Project: Southeast Extension

Applicant: Regional Transportation District

Project Location: Lincoln Station, Douglas County to RidgeGate Station, City of Lone Tree, Douglas County, Colorado

October 2014

Introduction
The Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is the lead agency for this project under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA). The Regional Transportation District (RTD) prepared the Southeast Extension Environmental Assessment (EA) pursuant to NEPA, 42 United States Code (U.S.C) 4321 et. seq., and 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 622 related to 23 CFR Part 771. The analysis, potential environmental impacts, and proposed mitigation measures are described in the EA.

Project Description
RTD proposes to extend the existing light rail transit (LRT) alignment and provide new transit service south from the existing end-of-line Lincoln Station in Douglas County, Colorado approximately 2.3 miles to RidgeGate Parkway in the City of Lone Tree, Douglas County, Colorado.

The Locally Preferred Alternative (LPA) includes a 2.3-mile, double-track light rail extension that runs south from the existing Lincoln Station along the west side of I-25, crosses to the east side of I-25 just north of the Sky Ridge Medical Center, and continues south to the RidgeGate Parkway interchange. Of this, 2.0 miles, or 87 percent, is at-grade and 0.3-mile, or 13 percent, is above-grade. This alternative provides three new stations. The Sky Ridge Station across from the Sky Ridge Medical Center and the Lone Tree City Center Station situated in the core of the RidgeGate planned development are both planned as kiss-n-ride stations without parking. A new end-of-line station at RidgeGate Parkway would provide a 1,300-space Park-n-Ride, and approximately 800 feet of tail track. All three stations would accommodate feeder bus service.

The light rail tracks would be grade separated via an overpass where they cross Lincoln Avenue, I-25, and RidgeGate Parkway. One at-grade crossing is proposed on a minor roadway near the
Sky Ridge Station. The project includes eight Light Rail Vehicles (LRV), with rail service via the E Line to Denver Union Station (DUS), F Line to Downtown Denver, and the Z Line, which is new service that will operate between the RidgeGate Station and the Peoria/Smith Station on the I-225 Rail Line. The service frequencies are presented in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Route</th>
<th>Changes from No Action</th>
<th>AM/PM Peak Service</th>
<th>Midday Service</th>
<th>Late Night Service</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>E Line to DUS</td>
<td>Extended LRT service to RidgeGate Station</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F Line to Downtown</td>
<td>Extended LRT service to RidgeGate Station</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>No service</td>
<td>No service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z Line (New Route)</td>
<td>LRT service between Peoria/Smith and RidgeGate stations</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>15 minutes</td>
<td>30 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The LPA in the EA included two parking options at the proposed end-of-line RidgeGate Station Park-n-Ride, as described below:

- **Option 1**: This option would provide a 1,300-space surface parking lot on opening day (2019). In 2035, the surface parking lot would be replaced with two parking structures that would accommodate a total of 2,100 parking spaces. The southern parking structure would consist of four levels and the northern parking structure would consist of three levels.

- **Option 2**: This option would provide one 4-level, 1,300-space parking structure on opening day (2019). In 2035, an additional 3-level parking structure would be built north of the first structure that would provide 800 parking spaces, for a total of 2,100 spaces.

The two parking structures in 2035 would be the same design and configuration under both parking options. The EA evaluated the environmental impacts of both parking options.

The LPA is shown in Figure 1.
Figure 1: Locally Preferred Alternative

Source: SE Corridor Project Team, 2014
Selection of Parking Option for RidgeGate Station Park-n-Ride
Parking Option 2 was selected as the preferred parking option for the RidgeGate Station Park-n-Ride. The selected option has a smaller footprint and would result in the need to acquire less right-of-way; would cause fewer impacts to prairie dogs, vegetation, wildlife habitat, and water quality (less impervious surface); would provide the same number of parking spaces as Option 1; and would leave more vacant land available near the RidgeGate Station for transit-oriented development by others.

Changes Made Since Distribution of the EA
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) provided a comment on the EA, requesting that additional language be added to mitigation measures to avoid construction impacts to the previously identified red-tailed hawk nest near Cottonwood Creek. In response to the USFWS comment, modifications were made to the following mitigation measure, as shown in bold underlined text. This change is reflected in the mitigation summary in Appendix B.

- Contact the USFWS Colorado field office immediately for further guidance if field survey identifies the existence of one or more active bird nests that cannot be avoided by planned construction activities. Adherence to these guidelines will help avoid the unnecessary take of migratory birds and the possible need for law enforcement action. RTD will coordinate with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) and the USFWS to implement their Raptor Guidelines, as needed. This could include seasonal restriction to encroachment within 1/3 mile of active nests, if determined by USFWS to be necessary.

Agency Coordination and Public Opportunity to Comment
Public and agency involvement activities for the Southeast Extension began when the Environmental Evaluation (EE) process was initiated in 2008, and included a comprehensive public involvement plan to proactively engage members of the public and agencies in the evaluation process.

In November 2011, at the beginning of the alternatives development process, RTD held three scoping meetings, one each with local governments, members of the public, and governmental agencies. RTD used the input received during scoping to refine the evaluation criteria and the project’s Purpose and Need, against which all alternatives would be evaluated.

Following the scoping process, RTD conducted a two-step alternatives screening process and identified a preliminary LPA. RTD then held meetings in January 2012 with local governments,
members of the public, and agencies to present the results of the screening process, present the preliminary LPA, and solicit comments and input on the screening results and preliminary LPA. The LPA determined by the screening process was accepted by meeting attendees.

RTD continued public and agency involvement during the EA process. On September 24, 2012, RTD announced initiation of the EA for the proposed project to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Region 1, CDOT Region 6, the Air Pollution Control Division (APCD), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG). RTD held meetings with local governments, agencies, and members of the public in December 2013 to present information on key environmental issues identified, potential impacts, and proposed measures to mitigate impacts. Public and agency comments about the proposed project did not produce significant concerns.

Notification of all meetings was made by email and website postings. The public meetings were announced in local newspapers, including the Parker Chronicle, the Highlands Ranch Herald, the Lone Tree Voice, and the Littleton Independent. Additionally, flyers were distributed to local businesses, at the Lone Tree Recreation Center and Library, at the Lincoln Station Park-n-Ride, on the RTD website, and by email blast to 55 recipients who had previously registered as interested citizens.

FTA and RTD conducted Section 106 consultation as part of the EA process with the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and other historic consulting parties regarding potential effects to cultural resources. Native American tribes were invited to participate in the 106 consultation process. No tribes elected to participate; however, one tribe, the Pueblo of Laguna, requested notification if additional resources are found during construction.

Availability of the Southeast Extension EA for agency and public review and comment, and the public meeting, were announced through the following methods:
• Announcements published in the following newspapers:
  - Centennial Citizen on August 15 and 22, 2014
  - Denver Post on August 12, 2014
  - Highlands Ranch Herald on August 14 and 21, 2014
  - Lone Tree Voice on August 14 and 21, 2014
  - Parker Chronicle on August 15 and 22, 2014

• News releases distributed to the following media:
  - CBS4 on August 12, 2014
  - Centennial Citizen on August 12, 2014
  - Denver Business Journal on August 12, 2014
  - Denver Post on August 12, 2014
  - Douglas County News-Press on August 12, 2014
  - Englewood Herald on August 12, 2014
  - Facebook on August 13, 2014
  - Highlands Ranch Herald on August 12, 2014
  - KOA/Clear Channel on August 12, 2014
  - Littleton Independent on August 12, 2014
  - Lone Tree Voice on August 12, 2014
  - Parker Chronicle on August 12, 2014
  - Twitter on August 13, 2014
  - Viva Colorado (Spanish paper published by Denver Post) on August 12, 2014

• Email blast to approximately 414 individuals on the stakeholder list.

• RTD and RTD FasTracks websites.

