



Draft Meeting Summary

Gold Line Local Governments Team

Tuesday, December 12, 2006
1:00 p.m.-3:00 p.m.
Wheat Ridge Recreation Center, Columbine Room
4005 Kipling, Wheat Ridge

Meeting Goals and Agenda

The meeting goals were to:

- Update the Local Governments Team (LGT) on the Level 3 Alternative Refinements
- Review the approach to Level 3 Detailed Evaluation
- Review the January-February 2007 schedule of activities

The meeting agenda included a project update; an update on the alternative refinements and design options; presentation of the Level 3 Detailed Evaluation methodology and criteria; an overview of travel demand modeling; and an overview of the activities planned in January and February 2007 for Level 3 Detailed Evaluation.

Meeting Handouts

- Meeting Agenda
- Revised October 30, 2006, LGT Meeting Summary (page 3)
- Table 3-1: Detailed Evaluation Measures (Draft-December 12, 2006)
- Table 3-2: Detailed Evaluation, Environmental-Gold Line Alternatives (Draft-December 12, 2006)
- Detailed Evaluation Maps of Alternatives (3, 6DD, 6G, 7BB)

Preliminary Items

Liz Telford, RTD Project Manager, welcomed the LGT. After introductions, Louise Smart and Julie McKay, facilitators, reviewed the agenda and finalized the October 2 and 30 LGT meeting summaries with the group.

Project Update

Don Ulrich, consultant Project Manager, provided a project update to the LGT. The project is now at its third milestone: Level 3 Detailed Evaluation (evaluating four Alternatives). RTD is continuing its negotiations with the Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroads. This will not affect the project's schedule because, if necessary, two Alternatives can be evaluated in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). However, a Preferred Alternative is needed to begin Preliminary Engineering and finalize the environmental documentation.

Alternative Refinements and Design Options

The purpose of this part of the meeting was to review the refinements to the four Alternative alignments that have made since the October 30, 2006, LGT meeting. Jonathan Spencer, RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team (Project Team), explained that the alignments have been refined to quantify the amount of at-grade track, aerial structure, and tunnel; quantify the percentage of mixed flow operation; define the appropriate cross-section by area; and avoid impacts where feasible. He noted that the refined alignments allow the Project Team to estimate costs at a higher level of accuracy; estimate impacts; and better communicate the trade-offs among the Alternatives to the public in upcoming meetings during Level 3 Detailed Evaluation.

The LGT referred to the maps of the four refined alignments as Jonathan Spencer reviewed each one, including the typical track cross-sections. During the review, the Project Team provided additional description and the LGT asked clarifying questions about the location and design of the alignments. LGT representatives also raised the following issues:

- **Track Cross-Sections:** Bob Manwaring, City of Arvada, asked if the local communities could receive copies of the track cross-sections displayed at the meeting. They will be helpful for station planning and other purposes, including being able to communicate about the alignments. In response, Jonathan Spencer explained that right now the cross-sections are only being used for estimates. They do not include a high enough level of design for them to be appropriate for other uses. When the design of the cross-sections does reach this level, they can be shared with the local communities.
- **Commuter Rail Boarding at Stations:** During the review of the Commuter Rail typical station cross-section for Alternative 3 (Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) Commuter Rail, BNSF/UP alignment), Shelley Cook, City of Arvada, asked for clarification about the four foot height for the boarding platform. She indicated a desire to have low floor vehicle boarding. The group then discussed two aspects of this issue:

- Ashland Vaughn, RTD, clarified that the station cross-section design is still in a conceptual engineering form. As is the case with the track cross-sections, the design is only being used right now for estimates. There are no basic design specifications yet. In response, Shelley asked for confirmation that the current design will be refined, which Ashland provided.
- Larry Schultz, City of Wheat Ridge, asked for confirmation that the train platform will allow for level Commuter Rail boarding. Liz Telford confirmed that this will be the case. She also clarified that this is referred to as “level boarding,” not “low floor boarding,” and that level boarding does not include a block of stairs up into the train. Dave Beckhouse, Federal Transit Administration (FTA), added that FTA requires level boarding for Commuter Rail in order to comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The existing LRT in Denver received a variance (to allow for stairs in the vehicles) to accommodate the operating environment in downtown, i.e. needing to deal with the height of the curbs. (RTD provided Arvada with a cross section of a commuter rail station platform to help clarify how level boarding works.)
- Single Track on Grandview Avenue: During the review of Alternative 6DD (LRT, 38th to Sheridan) and Alternative 6G (LRT, 38th to Harlan), City of Arvada representatives asked if a single track design could be considered on Grandview Avenue. The discussion included the following key points:
 - Referring to the constrained area on Harlan where a single track design is proposed, Liz Telford suggested that this may be an option for other areas that are similarly constrained. However, it is important to be selective about where to apply the design because of the implications for operations, including how delays could affect the system. Shelley Cook indicated that it would be important to know how a single track design on Grandview Avenue would affect headways.
 - Patty Lorence suggested that single track may be a good approach to Grandview Avenue, noting the historic properties on the south side of the street.
 - Liz Telford indicated that the Project Team can explore single track on Grandview Avenue as a design option. Jonathan Spencer noted that in order to further evaluate this option the Project Team would need to

