

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT MEMORANDUM
#10-36

September 23, 2010

TO: Honorable Mayor Joyce Downing and City Council Members

FROM: William Simmons, City Manager *WAS*
James Hayes, Director of Planning and Development *JH*

SUBJECT: Regional Transportation District (RTD) FasTracks project update

BACKGROUND

City staff has presented periodic updates to the City Council over the last several years. The breadth of topics included the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS), the Northglenn FasTracks Task Force, Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) versus Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) technologies, station area planning at 112th Avenue and Eastlake with the City of Thornton, local match and Intergovernmental Agreements (IGA) with the other jurisdictions along the North Metro Corridor, and an option to purchase property in the area of the 112th Avenue station. All of these topics and a recent history were outlined in a series of administrative memos from staff to the City Council on January 17, 2008, October 16, 2008, April 9, 2009, and September 17, 2009. A more detailed memorandum was provided on December 3, 2009, which outlined all of the formal comments from the City on the DEIS. A copy of a letter, dated December 17, 2009 outlines the official City comments and is attached for reference purposes.

UPDATE

Over the last several months, RTD staff has been working on updates to the ridership model and preliminary engineering designs for the project. The new ridership model analysis has required a delay in the issuance of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) until January, 2011. The new data was presented at a Local Government Team (LGT) meeting on August 12, 2010. Eric Sabina from DRCOG outlined the methodology for the new ridership and the data as follows:

	DEIS (Dec, 2009)	LGT meeting (Feb, 2010)	FEIS (Jan, 2011)
Model Year	2030	2035	2035
Daily Boardings	14,300	13,100	24,100
Travel Time (DUS to SH7)	27	35	32
Total Parking	3,670	3,970	8,440
Opening Day Parking	3,100	3,100	4,100

Schedule for the North Metro Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS)

The purpose of the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) for the North Metro Corridor is to analyze transit alternatives in the corridor that runs between Denver Union Station and 162nd Avenue in Thornton. The formal FEIS process, which began in 2006, builds upon recommendations from previous studies, public input, and local government input to arrive at the best alternatives for transit development in the corridor. All of the comments submitted during the DEIS process will be reflected in the FEIS document. Northglenn staff has participated in the DEIS/FEIS meetings from the beginning of the process. The FEIS is scheduled for release in

January, 2011 with public hearings in January and February. Formal comments will be due within 45 days and a Record of Decision is projected for March, 2011.

Stations serving Northglenn

Screening criteria – Targeted station areas were selected by a process of examining- multiple variables such as station spacing, ridership, parking demand, access, environmental factors, and community acceptance. Based on the evaluation, a station location at 112th Avenue and York Street was included in the DEIS. Station location on the periphery of Northglenn were sited at 104th Avenue (& Colorado Boulevard) and 124th Avenue (& Claude Court) in the City of Thornton.

104th Avenue Station

The station is located in the southwest corner of 104th Avenue and Colorado Boulevard behind the existing Albertson's shopping center. 500 parking spaces along with a bus transfer facility are currently planned for opening day. The increased ridership and revised station design may warrant structured parking on opening day. The City of Thornton is considering a TIP application for a station area master plan for the 104th Avenue station. Residents of Fox Run may also benefit from a station in this location, and Northglenn City staff will continue to work with Thornton staff in reviewing concepts for this site.

112th Avenue Station

The one station in Northglenn at 112th Avenue is close to final design and all of the parking, bus loading, and auto drop off (kiss and ride) features are west of York Street. The site will have surface parking on opening day, but structured parking is proposed to meet 2035 ridership demands. The City of Northglenn is proposing a station area master plan for this location as part of the DRCOG 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding cycle. The City of Thornton may partner with Northglenn to develop the plan and provide additional local match funding.

124th Avenue Station (Eastlake)

The third station along the North Metro Line that will impact the City of Northglenn is proposed at Eastlake (124th Avenue) within the City of Thornton. The DEIS is forwarding a concept that is alternative to what the City of Thornton would like to see there. The DEIS concept calls for large parking areas to accommodate 300 parking spaces on opening day. The City of Thornton developed a station plan for the surrounding area in December of 2008. The City of Northglenn staff served on the steering committee and received a third place award from DRCOG for “Planning with Vision”.