The Southeast Extension EA was made available for public review on August 12, 2014 for a 30-day comment period that ended on September 12, 2014. A hard copy of the EA was made available for review during the comment period at the following locations:

• City of Lone Tree Administrative Office, 9220 Kimmer Drive, Suite 100, Lone Tree, CO
• Douglas County Government, 100 Third Street, Castle Rock, CO
• Highlands Ranch Library, 9292 South Ridgeline Boulevard, Highlands Ranch, CO
• Lone Tree Library, 8827 Lone Tree Parkway, Lone Tree, CO
• Parker Library, 10851 South Crossroads Drive, Parker, CO
• RTD Administration Building, 1600 Blake Street, Denver, CO
• RTD FasTracks Office, 1560 Broadway, 7th Floor, Denver, CO

The EA was also made available on the RTD and RTD FasTracks websites.
Additionally, a hard copy of the Executive Summary of the EA was sent to representatives of the following agencies and local governments:

- City of Lone Tree
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment Air Pollution Control Division
- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Colorado House of Representatives
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado State Senate
- Coventry Development
- Denver Regional Council of Governments
- Douglas County Commissioners
- Federal Highway Administration
- Highlands Ranch Community Association
- Public Utilities Commission
- State Historic Preservation Officer
- Town of Parker
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Region 8
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Urban Drainage and Flood Control District

During the 30-day EA review and comment period, RTD held meetings with local governments and stakeholders, resource agencies, and the public to present the environmental impacts and mitigation measures contained in the EA and to provide opportunity to comment on the project. These meetings are summarized below. Meeting minutes are provided in Appendix A.

- **Local Governments and Stakeholders Meeting:** This meeting was held on August 27, 2014, at the City of Lone Tree Administrative Offices, 9220 Kimmer Drive, Lone Tree, Colorado, from 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm. Attendees included representatives from the City of Lone Tree, RidgeGate, and Douglas County.

- **Public Meeting:** A public meeting was held on August 27, 2014, to present the impacts and mitigation measures contained in the EA, and to provide opportunity to comment on
the project. The public meeting was held at the Lone Tree Recreation Center, Willow Room, 10249 RidgeGate Circle, Lone Tree, Colorado, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm. A total of 24 people registered on the sign-in sheets at the meeting. The meeting was held in an open house format followed by a short presentation and question/answer period. Project team members were available to take comments and answer questions. Members of the public could provide comments on the comment sheets provided at the public meeting or through RTD’s FasTracks website.

- **Agency Meeting**: This meeting was held on September 4, 2014, at RTD offices, 1560 Broadway, Denver, Colorado, from 9:00 am to 10:00 am. Attendees included representatives from the Denver Regional Council of Governments and the Colorado Public Utilities Commission.

**Comments on the EA**

During the 30-day EA comment period (August 12, 2014 through September 12, 2014), eight comments were received through comment sheets, email, letters, or the RTD FasTracks website. Approximately 30 verbal comments and questions were received at the local governments and stakeholders meeting, the public meeting, and the agency meeting.

All comments received were compiled and reviewed. All EA comments received and responses to each comment are provided in Appendix A and are also available for review on RTD’s FasTracks website at [http://www.rtd-fastracks.com](http://www.rtd-fastracks.com).

**Planned Outreach**

RTD will continue to coordinate with local governments and stakeholders during the final design process and construction phase. This includes coordinating with the City of Lone Tree to determine detour routes for temporary sidewalk closures along Lincoln Avenue and RidgeGate during construction.

**Mitigation Measures to Minimize Impacts**

Measures that will be undertaken by RTD to mitigate impacts as a result of the proposed project are presented below. For more detail, please refer to Appendix B.

**Resources that Require No Mitigation**

No direct, indirect, or temporary construction impacts would occur to the following resources therefore no mitigation is necessary.
Resources that Require Mitigation
The following resources would have direct or indirect impacts as a result of the proposed project and, therefore, require mitigation.

- Land Acquisitions, Displacements, and Relocations of Existing Uses
- Cultural Resources
- Visual and Aesthetic Conditions
- Noise and Vibration
- Water Resources and Water Quality
- Wetlands and Waters of the U.S
- Vegetation and Noxious Weeds
- Biological Resources, including wildlife and Threatened and Endangered Species / Special Status Species
- Transportation

The following resources would have temporary construction impacts as a result of the proposed project and will be mitigated and monitored during construction.

- Social Conditions and Community Facilities
- Economic Conditions
- Cultural Resources
- Visual and Aesthetic Resources
- Park and Recreation Facilities
- Air Quality and Energy
- Noise and Vibration
- Water Resources and Water Quality
- Wetlands and Waters of the U.S
- Floodplains
- Mineral Resources, Geology, and Soils
• Biological resources, including wildlife and Threatened and Endangered Species / Special Status Species
• Vegetation
• Noxious Weeds
• Hazardous Materials
• Public Safety and Security
• Utilities
• Transportation

**Determinations and Findings**

**National Environmental Policy Act Finding**

FTA is the lead agency for the project under NEPA. RTD prepared the EA for FTA review in compliance with NEPA, 42 U.S.C § 4321 et. seq., and with FTA’s regulations, 23 CFR Part 771. FTA has independently evaluated the adequacy of the EA.

After carefully considering the EA, its supporting documents, and the public comments and responses, FTA finds under 23 CFR 771.121 that the proposed project, with the mitigation that is required herein, will have no significant adverse impact on the environment. The environmental record provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.

**Land Use and Zoning**

The proposed project is consistent with and supports the existing and planned mixed-use, retail, and commercial land uses included in the RidgeGate planned development and City of Lone Tree plans. This results in no impact to land use in the Study Area.

**Land Acquisitions, Displacements and Relocations of Existing Uses**

Most right-of-way needs would be met through agreements with the City of Lone Tree, Coventry Development Corporation, and CDOT. No residential acquisitions would be required, and no business or residential relocations would be required. The project would require 29 acres from 33 parcels. Acreages include approximately 12 acres for the LRT alignment. The preferred parking option would require acquisition of approximately 15 acres, which is the land needed for both proposed parking structures (one in 2019 and the second in 2035) that would be acquired at the same time. North of Lincoln Avenue, portions of three commercial properties (less than 1.15 acre) adjoining the reserved 25-foot right-of-way would be acquired. Approximately 22 parking spaces would be permanently removed from one commercial property north of Lincoln Avenue.
RTD will comply with the Uniform Act and will coordinate with property owners during the final design process to seek ways to minimize parking impacts. During construction, an estimated eight acres of temporary construction easements may be needed on adjacent property to gain access. Property access may be temporarily impacted. Construction could affect surrounding roadways through temporary lane closures and/or detours.

Social Conditions
No adverse impacts to existing neighborhoods, population, or employment are anticipated. No impacts to community facilities would occur. Temporary construction impacts would include traffic congestion and temporary changes in noise, air quality, and visual conditions caused by construction activities.

Economic Conditions
The proposed project is consistent with and supports the existing and planned mixed-use, retail, and commercial land uses included in the RidgeGate planned development and City of Lone Tree plans. Construction would provide economic stimulus within the Denver metropolitan region, including creation of up to 450 construction jobs and an estimated $431.2 million of additional economic activity. Operation and maintenance of the project would generate approximately 20.5 permanent jobs and approximately 13 additional jobs would be generated in all industries not associated with transit operations. During construction, adjacent businesses may experience temporary noise, dust, and visual changes, as well as temporary access modifications.

Environmental Justice
There are no environmental justice communities within the study area. Therefore, no disproportionately high or adverse impacts to minority or low-income populations would occur.

Section 106 Compliance
Through the Section 106 process, it was determined that the minor project-related indirect visual impacts would not alter those characteristics that render the Schweiger Ranch (5DA 1753) property eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), and the LPA would have No Adverse Effect to the Schweiger Ranch. The No Adverse Effect determination assumes certain mitigating factors to be included in the RidgeGate Station Park-n-Ride design, including the use of materials for retaining walls and parking structures associated with both parking options that would be compatible in color, texture, and design to the surrounding natural environment, and would not greatly contrast with the area landscape surrounding the ranch. FTA notified the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) of their determination of No Adverse
Effect and requested concurrence in a letter dated October 23, 2013, and the SHPO concurred on November 4, 2013. In a May 15, 2014 letter, FTA notified the SHPO of minor design modifications made to the RidgeGate Station Park-n-Ride parking options, and requested the SHPO’s concurrence that the LPA would still result in No Adverse Effect to the Schweiger Ranch. The SHPO concurred on May 21, 2014. Minor visual changes near this resource would occur during construction activities. The potential exists to uncover unidentified paleontological or archaeological resources during ground disturbing construction activities.

Based on the cultural resources analysis and consultation with the SHPO, FTA finds that the project will have No Adverse Effect on the Schweiger Ranch or other historic resources. FTA finds that the Section 106 coordination and consultation requirements for this project have been fulfilled.

Visual and Aesthetic Resources

While there would be visual changes from the project, no significant visual impacts would occur from new bridges, Park-n-Ride facility and parking structures, LRT track elements, or vegetation removal. Minimal impacts would occur from views of temporary construction activities.

Parks and Recreation

No direct impacts, and minimal to no indirect and construction impacts to park or recreation resources would occur because none are located in the impact area. No noise, visual, or air quality impacts are anticipated for recreation resources in proximity to the project corridor.

