

## CORRIDOR-WIDE MEETING SUMMARY

**Date/Time:** May 17, 2006/5:00 P.M.

**Location:** Montbello Recreation Center

**Attendees:**

Don Sater	Mark Burry	Jim Paulmeno	Deborah Lebow
Jay Hutcheson	Bernard Berry	Larry Nelson	Nance Zieler
Bob Zieler	Huiliang Liu	Norman Lane	Bennie Milliner
Luciano Cabrera	Marion Combs	Joshua Carson	Justin Henderson
Kirk Webb	Gerald Manning	James Ellis	Mike Vanderhoff
Kriste Tyler	Tim Hogan	Michelle Rabouin	Gary Gallegos
Paul Frohardt	John Gustafson	Karen Brown Gerdine	Bettina Banow
Aurora Ovalle	Alejandro Baca	Jay Hutcheson	Kelsey Robinson
Cheryl Williamson	Keith Damerom	Tom Waters	Walt Cross
Kevin Ludlum	Jose Santiago	Sandi Kohrs	Mike Stein
Elia Fisher	Julie Hock-Noble	Gene Hook	Bob Morrison
Lori Taylor	Quenton Sonnenfeld	Derek	Darlene Rosas
Norma Corman	Maxine Burbuy	Charles Foster	Joel Nobol
Piedad Reyes	Juan Sandoval	Justin	Dion
Athena			

The I-70 East Corridor Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project team conducted corridor-wide meetings on May 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>, 2006 as part of the on-going community outreach process. These notes reflect the meeting held on May 17<sup>th</sup>. The primary purpose of the May corridor-wide meetings was to disseminate, discuss, and answer questions regarding the additional screening of project alternatives and the alternatives recommended for further analysis. The meeting included an open house with boards that focused on the project overview, alternatives eliminated, highway and transit alternatives, ways to stay involved, and how the highway and transit portions of the study would move forward independently. Small group discussions were conducted. Comment sheets were also provided for the attendees.

### I. SUMMARY OF COMMENT FORMS

The following section details the comments received to date from the comment sheets distributed at the meeting. These comments are recorded verbatim.

Highway Alternatives	
Alternative A (2 options)	Add general purpose lanes on the existing I-70 alignment Alternative A2 – Shifting north between Brighton Boulevard and Quebec Street Alternative A4 – Shifting south between Brighton Boulevard and Quebec Street
Alternative B	Add general purpose lanes on the existing I-70 alignment with a combination of tolled express and general purpose lanes from Colorado Boulevard to Chambers Road
Alternative C	Add general purpose lanes on the I-70 realignment
Alternative D	Add general purpose lanes on the I-70 realignment with a combination of tolled express and general purpose lanes from east of Brighton Boulevard to Chambers Road

East Corridor Transit Alternatives	
Alternative 1 (2 options)	Union Pacific Commuter Rail Option 1 – Peña Boulevard Option 2 – Telluride/Himalaya Street
Downing Street Transit Extension Alternatives	
D1 – Light Rail	Double track on west side of Downing Street from 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue/Downing Street to 40 <sup>th</sup> Street/40 <sup>th</sup> Avenue
D2 – Streetcar	In the street from 40 <sup>th</sup> Street/40 <sup>th</sup> Avenue to 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue/Downing Street, then in the existing light rail tracks along Welton Street to 20 <sup>th</sup> Street/Welton, then in the street on a loop along Broadway Street, 16 <sup>th</sup> Avenue, and Lincoln Street

**1. What comments do you have regarding the highway alternatives being evaluated?**

- I still favor the present alignment for I-70 and Alternative C – Adding general purpose lanes and no toll lanes. I feel the reduction of congestion overall will best be served by the general purpose lanes.
- Alternatives A and C are better for Denver.
- Toll roads historically fail to reach their projected ridership numbers or even come close.
- Take the highway around the neighborhood (realignment alternative).

