

I-225 CORRIDOR

Times

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RTD FASTTRACKS QUARTERLY NEWS LINK

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FOR MORE INFORMATION

Online: www.RTD-FasTracks.com
Click on I-225 Corridor

Email: I-225@RTD-FasTracks.com

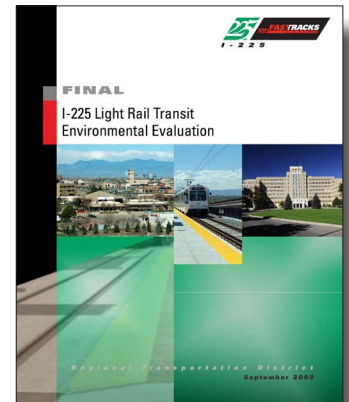
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Summary of the Environmental Evaluation Process

The Final I-225 Light Rail Transit Environmental Evaluation (EE) was completed in September 2009, after a 30-day public comment period from July 10 to August 10, 2009. All comments received from the public and agencies were given consideration. Responses were incorporated into the Final EE.

The Final EE includes the following updates:

- Refinements to station areas based on information from the City of Aurora's station area planning process
- Addition of Opening Day 2015 operating frequency information
- Incorporation of "Appendix C-Responses to Comments," containing comments received during the 30-day public comment period including changes made in the EE
- Updates of "Appendix A-Preferred Alternative Detail," to provide the latest engineering design detail



The Final EE is available online and at local City of Aurora and Denver libraries for reference (see page 4 for list of locations). Updated I-225 corridor project information will be available on the project Web site.

The Final EE containing the Preferred Alternative alignment and eight stations as well as potential impacts and mitigation measures was presented to the RTD Board of Directors for adoption on October 20, 2009. Adopting the Final EE allows final design, right-of-way acquisition and construction to proceed in accordance with the FasTracks financial plan.

Next Steps

RTD is exploring funding and phasing options to move forward with implementation of the FasTracks Program. Construction for the I-225 Corridor will be scheduled in accordance with the FasTracks financial plan. RTD is committed to implementing the whole FasTracks Program.

The RTD Board has approved this project to move forward into final design for the segment from the Nine Mile Station to Iliff Station. There are several key issues to be resolved, including:

- Final design engineering, including mitigation measure design
- Identifying and obtaining the appropriate permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- Coordination with the City of Aurora, City and County of Denver, Public Utilities Commission, and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- Phase II studies for hazardous materials
- Additional noise analysis
- Environmental documentation for use of CDOT right-of-way

Summary of Comments and Responses on the Draft EE

Between July 10, 2009 and August 10, 2009, a total of 110 comments were received from the public and agencies including the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), the State Historic Preservation Office, the City of Aurora, the City and County of Denver, the Fitzsimons Redevelopment Authority, and the University of Colorado Denver. All comments and responses are included in their entirety in Appendix C of the Final EE and summarized below.

Comment Topic	Response
Individual property and access impacts	Property and access impacts are included in Chapter 3 with design detail outlined in Appendix A.
Vibration and Electromagnetic Fields/ Electromagnetic interference impacts	RTD will coordinate with landowners of sensitive land uses and equipment to minimize and mitigate impacts.
Noise impacts	RTD will conduct additional noise analysis as design progresses.
Traffic impacts	A Traffic Control Plan will be reviewed and approved by CDOT, Aurora, and Denver for mitigation of traffic impacts within their respective right-of-ways. The City of Aurora would be responsible for any changes to roadway configurations within adjacent neighborhoods.
Location and amount of parking	Parking was provided within ¼ mile of station platforms based on land availability, environmental restrictions, potential for transit oriented development (TOD), bus access, and other factors. To the extent feasible, within budget and program constraints, RTD will work with the City of Aurora to address parking related issues.
Bicycle and pedestrian facilities	RTD has provided connections to existing facilities between the station platforms and associated park-n-Rides. RTD anticipates that additional connections with existing and future pedestrian/bicycle facilities will be provided by others as part of TOD development. RTD will not preclude future connections.
Provide additional detail on 2015 light rail operating plan, bus operations, and traffic	On Opening Day in 2015, the G-Line would operate at a 10 minute headway during peak periods. RTD is currently developing the final I-225 Transit Operations Plan.
Visual impacts of stations, bridges, substations, barriers, and fencing	RTD will work with stakeholders to develop reasonable, cost effective aesthetic treatment options during design.
Stormwater and drainage design	RTD will work with CDOT and the City of Aurora to comply with water quality requirements and build water detention ponds as necessary.
Station design	RTD will coordinate with the City of Aurora to refine station elements as design progresses
Public safety at light rail crossings	The Public Utilities Commission has jurisdiction on the number and configuration of light rail/roadway crossings.
Support for completing for the project	RTD will explore funding and phasing options to proceed with implementation of the FasTracks Program.

City of Aurora Project Updates Strategic Parking Plan and Program Study

The City of Aurora conducted a Strategic Parking Plan and Program Study in 2008 and 2009. The study, which included input from RTD and the public, developed a corridor-wide strategic parking plan and program to address current and anticipated parking demand and management needs resulting from RTD's FasTracks I-225 light rail and East Corridor commuter rail lines. The study also provides city-wide approaches for financing, management and regulatory framework. The study addressed parking demand estimation, best practices, parking management, funding, and financing analyses. It is anticipated that the final plan will be completed in October 2009.

