

## 5.0 PUBLIC COMMENT AND AGENCY COORDINATION

The Central Corridor Extension followed the same extensive community and agency involvement process as the I-70 East Corridor EIS in the beginning (July 2003) because the Central Corridor Extension was a component of the larger study. This comprehensive outreach process continued as part of the East Corridor EIS after the highway and transit projects split in June 2006 and as part of this EE when it was determined in July 2007 that the Central Corridor Extension would no longer be included in the East Corridor EIS. The overall goal of the community outreach and agency involvement program throughout the duration of this project has been to provide an open, dynamic process that includes as many of the residents, businesses, agencies, stakeholders, and community groups as possible. The process has been structured to involve people early and often and to share information as it becomes available.

### 5.1 ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

At the outset of the Central Corridor Extension EE process, the community and government agencies were given the opportunity to identify the range of issues, depth of analysis, and range of alternatives that needed to be addressed, as well as the potentially significant issues related to project development. This was accomplished primarily through a series of community informational meetings and formal coordination meetings with governmental agencies, in addition to an established resource agency committee review structure. Meetings and contacts with affected agencies and the community were documented through meeting notes, contact reports, and an outreach database.

#### 5.1.1 Agency Issue Identification

The agency coordination process began in October 2003 with the identification of prospective agencies that would guide and contribute to the project development process. To gather input from the different agencies, several meetings were held to respond to individual agency issues, including resource agencies and CCD. The agency issues included potential environmental and construction impacts, mitigation measures, alternative development, design constraints, analysis methodologies, and reporting requirements. A topical committee structure among the range of Federal, state, and local agencies was also established to provide specialized guidance, insight, policy-related recommendations and expertise for issues specific to both the East Corridor project area as a whole and the Central Corridor Extension project area as needed (see Table 5-1).

**Table 5-1  
Project Agency Coordination Committees**

Committee	Function
Executive Oversight Committee (EOC)	Senior staff oversight, policy recommendations (RTD, CDOT, CCD, FTA, FHWA)
Project Management Committee (PMC)	Project staff day-to-day direction, recommendations for EOC review (RTD, CDOT, CCD, FTA, FHWA)
Intergovernmental Coordination and Compliance Committee	Technical guidance and support (Adams County, Aurora, CDOT, Commerce City, CCD, DIA, DRCOG, EPA, Federal Aviation Administration, FHWA, Federal Railroad Administration, FTA, Public Utilities Commission, RTD)
Environmental Justice Compliance Committee	Technical support and review of NEPA and Federal Environmental Justice directives by regulatory agency experts
Air Quality Compliance Committee	Technical support and review of air quality analysis by regulatory agency experts

**Table 5-1  
Project Agency Coordination Committees**

Committee	Function
Intergovernmental Forum	Policy-related oversight and recommendations by elected and appointed officials from local and Congressional entities

On March 15, 2006, a portion of the I-70 East Corridor PMC meeting focused specifically on Downing Street streetcar operations proposed at that time and discussed the following topics:

- Existing conditions along Downing Street
- Light rail extension alternatives and screening results
- Differences between light rail and streetcar operations (speeds, capacities, alignments and typical sections design)
- Northern terminus connections to East Corridor
- Southern terminus connections to 30th/Downing station and Welton Street

Following this meeting, a streetcar coordination subgroup was established, comprised of CCD, RTD, and project team staff. This group met in spring and early summer 2006 to discuss the following traffic and intersection design and operations issues in more detail:

- Proposed stop locations
- Capacity and headways
- Typical sections
- Traffic safety and operations
- Transfer connections to other rail/bus services
- Coordination with other CCD studies
- Utilities