Section 4(f) and 6(f) Compliance

Section 4(f) of the United States Department of Transportation Act of 1966 declares a national policy that a special effort must be made to preserve the natural beauty of the countryside, public park and recreational lands, wildlife and waterfowl refuges, and historic sites. No parks, recreational lands, or wildlife or waterfowl refuges are located within the impact area. Further, there would be No Adverse Effect to NRHP-eligible resources within the study area.

Additionally, Section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Act of 1965 protects federal investments and states that properties acquired with the funding under the act shall be protected. There are no 6(f) properties within the study area.

FTA finds that the proposed project will not use any Section 4(f) properties. Additionally, the proposed project will not convert any Section 6(f) lands. The project therefore complies with the requirements of Section 4(f) and Section 6(f).
Farmland
No impacts to prime farmland, unique farmland, or land of statewide or local importance would occur.

Energy and Conformity with Air Quality Plans
There will be decreases in Mobile Source Air Toxics (MSATs) from existing conditions. The project will not violate air quality standards. The project would contribute to improvements in regional air quality. Minimal impacts to energy consumption would occur. There would be temporary impacts during construction from equipment, dust, etc., and use of energy resources during construction.

On the basis of the determinations made in compliance with relevant provisions of federal law, FTA finds that the project satisfies the requirements of NEPA, the Clean Air Act of 1970, and the U.S. Department of Transportation Act of 1966, as amended. The project is identified in the conforming Long Range Transportation Plan (LRT) and in the conforming Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for the Denver metropolitan region.

Noise and Vibration
Noise impacts in the high moderate range at Sky Ridge Medical Center hospital tower and medical office building are anticipated to occur. No excessive ground-borne vibration is projected to occur during construction or operation of the LPA at any location along the alignment. Temporary noise impacts would occur from construction of stations, utility relocations, grading, excavation, track work, demolition, and installation of system components. Such impacts may occur in residential areas and at other noise-sensitive land uses located within several hundred feet of the alignment. The potential for noise impact would be greatest at locations near pavement breaking and at locations close to any night time construction work. RTD will coordinate with the Public Utilities Commission to establish a “quiet crossing” to eliminate the use of train horns near the grade crossing at the south end of the proposed SkyRidge Station.

After carefully reviewing the EA and supporting documents, including comments from the public and agencies and the responses to those comments, FTA finds that the proposed project, with the mitigation that is required herein, will have no significant adverse noise or vibration impacts.
Water Resources and Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.

Potential impacts to water resources and water quality were evaluated using Driscoll modeling of impervious surface areas. The increase in copper and zinc runoff to Happy Canyon Creek would occur at the RidgeGate Station. However, the increases are less than the threshold effect level as defined by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Water quality effects during construction would include sedimentation in receiving streams and drainage facilities, erosion of on-site and off-site soils, and petroleum spills from heavy equipment fueling.

Two non-jurisdictional wetlands (SE-9 and SE-10) would be impacted. Approximately 9,629 square feet of the 10,953-square-foot Wetland SE-9 would be impacted from Havana Street improvements. The entire Wetland SE-10 (290 square feet) would be impacted by construction of the RidgeGate Station Park-n-Ride under both parking options. RTD will work to reduce wetland impacts during final design and for impacts to SE-9 and SE-10, RTD will purchase credits from a wetlands mitigation bank within the Cherry Creek Watershed. During construction, temporary impacts to wetland SE-8, a 450-square foot, non-jurisdictional wetland, would occur. Also, temporary sedimentation, vegetation removal, and water quality degradation would occur during construction.

After carefully reviewing the EA and supporting documents, FTA finds that the proposed project, with the mitigation that is required herein, will have no significant adverse impact on water resources.

Flooding and Floodplain Management

No direct impacts to the Cottonwood Creek 100-year floodplain would occur because the LPA would span the floodplain. The impervious surfaces from the project’s stations are not within the 100-year floodplain. Temporary impacts to the Cottonwood Creek floodplain would potentially occur during construction.

Mineral Resources, Geology, and Soils

Direct impacts would be minimal and would be similar to temporary construction impacts, which include loss of slope stability, erosion and aggradation, and ground surface settlement. Adverse substrate or groundwater conditions may influence the design. Topographic relief, range and distribution of elevations, bedrock exposure, and drainages can influence alignment placement and design. No impacts are anticipated with proper implementation of construction mitigation.
Biological Resources

Wildlife

Due to presence of existing roadways, highway, and area development, the proposed project is not expected to act as a barrier to wildlife movement. Approximately 60 acres of wildlife habitat impacts would occur. The total permanently impacted acreage of the LPA, including RidgeGate Station Park-n-Ride, would be 40 acres. Some wildlife displacement would occur during construction. Minimal indirect impacts would occur because the project area is composed of developed or developing areas that have already or soon will be bisected by roadways, including I-25 and RidgeGate Parkway. Indirect impacts would occur to aquatic life and amphibians in the project area along Cottonwood Creek from erosion along riverbanks.

Minimal temporary construction impacts to wildlife would occur. Increased noise and activity during construction may cause wildlife to temporarily leave area. Direct mortality of small terrestrial and burrowing animals could occur during ground-clearing activities and collisions with construction vehicles. Disturbance of migratory birds, such as the active red-tailed hawk nest observed in the immediate vicinity of the LPA at Cottonwood Creek, are subject to the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). RTD will coordinate with CPW and the USFWS to implement their Raptor Guidelines, as needed.

Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species

No federally-listed species or their designated habitats were identified in the project corridor. Therefore, no impacts to such species are anticipated.

The proposed project would impact a total of approximately 16.1 acres of prairie dog colonies A, B, and C within the study area. RTD or their contractor will adhere to the FasTracks Prairie Dog Mitigation Policy to avoid, minimize, and/or mitigate impacts to prairie dogs. The policy states that the first step is avoidance. If this is not feasible, sites to relocate prairie dogs should be considered next. Finally, if this is not feasible, removal and humane euthanasia should be employed. In no case will construction activities commence that would result in burying live prairie dogs.

FTA, in cooperation with RTD, prepared a Biological Assessment (BA) in 2013 for the FasTracks program to address South Platte depletions and USFWS issued a Biological Opinion (BO) in 2014. Water usage and potential depletions for the Southeast Corridor Extension project will be included in the annual report of RTD construction water usage to the USFWS.
Vegetation
Approximately 60 acres of vegetation would be impacted, of which approximately 50 acres would occur in areas that have been recently graded, previously disturbed and reseeded, or used for grazing. Several ornamental trees and shrubs would be removed from commercial landscaped areas north of Lincoln. Any trees removed will be replaced per the requirements of local governments or CDOT and when possible. Station areas will be landscaped using native species. During construction, approximately 20 acres of vegetation would be temporarily impacted.

Noxious Weeds
During construction, approximately 20 acres of vegetation would be temporarily impacted and would be susceptible to spread of weedy plant species especially along drainage ditches beside track. A noxious weed management plan will be developed to control encroachment of noxious weeds.

Hazardous Materials
No impacts are anticipated because no potential hazardous material sites are identified within or adjacent to properties to be acquired or construction areas. However, it is possible that undocumented or unanticipated hazardous materials could be encountered during ground-disturbing construction activities. Protection of construction workers and water quality would be required.

Public Safety and Security
Temporary impacts would occur during construction to police, fire, and emergency response times due to potential roadway closures and detours. RTD will convene a Fire and Life Safety Committee that will assist in preparing an emergency plan and coordinate responses to emergency situations as is standard practice. There would be no additional safety and security concerns because RTD’s Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) policies have been implemented in the design for this project. Additionally, all station areas and boarding facilities will be constructed in accordance with the Americans With Disabilities Act.

Utilities
Existing utilities will be relocated or protected, as required. Utility conflicts can be found in the Advanced Basic design for this project, which is the basis for the EA’s impact analysis. Additionally, the project team will coordinate with utility providers and will develop Utility Relocation Agreements (URAs) during the final design for this project. Temporary service interruptions to protect or relocate utilities as needed may occur.
Transportation

No traffic impacts are anticipated on opening day (2019). In 2035, the Level of Service at the RidgeGate Parkway and Havana Street intersection would decrease, and the RidgeGate Park-n-Ride Access #1 may reach capacity. The RidgeGate Parkway/Havana Street intersection will be monitored from opening day to 2035. RTD and the local jurisdiction will work together to determine the timing of the need for improvements and the responsibilities for implementing these improvements. During some periods of the construction process, motorists would experience travel delays. Access to local neighborhoods will be maintained and signage will be used to notify drivers of detours. The exact location of detour notifications and signage will be determined during final design. Near each station, vehicular traffic and access to local businesses will be maintained throughout construction using construction traffic control methods to be determined during final design.

