



## CORRIDOR-WIDE MEETING SUMMARY

**Date/Time:** July 23, 2008/5:00 P.M.

**Location:** Montbello Recreation Center

**Attendees:**

Lu Graham	Adam Goldstein	Beverly Garcia	Mac Callison
Arditha Duke	Tom Gleason	Joseph Weilminster	Maxine Burry
Mark Burry	Sharon Faragalla	Steve Bretthauer	Mkale Williams
Chris Martinez	Anthony Gilliam	Rick McNeal	Marion Cones
Marty Busch	Diana Jordan	Jim Jordan	Michael Zapp
Bruce Bennion	Maria Elena Rivera	Fred LeBrun	Maxwell Stewart
Janice Indie	Vanita Warren	Bill Williamson	Anita Gomez
Frank Serafini	Kunal Mehra	Bernadette Ukolowice	Manny Perez
Tom Myers	Nadine Caldwell	Bob Hammond	Sharon Wilson
Russell Larson	Maria Vasquez	Elgin Bell	George Mills
Gene Hook	Susan Wilson	Robert Wilson	Dan Reimer
Gloria Spiller	Antoinette Hendricks	Karl Davis	Alejandra Gonzalez
Dick Havercamp	Lori Baker	Dean Bradley	Betty Wonder
Jim Hayes	Isabella Innis	Keith Williams	Quenton Sonnenfeld
Melissa Rosas	Jess Ortiz	Lalit Mehra	Jim Gruber
David Kline	Jeff Kay	Glenda Stephens	Taylor Merritt
Scott Hill	Joe Recosky	Norman Lane	Maria Tovar
Mark Jaeger	Ryan Fischer	Tad Addo	Jose Solano
Michael Hancock			

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The RTD East Corridor environmental impact statement (EIS) project team conducted corridor-wide meetings on July 23rd and 24th as part of the on-going community outreach process. These notes reflect the meeting held on July 23<sup>rd</sup>, meeting notes from the July 24<sup>th</sup> meeting are included in the July 24<sup>th</sup> Corridor-wide meeting notes. The primary purpose of the July corridor-wide meetings was to disseminate, discuss, and answer questions regarding the status update on the East Corridor since the last set of corridor-wide meetings back in July 2007. A PowerPoint presentation was conducted followed by a question and answer period. Comment sheets were also provided for the attendees in an effort to solicit additional comments on the project. The meeting included an open house and presentation. Topics are listed in the following sections.

#### 1. Project Schedule

The EIS schedule in conjunction with the public-private partnership (PPP) schedule was presented. The Draft EIS (DEIS) is anticipated to be released to the public in early 2009 with a 45-day public comment period. The Final EIS (FEIS) is anticipated to be released the summer of 2009. Construction is projected to begin in 2011 and opening day in 2015.

## **2. Project Update**

Since the last corridor-wide meetings held in July 2007, the Union Pacific (UP) has presented the Regional Transportation District (RTD) with a package of properties, including portions of the East Corridor alignment, that was more than the established budget. There was also substantial risk this cost would continue to escalate and that the schedule to relocate the freight yards to Fort Lupton would not be met. UPRR and RTD have been in negotiations and anticipate a signed agreement by the end of 2008 for limited pieces of UPRR right of way. Due to these issues, the project team has been evaluating refinements to the Preferred Alternative since February.

It was explained that several strategies were used to minimize property impacts in refining the Preferred Alternative. These strategies include negotiating individual segments of UPRR right of way, sharing right of way with the City and County of Denver and Aurora, building a barrier wall between freight and commuter rail where appropriate, and minimizing the width of the East Corridor through engineering design.

The five areas with the most change were identified, these areas include Denver Union Station (DUS) to the 40th/40th station, the 40th/40th station to the Colorado station, the Colorado station to Kearney Street, the Peoria station area, and the Denver International Airport (DIA) station area are not a result of the preferred alternative refinement or negotiations with the UPRR.

### **Area 1: DUS to 40th/40th**

In this action, the East Corridor alignment has been shifted south and east of UPRR right of way. This alignment would have potential impacts to the Rockies Stadium parking as well as properties north of 35<sup>th</sup> Street.

The 40th/40th station site options were presented, which are 33rd Street or 38th Street. This discussion included a summary of the 40th/40th neighborhood meeting held on June 12, 2008. The project team received strong support for the 38th Street option at the neighborhood meeting. Each of the station options were evaluated using the project team's standard station site criteria.

The pros and cons of the 38th Street option were presented. The 38th Street option has better connectivity between bus, commuter rail, and streetcar; and it meets the original intent of the Central Corridor Extension direct connection to the East Corridor along Downing Street. However, there are potential drainage issues associated with this station option, and it would have minor traffic impacts to nearby intersections.

