



RTD RAIL TRAIL

Community Working Group Meeting #1



AGENDA

1. **Introductions (25 Min)**
2. **CWVG Purpose and Charge (10 Min)**
3. **Project Review and Discussion (20 Min)**
4. **Public Involvement Plan and Review (15 Min)**
5. **Corridor Goals and Evaluation Criteria (30 Min)**
6. **Next Steps (5 Min)**

INTRODUCTIONS

Name

Organization or Affiliation

**Please tell us one thing you like about the corridor or
one way in which you use the corridor**

CWG PURPOSE & CHARGE

- o Identify critical issues and core community values that the Plan must address;
- o Assist with communicating activities of the project in the community;
- o Support Study activity promotion and attendance; and
- o Direct community questions to the Project Team for answers and assistance.

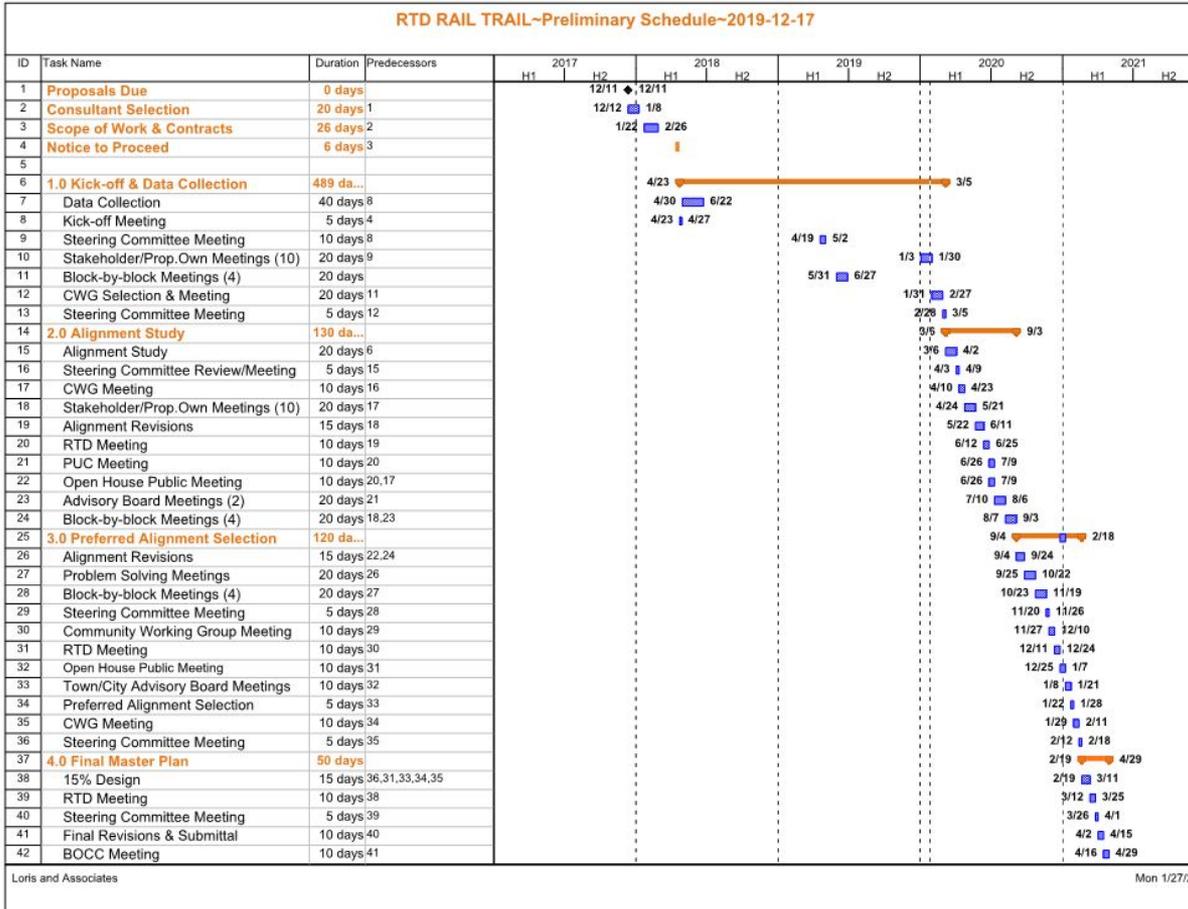
CWG COMMITMENT

- o Attend approximately 4 2-hour CWG meetings or send alternate
- o Review materials
- o Think creatively
- o Be constructive and problem-solving