It is currently anticipated that detours and/or road closures may occur on the following roadways during construction:

- Lincoln Avenue
- RidgeGate Parkway
- Havana Road
- I-25
- SkyRidge Parkway

RTD will provide signage to guide roadway users to detours and will provide public notice prior to implementing roadway detours to inform users about detour routes and dates/times that detours will be in place.

Temporary closure of sidewalks would be required along Lincoln Avenue and RidgeGate Parkway during construction of the light rail bridges over those roads to ensure the safety of sidewalk users. RTD will coordinate with the City of Lone Tree to identify sidewalk detour routes.

After carefully reviewing the EA and supporting documents, including comments from the public and agencies and the responses made to those comments, FTA finds that the proposed project, with the mitigation that is required herein, will have no significant adverse impact on transportation.
Environmental Finding

RTD has incorporated environmental considerations into a study of project alternatives, and has conducted evaluations of the project’s potential environmental impacts. The EA was issued on August 12, 2014, and is hereby incorporated by reference in this Finding of No Significant Impact.

After carefully considering the analysis and conclusions in the EA, its supporting documents, and the public comments and responses, FTA finds pursuant to 23 CFR 771.121 that there are no likely significant adverse impacts on the environment associated with the development and operation of the proposed Southeast Extension Project.

Linda M. Gehrke
Regional Administrator
Federal Transit Administration, Region 8

Date
17 October 2014
Appendix A

Summary of Public and Agency Comments Received
Summary of Meetings Held After Distribution of the EA

The following meetings were held following distribution of the EA to present the impacts and mitigation measures contained in the EA and to provide opportunity to comment on the project. Refer to the meeting minutes included in this appendix for more information.

- **Local Governments and Stakeholders Meeting**: August 27, 2014, held at City of Lone Tree Administrative Offices, 9220 Kimmer Drive, Lone Tree, Colorado.

- **Public Meeting**: August 27, 2014, held at the Lone Tree Recreation Center, Willow Room, 10249 RidgeGate Circle, Lone Tree, Colorado, from 7:00 pm to 9:00 pm.

- **Agency Meeting**: September 4, 2014, held at RTD offices, 1560 Broadway, Denver, Colorado, from 9:00 am to 10:00 am
RTD Southeast Extension Environmental Assessment

RTD Southeast Extension EA
Stakeholder and Local Agency Meeting
August 27, 2014, 1:30 pm to 2:30 pm
City of Lone Tree Offices

Participants:

RTD: Susan Wood, Andy Mutz, Joni Goheen
Coventry Development: Keith Simon, Darryl Jones
City of Lone Tree: John Cotten
Douglas County: Art Griffith
Jacobs: Tom Underwood, Misty Swan

The purpose of the meeting was to provide the information to local stakeholders and agencies that will be presented at the August 27, 2014 public meeting, and obtain feedback on the information presented and answer questions.

Susan Wood began the meeting with introductions, and then presented information about the project history, where we are in the process, purpose and need, alternatives evaluated, and project schedule. She presented the findings of the Environmental Assessment (EA), including impacts and mitigation. The meeting then opened up for questions and answers, as summarized below.

1. **Question:** I thought that 2,000 parking spaces would be provided at the RidgeGate Station in 2019; why will 1,300 spaces be provided instead? **Answer:** The traffic analysis for the project was recently updated, which considered the recent economic down turn and changes that DRCOG made to their travel model. The results of the updated traffic analysis indicated that 1,300 parking spaces would be needed in 2019. RTD will monitor the occupancy of parking spaces and parking needs at the RidgeGate Station.

2. **Question:** Will the E and F light rail transit (LRT) lines be the only ones that serve the Lincoln and RidgeGate stations? **Answer:** Yes, at this time. However, when the I-225 LRT corridor is completed, the Z line, which will run along I-225, will serve both stations.

3. **Question:** Is 2,100 parking spaces the maximum number that could be provided at the RidgeGate Station? **Answer:** No. It would be possible to build additional parking if needed.

4. **Question:** Will the RidgeGate Station have a drop-off (kiss-n-ride)? **Answer:** Yes.

5. **Question:** What are the general dates associated with the steps shown in the Federal New Starts Process slide? **Answer:** General timeframes for the remaining steps are as follows:
   - Apply/receive entry into engineering phase: September 2014
   - FTA funding recommendation: Expected in February or March 2015.
   - Receive full funding grant agreement: Expected in late 2015 or early 2016.
   - Construction: Construction is anticipated to begin in 2015, with construction completion in 2019.
6. **Question:** Does the study area map just show the area within the RTD district? **Answer:** No, it shows the area that people would come from to ride the LRT.

7. **Question:** Why doesn’t the study area boundary extend farther east to include the entire Town of Parker? **Answer:** The study area boundary was determined by traffic analysis zones used in the traffic analysis for the project.

8. **Question:** The study area map does not show RidgeGate Parkway going farther east. **Answer:** Although not shown on the map, the existing RidgeGate Parkway was considered in the traffic analysis for the project.

9. **Question:** Would people living in Castle Rock pay for parking at the RidgeGate Station? **Answer:** Yes, because they are outside the district.

10. **Question:** Which parking option will be chosen for the RidgeGate Station? **Answer:** The EA evaluated both parking options for impacts, and left both configurations as options. RTD selected Option 2 (structured parking in 2019 and 2035) for the RidgeGate Station because it would result in fewer environmental impacts.

11. **Question:** Regarding the no adverse effect to Schweiger Ranch. Does that determination include potential widening of Havana Street? **Answer:** No. The project would not encroach on the Schweiger Ranch parcel.

12. **Question:** Would bikes be accommodated from RidgeGate Station to connect to the trail that Douglas County has planned farther to the south? Is there room on the west side of Havana Street to accommodate future bike/pedestrians? **Answer:** Yes. RTD is aware of the planned trail to the south, which would not be impacted by the project. Havana Street could be widened to the west to avoid Schweiger Ranch.

13. **Question:** Kids will come to RidgeGate Station via bike to visit Schweiger Ranch, and there is concern about providing that connectivity. **Answer:** Bicyclists can be accommodated as discussed earlier, and RTD is planning to include a sidewalk on the west side of Havana Street and pedestrian facilities within the RidgeGate Station to accommodate pedestrians.

14. **Question:** Regarding the noise impact at Sky Ridge Medical Center. If a train horn is eliminated at that location to mitigate the noise impact, how will train arrival be announced? **Answer:** There are options such as directional horns, gates, and bells, which are quieter than train horns.

15. **Question:** Note that eagles and burrowing owls have occurred farther east on RidgeGate Parkway. **Answer:** The project will comply with requirements of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, including preconstruction surveys.

16. **Question:** Is there Preble’s Meadow Jumping Mouse habitat within the impact area for the project? **Answer:** No.

17. **Question:** Would the wetland at Cottonwood Creek on the east side of I-25 be impacted by the project? **Answer:** No permanent impacts to the wetland would occur. The LRT bridge would span the wetland; no piers would be constructed within the wetland. Temporary impacts may occur to the wetland during construction.

18. **Question:** Will traffic improve at Lincoln Station once people begin to use the RidgeGate Station? **Answer:** The traffic analysis takes that into consideration.

19. **Question:** Art Griffith with Douglas County requested a copy of the EA document on a thumb drive. **Answer:** The EA will be provided as requested.

20. **Question:** Will there be full closure of sidewalks during construction? **Answer:** Temporary full closure of sidewalks along Lincoln Avenue and RidgeGate Parkway is anticipated during
construction. RTD will work with the City of Lone Tree to establish detour routes. RTD will work to limit sidewalk closures to nighttime hours.

21. **Question:** Will the LRT alignment span Lincoln Avenue? **Answer:** Yes, the LRT alignment will span Lincoln Avenue; there will be no pier in the middle of Lincoln Avenue.

22. **Question:** The project will require Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs). The meeting attendees discussed various scenarios for IGAs.
A public meeting was held on August 27, 2014, from 7:00pm to 9:00pm at the City of Lone Tree Recreation Center, City of Lone Tree, Colorado, to present the findings of the Environmental Assessment (EA) to the public to obtain input and answer questions.

Twenty-four people signed in at the meeting (see attached sign-in sheets).

Project team members present at the meeting are listed below:

- RTD: Gary Lasater (RTD Board of Directors), Susan Wood, Andy Mutz, Joni Goheen
- Federal Transit Administration: Jeff Jordan
- Jacobs: Tom Underwood, Misty Swan

Susan Wood began the meeting by introducing Gary Lasater with the RTD Board of Directors, who provided a short summary of the proposed project and purpose of the public meeting. After Director Lasater’s summary, Susan introduced other team members present at the meeting.

