



Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility Environmental Assessment (EA) Meeting Summary

Date of Contact: 9/18/2008

Meeting: CRMF Impacts and Mitigations Issue Focused Team meeting #1: Methodology

Presenters: Rick Pilgrim, URS; Nadine Lee, RTD; Tracy Faigin Boyle, GBSM; Nate Larson, URS; Bob Pearson, CH2M Hill; Chris Proud, CH2M Hill; and Dave Towers, HMMH

Number of Attendees: 13

Purpose: To explain the methodology of evaluating environmental impacts of CRMF

Meeting Summary

Nadine Lee welcomed everyone to the Methodologies meeting, and she noted that this was the first of three meetings in a series. She then said that, based on feedback from project stakeholders, the schedule for these meetings would be extended. Nadine noted, the Issue Focused Team (IFT) meetings on the environmental analysis will now have one month in between each instead of two weeks. The next meeting is now scheduled for October 16. The EA process will incorporate feedback from the public through January 2009.

Tracy Faigin Boyle provided an overview of the Environmental Analysis IFT meetings and how stakeholder input would be incorporated. The first meeting will cover methodology, the second will review the results of the impact analysis, and the third will review proposed mitigations. Tracy also explained that, even though the EA will cover all of the resource areas required by NEPA, five specific resource areas, as reflected in stakeholder comments/concerns, would be the focus of this meeting. Those specific areas were Transportation, Land Use, Visual & Aesthetics, Air Quality and Noise.

Rick Pilgrim then provided an overview of the CRMF project including the study footprint, the components of the facility and the decision-making process. He reiterated that the EA would document the environmental analysis for the full list of resource areas shown in the presentation.

He then introduced Nate Larson, who spoke about the methodology used to analyze transportation impacts of the CRMF project. Nate showed maps indicating the intersections that would be studied and described the baseline assumptions for the impacts analysis.

Next, Chris Proud gave a presentation on land use, discussing the goals and approach to identifying land use impacts, avoiding conflicts and determining appropriate mitigation.

Chris Proud gave a separate presentation on visuals and aesthetics evaluation methodology. He outlined the methods used to analyze these elements, which included



components such as existing and future conditions, public response to visual impacts and review of the City and County of Denver's View Plane ordinance.

Bob Pearson then gave a presentation on air quality analysis methodology which included explanations of Federal and State air quality standards. He explained the air emissions they measure and how the project cannot result in local air quality exceeding ambient air quality standards.

Finally, Dave Towers provided a presentation on noise analysis, which included background on how noise is evaluated and what factors are considered in the analysis. There was a discussion about the relative amount of additional noise allowed for locations with different baseline noise levels.

Issues and Themes

After each presentation, project stakeholders were given the opportunity to ask questions on each topic presented. While most questions were able to be addressed at the meeting, some required additional research. RTD noted they would provide a response directly back to the individual who made the inquiry. Major themes included:

- *Analyzing future conditions for traffic* - A question was asked if the analysis took into consideration traffic that would be caused by future development, not just the CRMF. Nate Larson replied that the analysis examines how the CRMF would affect existing traffic patterns.
- *Visuals/aesthetics* - There were also questions regarding how future development is considered in the visual/aesthetics analysis. Chris Proud described how multiple factors are considered in the visual analysis and that future approved development plans are considered in the visual context for the area. It was noted that Aesthetic analysis primarily includes comparison to existing views and the change that would be introduced by the project.
- *Air quality analysis study area* - There were questions about how the study area was established, how baselines are established and if environmental justice is taken into account in the study. Specifically, Bob Pearson said the intersection to the south near Park Avenue and railroad tracks is already considered as part of the baseline condition. In the baseline condition, the air quality currently meets air quality standards as measured at nearby air quality monitoring stations. Environmental justice is considered in the EA. It was noted that air quality impacts (if they are present) are part of the environmental justice analysis.



- *Factors used to determine noise impacts* - There were several questions about the kind of technology, idling and other factors that the noise analysis is based on. Dave Towers described how the assumptions are based on noise generated by current technology for Diesel Multiple Units (DMUs) and Electric Multiple Units (EMUs) but that technology is likely to make these trains quieter in the future. Stakeholders identified noise issues associated with the fans on the Light Rail Transit (LRT) trains. It was noted the fans and auxiliary engines are part of the idle noise produced by the electric trains. However, this noise dissipates based on distance from the train and reducing idling times could be an effective way to mitigate this noise. There was also a specific question about train horns. RTD will research and respond back to disclose if there are nearby at-grade crossings that would affect horn use.