

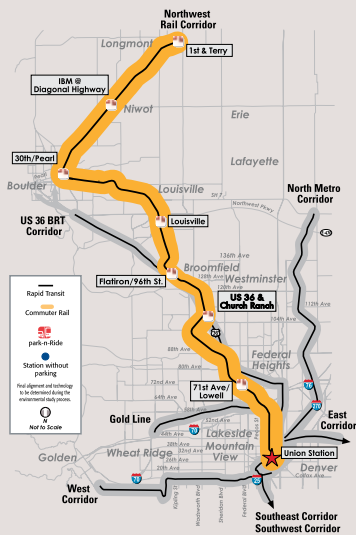
# Northwest Rail CORRIDOR

## Times

SPRING/2008

RTD FASTRACKS NORTHWEST RAIL NEWS LINK

### Northwest Rail Corridor



# Environmental Evaluation Update

FROM RTD PROJECT MANAGER CHRIS QUINN

Since the distribution of the November 2007 *Northwest Rail Corridor Times*, we have continued to receive your thoughts and questions about the implementation of commuter rail service along the proposed 41-mile corridor from Denver Union Station to Longmont, passing through North Denver, Adams County, Westminister, Broomfield, Louisville, and Boulder. Noise impacts and Quiet Zone implementation remain two of the most important issues for corridor residents, neighborhoods and communities. In this edition of the project newsletter, we update you on the recent and upcoming activities of the Northwest Rail Environmental Evaluation (EE), including how the study will continue to address these and other project issues in the months ahead.

### WORKING WITH THE NORTHWEST RAIL CORRIDOR COMMUNITIES

Since the beginning of the year, the project team has:

- Presented at community meetings
- Briefed elected officials along the corridor
- Partnered with local communities to initiate the Quiet Zone implementation process
- Begun working with local communities to determine fencing needs along the corridor
- Worked with local planning and transportation staff to refine the plans for the seven FasTracks-funded and three non-funded stations along the corridor

As a result, we have established a schedule for the anticipated implementation of Quiet Zones along the Northwest Rail Corridor. (See page 3 for more information.) The refined station plans will also soon be available for public review. We invite you to check the Northwest Rail Project Web site at [www.RTD-FasTracks.com](http://www.RTD-FasTracks.com) within the upcoming weeks to view them.

### DEVELOPING THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE

In following the process established in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the project team has identified and evaluated a range of alternatives and is currently working to develop the Preferred Alternative. This includes:

- Updating ridership projections by using the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) 2035 model;
- Defining the track alignment;
- Refining the station plans; and
- Finalizing the commuter rail operating plan.

Defining the Preferred Alternative allows the project team to analyze the impacts that would be associated with the project, eventually leading to the identification of mitigation measures that RTD would implement.

### UPCOMING ACTIVITIES & TIMELINE

The project team will spend this spring further developing the Preferred Alternative and identifying impacts. As you may have heard, due to recent developments in RTD's negotiations with the Union Pacific Railroad, the schedule for the environmental study has now been lengthened by several months. While we had originally anticipated completing the Draft Environmental Evaluation this spring, we are now working to release the document for public review late this year. (See the following page for the project timeline and key activities.) Note that the adjustment to the study's schedule does not affect opening day for commuter rail service, which is still planned to take place in early 2015.

### 2008 PUBLIC OUTREACH

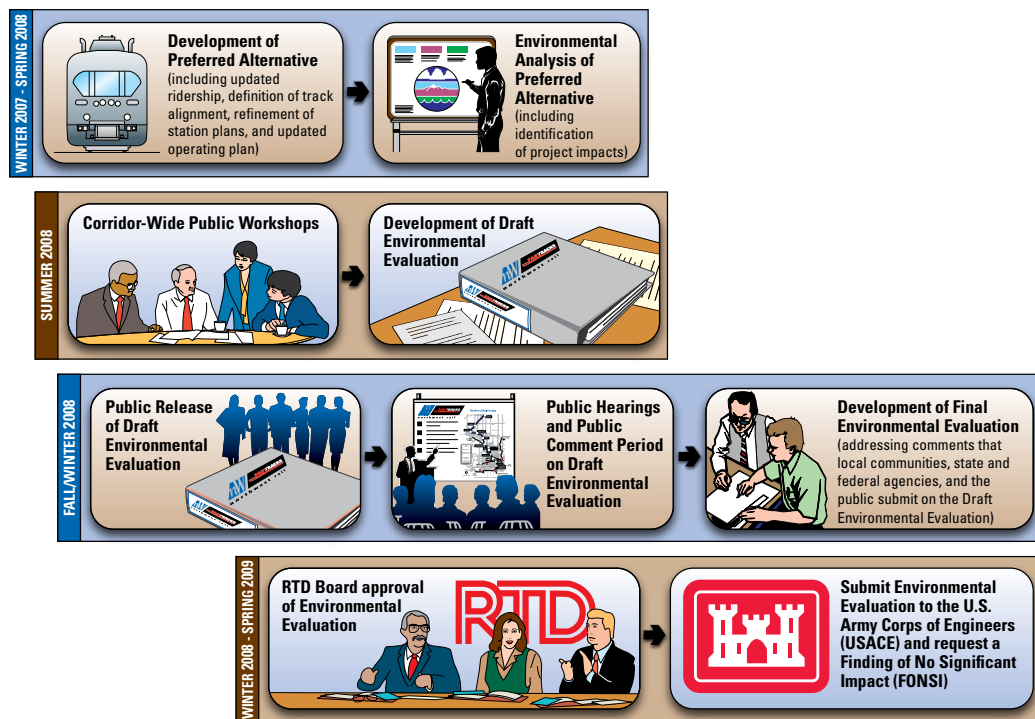
Here are some groups we have met with this year to discuss Northwest Rail:

