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Delegation Visits D.C. Seeking Funding for Arapahoe Rd. Interchange



The Mayor's View

In March, City Manager Jim Sanderson and I accompanied representatives from Arapahoe County and the City of Centennial on our second trip to Washington, D.C. The purpose of our trip was to encourage our legislators to support federal funding for interchange improvements at I-25 and Arapahoe Road. The delegation met with members of our congressional delegation and their staffs, including, Representatives Mike Coffman, Ed Perlmutter, and Betsy Markey; and Senators Michael Bennett and Mark Udall. In addition to these members of the Colorado delegation, we also met with other key members of Congress including Rep. James Oberstar's Administrative Assistant Bill Richards and Senator Patty Murray's Chief of Staff Jeff

Bjornstad. We stress the importance of improving safety, mobility and air quality at this very important interchange.

One key element that impacts traffic congestion on Arapahoe Road is the Arapahoe Road/I-25 Interchange. This interchange is a critical access point for employees to reach their places of employment, commuters to access the new light rail system, merchandise to reach major shopping areas, and is a primary travel route to Centennial Airport. The Arapahoe Road/I-25 Interchange lies in the midst of the southeast I-25 Corridor, which produces 25% of the state's gross domestic product. The serious congestion that exists at the Arapahoe Road/I-25 Interchange today causes hours of lost employee productivity, increases accidents, decreases response time of emergency vehicles and decreases the quality of our air.

Despite its significance to the State and regional transportation network, the Arapahoe Road/I-25 Interchange has not been improved since the 1980s. Due to funding limitations, the Arapahoe Road/I-25 Interchange was one of only a few interchanges that were not significantly improved as part of the T-REX project.

While any current funding or the recent stimulus money will not be earmarked for this vital project, the Village will continue to encourage our congressional representatives to approve the necessary federal funding for reconstruction of this interchange. The estimated cost of a new interchange is \$90 million to \$110 million, depending on the design. With 1 million square feet of new development planned in the area over the next 10 years, we must continue to move forward to secure funding so that this vital project can be completed.

-Provided by Greenwood Village Mayor Sharpe
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May 2009

Two New Transit Programs Introduced in the Southeast Corridor

The South I-25 Urban Corridor Transportation Management Association (TMA) has recently introduced two Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs for 2009.

The **2009 Commitment to Transit Award** will recognize a business within the Southeast Corridor that demonstrates a dedication to improving mobility and air quality, while decreasing traffic congestion in the Corridor. The TMA wants to commend a business that encourages the education and promotion of alternate transit use and extending transit benefits. Submissions to recommend a company are due by October 5, 2009, in a written nomination explaining why the company should be acknowledged. The winner will be announced on December 14, 2009.

Additionally, the TMA is announcing its **2009 Transportation Proposal Contest**. The objective of the contest is to identify and develop transportation solutions that will enhance mobility, drive economic development and boost the image of the Southeast Corridor. Teams or individuals must specify a transit-related issue within the Corridor and a subsequent solution. The TMA will implement the winning project, up to \$10,000. All entries must be received by September 1, 2009 in a written proposal format.

The TMA encourages participation in these two projects, as this will greatly benefit the well being of the local community.

For more information, please visit SOUTHEASTconnections.com or call 303.867.5550

-Provided by 360 Media

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FasTracks Funding Fix Requires Regional Effort

The results of our 2009 FasTracks Annual Program Evaluation were presented to the RTD Board in early March. While capital costs are estimated to decrease nearly \$1 billion, which will bring the total program cost down, sales tax revenues have also decreased significantly. The funding gap is currently \$2.2 billion to complete the program by 2017.

Since the economy started its downward turn, RTD has been addressing its budget challenges, recognizing that it would require innovative and sensible ideas to implement the program as intended. RTD has diligently worked in coordination with the Metro Mayors, other local and state officials, and the business community to develop such ideas. In addition, RTD hosted a series of 17 public meetings last fall to get feedback from the public.

On April 7, the RTD Board approved the Financial Plan, which assumes RTD will continue to pursue \$1 billion in federal funding for the East Corridor and Gold Line, and pursue an additional 0.4% sales tax increase to build the whole FasTracks program by 2017.

