

Denver Union Station Vision Statement

“Denver Union Station will be a multimodal transportation hub of international significance and a prominent and distinctive gateway to downtown Denver and the region.

Denver Union Station will bring critical elements of the public and private local, regional, statewide, and national transportation systems, both existing and future, together with private development and inspiring civic features.

Denver Union Station will create an exciting setting that will improve the connections between all transportation modes, respect the character and historical significance of the station and its adjacent neighborhoods, and provide a stimulating environment for public activity and economic vitality.”

Vision statement developed by the Union Station Advisory Committee and the Agency Partners, Summer 2002.

Introduction

From early times in Colorado, farsighted citizens and local leaders recognized the link between a strong transportation system and a thriving state economy. Their efforts started in the 1870s with the struggle to bring railroads to Denver and continued with the development of a statewide roadway system, construction of I-70 through the Eisenhower Tunnel and Glenwood Canyon, creation of the Regional Transportation District (RTD), building Denver International Airport (DIA), and most recently expanding the highway and light rail on I-25 and I-225.

The Denver Union Station Master Plan presents a vision for the next stage of Colorado’s transportation future. A revitalized Denver Union Station will blend many transportation modes and transportation networks in one place for the benefit of the entire state.

This future may look like this:

The scene is Denver Union Station, somewhat later in this century.

During evening rush hour, a Rocky Mountain sunset illuminates the huge arched windows above the 17th Street Promenade. The air is scented with flowers and roasting coffee beans.

Inside, hundreds of commuters move smoothly and efficiently through the station toward gates for light-rail and bus connections. Many carry home fresh produce, cheese, or bread from specialty markets in Denver Union Station.

Arrivals and departures are announced over the public address system: “Transit to Silverthorne and Breckenridge, Platform 3, 6:37pm Train to DLA, Platform 2, 7:14 p.m. Greyhound bus to Grand Junction, Gate 4, 7:15 p.m. Express to Fort Collins, Track 6, 7:16 p.m., stopping in Loveland only.” Attractive signs and arrival-departure boards direct patrons to their connections with ease.

A young couple pushes a child in a stroller. They just stepped off the 16th Street Mall Shuttle after visiting the Denver Art Museum, and are about to board a light-rail train to their home in

the suburbs. Another young couple is planning their wedding. They arrived via RTD bus from Northglenn and will take light rail to Park Meadows Mall to register at a department store.

A few commuters tuck bike helmets under their arms. They rode light rail from work elsewhere in the metro area, and are off to claim their bikes from the on-site Bike Station outside the historic station building.

Neighborhood residents drop by the Train Room to meet friends for a bite at a bistro. They may hang around a few hours to hear some jazz at a new club next to the station. Afterwards, their friends will grab a taxi home to Washington Park.

Long-distance travelers pull wheeled luggage through the Train Room. They may be catching Amtrak to California, or boarding the Air Train to DLA for a flight to London. Some passengers just

arriving in Denver follow signs to local buses, taxis, and car-rental counters. Travelers carrying ski bags head for private van services that will shuttle them to mountain resorts.

Several retirees visiting from San Francisco wander around the historic Train Room snapping pictures. After reading about the revitalized Denver Union Station in national magazines, they traveled by train (stopping in Glenwood Springs for a few days) to see for themselves. After a day in Denver, they plan to take light rail to Englewood to visit relatives.

The historic building itself—one of Colorado’s great examples of Beaux-Arts architecture—has been meticulously restored. New shops and services introduced within and near the building complement the station’s style, scale, and materials. The former parking lot in front of the station on Wynkoop Street has been transformed into a handsome public plaza.



Concept for a revitalized Denver Union Station from the corner of 16th and Wynkoop Streets.

A Multimodal Transportation Center

The Denver Union Station Master Plan presents a vision, a framework, and practical guidelines to transform the historic station into a multimodal transportation center serving the Denver region and the entire state of Colorado. The multimodal concept brings together many different means of transportation in one place with logical, safe, and convenient transfers.

The Master Plan expands this concept to include international connections through DIA and private international bus connections. And it restores the station as a gateway to Colorado, the metropolitan region, and Downtown Denver.

By combining all the region's transportation modes at one hub, Denver Union Station will enhance the value of local, regional, state, and federal investments in highways, HOV lanes, light rail, commuter rail, local and regional buses, parking, bike paths, and pedestrian networks.

