



**2012 Annual Program Evaluation (APE)
Staff Recommendation - Northwest
Corridor**

March 5, 2012

Presentation Overview

- **Staff Recommendation**
- **Next Steps**

Staff Recommendation

Overview

- **The RTD Board of Directors does not have the authority to unilaterally change the use of the tax and debt authorized for the FasTracks plan that was approved by the voters in 2004**
- **If the RTD Board of Directors chooses to proceed with a sales and use tax election in 2012, an amended plan will be referenced as part of the ballot question**
 - Approval of the ballot measure will include approval of the plan amendment
 - If the ballot measure fails, the 2004 plan will remain unchanged
- **Approval of an option for the Northwest Corridor will allow staff to include these assumptions in the 2012 financial plan that will then be submitted to DRCOG for review as part of the SB 208 process**

Staff Recommendation - Background

- **Based on staff discussions, and from the formal responses from our stakeholder groups, there is no consensus from our stakeholders around any of the three options proposed**
- **Therefore, RTD staff has identified a new, hybrid option which incorporates input from the community and elements from the other options**

FasTracks Guiding Principles

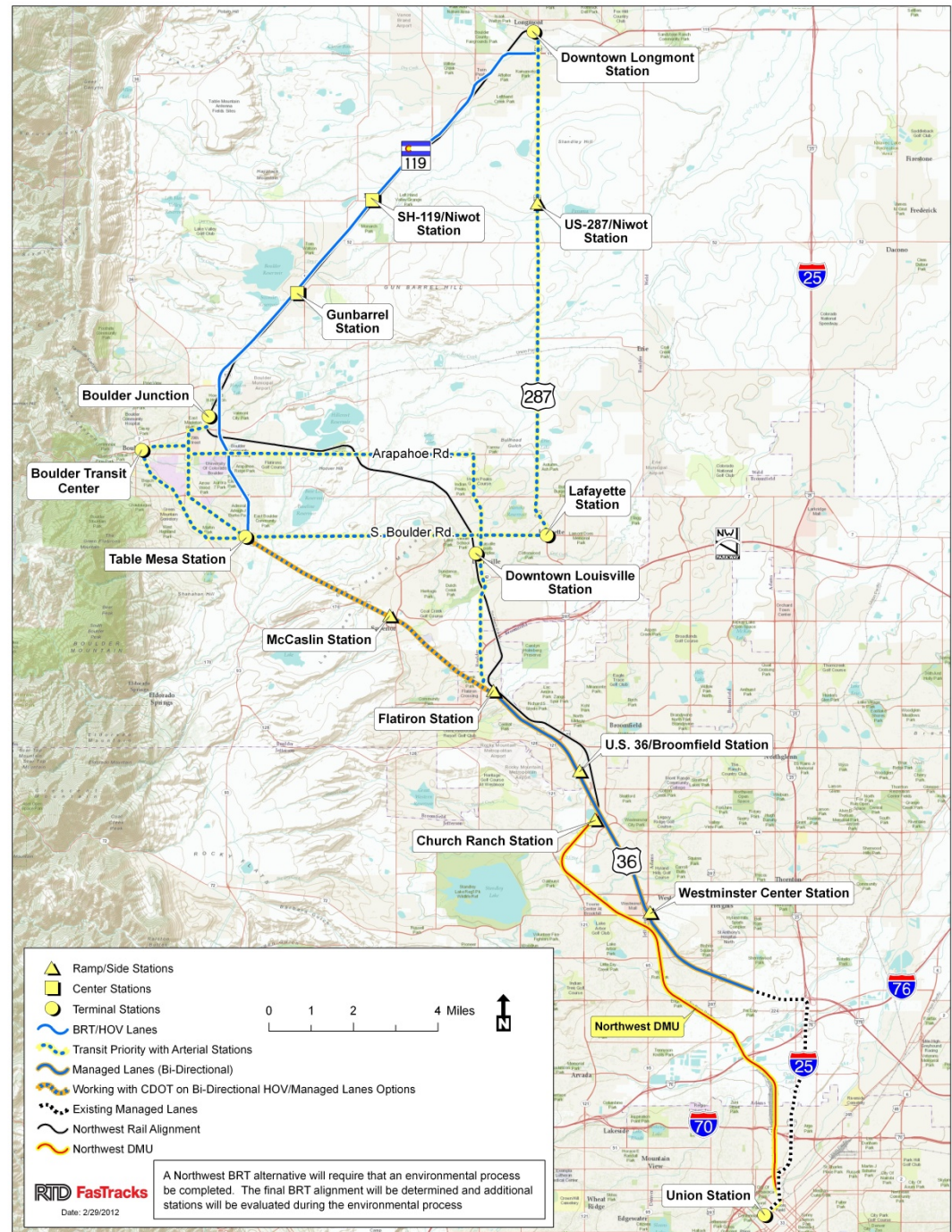
- **Staff relied heavily on our Guiding Principles to develop tonight's recommendation:**
 - Ensure every step contributes to the full vision
 - Focus money available to the greatest good
 - Spend public money wisely
 - Maximize outside funding before going to taxpayers
 - Deliver key investments in all corridors

