



6.0 Public Comment and Agency Coordination

The Public Involvement Program was developed and implemented to receive public and agency input on the Gold Line alternatives screening process (including Public Scoping, Alternatives Evaluation, and the Selection of the Preferred Alternative), the DEIS evaluation and selection of the Preferred Alternative, and the refinement of the Preferred Alternative during the FEIS. The Public Involvement Program was developed to fulfill several requirements to inform the public regarding implementing federal actions.¹

Specifically, the objectives of the Public Involvement Program have been to:

- Keep the public and agencies informed throughout the planning process with respect to the community, environmental, and technical justifications for screening alternatives.
- Provide for public and agency stakeholder participation in the decisions at each project milestone.
- Assure that minority and low-income persons were provided the same level of input as the population at large for participating in the Gold Line decision process.
- Keep the public informed throughout the DEIS and FEIS processes with respect to the community, environmental and technical impact evaluation, and proposed mitigations.

CRMF

The public involvement process for the CRMF started in 2004 during the US 36 DEIS and continued as part of the East Corridor DEIS from late 2004 through 2006. During these two studies, a total of 9 public meetings were held. Planning for the CRMF continued in 2008 with an additional 6 public meetings. During the SEA that supports this FEIS, two additional public meetings were held on January 22, 2009 and April 23, 2009 to gather comments.

6.1 Elements of the Public Involvement Program

Public involvement for the Gold Line project blends ongoing engagement strategies with intensified outreach organized around key SAFETEA-LU decision-making milestones: Scoping, Development of the Purpose and Need, Preliminary Evaluation of Alternatives, Detailed Screening of Alternatives, and the Selection of the Preferred Alternative. The public involvement effort will continue throughout the preparation and finalization of the FEIS and Decision Document.

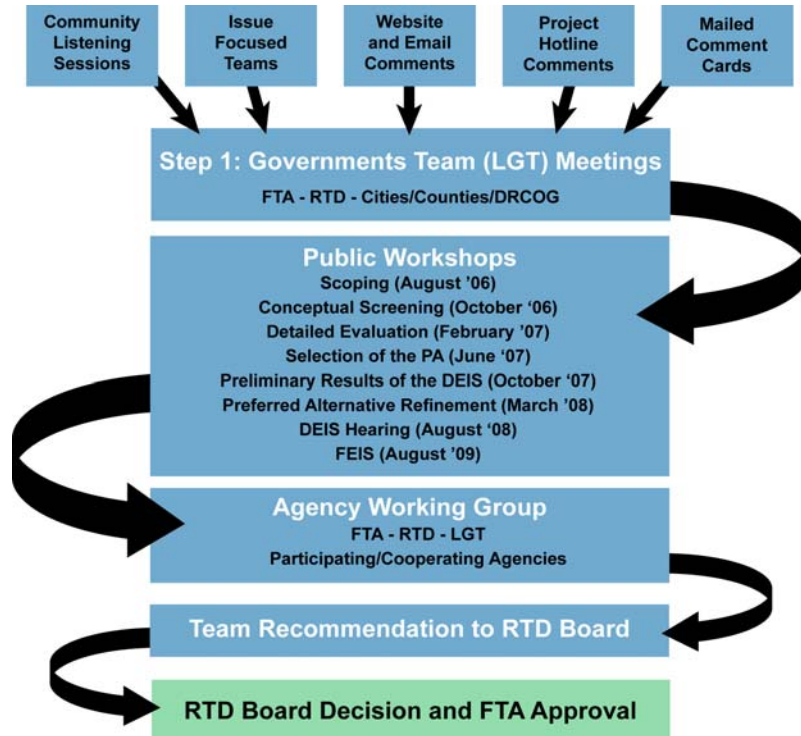
¹ SAFETEA-LU and NEPA (40 CFR 1501.7 Scoping; 40 CFR 1501.6 Public Involvement; 23 CFR 771.111 Early Coordination and Public Involvement).

The ultimate decision-makers for the Gold Line project are RTD and FTA. Figure 6-1 shows the overall input and decision-making process utilized at every key decision milestone.

Under this process, all project information is presented first to the LGT for information, then to the public through the public workshops and finally to the combined LGT and AWG at agency milestone meetings.

Figure 6-2 presents the timing of the public workshops. Per SAFETEA-LU guidance, each milestone included public workshops to gather public input that was presented to the AWG prior to proceeding with the subsequent step.

FIGURE 6-1 Preferred Alternative Decision Process



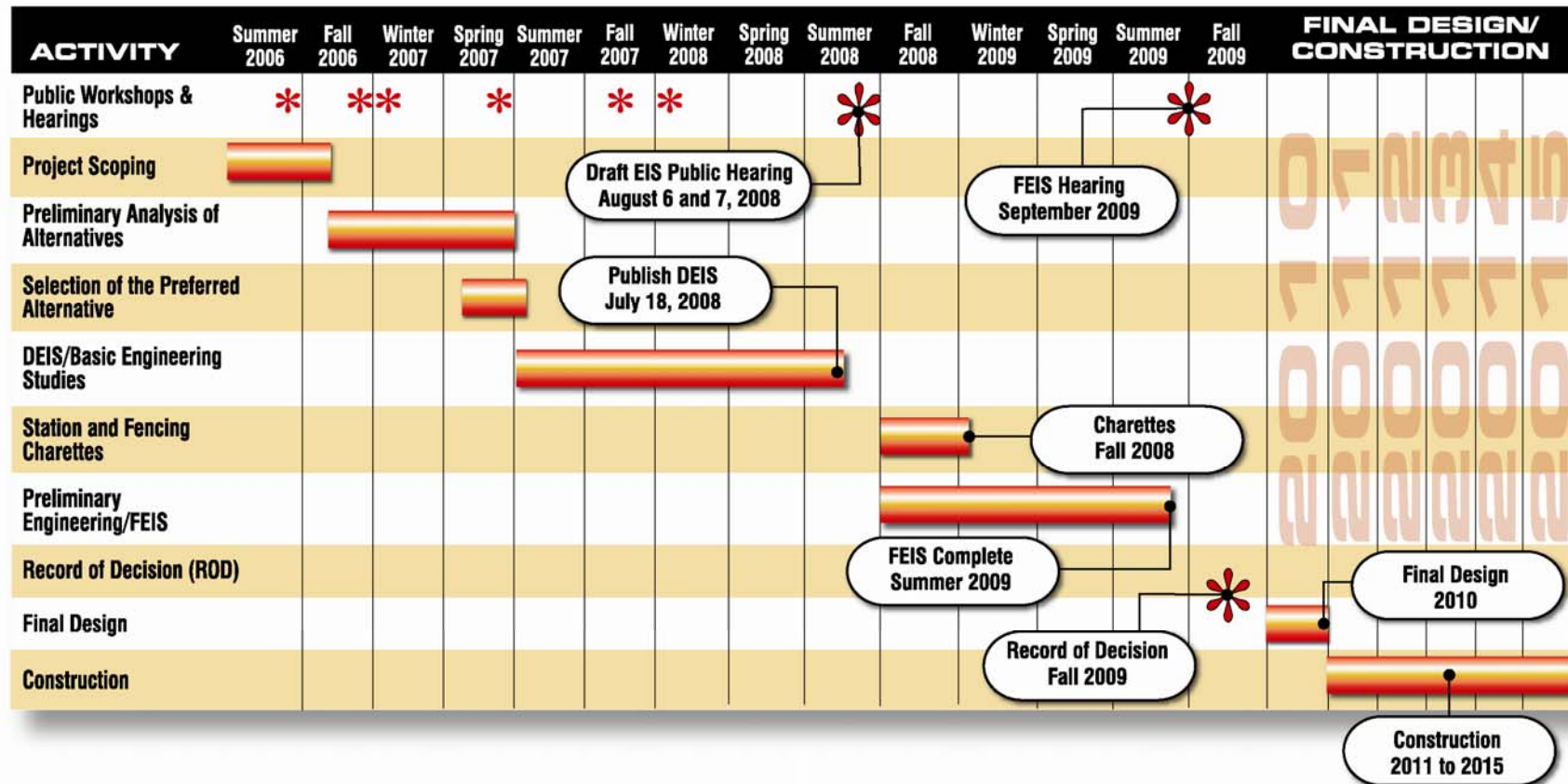
Source: Gold Line Team, 2007

Complying with SAFETEA-LU, a Corridor Coordination Plan (Appendix E, Gold Line Corridor Coordination Plan) was developed. Additionally, a Public Involvement Plan was developed. These two plans worked together to direct the approach to effectively engage all stakeholders in the community in the DEIS and FEIS processes.

The Corridor Coordination Plan established clear expectations for the role of local governments, agencies, and the public in decision making. It also identified the Gold Line Cooperating and Participating Agencies and their responsibilities. Furthermore, it set forth a format and schedule for coordination, and described procedures that support timely input at decision milestones and collaborative problem solving where appropriate. The Corridor Coordination Plan identifies the responsibilities of its members as well as the groups organizing principles and the structure of its coordination.

The Public Involvement Plan established a process for linking public involvement to the decision process, defined public involvement team structure, identified roles and responsibilities, and established the process for sharing project information and input gathering strategies.

FIGURE 6-2
Public Workshops Timing



Source: Gold Line Team, 2007

6.1.1 Public Involvement Organization

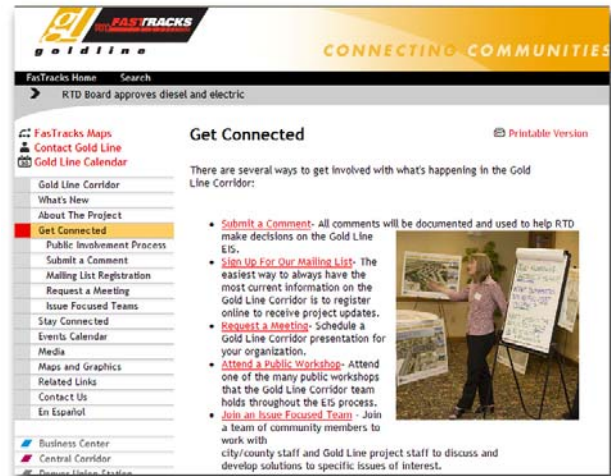
As outlined in the Corridor Coordination Plan and agreed to by all participating and cooperating agencies, the public involvement for the Gold Line project was organized in the following manner.

Local Governments Team (LGT). The LGT is comprised of elected officials and staff from each of the following local/regional government entities:

- Adams County
- City of Arvada
- City and County of Denver
- DRCOG
- Jefferson County
- Town of Lakeside
- Town of Mountain View
- City of Wheat Ridge

Agency Working Group. The AWG was comprised of the LGT (as participating agencies) and representatives from the following state and federal cooperating and participating agencies, joint lead agencies, and railroads:

- BNSF Railway Company²
- CDOT
- CDOW
- CDPHE
- FHWA
- FRA
- RTD
- SHPO
- UP²
- UDFCD
- USACE
- USEPA



Gold Line Web site www.rtdgoldline.com

6.2 Public Involvement Methods and Tools

The tasks summarized below were designed to provide simple, user-friendly access to information so that stakeholders could develop and further their opinions and recommendations based on accurate knowledge and a realistic understanding of needs, constraints, and opportunities of the project. The methods and tools included the following:

- Maintenance and outreach to a more than 4,000-person stakeholder database
- Scoping booklet
- Project newsletters, fact sheets, and other materials
- Media relations program
- Highly interactive project Web site
- Telephone hotline
- Bi-lingual communications of all media

² The railroads were not participating agencies, but were included in the AWG as participating entities in the process.