- Boulder County Commissioners
- Longmont Transportation Open House
- 36 Commuting Solutions
- Latino Ministerial Alianza of Denver
- Lafayette City Council
- Boulder Optimist Club
- Louisville City Council
- Centro Cristiano Community Meeting
- Broomfield 120th Avenue Improvements Open House
- Westminister City Council

Please let us know if you would like us to attend a meeting of your group!

# Environmental Evaluation Activities and Timeline

The following graphic illustrates the key activities for the Environmental Evaluation from now through early 2009:



## SERVICE BETWEEN BOULDER AND LONGMONT

Negotiations are ongoing between RTD and BNSF Railway to accommodate both peak hour service and mid-day service between Boulder and Longmont, as promised to the voters in 2004. RTD is exploring options to provide full-day service and still meet the operational needs of the railroad, which require freight and maintenance operations during the mid-day. As the negotiations progress, we will update you on the progress of the discussions to implement full-day service between Boulder and Longmont. RTD also continues to propose all-day commuter rail service between Denver and Boulder, with hourly off-peak service, including mid-day, and 30-minute peak service.

After the release of the Draft Environmental Evaluation, anticipated this fall, the project will hold Public Hearings to collect comments on the study, including the proposed mitigation measures. The project team will then incorporate feedback from the public workshops and develop the Final Environmental Evaluation for submittal to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the lead agency for the study, in early 2009. At that time, RTD will request a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers which would allow the project to move forward into final design.

The next major public involvement activity for the Environmental Evaluation will be in the summer of 2008, when the project conducts corridor-wide public workshops. This is when we will present the Preferred Alternative and provide detailed information about project impacts. In the meantime, please feel free to contact us with your thoughts, questions and ideas. We look forward to seeing you this summer!

## REFINED NORTHWEST RAIL STATION PLANS AVAILABLE SOON

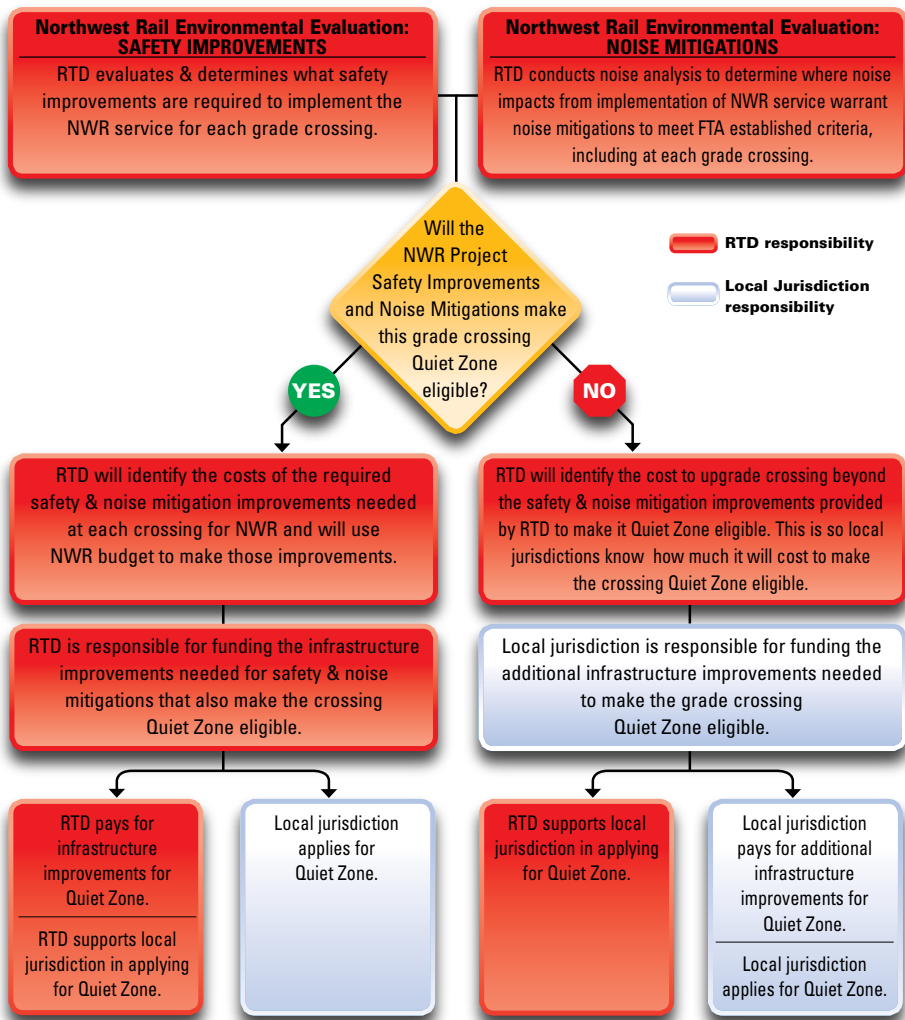
Since last fall, the project team has worked with representatives of the local communities to refine the station plans for the Northwest Rail Corridor. These plans were originally developed in the US 36 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the two Longmont Diagonal rail studies. They have been updated to reflect current community plans and the transit elements (platforms, parking, and access points) of the commuter rail stations.

