

Miscellaneous Comments & Responses

Background:

The comments included in this document were derived from several sources, including the Public Hearing for the New Mexico Rail Runner Express service extension to Santa Fe held on August 21, 2007 and two more public meetings held on October 23, 2007 and October 30, 2007 respectively. Some comments were also generated from emails or phone calls as a result of these meetings. Specific references to home addresses or names have been omitted from the comments for privacy reasons. For further information on project plans and updates please consult the New Mexico Rail Runner Express website at www.nmrailrunner.com

Miscellaneous Comments

1. Why is potable water being utilized on the construction project?

Potable water was being used for dust control early on the construction project. Working with the City of Santa Fe and Santa Fe County the contractor now has access to a sufficient amount of effluent for most water needs. Potable water is only being used in situations where no sources of effluent are available.

2. The project should be using parametric modeling to communicate information.

A wide variety of analytical frameworks have been utilized to analyze the extension of train service to Santa Fe, since work began on this piece in the Summer of 2004. While the comment does not include a definition or example of what is meant by “parametric modeling” if it includes the use or application of spatial, time sensitive, and behavior based data and information then there are several instances in which parametric modeling has been used to communicate information, ranging from the affected view shed analysis performed during the evaluation of alternatives to the assessment of potential markets associated with station locations.

3. Traffic and train operations analysis should have considered future year conditions.

The traffic analysis considered utilized existing and year 2030 traffic projections. The environmental assessment conducted for the project utilized 20 train movements a day as a maximum condition. Train movements that exceed this amount will require additional analysis and public comment.

4. As policy makers you should be ashamed of yourself. This is classic SF “nimby ya ya talk.” When you say that Miguel Chavez is from a district “not affected” it

is a perfect example of your ignorant attitude. This train effects every person in this town, positively quit listening to the complainers and do the right thing for the whole community.

Comment noted.

5. Why is the alignment being changed at Zia & St. Francis?

There are several reasons the alignment was shifted to the east near Zia and St. Francis. First it places the railroad tracks very near the intersection which provided an opportunity to interconnect the traffic signal with the rail crossing gates and arms. This will produce a more efficient and safe crossing since gates and signals will be coordinated with traffic signal phases. Second, the current alignment crosses Zia several hundred feet west of St. Francis and the traffic queue analysis indicated that traffic would back up over the tracks on a regular basis. Third, the realignment also realigns the rail trail, and allows users of the trail to cross Zia at St. Francis under traffic signal protection. Lastly, the land owner had rights to a total of three crossings over the existing alignment. Moving the alignment to the east eliminated a need for these crossings.

6. Please do not divide Santa Fe into those who have (the East side) and the other side of the tracks!!

Comment noted.

7. My family owns the property in front of the Depot on Guadalupe St. How will the station affect us? Traffic control, trash, trespassing, etc.

It depends. If the property is a business dependent on patrons, the service may provide new customers. In any case, patrons using the trains will be directed outward from the station across public property. Trash receptacles are provided on the trains and at stations. The Railyard has already been master planned and is under development. While some traffic may migrate toward this station it will be necessary via education, signage, etc. to direct train users to the South Capital Complex station for parking.

8. What is the honest and true final cost for this project, taking into consideration, especially safety on all major streets, i.e. Cerrillos and St. Francis?

While there are still a couple of capital items that remain to be bid, the total cost for the project is estimated at \$400 million. This includes all costs (track improvements, maintenance facility, cars and locomotives, station development, and track purchase) associated with implementing the first phase of the project between Belen and Bernalillo and all costs associated with the extension of service to Santa Fe (more cars and locomotives, stations, 18 miles of new track construction, 4 miles of track upgrades, railroad crossing improvements, and track purchase). In total this project will create about 100 miles of rail service.

The costs of this project will come in at about \$4 million a mile. The Utah Transit Authority is building a similar rail system in the Salt Lake City area (about 100 miles). The cost estimates for this project exceed \$1.4 billion.

9. I strongly support the Rail Runner and plan to use it a lot. Please allow for people to bring bicycles on board.

Bicycles are allowed on trains. Each car has an area to store and secure bikes.

10. I am opposed to a six-story building going up where the DOT building is located at the corner of Cerrillos and Cordova – that would be totally contrary to the spirit of Santa Fe.

A contract for the NMDOT redevelopment was put on hold and has now been cancelled. The redevelopment may be reconsidered at some future point in time accompanied by additional opportunities for public review and comment.

11. Please be open and public about your plans - all plans! (communicate via newspapers, etc.) Please coordinate stations with bike trails as part of overall transportation network. Thanks!

