

May 1, 2025

**Mr. Cole Neder, MPA**

Senior Transit Manager  
Denver Regional Council of Governments  
1001 17th Street, Suite 700  
Denver, CO 80202  
cneder@drcog.org

Subject: 2025 FasTracks Status Report

Dear Mr. Neder,

The 2025 FasTracks Status Report, submitted for your review and distribution per DRCOG Resolution No. 14 dated September 18, 2013, is attached. This resolution states that RTD is to provide an annual status report to DRCOG on the FasTracks Program for informational purposes.

Ten FasTracks projects have been completed and are in operation. These include:

FasTracks Projects Completed	Date of Completion
West Rail Line (W Line)	April 2013
Denver Union Station (DUS)	August 2011 (Light Rail Station) May 2014 (Bus Concourse) April 2016 (Commuter Rail Operations)
Free MetroRide	May 2014 (suspended 2020, reinstated May 2024 and suspended September 2024)
U.S. 36 Flatiron Flyer Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)	January 2016
East Rail Line (University of Colorado A Line to Denver International Airport)	April 2016
Northwest Rail Line Phase 1 (B Line to Westminster)	July 2016
I-225 Rail Line (R Line)	February 2017
Gold Line (G Line)	April 2019
Southeast Rail Extension (SERE)	May 2019
North Metro (DUS to 124 <sup>th</sup> Avenue)	September 2020

The most recent line to open is the North Metro Commuter Rail Line (DUS to 124th Avenue), which began construction in 2014 and opened for revenue service on September 21, 2020. On September 29, 2024, RTD implemented service changes to increase reliability, improve on-time performance, reinstate school services, and restore regular routes impacted by Phase 1 of the Downtown Rail Reconstruction Project. These changes

included suspension of the Free MetroRide, which had been restored to service May 26, 2024. The Free MallRide, with service detoured on some blocks due to construction, connect Union Station and Civic Center Station.

## **Unfinished Corridors**

Four FasTracks corridors remain unfinished. These include the North Metro Rail Line from 124<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 162<sup>nd</sup> Avenue; the Southwest Rail Extension; the Central Corridor (L Line) Extension, and the Northwest Rail Line (NWR) Phase 2 (Longmont to Westminster). Funding for these projects has not been identified; however, they remain a part of the FasTracks Plan. RTD continues to consider all options and to seek funding for construction and operation of these projects so they can be implemented when funding becomes available.

On May 16, 2024, Governor Jared Polis signed Senate Bill 24-230, titled, Concerning Support for Statewide Remediation Services that Positively Impact the Environment, which, among other things, requires RTD to prioritize the completion of the Northwest Rail (B-Line) and the North Metro (N-Line) corridors of the 2004 voter-approved FasTracks Plan. Additionally, the legislation requires RTD to submit a report to the governor and the General Assembly by July 1, 2025, that demonstrates how RTD will complete the plan's unfinished corridors by 2034. This report is in response to that requirement.

The 2019 Unfinished Corridors Report, previously shared with DRCOG, serves as the primary basis for the SB 24-230 report to the General Assembly and the Governor. The 2019 Unfinished Corridors Report was completed in response to the April 2019 RTD Board Resolution that demonstrated the Board's commitment to finish the FasTracks Plan. This 2025 report, in addition to providing background and updated cost estimates for each of the four remaining corridor projects, will also provide an update and discussion of the other unfinished components of the FasTracks Plan.

## **Northwest Rail Peak Service Study**

The Northwest Rail (NWR) Peak Service Study (the Study) was initiated in April 2022 and was completed in September 2024. The Study evaluated the feasibility of a peak period operation in the 41-mile NWR corridor, which is a part of the FasTracks Plan. Peak period service would consist of weekday commuter rail service with three trips between Longmont and Denver during the morning and three trips between Denver and Longmont in the evening peak periods. The proposed service would use existing freight tracks operating in right-of-way owned by BNSF. Six miles of the NWR are in operation as the B Line from Denver to Westminster, with the remaining 35 miles yet to be constructed. The project is included in the 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan (MVRTP) in the 2040 – 2050 horizon.