The refined station plans will soon be available for public review. As the Environmental Evaluation moves forward, the study will examine the impacts associated with these station areas or "footprints." To view the station concept plans and provide feedback, please continue to check the Project Web site at [www.RTD-FasTracks.com](http://www.RTD-FasTracks.com). We are also happy to mail you copies of any of the station plans. Just let us know!

# FasTracks Begins Quiet Zone Implementation with Local Communities

In early March, the RTD FasTracks team met with representatives of the Northwest Rail communities to initiate the Quiet Zone implementation process. The Quiet Zone implementation process will occur over the next several years and will coincide with the planning, design, and construction of the corridor. If a Quiet Zone is approved for the Northwest Rail Corridor, the necessary infrastructure will be built in time for opening day.

This graphic illustrates the Quiet Zone decision-making process. It also describes the things that RTD and the local jurisdictions will do to implement Quiet Zones along the Northwest Rail Corridor.

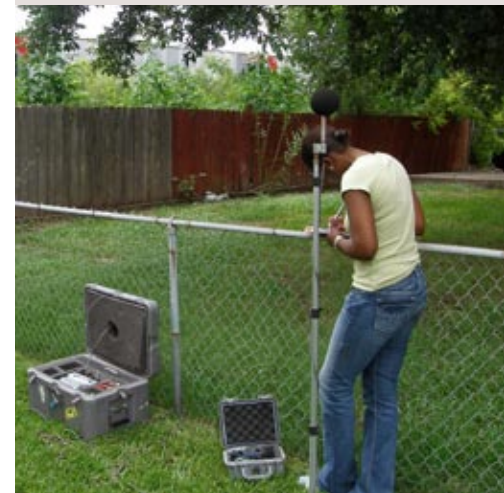


RTD has developed a Quiet Zone Work Plan to help the Northwest Rail Corridor communities and local governments in other FasTracks corridors establish Quiet Zones. The Quiet Zone Work Plan identifies the implementation steps for the Northwest Rail Corridor and a timeframe for them. It is available on the FasTracks Web site at [www.RTD-FasTracks.com](http://www.RTD-FasTracks.com). Click on “What’s New” on the bar at the top of the page and then click on “Quiet Zones” in the drop down menu. You can find the link to the work plan at the bottom of the Quiet Zones page.

## NOISE IMPACTS AND QUIET ZONE RESOURCE PACKET NOW AVAILABLE!

Do you have questions about how the Environmental Evaluation will measure noise impacts? Do you wonder what options are available to address them? Would you like to learn more about the Quiet Zone implementation process? If so, the Northwest Rail Noise Impacts and Quiet Zone Resource Packet is for you!

The resource packet includes answers to commonly asked questions about all aspects of noise impacts, analysis, and mitigation, including Quiet Zone implementation. Please go to the Northwest Rail Web site at [www.RTD-FasTracks.com](http://www.RTD-FasTracks.com) to view the packet or request one directly from the project team!



*Background noise analysis being performed in residential area.*

# HOW TO STAY INVOLVED!

As the Environmental Evaluation moves forward, your participation in the study continues to be invaluable. There are many avenues available to learn about and contribute to the project:

## **VISIT THE PROJECT WEB SITE**

Visit the RTD FasTracks Project Web site at [www.RTD-FasTracks.com](http://www.RTD-FasTracks.com) and click on the Northwest Rail button to:

- Learn about project issues and activities
- Subscribe to the mailing list
- Share your comments
- Ask questions

## **SUBMIT A COMMENT OR QUESTION**

In addition to the Project Web site, you can share your ideas and questions by phone, e-mail, or mail. Please refer to the contact information listed on this page.

## **ATTEND A PUBLIC WORKSHOP**

The project team will hold the next series of corridor-wide Public Workshops in the summer of 2008. If you are on our mailing list, you will receive a meeting announcement. The project team will also provide notification in local papers and post meeting details on the Project Web site.

## **REQUEST A MEETING**

If your organization would like to meet with members of the Northwest Rail Project Team to discuss specific issues or learn more about the project, please send an e-mail to the address below, make a request through the Web site, or call the number below.



## **CONTACT US**

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