



NORTHWEST RAIL GOVERNMENTS TEAM

MEETING SUMMARY

DATE: September 27, 2007, 7:30 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

LOCATION: Westminster City Park Recreation Center, Community Room
10455 Sheridan Boulevard
Westminster

MEETING GOALS & AGENDA

Goals:

- **Follow up on action items from September 13 meeting and provide updates on select project issues**
- **Review findings of Commuter Rail Technology analysis**
- **Review public input from September Public Workshops**
- **Gather Governments Team input on preliminary project recommendations on Commuter Rail technology**
- **Identify next steps and future agenda items for the NWR Governments Team**

Agenda

1. Welcome and Introductions
2. Follow Up Items and Project Updates
3. Review of Commuter Rail Technology Analysis
4. Review of Public Input from September Workshops
5. Governments Team Input
 - Comments on Preliminary Project Recommendations (round robin)
 - Assessment of level of support from Governments Team
6. Summary and Next Steps
 - Final day to submit written comments (September 28) for RTD Board
 - RTD Board meeting and final project recommendation (October 16)
 - Next Governments Team meeting

SUMMARY

Welcome & Introductions

Chris Quinn, RTD Project Manager, welcomed the Northwest Rail Governments Team (GT) and group members introduced themselves. Julie McKay, NWR Project Team, then presented the agenda for the meeting.

RTD Updates

North Metro

The RTD North Metro rail study is at approximately the same place in its schedule as the Northwest Rail, with public meetings to be held this week. The RTD Board will also consider a commuter rail technology recommendation for the North Metro corridor at its October 16th meeting.

Fencing

As mentioned during the September 13th meeting, RTD has established an internal committee to examine the agency's current fencing policy. To date, the group has met with Boulder County, City of Boulder, City and County of Broomfield, City of Louisville, and City of Lafayette, including Open Space and Parks representatives. The goal is to identify local issues related to fencing. In the coming weeks, RTD will meet with communities in the north metro area.

Follow up Items and Updates

Noise & Vibration Analysis

During the September 13th meeting, several GT representatives requested more information about the noise and vibration impacts analysis. After the meeting, the Project Team distributed the FTA mitigation guidance, "Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment Guidance Manual," to the GT.

City of Boulder and City of Louisville representatives also expressed an interest in learning more about the methodology that was used for the noise and vibration analysis. While some jurisdictions have specific concerns and questions, such as the locations where noise was measured and the decibel measures, there is significant interest in understanding the analysis in general. The Project Team asked the GT for clarification on the best way to review the methodology with the GT— individually or as a group? The GT suggested that the Project Team schedule a meeting and notify the GT of it. Each jurisdiction can then decide if they want to attend. RTD representatives suggested that the meeting be scheduled when Dave Towers, who conducted the analysis, is available to attend. The GT agreed that this would be helpful.

Martha Roskowski, City of Boulder, asked if RTD had received a response from the FRA for their request to sound commuter rail horns at 90 dBA, instead of the FRA rule for freight train horns which is 96-110 dBA. The Project Team is in consultation with FRA regarding this issue and it is currently under review by their safety committee. RTD will clarify the requirement during the Environmental Evaluation process, as soon as it receives confirmation from FRA.

Integration of GT Comments into Public Presentation

The Project Team appreciated the feedback from the GT on the PowerPoint presentation at the September 13th meeting. It proved very helpful in effectively presenting the information during the recent public workshops. Many members of the public seemed to appreciate the information and noted that it helped them further consider their own perspective on the technology issue. Debra Baskett, City and County of Broomfield, expressed appreciation for the quality of the public meetings, noting that information was well-presented and that the Broomfield meeting did not include anyone she recognized, which speaks to the effectiveness of the outreach efforts.

Vehicle Rail Technology Analysis

Tim Baldwin, Consultant Project Manager, reviewed the primary changes made to the presentation prior to the public workshops, provided a summary of the technology analysis, and reviewed the preliminary recommendation regarding commuter rail vehicle technology, which had been presented to the GT at its September 13, 2007, meeting. [See PowerPoint presentation handout.]