Also underway is a parallel study by the Front Range Passenger Rail District (FRPRD) to consider implementation of intercity rail service along the Front Range between Pueblo and Fort Collins that would share the Northwest Corridor tracks between Denver and Longmont. Project Team members from both the NWR and FRPRD projects meet routinely to consider potential opportunities to share resources to determine ways to achieve cost efficiencies and catalyze project implementation.

## FasTracks Financial Forecast

RTD has prepared an updated FasTracks Financial Forecast for inclusion in this report. The basis for this financial forecast is the 2024 Budget and the 2025-2029 Five-year Financial Forecast (FYFF) presented and approved by the RTD Board in July 2024 and September 2024, respectively. The FYFF information has been updated with the following:

- Sales and use taxes include the September 2024 sales and use tax forecast from the University of Colorado Leeds School of Business which remained relatively flat over the five-year forecast from the prior forecast indicating an \$11.8 million or 0.6% decrease. Subsequently, a March 2025 sales and use tax forecast has been received which projects a \$315.6 million decrease from the prior forecast over the five-year period ending 2030. Contributing factors to this projected lower forecast include slow net migration to Colorado, high office vacancies which will result in markdowns for regional banks, household credit delinquencies, and depleted savings. Macroeconomic headwinds include tariffs, federal restructurings, immigration policy and declining consumer confidence. This lower forecast is not reflected in the MTFP included in this report.
- RTD implemented fare changes on January 1, 2024, after completing an 18-month fare study and equity analysis. That study resulted in a simplification of RTD's fares from a local fare, regional fare, and airport fare to only having a single fare and airport fare. In addition, fares were reduced. This has resulted in fares being projected to decrease to 5% of operating costs from a previous level of 7% of operating costs. RTD does not consider this to have a material financial impact.
- RTD has included cost inflationary assumptions in the below FYFF which approximate 5.0% annually over the five-year period as a result of the current inflationary environment and associated contractual increases, including labor.
- Debt service has decreased due to recent refinancings that released debt service reserves and will also produce interest savings.
- FasTracks' debt was structured at a fixed rate upon issuance to delay significant principal payments until 2025 and beyond. The purpose of the debt structure was to provide budget certainty by allowing the Base System to fully pay outstanding bond debt in 2024, thus freeing cash flow from the Base System for FasTracks availability. This support will be necessary during the 2026-2030 FYFF period as the unrestricted fund balance is projected to be utilized for operations, debt service and increases to the FasTracks Internal Savings Account (FISA).
- RTD has prioritized maintaining assets and replacing and repairing assets that are reaching their useful lives. A Capital Replacement Fund has been established and will grow to provide funding for light rail reconstruction efforts as that infrastructure continues to surpass 30 years of usage. Capital reconstruction and replacement for FasTracks is relatively minor in the FYFF period due to the relatively new nature of those assets, however, these needs will grow and require significant investments as those assets age.
- The FISA was established by the RTD Board in 2013 to identify and reserve funds to complete unfinished FasTracks corridors. The FISA will not grow during 2025-2027 due to additional funding requirements of the concessionaire agreement for the A, B and G lines in which additional payments will be made during this period for periodic asset maintenance. Growth in the FISA through 2030 results in the exhaustion of FasTracks unrestricted fund balances.



Ridership on FasTracks projects is expected to continue to remain relatively flat over the near term; RTD makes regular service adjustments according to its system optimization plan, which results from the comprehensive operational analysis, in alignment with customer demand and staffing resources. As a result, RTD anticipates that adequate funding will be available for FasTracks operations and maintenance, however, reserves will decrease.

A current reconciliation of the FasTracks Internal Savings Account (FISA) has been included in this report.

Additional financial challenges that RTD is addressing includes the following:

- Downward revisions of sales and use tax forecasts. Sales and use taxes provide approximately 70% of RTD's funding.
- RTD receives approximately 15% of funding from federal formula grants. RTD expects this funding to continue to be available through the end of the federal fiscal year ending September 2025, however there is uncertainty beyond then due to ongoing federal funding reductions.
- Inflationary pressures and supply chain issues are expected to moderate; however, the past four years of above average growth have exceeded growth in revenues putting additional pressures on fiscal sustainability that will likely contribute to spending constraints.