The final parking plan will address several potential strategies to meet parking demand:

- Policies and regulatory framework encouraging the implementation of a fee-based program for all commuter parking facilities in Aurora
- A comprehensive parking management program, including time management and pricing strategies
- Providing adequate parking spaces to meet the FasTracks opening-day parking demand estimate, while developing contingency plans for additional parking

- Enable and require more efficient utilization of parking spaces, e.g., requiring parking spaces to be shared among different uses
- Pursue public/private partnerships to address parking demand
- Explore and develop corridor-wide funding strategies for parking

Station Area Planning Process

During 2008, the City of Aurora, with RTD support, held a series of public and stakeholder meetings to identify how the planned light rail stations could affect the surrounding land uses, road networks and neighborhoods.

There are a variety of uses that compete for the valuable land surrounding a light rail station. These include transportation-related facilities such as bus transfers, kiss-n-Rides, and park-n-Rides, but also new residential and office

development are attracted by the benefit of locating close to the stations. The purpose of the City’s station area planning process is to determine the optimal location for these competing land uses.

Through a series of public meetings, concepts were developed for the land surrounding the planned Iliff, Abilene, 13th Avenue, Fitzsimons-Colfax, and Peoria-Smith stations. These concepts define how the character of these areas can change over time as new transit-supportive uses occur. The concepts, as well as the guidance for new zoning, are contained in four station area plans; Iliff, Abilene, Fitzsimons-Colfax and 13th Avenue, and Peoria-Smith. The four station area plans are currently being reviewed by City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission, and are expected to be approved by the end of the year. A fifth plan, the Florida Station Area Plan, will be initiated in Fall 2009.

A message from your RTD Board of Directors



Christopher Martinez
District B

The recent completion of the FasTracks I-225 Corridor Light Rail Final Environmental Evaluation (EE) is an exciting milestone that brings us one step closer to building and opening this key transit connection through Aurora. RTD Board approval of the Final EE in October provides the green-light for moving the project into final design. Light rail in the I-225 corridor will provide critical connectivity to major destinations in Aurora and the metro area. This includes access to the Anschutz Medical Campus and Fitzsimons Life Sciences District, other major locations of economic growth in Aurora, and connection to Denver International Airport via the Peoria/Smith station on the East Corridor line.

A recurring theme heard throughout the environmental study process was the concern for parking. RTD will monitor parking demands at the stations. RTD will also conduct an educational program about alternative methods for reaching stations, such as feeder buses, and bike and pedestrian access. In addition, RTD will partner with the City of Aurora to evaluate parking solutions. As part of an effort to make FasTracks “shovel-ready”, the Board has approved a plan to move forward on the final design from the Nine Mile Station to the Iliff Station, offering parking options for Nine Mile station commuters in the future.



Bill McMullen
District E

Like everyone, RTD and the FasTracks program struggle with the economic situation that agencies, businesses, government and individuals face nationwide. For us, that means working with less tax revenue and increased costs while developing cost containment strategies.

At the same time, there are now many visible signs of your FasTracks tax dollars at work. The West Corridor is in full construction. We are expanding the Elati Light Rail Facility in Englewood to accommodate FasTracks. We are building a pedestrian bridge and bus ramps on U.S. 36, and have begun construction on the transit elements to support FasTracks at Denver Union Station. We are seeing the arrival of our Light Rail Vehicle fleet, which will support future FasTracks Light Rail corridors and support current needs. All of this means progress for FasTracks and a boost to our local economy as we put people to work – 600 already on the West Corridor alone. At the height of construction, FasTracks is estimated to create more than 10,000 construction-related jobs. It’s our own economic stimulus package, and we’re excited to see the progress.



Tom Tobiassen
District F

Completed environmental documents, like the I-225 Final EE, are getting FasTracks “shovel-ready” so that once funding is in place, each project is ready for construction. While we face challenges on the FasTracks program, the RTD Board of Directors and the FasTracks staff remain committed to delivering a high quality transit system to the City of Aurora and the metro area.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

**The I-225 Light Rail Corridor Final Environmental Evaluation
is now available for review!**

View the document online at www.RTD-FasTracks.com and click on I-225 Corridor.

View the I-225 Light Rail Environmental Evaluation document at any of the following libraries:

• **Hoffman Heights Library**
1298 Peoria St.
Aurora, CO 80011

• **Central Library**
14949 E. Alameda Pkwy
Aurora, CO 80012

• **Chambers Plaza Library**
15057 E. Colfax, Unit #C
Aurora, CO 80011

• **Iliff Square Library**
2245 S. Peoria St.
Aurora, CO 80014

• **Mission Viejo Library**
15324 E. Hampden Cir.
Aurora, CO 80013

• **M.L.K., Jr. Library**
9898 E. Colfax Ave.
Aurora, CO 80010

• **Montbello Library**
12955 Albrook Dr.
Denver, CO 80239

* **For specific Aurora Public Library hours**, please visit www.auroralibrary.org

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