



PRESS RELEASE

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RTD FasTracks North Metro Corridor EIS **Community Scoping Meetings**

Denver, CO. - The Regional Transportation District (RTD) has held its first Scoping Meetings for the FasTracks North Metro Corridor, which began the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process in August. Thousands of corridor residents and businesses were invited to attend. The North Metro Corridor is a proposed 18-mile rail transit corridor between Denver Union Station (DUS) and 162nd Avenue. The first step in the North Metro Corridor EIS project is to outline the “scope” or the range of issues, needs, concerns and alternatives to consider in the EIS. Based on the input received during the scoping process, RTD and the North Metro project team will refine and finalize the scope of what will be evaluated in the EIS, as well as its Purpose and Need Statement, the benchmark from which all EIS alternatives are evaluated.

PROJECT LOCATION and DESCRIPTION

The North Metro Corridor is a proposed 18-mile rail transit corridor between Denver Union Station and 162nd Avenue, passing through Denver, Commerce City, Thornton, Northglenn and unincorporated Adams County. As part of the voter-approved FasTracks program, the North Metro Corridor Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will identify the best way to provide a high-quality, reliable, high-capacity, fixed-guideway transit service for the area while improving travel times and enhancing access to jobs, recreation and entertainment.

A Preliminary List of Alternatives was offered to the participants of the scoping meetings. The community was given the opportunity to listen and comment on what they heard. The National Environmental Policy Act requires that, in addition to the proposed “Build” alternatives, a No-Action alternative and a low-cost alternative be evaluated in the EIS. These are Alternatives 1 and 2 in the North Metro project.

Alternative 1: No-Action (NA).

No new improvements constructed other than currently committed projects.

Alternative 2: Transportation System Management/Travel Demand Management (TSM/TDM).

Relatively low-cost improvements to the corridor centering on an enhanced bus system that would be configured to best meet the Purpose and Need for the project. Using the North Metro Transportation Study as a starting point, several “Build” alternatives for high-capacity fixed-guideway transit are being considered during the North Metro EIS. These alternatives would generally use the UPRR right of way north of I-270 and the Sand Creek rail junction. Between I-270 and Denver Union Station, there are two alignment options for the proposed project, as follows:

Alignment Option 1: UPRR Alignment.

North Metro would use the UPRR right-of-way from Denver Union Station through the refinery area to the Sand Creek rail junction at I-270.

Alignment Option 2: BNSF Alignment.

North Metro would use the Burlington Northern Santa Fe right-of-way from Denver Union Station through the refinery area to the Sand Creek rail junction at I-270.

The following three transit technologies will be considered for the "Build" alternatives:

Alternative 3: Light Rail Transit (LRT).

This alternative would consist of electric light rail (the same technology RTD currently uses on its Southwest Line) on new tracks between DUS and 162nd Avenue.

Alternative 4: Electrical Multiple Unit (EMU) Transit.

EMU is an electric commuter train powered via overhead catenary, or electrical wires, like LRT. Unlike LRT, EMU is acceptable by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to share right-of-way corridors with freight trains.

Alternative 5: Diesel Multiple Unit (DMU) Transit.

DMU uses individually powered diesel-engine commuter train vehicles that do not require overhead wires. Like EMU, DMU is acceptable by the FRA to share right-of-way corridors with freight trains. Regardless of the transit technology chosen, the following eight new station locations are anticipated and will be evaluated in the DEIS: Globeville / Swansea, Commerce City, 88th Avenue, 100th Avenue, 112th Avenue, 124th Avenue, 144th Avenue and 162nd Avenue. Other station locations may be considered. These alternatives, as well as any additional alternatives identified during the scoping process, will continue to be refined and evaluated until a Preferred Alternative is selected in early 2007.

Various project representatives were present at the meeting to listen and answer questions. Dave Shelly Project Manager from RTD-FasTracks said, "The North Metro EIS is an important step in implementing the regionally approved FasTracks Plan. We are looking forward to working with the communities in the corridor to create a solution to some of the congestion problems in the north area, a solution that meets the needs of the community and allows us to stay within our established budget."

**For more information, visit the project website at: www.rtdnorthmetro.com
or call the Hotline at (303) 299-2000**

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