consider flow lines, ROW, cross section dimensions, location of sidewalks, parking, and a variety of other factors.

- Bob Manwaring confirmed that the City of Arvada would like the Project Team to consider a single track design on Grandview Avenue.
- Station Locations:
 - Lorraine Anderson, City of Arvada, asked if it would be possible to locate a LRT or streetcar station at 52nd Avenue and Marshall in order to serve east Arvada and Wheat Ridge residents. Jonathan Spencer clarified that right now the seven station locations on each alignment are based on the FasTracks plan. For comparison purposes, the four Alternatives need to have the same number of stations. Liz Telford, in response to a follow up question by Lorraine, confirmed that there is nothing to preclude adding a station in this area, and that this can be considered at a later point in the study.
 - Proposed station at Harlan and 45th Avenue: Steve Nguyen, City of Wheat Ridge, asked why the proposed station on Harlan is located on 45th instead of 44th Avenue. Liz Telford explained that this is where the transition between the narrow and wide Right-of-Way (ROW) occurs. There needs to be a turn pocket for the vehicles, which is why 45th Avenue was selected instead of 44th Avenue.
- Vehicle Specifications and Selection Process (EMU): At the end of the review of the alignments, Shelley Cook asked about vehicle specifications and the process for EMU Commuter Rail vehicle selection. She expressed an interest in local community involvement in the decision-making process, including concern that they have not yet been a part of it. As the discussion continued, Shelley expressed concern that decisions being made now may limit choices in the future and that it is important to avoid this possibility. She also explained that the City of Arvada needs to know what Commuter Rail will “look like” so that it can feel comfortable supporting it for the Gold Line. All aspects of the vehicle– height, weight, appearance, etc.– are important to the City.

To address the concerns raised, Liz Telford clarified that RTD is at least a year away from developing vehicle specifications and that additional station engineering needs to be performed first. While station plans may change as the project moves forward, the engineering– conceptual– that has been conducted thus far is not at a high enough level to preclude any options. Dave Beckhouse added that the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) will

require an FRA-compliant vehicle if it operates in the freight ROW. In addition, FTA has “buy America” regulations to follow. At the end of the discussion, Liz Telford indicated that there could be a special session about this issue when the time is appropriate.

In addition to the issues raised by the LGT during the review of the alignments, Liz Telford also pointed out the design challenges, including the grade issues, in the Kalamath/Navajo and 38th Street areas.

Level 3 Detailed Evaluation Methodology and Criteria

Don Ulrich provided an overview of the Level 3 Detailed Evaluation Methodology and Criteria. Later in the meeting, the LGT reviewed the two Detailed Evaluation tables. [See “Handouts” section above.] Don Ulrich asked LGT representatives for input on whether the evaluation approach meets their expectations, particularly for the environmental issues. In response, the LGT discussed the following issues:

- **Noise and Vibration:** Bob Manwaring asked whether noise and vibration impacts would be addressed in Level 3 evaluation. Don replied that noise and vibration impacts will be evaluated when the number of Alternatives is narrowed. Liz Telford elaborated that this approach allows the study to do a thorough analysis on a few Alternatives as opposed to a less detailed analysis on several Alternatives.
- **Traffic, Circulation, and Parking:** Bob Kochevar, City and County of Denver, referenced the evaluation criterion included under “Traffic, Circulation, and Parking” (Table 3-2, page 6). He suggested that it needs to be expanded to include factors such as circulation, access, safety, connectivity (particularly in relation to Denver’s grid system), level of service on 38th Street, signaling, and the impacts of traffic lane losses. He emphasized that there are many issues that should be considered in addition to the criteria listed in the table. Later in the discussion, he indicated that it would be helpful to the City and County to know the magnitude of the traffic impacts.

Don Ulrich acknowledged that these issues are important. He explained that they are not included in the Level 3 criteria because they do not serve as discriminators among the three 38th Street Alternative alignments and thus cannot serve a comparative purpose. Instead, they will be evaluated when the study narrows the Alternatives.

