

Southeast Extension to RidgeGate Parkway

Scoping Booklet



Public and Agency Scoping Begins on the Southeast Extension

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) is initiating an Alternatives Analysis (AA) and Environmental Assessment (EA) process for the FasTracks Southeast Rail Extension project. The project proposes to extend transit from the existing end-of-line station at Lincoln Avenue south to RidgeGate Parkway.

The first step of the EA process is called “scoping.” National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) regulations define scoping as “an early and open process for determining the scope of issues to be addressed and for identifying the significant issues related to a proposed action.” The scoping process is used to identify the range of alternatives and

impacts and the significant issues to be addressed in the EA. Specifically, scoping will help determine:

- The alternatives that will be evaluated in the EA.
- The level of importance of specific issues and needs.
- Current public concerns associated with the proposed action.
- If previous planning efforts were adequate.

Based on input received during scoping, RTD will refine and finalize the scope of what will be evaluated in the AA and EA and also its Purpose and Need Statement, against which all AA alternatives will be evaluated.

PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING SCHEDULE

Public Scoping Meeting

Wednesday, November 2, 2011
6:00pm to 7:30pm
City of Lone Tree
Recreation Center
Willow Room
10249 RidgeGate Circle
Lone Tree, CO 80124

Meeting Format

Open House

6:00pm to 7:30pm

Project Presentation

6:30pm

How to Submit Scoping Comments

Online: www.RTD-FasTracks.com

and click on the
Southeast Rail Extension Tab

In person: At November 2, 2011
scoping meeting

By email: SE@RTD-FasTracks.com

By mail: RTD-FasTracks
Attn: Tina Jaquez
FasTracks Public
Information Team
1560 Broadway, Suite 700
Denver, CO 80202

Phone: 303.299.6902

Fax: 303.299.2425

Acronym Glossary

AA	Alternatives Analysis
EE	Environmental Evaluation
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
LMIS	Limited Major Investment Study
EA	Environmental Assessment
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
LPA	Locally Preferred Alternative
LRT	Light Rail Transit
RTD	Regional Transportation District

Purpose and Need

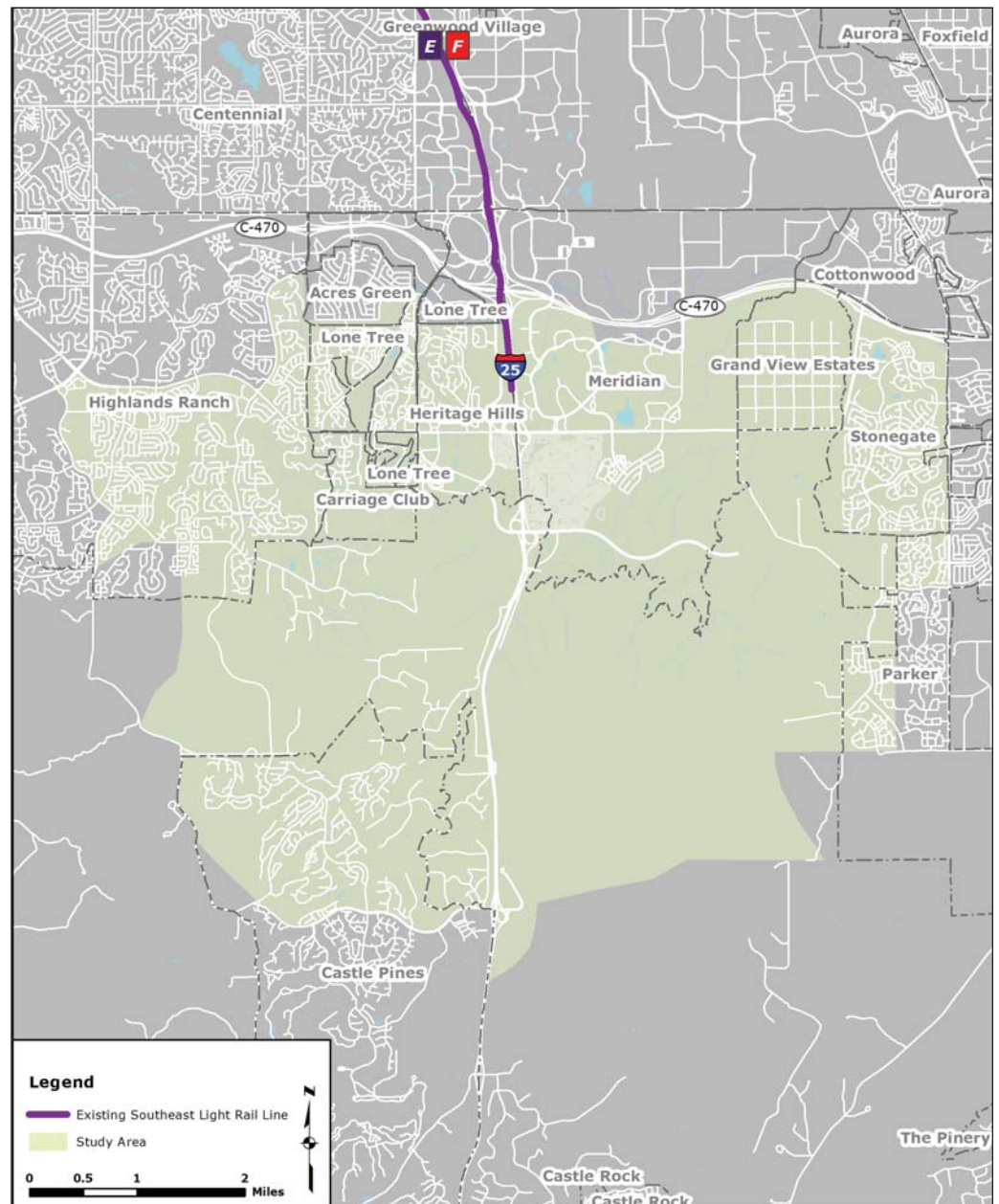
The purpose of the Southeast Extension is to extend transit service from the existing end-of-line LRT station at Lincoln Avenue south to RidgeGate Parkway. The needs include:

