

CDOT State Highway 7 – Visioning Workshop Meeting Summary

Date: Tuesday, April 10, 2012, 9:00 a.m. – Noon

Location: Lafayette Public Library, 775 W. Baseline Road, Lafayette, CO. 80026

WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, MEETING PURPOSE, AGENDA REVIEW

Andrea Meneghel, CDR Associates, greeted the attendees, facilitated introductions and explained that the purpose of the Visioning Workshop was to:

- To confirm the goals and desired outcomes of the State Highway 7 Planning and Environmental Linkage (SH 7 PEL) Study
- To develop a shared understanding for what is known about current and future corridor conditions
- To understand how the corridor communities currently define their vision for the SH 7 corridor
- To establish and define expectations for how the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) will work with the Technical Working Group, elected officials, and general public

Dave Kosmiski, CDOT Project Manager, welcomed all attendees and explained that the Visioning Workshop is an opportunity for the corridor communities to discuss the future vision and needs for the SH 7 corridor. It allows the Project Team to collect input from the communities to develop the study's Purpose and Need statement.

Reza Akhavan, CDOT Region 6 Regional Transportation Director, and Johnny Olson, CDOT Region 4 Regional Transportation Director, thanked everyone for their attendance and expressed their support for the study and commitment to collaborate across Regions to develop a comprehensive plan for the future of SH 7.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Bob Felsburg, Felsburg Holt & Ullevig (FHU), provided an overview of the study which included the scope, what the PEL will accomplish, a definition of the study area, project goals and schedule. Bob addressed the following points:

- A goal of the study is to lay the groundwork for anticipated National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) studies.
- The PEL study aims to identify issues early and minimize duplication of efforts. The PEL will allow for long-term visioning beyond 2035. Collaboration and consensus building are a big part of the study in order to develop a broadly supported vision that can establish the framework for NEPA.
- The study area contains diverse cross sections with very different land use plans.
- The study includes a Corridor Conditions Assessment Report, development of a Purpose and Need statement, and a PEL/Feasibility Study. Completion of the study is slated for December 2012. The first public meetings are anticipated to be held in June 2012 to gather public input throughout the corridor.

SH 7 PEL DATA COLLECTION EFFORTS

The Project Team presented land use, transportation system and environmental data collected as part of the study to-date.

Land Use: Jenny Young, FHU, reviewed the level of projected household and employment growth through 2035; the Project Team plans to conduct a sensitivity analysis beyond 2035.

Transportation System: It was explained that cross sections vary throughout the corridor and design inconsistencies currently exist. There is not a consistent corridor-wide lane balance nor is there consistency for shoulder widths, bicycle lanes or sidewalks. Transit service exists in the west end of the study area but is not corridor-wide. Crash data were reviewed and it was noted that a high frequency of crashes occur near major intersections. The demand on the transportation system is anticipated to reach capacity by 2020 in most segments within the study area. Travel forecasts suggest that future trips will be shorter, with more trips being local rather than regional and a significant growth in north-south travel through the study area.

Environmental: Kevin Maddoux, FHU, presented environmental data which focused on identifying flood plains, parks and open space, historic resources, and hazardous material locations to determine potential constraints when developing alternatives.

Comments:

- With the anticipation of the RTD FasTracks North Metro line, there is a strong desire to identify corridor wide transit improvements to be coordinated with its service.
- It was expressed that household and employment growth figures seemed inconsistent with anticipated travel/traffic patterns and local land use planning.

SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS

Andrea Meneghel described what was learned from key stakeholder interviews with the corridor communities and agencies involved in the study. The interviews resulted in identifying the goals, concerns and issues that should be addressed in the PEL study. The common vision elements, goals and issues that were identified throughout the corridor were the following:

- Identifying solutions which balance improving regional mobility and economic development.
- Reducing traffic congestion.
- Advancing transit solutions and multi-modal improvements.
- Optimizing transportation in the current footprint while minimizing impacts.

Specific issues to address include:

- Improving regional mobility and connectivity.
- Developing alternatives for the I-25/SH 7 interchange.
- Analyzing a preferred alignment for SH 7.
- Identifying opportunities for multi-modal facilities and improvements.

Comments:

- Agreement and support was expressed by the TWG members that the Project Team has accurately identified the key goals to be achieved through this study and the issues that need to be addressed (as identified in the Stakeholder Interviews Summary Report).
- Improvements and decisions made in the North I-25 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) should be recognized and carried forward for the I-25/SH 7 interchange in the SH 7 PEL.
- Safety improvements must be a part of all alternatives and a key focus of the study; especially when addressing access management.
- The Project Team was asked to be aware of how SH 7 could be impacted by issues experienced on 144th Avenue. The Project Team stated that it would be another east/west corridor that will be recognized.
- An inquiry was made about the role SH 7 will play with the other studies along the corridor, notably in light of the recent decision on RTD's Northwest Rail Corridor and potential Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service along SH 7 west of the study area.
- It was suggested that the study consider the corridor usage and travel patterns of commuters from outside of the study area and that those users also have the opportunity to provide input.
- The importance of developing multi-modal transit options and ensuring that those options connect SH 7 and the greater metro area was emphasized. However, there was some confusion as to what extent the SH 7 PEL would define transit service and improvements. The Project Team confirmed that this study will identify what improvements are supported and can be accommodated within the corridor footprint to address long-term needs. The SH 7 PEL is intended to define the vision for the future of the corridor, and while noting the extent to which transit is needed or desired by stakeholders along the corridor is within the scope of the study, determining the means and extent of particular transit options is not. This will be accomplished through future cooperation between RTD and stakeholders. The SH 7 PEL will consider transit needs as a factor in recommending a vision for the corridor and defining long terms needs.
- An inquiry was made about exploring Bus Rapid Transit improvements along SH 7. Lee Kemp, RTD Board of Directors, explained that RTD is currently evaluating a variety of possible scenarios along the corridor as they relate to the FasTracks program. Future service levels and potential RTD investments in the corridor are dependent on the outcome of a tax increase and future ballot initiatives.
- The City of Thornton raised the issue about addressing SH 7's functional classification and access categorization.

VISION ELEMENTS / BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The attendees were divided into four separate groups for discussion purposes at topic-specific stations. Each station was hosted by members of the Project Team. Groups visited each station and provided input to the Project Team on the station's topic area. At the end of the exercise a report-back was provided by the CDOT staff or Project Team member that served as station hosts.

Access/Mobility Balance – What is the purpose and function of SH 7?

- To develop a consistent approach for access.

- The east end of the corridor should no longer be categorized as Rural and should be classified as NR-A.
- Funding will be better used to enhance SH 7 rather than to identify improvements to 168th Avenue.
- The City and County of Broomfield has identified additional access needs than what is in the current Access Management Plan. It also believes its segment of SH 7 should be classified NR-B.
- Some noted that SH 7 is a regional commuter route and should have limited access.
- A dispersion of traffic around the Erie/Lafayette segment should be explored. The City of Lafayette has indicated that it is important for motorists who want to go to the downtown area to have that ability, but for those who wish to go through to the west to also have that ability. Therefore, the splitting of the traffic must be well designed for both movements and should be located as far to the west as possible, preferably in the vicinity of 119th Avenue or 120th Avenue. The Town of Erie has expressed preference for a realignment option located farther to the east. There are differences of opinion on the character of that realignment as well; Erie views it as a potential economic development tool, while Boulder County would like to maintain the less developed character supported by their Open Space in this area.
- Residents along Flagg Drive expressed concern about controlling traffic making illegal turning movements into their neighborhood.
- A choke point was identified at SH 7 and Riverdale.
- There is still disagreement among communities regarding whether South Boulder Road should be extended west to Lowell/Sheridan.

Traffic Operations and Safety – How should SH 7 operate?

- SH 7 should be evaluated with and without a connection of South Boulder Road to Lowell/Sheridan. It is unlikely to be built, and it should be understood what happens to traffic volumes along SH 7 without the extension.
- Instead of specifying a specific cross section for the corridor, consider identifying a consistent right-of-way width and allow the local agencies to make decisions on how to use the right-of-way. This would require identifying consistent design principles or performance measures that must be met.
- A diverging diamond interchange design for I-25/SH 7 needs to be safe and accessible.
- SH 7 should be maintained as a route to move commuting traffic along the entire corridor.
- Innovative intersection treatments can be considered in the right context.

Design Considerations – What should the corridor look like?

- Leave room for medians; the overall vision needs to be adaptable by each community, varying between paved, hard-scaped and landscaped.
- Be able to incorporate future considerations or the ability to widen for traffic improvements or pedestrians facilities.
- Attached sidewalks were not well received across all groups, except in constrained parts of Lafayette.

- Transition areas can be gateways to other communities (gateway vision), especially where there are diversions to alternate alignments.
- Preserve options that include wide shoulders, for future conversion if needed for future transit or other needs.
- Consider roundabout options in the Lafayette segment.
- Broomfield has a vision of SH7 with landscaped medians, a multi-use path for pedestrians and bicycles, and an on-street bicycle lane.
- Lafayette prefers to maintain an urban, walkable character for their community for the existing portion of SH 7. If an alternate route is proposed around Lafayette, the adjacent land uses may require a different cross section.

Multi-Modal Accommodation – What is important to consider about multi-modal solutions (i.e., transit, bicycle, pedestrian)?

- There were many different perspectives and not one broadly supported alternative.
- The study should make sure the SH 7 can adequately accommodate future transit service and connectivity to the North Metro corridor.
- Transit should have minimal disruption on other traffic and needs to have useful service hours/schedule. Queue jumps and signal priority at intersections were broadly supported.
- Make sure transit and multimodal improvements are compatible with service and facilities beyond the study area.
- Bicycle and pedestrian safety is important. Attached sidewalks are not desirable and should only be used in constrained areas where detached sidewalks are not feasible.
- Address urban/rural needs separately (there should not be a one size fits all solution).
- Bike lanes on SH 7 are supported by some stakeholders for commuter/advanced cyclists, but other stakeholders raised concern about the safety of cyclists using the high speed, high volume corridor.
- Pedestrian connections should be focused on providing access to major activity centers along the corridor (schools, residential areas, businesses, transit stations, etc.).
- Multi-use trails along the corridor and connecting the other regional trail facilities would be supported by most stakeholders.
- Safety was a big part of the conversation and considerations.

ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES, AND OUTREACH EFFORTS

In order to increase understanding of how local agencies will be involved in the PEL Study, as well as general timeframe for how decisions will be made, the Project Team reviewed the SH 7 TWG Operating Protocols which described roles, responsibilities and the decision making process. The public involvement effort was also presented.

Operating Protocols/TWG Role and Responsibilities: Agreement was expressed by the Project Team and TWG that it is imperative to establish a partnership to address the identified issues and develop solutions for establishing a corridor vision. The TWG members accepted being actively involved in the study to problem solve as a group and with the Project Team. There will be check-ins at key milestones with elected officials. The TWG expressed their support for adopting the SH 7 PEL TWG Operating Protocols and the guidelines outlined within the document.

Public Outreach: The Project Team described its public outreach efforts and how members of the public can provide input or stay informed about the study. Some issues may be addressed in small groups and then discussed with the TWG when necessary, and the Project Team will meet with smaller stakeholder groups when necessary or as resources allow. Two corridor-wide public meetings will take place in the summer and will be geographically dispersed throughout the corridor. A web page on the CDOT website will be available to provide public information, while a site hosted by FHU (Basecamp) will provide project specific materials for the TWG. Any of the project managers from CDOT, FHU or CDR Associates are available as points of contact to answer any questions about the study. CDR Associates will be in contact with TWG members to establish a contact database which will include members of the public from their respective communities.

CLOSING / NEXT STEPS

The Project Team reviewed the next steps for the SH 7 PEL Study and thanked participants for their feedback explaining that the Visioning Workshop will help inform and shape the purpose and need of the study.

- It was requested that the Project Team re-distribute the address to the study web page to the TWG in addition to the boards and materials used in the Visioning Workshop.

MEETING ATTENDEES

	NAME	AFFILIATION
1.	Erik Hansen	Adams County
2.	Jeanne Shreve	Adams County
3.	Jamie Archambeau	Atkins North America
4.	Jim Hanson	Atkins North America
5.	Cindy Domenico	Boulder County
6.	George Gerstle	Boulder County
7.	Julie McKay	Boulder County
8.	Johnny Olson	CDOT Region 4
9.	Karen Schneiders	CDOT Region 4
10.	Myron Hora	CDOT Region 4
11.	Andy Stratton	CDOT Region 6
12.	Brad Sheehan	CDOT Region 6
13.	Dan Herrmann	CDOT Region 6
14.	David Kosmiski	CDOT Region 6
15.	Kirk Allen	CDOT Region 6
16.	Kirk Webb	CDOT Region 6
17.	Leela Rajasekar	CDOT Region 6
18.	Neil Lacey	CDOT Region 6
19.	Reza Akhavan	CDOT Region 6
20.	Andrea Meneghel	CDR Associates

21. Angela Jo Woolcott	CDR Associates
22. Debra Baskett	City & County of Broomfield
23. Dennis McCloskey	City & County of Broomfield
24. Michael Sutherland	City & County of Broomfield
25. Tom Schomer	City & County of Broomfield
26. Wayne Anderson	City & County of Broomfield
27. Annette Marquez	City of Brighton
28. Joe Smith	City of Brighton
29. Alexandra Lynch	City of Lafayette
30. Carolyn Cutler	City of Lafayette
31. Debbie Wilmot	City of Lafayette
32. Doug Short	City of Lafayette
33. Pete d'Oronzio	City of Lafayette
34. Phillip Patterson	City of Lafayette
35. Staci Lupberger	City of Lafayette
36. Gene Putman	City of Thornton
37. John Aguilar	Daily Camera
38. Fred Sandal	Denver Regional Council of Governments
39. Monica Pavlik	Federal Highway Administration
40. Bob Felsburg	Felsburg Holt & Ullevig
41. Jeffrey Dankenbring	Felsburg Holt & Ullevig
42. Jenny Young	Felsburg Holt & Ullevig
43. Kevin Maddoux	Felsburg Holt & Ullevig
44. Frank Miltenbrger	FMLA
45. Dick Schillawski	Member of the Public
46. Don Jering	Member of the Public
47. Ron Spalding	Member of the Public
48. Sandra Dowling	Member of the Public
49. Wendy Phillips	Member of the Public
50. Karen Stuart	NATA TMO
51. Bob Boot	Regional Transportation District
52. Lee Kemp	Regional Transportation District
53. Natalie Erving	Regional Transportation District
54. Jody Lambert	Town of Erie
55. Barbara Kirkmeyer	Weld County
56. Elizabeth Relford	Weld County