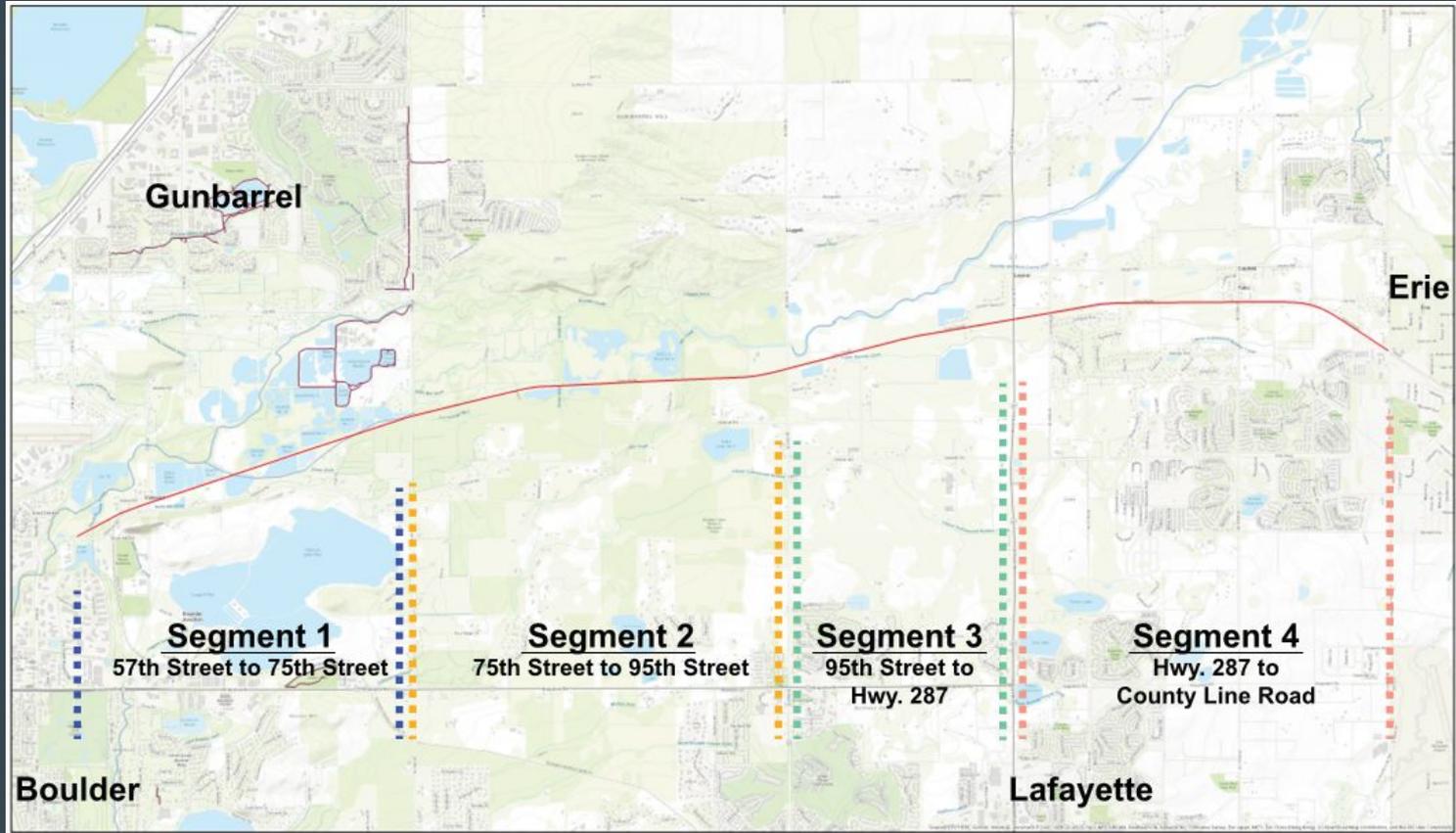
PROJECT REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- o **High-level objectives and goals for the RTD Rail Trail Master Plan**
- o **Timeline**
- o **Environmental Issue Update**

