



## PUBLIC HEARING MEETING SUMMARY

**Date/Time:** March 5, 2009/5:30 P.M.

**Location:** Bruce Randolph Middle School

### Attendees:

Roberta Waggoner	Harold Waggoner	Angie Malpiede	Gene Hook
Robert Randall	Fannie Taylor	Brian Volkman	Robert Eanes
Wayne Nelson	Moral Martinez	Ann Bramwell	Georgia Clark
Kim Proia	Bettie Cram	Nancee Braan	Georgia Olakanye
Jess Ortiz	Earl Ostling	Patrick Kervin	Lisa Grimsley
Linda Evans	Dennis Hanson	Jason Evans	Manolo Gonzalez-Estay
Mary Cay Omalley	Carolyn Walker	John Zapien	Ray Muse
Lily Fuller	Arlene Welsch	John McBride	Jennifer Gonzalez
Kenny Shepard	John Collison	Emmy Yoshikawa	Anke Sloat
Stephanie Cross	Lynn Smith	Carolyn Barnes	Coortland Hyser
Mike Turner	Todd Rutherford	Mandy Stackhouse	Diane Cunningham
Betty Wonder	Barbara Price	Rosie Tozer	Donna Zoerb
Dennis Bronson	Said Bouhouch	Kevin Scott	Vickie Harvey
Augustine Villalobos	Joseph Schaub	Chaka Mzee	Angelica Martinez
Steve Gordon	Mike Stone	Tim Outhouse	Brian Pinkerton
Felicia Trujillo	Ed Salazar	Shawn Bisailon	Spring Keim
Charlotte Brantley	Ron Torrez	Judy Redwine	Robert Quintana
Todd Franklin	Dave Dombrowski	Keith Dameron	Terry Sullivan
Jessie Cannady	Harold Brewer	Marge Gilbert	Larry Longsine
Jim Urban	Ladonna Urban	Patrick Picard	Phillip Crouse
Janet Crouse	Rich Glazier	Ron Ware	Bill Levis
Darcy Wilson	Tom Anthony	David Poe	Miller Hudson
Steve Dole	Haru Yamamoto	Hasena Williams	Elia Fisher
Ken Hoagland	Hiko Yoshikawa	Margot Hackstaff	Mable Banks
Marva Houston	Frank McLaughlin	Charmaine Knighton	Frank Woertman
Dave Beckhouse	Howard Campbell	Esther Fite	Art Patrick
Theresa St. Peter	Jeremy Nichols	John Haussmann	Annias Reeves
Chris Martinez	Brandon Wyszynski	Lorialie Cole	Luke Ullestad
Tia Cavender	Penn Tate	Kate Greeley	

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### I. INTRODUCTION

The East Corridor environmental impact statement (EIS) project team conducted public hearings on March 4th and 5th as part of the on-going community outreach process. These notes reflect the public hearing held on March 4th. The primary purpose of the public hearings was to provide an update of recent study developments, summarize the draft EIS (DEIS), and provide an opportunity for public comment on the DEIS. The meeting included an open house and a PowerPoint presentation followed by a formal public comment period. Comment sheets were

also provided for the attendees in an effort to solicit additional comments on the project. Topics are listed in the following sections.

### **1. What is a DEIS**

The DEIS is part of the federal process as dictated by the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended. The DEIS is required in order to obtain federal funding for the project. The document evaluates impacts and benefits of the project, while identifying mitigations to avoid or minimize impacts. The DEIS process includes extensive public outreach and agency coordination. The process improves the decision-making process.

### **2. DEIS schedule**

The Notice of Availability for the DEIS was released on January 30, 2009. The DEIS is available for public comment for a period of 45 days, beginning January 30<sup>th</sup> and ending March 16<sup>th</sup>. Public hearings were conducted on March 4<sup>th</sup> and March 5<sup>th</sup> to provide an opportunity for the public to hear updates on the project and to provide their comments on the DEIS. The final EIS (FEIS) will address all comments submitted by the public, which is due to release in the summer of 2009. There will be another public comment period for the FEIS and then the Record of Decision (ROD) is anticipated in fall 2009.

### **3. Alternative screening process**

The alternative screen process included four levels: initial screening, comparative screening, detailed screening, and alternative refinement. Each screening level increased the level of detailed analysis. The initial screening level was a reality check that eliminated transit alignment, technology, and station location alternatives that did not have a realistic chance of being designed and built because they would result in significant environmental impacts, were not located in the project area, or were not a technology that is in revenue service. Comparative screening looked at transit alignments and technologies relative to each other using a qualitative approach to see which were more effective at meeting the purpose and need. Detailed screening used a quantitative analysis to identify strengths and weaknesses of each alternative. Finally, the alternative refinement level further analyzed the remaining alternatives from detailed screening. This level of screening was a more in depth evaluation that was used to determine the alternatives most responsive to the project purpose and need. Alternative refinement considered engineering feasibility; potential impacts on social, environmental, and economic resources; and analyzed capital, operation, and maintenance costs.

