Meeting Notes

Meeting: Globeville, Elyria, and Swansea Neighborhood Meeting

Date/Time: Tuesday, November 30, 2004/6:30 P.M.

Location: Holy Transfiguration Church, 349 E 47th Avenue

Attendees:
Venita Lund Hal Marshall Oscar Soltero
Frank Lund Pat Brandt Florence Sestrich
Jeremy Gilhousen Kevin Marshall Roger Rayfield
Carlos Carranza Carol Decker Dolores Hunt
Bruce Hunt Bernie Nowogrocki Deborah Cardenas
Dolly Kelly Sam Romero Larry Burgess
Jack Rhine Tony Dassingher Sam No
Paulette Hirsh Shirley Valentine Bob Thomas
Gary Tisch Larry Holly Thorin Somers
Mike Robbins Miles Frilot Larry Trujillo
Mickey Zeplin Mickey Trujillo Derek Officer
Ian Harwick Jose Casillas Marcia Hanel
Kevin Hankel Loretta Ruiz Mike Stone
Ray Ruppert Joe Daniels Todd Inglee
Amanda Champany Siohbbann Kelly Adolph Fiero
Volney LeBaron Raul Ramirez Marsha Jeffers
Ester Shabell Shawn Kennedy David Schoenfeld
Nelda Damora Manuel Damora Bettie Cram
Harry McFarland John Modig Fred McPeck
Keith Dameron Bob Yeager Sal Rivera
Guadalupe Flores Ken Cotton Faye York
Danny York Tom Anthony Arlene Welsh
Teresa Guerrero Maria Saucedo Yvonne Sandoval
Sergio Garcia Gene Hook John Hayden
Representative from Lumber Representative from Sidenwinder
Liquidator Auto Recycling

Agenda Items:
I. Neighborhood Meeting Overview
II. Open House
III. Presentation
   1. Realignment Alternative
   2. No Action Alternative
   3. Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility
   4. Other Comments
IV. Summary of Comment Sheets
I. Neighborhood Meeting Overview
The I-70 East Corridor and US 36 Corridor Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project teams conducted a neighborhood meeting for the Globeville, Elyria, and Swansea neighborhoods on November 30th at the Holy Transfiguration Church.

II. Open House
The first 30 minutes of the meeting was conducted as an open house with five general areas. Each area consisted of the following information:
1. Project Overview
2. Realignment Alternative
3. No Action Alternative
4. Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility
5. How to Stay Involved

III. Presentation
After the open house, a slide show was presented describing the Realignment Alternative, No Action Alternative, and Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility. After each topic, various questions and comments were discussed. An overview of the presentation topics and questions/comments associated with each are described in the following sections.

1. Realignment Alternative
The project team presented the proposed realignment for I-70 around the Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods. I-70 would leave its existing alignment just east of Washington Street and run northeast next to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railroad to either the Rock Island railroad or I-270. The realignment connects to existing I-70 just west of Quebec Street or at the existing I-70/I-270 interchange depending on the realignment option. Access to the realignment will be provided at Brighton Boulevard and Vasquez Boulevard. As part of this alternative, a four to six-lane arterial would be developed along existing I-70 between Washington Street and Quebec Street to provide local access.

Questions
1. How many lanes will there be with the realignment? Will the realignment be at ground level?
Answer: The realignment would be on the ground level for the most part. It would be an eight-lane facility. More traffic analysis is needed to determine the exact number of lanes.

2. How will the realignment affect Brighton Boulevard?
Answer: We will conduct additional traffic analysis to determine the impacts.

3. How long will construction take to build the I-70 project?
Answer: We do not know what we are trying to build yet or where the funding will come from.

4. How much will 46th and 47th Avenue expand? If so, how long will construction take?
Answer: We’ll have to look at 46th Avenue and how it will be impacted.