PROJECT REVIEW AND DISCUSSION - SCHEDULE



PROJECT REVIEW AND DISCUSSION- PROJECT AREA



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN AND REVIEW

- o **Public involvement activities to-date**
- o **Summary of input received to-date**
- o **Upcoming public involvement activities**

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW



Neighborhood Workshops include property owners within 1/4 of a mile of the potential trail

Community Working Group (CWG) meetings include CWG members selected following an application process in Summer 2019

Steering Committee Meetings include RTD, Boulder County Parks & Open Space, City of Boulder Open Space and Mountain Parks, City of Boulder Transportation, Boulder County Transportation, and City of Erie

Policy Decision-Making Meetings include Regional Transportation District (RTD), Public Utilities Commission (PUC), Advisory Board Meetings, and the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC)

Engage online at <https://boco.org/RTDTrail>

CORRIDOR GOALS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA

- o **Broad categories listed around the room**
- o **Take time to brainstorm corridor goals based on categories**
- o **One idea per sticky note**
- o **Place ideas on categories around the room**

NEXT STEPS

- o **Feedback will help develop Evaluation Criteria, to be presented at next meeting**
- o **Next CWG Meeting: Late Spring 2020**
- o **Public Meeting: Mid-Summer 2020**



CONTACT US

Tonya Luebbert, Regional Trails Planner
tluebbert@bouldercounty.org

Visit the Website: RTDRailTrail.com



CDR ASSOCIATES
COLLABORATIVE DECISION RESOURCES



RTD RAIL TRAIL

COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP SUMMARY

Thursday, January 30, 2020 | 4:00-6:00PM MT

Meeting Purpose:

- Form Community Working Group
- Provide Master Plan Process Status Update
- Inform CWG of Environmental Issue Update
- Inform CWG on Current Stakeholder Input and Engagement Plan
- Obtain input from CWG on Approach To-Date

COMMUNITY WORKING GROUP (CWG) MEETING 1

TIME	AGENDA ITEM
25 MINUTES	Welcome and Agenda Review
10 MINUTES	CWG Purpose and Charge
20 MINUTES	Project Review and Discussion
15 MINUTES	Public Involvement Plan and Review
30 MINUTES	Activity: Corridor Goals and Evaluation Criteria
5 MINUTES	Wrap Up & Next Steps

ATTENDEES

Will Chapman
Earl Cornelius
Jim Pendleton
Debi Garrity
Roy Burger
David Butler
Gary McClelland
Dave Tazik
Ron Blackwelder

Willie Tiefel
Richard Mansbach
Ruth Mansbach
Tim Payne (participated by phone)
Tonya Luebbert, Boulder County
Anthony Pratt, Otak
Aliina Fowler, ERO Resources
Jeffrey Range, CDR Associates
Melissa Rary, CDR Associates



WELCOME AND AGENDA REVIEW

Tonya Luebbert, Boulder County, welcomed the CWG and set the stage for the meeting. Jeffrey Range, CDR Associates, facilitated group introductions where members were asked to share *one thing they like about the corridor or one way in which they use the corridor*. Answers included:

- This corridor could be used to provide a safe commuter route from Erie to Boulder
- Getting bikers off the road, particularly at dangerous intersections like 287/Isabelle and 61st/Valmont, is important for biker and driver safety
- Connectivity to other City and County projects, including the “Bridge to Nowhere” and the future Airport to Andrus trail segment
- Erie and Boulder would benefit from increased connectivity
- Recreation opportunities - including cycling, walking, running
- Desire to have a trail but one that doesn’t impose on the view of the mountains (e.g. overpasses for crossing major intersections)
- Opportunity to create a more trail loops

CWG PURPOSE AND CHARGE

Jeffrey Range introduced the purpose and charge of the CWG:

- Identify critical issues and core community values that the trail master plan must address;
- Assist with communicating activities of the project in the community;
- Support Study activity promotion and attendance; and
- Direct community questions to the Project Team for answers and assistance.