Table 6-1 lists the media releases, public notices, newsletters, and other publicity materials that have been distributed during the screening, DEIS and FEIS processes.

TABLE 6-1
Publicity Materials Distributed During Screening Processes

| Printed Material | Date Released | Content |
|--|------------------------------------|---|
| Scoping | | |
| Notice of Intent | July 7, 2006 | FTA announced its intent to prepare an EIS for the Gold Line project |
| News Alert (distributed in English and Spanish) | July 20, 2006 | “August 22 and 23 Public Scoping Meetings Kick-Off Gold Line EIS” |
| Scoping Booklet (mailed to more than 6,000 stakeholders in the study area) | August 11, 2006 | Overviewed EIS process and schedule, history of the Gold Line, and public involvement opportunities; also publicized the scoping meetings |
| News Release (distributed in English and Spanish) | August 12, 2006 | “RTD Kicks Off Gold Line EIS To Provide High Quality, Reliable Transit” |
| Four Newspaper Advertisements | August 16-17, 2006 | Publicized Scoping Public Workshops |
| News Alert (distributed in English and Spanish) | August 18, 2006 | “FasTracks – Gold Line EIS, Public Meetings Kick Off FasTracks Project Between Downtown and Northwest Suburbs” |
| Conceptual Screening of Alternatives | | |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | September 5, 2006 | “Gold Line Public Workshops Announced for Early October” “Scoping Period Closes at the End of September” “Sign up for Issue Focused Teams” |
| News Alert (distributed in English and Spanish) | September 11, 2006 | “Public Workshops Slated for Oct. 4 and 5, 2006 to Discuss Initial Screening for Gold Line EIS” |
| Six Newspaper Advertisements | September 21-28, 2006 | Publicized Conceptual Screening Workshops |
| Project Newsletter No. 1 | September 25, 2006 | Summarized scoping phase, previewed initial screening, provided a comparison of light rail to commuter rail, and publicized conceptual screening workshops |
| News Release (distributed in English and Spanish) | October 2, 2006 | “Gold Line Recommends More Study For Light Rail, Electric Commuter Rail, Diesel Commuter Rail, Streetcars” |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | October 30, 2006 | “Gold Line Narrows Alternatives to Four Routes” |
| News Release (distributed in English and Spanish) | October 31, 2006 | “Gold Line Screens Alternatives to Four Routes” |
| Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives | | |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | November 17, 2006 | “Neighborhood Working Groups Forming” “Why RTD is Required to Evaluate Alternate Alignments” “What’s Next for the Gold Line” |
| Ten Newspaper Advertisements | January 4, 2007 - February 2, 2007 | Publicized Detailed Evaluation workshops |
| Project Newsletter No. 2 | January 4, 2007 | Overviewed four alternatives under consideration and summarized alternative refinements; provided information on Streetcar and previewed detailed evaluation phase; publicized Detailed Evaluation public workshops |
| News Alert (distributed in English and Spanish) | January 17, 2007 | “February 5 and 7 Public Workshop Meetings Discuss Detailed alternatives evaluation for Gold Line EIS” |
| News Release (distributed in English and Spanish) | January 29, 2007 | “Gold Line Analysis of Four Remaining Transit Alternatives Ready for Public Review” |

| Printed Material | Date Released | Content |
|---|--------------------|--|
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | February 2, 2007 | “Reminder: Gold Line Public Meetings to Take Place Next Week” “Local Community Gets Involved Through Issue Focused Teams” “Gold Line Team Coordinates with Local Planning Efforts” |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | March 9, 2007 | “Gold Line Alternatives Narrowed to Two” “Legislation Introduced to Indemnify Railroads of Liability” |
| Project Newsletter No. 3 | March 22, 2007 | Provided update on detailed evaluation and data on two remaining alternatives; previewed station platform and parking evaluations and publicized IFT meetings |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | May 29, 2007 | “RTD Gold Line Update on the FasTracks Annual Program Evaluation” |
| Selection of Preferred Alternative | | |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | June 8, 2007 | Announced public meetings on June 26 and 27 |
| News Release (distributed in English and Spanish) | June 8, 2007 | “June 26 and 27 Public Workshop Meetings Discuss Preferred Project Alternative for Gold Line” |
| Seven Newspaper Advertisements | June 13-21, 2007 | Publicized June 26 and 27 public meetings |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | June 14, 2007 | “Gold Line Recommends Commuter Rail as LPA” |
| News Release (distributed in English and Spanish) | June 14, 2007 | “Gold Line Recommends Commuter Rail as LPA <i>Public Review and Comment Will Be Accepted at June 26 and 27 Meetings</i> ” |
| Postcard | June 15, 2007 | Announced public meetings on June 26 and 27 |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | June 25, 2007 | Gold Line Preferred Alternative Update/Meeting Reminder |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | July 25, 2007 | “Electric Commuter Rail on the Railroad Alignment Selected as Preferred Alternative” |
| News Release (distributed in English and Spanish) | July 30, 2007 | “Electric Commuter Rail on the Railroad Alignment Selected as Preferred Alternative for Gold Line” |
| Preliminary Results of the DEIS | | |
| Project Newsletter No. 4 | August 17, 2007 | Announced selection of the Preferred Alternative and October public meetings; overviewed next steps in the EIS process; previewed upcoming IFT meetings; provided information on public-private partnerships and the Penta-P program; included updated map and statistics on the Gold Line |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | October 5, 2007 | Announced public meetings on October 23 and 24 |
| Seven Newspaper Advertisements | October 5-18, 2007 | Publicized October 23 and 24 public meetings |
| News Release (distributed in English and Spanish) | October 15, 2007 | “Oct. 23 and 24 Public Workshop Meetings to Provide Update on Gold Line Design and Analysis” |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | October 22, 2007 | Public workshop reminder e-mail |
| Preferred Alternative Refinements | | |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | January 9, 2008 | Announced launch of new Gold Line stations Web page |
| E-mail Blast and Hard-Copy Letter to Stakeholder Database | January 30, 2008 | Announced potential refinements to the Preferred Alternative and March public workshops |
| News Release (distributed in English and Spanish) | February 1, 2008 | “March 4 and 6 Public Workshops to Review Potential Refinements to the Gold Line Preferred Alternative” |

| Printed Material | Date Released | Content |
|---|------------------------|---|
| Six Newspaper Advertisements | February 7-28, 2008 | Announced public workshops on March 4 and 6 |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | February 19, 2008 | Overviewed the Gold Line Team's recommendations for Preferred Alternative Refinements |
| News Release (distributed in English and Spanish) | February 27, 2008 | "Preferred Alternative Refinements Considered for Gold Line EIS" |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | March 3, 2008 | Public workshop reminder e-mail |
| Project Newsletter No. 5 | May 9, 2008 | Announced recommendation to further evaluate the EDDO; announced selection of preferred station locations for Olde Town and Federal; promoted station design workshops; recapped EIS public involvement efforts; provided an update on railroad negotiations and the project schedule; included an updated map |
| Draft Environmental Impact Statement | | |
| Letter to All Corridor Organizations | July 11, 2008 | Announced upcoming release of the DEIS and public hearing dates; encouraged groups to distribute information to their members |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | July 14, 2008 | Announced upcoming release of the DEIS and public hearing dates |
| News Release (distributed in English and Spanish) | July 17, 2008 | "Gold Line Corridor Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) to be Released for Public Review on July 18" |
| Project Newsletter No. 6 – DEIS Special Edition | July 18, 2008 | Announced release of DEIS; promoted public hearings; overviewed the content of the DEIS; listed locations where DEIS was available for review; provided information on how to submit DEIS comments; promoted station design workshops; included updated project map |
| Eight Newspaper Advertisements | July 17-August 6, 2008 | Announced public hearings on August 6 and 7 and release of DEIS |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | August 4, 2008 | Public hearing reminder e-mail |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | August 29, 2008 | Reminder e-mail about the end of the DEIS comment period |
| Final Environmental Impact Statement | | |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | September 22, 2008 | Recapped DEIS comment period and overviewed next steps; invited stakeholders to participate in Station Access and Design IFTs |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | October 2, 2008 | Announced recommendation of preferred locations for the 38th Avenue and Pecos stations; announced selection of EDDO as the preferred alignment |
| Project Newsletter No. 7 | November 6, 2008 | Announced the finalized alignment and recommendation of preferred locations for the 38th Avenue and Pecos stations; announced DEIS award for excellence in environmental documentation from FTA; recapped activities during the DEIS comment period and outlined next steps for the Gold Line; provided update on FasTracks budget; provided information on Gold Line safety measures; included updated map |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | February 9, 2009 | Update on the FEIS schedule, station design recommendations and the new option for the Pecos Station |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | March 9, 2009 | Invitation to participate in the FTA's Public Transportation Participation Pilot Program |
| CRM Supplemental Environmental Assessment | | |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | December 3, 2008 | Project update to announce peer review and efforts to minimize the footprint of the maintenance facility |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | January 7, 2009 | Project update to announce Fox North option and January 22, 2009 workshop |

| Printed Material | Date Released | Content |
|--|--------------------|---|
| Stakeholder mailing | January 8, 2009 | Project update to announce Fox North option and January 22, 2009 workshop |
| Newspaper Advertisements (English and Spanish) | January 8-14, 2009 | Project update to announce Fox North option and January 22, 2009 workshop |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | January 20, 2009 | Reminder of the January 22, 2009 CRMF and BMF workshop |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | February 5, 2009 | Project update to announce recommendation of the Fox North Site to the RTD Board |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | February 18, 2009 | Project update to announce Board advancement of the Fox North Site |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | March 4, 2009 | Project update and announcement/explanation of the SEA process |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | March 30, 2009 | Announced upcoming release of SEA and April 23, 2009 public meeting |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | April 15, 2009 | Announced release of SEA and provided information on how to review/comment on the document |
| Project Newsletter | April 15, 2009 | Announced release of SEA, overviewed the information contained in the document, provided information on how to review/comment on the EA and summarized next steps for the project |
| E-mail Blast to Stakeholder Database | April 20, 2009 | Reminder of the April 23, 2009 public meeting |

Source: Gold Line Team, 2009

6.3 Public and Agency Input Strategies

The goal of the tasks summarized below was to solicit informed input from stakeholders by providing multiple methods for the public to provide feedback to the project team and decision makers at key stages of the DEIS and FEIS planning processes. Both large, public workshops and smaller, more intimate meetings were held to facilitate public, LGT, and AWG input (Table 6-2). All input was documented and categorized in a computerized comment tracking system.

