

## **Regional Transportation District (RTD)**

### **Gold Line Federal Station Site Reevaluation**

June 8, 2010

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The Gold Line project received a Record of Decision (ROD) from the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) on November 2, 2009. The information for this document is based on the Gold Line Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), released in July of 2008 and August of 2009 respectively, and the ROD.

The purpose of this report is to document consistency of the proposed Federal station relocation with the probable impacts and mitigation measures included in the Gold Line FEIS and ROD.

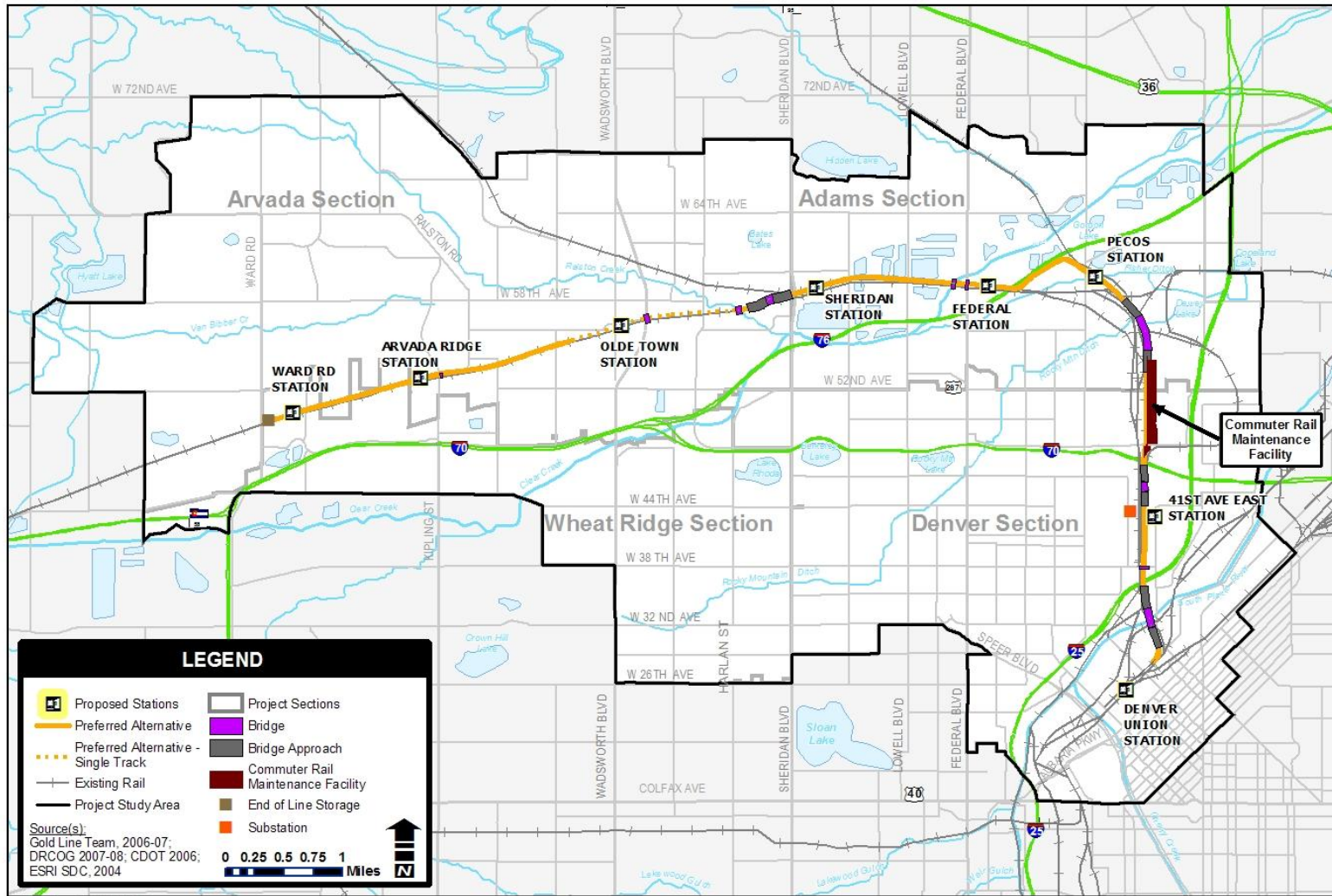
The Preferred Alternative for the project is commuter rail from Denver Union Station (DUS) to Ward Road (sharing the alignment with other commuter rail corridors going to/from the Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility and with Northwest Rail to Pecos).

