
Meeting Summary

Gold Line Local Governments Team

Tuesday, August 7, 2007

9:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Arvada City Hall

8101 Ralston Road, Arvada

Anne Campbell Room

Meeting Goals and Agenda

The meeting goals were to:

- Provide an understanding of the station site planning and location evaluation process.
- Review and discuss the results of the station location screening process.
- Give a preliminary review of the avoidance and minimization workshop.
- Overview next steps in the project.

The meeting's agenda included a PowerPoint presentation covering a Draft Environmental Impact (DEIS) project update, station location evaluation results, preliminary station concept plans, station location evaluation results, station observations and project team recommendations, revised concept plans for further evaluation, and an avoidance and minimization workshop summary. The team then overviewed the upcoming Station Platform and Parking Issue Focused Team meeting and summarized of the next steps for the project

Meeting Handouts

- Meeting Agenda
- PowerPoint Presentation

Preliminary Items

Andy Mountain, Public Involvement consultant, conducted introductions and explained that this LGT meeting would be primarily focused on station planning. Liz Telford, RTD Project Manager, welcomed the participants and outlined the agenda and goals for the meeting. Liz announced that the RTD Board endorsed the Gold Line team's recommendation of EMU: BN/UP as the Preferred Alternative and that the Gold Line - combined with the East Corridor and Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility - had been accepted into the FTA's Penta-P program. Liz stated that RTD will work with FTA to determine the next steps.

Liz then added that station planning for the Gold Line is an evolving process. She explained that the Gold Line Team will make station assumptions in the DEIS, but that the designs will continue to evolve as more engineering is completed. She mentioned that the team has an aggressive schedule ahead in order to get a decision document from the FTA by end of 2008.

PowerPoint Presentation - Stations

Don Ulrich, consultant Project Manager, reviewed the slides of the presentation that will be used at the Issue Focused Team meeting and overviewed the planned footprints for each station location, explaining how the team had arrived at its present-day plans. The attendees had the following questions/comments during the presentation in relation to the specific station locations:

38th Avenue Station

- Rick Garcia, Denver City Councilman, asked whether this station would be a joint station with the Northwest Rail corridor. He also asked whether Northwest Rail's decisions on technology would affect the station's ability to be a joint station for both corridors. Don Ulrich replied that the assumption is for the station to be shared by Northwest Rail and the Gold Line, and Liz Telford explained that technology wouldn't be an issue in creating a joint station, since the station could be compatible with both EMU and DMU technology and that DMU can run on the same tracks (under the catenary) as EMU.
- Rick Garcia then asked whether Councilwoman Judy Montero's office had been involved in the station design or how the public had been involved in the planning efforts. Andy Mountain replied that the team had conducted Issue Focused Teams in April to gather public input and that another meeting was planned for the following week at which the community would have opportunity to comment on the station footprints. Andy added that if the public still has questions, the Gold Line Team could conduct an additional meeting specific to the 38th Avenue station location.
- Liz Telford mentioned that the station design for 38th allows for good bus and vehicular circulation and helps to avoid traffic impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Crissy Fanganello, City of Denver, asked whether the opening day parking spots would all fit in a surface lot, to which Jean Sanson, a Gold Line Team consultant, responded that all of the opening day parking would fit in a surface lot.

Pecos Station

- Loraine Anderson, Arvada City Councilwoman, made the comment that the transportation into and out of the stations needs to be simple and easily accessible and that signage needs to be clear.

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- Jeanne Shreve, Adams County, stated that the county is considering both of the current options for the Pecos station. She added that the preliminary design for the Pecos grade separation would begin in December. She also noted that the county hopes to build a pedestrian network that links to the Clear Creek System and accesses this station.

Federal Station

- Don Ulrich explained that there are two station options at Federal. One of the options, Federal East, has fewer potential wetlands impacts than the other option, Federal West.
- Liz Telford added that the station footprints make a considerable difference when it comes to impacting wetlands, so as a result, additional analysis may be required in order to avoid them wherever possible.
- Shelley Cook, City of Arvada, made the comment that she would prefer for access to the Clear Creek Trail to be preserved at this station location.