In conclusion, please note that the updated FasTracks Financial Forecast, FasTracks Program Costs through 2024 (reflects all RTD Board-appropriated funding through 2024), and a current statement of the FasTracks Internal Savings Account (FISA) are attached, as is the FasTracks Progress Map, which summarizes the status of all FasTracks projects. The FISA is provided as an informational item with a note that it is planned for future, though not yet scheduled, consideration regarding utilization. It will be addressed by the RTD Board of Directors at a future date.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have additional questions.

Sincerely,

Susan A. Wood, Planning Project Manager II

#### Attachments

cc: Debra A. Johnson, General Manager & CEO  
Angel Peña, Deputy CEO  
Brian T. Welch, Senior Manager, Planning Technical Services  
Jacob Riger, Long Range Transportation Planning Manager, DRCOG  
FasTracks Document Control



## Five-year Financial Plan - FasTracks (\$000's)

As of 8/19/24

	<b>Projected 2024</b>	<b>2025</b>	<b>2026</b>	<b>2027</b>	<b>2028</b>	<b>2029</b>
1 Fares	\$ 19,286	\$ 20,000	\$ 20,927	\$ 21,346	\$ 21,963	\$ 22,600
2 TABOR Refund	-	-	-	(862)	-	(1,334)
3 Sales and use taxes	330,472	372,232	387,502	403,894	418,780	437,071
4 Grants and contributions	-	-	-	-	-	-
5 Investment income	11,803	6,000	5,000	2,000	1,000	1,000
6 Other income	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>7 Total Revenue</b>	<b>361,561</b>	<b>398,232</b>	<b>413,429</b>	<b>426,378</b>	<b>441,743</b>	<b>459,337</b>
8 Operating expenses	192,121	243,080	211,027	214,576	226,078	242,326
9 Expense projects	-	4,129	2,548	6,690	1,671	1,177
10 To/(From) Capital Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-
11 To/(From) Operating Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-
12 To/(From) FISA Reserve	23,806	-	(69)	6,279	40,057	24,028
13 Transfer from Base	-	-	-	-	-	(26,576)
14 Capital expenditures	-	-	-	-	-	-
15 Debt service	177,222	188,400	219,268	256,366	256,977	254,864
<b>16 Total Expenditures</b>	<b>393,149</b>	<b>435,609</b>	<b>432,774</b>	<b>483,911</b>	<b>524,783</b>	<b>495,819</b>
17 Net sources and uses	(31,588)	(37,377)	(19,345)	(57,533)	(83,040)	(36,482)
18 Operating reserve	52,850	52,850	52,850	52,850	52,850	52,850
19 Capital replacement reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-
20 FISA reserve	190,099	190,099	190,030	196,309	236,366	260,394
21 Unrestricted reserve	233,775	196,398	177,053	119,522	36,482	-
<b>22 Total available reserves</b>	<b>476,724</b>	<b>439,347</b>	<b>420,002</b>	<b>362,469</b>	<b>279,429</b>	<b>242,947</b>



**REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT  
FASTRACKS INTERNAL SAVINGS ACCOUNT (FISA)**  
(In Thousands)

