



Draft Meeting Summary

Gold Line Local Governments Team

Wednesday, August 16, 2006

1:00 p.m.-3:30 p.m.

Arvada City Hall, 8101 Ralston Road, City Council Conference Room

Meeting Goals and Agenda

This was the first meeting of the Gold Line Local Governments Team (LGT). The meeting goals were to:

- Establish the Local Governments Team
- Provide a project update and preview information for the Public Scoping meetings
- Identify project issues of importance to the Local Governments Team
- Prepare the Local Governments Team for the August 24, 2006, Agency Milestone (Scoping) Workshop

The meeting agenda included introductions; identification of project issues; an overview of the role and function of the LGT; a preview of the presentation for the Public Meetings; and preparation for the Agency Milestone (Scoping) Workshop. Action items, next steps, and a list of participants are included at the end of this summary.

Introductions and Identification of Project Issues

Don Ulrich, consultant Project Manager, and Liz Telford, RTD Project Manager, welcomed the LGT and introduced the RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team (Project Team). Julie McKay, Project Team, asked LGT representatives to introduce themselves and identify the issues that will be important to them during the Gold Line Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), including their hopes and concerns for the project. LGT members provided the following responses:

- An important issue will be integrating local station planning with the EIS, including identifying property impacts and involving those who will be impacted. (Bob Manwaring, City of Arvada)
- Outreach will also be important. (Bob Manwaring, City of Arvada)

- My hope is that the project goes smoothly and comes in under budget. (Bob Manwaring, City of Arvada)
- My hope is that the EIS is complete, thorough, and accurate, and does not contain any “surprises” that were not discussed along the way. (John Malito, City of Arvada)
- Another hope is that the process can be sped up so that the corridor is implemented sooner. (John Malito, City of Arvada)
- An important issue will be community and citizen involvement during the study. (John Malito, City of Arvada)
- All issues are important to the RTD Board. (Wally Pulliam, RTD Board)
- Local impacts will be important— my hope is that they are addressed fairly and objectively. (Steve Nguyen, City of Wheat Ridge)
- Coordination with local sub-area plans will also be important. (Steve Nguyen, City of Wheat Ridge)
- Jefferson County is interested in the broader transportation and transit issues in the area (including the West Corridor and I-70). (Rob Balmes, Jefferson County)
- The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) is interested in overall coordination and consistency with regional transportation efforts, including systems development and the Regional Transportation Plan. We are here to listen for major issues that might be of interest to the DRCOG Board. (Bill Obermann, DRCOG)
- My hope is that the EIS is completed on schedule. (Bill Obermann, DRCOG)
- Important issues will be the 38th Avenue/Inca Street station and Denver Union Station (DUS) coordination. (Crissy Fanganello, City and County of Denver)
- An important issue will be the 38th Avenue/Inca Street station. (Rick Garcia, City and County of Denver)
- It will also be important for the study to recognize the demographic changes that have occurred in the northwest Denver neighborhoods. There is a need to look for revitalization opportunities. The neighborhoods’ relationships to the station will also be important. (Rick Garcia, City and County of Denver)

- Another interest is improving northwest Denver access to the transit system. (Rick Garcia, City and County of Denver)
- I have concerns about the impacts to neighborhoods, including property impacts. (Lorraine Anderson, City of Arvada)
- An important issue will be technology. I want to honor the conclusions of the Major Investment Study (MIS). (Lorraine Anderson, City of Arvada)

During the discussion, Steve Nguyen noted that Larry Schultz will serve as the elected official representative for the City of Wheat Ridge on the LGT. Rob Balmes noted that Jefferson County is still to appoint its elected official representative to the group.

Preview of Public Scoping Meetings

The Public Scoping Meetings for the Gold Line EIS will be held on August 23 and 24, 2006, in Arvada and north Denver, respectively. The Agency Milestone (Scoping) Workshop will be held on August 25, 2006. The purpose of this discussion was for the LGT to preview the draft presentation for the public and agency meetings and to provide input on it. During the discussion, LGT representatives and the Project Team also discussed several study issues.

At the beginning of the discussion, Liz Telford noted that Section 6002 of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act- A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) provides the framework for coordinating with local governments during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process, including identifying specific comment points at key NEPA/ Alternatives Analysis (AA) milestones. She also cited recent Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) guidance on "Linking Planning and NEPA," which enables findings of prior planning studies to be carried forward into an EIS, if certain conditions are met.

Don Ulrich noted that the SAFETEA-LU key milestones for Scoping include:

- Draft Purpose and Need
- Range of Alternatives
- Draft Alternatives Screening Criteria
- Project Schedule

The upcoming Public Scoping Meetings and Agency Milestone (Scoping) Workshop will be oriented around gathering public and agency input on these items.

