

**South Broadway NEPA Process
Summary of Public Meeting #2
Lincoln Elementary School
1600 S. Pearl Street, Denver, CO
November 2, 2005**

The public meeting began at 4:30 with an Open House. Information stations showing the status of project information developed to date were available for public review and comment. This information included the project description, purpose and need, project goals, process for developing and evaluating alternatives, description of ways for the public to get involved in the project, and anticipated next steps in the process. In addition, graphics presenting a wide range of transportation improvement suggestions were also available for public comment. Project team members were available for questions and comments. Members of the public were encouraged to make comments on the project information and the transportation suggestions either by written comments on forms provided, talking with project staff, or using sticky notes on the transportation suggestion graphics to provide specific suggestions and questions for transportation improvements.

At 6:00, a short presentation summarizing the progress of the project since the last public meeting was followed by an 'open-mic' question/answer session with attendees speaking directly to the project team. . A summary of the presentation and discussion follows below.

Councilwoman Kathleen MacKenzie opened the open mic session by expressing her support for this project. She recognizes that much of the traffic in the study area comes from development in the area, and that good transportation decisions are important for all involved.

Jason Longsdorf, Project Manager from the City and County of Denver, Department of Public Works opened the session with a description of the purpose of this meeting, and gave an overview of the South Broadway NEPA Process to date.

PURPOSE OF THIS MEETING

- To give a project overview and update since the last public meeting
- To provide an opportunity to hear public comments
- To answer questions where possible
- To identify additional transportation suggestions to be included in the study

OVERVIEW OF THE SOUTH BROADWAY NEPA PROCESS

- The goal of this process is to improve mobility in the South Broadway Corridor
- In order to do this, and as per the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the City and the project team from Carter & Burgess is working with stakeholders and partner agencies to develop a wide range of suggestions for transportation improvements

- By listening to the public, partner agencies and the Consensus Committee, the City has developed the Purpose and Need and goals for the project. This statement will likely evolve and be refined over the course of the project.
- The study will systematically identify and narrow a broad range of alternatives. Early narrowing will utilize very general evaluation criteria, based primarily on the accommodation of project purpose and need.. Subsequent evaluations will utilize increasingly detailed evaluation criteria consistent with the increased knowledge of the alternatives being screened. Later in the process as fewer suggestions and alternatives remain, a greater amount of data will be collected for comparative evaluation.
- The initial list of transportation improvement suggestions came from the Consensus Committee. The Consensus Committee is a collaborative group with representatives from area neighborhood associations, partner agencies, City and County of Denver staff, and business representatives. The committee will continue to oversee and provide feedback project team efforts, working towards consensus agreements.
- Over 90 suggestions for transportation improvements have been identified to date. Approximately half were developed by the Consensus Committee, the remaining were suggestions developed by the project team, the public and partner agencies.
- The first level of screening to narrow the range of suggestions is now underway.

NEXT STEPS IN THE NEPA PROCESS

- The first level of screening focuses on elimination of those suggestions which have no ability to adequately accommodate the project purpose.
- At the conclusion of the first level of screening, the project team will develop the criteria for the second level of screening of suggestions utilizing the statements of project need and the project goals.
- At level 3 analysis and screening, the project team will begin to build packages of suggestions into alternatives. It is possible that at this stage there will be 12-15 alternatives
- The goal of level 3 `screening is to narrow to a small range of alternatives (2-3) for detailed analysis and comparison in Part II of the project in either an Environmental Assessment (EA) or Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The goal is to complete the level 3 screening by January-February of 2006.

COMMENTSABOUT THE STUDY PROCESS

The following comments and questions were received from the public during the open mic question/answer session.

- The project should not consider automobile movement to be the primary focus of the study. Other transportation needs should be served well and there should be as much focus on building a place that supports TOD and Denver's zoning decisions.

- It is important to see traffic projections and models as soon as possible in order to refine the study area of the project
- There were many comments that the study area should be modified and/or expanded. Suggestions included expanding the study area to west of Santa Fe, east to University, south to Iliff, and north to Speer.
 - o The City responded that the purpose of the project is to capture travel demand among the different transportation modes to develop an integrated transportation network in the area. In order to identify specific travel improvements, it is important to define a study area of appropriate size to be able to actually define specific travel improvement recommendations.
- It was suggested that the project team include and evaluate transportation suggestions using the Broadway Corridor Transportation and Urban Design Study for suggestions for integrating redevelopments into neighborhoods.
- The City should be willing to think big about transportation solutions in the area. They have committed to big zoning decisions.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE STUDY PROCESS

In addition, the following study process questions and comments were received from attendees.

