Appendices to Final Report of RTD

ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

CONFLUENCE POLICY & STRATEGY GROUP

COLORADO Energy Office

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APPENDIX A

Legislative Text

- SB25-161: Transit Reform (full legislative text)
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SENATE BILL 25-161

BY SENATOR(S) Winter F. and Jodeh, Cutter, Danielson, Exum, Hinrichsen, Kipp, Michaelson Jenet, Sullivan, Wallace;
also REPRESENTATIVE(S) Lindstedt and Froelich, Bird, Boesenecker, Brown, Clifford, Jackson, Lindsay, Mabrey, Rutinel, Sirota, Valdez, Duran, Espenoza, Lieder, McCormick, Phillips, Woodrow.

CONCERNING TRANSIT REFORM, AND, IN CONNECTION THEREWITH, CREATING STUDY, PLANNING, AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS; INCREASING COORDINATION AMONG TRANSIT AGENCIES, GOVERNMENT, AND PLANNING ORGANIZATIONS; AUTHORIZING THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT TO ENTER INTO SERVICE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS; CREATING A REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE; REQUIRING THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT TO EMPHASIZE RIDERSHIP GROWTH, WORKER RETENTION, SAFETY, AND STATEWIDE CLIMATE GOALS; AND MAKING AN APPROPRIATION.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Colorado:

SECTION 1. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 32-9-102, **add** (2) as follows:

Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material added to existing law; dashes through words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law and such material is not part of the act.

32-9-102. Legislative declaration. (2) THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY FURTHER FINDS AND DECLARES THAT:

(a) TRANSPORTATION IS CRITICAL TO DAILY LIFE AND COMMERCE, YET OUR METHODS CONTRIBUTE TO SEVERAL CHALLENGES FACING THE REGION, INCLUDING AIR POLLUTION, GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, AFFORDABILITY, PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, ACCESSIBILITY, AND EQUITY;

(b) EXPANDING MASS TRANSPORTATION PRESENTS A VITAL OPPORTUNITY TO REDUCE HOUSEHOLD TRANSPORTATION COSTS, DECREASE POLLUTION, REDUCE CONGESTION, MINIMIZE FATALITIES AND SERIOUS INJURIES WHILE IMPROVING ACCESS TO KEY DESTINATIONS, PARTICULARLY FOR TRANSIT-RELIANT POPULATIONS, AND STIMULATE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT; AND

(c) THEREFORE, THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT SHALL PRIORITIZE PROVIDING FAST, FREQUENT, RELIABLE, AND SAFE SERVICE TO MAXIMIZE RIDERSHIP LEVELS ACROSS THE REGION.

SECTION 2. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 32-9-119, **amend** (1) introductory portion and (1)(y); and **add** (1)(z) as follows:

32-9-119. Additional powers of district. (1) In addition to any other powers granted to the district in this ~~article~~ ARTICLE 9, the district has the following powers:

(y) To exercise all or any part or combination of the powers granted in this ~~article~~ ARTICLE 9; AND

(z) TO ENTER INTO A SERVICE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT WITH A LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION, BUSINESS OR HOUSING ENTITY, OR SPECIAL DISTRICT TO EXPAND SERVICES WITHIN THE DISTRICT'S SERVICE TERRITORY, OR BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF THE DISTRICT AS AUTHORIZED BY LAW, BY:

(I) SHARING RESOURCES AND THE MEANS OF PROVIDING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PROJECTS OR SERVICES; OR

(II) COOPERATING ON THE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, OR IMPLEMENTATION OF TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PROJECTS OR SERVICES.

SECTION 3. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 32-9-119.7, **amend** (8); **repeal** (1); and **add** (10), (11), (12), and (13) as follows:

32-9-119.7. Cost efficiency of transit services - climate goals - employee retention goals - reporting - plans - repeal. (1) ~~The general assembly hereby finds and declares that surface transportation in the Denver metropolitan area is a major problem confronting not only the citizens of the metropolitan area but also the citizens of the entire state of Colorado. The general assembly further finds that, although mass transportation is one component of an effective surface transportation system, the allocation of resources to mass transportation must be made in light of all surface transportation needs. The general assembly further finds that the district should be organized efficiently, economically, and on a demand-responsive basis and that the district should consider least-cost alternatives in discharging its responsibilities.~~

(8) (a) The district shall prioritize completion of the northwest rail line to Longmont and the north lines of the transportation expansion plan, adopted by the board and approved by the voters on November 2, 2004, which ~~shall~~ MUST include cooperating and actively partnering with the state and the front range passenger rail district and recognizing the state's plan to fund and execute the northwest rail line in order to take advantage of any available federal funding opportunities.

(b) On or before ~~July 1, 2025~~ DECEMBER 1, 2025, the district shall submit a report to the governor and the general assembly that demonstrates how the district will fulfill the district's commitment in the transportation expansion plan, adopted by the board and approved by the voters on November 2, 2004, to complete the transportation expansion routes proposed in the transportation expansion plan by December 31, 2034. On or before December 15, 2025, the district shall present the report BOTH to the transportation legislation review committee AND AT A MEETING OF THE BOARD THAT IS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE:

(I) AN EXPLANATION OF HOW THE DISTRICT IS OPTIMIZING AVAILABLE FUNDING TO COMPLETE THE TRANSPORTATION EXPANSION PLAN TO DELIVER SERVICE ON THE FIXED GUIDEWAY MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM DESCRIBED IN SECTION 32-9-107.5 (1)(e)(I) BY JANUARY 1, 2029; AND

(II) AN ANALYSIS OF:

(A) THE AVAILABLE DEBT SERVICE THAT WAS AUTHORIZED BY THE VOTERS;

(B) THE POTENTIAL USE OF CERTIFICATES OF PARTICIPATION;

(C) NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH THE STATE ON A COLLABORATIVE APPROACH TO FUNDING SERVICE ON THE FIXED GUIDEWAY MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM DESCRIBED IN SECTION 32-9-107.5 (1)(e)(I); AND

(D) OPPORTUNITIES TO PURSUE FUNDING FROM THE CLEAN FLEET ENTERPRISE CREATED IN SECTION 25-7.5-103 THAT MAY OFFSET PLANNED EXPENSES.

(c) ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 30, 2025, THE DISTRICT SHALL CONVENE LOCAL AND REGIONAL STAKEHOLDERS AND CONDUCT FORMAL, COMPREHENSIVE, AND VERIFIABLE COMMUNITY OUTREACH TO INFORM THE REPORT REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION (8)(b) OF THIS SECTION. STAKEHOLDERS MUST INCLUDE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMUNITY JUSTICE ORGANIZATIONS, TRANSIT-DEPENDENT RESIDENTS, EMPLOYERS, AND RESIDENTS AT LARGE.

(d) IF THE DISTRICT HAS NOT COMPLETED THE FIXED GUIDEWAY MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM DESCRIBED IN SECTION 32-9-107 (1)(e)(I), AS PROPOSED IN THE TRANSPORTATION EXPANSION PLAN, AND BEGUN SERVICE BY JANUARY 1, 2029, THE DISTRICT SHALL REPORT TO THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES, AND THE GOVERNOR ON THE REASONS WHY SUCH SERVICE HAS NOT BEGUN AND SHALL PROVIDE A DETAILED PLAN FOR PROVIDING SERVICE. IF SUCH REPORT AND PLAN ARE REQUIRED BY THIS SUBSECTION (8)(d), THE DISTRICT SHALL PROVIDE THE FIRST REPORT AND PLAN NO LATER THAN JANUARY 1, 2029, AND SHALL PROVIDE AN UPDATED REPORT AND PLAN EACH SIX MONTHS THEREAFTER UNTIL SERVICE IS INITIATED.

(10) IN DISCHARGING ITS RESPONSIBILITIES, THE DISTRICT SHALL ALIGN WITH THE GREENHOUSE GAS REDUCTION TARGETS SET FORTH IN SECTION 25-7-102 (2)(g); THE GOALS SET FORTH IN THE GOVERNOR'S "TRANSPORTATION VISION 2035", WHICH INCLUDES AN EIGHTY-THREE PERCENT INCREASE IN TRANSIT SERVICE BY 2035; AND THE MODE CHOICE TARGETS DEVELOPED PURSUANT TO SECTION 43-1-138, AS ADDED BY

SENATE BILL 25-030, ENACTED IN 2025. THE DISTRICT SHALL DEVELOP PERFORMANCE MEASURES TO EVALUATE ITS PROGRESS IN ALIGNING WITH THESE STATE CLIMATE GOALS. IN ASSESSING CLIMATE IMPACT, THE DISTRICT SHALL CONSIDER THE EXTENT TO WHICH ITS SERVICES REDUCE VEHICLE MILES TRAVELED BY INCREASING TRANSIT RIDERSHIP AND ENCOURAGING THE DEVELOPMENT OF DENSE, WALKABLE, AND LESS CAR-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES NEAR TRANSIT STATIONS AND CORRIDORS THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT'S GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA.

(11) THE DISTRICT SHALL ESTABLISH GOALS FOR EMPLOYEE RETENTION. THE DISTRICT SHALL DEVELOP PERFORMANCE MEASURES TO EVALUATE ITS PROGRESS TOWARD ITS EMPLOYEE RETENTION GOALS.

(12) THE DISTRICT SHALL ADHERE TO THE REQUIREMENTS OF "GENERAL DIRECTIVE 24-1: REQUIRED ACTIONS REGARDING ASSAULTS ON TRANSIT WORKERS", ISSUED ON SEPTEMBER 25, 2024, BY THE FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

(13) (a) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 15, 2025, THE DISTRICT SHALL REPORT TO THE TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE CREATED IN SECTION 43-2-145 (1)(a) ON THE DISTRICT'S FIVE-YEAR FINANCIAL FORECAST, DEBT CAPACITY, AND USE OF AGENCY RESERVE ACCOUNTS. THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE A COMPARISON OF COMPARABLE TRANSIT AGENCIES IN OTHER STATES.

(b) THIS SUBSECTION (13) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026.

SECTION 4. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 32-9-165, 32-9-166, 32-9-167, and 32-9-168 as follows:

32-9-165. Planning - ten-year plan - comprehensive operational analysis - reporting - funding study - transit-oriented community infrastructure. (1) **Ten-year strategic plan.** (a) NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 30, 2026, THE DISTRICT SHALL CREATE A TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN. THE PLAN MUST:

(I) IN COLLABORATION WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE DISTRICT SUBREGIONAL SERVICE COUNCILS, IDENTIFY PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS FOR SERVICE, RIDERSHIP, ENROLLMENT IN THE

DISTRICT'S ECOPASS PROGRAM AND INCOME-BASED FARE DISCOUNT PROGRAM, AND THE PERCENTAGES OF RESIDENCES AND JOBS WITHIN ONE-QUARTER MILE OF A FREQUENT TRANSIT ROUTE. THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS MUST ALIGN WITH STATE AND REGIONAL GOALS FOR MODE CHOICE, LAND USE, CLIMATE, EQUITY, AND SAFETY;

(II) IDENTIFY TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES AND SERVICES, INCLUDING THE EXPANSION OR IMPROVEMENT OF EXISTING FACILITIES AND SERVICES, REQUIRED TO MEET SERVICE AND RIDERSHIP GOALS THROUGHOUT THE DISTRICT'S GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA OVER THE TEN-YEAR PERIOD;

(III) INCLUDE A FISCALLY CONSTRAINED PLAN OUTLINING THE TRANSIT PROJECTS AND SERVICES THAT ARE EXPECTED TO BE FUNDED WITH THE CURRENT BUDGET, WHICH MUST BE UPDATED PERIODICALLY IF THE FUNDING PICTURE CHANGES SUBSTANTIALLY;

(IV) INCLUDE A FISCALLY UNCONSTRAINED OPTION THAT DESCRIBES SERVICE AND INVESTMENTS NEEDED TO MEET THE DISTRICT'S IDENTIFIED PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS FOR SERVICE, RIDERSHIP, AND THE PERCENTAGES OF RESIDENCES AND JOBS WITHIN ONE-QUARTER MILE OF A FREQUENT TRANSIT ROUTE; AND

(V) IDENTIFY EXPECTED ENVIRONMENTAL, SOCIAL, AND ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS CONTAINED IN THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN.

(b) FOR EACH SERVICE, FACILITY, OR CAPITAL PROJECT IDENTIFIED IN THE TEN-YEAR PLAN, THE PLAN MUST SPECIFY AND REGULARLY UPDATE AS CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE:

(I) THE TIME FRAME DURING WHICH THE PROJECT IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED;

(II) THE TOTAL ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF FUNDING REQUIRED TO COMPLETE THE PROJECT; AND

(III) FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES THAT ACCOUNT FOR THE TOTAL ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF FUNDING FOR THE PROJECT, INCLUDING THE AMOUNT OF FUNDING FROM EACH FUNDING SOURCE THAT HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FOR THE PROJECT OR IS ANTICIPATED TO BE ALLOCATED FOR THE PROJECT.

(c) THE DISTRICT SHALL UPDATE THE TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN IN CONJUNCTION WITH EACH MAJOR UPDATE TO THE DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN.

(d) IN CREATING THE TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN, THE DISTRICT SHALL COORDINATE WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, THE DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITHIN THE DISTRICT'S SERVICE TERRITORY.

(e) IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CREATION OF ITS TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN, THE DISTRICT SHALL STUDY AND IDENTIFY OR CONTRACT WITH A THIRD PARTY TO STUDY AND IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO INCREASE THE DISTRICT'S FUNDING TO ACHIEVE THE GOALS, MEASURES, AND TARGETS IDENTIFIED IN THE TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN.

(2) **Comprehensive operational analysis.** NO LATER THAN APRIL 10, 2026, AND NO LESS FREQUENTLY THAN EVERY FIVE YEARS THEREAFTER, THE DISTRICT SHALL CREATE A COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS. THE ANALYSIS MUST:

(a) ASSESS EXISTING SERVICES AND TRAVEL PATTERNS;

(b) EVALUATE THE DISTRICT'S FINANCIAL CAPACITY AND FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES;

(c) IDENTIFY SPECIFIC TRANSIT ROUTES OR SERVICES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AS IDENTIFIED IN THE FISCALLY CONSTRAINED PROJECTS LIST OF THE APPLICABLE TEN-YEAR PLAN REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS SECTION; AND

(d) MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON ACHIEVING THE GOALS IDENTIFIED IN THE APPLICABLE TEN-YEAR PLAN REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS SECTION.

(3) **Reports.** (a) (I) DURING EACH LEGISLATIVE INTERIM, THE DISTRICT SHALL PRESENT A REPORT ON ITS PROGRESS IN DELIVERING THE PROJECTS IDENTIFIED IN THE TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS SECTION AND THE COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION TO THE TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION REVIEW COMMITTEE CREATED IN SECTION

43-2-145 (1)(a). AS PART OF THE REPORT, THE DISTRICT SHALL PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO THE COMMITTEE AS TO HOW TO ACCESS AND UNDERSTAND THE PLAN AND ANALYSIS, AND THE COMMITTEE MAY, IF IT DETERMINES THAT THE PLAN OR ANALYSIS DOES NOT INCLUDE ALL THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION (1) OR (2) OF THIS SECTION, INSTRUCT THE DISTRICT TO ENSURE THAT ANY MISSING INFORMATION IS PROMPTLY ADDED.

(II) NOTWITHSTANDING THE REQUIREMENT IN SECTION 24-1-136 (11)(a)(I), THE REQUIREMENT TO SUBMIT THE REPORT REQUIRED IN THIS SUBSECTION (3) CONTINUES INDEFINITELY.

(b) THE DISTRICT SHALL REPORT QUARTERLY TO ITS BOARD OF DIRECTORS ON ITS PROGRESS IN DEVELOPING AND DELIVERING THE TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS SECTION AND THE COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION.

(4) **Transit-oriented community infrastructure.** THE DISTRICT SHALL PERIODICALLY NOTIFY THE DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AND THE DEPARTMENT OF LOCAL AFFAIRS OF ANY KNOWN INFRASTRUCTURE GAPS THAT EXIST WITHIN A TRANSIT CENTER, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 29-35-202 (9), WITHIN THE DISTRICT'S SERVICE TERRITORY.

32-9-166. Information dashboards. (1) THE DISTRICT SHALL CREATE, MAINTAIN, AND PUBLISH ON ITS PUBLIC WEBSITE:

(a) A PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY DASHBOARD THAT SHOWS:

(I) BY TRANSIT ROUTE:

(A) DATA ON RIDERSHIP, INCLUDING TOTAL RIDERSHIP AND WEEKEND AND WEEKDAY RIDERSHIP;

(B) ON-TIME PERFORMANCE, INCLUDING A CLEAR DEFINITION OF WHAT CONSTITUTES ON-TIME PERFORMANCE;

(C) FAREBOX RECOVERY RATIO;

(D) BOARDINGS PER HOUR; AND

(E) RELIABILITY OF SERVICE; AND

(II) PROGRESS TOWARD MEETING PERFORMANCE TARGETS RELATING TO RIDERSHIP GROWTH AND SERVICE PROVISION;

(b) A PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY DASHBOARD THAT SHOWS THE DISTRICT'S WORKFORCE STATISTICS REGARDING EMPLOYEE RETENTION, RECRUITMENT, AND VACANCIES;

(c) A PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY DASHBOARD ON TRANSIT SAFETY, INCLUDING DATA ON PASSENGER SAFETY AND DRIVER SAFETY;

(d) A PUBLIC ACCOUNTABILITY DASHBOARD THAT PROVIDES, AT A MINIMUM, ACCESSIBLE AND TRANSPARENT SUMMARY INFORMATION REGARDING EACH OF THE DISTRICT'S IN-PROGRESS CAPITAL PROJECTS THAT EXCEEDS TEN MILLION DOLLARS; THE FUNDING STATUS OF EACH PROJECT, INCLUDING THE PROJECT'S TOTAL FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES TO DATE; AND THE DISTRICT'S PROGRESS TOWARD THE COMPLETION OF EACH PROJECT;

(e) A SUMMARY PAGE FOR PLANNED SERVICE CHANGES THAT INCLUDES DETAILED TIMING CHANGES; THE REASONS FOR ANY PLANNED CHANGES; AND THE IMPACTS OF THE PLANNED CHANGES, INCLUDING EFFECTS ON LOCAL TRANSFERS; AND

(f) THE DISTRICT'S PROGRESS TOWARD MEETING THE PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND TARGETS IDENTIFIED IN ITS TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN PURSUANT TO SECTION 32-5-165 (1). THE DISTRICT SHALL UPDATE THIS PROGRESS ON A QUARTERLY BASIS.

(2) THE DISTRICT SHALL FIRST CREATE AND PUBLISH THE INFORMATION REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION (1) OF THIS SECTION NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 1, 2025.

(3) THE DISTRICT SHALL REVIEW AND UPDATE THE DASHBOARDS AT LEAST QUARTERLY.

32-9-167. Required policy updates - service policies and standards - equitable transit-oriented development policy - service buy-up policy - communication protocols - parking policies and strategies. (1) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2025, AND EVERY TWO YEARS

THEREAFTER, THE DISTRICT SHALL UPDATE ITS SERVICE POLICIES AND STANDARDS TO:

(a) DEFINE AND MAP TRANSIT PROPENSITY BASED ON POPULATION DENSITY, INCOME, DIVERSITY, MOTOR VEHICLE OWNERSHIP, AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS THAT INFLUENCE TRANSIT RIDERSHIP;

(b) ESTABLISH A CLEAR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESS FOR SERVICE CHANGES, UNDER WHICH PROPOSED CHANGES INCLUDE PUBLICLY ACCESSIBLE INFORMATION OUTLINING THE REASONS FOR THE CHANGES AND HOW THEY ALIGN WITH IDENTIFIED PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND THE COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS;

(c) WORK WITH ENTITIES HOSTING SPECIAL EVENTS TO FACILITATE INCREASED RIDERSHIP TO AND FROM THE EVENTS, SO LONG AS THE FACILITATION OF INCREASED RIDERSHIP IS ADDITIVE TO EXISTING SERVICE; AND

(d) EVALUATE AND SET CLEAR AND OBJECTIVE STANDARDS FOR THE PRODUCTIVITY OF EXISTING ROUTES AND SERVICES, INCLUDING PROVIDING FOR SERVICE ADJUSTMENTS ON THOSE ROUTES IF THEY DO NOT MEET THE IDENTIFIED STANDARDS.

(2) ON OR BEFORE APRIL 10, 2026, THE DISTRICT SHALL UPDATE ITS EQUITABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT POLICY TO:

(a) ALIGN WITH APPLICABLE TRANSIT-ORIENTED POLICIES AND HOUSING OPPORTUNITY GOALS AS DESCRIBED IN PART 2 OF ARTICLE 35 OF TITLE 29;

(b) ALIGN WITH APPLICABLE LOCAL GOVERNMENT PARKING REQUIREMENTS AS DESCRIBED IN PART 3 OF ARTICLE 35 OF TITLE 29; AND

(c) ENABLE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND DENSE, WALKABLE, MIXED-USED COMMUNITIES NEAR TRANSIT STATIONS AND ROUTES.

(3) (a) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2025, THE DISTRICT SHALL UPDATE ITS SERVICE BUY-UP POLICY IN CONSULTATION WITH STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, TO OUTLINE A PROCESS

FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND BUSINESS PARTNERS TO PROPOSE TO PURCHASE ADDITIONAL SERVICES FROM THE DISTRICT.

(b) THE DISTRICT SHALL EVALUATE THESE ADDITIONAL SERVICE PROPOSALS AND, WHERE FEASIBLE, CREATE PLANS TO ACCOMMODATE THE PROPOSALS.

(4) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 31, 2025, THE DISTRICT SHALL CREATE AND PERIODICALLY UPDATE, AS NECESSARY, A POLICY OUTLINING COMMUNICATION PROTOCOLS FOR:

(a) PLANNED AND UNPLANNED SERVICE DISRUPTIONS;

(b) SERVICE SUBSTITUTIONS; AND

(c) CONTINGENCY PLANS FOR SERVICE DISRUPTIONS AND SUBSTITUTIONS.

(5) THE DISTRICT SHALL WORK WITH LOCAL GOVERNMENTS WITHIN ITS SERVICE TERRITORY TO IMPLEMENT PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION DEMAND MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND POLICIES TO OPTIMIZE THE USE OF NEW AND EXISTING PARKING SUPPLY, AS IDENTIFIED IN THE BEST PRACTICES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MATERIALS DEVELOPED PURSUANT TO SECTION 29-35-305.

32-9-168. EcoPass program - bulk purchasers - apartment building survey - report - definitions - repeal. (1) AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(a) "BULK PURCHASER" MEANS AN ENTITY THAT HAS A LEGAL RELATIONSHIP WITH AND THAT PROVIDES GOODS OR SERVICES TO A GROUP OF EMPLOYEES, RESIDENTS, OR MEMBERS. "BULK PURCHASER" INCLUDES, WITHOUT LIMITATION, AN EMPLOYER, A BUILDING OWNER OR MANAGER, A LOCAL GOVERNMENT, A BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT, A BUSINESS OR TRADE ASSOCIATION, A HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, A NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATION, A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, OR ANY COMBINATION OF SUCH ENTITIES.

(b) "COVERED DEVELOPMENT" MEANS A DEVELOPMENT THAT CONTAINS OR IS INTENDED TO CONTAIN FIFTY UNITS OR MORE, THAT IS IN AN

AREA COVERED BY THE REQUIREMENTS OF PART 3 OF ARTICLE 35 OF TITLE 29, AND THAT HAS RECEIVED LAND USE APPROVAL FOR A MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT; ADAPTIVE RE-USE FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES; OR ADAPTIVE RE-USE MIXED-USE PURPOSES THAT INCLUDE AT LEAST FIFTY PERCENT OF USE FOR RESIDENTIAL PURPOSES.

(c) "ECOPASS PROGRAM" MEANS A PROGRAM OPERATED BY THE DISTRICT THAT PROVIDES ANNUAL PREPAID TRANSIT PASSES FOR UNLIMITED USAGE OF THE DISTRICT'S TRANSIT SERVICES. "ECOPASS PROGRAM" INCLUDES THE ECOPASS AND NEIGHBORHOOD ECOPASS PROGRAMS, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR PROGRAMS.

(2) (a) THE DISTRICT SHALL ADMINISTER AN OUTREACH PROGRAM TO PROMOTE THE ECOPASS PROGRAM TO BULK PURCHASERS. IN CONDUCTING OUTREACH, THE DISTRICT SHALL PRESENT THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION TO THE BULK PURCHASER:

(I) SUCCINCT INFORMATION ON CURRENT AND PLANNED TRANSIT SERVICE WITHIN THE AREA RELEVANT TO THE BULK PURCHASER, INCLUDING INFORMATION ON THE PROXIMITY, FREQUENCY, AND POPULARITY OF APPLICABLE TRANSIT ROUTES; AND

(II) THE ESTIMATED PER-USER COST EXPRESSED IN PER-YEAR AND PER-MONTH TERMS. IF THE BULK PURCHASER IS AN EMPLOYER, THE PER-USER COST MUST INCLUDE THE AMOUNT OF THE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS TAX CREDIT ALLOWED PURSUANT TO SECTION 39-22-509.

(b) THE OUTREACH PROGRAM MUST INCLUDE PERIODIC PROACTIVE OUTREACH TO BULK PURCHASERS. IN CONDUCTING PROACTIVE OUTREACH, THE DISTRICT SHALL PRIORITIZE BULK PURCHASERS IN AND NEAR TRANSIT CENTERS, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 29-35-202 (9), NEIGHBORHOOD CENTERS, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 29-35-202 (5), AND APPLICABLE TRANSIT SERVICE AREAS, AS DEFINED IN SECTION 29-35-302 (3).

(c) THE DISTRICT SHALL CONDUCT THE OUTREACH PROGRAM IN COORDINATION WITH THE DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AND WITH TRANSPORTATION MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATIONS THAT PARTNER WITH THE DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENT'S "WAY TO GO" PROGRAM.

(d) THE DISTRICT SHALL PROVIDE TRANSPARENT AND ACCESSIBLE PRICING INFORMATION FOR THE ECOPASS PROGRAM ON ITS PUBLIC-FACING WEBSITE, WHICH MUST INCLUDE ANY GEOGRAPHIC PRICE DIFFERENTIATION.

(3) (a) THE DISTRICT SHALL, TO THE GREATEST EXTENT FEASIBLE, MINIMIZE THE ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD FOR BULK PURCHASERS AND THE RECIPIENTS OF BULK-PURCHASED ECOPASSES, INCLUDING THE BULK PURCHASER'S EMPLOYEES, RESIDENTS, OR MEMBERS.

(b) THE DISTRICT SHALL, TO THE GREATEST EXTENT FEASIBLE, ENROLL ALL RECIPIENTS OF BULK-PURCHASED ECOPASSES AT ONE TIME, RATHER THAN ENROLLING A BULK PURCHASER'S EMPLOYEES, RESIDENTS, OR MEMBERS ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS.

(c) THE DISTRICT SHALL, TO THE GREATEST EXTENT FEASIBLE, ALLOW A GROUP OF RELATED BULK PURCHASERS THAT SEEKS TO PROVIDE BULK-PURCHASED ECOPASSES TO EMPLOYEES, RESIDENTS, OR MEMBERS OF EACH RELATED BULK PURCHASER TO APPLY WITH ONE APPLICATION FOR ENROLLMENT IN THE ECOPASS PROGRAM.

(d) (I) THE DISTRICT SHALL UPDATE THE NEIGHBORHOOD ECOPASS PROGRAM PRICING STRATEGY BY JULY 1, 2026.

(II) THIS SUBSECTION (3)(d) IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 2027.

(e) THE DISTRICT SHALL COMPENSATE A BULK PURCHASER OF A NEIGHBORHOOD ECOPASS TO DEFRAY ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AT A REASONABLE AMOUNT AND THROUGH A METHOD DETERMINED BY THE DISTRICT.

(f) THE DISTRICT SHALL, TO THE GREATEST EXTENT FEASIBLE, MINIMIZE THE ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD FOR BULK PURCHASERS AND THE RECIPIENTS OF BULK-PURCHASED ECOPASSES, AS WELL AS TAKE STEPS TO IMPROVE UTILIZATION BY ECOPASS HOLDERS, BY INCLUDING GUARANTEED RIDE HOME SERVICES ALONG WITH EACH BULK ECOPASS.

(4) (a) NO LATER THAN JUNE 30, 2026, OR ONE YEAR AFTER THE DATE THAT THE FIRST RESIDENT MOVES INTO A COVERED DEVELOPMENT, WHICHEVER IS LATER, THE COVERED DEVELOPMENT SHALL SURVEY ITS

RESIDENTS ABOUT THE RESIDENTS' INTEREST IN HAVING THE COVERED DEVELOPMENT PROVIDE BULK-PURCHASED ECOPASSES TO ITS RESIDENTS; EXCEPT THAT A COVERED DEVELOPMENT IS NOT REQUIRED TO SURVEY ITS RESIDENTS IF THE COVERED DEVELOPMENT ALREADY PROVIDES BULK-PURCHASED ECOPASSES TO ITS RESIDENTS BY THE DATE THAT THE SURVEY WOULD HAVE BEEN REQUIRED BY THIS SUBSECTION (4)(a). THE SURVEY MUST INCLUDE THE PER-USER COST OF THE BULK-PURCHASED ECOPASSES, AS PROVIDED BY THE DISTRICT.

(b) IF A MAJORITY OF RESPONDENTS RESPOND TO THE SURVEY THAT THEY WOULD LIKE THE COVERED DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE BULK-PURCHASED ECOPASSES, THE COVERED DEVELOPMENT SHALL ENROLL IN THE ECOPASS PROGRAM FOR ITS RESIDENTS. THE OWNER OR MANAGER OF THE COVERED DEVELOPMENT IS THE CENTRALIZED PAYER OF THE COSTS AND FEES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ECOPASS PROGRAM, WHICH IT MAY RECOUP FROM ITS RESIDENTS.

(c) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 1, 2026, THE DISTRICT SHALL CREATE AND PUBLISH AN ONLINE SURVEY TOOL THAT COVERED DEVELOPMENTS MAY USE TO CONDUCT THE SURVEY REQUIRED BY THIS SUBSECTION (4).

(5) (a) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 31, 2026, AND ON OR BEFORE EACH JANUARY 31 THEREAFTER, THE DISTRICT SHALL REPORT ON THE ECOPASS PROGRAM TO A JOINT SESSION OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE AND THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES. THE REPORT MUST INCLUDE INFORMATION CONCERNING:

(I) THE DISTRICT'S OUTREACH EFFORTS, AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION, INCLUDING QUANTITATIVE DETAILS ON THE DISTRICT'S PROACTIVE OUTREACH;

(II) THE DISTRICT'S ADMINISTRATIVE EFFORTS, AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION; AND

(III) THE SURVEY REQUIRED FOR COVERED DEVELOPMENTS, AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (4) OF THIS SECTION, INCLUDING THE NUMBER AND RESULTS OF THE SURVEYS CONDUCTED.

(b) NOTWITHSTANDING THE REQUIREMENT IN SECTION 24-1-136

(11)(a)(I), THE REQUIREMENT TO SUBMIT THE REPORT REQUIRED IN THIS SUBSECTION (5)(a) CONTINUES INDEFINITELY.

SECTION 5. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 43-1-106, **amend** (15) introductory portion; and **add** (15)(f) as follows:

43-1-106. Transportation commission - efficiency and accountability committee - powers and duties - report - rules - definitions. (15) In addition to any other duties required by law, the commission ~~shall have~~ HAS the following charges:

(f) ON OR BEFORE MARCH 31, 2026, TO DEVELOP AND PUBLISH BEST PRACTICES AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MATERIALS CONCERNING THE CREATION OF REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITIES PURSUANT TO THE "REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY LAW", PART 6 OF ARTICLE 4 OF THIS TITLE 43, TO INCREASE FUNDING FOR TRANSIT AND TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL TRANSIT SERVICES WITHIN THE STATE.

SECTION 6. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 32-9-109.5, **amend** (4) as follows:

32-9-109.5. Board of directors - membership - powers. (4) All powers, duties, functions, rights, and privileges vested in the district shall be exercised and performed by the board; except that the exercise of any executive, administrative, or ministerial powers may be delegated by the board to officers and employees of the district. THESE POWERS, DUTIES, FUNCTIONS, RIGHTS, AND PRIVILEGES INCLUDE, IN ADDITION TO ANY OTHER POWERS AND DUTIES SPECIFIED IN THIS ARTICLE 9:

(a) SETTING POLICY OBJECTIVES TO BE IMPLEMENTED BY EMPLOYEES OF THE DISTRICT;

(b) HIRING AND MANAGING THE DISTRICT'S GENERAL MANAGER AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER;

(c) OVERSEEING THE DISTRICT'S GENERAL COUNSEL;

(d) DEVELOPING, ADOPTING, AND OVERSEEING THE DISTRICT'S BUDGET, INCLUDING AN ANNUAL CAPITAL BUDGET WITH PROJECT COSTS AND FINANCING MECHANISMS;

(e) DEVELOPING AND APPROVING THE DISTRICT'S TEN-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN AND COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS;

(f) ENGAGING WITH CONSTITUENTS, LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION, THE DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS, TRANSIT AGENCIES, AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS TO OBTAIN INPUT AND FEEDBACK ON THE DISTRICT'S DECISIONS AND OPERATIONS;

(g) PURSUING OPPORTUNITIES TO GROW TRANSIT RIDERSHIP AND MAKE TRANSIT SERVICES COMPETITIVE WITH DRIVING;

(h) DEVELOPING AND PROMOTING STRATEGIES AND LEGISLATION TO ENSURE THAT THE DISTRICT HAS THE RESOURCES IT NEEDS TO IMPLEMENT ITS STRATEGIC TEN-YEAR PLAN;

(i) MEETING QUARTERLY WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND WITH THE DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS AND MEETING BIANNUALLY WITH ANY LABOR ORGANIZATION, AS DEFINED IN 24-34-401 (6), THAT REPRESENTS SOME OR ALL DISTRICT EMPLOYEES;

(j) PERFORMING AN ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE DISTRICT'S CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER, IN THE DISTRICT'S DISCRETION; AND

(k) CONDUCTING AN ANNUAL FINANCIAL AUDIT OF THE DISTRICT.

SECTION 7. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 32-9-111, **add** (5)(g) as follows:

32-9-111. Election of directors - dates - terms. (5) (g) (I) A CANDIDATE FOR ELECTED DIRECTOR IS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR ELECTION AS A WRITE-IN CANDIDATE.

(II) (A) IF, FOR ANY DISTRICT ELECTION, THERE IS NOT A CANDIDATE FOR DIRECTOR WHO IS NOMINATED FOR ELECTION PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION, A DIRECTOR IS APPOINTED IN LIEU OF THE DIRECTOR BEING ELECTED BY THE ELIGIBLE ELECTORS OF THE DISTRICT. IN SUCH CASE, A DIRECTOR IS APPOINTED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE DIRECTOR DISTRICT IS LOCATED OR, IN THE CASE OF A DIRECTOR DISTRICT IN A CITY AND COUNTY, THE DIRECTOR IS APPOINTED

BY THE MAYOR OF THE CITY AND COUNTY WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE CITY COUNCIL. IN THE CASE OF A DIRECTOR DISTRICT THAT CONTAINS TERRITORY IN TWO OR MORE COUNTIES, OR IN A CITY AND COUNTY AND IN ONE OR MORE COUNTIES, A DIRECTOR IS APPOINTED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY IN WHICH THE LARGEST NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORS OF THE DIRECTOR DISTRICT RESIDE; EXCEPT THAT, IF THE LARGEST NUMBER OF ELIGIBLE ELECTORS OF THE DIRECTOR DISTRICT RESIDE IN THE CITY AND COUNTY, THE DIRECTOR IS APPOINTED BY THE MAYOR OF THE CITY AND COUNTY WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE CITY COUNCIL.

(B) A DIRECTOR APPOINTED PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (5)(g)(II) SERVES UNTIL THE NEXT REGULAR NOVEMBER ELECTION, AT WHICH THE DIRECTOR POSITION IS FILLED BY ELECTION PURSUANT TO THIS SECTION.

SECTION 8. In Colorado Revised Statutes, **add** 24-38.5-124 as follows:

24-38.5-124. Regional transportation district accountability committee - creation - membership - report - definitions - repeal. (1) **Definitions.** AS USED IN THIS SECTION, UNLESS THE CONTEXT OTHERWISE REQUIRES:

(a) "COLORADO ENERGY OFFICE" OR "OFFICE" MEANS THE COLORADO ENERGY OFFICE CREATED IN SECTION 24-38.5-101.

(b) "DISTRICT" MEANS THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT CREATED IN ARTICLE 9 OF TITLE 32.

(c) "RTD ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE" OR "COMMITTEE" MEANS THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE CREATED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION.

(2) **Membership.** (a) THERE IS CREATED IN THE COLORADO ENERGY OFFICE THE REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE. THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE IS TO EVALUATE AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING THE DISTRICT AS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (3) OF THIS SECTION.

(b) THE COMMITTEE CONSISTS OF FOURTEEN VOTING MEMBERS AND

ONE EX OFFICIO NONVOTING MEMBER AS FOLLOWS:

(I) SIX VOTING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR, INCLUDING ONE MEMBER WHO IS A FORMER MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DISTRICT, ONE MEMBER WHO IS A CURRENT MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DISTRICT, AND FOUR MEMBERS WHO COLLECTIVELY HAVE EXPERTISE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

(A) LOCAL GOVERNMENT WITHIN THE DISTRICT'S SERVICE AREA;

(B) FINANCIAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT;

(C) MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION; AND

(D) ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATION;

(II) THREE VOTING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE, INCLUDING ONE MEMBER WHO IS TWENTY-TWO YEARS OF AGE OR YOUNGER AND WHO USES DISTRICT SERVICES, AND TWO MEMBERS WHO COLLECTIVELY HAVE EXPERTISE IN THE FOLLOWING AREAS:

(A) WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT; AND

(B) TRANSPORTATION EQUITY;

(III) ONE VOTING MEMBER WHO HAS EXPERTISE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, APPOINTED BY THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE SENATE;

(IV) THREE VOTING MEMBERS APPOINTED BY THE SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, INCLUDING:

(A) ONE MEMBER WHO REPRESENTS TRANSIT RIDERS WITH DISABILITIES;

(B) ONE MEMBER WHO REPRESENTS THE LABOR ORGANIZATION THAT REPRESENTS A PLURALITY OF TRANSIT WORKERS OF THE DISTRICT; AND

(C) ONE MEMBER WHO HAS EXPERTISE IN URBAN PLANNING;

(V) ONE VOTING MEMBER WHO HAS EXPERTISE IN SAFETY FOR THE

PUBLIC AND TRANSIT WORKERS, APPOINTED BY THE MINORITY LEADER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES; AND

(VI) ONE EX OFFICIO NONVOTING MEMBER WHO IS A CURRENT MEMBER OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DISTRICT, APPOINTED BY THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE DISTRICT.

(c) THE COMMITTEE SHALL SELECT ONE OF ITS MEMBERS TO SERVE AS CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE.

(d) (I) THE APPOINTING AUTHORITIES SHALL MAKE THE APPOINTMENTS DESCRIBED IN SUBSECTION (2) OF THIS SECTION NO LATER THAN AUGUST 1, 2025.

(II) EACH MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE SERVES AT THE PLEASURE OF THE APPOINTING AUTHORITY. THE TERM OF APPOINTMENT IS FOR THE DURATION OF THE COMMITTEE'S EXISTENCE.

(III) IF A VACANCY OCCURS ON THE COMMITTEE FOR ANY REASON, THE ORIGINAL APPOINTING AUTHORITY SHALL APPOINT AN INDIVIDUAL TO FILL THE VACANCY AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER THE VACANCY OCCURS. IN MAKING THE VACANCY APPOINTMENT, THE APPOINTING AUTHORITY SHALL ENSURE THAT THE COMMITTEE MAINTAINS THE EXPERTISE REQUIRED BY SUBSECTION (2)(b)(II) OF THIS SECTION.

(e) EACH MEMBER OF THE COMMITTEE SERVES WITHOUT COMPENSATION.

(f) MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE MAY PARTICIPATE REMOTELY IN COMMITTEE MEETINGS AND OTHER ACTIVITIES.

(g) THE OFFICE SHALL BE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST THE COMMITTEE IN CARRYING OUT ITS DUTIES. THE OFFICE MAY ADOPT INTERNAL PROCEDURES TO ENSURE THAT THE COMMITTEE'S WORK IS CONDUCTED IN AN ORDERLY, TIMELY, AND GOAL-ORIENTED MANNER ALIGNED WITH ITS STATUTORY PURPOSE.

(3) **Evaluation and recommendations.** (a) THE PURPOSE OF THE COMMITTEE IS TO EVALUATE AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS ON:

(I) THE GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP OF THE DISTRICT;

(II) COMPENSATION FOR THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP OF THE DISTRICT;

(III) THE PARATRANSIT SERVICES PROVIDED WITHIN THE DISTRICT'S GEOGRAPHIC SERVICE AREA. AS USED IN THIS SUBSECTION (3)(a)(III), "PARATRANSIT SERVICES" MEANS COMPLEMENTARY PARALLEL TRANSIT SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES WHO ARE UNABLE TO UTILIZE REGULAR OR FIXED-ROUTE TRANSIT SERVICES FOR SOME OR ALL OF THEIR TRANSIT NEEDS.

(IV) HOW TRANSIT SERVICES WITHIN THE DISTRICT CAN BE EXPANDED WHILE ENSURING GOOD-PAYING JOBS WITH BENEFITS FOR TRANSIT SERVICE AND MAINTENANCE PROVIDERS, GIVEN STATE INVESTMENTS TO EXPAND TRANSIT IN THE STATE;

(V) HOW TRANSIT SERVICES WITHIN THE DISTRICT MAY BE SERVED BY IMPLEMENTING EMPLOYER HARMONY AGREEMENTS THAT PROTECT AGAINST LABOR DISPUTES AND OTHER DISRUPTIONS THAT CAN LEAD TO WORKFORCE RETENTION CHALLENGES AND SERVICE RELIABILITY AND SAFETY CONCERNS;

(VI) THE REPRESENTATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENTS AND STATE AGENCIES WITHIN THE DISTRICT; AND

(VII) THE DISTRICT'S WORKFORCE RETENTION.

(b) THE COMMITTEE'S WORK IS INTENDED TO BUILD ON THE WORK OF THE PREVIOUS RTD ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE CREATED IN 2020. THE COMMITTEE SHOULD BEGIN ITS EVALUATION PURSUANT TO THIS SUBSECTION (3) WITH AN ASSESSMENT OF THE STATUS OF EACH RECOMMENDATION INCLUDED IN THE PREVIOUS RTD ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE'S JULY 2021 FINAL REPORT, INCLUDING ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING DISTRICT SUBREGIONAL SERVICE COUNCILS AND IDENTIFICATION OF OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE THE SCOPE AND EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SERVICE COUNCILS.

(c) ON OR BEFORE JANUARY 30, 2026, THE COMMITTEE SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE GOVERNOR, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

TRANSPORTATION, HOUSING, AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE, AND THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION AND ENERGY COMMITTEE, OR THEIR SUCCESSOR COMMITTEES, THAT INCLUDES A SUMMARY OF THE WORK ACCOMPLISHED BY THE RTD ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE, THE FINDINGS OF ITS EVALUATION, AND ANY RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY CONCERNING MATTERS EVALUATED BY THE COMMITTEE.

(4) **Repeal.** THIS SECTION IS REPEALED, EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2026.

SECTION 9. In Colorado Revised Statutes, 43-4-1204, **amend** (3)(c)(I), (3)(d) introductory portion, (3)(d)(II)(A), (3)(d)(II)(B), and (3)(d)(II)(C); and **add** (3)(e) as follows:

43-4-1204. Production fee for clean transit imposed by the enterprise - local transit operations program - local transit grant program - rail funding program - cash funds - report. (3) (c) Pursuant to the purposes of the local transit operations program, the enterprise shall allocate money from the local transit operations cash fund to eligible entities using a formula developed by the board, which shall be based on population, population density, local zoning, transit ridership, vehicle revenue miles, share of disproportionately impacted community population, and other transit-related criteria. An eligible entity that is awarded money from the local transit operations cash fund shall:

(I) Prior to receiving any money, submit the eligible entity's most recent ~~service improvement plan or system optimization plan~~ COMPREHENSIVE OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS to the board and describe how the money would be used to expand transit service, increase transit frequency, improve system-wide transit connectivity, and meet the other purposes described in subsection (3)(b) of this section;

(d) An eligible entity, EXCEPT FOR A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION, awarded money pursuant to subsection (3)(c) of this section that provides service to areas with a population of one million individuals or more shall:

(II) Create, maintain, and regularly update the following on the eligible entity's website:

(A) An annual update regarding the eligible entity's financial plan that includes a detailed report of all the eligible entity's capital projects that

are in progress AND THAT EXCEED TEN MILLION DOLLARS;

(B) A quarterly update regarding all of the eligible entity's capital projects that are in progress AND THAT EXCEED TEN MILLION DOLLARS, including a project schedule and project expenditure information for each project;

(C) A public accountability dashboard that provides, at a minimum, accessible and transparent summary information regarding each of the eligible entity's capital projects that is in progress AND THAT EXCEEDS TEN MILLION DOLLARS; the funding status of each project, including the project's total funding and expenditures to date; and the eligible entity's progress toward the completion of each project;

(e) FOR MONEY AWARDED PURSUANT TO SUBSECTION (3)(c) OF THIS SECTION THAT IS AWARDED NO LATER THAN THE STATE FISCAL YEAR BEGINNING ON JULY 1, 2025, AN ELIGIBLE ENTITY MAY BE EXEMPT FROM THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OF SUBSECTIONS (3)(c)(I) AND (3)(d) OF THIS SECTION, IN THE ENTERPRISE'S DISCRETION, IF THE ELIGIBLE ENTITY SUBMITS TO THE ENTERPRISE BY JULY 1, 2025, A PLAN OUTLINING HOW IT WILL MEET THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS.

SECTION 10. Appropriation. For the 2025-26 state fiscal year, $146,720 is appropriated to the office of the governor for use by the Colorado energy office. This appropriation is from the general fund and is based on an assumption that the office will require an additional 0.1 FTE. To implement this act, the office may use this appropriation for program administration.

SECTION 11. Safety clause. The general assembly finds, determines, and declares that this act is necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety or for appropriations for

the support and maintenance of the departments of the state and state institutions.

James Rashad Coleman, Sr.
PRESIDENT OF
THE SENATE

Julie McCluskie
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

Esther van Mourik
SECRETARY OF
THE SENATE

Vanessa Reilly
CHIEF CLERK OF THE HOUSE
OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED Tuesday May 13th 2025 at 10:20am
(Date and Time)

Jared S. Polis
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF COLORADO

APPENDIX B

Minority Opinions

- Larsen/Snook Minority Opinion
- Hudson/Bouquet Minority Opinion

MINORITY REPORT (Larsen, Snook): 2025 RTD Accountability Committee Recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The reason for my minority report is that while I support some changes to the RTD Board structure, my view is that the majority's recommendations go too far from the principles of democracy and representation embodied in the current board structure created by the voters in 1980.

I agree with the Hudson/Bouquet Minority Report's sentiments that any change to voters expressed preference for elected representation is monumental and risks the perception that legislators are overruling the public's will. But I differ from Hudson and Bouquet in recommending no changes to the existing structure. Instead, I urge prudent and incremental changes that address specific real weaknesses in the Board's current arrangement, rather than a radical reconfiguration that voters did not ask for and that increases the risk of disenfranchising large portions of RTD's riders, potential riders, and taxpayers.

As Hudson and Bouquet identify, "the committee was charged with providing governance recommendations without any statutory direction for what might actually need 'fixing'". Hudson and Bouquet continue, noting their interpretation of the findings Accountability Committee's staff interview research that "the real locus of complaint was… influential legislators unhappy that the elected Board of Directors hadn't made a priority of their desire for rail extensions." As the staff report (Bragdon) concluded: *"Without closure on the FasTracks legacy, conversations about a past plan continue to infect the relationship between local government leaders and RTD, several generations of leadership after the former officials, who devised that plan, (have) departed the scene."*

This is extremely significant, because as Hudson and Bouquet note, "***the FasTracks program intended by RTD 21 years ago is as complete as it will ever be***." It is understandable that legislators and others are disappointed that taxes raised for additional train service turned out to be insufficient to build out the entire plan. Changes in the Board structure will not make this any less true. Instead, the Majority's proposed changes simply increase the possibility that this disappointment leads RTD to make critical errors. It would enable a Board to be selected that over-represents these disgruntled portions of the District, who could then force the District to provide even more expensive, inefficient service to low-density areas with few

existing or potential transit riders, at the cost of service to existing riders and potential riders.

THE PROBLEMS WITH THE MAJORITY'S RECOMMENDATIONS

The Majority recommends a revised Board structure with four members appointed by the Governor and approved by the legislature, and five elected by geographically drawn districts. The Majority believes that appointed members will have experience and expertise that will make for a more capable board.

I agree that, given a wise and capable Governor, the appointed members should have useful experience and expertise. But the Majority also seems to believe that these noble appointed representatives will set politics aside and govern purely in the interest of the public good, safely isolated from the rumble and tumble of political interests.

I believe that view is naïve. Governors and legislatures are of course political entities that can be expected to appoint Board members who have their appointers' political goals in mind. The Governor and the legislature are elected by the entire state. *In the worst case, rather than increasing accountability, the Majority's recommendations could create a structure where 44% of the Board's voting power is accountable only to elected officials who may have never won a majority in the District*. Recent events in US politics show very clearly the peril of assuming that outcomes that seem unlikely will never happen. Changes to the Board structure should not depend on the uninterrupted reign of Colorado's current, relatively pro-transit leadership, but should be constructed to serve the interests of the District in all future political conditions. The Majority's proposed structure plainly fails to meet that standard.

That said, the greater near-term risk is that with four appointed members, decisions about how to allocate money for investments and service could represent a minority of voters, taxpayers, and riders *within* the district. If the four appointed members are aligned with just one of the elected members' preferences, that single district representing just 20% of the voters could implement policies to the detriment of the other 80%. The Majority's response to this concern is to once again simply claim that it is unlikely to happen. The Majority bases its structure on a bet that wise future state leaders will act in the whole District's best interest. My view is that implementing a structure that could allow governance unaccountable to the majority of voters in the District would be a folly.

It's relevant here to describe the scenario representing my biggest concern with the Majority's scheme. Within RTD, there are currently three districts where voters living in Denver represent the large majority or entirety of the district's constituents. In addition, a fourth contains about 50% Denver voters. In essence, in the present arrangement, 3.5 members of the 15 member board represent Denver – or 23% of the voting power on the Board.

In a board with 5 elected members in the RTD district of 3.1 million people, each district would represent a population of about 620,000 people. The city of Denver has about 720,000 people. If the districts are drawn according to traditional districting principles – contiguity, compactness, preserving political subdivisions, and shared communities of interest – it is highly likely that the entirety of one district will represent Denver voters, with another district containing a small portion of the city, but mostly representing other communities. In effect, Denver voters will go from reliably representing 23% of the voting power on the Board to reliably representing less than half of that, just 11% of the voting power. While there may (or may not) be appointed members of the board who live in Denver, there can be no expectation that they will be accountable to the voters in the city.

This could be disastrous for the Denver metropolitan area and the state's climate goals. Within RTD, 45% of non-car households reside in Denver, and 33% of commuters that regularly use transit to go to work live in Denver. More importantly, Denver (and the small enclave of Glendale enclosed entirely within Denver) are the densest cities in Colorado. Thanks to its high density, Denver represents not just a disproportionate number of transit riders compared to the rest of RTD's communities, ***but by far has the greatest opportunity for ridership growth in the region.*** It is a well-known principle of mass transit that ridership is directly connected to the level of population or employment density along a given route. In general, if you want to increase ridership in your system, increasing the service and particularly the service frequency in the areas with the highest population (or employment) density is the way to do it (at least until service becomes so frequent and extensive that there is little room for improvement).

Historically (and currently) RTD has not optimized for maximum ridership. The current service configurations are already overweighted towards coverage of areas with low transit-riding propensity instead of towards increased service frequency in areas with high transit-riding propensity. To maximize ridership, the agency should provide far more frequent service in the densest areas where ridership growth could be most easily won. Service frequences on bus and train lines that match international standards – typically 4 to 5 minute headways at peak times – would enable many more residents who live in Denver to achieve total travel times that favorably compare to driving. High service frequency, when combined with the lower costs of transit compared to car ownership, is the most potent way to gain modal shifts from automobiles to transit.

Instead, with so many districts in RTD representing low density areas, RTD has had to provide service coverage to areas where it is a necessity for every household to own one or more cars, virtually ensuring that these routes garner low ridership. The reason

is geometric - purely due to the inherent geometry of low vs. high population density, in low density areas mass transit simply can't deliver travel times competitive to personal vehicles at anywhere near the efficiency (cost per boarding) it can in denser areas.

We can see this dynamic playing out with the ongoing Fastracks debate about Northwest Rail. Every study that has been done on the ridership potential for Northwest rail has projected modest ridership that would result in a very high cost per boarding compared to the rest of RTD's system. It should be no surprise - the communities along the Northwest rail proposed path have density far below what is normally considered necessary for efficient transit. Further, these cities have shown little interest in increasing their density near the rail stops. In fact, one of the cities along the proposed path has sued the state of Colorado for passing a law requiring cities to take just modest steps towards increasing their allowed density around transit-oriented development. Nevertheless, the Board has been directed by the legislature to prioritize Northwest rail, and the Directors from the Northwest districts and other districts will support it, despite the obvious truth that if ridership growth was truly the District's highest priority, the funds for this extension could drive far more ridership growth if used elsewhere.

The Majority's recommended Board Structure creates an extremely high risk that the agency's existing tendency to underweight ridership growth in favor of inefficient coverage will only get worse, as the area with the most ridership growth potential will almost certainly be even more poorly represented.

If the legislature truly believes that increasing ridership should be RTD's priority, it should reject the Majority's recommendations to adopt a structure with such a high risk of leading to reduced ridership.

WHAT ABOUT THE BOARD SHOULD BE CHANGED?

All of this is not to say that after 45 years, there is not room for improvement in the structure laid out in 1980. A number of reforms should be made to increase the quality of elected board members, increase the capacity of elected board members to govern, and to give the State a greater voice in RTD's governance. All of these things can be done without making anti-democratic, risky, and counter-productive changes to the core principle that RTD should be governed primarily according to the will of the taxpaying citizens residing within the District.

Below I identify real problems with RTD's governance structure, and concrete steps to solve them:

PROBLEM	SOLUTION
Too many board races are uncompetitive, risking low quality board candidates.	1. Allow any individual local elected official (mayor, city council member, county commissioner) to nominate a candidate and thereby put them on the ballot. Local officials will identify candidates with experience and existing relationships, improving the quality of candidates. Making it possible to get on the ballot without an expensive and time-consuming signature process will encourage more candidates, leading to a competitive election process that gives voters more choice and encourages voters to invest more thought into their votes. 2. In years prior to the start of new RTD terms, enable funding of a training program for Board candidates and prospective appointees, to be run by a 3rd party organization jointly selected by the Governor's Office and RTD. Training is divided into pre-Candidate awareness for anyone interested and Candidate training for anyone who is on the ballot or identified as a prospective appointee. 50% of funding is provided by State, 50% by RTD.
The State is providing and likely will increasingly provide money for RTD's operations, but it has no voice in the agency's governance.	1. Add two members appointed by the Governor and approved by the Senate as voting members of the Board, raising the total board size to 17 members effective Jan 1, 2027. Appointed members must reside in the District for at least a year prior to their appointment. Terms and term limits are the same as for elected members, however members serve at pleasure of the appointer. 2. By 2030, reduce the size of the elected board to 13 members, for a total board size of 15 members.

Board members' compensation has not changed for some time and therefore has not kept pace with inflation. The low pay discourages candidates from running for the office and reduces the quality of Board oversight by giving Directors little room to adjust their workload in their full-time job to devote more time to RTD governance.	Raise Director's compensation to be pegged at a fraction of the standard salary of state officials that are given regular pay increases that account for inflation. To account for inflation, this compensation should be no lower than $22,500 in 2026.
The Board has no ability to pay Directors who can devote more time to governance and oversight for their time, which limits the capacity the Board has to govern.	Allow the Board to allocate an additional total amount equal to 1.25x to 1.5x of the pegged state official as additional salary to up to 5 board directors each year for extra work or special projects. The allocation of salary is allocated by board majority vote, and board can opt to spend all, part, or none of the amount.
At 15 (or 17) members, the Board is too large and unwieldy for efficient decision-making.	1. A larger board does create a need for more time and work to develop consensus for policies. This is especially true when you end up with the occasional board member who lacks the experience and mentality to communicate concisely and effectively. Implementing compensation policies as detailed above would increase Directors' capacity to invest time on Board work and enable some Board members to work full time on gathering the information the Board needs to come to decisions. Higher compensation and other measures to increase electoral competition will also help ensure that the elected Directors are better prepared to do Board work efficiently.

	2. As burdensome as a larger Board is, what makes it doubly burdensome are the overly restrictive Sunshine laws that restrict Directors from talking to each other about District policy except one on one or in public meetings. All too frequently what could be said once to a small group of Directors must be said serially, meaning conversations that could take 30 minutes may have to take 3 hours. Few other states are so restrictive in this way. The legislature should align its sunshine policies with other states and allow Directors to meet and converse in groups whenever no policy will be decided or whenever the group is short of a quorum. This would do far more to increase Board efficiency than reducing the size of the Board.

WHAT DOES RTD REALLY NEED FROM THE LEGISLATURE TO SUCCEED

Rather than pursuing a strategy that would enable manipulation of the RTD Board composition in a vain effort to realize impossible promises, the legislature should prioritize actions that can truly deliver on the need for expanded public transit. In addition to the Board changes I detail above, the legislature should pass laws with an eye towards maximizing transit ridership and helping RTD optimize for the efficient use of taxpayer dollars. Continued expansion of financial assistance from state to provide more transit should be part of this, as the budget permits. But more critically, and possibly more feasibly in the short term, the legislature should take actions to free RTD from state requirements that trammel RTD's efforts to increase revenue and ridership.

The state should advance a two-pronged legislative strategy that makes achieving the state's climate goals a real priority:

1. Pass legislation that does more to fund public transit, either via shifting transportation dollars from highway expansion to transit, or by making use of tolls or congestion pricing measures that will reduce congestion, reduce emissions, and raise funds that can be used for transit.

2. Unleash RTD from outmoded restrictions that prevent the agency from taking actions to obtain the funding it needs to expand service and to implement a

real estate development strategy that takes ridership and revenue growth seriously. Specifically:

a. As recommended by Hudson and Bouquet, "confer the full set of special district authorities to RTD (taxation, ballot questions, etc.) enjoyed by comparable districts."

b. Free RTD to gain revenue and ridership from developing its own property. Universities and other state entities are exempt from local land use restrictions in Colorado, so they can pursue goals that benefit the entire state without being constrained by local governments. Yet few state entities would benefit as much as RTD if allowed to develop its properties, and properties it could acquire, without the constraint of local land use restrictions. Population density near transit is the primary driver of transit ridership, yet RTD has little freedom to enable increased population density near its transit stations. The legislature should remove the restriction that RTD must follow local land use and zoning rules. It should instead enable RTD to pursue dense real estate development on its properties as a ridership growth and revenue raising opportunity, as is done in many countries around the world. In addition, the legislature should specifically empower RTD to stand up a real estate development and acquisition operation for the purpose of increasing ridership and diversifying funding sources for the agency.

As G.K. Chesterton's famous saying goes,

> *There exists in such a case a certain institution or law; let us say, for the sake of simplicity, a fence or gate erected across a road. The more modern type of reformer goes gaily up to it and says, "I don't see the use of this; let us clear it away." To which the more intelligent type of reformer will do well to answer: "If you don't see the use of it, I certainly won't let you clear it away. Go away and think. Then, when you can come back and tell me that you do see the use of it, I may allow you to destroy it."*

Reforms should be made to the RTD Board to reflect what we have learned from 45 years. But a Board designed to represent the varied interests across the region large and diverse geography was created that way for good reasons that apply just as much today as they did 45 years ago. Let us not blithely chop apart the past design that led to many successes and achievements. Instead, let's make surgical changes that preserve the core principles of a geographically representative board, while

augmenting its ability to govern effectively – and primarily in the interests of the District's voters and riders -- going forward.

MINORITY REPORT (Hudson/Bouquet): 2025 RTD Accountability Committee Recommendations

The underlying premise of our minority report to the Legislature is that we believe there is no legitimate reason for appointed members to serve on the district's governing board. The existing 15-member board of directors was authorized by receiving over 70% voter approval at a statewide general election in 1980. This decision replaced a discredited appointed board plagued with instances of corruption, incompetence and misfeasance. During the ensuing 45 years, RTD has distinguished itself, twice winning recognition as the American Public Transit Association's (APTA) agency of the year. Its elected Board was the first in the nation to provide handicapped access to all its bus and rail vehicles which later served as a template for a similar requirement in the American Disability (ADA) Act. It can further be argued that the light and heavy rail system deployed across the District since 1990 would never have occurred without voters' creation of an elected Board. RTD undertook successful construction of the largest rail implementation program anywhere in the country over the past thirty years.

Returning governance to a partially or wholly appointed board would prove a policy blunder that disserves taxpayers, riders and staff. While detailed objections are outlined in the body of this report, it is of paramount significance to point out that the recommendations in the majority report constitute an assault on the democratic process itself. At a time of growing national concern regarding the undermining of democracy at the federal level, it would be a travesty for the Colorado Legislature to reject voters expressed preference for elected representation in the planning, operation and financing of public transit. The contention that the complexity of transit governance exceeds the intellectual grasp of elected directors, which must be supplemented with expert voices should ring hollow at the Legislature. The logic of the majority recommendation implies a conclusion that the Legislature itself would benefit from a hybrid structure directed by elite advisors.

If the General Assembly determines, nonetheless, to endorse the majority recommendation, it is imperative they seek voter approval for this new scheme.

DELIBERATIONS

There were substantial deficiencies in the Accountability Committee's process, through no fault of the mediators, but attributable to inherent weaknesses in the enabling

legislation itself. At all but the final meeting to vote on recommendations, at least once and frequently several times during discussion, members would inquire plaintively, "What is the problem we are trying to solve here?" Indeed, the committee was charged with providing governance recommendations without any statutory direction for what might actually need 'fixing'. The response that was elicited from reform proponents usually consisted of vague
charges that "…trust in RTD needs to be restored." This was occasionally accompanied by grumbling about the failure to complete the entire rail buildout anticipated in the 2004 FasTracks program and improving ridership post-COVID.

Staff investigation reported a fascinating anomaly in opinion regarding RTD, where it was almost entirely elected officials (legislators, and local municipal and county officials) who expressed dissatisfaction with the District. Transportation staff for these jurisdictions almost uniformly expressed satisfaction with the professionalism, cooperation and coordination extended by RTD. Neither was there significant dissatisfaction among riders, with the exception of unhappiness with the light rail upgrades required last summer that disrupted schedules and reliability. Even for these riders, there was a general recognition that this maintenance was justified and needed. The real locus of complaint was confined to a coterie of influential legislators unhappy that the elected Board of Directors hadn't made a priority of their desire for rail extensions – that RTD hadn't done what they wanted it to do. Upending the elected Board serves as their strategy for forcing decisions they seek.

A staff report (Bragdon) concluded: *"Without closure on the FasTracks legacy, conversations about a past plan continue to infect the relationship between local government leaders and RTD, several generations of leadership after the former officials, who devised that plan, (have) departed the scene."*

Despite specific requests from members of the Accountability Committee, the following briefings were never provided:

- •. A joint meeting with RTD directors
- • A financial/accounting presentation regarding budget matters
- •. A public hearing that would permit a broad expression of opinion
- •. A legal explanation of the recently filed lawsuit over disability services

There was little or no debate during Accountability Committee meetings that addressed directly what the issues and decisions are that require state Accountability from the

Legislature. Nor was there a thorough presentation outlining how the elected Board operates: how and when a director spends their time, what Board sub-committees handle, how the Board exercise its supervisory responsibility over staff, as well as policy development and issue identification.

FASTRACKS

Although not formally adjudicated by the Accountability Committee, it is important to understand that the FasTracks program intended by RTD 21 years ago is as complete as it
will ever be. Ballot questions are not legal documents and do not entail contractual obligations, enforceable in law. Governments do as much as they can, as well as they can with the moneys they secure. Three fourths of the original system has been built out and operates daily. The Boulder light rail extension originally proposed (not promised) was the least cost-effective element of FasTracks, with the worst ROI, and was therefore postponed and should now be considered cancelled. Recognizing its obligation to assist riders, nearly $200 million dollars in BRT (Flatiron Flyer) service and two local circulators have been funded in Boulder. It is time to move on. The tax revenue produced by FasTracks levies are insufficient to cover both bond amortization and service operations, which requires the base system to subsidize existing services. An additional billion dollars has been expended to support FasTracks above the projected estimate.

There is a possibility that Front Range Rail, if successful, will eventually provide a rail link from Boulder to Denver satisfying the original system design. Meanwhile, The RTD Board must examine system expansions that most cost-effectively increase ridership. Extending the N line from Westminster to Erie and on to Longmont is far cheaper and generates greater ridership than the Boulder rail link would. The question is why would a hybrid, appointed Board be better prepared to make this decision than an elected Board?

PROBLEMS RAISED WITH A HYBRID BOARD

Although there isn't a single hybrid transit Board in North America, the majority is recommending adoption of such a scheme without identifying what would be the benefit to taxpayers and riders. Reducing the number of elected Directors from 15 to just five expands the size of each electorate to 600,000 voters, nearly the size of a Congressional District. Whatever the distance between voters and their directors today, this separation would only be exaggerated under the split-board proposal. The cost of

conducting election campaigns would be nearly prohibitive for a part-time position. Inevitably, there would be friction between elected and appointed members – dividing along the lines of "real" directors and artificial ones.

If the Legislature remains genuinely concerned about the effectiveness of the existing Board, at least two alternatives present themselves, while preserving its current structure:

(1) Retain 15 elected members, but supplement Board subcommittees with non voting, ex-officio advisory panels

(2) The current board was created (1980) when the Special District law had not been extended to transportation services. The Legislature could confer the full set of special district authorities to RTD (taxation, ballot questions, etc.) enjoyed by comparable districts and thereby also relieve themselves of supervisory duties

POLITICAL REALITIES

Eliminating the elected Board is and will be unpopular with voters. Asking a legislator to support a hybrid Board is asking for a vote that sends a message to constituents, "I know you're smart enough to elect me but not intelligent enough to select a member of the RTD Board." Further, there will be a vigorous citizen campaign to repeal any statute requiring such a change and convert RTD representation into an election issue in every legislative race. Few legislators will be willing to sacrifice their seats on that hill. The RTD Board, like all elected assemblies, has had good years and bad years – strong personalities and weak ones. That's the nature of democracy. No one has ever claimed democracy is cheap or swift, yet, over time, it usually gets public policy right.

The Bragdon report explains that Denver's transit dilemmas are not unique: *"Leaders in Seattle and Los Angeles and Austin are having to reconsider their plans and make painful, unpopular choices, based on information they now have and the (fiscal) conditions they are now in. Anything they decide will be partially at variance with what was once described in their ballot measures and accordingly will anger and disappoint many people. But, they like the Denver region, need to make decisions and what forward progress they can."*

The minority report urges these decisions be made at RTD by exclusively elected Directors.

APPENDIX C

Meeting Agendas, Administrative Presentations, Meeting Minutes & Bylaws

- Agendas, Administrator Presentations and Meeting Minutes
- RTD Accountability Committee Bylaws

RTD Accountability Committee
August 26, 2025 Meeting via Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89839561583?pwd=Frigk0l3LfVubHVynT721ox3saLzlb.1&from=addon

Meeting goals
- Introduce committee members to our facilitator, subject matter expert(s), and each other;
- Establish key committee governance decisions, group norms and agreements, elect a chair, etc.;
- Review and clarify the purpose of the committee, including what is in and out of scope;
- Begin providing background on the work of the previous RTD committee, as it relates to this committee's priority topic areas.

Pre-reading *(available in folder and at links below)*
Draft Committee Bylaws
SB25-161 Transit Reform
CO Legislative Council Staff Memo: Background of RTD
2021 Regional Transportation District Accountability Committee Final Report
2024 Fiscal Governance Performance Audit

Agenda

Timing	Content
11 – 11:10am	**Welcome & Meeting Overview**
11:10 – 11:40am	**Committee Member Introductions**
11:40am – 12:25pm	**Housekeeping** • Meeting Logistics & Cadence • Legal Responsibilities and Bylaws • Committee Operating Norms & Agreements • Committee Chair and Vice Chair Process
12:25 – 12:55pm	**Committee Roadmap and Level Setting** • Committee Scope & Charge • Previous Accountability Committee Work & Progress - presentation from RTD
12:55 – 1:00pm	**Next Steps** • Public Comment & Input Strategy • Homework, Meeting 2 Preview

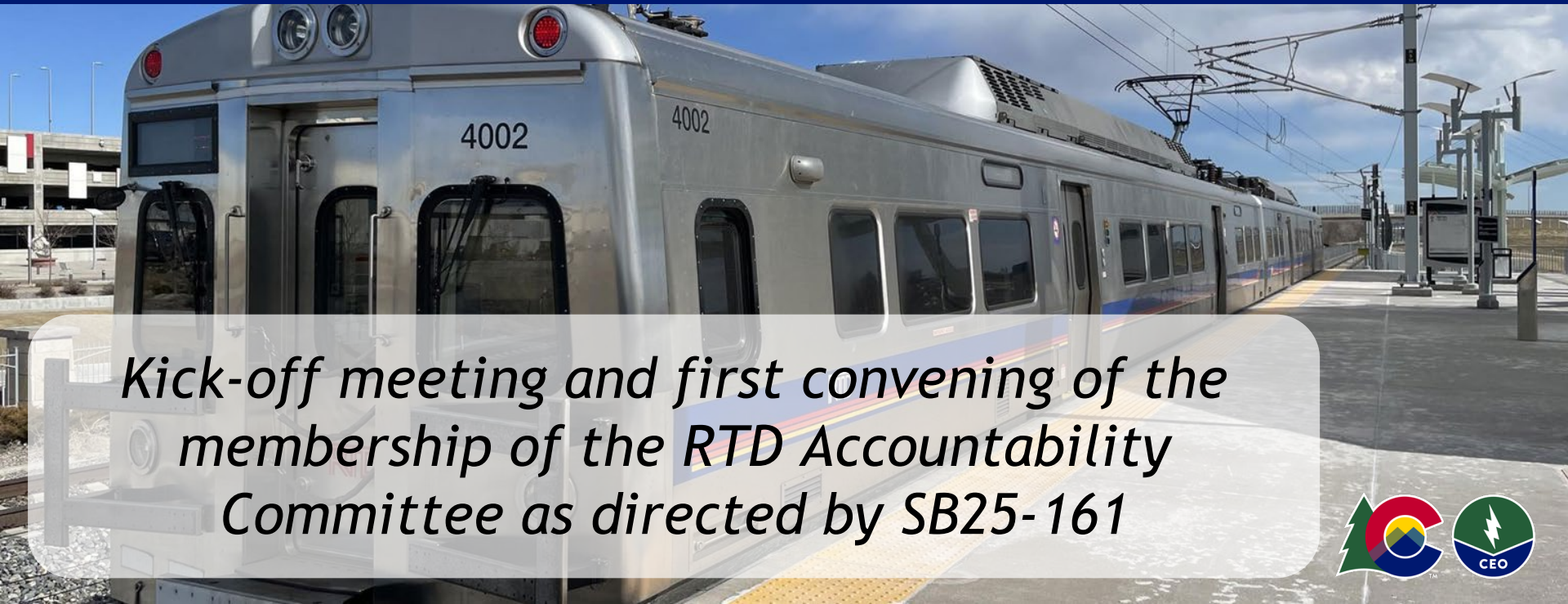
Contact

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead
Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation: kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

RTD Accountability Committee

August 26, 2025



Kick-off meeting and first convening of the membership of the RTD Accountability Committee as directed by SB25-161

Today's Meeting: Agenda

Meeting Agenda

Timing	Content
11 – 11:10am	**Welcome & Meeting Overview**
11:10 – 11:40am	**Committee Member Introductions**
11:40am – 12:25pm	**Housekeeping** • Meeting Logistics & Cadence • Legal Responsibilities and Bylaws • Committee Operating Norms & Agreements • Committee Chair and Vice Chair Process
12:25 – 12:55pm	**Committee Roadmap and Level Setting** • Committee Scope & Charge • Previous Accountability Committee Work & Progress - presentation from RTD
12:55 – 1:00pm	**Next Steps** • Public Comment & Input Strategy • Homework, Meeting #2 Preview

Today's Meeting: Welcome & Overview

Welcome & Meeting Overview

- *Today's meeting agenda, purpose & goals*
- *CEO Leadership Welcome - Executive Director Will Toor*
- *Introductions of state staff, consulting team, facilitation team*
- *Overview of SB25-161 and committee charge*

Today's Meeting: Goals

Meeting Goals

- *Introduce committee members to our facilitator, subject matter expert(s), and each other*
- *Establish key committee governance decisions, group norms and agreements, elect a chair, etc.*
- *Review & clarify the purpose of the committee, including what is in and out of scope*
- *Begin providing background on the work of the previous RTD committee, as it relates to this committee's priority topic areas*

Today's meeting: CEO leadership welcome

Mission

Reduce greenhouse gas emissions and consumer energy costs by advancing clean energy, energy efficiency and zero emission vehicles to benefit all Coloradans.

Vision

A prosperous, clean energy future for Colorado.

Today's Meeting: Intro to team

State staff

Kelly Blynn
Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation, Colorado Energy Office

Facilitation

Berrick Abramson
President, Confluence PSG

Carrie Steele
Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG

CONFLUENCE POLICY & STRATEGY GROUP

Research support

David Bragdon
Hudson Skykomish
Focusing on governance

With support from:

NELSON NYGAARD
Focusing on paratransit

Eno Center for Transportation
Focusing on workforce/labor topics

Accountability Committee: SB25-161 Overview

SB25-161 established the Committee within CEO:

- 14 voting members and 1 ex-officio member, appointed by the Governor, legislature and RTD, with specific areas of expertise / backgrounds (list available on CEO webpage)
- "The office shall be available to assist the committee in carrying out its duties. The office may adopt internal procedures to ensure that the committee's work is conducted in an orderly, timely, and goal-oriented manner aligned with its statutory purpose."

SB25-161 tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to:

- **Governance-related Topics**
- **Paratransit Topics**
- **Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics**

SB25-161 directs the committee to:

- By January 30, 2026, submit a report to the governor and legislature that includes a summary of the work accomplished by the committee, the findings of its evaluation, and any recommendations to the general assembly concerning matters evaluated by the committee.
- Build on the work of the previous RTD accountability committee created in 2020.

Committee Member Introductions

Housekeeping

- Meeting Logistics & Cadence
- Legal Responsibilities and Bylaws
- Committee Operating Norms & Agreements
- Committee Chair and Vice Chair Process

Accountability Committee: Meeting Logistics

Meeting Cadence & Logistics

- *Meetings roughly every other week for 2-3 hours throughout the fall*
- *Most meetings will be online, with at least two longer meetings in person*
- *Preliminary meeting schedule will be shared following this meeting, along with calendar invites to hold the date*
- *Some sessions will focus on learning, others on discussion and deliberating recommendations*
- *With a large committee and short time frame, please do what you can to adjust your schedule, and let us know early if you cannot make a meeting*
- *We will maintain a Google Drive with pre-reading and other key materials for the committee*

RTD Accountability Committee

Open Meetings, Open Records, and Open Minds

Jessica Lowrey
First Assistant Attorney General

August 26, 2025

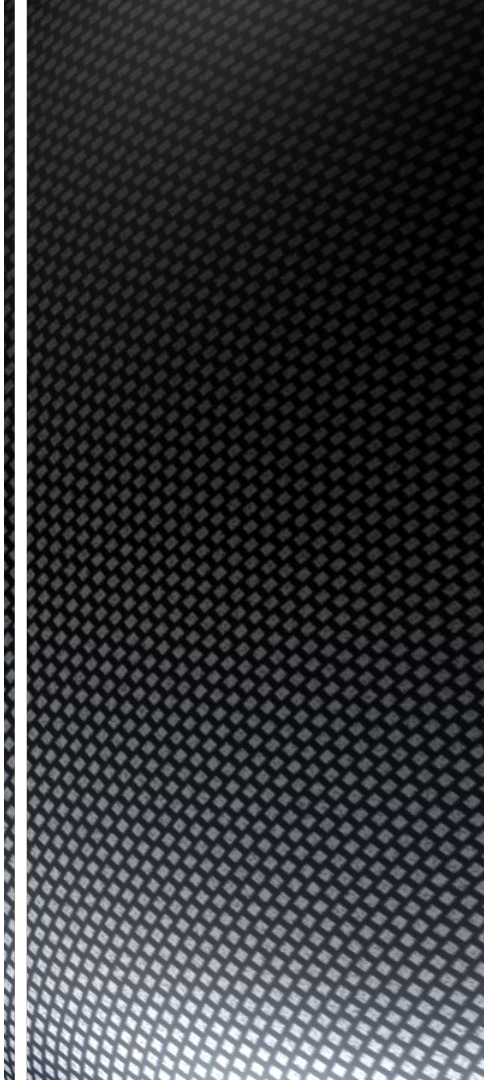
WHOMP
WHOMP

Agenda

- Open Meetings Law
- Colorado Open Records Act
- Conflicts of Interest

Open Meetings

Colorado’s Sunshine Law



Colorado Sunshine Law

- Formation of public policy happens in the public eye, not in secret.
  - Public meetings
  - Minutes open to public inspection
  - Carefully limited executive session

Public Meetings (1)

- "All meetings of **two or more members** of any state public body at which **public business is discussed** or at which **any formal action** may be taken are declared to be public meetings open to the public at all times." **§ 24-6-402(2)(a), C.R.S.**

- What makes a meeting "open to the public"?
  - Notice to public, with agenda, held in a manner that the public can watch or attend
  - Strict limitations on closed sessions and secret ballots
  - Public comment not required (by OML)

Public Meetings (2)

Discussing whether to adopt recommendations about the governance structure for RTD.	Yes
Side conversations on bathroom break about a potential idea for how to expand RTD services	Yes
Thursday night dinner and drinks	No…unless
Phone call to the committee chair with a question about the agenda	No
Phone call to another committee member with a comment about a potential committee vote coming up	Should be…
Phone call to committee counsel, facilitator, or administrator	No

Public Meetings - Executive Sessions

Substantive Constraints

- Available only for limited subject matters
  - When you need legal advice from task force counsel.
- **No** formal action allowed
- **No** discussion of issues among task force members

Procedural Constraints

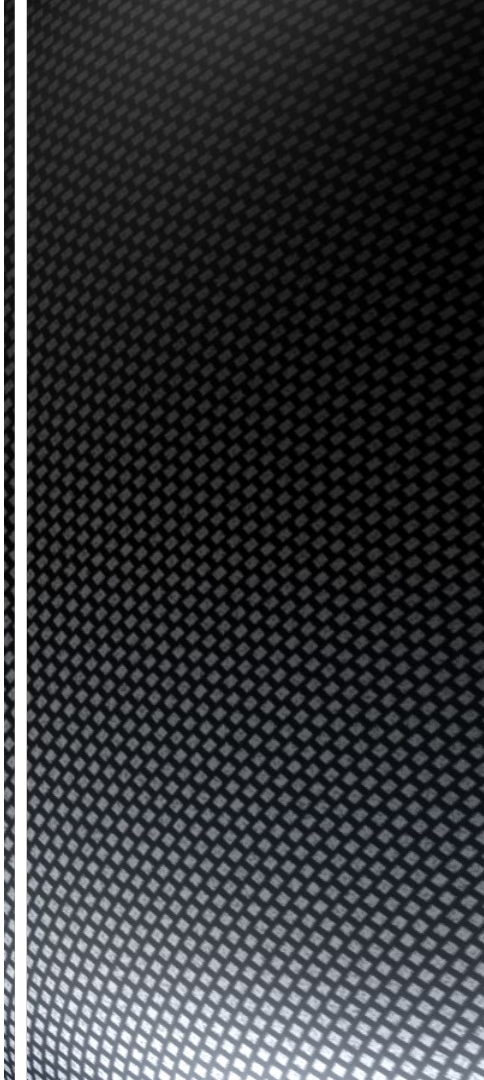
- Two-thirds vote of entire body required
- Session must be recorded
- Must announce topic and legal basis for exec. Session in public meeting
- May not deviate from the announced topic

Public Meetings - Consequences

- If the Committee violates the Open Meeting Law by either discussing public business in a closed meeting or taking formal action in an executive session:
  - Decision voided and must be discussed and voted on again in a public meeting.
  - Maybe liable for attorney's fees if sued.
  - Loss of public trust.

Open Records

Colorado Open Records Act



CORA: Applicability

- "Public records" includes any writing "made, maintained, or kept by" the state or any agency **(§ 24-72-202(6), C.R.S.)**
- "Writings" means:
  - "all books, papers, maps, photographs, cards, tapes, recordings, or other documentary materials, **regardless of physical form or characteristics**.
  - "Includes digitally stored data, including without limitation electronic mail messages, but does not include computer software." **§ 24-72-202(7)**

CORA: Is it a Public Record?

1. Committee member emails to task force facilitator, administrator, or counsel — **PUBLIC RECORD**
2. Committee member emails about personal business — **PRIVATE**
3. Committee member meeting notes — **PUBLIC RECORD**

CORA: Best Practices

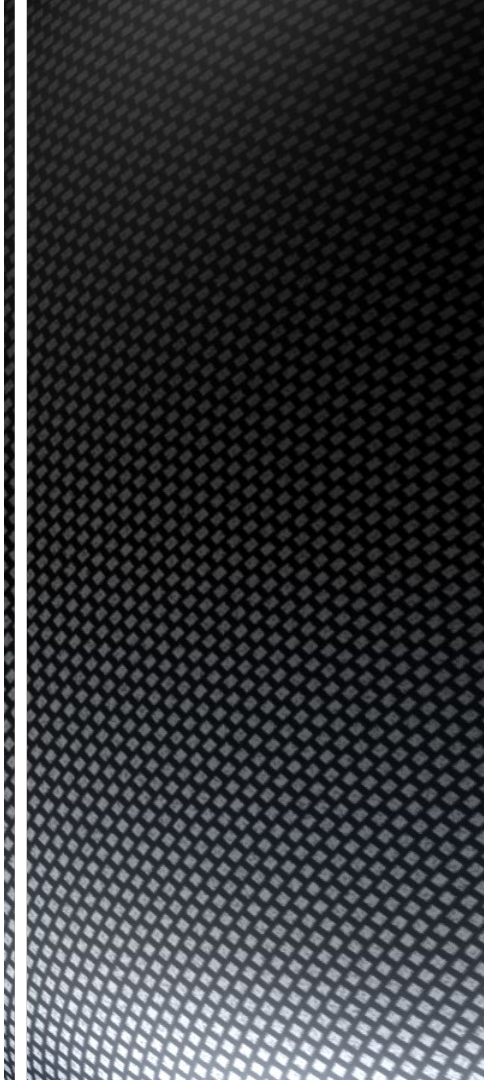
- Any request for documents or information is treated as a CORA request.
  - Forward any CORA requests to committee administrator ASAP
  - We have 3 days to initially respond to CORA requests.
- Treat all emails as if they will be published in *The Denver Post* tomorrow with no favorable context
- Make sure committee counsel communications are handled confidentially

CORA: Exceptions

- Personal email addresses, home addresses, and personal phone numbers; medical records
- Personnel files; letters of reference for jobs
- Confidential business information and trade secrets
- When “disclosure of the contents of the record would do substantial injury to the public interest.”
- Documents protected by state or federal law
- Legally privileged documents and communication
  - But privileges can be waived

Open Minds

Conflicts of Interest



Code of Ethics

- “The general assembly recognizes the importance of the participation of the citizens of this state in all levels of government in the state. The general assembly further recognizes that, when citizens of this state obtain public office, conflicts may arise between the public duty of such a citizen and his or her private interest. The general assembly hereby declares that the prescription of some standards of conduct common to those citizens involved with government is beneficial to all residents of the state. The provisions of this part 1 recognize that some actions are conflicts per se between public duty and private interest while other actions may or may not pose such conflicts depending upon the surrounding circumstances.” **(§ 24-18-101)**

Standards of Conduct: Conflicts (1)

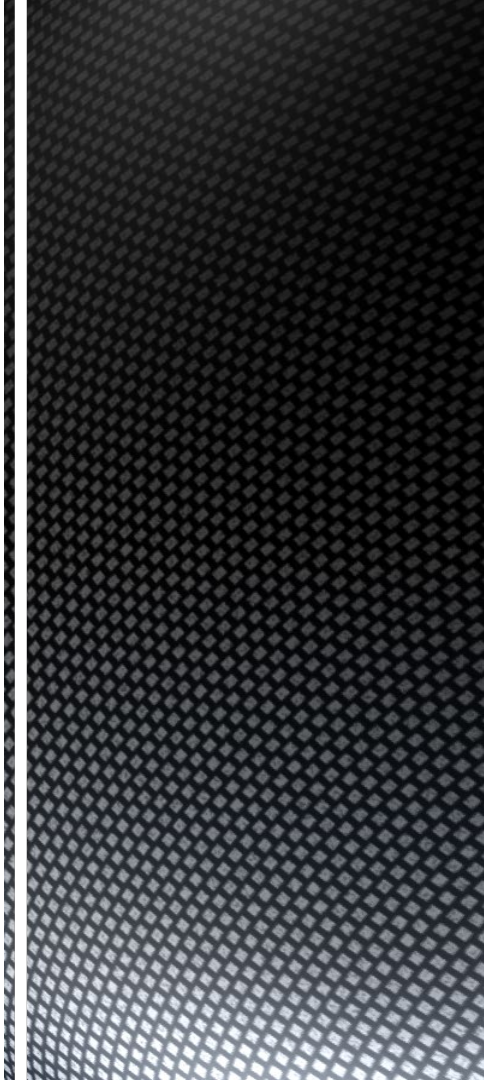
- "A member of a board shall not perform **an official act** which may have a direct economic benefit on a business or other undertaking in which the member has a **direct or substantial financial interest**." **(§ 24-18-108.5(2))**
  - Prohibits participation in discussions and voting on recommendations.
  - "**Official act**" means "any vote, decision, recommendation, approval, disapproval, or other action, including inaction which involves the use of discretionary duty. **(§ 24-18-102(7))**
  - "**Financial interest**" includes ownership interest in a business; creditor interest in an insolvent business; employment or prospective employment (if negotiating); ownership interest in real or personal property; a loan or any other debtor interest; or a directorship or officership in a business. **(§ 24-18-102(4))**

Standards of Conduct: Conflicts (2)

- "**Actual conflict of interest**" means an official act of a Committee member that may have a direct economic benefit on a business or other undertaking in which the Committee member has a direct or substantial financial interest.
- "**Apparent or perceived conflict of interest**" means an interest in the outcome of Committee business or matter under consideration by the Committee presents a circumstance in which the public is likely to perceive reasonably that a Committee member has a personal or professional interest that would make the Committee member unable to participate objectively.
- **Will you economically benefit from the work you are doing on this committee?**

Questions?

Suggestions?



Jessica Lowrey
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(720) 508-6167

Accountability Committee: Bylaws & Voting

The draft bylaws presented today include recommended thresholds and requirements for conducting business and taking formal actions. The proposed structure is based on the charges given to the Committee, the experience of other similar bodies and national best practices.

Quorum

Two-thirds of the 14 appointed, voting members (10) must be present to transact business.

Voting

*Decisions requiring formal action of the Committee, including voting to advance recommendations in the Committee report, require a simple majority of the voting members (8 votes).**

Adoption or changes to bylaws require either a majority vote, or if amendment submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting, ⅔ of quorum.

** Recommendations included in the Committee report will include the vote tally. Any members voting in the minority will be invited to request or submit explanatory language for inclusion.*

Accountability Committee: Operating Norms

The following norms encourage productive and collaborative conversation. All attendees are asked to follow and embody them and give facilitators room to ensure they define our time together.

Good Faith: Act in good faith in all discussions with intent to promote collaboration and productive conversation.

Openness: Be honest and open in sharing your perspectives; be open to other points of view and outcome of discussions.

Focus: Maintain focus on the goals, purpose and meeting objectives; honor agendas.

Listening: Listen to each speaker rather than preparing your response; no interruptions; refrain from use of smart phones and other technologies.

Participation: Participate actively, speak briefly, and agree succinctly. Be mindful and respectful of the presence of multiple backgrounds and avoid the overuse of acronyms or technical language.

Respect: Disagree judiciously and without being disagreeable; do not engage in personal attacks; in all contexts, refrain from behavior that denigrates other participants or is disruptive to the work of the group.

Preparedness & Commitment: Prepare for and attend each session; get up to speed if you missed a meeting.

Facilitation: Let the facilitators facilitate; allow them to enforce the norms and engage them with any concerns.

Questions & Requests: Please direct any questions, comments or requests to the facilitators who will route them to staff, third parties or other members.

Committee Roadmap and Level Setting

- Committee Scope & Charge
- Previous Accountability Committee Work & Progress - presentation from RTD

Accountability Committee: Legislative Charge

SB25-161 established the committee within CEO and tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to (see C.R.S. 24-38.5-124(3)):

Governance-related Topics

- "The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "The representation of local governments and state agencies within the District;"

Paratransit Topics

- "The paratransit services provided within the District's geographic service area."

As used here, "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

- "The District's workforce retention."
- "How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;"
- "How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;"

Accountability Committee: Legislative charge (2)

- **Research support**
  - Research team will be summarizing literature and conducting interviews to help put these topics into a national context and provide helpful information to the committee
  - Will be recommending pre-reading, presenting to the committee at certain meetings, and providing a white paper
- **Reminders:**
  - Given the short time frame, we will need to continually connect issues and refocus back to the statutory topics
  - Directive to the committee to build on the work of the previous 2021 RTD Accountability Committee

Accountability Committee: Previous Work

Previous Work of RTD Accountability Committee + Changes or developments since that time.

John McKay
Chief of Staff, Executive Office
Regional Transportation District

D
Littleton • Mineral
E
RidgeGate
H
Florida
10th•Osage Station

Next Steps

Accountability Committee: Next Steps

Public Input Overview

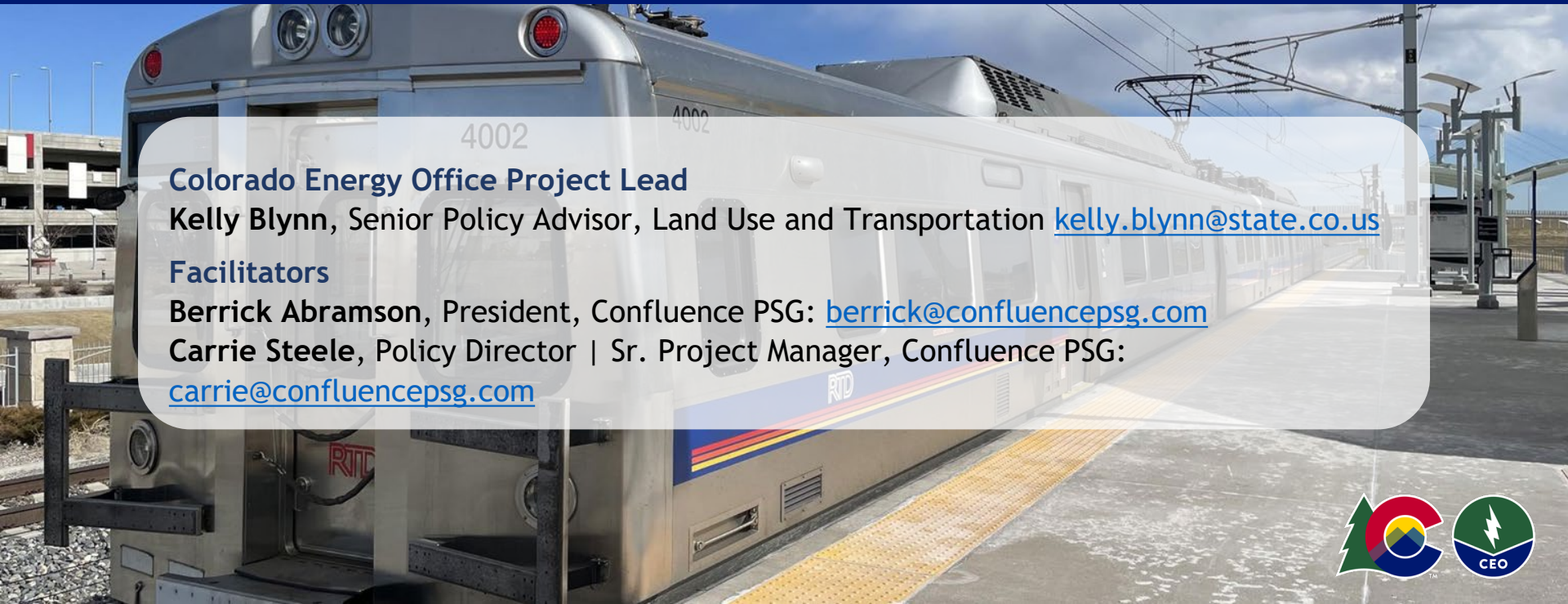
- Written comment form available on CEO webpage
- Will revisit in future meetings when/how to take verbal public comments

Preview of Meeting #2

- September 10th, 11am-1:30pm
- Initial learning session on governance-related topics
- Homework: Pre-readings on governance-related topics (will be shared in a follow-up e-mail)

Meeting 3: September 22nd. Extended, in-person meeting. Details to follow.

Thank you!



Colorado Energy Office Project Lead

Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators

Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com

Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

Meeting Minutes

RTD Accountability Committee

AUGUST 26, 2025, 11:00 am - 1:00 pm MT

Committee Members in Attendance

- Voting Members: Alexis Senger, Andrew Iltis, Harold Dominguez, Jackie Millet, Jaime Lewis, James Flattum, Kiplund Kolkmeier, Lance Longenbohn, Maria Garcia Berry, Matthew Groves, Miller Hudson, Renée Chacon, Tobin Snook
- Non-Voting Members: Julian Bouquet
- Not present: Matt Larsen (excused)

CEO Staff Members

- Will Toor, Executive Director of the Colorado Energy Office (opening remarks)
- Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation, Colorado Energy Office

Consulting and Facilitation Teams

- Facilitators: Berrick Abramson and Carrie Steele, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
- Research: David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomimish, LLC

Meeting Goals

- Introduce committee members to facilitator, subject matter expert(s), and each other;
- Establish key committee governance decisions, group norms and agreements, elect a chair, etc.;
- Review and clarify the purpose of the committee, including what is in and out of scope;

- Begin providing background on the work of the previous RTD committee, as it relates to this committee's priority topic areas.

Committee Member Introductions & Appointed Roles

Members introduced themselves and shared what it would look like for the committee to be successful from their perspective.