**2. What comments do you have regarding the transit alternatives, including the DIA connection options, Downing Street transit extension, and commuter rail maintenance facilities being evaluated?**

- I understand why light rail won't be used, but I feel we are sacrificing a better commuter system in order to deal with Union Pacific. What a shame! Commuter rail has too many negatives to even consider building it.
- The streetcar plan is great. It has much less impacts on existing businesses and residential properties along Downing Street and would appear to benefit all of Welton Street too. Streetcars could also run the loop to the Convention Center.
- The potential to extend streetcars east or west on Colfax or Smith Road and on Broadway and Lincoln Street is a huge plus.
- I would like the streetcar on Downing Street for the concept of creating an old neighborhood.

**3. What comments do you have regarding the different commuter rail vehicle technologies that are being evaluated?**

- DMU seems like the best equipment to Denver International Airport (DIA). I'm not sure if the elimination of the bi-level cars is appropriate.
- I don't want diesel.

**4. Any other comments or questions?**

- There seems to be many major details still left unresolved at this late date. I was hoping for more "concrete" plans by this stage.
- It's too bad the old "central connector" plan failed to consider streetcars down Broadway and Lincoln Street.

## II. SUMMARY OF COMMENT CARDS

The following section summarizes comments that were received by the staff in the open house portion of the corridor-wide meeting.

- Existing highway alignment makes the most economic sense
- Would hate to see new improvements at Quebec Street and I-270 be reconstructed
- Downing Street light rail currently accesses the middle of downtown. Streetcar will change that. Not had enough time to react to streetcar
- Against streetcar
- Streetcar will lose connectivity
- Streetcar will cause the need to transfer technology
- On Downing Street the original intent/vote was light rail, not streetcar
- Would utility – sewer/water be improved with Downing Street extension?
- Toll lanes cause congestion on existing general purpose lanes and does not seem like a popular idea
- RTD and Denver need to do a better job of having the community involved in determining amenities at stations
- My house was built in 1882. If you build light rail on Downing Street it will have to be torn down. I prefer the streetcar alternative over light rail
- Streetcar on Downing Street is a great idea. Streetcar will serve the neighborhood better than light rail. I do not like the light rail alternative because it takes too many properties on Downing Street.
- Mainly interested in rail transit and didn't know or wasn't aware that I-70 improvements were a part of the EIS.
- Alternative A (General purpose lanes on the existing alignment) seems to place a structure the size of a half-city block in the corridor west of Colorado Boulevard. (Estimate Five EB at 12ft. = 60ft., Five WB at 12ft. = 60ft, Four lanes = 40ft., Total = 160ft. width). This is awful!
- Would like to see highway run south of I-70 on Smith Road alignment
- Keep the light rail to 30<sup>th</sup> Street and Downing Street. Run streetcar from 30<sup>th</sup> Street to 40<sup>th</sup> Street
- Take streetcar up Broadway and turn on Blake Street and connect to 40<sup>th</sup> Street and 40<sup>th</sup> Avenue
- Would like to see more streetcar stops on the Broadway loop and along Welton Street
- Replace bus rapid transit on 16<sup>th</sup> Street with streetcar to complete system
- Prefers light rail, less transfers especially with T-REX, uses current technology no new expenses with mechanics
- Downing Street is useless unless it runs light rail from 20<sup>th</sup> Street/Welton Street to Denver Union Station. Run people down to 20<sup>th</sup> Street. Bus system is needed along Blake Street to Downing Street. No Denver Union Station connection.
- When you run on traffic it stops and starts like traffic. I'm concerned about that.
- Express buses should feed commuter rail stations, especially at Colorado Boulevard.
- I like the low floor doors of a streetcar because it allows people to get on and off easily particularly handicap people or people with strollers. It will also help with people going to the airport with bags.
- Concerned about property in the area of I-225 and Smith Road

