

Northeast Area Transit Evaluation (NATE) II Summary

In November 2007, RTD completed the Northeast Area Transit Evaluation (NATE) study which provided an overview of potential implementation strategies that would support fixed-guideway transit opportunities within Denver's northeast metropolitan area. The goal of the NATE study was to work with local municipalities and jurisdictions to investigate options to invest \$7.3 million allocated in the Regional Transportation District's (RTD) FasTracks program toward the extension of future, post-FasTracks, fixed-guideway bus and/or rail transit improvements between Denver and Brighton with direct connection to the FasTracks system. Key local study participants included the City of Brighton, Commerce City, Adams County, CCD, City of Thornton, CDOT, and RTD. Meetings were held with community groups, advisory boards, and local developers to share findings and recommendations. In addition, study recommendations were presented at council meetings and a county commission meeting.

The NATE study developed three alternative rail alignments for a potential future rail line through Commerce City, Adams County, and Brighton that generally follow either UPRR Greeley along US 85; BNSF Railway along SH 2 and I-76; or various alignments between the two corridors referred to as the cross-country alignment options. Other options that were documented include transit circulators and connections to other FasTracks corridors such as along Quebec Street to the East Corridor. The NATE study recommended all of these options for further study.

In June 2011, RTD met with the local jurisdictions to review the status of the future of NATE. The jurisdictions felt that a report that continues the development of the alternative alignments evaluated in the November 2007 report may be the best use of the available funds. RTD distributed an outline for the "white paper" in September 2011 to gain feedback on the direction and focus of the additional studies. Over the next year, RTD met with the local jurisdictions to review and refine a scope for NATE II, which will summarize and expand the analysis of the original 2007 NATE study by providing a fatal flaw analysis of commuter rail and light rail technology, develop and analyze alternatives for BRT, and develop a bus-to-rail transition evaluation.

Since the November 2013 kick-off meeting, RTD has met with each local jurisdiction including CDOT to review the scope of the study, hear expectations, and review local land use plans and projects. RTD is currently developing alternatives and evaluation criteria. It is RTD's goal that upon completion of NATE II, we will have a prioritized list of improvements for the Northeast area of the district that has the overall support of RTD, CDOT and our project stakeholders.