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**Gold Line Recommends Commuter Rail
as Locally Preferred Alternative**

Public Review & Comment Will Be Accepted at June 26 & 27 Meetings

DENVER – The RTD FasTracks Gold Line team is recommending the selection of commuter rail transit operating in the current BNSF/Union Pacific railroad alignment as the Locally Preferred Alternative for the FasTracks corridor between Denver Union Station and Ward Road. The team is also recommending the elimination of a streetcar option that is proposed to run on local streets including 38th Avenue, Harlan Street and Ralston Road.

The selection of commuter rail over streetcar will provide an alternative to the community that is nearly two times faster, will likely carry 50 percent more riders and could allow RTD to leverage federal dollars necessary to complete the project. Additionally, analysis of public comments submitted to the project shows that about 60 percent of Gold Line stakeholders that commented on the project prefer commuter rail over streetcar.

The public will have the opportunity to review and comment on the Regional Transportation District (RTD) findings during two public meetings: Tuesday, June 26 at the Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd., Arvada; and Wednesday, June 27 at the Highlands Masonic Center, 3550 Federal Blvd., Denver. Both meetings are scheduled from 6 p.m.-8 p.m.

“Our studies show that commuter rail in the railroad alignment provides the best transportation results, performs well with environmental measures and it is broadly supported

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by the community,” said Liz Telford, project manager for the Gold Line Environmental Impact Statement. “Now, it is vital that we hear from the public as we continue to work with local and federal agencies to bring this recommendation to the RTD Board.”

If accepted by the RTD Board, the estimated \$553 million (2015, year of expenditure) commuter rail alternative will be further refined and studied as the Gold Line Team prepares an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), scheduled for release in the spring or summer of 2008. The Gold Line Team will continue to seek community input throughout the process.

The commuter rail alternative would include seven stations to be located near 38th/44th Avenue; Pecos Street; Federal Boulevard; Sheridan Boulevard; Olde Town (Arvada); Ridge Road and Ward Road. At the request of the RTD Board, the Gold Line team will further compare diesel and electric commuter rail technologies until the Board makes a decision about whether the RTD system should operate one or two types of commuter rail trains.

The Gold Line team found numerous benefits associated with commuter rail when compared to the streetcar alternative. From a transportation and mobility perspective, travel time for the commuter rail is nearly twice as fast as the streetcar and approximately 50 percent more transit users are projected to use the commuter rail line than the streetcar. From a financial perspective, it appears that the commuter rail alternative may qualify for obtaining federal funding, while the streetcar alternative definitely would not. This is important to the Gold Line as FasTracks planned for half of the \$553 million Gold Line budget to be paid for

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with federal funds. The commuter rail alternative also has fewer environmental impacts, avoids in-street construction and has less impact on vehicle traffic.

The Gold Line is one of two FasTracks corridors the RTD Board is considering for a Federal Transit Administration public-private partnership pilot program. This unique project-funding and delivery option would likely not be available with the streetcar alternative.

The Gold Line team will review public comments received and will present the Locally Preferred Alternative to the RTD Board of Directors on July 10. Public input can be submitted during the meetings, in writing or at www.rtdgoldline.com.

About Gold Line Corridor EIS

The Gold Line is an 11.2-mile rapid transit corridor extending from Denver Union Station in downtown Denver to the vicinity of Ward Road in Wheat Ridge. In the 2004 FasTracks election, voters approved a budget of \$463.5 million for the Gold Line, serving Denver, Arvada, Wheat Ridge and unincorporated Adams County. The two-and-a-half year Environmental Impact Statement will analyze transit alternatives in this corridor and will include extensive public involvement.

About FasTracks

FasTracks is RTD's voter-approved \$4.7 billion, 12-year program to expand rail and bus service throughout the RTD service area. Scheduled for completion in 2017, FasTracks will create six new commuter rail and light rail corridors, extend three existing corridors, add 21,000 new parking spaces, and expand bus service across the entire District.

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