The Preferred Alternative includes 7 stations located at:

- 41<sup>st</sup> and Fox
- Pecos
- Federal
- Sheridan
- Olde Town
- Arvada Ridge and
- Ward Road

Figure 1 below displays the Gold Line Preferred Alternative.

**FIGURE 1: GOLD LINE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE**



### ***Stations Alternatives Analysis Process during the EIS***

During the EIS process, a number of specific station sites were considered in the seven general station area locations noted above. The Alternatives Analysis (AA) was conducted under the umbrella of NEPA. The EIS AA included a screening of station sites that integrated neighborhood and local government meetings and workshops and environmental analysis, to identify the specific preferred site at each location.

During the EIS AA two sites were considered for the Federal station (Federal East and Federal West) as shown in Figure 2 in the “Detailed Project Description” section below. The main consideration for the selection of the site on the east was to preserve the more developable land to the west of Federal. At the time of the selection of the site on the east, the developer interested in the site on the west did not have financing in place and therefore had not secured the property.

### ***Federal Station Comments on the DEIS***

There were 2 public comments on the DEIS referencing the Federal station site.

One comment was from the Urban Drainage Flood Control District (UDFCD) discussing concerns about the safety of those parking at the station if the station on the east was located in a floodplain (old mapping showed that it was within the 100 year floodplain, newer mapping revealed that it was not).

The other comment was from a representative of a land owner just to the east of Federal (who owns 2 parcels in this location) noting that they had questions about the environmental remediation of the site.

This commenter also expressed that they may have an interest in discussing our station expansion to the west (on their property) instead of to the east as assumed in the EIS (for 2030).

Note: There are 2 partial impacts to the properties, discussed by the commenter above, within the Federal east station site. These properties include a registered Underground Storage Tank (UST) site.

### ***EIS Consistency with Land Use Planning***

Adams County had not adopted their station area Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Plan for the Federal station during the EIS process. They were developing their TOD plan and had been considering sites on both the east and west of Federal.

In selecting the Federal east station site (see Figure 3 under the “Detailed Project Description” section below), the EIS was generally consistent with Adams County land use planning at that time.

### ***Most Recent Land Use Planning in the Federal Station Area***

A developer has now purchased the property to the west of Federal and has the desire to integrate the Gold Line Federal station into their plans. This developer (along with Adams County) had several local community meetings to discuss their development plans. The results of the public meetings were that the community is generally supportive of those plans. The station area plan presented to the public, and eventually adopted by Adams County can be found in Figure 4 in the “Detailed Project Description” section below.

This developer has since taken the Federal west station area design to 30% to be consistent with the engineering for the Gold Line FEIS (see Figure 5 in the “Detailed Project Description” section below).

Adams County adopted the developers TOD plan as part of an amendment to their Comprehensive Plan in 2009.

And finally, two proposers who are competing to design/build/operate/maintain this project both included moving the Federal station to the site on the west in their proposals.

The developer, community, Adams County and the contractors bidding on the Gold Line project all feel that there are benefits to the Federal west site. The purpose of this document is to reevaluate that alternative.

The RTD and FTA may also benefit from the Federal west site in the following ways:

- Cost savings; the developer will accommodate some of the costs on the west site for the project. RTD is currently negotiating an agreement.
- Elimination of the hazardous materials remediation that would be needed on the east site (and associated additional cost savings).
- Consistency with Adams County adopted Comprehensive Plan amendment and,
- Decrease in environmental impacts of the project as the west site has fewer environmental impacts than the site to the east.

