Frequently Asked Questions

Q: HOW CAN I GET INVOLVED WITH FASTRACKS?

A: Public involvement is very important to the FasTracks program and to the decision-making process. Not only is public participation encouraged by RTD, it is required on all federally funded projects. However, RTD includes public involvement in all of its planning processes, regardless of whether a project is federally funded.

There are several ways for you to get involved:

- Attend any FasTracks corridor public meeting. There, you can ask questions about specific corridor projects and submit comments. Those comments will be considered as part of the decision-making process.
- Visit RTD-FasTracks.com for information on the overall FasTracks program, to submit comments and/or questions about any project, or to sign up to receive information or corridor newsletters.

Q: HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN PUBLIC MEETINGS ARE BEING HELD FOR THE PROJECTS I'M INTERESTED IN?

A: Each FasTracks corridor team hosts public meetings during each phase of a project. Check our Web site RTD-FasTracks.com for a listing of upcoming meetings in your area. You can also sign up for corridor mailings about upcoming meetings and information specific to your corridor of interest.

Q: HOW CAN I GET THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON THE PROJECTS I'M INTERESTED IN?

A: With a program as large as FasTracks, there is a constant flow of new information. The best way to stay updated is to visit RTD-FasTracks.com and click on "What's New."

You can also stay connected by signing up for our mailing list to receive the most recent updates on the overall FasTracks program and/or the specific corridor projects. Sign up for the mailing list by visiting RTD-FasTracks.com and click on the "Information Subscription" drop down button under the "Stay Connected" tab.

Q: HOW DOES MY OPINION AFFECT FASTRACKS DECISIONS?

A: Public input is one of three major areas analyzed prior to project decisions being made. Public input along with cost, and technical, environmental and schedule feasibility are all considered in the decision-making process. As each project progresses, input opportunities narrow and become more focused.

Public input is collected during public meetings and from the Web site and analyzed with other criteria. The collective information is then presented to the RTD Board of Directors to incorporate into their final decision-making process.

Q: WHEN IS THE BEST TIME TO GET INVOLVED?

A: As early as possible. The first phase – planning – is the best time for general public input. This is when major decisions for each FasTracks project are made, including alignment, type of transit technology, and station locations. Public input in these areas has the biggest impact during this phase. Once design and construction begin, the opportunity to influence major changes decreases due to budget and schedule impacts.

Q: IN WHAT PART OF THE PROJECT DOES MY INPUT PLAY A ROLE?

A: Public involvement is a highly valued element of the decision-making process and is one of several components taken into consideration. During planning, public input is considered for major project decisions, including station locations, alignments and types of transit. During project design, RTD works with local cities and counties to determine aesthetic elements, such as wall treatments, shelters, barriers, fencing, landscaping, lighting fixtures, etc. The public can also provide input on how to minimize the inconvenience of construction and how they prefer to get information about the project once it moves into the construction phase.

Q: HOW WILL I KNOW IF MY INPUT MADE A DIFFERENCE?

A: Input that is incorporated into FasTracks will be shared with the public through a variety of tools, including the Web site, public meetings, newsletters, etc. At key milestones throughout each phase of a project, the project team shares information with the public on how their input affected the project or why that input wasn't able to be incorporated into the project.

Q: WHO MAKES THE FINAL DECISIONS ABOUT FASTRACKS PROJECTS?

A: Public input is considered as one of the criteria in the decision-making process. While the project teams make numerous decisions regarding a project, the RTD Board and the federal agencies sponsoring each project then have the final approval on decisions, based on the collective analysis of several elements.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Web site: www.RTD-FasTracks.com

FasTracks Information Line: 303-299-2000

For a presentation, call 303-299-6990.

