

Appendix C

Outreach and Public Involvement

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1.0 Public Outreach and Input Strategy

There is tremendous interest in future plans and potential development for the Denver Federal Center site from local, regional, and national entities. To respond to this interest, the General Services Administration (GSA) developed a communication outreach plan intended to share information with interested parties and provide meaningful opportunities for dialogue.

Several separate, but cumulatively supportive activities were launched early in the project: federal tenant meetings; a roundtable discussion group comprised of federal tenants, community representatives, and other interested parties; design charrette meetings; a public open forum; meetings with other official and or representatives; and scoping meetings to support the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. Summaries for each activity are provided below.

1.1 Federal Tenant Meetings

Four federal tenant committee sessions were conducted between January 11 and 12, 2006. Approximately 50 people attended the sessions with all federal tenant agencies at the Federal Center site represented. A federal tenant open house was conducted on March 2, 2006 with follow up briefings to federal tenant management groups.

1.2 Roundtable Meetings

A roundtable group, made up of private-sector, government, community and business stakeholders, met throughout the planning process to inform development of the Master Site Plan.

1.3 Design Charrettes

The design charrette sessions, held March 2 and 3, 2006, had more than 200 participants. Design concepts as well as security and disposition strategies were the focus. GSA tenants at the Federal Center were represented, along with members of the roundtable group.

Numerous concepts were drawn in an interactive, open process facilitated by the consultant team. Approximately 20 framework plans were consolidated into five “big idea” schemes. These “big idea” schemes were studied, evaluated, and combined into three planning concepts. Two of the concepts were refined and developed further for peer review by an expert panel at the conclusion of the charrette process.

The concepts were refined into alternatives based on market analysis and other opportunity and constraints analyses.

1.4 Public Open Forum

On March 2, 2006, an open house was held at the Lakewood Heritage Center to introduce the project and gather input from area residents and businesses in a structured environment. Approximately 300 people attended the meeting.

1.5 Community Group Meetings

Several meetings and briefings with multiple community groups have occurred throughout the planning process.

1.6 Meetings with Officials and Representatives

Meetings with the Regional Transportation District (RTD) and Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) on coordination of the proposed light rail system included a charrette on the Federal Center station.

An architectural peer review of the St. Anthony Central Hospital site plan/architecture took place with representatives from GSA and the planning team.

1.7 Summary of Input

Topics of discussion at the early (pre-NEPA scoping) meetings and workshops included:

- Security
- Wildlife, wetlands
- Potential financial impact on tenants
- Compatibility of the Master Site Plan with the mission at the Federal Center site—current and future tenant needs
- Impact on Lakewood and the surrounding community
- Traffic

Advantages or amenities on the Federal Center site:

- Parking (free, ample)
- Open space, buffer area
- Security
- Collocation with other federal agencies
- Individual building qualities
- Campus setting
- Proximity, short commutes
- Element of “mystery” (privacy, confidentiality of use)
- Daycare, wellness center

What should change?

- Improved infrastructure, roads, egress
- Enhance open space (uses, parks)
- Modernize buildings
- Improved quality of life
- More mixed uses, amenities and services
- Campus lighting

Thoughts on RTD/light rail transit station:

- Compromised security
- Need station-to-building shuttle/people movers
- Light rail transit is a plus
- Noise and traffic impacts
- Impacts of construction
- Good for public, visitors

Thoughts on the St. Anthony Central Hospital Project:

- Convenient for employees
- Impact of construction
- Flight for Life noise
- Security concerns
- Creates a “smaller, tighter” Federal Center area
- Brings opportunity
- Increased demand on infrastructure

What features should be included in the Master Site Plan?

- Infrastructure improvements (roads, utilities, communications)
- Retain parking; covered structures
- Sensitive to open space, wildlife, trails
- Planning foresight (support more employees, buildings)
- “Smart” buildings
- Services and amenities (restaurants, dry cleaners, health clubs)
- Shuttle service
- Modernized security planning
- Focus on business
- Centralized buildings and services (meeting space, extended stay hotel, IT)
- Campus atmosphere
- Recreational options (golf course, sports fields, lake/ponds)

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2.0 Scoping Meetings

2.1 Large-Group Meetings

In addition to public outreach described above, as part of the EIS process, two scoping meetings were conducted using an open-house format on the following dates:

- May 16, 2006, Denver Federal Center Tenants
- May 17, 2006, General Public

The Denver Federal Center Tenant open house was publicized through individually mailed/e-mailed invitations to approximately 200 federal tenant agency employees who had participated in previous meetings/open houses or who had requested inclusion on the database; Federal Center-wide distribution of a flyer promoting both the tenant open house and the community event; e-mail forwards from agency managers; inclusion in tenant agency e-newsletters; and posting on the Federal Center Site Plan Study web page. The Denver Federal Center Tenant open house meeting was attended by approximately 130 individuals.