The CWG was asked to commit to the following:

- Attend approximately 4 2-hour CWG meetings or send alternate
- Review materials
- Think creatively
- Be constructive and problem-solving

Question: When meetings were held last year, a number of public meetings were proposed. Have those happened yet?

Answer: No. The process needed to focus on working on key issues with property owners, prior to engaging the public.

Question: Does this project have an online presence we can point the community to?

Answer: Yes, visit RTDRailTrail.com. We are in the process of updating the website.

PROJECT REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

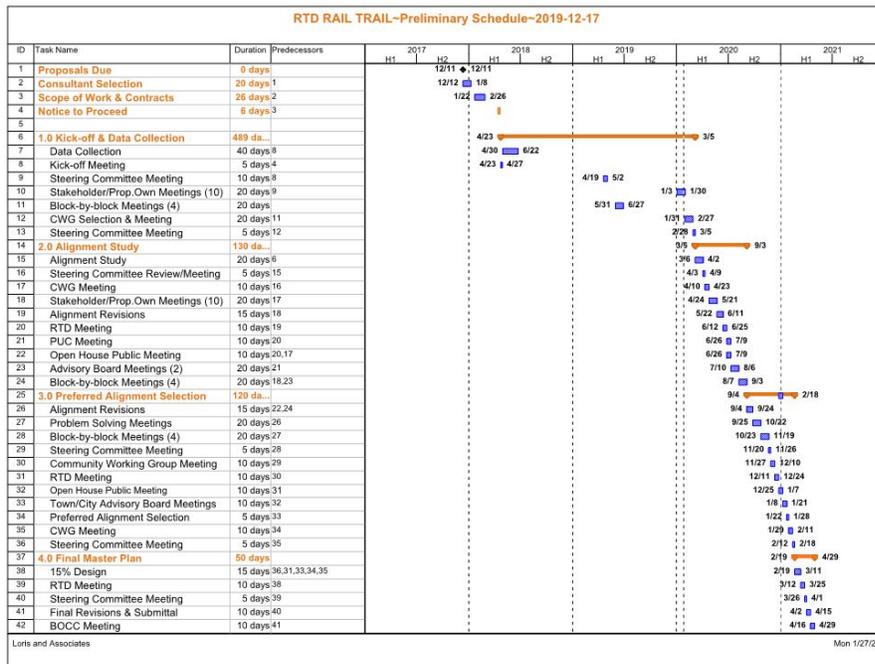
Anthony Pratt, Otak, reviewed the project purpose with the CWG. The goal of the project is to explore an alignment through the RTD Rail corridor between Boulder and Erie. Boulder County (the County) is working with RTD on this project, and has agreed to exploring trail options as long as the trail does not