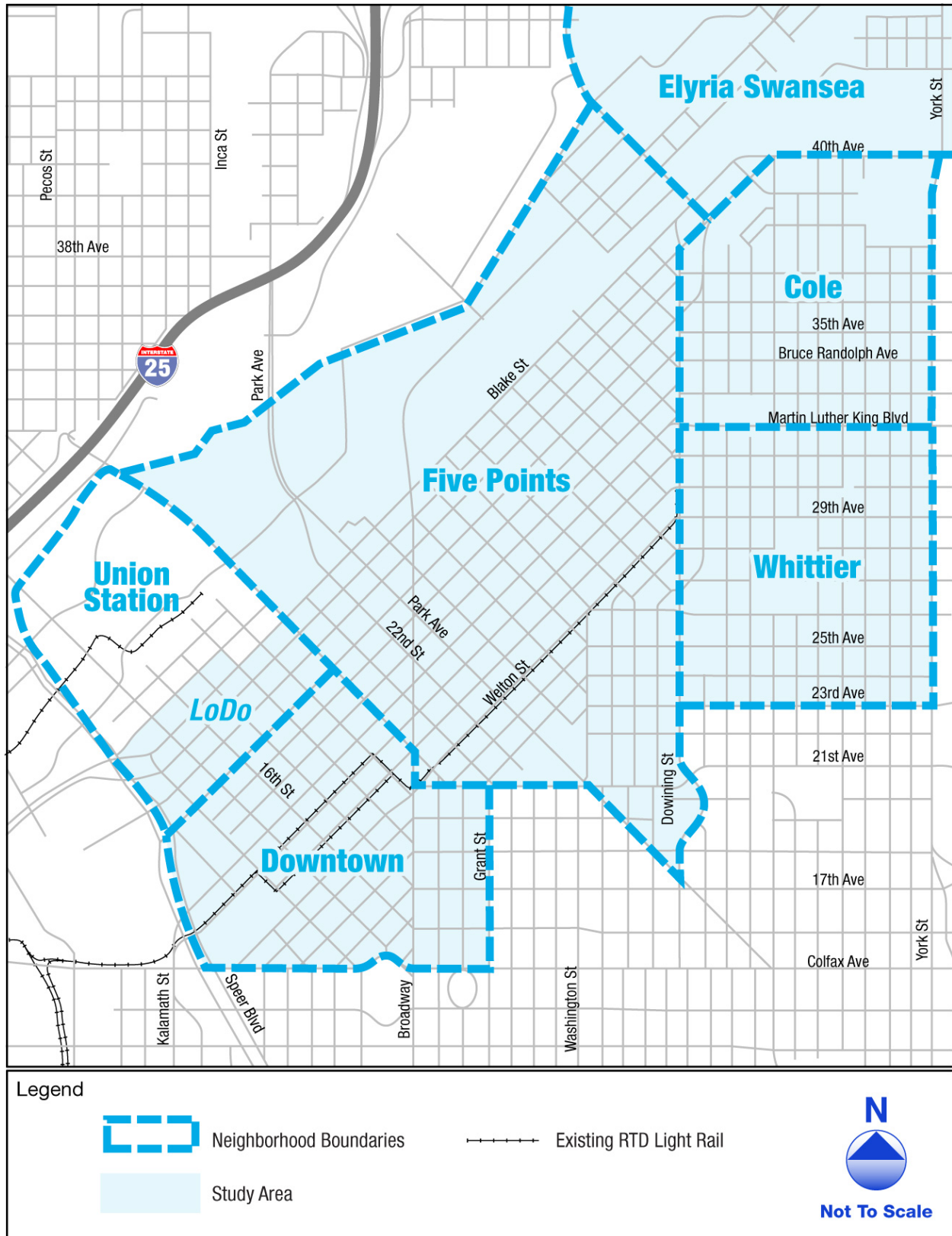
Following separation of the highway and transit elements of the I-70 East Corridor project, the EOC was disbanded and PMC and Intergovernmental Forum functions continued through coordination meetings among the agencies on an individual rather than committee basis. In addition, other committee functions were no longer as relevant to the Central Corridor Extension since these topical areas focused primarily on the East Corridor EIS.

### **5.1.2 Community Issue Identification**

The public input process began with a thorough analysis of the neighborhoods and businesses within the project area in a concentrated effort to develop a logical community outreach boundary and community outreach plan. A comprehensive informational meeting process was then implemented to ensure that every neighborhood in the project area had ample opportunity to provide input. Several techniques were used during the community issue identification process, including door-to-door outreach, followed by block, neighborhood, and corridor-wide meetings.

