

To: RTD Board of Directors

From: David A. Genova, General Manager & CEO

Date: August 21, 2018

Re: Northwest Rail Annual Report

Subject: Northwest Rail Annual Report

RTD, in collaboration with the Northwest area stakeholders, completed the Northwest Area Mobility Study (NAMS) in August 2014. As part of NAMS, the stakeholders developed a Consensus Statement for prioritizing future activities in the Northwest area. One request from the stakeholders was for RTD to provide an annual update on the status of the Northwest Rail and any activities that have occurred to advance the rail forward. This memo will address that item, and will provide an update on all of the stakeholder-requested priorities. Those priorities are summarized below.

Complete the FasTracks US 36 Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Commitments;

- I. Pursue Arterial BRT/Enhanced Bus Service Projects:
 - a. SH 119
 - b. US 287 or SH 7 (The stakeholders deferred to RTD to determine which corridor is best suited for available funding opportunities)
- II. Pursue I-25 Reverse Commute Solutions;
- III. Recognize Northwest Rail is a longer term goal, but annually evaluate strategies to accelerate implementation of some or all of the line and report on the status of progress;
- IV. Pursue the remaining arterial BRT/enhanced bus corridors in the next seven to twenty years. Additional prioritized corridors include US 287 or SH 7, South Boulder Road, 120th Avenue, SH 42/95th Street and 28th Street/Broadway.

On May 22, 2014, the Board approved Resolution No. 006, which accepted the stakeholder Consensus Statement for prioritization of future activities in the Northwest area, subject to future Board consideration. Following is a summary of progress that has been made on each item since the completion of NAMS.

Consensus Item: *Recognize Northwest Rail is a longer term goal, but annually evaluate strategies to accelerate implementation of some or all of the line and report on the status of progress.*

Progress: RTD has been working with the local jurisdictional stakeholders to determine the feasibility of establishing a peak-period, starter service for the corridor. The intent is to create a lower-cost alternative that could establish passenger service in the corridor and be expanded over time when additional funding becomes available. In general terms, the agreed upon service would run three one-way trains during the morning peak-period from the Downtown Longmont Station to Denver Union Station; and, conversely, three one-way trains during the after peak-period from Denver Union Station back to Longmont. Stations would be at the following locations:

- Downtown Longmont
- Boulder Junction
- Downtown Louisville
- Broomfield Flatiron
- Broomfield 116th Avenue
- Westminster 88th Avenue
- Westminster Station (Existing B-Line terminus)

RTD has produced a high-level cost estimate to provide guidance on the RTD costs for the corridor, including stations and rail vehicles. The estimate does *not* include the fees BNSF would charge to use the corridor, nor does it include the costs for required right-of-way at stations. A summary of the cost estimate is shown below:

Capital*	
<i>Item</i>	<i>Cost</i>
Vehicles	\$48,000,000
Stations	\$34,058,700
Track Infrastructure DUS	\$ 1,202,000
Maintenance Facility	\$33,889,700
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Total	\$117,150,400

**Does not include cost of BNSF infrastructure upgrades and operating slots, nor does estimate include costs for needed right-of-way.*

