



Community

Information Line:

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rtd-fastracks.com



The \$511.8-million FasTracks West Corridor project consists of constructing a new 12.1-mile, double-track light rail line, extending west from the existing light rail line at Auraria West Station in downtown Denver, through Lakewood along 13th Avenue, continuing along 6th Avenue (U.S. 6) and ending at the Jefferson County Government Center.

E-NEWS



WELCOME!

In May we celebrated the beginning of FasTracks construction, which starts on the West Corridor with a rousing "pullin' up" of the old rails at Quail Street. We have made significant progress on the remaining outstanding Value Engineering (VE) proposals over the past month, and are planning to have final approval on all VE items this month. We are looking forward to the completion of the Environmental Assessment in the months ahead, and will share developments as they become available. As always, we are excited to share with you information related to recent project developments and hearing your thoughts related to all of these milestones.

June 2007

In this issue you will find:

[Save the Date](#) - Mark your calendars for several upcoming events and meetings.

[Pullin' Up the Rails](#) - FasTracks celebrates the beginning of construction on the West Corridor.

[Value Engineering Proposals Update](#) - Get updates on the status of several Value Engineering proposals.

[Noise Study and Noise Walls](#) - Find out details about the Noise Study and upcoming outreach.

[Environmental Assessment Update](#) - Learn about the current status of the project's Environmental Assessment.

[Utilities/Track Work Update](#) - Get an update on the progress of early construction.

[FasTracks Annual Program Evaluation Q&A](#) - Find answers to some frequently asked questions.

[How Can I Get \(or Stay\) Involved?](#) - Find out where to get more information on meetings and events, and the best ways to have your questions answered.

Save the Date

Environmental Assessment Public Meeting: The West Corridor will hold an Environmental Assessment (EA) Public Meeting July 18 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds Exhibit Halls. See the EA Update below for more details.

Environmental Assessment Public Hearing: An EA Public Hearing is scheduled for mid-September at the Jefferson County Fairgrounds. Some of the topics at this hearing will be determined by the feedback received at the July 18 meeting.

Pullin' Up the Rails



Local elected officials, community leaders, residents and RTD staff celebrate the beginning of construction activity on the West Corridor May 16 as dignitaries participate in a rail removal ceremony.

Value Engineering Proposals Update

As many of you know, the entire FasTracks program has encountered a variety of budget challenges. Costs for materials like concrete, copper and steel have skyrocketed since earlier projections, while tax revenues, a main source of funding for the project, have been lower than original projections. In spite of these challenges, the West Corridor Project team is moving forward as planned to complete the light rail project by the end of 2012.

Several Value Engineering (VE) proposals on the West Corridor were reviewed by the RTD Board of Directors in May and have been approved.

In addition, there were four items that required additional discussion with the affected jurisdictions and communities. These items will be taken to the RTD Board on June 19 for final approval.

Sheridan: The 65 percent design proposal was to build Sheridan Boulevard over the light rail tracks that would travel through the gulch. The VE proposal was to leave Sheridan Boulevard in its current location, and build light rail on a bridge over Sheridan.

Solution: RTD will revert to the 65 percent design with Sheridan over the light rail tracks. Denver, CDOT and RTD have collaborated to find the necessary funding through construction methods, park mitigation funds and right-of-way savings.

Jeffco Single Track: This refers only to the section of the line between the Denver Federal Center and the Jefferson County Government Center. The VE proposal was to build single track instead of double track in this section, which would be sufficient to serve projected ridership.

Status: RTD agreed to a progressive commitment if ridership exceeds capacity, including additional passing track, additional station platforms to handle four-car trains and eventual double tracking. Jeffco/Golden are confirming ridership data, discussions are continuing.

Auraria: The VE proposal was to relocate the track and station platform at the Auraria West Station.

Solution: Return to the 65 percent design layout and Auraria/Developer will contribute cash and in-kind construction to fund the difference in cost.

Drainage: The VE proposal was to modify the drainage criteria to protect transit infrastructure.

Status: All minor issues have been resolved between Lakewood, Denver and RTD. Outstanding issue is movement of the Denver Maintenance Facility at Decatur.

Alternatives are being developed to mitigate monetary commitments for drainage improvements.

Noise Study and Noise Walls

The noise consultant has completed its noise wall study, which includes wall locations and heights along the corridor. All noise walls will be directly adjacent to the light rail tracks.

RTD is organizing small group meetings in June with affected property owners to discuss wall options. The objective of these meetings is to get a quality and reasonably consistent noise mitigation treatment through the neighborhoods. Affected property owners can work with their neighbors to determine whether they want the wall as planned or would rather use the new Noise Barrier Change (opt-out) Policy. This policy provides an opportunity for interested neighborhoods to request changes to the noise walls by raising, lowering, eliminating or enhancing them.

The West Corridor Project team will also present planned noise wall locations and heights to the public in conjunction with the Environmental Assessment public meeting on July 18.

