

RTD FasTracks – Northwest Rail Gunbarrel Station Working Group

Date: Thursday, April 3, 2008, 5:30 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.
Location: Vinelife Church, 7845 Lookout Road, Gunbarrel

Meeting Goals

- **Update area residents and stakeholders on the status of the Gunbarrel Station since the completion of the Longmont Diagonal Rail Project.**
- **Present the evaluation results for the East and West Gunbarrel Station sites.**
- **Gather input on the Project Team’s preliminary recommendation to set aside the Gunbarrel East station site and carry forward the Gunbarrel West station site for further evaluation in the Northwest Rail Environmental Evaluation.**

Welcome, Introductions and Agenda Review

Chris Quinn, RTD FasTracks Northwest Rail Project Manager, greeted the audience and introduced the Northwest Rail Project Team members: Tim Baldwin, Lissa Myers, Nadine Lee, and Julie McKay.

Northwest Rail Presentation: Project Background, Current Activities, Schedule

Lissa Myers presented an overview of the Northwest Rail project. The overview included the project’s history and its evolution from the Longmont Diagonal Rail Project. Also presented, was a general description of Northwest Rail Environmental Evaluation events which have occurred and the projected timeline for planned activities, design and construction of the rail line.

Discussion

A general Northwest Rail project question and answer session followed the presentation where participants and RTD FasTracks engaged in a discussion about the broader aspects of the project. During that session the following topics were addressed:

- The maintenance/layover facility that is planned for the downtown Denver area
- What Quiet Zones are and the type of upgrades that could be required at intersections:
 - Federal Requirements for a Quiet Zone
 - Implementation Steps
 - A description of jurisdictional and RTD obligations
 - What a Quiet Zone upgrade involves: different at each intersection, features include warning devices, gates and medians
 - How a Quiet Zone operates
- Other noise mitigations (versus Quiet Zones which are just at intersections)
- Train Operations and Service
 - Frequency of trains: Every 30 minutes during peak hours, every 60 minutes during non-peak hours
 - Train speeds: Average Speed – 37-40 mph, Max Speed - 79 mph
 - Time of Service: 5:00 a.m. – 1:00 a.m. daily
 - Travel Time: Denver Union Station to Longmont – 61 minutes (2015)
- Interlocking at Denver Union Station: An operating agreement is being developed with railways.
- Shared tracks and stations with the RTD FasTracks Gold Line
- Track Alignment: Single versus double-track alignment from Boulder to Longmont.

- Maintaining and integrating the current BOLT bus service from Niwot
- Train Designs: Bike facilities on trains
- Concern for natural resource use

This summer, additional information will be available about train service, operations, track alignment, and noise impacts and mitigation strategies, including Quiet Zone implementation.

Northwest Rail Gunbarrel Station: History, Evaluation of Sites, and Project Team Recommendation

Lissa Myers reviewed the Gunbarrel Station history including results from previous studies and planning efforts. The Northwest Rail Environmental Evaluation has re-evaluated the Gunbarrel Station sites and the focus has been on a site on each the east and west sides of 63rd Street (Please see the Gunbarrel Station Working Group Presentation for more information). Both sites have been evaluated based on operations, community considerations, environmental impacts and financial factors. After evaluating these criteria, the Northwest Rail Project Team made the following recommendation:

Northwest Rail Project Team Recommendation

Based on the station evaluation, the Project Team recommends setting aside the Gunbarrel East station site and carrying forward the Gunbarrel West station site for further evaluation in the Northwest Rail Environmental Evaluation due to the following:

- **Fewer acquisitions and relocation impacts/costs**
- **Fewer environmental impacts**
- **Better roadway access**
- **Less potential for negative impacts to surrounding land uses**

Julie McKay confirmed by a show of hands that there is support for the Project Recommendation. There were no concerns expressed. One participant did state opposition if the station were to negatively impact local property values. Tim Baldwin explained that in numerous studies throughout the nation, property values have only increased when located near transit stations.

Discussion & Input Session

A discussion and input session took place where participants were asked the following questions:

- What questions do you have about the evaluation methodology and its results?
- Do you support the project recommendation? Why or why not?
- As the study moves forward, what impacts should we be particularly aware of for the Gunbarrel West station area?
- Do you have any other comments?

Comparison of Station Site Alternatives

- Support was noted for the Gunbarrel West station site based on fewer residential impacts.
- Who was involved in the analysis, ranking, and selection of criteria for the Gunbarrel Station Evaluation Matrix? How were the levels of impact (1,2,3) determined? (Please see Presentation)
- What is the difference in residential impacts and employment numbers between the east and west station sites?
- What did the comparison of sights signify about economic impacts and benefits?

Parking

- The lack of available parking along Spine Rd. is a concern and it is desired that when the station is built it will have adequate parking to minimize the impact upon local residents.
- What will the amount of parking be at the Gunbarrel Station site? How will this compare to the Table Mesa park-n-Ride?
- How does parking capacity relate to passengers per train?

Traffic & Circulation

- There is support for the Gunbarrel West station site based on better circulation.
- A resident that lives off of Spine Rd. stated that an increase in traffic on Spine Rd. would impact the locals, and asked how have traffic operations and circulation been addressed by RTD?

Access to the Station

- Support was expressed for improved local access to the station which would include pedestrian and bicycle access in addition to integrating local BOLT bus service operations with the station concept. How has RTD addressed this?
- Will there be shuttle services for local residents to access the station?

Transportation Oriented Development

- Support was expressed for transportation oriented development around the station and for the station concept to align itself with local Gunbarrel commercial development such as integrating with the Gunbarrel Commercial Center.
- Is it possible that the station expand its size from the original concept plans?

Rider Services

- Support was expressed for services at the station such as restrooms, retail, and bike facilities. What is RTD planning to provide for riders and what is the potential for additional services to develop?

Transit Ridership

- It was emphasized that the local BOLT bus service be maintained and streamlined to coincide with Northwest Rail operations.
- A Niwot resident stated that she would continue to use the BOLT bus service from Niwot to Boulder and plans to use Northwest Rail for longer trips. What has RTD learned about trip-patterns and where riders are expected to go from Gunbarrel?

Station Funding

- Have there been any funding issues regarding the Gunbarrel station?

The Northwest Rail Project Team has heard the support, desires, and concerns of the local residents as it moves forward to further evaluate the Gunbarrel West Station. The feedback received about the station concerning issues such as parking capacity and location, access to the station, traffic, and residential impacts will be considered in the upcoming impacts analysis for the study. The Project Team will also keep in mind the desires for services at the station, such as restrooms, retail, and bike facilities, and for maintaining the BOLT bus service.