

RTD FASTRACKS & NORTHWEST RAIL UPDATE JULY 2009

This e-update is designed to keep you informed about the progress of the RTD FasTracks program, and to provide you with new information about Northwest Rail.

Thank you for your continued interest in the Northwest Rail project and the entire FasTracks program to build 122 miles of new rail transit, 18 miles of bus rapid transit service, add 21,000 new parking spaces, redevelop Denver Union Station, and expand bus service across the eight-county District. We look forward to continuing our partnership with you to provide more transit to our region at a time when the need for transit investment is at its greatest.

RTD FASTRACKS UPDATE

West Corridor moves into full construction: The FasTracks program has reached a key milestone – the start of major construction on the first FasTracks rail corridor! Construction has already begun, with some very visible work beginning along West 6th Avenue. You can expect other corridors to follow! For more information, please visit the [West Corridor Web site](#).

RTD will not seek sales tax increase in 2009: In March, the Metro Mayors & Commissioners Task Force made a recommendation to RTD to support a sales tax increase to fund FasTracks and complete the program on time. The RTD Board has decided not to seek an additional FasTracks sales tax increase in 2009. In June, the RTD Board determined that it is prudent not to seek a 0.4 percent sales tax increase this year in order to fill the FasTracks budget gap. FasTracks needs an additional \$2.2 billion in revenues to stay on track for completing the program by 2017.

Many factors led to the decision not to go to voters in 2009, including the uncertainty of the economy, the challenge in generating support for a campaign in an off-year election and the transition of leadership in the agency. The RTD Board will use the time to continue to evaluate all of the options for moving FasTracks forward.

Progress on Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility site: The introduction of commuter rail technology to RTD's system requires RTD to build a new [maintenance facility](#) for commuter rail vehicles. Recently, there has been a lot of news coverage about RTD's preferred site for the Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility (CRMF). Since 2004, RTD has evaluated nearly 30 sites for the CRMF. The Fox North site, in the general vicinity of the I-25/I-70 junction at 48th Ave. and Fox St., has been recommended as the preferred site, based on input from the community, previously identified acquisitions needed for the [Gold Line](#) and Northwest Rail, and fewer environmental impacts. A modified design for the CRMF has been developed to allow both RTD and the current resident Owens Corning, to coexist on the site. The modified CRMF design requires RTD to only purchase a small amount of additional land from Owens Corning, currently used for storage and parking.

Economic Impacts of FasTracks: The following points come from the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce and the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation.

- If FasTracks remains on track for completion in 2017, it will serve as an economic driver for the whole region. FasTracks is expected to create more than 10,000 jobs at the height of construction.
- Every \$1 invested in transit infrastructure results in as much as a \$6 investment in the local economy.
- Every \$10 million capital investment in public transportation can return up to \$30 million in business sales alone.
- Every \$1 billion in transportation investment creates 30,000 jobs.

For more information about RTD FasTracks and to find out about the progress being made on other corridors visit www.RTD-FasTracks.com

NORTHWEST RAIL UPDATE & CURRENT PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Here is new information about the activities taking place to move the Northwest Rail project forward:

NWR Project Schedule, Corridor Wide Public Impacts Workshops, and Public Meetings: The Northwest Rail (NWR) project is still on schedule to hold corridor-wide Public Workshops in the coming months to discuss project impacts with you. In the fall, a Draft Environmental Evaluation (EE) will be released and another series of corridor-wide Public Meetings will take place to collect comments on the Draft EE and then the final document will be submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the lead agency for the study, for approval. You can look forward to another email notification to inform you about the upcoming Public Workshops!

Northwest Rail Track Alignment: In cooperation with the BNSF Railway, RTD has identified the [Northwest Rail proposed commuter rail track alignment](#) - the proposed new track location is highlighted in blue and the FasTracks Stations along the corridor are noted with red and blue icons. The corridor tracks will be shared by both BNSF freight and NWR commuter rail vehicles. RTD is working with the BNSF Railway to ensure safety for simultaneous operations. The impacts analysis for Northwest Rail is underway and the upcoming Public Workshops will share more information about that analysis with you.

Northwest Rail Station Plans: RTD has developed 12 different preliminary concept plans for its commuter rail stations in the Northwest Rail corridor. These designs are the outcome of a year-long collaborative process with local communities along the corridor, and they will be used to guide the final station design. The figures depict the proposed platform location, the configuration and location of parking, pedestrian bridges/underpasses provided to cross the tracks, and access and circulation configuration for pedestrians, buses and vehicles. The NWR Project Team will use the "station footprints" to identify impacts associated with the station areas and develop mitigation measures for impacts identified. The station design maps will be available for public review during the upcoming Public Workshops to be held this summer. In the meantime, you can view each station concept plan on the [Northwest Rail Web site](#).

Noise Impacts & Quiet Zones: The Northwest Rail Environmental Evaluation will evaluate noise impacts of Northwest Rail. This analysis is currently underway and the results will determine the level of noise impacts and appropriate mitigation measures to be taken in impacted areas. One potential noise mitigation is the establishment of Quiet Zones where train operators would be exempt from the requirement of sounding their horns at rail crossings.

Field visits have occurred to determine what Quiet Zone implementation steps need to be taken at each crossing. RTD has developed a [Quiet Zone Work Plan](#) that identifies the steps that local communities would take to implement Quiet Zones. RTD has also developed grade crossing inventories and conducted diagnostic reviews for crossings along the Northwest Rail corridor to assist the local communities in the Quiet Zone implementation process.

The results of the noise analysis and approaches to minimize impacts will be shared at the upcoming Public Workshops this summer.

Noise Impact & Quiet Zone Resource Packet: The Northwest Rail Project Team has a Noise Impact and Quiet Zone resource packet available to answer your questions about how noise impacts

are being analyzed and how these impacts can be addressed. Please let us know if you would like us to [mail one of these packets to you](#); or you can [view all of the information electronically on our Web site](#).

Grade Crossings: The Northwest Rail Project Team is using information from its rail crossing inventory and field visits to identify the safety upgrades that RTD will need to make at each crossing to implement commuter rail service.

CONTACT US

As always, feel free to [submit a comment](#), [ask a question](#), or [sign up for our mailing list](#) to stay connected.

If you would like to receive more information or if you would like to schedule a FasTracks presentation for your organization, please contact the Northwest Rail Public Involvement Team at (303) 299-2000; or email us at nwrail@rtd-fastracks.com

Please visit www.RTD-FasTracks.com for additional information.

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