RTD FasTracks Plan Change Report: North Metro and I-225 Rail Lines

December 2013
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Appendix

2035 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan 2013 Cycle 2
FasTracks Amendment – I-225 Rail Line

2035 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan 2013 Cycle 2
FasTracks Amendment – North Metro Rail Line
1.0 INTRODUCTION

This FasTracks Plan Change Report is being prepared in order to fulfill the requirements of DRCOG Resolution 14 (2013). This resolution requires RTD to submit a Change Report whenever RTD proposes changes from the most recent DRCOG-approved FasTracks Plan to any categories listed in SB 90-208.

This Change Report presents a change to both the I-225 Rail Line and the North Metro Rail Line. The I-225 Rail Line alignment change north of the Colfax Station to Peoria Street is described briefly below and more fully in the attached Appendix, 2035 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan 2013 Cycle 2 FasTracks Amendment – I-225 Rail Line. The Change Report also documents a change in the schedule for completion of the North Metro Rail Line from 72nd Avenue to 124th Avenue, which is being accelerated to 2018. This results in construction of the North Metro Rail Line from Denver Union Station (DUS) to 124th Avenue. This change is also documented in the attached 2035 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan 2013 Cycle 2 FasTracks Amendment – North Metro Rail Line.

2.0 PROJECT DEFINITION/SCOPE

2.1 I-225 Rail Line

The I-225 Rail Line is a light rail project (LRT) that begins at Nine Mile Station (I-225 south of Parker Road) and extends north 10.5-miles to an end-of-line station at Smith Road and Peoria Street. At the end-of-line station, a transfer can be made to the East Rail Line with service to the Denver International Airport (DIA).

In June 2013, the RTD Board of directors approved a change in alignment and station location on the I-225 Rail Line. This change moved the alignment along Montview Avenue at the Anschutz/Fitzsimons Medical Campus to a new alignment Fitzsimons Parkway. The station location will also change from Montview to along Fitzsimons Parkway (see Figure 1). The new location is approximately 0.5-mile north or the previous station location. In addition, RTD will construct a grade separation over Peoria Street, which will be a double-track bridge. This will avoid an at-grade crossing at Peoria Street and Montview Avenue.

As a result of this change, the opening day corridor ridership is decreased by approximately five percent, to 16,800 average weekday riders. There is no impact to parking as the original Montview Station did not include parking and the relocated station along Fitzsimons Parkway does not include parking.
Figure 1: I-225 Rail Line Alignment Change
2.2 North Metro Rail Line
As part of the 2004 RTD FasTracks Plan, the full North Metro Corridor is described as an approximately 18.5-mile-long Commuter Rail line extending from DUS through the City and County of Denver, the Cities of Commerce City, Thornton, Northglenn and parts of Adams County.

On November 26, 2013, the RTD Board of Directors approved a proposal from Graham, Balfour Beatty, Hamon Contractors (GBBH)/Regional Rail Partners that included construction of the North Metro Rail Line to the end-of-line at 162nd Avenue. At this time, based on current funding, RTD approved issuance of a Notice to Proceed for construction to 124th Avenue, which will be constructed for a lump sum amount of $343.3 million (see Figure 2). The total cost for the DUS to 124th Avenue is $633.8 million in year-of-expenditure dollars. Acceptance of this proposal will complete the North Metro corridor to 124th Avenue with options to extend to 162nd Avenue as funds become available.

The auto parking at the North Metro Rail Line Stations is not significantly affected by this change. The exception is at the National Western Stock Show Station, parking was reduced from 210 spaces to 40 spaces (see Table 1). This change is due to negotiations with the National Western Stock Show, which resulted in the parking footprint being reduced on the site. There may be options for space sharing to increase parking capacity at this location in the future.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Station</th>
<th>Total Opening Day Auto Parking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National Western Stock Show</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72nd Ave</td>
<td>330</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88th Ave</td>
<td>550</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>104th Ave</td>
<td>880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>112th Ave</td>
<td>310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>124th Ave/Eastlake</td>
<td>410</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>2520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 13.3 mile segment from DUS to 124th Avenue, approximately 7.1 miles is single-track, with double-track segments in four locations from DUS to 38th Street; from south of 72nd Avenue to the South Platte River; from north of Thornton Parkway to just south of 112th Avenue; and from south of 124th Avenue through the station platform.
Figure 2: North Metro Rail Line
3.0 FINANCES

3.1 I-225 Rail Line
As previously documented in the 2035 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan 2013 Cycle 2 FasTracks Amendment – I-225 Rail Line, the cost for the change in alignment from Montview Drive to Fitzsimons Parkway will be managed within the current project budget and contingency. The estimated project cost is $687 million YOE$. This will not change as a result of the alignment change to the I-225 Rail Line.

3.2 North Metro Rail Line
The total cost to construct the North Metro Rail Line from DUS to 124th Avenue is $633.8 million in year-of-expenditure dollars (YOE$). This amount does not include prior expenditures for right-of-way, environmental documentation, or engineering design, but represents the remaining costs to build the line to 124th Avenue. These prior expenditures total $74.5 million. Note that the railroad right-of-way costs that are included in this total were purchased as part of the Boulder Industrial Lead and include the railroad right-of-way cost to complete the North Metro Rail Line to 162nd Avenue. The most recent cost to complete the North Metro Rail Line to 162nd Avenue is $978.7 million YOE$ as reported in the RTD 2012 Annual Program Evaluation.

