

# Comments: Northwest Rail Governments Team

Commuter Rail Technology Selection  
Comments due Friday, September 28, 2007

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Commenting Agency: Councilwoman Judy Montero

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Comments
1. The Northwest Rail Project Team is making a preliminary recommendation to the public, agencies, and the RTD Board to initiate service for the Northwest Rail corridor in 2015 with <b>Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) Commuter Rail Technology.</b>
<b>a. Do you support this recommendation? If so, why?</b>
<b>b. Do you disagree with this recommendation? If so, why?</b>
I am opposed to DMU technology on the NW Rail Corridor for two reasons: It is clear that public sentiment is in favor of EMU and because all possible solutions have not been exhausted to impact the difference in cost between EMU and DMU.
<b>c. Other comments:</b>
I am concerned about the message this decision gives to the public who have been asked to participate and provide input in this public process. According to the project team the comments in favor of EMU outnumbered those in favor of DMU on every count: written, verbal, at meetings, in the media, on the web, subsequent to meetings, and so on. It is unconscionable to solicit this input and then ignore it.

2. After the three Public Workshops, Northwest Rail Governments Team representatives will meet to provide their input on the preliminary Project Team recommendation. This input and the input collected at the public workshops will then be forwarded to the RTD Board.

**a. Taking into account the FasTracks budget and the cost of implementing Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) technology on the Northwest Rail corridor, do you see any other options that RTD should consider?**

It currently appears that there are significant financial obstacles to overcome to achieve the build out of this corridor with electric vehicles. However, I am not convinced that every possible option has been explored to try to close the financial gap. I asked the project team to investigate the possibility of some type of dual-mode service that could be powered by electricity in Denver where the cost of electrification will already be spent for the Gold Line and run as diesel for the remainder of the corridor. I never received a response to this request. I also remain unconvinced that EMU is impossible based on the BNSF letter regarding the desired height of the catenary. It is unclear what types of alternatives RTD has examined to satisfy BNSF's demand rather than simply assuming the necessity of rebuilding bridges. More exploration of this issue should take place, for example by studying how other transit agencies have handled this issue nationally.

**b. If the RTD Board supports DMU as the recommended technology for the Northwest Rail corridor, what other issues specific to DMU technology should the Environmental Evaluation address?**

If DMU technology is adopted in this corridor the ability to utilize alternative fuels should be investigated. Additionally it is bad policy to make a decision for this corridor and not consider the impacts of the corridor in the commuter rail maintenance facility and Denver Union Station. I know that these two "hubs" are being studied under other environmental processes, however more information about these impacts should be considered in making this decision for the NW Rail corridor.

**c. Other comments:**

We as a region will only have one chance to build this corridor the right way, and the impacts of the choices we make today will continue well into the future. I understand the need to build this corridor on time and within the budget, but am not convinced that all options have been explored to date. I continue to oppose DMU vehicles for the northwest rail corridor.

3. For the remainder of the year, the Environmental Evaluation will be looking at stations and Commuter Rail track alignment for the Northwest Rail corridor. RTD will present the results of this analysis at Public Workshops in January 2008.

**a. What should the study consider as it examines these issues?**

It will be important to study the ability of the NW Rail corridor to make a stop at the already planned 38<sup>th</sup>/Inca station on the gold line – this shared station will provide better regional access to the system for riders.

**b. What other comments do you have about the Environmental Evaluation?**