Local Match

Local governments (collectively) are responsible for providing a 2.5 percent local match on each independent FasTracks line. In light of the Annual Program Evaluation and the funding update progress on negotiations of the local match have been delayed. The current estimates as of March 31, 2009 for complete construction of the North Metro line stand at \$924 million. That places the total required local government match for the North Metro Line (split between five jurisdictions) at \$23.1 million. If the required match was split equally, a worst case scenario would have Northglenn responsible for \$4.62 million. If the time frame for the project extends

beyond 2017 and subsequently project costs increase, Northglenn's required portion will only go up. Future negotiations will hopefully result in a more equitable solution that lessens the amount that Northglenn may be required to pay. Cost sharing negotiations were put on hold this year during the update to the ridership model. Discussions will start up again this fall, and staff will provide another update on this topic in the next few months. RTD staff would like to complete the IGAs concurrent with the release of the FEIS in early 2011.

BUDGET/TIME IMPLICATIONS

Time implications for the FasTracks project include a review of the FEIS and formal comments to RTD within the comment period deadline in the first quarter of 2011. Staff will distribute the document (electronically) as soon as possible upon receipt and schedule the requisite study session at the direction of the City Council and City Manager.

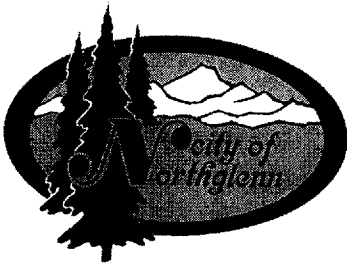
Budget implications for the FasTracks project are limited in 2011 but that is proposing to commence more detailed station area planning in 2012. This approach will necessitate the hiring of a consultant, but the project will be supplemented by the City of Thornton and federal funding through DRCOG. The current proposed local match from the City of Northglenn for this project is \$25,000. In future years, and possibly starting with the 2012 budget, the City will need to resolve the issues surrounding the local match and intergovernmental agreements with the other jurisdictions along the North Metro line.

STAFF CONTACT

If Council members have any comments or questions they may contact James Hayes at 303-450-8937, jhayes@northglenn.org or Travis Reynolds at 303-450-8836, treynolds@northglenn.org.

ATTACHMENTS

Letter from the City of Northglenn to FTA (formal DEIS comments), dated December 17, 2009



City of Northglenn
11701 Community Center Drive
P.O. Box 330061
Northglenn, CO 80233-8061
Phone 303-450-8741
FAX 303-450-8708

December 17, 2009

FTA Region 8
Mr. David Beckhouse
Team Leader for Planning and Program Development
c/o North Metro Corridor Project Team
999 18th Street, Suite 900
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Mr. Beckhouse:

I am writing on behalf of the City Council of the City of Northglenn with formal comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the RTD FasTracks North Metro Corridor. After analysis of the document by City staff and careful consideration of the DEIS at a public study session on December 3, 2009, we have prepared these comments for your consideration with the preparation of the Final EIS.

Technology

After reviewing the noise, air pollution, and aesthetic impacts on the community, the benefits to the community outweigh the increased capital costs outlined in the DEIS. ***Therefore, the City of Northglenn supports Electric Multiple Unit (EMU) as the preferred technology for the corridor.***

Station Locations

The City of Northglenn has one proposed station within its jurisdiction at 112th Avenue. However, additional impacts may be experienced within the community as a result of the 104th Avenue and Eastlake (124th Avenue) stations. The City of Northglenn is providing these official comments related to the proposed stations along the corridor.

112th Avenue

The station name should be officially changed to the "Northglenn Station". This will facilitate future "placemaking" and provide an identity for the area. A sufficient analysis has been completed to warrant support for the "West of York Street" option. However, any future parking demands should be met by creating parking areas east of York Street or with structured parking. The City of Northglenn is very concerned about preserving development opportunities south of the proposed station location.