Sheridan Station

- Kevin Nichols, City of Arvada, asked whether the slope underneath the Sheridan bridge would need to be reconstructed for the Gold Line, and Jonathan Spencer, a consultant with the Gold Line Team, replied that it would be.
- Kevin Nichols then asked whether it would be possible to also fit a pedestrian/bike trail under the Sheridan bridge. Ashland Vaughn, RTD's lead engineer for the Gold Line, responded that there is barely enough space for two Gold Line tracks, so a trail would not be possible.
- Rick Garcia questioned how the station's layout was originated and whether there was public support for locating the parking to the north. Andy Mountain responded that at the Issue Focused Team meetings, the public had liked the idea of having the station north of the tracks, since it doesn't require a pedestrian bridge and has more points of access. Rick responded that Option B (with the parking located south of the existing railroad tracks) seemed more accessible for the neighborhoods of northwest Denver. He added that the main sensitivity is related to having good bus service for the Federal and Sheridan stations, so that residents of northwest Denver are able to use the system without having to go all way to the 38th Avenue station.
- Liz Telford stated that the team would be going back to the members of the Issue Focused Teams the following week to present the station options, so the public would have another opportunity to provide input.
- Kevin Nichols said that he understands Rick Garcia's point about Option B being slightly closer to the northwest Denver, but that there is extensive industrial traffic that uses the roads around the south station option, including traffic serving a nearby concrete plant. As a result, Nichols said that the north option (Option A) may provide better vehicular access.

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- Lorraine Anderson stated that, besides Sheridan Blvd., she believes Tennyson would provide the best vehicular access to the Sheridan station from the neighborhoods to south. She said that the station should connect to Tennyson to provide easy vehicular access. Liz Telford said that the existing infrastructure provides good connectivity to Tennyson and that it's likely that many people would use that route to access the station.

Olde Town

- Bob Manwaring, City of Arvada, asked how the team would be able to increase the capacity of the existing park-n-Ride for the Olde Town South option, and Jean Sanson responded the lot would need to be reconfigured to make room for the additional spots. Bob added that the Olde Town Arvada south option has a sizeable hill on Vance between the parking and the platform, and Shelley Cook echoed Bob's concerns about getting pedestrians up the hill.
- Kevin Nichols, City of Arvada, asked if pedestrians would cross the freight tracks at grade to access the station, to which Jonathan Spencer responded yes (at existing roadway crossings).
- Bob Manwaring requested that the team place the structured parking as far up the hill as possible and as close to Vance as possible to mitigate the hill between the parking and the platform as much as possible.
- Kevin Nichols encouraged the team to consider how traffic circulation would work at this station location, particularly how access in and out of Option C (north of the existing park-n-Ride) the parking would interact with potential traffic back-ups on Vance.
- Wally Pulliam, RTD Director for District L, asked whether it would be possible to push the parking even further north with the revised Option C. Liz said it was a possibility and that this could possibly allow for access to Wadsworth from the parking structure. Don Ulrich added that the potential wetland area that is located south of the tracks may not be a jurisdictional wetland, which is something that the team will have to evaluate.
- Patty Lorence, City of Arvada, questioned whether the platform could be shifted at this location, and Jonathan Spencer responded that it was not possible to move the platform at all due to potential impacts and space constraints. He added that if it were to be shifted to the east, there would be impacts to Grandview that could cause traffic circulation and parking impacts to Olde Town.
- Kevin Nichols stated that the citizens from the City of Arvada work sessions expressed a preference for keeping platform where it is currently planned to be.

Andy Mountain confirmed that the team has heard from the LGT that they want the Olde Town parking to be closer to the tracks, and Jean Sanson confirmed that the team will evaluate potential traffic circulation issues through Olde Town.

Arvada Ridge

- There were no specific questions or comments related to this station.

Ward Road

- Representatives from the City of Wheat Ridge asked whether the existing park-n-Ride would be eliminated with the construction of the Gold Line, and Liz Telford confirmed that it would be.
- Steve Nguyen, City of Wheat Ridge, commented that the surface parking would take up a large footprint and that it may be better to expand via structure in order to open up more space for potential TOD.
- Larry Schulz, Wheat Ridge City Councilman, asked whether it would be possible for the parking to be located south of 50th Place. Jean Sanson replied that there were concerns about property acquisitions and traffic congestion for the southern location. She added that it would be difficult to add an additional traffic signal at 50th Place, since there is already one at 52nd. Putting the parking to the north provides a good connection with via the already signalized intersection at 52nd.

