



I-25 Central PEL

MEETING SUMMARY

Stakeholder Focus Group Meeting #3

Location: CDOT, 2829 W Howard Place (Auditorium)

Date/Time: Thursday, April 18, 2019 / 5:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

SFG Members

Chad Ashley, Denver Aquarium

Erik Carlson, Foster Graham

Lee Cryer, RTD

Aldo Delpiccolo, CEI

Jim Graebner, Union Station Advocates

Jeanne Granville, Sun Valley Community

Coalition

Michael Guiietz, Jefferson Park United Neighbors

Jon Handwork, Denver Children's Museum

Steve Harley, Baker Historic Neighborhood

Association

Dave Keough, La Alma / Lincoln Park

Neighborhood Association

Jill Locantore, WalkDenver

David Menter, RTD

Joel Noble, INC

Tracy Sakaguchi, CMCA

David Sikora, Highland United Neighbors

Kevin Sniokaitis, Baker Historic Neighborhood

Association

Matt Sugar, Metropolitan Football Stadium District

Ean Tafoya, INC

Leslie Targowski, Federal Boulevard BID

Yara Vaneau, Valverde Neighborhood

Association

Byron Weber, Auraria Campus

Austin Zillis, Denver Broncos

Project Team Members/Agency Representatives

Jamie Archambeau, Atkins

Jonathan Bartsch, CDR Associates

Sean Brewer, CDOT

Chris Enright, CDOT

Karen Good, City and County of Denver

Jay Hendrickson, CDOT

Jason Longsdorf, HDR

Devin Louie, Atkins

Joann Mattson, CDOT

Jessica Myklebust, CDOT

Bruce Naylor, CDOT

Chau Nguyen, HDR

Chris Primus, HDR

Jeffrey Range, CDR Associates

Grant Rilling, CDOT

Tamara Rollison, CDOT

Steve Sherman, CDOT

Carrie Wallis, Atkins

Emily Zmak, CDR Associates

Meeting Summary

The following summary was developed based on the agenda and general discussions held during the meeting. Attachments to this summary include: agenda, presentation, sign-in sheet, alternatives overview.

Welcome and Introductions

As Stakeholder Focus Group (SFG) members entered the meeting room, they were encouraged by the project team to engage with displays of the Level 2 alternatives. The displays listed each alternative, provided text and graphic descriptions, and the results of the Level 2 evaluation.

Steve Sherman, CDOT Project Manager for the I-25 Central PEL (the Study), opened the meeting at 5:45 pm and welcomed the SFG to their third meeting. Jonathan Bartsch, Project Team, reviewed the objectives and agenda for the meeting, gave a review of the previous meetings, and thanked the attendees for their participation. He prompted each SFG and project team member to introduce themselves and their affiliation.

Public Involvement Update

Jeffrey Range, Project Team, described the public involvement activities the Study has done to-date. He emphasized the survey, which has successfully broadened the scope of stakeholder engagement, and the public meeting, which is scheduled for June 6 at Riverside Church.

SFG Input

Steve Sherman updated the SFG on how their input has been considered and emphasized in the PEL process. The SFG previously identified four areas of importance: multi-modal transportation; future density; induced demand; and impacts to neighborhoods. CDOT's work to incorporate these areas include:

- Ongoing coordination with the City and County of Denver and RTD on bike, pedestrian, and transit options
- Analysis of growth hotspots to consider the effect of future density through sensitivity analysis
- Alternatives evaluation with consideration of induced demand
- Ongoing identification of benefits and impacts to neighborhoods along the corridor, to be included in the final PEL report

Evaluation Process

Carrie Wallis, Project Manager for the Project Team, presented information on the process to evaluate alternatives for the Study. SFG members were provided an overview document (attached).

Level 2 Evaluation criteria included safety, congestion, travel time reliability, crossings (for all modes), access (to and across the highway), environment, future flexibility and technology, and constructability. After evaluation against the criteria, the project team recommended that alternatives be A) not recommended, B) carried forward as a "primary" element, or C) carried forward as a "secondary" element—being insufficient on its own, but a potential component of a larger future package. Only one alternative was not recommended (Construct a Tunnel). All Level 2 Alternatives and the Level 2 results are attached.