5. Will homes be impacted? Will businesses be impacted? How will residents be compensated if their homes are taken?
Answer: Analysis in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) will look at impacts to homes and businesses in more detail. There is a federal process that addresses right of way compensation for businesses and residents.
6. How will historic properties be addressed? Have there been other studies on historic sites/landmarks? Will any be impacted in the Globeville, Elyria, and Swansea neighborhood?  
Answer: We will be considering impacts on historic properties as part of the DEIS.

7. What will happen if there is no funding to build this alternative?  
Answer: We can’t comment on funding until alternatives are chosen.

8. How will homes and businesses be affected by the No Action Alternative compared to the realignment?  
Answer: Homes and businesses affected were evaluated in detailed screening, and impacts will be compared as the DEIS continues. We will have a better understanding of the differences between the No Action Alternative and build alternatives once we completed the DEIS.

9. How will the 46th Avenue connection tie at the east and west end? Will you call 46th Avenue something else?  
Answer: We are still looking at the connections. We do not know what it would be called.

10. What is the cost for the realignment alternative?  
Answer: The realignment would cost $1 billion.

11. Why are we building this at a 1950’s standard? Why not plan for the future capacity? Why only add four lanes? We will need at least 15 lanes to accommodate traffic?  
Answer: We are not building at 1950 standards. Our 6 build alternatives add capacity. The No Action Alternative is developed as a baseline to compare alternatives. We are planning for 2025 – 2030 traffic volumes.

12. Why not continue on I-270 to I-76 past I-25 and utilize I-70 as a business bypass?  
Answer: This alternative was looked at and eliminated in the screening process. There is still a significant amount of traffic that wants access to northeast Denver, so it doesn’t solve the problem.

Comments
- The neighborhood would like to see the bridge dropped all the way back to I-25. No one asked us if we wanted a bridge. East of I-25, it is on the ground, so it is possible. If you drop the bridge, you can eliminate pollution, and increase development opportunities.
- I support tunneling I-70 on the existing alignment.
- Elyria and Swansea Neighborhood Association would like to go on record that we would like to bury I-70 between Brighton Boulevard and Vasquez Boulevard as opposed to putting in more highway lanes. An underground highway will cause less pollution by filtering air.
- The National Western Stock Show would like to go on record as having serious concerns with the realignment alternative.
- If you remove the viaduct from this area – the neighborhood would be beautiful.

2. No Action Alternative  
The project team presented the No Action Alternative that is being recommended. The No Action Alternative normally includes short-term safety and maintenance improvements that maintain the continuing operation of the roadway. Because of the condition of the existing viaduct between Brighton Boulevard and Colorado Boulevard, the No Action Alternative for the I-70 East Corridor EIS includes replacing the viaduct in this area. This replacement is necessary to maintain the continuing operation of I-70 and does not include any additional travel lanes. The project team also
presented the capital costs that would be incurred as well as the impacts to buildings that would be affected by this alternative.

Questions
1. It seems that shifting to the south may have a smaller number of businesses except for a major impact to the Purina factory, which other businesses will be impacted?
Answer: As the DEIS progresses, business impacts will be refined.

2. If it costs $350 million for the No Action alternative and $1 billion for the realignment alternative, why would you spend the money on the realignment?
Answer: The No Action alternative would not improve the highway, the realignment alternative would, which is why it costs more.

3. Why don’t we just add more lanes to I-70 instead of the No Action alternative?
Answer: Adding lanes to the existing highway is an alternative. The No Action Alternative is just being looked at to provide a comparison to the build alternatives like the realignment and options on the I-70 alignment.

4. What impacts will this have west of Washington Street to I-25?
Answer: Between I-25 and Washington Street there are not many impacts.

5. What are the hazardous material dangers of the alternatives?
Answer: We will look at the hazardous material impacts in the EIS.

6. If you are repairing the highway, why would you take properties?
Answer: We have to be able to do construction and allow traffic flow to continue during the construction. This means we have to build to one side or the other.

