Denver RTD’s Lessons Learned in Developing Transit Initiatives

Traction Power to the People

September 9, 2005
FasTracks Plan

- **Scheduled Completion:** 2016
- 119 miles of new and expanded rail transit
- 9 Rapid transit corridors
- Funding for 18 miles of Bus Rapid Transit
- Enhanced bus network
- 65 New park-n-Rides; 21,000 new parking spaces
- $4.7 million plan.
FasTracks Lessons Learned

1 Proof of Concept: Successful starter line:

- Central Corridor, 1994
- Southwest Corridor, 2000
- Central Platte Valley Spur, 2002
- All three lines were built on-time and within budget
- All three lines exceeded ridership projections
- All three lines have spurred development within their corridors.

Englewood City Center
FasTracks Lessons Learned

2 Use of Planning Process: Major Investment Studies

• MIS’s were subject to extensive public input
• Provided clear description of corridors for public understanding
• Provided preliminary selection of alignments, technologies and station sites
• Allowed municipalities to begin station TOD planning efforts in advance.

Boulder Transit Village Plan
FasTracks Lessons Learned

Plan Specificity, Schedule and Financial Plan:

- Included sound financial plan with specified revenue, cost and debt assumptions
- Developed implementation schedule supported by the financing plan with clear timeline of individual capital investments.
4 Strong political support

- Unanimous support from region’s mayors
- Strong support from most of region’s elected officials
- Elected officials understood potential TOD opportunities along future lines based on success of existing TOD and the fury of interest in future development along RTD’s future Southeast Corridor.

Denver Federal Center Redevelopment Plan
FasTracks Lessons Learned

5 Strong support from environmental community.

- Promoted initiative for quality of life and environmental/sustainability reasons.
- Saw the opportunity to implement smart growth policies at new rail stations through TOD – thus channeling growth and combating sprawl.

DRCOG Mile High Compact
FasTracks Lessons Learned

6 Strong support from business and development communities.

- Considered initiative as means to maintaining economic development growth and competitiveness on a region-wide basis
- Realized the potential for development and redevelopment opportunities at future stations
- Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce was the single largest contributor to the campaign.
FasTracks Lessons Learned

7 Private 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
- Included non-traditional constituency in campaign.

8 Professionalism

- Board and Agency earned respect of public for professionalism.
9  Public Involvement
  • Agency held hundreds of meetings throughout region to explain the program and answer public questions.

10  Rapid responses to attacks
  • Quickly corrected statistical distortions by opponents
  • Avoided highway v. transit debate.
Conclusions

- Promise what you can deliver and deliver what you promise
- Avoid “Us versus Them” scenario
- Make the business case as well as the environmental and mobility case
- Hire a professional campaign team and run a professional campaign.