104th Avenue and Eastlake (124th Avenue)

Similar to the 112th Avenue station alignment, the 124th Avenue station location should be officially known as the "Eastlake Station". The DEIS should also adopt the preferred station, parking lot, and TOD

design as proposed by the City of Thornton. A detailed station area plan was created for the area and included several stakeholders, including the City of Northglenn. Realignment of Claude Court, dispersed parking, and higher density development opportunities should be reflected in the Final EIS. The 104th Avenue station location is acceptable as designed, but RTD should carefully consider parking demands and coordinate any cross parking agreements with the owner of the Albertson's anchored shopping center.

Therefore, the City of Northglenn requests the 112th Avenue station be officially changed to the "Northglenn Station and future parking demands at the Northglenn Station should be met by creating parking areas east of York Street or with structured parking. In addition, RTD should adopt the City of Thornton preferred station, parking lot, and TOD design for the Eastlake Station.

Land Use and Economic Impacts

The DEIS includes substantial analysis of business and residential relocations, positive and negative employment (job) impacts, and transit oriented development opportunities. ***The City is supportive of the conclusion that no residential or commercial relocations will be necessary within the City of Northglenn.***

Environmental Impacts

The City of Northglenn agrees with the assessment under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106. The area of residential properties along Claude Court and north of 112th Avenue are within the parameters of the Area of Potential Effects (APE). ***The City of Northglenn agrees with the conclusion that noise walls will be used to offset the impacts to properties along Claude Court.***

Grade Crossings and Separations

Along the northern area of the North Metro Line (above 88th Avenue), the DEIS calls for two grade separations where the line will cross arterials with significant daily traffic volumes. These two grade separations at 104th Avenue and 120th Avenue are significant to Northglenn as they impact the major east/west connections through the City. The DEIS simply indicates that these two areas need to be grade separated for safety requirements.

The decision was not made whether the technology would go "over" or "under". On November 24, 2009, staff received copies of elevation drawings and aerial photography depicting both the "under" and "over" options. The City is extremely concerned that these concepts have not been addressed in the DEIS for noise and visual impacts.

Little detail has been provided to date regarding land use and utility mitigation or design specifics. The City believes that the initial analysis is adequate and that grade separation in these locations is necessary. However, further discussions will occur during the design and engineering phase of the project. In the event that the preferred alternative for grade separation is the rail line "over" the road system, the noise and visual impacts on residential and commercial properties should be addressed in the FEIS.

The crossing of the line at 112th Avenue is slated as an "at-grade" crossing in the DEIS. A series of mitigation measures including the lengthening of turning lanes at the intersection of Irma Drive and 112th Avenue as well as York St. and 112th Avenue are called for by the DEIS. Signal timing and enhanced

railway signals are also called for at the intersections and at the crossing. These mitigation measures are required for operation of the line and the City supports this expenditure to be funded by RTD.

Therefore, the City of Northglenn believes there are major impacts from the proposed grade separations at 104th Avenue and 120th Avenue that have not been adequately addressed in the DEIS. Additional public outreach, design, utility impacts, noise and vibration impacts, and aesthetic issues should be addressed prior to the release of the Final EIS.

Parks and Open Space Impacts

The DEIS calls out the lone impact from the alignment as the 112th Avenue detached multi-use sidewalk on the south side of the roadway at the alignment intersection. Based on grade crossing mitigation efforts, this alignment may need to be augmented or improved. The DEIS was also silent on the potential impacts to the Grange Hall Creek trail underpass.

The City of Northglenn is requesting additional details about this underpass be included in the Final EIS and mitigation may be necessary for continued trail connection during and after construction of the project.