- Julien Bouquet (non-voting member): current Chair of RTD Board
- Andrew Iltis: Appointed by Senate Majority Leader representing economic development
- Miller Hudson, Appointed by Senate President representing workforce development
- Tobin Snook: Appointed by Senate resident representing young persons who use RTD
- Renée M. Chacon: Appointed by Senate President representing transportation equity
- James Flattum: Appointed by Governor Polis representing environmental organization
- Matt Larsen: Appointed by Governor Polis; current RTD Board Member
- Maria Garcia Berry: Appointed by GOvernor Polis, firmer RTD Board Member
- Jackie Millet: Appointed by Governor Polis representing multimodal transportation
- Alexis Senger: Appointed by Governor Polis representing financial planning and management
- Harold Domingues: Appointed by Governor Polis representing local government
- Lance Longenbohn: Appointed by Speaker of the House and union representative
- Kiplung (Kip) Kolkmeier: Appointed by Speaker of the House representing urban planning
- Jaime Lewis: Appointed by Speaker of the House representing riders with disabilities
- Matthew Gorves: Appointed by Minority Leader of the House representing safety for the public and workers

Presentations & Group Discussions

- Attorney General Jessica Lowrey: Presentation on Committee Rules and Open Meeting Laws: Members discussed and had minimal clarifying questions.
- Introductions and Discussion:
    - Draft Bylaws: Members discussed handling of media inquiries, speaking as a committee vs. as individuals, the powers and duties of the

committee, and quorum and voting thresholds. Member question about scope of inquiry and examination of operational matters.
    - Norms and Agreements: Berrick provided an overview - no member comments or questions were asked.
    - Roadmap for Committee Work and Level Setting: Kelly provided an overview - no member comments or questions were asked.
    - Electing a Chair and Vice Chair: members invited to nominate colleagues; the vote for chair and vice chair will take place at September 10 meeting.
- Debra Johnson, Executive Director, RTD: Offered background information and gave welcoming remarks
- John McKay, Executive Business Partner, RTD: Presented background on RTD and on the previous Accountability Committee Work & Progress on recommendations

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- September 10, remote via Zoom 11:00am - 1:30pm
- September 22, in-person (Colorado Energy Office) 1:00pm - 4:00pm
- October 8, remote via Zoom 11:00am - 2:00pm
- October 22, remote via Zoom, 11:00am - 1:30pm
- November 5, remote via Zoom, 11:00am - 1:30pm
- November 19, in-person (Colorado Energy Office), 11:00am-5:00pm
- December 3, remote via Zoom, 11:00am - 1:30pm
- TBD if needed: December 17, 11:00am-1:30pm

For questions about this meeting or upcoming meetings, please contact:

Confluence Policy & Strategy Group, Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Senior Project Manager: carrie@confluencepsg.com

Colorado Energy Office
Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation:
kelly.blynn@state.co.us

RTD Accountability Committee

September 10, 2025, 11am-1:30pm - Meeting via Zoom

Join Zoom Meeting:
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86791620299?pwd=r304smxnt6n2tYzKxSPNUNdzePjyXl.1&from=addon

Meeting goals:

- Explore and align on definition of "governance" and scope of committee's charge (level-set on difference between governance vs. operations);
- Begin Committee discussion of guiding principles, values and goals for transit governance structures.

Pre-Reading

All pre-read documents are in September 10 pre-read folder.

- Draft August 26 Meeting Minutes
- Updated Committee Bylaws
- Pre-Reading Memo. **Read first**
- RTD Governance Evaluation
- Coordination and Governance in Transit: 6 Case Studies
- Getting to the Route of It: the Role of Governance in Regional Transit
- Board Members: Short Biographies of Transport for London's (TfL's) Board

Agenda

Timing	Content
11:00am – 11:20am	**Welcome, Meeting Overview** **Approval of August 26 minutes** **Housekeeping items**
11:20am – 11:30am	**Review & Adoption of Bylaws**
11:30am - 11:45am	**Committee Chair & Vice Chair Election** • Nominee Remarks (2min each) • Vote on Chair, Vote on Vice-Chair
11:45am – 1:00pm	**Governance Discussion** • Presentation on Governance & Accountability Structures and Values - David Bragdon, Hudson Skykomish *5min break* • Group Q&A + Discussion

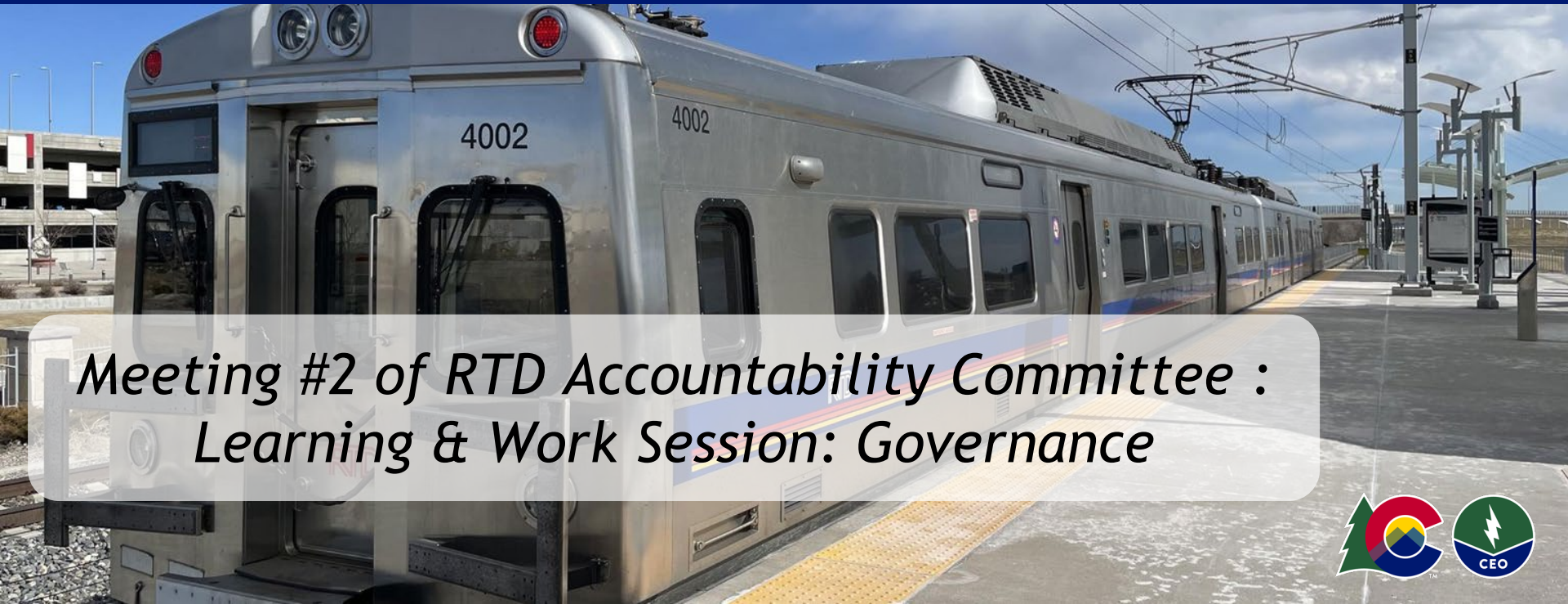
1:00pm – 1:15pm	**Group Discussion: Public Input Strategy**
1:15pm - 1:25pm	**Public Comment**
1:25pm - 1:30pm	**Next Steps & Closing**

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead
Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation: kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

RTD Accountability Committee

September 10, 2025



Meeting #2 of RTD Accountability Committee :
Learning & Work Session: Governance

Accountability Committee: Operating Norms

The following norms encourage productive and collaborative conversation. All attendees are asked to follow and embody them and give facilitators room to ensure they define our time together.

Good Faith: Act in good faith in all discussions with intent to promote collaboration and productive conversation.

Openness: Be honest and open in sharing your perspectives; be open to other points of view and outcome of discussions.

Focus: Maintain focus on the goals, purpose and meeting objectives; honor agendas.

Listening: Listen to each speaker rather than preparing your response; no interruptions; refrain from use of smart phones and other technologies.

Participation: Participate actively, speak briefly, and agree succinctly. Be mindful and respectful of the presence of multiple backgrounds and avoid the overuse of acronyms or technical language.

Respect: Disagree judiciously and without being disagreeable; do not engage in personal attacks; in all contexts, refrain from behavior that denigrates other participants or is disruptive to the work of the group.

Preparedness & Commitment: Prepare for and attend each session; get up to speed if you missed a meeting.

Facilitation: Let the facilitators facilitate; allow them to enforce the norms and engage them with any concerns.

Questions & Requests: Please direct any questions, comments or requests to the facilitators who will route them to staff, third parties or other members.

Today's Meeting: Agenda

Meeting Agenda

Timing	Content
11:00am – 11:20am	**Welcome, Meeting Overview** **Housekeeping items, Minutes Approval**
11:20am – 11:30am	**Review & Adoption of Bylaws**
11:30am - 11:45am	**Committee Chair & Vice Chair Election**
11:45am – 1:00pm	**Governance Discussion**
1:00pm – 1:15pm	**Group Discussion: Public Input Strategy**
1:15pm - 1:25pm	**Public Comment**
1:25pm - 1:30pm	**Next Steps & Closing**

Today's Meeting: Goals

Meeting Goals

- *Explore and align on definition of "governance" and scope of committee's charge (level-set on difference between governance vs. operations);*
- *Begin Committee discussion of guiding principles, values and goals for transit governance structures.*

Housekeeping

- Member Intro
- Meeting Schedule
- OML Reminder
- Executive Leadership Question
- Member COI
- Additional Member Inquiries

Accountability Committee: Bylaws & Voting

- *The revised bylaws today include the clarification discussed during our kick-off meeting regarding speaking to the press.*
- *Adoption of the bylaws requires a majority vote by the membership.*

Housekeeping

continued

- Approval of Minutes

Committee Chair & Vice Chair

- Remarks By Nominees
- Vote for Chair
- Vote for Vice Chair

Presentation & Discussion on Governance

Accountability Committee: Public Input

- ***SB25-161 did not explicitly require or provide guidance on public input.***
- ***Members, the administrator and facilitators have all suggested allowing some form of public input.***

Public input options for consideration:

- Public comment block during Committee meetings *(10-15 min, 2min per person)*
- Public comment online form *(already in place on CEO Committee website)*
- Dedicated public listening session *(virtual with topics TBD)*
- Online surveys *(scope and topics TBD)*
- *Other?*

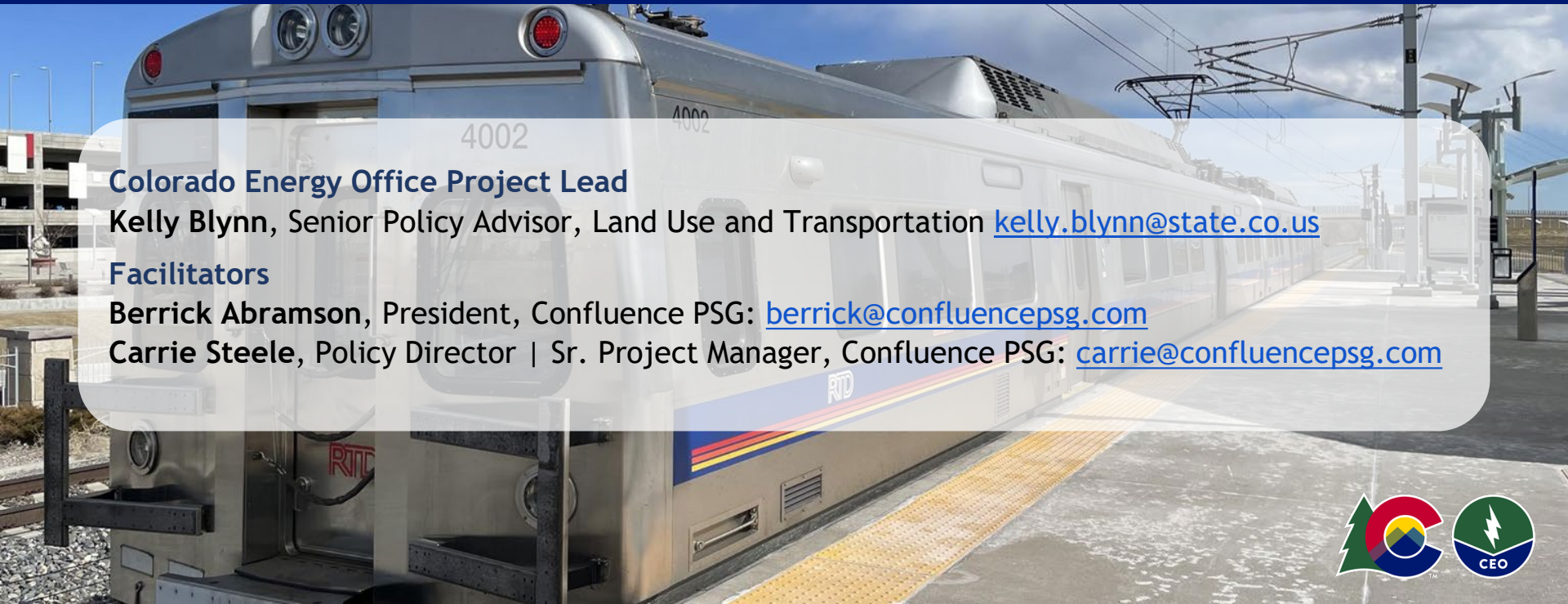
Accountability Committee: Next Steps

Preview of Meeting #3

- In-Person at CEO Office - 1600 Broadway in Denver, 5th floor conference room
- September 22, 1:00 – 4:00pm
- Deep Dive Workshop on Governance, Initial learning session on paratransit

Meeting #4: October 8. Virtual. Learning session - details to follow.

Thank you!



Colorado Energy Office Project Lead
Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

Meeting Minutes

RTD Accountability Committee

September 10, 2025, 11:00 am - 1:30 pm MT

Committee Members in Attendance

- Voting Members: Alexis Senger, Andrew Iltis, Harold Dominguez, Jackie Millet, Jaime Lewis, James Flattum, Kiplund Kolkmeier, Lance Longenbohn, Maria Garcia Berry, Miller Hudson, Tobin Snook
- Non-Voting Members: Julien Bouquet
- Not present: Matthew Groves (excused); Renée Chacon (excused)

CEO Staff Members

- Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation, Colorado Energy Office

Consulting and Facilitation Teams

- Facilitators: Berrick Abramson and Carrie Steele, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
- Research: David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomimish, LLC

Meeting Goals

- Review and Adoption of Bylaws
- Review and Approval of August 26 meeting minutes
- Election of chair and vice chair
- Explore and align on definition of “governance” and scope of committee’s charge (level-set on difference between governance vs. operations);
- Begin Committee discussion of guiding principles, values and goals for transit governance structures.

Adoption of Bylaws and Meeting Minutes

Adoption of Bylaws: Motion to Approve, Jaime Lewis; Second, Maria Garcia Berry: Bylaws approved and adopted unanimously by all members present.
Approval of August 26 Meeting Minutes: Motion to Approve, Maria Garcia Berry; Second, Jaime Lewis; Minutes approved by all members present.

Committee Chair and Vice Chair Election

Nominations and Volunteers included: Maria Garcia Berry & Jaime Lewis

- Maria Garcia elected chair by a vote of 10 of 12 voting members present
- Jamie Lewis elected Vice Chair by 12 of 12 voting members present

Presentation & Group Discussion

Presentation by David Bragdon, Hudson Skykomish
Principles and definitions" "accountability, "governance" (and other multi-syllabic words);

Discussion about the intent, values or core principles that members consider characteristics of good governance - beyond "accountability".

Members discussed ideas, including:

Core Principles of Good Governance
a. Accountability to multiple constituencies

- Governance should be accountable to **riders, taxpayers, potential riders, and future riders and taxpayers.**
- Accountability should extend beyond short-term results to **long-term system sustainability**, including maintenance, financial stability, and strategic planning.

b. Representation and inclusivity

- Boards should reflect diverse perspectives, including riders, advocacy groups, local businesses, and communities across geographies.
- Competitive elections and public engagement to help ensure board members represent community interests rather than political or parochial agendas.

c. Expertise and capacity

- Effective governance requires members with knowledge, experience, or transferable expertise to oversee complex organizations and hold the CEO accountable. Over-reliance on the CEO or staff for information can weaken board independence and effectiveness.

d. Performance and outcomes focus

- Whether governance should prioritize effective service delivery, with ridership and system reliability as primary measures of success. Efficiency is secondary to effectiveness; good governance ensures the agency meets its core mission and intended outcomes, including transit accessibility, environmental goals, and economic development.

e. Oversight and independence

- Whether boards should actively set agendas, monitor operations, and review financial and strategic performance.
- Have structural safeguards to prevent executives from dominating decision-making or pushing the board's priorities.

f. Long-term perspective and systems thinking

- Good governance requires planning for the future needs of the system, not just immediate demands.
- Applying systems theory can help align governance with broader community goals and long-term sustainability.

g. Engagement and transparency

- Boards should engage stakeholders regularly—community members, elected officials, advocacy groups—to understand and respond to needs.
- Governance includes being a communication bridge between the organization and the public to ensure transparency and responsiveness.

h. Public interest

- Beyond specific constituencies, governance should be accountable to the overall public interest, advancing community well-being, environmental sustainability, equitable access, and quality of life.

i. Clear roles, responsibilities, and coordination

- Governance should clarify how **local initiatives, intergovernmental projects, and new services** are integrated, funded, and operated.
- Formal processes or agreements help prevent conflicts and ensure equitable service delivery across the district.

Public Comment

Time was reserved at the end of the meeting for public comment, of which there was one:

- Christopher Nicholson, Current RTD Board Member

Action Items

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- October 8, remote via Zoom 11:00am - 2:00pm
- October 22, remote via Zoom, 11:00am - 1:30pm
- November 5, remote via Zoom, 11:00am - 1:30pm
- November 19, in-person (Colorado Energy Office), 11:00am-5:00pm
- December 3, remote via Zoom, 11:00am - 1:30pm
- TBD if needed: December 17, 11:00am-1:30pm

For questions about this meeting or upcoming meetings, please contact:

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Colorado Energy Office
Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation:
kelly.blynn@state.co.us

RTD Accountability Committee - Meeting #3

September 22, 2025, 1pm - 5pm - In Person

Colorado Energy Office, 1600 Broadway, 5th Floor Conference Room

(Take elevators on the right, no badge needed to get to the 5th floor)

Zoom Link (only if needed - we encourage everyone to be there in person):
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/85800106840?pwd=q8W52gbrhmmVAh4XfESSvSRKmoaI0p.1&from=addon

Meeting goals:

- Align on purpose & values to inform governance recommendations;
- Identify range of governance typologies, and related opportunities & risks;
- Identify & discuss non-structural elements of governance;
- Conduct a (high-level) SWOT analysis of governance options.
- Begin conversation about paratransit in the region

Pre-Reading

All pre-read documents are linked from the September 22 pre-read memo.

Agenda

Timing	Content
1:00 - 1:10	**Welcome, Overview, Housekeeping**
1:10 - 1:30	**Governance Learning Session:** Reflections, Take-aways *Lightning Round*
1:30 - 2:15	**Governance**: Purpose **Governance:** Values & Priorities
2:15 - 2:25	**Break**
2:25- 4:15	**Governance** • **Structure:** Presentation and discussion of typologies • **Governance:** Authorities & Non-Structural Issues • **Governance:** Aligning Purpose, Values & Structure • **Governance** Structure & Other Solution SWOT
4:15 - 4:40	**Paratransit:** Introductory presentation from Nelson/Nygaard
4:40 - 4:50	**Public Comment**
4:50 - 5:00	**Closing & Next Steps**

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead

Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation: kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators

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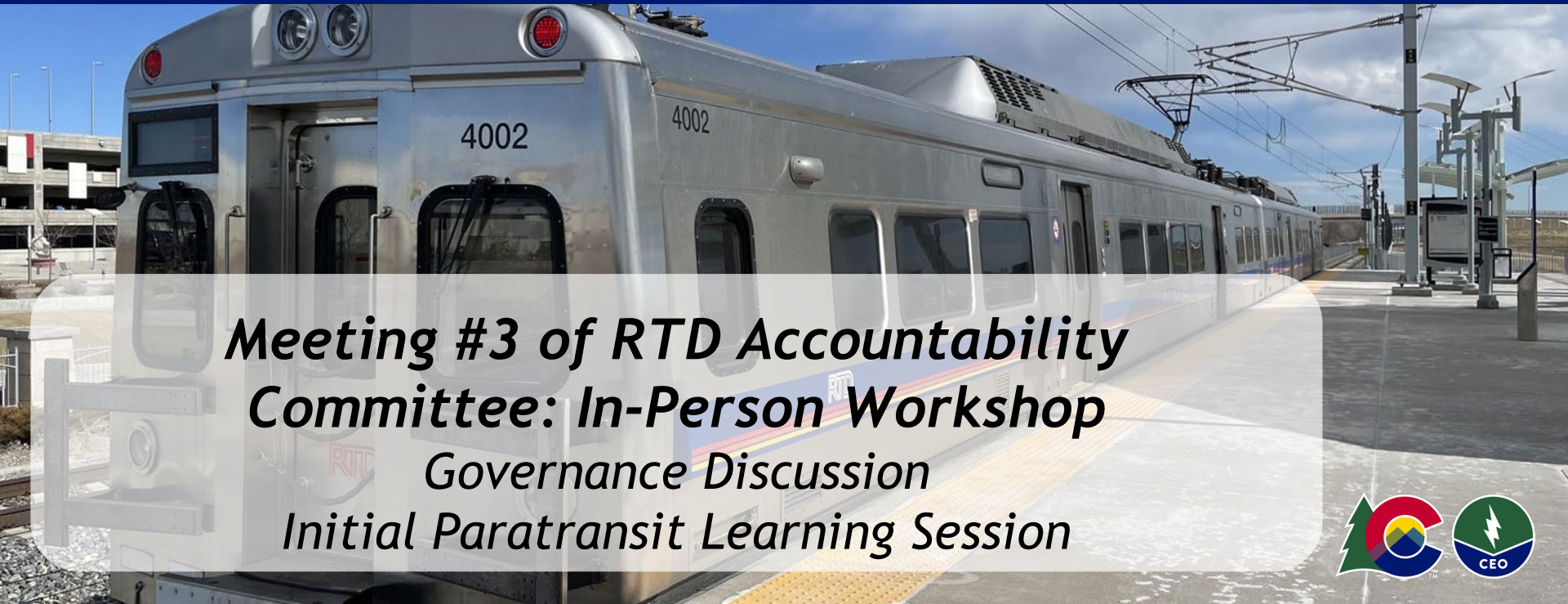
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

RTD Accountability Committee

September 22, 2025



Meeting #3 of RTD Accountability Committee: In-Person Workshop

Governance Discussion

Initial Paratransit Learning Session

Accountability Committee: Operating Norms

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Today's Meeting: Agenda

Timing	Content
1:00 - 1:10	**Welcome, Overview, Housekeeping**
1:10 - 1:30	**Governance Learning Session:** Reflections, Take-aways *Lightning Round*
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2:15 - 2:25	**Break**
2:25- 4:15	**Governance** ● **Structure:** Presentation and discussion of typologies ● **Governance:** Authorities & Non-Structural Issues ● **Governance:** Aligning Purpose, Values & Structure ● **Governance** Structure & Other Solution SWOT
4:15 - 4:40	**Paratransit:** Introductory presentation from Nelson/Nygaard
4:40 - 4:50	**Public Comment**
4:50 - 5:00	**Closing & Next Steps**

Today's Meeting: Goals

Meeting Goals

- *Align on **purpose** & **values** to inform governance recommendations;*
- *Identify **governance structures**, opportunities & risks;*
- *Identify & discuss **non-structural elements of governance**;*
- *Conduct a (high-level) S**WOT analysis** of governance options;*
- *Begin conversation about **paratransit** in the region.*

Housekeeping

- Approval of Sept 10 Minutes
- Reminder of legislative charges
- Arc & Continuum of Conversations
- Public Input Strategy
- Member Inquiries & Requests

Accountability Committee: Legislative Charge

SB25-161 established the committee within CEO and tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to (see C.R.S. 24-38.5-124(3)):

Governance-related Topics

- "The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "The representation of local governments and state agencies within the District;"

Paratransit Topics

- "The paratransit services provided within the District's geographic service area."

As used here, "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

- "The District's workforce retention."
- "How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;"
- "How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;"

Planned Arc of Conversations / Work Plan

August

- Meeting #1 - Kick-off meeting - Tuesday August 26

September

- Meeting #2 - Learning session on governance-related topics - Wednesday Sept 10
- Meeting #3 - Discussion session on governance-related topics; Learning session on paratransit - Monday Sept 22
  - *Presentation from Nelson/Nygaard*

October

- Meeting #4 - Learning session on governance-related topics; Discussion session on paratransit - Wednesday October 8
  - *Panel with national agency board members*
  - *Interview findings summary*
- Meeting #5 - Learning session on workforce and labor topics - Wednesday October 22
  - *Presentation from Eno Center*
- Draft report outline

November

- Meeting #6 - Discussion session on workforce and labor topics - Wednesday November 5
- Meeting #7 - Preliminary discussion on committee recommendations - Wednesday November 19 (longer meeting)

December

- Meeting #8 - Follow-up discussion on committee recommendations - Wednesday, December 3
- Draft report
- (Tentative - if needed) Meeting #9 - Discussion session on draft report - Wednesday, December 17

January

- Meeting # 10 - Discussion session on finalizing and approving report - January 8
- Final report
- January 30th - Report due to legislature

Note: *We will be adjusting / adding to agendas based on how conversations develop over time*

Elements of Public Input

Planned avenues for public input:

- *You! SB25-161 identified a diverse set of interests and backgrounds to comprise the committee (and didn't specify other public input)*
- *Public written comments available anytime (see first comment in member folder)*
- *Time for public comment at each meeting*
- *Confidential interviews with David Bragdon (and subcontractors), with synthesized findings to be shared with the committee*
  - DRCOG
  - Metro Mayors
  - Members of previous Accountability Committee
  - RTD staff
  - Environmental, transit, and disability advocates
  - Local elected officials
  - Local transportation and planning staff
  - State agency staff (CDOT)
  - Business leaders
  - Transit leaders in Salt Lake City, Twin Cities, SF Bay area

Accountability Committee: Sept 10 Reflections

In 60 seconds or less: What was one "a-ha" moment or something you learned during our September 10 presentation and discussion of governance?

Governance

Getting to Purpose

What problem are we trying to solve for?

How is governance connected to that?

Governance

Values & Priorities

What do you most value or believe is important in governance?

Governance: Purpose

What problem are we trying to solve for? How is governance connected to that?

Problem	Connection to Governance
e.g. Lack of coherent, cohesive strategy *e.g. Low Ridership*	*Collaborating & setting strategic direction* *???*

Governance: Value

What do you most value or believe is important in governance?

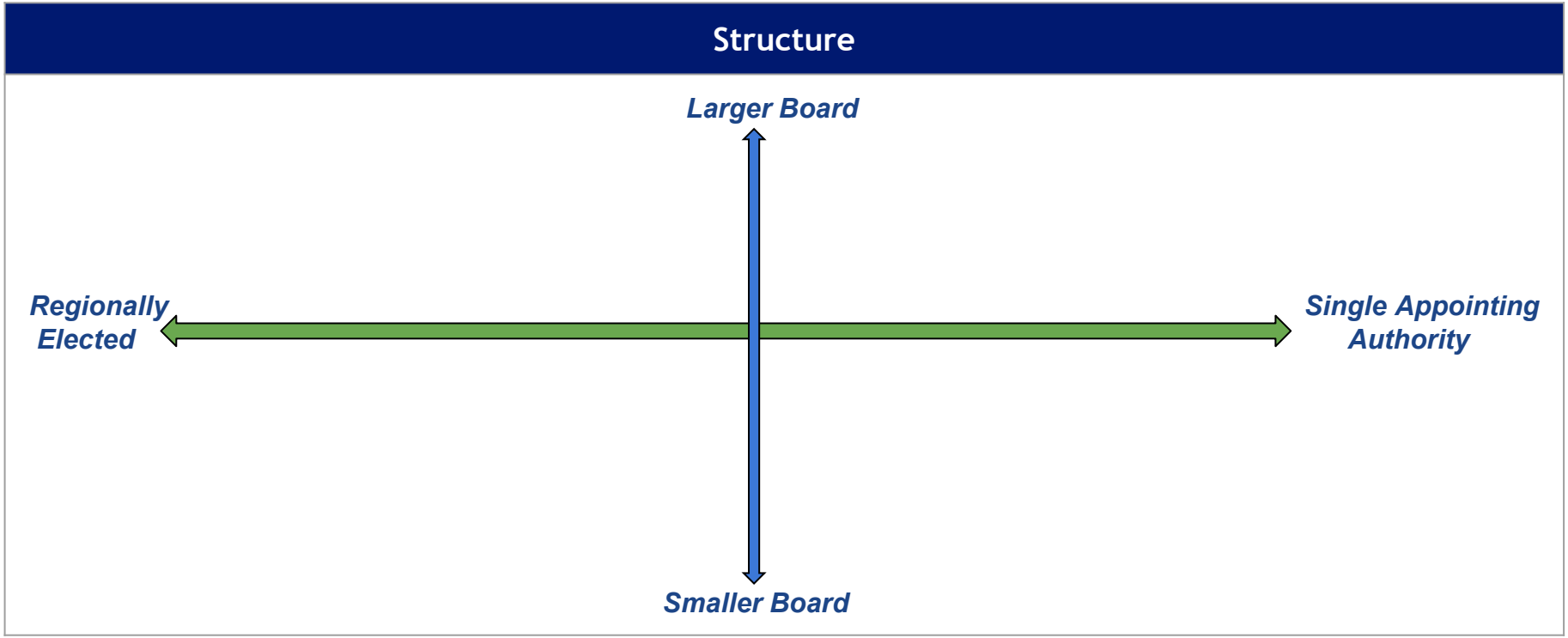
Value	Outcome or Effect
e.g. Transparency *e.g. Representation*	*Public & government awareness, information* *Public & constituencies have voice*

Presentation

David Bragdon:
Governance Structures & Typologies

Governance: Structure

What are the range of structural options?



Governance: Sub-Structures

What are the structural elements & considerations within or under the Board?

Element	Factors to Consider
e.g. Standing Committees	*Role, scope, reporting, requirements or deliverables*

Governance: Non-Structural Elements

What other elements of Governance are significant for our work?

Element	Connection to Accountability Committee
e.g. Representation of local government, state agencies *e.g. Fiscal power (revenue, taxation)*	*Elements of governance* *Authority or agency to take certain actions*

Governance

Aligning Purpose & Values with Structure

As we look at all structures, where are there alignments or misalignments with our intended outcome, purpose and values?

Governance

Strengths
Weaknesses
Opportunities
Threats

No solution is perfect. Some present different risks or opportunities.

Given the state of RTD + looking at our structural options and our alignment considerations, discuss SWOTs

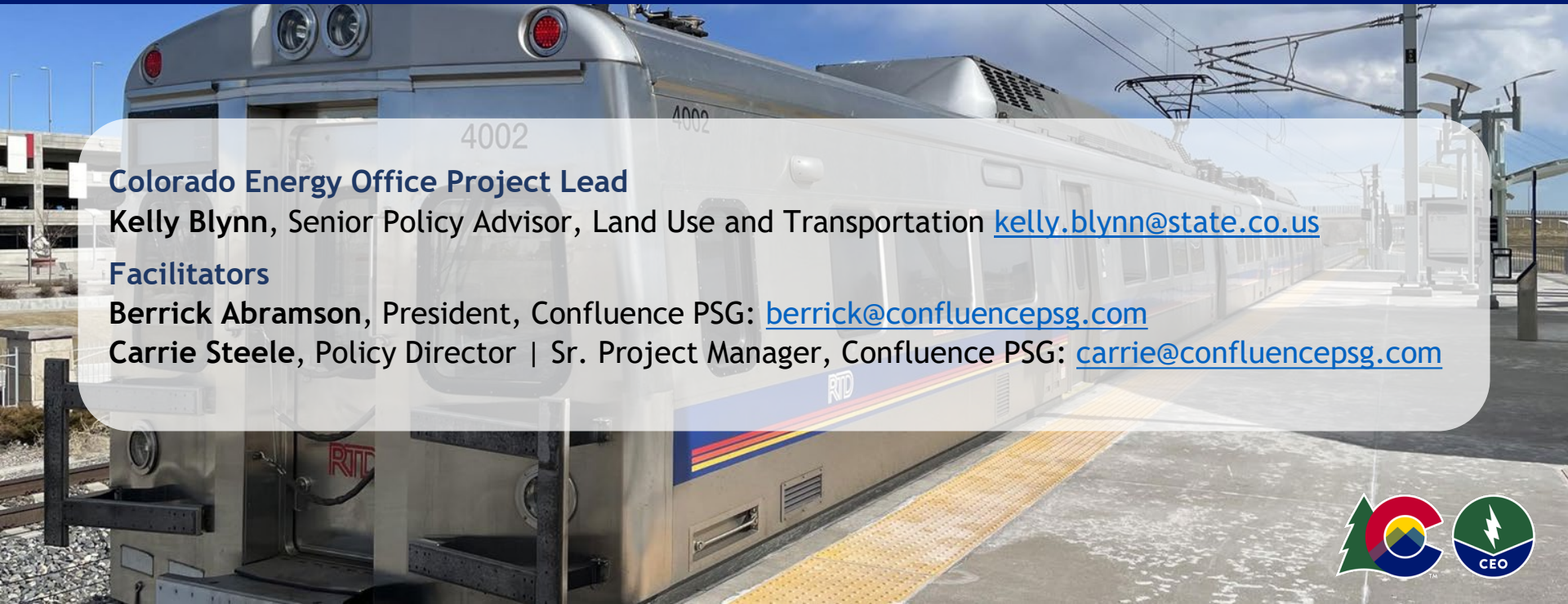
Accountability Committee: Next Steps

Preview of Meeting #4

- Virtual
- October 8, 11:00am – 2:00pm
  - Governance
    - Meeting 3 Reflections, moving toward recommendation framework;
    - Transit board member panel discussion
    - Presentation on other governance topics
  - Paratransit discussion *tentative*

Meeting #5: October 22. Virtual. Workforce: learning session.

Thank you!



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Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

Meeting Minutes

September 22, 2025, 1:00pm - 5:00 pm MT

Attendance

Committee Members

- **Voting Members:** Alexis Senger, Andrew Iltis, Harold Dominguez, Jackie Millet, Jaime Lewis, James Flattum, Kiplund Kolkmeier, Lance Longenbohn, Maria Garcia Berry, Matthew Groves, Miller Hudson, Renée Chacon, Tobin Snook, Matt Larsen
- **Non-Voting Members:** Julien Bouquet

CEO Staff Members

- Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation, Colorado Energy Office

Consulting and Facilitation Teams

- **Facilitators:** Berrick Abramson and Carrie Steele, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
- **Research and Technical Support:** David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomish, LLC; Tim Payne and Bethany Goad, Nelson Nygaard

RTD Directors and Staff

- John McKay, RTD Chief of Staff
- Michael Davies, Government Relations Officer
- Jack Kroll, Executive Manager, Board Office
- RTD Directors: Chris Nicholson, Michael Guzman, Kathleen Chandler, Karen Benker

Meeting Goals

- Align on purpose & values to inform governance recommendations;

- Identify range of governance typologies, and related opportunities & risks;
- Identify & discuss non-structural elements of governance;
- Conduct a (high-level) SWOT analysis of governance options.
- Begin conversation about paratransit in the region

Presentations & Group Discussions

- David Bragdon, Hudson Skykomish: Governance Learning Session
- Tim Payne and Bethany Goad, Nelson Nygaard: Introductory presentation on paratransit

Governance Discussion

Governance issues were the primary focus of the meeting. Members reflected on prior conversations, readings, and external examples to identify core governance challenges and opportunities.

Challenges facing RTD (and connections to governance)

- Low ridership recovering following COVID
- Lack of public trust and confidence
- Challenges with public perception and communicating successes
- Need for big picture long-term vision and planning
- Board terms and regular turnover challenges long-term visioning
- Need for improved financial expertise on the board (and other areas of expertise / experience)
- Challenges with board members (particularly the chair) being part time
- Challenges working with, making decisions, finding consensus with larger board

Values and outcomes - what do we value as core elements of governance?

- Effectiveness: ability to achieve agency and regional goals
- Representation
- Diversity and relevance of expertise and experience
- Ability to adapt over time
- Ability to set vision and goals/plans/metrics and accountability for meeting those goals.

Governance typologies

David Bragdon presented on different governance typologies and some of their strengths and weaknesses, followed by a group discussion (slides available in the meeting folder).

Overall, key themes included:

a. Accountability: Clarifying who is ultimately responsible for system performance and outcomes, and whether the current governance structure enables effective oversight and delivery of effective services for RTD customers. Challenges with having a single appointing entity vs. more diffuse responsibility.
b. Ridership and Outcomes: Low ridership was identified as a symptom of larger governance and structural issues. Members debated how governance and system level issues can influence ridership through long-term vision, accountability, and strategic planning.
c. Oversight and Long-Term Planning: Members highlighted the board's responsibility to oversee effectiveness, require comprehensive planning, and ensure public promises are fulfilled to maintain trust.
d. Representation vs. Expertise: The committee discussed balancing representation of diverse constituencies with the need for technical expertise on the board.
e. Financial Literacy and Stability: Members discussed RTD's financial health, allocation of resources, and the need for governance structures that foster fiscal responsibility, management and creativity.
f. Public Trust and Communication: Several members stressed that the board should be ambassadors for RTD, improving public perception through transparency and effective communication of successes and challenges.
g. Continuity and Political Risk: Frequent turnover of elected board members was noted as a barrier to long-term vision and stability; governance should mitigate risks associated with political shifts.
h. Partnerships: The importance of coordination with local governments, DRCOG, CDOT, and other stakeholders was highlighted as a governance responsibility to ensure integration and effective service planning.
i. Challenges of a larger board: Difficulty of finding consensus and checking in with 15 members, particularly for the role of the chair.

Paratransit Discussion (part 1)

Nelson Nygaard provided an introductory presentation on paratransit generally, FTA requirements, and RTD's current paratransit services, and further discussion will continue at an upcoming meeting. It was acknowledged that RTD's board is undertaking a major decision on paratransit services following many months of study on September 30th, which the committee will review at a future meeting. Members underscored paratransit as essential for equity, accessibility, and fulfilling RTD's mission.

Discussion points included:

a. Equity and Transit Dependence: Governance must prioritize service for riders with disabilities and other vulnerable populations to ensure equitable access.

b. System Health: A robust paratransit program supports the overall system, enhancing accessibility and reinforcing RTD's commitment to inclusivity.

c. Local Coordination: Members emphasized coordination with municipalities and counties to address infrastructure gaps (sidewalks, shelters, first/last-mile connections) and leverage microtransit models.

d. Governance Role: The board should ensure that paratransit is embedded in policy frameworks, with reliable funding and accountability measures.

Public Comment

Time was reserved for public comment of which there were two. Members of the public are invited to attend meetings and time will be reserved at the end of each meeting to provide public comment. Written public comments were also encouraged and can be submitted by using the form on the CEO website.

Public Comment was provided by:

- RTD Director, Chris Nicholson
- RTD Director, Michael Guzman

Next Steps

- Continue governance discussion with values, structural typologies, and potential reforms
- Continue discussion on paratransit issues at October meetings
- Begin discussion on labor and workforce issues in October
- Framework of recommendations to be discussed on November 19
- Draft of report will be available December 30
- Final report with recommendations due January 30, 2026
- Staff working to address member questions/information requests where information is available

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- October 8, remote via Zoom, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- October 22, remote via Zoom, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- November 5, remote via Zoom, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- November 12, remote via Zoom, 11:00 - 2:00pm
- November 19, in-person (Colorado Energy Office), 11:00 am – 5:00 pm
- December 3, remote via Zoom, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- TBD if needed: December 17, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- Potential additional December meeting (date and time tbd depending on any outstanding work)

- Thursday, January 8, 11am-1:30pm (virtual discussion session to finalize and approve report)

RTD Accountability Committee

October 8, 2025, 11am - 2pm via Zoom

Zoom: https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81421850320?pwd=t4011ILD38B7TOrnPbU1xi5GlvBEDd.1

Meeting goals:

- Level-set on arc of activities leading to November 19 in-person work session;
- Align on scope and time/capacity for information or research requests;
- Generate Governance Ideas for Consideration;
- Learn & discuss Paratransit to position for Ideas discussion October 22.

Pre-Reading

- Survey on problem statement, values
- Pre-reading:
  - Draft meeting minutes for approval, 9/22 (revised version)
  - Background documents and FAQs
  - Resources from board meeting re: paratransit discussion - agenda packet page 5-23
  - Letter from RTD Board Chair Bouquet re: AoD changes
  - Letter from CCDC and NFB re: AoD changes
  - People with disabilities will now pay more for RTD on-demand rides (Denverite)
  - Former transit agency board member speaker bios
  - Confidential interviews about other transit boards
- RTD-related news to share as an FYI:
  - New RTD Finishing FasTracks report

Agenda

Timing	Content
11:00 - 11:05am	**Welcome, Meeting Overview**
11:05 - 11:10am	**Meeting Planning & Strategy**
11:10 - 11:35am	**Governance Panel - Experience from Other Systems**
11:35 - 12:50pm	**Governance Ideas for Consideration**
12:50 - 1:00pm	*Break*
1:00 - 1:50pm	**Paratransit Discussion**
1:50 - 1:59pm	Public Comment

Timing	Content
1:59 - 2:00pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead
Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation: kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

RTD Accountability Committee

October 8, 2025

Meeting #4 of RTD Accountability Committee:

Governance Ideas for Consideration

Paratransit Updates & Discussion Session

Accountability Committee: Operating Norms

The following norms encourage productive and collaborative conversation. All attendees are asked to follow and embody them and give facilitators room to ensure they define our time together.

Good Faith: Act in good faith in all discussions with intent to promote collaboration and productive conversation.

Openness: Be honest and open in sharing your perspectives; be open to other points of view and outcome of discussions.

Focus: Maintain focus on the goals, purpose and meeting objectives; honor agendas.

Listening: Listen to each speaker rather than preparing your response; no interruptions; refrain from use of smart phones and other technologies.

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Preparedness & Commitment: Prepare for and attend each session; get up to speed if you missed a meeting.

Facilitation: Let the facilitators facilitate; allow them to enforce the norms and engage them with any concerns.

Questions & Requests: Please direct any questions, comments or requests to the facilitators who will route them to staff, third parties or other members.

Today's Meeting: Agenda

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Today's Meeting: Goals

Meeting Goals

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- *Align on scope and time/capacity for information or research requests;*
- *Generate Governance Ideas for Consideration;*
- *Learn & discuss Paratransit to position for Ideas discussion October 22.*

Housekeeping

- Approval of Sept 22 Minutes
- Overview of FAQs document
- Meeting Planning & Strategy

Accountability Committee: Legislative Charge

SB25-161 established the committee within CEO and tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to (see C.R.S. 24-38.5-124(3)):

Governance-related Topics

- "The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "The representation of local governments and state agencies within the District;"

Paratransit Topics

- "The paratransit services provided within the District's geographic service area."

As used here, "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

- "The District's workforce retention."
- "How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;"
- "How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;"

Planned Arc of Conversations / Work Plan

August

- *Meeting #1 - Kick-off meeting - Tuesday August 26*

September

- *Meeting #2 - Learning session on governance-related topics - Wednesday Sept 10*
- *Meeting #3 - Discussion session on governance-related topics; Learning session on paratransit - Monday Sept 22*

October

Meeting #4 Wednesday October 8

- Governance Ideas for Consideration
  - *Panel with national agency board members*
- Discussion session on paratransit

Meeting #5 Wednesday October 22-

- Paratransit Ideas for Consideration
- Learning session on workforce and labor topics -
  - *Presentation from Eno Center*

November

Meeting #6 Wednesday November 5

- Workforce & Labor Ideas for Consideration
- Learning session on local government collaboration

Meeting #7 (new) Wednesday, November 12

- Discussion: Executive team, compensation, etc.

Meeting #8 Wednesday, November 19 (in-person, extended)

- Recommendation Deliberations & Drafting

December

Meeting #9 Wednesday, December 3

- Follow-up discussion on committee recommendations

Draft report

(Tentative - if needed) Meeting #10 - Discussion session on draft report - Wednesday, December 17

January

- Meeting # 11 January 8 - Discussion session on finalizing and approving report
- Final report
- January 30th - Report due to legislature

***Note:** We will be adjusting / adding to agendas based on how conversations develop over time*

Governance: Experience from Other Systems

Rebecca Saltzman, former board member, Bay Area Rapid Transit

Lynn Peterson, former board member, Sound Transit

Governance

Ideation Session

What ideas is it likely we'll want to develop into recommendations?

What ideas are we uncertain about but could move either way with additional information?

*For both categories, what do we **need** to know before November 19?*

Governance Ideas: Survey Findings / Temperature Check

Which of the following do you believe are the top five system-level problems that have a connection to governance.

Problem	%	Number
Low ridership and factors contributing to it	69.23%	9
Public Trust & Confidence	69.23%	9
Appearance of limited coordinated, strategic vision & plan	61.54%	8
Workforce Satisfaction & Retention	46.15%	6
Insufficient financial resources to meet all needs & limit cost increases to riders;	38.46%	5
Perception of limited accountability to riders, tax-payers & others.	38.46%	5
Leadership	38.46%	5
Meeting needs of all riders and potential riders;	30.77%	4

Other:

Unwillingness to make coverage decisions necessary to increase ridership
Trying to do too many things on their budget. Budget is not insufficient.
Introduction, selection and execution of technology throughout operations
Board elections are not meaningful because lack of candidates and public awareness and attention

Governance Ideas: Survey Findings / Temperature Check

Problem	%	Number
Need for diversity of expertise and experience	69.23%	9
Challenges with fulfilling oversight role due to dynamic between Board and Leadership and ability of a part-time Board to be as fully informed as necessary.	53.85%	7
Challenges working with, making decisions, finding consensus with larger board	53.85%	7
Accountability to constituents vs. system-level thinking (parochialism)	46.15%	6
Lack of appeal & attractiveness to serving including compensation considerations	38.46%	5
Lack of clarity and transparency of decision-making processes	38.46%	5
Challenges with board members (particularly the chair) being part time to carry out duties	38.46%	5
Elected positions lack visibility, competition, voter awareness which leads to weakened legitimacy	30.77%	4
Board terms / turnover presenting challenges to long-term planning	30.77%	4

Governance Ideas: Survey Findings / Temperature Check

Whi

Problem	%	Number
Perception among some that some board members are unclear on their role, statutory authority and associated obligations.	23.08%	3
Lack of sufficient onboarding, training, and adoption of working norms	23.08%	3
Lack of sufficient staffing & support	23.08%	3
Role, expectations and operations of standing committees	15.38%	2
Belief among some that Board is not fully representative of all constituents or interested parties	7.69%	1
Fiscal authority (e.g. taxes, bonds, ballot measures) - relation to TABOR	7.69%	1

Governance Ideas: Survey Findings / Temperature Check

Please rate each of these Values from least important (1) to most important (5)

Values	Rating
Effectiveness	4.69
System Health	4.54
Fiscal stewardship and responsibility	4.54
Long-term Vision, Goals & Clear KPIs	4.46
Expertise	4.15
Communications: Internal & External	4
Accountability - who is accountable, to whom and for what outcomes	3.92
Local & State Government Collaboration	3.85
Ability to adapt over time	3.62
Representation	3

Governance: Structure

Composition

- Significant majority of ideas offered for a mix of elected and appointed
- Small, roughly equal number of ideas in support of all elected or all appointed

Size

- Significant majority for a reduced size with substantial grouping in the 7-11 members
- Second grouping of ideas for size in the 5-7 range
- Small, roughly equal ideas in support of small (2-4) or large (15-25)

Appointing Authority

- Moderate to high support for expertise based appointments or requirements
- No clear consensus on appointing authority
- Several ideas support single appointing authority with approximately equal support for:
  - County Commissioners OR other local government appointments
  - Governor appointed
- Several ideas for distributed appointing authority with varying mixes of local government, legislature and Governor.
- Screening committee to identify pool of board candidates (a la Vancouver)

Governance: Structure

Elected Representation

- Ideas lean slightly to mix of regional and at-large
- Lesser and approximately equal support for all regional and for all at-large

Other structural aspects to consider for recommendations

- Terms
- Role, responsibilities, and compensation of the chair
- Compensation and possibility for better paid or some full time
- Process for recall
- Inspector general

Governance: Sub-structures

Use of Committees

- Standing Committees (see FAQs for list)
- Ad-Hoc, Strike or Special Purpose

Roles, Responsibilities, Practices

- Scope of responsibility or inquiry
- Membership
- Reporting or periodic function (recommendations, reviews etc.)

Governance: Responsibilities/Authorities

RTD Board Legislatively Directed Role & Responsibilities - *for reference (C.R.S. 32-9-109.5(4))/in FAQs:*

"(a) ***Setting policy objectives*** *to be implemented by employees of the district;*

(b) ***Hiring and managing the district's general manager*** *and chief executive officer;*

(c) ***Overseeing the district's general counsel****;*

(d) ***Developing, adopting, and overseeing the district's budget****, including an annual capital budget with project costs and financing mechanisms;*

(e) ***Developing and approving the district's ten-year strategic plan*** *and comprehensive operational analysis;*

(f) ***Engaging with constituents****, local governments, the department of transportation, the Denver regional council of governments, transit agencies, and community partners to obtain input and feedback on the district's decisions and operations;*

(g) ***Pursuing opportunities to grow transit ridership*** *and make transit services competitive with driving;*

(h) Developing and promoting strategies and legislation to ***ensure that the district has the resources it needs to implement its strategic ten-year plan****;"*

(i) Meeting quarterly with the ***department of transportation and with the Denver regional council of governments*** *and meeting biannually with any* ***labor organization****, as defined in section 24-34-401 (6), that represents some or all district employees;*

(j) Performing an ***annual review of the district's chief financial officer****, in the district's discretion; and*

(k) ***Conducting an annual financial audit*** *of the district."*

Governance: Authority & Supports

Authority or Powers of Board

- Raising capital (e.g. ballot measures)
- …

Supports for Board & Board Members

- Training
- Staffing
- …

Break

Paratransit: Updates & Discussions

Goal: Surface high-level ideas & identify needs to be prepared to generate Ideas for Consideration at next meeting.

- ➔ Overview & Update on recent RTD Board Activities
- ➔ Involved Stakeholder Perspective
- ➔ Q&A for Clarifications

Paratransit: Updates & Discussions

Getting to high-level ideas for consideration November 19
What else do you need to know to develop Ideas for Consideration on October 22 to be revised & agreed upon November 19?

- ➔ Focus on system or process level ideas
- ➔ Building on recent process + any gaps or needs for next steps

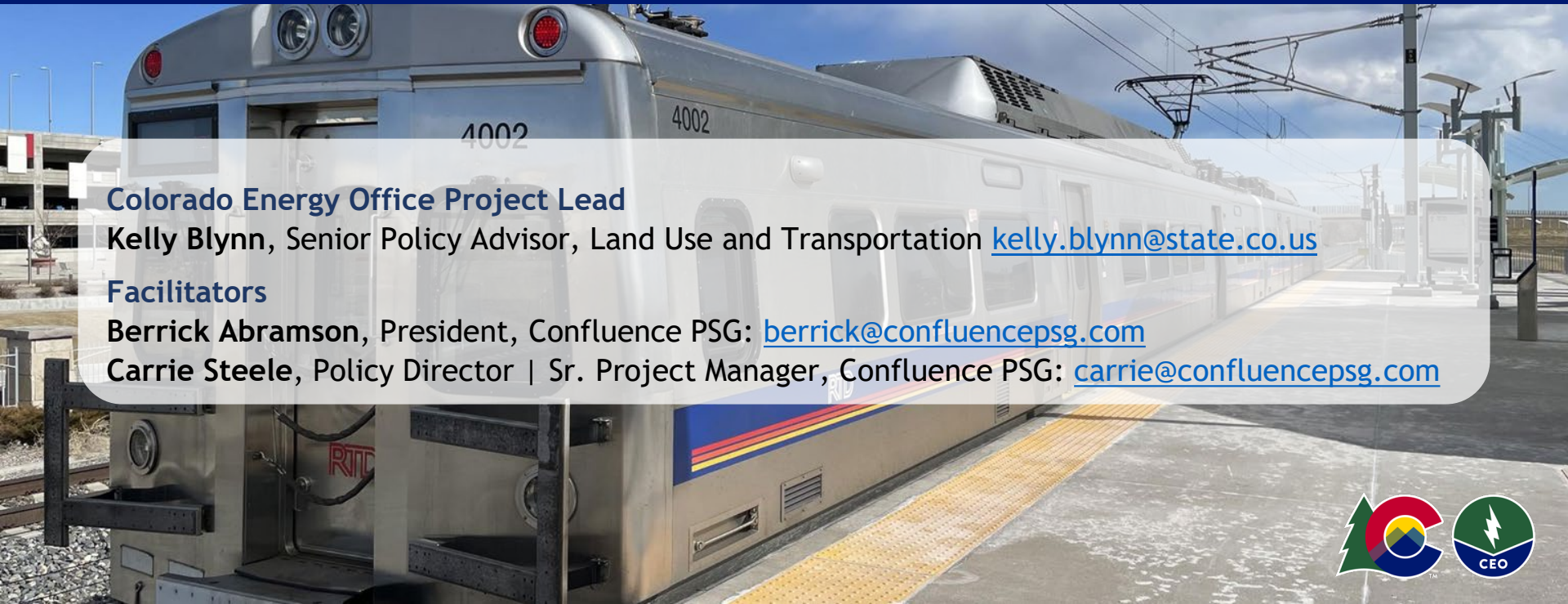
Accountability Committee: Next Steps

Preview of Meeting #5

- Virtual
- October 22, 11:00am – 2:00pm
  - Paratransit
    - Meeting 4 Reflections, moving toward recommendation framework;
  - Workforce Discussion *tentative*

Meeting #6: November 5. Virtual. Workforce: Idea Generation Session.

Thank you!



Colorado Energy Office Project Lead
Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

Meeting Minutes

October 8, 2025, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm MT

Attendance

Committee Members in Attendance

- **Voting Members:** Alexis Senger, Andrew Iltis, Harold Dominguez, Jackie Millet, Jaime Lewis, James Flattum, Kiplund Kolkmeier, Lance Longenbohn, Matt Larsen, Matthew Groves, Miller Hudson, Renée Chacon, Tobin Snook
- **Non-Voting Members:** Julien Bouquet
- **Not Present:** Maria Garcia Berry (excused)

Consulting and Facilitation Teams

- **Facilitators:** Berrick Abramson and Carrie Steele, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
- **Research and Technical Support:** David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomish, LLC; Tim Payne and Bethany Goad, Nelson Nygaard

Guest Speakers

- Rebecca Saltzman, former BART Director
- Lynn Peterson, former Sound Transit Board Member

RTD Staff

- Susan Wood, Jack Kroll, Debra Johnson, Michael Davies, Keirnan Maletsky & Erin Vallejos

Meeting Goals

- Level-set on arc of activities leading to November 19 in-person work session;
- Align on scope and time/capacity for information or research requests;
- Generate Governance Ideas for Consideration;
- Learn & discuss Paratransit to position for Ideas discussion October 22.

Adoption of Meeting Minutes

Approval of September 22 Meeting Minutes: Motion to Approve, Jaime Lewis; Seconded by James Flattum; Approved by all members present.

Governance Panel – Experiences from Other Systems

Guest speakers included:

Rebecca Saltzman (former BART director): BART's nine-member elected board represents large districts (approx. 300,000 residents each). Elected structure ensured direct accountability to voters, visibility, and responsiveness to rider needs. Incumbency was historically high, but competitive elections brought diversity and energy. Highlighted need for stronger training culture and mentorship.

Lynn Peterson (former Sound Transit Board member): Sound Transit Board composed of 17 locally elected officials appointed and confirmed by county councils, plus one ex-officio state representative. Designed for proportional representation and regional cooperation. Emphasized governance must align with funding, performance metrics, and oversight mechanisms; recommended periodic reviews to maintain adaptability.

Committee Reflections: Members discussed balancing elected vs. appointed models, proportional representation, training, and statutory clarity.

Governance Ideas for Consideration

The committee engaged in wide-ranging discussions to explore potential governance models for RTD, including but not limited to:

Board structure and composition:

- Potential of a smaller board (e.g., 7–9 members) to improve effectiveness and focus.
- The potential impact on the number of constituents per district if number of Directors is reduced substantially.
- Hybrid models combining elected and appointed members.
- Locally appointed advisory board with a small full-time board (aka Utah Model).
- Emphasis placed on proportional representation by region, with attention to both equity and expertise.
- Appointees with varying expertise and potential at-large and ex-officio seats.
- A range of appointing authorities and processes.

Key governance themes:

- Accountability and authority over leadership positions.
- Expertise through committees and advisory boards.
- Equity in representation and decision-making.
- Continuity via term limits and staggered terms.

Potential Substructures: Committees and Support Functions

- Revisiting and improving the effectiveness of standing committees and advisory committees, particularly in light of any board restructuring.
- Advisory and Technical Committees: local government, citizen advisory, and expert or technical advisors.
- Ancillary committees (e.g. citizens advisory committees, local nomination committees).
- Inspector General/Auditor: Broad support for independent oversight roles.
- Keep potential for additional support staff for Board members, ways to access needed information for decision-making

Potential Authorities and Responsibilities

- Clarification of authorities and responsibilities of the board
- Annual review and compensation of CEO/GM.
- Revisit oversight authorities with respect to CEO/GM, counsel, etc.
- Potential addition of an Inspector General or Auditor.
- Requirement for quarterly public performance updates.

A governance ideas for consideration document will be developed based on this conversation and circulated with committee members for further refinement.

Paratransit Discussion

Committee members held an in-depth discussion on the recent RTD Board decision regarding paratransit services, including Access-a-Ride (AaR) and Access-on-Demand (AoD). Members reflected on both the operational complexity of these programs and the broader governance implications—such as transparency, financial sustainability, and equity.

Julien Bouquet, Matt Larsen, and Jack Kroll provided an update on the RTD Board's recent actions, setting the stage for discussion on how this committee can add value in addressing ongoing challenges. Jaime Lewis provided additional perspective from his role with CCDC and as the committee's representative for transit riders with disabilities.

Key themes included:

- **A difficult compromise:** Members including current board members stressed the challenging and complex nature of the decision, in which there is no "right" answer. Paratransit services must be financially and operationally sustainable while maintaining equity for low-income and disabled riders.
- **Program Clarity:** Committee members requested clearer communication about program differences, eligibility, and a need to clarify the long-term vision for paratransit services as a whole (including both AaR and AoD, and how they can complement each other), and conduct further planning.

- **Public Trust and Communication:** Several members encouraged more transparent engagement from RTD with riders, advocacy organizations, and legislators agreeing that reducing or retracting service after expansion risks undermining public confidence. A need to better communicate and market the low income fare program LiVE was also identified.
- **Governance and Oversight:** Members discussed how future governance reforms could strengthen oversight of paratransit operations, including clearer roles, accountability mechanisms, and use of advisory committees for ongoing input from the disability community.
- **Data and Decision-Making:** Members discussed defining clearer goals, metrics, and reporting standards to guide paratransit planning, including understanding what percentage of funding should be allocated to paratransit.
- **Collaboration and Partnerships:** Local governments, advocacy groups, and state agencies were seen as critical partners for service delivery, funding, and data collection. Members emphasized leveraging regional resources to expand capacity and close service gaps.
- **Operational and Regulatory Issues:** Concerns were raised about the lack of regulatory standards for Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), including training and safety requirements for drivers assisting riders with disabilities. Concerns were also flagged about the use of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in AoD, and the potential impact on AaR.
- **Financial Realities:** Members acknowledged the difficult fiscal environment facing RTD and stressed that long-term solutions must balance compassion, accessibility, and financial viability.

Public Comment

Time was reserved at the end of the meeting for public comment, of which there was two:

- **Mary Henneck:** Disabilities advocate; urged pause on paratransit changes pending an independent impact study; raised transparency concerns. Will submit more in depth comments via writing to be shared with the committee in advance of the October 22 meeting.
- **Chris Nicholson**: RTD Board member; emphasized importance of equitable representation and urged committee to reflect and learn from 2024 legislative debates.

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RTD Accountability Committee - Meeting #5

October 22, 2025, 11am - 2pm via Zoom

Remote, via Zoom

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82416904409?pwd=DfskUeRa0nYlsvmInpSz0wB3fIGcgG.1

Meeting goals:

- Generate Paratransit Ideas for Consideration;
- Learn & discuss Workforce & Labor issues to position for Ideas discussion November 5.

Pre-Reading

- Eno Center workforce literature review
- A Bus Driver Shortage Threatens Transit. Here's What to Do About It. (Governing)
- Anger and heartbreak on Bus No. 15 (Washington Post)
- Draft minutes from October 8 meeting
- Additional materials may be added Monday. Members will be notified.

Agenda

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11:50 - 12:00pm	*Break*
12:00 - 1:45pm	**Workforce:** Presentation, Q&A, and initial discussion on workforce and labor topics
1:45 - 1:55pm	**Public Comment**
1:55 - 2:00pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead

Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation: kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators

Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

RTD Accountability Committee

October 22, 2025

Meeting #5 of RTD Accountability Committee:

Paratransit Ideas for Consideration

Worforce Learning & Discussion Session

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Meeting Goals

- *Generate Paratransit Ideas for Consideration;*
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October

Meeting #4 Wednesday October 8

- *Governance Ideas for Consideration*
  - *Panel with national agency board members*
- *Discussion session on paratransit*

Meeting #5 Wednesday October 22-

- Paratransit Ideas for Consideration
- Learning session on workforce and labor topics -
  - *Presentation from Eno Center*

November

Meeting #6 Wednesday November 5

- Workforce & Labor Ideas for Consideration
- Learning session on local government collaboration

Meeting #7 (new) Wednesday, November 12

- Discussion: Executive team, compensation, etc.

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- Recommendation Deliberations & Drafting

December

Meeting #9 Wednesday, December 3

- Follow-up discussion on committee recommendations

Draft report

(Tentative - if needed) Meeting #10 - Discussion session on draft report - Wednesday, December 17

January

- Meeting # 11 January 8 - Discussion session on finalizing and approving report
- Final report
- January 30th - Report due to legislature

Paratransit

Ideation Session

Given the work of RTD & stakeholders over the past 20 months, what do we want to reinforce, suggest adjusting course on, or add to efforts at the system or process levels?

What ideas is it likely we'll want to develop into recommendations?

What ideas are we uncertain about but could move either way with additional information?

For both categories, what do we need to know before November 19?

Paratransit: Discussions & Ideas for Consideration

Getting to high-level ideas for consideration November 19

- ➔ Focus on systemic or process level ideas
- ➔ Building on RTD's recent program evaluation and board decision-making + any gaps or needs for next steps

Paratransit: Recap of Nelson\Nygaard Presentation Sept 22

Final paper will be provided in advance of November 19 workshop

- Paratransit is subject to complex legal and financial regulations, rooted in federal ADA of 1990. This complexity is compounded by RTD's provision of two different services, AaR (ADA compliant service, dating from 1990s) and AoD (premium supplemental service, expanded in 2020s.)
- AoD offers more convenience to some riders, so its popularity has risen. This demand has caused costs to escalate significantly, posing a fiscal trade-off for RTD's financial capacity to provide other services, like fixed route and AaR.
- N\N found RTD management and board "understand the gravity" of the fiscal trade-off and societal concerns, have been "careful and deliberate" in decision-making, and conducted "extensive" community involvement.
- No "right" answer exists, and no one solution will please all parties.
- N/N has identified some potential considerations for moving forward that will be included in their white paper to the committee

Paratransit: APTA Peer Review Recommendations 2024

Recommended Initiatives:

- *Develop clear vision for paratransit to guide priorities in the Access-a-Ride (AaR) and Access-on-Demand (AoD) services*
- *Refresh AoD program to improve financial sustainability*
- *Leverage technology and process improvements to improve staff efficiency, deliver better service, and reduce costs*

Recommended Actions:

- *Set parameters on the AoD service in alignment with service mission and financial resources*
- *Create a technology and data strategy*
- *Reduce compliance exposure by evaluating certain service area and fare policy issues*
- *Evaluate AaR reporting standards for on-time performance and key performance indicators*
- *Identify an "empowered owner" of paratransit who can get into details and lead on policy*
- *Implement software that can streamline tasks*
- *Review contractor management to improve service and streamline operations*

Paratransit: Opening the discussion

The following discussion starter is offered by Committee Vice-Chair and representative of transit riders with disabilities, Jaime Lewis

Key challenges:

- *Have two systems that are not fully complementary*
  - *AAR is a federally mandated system that all transit agencies must have*
  - *AOD is fairly new and exciting option for some users in the PWD community*
- *Creates a two-tier system*
- *Making them more complementary is not simple, could take funding, rule changes, training*

Concepts for group consideration:

- *RTD Operational Analysis to make AAR and AOD as efficient as possible*
- *Pilot program to allow TNC drivers to volunteer to be trained under FTA rules*
- *Consider new rules for TNC providers*
- *Connect to other services in the app*
- *Identify projected costs for both programs with/without changes*

Housekeeping

- Approval of October Minutes
- Meeting Planning & Strategy
- Updates to FAQs
- Public comments
- TLRC status update

Break

Workforce: Framing & Role of Committee

As you engage with our presenters and your colleagues, give thought to:

- What is the problem to be solved or condition to improve?
- Thinking beyond the immediate, what are the process or system-level issues and actions to explore or address?
- How are management-labor issues shaped by the agency's governance structure, if at all?

Workforce

Presentation & Perspectives:

- *Eno Center*
- *RTD*
- *ATU*

Group Discussion

Meeting Minutes

October 22, 2025, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm MT

Attendance

Committee Members in Attendance

- **Voting Members:** Alexis Senger, Andrew Iltis, Harold Dominguez, James Flattum, Jaime Lewis, Kiplund Kolkmeier, Lance Longenbohn, Maria Garcia Berry, Matt Larsen, Matthew Groves, Miller Hudson, Renée Chacon, Tobin Snook
- **Non-Voting Members:** Julien Bouquet

Consulting and Facilitation Teams

- **Facilitators:** Berrick Abramson and Carrie Steele, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
- **Research and Technical Support:** David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomish, LLC.

CEO Staff Members

- Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor / Committee Administrator

Guest Speakers

- Philip Plotch, Principal Researcher and Senior Fellow, Eno Center for Transportation
- Charlene Polege,Chief People Officer, RTD

RTD Staff

- Debra Johnson, Jack Kroll, Patrick Preusset, John McKay, Angel Péna, Susan Wood, Michael Davies

Meeting Goals

- Generate Paratransit Ideas for Consideration;
- Learn & discuss Workforce & Labor issues to position for ideas discussion November 5.

Adoption of Meeting Minutes

Approval of October 8 Meeting Minutes: Motion to Approve, Miller Hudson; Second by Alexis Senger; Approved by all members present.

Paratransit Ideas for Consideration

The committee engaged in wide-ranging discussions to explore potential paratransit ideas for RTD, including but not limited to:

Program Review & Coordination

- The potential for a full operational review of Access-a-Ride and Access-on-Demand. Evaluation to include needs assessment, cost structures, ADA compliance, financial sustainability, peer agency approaches, and rider experience.
- Conducting a Comprehensive Operations Analysis (COA) of existing operations.
- Establishment of an overall goal / vision for paratransit services.
- Interest in regional coordination with other transit providers as well as local government partners to reduce duplication and close service gaps.
- Potential to provide a statement or assessment of RTD's recent decision on AoD program.
- Updating standards and processes for committees providing more formal and comprehensive presentations to the Board.
- Examining paratransit as a holistic part of transit service delivery.

Technology & Data Improvements

- Opportunities identified to modernize dispatching, scheduling, and trip management.
- Emphasis on leveraging data to improve performance and better understand user needs.
- Examine a systemized and consistent means of data collection.

Advisory Engagement

- Greater involvement recommended from the ADA Paratransit Access Panel and Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities.
- Goal: strengthen feedback loops and communication between riders, advisory groups, and the RTD Board.

Equity & Outreach

- Expand awareness and simplify enrollment in the LiVE program for low-income riders.
- Improve data collection to capture the diversity and mobility patterns of paratransit users.
- Leveraging existing groups and communities to include additional community perspective and data (including leveraging the use of technology).
- Conducting an equity analysis drawing on community input.

Workforce and Labor Discussion

The committee engaged in an initial discussion about workforce and labor issues guided by presentations and discussion with Philip Plotch, Principal Researcher and Senior Fellow, Eno Center for Transportation and Charlene Polege, Chief People Officer, RTD.

The committee engaged in Q&A with guest speakers and had an initial discussion on workforce and labor related-issues, including but not limited to:

- Differentiating the operators/direct transit workers from the rest of RTD staff (e.g., head of accounting) in tracking and evaluation of worker contentment and status.
- Operator conditions being a foundational piece for RTD's reliability and public trust.
- Ensuring safety, dignity, and opportunities for advancement are crucial to maintaining morale and service quality.
- The value of labor-management collaboration and recognizing the union's role in supporting workforce development initiatives.
- Providing essential amenities such as restroom access, safe facilities, and adequate break time correlating strongly with higher employee morale.
- Employee engagement and professional development as leading predictors of retention and organizational performance.
- The importance of detailed data on hiring, turnover, and satisfaction to guide future policies and ensure accountability.
- Strategies linking workforce planning to community need referencing peer agencies that have explored housing partnerships, childcare programs, and educational pipelines to recruit and retain skilled workers.

Public Comment

Time was reserved at the end of the meeting for public comment, of which there was none.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- November 5, remote via Zoom, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- November 12, remote via Zoom, 11:00 - 1:30pm
- November 19, in-person (Colorado Energy Office), 11:00 am – 5:00 pm
- December 3, remote via Zoom, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- TBD if needed: December 17, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- Potential additional December meeting (date and time tbd depending on any outstanding work)
- Thursday, January 8, 11am-1:30pm (virtual discussion session to finalize and approve report)

RTD Accountability Committee - Meeting #6

November 5, 2025, 11am - 2pm via Zoom

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/86124972149?pwd=SdFAhC6ZaFbIbhqIMgMdxT3bBwjTu9.1&from=addon

Meeting goals:

- Generate Workforce Ideas for Consideration;
- Learn & Discuss: Local Government Collaboration

Pre-Reading / Thinking

- Come ready to offer your top 3 ideas/topic areas for Workforce
- Draft Minutes for 10/22 Meeting
- Eno Center Transit Worker Recruitment and Retention Final Report
- Memo on RTD and Local Government Relations from David Bragdon
- Updates to FAQs document (noted in red)

Agenda

Timing	Content
11:00 - 11:15am	**Welcome, Meeting Overview, Housekeeping** ● Stakeholder engagement updates
11:15 - 12:25pm	**Workforce Follow-Up** ● Follow-up presentation from Eno Center and Q&A with RTD ● Ideas for Consideration
12:25 - 12:35pm	*Break*
12:35 - 1:45pm	**Local Government Collaboration & Representation:** ● Presentation from RTD ● Presentation from David Bragdon on interviews ● Q&A ● Discussion of Ideas for Consideration
1:45 - 1:55pm	**Public Comment**
1:55 - 2:00pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead

Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation: kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators

Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com

Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

RTD Accountability Committee

November 5, 2025

Meeting #6 of RTD Accountability Committee:

Workforce Ideas for Consideration

Local Government Learning & Ideation Session

Accountability Committee: Operating Norms

The following norms encourage productive and collaborative conversation. All attendees are asked to follow and embody them and give facilitators room to ensure they define our time together.

Good Faith: Act in good faith in all discussions with intent to promote collaboration and productive conversation.

Openness: Be honest and open in sharing your perspectives; be open to other points of view and outcome of discussions.

Focus: Maintain focus on the goals, purpose and meeting objectives; honor agendas.

Listening: Listen to each speaker rather than preparing your response; no interruptions; refrain from use of smart phones and other technologies.

Participation: Participate actively, speak briefly, and agree succinctly. Be mindful and respectful of the presence of multiple backgrounds and avoid the overuse of acronyms or technical language.

Respect: Disagree judiciously and without being disagreeable; do not engage in personal attacks; in all contexts, refrain from behavior that denigrates other participants or is disruptive to the work of the group.

Preparedness & Commitment: Prepare for and attend each session; get up to speed if you missed a meeting.

Facilitation: Let the facilitators facilitate; allow them to enforce the norms and engage them with any concerns.

Questions & Requests: Please direct any questions, comments or requests to the facilitators who will route them to staff, third parties or other members.

Today's Meeting: Agenda

Timing	Content
11:00 - 11:15am	**Welcome, Meeting Overview, Housekeeping**
11:15 - 12:25pm	**Workforce Follow-Up & Idea Generation**
12:25 - 12:35pm	*Break*
12:35 - 1:45pm	**Local Government Collaboration & Representation**
1:45 - 1:55pm	Public Comment
1:55 - 2:00pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

Today's Meeting: Goals

Meeting Goals

- *Generate Workforce Ideas for Consideration;*
- *Learn & discuss Local Government Collaboration to position for Ideas discussion November 12.*

Housekeeping

- Attendance
- Approval of October 22 Minutes
- Stakeholder Engagement Update
- Updates to FAQs doc
- Meeting Planning & Strategy

Accountability Committee: Legislative Charge

SB25-161 established the committee within CEO and tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to (see C.R.S. 24-38.5-124(3)):

Governance-related Topics

- "The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "The representation of local governments and state agencies within the District;"

Paratransit Topics

- "The paratransit services provided within the District's geographic service area."

As used here, "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

- "The District's workforce retention."
- "How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;"
- "How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;"

Planned Arc of Conversations / Work Plan

August

- *Meeting #1 - Kick-off meeting - Tuesday August 26*

September

- *Meeting #2 - Learning session on governance-related topics - Wednesday Sept 10*
- *Meeting #3 - Discussion session on governance-related topics; Learning session on paratransit - Monday Sept 22*

October

Meeting #4 Wednesday October 8

- *Governance Ideas for Consideration*
  - *Panel with national agency board members*
- *Discussion session on paratransit*

Meeting #5 Wednesday October 22-

- *Paratransit Ideas for Consideration*
- *Learning session on workforce and labor topics -*
  - *Presentation from Eno Center*

November

Meeting #6 Wednesday November 5

- Workforce & Labor Ideas for Consideration
- Learning session on local government collaboration

Meeting #7 (new) Wednesday, November 12 - ***Reminder!***

- Discussion: Executive team, compensation, etc.

Meeting #8 Wednesday, November 19 (in-person, extended)

- Recommendation Deliberations & Drafting

December

Meeting #9 Wednesday, December 3

- Follow-up discussion on committee recommendations

Draft report

(Tentative - if needed) Meeting #10 - Discussion session on draft report - Wednesday, December 17

January

- Meeting # 11 January 8 - Discussion session on finalizing and approving report
- Final report
- January 30th - Report due to legislature

Workforce: Experience from Other Systems

Discussion with Eno

Workforce

Ideation Session

What ideas is it likely we'll want to develop into recommendations?

What ideas are we uncertain about but could move either way with additional information?

*For both categories, what do we **need** to know before November 19?*

Workforce: Discussion & Ideation

Getting to high-level ideas for consideration November 19

- ➔ Focus on system or process level ideas
- ➔ Eno's suggestions are meant as ideas to evaluate / consider, not necessarily to do all of them

Break

Local Government

RTD presentation

Government Stakeholder Interviews by David Bragdon Share-out

Discussion of "ideas for consideration"

Local Government: Discussion & Ideation

Getting to high-level ideas for consideration November 19

➔ Focus on system or process level ideas

Accountability Committee: Next Steps

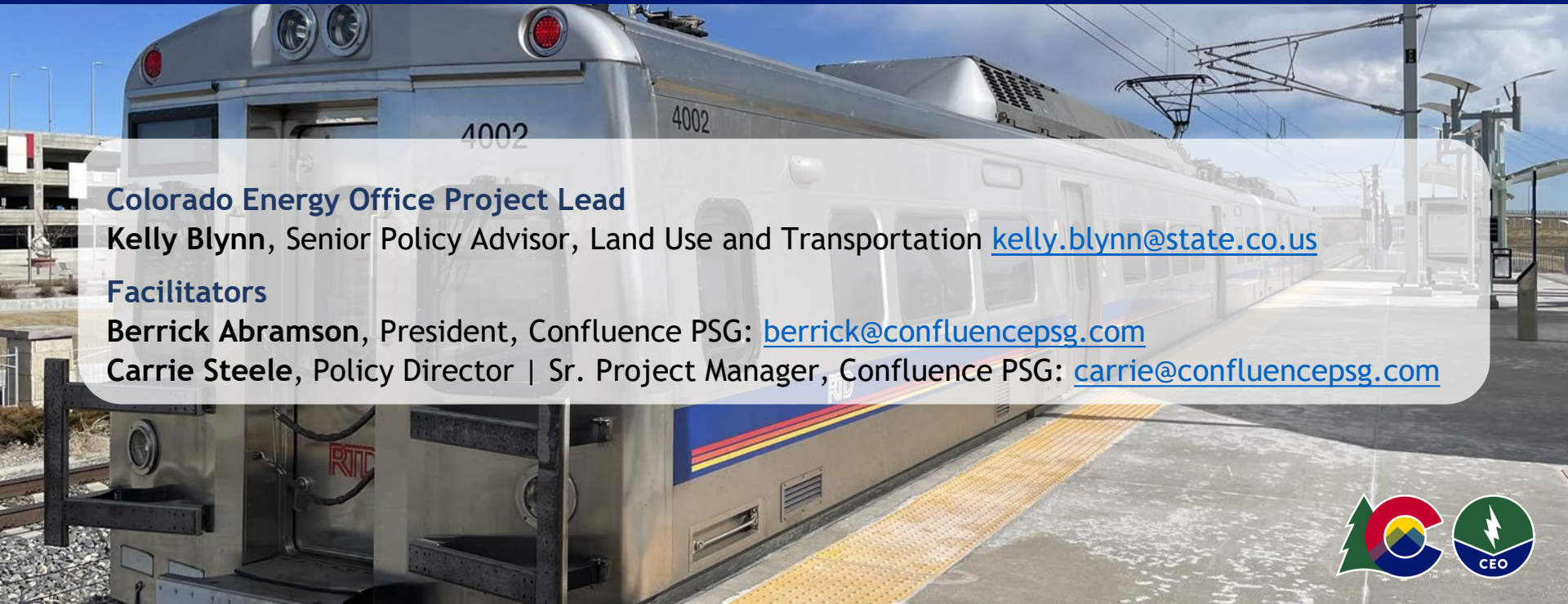
E-mail later this week: Paratransit ideas for consideration, survey

Preview of Meeting #7

- Virtual
- November 12, 11:00am – 1:30pm
  - Governance Related Ancillary Topics
    - Non-Structural, Compensation, Executive Leadership;
  - Legal Questions & Discussion with Attorney General's Office

Meeting #8: November 19. Extended in-person, 11am-5pm at CEO. Recommendation Development.

Thank you!



Colorado Energy Office Project Lead
Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

Meeting Minutes

November 5, 2025, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm MT

Attendance

Committee Members in Attendance

- **Voting Members:** Alexis Senger, Andrew Iltis, Harold Dominguez, Jaime Lewis, James Flattum, Jackie Millet, Julien Bouquet, Kiplund Kolkmeier, Maria Garcia Berry, Matt Larsen, Matthew Groves, Miller Hudson, Tobin Snook
- **Non-Voting Members:** Julien Bouquet

Consulting and Facilitation Teams

- **Facilitators:** Berrick Abramson and Carrie Steele, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
- **Research and Technical Support:** David Bragdon, Hudson Skykomish LLC

CEO Staff Members

- Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor/Committee Administrator

Governor's Office

- Jon Moore, Colleen Morey

RTD

- Michael Davies, Bill Sirois, Jack Kroll, Jillian Knapp-Rhodes, John McKay, Kathleen Chandler, Kiernan Maletsky, Susan Wood, Chris Nicholson, Chessy Brady, Melanie Snyder, Patrick Preusser

Speakers & Presenters:

- Phil Plotch, Eno Center for Transportation; Bill Sirois, RTD; David Bragdon, Hudson Skykomish LLC

Meeting Goals

- Generate Workforce Ideas for Consideration
- Learn & Discuss: Local Government Collaboration

Adoption of October 22 Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve by Harold Dominguez; second by James Flattum. Approved as-is by all members present.

Workforce Follow Up Discussion

Eno Center for Transportation Presentation, Phil Plotch

The presentation expanded on previous discussions, providing updated data and comparative research on transit workforce recruitment, compensation, hiring processes, training and workforce culture.

Members discussed key themes and ideas for considerations, including:

- Aligning fiscal planning and workforce recruitment and retention strategies considering the financial reality of RTD's ~$200 million budget deficit.
- Operator and frontline worker retention remains central to RTD's performance and public trust.
- The importance of workplace culture, mentorship, and management training as vital components of retention, including the willingness of employees to recommend RTD to prospective workers.
- Expanding partnerships with local governments and housing entities to improve affordability and competitiveness with other employers.
- Encouraging ridership improvement in RTD's 5-year budget plan, and the relationship to workforce recruitment.
- Whether delayed hiring could negatively impact ridership goals, though RTD confirmed operator hiring delays is not proposed in the draft budget.
- Potential automation and technology-based solutions to improve long-term efficiency and workforce stability.
- Expanded operator-specific surveys and data collection methodologies to capture broader employee experience.
- Considerations with respect to providing housing for employees, and the relationship with RTD's broader transit-oriented development (TOD) efforts.
- The need to understand retirement and other benefits, and comparisons with other employers.
- Expanded partnerships with organizations like ATU, local school districts, trade organizations and others to strengthen the commercial driver's license (CDL) pipeline and expand mentorship and apprenticeship opportunities.
- The importance of building upon what RTD is already doing to improve workforce recruitment and retention, and understanding what is subject to the CBA.
- Several specific ideas for consideration, which are being summarized for further deliberation at the November 19th meeting.

Local Government Collaboration Presentations and Discussion

RTD Presentation – Bill Sirois, Senior Manager, Transit Oriented Communities

Bill Sirois, Senior Manager of Transit-Oriented Communities at RTD, presented on the agency's evolving approach to local government collaboration, focusing on the creation and continuation of Sub-Regional Service Councils and the RTD Partnership Program.

David Bragdon Presentation, Interview Findings

David Bragon, Principal, Hudson Skykomish presented a summary of his interviews with local and state stakeholders about RTD's relationships with cities, counties, CDOT, and DRCOG.

Members discussed key themes and ideas for consideration, including:

- Ensuring consistent representation and support from local jurisdictions and advocacy groups, which has historically been important for RTD's success.
- Creating shared dashboards or reports that summarize regional service data, project updates, and performance indicators accessible to local partners.
- Using the Partnership Program to pilot innovative mobility solutions in equity zones and underserved areas.
- Continuing to strengthen alignment with DRCOG, CDOT, and local governments on BRT, corridor planning, and transit-oriented development.
- Emphasizing regional service integration and resource-sharing across agencies.
- RTD's legislative foundation distinguishes it from home-rule cities and counties, suggesting a potential need for clearer enabling legislation defining governance roles, expectations, and board responsibilities.
- Creating more elected-to-elected engagement between local governments and the RTD Board, which members emphasized is a "two-way street".
- Re-establishing a leadership "Transit Academy" to educate and prepare both RTD board candidates and local officials for governance and transit planning roles.
- Exploring independent facilitation for Service Councils to encourage more open, two-way discussion.
- Establishing senior local government staff participation in the Subregional Service Councils to strengthen coordination and ensure communication flows between elected leaders.
- Adjusting the frequency and scope of Service Council meetings to build deeper engagement.
- Revisiting whether service councils should include elected officials or community representatives in an advisory capacity to enhance accountability and visibility of regional input.
- Increasing the collection of clear, data-driven criteria to guide service allocation, balancing goals of maximizing ridership with ensuring equitable coverage.

- Encouraging partnerships between municipalities and RTD to support recruitment of operators and other transit staff, particularly to enable reinstatement of the buy-up program for expanded local service.
- Resolving issues surrounding incomplete FasTracks projects that continue to hinder progress and either redefining or closing out that program before launching new initiatives without demonstrated improvements in service quality, reliability, and ridership.
- A lack of regional acknowledgement and agreement of RTD's challenges and the urgency to address them, or a vision to address them. Noting that many transit agencies have struggled with a variety of headwinds since COVID-19.
- Building on successful relationships where possible, and creating clearer communication channels between city leadership and RTD management for timely issue resolution, as well as leveraging regional entities like DRCOG.
- Importance of civic sector engagement and support for RTD.
- Reviewing RTD's infrastructure ownership to explore shared responsibility with the state.

Public Comment

Time was reserved for public comment, of which there was one.

- Renée Larrarte, Climate and Transportation Manager, Conservation Colorado who shared their Vision for Transit in the Denver Region

Next Steps and Upcoming Meetings

The committee will continue refining and consolidating the Draft Ideas for Consideration developed during this session in preparation for the November 19 in-person work session.

Upcoming Meeting Dates:

- November 12 – Remote via Zoom, 11:00am – 1:30pm
- November 19 – In-person, Colorado Energy Office, 11:00am – 5:00pm
- December 3 – Remote via Zoom, 11:00am – 2:00pm
- TBD if needed: December 17 – Remote via Zoom, 11:00am – 2:00pm

These minutes are intended to provide an overview of the discussions and, where possible, the high-level themes and ideas of the committee. The summaries of any topics are not presented as comprehensive notes of the full discussion and neither the inclusion or omission of any comment or segment of a discussion should be interpreted as a judgment of the value or importance of such items.

RTD Accountability Committee - Meeting #7

November 12, 2025, 11am - 1:30pm via Zoom

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81136510537?pwd=mEFkTaNxSlqUy1C9902deHwqjfaliM.1&from=addon

Meeting goals:

- Learning and discussion of remaining statutory topics in the committee's charge from SB25-161
- Understand legal questions and answers related to governance and structure

Pre-Reading

- Draft minutes for approval, Nov. 5, 2025 meeting
- Utah Transit Governance Case Study from David Bragdon
- RTD Board Operating Guidelines
- RTD Director Orientation, Onboarding, and Continuing Education Policy
- GM/CEO Compensation Philosophy
- GM/CEO Performance Assessment Framework
- Memo and additional documents from RTD board office
- *More governance materials available here if of interest*
- Organizational Design and Workplace Assessment Overview - report prepared for RTD by Segal (https://www.rtd-denver.com/organizational-assessment)

Agenda

Timing	Content
11:00 - 11:15am	**Welcome, Meeting Overview, Housekeeping**
11:15 - 12:45pm	**Governance-related ancillary topics:** • Utah model update • Non-structural aspects, compensation, and executive leadership • Discussion / ideas for consideration
12:45 - 12:50pm	*Break*
12:50 - 1:15pm	**Legal Questions & Discussion - Potential Executive Session**
1:15 - 1:25pm	**Public Comment**
1:25 - 1:30pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

Post-meeting e-mail

Summary of Ideas for Consideration *(these may be a week after meeting to clean up)*
Request for any "need to know" requests for turning Ideas into Recommendations
Draft report outline

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead

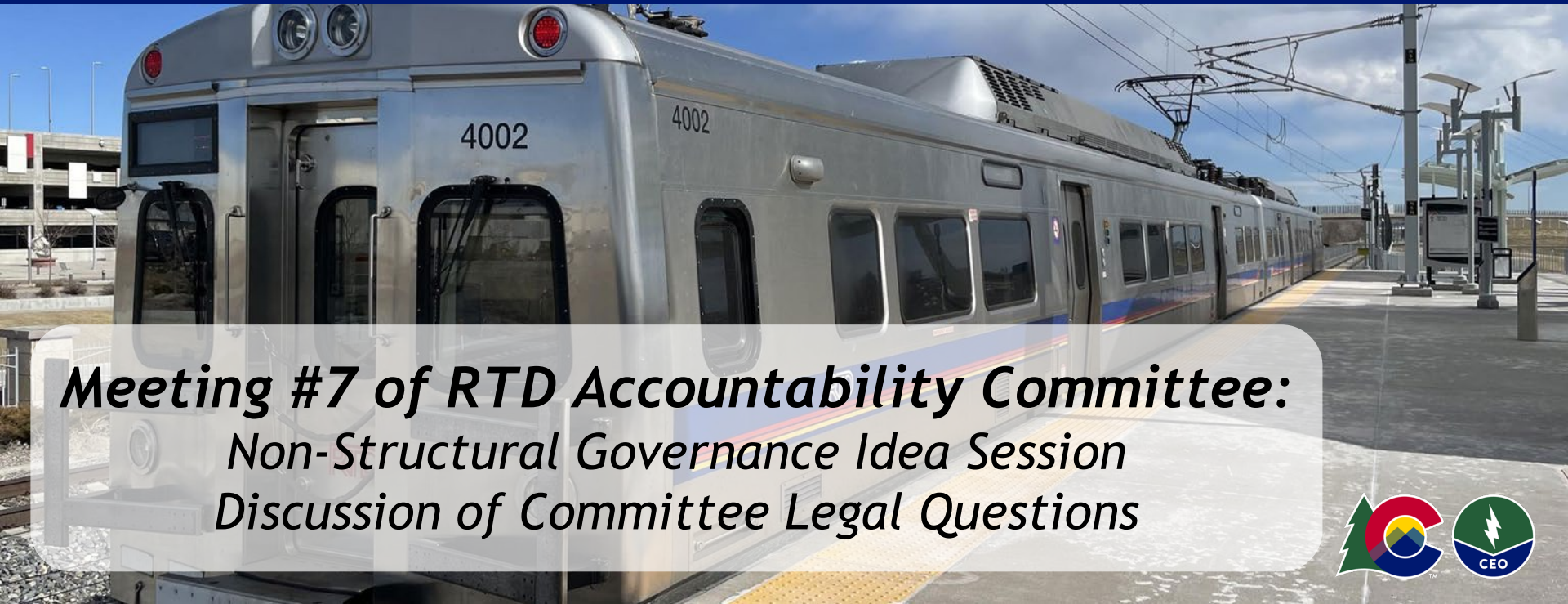
Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation: kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators

Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

RTD Accountability Committee

November 12, 2025



Meeting #7 of RTD Accountability Committee:

Non-Structural Governance Idea Session

Discussion of Committee Legal Questions

Accountability Committee: Operating Norms

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Preparedness & Commitment: Prepare for and attend each session; get up to speed if you missed a meeting.

Facilitation: Let the facilitators facilitate; allow them to enforce the norms and engage them with any concerns.

Questions & Requests: Please direct any questions, comments or requests to the facilitators who will route them to staff, third parties or other members.

Today's Meeting: Agenda

Timing	Content
11:00 - 11:15am	**Welcome, Meeting Overview, Housekeeping** • Minutes • Report Framework
11:25 - 12:35pm	**Governance-related topics:** • Utah model • Non-structural governance issues • Executive leadership & agency relations • Compensation
12:35 - 12:40pm	*Break*
12:40 - 1:15pm	**Legal Questions & Discussion** • AGO Presentation
1:15 - 1:25pm	Public Comment
1:25 - 1:30pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

Today's Meeting: Goals

Meeting Goals

- *Learn, Discuss & Generate Ideas on Non-Structural Governance Items*
- *Learn & Obtain Guidance on Committee Legal Questions*
- *Prepare for November 19 In-Person Session*

Housekeeping

- Approval of November 5 Minutes
- Report Framework
- November 19 Level Setting, Expectations & Asks

Committee Report: Process & Contents

Report Recommendations

Circulated December 1
*Vote held December 3**
**Subsequent votes if needed in December*

Report Drafting & Comments

Draft 1 (internal): December 5
Draft 2 to Members: December 15, Member Feedback by December 22
Draft 3 (internal): January 5
Final Draft (text): January 16
Final Report (full design for publication): January 30

Committee Report Outline: Contents

I. **Executive Summary**

II. **Background**

III. **Approach to Tasks & Recommendation Development**

IV. **Research, Perspectives & Structure**

V. **Recommendations**

1. **Summary/Overview**
2. **Governance**
    a) Recent Work on Issue
    b) Challenges & Opportunities
    c) Intended End State
    d) Recommendations
3. **Paratransit**
4. **Workforce**
5. **Local Government Collaboration**

VI. **Appendices**

1. Member Comments & Minority Opinions
2. SB25-161
3. Meeting Agendas & Minutes
4. Presentations & information utilized
5. Public Comment

Accountability Committee: Legislative Charge

SB25-161 established the committee within CEO and tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to (see C.R.S. 24-38.5-124(3)):

Governance-related Topics

- "The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "The representation of local governments and state agencies within the District;"

Paratransit Topics

- "The paratransit services provided within the District's geographic service area."

As used here, "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

- "The District's workforce retention."
- "How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;"
- "How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;"

Planned Arc of Conversations / Work Plan

August

- *Meeting #1 - Kick-off meeting - Tuesday August 26*

September

- *Meeting #2 - Learning session on governance-related topics - Wednesday Sept 10*
- *Meeting #3 - Discussion session on governance-related topics; Learning session on paratransit - Monday Sept 22*

October

Meeting #4 Wednesday October 8

- *Governance Ideas for Consideration*
  - *Panel with national agency board members*
- *Discussion session on paratransit*

Meeting #5 Wednesday October 22-

- *Paratransit Ideas for Consideration*
- *Learning session on workforce and labor topics -*
  - *Presentation from Eno Center*

November

Meeting #6 Wednesday November 5

- *Workforce & Labor Ideas for Consideration*
- *Learning session on local government collaboration*

Meeting #7 (new) Wednesday, November 12

- Discussion: Executive team, compensation, etc.