In response to an RTD Request for Proposals (RFP) issued on June 28, 2013, RTD received four design/build proposals to construct the North Metro Rail Line. In November 2013, the RTD Board voted to award Graham, Balfour Beatty, Hamon Contractors (GBBH)/Regional Rail Partners a lump sum design-build contract for the North Metro Rail Line from DUS to 124th Avenue, in the amount of $343.3 million, retaining an option to extend the line to 162nd Avenue as funding becomes available.

RTD determined that remaining construction costs would be funded through $430 million in net proceeds of Certificates of Participation (COP) that would be issued in the second quarter of 2014 and $203.8 million in proceeds of prior bond issues, pay-as-you-go cash financing, and local match funds.

4.0 IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

4.1 I-225 Rail Line
The scheduled year of completion is mid-2016. The scheduled completion year is not impacted by the alignment change.

4.2 North Metro Rail Line
The scheduled completion date is January 2018 for the DUS to 124th Avenue Station portion of the North Metro Rail Line.

5.0 OPERATING CHARACTERISTICS

5.1 I-225 Rail Line
The planned headways will not be affected by the alignment change.
5.2 North Metro Rail Line
The original FasTracks Plan included 30 minute peak and 60 minute off-peak service for the North Metro Rail Line between DUS and SH 7/162nd Avenue Station. The project also included double-track to 124th Avenue with short turn trains providing 15 minute peak and 30 minute off-peak service between DUS and 124th Avenue Station. During the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), the short turn at 124th Avenue Station was eliminated and all trains were defined to operate between DUS and 162nd Avenue Station with 15 minute peak and 30 minute off-peak headways.

The first segment of the North Metro Rail Line from DUS to 124th Avenue is planned to be complete in 2018. The 124th Avenue Station is considered to be a logical terminus as is evidenced by the original plan to run additional service to 124th Avenue. In order to be able to build as far north as North Metro to 124th Avenue by 2018 a decision was made to design enough double-track and procure sufficient vehicles to run 20 minute peak service instead of 15 minute peak service. As such, RTD plans for the North Metro Rail Line to open with 20 minute peak and 30 minute off-peak headways between DUS and 124th Avenue. RTD has the ability to add additional track in the future to achieve the planned 15 minute peak service. This segment will initially be operated with two-car EMU trains and expand to four-car trains as ridership warrants increased capacity.

6.0 LEVEL OF BUS SERVICE

6.1 I-225 Rail Line
The levels of bus service District-wide will not be affected by this change.

6.2 North Metro Rail Line
The levels of bus service District-wide will not be affected by this change.
APPENDIX
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2035 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan
2013 Cycle 2 FasTracks Amendment –
I-225 Rail Line

September 2013
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1.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT

This Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Amendment for the 2013 Cycle 2 process is being prepared in order to present a change in the I-225 Rail Line alignment north of the Colfax Station to Peoria Street. The change is described below in Section 1.1.

1.1 I-225 Rail Line

The I-225 Rail Line is a light rail project (LRT) that begins at Nine Mile Station (I-225 south of Parker Road) and extends north 10.5-miles to an end-of-line station at Smith Road and Peoria Street. At the end-of-line station, a transfer can be made to the East Rail Line with service to the Denver International Airport (DIA).

In June 2013, the RTD Board of directors approved a change in alignment and station location on the I-225 Rail Line. This change moved the alignment along Montview Avenue at the Anschutz/Fitzsimons Medical Campus to a new alignment Fitzsimons Parkway. The station location will also change from Montview to along Fitzsimons Parkway. The exact location will be defined as part of a collaborative effort with the City of Aurora, the University of Colorado stakeholders as well as public input. A general depiction of the changes is shown in Figure 1.
2.0 BENEFITS TO BE REALIZED FROM THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The FasTracks Plan, approved by the voters in 2004, will provide an enhanced region-wide transit system to respond to growing transportation needs and improve traffic congestion by offering transportation choices. The proposed amendment includes an alignment and station change to the I-225 Rail Line, a FasTracks project. The amendment is necessary to meet the federal requirements for a fiscally-constrained RTP, which is a requirement for funding projects within the DRCOG region. Specific benefits from the I-225 Rail Line project to be amended are:

The alignment change from Montview Drive to Fitzsimons Parkway is necessitated because of concerns from the University of Colorado that electromagnetic interference (EMI) and vibration from the I-225 light rail line could interfere with highly sensitive medical research equipment and put the University at a disadvantage in attracting national and international medical research to its campus. The new alignment will eliminate the potential for EMI and vibration. Further, the new alignment will likely result in:

- Reduction in at-grade crossings, which will minimize interaction with automobile traffic and pedestrians.
- Faster train speeds resulting in improved travel times.
- Minimal property acquisition needs.
- Minimal impacts to roadway connections.
- Connectivity to adjacent neighborhoods.

3.0 EXPLANATION OF WHY THE AMENDMENT MUST BE MADE NOW

The proposed amendment is necessary at this time for the following reasons:

Construction of the I-225 Rail Line is underway, having broken ground for Segment 2 on March 1, 2013. It is scheduled to be completed and service initiated in 2016. This change in design comes late in the project development, design, and construction process. Therefore, to ensure that the I-225 Rail Line is appropriately and accurately included in the 2035 RTP, a timely amendment is needed to coincide with efforts to design, and to precede efforts to construct, the project with this new alignment.