The diverse transportation elements of the metropolitan Denver region will be integrated into a single transportation system with easy linkages and transfers among modes. This newly unified system itself will be linked to transportation throughout Colorado and beyond.

Why Union Station?

Denver is the primary intersection of transportation modes and corridors serving the region and the state. Statewide and regional rail networks, interstate highways, state roads, light rail, and bike paths all converge near Downtown Denver. The city and its transportation infrastructure create the gateway to the region, the state, and the Rocky Mountain West.



Denver Union Station will serve as the hub for many different transportation modes.

"The impact of railroads [on Denver] was more than significant—it was monumental."—Lyle W. Dorsett & Michael McCarthy, *The Queen City: A History of Denver*, 1986

"When it was built in 1881, Union Station was a symbol of Denver's coming of age, its initiation as 'Queen City of the Plains.'"—Joshua Dinar, *Denver Then & Now*, 2002

"With the exception of the steam railways, it would seem that no institution has done so much for the upbuilding of Denver as the street railway system."—Jerome Smiley, *History of Denver*, 1901

"Automobility had turned Denver inside out, transforming the streetcar and railroad city into a new metropolitan world."—Stephen J. Leonard & Thomas J. Noel, *Denver: Mining Camp to Metropolis*, 1990

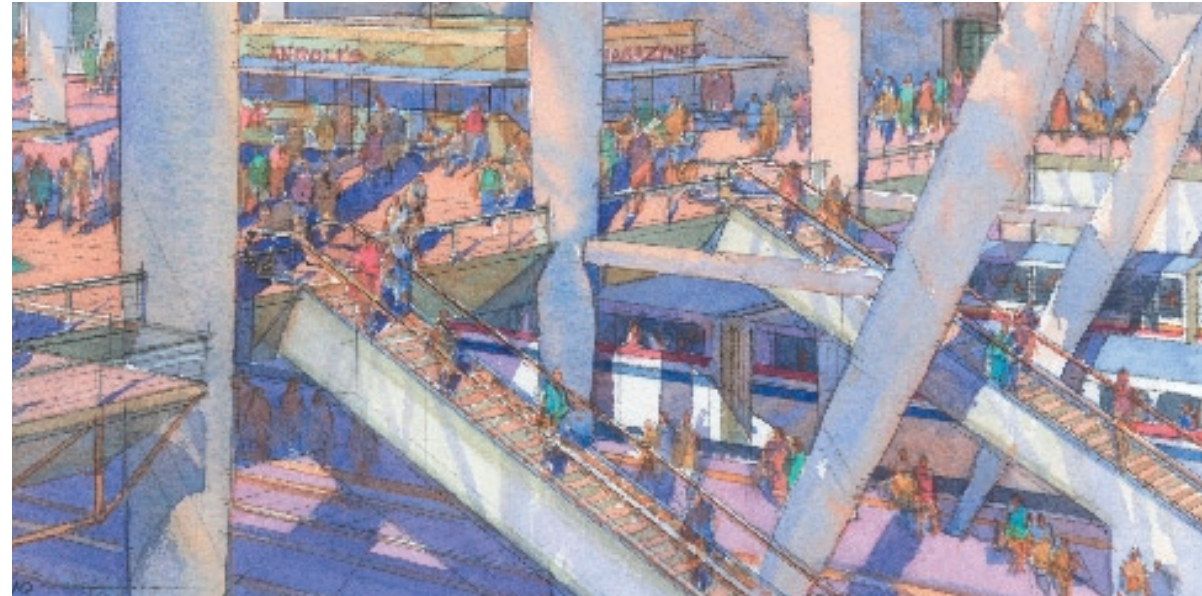
Overall Master Plan Goal

The Denver Union Station Master Plan shall identify and evaluate potential transportation, development, and civic components, along with design character, financing, ownership, and governance structures for the Denver Union Station site.

The Master Plan shall establish a final integrated plan that provides the best possible solution for redevelopment of the site in light of the project's vision, recognizing that transportation and its connectivity is the primary focus.

This plan supports the vision set forth in the following regional plans:

- City and County of Denver's Comprehensive Plan 2000 and Blueprint Denver Land Use and Transportation Plan
- Denver Regional Council of Government's Metro Vision 2020 Plan
- Regional Transportation District's Transit System Plan and FasTracks Program
- Colorado Department of Transportation's 2020 Statewide Transportation Plan



Artist's rendering showing activity and connections to the lower-level passenger-rail facility from 17th Street Promenade.