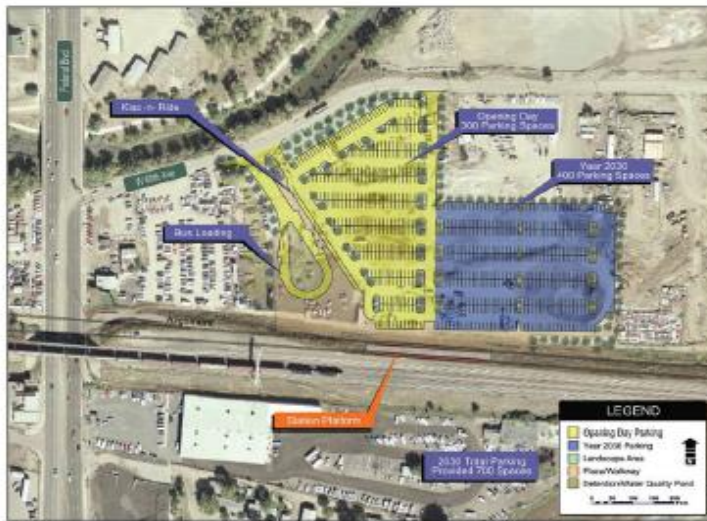
## DETAILED PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Federal station is the third station northwest of DUS of the seven stations along the Gold Line. The Federal station is located in Adams County.

Figure 2 below shows the “Federal East” and “Federal West” station sites that were considered during the EIS AA process (as discussed in the “Introduction” section above). The AA was conducted during/within the NEPA process.

**FIGURE 2: FEDERAL EAST AND WEST SITE LOCATIONS DURING THE EIS ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS PROCESS**