- The need for improved regional connectivity.
- The need to meet travel demand resulting from growing population and employment in the study area.
- The need to provide a transit alternative to I-25 to allow commuters an alternative to congested I-25.
- The need to provide a transit alternative compatible with the existing and planned transit network.
- The need to meet voter's 2004 mandate. Voters in the Denver Metro area approved the 2004 FasTracks Plan. The purpose of the plan was to provide improved transportation choices and options for the citizens of the Regional Transportation District (RTD), increase transit mode share during peak travel times, and establish a proactive plan that balances transit needs with future regional growth.
- The need to reflect community and regional plans and be consistent with existing and planned land uses.
- The need to attract new transit riders.

Southeast Extension Location

The Southeast Extension study area is located in the City of Lone Tree in northern Douglas County. It begins at the existing end-of-line Lincoln Station and extends south along I-25 to the RidgeGate Parkway interchange. It includes areas of planned development south of Lincoln Avenue on the east and west side of I-25. The figure below shows the Southeast Extension study area.

Southeast Extension Study Area



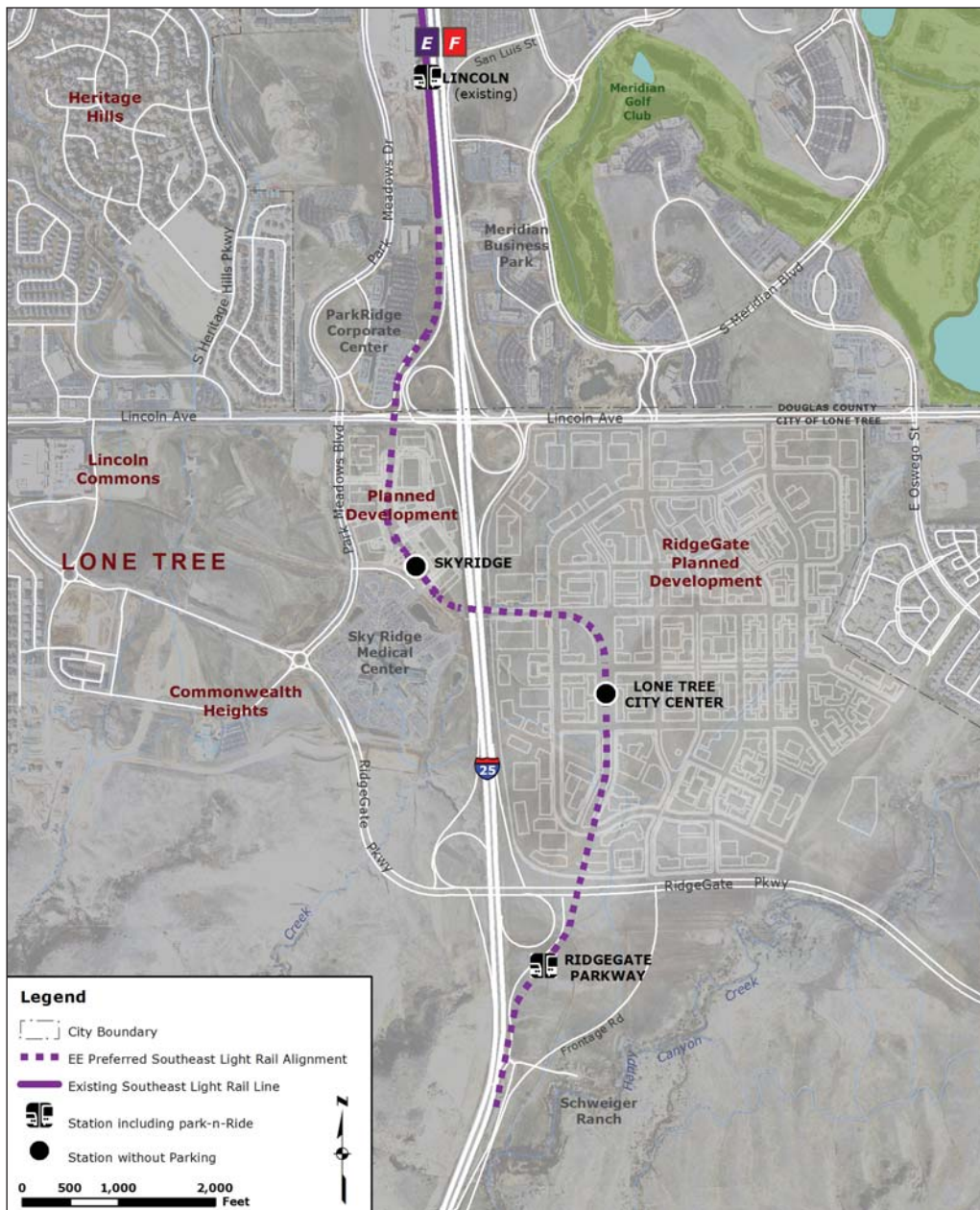
History of Southeast Extension

Limited Major Investment Study

The identification and evaluation of alternatives to extend transit on the Southeast Corridor began in 2000, when the City of Lone Tree and the Rampart Range Metro District initiated the *Southeast Corridor Light Rail Extension Limited Major Investment Study* (LMIS). The LMIS assessed the feasibility of extending the Southeast Corridor light rail transit south into the City of Lone Tree, and integrating transit into