Susan Wood then presented information about the project history, findings of the EA, and next steps, as listed below. Please refer to the presentation attached to these meeting minutes for more information:

- Project background
- Purpose of meeting
- Why an Environmental Assessment was prepared
- Federal New Starts grant process and status
- Project status and activities
- Study area
- Purpose and Need of the project
- Alternatives evaluated in the Alternatives Analysis process
- Locally Preferred Alternative
- Two RidgeGate Park-n-Ride parking options evaluated and the option selected
- Environmental impacts, including cultural resources (Section 106)
- Mitigation measures
- Next steps
- Project schedule
- Methods to provide comments
The presentation was followed by a question and answer period. Questions received and responses provided are summarized below. Comment sheets received at the meeting are attached.

1. **Question:** Is the $92 million grant an all or nothing proposition? Will you receive the entire $92 million or get nothing? **Answer:** The project would either receive the entire $92 million or nothing. However, RTD would hope to receive the full $92 million grant.

2. **Question:** What is DRCOG’s involvement in this project? **Answer:** RTD has worked with DRCOG throughout the AA and EA processes. The project is in DRCOG’s long range transportation plan, although in a different timeframe than currently planned. DRCOG is in the process of updating their plan and this project, with the current timeframe, will be included.

3. **Question:** Does the $92 million grant pay for the second parking garage planned to be built in 2035? **Answer:** No. Funds for the second parking garage in 2035 are included in the RTD long range financial plan.

4. **Question:** How does the number of parking spaces provided by the two parking structures planned at the RidgeGate Park-n-Ride compare to the existing parking structure at the Lincoln station? **Answer:** The Lincoln Station parking structure provides approximately 2,100 spaces. The first parking structure at RidgeGate would provide 1,300 parking spaces in 2019; the second parking structure in 2035 would provide an additional 800 spaces, for a total of 2,100 parking spaces in 2035.

5. **Question:** You explained that the area within the project alignment and stations has been disturbed, but what about the possibility of finding fossils during construction? **Answer:** Mitigation measures outlined in the EA include a process that will be followed if unanticipated archaeological or paleontological resources are discovered during construction. If such resources are found during construction, work will be halted in the vicinity of the find and the State Historic Preservation Officer will be consulted.

6. **Question:** Will you need to close I-25 during construction? **Answer:** No. Also note that Lincoln Avenue and RidgeGate Parkway will not be closed during construction, although steps such as lane restrictions may be required. Sidewalks along Lincoln Avenue and RidgeGate Parkway will be temporarily closed to protect the safety of sidewalk users. Sidewalk detours during construction will be established in consultation with the City of Lone Tree. It is possible that sidewalk detours may only occur during nighttime hours.

7. **Question:** Regarding new impervious surface associated with the project, how will water detention be handled? **Answer:** Initially, water detention will occur on-site; however, in the long-term, regional detention would be used.
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>David Carter</td>
<td>AECOM</td>
<td>3-376-2919</td>
<td>dave.center@aecom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harold A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan &amp; Nancy Jorgensen</td>
<td>Resident</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard &amp; Alysa Archuleta</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Cotton</td>
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<td>LineTree</td>
<td>9228 Teddy Dr, Lone Tree, CO 80124</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Jones</td>
<td></td>
<td>3-725-4743</td>
<td></td>
<td>1405 24th Ave Denver, CO 80210</td>
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# RTD FasTracks

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, August 27, 2014</td>
<td>7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.</td>
<td>Lone Tree Recreation Center Willow Room – 10249 RidgeGate Circle, Lone Tree, CO 80124</td>
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### RTD – FasTracks Southeast Rail Extension (Environmental Assessment) Public Meeting

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fred Kasserman</td>
<td>REM Co., Ltd.</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Fakasserman@remco.com">Fakasserman@remco.com</a></td>
<td>9320 W. 110th Ct., Centennial</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lori Hespinger</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Hespinger@pacific.net.com">Hespinger@pacific.net.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Rick Solomon</td>
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<td>303-757-9366</td>
<td><a href="mailto:Burer@CDOT.state.co">Burer@CDOT.state.co</a></td>
<td>Region 1 - Denver</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jeff Jordan</td>
<td>FTA</td>
<td>720.967.3307</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Westhoven</td>
<td>MHI</td>
<td>303.905.156</td>
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<td>Joe Racusin</td>
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<td>JoeRacusin urc.com</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alex Larson</td>
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<tr>
<td>Shoira Tahirova</td>
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<td>Dave Towers</td>
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COMMENTS

Option 2 at RidgeGate Park & Ride would be much preferred. Project looks great.

Please use reverse side for additional comments.

If you have additional questions or comments, please visit:
http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/main_64

Name: Harold Anderson
Phone Number: 303-799-3996
Email: harold.anderson@cityoflone-tree.com

COMMENTS

1. Discuss w/ CDOT Early lane closure-detour needs of I-25 during construction
   - Discovered
2. Beware of Archaeological Finds (on Cabellis site, previously graded & disturbed)
3. Water Quality - Storm detention - on or off-site? CC Basin sites are higher than most.

Please use reverse side for additional comments.

If you have additional questions or comments, please visit:
http://www.rtd-fastracks.com/main_64

Name: Rick Solomon - CDOT
Phone Number: 303-757-9536
Email: ____________________________
The purpose of the meeting was to present findings of the final Environmental Assessment (EA) to agencies to obtain their input and answer questions.

Susan Wood began the meeting with introductions, and then presented information about the project history, where we are in the process, purpose and need, alternatives evaluated, and project schedule. The findings of the EA, including impacts and proposed mitigation, were presented, followed by a question and answer session, as summarized below:

1. Matthew asked if transit travel from downtown to the RidgeGate Station under the No Action Alternative is assumed to be via bus or a combination of bus and automobile. Susan Wood said she will confirm this with Lee Cryer (RTD) and provide a response to Matthew. Actually, the transit travel time from downtown to the RidgeGate Station under the No Action is based on mixed-modes with a change from bus to rail at Lincoln Station.

2. Methods to provide a quiet crossing at the SkyRidge Station were discussed. Based on the station’s proximity to the impacted noise receptors, Pam noted that it is likely that standard bells and gates would be appropriate to mitigate noise impacts at that location. RTD will coordinate with the PUC to determine mitigation measures.
# RTD FasTracks

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Check below if you would like to make a Public Comment?</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Matthew Heffernan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tom Underwood</td>
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<td>Jacobs</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Tom.Underwood@Jacobs.com">Tom.Underwood@Jacobs.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Misty Swan</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:misty.swan@jacobs.com">misty.swan@jacobs.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Pam Fischer</td>
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<td>PUC</td>
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<td>Joni Gohzin</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Joni.Gohzin@rtd-denver.com">Joni.Gohzin@rtd-denver.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Susan Wood</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Susan.Wood@rtd-denver.com">Susan.Wood@rtd-denver.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Lizzi Kemp</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:Lizzi.Kemp@state.co.us">Lizzi.Kemp@state.co.us</a></td>
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**Date:** Wednesday, September 4, 2014  
**Time:** 9:00 p.m. – 10:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Civic Center Plaza – RTD FasTracks Systems Room – 1560 Broadway, 5th Floor, Denver, CO 80202
Summary of Comments Received on the Environmental Assessment

Following are the eight written comments submitted on the EA during the 30-day comment period from August 12, 2014 to September 12, 2014, and responses to those comments. For questions and comments received at the local governments and stakeholder meeting, public meeting, and agency meeting, and responses, please refer to the minutes for those meetings provided this appendix.