4.0 EFFECTS ON OTHER DRCOG PLANS

This amendment to the fiscally-constrained RTP is not anticipated to have any effect on other DRCOG plans.

5.0 IF THE PROPOSAL WOULD CHANGE A PLAN POLICY, IDENTIFY THE POLICY AND PROVIDE THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGE

The proposed amendment will not change a plan policy.
6.0 ESTIMATED PROJECT COST AND YEAR OF COMPLETION

- Estimated project cost: $687 million YOE$.
- Scheduled year of completion: 2016

7.0 SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT

The cost for the change in alignment from Montview Drive to Fitzsimons Parkway will be managed within the current project budget and contingency.

8.0 IDENTIFY OTHER ENTITIES THAT ARE DIRECTLY IMPACTED AND ATTACH ENDORSEMENT OR CONCURRENCE DOCUMENTS FROM THEM

The change in alignment is necessitated because of concerns from the University of Colorado that EMI and vibration from the I-225 light rail line could interfere with highly sensitive medical research equipment and put the University at a disadvantage in attracting national and international medical research to its campus. The original alignment bisected the Anschutz/Fitzsimons Medical Campus. Moving the alignment and corresponding station north to Fitzsimons Parkway would alleviate their concerns. A letter from Bruce Benson, President of the University of Colorado system requesting and supporting the alignment change, is attached.
May 28, 2013

Ms. Lorraine Anderson, Board Chair
Regional Transportation District
1600 Blake Street
Denver, CO 80202

Mr. Phillip A. Washington
General Manager
Regional Transportation District
1600 Blake Street
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Ms. Anderson & Mr. Washington,

The University of Colorado is vitally interested in the proposed RTD light rail line that will service the CU Anschutz Medical Campus, University Physicians, Inc., University of Colorado Hospital, Children’s Hospital Colorado, Veterans Affairs Medical Center, and the Fitzsimmons Redevelopment Authority (FRA) bioscience and technology park. We recognize the value and importance of having this RTD public transportation infrastructure serve what we plan will be one of the nation’s state-of-the-art teaching, research and clinical complexes located in the City of Aurora.

As we are now completing the next ten-year Site Wide Coordinated Master Plan for this integrated square mile site, we want to ensure that our present $4 billion investment attracts the nation’s most qualified and dedicated professionals and technological advances to meet our long-term goals of Stewardship, Innovation and Connectivity. Having the RTD light rail line serving this site only enhances and expedites the achievement of these goals.

We recognize that an enormous amount of planning for this light rail line has already been accomplished. We are also cognizant of the fact that the dynamics of technological advances and services are evolving rapidly and that we must keep pace to be nationally and internationally competitive. More specifically, the development of state-of-the-art research equipment and clinical care diagnosis and testing equipment plays a critical role in achieving and maintaining that competitiveness. The Anschutz campus is the home to ~$500 million annually of grant funded medical research as well as $1.5 B of world-class clinical facilities. Both enterprises are highly reliant on very advanced and extremely sensitive equipment some of which is rendered unreliable under certain conditions. It is in our mutual interest to take every step possible to preserve an environment that accommodates this highly-sensitive equipment in support of our federal and private sector research activities.

It is in that regard that we express our strong concerns about the potential adverse impacts of electromagnetic interference (EMI) and vibrations from the proposed RTD alignment along Montview adjacent to both existing and planned research and clinical facilities with highly sensitive equipment. We have consulted experts on this matter and investigated the experience of other medical campuses that have encountered this same problem. At present the medical research community has very limited history and experience with the interface of sensitive medical research equipment and the kinds of EMI and vibration that will be generated.
Ms. Lorraine Anderson  
Mr. Phillip A. Washington  
May 28, 2013  
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by a light rail in close proximity. Mitigation strategies that have been applied to similar situations could cost us an additional $13.3 to $17 million along the Montview alignment—with no guarantee that they will be as effective as would be needed for the research requirements of a pre-eminent university. These additional mitigation costs have not been accounted for in any of the partner’s planning and budgeting. Moreover, we can ill afford to have a public perception in the broader research and health science community that we have compromised our abilities to protect the physical integrity of these planned host research sites.

RTD staff has estimated that to mitigate EMI and vibration impacts by constructing a floating rail bed and remediating hazardous soil in the area could cost approximately $20 million. In addition, delay costs to implement these mitigation measures could cost an additional $20-25 million. Reconstruction of Montview would add another $5 million and with other incidentals the total mitigation and reconstruction cost could approach $58-60 million. These estimates do not consider the operational costs of monitoring mitigation performance or replacement of such measures in the future.

Therefore, we request that the RTD Board relocate the Montview alignment and attendant station to a Fitzsimmons Parkway location ½ mile to the north. Because we also want to ensure that this new location will adequately serve the campus and FRA site, we asked the RTD staff to rerun the ridership model to assess the impact of this relocation. Their results indicate that in the short term the service to the site would only vary by + or - 5% considering the entire corridor and that this variance is within the “noise” of the modeling process. Moreover, because we are planning a major parking facility adjacent to the Fitzsimmons Parkway location with shuttle service to the center of the campus which was not factored into this modeling process, we believe that in the long term this new location will provide even greater benefits to the campus and site as a whole. Further, we believe that a Fitzsimmons Parkway station location would provide greater access to the surrounding neighborhoods that wish to use the RTD light rail in contrast to the present Montview alignment and station location.

