
Draft Meeting Summary

Agency Milestone Workshop

Preliminary Results of the DEIS

Tuesday, November 29, 2007

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

FasTracks Regional Conference Room, Suite 700 (7th Floor)

1560 Broadway, Denver

Meeting Goals and Agenda

This was the fifth Agency Milestone Workshop for the Gold Line Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The meeting goals included the following:

- Provide an understanding of the Draft EIS preparation process
- Review and discuss the preliminary results of select areas of analysis
- Overview the schedule for the DEIS comment period

The meeting's agenda included a presentation and discussion of the preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) results. After introducing the DEIS and reviewing the alternatives considered, the presentation went over the environmental resources that had impacts including land use, land acquisition, historic resources, visual resources, noise, vibration and wetlands. The team then overviewed the next steps for the project, including the DEIS schedule.

Preliminary Items

Andy Mountain, Consultant Gold Line Public Involvement Lead, welcomed the meeting attendees and conducted introductions.

Presentation

Don Ulrich, Consultant Gold Line Project Manager, reviewed the presentation on the preliminary results of the DEIS analysis. This presentation was similar to the one that the project team presented at the October 23 and 24 public workshops. It overviewed the areas of analysis that had discriminating results between the Preferred Alternative and the No Action alternative. At several points in the presentation, workshop participants asked questions, discussed the information, and provided comments:

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- Patty Lorence, City of Arvada, mentioned the project team's need to conduct additional geo-technical analysis before they can determine whether certain vibration mitigation measures can be implemented. Patty asked whether there is any existing knowledge that indicates that the mitigation measures will be able to be used on the Gold Line. Don Ulrich stated that they are not sure at this point and that additional research and soil analysis are still required. Jonathan Spencer, Gold Line Engineering Consultant, added that the Gold Line Team will know more in the coming months.
 - Regarding the potential wetland near the Olde Town North station option, Patty Lorence and John Schwab, CDOT, discussed source of the water creating the wetland. John stated that source is coming from the north and that it appears to be clean, which indicates it is not coming from a leaking sewer, rather it's likely ground water.

Andy Mountain then provided the attendees with an overview of the public comments received – both for the project to date and during the most recent phase of evaluation. He outlined the schedule for the coming months surrounding the release of the DEIS and the 45-day comment period.

- Patty Lorence asked whether the City of Arvada would be included in the 106 consultation and review with SHPO. Liz Telford, RTD Gold Line Project Manager, replied that the meeting will be used to discuss Denver historic sites, specifically the structures near the 38th Avenue Station, so it would be unnecessary for Arvada to attend.
- Kirk Webb, CDOT, asked whether the DEIS will include all relevant technical memos. Liz Telford replied that while they won't be included with the document, the team can easily provide those memos upon request.
- Kirk Webb asked whether traffic at the Gold Line stations would be discussed at the meetings following the release of the DEIS. Don Ulrich responded that much of that information will be included in the document itself.
- Patty Lorence asked whether the Gold Line project team will mail out the document to stakeholders. Liz Telford replied that they will have CDs of the document available to send out, but that if someone also required a hard copy, the team would send them one. Andy Mountain added that there will also be an Executive Summary, which provides a good overview of the information in the DEIS, yet isn't as lengthy. Andy suggested that the team could also send a hard copy of the summary instead of the full DEIS, which will likely be several hundred pages.
- David Ruchman, RTD Director, suggested that the project team provide each of the local municipalities with several copies of the Executive Summary for distribution to the public, and the team agreed to do so.

