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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

August 7, 2006

## **RTD Kicks Off Gold Line EIS To Provide High-Quality, Reliable Transit**

DENVER – The Regional Transportation District (RTD) this month will kick off a two-year FasTracks project to determine how to best provide high-quality, reliable rail transit service in the corridor between downtown Denver and the vicinity of Ward Road, serving northwest Denver, unincorporated Adams County, Arvada and Wheat Ridge.

“Our goal will be to reduce travel times, provide a high quality rail transit travel option and enhance access to metro-area jobs, entertainment, recreation and shopping,” said David W. Hollis, the project manager for the Gold Line Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project.

“This corridor’s existing transportation system is expected to be inadequate to handle the projected growth in traffic between now and 2030 on Interstate 25 and Interstate 70,” Hollis added.

The study will be built upon recommendations from a major investment study completed in 2000, which recommended light rail service between downtown Denver and Ward Road in the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad corridors, as well as another technical study of the Gold Line and two other FasTracks corridors (the “Three Corridors Scoping Study”) completed in 2005.

Throughout the EIS, and with a focus on each key decision point, RTD will conduct extensive community outreach to ensure that the recommendations in the EIS reflect what best serves the communities while avoiding or minimizing adverse environmental effects.

Initial opportunities for public participation include:

- **Public scoping.** During interactive community meetings scheduled from 5:30 p.m. to 8:15 p.m. on Tuesday, Aug. 22 at the Arvada Center, 6901 Wadsworth Blvd., Arvada; and Wednesday, Aug. 23 at the Highlands Masonic Center, 3550 Federal Blvd., Denver. Each meeting will include a 30-minute group presentation, while featuring numerous display stations enabling the public to interact one-on-one with the project team to ask questions and

submit comments on the specific issues and alternatives the EIS should address. A booklet outlining the history of the corridor and the EIS process will be mailed to corridor residents the week of Aug. 14.

- ***Two rounds of public workshops for alternatives screening.*** Over the next several months, the project team will conduct increasing detailed evaluations of reasonable transit alternatives. Two sets of workshops will be held: one at conceptual screening is planned for October and one after more detailed evaluation is planned for early 2007.
- ***Public workshops to review the locally preferred alternative.*** In early 2007, two workshops will be held for the public to review and discuss the project team's recommended alternative. Once selected as the preferred alternative, it will then undergo a more detailed level of analysis called preliminary engineering.

Public input can be submitted throughout the project during meetings, in writing or through the project Website, [www.rtdgoldline.com](http://www.rtdgoldline.com), which will go online Aug. 8. The project staff also plans numerous listening sessions with stakeholder groups throughout the corridor. To schedule a listening session, contact Andy Mountain, the public involvement lead, at 303-825-6100.

Following these initial steps, the project team will prepare a draft environmental impact statement, planned for late 2007, which will identify potential impacts to the communities and the environment, and will recommend ways of lessening those impacts. After considering and responding to public comments, a final environmental impact statement will be prepared in early 2008, followed by a decision document issued by the Federal Transit Administration, also in early 2008.

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The following communication assistance is available for all Regional Transportation Public Meetings:

- Language interpreters
- Sign-language interpreters
- Assisted listening devices
- Alternative formats, such as large print or
- Reasonable accommodation for special needs

Contact Andy Mountain, 303-825-6100, 72 hours prior to the meeting to discuss your special needs and request for accommodation.

#### **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 Ward Road. In the 2004 FasTracks election, voters approved a budget of \$462 million for the Gold Line, serving Denver, Arvada, Wheat Ridge and unincorporated Adams County. The 2 -year Environmental Impact Study will analyze transit alternatives and will include extensive public involvement throughout.**

#### **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 light rail and commuter rail corridors, extend three existing corridors, add 21,000 new parking spaces, and expand bus service across the entire district.**



## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is the Gold Line corridor?

*Answer: The Gold Line corridor includes northwest Denver, unincorporated Adams County, Arvada and Wheat Ridge. The study-area boundaries are Interstate 25 to the east, West 38<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the south and Ward Road to the west. The northern boundary will be somewhere north of the BNSF rail line. The specifics are being determined now based on the analysis of travel information.*

### 2. What will the Gold Line EIS accomplish?

*Answer: The Gold Line EIS will identify the best way to provide high-quality, reliable rail transit service that improves travel times in the corridor while enhancing access to metro-area jobs, entertainment, recreation and shopping for existing and future residents. The EIS will select a recommended alternative, identify potential impacts and recommend ways of lessening those impacts*

### 3. What will the Gold Line EIS study?

*Answer: The Gold Line EIS will specifically study no-action and rail transit alternatives to develop recommended transit improvements that are best for the entire corridor. This study will build upon the recommendations from the major investment study completed in 2001 and the Three Corridors Study in 2005. The major investment study recommended light rail service in the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad and Union Pacific Railroad corridors between downtown Denver and Ward Road.*

### 4. What has been decided?

*Answer: No decisions have been made.*

### 5. What is the schedule and when can the public participate?

*Answer: RTD will conduct extensive community outreach throughout the project. At each key decision-point of the project, public workshops will be held to ensure that the recommendations in the EIS are reflective of what is best for the Gold Line community. The timing of the EIS decision-making process is as follows:*

- *Summer 2006 – Scoping identifies the scope of the study and alternatives to be evaluated. (One set of public workshops)*
- *Late 2006/Early 2007 – Conduct increasingly detailed evaluation of alternatives to identify those that best meet the needs of the corridor (Two sets of public workshops)*
- *Early 2007 – Select the recommended alternative to undergo more a very detailed level of analysis called preliminary engineering. (One set of public workshops)*
- *Late 2007 – Publish the Draft EIS, a very detailed report summarizing the impacts of the recommended alternatives and the proposed methods to mitigate them, and gather public comment. (One set of public hearings)*
- *Early 2008 – Respond to comments, submit Final EIS to Federal Transit Administration (FTA)*
- *Winter 2008 – FTA issues a decision document on the Gold Line EIS.*

### 6. Are public meetings the only time the public can submit input?

*Answer: No. Although the public meetings provide great opportunities to interact with the project team and become better informed about the EIS, public input also can be submitted in writing to Dave Hollis, RTD-FasTracks, 1560 Broadway #700, Denver, CO 80202, or via the project Website, [www.rtdgoldline.com](http://www.rtdgoldline.com), which will go online Aug. 8.*

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