Figure 5-1 shows the project area and study boundaries that were used during this process. Additionally, informational kiosks were set up in several downtown Denver buildings in the summer of 2006 in an effort to gather feedback on the project. Approximately 257 people spoke directly with team members regarding their thoughts about the project and 58 comment sheets were completed.

**Figure 5-1  
Project Area**



## 5.2 COMMUNITY OUTREACH

The mission of the community outreach plan was to develop a process that created an atmosphere of openness and trust with the public. Each outreach activity was customized to address the individual characteristics of the neighborhood.

### 5.2.1 Community Outreach Techniques

Specific community outreach techniques were used to establish a level of trust in neighborhoods, beginning with developing project team sensitivity for the community history and culture, coupled with a grassroots approach to developing a credible presence in the project study area.

#### 5.2.1.1 Outreach Training

To facilitate the initial phase of the community outreach process, individuals living in the community were hired to serve as the first point of contact with the neighborhoods. These individuals could leverage their existing relationships and community understanding to gain credibility and trust and engage their neighbors to get involved in the project. All hired individuals were required to attend a training program to better understand the project and their roles. This training was also required for any member of the project team that would be involved in community outreach.

#### 5.2.2 Door-to-Door Outreach

A door-to-door approach was used in neighborhoods bordering the Central Corridor Extension project, as shown in Figure 5-1. Outreach specialists used a questionnaire to gather information from the residents as part of this process. A standard dialogue was used to ensure that all of the outreach specialists were communicating the same message to the residents. Door-to-door outreach was generally conducted Monday through Friday; Saturday outreach was conducted, as necessary, to meet the overall schedule. Spanish-speaking outreach specialists were also made available. A canvas bag containing information on neighborhood resources was offered to every person that agreed to complete a survey. Questionnaires were collected at the end of each day and input into a database to track the results. The information was used to develop a summary of the transportation characteristics and issues disclosed by each neighborhood.

Door-to-door activity boundaries were:

- Welton Street from Park Avenue West to 30th Avenue
- Downing Street, 30th Avenue to 40th Avenue
- Marion Street, 28th Avenue to 40th Avenue
- All the intersecting streets west of Downing Street beginning with California Street to Walnut Street for one block west



#### 5.2.3 Block Meetings

In addition to the door-to-door outreach, block meetings were held as small, informal gatherings. The purpose of the meetings was to inform residents of the environmental process, introduce the project team, and provide an intimate setting to develop a better understanding of specific concerns in certain areas. Meetings began with a short presentation by the project team followed by an open forum to answer questions and solicit input. Spanish translation services and meals were provided.

## 5.2.4 Neighborhood Meetings

Following the block meetings, neighborhood meetings were conducted to focus on broader neighborhood issues. These meetings were held in each of the neighborhoods and included a short presentation and an open forum for the community to interact with the project team. Meeting materials were made available in both English and Spanish. Summaries of the questionnaires and block meetings from within each neighborhood were discussed. Spanish translation services, meals, and childcare were provided at each neighborhood meeting. Table 5-2 shows the date, neighborhood, and number of attendees at each neighborhood meeting held in the Central Corridor Extension project area.

**Table 5-2  
Central Corridor/Downing Street Extension  
Neighborhood Meetings**

Date	Neighborhood(s)	Number of Attendees
10/24/2003	Five Points	56
10/28/2003	Clayton	27
10/29/2003	Cole	28
11/17/2003	LoDo	23
11/19/2003	Elyria and Swansea	49
<b>Total:</b>		<b>183</b>

## 5.2.5 Corridor-Wide Meetings

Following the neighborhood meetings and in context with the greater East Corridor EIS study area, corridor-wide meetings were conducted to discuss all of the issues from the various neighborhoods and to provide a corridor-wide understanding of similarities and differences. Each round of corridor-wide meetings provided two opportunities for the public to attend: one in the Central Corridor Extension project area at the western end and one at the eastern end of the East Corridor study area. The meetings were held back-to-back on a Wednesday and Thursday evening to make it as convenient as possible for the public to attend. Spanish translation services, meals, and child care were provided at each corridor-wide meeting.