Public Participation

RTD FASTRACKS

A Little About FasTracks

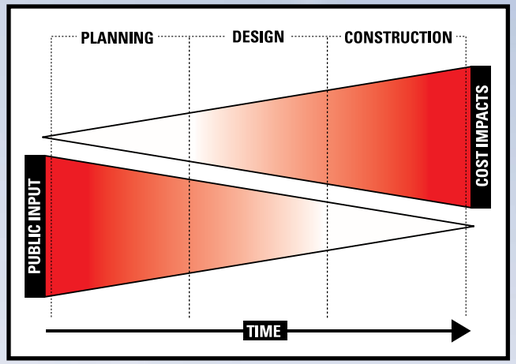
FasTracks is RTD's ambitious transit plan approved by Denver metro voters in 2004. The program includes a number of transit improvements all across RTD's eight-county district. The elements of FasTracks include:

- 122 miles of new commuter rail and light rail
- 18 miles of bus rapid transit (BRT)
- 57 new transit stations
- 31 new park-n-Rides
- 21,000 additional parking spaces
- Enhanced bus feeder system
- Redevelopment of Denver Union Station

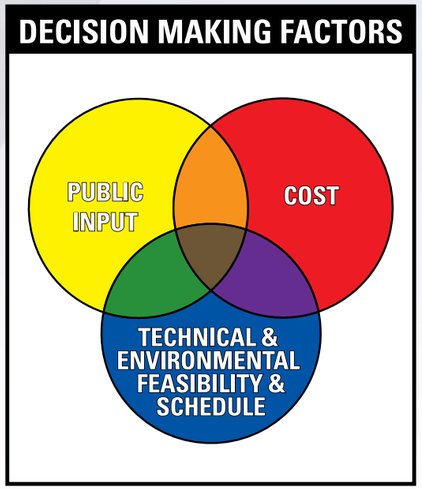
Public Participation

A key goal of the Regional Transportation District's (RTD's) FasTracks program is to get the public involved in helping to shape their community as FasTracks is implemented. As a public agency, RTD understands the importance of integrating our transit systems into our cities and neighborhoods by incorporating community feedback as much as possible. Public input is analyzed along with other criteria such as technical and environmental feasibility, schedule and cost. These elements are considered together to help RTD make the best decisions about each project. We strive to respond quickly and thoroughly to our stakeholders about how their input has helped shape a project, or why we weren't able to incorporate those requests or ideas. For individual input to have the most impact, it is important to get involved at the right time.

All FasTracks projects have an established budget and schedule designed to allow RTD to open the entire FasTracks program by 2017. For public input to have maximum impact, it is important for people to get involved early, while each project is being planned. A suggestion made during the planning phase may be easily incorporated, while during design, that same request may no longer be feasible or cost-effective. The key to connecting with FasTracks is knowing the right time to provide input.



As projects progress, public input opportunitites narrow as the cost to implement changes greatly increases.



Public input is one of three major areas of consideration analyzed for project decisions.

Make Your Input Count

As each corridor project progresses from one phase to the next, the type and level of public involvement changes. As each project moves from planning to design to construction, public involvement opportunities narrow and become more defined as the budget and schedule are more impacted by changes.

Planning Phase – Input is not only a requirement but a critical part of planning. During this stage, input has the biggest impact with the best opportunity to affect changes to a project. Discussion is open to a broader range of topics, including station locations, transit modes (light rail, commuter rail, buses) and track alignment.

Final Design Phase – Input is more focused and generally limited to aesthetic and design elements. The project team works closely with local cities and counties on things like the appearance of bridge and wall treatments, shelters, barriers, fencing, landscaping, lighting fixtures, etc.

Construction Phase – While construction is taking place, the project teams keep the public informed about what will be happening, when it will occur, and how long it will take. The public can provide input on what measures should be taken to minimize construction inconvenience.

Operational Phase – Education regarding how the transit system works, how to use the ticket vending machines and transit safety is the focus of outreach during this final phase. During this time, it is helpful for the public to offer feedback and comments on how operations can be continuously improved and modified.

How Construction Affects Your Input

There are a number of ways to complete a project from planning, to design, and finally, through construction. Public input is an important element in each of the construction methods that will be used to build FasTracks, but the process will take on a different approach depending on the method.

