

Maintenance Eligibility Program

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Construction Plan Reviews

The Wednesday, November 24th headline in the *Rocky Mountain News* proclaimed "Home Boom, \$13.1 billion in 2004 home sales". This year's continued robust housing market was fueled by low interest rates, a belief the Colorado economy is strengthening and a post election bounce. Total home sales for 2004 will likely outpace last year's record by 10%. The result was a continued boom in land development activities. The eastern E-470 and northern I-25 corridors have attracted the largest development interest. District staff reviewed over 300 construction plan referrals. Providing timely reviews is always challenging and this year was no exception. Terri Fead, PE has supplemented District staff throughout the year. Terri's involvement has been a tremendous benefit to the maintenance eligibility program and I'm happy to announce she will be part of the program next year.

The District's maintenance eligibility database, updated bi-monthly, and the *Guidelines for Maintenance Eligibility Of Flood Control Facilities Constructed By Others* (Maintenance Eligibility Guidelines) have been available online throughout the year. This has proved helpful to local governments and consulting engineers alike. Another effective tool has been the practice of holding project meetings involving District staff, design consultants and local government representatives as a way to reach consensus and move construction plans quickly through the final review process. We are also available by e-mail, fax or telephone to answer questions on design criteria and the maintenance eligibility program.

In April, the District hosted a workshop addressing current issues and guidelines in stormwater planning and design (see Ben Urbonas's article). One presentation subject was "Maintenance Eligibility and Master Plan Implementation". Bill DeGroot touched on this issue in his article. Bill continues to provide excellent leadership in this important effort. Private land development projects are responsible for constructing perhaps one-half to two-thirds of the Denver metropolitan area's major drainageway infrastructure. In working with local governments, developers and their consultants, we have also been mindful that major drainageways must be attractive, provide a community asset and represent a "sense of place" in addition to functioning hydraulically. The aesthetic and urban design components are difficult to capture in criteria manuals, but oh so important in the final product.

RTD's West Corridor Project

Voters approved the \$4.6 billion Fast Tracks project in November. One of the six alignments, known as the West Corridor, will precede the other alignments into design and construction phase. The West Corridor, which will connect downtown Denver to the Federal Center and Jefferson County Government Center, follows the old Associated Railroad alignment, which RTD purchased a number of years ago. The West Corridor project is budgeted at \$500 million with major impacts to the South Platte River, Lakewood Gulch, Dry Gulch and North Dry Gulch. We have been working with City and County of Denver, City of Lakewood and RTD representatives since mid-summer in an effort to advance the preliminary design, enhance drainageway and open space functions and define budget risks for RTD. Significant progress has been made and significant work still needs to be done. The largest remaining issue is the South Platte River crossing. The crossing alignment is approximately 14th Avenue, just north of the Zuni Power Plant and south of Denver's Solid Waste Management facility. Stay tuned...

In the field

An integral part of the maintenance eligibility process is construction oversight. Construction activity has increased this year over past years. At any given time, we typically have 120 to 150 active construction projects spread out over 1600 square miles in many different local jurisdictions. We depend heavily on networking and partnerships developed with local governments and various engineering consultants over the years to adequately cover construction oversight. In some cases, local government inspection staffs have conducted construction observations on the District's behalf. Field reports and/or digital photos are typically provided to us through e-mail. We also rely upon local inspection staff, engineering consultants and in some instances, contractors to keep us apprised of construction progress and the need for District construction site visits. During 2004, District staff completed over 100 construction site visits. Over 60 projects were completed and recommended for construction acceptance during the preceding 12 months. Another 30 previously approved projects were re-inspected for adequate vegetative cover and received final approval.

Recent projects in the Maintenance Eligibility Program



Convention Center storm sewer outlet to Cherry Creek in downtown Denver



Parkfield Lake spillway in Denver



Bronco Parkway bridges over Cherry Creek in Arapahoe County



Confluence of Sanderson Gulch and North Sanderson Gulch in Lakewood