We want to work collaboratively with RTD, the City of Aurora, FRA and the surrounding community to find the best transportation solutions for the Site Wide Master Plan. We hope that you will give our requests serious consideration for the benefit of a long-term success of this important community and national asset.

Sincerely,

Bruce D. Benson  
CU President

cc: Barbara Deadwyler, RTD Board member District B  
Steve Hogan, Mayor of Aurora  
Steve VanNurden, President of FRA  
John Shaw, FRA Board Chairman  
Donald Elliman, Chancellor for University of Colorado Denver  
Lilly Marks, CU Vice President for Health Affairs and Executive Vice Chancellor for the Anschutz Medical Campus  
Mike Coffman, U.S. Representative
2035 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan
2013 Cycle 2 FasTracks Amendment –
North Metro Rail Line

November 2013
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1.0 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT

This Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) Amendment for the 2013 Cycle 2 process is being prepared in order to change the timing and extent of the North Metro Rail Line project.

The North Metro Rail Line is a commuter rail project (EMU) that begins at Denver Union Station (DUS) and extends north 18.4 miles to SH 7/162nd Avenue traversing the jurisdictions of Denver, Commerce City, Adams County, Northglenn, and Thornton. A 13.3-mile portion of the project from DUS to 124th Avenue will be completed by 2018 (see Figure 1). The remainder of the project (from 124th Avenue to SH 7/162nd Avenue) will be completed as funds become available, but it is currently not included in this RTP Amendment.

In the current RTP, the initial phase of the North Metro Rail Line (DUS to 72nd Avenue) is scheduled to be completed in 2018. Due to the availability of additional funding (see Section 7.0), the segment from 72nd Avenue to 124th Avenue will be constructed with the initial phase. Therefore, the entire portion from DUS to 124th Avenue is scheduled for completion and revenue service in 2018.
Figure 1: North Metro Rail Line
2.0 BENEFITS TO BE REALIZED FROM THE PROPOSED AMENDMENT

The FasTracks Plan, approved by the voters in 2004, will provide an enhanced region-wide transit system to respond to growing transportation needs and improve traffic congestion by offering transportation choices. This amendment is necessary to meet the federal requirements for a fiscally-constrained RTP, which is a requirement for funding projects within the DRCOG region.

In the current RTP, the initial phase of the North Metro Rail Line (DUS to 72nd Avenue) is scheduled to be completed in 2018. Due to the availability of additional funding, the segment from 72nd Avenue to 124th Avenue will be constructed with the initial phase. Therefore, the entire portion from DUS to 124th Avenue is scheduled for completion and revenue service in 2018. The accelerated schedule will provide major benefits to RTD, the FasTracks program and the entire region.

- It demonstrates RTD’s commitment to the northern suburbs toward completion of the FasTracks program.
- It provides a firm, fixed price commitment to complete a key part of the FasTracks program. It also provides a fixed capital cost. The commitment to this cost and scope is not likely to be available at a later time due to time escalation of prices.
- Completion of this North Metro Rail Line maximizes mobility for transit dependents both temporary and long-term, to key job centers and provides clean, safe, reliable, accessible and cost effective transportation in keeping with RTD’s overall mission.
- The line provides access for northern residents to major employment centers in downtown Denver and the Denver Tech Center.
- The North Metro Rail Line connects Thornton, Northglenn, Commerce City and parts of Adams County with all other rail lines via DUS and provides regional connectivity to a major portion of the metro area, including DIA.

3.0 EXPLANATION OF WHY THE AMENDMENT MUST BE MADE NOW

The initial construction phase of the North Metro Rail Line from DUS to 72nd Avenue, scheduled for completion in 2018, was included in the 2035 fiscally-constrained RTP via the 2013 Cycle 1 Amendment process. This Amendment is requested pursuant to the 2013 Cycle 2 amendment process to include the additional portion of North Metro from 72nd Avenue to 124th Avenue in the initial phase of construction.

On November 26, 2013, the RTD Board of Directors approved a proposal from Graham, Balfour Beatty, Hamon Contractors (GBBH)/Regional Rail Partners to construct the North Metro Rail Line from DUS to 124th Avenue with a 2018 date for completion. The amendment is requested at this time in order to execute a contract with GBBH/Regional Rail Partners at this time. As stated above, there are both local and regional benefits to accelerated completion of the North Metro Rail Line.

Further, to maintain a fiscally-constrained RTP, which is regionally significant, an amendment to the current RTP must be made in the 2013 Cycle 2 time frame. Amending at this time to change the completion date to 2018, will facilitate a finding of air quality conformity, which is necessary for a fiscally-constrained RTP.
4.0 EFFECTS ON OTHER DRCOG PLANS

This amendment to the fiscally-constrained RTP is not anticipated to have any effect on other DRCOG plans.

5.0 IF THE PROPOSAL WOULD CHANGE A PLAN POLICY, IDENTIFY THE POLICY AND PROVIDE THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGE

The proposed amendment will not change a plan policy.