- I do not like the streetcar because I will have to transfer to get to Five Points south. I also don't like it because it will run in traffic which will take longer. It will be like a bus.
- Streetcar is not economical and it doesn't make sense to add another mode
- Very concerned that the streetcar option has not had the same level or opportunity for public input as light rail (on Downing Street).
- Feels that the loss of system connectivity that would result from streetcar is a major negative impact
- Concerned that light rail will not get equal consideration in the EIS as streetcar and that RTD has made up its mind
- The streetcar looks like the 16<sup>th</sup> Street mall ride. It doesn't look cost effective. Introducing a new technology causes more problems than it solves
- Concerned with not having 33<sup>rd</sup> Street/Union Pacific station on commuter rail
- We don't want diesel transit commuter equipment added to burden of noise and air pollution near south side of I-70 between downtown and Colorado Boulevard. I have a craft shop at 26<sup>th</sup> Street and Walnut Street and reside at Cook and Bruce Randolph.
- Streetcar would "disconnect" the existing light rail service
- I-270 doesn't work now (the realignment alternative is a problem)
- Concerned about impacts of the maintenance facility
- Concerned about impacts to properties with the maintenance facility

### III. SUMMARY OF SCRIPTS

The corridor-wide meeting included several discussion tables (each facilitated by a project team member) that focused on different issues: Highway, Maintenance Facilities/Transit, Community/Environmental Issues and Right of Way. The discussion tables provided a format for the public to be able to voice their concerns, ask questions, or comment on project related issues. Notes were taken at each table and are highlighted here.

#### Highway

1. I have concerns about property impacts in Commerce City. Why is highway alternative C (Add general purpose lanes on the I-70 realignment) moving through Commerce City?

*Answer: The realignment alternative was introduced in May 2004 as part of the public involvement process. The project team continues to explore it as an option to address the issues in the I-70 East Corridor.*

2. It seems more cost effective to expand within the existing corridor. Don't spread the effects of construction by having double corridors (with the realignment alternative). The realignment alternative results in a loss of tax base for Commerce City.

3. Why not double deck the highway?

*Answer: We eliminated that alternative based on pollution, visual impact, and the cost to build the alternative.*

4. The public process is a show. CDOT already knows that it wants the realignment alternative and that decision is a “done deal”.
5. The realignment alternative is another example of Denver “ramming it” down the throat of Commerce City. That is the historical relationship between the two cities.
6. I-70 problems will exist in the near future with the realignment alternative. Why not be more creative in selecting an alignment that will have a greater life time?
7. What will happen to the Coliseum?  
*Answer: The Coliseum will not be impacted with any of the remaining alternatives.*
8. I would like to see costs associated with each highway alternative before I make up my mind which alternative to support.
9. I’m concerned about the high cost of the elevated options. Those costs will come down to the tax payers.
10. I question the viability of express toll lanes as a project option. I’m not sure it’s a financially viable option.
11. High-occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes are inefficient; I would prefer to see other options.
12. What happened to the Interchanges Working Group? There are still issues to be discussed on Chambers Road, Havana Street, and other interchanges in the project area.  
*Answer: The Interchanges Working Group still exists, but we have not had any specific issues to discuss since the last meeting. No meetings are scheduled at this time but will be posted to the website once a date is confirmed.*
13. Is the below-grade alternative still on the table for I-70?  
*Answer: The project team is recommending to eliminate it from further consideration and asking for public input as part of these corridor-wide meetings.*
14. Have you met with representatives from the National Western Complex about the realignment alternative?  
*Answer: Yes, we have had coordination meetings with the National Western Complex representatives.*
15. What is the lifespan of the viaduct?  
*Answer: Typically about 50 years.*

16. If you keep the existing highway alignment, how much wider would the footprint be?

*Answer: It could be up to 100 additional feet.*

17. Does the Stapleton development leave enough room for right of way impacts?

*Answer: Yes.*

18. What is the construction timeline for the highway?

*Answer: The construction timeline usually depends on funding. The timeline is uncertain until the alternative is chosen and potential funding opportunities are defined.*

19. Is the 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue project part of the I-70 EIS?

*Answer: No, 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue was looked at initially in the EIS, but it does not meet the project purpose and need. Improvements to the 56<sup>th</sup> Avenue corridor are being considered as part of a separate project.*

20. Would lanes added with the realignment alternative be permanent?

*Answer: Yes.*

21. Is there a different cost for the realignment alternative that goes through the National Western Complex versus the alignment that goes through the neighborhoods?