Meeting #8 Wednesday, November 19 (in-person, extended)

- Recommendation Deliberations & Drafting

December

Meeting #9 Wednesday, December 3

- Follow-up discussion on committee recommendations

Draft report

(Tentative - if needed) Meeting #10 - Discussion session on draft report - Wednesday, December 17

January

- Meeting # 11 January 8 - Discussion session on finalizing and approving report
- Final report
- January 30th - Report due to legislature

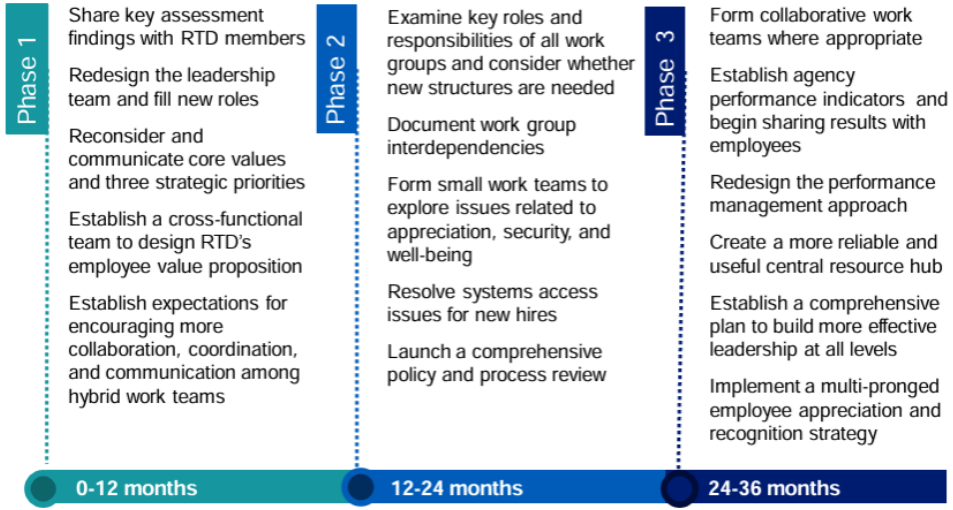
Non-Structural Governance
Learning & Ideation Session

- *The "Utah Model"*
- *Non-structural governance issues*
- *Compensation*
- *Executive leadership & agency relations*

Non-Structural Governance: Executive Leadership

- RTD undertook Organizational Design and Workplace Assessment in 2024
- Through interviews and benchmarking with other agencies, includes some recommendations re: executive leadership structure, in addition to others
- RTD is in process of implementation of the report's findings and recommendations

High level roadmap and timeline of recommendations



Non-Structural Governance: Ideas Generation

Getting to high-level ideas for consideration November 19

- ➔ Focus on system or process level ideas
- ➔ SB25-161 includes in the committee's charge: ""The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;" and "Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- ➔ It is always an option to not make specific recommendations in certain areas

Topics the committee may want to consider for recommendations:

- Board training, staffing, operating procedures, other supports
- Board compensation
- Executive compensation and performance assessment
- Executive leadership

Break

Legal Discussion

Discussion with Attorney General's Office

Accountability Committee: Next Steps

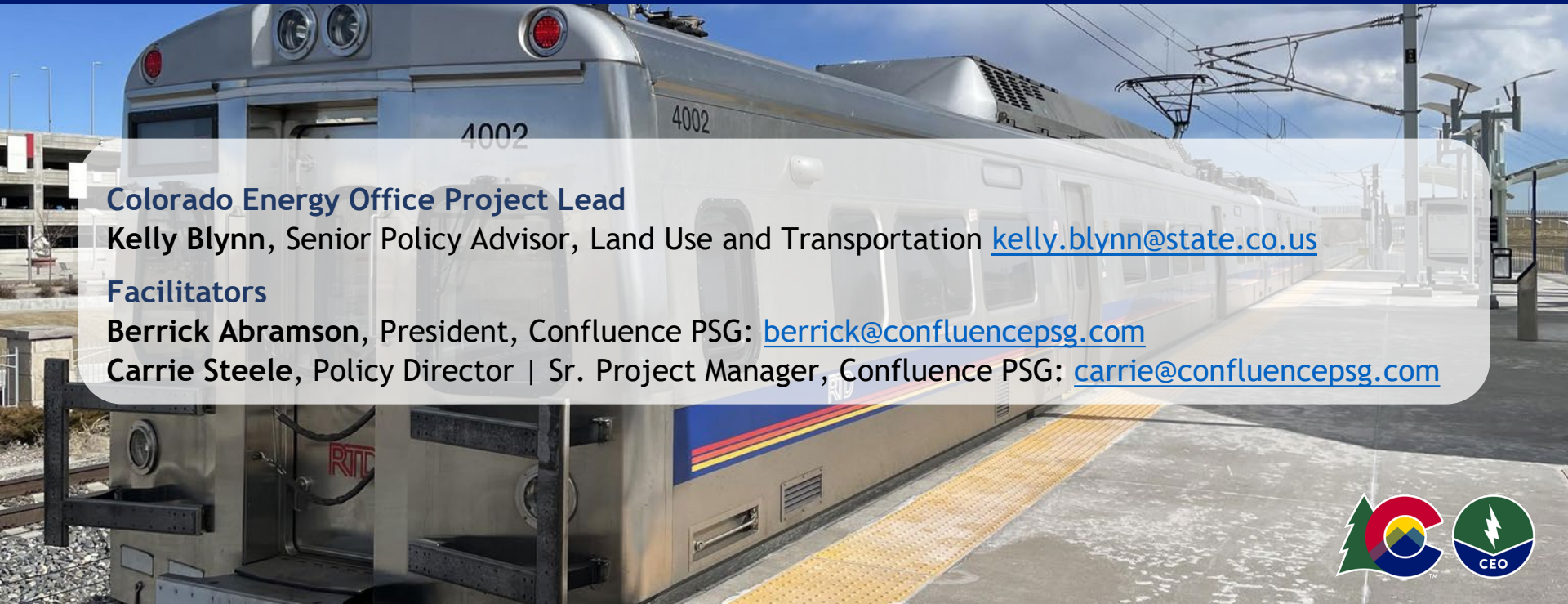
Preview of Meeting #8

- In-Person
- November 19, 11:00am – 5:00pm
    - Recommendation Development

Preview of Meeting #9

- Virtual
- December 3, 11:00am - 2:00pm
    - Recommendation Voting

Thank you!



Colorado Energy Office Project Lead
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Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

Meeting Minutes

November 12, 2025, 11:00 am - 2:00 pm MT

Attendance

Committee Members in Attendance

- **Voting Members:** Maria Garcia Berry, Alexis Senger, Andrew Iltis, Harold Dominguez, Jaime Lewis, James Flattum, Kiplund Kolkmeier, Lance Longenbohn, Matt Larsen, Matthew Groves, Miller Hudson, Renée Chacon, Tobin Snook
- **Non-Voting Members:** Julien Bouquet
- **Excused:** Jackie Millet

Consulting and Facilitation Teams

- **Facilitators:** Berrick Abramson and Carrie Steele, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
- **Research and Technical Support:** David Bragdon, Hudson Skykomish LLC

CEO Staff Members

- Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor/Committee Administrator

Meeting Goals

- Learning and discussion of remaining statutory topics in the committee's charge from SB25-161
- Understand legal questions and answers related to governance and structure

Adoption of November 5 Meeting Minutes

Motion to Approve, Kip Kolkmeier; Second by James Flattum; Approved by all members present.

Discussion of RTD Fiscal Condition & Governance Scope

The committee discussed projected budget deficits and whether RTD's fiscal instability reflects structural governance challenges.

Key themes included:

- RTD's significant projected deficits over the next several years.
- Long-term sustainability concerns requiring stronger governance systems.
- Fiscal oversight as a core governance responsibility
- Should consider whether any changes to the RTD Act are needed

Process for Drafting Recommendations

Discussion focused on establishing clarity as the committee enters the deliberation phase and formation of recommendations. The State leadership team emphasized that ideas in the Ideas for Consideration documents are those offered by members during Committee meetings and additions offered by members after circulation of those documents. It was reiterated that those ideas and findings of informal surveys are intended to inform but not limit discussions of potential recommendations on November 19th.

Committee members and State leadership team discussed:

- The need for structured prioritization due to compressed timelines
- Concerns expressed with time spent on presentations, while some felt they were helpful
- Ensuring all recommendations align with statutory responsibilities
- How minority opinions will be expressed in the final report
- Clarification of the 2/3 voting threshold for final recommendations as established in committee bylaws

Utah Transit Governance Case Study (Presented by David Bragdon)

The committee received a presentation on Utah's 2018 governance reforms and engaged in Q&A and discussions of the benefits/risks of such a model. In 2018, Utah replaced its 15-member locally appointed board with a 3-member full-time Board of Trustees appointed by the Governor, plus a 9-member Local Advisory Council nominated by local governments.

High-level themes of committee discussion centered around:

- Accountability and role clarity: avoiding weakened accountability, the blurring of roles, how reforms can unintentionally increase bureaucracy, etc.
- Preserving meaningful representation and how Utah's geography, demographics and political leadership differ from Colorado
- Different infrastructure and other influencing elements including population density, varying transportation corridors, station siting, varied ridership, etc.
- Importance of maintaining clear distinction between oversight and day-to-day management
- Governance structures remaining lean and effective
- Important to take the elements that work/make sense from other places

RTD Board Office Overview

The committee received an overview of the Board office structure, workflows, norms and operating procedures, and staff support.

Member discussion key themes included but were not limited to:

- The Board experiences high workloads, amount of material to review and some routine approvals that could potentially be delegated.
- Earlier and more comprehensive training for prospective candidates may be beneficial.
- Board members could benefit from increased analytic and policy research capacity.
- The Board faces some challenges with setting agendas, providing policy direction, and accessing timely information.
- Access to staff and getting questions answered is a key topic; providing open access is critical for building trust, though also need to be thoughtful about staff workloads
- Potential consideration for general counsel to report to Board instead of CEO/GM

Attorney General's Office Guidance

The Attorney General's Office (Jess Lowrey) provided preliminary legal guidance and will expand on members questions in regard to:

- Property taxing authority
- TABOR and governance changes: TABOR is typically focused on fiscal matters, though some governance changes may have indirect implications.
- Public challenges to governance changes through referendum or initiatives
- Legislative authority and changes in regard to board composition and transitions to a new structure.
- Compensation changes and PERA obligations

Written clarification for additional member questions will be provided regarding governance transition models, ballot measure referrals, etc.

Summary Draft Ideas for Consideration – Non-Structural Governance

The committee discussed non-structural improvements including but not limited to:

Board Compensation

- Increasing compensation to reflect inflation since 2001
- Adjusting compensation to match future board structure
- Considering differentiated compensation for the Chair

Additional Operational Support:

- Expanding research and analytical support
- Reconsidering general counsel structure
- Delegating more routine approvals to staff

- Strengthening training and evaluation frameworks

Fiscal Considerations

- Improving financial transparency and reporting

Public Comment

Time was reserved at the end of the meeting for public comment, of which there was one:

- Chris Nicholson, RTD Board Member: Emphasized the need for strong communication channels and cautioned against reducing representation or public trust.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- November 19, in-person (Colorado Energy Office), 11:00 am – 5:00 pm
- December 3, remote via Zoom, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- TBD if needed: December 17, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm
- Potential additional December meeting (date and time tbd depending on any outstanding work)
- Thursday, January 8, 11am-1:30pm (virtual discussion session to finalize and approve report)

***Please note**: These minutes are intended to provide an overview of the discussions and, where possible, the high-level themes and ideas of the committee. The summaries of any topics are not presented as comprehensive notes of the full discussion and neither the inclusion or omission of any comment or segment of a discussion should be interpreted as a judgment of the value or importance of such items.*

RTD Accountability Committee - Meeting #8

November 19, 2025, 11am - 5:00 pm in-person

Colorado Energy Office, 1600 Broadway, 5th Floor Conference Room (take elevators on right)

Zoom Link:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/84584585872?pwd=okavhwl1hru0RRnvkEtRy4rm7LLy7m.1

Meeting goals:

- Refine and align on recommendations for Committee Report
- Identify any remaining topics and strategy to get to recommendations

Pre-Reading

- Review all Ideas for Consideration
- Review Background and FAQs document, which contains links to previous pre-reading, slides, and other materials assembled for the committee
- Review public comments (one new one late last week)
- Review draft meeting minutes from Nov. 12th meeting

Agenda

Timing	Content
11:00 - 11:10am	**Welcome, Housekeeping & Level-Set on Day**
11:10 - 12:20pm	**Governance:** Board Structure
12:20 - 12:30pm	*Break & Grab lunch for working lunch*
12:30 - 1:40pm	**Governance:** Sub-Structures, Staffing & Supports, Authorities and Duties (including Fiduciary Role)
1:40 - 2:20pm	**Paratransit**
2:20 - 2:30pm	*Break*
2:30 - 3:30pm	**Workforce**
3:30 - 3:40pm	*Break*
3:40 - 4:20pm	**Local Government Collaboration**
4:20 - 4:50pm	**Ancillary Topics, Key Messaging or Framing**
4:50 - 5:00pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

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Facilitators

Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com

Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

RTD Accountability Committee

November 19, 2025

Meeting #8 of RTD Accountability Committee:
Ideas into Action: Recommendation Development Session

Today's Meeting: Agenda

Timing	Content
11:00 - 11:10am	**Welcome, Housekeeping & Level-Set on Day**
11:10 - 12:20pm	**Governance:** Board Structure
12:20 - 12:30pm	*Break & Grab lunch for working lunch*
12:30 - 1:40pm	**Governance:** Sub-Structures, Staffing & Supports, Authorities and Duties (including Fiduciary Role)
1:40 - 2:20pm	**Paratransit**
2:20 - 2:30pm	*Break*
2:30 - 3:30pm	**Workforce**
3:30 - 3:40pm	*Break*
3:40 - 4:20pm	**Local Government Collaboration**
4:20 - 4:50pm	**Ancillary Topics, Key Messaging & Framing**
4:50 - 5:00pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

Today's Meeting: Goals

Meeting Goals

- *Refine and align on recommendations for Committee Report*
- *Identify any remaining topics and strategy to get to recommendations*

Housekeeping

- Minutes approval
- Agenda
- Process, voting, bylaws, reemphasize norms
- Remarks from Chair & Vice Chair

Accountability Committee: Legislative Charge

SB25-161 established the committee within CEO and tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to (see C.R.S. 24-38.5-124(3)):

Governance-related Topics

- "The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "The representation of local governments and state agencies within the District;"

Paratransit Topics

- "The paratransit services provided within the District's geographic service area."

As used here, "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

- "The District's workforce retention."
- "How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;"
- "How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;"

Reminder of process

Learning and Discussion	Pre-readings, meeting presentations, Q&A, discussions in meetings #1-7
Idea generation	Ideas for consideration generation during meetings and in follow-up surveys from topical meetings
Idea prioritization	Prioritization of ideas for consideration by the committee, and identification of anything missing
Idea refinement	Discussion and deliberation to combine, refine, and further hone in on potential recommendations
Voting on recommendations	Voting to approve recommendations for inclusion in the final report (reminder: bylaws require 8 votes, 10 person quorum)

Focus of our meeting today

Committee Report: Process and Timeline Reminder

Report Recommendations

Circulated December 1

*Vote held December 3**

**Subsequent votes if needed in December*

Report Drafting & Comments

Draft 1 (internal): December 5

Draft 2 to Members: December 15, Member Feedback by December 22

Draft 3 (internal): January 5

Final Draft (text): January 16

Final Report (full design for publication): January 30

Recommendation Development

- Today’s Discussion Structure
- Problems to Solve
- Values Driven Ideas

Accountability Committee: Operating Norms

The following norms encourage productive and collaborative conversation. All attendees are asked to follow and embody them and give facilitators room to ensure they define our time together.

Good Faith: Act in good faith in all discussions with intent to promote collaboration and productive conversation.

Openness: Be honest and open in sharing your perspectives; be open to other points of view and outcome of discussions.

Focus: Maintain focus on the goals, purpose and meeting objectives; honor agendas.

Listening: Listen to each speaker rather than preparing your response; no interruptions; refrain from use of smart phones and other technologies.

Participation: Participate actively, speak briefly, and agree succinctly. Be mindful and respectful of the presence of multiple backgrounds and avoid the overuse of acronyms or technical language.

Respect: Disagree judiciously and without being disagreeable; do not engage in personal attacks; in all contexts, refrain from behavior that denigrates other participants or is disruptive to the work of the group.

Preparedness & Commitment: Prepare for and attend each session; get up to speed if you missed a meeting.

Facilitation: Let the facilitators facilitate; allow them to enforce the norms and engage them with any concerns.

Questions & Requests: Please direct any questions, comments or requests to the facilitators who will route them to staff, third parties or other members.

RTD Accountability Committee: Problems to Solve

Which of the following do you believe are the top five system-level problems that have a connection to governance.

Problem	%	Number
Low ridership and factors contributing to it	69.23%	9
Public Trust & Confidence	69.23%	9
Appearance of limited coordinated, strategic vision & plan	61.54%	8
Workforce Satisfaction & Retention	46.15%	6
Insufficient financial resources to meet all needs & limit cost increases to riders;	38.46%	5
Perception of limited accountability to riders, tax-payers & others.	38.46%	5
Leadership	38.46%	5
Meeting needs of all riders and potential riders;	30.77%	4

Other:

Unwillingness to make coverage decisions necessary to increase ridership
Trying to do too many things on their budget. Budget is not insufficient.
Introduction, selection and execution of technology throughout operations
Board elections are not meaningful because lack of candidates and public awareness and attention

RTD Accountability Committee: Values Driven Approach

Please rate each of these Values from least important (1) to most important (5)

Values	Rating
Effectiveness	4.69
System Health	4.54
Fiscal stewardship and responsibility	4.54
Long-term Vision, Goals & Clear KPIs	4.46
Expertise	4.15
Communications: Internal & External	4
Accountability - who is accountable, to whom and for what outcomes	3.92
Local & State Government Collaboration	3.85
Ability to adapt over time	3.62
Representation	3

Governance Recommendation Development

Board Structure

- Member discussion (lightning round on leanings)
- Member proposals, deliberations

Governance: Problems to Solve

Problem	%	Number
Need for diversity of expertise and experience	69.23%	9
Challenges with fulfilling oversight role due to dynamic between Board and Leadership and ability of a part-time Board to be as fully informed as necessary.	53.85%	7
Challenges working with, making decisions, finding consensus with larger board	53.85%	7
Accountability to constituents vs. system-level thinking (parochialism)	46.15%	6
Lack of appeal & attractiveness to serving including compensation considerations	38.46%	5
Lack of clarity and transparency of decision-making processes	38.46%	5
Challenges with board members (particularly the chair) being part time to carry out duties	38.46%	5
Elected positions lack visibility, competition, voter awareness which leads to weakened legitimacy	30.77%	4
Board terms / turnover presenting challenges to long-term planning	30.77%	4

Governance Ideas: Survey Findings / Temperature Check

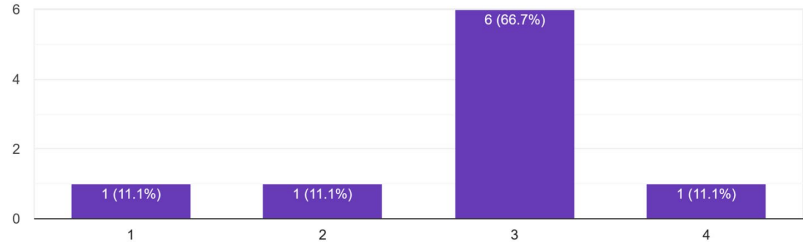
Whi

Problem	%	Number
Perception among some that some board members are unclear on their role, statutory authority and associated obligations.	23.08%	3
Lack of sufficient onboarding, training, and adoption of working norms	23.08%	3
Lack of sufficient staffing & support	23.08%	3
Role, expectations and operations of standing committees	15.38%	2
Belief among some that Board is not fully representative of all constituents or interested parties	7.69%	1
Fiscal authority (e.g. taxes, bonds, ballot measures) - relation to TABOR	7.69%	1

Governance Ideas: Survey Findings / Temperature Check

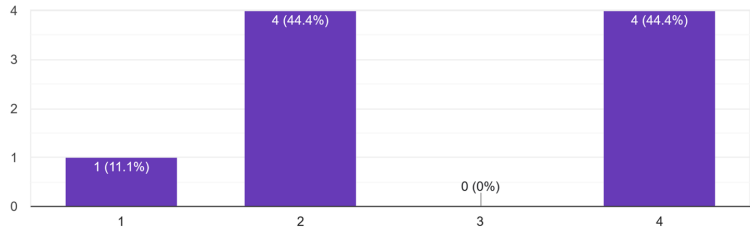
A mid-sized Board (7-11) comprised of both elected and appointed members.

9 responses



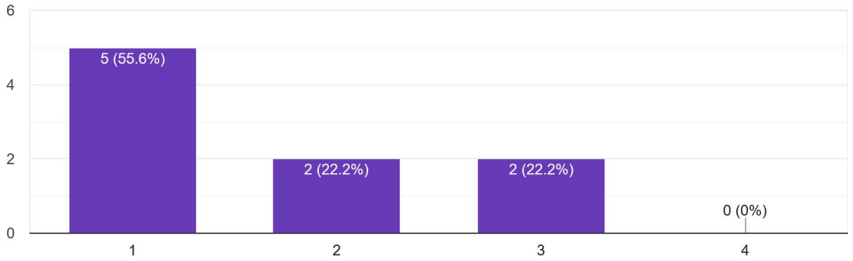
A smaller Board (5-9), primarily elected with small number of appointed members with subject matter expertise and/or appointed members on standing committees.

9 responses



Mid-sized Board (size TBD ~7-11) of elected members and an appointed advisory committee with subject matter expertise.

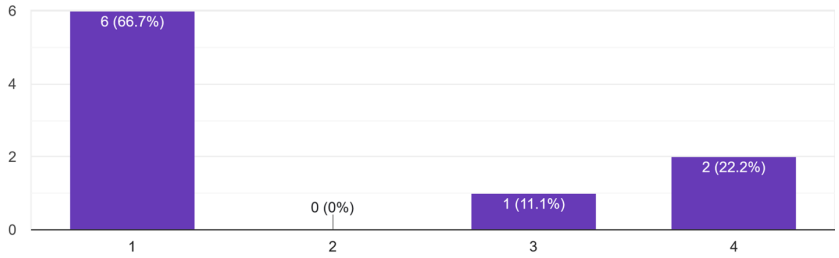
9 responses



Governance Ideas: Survey Findings / Temperature Check

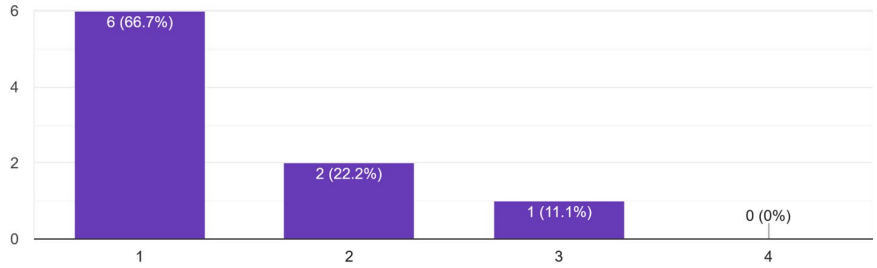
A mid sized (9-11) local advisory council consisting of local government representatives. Local government officials identify a pool of eligible cand...tah Model). Can also involve a legislative approval.

9 responses



Maintain current general structure of Board with possibility of an appointed advisory council, committee or similar structure.

9 responses



Governance Ideas: Survey Findings / Temperature Check

If there is a reduction in the total number of elected seats on the RTD Board, should any of the seats in the smaller Board going forward be At-Large seats?

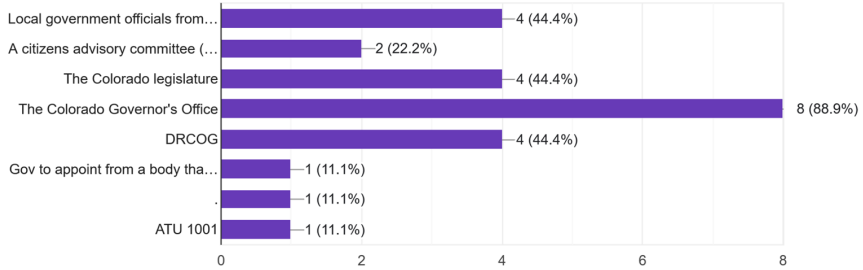
9 responses

If a certain number of seats on the RTD Board were to be appointed, do you think appointing authority should be more distributed or concentrated?

9 responses

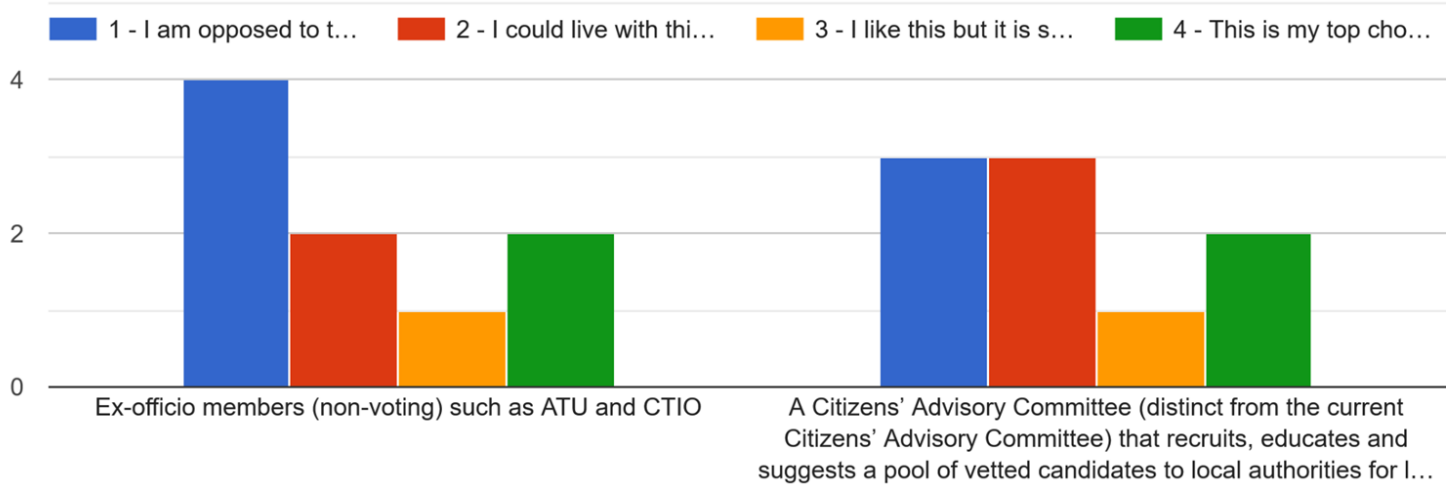
If the Board has some members who are appointed, which of the following should have a role in nominating, selecting or confirming appointed memb...estion to briefly explain your suggested process.

9 responses



Governance Ideas: Survey Findings / Temperature Check

Committee members offered the following additional ideas that could be included in governance structure recommendations. What is your opinion of... following additional governance structure ideas?



Governance Ideas: Discussion

RTD Accountability Committee

BREAK

Governance Recommendation Development

Non-Structural

- Sub-Structures
- Staffing & Supports
- Authorities and Duties (including Fiduciary Role)

Governance Ideas: Non-Structural

Governance Ideas: Non-Structural

Paratransit Recommendation Development

Paratransit Ideas: Survey Findings / Discussion

RTD Accountability Committee

BREAK

Workforce Recommendation Development

Workforce: Ideas Into Actions

Workforce: Ideas Into Actions

Local Government Recommendation Development

RTD Accountability Committee: Local Government

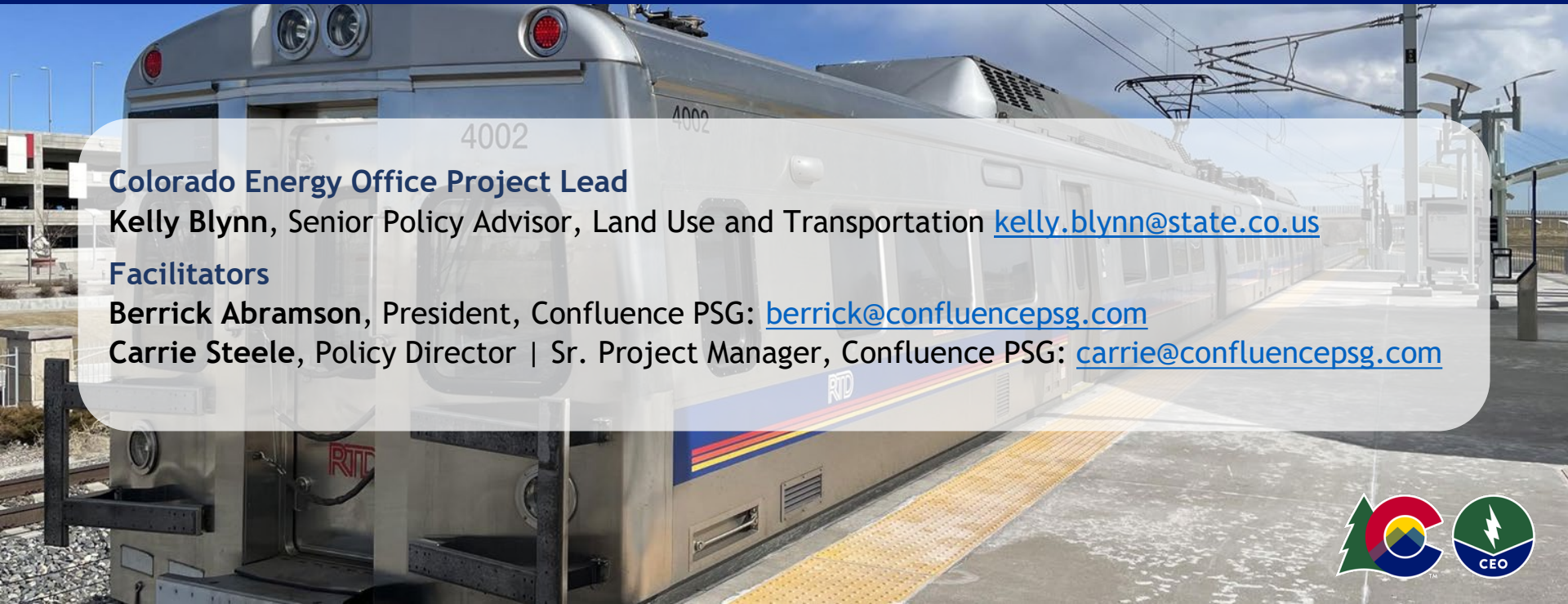
Ancillary Topics Recommendation Development

RTD Accountability Committee: Ancillary Topics

RTD Accountability Committee: Report Development

- Framing / Key Messaging
- Report Framework

Thank you!



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CEO Staff Members

- Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor/Committee Administrator

Meeting Goals

- Refine and align on Governance recommendations for Committee Report
- Identify any remaining topics and strategy to get to recommendations

Adoption of November 12 Meeting Minutes

Motion to Approve, Andrew Iltis; Second by Miller Hudson; Approved by all members present.

Welcome, Housekeeping & Level Setting for the Day

Members were reminded of the committee's legislative charge and discussion of today's ideas for consideration including:

- Governance: Board Structure
- Governance: Substructures, Staffing & Supports, Authorities & Duties
- Paratransit
- Workforce
- Local Government Collaboration
- Ancillary Topics, Key Messaging or Framing

It was emphasized that while the district's budget is not explicitly part of the committee's charge, the Board's fiduciary/fiscal oversight role intersects with governance and may influence recommendations.

Overview of Process & Expectations for the Day

The facilitators and State leadership team provided a recap of the committee's process to date, noting that the group has worked through a significant volume of material under tight timelines. The day's agenda was designed as a deep work session to advance recommendation development. Members were encouraged to bring forward bold ideas.

Governance Discussions

Board Structure & Roles

Members discussed whether the Board should be a true governing board with broad support for this being clarified as accurate. Members expressed openness to a mid-sized board with a majority of board members being elected and a minority of members appointed. Discussion emphasized balancing representation with specific expertise in the areas of finance, land use/transit, labor and workforce, operations. Members also discussed geographic representation from urban, suburban and exurban communities.

Members discussed the possibility of a nominating committee to develop a pool of potential Board candidates, likely via a neutral convener such as DRCOG, from which the appointees would be selected. A majority of members expressed support for the Governor selecting all appointees from the list of nominees developed by a nominating committee.

Members began a discussion of the composition of the committee and which perspectives and qualifications should be included.

A non-binding vote was taken on each element of the governance structure with a super-majority meeting the threshold of the bylaws for recommendations supporting:

1. A nine member board with five elected and four appointed members;
2. An independent nominating committee being established to recruit, screen and recommend to the Governor a pool of candidates to be selected from for the appointed seats on the Board;
3. All elected seats to represent geographic or boundary districts. *(Some members expressed interest in revisiting this topic)*.

Aspects of Governance that were discussed but still requiring further deliberations include:

1. Whether all appointees must be from the list provided by the nominating committee;
2. Organizations, constituencies or perspectives to be included on the nominating committee;
3. Whether all electeds should be district-based vs. some at large vs. district-based but run at large (like some counties)

Sub-Structures, Staffing, Duties & Fiduciary Role

Members discussed ideas about potential substructures, staffing issues and the fiduciary role of the Board, including but not limited to:

- Inclusion of interested or expert parties on various standing committees
- Clarifying and formalizing the role or engagement of RTD committees as well as external bodies who regularly interact with the Board or provide reports to the Board to improve the effectiveness of these entities and relationships.
- Requirements to publish more detailed data on fiscal performance, workforce retention, ridership, etc.
- Requiring more transparency into the District's finances and making them easy to find for Board members, legislature and the public.
- Examining thoroughly the fiscal condition of the District and the current budget shortfall (est $200+ million)
- Members discussed whether the Chair should be a full time position with a salary that represents industry standards and whether the Vice Chair should be compensated at a slightly lower rate.
- Clarifications for the Board's ability to request information from and assign tasks to RTD staff
- The potential of reinstating the Transit Academy to provide training or informational sessions for potential board candidates to better understand the workload, time commitments, etc.

Paratransit

Members discussed ideas regarding paratransit operation and supports including, but not limited to:

- Conducting a comprehensive needs assessment and additional analysis to inform a plan for providing service to people with disabilities in the district.
- Assessing fiscal stability, including RTD's overall spending on paratransit as a portion of their budget and benchmark against other regions.
- Establishing an overarching goal / vision / framework for RTD's paratransit service and services for people with disabilities as a whole to guide future decisions.
- Engaging with and assessing what the opportunities may be to collaborate with local and regional organizations to address gaps and challenges in providing paratransit services.
- Assessing how to leverage technology to improve service.
- Completing an equity analysis of current and potential service changes.
- Developing options for regular data collection about paratransit users and usage from drivers, paratransit committees, riders, etc.
- Working with partners to better market the LiVE program and making sure it's easier for riders to apply

Workforce

Members discussed the need to modernize hiring pipelines, training timelines, and retention strategies. Workforce challenges were directly tied to the agency's ability to restore services and grow ridership. Members encouraged an entrepreneurial, innovative approach rather than incremental improvements in the areas of recruitment, retention, training and mentorship, data and measurement. Members also began to discuss whether they may want to tie workforce recommendations to governance, in terms of setting retention as a key metric. Members highlighted some of their top potential areas for recommendation via an interactive exercise, including but not limited to the following ideas:

- Explore enabling more flexible and part-time positions.
- Partner with school and community college districts, CDOT, ATU, regional entities, workforce agencies, community organizations, and/or ESL programs on shared hiring outreach and transit career training.
- Examine structural ways for employees to have a stronger voice in management or decision-making.
- Support an improved internal culture that enables increased retention and satisfaction; ensure employees feel ownership and like they don't just have a job, they have a career opportunity.
- Expand the joint ATU–RTD apprenticeship program and, if resources limit, establish mentorship options.
- Incentivize senior operators to mentor new hires; possibly provide bonuses tied to mentee retention.

- Improve employee and community survey design to better assess RTD's organizational health and performance, e.g.: increase sample size, focus on RTD performance rather than abstract community value; include operator engagement, more concrete questions re: safety, convenience, etc.
- Explore options to accelerate transit-oriented development on RTD-owned land and/or collaboration with local governments and developers to increase affordable housing, including some possibly with a preference for RTD workers.

Next Steps

The State leadership team and facilitators outlined steps for early and mid-December meetings, including virtual sessions and at least one in-person meeting to finalize votes. Public comment will be moved to the start of meetings to allow input before decisions. Staff will compile, organize, and return all recommendations for further refinement and ultimately, voting. Members are asked to complete a survey on a narrow set of topics relating to Governance and the Fiduciary Role of the Board.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- December 3, remote via Zoom, 11:00 am – 2:00pm
- December 10, Remote via Zoom, 11:00am-2:00pm
- December 17, In-person, location tbd., 9:00 am – 1:00pm
- Thursday, January 8, 11am-1:30pm (virtual discussion session to finalize and approve report)

***Please note**: These minutes are intended to provide an overview of the discussions and, where possible, the high-level themes and ideas of the committee. The summaries of any topics are not presented as comprehensive notes of the full discussion and neither the inclusion or omission of any comment or segment of a discussion should be interpreted as a judgment of the value or importance of such items.*

RTD Accountability Committee - Meeting #8

December 3, 2025, 11am - 2:00 pm via Zoom

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87125731062?pwd=al4GEkbPloirEim9AxMn9qqLojSZlg.1&from=addon

Meeting goals:

- Complete Governance Recommendation Discussions, including Non-structural Governance
- Discuss and develop Paratransit Recommendations

Pre-Reading

- Nov 19 meeting minutes
- Minnesota & Vancouver Memos
- Recommendation Development Post November 19 document
- Review Background and FAQs document, which contains links to pre-reading, slides, and other materials assembled for the committee; new FAQs and resources noted with date added

Agenda

Timing	Content
11:00 - 11:05am	**Welcome, Housekeeping & Level-Set on Day**
11:05 - 11:15am	**Public Comment**
11:15 - 11:50am	**Governance:** Outstanding Structural Items • Elected position district vs at large • Nominating Committee Structure & Membership • Nominating/Confirmation Authority • Requirements (if any) for nominees (one or more)
11:50am - 12:40pm	**Governance:** Non-Structural - Board • Substructures • Authorities and Responsibilities • Fiduciary Role • Staffing, Supports & Training • Board Compensation
12:40 - 12:50pm	***Break***
12:50 - 1:30pm	**Governance:** Non-Structural - Executive Leadership • Performance Assessment/Framework • Compensation

1:30 - 1:55pm	**Paratransit** *(Conversation may continue into December 10th meeting)*
1:55 - 2:00pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead

Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation: kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators

Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

RTD Accountability Committee

December 3, 2025

Meeting #9 of RTD Accountability Committee:
Ideas into Action: Recommendation Development Session

Today's Meeting: Agenda

Timing	Content
11:00 - 11:05am	**Welcome, Housekeeping & Level-Set on Day**
11:05 - 11:15am	**Public Comment**
11:15 - 11:50am	**Governance:** Outstanding Structure Items
11:50am - 12:40pm	**Governance:** Non-Structural
12:40 - 12:50pm	*Break*
12:50 - 1:30pm	**Governance:** Non-Structural continued
1:30 - 1:55pm	**Paratransit**
1:55 - 2:00pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

Today's Meeting: Goals

Meeting Goals

- Complete Governance Recommendation Discussions, including Non-structural Governance
- Discuss and develop Paratransit Recommendations

Our priority continues to be those tasks identified in SB25-161. As time necessitates and where appropriate, we will also include observations and issues identified during our work together. The Committee should not feel obligated to work through every detail to advance each recommendation which will be the collective responsibility of legislators, bill drafters and others.

Housekeeping

- Minutes approval
- Agenda
- Process, voting, bylaws, reemphasize norms

Accountability Committee: Legislative Charge

SB25-161 established the committee within CEO and tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to (see C.R.S. 24-38.5-124(3)):

Governance-related Topics

- "The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "The representation of local governments and state agencies within the District;"

Paratransit Topics

- "The paratransit services provided within the District's geographic service area."

As used here, "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

- "The District's workforce retention."
- "How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;"
- "How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;"

Reminder of process

Learning and Discussion	Pre-readings, meeting presentations, Q&A, discussions in meetings #1-7
Idea generation	Ideas for consideration generation during meetings and in follow-up surveys from topical meetings
Idea prioritization	Prioritization of ideas for consideration by the committee, and identification of anything missing
Idea refinement	Discussion and deliberation to combine, refine, and further hone in on potential recommendations
Voting on recommendations	Voting to approve recommendations for inclusion in the final report (reminder: bylaws require 8 votes, 10 person quorum)

Focus of our meeting today

Committee Report: Process and Timeline Reminder

Report Recommendations

Developed November 19 - December 10

Vote held December 10 & 17 as needed

Report Drafting & Comments

Note: initial drafts will contain everything except recommendations

Draft 1 (internal): December 5

Draft 2 to Members: December 15, Member Feedback by December 22

Draft 3 (internal): January 5

Final Draft (text): January 16

Final Report (full design for publication): January 30

Recommendation Development

- Today’s Discussion Structure
- Problems to Solve
- Values Driven Ideas

Accountability Committee: Operating Norms

The following norms encourage productive and collaborative conversation. All attendees are asked to follow and embody them and give facilitators room to ensure they define our time together.

Good Faith: Act in good faith in all discussions with intent to promote collaboration and productive conversation.

Openness: Be honest and open in sharing your perspectives; be open to other points of view and outcome of discussions.

Focus: Maintain focus on the goals, purpose and meeting objectives; honor agendas.

Listening: Listen to each speaker rather than preparing your response; no interruptions; refrain from use of smart phones and other technologies.

Participation: Participate actively, speak briefly, and agree succinctly. Be mindful and respectful of the presence of multiple backgrounds and avoid the overuse of acronyms or technical language.

Respect: Disagree judiciously and without being disagreeable; do not engage in personal attacks; in all contexts, refrain from behavior that denigrates other participants or is disruptive to the work of the group.

Preparedness & Commitment: Prepare for and attend each session; get up to speed if you missed a meeting.

Facilitation: Let the facilitators facilitate; allow them to enforce the norms and engage them with any concerns.

Questions & Requests: Please direct any questions, comments or requests to the facilitators who will route them to staff, third parties or other members.

Governance Recommendation Development

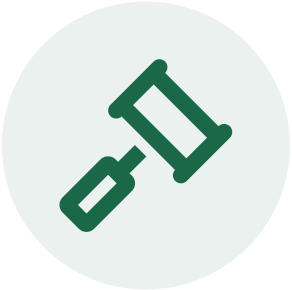
Board Structure

- Member discussion (lightning round on leanings)
- Member proposals, deliberations

Governance and Administration of Colorado's Boards and Commissions

Nikky Patel, Director of Boards and Commissions

Types of Boards Within Colorado's Governance



Policy-Making Boards (Type 1)

Boards that make binding decisions shaping policy.

On average they have 7 member boards

Advisory Boards (Type 2)

Provide recommendations and expert advice without direct authority.

On average they have 15 member boards

Regulatory Boards

Boards share some of the responsibilities of advisory and policy-making boards but usually perform rulemaking or quasi-judicial functions.

On average they have 15 member boards

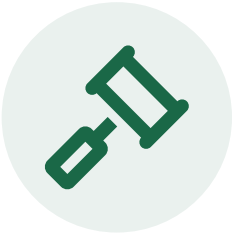
Overview of Colorado's Boards and Commissions Office: Scale and Structure

Number of Boards and Commissions

Colorado has approximately 350 boards and commissions. The Governor's Office maintains a specialized appointments unit with a staff of four who handle outreach, recruitment, and interviewing.

Membership Size

There are around 2,200 appointed members serving on these boards and commissions.



Establishment Methods

These boards are established through statute, executive orders, or ballot measures.

Full-Time Paid Boards

The three full-time, paid boards are the Parole Board, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and the Energy and Carbon Management Commission (ECMC).

Professionalized Selection Approach for Appointments

Clearly Defined Missions for Each Board

Colorado employs an executive-search style process for gubernatorial appointments that includes clearly defined missions for each board.

Use of Skills Matrices

Skills matrices are used to identify the needed competencies for effective board membership.

Intentional Recruitment for Diversity and Expertise

The process includes intentional recruitment efforts to ensure diversity and expertise among appointees.

Thorough Vetting and Compliance Checks

Applicants undergo thorough vetting and compliance checks to maintain standards and eligibility.

Replacement Strategies and Succession Planning

Replacement strategies are implemented to fill vacancies efficiently, ensuring continuous board functionality.

Gubernatorial Appointments: Dedicated Infrastructure

Specialized Appointments Unit

The Governor's Office maintains a specialized appointments unit staffed by four professionals who handle outreach, recruitment, interviewing, and onboarding of board members.

Contrast with Other Appointing Bodies

This dedicated infrastructure contrasts with other appointing bodies in Colorado, which generally have limited administrative resources to manage appointments.

Accountability Mechanisms for Appointed Members

Removal for Cause

Colorado law allows appointed members to be removed for misconduct, ethics violations, failure to participate, neglect of duty, or incapacity. This is established in the statute that creates the board or commission.

Senate Confirmation

Many gubernatorial appointments require Senate confirmation, adding transparency, public vetting, additional oversight, and a second check on qualifications.

Colorado's robust accountability mechanisms, including removal for cause, Senate confirmation, and ongoing oversight, ensure appointed board and commission members are held responsible and act in the public's best interest.

Governance Ideas: Discussion

Committee Alignment on November 19

- Should be a governing board
- 9 Member Board
- 5 Elected, 4 Appointed
- Appointees selected from list of nominating committee (details TBD)

Governance Ideas: Discussion

Outstanding Structure Items

- District (or at-large) of Elected Directors
- Nominating Committee Structure & Membership
- Nominating/Confirmation Authority
- Requirements (if any) for nominees (one or more)

Governance Ideas: Survey Responses

Nominating committee

- Size: ~7-9, with a range of suggestions from 0-15
- Membership organizations / constituencies / perspectives:
  - Labor
  - Riders
  - Public safety
  - Disproportionately impacted communities
  - Business / workforce / economic development
  - People with disabilities
  - Land use expertise
  - Financial expertise
  - Transit non-profits
  - Environmental community
  - County commissioners
  - Metro Mayors
  - Regional planning / DRCOG
  - TLRC / house & senate transportation committees

Governance Ideas: Survey Responses

Appointing Authorities

- Should the Governor have discretion to appoint one or more?
  - **8 -** No. All appointees should come from the nominating committee list
  - **5 -** Yes. The Governor should be able to select one member without limitations
- Should appointed members have the same term length?
  - **11 -** Yes
  - **2 -** No

Governance Recommendation Development

Non-Structural

- Substructures
- Authorities and Responsibilities
- Fiduciary/Fiscal Role
- Staffing, Supports & Training
- Compensation

Governance Ideas: Non-Structural

Ideas / Discussion from November 19

- **Substructures**
  - How could/should the Citizens Advisory Council be strengthened / made more influential / have a clearer advisory role?
  - Should an external audit function be created?
- **Authorities and responsibilities**
  - Is clarification of the key duties of the governance body needed, e.g. limiting or prioritizing what is in RTD Act?
- **Supports and Compensation**
  - Should Board and Chair compensation be reconsidered in light of structural changes?
  - Should the General Counsel report to the board?

Governance Ideas: Substructures

Substructures (November 19 exercise)

- **13** - Inclusion of interested or expert parties on various standing committees including, but not limited to, CTIO (finance) and ATU (TBD);
- **5** - Clarifying and formalizing the role or engagement of RTD committees as well as external bodies who regularly interact with the Board or provide reports to the Board to improve the effectiveness of these entities and relationships.
- **1** - Creation of a Standing Committee of Local Government Officials;
- **1** - Augmenting the standing committee membership with additional subject matter experts appointed by the Governor's Office or other body TBD.
- **0** - Creation of a technical advisory council of local officials, subject matter experts or others TBD.
- **0** - Revisiting the roles, membership, and structures of standing committees in light of board changes.

Governance Ideas: Board Supports

November 19 exercise

- **8 -** Chair should be a full time position with a salary that represents industry standards. Vice Chair should be 1/2 of the Chair's compensation. **Suggested to combine with:**
    - **3 -** Chair should be compensated at roughly twice the regular board member salary;
- **7 -** Clarification for Board on the ability to request information from and assign tasks to RTD staff; **Suggested to combine with:**
    - **0 -** Establishment or clarification on policies and procedures for Board to interact with and make requests of staff;
- **7 -** Reinstate Transit Academy (addresses better prepared candidates whether appointed or elected) that would provide training or informational sessions for potential board candidates to better understand the workload, time commitments, etc.
- **4 -** Address the redundancy of board staff roles and management roles and improve communications.
- **2 -** Add FTE's to current RTD Board office.
- **2 -** Board compensation should be increased to a minimum inflationary raise adjusted from 2001 to 2025, and pegged somehow to other public employees like judges, so that it is likely to continue to keep pace with inflation;

Governance Ideas: Fiscal & Fiduciary Role

November 19 exercise

- **10 -** Review the financial stability of RTD and how to empower the state to have control/more influence over RTD's rail which is the most expensive part of their system.
- **7 -** Require more transparency into the District's finances and make them easy to find for Board members, legislature and the public. **Suggested to combine:**
    - **4 -** Examine thoroughly the fiscal condition of the District and the current budget shortfall (est $200+ million)
    - **2 -** Establish a clear, transparent process for Board engagement into District budgeting and financial condition
- **3 -** Training on Financial Oversight with a particular emphasis on fund accounting and who is paying into the system and what they are paying for. Training on what it means to be a board and clearly defining the policy/administration role. How to set stretch goals to truly push the operations into the future.
- **1 -** Require RTD to deliver a balanced budget annually.

Governance Ideas: Fiscal & Fiduciary Role

Additional Member Proposed Ideas Submitted to Leadership Team

- Auditor Reports to Board
- Rolling (3 or 5 year) Capital Improvement Plan (with Board Approval)
- Cascading, Multi-Month Budget Development
    - Alignment with Board Goals
    - Reference City & State Budgeting Processes
- SMART Act (or similar) Hearing/Presentation
- Practice & Policy of Intentionally Clear, Easy to Access Financials from Staff

Governance Ideas: Authorities & Responsibilities

November 19 exercise

- **6 -** Requirements to publish more detailed data on fiscal performance, workforce retention, ridership, etc. **Suggested to combine with:**
  - **4 -** Examine whether performance scorecard is quantifiable in areas other than financial/budgetary
  - **2 -** Examine whether performance metrics in the RTD strategic plan are quantifiable and critical enough to identify weaknesses in RTD performance
- **3 -** Quarterly public reporting of certain key performance indicators (KPIs);
- **3 -** Consider separate roles for GM and CEO; **Suggested to combine with:**
  - **0 -** Discussion on the combined nature of the roles of GM and CEO (what each role entails and how they became combined).
- **2 -** Potential expansion of capital raising authority;
- **2 -** Avoid gatekeeping by ensuring a bi-directional flow of information that is not only top-down, but executive leadership receives and is responsive to bottom-up feedback in order to build trust.

Executive Leadership

- Performance Assessment Framework
- Compensation

Executive Leadership: Performance & Compensation

Member Proposed Ideas

- Alignment of Performance Metrics with KPIs and Top 3-4 Goals
- Bi-annual Benchmarking of C-Suite Compensation

Paratransit Recommendation Development

Paratransit Ideas: Discussion

November 19 Survey

- **8/8 -** Assess ways to better integrate AoD and AaR services.**5/8 -** Conduct needs analysis to better understand the population of people with disabilities using transit, their needs, and gaps.
- **7/8 -** Assess how to leverage technology to improve paratransit service.
- **6/8 -** Establish an overarching goal / vision / framework for RTD's paratransit service and services for people with disabilities as a whole to guide future decisions.
- **6/8 -** Engage with and assess what the opportunities may be to collaborate with local and regional organizations to address gaps and challenges in providing paratransit services.**5/8 -** Conduct a comprehensive analysis of current paratransit operations.
- **6/8 -** Complete an equity analysis of current and potential service changes.
- **5/8 -** Assess fiscal sustainability, including RTD's overall spending on paratransit as a portion of their budget and benchmark against other regions, tradeoffs between providing different service levels of paratransit, fixed route, etc.
- **5/8 -** Evaluate other paratransit operations in various regions (or comment or, amplify or endorse APTA peer review document in light of recent RTD actions).
- **5/8 -** Develop options for regular data collection about paratransit users and usage from drivers, paratransit committees, riders, etc.
- Consider developing committee statement or reflections on the public engagement and decision-making process of recent RTD management recommendations and board decision on AoD program

Paratransit Ideas: Discussion

November 19 Exercise

Internal Practices & Processes

- **7/8 -** Make sure it is easier for customers to apply for a LiVE Pass and shorten the amount of time it takes to get approved.
- **7/8** - More collaboration with and use of RTD's two committees which have people with disabilities on them, including more regular engagement with them on paratransit planning and policy decisions.
- **5/8 -** Work with partners to better market the LiVE program.

Policy & System Changes (outside of RTD)

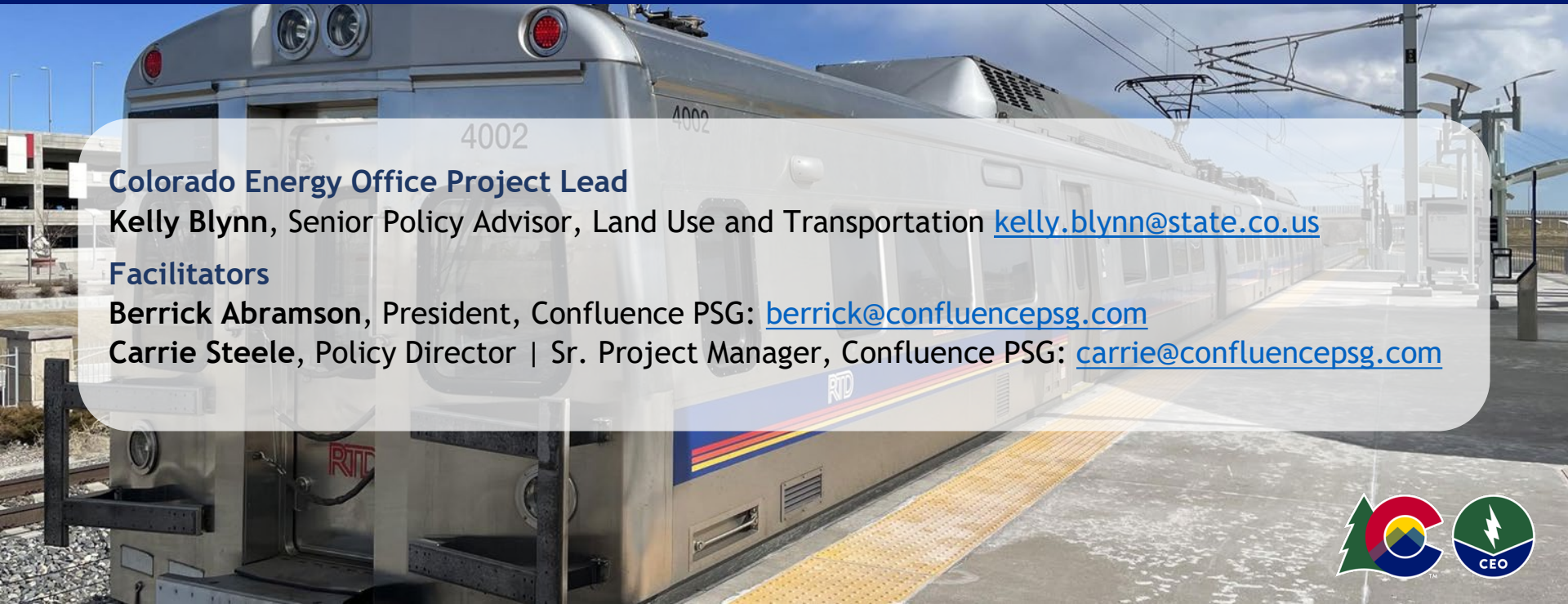
- **5/8** - Evaluate/consider a policy or programmatic strategy to ensure a certain number of WAVs as a percentage of the TNC fleet
- **3/8 -** Pursue a program to train TNC drivers that volunteer to get additional training and drug testing

Paratransit Ideas: Discussion

Takeaways and outstanding questions from survey and Nov. 19 discussion:

- General alignment around support for a **needs assessment and additional analysis to inform a vision and plan for providing service to people with disabilities in the district**. Additional questions about this analysis include:
    - What should additional study / analysis / planning include?
    - Who should be at the table?
    - Who should lead the assessment? (independent vs. RTD)
- Should the committee provide any opinion/statement about RTD's recent AoD decision?
- Are there any additional ideas from those generated that the committee wants to turn into recommendations? (i.e. aside from assessments / studies / learning?)
    - ***Reminder**: see "Recommendations Development" document for paratransit ideas for consideration survey results.*

Thank you!



Colorado Energy Office Project Lead
Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

Meeting Minutes

December 3, 2025, 11:00am - 2:00pm MT

Attendance

Committee Members in Attendance

- **Voting Members:** Maria Garcia Berry, Alexis Senger, Andrew Iltis, Harold Dominguez, Jackie Millet, Jaime Lewis, James Flattum, Kiplund Kolkmeier, Lance Longenbohn, Matt Larsen, Matthew Groves, Miller Hudson, Renée Chacon, Tobin Snook
- **Non-Voting Members:** Julien Bouquet

Consulting and Facilitation Teams

- **Facilitators:** Berrick Abramson and Carrie Steele, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
- **Research and Technical Support:** David Bragdon, Hudson Skykomish LLC

CEO Staff Members

- Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor/Committee Administrator

Guest Presenter

- Nikky Patel, Boards & Commissions

Moment of Silence Honoring Senator Faith Winter

Meeting Goals

- Complete Governance Recommendation Discussions, including Non-structural Governance
- Discuss and develop Paratransit Recommendations

Adoption of November 19 Meeting Minutes

Motion to Approve, Jackie Millet; Second by Miller Hudson; Approved by all members present.

Presentation & Discussion: Nikky Patel, Governor's Office of Boards & Commissions

Nikky Patel provided an overview of how gubernatorial appointments typically function in Colorado. Key points included:

- Variation in board structures: Some state boards and commissions' statutes require geographic or partisan balance, or professional expertise, while others do not.
- Type 1 boards are policy-making/rulemaking boards, whereas Type 2 are advisory boards where recommendations are not binding.
- Size usually varies with the degree of policy-making power they have; boards that are policy-making are usually smaller (e.g. 7), whereas advisory are usually larger (e.g. 10-15).
- Experience with paid boards vs. volunteer boards: paid boards tend to attract more qualified candidates, improving board performance.
- The Governor appoints chairs for paid boards, but not typically for unpaid bodies, however there are some exceptions.
- Boards and commissions staff utilizes a multi-step process for recruitment and vetting, and evaluate gaps in perspectives and expertise among applicants to identify missing skillsets or perspectives.
- Legislative confirmation processes help ensure transparency, competency, and legitimacy of appointees.
- Process for removal of appointees is usually stipulated in statute in some way.

Members asked clarifying questions on removal procedures, the role of legislative committees, options for expanding community representation, and requested examples of statutory language that supports effective appointment processes.

Governance Discussions: Outstanding Structural Items

Discussion: Structure of a hybrid elected + appointed board

The committee engaged in comprehensive dialog about how to structure a reformed board that balances democratic accountability, expertise, and representativeness.

Key themes include:

- A hybrid board may offer the potential to strengthen capacity but could create concerns for some and questions regarding complexity, how elected and appointed members relate to one another, and where each gets authority.
- Confirmation processes may improve transparency and accountability but may introduce timing constraints tied to the legislative calendar.
- The committee emphasized the need for clear statutory qualifications for appointed seats to avoid cronyism and ensure expertise, possibly phrased as "including but not limited to", to enable flexibility in the future.

- Ensuring equity-focused representation, including riders, paratransit users, immigrant communities, and underserved groups.

Appointment Authority & Governor Discretion

The committee explored multiple approaches to appointment authority, including but not limited to:

Points of General Support:

- Allowing the Governor discretion for at least one appointment which may help coordinate statewide transportation priorities and improve communication between RTD leadership and the administration.
- Gubernatorial involvement may strengthen accountability through the confirmation process.
- One appointing authority helps centralize accountability.

Points of General Concern:

- Risk of cronyism, without clear stipulations in statute for qualifications.
- Desire for guardrails ensuring transparency, community outreach, and meaningful evaluation of applicant qualifications.
- Fear that unbounded discretion could lead to appointments based on political loyalty rather than skill.
- Multiple appointing authorities could help with representativeness.

Discussion: Process on creating, nominating and selecting candidates

Nominating Committee Design

The committee examined whether to create a nominating committee and, if so, what its role should be. The committee broadly agreed on the importance of clear qualifications, even if the exact appointment pathways differ.

Arguments Supporting a Nominating Committee

- Creates structured competition and early vetting
- Reduces the risk of politicized appointments
- Supports diverse and representative voices in candidate selection
- Allows community, labor, riders, advocacy groups and others to guide the qualifications framework

Arguments Against a Nominating Committee

- Adds complexity and creates additional layers of bureaucracy
- May dilute accountability by distributing responsibility
- Raises concerns about geographic proportionality, especially if administered by a regional body with uneven representation
- Could create “a committee to choose a committee,” adding process without clear performance benefits

- Focus on representative composition of committee could dilute focus on ensuring expertise

A temperature check was taken regarding the potential Board nominating committee: Initial support was indicated favoring a 5 member elected board with 4 members being appointed by the Governor. A Board nominating committee would put forth to the Governor no fewer than two and no more than five names based on requirements of background that the committee will define. The Governor's only discretion would be the ability to reject a list in whole or for one of those appointed slots. The committee is contemplating though not yet settled on legislative approval of those appointments through the Senate Transportation and Energy Committee.

A temperature check indicated:
- Majority support for this model with further discussion needed
- Conditional support depending on details (e.g., who sits on the nominating committee, how qualifications are defined).
- A minority opposed, preferring either full elections or fewer appointed members for reasons of democratic representation.

Key areas requiring further refinement include:
- Finalizing Board size, elected vs. appointed
- Composition, size, and mandate of a potential nominating committee
- Who would have administrative responsibility of a potential nominating committee (DRCOG has been suggested)

Initial Discussion: Non-structural Board Items

The committee began exploring multiple areas of non-structural board governance items, including but not limited to:
- Labor having a formal voting or ex-officio role on the Board or within operations-related subcommittees.
- Incorporating statewide or regional transportation expertise into finance-related committees
- Enhancing or reconfiguring existing citizen advisory bodies to ensure their input meaningfully informs board decisions

Discussions to be continued at December 10 meeting include:

Non-Structural Governance Items
- Substructures of the Board
- Authorities and Responsibilities
- Financial and Fiduciary Role of the Board
- Staffing, Supports & Training
- Board Compensation

Governance: Executive Leadership

- Performance Assessment/Framework
- Compensation

Paratransit Discussion and Generation of Ideas for Consideration

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- December 10, Remote via Zoom, 10:00am-2:00pm
- December 17, In-person, location tbd., 9:00 am – 3:00pm
- **New date**: Thursday, January 7, 11am-2:00pm (virtual discussion session to finalize and approve report) (replacing the January 8th tentative hold)

RTD Accountability Committee - Meeting #10

December 10, 2025, 10am - 2:00 pm via Zoom

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89320799832?pwd=RbBvFcbvXt7nbzgbs6plrPY3nnuB4I.1&from=addon

Meeting goals:

- Complete Governance Recommendation Discussions, including Non-structural Governance
- Discuss and develop Paratransit Recommendations

Pre-Reading

- December 3 Draft Meeting Minutes
- Review new questions at end of governance section in FAQs document
- Review draft nonstructural governance and paratransit recommendations for discussion, along with original ideas for consideration
- Review new public comments in “Public Input” folder of member folder

Agenda

Timing	Content
10:00 - 10:05am	**Welcome, Housekeeping & Level-Set on Day**
10:05 - 10:15am	**Public Comment**
10:15 - 11:30am	**Governance:** Structural
11:30 - 11:40am	***Break***
11:40 - 1:00pm	**Governance:** Non-Structural & Executive Leadership
1:00 - 1:10pm	***Break***
1:10 - 1:55pm	**Paratransit**
1:55 - 2:00pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead

Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation: kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators

Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
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RTD Accountability Committee

December 10, 2025

Meeting #10 of RTD Accountability Committee:
Ideas into Action: Recommendation Development & Voting Session

Today's Meeting: Agenda

Timing	Content
10:00 - 10:05am	**Welcome, Housekeeping & Level-Set on Day**
10:05 - 10:15am	**Public Comment**
10:15 - 11:30am	**Governance:** Structural
11:30 - 11:40am	***Break***
11:40 - 1:10pm	**Governance:** Non-Structural & Executive Leadership
1:00 - 1:10pm	***Break***
1:10 - 1:55pm	**Paratransit**
1:55 - 2:00pm	**Closing & Next Steps**

Today's Meeting: Goals

Meeting Goals

- Complete Governance Recommendation Discussions & Voting, including Non-structural Governance
- Discuss and develop Paratransit Recommendations

Our priority continues to be those tasks identified in SB25-161. As time necessitates and where appropriate, we will also include observations and issues identified during our work together. The Committee should not feel obligated to work through every detail to advance each recommendation which will be the collective responsibility of legislators, bill drafters and others.

Housekeeping

- Minutes approval
- Agenda
- Recap of remaining meetings

Accountability Committee: Legislative Charge

SB25-161 established the committee within CEO and tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to (see C.R.S. 24-38.5-124(3)):

Governance-related Topics

- "The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "The representation of local governments and state agencies within the District;"

Paratransit Topics

- "The paratransit services provided within the District's geographic service area."

As used here, "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

- "The District's workforce retention."
- "How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;"
- "How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;"

Reminder of process

Learning and Discussion	Pre-readings, meeting presentations, Q&A, discussions in meetings #1-7
Idea generation	Ideas for consideration generation during meetings and in follow-up surveys from topical meetings
Idea prioritization	Prioritization of ideas for consideration by the committee, and identification of anything missing
Idea refinement	Discussion and deliberation to combine, refine, and further hone in on potential recommendations
Voting on recommendations	Voting to approve recommendations for inclusion in the final report (reminder: bylaws require 8 votes, 10 person quorum)

Focus of our meeting today

Committee Report: Process and Timeline Reminder

Report Recommendations

Developed November 19 - December 17
Vote held December 10 & 17 as needed

Report Drafting & Comments

Draft 1 (Internal): December 12
Draft 2 (Recommendations) to Members: December 23, Member Feedback by January 5
Draft 3 (Narrative) to Members: January 2, Member Feedback by January 8
Final Draft (text): January 16
Final Report (full design for publication): January 30

Recommendation Development

- Today’s Discussion Structure
- Problems to Solve
- Values Driven Ideas

Accountability Committee: Operating Norms

The following norms encourage productive and collaborative conversation. All attendees are asked to follow and embody them and give facilitators room to ensure they define our time together.

Good Faith: Act in good faith in all discussions with intent to promote collaboration and productive conversation.

Openness: Be honest and open in sharing your perspectives; be open to other points of view and outcome of discussions.

Focus: Maintain focus on the goals, purpose and meeting objectives; honor agendas.

Listening: Listen to each speaker rather than preparing your response; no interruptions; refrain from use of smart phones and other technologies.

Participation: Participate actively, speak briefly, and agree succinctly. Be mindful and respectful of the presence of multiple backgrounds and avoid the overuse of acronyms or technical language.

Respect: Disagree judiciously and without being disagreeable; do not engage in personal attacks; in all contexts, refrain from behavior that denigrates other participants or is disruptive to the work of the group.

Preparedness & Commitment: Prepare for and attend each session; get up to speed if you missed a meeting.

Facilitation: Let the facilitators facilitate; allow them to enforce the norms and engage them with any concerns.

Questions & Requests: Please direct any questions, comments or requests to the facilitators who will route them to staff, third parties or other members.

Governance Recommendation Development

Board Structure

What is problem to solve?

- Selection Process of Appointees
- Criteria & Requirements for Appointees
- Elected Representation (District/At-Large)

Governance Ideas: Discussion

Committee Alignment on November 19 & December 3

- Should be a governing board
- 9 Member Board
- 5 Elected, 4 Appointed
- *Governor selects from list provided by nominating committee*

Governance Ideas: Discussion

Outstanding Structure Items

- *Role of a nominating committee or Boards & Commissions Office*
- Nominating/Confirmation Authority
- Requirements (if any) for nominees (one or more)
- District (or at-large) of Elected Directors

Governance: Problems to Solve

Problem	%	Number
Need for diversity of expertise and experience	69.23%	9
Challenges with fulfilling oversight role due to dynamic between Board and Leadership and ability of a part-time Board to be as fully informed as necessary.	53.85%	7
Challenges working with, making decisions, finding consensus with larger board	53.85%	7
Accountability to constituents vs. system-level thinking (parochialism)	46.15%	6
Lack of appeal & attractiveness to serving including compensation considerations	38.46%	5
Lack of clarity and transparency of decision-making processes	38.46%	5
Challenges with board members (particularly the chair) being part time to carry out duties	38.46%	5
Elected positions lack visibility, competition, voter awareness which leads to weakened legitimacy	30.77%	4
Board terms / turnover presenting challenges to long-term planning	30.77%	4

Governance Ideas: Survey Findings / Temperature Check

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Problem	%	Number
Perception among some that some board members are unclear on their role, statutory authority and associated obligations.	23.08%	3
Lack of sufficient onboarding, training, and adoption of working norms	23.08%	3
Lack of sufficient staffing & support	23.08%	3
Role, expectations and operations of standing committees	15.38%	2
Belief among some that Board is not fully representative of all constituents or interested parties	7.69%	1
Fiscal authority (e.g. taxes, bonds, ballot measures) - relation to TABOR	7.69%	1

Governance Ideas: Appointing Process

How does a proposed approach address the problem(s) to solve?

What are opportunities, risks, clarities or complexities added by approach?

Governance Ideas: Appointee Profiles

Should there be any absolute qualifications for one or more appointed seats?

If yes, what are requirements & desired qualifications?

Governance Ideas: Elected Directors

Should any seats be at-large?

For any boundary/geographic districts, what attributes should be considered in drawing the district map?

Governance Recommendation Development

Non-Structural

- Substructures
- Authorities & Responsibilities
- Fiduciary & Fiscal Role
- Staffing, Supports, Training & Board Compensation

Governance Ideas: Substructures

1. **Substructures:**
    a. The Committee recommends that RTD include at least ex-officio seats (if not full voting membership) on its standing committees to strengthen coordination with key stakeholders and partners including 1) A union seat on the Operations and Safety committee or its successor and 2) A seat for CDOT (or CTIO or CTE) on the Finance and Planning committee or its successor.
    b. The Committee recommends RTD review and revisit the composition and role of the Citizens Advisory Committee in order to strengthen its effectiveness and ensure its input into key policy and oversight decisions made by the RTD Board.
    c. The Committee recommends RTD review all standing committees of external stakeholders, in order to clarify and formalize their roles and engagement with the RTD Board, in order to improve their effectiveness.

Governance Ideas: Authorities & Responsibilities

2. Authorities and Responsibilities

a. The RTD Accountability Committee recommends the legislature refine the authorities and responsibilities of the RTD Board in C.R.S. 32-9-109.5 to clarify and focus the Board's efforts on being a governing board that provides effective oversight of the District. These authorities and responsibilities should focus principally on:
   i. Passing a fiscally responsible annual budget
   ii. Setting policy direction designed to grow ridership
   iii. Hiring and evaluating the GM/CEO on appropriate measures of performance aligned with the strategic plan

b. The Committee recommends that reporting requirements in statute ensure that RTD establish quantifiable performance metrics in their strategic plan related to fiscal performance, workforce retention, ridership, customer-service related metrics like on-time performance, and publish performance data for these metrics at least quarterly to strengthen transparency, oversight, and effectiveness. Any changes to reporting requirements should be reviewed in light of requirements from SB24-230 and SB25-161.

Governance Ideas: Fiscal & Fiduciary Role

3. Fiscal Oversight

a. The Committee recommends RTD take key steps to improve transparency and oversight of the District's finances, including:
   i. Establishing a clear, transparent process across multiple months that results in development of a budget that aligns with the Board's goals
   ii. Establishment of a regular 3-5 year capital improvement and asset management/state of good repair budgeting process
   iii. Conducting more in-depth financial training for Board members
   iv. Conducting a thorough review of the District's current financial condition and budget shortfall
   v. Strengthening of the Board's audit function
   vi. A regular SMART Act or similar hearing presentation on the District's budget

b. The Committee recommends that the state, in collaboration with RTD, study the potential benefits and challenges of shared responsibility and/or state ownership of the District's rail assets.

Governance Ideas: Board Supports - compensation

4. **Supports, Staffing, and Board Compensation**
    a. The legislature should increase the amount that Board Members are compensated to reflect inflation since the last change in statute (2009), and should benchmark compensation going forward to a fraction of another statutorily established salary such as judges or county commissioners, in order to keep pace with inflation.
    b. The RTD Chair should become a full-time position with a salary that reflects their increased workload, which should also be benchmarked to a statutorily established salary such as judges or county commissioners.

Governance Ideas: Board Supports - staffing, etc.

C. Board members and the GM/CEO should establish a more clear mutual understanding of the amount and types of access to agency staff that board members can reasonably request in the course of their duties on behalf of the agency. Procedures for this interface exist, but seem to be inconsistently understood. The protocol, in practice as well as writing, should recognize that board members are entitled to some agreed-upon level of support from agency staff, and that while in effect the staff of RTD works under the overall direction of the board, individual employees do so functionally through a chain of command headed by the GM/CEO and that individual board members do not directly manage staff.

D. The Committee recommends that something akin to the former “Transit Academy” be reinstated, to provide training and informational sessions to potential RTD Board candidates (both appointed and elected). This initiative could be led by [discuss].

Executive Leadership

- Performance Assessment Framework
- Compensation

Executive Leadership: Performance & Compensation

Member Proposed Ideas

- Alignment of Performance Metrics with KPIs and Top 3-4 Goals
- Bi-annual Benchmarking of C-Suite Compensation

Governance Ideas: Executive leadership

5. **Executive Leadership**

   a. The Committee understands that the current board has taken steps to include more ambitious goals and clearer metrics in the annual GM/CEO evaluation, an encouraging trend that should be continued, including explicit linkages to the agency's strategic plan when it is updated next year.

   b. The committee recommends that every 2-3 years the Board review and consider updating its written "Compensation Philosophy for the GM-CEO," as currently shown on the District's web site with the version adopted September 26, 2023. This is a useful explanation of how the board sees RTD as a competitive employer of executive talent in the national transit industry marketplace, which evolves over time.

Paratransit Recommendation Development

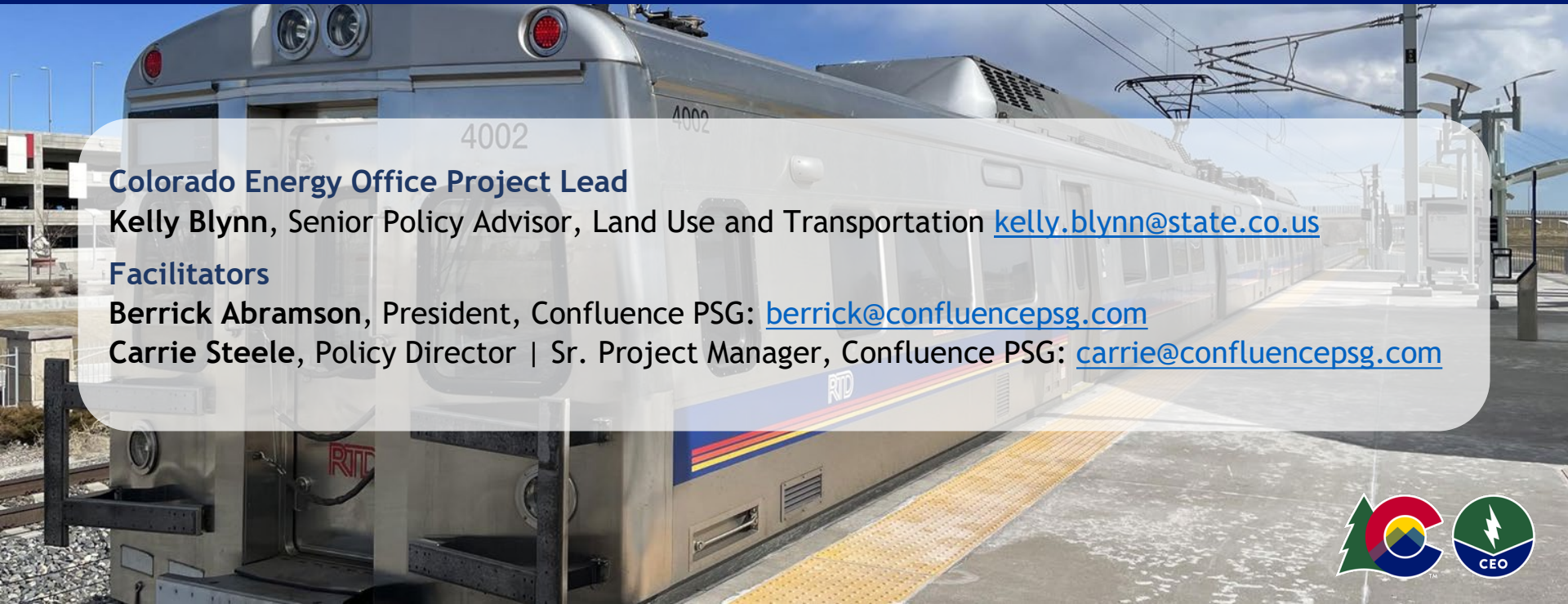
Paratransit Ideas: Discussion

1. **Assessment and planning:** The Committee recommends RTD undertake a comprehensive analysis and planning effort to inform a holistic vision and plan for providing service to riders with disabilities in the District. This analysis and planning effort should include:
    - A needs assessment to better understand the population of people with disabilities using transit, their needs, and gaps.
    - An assessment of ways to better integrate AoD and AaR services.
    - An assessment of opportunities to collaborate with local and regional organizations to address gaps in paratransit services.
    - Engagement with paratransit users, transit riders with disabilities, local governments, local and regional service providers, and other key stakeholders.
    - Establishing an overarching framework, vision, and/or set of goals to guide decision-making about RTD's paratransit services and other services that support people with disabilities in the District.
    - An assessment of fiscal sustainability, including RTD's overall spending on paratransit as a portion of the budget compared to other regions, tradeoffs between services relied on by riders with disabilities, etc.

Paratransit Ideas: Discussion

2. **AoD decision statement:** The Committee reviewed the RTD Board's recent decision about Access on Demand, and recognizes this was a very difficult decision without one right answer. RTD is not alone amongst transit agencies who have launched on-demand paratransit programs, seen costs rise past initial expectations, and who have subsequently needed to take steps to ensure financial sustainability while preserving the benefits of the program and meeting federal ADA paratransit requirements. The Committee believes the thorough assessment and planning recommended is important for moving forward and establishing a more holistic framework to guide future decision-making.

Thank you!



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Facilitators
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Meeting Minutes

December 10, 2025, 11:00am - 2:00pm MT

Attendance

Committee Members in Attendance

- **Voting Members:** Alexis Senger, Andrew Iltis, Harold Dominguez, James Flattum, Jaime Lewis, Kip Kolkmeier, Lance Longenbohn, Maria Garcia Berry, Matt Larsen, Miller Hudson, Renée Chacon, Tobin Snook
- **Non-Voting Members:** Julien Bouquet

Consulting and Facilitation Teams

- **Facilitators:** Berrick Abramson and Carrie Steele, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
- **Research and Technical Support:** David Bragdon, Hudson Skykomish LLC

CEO Staff Members

- Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor/Committee Administrator

Meeting Goals

- Complete Governance Recommendation Discussions, including Non-structural Governance
- Discuss and develop Paratransit Recommendations

Adoption of December 3 Meeting Minutes

Motion to Approve, Harold Dominguez; Second by Jaime Lewis; Approved by all members present.

Committee Votes on Formal Recommendations

The committee considered several topics and formal votes were taken on several items under substructures, authorities and responsibilities, board supports and

paratransit. Recommendation language will be exactly as voted by the Committee. Framing language including process notes will be drafted by the State leadership team for members to review in advance of publication of the final report. A summary of the Committee member discussion and key considerations is below.

Governance Discussion: Outstanding Structural and Non-Structural Items (continued from December 3 meeting)

Structural Issues

Structure of a hybrid elected + appointed board: The committee continued in-depth deliberations on structural governance reforms, with discussion focused on the size of the board, number of elected and appointed, appointment pathways, nominating structures, confirmation authority, and statutory qualifications.

Candidate Screening and Recruiting: Following the December 3rd presentation from Boards and Commissions and several members' concerns about the potential complications of a separate body to nominate candidates for appointment, the committee expressed general alignment that the creation of a new nominating committee could be overly complicated and unnecessary. Some members instead expressed support for a nominating process that already exists through Boards and Commissions.

Discussion and Support for Boards and Commissions Role Included:

- Administrative function already exists at the State which allows for transparency and consistency without additional structural complexity.
- Applications and nominations allow for focus on who should serve and what qualifications are needed.

Potential Gubernatorial Appointed Seats: Summary discussion of potential Gubernatorial appointments included:

- Appointments were viewed as a way to ensure representation of critical skill sets, including finance, transportation operations, land use, labor, and equity, though members also discussed the need to maintain flexibility in statutory criteria.
- The committee discussed Senate confirmation as a mechanism to strengthen accountability, legitimacy, and transparency in the appointment of board members by the Governor.
- Some members expressed concern that excessive discretion could undermine public trust and democratic legitimacy.

Members made several motions for recommendations of different sizes and compositions of a hybrid board with elected and appointed members. No motion

received sufficient votes to advance as a recommendation. Discussion will continue at the December 17 meeting.

Elected Seats: District-based vs. At-large: Summary discussions of Elected Seats: District-based vs. At-Large included:

- Alignment on the idea that all elected board seats should be district-based, not at-large and that district-based elections were viewed as a means to strengthen geographic accountability, reduce parochialism, and ensure representation across the full RTD service area.
-
- Concern was shared that poorly designed districts could exacerbate underrepresentation of minority or underserved communities.
- Members emphasized that it would be best for the committee not to weigh in given the significant legal requirements around districting.

Following brief discussion, members agreed to postpone further discussion or action until resolving structural governance issues at the December 17 meeting.

Non-Structural Issues

Non-structural Board Items: Summary discussions of Non-Structural Board Items included:

- Non-structural reforms including financial and fiduciary oversight, training and support, and potential board substructures were viewed as essential to accountability, performance, and long-term system success.
- Adding ex-officio seats on standing committees to strengthen coordination, including a labor seat on Operations/Safety and a state transportation seat (CDOT/CTIO/CTE) on Finance/Planning.
- Reviewing and redefining the role and composition of advisory bodies, including the Citizens Advisory Committee, to ensure meaningful input into board decisions.
- Ensuring disability-focused advisory groups (e.g., APAC and Advisory Council for People with Disabilities) are clearly integrated into governance processes.
- Conducting regular reviews of all external committees of stakeholders to identify gaps, duplication, and opportunities to consolidate.

Substructures discussion included:

- Including ex-officio seats on its standing committees to strengthen coordination with key stakeholders and partners including 1) A union seat on the Operations and Safety committee or its successor and 2) A seat for CDOT (or CTIO or CTE) on the Finance and Planning committee or its successor.
- Reviewing and revisiting the composition and role of the Citizens Advisory Committee in order to strengthen its effectiveness and ensure its input into key policy and oversight decisions made by the RTD Board.
- Reviewing, on a regular basis, all standing committees of external stakeholders (including APAC & Advisory Council for People w/Disabilities) to identify gaps

or duplications and opportunities to consolidate if appropriate in order to clarify and formalize their roles and engagement with the RTD Board, in order to improve their effectiveness.

As part of discussion, edits were made to include the APAC & Advisory Council for People w/ Disabilities. A motion was made and seconded. Following discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the recommendations as revised were approved.

Authorities and Responsibilities discussion included:

- Focusing the RTD Board's statutory authorities and duties on:
    - Passing a fiscally responsible annual budget
    - Setting policy direction designed to grow ridership
    - Hiring and evaluating the GM/CEO on appropriate measures of performance aligned with the strategic plan
- Strengthening reporting requirements in statute to align with their strategic plan
- Ensuring the General Counsel is overseen by the Board as an important oversight duty

As part of discussion,edits were made to include a recommendation that general counsel be hired by and report to the Board of Directors and to add clarifying language. A motion was made and seconded. Following discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the recommendations as revised were approved.

Fiscal and Fiduciary Role of the Board: The Committee discussed taking key steps to improve transparency and oversight of the District's finances, including:

- The CO General Assembly directing RTD to establish a clear, transparent process across multiple months that results in development of a budget that aligns with the Board's goals including a quarterly report forecasting deficits and revenues.
- Establishing a regular 3-5 year capital improvement and asset management/state of good repair budgeting process
- Conducting more in-depth financial training for Board members
- Conducting a thorough review of the District's current financial condition and budget shortfall
- Strengthening the Board's audit function
- A regular SMART Act or similar hearing presentation on the District's budget

The Committee also showed general alignment that the state, in collaboration with RTD, study the potential benefits and challenges of shared responsibility of the District's rail assets.

As part of discussion, several edits were made to strengthen the draft regarding financial transparency by calling for the General Assembly to direct the actions and to add reporting requirements. A motion was made and seconded. Following discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the recommendations as revised were approved.

Supports, Staffing, and Board Compensation: Summary discussions of Supports, Staffing and Board Compensation included:

- Increasing the amount that Board Members are compensated to reflect inflation since the last change in statute (2009), and should benchmark compensation going forward to a fraction of another statutorily established salary such as judges or county commissioners, in order to keep pace with inflation.
- The RTD Chair becoming a full-time position with a salary that reflects their increased workload, which should also be benchmarked to a statutorily established salary such as judges or county commissioners.
- Board members and the GM/CEO establishing a more clear mutual understanding of the amount and types of access to agency staff that board members can reasonably request in the course of their duties on behalf of the agency noting that procedures for this interface exist, but seem to be inconsistently understood.
- Enacting something akin to the former "Transit Academy" to be reinstated to provide training and informational sessions to potential RTD Board candidates (both appointed and elected). This initiative could be led by RTD and outside parties such as DRCOG in partnership with other agencies or organizations.

Following brief discussion, members agreed to postpone further discussion or action on board staffing and compensation until resolving structural governance issues at the December 17 meeting. They did deliberate and approve a recommendation to enact a "Transit Academy" to recruit and train potential RTD Board candidates.

Executive Leadership Discussion: The committee discussed executive leadership as a central lever for improving accountability, performance, and long-term system outcomes. Members emphasized the need for clearer expectations, stronger alignment between leadership evaluation and agency goals, and governance practices that support both accountability and stability.

Summary of key discussion points included:

- Strengthening the GM/CEO evaluation framework with clearer, more ambitious performance metrics aligned to the strategic plan and top agency priorities.
- Tying executive performance more explicitly to measurable outcomes such as ridership growth, service quality, financial stewardship, and organizational effectiveness.
- Periodically reviewing and updating the GM/CEO compensation philosophy to ensure competitiveness and alignment with performance expectations.

- Using regular benchmarking against peer transit agencies to inform executive compensation decisions.
- Clarifying roles and expectations between the Board and executive leadership to support effective oversight while preserving appropriate management authority.
- Recognizing leadership stability as critical to implementing reforms and sustaining progress over time.

Following brief discussion, members agreed to continue deliberations on these items at the December 17 meeting.

Paratransit Discussion

The committee discussed paratransit as a key issue for RTD requiring additional assessments and planning, stronger data, and more direct engagement with riders. There was broad agreement that additional work is required to ensure paratransit services are equitable, responsive, and aligned with ADA obligations and rider needs.

Summary of key discussion points included:

- Conducting a needs assessment to better understand the population of people with disabilities using transit, their needs, and gaps.
- Conducting an assessment of ways to better integrate AoD and AaR services.
- Conducting an assessment of opportunities to collaborate with local and regional organizations to address gaps in paratransit services.
- Engaging with paratransit users, transit riders with disabilities, local governments, local and regional service providers, and other key stakeholders.
- Establishing an overarching framework, vision, and/or set of goals to guide decision-making about RTD's paratransit services and other services that support people with disabilities in the District.
- Conducting an assessment of fiscal sustainability, including RTD's overall spending on paratransit as a portion of the budget compared to other regions, tradeoffs between services relied on by riders with disabilities, etc.
- Aggressively adopting innovative approaches to providing additional paratransit services leveraging technologies such as autonomous vehicles and other available technologies or services.

Members also discussed whether to make any statement about the RTD Board's recent decision regarding AoD service. Members expressed concern with ongoing litigation on the topic, a feeling that making a statement on the topic was outside the committee's scope, as well as a desire to be forward looking in their recommendations, and ultimately members opted to pass on developing a statement.

As part of discussion, members agreed to add a sub-item to the assessment and planning recommendation advocating for use of innovative approaches and leveraging technology such as autonomous vehicles. A motion was made and seconded. Following discussion, a roll call vote was taken and the recommendations as revised were approved.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- December 17, In-person, History Colorado, 9:00 am – 3:00pm
- **New date**: Thursday, January 7, 11am-2:00pm; Virtual discussion session to finalize recommendations (replacing the January 8th tentative hold).

***Please note**: These minutes are intended to provide an overview of the discussions and, where possible, the high-level themes and ideas of the committee. The summaries of any topics are not presented as comprehensive notes of the full discussion and neither the inclusion or omission of any comment or segment of a discussion should be interpreted as a judgment of the value or importance of such items.*

RTD Accountability Committee - Meeting #11

December 17, 2025, 9:00am - 3:00pm

History Colorado, 1200 Broadway, Denver, CO 80203, Colorado Room

Hybrid Option:

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88217469560?pwd=HbsjGSHg7qCtqahB2a2spMYfOUBHZ6.1&from=addon

Meeting goals:

- Complete Recommendation Discussions & Voting

Pre-Reading

- December 10 Draft Meeting Minutes
- Review Recommendation Drafting Document (includes recommendations already voted on and not yet voted on)
- Review new questions at end of governance section in FAQs document
- Review new public comments in "Public Input" folder of member folder
- FYI: General Counsel memo from David Bragdon

Agenda

Timing	Content
8:30am	**Breakfast:** Light breakfast (bagels / pastries / fruit) will be provided for the Committee. Note for observers and general public: there is a cafe in History Colorado.
9:00 - 9:10am	**Welcome, Housekeeping & Level-Set on Day**
9:10 - 9:25am	**Public Comment:** Those wishing to sign up for public comment are highly encouraged to sign up in advance by clicking here.
9:25 - 10:30am	**Governance:** Structural
10:30 - 10:40am	***Break***
10:40 - 11:30am	**Governance:** Non-Structural
11:30 - 12:15pm	**Workforce**
12:15 - 12:30	***Break, Grab Lunch:*** Lunch will be provided for the Committee. Note for observers and general public: there is a cafe in History Colorado.
12:30 - 1:20pm	**Workforce** *continued*
1:20 - 1:30pm	*Break*
1:30 - 2:30pm	**Local Government Collaboration**

2:30 - 2:45pm	**Public Comment 2** (if needed)
2:45 - 3:00pm	**Chair Reflections, Closing & Next Steps**

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead
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RTD Accountability Committee

December 17, 2025

Meeting #11 of RTD Accountability Committee:
Ideas into Action: Recommendation Development & Voting Session

Today's Meeting: Agenda

Timing	Content
8:30am	**Breakfast**
9:00 - 9:10am	**Welcome, Housekeeping**
9:10 - 9:25am	**Public Comment**
9:25 - 10:30am	**Governance:** Structural
10:30 - 10:40am	***Break***
10:40 - 11:30am	**Governance:** Non-Structural
11:30 - 12:15pm	**Workforce**

Timing	Content
12:15 - 12:30	***Break, Grab Lunch***
12:30 - 1:20pm	**Workforce** *continued*
1:20 - 1:30	*Break*
1:30 - 2:30pm	**Local Government Collaboration**
2:30 - 2:45pm	**Public Comment 2** (if needed)
2:45 - 3:00pm	**Chair Reflections, Closing & Next Steps**

Today's Meeting: Goals

Meeting Goals

- Complete Recommendation Discussions & Voting

Housekeeping

- Minutes approval
- Agenda
- Recap of remaining meetings
- Proxy vote allowance

Accountability Committee: Legislative Charge

SB25-161 established the committee within CEO and tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to (see C.R.S. 24-38.5-124(3)):

Governance-related Topics

- "The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "The representation of local governments and state agencies within the District;"

Paratransit Topics

- "The paratransit services provided within the District's geographic service area."

As used here, "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

- "The District's workforce retention."
- "How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;"
- "How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;"

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Public comment

- 3 mins each

Recommendation Development

- Today’s Discussion Structure

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Focus: Maintain focus on the goals, purpose and meeting objectives; honor agendas.

Listening: Listen to each speaker rather than preparing your response; no interruptions; refrain from use of smart phones and other technologies.

Participation: Participate actively, speak briefly, and agree succinctly. Be mindful and respectful of the presence of multiple backgrounds and avoid the overuse of acronyms or technical language.

Respect: Disagree judiciously and without being disagreeable; do not engage in personal attacks; in all contexts, refrain from behavior that denigrates other participants or is disruptive to the work of the group.

Preparedness & Commitment: Prepare for and attend each session; get up to speed if you missed a meeting.

Facilitation: Let the facilitators facilitate; allow them to enforce the norms and engage them with any concerns.

Questions & Requests: Please direct any questions, comments or requests to the facilitators who will route them to staff, third parties or other members.

Governance Recommendation Development

Board Structure

What is problem to solve?

- Size / composition
- Selection Process of Appointees
- Criteria & Requirements for Appointees
- Elected Representation (District/At-Large)

Governance Ideas: Discussion

Committee Alignment on November 19 & December 3

- Should be a governing board
- 9 Member Board
- 5 Elected, 4 Appointed

Committee Discussion on December 10

- 9 or 7 member Board
- 5 or 4 Elected, 4 or 3 Appointed
- Boards & Commissions Managed Process

Governance Ideas: Discussion

Outstanding Structure Items

- Board Size & Composition
- Nominating/Confirmation Authority
- Requirements (if any) for nominees (one or more)
- District (or at-large) of Elected Directors

Governance Ideas: Appointing Process

How does a proposed approach address the problem(s) to solve?

What are opportunities, risks, clarities or complexities added by approach?

Governance Ideas: Appointee Profiles

Should there be any absolute qualifications for one or more appointed seats?

If yes, what are requirements & desired qualifications?

Governance Ideas: Elected Directors

Should any seats be at-large?

For any boundary/geographic districts, what attributes should be considered in drawing the district map?

Governance Recommendation Development

Non-Structural

- Staffing, Supports, Training & Board Compensation
- Executive Leadership

Governance Ideas: Board Supports - compensation

4. **Supports, Staffing, and Board Compensation**
    a. The legislature should increase the amount that Board Members are compensated to reflect inflation since the last change in statute (2009), and should benchmark compensation going forward to a fraction of another statutorily established salary such as judges or county commissioners, in order to keep pace with inflation.
    b. The RTD Chair should receive an increased salary relative to the rest of the Board that reflects their increased workload, prevents the need for a secondary income, and which should be benchmarked to a statutorily established salary such as judges or county commissioners.

Governance Ideas: Board Supports - staffing, etc.

C. Board members and the GM/CEO should establish a more clear mutual understanding of the amount and types of access to agency staff that board members can reasonably request in the course of their duties on behalf of the agency. Procedures for this interface exist, but seem to be inconsistently understood. The protocol, in practice as well as writing, should recognize that board members are entitled to some agreed-upon level of support from agency staff, and that while in effect the staff of RTD works under the overall direction of the board, individual employees do so functionally through a chain of command headed by the GM/CEO and that individual board members do not directly manage staff.

Governance Ideas: Authorities & Responsibilities

a. The signature threshold established in statute for getting onto the ballot for the RTD Board elected seats should be reviewed and revisited, likely increasing the current threshold in statute of 250 signatures to align more closely with other elected positions.

Governance Ideas: Executive leadership

5. Executive Leadership

a. The Committee understands that the current board has taken steps to include more ambitious goals and clearer metrics in the annual GM/CEO evaluation, an encouraging trend that should be continued, including explicit linkages to the agency's strategic plan when it is updated next year. From 12/10: Does language including *"ambitiousness" get at member intent?*

b. The committee recommends that every 2-3 years the Board review and consider updating its written "Compensation Philosophy for the GM-CEO," as currently shown on the District's web site with the version adopted September 26, 2023. This is a useful explanation of how the board sees RTD as a competitive employer of executive talent in the national transit industry marketplace, which evolves over time.

Workforce Recommendation Development

Workforce Ideas: Discussion

1. **Recruitment**
    a. The Committee recommends RTD pursue partnerships with other key stakeholders, including community college districts, CDOT, ATU, regional entities, workforce agencies, community organizations, and ESL programs on hiring outreach, training (particularly on obtaining CDLs), and test prep support.
    b. The Committee recommends RTD together with ATU explore enabling more flexible and part-time positions for operators.
    c. The Committee recommends RTD together with ATU explore incentivizing senior Operators to vote the extra board as a means to open up work for newer Operators to vote on.

Workforce Ideas: Discussion

2. **Retention**
    a. The Committee recommends RTD examine and implement strategies to improve internal culture, ownership, and job satisfaction, including structural changes to enable employees to have a stronger voice in decision-making.
    b. The Committee recommends RTD in collaboration with ATU or other partners as appropriate explore and implement childcare subsidies to support employee recruitment and retention.

Workforce Ideas: Discussion

3. **Training and Mentorship**
   a. The Committee recommends RTD and ATU expand their joint apprenticeship program, and, if resources limit, establish expanded mentorship options.
   b. The Committee recommends RTD incentivize senior operators to mentor new hires, including possibly providing bonuses tied to mentee retention.