Public Input

Jennifer Graham, NWR Project Team, summarized the public input about commuter rail vehicle technology that the project has collected to date, emphasizing the results from the September public workshops. Her analysis included a breakdown by meeting of the level of support for the preliminary recommendation, as well as identifying specific concerns related to it. [See PowerPoint presentation handout.]

Governments Team Input

The preliminary recommendation of the Northwest Rail Project Team to the public, agencies, and the RTD Board is: **To initiate service for the Northwest Rail corridor in 2015 with Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) Commuter Rail Technology.** As part of the comment process for this project milestone, Julie McKay asked GT representatives to share their comments about the preliminary recommendation, also suggesting that they could indicate their position on the recommendation, remain neutral, or abstain from making a comment. Following are the comments made by GT representatives:

North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization

We are neutral, as this project is not within our jurisdiction. We understand the technology and are comfortable with DMU. The recommendation makes sense given the technological analysis. There is a chance that the North Front Range will run into the same issues when considering DMU and Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) technologies, as our constituents are interested in air quality and aesthetic values, so it will be helpful to know how to address these issues in the future. You have our support, but we anticipate that this issue will continue to be discussed in the future in the north and that there will be concerns. (David Averill)

City of Westminster

The Westminster City Council discussed this issue on several occasions and there is unanimous support for DMU. First, DMU offers aesthetic benefits over EMU. The City of Westminster recently spent a significant amount of money on underground utility lines; there would be significant visual impacts with the 41-mile catenary wire that EMU requires. Air pollution concerns are likely a neutral issue given the fact that the air pollution caused by EMU trains would come from somewhere, as it is unknown how the electricity would be generated over the years. DMU allows for alternatives in the future which could be less polluting than the power plant. Some innovative technologies can be used.

Then there are the cost differences, especially when considering the BNSF [bridge] requirement, which doubles the original cost of the project. Westminster has concerns about noise and vibration and over the term of the project will be looking at mitigating those. Noise impacts are similar with DMU and EMU, so regardless of the technology, we will have to pursue those issues. In respect to noise, we want to pursue the establishment of quiet zones. The city council will decide next week whether to supplement the RTD noise analysis. We need to address air pollution issues, but given that 99% comes from cars at the stations, it is the automobile emissions that need to be addressed. (Mayor Nancy McNally, Matt Lutkus, Dave Downing)

City of Boulder

In contrast to Westminster, the Boulder City Council has not had an opportunity to discuss the recommendation. Consequently, at this point we have to remain neutral. Having attended these meetings personally, I can see why there is a leaning towards DMU, if that becomes the decision. At the public workshops there was a lot of concern in Boulder about noise, vibration, and quiet zones, including liability

issues associated with their implementation. We need more information about the impacts of DMU, how the technology works, and its efficiencies. We are leaning towards DMU, although our official position is one of neutrality. (Councilman Jack Stoakes)

In Boulder, as the public input statistics show, there is tremendous public concern about the project recommendation. A lot of people support EMU. The City likes to make decisions based on a lot of information, public meetings, and a lot of discussion. For future project decisions, there should be a longer period of time between information dissemination and input requested from the Governments Team. What does the public think? This is really what is important. I do not want to suggest that the City of Boulder is not interested in the technology issue; we very much care about it. Our official position of abstaining is due to lack of information in a timely manner. However, there are certain things the City does want to address today. (Carl Castillo)

We are interested in the concept of performance measures: If the project goes forward with DMU, we are interested in quiet zones, including gaining a clear understanding of what is required to build quiet zone infrastructure and RTD's commitment to this process. We want all of the impacts analysis information to be shared to ensure transparency and trust and so that we can understand the basis on which the decision was made. Adhering to air quality standards is important, especially replacing the DMU engines every two years. Also, information technology (IT) resources should be utilized to minimize car traffic at parking areas. There are health concerns related to diesel. There are certain toxins associated with the use of diesel fuel—not only at the stations, but also along the rail line. We need to understand and know whether there are ways to mitigate them. Fuel prioritization is a concern as well. If a crisis hits, there needs to be some mechanism to ensure trains have some fuel priority. Service levels should be based on productivity and not on the price of fuel. If the price of fuel skyrockets, then we need make sure that service is not reduced based on the price of fuel. Also, flexibility is important. It would be fabulous if DMU trains could operate on EMU lines so that there could be direct transport to DIA. (Martha Roskowski)