In the 1980s, as the Denver region studied regional light rail and commuter rail, planners identified the need for a central point of connection. The best location for this hub soon came into focus: Denver Union Station. Located in the state's geographic heart and capital city, as well as its busiest downtown, Denver Union Station enjoys:

- existing rail lines that allow easy access for new lines,
- convenient highway connections,
- a wonderful historic building prime for adaptive use,
- adjacent sites for complementary development that supports transportation,
- a central location near the region's biggest event and entertainment venues and densest employment center, and
- proximity to the South Platte River and Cherry Creek greenway and bike path systems.

Through extensive study, planning, design, and public feedback gathered during the Master Plan process, the Denver Union Station site was confirmed as the best location for a multimodal facility that takes advantage of its geography and transportation infrastructure.

Why now?

Because of its rugged geography, the population density of established communities, a fragile environmental landscape, limited financial resources, and a growing desire among citizens for increased transportation choices, Colorado's current transportation needs require more than highway expansion. As the state's population grows to a projected 7 million by 2030, Colorado will need transportation alternatives to keep people and goods flowing. Denver Union Station provides the premier access and transfer point for transportation that will serve the region, the state, and beyond.

A transportation partnership is ready to make this happen. In the 1990s, Denver, CDOT, DRCOG, and RTD joined as partners in planning a multimodal transportation hub at Denver Union Station. These efforts, in conjunction with the planning and partial implementation of the regional transportation system, led to RTD's 2001 purchase of the site, as part of a jointly funded acquisition with intergovernmental participation by the public agency partners. In a spirit of unprecedented cooperation, these agencies now share a common vision for the future of Denver Union Station

as an integral component of the region's multimodal transportation systems for the coming decades and beyond.

This vision creates a walkable urban environment, reinforces principles of sustainability, and improves access to activity centers by offering transportation choices. It also preserves and restores one of Denver's landmark buildings and connects several downtown neighborhoods.

The effort to create this multimodal hub also enjoys widespread support. DRCOG's *Metro Vision 2020 Plan*, the 2020 Statewide Transportation Plan, RTD's adopted FasTracks Plan, the City and County of Denver's Comprehensive Plan 2000 (and the subsequent *Blueprint Denver* Land Use and Transportation Plan), all support the need for a multimodal transportation center at Denver Union Station.

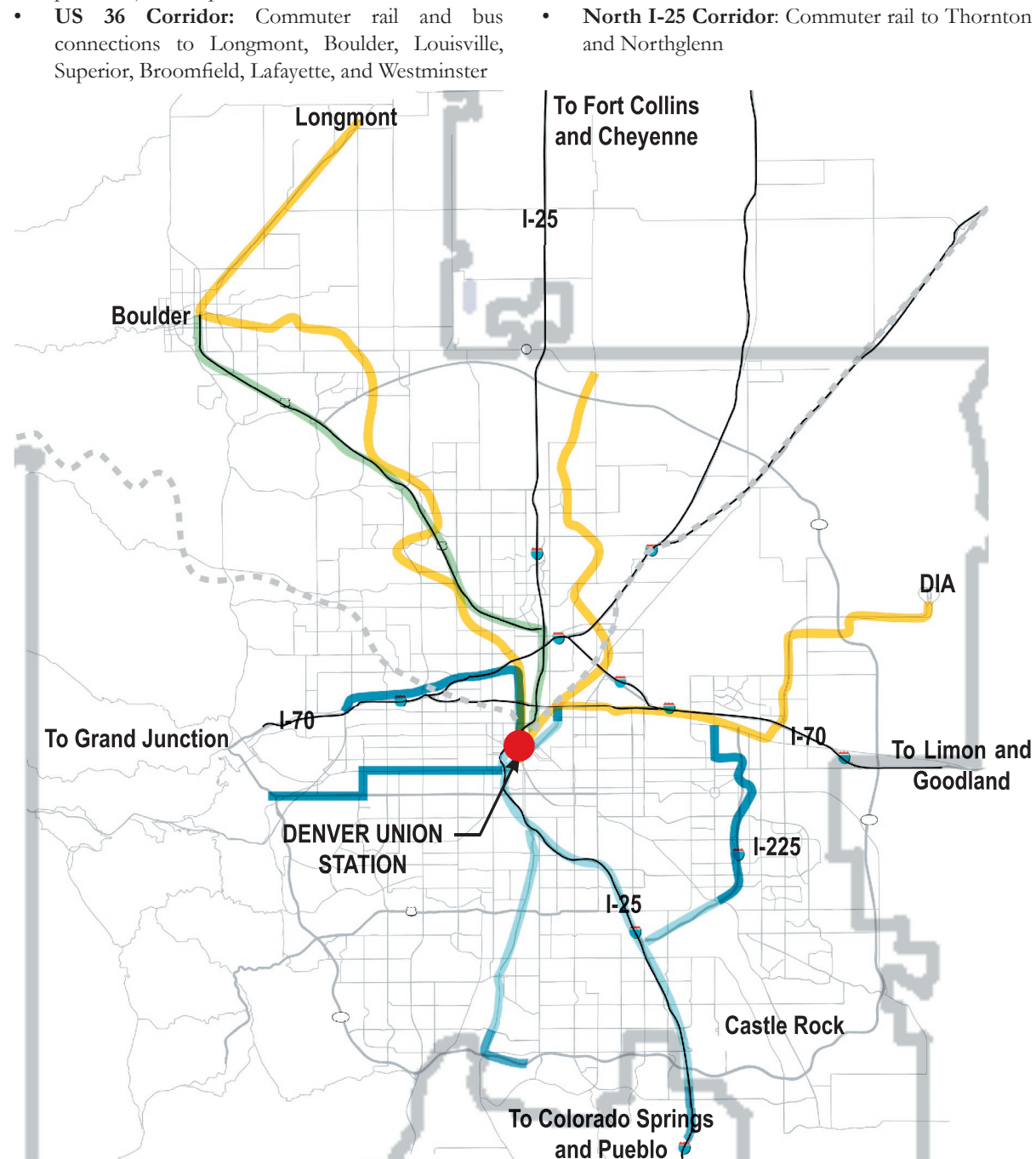
Benefits of the Denver Union Station Multimodal Transportation Center