the proposed City Center and development associated with the RidgeGate planned development. The LMIS evaluated several alternatives, and recommended a 2.3-mile, double-track light rail extension that would run south from the existing Lincoln Station along the west side of I-25, cross to the east side of I-25 just north of Sky Ridge Hospital, and continue south to the RidgeGate Parkway interchange. The LMIS identified three conceptual station locations and evaluated alignment considerations for the light rail extension.

2010 Environmental Evaluation Build Alternative



Environmental Evaluation

To further evaluate light rail transit south of the Lincoln Station, RTD prepared the *Southeast Corridor Extension Environmental Evaluation* (EE) in March 2010. The EE evaluated a No Action Alternative and a Build Alternative to extend transit along the Southeast Corridor, assess environmental impacts, and identify a Preferred Alternative. The Build Alternative began with the LMIS recommended alternative, which was then refined to reflect updated conditions; respond to agency, stakeholder, and public comments; and optimize construction costs, operational efficiency, and integration with the existing and planned roadway network. As a result, the EE Build Alternative maintained the general LMIS alignment with only minor alignment changes (as shown on the figure to the left), and included grade-separated crossings at all four major road crossings (bridges across Lincoln Avenue, I-25, and Sky Ridge Avenue, and underpass at RidgeGate Parkway). Three station locations were identified, including a station just north of Sky Ridge Avenue across from the Sky Ridge Medical Center, a Lone Tree City Center Station

situated in the core of the RidgeGate planned development, and an end-of-line station at RidgeGate Parkway. The RidgeGate Parkway station includes a Park-n-Ride facility with 2,000 parking spaces.

