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# Draft Meeting Summary

## Gold Line Local Governments Team

Tuesday, October 16, 2007

9:00 -11 a.m.

Wellington E. Webb Building  
201 West Colfax Ave., Denver

### MEETING GOALS AND AGENDA

The meeting goals were to:

- Provide an understanding of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) preparation process
- Review and discuss the preliminary results of select areas of analysis

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

### MEETING HANDOUTS

- Meeting Agenda
- Comment Form

### PRELIMINARY ITEMS

Andy Mountain, Public Involvement consultant, conducted introductions. Liz Telford, RTD Project Manager, welcomed the participants and outlined the agenda and goals for the meeting. Liz stated that, as per usual, the LGT meeting would preview what the public will see at the October 23 and 24 workshops. Liz said that the results being presented are preliminary and that the analysis is still a work in progress. Andy then added that the LGT meeting will provide more technical detail than will be provided at the workshops.

### PRESENTATION

Don Ulrich, consultant Project Manager, reviewed the slides of the presentation. The attendees had the following questions/comments during the presentation in relation to the specific discriminating results:

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### **Property Impacts**

- Regarding the 1.9-mile segment that is proposed to be single-track, RTD Director Wally Pulliam asked whether the project team would purchase enough land to allow for an eventual second track in the area. The project team responded that RTD plans to request from the railroads as much right of way in this area that the railroads are willing to sell, however they only plan to have one track in order to avoid impacts. Wally Pulliam commented that he feels it is short-sighted to have a single track if it precludes the line from providing adequate service in the long-term, particularly if the line is ever extended further west. Liz Telford responded that the single-track can support an expansion from the proposed two-car train to a three- or four-car train (a 100-percent increase in capacity) and that current model runs show the single track being able to meet projected demand through 2030.
- Bob Manwaring, City of Arvada, stated that his main priority is ensuring that the Gold Line's design meets the commitment and promise of FasTracks. Liz Telford responded that the Gold Line will fulfill the commitment made in FasTracks since – even with single track – the line is still able to run at a peak-hour frequency of every 7.5 minutes.
- Bob Manwaring mentioned that members of the public are likely to ask the project team whether their homes will be acquired at the public workshops, and he asked that the team be prepared to answer those questions. Liz Telford commented that the single track through Olde Town eliminates the need for all residential and most commercial property acquisitions in that area. She added that the Gold Line project does not anticipate the need for any residential property acquisitions.

### **Visual Impacts**

- Patty Lorence, City of Arvada, asked for a rough height estimate for the retaining walls along the Gold Line. Ashland Vaughn, RTD engineer, stated that retaining walls are generally 3-5 feet in height, although they can be as tall as 10-12 feet.
- Bob Manwaring asked whether there are any technological developments that could someday allow electrically powered trains to operate without catenary, to which Jonathan Spencer, lead engineer for the consultant team, replied no. Don Ulrich added that the team can do much to make the catenary and architectural poles blend in better with the communities' existing visual environment. Bob Kochevar, City and County of Denver, mentioned that in the past Denver has minimized the light rail's visual impact by integrating catenary poles into street light poles and by having bigger poles at longer distances.

### **Noise Impacts**

- After Liz Telford explained RTD's policies related to noise walls and Quiet Zones, Kevin Nichols, City of Arvada, asked what the Gold Line horns will sound like, specifically

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whether they will be similar to RTD's existing light rail horns or more like the horns on freight trains currently operating in Arvada. Liz Telford responded that RTD is working with the FRA to determine the required decibel levels for the Gold Line horns. While RTD would prefer for the Gold Line's horns to be similar to current light rail noise level, it is up to FRA to determine. Liz added that their current assumption is a 90 decibel train horn for the Gold Line.

- In addition to reducing Gold Line noise impacts, Steve Nguyen from the City of Wheat Ridge asked if Quiet Zones would also help to reduce noise from freight trains. Don Ulrich affirmed that this was the case.
- Wally Pulliam asked for a clarification on responsibilities regarding Quiet Zones. Liz Telford replied that RTD has agreed to upgrade the corridor's grade crossings in order to qualify them for the Quiet Zone status in areas where there are noise impacts, but that it is then the local governments' responsibility to apply for the designation. Liz added that RTD will assist in coordinating the Quiet Zone application process.
- Kevin Nichols asked about the funding process and whether the Gold Line has the budget to implement the necessary safety measures to qualify certain areas for Quiet Zone status. Don Ulrich responded that the budget assumes that all crossings in areas with noise impacts will have grade crossing protections that will be consistent with the requirements for a Quiet Zone. Because there is some additional cost associated with the circuitry required for Quiet Zones, those areas without noise impacts may not have the required budget for the additional circuitry. In those areas where there are noise impacts, RTD will incur the full cost of both upgrading the crossing protections and the circuitry. Once each crossing is designed, then an updated cost estimate can be completed.
- Bob Manwaring asked about the mitigation measures that will be taken for areas with moderate noise impacts. Liz Telford explained that RTD must mitigate all severe noise impacts and must mitigate all moderate noise impacts where existing noise levels are significant. In those areas where existing noise levels are not significant, and there are moderate noise impacts, the agency will typically mitigate the upper 50-percent of moderate noise impacts, depending on cost effectiveness and community support level. This is outlined in RTD's moderate noise impact policy. For the Gold Line corridor, the moderate noise impacts are from east of Olde Town to Ward Road and these impacts require mitigation.

