



**South Broadway NEPA Process
Consensus Committee Meeting #7
Cameron Church
January 19, 2006**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NEXT MEETINGS

February 16th – date held for possible updates (may only be an hour)

March 16th - date held for possible updates (may only be an hour)

Discussion Highlights

This meeting focused on reviewing the alternatives packages developed by the project team based upon the initial packages identified during the alternatives workshop on January 9th. At the workshop, attendees identified packages of transportation improvement suggestions. These were developed in small working groups. The project team revisions included elimination of conflicting suggestions, addition of complementary suggestions, and inclusion of suggestions addressing needs not addressed. In addition, the project team added a new package: the Broadway/Acoma couplet. This package was added to ensure that a full-range of reasonable alternatives is evaluated in the NEPA process.

Key points from the Committee's discussion of the revised alternatives packages included:

- The need for greater refinement of key pieces. For example, what is the intent of the boulevard concepts and what do they look like?
- The need for greater refinement and inclusion of suggestions that fall under Needs #3 and #4.
- Detailed traffic counts and travel modeling will be important for the next level of screening and evaluation
- There is concern expressed over whether a couplet has the support of any stakeholders.
- It is critical that the current packages can be "broken apart" and re-combined into new alternatives at some point in the process.

The group reviewed the alternatives packages individually, and also discussed the range of the alternatives. Some new, specific suggestions were provided to the project team for changes and adjustments to the alternatives (e.g. SB Broadway to WB Mississippi tunnel). The project team will continue to collect suggestions and refine alternatives in the coming weeks.

Next Steps

The project team will refine the alternatives packages and draw them as conceptual engineering drawings which will then be evaluated in Level 3 screening. It will probably

require about 2 months to prepare these drawings.. The project team will also be developing local area traffic models based upon recent traffic counts and identifying the Level 3 screening criteria. For any meetings/briefings, the Committee recommended keeping their regular third Thursday meeting dates on the schedule (16th of February and the 16th of March). To keep the Consensus Committee informed, the regular dates may be used for regular CC meetings and special update briefings, and in some cases there may be only web postings and homework.

MEETING NOTES

Meeting Goals

- Review the results of the packaging workshop
- Discuss alternatives packages developed by the project team, including:
 - o Are these packages internally consistent?
 - o Are there any unused suggestions that should be part of an alternative (what is missing)? (not used in any of the packages))
 - o Do these packages represent a sufficiently broad range for analysis?

PROCESS UPDATE

- The project team received a letter from CDOT expressing concern about suggestions that impact the TCE plume. As a result, all tunnel suggestions that impact the plume have been screened from further consideration (suggestions #4, 6, 8, 16, 52, 53). These suggestions have been placed on the Disposition List.
- First round of historic analysis indicates that suggestion #78 should be screened from further consideration for its anticipated impact on the eligible Gates Historic District.
- Some of the suggestions have also been screened because they are included in the No-Action Alternative, are duplicates, of other suggestions, have no independent utility, or have been replaced by another suggestion of similar intent but with greater detail.

All of these screened suggestions are listed in the Disposition List.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Charlie Busch responded to the comment that with increased congestion, people will be more apt to use other modes. In her experience living in places where there were lots of mode choices, a congested intersection would never result in her changing modes, instead she took residential streets. If the solution creates too much congestion, then travelers will use neighborhood streets, i.e., Washington and Emerson, not other modes.

REVIEW OF THE ALTERNATIVES PACKAGES

General Comments and Questions

Question: Central Connector - Is it the same as the one included in the RTD plan?

Answer: It appears that the alignments may be similar but that technologies indicated in the current alternatives may vary (LRT, streetcar, bus) from previous Central Connector plans.

Question: What does the Central Connector, as shown, require in terms of existing lanes?

Answer: This would vary, depending on technology, lanes may or may not be dedicated for transit.

Comments and Questions by Alternatives

Alternative #1: Maximizing Transit

Comment: The mode and technology for suggestions that resemble the Central Connector have not been identified yet.

Question: Why extend only to Englewood Station?

Answer: Previous ridership studies show a significant drop off in ridership south of the Englewood Station.

Alternative #2: Median Divided Narrow Boulevard (175' ROW)

Comment: This design should include through travel lanes that extend north of I-25.

Question: Why 175' Right of Way? Is it possible to consider narrower footprints of the same concept?

Answer: Yes it is possible to identify and evaluate a narrower boulevard. 150' ROW may be minimum width for the boulevard.

Question: Are pedestrian crossings between Kentucky and Mississippi possible?

Answer: Yes, signalized crossings are possible but often there is conflict with turn lanes and so requires careful placement.

Alternative #3: No Broadway Widening w/Flyover

Comment: There does not appear to be a focus on improvements on Broadway north of I-25.

Alternative #4: Wide Boulevard (225' ROW)

Comment: It is not clear who supports this alternative at this point. The idea of a 12 lane boulevard is daunting to most.

Comment: Narrower iterations of this concept should be considered. (e.g., 150' ROW)

Comment: Six blocks of a wide boulevard will “shot gun” traffic north and south of the project area and speed up traffic creating new bottle necks.

Question: What is need for continuous side roads for full length of boulevard?

Answer: The side lanes are used for local traffic; providing access to local streets and businesses, transit, on-street parking, and turning movements.