Noise and Vibration Impacts and Quiet Zones

The City of Northglenn understands that a Quiet Zone for a rail corridor is a Federal Railroad Authority designation that allows trains to move through at-grade crossings without activating the train's horn. In addition, establishment of a Quiet Zone requires the application of certain supplemental safety measures (gates, enhanced signalization, median improvements etc.) to the area in proximity to an at-grade crossing to ensure safety. The City of Northglenn intends to coordinate a formal Quiet Zone application with the City of Thornton. ***The City is supportive of quiet zone improvements paid for by RTD as part of the required mitigation.***

Noise impacts to properties within the City of Northglenn in the DEIS analysis indicates that under the preferred EMU scenario 105 properties would have a "Lower Moderate", "Upper Moderate", or "Severe" noise impact prior to any sound wall mitigation. Post mitigation would reduce that number to 16 properties. Under a DMU alternative the noise issues are more severe with 44 properties still being impacted. ***The analysis in the DEIS reiterates the position by the City of Northglenn to support EMU as the preferred technology.***

Bus Operations

As a part of developing an equitable FasTracks option, RTD should also begin utilizing FastConnects in this current process by identifying key major road connections to the rail corridors. For the North Metro line, the local jurisdictions would request consideration for enhanced bus service to the most appropriate station(s) along the FasTracks system that will serve our neighbors in Brighton and other areas of northern Adams County by opening day of the North Metro corridor.

The City of Northglenn supports adjustments to the 112 RTD bus line to serve the 104th Avenue station, the 104 RTD bus line to accommodate stops at the 112th Avenue station. In addition, the City supports adjustments for the 120 route to access the station at 124th Ave (Eastlake). The City does not support any negative impacts to service levels within the City.

Parking Impacts

Parking depicted for either station scenario at the Northglenn Station reflects 250 spaces provided on opening day. Projections for parking provisions in 2030 include an additional 50 spaces. Any future improvements that improve 112th Avenue or allow traffic to flow east and west more freely across the city will induce more use of the transit station. RTD should continue to keep all options available for additional parking overflow areas in proximity to the station. Final station designs should also accommodate bicycle parking areas to facilitate multi-modal transportation. ***The City is concerned about the long term parking provisions for 2030 and is sensitive of the impacts to adjacent neighborhoods of overflow parking.***

Traffic Impacts

104th Avenue station area – No significant impacts to Northglenn

112th Avenue (Northglenn) station area – The DEIS does not include a schematic depiction of traffic operations at the 112th station. This is largely due to the fact that under RTD’s station configuration alternatives (east vs. west), little would change. The DEIS indicates that no station-related traffic mitigation measures would be required for either option. ***The City is concerned that impacts to the intersection of 112th Avenue and York Street have not been fully investigated.***

124th Avenue (Eastlake) – The DEIS forwards a station area concept that is alternative to the station area plan that the City of Thornton currently endorses. Impacts of the station concept that the DEIS carries forward includes both the relocation of Claude Court north of 124th Avenue, essentially eliminating through traffic on Claude Court and a new traffic signal to control the intersection at 124th Avenue and Claude Court. The DEIS indicates that RTD will be working with Thornton to further refine Thornton’s Eastlake station plan prior to the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS). ***City staff consulted on the Thornton Eastlake Station plan and the City of Northglenn endorses the City of Thornton plan that maintains Claude Court as a thoroughfare with connection at 128th Avenue.***

Rail Freight Operations

The Union Pacific Railroad Corporation currently serves one customer on the North Metro preferred alignment. That customer is located just south of 112th Avenue in the Industrial Park within the City of Northglenn. RTD has negotiated a “Shared Use Agreement” with Union Pacific that indicates that they will seek no additional customers for future service. Under the agreement if the corridor has not been used for freight service for three or more years, Union Pacific will abandon the corridor and leave it free of freight train traffic. ***The City is requesting a copy of the agreement between RTD and UPRR to ensure that the industrial businesses within the City continue to be served by rail, if requested.***

Pedestrian and Bicycle Impacts

The DEIS recognizes Northglenn’s existing trail system and calls for additional connections to be made for enhanced access to the proximal stations. The regional trail system that runs through the Fox Run Open Space can be a significant east/west connection. Although the DEIS recognizes the Fox Run Open Space and its system of trails, mitigation measures for the Grange Hall Creek Trail underpass that runs under the rail alignment are largely unmentioned.