Avoidance and Minimization Discussion

Don Ulrich then discussed avoidance and minimization evaluations that would take place in the coming months. Ashland Vaughn mentioned that RTD is working with the railroads to try to narrow the clearance required between the freight tracks and the Gold Line tracks. He explained that this could help to avoid property and environmental impacts, particularly for the historic buildings through Arvada.

Don added that there are many ideas for ways to avoid and minimize impacts and that the Gold Line Team will spend the coming months evaluating those options and gathering more information and will then report back to the LGT. Don added that the team will also be looking for ways to cut costs from the project to help address the fact that the current estimate is over-budget.

The LGT had several questions and comments:

- Kevin Nichols asked whether RTD's cost estimates take into account the 2030 plans or if it only includes construction costs for opening day. Liz responded that the team, as required by FTA, is assuming costs for 2030 up front.

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- Shelly Cook, City of Arvada, asked whether it was appropriate to discuss the naming of the stations, particularly naming the Federal station after Regis University. Liz Telford then stated that it may be premature to begin discussing station names.
 - Wally Pulliam brought up the issue of using single-track the Gold Line through portions of Arvada. He commented that he has concerns about whether installing a single track today could limit the potential for RTD to expand service of the Gold Line in the future. Don Ulrich responded that the single-track portion that the team is proposing would not affect the level of service of the Gold Line at all as it has been envisioned to Ward Road.
 - Liz said that using single-track through the area discussed would not affect the planned 7.5 minute peak headways for trains. She added that there are several adjustments that could be made in this situation, including changing the layover times at Golden or expanding the platform to make room for up to 5 cars. Liz added that with these adjustments it would be unlikely that service would be affected for many, many years.
 - Lorraine Anderson commented that Golden has said that they don't want the Gold Line to extend to their town. She said that while she can see the benefits of eventually connecting to the west corridor, she doesn't agree with making poor decisions today based on the unfunded possibility of expanding into the mountains. She said that RTD should focus on the local municipalities who have been paying taxes to RTD for a long time before worrying about a statewide system.
 - Wally Pulliam stated that his comments are related to long-term planning, beyond 2030, and that he still has concerns that using single-track could have a negative impact to service in the long term. Lorraine Anderson replied that she thinks RTD should prioritize their resources and focus on delivering the FasTracks project as it was promised to the voters before raising concerns about 2050 or 2070.

Next Steps Discussion

Andy Mountain discussed the next steps for the project, and told the LGT that they will be provided with more information in the coming months. Andy explained that the team will present the initial findings from the evaluations to the public at the next round of public workshops on October 23 and 24. Andy added that the team would host an additional Station Platform and Parking Issue Focused Team meeting on August 15 to gather more input on the station footprints.

The LGT had the following final questions and comments:

- Kevin Nichols asked how the LGT should submit comments on the station and parking concepts. Liz Telford responded that the team would send out a comment form on the

stations to the members of the LGT and that they would be given a 15-day comment period.

- Lorraine Anderson expressed her gratitude to the Gold Line team for their work in arriving at a Preferred Alternative for the Gold Line.

Meeting Participants

1. Jeanne Shreve Adams County
2. Kevin Nichols City of Arvada
3. Bob Manwaring City of Arvada
4. Shelley Cook City of Arvada
5. Patty Lorence City of Arvada
6. Lorraine Anderson City of Arvada, City Council
7. Crissy Fanganello City and County of Denver
8. Rick Garcia Denver City Council
9. David Heller DRCOG
10. Larry Schulz City of Wheat Ridge, City Council
11. Steve Nguyen City of Wheat Ridge
12. Sally Payne City of Wheat Ridge
13. Wally Pulliam RTD Board, District L
14. Liz Telford RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
15. Don Ulrich RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
16. Louise Smart RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
17. Jonathan Spencer RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
18. Angela Brand RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
19. Ashland Vaughn RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
20. Andy Mountain RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
21. Megan Lane RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
22. Derek Crider RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
23. Jean Sanson RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
24. Kevin Flynn Rocky Mountain News