



Elements of a Successful Referendum

The Denver Regional Transportation District FasTracks Program

Presentation to the Transportation Task Force
July 20, 2009

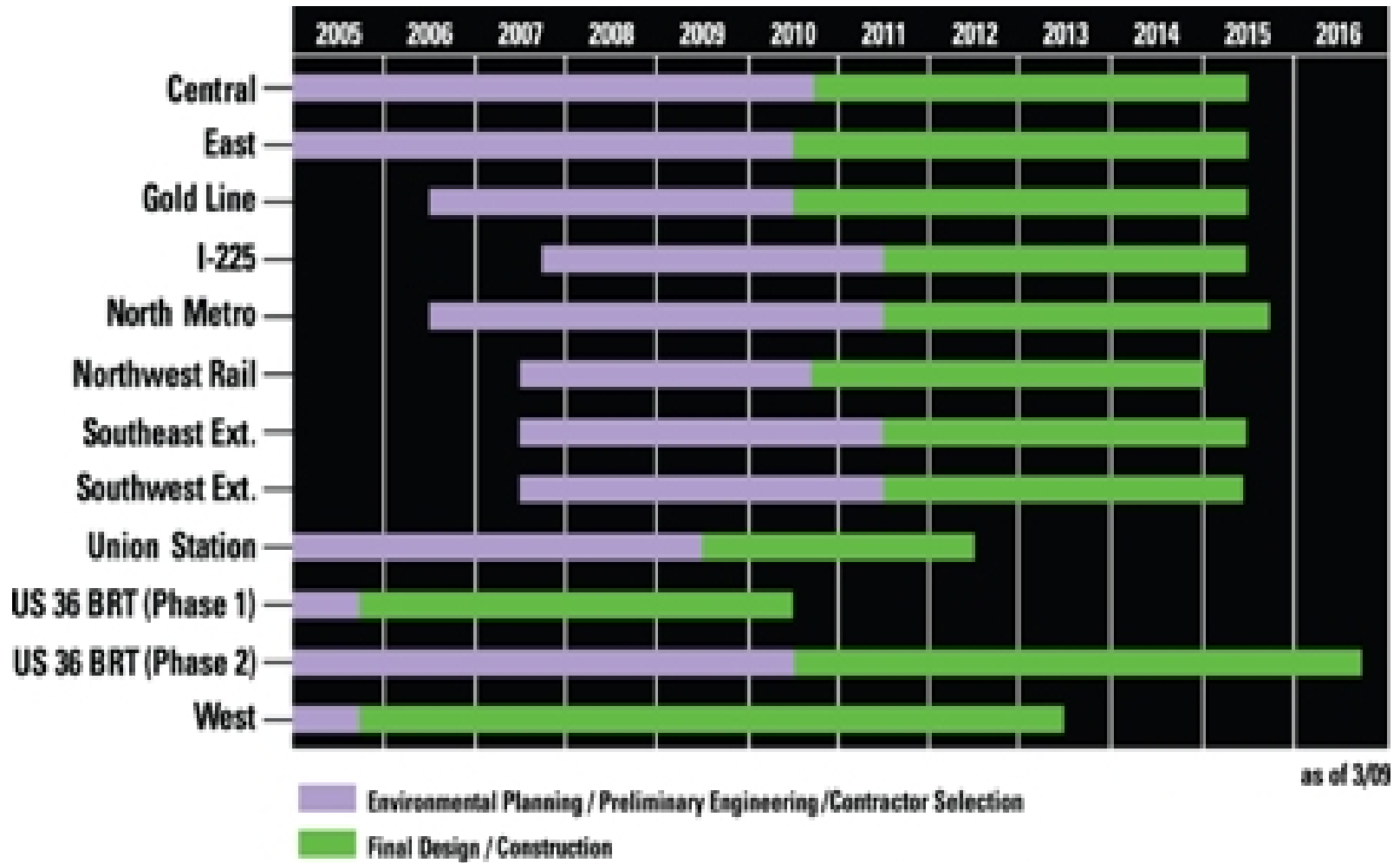
Liz Rao, Vice President Public Transit Services Chair,
HNTB

