
CHAPTER 5.0: COMMENTS AND COORDINATION

The Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) has conducted extensive public and agency involvement for the West Corridor project. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) highlights the public and agency activities that occurred during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. This chapter discusses the activities that have been conducted since that time.

5.1 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONDUCTED SINCE FEIS

5.1.1 General Public Information Meetings

RTD held five public information meetings just before and during preparation of the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA):

- ▶ Final Design Kick – off meeting – on February 9, 2006
- ▶ EA Kick-off meeting–West Communities – on June 27, 2006
- ▶ EA Kick-off meeting–East Communities – on June 28, 2006
- ▶ Final Design/EA Update meeting–East Communities – on September 27, 2006
- ▶ Final Design/EA Update meeting–West Communities – on September 28, 2006
- ▶ EA/Value Engineering – on Jan. 31, 2007
- ▶ EA Public Meeting – on July 18, 2007

A total of 530 participants attended these meetings, which were advertised in local media, newsletters, and through other means.

In addition, RTD attended a number of neighborhood meetings to give updates on the project. Neighborhoods that were included in this manner include La Alma/Lincoln Park, Sixth Avenue West, City of Lakewood Ward I, Federal Boulevard Corridor Partnership, Villa Park Neighborhood Association, the Lakewood Collaborative, Lakewood Community Members, Eiber Neighborhood Association, Two Creeks Neighborhood Association, Glennon Heights Homeowners Association, Golden Town Meeting, and Kipling Avenue Residents. The following sections discuss other public involvement opportunities.

5.1.2 Coffee with Dennis

RTD started the “Coffee with Dennis” series (referring to meetings with Dennis Cole, the RTD Project Manager) to provide members of the community with a way to interact with the West Corridor project manager in a small group setting. These meetings were held at different times of the day to accommodate as many schedules as possible and were publicized using monthly e-newsletters. A total of 36 Coffee with Dennis meetings were held in June, August, and October 2006; and February and April 2007. Coffee with Dennis will continue through the remainder of the final design phase.

5.1.3 Urban Design Committee Meetings

RTD formed Urban Design Committees (UDC) to provide the community with a means to explore specific issues in-depth. Interested citizens were invited to review the design progress and represent the community's interests by describing concerns and issues and providing comments. A total of four UDCs with approximately 150 total community members were formed. Representatives from the community provided input on the following light rail stations: Federal/Decatur, Knox and Perry; Sheridan and Wadsworth; Lamar, Garrison, and Oak; and Red Rocks Community College and Jefferson County Government Center. Meetings were held on March 9, March 20, April 26, and April 27 in 2006. At the request of the UDCs two additional meetings were held on July 26 and July 27, 2006 to allow for additional comments. On September 27 and 28 2006, UDC meetings were held concurrently with the EA update public meetings. Representatives from the community provided input on several topics at the December 2006 UDC meetings, including the 65 percent design, noise walls and stations. In response to a large number of public comments regarding the VE proposals for the Federal Boulevard bridge and Sheridan station, two additional UDC meetings were held on March 21 and March 22, 2007, with 130 community members in attendance. Additional UDC meetings are scheduled for August 21 and 22, 2007.

5.1.4 Environmental Justice Outreach

In addition to the public involvement activities discussed in this chapter, the project team conducted additional outreach for Mountainside Estates to ensure residents' comments and concerns were considered (see Section 4.2). For example, members of the project team met with the Mountainside Estates park manager to provide general project information and discuss how the design changes may affect the park and its residents.

Mailers were sent to park residents to notify them of the public information meetings in September 2006, January 2007, and July 2007. The mailers, which were provided in English and Spanish, also discussed the design changes and their potential effects to their community. Residents have not expressed concerns about the changed effects from the LRT project.