**FIGURE 4.3-5: FEDERAL EAST STATION (2015 AND 2030, ALL SURFACE PARKING)**

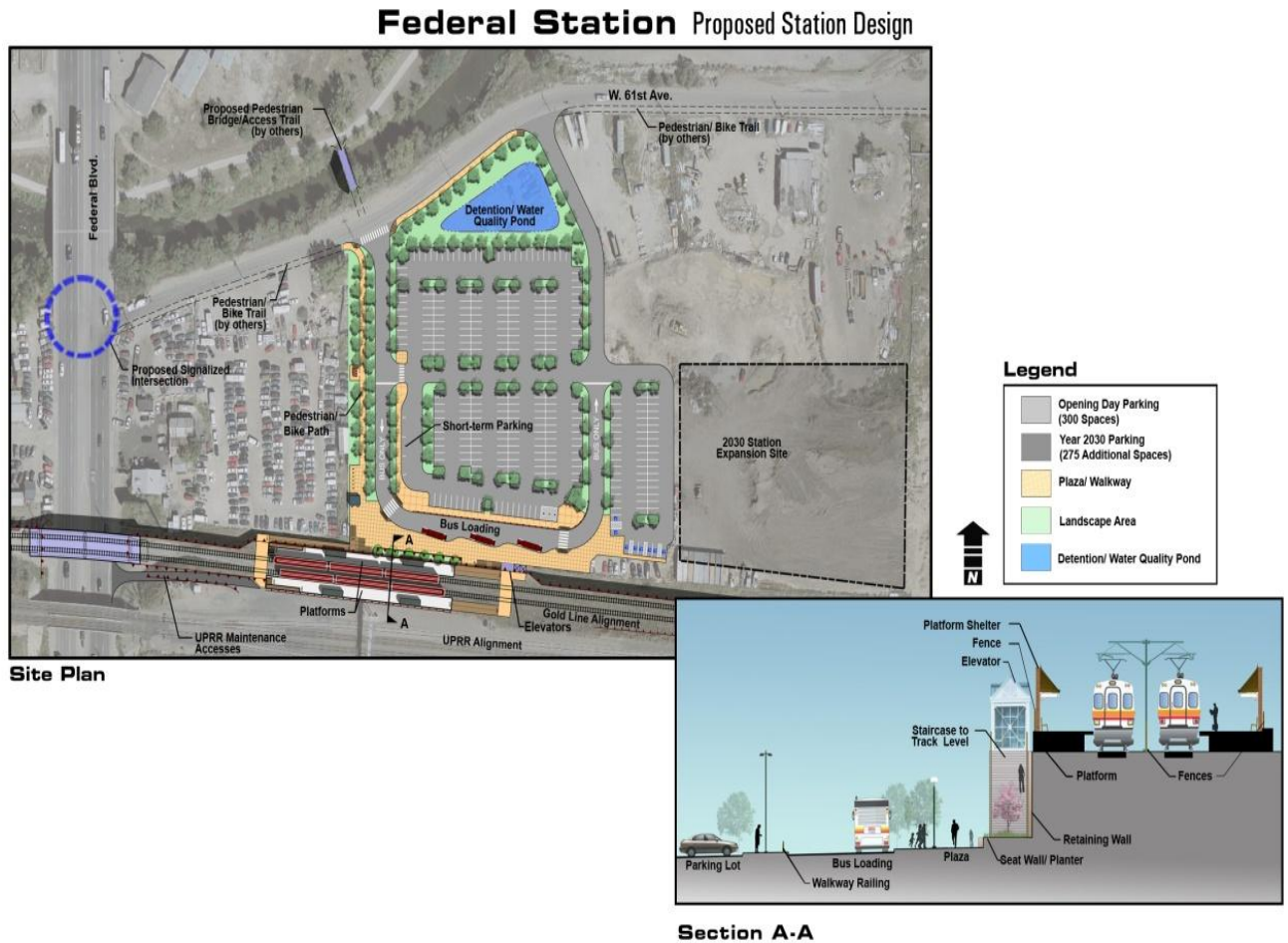


**FIGURE 4.3-6: FEDERAL WEST STATION (2015 AND 2030, ALL SURFACE PARKING)**



During the Final EIS (FEIS) it was determined that the Federal east site was preferable as it preserved developable land on the west for Adams County TOD planning (the plan was not adopted at that time). This site is shown in Figure 3 below.