Project team members answer questions at a corridor-wide meeting

The traditional audience-style format with informational boards, a presentation, and a question and answer period were used during the review process. The format of some subsequent meetings was modified by substituting the formal presentation and question and answer period with small, topic-specific discussion groups moderated by project team members. Each table also had a scribe who recorded comments and questions. The comments received during the open house were recorded and posted on comment boards to be reviewed by all participants. Overall summaries of the meetings were prepared and posted on the project website.

Table 5-3 lists the corridor-wide meeting dates, locations, topics, and number of attendees. Corridor-wide meetings through 2008 included the entire original I-70 East Corridor and subsequently the East Corridor project areas. Issues related to the Central Corridor Extension were included in all of the meetings listed. Following separation of the projects, the October 2009 meeting focused entirely on the Central Corridor Extension.

**Table 5-3  
Corridor-Wide Meetings**

Date	Location	Topic	Number of Attendees
12/10/2003	Now Faith Christian Church	Project overview and what we've heard	73
12/11/2003	Bruce Randolph Middle School		158
2/18/2004	Sable Elementary School	Screening process and alternatives to be evaluated	26
2/19/2004	Bruce Randolph Middle School		58
5/12/2004	Montbello Recreation Center	Alternatives eliminated in initial screening and comparative screening	60
5/13/2004	Bruce Randolph Middle School		101
9/29/2004	Montbello Recreation Center	Detailed screening alternatives and screening information	68
9/30/2004	Bruce Randolph Middle School		166
2/23/2005	Montbello Recreation Center	Draft EIS alternatives and alternatives removed after detailed screening	74
2/24/2005	Bruce Randolph Middle School		162
10/12/2005	Montbello Recreation Center	Draft EIS alternatives and initial alternative refinement evaluation results	56
10/13/2005	Bruce Randolph Middle School		140
5/17/2006	Montbello Recreation Center	Upcoming decisions and additional screening	58
5/18/2006	Swansea Recreation Center		128
11/8/2006	Montbello Recreation Center	Alternative recommendations	32
11/9/2006	Swansea Recreation Center		82
7/18/2007	Montbello Recreation Center	Project update and potential alternative changes	24
7/19/2007	Swansea Recreation Center		54
7/23/2008	Montbello Recreation Center	Preferred Alternative refinements	73
7/24/2008	Bruce Randolph Middle School		164
10/21/2009	EXDO Annex	Central Corridor Extension update	79
<b>Total:</b>			<b>1,836</b>

### 5.2.6 Working Groups

Five working groups were established to provide residents, businesses, stakeholders, and property owners an opportunity to continue their participation and learn more about how the scientists, engineers, and planners would evaluate specific resources. The formation of working groups was announced at each neighborhood and corridor-wide meeting, and attendees were invited to sign up for the group(s) that interested them. Working group meetings were typically held on weekday evenings (Monday through Thursday).

The project team used the working groups to solicit input, establish dialogues about specific issues, and educate the attendees about the issues that would be considered in the environmental documents. Innovative exercises were incorporated into the meetings, such as noise monitors on the streets of Denver to get readings on light rail, puzzles that helped participants gain an understanding of alternative packaging, and an exercise designed to help participants understand how the alternatives would be screened by comparing the process to the typical selective decisions made when buying a car. Issues from each working group were then communicated back to the PMC and compliance committees to be resolved. Table 5-4 lists the working groups applicable to the Central Corridor Extension.