Goals of the AA

In order for the Southeast Extension project to be eligible for FTA Small Starts funding, it is necessary to complete an Alternatives Analysis document. The alternatives analysis will identify and screen alternatives to be evaluated in detail. The goals of the Southeast Extension AA include:

- Provide a cost-effective extension of transit service in the Southeast Corridor.
- Extend high-quality and reliable transit services in the corridor that reduce travel times, eliminate delays, and increase travel comfort to encourage travel by more efficient and environmentally sensitive means than vehicular travel.
- Enhance access to jobs, entertainment, recreation, shopping, and medical facilities for existing and future residents of the Southeast Corridor.
- Minimize environmental impacts.
- Improve the environmental sustainability and development of sustainable communities.

Evaluation Criteria

In addition to evaluating the ability of project alternatives to meet the Purpose and Need, each alternative will be evaluated in a number of areas. NEPA requires the process to evaluate each reasonable alternative on potential environmental issues in 20 different categories. The following criteria will be used to screen alternatives developed during the AA process.

- Engineering:
 - Utility conflicts
 - Right-of-way required
 - Drainage issues
 - Compliance with applicable transit design standards
 - Construction impacts, phasing, and traffic control
 - I-25/CDOT approvals

- Engineering feasibility (topography, geographic conditions)
- Cost:
 - Capital cost
 - Operating and maintenance cost
 - Cost effectiveness/cost per new rider
- Ridership/Effectiveness:
 - Serves key origins/destinations
 - System connectivity
 - Populations within 1/2 mile of station
 - Employment within 1/2 mile of station
 - Ridership
 - Mode of access to station (walk, drive, bus)
 - Compatibility with FasTracks Plan
- Environmental Impacts
 - Noise
 - Prairie dogs
 - Cultural resources
 - Visual impacts
 - Temporary construction impacts
 - Wildlife, including Threatened and Endangered Species
 - Water resources/water quality
 - Wetlands and waters of the U.S.
 - Bicycle/pedestrian facilities
 - Consistency with planned land use
 - Economic development potential
- Traffic/transportation:
 - Study area traffic impacts
 - Temporary construction impacts (closures, detours)
 - Access to stations
 - Travel time
 - Vehicle miles traveled
 - Vehicle hours traveled
 - Safety

For environmental impacts exceeding allowable limits, mitigation measures must be evaluated to determine the extent to which negative impacts can be minimized or eliminated.

Preliminary List of Alternatives to be Evaluated

In accordance with the FTA Small Starts AA process, a range of alternatives has been developed for evaluation. Each alternative will be screened based on its ability to meet the project's Purpose and Need and satisfy cost effectiveness, land use, and other FTA Small Starts evaluation criteria. Alternatives that meet the project's Purpose and Need will be advanced for detailed evaluation in the EA. The preliminary alternatives are described below:

- **No Action Alternative:** This alternative assumes no new improvements would be constructed other than currently committed projects. This alternative includes the existing bus routes in the area as well as a new bus route connecting Parker and the Lincoln Station along RidgeGate Parkway. The CDOT I-25 widening is also included as part of this alternative.
- **Baseline Alternative (Transportation System Management [TSM]):** This alternative assumes the existing bus system is maximized to best meet the Purpose and Need for the project. This alternative assumes a maximized bus network serving the same travel market as the Light Rail Alternatives. It includes the addition of a Park-n-Ride on the east side of the I-25/RidgeGate interchange. The new Park-n-Ride would be connected to the Southeast Corridor light rail line with frequent feeder bus service to Lincoln Station. The feeder bus service would be provided with increased frequency and rerouting of bus routes included in the No Action Alternative.
- **Light Rail Transit (LRT):** Three alternatives will be developed:
 - **LRT Along I-25:** Includes LRT alignment along west side of I-25, with one station with a Kiss-n-Ride at Sky Ridge Medical Center, and one station at RidgeGate Parkway. Includes a 2,000-space Park-n-Ride located on the east side of I-25 with pedestrian access to LRT via a pedestrian crossing over I-25.
 - **LRT on EE Alignment 1:** Includes a 2.3-mile, double-track light rail extension that runs south from the existing Lincoln Station along the west side of I-25, crosses to the east side of I-25 just north of Sky Ridge Hospital, and continues south to the RidgeGate Parkway interchange. The LRT crosses RidgeGate Parkway via an underpass.

