



Denver Colorado The Next Transit Metropolis

Transit for Livable Communities

TLC is a non-profit organization working to improve the quality of life in Minnesota communities by promoting transit, walking, biking and transit oriented development.

Our major policy initiatives include:

- *Securing increased and dedicated funding for transit, biking and walking.*
- *Encouraging development and zoning that supports walking, biking, and transit.*
- *Advocating for reform of state transportation funding, road design practices, and local parking policies.*

To contact TLC:

Write to:

626 Selby Avenue, Suite A
St. Paul, MN 55104

Phone: 651-767-0298

E-mail: tlc@tlcminnesota.org

Web: www.tlcminnesota.org

Jan 05

Color Green

Transit referendum passes.

On November 2nd, voters in the Denver metropolitan area approved a referendum to greatly expand public transit. Passage of the referendum will pay for **\$4.7 billion** in transit improvements over the next 12 years through an increase in the regional sales tax – from 6/10ths of a cent to a full cent (a dime on a \$10 purchase). The referendum, known as FasTracks, was strongly supported by Denver voters, the business community, and local elected officials.

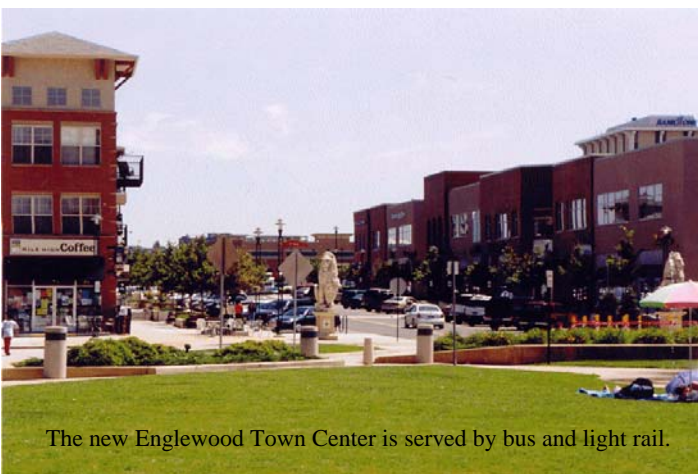


Fare-free buses on Denver's Transit Mall

FasTracks will add 119 miles of new light rail and commuter rail, 18 miles of rapid bus transit, 21,000 new parking spaces at transit stations, and expanded bus service throughout the region; much of it in the suburbs. Denver's transit agency, the Regional Transit District (RTD), currently operates 16 miles of LRT, two downtown transit stations connected by a fare-free transit mall, express bus service on dozens of miles of HOV lanes, and frequent bus service. Denver's T-REX project, which opens in 2006, will widen I-25 to three lanes in each direction and add 19 miles of light rail.

The Denver metro area has 20% FEWER highway lane miles per person than does the Twin Cities region.¹ Transit ridership in Denver was 78 million in 2003 (8% higher than in the Twin Cities region).

Transit-oriented development continues in Denver; in down-town along the transit mall and at Union Station; and to the southwest along the light rail line. Light rail



The new Englewood Town Center is served by bus and light rail.

has helped to transform the site of an abandoned shopping mall in the City of Englewood into a new Civic Center and acres of high density housing. RTD is planning for 50 new transit villages, most of them along the expanding rail system.

(over)

Denver Colorado The New Transit Metropolis

TRANSIT for



Livable Communities

This fact sheet was produced with support from the Joyce, McKnight, and Minneapolis Foundations.

Check out TLC's other fact sheets.

Available fact sheets include:

- *New Rail Starts*
- *Subsidies for Roads and Transit*
- *Peer City Investment in Public Transit*
- *Sources of Funding for Transit in Peer Cities*
- *Myths about Transit in the Twin Cities Region*
- *Revenues to Minnesota's Highway Users Tax Distribution Fund*
- *Transit Routes and Ridership in North American Cities*
- *Highway Lane miles in the Largest 25 Regions*



Light rail station in Littleton Colorado, southwest of downtown Denver. Light rail on this corridor carries 33,000 riders each weekday. During peak hours, LRT carries 19 percent of peak hour travelers in the US-85 corridor.

Transit is key transportation strategy. The 2030 Metro Vision RTP developed by Denver's Regional Council of Governments identifies \$30 billion in state and regional spending for roads, transit, safety, bike and pedestrian spending for the 25-year planning horizon. Of this amount, \$19.5 billion or 65% is for transit, travel demand management, and bike and pedestrian projects.

Denver is not alone. Nearly every major metropolitan area in the US has made a similar commitment to transit.

- **Dallas** with its one cent sales tax for transit has built a robust bus, light rail and commuter rail system. That region now has 44 miles of light rail and 35 miles of regional rail connecting Dallas and Ft. Worth. Dallas plans to double its light rail system by 2014. Dallas has more highway lane miles per capita than the Twin Cities and a very sprawling land use pattern.
- **San Diego** has nearly 100 miles of rail transit. *Mobility 2030*, the transportation plan for the region, calls for "transit to be the first choice for many trips" and projects a "double-digit transit mode share in the peak hour." Of the \$20 billion in major capital investments planned for 2002 to 2030, \$8.5 billion (42%) is for transit; \$6.6 billion (37%) is for HOV, managed lanes, and HOV connectors; and \$4.1 billion is for highway system completion, widening, and connections.
- **Phoenix** voters approved a roads and transit referendum in 2004. That proposal will add 27 miles of light rail. Phoenix will also expand its regional highway system which is only 2/3rds the size of the highway system in the Twin Cities region.

Endnotes:

1. Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration. Urbanized Areas, Selected Characteristics—2002 (www.fhwa.dot.gov/policy/ohim/hs02/hm72.htm)