TABLE 6-2
Public and Agency Input Meetings

| Date | Meeting Type | Detail | Attendees |
|----------------------|-------------------------|--|-----------|
| Scoping | | | |
| August 8, 2006 | Listening Session | Arvada Lake Arbor Optimists | 25 |
| August 8, 2006 | Listening Session | Highland United Neighbors Inc. (HUNI) Planning and Community Development Board | 13 |
| August 15, 2006 | Listening Session | Jefferson Economic Development Council | 13 |
| August 15, 2006 | Listening Session | Wheat Ridge 2020 | 8 |
| August 16, 2006 | LGT | LGT Scoping Preview | 9 |
| August 22, 2006 | Public Workshop No. 1 | Public Scoping Workshop No. 1, Arvada Center | 150 |
| August 23, 2006 | Public Workshop No. 1 | Public Scoping Workshop No. 2, Highlands Masonic Center | 90 |
| August 24, 2006 | AWG | Scoping Agency Milestone Workshop | 22 |
| September 6, 2006 | Listening Session | Arvada Gold Line Advisory Committee | 8 |
| September 6, 2006 | Listening Session | Wheat Ridge Optimists | 20 |
| September 8-10, 2006 | Other Community Meeting | Arvada Harvest Festival | NA |

| Date | Meeting Type | Detail | Attendees |
|---|-------------------------|---|-----------|
| September 12, 2006 | Listening Session | Arvada Economic Development Association | 35 |
| September 13, 2006 | Listening Session | Sunnyside United Neighbors Inc. (SUNI) | 30 |
| September 14, 2006 | Other Community Meeting | Wheat Ridge Town Meeting | NA |
| September 26, 2006 | Listening Session | Arvada Sunrise Rotary | 20 |
| September 26, 2006 | Other Community Meeting | HUNI Hours (HUNI informal neighborhood gathering) | NA |
| Conceptual Screening of Alternatives | | | |
| October 2, 2006 | LGT | LGT Conceptual Screening of Alternatives Preview | 16 |
| October 4, 2006 | Public Workshop No. 2 | Conceptual Screening of Alternatives Workshop No. 1, Arvada Center | 161 |
| October 5, 2006 | Public Workshop No. 2 | Conceptual Screening of Alternatives Workshop No. 2, Highlands Masonic Center | 156 |
| October 10, 2006 | AWG | Conceptual Screening of Alternatives Agency Milestone Workshop | 20 |
| October 10, 2006 | Listening Session | Berkeley Regis United Neighbors | 95 |
| October 26, 2006 | Listening Session | Representative Frangas/Senator Sandoval Informational Meeting | 90 |
| October 30, 2006 | LGT | LGT Conceptual Screening of Alternatives Update | 17 |
| Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives | | | |
| November 2, 2006 | IFT | Alternate alignments IFT | 27 |
| November 3, 2006 | Listening Session | Mountain View Mayor and Public Works Director | 4 |
| December 1, 2006 | Listening Session | Regency Student Housing Community Assistants | 10 |
| December 5, 2006 | Listening Session | West Highland Neighborhood Association | 25 |
| December 11, 2006 | Listening Session | Mountain View City Council Study Session | 5 |
| December 12, 2006 | LGT | Alternatives evaluation Update and IFT Preview | 25 |
| January 3, 2007 | Listening Session | Arvada Jefferson Kiwanis | 48 |
| January 9, 2007 | Listening Session | Inspiration Point Neighborhood Association | 25 |
| January 11, 2007 | IFT | Neighborhood-Specific IFT Orientation Meeting | 106 |
| January 16, 2007 | IFT | Olde Town Arvada East Neighborhood-Specific IFT | 16 |
| January 17, 2007 | IFT | Southwest Adams County Neighborhood-Specific IFT | 12 |
| January 18, 2007 | IFT | Ridge Road/Ward Road Neighborhood-Specific IFT | 21 |
| January 24, 2007 | IFT | 38th Avenue East of Federal Neighborhood-Specific IFT | 26 |
| January 25, 2007 | IFT | 38th Avenue West of Federal Neighborhood-Specific IFT | 30 |
| January 29, 2007 | IFT | Harlan Street/Sheridan Boulevard Neighborhood-Specific IFT | 24 |
| January 30, 2007 | LGT | Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives Preview | 13 |
| February 5, 2007 | Public Workshop No. 3 | Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives Workshop No. 1, Highlands Masonic Center | 178 |

| Date | Meeting Type | Detail | Attendees |
|---|-------------------------|--|-----------|
| February 7, 2007 | Public Workshop No. 3 | Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives Workshop No. 2, Arvada Center | 175 |
| February 15, 2007 | AWG | Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives Agency Milestone Workshop | 22 |
| February 20, 2007 | Listening Session | Wheat Ridge City Council Briefing | 15 |
| February 26, 2007 | Listening Session | Denver City Council Update | 12 |
| February 28, 2007 | Listening Session | Flour Mill Lofts | 12 |
| March 9, 2007 | Listening Session | Wheat Ridge 2020 | 15 |
| March 13, 2007 | Listening Session | US 36 Steering Committee | 10 |
| April 3, 2007 | LGT | Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives Update and Preview of Upcoming IFT Meetings | 19 |
| April 5, 2007 | IFT | Station Platform and Parking IFT Kick Off Meeting | 40 |
| April 10, 2007 | IFT | Station Platform and Parking IFT: EMU – Arvada Ridge and Ward Road | 7 |
| April 12, 2007 | IFT | Station Platform and Parking IFT: EMU – Sheridan Boulevard and Olde Town | 15 |
| April 17, 2007 | IFT | Station Platform and Parking IFT: EMU – 38th Avenue, Pecos Street and Federal Boulevard | 20 |
| April 18, 2007 | IFT | Station Platform and Parking IFT: Streetcar – 38th West of Federal Boulevard and Harlan Street | 16 |
| April 24, 2007 | IFT | Station Platform and Parking IFT: Streetcar – Olde Town to Ward Road | 12 |
| April 25, 2007 | IFT | Station Platform and Parking IFT: Streetcar – 38th Avenue East of Federal Boulevard | 10 |
| Selection of Preferred Alternative | | | |
| June 20, 2007 | LGT | Preferred Alternative Recommendation | 17 |
| June 26, 2007 | Public Workshop No. 4 | Preferred Alternative Recommendation Workshop No. 1, Arvada Center | 130 |
| June 27, 2007 | Public Workshop No. 4 | Preferred Alternative Recommendation Workshop No. 2, Highlands Masonic Center | 76 |
| June 28, 2007 | AWG | Preferred Alternative Recommendation Agency Milestone Workshop | 17 |
| Preliminary Results of the DEIS | | | |
| August 7, 2007 | LGT | Station screening process and value engineering | 14 |
| August 14, 2007 | Listening Session | Arvada Economic Development Association | 15 |
| August 15, 2007 | IFT | Station Platform and Parking Joint Team Meeting | 35 |
| August 21, 2007 | Listening Session | Jefferson Economic Council Transportation Committee | 20 |
| September 7-9, 2007 | Other Community Meeting | Arvada Harvest Festival | NA |
| September 13, 2007 | Listening Session | Arvada Optimist Club | 16 |
| September 24, 2007 | Listening Session | Arvada City Council | 25 |
| September 27, 2007 | Other Community Meeting | Wheat Ridge Town Hall Meeting | NA |
| October 16, 2007 | LGT | Preliminary Results of the DEIS | 10 |
| October 23, 2007 | Public Workshop No. 5 | Preliminary Results of the DEIS Workshop No. 1, Arvada Center | 93 |
| October 24, 2007 | Public Workshop No. 5 | Preliminary Results of the DEIS Workshop No. 2, Highlands Masonic Center | 33 |
| October 25, 2007 | Listening Session | Quigg Newton Housing Resident Council | 18 |

| Date | Meeting Type | Detail | Attendees |
|---|-------------------------|--|-----------|
| November 7, 2007 | Listening Session | Affordable Residential Communities | 11 |
| November 13, 2007 | Listening Session | Historic Olde Town Arvada | 13 |
| November 29, 2007 | AWG | Preliminary Results of the DEIS | 14 |
| Preferred Alternative Refinements | | | |
| December 8, 2007 | Listening Session | Inca/Fox Street Business Owners | 8 |
| December 12, 2007 | Listening Session | Jefferson County Transportation Advisory and Advocacy Group (JeffTAAG) | 18 |
| January 14, 2008 | Listening Session | Arvada City Council | 18 |
| February 19, 2008 | LGT | Preferred Alternative Refinements | 11 |
| February 19, 2008 | Listening Session | Jefferson Economic Council Transportation Committee | 25 |
| February 28, 2008 | Listening Session | Judy Montero 38th Avenue Station Meeting | 4 |
| March 4, 2008 | Public Workshop No. 6 | Preferred Alternative Refinements Workshop No. 1, Arvada Center | 95 |
| March 6, 2008 | Public Workshop No. 6 | Preferred Alternative Refinements Workshop No. 2, Highlands Masonic Center | 69 |
| March 7, 2008 | AWG | Preferred Alternative Refinements | 14 |
| March 18, 2008 | Listening Session | Fairmont HOA | 40 |
| March 31, 2008 | IFT | 38th Avenue Station Refinements IFT | 17 |
| April 9, 2008 | Listening Session | JeffTAAG Presentation | 18 |
| April 24, 2008 | Listening Session | Arvada Gold Line Advisory Committee | 14 |
| May 13, 2008 | Listening Session | League of Women Voters Walking Tour | 14 |
| May 22, 2008 | Listening Session | Arvada Gold Line Advisory Committee | 13 |
| June 2, 2008 | Listening Session | SUNI Planning & Community Development Board | 12 |
| June 24, 2008 | Listening Session | Arvada Clear Creek Optimists | 13 |
| Draft Environmental Impact Statement | | | |
| July 9, 2008 | Listening Session | JeffTAAG Presentation | 17 |
| July 19, 2008 | Listening Session | Wheat Ridge 2020 Members Meeting | 45 |
| July 29, 2008 | LGT | Overview of DEIS and 45-day comment period | 14 |
| August 2, 2008 | Listening Session | State of Colorado Representative Sara Gagliardi Town Hall Meeting | 35 |
| August 3, 2008 | Listening Session | Sheridan Station Neighborhood Meeting | 7 |
| August 6, 2008 | Public Hearing | Gold Line Public Hearing (Denver) | 55 |
| August 7, 2008 | Public Hearing | Gold Line Public Hearing (Arvada) | 79 |
| August 11, 2008 | Listening Session | Arvada City Council Briefing | 22 |
| August 12, 2008 | AWG | Overview of DEIS and protocol for submitting comments | 10 |
| August 18, 2008 | Listening Session | DRCOG Transportation Advisory Committee | 30 |
| September 5-7, 2008 | Other Community Meeting | Arvada Harvest Festival | NA |
| September 10, 2008 | Other Community Meeting | Wheat Ridge Town Hall Meeting | NA |
| September 10, 2008 | Listening Session | JeffTAAG Presentation | 16 |
| September 10, 2008 | Listening Session | Arvada Jefferson Kiwanis | 45 |
| Final Environmental Impact Statement | | | |
| October 1, 2008 | LGT | Recommendations for alignment and stations; overview of fencing subcommittee | 12 |
| October 7, 2008 | IFT | Sheridan Station Access & Design IFT | 4 |
| October 8, 2008 | Listening Session | JeffTAAG Presentation | 14 |