Benefits will be realized throughout the city, metropolitan region, and state. The transportation hub will promote economic vitality by providing citizens better access to jobs and commerce, and improved connections for business, recreation, tourism, and services.

From Fort Collins to Pueblo, and from DIA to the mountain communities, the state will be linked at Denver Union Station. These connections will be made through new combinations of light rail, regional buses, commuter rail, Amtrak, intercity buses, charter buses, tour buses, taxis, shuttles, private and rental cars, van services, bicycles and pedestrians. Travelers will find convenient access and transfer options for a wide variety of destinations and purposes.

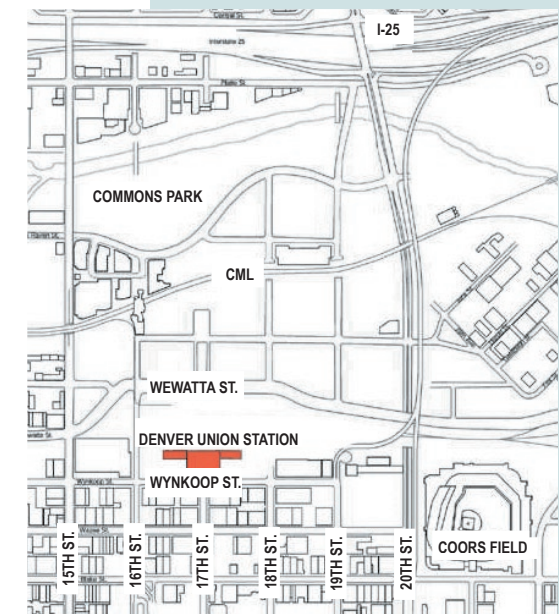
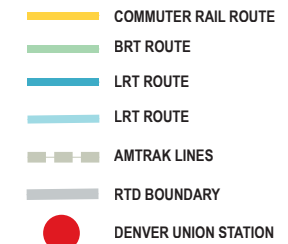
Connections at Denver Union Station also will benefit the young, the elderly, and the disabled by helping them access employment, shopping, and leisure activities more independently.

The plan's major transportation links include:



Map showing approximate nine-county RTD boundary, as well as rail and highway connections into Denver Union Station.

Legend



Map showing Denver Union Station and surrounding context.

Across the nation, other historic train stations once devoted to passenger rail have been revitalized as multimodal centers. The DUS Master Plan incorporates lessons from these projects, improving on many ideas and elements to create what promises to be the nation's most comprehensive multimodal transportation center.