The General Public open house was publicized through newspaper advertisements in the *Lakewood Sentinel* (May 4), *Rocky Mountain News* (May 6), and *The Denver Post* (May 7); postcard invitation mailings to approximately 2,200 recipients; city/county websites and e-newsletter distributions; homeowner association (HOA) newsletters and e-mail distributions; and public access TV community calendar. The General Public open house was attended by approximately 150 individuals.

Attendees submitted written comments in a variety of ways:

- Comment forms
- Flip-charts with prompting questions
- Existing site maps of the Denver Federal Center
- Laptop access was also available

A total of 46 completed comment forms were received as well as six site plan drawings/illustrated comments.

2.2 Small-Group Meetings

Small-group meetings were held using a presentation and break-out group discussion format on the following dates:

- May 18, 2006, Community Leaders Forum
- May 18, 2006, Federal Focus Group

Personal letters of invitation to the Community Leaders Forum were sent to approximately 100 individuals, with approximately 25 attending. The group represented a cross section of

city and county staff, elected officials, business leaders, Jefferson County schools, RTD, HOAs, community action groups, and the Denver Federal Center Roundtable Group.

Personal e-mails and invitation letters to the Federal Focus Group were sent to approximately 50 individuals representing each federal agency located on the Denver Federal Center site. Approximately 20 individuals attended.

Attendees offered ideas, suggestions, and questions in group question-and-answer sessions; facilitated break-out discussion group comment recordation; and written comment forms.

In addition to the open house sessions described above, a meeting was held with the Denver Federal Center Roundtable Group to allow them opportunity to comment on the alternatives on September 21, 2006.

2.3 Summary of Scoping Comments

Scoping comments that resulted from all above meetings included the following (organized by topic):

Open Space/Recreation

Preservation and enhancement of the open spaces at the Federal Center is a priority for both federal tenants and area residents. Creation of a pedestrian-friendly environment; walking paths; maintaining mature, native trees; and creation of functional/recreation-oriented spaces were among the leading comments, which included:

- Preserve open space
- Create a peaceful, quiet campus environment
- Retain ball fields and functional open space such as outdoor fitness activities
- Pocket parks and open spaces equate to “de-stress” opportunities for workers
- Open space along Alameda Avenue can help retain the area’s “rural” feel
- Bicycle paths
- Pedestrian movement
- Elevated walkways
- Increase the number of recreation fields
- Potential use of artificial turf
- Variety of open space
- Natural/historical interpretive center

Traffic/Access

Issues relating to access, traffic flow, and potential traffic congestion on the primary arterials surrounding the Federal Center are a concern of both federal tenants and residents.

Extension/creation of north-south and east-west streets is viewed as a positive, lightening the traffic load on the perimeter arterials. Respondents are interested in alignment of streets to create access to nearby Creighton Middle School as well as creation of additional entry points into the Federal Center. Some see increased traffic as the leading negative implication of the Federal Center redevelopment. Among the comments were the following:

- Realign main gate for direct access to Creighton Middle School
- Create north-south street parallel to Union Boulevard to ease congestion
- Kipling Street access should benefit both sides of the street
- Additional traffic will overload an already congested Alameda Avenue
- Create a pedestrian walkway at Routt intersection
- Concerns about traffic/noise impact on homes south of Alameda Avenue
- Traffic is only significant negative impact of development plan
- Increased retail uses will necessitate increased access
- Pre-existing infrastructure and road network is advantage
- Reconfiguration of main gate
- Connection from Kipling Street to Union Boulevard
- Connection across 6th Avenue
- Consider traffic connections as land is planned and developed

Security

Security is a leading concern for federal tenants, and many prefer retention of the existing fenced boundary to ensure safety of the federal workers and their agency missions. Building-specific security methods and “mini campuses” where agencies with high-level security requirements are among the options offered. There are differing opinions concerning whether the presence of the Federal Center creates a safer or more vulnerable environment for the surrounding community. Among the comments were the following:

