



# **NORTHWEST RAIL GOVERNMENTS TEAM**

## **MEETING SUMMARY**

**DATE:** JULY 25, 2007, 1:00-3:00 p.m.

**LOCATION:** BROOMFIELD CITY & COUNTY COMPLEX  
ZANG SPUR & BAL SWAN CONFERENCE ROOMS

## **MEETING GOALS & AGENDA**

### **Goals:**

- **Establish the Northwest Rail (NWR) Governments Team**
- **Identify project issues of importance to NWR Governments Team representatives**
- **Provide a project overview and review outcomes of the July public meetings**
- **Present updated information and discuss decision-making for Commuter Rail Vehicle Technology for the NWR corridor**
- **Identify next steps and future agenda items for the NWR Governments Team**

### **Agenda**

1. Welcome & Introductions of Project Team
2. Introductions of NWR Governments Team (NWRGT)
3. Overview of Environmental Evaluation, Role of Governments Team, and Public Meetings
4. Commuter Rail Technology for the Northwest Rail Corridor
5. Summary and Next Steps

## **SUMMARY**

### **Welcome & Introductions of Project Team**

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Chris Quinn, RTD FasTracks Northwest Rail Project Manager, greeted the Governments Team and introduced the Northwest Rail Project Team members: Tim Baldwin and Lissa Myers, URS; Nadine Lee, Liz Telford, and Kristi Estes, RTD FasTracks; and Julie McKay and Andrea Meneghel, CDR Associates.

### **Introductions of NWR Governments Team**

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Julie McKay welcomed the Northwest Rail Governments Team (NWRGT) and explained the purpose of the group. The different agency and jurisdictional representatives introduced themselves and communicated their interests,

concerns, and hopes for the Northwest Rail Environmental Evaluation (EE). Each jurisdiction/agency answered the following two questions:

- What issues will be important to you during the Northwest Rail EE?
- What hopes and concerns do you have about the Northwest Rail EE?

Affiliation	Issues, Questions, Concerns & Hopes
Boulder County	Community Impacts Mitigation Measures Noise Technology: DMU-EMU Station – Arapahoe & 63 <sup>rd</sup>
City of Boulder	Technology Noise Impacts and Mitigation Measures What kind of RTD assistance will be provided regarding the establishment of Quiet Zones? What will be the RTD investments? What investments will the local jurisdictions need to make?  Safety Fencing Environmental & Open Space Impacts Station Locations and Design 63 <sup>rd</sup> & Arapahoe Station Service Frequencies Connectivity to Local Transportation Systems and Transportation Service Transparency in Decision-Making Clarity in Decisions and Deadlines Public Outreach
City & County of Broomfield	Technology Mitigation Measures Stations – 116th
Colorado Department of Transportation (Region 4)	Interaction between NWR & Highway System
Denver	Coordination among FasTracks Corridors Drainage Denver Union Station Corridor joint-stations
Denver Regional Council of Governments	Technology Station Locations
Federal Transit Administration	Operational Interaction between NWR, Maintenance Facilities, and Denver Union Station
City of Longmont	Quiet Zones Technology Track the evolution of comments regarding technology Grade Separations in Downtown Longmont Traffic Impacts Correlation with Local Transportation Projects Being informed of the progress of the EE
City of Louisville	Technology EMU (visual impacts) Vibration

	Noise Fencing Stations – Louisville Parking Zoning and Design Standards Downtown Impacts Circulation Grade Separations Impacts to Louisville of the Arapahoe & 63 <sup>rd</sup> station Providing information to the public about property and ROW impacts
North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization	Connections to North I-25 EIS Alternatives (Longmont)
RTD District I	Involvement Corridor-wide Representation Consensus Building Planning
RTD FasTracks	Completing the study efficiently and on schedule Analyzing Mitigation Measures Quality Consistency Communication
City of Westminster	Technology Transit Oriented Development, specifically in the area around the Westminster Center Station Locations
36 Commuting Solutions	Quiet Zones Knowing RTD's financial commitments

At the end of the discussion, Julie McKay suggested that these issues could be used, in part, to develop future agendas for the NWRGT.