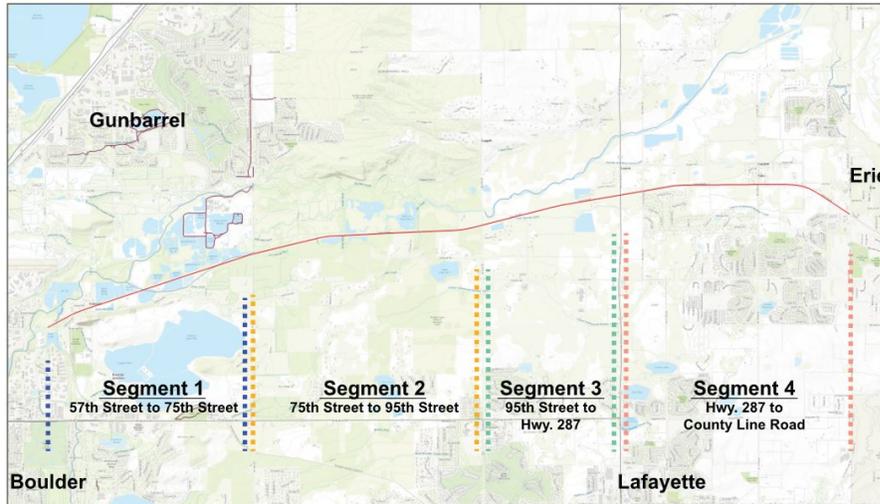


preclude a rail option in the future. There are currently no plans for RTD to use the corridor for rail, but this trail study seeks to avoid using or crossing rails where possible (unless a major issue arises, including floodplains or wetlands). Given these considerations, this project is considered “Rails with Trails,” not “Rails to Trails.”

This project is a study, and it will not include construction. It is important for stakeholders to develop a plan for accomplishing a trail prior to next steps. The study is at the beginning of the process, and has not yet considered specifics such as overpass/underpass crossings, alignment on the north or south side of the tracks, etc.

The goal of the CWG meeting is to discuss findings from Neighborhood Workshops (aka Block by Block) meetings and develop goals for the team to consider when evaluating alignment options. The next phase of the study will be development of alignment options and presentation and feedback from stakeholders. Anthony presented an updated timeline and a map of the project area.





Question: What is the end date of the study project?

Answer: The goal is to finalize the study and findings in May 2021.

Question: Is there a plan or timeline for construction?

Answer: No, there is no plan for construction at this point. The preferred alignment option will propose a phasing plan for construction.

Question: What happened to the funding we were told exists for the corridor?

Answer: There is funding from a County-wide Transportation Sales Tax Ballot Issue that was passed in 2001 and renewed in 2007. A portion of the tax is allocated to the Boulder County Regional Trails Program. A prioritization process was completed and adopted and the RTD Rail Trail (then UP Rail Trail) was on a priority list of ten trails/trail segments. The funds go towards planning, designing, constructing, and maintaining multiple regional trails. The sales tax that funds the regional trails program has provided enough funding for a study but is likely not adequate for construction of the full corridor.

Aliina Fowler, ERO Resources, provided a high-level review of environmental issues and considerations along the corridor. Considerations include wetlands, raptor nests, and other resources given dense vegetation and proximity to Boulder Creek.

Question: How wide is the buffer zone for the corridor?

Answer: Half a mile from the center. In total, a mile across.

Question: Will there be places to stop along the Creek?

Answer: The Creek is not in the ROW. At this time, the alignment has to stay within or adjacent to the RTD Rail ROW. In some places it may be necessary to look beyond the ROW, but this likely won't be close enough to the Creek for recreation.



Question: What are other property owners' concerns? Is there a way to ensure land owners like OSMP are on board?

Answer: There are considerations when crossing into Open Space property, habitat conservation areas, and other considerations. OSMP is participating in the study; they are part of the Steering Committee and are working to provide the County with data and information needed in relation to their properties.

Question: Is "Rails to Trails" involved in helping? They could provide funding.

Answer: At this point we have not engaged external funders but will look into this opportunity.

ACTION: Look into funding sources (Rails to Trails, GOCO, etc.). Having a plan in place first is helpful when seeking funding.

Question: Is there a single point of resistance to the trail? Or is there general support for the trail?

Answer: To date, most of the feedback has been positive in support of the trail or neutral questions. We will likely hear resistance at some point, so it is important for the process to be transparent and include all voices.

Question: Would human traffic have to be closed in consideration of raptor nests? This could cause issues for property owners.

Answer: Seasonal closures are in place for places like Sawmill Ponds. Alternatives may have to be considered with low-stress solutions to look at options around raptor areas.

Question: Will there be 404 permitting needed?

Answer: 404 permitting might be needed, but the type of permitting will depend on the alignment. Whether a nation-wide permit or individual permit will be needed remains to be seen.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PLAN AND REVIEW

Jeffrey Range reviewed public engagement to-date, which included four Neighborhood Workshops (aka Block by Block Meetings) along the corridor and online (email and comment form) engagement. Key themes include:

- Support for trail in general
- Support for paving trail
- Support for trail as commuting facility
- Support for train in corridor
- Support for trail for cyclists
- Support for bike/ped safety
- Support for horses on trail
- Neutral Questions on: Timing, Properties, 287 crossing

Question: Is there a plan to fence off trail from bordering properties?