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<th>Commenter</th>
<th>General Comment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Harold Anderson</td>
<td>Option 2 at RidgeGate Parkway Stations would be much preferred. Project looks great.</td>
<td>Thank you for reviewing the EA and providing your comment.Parking Option 2 has been selected as the preferred parking option at the RidgeGate Station.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rick Solomon, CDOT</td>
<td>1) Discuss w/CDOT early lane closure-detour needs of I-25 during construction.</td>
<td>Thank you for your comments.1) RTD will coordinate with CDOT regarding I-25 closures required during construction.2) The EA includes mitigation measures to address unanticipated archaeological or paleontological discoveries during construction.3) Water detention is planned to initially occur on site, and will ultimately be handled regionally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jan and Nancy Jorgensen</td>
<td>We are most appreciative of the extreme, detailed, and lengthy process for getting the SE Rail Extension to this point! (as well as the other Denver area transportation progress for public transportation!) The handouts and the Wednesday, August 27 presentation at the Lone Tree Recreation Center was like a ray of bright light (!!!) for our area. Thank you!! (We learned so much and did pick up additional sets of the handouts and have given to neighbors.) Parkside Subdivision, Lone Tree.</td>
<td>Thank you for taking the time to review the EA and project information. Your feedback is appreciated.</td>
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<td>Christopher Zvolanek</td>
<td>What about the Light Rail and Bus Service to expand since City of Colorado Springs cut off funding and you need to work with them to get Bus Service RTD back on routes along to build light rail. Even though for North East and North West need the service of Colorado for new Bus Services Routes. This have to get this project immediate plan to get this set up. Thanks.</td>
<td>Thank you for your comment. The Southeast Corridor Extension is part of RTD’s FasTracks program. The project will provide feeder bus service at the proposed end-of-line station at RidgeGate Parkway in Lone Tree, CO.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shayne Waldron</td>
<td>When will there be a solicitation?</td>
<td>It is anticipated that this project will be put out to bid by mid-2015.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kevin Sampson</td>
<td>I am a former member of the Board of Directors of the Regional Transportation District. I was elected to oversee the reconstruction of North Interstate 25. This letter involves Federal funding of the proposed Southeast Light Rail line. Since there are many, many, more projects on the front burner, including the looming disaster on Interstate 70 this winter, I’m opposed to the ninety two million dollar Federal contribution.</td>
<td>Thank you for your comment. RTD is committed to completing construction of the FasTracks transit program. The $92M federal grant would help achieve this goal by providing funding needed to construct the Southeast Corridor Extension, which is included in the FasTracks program.</td>
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| Alison Deans Michael, CDOT/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Liaison Colorado Field Office, 303 236-4758, | I reviewed the Executive Summary mailed out with your letter dated August 12, and have a comment. On page ES-23 under Mitigation for the Wildlife Resource, you mention compliance with MBTA, but because there's a red-tailed hawk nest in the vicinity, I'd like to see something more specific to avoiding or minimizing impacts to it. The CPW has put out raptor nest buffers that we refer people to; let me know if you need a copy. Also, I don't think I'll be attending the Resource Agency meeting in September. Thank you, and please let me know if you have any questions. | Thank you for your comment and for providing a copy of the Recommended Buffer Zones and Seasonal Restrictions for Colorado Raptors referenced in your comment. The EA included commitments to coordinate with the CPW regarding nest surveys and active nests. Your comment has been incorporated into one of the mitigation measures of the EA, as shown in bold underlined font in the excerpt below and in Appendix B of this FONSI:  
- Contact the USFWS Colorado field office immediately for further guidance if field survey identifies the existence of one or more active bird nests that cannot be avoided by planned construction activities. Adherence to these guidelines will help avoid the unnecessary take of migratory birds and the possible need for law enforcement action. RTD will coordinate with CPW and the USFWS to implement their Raptor Guidelines, as needed. This could include seasonal restriction to encroachment within 1/3 mile of active nests, if determined by USFWS to be necessary. |

| Liza Hunholz, Area Wildlife Manager, Colorado Parks and Wildlife | CPW – excerpts from letter:  
CPW would expect to find occasional use of the proposed sites by small ground-dwelling mammals, small birds, raptors, red fox, raccoons, and coyotes.  
Since prairie dogs were discovered near the development sites, there is the potential for presence of burrowing owls. They are classified as a state threatened | As described in the EA and in the mitigation measures listed in this FONSI, RTD will comply with the requirements of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and a burrowing owl survey will be conducted prior to construction. RTD will adhere to the FasTracks Prairie Dog Mitigation Policy. This includes the stipulation that no earth-moving activities will occur |
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<td>species and are protected by both state and federal laws, including the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. These laws prohibit the killing of burrowing owls or disturbance of their nest. Therefore, if any earth-moving will begin between March 1st and October 31st, a burrowing owl survey should be performed. Guidelines for performing a burrowing owl survey can be obtained from your local District Wildlife Manager. CPW would also recommend that any discovered prairie dog colony be completely vacated of living animals prior to the start of any earth-moving. Removal of the animals can be coordinated at the discretion of the development departments. Care should be taken to make sure no raptor nests will be impacted during this project. The mentioned red-tailed hawk nest would be included in this circumstance. Raptors are protected from take, harassment, and nest disruption at both the state and federal levels. CPW recommends that buffer zones be implemented around any nest discovered within the project vicinity during any period of activity that may interfere with nesting season. This will prevent intentional or unintentional destruction of an active nest. For further information, a copy of the document “Recommended Buffer Zones and Seasonal Restrictions for Colorado Raptors” is available from your local District Wildlife Manager. Following recommendations outlined in that document will decrease the likelihood of unintentional take through disturbance. Noxious weeds should be monitored very closely. The spread and control of noxious weeds on and around the RTD FasTracks project site is a concern for wildlife. Invasive plants endanger the until all prairie dogs in the vicinity have been removed. RTD has incorporated your comment regarding Recommended Buffer Zones and Seasonal Restrictions for Colorado Raptors into the project’s mitigation measures, as shown in bold underlined font in the excerpt below and in Appendix B of this FONSI: - Contact the USFWS Colorado field office immediately for further guidance if field survey identifies the existence of one or more active bird nests that cannot be avoided by planned construction activities. Adherence to these guidelines will help avoid the unnecessary take of migratory birds and the possible need for law enforcement action. RTD will coordinate with CPW and the USFWS to implement their Raptor Guidelines, as needed. This could include seasonal restriction to encroachment within 1/3 mile of active nests, if determined by USFWS to be necessary. The EA included mitigation measures to address the spread of noxious weeds, including development of a noxious weed program and performing continuous weed control throughout construction. These measures are listed in Appendix B of this FONSI. RTD will continue to coordinate with the USFWS to address</td>
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ecosystem by disturbing natural processes and jeopardizing the survival of native plants and the wildlife that depend on them. CPW would recommend implementation of a weed management plan that may already exist within local cities or counties.

CPW recommends the applicant continues to consult with the USFWS for any additional recommendations regarding any threatened or endangered species that may exist within the outlined project boundaries.

Due to the location of the proposed project and limited disturbance to nearby habitat areas, impacts of the development can be characterized as minimal. It is important to remember that incremental and cumulative loss of natural areas and open spaces will, over time, significantly degrade the overall quality of wildlife habitat in the area. In this case, we want to focus our recommendations on planning and implementing your proposal to minimize negative impacts and maximize potential enhancements to support living with wildlife in our community.

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<th>General Comment</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ecosystem by disturbing natural processes and jeopardizing the survival of native plants and the wildlife that depend on them. CPW would recommend implementation of a weed management plan that may already exist within local cities or counties.</td>
<td>wildlife and threatened and endangered species potentially impacted by the project.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B