The FasTracks vision remains a top priority for the metro region, as evidenced by recent public opinion surveys. After receiving a \$308 million commitment from the Federal Transit Administration earlier this year to help fund the West Corridor Project, RTD continues to maximize its potential to receive additional federal funds. The agency also continues to lay the groundwork to take full advantage of additional revenue sources that become available.

Through the cooperative support of local leaders, FasTracks can remain on-track, as a key economic driver that will provide jobs and economic stability during this difficult time.

-Provided by District G FasTracks Quarterly News Link

What is RTD Doing to Address Budget Challenges?

The following is a list of strategies RTD has implemented or is planning to implement to address both the general RTD and FasTracks budget challenges:

- Increased fare and pass rates by 14%
- Increased EcoPass fares by 19%
- Reduced service levels for underproductive trips or routes
- Implemented parking management program
- Restricted travel, unless mission critical
- Implemented hiring freeze for salaried positions, unless mission critical
- Eliminated all salary increases for salaried employees
- Reduced budgets for FasTracks program consultants
- Implemented undercover fare enforcement program
- Investigating potential for increased bus advertisement revenue
- Working on allocation of federal stimulus funds
- Maximizing federal funding opportunities
- Pursuing additional Public-Private Partnership opportunities (Design-Build, private financing)
- Partnering with CDOT, wherever possible, on funding or project initiatives
- Utilizing value engineering to reduce project costs

-Provided by District G FasTracks Quarterly News Link

New TRIP Referral Program

In April 2009, the South I-25 Urban Corridor Transportation Management Association (TMA) launched the new Transit Rider Incentive Program (TRIP) referral program to promote use of alternate transit within the Southeast Corridor. Under the referral program, current users of TRIP who refer three people will receive one free monthly TRIP pass. In order to qualify, each referee must purchase a TRIP pass and input the email of the person referring them. Once three individuals submit a referrer's email address, he or she will receive a free TRIP pass. There is no limit to the number of free passes a referrer can receive through the program; however, referrals that occurred prior to May 2009 are not eligible. A referral must be employed within the TRIP boundaries and cannot have purchased an RTD monthly pass within the last year.

The TRIP referral program is one of several programs recently launched by the TMA to raise awareness of alternate transportation and the commuter and environmental benefits received by the Southeast Corridor.

In order to receive a TRIP pass, the referrals must meet specific qualifications within the terms and conditions. For more information, please visit triptowork.com or call 877.975.TRIP (8747).

-Provided by 360 Media

RTD Launches New Website

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) is making commuting even easier with the new RTD-Denver.com. With collapsible schedules, a search engine and the Trip Planner available on every page, full information on riding RTD is a only a mouse click away!

Features of the new website include a sleek, streamlined, inviting design that flows on to every page of the website. Navigating the site is now a cinch with the addition of drop down menus. The homepage is clearly organized and features links and tools that are most helpful to RTD riders, such as the Trip Planner, News and Alerts and Rider Alerts. The most useful feature of the new website is the new collapsible schedules, which allow riders to collapse schedules that can include hundreds of timepoints into as little as 4 timepoints of their choice. The new website is remarkable; take it for a ride today at RTD-Denver.com.

-Provided by RTD

For more information on transportation news in the Southeast Corridor or TRIP, visit www.SOUTHEASTconnections.com



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New Law Imposes Higher Motor Vehicle Late Fees

Effective June 1, 2009, Colorado motor vehicle owners will face late fees of up to \$100 for failing to register vehicles on time. Senate Bill 09-108, passed and signed into law by Governor Ritter during the 2009 legislative session, requires these new late fees.

The vehicle owner will continue to receive a one month grace period after which the \$25-per-month late fee applies to any portion of the month for up to four months.

Vehicles that have been issued temporary registrations (permits) have no grace period and are also subject to the new late fees.

Vehicle owners who move to Colorado from out of state and do not register their vehicles within 90 days of residency will be charged late fees up to \$100. Vehicles purchased by Colorado residents will be assessed late fees 61 days after the purchase date, if the vehicle is not registered.