## **Overview of Environmental Evaluation, Role of Governments Team, and Public Meetings**

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### **Overview of the Northwest Rail Environmental Evaluation**

Tim Baldwin reviewed the project's study area, history, and proposed Purpose & Need statement. He also reviewed the FasTracks Annual Program Evaluation's goals and cost reduction measures. Tim noted the seven stations identified in the original FasTracks plan that RTD has committed to fund. These are the South Westminster, Church Ranch, Flatirons, Louisville, Boulder Transit Village, Gunbarrel and Longmont stations. Last, he discussed the project's 2007 & 2008 objectives, the NWR EE's next steps, and the project's future steps through completion in 2015.

### ***Questions & Comments***

After Tim Baldwin's presentation, NWRGT representatives asked questions about technology, property impacts, station locations, fencing, noise mitigation measures, and jurisdictional communications with the public. The following issue areas capture the key points from responses by Tim Baldwin and Chris Quinn to NWRGT members' questions:

***Technology:*** Although the original FasTracks plan stated the Commuter Rail technology would be DMU, each corridor is subject to an environmental analysis to determine if, among other things, it is the most appropriate technology for the corridor.

**Property Impacts:** The NWR EE will identify and take into consideration impacted parcels of land along the NWR corridor.

**Station Locations:** RTD has used criteria in the past to determine station locations that has included parking availability, land availability, and the overall station fit with the community. As the project moves forward, the Project Team will conduct public workshops and station planning sessions. The NWR EE will incorporate previous jurisdictional efforts and public input to determine upcoming station planning initiatives. The study will draw from previous corridor studies that identify a preliminary station footprint and then make adjustments based on jurisdictional concerns, public input, and additional analysis.

**Fencing:** Jurisdictional representatives expressed significant concern about the visual and wildlife impacts of fencing, particularly in the more rural areas of the corridor. The EE will analyze this issue, including the impacts of fencing and how they will be addressed. Originally, RTD planned to fence along the entire corridor. However, during the study, RTD will consider the issues and impacts associated with fencing and assess its policy position on it.

**Noise Impacts & Mitigation:** Jurisdictional representatives expressed interest in understanding RTD's commitment to noise mitigation measures, i.e. what will RTD implement and fund, and wondered if the EE will provide this clarity. Noise and vibration studies will be conducted in conjunction with workshops and outreach efforts that will explore specific community concerns. The EE will suggest noise mitigation measures that will address impacts, but will not necessarily recommend Quiet Zones as specific mitigation measures in all areas along the corridor.

**Jurisdictional Communications with the Public:** RTD encourages jurisdictional representatives to engage their communities in active discussion and to be involved in the project. The Project Team will clearly communicate the project's current status with jurisdictional representatives and, as the study progresses, additional communications to stakeholders will occur as issues within each community are explored. RTD will rely on members of the NWRGT to raise concerns and increase the Project Team's awareness of relevant issues within their individual jurisdictions.

## **Role of the Northwest Rail Governments Team**

Julie McKay reviewed the *Northwest Rail Governments Team Draft Operating Guidelines*, which identifies the decision makers - RTD and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, describes the decision making process for the Northwest Rail Corridor EE, and explains the purpose of the NWRGT. It also describes the development of study recommendations as well as additional meeting procedures.

The NWRGT group structure will include one elected official and one technical staff from each NWR community, alternates, and representatives from various agencies. Meetings will take place at key decision points and the Project Team will implement procedures to facilitate the participation of the NWRGT representatives at those milestone points. Other meetings will be held for the purpose of providing updated information and discussing it.

## **Questions & Comments**

- A NWRGT member requested that the Project Team consider the time it takes to gather city council input and assess internal support for certain study recommendations. The Project Team agreed to work with NWRGT representatives to identify city council meetings that coincide with significant project milestones in order to respect internal timeframes and help facilitate an efficient decision making process for NWRGT members and their respective agencies. The Project Team will also assign specific dates to the comment periods and solicit NWRGT feedback as to whether they are appropriate.
- Procedurally, the NWRGT prefers to meet in the early morning on either Thursdays or Fridays. The NWRGT will tentatively plan on meeting monthly or as otherwise suggested by the Project Team.

At the end of the discussion, Julie McKay welcomed additional feedback from NWRGT representatives. If more comments are received, they can be reviewed at the next NWRGT meeting.

## Summary of Public Meetings

Julie McKay briefly summarized the main themes that emerged from the Northwest Rail Public Meetings held on July 9, 11, and 12, 2007. She noted that many of the issues were also raised by the NWRGT earlier in the day, and that in particular she will look out for comments about fencing. Julie will distribute the comments from the Public Meetings to the NWRGT when they are available.