During Don Ulrich's presentation, the Project Team and LGT discussed the following study issues:

- **EIS Schedule:** The LGT expressed interest in knowing the project timeline and in it being followed. Don Ulrich explained that the schedule is driven by the selection of the Preferred Alternative (PA). The project, which started in July 2006, will take 18 months. It is possible that Advanced Basic Engineering will begin next spring, with a 50% level of engineering accomplished by the time the Record of Decision (ROD) is released. The goal is to work toward a PA at the beginning of the study, including active public and agency involvement, and then focus on mitigation and engineering as it progresses. A detailed project schedule will be available to the LGT.
- **Local Land Use Planning and Transit-Oriented Development:** The LGT asked for clarification as to why RTD removed Transit-Oriented-Development (TOD) from the scope of the Gold Line study. The question was asked as to how and when the EIS will integrate local planning efforts into the public process. There is a need to coordinate the EIS with local planning efforts, including making sure that timeframes for these different activities are compatible.

In response to this need, Don Ulrich noted that the Project Team is collecting information from local governments that will then be shared at public meetings and listening sessions. In addition, "local land use compatibility" is a criterion that the study will use in evaluating the compatibility of the project with local land use planning at the station areas.

- **Project Funding:** The LGT inquired as to whether efforts could be made to acquire federal funding for the Gold Line sooner rather than later. Don Ulrich explained that the AA is one requirement in order to receive federal funding, as are other steps throughout the project. In response to a question about when local governments can start lobbying for federal funding, Liz Telford explained that RTD first needs to identify a PA and receive a rating from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA). RTD needs a medium or higher rating and permission to move into engineering and final design from FTA.
- **Rail Technologies:** The LGT asked for further explanation about RTD's current study of new technologies. Liz Telford explained that the FasTracks plan identifies Commuter Rail (CR) for some corridors and Light Rail Transit (LRT) for others. RTD is now taking a closer look at CR technologies— RTD has eliminated Locomotive-Hauled Coaches from further study and is still examining Electric Multiple Units (EMU) and Diesel Multiple Units (DMU). RTD has a consultant that is looking at the use of these two technologies for all CR corridors. Don Ulrich added that vehicle technology will also need to be

further examined for the Gold Line corridor. Later in the discussion, Liz Telford confirmed that the FasTracks budget estimate for the Gold Line is based on LRT. She clarified that this does not drive the technology decision for the corridor, but rather provides some assumptions for the study.

- **End-of-Line Station:** The LGT inquired as to whether there is a chance that the End-of-Line station at Ward Road will be eliminated from the study. Liz Telford confirmed that the FasTracks budget for the Gold Line includes the Ward Road station.
- **Purpose and Need:** In response to a question from the LGT, Liz Telford confirmed that the EIS will take into account demographic changes and shifts since the MIS.

The LGT also expressed concern about the "fixed guideway" terminology in the Purpose and Need statement. Specifically, there is concern that this is too broad of a statement and that it will allow for the inclusion of unfeasible alternatives in the study. Don Ulrich explained that current FHWA/FTA guidance allows the Purpose and Need to be specific and that it is still necessary to include a range of alternatives in the study. Liz Telford added that the screening process will help to address the concern raised by the group.

- **Study Area:** The LGT asked for further clarification about how the study area boundaries were determined. For example, the areas from Ward to Kipling and Kipling to Sheridan are different distances from I-70. Liz Telford explained that the Project Team wanted to look at impacts based on travel pattern changes, as opposed to establishing an arbitrary boundary for the study, such as a one-mile radius. The Project Team used the regional travel model to establish the study area because it provides information on where riders are most likely to access the corridor (stations).
- **Alternatives:** The LGT asked whether it will have input into the identification of the study alternatives, including any possible new alignments. One interest is serving population centers that would not be served by the BNSF alignment. The Project Team confirmed that the LGT will have input into the identification and narrowing of the study alternatives.
- **Right-of-Way:** The LGT asked for clarification as to how many additional tracks DMU or EMU technology would require in the railroad corridor. Don Ulrich clarified that the use of either of these technologies would require three tracks in the Right-of-Way, as opposed to the four that would be necessary for LRT (in either case, two tracks would be needed for freight). City of Arvada representatives noted that this is an important issue in the neighborhoods

adjacent to the railroad corridor, primarily because of concerns about property impacts. They also noted that these areas include low-income and minority populations.

During the discussion, LGT representatives provided the following input on the draft presentation for the Public Scoping Meetings:

- Include that the City of Arvada had a vision for the Gold Line eight years prior to the MIS. (“Overview of Past Studies,” pg. 11)
- Consider adding the “Beer Line Study” which was the original name for the Gold Line. This was the first rail corridor that RTD studied when the agency was first established (to be confirmed). (“Overview of Past Studies,” pg. 11)
- Change Public Support for Alternative 4A to “No.” (Note: The group recognized that this was a typographical error in the presentation. There was not public support for Alternative 4A in the MIS.) (“7 Finalist Alternatives Underwent Detailed Evaluation,” pg. 21)

In response to a LGT request, the final “Public and Agency Scoping Workshops (August 22, 23, and 24, 2006)” presentation will be available electronically on the project website www.rtdgoldline.com. The Project Team will notify the LGT when it is posted. [Note: After the LGT meeting, the Project Team determined that providing the presentation through the website was preferable to sending the presentation by mail on CD, which was discussed at the meeting.]