104th Avenue Station

The DEIS calls for a station area connection using the existing system of sidewalks/trails along 104th Avenue.

112th Avenue Station (Northglenn)

The DEIS highlights the existing multi-use trail along 112th Avenue and indicates that an additional trail could be constructed to connect from 112th Avenue to the proposed station area.

124th Avenue Station (Eastlake)

No significant impacts to the City of Northglenn. Existing trail systems in Northglenn should attempt to tie to future proposed trails that lead to the 124th (Eastlake) station.

In the event that the alignment or Right of Way requires widening or disruption of its current alignment, mitigation of impacts to pedestrian and bicycle connections should be provided by the project and reflected in the FEIS.

Historical City Input

Over the last several years, the City of Northglenn has provided informal input to the DEIS process through the staff and formal input from the City Council and City Manager. Copies of the formal correspondence are attached for reference purposes.

August 18, 2006

The City of Northglenn created a FasTracks Task Force and recommendations were presented to the City Council for consideration in the form of a memo, dated August 18, 2006. The main recommendation was as follows:

“The FasTracks Task Force recommends that Northglenn **not** have a rail station physically located within the City. However, the Task Force members feel it would be economically viable to try to attract developers for the land adjacent to the proposed Thornton site at 122nd and Claude Court, which would include the Northglenn Maintenance and Operation Facility.”

On August 24, 2006, the City Council passed a motion (8-0) to accept the recommendation from the FasTracks Task Force.

August 13, 2007

The City Manager of the City of Northglenn sent a letter to RTD re-affirming the Task Force recommendation that a station not be built at 112th Avenue and York Street. However, the closing paragraph states the following:

“However, *if* RTD views that station (112th) as a necessary stop along the North Metro Corridor, we ask that every effort be made to minimize the overall physical development and that final plans be extraordinarily sensitive to surrounding residential areas.”

October 16, 2008

The City Council authorized the Mayor to execute a letter to RTD with the formal City response to the various financing and project build out options, which were discussed in the summer and fall of 2008. In

summary, the City recommended elimination of Option 2, a reduced build option, and supported construction of the line to at least the 124th Avenue (Eastlake) Station.

Therefore, since RTD is proposing a station at 112th Avenue and York Street, the condition of support in the 2007 letter appears to be met. The City does not intend to discount or ignore the recommendations of the Task Force, recognizing that there may be some individuals opposed to the station in the City of Northglenn.

The City of Northglenn is also taking this opportunity to communicate support for construction of the entire North Metro Corridor within the original project time frame (2017). After careful consideration and discussion, the City of Northglenn is in support of the entire FasTracks program being built out as approved by the voters in 2004, including a station within the City limits at 112th Avenue (Northglenn Station).

The City appreciates the efforts of the Regional Transportation District to involve the local jurisdictions in this critical decision making process. FasTracks was approved by the region, and it will only be a regional effort that moves FasTracks forward. Please accept our comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and consider the issues we raised during the preparation of the Final EIS.

Sincerely,

Kathleen M. Novak, Mayor
City of Northglenn

cc: RTD Board of Directors
1600 Blake Street
Denver, Colorado 80202

Enclosures: Resolution adopted by City Council and Task Force Recommendations, dated August 18, 2006
Letter to RTD from Northglenn City Manager, dated August 13, 2007
Letter to RTD from Northglenn Mayor, dated October 16, 2008



104th Ave.

Colorado Marketplace Shopping Center

Future Platform

E. 103rd Pl.

Bus Loading

Station Platform

Settler's Chase Trail

Colorado Blvd.

Grandview Ponds
Open Space
and Prairie Bog
Habitat

DRAFT

Concept subject to change based on additional design analysis and planning review.