7. Would it be more feasible to build a new school in Elyria and Swansea?
Answer: We would have to look at building a new school if Elyria/Swansea school is impacted.

8. What does Purina think about this alternative?
Answer: We have talked to Purina and are meeting with stakeholders and business owners as the process continues.

9. Is the No Action just a rebuild?
Answer: Yes, the No Action Alternative would reconstruct the viaduct as it is with out adding lanes. The No Action Alternative provides a baseline to compare other alternatives to.

10. Wouldn’t the existing highway need to be widened for safety purposes and emergency traffic? What is included in the No Action?
Answer: In the No Action Alternative, shoulders would be added for safety, but not additional lanes are assumed.

11. Can this be done as a design build like on T-Rex? Will changes be made later in the process if design-build is utilized?
Answer: We could use design-build on I-70. This will be determined later in the project.
12. What is CDOT’s position on this project? Does CDOT prefer the realignment? Does CDOT want to build a bigger highway?

Answer: The intent of this process is to find the best alternative. CDOT is involved, and is working with the project team to determine what alternatives will best meet the needs of the project.

13. Would CDOT tear down the portion of I-70 that was just built?

Answer: If that is the best transportation solution, yes.

Comments

• I support the realignment if we shift I-70 to the south, we save Elyria/Swansea school.

3. Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility

The project team gave a presentation on Commuter Rail Maintenance Facilities; their purpose, proposed application site requirements, and screening criteria. The team also presented the potential Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility Locations. Two levels of screening have been completed to explore a Central Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility. Locations for light rail facilities are still being explored.

Questions

1. What if the I-70 East Corridor EIS chooses light rail instead of commuter rail? Would US 36 still put a commuter rail site in the I-70 corridor?

Answer: It is possible, the sites still under consideration best meet the criteria for any commuter rail system in the area.

2. What happened to 40th Avenue and York Street? UP operations?

Answer: A maintenance facility would not interfere with a station located near 40th/40th. The trains that go through the corridor would not all be eliminated if we went with the UP alignment.

3. Would it look like the Kenmore facility? Would a diesel facility look different?

Answer: RTD would try to build a facility similar to the one at Elati.

4. At 48th Avenue and Washington Street, if construction forces homes to be destroyed, what will happen?

Answer: We will consider fair market value for homes. You have the option of getting an independent appraisal. Relocation assistance will be available for residents and business owners.

5. With I-70 and North Metro undecided, shouldn’t the Rennick Yard be used?

Answer: We need to look at all the sites since commuter rail is still under consideration in all three corridors. If commuter rail is taken off the table in one of the corridors that will factor into the decision on a preferred site.

6. Why not have the facilities near Denver Union Station?

Answer: The three sites selected best meet the transportation needs of maintenance facility. Sites near Denver Union Station can’t accommodate such facility.

7. Does it make sense to expand the existing maintenance facility somewhere?

Answer: The existing maintenance facilities are for light rail and are not compatible with the needs of commuter rail.
8. What is the time frame in choosing a site? 

Answer: A final site will not be determined until after the US 36 Corridor and I-70 East Corridor documents are released. US 36 will be choosing a preferred site in their DEIS early next year. I-70 will chose a site after the preferred transit alternative is selected.

Comments

• We don’t want a maintenance facility in our neighborhoods!
• If you put in commuter rail then you will provide fewer stops. This does not serve Northeast Denver.
• I am a business owner with property near this proposed site. No one has spoken to us about this maintenance facility. It is inconsistent with our plans to develop. It is inconsistent with the River North Plan. We do not want a maintenance facility. We have enough undesirable use already in this neighborhood.
• Rennick Yard seems like a good site and the Burnam Yard has potential as a facility.
• The maintenance facility is not compatible with development.
• It is unfair to add a maintenance facility in this neighborhood. It just brings more pollution. A maintenance facility will leave less room for transit-oriented development.
• Build maintenance facility north.
• What is the future vision for this area? That needs to be decided before we move forward with choosing alternatives.
• The consensus for our neighborhood is a preference for light rail over commuter rail. The transportation isn’t good enough in Elyria, Swansea, and Globeville. Build a nice light rail station like the one in Englewood. Beautify the neighborhood, not make it worse.