6.0 ESTIMATED PROJECT COST AND YEAR OF COMPLETION

- Estimated project cost: $633.8 million YOE$.
- Scheduled year of completion: January 2018

7.0 SOURCES OF FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT

The total cost to construct the North Metro Rail Line from DUS to 124th Avenue is $633.8 million in year-of-expenditure dollars. This amount does not include prior expenditures for right-of-way, environmental documentation, or engineering design, but represents the remaining costs to build the line to 124th Avenue.

In response to an RTD Request for Proposals (RFP) issued on June 28, 2013, RTD received four design/build proposals to construct the North Metro Rail Line. In November 2013, the RTD Board voted to award Graham, Balfour Beatty, Hamon Contractors (GBH)/Regional Rail Partners a lump sum design-build contract for the North Metro Rail Line from DUS to 124th Avenue, in the amount of $343.3 million, retaining an option to extend the line to 162nd Avenue as funding becomes available.

RTD determined that remaining construction costs would be funded through $430 million in net proceeds of Certificates of Participation that would be issued in the second quarter of 2014 and $203.8 million in proceeds of prior bond issues, pay-as-you-go cash financing, and local match funds.

Please see the attached Financial Summary in Appendix A.

8.0 IDENTIFY OTHER ENTITIES THAT ARE DIRECTLY IMPACTED AND ATTACH ENDORSEMENT OR CONCURRENCE DOCUMENTS FROM THEM

There is overwhelming support from Adams County and the North Denver Metropolitan area cities, as well as the City of Aurora and the University of Colorado, to complete the segment in an earlier timeframe. Attached, in Appendix B, are letters from the North Area Transportation Alliance (NATA), University of Colorado, Smart Commute Metro North (North Area Transportation Management Organization), and the Cities of Aurora, Thornton, Northglenn, and Commerce City expressing support.
Appendix A
Financial Summary
RTP AMENDMENT – NOVEMBER 2013

Major Changes from Prior Financial Plan

In February 2013, the RTD Board of Directors adopted an amended financial plan which assumed that the following components of FasTracks would be completed by 2035:

- West Rail Line: Complete 2013
- Denver Union Station:
  - LRT: Complete 2011
  - Underground Bus Facility: Complete 2014
  - Commuter Rail: Complete 2016
- I-25: Complete 2016
- Eagle Project: Complete 2016
- Northwest Rail - Longmont Station: Complete 2015
- Central Corridor Extension - Planning Study: Complete 2012/2013
- US 36 BRT:
  - $120M for Managed Lanes to 88th Street: 2012-2014
  - Table Mesa Pedestrian Bridge: Complete 2013
  - $15M for Managed Lanes to Table Mesa: 2014/2015
  - Remaining RTD funding commitment available: 2030-2035
- North Metro:
  - Construction to 72nd Avenue: 2018
- Southeast Corridor Extension: Complete assuming 50% federal grant funding 2030-2035

In February 2013, RTD received an Unsolicited Proposal from Graham Contracting Limited related to the North Metro Rail Line. In March 2013, following RTD staff review and evaluation of the Graham Contracting Limited proposal, it was determined that it did have technical merit and consistent with RTD policy, a competitive procurement process was initiated. The RTD staff completed development of a design/build and financial solutions Request for Proposals (RFP), which was advertised on June 28, 2013. This RFP includes two phases related to the North Metro Rail Line:

- Phase 1: Design/Build from DUS to 72nd Avenue
- Phase 2: Design/Build on four individual segments from 72nd Avenue to end of line at 162nd Avenue (72nd–88th, 88th-104th, 104th-124th, 124th-162nd), and offer financial solutions

After review of the financial proposals, staff determined that it would be in RTD’s best interest to finance construction of the North Metro Rail Line through RTD issuance of Certificates of Participation (COPs) with the North Metro Rail Line as the collateral. Staff modeled financial alternatives to determine how much of the North Metro Rail Line could be built and operated within RTD’s current projected financial capacity. The financial projections considered the contractors bid, RTD’s internal costs for items such as ROW, vehicles, and construction management, future costs to operate the line, and debt service on the COPs. In addition, the projections used in this analysis considered the impacts of an increase in COP interest rates due to potential market movement between today and the time the COPs are issued (50bps) and a potential ratings downgrade on RTD COPs (40bps). When RTD last issued COPs in April, 2013, Standard & Poors, Moody’s and Fitch all indicated that they could potentially take a negative rating action if the District were to issue a significant amount of debt beyond what was planned.
at that point in time. Should RTD COPs be downgraded, the COPs would likely still be considered as
having a credit rating in the upper medium investment grade. This analysis determined that RTD would
have the capacity to build and operate the corridor to 124th Avenue while maintaining the Board 1.2
times net revenue, bond test, and allowing fund balance policy.

In the past RTD has utilized sales tax bond financing for various projects. This type of financing is
only repayable from the revenue streams pledged by the District. Under a Certificate of Participation
(COP) structure, RTD leases certain assets then makes rental payments under the lease which is
subject to annual appropriation by the Board of Directors. The COPs are sold to investors and are
evidenced by assignments of proportionate interests in the rights to receive payments under the
lease. COP investors accept the risk of future non-appropriation by the RTD Board of Directors and
this risk to the investor is reflected in the COPs credit rating as well as the interest rate of the COPs.