Workforce Ideas: Discussion

4. **Data and Measurement**
   a. The Committee recommends RTD improve their employee and community survey design and implementation to improve participation and enable better assessment of RTD's organizational health and performance, including but not limited to:
      i. Increase sample sizes
      ii. Explore strategies to boost participation rates, including consideration of a third party survey administrator
      iii. Include questions focused on concrete issues such as safety, convenience, on-time performance, etc., in addition to qualitative measures around operator engagement, culture, and job satisfaction

Workforce Ideas: Discussion

5. Other Ideas

a. The Committee recommends RTD accelerate its Transit-Oriented Development program on RTD-owned land through collaboration with local governments and developers, ensuring sufficient staffing, and exploring options to include a preference for RTD workers in new affordable housing.

b. The Committee recommends the legislature consider allowing RTD more flexibility to develop their land outside of local zoning restrictions, similar to universities.

Local Government Collaboration Recommendation Development

Local Government Ideas: Discussion

1. **Improve effectiveness of Subregional Service Councils**: The Committee recommends RTD revisit the design and implementation of the Subregional Service Councils, with input from local government and other key partners, and consider the following improvements discussed by the committee in order to improve effectiveness:
    a. Work with local governments to ensure senior staff participation to enable coordination and communication flows with elected leaders
    b. Implement independent or rotating facilitation to encourage more open discussions and shared ownership
    c. Consider additional representation from advocacy groups, chambers of commerce, and economic development groups
    d. Increase focus on strategic and future-oriented planning in addition to operational updates

Local Government Ideas: Discussion

2. **Service allocation criteria:** The Committee recommends RTD undertake a process to establish clear, data-driven criteria to guide service allocation, balancing goals of maximizing ridership with ensuring equitable coverage, in order to improve transparency, understanding, and trust in decision-making. The agency needs to publicly resolve the trade-offs between the conflicting pressures for “ridership growth” on one hand and “provide broad geographic” coverage on the other hand.
3. **Service buy-up:** The Committee recommends RTD reinstate a service buy-up policy and program to enable expanded local service, which may include partnerships between local governments and RTD to support workforce needs to enable expanded service.

Local Government Ideas: Discussion

4. **Shared information:** The Committee recommends RTD work with local governments and DRCOG to create shared dashboards or reports that summarize regional service data, project updates, and performance indicators geared to local partners.

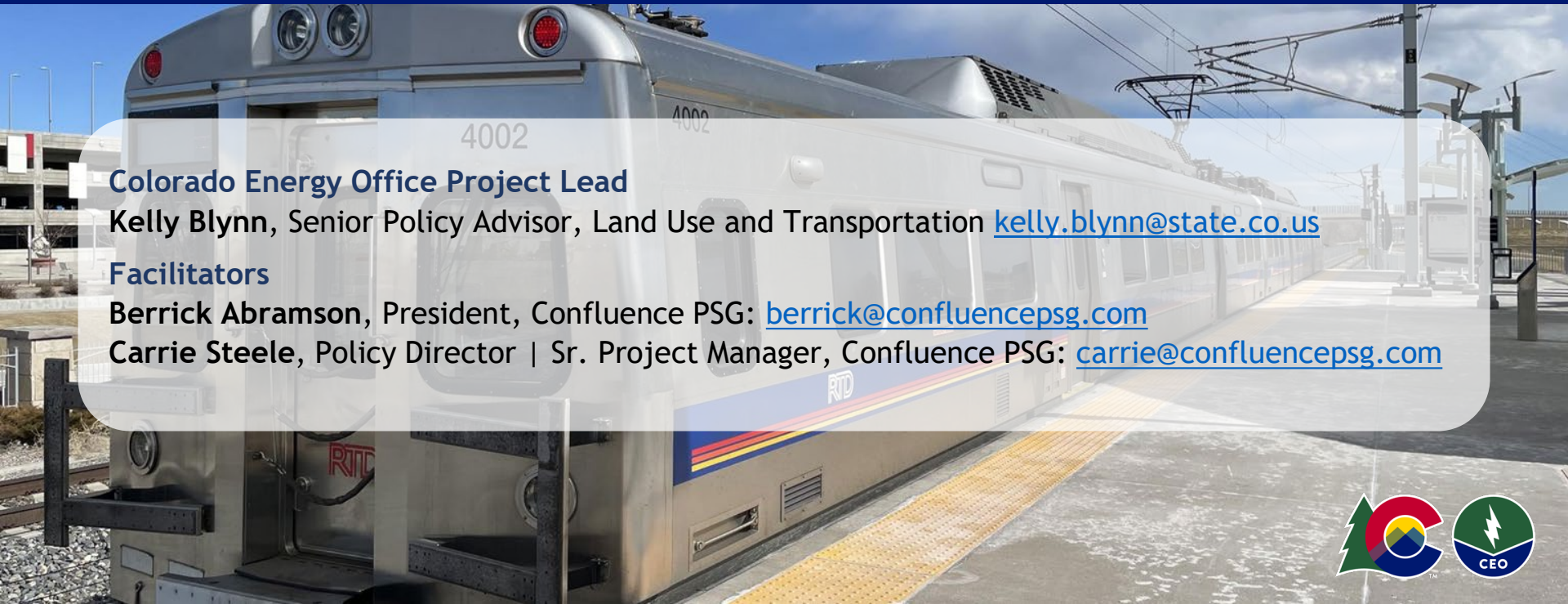
5. **Standardize Protocols for Bus Stop Improvements and Maintenance:** The Committee recommends that RTD and local jurisdictions develop a more consistent standard and funding model for which agencies are going to take on which functions for bus stop improvements and maintenance.

6. **Build on Recent Experience to Undertake More Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation on High-ROI Capital Projects:** The Committee recommends that RTD consider the partnership among the cities of Aurora and Denver and CDOT on the Colfax BRT project as a template for interagency cost-sharing and project management, and look for opportunities to emulate this type of cooperation particularly for similar proposals that would have a high return on investment in terms of generating ridership and attracting federal dollars.

Local Government Ideas: Discussion

7. **A Regional Conversation about the Future of Transit (and Moving Beyond FasTracks):** The Committee recommends RTD together with state leaders, local governments, and regional stakeholders undertake a process to explore options to re-set the region's long-term transit expectations, planning, and priorities and resolve lingering frustrations around the portions of the 2004 FasTracks plan which have not yet been accomplished. A new regional conversation and planning effort should identify a path forward to either complete, redefine, or close out that 2004 plan to enable the region to move forward, plan for the future, and identify a financially sustainable path for transit service in the region responsive to the current era with the foreseeable resources and cost benefit analyses of today. This may also include exploring options for new revenue sources, the scope and/or focus of the District, and options to enable multiple service providers to serve differing local needs while preserving regional connectivity.

Thank you!



Colorado Energy Office Project Lead
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Facilitators
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Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

Meeting Minutes

December 17, 2025, 9:00am - 3:00pm MT

Attendance

Committee Members in Attendance

- **Voting Members:** Alexis Singer, Andrew Iltis, Harold Dominguez, Jackie Millet, James Flattum, Jaime Lewis, Kip Kolkmeier, Lance Longenbohn, Maria Garcia Berry, Matt Larsen, Matthew Groves, Miller Hudson, Renee Chacon, Tobin Snook (virtual, for part of the session due to scheduling conflicts)
- **Non-Voting Members:** Julien Bouquet

Consulting and Facilitation Teams

- **Facilitators:** Berrick Abramson and Carrie Steele, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
- **Research and Technical Support:** David Bragdon, Hudson Skykomish LLC

CEO Staff Members

- Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor/Committee Administrator

Meeting Goals

- Complete Recommendation Discussions & Voting

Adoption of December 10 Meeting Minutes

Motion to Approve, Jaime Lewis; Second by James Flattum; Approved by all members present.

Public Comment

Time was reserved at the beginning of the meeting for public comment, of which there were five individuals representing the Denver Downtown Partnership, Southwest

Efficiency Project, current and former members of the RTD Board, concerned citizens and transportation advocates.

Committee Votes on Formal Recommendations

The committee continued discussion and formal votes were taken on several items under structural and non-structural governance issues, board supports and executive compensation as well as issues concerning workforce recruitment and retention, training and mentorship.

Governance Discussion: Outstanding Structural and Non-Structural Items (continued from December 10 meeting)

Structural Governance Issues

Following discussion, the committee voted to advance the following structural items:

- **Board structure and composition:** The Committee recommends a 9-member Board of Directors, with 5 elected and 4 appointed positions. The appointments would be made by the Governor and confirmed by the senate. If the Senate is not in session, appointees shall serve in their position until confirmed (or rejected) by the Senate.
- **Appointee criteria:** The Committee recommends that appointees must be residents of the District and must collectively have key areas of expertise necessary to provide effective oversight and ensure success of the District, including but not limited to:
    - Financial expertise
    - Land use and multi-modal transportation planning
    - Transit operations
    - Disproportionately impacted communities
- **Labor and workforce appointee:** The Committee recommends that one appointed seat must be held by a member of labor who is not currently an employee of RTD's largest collective bargaining agency, or an officer of the same.
- **District-based elected positions:** The Committee recommends that all 5 elected seats be district-based seats with districts to be drawn in accordance with applicable laws.
- **Chair:** The Committee recommends that the chair be elected to a 2-year term and that the Board select a chair and that any duly elected or appointed member shall be eligible to serve as Chair.
- **Timing:** The Committee recommends the new structure be implemented at the soonest appropriate time, and at the latest in time for the 2028 election.
- **Terms**: The Committee recommends both elected and appointed seats serve four year terms.

- **Term limits:** The Committee recommends elected and appointed positions could serve two full four year terms, and be subject to statute regarding term limits.
- **Statutory change:** The Committee recommends that the structural governance changes be made exclusively statutorily, not by referral to the ballot.

The Committee also discussed a motion suggesting that the current RTD Board be abolished in order to accelerate needed governance reforms; while ultimately members felt such a recommendation went too far, they did express a general consensus for framing the recommendations with strong language emphasizing the need for urgency and reform in the report, and highlighting their belief that the current structure does not serve the future as well at it has served the District's past.

Non-Structural Governance Issues

Following discussion, the committee voted to advance the following non-structural items:

1. **Board and chair compensation:** The Committee believes that Directors & the Chair should be paid more. The expectation is that the Chair is a full-time position. Salaries for all Directors should be reviewed and benchmarked by a third party with expertise in public salaries to an appropriate comparative position given the workload and responsibilities. Such reviews should consider the work of Directors and the Chair be undertaken on a cycle consistent with the terms of Directors and aligned to a standard rate of increase such as CPI or other index. This compensation structure should be implemented to coincide with other recommended structural changes to the Board.
2. **Executive leadership:** The Committee understands that the current board has taken steps to establish goals and metrics in the annual GM/CEO evaluation and believes that should be strengthened in alignment with the agency's strategic plan whenever it is updated. Compensation of the executive leadership should be directly connected to performance and achieving objectives. This should be an annual process that can begin immediately and is not dependent on the new board as recommended.

The Committee discussed other potential recommendations without approving them, which focused on staggering terms, how removal works for appointed members, conflicts of interest, staffing, signature thresholds for getting on the ballot, and splitting up the GM and CEO functions.

Workforce Discussion

Workforce issues were discussed as a foundational challenge affecting service delivery, ridership recovery, and organizational performance.

Following discussion, the committee voted to advance the following workforce recommendations:

1. **Recruitment**
    a. The Committee recommends RTD pursue partnerships with other key stakeholders, including community college districts, CDOT, ATU, regional entities, workforce agencies, community organizations, and ESL programs on hiring outreach including disproportionately impacted communities and the veteran community, training (particularly on obtaining CDLs), and test prep support.
    b. The Committee recommends RTD together with ATU explore enabling more flexible and part-time positions for operators.
2. **Retention**
    a. The Committee recommends RTD together with ATU explore ways to open work for newer operators to vote on.
    b. The Committee recommends RTD examine and implement strategies to improve internal culture, ownership, and job satisfaction, including structural changes to enable employees to have a stronger voice in decision-making.
    c. The Committee recommends RTD in collaboration with ATU or other partners as appropriate to explore and implement childcare subsidies to support employee recruitment and retention.
3. **Training and Mentorship:** Committee believes mentorship is a valuable tool that increases retention of new hires and that training and mentorship is a critical issue. Therefore:
    a. The Committee recommends RTD and ATU expand their joint apprenticeship program, and establish expanded mentorship options.
    b. The Committee recommends RTD incentivize senior operators to mentor new hires, including possibly providing stipends tied to mentor evaluation.
4. **Data and Measurement**
    a. The Committee recommends RTD improve their employee and community engagement and impacts to improve participation and enable better assessment of RTD's organizational health and performance, including but not limited to:
        i. Establishing additional metrics including recruitment and retention
        ii. Identify and utilize means of input other than surveys
        iii. Greatly reduce use of surveys and where they are used, explore strategies to:
            1. Increase sample sizes
            2. Boost participation rates, including consideration of a third party survey administrator
            3. Include open ended questions focused on concrete issues such as safety, convenience, on-time performance, etc., in addition to qualitative measures around operator engagement, culture, and job satisfaction

Public Comment

Time was reserved at the end of the meeting for public comment, of which there was one individual representing himself as a former RTD Board member.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

- Wednesday, January 7, 8am-12:00pm; Virtual discussion session to finalize recommendations on local government collaboration and other remaining topics, and discuss draft report.

Please note: *These minutes are intended to provide an overview of the discussions and, where possible, the high-level themes and ideas of the committee. The summaries of any topics are not presented as comprehensive notes of the full discussion and neither the inclusion or omission of any comment or segment of a discussion should be interpreted as a judgment of the value or importance of such items.*

RTD Accountability Committee - Meeting #11

January 7, 2026, 8:00am - 12:00pm

Via Zoom

https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83889049491?pwd=nTsfLclOg7DNx39UFk6xQIZf8iJEsT.1&from=addon

Meeting goals:

- Complete Recommendation Discussions & Voting
- Discuss draft Committee Report

Pre-Reading

- December 17 Draft Meeting Minutes
- Review Recommendation Drafting Document (includes recommendations already voted on and not yet voted on)
- Review materials compiled FAQs document as needed

Agenda

Timing	Content
8:00 - 8:10am	**Welcome, Housekeeping & Level-Set on Day**
8:10 - 8:25am	**Public Comment:**
8:25 - 9:30am	**Local Government & State Agency Collaboration**
9:30 - 9:40am	***Break***
9:40 - 10:10am	**Local Government & State Agency Collaboration** *continued*
10:10 - 11:00am	**Outstanding Items: Governance and Other**
11:00 - 11:10	***Break***
11:10 - 11:45am	**Report Discussion**
11:45 - 11:55am	**Post-Report Release:** Next Steps, Opportunities
11:55 - 12:00pm	**Chair Reflections, Closing & Next Steps**

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead
Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation: kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

RTD Accountability Committee

January 7, 2026

Meeting #12 of RTD Accountability Committee:
Ideas into Action: Recommendation Development & Voting Session

Today's Meeting: Agenda

Timing	Content
8:00 - 8:10am	**Welcome, Housekeeping & Level-Set on Day**
8:10 - 8:25am	**Public Comment**
8:25 - 9:30am	**Local Government & State Agency Collaboration**
9:30 - 9:40am	***Break***
9:40 - 10:10am	**Local Government & State Agency Collaboration** *continued*
10:10 - 11:00am	**Outstanding Items: Governance or Other**
11:00 - 11:10	***Break***
11:10 - 11:45am	**Report Discussion**
11:45 - 11:55am	**Post-Report Release:** Next Steps, Opportunities
11:55 - 12:00pm	**Chair Reflections, Closing & Next Steps**

Today's Meeting: Goals

Meeting Goals

- Complete Recommendation Discussions & Voting
- Discuss & Level-Set on Report Finalization & Release

Housekeeping

- Minutes approval
- Agenda
- New Written Public Comments
- Legislature Briefing Feb. 4
- Voting Consideration

Accountability Committee: Legislative Charge

SB25-161 established the committee within CEO and tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to (see C.R.S. 24-38.5-124(3)):

Governance-related Topics

- "The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "The representation of local governments and state agencies within the District;"

Paratransit Topics

- "The paratransit services provided within the District's geographic service area."

As used here, "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

- "The District's workforce retention."
- "How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;"
- "How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;"

Public comment

- 3 mins each

Recommendation Development

- Today’s Discussion Structure

Accountability Committee: Operating Norms

The following norms encourage productive and collaborative conversation. All attendees are asked to follow and embody them and give facilitators room to ensure they define our time together.

Good Faith: Act in good faith in all discussions with intent to promote collaboration and productive conversation.

Openness: Be honest and open in sharing your perspectives; be open to other points of view and outcome of discussions.

Focus: Maintain focus on the goals, purpose and meeting objectives; honor agendas.

Listening: Listen to each speaker rather than preparing your response; no interruptions; refrain from use of smart phones and other technologies.

Participation: Participate actively, speak briefly, and agree succinctly. Be mindful and respectful of the presence of multiple backgrounds and avoid the overuse of acronyms or technical language.

Respect: Disagree judiciously and without being disagreeable; do not engage in personal attacks; in all contexts, refrain from behavior that denigrates other participants or is disruptive to the work of the group.

Preparedness & Commitment: Prepare for and attend each session; get up to speed if you missed a meeting.

Facilitation: Let the facilitators facilitate; allow them to enforce the norms and engage them with any concerns.

Questions & Requests: Please direct any questions, comments or requests to the facilitators who will route them to staff, third parties or other members.

Local Government Collaboration Recommendation Development

Local Government Ideas: Discussion

1. **Improve effectiveness of Subregional Service Councils**: The Committee recommends RTD revisit the design and implementation of the Subregional Service Councils, with input from local government and other key partners, and consider the following improvements discussed by the committee in order to improve effectiveness:
    a. Work with local governments to ensure senior staff participation to enable coordination and communication flows with elected leaders
    b. Implement independent or rotating facilitation to encourage more open discussions and shared ownership
    c. Consider additional representation from advocacy groups, chambers of commerce, and economic development groups
    d. Increase focus on strategic and future-oriented planning in addition to operational updates

Local Government Ideas: Discussion

2. **Service allocation criteria:** The Committee recommends RTD undertake a process to establish clear, data-driven criteria to guide service allocation, balancing goals of maximizing ridership with ensuring equitable coverage, in order to improve transparency, understanding, and trust in decision-making. The agency needs to publicly resolve the trade-offs between the conflicting pressures for “ridership growth” on one hand and “provide broad geographic” coverage on the other hand.
3. **Service buy-up:** The Committee recommends RTD reinstate a service buy-up policy and program to enable expanded local service, which may include partnerships between local governments and RTD to support workforce needs to enable expanded service.

Local Government Ideas: Discussion

4. **Shared information:** The Committee recommends RTD work with local governments and DRCOG to create shared dashboards or reports that summarize regional service data, project updates, and performance indicators geared to local partners.

5. **Standardize Protocols for Bus Stop Improvements and Maintenance:** The Committee recommends that RTD and local jurisdictions develop a more consistent standard and funding model for which agencies are going to take on which functions for bus stop improvements and maintenance.

6. **Build on Recent Experience to Undertake More Inter-jurisdictional Cooperation on High-ROI Capital Projects:** The Committee recommends that RTD consider the partnership among the cities of Aurora and Denver and CDOT on the Colfax BRT project as a template for interagency cost-sharing and project management, and look for opportunities to emulate this type of cooperation particularly for similar proposals that would have a high return on investment in terms of generating ridership and attracting federal dollars.

Local Government Ideas: Discussion

7. **A Regional Conversation about the Future of Transit (and Moving Beyond FasTracks):** The Committee recommends RTD together with state leaders, local governments, and regional stakeholders undertake a process to explore options to re-set the region's long-term transit expectations, planning, and priorities and resolve lingering frustrations around the portions of the 2004 FasTracks plan which have not yet been accomplished. A new regional conversation and planning effort should identify a path forward to either complete, redefine, or close out that 2004 plan to enable the region to move forward, plan for the future, and identify a financially sustainable path for transit service in the region responsive to the current era with the foreseeable resources and cost benefit analyses of today. This may also include exploring options for new revenue sources, the scope and/or focus of the District, and options to enable multiple service providers to serve differing local needs while preserving regional connectivity.

Other Recommendations

Other Recommendations: New or Outstanding

These are ideas discussed on Dec. 17th but not resolved

1. **Staggered terms:** The Committee recommends that when implementing the new Board structure, that terms be staggered such that the entire Board does not turn over at one time, to support continuity.
2. **Ballot threshold:** The signature threshold established in statute for getting onto the ballot for the RTD Board elected seats should be reviewed and revisited, likely increasing the current threshold in statute of 250 signatures to align more closely with other elected positions.

Other Recommendations: New or Outstanding

These are ideas discussed on Dec. 17th but not resolved

3. **Staffing and supports:** Board members and the GM/CEO should establish a more clear mutual understanding of the amount and types of access to agency staff that board members can reasonably request in the course of their duties on behalf of the agency. Procedures for this interface exist, but seem to be inconsistently understood. The protocol, in practice as well as writing, should recognize that board members are entitled to some agreed-upon level of support from agency staff, and that while in effect the staff of RTD works under the overall direction of the board, individual employees do so functionally through a chain of command headed by the GM/CEO and that individual board members do not directly manage staff.

Other Recommendations: New or Outstanding

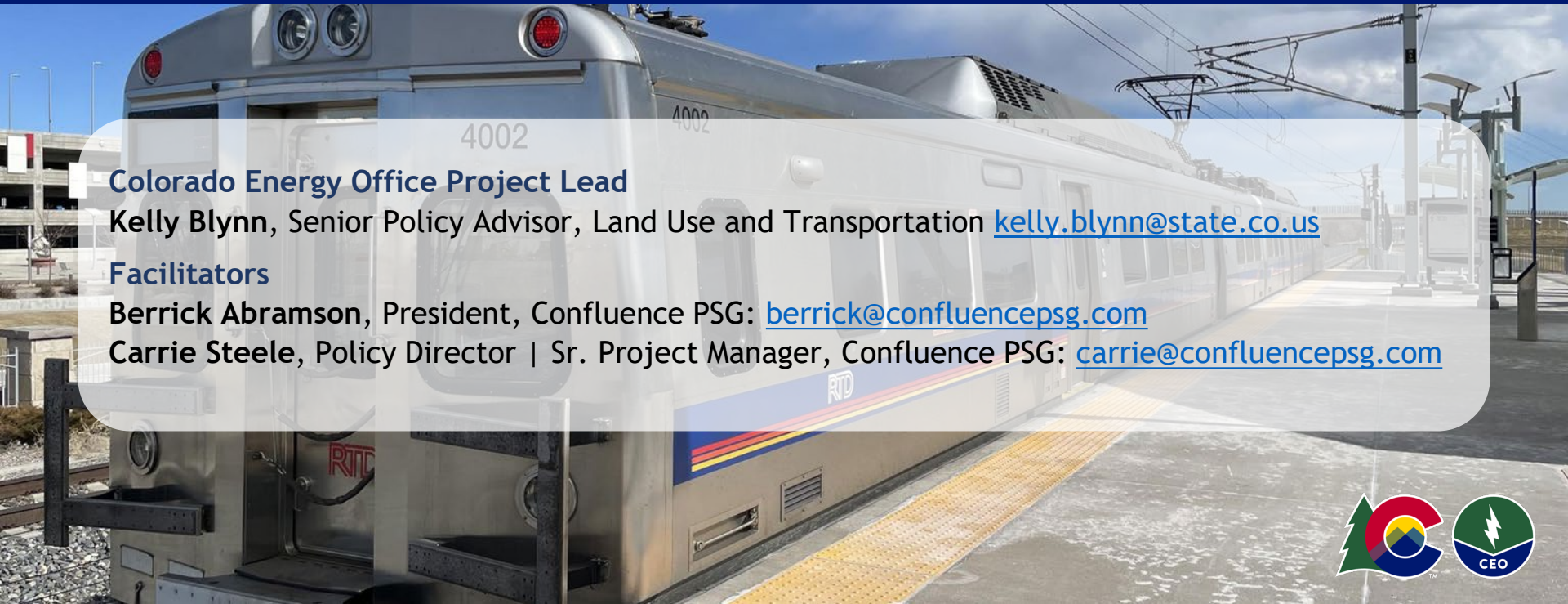
These are ideas discussed on Dec. 17th but not resolved

4. **Splitting GM and CEO roles:** The Committee recommends that the next GM/CEO hired by the RTD Board of Directors be narrowed to a CEO-only role focused on executive responsibilities with the GM responsibilities fully delegated to the COO who will be empowered to own and oversee the agency's planning, operations, maintenance, and capital expansion, and present/communicate with the Board on operational matters.

Committee Report

- Member Discussion
- Release Timeline

Thank you!



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Facilitators
Berrick Abramson, President, Confluence PSG: berrick@confluencepsg.com
Carrie Steele, Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG: carrie@confluencepsg.com

Meeting Minutes

January 7, 2026, 8:00am - 12:00pm MT

Attendance

Committee Members in Attendance

- **Voting Members:** Alexis Singer, Andrew Iltis, Harold Dominguez, Jackie Millet, James Flattum, Jaime Lewis, Kip Kolkmeier, Lance Longenbohn, Maria Garcia Berry, Matt Larsen, Matthew Groves, Miller Hudson, Renée M. Chacon, Tobin Snook
- **Non-Voting Members:** Julien Bouquet (not present)

Consulting and Facilitation Teams

- **Facilitators:** Berrick Abramson and Carrie Steele, Confluence Policy & Strategy Group
- **Research and Technical Support:** David Bragdon, Hudson Skykomish LLC

CEO Staff Members

- Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor/Committee Administrator

Meeting Goals

- Complete Recommendation Discussions & Voting
- Discuss draft committee report

Adoption of December 17 Meeting Minutes

Motion to Approve, Jaime Lewis; Second by James Flattum; Approved by all members present.

Public Comment

Time was reserved at the beginning of the meeting for public comment, of which there was none.

Committee Votes on Formal Recommendations

The committee continued discussion and formal votes were taken on several items under local government & state agency collaboration as well as outstanding items related to governance.

Local Government & State Agency Collaboration

Following discussion, the committee voted to advance the following local government and state agency collaboration items:

Evaluate & Restructure As Appropriate Subregional Service Councils To Improve Effectiveness

Vote: 13 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 not present

The Committee recommends RTD revisit the design and implementation of the Subregional Service Councils, with input from local government and other key partners, explore and consider the following improvements discussed by the committee in order to improve effectiveness:

1. The evaluation should examine the existing Councils and define the role, purpose and general operating principles of the Councils
2. Work with local governments to ensure senior staff participation to enable coordination and communication flows with elected leaders
3. Implement independent or rotating facilitation to encourage more open discussions and shared ownership
4. Include additional representation from advocacy groups, community members, chambers of commerce, and economic development groups
5. Increase focus on strategic and future-oriented planning in addition to operational updates

Service Allocation Criteria

Vote: 13 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 not present

With a belief that growing ridership is the top priority, the Committee recommends RTD include in their upcoming Comprehensive Operations Analysis, a process to establish a transparent, data-driven criteria to guide service allocation, balancing goals of maximizing ridership with ensuring equitable broad geographic coverage.

Service Buy-up

Vote: 13 in favor, 0 opposed, 1 not present

The Committee recommends RTD reinstate a service buy-up policy and program to enable expanded local service, which may include partnerships between local governments and RTD to enable expanded service.

Shared Information
Vote: 13 in favor, 1 opposed
The Committee recommends RTD adapt and improve existing dashboards including collaborative development with local governments and DRCOG to ensure public, fully accessible, transparent dashboards or reports that summarize regional service data, project updates, and performance indicators.

Standardize Protocols for Bus Stop Improvements and Maintenance
Vote: 11 in favor, 3 opposed
The Committee believes bus stop safety and maintenance are key to ridership and recommends that RTD develop clear standards for bus stop safety and maintenance, clarifying the responsibility of RTD and local jurisdictions. The Committee recognizes the unique context and factors of each local jurisdiction and brings this to the attention of the General Assembly.

Build on Recent Experience With Past and Current Inter-Jurisdictional Cooperation on Large Capital Projects that Increase Ridership Opportunities
Vote: 13 in favor, 1 opposed
The Committee believes RTD should pursue additional partnerships for interagency cost-sharing and project management that leverages local, state, federal, and private sector funds. The Committee recommends that RTD report on grants applied for, not pursued, and received, and provide an explanation for each.

Strategic Focus and Actions to Support Future of RTD
Increasing Investment in Public Transit
Vote: 11 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 Abstain, 1 not present
With a commitment to the importance of ridership, the Committee recommends RTD must work together with state leaders, local governments, and regional stakeholders to increase investment in public transit, resolve lingering frustrations around the portions of the 2004 FasTracks plan which have not yet been accomplished, and identify a path forward.

Regional Conversation about the Future of Transit and Regional Opportunities Beyond FasTracks
Vote: 12 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 not present
Working together, these stakeholders, led by RTD, must engage in a new regional conversation and planning effort to identify a path forward. This effort should explore how best to enable the region to plan for the future, and identify a financially sustainable path for transit service responsive to the current era that evaluates technology and focuses on an effective, efficient system.

Governance Items (discussion continued from December 17)

Following discussion, the committee voted to advance the following governance recommendations:

Staggered Terms

Vote: 11 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 not present

The Committee recommends that when implementing the new Board structure, the terms be staggered such that the entire Board does not turn over all at the same time, to support continuity.

Ballot Threshold

Vote: 11 in favor, 1 opposed, 2 not present

The signature threshold established in statute for getting onto the ballot for the RTD Board elected seats should be reviewed and revisited, likely increasing the current threshold in statute of 250 signatures to align more closely with other elected positions.

Board Staffing and Supports

Vote: 10 in favor, 1 opposed, 1 Abstain, 2 not present

Board members and the GM/CEO should establish a more clear mutual understanding of the amount and types of access to agency staff that board members can reasonably request in the course of their duties on behalf of the agency. Procedures for this interface exist, but seem to be inconsistently understood. The protocol, in practice as well as writing, should recognize that board members are entitled to some agreed-upon level of support from agency staff, and that while in effect the staff of RTD works under the overall direction of the board, individual employees do so functionally through a chain of command headed by the GM/CEO and that individual board members do not directly manage staff.

Committee Conclusion, Final Report Delivery and Public Release

Members were reminded that this was the final meeting of the Committee, and to submit any comments on the draft report by Thursday, January 8th.The report of the committee will be delivered to the Colorado General Assembly as required by January 30, 2026. A briefing on the committee's work will take place on February 4, 2026 at the Joint Transportation Committee of the Colorado General Assembly.

***Please note**: These minutes are intended to provide an overview of the discussions and, where possible, the high-level themes and ideas of the committee. The summaries of any topics are not presented as comprehensive notes of the full discussion and neither the inclusion or omission of any comment or segment of a*

discussion should be interpreted as a judgment of the value or importance of such items.

RTD Accountability Committee Bylaws

Approved September 10, 2025

Article I. Name and Purpose

A. The RTD Accountability Committee ("Committee") is created pursuant to section 24-38.5-124, C.R.S. The Committee evaluates and makes recommendations concerning the Regional Transportation District ("RTD" or "the District") to the Governor, the House of Representatives Transportation, Housing, and Local Government Committee, and the Senate Transportation and Energy Committee, in accordance with statutory directives.

B. The Committee exists inside the Colorado Energy Office, which is available to assist the Committee in carrying out its statutory directives. The Colorado Energy Office may adopt internal procedures to ensure that the Committee's work is conducted in an orderly, timely, and goal-oriented manner aligned with its statutory purpose.

Article II. Bylaws

A. These bylaws address the work of the Committee and the obligations of its members.

B. These bylaws shall take effect immediately upon a majority vote of the Committee.

C. These bylaws may be amended in whole or in part at a committee meeting by a majority vote of the entire membership, or, if the amendment was submitted in writing at the previous regular meeting, by a two-thirds vote of those voting when a quorum is present.

Article III. Powers and Duties

Section 1. Statutory Authority

A. The Committee performs the duties delineated at section 24-38.5-124(3), C.R.S., which are to evaluate and make recommendations on:
   i. The governance structure of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;
   ii. Compensation for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;

iii. The paratransit services provided within the District's geographic service area. As used here, “paratransit services” means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

iv. How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;

v. How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;

vi. The representation of local governments and state agencies within the District; and

vii. The District's workforce retention.

B. The committee's work is intended to build on the work of the previous RTD accountability committee created in 2020. The Committee must begin its evaluation with an assessment of the status of each recommendation included in the previous RTD Accountability Committee's July 2021 final report, including assessment of existing District subregional service councils and identification of opportunities to improve the scope and effectiveness of the service councils.

C. On or before January 30, 2026, the Committee must submit a report to the governor, the house of representatives transportation, housing, and local government committee, and the senate transportation and energy committee, or their successor committees, that includes a summary of the work accomplished by the RTD Accountability Committee, the findings of its evaluation, and any recommendations to the general assembly concerning matters evaluated by the Committee.

Article IV: Meetings

A. All meetings of two or more members of the Committee where Committee business is discussed shall be open to the public in accordance with regulations of the Colorado Open Meetings Law, section 24-6-402, C.R.S., except when an executive session is announced as authorized by law.

i. Notice of meetings shall be posted on the CEO’s website at least 24 hours prior to a meeting and will include: (1) the date and time of the

meeting; (2) the location of the meeting; and (3) the agenda of the meeting where possible.

ii. All open meetings of the Committee shall be memorialized in meeting minutes, which shall be considered draft and deliberative until approved by the Committee.

iii. The Committee may move to executive session as authorized by law, specifically section 24-6-402, C.R.S. To enter executive session during a meeting, a member must announce the specific statutory provision that authorizes the executive session and the topic for which the executive session is authorized. Members may only discuss the topic or topics announced during the open public meeting. A vote of the members to enter executive session for the topic announced must be taken with the approval of 2/3 of the entire membership of the body. Any executive sessions entered into by the Committee shall be electronically recorded.

B. The Committee will meet at least monthly. Additional meetings may be scheduled if agreed to by the Committee or determined necessary by the Committee administrator. Any meeting may be canceled by the Committee administrator, chairperson, or the majority of the Committee members. Meetings will be canceled with as much notice as is practicable.

C. Meetings can be in-person or remote (virtual).

D. A quorum of two-thirds of the committee, ten (10) members, shall be required for all actions of the Committee. No proxy or absentee participation is allowed. In the absence of a quorum, any business transacted is null and void, except to take measures to obtain a quorum or to reschedule another meeting.

E. Meetings shall be conducted generally in keeping with Robert's Rules of Order to the extent practicable, but shall be as informal as circumstances permit.

Article V: Members

Section 1. Committee Composition and Term Limits

A. The Committee shall be established in accordance with section 24-38.5-124(2) C.R.S., and shall consist of fourteen (14) voting members and one (1) ex officio nonvoting member as follows:

i. Six voting members appointed by the Governor, including one member who is a former member of the Board of Directors of the District, one member who is a current member of the Board of Directors of the

district, and four members who collectively have expertise in the following areas:

a. Local government within the District's service area;
b. Financial planning and management;
c. Multimodal transportation; and
d. Environmental organization;

ii. Three voting members appointed by the President of the Senate, including one member who is twenty-two years of age or younger and who uses District services, and two members who collectively have expertise in the following areas:

a. Workforce development; and
b. Transportation equity;

iii. One voting member who has expertise in economic development, appointed by the Minority Leader of the Senate;

iv. Three voting members appointed by the Speaker of the House of Representatives, including:

a. One member who represents transit riders with disabilities;
b. One member who represents the labor organization that represents a plurality of transit workers of the District; and
c. One member who has expertise in urban planning;

v. One voting member who has expertise in safety for the public and transit workers, appointed by the minority leader of the house of representatives; and

vi. One ex officio nonvoting member who is a current member of the Board of Directors of the District, appointed by the Board of Directors of the District.

B. Each member of the Committee serves at the pleasure of the appointing authority.

C. The term of appointment is for the duration of the committee's existence.

D. If a vacancy occurs on the Committee for any reason, the original appointing authority shall appoint an individual to fill the vacancy as soon as possible after the vacancy occurs. In making the vacancy appointment, the appointing authority shall ensure that the committee maintains the expertise required by the specifications above and in section 24-38.5-124(2)(b), C.R.S.

Section 2. Representing the Committee

A. Members of the Committee serve without compensation.

B. Regular attendance and participation are vital to the purpose and effectiveness of the Committee in carrying out its duties and responsibilities. Committee members accept the duty and obligation to attend meetings and shall provide advance notice by phone or email to the Committee administrator if they are unable to do so. Any appointed member who has multiple consecutive, unexcused absences may be deemed to have vacated the membership. For the purpose of this provision, "unexcused absences" means absences in which a member fails to communicate with the Committee administrator regarding the absence prior to the meeting, if known, or as soon as practical after the meeting in the cases of unexpected circumstances.

C. No individual member shall make a statement of policy or position that purports to be that of the Committee unless the Committee has adopted such a policy or position, but no one shall be prohibited from stating their personal opinions with respect to any matters also addressed by the Committee, provided they are clearly identified as such. Members will provide advance notice to the Committee administrator if they wish, when providing their personal opinions, to include a statement that the individual is a member of the Committee.

D. Any member of the Committee may resign from the Committee at any time by providing written notification to the Committee administrator. The Committee may request the resignation of the Committee member or recommend the removal of a member for failure to comply with the statutes or these bylaws, or similar actions that impair the Committee's ability to be effective or maintain the public's trust.

E. Committee members are encouraged to refer constituents to the meeting minutes rather than opine on Committee discussions or the statements of an individual Committee member.

F. No member of the Committee will accept a request for a media interview on Committee business without prior notification to the Committee administrator.

Article VI: Officers

Section 1. Positions

A. The Committee shall elect from its members a chairperson and vice-chairperson.

B. The chairperson and vice-chairperson shall be elected by a majority vote of the Committee.

C. Officers may participate in discussion and vote as any other member.

D. All officers shall hold their positions at the pleasure of the Committee.

Section 2. Duties

A. The duties of the chairperson are to:
   i. Preside at all Committee meetings when in attendance;
   ii. Prepare for meetings in coordination with the Committee administrator and CEO staff;
   iii. Be aware of the Committee's strategic priorities as well as the Committee's activities;
   iv. Observe and enforce the Committee's bylaws and procedures; and
   v. Perform all such other duties of the office as provided by these bylaws or prescribed by the Committee.

B. The duties of the vice-chairperson are those of the chairperson if the chairperson is unable to fulfill any of his or her duties at any meeting where a quorum is present.

C. Should the chairperson and vice-chairperson both be absent at any meeting in which a quorum is present, the members present shall identify a chairperson to serve for that meeting only.

Article VII: Voting and Balloting Procedures

A. In any instance, other than to adopt or amend the bylaws, in which a vote is called for, the action will pass with a simple majority of the committee members (8).
   i. The chairperson may call for a show of hands, a voice vote, or other voting method that is practical, and such voting method shall determine the result of the vote.
   ii. No proxy or absentee voting shall be allowed.

B. In general, voting during regularly scheduled meetings is preferred. However, a special meeting to vote upon a matter is permitted on a case-by-case basis. Any such vote will comply with open meeting requirements and be communicated at the next public meeting.

C. If during elections, no candidate or issue receives a majority of the votes cast, another ballot shall be taken. If further ballots need to be cast to determine a single majority winner, it shall be between the two candidates or issues receiving the highest number of votes on the immediately preceding ballot.

D. All voting members, including the chairperson, shall have voting rights unless the member has recused or abstained due to a conflict of interest or to avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest.

Article VIII: Colorado Open Records Act, Records Retention, and Conflicts of Interest

Section 1. Colorado Open Records Act and Records Retention

A. The Committee is subject to the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA) outlined in sections 24-72-201 to 206, C.R.S. The Committee shall adhere to the Colorado Energy Office's CORA policy, which can be found at https://energyoffice.colorado.gov/contact-us.

B. Pursuant to CORA, all records provided under the Act are retained for a minimum of two years; however, CORA also allows for the destruction of records that are no longer needed. The Committee shall retain records that are no longer needed for a minimum of thirty (30) days prior to destruction.

Section 2. Conflicts of Interest: Definitions

A. Committee members are subject to Rules of Conduct for Members of Boards and Commissions, section 24-18-108.5, C.R.S.

B. "Conflict of interest" means engagement in an official act of the Committee that may be influenced by an actual direct economic benefit from an undertaking in which the member has a direct or substantial financial interest. A conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest may also exist in circumstances where the member has a personal or professional interest that would interfere with participating objectively in an official act or recommendation. This includes situations where the member has a duty to more than one person or organization, but cannot do justice to the actual or

potentially adverse interests of both parties, or the member's personal interests or concerns are in conflict with the best interests of those served by the State.

C. "Official act" is any vote, decision, recommendation, approval, disapproval or any other action, including inaction, which involves the use of discretionary authority. See 24-18-102(7), C.R.S.

D. "Financial interest" means a substantial interest held by an individual which is:
   i. An ownership interest in a business,
   ii. A creditor interest in an insolvent business,
   iii. An employment or a prospective employment for which negotiations have begun,
   iv. An ownership interest in real or personal property, e. A loan or any other debtor interest, or
   v. A directorship or officership in a business.

   See section 24-18-102(4), C.R.S.

E. "Actual conflict of interest" means an official act of a Committee member that may have a direct economic benefit on a business or other undertaking in which the Committee member has a direct or substantial financial interest.

F. "Apparent or perceived conflict of interest" means an interest in the outcome of Committee business or matter under consideration by the Committee that is not an actual conflict of interest but presents a circumstance in which the public is likely to perceive reasonably that a Committee member has a personal or professional interest that would cause bias and that would make the Committee member unable to participate objectively.

Section 3. Conflicts of Interest: Disclosure, Recusal, and Abstaining

A. A member shall disclose a conflict of interest that may impinge upon their fiduciary duty and the public trust before the discussion begins or as soon thereafter as the conflict is perceived. The member shall disclose to the Committee the basis of the conflict. The member can then either recuse or abstain further participation or voting on the matter at hand, or upon disclosure of the conflict, the chairperson may ask for comments from any Committee members, CEO staff, or members of the public present so the Committee can determine whether the member can participate and the extent to which a member can participate if a conflict of interest exists. The member

disclosing the potential conflict of interest shall be bound by the Committee's vote.

B. In deciding whether an indirect or apparent conflict of interest warrants recusal, Committee members shall consider the above definitions of "conflicts of interest" and other relevant information, including:
    i. The legislature's intent and decision to appoint a Committee comprised of individuals with expertise and involvement with the District;
    ii. The disclosure of potential conflicts of interest by the Committee member upon nominating him/herself to the Committee, when announcing interest in an officer position, and during the term of the member's appointment;
    iii. Whether the indirect or apparent conflict of interest impedes the Committee member's independence of judgment; and
    iv. A conflict does not exist merely because a Committee member, a Committee member's employer, or a Committee member's client has a pre-established policy position or self-interest regarding an issue being considered by the Committee.

C. If a conflict is found to exist, the member disclosing the conflict of interest may recuse themself from discussion, abstain from voting, or both depending on the degree of conflict of interest. Members may be asked to leave the room for the discussion and vote.

D. The existence of a conflict of interest may be raised by other Committee members, CEO staff, and/or any member of the public. In such instances, the subject Committee member may either choose to voluntarily recuse further participation or abstain from voting on the matter, or the Committee may determine the member's ability to participate as described in this Article.

E. In the rare instance when a conflict of interest reduces the voting membership below a quorum, recusing or abstaining members shall not count against the quorum.

F. Meeting minutes shall reflect all disclosures of conflicts of interests, and shall record any recusal and abstention.

Adoption

It being the desire of the Committee to meet its responsibilities to the people of Colorado, and, in the most efficient and conscientious way possible, to discharge its duties under the law, the Committee does hereby adopt these bylaws.

Date of Adoption: 9/10/2025

APPENDIX D

Public Input

Organizations

- Adams County Board of Commissioners
- Arapahoe County Board of County Commissioners
- Civic Results and Metro Mayors Caucus
- Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition and National Federation of the Blind
- Denver Arts Complex Resident Companies: Colorado Ballet, Colorado Symphony, Denver Center for the Performing Arts, Opera Colorado

- Denver Health
- Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, Metro Denver EDC, Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation
- Downtown Denver Partnership
- Holland and Hart
- Hyatt Regency
- IMA Financial Group
- Polsinelli Law Firm

Individuals

- Aliah Jenette
- Carl Lawrence
- Mary Henneck, Disability Advocate, Parent/legal guardian of AOD rider who, by definition of his disability, is unable to advocate for himself.
  - A Short Story About RTD Paratransit
  - New RTD Math, Electeds Letter
  - RTD Proposed Fare Increase for Access on Demand, Non-Elected Letter
  - RTD Proposed Increase for Access on Demand
- Matt Frommer, SWEEP
- Natalie Stiffler
- Victoria Southerland

Commissioners' Office
4430 S. Adams County Pkwy.
5th Floor, Suite C5000A
Brighton, CO 80601-8204
PHONE 720.523.6100 | FAX 720.523.6045
adamscountyco.gov

December 16, 2025
Colorado Energy Office
Attn: Kelly Blynn, Senior Policy Advisor
1600 Broadway, Suite 1960
Denver, CO 80202
Email: kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Subject: RTD Accountability Committee – Governance and N Line completion

Dear RTD Accountability Committee Members,

On behalf of the Adams County Board of Commissioners, I write to express our concern about RTD's current governance structure and its impact on project delivery, regional coordination, and public trust. RTD is central to mobility, economic opportunity, and long-term regional planning, yet its governance model continues to limit clear leadership, unified priorities, and accountable decision-making.

Governance Challenges Reflected in N Line Delays
The prolonged delay in completing the full N Line is the clearest example of these governance shortcomings. Voters approved the entire 18.5-mile FasTracks corridor in 2004, and while 13 miles opened in 2020, the remaining 5.5 miles remain unbuilt more than two decades after the commitment was made.

Despite its voter-approved status, the N Line has repeatedly been deprioritized as RTD directs attention to new initiatives—such as Front Range Passenger Rail and the Mountain Rail Line—leaving Adams County communities without the service they were promised.

Need for a Modernized Governance Structure
RTD cites funding gaps, design issues, and right-of-way challenges as barriers to completing the N Line, yet competing initiatives continue to advance. This inconsistency underscores the need for a governance framework that aligns authority with accountability.

We urge the Accountability Committee to consider a governing board composed of currently serving local elected officials. Local leaders are accountable to voters, responsible for land use and infrastructure decisions, and better positioned to coordinate regional priorities and deliver major capital projects.

A governance structure rooted in elected leadership would:

- Strengthen regional coordination and long-term planning
- Establish direct accountability for project delivery

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

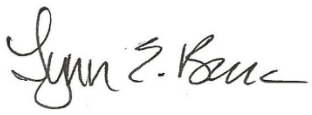
Julie Duran Mullica — DISTRICT 1
Kathy Henson — DISTRICT 2
Emma Pinter — DISTRICT 3
Steve O'Dorisio — DISTRICT 4
Lynn Baca — DISTRICT 5

- Ensure decisions reflect regional and equity-based needs
- Rebuild public trust in RTD's ability to deliver voter-mandated commitments

Conclusion
Adams County communities deserve the transit investment they were promised. Completing the N Line is essential to equitable mobility, economic opportunity, and the region's environmental and growth goals. We urge the Accountability Committee to support governance reforms that will enable RTD to deliver on these commitments.

Thank you for your consideration. Adams County stands ready to collaborate as this work continues.

Sincerely,



Lynn Baca, Chair
Adams County Board of Commissioners

ARAPAHOE COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Administration Building
5334 South Prince Street
Littleton, Colorado 80120
303-795-4630
arapahoeco.gov

CARRIE WARREN-GULLY
District 1

JESSICA CAMPBELL
District 2

JEFF BAKER
District 3

LESLIE SUMMEY
District 4

RHONDA FIELDS
District 5

December 12, 2025

Maria Garcia Barry, Chairperson
Regional Transportation District (RTD) Accountability Committee
Colorado Energy Office
1600 Broadway, Suite 160
Denver, CO. 80202

Dear RTD Accountability Committee,

The Board of County Commissioners want to express our concerns with the proposed changes to the RTD Board membership. While we support the hybrid structure of an elected and appointed board, we do not support centralizing appointments at the state level and prefer to see this authority anchored within the region RTD serves.

We believe an appointment model that aligns with best practices deployed by the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District and the Mile High Flood District would achieve greater accountability and community trust – key elements to support RTD's success as a transit agency. In addition to the proposed five elected members, we see value in having members of the board include a county-appointed, local elected official from each of the eight counties the agency serves, providing local perspective and technical expertise in areas such as land use/transit, finance, workforce, labor and operations.

Continuing to build an RTD focused on enhancing infrastructure, providing excellent customer service, improving public trust, and enriching customer experience requires a board with a comprehensive understanding of the unique transportation challenges both within local communities and across counties. Appointing locally elected officials who also have subject matter expertise untethered from political influence will ensure that the board balances the public's best interest with identifying and implementing improvement policies necessary to the continued success of the district. The existing relationships fostered through local government partnership organizations will also help elected officials streamline decisions that impact the service region.

Accountability and responsiveness to community members is paramount. We believe local elected officials are more beholden to the community members who rely on RTD services than state appointees. We acknowledge there is a nexus and need for strengthened coordination between regional and state transportation interests; that can be supported through state ex-officio appointments, similar to the Denver Regional Council of Governments.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Leslie Summey

Commissioner Leslie Summey
Chair of the Board

COLORADO CROSS-DISABILITY COALITION

September 25, 2025

Dear RTD Board of Directors and CEO/GM Johnson:

The National Federation of the Blind of Colorado and the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition are recommending the following solution to the AAR/AOD issue: We have been part of the process since discussions began, and are proposing this now because we only had since last week to analyze the proposal made by the operations committee. We stand ready to work with you in a productive manner to achieve the goals we believe everyone wants, which is a transit system that is accessible to everyone, honoring the fact that we all have responsibility to make it work.

Immediate action:

- Implement a fare of $4.50.
- Accept reduced cap of $20 per ride.
- NO time limit--number of rides and amounts are capped so this is not a cost saving.
- Allow multi stop trips-dollar amounts and trips are capped so this is not a cost savings. All AOD users have a choice to use the service that has this feature.
- Only expand the service area to within two miles of a fixed route. This should include stops on regional and commuter rail.

Over the next year:
It has been pointed out that AOD is more desirable and less expensive than AAR. The problem is AOD does not serve all paratransit eligible people: Currently it does not serve the following groups:
1) People who need door-to-door service.
2) People who need trained drivers due to cognitive or behavioral disabilities (they also need door to door but may need a better trained driver like what you have on WAV).
3) People that cannot use smart phones.

We believe there is a way to make the AOD work for these folks with some creativity and expanded contracting.
We would like RTD to explore the following:

1) Allow a request on the app that would be like WAV but could indicate the need for a trained driver. Perhaps those folks get a higher subsidy to encourage drivers to meet this higher standard. A similar add on for door to door could also happen. We believe we could find at least one company to do these rides; I am sure COOP would do this.
2) Contract with Hop Skip Drive for those who are ambulatory but need some extra attention or support. They take children with severe disabilities to and from school.
3) Create a workaround for people that need to use a phone.

These might not be the exact solutions, but we believe with true solution focused dialogue and teamwork between the disability community and RTD we can figure this out in a way that will not break the bank. NFB-CO and CCDC understand there are limited resources and are mindful of the need to reduce costs. We believe much of the tension comes from trying to create equality between the AAR and AOD experience. We want to be sure our siblings using AAR also have their needs met so our idea is to make AOD accessible to all paratransit eligible passengers. Even a higher subsidy for those with additional service needs would not equal the cost of AAR today. Once a transition occurs, the AAR infrastructure would be significantly less as it becomes more of a contract management and oversight function outside of eligibility, which is already contracted. We understand AAR is currently providing all the WAV services and this may or may not need to continue; but it could continue under a new model.

Respectfully

Jessica Beecham, President NFB-CO

Julie Reiskin Co-Executive Director CCDC

December 16, 2025

Dear Members of the RTD Accountability Commission,

On behalf of the four resident companies of the Denver Performing Arts Complex located in downtown Denver, we write to you as not only robust and vibrant destinations in our city center but as employers whose staff, volunteers, patrons and students rely on our regional transit system throughout the year.

As the Downtown Denver Partnership noted in their recent letter, the performance of RTD has never been more significant to our collective success, and we are grateful to the Partnership which stands prepared to work alongside you to bring employers, visitors and residents to the table, build public support, and identify paths forward that strengthen transit for the entire region. Employers like us depend on RTD's frequency, reliability, and perceived safety as among our greatest challenges to bring employees back to the office, as well as to welcome more than 1.5 million patrons to the Arts Complex each year. We urge RTD to focus on all transit riders, including workforce commuters, patrons, students and visitors, to help drive the region's economic recovery and vitality.

As the Partnership reported from their Annual Commuter Survey, there are specific barriers preventing greater transit use:

- Slow Travel Times: (42% of respondents), service reliability issues (42%), and personal safety concerns (40%). Notably, only 9% of respondents indicated that lower fares would incentivize transit use, underscoring that this is fundamentally a service quality issue.
- Growing Demand: Despite current challenges, inbound employee commuting trips to downtown increased by more than 5% from 2024 to 2025.
- Employers and Workers: 6,000 companies employing over 150,000 workers in Downtown Denver depend on reliable transit access. When RTD service falls short, businesses face increased costs, reduced talent pools, and diminished competitiveness.
- Regional Economic Vitality: At just under 2% of the City and County of Denver's land area, Downtown Denver represents 30% of the city's jobs and just over 20% of taxable value, and serves as the economic engine for the entire region. A weakened downtown diminishes property values, tax revenues, and economic opportunity across every RTD service district.

We echo the Downtown Denver Partnership's position and urge the RTD Accountability Commission to prioritize:

- Commuter-focused service with reliable, frequent connections to downtown during peak hours
- Continued work to make meaningfully improvements to overall safety and rider experience

- Service reliability that allows transit to be a dependable commuting option, not a gamble Transparent communication with employers and stakeholders about service plans and performance metrics We recognize the significant challenges RTD faces and do not underestimate the complexity of the work ahead.

As the four resident companies of the Denver Performing Arts Complex, we join the Downtown Denver Partnership in requesting that RTD and this Accountability Commission prioritize commuter service in your reform agenda.

Sincerely,

Sameed Afghani, Executive Director
Colorado Ballet

Daniel Wachter, President & CEO
Colorado Symphony

Janice Sinden, President & CEO
Denver Center for the Performing Arts

Barbara Lynne Jamison, General Director & CEO
Opera Colorado

DENVER HEALTH™
est. 1860
FOR LIFE'S JOURNEY

December 15, 2025

Dear Members of the RTD Accountability Commission,

As an engaged member of the Downtown Denver Partnership, we write to you at a critical inflection point for both Denver's city center and regional transit system. We would like to add our voice to the conversation regarding the prioritization of daily commuter—those who travel here for work and health care and for downtown events.

As one of Denver's largest employers with employees and patients who depend on RTD to come to and from our hospital campus, we ask that you consider them when making decisions regarding RTD's future. The majority of our 8,300 employees come to the hospital campus for work seven days a week, while thousands of patients depend on public transportation to get to their medical appointments on time and then safely home. Reliable public transportation is imperative to protecting and growing our workforce and patient volumes and securing the recovery and growth of the region.

We recognize the significant challenges RTD faces and do not underestimate the complexity of the work ahead. Denver Health asks that you continue to work closely with Downtown Denver Partnership so that final decisions reflect the revitalization efforts of Denver's downtown and that they reflect the needs of some of the city's largest employers, like Denver Health.

Thank you for careful consideration of ours, and all of downtown's workforce, as you evaluate your reform agenda and to act with the urgency that this moment demands.

Sincerely,

Steve Federico, MD
Chief Government and Community Affairs Officer

December 17, 2025
RTD Accountability Committee, RTD
1660 Blake Street
Denver, CO, 80202

Dear Members of the RTD Accountability Committee:

Thank you for your ongoing work to evaluate and strengthen the governance and performance of the Regional Transportation District. Your efforts are critically important as the Denver-metro region continues to grow, diversify, and attract new employers, residents, and investments.

A reliable and well-functioning transit system is fundamental to workforce mobility and long-term economic development. Tens of thousands of people rely on RTD every day for everything from commuting to work, going to school, and navigating everyday life. When daily service is inconsistent or insufficient, it affects productivity, hiring, retention, and the overall competitiveness of our regional economy.

As the region expands, employers must evaluate transit accessibility when making decisions about locating, scaling, or modernizing their operations. Public transportation must be capable of supporting growth by providing dependable connections across employment corridors, emerging commercial nodes, and high-demand residential areas. A strong RTD system is a foundational asset for sustained economic development and for maintaining the Denver-metro area's status as a premier place to live, work, and build a business.

For these reasons, we encourage the Committee to prioritize recommendations advancing:

- Reliable, frequent service during peak commuting hours, ensuring workers can reach major employment centers predictably every day.
- Operational stability, supported by workforce recruitment, retention, and service planning strategies to minimize disruptions.
- Safety, comfort, and cleanliness, which are essential to retain existing riders and encourage new ones.
- Clear, proactive communication with employers, local governments, and economic development partners regarding service performance, planned adjustments, and long-term system planning.

The Chamber is committed to supporting regional transportation solutions that strengthen economic competitiveness and ensure the metro area can sustain future population and job growth. A high-performing RTD system is indispensable to achieving these outcomes.

Sincerely,

J. J. Ament
President & CEO
Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce

Downtown Denver Partnership

December 10, 2025

Dear Members of the RTD Accountability Commission,

On behalf of the Downtown Denver Partnership and the businesses, employers, and stakeholders we represent, we write to you at a critical inflection point for both our city center and regional transit system. **As partners from across our city and region work diligently on downtown revitalization, the performance of RTD has never been more consequential to our collective success, or more urgently in need of reform.** As the Transportation Management Association for downtown, we approach this conversation from an informed position and with a commitment to partnership. We recognize that, like many transit agencies across the country, post-pandemic shifts have created real operational, financial, and service challenges for RTD that demand thoughtful solutions. The Downtown Denver Partnership stands prepared to work alongside you to bring employers and residents to the table, build public support, and identify paths forward that strengthen transit for the entire region.

Employers across downtown - from small businesses to major corporations that span industries from hospitality to tech - consistently cite RTD's frequency, reliability, and perceived safety as among their greatest challenges in bringing employees back to the office. With return-to-office rates currently at 65% compared to 2019 levels and continuing to climb, we are at a pivotal moment. Yet in conversation after conversation with decision-makers, we hear the same refrain: *their employees want to ride transit, but don't feel it's a viable commuting option.* This sentiment is showing up in the numbers: those who have returned to the office are choosing to drive in greater numbers than ever before.

We were deeply concerned by recent comments suggesting RTD should prioritize serving large events over daily commuters. **We view this perspective as detrimental to the 200,000 jobs, 100,000 residents and entirety of the tax base that Denver's city center drives for the Metro area.** The lack of focus on commuters is, in fact, one of the single largest barriers to downtown revitalization and the region's economic vitality.

Our data paints a clear picture:

- **Member Priorities:** For the second consecutive year, Transportation has been identified as one of the top two challenges facing downtown in our annual Public Policy Survey, cited more frequently than Homelessness and, as of this writing, within just six responses of eclipsing Crime and Safety as members' primary concern.
- **Commuter Feedback:** Our Annual Commuter Survey reveals the specific barriers preventing greater transit use: slow travel times (42% of respondents), service reliability issues (42%), and personal safety concerns (40%). Notably, only 9% of respondents indicated that lower fares would incentivize transit use, underscoring that this is fundamentally a service quality issue.
- **Growing Demand:** Despite current challenges, inbound employee commuting trips to downtown increased by more than 5% from 2024 to 2025. Overall foot traffic rebounded more significantly in 2025 than at any point since the pandemic, signaling continued growth momentum that transit service must be prepared to support.

Downtown Denver Partnership

This is not solely an employer or commuter issue, it affects the full ecosystem of downtown's transformation:

- **Employers and Workers:** 6,000 companies employing over 150,000 workers in Downtown Denver depend on reliable transit access. When RTD service falls short, businesses face increased costs, reduced talent pools, and diminished competitiveness.
- **Current and Future Residents:** Downtown has experienced a **30**% increase in occupied multifamily units since 2019, with numerous projects underway and in the pipeline. The Downtown Area Plan envisions adding 40,000 more residential units, transforming downtown into a complete, 24-hour neighborhood. **These residents (present and future) require dependable transit service to access jobs, services, and amenities across the region.**
- **Regional Economic Vitality:** At just under 2% of the City and County of Denver's land area, Downtown Denver represents 30% of the city's jobs and just over 20% of taxable value, and serves as the economic engine for the entire region. A weakened downtown diminishes property values, tax revenues, and economic opportunity across every RTD service district.

The RTD Accountability Commission was created to drive meaningful change. We urge you to ensure that reform efforts prioritize:

1. **Commuter-focused service** with reliable, frequent connections to downtown during peak hours
2. **Continued work to meaningfully improvement safety** and rider experience
3. **Service reliability** that allows transit to be a dependable commuting option, not a gamble
4. **Transparent communication** with employers and stakeholders about service plans and performance metrics

We recognize the significant challenges RTD faces and do not underestimate the complexity of the work ahead. The Downtown Denver Partnership stands ready to be a constructive partner in identifying solutions, engaging employers and residents, and building support for the investments needed to strengthen our transit system.

Downtown Denver's revitalization - and with it, the region's economic prosperity - demands a transit system that protects today's jobs, residents and visitors, *and* serves as a catalyst for growth. The business community we represent has been clear and consistent: revitalizing RTD is not just a transportation priority; it is *the* infrastructure priority for enabling downtown's next chapter.

We respectfully urge the RTD and this Accountability Commission to center commuter service in your reform agenda and to act with the urgency this moment demands.

Sincerely,

Kourtny Garrett
President & CEO
Downtown Denver Partnership

Amy Hansen
2026 Board Chair
Downtown Denver Partnership

Holland & Hart

Jonathan S. Bender
Partner
Phone 303.295.8456
JSBender@hollandhart.com

December 15, 2025

Dear Members of the RTD Accountability Commission:

As Denver's largest law firm, we write to express our perspective related to RTD's current service levels and the impact of those services on our ability to operate efficiently in downtown Denver.

Like many downtown employers, we are working to bring our people back to the office and rebuild our collaborative, mentorship-driven culture. Although our employees consistently express interest in using public transit for their commutes, public transit is a challenging option. The feedback from members of our team is consistent:

- **Unreliable service** means employees cannot depend on transit to arrive at work, client meetings, or court appearances in a timely manner, or meet time-sensitive deadlines;
- **Insufficient frequency** forces extended wait times that make commutes prohibitively long; and
- **Safety concerns** have led many employees, particularly those commuting during early morning or evening hours, to abandon transit entirely.

Client service and responsiveness are paramount in our business. Asking employees to rely on a transit system they cannot count on is simply untenable.

These challenges create tangible operational and cultural impacts:

- **Talent recruitment and retention:** Prospective employees, particularly younger professionals and support staff, expect urban employers to offer viable transit access;
- **Return-to-office obstacles:** Employees cite RTD's current level of service as a reason for resisting in-office work, complicating our efforts to restore mentorship, collaboration, and firm culture; and
-
- **Parking and congestion:** As employees default to driving, we contribute to downtown traffic congestion, which impacts commute times and our employees' motivation to return to the office.

To be clear, our employees want to utilize public transportation but to do so, we need a system that is reliable and safe.

We urge you to prioritize the commuters who form the backbone of downtown Denver's economy. These are the employees who want to support public transit but cannot justify the risks and inconveniences created by current conditions.

Downtown Denver is home to major law firms, corporations, small businesses, and a growing residential community, all of whom deserve a transit system that functions as essential urban infrastructure should. Downtown's economic vitality and our region's competitiveness depend on it.

Very truly yours,

/s/ *Jonathan S. Bender*

Jonathan S. Bender
Partner
of Holland & Hart LLP

JSB:njh

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HYATT
REGENCY

Dear Members of the RTD Accountability Commission,

I am writing on behalf of the Hyatt Regency Denver at the Colorado Convention Center and the more than 500 colleagues who keep our hotel, meetings, and citywide events running every day. As one of downtown Denver's largest hospitality employers, we depend on a reliable, safe, and frequent public transit system, not as a convenience, but as a necessity.

More than 300 of our colleagues rely on RTD through their Eco Pass to commute to work. For many, public transit is their only means of transportation. These are frontline hospitality professionals - housekeepers, engineers, cooks, servers, front desk agents, and event staff - whose ability to get to work directly determines whether our hotel can operate, whether large conventions can be staffed, and whether Denver can continue to welcome visitors at scale. When transit fails, work simply doesn't happen.

As downtown and the broader region continue efforts to revitalize our urban core, RTD's performance has never been more consequential. Like many transit agencies nationwide, RTD is navigating real post-pandemic challenges. I recognize the complexity of those challenges and believe strongly in the importance of collaboration to address them. However, from the employer and employee perspective, the current reality is increasingly untenable.

We consistently hear from our colleagues that frequency, reliability, and safety concerns make transit unpredictable and stressful. Even for those who want to use transit, uncertainty around service and personal safety has made commuting feel like a gamble. For employees working early mornings, late nights, weekends, and large events, common realities in hospitality, missed or unreliable service can mean missed shifts, lost wages, and operational disruptions.

We were particularly concerned by recent public comments suggesting that RTD should prioritize large events over daily commuters. Downtown Denver's vitality depends on the opposite approach. Daily commuters - those who keep hotels staffed, offices open, restaurants operating, and venues functioning—demonstrate the ongoing, baseline demand that must be served well if downtown is to recover and thrive. Without dependable commuter-focused service, revitalization efforts will continue to stall.

The impacts of current transit challenges extend well beyond individual riders:

- Employers and Workforce Access: Hospitality, healthcare, education, and service-sector employers depend on transit to reach a diverse workforce. When transit reliability declines, employers face staffing shortages, increased turnover, and reduced service levels.

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- Equity and Inclusion: Many transit-dependent workers do not have flexible schedules or alternative transportation options. Reliable public transit is foundational to economic inclusion and opportunity.
- Downtown and Regional Economy: Downtown Denver remains a critical economic engine for the metro area. Its success is inseparable from a transit system that works consistently for the people who show up every day to support it.

The creation of the RTD Accountability Commission represents an important opportunity to drive meaningful, lasting reform. I respectfully urge the Commission to prioritize:

1. Commuter-focused service, with frequent and reliable connections to downtown during peak and off-peak work hours
2. Continued, visible improvements to safety and rider experience
3. Service reliability that allows transit to function as dependable infrastructure, not a risk calculation
4. Transparent communication with employers and riders about service expectations, performance, and improvement plans

I believe strongly that RTD, employers, and community partners share the same goal: a transit system that supports workers, strengthens downtown, and fuels regional economic vitality. The hospitality industry and the thousands of workers it employs, stand ready to be part of the solution.

Downtown Denver's next chapter depends on transit that serves the people who make the city work every day. I urge you to center commuter service in your reform agenda and to act with the urgency this moment requires.

Thank you for your time, leadership, and commitment to improving our region's transit system.

Stay Well ~ Travel Well

GREG LEONARD
General Manager

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December 17, 2025

Dear Members of the RTD Accountability Committee,

As a leading financial services firm with 350 employees in our downtown Denver office, IMA Financial Group writes to urge immediate action on the state of regional transit service. The current performance of RTD is impacting our current employees, and our ability to compete for talent and deliver the workplace experience we strive for.

IMA Financial is committed to downtown Denver. We have made significant investments in our office presence, and we are working to create a workplace culture that brings our teams together for collaboration, mentorship, and innovation. Public transit should be a cornerstone of that strategy, but RTD's current service is prohibitive.

Our employees want to use transit. Many are environmentally conscious, cost-conscious, and prefer the flexibility of not driving. However, the current system fails them in fundamental ways:

- **Unreliable service** makes it impossible to depend on transit for client meetings or time-sensitive obligations
- **Insufficient frequency** turns what should be a 30-minute commute into an hour-plus ordeal
- **Safety concerns** have pushed employees, particularly women and those commuting outside traditional hours, back into their cars

As a company in the financial services industry, we understand what it means to remain competitive and meet evolving customer expectations. Transit is no different. Our employees compare RTD not just to driving, but to transit systems in other major cities where they've lived and worked, systems that offer Wi-Fi connectivity, real-time tracking, clean facilities, and a safe, professional commuting environment.

These transit shortcomings create cascading business challenges:

- **Talent competitiveness:** Prospective hires, particularly younger professionals, expect modern transit infrastructure. RTD's deficiencies make Denver less attractive compared to peer cities.
- **Onsite Work Challenges:** Employees cite transit inadequacy as one of the barriers to in-office work, threatening to hamper our efforts to rebuild team cohesion and company culture.

- **Operational costs:** As transit fails, we absorb increased parking subsidies and transportation expenses, costs that could be better invested in our people and growth.
- **Employee satisfaction:** Team members who want sustainable commuting options feel unsupported and frustrated by infrastructure that doesn't meet basic standards of service quality.

We urge the RTD Accountability Committee to ensure that reform efforts address not just frequency and reliability (though those are critical) but also the overall **rider experience and safety** that make transit a genuine choice rather than a last resort:

- **Dependable, frequent service** during commuting hours that makes transit time-competitive with driving
- **Visible safety measures** that make employees feel secure at all hours
- **Modern amenities** including Wi-Fi connectivity, real-time arrival information, and clean, well-maintained facilities
- **Innovative thinking** about what contemporary transit riders need and expect

Continued underinvestment in transit functionality and rider experience carries real economic consequences for downtown Denver and the region. IMA Financial Group is prepared to support the reforms and investments necessary to transform RTD into a system that serves as genuine urban infrastructure.

We respectfully urge you to prioritize commuter needs and embrace the innovation required to deliver a 21st-century transit experience. Our employees, our business, and downtown's economic future depend on it.

Sincerely,

Nick Burns

Nick Burns

Colorado Market President

Dear Members of the RTD Accountability Committee,

As the former Mayor of Thornton who was actively engaged in the FasTracks Task Force process, and in my current roles as President & CEO of Civic Results and Executive Director of the Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC), I am writing to strongly encourage the Committee to approach its work with the fullest regard for regional collaboration, transparency, and long-term mobility solutions for the Denver metropolitan area. There has been a growing and increased level of frustration about RTD service levels, ridership and safety expressed by regional Mayors.

The Metro Mayors Caucus represents over half the state's population and played a critical leadership role in securing support for FasTracks, helping to build the regional consensus and public confidence necessary to pass the 2004 ballot initiative. That history underscores how essential MMC partnership is to major transit decisions—and how much collective effort remains to complete the vision voters approved more than two decades ago.

Given this legacy, and the reality that several FasTracks corridors and commitments remain unfinished, we must embrace innovation, not nostalgia, to advance the projects that still need to be delivered. As we confront today's mobility challenges, we cannot rely on yesterday's solutions; doing so would limit both progress and public trust. A modern, adaptive, and collaborative approach is essential to ensuring that the system evolves to meet current and future needs.

With that in mind, I urge the Committee to take seriously its responsibility to evaluate and improve:

- The governance structure;
- Paratransit services within RTD and the agency's ability to meet federal, regional, and community expectations;
- The representation of local governments and state agencies within RTD's decision-making processes; and
- RTD's labor and workforce standards, including workforce retention and stability.

Each of these issues directly impacts the residents and 38 communities represented by the Metro Mayors Caucus. Given our mayors' long-standing experience and leadership in regional transportation and community mobility, it is essential that the MMC remain fully informed and engaged throughout the Committee's review. I respectfully request that the Committee not finalize or approve any recommendations or plans without first consulting the Metro Mayors Caucus.

Thank you for your service and for the thoughtful work you are undertaking. I look forward to continued partnership and stand ready to support the Committee in advancing a regional transit future that is innovative, equitable, and responsive to the needs of our communities.

Sincerely,

Heidi Williams
President & CEO, Civic Results
Executive Director, Metro Mayors Caucus
Former Mayor, City of Thornton

POLSINELLI

1401 Lawrence Street, Suite 2300, Denver, CO 80202 • (303) 572-9300

December 1, 2025

RTD Accountability Committee
Colorado Energy Office
c/o kelly.blynn@state.co.us

Dear Committee Members:

Thank you for your service on the RTD Accountability Commitee and for your commitment to making recommendations for the improvement of RTD. As you know, RTD provides a critical service to businesses in the Denver metropolitan area and their employees. We write today to provide our perspective as a large employer in Denver.

Our firm employes over 1,200 attorneys across the United States, including approximately 150 people in Downtown Denver. Given our city's location in the United States and the world-class airport we enjoy here in Denver, Polsinelli often hosts meetings with firm leaders and others from across the country in our Denver office. Both our Denver employees and our visitors to the Denver office rely on RTD service every single day.

While we are experiencing greater in-office attendance, we are also hearing concerns related to commute times and resistance to use of public transit due to crime, cleanliness and service levels. These concerns are being raised by staff and others who routinely used public transit to get to the office before the pandemic, many of them every day. These concerns are impacting office attendance negatively and causing our team great concern. These issues more generally impact the vitality of the entire city and its business community, which is also concerning.

We understand the Committee's mandate is not to get into RTD's operational details, but rather to make recommendations on governance related issues. We encourage the Committee to consider changes in governance that are designed to bring strong leadership to the table, with expertise that understands how a highly functioning RTD is critical to businesses like ours and the continued success of our city. While progress has been made by RTD, around crime, cleanliness and service levels, there is more progress to be made, including with respect to public perception

of these issues. We are hopeful that this focus on governance will help bring additional attention to these issues in the coming months.

Thank you for your time and service towards this very important issue.

Regards,

Amy Hansen
Denver Office Co-Managing Partner

Scott Berdan
Denver Office Co-Managing Partner

December 10, 2025

Members of the RTD Accountability Committee,

My name is Matt Frommer, and I'm the Transportation and Land Use Policy Manager for the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project, or SWEEP. Thank you for your time and commitment to strengthening our regional transit agency, RTD. While I haven't been able to attend every meeting, I understand the Committee is preparing legislative recommendations to improve RTD's performance and accountability.

I urge you to think big and be bold. The region needs recommendations that meaningfully address the deep structural problems at the core of RTD's operational, financial, and public trust challenges. Our transit system is in dire straits, and desperate times call for desperate measures. Some may argue things aren't as bad and I'm making them out to be, but I'd argue we've just revised our expectations downward to the point that we don't expect excellence or ambition from RTD, and that's just unacceptable for a growing metro area that has big goals around transportation, affordability, and climate.

RTD ridership has plummeted since 2020 with no sign of sustained recovery. Sure people are working from home, but that doesn't explain the fact that total driving has surpassed pre-pandemic levels while transit use continues to stagnate. Who would've thought that CDOT, the former Department of Highways, would become the bright spot for public transit in Colorado with Bustang service and ridership growing significantly every year.

It's hard to summarize RTD's missteps in a two-minute comment - from mishandling slow zones that permanently drove away rail riders, to failing to apply for certain state grants, to discovering hundreds of millions of dollars in unplanned maintenance projects late in the budgeting process. The agency has failed to provide a clear path forward on FasTracks and lacks a compelling vision for the future of transit in our region. Some of these issues were uncovered not through RTD's own transparency, but through reporters and volunteer advocates who had to comb through board packets and file CORA requests just to get answers they could then report to the Board to ask RTD staff. This is not effective governance.

RTD's struggles don't exist in isolation, they ripple across the region. When DRCOG or CDOT consider multimodal projects, local leaders want to pair road improvements with transit, but often can't because of RTD's lack of capacity and initiative. Some cities want more transit and are even willing to pay for it, but can't seem to find a path forward with RTD. In 2024, we had 17% less bus service than we did 20 years ago, when we had 1 million fewer residents.

RTD's performance also affects local land use decisions. Cities hesitate to plan dense, mixed-use development with affordable housing near transit lines because they can't trust RTD to deliver the "T" in TOD. In general, this kind of mismanagement erodes public trust and jeopardizes Coloradans faith in government, whether it's a transit agency, school district, city, or state.

In my view, the Board's structure and lack of clear direction is a major barrier to progress. Fifteen elected members each advocating for service in their own districts dilutes RTD's regional mission. Are service decisions driven by a cohesive strategy, or simply spread thin and sprinkled across the metro to satisfy each jurisdiction regardless of the demonstrated need? Governance reform must address not only the size and role of the Board, but also its relationship with agency leadership. That dynamic feels broken, and without major changes, it will remain so.

As a longtime transit advocate, I find myself in a constant bind: defending the importance of transit for our region while grappling with RTD's unreliability and lack of vision. The Denver region deserves better. Without meaningful reform, we risk standing in the same place two years from now, forming yet another "RTD accountability committee" to examine the same unresolved issues. Getting RTD on the right track will be very difficult, but I worry we're going to keep tip-toeing around the real issues rather than creating a leadership structure that tackles the big problems head on. And so I ask you, please meet the urgency of this moment and be bold.

Sincerely,

Matt Frommer
Transportation & Land Use Policy Manager
Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEEP)
mfrommer@swenergy.org

December 17, 2025

Dear Members of the RTD Accountability Committee,

Visit Denver would like to emphasize the critical connection between consistent, reliable regional transit and our city's visitor economy. RTD service is essential infrastructure that shapes how millions of visitors experience Denver and directly impacts our ability to compete for tourism, conventions, and major events on the national and global stage.

Denver's 10-Year Tourism Roadmap, adopted by the Visit Denver Board and informed by hundreds of local industry and business leaders, identifies enhanced mobility and connectivity as fundamental to maintaining Denver's reputation as a world-class destination. Meeting planners assess whether attendees can move easily between the Colorado Convention Center, hotels, restaurants, and cultural attractions.

When visitors arrive at Denver International Airport, their first impression is often shaped by their transit experience to downtown and throughout the metro area. Reliable, frequent service from DEN to downtown signals that Denver is accessible, modern, and easy to navigate. RTD's current service challenges threaten that narrative and our competitive position in an increasingly crowded tourism marketplace.

Denver's visitor economy supports more than 44,000 jobs in the City and County of Denver and over 73,000 jobs across the metro area, including hospitality workers, restaurant staff, attraction employees, and countless others whose livelihoods depend on a thriving tourism sector. RTD service quality directly impacts this workforce. Unreliable or infrequent service creates workforce challenges for hotels, restaurants, and attractions operating on extended and weekend schedules. Investing in transit is investing in the people who power Denver's visitor economy.

The Denver Tourism Roadmap recognizes that visitor experience and resident quality of life are interconnected. Reliable RTD service supports both visitors navigating our city and residents accessing jobs, services, and amenities, creating a more livable city for Denverites while enhancing the experience we offer our visitors.

Visit Denver stands ready to partner in advocating for the investments and reforms necessary to strengthen RTD. Our visitor economy, the tens of thousands of jobs it supports, and Denver's standing as a premier destination depend on a transit system that functions as essential infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Scharf

Richard W. Scharf
President & CEO
Visit Denver

Written Public Comment Submitted on CEO Website

Aliah Jenette

To whom It may concern:

My name is Aliah, and I am a longtime, dedicated user of Access-a-Ride and Access On Demand. These programs are not just services they are lifelines for individuals like myself who live with disabilities. For years, I've relied on them to attend critical appointments, participate in the workforce, and maintain an independent life without depending on my parents or others to drive me around. I am a grown woman, and I deserve to live with autonomy.

Without these programs, my independence and the independence of countless others will be severely limited or even taken away entirely. It's already incredibly difficult to obtain funding for accessible vehicles, and most families cannot afford the cost. Programs like Access-a-Ride and Access On Demand are often the only transportation options we have to live, work, and engage in our communities.

If these services are cut back or made less accessible, you're not just making budget changes, you're ripping away our ability to be full, active members of society. We won't be able to get to our jobs, doctor's appointments, or community events. Instead, you'll be creating an isolated, homebound population that's being shut out of the world simply because we can't get a ride.

I live in Brighton, Colorado, where the service area is already very restricted. It makes no sense that I've been a lifetime user of these services, yet I often can't even access them when I need them. These programs were built to provide independence but when they're limited or unreliable, they do the exact opposite.

People with disabilities deserve reliable, accessible transportation, regardless of the time or day. We have lives to live. We have places to be. We have every right to move through the world like everyone else.

Please reconsider any changes that would reduce access to these essential programs.

Instead, expand them. Make them truly accessible. Invest in our independence, don't strip it away.

Sincerely,
Aliah

Carl Lawrence

Schedule frequency needs to be ten minutes or less for transit to be truly effective. This can be accomplished using smaller coaches on an automated network, just like we'd all expect to see in the future. This technology has been available for decades but ignored in favor of the entrenched, 200 year old rail industry. The RTD board needs more technical experts capable of visualizing the benefits of advanced technologies, and willing to start that planning process now.

Sue Shusterman

I am writing in hopes that the committee members will do whatever possible to preserve access on demand. The program program works, so if if it is not broke,, why are detrimental changes being made? I understand that the number of users of the program has increased, which obviously has increased cost to run the program. However, please remember, that the cost for someone to take Access A ride to taxpayers versus Access on demand, is significantly different. Let’s find ways to preserve the program and keep it affordable and usable for community members who truly need this program. It has enabled me personally to be more independent, be more involved in my community with volunteering, and made it easier on my family and friends, because I do not have to rely on them for my transportation needs.

Karen Benker

Greetings,
I served on the RTD Board from 1992 to 2000. We accomplished many projects: opened the first 5 miles of rail in downtown Denver, built the SW rail line to Littleton, started SkyRide to the new DIA, and started Access a Ride. We also went to the voters for funding to build a rail network called Guide the Ride in 1997 and it failed at the ballot box. Fastracks passed in 2004.

In 1994, the 15 member board had 8 new directors that were mostly unopposed in their election and their goal was to dismantle RTD because they felt that transit was not necessary and they wanted to stop the rail program. We were very dysfunctional. And they were very difficult times to serve on the board. It was the Mayors of the region that came to our rescue and kept us going until the next election. This lack of qualified RTD officials started the conversation about changing the board from

elected to appointed because no one paid attention to the RTD races. The State Legislature became involved and talked about reforming the board. No action was taken, but for several years the mayors stepped up and found strong candidates.

Despite the dysfunction of the board, we accomplished "big" things. And boards following us also continued in that manner and had major accomplishments that moved our transit agency forward. Just look at Union Station. It is a glorious building!

I was asked by my Longmont Mayor to run for RTD again because our region has waited for decades for the NW rail line that was promised in the Fastracks vote. So I am back and can now compare this RTD with the 1990s RTD.

Currently, I feel that RTD is "stuck in the mud". And that is why the State Legislature has passed several bills over the past 2-3 years to try to get RTD moving again. And I believe that is now your role. COVID set us back. But it is now behind us, and we have not been active in trying to bring back riders. Pre-COVID, we had about 106 million riders (or boardings). Now for several years, we are at 65 million. Not good enough. And the State Legislature wants more from RTD (and I do too).

Last year, the Legislature passed SB 24-230 and SB 24-184 which provides state funding for the construction of NW rail and the last 2 stations for the N line in Adams County. RTD is slow to move to capture those funds and get those projects started.

Some of us want to reinstate the Broncos Ride but I was told by 2 directors that "staff doesn't want to do that", yet that is one of the most popular services that we have provided for decades. We need 8 votes to get this passed.

Whether this committee recommends an appointed board or an elected board, I believe either one can work. Over the years, I believe leadership skills are necessary to move government agencies forward--both at the board level and staff level. RTD needs a push, we lack energy and excitement, and we need to stop complaining about not having enough resources and our region is "too big". These are problems that can be addressed, but at this time, little action takes place.

Yes, we need to keep our capital assets in order and have a realistic timeline to repair and replace our buses, trains, buildings, etc. But I think RTD can walk and chew gum at the same time by growing ridership, maintaining our assets, and building out the last 4 pieces of Fastracks. It takes some brain-storming, creativity, and drive to accomplish these things.

Perhaps your committee can help us in that area. Many thanks for your service. This is important work.

Victoria Southerland

I am a Paratransit rider in RTD's District G, represented by Board Member Julien Bouquet. Mr. Bouquet is not only my district representative but also the Chairman of the RTD Board of Directors and a member of the RTD Accountability Committee.

I have sent Mr. Bouquet multiple emails requesting a response to prior communications, as well as guidance on how I may formally request the involvement of an Inspector General or Ombudsman to address the ongoing, systemic problems within RTD.

Because this specific question has been included in my previous messages, yet he has repeatedly declined to respond, I can only conclude that Mr. Bouquet, and possibly the Board, do not want this matter entered into any official record. That reluctance is troubling, as such a position would provide meaningful oversight and hold both RTD and the Board accountable.

Given the persistent lack of accountability on the part of RTD and the Board, the creation of an Inspector General or Ombudsman position is both necessary and fully justified.

With that in mind, I am asking: What recourse does a district constituent have when their elected board representative refuses to perform their duties and responsibilities? To whom is the RTD Board accountable?

Any assistance you can provide would be greatly appreciated.

Natalie Stiffler

Here are my comments that I've verbalized during your visits with Commuting Solutions and Move Colorado. I hope the committee will consider including in the final report to the legislature.

I would be happy to talk more about this with you if there's interest.

Sincerely,

Natalie

Recommend amending the draft recommendations in section titled **Local Government Collaboration** to include: **Advancing Regional Transit Governance and Service Delivery**

While the current draft recommendations address critical governance and operational issues, they do **not** fully resolve questions about:

- Whether RTD's current district boundaries match today's travel patterns and urban development.
- How municipal and subregional agencies could share service delivery responsibilities.
- What funding models would ensure sustainable, high-quality transit across the region.

Peer regions - including the Bay Area, Los Angeles, and Seattle/King County - demonstrate that regional coordination plus empowered local operators can improve service responsiveness and efficiency, provided there is a clear framework for integration and funding.

Proposal

Include in the Accountability Committee's final recommendations a call for a Regional Transit Service Model Study to be initiated in 2026 as a logical next step following the Committee's report to the Legislature. This study would focus on:

1. Geographic Alignment

- Assess RTD's statutory boundaries versus current and projected travel markets.
- Explore options for subdistricts or boundary adjustments that maintain equity and financial stability.

2. Service Delivery Model

- Evaluate the potential for municipal/subregional operators under a regional coordination framework.
- Define clear roles for RTD (trunk/regional services, integration) and local agencies (circulators, coverage routes).

3. Funding and Fiscal Allocation Architecture

- Model impacts of local return formulas, joint procurement, and state/federal alignment.

- Consider FasTracks obligations related to future funding models.

Phased Approach

- **Phase 0:** Fact base - travel markets, equity analysis, financial stress tests, stakeholder engagement.
- **Phase 1:** Build coordination - schedule sync, fare integration, service standards.
- **Phase 2:** Pilot municipal operators/Joint Powers Authority contracts with performance KPIs.
- **Phase 3:** Legislative options for district geography and funding reforms.

Deliverables

- Policy options paper for the Legislature and DRCOG.
- Governance and funding framework aligned with Accountability Committee principles.
- Implementation roadmap with statutory change recommendations.

Recommendation: The Accountability Committee should include recommending this additional study as a formal next step in its final report, binding the Legislature and the region to move forward with a comprehensive review of RTD's service area, provider roles, and funding after the Committee's work concludes.

Mary Henneck

Please accept the following as public comment and pre-reading materials for the next Accountability Committee meeting at which paratransit will be discussed, as well as to provide input regarding the committee's update to the TLRC on 10/21/25.

In order to inform the RTD Accountability Committee of the paratransit rider community's perspective that has been dismissed and ignored by RTD, I have attached several documents. You will notice a theme of obfuscation and misleading information that emanates from RTD and is being perpetuated by this very Accountability Committee.

Furthermore, I'd like to address the most recent communication from board chair Bouquet (RTD_Chair Bouquet_Response to AoD Letter_Oct 3. 2025) regarding recent approved changes to the Access on Demand (AOD) program. This document was included as pre-reading for the 10/8/25 RTD Accountability Committee meeting and I must ask, "Why was the original letter signed by 30 elected officials (that Chair Bouquet was responding to) not included in your pre-reading packet?" I have attached it here so that the committee has complete information, not just one side of the story.

In Chair Bouquet's response (pg. 1), the second bullet point under "additional modifications" is clearly meant to mislead the public. It lists a modification as, "Inclusion of the entire district of 2,345 square miles as allowable service area, which represents a nearly 195% increase over the historic paratransit service area of 795 square miles". This implies that the service area under AOD was expanded; however, that is not true. This is not a modification to the AOD program, this is status quo. Bouquet later in the letter (pg. 2) acknowledges this by stating that, "the Board voted to preserve the service area for Access-on-Demand to be the entire RTD region". Preservation and expansion are not synonymous. During the vote at the board meeting, several board members were under the impression that they were expanding the service area. They did not even understand what they were voting on.

On page 2 of Bouquet's letter he states that, "the program has proven to be more popular than even the most aggressive initial estimates and continues to experience compound growth in both the number of trips provided and customers using the program". However, the Nelson Nygaard consultancy determined, "the financial issues were completely predictable". Interestingly, RTD has proclaimed for almost two years now that AOD's growth has been "precipitous", and "financially unsustainable" yet when confronted with their own cost projections (see "New RTD Math" attachment), the program costs were projected to

come in half a million dollars under budget with 0% growth from 2024 to 2025. So how is it that RTD is purporting exponential growth in ridership? The math doesn't add up. Tim Payne of Nelson Nygaard indicated that they were not commissioned to conduct a full-blown analysis of paratransit. Unfortunately, their superficial review provided an echo-chamber for RTD's own propaganda and provided unsubstantiated validation to RTD's misleading claims. Were any riders consulted?

Lastly, Chair Bouquet's admission that the changes to AOD were largely based on an unrepresentative position supported by the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition (CCDC) and National Federation of the Blind (NFB) is shameful. Who appointed these two organizations (and really just two individuals) to represent the interests of the entire disability community? The attached letter ("RTD Proposed Fare Increase for Access on Demand 093025-nonelected") was signed by 440 individuals at the time of submission and another 100 since. This level of opposition to the proposed changes tells a different story than the one-sided information this committee has been provided. Additionally, why were RTD's own committees: the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities (ACPD) and the Access-a-Ride Paratransit Advisory Committee (APAC) entirely absent from this process?

It is one thing to start a program with up-friont costs, it's another thing to take away a program that people have built their lives around, allowing them to live and work in places that are only accessible through the AOD program. If these changes are implemented, people will be priced out of accessible transportation and will lose their jobs and their independence. It is incumbent upon the RTD Accountability Committee to require that an independent impact study from a neutral organization be conducted prior to any adverse changes to AOD being implemented.

Sincerely,

Mary Henneck
Disability Advocate, Parent/legal guardian of AOD rider who, by definition of his disability, is unable to advocate for himself

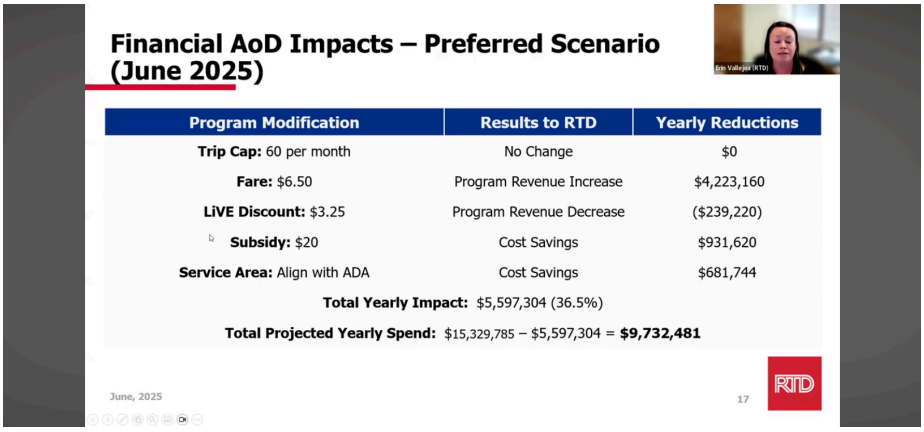
A short story about RTD Paratransit

Prologue: The Numbers

Although the efforts by RTD to cut the **Access on Demand (AOD)** program — a paratransit option beloved by riders with disabilities for its flexibility and affordability–has been going on for almost 2 years, the last few months have really shed light on the problems within RTD specific to paratransit.

At the May 2025 RTD Board meeting, *Acting Assistant Manager of Bus Operations*, Erin Vallejos, reported that AOD costs RTD **80% less per trip** than its sibling program, **Access-a-Ride (AAR)**. AAR trips cost about **$106 each**. AOD trips? Around **$22**.

On **June 30, 2025**, Vallejos presented RTD's so-called **"Preferred Scenario"** for cutting the AOD program.



Chapter 1: "Preferred by Whom?"

Why is it called a *Preferred* Scenario? Preferred by riders? No. Not at all. It's labeled "preferred" by RTD staff — which makes the title an oddly cheerful label for a proposal that would hurt the very people it serves. Tone-deaf? Absolutely. Fitting? Unfortunately, yes.

What kind of *impacts* are we talking about? Financial impacts — as the slide title proudly declares. And the *human* impacts? RTD doesn't like to talk about those.

Chapter 2: The Mysterious Case of the Missing Crisis

Why is CEO Debra Johnson asking for a **40% cut** to AOD? According to RTD, the program is "growing out of control," "costs are ballooning," and it's "unsustainable."

Buried in the presentation slide is a line showing that AOD's **2025 projected spending** is **$15.3 million** — virtually identical to 2024's costs. In fact, that's **half a million dollars under the 2025 approved budget of $15.8 million.**

So…it's not actually *growing out of control*? Correct. It's holding steady — and efficiently so. In other words: happier riders at a far lower cost.

So why slash the more efficient program?

Chapter 3: The Disappearing Data Act

After advocates noticed the contradictions, a detailed letter summarizing those numbers was sent to the RTD Board in **July 2025** — and then… vanished into the bureaucratic void. It wasn't made public until **September**, after multiple requests.

Why the delay? Was RTD hiding something? It's hard to say. But what's clear is that the narrative of "runaway costs" didn't match RTD's own data.

Meanwhile, the community got wind of the proposed cuts. Over **40 people** rallied outside RTD headquarters in July, followed by two hours of impassioned public comment.

RTD responded with a new twist — introducing an unfamiliar expense category called **"WAV (Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle) Costs,"** suddenly claiming it doubled AOD's budget. Wait. Doubled? Where did *that* come from?

Chapter 4: A New Program Appears (Without Warning)

RTD defines AOD as *"a subsidized curb-to-curb service using taxi and rideshare providers."* Does this mean Uber, Lyft, and taxis are now offering wheelchair-accessible vehicles? That would be great, but sadly, no.

What it *does* mean is that RTD staff quietly created a **new, unapproved service** — let's call it '**WAV on Demand'** — using **Access-a-Ride vehicles operated by Transdev** to provide on-demand rides for wheelchair users.

Who approved this? Did the board even know? Apparently not. There's no public record of board approval, budget allocation, or even discussion. So where's the money coming from? We'll get to that in a minute.

Chapter 5: The Board Meeting Cliffhanger

At the July Board meeting, debate raged for two hours. Amendments were amended. Motions were motioned. In the end, the Board punted — sending the matter back to committee. But by **August**, CEO Johnson issued a memo attempting to justify folding WAV on Demand's multimillion-dollar costs **into the AOD budget category.**

Did she explain why her own numbers contradict her story? She did not.

In response, **ADAPT Colorado** sent a detailed letter challenging RTD's math — pointing out misclassified WAV costs, exaggerated growth assumptions, and questionable projections that defied actual trip data.

CEO Johnson replied that she was "heeding direction from the Board." Curiously, no such direction exists in the public record.

Chapter 6: The September Showdown

By September, riders with disabilities, community advocates, and elected officials had had enough.

A letter signed by **440 citizens** and another signed by **30 elected officials** were sent to RTD leadership, urging the agency to halt cuts, commission an independent impact study, and honor **Ballot Measure 7A**, which voters passed to *protect* — not gut — paratransit services.

