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East Corridor EIS Recommends Electric Commuter Rail, Union Pacific 36th Street Yard Maintenance Facility Site

DENVER – The East Corridor Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) project team today announced it will recommend electric commuter rail for service on the 23.6-mile FasTracks corridor, serving six stations between Denver Union Station in downtown Denver and Denver International Airport.

The project team also recommends that the Regional Transportation District locate its central maintenance facility for commuter rail vehicles for the East, Northwest Rail and North Metro corridors at the Union Pacific's 36th Street Yard, located at 36th Street and Brighton Boulevard in Denver.

Based on more than three years of unprecedented public outreach and a detailed technical analysis, these new recommendations will be elements of the recommended preferred alternative in the draft environmental impact statement, scheduled for release in early 2007.

“Electric commuter rail is an excellent fit for the East Corridor because it meets the needs and desires of the communities, and will provide superior service to the estimated 37,000 daily users of this critical FasTracks corridor,” said Mike Turner, East Corridor project manager.

The specific commuter rail technology the team recommends is called an electric multiple unit, which is self-powered by an overhead electrical system. With a 30-minute travel time between downtown and DIA, electric multiple unit also accelerates and decelerates faster than other commuter rail technologies and can climb steeper grades, therefore requiring shorter approaches for bridges over streets.

The team recommends the Union Pacific (UP) 36th Street Yard for the central rail maintenance facility because RTD has to buy the site to build the East Corridor, regardless of where the maintenance facility is located. Since the other remaining candidate site, the Burlington Northern

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Santa Fe (BNSF) 31st Street Yard, is not required to build FasTracks, relocating it for a maintenance facility would add \$150 million to the FasTracks budget. The UP 36th Street Yard also has additional operational benefits over the BNSF 31st Street Yard.

“We have worked closely with the community to identify a maintenance facility location that minimizes impacts to the surrounding neighborhoods but still meets the operational needs of FasTracks,” Turner said. “After analyzing 24 candidate sites, the UP 36th Street Yard is by far the best fit.”

Recommendations for other elements of the preferred alternative, including the Central Corridor/Downing Street extension and the corridor alignment northeast of I-70 to DIA, will be discussed in October.

Meetings are being scheduled for early November for the public to comment on the East Corridor recommendations.

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- Language interpreters
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- Alternative formats, such as large print or
- Reasonable accommodation for special needs

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About East Corridor EIS

The East Corridor is a 23.6-mile rapid transit corridor extending from Denver Union Station in downtown Denver to Denver International Airport. The East Corridor Environmental Impact Statement is analyzing transit alternatives on the East Corridor and an extension of transit on the Central Corridor/Downing Street and will include extensive public involvement throughout. In the 2004 FasTracks election, voters approved a budget of \$702.1 million for the East Corridor, serving Denver, Aurora and unincorporated Adams County. Voters also approved \$54 million for the Central Corridor. Service is scheduled to begin in 2014.

About FasTracks

FasTracks is RTD’s voter-approved \$4.7 billion, 12-year program to expand rail and bus service throughout the RTD service area. Scheduled for completion in 2017, FasTracks will create six new light rail and commuter rail corridors, extend three existing corridors, add 21,000 new parking spaces, and expand bus service across the entire District.