### **4. Preferred Alternative description**

The Preferred Alternative is comprised of 22.8 miles of double-tracked EMU commuter rail between DUS and DIA. Travel time between DUS and DIA is 29 minutes compared to the no-action automobile travel time via the highway of 79 minutes. Service will be from 3 a.m. to 1 a.m. with 15-minute headways in either direction between 4 a.m. and 11 p.m. Average daily ridership will be approximately 37, 900 passengers. Capital costs for opening day are estimated at \$1.715 billion and \$1.992 billion for year 2030.

The Preferred Alternative includes two DIA alignment design options. DIA Design Option 1 is the originally proposed alternative that runs on a diagonal from approximately 78th Avenue and New Castle Street to the north/south axis of the terminal. It includes an at-grade crossing of New

Castle Street and the alignment crosses under the Peña Boulevard inbound and outbound roadways. A variation of Option 1 would grade separate New Castle Street. DIA Design Option 2 is a 90-degree alternative that maintains an east/west direction along 78th Avenue, extended to the north/south axis of the terminal. This option includes an at-grade crossing at New Castle Street. It crosses directly over the existing Peña Boulevard outbound roadway and under the crossover structures for west side inbound/east side outbound lanes. A variation on Option 2 would grade separate New Castle Street. Both options are being evaluated in the DEIS; however, DIA Design Option 2 is included as part of the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative identifies recommended parking spaces for each station that totals 3,529 spaces for opening day (2015) and 7,900 spaces by 2030. Parking is not included at the DIA station.

In addition to DUS and DIA, five stations are included in the Preferred Alternative: 38<sup>th</sup>/Blake, Colorado, Central Park, Peoria, and 40<sup>th</sup>/Airport. The 38<sup>th</sup>/Blake station would be located both northwest and southeast of the UPRR corridor and 38th Street and would provide an opportunity for a connection to the Central Corridor Extension. The station platform would be located southwest of 38th Street. The station would have two locations for parking, providing 200 parking spaces on opening day and 500 by 2030. The Colorado station would be bordered by Monroe Street on the west, 41st Avenue on the south, Jackson Street on the east, and the UPRR corridor on the north. It will provide 200 parking spaces on opening day and 1,800 by 2030. The Central Park station would be located southwest of the proposed Central Park Boulevard and Smith Road. The site would be bordered by Tamarac Street on the west, 37th Avenue on the south, the proposed Central Park Boulevard (to be constructed by others) on the east, and Smith Road on the north. It would provide 1,500 parking spaces on opening day and 2030. The Peoria station would be located in the southwest quadrant of Peoria Street and Smith Road. The site would provide a connection point for the I-225 Corridor and would include the realignment of Smith Road. It would provide 550 parking spaces on opening day and 1,900 by 2030. The 40<sup>th</sup>/Airport station would be located south of 40th Avenue, just east of Peña Boulevard and west of Salida Street, at the site of the existing RTD park-n-Ride lot. This existing site provides 1,079 surface parking spaces to be used on opening day (2015). There are 2,200 parking spaces planned for the station in 2030, some of which would be in a parking structure.

## **5. Resources evaluated and impacted**

Detailed studies were conducted to determine the impacts of the No-Action and Preferred alternatives on social, environmental, and economic resources. These studies addressed:

- Social impacts and community facilities
- Land use, zoning, and economic development
- Land acquisition, displacements, and relocation of existing uses
- Historic, archaeological, and cultural resources
- Visual and aesthetic qualities
- Parklands and recreation areas
- Air quality and energy
- Noise and vibration
- Biological resources

- Natural resources
- Hazardous materials
- Safety and security
- Utilities

Some of the resources studied have substantially different results from the No-Action Alternative. There would be the acquisition of six residential properties and associated seven residential relocations. There is an on-going evaluation of potential effects of 47 to 60 commercial/industrial business relocations. There is the potential to lose \$421,000 to \$518,000 in annual property taxes from commercial/industrial properties, if businesses do not relocate. The Preferred Alternative would require the land acquisition, displacement, or relocation of existing uses of 63 commercial/industrial properties, 6 residential properties, 50 acres of Union Pacific railroad property, 87 acres of the Peña Transportation Corridor, and 48 acres of property from CCD, Aurora, and CDOT. Three historic resources would be adversely impacted; however, those impacts would be limited to parking areas for two of those resources. Visual and aesthetic impacts would include four major grade-separated flyover crossings, 22.8 miles of overhead centenary and track way, three electric substations, and the transit stations and park-n-Rides. Quiet zones would be used to mitigate noise and vibration impacts. Unmitigated noise and vibration impacts would include 229 severe noise impacts and 222 high moderate noise impacts. The Preferred Alternative would also impact 0.98 acre of wetlands (DIA Design Option 1 would have 0.83 acre of impact).

