

Guidelines for City of Boulder Participation in the Northwest Rail Environmental Evaluation

Approved by City Council on January 22, 2008

The Boulder City Council approves the following policy guidelines to inform and guide the city's participation in the Northwest Rail Environmental Evaluation. City Council's representative to this study is Council Member Suzy Ageton, with Council Member Matt Appelbaum as its alternate.

1. **U.S. 36 MCC** – The city should maintain and support the regional coalition embodied by the US 36 Mayors and Commissioners Coalition (MCC). The MCC has been an effective, collective voice advancing the interests of transportation solutions of the entire corridor. FasTracks plans and investments, the bikeway, the environmental studies, and fiscally constrained funding through DRCOG would not have occurred without the coordinated and strategic efforts of the MCC.
2. **Consistency with Established Plans, Codes, Regulations and Policies** – RTD should honor city direction established through existing master plans such as the Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan, Transportation Master Plan, the Gunbarrel Community Center Plan, adopted goals and policies of the Transit Village Area Plan, Council approved plans guiding the use and management of Open Space and Mountain Parks, and Council's overall Sustainability Goal including Social, Environmental and Economic sustainability. RTD shall also comply with all city regulations including, but not limited to, the city's wetlands protection ordinance, wildlife ordinance and floodplain development regulations.
3. **Commuter Rail and BRT**– The city supports commuter rail and recognizes its value for providing added transit connectivity to multiple origins and destinations along the existing BNSF rail alignment travel shed as well as its long-term potential to provide connectivity along the Front Range and across state lines. The city will encourage RTD to make the train service quick and convenient by minimizing travel times and offering frequent service. Express service between Boulder and Denver should be considered. The city will also ask RTD to implement commuter rail in a way that mitigates the community impacts such as noise, vibration, emissions, physical barriers to communities and others.

Along with support for commuter rail, the city will continue to equally support and value the final design and implementation of Bus Rapid Transit along the US 36 corridor. Boulder expects RTD to champion the final design, funding and full implementation of a signature BRT system.

4. **Quiet Zones** – The city strongly supports the Northwest Rail being built with the necessary infrastructure and circuitry so that quiet zones can be implemented for all

rail crossings in the Boulder area, at minimum, and preferably corridor-wide. Quiet zone improvements should be in place so that quiet zones can be established by the city of Boulder and other local governments before passenger service commences. RTD should accept full responsibility for noise and vibration impacts of the FasTracks services. Other sound mitigation strategies, such as noise walls should also be explored and fully vetted with the community.

5. **Fencing** – The city advocates ensuring that corridor fencing is minimized in order to reduce impacts to wildlife habitat, agricultural operations, other environmental concerns, multimodal connectivity and transit oriented development, maintenance issues, corridor costs, aesthetic value, and other important community values. In addition, any fencing should be sensitive to its surrounding context.

6. **Bus Service** – The city supports effective and well-connected local and regional bus service and insists that these services are not cannibalized by rail investments. This includes maintaining effective frequencies on the BOLT service from Longmont and on the DASH from Louisville. Maintain strong B and H service between Boulder and Denver as the BRT services are phased in, as these serve key activity centers such as downtown, CU, University Hill, *Twenty Ninth Street* and 30th and Pearl. Maintain AB airport service even after the BRT and commuter rail are operational. Increase local bus services, such as the HOP, BOUND, JUMP, 204 and DASH to provide seamless links with the regional rail and BRT services.

7. **Station Planning** – The city expects effective station planning, design and implementation. Strong multimodal connections and infrastructure should be included in all stations. The city also:
 - Expects the Diagonal station to be located in Gunbarrel Community Center Plan area. We also expect that a strong TOD station will be created there with quality multimodal connectivity.
 - Expects RTD to fully consider a range of options for the Transit Village station, including:
 - Exploring the pros and cons of adjusting the location of the Transit Village platform due to “runaround” track needs. This includes considering costs, connectivity to the rest of the site, the historic depot location, and the network plan approved for the Transit Village Area Plan, etc. This also includes ensuring that the Transit Village station is adequately funded when compared to other stations.
 - Considering a pedestrian underpass, rather than an overpass, at the Transit Village. Underpasses can be attractive and are more functional for bicyclists and pedestrians, as stairs or elevators can be minimized.
 - Clarifying and maximizing RTD’s investment for infrastructure improvements at the Transit Village, including a bridge over Goose Creek to provide necessary local transit service to the rail platform and to connect with the BRT service.
 - Having the 63rd & Arapahoe station location included in all planning, including obtaining “environmental clearance” for station construction.

The city will continue to explore funding options for the 63rd and Arapahoe station, but will carefully examine the trade-offs of constructing that station, which include slowing travel times and perhaps encouraging more driving on the one hand, while providing train service to east Boulder and relieving parking demands at the Transit Village and downtown Louisville on the other.

- Incorporating Boulder’s current and desired modal split into all of RTD’s planning, modeling and assumptions for parking demand, as well as access to stations and anticipated ridership.
8. **Technology** – The city supports ensuring that RTD honors its clean technology commitments as outlined in the RTD “*Responsible Rail Amendment*” as the purchase of Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) vehicles approaches.
 9. **Amenities** – The city supports options that will increase the attractiveness and functionality of travel by rail, including bike capacity on trains, real-time arrival information, wireless internet service on rail cars, beverage and food services, and other amenities as appropriate and available.