| Date | Meeting Type | Detail | Attendees |
|---|----------------------------|--|--------------|
| October 14, 2008 | LGT | Fencing Subcommittee meeting to discuss framework for identifying fencing recommendations. | 3 |
| October 14, 2008 | IFT | Olde Town Station Access & Design IFT | 18 |
| October 21, 2008 | IFT | Pecos/Federal Station Access & Design IFT | 12 |
| October 23, 2008 | IFT | Arvada Ridge/Ward Road Station Access & Design IFT | 15 |
| November 5, 2008 | IFT | 41st Avenue East Station Access & Design IFT | 23 |
| November 10, 2008 | LGT | Fencing Subcommittee meeting to discuss corridor fencing recommendations | 6 |
| November 20, 2008 | IFT | 41st Avenue East Station Access Follow-Up Meeting | 8 |
| December 2, 2008 | Other Community Meeting | City and County of Denver Comprehensive Planning Efforts in North District 9 | NA |
| December 10, 2008 | Listening Session | JeffTAAG | 13 |
| December 10, 2008 | LGT | Fencing Subcommittee to discuss corridor fencing recommendations | 6 |
| January 14, 2009 | Other Community Meeting | Sunnyside United Neighbors Inc. (SUNI) Quarterly Meeting | 29 |
| January 14, 2009 | Listening Session | JeffTAAG | 16 |
| February 3, 2009 | Other Community Meeting | City and County of Denver 41st Avenue East Station Area Planning Workshop | 32 |
| February 11, 2009 | Listening Session | JeffTAAG | 17 |
| March 11, 2009 | Listening Session | JeffTAAG | 12 |
| April 8, 2009 | Listening Session | JeffTAAG | 23 |
| April 8, 2009 | Other Community Meeting | Sunnyside United Neighbors Inc. (SUNI) Quarterly Meeting | 45 |
| April 23, 2009 | Listening Session | Arvada Gold Line Advisory Committee | 6 |
| CRMF Supplemental Environmental Assessment | | | |
| January 22, 2009 | CRMF Public Workshop | Gather input of the two remaining CRMF sites. | 65 |
| March 17, 2009 | AWG | Joint meeting with CRMF, Gold Line, East Corridor and North Metro to discuss the CRMF SEA. | 4 |
| April 23, 2009 | Public Meeting on CRMF SEA | Present findings of the SEA and receive formal comments. | 257 |
| TOTAL | 129 Meetings | | 3,968 |

Source: Gold Line Team, 2009

In total, more than 3,900 individuals attended the 129 meetings the project team had with the public and agencies. With the broad accessibility of the Internet and many in the community viewing it as a preferred or alternate method to engage in the public process, the project Web site and other online outreach tools were integrated into all input strategies. In total, more than 63,000 individuals accessed information from the project Web site, with many using it as one of their primary tools to provide input to the process.



Public Workshop Information Station

6.3.1 Public Input

Public Workshops. At each decision milestone (Scoping, Conceptual Screening of Alternatives, Detailed Evaluation of Alternatives, Selection of Preferred Alternative, Preferred Alternative Refinement), the project team held two public workshops in geographically diverse areas of the Gold Line study area. Additionally, two public hearings were held following the release of the DEIS.

The workshops were publicized through a variety of mechanisms including newspaper advertisements (in both English and Spanish), direct mail, e-mail blasts to the stakeholder database, earned-media coverage, and cooperative promotion by business/neighborhood/civic organizations and local municipalities. Simultaneous translation services were available and promoted at all public workshops. The workshops were well attended, with 1,862 individuals attending the 16 public workshops and hearings.

The public workshops were always held prior to the Agency Milestone Meetings so that, using the Gold Line Team's comment tracking system, AWG and LGT representatives had access to the raw comments and summaries of the public comments. The format shown in Figure 6-3 was used for each workshop.

Community Listening Sessions. As of May 2009, a total of 56 "Community Listening Sessions" were conducted with a variety of community, civic, neighborhood, and municipal committees/organizations and a total of 1,171 stakeholders participating.

These small-group meetings engaged stakeholders in a smaller, more community-specific manner than is often afforded through larger public workshops. The listening sessions provided stakeholders and the project team ample opportunity to listen to what the other had to say and share information openly. Input from listening sessions was clearly documented in contact reports and incorporated into the project's comment-tracking system.

Issue-Focused Teams. The Gold Line Team formed IFTs comprised of community members, local municipal staff, elected officials, and the project team. These informal working groups, which were open to the public, were dynamic small-group work sessions used to address issues and generate ideas by identifying problems, opportunities, and potential solutions related to specific issues.




Public Workshop Comment Station

As of May 2009, 23 IFT meetings had been held with more than 500 individuals participating. The topics addressed at these IFT meetings included alternate alignments, neighborhood specific issues, and location of station platforms and parking.

FIGURE 6-3
Public Workshop Format

Comment Stations Open (written, verbal, and online commenting)





General Open House (30-45 minutes)

- Handouts for participants
- Display stations staffed with project representatives
- Interaction with attendees, either individually or in groups

Project Team Presentation and Public Comment (30-45 minutes)

- Project team presentation outlining the context of the meeting and summarizing the analysis and recommendations to date
- Question and answer session
- Gathering of public comments






Hands-On Workshop (30-60 minutes)

- Small-group discussions between the public and project team representatives at display stations

Virtual Public Workshop (Online Following Public Workshops)

All workshop materials (general presentation, handouts, display boards, and comment forms) were posted to the project Web site within 1 to 2 days of the workshops. This allowed stakeholders to virtually experience the Public Workshop and provide comments regardless of their ability to attend the meetings in person.



6-14
AUGUST 2009

Other Community Based Meetings. In an effort to increase the stakeholder database and share basic project information, the Gold Line Team provided project materials and staffed booths at a number of broader community events including the annual Wheat Ridge Town Hall Meeting, the Arvada Harvest Festival, SUNI's annual meeting and the Sunnyside Music Festival. No formal presentations were given at these events, but project information was shared, individuals were signed up for the stakeholder database, and comments were gathered via comment cards.



Public Workshop in Arvada

6.3.2 Agency Input

Local Governments Team. The LGT met regularly with RTD and FTA and held in-depth discussions regarding project issues and decisions. They also met jointly with the AWG at key milestones to provide focused input to RTD and FTA related to specific questions at each respective milestone.

Agency Working Group. The AWG met at each decision milestone to provide input to FTA and RTD through participation in these meetings, individual consultation with the project team, and written input and comment at the key milestones.

Regulatory Meetings. At various times throughout the EIS process, the project team consulted individually with specific agencies including local governments, the USACE, the SHPO, and consulting parties.

6.4 Strategies for Environmental Justice Outreach

The Gold Line project was committed to meeting or exceeding, both in letter and spirit, all Environmental Justice requirements. By its very nature, outreach to minority and low-income populations has been customized and personalized. Similar, and often combined, processes were conducted for the Gold Line and CRMF projects.

The Gold Line Team identified specific areas in the Gold Line study area where minority or low-income communities comprised more than 50-percent of the population, as described in Chapter 1, Purpose and Need, and Chapter 3, Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences. Specific emphasis was placed on identifying those areas that fall within 0.5 mile of proposed station areas.

Two general areas met this criterion:

- **Area #1** – Within 0.5 mile of the proposed 38th Avenue Station (which was later located at 41st Avenue), particularly the residential and commercial areas north and west of the station and south of I-70.



Gold Line Scoping Booklet

- **Area #2** – Within 0.5 mile of the proposed Pecos Street, Federal, and Sheridan stations, south of the active BNSF Railway Company tracks between Pecos Street and Lowell Boulevard and north of the active BNSF Railway Company tracks between Federal Boulevard and Lowell Boulevard.

Given the importance of these communities and the team’s commitment to ensuring that everyone in the community has ample opportunity to engage in the public process, outreach was targeted specifically for the two identified areas and other communities that are likely to have large numbers of individuals or businesses that may qualify as Environmental Justice communities. Outreach included the following:

- Listening Sessions were conducted with groups of residents and businesses, including Quigg Newton Public Housing, Affordable Residential Properties, and a group of business owners near the proposed 38th Avenue Station.
- Bi-lingual (Spanish/English) project material distribution points were established at locations where larger numbers of individuals from Environmental Justice communities were likely to be engaged, including the Denver Housing Authority’s Quigg Newton housing complex, Atzlan Recreation Center, and local churches.
- Information (letters, bi-lingual newsletters) was shared with the leadership of churches and community centers that serve significant minority and low-income populations.
- The Scoping Booklet was mailed to homes and businesses in key Environmental Justice communities.
- Personalized, door-to-door outreach and visits were provided to residents in the two geographically identified Environmental Justice communities.
- Personalized outreach and visits were provided to minority and low-income business owners in the two geographically identified Environmental Justice communities.
- A Spanish version of the project newsletter was published.
- An online Spanish section at www.rtdgoldline.com is maintained.
- The Spanish recording on the project hotline is updated regularly.
- Spanish-language advertisements are used to promote all public workshops.
- Simultaneous translation services are offered at all public workshops.



Gold Line Newsletter in Spanish

6.5 Results of the Public Involvement Process

The results of the alternatives evaluation leading up to the selection of both the Preferred Alternative and the Preferred Alternative Refinement have been endorsed by the LGT, the general public, and the AWG. In addition, this same process was used to gather comments on the preliminary results of the DEIS and was used for formal public comment on the DEIS. During the 45-day DEIS public comment period, two public hearings were held.

6.6 Agency and Public Response to Scoping (Public Workshop No. 1)

The DEIS process was initiated with Public Scoping Workshop No. 1 held at two geographically diverse locations in the Gold Line study area on August 22 and 23, 2006. A scoping presentation and supporting graphics were prepared and submitted to the LGT on August 16, 2006, for comment and endorsement before sharing with the public. The reconciled agenda for the public scoping workshops is presented below.

- Project Introduction
 - Purpose of Scoping
 - What is an EIS?
 - What is NEPA?
 - Schedule
- Project History - Why is This Important?
 - Overview of Past Studies
 - Where Are We Now?
- Evaluation Methodology
 - Purpose and Need
 - Alternatives
 - Alternatives Evaluation
 - Criteria
- Next Steps

Public Input at Public Workshop No. 1. Three key issues surfaced at Public Workshop No. 1 and have persisted throughout the planning process:

- Why is RTD re-opening the results from the MIS and the perceived project approval tied to the 2004 voter-approval of FasTracks?
- Why are transit technologies other than LRT being evaluated?
- Effects of, and interest in, alternate alignments.

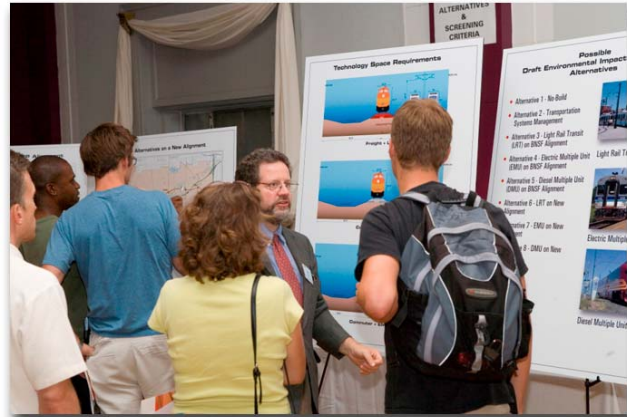
These issues were further complicated by both the BNSF Railway Company and UP changing their policies with respect to operating non-compliant transit technologies (such as LRT) within their ROWs. The three key issues are discussed below.

The MIS and FasTracks. Regarding the first issue, the majority of the public did not realize that the MIS was not a legally binding document and that a NEPA document would be needed to qualify for FTA funding. There were also concerns that since the public had voted

for FasTracks, the details (such as alignment and transit technology) shown in the ballot measure should be binding. The public process has successfully resolved these issues.