4. Other Questions

1. When will there be a conclusion for the EIS – US 36 and I-70? 

Answer: US36 will release their draft EIS in mid 2005. I-70 East Corridor draft EIS will be available late summer 2005.

2. When will the technology be determined for I-70? 

Answer: The technology will be determined in the Final EIS.

Comments

• The North Metro alignment is different than I’ve seen before.

IV. Summary of Comment Sheets

The following section summarizes the comments received to date from the comment sheets distributed at the meetings.

1. Did the project team provide a thorough presentation of the potential shift of I-70 north of the Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods (realignment)? Do you have questions, comments, or concerns regarding the potential shift of I-70 north of the Elyria and Swansea neighborhoods (realignment)? If so, please explain.

• No comment
• I have a question about the electrical in the neighborhood.
• Yes, we’re concerned as a business owner with the shift. Plus we don’t believe the shift north will alleviate pollution or congestion.
• Why not north of Globeville also?
• To be determined
• Move I-70 north
• 1. Yes. 2. It appears I-70 corridor should stay in the same alignment as at present. I think a covered corridor would be the best. Yes, good presentation.
• Yes, good presentation
• Yes, you did explain well for this stage in the planning. Good job.
• Good idea, spend the money for the future even if it is 3 times the amount. Analyze instead of Elyria.

2. Did the project team provide a thorough presentation of the future issues concerning the I-70 bridge (viaduct)? Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the issues concerning the I-70 bridge (viaduct)? If so, please explain.
• No comment
• My house in general needs electrical work done. From pole to back porch to downstairs and in the basement along with the plumbing as well.
• Fair presentation – again we support burying the I-70 portion, but know it needs to be studied
• Pollution right through the middle of neighborhood
• To be determined
• Remove the bridge, move I-70 north
• 1. Yes 2. No
• Yes
• Yes, you did explain well for this stage in the planning. Good job.
• Do both projects and keep the one also

3. Did the project team provide a thorough presentation on the potential commuter rail maintenance facility locations? Do you have any questions, comments, or concerns regarding the potential commuter rail maintenance facility locations? If so, please explain.
• As a property owner, potentially affected by the location of one of the 3 alternative sites, I have many questions and much anxiety that cannot be addressed in this type of meeting. Please contact me.
• Is commuter rail service going on south side of I-70 highway?
• Yes, but it is still in such a preliminary stage I don’t think anything was really accomplished. We do support the development of the Zeppelin Group in the river area.
• Why does this area always have to suffer?
• Say what?
• No commuter rail in NE Denver, we need light rail. No maintenance facility in Swansea, Elyria, or Globeville, we don’t need more pollution.
• Yes
• Good job
• The existing train because to the west would be the best

4. Any other comments or questions?
• I am very concerned about pollution. The toxicity levels are high already with smog, water filtration, metals, smells, poisons, etc. The industrial atmosphere is horrendous let along our food chain has been compromised. Speaking from experience, the generations are seeing auto immune diseases early in age and people are dying earlier with a multitude of diseases stemming from cells altering. Until it happens to you – when are we going to look at the future of our kids health and the health of others? The body can
only filter so much before it gets compromised. Please take consideration toxins of all kinds. We all want to live long in a healthy life without the increased use of medical assistance. Let’s consider being preventative in all things.

- I have a question about the on and off ramps around Steele Street. Are they going to look like the ones around Brighton Boulevard?
- The I-70 corridor needs to be light rail. It would be short sighted to eliminate rail station through NE Denver in order to have commuter rail. Commuter Rail will hurt NE Denver. Please do light rail.
- Why did you not let Ray Ruppert speak?
- To be determined
- Move I-70 north, build light rail
- These town meetings are good