**2025 BUDGET**

	Risk Level	Actual					2025 Budget	Estimated 2026-2028	Estimated 2029-2030	Estimated 2031-2040	Total
		2013-2021	2022	2023	2024	2013-2024					
<b>IDENTIFIED SOURCES:</b>											
Limit Fastracks funding increases for bus and paratransit expansion to CPI	Medium	\$ 82,584	\$ 18,989	\$ 20,614	\$ 21,192	\$ 143,379	\$ 21,776	\$ 68,635	\$ 48,621	\$ 273,651	\$ 556,062
<u>Reduce Fastracks Minimum Unrestricted Fund Balance from \$150 million</u>	<u>Medium</u>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Reduce Fastracks Operating and Maintenance Fund Balance from 3 to 2 months	Medium	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Defer the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) relocation for the SW Corridor Extension	Low	9,000	-	-	-	9,000	-	-	-	-	9,000
Achieve project underruns on Fastracks projects currently under contract <sup>1</sup>	Low	56,304	-	-	-	56,304	-	-	-	-	56,304
Sales and lease opportunities for all RTD properties <sup>2</sup>	Low	14,679	-	-	1,500	16,179	-	-	-	-	16,179
Request local financial participation in projects above the current 2.5%	Low	22,179	-	-	-	22,179	-	-	-	-	22,179
Restore FISA drawdowns for operations between 2031-2040 <sup>3</sup>	Low	-	-	-	-	-	-	16,601	-	-	16,601
Fastracks sales and use tax collections above adopted budget <sup>4</sup>	Low	3,207	-	-	-	3,207	-	-	-	-	3,207
<u>Sales tax audit parity</u>	<u>Low</u>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Sources</b>		<b>187,953</b>	<b>18,989</b>	<b>20,614</b>	<b>22,692</b>	<b>250,248</b>	<b>21,776</b>	<b>85,236</b>	<b>48,621</b>	<b>273,651</b>	<b>679,532</b>
<b>IDENTIFIED USES:</b>											
US36 Project draws <sup>1</sup>		(6,129)	-	-	-	(6,129)	-	-	(33,304)	-	(39,433)
North Metro Project draws		(22,338)	-	-	-	(22,338)	-	-	-	-	(22,338)
Southeast Rail Extension (SERE) Project draws		(22,179)	-	-	-	(22,179)	-	-	-	-	(22,179)
Debt service and operations funding <sup>1,3</sup>		(2)	-	-	-	(2)	(21,776)	(38,969)	-	-	(60,747)
2021/2022 Northwest Rail Study		(8,000)	-	-	-	(8,000)	-	-	-	-	(8,000)
<b>Total Uses</b>		<b>(58,648)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(58,648)</b>	<b>(21,776)</b>	<b>(38,969)</b>	<b>(33,304)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(152,697)</b>
<b>Net Sources and Uses</b>		<b>\$ 129,305</b>	<b>\$ 18,989</b>	<b>\$ 20,614</b>	<b>\$ 22,692</b>	<b>\$ 191,600</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 46,267</b>	<b>\$ 15,317</b>	<b>\$ 273,651</b>	<b>\$ 526,835</b>
<b>Fastracks Internal Savings Account Balance</b>		<b>\$ 129,305</b>	<b>\$ 148,294</b>	<b>\$ 168,908</b>	<b>\$ 191,600</b>	<b>\$ 191,600</b>	<b>\$ 191,600</b>	<b>\$ 237,867</b>	<b>\$ 253,184</b>	<b>\$ 526,835</b>	<b>\$ 526,835</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes approved changes from 2020-2025 Midterm Financial Plan adopted in October 2019 and Long Range Plan adopted in October 2018, plus changes proposed in 2020 Amended Budget.

<sup>2</sup> Sale of Civic Center air rights for \$8,063 less \$2,500 cost of NAMS study - these are Base System funds; plus Fort Lupton property sale of \$4,096; plus Alameda property sale of \$5,140, plus Montebello property sale of \$601, plus \$1,500 29th and Welton property sale

<sup>3</sup> The Long Range Financial Plan adopted in 2018 restores funds drawn from the FISA for operations and debt service to the FISA to the extent of available funding in Fastracks.

<sup>4</sup> The transfer of Fastracks sales and use tax revenues in excess of the annual adopted budget to the FISA was approved by the Board in October 2016.

