



Denver City Council

Public Works Committee Summary – Revised 3/21/06 (page 3)

March 8, 2006

Location: Council Conference Room

Committee Members Present: Brown, Chair; Montero, Vice-Chair; Hancock, Johnson, Lehmann, Robb

Other Council Present: Garcia, MacKenzie

1) T-REX update:

Committee Discussion

Councilmember Brown outlined a few key points of the T-REX project to indicate how massive the project was:

- Total budget is \$1.6 billion;
- T-REX area supports 230,000 vehicles daily;
- \$3 million worth of walls were constructed and 600 tons of structural steel was used; and
- 557,000 miles of asphalt was laid.

Delbreath Walker, T-REX Deputy Project Director, indicated there were many projects being simultaneously constructed from the north to south end of I-25 and the challenges of the project included conducting construction against extreme traffic conditions. This project is the largest design-build transportation contract in the U.S. The project owners include the Regional Transportation District (RTD) and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) with the cooperation of many neighborhoods, jurisdictions, and developers. The total budget is \$1.67 billion with \$879 million allocated for light rail and \$795 million for highway construction. The project was funded by local, state, and federal funds. No new taxes or increased taxes were assessed to the taxpayer. Light rail elements along this corridor include 19 miles of double track and 13 stations. The highway component included reconstruction of eight interchanges along the corridor, the widening of numerous bridges, drainage improvements, ramp acceleration and deceleration lanes, and other safety enhancements.

Rick Clarke, T-REX Project Manager, indicated the project was 94% complete and ahead of schedule, and within budget. Highway completion is scheduled for September 2006 and the light rail transit is scheduled to open on November 17, 2006. A celebration is being planned for November.

Councilmember Lehmann acknowledged the hard work and planning of T-REX and City staff. She noted there were challenges involved with addressing neighborhood requests and planning for the appropriate type of transit and pedestrian access. She noted one of the most difficult transit development areas involved the Dayton Station (near I-225 in Southeast Denver). Various multi-city agreements and commitments for wetland protection and pedestrian safety were instrumental in resolving the type of transit planned in this area. Mr. Clarke said ongoing communications would continue with the Denver Southeast Initiative and the Southeast Urban Steering Committees to assure quality and community input. He noted that ongoing dialogue with communities and coordination with elected officials helped to make this project a success. Councilmember Lehmann commented that collaboration and partnering in these endeavors are critical when lobbying in Washington too obtain more state funding for transportation projects.

Councilmember Johnson asked what warranties are included for the concrete and asphalt. Mr. Walker indicated that the highest quality of concrete was used and that many specifications were required at the front end and throughout the process to assure that materials were of high quality. Due diligence and constant monitoring is included throughout the construction phases. There is a one-year warranty beyond completion of the project and once the final payment is made to the contractor, the contractor is no longer involved in the process. Mr. Walker indicated there was an elaborate punch list required to confirm completion of the project.

Councilmember Garcia asked if there were any remaining contingencies to the project. Mr. Clarke explained there were two outstanding lawsuits; one involving a contractor claim and another involving right-of-way issues that is at the Colorado Court of Appeals level. At this time, Southeast Corridor Constructors (SECC), design-build contractor for T-REX, is waiting out the decision in both courts and would not close out the financial aspects of the project until they are resolved. Councilman Garcia noted that SECC received construction incentives over the past three years for meeting disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) goals and asked if all goals were met. Mr. Clarke indicated that it hasn't been confirmed as yet. An audit conducted eliminated some of the reported DBE percentages that SECC claimed. Councilman Garcia indicated that this information was contrary to what he was originally told and said there were many DBE businesses that could be hired to assure that SECC meets their DBE goals.

Councilmember MacKenzie asked what the plans were to manage the parking at the University light rail station. Mr. Clark said they were looking at a paved parking plan, but that might be difficult due to recent legislation so they are continuing to look at alternatives. The Councilwoman said she disagreed with the current legislation that would charge for parking. Councilwoman Lehmann suggested that a tour of the completed T-REX project be scheduled in September.

2) Proposed sidewalk policy:

Discussion Summary

Jason Longsdorf, Public Works, stated the purpose of today's meeting was to provide a draft policy document (see attachment) to Councilmembers and the public to begin dialogue regarding basic principles related to sidewalk construction and parkways. The

intent of the proposal is to establish consistent criteria for construction or reconstruction of sidewalks in rights-of-way with the goal of establishing accessibility for all communities. The plan is to make the process simple and to assure that the permitting process identifies what type of sidewalk is appropriate and what is required. A public hearing will be scheduled to incorporate comments from the public to be included in the final rules and regulation recommendations. Highlights of the proposed Sidewalk Construction Rules and Regulations include:

- ✚ Governing authority for the rules and regulations is in Section 49-84 (C) of the Revised Municipal Code;
- ✚ Construction of compliant sidewalks shall always be required when a property is either first constructed or reconstructed;
- ✚ Nothing noted in the rules or regulations would limit the authority of the Manager of Public Works to waive, modify, or qualify any requirement acknowledged in the policies;
- ✚ Parkway regulations would be considered and/or if no parkway regulations apply, the Managers of Public Works and Parks and Recreation would evaluate on a case by case basis;
- ✚ Outlines the conditions (existing) for no sidewalk requirements – speaks to the issue of attached or detached opinions and consideration of the character of the neighborhood; and
- ✚ Curb ramp requirements.

Based on the draft document, Councilmember Robb asked what the sidewalk width would be relative to parkways. Mr. Longsdorf stated that Parks and Recreation was involved in this process, including Forestry to consider tree issues as well. The typical width is 5 ft. and ADA requires at least 4 ft. Some of the decisions are based on traffic and the need to move pedestrian away from high trafficking areas. The situation that is found off Quebec at Stapleton (50 ft. setback) is not typical. The goal is to work with the community to obtain needs and to build appropriate separation from the curb and traffic. Most sidewalks throughout the city are attached (see sidewalk implementation map).

Councilmember Johnson stated she ran a survey of her district and asked District 5 constituents if they would be willing to pay for sidewalks. Councilmember Robb noted that Colorado Springs is considering a sales tax for sidewalk repair and replacement because the city cannot keep up with the need. She added she was not advocating a sales tax increase, but encouraged creative ideas to address the issue such as requiring sidewalk repair before a home is sold. Councilmember Lehmann indicated that including developers in projects would help to plan for future maintenance so as not to impact or assess homeowners later. Additionally, she asked how golf courses were included in this planning. Mr. Longsdorf said this process does not include golf courses. This proposal identifies sidewalk improvements and is more related to policy, planning, and development. He added that the Planning Department was also involved in this process. The final policy should address consistency or modifications to the rules citywide. Mr. Longsdorf noted that some neighborhoods prefer not to have sidewalks; so how to approach this request is another issue to consider. Part of the problem is the citizen's difficulty in getting a

contractor to perform small concrete jobs so that the citizen is compliant with the code, stated Councilmember Johnson. Councilmember Brown asked Councilmember Johnson to share her final survey results with the entire Council. Mr. Longsdorf will come back to Committee with final recommendations.