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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 31, 2011

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### **U.S. Transportation Secretary awards RTD \$1.03 billion grant for Fastracks rail lines to DIA and Arvada/Wheat Ridge**

#### **MAJOR MILESTONE FOR REGION'S TRANSIT EXPANSION PROGRAM**

**Denver, Aug. 31, 2011** – U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood and Federal Transit Administration Administrator Peter Rogoff today officially awarded the Regional Transportation District (RTD) a \$1.03 billion Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) to help build two rail lines in the Fastracks transit expansion program. A special signing ceremony was followed by the groundbreaking for the Gold Line at the site of the future Olde Town Arvada rail station.

"The Obama Administration is proud to partner with the Denver Regional Transportation District on a project that puts this region on a smart path to sustainable growth, while generating thousands of good local jobs," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood. "The citizens of Denver have made it clear they want transportation choices that reduce roadway congestion, promote cleaner air, and reduce our nation's dependence on costly oil."

The federal grant will help build the East Rail Line to Denver International Airport and the Gold Line to Arvada and Wheat Ridge, the main components of RTD's innovative Eagle P3 project. The lines will be open to the public in 2016.

"As the population of the metro area continues to grow, transit will be even more important as communities plan for their future," said Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper. "None of this would be possible without regional collaboration. Working together toward one vision has been key to Fastracks and is why we're all here today."

Through FTA's New Starts program, transit projects that are deemed the most qualified to receive federal funding are rigorously evaluated on a number of criteria prior to award of an FFGA. RTD has worked with FTA for four years leading up to this award.

## Federal Grant Awarded to RTD

“This is an important day in the work we do at the federal level and here at the regional level, and now that partnership comes together to bring more transit options to our local communities,” said RTD Board Chair Lee Kemp. “This is also an important day because it signifies the confidence that the federal government has in RTD as good stewards of taxpayer dollars.”

With today’s award comes RTD’s Notice to Proceed to Denver Transit Partners, the contractor for the Eagle P3 project, to move forward with construction of the Gold Line and a short segment of the Northwest Rail Line to Westminster. Early construction work already has begun on the East Rail Line. These components of FasTracks combine for the largest transit public-private partnership in the nation.

“I applaud RTD for pursuing this innovative public-private partnership to help finance this vital regional link to the nation’s fifth busiest airport, given the adverse economic conditions we all face,” said Denver Mayor Michael Hancock. “It’s an example for other public entities on how bringing private sector resources to the table can keep infrastructure projects moving forward.”

Hundreds attended today’s ceremony in Olde Town Arvada, including many local, state and federal officials. The City of Arvada and Historic Olde Town Arvada hosted several activities around RTD’s ceremony, including a street fair to tie-in local businesses and the economic benefits that the rail line will generate, much like the gold rush of the 19th century.

“Back in the 1850s, this was the site of the first gold find in Colorado, which brought economic prosperity to this area, and now this federal investment will be a catalyst for new and sustained economic prosperity to the area once again,” said Arvada Mayor Bob Frie.

FasTracks is RTD’s voter-approved transit program to expand rail and bus service throughout the Denver metro area. FasTracks will build 122 miles of commuter rail and light rail, 18 miles of bus rapid transit service, add 21,000 new parking spaces, redevelop Denver Union Station and redirect bus service to better connect the eight-county District. The FasTracks investment initiative is projected to create thousands of construction-related jobs during the height of construction, and will pump billions of dollars into the regional economy over the next 20 years.

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