



**South Broadway NEPA Process
Public Meeting #3
Platt Park Senior Center
1500 S. Grant Street; Denver, CO
June 27, 2005**

MEETING SUMMARY

OVERVIEW OF THE PUBLIC MEETING

The Public Meeting began at 5:00 p.m. with an open house. Information stations showing the status of project information that has been 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, a summary of the public interests identified early on and how they have been addressed in the alternatives screening, the range of alternatives developed, and anticipated next steps in the process. In addition, maps/graphics presenting the three “build” alternatives and the No Action Alternative for the Level 3B screening were available for public comment. Project team and members of the Consensus Committee answered questions and discussed how the three build alternatives were developed. The public was encouraged to comment on the information presented by writing comments on forms provided, talking with project staff, or writing directly on the maps/graphics to provide specific suggestions and questions for improvements.

At 5:30 p.m., Jason Longsdorf, Project Manager from the City and County of Denver, Department of Public Works, presented a summary of the open house information and an overview of the South Broadway NEPA¹ Process to date. He then provided a summary of the No Action Alternative and the three build alternatives that will be evaluated in the Level 3B analysis. The alternatives are defined to address peak-hour congestion on Broadway and the access needs of area neighborhoods, existing businesses, the planned redevelopments, and the I-25/Broadway transit station area. The alternatives also are defined to promote transit-oriented development and neighborhood places. The No Action alternative and three build alternatives presented were:

- **No Action Alternative:** This alternative is required by NEPA and includes funded projects that would be implemented even if no action on this project is undertaken. Even though the City of Denver would not pursue any activities in the South Broadway corridor under this alternative, there are planned and funded improvements in the area as a result of other projects.
- **Couplet Alternative:** This alternative creates two one-way streets, one for northbound traffic and one for southbound traffic. Northbound travel would occur in the current Broadway right-of-way and southbound travel would occur west of Broadway, along the western side of the Cherokee property paralleling the railroad tracks. This alternative includes 13-foot sidewalks along both sides of each couplet street.
- **Multi-Way Boulevard Alternative:** This alternative proposes a boulevard with two-way through traffic in the middle (three lanes each direction) and a two-lane one-way local

¹ NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act

- access road on either side separated by planted medians. This alternative includes 13-foot sidewalks on each side of Broadway.
- Broadway Widening Alternative: This alternative widens Broadway to accommodate 8 lanes of traffic (4 northbound and 4 southbound) with center turn lanes at all intersections except Mississippi, which will have double left-turn lanes. This alternative has 13-foot sidewalks on both sides of Broadway.

All the alternatives include the suggestions included in the pedestrian/bicycle overlay developed with the project Consensus Committee and with general public input obtained during an early pedestrian/bicyclist workshop. For additional information on the alternatives, please contact Jason Longsdorf at 720-865-3162.

During the presentation, members of the community were invited to share their thoughts and preferences regarding the alternatives. A summary of the presentation and discussion follows below. After the public comment period, Jason Longsdorf thanked the participants for their comments and questions, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.

SUMMARY OF THE INFORMATION PRESENTED

Purpose of this Meeting

- To give a project overview and update since the last public meeting
- To review the alternatives to be evaluated in the Level 3B analysis
- To hear public comments and preferences about the alternatives
- To answer questions from the community about the alternatives
- To provide a description of the next steps in the project

Overview of the South Broadway NEPA Process

With the Consensus Committee, the project team developed the project Purpose and Need. The **purpose** of this project is to create a South Broadway corridor that provides safe and efficient mobility for all modes of transportation (pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and automobile) that:

- Accommodates the transportation needs of area neighborhoods, existing businesses, planned redevelopments, and the I-25/Broadway transit station area; and
- Promotes the development and use of transit-oriented, civic, and neighborhood places.

Similarly, **needs** for this project were defined:

- South Broadway is currently experiencing peak hour congestion which is expected to worsen.
- As South Broadway traffic increases, there is increased likelihood of regional traffic cutting through adjacent neighborhoods.
- Projected regional growth, as well as local growth, will result in increased demand for multimodal travel options that may not be accommodated with existing infrastructure.
- Future access to and from area neighborhoods, existing businesses, bus stops, the Cherokee and Lionstone developments, and the I-25/Broadway light rail station may not be accommodated with the existing transportation infrastructure.