Mitigation Measures
RTD will undertake the following measures to mitigate project impacts:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land Use</td>
<td>• No mitigation is required.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Land Acquisitions, Displacements and Relocations of Existing Uses | **Direct Impacts**  
- The acquisition of real property interests will fully comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (Uniform Act) and the Fifth Amendment of the United States Constitution. The Uniform Act applies to all acquisitions of real property or displacements of people resulting from federal or federally assisted programs or projects.  
- All affected owners will be provided notification of the acquiring agency’s intent to acquire an interest in their property, including a written offer letter of just compensation specifically describing those property interests.  
- RTD will coordinate with property owner during the final design process to seek ways to minimize parking impacts and identify opportunities to replace parking removed as a result of the project.  
**Indirect Impacts**  
• No mitigation is required.  
**Temporary Construction Impacts**  
- Coordinate use with specific property owners where a temporary construction easement is required.  
- Temporary access will be provided during normal business hours.  
- Adequate detours, including advanced notice and signing will be provided before beginning construction.  
- Adjacent property used during construction activities will be returned to original conditions, once construction is complete.  
- Special use permits to access CDOT right-of-way during construction will be obtained.  
| Social Conditions and Community Facilities | **Direct Impacts**  
• No mitigation is required.  
**Indirect Impacts**  
• No mitigation is required.  
**Temporary Construction Impacts**  
- Working with the communities, RTD will prepare a Construction Management Plan (CMP) that specifies public communications and construction means and methods to reduce or mitigate the inconveniences of construction such as noise, dust, visual blight, construction traffic, and preservation of access to homes, businesses, and community facilities. Refer to noise and air quality sections of this table.  
| Economic Conditions | **Direct Impacts**  
• No mitigation required.  
**Indirect Impacts**  
• No mitigation required.  
**Temporary Construction Impacts**  
- Refer to noise, air quality, and visual sections of this table.  
- Develop traffic maintenance plans to maintain access and circulation.  
- A CMP will be developed in coordination with local communities and businesses.  
- In accordance with the CMP the following measures will be implemented:  
  - Where possible business access closure will be limited to outside of normal operating hours.  
  - Provide clear signage for detours.  
  - Coordinate with local groups, business districts, and jurisdictions regarding construction impacts using a variety of media (for example radio, flyers advertisements, and website), where appropriate.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Environmental Justice            | **Direct Impacts**  
  • No mitigation is required.  
  **Indirect Impacts**  
  • No mitigation is required.  
  **Temporary Construction Impacts**  
  • Working with the communities, RTD will prepare a CMP that specifies public communications and construction means and methods to reduce or mitigate the inconveniences of construction such as noise, dust, visual blight, construction traffic, and preservation of access to homes, businesses, and community facilities. |
| Cultural Resources               | **Direct Impacts**  
  • No mitigation is required.  
  **Indirect Impacts**  
  • Use materials for retaining walls and parking structure that would be compatible in color, texture, and design to the surrounding natural environment, and would not greatly contrast with the area landscape surrounding the historic Schweiger Ranch.  
  **Temporary Construction Impacts**  
  • Maintain access to Schweiger Ranch during construction.  
  • FTA and RTD will immediately contact SHPO should any post review discoveries be made during construction.  
  • FTA and RTD will also notify the Pueblo of Laguna if additional resources are found. |
| Visual and Aesthetic Resources   | **Direct Impacts**  
  • Coordinate with local municipalities and developers in the design of station area improvements.  
  • Coordinate with local municipalities and developers to incorporate aesthetic treatments, such as color and texture, for structural elements, including parking lot retaining walls, parking structure, and bridge structure.  
  • Pursue use of lighting standards to shield light to prevent light trespass.  
  **Indirect Impacts**  
  • No mitigation is required.  
  **Temporary Construction Impacts**  
  • Revegetate impacted areas with native species as soon as practicable upon construction completion. |
| Parks and Recreation Facilities  | **Direct Impacts**  
  • No mitigation required.  
  **Indirect Impacts**  
  • No mitigation required.  
  **Temporary Construction Impacts**  
  • RTD will coordinate with local jurisdictions during construction for appropriate trail detours. |
| Farmlands                        | **Air Quality:**  
  **Direct Impacts**  
  • No mitigation required as there are minimal to no direct impacts.  
  **Indirect Impacts**  
  • No mitigation required as there are minimal to no indirect impacts.  
  **Temporary Construction Impact**  
  • Prepare a Dust Control Plan.  
  • Obtain Air Pollution Emission Notice permit for construction activities.  
  • Cover trucks hauling soil and other fine materials. Stabilize and cover stockpile areas.  
  • Cover or wet temporary excavated materials.  
  • Re-vegetate exposed areas.  
  • Minimize off-site tracking of mud and debris by washing construction equipment and temporary stabilization.  
  • Limit vehicle speed of construction-related equipment.  
  • Prohibit unnecessary idling of construction equipment  
  • Use low-sulfur fuel.  
  • Locate diesel engines and motors as far away as possible from residential areas.  
  • Locate staging areas as far away as possible from residential areas. |
### Resource | Mitigation
---|---
- Require heavy construction equipment to use the cleanest available engines or to be retrofitted with diesel particulate control technology.  
- Use alternatives for diesel engines and/or diesel fuels (such as: biodiesel, liquefied natural gas, compressed natural gas, fuel cells, or electric engines).  
- Install engine pre-heater devices to eliminate unnecessary idling during winter-time construction.  
- Prohibit tampering with equipment to increase horsepower or to defeat emission-control devices effectiveness.  
- Require construction vehicle engines to be properly tuned and maintained.  
- Use construction vehicles and equipment with the minimum practical engine size for the intended job.  
- Use a wheel wash station and/or large-diameter cobble apron at egress/ingress areas to minimize dirt being tracked onto public streets.  
- Use vacuum powered street sweepers to control dirt tracked onto streets.  

**Energy:**  
- No mitigation required.

### Noise and Vibration

**Direct Impacts**  
- Work to establish a PUC approved “quiet crossing” to eliminate use of train horns near the grade crossing at the south end of the proposed Sky Ridge Station.

**Indirect Impacts**  
- No mitigation required.

**Temporary Construction Impacts**  
Construction activities will need to comply with local noise ordinances. Noise will be minimized during construction. Mitigation measures may include:

- Make hotel vouchers available to affected residents in the vicinity of any night time construction activities.
- Locate stationary construction equipment as far as possible from noise-sensitive sites.
- Construct temporary noise barriers, such as temporary walls or piles of excavated material, between noisy activities and noise-sensitive receivers.
- Communicate early on with the general public to reduce the number of noise complaints. Inform the public of any potential construction noise impacts and the measure that will be employed to reduce these impacts. Also, establish and publicize a responsive complaint mechanism for the duration of construction.
- Minimize construction duration in residential areas as much as possible.
- Minimize nighttime activities as much as possible.
- Re-route truck traffic away from residential streets, where possible.
- Combine noisy operations to occur in the same time period.
- Use well-maintained equipment equipped with modern mufflers.
- Use noise blankets on equipment and/or quiet-use generators. Noise blankets (also called “acoustic wraps”) are removable and reusable sound barriers made from compost materials like Teflon impregnated cloth. The blankets are custom-fit to encapsulate the noisy equipment and block sounds at the source. These are commonly used on equipment such as fans and blowers, compressor housings, hydraulic pumps, etc. They are very effective because they block the source of the noise.
- Use alternative construction methods, such as sonic or vibratory pile driving in noise sensitive areas.
- Perform pile driving and other high-noise activities during daytime construction (generally 7:00AM to 7:00PM), where possible. When construction time is restricted to certain daytime hours, the overall duration of project construction would likely increase.
# Resource |
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Water Resources and Water Quality</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Impacts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Permanent water quality BMPs, possibly including.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Grass lined ditches.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Re-grading, seeding, and revegetating slopes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Stormwater control channels and water quality detention ponds.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Runoff from the bridge will be mitigated by a water quality structure, such as a stormceptor or equivalent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- CDOT’s municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) permit, as required by RTD’s MS4 permit will be adhered to where applicable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Native vegetation will be reestablished, decreasing potential for erosion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- If any permanent water quality degradation occurs, waters shall be mitigated to appropriate water quality standards (existing conditions prior to impact).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Ballasted track areas do not require any water quality mitigation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Impacts</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No mitigation required as there are minimal to no indirect impacts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Temporary Construction Impacts
- A stormwater management plan (SWMP) will be developed and implemented that specifies BMPs to minimize soil erosion, and methods for monitoring conditions before, during and after construction.  
- Stabilization BMPs, such as mulching, temporary seeding, or erosion control blankets, will be used.  
- Temporary erosion control BMPs will be used to reduce disturbance, such as staging construction, minimizing access areas, temporary seeding, early final grading and seeding of completed areas, clean water diversions, silt fences, erosion bales, erosion control blankets, sediment traps, sediment basins, soil stockpile management, and temporary diversion structures. These BMPs will be installed prior to ground disturbance activities.  
- A spill control plan will be developed.  
- Operational monitoring and supply wells will be protected or replaced in the same or similar location depending on the site conditions. Non-operational monitoring and supply wells will be abandoned in accordance with state requirements.

# Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.

## Wetlands:

### Direct Impacts
- RTD will work to further reduce wetland impacts during final design.
- Impacts to the non-jurisdictional wetlands (SE-9 and SE-10) will be mitigated by purchasing credits from a wetland mitigation bank within the Cherry Creek Watershed.

### Indirect Impacts
- Indirect impacts from spread of noxious weeds will be mitigated through the noxious weed management plan that will be developed for the project.

## Temporary Construction Impacts
- Appropriate permanent BMPs will be utilized to stabilize the soil within the study area.
- If construction contractor determines that temporary impacts to jurisdictional wetlands will occur to gain site access, the contractor will need to obtain appropriate permits from the USACE.
- Wetlands temporarily affected during construction will be restored to pre-construction conditions.
- Construction zones will be fenced, and wetland areas near construction access will be covered with layers of geotextile, straw, or soil prior to use in order to minimize impacts.
- The limits of disturbance will be fenced during construction to avoid inadvertent temporary impacts.
- Wetland areas, used for construction access, will be covered with a layer of geotextile, straw, and soil prior to use. After construction is completed, temporary structures, fill, and geotextile will be removed.

