



April 30, 2024

**Mr. Cole Neder, MPA**

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

Subject: 2024 FasTracks Status Report

Dear Mr. Neder,

The 2024 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 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. Most recently, service changes effective May 26, 2024, will reinstate the Free MetroRide, which was suspended during the pandemic. Vehicles will connect Union Station and Civic Center Station, operating along 18th and 19th Streets to give customers alternative connections between Denver Union Station and the Central Business District.

## 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.

## Northwest Rail Peak Service Study

The Northwest Rail (NWR) Peak Service Study (the Study) moved forward in April 2022 with the issuance of a notice to proceed to HDR Engineering, Inc, the selected contractor for the Study. The Study is evaluating 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. 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 study will identify a common set of facts including environmental conditions and potential issues; viable vehicle technologies; fleet and infrastructure needs; lifecycle costing; risk and mitigation strategies; operational rights within the BNSF Railway corridor; and independent capital and operating cost estimates. To bring more accuracy to the BNSF costs, RTD has contracted with the BNSF to complete 30% engineering plans and capital and operational cost estimates. Coupled with this is a robust outreach plan that includes ongoing stakeholder coordination. Since initiation, a Study Advisory Team (SAT) has met generally on a monthly basis, and two rounds of open houses have been held. The most recent round was held in November 2023.

Also underway is a parallel study by the Front Range Passenger Rail District (FRPR) to consider implementation of regional rail service between Pueblo and Fort Collins running north-south along the Colorado Front Range. Project Team members from both the NWR and FRPR projects meet routinely to consider potential opportunities to share resources in an effort to determine ways to achieve cost efficiencies and catalyze project implementation.

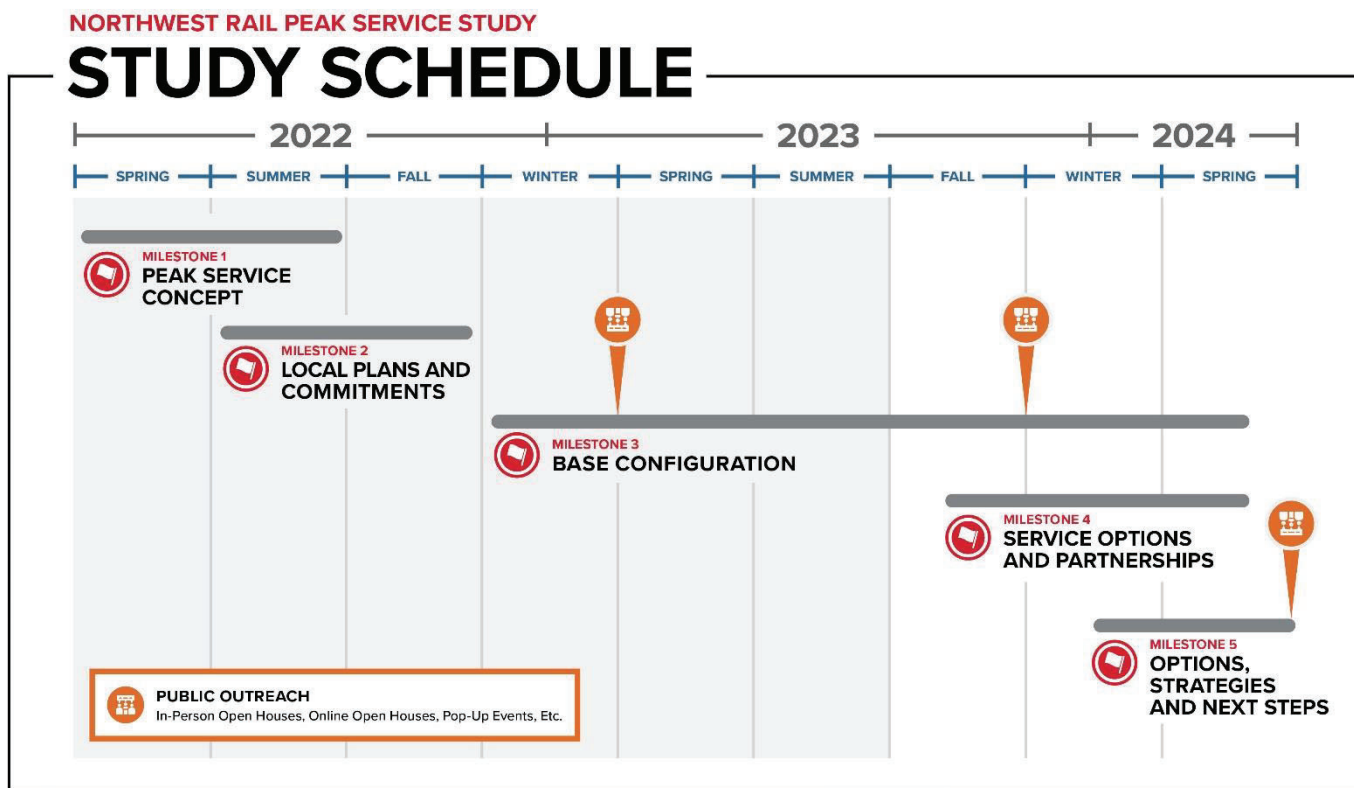
The Study is being conducted through a series of five milestones focused on achieving a common understanding of current conditions and considerations for the path forward. The five-milestone process includes:

- Milestone 1 – Peak Service Concept
- Milestone 2 – Local Plans and Commitments
- Milestone 3 – Initial Footprint
- Milestone 4 – Service Options and Partnerships
- Milestone 5 – Options, Strategies, and Next Steps

Milestones 1 and 2, fact-finding efforts to understand Peak Service requirements and to research and document previously completed local plans and commitments, are complete. Near completion is Milestone 3. During this



milestone, the information discovered in Milestones 1 and 2 was analyzed to define the infrastructure requirements and costs for implementing Peak Service on the NWR corridor. In Milestones 4 and 5, which is currently underway, possible partnership opportunities and funding solutions for potential avenues for the advancement of the project, are being identified. Coordination with the FRPR Study continues including meetings; information sharing; and evaluation of the potential for compatible service and operations, design elements, and funding opportunities. The current project schedule is below. To capture the BNSF cost information and to better coordinate with the FRPR Study efforts and schedule, the NWR Study end date has been extended beyond the time frame originally projected (late 2023) and will conclude in 2024. The project is included in the 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan (MVRTP) in the 2040 – 2050 horizon.



## FasTracks Financial Forecast

RTD has prepared an updated FasTracks Financial Forecast for inclusion in this report. The basis for this financial forecast is the 2023 Amended Budget and the 2024-2029 Mid-term Financial Plan (MTFP) presented and approved by the RTD Board in June 2023 and October 2023, respectively. The MTFP information has been updated with the following:

- Sales and use taxes include the August 2023 sales and use tax forecast from the University of Colorado Leeds School of Business which remained flat over the six-year forecast from the prior forecast indicating an \$0.8 million increase. Subsequently, a March 2024 sales and use tax forecast has been received which projects a \$115.2 million decrease over the six-year period which resulted from slower spending that has occurred over the intervening period from the prior forecast. 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. These lower fare projections are not reflected in the MTFP included in this report.
- RTD has included higher cost inflationary assumptions in the below MTFP which average 5.1% annually over the six-year period as a result of the current inflationary environment and labor shortages in the local market.
- Debt service has decreased due to two recent refinancings that released debt service reserves and will also produce interest savings.
- RTD has prioritized maintaining assets and replacing and repairing assets that are reaching their useful lives. The impact to FasTracks is relatively minor in the MTFP period due to the relatively new nature of those assets.
- Reserves are forecast to continue to increase due to the net positive cash flow assumptions during the MTFP period. Those reserves are anticipated to be used in the future for state of good repair needs.

Ridership continues to remain relatively flat year-over-year and RTD makes regular service adjustments according to its system optimization plan in alignment with customer demand and staffing resources. As a result, RTD continues to anticipate that there will be no material adverse impacts to financial results or financial position for FasTracks over the six-year MTFP period.

A current reconciliation of the FasTracks Internal Savings Account (FISA) has been included in this report. The FISA acts as a reserve mechanism to set aside certain funding towards completion of unfinished FasTracks corridors. The FISA balance will grow from \$168.9 million in 2023 to \$190.1 million in 2024.

Additional financial challenges that RTD is addressing includes the following:

- All non-federal revenues except the FasTracks sales and use tax will be subject to TABOR revenue growth limitations beginning in 2025. The FasTracks sales and use tax of 0.4% will not be subject to TABOR revenue growth limitations until 2050.
- RTD staffing of front-line positions will continue to be an area of focus. RTD is making significant gains in attracting additional employees and is also focused on retaining those employees.
- Inflationary pressures and supply chain issues are expected to continue which create volatility in forecasting and present delays in obtaining goods and services.

