



North Metro Corridor Alternatives Analysis Begins

Project Overview

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) began the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the FasTracks North Metro Corridor in Sept. of this year. FasTracks is a \$4.7 billion, 12-year voter approved plan to expand rail and bus service throughout the RTD service area.

The North Metro Corridor is a proposed 18-mile high-capacity fixed-guideway transit corridor between Denver Union Station (DUS) and the 162nd Avenue area. The North Metro Corridor will greatly expand transit access in the north metro area. This is one of the fastest growing areas in the region and is expected to more than double in population and employment by 2030.

It is anticipated that federal funds will also be needed for the North Metro Corridor project. Because of the federal involvement, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requires that environmental effects be considered in the decision-making process. NEPA requires an evaluation of a reasonable range of alternatives to identify their effects on the social, economic, cultural, physical, and natural environment. The alternatives must include a no-action alternative. The evaluation of impacts of these alternatives is documented in an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

If you would like more information about the North Metro Corridor project, an educational DVD is available through the project website at www.rtdnorthmetro.com, or by calling RTD at 303-299-2000.

Project Status

Scoping	Sept-Oct '06	<i>Completed</i>
Alternatives Development – Initial Alternatives Analysis	Oct-Dec '06	<i>We are here</i>
Alternatives Evaluation – Detailed Alternatives Analysis	Dec-Feb '07	
Select Preferred Alternative	Feb-Mar '07	<i>2007</i>
Basic Engineering	Spring-Summer '07	
Begin Draft EIS Environmental Analysis	Spring-Fall '07	

Next Public Meetings

Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2006
& Thursday, Nov. 30, 2006

Details on page 4

Goals for the North Metro EIS

- Provide a cost-effective, high-capacity, fixed guideway transit option in the North Metro Corridor
- Provide a high-quality and reliable transit service that reduces commute times, reduces delays and encourages travel by more efficient, environmentally-sensitive means than private vehicles
- Provide system linkage with other FasTracks corridors
- Facilitate land use and Transit Oriented Development (TOD) plans in the North Metro Corridor
- Enhance access to jobs, entertainment, recreation, and shopping for existing and future residents of the North Metro Corridor
- Provide equitable transit opportunities regardless of financial means
- Fulfill \$4.7 billion voter approved FasTracks Plan

For more information, visit the project website at:

www.rtdnorthmetro.com

or call the RTD FasTracks Hotline at 303-299-2000.

WHAT'S INSIDE

Alternatives Analysis Begins	1
Project Status	1
Goals for the North Metro EIS	1
Scoping Period	2
What Did We Do in Scoping?	2
Alternatives Development	2
Evaluation and Screening Steps	3
Northeast Area Transit Evaluation	3
Initial Alternatives Map	4
Next Public Meetings	4
How Can You Get Involved?	4

Scoping Period

Scoping is the process of determining the focus and content of an EIS. The scoping process is the first project milestone of the environmental review process, as required by NEPA and SAFETEA-LU (Safe, Accountable, Flexible, and Efficient Transportation Equity Act – A Legacy for Users). The scoping process was initiated when the Notice of Intent (NOI) was published in the Federal Register on Sept. 12, 2006. The Scoping Period was completed on Oct. 31, 2006.

Scoping helps to identify the range of actions, alternatives, environmental effects and mitigation measures to be analyzed. It helps eliminate from detailed study those issues that are not pertinent to the final decision on the proposed project. Scoping is also an effective way to identify the concerns of the public, affected agencies, and other interested parties because all are brought together in the scoping meetings. Scoping is conducted to help ensure that a comprehensive and focused EIS will be prepared that provides a firm basis for the decision-making process.

What Did We Do in Scoping?

The project team:

- Provided a **Public Scoping Booklet** (Newsletter # 1) that presented an overview of the project, its relation to the other FasTracks projects, and how to comment on the project
- Mailed over 60,000 announcements about the project and upcoming Scoping Meetings
- Held two **public scoping meetings**, on Sept. 27, 2006 at Thornton City Council Chambers, and Sept. 28, 2006 at Bruce Randolph Middle School

- Held the **agency scoping meeting** on Oct. 3, 2006, with the agency working group (AWG) and local government team (LGT) in attendance

The **public scoping meetings** began with an open house where stakeholders viewed exhibits on the need for the project, the proposed alternatives, transit modes, and environmental resources in the corridor that may be affected by the project. The project team gave a formal presentation that was followed by a question and answer period.

- 200 citizens and interested stakeholders attended the **public scoping meetings**
- Nearly 200 citizens commented on the project's initial purpose and need statement, initial alternatives, the evaluation criteria, and provided general concerns
- Made special outreach effort in Spanish

Top Items

Approximately 350 comments were received. Representative comments discussed station locations, noise/vibration concerns, alignment locations, transit technology options, and community-neighborhood-social issues. The following trends were noted:

- Pro Comments:
 - Complete the project sooner
 - Interested in New Alternatives
- Concerns
 - Noise/Vibration
 - Property Impacts/Value
 - Train Emissions
 - School/Pedestrian Safety
 - Station Impacts

Top 5 Comment Categories

Comment Category	Percentage	Total
General/Other	16.9%	59
Stations	10.6%	37
Noise/Vibration	10.0%	35
Alignment	8.9%	31
Transit Technology	8.3%	29

Initial public comments were presented to public officials at the agency scoping meeting on Oct. 3, 2006.