- Are there notes or summaries of the scoping process and specifically of scoping with other regulatory agencies?
 - o A scoping report is being generated and will be posted on the website (www.denvergov.com)
- Where can one view plans so far for the former Gates property?
 - o Please see the Cherokee redevelopment website ([list web site](#)) and the Lionstone website at www.dota.com
- How does the South Broadway NEPA process overlap and coordinate with the Valley Highway EIS?
 - o CDOT and the City and County of Denver are working to develop a memorandum of understanding that keeps each study from precluding the options of the other.
- Is it true that there is no funding for the Valley Highway EIS as a result of Referendum D failing?
 - o There is money for most elements of the Valley Highway EIS including balancing lanes (to 6 lanes). Money to complete all interchange improvements including Broadway is not immediately available. It is unclear how this may impact the South Broadway NEPA process but would seem to keep some Valley Highway interchange options open for examination.
- When might construction actually begin on anything?

- It is unclear. The outcome of this decision may be a Locally Preferred Alternative, or an environmental document such as an EIS. The outcome of the project will include a proposed funding source, which is necessary before construction can begin.

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS ABOUT DECISION MAKING

The following comments and questions about project process were raised during the public comment session as well.

- Who has the final say in the South Broadway NEPA Process?
 - Answer: the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is the lead agency and will review any environmental document such as an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to make sure that the study was done in compliance with NEPA. FHWA has ceded some oversight of the project to Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The applicant of the project is the City and County of Denver. CDOT and FHWA will listen closely to the City's recommendations. The City will listen closely to the Consensus Committee recommendations.
 - The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and the Regional Transportation District (RTD) are also cooperating agencies in the study.
 - The goal is to build consensus recommendations among the Consensus Committee for consideration by the City and County of Denver.

SUGGESTIONS FOR TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

Roads

- Do not want another highway traveling through this area (don't turn Broadway into an expressway)
- Improvements to East-West travel will improve North-South congestion. Currently there is only one East-West access in the area (at Mississippi)
- Movement on and off I-25 in the area should happen via Santa Fe
- Santa Fe is already overly congested. Movement on and off I-25 should be preserved at Broadway.
- Improved East West movement is critical for some of the neighborhoods to the west of the study area such as Overland. In order to bring some of the business and traffic from this area into the western neighborhoods, the project should consider East-West movement improvements from Broadway to West of Santa Fe along streets such as Iliff, Evans and Iowa.

Pedestrians and Bicycles

- There is a coalition of cyclists and pedestrians seeking to improve bike-ped traffic infrastructure from Colorado Avenue to Broadway.
- ○ The project team has their information and will include it in the analysis.

- Traveling west across Broadway and Santa Fe to western neighborhoods or to the Platte River bike path is difficult.
- The project team will have a bicycle-pedestrian workshop to improve data and understanding on local bike and pedestrian trips and needs.
- There is generally not enough funding for bicycle and pedestrian improvements. Now is the time to work with developers and through transportation enhancement programs to seek bicycle and pedestrian movements.
- The study should evaluate increased East-West movement options via Buchtel Blvd.

COMMENTS ABOUT LAND USE AND CREATING PLACES

- This corridor and the major redevelopment sites represent important infill and density and a conscious decision by city council.
- Do not make car movement the primary factor in shaping this area
- The goal of this area is to be a model of transit oriented development
- All area businesses and residents will benefit from the major redevelopments and increased density in the form of property taxes and new civic spaces. The traffic and other impacts should likewise be shared by all.
- Do not tear down the Ford building on the Lionstone property as a result of transportation decisions
- Personal property should not be taken as a result of transportation decisions
- Some personal property may need to be taken as a result of transportation decisions but it should not be done capriciously

The meeting adjourned at 7:30 pm. The project team thanks all who attended the meeting and who shared their comments and concerns about the project and the progress of the project to date. All attendees will be notified of upcoming project public meetings.