Transit Technologies. To provide a reasonable range of alternatives, and to address changed railroad policies with respect to operating non-compliant technologies in the freight Gold Line study areas, the following candidate alternatives were presented during Public Workshop No. 1:

- Alternative 1 – No-Action
- Alternative 2 – Transportation System Management (TSM)
- Alternative 3 – LRT on the BNSF/UP Alignment
- Alternative 4 – EMU on the BNSF/UP Alignment
- Alternative 5 – DMU on the BNSF/UP Alignment
- Alternative 6 – LRT on New Alignment
- Alternative 7 – EMU on New Alignment
- Alternative 8 – DMU on New Alignment



Public Workshop Information Station

At the time of Public Workshop No. 1, the greatest public concerns centered around the need to look at technologies other than LRT. There was a perception that EMU and DMU were not comparable to LRT. There was also some question about whether EMU and DMU would equally support TOD and if they were more inclined to result in noise and vibration impacts. DMU was also a concern from an air-quality impact standpoint.

Effects of Alternate Alignments. Alternate alignments that provided more direct service to Northwest Denver generated both support and concern from the public. Many residents felt that the impacts of public transit (including property acquisitions and safety) should be confined to the railroad ROW. Others indicated that providing more direct service to the growing neighborhoods of Northwest Denver would have a positive effect.

Since the specific alignments for the alternate alignment had not been defined during Public Workshop No. 1, public concerns were more understated. There were some who were concerned about property acquisition impacts, effects on property values, safety of children, and noise and vibration impacts. Again, the over-riding issue related to the question of why another look at alternatives was necessary.



Public Workshop Information Station

Agency Working Group Input. The results of Public Workshop No. 1 were presented to the AWG on August 24, 2006. The reaction of the AWG members paralleled the public concerns expressed at the workshop, with the issues of alignment, technology, and railroad negotiations dominating the discussion.

6.7 Agency and Public Response to Conceptual Screening (Public Workshop No. 2)

The results of the Conceptual Screening were initially presented to the LGT on October 2, 2006, then to the public at Public Workshop No. 2 on October 4 and 5, 2006, and finally to the AWG on October 10, 2006. The two greatest issues identified were the need to drop the MIS LPA (LRT on the BNSF/UP alignment) from further consideration as the result of changed railroad policy and passionate interest in/opposition to Streetcar and LRT Alternatives on new alignments.



Public Workshop Information Station

Public Input at Public Workshop No. 2. At all levels (LGT, public, and AWG), the issues of alignment, transit technology, and ROW impacts from property acquisition dominated the agency and public meetings. Environmental impact issues were noted as concerns but to a much lesser extent.

Alignment. The alignment issue was clearly the most prevalent among those submitting comments, accounting for nearly one-third of all issues identified by the public and nearly twice as many as the second most commented upon issue.

Public input revealed a greater preference for the BNSF/UP alignment, with more than 60-percent of the alignment comments during this milestone expressing either preference for the BNSF/UP alignment or opposition to the alternate alignments. During this same time, about one-fourth of the alignment comments expressed support for an alternate alignment that would provide better access to Northwest Denver. The remaining alignment comments were neutral or discussed other topics related to alignment.

The greatest concerns identified in the alignment comments related to the alternate alignments potentially causing a change in neighborhood character associated with increased urbanization, added noise and congestion, and concerns over reduced real estate values. The most controversial alignment involved the construction of LRT on Lowell Boulevard, where the public passionately expressed the feeling that this residential corridor was incompatible with fixed-guideway transit.

In response to these concerns, the project team added two new north-south alignments on Sheridan Boulevard (Alternative 6D) and Harlan Street (Alternative 6G), which are both more characterized by mixed-use development than the more residentially oriented development on streets like Lowell Boulevard.

Transit Technology. The public indicated a clear preference for LRT. EMU was a second choice, but was considered a breach of what the public believed was promised in the FasTracks Plan. There was a modest interest in Streetcar, but this technology was not generally considered comparable to LRT or EMU. DMU technology was not supported by the

community. Most comments about DMU expressed concerns about air quality degradation and greater noise. In response to these concerns, all possible transit technologies but DMU were carried forward into Detailed Evaluation.

Right-of-Way and Property Acquisition. The impact of any of the alternate alignments on residences and businesses was a major concern. As a result of this concern, the most contentious alternate alignments were dropped from further consideration, and the new alignments along Sheridan Boulevard and Harlan Street were added.

Additionally, the concept of dedicated guideways, requiring new ROW on the alternate alignments, was abandoned in favor of mixed-flow operation with roadway traffic. The mixed-flow operation was generally configured to public ROW.

Environmental Impacts. Noise, aesthetics, and safety were identified as additional environmental concerns. The public was assured that these issues would be considered with increasing levels of evaluation during Detailed Evaluation of alternatives and the EIS.

Between September 30, 2006 and October 20, 2006, members of the public submitted 198 comments to the project team. Comments were submitted in-person at the public workshops or listening sessions, as well as by e-mail, the project Web site, comment cards, and the project hotline.

Table 6-3 presents the top ten issues identified through the public process during Conceptual Screening. The project team response to addressing these issues is also provided.

TABLE 6-3
Top Issues Identified During Conceptual Screening

| Rank | Issue | Description of Issue | Response |
|------|-----------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Alignment | Consideration of alignments other than the BNSF/UP alignment was the greatest project issue. Public comment was mixed about the potential benefits/impacts of rail transit in established, population-dense areas. Many expressed a preference for keeping the project impacts contained to the original alignment rather than locate fixed-guideway transit in the neighborhoods. | Revised alignments to add options and reduce impacts. |
| 2 | Transit Technology | Both the MIS and FasTracks presented LRT as the selected technology. LRT was considered by many to be more supportive of TOD and to have less impact than EMU. Public and agencies both expressed concern that DMU was least like LRT. Streetcar technology was considered to not be competitive with either LRT or EMU. | Evaluated multiple transit technologies. Removed DMU technology from further evaluation. |
| 3 | Right-of-Way/Property | This concern is limited to the alternate alignment alternatives because ROW would need to be acquired for the transit footprint. It was felt that constructing transit through the established neighborhoods would affect too many residents and businesses. | Modified construction footprints to reduce ROW requirements. This included mixed-flow operation for both LRT and Streetcar. |
| 4 | Public Involvement | Some citizens at the public workshops complained that they were not informed. | Increased the number of IFT meetings. Added newsletter and door-to-door flyers. |

| Rank | Issue | Description of Issue | Response |
|------|-----------------|---|---|
| 5 | Environmental | These concerns related to the property impacts discussed above, as well as increases in traffic congestion and loss of neighborhood character due to the influence of transit on urban density. | Reconfigured alternatives to reduce impacts (also see the reference to mixed-flow operation above). Evaluated environmental impacts with rigor in the Detailed Evaluation. |
| 6 | Noise/Vibration | Concerns generally focused on the noise impacts of the alternate alignment alternatives and commuter rail. | It was noted that detailed noise and vibration impacts would be evaluated in the DEIS. |
| 7 | Aesthetics | Concerns generally focused on the visual impact of overhead catenary associated with the alternate alignment alternatives. | It was noted that comparative visual impacts would be evaluated during Level 3, Detailed Evaluation. |
| 8 | Safety | Concerns, generally focused on the safety of children crossing the guideway, as related to the alternate alignment alternatives. | It was noted that detailed impacts on public safety would be evaluated in the DEIS. |
| 9 | FasTracks | The Gold Line study area public believed that they had voted on LRT on the BNSF/UP alignment (the MIS LPA), and that there was no need to further evaluate new alternatives. There was a feeling that eliminating this alternative during Level 1 Screening represented a retracted promise on the part of RTD. | The reason that LRT as non-compliant technology can no longer be operated in either the BNSF Railway Company or UP ROW is explained by an RTD representative at every public meeting. Provided information about the similarities and differences of transit technologies on the project Web site and at all meetings. |
| 10 | Operations | The basic concern relates to operating the alternate alignment transit alternatives in a mixed flow does not provide a sufficient advantage over bus service. There were also concerns that Streetcar is not competitive with either EMU or LRT. | The alternate alignment alternatives were refined as the process progressed from Level 1 and through Level 2 screening to improve travel times. However, movement to mixed-flow operations to reduce property acquisition degraded travel times. This tradeoff was explained to the public. |

Source: Gold Line Team, 2008

Agency Working Group Input. The concerns of the AWG paralleled those identified by the general public, as described below.

Alignment. AWG representatives asked for information and expressed concern about the neighborhood impacts of the LRT and Streetcar alignments. Property impacts were of primary concern. Concerns about traffic and street impacts were also significant. The group recognized that the general public and local governments favored the original BNSF/UP alignment.

The AWG also expressed interest in the travel markets served by the Streetcar Alternatives (7A and 7B) and how those correspond to the travel concept for the original BNSF/UP alignment. The group discussed whether the alternate alignments represent the line-haul commuter function or were only suitable for local service to enable Northwest Denver access to the FasTracks system.

Transit Technology. AWG representatives expressed a general preference for LRT technology on the original BNSF/UP alignment. There was general support for EMU as a replacement for LRT on the BNSF/UP alignment. Agencies, including the USEPA, CDPHE, and others noted the regional air-quality advantages of an electric technology. With the exception of Adams County, there was no support for DMU technology, and it was agreed to eliminate it from further consideration.

The AWG also supported carrying forward a Streetcar Alternative into Detailed Evaluation. The group indicated that more information on this alternative would be helpful. For example, it would be helpful to see if the Streetcar Alternative would improve access for Northwest Denver residents to the FasTracks system and bring other benefits to the community, such as economic revitalization. The group also indicated an interest in Streetcar service as a supplement to the Gold Line—using the term “FasTracks II” to describe this possible approach.

Right-of-Way and Property Acquisition. The LGT and AWG agreed with eliminating the alternatives that affected Lowell Boulevard and replacing these alternatives with alignments on Sheridan Boulevard and Harlan Street. Additionally, the concept of mixed-flow operation to reduce property impacts from the alternate alignment alternatives was endorsed.

Environmental Impacts. The AWG agreed with the proposed approach for evaluating environmental impacts at Level 3, Detailed Evaluation.

6.8 Agency and Public Response to Level 3, Detailed Evaluation (Public Workshop No. 3)

The results of the Detailed Evaluation Screening were initially presented to the LGT on January 30, 2007, then to the public at Public Workshop No. 3 on February 5 and 7, 2007, and finally to the AWG on February 15, 2007.

Public Input at Public Workshop No. 3. At all levels (LGT, public, and AWG) the issues of alignment, transit technology, and ROW impacts from property acquisition continued to be most prominent.

Alignment. Alignment remained by far the most commented upon issue. Some specific details that were revealed in these comments included:

- Overwhelming support of the BNSF/UP alignment, with roughly two-thirds of alignment comments during this milestone expressing support for the EMU: BNSF/UP Alternative or opposition to alternate alignments.
- Concerns about the community impacts of the alternate alignments, including property impacts, increased traffic congestion, and deviation from the FasTracks vote.
- There was a significant segment of the Northwest Denver community that was still very interested in a Streetcar alignment to provide the area with more/better access to the FasTracks system. There were very few supportive comments for any LRT Alternatives, as most comments indicated that these alternatives provided similar service to Streetcar with far greater impacts.