- Maintain current boundaries to ensure security of federal employees
- Retail and public uses on the Federal Center could compromise security through increased public access
- How will introduction of new federal tenants impact security levels?
- Consolidate agencies that need protection and keep them fenced
- Move back the fence only to the necessary areas
- Security can be maintained and enhanced without making the Federal Center look like a prison
- Show delineated areas of security on the two plans
- Tenants have concerns with security
- Tighter federal area could benefit security
- Phased relocation of secure perimeter

Land Use/Disposition

Of the two preliminary concept plans presented for review, the “Quad” plan received significantly more support due primarily to (a) the appeal of the central courtyard and (b) the

use of open space in the southeast corner of the property versus residential uses depicted in the “Mall” concept. In many cases, respondents feel that a combination of the two concepts could result in a viable framework. “Big box” retail and other large floor-plate public uses are not favored; however, incorporation of amenities and services that support the day-to-day needs of both federal tenants and residents are seen as positive inclusions. Maintaining restricted building heights so as not to change the campus-style design of the center or to block mountain views is preferred. There is confusion concerning the design and intent of the city of Lakewood/GSA with regard to land disposal, rezoning, and annexation, particularly as these relate to the hospital and transit station. Among the comments were the following:

- Keep it mostly federal uses
- Make the campus attractive
- No big-box retail or stores near the Federal Center for security reasons
- Clarify federal space
- Move federal offices located elsewhere onto the campus grounds
- Do not give away land to Lakewood
- No commercial development on south border at Kipling Street
- Architectural standards for all development
- Maximize density in right places
- Mall concept is more urban; quad concept more suburban
- Concentration levels at Oak Street & Alameda Avenue fit with city’s cornerstone plan
- Partner with university or research park as compatible uses to scientific aspects of Federal Center
- Fear of disjointed/piecemeal development
- Allow for market flexibility
- Private builders may attract different tenants because of better amenities
- Final plan may reflect components from both alternatives
- R&D district is a positive of both alternatives
- Both alternatives provide a campus environment
- Retail seems high in both plans

Amenities

Federal employees in particular are vocal about the desirability of introducing the “right kind” of amenities as part of the master site plan. Centralized meeting/conference facilities with state-of-the-art technology that can accommodate large groups are noted with a high rate of frequency. Tenants note that they would be willing to pay for use of such facilities. Quality restaurants, coffee shops, and service-oriented retail, such as dry cleaners, are seen as important inclusions in the amenity mix. Specific comments included the following:

- Larger, more comprehensive fitness center
- Campus activities, entertainment such as lunch-hour concerts
- Hotels and extended-stay lodging
- Retail shops around transit station perimeter
- Performing arts venue
- State-of-the-art “mega” conference center with satellite capabilities for use by both federal tenant agencies and the general public
- Child care
- Eldercare/assisted-living facilities
- Bicycles for common use and weatherproof bike storage
- Replacement of facilities
- Questions about plans for removal of facilities
- Need to retain wareyards
- Some facilities could move to/from secured area

Federal Tenant Issues

In addition to compromised security, tenants are concerned about economic impact as a result of redevelopment of the Federal Center, i.e., lease rates that are no longer affordable. Tenants also have building- and agency-specific questions and concerns that override the long-term, visionary potential that the master site planning effort offers. Some tenants see the possibilities for consolidating agency locations now spread out across the Federal Center, congregating either by agency or by discipline, e.g., water, soils, geology, etc. Among the comments were the following:

- No “use tax” imposed on federal employees
- How do buildings such as FEMA and USGS Bldg. 810 that fall outside the campus core fit into the plan?

- Many current buildings are not fully functional without renovations; new construction may be easier than renovating
- Oak Street plan would support USGS retail needs
- Could consolidate agency facilities now in multiple locations throughout the campus
- Facilitate interaction among agencies, culture and communication
- Sensitive to cost/affordability to consolidate into optimum environment
- Why build more buildings when there is still space for rent?
- How will tenant rents be affected?