### Waters of the U.S.:

### Direct Impacts
- No mitigation is necessary.

### Indirect Impacts
- No mitigation is necessary.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
<th>Mitigation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporary Construction Impacts</strong></td>
<td>- Appropriate BMP mandates by the federal, state, and local regulatory agencies will be used to avoid and minimize construction–related impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- If construction contractor determines that temporary impacts to jurisdictional waters of the U.S. will occur to gain site access, the contractor will need to obtain appropriate permits from the USACE.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Direct Impacts</strong></td>
<td>Adherence to all Urban Drainage and Flood Control District (UDFCD) and local jurisdiction floodplain requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Impacts</strong></td>
<td>Impacts due to development would be avoided through adherence to local development requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporary Construction Impacts</strong></td>
<td>Construction impacts to floodplains and drainage areas in the study area would be avoided or minimized to comply with federal, state, and local permit regulations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Appropriate BMPs would be used during construction activities to minimize impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Floodplains</strong></td>
<td>Direct Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No mitigation required as there are minimal to no direct impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Impacts</strong></td>
<td>No mitigation required as there are minimal to no indirect impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporary Construction Impacts</strong></td>
<td>Appropriate design and development of the slope profile and slope cuts, limited devegetation, slope cover during construction, prompt revegetation of slopes, temporary or permanent dewatering systems, retaining walls, appropriately engineered fill.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Pre-flooding and/or dewatering, removal of adverse substrate, engineered backfill, geotextiles or geogrids.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Appropriate design and development, coated and resistant steel and concrete, subsurface drainage and dewatering systems, specialized piers and footings, deep foundation systems, overexcavation, appropriately engineered backfills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Appropriate structural designs for existing topography.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mineral Resources, Geology, and Soils</strong></td>
<td>Direct Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No mitigation required as there are minimal to no direct impacts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Impacts</strong></td>
<td>No mitigation required as there are minimal to no indirect impacts.</td>
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<td><strong>Temporary Construction Impacts</strong></td>
<td>Appropriate design and development of the slope profile and slope cuts, limited devegetation, slope cover during construction, prompt revegetation of slopes, temporary or permanent dewatering systems, retaining walls, appropriately engineered fill.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Appropriate structural designs for existing topography.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vegetation and Noxious Weeds</strong></td>
<td>Direct Impacts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Replace any trees impacted based on the requirements of local governments and/or CDOT.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When possible, use native species for landscape plantings at Park-n-Ride and stations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If impacts occur to riparian areas within CDOT right-of-way, Senate Bill 40 Certification will be necessary and obtained.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Indirect Impacts</strong></td>
<td>Develop noxious weed management plan.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Perform continuous weed control within CDOT and RTD rights-of-way, and replant native species throughout the project until construction completion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Temporary Construction Impacts</strong></td>
<td>Reseed with native species, control invasive species, and use weed-free hay/mulch within the right-of-way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Revegetate disturbed areas that would not be paved or part of the new track embankment.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Resource** | **Direct Impacts** | **Mitigation**
--- | --- | ---
Biological Resources | **Direct Impacts**<br>RTD will comply with the requirements of the MBTA (refer to temporary construction mitigation below).<br>**Indirect Impacts**<br>Use BMPs to avoid water quality impacts to, and tree removal along Cottonwood Creek. | 
Wildlife | **Temporary Construction Impacts**<br>RTD will comply with the requirements of the MBTA.<br>Although provisions of the MBTA are applicable year-round, most migratory bird nesting activity in eastern Colorado occurs during April 1 to August 31. However, some migratory birds are known to nest outside of primary nesting season (e.g., raptors can nest in woodland habitats between February 1 and July 15).<br>If construction is planned to occur during primary nesting season or at any other time that may result in the take of nesting migratory birds, the USFWS recommends that RTD have a qualified biologist conduct a field survey of affected habitats and structures to determine absence or presence of nesting migratory birds.<br>Conduct nesting bird surveys during the nesting season. In some cases, such as on bridges or other similar structures, nesting can be prevented until construction is complete.<br>Contact the USFWS Colorado field office immediately for further guidance if field survey identifies the existence of one or more active bird nests that cannot be avoided by planned construction activities. Adherence to these guidelines will help avoid the unnecessary take of migratory birds and the possible need for law enforcement action. RTD will coordinate with CPW and the USFWS to implement their Raptor Guidelines, as needed. This could include seasonal restriction to encroachment within 1/3 mile of active nests, if determined by USFWS to be necessary. | 
Threatened, Endangered, and Sensitive Species | **Direct Impacts**<br>RTD/the contractor will adhere to the FasTracks Prairie Dog Mitigation Policy. The FasTracks program first established its Prairie Dog Mitigation Policy in 2007, as RTD takes seriously its efforts to avoid, minimize or mitigate for impacts to our environment. The mitigation policy states (in order of preference) that RTD will:<br>First avoid, minimize and/or mitigate for impacts to prairie dogs if feasible;<br>Second, relocate prairie dogs if RTD can obtain permission and find property and the relocation is not cost prohibitive;<br>Third, donate prairie dogs to raptor rehabilitation programs or to the USFWS ferret program;<br>Finally, humanely euthanize on site as a last resort.<br>The policy clearly states, “At no time will RTD authorize earth-moving activities that result in the burying of live prairie dogs.” In an effort to find suitable land for relocations, RTD has established a Working Group composed of interested parties to look for ways to clear the obstacles RTD has encountered in trying to implement live relocations.<br>Burrowing owl surveys will be conducted within one year prior to construction.<br>Vegetation and trees removed along Cottonwood Creek will be replaced. | **Indirect Impacts**<br>Permanent BMPs will be implemented to control erosion.<br>**Temporary Construction Impacts**<br>BMPs will be implemented during construction to control erosion.<br>A construction barrier between construction areas and active prairie dog colonies will be erected to minimize interaction with adjacent colonies.<br>Prairie dogs will be removed from the construction side of the barriers prior to the initiation of ground-disturbing construction activities.<br>As a result of the Biological Opinion (BO) obtained from the USFWS, water usage during construction will be tracked and gallons used will be provided to the FasTracks environmental group on an annual basis.
## Resource | Mitigation
--- | ---
### Hazardous Materials
**Direct Impacts**  
- No mitigation required.

**Indirect Impacts**  
- No mitigation required.

**Temporary Construction Impacts**  
- Prepare a Materials Management Plan to address the potential to encounter contaminated soil and groundwater.
- Complete an asbestos survey and a lead-based paint survey on structures proposed for demolition, if applicable.
- Prepare and implement a Health and Safety Plan to protect worker health and safety.
- Comply with Occupational Safety and Health Administration requirements for construction workers who may be exposed to hazardous materials.
- Follow CDOT 250 Specification for hazardous materials when on CDOT right-of-way.
- Implement construction BMPs in accordance with Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan. BMPs may include secondary containment areas for refueling construction equipment, berms or ponds to control runoff, and a monitoring program to test stormwater for contaminants prior to discharge from the construction site.

### Public Safety and Security
**Direct Impacts**  
- No mitigation required as there are minimal to no direct impacts.

**Indirect Impacts**  
- No mitigation required as there are minimal to no indirect impacts.

**Temporary Construction Impacts**  
- Provide service providers with adequate detour information, including advanced notice before construction, to ensure access is maintained during construction.
- Coordinate with Colorado State Patrol regarding operational issues as they relate to safety and security.

### Utilities
**Direct Impacts**  
- Avoid utilities during final design and construction.
- Reinforce or protect utilities through casing and other construction methods.
- Use cathodic protection to mitigate corrosion or electrical grounding to mitigate effects of induced voltages caused by alternating current.
- Relocate utilities in coordination with the utility owner or municipality.

**Indirect Impacts**  
- No mitigation required.

**Temporary Construction Impacts**  
- Ensure that disruption of service provided by the existing utilities infrastructure is limited.
- Conduct detailed field survey and coordinate with utility owners and municipalities.
- Coordinate temporary interruptions in utility service with affected property owners and tenants.

### Transportation
**Direct Impacts**  
- The RidgeGate Parkway/Havana Street intersection will be monitored from opening day to 2035. RTD and the local jurisdiction will work together to determine the timing of the need for improvements and the responsibilities for implementing these improvements.

**Temporary Construction Impacts**  
- Access to local neighborhoods will be maintained. The exact location of detour notifications and signage will be determined during final design.
- Near each station, vehicular traffic and access to local businesses will be maintained throughout construction using construction traffic control methods to be determined during final design.
- RTD will coordinate with the City of Lone Tree to identify sidewalk detour routes.