**Table 5-4  
Working Groups**

Working Group	Date(s) of Meetings
Bicycle/Pedestrian/Open Space	6/16/2005
Community Impacts	2/12/2004, 3/18/2004, 4/15/2004, 5/20/2004, 6/17/2004, 7/15/2004, 8/19/2004, 9/16/2004, 10/21/2004, 12/09/2004, 1/20/2005, 2/17/2005
Economic Development	8/2/2005
Stations	2/9/2004, 3/10/2004, 4/14/2004, 5/5/2004, 5/26/2004, 6/23/2004, 7/14/2004, 8/10/2004, 9/15/2004, 11/10/2004, 12/8/2004, 2/2/2005, 3/9/2005, 8/23/2005, 5/9/2006
Transit	9/26/2006, 10/24/2006, 3/4/2008, 7/15/2008, 1/27/2009, 3/18/2009, 3/19/2009

### 5.2.7 Topic-Specific Neighborhood Meetings

In addition to the general neighborhood meetings held at the outset of the project and described in Section 5.2.4, topic-specific neighborhood meetings were also held. As shown in Table 5-5, three topic-specific neighborhood meetings focused on the Central Corridor Extension.

Some of the concerns raised at the first two meetings focused on the operational differences in alternatives under consideration, potential property and business impacts, Downing Street traffic interface with rail, construction-related concerns, project costs, and redevelopment opportunities. The meeting in 2008 discussed the differences that a 33rd Street or 38th Street station (in lieu of the former 40th/40th station, which was no longer feasible) would have on the Central Corridor Extension project connection from Downing Street to the East Corridor station location options.

**Table 5-5  
Topic-Specific Neighborhood Meetings**

Date	Neighborhood(s)	Topic	Number of Attendees
5/19/2005	Five Points/Whittier/Cole	Downing Street light rail extension	68
8/15/2006	Downtown/Five Points/Whittier/Cole/Curtis Park/Elyria/Swansea	Central Corridor Extension	78
6/12/2008	Globeville/Elyria and Swansea/Cole/Whittier/Curtis Park	40th/40th station	119

Date	Neighborhood(s)	Topic	Number of Attendees
<b>Total:</b>			<b>265</b>

### 5.2.8 Stakeholder Meetings

Individual meetings were scheduled with elected officials and established community groups to introduce them to the EE process and the project team. The meetings were used to solicit input, provide information about the EE process and the need for meaningful involvement, establish a dialogue with individuals and groups who have lived and worked in specific neighborhoods, obtain input on the outreach methodology, and solicit their support early to help lend credibility to the process. Before major project decisions, the project team met with elected officials to brief them on study recommendations.

In addition to formal neighborhood leaders, the project team provided outreach to church congregations in the project area to inform them that outreach specialists would be visiting some of their neighborhoods and to encourage them to speak to a specialist and become engaged in the EE process. Before each corridor-wide meeting, outreach specialists visited churches throughout the corridor to announce the upcoming meetings.

Project team members also visited community organizations during their regular meetings to provide an update on the project, answer questions, solicit input, and inform the participants of an upcoming meeting for the project. Stakeholder meetings were also held by request and typically included property or business owners, business or homeowners associations, special interest groups, religious organizations, neighborhood associations, police/fire personnel, and others as appropriate.

For the Central Corridor Extension area, the project contact list included the following key stakeholders:

- Ballpark Neighborhood Association
- Cross Community Coalition
- Curtis Park Neighbors
- Cole Neighborhood Association
- Curtis Park Preservation Council
- Downtown Denver Resident's Organization
- Downtown Denver Partnership
- Elyria Neighborhood Association
- Elyria Swansea Business Association
- Globeville Civic Association
- Globeville Area Business Association
- LODO District
- LODO Neighborhood Group
- Ministerial Alliance
- Northeast Denver Coalition
- San Rafael Neighborhood Association
- Upper Larimer Neighborhood Association
- Whittier Neighborhood Association

The project contact list included the following area religious organizations:

- Zion
- Word Up
- Central Baptist
- Ministry of Hope
- Holy Ghost
- Agape
- Sacred Heart

### **5.2.9 Additional Communication**

Other forms of communication were used to provide information to the public about upcoming meetings or to provide new information that was available.

#### **Flyers and Posters**

Flyers were distributed throughout the process preceding door-to-door visits and community meetings. The flyers were typically distributed a week before meetings and provided meeting specifics in both English and Spanish. Posters advertising public meetings were placed throughout the corridor to ensure those not reachable through existing community groups or the project's mailing list or e-mail distribution list were invited to attend. Posters were placed in libraries, community centers, businesses, recreation centers, and neighborhood economic centers.

