Public Rail Transit in the Rocky Mountain West:
The Potential of Regional Transit Planning for Smart Growth in the 21st Century

Rocky Mountain Land Use Institute

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The RTD FasTracks Plan

• 122 miles of new light rail and commuter rail
• 18 miles of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service
• 31 new park-n-Rides; over 21,000 new spaces
• Enhanced Bus Network & Transit Hubs (FastConnects)
• Redevelopment of Denver Union Station
### FasTracks by the Numbers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metric</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miles of new rail lines under contract to begin construction</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>Miles of new rail lines are currently in construction or under contract to begin construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dollars injected into the local economy by mid-2010</td>
<td>$1 B</td>
<td>Number of dollars injected into the local economy by mid-2010.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average number of jobs that will be created annually during peak construction</td>
<td>10,000</td>
<td>Average number of jobs that will be created annually during peak construction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated jobs on the West Corridor</td>
<td>600</td>
<td>Number of estimated jobs on the West Corridor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated amount of federal funds to be received</td>
<td>$1.5 B</td>
<td>Estimated amount of federal funds to be received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of spending that FasTracks is estimated to generate in Denver between 2005 and 2019</td>
<td>$10.1 B</td>
<td>Amount of spending that FasTracks is estimated to generate in Denver between 2005 and 2019.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount per year in wages and salaries that FasTracks is estimated to add to the metro Denver economy once construction is complete</td>
<td>$150 M</td>
<td>Amount per year in wages and salaries that FasTracks is estimated to add to the metro Denver economy once construction is complete.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Accomplishments to Date

• U.S. 36 BRT Corridor Phase I: First FasTracks project completed in May 2010

• Projects that will be under construction this year:
  – West Corridor: 72% complete
  – Denver Union Station: 30% complete
  – East Corridor (to DIA): Broke ground in August 2010
  – Commuter Rail Maintenance Facility: Groundbreaking in 2011
  – Gold Line: Groundbreaking in 2011
  – Northwest Rail (to Westminster): Groundbreaking in 2011
  – US 36 BRT Phase 2 Projects (Table Mesa Pedestrian Bridge and Queue Jumps): Groundbreaking in 2011
Accomplishments to Date (cont.)

• **Environmental processes complete**
  - East Corridor
  - Gold Line
  - I-225 Corridor
  - US 36 BRT
  - Southwest Corridor Extension
  - Southeast Corridor Extension
  - Central Corridor Extension
  - Northwest Rail

• **Environmental process wrapping up on final corridor – North Metro**

• RTD signed agreements with BNSF and UPRR

• $308 M federal New Starts funding for West Corridor

• **Federal loans for Denver Union Station**
  - RRIF loan - $155 M
  - TIFIA loan - $146 M

• **Submitted application to FTA for $1.03 B federal grant for the Eagle P3 Project**
FasTracks Benefits

• Stimulates the economy
  – Every $1 invested translates into $4 injected into local economy over 20 years
• 10,000 construction-related jobs at height of construction
• Provides opportunities for livable, sustainable communities and affordable housing
• Provides transportation options (rail and bus transit, bicycle and pedestrian improvements)
• Improves connectivity
### 2025 Peak Hour Transit Share

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode Split*</th>
<th>Existing Mode Split</th>
<th>2025 FasTracks Mode Split*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I-225</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gold Line</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US 36**</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Metro/I-25**</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southwest**</td>
<td>19%***</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Average All Corridors</strong></td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* In peak direction at most congested point.
** Does not include car pools.
*** Reflects the mode split from after the opening of the SW Corridor Light Rail.
2025 Travel Time Savings to Downtown by Corridor

Travel Times to Downtown in 2025
To 16th & California during AM Peak Hour

- East: DIA
- Gold Line: Ward Rd.
- I-225: Aurora City Center
- North Metro: 160th Ave.
- Southeast: RidgeGate Pkwy.
- Southwest: Lucent/Plaza
- US-36 (BRT): Table Mesa
- US-36 (Rail): Longmont
- West: Jeffco Gov’t Center

Time (minutes)

Transit with FasTracks   Single Occupant Auto with FasTracks
Regional Workforce Initiative Now (WIN)

- One of the major efforts of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) is fostering workforce development
- RTD developed the WIN program to accommodate the need for workforce development in the region
- WIN is a regional collaborative partnership that leverages existing training providers to identify, assess, train and place community members into careers on transportation and mixed-use development projects
- RTD’s FasTracks program provides a starting point
  - Denver Transit Partners, the Eagle P3 concessionaire, is committed to making some of the jobs available for the WIN participants
- Moving forward, construction projects of other partnering agencies will help create jobs that will continue to build our workforce and our communities
Regional WIN (cont.)

- Neighborhood Unemployed
- Graduates of Network Partners
- Workforce of Employer Partners

Case Management/Career Building

Evaluation of Economic Outcomes

- Assessment & Career Planning
- Entry-level and Skilled Training
- Jobs and Apprenticeships
- Advanced Training
- Sustainable Careers
- Sustainable Neighborhoods
TOD Systemwide Summary

- Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) in the current RTD system and FasTracks
  - Built or under construction:
    - 17,697 residential units
    - 5,407 hotel rooms
    - 5.26 M SF retail
    - 5.37 M SF office
    - 2.5 M SF government
    - 160,000 SF cultural
    - 6.16 M SF medical
  - Proposed:
    - 4,962 residential units
    - 2,075 hotel rooms
    - 653,220 SF retail
    - 3.34M SF office
    - 4.3 M SF medical
TOD Trends

• **TOD is the primary development opportunity**
  - Grubb & Ellis – rental properties near light rail command an average 4% premium
  - ULI Emerging Trends 2011 - Young professionals are less car dependent, baby boomers are looking to downsize and simplify

• **Residential rental market is the strongest**
  - RTD developer survey rated residential for lease market the best.
  - Vacancy rates in Denver Metro at 10 year lows
  - Financing is still tight and many can’t afford to buy
Transit Oriented Communities

- TOD can create “communities” for RTD riders
  - Mixed-income communities
  - Station/development integrated within community setting
  - Jobs: creation as well as improved access

- Increase RTD market share for all trips, not just commuting

- RTD and Boulder are currently evaluating proposals for a mixed-use, joint development on the Boulder Transit Village site.
FasTracks Challenges:
2011 Annual Program Evaluation

• RTD updates program costs and financial plan annually

• Funding gap exists to complete entire program as planned by 2019

• As in previous years, RTD sought help and advice from industry experts and regional partners
  – Construction Inflation Workshop & Regional Sales and Use Tax Working group reviews

• RTD Board considering alternative scenarios, including sales tax increases ranging from 0.2% - 0.4% to close funding gap and accelerate program completion
FasTracks Program Capital Cost Summary (YOE)

- Assuming full program completion by 2019 – capital costs remain constant at $6.7 B
  - Due to cost escalation, capital costs for the program will change if the date of full program completion is extended

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>$4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007 APE</td>
<td>$6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008 APE</td>
<td>$7.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 APE</td>
<td>$6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 APE*</td>
<td>$6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 APE*</td>
<td>$6.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Assumes program completion in 2019
FasTracks Program Sales and Use Tax Forecasts – 2005-2035

* Medium sales and use tax growth scenario