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Gold Line EIS Contact Report

Date of contact: January 16, 2007
Contact method: Olde Town Arvada Issue Focused Team Meeting
Attendees: **Issue Focused Team Members:** Bob Boling, Gretchen Boling, Trish Cassen, Judith Denham, Allan Evans, Julie Hyman Johnson, Julie Jordan, John Kiljan, Michael Petz, Brad Rupert, Jane Schnabel, Phil Shelton and Bob Wilson.
LGT Members/City Staff/Elected Officials: Lorraine Anderson, Kevin Nichols, Ed Stafford, David Ruchman
Project Team: Liz Telford, Don Ulrich, Jon Spencer, Andy Mountain, Terry Ruitter, Sandra Dowling, Megan Lane, Ashland Vaughn, Angela Brand, Matt Moseley

MEETING SUMMARY/KEY ISSUES

After introductions, Jonathan Spencer provided a detailed description of the alignments through Olde Town for each alternative. The team members then provided feedback on four main topics: traffic, travel time, parking and community impacts.

SPECIFIC TEAM INPUT:

Traffic

- For light rail and streetcar alternatives, RTD should evaluate benefits/impacts of crossing Wadsworth at Grandview and traveling north/south to Ralston Rd. on the east side of Wadsworth rather than crossing Wadsworth at Ralston Rd.
 - City staff noted that this scenario would likely require acquiring additional property compared to being on the west side of Wadsworth.
- When traffic analysis is completed, the group would like to see how traffic on intersecting streets is impacted in addition to roads like Ralston and Grandview.

Travel Time

- The group feels that travel time should be one of the most important criteria to consider when evaluating alternatives.
- The system must be reliable and meet its projected travel times. Specific to the light rail and streetcar alternatives, the group recommends that, as much as possible, tracks should be in exclusive right-of-way rather than in mixed flow with vehicles.



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- The group supports RTD's efforts to secure signal prioritization for light rail and streetcar trains as will likely improve travel time.

Parking

- The group is interested in measures to discourage transit users from parking on streets in Olde Town and encourage users to use the park-n-Ride. This must be balanced with unintended negative impacts of such measures on consumer parking in Olde Town.
- The group supports the City's plans to partner with RTD to provide a parking structure at Olde Town in order to maximize the use of available land.
- When it comes to design, the groups emphasized the importance of ensuring that the station and any parking fit into the character of Olde Town.
- The group supports RTD's plans to optimize its existing bus operations to provide maximum access to the transit station from surrounding sub-divisions.
- When it comes time to locate parking facilities, the groups recommends locating them near major arterials to minimize congestion on side streets in/around stations.

Community Impacts

- In pedestrian areas like Olde Town, the group supports RTD's plans to operate trains at similar speeds to street speed limits for safety purposes.
- Crossing gates must be well-maintained to avoid vandalism problems currently plaguing the BNSF gates.
- The group supports RTD's efforts to work closely with emergency response teams – specifically Fire Station #1 – to ensure that the project does not negatively impact emergency response times.
 - The group is interested in the possibility of giving Emergency vehicles some ability to force trains to stop to facilitate timely response in the event of an emergency.
- The group recommends evaluating the possibility of including exclusive pedestrian crossings (bridges or tunnels) at two specific locations – Allison (Lawrence Elementary School) and in the vicinity of Garrison and Independence.

Additional Individual Recommendations Submitted After The Work Session

1. From John Kiljan:

On the issue of travel time, the projected time of travel along the route was indeed important, but even more so to those I listened to was the reliability of the projected travel times.

In other words, in the case of the EMU versus the streetcar (25 and 41 minute optimal travel times, respectively), the 16 minute advantage of the EMU was certainly important, but what was even more important to the group was that travelers could have more confidence in the 25 minute EMU time since it was more likely to be un-affected by



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weather and traffic, whereas the 41 minute streetcar time could easily stretch out to an hour or more depending upon heavy traffic, everyday roadway accidents, weather or other difficult-to-predict events because of its mixed-flow element.

2. *From Allan Evans:*

An additional proposed station to be added to the Gold Line Project proposal at Garrison St was suggested and was strongly supported by the Ridge Road/Olde Town Community Focus Group. Project Director Liz Telford told the group that her team would crunch the numbers for the project to see if it might be fiscally feasible. And if not, it could be added to the EIS as a proposed future "ghost station" wherein the initial alignment and construction of the tracks could laid along the BNSF right-of-way and configured in such a way so that a station could be built at a future time, as part of a build-out that could be done as part of a Line improvement "Phase II" project at a time when funds might be more readily available. The Focus Group members asked RTD officials how much such a station would cost, and one of the contracted technical engineers replied that it was his guess that it could cost anywhere from \$2M to \$4M, but that he was unsure. Gold Line Project Manager Liz Telford promised that she would have her team technically investigate and fiscally analyze such a proposed station at Garrison St and offer the Ridge Road/Olde Town Community Focus Group some technical options regarding this matter at the next group meeting to be held sometime in March 07. Additionally, Liz Telford promised to bring technical options with station costs for other proposed stations, to the next Ridge Road/Olde Town Community Focus Group meeting to be reconvened sometime around March 07 as well. She further promised that her team would present DRCOGS' specific demographics of the TAZ's proposed line alternatives and stations at the next round of public hearings regarding the elimination of some of the Project Line Alternatives to be held sometime in the following month of Feb 07.

3. *From Philo Shelton:*

The preferred alternative should look at maximizing passenger counts.

Reciprocal parking agreements should be explored such as parking at the movie theater during the day for commuters.