*Answer: The cost estimates are being refined, but the alternatives have had relatively similar costs.*

22. Would the National Western Complex leave Denver if the realignment alternative becomes a reality?

*Answer: We have talked to the National Western Complex representatives, but we are not sure if they would move.*

23. I prefer elevating the existing highway and adding general purpose lanes instead of express toll lanes.

24. I would like the Havana interchange to remain. I have heard that funds are being diverted from improving Havana Street.

25. I live at Steele Street and would prefer the realignment alternative.

#### Transit/Maintenance Facilities

1. My preference for the maintenance facility location would be 36<sup>th</sup> Street.

2. I'm concerned about the cost of the transit alternatives and I would prefer to make sure that the alternatives allow for future growth and expansion.

3. Will mass transit reduce traffic on the highway?

*Answer: The 2030 traffic model forecasts an increased demand for mass transit in the future. Some of this traffic would come off of the highway.*

4. Public transportation in Montbello is not that great.

5. 31<sup>st</sup> Street would be my preferred location for the maintenance facility.

6. Has the North Metro corridor already chosen commuter rail? How will this project interact with the North Metro project?

*Answer: The North Metro corridor study is beginning and they have not chosen a technology. The two project teams will coordinate with each other.*

7. If there are two or three commuter rail lines, how many maintenance facilities would there be?

*Answer: Just one in the downtown area.*

8. Is there still neighborhood friction about the maintenance facility locations?

*Answer: There have been ongoing discussions with the affected neighborhoods to address their concerns.*

9. Where will the railroad move?

*Answer: A Public Benefits Study was conducted to consider whether or not it is feasible to move the bulk of the railroads to the east of Denver. While this would move some of the railroad traffic, there would still be customers along the rail corridor that would need train access.*

10. Why not use the Smith Road easement instead?

*Answer: Liability and safety concerns from the railroad. The railroad will not allow only partial use. It's all or nothing.*

11. Why was the streetcar alternative introduced?

*Answer: Originally, we looked at east and west alignments for light rail and those options took too many properties. The public asked us to consider any alternatives that may not have the same level of impacts. The streetcar alternative evolved out of that process.*

12. Why add another vehicle technology into the mix with the streetcar?

*Answer: The streetcar would have only a focused use between Civic Center and 40<sup>th</sup> Street. It works well with the alignment. Plus, the right of way issues on Downing Street can be handled with the streetcar alternative.*

13. What is the value added by having a streetcar?

*Answer: The streetcar vehicle works in and with other options and minimizes the need for property takes along Brighton...*

14. Does the streetcar still need tracks?

*Answer: Yes.*

15. Does the streetcar impact houses?

*Answer: No, not on Downing Street.*

16. What about the communities that may not want a maintenance facility in their neighborhood?

*Answer: We are working with the communities to find the best location for a maintenance facility that balances the needs of the community with the overall FasTracks program needs.*

17. Why does RTD have to buy two or three yards from the Burlington Northern/Santa Fe railroad when they only need one for the maintenance facility?

*Answer: A few of the railroad yards need to be located close enough to each other to provide for efficient storing, cleaning, and maintaining trains.*

18. There is hope for commercial use around the maintenance facility.

19. Public participation on the Downing streetcar alternative has been lacking. The Downing Street section has received little attention until now or until the October 2005 Corridor-wide meeting where the streetcar issue was an option. In terms of public participation, there needs to be more involvement. After the May 2005 neighborhood meeting at Tosh's Hacienda the thought was to move towards light rail, not streetcar. It wasn't until the October meeting that a streetcar was introduced as an option.