RTD Vehicle Operations & Maintenance* \$14,000,000

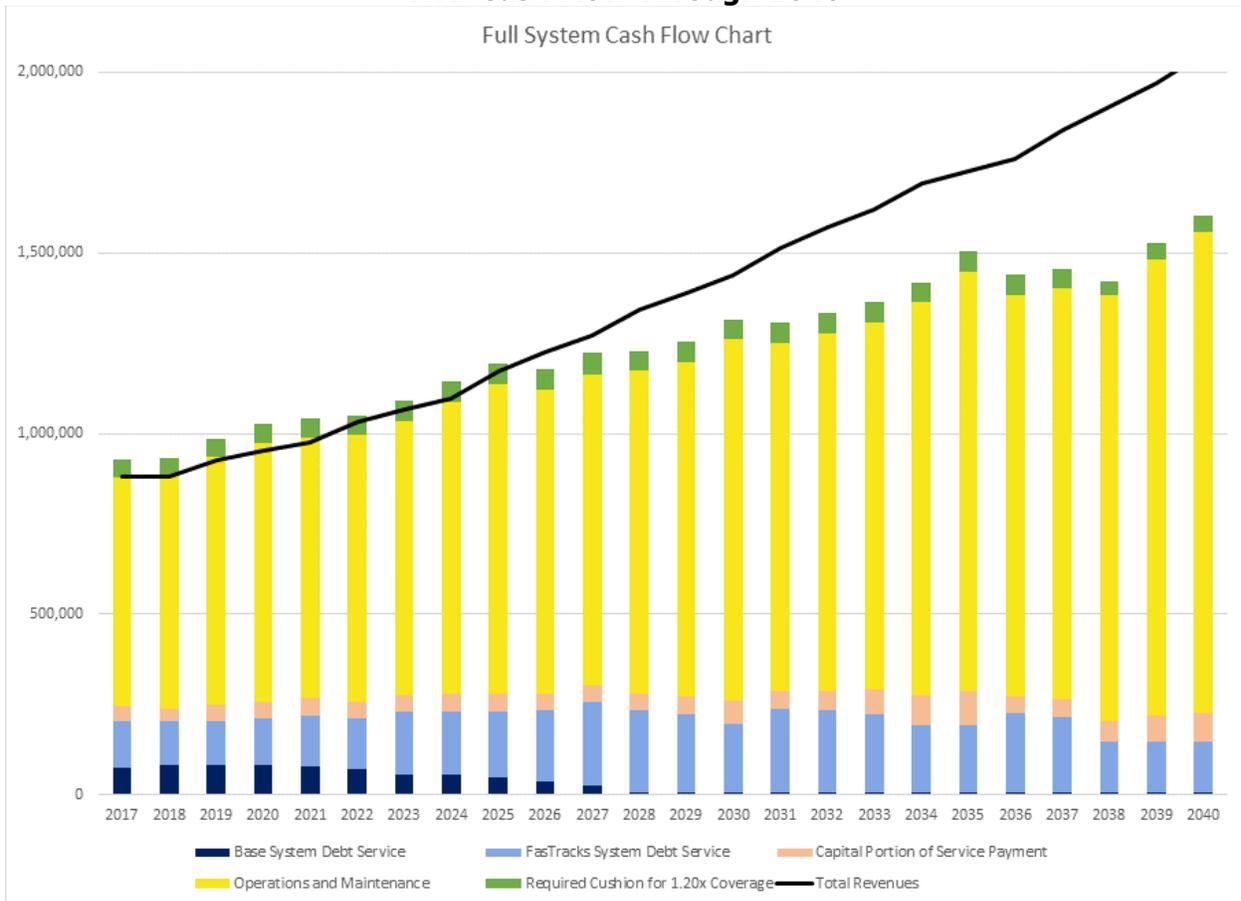
**Does not include potential BNSF O&M fees.*

RTD has sent a letter to the BNSF requesting feedback on the proposed service concept (*see attachment*).

Comparatively, the NAMS report provided a range of costs for full service (55 trains per day) in the corridor. That cost in 2013 dollars was \$1.16 to \$1.41 billion. Applying the Colorado Construction Cost Index cost escalation for 2013 through 2017 results in a range of \$1.51 to \$1.85 billion in 2017 dollars. The already-constructed B-Line to Westminster Station, which was constructed as part of the Eagle P-3 project, is not included in this cost.

RTD is currently unable to identify adequate funding for the remainder of the corridor within the 2040 timeframe. The graphic below illustrates RTD’s projected cash flow through 2040 from the 2017 Annual Program Evaluation (APE). The chart indicates that there is some funding capacity available beginning in the 2030s.

RTD Cash Flow Through 2040



Source: RTD 2017 Annual Program Evaluation

Consensus Item: *Completion of US 36 Commitments.*

Progress: On September 17, 2013, the Board approved the Final Scope Elements for the FasTracks US 36 Corridor BRT commitments. Those scope elements are listed in the

table below followed by the status of their anticipated completion. Many of the committed items were completed with the US 36 Flatiron Flyer Grand Opening on January 3, 2016, or shortly thereafter. Ridership for the Flatiron Flyer services (including the former 90L, which is now the FF7) averaged almost 11,000 daily weekday riders for 2017.

