



PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY

Date/Time: May 7, 2011/10:00 A.M.

Location: Swansea Recreation Center

Attendees:

Les Rogers	Esther Gross	Bonnie Stackhouse	Fred McPeck
Fred Orr	Joe Portlock	Willie Stackhouse	Leo Branstetter
Jim Wright	Rosie Tozer	Penny Gonzales	Joe L. Mares, Sr.
Jim Klismet	John Jimenez	Abraham Gonzalez	Ellen Wilensky
Miller Hudson	Justin McPeck	Rebecca White	Vince Stewart
Bettie Cram	Tong Lee	Marie Garcia	Roger Mutz
Betty Wonder	Joe Schaub	Klaus Kruger	Tom Anthony
Gene Hook	Robert Dawson	Kirk Haynes	Magdalena Marmolejo
Robert Armstrong	Jackie Elwess	Ron Covey	Ralph Yuhasz
Dennis Gallagher	Izzy Sonenreich	Salvador Blea	Gabriel Zuniga
Joe Elliott	Lori Cole	Walt Czajkowski	Bill Hall
Anna Casados	Paul Brown		

PACT Members:

Doug Bennett – FHWA
Reza Akhavan – CDOT
Tom Acre – Commerce City
Jeanne Shreve – Adams County
Leslie Thomas – City and County of Denver
John Lucero – City and County of Denver
Mac Callison – City of Aurora
Norma Frank – Community Representative, Adams County
Anthony Thomas – Community Representative, Denver
Larry Burgess – Denver - Elyria/Swansea Business Association
Kate Kramer – Sand Creek Greenway
Guillermo Serna – Community Representative, Commerce City
Jimmy Burds – Commerce City Business Association
Art Ballah – Colorado Motor Carriers Association
Scott Jaquith – Community Representative, Commerce City
Drew Dutcher – Community Representative, Denver/Elyria
Pat Grant – National Western Stock Show
Jim Dileo – Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Paul Garcia – Community Representative, Denver/Swansea

I. INTRODUCTION

The I-70 East environmental impact statement (EIS) project team conducted public meetings on May 4th and 7th as part of the on-going community outreach process. These notes reflect the public meeting held on May 7th. The primary purpose of the public meeting was to disseminate, discuss, and answer questions regarding the PACT process and the alignment of the highway between Brighton Boulevard and I-270. The meeting included an open house with boards that focused on the project overview, PACT process, and the alternative that is considered the most promising. Small group discussions were also conducted. Comment sheets were provided for the attendees in an effort to solicit additional comments on the project. Topics are listed in the following sections.

II. SUMMARY OF COMMENT SHEETS

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

1. Do you agree the PACTs choice of current alignment has the most promise to balance the trade-offs? Why/why not?

- Yes
- The current alignment makes the most sense. I-270 is a hassle getting onto I-70 further east.
- My concern is if the current alignment is not move, will the highways roads be widen to impact the neighborhood? I don't want to live close to the Highway. I feel it will be noisy issues. Houses will not be value. Living and the area will created a negative impact. House are depreciated real bad. In its going to be worse. If people have to live in their homes and business. For I live 2 blocks now from Highway 70.
- Yes. Alternative alignment would have larger impact on local businesses
- North shift will clean up the local neighborhood better.
- Do both
- I agree the current alignment is best
- Agree! 270 at I-70 is a nightmare every morning as it is.
- Yes, I think that although the presence of I-70 n the North Denver neighborhoods will always be a burden, the current alignment is the most affordable and rational solution. The impact to the community will be hard regardless of where I-70 is moved/widened, but if efforts can be made to improve the community and infra structure.
- Yes! Why: Attached – part of which was recorded from interview with Tom Schilling. Why not: No compelling reason. (An attachment was provided titled, “I-70 East Realignment Option’s – Very Detrimental Outcome, A One Billion Dollar Trap”)

2. Which current alignment option, north or south, seems best to you and why?

- I agree that current alignment to north. Because my business shall be impacted so bad during construction period anyway.
- I am not affected either way, directly. I am leaning toward the south version. Losing Purina would allow for more neighborhood development which would be good.
- North but depends on how wide the roads will be.
- South alignment appears to be best, providing south side residents & Purina are compensated for their investments property.
- More study & discussion of "no action" is necessary
- South. The new part of I-70 between mousetrap & Brighton Blvd. is built toward south & this relocates Purina out of neighborhood

- The south option, because the impacts would be less and could have a few benefits as well
- North option – less expensive, least disruptive to status quo – more opportunity for improvement of Swansea Elementary School situation – and further development

3. What community resources are most important to you (for CDOT to protect)?

- The Swansea school
- Elyria
- School
- Denver #9 Fire Station – Brighton Blvd. and 47th Avenue intersection, the Historic Center of Elyria, the RTD NWSS Station

4. Any other comments or questions?

- Very excited about the Western stock RTD STATION. Don't allow tolling to slow traffic along highway.
- Will hope that the decision will be a fair one. For the consumers who are deeply affected by these issues.
- The re-alignment should be immediately voted out & forgotten
- Glad to see light rail coming to our street, Baldwin Ct.
- I believe that whatever option is decided in the end, the community concerns need to be assured. If the Swansea school is taken, make sure it is relocated in a easily accessible place. If community members want to stay in the area, find a way to let them.
- This has been a tedious process, with an outcome most favorable to Denver and Colorado. The \$1 Billion saved would best be applied to expediting the RTD FasTracks projects. Thanks to the staff and participants for your/their indulgence! In my interview with Mr. Schilling, I inadvertently said I favored the south option, when I meant to say north.