Over **100 people testified** that night — **three hours and fifteen minutes** of passionate, informed, sometimes emotional public comment. And yet… it was clear the decision had already been made.

Board members voted without addressing the community's requests. Some even appeared confused about what they were voting on, suggesting "expansions" that were really just preserving the current service area for AOD.

Chapter 7: The Reveal

Then came a rare moment of candor.

Director Harwick asked Ms. Vallejos about WAV on Demand costs. He calculated that this new WAV on Demand program was costing RTD **$270 per trip.**

"I don't understand how that's possible," he said. Staff did not dispute his math.

Director Ruscha pressed further: How had staff taken vehicles *off* the Access-a-Ride fleet — at a cost of $14-15 million — without notifying the Board? "What happened behind the scenes?" she asked.

CEO Johnson replied that RTD "leveraged our AAR vehicles" when rideshare providers couldn't supply WAVs. Vallejos added, "We are still obligated to stay within our contractual Not to Exceed (NTE) amounts approved by the Board."

So… they just spent the money however they wanted, as long as it stayed under the NTE ceiling? That's the implication. And Ruscha was very certain that the Board never gave such authority.

Which brings us back to – why are we only hearing this now, during the vote in September – after a steady barrage of obfuscation, misdirection and withholding of data?

Epilogue: The Ask

And that is the true story of how RTD leadership quietly dismantled the most efficient and rider-friendly paratransit option in the system — while shifting blame, data, and dollars around like pieces on a chessboard.

The question now isn't just *what happened*, but *what happens next.*

So here's the ask:

> **The newly appointed RTD Accountability Committee** should immediately **pause all adverse changes** to the Access on Demand program, **initiate an independent impact study** of all paratransit and adjacent services, and **hold RTD leadership accountable** to the intent of **Ballot Measure 7A** — to maintain and protect mobility for people with disabilities.

Because when public agencies play games with public trust, it's the riders — the most vulnerable and transit-dependent among us — who pay the price.

And that, my friends, is a true story.

Access on Demand: A Proven Success Under Threat

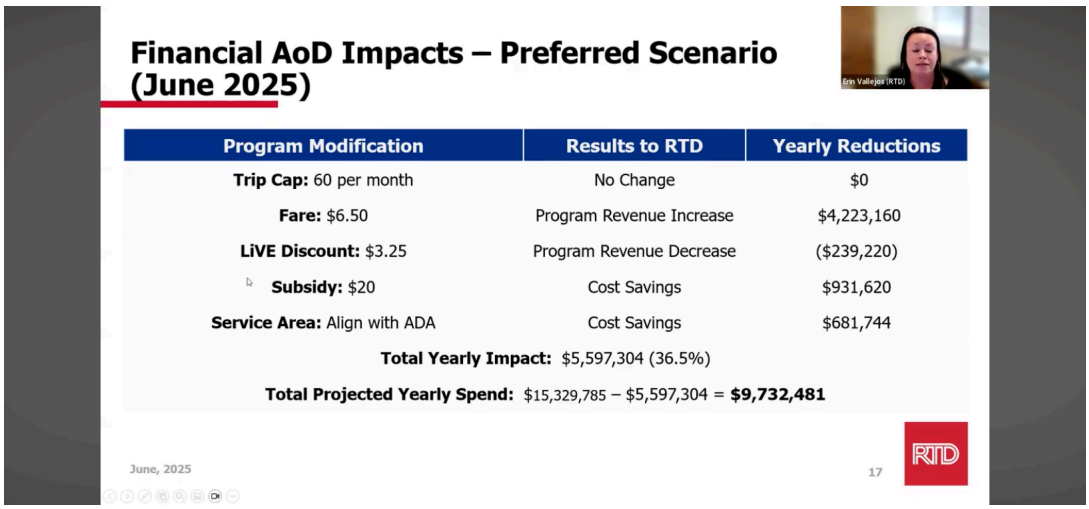
RTD CEO Debra Johnson has spent the past year leading an aggressive campaign to dramatically scale back Access on Demand (AOD)—the most effective, affordable, and rider-preferred paratransit service in the Denver metro area. Alongside former staffer Fred Worthen, CEO Johnson has repeatedly framed AOD as financially unsustainable.

This narrative doesn't hold up to scrutiny.

While costs increased when AOD expanded from a limited four-zip-code pilot to a full regional program, that is expected growth. Now, the data shows those costs have stabilized. According to data from RTD staff member Erin Vallejos' "Preferred Scenario" presentation on June 30, 2025, AOD is projected to have 0% cost growth from 2024 to 2025—and will finish the year nearly $500,000 under budget. The numbers speak for themselves.

AOD Budget Detail	2024 Amount	2025 Amount
Original Approved Budget		$13,814,441
Additional Approved Funding		$2,000,000
Total Approved Budget		$15,814,441
Actual/Projected Spend (per Vallejos)	**$15,300,000**	**$15,329,785**
Variance (Under Budget)		($484,656)
Growth Rate		**0%**

Despite these strong indicators of stability and fiscal responsibility, CEO Johnson is advancing a proposal to cut the AOD program by 36.5% (just short of her requested 40%) as soon as October 2025.



Even more baffling: the plan shifts more riders to Access-a-Ride, a program that costs 80% more per trip—undermining both budget goals and service quality.

From the May 28, 2025 Board presentation by Erin Vallejos:

Program	2024 Annual Cost	2024 Trips	Cost/Trip
Access-a-Ride	$53,000,000	500,000	$106
Access on Demand	$15,300,000	685,000	$22

The Impact on Riders

The proposed cuts are not just financial—they are deeply human.

According to RTD's own June 30 "Preferred Scenario" presentation, AOD riders would bear nearly $5 million in new costs, including:

Increased fares	$4,223,160
LiVE discount	($239,220)
Subsidy reduction	$931,620
Total cost to AOD riders	**$4,915,560**

And that's not all. The proposal also calls for cutting approximately 34,250 trips affecting those outside the ADA-mandated service area.

Trip reduction estimate	
2024 AOD trips	685,000
% Trips outside ADA service area	5%
Proposed AOD trips cut	34,250

The Wrong Direction

RTD leadership has failed to:

1. Provide transparent, data-backed justification for cutting AOD.
2. Acknowledge the real-life impact on thousands of riders who rely on the program for work, medical appointments, social connection, and basic independence.

Despite many hundreds of public comments from riders, caregivers, and advocates, RTD has not engaged with their concerns.

Let’s be clear: budget lines don’t capture lived experiences.

- How many people will lose their jobs because they can’t get to work?
- How many medical appointments will be missed?
- How many people will be further isolated from their communities?

This is a False Choice

RTD is pitting two vital programs—AOD and Access-a-Ride—against each other. That is not necessary and not fiscally sound. Cutting AOD and shifting riders to Access-a-Ride doesn’t save money. It increases per-trip costs, reduces flexibility, and worsens service delivery for people with disabilities.

To summarize, cutting AOD:

- does not reduce paratransit costs,
- does not improve Access-a-Ride, and
- effectively guts a high-performing, cost-effective service that many riders depend on.

Conclusion

RTD must reconsider this proposal. Riders, taxpayers, and advocates are not asking for favors—they’re asking for facts, fairness, and a commitment to proven solutions. Access on Demand works. It’s efficient. It’s under budget. And it must be protected.

RTD Proposed Fare Increase for Access on Demand, September 30th, 2025

To: Julien Bouquet, Board Chair; Ian Harwick, Chair, Operations, Safety & Security Committee; RTD Board

Cc: Debra Johnson, RTD GM/CEO

Re: RTD Proposed Fare Increase for Access on Demand, September 30th, 2025

We, community members with disabilities and taxpayers with an interest in the Regional Transportation District (RTD) serving residents and tourists, are disappointed in the proposed changes to Access-on-Demand (AoD)'s costs and coverages for people with disabilities. Folks with disabilities have been providing public comments at RTD Committee Meetings and Board Meetings alike for 21 months, yet the Board has failed to be responsive to our pleas. These cuts will cause real harm to people with disabilities.

The proposed fare will change from $0.00 to $6.50, and the ride subsidy will decrease from $25.00 to $20.00. It will also dramatically reduce hours, making it impossible for some people to get home after work (or to work for those on the night shift). This service provides people who cannot drive or get into private cars without a wheelchair-lift the ability to get around. It is not a luxury, but a lifeline for our community.
The agency has unfortunately labeled Access-on-Demand a "premium, supplemental service". This very successful & popular service is critical to independent living.

Thousands of Coloradans depend upon Access-on-Demand to get to work, medical appointments, and for things like grocery shopping. **Having a 650% increase for this community is going to create a devastating impact**. In addition there were unprecedented cuts during the pandemic that have not been restored, leaving thousands of riders solely dependent on Access-a-Rides. People are going to have to quit jobs, miss appointments, and choose between eating and getting to a needed meeting.
We respectfully request the elected Board of Directors of the Regional Transportation District to wholly reject the recommended action for Access on Demand at your September 30th Board Meeting. We believe **that targeting one class of people,** principally our disability community is reckless, irresponsible and immoral. Coloradans with disabilities deserve better.

In addition, we strongly encourage the RTD Board of Directors to direct GM/CEO Debra Johnson to **engage a third party to conduct a comprehensive Impact Study on the entire service offerings of accessible transportation, i.e., Paratransit (AaR), WAV, AOD, Flex Ride, to include alongside a representative panel of subject matter experts we refer to as consumers with disabilities.**

The panel of consumers with disabilities shall be selected prior to any engagement with a third party, ensuring maximum community engagement. In addition, we strongly believe that Access on Demand (Aod) and Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) services shall include: multiple stops, no geographic restrictions and no time limitations.

Please honor the promises of the 7A Campaign and expand services for the Disability Community not single out people with disabilities for cuts and fare increases.

Dawn Russell, *ADAPT*
Dr. Claudia Folska, *Director, RTD District E (2012-2020)*
Dr. Brian Grewe, *Executive Director, Atlantis Community, Inc*
Bob Dinegar, *ADAPT*
James Flattum, *Co-founder, Greater Denver Transit*
Mary Henneck, MBA, MA, *Disability Advocate, Parent of AOD Rider, Parent to Parent Advisory Board*
Coleen Samuels, Executive Director, DRMAC
Leah Jaron, *Chair, Board of Directors, Atlantis Community, Inc.*
Tiffany Fixter, *Founder, Brewability*
Corinne Melon, *Managing Director, Phamaly Theatre Company*
Kenneth Hendren, *Aging in Place Specialist*
Shelly Fitzgerald, *Parent of disabled child*
Jack Rosenthal, *Candidate for RTD Board, District O*
Kristie Gamboa Cheyne, *Mom of an AOD rider, Atlantis Community Inc*
Carol Silvestain, *Parent of an adult with IDD*
Nichole Arp, *Program Manager, Parent to Parent of Colorado/Ability Connection Colorado*
Chitra Murugesan, *Caregiver*
Lee Sylvester, *Advocate, Colorado Resident*
Kim Putnam, *Legal Guardian to Tessa Putnam*
Renee Walbert, *AtillaTheMom, Family thriving and Disabled with a cap D*
Heather Ewer
Cindy Stevens, *Disability Advocate, Aging Parent of 35yo with CP/IDD, RTD user*
Gayle Martinez, *Caregiver, Stepping Stone*
Lynn Fiedorowicz
Allie Crow, *Program Manager, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Nickie Woods, *Special Education Instructional Coach, Fletcher Miller Special School*
Janet Hass, *Family of Disabled Adult*
Aubrey Allmond, *Caregiver / Guardian, Stepping Stone*
Aaron Miller, *AOD rider to/from work and day program, Stepping stones*
Natalie Snell, *Advocate, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Suzanne Ogborn, *Employment Services Manager, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Linda Tegeder, *POA to an IDD son*
Amanda Stewart
Samantha Parr
Lori Hogan, *Caregiver/legal guardian/parent of a disabled adult*
Adeline Flower
Lisa Fretz, *Parent*
Suzanne Batz, *Parent of 33 year old with IDD*
Vicki Krieger
Merriea Rayo-Jackson, *Co-op, Stepping Stones*

Teri Stokes, *Caregiver/Parent of Noah Stokes*
Michele Colbert, *Parent*
Anne Cary, *Founding Director, Autistic &/or ADHD Adults of Colorado*
Kathy Kary, *Caregiver*
Kathy Bishop
Eric Anderson
Pam Press, *Parent of disabled adult*
Elizabeth Pearson, *Life Skills Coach, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Erica Parker, Parent, *Caregiver*
Marcy Tafoya, *Parent / Legal Guardian of Disabled Adult*
Cynthia Strecker, *DSP/Parent of Adult Child with Developmental Disabilities, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Karen Gray, *Parent/Guardian of adult child with IDD*
Kenya Sande, *Care Giver*
Linda Idleberg
Marian Uebbing, *Provider of Services for Adults with Disabilities, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Barry Silvestain
Lois Brassfield, *grandparent/caregiver to disabled adult*
Renee Klotzbach, *Family Caregiver, Support Inc*
Tim Batz, *parent*
John Marrinson
Paolo Solorzano, *Policy Advocate, RTD Rider's Alliance*
Helen Pietranczyk, *Advocate, The Arc*
Luke Williams, *Disabled adult using RTD to/from work, Stepping Stone*
Flo Murray, *Disability Advocate, IDD Work Planning*
Jolee Harston
Susan Brown, MA, LPC, CBIS, *Mental Health Counselor, Brain Injury Specialist, Brain Injury Association of Colorado*
Ann Beetham, *Parent of disabled adult, Stepping Stones support center*
Lila Seal, *Parent and Attorney*
Catherine Greco, *Parent of disabled 32 yr old*
Karen Whitehead, *Parent/Guardian of impacted Access a Ride/on Demand User, Stepping stone Support Center*
Alison Rangell, *Parent of an adult with I/DD*
Steve Callahan, *OTR*
Anne Scannell, *Guardian and Stepping Stones Caregiver of Christopher DeKoker (IDD living in Trailhead) Stepping Stones*
Chandrasekaran Ayyasamy, *A Parent of a disabled Adult*
Julian Wang
Regina Silvestain
Vanessa Austin, *AdventHealth littleton*
Michelle Wiggins, *parent*
Crista Carnes, *Stepping Stone Support Center*
Chris Nitta, *Staff at Stepping Stone a day program*

Jay Silvestain
Donna Silvestain
Suzanne Ball, *Director, Employment Services, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Edward Starz, *Parent of person with disabilities*
Michael Silvestain
Stephanie Silvestain
Dawn M Faulkner, *Employment Services Manager, Stepping Stone Support Center, Grateful Farms*
Victoria Walter, *Life Skill's Coach, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Rebecca Thompson, *Family Caregiver/Parent of disabled adult*
Rose Reinhardt Campbell, *Sister and guardian of disabled adult*
Elizabeth Lang, *Parent, Specialized Ministries Director, Colorado Community Church, Special Needs Ministry*
Erica Hostetler, *Acess-on-Demand user*
Lisa Franklin, *Parent/Caregiver, Parent to Parent of Colorado, Advisory Board*
Mikayla Harris, *Caregiver of disabled spouse and 2 disabled children*
Eileen Forlenza, *Parent and caregiver of an Adult with disabilities*
Amanda Wolfenbarger
Anne Patton, *parent advocate of AOD rider, a better life llc*
Katelyn Schnorr
Melina DePasse, *Parent*
Teresa Nguyen, *State and national disabled advocate, AOD customer*
Molly Kirkham, *policy and self Advocate, The Arc*
Susan McLoon Hodson, *Mother and Guardian of a Special Needs Adult Utilizing these Services*
Robin Vint, *Parent Advocate*
Aimee Zimmerman
Tracy Solomon, *Parent of an adult with disabilities*
Christine Brooks, *Case manager/advocate for disabled community*
Nikki Martin, *parent*
Beth Pasterkamp, *riding with miles, special olympics*
Kori Gonzales, *Guardian of my adult daughter with I/DD who uses this service every day*
Rachel Silvestain
Ame Vessa, *Occupational Therapist/Disability Advocate*
Marilyn Arens
Dan Campbell and Travis Terry, *Parents/guardian of IDD adult who uses Access-a-Ride services multiple times per week every week*
Jennifer Manera, *Executive Director, PASA, Active Belief*
Naomi Larkin, *Parent of special needs teen with mental health challenges*
Janice Anglim, *The Right Step, Sister to a disabled adult*
Pam Trent, *Host Home Provider, Welcome Home CO*
Jack Trent, *Host Home Provider, Welcome Home CO*
Randi Curtis, *Special Education Student Advocate, Advocate2Educate LLC*
Laura Ayres, *Parent and Caregiver, ILC*
Carla, Life skills Coach, *Advocate for my participants, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Mark Elliot, *Parent and Caregiver for an adult with disabilities, Cottonwood Community Alternatives*

Louise Thayer
Lia Weiler, *Disability Program Specialist*
Parker Steindorf
Donna Catalfamo, *Parent, Autistic &/or ADHD Adults of Colorado*
Melissa Rapp, *Coach, Melissa Rapp Coaching, LLC*
Mary Wilder, *Family caregiver*
Amanda McConnell, *Employment Specialist*
Mary Kilgannon, *Parent Advocate*
Nikki Koivunen
Cheryl Sanders
Rebecca Proctor, *Community member*
Katherine Fritz, *parent and caregiver for an adult with disabilities*
Sandi Wilmoth
Robyn Peterson
Renee Ashcraft, *Parent*
Kayla Olson
Jordan Sibayan, *Advocate/Activist, Disabled4Justice*
Helen Castro, *Parent, Caregiver & Guardian of an adult with intellectual & physical disabilities*
Curtis Garrett, *Disaster Preparedness Coordinator, Atlantis Community*
Ashley Spice, *Guardian*
Christine Remy, *Chair, Board of Directors, The Right Step, Inc.*
Tim Keenan, *Blind overnight Amazon Worker Who Relies Upon AOD*
Gail Hamilton, *blind senior, speaker, author, musician, NFB*
Megan Langet, *Mom*
Sue Shusterman, *Access on demand user*
Maria Griffin, *Marketing and Program Coordinator, DRMAC*
Charles Spice
Amy Dougherty, *P2P CO*
Donna Casteen, *Disabled AOD rider*
Earl Lee, *Past Chair RTD - ACPD Committee*
Elizabeth Taurasi, *access on demand user, trauma survivor, blind mom, victim of ongoing East stocking/harassment from out of state*
Brent Belisle, *Consulting Advocate, The Arc of Jeffco*
Gabe Gates, *Director, Disability Support Services, Front Range Community College*
Martin Becerra-Miranda, *AOD User, Parent, Instructor at Colorado Center for the Blind, taxpayer, Colorado Center for the Blind*
Kelly Bergma, *Concerned Community Member*
LaBarre LaBarre, *Teacher of Visually Impaired, National Federation of the Blind of Colorado*
Clayton Jacobs, *Access on demand user*
Sirisha Manam
Susann Parshall
Carol Lorie, *Parent and friend*
Naomi Jacobs, *AOD rider whose life depends on it*

David Schwartz, *AAR/AOD rider*
Sarah Schumaker
Michelle Nichols, *Customer Service Representative, ARC Thrift Stores*
Jim McKeever
Ellen Lichtenstein
Jennifer Rose, *Author of middle grade with disabled heroine, Author/disability advocate*
Jennifer Alabiso, *Parent & Concerned Community Member*
Kathy Derdzinski
Jennifer Rysavy, *Parent of a young adult with an IDD*
Meghan Jordan
Andrea Morago, *Community Member*
Sydney fowler
Lori Fernandez
Martin Schneider, *Teacher, Wellspring Community*
Samantha Ward, *Community Member, EBECC*
Rachelle Rice, *Caregiver*
Kian Phair, *Disabled.- daily rtd user to get to work*
Stephany Camacho Lara
Darlene Calkins, *Visually impaired Customer Service Representative*
Icaro Mardones, *Executive Director, Inclusive Denver Movement*
Amanda williams, *Denver area voter, NFB*
Dawn, *RTD rider*
Preston Peters, *Blind Coloradian CCB student*
Caroline Volkman, *Mother of daughter with IDD, Community member*
Penny Holt
Maureen Welch, *Family caregiver of an adult with IDD, SELF*
Kelly Dillon
Jamie Carley
Jamila Lane, *Concerned citizen*
Darcy Epeneter, *Certified Brain Injury Specialist, Prgrm Mgr of Client Events & Activities, Brain Injury Association of Colorado*
Alanna Ritchie
Melba Matthews, *Parent/ Legal guardian and caregiver of adult with IDD, Stepping Stones Support Center*
Diana Sieber, *CBIS, Program Manager, Brain Injury Association of Colorado*
Kimberly Davalos, *Concerned Sister of a Blind Person, NFBCO*
Charlie Cockriel, *President Cockriel Insurance, Englewood Lions Club*
Jennifer Johnson, *Director, Trellis*
Marlene Kaiser, *Customer Service Representative Arc Call Center, National Federation of the Blind*
Amy Singleton, *Para Educator*
Lorena Emmons, *A rider with Multiple Sclerosis*
Amy Williams, *Parent of adult child with autism*
Mike Kenneally, *Instructor, Project SEARCH, Denver Public Schools*
Suzan Myers

Kishia Mason, *Blind adult*
Pavla Pribylova, *CMA*
Isaac Scholl, *AOD daily rider to/from work*
Nicole Dibben, *Resource Facilitation, Brain Injury Association of CO*
Jo Burns, *Certified Therapeutic Recreation Specialist, Jo Burns Connects*
Christina Botzum, *MSW, Private Citizen*
Misty Davidson, *Concerned citizen*
Marcia Goldsmith, *Parent and family caregiver, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Ver Suarez, *Young Adult Transition Specialist, Atlantis Community Inc.*
Iva Lou Bailey, *Concerned Citizen*
Margaret Samuelsen, *NFB Colorado, AARP*
Carol Young, *District Governor 6C, Lions Clubs of Central Colorado*
Donna Freeman, *AOD Rider, frequent disabled rider*
Bonnie Barlow, *Audio Description Specialist*
Michael Flaherty, *Englewood Lions Club*
Pipi Adams, *Owner of Pipi's Place-State Capitol-AODP, National Federation of the Blind*
Sharon Carley, *Mother of blind daughter*
Stacy kenney, *Englewood lions club*
Mark Hamouz, *Concerned citizen*
Jolee Harston, *Disabled adult, Access On Demand User*
Manuel Contreras, *Filmmaker, Independent*
The Executive Committee, *Disability Strong Democrats Colorado*
Melanie Ferguson, *Parent & caregiver of Special Needs Individual, Stepping Stones Support Center*
Danielle Johnson, *AuDHD Adult, Daily RTD rider*
Kathleen Crowe, *Parent & Caregiver of Special Needs Son, Continuum of Colorado*
Tiffany Harston, *Mom of person with disability*
Connie NordmarK
Kyley Dalton
Randa Yancey, *Denver citizen*
Jayd Flotte, *Taxpayer & Business owner that serves disabled people*
Sharon York
Sherrill Morris, *Adult with multiple disablitiltes and an unbelieveable schedule of Dr. appointments*.
Gigi Faddoul
Daniel Percefull, *Club Member, Englewood Lions club*
Marisa Santarella, *LCSW*
Shelby Calloway
Amanda Morris, *Colorado resident*
Laura Gonzalez, *Concerned Citizen*
Aubrey Harrison
Robert E Lee II, *Co-leader of the You Don’t Look Blind Community and long time RTD/AaR/AoD consumer*
American council of the blind national Federation of the blind American foundation for the blind
Bobby Lee, *AOD user, Teaching autism community trades graduate*
Jamie Lee, *Beyond Vision skills trainer, The Center For People With Disabilities*

Hayden Schaff
Kimberly Bowen, *Parent*
Cynthia Aceves
Lisa Raville, *executive director, Harm Reduction Action Center*
Brittny Saldana
Dianne Christian, *Central Colorado Lions Past District Governor, Lions of Central Colorado*
Gabriella Gutierrez-Reed
Rami Zubieta
Josiah Peters
Jackie Esbin, *Chef, Civilian*
Kalee Richardson, *sales specialist, REI*
Kira Woodmansee
Shannon Holmes
Jack Anderson
Camille McPherson
Kim Foster, *Concerned parent*
McKenna Foster, *Very concerned disabled and impacted student/employee*
Helix Hagan, *Nurse, patient advocate*
Jennifer Ochs, *Self advocate*
Betsabet Samarripa, *Bilingual Independent Living Advisor, Center for People with Disabilities*
K. Chin
Al Strong, *Disability Rights Activist*
Madison *Bergman, Concerned Community Member*
Denise Howd, *Parent*
Mark Howd, *Neurodivergent adult that needs the transit to keep my job*
Alicia Baeza
Josh Doyle
Amy Smith, *chair elect, SILC*
Anthony Wright, *Parent*
Devin Kepler, *Secretary, Board of Directors, Atlantis Community, Inc*
Molly Smith
Iniko Awujo, *Financial Advisor, Northwestern Mutual*
Hanna Madison Lignell, *Clinica Family Health & Wellness*
Sofia Prado-Irwin
Brett Boyer, *Access technology specialist, Colorado Center for the blind and the national Federation of the blind of Colorado*
Michael Long, *Community Member*
Amy Woszczynski, *Disability examiner, Parent*
Ashley Allen
Christina Brennan, *Concerned Resident, Sovereign Individual*
Joe Frommert, *Unaffiliated*
Renee Buller, *Job Coach/DSP, Stepping Stones Support Center*
Tyler Himelstieb, *PAIMI Council*

Nancy Jensen, *advocate*
Mary Kay Kisseberth, *Board member, Disability Law Colorado*
Kate Harris, *COO, ThynkStack*
Shanin Terrell
Jean McGuire, *Concerned citizen*
Bobbi Christensen, *SABE Advisor, Adult Community Living*
Katharine Glover, *Student, Disability community member*
Fatima Najar
Andrew Foster
Alexis Dryg
Elijah Kimball
Kelly Hoyer, *RN and mother, Adult with disability*
Leslie Rocha, *Medical Case Manager, Tepeyac Community Health center*
Monique Melton, *Independent Living Specialist, Atlantis Community Inc., AOD user, tax payer, concerned citizen, National Federation of the Blind*
Lisa Koski
Angela Langowski, *Caregiver and parent of an adult child with a disability*
Kelly Murphy
Heather Hagen, *Director of Employment Services, DDRC*
Derek Selbo, *Blind user of Rtd services including AOD*
Jack Storti, *Worked within disability community*
Ayush Vispute
Janet Pasterkamp
Sabine Shaikh
Nahla Zenati
Ryan Nunn
Grace Yang
Michelle Dumay, *Parent of AoD & AAR Rider*
Deana Cairo, *Physician Assistant*
Madelen McHugh, *Access a ride user*
Hailey Massingale
Jeannie Forrester, *Parent and Family Caregiver*
Richard Sault, *Friend of family , daughter with IDD*
Caroline Volkman, *Mom of adult daughter with IDD*
Rikki Sault, *Friend of Adult with IDD*
Kyla Conger, *Friend of adult with IDD*
Om Vegesna, *Senate District 18 Representative, Colorado Youth Leadership Council*
Melissa Saynourath
Jacqueline Mitchell, *Activist /advocate, Disabled4Justice*
Cindy Stevens, *Parent of Adult with Disabilities and AOD user*
Evan Stevens, *Person with disabilities and AOD user, Disabled adult in Parker where there is little transportation*
Earl Lee, *HOYA Foundation*

Marilyn Halpern, *Executive Director, Aspen Care Services*
Tammy Brandt, *Mother of special needs son*
Sarah Fouret, *Parent and Family Caregiver*
Eddie Picciano, *Certified Nursing Assistant*
Clayton Lippoldt, *Access a ride user, Access on Demand User*
Jane Kramer, *Disabled Adult*
Lucia MacMillan, *Registered nurse*
Sid Bista, *Direct Care Staff, Cottonwood Community Alternative*
Jennifer Ochs, *Self advocate*
Tina Squyres-Price, *Parent of working adult with disabilities, DDRC*
Christina Holcomb
Kristina Nellessen, *Parent Advocate*
Dennis LaMere, *Proud parent of young adult with disabilities who absolutely need this service!*
Rebecca Toliver, *Self Advocate*
Jackie Wells, *Advocate*
Mark Dare
Greg Lyeki, *Family Caregiver*
Allison Lyeki, Family Caregiver
Dawn Caldwell, *President, Caldwell Family Services Inc. (A Medicaid PASA for SLS, CES and DD services.)*
Julie Rodgers, *Mother*
Jeanne Puerta
Marilyn Eckerling
Wayne Eckerling
Brad Gorecki
Alexis Armstrong, *Benefits Coordinator, Cottonwood Community Alternatives, Inc.*
Karen Roberts, *Family caregiver of adult with I/DD*
Jobey King, *Program Director, Cottonwood Community Alternatives*
Michael Phipps
Loren Hansen, *Executive Director, Colorado History Rides*
Coleman Erickson, *Candidate for RTD Board, District J*
Melody, *Pca, ACL*
James Mohl
Crystal Hinton, *Advocate & therapist, The Chanda Center for Health*
Jonathan Davis, *Parent of Disabled Individual, A Physician's Home Care*
Brie Gallegos, *Program Manager, Cottonwood Community Alternatives*
Sarah Lee, *Accessaride passenger, APAC member*
Elizabeth Chiara-Sullivan
Laura Kenney
Ximena Guzman, *Case manager/ intake coordinator. YDA chair of the Hispanic and Latinx caucus, YDA/ Ananeo LLC*
Richard C Lorie
Heather Christiansen, *Family caregiver*
Gabriel Cervantes, *RTD CAC Member - District K, RTD*

Janell Knudson
Ally MacDougall
Gary Sprung, *Able-bodied transit rider who cares about accessibility for everyone*
Roberta gause, *Cna, Atlantis*
Kevne Sharpe, *Mom of IDD Adult & Special Needs Fin Advisor*
Mariner
Cynthia Barkley
Susan Aarup, *Disability Rights Activist, Adapt*
Richard R Lorie
Cecilia Aguirre, *Chief of Staff, Atlantis Community Inc.*
Rachel Galano, *Dir. Transitions, Atlantis Community Inc.*
Denice Walker, *Volunteer Ambassador, Mobility for All*
Tim Young, *Director, Case Management Agency*
David La Rue, *Resource Facilitator, BIAC*
Aliah Aragòn
Jamal Bradford, *rider*
Joelle Brouner
Ty Smith, *Benefits Planner, Atlantis Community Inc.*
Maitri Lazaroff, *Project Coordinator - Colorado Boulevard BRT, Greater Denver Transit*
Wanda Coleman
Karel Horney
Elizabeth Moseley, *Caregiver/ disability rights activist, Adapt*
Kristen Seidel
Bruce Barkley, *Parent/Caregiver, Pal o Inc*
Darla Stuart
Bethany Wimp
Evelyn Willis
Nina Banecks, *Caregiver, ADAPT*
Aiyana Urbina, *Student and Advocate*
Kelly Powers, *Parent and Provider, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Jordyn Merritt, *Disabled adult who could not afford this price increase*
Heather Fling
Dustin Rhoades
Melissa McHugh, *Parent and Provider, Stepping Stone Support Center*
Oscar Gomez
Chelsea Wirsing, *Adult on autism spectrum*
Janet Bardwell
Raquel Archuleta, *Care Giver, ADAPT*
Eliza Namazi, *Science Teacher, School district*
Teri Walker, *Parent caregiver, RN-BC*
Patti Schramm, *Licensed Clinical Social Worker, Advanced Mental Health Counseling Services*
Apryl Webb
Breanne barkley

Roseanna Jenne
Maruchy Lachance, *Support*
Helen Pietranczyk
Dennis Lazof, *ACLU/ NAACP*
Noreene Nogueira, *Parent of adult with special needs*
Danielle “Dani” Dawes Cox, *Community Advocate*
Julieanne Giorlando
Joseph Bajandas, *Disabled self advocate*
Cameron Moseley
Kevin Mooney

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE OF COLORADO
State Capitol
Denver, 80203

To:RTD Board of Directors
1660 Blake Street
Denver, CO 80202
Cc: Debra Johnson, RTD CEO
Michael Davies, RTD Government Relations Officer

September 30, 2025

Re: RTD Proposed Fare Increase for Access on Demand

As Legislators with an interest in a Regional Transportation District (RTD) that serves the community and is transparent in governance and reliable in service we are disappointed in the recently proposed change to Access on Demand (AoD)'s costs and coverages for people with disabilities.

The proposed fair will change from $0.00 to $6.50, and the ride subsidy will decrease from $25.00 to $20.00. It will also dramatically reduce hours, making it impossible for some people to get home after work (or to work for those on the night shift). This service provides people who cannot drive or get into private cars without a wheelchair lift the ability to get around. It is not a luxury, but a lifeline for our community. Thousands of Coloradans depend upon this service to get to work, medical appointments, and for things like grocery shopping. **Having a 650% increase for this community is going to create a devastating impact**. In addition there were unprecedented cuts during the pandemic that have not been restored leaving thousands of rides solely dependent on Access a Rides. People are going to have to quit jobs, miss appointments, and choose between eating and getting to a needed meeting.

We respectfully request the elected Board of Directors of the Regional Transportation District to wholly reject the recommended action for Access on Demand at your September 30th Board Meeting. We believe **that targeting one class of people,** principally our disability community is reckless, irresponsible and immoral. Coloradans with disabilities deserve better.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE OF COLORADO
State Capitol
Denver, 80203

In addition, We strongly encourage the RTD Board of Directors to direct GM/CEO Debra Johnson to **engage a third party to conduct a comprehensive Impact Study on the entire service offerings of accessible transportation, i.e., Paratransit (AaR), WAV, AOD, Flex Ride to include alongside a representative panel of subject matter experts we refer to as consumers with disabilities.** The panel of consumers with disabilities should be selected prior to any engagement with a third party, ensuring maximum community engagement.
In addition, we strongly believe that the Access on Demand and WAV services should include multiple stops, no geographic limitations,and time restrictions.

Please honor the promises of the 7A Campaign and expand services for the Disability Community not single out people with disabilities for cuts and fare increases.

Signed,

Senator Faith Winter, SD25, Chair Transportation and Energy Committee

Senator Lisa Cutter, SD20 Vice Chair, Transportation and Energy Committee

Representative Meg Froelich, HD3, Chair Transportation, Housing and Local Govt Committee

Representative Rebekah Stewart, HD30, Vice Chair, Transportation, Housing and Local Govt Committee

Senator Tom Sullivan, SD27

Senator Chris Kolker, SD16

Senator Dafna Michaelson Jenet, SD21

Senator Mike Weissman, SD28

Senator Cathy Kipp, SD14

Representative Jamie Jackson, HD41

Representative Emily Sirota, HD9

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Denver, 80203

Representative Sheila Lieder, HD28

Representative Elizabeth Velasco, HD57

Representative Tammy Story, HD25

Representative Jennifer Bacon, HD7

Representative Chad Clifford, HD37

Representative Lorena Garcia, HD35

Representative Jacque Phillips, HD31

Representative Javier Mabrey, HD1

Representative Brianna Titone, HD27

Representative Michael Carter, HD36

Representative Karen McCormick, HD11

Representative Lesley Smith, HD49

Representative Gretchen Rydin, HD38

Representative Lesley Smith, HD49

Representative Mandy Lindsey, HD42

Representative Naquetta Ricks, HD40

Rhonda Fields, Arapahoe County Commissioner,District 5

Chris Hinds, Denver City Councilmember, District 10

Mayor Guyleen Castriotta, City and County of Broomfield

APPENDIX E

Committee Developed Full Ideas for Consideration

- Full Ideas For Consideration

RTD Accountability Ideas for Consideration

All ideas for consideration were developed by committee members and reflect the conversations at each meeting. The facilitation team worked to consolidate some similar ideas and clarify language to streamline deliberations, and in no way intended to omit any ideas.

Governance Ideas for Consideration

Structure

The following ideas for the structure of governance were offered at the Sept 22 and Oct 8 Committee meetings with slight variations discussed for most (e.g. exact number of members, number of regional vs. at large etc.

1. A mid-sized Board (7-11) comprised of both elected and appointed members;
2. A smaller Board (5-9), primarily elected with small number of appointed members with subject matter expertise and/or appointed members on standing committees;
3. Mid-sized Board (size TBD ~7-11) of elected members and an appointed advisory committee with subject matter expertise;
4. A mid sized (9-11) local advisory council consisting of local government representatives. Local government officials identify a pool of eligible candidates for the Board of Trustees, the Governor selects three from that pool (aka the Utah Model). Can also involve a legislative approval.
5. Maintain current general structure of Board with possibility of an appointed advisory council, committee or similar structure.

In addition to the above governance structures, Committee members offered the following related items to consider:

1. Ex-officio members (non-voting) including ATU and CTIO;
2. A Citizens' Advisory Committee (distinct from the current Citizens' Advisory Committee) that recruits, educates and suggests a pool of vetted candidates to local authorities for local appointed positions;

For the structures listed above, a number of questions remain outstanding. The Committee will need to identify which to prioritize addressing, which there may

be need for further work to resolve and what level of detail should be included in the Committee's recommendations vs. identified for finalization during legislative or other processes. These items include:

1. Whether the majority is elected or appointed and the exact count of each;
2. For elected members, whether they are regional, at-large, or a mix and what criteria or restrictions are relevant or appropriate;
3. Any additional requirements for elected members;
4. For appointed members, what body or bodies would appoint each position (ideas offered included local governments, legislature, Governor, DRCOG, and the potential role of the Citizens' Advisory Committee noted above).
5. For appointed members, if there should be any qualifications or areas of expertise defined;
6. Terms for all members and whether regional, at-large or appointed differ, whether they are staggered;
7. How a chair is selected;
8. Clarity on recall process and vacancy appointments or elections for all seats.

For any appointed positions, members offered the following for further discussion:

1. Nominated by local government and appointed by Governor;
2. Potential role of the Colorado Transportation Legislative Review Committee (TLRC);
3. Whether appointing authority should be distributed or concentrated;
4. The desire to seek individuals who, among other perspectives or experiences, bring knowledge of the BIPOC communities, lower-income needs, elderly, paratransit, finance, operations, land-use and marketing.

Sub-Structures

At the Sept 22 and Oct 8 meetings, Committee members offered ideas for consideration relating to Standing Committees and Special Committees. Members proposed the following for further discussion and development:

1. Inclusion of interested or expert parties on various standing committees including, but not limited to, CTIO (finance) and ATU (TBD);
2. Creation of a Standing Committee of Local Government Officials;
3. Creation of a technical advisory council of local officials, subject matter experts or others TBD.
4. Augmenting the standing committee membership with additional subject matter experts appointed by the Governor's Office or other body TBD.
5. Clarifying and formalizing the role or engagement of RTD committees as well as external bodies who regularly interact with the Board or provide reports to the Board to improve the effectiveness of these entities and relationships.
6. Revisiting the roles, membership, and structures of standing committees in light of board changes.

Authority, Agency & Supports

The following ideas for the <u>authority and agency</u> of the Board were offered at the Sept 22 and Oct 8 Committee meetings (new ideas from Nov 12 & survey in blue):

1. Clarification of authorities and responsibilities of the board that are established in the RTD Act;
2. Potential expansion of capital raising authority;
3. Quarterly public reporting of certain key performance indicators (KPIs);
4. Clarification and training on Board role in the hiring of the CEO/GM and General Counsel;
5. Expanded role in CEO/GM oversight including:
    a. Base pay and discretionary bonus;
    b. Performance review of the CEO/GM;
    c. Authority for discretionary termination of CEO/GM.
6. Creation of an Inspector General role
7. Focus authorities and responsibilities on three core critical areas, i.e. (1) hiring and evaluating the GM on appropriate measures of performance; (2) passing a

responsible budget; and (3) growing RTD ridership, and avoid diffusing focus on too many smaller priorities.

8. Requirements to publish more detailed data on fiscal performance, workforce retention, ridership, etc.
9. Examine whether performance metrics in the RTD strategic plan are quantifiable and critical enough to identify weaknesses in RTD performance
10. Examine whether performance scorecard is quantifiable in areas other than financial/budgetary
11. Examine whether GM short-term goals are appropriate and sufficient to move RTD forward
12. Increase the RTD Board's ability to evaluate the GM CEO's performance and set requirements
13. Formal coordination with DRCOG and Metro Mayor's Caucus

The Committee offered the following ideas relating to <u>support</u> for the Board:

1. Increased compensation for Board members;
2. Added compensation for Board Chair;
3. Clarification for Board on the ability to request information from and assign tasks to RTD staff;
4. Clarification for Board to hire Board staff;
5. Establishment or clarification on policies and procedures for Board to interact with and make requests of staff;
6. Add FTE's to current RTD Board office.
7. Address the redundancy of board staff roles and management roles and improve communications.
8. Board compensation should be increased to a minimum inflationary raise adjusted from 2001 to 2025, and pegged somehow to other public employees like judges, so that it is likely to continue to keep pace with inflation;
9. Increased compensation for Board members to $2,500 monthly (equivalent to $50/hour).
10. Chair should be compensated at roughly twice the regular board member salary;
11. Chair should be a full time position with a salary that represents industry standards. Vice Chair should be 1/2 of the Chair's compensation.

12. Reinstate Transit Academy (addresses better prepared candidates whether appointed or elected) that would provide training or informational sessions for potential board candidates to better understand the workload, time commitments, etc.
13. New directors should be introduced to paratransit services by experiencing a real time boarding and ride with a PWD as part of onboarding training

A recommendation was made to examine how CU Regents effectively engage and get support from CU staff.

RTD Finances and Fiscal Oversight

- Examine thoroughly the fiscal condition of the District and the current budget shortfall (est $200+ million)
- Establish a clear, transparent process for Board engagement into District budgeting and financial condition
- Require more transparency into the District's finances and make them easy to find for Board members, legislature and the public.
- Require RTD to deliver a balanced budget annually.
- Training on Financial Oversight with a particular emphasis on fund accounting and who is paying into the system and what they are paying for. Training on what it means to be a board and clearly defining the policy/administration role. How to set stretch goals to truly push the operations into the future.
- Review the financial stability of RTD and how to empower the state to have control/more influence over RTD's rail which is the most expensive part of their system.

Executive Leadership, Compensation, and Performance Assessment

- Consider separate roles for GM and CEO
- Discussion on the combined nature of the roles of GM and CEO (what each role entails and how they became combined).
- Avoid gatekeeping by ensuring a bi-directional flow of information that is not only top-down, but executive leadership receives and is responsive to bottom-up feedback in order to build trust.

Note: The following items were touched on at the November 12 meeting and have been included here for member consideration.

- RTD's legislative foundation distinguishes it from home-rule cities and counties, suggesting a need for clearer enabling legislation defining governance roles, expectations, and board responsibilities.
- Reviewing RTD's infrastructure ownership to explore shared responsibility with the state.

Local Government Collaboration

Improve effectiveness of Subregional Service Councils and Partnership Program

- Expand or adjust the frequency and scope of Service Council meetings to build deeper engagement and continuity among participants.
- Ensure consistent representation from local jurisdictions and advocacy groups over time on the Service Councils.
- Establish senior local government staff participation in the Service Councils to ensure coordination and communication flows between elected leaders.
- Consider adding chambers of commerce and economic development groups to Service Council membership.
- Consider rotating leadership or facilitation of the Service Councils to share ownership and build mutual accountability.
- Explore independent facilitation for Service Councils to encourage more open, two-way discussion.
- Increase focus on strategic and future-oriented planning in addition to the operational updates at the Service Councils.
- Study and implement innovative mobility solutions in equity zones and underserved areas as part of the Partnership Program.

Other ideas to strengthen regional and interagency collaboration

- Continue strengthening alignment with DRCOG, CDOT, and local governments to deliver BRT, corridor planning, and transit-oriented development.
- Re-establish a leadership "Transit Academy" to educate and prepare both RTD board candidates and local officials for governance and transit planning roles.

- Reinstate a service buy-up program to enable expanded local service, which may include partnerships between municipalities and RTD to support recruitment of operators and other transit staff.
- Establish clear, data-driven criteria to guide service allocation, balancing goals of maximizing ridership with ensuring equitable coverage.
- Create a more programmatic/systematic approach to local government engagement by RTD to better understand local governments' priorities. Should include clarity on both elected-to-elected and staff-to-staff engagement.
- Create shared dashboards or reports that summarize regional service data, project updates, and performance indicators accessible to local partners.
- Review RTD's infrastructure ownership to explore shared responsibility with the state.
- Explore options to resolve lingering frustrations around incomplete FasTracks projects, which continues to hinder progress, and either redefine or close out that program before launching new initiatives.
- Prioritize a joint investment framework for bus stop improvements with shared funding and responsibility.
- Develop a regional accessibility plan to ensure ADA compliance and equitable distribution of infrastructure investments.

Paratransit Ideas for Consideration

Assessments, Studies & Learning

- Conduct needs analysis to better understand the population of people with disabilities using transit, their needs, and gaps.
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of current paratransit operations.
- Assess fiscal sustainability, including RTD's overall spending on paratransit as a portion of their budget and benchmark against other regions, tradeoffs between providing different service levels of paratransit, fixed route, etc.
- Establish an overarching goal / vision / framework for RTD's paratransit service and services for people with disabilities as a whole to guide future decisions.
- Engage with and assess what the opportunities may be to collaborate with local and regional organizations to address gaps and challenges in providing paratransit services.
- Evaluate other paratransit operations in various regions (or comment or, amplify or endorse APTA peer review document in light of recent RTD actions).
- Assess how to leverage technology to improve paratransit service.
- Assess ways to better integrate AoD and AaR services.
- Complete an equity analysis of current and potential service changes.
- Develop options for regular data collection about paratransit users and usage from drivers, paratransit committees, riders, etc.

- Consider developing committee statement or reflections on the public engagement and decision-making process of recent RTD management recommendations and board decision on AoD program

Internal Practices & Processes

- Work with partners to better market the LiVE program.
- Make sure it is easier for customers to apply for a LiVE Pass and shorten the amount of time it takes to get approved.
- More collaboration with and use of RTD's two committees which have people with disabilities on them, including more regular engagement with them on paratransit planning and policy decisions.

Policy & System Changes (outside of RTD)

- Evaluate/consider a policy or programmatic strategy to ensure a certain number of WAVs as a percentage of the TNC fleet
- Pursue a program to train TNC drivers that volunteer to get additional training and drug testing

Workforce Ideas for Consideration

Recruitment

- Partner with school and community college districts, CDOT, ATU, regional entities, workforce agencies, community organizations, and/or ESL programs on shared hiring outreach and transit career training.
- Explore paths to getting more people qualified and maintaining CDLs; partner with law enforcement agencies (LEAs) and Dir. Lew's work at CDOT.
- Offer test-prep support for job applicants.
- Expand outreach to CDL holders (e.g., direct mail like New Jersey Transit).
- Explore enabling more flexible and part-time positions.
- Consider ways to incentivize senior operators to take less desirable shifts, freeing up some better ones for new hires.
- Allow prospective operators to "ride along", possibly utilizing part-time workers as ride along ambassadors.
- Shorten delays between hiring and training start dates.
- Focus on candidate quality as well as quantity.
- Track and report retention and job-quality metrics alongside vacancy rates.

Retention

- Incentivize employees who opt out of RTD health coverage.

- Tie wage progression to achievements such as attendance.
- Consider childcare subsidies.
- Support an improved internal culture that enables increased retention and satisfaction; ensure employees feel ownership and like they don't just have a job, they have a career opportunity.
- Examine structural ways for employees to have a stronger voice in management or decision-making.
- Recognize generational changes and work with ATU to bond with newer employees and vice versa.

Training and Mentorship

- Extend the four-hour train-the-trainer course.
- Expand the joint ATU–RTD apprenticeship program and, if resources limit, establish mentorship options.
- Incentivize senior operators to mentor new hires; possibly provide bonuses tied to mentee retention.
- Strengthen coordination between bus and rail training to build shared culture.
- Reinforce and measure outcomes from supervisor training programs; ensure culture change is sustained through evaluations.

Data and Measurement

- Improve employee and community survey design to better assess RTD's organizational health and performance, e.g.: increase sample size, focus on RTD performance rather than abstract community value; include operator engagement, more concrete questions re: safety, convenience, etc.
- Ensure operations staff participation in surveys and track management-related retention issues.
- Better analyze absenteeism and refine employee surveys to distinguish between union and non-union staff.
- Include culture and quality metrics, not just vacancy numbers, in RTD performance dashboards.
- Include workforce metrics in strategic plan; reinforce the connection between an engaged workforce and RTD's broader strategic goals.

Other Ideas

- Explore options to accelerate transit-oriented development on RTD-owned land and/or collaboration with local governments and developers to increase affordable housing, including some possibly with a preference for RTD workers.

- Consider legislative changes allowing RTD more flexibility (similar to universities) to develop their land outside local zoning restrictions.
- Use Community Benefit Agreements (CBA) or other mechanisms to increase housing units to be primarily first available to transit workers.
- Explore productivity and safety benefits of automation and technology to augment workforce capacity in operations, buses, etc.
- Seek state support for workforce investments such as mentorship funding or housing partnerships.

APPENDIX F

Research Materials and Sources

Overarching Materials

- Background and FAQs
- RTD Staff Introductory Presentation
- Links to other pre-reading and background documents

Governance

- **Hudson Skykomish/David Bragdon Governance Materials**
  - Memo: Recommended Readings Prior to September 10 Meeting
  - Presentation: Principles and Definitions: “accountability”, governance” (and other impressive multi-syllabic words)
  - Coordination and Governance in Transit: 6 Case Studies
  - RTD Governance Evaluation by North Highland, 2021
  - Memo: Recommended Readings Prior to September 22 Meeting
  - Memo: Confidential Interviews About Other Transit Boards
  - Memo: Considerations regarding General Counsel reporting
  - Twin Cities Status Quo Survives Due to Failure to Agree on Reform
  - Utah Transit Governance Case Study
  - Ideas from Vancouver Trans-Link on “Nominating Committee” concept
- **RTD Board Office Materials**
  - Memo from RTD Board Office: RTD Board Member Commitments, Resources, and Supports
- **Links to other pre-reading and background documents**

Paratransit

- **Nelson / Nygaard Materials**
  - Nelson / Nygaard Presentation: Paratransit
  - Nelson / Nygaard White Paper: Paratransit
- **Links to Other Prereading**

Workforce

- **The Eno Center for Transportation Materials**
  - Workforce presentation
  - Workforce whitepaper
- **RTD Prepared Materials**
  - Workforce Presentation
- **Links to Other Prereading**

Local Government and State Agency Collaboration

- **Hudson Skykomish/David Bragon Governance Materials**
  - Memo: RTD and Local Government Relations
  - Local Government Presentation
- **RTD Materials**
  - Local Government Presentation
- **Links to Other Prereading**

Background and FAQs

Documents and Information Assembled for the RTD Accountability Committee

This document will be updated with information on an ongoing basis. Committee staff are working to respond to committee members' inquiries expeditiously, where the information is available.

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Governance-related topics

Key background documents and links

- **Committee presentations and memos:**
  - Intro to governance slides (Sept. 10 mtg - slides 10-50)
  - Governance typologies (Sept. 22 mtg - slides 11-29)
  - Memo on RTD and Local Government Relations from David Bragdon
  - Local government slides from RTD (Nov. 5 mtg, slides 36-52)
  - Local government slides from David Bragdon (Nov. 5 mtg, slides 53-58)
  - Utah Transit Governance Case Study from David Bragdon
  - Utah Transit Governance case study slides and non-structural governance issues slides (Nov. 12 mtg - slides 12-42)
- **General governance reports:**
  - Transit Board Member Handbook (APTA)
  - TCRP Report 85 – Public Transit Board Governance Guidebook
  - Getting to the Route of It (Eno Center / Transit Center)
  - Coordination and Governance in Transit: 6 Case Studies (Eno Center for Transportation, June 29, 2023)
  - RTD Governance Evaluation, North Highland, 2021 (pgs. 63-68)
- **RTD-specific governance resources:**
  - Regional Transportation District Act (§§ 32-9-101 — 32-9-168)
  - About RTD | RTD-Denver (Mission and Vision)
  - Facts and Figures | RTD-Denver
  - Strategic Plan | RTD-Denver
  - Performance Dashboard | RTD-Denver
  - Budget | RTD-Denver
  - RTD Board Governance Materials
  - RTD Board Operating Guidelines
  - RTD Board Bylaws
  - RTD Board of Directors Governance Manual
  - RTD Fiscal Governance Performance Audit July 2024
  - 2020/2021 RTD Accountability Committee Final Report
  - RTD response to 2020/2021 RTD Accountability Committee Final Report
  - 2020/2021 RTD Accountability Committee Governance Evaluation
  - RTD Board GM/CEO Compensation Philosophy
  - RTD Board GM/CEO Performance Assessment Framework
  - Organizational Design and Workplace Assessment Overview (https://www.rtd-denver.com/organizational-assessment)
  - Governance webpage, memo and additional documents from RTD board office
  - SB25-161 Transit Reform

- HB24-1447 Transit Reform (introduced version, Section 6)

What is RTD's statutory mission?

The legislative declaration of the RTD Act (C.R.S. 32-9-102) states:

> *"**(1)** The general assembly determines, finds, and declares:*
> *__(a)__ That the creation of the regional transportation district will **promote the public health, safety, convenience, economy, and welfare of the residents of the district and of the state of Colorado**; and*
> *__(b)__ That a general law cannot be made applicable to the district and to the properties, powers, duties, functions, privileges, immunities, rights, liabilities, and disabilities of such district as provided in this article because of a number of atypical factors and special conditions concerning same.*
> *__(2)__ The general assembly further finds and declares that:*
> *__(a)__ Transportation is critical to daily life and commerce, yet our methods contribute to several challenges facing the region, including air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, affordability, public health, safety, accessibility, and equity;*
> *__(b)__ Expanding mass transportation presents a vital opportunity to **reduce household transportation costs, decrease pollution, reduce congestion, minimize fatalities and serious injuries while improving access to key destinations, particularly for transit-reliant populations, and stimulate regional economic development**; and*
> *__(c)__ Therefore, the regional transportation district **shall prioritize providing fast, frequent, reliable, and safe service to maximize ridership levels across the region.**"*

Also, C.R.S. 32-9-107 states: "*The district, acting by and through the board, is authorized to develop, maintain, and operate a mass transportation system for the benefit of the inhabitants of the district.*"

What is the current mission and vision of the organization?

The organization's current mission and vision can be found on the About RTD webpage.

What is the current strategic plan? What is the focus of the strategic plan?

RTD is currently implementing its Strategic Plan for FY2021-2026, with the latest visions adopted by the board in spring of 2025. The four main strategic priorities highlighted include:

- *"**Community Value**: RTD strives to be a strong community partner, providing value to customers as well as to the broader Denver metro region while sustaining planet Earth. Success Outcome: Increase Community Value Index by 5%.*
- ***Customer Excellence**: RTD strives to consistently deliver high-quality customer service. Success Outcome: Increase Customer Net Promoter Score by 5%.*
- ***Employee Ownership**: RTD seeks to attract and retain a highly skilled and engaged workforce. Success Outcome: Increase Employee Net Promoter Score by 5%.*
- ***Financial Success**: RTD takes very seriously the management of all financial resources. Success Outcome: 50% of outcome is that RTD spends less money than it receives; and 50% of outcome is that the community believes that it sees value in RTD's spending."*

The agency performance scorecard with additional goals and metrics begins on p.28. The board will be beginning work on a new strategic plan soon.

What are the key metrics RTD is tracking and reporting on to deliver on its goals?

RTD maintains a performance dashboard where it tracks metrics including information about ridership, financial performance, operator vacancies, customer survey data, etc. SB25-161 added several new requirements for RTD to publish in "information dashboards", codified in C.R.S. 32-9-166:

"(1) The district shall create, maintain, and publish on its public website:

(a) A public accountability dashboard that shows:

(I) By transit route:

(A) Data on ridership, including total ridership and weekend and weekday ridership;

(B) On-time performance, including a clear definition of what constitutes on-time performance;

(C) Farebox recovery ratio;

(D) Boardings per hour; and

(E) Reliability of service; and

(II) Progress toward meeting performance targets relating to ridership growth and service provision;

(b) A public accountability dashboard that shows the district's workforce statistics regarding employee retention, recruitment, and vacancies;

(c) A public accountability dashboard on transit safety, including data on passenger safety and driver safety;

(d) A public accountability dashboard that provides, at a minimum, accessible and transparent summary information regarding each of the district's in-progress capital projects that exceeds ten million dollars; the funding status of each project, including the project's total funding and expenditures to date; and the district's progress toward the completion of each project;

(e) A summary page for planned service changes that includes detailed timing changes; the reasons for any planned changes; and the impacts of the planned changes, including effects on local transfers; and

(f) The district's progress toward meeting the performance measures and targets identified in its ten-year strategic plan pursuant to section 32-5-165 (1). The district shall update this progress on a quarterly basis.

(2) The district shall first create and publish the information required by subsection (1) of this section no later than December 1, 2025.

(3) The district shall review and update the dashboards at least quarterly."

How does RTD's performance tracking compare to the 2021 committee recommendations around metrics and reporting?

The most recent fiscal governance audit noted RTD is working to report on all of the recommended metrics in the performance dashboard, except for a few metrics as noted and explained in Appendix B of the audit, some of which were optional "stretch metrics".

What are RTD board members' duties and responsibilities?

According to C.R.S. 32-9-109.5(4): *"(4) All powers, duties, functions, rights, and privileges vested in the district shall be exercised and performed by the board; except that the exercise of any executive, administrative, or ministerial powers may be delegated by the board to officers and employees of the district. These powers, duties, functions, rights, and privileges include, in addition to any other powers and duties specified in this article 9:*

(a) Setting policy objectives to be implemented by employees of the district;

(b) Hiring and managing the district's general manager and chief executive officer;

(c) Overseeing the district's general counsel;

(d) Developing, adopting, and overseeing the district's budget, including an annual capital budget with project costs and financing mechanisms;

(e) Developing and approving the district's ten-year strategic plan and comprehensive operational analysis;

(f) Engaging with constituents, local governments, the department of transportation, the Denver regional council of governments, transit agencies, and community partners to obtain input and feedback on the district's decisions and operations;

(g) Pursuing opportunities to grow transit ridership and make transit services competitive with driving;

(h) Developing and promoting strategies and legislation to ensure that the district has the resources it needs to implement its strategic ten-year plan;"

(i) Meeting quarterly with the department of transportation and with the Denver regional council of governments and meeting biannually with any labor organization, as defined in section 24-34-401 (6), that represents some or all district employees;

(j) Performing an annual review of the district's chief financial officer, in the district's discretion; and

(k) Conducting an annual financial audit of the district."

The RTD governance manual further outlines the following duties:

"1. Governance—creating and approving policies related to RTD agency business

2. System Innovation and Strategic Guidance—setting vision, mission and strategic direction for agency

3. Oversight of system performance and legal and fiduciary responsibilities

4. Customer and Constituent representation for all in the Transit District

5. Selecting, supervising and evaluating the performance of the General Manager. Please refer to the Board of Directors' documentation on the process for hiring or transitioning to a new General Manager."

The manual highlights the distinction between management and governance: *"The question of whether the RTD Board is a governance board or a management board often comes up in the discussion of duties and functions of the RTD Board. While it is clear that, as part of the legislative enabling act, the RTD Board was created as a policy-making board (i.e. governance) to represent the public interest, boundaries for the execution of the functions and powers afforded to the Board in the RTD Act are complex and affect management as well. Generally, the creation of policy, establishing strategic direction, and exercising oversight are Board functions, whereas the implementation of policy is a staff responsibility. However, areas where the Board may cross into management include financial approval of contracts, fare structure, CEO/General Manager oversight and management. As an elected Board, often times political implications of a decision must be considered as well. The distinction between policy and management is often distorted when Board governance is characterized by a merging of management, political and policy-making functions. Board members must avoid the proclivity of getting too detailed in day to day operations and try to stay focused at the policy making level."*

What are the RTD board's administrative powers?

According to C.R.S. 32-9-114, *"(1) The board has the following administrative powers:*

> *(a) To fix the time and place at which its regular meetings, to be held at least quarterly, shall be held within the district and shall provide for the calling and holding of special meetings;*
>
> *(b) To adopt and amend bylaws and rules for procedure;*
>
> *(c) To elect one director as chairman of the board and another director as chairman pro tem of the board, and to appoint one or more persons as secretary and treasurer of the board;*
>
> *(d) To prescribe a system of business administration, to create necessary offices, and to establish the powers, duties, and compensation of all officers, agents, and employees and other persons contracting with the district, subject to the provisions of section 32-9-117;*
>
> *(e) To prescribe a method of auditing and allowing or rejecting claims and demands;*

(f) To provide a method for the letting of contracts on a fair and competitive basis for the construction of works, any facility, or any project, or any interest therein, or for the performance or furnishing of labor, materials, or supplies as required in this article;

(g) To designate an official newspaper published in the district in the English language; except that nothing in this article shall prevent the board from directing publication in any additional newspaper where it deems that the public necessity may so require;

(h) To make and pass resolutions and orders necessary to carry out the provisions of this article."

How does the board operate, what are its bylaws?

The RTD Act enables the board to enact its own bylaws. The board has also established operating guidelines.

What does current RTD board training and orientation include?

RTD's governance manual outlines several trainings that new members receive (see p.8). RTD has also adopted a Director Orientation, Onboarding, and Continuing Education Policy.

What are all the different committees RTD has currently, including their composition and purpose?

RTD has several internal and external committees. Information about these can be found:

- In the bylaws starting on p.10 regarding the standing committees of the board.
- A list of current committees and who sits on them
- Customer committees:
    - Citizens Advisory Committee charter
    - Access-a-Ride Paratransit Advisory Committee
    - Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities

The standing committees of the board include (quoted from the bylaws):

- **"Executive Committee.** The Executive Committee will consist of the five Board officers, which are the Chair, First Vice Chair (Chair Pro Tem), Second Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The responsibilities of the Executive Committee include: establishing the agenda for each regular meeting of the Board; addressing public affairs of the Board; managing external relationships on behalf of the Board; reviewing and recommending positions on relevant

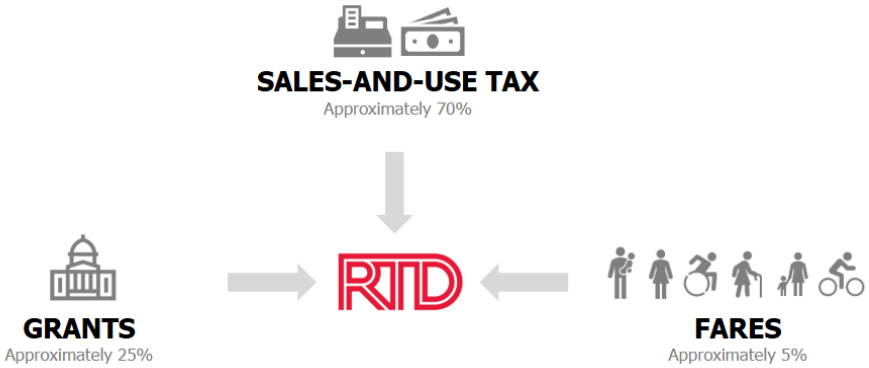
legislation; overseeing the internal governance of the Board; reviewing the Board Office budget; reviewing the performance of the Board Office Executive Manager; planning Board retreats; and other ministerial matters affecting the Board. The Chair, or any member of the Executive Committee, is authorized to review and approve the expense reimbursements and travel requests for fellow Directors, in accordance with the Board of Directors Expense and Travel Policy.

- **Finance and Planning Committee.** The Finance and Planning Committee is responsible for agency financial matters, including but not limited to budget and monthly financial statement review, determination of the fiscal impact of all Board actions, asset management, and long-range planning and capital projects.
- **Operations, Safety, and Security Committee.** The Operations, Safety, and Security Committee is responsible for all operational matters, including all contracted and non-contracted bus, rail, paratransit, and microtransit services, as well as safety and security matters.
- **Performance Committee.** The Performance Committee has three oversight functions: 1) Performance management of the General Manager and CEO, 2) in close coordination with the General Manager and CEO, the development, ongoing review, and subsequent amendment of long-range strategic planning efforts, including the agency's Strategic Plan, 3) high-level monitoring of agency performance in relation to the Strategic Plan. With respect to the performance management of the GM/CEO, the committee has primary oversight over the GM/CEO's employment agreement, annual goalsetting, the annual performance assessment framework, and annual performance assessment. The Performance Committee is also the appropriate venue through which the Board members periodically engage in dialogue with the GM/CEO to discuss feedback regarding the GM/CEO's ongoing performance. The Committee is responsible for monitoring performance metrics related to, and progress toward, the agency's Strategic Plan. The Committee will collaborate with the GM/CEO to set the cadence, timing, and topics of performance updates relative to the Strategic Plan when developing and adopting its annual committee work plan."
- **"Independent Audit Committee.** Consistent with the International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing published by the Institute of Internal Auditors (Standards), the Board will appoint a separate, independent Audit Committee that will establish and oversee the internal audit function consistent with the Standards."
- **"Other committees.** The Chair of the Board of Directors may establish and appoint such other special or ad hoc committees as the Chair deems appropriate, including designating the Chair of any such special or ad hoc

committees. All such special or ad hoc committees shall be evaluated annually by the new Chair of the Board for update, change of committee members or dissolution, as appropriate."

What are RTD's sources of revenue?

Per the most recent budget, RTD's primary sources of revenue include:



This is broken down in the FY2025 budget as:

FY 2025 Revenues
in thousands

	FY 2024 Budget	FY 2025 Budget	Change
Fares	63,930	57,165	(6,765)
Sales-and-Use Tax	932,541	903,171	(29,370)
Grants and Other Income	349,066	347,328	(1,738)
Other Revenue	8,400	44,400	36,000
Total Revenues	**$ 1,353,937**	**$ 1,352,064**	**$ (1,873)**

It's estimated that RTD will receive about $40M per year starting in FY2027 from SB24-230 formula funds, and has received other state grants in recent years.

How is revenue generated in different parts of the district?

Retail sales by county, 2023-2025, Department of Revenue

County	2023	2024	2025
Adams	$32,560,977,177	$31,350,572,429	$15,508,106,666
Arapahoe	$30,713,699,205	$31,028,924,741	$14,991,088,042
Boulder	$18,217,658,771	$19,015,595,527	$8,895,896,018
Broomfield	$3,524,762,043	$3,470,613,303	$1,663,283,628
Denver	$44,652,095,440	$46,251,800,596	$23,014,203,134

Douglas	$18,926,448,257	$19,358,506,656	$9,168,234,644
Jefferson	$29,377,960,911	$30,611,616,169	$14,876,981,527
Weld	$17,741,874,944	$17,967,825,537	$9,139,611,632

What are current board terms and other details of elections?

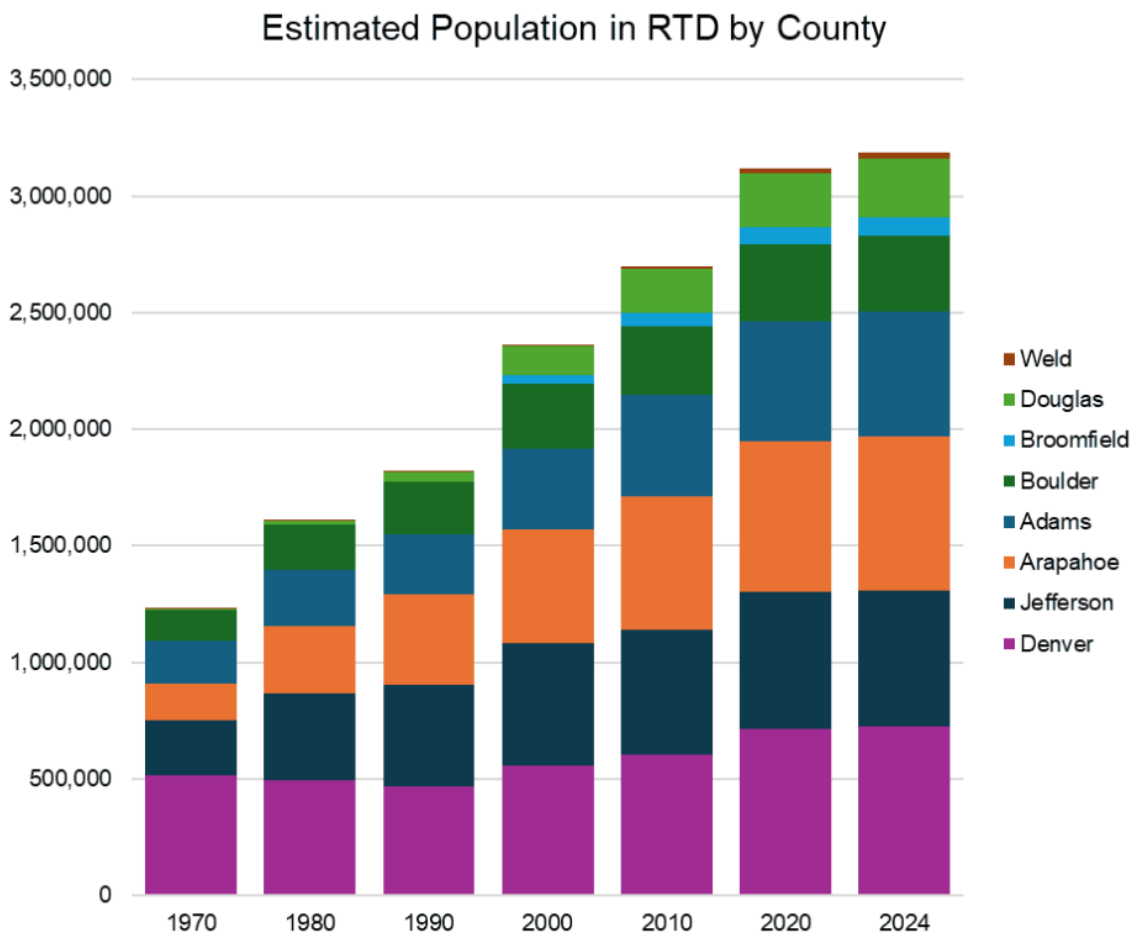
C.R.S. 32-9-11 details elements of board terms, redistricting, when elections are held, etc. It stipulates that members are elected to 4-year terms, with 8 seats up for elections during one cycle, and the other 7 up the next cycle. Board members can serve up to two terms. Board elections are to happen during even year elections. SB25-161 removed the ability for there to be write-in candidates; if there are no candidates for a seat, the board of county commissioners or mayor (with confirmation by city council) of a city county appoints. Vacancies are filled in the same manner (C.R.S. 32-9-112). Board members may be recalled.

How competitive have past board elections been?

According to the Secretary of State website, out of 172 RTD electoral contests since 1980, 68 of them were uncontested (~40%). 50 had 2 candidates (29%), and 54 had 3 or more candidates (31%).

What is the population of the district and how has it changed over time?

The State Demography Office provided the following information about the population within the district. In 2024, the population of RTD was about 54% of Colorado's population.



Estimated Population in RTD by County

Source: Colorado State Demography Office, Vintage 2024 prepared August 2025

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2024
Adams	182,382	241,410	260,069	345,656	437,207	512,892	535,059
Arapahoe	155,499	288,660	384,975	487,691	569,732	648,978	659,912
Boulder	133,432	190,695	226,042	276,255	295,605	330,951	329,996
Broomfield				38,544	56,107	74,502	78,453
Denver	515,985	493,385	466,998	556,738	604,879	717,626	728,309
Douglas	5,500	16,504	41,268	126,736	189,807	231,016	248,856
Jefferson	237,712	374,709	439,524	526,718	535,651	583,138	578,437
Weld	450	1,231	1,265	2,470	10,400	19,324	24,691

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	2024
Total	**1,230,960**	**1,606,594**	**1,820,141**	**2,360,808**	**2,699,389**	**3,118,427**	**3,183,713**

	1970's	1980's	1990's	2000's	2010's
Change in decade	375,634	213,547	540,667	338,581	419,038
% Change in decade	30.5%	13.3%	29.7%	14.3%	15.5%

How does RTD work together with CDOT and DRCOG?

RTD, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) partner in the region's transportation planning process via the Metropolitan Planning Agreement. Partner agencies develop the following documents, which determine the transportation priorities and funding programming for the region:

- Unified Planning Program of Work (UPWP)
- Regional Transportation Plan
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

The agencies have monthly meetings through the Agency Coordination Team (ACT) to discuss and coordinate activities.

TIP process: RTD must seek DRCOG approval, as designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for all regionally significant capital projects per federal statute

Senate Bill 90-208 process: Requires DRCOG review and approval prior to construction of any fixed guideway transit corridor. DRCOG must approve each component of the corridor including alignment, technology, and financing.

RTD also depends on DRCOG on macro-level forecasting, such as population projections and travel demand forecasts that inform planning and ridership predictions. Institutionally, both RTD and CDOT are 'members' of DRCOG, with the RTD GM/CEO (or her delegate (and the CDOT Secretary (or her delegate) both accorded non-voting seats on the DRCOG board of directors. Additionally, both RTD and CDOT are members of the DRCOG Regional Transportation Planning Committee and the DRCOG Transportation Advisory Committee, where staff members from DRCOG, RTD, and CDOT interact on a regular basis. RTD and CDOT staff also collaborate closely on projects and services where RTD buses operate on CDOT-owned

streets and roads—most notably the BRT project on Colfax Avenue, one of many arterials where the right-of-way is owned by CDOT.

What audit processes does RTD go through?

- Routine performance audits
  - §32-9-115 (3), Colorado Revised Statutes
  - Once every five years or more frequently
- Annual financial audit
  - §29-1-603, Colorado Revised Statutes
  - Governmental Accounting Standards Board/ generally accepted accounting principles
- Internal audit function
  - Audit plan approved annually by Board of Directors
  - Function currently performed by third-party audit firm
- Audits by regulatory bodies
  - e.g., FTA Triennial Review, FRA audits

What are examples of other transit agency governance structures?

The 2020/2021 Accountability Committee summarized several peer agency governance structures and developed case studies, for example:

PROPERTY	BOARD MEMBERS	SERVICE AREA POPULATION	SERVICE AREA SQ. MILES	MEMBERS/ PERSON	MEMBERS/ SQ. MILE
RTD	15	2,920,000	2,342	194,667	156.13
UTA	3	1,883,504	737	627,835	245.67
DART	15	2,407,830	698	160,522	46.53
TriMet	7	1,565,010	383	223,573	54.71
MTS	15	2,462,707	720	164,180	48.00
SEPTA	15	3,426,793	839	228,453	55.93
King County Metro	10	2,149,970	2,134	214,997	213.40
VIA	11	1,986,049	1,213	180,550	110.27
WMATA	8	3,719,567	950	464,946	118.75
Sound Transit	18	3,158,800	1,087	175,489	60.39
LA Metro	14	8,621,928	1,469	615,852	104.93
Average[7]	11.6	3,138,216	1,023	305,640	105.0

Table 3: Board Member Representation Analysis

PROPERTY	REPRESENTATION APPROACH	REPRESENTATION CLASSIFICATION
RTD	Each Board member represents a particular district	Subregional
UTA	One member represents Salt Lake County while the two other members represent two counties each	Regional
DART	Board members represent either one or two municipalities proportional to the ratio as the population of the area served	Subregional
TriMet	Consists of representation from seven regions	Subregional
MTS	Board members representatives consist of county and local municipalities	Hybrid
SEPTA	Two members from each county in the service area, state representation	Regional
King County Metro	County representation	Regional
VIA	Four Board members represent municipalities, three members represent the county	Hybrid
WMATA	State, District of Columbia (local representation), and Federal representation	Hybrid
Sound Transit	Representation at the county level with one state appointee	Reginal
LA Metro	Seven Districts, county representation	Hybrid

Table 4: Regional Representation Approach

Resources with more information, profiles, and case studies on transit agency governance structures include:

- Transit Board Member Handbook (APTA)
- TCRP Report 85 – Public Transit Board Governance Guidebook
- Getting to the Route of It (Eno Center / Transit Center)

What are other RTD governance structures that have been considered recently?

HB24-1447 proposed an alternative board structure composed of both elected and appointed members, which can be found in Section 6 of the introduced bill.

How are other types of districts / boards / commissions in Colorado governed?

Entity	Board size	Structure details	More details
Denver Water	5 directors	Appointed by Denver's mayor	Board of Water Commissioners
Roaring Fork Transportation Authority	8 directors	Representatives of the local governments served by the agency, appointed by each local government according to the intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) forming the agency.	More about RFTA's board of directors and governance approach

Grand Valley Transit	4 directors	Voting members include an elected representative from Mesa County, Grand Junction, Fruita, and Palisade.	Grand Valley Regional Transportation Committee | Mesa County
Mile High Flood District	24 directors (22 elected officials, 2 professional engineers)	Appointed by a few different appointing authorities (local governments, Governor, the board itself – see table below). Also has 5 person executive committee.	Statute and website
Colorado State University Board of Governors	15 members (9 voting)	9 voting members appointed by the Governor, 6 non-voting members representing CSU, CSU Pueblo, and CSU Global, with one faculty member and one student leader from each university.	Board of Governors | CSU System
University of Colorado Board of Regents	9 members	The University of Colorado Board of Regents consists of nine members serving staggered six-year terms, one elected from each of Colorado's eight congressional districts and one from the state at large.	University of Colorado Board of Regents
GOCO (Colorado Lottery Commission)	5 commissioners	Appointed by the Governor with approval of the Colorado Senate. Must meet criteria: one law enforcement officer for at least five years; one practicing attorney for at least five years; one member certified public accountant who practiced in Colorado for at least five years.	Colorado Lottery | Commissioners
Metro Water Recover	23 board members	Metro includes 65 cities and special districts, 23 of which have voting representation on the Board of Directors. Representation is based on the population within each Member Municipality.	Leadership – Metro Water Recovery

West Metro Fire District	7 board members	7 members elected by district	Board of Directors - West Metro Fire Protection District
Northern Water	14 board members	Northern Water and the Municipal Subdistrict operate through the leadership of a 13-member Board of Directors, plus 1 Director Emeritus. Directors from the eight counties within Northern Water's boundaries are appointed to four-year terms by district court judges.	Board of Directors | Northern Water
Public Utilities Commission	3 commissioners	The PUC has three Commissioners, appointed by the Governor for 4-year terms	About the PUC
Denver Metropolitan Major League Baseball Stadium District	7 commissioners	Appointed by the Governor, confirmed by senate	Denver Metropolitan Major League Baseball Stadium District
Metropolitan Football Stadium District	9 board members	6 directors appointed by counties and Denver; 2 appointed at large by the Governor; chairperson of the baseball district.	Metropolitan Football Stadium District
Science and Cultural Facilities District	11 commissioners total	7 appointed by counties, Denver, and Broomfield; 3-4 appointed by the Governor	Statute creating the district

Per statute, the following makes up the Mile High Flood District board, or the "Urban Drainage and Flood Control District" as it is referred to in statute:

Appointing Authority	**Criteria**
1 member - Mayor of the City & County of Denver (or deputy mayor) – ex-officio	Must be the mayor (or deputy) of Denver
2 members – appointed by City Council of the City & County of Denver	Must be a member of that city council and remain one during term.

3 members – each appointed by Board of County Commissioners of Adams & Boulder and City & County of Broomfield's city council	The appointee must be a member of the appointing board/council and remain so during term.
3 members -- Board of County Commissioners of Arapahoe, Douglas & Jefferson	Appointee must be a member of that county board and remain so during term.
5 members -- Governor of Colorado – appoints 5 board members, staggered from Arapahoe, Douglas & Jefferson, Adams & Boulder	Must be an executive-officer of a municipality with population ≤100,000 located wholly or in part in the respective county; must be resident of the county; must remain executive-officer and resident during term.
One or more members -- The Board itself appoints one or more technical directors	Must be a licensed professional engineer in Colorado; an elector of the district; *not* an officer in the regular employment of any public body (though can be independent contractor).

What information is available about RTD's budget and finances?

RTD's budget can be found on its website, as can financial reports. At a recent RTD Finance and Planning Committee meeting, the committee was provided information about the 2026 proposed budget, sales tax forecast, and long term financial planning (see packet pages 197-198, 242 for summary information).

What principles are used to set the GM/CEO's compensation?

In 2023, the RTD board adopted a "compensation philosophy" for setting the GM/CEO's salary. Amongst other criteria, a key principle is "Demonstrate internal equity, fairness, and transparency while being externally market competitive, aligned to the 50th percentile of comparable public transit agencies, and related public and private sectors where executive talent may reside."

How is the GM/CEO's performance assessed?

The current Performance Assessment Framework was adopted by the board earlier in 2025, and contains several short-term goals for the GM/CEO which are benchmarked against peer agencies.

What are some examples of compensation levels set by statute or other official process in Colorado that board compensation might be tied to?

- County commissioners: County commissioner compensation is governed by C.R.S. § 30-2-102, and is updated based on inflation every year by legislative staff. Currently the compensation for commissioners in the RTD counties is $150,991/year.
- Legislators: "Section 2-2-307, C.R.S., governs the salaries of the members of the General Assembly. Members of the General Assembly receive the same salary each year of their term, unless an exception is made in statute. Member salaries are adjusted at the beginning of each term to equal 25 percent of a county judge's salary during the first year of the term."
- Statewide elected officials' salaries are also pegged to a percentage of judicial salaries.
- Judge's salaries are governed by §C.R.S. 13-30-103 and 13-30-104, and are adjusted annually.

How are county commissioners elected in the RTD district?

- Boulder County: "The Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) consists of three individuals elected to serve four-year terms as leaders of the Boulder County government. All three commissioners are elected at-large by the voters of Boulder County and represent the county as a whole." Population: 330,758
- Jefferson County: Must live in a district, but run at large. Population: 582,910.
- Douglas County: "Commissioners are elected at large from one of three geographic districts for four-year staggered terms." Population: 357,978
- Adams County: District-based elections, 5 commissioners. Population: 519,572
- Arapahoe County: District-based elections, 5 commissioners. Population: 655,070

How are municipal or county audits typically conducted in Colorado?

Per the Office of the State Auditor:

"The OSA's Local Government Audit Division tracks about 4,000 Colorado local governments for compliance with the Local Government Audit Law [Section 29-1-601, et seq., C.R.S.], which requires submission of an annual independent financial audit to the State Auditor."

And their FAQs page:

"Colorado's Local Government Audit Law (Section 29-1-601, et seq., C.R.S.) requires every local government in the state to undergo an annual financial audit conducted by an independent certified public accountant and to submit the resulting audit report to the State Auditor. The State Auditor is required to review local governments' audit

reports to determine compliance with governmental accounting standards and other requirements. The Local Government Audit Law specifies that local governments with annual revenues or expenditures for any fiscal year that are not more than $750,000 may apply to the State Auditor for an exemption from audit."

How many people do different elected officials in Colorado represent?

- **U.S. Congressional Representatives (8 members):** Each represents one of Colorado's eight congressional districts, with a population of approximately 710,000 people per district based on the 2020 Census data.
- **CU Regents (9 members):** One regent is elected to represent each of Colorado's eight congressional districts and another is elected by the state at large. The board also has three non-voting representatives that represent the students, staff, and faculty of the CU system.
- **State Board of Education (9 members):** The board is composed of members elected from districts corresponding to Colorado's congressional districts. When Colorado is allocated an even number of congressional seats, an additional member is elected by statewide vote, so there is an odd number of members to reduce the potential for tied votes. Following the 2020 census, there are eight districts and therefore nine members.
- **County commissioner examples:** In Boulder, Douglas, and Jefferson Counties, the three county commissioners in each county are elected "at large," meaning that each one officially represents the entire population of their county, not just a smaller district. While each commissioner must reside within a specific geographic district in their respective county, they are all elected by the county's voters as a whole and serve the entire county.
    - Jefferson County: Approximately 579,373 people
    - Douglas County: Approximately 402,849 people
    - Boulder County: Approximately 332,105 people

How does the judicial nominating process work?

The judicial nominating process in Colorado has nominating commissions for different districts, as described in this article.

How does the RTD redistricting process work currently?

RTD's 2022 redistricting criteria can be found in this memo, and includes: "In adopting the 2022 District map, the Board will:

1. Make a good faith effort to achieve mathematical population equality between districts, with no more than 5% deviation between the most and least populous district
2. Ensure that race is not a predominant consideration
3. Comply with the Voting Rights Act of 1965

4. Preserve whole voter precincts
5. Create districts as compact and contiguous as reasonably possible
6. Ensure no district is left without representation
7. Not draw districts for the purpose of protecting one or more incumbent Directors or declared candidates
8. Preserve communities of interest and keep intact jurisdictional subdivisions such as counties, cities, and towns as much as reasonably possible"

How does the Citizens Advisory Committee currently work?

Information about RTD's 17-member Citizens Advisory Committee can be found here.

Background: "Originally established in 2004 by the Regional Transportation District (RTD) Board of Directors (Board) as the FasTracks Citizens Advisory Committee, the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC/Committee) has evolved to become a diverse body tasked with providing direct feedback to RTD on general matters relating to public transit provided by RTD in the region, including but not limited to: operations, on-going maintenance projects, new capital projects, communications, as well as state and local legislation."

Composition: Members are appointed by RTD Board of Directors for 3-year terms. There are criteria in the charter, though they are not binding. There is a nominating committee of five people to review applications to serve on the CAC:

- RTD Board Chairman or their designee from the Board's Executive Committee membership
- RTD Operations, Safety, and Security Committee Chair or their designee from the Board's Operations, Safety, and Security Committee membership
- One of the current CAC co-chairs
- The Board Office Executive Manager
- A CAC member chosen at-large from the current CAC membership

How does senate confirmation of appointees generally work, particularly when appointments happen outside of session?

Senate confirmation typically applies when the Governor is the sole or majority appointing authority. Regarding Senate confirmation when the legislature is out of session, under the 1968 Administrative Code, appointees may begin serving as full voting members upon appointment. They continue in that role unless rejected during the next legislative session.

What are examples of statutory criteria for boards and commissions?

The Energy and Carbon Management Commission statute contains language focusing on both geographic representation and professional expertise that may be helpful for the committee to consider as an example (C.R.S. 34-60-104.3).

- **Geographic representation:** "To the extent possible, consistent with this subsection (2), the members shall be appointed taking into account the need for geographical representation of areas of the state with high levels of current or anticipated oil and gas activity or employment."
- **Professional expertise:** "One appointed member must be an individual with substantial experience in the oil and gas industry; one appointed member must have substantial expertise in planning or land use; one appointed member must have formal training or substantial experience in environmental protection, wildlife protection, or reclamation; one appointed member must have professional experience demonstrating an ability to contribute to the commission's body of expertise that will aid the commission in making sound, balanced decisions; and one appointed member must have formal training or substantial experience in public health."

How does RTD's board compensation compare to other agencies?

The previous RTD Accountability Committee facilitated by DRCOG did some research to benchmark RTD's board compensation, which can be found on page 8 of their governance report, also excerpted here. Since other agencies compensate their boards differently, that report tried to compare on a per meeting basis: "In the event Board members could be attending as many as eight meetings, this would result in compensation of $125 per meeting, putting RTD Board compensation on par with their peers."

PROPERTY	COMPENSATION
RTD	$12,000 per year + expenses
UTA	N/A[2]
DART	$50.00 per meeting + expenses
TriMet	Board members are volunteers
MTS	$150 + expenses per meeting $1,500 monthly for chairperson
SEPTA	Expenses only
King County Metro	N/A[3]
VIA	$50.00 per meeting
WMATA	$200 per day + expenses
Sound Transit	$100 per day + expenses[4]
LA Metro	$150 for one business day, not more than $600 per month

Table 2: Board Member Compensation

What are the signature thresholds for RTD elected board members, and how do they compare to other elected positions?

Per statute (C.R.S. 32-9-111(5)(a), "petitions shall be signed by at least two hundred fifty eligible electors residing within the director district in which the officer is to be elected". Signature requirements for other elected positions can be found on the Secretary of State's website. For example:

- County Offices | 1,000 or 2% of votes cast (whichever is less)*
- CU Regent, At-Large | 500 per congressional district
- CU Regent, District | 1,500 or 2.5% of votes cast (whichever is less)

Paratransit

Key background documents and links

- APTA RTD Paratransit Peer Review
- Nelson \ Nygaard introductory slides on paratransit (Sept 22. Mtg - slides 39-54)
- Nelson \ Nygaard white paper on paratransit
- RTD Board Packet for Sept. 30, 2025 Access on Demand Decision
- Colorado PUC Launches Consumer Engagement and Outreach on Rideshare Safety
- People with disabilities will now pay more for RTD on-demand rides (Denverite October 1, 2025)
- Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Ride Alliance Stage 1 Project Update, October 14, 2025)
- Feedback on Rideshare / Transportation Network Companies (TNCs), Colorado Public Utilities Commission, Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies)

What is being done to coordinate different ride services at a regional level?

DRCOG has received a grant to coordinate the "Ride Alliance", which is focused on coordinating transportation services for older adults: "The grant award of $975,486 provides funding to upgrade and pilot the Ride Alliance Trip Exchange Hub. This project builds off previous work completed by DRCOG and others in the region to develop the initial Trip Exchange Hub. The purpose of the Trip Exchange Hub is to coordinate human service transportation trip requests across the region, reduce trip denials, create a no-wrong door approach for clients seeking services, and streamline reporting processes across human service transportation providers." At this stage, they are working on a pilot: "The project has secured a memorandum of understanding from transportation providers RTD FlexRide, Via Mobility Services and the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization agreeing to participate in the Pilot of the Trip Exchange Hub." This pilot is focused on coordinating ride services for older adults, not specifically for paratransit, but its learnings could potentially be applicable for paratransit services and providers. More information: DRCOG packet; DRCOG slides.

What is being done in Colorado with respect to TNC safety and regulation?

On October 9th, "the Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC) launched a new online tool, Rideshare Engage, to gather public input on rideshare safety and broaden awareness of the PUC's role in overseeing the industry.

In 2014, Colorado became the first state in the country to establish state-level regulations for rideshares, also known as Transportation Network Companies (e.g., Uber and Lyft). In that time, the rideshare industry has grown and evolved significantly. Today, there are five licensed rideshare companies and over 35,000 rideshare drivers in Colorado which together provided approximately 35 million rides statewide in 2024.

The PUC ensures that rideshare vehicles are properly licensed and insured, that drivers have passed background checks and met medical certification requirements, and that vehicles have been verified to be in a safe and working condition. The PUC does not set rideshare rates or fees.

The PUC encourages the public to share their opinions and stay involved in discussing the future of how the PUC will regulate rideshares."

Workforce and labor-related topics

Key background documents and links

- Eno Center Transit Worker Recruitment and Retention Final Report
- Eno Center workforce introduction slides (Oct 22 mtg - slides 16-53)
- RTD workforce slides (Oct 22 mtg - slides 54-87)
- Eno Center workforce follow-up slides (Nov. 5 mtg - slides 9-31)
- A Bus Driver Shortage Threatens Transit. Here's What to Do About It. (Governing, October 31, 2022)
- Anger and Heartbreak on Bus No. 15 (June 6, 2022)

What does the current RTD CBA with ATU entail?

A new CBA was authorized this past summer - more information from RTD's press release, and details about the agreement can be found in the July 29th agenda packet:

"The Regional Transportation District (RTD)'s Board of Directors authorized the agency's General Manager and CEO, Debra A. Johnson, to enter into a successor three-year collective bargaining agreement (CBA) with the Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1001 (ATU). The agreement increases wages for ATU-represented employees, which comprise approximately two-thirds of the agency's workforce, 16.3% over the term of the contract, starting with a 6.5% increase in the first year and 4.5% in each of the next two years. The hourly wage increases within the successor agreement are retroactive to Jan. 1, 2025. The successor CBA extends through Dec. 31, 2027.

The agreement includes a 6.5% increase for RTD's bus and rail operators in the first year, raising the starting hourly wage from $25.96 to $27.65, with increases every six months. Other entry-level hourly wages include $34.85 for a general repair mechanic in Bus Operations, $41.08 for a signal/traction power maintainer in Light Rail Maintenance, $38.89 for an electromechanic in Light Rail Maintenance, $41.08 for a signal maintainer in Commuter Rail Maintenance, and $39.71 for a journeyman electrician in Facilities Maintenance. Additionally, the agreement will increase vacation accruals for tenured employees by lowering the number of years to reach designated time milestones."

What are RTD and other transit agencies doing with respect to affordable housing near transit?

Eno Center and the Urban Institute have co-authored a draft report on this topic, which highlights RTD as well as other transit agencies' approaches around the country to building affordable housing near transit.

What are RTD's retirement plans like for represented and non-represented workers?

Information about RTD's retirement plans can be found here and here. For specifics on the current 401(a) and 457(b) plans for represented employees, please see the RTD/ATU 1001 401(a) defined contribution plan and 457(b) deferred compensation plan summary plan description.

We make lives better through connections.

August 26, 2025

Agency Overview

2025 Accountability Committee

Outline

- Introduction
- Accountability
- 2020-21 Accountability Committee – Recommendations and Implementation

Introduction

Regional Transportation District

- Created in 1969 by the Colorado General Assembly
- Publicly elected Board of Directors
  - 15 members, each representing 200,000+ constituents
- Multi-modal transit agency
  - Bus, light rail, commuter rail, paratransit, microtransit
- 2,345 square-mile service area
  - Eight counties and more than 40 municipalities
  - 3M+ population
- 3,639 employees (per FY 2025 Budget)
  - 2,337 Represented; 1,302 Non-Represented

Primary Modes

Bus

85 local routes

12 regional routes

5 airport routes

~1,000 vehicles

58 FlexRide vehicles in 24 areas

9,720 bus stops

Paratransit

344 Access-a-Ride vehicles

Access-on-Demand provided by Uber, Lyft, zTrip, and Metro Taxi

Commuter Rail

4 lines

66 vehicles

54+ miles of track

27 stations

Light Rail

6 lines

200 vehicles

60+ miles of track

57 stations

2021-2026 Strategic Plan

2021-2026 Strategic Plan

- Board approved in August 2021
  - Performance metrics subject to change during the plan's five-year duration
  - Adjusting agency metrics and operations supports continual success
- Revised Strategic Plan document approved in April 2025
- Near-term efforts will commence by the Board to start developing a subsequent Strategic Plan for the agency

rtd-denver.com/about-rtd

What we aspire to achieve
VISION
To be the trusted leader in mobility, delivering excellence and value to our customers and community.
What we do
MISSION
We make lives better through connections
What we stand for
VALUES
Passion, Respect, Diversity Trustworthiness, Collaboration, Ownership
What we will concentrate on for the life of the Plan
STRATEGIC PRIORITIES
w/SUCCESS OUTCOMES METRICS
Cust. Excellence, Comm. Value, Emp. Ownership, Fin. Success
What we will concentrate on in the short- to medium-term to achieve long-term goals
STRATEGIC INITIATIVES
Back to Basics, People Power, Welcoming Transit Environment, Customer/Community Connections
How we will get there
TACTICS
W/LEADING INDICATORS
Asset Management, Employee Recruitment/Retention, Employee/ Public Security, Customer Experience, Community Outreach
What we need to do
INDIVIDUAL EMPLOYEE CONTRIBUTIONS
Tied to Performance

Strategic Priorities: 2021-2026

Community Value

RTD strives to be a strong community partner, providing value to customers as well as to the broader Denver metro region while sustaining planet Earth.

Customer Excellence

RTD strives to consistently deliver high-quality customer service.

Employee Ownership

RTD seeks to attract and retain a highly skilled and engaged workforce.

Financial Success

RTD takes very seriously the management of all financial resources.