## Commuter Rail Technology for the Northwest Rail Corridor

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Tim Baldwin presented an overview of Commuter Rail vehicle technology, which identified previous outreach efforts and decisions made within the NWR corridor about this issue. He also presented the Northwest Rail Technology Decision Making Process framework, which highlights events, meetings, and milestones that will be a part of the technology selection process for the corridor from August through October. The study's objective during the upcoming months will be to gather additional information about DMU and EMU technologies, collect public input, and develop a recommendation for the RTD board to consider at its October meeting. Tim Baldwin requested the NWRGT's feedback on the plan for decision making about technology, including the timeline for it.

The plan includes the following timeline for key activities:

- **August 2007:** The Project Team will conduct Public Outreach about technology and begin the environmental analysis on DMU and EMU technologies for the corridor
- **September 2007:** A NWRGT meeting and Public Workshops will occur to consider the cost and environmental analysis for DMU and EMU technologies
- **October 2007:** The NWRGT will meet to review the input gathered from the September Public Workshops and to consider the technology recommendation the project will forward to the RTD Board

Chris Quinn also updated the group on the RTD Board's decision to select EMU technology for the Gold Line and the East Corridor. In regards to the North Metro and Northwest Rail corridors, the RTD Board committed to the processes in place in each corridor that will result in corridor-specific analyses and recommendations.

## Questions & Comments

- Debra Baskett, City & County of Broomfield, suggested that the Project Team provide information about other corridors' noise and vibration studies, decision-making processes, and the outcomes of these efforts.
- The Project Team was asked to consider what can be done to educate the public about the potential visual impacts associated with EMU technology, including what jurisdictions can do to provide the public with tangible information regarding the project.
- RTD has considered conducting technology demonstrations and simulations for the corridor, although some liability issues will need to be resolved before demonstrations could occur. There are some funds budgeted for these activities.
- Liz Telford suggested that it may be helpful to show what other corridor studies have done to address issues such as visual aesthetics, wildlife mitigations, noise demonstrations, and safety.
- Dennis McCloskey, City & County of Broomfield, articulated that there is a public perception that associates DMU with heavy rail locomotives. He suggested the Project Team offer information addressing this misperception through mediums such as television and radio commercials, or by conducting a corridor-wide demonstration. He also suggested that information is needed about DMU's net pollution ratio.

- Mary Blue, City of Longmont, suggested small-group public outreach aimed to address public perceptions of DMU-generated noise, pollution, and visual impacts.
- Kristi Estes noted that there have been public concerns about RTD presenting the noise demonstrations in the North Metro corridor, so the different jurisdictions have begun to conduct them. Information from that corridor can be shared with the NWR corridor.
- Martha Roskowski, City of Boulder, requested cost comparisons of DMU and EMU and suggested the long-term costs of operations be updated and presented. Liz Telford replied that the Department of Energy has hi/mid/low cost estimates of comparisons between diesel and electric that can be presented.
- Several NWRGT members suggested that a video depicting diesel and electric trains be provided on the NWR website to illustrate the difference between technologies to the public. Dave Beckhouse, FTA, questioned the overall effectiveness of using a video due to the multitude of additional variables that one must consider other than appearance to accurately assess the impact of the two different technologies.
- Mayor Nancy McNally, Westminster, requested that a current visual example of DMU technology be provided to the public because she feels people perceive DMU negatively.
- Bob Kochevar, City & County of Denver, mentioned that the project team can expect to hear concerns about DMU and the impacts of a maintenance facility from Denver citizens.
- A NWRGT member asked if a layover facility is being examined in the EE. Tim Baldwin noted that the EE currently includes three possible areas for a layover facility– in Longmont, along the Diagonal, and in East Boulder County. However, he emphasized that RTD will further examine the need for such a facility in the EE.
- Mary Blue and Martha Roskowski emphasized the importance of knowing when the EE will be finalized and, more specifically, when DRCOG will incorporate the station locations into the Regional Transportation Plan. Does DRCOG need a FONSI (for EAs) or ROD (for EISs) to do so? This is critical to the jurisdictions' ability to develop their land use plans for station areas.