#### **6. Preferred Alternative benefits**

Some of the benefits of the Preferred Alternative include 29-minute travel times between DUS and DIA, average daily ridership of 37,900, reduction of 204,000 of vehicle miles travelled per day in the region over the No-Action Alternative, reduction of 11,000 vehicle hours of travel per day in the region over the No-Action Alternative, and improved air quality.

#### **7. Next Steps**

Following the end of the formal public comment period on March 16th, the project team will focus on reviewing and addressing public comments. The project team will continue to hold stakeholder meetings as well as compliance committee meetings as necessary.

During the FEIS process, the project team will update the impact analysis of the No-Action and Preferred alternatives. The FEIS is anticipated in summer 2009. The project team will also be preparing the finance and phasing plans while continuing our public involvement activities.

## **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. Please select a comment category and provide your comments.**

- Please engineer the corridor for the possibility of using bi-level (double decker) cars in the future when ridership increases to that level. This engineering should include:
  - Setting the rail height under existing underpasses and bridges to allow for a bi-level car by just raising the catenary wire on the poles.

- Platform shelters should be configured for bi-level cars.
- Catenary poles should be tall enough that the wire could be raised in the future, when necessary.
- Pedestrian bridges should be built high enough to allow clearance for bi-level cars.
- 38<sup>th</sup> and Walnut favored station location as it can serve a local bus loop through the north neighborhood. Concern that uses along the heavy rail ROW will limit TOD. I am personally threatened by parked fuel tankers on the ROW. The 1,000 foot separation in the city zoning code cannot be enforced, according to the city attorney. If you can't protect existing residents how will you protect future residents.
- The new addition to the light rail should benefit everyone, but especially those with low incomes and people who are living in poverty. New developments are being built along the trail of the new light rail system, so these people do not have to travel a long distance and can spend all that gas money to ride the light rail. If the light rail was within walking distance or right along the rail, that would benefit a lot of people, especially the poor. Also, these people should be able to ride into the city for free. Maybe a strategy would be to build some shops and for restaurants along the track so these people would be spending money regardless and could save some money by riding into downtown for free.

### III. SUMMARY OF PUBLIC COMMENTS

The following section provides a summary of the public comments received during the formal comment period. Public comments were recorded by a court recorder and will be transcribed verbatim.

- I am speaking on behalf of the landowner that sits on the southeast corner of Smith and Colorado. We are trying to create a community in that area and by realigning Smith Road; you are making it an island again. It would no longer be adjacent to the golf course and would create more traffic.
- Owner of Park Hill Golf Course and supporter of the light rail. Anything that would change the playability of the course would impact the revenue of the golf course and in turn the revenue of Clayton Early Learning, which supports many low-income and minority families.
- Thank you for all the work you have done. I think bi-level cars should be thought about for the future and allow for potential use of them in the future to meet higher capacity.
- Concerned that nothing has been done to prepare for the safety of the children attending Bruce Randolph Middle School. This will be an issue with parents. An idea would be to put a foot bridge on Steele that would cause kids to migrate to cross there or work with the parents to provide safe access.
- Support the 38<sup>th</sup> station option. I live near the Platte River across from the railroad tracks and there are tankers parked there. The railroads can do what they want in their own right of way. We don't feel safe.
- I understand the lower 6 acres of the golf course will be taken. The relocated Smith Road would take away the only green space in the area and could make the golf course

undesirable. I only ask that no stone be left unturned in figuring out where to put this light rail.

- Councilwoman Montero is sorry she could not attend the meeting. She is happy that EMU was chosen and she will continue to work with RTD. One request is that there be a bridge over 36<sup>th</sup> to connect to the 38<sup>th</sup> station for pedestrian and bike traffic. Concerned there is very little in pedestrian and bike access at the Colorado station.
- Concerned about the small number of parking spaces. There is not enough for the ridership. Is there potential for additional stations along the route? I appreciate the pedestrian bridge on the south end to 38<sup>th</sup> and hope it includes bike access too.
- I think this project is a great idea, but I want to make sure the environmental impacts are really being looked at fully. I also think that 45-days is not enough time and I am unsure why the request for an extension of time was rejected. This will short change the public process.
- The cost of the project has sparked my interest. The cost keeps climbing and there is no money. The rising cost will affect everyone. How will this be paid for? I am not willing to pay more in taxes for this; I can't afford it. What will happen if parking fills up? It won't take long to max out 200 spaces; this is a serious problem.