2025 Strategic Initiatives

- Short-term and medium-term concentration areas to achieve long-term goals
- Performance data, customer/community survey and stakeholder responses used to inform tactical efforts
- 2026 initiatives currently in development

Back to Basics

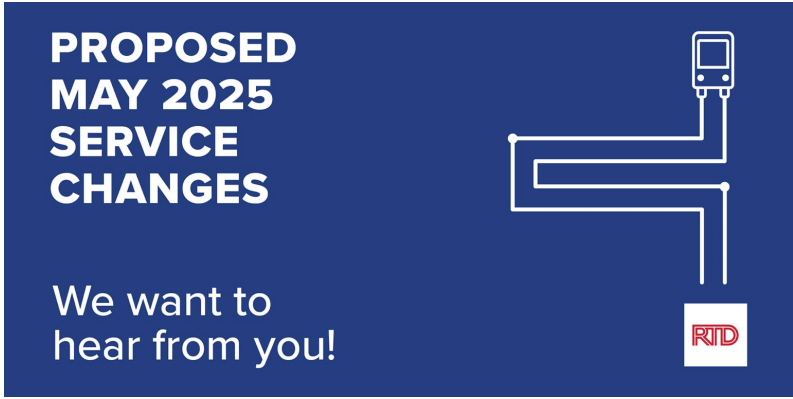
People Power

Welcoming Transit Environment

Customer and Community Connections

RTD Listens – Feedback and Engagement

- Advisory committees
  - Access-a-Ride Paratransit Advisory Committee
  - Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities
  - Citizens Advisory Committee
- Represented workforce engagement
  - Amalgamated Local Transit Union Local 1001
  - Fraternal Order of Police Local 74
- Annual customer, community, and employee surveys
- Subregional Service Councils
- Customer feedback panels
- RTD Impact Team



Revenue and Budget

Primary Revenue Sources

SALES-AND-USE TAX

Approximately 70%

GRANTS

Approximately 25%

FARES

Approximately 5%

FY 2025 Budget

- RTD annually reviews, proposes, and adopts a fiscal year budget and five-year financial forecast (FYFF)
  - Align financial resources with RTD's Strategic Plan
- FY 2025 Budget adopted by the Board of Directors on December 3, 2024
- FY 2026 Budget in development

rtd-denver.com/budget

FY 2025 Budget Appropriations

As approved Dec. 3, 2024

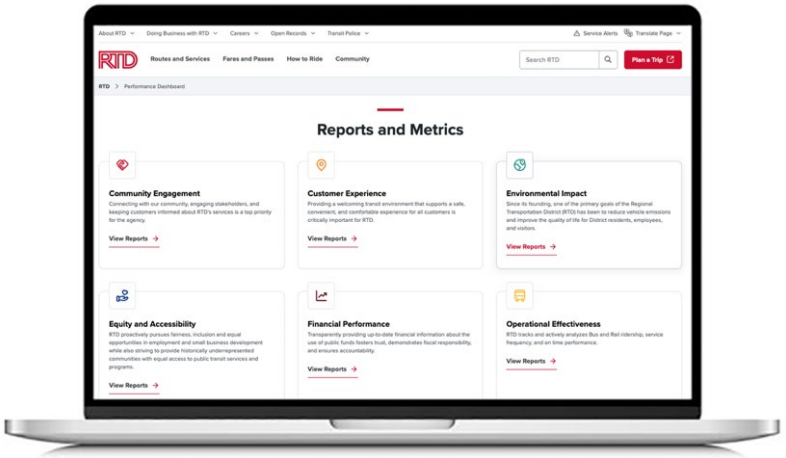
FY 2025 Budget Appropriations	Amount
Operating Expense (excluding depreciation)	1,233,611
Debt Interest Payments	144,276
Debt Principal Payments	85,151
New Capital Expenditures	36,148
Total Expenditure Appropriation	**$1,499,186**
-	-
FasTracks Internal Savings Account	190,099
Capital Replacement Fund	261,000
Operating Reserve	218,302
Unrestricted Fund	336,111
Total Fund Appropriation	**$1,005,512**
-	-
Previously Approved Capital (carry-forward)	**$324,998**

**In thousands*

Performance Dashboard

Performance Dashboard

- Provides transparent agency performance overview
  - On-time performance metrics, security data, community outreach reports, boardings, and finance information
- Regularly updated to identify trends and measure service delivery efficiency and effectiveness
- Houses datasets pursuant to 2020-21



rtd-denver.com/performance-dashboard

Agency Accountability – Governance and Oversight

Regulatory Environment

Regulatory Oversight by Mode

- **Federal Railroad Administration (FRA):** Commuter Rail
- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA):** Light Rail
  - Colorado Public Utilities Commission serves as FTA-designated State Safety Oversight Agency (SSOA) in Colorado per 49 U.S.C. 5329(e)
- **Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMSCA):** Bus
  - Program review conducted for FMCSA by Colorado State Patrol

Safety Oversight

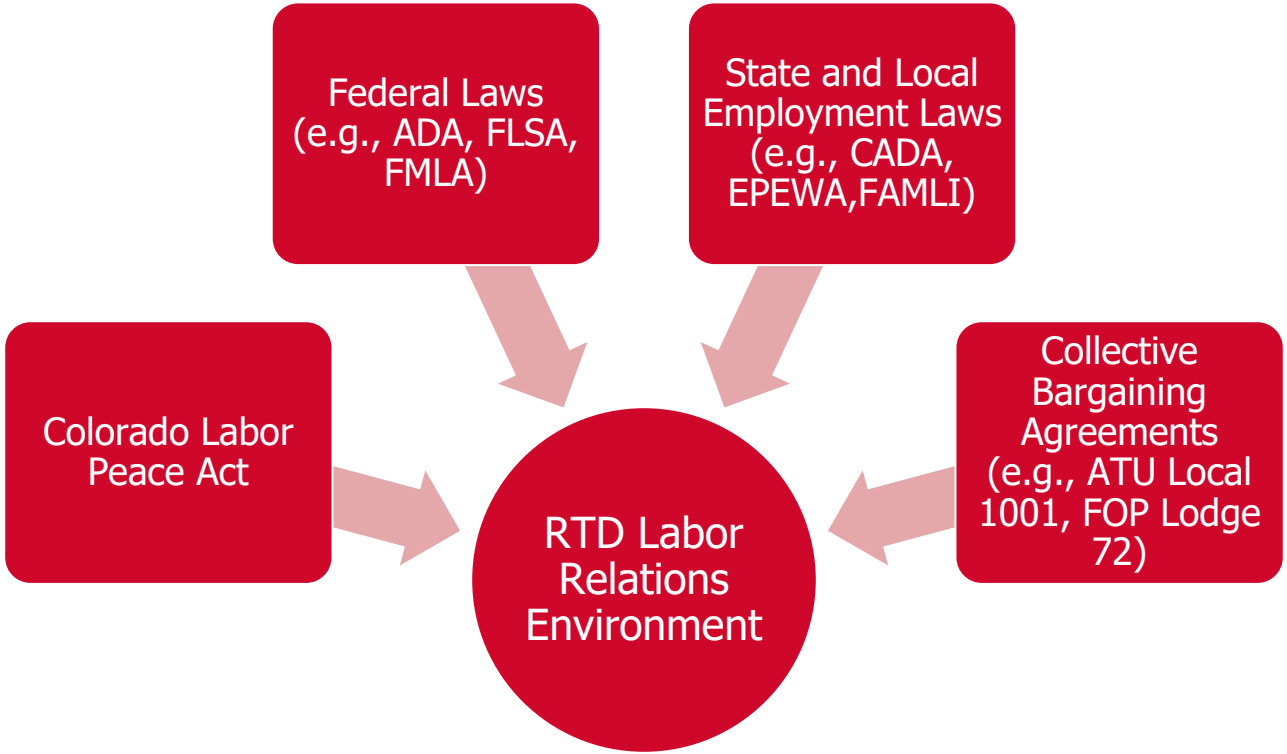
- System Safety Program Plan (SSPP)
  - FRA required
- Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP)
  - FTA required
- Safety Performance
  - Federal, state, and agency targets and benchmarks

National Transit Database

- Established in 1974
- Serves as FTA central repository for transit system data
  - Operational (e.g., vehicle revenue miles and hours, unlinked passenger trips)
  - Financial (e.g., operating expenses)
  - Asset condition
- Designed to support local, state, regional planning efforts
- Stringent reporting requirements
- NTD data used to apportion federal formula funding

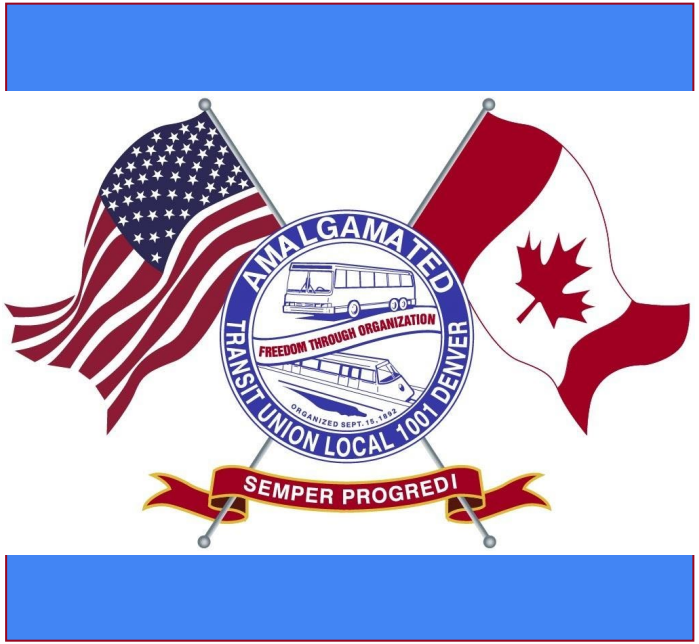
Labor Relations Environment

Labor Relations Environment (1 of 3)



Labor Relations Environment (2 of 3)

- **Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1001 (ATU)**
  - Represents two-thirds of workforce
  - Over 60 job classifications
  - Partner contractors
    - Transdev
      - Denver
      - Metro/Longmont
      - Commerce City
- Current collective bargaining agreement (CBA) period
  - January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2027



Labor Relations Environment (3 of 3)

- Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 72 (FOP)
  - New partner
  - Represents rank-and-file officers (includes Corporals and Detectives)
- Current CBA period
  - January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2027

RTD’s Statutory Framework

Regional Transportation District Act

§32-9-101 *et seq.*, Colorado Revised Statutes

- Political subdivision of the state since 1969
- Public regional mass transportation system
- Powers and duties reside with elected Board of Directors (delegable)
  - Board members directly accountable to constituents
- Sales and use taxing authority
- Authority to borrow and issue securities
- 58% limitation on contracted rubber tire service (non-rail services)

Public Official Fiduciary Role

"The holding of public office or employment is a **public trust**, created by the confidence which the electorate reposes in the integrity of public officers, members of the general assembly, **local government officials**, and employees." §24-18-103, Colorado Revised Statutes

- Board collectively and Directors individually must carry out duties for the people's benefit
  - Actions in agency's best interest (consistent with statutory mandate)
  - Duties of care, loyalty, prudence
  - Good faith, no self-dealing, or conflicts of interest

Other Applicable Laws (Selected)

- Open Meetings Law, §24-6-401, *et seq.*, Colorado Revised Statutes
- Open Records Act, §24-72-201, *et seq.,* Colorado Revised Statutes
- Criminal Justice Records Act, §24-72-301, *et seq.,* Colorado Revised Statutes

Regional Collaboration

RTD, DRCOG, CDOT Relationship

- RTD, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) partner in region's transportation planning process via the Metropolitan Planning Agreement
- Partner agencies develop the following documents, which determine the transportation priorities and funding programming for the region:
  - Unified Planning Program of Work (UPWP)
  - Regional Transportation Plan
  - Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)
- Monthly meetings through Agency Coordination Team (ACT) to discuss and coordinate activities between agencies

RTD, DRCOG, CDOT Relationship (cont'd)

- **TIP process:** RTD must seek DRCOG approval, as designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), through the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for all regionally significant capital projects per federal statute
- **Senate Bill 90-208 process:** Requires DRCOG review and approval prior to construction of any fixed guideway transit corridor
  - DRCOG must approve each component of corridor including:
    - Alignment
    - Technology
    - Financing

Audit Oversight

Audit Oversight

- Routine performance audits
  - §32-9-115 (3), Colorado Revised Statutes
  - Once every five years or more frequently
- Annual financial audit
  - §29-1-603, Colorado Revised Statutes
  - Governmental Accounting Standards Board/ generally accepted accounting principles
- Internal audit function
  - Audit plan approved annually by Board of Directors
  - Function currently performed by third-party audit firm
- Audits by regulatory bodies
  - e.g., FTA Triennial Review, FRA audits

2020-21 Accountability Committee

Recommendations and Implementation

Accountability Committee (2020-21) Timeline

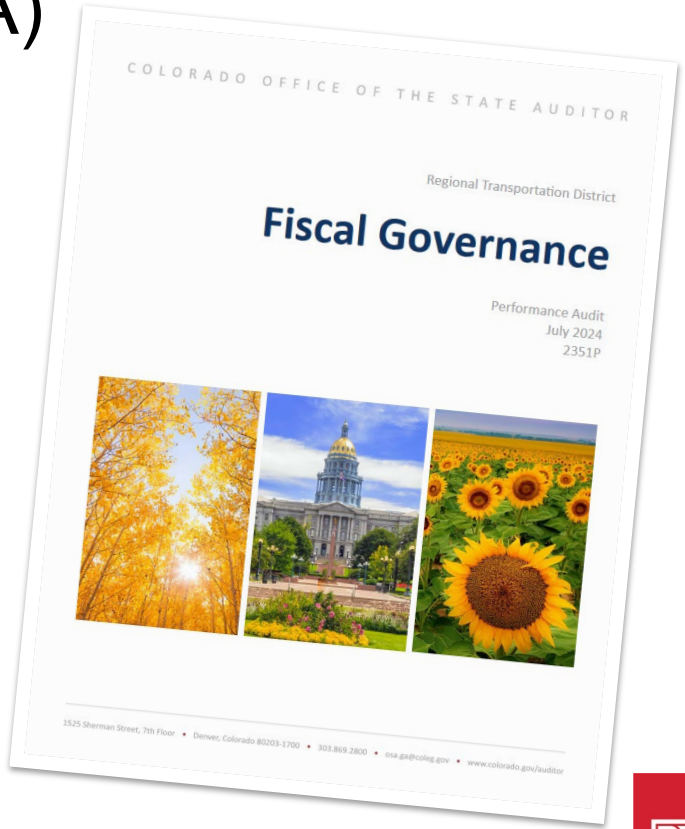
- Formed in July 2020
- Commenced work in August 2020
- Final report issued July 2021
- Agency response issued August 2021
  - RTD agreed or partially agreed with 42 of 43 recommendations

Accountability Committee (cont'd)

- Recommendations related to:
  - COVID-19 relief funds
  - Operator retention
  - Subregional service councils
  - Board structure modifications
  - FasTracks options
  - Reporting metrics and transparency
  - Fixed-route and paratransit service provision
  - Partnerships for resources and services
  - Fares and pass program

Office of the State Auditor (OSA)

- Fiscal governance audit
  - Performed 2023-24
  - Included review of Accountability Committee recommendation implementation
  - OSA report issued August 2024
    - Appendix B (see p.117) overviews Accountability Committee recommendation implementation status as of March 2024
  - Status update to OSA and Legislative Audit Committee provided May 2025



Recommendations – Implementation Status

- 34 of 42 agreed-upon recommendations implemented
- Remaining recommendations either in progress or ongoing:
  - Report illustrating RTD's value to the region (*in progress*)
  - Identifying alternative FasTracks funding sources (*in progress*)
  - Collaboration with CDOT regarding future bus rapid transit corridors (*ongoing*)
  - Bus stop assessment (*in progress*)
  - Opportunities to solicit transportation network companies to provide service (*in progress*)
  - Partnership Program evaluation (*in progress*)
  - First/last mile strategy (*ongoing*)
  - RTD police expansion (*ongoing*)

Thank you.

rtd-denver.com

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Memorandum

October 20, 2020

TO: Interested Persons

FROM: Katie Ruedebusch, Principal Analyst, 303-866-3001
April Bernard, Research Analyst, 303-866-4789

SUBJECT: Regional Transportation District Overview

Summary

This memorandum provides information on the Regional Transportation District (RTD). Information regarding RTD's statutory history, authority, board, budget, and service area is included below.

Contents

Regional Transportation District Overview 1
RTD Annexation 2
RTD Fare Structure 3
RTD Legislative Oversight 4
RTD Legislative History 4
Attachment A 6

Regional Transportation District Overview

RTD overview. The General Assembly created RTD in 1969 to create, operate, and maintain a transportation system in the RTD service area.[1]

RTD service area. RTD currently serves 3.08 million people in 2,342 square miles of service area, including all or part of the following eight counties: Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas, Jefferson, and Weld. Annually, RTD operates 43.8 million regular fixed-route service miles, with over 9,800 stops on 141 fixed routes. Attachment A includes the current RTD system map. The current RTD system map may also be found here:

https://www.rtd-denver.com/rider-info/system-map.

RTD board of directors. The original RTD board consisted of 21 taxpaying electors. In 1980, a citizen-initiated ballot measure changed the composition of RTD's board to its current structure, a 15-member board of directors. Directors are elected for four-year terms, and each director represents a district of approximately 180,000 residents. More information on RTD's current board of directors, including an interactive district map, can be found here:

https://www.rtd-denver.com/board-of-directors.

[1]Section 32-9-101, *et seq.*, C.R.S.

Board authority. As required by the original statute, within five years of RTD's creation, elections were held in all district counties to authorize RTD's authority to issue debt for mass transportation purposes. State law gives RTD's board the power to enter into contracts, borrow and invest money, purchase and maintain property, and levy taxes. The board is also charged with setting RTD policy, adopting the annual budget, and establishing RTD's short- and long-term transit goals.

RTD budget. For 2019, RTD's total projected revenues were about $1.2 billion. Of this revenue, approximately 57 percent came from a 1 percent sales and use tax within RTD's service area, and approximately 14 percent came from passenger fares. The remainder of the district's revenue came from federal grants, investment income, and various other sources. RTD employed around 2,890 individuals throughout the Denver metropolitan area in 2019. In addition, RTD works with approximately 1,600 private contractor employees. RTD's 2020 annual budget can be found here.

FasTracks. Voters in the district approved RTD's multi-billion dollar FasTracks program in 2004 to expand transit across the Denver metro region. This plan included 122 miles of new light and commuter rail and 18 miles of rapid transit bus service. FasTracks was funded through a combination of a voter-approved sales tax of 0.4 percent, public-private partnerships, and federal funding. As a result, RTD's light and commuter rail system is comprised of 12 rail lines and 78 stations, with plans to expand service.

RTD Annexation

Colorado law currently defines RTD's service area as the area that existed within the district as of July 1, 2007, along with additional area annexed to or included in the district after July 1, 2007.[2] The state allows additional RTD service area to be added through petition or election.

Incorporated or unincorporated areas may join RTD either through petition or election. Certain landowners may petition to join RTD's service area if they live in a contiguous area along RTD's service areas and 100 percent of parcel landowners agree. For local governments or unincorporated counties, 8 percent of eligible electors or the board of county commissioners may request an election to include an area in RTD. Petitions for elections must be submitted at least 120 days before an election, and the RTD board must approve the election by a majority vote.

If any unincorporated area is entirely contained within RTD's service area, the district may pass a resolution to annex the territory into the district, subject to certain notice requirements, a public hearing, and vote of the RTD board.[3] RTD must send the resolution to any local governments, special districts, and school districts in the unincorporated annexed territory, along with the executive director of the Colorado Department of Revenue.

The annexation or inclusion of any area into RTD's service area is not effective until the RTD board updates the service area map and the Department of Revenue communicates with retailers in the new area.[4]

[2]Section 32-9-106.1 (1)(a)(I), C.R.S.
[3]Section 32-9-106.8 (1), C.R.S.
[4]Section 32-9-106.1 (2)(e), C.R.S.

RTD Fare Structure

Table 1 below shows RTD's full price fares for various routes since 2002. Rates for discounted fares are not included. The last time RTD raised fares was in 2019.

Table 1
Regional Transportation District Fares

Year	Local Fare	Regional Fare	Express Fare	Airport Fare
2002	$1.10	$3.50	$2.50	-
2003	$1.15	$3.50	$2.50	-
2004	$1.25	$3.75	$2.75	-
2005	$1.25	$3.75	$2.75	-
2006	$1.50	$3.75	$2.75	-
2007	$1.50	$3.75	$2.75	-
2008	$1.75	$4.00	$3.00	-
2009	$2.00	$4.50	$3.50	-
2010	$2.00	$4.50	$3.50	-
2011	$2.25	$5.00	$4.00	-
2012	$2.25	$5.00	$4.00	-
2013	$2.25	$5.00	$4.00	-
2014	$2.25	$5.00	$4.00	-
2015	$2.60	$4.50	-	$9.00
2016	$2.60	$4.50	-	$9.00
2017	$2.60	$4.50	-	$9.00
2018	$2.60	$4.50	-	$9.00
2019	$3.00	$5.25	-	$10.50
2020	$3.00	$5.25		$10.50

Prepared by: Colorado Legislative Council Staff.

RTD fares depend on several factors, including zone of travel, discounts, and type of ticket package purchased. In addition, rides are free for children under five riding with a fare paying adult and active duty members of the U.S. military. Fares and fare payment options are discussed in detail on the RTD website's Fares page.

Low-income and youth pass. A 25-member working group completed an evaluation of RTD's pass programs in 2019 and drafted recommendations. The Fare Pass Working Group's recommendations included adding a low-income pass, which would discount fares by 40 percent for riders who have incomes at or below 185 percent of the Federal Poverty Level; and a youth pass, which would discount fares for riders who are 13 to 19 years old by 70 percent. RTD offers these two passes, with the eligibility requirements and costs listed above. The passes were recommended by the working group in 2019 and implemented by RTD.

RTD Legislative Oversight

RTD is a statutorily created entity, similar to a special district. However, RTD is not a regional transportation authority, as it was created as a separate statutory political subdivision. Current law gives RTD's elected board wide authority to operate and maintain the transportation system within its district boundaries. The legislature plays a limited role in the administration of RTD. However, RTD is required to provide copies of its annual budget to the Transportation Legislation Review Committee, and other information, data, testimony, or audits as requested by the committee.

In 2020, RTD, in consultation with several members of the General Assembly and the Governor, created the independent RTD Accountability Committee (committee). The 11-member committee is hosted by the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG). Of the 11 committee members, the chairs of the House and Senate Transportation Committees appointed 6 members and the Governor appointed 5 members. The committee must provide a report, including recommendations for improvements to RTD's operations, financial health, and statutory authority, to the RTD board, the Governor, and the chairs of the House and Senate Transportation Committees no later than July 1, 2021. Before issuing any reports or recommendations, the committee must hear and consider comments from the public. The committee will end its work after the report is issued. Learn more about the committee's work at RTD's website:

https://www.rtd-denver.com/accountability-committee.

Information about committee meetings may be found at DRCOG's website:

https://drcog.org/planning-great-region/rtd-accountability-committee.

RTD Legislative History

The General Assembly has introduced a number of bills to change the taxes and fees that RTD may collect, RTD's boundaries, the level of RTD services that must be provided by private companies, and the RTD board's composition and election requirements.

Table 2 on the next page outlines bills passed by the General Assembly that directly modified RTD's statutory authority.

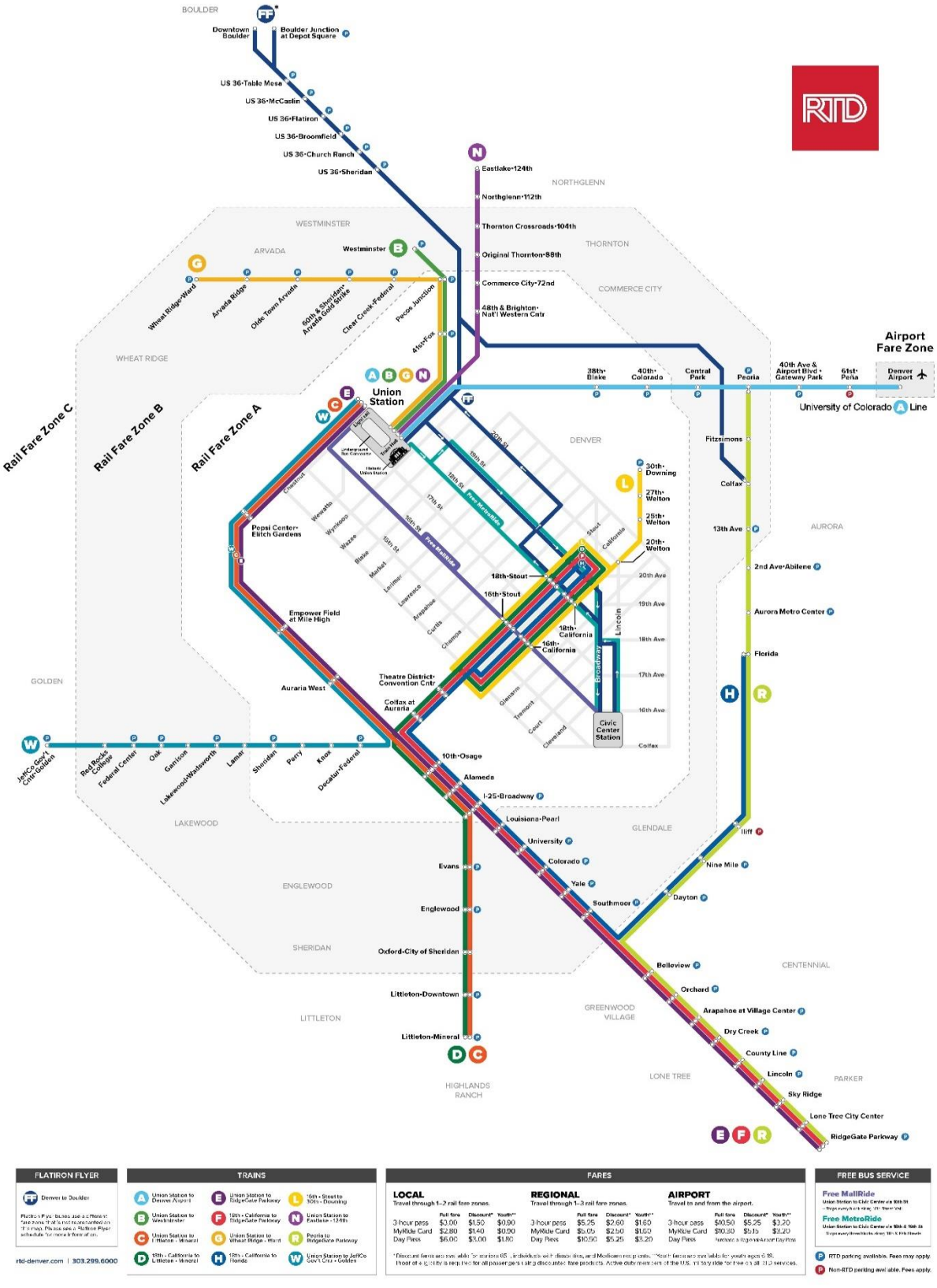
Table 2
Bills Substantially Changing RTD Statutory Authority Since 2000

Category	Bill Number	Bill Description
Taxes and Fees	SB 02-179	Increased the amount of sales tax that RTD can collect from 0.6 percent to 1.0 percent to fund FasTracks
	SB 06-093	Allowed RTD the authority to charge a parking fee at park-n-rides
	SB 07-088	Expanded RTD's authority to charge fees at park-n-rides
	SB 09-108	Removed the 1.0 percent cap on sales tax that RTD can collect
District Boundaries	HB 01-1132	Allowed RTD to unilaterally annex unincorporated territory completely surrounded by the district
	HB 03-1070	Allowed RTD to annex an area if a majority of registered voters approve of the annexation
	SB 05-182	Allowed special benefits to be awarded in eminent domain proceedings for RTD projects
	HB 06-1338	Authorized the inclusion of counties, or portions of counties, if they request annexation
	HB 07-1186	Authorized RTD to include incorporated areas of a county under certain requirements
	HB 07-1295	Specified the geographic area of RTD, and required it to consist of all land within the district as of July 1, 2007
Privatization of Services	HB 03-1103	Increased the percentage of RTD service that must be provided by private businesses from 35 percent to 50 percent
	SB 07-251	Eliminated the minimum requirement for RTD to contract with private businesses, and authorized RTD to contract with private companies for up to 58 percent of services

Prepared by: Colorado Legislative Council Staff.

Additionally, the General Assembly has considered a number of other changes under RTD's statutory authority that did not become law. These proposals have included various changes to the boundaries of RTD; various increases and decreases to the percentage of RTD services that must be provided by private businesses; and changes to the board's composition, elections, and campaign finance requirements.

Attachment A



Source: RTD. Accessed at: https://www.rtd-denver.com/services/rail/rail-system-map.

Hudson Skykomish

Memorandum

Date: 4 September 2025

To: RTD Accountability Committee Members and Interested Parties

From: David Bragdon, contracted advisor to the Colorado Energy Office for the RTD Accountability Committee

Subject: Recommended Readings Prior to September 10 Meeting

Your launch meeting on August 26 introduced the term "transit governance," one of the three topics that constitute your scope. As we will discuss September 10, I am going to suggest the term "transit governance" is defined as "the institutional structures that oversee the provision of public transit," or, more colloquially, "who holds the official power to make policy and decisions about transit."

Metropolitan regions across the U.S. structure their transit governance in a vast variety of ways. Those structures vary based on the region's politics, history, funding sources and a myriad of factors. No single ideal transit governance model exists, ready to be transplanted from region to region and uniformly adopted everywhere. However, studying other regions can provide ideas, lessons and cautions for the Denver area.

Selected applied research reporting on transit governance will be useful context for your deliberations. Some resources are itemized below, for you to read prior to the September 10 meeting, when we will dive into the substance.

1. **"RTD Governance Evaluation," written by Highland North, May 18, 2021.** This helpful survey of the governance of other transit systems was prepared for the previous Accountability Committee managed by DRCOG pursuant to prior state legislation. It provides a sampling of other regions and some comparisons to RTD.

2. **"Coordination and Governance in Transit: 6 Case Studies," written by the Eno Center for Transportation to the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, June 2023.** This Eno Center compilation of how transit provision is structured in six regions was prepared

for policy-makers considering change in the Chicagoland region, where controversy about the current agencies has persisted for many years.

3. **"Getting to the Route of It: the Role of Governance in Regional Transit," written jointly by the Eno Center for Transportation and TransitCenter, October 2014.** You will get a good flavor of typical governance issues by reading only pages 2-13 (Executive Summary, Introduction, Methodology) and pages 73-82 (Findings and Lessons Learned.) It is *not* necessary to read all the details of the case studies, just the introduction and conclusions which draw from all the case studies. (Full disclosure: I was an author.)

4. **"Board Members: Short Biographies of each of Transport for London's (TfL's) Board members are listed on this page."** https://tfl.gov.uk/corporate/about-tfl/how-we-work/corporate-governance/board-members#on-this-page-13 Scan the resumes of the board members who govern one of the most accomplished transit agencies in the world. See if you detect a deliberate attempt to assemble a broad range of professional disciplines and specialized bodies of knowledge and expertise. (Spoiler alert: the explanation is here: https://www.london.gov.uk/mayor-appoints-new-members-refreshed-tfl-board)

Hudson Skykomish

Principles and definitions: “accountability”, “governance” (and other impressive multi-syllabic words)

Conversation starter for the committee, by David Bragdon

September 10, 2025
RTD Accountability Committee

My most recent visit to Colorado: “Non-millennial on Millenium Bridge”

(me, looking for the W train, August 2025)

My *first* visit to Colorado: "Baby boomer drawn to automobile transportation."

(me, learning to drive at my Uncle and Aunt's house in Arvada, 1960)

OCTOBER 2014

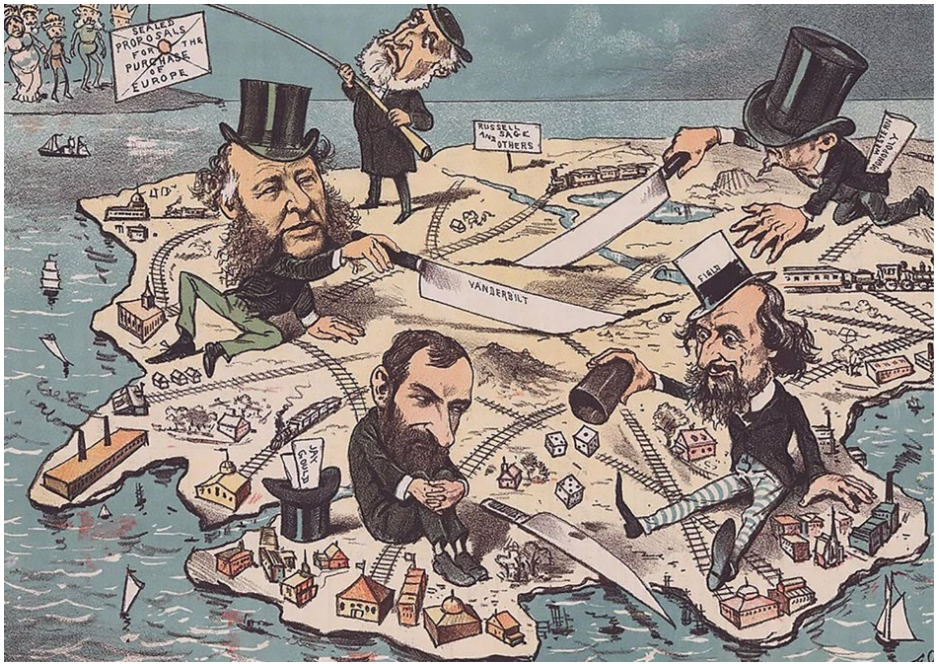
Getting to the Route of It

THE ROLE OF GOVERNANCE IN REGIONAL TRANSIT

Eno Center for Transportation

TransitCenter

Suggested Definition of “Governance”



“Institutional structures and processes by which policy and decisions are made”

Governance structure is a main topic the legislature assigned us,

along with sub-tasks on paratransit and labor relations

What it's *not:*

Governance structures are ***not*** day-to-day management, service planning, or operations – those are agency *activities*, possibly **shaped by** governance structures.

Similarly, the budget and current capital investment priorities are ***not*** governance structures - those are outputs, possibly **shaped by** governance structures.

Two Scoping Considerations for the Committee:

- ➔ As you think about RTD's activities and outputs - its service quality, its capital priorities, its operations or overall organizational performance - always keep coming back to the assigned question of whether (or how) those things are shaped by RTD's governance structure.

- ➔ Keep asking the key question: how do institutional mechanisms of governance - like policy-making, budgeting, goal-setting, oversight and evaluation - influence the quality of transit provided to the public?

Major actions and activities of a transit board:

- ➔ Fiduciary: set budget and monitor financial performance
- ➔ Hire, supervise, evaluate and potentially terminate CEO (but not manage other staff members)
- ➔ Consider and vote on *major* (not minor) operational policies, like fare policy, service standards, labor contracts, intergovernmental agreements, large (not small) procurements, strategic plans
- ➔ Serve as a bridge between the constituency board members represent and the agency

The prior Accountability Committee (2021, staffed by DRCOG) noted the importance of board structure and effectiveness, but reached no conclusions and made no recommendations about it.

They suggested someone else take on that issue in the future. That "someone else" is *you*. (Congratulations)

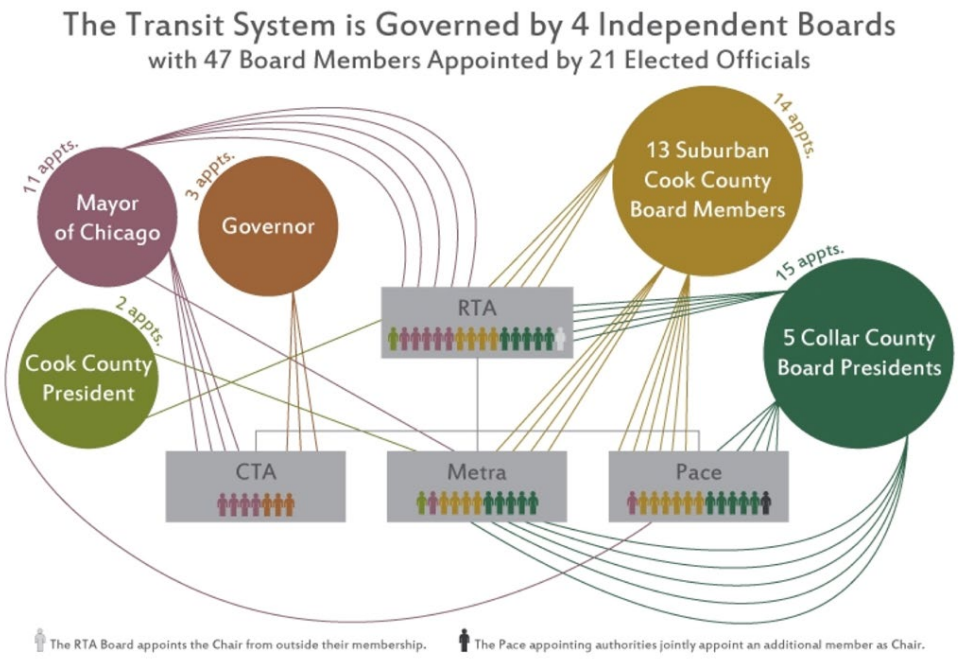
"The committee acknowledges a lack of consensus on how the structure of the RTD board affects the effectiveness of its decision making. Neither is there clarity on the existence of a problem with the board's structure nor what that problem may be."

-Accountability Committee final report, July 2021

Another way to define “governance” is to ask:

Who has the power to make big decisions about transit?

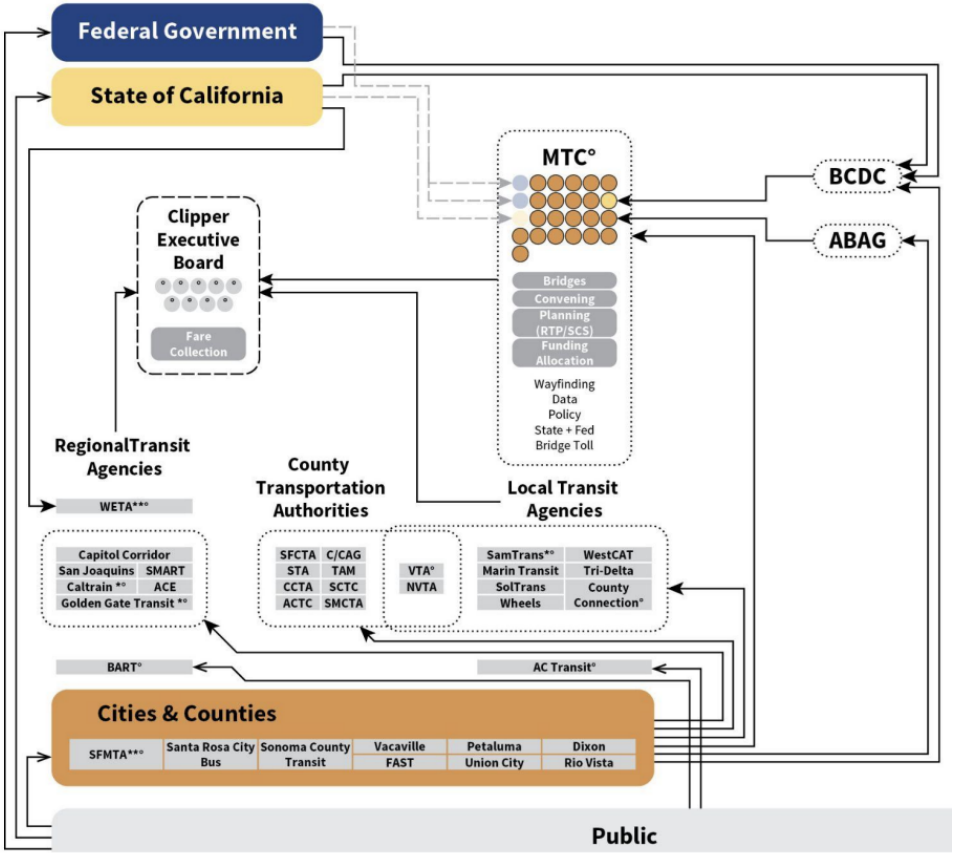
To whom are they accountable?



Chicagoland Transit Governance

Who is accountable there?

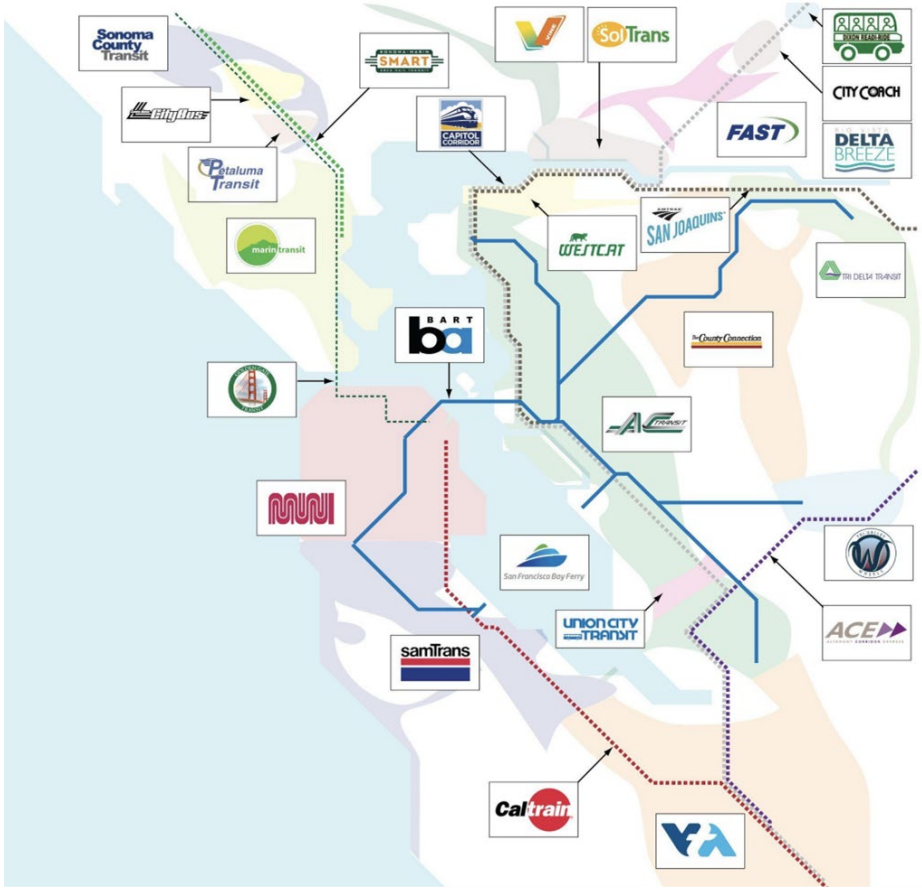
Chart credit: Eno Center for Transportation



Bay Area Transit Governance

Who is accountable there?

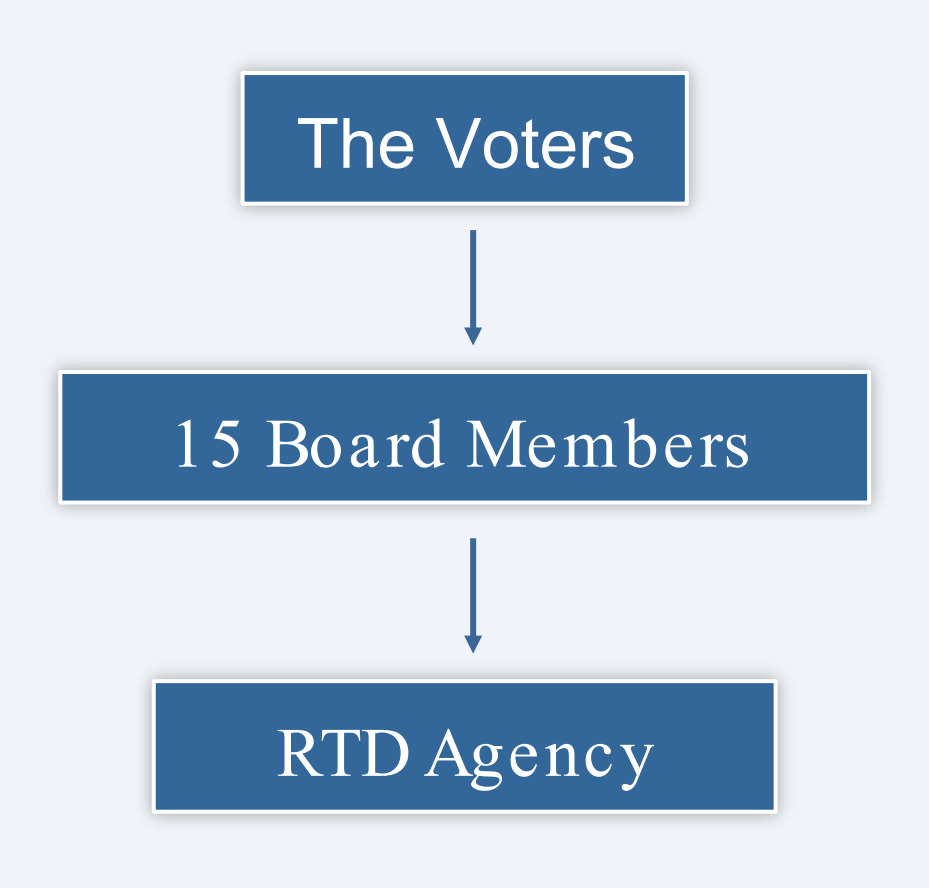
Chart Credit: Seamless Bay Area (advocacy organization)



Fragmented governance leads to fragmented accountability

(and fragmented service)

Credit: Seamless Bay Area (advocacy organization)



Denver Regional **Transit Governance is Comparatively Simple**

- Board members accountable to the voters =>
- CEO accountable to the board =>
- Agency staff accountable to the CEO

Today, we want to provoke a committee discussion about the values (or principles) that members consider characteristics of good governance - beyond “accountability”

Sample values: representative, responsive, effective, transparent, communicative, legible, legitimate, fiscally responsible, wise, informed…

Let's start with two values (out of many) we might like to see in governance:

- ***Representative:*** we live in a democratic republic, where we want our public officials making decisions in the public interest. We could ask: "does the governing structure faithfully represent the people who ride transit, and the taxpayers in the transit district who fund it?"

- ***High capacity:*** transit is a complex utility, involving planning, operations, engineering, finance, human resources and other organizational functions. Transit also influences the economy and housing. We could ask, "does the governing structure include oversight by technical experts, to assure delivery of high-quality transit service?"

How does *representation* in transit governance affect transit service quality?

Let’s compare Philadelphia and Seattle

Philadelphia: Dysfunctional governance structure leads to dysfunctional transit

The New York Times

Deep Transit Cuts in Philadelphia Set Commuters and Parents Scrambling

A budget shortfall has led the city's transit authority to cut its bus and rail services by 20 percent, with fare increases and more cuts to come.

SEPTA governance under-represents riders, due to domination by state government and suburbs, based on archaic district boundaries.

Result: perpetual crisis and low quality service

SEPTA Board Structure, based on jurisdictional lines drawn in the colonial era, is unrepresentative:

- 2 seats for Bucks County (est. 1682!) (pop. 650,301)
- 2 seats for Chester County (also 1682) (pop. 560,745)
- 2 seats for Delaware County (est.1789) (pop. 559,206)
- 2 seats for Montgomery County (1784) (pop. 879,190)
- 2 seats for City of Philadelphia (1682) (pop. 1,574,284)

- 1 seat appointed by Governor of Pennsylvania
- 1 seat appointed by State Senate Majority Leader (R)
- 1 seat appointed by State Senate Minority Leader (D)
- 1 seat appointed by House Majority Leader (D)
- 1 seat appointed by House Minority Leader (R)

Percentage of SEPTA riders residing within City of Philadelphia:

70%

Percentage of regional population residing within City of Philadelphia:

39%

Percentage of SEPTA board seats appointed by City of Philadelphia:

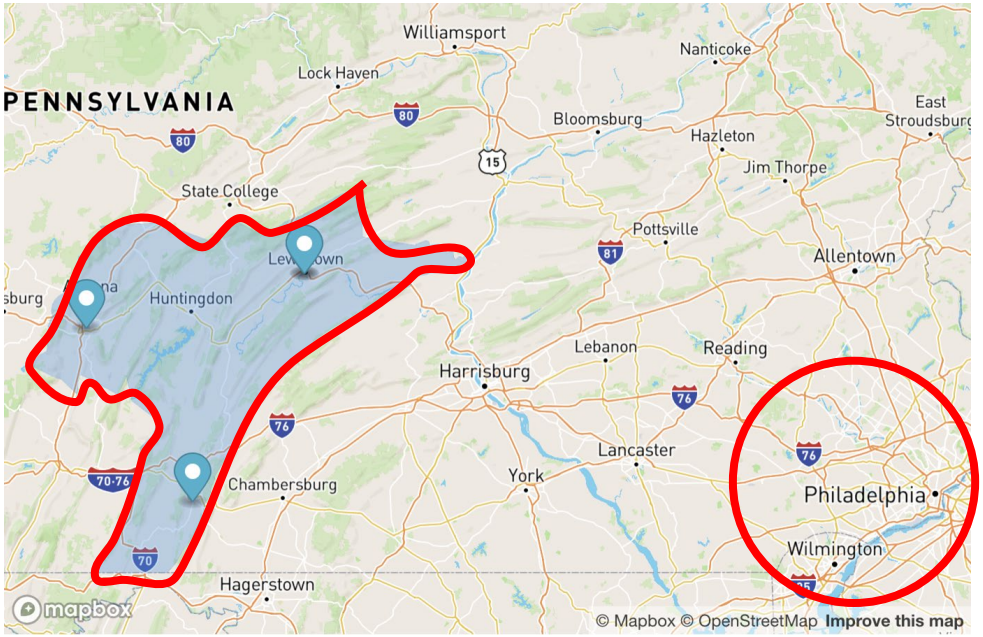
13%

A State Senator from a rural area far from the SEPTA district wields lots of power over SEPTA.

Virtually none of her constituents, **the voters *she* is accountable to**, ride SEPTA or pay the regional taxes that fund SEPTA.

She has been blocking transit funding, including denying **SEPTA's ability to raise revenue in its own territory from its own residents.**

State Senator Ward's district is 200 miles from Philadelphia – about the distance from Denver to Craig



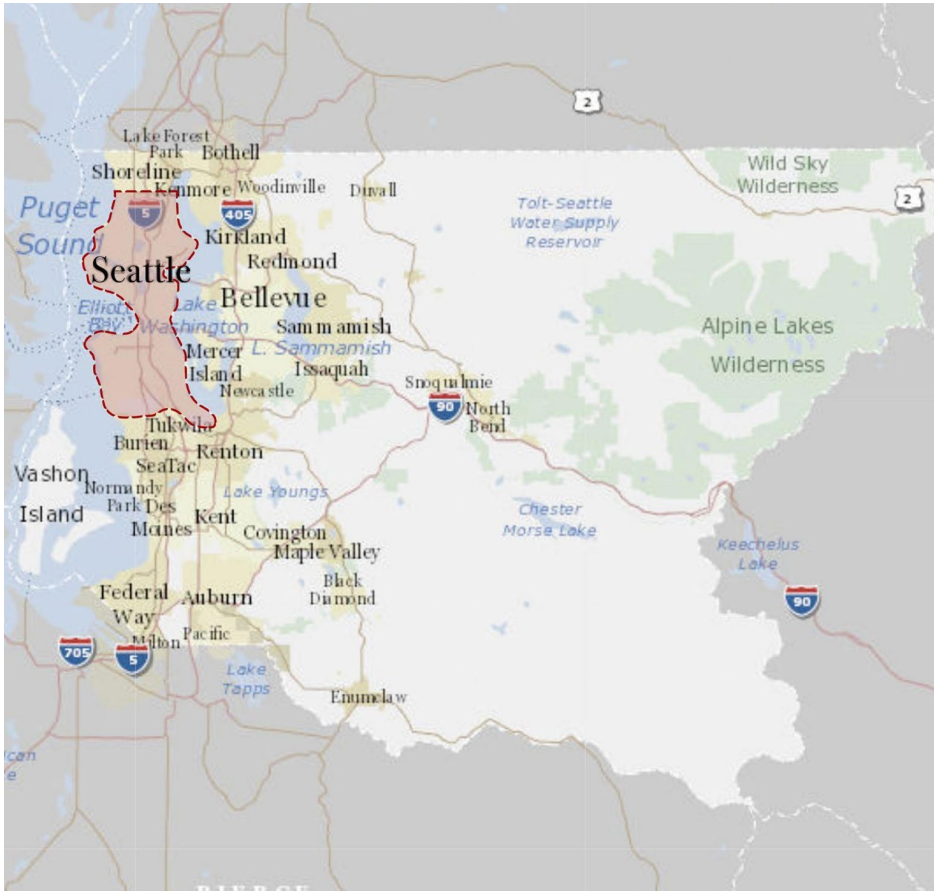
Yet she has as much or more influence over Philadelphia transit **than the Mayor of Philadelphia does.**

Penna Senate District 30 constituent

SEPTA District constituents

One test for “good” governance: is it representative?

Do the officials who make decisions about transit fairly represent the people who ride transit and the people who pay the taxes that fund transit?



Seattle: overcoming archaic boundaries

Metro Transit is a department of King County government. The board of councilors represent districts from all over the county.

Seattle residents are only **one-third** of King County population, but are a majority of people who ride transit, due to land use, density and demographics.

Photos via theurbanist.org, strongtowns.org

Governance Dilemma:

King County encompasses urban and suburban and rural areas. Ridership, and potential ridership growth, is higher in the areas with population density, employment centers, transit-oriented land uses and socio-economic demographics that favor transit.

To serve the most riders and grow ridership, Metro would focus on the areas where transit can succeed. But the governance structure creates political pressure to spread service out into low density areas that produce low ridership.

The governance solution: “local effort” funding allows differing service levels *within the same transit district*

Seattle Department of Transportation

King County METRO

2014: Transit funding levy fails on countywide ballot. “Yes” votes were concentrated in Seattle, while “no” votes dominated in suburbs.

2015: Seattle municipal leaders propose transit funding levy *within their own borders only*. They do not create a new agency: they propose to “buy” enhanced level of transit service from Metro, by passing city dollars to the county. Measure passes.

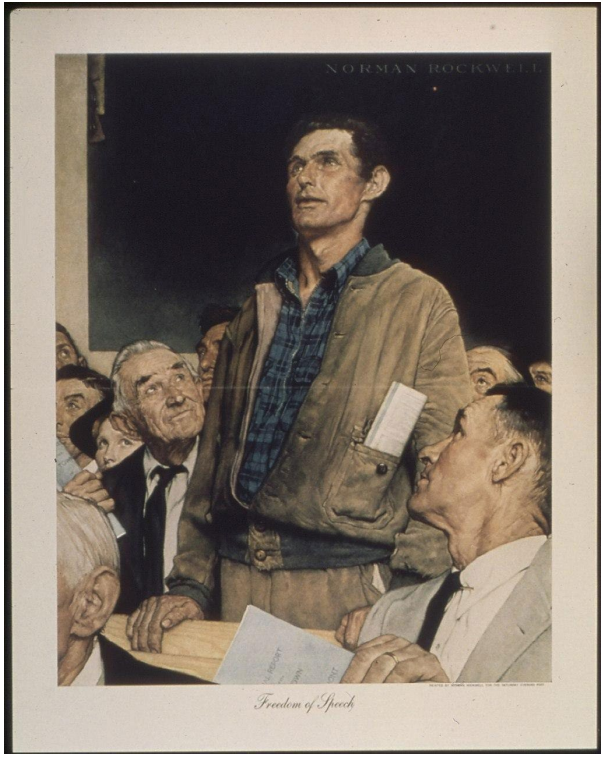
2016 – Present: King County Metro provides a baseline level of service across entire county, with additional enhanced service within city limits of Seattle, under intergovernmental agreement with Seattle DOT.

The word “Accountable” conveys synonyms like responsive, transparent and *representative*.

Those are all good things...

What additional characteristics do you think are desirable to oversee a transit agency?

An additional possible value: “capacity” (effectiveness)



We’ve been talking about one desired attribute of governance: *Is it representative?*

(Does it listen to the citizen at the town meeting?)

Now let’s explore a second attribute: “*Does the governance structure have the capacity to provide oversight, well-informed by expertise in the technical disciplines required by a high-performing transit agency?*”

Board governance currently in the news: Federal Reserve Governors

- Board members *deliberately* insulated from public opinion
- Board members *expected* to exercise judgement independent of whoever appointed them

***Intentionally* independent!**

1913: Congress and President Wilson intentionally structure the Fed Reserve Board of Governors:

Federal Reserve Act Signed into Law

December 23, 1913

President Woodrow Wilson signed the Federal Reserve Act in December 1913, culminating three years of discussion and debate over the development of a central bank.

President Wilson signing the Federal Reserve Act 1923 painting by Wilburg G. Kurtz; photo courtesy of Woodrow Wilson Presidential Library)

- Appointed on the basis of their **knowledge or expertise,** not popular appeal or who they know.
- Insulated from public opinion, changes of administration, short-term political impulses.
- "**Accountable**" only to larger **policy objectives** (low inflation, high employment) for long-term health of the economy.

Yumi Hwang-Williams, concertmaster: the “chief operating officer” who **“provides the Colorado Symphony Orchestra with consistent and technically oriented leadership…the bridge between the conductor and all the other musicians.”**

Job requirements: “deep knowledge of orchestra repertoire and fantastic abilities as a musician…must also cultivate superb leadership, teaching, and communication skills.” *(Berklee College definition)*

‘It’s Your Symphony,’ they tell the public, but….

- Is Yumi accountable to the public (ticket holders)? Or to the Conductor? Or to the other musicians? To her craft? Or to all of them?
- How should she be evaluated? Ticket sales? Expert reviews?
- If the orchestra were all violins – or had no violins – how would it sound?

Denver Nuggets: the best basketball team in the world, 2023 - thanks to balance of skills

Carefully assembled to collectively possess a range of specialized talents:

- Some are most accomplished at scoring
- Some are known more for talent on defense
- Some were chosen because they’re big
- Some were chosen because they’re fast
- They increase customer satisfaction, and sell more tickets, by winning

Transport for London Board Member: Zoe Billingham, CBE

SSRB Member, NCARRB Chair, and PRRB Chair

The Hon Zoë Billingham CBE

Contents

— Biography
— Role
— Previous roles

Biography

Zoë was appointed Chair of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) and the National Crime Agency Remuneration Review Body (NCARRB) by the Prime Minister in January 2022. She was appointed ex-officio member of the SSRB on 12 March 2024. Zoë brings years of experience of working in policing. Zoë was appointed as a non-executive director of the SIA in December 2021

Zoë has spent much of her career inspecting public services to promote improvement. Serving as Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue for 12 years, she shone a light on all aspects of policing and created the new fire inspectorate. She led the inspectorate's national work on value for money, mental health and protecting the most vulnerable. Zoë's work on domestic abuse and violence against women and girls led to a sea-change in approach. Appointed to the Home Secretary's Task Force, she continues to support the government's ambitious reform programme. Zoë is Chair of Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust and a Trustee of SafeLives, a national domestic abuse charity.

NCARRB and PRRB Appointment: January 2022 (reappointed October 2024) Term ends: January 2028

- Recruited to TfL board 2024, a time of public concern about anti-social behaviour and petty crime on the Tube
- Great Britain's leading expert on policing and emergency response
- Background in mental health services and combating domestic abuse
- Previously served as Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.
- That's right, "CBE" stands for "Commander of the British Empire"

Transport for London Board Member: Anurag Gupta

ANURAG GUPTA

Chief Risk Officer

Anurag Gupta is Chief Risk Officer at SIMCo. He chairs SIMCo's Investment Committee and has primary responsibility for risk management and compliance across SIMCo's various funds. He additionally oversees finance, administration and operations. Mr Gupta currently serves on the Board of Transport for London (TfL) and the Board of the Staff College. He has over 20 years of experience in project finance, infrastructure investment and appraisal, risk management, M&A, and financial advisory.

Prior to assuming his role at SIMCo, Mr Gupta was with KPMG where he was an Infrastructure Advisory Partner and the Global Sector Head of Power. Over his career he has accrued extensive transactional experience across infrastructure sectors such as transport, power & utilities, renewables, TMT and social infrastructure (PPPs) amongst others.

Mr Gupta holds an MBA from Tulane University, USA, a Bachelor's degree in Mechanical Engineering from the Engineering Council, UK, and a BSc from Calcutta University, India.

- Recruited to TfL board in 2021, a time of public concern about capital project delivery.
- Degrees in business and mechanical engineering from universities in India, Great Britain and the U.S.
- Specializes in Risk Management for large private infrastructure fund.
- Knowledge of debt financing, bonding, infrastructure finance, construction.

Let’s Go! Conversation Starters for the Committee:

- What is *your* understanding of ‘transit governance’?
- Who should a transit agency be accountable to?
- What should it be accountable *for*?
- What are some of *your* values or principles that would characterize the ideal governance structure for a transit system?
- What would be the indicators to you that a transit agency has “good” governance?

What do you think of the proposed definition of ‘transit governance’ for our committee’s charge:

“The institutional structures and processes by which transit policy and decisions are made.”

For next meeting: in person, Monday September 22

- Prioritizing or trading off the different values and characteristics that *you* think an ideal transit governance structure should have
- Deeper dive into transit governance typologies from other regions
- Lots of face to face interactive discussion among committee

Hudson Skykomish

Let’s have some committee discussion!

David Bragdon, Principal
HudsonSkykomish@gmail.com

More questions for the Committee Sept 22:

- ➔ Is “accountable” to the public a sufficient characteristic to describe an effective board?
- ➔ Is there a larger sense of “accountability,” to a mission or purpose or long-term organizational performance?
- ➔ Is there a tension between the “accountability” inherent in democratic legitimacy (reflecting popular will) and the “accountability” inherent in organizational stewardship and specialized technical capacity?

Note: there are no right or wrong answers.

Hudson Skykomish

Date: September 18, 2025

To: Accountability Committee Members and Interested Parties

From: David Bragdon, technical advisor to the Accountability Committee

Subject: Recommended Readings Prior to September 22 Meeting

This week's readings go deeper into the role of transit agency boards, the concept of oversight by Inspectors General, and introduce the topic of paratransit:

1. **Pages 9 – 16 and pages 23 – 28, "Transit Board Member Handbook," American Public Transportation Association, 2018.** APTA is the trade association for public transit agencies and their vendors and suppliers. APTA produced this manual describing board member duties, and containing a useful breakdown of typologies which will guide our discussion September 22. The portions of most direct relevance to the Accountability Committee are pages 9-16, which describe some governance typologies as well as general expectations of what a board's role is. Pages 23-28 are about norms, also important to consider. https://www.apta.com/wp-content/uploads/2018-APTA-Transit-Board-Member-Handbook.pdf

2. **Pages 2 – 19, "Public Transit Board Governance Handbook," Transportation Research Board, 2002.** Yes, this document is almost one-quarter century old. Like the magna carta or Declaration of Independence, it contains some timeless philosophy. It also offers a description of different typologies and suggestions on how to measure effectiveness. Some of the information is self-reported, so should be taken with a grain of salt as well as cognizance that the passage of time has probably rendered some details obsolete. (Including the rosy snapshot of RTD circa 2002 on pp 25-26.) https://trb.org/publications/tcrp/tcrp_rpt_85.pdf

3. **"New York's Subways Need an Independent M.T.A.," opinion essay by Richard Ravitch, *New York Times*, March 29, 2019.** This article is relevant to the Colorado Attorney General's office's comment that elected officials and appointees to public bodies are obliged to a duty of care toward the agency. The article is also relevant to our philosophical discussion of to whom a transit board is accountable. Richard Ravitch

urges public agency board members to use their independent judgement on behalf of the agency's holistic interests, not simply represent parochial interests of whoever appointed them. Ravitch was appointed Board Chair of the Metropolitan Transportation Authority by New York Governor Hugh Carey in 1979, at a time when New York City's subway and bus systems had deteriorated to a terrible condition. In this retrospective op-ed published forty years later, Ravitch Implicitly praises former Gov. Carey for his approach to appointments, and critiques then-Gov. Andrew Cuomo for interfering in the agency's functioning. https://www.nytimes.com/2019/03/29/opinion/new-yorks-subways-mta.html (see folder for PDF)

4. **Inspector General Example #1:** Here's another form of governance and accountability: New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority is subject to audits and inspections by an Office of the Inspector General. (The New York MTA IG is not truly "independent," because both it and the agency board are appointed by the same party, the Governor.) https://mtaig.ny.gov/Pages/Main.aspx

5. **Inspector General Example #2:** The San Francisco Bay Area's BART is also overseen by an Inspector General. The BART IG position was created by the state government due to legislative (and public) skepticism of the BART capital plan and expenditures, in anticipation of a plebiscite for BART funding when voter doubts about BART fiscal responsibility were an issue. The BART IG structure is more truly independent than the New York version, and more of a classic "check and balance," because the IG and the board derive their power from different sources, the BART board being directly elected by the people of the district and the IG being appointed by the Governor of the state. https://www.bartoig.org

6. **"School Board Leaders Want to Try a New Style of Governance," Willamette Week, Sept 17, 2025.** It's not just transit boards which struggle to define the difference between leadership and management. The Portland School board is fighting about that issue right this second! https://www.wweek.com/news/schools/2025/09/17/portland-school-board-leaders-want-to-try-a-new-style-of-governance/

7. **"Paratransit Peer Review of RTD," by the American Public Transportation Association, 2024.** The September 22 meeting will include an introduction to the issue of paratransit, one of the topics assigned to you by the legislature. Last year, RTD CEO/GM Debra Johnson pro-actively commissioned a peer review of her agency's paratransit and related services, conducted by the American Public Transportation Association, aided by managers of other agencies and experts from around the country. That report, and RTD's response, is at this link: https://cdn.rtd-denver.com/image/upload/v1725904023/APTA_Paratransit_Peer_Review_Report_and_Next_Steps_-_8.21.2024_j00ndt.pdf

Hudson Skykomish

Memorandum

Date: 3 October 2025

To: RTD Accountability Committee and Interested Parties

From: David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomish LLC

Subject: Confidential Interviews About Other Transit Boards

As part of my assigned research for you, I am interviewing current and past board members and close observers of the two elected boards in the Bay Area. Several of the interviewees were willing to be frank with me on a confidential basis, but authorized me to only summarize their remarks without attribution and with some paraphrasing. The sources are three former or current board members of BART and A/C Transit as well as a former leader of a pro-transit advocacy organization in the Bay Area. *This sample is admittedly small and non-scientific, based on the amount of time and contacts I had. I am sure many other differing opinions are out there, which are not captured here.* The basic points I gleaned are as follows, grouped by subject matter:

Board Size

- BART (9 members) and A/C Boards (7 members) both consist of members from separate geographic districts. A/C used to have two at-large districts, but campaigning for a low-visibility office in a district of 1.5 million residents was untenable, so they switched to the multiple district model.

- “9 members works well, but 7 would too. More than 9 would be a lot to deal with, in terms of colleagues. That many members would take a lot of time, for everyone to be briefed and talk on every issue.”

Elections, Candidates, Campaigns

- Due to the low visibility of the races, and the influence of campaign contributions, “it is hard to unseat a bad incumbent. Most voters don’t even know who they are, let alone that they are doing a bad job.”

- More good people are running lately. It takes some recruitment. Still, it is very challenging to get candidates.

- “It is almost impossible to educate voters about the candidates. Money wins almost every time, campaign contributions make a big impact.” Endorsements from other politicians or interest groups are also persuasive.

- “The BART board has attracted more high quality candidates in recent election cycles, for some reason. It used to consist mostly of people looking for something to do.” It is not, and never has been, representative of riders, or even representative of the population as a whole.

- “Most of the current board cares about transit, but it was not always that way. Some see the board as a stepping stone to some other office.” [But few actually do ascend to other offices. One notable exception is former BART director Lateefah Simon, now a member of Congress.]

- “To run, you need money, and where do you get money? From unions. One colleague of mine got huge checks from the unions, only from unions, so that’s who they listen to and support” [in terms of board decisions, like on labor contracts. Also, management knows that the board is favorable to the unions, which constricts management’s ability to bargain with the union because the management thinks they will be undermined by board members.]

- It is very hard to get attention for a campaign for these seats. We are way down on the ballot, though that doesn’t matter as much now that so many people are voting by mail. Instead of being rushed, in a booth on election day, they can take time to sit at their kitchen table and study the ballot. Still it is hard to get attention for one of these races.

General Comments on Performance and Effectiveness

- "The two elected boards in the region, BART and A/C, are not the two worst in the San Francisco Bay area. There are some other boards I won't name, who are all appointed, that are very dysfunctional. The two most functional boards in our region are the Ferry Board, appointed by the Governor, and the SFMTA board, appointed by the Mayor." They have clear missions.

- "A/C board has been pretty dysfunctional in the past, but there seems to be a new generation of candidates being recruited, some of them recruited by rider advocates or urbanists (YIMBY), who seem to really care about the role."

- "Unions and their campaign contributions carry a ton of weight in the elections. They are often the biggest contributor in these campaigns. As a result, we have very labor-friendly boards. Labor generally gets whatever it wants from our elected boards, because none of them want to anger their big contributor, the union. Fiscal interests and efficiency get sacrificed. For example, there was a move to modernize the role of the employees sitting in the booths in the stations, but the union didn't want that, so it was stalled."

- "Twenty years ago the BART board was older retired white people, or people looking for some office to run for. The majority now are people who care about transit. The use of social media in campaigns has really cut the costs of campaigning. Rather than the expense of mailers, they can use social media for a fraction of the cost." Civic organizing has also helped. There are now rider groups who recruit and endorse candidates.

- "The BART board is missing certain disciplines, especially financial acumen or knowledge of organizational effectiveness."

- [I came to believe] "boards in general are the worst. Elected, appointed, whatever. Transit agencies should be staffed by professionals who report to

the Mayor or the Governor." It's a complex public utility, but you would never run a complex public utility like a gas or electric company with a bunch of random amateurs.

- "As a board member, I find the Office of Inspector General works well. We as a board nominate three candidates and the Governor picks one. The OIG has found some things that needed fixing and suggested some improved procedures."

- "Government boards are extremely challenging. They ensure there is no joined up thinking among different parts of government."

- The biggest benefit of the elected board is our responsiveness to constituents. We help with problems. Appointed bodies often consist of people who wear other hats – they are on city councils or whatever, but not really accountable to anyone in terms of transit, except whoever appointed them to a transit board. It's also hard to develop working relationships and bonds on a multi-jurisdictional board, where everyone has been appointed by different jurisdictions.

Compensation and Workload

- "It is not possible to have a full time job and be on the BART board" due to the demands on one's time. That then means most candidates have independent income, or an employer who lets them off, or a spouse or partner or someone else who funds the household, or are retired.

- "It is hard to work full-time, be a parent, and be on a transit board."

- The BART salary, now about $20,000 per year and indexed to inflation, is impossible to live on in an expensive region like the Bay Area.

Parochialism vs Big Picture

- "At BART, we have had some directors who think about the good of the whole system, and we have had some who are parochial about their own district."

- “Most of our members, despite being elected from districts, see the big picture. They realize most of our customers’ trips cross district boundaries and the whole system has to function well, not just in their area.”

- We went through a network re-design of our bus network, called re-align, and because we used clear criteria, all the board members were pretty constructive and big picture instead of focused on how much service is in their district. Or at least they understood why service levels varied, and why some districts get less service, based on objective standards.

- “Parochialism waxes and wanes. BART has some low-performing extensions due to political parochialism, lines that got built due to political pressure rather than actual ridership potential. As a result of this emphasis on expansion, there was lack of attention to maintenance of the core system.”

Preparation, Norms, Roles and relations with management

- “When you have an elected board, there’s this expectation that individual members can ask for anything and run things,” instead of overseeing and guiding. There are too many board and committee meetings, and I hear staff spends a lot of time prepping, getting random contacts from board members, catering to requests based on whim. Management is constantly reacting and meetings get hijacked by parochial concerns.

- “We don’t have a code of conduct or norms and could use more training. We do have some ‘board policies’ but they are inadequate.”

- Long story about one A/C board member who “asked a lot of questions” of the General Manager, causing GM to threaten to sue for harassment. Independent investigation found no basis for such a suit, but the board gave him $500,000 anyway.

- Our board is not conservative vs liberal or Democrat vs Republican (this is California) but the two cohorts are: the passive directors willing to rubber stamp whatever management wants, and the active directors who ask questions.

- The staff feels put upon by some of the active members, and look back to when there was a more passive board. I heard in those days some members did not read the pre-meeting packets. More of the directors take the role seriously now. But still, some don't ride transit. Even some of the staff don't ride transit.

- "The past two General Managers, Grace Crunican and Bob Powers, did a good job of helping board focus on the big picture and understand the interdependence of the region."

- The relationship between the board and General Manager is generally good, and most board understand the line [between our role and management role.] But there was always at least one member who would overstep.

- There is a steep learning curve. There used to be no orientation as a board member. Now there is a one day orientation. But that is not a whole lot. The California League of Cities has trainings for new city councilors [and those are well-run and useful.]

Hudson Skykomish

Memorandum

Date: 11 December 2025

To: Kelly Blynn, Office of Governor Jared Polis

From: David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomish LLC

Subject: Considerations regarding General Counsel reporting

In response to your discussion today about the reporting relationship of General Counsel, the following is my understanding of the norms, as well as the practice we used under the charter of the Metro Council in Portland. In short, Harold, Maria, James and Alexis are essentially correct in their prescription for separate reporting, and in their reasons why. It appears from Alexis's findings that Colorado State Statute already dictates that the Counsel is supposed to report to the RTD board, which confirms that intention. C.R.S. 32-9-109.5(4) lists several powers and duties that "shall be exercised and performed by the board", including "Overseeing the district's general counsel". This same section also notes that these powers "may be delegated by the board to officers and employees of the district".

When we wrote our Metro Council Charter in 2000, the Chief Operating Officer (equivalent to the GM-CEO in the RTD context) and the Metro Attorney (equivalent to the General Counsel) were designed to *both* be hired, supervised and (if desired) terminated by the Metro Council. The Council President (who was me) nominates both positions, subject to majority Council confirmation, and a majority is also required to remove either one. (Additionally, the agency has an independent auditor, directly elected by the voters.) We based the separation of chief manager and chief attorney on advice from the International City Managers Association (ICMA) manual, which Harold was probably referring to implicitly at our meeting Wednesday as he described Longmont's system, which sounds identical to ours in structure and reasoning.

As was explained to me, the rationale for the separate reporting relationship are rooted in a need for a formal "separation of duties" for four very specific functions, which are a small portion of the Counsel's workload but are vital to keep at institutional arm's length from the GM/CEO chain of command:

1. When the Council is hiring a CEO, the General Counsel needs to oversee drafting, negotiation and signing of the employment contract. You shouldn't have someone negotiating salary with a person who is about to become the negotiator's boss.
2. The organization needs a formal written whistleblower policy, which should dictate that if a whistleblower complaint is registered about a GM/CEO, the board needs to instantly turn to someone professional who is not in the GM/CEO's chain of command to investigate. The process is tainted if the investigator is someone who reports to the GM/CEO. (Whistleblower complaints about the Counsel go to the head of HR.)
3. For the annual review of the GM/CEO, someone not in the GM/CEO chain of command is needed to negotiate any contract modifications, improvement letters, etc. In case of negotiating a termination and severance, the lawyer needs to be working for the board, obviously not for the GM/CEO who is terminating.
4. In arcane legal terms, the Counsel's client is RTD, and in a corporate sense the Board is RTD. The board, as an entity, "is RTD" in a way that the GM/CEO, a person, is not.

All the foregoing is applicable regardless of whether you retain external Counsel for certain tasks. The external Counsel needs to be supervised by someone internally, and the principle carries through that for the above functions, that person cannot ethically be the GM/CEO.

Director Larsen and Chair Bouquet pointed out that the vast majority of the workload of the General Counsel's Office pertains to routine operational matters. True! That was entirely the case with us as well: the four scenarios above took a tiny percentage of the Metro Attorney's time, perhaps 2% per year. But preserving independence for those functions, and the stand-by status of the whistleblower system, is institutionally important.

As for the other 98% of the things the Metro Attorney worked on - the routine tort claims from someone who slipped on the property, the language for a federal contract, etc. – we simply directed the Metro Attorney and GM/CEO to work together harmoniously, and the Metro Attorney never literally "reported to" us about those sorts of items that are below the level of issues requiring our attention. *Supervising* the Metro Attorney did not require much of our board time, beyond the annual performance evaluation.

For most purposes the Metro Attorney functioned as part of the senior management team, attending senior staff meetings, etc., just like other department directors, regardless of the underlying reality that unlike the others at his level, he was not technically under the authority of the CEO/GM, for reasons everyone understood. Our ability to hire and fire the Metro Attorney was an institutional check-and-balance, sort of a "in case of emergency break glass sort of authority" he silently possessed, not a power he wielded routinely. The separate chain of command was *not* an impediment to day-to-day cooperation between him and the COO. Had they not been cooperative with one another, we could have taken corrective action with either or both during their annual performance review(s.)

Hudson Skykomish

Memorandum

Date: 3 October 2025

To: RTD Accountability Committee and Interested Parties

From: David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomish LLC

Subject: 8 October Guest Speakers from Other Transit Boards

As part of my assigned research for you, I am interviewing current and past board members of comparable systems, including the two elected boards in the Bay Area and the two boards that were recently the subject of reform debates, Salt Lake City and St.Paul/Minneapolis. I will be summarizing the basic findings of those interviews once complete in mid-October. Several of the interviewees were willing to be frank with me on a confidential basis, but declined our invitation to speak with the committee in a public setting where their remarks might get back to their own city., but two former directors will be public and candid with you at your October 8 meeting:

- **Rebecca Saltzman, former BART Director:** Elected to three terms (12 years total) to the BART board, served as Board President for portions of that time. Also cross-appointed to the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (runs trains between Bay Area and Sacramento) as well as the Alameda Transportation Commission. She left the BART board after three terms and was elected to the El Cerrito City Council in 2024. Her "day job" is Co-Executive Director of the Bike East Bay advocacy organization. She has a long history of working for better multi-modal transportation. The BART board has nine members, each elected from a district. The agency is also overseen by an Office of Inspector General. The population of the BART's

jurisdiction is about 4 million, and the system averages about 180,000 riders on weekdays. BART connects with multiple local transit agencies, such as Muni within the City/County of San Francisco or A/C Transit in the Oakland area. https://www.elcerrito.gov/1703/36783/Councilmember-Saltzman https://www.bart.gov/about/bod

- **Lynn Peterson, former Sound Transit board member:** As Secretary of Transportation for Washington State under former Governor Jay Inslee, Lynn was an ex officio board member of the board of Sound Transit, the regional transit agency which plans and builds the longer-distance bus and rail services in the Seattle-Everett-Tacoma area. (Local jurisdictions operate connecting services in their own areas, the major one being King County Metro in Seattle, Redmond and Bellevue, the most populated core of the region.) The state government appoints one of the 18 seats on the board, with the other 17 being delegates from local government, nominated to the Sound Transit board roughly proportional to the population of their home jurisdictions. (Nearly all the funding for Sound Transit is generated by taxes in the region, with only a small portion coming from the State of Washington government, so the Governor and legislature have minimal financial stake in Sound Transit. The state's major fiscal role and assets in the region are the state highways and operating the ferries on Puget Sound.) Prior to Governor Inslee appointing her Secretary of Transportation, Lynn was a local government elected official in Oregon, serving on the Lake Oswego City Council and the Clackamas County Commission. She is now the elected President of the Metro Council in the Portland region. https://www.lynnpetersonconsulting.com/bio https://www.soundtransit.org/get-to-know-us/board-directors

Memorandum

Date: 30 November 2025

To: RTD Accountability Committee

From: David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomish LLC

Subject: Twin Cities Status Quo Survives Due to Failure to Agree on Reform

I. Reform requires constructive, broad agreement on something better

The recent failure of transit governance reform efforts in the Twin Cities region of Minnesota provides a cautionary tale of a dissatisfactory status quo persisting because critics could not coalesce behind a broadly-supported replacement. The Twin Cities counterpart to your Accountability Committee came up with six different proposals, not one of which was supported by a majority of the committee. Baffled by this profusion of ideas and lack of consensus, the legislature acted on none of them. This tale of two cities may inspire you to engage in frank give-and-take as you deliberate in December on what you want to convey to your legislature.

II. A Mirror Image?

A description of the setting might sound eerily familiar to Denverites: a forward-looking metropolitan region commits to transit expansion in the 1990s and 2000s, with significant investments in new lines. Cost overruns and disputes about what alignments to prioritize begin to sour the political atmosphere. Suburban officials express dissatisfaction with the agency, echoed by some state legislators and the Governor's office. During the pandemic, a shift in commuting patterns, social disorder, unsheltered individuals and open drug abuse combine to impact transit ridership, also accelerating attrition of transit workers unwilling to toil under those working conditions. A Governor appoints a committee to study the transit agency's governance structure. The committee fails to come up with meaningful recommendations. The next Governor appoints a *second* committee to study the same topic, causing cynics to note, "didn't we already have a committee on that topic?" The second committee meets for months, but cannot produce a unified set of recommendations, or any findings beyond platitudes or statements of the obvious, like the existence of "widespread confusion and widespread disagreement about who is and who should be accountable" for regional transit – the issue they were supposed to help solve, not just amplify. The legislature, reading the report, is stymied by lack of clear direction. The 2025 legislative session adjourns without any action. The structure of transit governance remains mostly in the form it has had since the 1980s.

III. Transit governance, Minnesota 1970s style

While political and civic leadership in both Denver and the Twin Cities express dissatisfaction with their respective transit governance structures, and while both have empaneled two committees to try to reform it, they have very different histories and circumstances:

The Metropolitan Council, referred to as the Met Council, was formed by the Minnesota legislature in 1967, and in the 1970s became responsible for operating Metro Transit. During the 1970s and later, the Met Council grew into a regional body responsible for planning, transit operations, regional parks funding, wastewater treatment and drinking water supply. It also administers a revenue sharing program that redistributes local tax revenues in the region to even out fiscal disparities among different jurisdictions. More recently, it also has authority under state law to oversee local jurisdictions' planning and zoning, to encourage more housing to be built, especially near transit. It also distributes the federal Section 8 housing funds for the region. You can think of the Met Council as an amalgamation of RTD, DRCOG, a regional parks district, a water and sewer utility coordinator and an enforcer of state mandates for more housing, as well as a conduit of federal housing funds. Unlike RTD, it's not just a transit agency.

The Met Council is composed of 17 members. All 17 are appointed by the Governor of Minnesota. 16 represent geographic districts of equal population, and one is at large and serves as Chair. The chair is deemed a full-time position and is a member of the Governor's cabinet, and in recent years has been people with a strong transportation and public executive background. (Until recently, the Chair of the Met Council was an individual who had previously served as Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Transportation, the title equivalent to what is called "Executive Director" at CDOT, and prior to that ran a private sector intercity bus company, Jefferson Lines. The current Met Council chair is a former Director of Transportation in Salt Lake City, former Director of Public Works in Minneapolis, and former Administrator of the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration within US DOT.) The 16 district Councilors are paid $20,000 per year, and the chair is paid equivalent to a state agency executive. All Met Councilors serve at the pleasure of the Governor, who appoints them to coterminous terms (not staggered) and can remove them at any time without cause. One former Met Councilor I interviewed for this project, who also has experience in other levels of government, said dealing with 16 colleagues was a challenge, and the size of the body limits the effectiveness of any individual.

Keep in mind that unlike RTD, which is purely a transit agency, the Met Council also inevitably engenders controversy on contentious issues like tax base revenue sharing, parks funding, stormwater management, housing and land use. Political affiliation of the Governor can also influence how the agency is viewed, depending on the viewer's own partisan affiliation. One person I talked with somewhat facetiously said, "We should call it 'the Governor's Met Council.'" In 2008, when the state elected an anti-transit Governor, Tim Pawlenty, who received only about 39% of the vote in Minneapolis and St Paul, but as Governor controlled 100% of the seats on their transit board, local governments created fiscal workarounds to raise revenue

outside the Met Council structure.) Accordingly, we should not infer that the debates about governance in the Twin Cities are solely about transit - other issues are at play there.

While Metro Transit grew ridership for the first part of the century and was considered a high performer in the national industry (2016 APTA agency of the year), concerns arose in the past 5-10 years about the Met Council's oversight, because of capital cost overruns and disputes about rail route alignments, exacerbated by COVID era concerns about social disorder, homelessness and worker attrition. Since COVID, Twin Cities Metro Transit ridership recovery has lagged the national average, below RTD's ridership recovery rate. (Ridership recovery in the Twin Cities and Denver and Portland are all about two-thirds the rate of Salt Lake City.)

One advocate told me simply, "Everyone agrees there's a problem" with the governance structure. However, this person added that time and multiple processes have proven that *not* everyone can agree on a solution. The past two Governors, Mark Dayton and Tim Walz, both Democrats, despite controlling the Met Council through their appointments, have wanted change. One advisor to ex-Governor Dayton told me, "Every Governor wants to examine transit governance, but none have achieved anything." With possible parallels to Br'er Rabbit and the briar patch, this person added that "nobody is willing to put their neck out for change," and that everyone, including Governors, "knows that it is not working, but nobody knows how to fix it."

Governor Dayton appointed one committee to study transit governance toward the end of his terms (2018), but it reached no impactful conclusions and prompted no action by the legislature. In 2023, Governor Walz and the legislature appointed another study committee on the same topic. A person with leadership experience in the civic sector as well as experience within a Minnesota transportation agency told me that the committee's composition may have doomed it from the start: some members represented an "anti-urban" point of view and "wanted to kneecap the Met Council" (often for reasons unrelated to transit, especially housing and land use) and opposed anything that would make it more effective and powerful, while other members were enthusiastic supporters of increasing the Met Council's authority and profile, including the pay of councilors. Ideologically based disagreements and territorial jealousies infused the discussions.

One task force member recounted how they evaluated a variety of options, but that the debate was more about predetermined perspectives rather than openness to debate. An all-elected board, which was touted by transit rider advocates, was rejected by the committee due to the view that (as this person said) elections "would not bring accountability because none of the voters would even know who they are." (This person cited the Minneapolis Parks Board as an example of a dysfunctional, ineffective elected body, similar to the way people in your region have talked to me about the Denver Public Schools Board of Education.) They also discussed a hybrid model, with some directly elected members and some appointed members, in varying numbers. They discussed increasing Councilor salaries from the current $20,000 to a figure "to be determined to be equivalent to the average salary of a county commissioner in the region." The various ideas and debates are reflected in their final report, issued in February 2024, which

you can scroll through to mine for ideas as well as to recognize familiar themes from your own work this year. The “problem statement” on page 17 and “values” on page 18 are so generic as to be almost meaningless, confirmation of the reality that everyone might agree on a problem but not a solution.

The committee met for six months, held numerous public hearings, but in the end issued a report with six different conflicting ideas (five labeled competing “proposals” and one a “position”) and if that were not enough, also a “minority report.” The Minnesota legislature received the document, but took no action in the 2024 or 2025 sessions to change the Met Council and Metro Transit governance structure.

While you may be disappointed there are no magic answers forthcoming from the Twin Cities, two process-oriented conclusions should be relevant to you as you deliberate in December:

One, that transit governance is like the U.S. health care system: everyone may agree that the current system is dysfunctional, but once someone starts proposing remedies, organized interests will find one or another reason why that particular remedy is objectionable, or to over-complicate it, so the status quo persists
and
Two, that committees that fragment into six or seven very divergent proposals, each with narrow support, have less impact than committees who can conduct healthy give-and-take, negotiate and come up with something imperfect yet broadly acceptable.

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Task force has a range of ideas to change Met Council structure, but is there enough support for any of them?

by Peter Callaghan
01/19/2024

Hudson Skykomish

Memorandum

Date: 7 November 2025

To: RTD Accountability Committee

From: David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomish LLC

Subject: Utah Transit Governance Case Study

Background

In the 1990s, Denver and Salt Lake City attracted national attention in the transit industry as emerging transit aspirants. Both were booming metropolitan areas in the Mountain West that had previously been oriented entirely to the automobile, then made large capital commitments to transit, which started coming on line around the turn of the century.

The stories start to diverge around then, due to different network planning and system design choices the two regions made in the 1990s and early 2000s. As a result largely of those legacy decisions, the two agencies' results differ, with UTA boasting higher ridership per capita than RTD. Today, UTA ridership continues to rise and RTD ridership is more stagnant. The root causes of those differences are beyond the scope of this memo, because they are not rooted in governance, but are summarized briefly at the end for context. That section of the memo is intended to support my opinion that the differences in the two agencies' current results is *not* an outcome of their governance structures.

As our indefatigable facilitator Berrick Abramson has been (politely but firmly) asking since August to keep us on our legislatively-defined mission, "What does issue 'x' have to do with governance?" So let's get on to the UTA governance story, based on my research as well as interviews with well-informed players in Salt Lake City, at various levels of government and in multiple agencies and the civic sector.

Until 2018, UTA was governed by a 15 member board composed of representatives from the local governments which encompass the metropolitan area being taxed. The state of Utah was not a major fiscal contributor to UTA and played a negligible role, other than enabling legislation. One local government official recalls, "15 people was a lot to manage." Another regional participant recalls that the board was a little "disconnected" both in the sense of

parochialism (it was "politically territorial" and "not thinking collectively" according to another local government player) and the functional reality that having so many members from so many jurisdictions was unwieldy. Still, UTA had major successes, passing several ballot measures and building out the "Front Lines 2015" rail projects by 2013, implementing regular bus network redesigns and bus service improvements, forging a strong relationship with the City of Salt Lake City to increase local service, and establishing a regional line from Provo *through* Salt Lake City to Ogden, the three major population centers along the Wasatch Front, arrayed in a straight north-south line, each with a significant population and ridership generators like major universities. 80% of Utah's population and eight of its ten largest cities are in the UTA district.

The Utah legislature was prompted to change this 15 member locally-based board structure for a variety of reasons that converged in the 2015-17 period:

- A highly publicized scandal alleged that a UTA board member personally benefited financially from a real estate land deal near a future light rail station, by using inside information and/or his influence on siting decisions. No prosecution occurred, but the damage to UTA's reputation was harmful.
- Newspaper articles described multiple trips that UTA officials took to Switzerland at public expense, ostensibly to study transit to mountain resorts. UTA, in its defense, had played an important role in hosting visitors for the 2002 Winter Olympics, and wanted to up its capacity in the bid for 2034, but apparently the number and cost of the Swiss trips did not pass the straight face test for some people.
- UTA executive salaries were found to be way above the norm for the U.S. transit industry and for public sector employment in Utah.
- The agency, while it had successfully delivered on the rail projects and bus service that had been promised to voters, had incurred significantly more debt than had been forecast. Growing debt service payments portrayed a sense of mismanagement, fairly or not. (Lots of public agencies use debt financing.)

These factors, according to people who were on the scene, either created an imperative or an exaggerated pretext for the legislature to act, in the name of "fixing" UTA. The legislature formed a task force to look at the structure. One person recalls there was a sense that "we need to clamp down on the management of the agency," phrasing that suggests the reform was more about punishment than about aspirations for excellent transit. The more skeptical observers believed that the legislature was just looking for an excuse to assert control over UTA, as part of a trend of a legislature dominated by rural and suburban members swatting at the big city, a pattern of a conservative legislature pre-empting prerogatives of the progressive local officials of Salt Lake City, on a wide range of issues.

City and county officials in the metropolitan region opposed the legislature's move to replace the local board. The local officials, and transit advocates who represent the interests of riders, were somewhat mollified by the compromise of keeping a local advisory board along with a new state-appointed board. The new state control of governance was further justified on the basis that for the first time the Utah state government would be appropriating money to UTA, which had previously been entirely funded from local sources.

The structure installed in 2018 is:

- A three member board of trustees, drawn from a pool of candidates nominated by local governments, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate. The three work full-time and are paid public sector executive-level salaries.
- A nine member Local Advisory Council, consisting of officials from Councils of Government around the region, with one seat permanently assigned to the Mayor of Salt Lake City, the largest city in the region and home to a majority of transit riders.

How It's Going

By most accounts, the new system, despite appearing simple, has actually created complexity and confusion about who is in charge. In some respects, the new structure has diffused accountability, the opposite of the intent of sharpening it. One close observer noted, "There's a reason this model doesn't exist elsewhere." Another local official, based on the nearly ten years of experience with the structure, terms it, "just weird."

The critics, including local elected officials, staff at other partner agencies who work with UTA, and staff within UTA, express the view that UTA essentially now has "no board" in the conventional sense of a board. Instead, the agency has "four executives," one with the title Executive Director and three others with the title of Trustee. All four of them are in the executive suite fulltime, one of them with the job description of a conventional Executive Director and three of them with the amorphous job description of Trustee. With that license for the three to define their roles, and forty hours per week to fill, their self-assigned duties reportedly sometimes overlap with each other and with the Executive Director. The traditional separation of duties, with a board providing high-level oversight and a management that runs the agency day-to-day, has been blurred, if not been erased, to the detriment of the agency's functionality. (In another subtle sign that the Trustees are more "management" than "board" in character, the legislature also exempted them from some of the Open Meetings Law, counter to the basic principle of most other public sector boards that deliberate in public.)

Structure, and the organization chart, is also more complex than before. In theory, the three trustees are supposed to be responsible for "external relations," the audit function, and inter-governmental affairs. In practice, this bifurcation creates a duplicative chain of command for departments that were previously managed in concert by the management team. The three trustees have a staff of 12, including a Policy Director, duplicating the staff at UTA who were already responsible for policy. Internally, some employees consider the board office a "shadow staff," creating duplication as well as an us/them mentality in what used to be a unified agency.

From a budgetary standpoint, the salaries and staffing for the three trustees amounts to $3.8 million per year, a sizable sum that makes the agency more top-heavy at a time when it is facing financial challenges and struggling to increase wages to recruit and retain drivers and mechanics.

Externally, the four-headed leadership structure (or more accurately "one-plus-three-headed" leadership structure) creates confusion for the public and for partner agencies in trying to figure out who the decision-makers at UTA are, on a variety of issues. Because the trustees are in theory responsible for "external relations," their portfolio can be construed to include anything involving the outside world, from procurement to bus stop placement. A local government or community group wanting to engage with UTA about service planning, for example, doesn't know whether to talk to the Planning Department (which reports to the Executive Director) or to one of the Trustees (who is one of the superiors to the Executive Director, but supposedly not in the chain of command over the Planning Department.)

Meanwhile, the Local Advisory Committee appears to have somewhat insignificant influence, meeting only four times per year. Most connections between UTA and local governments now occur at the staff level or at the MPO, not through Local Advisory Committee deliberations.

By all accounts, the three individuals appointed as trustees by the current Governor are respected, experienced public servants, with good intentions for better transit. They are all reported to be "good ambassadors" for UTA at public events, with networks of contacts who can be useful in building connections for UTA. Those sorts of functions are typical expectations of transit agency board members, accomplished part-time in other transit systems. The complexity arises at UTA because the trustees' full-time presence creates the near-inevitability that at least some of them, even with the most well-meaning intentions, venture into the realm of management. One transit industry veteran experienced in other cities observed, "I would guess it is difficult to recruit a CEO for UTA - who wants a CEO job with three backseat drivers riding with you all day?" (This statement, from someone familiar with CEO recruitments across the country, was an *abstract comment* about the *structure*, *not* a personal reference to the current UTA Executive Director, who by all accounts has a positive reputation in the industry and is well-regarded in Utah.)

This syndrome of the trustees' blurry role was apparently troubling enough that the 2025 legislature went back into the 2018 statute to amend it with a more detailed job description for the trustees (Section 17B-2a-808 and 811) , a sign that people are confused about who does what. (As former Sound Transit board member and Washington State Secretary of Transportation Lynn Peterson told you on October 8, if the legislature feels the need to spell out the details of your job description, that's a sign of trouble.) One source anticipates that the next session of the Utah legislature may take additional steps to try and "fix" the UTA governance situation, because "people in Utah who pay close attention are not satisfied with how it's going" and what it is costing. If the legislature does undertake reform, it will be trying to "fix" the "fix" that it adopted in 2018.