5.1.5 Newsletters and E-Mail

In June 2006 a newsletter was sent to approximately 5,000 residents to announce the beginning of the environmental review process and the project kick-off meeting(s). Also, 1,600 members of the public were contacted between January and May 2006, via electronic mail (e-mail) announcing opportunities for public involvement. In May 2006, contacts by e-mail took the form of a monthly e-newsletter that contained updates on final design, the EA and any upcoming public meetings. RTD has continued to distribute the monthly e-newsletter and has included updates on the value engineering (VE) proposals. Almost 4,000 members of the public were contacted between September 2006 and July 2007, via electronic mail (e-mail) and postcard announcing opportunities for public involvement.

5.1.6 Web Site

RTD has a Web site (www.rtd-fastracks.com) to help disseminate information to the public. The Web Site takes RSVPs for Coffee with Dennis, posts materials from public meetings, takes comments on the EA and general comments on the project, posts e-newsletters, maintains a project calendar, and allow residents to add their contact information to the project database.

5.2 AGENCY AND STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION

5.2.1 Stakeholder Group Meetings

The Stakeholder group consists of professional staff from local governments and other entities. The group provides comments to the design team on process and technical issues, and reports back to elected officials in their communities. Stakeholder meetings provide an opportunity for exchange of information including project status, upcoming tasks, and community issues. A Stakeholder kickoff session was held in November 2005, subsequent meetings were held on the second Thursday of each month ending in November 2006 with meetings on November 9 and 16. Stakeholder meetings were resumed on the second Thursday of January, March, April, May, June and July of 2007. These meetings will continue throughout the project.

5.2.2 Elected Official Briefings

Monthly project briefings were held with elected officials starting in April 2006 and will continue throughout the project.

5.2.3 Agency Coordination

On July 18, September 12, October 6, 2006, and August 13, 2007, the project team held pre-application meetings with the COE, Environmental Protection Agency, and the Colorado Division of Wildlife in support of the Section 404 permit (see Section 4.9). The purpose of the meetings was to review results of the wetland delineations, discuss avoidance and minimization measures, and get agency input on information needed for the permit application. Additional meetings with resource agencies will continue as needed through early 2008.

As discussed in Section 4.6, RTD has coordinated with the Colorado State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP) regarding effects to historic properties from the revised design.

5.3 FUTURE COORDINATION

A public hearing to solicit input on the findings of this EA will be held at least 15 days after it is ready for public and agency review.

Community involvement during final design of the West Corridor project will continue through September 2007 when the final design phase is expected to be completed. Public involvement will continue through the 90 percent design completion in November 2007. Planned activities include:

- ▶ E-newsletter distributed monthly through September 2007
- ▶ Elected Officials Briefings monthly through September 2007
- ▶ Speakers Bureau effort May 2007 through September 2007
- ▶ UDC meetings in August 2007
- ▶ EA Public Hearing in September 2007

REFERENCES

- Denver Council of Regional Governments, January 2006, *2030 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan*
- Denver Regional Council of Governments (July 1997) *Regional Transportation Plan*
- RTD, June 2006, *West Corridor Cost Containment/Value Engineering Recommendations and Likely Environmental Effects*
- RTD, July 2006, *West Corridor Cost Containment/Value Engineering Recommendations And Cost Implications*
- City of Lakewood's November 2006, *Union Corridor Station Area Plan*
- Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970*
- Noise and Vibration Analysis Technical Report, November 2006*
- Carter and Burgess, 2006, *Project Effect Assessment for the FasTracks West Corridor Light Rail Track Project in Denver and Jefferson Counties, Colorado*
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, 1987, *Wetlands Delineation Manual*
- RTD 2006, *West Corridor Wetland Delineation Report.*
- Shapins Associates and Fox Higgins, November 2003, *City of Golden Bicycle Master Plan*
- Lakewood Civic Center, November 2006, *Planning Commission Public Hearing FTA Transit Noise and Vibration Impact Assessment May 2006*
- Final Report: Value Engineering Study for Denver RTD FasTracks West Corridor Project (Solutions Engineering and Facilitating, Inc., 2007*
- RTD's policy described in its *Technical Memorandum: Implementation of RTD's Policy for Noise Mitigation Measures for Moderate Impacts (RTD, June 2007),*