20. The streetcar would require multiple transfers and that's a problem. How can the Downing Street light rail be obsolete after only 10 years?

*Answer: The light rail technology is not obsolete. Both light rail and streetcar are considered transit options along Downing Street.*

21. It makes no sense to tear up homes to create a connection to downtown which is less than two miles away. The high cost of right of way along Downing Street is not justified by the small return in connectivity.

22. Why wasn't feedback given at the Curtis Park Neighborhood Association meeting included in the official EIS comments?

*Answer: All comments received by the project team will be included in the DEIS.*

23. As a Curtis Park resident, we know what it's like to be connected to the system. The Downing streetcar removes that true connectivity. Ideally, we could get on light rail in Curtis Park and go to Denver Union Station. The streetcar will be a massive reduction in service connectivity as compared with current standards.

*Answer: Both the light rail and streetcar alternatives connect to the East Corridor. Both would require a transfer to get from this area to the Pepsi Center.*

24. In Curtis Park, we are also currently connected to a "regional system." The Downing streetcar would push Curtis Park to be connected into a "local system" and this is a step backwards. The focus for streetcar is local, not regional.



25. What is car capacity for the streetcar?

*Answer: 120 to 125 passengers.*

26. It is a good thing that both the streetcar and light rail alternatives use existing facilities on Welton Street.

27. Will the streetcar present safety issues?

*Answer: We are evaluating any potential safety issues, but there does not seem to be many safety concerns.*

28. There should be a No-Action Alternative that is valid and made available as an option.

*Answer: All build alternatives are compared to the no-action alternative as part of the environmental process.*

29. 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall should be replaced by a streetcar. The existing buses are hodgepogged together. The streetcar could go to Denver Union Station.

*Answer: The 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall shuttle is not part of this project.*

30. When will you know if it is going to be a light rail connection or streetcar on Downing Street?

*Answer: We will probably have a recommendation in August 2006.*

31. Will there be parking near the streetcar?

*Answer: There will be parking on the east side of Downing Street, but the stations on Downing Street will not have much parking around them.*

32. Are there incentives from builders to develop along the streetcar alignment?

*Answer: Not that we are aware of at this time.*

33. What was the need that created this study and got it going?

*Answer: The EIS has always been considering a connection between the existing light rail system and the proposed East Corridor to the airport.*

34. Will streetcar stops be relevant to intersections?

*Answer: Stops will be on the far side of intersections to allow streetcars to get through traffic.*

35. I prefer the streetcar alternative to light rail. I have advocated for the streetcar for years.

36. How does a neighborhood organization express our preference for alternatives?

*Answer: A letter with signatures of members could work as an informal petition.*

37. How would fares work with the streetcar alternative and commuter rail?

*Answer: More than likely the commuter rail will have a premium fare and the streetcar will have a local fare.*

Community/Environmental

1. Are there wetlands impacts?

*Answer: There are wetlands at Sand Creek for the highway alternatives and near Denver International Airport for the transit alternatives.*

2. The first thing that everyone thinks about is air pollution. Any improvement to reducing air pollution is preferable.

*Answer: This is something that we are looking at right now. We are continuing to study air pollution on the highways along with different rail technologies.*

3. One of the biggest mistakes was to take out the trolley downtown. It looks like we are going back to the future and trying to take two steps forward.

4. What area have you lived in that has the best roads?

*Answer: Florida has the best roads and the East Coast has the best transit.*

Right of Way

1. I live at 30<sup>th</sup> Street and Downing Street. Will I be notified if my property is going to be affected?

*Answer: Yes.*

2. Is there a different formula if the property affected is a duplex?

*Answer: No.*

3. Will tenants have a relocation benefit?

*Answer: Yes.*

4. What is the time frame of these decisions?

*Answer: The decision on whether or not a property will be taken does not occur until final design.*