Considerations for Committee Discussion

Some suggested attributes and drawbacks to the UTA structure for the committee to discuss:

- Point in favor: Appointments made by the Governor of Utah – who counts residents of the UTA district as a whopping 80% of his or her constituents – signals the importance of transit to the state's economy and quality of life, and also makes some fiduciary sense because in recent years the state government now puts money into UTA, justifying a state government role in oversight.

- Point in favor: Local governments – who represent riders and the *local* taxes that support UTA, and who are responsible for land use decisions which affect transit – retain some role because they nominate the candidate pools the Governor chooses from. No Governor can appoint someone the locals have not nominated.

- Point in favor: A Governor of Utah who cares about transit – as the current Governor is reputed to – has the heft to recruit respected civic leaders as board members. By all accounts (including from detractors of the structure) the individuals who have been appointed by the current Governor are diligent and respected community leaders who bring knowledge and experience to the role. (*Not* "transit subject matter expertise," but background with useful disciplines like public finance or administration.)

- Point in favor: The audit function, both internal and by the external auditor, has an appropriate home directly overseen by the trustees, extending the arms-length relationship that auditing should have from management. After the perceived profligacy of the mid-teens, the community now has more basis to see UTA as "squeaky clean," according to one observer. (In some systems, an Inspector General serves this purpose.)

- Point of concern: In key respects, this structure diffuses accountability, rather than strengthening it. Internally, staff members, including department heads, aren't quite sure who the boss is, and who they need to get approval from about something, the CEO or the three trustees. Functions that should be intertwined, such as planning and external relations, instead report to different chains of command.

- Point of concern: This structure blurs the line between full-time day to day management, normally the province of a CEO/GM, and high-level oversight and guidance, normally the province of a part-time outside board. Full-time trustees sitting in the executive suite forty hours per week inevitably leads to them delving into day-to-day details of micro-management, making for an ambiguous decision-making process

prone to delays and second-guessing. The trustees' office is perceived by some people to be "shadow staff" that duplicates the responsibilities of other agency staff.

- Point of concern: This model is expensive and top-heavy, increasing agency overhead and payroll at the top end of the pay scale. Three executive-level trustees at $163,000 plus generous benefits, plus approximately 12 staff, amount to a $3.8 million budget for salaries and staffing of the three trustees. ($3.8 million would be about the amount needed to hire 50-60 bus drivers. Using 2024 RTD performance data, $3.8 million would deliver 36,000 hours of revenue service that on high-productivity routes would serve 800,000 boardings per year.)

- Point of concern: One fundamental value of a conventional board of directors is supposed to be "representation," through a panel large enough to bring different interests to the deliberating table. Three individuals, no matter how talented, are unlikely to embody the diverse skills, perspectives and backgrounds needed to represent the 2.8 million people of the Wasatch Front. The Utah system appears to sacrifice the principle of representation, in favor of a principle of stricter fiduciary oversight. This trade-off makes this structure less of a conventional board and more of an additional layer of management.

Post Script: Non-governance factors differentiate RTA and UTA: geography and past planning decisions

Any comparison of RTD's governance structure and UTA's governance structure should recognize the differences in the places they operate, as well as their respective histories. The differences in agency performance, especially ridership, are the result of a lot of factors that are mostly *not* related to current governance or management practices. Even though Denver and Salt Lake City are both regions in the Mountain West that invested significantly in transit in the past thirty years, they did so in different ways. Some differentiations are a product of geography, some relate to culture and politics, and most are the result of transit planning decisions made in the 1990s and 2000s. These differences help explain the differences in outcomes a quarter century later, such as ridership growth in Salt Lake City contrasting with ridership stagnation or declines in Denver.

A deep history is beyond the scope of this memo (intended to be limited to governance) but some brief notes on the differences in context are worth keeping in mind:

1. *Non-governance difference #1: Geography, and the connection between transportation and land use, are big ones.*

RTD operates in a district with far less population density than the UTA district. The table below shows that RTD's region has somewhat more people than UTA's, but vastly more land. Population density is one of the main factors that influences transit's effectiveness. Settlement patterns matter too: the populated part of the Wasatch Front is more clearly delineated north and south, confined between the mountains and lake, Provo at the south and Ogden at the north, with natural transportation corridors, compared to the Denver region, which sprawls in four directions.

Characteristic	Denver RTD	Utah Transit Authority
District Population	3.2 million	2.8 million
District Spatial Size	6,006 square km	3,600 square km
Annual Ridership 2024	Approx 65 million	Approx 35 million
Ridership Per Capita 2023	24.06	29.75
Post-COVID ridership recovery	Approx 65%	Approx 91.5%

Per capita figures from: Community Transportation Association of America
UTA post-COVID figure from: "UTA Ends 2024 With Big Ridership Gains"
More on national trends in post-COVID ridership is here.

0. *Non-governance difference #2: Rail network design decisions in the 1990s*

Planning decisions and infrastructure investments of decades ago affect ridership attraction today. Like many transit systems, UTA's main trunk lines were drawn as a "run-through" network, with legible directional lines all running *through* the center of the city, with natural transfer points in the heart of town. "Running through" is beneficial to riders who want to go from one side of the region to another, who can either complete their trip on one vehicle (say from Jordan Valley on the south side of the region, through downtown, to the University of Utah on the north side) or transfer at a logical, hospitable connecting point (say from Sandy to SLC airport by changing trains at the attractive urban streetscape at Temple Square.) Through-running is also good for equipment utilization and labor productivity since a vehicle is detraining "inbound" passengers and entraining "outbound" passengers simultaneously.

By contrast to "run-through," the RTD network was drawn in the entirely "stub end" model. All of the rail lines terminate downtown, but in three different locations. Connections on Denver RTD are more cumbersome and less intuitive than on Salt Lake City's UTA.

0. *Non-governance difference #3: Alignments serving urban uses*

Another legacy of the planning and design decisions of the 1990s and 2000s is that many of the UTA rail lines were placed in arterials adjacent to relatively walkable urban uses. Some lines were also routed to serve districts where new development was to occur, through deliberate coordination of transit planning and land use planning. UTA's rail lines go to the front door

(literally in some cases) of the major origins and destinations in the region, notably the University of Utah (over 35,000 students and 8,000 faculty and staff), Temple Square and the Tabernacle (thousands of visitors per day and many big events), the Utah State Fairgrounds (major event and exposition facility, year round), the largest hospital in the state, the airport, the convention center, the NBA/NHL arena, etc. In short, UTA's routes were designed for close access to places that lots of people want to go, for work as well as for recreation or socializing, seven days a week.

By comparison, much of RTD's rail network was placed in loud, fume-filled alignments right next to interstate highways, or in freight railroad corridors. These alignments make adjacent development less likely and many station areas unpleasant to wait at. Some major origins and destinations (such as most big hospitals) in Denver are not on frequent transit routes.

0. *Non-governance difference #4: Over many years, UTA regularly re-designed and improved their bus network, and increased frequency and hours of service, particularly in the parts of the region where people need and use transit the most.*

Throughout planning, construction and completion of their rail lines, UTA continued to adapt their bus network and improved frequent bus service (branded as the "Go Lines") on the routes with greatest density and transit usage. The bus was not considered second class, but an important part of the whole network. (Seattle, Portland and Houston took a similar approach as they developed rail in concert with improvement in bus service.) Although Denver's FasTracks ballot measure provided for significant increases in bus service, this goal was not fulfilled after the Great Recession of 2008-09 reduced sales tax receipts. Instead, bus service has been generally reduced, with limited tweaks to the route network.

0. *Non-governance difference #5: in Utah, an influential non-profit civic organization helped set the vision, marshal support, and stuck with it to bird-dog implementation.*

The Salt Lake City region's surprising commitment to ambitious transit, and the connection to land use planning, was sparked by civic leaders outside government, who formed the Envision Utah organization in the 1990s. The support of business leaders, including the real estate industry, helps to explain what outsiders sometimes perceive as the paradox of one of the most "conservative" states in the Union becoming a national leader in transit growth in the 1990-2015 period. Envision Utah's plans had a strong "transit-oriented development" focus from the start, connected to the transit plans. Today, Envision Utah, along with UTA and the MPO Wasatch Front, are joint stewards of an abiding vision for the role transit plays in the region.

Denver's quality of life and economy has also benefitted from the involvement of a strong civic sector, though less sustained over time. Several Denver-based organizations ranging from environmentalists to real estate to social justice groups all advocate for better transit. Past ballot measure victories would never have happened without their passion and dedication. More recently, advocates have been remarkably successful in encouraging the legislature and Governor to take bold steps at the state level to alter past practice of endless highway

expansions, and provide significant funding for public transit at the urban, rural and intercity levels. Those advocates and the current Governor and legislature have made Colorado a national leader in transportation reform *at the state level.* Further unifying these groups to focus on the next generation of *local public transportation improvement* in greater Denver is the current challenge.

The foregoing postscript is intended to supplement your governance discussion only by putting forward a variety of longstanding reasons that board structure is *not* the reason that UTA outperforms RTD on the key measures like ridership per capita.

Utah Transit Authority 2018 Governance Reform: How many queen bees in the hive?

In 2018, the Utah Legislature significantly overhauled the governance structure for transit in the Salt Lake City region.

But *structure* is just part of the picture.

7 years later, ambiguity persists about the *roles* of the different *officials* who occupy that *structure*

Maybe they didn’t ask the classic Berrick Abramson question:

“What problem are we trying to solve with governance reform?”

Utah Transit Authority, pre-2018

- ***Governance:*** 15 member board composed of elected officials delegated from the various local governments in the UTA taxing district. Parochialism somewhat overcome by sense of regional mission in “Envision Utah” plan.
- ***Performance:*** UTA delivered on significant transit expansion plan (rail and bus), strong ridership growth up to mid-20teens. Financial cutbacks after Great Recession, heavy debt service expense due to bonding, suffered decline in public confidence due to profligate spending and land development scandal.

Utah Transit Authority Reforms, 2018

- ***Restructuring:*** Local government board was demoted from governance to advisory council only, over opposition from local officials. Authority was vested in three full-time trustees nominated by local governments and appointed by Governor.

- ***Fiscal:*** State legislature commenced investing significant funding in UTA for the first time, justifying a state role in governance.

- ***Almost unique:*** The only other full-time, highly paid member of a transit board is at the NY MTA, where the Board Chair also has the title CEO. (The MTA has an operating budget of $19.88 billion, with 70,000 employees.)

Utah Transit Authority Governance, 2018-Present

- ***Performance:*** Public perception of misspending is in the past; service is expanding and ridership is back to over 91% of pre-COVID levels. Won APTA 2025 “Outstanding Transit System of the Year” in its category.
- ***External relations:*** The three current trustees appointed by the current Governor are all viewed as respected, upstanding public servants, with positive relationships in their areas of the community. Some external confusion exists about “who really runs UTA, the trustees or the CEO?”
- ***Internal management issues:*** The full-time nature of the trustees, and ambiguity of job descriptions, blurs the distinction between high-level guidance and day-to-day management. Duplicative staffing and parallel chains of command create confusion and expense.

Non-governance explanations for differences in performance

- ***Land use and density:*** Salt Lake City put its rail alignments and stations where lots of people and origins/destinations are. Denver put many of its rail lines and stations along interstate highways and freight railroads, with less population density, less walkability, and less development potential.
- ***Bus synergies:*** UTA undertook regular bus network re-designs and service increases (except right after the Great Recession) and with financial support from Salt Lake City, significantly increased bus frequency on most popular routes in densest neighborhoods.
- ***Downtown revival:*** Downtown Salt Lake City's office, recreational, religious and tourist activities have returned to near pre-COVID levels, while Denver's downtown recovery lags the national average.

Strengths and Weaknesses of the UTA model

- ***State/local balance:*** Local governments and the Governor/legislature both have a role in appointments, just as both contribute funding to UTA.
- ***Strengthened fiduciary oversight:*** The three trustees have very clear responsibility for fiscal management, adding weight to the audit function.
- ***Reduced representation:*** Three individuals, chosen for expertise in public administration, are unlikely to reflect the diversity of a population of 2.8 million residents, and a wide range of skills and experiences. The Local Advisory Committee does not appear to play a strong role in that regard.
- ***Ambiguous distinction between "board" and management:*** Three new full-time officials can tend to function like an added layer of management, costly for the budget and confusing for the chain of command.

Questions to ask before importing governance ideas across state lines from Utah to Colorado

- What problem was the Utah legislature trying to solve in 2018? What problem will the Colorado legislature be trying to solve in 2026?
- What is the role (job description) of a full-time board member in SLC? What would the role be here in Denver?
- What is a reasonable fiscal cost to pay salaries and provide dedicated staffing to a board, over and above existing agency staff?

Non-Structural Governance: RTD Board Office

Memo and materials from Jack Kroll, Executive Manager of the Board Office:

1. Time Commitment and Regular Duties
2. What Comes Before the Board and How
3. Authority of the Board
4. Staff Support
5. How Do Directors Get the Information They Want/Need
6. Board Member Background and Expertise
7. Advisory Committees
8. Remuneration
9. Director Districts and Terms
10. Training and Continuing Education

Non-Structural Governance: Board compensation

- ➔ Board compensation is prescribed in statute (C.R.S. 32-9-117) - $12,000 / year + expenses
- ➔ Previous Accountability Committee found RTD board's compensation is generally on par with other agencies
- ➔ "Ideas for Consideration" generation did include possibilities around increased compensation for the board, for the chair, etc. *(i.e., may be connected to other structural recommendations)*

Comparison of Board Member compensation from other agencies by North Highland

PROPERTY	COMPENSATION
RTD	$12,000 per year + expenses
UTA	N/A[2]
DART	$50.00 per meeting + expenses
TriMet	Board members are volunteers
MTS	$150 + expenses per meeting $1,500 monthly for chairperson
SEPTA	Expenses only
King County Metro	N/A[3]
VIA	$50.00 per meeting
WMATA	$200 per day + expenses
Sound Transit	$100 per day + expenses[4]
LA Metro	$150 for one business day, not more than $600 per month

Table 2: Board Member Compensation

Portland’s 7 elected Metro Councilors Are Supported by 1,600 staff

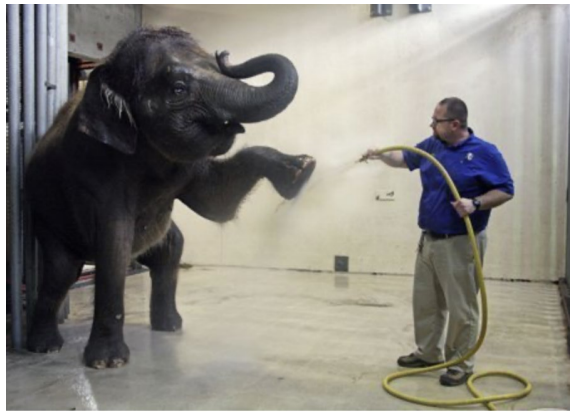
Organizational structure

Metro's 1,600 employees work in performance halls, cemeteries, classrooms, natural areas and parks, an exhibition hall, a convention center, administrative offices, recycling and garbage transfer stations, a paint remanufacturing plant, and the zoo.

Metro

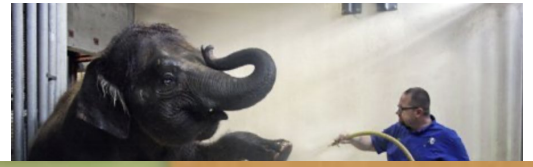
Photos via oregonmetro.gov

Some of the Portland Metro Councilors' 1600 staff

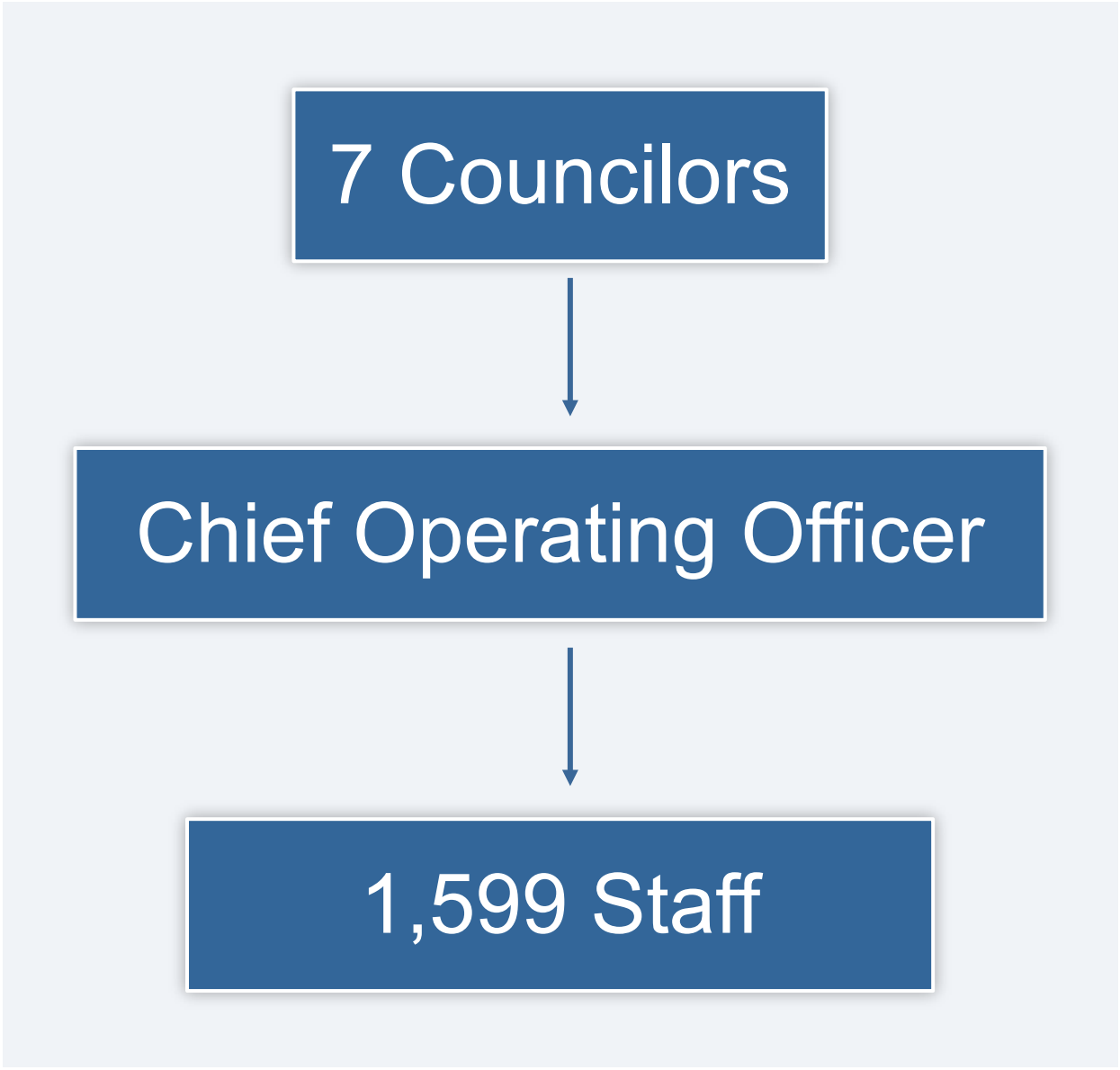


Metro Park Ranger helps mom deliver baby | KOIN.com

Metro Council's 1 staff member on point: the COO



k Ranger helps mom deliver baby | KOIN.com



Metro Councilors have 1600 staff - via the COO

- 1 employee, the Chief Operating Officer, *reports* directly to Council
- The other 1,599 are *responsible* to Council, and they *report through* their supervisors and the Chief Operating Officer via a chain of command

The fateful conversation of early 2003:

- ***Councilor X:*** "We need staff."
- ***New COO:*** "We already have hundreds of staff."
- ***Councilor X:*** "I mean the Council needs *our own* staff."
- ***New COO, puzzled:*** "Why? The whole agency *is* your staff."
- ***Councilor X:*** "Councilors don't trust agency staff. The work presented by the _____ Department misleads Council. We need *our* staff to watch *them*."
- ***New COO:*** "Why didn't you say that's the problem? There is no "us" and "them." The solution is for me to fix the _____ Department, not to duplicate it. Hold *me* accountable to hire and manage staff you will trust."

Post Script: the COO fixed the ____ Department, to Council's satisfaction

The 2003 understanding between Council & COO

- ***There's only us:*** Everyone in the agency ultimately works for the Council. There's not us and them. Every single Metro staff member helps deliver the programs that the Council provided for when it adopted the budget.

- ***Respect for chain of command:*** The COO works *directly* for the Council. The rest of the staff works *indirectly* for the Council, via supervisory chains of command. The COO is accountable to the Council for the agency's managerial performance, set in goals and assessed by annual evaluation. Councilors play absolutely no supervisory or other Human Resources role with regard to any employee other than the COO.

- ***The Council is part of Metro:*** The Council office, providing clerical and administrative support to Councilors, is not a separate "branch of government." (The Council is not Congress and the COO is not President.)

The 2003 understanding, continued

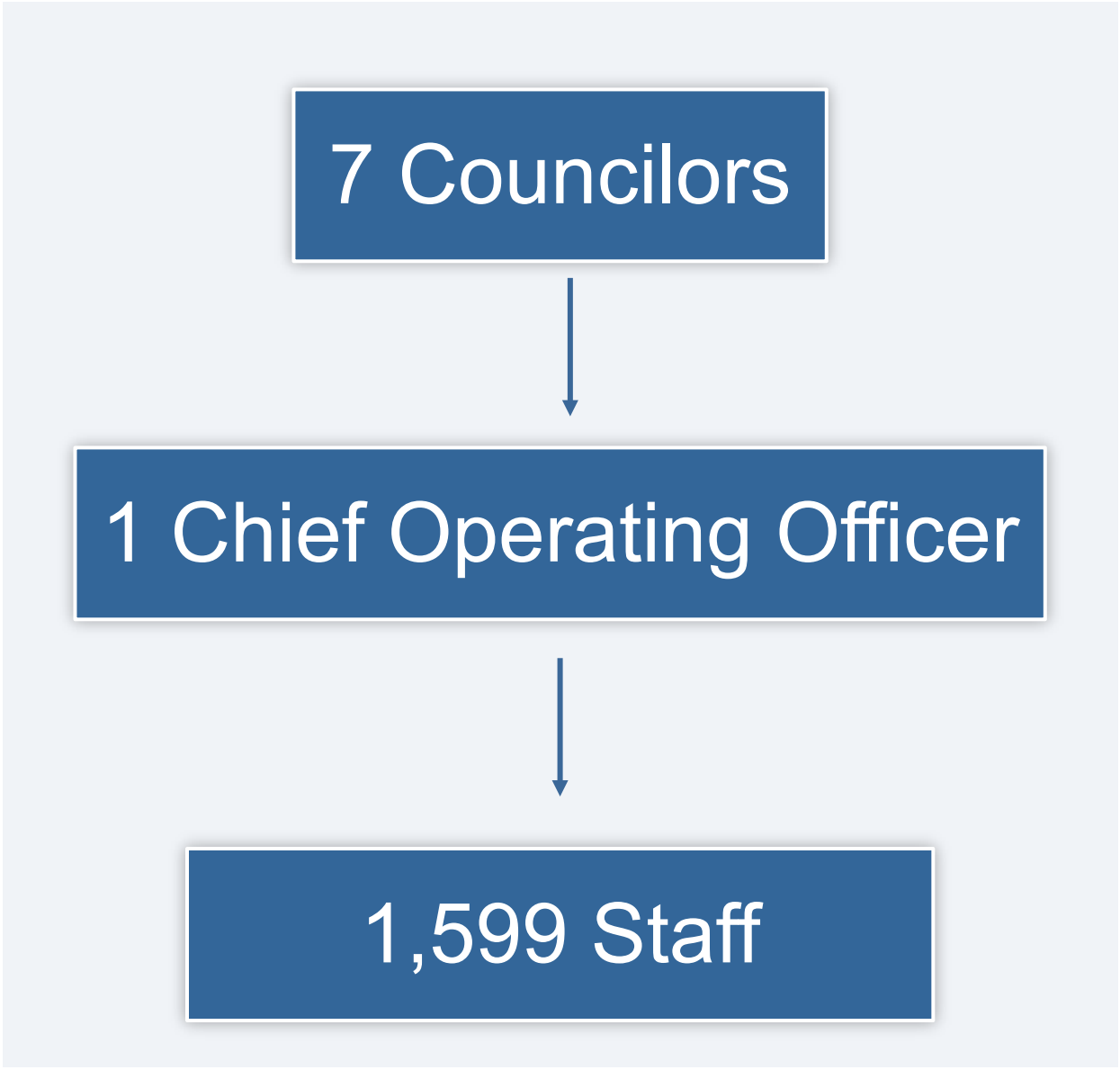
- ***The COO is the gatekeeper between Council and staff, and the gate's normal default position is "open":*** The COO's office is the coordinating conduit for Councilor communications with staff, with the mindset that exchange between Councilors and staff, within reasonable time limits, is a good thing. Requests for information and dialog about policy and programming are encouraged, within defined boundaries of staff workload and hours.

- ***Individual Councilors are each entitled to a reasonably defined amount of communications assistance:*** The Communications Department budget includes the resources and personnel needed to provide each Councilor with a baseline level of outreach and communications support, defined in the budget. (If an individual Councilor's demands exceed fair share, COO can impose a limit.)

The 2003 understanding, budget provisions

- ***The COO proposes an annual budget that reflects revenue constraints and his interpretation of Council priorities and interests:*** The COO will propose the annual budget. The proposal will reflect a shared understanding of conditions, priorities, etc., as discussed in informal Council work sessions that inform the COO's first draft.

- ***Mid-year program changes, or new policy development with budgetary consequences, requires expression of interest from multiple Councilors and a budget amendment:*** Before a new initiative, or change of direction, is considered mid-year that would require significant time and money, COO will first convene informal work session to gauge the interest of Councilors in exploring a budget amendment.



Metro

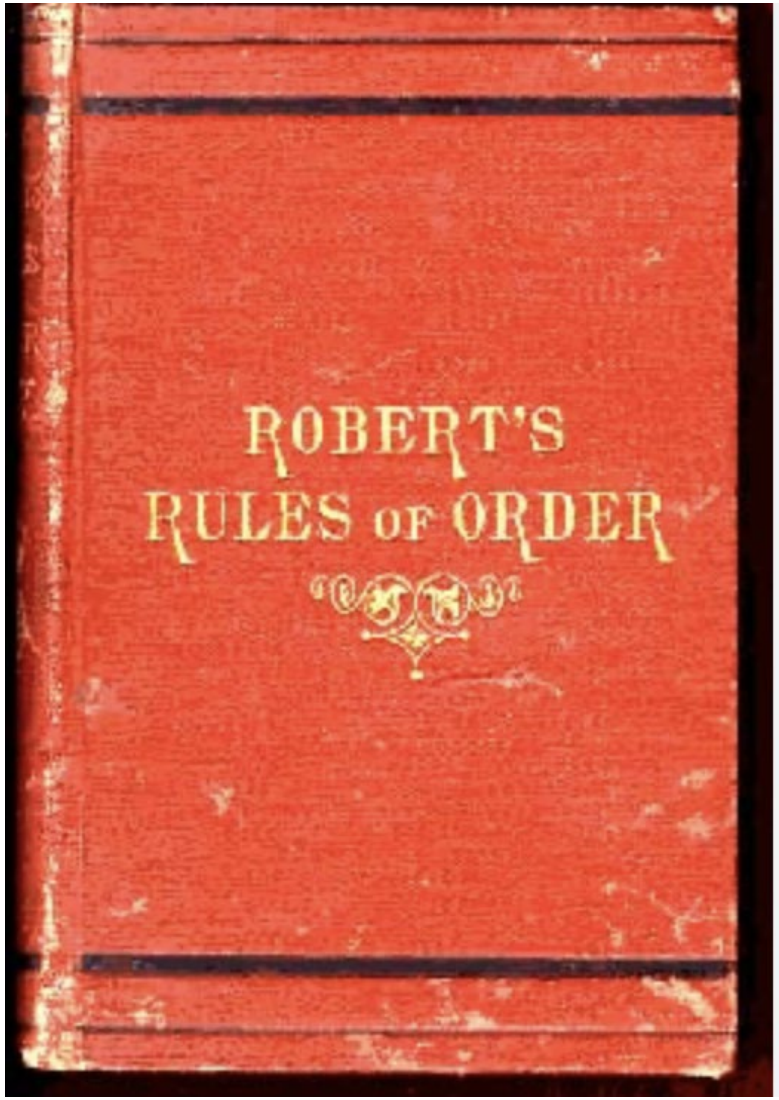
How much staff does the RTD Board have?

3,442 employees

Well-intentioned observations about RTD Board from an innocent visitor

Subjective impressions from David’s interviews

Written policies are great; real practice is inconsistent



Comprehensive written policies and wise guidance from an experienced Executive Manager of the Board Office exist, but are reportedly sometimes outweighed by inconsistent informal norms of interpersonal conduct and lack of common understanding of basic processes and roles

Math problem: board size inhibits building relationships

AI Overview

A 15-member board has **105** potential bilateral relationships.

The number of bilateral relationships (pairings) among a group of n members is a combination problem calculated using the formula for combinations "15 choose 2", which is:

$$C(n, k) = \frac{n!}{k!(n-k)!}$$

Where n is the number of members (15) and k is the size of the group for the relationship (2 members in a bilateral relationship).

The calculation is as follows:

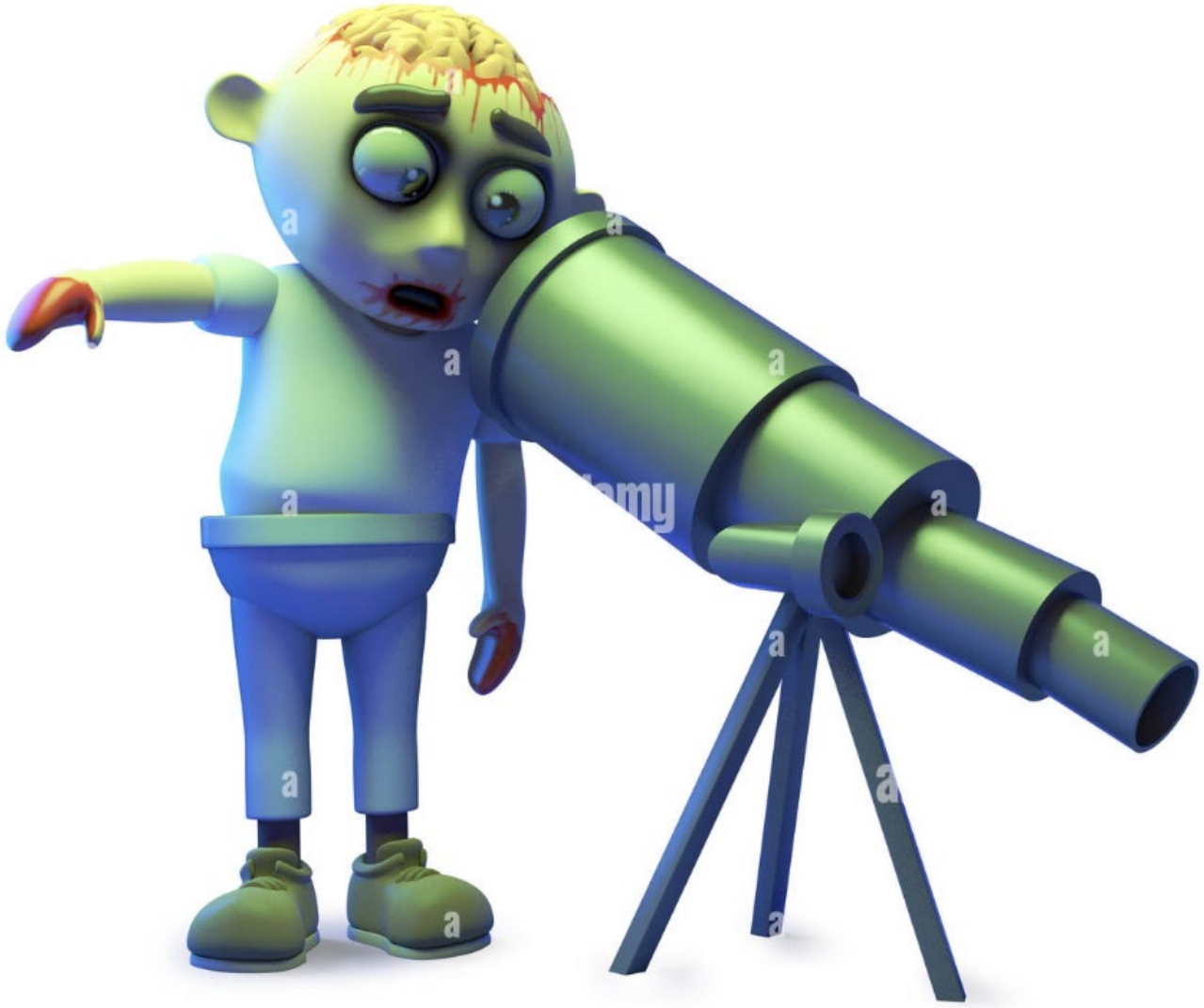
$$C(15, 2) = \frac{15!}{2!(15-2)!} = \frac{15!}{2!13!} = \frac{15 \times 14}{2 \times 1} = 105$$

This calculation assumes that every member is a distinct entity, and each pair constitutes one unique, non-directional relationship (e.g., Member A and Member B is the same relationship as Member B and Member A).

The boundary between board and staff is contested

While there are guidelines for board-staff interaction, those boundaries are honored inconsistently, leading to disgruntlement on both sides.

Sweating small stuff, not looking at big picture

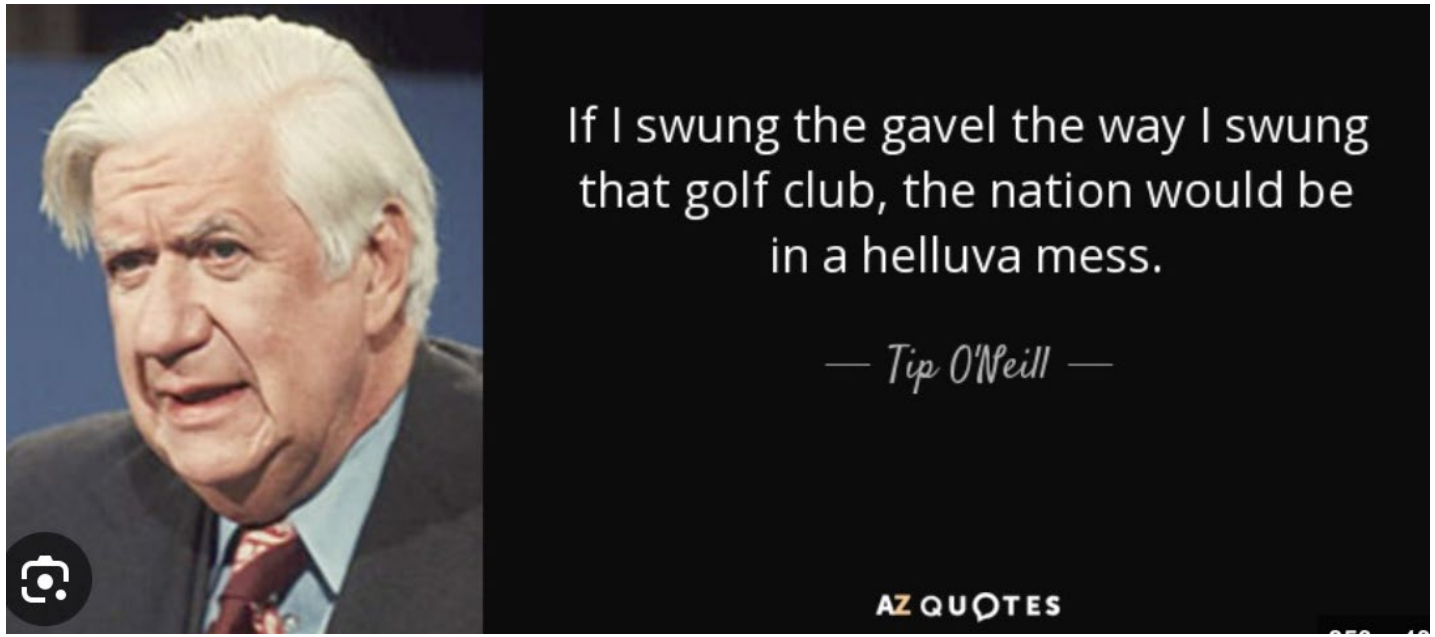


The board grapples with 800 page packets about procurements of lube oil, etc., but huge strategic issues like “ridership or coverage?” are unasked and unanswered

Uneven understanding of budget preparation and amendment processes

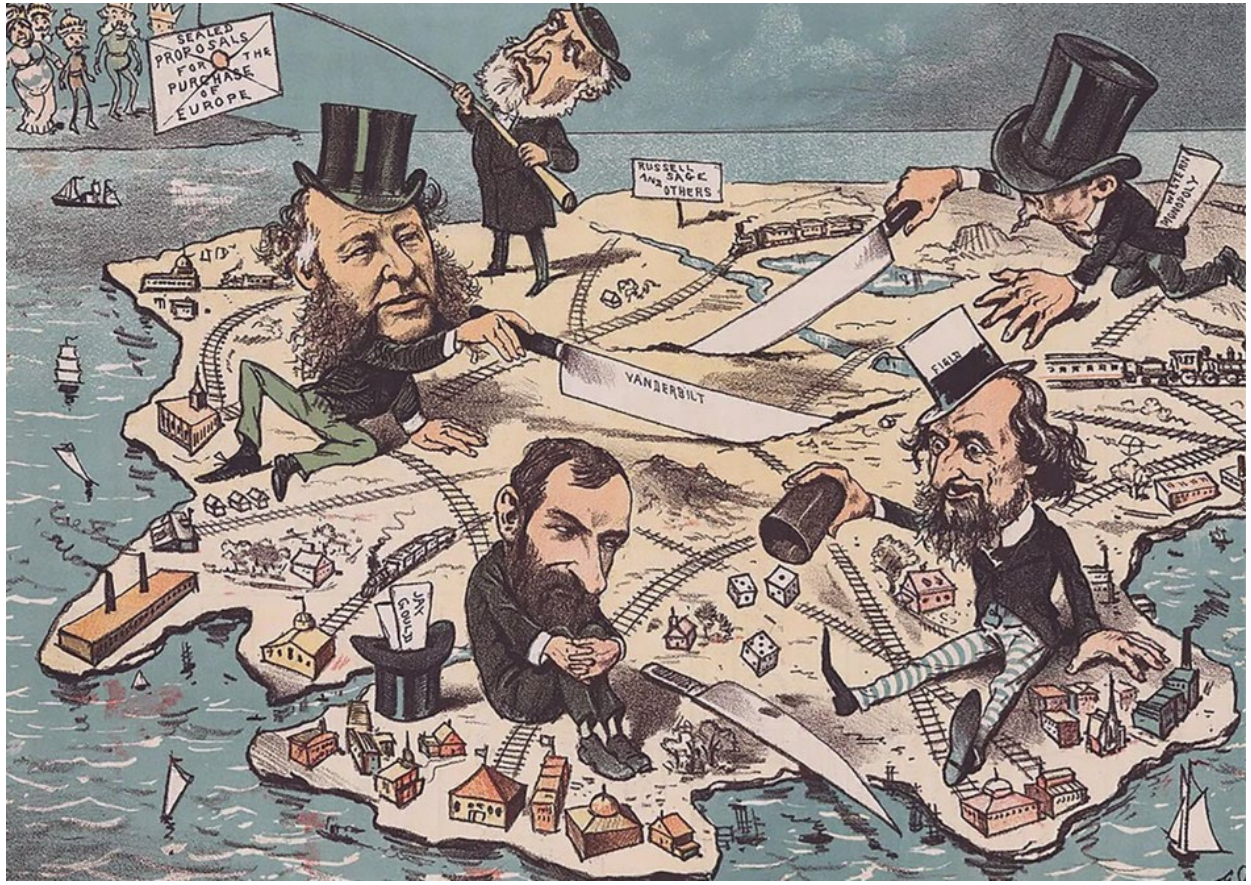
It seems not all directors have a clear understanding of how the budget is developed or amended.

Lack of clarity about selection and role of chairs



Are Chairs and Committees expected to be servants of the whole body, or are they expected to wield more influence than other directors?

Varying degrees of parochialism and regional perspective



Is it “my district,” or “our region?”

(Maybe both.)

Hudson Skykomish

Let’s have some committee discussion

David Bragdon, Principal

Hudson Skykomish

Memorandum

Date: 28 November 2025

To: RTD Accountability Committee

From: David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomish LLC

Subject: Ideas from Vancouver Trans-Link on "Nominating Committee" concept

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At your meeting on November 19, you explored the concept of a local screening committee that would nominate possible appointees to the RTD board. This memo will provide you with examples from two places that have such an arrangement, Salt Lake City and Vancouver.

As described in my memo of November 7, in the Great Salt Lake region a Local Advisory Council composed of nine local government officials suggests nominees for the Governor of Utah to consider appointing as Trustees of the Utah Transit Authority. The Governor must select from that list. Civic organizations and institutions outside of government do not play an official role, but local officials informally consult stakeholders for suggested nominees. The Local Advisory Council also sets the trustee salaries. The three current trustees all come from high-profile community leadership backgrounds, with long tenure in public life as well as the private sector and philanthropy. All of them have served on other important boards, such as public utilities, cultural institutions and the Olympics organizing committee. Currently, two of the three were previously elected officials.[1]

The selection process for Vancouver's Trans-Link board also involves a nominating committee. Their governance has evolved over several rounds of change, according to urban studies Professor Anthony Perl of Simon Fraser University, who has analyzed Vancouver transit politics over several periods of reform. According to Professor Perl, the current structure was designed by the Provincial Legislative Assembly to give local government a voice, but to constrain local officials' latitude by imposing filters through an intermediate screening committee, and some required credentials for Trans-Link board member seats.

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[1] The flip side of long tenure is absence of representation of younger viewpoints, at least in terms of who has recently been appointed. The photographs reveal that there is no racial or much age diversity among the current trustees. Non-white people make up 25.9% of UTA riders (31% are low-income) according to the Salt Lake *Tribune* of May 27, 2022, and a sizable proportion of riders are young adults. That range of demographics is not reflected in the current governance of the system, though the Governor could choose to take that consideration into account.

Taking it from the top, the ultimate appointing authority for most seats on the Trans-Link board is a Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, consisting of 21 Mayors from around the region, plus the native First Nation tribe and a representative of an unincorporated urban area. However, the MCRT *must pick from suggested nominees advanced by an Independent Screening Panel (ISP.)* We will get to the ISP in a moment - hold that thought - but first let's go through this complicated hierarchy of who the Mayors' Council is, and how it otherwise relates to Trans-Link. (You'll need a scorecard for the next several paragraphs.)

The members of the Mayors' Council are appointed by a governmental organization called Metro Vancouver, which also coordinates sewage, drainage and water supply across the region. Metro and the Mayors' Council are separate entities, and between the two they perform some but not all of the planning functions that in the U.S. would be carried out by an MPO like DRCOG. (Canada does not have a counterpart of MPOs.) The transit operator, Trans-Link, is a separate entity from both Metro Vancouver and the Mayors' Council, connected only through these membranes of the board appointment process.

In addition to nominating most of the Trans-Link board members, the MCRT also has on-going responsibility for other long-term transport decision-making, like the approval of any transport strategy with implications beyond the next 30 years and the 10 year transport investment plan, as well as shorter-term consumer-oriented matters like adjustments to transit fares, and changes to the customer survey and complaint process. (These functions are itemized by clicking on the MCRT "+" sign here.) It's interesting that the Mayors retain an institutional role for both long-term capital planning and day-to-day consumer satisfaction issues.

In addition to the seven board members appointed by the MCRT (from candidates suggested by the ISP, which I *promise* we are still going to get to), the Trans-Link board includes the chair and the vice chair of the MCRT, and two members appointed by the Province of British Columbia. (The appointments are made by the Provincial Premier, counterpart to a Governor in the U.S.) The board thus totals 11 members, seven via the ISP/MCRT and four set-asides for local and Provincial elected officials outside of the ISP process.

The Trans-Link board's function is described by clicking on the appropriate "+" symbol here. The Trans-Link board could be said to be a transit operating board, while some high-level transport policy-making is reserved to the Mayors' Council (again, *somewhat* akin to an MPO in the U.S.)

The Trans-Link board meets only four times per year as a group, perhaps because some high-level items are performed by the Mayors' Council and other items are dealt with by committees. I also understand the Trans-Link board also has a tradition of clearly delegating operating concerns to the fulltime professional executives of the agency, and that board members are oriented to strategy and oversight, not managing day-to-day. Biographies of the current board members catalog a wide range of experiences, backgrounds, ages and perspectives, including finance, law, health care, social services, local government, banking, urban planning, labor ("labour") relations, education, environmental activism and housing.

Now we finally come to the nominating committee you have been holding your breath to hear about, and the start of the process. To be named to the Trans-Link board by the Mayors' Council on Regional Transportation, a candidate must first be recruited, vetted and nominated by the Independent Screening Panel, consisting of members from specific organizations and officials named in the statute. (This process does not apply to the two seats appointed by the Province, to which the Premier has discretion to appoint anyone he or she wants.) One seat on the Independent Screening Panel belongs to a professional association representing the accounting discipline, the Organization of Professional Accountants of British Columbia. (Counterpart: Colorado Society of Certified Public Accountants.) Another is a specific business organization, the Vancouver Board of Trade. (Counterpart: Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce.) Another member of the ISP is chosen by the Greater Vancouver Gateway Council, a private sector-led organization dedicated to transportation infrastructure, including international freight flows as well as passenger transport. (You'll notice one of the Trans-Link board members also happens to chair the Provincial commission on Maritime Pilotage, which oversees the mariners who guide ocean-going ships in the harbor, a totally different form of transportation!)

The only governmental presence on the ISP is a seat for the Provincial Minister for Transport and Transit, who simultaneously has influence over the Premier's two direct appointments to the Trans-Link board that do not go through the ISP. (Semi-counterpart: Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Transportation. This analogy is limited: in the Canadian system the Minister, Mike Farnworth, is a politician, an elected member of the unicameral Provincial Parliament, simultaneously serving in Cabinet, whereas the Executive Director of CDOT is a transportation professional, typically with deep technical experience, hired by the Governor.)

According to Professor Perl, prior to 2017 the provincial statute was even more prescriptive, with mandated seats for professional engineers, certified accountants, and registered barristers. In practice, this level of specificity was found to be too constraining, so the Provincial Legislative Assembly relaxed some of the "quotas" and gave the Independent Screening Panel more flexibility. While the accountants retained their seat, the appointment of someone with an engineering background and someone with a legal background is now a matter of informal norm, not an automatic requirement. A fuller description of the Independent Screening Panel can be found by clicking the appropriate "+" here.

As you debate what might work for the Denver region, you certainly don't need to figure out every detail now - obviously the legislature and Governor will have their say when they review your report in 2026 - but Vancouver gives you some intriguing questions to discuss:

- The Independent Screening Panel includes three business-oriented organizations, but no organizations pertaining to the environment or to workers, even though Vancouver is politically inclined to be pro-environment and pro-labour. Nor are seats designated for particular demographic groups, including transit riders. I theorize the composition is

designed to find people with skills pertinent to overseeing Trans-Link as an enterprise, rather than people who represent a specific interest. You might want to debate that.

- You might want to discuss whether you are looking for a collection of disciplines and skills, or, conversely, a collection of delegates and representatives of particular interests and groups. (The difference between "that person tends to bring an environmental perspective to the table" and "that person is here to articulate the Sierra Club's official position on x y or z.") In setting criteria, you might explore whether there is a subtle but important difference between thinking of a member as a person with broadly applicable expertise, rather than as a lobbyist for a particular vested interest. For example, a person with objective knowledge of labor-management issues might be a professor of industrial relations and human resources, rather than the head of a union or a corporate CEO, whose views on any given issue might be fixed or pre-determined.

- It seems short-sighted that specific organizational names are fixed in the B.C. statute, rather than generic, to be adaptable as names or sectors evolve. The Vancouver Board of Trade has existed under that name since 1887, but what if they update their brand and rename themselves the Vancouver Chamber of Commerce? Ten years ago, transit advocacy in Denver identified under the banner of an organization named the Transit Alliance, but that organization disbanded now some transit advocacy gathers under the name Denver Streets Partnership but serves a somewhat similar purpose. A statute that refers generically to "representatives of local government" is probably more durable than one that specifies a proper noun like "Metro Mayors Caucus," just as "a professional baseball team that plays in Denver" is probably more versatile than "Bears" (good for 1983) or "Rockies" (good for now.)

Some additional fascinating materials from Vancouver Trans-Link include detailed specifications of what is expected from Board members:

"Board Competencies Guidelines" is three pages of the criteria the screening committee is expected to use to vet potential candidates. It is derived from statute but not in statute.

The Trans-Link "Board manual" contains almost staggering detail (113 pages!) on board member protocols, role of the chair, annual evaluation of the CEO, board self-evaluation, ethics code, communications, code of conduct, etc. Trans-Link also has a strong board member orientation program.

As always, there are no right or wrong answers to these questions, no perfect formulas to adopt wholesale from elsewhere – but lots of nutritious food for thought as you consider what is best for greater Denver.

Memorandum

We make lives better through connections.

To: Maria Garcia Berry and Jaime Lewis, Chair and Vice Chair of RTD Accountability Committee

From: Jack Kroll, Board Office Executive Manager JXK

Date: November 10, 2025

Re: **RTD Board Member Commitments, Resources, and Support**

At the request of the RTD Accountability Committee Vice Chair Jaime Lewis, I have compiled this short summary on the time commitment, duties, resources and staff support available to the Board. As Executive Manager of the Board Office, and former elected board member (University of Colorado Board of Regents 2017 – 2023, 1st Congressional District), I manage the day-to-day affairs of the board and help guide the board and directors in their collective as well as individual efforts to govern and set policy on behalf of the agency.

Time Commitment and Regular Duties

Board members are typically working professionals fulfilling the duties of their office in addition to other life commitments. The typical board member spends 10-15 hours per week on RTD duties with those commitments expanding or contracting during busier times. The chair of the board, as well as the chairs of the various committees devote additional time, with the chair spending 20-30 hours a week and the committee chairs 15-25 hours per week during busy times.

Nearly all directors serve on 1-2 standing committees. The standing committees of the board are: Executive, Finance and Planning, Operations Safety and Security, and Performance. The board also has an Independent Audit Committee comprised of three directors and two external audit professionals, which meets at least quarterly. Aside from August and December, when the board does not meet, the full board as well as each standing committee meet monthly. Regular board meetings as well as the meetings of the Finance and Planning and Operations, Safety and Security Committees are held on Tuesday and Wednesday nights at 5:30 p.m. The Executive, Audit, and Performance committees meet during traditional business hours. Board and committee meetings often last for 2-4 hours. The board also holds two retreats and roughly a half-dozen additional study sessions or special board meetings throughout the calendar year.

Board members have a regular cadence of duties which primarily include:

- Attendance at monthly board meeting (held in-person)
- Attendance at 1-2 committee meetings a month (held remotely)
- Preparation for board and committee meetings:
    - Review agenda packets published 3-5 days in advance
    - Packets size can be 100 – 200 pages on the low end to 800-1500 pages on the high end
    - All packets contain summary board reports. All major items will come before a committee first for discussion and then again in a subsequent month for action
    - Submit advance inquiries to staff
- Relationship building with other RTD board members
- Correspondence with constituents – each Director Districts has ~220,000
- Engagement with other elected officials and government entities/bodies including mayors, city councils, boards county commissioners (level of engagement varies widely by individual Director)
- Initial training and subsequent continuing education

What Comes Before the Board and How

Most of what the board reviews, discusses, and approves is driven by its standing committees' work plans. Nearly all items voted on by the board are initially approved by a committee. Every standing committee develops and approves an annual work plan.

Most items on the work plans are items brought forward by staff for the board's review and adoption in accordance with the regular business of the agency and the Board's delegation of authority to the GM/CEO.

Work plans provide space for the board to proactively pursue governance and policy topics of wide interest. Items of paramount importance are typically discussed by a committee first, then return at a subsequent meeting for approval.

Outside of work plans, the board chair, General Manager/CEO (GM/CEO), or any three-directors may request an agenda item for discussion or approval. Any three-directors may also call a meeting to discuss or vote on an item.

The board engages in its business in accordance with its Bylaws and Board Operating Guidelines. The Bylaws, which are binding, detail the formal structures the board works through to complete its work. The non-binding Board Operating Guidelines detail the optimal ways in which directors *should* engage in the duties of their office, with other directors, and with staff.

Authority of the Board

The board delegates most operational duties and powers to the GM/CEO while retaining oversight, appropriation, and governance responsibilities. No action of the board can be taken without the affirmative vote of at least eight present and voting members. Certain actions require a two-thirds majority including amendments to the Bylaws and any appropriation for the construction of additional light rail or commuter rail.

Staff Support

The board has two employees over whom it makes hiring decisions: the GM/CEO and the Executive Manager of the Board Office. The board is also heavily supported by the General Counsel, whose core client is ultimately the board. The board hires a Chief Audit Executive, who carries out audits and reports the results of those audits to Independent Audit Committee (see Independent Audit Committee Charter). Members of the GM/CEO's Leadership Team are often also directly in contact with directors and coordinate their board engagement efforts with the GM/CEO. Presentation materials, briefing documents, and background information used by directors in public meetings are often prepared by RTD communications and government relations staff. While not on the GM/CEO's Leadership Team, many directors frequently engage with RTD's Government Relations Officer and service planning staff to receive critical information and maintain an understanding of issues facing the agency.

<u>GM/CEO</u>

- Primary point of contact for Directors regarding the functioning of the agency
- Reports to the full board
- Serves as the chief executive of the agency
- See Bylaws Article VII – Officers and Personnel, Section 12 the General Manager
- See Delegation of Authority and Competitive Selection

GM/CEO's Leadership Team

GM/CEO	General Counsel	Deputy CEO	Chief People Officer
Chief Operations Officer	Chief of Police	Chief Financial Officer	Chief of Staff
Deputy COO, Rail Operations	Deputy COO, Bus Operations	Chief Communications and Engagement Officer	Chief Information and Technology Officer

Board Office Executive Manager

- Key point of contact for directors regarding internal and external affairs of the board
- Reports to the board chair and supports the entire board
- Helps to review and develop policy on behalf of the board
- Coordinates with chair, GM/CEO and staff regarding board communications with the media
- Coordinates with the Secretary of State on director elections and other governing bodies on appointments to fill board vacancies
- Facilitates and liaises with the Citizens Advisory Committee on behalf of the board
- Manages Board Office staff
    - Three additional staff support the board operationally ensuring meeting packet agendas are published, records are maintained accurately, meetings are properly noticed, meetings run smoothly and assist with director travel arrangements and reimbursements.
- See Board Office Executive Manager Job Description

Senate Bill 25-161 repeated/clarified the board's authority to oversee the District's General Counsel and to conduct an annual review of the District's Chief Financial Officer. However, this legislation did not add any powers to the board, as the board could opt for such a structure on its own without legislative action.

How Do Directors Get the Information They Want/Need

Agenda packets contain relevant supporting materials for items on a given meeting agenda. These packets are published 3-5 days prior to meetings.

Directors are in frequent communication with the GM/CEO, General Counsel, and Board Office Executive Manager to obtain information necessary to the conduct of their duties.

The Board Office maintains a customer relationship management system to track and record director requests. The highly efficient system ensures accurate timely follow-up for both simple and complex inquiries. All directors receive a weekly report detailing the inquiries closed since the last report and those still outstanding.

The Board Office reports to the Executive Committee twice a year on the volume and nature of directors' requests. The system is used to track and respond to 300+ inquiries a year. However, it should be noted that not all inquiries or requests are tracked, and the number is likely an undercount of the true total.

Board Member Background and Expertise

As with any elected body, the various backgrounds and expertise of the directors elected to the board will change and evolve over time. During the 2024 legislative session the Board Office compiled a document highlighting the experience of board members at the time, that document is attached to this memo.

Additionally, the board moved to a committee model in which subsets of the board serve on the board's standing committees. Previously, every board member served on every committee. Having smaller committees

encourages directors to more readily develop expertise overtime.

While each board member brings varying levels of expertise and experience to the board, the scope of the board's responsibilities is too broad to ensure universal coverage on the issues that come before it. A good example of t the breadth of issues the board should be knowledgeable about, and could conceivably have experts on, is contained in the Director Orientation, Onboarding, and Continuing Education Policy. Directors specifically selected the topics for training listed in that policy to ensure board members had a good understanding of the issues upon which they will be expected to deliberate and decide.

Advisory Committees

Three advisory committees report regularly to the board on their activities, insights, and recommendations. Those are the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC), the Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities (ACPD), and the Access-a-Ride and Paratransit Advisory Committee (APAC). These committees meet monthly and are afforded time on the agenda for the board's regularly scheduled meetings as requested and at least once quarterly. The updates are relatively informal. The committees all have a staff liaison with the CAC run out of the Board Office, the ACPD supported by the Civil Rights Division, and paratransit operations staff facilitating the APAC.

Remuneration

In 2008, the Colorado General Assembly increased the annual stipend for directors from $3,000 to $12,000. The stipend is paid at the beginning of each month.

Directors are eligible for reimbursement of local business expenses (up to $4,000 annually) as well as monthly phone/internet costs (up to $140); additionally, directors have funds to travel to educational conferences (up to $6,000 per year for travel and up to $1,800 for conference registration fees). The average director spends less than half of their annual local, travel, or phone/internet budgets.

Director Districts and Terms

Each Director is elected to represent one of 15 distinct Director Districts. Each district has a population of ~220,000. The board is responsible for approving new district boundaries after each decennial census. Directors are elected during even year elections, with seven directors elected one cycle followed by eight the next. Directors serve four-year terms and may serve no more than two consecutive four-year terms.

Training and Continuing Education

The Board Office Executive Manager and GM/CEO coordinate every year following a director election to offer training to incoming directors. The training sessions offered are listed in the Director Orientation, Onboarding, and Continuing Education Policy. This year, incoming directors were provided with 20+ orientation sessions, training sessions, and facility tours to help them ground themselves in the agency's work and their roles as directors.

The board is committed to continuing education, and the Board Office surveys directors and agency leadership annually to determine topics for the following year. The board then schedules study sessions corresponding to the areas highlighted for continuing education.

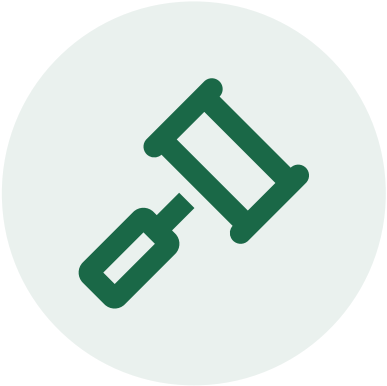
Cc: RTD Board of Directors
Debra A. Johnson, General Manager and CEO
Kelly Blynn, Colorado Energy Office
Barrick Abramson, Confluence Strategies
David Bragdon, Hudson Skykomish

Enclosures: Amended Bylaws
Board Operating Guidelines
Current Committee Work Plans (Executive, Finance and Planning, Operations, Safety, and Security, Performance)
Delegation of Authority and Competitive Selection to GM-CEO
Board Office Executive Manager Job Description
Semi-Annual Review of Director Inquiries July 2025
Board Expense and Reimbursement Policy
2024 Board Experience
Director Orientation, Onboarding, and Continuing Education Policy

Governance and Administration of Colorado's Boards and Commissions

Nikky Patel, Director of Boards and Commissions

Types of Boards Within Colorado's Governance



Policy-Making Boards (Type 1)

Boards that make binding decisions shaping policy.

On average they have 7 member boards

Advisory Boards (Type 2)

Provide recommendations and expert advice without direct authority.

On average they have 15 member boards

Regulatory Boards

Boards share some of the responsibilities of advisory and policy-making boards but usually perform rulemaking or quasi- judicial functions.

On average they have 15 member boards

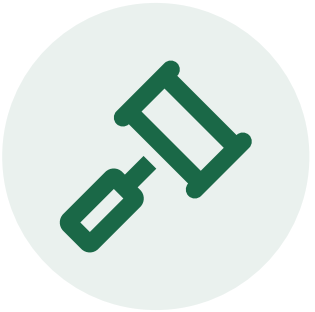
Overview of Colorado's Boards and Commissions Office: Scale and Structure

Number of Boards and Commissions

Colorado has approximately 350 boards and commissions. The Governor's Office maintains a specialized appointments unit with a staff of four who handle outreach, recruitment, and interviewing.

Membership Size

There are around 2,200 appointed members serving on these boards and commissions.



Establishment Methods

These boards are established through statute, executive orders, or ballot measures.

Full-Time Paid Boards

The three full-time, paid boards are the Parole Board, the Public Utilities Commission (PUC), and the Energy and Carbon Management Commission (ECMC).

Professionalized Selection Approach for Appointments

Clearly Defined Missions for Each Board

Colorado employs an executive-search style process for gubernatorial appointments that includes clearly defined missions for each board.

Use of Skills Matrices

Skills matrices are used to identify the needed competencies for effective board membership.

Intentional Recruitment for Diversity and Expertise

The process includes intentional recruitment efforts to ensure diversity and expertise among appointees.

Thorough Vetting and Compliance Checks

Applicants undergo thorough vetting and compliance checks to maintain standards and eligibility.

Replacement Strategies and Succession Planning

Replacement strategies are implemented to fill vacancies efficiently, ensuring continuous board functionality.

Gubernatorial Appointments: Dedicated Infrastructure

Specialized Appointments Unit

The Governor's Office maintains a specialized appointments unit staffed by four professionals who handle outreach, recruitment, interviewing, and onboarding of board members.

Contrast with Other Appointing Bodies

This dedicated infrastructure contrasts with other appointing bodies in Colorado, which generally have limited administrative resources to manage appointments.

Accountability Mechanisms for Appointed Members

Removal for Cause

Colorado law allows appointed members to be removed for misconduct, ethics violations, failure to participate, neglect of duty, or incapacity. This is established in the statute that creates the board or commission.

Senate Confirmation

Many gubernatorial appointments require Senate confirmation, adding transparency, public vetting, additional oversight, and a second check on qualifications.

Colorado's robust accountability mechanisms, including removal for cause, Senate confirmation, and ongoing oversight, ensure appointed board and commission members are held responsible and act in the public's best interest.

September 2025

RTD Paratransit Accountability

RTD Accountability Committee, Colorado Energy Office

Tim Payne, Bethany Goad

NELSON NYGAARD

Study Purpose

Senate Bill 25-161, signed into law, May 13, 2025, by Governor Jared Polis:

"(3) Evaluation and recommendations. (a) the purpose of the committee is to evaluate and make recommendations on:

(iii) the paratransit services provided within the district's geographic service area. As used in this subsection (3)(a)(iii), "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs."

RTD Transportation Programs

Access-a-Ride (AaR)

- Complies with the FTA ADA regulations, uses designated paratransit vehicles to accommodate eligible riders with a wide range of disabilities, intent is to provide "access" to public transportation.
- Door-to-door service only within ¾ mile of regular fixed route service and only when those fixed routes are operating
- Requires trip reservations in advance
- Fare: $4.50 per one-way trip

Access-on-Demand (AoD)

- Optional "premium" service for paratransit-eligible riders
- Curb-to-curb service, available throughout the RTD service area, 24/7.
- Same-day, on-demand rides, limited to 60 trips per month
- Utilizes commonly available rideshare services as primary delivery mechanism
- Fare: Subsidized up to $25 per trip, customer is responsible for remainder over $25

Federal Requirements for ADA Paratransit

- Eligibility from the Federal Transit Administration, the federal regulatory authority

“Disability alone does not determine paratransit eligibility; the decision is based on the applicant’s functional ability to use the fixed route bus and is not a medical decision.

The substantive eligibility process is not aimed at making a medical or diagnostic determination. While evaluation by a physician (or professionals in rehabilitation or other relevant fields) may be used as part of the process, a diagnosis of a disability is not dispositive. What is needed is a determination of whether, as a practical matter, the individual can use fixed route transit in his or her own circumstances.”

Federal Requirements for ADA Paratransit

- Service Requirements as defined in the regulations implementing the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, aka, “the six service criteria”

1. **Service Area** – established by proximity to non-commuter fixed-route bus and rail services, available within ¾ mile of RTD’s non-commuter bus routes and light rail stations.
2. **Response Time** - Service must be available on request the previous day, people can request and receive service at any requested time on any day for which the fixed-route system operates. The maximum request time can be developed locally but must not be less than three days. RTD’s current policy allows AaR reservations up to seven days in advance

Federal Requirements for ADA Paratransit (cont.)

4. **Trip Purpose Restrictions** - Transit agencies cannot impose restrictions or priorities based on the purpose of a trip; service must be provided to eligible riders regardless of where they are going.
5. **Hours and Days of Service** - Paratransit must be provided on the same days and during the same hours as the fixed-route services for any given trip.
6. **Capacity Constraints** - Transit agencies are prohibited from limiting the availability of service by placing constraints on capacity, meaning they must have adequate resources to meet the demand from eligible riders.

Curb to Curb versus Door to Door – The regulations allow this decision

Access versus Mobility

- **Access** - a person can find their way to get to a service. It may not be convenient, it may be limited, and it may be expensive, but they can utilize it.
- **Mobility** – a person has choice and freedom over their movement. They can get where they want, when they want, and within a cost that fits into their personal budget.

A parallel

- Library systems that offer large static buildings brimming with literature and media, versus a "bookmobile" that makes its way into rural areas served by the library system
  - Bookmobile provides **access** to the library system
  - People who can reach the main library have **mobility**

Access versus Mobility

- **AaR –** Designed to meet the minimum requirements of the ADA and a considered a guarantee of **access** to public transit. At the time regulations were drafted (they became effective in 1992) this was considered an over-reach by many in the transit industry and an under-reach by the people who would use the service.
  - Subscription rides for repetitive trips are offered
  - Service is door to door, including being escorted, if needed
  - Reservations can be made in advance
  - Drivers are specifically trained for assisting people with disabilities
  - Drivers are closely regulated to spot possible safety and personal security issues

Access versus Mobility

- **AoD –** Offers options to people, essentially improved **mobility**
  - Same day trip requests, allows spontaneity
  - Trips are origin to destination, no trip sharing which is common with AaR, service is faster
  - For some AoD riders, there is no fare
  - Riders can see their vehicle's status as it arrives for their trip, no uncertainty with a 30 minute pick-up window
  - Services like AoD are possible due to advancements in technology and the rise of ridesharing
  - Service is curb to curb, there is no assurance of operator assistance
  - Operators are not generally specifically trained about the needs of riders with disabilities
  - Lyft and Uber operators are not screened, or actively monitored

National Perspective

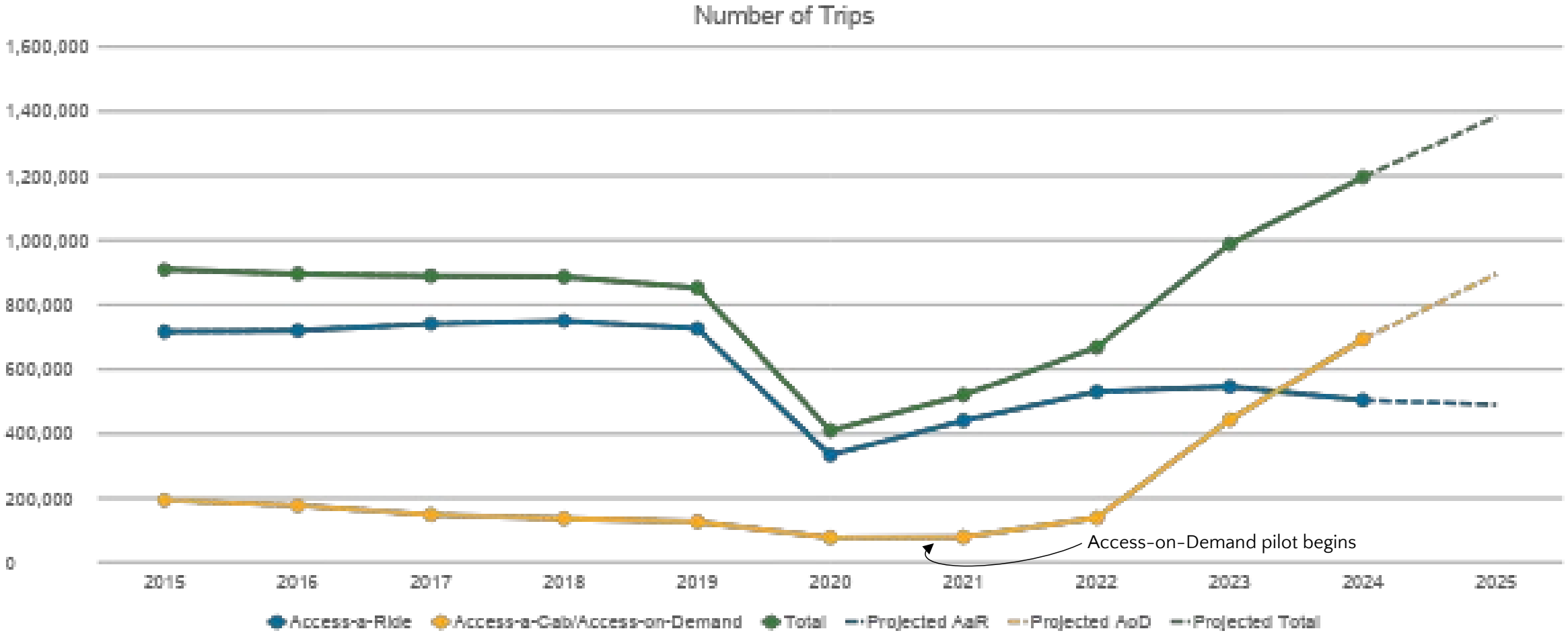
- Agencies throughout the US have active and mature programs like AoD, or they are experimenting with implementing them. There are great lessons learned.
- The minimum service requirements of the ADA unintentionally set barriers to mobility, once those barriers are removed, especially the ability to be spontaneous and to always have point to point service, result in increased demand if the service is reliable. Demand per person usually rises 2 to 3 times the baseline usage of service under ADA criteria.
- In most cases where pilots were initially established without trip caps, or cost barriers, they have been subsequently added to manage

Key Takeaways

- The current RTD decision process is a controversial and highly-emotionally charged process with multiple dimensions of equity and fairness overlapping with practical, legal, and financial considerations. There are no “right” answers.
- AoD is a relatively new program that has proven to meet rider needs in a way that conventional paratransit service, such as AaR, cannot:
  - In the words of riders, AoD is “life changing” and “a game changer”
  - AoD offers improved mobility compared to AaR
- AoD has had a significant increase in demand and program costs in a short period of time
  - RTD is attempting to find a balance between the utility of the service and the financial sustainability of the program
  - Based on experience in other urban areas, the rider response and the financial issues were completely predictable

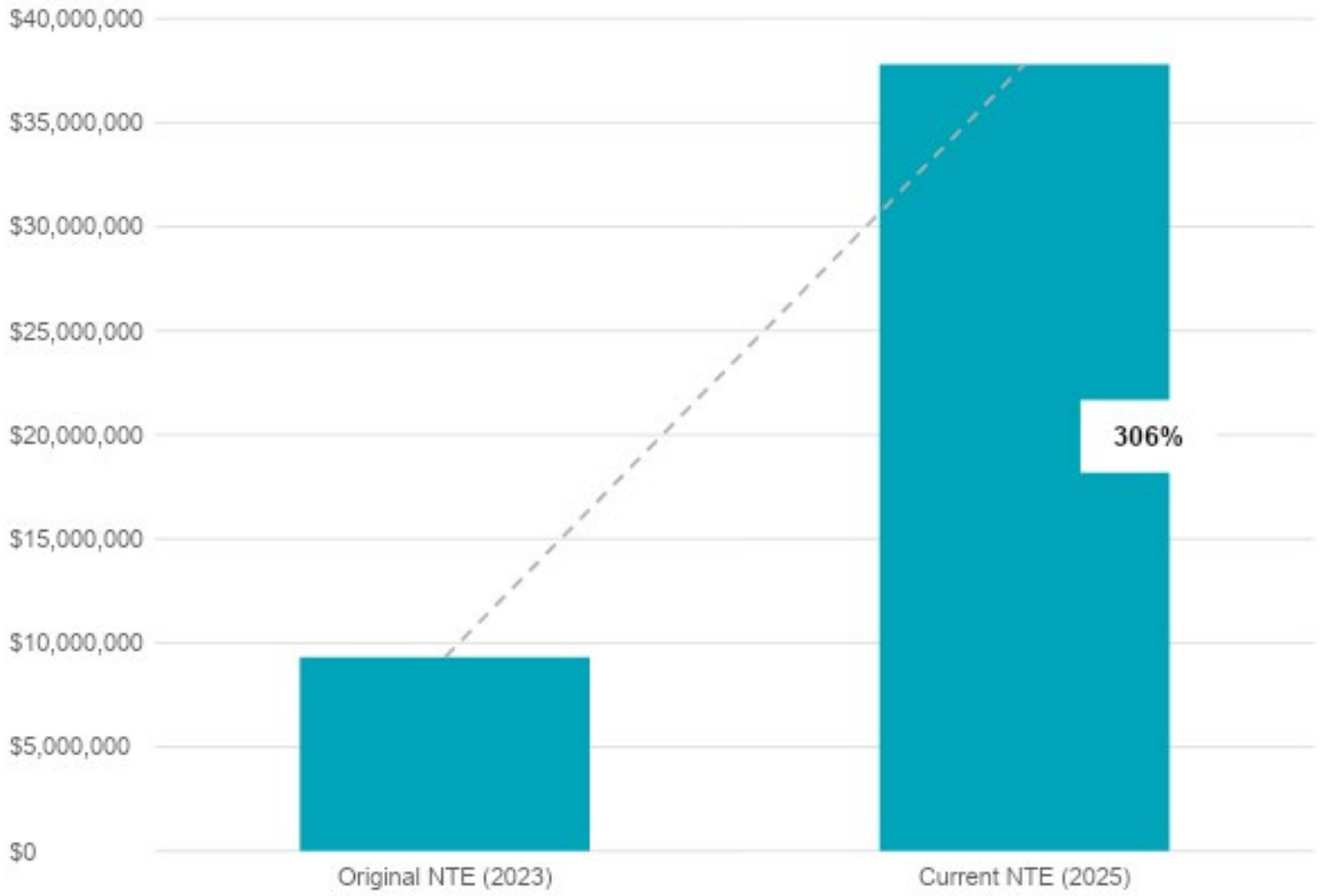
Access-on-Demand Growth

- Paratransit trips have surpassed historical levels by 50%



Financial Sustainability

- Graphic shows 3-year (2023 through 2025) costs for contracted services of AoD program at inception and current appropriation.
- RTD has fiscal responsibility – rapid increases in program costs and how it influences financial sustainability of the whole organization.



Key Takeaways

- Despite calls to convert all AaR to AoD, that move is a violation of current federal law and could create legal issues for RTD
- Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) from the AaR program are used to support the AoD program
  - Endangers ability to meet demand in the AaR program without capacity constraints
  - Violation of ADA paratransit regulations to tell a person requesting a ride from the AaR program that there is no vehicle available
  - Equally, it is a violation of the broader ADA to offer a publicly available service, such as AoD, in a manner that is not accessible to people who use mobility devices

Key Takeaways

- RTD decision process to make modifications to the AoD program is on-going, proposals have been forwarded, they have not been adopted
- RTD Board and staff understand the gravity of the issue in front of them and are committed to finding a solution that works for the current and future riders of RTD's paratransit programs that also works for the balance of the RTD system and its financial underpinnings
- Engagement with the community at the Board and staff levels has been extensive, and the decision process has been careful and deliberate
- Improvement could be made in fact-based information on the issues of the fare and subsidy level proposals
- There will be criticism of whatever decision is reached as there is no perfect answer.

Thank you!

Tim Payne

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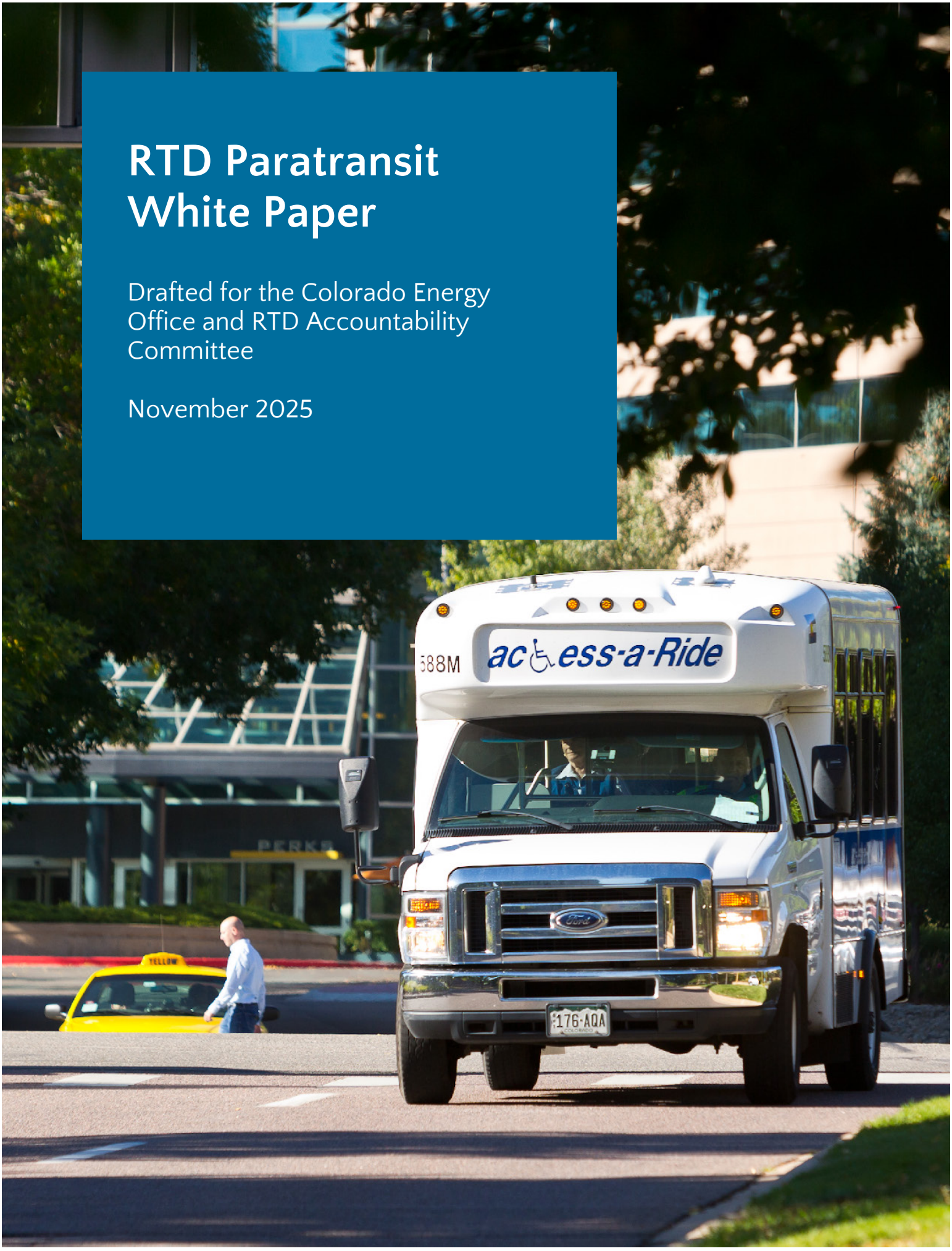
RTD Paratransit White Paper

Drafted for the Colorado Energy Office and RTD Accountability Committee

November 2025



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1 Introduction

Study Purpose

Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates, Inc. was retained by the Colorado Energy Office to support the RTD Accountability Committee in conducting research about paratransit services provided by RTD. Nelson\Nygaard is a national consulting firm focused on multimodal transportation and public transit services. Nelson\Nygaard's limited scope for this project included conducting an independent review of data and documents from RTD about their paratransit services, considering RTD's paratransit services in comparison with peer agencies, conducting interviews, drafting this white paper, and providing a presentation to the committee. This paper represents the researchers' perspectives based on their experience with paratransit services nationally, and is not meant to convey a comprehensive survey of the perspectives of RTD, riders, advocates, and other stakeholders, which was not possible in the time frame available.

This document has been assembled to address the following passage from Senate Bill 25-161, signed into law, May 13, 2025, by Governor Jared Polis, and to provide independent research to the RTD Accountability Committee on this topic.

> *"(3) Evaluation and recommendations. (a) the purpose of the committee is to evaluate and make recommendations on:*
>
> *(iii) the paratransit services provided within the district's geographic service area. As used in this subsection (3)(a)(iii), "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs."*

In this case, the reference to "the District" is a specific reference to RTD. RTD offers paratransit services to people who are declared eligible under the requirements of the American's with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). Generally, eligibility is limited to, as suggested by the language in SB 25-161, "individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs." For clarity, the ADA strictly limits eligibility for paratransit service required under the act to those who are either always or sometimes unable to access traditional fixed route transit as a result of their disability.

RTD has, for the past five years, offered two paratransit services to people who are eligible for ADA paratransit service: Access-a-Ride (AaR), which is the service that has been used to meet federal ADA requirements, and the newer of the two services, Access-on-Demand (AoD). AoD is a subsidized curb-to-curb service using taxi and ridehail companies that provides a premium service in addition to the complementary paratransit service, which is AaR. "Premium," as defined by the FTA in various letters and bulletins, refers to service that exceeds the minimum

service criteria established in the regulations, as opposed to something that is luxury or higher quality. More detail on the two programs is provided in the body of this paper.

Based primarily on its flexibility features, AoD has proven to be extremely popular with a segment of riders who are eligible for RTD paratransit service. The popularity created rapid program growth and increased costs. Following more than a year of deliberation and public process, including at the RTD Board/Committee level, RTD modified the program in September 2025 to address what RTD forecasts as an unsustainable fiscal burden. Updating the AoD program to enable "a financially sustainable option that serves customer needs" was one of the recommendations of an APTA Peer Review of RTD's paratransit services commissioned in 2024. Multiple other U.S. transit agencies have gone through similar decision-making processes to manage costs following the launch of on-demand paratransit services that proved universally popular. The process and proposals sparked substantial controversy in the greater Denver area from AoD riders and disability advocates. More details on the issues around these programs and their performance are outlined in this paper.

2 RTD Paratransit Program Overview

RTD currently operates two paratransit programs, discussed in the section below. A review of the FTA ADA Paratransit regulations and how RTD's programs comply with them is discussed, as well.

Access-a-Ride

In accordance with the FTA ADA regulations, RTD offers complementary door-to-door paratransit service through their Access-a-Ride program (AaR). AaR is available for those who are unable to use RTD's fixed-route bus and light rail services due to a disability. The AaR service area covers all locations that are within ¾ of a mile of RTD's fixed-route network, and there is no service outside of this boundary. Riders must make a reservation for an AaR trip at least one day in advance and up to seven days in advance. There is no same-day service offered as part of AaR. Reservations can be made over the phone or by using the online customer portal. AaR service is supplied by a contractor who owns and operates the wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs) and employs and trains the drivers. Drivers are subject to background checks, drug testing, and are trained to interact with people with disabilities.

AaR, on a per-ride basis, is one of the most expensive services to provide offered by RTD. ADA paratransit programs throughout the country are consistently the most expensive services to provide on a cost per rider or cost per ride basis, and in spite of the cost, these services often fail to provide high-quality and reliable services that riders can depend on. There are very good reasons for RTD to invest in program improvements to AaR to ensure it not only meets the essential access features required under the ADA, but does so in a reliable, high-quality, and cost-effective manner.

Access-on-Demand

Access-on-Demand (AoD) is an optional, premium, curb-to-curb service for ADA eligible riders to book same-day rides with taxi and ridehail companies. RTD contracts with Uber, Lyft, Metro Taxi, and zTrip to provide the service, and the AoD program operates within the entire RTD service area. Ridehail drivers are not directly employed by their respective companies and are, therefore, not subject to specialized training or drug testing where AaR drivers and all other operators of RTD services are required to meet those standards.

As the program was introduced, a rider could take up to 60 trips per month, and each trip is subsidized by RTD up to $25, with riders paying any remaining portion, or if they have

exceeded the monthly trip cap, 100% of the trip cost.[1] Rides are requested through Uber and Lyft's respective mobile applications or the AaR call center for taxi trips, and all payment is directly with the providers. Due to the length of trips taken by AoD riders, the service has been fare-free for many riders. It is important to note that this policy is changing January 1, 2026.

RTD has offered on-demand trips with taxi companies since 1997 through their former Access-a-Cab program. Ridehail companies were introduced to the service through a pilot program in November 2020. A request was made to the former (Interim) RTD GM/CEO to pilot Uber as part of the Access-a-Cab on-demand services to determine its efficacy in providing a more responsive service platform for paratransit customers. Under this pilot program, customers residing in four zip codes (selected for the concentration of customers residing there) could take up to 60 trips a month when traveling to or from their home address between the hours of 6 and 9 a.m. and 2 and 5 p.m.

In April 2021, the Uber pilot added the capacity to perform trips for those requiring wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs). Most Uber and Lyft vehicles are not accessible to people who utilize wheelchairs. To supplement the fleet RTD began providing vehicles from the AaR fleet for the AoD program to cover this deficiency. In June 2021, the service area was expanded to add three additional zip codes. In January 2022, the service area was opened to include all AaR customers anywhere within the RTD service area, and the time-of-day restrictions were eliminated, meaning the service is available 24/7/365.[2] In January 2023, the Access-on-Demand program was expanded beyond its pilot stage to the four-provider model currently in place.[3]

FTA ADA Regulations

AaR and AoD share a common user base who must meet the eligibility standards for complementary paratransit as established in the regulations. A summary of those requirements offered by the FTA is below:

> "Disability alone does not determine paratransit eligibility; the decision is based on the applicant's functional ability to use the fixed route bus and is not a medical decision. The Department of Transportation (DOT) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations in Appendix D to 49 C.F.R. Section 37.125 explain: "The substantive eligibility process is not aimed at making a medical or diagnostic determination. While evaluation by a physician (or professionals in rehabilitation or other relevant fields) may be used as part of the process, a diagnosis of a disability is not dispositive. What is needed is a determination of whether, as a practical matter, the individual can use fixed route

[1] This part of the AoD program has been modified by RTD effective January 1, 2026. Riders will now have a minimum co-pay of $4.50/$2.25 LiVE fare, with the next $20 (as opposed to $25) of the fare covered by RTD. Any trip costs beyond $24.50 ($4.50 + $20.00) are the responsibility of the rider.

[2] This portion of the AoD program was also modified by RTD and will take effect January 1, 2026. Service will now be available 22 hours a day, 3:30 am to 1:30 am. Service will remain available throughout the RTD service area.

[3] Description of the AoD program is adapted from "FINDINGS OF THE APTA PEER REVIEW PANEL ON ACCESS-A-RIDE AND ACCESS-ON-DEMAND PARATRANSIT AT DENVER REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT," May 20–24, 2024. APTA is the American Public Transit Association

> transit in his or her own circumstances." Transit agencies, with input from the communities they serve, devise the specifics of their individual eligibility processes.[4]"

It is not the intent of this paper to explore the intricacies of ADA Paratransit eligibility determination. Further information on RTD's local process can be found in RTD's publication Access-a-Ride Customer Guide, June 2024 Access-a-Ride Additional Customer Information | RTD-Denver). It is critical to understand that AoD and AaR share the same eligibility determination process and that neither of these services are available to just anyone with a disability. Both services are only open to those found to be eligible for ADA required paratransit services through a process RTD oversees that meets federal screening requirements.

The regulations are intended to broadly make all public transit accessible to everyone. As a practical matter, the ADA and the regulations recognize that it is not fully possible due to the unique needs of individuals. As a result, ADA paratransit is provided as an essential safety net for those who cannot, because of their disability, access regular fixed-route transit services. The ADA was not necessarily intended to create improved mobility for people who cannot drive, it was intended to provide equal access to whatever services are made available to the general population. The ADA regulations establish six service criteria that RTD is legally bound to adhere to in providing these services, regardless of the cost to provide the services.

1. Service Area – Established by proximity to non-commuter fixed-route bus and rail services, available within ¾ mile of non-commuter bus routes and light rail stations.
2. Response Time - Service must be available on request the previous day, meaning eligible individuals can request and receive service at any requested time on any day for which the fixed-route system operates, one day in advance. The maximum request time can be developed locally but must not be less than three days.
3. Fares - The fare for an ADA paratransit trip cannot exceed twice the full fare of a comparable trip on the fixed-route system, with no discounts considered.
4. Trip Purpose Restrictions - Transit agencies cannot impose restrictions or priorities based on the purpose of a trip; service must be provided to eligible riders regardless of where they are going.
5. Hours and Days of Service - Paratransit must be provided on the same days and during the same hours as the fixed-route services for any given trip.
6. Capacity Constraints - Transit agencies are prohibited from limiting the availability of service by placing constraints on capacity, meaning they must have adequate resources to meet the demand from eligible riders.

RTD's Access-a-Ride service meets all six of the service criteria:

1. Service Area – The AaR service area is ¾-mile from RTD non-commuter bus routes and light rail system.
2. Response Time – RTD's current policy allows AaR reservations for the next day and up to seven days in advance.
3. Fares – Current AaR are less than twice the full fare of comparable fixed-route fares:

[4] Frequently Asked Questions | FTA

Figure 1 Access-a-Ride and Fixed-Route Fare Comparison

	Access-a-Ride Cost	Fixed Route Cost
Standard Fare	$4.50	$2.75
Airport Fare	$19	$10
LiVE Fare	$2.25	$1.35

Source: RTD

4. Trip Purpose Restrictions – RTD does not restrict or prioritize trips based on purpose.
5. Hours and Days of Service – Access-a-Ride is available during the same days and hours as RTD local bus service.
6. Capacity Constraints – RTD fulfills every AaR trip that is requested. In order to increase the efficiency of the service, reservations may offer an alternate pick-up or drop-off time. This time may be negotiated to either one hour before or after the requested time, but the time will consider the customer's time constraints. The customer may accept or reject this negotiated time or may suggest a more acceptable option. If Access-a-Ride cannot accommodate the exact schedule request, the reservationist may offer a pick-up time of up to 60 minutes before or up to 60 minutes after the requested pickup time.

Capacity constraints are especially critical as there is a direct connection to AoD service. RTD's ability to provide AaR service without capacity constraints, most particularly as it applies to provisions for transporting people who require use of mobility devices, may be threatened by also using the same fleet of WAV's to offer riders who use mobility devices access to AoD services. Under the law, demand for AaR must be met before any other services, above and beyond those required by the regulations, are offered.

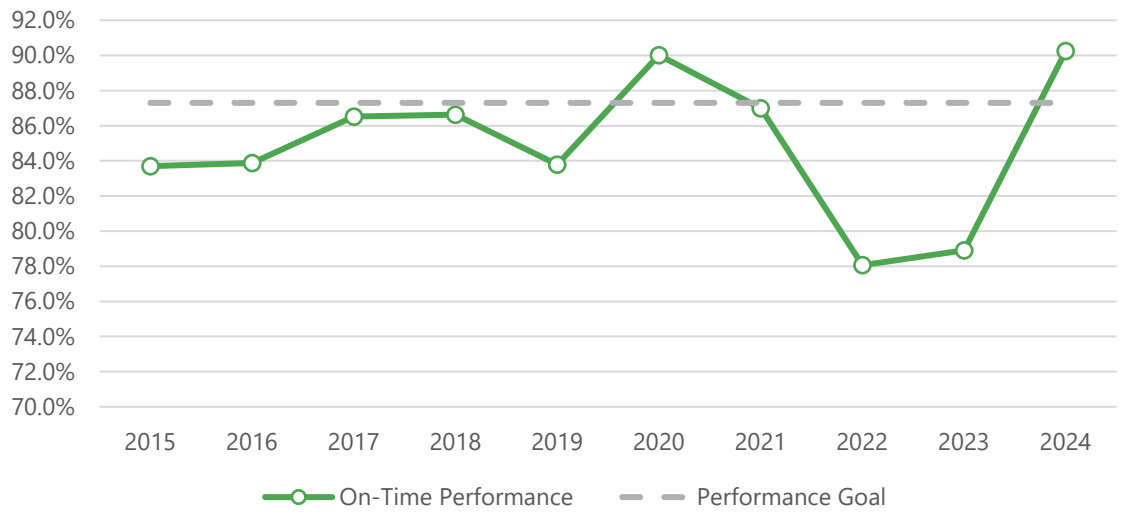
3 Paratransit Program Comparisons

This section will highlight important distinctions between the Access-a-Ride and Access-on-Demand services.

Reliability

With Access-a-Ride being a federally-mandated service, the program closely tracks key performance indicators to evaluate the quality of service being provided. On-time performance and overall reliability of the service is one of the most important metrics because of its customer experience impacts. Vehicles that arrive excessively early or late for trips can cause missed rides or missed medical appointments, which can have negative implications. From 2022-2023, Access-a-Ride's average on-time performance was 78%, which was below their performance goal of 87% (Figure 2). AaR's challenges with reliability coincided with Access-on-Demand's expansion to all AaR riders in the RTD service area. AoD has seen tremendous growth in the past few years, and reliability concerns with AaR could be a factor in riders choosing to use AoD services instead. Conversely, AaR has since made great strides in improving on-time performance. AaR averaged 90% on-time performance in 2024, and as of July 2025, the monthly average was 89%. Of note, comparable information for the availability, response time, and trip time of AoD was not available.

Figure 2 AaR On-Time Performance, 2015-2024



Source: RTD

Ridership Profiles

While AoD service is available to all riders who are eligible for AaR, different kinds of riders are using the services at different levels. Riders who have more severe cognitive disabilities

typically rely on the door-to-door service that AaR provides. The structure of dedicated paratransit vehicles and trained operators is critical for some riders and AaR meets those important needs.

AoD riders are typically more mobile and comfortable traveling alone and can navigate the curb-to-curb travel typical of ridehail and taxi trips. These riders may have vision impairment or another related disability that does not allow them to utilize fixed-route services, while also not requiring the full assistance offered by AaR. These riders have benefited from the increased independence that the AoD program offers.

Fares

Access-a-Ride requires fare payment for each trip booked, and fares can be paid in cash, paper tickets, or through the mobile app. A single one-way ticket is $4.50. There is also a specific $19 fare for trips to the airport. AaR also offers LiVE Fare for paratransit customers enrolled in RTD's income-based fare discount program. LiVE Fare Access-a-Ride tickets are half the price of standard fares.

Access-on-Demand will operate, until January 1, 2026, on a subsidy fare system with riders only paying if their trip cost exceeds $25. Currently, there is no upfront payment for AoD trips, and due to the length of many AoD trips, the service is effectively fare-free for many riders.

The issue of fares and co-payment was one of the pivotal issues in RTD's Access-on-Demand Program Modification decision process. The adopted policy, effective January 1, 2026, is a co-pay of $4.50 for each ride ($2.25 LiVE). This makes the initial fare for AoD equivalent to AaR fares. The level of subsidy, currently set at $25, was lowered to $20 per trip, also effective January 1, 2026. The financial impact that these proposals will have on individual riders is unknown as no publicly available data was provided during the program modification decision process. It is also worth noting that in the RTD Board proceedings there appeared to be a general lack of awareness of RTD's LiVE fare program among AoD riders. The program offers half-fare to riders with qualified lower incomes.