At the end of the discussion, Julie McKay asked the LGT if it had any additional input or issues about the upcoming public meetings or Public Involvement for the study. LGT comments included the following:

- Lorraine Anderson asked about citizen involvement in the study, citing the importance of this issue. Specifically, how will individual citizens participate in the study, particularly if they are not members of organized groups or civic organizations? In response, Andy Mountain, Project Team, provided an overview of the study’s Public Involvement activities. He highlighted the issue-focused teams, which will be convened to engage interested citizens around specific study issues. Julie McKay also noted that one purpose of the LGT is to communicate with the Project Team about Public Involvement issues and needs in their respective communities.
- Crissy Fanganello noted that the Denver neighborhoods continue to be interested in the RTD Central Maintenance Facility. Community members are also likely to be vocal about DMU and EMU Commuter Rail technology.

During the discussion, the LGT expressed an interest in receiving the public comments that the Project Team collects during the Public Scoping Meetings. The Project Team agreed to distribute these to the LGT when they are available. The Scoping period for the study ends September 25, 2006.

Role and Function of the Local Governments Team

Liz Telford presented the Gold Line Corridor Coordination Plan (GL-CCP), which the LGT received by email prior to the meeting. She noted that the LGT consists of the local government agencies that FTA invited to be Participating Agencies under SAFETEA-LU. After further explaining this process, Liz Telford requested that LGT members inform FTA whether they accept their Participating Agency status, if they have not already. She also distributed additional copies of the response form that Participating Agencies received earlier by mail.

In further reviewing the GL-CCP, Liz Telford noted the highlighted sections that describe the composition, role, and operating procedures of the LGT. Julie McKay asked LGT representatives for additional suggestions or needs concerning how the group functions— including meeting locations and times. In general, the group did not have strong feelings about any other procedural matters, although noted that Fridays are usually good for meetings (Monday and Wednesday are more problematic) and the length of meetings should be kept at two hours or less. As a follow up, Julie McKay encouraged LGT members to contact her if they have additional suggestions, questions, or concerns about how the group is operating.

The LGT also discussed whether a group tour of the Gold Line corridor would be useful, and, if so, whether it should be combined with the next LGT meeting. The group agreed that a tour would be useful and that it should be held as a separate event. The Project Team agreed to coordinate this event.

Next Steps: Agency Milestone (Scoping) Workshop

The next LGT meeting will be the Agency Milestone (Scoping) Workshop— a combined meeting of the LGT and Agency Working Group (AWG), which consists of state and federal agency representatives. Liz Telford highlighted some key aspects of the workshop:

- The workshop will kick off the 15 day agency comment period for the Scoping milestone.
- At the workshop, the LGT and AWG will receive the Project Schedule and other "milestone" materials. The distribution of these materials will be supplemented with electronic distribution of them after the workshop.

- The Project Team hopes to support LGT representatives by providing a form on which they can provide comments and by sending a reminder as the deadline for comments approaches.

The Agency Milestone (Scoping) Workshop will take place on Thursday, August 24, 8:30 a.m., at the RTD FasTracks Office in Denver.

Action Items

In addition to the “Next Steps” identified in the previous section, following is a summary of the Action Items identified during the meeting:

- LGT representatives are requested to inform Dave Beckhouse, FTA, as to whether they accept their Participating Agencies status, if they have not already.
- The Project Team will coordinate the Gold Line corridor field trip. (Liz Telford, Angela Brand, Julie McKay)
- The Project Team will distribute the public Scoping comments to the LGT when they are available. (Andy Mountain/Julie McKay)
- The Project Team will notify the LGT when the final “Public and Agency Scoping Workshops (August 22, 23, and 24, 2006)” presentation is available on the project website www.rtdgoldline.com. (Andy Mountain/Julie McKay)

Meeting Participants

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| 1. Lorraine Anderson | City of Arvada |
| 2. Rob Balmes | Jefferson County |
| 3. Bob Boot | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 4. Angela Brand | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 5. Kathleen Collins | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 6. Saundra Dowling | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 7. Crissy Fanganello | City and County of Denver |
| 8. Rick Garcia | City and County of Denver |
| 9. John Malito | City of Arvada |
| 10. Bob Manwaring | City of Arvada |
| 11. Julie McKay | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 12. Matt Moseley | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 13. Andy Mountain | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 14. Steve Nguyen | City of Wheat Ridge |
| 15. Bill Obermann | Denver Regional Council of Governments |
| 16. Wally Pulliam | RTD Board, District L |
| 17. Terry Ruitter | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 18. Tom Schilling | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 19. Liz Telford | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 20. Don Ulrich | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |