

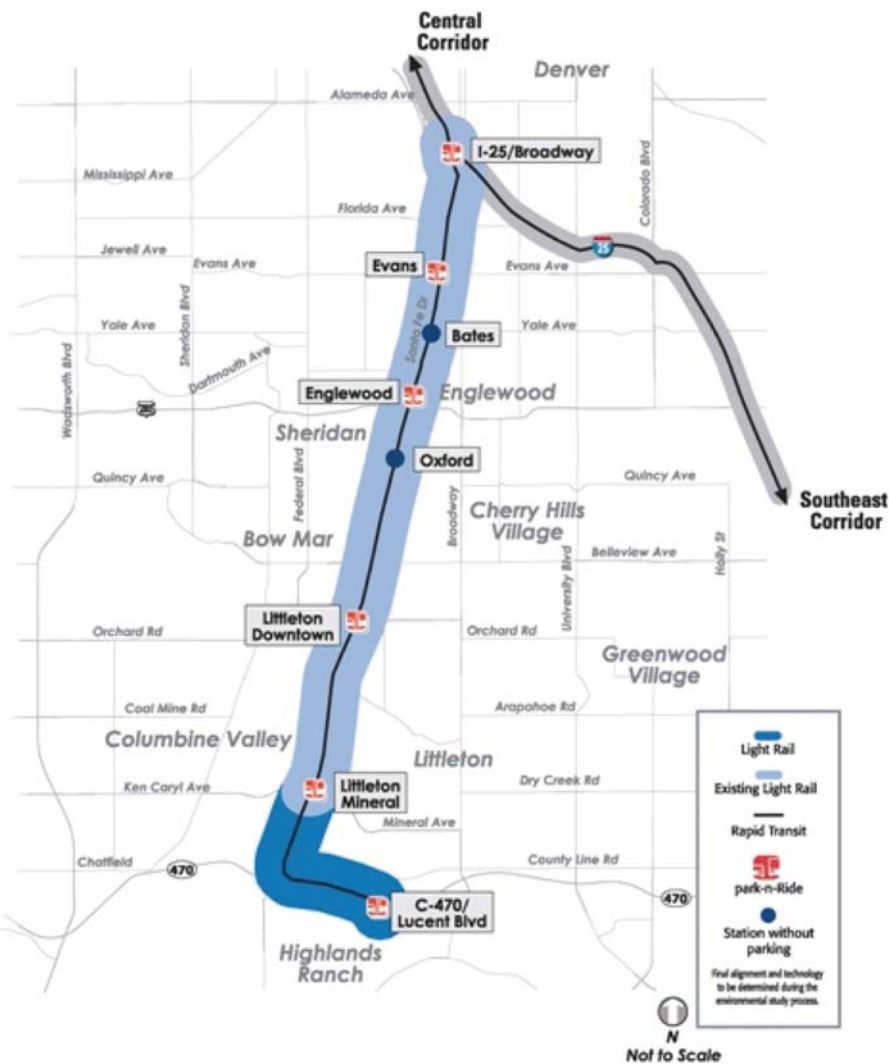
# SouthwestCORRIDOR

Times

FALL 2008

RTD FASTRACKS SOUTHWEST QUARTERLY NEWS LINK

## Southwest Corridor



## Planning for Southwest Corridor Extension Underway

The Southwest Corridor Extension is part of the overall FasTracks program, the Regional Transportation District's (RTD) comprehensive plan to build and operate commuter and light rail lines and expand and improve bus service and park-n-Rides throughout the region. Included in that package, approved by voters in 2004, is a planned extension of the Southwest Corridor, C (Union Station to Mineral) and D (30th and Downing to Mineral) line service areas.

The first step to extending light rail in the Southwest Corridor will kick-off with the start of the Environmental Evaluation and supportive Basic Engineering. During this phase of the project, the Southwest Corridor Extension team will prepare an Environmental Evaluation to document the potential impacts and the benefits of the extension.

The Environmental Evaluation and Basic Engineering process continues the planning process begun in 2002 with the Southwest Corridor Planning and Conceptual Engineering Study. The current plan is to extend light rail transit service to Highlands Ranch by providing the following:

- 2.5 miles of additional light rail
- An end-of-line station at C-470/Lucent Boulevard
- 1,000 space park-n-Ride facility at the end-of-line station

An intermediate station, located near the southeast corner of the C-470/U.S. 85 Interchange is also being considered as part of this current phase of study. This station is currently not a part of the FasTracks plan.

The next phase of project development will develop basic engineering plans (e.g., 30% design), identify potential environmental impacts, and recommend ways to minimize and mitigate these possible impacts. A comprehensive public involvement process is included to assist the project team in determining the best alternatives for rail to meet the needs of current and future businesses and commuters in the area.

### Preliminary Purpose and Need Statement

The Purpose and Need Statement establishes the benchmark from which alternatives are evaluated. (Continued on Page 4)

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- Hotline: (303) 299-2000, follow the prompts
- Mail: RTD-FasTracks, Attn: Tina Jaquez, 1560 Broadway, Suite 700, Denver, CO 80202

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Web site:  
[www.RTD-FasTracks.com](http://www.RTD-FasTracks.com)  
 Click on SW Corridor

Email:  
[swcorridor@RTD-FasTracks.com](mailto:swcorridor@RTD-FasTracks.com)

Contacts: Ed Romero  
 SW Corridor Public Involvement  
 Specialist: (303) 803-2941

Tina Jaquez, SW Corridor  
 FasTracks Liaison:  
 (303) 299-6902

## What is an Environmental Evaluation?

Since federal funding is not connected to this project, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) compliance (preparation of an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement) is not a requirement. The Environmental Evaluation (EE) is RTD's approach to ensure general conformance with the NEPA and associated regulations, regardless of the source of funding, and to ensure equal treatment of all of the FasTracks corridors.

The EE process will include a community involvement process, evaluation of alternatives (including a summary of prior studies), selection of a preferred alternative, and identification of potential impacts and recommendations to minimize and mitigate those impacts. The RTD Board of Directors will use the EE to approve the selection of the preferred alternative and commit to mitigation measures.



Existing Southwest Corridor Light Rail Station at Littleton/Mineral

# Message From the Project Manager



Recently, we began work on the environmental process for the Southwest Corridor Extension. This process, an Environmental Evaluation (EE) is the planning, or initial, phase of work for this project. During the EE we will be holding public meetings at regular intervals to provide you with useful, up-to-date information regarding the project; and, more importantly, to receive your comments, input, and concerns. It is anticipated to take approximately 18 to 20 months to complete.

The first public meeting will be held on Thursday, Oct. 16, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the Highlands Ranch Metro District, 62 W. Plaza Drive. No planning process can be successful without input from its stakeholders, which include all of those who will either use the system, or in some way be affected by it. The EE will use public input together with technical, environmental, schedule feasibility, and cost information to evaluate and confirm the alignment for the Southwest Corridor Extension. We encourage you to participate in the public process so that the outcome of evaluation is a success.

Many of you have most likely heard about the challenges RTD and the FasTracks program is facing as a result of current economic conditions, lower tax revenues, and increases in construction costs. The RTD Board of Directors has acknowledged that additional strategies for implementation

of the overall program must be considered. However, regardless of the challenges facing the FasTracks program, the planning phase for the project is underway and will proceed through completion. This is important for a variety of reasons including:

- RTD has committed to performing a NEPA-level environmental study on all corridors and the SW Corridor is no exception; and
- The planning work will be completed and is necessary prior to going forward with construction, regardless of construction schedule.

Again, we invite your participation. Please join us for our first public meeting for this project to:

- Learn about previous studies that have been completed to evaluate the Extension
- Tell us of any concerns you have regarding this project
- Weigh-in on issues that you feel are associated with the project
- Give us feedback on the process

With stakeholder input, the final EE product will be a successful study that will lay the foundation for the ultimate configuration of the Southwest Corridor Extension.

Thank you and I look forward to seeing you throughout the public process.

Susan A. Wood, AICP  
Project Manager,  
Southwest Corridor Extension

# Public Involvement Process



The Southwest Corridor Project Team plans to implement a comprehensive public involvement program to ensure that you can provide input on the following:

- Purpose and Need for the Project
- Alternative Alignments and Station Locations
- Evaluation Process and Criteria
- Environmental Impacts
- Mitigation Measures
- Schedule
- Public Involvement Process

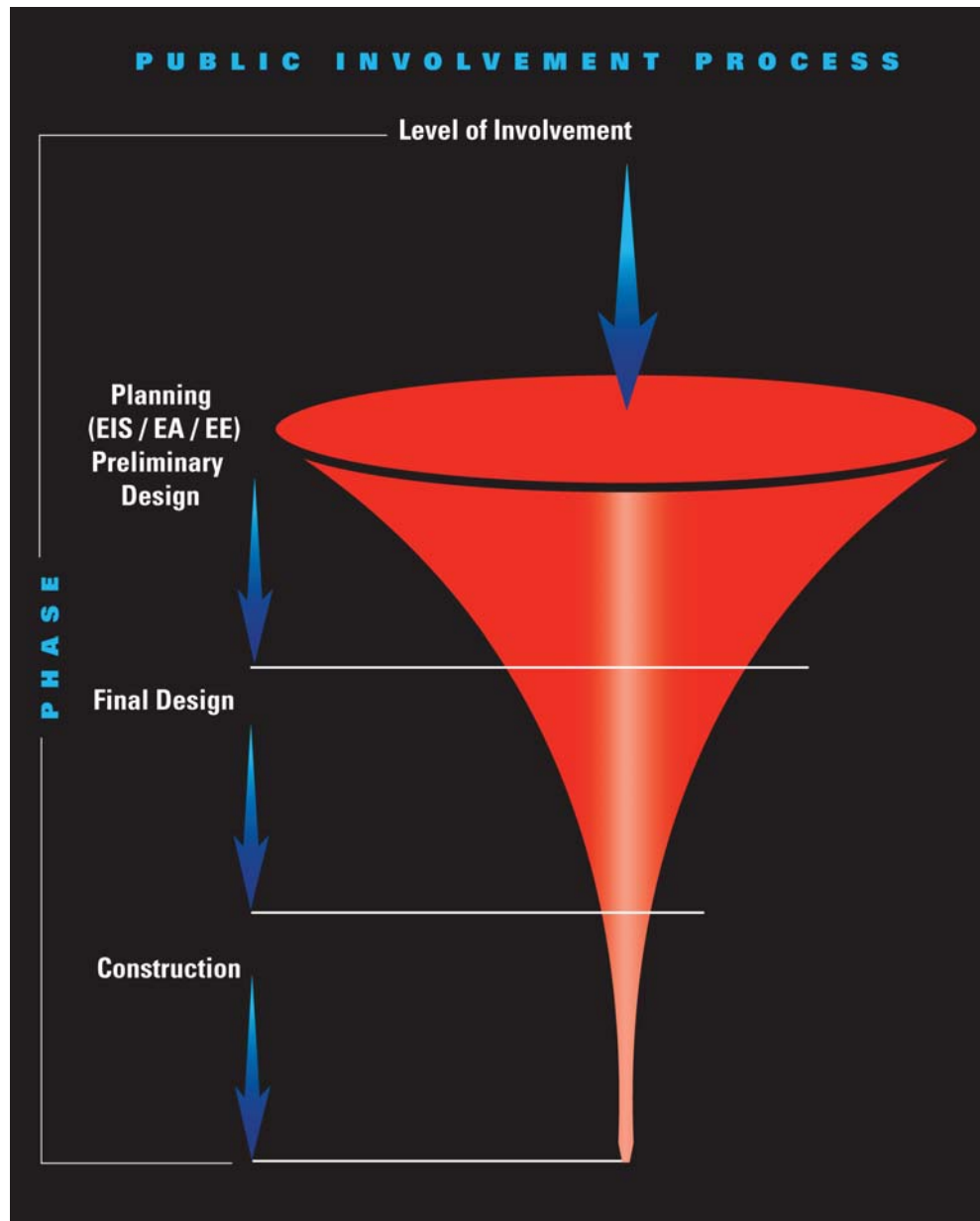
Early communication, sincere listening, and timely, honest feedback are the most valuable parts of any public involvement process.

We commit to:

- Proactively provide timely, frequent, consistent, and accurate information regarding the project
- Work with you to identify and prioritize community needs and concerns early, so that the impact of those needs and concerns can be addressed during the Environmental Evaluation and Basic Engineering process
- Create and maintain an effective two-way communications channel that supports the planning process by establishing a basis of trust for sharing feedback and concerns

Your participation is an element of the decision-making process that is considered along with technical, environmental, schedule feasibility and cost. As the project moves through the various phases, the level of public involvement changes. The best time to give your input on the project is now during the planning phase. As we move into design and construction, input becomes more focused and changes become more costly as detailed in the Public Involvement Process graphic on this page.

We recognize that it not always easy to attend public meetings, but your input is highly valued.



You can also learn more about the project by going to [www.RTD-FasTracks.com](http://www.RTD-FasTracks.com) for the most recent updates and to provide feedback. Our staff is always available to speak on the phone and answer any questions you might have about this project.

The following schedule milestones outline the opportunities you will have to provide input during this all important planning phase of the project.

## MILESTONES:

- Scoping/Defining Purpose and Need for the Project**  
– Fall 2008
- Alternative Development/Environmental Evaluation**  
– Spring/Summer 2009
- Final Results**  
– Fall/Winter 2009

(cont'd from Page 1)

The statement is developed such that it is not so restrictive that it is impossible to develop a reasonable range of alternatives. The "purpose" is essentially the reason for the project. The "needs" statement should present the current projected conditions that the project must address.

**The project team would like to receive comments on the purpose and need statement below.** The statement will be finalized based on public input received during the early stages of the public process.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Southwest Corridor Extension is to provide light rail transit service south of the existing end-of-line station at Mineral to serve Highlands Ranch and the South Metro area, which is continuing to grow. Travel demand on the existing light rail lines is high, with ridership running higher than projections and parking shortages occurring on a regular basis.

**Need**

An extension of the Regional Transportation District's light rail transit service to Highlands Ranch would:

- Address travel demand issues along the existing light rail lines
- Address future development and growth patterns in Douglas County, the city of Littleton, and Highlands Ranch
- Provide a reliable alternate mode of transportation to the automobile
- Improve current and future mobility within the corridor, contributing improved travel times, providing more travel options, and offering better regional connectivity
- Meet the voter mandate of 2004 by completing this portion of the FasTracks plan

**You are invited!**

***FasTracks Southwest Corridor Extension  
Public Scoping Meeting/Open House***

Thursday, Oct. 16, 2008  
6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Highlands Ranch Metro District  
62 W. Plaza Drive  
Highlands Ranch, Colorado 80129

Your input is extremely valuable in helping RTD to plan an extension of the existing Southwest Corridor. Please join us to learn more about the planning phases of this project.

**Web/Phone**

For questions and/or to be notified of future public meetings, visit the project Web site at [www.RTD-FasTracks.com](http://www.RTD-FasTracks.com) and click on Southwest Corridor, or call (303) 299-2000 and follow the prompts.

*Para información en español, visite [RTD-FasTracks.com](http://RTD-FasTracks.com) y pulse el enlace con el Corredor Sureste o llame al 303-299-2000.*

*Si necesita ayuda para la reunión pública, llame al 303-803-2941.*

**Communication Assistance Available**

The following communication assistance is available for Regional Transportation District public meetings: language interpreters, sign-language interpreters, assisted listening devices, alternative formats such as large print or reasonable accommodations for special needs. Contact RTD at (303) 803-2941 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting to discuss your special needs and request for accommodation.