Each project is considered individually in determining how it can be executed in the most efficient, cost-effective manner.

Design/Bid/Build

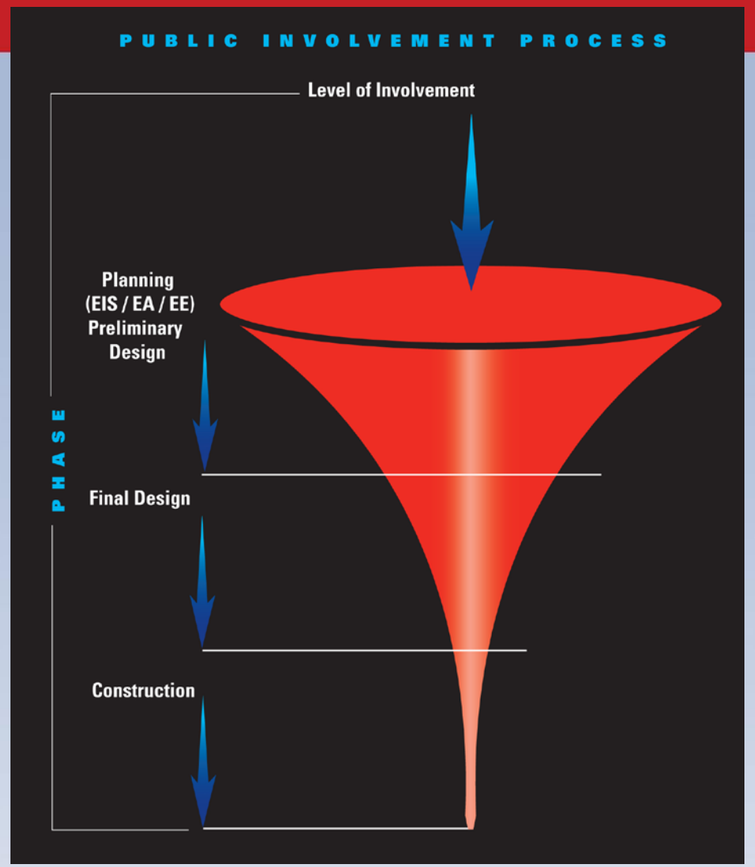
A government agency contracts with a design firm who prepares the design of the project. After the design is complete, the agency issues bid documents for construction. The lowest cost bidder is awarded the contract and performs the work through project completion. For this method, public involvement is critical during planning.

Design/Build

Following the planning process, a contractor team is hired to design and build the project simultaneously. This process provides more opportunity to lower costs and save time. In addition, since the same team handles both design and construction, potential issues can be addressed in a timely, streamlined manner. For a Design/Build project, public involvement during the planning stage is crucial, because once the contractor bids on the project, most changes will add cost. A proactive public information program during construction focuses on when and how construction will take place and ways to minimize inconvenience.

Corridors identified for Design/Build:

- I-225 Corridor
- Southeast Corridor extension
- Southwest Corridor extension



Opportunity for input is greater at the beginning and narrows as the project progresses.

Construction Manager/General Contractor (CM/GC)

With CM/GC, the owner designs the project, but the construction contractor is hired during design. This way, the contractor can oversee and give constructability advice to the design team as it progresses. At the end of the design phase, the CM/GC provides a guaranteed maximum price for the construction, based on the design. If the price is approved, the second half of the contract is awarded. The public involvement/information process on CM/GC is similar to design/build.

Corridors identified for CM/GC:

- West Corridor
- North Metro Corridor

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) provide a unique opportunity for public agencies to partner with private companies. The planning process is conducted first, then the public agency contracts with private partners to provide some or all of the following: design, construction, financing, operation and maintenance. In this method, some financial risk shifts to the private partner. The public agency maintains control and oversight of construction and operations, and sets requirements for the private partner, such as providing a proactive public information program, setting performance standards, setting fares, establishing an operations plan, and overseeing the look and feel of the project.

Corridors identified for PPP:

- Gold Line
- East Corridor