Alternatives Development

Initial Alternatives

The initial alternatives presented in the Scoping Booklet used the UPRR Boulder Branch rail corridor alignment from Denver Union Station (DUS). The alternatives varied by technology. The technology included Light Rail Transit (LRT) and two types of heavier commuter rail, Electric Multiple Unit (EMU), and Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU). Both EMU and DMU commuter rail technologies are Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) compliant, based on crash-testing with freight trains. LRT is a non FRA-compliant technology.



Trains must be FRA-compliant to share or cross freight rail tracks.

While the UPRR Boulder rail corridor was the initial alignment, it featured two alignment options:

- Alignment Option 1: UPRR alignment from DUS
- Alignment Option 2: BNSF alignment from DUS to UPRR

Alignments Added After Scoping

Following the scoping period, these three new alignments were added:

- Interstate-25 corridor (LRT only)
- Washington Street corridor (LRT only)
- UPRR/Greeley to Brighton

The alignment alternatives were then matched with appropriate transit technologies. For example, LRT is considered for all of the alignments, but DMU and EMU are only considered applicable for the UPRR Boulder and UPRR Greeley rail corridors.

Alternatives to be Evaluated

- **Alternative 1: No Action**
- **Alternative 2: Transportation System Management/Travel Demand Management**
- **Alternative 3: LRT**, on
 - UPRR Boulder Rail Corridor (with 2 options)
 - I-25 Corridor
 - Washington Street Corridor
 - UPRR/Greeley Rail Corridor
- **Alternative 4: EMU**, on
 - UPRR Boulder Rail Corridor (with 2 options)
 - UPRR/Greeley Rail Corridor
- **Alternative 5: DMU**, on
 - UPRR Boulder Rail Corridor (with 2 options)
 - UPRR/Greeley Rail Corridor

The alternatives to be evaluated are illustrated on the back page of this newsletter.

Evaluation and Screening Steps

Two levels of evaluation and screening with specific criteria have been applied to narrow the range of alternatives to a manageable number for detailed evaluation.

Level 1 Screening focuses on a broad assessment of the potential for each alternative to meet the project's Purpose and Need

PURPOSE

The purpose of the North Metro project is to implement high capacity, fixed-guideway transit within the North Metro corridor between Denver Union Station and the 162nd Avenue area.

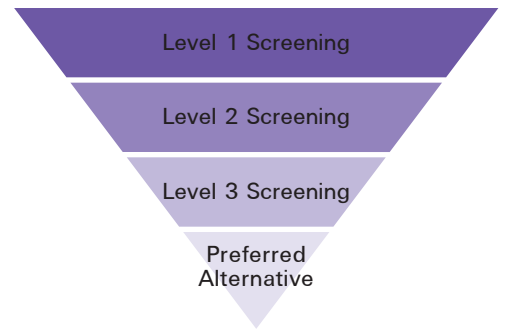
NEED

The North Metro Project is needed to:

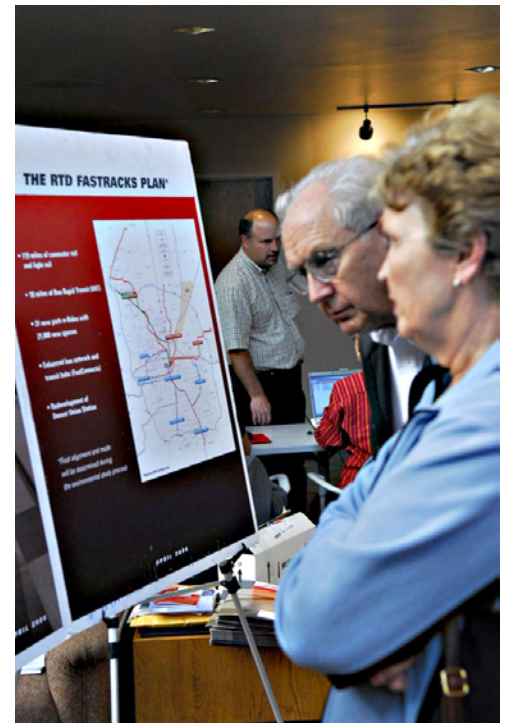
- Improve mobility,
- Enhance regional connectivity,
- Serve traditional and new transit users, and
- Support community and regional plans, including the voter approved FasTracks Plan

Level 2 Screening evaluates:

- Purpose and Need in more detail
- Mobility
- Cost, affordability, and cost-effectiveness
- Community impacts
- Environmental Impacts
- Degree of community and agency support



