Getting to “Yes” on Transit

30 Years of Dreaming, Failure, Success and More Challenges
Since 1980s....

Regional strategy:

• Build world-class infrastructure in the depths of recessions to position the region when recovery occurs.

• Sell the “region first”

• Focus on “innovation clusters” as engines of growth

• Engage in “place-making economic development”
Innovation Clusters in Metro Denver 2012
Remember, “A recession is a terrible thing to waste.”
Late 1980s
Mid-90s Recession
Mid-90s Recession

Pepsi Center
Opening Date: 2000
Capacity: 19,100
Mid-90s Recession

Sports Authority @ Mile High
Opening Date, 2001
Capacity: 76,125
The “Dot.bomb” Bust
Early 2001
Guide the Ride – 1997

• .4 percent sales tax increase throughout the region.
• Kubrik’s “2001 – A Space Odyssey” movie strategy – “Trust me, Dave, it’ll be wonderful.”
• Left RTD headquarters as an “evergreen”, came back as a Christmas tree – all kinds of new ornaments attached.
• Defeated resoundingly at the polls.
The Road to FasTracks

• RTD light rail for the Central Corridor (called the Metro Area Connector - MAC), also called the “Road to Nowhere” began revenue service on October 7, 1994. RTD’s first light rail line

• Designed to provide connections to multiple rail lines coming into the Central Core.

• Funded entirely by RTD without increased taxes or federal help.
Southwest Corridor, opened in 2000
Southeast Corridor, opened in 2006
Highways and Transit – T-Rex

Light rail and highway project
Incorporated “design-build”
concepts.
- Project completed two years
  ahead of schedule.
  “On budget”
  Grand Opening:
  November 17,
  2006.
West Corridor, opens Spring 2013
FasTracks
Reasons “For” at 30,000 feet

- One million new people from 2004 – 2025
- Metro Denver ranked 3rd most congested region
- $2.4 billion in construction spending
- 6,200 jobs during construction
- $1.25 billion in O&M after construction
- Reduce “peak auto travel” by 8% - 16% on FasTracks corridors
- Part of “world city” vision for Metro Denver
Why Did Business Support It?

• Congestion had split metro labor market in half – FasTracks opens up entire labor market of 1.5 million more people
• 16%-23% reduction in auto traffic on major corridors during rush hour
Why FasTracks Passed

• A “Real” plan – explicit
• Broad coalition of greedy capitalists, elected officials, enviros and transit whackos
• United RTD board
• Vocal and unified Metro Mayors Caucus
• Early BIG money into the campaign
• Total campaign cost:
  – $2.1 million “yes”
  – $100,000 “no”, plus lots of legal action filed against proponents
What’s Happened

• Approaching $2.0 billion of investments along existing lines.
• Fortune 500 giant DaVita (kidney dialysis) insists on locating on line. Chooses site directly across from Union Station in Downtown.
• Numerous site searches in our office start on rail lines.
“New Economy” TOD Site Selection Criteria

“We want to be on the rail line, with a Starbucks in the building and a Red Robin within walking distance.”

Justin Ball – Fast Enterprises”

“We have a new type of employee. They want to live on a transit stop, go to work on a transit stop and recreate at a transit stop.”

U.S. Patent and Trade Office Official