



South Broadway NEPA Process
Consensus Committee Meeting #10
July 20, 2006
Cameron Community Church
6:00 pm – 9:00 pm

Meeting Notes

Executive Summary

Next Meeting

August 17th – Consensus Committee meeting to continue to define a consensus recommendation.

Discussion Highlights

The South Broadway NEPA Process has analyzed a broad range of alternatives for the future of Broadway at and around the intersection of I-25. At this Consensus Committee meeting, summary results of the evaluation of three remaining build alternatives (plus the No-Action alternative) were presented and discussed. Based on the screening information, the Consensus Committee began to internally develop a consensus around a single preferred alternative.

This meeting focused on:

1. Review and discussion of the results of Level 3B screening of the widening, couplet and multi-way alternatives (to view this information, click-on the web site at www.denvergov.org/broadwaynepa/)
2. Review of local area traffic model results and animations of the traffic model results for the alternatives.
3. Beginning to build committee consensus for a single preferred alternative. The Broadway widening alternative with the wedge ramp is emerging as the likely preference. The discussion focused on the alternative being developed in a phased approach with the construction of the wedge ramp-related improvements and acquisition of the additional right-of-way required happening first, then in a later phase building additional through and turn lanes as the demand is identified. Options for interim use of the “extra” ROW include on-street parking, a wider center median and/or a wider pedestrian area on the street edge. There was additional discussion about what process would be established to decide how and when the later phase would be implemented.

Next Steps

The project team will complete the Level 3B screening, including some environmental and economic impacts not available for review at this meeting. Discussions will be held with several land and business owners and neighbors about specific aspects of the alternatives for

presentation on August 17th. These will include addressing neighborhood concerns about the intersection of Ohio/Broadway/Lincoln/I-25, the Kentucky realignment at the I-25/Broadway station, Exposition extended west of Broadway, and ongoing coordination with CDOT about the Valley Highway EIS. The project team will also identify possible “triggers” that would initiate the need to widen Broadway.

The Consensus Committee will continue their identification of a single preferred consensus alternative incorporating the additional information to be presented by the project team.

MEETING NOTES

I. LEVEL 3B SCREENING PROCESS

Additional Economic Impacts

The project team has identified several detailed economic evaluation criteria to be utilized in the Level 3B screening of the alternatives. The results of the economic screening of the alternatives were not available for the meeting, but will be available on August 17th. The results of this screening will be included in the existing screening categories F, H, and I. Input for this screening will come from contacts with land and business owners and developers potentially effected.

Question – Does the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) look at the economic impacts from/on areas outside the study area?

Answer - It could be reflected in screening criteria F.2. which asks generally addresses whether the alternatives are consistent with other plans.

Question – Are the economic impacts focused more on business impacts or also on economic impacts to residential property values?

Answer – The economic impacts to be analyzed will focus on impacts to existing businesses and developments and neighborhoods. They include neighborhood related evaluations of connections between neighborhoods and businesses, identification of opportunities for shared parking, comparisons of need for property acquisition, and impacts to parking in neighborhoods.

Question – What is the difference between the Level 3A and 3B screenings?

Answer – The Level 3B screening comparatively evaluates the impacts of only the No-Action, widening, couplet and multi-way alternatives; the Level 3A screening evaluated the previous seven packaged alternatives (and the No-Action alternative) which led to the definition of the three build alternatives for the Level 3B screening. The Level 3B screening is also a more detailed evaluation of these alternatives.

Findings on Recent Suggestions

The project team evaluated several recent suggestions raised by members of the Consensus Committee. These included a two-way Broadway by-pass located along the railroad tracks,

separate access directly into the Cherokee and Lionstone developments, and an at-grade interchange with Mississippi for the southbound Broadway ‘leg’ of the couplet alternative.

By-pass: In order to make turning onto the by-pass feasible, it would have to diverge from Broadway and Lincoln north of the highway. This would eliminate the possibility for the wedge ramp and create particularly difficult intersections between Broadway/Lincoln and Exposition. Access to southbound I-25 would continue to be a left-turn from southbound Broadway at Kentucky, north of the Ford Building. (The by-pass would enable Broadway to remain two-way through the study area). Local Broadway would have a few additional traffic signals but the by-pass would have less traffic signals. There would be significant impacts to the operation of the I-25/Broadway station and it would also require a bridge over the light rail tracks at the station.