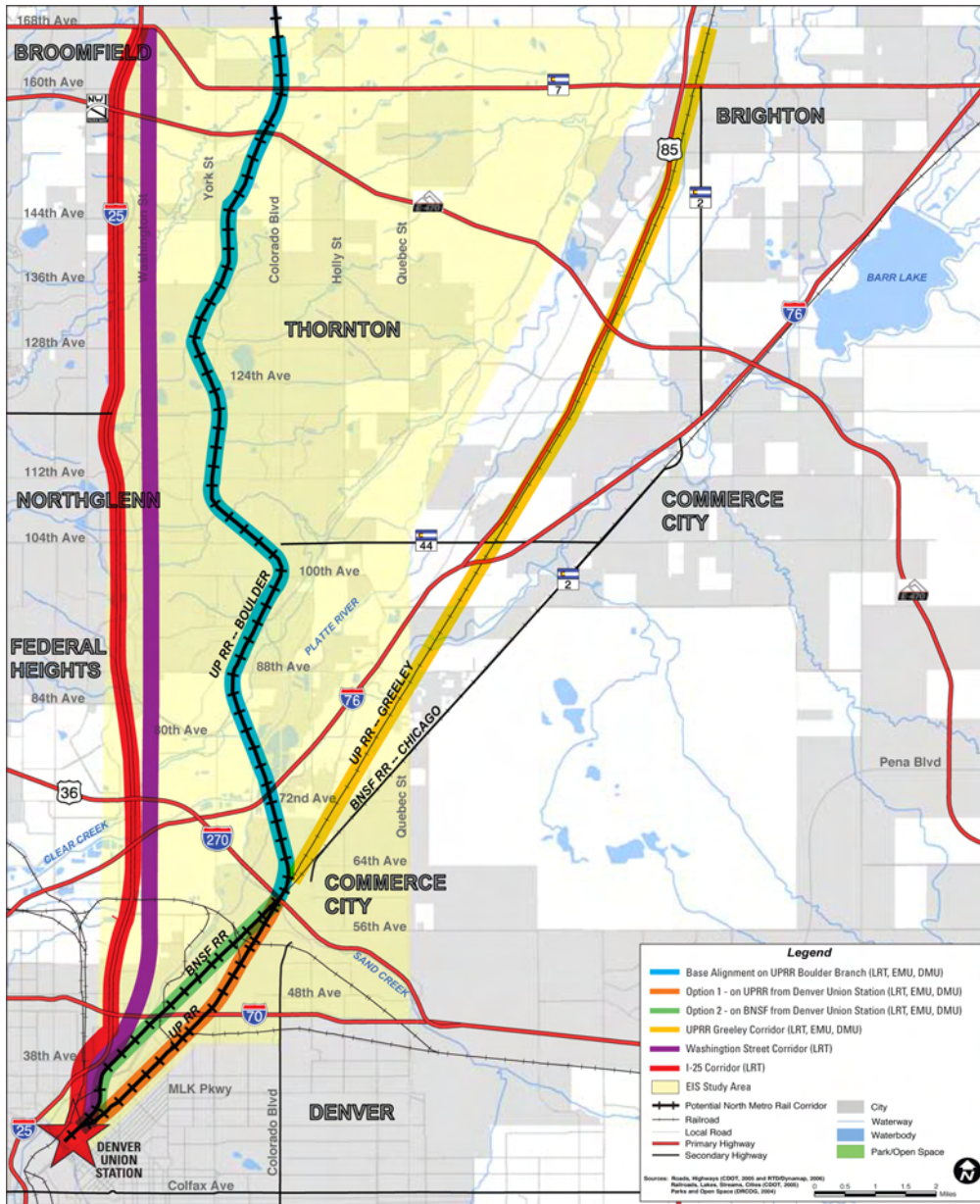
The results of the evaluation for Levels 1 and 2 will be presented at the public meetings. Alternatives advancing from Level 2 will be analyzed in greater detail in the Level 3 analysis.



Northeast Area Transit Evaluation

In conjunction with the North Metro Corridor EIS, RTD is conducting a separate study of future high-capacity transit opportunities in the area generally between US 85 and I-76, north and east of Commerce City to the Weld County Line. A working committee has formed and is in the process of formulating a recommended future transit focus area for Commerce City and Brighton. Stay tuned for more information.

Initial Alternatives Map



Next Public Meetings

Come to either of these two public meetings to get more information about the project and to register your comments on the North Metro Corridor EIS:

Wednesday, Nov. 29, 2006

5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Adams City High School
 4625 East 68th Avenue
 Commerce City, Colorado

Thursday, Nov. 30, 2006

5:30 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

Rocky Top Middle School
 14150 York Street
 Thornton, Colorado

MEETING FORMAT:

5:30 Open House

6:15 Presentation

6:45 Gather Comments

7:30 Open House

How Can You Get Involved?

Public input is critical to making sound transportation investment decisions for the North Metro Corridor. The fastest and easiest way to submit comments is to do it online by visiting www.rtdnorthmetro.com. Written comments can be mailed to:

Dave Shelley, North Metro Corridor EIS Project Manager
 Denver Union Station
 1701 Wynkoop St., Suite 215
 Denver, CO 80202

You are also encouraged to sign up for the project mailing list. We promise your contact information will not be sold, given, rented, or transferred in any way to anyone outside the North Metro Corridor project team, or used for any other purpose than sending out information about FasTracks and the North Metro Corridor project.