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# Draft Meeting Summary

## Agency Milestone Workshop

### Selection of the Preferred Alternative

Thursday, June 28, 2007

9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.

FasTracks Regional Conference Room, Suite 700 (7<sup>th</sup> Floor)

1560 Broadway, Denver

#### Meeting Goals and Agenda

This was the fourth Agency Milestone Workshop for the Gold Line Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The meeting goals included:

- Provide an overview of input from the June 26 and 27 public workshops;
- Present and discuss the results of refinements to both alternatives, including project team recommendations for the Preferred Alternative; and
- Gather preliminary input and assess levels of support for the project recommendations from the Agency Working Group (AWG) and Local Governments Team (LGT).

The meeting agenda included a welcome and introductions, a presentation on the Preferred Alternative Recommendation and a review of the comment form and comment period logistics.

#### Preliminary Items

Liz Telford, RTD Gold Line Project Manager, welcomed the AWG and the LGT. She noted that the Gold Line Team is now in its fourth milestone: the Selection of the Preferred Alternative. She explained that the desired outcome of this phase of the study is to select the alternative that will be evaluated in more detail in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). She thanked all of the municipalities and agencies for being involved.

Chris Proud, RTD FasTracks Gold Line Project Team, led introductions and reviewed the meeting agenda. Chris mentioned that meeting attendees could make verbal comments during the meeting to be part of official record, or they could choose to submit written comments.

#### Presentation

Don Ulrich, Consultant Gold Line Project Manager, reviewed the presentation on the Selection of the Preferred Alternative that the Project Team presented at the June 26<sup>th</sup> and

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27<sup>th</sup> public workshops. At several points in the presentation, workshop participants asked questions, discussed, and provided comment about the evaluation information:

#### Key Performance Discriminators

- Don highlighted work done to avoid impacts to historic properties and parkland, and Chris provided additional details of the work completed and how properties were analyzed. He noted that the streetcar alternative has higher likelihood of affecting historic properties. Kirk Webb (CDOT) asked whether the impacts identified were direct or indirect, and Liz Telford explained that the team's numbers identified the potential for impact and not necessarily direct impacts.
- In response to a question from Patty Lorence (City of Arvada) on avoiding impacts to the Flour Mill, Jonathan Spencer, a consultant on the Gold Line Project Team, explained that (based on the current level of design) the Gold Line would not impact the Flour Mill structure itself, but would likely impact the fenced garden area to the east slightly.
- Amy Pallante (SHPO) asked whether the railroad itself was evaluated to determine if it is a historic resource. Chris Proud responded that there are some segments of track that may be considered historic and that the project team will evaluate this further.
- Kirk Webb of CDOT asked for more specifics on how traffic impacts were measured to arrive at the conclusion that Commuter Rail alternative has "Low" impacts, while the Streetcar alternative has "Moderate" impacts. Liz Telford explained the process by which traffic impacts were analyzed and that the Commuter Rail alternative has fewer at-grade crossings.

#### **Preferred Alternative Recommendations**

Chris Proud asked AWG and LGT representatives for their input on the project team's recommendations– that Alternatives 3 (Electric Commuter Rail on the BNSF/UP alignment) is named as the preferred alternative and the Alternative 7BB (Streetcar on Harlan) is eliminated. Chris read each of the project team's recommendation's individually and then allowed each agency and municipality the opportunity to comment on the specific recommendation.

In response, the attendees provided the following comments:

#### **Recommendation #1: The Project Team recommends that the alignment of the Preferred Alternative should be in the BN/UP Railroad Alignment**

- Steve Nguyen stated that Wheat Ridge intends to submit written comments, but added that the city supports this recommendation because they believe that it will yield a more favorable result and will meet the FasTracks vision.
- Representatives from the City of Arvada stated that they do support this recommendation because they feel it is consistent with long-range plans for corridor and is best overall in terms of the evaluation criteria.

