RTD set to open N Line for passenger service on Sept. 21

Details about safety, how to ride, changes in bus service coming soon

DENVER (June 23, 2020) – The Regional Transportation District (RTD) today announced that it will open its newest commuter rail corridor, the N Line, on Sept. 21. The rail line will serve Denver, Commerce City, Northglenn and Thornton and include a stop at the National Western Complex.

RTD Chief Executive Officer and General Manager Paul Ballard made the announcement at tonight’s meeting of the RTD Board of Directors.

“Our efforts to open this line have continued even during the pandemic,” Ballard said. “I am confident opening the new line will play a key role in encouraging local recovery and continued growth in the north metro suburbs.”

The N Line includes six new stations, with a total of 2,480 new parking spaces. As part of a promotional pilot program, RTD will offer a local fare for travel on the entirety of the line during its first six months of operation. A trip between Union Station and Eastlake-124th Station, the current end-of-line stop, will take about 29 minutes to travel 13 miles.

The entire 18.5-mile N Line is part of RTD’s 2004 voter-approved FasTracks program to expand transit across the Denver metro region. Construction on the line began in March 2014. When the corridor is complete, it will reach North Adams County and include two additional stations, for a total of eight new stations. The remaining 5.5 miles of the corridor will be built as funds become available.

While RTD already maintains and operates all of the agency’s light rail and bus service, the N Line is the first electrified commuter rail line that RTD will operate. Denver Transit Partners (DTP), under a federally funded public-private partnership, operates the University of Colorado A Line to Denver International Airport; the B Line to Westminster; and the G Line to Adams County, Arvada and Wheat Ridge.

Before COVID-19, ridership on the N Line had been forecast at 6,400 to 9,100 passenger boardings per average weekday during the first year, climbing to between 13,400 and 19,100 boardings in 2035. The much-anticipated line will provide riders with access to downtown Denver and a connection to Denver International Airport.

The N Line, like all FasTracks commuter rail lines, features wireless positive train control (PTC) technology, a complex system that reduces the risk of catastrophic train accidents. RTD is the first transit agency in the United States to build PTC technology into a new rail system from the ground up.

The N Line is expected to open with quiet zones in place along the entirety of the line. Quiet zones – railroad segments where train operators don’t have to sound their horns on a routine
basis – are established once all regulatory approvals have been processed. RTD assisted Thornton, on behalf of all the jurisdictions along the line, in the application process to secure these approvals. Horns can continue to be used in emergency situations if maintenance workers, pedestrians or vehicles are on or near the tracks; if there are issues with gate timing at any of the N Line’s six crossings; or if a train must use automatic train control (ATC) instead of PTC.

The two-car commuter rail trains on the N Line include seating for 91 passengers in each car, two ADA-compliant seating areas, luggage racks, overhead carry-on storage areas, and space for skis and bikes. Passengers board at the same level as station platforms. Commuter rail service debuted in the Denver metro area in April 2016, with the introduction of the University of Colorado A Line.

RTD will be providing additional N Line-related information in the coming weeks about safety, how to ride and changes to bus service along this rail corridor. For the most current details, visit RTD’s home page, N Line webpage and social media platforms.

ABOUT RTD
The Regional Transportation District develops, operates and maintains a public transportation system that meets the transit needs of close to 3 million people within an eight-county service area in the Denver Metro region. RTD’s buses, rail lines, shuttles and additional services provide approximately 100 million annual passenger trips. For more information, visit rtd-denver.com, call 303-299-6000 and follow along on social media: www.facebook.com/RideRTD, @RideRTD on Twitter, @ridertd on Instagram and rideRTDco on YouTube. For the most current RTD news, visit the News Stop, at rtd-denver.com/news-stop.

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