US 36 BRT Project Scope Items Schedule for Completion			
Item	Description	Completion	
		2016	Post 2016
Station Amenities	Upgraded and standardized furniture, including benches, trash receptacles, bike racks/lockers, etc.	X	
Station Security Upgrades	Security devices such as cameras, emergency telephones and conduit at each BRT station.	X	
Transit Signal Priority (TSP)	Implementation of TSP at key US 36 interchanges as documented in RTD's Transit Signal Priority study which will provide a potential travel time savings of over two minutes.		X
Passenger Communications Improvements	Improve data accessibility for passengers on US 36 (WiFi, predictive arrival time information, etc.)	X	
BRT Vehicle Fleet	Procure fleet sufficient to meet 2016 opening day service plan.	X	
Church Ranch Platforms	Relocation of the Church Ranch Station boarding platforms closer to RTD-designated parking.		X
Westminster Pedestrian Bridge	Improvements for vertical circulation (additional stairs and elevators) on each side of the bridge.		X
Broomfield park-n-Ride	Construct a park-n-Ride with structured parking on the north side of US 36 at the Broomfield Station for better access to the station for residents north and east of US 36 in Broomfield.		X

As the table indicates, some US 36 BRT Commitments remained uncompleted as of the opening of the Flatiron Flyer Service, specifically:

1. *Transit Signal Priority.* Transit Signal Priority (TSP) is now operating at Sheridan and Church Ranch. RTD continues to work with Broomfield to establish the necessary framework to allow for TSP at Flatiron. As such, this item is substantially complete.
2. *Relocate the Church Ranch Platforms.* Due to significantly higher costs than originally anticipated for this item, RTD has had to forego using CDOT grant funds for this project. RTD will continue to seek funding in the future for this project.

3. *Improvements to the vertical circulation at the Westminster Park-n-Ride.* RTD is currently proceeding through the site development process for the installation of an elevator, which will be located on the east-bound side of the Westminster park-n-Ride. Construction is expected to begin in the third quarter of 2018.
4. *Expansion of the Broomfield Park-n-Ride to the north (east) side of US 36.* RTD will continue to monitor usage of the existing Broomfield Park-n-Ride on the south (west) side of US 36 and determine when it would be appropriate to respond to additional demand. Current usage for the existing Broomfield Park-n-Ride in the period from January 2017 to January 2018 was at 63 percent of capacity.

Consensus Item: *Conduct advanced planning/environmental/design work for proposed new arterial BRT corridors on SH 119 from Longmont to Boulder and US 287 from Longmont to Denver Union Station.*

Progress: RTD has undertaken the following activities for each corridor:

- a. **SH 119:** RTD began the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) review and preliminary engineering (PE) for the SH 119 corridor in the fall of 2017. Funding for the NEPA and PE is from a \$1 million DRCOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) grant and from an additional \$2.5 million in RTD funds for the local match to the DRCOG TIP grant. The NEPA and PE process is anticipated to be completed in 2019. With the completion of this process, the corridor will be ready for final design and RTD will be in a position to pursue grant opportunities for construction. Through the current six-year Strategic Budget Plan (SBP), RTD has allocated \$30 million in 2023 for construction. These construction funds will also provide a strong local match for potential grant or other funds. Additionally, RTD has been in regular discussions with CDOT regarding potential partnership opportunities for joint mobility improvements, such as managed lanes, in the corridor.
- b. **US 287:** In April 2014, RTD applied for a Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Planning Grant. The grant application included both SH 119 and US 287. While this grant was not approved, a coalition of stakeholders and RTD has conducted conceptual-level discussions to determine how additional planning work could advance forward

Consensus Item: *Work with CDOT to evaluate bus-on-shoulder and other near-term improvements to improve the I-25 reverse commute between Denver Union Station and Pecos Street.*

Progress: CDOT, with the participation of RTD, completed a Bus-on-Shoulder (BOS) feasibility study in December 2017. The study found that a combination of factors, including the number of multi-lane on-ramps and off-ramps, limits the feasibility of BOS on I-25. The study did not recommend the implementation of BOS at this time. However, the study did note that the feasibility could change over time as bus service in the corridor increases, and, correspondingly, as traffic congestion worsens.

Consensus Item: *Consider implementing additional arterial BRT/enhanced bus corridors in the next 7-20 years. Additional prioritized corridors include SH 7, South Boulder Road, 120th Avenue, SH 42/95th Street and 28th Street/Broadway.*

Progress: A coalition of stakeholders led by Boulder County was awarded \$200,000 in DRCOG TIP funds to advance environmental work and engineering design on the SH 7 Corridor. Boulder County initiated a consultant contract with Felsburg Holt & Ullevig in March 2016. The study, of which RTD has been a participant, is expected to be completed by fourth quarter 2018.

cc: Heather McKillop, CFO, Assistant General Manager, Finance & Administration
Henry Stoppolecamp, Assistant General Manager, Capital Programs
William C. Van Meter, Assistant General Manager, Planning
Chris Quinn, Planning Project Manager

Attachment: RTD Request Letter to BNSF on Starter Service