

## **Gold Line EIS Contact Report**

**Date of contact:** January 25, 2007  
**Contact method:** 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue West Issue Focused Team Meeting  
**Attendees:** **Issue Focused Team Members:** Barry Allen, Benjamin Allen, Debra Barringer, Paul Bedrosian, Matt Chiodini, Noel Copeland, Tony Curcio, Michelle Elsasser, Jeff Fielder, John Haney, Mark Herzberg, Bill Johnston, Mark Kellett, Steve Kinney, Susan Law, Daniel LeMier, Ed Mickens, Bill Rickman, Kate Rose, Katherine Scott, Teva Sienicki, Tom and Rachel Simmons, Kim Yuskis, Kurtis Zak, David and Annie Zook

**LGT Members/City Staff/Elected Officials:** David Ruchman, Crissy Fanganello, Larry Shulz and Sally Payne

**Project Team:** Liz Telford, Don Ulrich, Jonathan Spencer, Andy Mountain, Megan Lane, Jeremy Klop, Chris Vogelsang, Angela Brand

### **MEETING SUMMARY/KEY ISSUES**

After introductions, Crissy Fanganello from the City and County of Denver delivered a presentation on Main Street zoning and their station area planning. This was followed by a presentation by Chris Vogelsang on the findings from a parking study on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Jeremy Klop then presented findings from VISSIM 2030 traffic analysis for 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue. Jonathan Spencer then provided a detailed description of the alignments in the 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue area west of Federal for each alternative. As the alternatives were reviewed, Issue Focused Team members were engaged in discussion about impacts, parking, traffic and potential ways to improve travel times. The team members provided specific input and recommendations on the 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue alignments.

### **SPECIFIC TEAM INPUT:**

#### **Mixed-Flow and Travel Time**

Many felt that, in comparison to the railroad alignment, that alternate alignments are “destined for failure” if they operate mixed flow. The general consensus among the group is that if the alternate alignments are to succeed, they would need to have better travel time and reliability, which may require an exclusive right of way. Several suggestions were made to help improve the performance of the alternate alignments:



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- Some support for taking traffic travel lanes on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, although there was also concern that narrowing to one lane each direction will hurt small businesses by disallowing left turn access.
- One center track could be dedicated ROW with a two additional tracks operating in mixed flow conditions. The exclusive right of way could be used during rush hour (east bound in the morning, west bound in the evening).
- Single track (exclusive ROW) with passing at optimal locations on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Considering some property acquisition at pinch points
- Putting the tracks side by side on one side of 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, and putting both traffic lanes on the other side of the tracks.
- Taking the parking lanes on 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue, since the numbers indicate that it is underutilized. There was some concern about the impact of removing parking on residents and businesses because, while much of the parking is not utilized, what is appears to be used by residents.

### **Transit Technology**

Although the majority of the group preferred streetcar, the support was mixed, and some indicated a preference for light rail. Specific comments included:

- Most important thing is to choose a transit mode that will create a vibrant neighborhood.
- Streetcar offers more flexibility, less impact and could help make 38<sup>th</sup> the hub of the community. Scale and versatility of streetcar is appealing
- One possible benefit with streetcar is the possibility of more stops.
- Adding a new mode (streetcar) to the FasTracks system via streetcar raises a red flag with some. The system should be consistent in terms of transit technology.
- If a streetcar doesn't perform better than a bus, then it doesn't make sense for the Gold Line.

### **Other Individual Comments**

- It's very important to know the parking needs at stations beforehand and to provide enough spaces.
- Make sure to know all the negatives and the potential impact going in and prior to making decisions.
- New streetscape needs to be considered at the same time that transit planning is taking place.
- There are some doubts about the DRCOG model for projecting traffic and that congestion will really increase as much as the projections indicate.
- If the streetcar alternative remains under consideration, many in the group encouraged RTD to determine how many additional stations could be added (more than the currently



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proposed 7 but less than the 18 that caused too significant a drop in ridership) to maximize local access without sacrificing travel time and overall ridership.

- Look at Lakeside as a possible area for parking. Could help boost ridership and take cars off of I-70.

### **Additional Individual Recommendations Submitted After the Work Session**

#### *1. From Kim Yuskis:*

*I most definitely had the impression that almost everyone in attendance at the focus meetings was in favor of having the Gold Line go though North Denver on 38th Street. Frankly I was pleasantly surprised by this fact. Obviously there was no show of hands but there was no one advocating heavily for the existing rail option. There were a couple of squeaky wheel types who had concerns about dedicated lanes, but I don't think even they would want to lose the opportunity of having clean and efficient transportation accessible to our neighborhood.*

*I disagree strongly with the following statement. How does one measure some, the majority, many, etc. Is it the single voice that gets captured?*

*Many felt that, in comparison to the railroad alignment, that alternate alignments are "destined for failure" if they operate mixed flow. The general consensus among the group is that if the alternate alignments are to succeed, they would need to have better travel time and reliability, which may require an exclusive right of way. Several suggestions were made to help improve the performance of the alternate alignments:*

*No one talked about the reduction of fossil fuel burning and pollution reduction that would result from reducing buses and autos traveling through our neighborhood. I truly don't believe that the majority of the focus group or North Denver citizens want to miss the opportunity of the Gold Line. I think we all want what is best for our community and mixed flow streetcars would be better than leaving us with the rail to the North that would serve the very few willing to back track North and East to make use of it.*

#### *2. From Debra Barringer:*

*You asked for our top priorities at this point in the decision process. These are mine:*

- 1. I would only find useful one of the 3 routes that utilize 38<sup>th</sup> street. If I have to drive or even bus up to the UP/BN ROW to a train, I would likely not use it.*
- 2. I am of the mind that we can spare one or even two car lanes on 38<sup>th</sup> for dedicated mass transit. People have to get used to the reduction in individual car travel on some routes sooner rather than later. Please do the dedicated lane studies, people seem to not be aware how well it works downtown.*



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3. *Because of negative bus experiences, shortest travel times are of greatest importance to work commuters like me. I find it difficult to believe that your projections show the streetcar only 7 minutes slower than light rail. I trust the dedicated lane studies will show different results.*
4. *People's misconceptions that the streetcar better fits "quality of life" in our neighborhood than the light rail or that it is somehow safer. Having seen the crowded conditions of local buses, I am concerned about reduced capacity and increased travel times with streetcars.*

*I agree with the consensus at the last Team meeting that the parking lanes on 38<sup>th</sup> have to go. I also liked the discussion of making Lakeside Mall a transit center. Don't know the availability but I would prefer Highlands Garden Village, perhaps by the new Sunflower Market (38<sup>th</sup> and Wolff or Vrain), as a potential station as well.*

## **ACTION ITEMS**

- Team is interested in seeing numbers for ridership, travel times and traffic impacts for the alternate alignments operating in an exclusive right of way.