**Added at the end of the discussion:*

We are really supportive of making the Northwest Rail project happen and want to influence its course. Because there is public concern about noise, cost, and travel times, it would be helpful to collectively consider how we can address these issues, as we experience public opposition to the project. It is important that we all speak from the same page to reinforce that this is a good project and that it is important. (Martha Roskowski)

Boulder County

We are officially neutral on this issue, however, we are not adamantly opposed to either technology. We understand the inevitability [of implementing DMU] based on cost issues, including cost effectiveness. The real issue for the County will continue to be how DMU is implemented. There is a great possibility here. With EMU we do not have a lot of flexibility; DMU offers a lot of flexibility. This corridor should not bear the brunt of the budget issues of RTD by going cheap on DMU. It should be technology that is good and takes care of some of the issues of concern to our constituents, such as noise and pollution. We want to be very involved as the discussion goes forward—we think there are some good possibilities. It is important to have that discussion. (Dickey Lee Hullinghorst)

City of Lafayette

We apologize for coming late [into this process]. From a staff level—I cannot speak for council—I can say that we understand the technology arguments for DMU and EMU. We understand the cost constraints for both of these technologies and how these costs would impact operation of the line and Lafayette residents along the western edge of city. At this point in time, because we are new to the process, we are probably neutral, but are leaning towards DMU if it means moving the commuter line forward. That is the bottom line for us. As we go further, noise, grade separation, and the traffic impacts of trains need to be evaluated based on the technology decision. It is hard to see how EMU would work with other traffic concerns. We have not yet had the chance to review comments from citizens of Lafayette. (Paul Rayl)

Lafayette is on the eastern edge of Boulder County, northeast of Louisville. [The Northwest Rail] is going to run through our town. The western side of Lafayette is where a lot of development has occurred. I like to look out for the people who have not [yet] moved to Lafayette. Right now we have diesels coming through town at night, so there are preconceived notions about diesel engines. There are preconceived notions about electric [trains] as well. There are preconceptions about reliance on fossil fuels, for example, and the potential for the cost of diesel to go through the roof. Electric power has to be generated somewhere else—out of site, out of mind. We appreciate being brought into loop. This [project] is going to change the traffic patterns in town significantly. It could affect development. Housing developers should be brought into this process at some point. Forty percent of the town has moved here in the last 10 years— all of them between Highway 287 and where the [commuter rail] is going to be. A lot of residents do not realize that it will be coming through their “backyard” (in terms of earshot). We [Lafayette] need to get up to speed. We are glad you have not forgotten about us. The Northwest Parkway just signed a leasing agreement with a non-US company. It is interesting in terms of the non-competitive clauses. The Parkway Authority may have made some commitments that affect the rail project, too. (Councilman Kerry Bensman)

Note: Heather Balsler, City of Louisville, clarified that the Northwest Parkway leasing agreement does not affect the rail project.

City and County of Denver

The decision regarding technology (DMU and EMU) is a very serious issue. Staff has said that we will support the project team recommendation, so we support DMU. One of our council members has submitted a strong statement in support of EMU. Councilwoman Montero has made her concerns known and speaks for her district. As the official staff representative on this committee and in my role representing the City and County of Denver, I can say that we support the Project Team recommendation. Looking at the public input from the Denver meeting, more than 1/2 of those who commented said they support it. The public is also aware that Councilwoman Montero, as an elected official, supports EMU. (Mark Najarian)

36 Commuting Solutions

We are not taking a position because this is a local decision-making process. We are sharing information and encouraging our members to get involved. We have been working with the staff of the jurisdictions along the corridor to look at how to make the project as environmentally friendly and sustainable as possible. Building upon what the City of Boulder has said, we want to make sure we are getting the best product possible. (Audrey DeBarros)

City of Louisville

We have no official decision, although we have similar concerns as those raised by the City of Boulder. Noise and vibration concerns are of particular importance, as are the impacts on residences, businesses, and redevelopment. We want to how to mitigate the noise impacts that are officially considered “moderate”—not only those in the extreme noise impacts category. We are interested in clean technology, the use of hybrids, how we can make the system as fluid as possible, such as one train to DIA. Quiet zones are extremely important, including understanding RTD’s commitment to implementing them. Fuel issues and toxins are of concern. All of these concerns will be outlined in a forthcoming letter. We do not want to slow down the process because we support the implementation of the commuter rail line along this corridor.