**FIGURE 3: FEDERAL EAST SITE DURING THE FEIS**

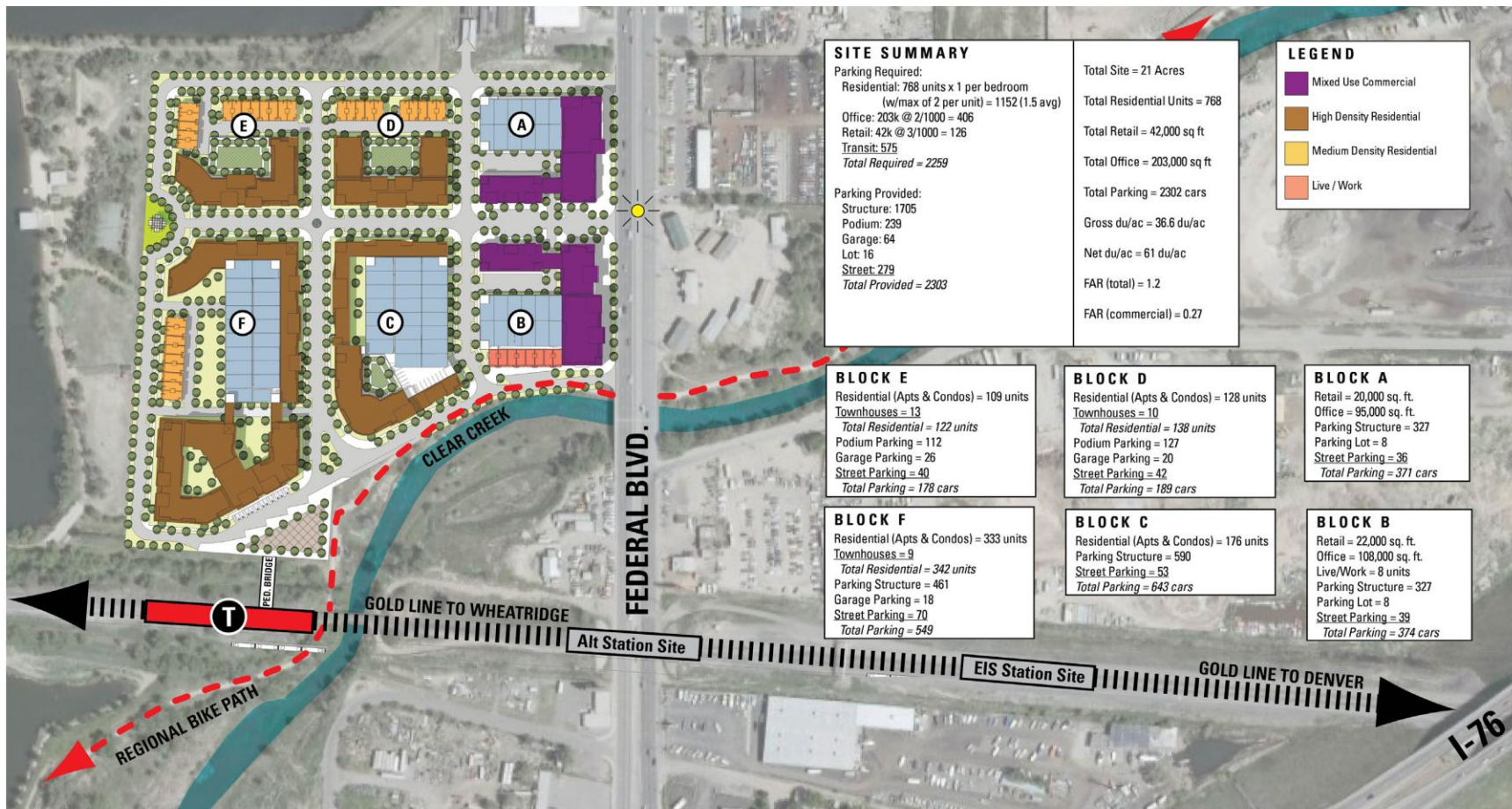


A developer purchased the property west of the Federal station in 2009. This developer then approached Adams County and RTD with the concept of moving the station to the west to integrate with their TOD plans. Adams County and the developer held neighborhood/community meetings and received a favorable response to the site.

Adams County adopted their TOD plan as an amendment to their Comprehensive Plan on June 22, 2009.

This amendment included the Vision Plan as presented by the developer/land owner of Federal west to the public and as shown in Figure 4 below.

**FIGURE 4: ADAMS COUNTY/DEVELOPERS TOD VISION PLAN FOR FEDERAL**



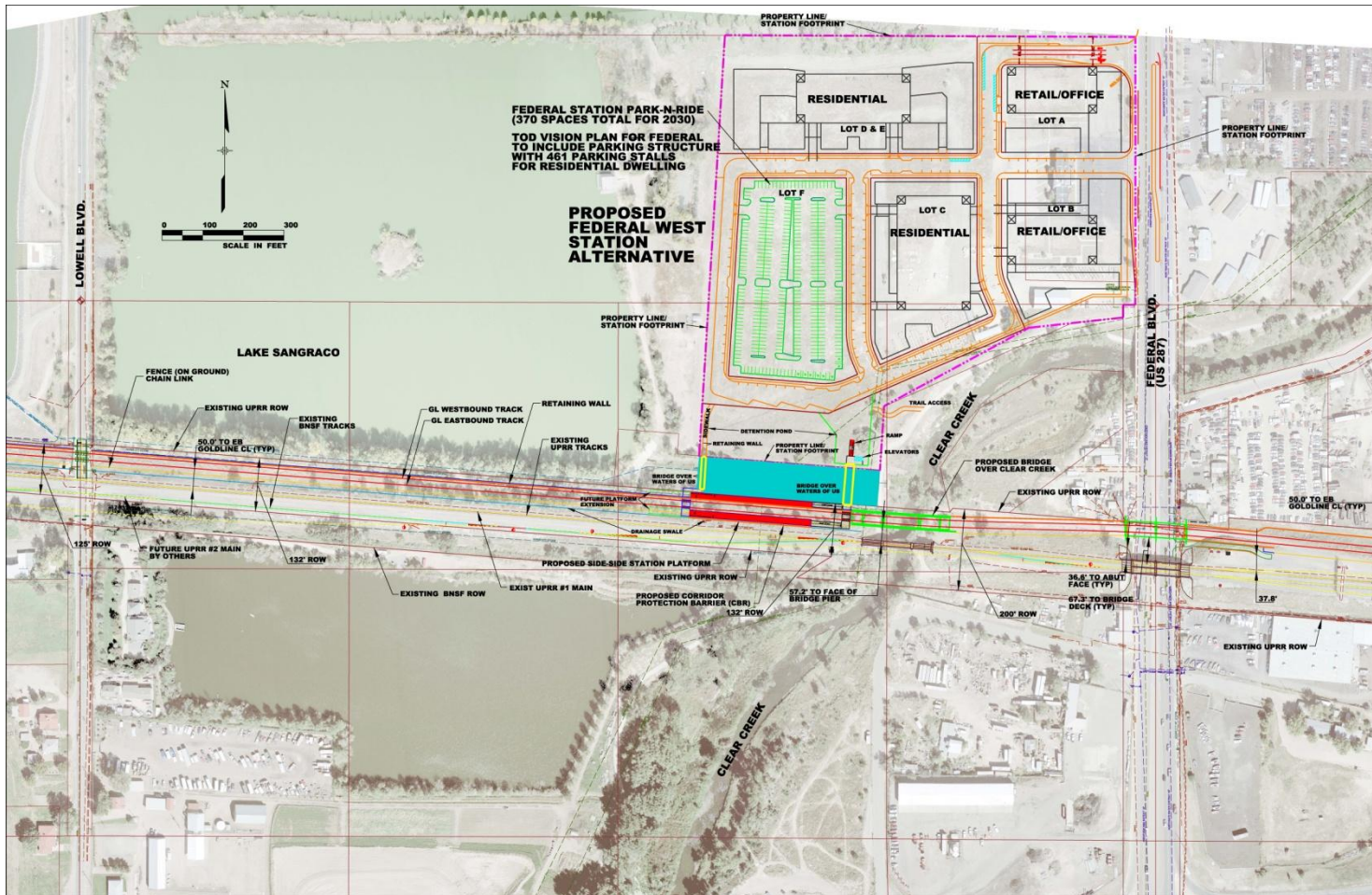
RTD discussed with the developer that a number of conditions had to be met to consider a site change for the Federal station including:

- The developer would need to engineer the station area to 30% to be consistent with the FEIS level of engineering.
- This engineering must show avoidance/minimization of any environmental impacts (particularly wetlands and the open waters at Clear Creek).
- The engineering must assume at least the same number of parking spaces for the Federal station as assumed in the EIS and ROD. Assuming 15 minute peak headways this is 280 parking spaces by opening day with an additional 90 parking spaces added by 2030 for a total of 370 spaces.
- The developer must reserve spaces for transit patrons.
- Moving the station site was contingent on FTA approvals.

The developer proceeded to engineer the Federal west site to 30% design. The station layout that was designed accommodates the 370 parking spaces required for the Gold Line project in 2030.

The station layout as a result of that engineering can be found in Figure 5 below.

**FIGURE 5: 30% ENGINEERING LAYOUT FOR THE FEDERAL WEST STATION**



## **METROPOLITAN PLANNING, AIR QUALITY CONFORMITY and CO HOT SPOT ANALYSIS**

The proposed project is included in the 2030 and 2035 Regional Transportation Plans. The Gold Line FEIS noted that the project would not cause any regional air quality impacts for criteria pollutants and would result in a net decrease over the No Action Alternative.

Hot spot analyses completed at station areas for the EIS also showed no impacts. Since the parking/traffic would be essentially the same with the Federal east and Federal west sites, there would be no difference in the hot spot analysis for either site.

### **LAND USE and ZONING**

The Federal west station site would be consistent with the Adams County Comprehensive Plan, with future land use, and the current zoning on the site. The Adams County Commissioner's have indicated support for the Federal west station site and sent a letter to FTA in June, 2010 noting this.

Currently the parcel on the site is zoned C-4 which is a commercial district. The purpose of a C-4 district is "to serve as a general retail, and service district, to provide services and products for both the general and traveling public in a regional context". Commercial parking lots are a permitted principal use in a C-4 district.

Additionally Adams County is in the process of considering the rezoning of the site to encourage mixed-use development which would provide additional flexibility on the site (and a parking use would also be a permitted use).

Adams County is also working with the developer such that they can obtain the needed entitlements on the site. It is estimated that this process will take six months.

### **TRAFFIC IMPACTS**

Traffic mitigation in the FEIS and ROD for the Federal east site included adding separate right and left turn lanes at 60<sup>th</sup> Avenue (the main road accessing the station from Federal) in 2015 and signalization of that intersection by 2030.

The traffic impacts would be the same for the Federal west site since the volume of traffic for the project remains the same. The Federal west site would require the same mitigation as the Federal east site.

## HISTORIC RESOURCES

The Section 106 consultation for the Gold Line EIS included the area of the Federal west station option within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) (see Figure 6 below). The red line indicates the APE for the Gold Line EIS.