Question – Why would the by-pass require a bridge over the light rail tracks?

Answer – A bridge is required because the by-pass diverges from Broadway and Lincoln north of the highway and cuts through the center of the I-25/Broadway station where there is inadequate opening under the light rail structure for the two-way by-pass roadway, thereby requiring the by-pass to bridge over the light rail tracks.

Separate access Directly to Developments: There was a suggestion for a scenario like the multi-way which would take the local access lanes and move them away from the through roadway to provide access directly into the Cherokee and Lionstone developments and to minimize their impact on Broadway. This suggestion will be further pursued as a modification to the multi-way if that alternative moves forward.

At-Grade Intersection from the Couplet to WB Mississippi: There was a suggestion that a grade separation of one or more lanes could allow either 1) all the couplet SB traffic or 2) all the traffic that wants to turn from SB Broadway onto Mississippi. This will be further pursued as a modification to the couplet if that alternative moves forward.

II. TRAFFIC MODEL RESULTS

Traffic Modeling Data

The VISSIM model looked at both am and pm peak hours for traffic volumes, speeds and travel times (including stops for signals) for the No-Action, widening, couplet and multi-way alternatives. The alternatives do not include parking lanes, though the multi-way has potential to allow off peak parking in one of the local traffic lanes. All alternatives include a signal at Exposition (except the No-Action). All alternatives have the same southbound Broadway to northbound I-25 movement (turn left at Ohio to use the existing ramp). The models also included double left turns at Mississippi for all alternatives (except the No-Action), and accounted for right turns on red. Some key points of the modeling:

- Projected 2030 pm peak was larger than am peak, because there are many more non-work trips (e.g. errands)
- The amount of demand served in the 2030 am peak period: No-Action 75%, widening 95%, couplet 97% , multi-way 85%

- The amount of demand served in the 2030 pm peak period: no-action 72%, widening 89%, couplet 96% , multi-way 76%
- Average 2030 am speed southbound through the study area (including stops): No-Action 4.4 mph, widening 7.3 mph, couplet 22.7 mph, multi-way 8.2mph.
- Average 2030 am speed northbound through the study area (including stops): No-Action 11.2 mph, widening 17.3 mph, couplet 21.2 mph, multi-way 12.2 mph.
- Average 2030 pm speed southbound through the study area (including stops): No-Action 5.3 mph, widening 7.5 mph, couplet 18.7 mph, multi-way 5.6 mph.
- Average 2030 pm speed northbound through the study area (including stops): No-Action 13.7 mph, widening 19.7 mph, couplet 14.8, multi-way 13.4 mph.

All the model runs accounted for southbound Broadway to westbound Mississippi movements, including the out-of-direction movement required by the couplet. Even though this movement requires out of direction travel, vehicles are able to make the movement faster in the couplet due to efficiencies inherent to one-way systems.

Only trips on Broadway are modeled in VISSIM due to the extent of data and effort required to code these models. Cut through traffic can be inferred by the amount of demand not served and by other congestion measures. Any demand not served would either cut through on local streets, travel at other times of day (extending the length of time for peak congestion), choose an entirely different route, or choose another mode of travel, (walk, bike, transit).

Animations

The project team showed several animations of this traffic modeling including overviews of the pm peak traffic flow for the No-Action, multi-way, widening and couplet alternatives. The animations showed all intersections in the study area and some north of the study area on Broadway. Additionally they showed close ups of the operations at the out-of-direction movement for southbound Broadway to westbound Mississippi in the couplet alternative, and the intersection of Ohio/Broadway/Lincoln/I-25 which is the same in all three of the build alternatives.

Question – What is the feasibility of an at-grade intersection for the couplet, southbound Broadway to westbound Mississippi?

Answer – The southbound roadway side of the couplet would need to move to the east in order to provide adequate sight distance and turning radii for trucks. It may be possible to keep the couplet alignment and bring the Acoma alignment through the Cherokee development down to the Mississippi grade. Westbound right turns could be accommodated at this “T” intersection. While it may be possible to create this roadway network, the impact to Cherokee would be dramatic. Should the couplet move ahead, these options would be analyzed in more detail. These tweaks do not change the overall difference between the three build alternatives.