Environmental Assessment Update

Completion of the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) has been postponed to allow the team to evaluate the impacts that the accepted VE proposals might have on the project. The EA will address impacts (both positive and negative) of the accepted VE proposals, and recommend appropriate mitigation. Once RTD identifies the impacts and mitigation, the Draft EA will be completed and sent out for comment.

In conjunction with the FTA, RTD will schedule a public hearing to solicit public comments on the EA document. Prior to that hearing, the West Corridor Project team has set a public meeting on July 18 to discuss several EA topics, including visual impacts, wetlands, bike/pedestrian access, and noise wall location and heights.

Utilities/Track Work Update

Many of you attended the ceremonial first removal of old rail at Quail Street on May 16. The removal of these old tracks will move east from Quail and will take approximately four months, although the contractor says it may be completed more quickly.

In early July, Xcel Energy will begin relocating gas and electric facilities out of the 13th Avenue right-of-way owned by RTD. In order to meet RTD's requirements, it will be necessary for Xcel Energy to obtain new easements or other rights along some portions of the right-of-way in order to properly serve your area and to relocate the gas and electric lines from the RTD property. It is Xcel Energy's intent to minimize the impacts to private property. If an easement is needed, an Xcel Energy project representative will contact you and explain your specific situation.

Xcel Energy will contract with private companies to do the actual construction along the West Corridor, and will start at Quail Street and work east to Eaton. The vast majority of the utility relocation construction will take place during daylight hours. There may be some outages as the project takes place. The

contractor for Xcel Energy will contact residents if outages are planned or if access to property is needed. We will do our best to keep updated information on the Web site, but if you have specific questions, the contact for Xcel Energy is Craig Coon at 303-425-3982. Xcel Energy is the first company that needs to move its utilities to new locations to make way for the light rail. Qwest and Comcast will be following soon.

For more information on the track removal and utility work, please [visit this link](#).

FasTracks Annual Program Evaluation Q&A

With a program as big as FasTracks, it's not surprising that we are considered big news and will continue to be for the next 10 years. As you may have seen, FasTracks has been getting a lot of media attention in recent months.

Since the FasTracks vote in 2004, the program has encountered a number of challenges that are outside of RTD's control, namely a significant increase in the cost of construction materials and sales tax revenue forecasts that have not kept pace with original projections.

Considering that information, FasTracks began a comprehensive program evaluation in January to examine each FasTracks project individually and the program as a whole. Annual evaluations are embedded in the FasTracks plan for moving forward, which allows us to analyze changing trends and make necessary modifications throughout the process to keep the program on track.

FasTracks is a massive undertaking to greatly expand transportation options in our region. Its scope is unprecedented, and we can expect to face hurdles over the next decade. Regardless of challenges, RTD is committed to delivering FasTracks within the general scope, timeframe and financial capacity passed by voters in 2004. We will deliver our collective vision of providing a region-wide, reliable, safe transit system that meets the growing transportation needs of the Denver metropolitan area.

Through the Annual Program Evaluation, the West Corridor has been in front of the pack in making progress, since this is the first FasTracks project to be built and open to the public. We have been working on cost containment and value engineering for the past six months and have come a long way. The questions that still face many of the FasTracks corridors are already decided for the West Corridor. Here are some common questions we have received.

Q: Will the West Corridor be privatized?

A: No. Light rail corridors, including the West Corridor, are not candidates for the Public-Private Partnerships that are being considered on other lines.

Q: Are you looking at other types of trains for the West Corridor?

A: No. Light rail is the chosen technology for the West Corridor and it will not be changed.

Q: Have noise walls been eliminated in favor of privacy fences?

A: No. Noise barriers are planned adjacent to affected residential properties according to the results of the noise study and RTD's noise mitigation policies. However, affected property owners will have several options to modify the noise mitigation if they choose, including six-foot wooden privacy fences on property lines, lowered concrete barriers, or no walls.

Q: Is RTD considering a single track throughout the corridor?

A: No. A single track is planned between the Denver Federal Center and the Jefferson County Government Center. At stations, there will be two tracks to allow trains to pass each other. This modification will save millions of dollars, and will not affect service. The rest of the alignment will remain double track.

How Can I Get (or Stay) Involved?

One of the best ways to get the information that will help you stay involved in the West Corridor design process is to ensure we have your e-mail address. Our periodic e-mails will provide you with information essential to being an active participant. Especially as the project continues to evolve and develop, it will be important to keep all members of the community updated and informed on findings, decisions and achievements. Tell your friends and neighbors to sign up on our e-mail list to receive up-to-date information.

Don't forget to visit our new Web site, where you'll find all the latest information about the West Corridor.

Where can I get more information?

Web site: http://rtd-fastracks.com/wc_1

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Communication Assistance Available

The following communication assistance is available for all 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 303-299-2401 at least 72 hours prior to the meeting to discuss your special needs and request for accommodation.**