



# Meeting Summary

## Gold Line Local Governments Team

Tuesday, July 29, 2008

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

Wheat Ridge Recreation Center – Carnation Room  
4005 Kipling St., Wheat Ridge, CO

### Meeting Goals and Agenda

The meeting goals were to:

- Provide a preview of the DEIS Public Hearing presentation
- Discuss questions about the role/expectations of local governments in the DEIS review/comment process

The meeting agenda included a presentation summarizing the results of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. The presentation also discussed the DEIS comment process, including the opportunities for the public and the local governments to submit DEIS comments. After conducting Q&A, the project team concluded by providing an update on the FasTracks program and the next steps/upcoming meetings for the Gold Line.

### Meeting Handouts

- Meeting Agenda
- Gold Line Draft Environmental Impact Statement Fact Sheet
- Gold Line Frequently Asked Questions
- Noise and the Gold Line: Frequently Asked Questions

### Preliminary Items

Liz Telford, RTD Project Manager, welcomed the participants and stated that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement had been released on July 18 and that the comment period would continue through September 2, 2008. Andy Mountain, Public Involvement consultant, then overviewed the meeting's agenda and goals and had the attendees introduce themselves. He mentioned that one of the purposes of the LGT meeting was to preview the presentation that would be delivered at the public hearings on August 6 and 7.

### PowerPoint Presentation

Don Ulrich, consultant Project Manager, conducted the presentation and asked that the LGT give their feedback on the slides. Don's presentation overviewed the purpose of a DEIS, the

purpose and need of the Gold Line, the alternatives considered, and some of the impacts and mitigation measures of the Preferred Alternative, including impacts to the environment and transportation systems in the corridor.

- Regarding the slide on travel time, Bob Manwaring, City of Arvada asked if the numbers referred to peak hours during 2030. Liz Telford confirmed that they were.

Andy then presented the public involvement process and next steps for the project. He summarized some of the public involvement efforts that had been conducted to date and mentioned the upcoming milestones, including the end of the comment period, the station design workshops and the publication of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Regarding the public hearings, Andy mentioned that there will be two separate rooms at the meetings – one for the presentation and submitting comments and one for reviewing the document. Andy mentioned that unlike previous public meetings, the project team won't be answering questions at the meeting, since the purpose of the hearing is to gather verbal comments. He also clarified that each verbal commenter will have a three-minute time limit for verbal comments, but the written/electronic comments could be as long as individuals wished to submit.

The following items were discussed following the presentation:

- Kevin Nichols, City of Arvada asked when the visual impacts of things such as fences, retaining walls and catenary would be determined. Liz Telford responded that the team will start to define those elements at the fall station charettes by determining what is within RTD's cost estimates and what would work from a safety and aesthetic perspective. Liz stated that RTD will then work with local governments to determine what type of fencing will work with local land use plans and what the extra costs may be for fencing that is beyond RTD's budget.
- Bob Manwaring stated that he liked the presentation and found it informative. He then mentioned that he had seen several articles in the paper about FasTracks' funding issues. Bob asked for a status update on funding and how the team plans to respond to those questions from the public. Liz Telford replied that the team won't be able to do Q&A during the public hearings, but that they will direct people with questions to document review room.
- David Heller, DRCOG, inquired about the main differences between the DEIS and FEIS. Liz Telford responded that RTD will respond to all DEIS comments and make the final decisions regarding issues such as station locations in the FEIS. Liz also said that RTD will have completed additional engineering and will have further refined their mitigation measures in the FEIS.

- Director David Ruchman had the following comments on the presentation:
  - He asked if it would be possible to have the property acquisition handout available at the hearings. He also suggested that Don and Andy be very clear in presentation about how many properties will likely need to be acquired.
  - Director Ruchman stated that many people still ask about streetcar on 38<sup>th</sup> and asked the project team to specifically state that this alternative is no longer on the table.
  - Regarding budget, Director Ruchman said that it's important to mention that RTD is still on budget when it comes to the scope of the EIS for the Gold Line.
  - Regarding construction impacts, Director Ruchman asked that the project team mention in their narrative that RTD has learned from the other corridors and that those insights will be applied to Gold line to minimize impacts as much as possible. He asked that the presentation emphasize how RTD will be extremely sensitive to residents and businesses. Liz Telford agreed and added that one of the Gold Line's mitigation measures is a construction management plan, which is detailed in the DEIS.
  - Regarding crime, Director Ruchman asked that the presentation stress that there has been no evidence of a correlation between rail and crime.
  - Director Ruchman also asked that the FAQ on Public Private Partnerships be made available at the hearings.
  - Andy Mountain responded that all the documents mentioned will be available in the document review room at the public hearings. Don Ulrich added that the Gold Line isn't projected to acquire any residential properties and that he would mention that fact in the presentation.
  
- Bob Manwaring asked that the project team mention how business access will be affected by construction – particularly in Olde Town – since it is a concern of the community. Liz Telford responded that they would mention it in the presentation and added that the DEIS contains a list of businesses that may have restricted access during construction.
  
- Will Kerns, Jefferson County, asked how RTD plans to mitigate the hazardous sites mentioned in the presentation. He asked where the 18 sites were located and questioned whether the presentation should provide more detail on this issue. Don Ulrich responded that the sites mentioned are the places legally considered to be contaminated for various reasons, and that as a result RTD is required to excavate them and clean them up during construction. Don added that the hazardous sites of the Gold Line have that designation as a result of surface contaminations that are typically found along an active railroad corridor. Dave Ruchman asked that the project team clarify in the presentation that there aren't any public health hazards associated with these sites. Don agreed and added that these hazardous sites will be even cleaner than they are today after the construction of the Gold Line.
  