Arvada Public Workshop

Transit Technology. As indicated above, a clear preference for Streetcar over LRT was identified. But, especially farther west in the Gold Line study area, there were a number of concerns raised about Streetcar’s travel time and its ability to stimulate TOD.

Right-of-Way. Most ROW comments concerned the alternate alignments because the EMU: BNSF/UP Alternative is contained almost entirely in the railroad ROW. Those comments were mostly focused on the LRT Alternatives, with many citing the potential impacts as a good reason to dismiss those alternatives. The public recommended that the project team continue to find ways to increase the amount of exclusive ROW for the alternate alignments through Northwest Denver in an effort to improve travel time. In particular, 38th Avenue was identified as a possible area for exploring use of exclusive ROW on a permanent or peak-demand basis. Numerous operating scenarios related to ROW and numbers of stations were analyzed, but travel time was minimally improved.

Agency Working Group Input. The AWG met regarding Level 3, Detailed Evaluation on February 15, 2007. Their comments were fairly consistent with what was heard from the public. There was near-unanimous support for all of the project team's recommendations.

- **Unanimous support for continuing to evaluate EMU: BNSF/UP.** None of the agencies expressed concerns with continuing to evaluate the EMU Alternative. AWG comments indicated a feeling that this alternative best supports the FasTracks vision, the project Purpose and Need, and existing local plans. There was still a strong interest in direct connectivity between this alternative and Northwest Rail.
- **Mixed opinions on continuing to evaluate Streetcar: Harlan Street.** This alternative was viewed less favorably than EMU: BNSF/UP, but better than both LRT Alternatives. Concerns with the Streetcar Alternative included traffic impacts especially on 38th Avenue, slower travel time, loss of stations shown in FasTracks, and ability to support TOD. The concept of viewing the Streetcar Alternative as a logical next transit investment in the study area was still of interest to some agencies.
- **Unanimous support to eliminate both LRT Alternatives.** AWG comments mirrored the public. Both LRT Alternatives were viewed as providing similar service to the Streetcar Alternative, at a greater cost and with greater impacts.



Arvada Public Workshop

The issues identified at Conceptual Screening generally held consistent at Level 3, Detailed Evaluation, as shown in Table 6-4.

TABLE 6-4
 Top Issues Identified at Level 3, Detailed Evaluation

| Rank | Issue | Difference from Conceptual Screening | Response |
|------|-----------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Alignment | Similar concerns about property acquisition, noise, safety, traffic impacts, but the concerns shifted from the Lowell neighborhood to the Sheridan and Harlan neighborhoods. The BNSF/UP alignment continued to receive most support from the public. | Dropped the alternate alignment LRT Alternatives. The Streetcar Alternatives were retained but with mixed support. Held additional IFT meetings to clarify concerns and mitigations. |
| 2 | Transit Technology | Streetcar technology was viewed as an expensive bus system and not competitive with other forms of fixed-guideway transit. | Retained both EMU and Streetcar for further evaluation. Refined the Streetcar Alternative to operate more competitively. Value engineered the Streetcar to improve cost-effectiveness. Held additional IFT meetings to clarify concerns and mitigations. |
| 3 | Right-of-Way/Property | Concerns were consistent with Conceptual Screening. | Modified the alternatives to affect less property. Provided GIS parcel counts to define the differences among the alternatives. Evaluated mixed-flow operation to reduce the impacts of the alternate alignment alternatives. Held additional IFT meetings to clarify concerns and mitigations. |
| 4 | Public Involvement | Many citizens praised the team's openness and commitment to partnering with the community to refine/improve alternatives. | Held additional IFT meetings to continue partnership with the public. |
| 5 | Environmental | Concerns were generally consistent with Conceptual Screening—property acquisition, impacts on businesses, traffic congestion, and noise. Comparatively few concerns regarding impacts to the "natural" environment. | Reconfigured alternatives to reduce impacts (also see the reference to mixed-flow operation above). Environmental impacts were evaluated with rigor in the Detailed Evaluation. |
| 6 | Noise/Vibration | Concerns were consistent with Conceptual Screening. | Presented conceptual noise impacts for the number of persons potentially affected based on numbers within 300 feet of the alignment. It was indicated that more detailed information would be provided in the DEIS. |
| 7 | Aesthetics | Concerns were consistent with Conceptual Screening. | Presented the statistical differences among the alternatives, showing the quantities of aerial structure, retaining wall, acres of new parking, and other relevant information to show the relative magnitude of impact. |
| 8 | Safety | Concerns were consistent with Conceptual Screening. | Discriminators among the alternatives were expressed in terms of percentage of mixed flow operation versus dedicated ROW and the number of at-grade crossings. It was shown that the BNSF/UP alignment would involve fewer public safety issues. It was indicated that more detailed information would be provided in the DEIS. |

| Rank | Issue | Difference from Conceptual Screening | Response |
|------|------------|--|---|
| 9 | FasTracks | Better recognition that the change in the MIS LPA (LRT on the BNSF/UP alignment) was due to changed conditions associated with railroad liability. | Continued to provide the status on negotiations between RTD and the railroad companies. |
| 10 | Operations | Poor performance of the Streetcar compared to other fixed-guideway transit technologies. | See Rank number 2, Transit Technology, above. |

Source: Gold Line Team, 2008

6.9 Agency and Public Response to the Selection of a Preferred Alternative (Public Workshop No. 4)

The project team’s additional refinements and analysis of the two remaining alternatives - with the recommendation to select EMU: BNSF/UP as the Preferred Alternative for the Gold Line – were initially presented to the LGT on June 20, 2007, then to the public at Public Workshop No. 4 on June 26 and 27, 2007, and finally to the AWG on June 28, 2007.

Public Input at Public Workshop No. 4. At all levels (LGT, public, and AWG) there was overwhelming support for all of the project team’s recommendations related to selecting the Preferred Alternative (alignment, stations, and technology). The most prominent topics indicated in the comments were transit technology, alignment, and stations. In considering the categories, it should be noted that, while all stakeholders were able to submit general, unaided comments, a comment form was used. The form elicited specific input about the five recommendations at this milestone: select commuter rail as the general technology mode, EMU as the preferred commuter rail technology, BNSF/UP as the alignment, include seven stations, and eliminate the Streetcar Alternative. Results in these categories are described below.

Transit Technology. Comments generally identified commuter rail as the preferred technology over Streetcar. However, given that the RTD Board was considering requesting that the Gold Line Team evaluate both EMU and DMU in the EIS, the vast majority of technology comments identified a preference for EMU and an opposition to DMU. Specific issues included the following:

- Public comments indicated that reintroducing DMU at this stage of the process, after it had been eliminated from evaluation much earlier in the process, would be viewed as inconsistent with the decision-making process that had been used throughout the alternatives evaluation.
- A number of concerns were raised about local noise and air quality impacts related to DMU.
- Public comments identified an overwhelming preference for EMU. Comments generally cited better local air quality, lower noise levels during acceleration, better acceleration/ deceleration, cleaner technology, and a general feeling that EMU was a logical replacement for the LRT technology that had been recommended in the MIS and included in the FasTracks ballot initiative.

Alignment. Public comments indicated overwhelming support for the BNSF/UP alignment. Comments identified the alignment as faster than the Streetcar Alternative due to operating in exclusive ROW and consistency with the vision and planning that has been conducted to date. There was still some interest in the Streetcar alignment, but most viewed it as a logical step for the next phase of the Gold Line project.

Stations. Public comments indicated there was strong support for the proposed station locations. The primary reason cited was that the station locations were consistent with existing local plans and also with what had been shown to voters in FasTracks. There was significant interest in ensuring that the 38th Avenue and Pecos stations be able to accommodate direct transfers to Northwest Rail. In addition, there was discussion about the exact platform location for the 38th Avenue Station. Neighboring communities indicated a preference for the platform to be located as close to the northern edge of 38th Avenue as possible to provide better access to the Highland Neighborhood south of 38th Avenue.

Agency Working Group Input. The AWG met regarding Selection of the Preferred Alternative on June 28, 2007. Their comments were fairly consistent with what was heard from the public. There was unanimous support for all but one of the project team’s recommendations.

- Unanimous support for Preferred Alternative Alignment, Stations, and General Technology Mode.** All of the agencies supported the recommendations for the Preferred Alternative to be in the BNSF/UP alignment with seven stations, using commuter rail technology. AWG comments indicated that these elements best support the FasTracks vision, the project Purpose and Need, and existing local plans.
- Unanimous Support to Drop the Streetcar: Harlan Street Alternative.** All of the agencies supported the recommendation to stop evaluating the Streetcar Alternative. AWG comments indicated that the alternative did not meet the project Purpose and Need, performed poorer than the EMU Alternative in nearly all evaluation criteria and was inconsistent with existing local land-use plans. Some asked that, should RTD identify a need for supplemental access to the FasTracks system, the Streetcar Alternative be re-evaluated.
- Near-Unanimous Support to Select EMU as the Preferred Commuter Rail Technology.** All AWG commenters except Adams County (which deferred a decision to support either EMU or DMU in order for the “EIS process and RTD to determine the most appropriate technology for the Gold Line”) supported the project team’s recommendation to select EMU as the preferred technology for the Gold Line. Supportive comments indicated a preference for EMU for numerous reasons including its similarity to the technology recommended in the MIS and endorsed by the voters in FasTracks, cost effectiveness, local air quality, and the fact that DMU was eliminated from further evaluation earlier in the alternatives evaluation screening process.

The issues identified at the selection of the Preferred Alternative generally held consistent with previous screening levels, as shown in Table 6-5.

TABLE 6-5
Top Issues Identified at Level 4, Selection of Preferred Alternative

| Rank | Issue | Difference from Conceptual Screening | Response |
|------|--------------------|--|--|
| 1 | Transit Technology | The vast majority of comments expressed a preference for EMU as the preferred technology for the Gold Line and opposed the re-introduction of DMU. Commenters cited several reasons for their preference, including: voter expectations; belief that no one technology is right for all corridors; concerns about noise, vibration, and environmental impacts; and long-term financial benefits of electric over diesel. | Public workshops included extensive information and boards comparing the two technologies. EMU was accepted as the Preferred Technology for the Gold Line by the RTD Board. |