III. SUMMARY OF DISCUSSION TABLES

The public meetings included several discussion tables (each facilitated and included PACT members) that focused on the PACT process including if the PACT is moving in the right direction and if a shift north or south is the best option. Notes were taken at each table and are summarized here.

Support Current Alignment as more promising, because:

- Less impact on Sand Creek
- Less impact on neighborhood, compared with the realignment's 46th Avenue, which becomes a major artery with huge impacts on the neighborhood; a massive boulevard does nothing to address the issue of Swansea Elementary School, makes it worse by putting the traffic at ground level
- Used to it – the neighborhood has grown accustomed to the highway, and moving it would create growing pains
- Too much industrial built up to change it now
- Greater possibility to access and develop along the South Platte River (realignment would preclude it)
- More affordable/less expensive – realignment would be more costly
- Can't imagine moving its major arterial
- Won't overshadow the light rail station at NWSS
- Maintains a shorter route – versus realignment

- Less fuel wasted - commuters would have to travel on the realignment two miles longer (round-trip) every day
- Fewer vehicle miles traveled per day (less fuel wasted) - the Governor and the Regional Air Quality Council are trying to reduce VMT and realignment would create more
- Fewer accidents because there is less shadow creating ice, and less sanding of the ice
- Further from the Suncor refinery - realignment would relocate the highway just south of the Suncor refinery and increasing the blast zone risk (explosion at the refinery in 1970s blew cars off the nearby highway)
- Protects properties (e.g. Elyria Guest House)
- Realignment would continue to divide the Swansea community with a larger 46th running through it
- Realignment's mixing of I-70 and I-270 doesn't make sense; I-270 is a problem now
- Only if it is a tunnel
- Better than realignment

Support for North or South shift on Current Alignment:

- Need to get the feedback directly from Swansea neighbors about whether they would support North or South shift
- Support for North, because:
 - Building a new school would be required
 - Swansea school was built on outdated philosophy; needs a building that meets current philosophy
 - Could be larger (already too small)
 - Moving the school to the Swansea Park would decrease the gang activity in the park
 - Downside is closer to Dunham park
 - Keeps Purina
 - Purina jobs are important to protect
 - Moving Purina would be too expensive
 - Smell is bad from all of the industry, but it is not just Purina
- Support for South, because:
 - It seems like there are fewer impacts
 - Maintains the school, which is a major community asset
 - Leery whether a new school would be built if it is the North shift, with all the budget cuts
 - Concerned about the domino effect on the neighborhood of moving the school; how many families would move if the school was further from the current location?
 - Decreases the shadow of the structure on the Colonial Manor
 - Removes Purina
 - Removes the odor issue
 - Reveals a large track of developable land
 - Fewer residences would be acquired
 - Mitigates problems with the school in the best way
 - Better serves Elyria / Swansea neighborhoods
 - Keeps the school, parks, church and north-side businesses

Outstanding Concerns

- Community needs to benefit no matter which alignment
- Improvements under 46th Avenue would help - it is scary underneath
- Loss of jobs for those in the neighborhood from those businesses being acquired
- Mitigating the presence of the highway on the Swansea neighborhood
- Bottleneck at the I-70 and Brighton intersection
- Shading effect on the neighborhood
- School concerns
 - o Leery that a new school would not be built, with all the budget cuts going on, if it went North
 - o Would need a guarantee that it would be in the same neighborhood; in writing, and to build it within walking distance in the community
 - o Close to the highway is not a good place to have a school
 - o Need to have the school weigh in with its view
 - o Need a walkable location for the school
- Impact of a larger freeway on the city – smaller is better for cities than larger
- More public transportation, less private transportation

Interests mentioned for any solution:

- Protect the neighborhood from unwanted traffic
- Improve the integration of Swansea from north to south
- Create development opportunities
- Be sensitive to the neighborhoods
- Increase access to the South Platte River, a major amenity
- Relieve congestion
- Improve/maintain public transportation (it is important)
- Ensure a long term solution

Additional Suggestions/Questions:

- Build a tunnel instead of a bridge
- Build businesses under the elevated highway that face onto a frontage road – decreases dark underneath the bridge and improves the look/feel of the highway for the neighborhood
- Build a bike path under the highway; concern - there isn't enough light to make it feel safe
- Have a light-gap between the two decks; concern - would make it wider and require more property impacts
- Put the York exit ramps back in the plan (even if there isn't on-ramps)
- Move the school to:
 - o Swansea Park, Clayton and 49th (in the area of Our Lady of Grace church, Swansea Recreation Center and Park)
 - o Washington and South Platte River (22 acre site)
 - o NWSS when they leave
- Build an extra lane onto I-270 each way to relieve congestion