**FIGURE 6: APE FOR THE GOLD LINE EIS**



There were no listed or eligible properties within the APE in the Federal west station location and therefore no historic properties are affected.

## **NOISE**

Noise analysis completed for the FEIS indicated that there are no noise impacts in the area of the Federal station.

There is one moderate impact to a residence near Lowell Boulevard (1,948 feet west of the Federal west station site). The closest sensitive receptors to the Federal west site would be neighborhoods to the north. These neighborhoods are 960 feet to the north from the middle of the site (well outside of the FTA screening distances for rail rapid transit, rail rapid transit stations and parking facilities).

## **VIBRATION**

The location of the tracks for the Federal east and Federal west sites would be the same.

The FEIS analysis resulted in no vibration impacts for the Preferred Alternative.

## **ACQUISITIONS and RELOCATIONS**

Implementation of the Federal east site in the FEIS would require 1 full and 2 partial acquisitions and 4 business relocations.

Implementation of the Federal west site would not require any new acquisitions or relocations.

## **HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

A Phase I Site Assessment was completed for the Gold Line EIS. There were 2 sites within the footprint of the Federal east station site; a landfill within the footprint of the station (the full acquisition) and a registered UST site at 5901 North Federal (the partial acquisitions noted above and in the “Federal Station Comments on the DEIS” section of this document). The Federal east site is within a methane overlay district; the Federal west site is not.

No sites were found within the Federal west footprint.

## **COMMUNITY DISRUPTION and ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE**

There are no community facilities within the areas surrounding the station.

There are fewer than 20% low income households and 45% minority households within ½ mile of the station. Access to transit would be enhanced for these communities and would be a benefit.

Therefore, there are no environmental justice impacts for the Federal west station location.

### **PUBLIC PARKLAND and RECREATION AREAS**

The Clear Creek Trail runs along the Clear Creek southeast of the Federal west site and crosses the Gold Line alignment just south of the Federal west station. There would be a need for temporary trail relocation during construction of the structure over Clear Creek. Concurrence was obtained during the EIS process from Adam's County for the temporary detour during construction.

This trail relocation would need to occur with both the Federal east and Federal west station site locations.

### **WETLANDS and WATERS OF THE U.S.**

Wetlands and Waters of the U.S. in the station area are shown on Figure 7 below.

