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## RTD to hold public light-rail meeting

By **J.C. O'Connell**  
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**AURORA** | Light rail won't glide through Aurora until 2015, but RTD wants to hear residents' concerns and suggestions about the new transportation system this month.

The first public meeting about Aurora's light rail will be held Nov. 7 at the Summit Conference and Event Center, on Sable Boulevard near East Sixth Avenue. RTD officials plan on presenting the same information about the light-rail project twice, during two separate two-hour sessions.

Neighborhood liaison Marsha Osborn said she hasn't heard a lot of residents talk about light rail but thinks once people know where the tracks will be built, they'll begin discussing the project.

"I think there will be a lot of interest generated when people have a little more information," Osborn said.

RTD is studying possibilities for the light-rail line that will eventually snake up Interstate 225 to the Fitzsimons Campus and north to link with another future light-rail line going to Denver International Airport.

"We talked about it at my ward meeting, and we're very excited, especially to have input in the process," said Councilwoman Molly Markert, who represents the area surrounding I-225 between Mississippi and Yale avenues.

She added that light rail should serve the nearby Medical Center of Aurora, while not interfering with Jewell Wetlands.

Deciding which side of the interstate should be home to Jewell Station's 450 parking spaces will also be a challenge, Markert said.

Councilman Larry Beer, who represents the area directly north of Markert's Ward, which also straddles I-225, said he's heard some concerns about increased traffic, but he thinks residents realize the potential light rail has to revitalize the area.

"I haven't heard anybody say they're not excited about FasTracks coming through Ward III," Beer said.

He's especially enthusiastic about the possible transformation of a vacant plot to the east of the Town Center at Aurora into a high-density, mixed-use, transportation-oriented development.

The 10.5-mile light rail extension is part of 2004's voter-approved FasTracks program and will cost a total of \$619.6 million, said Tina Jaquez, a spokeswoman for FasTracks.

FasTracks officials are still trying to determine the exact path the light rail will take, and are working with CDOT to

ensure that the light-rail tracks don't interfere with any future widening projects for I-225.

The alignment will likely go north along the center of the highway from Nine Mile Station, but leave the median at some point before reaching East Iliff Avenue, possibly traveling west along the highway.

Initial plans call for adding up to seven light-rail stations and 1,600 parking spaces along the route that will also serve the Aurora City Center near city hall.

FasTracks is hoping to break ground on the light-rail project in 2011 and open the new Aurora line to riders in June 2015.

By 2030, between 15,200 and 17,800 passengers will board light rail in the I-225 corridor, Jaquez said.

Nine Mile light rail station, located at I-225 and Parker Road, is already one of the busiest stations in the metro area.

RTD officials say residents can have the greatest impact on determining the future of the light rail in Aurora by expressing their opinion during the 27-month long study that just began.

"Every neighborhood's different, every neighborhood has different concerns," Jaquez said.

FasTracks will be conducting their first meeting for the public Nov. 7 at 4 to 6 p.m., or 6 to 8 p.m., at 411 Sable Blvd.

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