



2009 FasTracks Lessons Learned

September 15, 2009

Executive Summary

- Every major program and organization has something to learn from its experiences.
- RTD has built four light rail projects on time and on budget and has drawn upon the many lessons learned on each of those projects for FasTracks.
- A program of this magnitude is a unique venture that is positioned to benefit from the lessons of the past, but present a whole new slate of experiences that emerge from its trailblazing nature.

What Are Lessons Learned?

- Lessons Learned are general statements that describe good practices or innovative approaches that are shared to promote repeat application.
- Lessons Learned are also descriptions of challenges that are shared to provide continuous improvement.
- A program as large and complex as FasTracks is suited to offer lessons that can be used throughout the completion of FasTracks itself, as well as for future programs.

Planning/Environmental Studies

What we've learned:

- Allot three-to-five years for future planning/environmental studies.
- Early interaction and agreement with key stakeholders and third parties regarding project scope, alignments and stations is critical. This has helped project studies avoid further project delays as the projects progress.
- Begin studies fully staffed in all disciplines based on the scope and schedule identified.

Cost Estimating

What we've learned:

- It's beneficial to consider a program-wide contingency to address potential uncertainty and unknown issues.
- Continue to incorporate formal risk assessments into design reviews to identify potential additional costs and contingencies.
- Advance engineering to identify risks and the costs associated with them, ensuring the FasTracks plan is shovel-ready before requesting any additional tax increase to construct the projects.

Revenue Forecasting

What we've learned:

- Provide a range (best-case and worst-case cash flows) of potential sales and use tax collections, rather than an exact figure, for longer-term projections.
- Educate stakeholders and the public on RTD's forecasting methodologies.
- Communicate that long-term growth projections are averages, rather than exact forecasts of annual growth rates.

Railroad Right-of-Way

What we've learned:

- Include a larger corridor enhancement factor when establishing a budget for purchasing railroad right-of-way to be on the conservative side.
- Minimize impacts to railroad operations in order to contain the cost of relocation or enhancement.
- Allow sufficient time to negotiate to accommodate the railroads' approval process by their various departments.

Property Acquisition

What we've learned:

- Coordination among internal disciplines is essential to provide consistent communication with potentially impacted property owners as design progresses.
- Always stress that the acquisition of property takes place following the completion of the environmental process.
- It is key for designers to provide certified right-of-way plans as early on in design as is feasible in order to complete property acquisitions prior to construction.

Management

What we've learned:

- Staffing resources must be at a sufficient level to adequately address program demands.
- The matrix organization works well as long as each corridor has an adequate core group of personnel who are fully dedicated to that corridor.
- Assign full responsibility and final decision-making authority on program implementation to the FasTracks Program Manager, in conjunction with the General Manager and Board of Directors.

Policies/Procedures

What we've learned:

- Focus progress reporting and issue resolution on critical schedule milestones.
- Integration of FasTracks-specific control systems with overall RTD processes and systems is critical.
- Adequate business processes and internal controls need to be in place before entering into joint construction agreements for projects.

Project Delivery

What we've learned:

- Design-build and design-build-finance-operate-maintain delivery methods bring a significant private sector component into the management of these projects, which maximizes contractor innovation and participation
- Negotiated contract prices are extremely challenging to implement and should be avoided in the future.

Communications

What we've learned:

- It is important to define a Public Information and Public Involvement Program as early in a program as possible.
- It is essential to communicate the stakeholder participation process and how involvement opportunities narrow as a project becomes more defined.
- Internal communication is one of the most important components of any program.

Sharing our Lessons

- Will share Lessons Learned Report with regional partners and industry colleagues
- Will make report available on the FasTracks Web site
- Will develop an annual Lessons Learned Report throughout the implementation of FasTracks

Conclusion

- It is always prudent to learn from past experiences
- Intent is to be open and transparent about what has gone well and should be repeated, and what we would and will do differently moving forward
- Many of the lessons are already being implemented
- Offers RTD an opportunity to share our knowledge with the industry

Questions?