The following project **goals** have been identified for the project:

- Provide fully-integrated and useful bicycle and pedestrian facilities in the corridor.
- Minimize negative impacts to potentially affected natural, historic, and social environments.
- Enhance parking availability in the study area.
- Enhance the economic viability of residential neighborhoods in the South Broadway corridor by preserving their character.
- Enhance the economic viability of the South Broadway corridor.
- Enhance redevelopment opportunities in conjunction with transportation improvements.
- Develop a proposed action solution that can be constructed, funded, and is politically acceptable.
- Develop a proposed action solution that can be implemented according to funding availability, phasing of development, and expected growth in travel demand.
- Implement the recommendations from the approved plans of Blueprint Denver, Comprehensive Plan 2000 and relevant supplements, FasTracks, CDOT, and DRCOG.

In order to meet the project purpose, needs, and goals, and in accordance with NEPA, the project team has been working with the Consensus Committee to develop a wide range of alternative transportation improvements.

- The process of identifying alternatives began with the listing of transportation improvement suggestions. This list came from the Consensus Committee but was subsequently expanded with input of the general public at the last project public meeting (November 2, 2005) and from the project team. Over 140 suggestions for transportation improvements have been identified to date. Approximately half were developed by the Consensus Committee.
- An initial broad range of alternatives was defined by combinations of the suggestions and from input gained at an alternatives packaging workshop conducted with the Consensus Committee.
- The study has systematically identified and narrowed this broad range of alternatives. Early narrowing utilized very general evaluation criteria, based primarily on the accommodation of project purpose and need.
- Subsequent evaluations have utilized increasingly detailed criteria consistent with the increased knowledge of the alternatives being screened. These later evaluations have included attention to additional data that was gathered for the remaining alternatives.

Levels of Screening and Analysis

- The first level of screening focused on elimination of those suggestions which were determined to be fatally flawed.
- At the conclusion of the first level of screening, the project team (with input from the Consensus Committee), developed the criteria for the second level of screening of suggestions. These criteria evaluated suggestions based on how well they met the project purpose and need.
- At the third level of screening, the project team (with the assistance of the Consensus Committee) began to evaluate various “packages” of suggestions (now referred to as alternatives). The third-level screening consists of two separate evaluations (Level 3A and 3B screenings) and progressed from one to the other as the level of detail of the alternatives and the screening criteria increased. The goal of the Level 3A screening was to narrow to a small range of alternatives (3 alternatives) for detailed analysis and comparison. The Level

3A screening has been completed. The results of this screening are the focus of this public meeting.

- The next level of evaluation, Level 3B screening, will narrow the number of alternatives to one build alternative—the Preferred Alternative—that (along with the No Action Alternative) will be evaluated in the Environmental Assessment (EA).

Next Steps in the Process

- Ongoing public involvement
- Complete the Level 3 screening
- Identify the Preferred Alternative
- Prepare the Environmental Assessment (EA)
- Review public comments on the EA

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON THE THREE BUILD ALTERNATIVES

After the presentation of project information, Mike Hughes from The Keystone Center facilitated an “open mic” discussion of the alternatives. The following summarizes the comments and questions received from the meeting attendees.

Comments on the Couplet Alternative

- The couplet alternative will hinder redevelopment, particularly in the Gates area.
- I think the signal at Louisiana should continue to work as it is now. This signal protects the neighborhoods and businesses in the area. Having the couplet tying in at this location will encourage neighborhood cut-through traffic.
- I would like to support the couplet alternative, but it should be improved to provide some sort of access at Mississippi. Perhaps this could be a ramp of some kind.
City Response: This will be added to the list of suggestions and evaluated.
- I do not like the couplet alternative. I would like to see a “main street” themed alternative. The couplet divides property and diminishes the feel of the area.
- I support the couplet alternative. The couplet has a small right-of-way impact, and it seems to integrate the planned developments into the surrounding neighborhoods more, rather than create barriers with wide roads.

Comments on the Multi-Way Boulevard Alternative

- The multi-way boulevard alternative is better, because it does not hinder redevelopment on Broadway.
- I like the multi-way boulevard alternative, because it offers a better sense of place.

Comments on the Broadway Widening Alternative

- I would like to see the width of Broadway maintained as is. I feel this better maintains the pedestrian and bike environment.

General Comments about the Alternatives

- I like the parking structure on the west side of the CML near Santa Fe and would like to see it included in the preferred alternative.