- Crissy Fanganello, City of Denver, asked how the project team plans to handle people who have non-Gold Line questions at the public hearings. Andy Mountain

- responded that they will be directed to the document review room ,where members of the project team can assist them with their questions.
- Andy Mountain then described the concept of the document review room in greater detail. He stated that there will be project staff available to help guide people to particular sections of interest within the DEIS. He said that there will be several informational display boards available to help people better understand the project, as well as handouts on property acquisitions, noise, public private partnerships and other topics. Finally, Andy mentioned that there will be a high-resolution PDF map of the alignment projected onto a screen, allowing the public to see close-ups of the project. Andy added that members of the public can enter this room before or after presentation.
  - Director Ruchman asked for clarification as to why preferred locations have not yet been selected for the Pecos and 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue stations.
    - Regarding the 38<sup>th</sup> station, Liz Telford responded that RTD had to evaluate station options serving the East Direct alignment and the railroad alignment. Liz said there are now three options for the 38<sup>th</sup> station, including options at 38<sup>th</sup>, 39<sup>th</sup> and 41<sup>st</sup>. Liz added that all of the options would provide a pedestrian bridge so that people wouldn't have to go down to 38<sup>th</sup> to access the station.
    - Regarding Pecos, Liz said that Adams County has been trying to secure funds for a grade separation to avoid the frequent delays caused by railroad trains blocking the road. Liz said that the Pecos West option was developed as a back-up option in case Adams County cannot secure the funds for the grade separation, but that the Pecos East option is preferred. Jeanne Shreve stated that the projected cost of the grade separation is \$30-40 million and that the county has already identified about \$25 million. Jeanne said that Adams County is still looking for other avenues to secure funding because they are committed to this project. Jeanne also mentioned that the East option is preferred because it allows for access directly off the highway and provides the potential for a transfer to the Northwest Rail corridor, which could help to draw commuters.
    - Liz added that the project team hopes to be able to pick preferred options for both stations in the Final EIS.
  - Director Ruchman stated that there was a lot of animosity on the West corridor about the expectations set at the station charettes. He asked that the Gold Line Team ensure that the feedback coming out of the station charettes is carefully documented so that subsequent teams can easily integrate the community's input. Director Ruchman then asked for an update about where negotiations stand with the railroads. Liz responded that RTD continues to meet with them and that negotiations are progressing. She said that there are still some unresolved issues, such as their negotiations with the UP regarding how to get over the jersey cut-off and the amount of required right of way.

- Patty Lorence, City of Arvada, said that many opponents in Arvada claim that the Gold Line won't cause a significant reduction in vehicle miles travelled. Liz said that the estimated reduction in vehicle miles travelled for the Preferred Alternative is for the corridor as a whole and is considered a very conservative number, since the assumptions in the model won't allow for escalating diesel prices. Don added that even small decrease can still make a significant impact during the peak hours since that's when the most vehicles will be taken off the road.

Liz Telford then gave an overview of the current FasTracks budget situation. She stated that RTD does an Annual Program Evaluation every year, which looks at three potential budget scenarios - best case, worse case and middle of the road. Liz said that RTD won't have their detailed budget discussions until late summer and will begin making some decisions in the fall. Liz added that the Gold line is one of the Penta-P projects, so it has ties to federal money.

- Shelley Cook, City of Arvada, asked whether RTD is still looking at everything on a corridor by corridor basis when it comes to budget cuts, to which Liz Telford replied yes.
- Bob Manwaring stated that he thinks people need to hear that each corridor will remain "intact" within its scope.
- Kevin Nichols asked whether the budget issue will affect the Quiet Zone designation. He requested that this issue be addressed at public hearings. Liz Telford said that Quiet Zones are likely to be the most cost effective way to mitigate noise in the corridor. She mentioned that RTD will have a back-up mitigation plan outlined in the FEIS in case Quiet Zones aren't implemented.
- Sally Payne, City of Wheat Ridge, asked if the station charettes will be similar to the previous Issue Focused Teams and inquired as to what would be evaluated in the meetings. Andy Mountain replied that RTD is working with a consultant to develop design concepts to review with the public and that layout and access will also be discussed in the meetings. He added that the local municipalities will be working closely with RTD throughout the station charette process. Director Ruchman encouraged the team to also address park'n'Rides at the charettes.
- Bob Manwaring asked how the local municipalities will be involved in the Penta P process. Director Ruchman responded that the RTD board is going through the process very carefully and that RTD has hired someone with extensive experience on public private partnerships. He added that there will be several briefings and opportunities for input throughout the process, but that the board is far from making decisions about what to include in the RFQ. Andy Mountain added that FasTracks will also be conducting a survey of local governments to gather input on what should go into the Penta P process.

After asking if there were any further questions, Andy adjourned the meeting.

**MEETING PARTICIPANTS**

1. Jeanne Shreve Adams County
2. Kevin Nichols City of Arvada
3. Bob Manwaring City of Arvada
4. Shelley Cook City of Arvada
5. Bob Kochevar City and County of Denver
6. Tom Hoaglund City and County of Denver
7. Crissy Fanganello City and County of Denver
8. David Heller DRCOG
9. Will Kerns Jefferson County
10. Steve Nguyen City of Wheat Ridge
11. Sally Payne City of Wheat Ridge
12. David Ruchman RTD Board
13. Liz Telford RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
14. Don Ulrich RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
15. Jonathan Spencer RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
16. Chris Proud RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
17. Angela Brand RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
18. Ashland Vaughn RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
19. Andy Mountain RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
20. Megan Lane RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
21. Terry Ruitter RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
22. Kevin Flynn Rocky Mountain News