### **Wetland Impacts**

- Kevin Nichols asked whether RTD is required to replace the wetlands that are disturbed as a result of the project. Liz Telford responded that, per federal law, only the jurisdictional wetlands need to be replaced on a one to one basis. RTD will, however, purchase wetland bank credits for non jurisdictional wetland mitigation.

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## **Traffic Impacts**

Chris Sheffer, traffic consultant from Fehr & Peers, presented the traffic analysis for each station, bringing attention to any potential issues and the team's proposed mitigation.

- Bob Kochevar commented that it may be quite challenging for nearby traffic around the 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue station if RTD moves the signal from 39<sup>th</sup> to 40<sup>th</sup> and allows only for right-in, right-out access at 39<sup>th</sup>. He said that this configuration would likely require off-site improvements, especially for the Regency Student Housing development.
- Kevin Nichols asked which model was being used for traffic projections, and Liz Telford replied that they use the DRCOG 2030 model.
- Jonathan Spencer stated that the private drive railroad crossing labeled as Reed Street in Fehr & Peers analysis will likely need to be dead-ended at the railroad tracks. He noted that there is not a feasible location to add a crossing at this street and it could raise potential emergency access issues.
- Regarding the Olde Town station, Bob Manwaring stated that the City of Arvada has plans to eventually extend 56<sup>th</sup> to the east across Wadsworth, which could affect the station's traffic congestion. Chris Sheffer stated that the plans have not accounted for that extension. Kevin Nichols stated that Arvada would prefer that the Gold Line's plans not preclude an extension of 56<sup>th</sup>, as Arvada considers it a key infrastructure project. Jonathan Spencer said that in order for the extension to be considered in RTD's plans, it must already be funded and must be planned for completion by 2015. Liz Telford added that the team will conduct some additional analysis on the effect of this extension, but that in order for this scenario to be carried in the Final EIS, the extension must be funded.
- Bob Manwaring questioned whether RTD's traffic analysis considers the impacts on the community both with and without the Gold Line. Chris Sheffer explained that RTD must provide enough traffic mitigation to provide the same level of service as there would be in a No Action scenario. He said that the team has provided enough mitigation to maintain a service level of D or better for the corridor's major intersections.
- Patty Lorence commented that, although RTD is required to use DRCOG's 2030 model for growth projections, she doesn't think that this information corresponds with Arvada's models for density and future development. Liz responded that because RTD doesn't have land-use authority, and doesn't have control over station-area plans, they are not able to mitigate for those types of plans, which are considered to be indirect effects. Liz explained that, due to air quality conformity, RTD is required to base its traffic mitigation measures off of the DRCOG model. It was also mentioned that DRCOG uses information supplied by cities and counties when creating its model, so Arvada should discuss any potential inconsistencies with DRCOG.
- Patty Lorence commented that because Transit Oriented Development (TOD) would not take place without a station, she feels that RTD's traffic analysis should consider the

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potential secondary and cumulative impacts of Arvada's plans. (Note: RTD is required to identify and mitigate for direct effects of its projects. Indirect, secondary and cumulative effects are identified, but do not require mitigation. Additionally, RTD cannot directly impact land use outcomes since RTD has no land use authority.)

- Steve Nguyen requested that the team double check the Ward Road station, since he believes that 50<sup>th</sup> was incorrectly labeled as 52<sup>nd</sup>. Steve also commented that if the team is planning on using 52<sup>nd</sup> and Ward as its major access roads, he thinks it will also be necessary to provide a good north/south connection between 50<sup>th</sup> and 52<sup>nd</sup>.

### **Public Involvement Next Steps**

Andy Mountain overviewed the top ten comment issues for the project to date and discussed the upcoming public involvement milestones for the project. He explained that the team will present these findings to the public at the next round of public workshops on October 23 and 24.

The attendees had the following comments on the public workshop presentation:

- Kevin Nichols expressed that he feels it's important to give the public some additional context on various noise and vibration levels so that they can better understand the noise impacts of the Gold Line.
- Patti Lorence requested that the project team draw more attention to the fact that there aren't any anticipated residential property impacts. She also asked that the team try to compare Gold Line noise impacts to the existing conditions, since that is the public's frame of reference.

Andy Mountain adjourned the meeting.

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## Meeting Participants

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| 1. Jeanne Shreve        | Adams County                 |
| 2. Kevin Nichols        | City of Arvada               |
| 3. Bob Manwaring        | City of Arvada               |
| 4. Patty Lorence        | City of Arvada               |
| 5. Crissy Fanganello    | City and County of Denver    |
| 6. Bob Kochevar         | City and County of Denver    |
| 7. Rick Garcia          | Denver City Council          |
| 8. Kate Newman          | Jefferson County             |
| 9. Steve Nguyen         | City of Wheat Ridge          |
| 10. Wally Pulliam       | RTD Board, District L        |
| 11. Liz Telford         | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 12. Don Ulrich          | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 13. Jonathan Spencer    | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 14. Terry Ruitter       | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 15. Chris Sheffer       | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 16. Angela Brand        | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 17. Ashland Vaughn      | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 18. Genevieve Hutchison | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 19. Andy Mountain       | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |
| 20. Megan Lane          | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team |