In conclusion, please note that the updated FasTracks Financial Forecast, FasTracks Program Costs through 2023 (reflects all RTD Board-appropriated funding through 2023), 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,

Welch, Brian -  
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Digitally signed by Welch, Brian -  
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Date: 2024.04.30 13:38:24 -06'00'

Brian T. Welch, AICP  
Acting Assistant General Manager, Planning

#### Attachments

cc: Debra A. Johnson, General Manager & CEO  
Susan Wood, Planning Project Manager II  
Jacob Riger, Long Range Transportation Planning Manager, DRCOG  
FasTracks Document Control

# 2024-2029 MTFP FasTracks (\$ in thousands)

	FasTracks							
	Amended Budget							
	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2023-2029
Fares	\$ 23,213	\$ 19,818	\$ 20,899	\$ 21,844	\$ 23,934	\$ 24,412	\$ 24,900	\$ 159,020
Sales and use taxes	355,238	369,392	387,202	405,833	422,687	440,367	460,782	2,841,501
Grant revenue and other income	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
COVID-19 relief grants	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>378,451</b>	<b>389,210</b>	<b>408,101</b>	<b>427,677</b>	<b>446,620</b>	<b>464,779</b>	<b>485,683</b>	<b>3,000,521</b>
Operating expense less depreciation	(176,211)	(184,342)	(214,329)	(178,521)	(180,594)	(190,145)	(201,944)	(1,326,086)
Debt service	(169,635)	(172,233)	(187,310)	(218,926)	(260,108)	(261,129)	(252,257)	(1,521,598)
Cap Ex/State of good repair	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Expenditures</b>	<b>(345,846)</b>	<b>(356,576)</b>	<b>(401,639)</b>	<b>(397,447)</b>	<b>(440,701)</b>	<b>(451,274)</b>	<b>(454,201)</b>	<b>(2,847,684)</b>
<b>Net Cash Flow</b>	<b>\$ 32,605</b>	<b>\$ 32,634</b>	<b>\$ 6,461</b>	<b>\$ 30,230</b>	<b>\$ 5,919</b>	<b>\$ 13,506</b>	<b>\$ 31,482</b>	<b>\$ 152,837</b>



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

(In Thousands)

**2024 BUDGET**

	Risk Level	Actual					2024 Budget	Estimated 2025-2028	Estimated 2029-2030	Estimated 2031-2040	Total
		2013-2020	2021	2022	2023	2013-2023					
<b>IDENTIFIED SOURCES:</b>											
Limit Fastracks funding increases for bus and paratransit expansion to CPI	Medium	\$ 64,925	\$ 17,658	\$ 18,989	\$ 20,614	\$ 122,186	\$ 21,192	\$ 90,411	\$ 48,621	\$ 273,651	\$ 556,061
<del>Reduce Fastracks Minimum Unrestricted Fund Balance from \$150 million</del>	<del>Medium</del>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
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	-	-	-	14,679	-	-	-	-	14,679
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
<del>Sales tax audit/parity</del>	<del>Low</del>	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total Sources</b>		<b>170,294</b>	<b>17,658</b>	<b>18,989</b>	<b>20,614</b>	<b>227,555</b>	<b>21,192</b>	<b>107,012</b>	<b>48,621</b>	<b>273,651</b>	<b>678,031</b>
<b>IDENTIFIED USES:</b>											
US36 Project draws <sup>1</sup>		(2,252)	(3,877)	-	-	(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)	-	(60,746)	-	-	(60,748)
2021/2022 Northwest Rail Study		-	(8,000)	-	-	(8,000)	-	-	-	-	(8,000)
<b>Total Uses</b>		<b>(46,771)</b>	<b>(11,877)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(58,648)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(60,746)</b>	<b>(33,304)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(152,698)</b>
<b>Net Sources and Uses</b>		<b>\$ 123,523</b>	<b>\$ 5,781</b>	<b>\$ 18,989</b>	<b>\$ 20,614</b>	<b>\$ 168,907</b>	<b>\$ 21,192</b>	<b>\$ 46,266</b>	<b>\$ 15,317</b>	<b>\$ 273,651</b>	<b>\$ 525,333</b>
<b>Fastracks Internal Savings Account Balance</b>		<b>\$ 123,523</b>	<b>\$ 129,304</b>	<b>\$ 148,293</b>	<b>\$ 168,907</b>	<b>\$ 168,907</b>	<b>\$ 190,099</b>	<b>\$ 236,365</b>	<b>\$ 251,682</b>	<b>\$ 525,333</b>	<b>\$ 525,333</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 Montbello property sale of \$601

<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 2023</b>		
<b>(millions of dollars)</b>		
<b>Project</b>	<b>Spent Through 2023</b>	<b>Total Project Budget</b>
Central Extension	\$11.7	\$11.7
Denver Union Station	\$311.2	\$314.2
Eagle Project	\$2,284.0	\$2,301.5
Free MetroRide	\$12.4	\$12.6
I-225	\$655.3	\$676.9
Light Rail Maintenance Facility	\$17.2	\$17.2
Misc. Projects	\$285.7	\$296.6
North Metro	\$777.0	\$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>\$5,458.8</b>	<b>\$5,635.8</b>





# FASTRACKS INVESTMENT MAP 2024

## LEGEND

- Completed
- Pre-FasTracks
- Currently Unfunded
- Station