| Rank | Issue | Difference from Conceptual Screening | Response |
|-------------|-----------------------|--|--|
| 2 | Alignment | The BNSF/UP alignment was the overwhelming preference. Faster travel time, higher ridership and fulfillment of the expectation from the FasTracks vote were commonly cited as reasons for support. Many commenters were interested in looking at Streetcar in the future as a potential addition to the FasTracks system. | The BNSF/UP alignment was selected as the Preferred Alternative for the Gold Line by the RTD Board. A link to the City of Denver's Streetcar workshop Web page was added to the Gold Line Web site. |
| 3 | Stations | The vast majority of commenters supported the recommended seven stations. There was interest in Northwest Denver keeping the proximity of the 38th Avenue Station as near the Highland and Sunnyside neighborhoods as possible. | A Station Platform and Parking IFT meeting was convened to discuss the refined options for station footprints. The seven stations were included in the Preferred Alternative. Further analysis also resulted in selecting the southern-most 38th Avenue Station footprint option. |
| 4 | Environmental | These comments were generally focused on concerns about the potential environmental impacts of a DMU technology, particularly the potential impacts on air quality. | Eliminated DMU from reintroduction. Communicated to the public that more detailed environmental impacts analysis would be conducted at next level of evaluations and scheduled public workshops for October 2007 to review preliminary DEIS impact results. |
| 5 | Cost/Funding | Concerns in this area focused on the Annual Program Evaluation and the projected budget shortfall for FasTracks. There were also some comments – generally neutral or slightly negative in nature – about the potential for using a Public-Private Partnership to complete the final design, construction, and operation of the Gold Line. | Developed and distributed a fact sheet on the Annual Program Evaluation and the Penta-P program at the public workshops and via the Internet. Sent an e-mail blast on the Annual Program Evaluation and included a newsletter article on the Penta-P program. |
| 6 | Noise/Vibration | Generally focused on the noise/vibration impacts of diesel technologies and concerns that diesel technology impacts would be greater than the impacts of electric technology. | Provided a noise comparison graph at the public workshops. It was noted that detailed noise and vibration impacts would be evaluated in the DEIS. |
| 7 | Right-of-Way/Property | These concerns were expressed about both the EMU and Streetcar Alternatives. They related mostly to property impacts, increases in traffic congestion, and potential loss of neighborhood character. Olde Town Arvada, 38th Avenue, and Harlan Street were specifically mentioned. | Streetcar Alternative was eliminated from further evaluation. Team conducted impact avoidance workshop to reduce impacts of the Preferred Alternative. |
| 8 | Operations | Mainly related to the faster travel time of the commuter rail alternative and the associated advantages. There were concerns that Streetcar would not be competitive as an alternative. | Streetcar Alternative was eliminated from further evaluation. |
| 9 | Public Involvement | Most comments endorsed the public involvement process and expressed satisfaction for being able to participate in the process. Some comments expressed that the potential re-introduction of DMU would cause severe damage to the public's trust and belief in the decision-making process. | Selected EMU on BNSF/UP as Preferred Alternative. Sent e-mail blast to stakeholder database announcing selection of electric commuter rail as the preferred technology. |

| Rank | Issue | Difference from Conceptual Screening | Response |
|------|-----------|--|--|
| 10 | FasTracks | These comments mainly focused on the importance of being able to make a direct transfer to the Northwest Rail Corridor from the Gold Line at the 38th Avenue and Pecos stations. | Included station footprints that may accommodate direct transfers to Northwest Rail in EIS evaluation. Included a FasTracks station at the public workshops with staff to answer questions and distribute materials related to the Northwest Rail Corridor. |

Source: Gold Line Team, 2008

RTD Board Adoption of the Preferred Alternative. The RTD Board adopted the Preferred Alternative in two phases. In June 2007, the Board adopted the general technology mode, alignment, and stations of the Preferred Alternative as commuter rail on the BNSF/UP alignment with seven stations. At its July 24, 2007 board meeting, the RTD Board unanimously adopted EMU as the preferred commuter rail technology for the Preferred Alternative.

6.10 Agency and Public Response to the Preliminary Results of the DEIS (Public Workshop No. 5)

While not a decision milestone, the project team held a round of meetings with the LGT, public, and AWG to summarize some preliminary DEIS results and gather feedback on potential mitigation options for the Preferred Alternative for the Gold Line. This was initially presented to the LGT on October 16, 2007, then to the public at Public Workshop No. 5 on October 23 and 24, 2007, and finally to the AWG on November 29, 2007.

Public Input at Public Workshop No. 5. Public input at the workshops began to shift away from the topics of alignment and transit technology that were so prevalent prior to selecting the Preferred Alternative. Input at these workshops was largely complimentary to the proposed project and focused more on stations, noise and vibration, and potential property impacts.

Stations. Comments regarding stations dealt primarily with parking, preferred station options, and design elements:

- There continued to be strong support for selecting and designing the 38th Avenue and Pecos stations to provide a cross-platform transfer to Northwest Rail.
- There was some question regarding the parking demand at the 38th Avenue Station and the Ward Road Station. For the 38th Avenue Station, comments centered on a belief that the projected demand was too high. For the Ward Road Station, comments indicated some concern that the projected demand was too low.

Noise/Vibration. Public comments indicated overwhelming support for RTD to work with local municipalities to establish Quiet Zones as a preferred mitigation method for potential noise impacts. Comments identified multiple benefits to the establishment of Quiet Zones over other mitigation measures including:

- Prevents the visual impacts created by sound barriers.
- Eliminates noise from both the Preferred Alternative for the Gold Line and the freight trains that operate in the area, potentially creating a quieter environment than exists today in these communities.
- Avoids the introduction of a community barrier, dividing the communities on the north side of the tracks from those on the south.

Stations. Public comments indicated there was strong support for the proposed station locations. The primary reason cited was that the station locations were consistent with existing local plans and also with what had been shown to voters in FasTracks. There was significant interest in ensuring that the 38th Avenue and Pecos stations be able to accommodate direct transfers to Northwest Rail. In addition, there was discussion about the exact platform location for the 38th Avenue Station. Neighboring communities indicated a preference for the platform to be located as close to the northern edge of 38th Avenue as possible to provide better access to the Highland Neighborhood south of 38th Avenue.

Potential Property Impacts. The project team presented plans for a portion of single-track alignment. Among the reasons for this was an effort to avoid impacts to properties, including many historic properties. The majority of related comments expressed support for the use of a single-track alignment to minimize potential property impacts in and around Olde Town Arvada.

Agency Working Group Input. The AWG met regarding the preliminary results of the DEIS on November 29, 2007. Their comments were generally consistent with what was heard from the public, especially surrounding the single-track and Quiet Zone issues.

The issues identified during the Preliminary Results of the DEIS generally held consistent with previous screening levels, as shown in Table 6-6.

TABLE 6-6
Top Issues Identified at Preliminary Results of the DEIS

| Rank | Issue | Description | Response |
|------|-----------------------|---|--|
| 1 | Noise/Vibration | Most commenters in this category were addressing the project team's noise analysis and mitigation options. An overwhelming majority of commenters identified Quiet Zones as the preferred mitigation measure for noise impacts. | Project team continued to recommend Quiet Zones as the mitigation measure for severe noise impacts in the DEIS. |
| 2 | Right-of-Way/Property | The majority of commenters in this category identified support for the project team's proposed single-track segment as a way to avoid property impacts. Other comments in this category dealt with the desire to ensure that impacted property owners are notified as early in the process as possible. | Project team continued to recommend single-track segment in the DEIS. Stakeholder database was reviewed and updated to ensure that all potentially impacted property owners are receiving project information. |
| 3 | Stations | These comments continued to be supportive of the seven stations identified in the Preferred Alternative. In addition, commenters continued to identify a preference for the Pecos East station option that would allow for direct transfers to Northwest Rail. | The seven stations continued to be included in the project team's analysis. |
| 4 | Alignment | Commenters continued to support RTD's Preferred Alternative alignment. This category has overlap with Right-of-Way/Property Impacts as there were a number of comments supporting the section of single-track alignment. | Project team continued to analyze the Preferred Alternative alignment with the section of single-track. |
| 5 | Cost/Funding | Comments in this category were generally related to the Penta-P. | Project team continued distributing fact sheets and other information on the Penta-P. |

| Rank | Issue | Description | Response |
|------|-----------------------|--|---|
| 6 | Pedestrians/ Bikes | These comments generally were focused on bike and pedestrian access in and around stations. A few comments expressed interest in establishing a bike path along the Gold Line alignment that would connect existing local bike facilities. | Refined station renderings to ensure they clearly indicated bike/pedestrian access points for the station areas. Clarified that the Preferred Alternative is in the railroad ROW and that the railroads will not allow bicycle or pedestrian facilities in the vicinity of active train lines. Reminded public that FasTracks does not include funds for bike facilities that are not directly needed for the transit project. |
| 7 | Safety | Most of these comments related to the safety of at-grade crossings. Some questioned how RTD would provide safe at-grade crossings without the use of train horns in the case that Quiet Zones were implemented. | Distributed graphics depicting various at-grade-crossing safety options for both vehicles and pedestrians. |
| 8 | Operations | Comments were mainly related to the proposed operation schedule and how the Gold Line would relate to other FasTracks corridors | Provisions for a cross-platform transfer to the Northwest Rail project have been maintained. |
| 9 | Public Involvement | Similar to previous workshops, most comments endorsed the public involvement process. Some comments expressed a desire to ensure that affected property owners are contacted as soon as possible. | Stakeholder database was reviewed and updated to ensure that all potentially impacted property owners are receiving project information. |
| 10 | Transit Technology | Commenters were generally looking for more information about the similarities and differences between EMU trains and the LRT trains they are used to seeing in the metro area. | Displayed information at the public workshops about EMU trains. Provided links to EMU videos on the FasTracks Web site. Developed visual simulations of the Preferred Alternative for inclusion in the DEIS. |

Source: Gold Line Team, 2008

6.11 Agency and Public Response to the Preferred Alternative Refinement (Public Workshop No. 6)

The project team's initial analysis of the Preferred Alternative Refinements, with the recommendation to evaluate the Preferred Alternative, including both the Railroad Alignment and the EDDO in the DEIS, was presented to the LGT on February 19, 2008, the public at Public Workshop No. 6 on March 4 and 6, 2008, and the AWG on March 7, 2008.

Public Input at Public Workshop No. 6. At all levels (LGT, public, and AWG) there was overwhelming support for the project team's recommendation to evaluate the Preferred Alternative, including both the Railroad Alignment and the EDDO in the DEIS.

The issues identified at the Preferred Alternative Refinement workshops are shown in Table 6-7.

TABLE 6-7
Top Issues Identified at Level 5, Preferred Alternative Refinement

| Rank | Issue | Description | Response |
|------|---------------------------|---|---|
| 1 | Right-of-Way/ Property | Commenters expressed concern about the Preferred Alternative Refinement options having greater property impacts than the Preferred Alternative. In addition, there were several questions about the property acquisition process and RTD's power of eminent domain. | Distributed updated fact sheets summarizing the property acquisition process at the public workshops and online. |
| 2 | Stations | These comments generally dealt with the 38th Avenue Station and the Olde Town Station. Some commenters expressed concern that the 38th Avenue Station would be removed as part of the Preferred Alternative Refinement process. Regarding Olde Town, commenters expressed individual preferences among the three station options. | Held IFT to review options for the 38th Avenue Station associated with the Preferred Alternative Refinement. |
| 3 | FasTracks System | Commenters expressed disappointment in the negotiations between RTD and the railroads. Some felt that RTD should have had agreements in place with the railroads before getting this far into the planning process. | Developed a fact sheet summarizing the negotiation process between RTD and the railroads. Distributed the fact sheet at the public workshops and online. |
| 4 | Cost/Funding | General concerns about the how the Preferred Alternative Refinement options and railroad negotiations fit within the Gold Line budget. | Informed stakeholders that more information would be available in the DEIS and after RTD completes its Annual Program Evaluation of FasTracks in the summer of 2008. |
| 5 | Alignment | There was overwhelming support for the EDDO alignment refinement. | The EDDO was selected for evaluation in the DEIS. |
| 6 | Public Involvement | Public involvement comments generally complimented RTD's public involvement effort or questioned when and how property owners would be notified if RTD intends to purchase their property for the Gold Line. | Distributed updated fact sheets summarizing the property acquisition process at the public workshops and online. |
| 7 | Operations | Commenters continued to express their desire for access to Northwest Rail from both the 38th Avenue and Pecos stations. | For both the Preferred Alternative and the EDDO, the project team continues to enhance station design to maintain the ability to provide access to Northwest Rail at the 38th Avenue Station and Pecos East Station option. |
| 8 | Parking | Most parking comments at this milestone expressed concern about the impacts (mostly property impacts and increased traffic and congestion) of providing parking at the 38th Avenue Station. | Held a 38th Avenue Station IFT workshop to discuss the Preferred Alternative Refinement parking options. Developed a new Preferred Alternative parking option that minimizes impacts to historic properties. |
| 9 | Pedestrians/ Bicycles | The majority of these comments dealt with pedestrian access to the 38th Avenue Station. Commenters wanted to maintain quality pedestrian access to/from the station with the Preferred Alternative Refinement. | Project team continued refinements of 38th Avenue Station design options to ensure that all include a pedestrian bridge connecting neighborhoods west of the North Yards with the station to the east. |
| 10 | Noise/Vibration | Comments generally concerned potential noise impacts in residential areas in Arvada and expressed support for Quiet Zones and other noise mitigation measures as appropriate. | RTD continues to work with local municipalities on plans to assist local governments to implement Quiet Zones as the preferred noise mitigation measure. |

Source: Gold Line Team, 2008

Agency Working Group Input. The AWG met regarding the Preferred Alternative Refinements on March 7, 2008. The AWG expressed unanimous support for the project team's recommendation to evaluate the Preferred Alternative, including both the Railroad Alignment and the EDDO in the DEIS. The group agreed that this design option seemed to best balance efforts to avoid railroad ROW while minimizing impacts and remaining conscious of technical challenges and budget implications.