Answer: The project team recognizes the goal around safety. Given precedent in other projects, it is possible there will be fencing for bordering properties. The purpose of this planning process is to work with adjacent properties to determine issues and needs, such as fencing.

Question: Are we also focusing on alignment, or can we discuss things beyond alignment such as use?

Answer: This study is focused on alignment, but things such as trail use will be considered when establishing evaluation criteria and corridor goals.

Question: What is the planned surface of the trail?

Answer: Because of funding through the Regional Trails Program, the trail is planned to be a multi-use soft surface trail. Concrete might be prevented in this corridor on certain sections, and concrete is more expensive.

The CWG expressed the need for the trail to be well maintained year-round.

The CWG expressed interest in finding a way to collaborate with the Steering Committee. In the current structure, the CWG relies on the project team to convey the CWG's interests and ideas, and it might be useful to have in-person conversations with the Steering Committee. The CWG is interested in transparency around decision-making. Options might include having one representative at Steering Committee meetings or having one Steering Committee member attend CWG meetings.

ACTION: Project team to explore options for connecting CWG and Steering Committee throughout the process and present options to the CWG at the next meeting.

There is an opportunity to market the trail as something greater than a bike trail. Others along the corridor might get different things out of the project, such as recreational opportunities, increased land value, safety, etc. The CWG would like to consider different values and uses of the trail.

Other stakeholders might include Bicycle Colorado, Trust of Public Lands, and other policymakers at the state and county levels.

ACTION: CWG to send Tonya an email if they would not like their information shared. Project team to send around email list of CWG members.

Question: Is RTD part of the conversation?

Answer: Yes, RTD is a member of the Steering Committee and the project team has met with RTD's staff involved with the corridor.

CORRIDOR GOALS AND EVALUATION CRITERIA



Melissa Rary, CDR Associates, introduced an exercise to capture the CWG goals for the project. The goals developed by the CWG will be used to develop evaluation criteria for alignment options. Key themes from the exercise include:

Trail

- Four-season trail with maintenance in the winter months
- Connect Boulder-Erie Trail Systems
- Scenic overlooks to motivate people to use the trail beyond commuting
- Signage to motivate trail use by identifying historical components, birds, environmental and cultural information, mileage, wayfinding
- Uses: horses (with restricted access); walking; hiking; birders

Relationships

- Build community with neighbors and increase the ability of neighbors to engage with one another
- Use RTD routes nearby to market the corridor and elevate perception of trail as a destination

Environmental

- Ensure trail increases ability to enjoy nature
- Design trail in a way that keeps people on the trail and minimizes social trails
- Promote biological diversity on the trail

Phasing

- ASAP
- 61st/Valmont
- 287
- Involve Rail to Trails
- Consider unique opportunities for funding and marketing
- Plan with Erie Town Center (Erie Parkway) in mind

Adjacent Properties

- Avoid conflicts with adjacent property owners
- Invite land owners by section to CWG meetings
- Research other projects to determine crime/value impact on adjacent properties
- Reduce impact to wildlife
- Work with adjacent property owners to have stands on the trail for things they might grow
- Create way to continue hunting on adjacent properties

Other

- Coordinate CWG with SC



- Promote trail through diverse interests
- Safety of all users (of trail users, access of emergency personnel, etc.)
- Restrooms and other amenities in corridor

ACTION: Project team to consider engaging more diverse groups on CWG.

ACTION: Project team to begin to develop evaluation criteria for alignment options.

NEXT STEPS

Anthony Pratt discussed next steps for the project and CWG. The next CWG meeting will be in late Spring, with the next public meeting in mid-Summer.

ACTION: Project team to send meeting follow-up including PPT Slides, Notes, and Contact List.

Question: Can CWG visit the corridor?

Answer: The corridor is dense and this may be difficult. We would need to get permission from the landowner.

Question: Is there a drone video of the corridor?

Answer: No. This is something we could consider.