This alternative provides three new stations, including two Kiss-n-Rides, one just north of Sky Ridge

Avenue across from the Sky Ridge Medical Center, and another, the Lone Tree City Center Station, which is situated in the core of the RidgeGate Planned Development. A new end-of-line station at RidgeGate Parkway would provide 2,000 parking spaces.

- **LRT on EE Alignment 2:** Is similar to the LRT on EE Alignment 1 Alternative, except it includes an overpass at RidgeGate Parkway instead of an underpass.

Opportunities for Public Involvement

Public involvement is essential to the success of this project. RTD conducted extensive public involvement during the 2010 EE process for this project. RTD will use the wealth of information and input gathered during that study, and augment it with additional public input gathered during the alternatives analysis and environmental assessment process. RTD will hold two public meetings, two local governments meetings, and two agency meetings as part of the AA process. Additional meetings may be held as part of the EA process.

RTD Wants Your Comments

Public input is critical to making smart decisions for this project that are best for the community. This is especially true when it comes to the scoping process.

The scoping process will drive the overall focus for the Southeast Rail Extension EA. Your comments are important to ensuring that the scope of the project reflects the needs, concerns, and desires of your community.

The fastest and easiest way to submit your scoping comments is provide them online by visiting www.RTD-FasTracks.com and click on the Southeast Extension tab. Even after the scoping process, the project Web site will be your easiest method of submitting comments and feedback to the project team in one of the following ways:

Email: SE@RTD-FasTracks.com

Mail: RTD-FasTracks
Attn: Tina Jaquez
FasTracks Public Information Team
1560 Broadway, Suite 700
Denver, CO 80202

Phone: 303.299.6902

Fax: 303.299.2425

SOUTHEAST EXTENSION SCOPING BOOKLET

You can submit comments in person at the public scoping meeting on November 2, 2011 at the City of Lone Tree Recreation Center, Willow Room, 10249 RidgeGate Circle, Lone Tree, CO 80124, from 6:00pm to 7:30pm.

All comments received by December 2, 2011 will be compiled in a Scoping Report. This report will summarize all the scoping comments received and will be used to finalize the scope of the project. Comments received after this date will be considered and responded to, but will not be included in the Scoping Report.



Conventry Development's Miramont at RidgeGate project was completed in 2010. The apartment complex is located south and west of the future Sky Ridge Station on the Southeast Extension.

Process and Schedule for Alternatives Analysis and Environmental Review Process

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that environmental approvals be obtained for projects that use federal funds. NEPA requires that reasonable alternatives be evaluated to determine the effects of the project on the surrounding social, cultural, physical, and natural environment.

The Southeast Rail Extension AA and EA will further evaluate the findings of the LMIS and the EE to refine the alternatives to be fully evaluated in the EA and identify a Preferred Alternative that meets the Purpose and Need for the project. The schedule below illustrates the phases of the Alternatives Analysis and Environmental Assessment process*:

	2011			2012											
	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC
Alternatives Analysis:															
Develop screening criteria:	●														
Develop preliminary alternatives:	●														
Public and agency scoping:		●													
Conduct alternatives screening:		■													
Public and agency meetings to present Preferred Alternative and identify Locally Preferred Alternative:				●											
Environmental Review Process to be carried out after the AA Process:															
Data collection and existing conditions:				■											
Assess environmental impacts:							■								
Distribute Environmental Assessment:													●		
30-day public comment period for Environmental Assessment:													■		
Public Meeting:													●		
Prepare Decision Document and submit to Federal Transit Administration:														■	
Federal Transit Administration issues the Decision Document:															■

*Schedule subject to change depending on alternatives evaluation process.