RTD/Transit Station

Most individuals are pleased at the prospect of the planned RTD intermodal transit station at the northwestern corner of the Federal Center. Many indicated that connecting the station with a shuttle around the perimeter of the campus would greatly enhance the transportation plan. Among the comments were the following:

- Provide shuttle bus service from RTD transit station
- RTD access to 6th Avenue is important
- Light rail will create traffic jams and smog
- Too many grade crossings at the light rail transit alignment
- Shuttle/vintage trolley cars are potential tourist attraction
- Rooney Valley (1700 homes) will impact the Cold Springs park-n-Ride
- Light rail may not be convenient for all workers, so may not alleviate traffic problems the way we hope

St. Anthony Central Hospital

While the proposed relocation of the hospital has been a source of controversy and confusion, relatively few comments were received relating to it:

- Why build a hospital here? This is a secure area and will compromise security
- Hospital is needed by foothills residents
- Concern about helicopter flight paths; impact on air quality for labs

Noise

Traffic noise from increased travel to and through the Federal Center is a concern as are emergency vehicles serving the hospital:

- Soundproof noise from 6th Avenue
- Extra noise from traffic created by this development should be taken into consideration so that it does not impact neighborhoods to the south
- Noise curfew for emergency vehicles?

Aesthetics

Those who commented on the general appeal and design of the campus environment focus on a well-maintained environment with opportunities to enhance visual attractiveness:

- Boring grey buildings
- No billboards or advertising signs
- Curb appeal with mix of buildings and nature
- Don't obstruct view of skyline and mountains
- Clean and maintained
- Add sidewalks where they are currently missing

Wildlife

Most respondents who commented on the issue of the wildlife at the Federal Center support maintenance of natural habitats:

- Manage prairie dogs
- Preserve wildlife areas
- Maintain animal habitat
- Do not take away natural wildlife habitat and replace with concrete
- Maintain the current boundaries of the fence because it protects the wildlife

Parking

Tenants want improved, close-in, free parking and generally like the idea of parking structures so long as they are not too high. Among the comments were the following:

- Parking needs to be a high priority
- Need parking accommodations for GSA vehicles that protects them from animal damage (chewed wires)
- Ample parking to accommodate tenants
- Do not want to pay for parking

Residential

While high-density residential development is not a popular concept with the possible exception of transit-oriented-development near the RTD stop. Among the comments were the following:

- Non-residential

- No residential areas on Federal Center land
- Housing for St. Anthony Central Hospital personnel
- Mall concept incorporates residential that area residents will likely oppose

Environmental Issue

There are concerns about environmental cleanup activities disturbing pollutants in the soil and spreading them into the air, particularly among tenants whose agency activities include air quality monitoring. Among the comments were the following:

- Do not disturb the surface/subsurface of the buried landfill west of Bldg. 810
- Why remediate ground water to commercialize the Federal Center but not clean up for housed federal employees?
- Low pollution uses
- Quiet neighbors
- Impact of construction, helicopter flight paths on air quality for labs
- Address areas with hazardous waste

Community Impact

Little comment was received in the general topic area of community impact. There is some concern among residents that neighborhoods south of Alameda Avenue will be most affected by construction and long-term increases in traffic. Among the comments were the following:

- City of Lakewood will cut down all trees lining Union Boulevard and rip out the tree lawns by homes to widen between Alameda Avenue and Mississippi
- Neighborhoods will sacrifice
- Biggest impact will be on neighbors south of Alameda Avenue

Identity/History

The history and prominence of the Federal Center is generally acknowledged; however, comments were received that indicate a desire to let the “new” Federal Center reflect a more contemporary posture and its location in Lakewood vs. Denver. Among the comments were the following:

- Consider rebranding to “Lakewood Federal Center”
- Retain “federal” in name, historic context
- Branding and marketing of the Federal Center in context of densification of downtown Lakewood and Colfax center
- Incorporate additional cultural aspects to maintain history of campus and area

Sustainability

Few comments relative to creating a “green” or sustainable development/building design were received:

- Energy efficient construction
- Alternative heating and cooling

Quad Alternative

- Density of development
- Open space plentiful and well located
- Retail behind the Post Office well located
- Secured areas appropriate
- Connects to Alameda Avenue and 6th Avenue
- Hotel and conference center benefit tenants
- The mixed use core is centrally located
- Office center use suitable in NE corner
- Neighborhood retail and potential for housing
- Grid layout
- Show residential more clearly on Quad graphic
- RTD plans not complete
- No direct connection between Union Boulevard and Kipling Street
- Leave some natural open space at SE corner
- Doesn't have a recreation center

Mall Alternative

- Preserves existing street grid
- North Avenue/7th Street connection
- Recreation center, sports fields and courts
- Approve of residential area in SE corner
- Mall and pocket parks
- Traffic circle on North Avenue
- Open space restricted more to perimeter
- Mixed uses should be more interior
- Leave more open space in SE corner

Other

- Keep everyone informed and up to date
- May be difficult to obtain federal funding for future projects

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