Staff Recommendation

- **No schedule or cost impacts for any other partially-funded corridor projects**
- **Completing the Northwest Rail Line incrementally from Church Ranch to Longmont as rail becomes more cost effective and funding becomes available from the original 0.4% FasTracks sales tax**
- **A combination of an incremental segment of diesel multiple unit (DMU) commuter rail in the Northwest Corridor Area during the period of 2020 - 2022 and up to 80 miles of Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) by 2020 that will provide comprehensive, cost effective mobility improvements for the region**
 - Including funding for an Environmental Assessment or Environmental Impact Statement that will be required prior to finalizing an exact BRT alignment, etc.

Capital Improvements

- **Extension of the Northwest Rail Line from DUS to the Church Ranch Station**
 - This DMU extension would provide approx. 12 of the 41 miles of commuter rail for the Northwest Corridor (30% of the complete length)
- **\$894.6 million (YOE) for expanded BRT in the Northwest Corridor area by 2020**
 - These funds are in addition to the \$82 M (YOE) remaining for the US 36 BRT project by 2015



Extension of the Northwest Rail Line

- **Extending commuter rail to the Church Ranch station helps address a key operational challenge for BRT routes that are destined to and from DUS**
 - Effective implementation of BRT service in the Northwest Corridor requires reliable and fast reverse commute direction service between Pecos on US 36 and DUS along the North I-25 Express Lanes during peak travel periods
 - BRT services headed in the reverse commute direction during peak hours between DUS and Pecos will have to operate in mixed traffic on the general purpose lanes and be subject to traffic congestion and the resultant delays
- **Extending the rail will also allow RTD to continue moving forward with our ultimate vision of building rail to Longmont**

Extension of the Northwest Rail Line (cont.)

- **Extension of the Northwest Rail Line to the Church Ranch station will provide an alternative during peak hours for commuters traveling in the reverse commute direction along North I-25**
 - In the morning peak period, travelers headed north to the corridor will be able to take the train from DUS to Church Ranch and transfer to BRT buses scheduled to meet the trains
 - Afternoon peak service would be the reverse, with passengers disembarking BRT buses at Church Ranch to complete their travel to DUS on the train
 - RTD would also continue operations of parallel BRT service in both directions between DUS and Pecos as another alternative for patrons who do not wish to transfer

Extension of the Northwest Rail Line (cont.)

- **Given that the cost for long-term operation and maintenance (O&M) of this option would likely be lower than for the complete Northwest Rail Line to Longmont, RTD would commit to converting these O&M savings into a capital funding commitment to help complete the rail extension to Church Ranch**
 - RTD is working with BNSF to explore the opportunities and costs for this extension, analyzing alternatives that would provide between 15 minute or 30 minute peak period rail service frequencies
- **Based on conservative estimates of cost, it is currently anticipated that funding would be available to complete the rail extension during the period of 2020 – 2022**

RTD's BRT Vision

- **Frequent and reliable BRT service, same or better than light rail and commuter rail**
- **Service to the entire travel market identified for NW Rail**
- **Permanent BRT stations**
- **Specialized “branded” buses**
- **Pre-paid fare media (i.e., Ticket Vending Machines)**
- **Coordinated effort with stakeholders to establish BRT service standards**

RTD's BRT Vision (cont.)

- **Consistent BRT service levels, as identified through the SB 208 process and subsequent environmental analyses, until five years after opening of the full BRT system – after which time all routes would be required to meet service standards**
 - Bi-directional, high frequency service
 - Service levels could be increased if ridership levels increase (according to service criteria)

Staff Rationale for the Recommendation

- **RTD staff chose this hybrid option over the other options considered for two main reasons:**
 - This approach allows the entirety of the Northwest Rail Line to remain in the FasTracks plan, completing the Northwest Rail Line incrementally from Church Ranch to Longmont as rail becomes more cost effective and funding becomes available from the original 0.4% FasTracks sales tax
 - As we incrementally build the Northwest Rail Line, BRT will provide a cost effective solution to effectively address mobility needs sooner in the Northwest Corridor Area

Next Steps

2012 APE Schedule

- **March 8**: RTD Board selection of Northwest Corridor option at a Special Board meeting
- **March 20**: FasTracks Monitoring Committee recommendation to approve 2012 APE financial plan and release of SB 208 report to DRCOG
- **March 27**: Board approval of 2012 APE financial plan and SB 208 report
- **June 2012**: DRCOG approval of SB 208 Report

Questions?