At the end of the discussion, Julie McKay summarized the public input about technology that the Project Team gathered at the July Public Meetings. Of the roughly two hundred comments received, both verbal and written, nearly one-third of them addressed vehicle technology. Over half of these comments expressed some form of support for one technology over another, with more comments expressing support for EMU than DMU. In general, the comments that supported EMU suggested that this technology type will be more environmentally beneficial than DMU, have operational advantages, and be able to better address future issues associated with fuel sources and supply. The comments that supported DMU were primarily concerned about the visual impacts of EMU technology. Many comments suggested that EMU or DMU technology would be more cost advantageous than the other and encouraged the study to examine this issue from both a short and long-term perspective. Julie also noted that the other half of the comments that addressed technology asked questions, identified specific information needs, addressed trade-offs, and provided suggestions.

### **Additional Items**

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Following the meeting Councilwoman Judy Montero communicated the following issues of importance to the City and County of Denver, given that she was unable to attend the NWRGT July 25 meeting:

- She requested to know more about the speeds traveled on the corridor - specifically what speeds the trains will be traveling at which points in the corridor.
- She is concerned about the commuter rail maintenance facility that is currently slated to be housed at the Union Pacific 36<sup>th</sup> Street yards in the Swansea neighborhood. She is concerned about the impact of the

facility on the neighborhood. Her concerns relate to noise, air quality, visual impacts and a continued long term industrial use located adjacent to a transit station. She is also concerned about the impact to Brighton Boulevard.

- She is in support of EMU technology for the NW Rail corridor.

## Summary and Next Steps

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- NWRGT representatives can submit comments about the NWRGT Operating Guidelines to Julie McKay. If necessary, these comments can be considered at the next NWRGT meeting so that the Operating Guidelines can be finalized.
- Julie McKay will distribute the individual comments collected at the Public Meetings to the NWRGT. These will also be posted on the project website. At a future meeting, Julie McKay will report whether the Project Team has received public comments about fencing.
- Chris Quinn will work with Dan Carl to confirm when DRCOG will incorporate the NWR stations in the Regional Transportation Plan. He will provide this information to the NWRGT.
- On Tuesday, August 14th at 2:30 p.m. the Colorado Rail Association will conduct a tour of Colorado Railcar Manufacturing Co. in Fort Lupton. No RSVP is necessary to attend this event. Questions can be directed to: Bob Briggs, Executive Vice President, Colorado Rail Association, [Bob.briggs@rangerexpress.com](mailto:Bob.briggs@rangerexpress.com)
- The Project Team will consider ways that it can demonstrate DMU and EMU technologies such that the public can experience them. The team will consider the NWRGT's suggestions and pursue whether a video or simulation is available or can be developed.
- The next NWRGT meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, September 13, 2007 – 7:30a.m., location TBD.

## Handouts

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- Northwest Rail Governments Team Meeting Agenda
- Northwest Rail Governments Team Draft Operating Guidelines
- Northwest Rail Environmental Evaluation Governments Team Meeting presentation
- Northwest Rail Governments Team Contacts
- Northwest Rail Public Comments Regarding Technology (Thru 07/25/07)

## Meeting Participants

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PARTICIPANTS	AFFILIATION
1. Heather Balsler	City of Louisville
2. Tim Baldwin	URS Corporation
3. Debra Baskett	City & County of Broomfield

4. Dave Beckhouse	Federal Transit Administration
5. Mary Blue	City of Longmont
6. Dan Carl	DRCOG
7. Carl Castillo	City of Boulder
8. Audrey DeBarros	36 Commuting Solutions
9. Dave Downing	City of Westminster
10. Kristi Estes	RTD FasTracks
11. Mark Gosselin	CDOT – Region 4
12. Phil Greenwald	City of Longmont
13. Dickey Lee Hullinghorst	Boulder County
14. Lee Kemp	RTD Board, District I
15. Bob Kochevar	City & County of Denver
16. Nadine Lee	RTD FasTracks
17. Matt Lutkus	City of Westminster
18. Sean McCartney	City of Louisville
19. Dennis McCloskey	City & County of Broomfield
20. Julie McKay	CDR Associates
21. Vicky McLane	North Front Range MPO
22. Nancy McNally	City of Westminster

23. Andrea Meneghel	CDR Associates
24. Lissa Myers	URS Corporation
25. Wally Pulliam	RTD Board, District L
26. Chris Quinn	RTD FasTracks
27. Martha Roskowski	City of Boulder
28. David Singer	CDOT
29. Jack Stoakes	City of Boulder
30. Tim Swope	Boulder County
31. Liz Telford	RTD FasTracks
32. Paul Wood	City of Louisville