In addition, it is a good time for RTD and the team to further assist, through education and marketing, the public to understand the technology that is available. Most lay public do not understand DMU. The education process is important, as people need to understand the technology, including exactly why and how it works. They need to understand that there are still environmental effects of EMU (electricity has to be produced somewhere). (Heather Balsler)

City of Longmont

We are examining a couple of issues in terms of costs, as the cost issues are going to affect how far the line goes. Our council is going to look at this on October 9, prior to the RTD Board Meeting on October 16. That will help the City know what to convey to the Board. Again, the huge issue for us is cost. We also see

the flexibility of DMU; it allows for fuel alternatives, hybrid technology, and bio-diesel. Also, there are aesthetic concerns in the south end of town, as there is Boulder County Open Space in Longmont. We have worked to keep those areas open. An overhead catenary is not going to be acceptable for residents south of Longmont. The other big issue for Longmont is noise—the horns. The noise issue and traffic impacts are important whether the technology is DMU or EMU.

In addition, there is a need to continue to educate the public about DMU and EMU. Councilwoman Mary Blue apologizes for not being here today. On behalf of the council, I can say we want to see project successfully completed as soon as possible. (Phil Greenwald)

Adams County

Adams County has a similar position to the City and County of Denver. We want each corridor and its study process to determine technology for that corridor. DMU is cost effective and seems to have similar impacts to EMU. The capital costs and lifecycle costs are the key discriminator. It is likely that the Adams County Commissioners would support the DMU recommendation moving forward, but I need to check with them before forwarding any official Adams County position to the RTD Board. (Jeanne Shreve)

City and County of Broomfield

Given the cost constraints of the FasTracks program, DMU is acceptable to Broomfield, if specific mitigations are included for noise, vibration, and air quality. (Debra Baskett)

City of Arvada

We are neutral on the technology issue for the Northwest corridor and leave this recommendation to the project team. We are involved because of community concerns about noise and vibration in the portion of Arvada that is affected by the Northwest rail. (Edward Stafford)

DRCOG

The DRCOG Board plays a role in this recommendation, as it has to approve the technology for any rapid transit corridor. Four years ago, the Board approved commuter rail for the Northwest rail. If there are any changes in the technology in any of the lines through the environmental process, it will come back to the Board and at that time the Board will make decision.

As a Littleton resident, I would like to say that commuter rail changes communities for the better. It is neat seeing people of all walks of life walking to the train station. It will change your community—the mindset and the environment— for the better. (Steve Cook)

RTD Board

Representative Bill Christopher

I want to make a plea to everybody to come to the RTD Board Meeting on October 16. If you were not there for the December board meeting on the East and Gold lines, 27 people spoke, many of whom were high-level elected officials. They swayed many board members who were on the fence. The Independence Institute has been active recently about whether we need Bus Rapid Transit and commuter rail. I was the City Manager in Westminster when the Major Investment Study was developed and know how fragile the process can be. I do not want to see the Independence Institute tear that apart. The Institute may or may not be at the meeting. I would really urge more entities to get off the fence and take a position. This is not a purely scientific decision. Politics are very much at play. We need you there to help the board make the decision. We are going to make two decisions that night— one for Northwest Rail and one for North Metro. There are some of the same dynamics on the latter corridor. I would really urge you to join us that night and to speak for your entity or send a letter in advance. Believe me, it makes a difference.

John Tayer

If this corridor is going to ensure that we maintain the dual services (commuter rail and bus rapid transit) that we asked for through the FasTracks vote, we need to stand together. The technology issue will not divide us and be a reason to oppose rail. It is important to mention that DMU is part of the agreement to

have dual technologies. One should not take away from the other. If some communities do not decide to take a position on technology, I understand, but a clear statement on the two services is important. Other board members need to hear that loud and clear.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

I want to express appreciation to the RTD Project Team. They have done a great job as far as I am concerned with this process. There may be some confusion as to why the USACE is the Lead Federal Agency for this study, which I can clarify. When any public project involves any federal agency, the Council on Environmental Quality and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) kick in. For the Northwest Rail, there is no federal funding and no federal land involved, but eventually RTD will probably need to get 404 permits for the water crossings. This is why the USACE is the lead agency. It is a result of the permits that we will likely need to issue.