Pedestrian Walkway/Underpass

Proposed Grange Hall Creek Regional Trail Missing Link (By Others)

LEGEND

-  Opening Day Parking
-  Landscape Area
-  Station Platform
-  Plaza/Walkway
-  Detention/Water Quality Pond
-  Proposed Trail



104th Avenue

June 2010

Presidential Ridge

DRAFT

Concept subject to change based on additional design analysis and planning review.

Station Platform

Future Platform

Bus Loading

Future 2035 Expansion

Future 2035 Expansion

Unnamed Neighborhood Trail Missing Link 2 (Proposed By Others)

Northeast Grange Hill Tributary

112th Ave.

York St.

Claude Ct.

112th Avenue

June 2010

LEGEND

- Opening Day Parking
 - Landscape Area
 - Station Platform
 - Plaza/Walkway
 - Detention/Water Quality Pond
 - Proposed Trail
- ↑ N

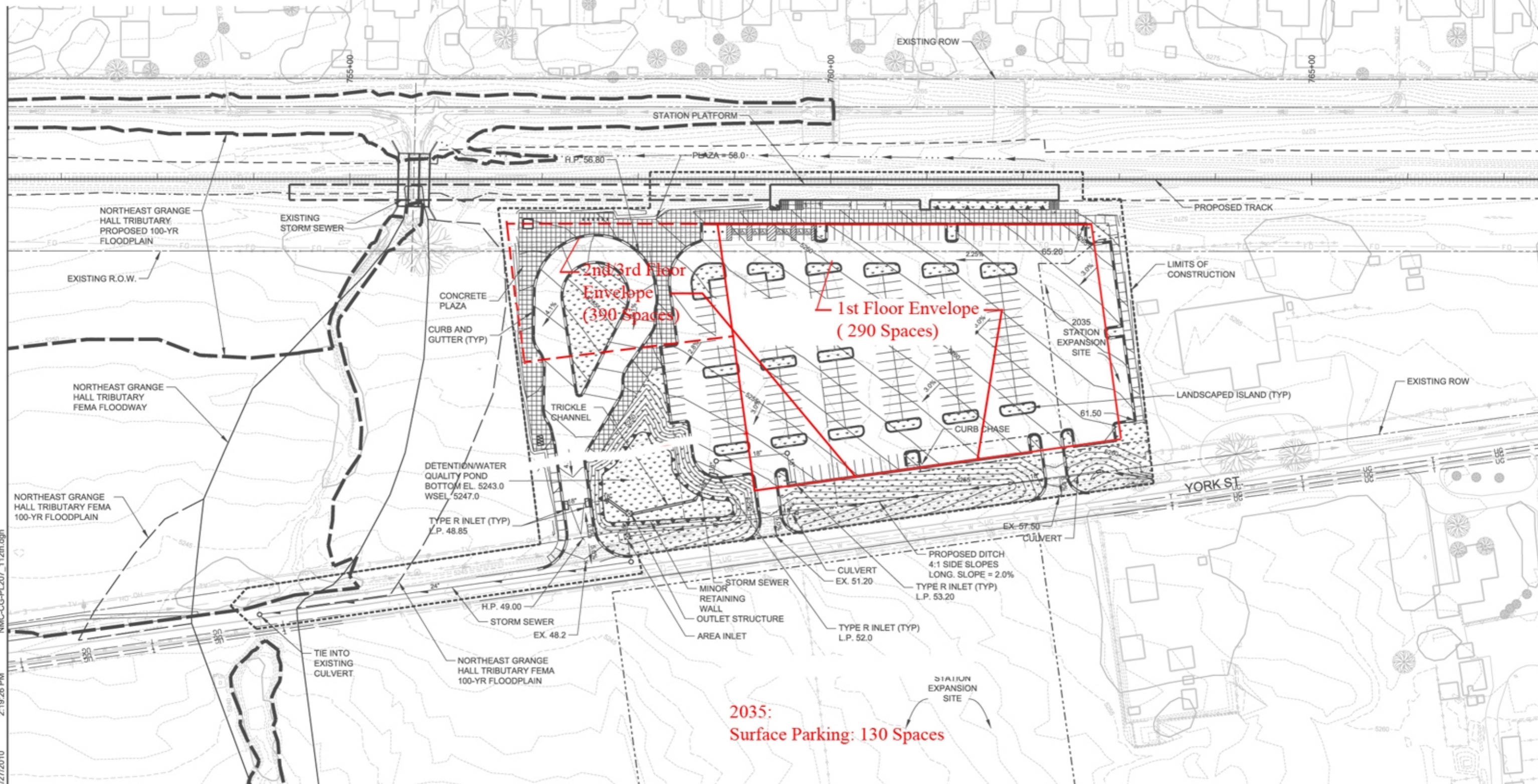


112th Ave. Station

2020: Surface Parking: 310 Spaces
 2035: 3-Floor Parking Structure &
 Surface Parking: 1200 Spaces

CALL UTILITY NOTIFICATION CENTER OF COLORADO
 1-800-922-1987 or (811)
 CALL 3-BUSINESS DAYS IN ADVANCE BEFORE YOU DIG, GRADE, OR
 EXCAVATE FOR THE MARKING OF UNDERGROUND MEMBER UTILITIES.

CLAUDE CT.



