

Downtown Free MetroRide Improvements

Land Use, Transportation and
Infrastructure Committee

March 28, 2017

History

- **2004:** FasTracks plan included a circulator for downtown to complement and relieve pressure of the Mall
- **2005:** DMAP recommendation for 18th/19th Alignment, dedicated lanes, bike integration
- **2006 – 2014:** Further planning and design determined it to be fare-free, have dedicated enhanced stops, and some dedicated lane features (bus/bike/HOV on 19th)
- **2014:** Service Opens; Although originally envisioned to serve the Golden Triangle, funding constraints limited service from DUS to Civic Center during weekday peak periods (6-9 minute headways)
- **2016:** Service hours expanded in peak periods, headways improved to 4-6 minutes.

Current Operations



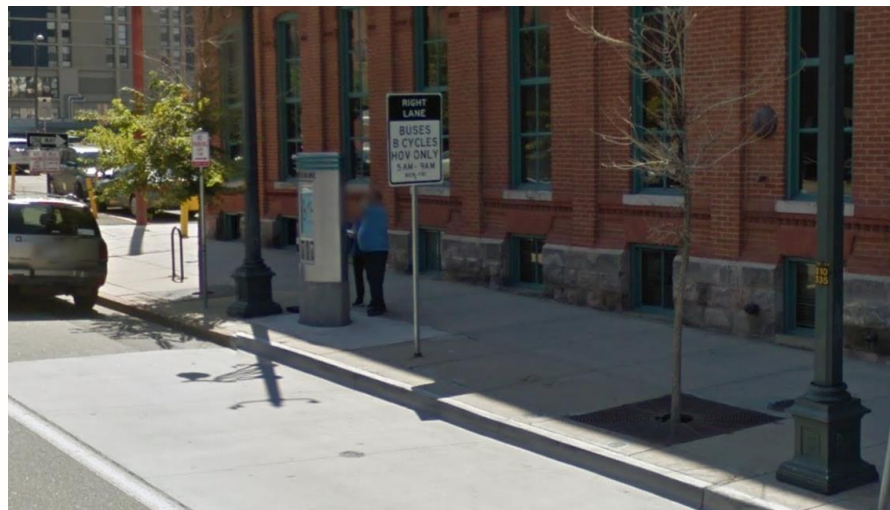
Source: RTD, 2017

Current Operations

- Fare-free service with multiple door boarding
- Uniquely branded 60 foot low – floor articulated buses
- Shared bus/bike/HOV lane on 19th Street
- Bus bulbs on 18th Street between Curtis and Wynkoop
- Dedicated and enhanced stops
- Simple, frequent service – no schedule required
- Service: Monday – Friday: 5:00am – 9:00am; 2:30pm – 6:30pm
- Headways: 4-6 minutes
- 3,000 boardings/day



Source: RTD, 2014



Source: Google Streetview

Current Operations



Source: RTD



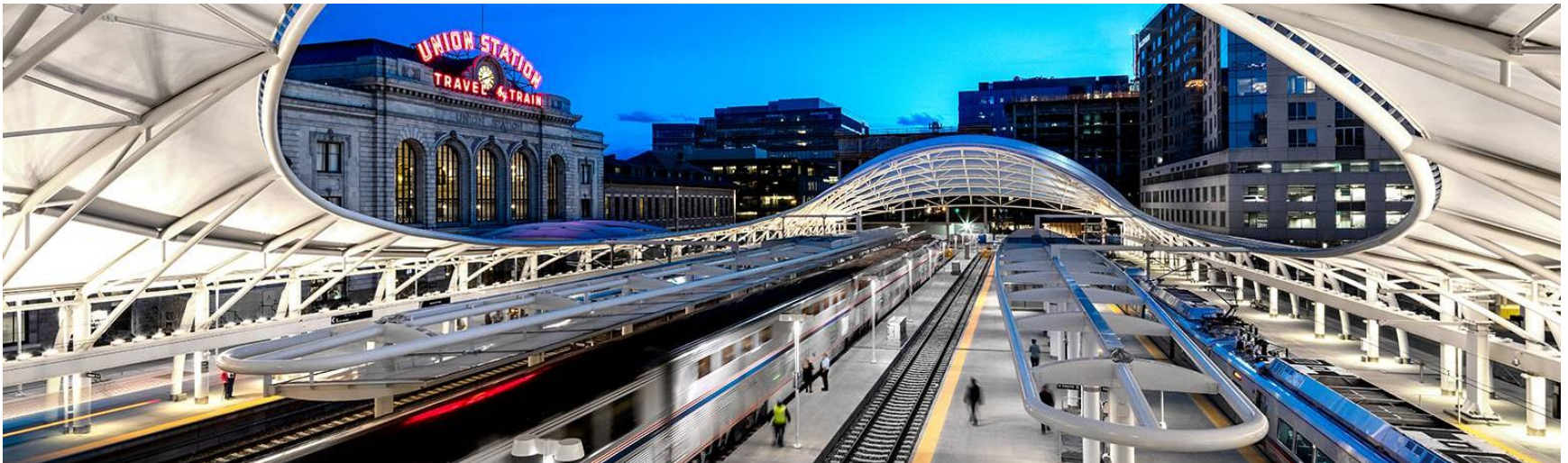
Source: Denver Post



Source: Streetsblog Denver

Need For Improvement

- Goal of Free MetroRide is to provide faster service through downtown than the Free MallRide
- With increased congestion, Free MetroRide is no longer faster or more reliable than Free MallRide especially during the PM peak
- Passengers are choosing Free MallRide
- With 2 additional FasTracks commuter rail lines coming on board by 2018 (G Line and N Line), even greater need to circulate those passengers and relieve pressure from the mall shuttle



Potential Improvements

- No planned service improvements
- Bus Priority Signal and Queue Jump Analysis for the entire route
 - Implement where feasible
- Traffic Signal Optimization study for the entire route
 - Implement where feasible
- Transit-Only Lane on Broadway



Source: RTD

Potential Improvements

- 19th Street Design Changes
 - Bus bulbs
 - Potential for Protected Bike Facility (if feasible)
 - Peak Period Transit-Only Lane (If feasible)
- 18th Street Design
 - Additional Floating Bus Islands
 - Protected Bike Facility (If feasible)
 - Peak Period Transit-Only Lane (If feasible)
- Any additional improvements identified as part of the analysis



Source: RTD

Anticipated Outcomes

- The potential for additional dedicated space allows buses to operate more reliably – not as constrained by congestion. This also decreases bus travel time.
- Potential signal improvements prioritize buses – decreased travel time and increased reliability
- Potential separation of bike/bus facilities allow for both to operate more efficiently/safely.
- Potential stop improvements decrease dwell time – decreasing overall travel time.

DECREASE IN
TRAVEL TIME



INCREASE IN
RELIABILITY



INCREASED
RIDERSHIP

Funding

- \$1.5 million from RTD
- IGA requires RTD Board approval
- Initial project was completed under budget due to cost savings from bus purchase
 - Funding was reserved for future improvements

Schedule

- Spring 2017: IGA
- 2017: Feasibility Analysis and Design
- 2018-2019: Additional Design and Implementation