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- Will Kerns stated that Jefferson County supports this recommendation. He added that it is in line with what the voters approved.
  - Jeanne Shreve stated that Adams County supports this recommendation for all of the previously mentioned reasons (listed above).
  - Amy Pallante said that SHPO intends to submit its official comments in written form.
  - Jody Ostendorf of the USEPA stated that the organization supports the BN/UP Railroad alignment.
  - Kirk Webb stated that CDOT supports this alignment.
  - Crissy Fanganello stated that City and County of Denver supports this alignment
  - Rena Brand of the US Army Corps of Engineers stated that the agency supports this alignment, because it is less damaging in terms of wetlands and stream impacts, based on the impact information provided by the project team.

**Recommendation #2: The Project Team recommends that the Preferred Alternative should have 7 stations. (38th/44th, Pecos, Federal, Sheridan, Olde Town, Ridge Rd., Ward Rd.)**

- Steve Nguyen stated that Wheat Ridge would support this recommendation because it would support local planning efforts conducted to date.
- Kevin Nichols stated that Arvada supports this recommendation.
- Will Kerns (Jefferson County) had no comment on this recommendation.
- Jeanne Shreve stated that Adams County supports this recommendation.
- Jody Ostendorf of the USEPA had no comment.
- Crissy Fanganello stated that City and County of Denver supports this recommendation but wants the project team to continue to look at different station options.
- Rena Brand of the US Army Corps of Engineers stated she will defer comments on stations until more detailed studies on wetland impacts have been completed.

**Recommendation #3: The Project Team recommends selecting Commuter Rail on the BN/UP Alignment as the Preferred Alternative for the Gold Line**

- Steve Nguyen stated that Wheat Ridge supports this recommendation in order to maintain the Gold Line's high performance. He added that he thinks commuter rail technology is also compatible from system-wide standpoint.
- The City of Arvada voiced their support, because they feel it will enable RTD to apply for the Penta-P program and is in line with planning efforts conducted to date.
- Will Kerns stated that Jefferson County supports this recommendation.
- Jeanne Shreve stated that Adams County supports this recommendation
- Jody Ostendorf of the USEPA stated that the organization supports commuter rail.
- Kirk Webb stated that CDOT supports this technology because it has fewer traffic impacts.
- Crissy Fanganello stated that City and County of Denver supports commuter rail.
- Rena Brand of the US Army Corps of Engineers had no comment on this recommendation.

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**Recommendation #3A: The Project Team recommends selecting Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) as the Preferred Technology for the Gold Line**

- Steve Nguyen stated that Wheat Ridge supports the selection of EMU.
- Representatives from the City of Arvada stated that they support this recommendation because electric technology is more in line with what the voters wanted.
- Will Kerns stated that Jefferson County supports EMU, adding that despite cost savings, he doesn't want a corridor that is dependent on oil.
- Jeanne Shreve stated that Adams County will submit written comments on this recommendation.
- Jody Ostendorf of the USEPA stated that the organization supports EMU. She added that while the organization understands that there are cost considerations, they do not support DMU.
- Kirk Webb stated that CDOT has no preference.
- Crissy Fanganello stated that City and County of Denver supports EMU as the preferred technology. She said that she was pleased with the team's approach of naming a preferred technology.
  - Denver City Councilwoman Judy Montero added that since northwest Denver will possibly be hosting a maintenance facility, she would prefer the "cleaner" electric technology.
- Rena Brand of the US Army Corps of Engineers had no comment.

**Recommendation #4: The Project Team recommends eliminating Alternative 7BB (Streetcar on 38th to Harlan alignment) from further study**