2035:
 Surface Parking: 130 Spaces

USER: carl_fisher
 4/27/2010 2:19:26 PM NMC-CG-PL207_112th.dgn

For Information Only.
 Not for Bidding or Construction

NO.	REVISIONS	BY	DATE

DESIGNED BY: BL	DATE: 03/05/10	CHECKED BY: MM	DATE: 04/27/10
DRAWN BY: NZ	DATE: 03/05/10	APPROVED BY: PW	DATE: 04/27/10

URS
 8181 East Tufts Ave. 303-694-2770 (Phone)
 Denver, CO 80237 303-694-3946 (Fax)

HORZ SCALE: 1"=50'
 VERT SCALE: NA

HALF SIZE - Double The Scale



NORTH METRO CORRIDOR
 GRADING AND DRAINAGE PLAN
 112TH AVENUE STATION

SHEET REFERENCE NUMBER:
 CG-207
 SHEET 393

DRAFT

Concept subject to change based on additional design analysis and planning review.

Proposed UPRR Trail (By Others)

Birch Ave.

Eastlake Granary

Lake Ave.

Relocated Claude Ct.

Future 2035 Expansion

Bus Loading Only

Station Platform

Short Term Parking

Future Platform

E. 124th Ave.

2nd St.

1st St.

Claude Ct.

ADCCO Shop Site Trail

Potential Future Parking and Pedestrian Underpass (By Others)

LEGEND

- Opening Day Parking
 - Landscape Area
 - Station Platform
 - Plaza/Walkway
 - Detention/Water Quality Pond
 - Proposed Trail
- ↑ N