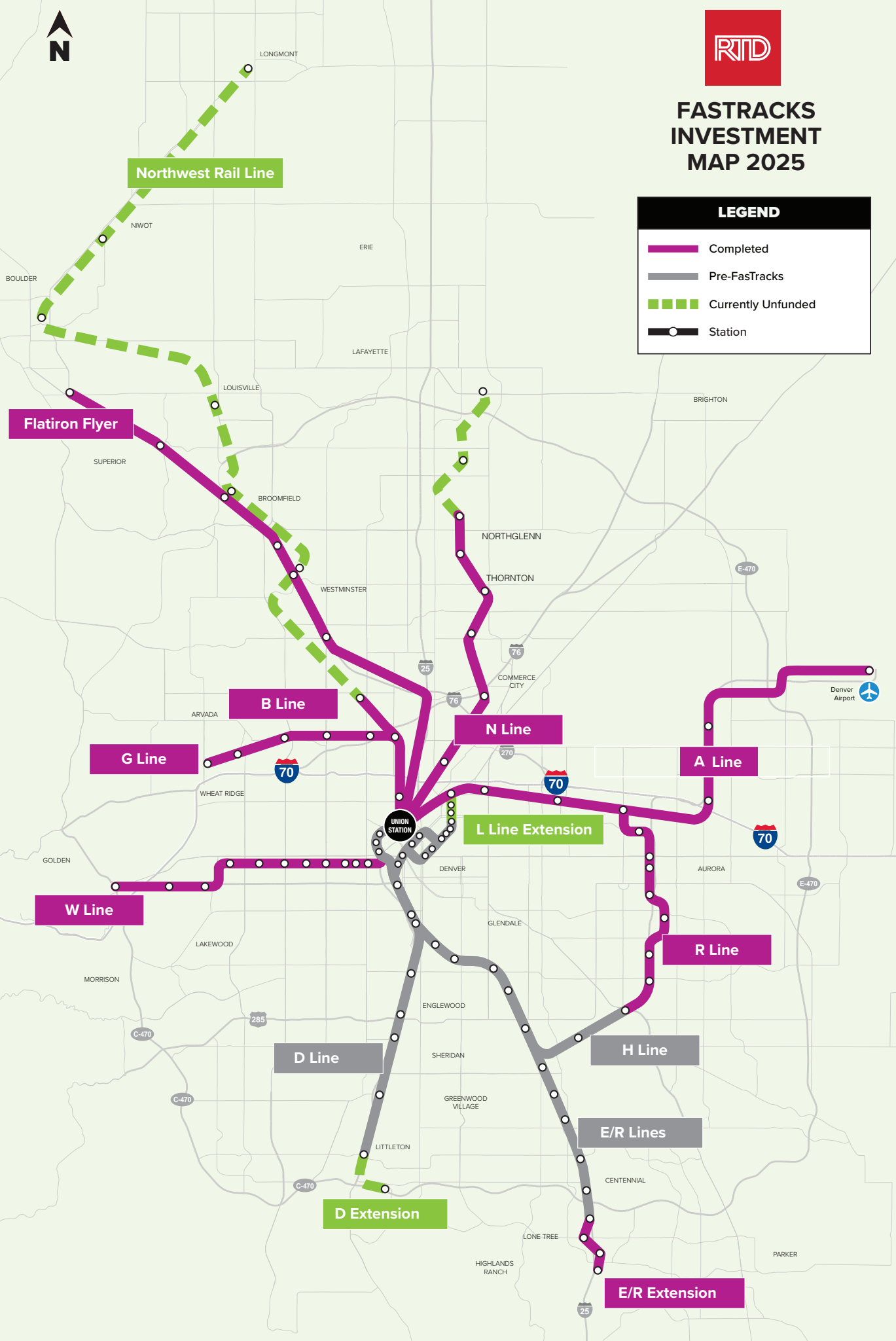
<b>FasTracks Program Costs Through 2024</b>		
<b>(millions of dollars)</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Spent Through 2024</b>	<b>Total Project Budget</b>
Central Extension	\$11.7	\$11.7
Denver Union Station	\$311.2	\$314.2
Eagle Project	\$2,362.8	\$2,869.6
Free MetroRide	\$12.4	\$12.6
I-225	\$655.3	\$676.9
Light Rail Maintenance Facility	\$17.2	\$17.2
Misc. Projects	\$287.8	\$296.6
North Metro	\$780.8	\$851.9
Northwest Rail	\$11.9	\$28.0
Southeast Extension	\$206.1	\$232.9
Southwest Extension	\$24.0	\$24.0
US 36 BRT	\$184.3	\$190.1
West Corridor	\$678.0	\$678.2
<b>Total Program</b>	<b>\$5,543.5</b>	<b>\$6,203.9</b>



# FASTRACKS INVESTMENT MAP 2025

## LEGEND

- Completed
- Pre-FasTracks
- Currently Unfunded
- Station



Northwest Rail Line

Flatiron Flyer

B Line

G Line

W Line

D Line

D Extension

N Line

L Line Extension

R Line

H Line

E/R Lines

E/R Extension

A Line