Pros and cons of the 33rd Street option were also reviewed. This option could have potential leased parking from Coors Field, which may decrease right-of-way costs; has more convenient access to the Platte River Greenway; and has better pedestrian access. Conversely, this option would have moderate station impacts to Coors Field parking; has only one access point off Blake Street; the nearest east-west vehicular connection across the UPRR is at 38th Street (over ½ a mile north); and requires a modified Central Corridor Extension connection along 33rd Street.

### **Area 2: 40th/40th to Colorado**

The refinements to the alignment between 40th/40th and Colorado were presented. In order to minimize the amount of private property acquired, a combination of UPRR and City of Denver public right of way along 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue will be used. There will be a single at-grade crossing of a realigned York Street and Josephine Street intersection with 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The other alignments considered included a North alignment option and a Market Lead alignment option. The North alignment option was eliminated due to it requiring two new bridges to take the alignment over UPRR tracks and the reconstruction of the existing Colorado Boulevard bridge. The extra cost incurred by these bridges would make this option more expensive than the preferred alternative refinement. The Market Lead alignment option was eliminated because it would require a bridge over 40th Avenue, increased travel time, and would place trains closer to Bruce Randolph Middle School. The private property impacts were also substantially more than originally anticipated.

### **Area 3: Colorado to Kearney**

In this section, a combination of UPRR and Smith Road right of way will be used. The impacts generally stay within the existing Smith Road right of way except around intersections and at the station. Because the existing Smith Road can not be maintained with both the freight and commuter rail under Colorado Boulevard, a relocation of Smith Road is being proposed from 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Colorado Boulevard to the intersection of Dahlia Street and Smith Road along the edge of the Park Hill Golf Course.

### **Area 4: Peoria Station Area**

A summary of the Peoria Station neighborhood meeting that was held on February 27, 2008 was provided. There is strong public support for the Peoria West station option. The project team recommends the Peoria West station option. This option provides for a direct transfer with the I-225 light rail corridor and a relocated Smith Road.

### **Area 5: DIA Area**

The preferred alignment refinement for the DIA area was presented. The project team is working with the Federal Aviation Administration and DIA to minimize impacts to the runway protection zone. There are two options still being evaluated in this area.

### **Parking Refinements**

The refined parking recommendations were presented. These recommendations increased the total amount of parking spaces for 2030, but kept the opening day parking totals the same.

### **Ridership and Travel Time**

The project team presented the 2030 daily station activity for the preferred alignment refinement versus the preferred alternative from July 2007. The ridership totals decreased to 36,800 total daily boardings and the travel time increased to 31.5 minutes.

## **3. Next Steps**

The tentative schedule includes a DEIS by February 2009 with public hearings after the release; the FEIS by July 2009 with public hearings after the release, and a Record of Decision in October 2009.

## **II. SUMMARY OF COMMENT SHEETS**

The following section details the comments received to date from the comment sheets distributed at the meeting. These comments are recorded verbatim.

### **1. What comments do you have regarding the refinements to the East Corridor Preferred Alternative?**

- Adding a minute and a half seems unfortunate, especially if some further technology move at twice the current speed; the extra curves will be a serious bottleneck.
- They're fine. Sounds like the only viable options.
- Can you make East Corridor a through station at DUS so you don't need to change trains to get on the Gold Line?
- I don't like the Smith Road relocation and the loss of the Smith Road through fare. The "on grade" crossing of Peoria Street (east side to west side) at 25th Avenue will cause traffic problems on Peoria that already has big problems. This is a major access road for Aurora to I-70. It needs to be improved, not chopped up.
- Why can't RTD align the train from DIA through the new Stapleton development down Martin Luther King Boulevard, pick up 30th Street station? United/Frontier air travel in general could decline and the train would run empty.
- I don't have an alternative, but I wish we think big and really made taking the bus and train appealing enough to get people completely out of their cars.
- Looks like some good changes.
- I enjoy coming to these meetings because they give you good information and also keep you up to date.

### **2. What comments do you have regarding the two station location options for the 40<sup>th</sup>/40<sup>th</sup> station?**

- 38<sup>th</sup> seems to make more sense.
- Again, the train runs most of the time down streets of manufacturing not populated with people. You run the train where it is easy to put it, but does not make it people-friendly.
- Undecided.