The leased assets serve as collateral for the COPs such that, in the event of RTD non-appropriation
or default, the leased assets may be sold, re-leased, repossessed, liquidated or otherwise disposed
of with proceeds being utilized to redeem COPs for the investors. Risk to RTD is not substantially
different between bond financing and COP financing, although the COP financing is more expensive.

In November 2013 the RTD Board voted to award a design-build contract for the North Metro Corridor
to 124th Avenue, retaining an option to extend the corridor to 162nd Avenue as funding becomes
available.

Sources and Uses for Corridors with Changes

The total additional cost for the DUS to 124th Avenue Station segment of the North Metro Rail Line is
$633.8 million in year-of-expenditure dollars. This does not include prior expenditures for right-of-way,
environmental documentation, or Preliminary Engineering, but represents the remaining costs to build
the segment. Remaining construction costs for this segment would be funded through $430 million in
net proceeds of Certificates of Participation to be issued in the second quarter of 2014, and a total of
$203.8 million in proceeds of prior bond issues, pay-as-you-go cash financing, and local match funds.
The allocation of prior sales tax bonds proceeds and pay-go cash would depend on the timing of
expenditures on the North Metro project relative to those for other corridors. All these methods of
finance were included in the original FasTracks Plan adopted by the RTD Board of Directors and
approved by DRCOG through the Senate Bill 208 review process in 2004.

Implication of Financial Plan Changes on Other Projects in the Financial Plan

The acceleration of completion of the North Metro Rail Line to 124th Avenue would have no impact on
the schedule for the completion of the other elements of the RTP. All other projects would remain on
the current schedule.

The current financial plan provides for construction and operation of the North Metro Rail Line to 124th
Avenue, and still maintains healthy fund balances. RTD's projected minimum combined fund balance,
between the unrestricted fund balance and the FasTracks Internal Savings Account, would be $123
million in 2029. In addition, this action would accelerate the completion of a key element of the
FasTracks program from beyond the time horizon of the current RTP into 2018.
Appendix B
Letters of Support
November 14, 2013

Board of Directors,
Regional Transportation District
1600 Blake Street
Denver, CO 80202

The North Area Transportation Alliance would first like to take this opportunity to thank RTD for developing an innovative and thorough RFP, which attracted four top teams to bid on construction of the North Metro corridor. We also want to extend our appreciation to the four teams for their time and effort they dedicated to putting their proposals together. We are grateful too for the positive, meaningful role the North Metro corridor stakeholders’ group was afforded in developing the RFP and participating in the proposal selection process. Because the stakeholder group and the RTD Technical Evaluation Committee arrived at the same recommendation, we are confident the Graham, Balfour Beatty & Hamon team, or GBBH is the right team to build the first phase of North Metro from Denver Union Station to 124th Avenue (Eastlake) Station.

To that end, NATA urges the RTD Board to approve the recommended action, authorizing the General Manager to award the design/build contract and negotiate final terms with GBBH.

NATA and the local stakeholders along North Metro will continue to collaborate with RTD and the GBBH Team throughout construction, as well as support RTD's amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan -through the DRCOG process.

We understand that as part of the RFP, and through upcoming negotiations, the contract will include a provision that provides RTD an option to extend the contract to build North Metro from 124th to 162nd. We view this as a very positive sign of RTD and the contractor’s desire to complete the entire line by 2020.

Thank you for your diligence in this matter. Please let us know if we can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

[Signature]
Erik Hansen, Chair

Cc: NATA Members
November 8, 2013

Board of Directors
Regional Transportation District
1600 Blake Street
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Board Members:

I understand that the Board will soon consider a contract with Graham, Balfour Beatty, Homan Constructors (GBBH) for the design and build of the North Metro Rail Line. I write to express my full support. I believe the GBBH proposal represents an innovative public private solution to assist RTD in completing the FasTracks project.

When the City was before the Board 18 months ago advocating for the I-225 line, we expressed our commitment to the completion of the entire FasTracks project. I reiterated our commitment today. I believe the full potential of FasTracks can only be fulfilled when all segments are complete as one system. The GBBH proposal represents another step toward that full completion and makes maximum use of available resources.

As you recall, the RTD Board, using the same unsolicited proposal process, approved the public private partnership with Kiewit to build the I-225 light rail line. It was RTD’s willingness to entertain such a proposal that led to construction on the I-225 line. This innovative public private project will provide the City with a new “main street,” consisting of 10.5 miles, 8 stations, and connectivity for citizens and businesses throughout Aurora. We believe the GBBH proposal represents the same opportunity for our regional partners in the north.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Steve Hogan
Mayor, City of Aurora
November 14, 2013
RE: Contractor Recommendation for North Metro Rail Line

Dear RTD Board of Directors:

I apologize I cannot be at your meeting in person tonight but I have three previously scheduled engagements for this evening. However, because this project is important to the University of Colorado, I want to share my thoughts.

It was just over a year ago when I was here to show my strong support for your plan to build out the I-25 Light Rail Line. Tonight I want to show my support again because RTD’s plans are critical to the University of Colorado. Effective transportation among our four campuses and related operations is vital to the university. Our 58,000 students and 27,000 employees depend on an effective network of transportation options. CU is Colorado’s third-largest employer, so we have a vested interest in smooth-running transportation.