We are primarily interested in the process by which we arrive at project decisions. RTD has certain procedures for ensuring the public is involved. The USACE does not have those same procedures. There is also some confusion as to why this is an Environmental Assessment (EA) and not an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The USACE has certain procedures to follow for an EA. The Corps needs to decide whether or not conduct an EIS or whether an EA is sufficient. If all procedures are met with the EA, we will stop there.

Summary: Key Themes

At the end of the discussion, several representatives of the GT reiterated the key themes resulted from it: 1) If the project moves forward with DMU, it is important to keep working with the public to address concerns and share information about the technology and how it works; 2) If the project moves forward with DMU, it is important to the local communities that it become “the best” DMU possible, which includes minimizing its environmental impacts and maximizing its functionality; and 3) Wanting DMU to be “the best” technology means addressing the issues and concerns about it that the local communities have raised. *However*, raising issues about DMU should *not* be confused with lack of support for the project. The local communities support the implementation of commuter rail in the corridor and want to use the EE process to make the project the best that it can be.

To conclude the meeting, Julie McKay reminded the GT that written comments on the technology milestone are due the following day, September 28. These comments will be inserted into the comment notebook and forwarded to the RTD Board. The Project Team will also respond individually to the written comments it receives and distribute them and the responses to the GT. The Project Team will also forward the additional public comments it receives to the RTD Board before its meeting on October 16.

Next Steps and Action Items

- The Project Team will convene a working session on the noise and vibration impacts analysis and will notify the Governments Team when it is scheduled. It will be held when Dave Towers is in town.
- RTD will confirm the FRA decibel requirement for commuter rail horns when it receives an answer from the FRA.
- The Project Team will respond to the written comments on technology submitted by the GT.
- In October and November, the Project Team will focus on alignment and station issues. This will include meeting with jurisdictions individually to update station plans. The next GT meeting is anticipated for December. The agenda will include a review of the station planning work that the Project will conduct over the next two months.
- The Project Team will contact the local jurisdictions in early October to set up station planning meetings.

Handouts

- Northwest Rail Governments Team Meeting Agenda
- Commuter Rail Vehicle Technology Comment Notebook
- Power Point Presentation Handout
- Summaries of Public Comments (July to September; September Public Meetings)

Meeting Participants

PARTICIPANTS	AFFILIATION
1. Audrey DeBarros	36 Commuting Solutions
2. Bill Christopher	RTD
3. Carl Castillo	City of Boulder
4. Chris Quinn	RTD FasTracks
5. Dave Downing	City of Westminster
6. David Averill	NFRMPO
7. Debra Baskett	City & County of Broomfield
8. Dickey Lee Hullinghorst	Boulder County
9. Edward Stafford	City of Arvada
10. Heather Balsler	City of Louisville
11. Jack Stoakes	City of Boulder
12. Jeanne Shrene	Adams County
13. Jennifer Graham	CDR Associates
14. John Tayer	RTD
15. Julie McKay	CDR Associates
16. Karen Morales	RTD
17. Kerry Bensman	City of Lafayette
18. Lissa Myers	URS Corporation
19. Liz Telford	RTD FasTracks
20. Mark Gosselin	CDOT – Region 4
21. Mark Najarian	City & County of Denver
22. Martha Roskowski	City of Boulder
23. Matt Lutkus	City of Westminster
24. Nadine Lee	RTD FasTracks
25. Nancy McNally	City of Westminster
26. Nick Wolfrum	City of Longmont
27. Paul Rayl	City of Lafayette
28. Phil Greenwald	City of Longmont
29. Scott Franklin	US Army Corps of Engineers
30. Sean McCartney	City of Louisville
31. Steve Cook	DRCOG
32. Tim Baldwin	URS Corporation