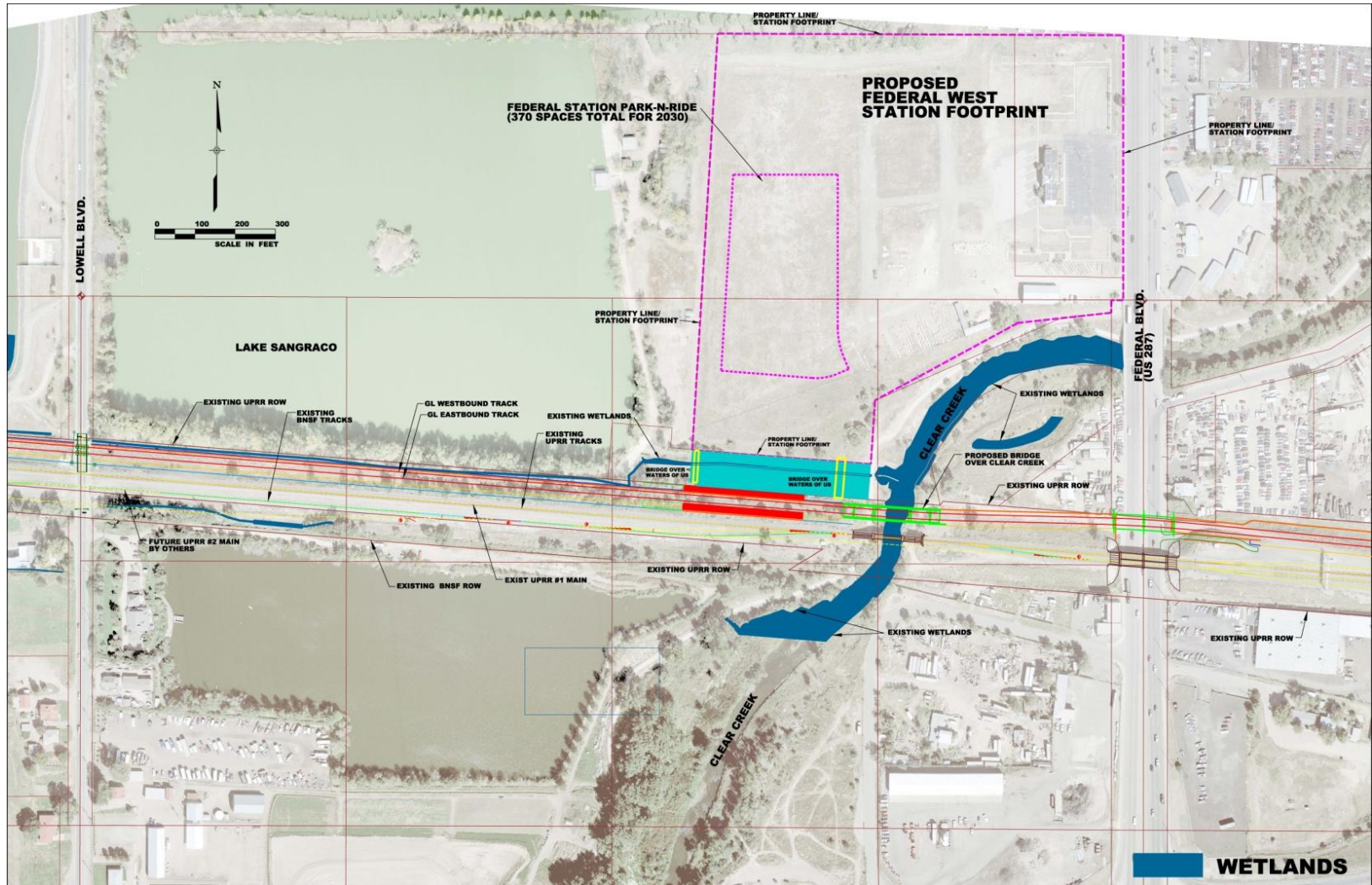
There will be a pedestrian structure from the station platform to the parking area such that any potential impacts to open waters or wetlands will be avoided.

There would be no additional wetland impacts by relocation of the station from the east to the west site (impacts to .02 acres of jurisdictional wetlands in this area are caused by the structure over the creek and not the station area) therefore there will be no requirement to amend the existing 404 Nationwide Permit for the project.

### **FLOODPLAINS**

The Federal west station site is not within the 100 year floodplain (see Figure 8 below).

FIGURE 7: JURISDICTIONAL WETLANDS AND WATERS OF THE U.S. IN THE STATION AREA





## **WATER QUALITY**

The numbers of parking spaces needed for the project are the same for both the Federal east and Federal west sites. Therefore the new impervious surface created for the park and ride would be the same for both locations and the water quality analysis done for the EIS is applicable to either location.

With storm water controls, the FEIS indicated that there would be no violations of water quality standards associated with the additional runoff directly caused by the parking on the east side. Therefore, there would be no violations of water quality standards associated with the additional runoff directly caused by having parking on the west side.

Onsite detention is required (per FEIS mitigation) for the Federal Station on either site.

## **ECOLOGICALLY-SENSITIVE AREAS and ENDANGERED SPECIES**

There are no impacts to high-quality habitat or listed endangered or threatened species by the implementation of the Federal west station site.

## **SAFETY and SECURITY**

The RTD safety and security design features would be the same as those implemented for any other park and ride. There will be emergency telephones in station areas and closed circuit television coverage.

The RTD Fire and Life Safety Committee will work with representatives from local law enforcement and emergency providers to develop an emergency response plan for the project.

The east and west Federal station sites would have the same safety and security measures taken.

## **CONSTRUCTION IMPACTS**

Construction impacts will be the same for the Federal west and Federal east stations. Since neighborhoods are far removed from either station site, few impacts are expected.

Mitigations for construction impacts can be found in the Gold Line ROD and in the Construction Mitigation Plan (CMP) that will be prepared for this project as committed to in the ROD. The development of the CMP will include the participation of local governments and the community.

## **SUMMARY**

Relocation of the Federal station site to the west is found to have the same, or fewer, environmental impacts than the site on the east.

Additionally, the proposed Federal west station location is consistent with the probable impacts and mitigation measures included in the Gold Line FEIS and ROD.