#### **Newsletters**

Newsletters provided status updates and information throughout the project and were one of the sources for meeting notification. Newsletters were mailed to property owners, businesses, interested parties, and those who requested contact via mail, and were flyered to all corridor residents. Each newsletter was published in English and Spanish and included contact information for the project team and a section on how to stay involved. The newsletter, like the rest of the project information, could also be found on the project website. A total of six newsletters were produced and distributed, all but one prior to the separation of the Central Corridor Extension from the East Corridor.

#### **Advertising**

Advertisements were placed in the weekly newspapers, Denver daily newspapers, and other relevant and local publications to announce meetings. All of the advertisements were published in both English and Spanish. Local publications that have been used include, the *Denver Post*, *Denver Weekly News*, *El Hispano*, *El Seminario*, *La Voz*, *North Denver Tribune*, *Rocky Mountain News*, and *Urban Spectrum*.

#### **E-mail and Telephone Notification**

Members of the public who specified that they wanted to be informed of project activities through e-mail were sent notifications that covered new information on the website, upcoming public meetings, and any other pertinent information. People who preferred to be notified of public meetings through telephone communications were called within one week of any public meeting or working group.

#### **Project Website**

A project website ([www.eastcorridor.com](http://www.eastcorridor.com)) was developed to disseminate information and provide a schedule of events. The site offered English and Spanish options and included features such as an on-line feedback form, an automatic update e-mail distribution for when

new information was posted, and technical documents. The website was updated regularly to provide timely project information. After the Central Corridor Extension project separated from the East Corridor EIS, users were referred to RTD's FasTracks website ([www.rtd-fastracks.com](http://www.rtd-fastracks.com)) where they could access a Central Corridor link that continued to provide project updates and information.

### **Project Office**

When the I-70 East Corridor EIS began, a project office was established in the corridor. Managers and key project staff from RTD, CDOT, and the consultant team were co-located in that office and day-to-day project management activities were conducted from there. The project office was the site for many of the working group and compliance committee meetings and was available for the public to drop-in and meet with the project team. Staff were available to discuss Central Corridor Extension project issues as necessary. After the highway and transit projects were split in 2006, the transit portion of this function was transferred to RTD's FasTracks offices located at 1560 Broadway.

## **5.3 DRAFT AND FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION DOCUMENT REVIEW**

The draft EE was made available to the public for review and comment between December 9, 2009 and January 11, 2010 via the project website and at the following locations:

- Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library, 2401 Welton Street
- Ford-Warren Library, 2825 High Street
- Valdez-Perry Library, 4690 Vine Street
- RTD – FasTracks Office, 1560 Broadway, Suite 700

During the review period, the public was invited to respond via email, written correspondence, or during attendance at a public meeting held on December 16, 2009. The purpose of this meeting was to present project information contained in the report and to seek public input through a question/answer session at the meeting and through distribution of comment cards which respondents could fill out at the meeting or return prior to close of the public comment period. Fifty-two people attended the meeting. Specific responses to the formally submitted review comments are included in Appendix A of this report. A summary of the discussion topics at the public meeting are listed below:

- Potential changes to existing traffic, bus operations, and business access. Response to traffic accidents on Downing with the addition of in-street rail transit.
- Potential impacts to the pedestrian environment throughout the corridor, including platform lighting.
- Opportunities and constraints for system expansion and anticipated service schedule.
- Construction costs, future funding scenarios and construction timing.
- Route identification and marketing strategies prior to opening day.
- Functionality of the system in connecting with other light rail lines through the downtown loop, differences between a Central Corridor Extension 36th Street stop and cross-platform transfer at the 38th and Blake station in accessing the East Corridor line.

## **5.4 NEXT STEPS**

Following release of this final document, further opportunities for public information will continue. When funding is secured to complete the FasTracks program, it is anticipated that the Central Corridor Extension would move to final design and construction. During that phase, RTD will continue coordination with project partners, coordinating agencies and stakeholders. In addition, a construction mitigation plan will be prepared that will include a communication program to provide further information about the project.

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