



DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FACT SHEET

This is a summary of what to expect in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The analysis includes demographic and traffic projections, ridership forecasts, site/parcel level analysis, preliminary-engineering analysis, an analysis of socio economic and community concerns, and an analysis of environmental resources and impacts and proposed mitigation. A brief description of each chapter is provided below.

Chapter 1 – Purpose and Need

Chapter 1 documents the need for transportation improvements within the West Corridor and the purposes that the proposed action is intended to serve. It includes a discussion of the West Corridor project goals and relevant corridor planning activities and provides an overview of the study area including population and employment characteristics as well as current travel patterns and growth. The chapter concludes with a summary of the regional and local planning history as it relates to the West Corridor.

Chapter 2 – Alternatives Considered

Chapter 2 presents the alternatives that are being considered and evaluated in the West Corridor EIS and were considered in a previous study conducted in 1997, the Major Investment Study (MIS). The process led to three alternatives that are evaluated in detail in the EIS: No Action, Enhanced Bus Service, and Light Rail Transit (LRT). A brief description of each alternative is provided below:

- *No Action Alternative:* This alternative includes all existing and committed future roadway and transit improvements to the regional transportation system. It does not include proposed projects that are not funded as part of a fiscally constrained plan.
- *Enhanced Bus Service Alternative:* This alternative includes all transportation improvements assumed in the No Action Alternative in addition to improved east-west bus transit service to help meet the West Corridor's transportation needs. Included in this alternative are a new bus transfer facility and a new park-n-Ride facility.
- *Light Rail Transit Alternative:* The LRT Alternative is the locally preferred alternative. It includes all existing and committed transportation improvements assumed in the No Action Alternative. This alternative involves the construction of approximately 12.1 miles of Light Rail Transit in a 32 to 36-foot wide right-of-way extending from the existing Regional Transportation District (RTD) CPV line at Auraria West Station, west across the South Platte River, and then west along the existing Associated Railroad right-of-way along West 13th Avenue to the Jefferson County Government Center.

Chapter 3 – Affected Environment

Chapter 3 provides a description of the affected environment in the West Corridor. Areas discussed include: Land Use and Socioeconomics; Transportation; Air Quality; Noise and Vibration; Ecosystems; Cultural Resources; Parklands and Open Space; Visual and Aesthetics; Water Resources; Hazardous Materials; Utilities; Public Safety and Security; and Geological Resources.

Chapter 4 – Transportation Impacts

Chapter 4 discusses the compatibility of the proposed alternatives with current transportation plans and policies. It also describes how well each alternative would meet travel demand within the corridor and explains the impacts of each alternative on traffic volumes and operations, travel-time savings, pedestrian

and bicycle facilities and parking. In addition, it provides a description of LRT service and ridership and the impacts of construction of LRT on traffic in the corridor.

Chapter 5 – Environmental Consequences

Chapter 5 presents a discussion of the environmental impacts of each alternative and any consequent mitigation that may be needed. Environmental impacts analyzed for each alternative in the EIS include: Land Use and Socioeconomics; Community Impact Assessment; Air Quality; Noise and Vibration; Acquisitions and Displacements; Ecosystems; Cultural Resources; Parklands and Open Space; Visual and Aesthetics; Water Resources; Hazardous Materials; Utilities; Public Safety and Security; Geological Resources; Energy; Electromagnetism; Construction Impacts; and Secondary and Cumulative Effects.

Chapter 6 – Financial Plan

Chapter 6 discusses the financial ability of RTD to construct and operate the proposed West Corridor LRT project. The chapter discusses the agency's revenues and expenditures, capital and operating cost estimates for the proposed LRT project, and outlines two possible financial scenarios to implement the proposed project. The proposed LRT project is estimated to cost \$495 million in 2002 dollars.

RTD and the local economy have experienced a decline in sales and use tax receipts, thereby altering the outlook for project implementation. As a result, RTD is revising its financial plan for the West Corridor project and will examine two scenarios: (1) using available RTD revenues; and (2) advancing a regional transit system plan (FasTracks) that would require voter approval of a 0.4 percent increase in the RTD sales and use tax, which would accelerate the project and allow LRT to be operating in the West Corridor as early as 2010. The RTD Board of Directors' adopted financial plan for the proposed West Corridor LRT project will be presented as part of the Final EIS.

Chapter 7 – Public and Agency Involvement

Chapter 7 discusses the public and agency involvement program for the proposed LRT project. This program is one of the most aggressive public involvement programs ever implemented as part of an EIS. A project office has been established in the West Corridor study area on West Colfax Avenue. Nearly 150 meetings have been conducted since the project's initiation, with nearly 2,500 participants. A Technical Advisory Committee, consisting of local government and public sector agencies in the study area, has met monthly during the study process to address technical matters. A Policy Advisory Committee, comprised of elected and appointed officials in the corridor, has aided the project team by providing policy guidance and direction.

Chapter 8 – Section 4(f) Statement

Section 4(f) is a national policy that states every effort should be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside and public park and recreation lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. Chapter 8 provides a definition of these policies and discusses any cultural or parks and recreation resources that may be impacted under each alternative.

Appendices

In addition to the chapters described above, four appendices are included. These are: Appendix A: List of Preparers; Appendix B: Draft EIS Recipients; Appendix C (which is a separate bound document): Plan and Profile Drawings; and Appendix D: Agency Coordination Letters.