Question: What is the problem the boulevard is intended to solve?

Answer: Boulevards address the intersection of pedestrian-friendliness, through traffic and local business access/enhancement. They provide more pedestrian-friendly sidewalks and crossings while separating through traffic from local traffic enabling both to function more efficiently, and provide desirable street-fronts to activate adjacent properties.

Alternative #5: Minimal Broadway Widening (125') w/Early Left Turns

Question: What impact might a pedestrian bridge over I-25 at Tennessee have on Lincoln?

Answer: Don't know yet

Question: Can transit modes share travel lanes?

Answer: Some modes can share travel lanes (streetcar, local bus); others operate more effectively in their own (light rail, BRT). Some exclusive transit use of travel lanes will occur only during peak hour periods with vehicular traffic (or parking) allowed at other times.

Alternative #6: Wedge Ramp

Question: What impact might a pedestrian bridge over I-25 at Tennessee have on Lincoln?

Answer: To be determined in next level of evaluation.

Question: Suggestion #123 - dedicated westbound turn lane off of Broadway onto Mississippi. Will a Broadway bridge over Mississippi (suggestion #12) preclude this?

Answer: There are significant turning movements between Broadway and Mississippi that will need to be accommodated in the definition of alternatives.

Question: Does a pedestrian overpass improve congestion? (Need #1) Example: many cities have second level skyways to minimize auto/pedestrian conflicts and thereby traffic flows.

Answer: The effect on traffic of grade separated pedestrian crossings will be evaluated in the next level screening.

Alternative #7: Broadway/Acoma Couplet

Question: Why was a couplet included when it was not developed at the workshop?

Answer: The project team included a couplet to provide a full-range of reasonable alternatives to be evaluated as required in the NEPA process. A couplet may represent the upper end of automobile capacity to be evaluated in comparison to other alternatives.

Comment: Without greater improvements to Needs #3 and #4, this alternative currently does not seem to meet the purpose and need or other interests. It is also not likely to gather much support.

Responses to Question "What is Missing?"

- A boulevard design that provides for pedestrian crossing (See South Broadway Corridor Plan). Look at alternate boulevard types.
- Definition of what a "safe pedestrian haven" is--get more specific about the width of medians in different alternative designs
- Southbound Broadway to southbound I-25 loop ramp (suggestion #59) should be included in Alternative # 5.
- Details on Need #3 and Need #4 suggestions - they are vague and less developed than those under needs #1 and #2. Perhaps these needs require different treatment.

Suggestion: Needs #3 and #4 could be refined and expanded and combined into a single “overlay” that could be included in all of the alternatives packages rather than developing individual packages.

Suggestion: the goals and principles of the boulevard concept could be achieved by stacking the different uses vertically rather than horizontally in one wide footprint.

Responses to Question “Is there Sufficient Range in the Alternatives?”

- Yes, if some elements can be subsequently mixed and matched. It is important that the alternatives are designed and refined iteratively.
- Traffic numbers are needed for future screening.
- Alternatives have a corridor-centric focus. There remains a need for east-west connections to lessen the north-south demand.
- It is essential to solve the southbound Broadway to southbound I-25 problem in all alternatives.
- There is a need for better connectivity between Broadway north and south of I-25.

NEXT STEPS

The project team will:

- Take comments and further review the alternatives packages
- Prepare conceptual engineering drawings (footprints, number of lanes, sidewalk widths, etc) as basis for next level of screening.
- Develop travel projections and local area travel models using revised DRCOG regional transportation model data and recent traffic counts.
- Identify Level 3 screening criteria utilizing the interest matrix.

It is expected that these tasks will be completed in the March/April timeframe. In the meantime, the project team will remain in contact with the Consensus Committee via some or all of the following techniques:

- o By mailings/posting information on the website
- o Phone calls
- o Brief update meetings
- o Full CC meetings if necessary

APPENDIX A

Consensus Committee Members and Alternates in Attendance:

Ferd Belz, Cherokee Redevelopment
Jim Carlson, West University Community Association
Lee Cryer, Regional Transportation District
Karen Cuthberston, Athmar Park Neighborhood Association
Katie Fisher, West University Community Association
Steve Harley, Baker Historic Neighborhood Association
Jim Jones, West Washington Park Neighborhood Association
Donna Krentz, Platt Park Residents Coalition
Jim Lindbergh, Platt Park People's Association.
Jason Longsdorf, Denver Public Works
Joan Loughridge, Broadway Area Revitalization District
Doug McKinnon, Lionstone Group
Jack Unruh, Overland Neighborhood Association
Kirk Webb, Colorado Department of Transportation

In Attendance:

Genevieve Hutchison, Regional Transportation District
Steve Kaplan, Kaplan Kirsch & Rockwell
Jay Jones, Citizen
Shelly Watters, Councilwoman Boigon's office
Robert W. Rynerson, RTD
Charlie Busch, West Washington Park Park Neighborhood Association

Project Team:

Larry Gibson, Carter & Burgess
Craig Gaskill, Carter & Burgess
Brian Welch, Fehr and Peers
Darin Stavish, Carter & Burgess
Catherine Cox-Blair, Denver Planning and Community Development
Amy Wiedeman, Denver Public Works
Julie Connor, Denver City Council

Facilitation:

Caelan McGee, The Keystone Center
Jody Erikson, The Keystone Center