- I am concerned about how trees have been addressed by this project. I do not believe that five feet is adequate to keep trees alive considering our climate.
City Response: The sidewalks are shown to be 13 feet. This does not mean there will be 8 feet for walking areas and 5 feet for plants. Areas with trees may have up to an 8-foot tree grate.
- Bike and pedestrian access seems to only service the light rail station. I would like to see bike and pedestrian improvements all the way to downtown Denver.
- I would like to see some sort of vehicular blocking on Ohio to keep drivers from cutting through West Washington Park. Neighborhood residents are concerned about cut-through traffic and how the intersection at Ohio has not been addressed by this study.
City Response: With the preferred alternative, improvements to the Ohio intersection will be defined.
- I do not like the couplet alternative. It does not meet the goals of the project, and it makes development of the Cherokee property difficult. I do not like the multi-way boulevard alternative. I think it is too confusing. I do support the widening alternative. I think it is a solution that people understand, and it has the least amount of impact.
- We should keep in mind that we are basing our decision on a model that projects 30 years into the future. If we think back 30 years, things were much different. We should consider this when making a selection and realize there are a lot of unknowns.
- If we build it they will come. We don't want another Colorado Boulevard here.
- I am concerned about east/west improvements. If there is more congestion in the future, then many drivers may be directed to Louisiana. There is a school on Louisiana with many younger children walking around.
- I am the owner of the Hurricane Drain building. I have been in operation at this location for many years. I do not support anything that takes away my business.
- All of these alternatives and all the other studies of the corridor do not examine the connection of this area to the state capitol.
- Broadway should be like a Main Street, not a super highway. Pedestrians should come first. A sense of community is the most important thing.

Questions about the Couplet Alternative

Q: Why is the couplet shown to connect back with Broadway so far south of the study area?

A: The location of the end of the couplet is negotiable. The current location was selected because it appears to affect the least amount of right-of-way and because of its proximity to Broadway makes for a shorter tie-back.

Questions about the Multi-Way Boulevard Alternative

Q: How does the Multi-Way Boulevard Alternative accommodate bikes?

A: The frontage roads could provide a traffic lane for off-peak use for bicycles and/or parking.

Questions about the Broadway Widening Alternative

Q: Do the improvements along Broadway in the widening alternative improve left-turn capacity at Mississippi?

A: Yes. The widening alternative provides an additional left-turn lane at Mississippi (total of two left-turn lanes).

- Q: Does Broadway have a median in the widening alternative?*
A: Not continuously, and it will not be wide enough for pedestrians or trees.

General Questions about the Alternatives

- Q: How many residents are expected in the Cherokee and Lionstone developments? I'm concerned about where all of these people are going to park if they each have a vehicle.*
A: Cherokee will have approximately 600 – 900 units. Lionstone will have approximately 2,000 – 4,000 units. However, the City has granted a 30% reduction in overall parking, because the project is designed to be friendly to pedestrians and bikes and is in such close proximity to the light rail station.
- Q: What happens to the Hurricane Drain building in each of the alternatives?*
A: With each of the alternatives, it appears that there will be some impact to this structure, although the impacts differ.
- Q: Do any of the alternatives take a right-of-way from the Cherokee development?*
A: Exact right-of-way impacts have not been studied yet. The goal will be to be as fair as possible with the right-of-way impacts to Cherokee and Lionstone developments. However, the Ford building is located on the Lionstone property and cannot be impacted with any improvements.
- Q: What is the speed limit on Acoma?*
A: It will likely be 25 mph.
- Q: Why aren't there east/west improvements recommended by this project?*
A: The project did look at east/west improvement. Several improvements that were considered included a connection to Mississippi over I-25 and connecting Tennessee under the railroad. These recommendations were screened out earlier in the process. However, this is one of the reasons that Exposition was extended west of Broadway—it should improve east/west connections. Mississippi is also being improved between Broadway and the CML.
- Q: Is there something that we can consider to prevent traffic from going to Louisiana?*
A: School-zone safety is always a priority for governing agencies. Louisiana is outside of the study area, so specific improvements will not be made by this project. However, traffic calming measure maybe effective in this situation.
- Q: What happens if none of the alternatives are shown to work?*
A: If none of the other alternatives are shown to provide enough benefit, the No Action Alternative will be carried forward.
- Q: What is the deadline for the public to submit their comments?*
A: Comments will be collected until the project is complete. However, for development of the Preferred Alternative, it would be helpful to have comments in to the study team by July 10, 2006.