Denver Regional Transportation District

- Created in 1969
- Eight county service area
 - 40 municipalities
- Service area: 2,337 square miles
- 2.7 million population
- 1,039 buses
- 117 light rail vehicles
- 165 routes
- 74 park-n-rides
- 10,159 bus stops
- 2,526 employees
- 35 miles of light rail
- 37 light rail stations
- 102-million+ annual boardings
- 6 operating facilities
- Total 2009 Operating Budget:
\$382.9 million



FasTracks Plan Schedule



as of 3/09

Environmental Planning / Preliminary Engineering / Contractor Selection
 Final Design / Construction

*All corridor schedules subject to change and based on actual bid and financial plan adjustments.
 US 36 (Phase 2) schedule dependent on CDOT funding.*



FasTracks Facts

- Public vote in 2004
- Passed 58% to 42%
- 0.4% sales tax increase (\$.04 on \$10 purchase) for capital and O&M
- After the debt is repaid a portion of the tax will remain to cover O&M costs
- RTD District-wide sales tax goes to 1 penny

Elements of a Successful Referendum

1. Successful Starter Lines

Corridor	Cost (millions)	Miles	Opening Day	Opening Day Ridership
Central	\$ 117m	5.3	1994	14,000
Southwest	\$ 178m	8.7	2000	13,000
Central Platte	\$ 48m	1.8	2002	3,000
Southeast (TREX)	\$ 879m	19.1	2006	33,800

All four lines were built on-time and within budget

All four lines exceeded ridership projections

2008 System-wide Light Rail Ridership 65,431/day

Elements of a Successful Referendum

2. Learn from Past (Failed) Referendums

- In 1997, RTD had a failed transit election for 0.4 % sales tax – “Guide the Ride”
- Reasons for failure: “Public didn’t know”
 - Alignments, technologies not specific
 - 20-yr schedule too long
 - No regional buy-in from cities and counties
 - The RTD Board, as a whole, did not support the plan
 - Campaign not well organized; did little to educate the public or respond to critics

Elements of a Successful Referendum

3. Planning and Public Involvement Work Accomplished
 - 1998-2001 Study work in the 6 major corridors defined - alignments, technologies, stations (subject to completion of NEPA)
 - Provided clear corridor descriptions
 - Held hundreds of public meetings in each of the corridors over the four years and then for the FasTracks Plan itself
 - Finally, its all about the MAP! –People could point to THEIR LINE

Elements of a Successful Referendum

4. Provided a Transit Vision for the Future

Benefits Described:

- Establish a proactive plan that balances transit needs with future growth - Population to grow by one million by 2025
- Increase transit share in the peak period – overall 22% share in peak hour in major corridors
- Real travel time savings with Rail Transit
- Plan for “smart growth” and TOD with Transit
 - 75% of the stations could accommodate TOD

Elements of a Successful Referendum

5. Developed a Specific Financial Plan and Schedule for Implementation
 - Detailed capital and operating cost assumptions
 - Specified local and federal revenue and debt assumptions
 - Provided for a Citizens Advisory Committee
 - Provide a clear schedule for project delivery
 - DRCOG/MPO reviewed and approved plan

Elements of a Successful Referendum

6. Developed Strong Support for the Plan
 - RTD Board Unanimous Support, took ownership in moving plan forward
 - RTD General Manager, Strong Champion
 - Support of all the Metro Mayors and a majority of all elected officials in the region; Mayor John Hickenlooper full support
 - Strong Business, Development Community and Chamber Support



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7. Respond to attacks rapidly

- Quickly correct statistical distortions by opponents
- Avoid highway vs. transit debate
- “The Facts are our Friends”

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FINALLY.....

8. Hire a Good Campaign Team!

- *Campaign spent over \$3 million*
- *Invested primarily in TV and radio ads*
- *Engaged professional pollsters to determine public's priorities and direct messages to address these priorities*

It's Well Worth It!