



Denver's Fastracks Case Study & Best Practices

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Laying the Groundwork

- Proposed “Guide the Ride” expansion failed in 1997 (57% to 43%)
 - Dysfunctional board
 - Conceptual Plan – “trust us with your money”
 - The “yes” campaign spent \$650,000
 - The “no” effort only spent \$50,000
 - Every county but one turned it down.

Laying the Groundwork

- In 1998, new Governor took office. Priority was widening I-25 EIS process demonstrated that adding a rail line along with expanding the road would be better than just adding lanes. The TREX Initiative was born.
- In 1999, CDOT and RTD collaborated on two ballot measures approved by the voters
 - Granted CDOT authority to pledge federal revenues to retire debt
 - Allowed RTD to seek additional bonding authority for rail construction
- This election was a dual question issued – CDOT statewide and RTD regional. No taxes were raised.

Laying the Groundwork

- In 2001 RTD took the gamble of purchasing Denver Union Station from the railroads for approximately \$49.1M.
- Created an IGA between RTD, CDOT, DRCOG and City and County of Denver to Master Plan, entitle, historically preserve and environmentally clean the station and its approximate 19.6 acres.
- The 4 partners launched the EIS/Master Plan process in April of 2002 – 31 months prior to the voters approving FasTracks.

Laying the Groundwork

- That same year, RTD Board and local communities began collaborating on a comprehensive, region-wide transit plan called FasTracks.
- RTD, a creation of the legislature, could not go to the ballot without their permission.
- As part of a compromise of creating the first version of the Colorado Tolling Enterprise the Legislature granted RTD authority to go the ballot, but only by petition, in May of 2002. RTD could decide what year to go to the ballot.
- Prior to circulating petitions there had to be a formal review and approval of the plan by DRCOG (Regional MPO).

FasTracks Plan

- 122 miles of new light rail and commuter rail
- 18 miles of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service
- 31 new Park-n-Rides; more than 21,000 new parking spaces
- Enhanced Bus Network & Transit Hubs (FastConnects)
- Redevelopment of Denver Union Station
- 57 new rail and/or BRT stations
- Opportunities for Transit Oriented Communities



Keys to an Effective Campaign

- Research, Research, Research!
 - Between June 2002 and March 2004, privately funded entities conducted 4 baseline polls and 24 focus groups
- Throw out all preconceived notions and myths as to who supports transit and who doesn't
- Start Early
 - Research started shortly after legislature granted RTD the authority to go to an election
- Utilize data gathered to assist public policy makers
- Be Inclusive
 - Use the issue to bring divergent views but common interests together
- Be Proactive
 - Don't let the anti-tax, anti-transit crowd define your campaign.

Understanding the Voters

- Understand your voting “world”
 - Develop a “voting model” on how to win in each county
 - Not all counties are equal – each have different populations and voting patterns
- In Denver metro area:
 - Voters knew we would grow population in the next 20 years
 - Voters wanted a specific plan/map
 - Voters wanted choices and options in transportation
 - Roads alone were not the answer; but roads weren’t the enemy either – one size doesn’t fit all
 - Voters wanted something done NOW!

Challenges faced by the Campaign

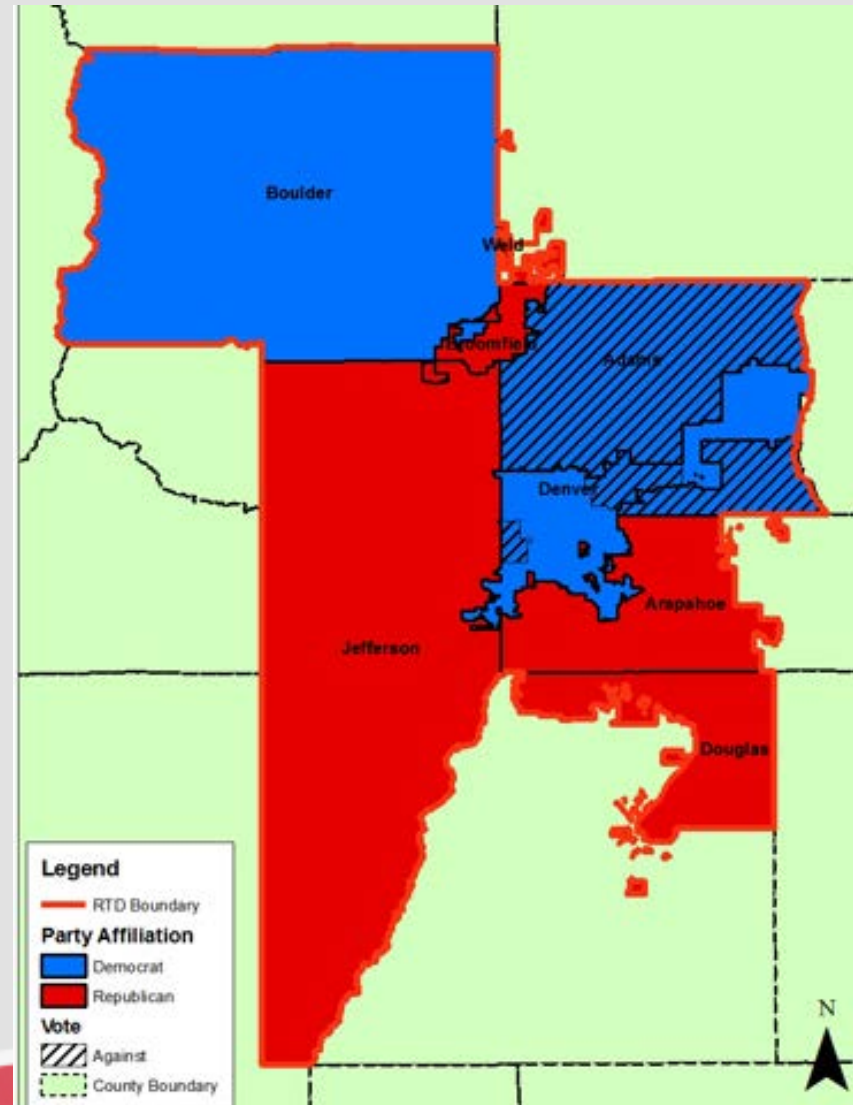
- Very competitive election year
 - Open Senate seat
 - Presidential election
 - Campaign budget increased by 15 – 20%
 - Ballot clutter – Colorado has a very long ballot
- Governor and Executive Director of CDOT opposed the campaign
- *Rocky Mountain News* editorialized against the campaign 13 times