### **3. Any other comments or questions?**

- Obviously concerned about private property impact, specifically for property owned south of the proposed parking area for the Peoria station. This property is held as an investment property and impact to the property ability to send to commercial tenants is a major concern. The proposed expansion of 33<sup>rd</sup> Avenue at the Peoria station will result in encroachment onto this property. The shifting of Smith Road will result in a large amount of traffic being funneled onto 33<sup>rd</sup> to Peoria. Frequency of trains traveling on the I-225 corridor will result in a large bottleneck at 33<sup>rd</sup> and Peoria. Funneling 1,900 cars (from 2030 build-out plan at Peoria station) will only further exasperate the problem.
- Why can't you provide handout sheets of your PowerPoint program as take home material? I asked for this before and the "team" was receptive to this request and

still it doesn't happen. This would allow people to share the material with others who can't attend the meetings.

- What about new cost projections!?! Who will pay the additional money!?!?
- This is the second time that the people were lead down this lane and we in the west and north and northeast have gotten nothing but we pay the taxes. No more for me.
- Thank you for working with this community and having our involvement.
- My question was answered; How would neighborhoods get access to the Draft and Final of the EIS documents?
- Interest is in station at 64th and Peña. Is the EIS completed for 64th/ Peña? North or south of 64th? Cost of station at 64th/ Peña? How much parking required at 64th/Peña?

### III. SUMMARY OF COMMENT CARDS

The following section provides a summary of the comments received from the public during the course of the meeting. Public comments were recorded by project team members, then posted on a comment card board for the public to review and add on to.

- A station at York/40th would provide access to more people.
- Find the money to get rid of UP.
- Wall will reflect noise.
- Why is there not a station at York/40th?
- Why not have the train go from DIA to the Stapleton Development then to Denver? United and Frontier no longer have a hub here.
- Would like to see a 64<sup>th</sup>/Peña station.
- Is a cost required for the potential parking location at the stations?
- What times will the commuter rail be operating?
- Need to consider a quiet zone at 40<sup>th</sup>/48th. Can hear the trains along Smith Road as far out as Tower Road at night (from Green Valley Ranch).
- In favor of a 40th/Airport station.
- Concerned with Chambers not be grade-separated.
- Concerned with noise at 48th and traffic disruption/flow on 48th.
- What does this do to property value?
- Won't have train running.

### IV. SUMMARY OF QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Following the PowerPoint presentation, the meeting was opened up to a question/answer period. Below is a summary of the public's questions/concerns followed by the responses provided by members of the project team.

1. How have UPRR issues affected the Smith Road/Peoria Street stop? What is to say it won't be moved?

*Answer: That area is not as reliant upon UPRR property so we do not anticipate changes in this area due to UPRR right of way negotiations.*

2. The plan sounds good, but it doesn't seem to be geared towards getting people out of their cars; how will you cater to people to get them out of their cars and start using public transportation?

*Answer: While the commuter rail stations will be within walking distances of many corridor residents, RTD will also be reconfiguring the bus network to better serve the new stations and provide better access for patrons to the entire transit system.*

3. What about Martin Luther King Boulevard?

*Answer: We did look at Martin Luther King Boulevard as well as Bruce Randolph, but these would add a substantial amount of travel time, there were impacts to neighborhoods, and there was strong public opposition. Also, the technology must be Federal Railroad Administration-compliant to be in the UPRR right of way east of Quebec Street, and light rail transit does not meet those requirements.*

4. Is there any opportunity to go underground for this corridor?

*Answer: There are numerous challenges to going underground and it doesn't make sense for this corridor.*

5. How will neighborhoods have access to the DEIS or EIS?

*Answer: When the document is available, there will be notifications sent through emails, advertisement notifications in the newspaper, and notifications to everyone on the mailing list. The public will be able to access the document through the website, at city buildings, libraries, and the RTD office.*

6. Not everyone can come to these meetings; the community is much bigger than the turn out at these meetings.

7. Who do you expect to ride the train; citizens or people coming in from DIA?

8. Would like everyone to consider having the trains running 24/7.

9. To clarify, you are proposing commuter rail, not light rail?

*Answer: Yes, it is electric commuter rail.*

10. If you are connecting from another corridor, the I-225 Corridor for example, will you have to change trains?

*Answer: Yes.*

11. Will changing trains deter riders?

*Answer: We don't believe this will deter riders, and the schedule will be to have the trains there at the same time if possible, to make transfers as quick as possible.*

12. Would like you to keep growth in mind for this project. Denver is a growing city and want to make sure you can grow bigger and better things.

13. What is the cost of the new changes?

*Answer: We are currently finalizing the numbers, which will be presented to the RTD Board at their meeting on August 12.*

14. Are you not getting federal funding for the corridor?

*Answer: The East Corridor is getting federal funding.*