Patti Lorence indicated that she had a similar comment, including the sense that changes in traffic volumes on local streets may be a discriminator at this point. In response, Liz Telford clarified that at this level of evaluation the

study will provide major arterial volumes, but not changes in traffic patterns, as this requires a sub-area analysis. Liz confirmed Don's explanation that the study will continue to examine the traffic, circulation, and parking issues.

At the end of the discussion, the LGT indicated that they are comfortable with the evaluation methodology and criteria. Don Ulrich indicated that the LGT will review the Level 3 Detailed Evaluation findings at its January meeting and that the Project Team will provide a completed matrix for this purpose.

Travel Demand Modeling

Liz Telford provided an overview of the regional Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) travel demand modeling process, including its advantages and challenges. She also reviewed FTA's New Starts funding criteria. After her presentation, LGT members asked the following questions:

- David Heller, DRCOG, asked about the relationship between New Starts and local FasTracks funding. Liz Telford clarified that the plan is to fund the Gold Line with 50% local funds and 50% federal funds.
- Bob Manwaring asked what the New Starts application entails. Liz Telford explained that RTD submits an initiation package and screening reports to FTA. RTD then needs FTA approval to move into Preliminary Engineering.
- Patty Lorence asked whether RTD considers local preferences or costs/benefits for stations. Liz Telford replied that RTD considers both of these factors.

Level 3 Detailed Evaluation: January-February 2007 Schedule Of Activities

Matt Moseley, Project Team, updated the LGT on public outreach and input since October and highlighted the dates for the Level 3 Detailed Evaluation workshops (LGT, public, and agency) in January-February 2007. Matt also described the purpose and composition of the Issue-Focused Teams (IFT), which will meet in January 2007. In response to a question from Julie McKay, LGT representatives indicated support for the approach to the IFT meetings, including their role in the January 11, 2007, orientation meeting. [See "Next Steps and Action Items" section below.]

Next Steps and Action Items

The following Next Steps and Action Items were identified during the meeting:

- The Project Team will distribute the Issue-Focused Team meeting schedule, including dates, times, and locations to the LGT.
- LGT representatives will coordinate their role for the Issue-Focused Team orientation meeting on January 11, 2007. The Project Team will support the LGT in this effort.
- The next LGT meeting will be held Tuesday, January 30, 2007. The Project Team will provide more details to the LGT as they become available.
- Action items for the future include:
 - The Project Team will provide the agencies with the track cross-section designs when they reach a high enough level for them to be appropriate for local uses.
 - The Project Team will evaluate single track on Grandview Avenue as a design option.
 - The Project Team will consider a station location at 52nd Avenue and Marshall when the time is appropriate to do so.
 - RTD will conduct a session on EMU vehicle selection when the time is appropriate to do so.
 - The Project Team will continue to evaluate traffic, circulation, and parking issues as the study moves forward, increasing the level of analysis when the study narrows the Alternatives under consideration.

Meeting Participants

1. Skip Fischer Adams County, County Commission
2. Jeanne Shreve Adams County
3. Lorraine Anderson City of Arvada, City Council
4. Kevin Nichols City of Arvada
5. Bob Manwaring City of Arvada
6. Patty Lorence City of Arvada
7. Shelley Cook City of Arvada
8. Steve Urban City of Arvada, City Council
9. Rob Balmes Jefferson County
10. Pat Defa (for Rick Garcia) City and County of Denver, City Council
11. Bob Kochevar City and County of Denver
12. Crissy Fanganello City and County of Denver
13. Karen Good City and County of Denver
14. David Heller DRCOG
15. Dave Beckhouse Federal Transit Administration
16. Betty VanHarte Town of Mountain View, Mayor
17. Gene Barnes Town of Mountain View
18. Larry Schulz City of Wheat Ridge, City Council
19. Steve Nguyen City of Wheat Ridge
20. Tim Paranto City of Wheat Ridge
21. Wally Pulliam RTD Board, District L
22. Liz Telford RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
23. Bob Boot RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
24. Don Ulrich RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
25. Julie McKay RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
26. Tim Baldwin RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
27. Jonathan Spencer RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
28. Chris Proud RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
29. Angela Brand RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
30. Louise Smart RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
31. Ashland Vaughn RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
32. Matt Moseley RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
33. Megan Lane RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
34. Mark Beudermann RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
35. Genevieve Hutchison RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team
36. Jeff Leib Denver Post
37. Kevin Flynn Rocky Mountain News
38. Arthur Bader Colorado Railcar Manufacturing