II. PUBLIC COMMENT

- Charlie Bush – Charlie was requested by Karen Cuthbertson, Athmar Park Neighborhood Association, to tell the Consensus Committee that she is disappointed

with the I-25 northbound ramp remaining in its present location. Karen cannot support alternatives that put additional traffic on side streets in other's neighborhoods.

Charlie questioned the reality of the local area traffic model showing six cars waiting on Ohio between Lincoln and Broadway. She stated that there is only space for three cars. Additional cars will start cutting through the neighborhood on Sherman or Grant to get northbound on I-25.

- Skip West – Stated that it is very difficult for pedestrians to cross at the Ohio/Broadway/Lincoln/I-25 intersection. He does not agree with the traffic model numbers. Skip asked about whether RTD is increasing their parking and about the development of additional parking on the west side of the tracks for a total of 1,500 spaces.

III. BUILDING CONSENSUS

The Consensus Committee began discussion around where they think they might be able to gather consensus on a single preferred alternative. The project team indicated that the discussion at this meeting is not to be the final consensus on an alternative, but is rather a starting place that may be altered and modified based on the availability of additional information to be made available by the project team.

The Consensus Committee members each spoke about which alternative or package of suggestions they believed could garner consensus. The following is a list of the elements discussed as the basis for a possible consensus preferred alternative:

- Widening alternative
- Phased approach – build the wedge ramp and acquire all necessary right-of-way for the final width; then wait to reconstruct/widen Broadway until it is needed (“Wedge and Wait”, “Wedge and Hedge”)
- An option – reconstruct/widen Broadway right away and utilize the widened area for on-street parking on an interim basis until the demand for additional lanes is identified
- Provide a safe haven median for pedestrians

The following are some issues/question raised for further discussion by the Consensus Committee on August 17th:

- Ohio/Broadway/Lincoln/I-25 intersection
- Pedestrian crossings – where is the best place to emphasize the crossing of Broadway, at Tennessee, Kentucky, or Mississippi? Prefer at-grade rather than pedestrian overpasses. Location of a crossing at south of I-25 where there will be an unused area north of the Ford Building
- What is the trigger and process to move into the second build phase? (e.g. possibly conduct a model run with updated data to show need) What type of public process would there be?
- Would anything be done to Broadway in the first phase? (e.g. pocket parking)

- What is the final alternative? (e.g. width of Broadway and location of the pedestrian crossings)

IV. NEXT STEPS

- Project team will complete the Level 3B screening including environmental and economic information not available at the meeting.
- Within few days of this CC meeting, the Project Team will send the DRAFT detailed Level 3B screening results to the Consensus Committee
- August 3rd will be the deadline for Consensus Committee Member to send comments on the DRAFT Level 3B screening results to Jody Erikson
- August 17th is the next Consensus Committee meeting, during which committee members will continue their identification of a single preferred consensus alternative.

APPENDIX A

Consensus Committee Members and Alternates in Attendance:

Patti Bennett, Platte Park Resident's Coalition
Jim Carlson, West University Community Association
Lee Cryer, Regional Transportation District
Katie Fisher, West University Community Association
Tony Gengaro, Broadway Partnership
Steve Harley, Baker Historic Neighborhood Association
Jim Jones, West Washington Park Neighborhood Association
Donna Krentz, Platte Park Resident's Coalition
Gloria LeFree, West Washington Park Neighborhood Association
Jason Longsdorf, Denver Public Works
Joan Loughridge, Broadway Area Revitalization District
Doug McKinnon, Lionstone
Robert Rynerson, Regional Transportation District
Jack Unruh, Overland Neighborhood Association
Mike Vanderhoof, Federal Highway Administration
Shelly Watters, Platt Park People's Association
Kirk Webb, CDOT
Rick Wells, Cherokee

In Attendance:

Charlie Bush, West Washington Park Neighborhood Association
Julie Connor, Councilwoman McKenzie's Office, District 7
Genevieve Hutchison, Regional Transportation District
Patricia Leslie, University of Denver student
Morey McDonnell, Broadway Area Revitalization District
Robert (Skip) West, resident
Mary West, resident
Gertie Grant, resident
Paul Ryan, Lionstone - The Kenney Group

Project Team in Attendance:

Mike Gill, Carter & Burgess
Erik Guderian, Fehr & Peers
Caryn Wenzara, Denver Community Planning and Development

Facilitation:

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