6.12 Agency and Public Response to Draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Hearing

The DEIS was released on Friday, July 18, 2008. Public comments on the DEIS were gathered for 45 days until Tuesday, September 2, 2008. Comments were submitted verbally and in writing. Verbal comments were submitted at the two public hearings. Written comments were submitted via the following methods:

- Online at www.rtdgoldline.com
- E-mailed to comments@rtdgoldline.com
- Mailed comments to FTA Region 8, David Beckhouse, Team Leader for Planning and Programs, C/O Gold Line Team, GBSM, 600 17th Street, Suite 2020 South, Denver, CO, 80202
- Comments from the two public hearings (verbal and written)

The project team completed a number of activities to ensure that the public and agencies had ample opportunities to review and comment on the DEIS. These activities included:

- Created and heavily promoted a special section of the project Web site that included electronic versions of the DEIS, all DEIS-related handouts, and the DEIS comment form
- Direct mail to the entire stakeholder database
- Multiple e-mail blasts throughout the DEIS comment period
- Outreach through business, neighborhood, religious, and civic organizations
- Presentations to organizations
- Developed special DEIS materials including tips on submitting effective comments, DEIS fact sheet, FAQs, and more
- LGT Meeting (July 29, 2008)
- Two Public Hearings (August 6 and 7, 2008)
- AWG Meeting (August 12, 2008)

During the public comment period, more than 80 organizations and individuals submitted DEIS comments. Every DEIS comment and a response is included in Volume II, Response to Agency and Public Comments for the Gold Line Corridor and Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility.

Table 6-8 provides a high level summary of the top issues/topics identified among the DEIS comments.

TABLE 6-8
Top Issues/Topics Identified in Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comments

| Rank | Issue | Description |
|------|---------------------------|---|
| 1 | Stations | Comments covered a wide variety of station-related topics, including suggestions for station design, questions about access to stations, and concerns about having adequate parking. Many comments specifically mentioned the 38th Avenue Station, with most expressing a preference for the 41st Avenue East Station option. |
| 2 | Operations | Comments mostly related to bus operations and how the future bus system will integrate into the Gold Line. Comments also dealt with train frequency and hours of operation. |
| 3 | Pedestrians/ Bikes | Comments expressing a desire for good pedestrian and bicycle access to Gold Line stations. |
| 4 | Cost/Funding | Comments varied, with some expressing concern about the FasTracks budget shortfall and others offering suggestions for making the Gold Line more cost effective. A few questioned whether the Preferred Alternative is the most cost-effective option for the corridor. |
| 5 | Aesthetics | Most of these comments related to the Olde Town Station and expressed a desire to integrate the station into its historic surroundings. Others expressed concerns about the visual impacts of infrastructure such as fencing and catenary. The aesthetics of the 38th Avenue, Sheridan, and Pecos stations were also mentioned. |
| 6 | Environmental | Environmental comments mentioned multiple aspects of the Gold Line Team's environmental analysis, including biological resources, historic properties, air quality, wetlands, floodplains, and surface water quality. |
| 7 | Right of Way/ Property | Comments generally requested that RTD avoid property impacts and acquisitions as much as possible. Some applauded the decision to implement a single-track segment to avoid impacts; other commenters asked about the impacts to specific properties. |
| 8 | Public Involvement | Most comments praised the collaborative public involvement process, while others felt that they weren't given enough information. Several comments requested that RTD continue to collaborate closely with the public as it makes decisions in future phases of the project. |
| 9 | Noise/Vibration | Comments encouraged RTD to limit noise and vibration impacts as much as possible and were highly supportive of Quiet Zones as the preferred mitigation measure for noise impacts. |
| 10 | Transit Technology | Comments generally supported EMU technology for the Gold Line, with some encouraging RTD to evaluate higher-capacity trains. |

Source: Gold Line Team, 2008

6.13 Preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement

The project team engaged local governments and community stakeholders throughout the preparation of the FEIS. A number of targeted efforts were used during this timeframe

Station Access and Design IFT. Since DEIS comments rated stations as the number one concern, the project team convened IFT meetings in October and November 2008 to review and gather input to help complete the preliminary station design templates/recommendations and access plans for the Gold Line stations. Recommendations from these meetings have been integrated in the station designs as shown in Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered.

Local Governments Fencing Workshops. The project team held four meetings with local government representatives to review and gather input on future land use types and recommended fencing options. The first of the four meetings was held with the entire Gold Line LGT. Following that meeting, each government entity appointed one to two representatives to participate in the three subsequent LGT Fencing Subcommittee meetings.

These workshops helped inform the analysis and recommendations shown in Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered.

CRMF Supplemental Environmental Assessment. Two public meetings were held for citizen and stakeholder input regarding the selection of the Fox North Site for the CRMF during the SEA process. The first meeting was held on January 22, 2009 to present and gather input on the two alternative sites considered for the CRMF project—the Platte Site and the Fox North Site. A second public and final meeting was held on April 23, 2009 to present the results of the CRMF SEA. Table 6-9 presents the key issues brought forth at this final meeting.

TABLE 6-9
Top Issues/Topics Identified at the Final CRMF Public Meeting

| Rank | Issue | Description |
|------|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | Property Acquisition | Many comments were received regarding the acquisition of the 4 businesses required for the shared alignment and the CRMF. Employees from the Owens Corning facility were the most vocal about the prospects of relocating. There were concerns that relocating the facility would result in the closing of the Owens Corning plant. Suppliers to Owens Corning also testified about the economic impacts of closing the plant. In many, cases commenter's indicated that the loss of approximately 100 Owens Corning employees would have ripple effects beyond the plant and that the economic analysis in the SEA should include impacts on secondary employment. |
| 2 | Site location | Several citizens were supportive of locating the CRMF at the Fox North Site. |
| 3 | Shared Alignment | The location of the shared alignment received almost no comments. |
| 4 | Environmental Impacts | There were few comments regarding the impact analysis conducted for the SEA, other than relating to secondary employment as mentioned above. |

Source: Gold Line Team, 2009

Continuation of all FEIS Communication Activities. Throughout the preparation of the FEIS, the project team continued many of the same outreach and engagement efforts that were used throughout development of the EIS. Those included publishing two project newsletters, making numerous updates to the project Web site, conducting multiple listening sessions, and distributing frequent e-mail updates to effected stakeholders.

Following the CRMF Supplemental EA formal comment period, stakeholders continued to submit comments to the project team.

One group of comments generally came from employees or affiliates of Owens Corning and individuals outside the study area. These comments expressed concern about the potential impacts (mainly economic) that could result if Owens Corning were to not to relocate its facility and instead choose to cease operations.

The second group of comments generally came from stakeholders representing the nearby residential neighborhoods that have been actively involved in the CRMF site-selection process since it began in 2004. These comments generally expressed support for the Fox North Site and concern that the years of community input and involvement that led to the recommendation of the site would be reversed by the concerns of one business.

In response to concerns about the potential loss of jobs, RTD redesigned the CRMF to minimize the impact on the Owens Corning facilities. As discussed in Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered, this involved some modifications to the original design and operational criteria and included the following measures:

1. Reduce the minimum storage to at least 78 vehicles for 2015 versus 96
2. Forego the paving of the vehicle storage tracks (to reduce storm water runoff)
3. Use underground storm water detention (to save site area)
4. Make adjustments to the mainline track that would allow shifting of the site footprint to the south, away from Owens Corning.

In total, these changes avoid the acquisition of approximately 9 acres of the Owens Corning site, allowing the administration and plant operating facilities to remain intact. Owens Corning could potentially lose some outside storage area and some parking that would need to be relocated as a part of this project. (Refer to Figure 2-13 in Chapter 2, Alternatives Considered). As a result of this avoidance measure, the Owens Corning facility will not have to be relocated.

6.14 Next Steps

The Gold Line Team will continue its proactive community engagement efforts through the completion of the FEIS and receipt of the FTA decision document.

In an effort to inform the public about the FEIS and solicit comments on the document, the Gold Line Team will conduct additional Listening Sessions, hold two public hearings, and disseminate information on the FEIS via the project Web site, e-mail blasts, and aggressive outreach to local media.

The FEIS is available for the public to review at the following locations:

- Online at www.rtdgoldline.com
- Arvada Library, http://jefferson.lib.co.us/pdf/wireless_brochure.pdf 7525 West 57th Avenue, Arvada, CO 80002
- Perl Mack Library, 7611 Hilltop Circle, Denver, CO 80221
- Red Rocks Community College – Arvada Campus, 5420 Miller Street, Arvada, CO 80002 (available at the front desk of the campus lobby)
- Regis University Library, 3333 Regis Boulevard, Denver, CO 80221
- Smiley Library, 4501 West 46th Avenue, Denver, CO 80212
- Standley Lake Library, http://jefferson.lib.co.us/pdf/wireless_brochure.pdf 8485 Kipling Street, Arvada, CO 80005
- Westminster Public Library, 7392 Irving Street, Westminster, CO 80030
- Wheat Ridge Library, http://jefferson.lib.co.us/pdf/wireless_brochure.pdf 5475 West 32nd Avenue, Wheat Ridge, CO 80212
- Woodbury Library, 3265 Federal Boulevard, Denver, CO 80211

Comments on the FEIS will be accepted for 30 days (excluding holidays) following the release of the document. Comments can be submitted verbally or in writing. Verbal

comments will be accepted at the two public hearings. Written comments can be submitted via the following methods:

- Online at www.rtdgoldline.com
- E-mailing to comments@rtdgoldline.com
- Mailing information requests and comments to FTA Region 8, David Beckhouse, Team Leader for Planning and Programs, C/O Gold Line Team, GBSM, 600 17th Street, Suite 2020 South, Denver, CO, 80202
- Dropping off comments at either of the two public hearings
- Completing and leaving a comment form at either of the two public hearings