Additionally, the university creates a number of startup companies and contributes substantial intellectual capital to some of Colorado’s key economic sectors, including aerospace, energy, health care and biotechnology. This makes us a magnet for companies looking to relocate here. Transportation is a key issue for them as well.

While we all advocate for completing the projects that directly benefit our communities, it is important that the whole region stay focused on the value that completing the FasTracks program brings to all of us.

This proposal by Graham, Balfour Beatty, Hamon (GBBH) provides a clear path for how to enhance our regional connectivity, and it allows us to make great strides toward bringing another FasTracks project to life.

Just as we at the University of Colorado continuously work to invest in the future through education, you here at RTD are putting forth the same commitment to invest in the future of the traveling public. That is why my staff and I can appreciate the hard work and vigilance you represent as leaders in the region.

The fact that RTD is now in a position to build the North Metro Line most of the way by using your own financing opportunities is even better. And it shows how quickly things change and how RTD is ready to respond as the economic picture makes it possible to do what you were not able to do before.

Accelerating your competitive process demonstrates RTD’s commitment to making investments in the northern suburbs as we keep FasTracks moving forward.

RTD’s bold “call for innovations” to the private sector is bearing fruit. The market is speaking to your call for creative thinking on how to get projects done despite challenging times.

I commend the RTD Board of Directors, General Manager Phil Washington and RTD staff for continuing to find ways to get these FasTracks projects done sooner rather than later.

I encourage you to move forward with this proposal from GBBH to build the North Metro Rail Line.

Sincerely,

Bruce D. Benson
President, University of Colorado
cc: Phil Washington, General Manager, Regional Transportation District

Office of the President
1800 Grant Street, Suite 800 • 35 UCA • Denver, Colorado 80203-1187
f 303 860 5600 • f 303 860 5610
November 13, 2013

Regional Transportation District Board of Directors
1600 Blake Street
Denver, CO 80202

RE: North Metro Rail Line Proposal

Dear Board of Directors,

The Mayor and City Council are out of town at a conference and unable to attend the public meeting on Thursday, November 14, 2013 and asked me to express their support of the RTD staff recommended proposal submitted by Graham, Balfour Beatty, Hamon Constructors ("GBBH") to design and build the North Metro Rail Line to 124th Avenue. It is our understanding that the BGGH proposal includes constructing phase one from Denver Union Station to 124th Avenue by January 2018 plus an option to build out the complete North Metro Rail Line to 162nd as additional funds become available.

GBBH was the unanimous choice of the RTD staff committees and stakeholder committee, which included representatives from Thornton, Northglenn, Commerce City, City and County of Denver, Adams County, and the Colorado Department of Transportation.

We want to thank the RTD Board and staff for your efforts to continually pursue the construction of this line which will serve the 122,000+ residents of Thornton as well as the many residents and commuters living in the north east quadrant of the Denver metropolitan area.

Again, thank you and the RTD staff for pursuing this proposal. We look forward to working with you to see the line completed to 162nd Avenue.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Jack Ethridge, City Manager
cc: Thornton City Council
November 14, 2013

Dear Board of Directors:

I am here tonight on behalf of the City of Northglenn to speak on the four proposals received for North Metro RFP. The City of Northglenn as well as the other communities in the north metro area have been waiting for this day for a long time.

On behalf of the city of Northglenn, I would like to voice our support for the Graham Balfour Beatty Hamon proposal. Northglenn asks you to please approve the recommended action. It has been a long time coming and hopefully after tonight the wait will be over for the north metro area.
I would like to thank the RTD Board of Directors for their cooperation in evaluating these bids. This process has shown what can be accomplished when we all work together. I thank you for allowing our staff to participate in the Stakeholder Review Committee. When I go out and speak to residents I’ve been able to reassure them that this is moving forward because the staff present at those meetings has reassured me. That is invaluable. I thank you for it.

I have full and complete confidence in the Stakeholder Committee and RTD’s Staff’s recommendation of Graham Balfour Beatty Hamon. If those very knowledgeable and professional people unanimously agree that this is the best course to take then we should take it.

Northglenn understands that this proposal will have two phases. As Mayor of Northglenn I am very glad that the first phase ends at 124th Avenue. However, I would ask the RTD Board of Directors to continue with all due diligence in their pursuit of the completion of the North Metro corridor to the end of the line at 162nd and fulfill the commitment to the north metro communities.

Northglenn recognizes the challenges that lay before us in completing this transit line. We commend the RTD Board and Staff in coming together with the other communities in the north and the North Area Transit Alliance in order to find a solution to building this line.

Time after time in public meetings, in talks with residents and even in council meetings I have heard citizens inquire about the future of the North Metro Line. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of everyone in this room over the past two years I am extremely happy to say that we now have a clear path forward. Northglenn is excited for the new story we are writing with RTD and I would respectfully ask that you approve this bid and award this contract so that we can continue writing it together.

Respectfully,

Joyce Downing
Mayor, City of Northglenn
Members of the Board,

My name is Michelle Halstead and I’m the director of communications and government affairs for the City of Commerce City. I’m here this evening to express the city’s support for advancing construction of the North Metro Rail Line.