Comment noted. Please see www.nmrailrunner.com A great deal of detailed information about the project is located on this web site. Newspapers have been used to advertise meetings. Approximately 3 new miles of the rail trail will be funded and constructed as part of this project.

12. How long will the track builders work behind 3 houses to replace the old track with new track? What is the projected length of time to complete that work?
Bids have not yet been received on the construction of the portion of the line between I-25 and the Downtown Railyard. An award for this portion is anticipated at the end of December 2007, and construction is required to be substantially complete by November 21, 2008. A construction schedule which will show construction phasing is one of the required bid documents. Public meetings will be held on the construction schedule once this information is available. These meetings will provide an opportunity for people to get answers to specific questions like this one, and will also provide an opportunity for the NMDOT and MRCOG to identify any concerns with the construction schedule so that they can be addressed with the contractor.

13. I live in the Las Estancia neighborhood and often use the Rail Trail. How will I access the trail over the tunnel that is being constructed south of Rosemont?

Access to the trail will be provided at Rodeo Road. South of this point the trail will be constructed on the east side of tracks to Rabbit Road. North of this point the trail will be constructed on the west side of the tracks to Zia Road.

14. This is the first public meeting I have attended where proper written comment forms have not been provided. This is embarrassing for such an important project. I expected views of the route to be posted for all to see – why was this not done? All of these issues have been raised by others at the microphone.

The meeting on the 22nd was to provide an open forum for the expression of comments and concerns. As noted at the meeting the follow up meeting on the 30th was intended to provide responses to the concerns and comments expressed at the meeting on the 22nd and to provide more detail on project plans. We apologize for failing to communicate this more clearly.

15. Where is the plan to deal with traffic and growth. The City is already a mess.

The Santa Fe Metropolitan Planning Organization has a long range transportation plan for the Santa Fe metropolitan area. This plan is updated at least every four years. Plan updates provide a great opportunity for residents of the area to examine the implications of growth and planned transportation improvements. As noted in the General Comments on Traffic, there are some significant growth and transportation related challenges that face the region. The proposed rail service can serve an important role in addressing some of these challenges.

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16. I am going to avoid crossings by driving through neighborhoods so the City can spend another \$800,000 on speed humps.

Comment noted.

17. Will the train increase development in Rio Rancho?

Everything increases development in Rio Rancho. Including housing prices in Santa Fe.

18. Will there be a quiet Zone at Paseo De Peralta

Yes. Although this crossing is within the Downtown Railyard property boundary the NMDOT has committed the resources to establish a quiet zone at this crossing.

19. There should be a pedestrian/bike overpass at Zia and St. Francis.

Comment noted.

20. One of a very few real locals left. We want/need the train to/from ABQ/SF. Many locals have moved to Rio Rancho thanks to housing costs so this would really help them stay connected to Santa Fe.

Comment noted.

21. Please make this happen – safely of course; automobiles are not a sustainable answer to transportation. We need this Rail Runner as an alternate form of transportation.

Comment noted.

22. Count me a supporter! I live near Yucca and Rodeo Road and would like a station as close as possible, whether it be at Zia and St. Francis or even closer to me. Please design wisely and not around those who fear change and believe that the train is not a good idea! The train is a part of a future transportation network – let's make it work with the trails as well – please, please, please coordinate the design.

Comment noted.

23. I am very much in favor of connecting Santa Fe to Albuquerque by the Rail Runner. It will have a very positive effect on reducing traffic between Albuquerque and Santa Fe. Efforts should be made to reduce the impact on traffic within cities like Santa Fe's and also reduce the noise impact on local residents.

Comment noted. Please see General Comments on Noise and Traffic.

24. What's the hold up? The real locals want/need this going.

Comment noted.

25. In support of Rail Runner. Get it going.

Comment noted.

26. Bring the train, get it going.

Comment noted.

27. In support of Rail Runner. Get it going already!

Comment noted.

28. Enough talk. Get the Rail Runner train from SF to ABQ going already.
Yes!!!

Comment noted.

29. Rail Runner is a great project. If we want to preserve landscape we need to use cars less and public transit more. Thanks!

Comment noted.

30. Moving the track closer to St. Francis is a great idea. Thank you DOT for moving the track.

You're Welcome.

31. A toll gate should be put at St. Francis

This would certainly help with some of Santa Fe's traffic issues.

32. The function of the train as intercity service or intra-city service should be discussed in the context of the station issue.

The primary purpose of this project is to implement intercity train service. However, efforts have been made to address some of the regional intra-city markets. More of these types of markets can be captured with more stations, and local instead of express service, but the two types of service are not mutually exclusive.