124th Avenue/Eastlake Station

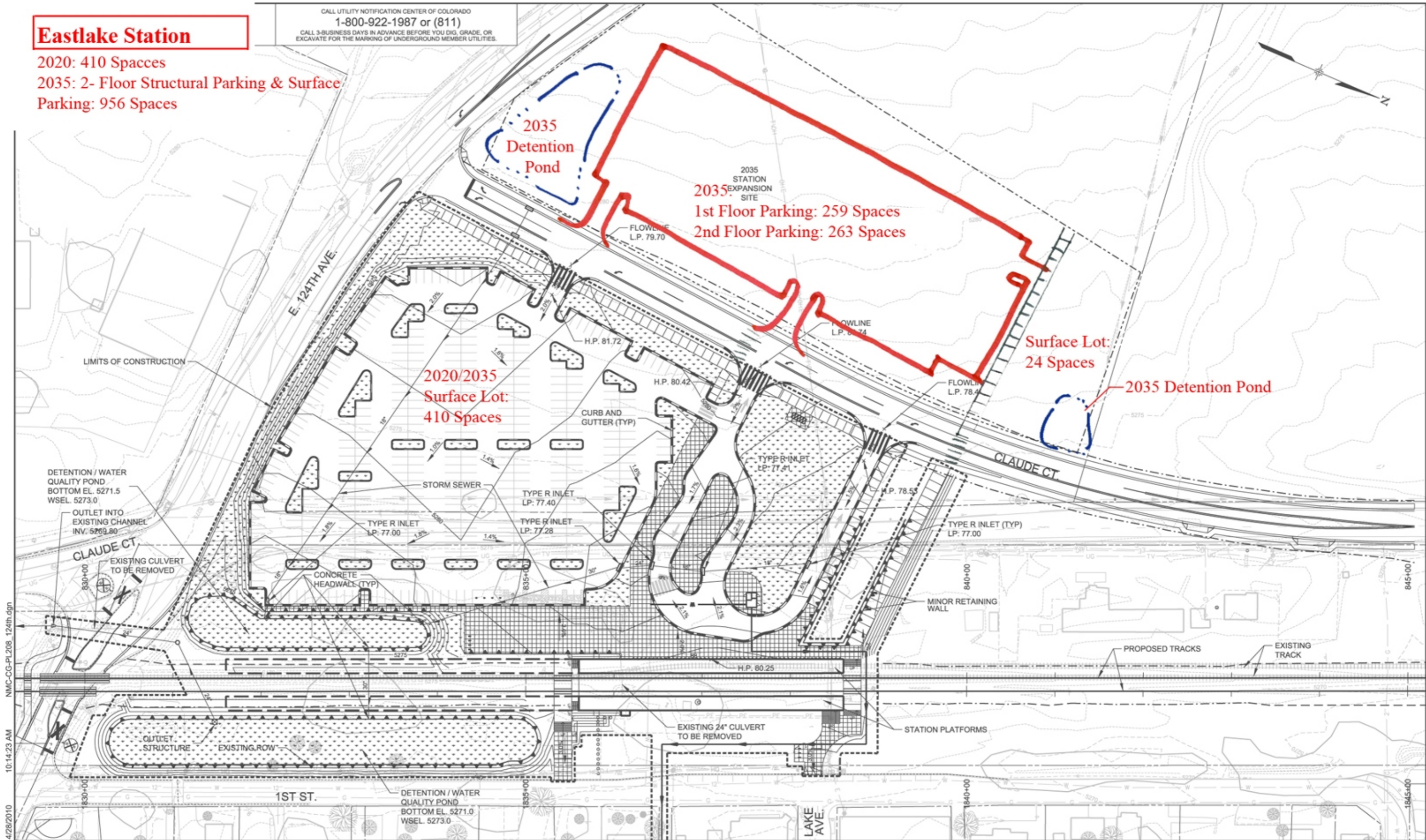
June 2010

Eastlake Station

2020: 410 Spaces

2035: 2- Floor Structural Parking & Surface
Parking: 956 Spaces

CALL UTILITY NOTIFICATION CENTER OF COLORADO
1-800-922-1987 or (811)
CALL 3-BUSINESS DAYS IN ADVANCE BEFORE YOU DIG, GRADE, OR
EXCAVATE FOR THE MARKING OF UNDERGROUND MEMBER UTILITIES.




USER: carl_fisher
 4/28/2010 10:14:23 AM NMC-CG-PL208_124th.dgn


For Information Only.
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NO.	REVISIONS	BY	DATE

DESIGNED BY: JF	DATE: 04/23/10	CHECKED BY: MM	DATE: 04/27/10
DRAWN BY: NZ	DATE: 04/23/10	APPROVED BY: PW	DATE: 04/27/10


 8181 East Tufts Ave. 303-694-2770 (Phone)
 Denver, CO 80237 303-694-3946 (Fax)

HORZ SCALE: 1"=50'
VERT SCALE: NA


 HALF SIZE - Double The Scale


 1580 BROADWAY, SUITE 700
 DENVER, COLORADO 80202
 (303) 299-6990

NORTH METRO CORRIDOR
GRADING AND DRAINAGE PLAN
EASTLAKE STATION

SHEET REFERENCE NUMBER:
CG-208
 SHEET 394