- Steve Nguyen stated that Wheat Ridge supports dropping streetcar due to its performance results.
- Representatives from the City of Arvada stated that streetcar doesn't support the vision of FasTracks and is inconsistent with station area planning and the comprehensive plan; thus they support the recommendation.
- Will Kerns stated that Jefferson County supports this recommendation but would like to keep an eye on the streetcar technology for the future.
- Jeanne Shreve stated that Adams County supports this recommendation but also wants to keep streetcar in mind as Denver proceeds with its individual planning efforts. She added that she feels streetcar could be a viable "NexTracks."
- Jody Ostendorf of the USEPA stated that the organization supports eliminating streetcar but would like to keep the alternative in mind for future area connectivity.
- Kirk Webb stated that CDOT supports the recommendation based on the analysis of traffic impacts.
- Crissy Fanganello stated that City and County of Denver supports eliminating streetcar but thinks that the Gold Line Team's analysis of the streetcar alternative was very valuable. Crissy said that Denver looks forward to other opportunities to study how streetcar might provide alternate means of transportation throughout the region and was happy that others in the room share the city's sentiment. She mentioned Denver's upcoming streetcar conference in September.
- Rena Brand of the US Army Corps of Engineers had no comment.

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Following these comments on specific team recommendations, several additional questions and comments were mentioned:

- Bob Manwaring (City of Arvada) asked if comments on the Gold Line are best submitted to board individually or if the AWG/LGT may want to submit a joint statement. Liz responded that both are acceptable. Judy Montero voiced support of Bob's suggestion of a joint statement on transit technology. Don Ulrich stated that a joint letter would be the responsibility of the LGT. The City of Arvada offered to prepare a statement summarizing their position. They plan to gather the signatures of as many municipalities and regulatory agencies as possible, and then to submit the statement to the RTD board.
- Judy Montero asked how long the delay would be if diesel was re-introduced for evaluation in the Gold Line corridor. Liz Telford responded that the team would anticipate a 6-8 month delay.
- Jody Ostendorf (USEPA) asked if whether during the Level 2 screening, the Gold Line team was considering DMU engines that meet current emission standards. Liz Telford replied that RTD would be required to meet today's emissions standards and likely would need to adhere to the standards for 2011. Jody also asked if idling trains would be taken into consideration when evaluating the diesel technology, to which Liz Telford replied yes.
- Liz Telford added that regardless of the technology selected, RTD would be required to do a federal procurement for vehicles, which means that favoritism to local companies is not permitted in the bidding process.

### **Next Steps**

- Liz Telford explained that, depending on the outcome of the July 24 board meeting, the next AWG Meeting would either be to compare EMU to DMU or to present alternative refinements and results of impact and mitigation studies.
- Chris Proud reiterated that comments from the AWG and LGT are due June 29, 2007 at 5 p.m. He overviewed the various ways to submit the comments before adjourning the meeting.

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## Meeting Participants

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| 1. Dave Beckhouse       | Federal Transit Administration           |
| 2. Rena Brand           | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers             |
| 3. Bill Brunskill       | Union Pacific Rail Road                  |
| 4. Crissy Fanganello    | City and County of Denver                |
| 5. Karen Good           | City and County of Denver                |
| 6. Bob Manwaring        | City of Arvada                           |
| 7. Kevin Nichols        | City of Arvada                           |
| 8. Patty Lorence        | City of Arvada                           |
| 9. Will Kerns           | Jefferson County                         |
| 10. Steve Nguyen        | City of Wheat Ridge                      |
| 11. Jeanne Shreve       | Adams County                             |
| 12. Pam Fischhaber      | Colorado Public Utilities Commission     |
| 13. Judy Montero        | City and County of Denver, Council       |
| 14. Steve Nguyen        | City of Wheat Ridge                      |
| 15. Kirk Webb           | Colorado Department of Transportation R6 |
| 16. Jody Ostendorf      | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency     |
| 17. Amy Pallante        | State Historic Preservation Office       |
| 18. Jonathan Spencer    | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team             |
| 19. Liz Telford         | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team             |
| 20. Don Ulrich          | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team             |
| 21. Ashland Vaughn      | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team             |
| 22. Genevieve Hutchison | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team             |
| 23. Angela Brand        | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team             |
| 24. Kate Manoney        | FasTracks Community Involvement Intern   |
| 25. Chris Proud         | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team             |
| 26. Megan Lane          | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team             |
| 27. Terry Reuter        | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team             |
| 28. Tim Baldwin         | RTD FasTracks Gold Line Team             |