Key Messages

- The Denver Metropolitan area would grow by a million people in the next 20 years
- The time is now
- Translate the cost - 4 pennies on a \$10 purchase
- The Map is key
- Can't stop growth – need to plan for it
- FasTracks provides choices
- Unanimous support of all 32 Mayors in the region

Election Results

- All Republican majority counties voted for FasTracks
- One out of three Democratic counties voted against FasTracks
- Final results:
YES – 57%
NO – 43%



The Element of Success

- Created a disciplined, focused, flexible campaign plan
 - Anticipate changing world of electoral politics
 - Plan for surprise events
- On Time/On Budget Delivery
 - RTD and the region had undertaken large infrastructure projects and delivered them on time and on budget
- What it Takes
 - Strength, passion, commitment, courage and unbridled determination to deliver
- Great City and Region
 - Need desire and political will to be a great city and region
- Vision
 - Should be lofty, but attainable
 - Should capture the region's imagination
- A plan
 - Must have a specific plan

What it will take to win

- Start early
- Political will
- Business/community/environmental support
- Public buy in – research is key
- Plan for implementing
- Strong public education campaign
- Gauge the economy and the impact it has on the voter



Eagle P3 Project

- Includes East Rail Line, Gold Line, first segment of Northwest Rail and commuter rail maintenance facility
- Project cost – \$2.2 billion
 - \$1.03 billion funded by federal grant
- Opens in 2016



Eagle P3 Project

- RTD pursued concept of P3 in 2007
 - “The Perfect Storm”
 - Costs skyrocketed
 - Revenues plummeted
- First transit P3 of this magnitude in the U.S.
- RTD retains ownership of assets
- 34-year contract
 - 6 years design/build
 - 28 years operate/maintain
- More public entities are turning to P3s to build out their projects



Union Station -2010



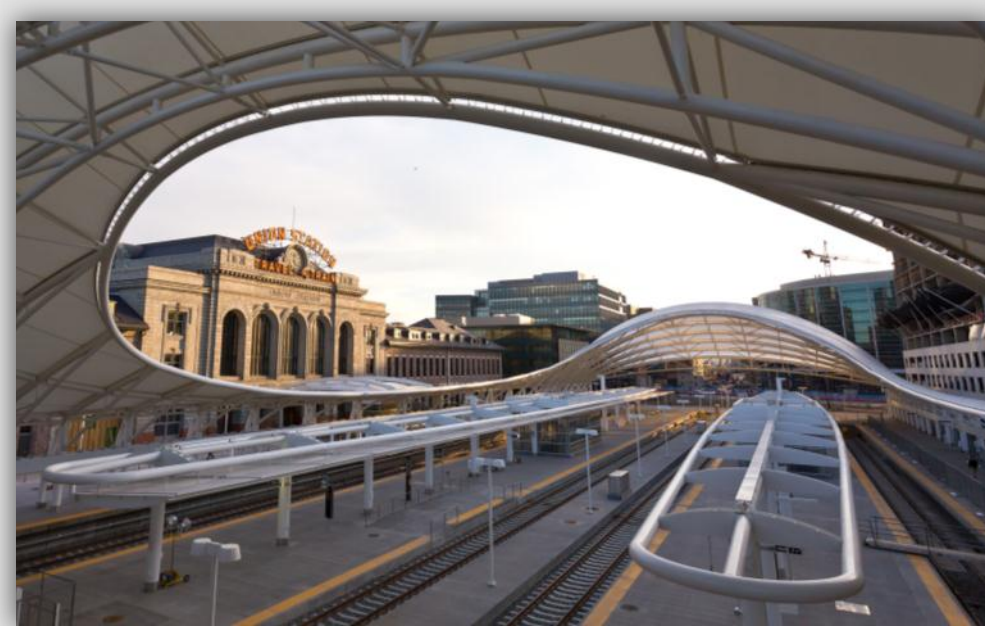
Union Station - Early 2013



Union Station – Mid 2013



Union Station – 2014 to Present



Bus Concourse- 2014 to Present



Questions?

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