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The top stories in this issue...

Denver — Cutbacks In FasTracks Projects Studied

DENVER — FasTracks Cuts Eyed

Spiraling construction costs are forcing the Regional Transportation District to take a hard look at individual projects within the FastTracks rail transit expansion program, hoping to stay within budget. First to be built will be the 12.1-mi. (19.4 km), \$508.2-million West Corridor line to the Jefferson County civic center in Golden. An independent panel of eight transit engineers was hired to make a value engineering study of the route and suggest possible cuts. One proposal, that could immediately save up to \$200 million, is temporarily truncating the line by 3.5 mi. (5.6 km), terminating it at the Denver Federal Center in Lakewood. That suggestion was made two years ago but was then deemed politically unacceptable. The panel's report made 61 other suggestions, some of which are alternatives to others, including eliminating four of the 11 stations, reducing signaling and substituting grade crossings for three expensive overpasses. Fourteen of the options are considered so significant that a new environmental impact study would be needed, which in turn would cause a major delay in construction. Fourteen others would also postpone completion but would not need a new EIS while the remaining proposals are considered minor. The RTD will now evaluate the panel's findings and decide which — if any — will be adopted.

Web site: www.rtd-denver.com/Projects/