

August 18, 2025



Board of Directors
Denver Regional Council of Governments
1001 17th Street, Suite 700
Denver CO 80202



Dear DRCOG Board Members:

The City and County of Denver (Denver) and the Regional Transportation District (RTD) submit for your consideration and approval a proposal for use of the approximately \$780,000 remaining funds in the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) funding allocated as the Second Commitment in Principle (SCIP) to FasTracks and the Central Corridor Extension project.

Denver and RTD have agreed to utilize this funding to complete conceptual design/preliminary engineering, a funding plan, and associated public involvement, for the Central Corridor Extension. Denver and RTD are at a juncture, with the 30-year-old track being considered for replacement and/or reconstruction by 2027. There has been considerable public input in the last several years, suggesting that a "vibrant, transit-rich, business-supporting, pedestrian-friendly, and sustainable" corridor is the preferred outcome for Welton, and the extension of service to the 38th•Blake A Line station, along Downing St.

There are diverse perspectives about the final outcomes fulfilling that quoted vision statement. There have been some requests from neighborhood residents for a two-way Welton St. for pedestrian safety and accessibility reasons. RTD has a responsibility to maintain a state-of-good repair for its current assets, and provide mechanically safe, reliable, and frequent transit service in the corridor. The FasTracks assessment of the rail extension along Downing Street identifies challenges to constructability and an implementation timeline of 2050+. Some business entities along Welton have suggested the rail be removed and replaced with alternative mobility options. Some transit advocates suggest keeping the rail for streetcar-like operations to improve the rail services along the existing corridor, and to complete the FasTracks extension with more rail.

Despite the diversity of opinions about the final outcomes, there is unity of opinion that this is the moment to "get it right" by involving everyone and making decisions together. Replacing track in the existing location could limit other, more community-supported alternatives, from being realistically evaluated for another 30 years (track life).

Concurrent efforts include the Denver Downtown Area Plan, just now reaching draft report stage, and a Welton Streetscaping design effort (City-paid) beginning this summer. The Downtown Area Plan envisions a new green space or park and point of connectivity at Broadway and Welton. The Welton Streetscaping design project envisions upgrading pedestrian safety elements from paint-and-post to concrete curbs and installing a pedestrian plaza at Welton/26th Avenue (the true five-point intersection).

The mobility design/preliminary engineering and funding plan will contain the following elements and may be staffed by a combination of DOTI employees (to allowable limits) and consultants selected through pre-qualified, DBE-eligible mini-bid:

1. **Project Management** – set structure for deliverables, public involvement, monitoring
2. **Stakeholder and Community Engagement** – wide array of participation methods
3. **Existing Conditions and Situation Appraisal** – plans, facilities, and perceptions in the community
4. **Goals for Welton and Downing Streets** – defining “success” for outcomes
5. **Alternatives Development and Evaluation** – synthesizing transportation, business, and community ideas into packages of alternatives; evaluating the effectiveness of the different ways to achieve the goals
6. **Environmental Overview** – fatal-flaw scanning for a range of alternatives, focused information for the preferred alternative
7. **Financial Overview** – determine costs and funding options which are consistent with anticipated future revenues and can be implemented within a community-desired timeframe
8. **Preliminary Design of the Preferred Alternative** – Conceptual/10% design of the preferred alternative

Denver has agreed to provide the required 20% match of approximately \$196,000. RTD has agreed to participate in public outreach efforts for both the streetscaping project, and for this mobility/preliminary engineering project. Denver has agreed to participate in RTD’s Downtown Rail Replacement (DRRP) outreach efforts. Both parties see the value in a coordinated approach to communicating with the public who are residents, employees, or visitors in Denver and transit riders of the RTD system at the same time.

As a result of this effort, RTD and Denver will align investments to community expectations, and seek to accelerate a “transit rich” connection between the Welton Corridor and the 38th•Blake A Line station. Thank you for your consideration of this request and for your support of this FasTracks project.

Sincerely,



Mike Johnston
Mayor of Denver



Debra A. Johnson
General Manager and CEO, RTD