As Colorado’s fourth-fastest growing community, Commerce City is redefining itself for the next generation, building on the historic values of community, industry, agriculture and family. Centrally located along Colorado’s bustling Front Range, Commerce City is a Quality Community for a Lifetime, with 25 miles of trails, a championship golf course, 700 acres of open space and parks, one of the country’s largest soccer complexes and the nation’s largest urban wildlife refuge.

For a community that was formed along rail lines to support industry, it’s only fitting that advancing the FasTracks’ North Metro Rail Line will complement our city’s continued growth and economic development - especially a new, five-year $166 million, voter-approved capital program that will begin in 2014.

The City Council of Commerce City recently adopted the station area master plan for the planned 72nd Avenue and Colorado station. This plan identifies current and future land uses necessary for successful transit oriented development. It will revitalize a historic area of our community that has established neighborhoods, critical community services and local business opportunities.

Our population has more than doubled over the last decade, becoming younger and even more diverse. This growth trend is only expected to continue. Commerce City will become a community of over 70,000 and cover a 64-square mile area in the next 20 years. Approving the contract this evening will allow the
first phase of the line to be completed by 2018, fulfilling prior commitments and allowing our community to take full advantage of a robust system. This means access and mobility improvements for our residents, a new employee base for our 1,500 businesses, and greater connectivity to the entire metro region.

On behalf of Commerce City, thank you for including our community in the process. We look forward to continued collaborations with the Regional Transportation District and the selected contractor.
Comments for RTD meeting 11-14-2013

I am Karen Stuart, Executive Director of Smart Commute Metro North, the Transportation Management Organization that serves the 13 communities adjacent to I-25, north of I-70. As a TMO, Smart Commute is committed to providing information, action, and advocacy for transportation and transit improvements that increase mobility options, reduce congestion and foster economic support for our residents and businesses in the north metro area.

I am speaking to you tonight in support of RTD’s staff recommendation to move forward with a proposal from Graham, Balfour Beatty and Hamon Constructors to design and build the North Metro Rail line to 124th Avenue by January 2018.

We applaud GBBH for early stakeholder outreach and collaboration; they took the time to understand our needs and listen to our expectations. We thank Phil Washington and his staff for their commitment to build the North Metro Rail line as part of the FasTracks system many of us have been supporting and promoting since 2004, and we thank you, the Directors of RTD for your leadership and consensus of purpose.

Getting the North Metro Rail line to 124th is a great start and will serve many of our residents with a transit option that can help reduce the congestion on I-25. The last two stations of the North Metro Rail line, 144th and 162nd will serve neighborhoods and employment centers that currently have no transit options of any kind and so we encourage RTD to look for funding opportunities to complete the line as soon as possible in order to benefit from GBBH’s commitment to hold the price for two years for those segments.

We appreciate the significant interest the North Metro Rail line RFP got from the private sector and feel encouraged that the remaining Northwest Rail line will become an industry focus next.

With each step toward the goal of building Fastracks in its entirety, RTD is fulfilling its promise for regional investment in a transit system that benefits all of us.
November 25, 2013

Jennifer Schaufele
Denver Regional Council of Governments
1290 Broadway, Suite 700
Denver, CO 80203-5606

RE:  City of Commerce City’s support for amending the Denver Regional Council of Government (DRCOG)’s Regional Transportation Plan to include the North Metro Commuter Rail Line

Dear Ms. Schaufele:

Commerce City is supportive of the Regional Transportation District (RTD)’s proposed amendment to the Regional Transportation Plan to change the completion date of the North Metro Rail Line from Denver Union Station to 124th/Eastlake Station to 2018.

As Colorado’s fourth-fastest growing community, Commerce City is redefining itself for the next generation, building on the historic values of community, industry, agriculture and family. Centrally located along Colorado’s bustling Front Range, Commerce City is a Quality Community for a Lifetime, with 25 miles of trails, a championship golf course, 700 acres of open space and parks, one of the country’s largest soccer complexes and the nation’s largest urban wildlife refuge.

Completing the FasTracks’ North Metro Rail Line by 2018 will complement our city’s continued growth and economic development. Our population has more than doubled over the last decade, becoming younger and even more diverse. Opening this project in advance of the 2030-2035 timeframe fulfills prior commitments and allows Commerce City and the entire north metro region to take full advantage of a robust system. This means access and mobility improvements for our residents, a new employee base for our 1,500 businesses, and greater connectivity to the entire metro region.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

for

Brian K. McBroom
City Manager

cc: Regional Transportation District
November 25, 2013

Jennifer Schaufele  
Denver Regional Council of Governments  
1290 Broadway, Suite 700  
Denver, CO 80203-5606

Re: Adams County Support for amending the Regional Transportation Plan to include North Metro from Denver Union Station to 124th/Eastlake by 2018

Dear Ms. Schaufele:

This letter expresses Adams County’s support for RTD’s Regional Transportation Plan Amendment that proposes to change the completion date of the North Metro Rail Line from Denver Union Station to 124th/Eastlake Station to 2018.

While we are extremely pleased with the advancement of the North Metro to 124th/Eastlake, Adams County will also continue to work closely with RTD and the contractor to accelerate the last portion of North Metro from 124th/Eastlake to 162nd by 2020.

This project is important to us and the region, because it will increase transit ridership and access to transit while fostering jobs and economic development opportunities. Opening this project in advance of the 2030-2035 timeframe brings a valuable transportation resource and transit option to the north area.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Eva J. Henry, Chair