Level 3 Preview

Steve Sherman introduced the role of packages, or grouped alternatives, to the SFG. In the Level 3 evaluation, packages of alternatives will be compiled based on numbers of through lanes, with illustrative packages modeled in a traffic model, and evaluated based on the results. The models will consider future land use changes and travel mode-shift predictions and will help address how packages improve the study area against current and future needs, goals, and objectives.

Information Station Open House

The SFG broke out into small groups to engage with information stations on topics related to the PEL. Topic stations included: environmental resources, land use and community, transit, bike and pedestrian, traffic and safety, and alternatives and evaluation. There was an additional feedback table for comments. Project team members facilitated the small group discussions. The project team highlighted the top issues raised at their tables, which include:

- **Environmental Resources:**
 - There is an interest in detailed data not covered at the PEL level.
 - There is a question about air quality along the corridor, and how different alternatives impact that quality.
 - There was a general interest in knowing what environmental resources are considered during the PEL process.
- **Land Use and Community:**
 - The Study's coordination with the River Mile and Colfax BRT projects, as well as the analysis of Denver developments.
 - Realignment and rezoning options, and the corresponding impacts on land use and neighborhoods.
 - How collector-distributor roads alleviate highway traffic.
- **Transit:**
 - Support for transit, with particular interest in potential realignment with RTD.
 - Impacts of a hard barrier between the residential and industrial sides of Baker, as well as the community groups facing potential displacement.
 - Interest in mobility hubs, or points of access to transit routes.
- **Bike and Pedestrian:**
 - I-25 as a barrier of access for neighborhoods, especially when coupled with the river and railroad, and how a wider highway may preclude future crossings.
 - How alternatives maintain good connections across I-25, particularly in partnership with Denver Moves.
 - How the Study might look at opportunities creatively, beyond improvements and towards creating an ideal scenario.
- **Traffic and Safety:**
 - How braided ramps and collector-distributor roads may benefit the corridor and improve safety.
 - How safety is addressed through predictive analytics.
 - How induced demand is being considered (e.g. vehicle hours or miles traveled) in the evaluations
- **Alternatives and Evaluation:**
 - The best way to explain the alternatives and the process to a public audience in a tangible and understandable way.
 - How to package alternatives together and define terminologies.
 - How the process portrays the incremental nature of future construction.
 - The current framework should further emphasize that alternatives can be repackaged together and are not limited to their families.

- **Feedback Table**

There were two comments submitted at the feedback table.

- The benefits of bypassing thru-traffic past downtown and encouraging I-25 traffic onto alternative routes.
- Feedback for the information station process: to have groups rotate through table stations, as it was difficult to jump into a discussion mid-way; and to define terms and have illustrations of concepts for people (e.g. turbulence, braided ramps, managed lanes, C/D roads).

Information Station Debrief

Following the small groups, there was discussion with the SFG on the process and set-up of the information stations. SFG feedback included:

- The public meeting forum might elicit gut reactions, not informed input, from the public. The SFG member recommended to provide alternatives to the public prior to the meeting.
- The second grouping of options, “No Additional Thru Capacity” is misleading, and sets people up against it. The SFG member recommended reframing it.
- Transit options are labeled as “not adequately reducing congestion,” but all transit options reduce congestion in some means.
- The evaluation of capacity was unclear whether capacity considers people-capacity or vehicular-capacity. The SFG member asked for further clarity of the methodology.
- One member requested an overlay of different data (vehicle traffic, pedestrian traffic safety data, environmental data, transit data, etc.), in order to make cost-conscious evaluations of the alternatives.
 - Steve Sherman responded that, at the PEL level, the analysis captures broad ideas and concepts. Deeper analysis happens in NEPA.
- The environmental impacts need to be clarified before decisions are made.
 - Jessica Myklebust, Project Team, responded that full environmental impact assessments are completed in the NEPA phase, including aspects like contaminants and air quality. She recognized that the public may have an expectation that is not met in the PEL process. The core purpose of the PEL is to create a broad vision for the corridor.
- The public presentation should present the PEL as it relates to the broader NEPA process.

Moving Forward

Jonathan Bartsch concluded the meeting with an overview of next steps for the PEL process. There will be a public open house on June 6, as well as meetings with the Technical Advisory Committee, Executive Oversight Committee, and SFG in the summer. The Study report will be complete in Fall 2019.