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- David Ruchman requested that the Gold Line team be receptive to comments up front. He mentioned issues with the West Corridor when residents were told that certain comments wouldn't be addressed until final design. Then, in final design, the same commenters were told that it was too late because decisions had already been made. Liz Telford replied that the Gold Line team intends to make solid decisions on as many issues as possible during the EIS phase. Regarding stations, she went on to say that Mark Leese, a Gold Line Consultant, will be developing packages of design options for all commuter rail FasTracks lines and that the Gold Line team will use those in station design in charettes next spring.
 - Lorraine Anderson, Arvada City Council, recommended that the Gold Line Team set up meetings with the business community to ensure that they are informed up front. Andy Mountain replied that the team will be setting up many listening sessions throughout the 45-day comment period and that the team has already held meetings with Historic Olde Town Arvada, the Arvada Economic Development Association and many other business groups.
 - Lorraine Anderson asked whether the owners of properties that will likely need to be acquired have been contacted. Andy Mountain replied that while these properties have been added to the database and are receiving all the project updates, the project team is prohibited from contacting them specifically about the potential need to acquire their property until RTD receives a Record of Decision because numerous factors including engineering and design could always change.
 - Lorraine Anderson commented that the public has a misunderstanding of the eminent domain process, and that many believe that owners are not compensated when their property is acquired. She encouraged the team to emphasize the facts regarding eminent domain with the news media.
 - Crissy Fanaganello, City and County of Denver, asked about the legal protocol surrounding property acquisition, and Liz Telford replied that there is a Federal Uniform Acquisition and Relocation Act that regulates the process.
 - Karen Good, City and County of Denver, asked whether there are any updates regarding shared stations with the Gold Line and Northwest Rail and if that analysis would be included in the EIS. Liz Telford responded that the team has assumed that the 38th station will be a transfer point for Northwest Rail. She added that if the Pecos East station option is selected, then that station would likely be a transfer point as well. Liz stated that they will refine the details of transfer stations in the Final EIS.
 - Dave Ruchman asked how the decision will be made in selecting either the Pecos East or Pecos West Station option. Liz Telford replied that the decision is entirely based on whether Adams County can obtain the funding to complete the grade separation at Pecos.

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- Dave Ruchman asked whether there could be a provision in the EIS stating that if the transfer station at Pecos falls through, then RTD would still provide good pedestrian connectivity to the Northwest Rail station from the Gold Line. Liz replied that this is not possible since Northwest Rail currently doesn't have a station planned for Pecos; rather having a Northwest Rail station at Pecos is fully contingent upon the Gold Line.
 - Will Kerns, Jefferson County, stated that he gets a lot of comments from bike advocates for a continuous bike path along the Gold Line. He asked whether such a trail would be a possibility. Liz Telford stated that there isn't enough space for such a trail without acquiring properties, and nor would the railroads allow a bike path within their right of way. She added that Chris Vogelsang, a Gold Line consultant, is working with groups to investigate other options for bike path connectivity (through adjacent neighborhoods, etc.). Don Ulrich added that the Gold Line budget does not have money allocated for building bike paths.

Liz Telford then provided the attendees with a brief overview the assumptions for the No Action alternative, particularly for the segment of track between Denver Union Station and Pecos. Because, among the projects assumed in the No Action alternative, is Northwest Rail. It would exist even if the Gold Line Preferred Alternative were not built. As a result its associated impacts are considered to be part of the Gold Line's No Action alternative.

- Kirk Webb asked whether the Gold Line will be taking on mitigation for that area in its EIS or if it would be something covered in Northwest Rail's EIS. Liz Telford replied that there are very few/no impacts in the area, but that the impacts would be covered in the Gold Line EIS.
- Patty Lorence asked whether costs on that segment will be shared with both lines. Liz Telford responded that with the exception of the transfer stations (38th and Pecos) and catenary (which is not needed for Northwest Rail as it is presumed to be Diesel Multiple Unit), construction costs for the DUS to Pecos segment will be shared between Gold Line and Northwest Rail.

Next Steps

Andy Mountain stated that the Agency Working Group would be contacted early next year with further details on upcoming meetings and the DEIS schedule. He then adjourned the meeting.

MEETING PARTICIPANTS

1. Jody Ostendorf Environmental Protection Agency
2. Larry Schulz Wheat Ridge City Council
3. Dave Beckhouse Federal Transit Administration
4. Mike Ramsey Federal Railroad Administration
5. Rena Brand U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
6. Crissy Fanganello City and County of Denver
7. Karen Good City and County of Denver
8. Lorraine Anderson Arvada City Council
9. Patty Lorence City of Arvada
10. Will Kerns Jefferson County
11. Jeanne Shreve Adams County
12. Kirk Webb Colorado Department of Transportation R6
13. Wally Pulliam RTD District Director
14. David Ruchman RTD District Director
15. Jonathan Spencer RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
16. Liz Telford RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
17. Don Ulrich RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
18. Ashland Vaughn RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
19. Megan Lane RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
20. Terry Reuter RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
21. Tim Baldwin RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team