Vehicles that are used to operate a commercial business as part of the normal operation of the business will be exempt late fees if the vehicle has not been operated on any public highway in Colorado for one full registration period.

The owner of a vehicle who is active in the military serving outside Colorado when the registration grace period expires, if the vehicle has not been operated on any public highway in Colorado between the time the registration period expired, including the grace period and the time the vehicle is registered will be exempt late fees.

-Provided by Douglas County

Rod Bockenfeld Elected DRCOG Vice Chair

Arapahoe County Commissioner Rod Bockenfeld has been elected vice chair of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Board of Directors. Joining Bockenfeld in leading the regional council in 2009 are Lakewood Council Member Ed Peterson as chair, Littleton Council Member Jim Taylor as secretary, and Broomfield Council Member Dennis McCloskey as treasurer. Westminster Mayor Nancy McNally is immediate past chair.

Bockenfeld has represented Arapahoe County on the DRCOG Board of Directors since 2007, and served as the alternate prior to that. In addition, he served as DRCOG secretary in 2008, and treasurer in 2007.

DRCOG is a voluntary association of more than 50 metro area local governments united together to achieve a better future for our region. Members include counties and municipalities from throughout the DRCOG region that covers Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, Gilpin and Jefferson counties, the City and County of Broomfield, the City and County of Denver, and southwest Weld County.

-Provided by Arapahoe County



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RTD GM Cal Marsella Announces He is Leaving the Agency on July 31, After 14 Years

Cal Marsella, General Manager and CEO of the Regional Transportation District (RTD), announced that he will be leaving the agency on July 31, after 14 years at the helm. Mr. Marsella is meeting today with the RTD Board of Directors to officially notify them that he will be taking a high-level position with a private sector firm. The RTD Board of Directors is expected to establish a comprehensive search process in the next several weeks.

Marsella said, "This was a tough decision, but I welcome the challenge of moving to another opportunity that I simply could not pass up. We have made extraordinary accomplishments, which is why last year we were once again named the most outstanding transit agency. The RTD staff is the best in the nation, so RTD is well positioned to continue with the incredible achievements we have made as a team with the RTD Board that will serve the entire metro area for this and future generations."

Lee Kemp, RTD Chairman of the Board said, "We owe Cal a great debt of gratitude for all of the remarkable successes that have been made under his leadership. We are very sorry to see him go, but do know that RTD is in great shape. We have an incredibly talented and experienced staff who will continue to operate the agency at the highest performance levels, and they have the Board's full support. The Board is fully committed to completing the entire FasTracks program, including the Eagle P3 project, by working directly with all of our stakeholders and especially the Metro Mayors Caucus."

Under Mr. Marsella's leadership, RTD has made numerous major accomplishments, including:

- Securing RTD's first federal Full Funding Grant Agreement for a light rail line with the \$120 million FFGA for the Southwest Light Rail line that was signed by then-US Secretary of Transportation Federico Pena in 1996
- Opening the Southwest Light Rail Line in 2000 on time and within budget
- Securing in 2000 the \$525 million federal Full Funding Grant Agreement for the Southeast Light Rail Line for the T-REX Project
- Replacing the aging 16th Street Mall shuttle bus fleet beginning in 2000 with state-of-the-art hybrid electric low-floor buses built by a local firm
- Purchasing Denver Union Station in 2001 in partnership with the City and County of Denver, the Denver Regional Council of Governments, and the Colorado Department of Transportation
- RTD being named the Outstanding Public Transportation Agency in North America by the American Public Transportation Association in 2003 and again in 2008
- Developing over a seven year period the FasTracks comprehensive transit system for the metro region that was overwhelmingly approved by voters in 2004 that will build 122 miles of new light rail and commuter rail, build 21,000 additional parking spaces at transit park-n-Rides, add 18 miles of bus rapid transit service, and build 57 new transit stations

In addition to these agency accomplishments, Mr. Marsella was selected by the American Public Transportation Association as the Outstanding Public Transportation Manager in 2006, by the University of Colorado Real Estate Council as their 2006 Person of the Year, and by Colorado Association of State Transportation Agencies as the Transportation Professional of the Year in 2000.

-Provided by RTD