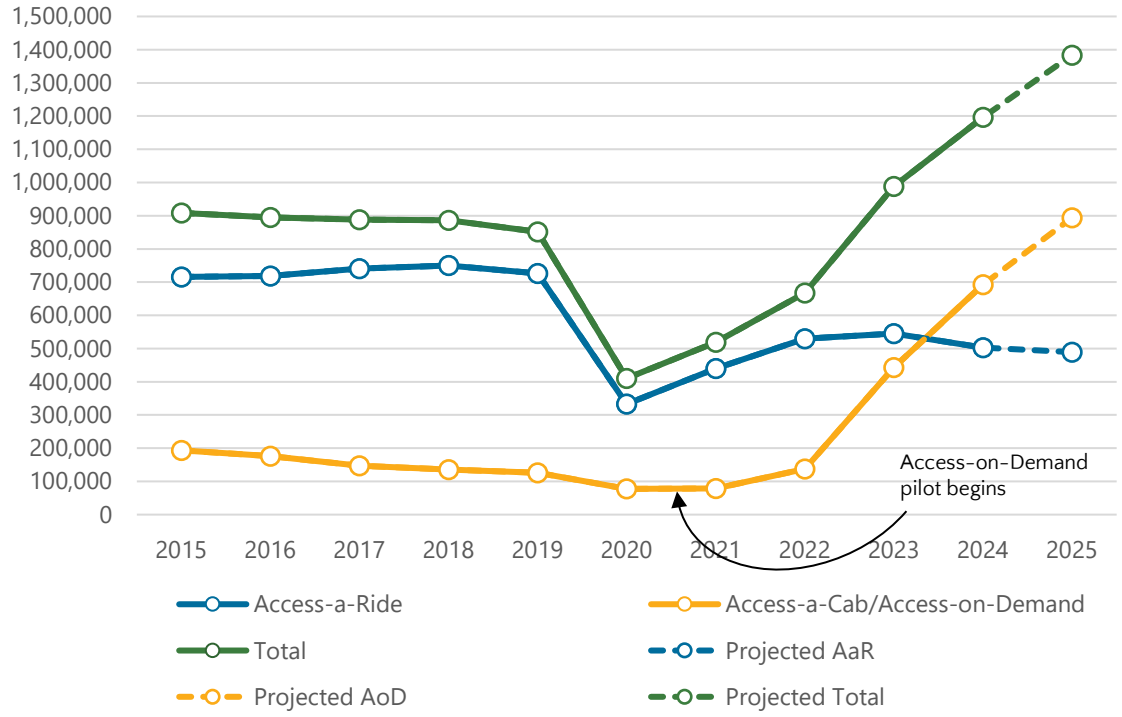
Program Growth

Access-on-Demand has seen nearly exponential growth in ridership. The growth trend demonstrates three important findings:

1. AoD is presenting new mobility opportunities for people.
2. Total paratransit ridership has risen well above historical volumes (Figure 3).
3. Ridership trends into 2025 for AoD are remaining on the same line while AaR is slightly below 2024, but still a very relevant service (Figure 5).

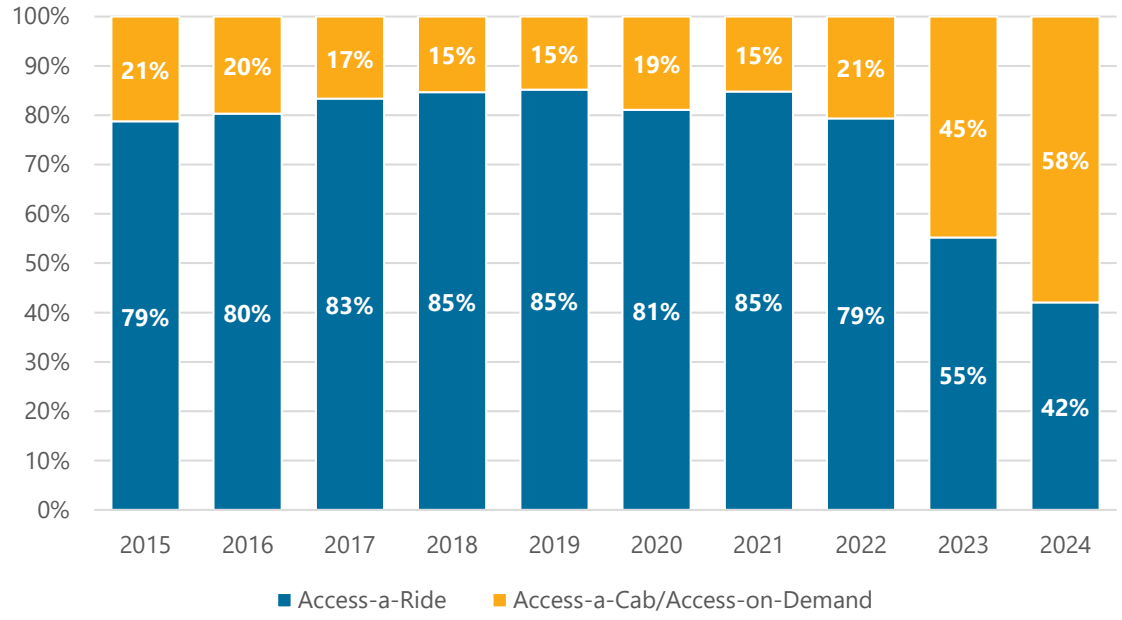
About 20% of all paratransit trips in 2022 were with AoD and the ratio jumped to 44% in 2023. By the end of 2024, 58% of paratransit trips had been delivered by the AoD program (Figure 4). The total number of paratransit trips has increased to historically high levels, due primarily to the growth seen in AoD. While the number of people with disabilities has likely increased over the years, it is more likely that similar numbers of riders are taking more trips than previous years due to mobility options offered by the on-demand service.

Figure 3 Total Number of Paratransit Trips by Program, 2015-2024



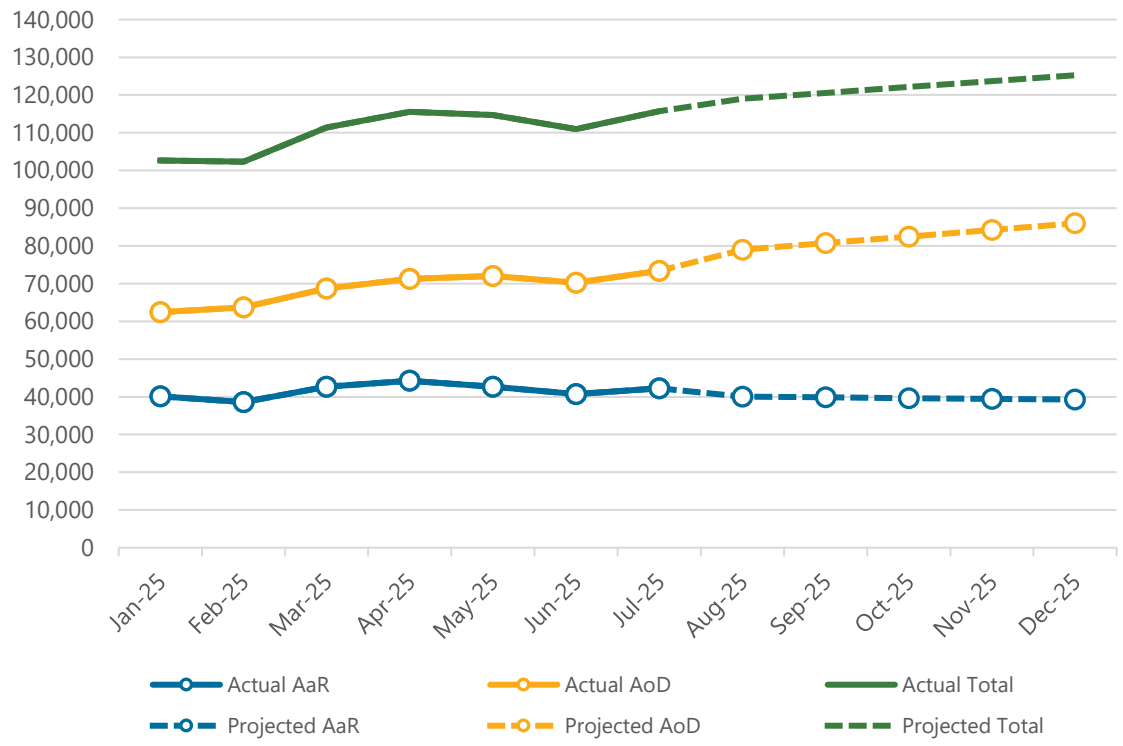
Source: RTD

Figure 4 Proportion of Paratransit Trips by Program, 2015-2024



Source: RTD

Figure 5 Paratransit Trips by Program, 2025 Actuals and Projections



Source: RTD

Financial Sustainability

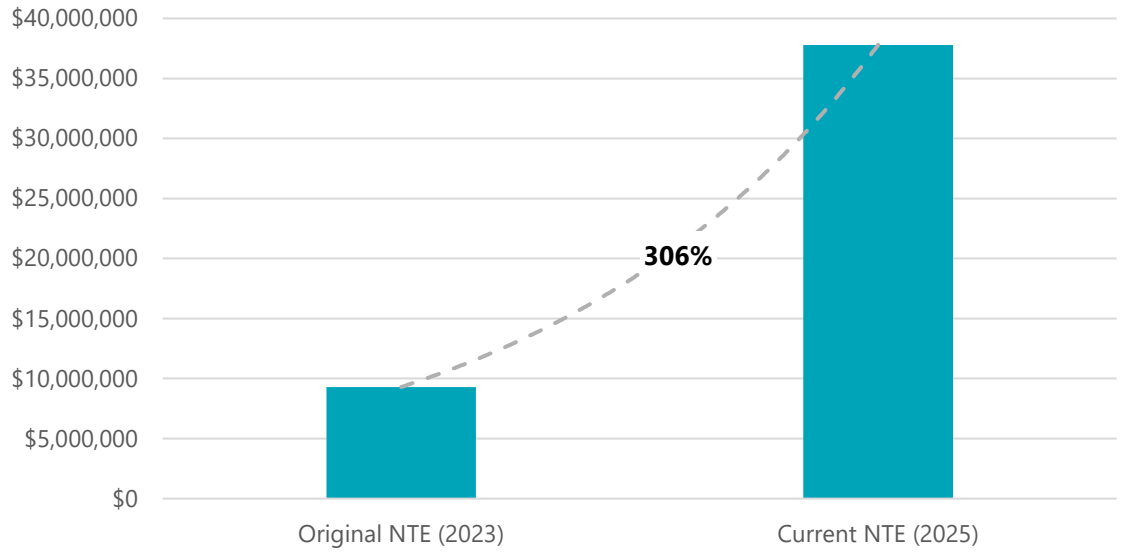
Financial sustainability is one of the most difficult areas of the paratransit controversy related to AoD. RTD management has legitimate concerns about a program that, at its inception, had an annual program cost of less than $1 million per year ballooning to more than $12 million per year in direct contract costs, plus another $12 million per year in costs transferred from the AaR program to support the availability of WAVs for AoD (Figure 6). The authors of this paper are taking these numbers directly from RTD. The scope of this review has not allowed in-depth independent study of the financial implications of the AaR and AoD programs, especially in the context of the full financial picture of the agency. However, the history of the direct contracts with service providers alone (Figure 6) creates significant credence to RTD management's concerns about the long-term financial sustainability of the AoD program.

A similar scope limitaiton existed for the APTA Peer Review cited earlier, but the financial sustainability of the program was also addressed by the review panel.

"*In considering the long-term sustainability of the paratransit and on-demand service, the panel identified the fundamental "problem statement" for RTD as follows:*

RTD needs to contain costs while providing ADA complementary paratransit and continuing to offer premium service."

Figure 6 Access-on-Demand Not to Exceed (NTE) Amounts



Source: RTD

RTD has a responsibility to be attentive to rapid increases in program costs and what it means for the financial sustainability of the organization as a whole. It is tempting to make a value-judgement about the costs of AoD services compared to AaR, as well as many other services provided by RTD. There is also a temptation to debate how the finances of RTD are being managed from a historical perspective, but this detracts from the main question of this controversy, which is what mobility should be offered to people with disabilities? This question is larger than RTD, and from a state governance perspective, it is a question to be considered for the entire state. Furthermore, people with disabilities also rely on fixed-route transit, so considering the full suite of transit services is critical to address all mobility needs. RTD must consider the financial sustainability of all services when evaluating new service opportunities.

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4 Case Studies

RTD is not the only agency facing challenges managing their paratransit program. Other transit agencies are exploring ways to offer improved mobility to people who are unable to use fixed-route services in cost-effective and financially sustainable ways. This section will review examples of programs at other agencies and lessons learned from them.

Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) - Chicago

In August 2025, the RTA board unanimously voted to use over $40 million in reserves and discretionary funds to help the region's paratransit program run by Pace. Paratransit costs had become unmanageable since the introduction of a ride-share program in 2024 which allows riders with disabilities to call subsidized Ubers in lieu of traditional paratransit vehicles. The program was at risk of ending the year over budget by $50 million and facing program cuts later in 2025 but is able to avoid this thanks to proposed guiderails on the ride-share program and emergency funds from RTA.

The program will now have a cap of 30 rides per month which modifies the current allowance of up to eight rides per day. Fares will also increase to $3.25 from $2, but Pace will continue to subsidize the remainder of the trip up to $30. With these modifications, riders will still be able to access this popular service under a more financially-manageable structure.

Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) - New York

In New York, the MTA sought to contain exponential on-demand "E-Hail" trip growth in order to maintain the financial sustainability of its paratransit service. The agency launched a pilot program for an on-demand service that offers participating Access-A-Ride customers the opportunity to book trips in real time through five taxi or for-hire vehicle service providers. Under the pilot phase of MTA's E-Hail program, for the price of the base paratransit fare (which equals the fixed-route fare), 1,200 pilot customers were offered unlimited on-demand trips with no cap on the trip fare. This led to costs exceeding $100,000 per year for the top 6% of E-Hail customers. With over 175,000 Access-A-Ride customers, MTA concluded that the E-Hail pilot was financially unsustainable, and it would have been impractical to continue the program as-is or expand the program further.

To reduce costs while offering customers the benefits of an on-demand program, MTA created a new program structure that is currently in operation. Under the new phase of the pilot program, 1,600 customers are enrolled in the E-Hail program. E-Hail customers are offered 25 or 40 trips per month (depending on their prior E-Hail or traditional Access-A-Ride usage) and pay a minimum of $4 per trip, as well as the remaining fare if their trip exceeds $60. Customers must pay the full fare if they exceed their monthly trip allocation. This new structure has enabled the MTA to serve about twice the number of active riders at one-third the total monthly cost versus the unlimited pilot program. If the new iteration of the E-Hail program

continues to demonstrate financial sustainability, MTA will continue to expand invitations to the service.[5]

Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) – Boston

The MBTA launched its on-demand paratransit service, now called The RIDE Flex, with a pilot program involving Uber and Lyft in 2016. The program offers eligible customers subsidized on-demand rides with ridehail partners, complementing the MBTA's traditional advance-reservation paratransit service known as The RIDE.

The original version of the new mobility program provided users with a subsidized, more flexible travel option for an unlimited number of trips per month. In 2017, the MBTA expanded the pilot to include all eligible RIDE users. However, significant trip caps were implemented based on rider's usage patterns. By 2020 the program had evolved to the Provider Options Pilot (POP), which allowed the agency to assign a trip to a ridehail partner like Uber or Lyft if the customer opted-in. In 2021 the program was renamed The RIDE Flex. This rebranded service offered a common opt-in agreement for customers to have their trips assigned to either a traditional RIDE vehicle or an on-demand ridehail partner. As of 2024, The RIDE Flex allows eligible customers to schedule on-demand trips directly through the Uber and Lyft apps.

In 2025 fares for the on-demand service, The RIDE Flex, are a $3 base co-pay for each trip. The MBTA subsidizes up to $40 for each trip, and riders pay any remaining cost over $43. Riders who opt to schedule their trip through The RIDE Access Center, which is the customer service center for the ADA Paratransit service, The RIDE, pay The RIDE fare which is $3.35 for a regular ADA paratransit fare or $1.70 for a senior/low-income eligible fare. The RIDE also offers a "premium service" that is beyond ADA requirements that has a fare of $5.50 ($2.80 for senior/low-income). Premium service offers flexibility to modify reservations the day prior to service as well as the ability to travel beyond the ADA ¾ mile boundary. It is not clear how the extended service area of The RIDE premium service transfers to The RIDE Flex service.

Pinella Suncoast Transportation Authority (PSTA) – Florida

PSTA also saw significant increases in overall paratransit ridership after implementing their Mobility On Demand (MOD) program. During the first year of implementation, MOD trips captured only 14% of the share of total paratransit trips but rose significantly over the next two years to reach 53% of all trips. As of 2024, 62% of paratransit trips are with the on-demand program.[6]

[5] "FINDINGS OF THE APTA PEER REVIEW PANEL ON ACCESS-A-RIDE AND ACCESS-ON-DEMAND PARATRANSIT AT DENVER REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT," May 20–24, 2024. APTA is the American Public Transit Association

[6] IBID

5 Key Takeaways

Future Considerations

In the APTA Peer Review document cited above, there is a clear finding that it is critical to resolve the issues in front of RTD:

> *"Develop a clearly stated vision for paratransit as a whole to guide priorities in the AaR and AoD services."*

In many ways, this is at the kernel of the controversy. The AoD program clearly provides a mobility benefit beyond the access guarantees of the ADA inherent in the AaR program. The larger question concerns what the program is trying to achieve and what its boundaries should be. Without a clear definition and understanding, almost any answer is the "right" answer. Further, such a definition can be used as a tool to assess budgetary trade-offs as RTD works to define overall system priorities.

Access and Mobility

It is important to define these terms for clarity as they are at the heart of what is discussed within this paper. Access means a person can find their way to get to a service. The service may not be convenient and may be limited or expensive, but it is available.

Mobility means a person has choice and freedom over their movement. They can get where they want when they want within a cost that fits into their personal budget.

A parallel example could be library systems with static buildings containing literature and media versus a "bookmobile" that travels into rural areas served by the library system with materials limited by its mobile nature. People who utilize the bookmobile have access to the library system, while people who can choose to travel to the main library have mobility.

Within transportation, another example is people who travel between cities using an intercity bus service. Those using an intercity bus service have access, while people driving or flying have mobility.

Mobility Issues

Overall, one of the conclusions about RTD's recent controversy with paratransit is that it is rooted in the need to establish a framework, outside of the minimum requirements of the ADA, for the mobility of people with disabilities. It is noteworthy that the controversy surrounding RTD paratransit is not about the program that supports basic access to public transportation,

AaR, although there have been rider and advocate concerns about that program raised in public discourse. Much of the controversy is about the mobility improvement offered by AoD which offers improved options as compared to the basic access offered by AaR. An example is the ability to move with a degree of spontaneity versus needing to plan ahead by at least one day. Riders have said, why are we still cleaving to the concepts of mobility that were hatched 35 years ago (referring to the service criteria established under the ADA)? That is a great and legitimate question, but additional questions also need to be answered: what are we striving for? How is it measured? How is it provided? How is it paid for? How do the per-ride fiscal costs of providing this service affect resources available to provide the other services that are competing priorities, such as the fixed-route network? AoD has been life-changing for many, but is it the ultimate in mobility for people with disabilities?

Program Issues

AoD is a relatively new program that has proven to meet rider needs in a way that conventional paratransit service, such as AaR, cannot. In the words of RTD riders AoD is "life changing" and "a game changer." This has resulted in a significant increase in demand and program costs in a short period of time. In three years, the popularity of the program has seen the annual ridership surpass that of the AaR program and program costs rise in direct proportion to its popularity. In considering how to modify the program RTD attempted to find a balance between the utility of the service, which is a huge leap in mobility options for people with disabilities, and the financial sustainability of the program.

Despite calls from supporters of the AoD program to convert all of AaR to AoD, that move may be a violation of current federal law and could create legal issues for RTD. The Access-on-Demand program does not meet all the required characteristics as defined by the six service criteria. Issues include, lack of operator training, availability of door-to-door service, capacity constraints due to limited supply of WAVs and the ability of ridehail providers to not accept ride requests. Other issues include, compliance with drug and alcohol regulation and testing, ability to make advanced reservations for service, issues around service animals, lack of evidence that the current, or modified, fare system meets the criteria of being no more than double the fixed route fare for the same trip. The FTA mandates that ADA paratransit service must be accessible for all eligible riders and that all trips must be fulfilled. There is inadequate analysis to establish that the AoD program, as presently established, can meet those criteria.

AaR is a program that is designed to meet the requirements of federal law but is often better suited to the needs of specific riders. Compared to AoD it offers more services specific to individual needs, such as door-to-door service, which is the ability to be escorted from the vehicle to the door, or vice versa. AaR offers the ability to make advanced reservations or subscription trips (not having to arrange for every trip if it is repetitive). Overall, the AaR program offers the ability to navigate the system with support from operators, which is often important to individuals with cognitive disabilities.

Resources

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) from the AaR program are used for AoD since Colorado does not have requirements for WAVs in TNC fleets. The use of AaR WAVs within the AoD program may be endangering RTD's ability to meet demand in the AaR program. without capacity constraints. It is a violation of the ADA paratransit regulations to tell a person

requesting a ride from the AaR program that there is no vehicle available. Equally, it is a violation of the broader ADA regulations to offer any publicly available service, such as AoD, in a manner that is not accessible to people who use mobility devices.

Quality

RTD AaR service has historically had issues with service quality and reliability. This led people to migrate toward a service that they believed would provide a greater degree of reliability. However, current AaR service is provided within service quality parameters considered as acceptable levels of performance for ADA paratransit and, to date, there is no data available to affirm that AoD is better, worse, or comparable.

Equity

The paratransit regulations of the ADA are intended to create a safety net and ensure people of disability have access to public transit service as a civil right. However, since passage of the ADA, it has become more obvious that just providing access does not create or equate to equity in mobility. The AoD program has offered significant advances in mobility for many people with disabilities. There is no question the service has improved the lives of many people with disabilities bringing them closer, in mobility terms, to non-disabled members of the community. However, the program has created new disparities. There are people who cannot use these services due to their disability because they need service elements not offered by the AoD program. In other cases, there may be people who are not ADA-eligible according to the program criteria but are disabled nevertheless and unable to drive as a result. In cases where their residence is not within reach of RTD's fixed route service, they also cannot use AoD service, even though it is available in their neighborhood, due to their ineligibility for ADA paratransit.

Decision Process

Observation of the RTD decision process to make modifications to the AoD program suggests that members of the RTD Board and staff truly understand the gravity of the issue. RTD is committed to finding a solution that works for the current and future riders of RTD's paratransit programs and also works for the balance of the RTD system and its financial underpinnings. Engagement with the community at the Board and staff levels has been extensive, and the decision process has been careful and deliberate. However, fact-based information for decision-making has not been in abundance. This leaves the decisions made that will impact people's lives in a policy-level debate that is not supported with information to justify a specific direction. There will be criticism of the decision that was reached as there is no perfect answer.

It should be noted that newly established RTD policy may well continue to evolve based on collaboration with the community. Equally, there is the issue of establishing what services and how much RTD should be spending on paratransit and other services and programs to meet the needs of the entire community. AoD is a valuable service to those who are eligible and can utilize the service, Comparatively speaking, the service is high cost, in terms of provision, and benefits a narrow spectrum of the community. That is not intended to denigrate its importance, only to point out that, literally, thousands of people with disabilities depend on RTD's fixed route bus, rail systems, and AaR every day. The entire community depends on RTD to make

program decisions that balance all of these needs and interests, that includes maintaining a financially viable transit system.

Statewide Issues

RTD is one of only a handful of transit agencies in Colorado to offer a service similar to AoD. People with disabilities who reside in places like Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, Greeley, Pueblo, or Grand Junction have mobility issues similar to people in the greater Denver region, yet a service similar to AoD is not available to them.

Buried within the controversy are other key state-level governance issues that have been exemplified by the rise of the AoD program, namely, why are not publicly available ridehail services accessible to people with disabilities, especially those who use mobility devices? Why are ride-hailing companies able to provide operators with minimal training and employment requirements, compared to the more rigorous standards required for paratransit drivers? Why are ride-hail operators not subject to some form of drug and alcohol testing, as most other transportation operating personnel (transit, aviation, maritime, railroads) are? The Colorado Public Utilities Commission is just recently taking up these questions, appropriately. Similar considerations arise regarding ridehail drivers' employment status: unlike front-line workers in most other sectors of the transportation industry, ridehail drivers are generally unable to organize and bargain collectively about wages, benefits, and working conditions.

AoD service economy depends on access to ridehail drivers who are not employees of any company and are legally deemed "independent" contractors. The operators personally provide the vehicle, fuel, and maintenance of a vehicle in return for their share of the fare. On a net per hour basis, most of these operators fail to achieve minimum hourly wage. The exception to this situation with Lyft and Uber are the WAVs and operators shared with the AaR program to provide accessible vehicles to the AoD service, Ztrip to a certain extent, and the taxi agencies who also provide services under the AoD banner.

The issues with ridehail companies go beyond operator wages. Conventional ridehail operators receive minimal training in working with people with disabilities or defensive driving; they are not subject to ongoing background checks, driving record checks, or random drug and alcohol testing; and the vehicles are not routinely tested or inspected for safe state of good repair. Furthermore, the process to exclude specific individuals from providing service is not transparent and does not contain the same level of safeguards as operators who work as contractors or direct employees of RTD. This topic is currently being considered within the USDOT/FTA. The eventual outcome is unknown, but the current common interpretation of regulations is that ridehail services fit the definition of what is commonly known as "the taxi-exemption." Late in 2024, the FTA provided notice that the current interpretation of regulation was incorrect, such that any formal contract between ridehail operators and public transit agencies had to meet all the safeguards expected of public transit operators. The FTA intended to address the issue, but to date, no Notice of Proposed Rule Making has been published on the topic, leaving the future unknown.

6 Considerations for Future Action

The authors of this paper are suggesting the following as logical next steps in the evolution of this issue. These are not recommendations as there remains significant conversation within the community to enable a solid foundation for decision-making.

Establish a framework, outside of the minimum requirements of the ADA, for the mobility of people with disabilities within RTD, and potentially, statewide. This effort could take a number of routes, but it could start with *who should these services be provided for? What services should be provided? What are we striving for? How is it measured? How is it provided? Where is it provided? How is it paid for?* There are a few umbrella options. One option is to let the process that has been started by RTD, including the shaping of policy by stakeholders and riders, work its way through the organic development of policy, then adapt that policy to a statewide application. The other option is for the state to assume leadership on this issue, with the concept that whatever comes out of the process will be applied and funded statewide.

Evaluate the financial impacts of the program modifications on riders and the agency. Engagement with the community at the Board and staff levels has been extensive. The decision process has been careful and deliberate. Even so, the issue of fares, co-pay, and subsidy level, for AoD service needs further evaluation and discussion, particularly in light of establishing a clear framework and goals as described above. It is understood that RTD needed to address the rapid growth of AoD and the resulting financial influences. At the same time there seems to be a dearth of information about how the financial changes, in particular, will impact current riders. While the adopted fare and subsidy changes may be an effective strategy to curb the growth in demand, the context of the co-pay and subsidy levels needs to be understood with respect to current costs and the impacts on riders. How often do AoD riders pay for services beyond the present $25/$20 future subsidy? What is the real impact to a household if they spend $9.00 a day, or more, for a service? Is that an equitable level or will it have a dampening impact on some households based on income? Is there a trade-off between the level of fare and subsidy and the number of monthly trips provided?

Equally, there is the issue of long-term affordability of the AoD program for RTD. Program costs have soared in a three-year span and some portion of AaR resources are being spent on AoD. What do these numbers look like in the future? Will the program modifications actually resolve the longer-term financial stability of the program and RTD's overall financial structure? A misstep occurred in 2022 when the program expanded to all of RTD's service area by not considering the long-term financial implications of the program and taking steps to allow a slower growth curve and additional considerations for rider affordability, This analysis for program affects and financial trends needs more time and analysis to provide greater

confidence the program is financially sustainable and balanced with RTD's other services and programs.

Assess marketing efforts for the LiVE program. A specific note in observing the board process, this observation is not related to what was adopted but could assist AoD and AaR riders, there generally seems to be a lack of awareness of the existence of the LiVE program. A careful evaluation on effective methods to enroll people in the program could be helpful to lower income households. This may help with the establishment of fares for AoD but may also help people who tend to utilize the AaR program.

Consider integration of the two paratransit programs. With the issues of fares and subsidy settled at least temporarily, RTD should consider adaptations to the AaR and AoD programs that melds the two programs more closely together. These services are critical to many people and the functional details of how they are provided and utilized must be carefully assessed. Are there features of each program that could benefit the other? This requires consistent and on-going work with riders and the community to ensure that needed program features are retained in programmatic evolution. It is also suggested that a publicly available dashboard of performance metrics for both programs be established and updated on a regular basis to ensure transparency in service delivery goals and performance.

Evaluate the utilization of RTD's fleet of WAVs and the implications for future fleet size. If present ridership trends and service provision tactics remain on pace, the availability of WAVs could become an important capacity constraint. Understanding these trends in the future, given that current delivery of WAVs can take 18 months or more, might help avert a future crisis for RTD.

Enable publicly available ridehail services to become fully accessible to all people with disabilities, but especially those who utilize mobility devices, meaning availability of WAVs. While it is beyond the current scope of the committee, the state could explore options to increase accessibility features in commonly available ridehail services through incentives or other strategies. Further, the state could adopt regulations or incentives to ensure essential quality parameters and/or pay for ridehail drivers (the PUC is leading a process on ride-hail services, which they regulate, currently as noted previously in this paper). A side consideration for RTD in this arena is to consider at least the outlines of a contingency plan for the AoD service if the outstanding FTA regulation, commonly known as the "taxi exemption" sees substantial re-interpretation and/or issuance of new regulations that influence the ability for public transit agencies to directly contract with ridehail firms.

Understand Remaining Disparities. New disparities that have been created by introduction of the Access-on-Demand program and its dimensions need further understanding. Further exploration of income, geographic, and individual eligibility needs further understanding, evaluation, and possible program modifications.

We make lives better through connections.

October 3, 2025

Colorado General Assembly
State Capitol
Denver, CO 80203

Senator Faith Winter and Members of the General Assembly:

Thank you for your advocacy on behalf of RTD's many Access-on-Demand users. I am writing on behalf of the Board of Directors to update you on our vote earlier this week on modifications to the agency's popular supplemental, premium paratransit service—Access-on-Demand—the reasons behind our vote, and the thorough in-depth process we took to arrive at this challenging decision.

The Board decided on Tuesday, September 30 to implement a fare structure for Access-on-Demand of $2.25 for low-income riders who qualify for our LiVE program and $4.50 for standard fare—***a position supported by both the Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition (CCDC) and National Federation of the Blind (NFB)***.

Access-on-Demand is RTD's supplemental, premium paratransit service, which was created in 2020 to add transit options for paratransit eligible customers beyond our federally mandated Access-a-Ride program. RTD is the only transit agency in the state offering a service along the lines of Access-on-Demand, and the structure of RTD's program, even after the Board's modifications, remains one of the most expansive of its type in the nation. Access-on-Demand allows customers to book a ride on-demand through a third-party transportation network company and/or taxicab company (i.e. Uber, Lyft, zTrip, and Metro Taxi). Customers can then take that trip to any destination within the RTD and RTD will subsidize the trip up to a specific dollar amount. The program has proven to be highly popular with ridership increasing over 300% since its inception. RTD, through formal Board action, has committed nearly $50 million in direct funding to the program since its creation.

On Tuesday, September 30, 2025, a two-thirds majority of the Board approved the aforementioned CCDC and NFB supported fare change as well as the following additional modifications:

- Reinstatement of the highly popular multi-stop functionality, which will allow customers to make up to two stops on one trip (i.e. take a child to school and then continue to work for one fare payment)
- Inclusion of the entire district of 2,345 square miles as allowable service area, which represents a nearly 195% increase over the historic paratransit service area of 795 square miles
- A cap of 60 trips per month
- A service reduction of two hours—the service will not be available from 1:30 a.m. to 3:30 a.m.
- A decrease in the per-trip subsidy to $20 from $25, meaning the customer will pay their fare and then RTD will cover the next $20 of their trip
- An effective date of January 1, 2026, to allow customers to become familiar with these modifications

The Board grappled with this decision for nearly two years, and we sought in-depth input from staff, external experts and the disability community along the way. Since its inception in 2020, the Access-on-Demand program has operated as the only RTD service that does not require customers to pay an upfront fare other than Zero Fare for Youth. While fare revenue represents only ~5% of RTD's total revenues, the rapid expansion of the program, which has grown over 300% since its inception as a pilot program, required the Board to make difficult decisions. Further, despite these modifications, we expect the program to continue to grow and the funding we

provide to the program to continue to increase. The Board is continuously grappling with the appropriate fare level for all services and will monitor the Access-on-Demand fare structure moving forward.

The Board's actions were significantly informed by feedback we received from the community over the last 20 months. As I mentioned above, the Board voted to reinstate the highly popular multi-stop functionality in large part due to the feedback received from customers of the program. Further, the Board voted to preserve the service area for Access-on-Demand to be the entire RTD region; this was done to ensure Access-on-Demand customers residing in locations that are not currently served by local bus service, including many communities Broomfield, retained access to this vital service. While the fare increase was not an easy decision it was a necessary one to contain the program's costs. Additionally, the Board met all the other requests of CCDC and NFB, except for one—the Board authorized a ***significantly greater*** service area than what was requested by those organizations. All paratransit eligible customers, including all who utilize Access-on-Demand, will continue to have access to our fixed route bus, light rail, and commuter rail services at no fare.

Nearly five years ago, RTD staff came to the Board with an innovative solution to improve paratransit services for our region's disabled community. Since 1992, RTD has primarily provided paratransit services through a program known as Access-a-Ride. Access-a-Ride, which is a federally mandated complimentary program to our traditional fixed route bus and light rail services, requires eligible customers to call at least one day ahead to book a trip at a designated time. Further, the service is limited to ¾ of a mile from bus or light rail services. This means that a customer cannot be picked up or dropped off outside of ¾ of a mile of a local fixed route service. On average, RTD pays roughly $106 per Access-a-Ride trip.

The table below shows the relative differences between the two programs after the Board's actions this week to modify the Access-on-Demand program.

Federally Mandated Access-a-Ride Program	**RTD's Supplemental Access-on-Demand Program**
Service area = 795 square miles	Service area = 2,345 square miles
Booking process = schedule 24+ hours in advance	Booking process = on-demand
Service availability = dependent on local bus service	Service availability = 22 hours a day
Number of stops per customer = 1	Number of stops per customer = up to 2
RTD's per trip cost = $106	RTD's per trip cost = $20
RTD's per trip cost for WAV* = $106	RTD's per trip cost for WAV* = $270

*WAV = Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle

As you can see from the above chart, the premise behind the creation of Access-on-Demand was simple and straightforward. If RTD could replace Access-a-Ride trips, which cost ~$106 per trip, with trips provided by transportation network companies and/or cab companies (such as Uber, Lyft, zTrip, and Metro Taxi) capped at a per-trip subsidy of no more than $20 or $25 then everyone would win. RTD could decrease trip costs, while customers would gain more utility through on-demand booking and greater travel time flexibility.

The result has been nothing short of amazing. Utilization has boomed, customer satisfaction has skyrocketed, and the Board applauds the foresight of RTD staff for launching a program that has added immense value to the lives of thousands of disabled individuals across the region. Despite the well-intentioned aims of saving the agency money through operating efficiencies, the program has proven to be more popular than even the most aggressive initial estimates and continues to experience compound growth in both the number of trips provided and customers using the program. As such, we expect to continue to grow our financial commitment to the program.

At our meeting this week, the Board approved an additional $9.4 million in spending for the program. As it currently stands, the program, which was originally expected to cost $9.7 million, has spending authorization of $47.8 million. And we anticipate authorizing more spending during the current contract terms which run through June 2026. This represents nearly $50 million in additional spending for paratransit customers from 2020 – 2026. An additional $15-plus million will be spent on the program annually moving forward. And that number is expected to grow as the modifications will only slow the rate of growth in the program.

Regardless of the Board's actions to lessen the impact of the modifications, we understand that these changes will have serious implications for many of RTD's most vulnerable customers. As elected officials we acutely appreciate the challenges you all faced this year when making decisions to cut hundreds of millions of dollars in spending for crucial State programs. In that regard we empathize with your duties as fellow elected officials and wish you the best as you tackle similar decisions in the year ahead.

I am immensely proud of the agency's innovations to provide paratransit options that are of greater value to our customers. The Board has been following closely the work of the legislature's RTD Accountability Committee, which is examining our paratransit offerings, and of which I am a non-voting member. Should the RTD Accountability Committee have further recommendations on how to improve our paratransit programs, we will give those recommendations the highest consideration. Now that the Board has made modifications to the Access-on-Demand program, our Operations, Safety, and Security Committee will be returning its attention to making improvements in our Access-a-Ride program in furtherance of our commitment to serving our region's disabled community. We would be happy to keep you updated on our progress to improve Access-a-Ride.

Attached to this letter is a presentation provided to the Accountability Committee from Nelson Nygaard, a highly respected transit consultancy hired by the Colorado Energy Office to educate members of the committee on RTD's paratransit programs. I found this presentation, commissioned outside of RTD, to be a fair, balanced, and realistic overview of our paratransit programs and the potential paths forward. The Board is eager to engage with whatever recommendations come from the committee's analysis. Below are several key takeaways:

- "RTD Board and staff understand the gravity of the issue in front of them and are committed to finding a solution that works for the current and future riders of RTD's paratransit programs that also works for the balance of the RTD system and its financial underpinnings" (slide 15)
- "Engagement with the community at the Board and staff levels has been extensive, and the decision process has been careful and deliberate" (slide 15)
- "There will be criticism of whatever decision is reached as there is no perfect answer" (slide 15)

We remain steadfastly committed to serving the most vulnerable individuals in our region and look forward to our continued partnership.

Sincerely,

Julien Bouquet, RTD Board Chair, Director, District G

Cc: Board of Directors; Debra A. Johnson, RTD General Manager and CEO; Jack Kroll, Executive Manager, RTD Board Office; Michael Davies, RTD Government Relations Officer

Enclosures: RTD *Paratransit Accountability*, Tim Payne and Bethany Goad of Nelson Nygaard, Sept. 2025
Letter from Colorado Cross Disability Commission and National Federation of the Blind, Sept. 2025

Operation Workers Recruitment and Retention

October 2025 Preliminary Discussion

Philip Plotch, principal researcher

Eno Center for Transportation

Eno's Tasks

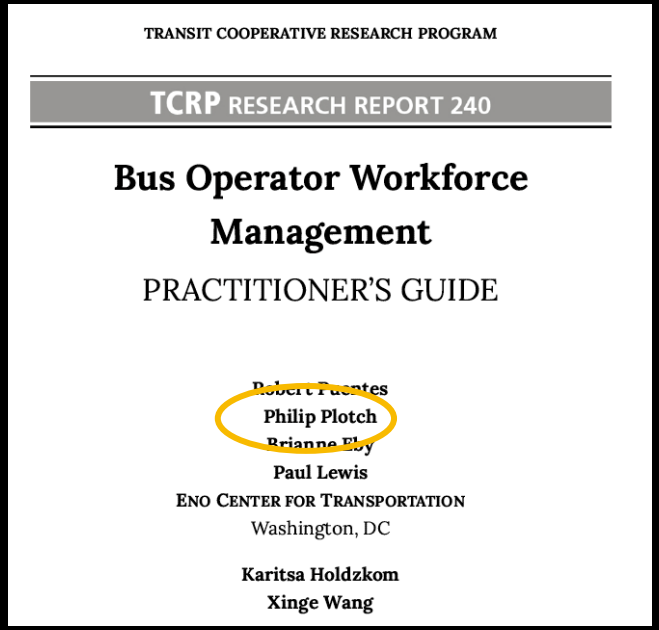
- ✓ Literature review
- ✓ Reviewed RTD data and initiatives
- ✓ Interviewed 9 RTD and labor representatives

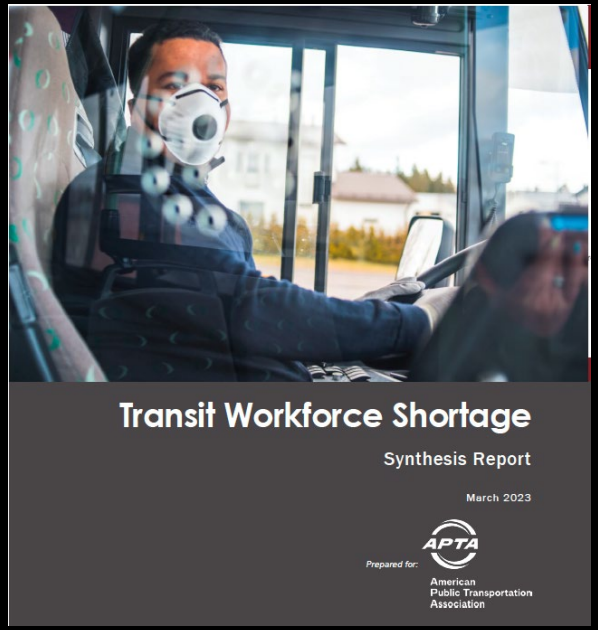
Presenting findings from literature and data to Committee

- Prepare white paper that will incorporate interview findings
- Presentation to Committee

1. Background
2. Recruitment
3. Compensation
4. Hiring Processes
5. Training
6. Safety, Health, and Working Conditions
7. Retention and Motivation

National Research Studies





2022 Survey

- 96% of transit agencies experiencing workforce shortage
- 84% said shortage affects their ability to provide service.

2019: “RTD Proposes Significant Cuts To Bus and Train Service Over Driver Shortage"

RTD Bus Operators

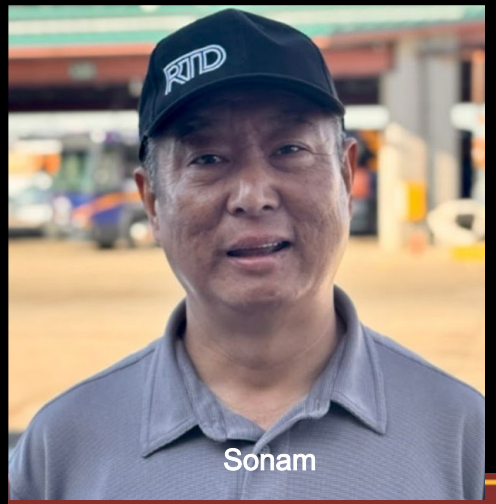
Year	*Budgeted*	*Actual*
2023	952	811
2024	952	879
2025	1,002	894

RTD Rail Operators (LR and CR)

Year	*Budgeted*	*Actual*
2023	250	204
2024	262	229
2025	276	237

Bus operators

- Drivers
- Ambassadors
- Passenger safety
- Answer questions
- Log trips
- Communicate about dangers, crashes, disruptions
- Directly affects on-time performance and reliability



1. Background
2. Recruitment
3. Compensation
4. Hiring Processes
5. Training
6. Safety, Health, and Working Conditions
7. Retention and Motivation

Number of RTD's job applications

Year	Ave. Monthly	Notes
2023	1,010	-
2024	1,488	-
2025	2,152	*Thru Sept 15*

Budgeted number of RTD employees = 3,639

Recruiting challenges (nationwide) in hiring operators

- Long working hours
- Seen as inflexible and rules-based
- Negative public perceptions of transit
- Fear of potential assault from passengers
- Unhoused / mental health / substance abuse
- Federal drug testing requirements

Most Widely Used Strategies (national)

- Internet ads and social media
- Employee referrals
- On-vehicle ads
- Job fairs
- Walk-ins
- Newspaper ads
- Work with labor unions and community organizations
- Community college and vocational school partnerships
- Pre-employment apprenticeships

RTD’s top recruiting sources

- RTD web site
- Indeed
- LinkedIn
- Employee Referral
- Handshake Network

At transit agencies across the nation

Pay has lower relevance to prospective employees than it has in the past.

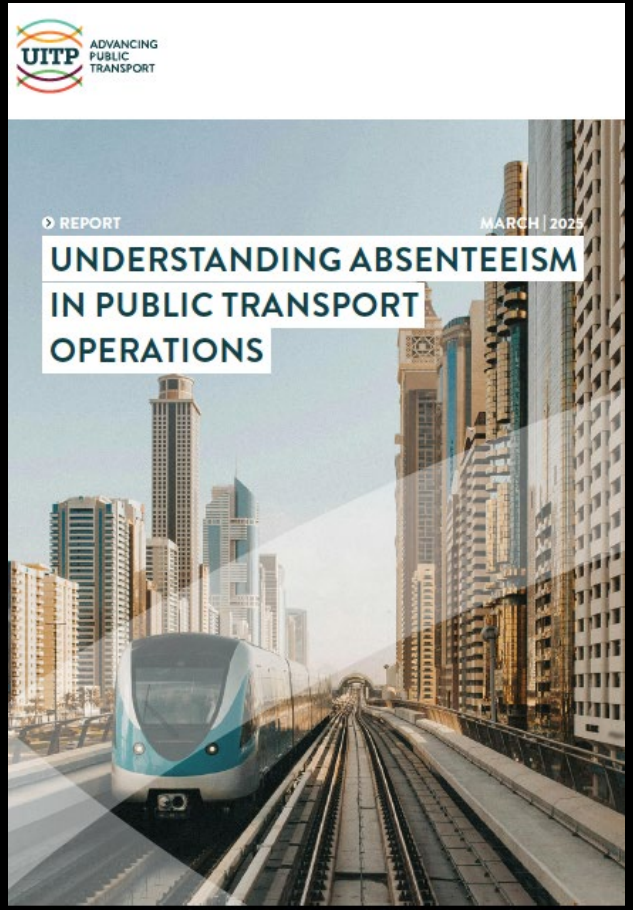
Hours of Work

May start at 3 AM or 3 PM. Work on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.

22% of bus operations staff are on “Extraboard”

Absenteeism Rate (excluding planned): Approx. 10%

“While many agree that the arduous nature of the profession, with its atypical working hours and risk of aggression, is a key factor in explaining the rise in absenteeism, this is not the only explanatory factor. The COVID-19 pandemic incited a profound change in people’s relationship to work, even if a majority of employees were never absent before or after the pandemic.”



1. Background
2. Recruitment
3. Compensation
4. Hiring Processes
5. Training
6. Safety, Health, and Working Conditions
7. Retention and Motivation

Comparing RTD's 2025 top hourly rate among 269 transit agencies

Bus operators: 37 *(up from 64 in 2024)*

Bus mechanics: 16 *(up from 28 in 2024)*

Bus Operator Hourly Salaries

Agency	Starting Salary	Top Rate
Portland	$29.35	$39.12 (3 years)
Denver	$27.65	$35.02 (4 ½ years)
Philadelphia	$26.50	$37.76 (4 years)
Salt Lake City	$21.44	$25.19 (5 years)

Comparing RTD bus operator salaries with private industry in Denver region

Practices that RTD and ATU should consider

- Incentives for employees opting out of healthcare programs
- Incentives to take less desirable shifts
- Incentives for good performance
- Child-care subsidies

1. Background
2. Recruitment
3. Compensation
4. Hiring Processes
5. Training
6. Safety, Health, and Working Conditions
7. Retention and Motivation

Qualifications for RTD bus operator position include:

- H.S. diploma
- 19+ years old
- Valid driver's license for past 2 years.
- No DUI, DWI, or reckless driving in past 5 years.
- 2 years of customer service experience
- Pass physical examination
- Read, write, and speak English
- Understand maps and timetables
- Maintain professional composure while under stress and pressure.

Or an equivalent…

Considerations

Expediting hiring process -- DMV delays issuing CDL permit

A realistic job preview

Difficult to predict future success

Converting Applicants to New Hires (2025 data)

Hiring step	*Bus operators*	*Train operators*
Applications	1,653	383
Conditional Offer	134	83
Accepted	134	52
Hired	122	48
Started	102	32

Ave. # of days from submitting application to accepting conditional offer

Bus operator	37
Train operator	58
General Repair Mechanic	43

Best Practices (per Eno Research): Hiring Process Strategies

Study sessions to help w/testing and applications.

Streamline and streamline again

HR needs sufficient staffing

Meet current employees

1. Background
2. Recruitment
3. Compensation
4. Hiring Processes
5. Training
6. Safety, Health, and Working Conditions
7. Retention and Motivation

Training

Onboarding process

Some agencies have mentorship programs

Managers and supervisor training

July 2025: 22 graduates from RTD's 12-week training program

1. Background
2. Recruitment
3. Compensation
4. Hiring Processes
5. Training
6. Safety, Health, and Working Conditions
7. Retention and Motivation

Work Environment Issues for operators

Physically and emotionally taxing work

Assaults

Restroom access

Relates to:

Job Satisfaction, Absenteeism, Costs, Retention,

RTD employees who agree or strongly agree:

“I feel that I am safe from crime in the work environment.”

Worker type	2023	2024	2025
Represented	35%	51%	53%
Non represented	56%	77%	83%

1. Background
2. Recruitment
3. Compensation
4. Hiring Processes
5. Training
6. Safety, Health, and Working Conditions
7. Retention and Motivation

RTD's attrition numbers for *light rail* operators

Year	0 to 12 months	13 to 18 months	19 to 24 months	Total attrition
2025	20	2	4	26
2024	13	4	2	19
2023	24	4	3	31
2022	22	6	4	32

Per APTA Survey

Most Effective Strategies to Retain Employees

Per *current* transit workers

#1. Increase pay

#2. Provide better work schedules

Former workers

#1. Listening to concerns and responsiveness

#2. Increase pay

Employees who agree or strongly agree: "I have trust in my departmental manager(s) to make decisions that align with the values of the organization."

Worker type	***2024***	***2025***
Represented	62%	67%
Non-represented	78%	81%

Former workers

1. Listening to concerns and responsiveness.

RTD Terminations

Year	Voluntary	Involuntary
2023	233	65
2024	264	66
2025 (as of Aug. 30)	227	78

Top Reasons for RTD Termination 2025 through Aug. 30

Voluntary top reasons

1. Unknown (57)
2. Retirement (44)
3. Family Reasons (39)
4. Other employment (37)
5. In lieu of termination (24)

Involuntary top reasons

1. Job performance (76)
2. Medical (6)
3. Drug/alcohol violation (4)

Professional Development

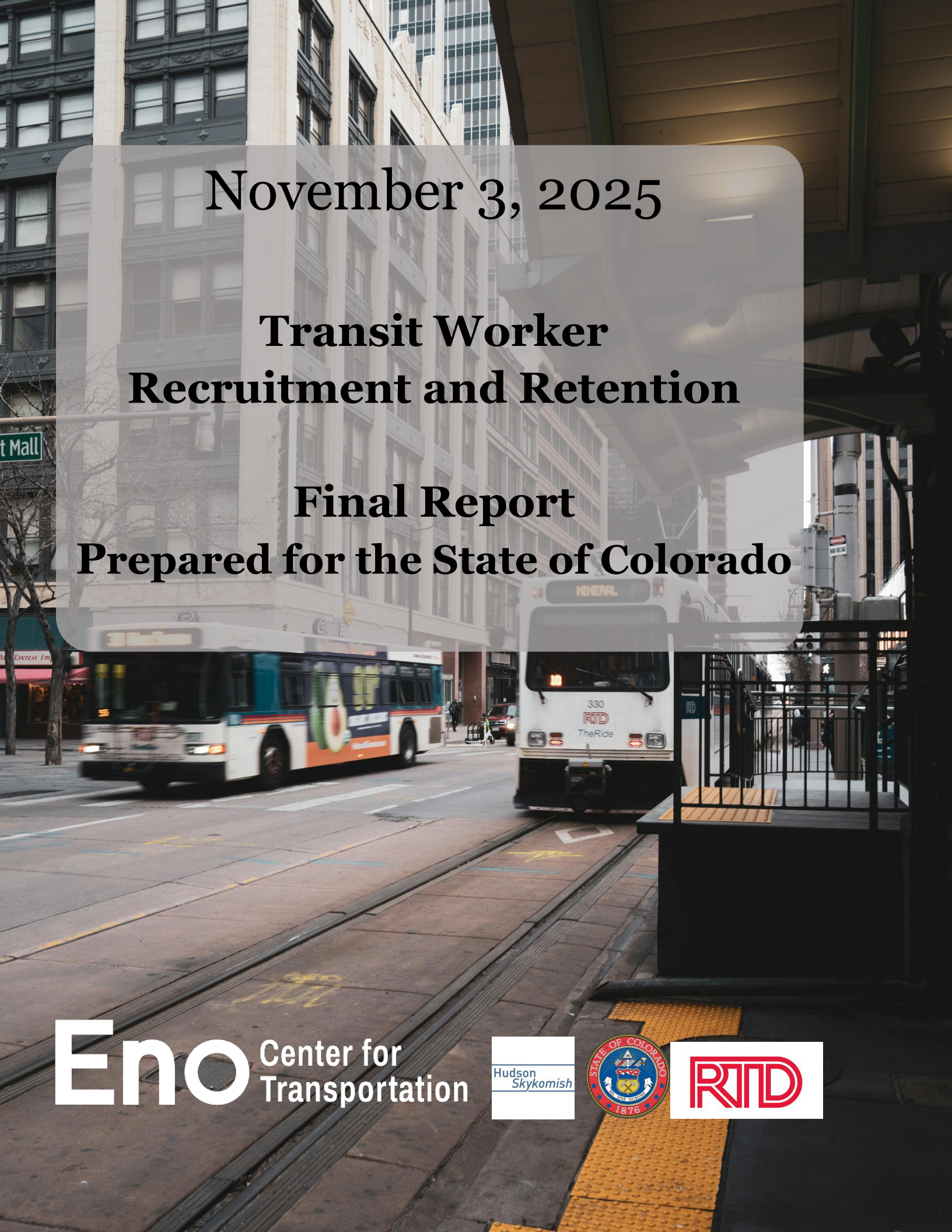
RTD offers up to $5,200 per year for tuition, certification, textbooks, etc.

Fewer than 15 bus operators and 5 rail operators submit requests per year.

Eno’s Tasks

Next Steps

- Prepare white paper that will incorporate interview findings
- Presentation to Committee



November 3, 2025

Transit Worker Recruitment and Retention

Final Report
Prepared for the State of Colorado

Eno Center for Transportation

Hudson Skykomish

STATE OF COLORADO 1876

RTD

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1. Introduction

Eno's work on behalf of RTD Accountability Committee

In 2025, the Colorado Legislature passed and Governor Polis signed SB25-161 into law. This Transit Reform act created a short-term "RTD Accountability Committee" with fifteen appointed members assigned the mission of evaluating Regional Transportation District's (RTD's) governance, including management-labor relations pertaining to workforce recruitment and retention. The committee will develop a report with recommendations which it will then deliver to the legislature and governor to help support RTD's success as the Denver region's transit agency.

The Eno Center was retained to advise the committee on the topic of workforce recruitment and retention. The Eno Center for Transportation ("Eno") is a national transportation research institution with several programs and past studies related to workforce issues in the transportation field. Eno performed the following four tasks relating to the preparation of a transit worker retention and recruitment white paper to inform the RTD Accountability Committee.

First, Eno conducted a review of existing literature relating to the hiring and retention of transit operators and mechanics. Sources included academic journals, government research, case studies, industry reports, and data from service providers. This literature review was shared with the RTD Accountability Committee in October 2025 and is incorporated as an appendix to this report.

Second, Eno analyzed recent Regional Transportation District (RTD) data and initiatives relating to workforce recruitment and retention. This included vacancy rates, classification and wage rates, retention rates, and survey data. Eno presented its preliminary findings from these first two steps to the committee on October 22.
Key sources of RTD-related information available on the web include:

- 2025 Employee Ownership Survey Data: https://www.rtd-denver.com/performance-dashboard/survey-data and previous survey info: https://leg.colorado.gov/sites/default/files/images/01.17.25_rtd_joint_transportation_committee_presentation.pdf and https://cdn.rtd-denver.com/image/upload/v1715887198/2023_Employee_Ownership_Survey_Data_n1mctc.pdf.
- RTD's Transit Watch mobile application data: https://www.rtd-denver.com/security-related-metrics.

- Career information: https://www.rtd-denver.com/careers
- RTD's collective bargaining agreement: www.atu1001denver.org/?zone=/unionactive/view_article.cfm&HomeID=965033&page=RTD

Third, Eno conducted interviews with ten representatives of RTD and ATU (Amalgamated Transit Union Local 1001) to gain an understanding of RTD's current challenges and opportunities in hiring and retention with a particular focus on bus and rail operators, who are critical to the core mission of the agency and which RTD like other agencies has struggled to recruit and retain in recent years. ATU represents about two-thirds of RTD's workforce including bus and train operators, mechanics, and other frontline workers.

Fourth, based on the previous three steps, this white paper synthesizes the findings from the literature review, identifies national best practices, assesses Denver's unique challenges, and presents recommendations to improve RTD's recruitment and retention strategies.

The following high-level items provide context for this report:

- The Denver region generally and RTD in particular are not immune from the fundamental changes shaping the U.S. labor market generally and the U.S. transit industry in particular. RTD does not appear to be an outlier in the recruitment and retention challenges it is confronting or in the ways it is confronting them, relative to other public transit agencies.

- Public transit is generally a highly routinized, regulated and unionized industry that by its nature is structured by schedules, rules and hierarchy, including procedures that reward seniority. These characteristics were established for good reasons, particularly the priority of maximizing safety and putting a reliable service out on the street with skilled, reliable employees. However, these features of the industry can be less attractive to younger generations of workers accustomed to the "gig" economy, flexible hours, and "work-life" balance.

- Eno's inquiry found that officials both within RTD management and the local leadership of ATU Local 1001 were frank, informative and open about sharing their perspectives and information with us. We found diligent, well-intentioned professionals on both sides of the table, grappling in good faith with challenges that are national in origin.

- This document addresses recruitment and retention issues associated with the fixed bus and rail services provided by RTD employees, not the services that RTD contracts out to private firms.

- RTD does not possess the authority to unilaterally adopt some of the suggestions in this document because it is a public sector organization whose operating employees are organized and represented by ATU, with terms and conditions spelled out in a collective bargaining agreement (the current agreement is in effect until December 31, 2027.) Labor unions at transit agencies have traditionally resisted changes to seniority based systems which are used to determine compensation, shift assignments, and route selection Although this approach is intended to promote fairness and objectivity by rewarding employees with longer service, it can impact efforts to recruit and retain new employees

- One general recommendation that applies to recruiting and retention issues does not require any union approval. RTD should collaborate more with other transit agencies to identify best practices and benchmark data. This could be done by using an existing organization, such as the American Public Transit Association (APTA) or the American Bus Benchmarking Group (a consortium of medium sized bus agencies.) Alternatively, the RTD General Manager / Chief Executive Officer could initiate an ongoing collaboration with several other transit agencies to share best practices and data.

This report contains the following sections: Recruitment and Retention; Workforce Needs Assessment; Recruitment; Compensation; Hiring Processes; Training; Safety/Health/Working Conditions; Retention and Motivation; Appendix (Literature Review.) It was prepared by Philip Plotch (Eno's principal research and senior fellow) with the assistance of Sohail Husain (Eno policy analyst) and David Bragdon (Hudson Skykomish principal).

2. Recruitment and Retention

The Denver region is not alone in experiencing huge changes in workforce trends over the past several years ago, and therefore RTD is far from unique as a transit agency that is encountering challenges with the recruitment and retention of transit vehicle operators and mechanics. Indeed, part of Eno's task was to compare RTD to other similar agencies in comparable cities. According to a 2022 survey conducted on behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the transit workforce shortage is widespread and severe: 96 percent of transit agencies reported experiencing

a workforce shortage, and 84 percent said the shortage affects their ability to provide service.

The survey found that transit agencies face intense competition for workers. Applicants reject transit agencies' employment offers 35 percent of the time—more than twice the rate for jobs across all industries.

Bus operators make up more than 60 percent of employees in public transit. Given their high degree of interaction with customers, they play a major role in influencing transportation and mobility decisions among riders and potential riders. Beyond the responsibilities of driving a bus, they serve as ambassadors for transit agencies. Bus operators are also responsible for ensuring passenger safety, answering passenger questions, logging trips, and maintaining communication with dispatchers and controllers about dangers, crashes, or weather-induced disruptions. Their performance directly affects service elements such as on-time performance and reliability.

Rail operators also have stressful jobs. They must be comfortable operating heavy equipment with an extensive set of rules and technical elements. They must constantly monitor track signals, speed restrictions, and control systems, because one mistake can have catastrophic consequences.

Most U.S. transit agencies have experienced difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified operators in recent years.In some locations, including Denver, the problem pre-dates the COVID epidemic. Long working hours, lack of adequate breaks, regulatory barriers to entry, and a perception of the transit industry as rigid, inflexible, and rules-based (particularly among younger workers) are among the many challenges transit agencies face in recruiting qualified operators.

The over-representation of older workers in the transit workforce highlights the need to attract younger candidates. Evidence suggests younger job seekers are less attracted to the prospect of a stable, long-term job at a single employer, but rather seek promotions and raises based on performance or merit, rather than seniority. Younger job seekers also tend to prioritize more work-life balance and flexibility in their work. For them, the public transit industry often carries a reputation for being rigid, dated, and rules based.

Although the workforce shortage was exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the problem predates the pandemic. For example, RTD in Denver faced a shortage of 60 light-rail and 80 bus operators in 2019.

3. Workforce Needs Assessment

RTD prepares a multi-year financial forecast along with a service plan that identifies exactly how many miles and hours of service will be provided. These documents are used to determine the number of operators and technicians needed to deliver planned services. RTD planners also calculate staffing needs when they estimate operating and maintenance requirements associated with expansion and new lines.

Some agencies develop a Workforce Needs Assessment that identify the employee skills that will be needed in the future. These assessments evaluate workforce trends and can be used to screen applicants, improve employee skills, and promote existing staff. Interviewees at RTD indicated that the agency does *not* currently prepare a Needs Assessment, although they would like to develop one. Instead, RTD has focused its efforts in the past few years on filling as many vacancies as possible.

Some interviewees officials indicated that budget uncertainty makes it very challenging to estimate service levels and the staffing needs associated with them. That uncertainty also affects other areas of planning. For example, RTD developed a Facilities and Fleet Transition Plan, but has not made a final decision about the new fleet technologies that will be used. Ideally, the agency would identify the skills needed if and when the agency moves away from diesel buses, but it is difficult to do so without concrete plans.

Vacancy rates

The following tables show the number of RTD represented employees and the vacancy rates for bus operators, rail operators, rail mechanics, and bus mechanics as of September 2025.

Number of RTD represented employees

	2023	*2024*	*2025*
Headcount	1,766	1,948	2,079

Vacancy rate for bus operators

Year	*Budgeted operators*	*Actual Operators*	*Vacancy Rate*
2025	1002	894	10.8%* (This would be only 6.1% if the number of budgeted operators remained at 952.)
2024	952	879	7.7%
2023	952	811	14.8%

*RTD calculates this as a 14.17% vacancy rate because it excludes 34 part-time retired operators and 61 trainees.

Vacancy rate for rail *(light rail and commuter rail)* operators

Year	*Budgeted operators*	*Actual Operators*	*Vacancy Rate*	*Vacancy Rate if budgeted operators stayed at 250.*
2025	276	237	14.1%	5.2%
2024	262	229	12.6%	8.4%
2023	250	204	18.4%	18.4%

Vacancy rate for rail mechanics

Year	*Vacancy Rate*
2025	16.5%
2024	11.4%
2023	17.7%

Vacancy rate for bus mechanics

2025	7.3%
2024	13.3%
2023	15.9%

Skills-based planning

Some interviewees at RTD expressed an interest in moving toward a skills-based hiring model. This approach prioritizes specific skills and capabilities needed for a role, rather than focusing solely on qualifications like educational background and job titles. A skills-based hiring method evaluates candidates based on their practical skills and how well they match the job's requirements. For example, instead of requiring two years of customer service experience for RTD bus operator positions, the agency could measure a candidate's aptitude, judgment, and de-escalation abilities. The agency could also test how quickly a candidate can digest and apply new information.

Skills-based planning fits in with promoting candidates. RTD could assess skills employees have and then strategically think about where they could obtain the skills that are needed, whether it is through RTD training, outside education, or experience.

At this time, RTD has not fully documented the skills needed for positions, although it does have job descriptions. Shifting to this model would require a resource-intensive

and in-depth analysis of current skills and competencies. It would take several years to complete.

Summary of Workforce Needs Assessment Recommendations

- Assess the costs and benefits of developing a Workforce Needs Assessment which would identify the employee skills that will be needed in the future.
- Assess the costs and benefits of moving toward a skills-based hiring model (an approach that prioritizes specific skills and capabilities needed for a role, rather than focusing solely on qualifications like educational background and job titles.)

For more information about Workforce Needs Assessment

- See the U.S. Department of Transportation's "Human Capital Management: Guide to Workforce Planning" and the Transportation Research Board's "Knowledge Management Resource to Support Strategic Workforce Development for Transit Agencies."
- The American Bus Benchmarking Group, a forum for mid-sized bus agencies to learn from each other, has helped Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) improve its workforce needs forecasting.
- Candace Blair Cronin et al., "Knowledge Management Resource to Support Strategic Workforce Development for Transit Agencies," National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, *and Medicine*, 2018.

4. Recruitment

The path to increasing workforce headcounts begins with recruiting -- activities related to attracting applicants, advertising, and attending community events. Transit agencies need to ensure they dedicate enough staff and resources to conduct these activities.

Potential candidates may not consider working at a transit agency, if they have negative perceptions of transit, or if they feel that the job is in some way not a good fit. Transit managers in the U.S. have reported the following concerns among potential job applicants for bus operator positions:

- The need to maneuver large buses or provide physical assistance to paratransit customers
- Fear of potential driver assault from passengers based on local news stories
- Long shifts with limited restroom breaks
- Need to work weekends and late night shifts due to seniority-based scheduling

More appealing work schedules offered by other employers in the Denver region affect the ability of RTD to recruit transit bus operators. During operators' first few years at RTD, they are often required to work weekends and holidays, making it hard to attend events with families and friends. As a result, some new operators may be obtaining their Commercial Driver License (CDL) during their initial RTD training, and then using it to find other employment.

Per APTA's 2022 survey, current and former operations workers referred to several factors that might discourage potential workers from applying for transit jobs:

- Almost half noted reasons related to compensation, including pay and benefits.
- A similar share noted issues related to inflexible work schedules, long shifts, and feeling overworked.
- Almost a fifth of the respondents mentioned customer-related reasons, such as physical and verbal abuse from passengers.

APTA has found that "work-life balance, predictability, and adequate compensation matter more now to transit workers." Likewise, Houston Metro reports that applicants are motivated by time off, the opportunity to earn overtime, and benefits. Aspects of the job that have been attractive in the past (e.g., job stability and union protection) no longer resonate as strongly. A generous retirement program, whatever its true long-term value, may simply seem irrelevant to a 25 year old.

Recruitment challenges identified by RTD

RTD interviewees identified the following challenges relating to shifts schedules/routes, changing labor market, recreational marijuana, and the media/public relations.

<u>Shifts/Schedules/Routes</u>
RTD's interviewees pointed to the hours that operations staff work as a key factor in both recruitment and retention. RTD employees select their routes, days off, and locations by seniority, with new schedules taking effect every September, January, and May. They learn about their assignments about a month in advance, and vacations are also chosen by seniority each January for the summer.

Senior employees tend to secure more desirable shifts -- such as those with daytime hours, weekends off, and shifts with paid travel time -- leaving newer employees to work overnight and weekend schedules. It typically takes several years before newer staff accrue the seniority to be able to choose assignments which satisfy them.

Schedules are widely seen as the biggest obstacle to attracting candidates, as many people are reluctant to miss family events because they have to work weekends and evenings. New operators expecting consistency are often disappointed, while long-term employees appreciate the stability and relationships that come with regular routes. In recent years, RTD's recruitment team has been more transparent about scheduling challenges during the hiring process. Although this honesty deters some applicants, interviewees report that it has improved retention.

Changing labor market

Interviewees representing both labor and RTD said that the days of people lining up to work at transit agencies are gone. Traditional incentives around a stable position with good retirement benefits are not as important for people seeking employment.

Recreational marijuana

An interviewee noted that many applicants are surprised to learn that operators and mechanics may not use marijuana while on vacation or on their days off. Applicants who test positive for marijuana are ineligible for employment at RTD. Even though Colorado legalized cannabis as a recreational drug in 2012, federal law still classifies it as an illegal drug. In accordance with federal law and regulation, RTD conducts pre-employment and random drug testing for safety-related positions including operators and mechanics. Note that these rules also apply to bus and truck drivers at other employers including FedEx, UPS, schools, and other transit agencies.

Media and public relations

RTD interviewees noted that the agency is in the news frequently, and often for negative reasons. Coverage of crime, disorder and homelessness, even if the number of instances is declining, shapes the image of RTD for potential employees. Negative news stories serve as a barrier to recruitment while positive ones offer RTD an opportunity to attract more candidates.

Public officials who criticize RTD -- about safety, security, and service delivery – harm the agency's image among potential candidates. Interviewees noted that RTD could enhance its image if elected officials, legislators, and board members all have the same base level of understanding about transit issues (e.g., unhoused individuals on trains) and how RTD is trying to address them. RTD could set up workshops for legislators, local officials, and RTD leadership to learn about issues and programs (e.g., those related to unhoused individuals.) Not only would they have a better understanding of each other's needs, but they could also collectively work towards solving problems.

Recruitment data

Recruiting and processing applications require significant resources. RTD expects to attend 29 community engagement/ job fair/ career fair events in 2025. That is up from 23 in 2023 and 21 in 2024. In 2025 (through September 15), RTD has received an average of 2,152 applications per month. That is up from 1,010 in 2023 and 1,488 in 2024.

RTD's recruitment programs

In the past few years, RTD has increased the number of its talent and acquisition staff from 7 to 11. They can now host more career events where they can review applications and make conditional job offers. If someone applies for a position online, RTD tries to have a staffer get back to the candidate within 24 to 48 hours.

RTD uses nearly all of the same strategies that other transit agencies use, such as sign-up bonuses, incentives for employee referrals, videos on its website, career fairs, and information about wages and benefits. RTD events where candidates can be given conditional offers have reduced the time for hiring, and kept some candidates from taking jobs at other employers.

Its top recruiting sources are the RTD website, Indeed (the most popular U.S. jobsite), LinkedIn, employee referrals, and the Handshake Network (an online platform that connects employers with college students and recent graduates for jobs, internships, and other career opportunities.)

RTD also recruits from five active military bases located near Aurora and Colorado Springs, and it has developed relationships with Regis University, Metropolitan State University of Denver, Colorado State University, and University of Denver. RTD posts positions on Handshake (an online platform that connects employers with college students and recent graduates for jobs, internships, and other career opportunities.)

Approaches for RTD and ATU to consider

RTD and ATU should consider the following recruitment strategies:

- Financial incentives that would encourage employees with more accrued seniority to work less desirable routes and shifts, so that new employees would have an opportunity to work more desirable ones. For instance, transit hourly operations workers in Pierce County, Washington receive a "graveyard" shift premium. The Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiated between ATU Local 758 and Pierce Transit provides a $3.00 per hour incentive for employees who work between 8 PM and 3 AM.

- Offer pre-employment training opportunities. For example, ATU Local 265 in the Santa Clara Valley has helped potential candidates prepare for the Commercial Learners Permit test.
- New Jersey Transit obtained the addresses for all the CDL-holders in New Jersey and then mailed out postcards to let them know that the agency was offering a hiring bonus for operators.
- San Antonio's VIA Metropolitan Transit has found success using targeted mailings. The agency works with a marketing firm to send flyers to residents in zip codes where people have applied for positions with similar qualifications as jobs at transit agencies, such as at car dealerships and oil-change shops.
- Dallas Community College System used DART's seven-week new bus operator training as part of its ESL (English as a Second Language) program. As ESL students learned the language of transit, they also learned about DART and its job opportunities.
- Develop more partnerships with workforce development agencies, social service agencies, and community organizations. Through the California Transit Training Consortium, California's transit agencies have partnered with the state's community and technical colleges to develop training programs to prepare students to work as operators and mechanics.
- Report more data about hiring and retention (such as the number of candidates finishing training and completing their first year.) Focusing on the number of hires can lead the agency to neglect other important aspects such as quality of employees and their job satisfaction.
- Link description with campaign: When prospective employees go to RTD's Job Openings page, they can click on hyperlinks about specific positions, such as Bus Operator. RTD could provide links on these pages to its existing profiles and videos, such as "People Who Move People" and "Day in the Life."
- Expand part-time positions: RTD currently has part-time positions but that is limited to retired operators, and they must be assigned a minimum number of hours.
- Workshops with city and state policy makers on cross-cutting issues, such as homeless outreach.
- According to one union official, some ATU locals use their own union halls and volunteers to promote transit jobs and help potential applicants prepare for required tests.

Summary of Recruitment Recommendations

- Financial incentives that would encourage employees with more accrued seniority to work less desirable routes and shifts.
- Offer pre-employment training opportunities.

- If possible, send mailing to all CDL-holders in the state.
- Use RTD's training elements as part of a school's ESL program.
- Offer part-time bus positions to attract potential applicants.
- Develop partnerships with workforce development agencies, social service agencies, and community organizations.
- Provide links on the website's job description pages to profiles and videos.
- Host workshops with city and state officials.
- Joint promotions with the ATU local and/or ATU-led recruitment efforts.

For more information about recruitment

- Eno's Literature Review identifies numerous examples of recruitment strategies.
- The Transit Workforce Center has developed a transit frontline worker recruitment campaign toolkit. See www.transitworkforcecenter.org.

5. Compensation

In the summer of 2025, RTD and ATU Local 1001 entered into a new Collective Bargaining Agreement. Interviewees noted that it does *not* seem to have made a difference in attracting more candidates.

The agreement increases wages for ATU-represented employees, which comprise approximately two-thirds of the agency's workforce, 16.3% over the term of the contract, starting with a 6.5% increase in the first year and 4.5% in each of the next two years. The starting hourly wage for RTD's bus and rail operators was raised from $25.96 to $27.65.

Many employers link wage increases to employment benchmarks, such as completing training and reaching the end of a probationary period. Regularly scheduled pay increases can incentivize workers to stay with the organization; however, a low starting salary may deter potential candidates from applying for a job. Even if the starting salary is high enough to attract new recruits, they may not stay on the job if they believe it takes too long to reach top-level wages.

Increasing compensation is the most common strategy agencies have adopted to respond to the operations workforce shortage, according to APTA's 2022 survey. However, only 36 percent of workers agreed or strongly agreed that their pay was competitive with similar jobs, compared with 44 percent who disagreed or strongly disagreed.

APTA reported in 2022: "Many agencies said they were surprised that it has been harder to move the needle on attracting and retaining workers through pay increases than they

expected. BART reported that pay seems to be of lower relevance to prospective employees than it was in the past; employees are now more motivated by remote work and other benefits. VIA reports that more and more workers are accepting lower pay for improved quality of life."

RTD salary data

Among 269 U.S. transit agencies, RTD's bus operators are ranked 37th in pay (up from 64 in 2024.) RTD's bus mechanics are ranked 16th in pay (up from 28 in 2024)

Below are salaries of selected positions at RTD.

Positions	*Hourly rate*
Bus operator	Start at $27.65 per hour and increase every six months until they reach $35.02 at 54 months. (Operators working split shifts are paid an additional $2.00 per hour.)
Bus "general repair mechanic (RTD has other maintenance classifications)	Starting pay of $34.85 that can increase to $42.04.
Light rail operators	Same as bus operators, however they can earn an additional 50 cents certification pay after initial training.
Light rail signal maintainers	$41.08 at entry level goes up to $45.45 after 24 months
Light rail track maintainers	$34.19 at entry level that goes up to $40.61 at 30 months

The following table shows hourly salaries for transit agencies at four transit agencies.

Agency	*Starting Salary*	*Top Rate*
Portland (TriMet)	$29.35	$39.12 (after 3 years)
Denver (RTD)	$27.65	$35.02 (4 ½ years)
Philadelphia (SEPTA)	$26.50	$37.76 (4 years)
Salt Lake City (UTA)	$21.44	$25.19 (5 years)

Potential approaches

The following approaches were identified in the research and stood out as valuable ideas that RTD and ATU should consider with respect to addressing compensation issues. As noted previously, the ATU may resist some compensation programs that do not prioritize seniority.

- *Incentives for employees opting out of healthcare programs*: The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority offers a Medical Opt-Out Program for employees covered by health insurance plans outside the transit agency. Employees opting out receive a taxable monthly payment on their paychecks valued at 50 percent of the employer's health insurance cost.
- *Incentivize senior bus operators to choose less desirable night and split-shifts*: These less-desirable shifts are often given to new employees by default, which may deter them from staying at the organization long-term.
- *Tie shorter wage progression periods (or bonuses) to incentives:* Incentives can be tied to factors such as good attendance, no accidents, and negative drug and alcohol test results.
- *Child-care subsidies*: As part of Portland area's TriMet's 2024 Worker and Wage Agreement, the agency offers a childcare subsidy of up to $150 per month.
- *Housing subsidies*: The affordable housing shortage is so acute in the Aspen area that the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) purchased a motel for $4.88 million in 2022 for use as employee housing. It is within walking distance of a bus route and approximately two miles from RFTA's Glenwood Springs bus maintenance facility. RFTA's 2024 budget included $7 million to remodel it and the agency's 42-unit housing opened in January 2025. A studio apartment rents for approximately $1,300 per month. The apartments are intended to bridge the gap for new hires who are unable to secure housing in the region. They may stay in the apartments no more than five years. RFTA has also leased apartments near its service area., At this time, Eno does not recommend that RTD undertake a similar program since Denver has more housing options and such a program can be costly and complex to administer.

Summary of Compensation Recommendations

- Incentives for employees (who have other health insurance available) to opt out of healthcare programs.
- Incentivize senior bus operators to choose less desirable night and split-shifts.
- Tie shorter wage progression periods (or bonuses) to incentives.
- Child-care subsidies.

For more information about compensation

- The literature review provides the most recent compensation data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and the APTA Public Transportation Wage Rate Database.
- Bureau of Labor Statistics. "Overview of BLS Wage Data by Area and Occupation," https://www.bls.gov/bls/blswage.htm (starting point for benchmarking local wage data in related industries/occupations).
- Federal Transit Administration, "Annual Database Transit Agency Employees."
- American Public Transportation Association, "Wage Database."

6. Hiring Processes

Multi-step application processes that span several days or even weeks can cause some applicants to take positions with employers who are able to hire more expeditiously. Many agencies have been consolidating and speeding up their application and hiring processes to improve their ability to compete for talent, reduce applicant drop-off, and ensure that qualified candidates remain engaged from start to finish.

Transit agencies face challenges trying to predict whether a candidate will make a good transit worker given the complex nature of some positions. For example, transit bus operators perform a variety of duties within the scope of their job that go beyond operating a bus, including customer service, assisting disabled passengers, and providing other health and safety services.

Often, new recruits may not understand the possibility of encountering riders who have severe mental health issues. The lack of understanding of how to interact with these riders causes some to leave the job shortly after being hired. A realistic job preview can give applicants a clearer understanding of the job's day-to-day activities—both the positive aspects and the challenges—so that transit agencies can streamline the hiring process as well as improve retention.

The longer new hires wait to begin training, the more likely they are to take another position elsewhere. Agencies that have launched early onboarding and training programs report both improved worker retention in the hiring process, and more time for workers to get acclimated to an agency's culture and familiarize themselves with its services.

RTD's hiring process

RTD's hiring process for represented employees is typical for transit agencies. It consists of the following steps:

i. Hiring begins with an internal bidding process. Represented employees can apply for open positions.
ii. Job advertisement is made available to the public, if RTD does not hire an internal candidate.
iii. Human Resources' Talent Acquisition team reviews potential candidates to see if they meet qualifications.
iv. RTD assesses candidates. For example, it tests the skills of potential mechanics.
v. Interview process. Some candidates, such as mechanics, have a one-on-interview with a supervisor or hiring manager. However, due to RTD's resource constraints, bus operators have group interviews with a supervisor or hiring manager, rather than one-on-one interviews.
vi. Pre-hire sessions: Candidates learn about roles, responsibilities and expectations associated with RTD employment. Candidates sign a form acknowledging that they understand the seniority system and how the agency assigns schedules. These sessions and acknowledgement forms were added in 2024 so that candidates were more informed and prepared for success. One interviewee estimated that possibly 10% to 20% of the individuals who attend pre-hire sessions decide not to pursue working at RTD because of the agency's work schedules.
vii. Selected candidates are given a conditional offer.
viii. Once a candidate accepts a conditional offer, RTD conducts a background check. RTD reviews potential criminal history to see if an applicant's history precludes employment from certain positions. Candidates need to obtain a US DOT Medical Examiner's Certificate, pass an assessment related to the physical requirements of the essential functions of the job, pass a drug test, and obtain a Commercial Learner's Permit (the first step towards getting a CDL.)

Hiring data

The following table provides information about RTD's 2025 conversion of applicants to new hires, as of September.

Represented Positions	*Bus operator*	*Train operator*	*General repair mechanic*
# of applications	1,653	383	343
Given conditional offers	134	83	12
Accepted	134	52	3

Hired	122	48	2
Started	102	32	2

Average time to hire

Below is 2025 data for the average number of days it takes after applicants submit an application until they accept a conditional offer.

Position	*Number of Days*
Bus operator	37
Train operator	58
General Repair Mechanic	43

RTD's hiring process challenges

Qualifications

- Most people who apply for positions are not qualified for numerous reasons including age and driver's license requirements.
- In September 2025, the US Department of Transportation issued a regulation that will reduce the number of potential applicants. Non-U.S. citizens will no longer be able to obtain a Commercial Learner's Permit or CDL unless they meet new stricter rules, including having an employment-based visa, and undergoing a mandatory federal immigration status check. This applies to refugees, asylees or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals recipients.
- Interviewees reported that most candidates pass the drug test. One factor that reduces the number of failed tests is that candidates have flexibility about the date when those tests are conducted.

Quality of Hires

- Interviewees noted that no one -- RTD leadership, supervisors, colleagues, unions, or customers -- wants workers who are unfit for the job. They noted that several years ago, during the COVID-19 related hiring blitz, a high number of new employees were not performing safely or correctly. They warned that RTD needs to be careful about waiving, compromising or reducing minimum qualifications.
- Several interviewees noted that RTD could improve its assessments of candidates' interpersonal skills. This could be done with testing or by having individual interviews with each candidate. At this time, the agency does not have enough managers to interview each candidate.

Approaches to consider

The following approaches stood out as valuable ideas that the RTD should consider regarding hiring processes:

- *Part time hiring:* RTD could expand the number of part-time positions. Under the current Collective Bargaining Agreement, only retired bus operators can serve as part-time employees. This could be extended to other positions like light rail operators or mechanics. This would give newer employees a chance to learn from people that have experience and institutional knowledge. In addition, part-time positions could be made available to non-retirees.
- *Ride-along experience:* A bus operator applicant could be paired with one of the agency's bus operators for an hour of ride-along experience to get a better feel for the position.
- *Study sessions:* RTD could offer study sessions to help potential candidates with English, CDL permitting questions, or map-reading skills. Metro Transit in Minneapolis-Saint Paul noticed that many applicants were failing a screening test, even with the help of an online application assistance program. In response, the transit agency created a series of study sessions at community centers.
- *Early start program:* In Florida, Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority initiated a program which allows new hires to start immediately in a paid position, similar to a paid internship. They do not have to wait for training to begin.
- *Streamline and streamline again*: Agencies need to regularly review their hiring processes to remain competitive.

Summary of Hiring Process Recommendations

- Expedite DMV appointments
- Provide ride-along experience to potential candidates.
- Offer study sessions.
- Report more data about hiring and retention. Focusing on the number of hires can lead the agency to neglect other important aspects such as quality of employees and their job satisfaction.
- Review interview and screening programs for new operators.
- Early start program.
- Regularly review and simplify hiring processes.

For more information about hiring processes

- Eno's Literature Review provides more information about hiring processes.

- National Rural Transit Assistance Program, "Applying Good Business Practices: Hiring, Training and Evaluating Employees," 2023

7. Training

Teaching employees new skills can help transit agencies improve employee retention. If employees feel the training they receive through the onboarding process prepares them well for the day-to-day tasks of the job, they are more likely to continue to pursue employment with the organization. Likewise, if employees feel they have access to growth opportunities, they may be more likely to stay with an organization. Furthermore, training can improve management skills, which in turn can improve retention.

Training at RTD

Responsibility for training resides in two different departments.

RTD's Human Resources Department training and development team offers professional development courses such as management and supervisor training. It also teaches new employees about agency-wide rules and employee benefits.

The Operations Department is responsible for teaching the skills needed to operate and maintain vehicles. Within the operations department, the bus operating and rail operating divisions each train their own employees. Training for new rail and bus operators is a 3-month process and includes soft skill training such as providing customer service and de-escalation. The department also offers refresher training courses.

New hires in the Operations Department have a training program that is approximately 12 weeks long. The program continuously assesses new employees and provides remedial training if necessary. Interviewees noted that the transition from training into employment can be emotionally tolling. Some people give up. Especially challenging is dealing with individuals who are unhoused, abusing drugs/alcohol, or have mental health issues.

RTD and labor interviewees praised a required program for all RTD **managers and supervisors** that was implemented after a 2020 state audit identified issues with supervisors and managers not knowing the best ways to communicate with their employees, especially with bus and rail operators. The Manager and Supervisor Training

program includes lessons on team building, leadership, providing feedback, engaging in crucial conversations, emotional intelligence, and communications.

Based on survey of RTD employees who participated in the managers and supervisors training in 2023 and 2024:

- Many demonstrate a desire to learn and enact change; however, they do not always feel empowered to do so.
- A small but vocal percentage of managers and supervisors feel that they lack sufficient support from upper management and leadership.
- Employees appreciate training with concrete application in their day-to-day roles.
- Employees desire clearer indications of their job expectations and how to apply training.

Interviewees noted several ways to improve this training program's effectiveness:

- Annual performance evaluations could be tied to the management practices learned in training.
- RTD could require managers to periodically outline how they apply key lessons.
- RTD should continue exploring how it could develop refresher training including who should take the training, how often, and what topics should be covered.

Mentorship and apprenticeship programs

Mentorship programs, where new employees are paired with more tenured employees, are used by some transit agencies as training and development opportunities. One of the benefits of a formalized mentor program is that it addresses the common issue of new bus operators getting inadequate or incorrect information about on-the-job challenges. In the absence of being paired with a trusted mentor, new bus operators may reach out to a bus operator who may not be the most qualified and/or experienced for mentorship purposes.

In the summer of 2025, RTD began a Bus Mechanic Apprenticeship Program, a collaboration between RTD and ATU Local 1001. Ten general repair mechanics were selected to be mentors following a competitive bidding and interview process. As mentors they will work side-by-side with apprentices both in the classroom and on the shop floor. The program was developed in cooperation with the US Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship and approved by the Colorado State Apprenticeship Agency. RTD plans on evaluating the program and determining whether it could be expanded to other positions such as bus and rail operators.

According to the ATU, RTD is investing more resources into this program than any of its other apprenticeship programs in the country. RTD is providing extensive training, over

a two year-period, for both its mentors and mentees. Interviewees from both RTD and ATU praised the program and hope that it is expanded.

The apprenticeship program is currently RTD's only formal mentoring program. If RTD determines that the formal apprenticeship model is too resource-intensive to scale across additional positions, the agency should still consider implementing a structured—but less intensive—mentorship program. Such a program would not need to be registered with the state or operate at the same level of formality as the apprenticeship. However, it could still include defined mentor qualifications, clear expectations for mentor-mentee interactions, and basic training or guidance for mentors. This approach would allow RTD to preserve the key benefits of mentorship—consistent knowledge transfer, peer support, and reinforced professional standards—even without the full administrative and training requirements of a registered apprenticeship program.

Potential to consolidate training

Currently, RTD is considering consolidating the training responsibilities that are now split between the rail and bus divisions, and with the HR department. Although the Operating Department has subject matter experts, HR does have a more holistic perspective on training. Some interviewees, however, expressed misgivings about HR overseeing technical training. Another possibility is giving HR more of an oversight role and consolidating the Rail and Bus training programs.

Interviewees noted the following opportunities to improve training:

- Training should include clear learning objectives, formal assessments, and regular performance evaluations to measure learning outcomes.
- Ensure all trainers are fully prepared and equipped with the skills, materials, and support needed to deliver effective instruction.
- Provide broader perspective about the agency's services and how rail and bus divisions can better work together. This would also allow smoother career transition between rail and bus positions.

Currently trainers attend a four-hour course to learn about instructional design, course assessment, presentation skills, commanding a room, and creating course surveys. This is a relatively new and valuable program. Given the range of materials, Eno suggests that RTD add additional hours to allow more time for learning, skill reinforcement, and feedback.

Tuition reimbursement

RTD offers a tuition reimbursement program for employees (after six months of service) who wish to improve their professional skills through continuing education. $3,200 is available per year for the cost of tuition, registration, and required textbooks at any nationally accredited college or university offering academic courses toward a certificate, associate, baccalaureate, or post-graduate degree. Another $2,000 is available for professional certifications and licensing, and affiliations with professional organizations.

RTD also negotiates with colleges and universities to offer discounts for employees, from 10% to 40% off various programs.

However, fewer than 15 bus operators submitted a request for professional development in 2024 or 2025. Interviewees noted that many employees cannot take advantage of this program because they are required to pay for courses up front. RTD should consider better promoting this program and offering financial resources so that employees do not have to pay out of pocket.

Preparing employees for promotion

Interviewees noted that RTD could take a more proactive role in helping employees plan their careers and gain the training and experience needed for advancement. For example, when hiring rail operators, it is critical to find individuals who can follow rules and work safely and effectively in isolated conditions. However, those traits do not necessarily translate into success as supervisors—roles that require creativity, independent judgment, strong communication, leadership, and coordination skills to manage people, resolve problems, and oversee systemwide operations.

RTD should consider developing a structured professional development program tailored to its operational needs. This program could help employees identify potential career paths and build the competencies required for advancement. For instance, RTD could make selected components of its Manager and Supervisor Training program available to any employee interested in moving into a management role.

Currently, RTD's training team lacks the resources to design or implement such a program, and scheduling time off for operations staff remains a challenge that would require coordination with the Bus and Rail divisions. Additionally, many employees have limited computer access and technological skills, which makes online learning less accessible and effective.

Summary of Training Recommendations

- More follow-up after managers and supervisors training to improve its effectiveness.
- Expand apprenticeship program or set up a less resource-intensive mentoring program.
- Ensure all trainers are fully prepared and equipped with the skills, materials, and support needed to deliver effective instruction.
- Improve coordination of bus and rail training for new hires.
- Promote educational assistance program and consider offering financial resources so that employees do not have to pay out of pocket.
- Help employees identify potential career paths and build the competencies required for advancement.

For more information about training

- Eno's Literature Review identifies more information about training programs.
- 2021 APTA Transit Workforce Readiness Guide
- Guide to Effectively Onboarding a New Employee, University of Denver Human Resources, n.d.
- Transit Workforce Center, "Fundamentals of Mentoring Webinar," 2022
- Transit Workforce Center, "Mentor Training," 2022

8. Safety, Health, and Working Conditions

Promoting health and safety and providing a generally agreeable work environment is important to maintaining transit workers' sense of comfort and belonging at a transit agency and thus, to retention. Working in rail and bus operations can be physically and emotionally taxing. If unaddressed, safety and health concerns can affect the workplace by leading to excessive absenteeism, increased health care costs, or operational problems and delays, among other stressors.

Many transit agencies, including RTD, have health and wellness programs. RTD employees can gain access to fitness centers, educational materials, health presentations and specialized personal services. RTD has a Joint Labor Management Safety Committee; however, interviewees noted that internal dissension between the union and management has made the committee less effective than it could be.

Assault is one of the biggest safety concerns in the work environment for bus operators, since they interact frequently and directly with the public, have mobile workplaces, and handle money. Beyond physical effects, negative and sometimes violent

interactions with passengers have been linked to adverse psychological effects on transit workers.

Interviewees noted that RTD employees have reported improvements in their perception of safety, thanks to more security patrols and physical barriers for bus operators. Ridership increases from the depth of the pandemic might have also helped because the trains and buses are now less conducive to inappropriate behavior.

Restroom access is an often-overlooked component of a bus operator's working conditions but one that can put a daily strain on the operator and lead to adverse health outcomes, like urinary tract infections. While it is ideal that bus operators have access to permanent restroom facilities along their route, providing comfortable, clean portable restrooms, and arrangements with local business owners can be a cost-effective approach for transit agencies.

RTD interviewees indicated that the agency has provided appropriate accommodations and when operators tell their dispatchers they need to use the bathroom, the issue is treated seriously and with sensitivity. However, labor interviewees noted restroom issues are still a problem because operators who are behind schedule may feel they need to prioritize on-time performance over taking a bathroom break.

RTD data

RTD's Transit Watch mobile application allows customers to anonymously or discreetly report any suspicious activities, safety concerns, or other non-emergency issues with Transit Police dispatchers. Data is available at https://www.rtd-denver.com/security-related-metrics.

The table below compares the first 7 months of 2023, 2024 and 2025.

Incident Count	*2023*	*2024*	*2025*
Drug Activity	1,762	1,704	545
Property Crimes - Theft	35	20	21
Sexual Assault - Physical	1	7	5
Sexual Harassment - Non-Physical	8	18	9

The following table shows the percent of employees who agreed or strongly agreed (in RTD's 2025 employee survey) with the statement: "I feel that I am safe from crime in the work environment."

	2023	*2024*	*2025*
Represented	35%	51%	53%
Non represented	56%	77%	83%

The following table shows the percent of employees who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I feel physically safe in my work environment from equipment-related failures, injuries or other workplace hazards."

	2023	*2024*	*2025*
All employees	64%	77%	81%
Represented	N/A	N/A	68%
Non-represented	N/A	N/A	92%

For more information on safety, health, and working conditions

- Eno's Literature Review identifies more information about safety, health, and working conditions processes.
- TCRP Synthesis 193, "Tools and Strategies for Eliminating Assaults Against Transit Operators", identifies measures that transit agencies can employ to reduce the instances and severity of assaults including policies, protocols, police and security staffing; automatic vehicle locators and emergency alert buttons; surveillance and observation systems; driver protection systems incorporated into buses; and training.
- A 2022 Transit Center report, "Bus Operators in Crisis" presents strategies that some transit agencies are using to improve employee facilities.
- ATU, "Transit Operator Bathroom Breaks: A Matter of Human Dignity and Respect."
- Econometrica, Inc. and Transportation Learning Center, "Improving the Health and Safety of Transit Workers with Corresponding Impacts on the Bottom Line," National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2020.

9. Retention and Motivation

This section of the report discusses retention and motivation, focusing on employee engagement programs. Previous sections addressed other measures relating to retention and motivation, such as compensation, hiring, training, and working conditions. For example, as discussed in the Training section, mentorship programs can strengthen recruitment, training, and retention.

APTA's findings

APTA reports: "Strong, encouraging agency culture appeals to workers, whether they are already part of the agency or considering joining. Agencies can attract new workers and retain existing ones through responsive, meaningful engagement with their workers, acknowledging their accomplishments, and providing clear pathways for career growth without having to leave the agency."

APTA's 2022 survey asked respondents to rank actions that would encourage long-term retention. Current workers ranked "increasing pay" highest, while former workers placed it second. Instead, former workers ranked "listening to concerns and changing procedures or practices" as the most effective measure to encourage retention. Both groups ranked "better work schedules" highly, and many also highlighted the importance of work-life balance measures such as childcare access and flexible hours.

According to APTA, "Transit operations work is stressful and difficult, and the public often treats operations workers with less than kindness. Therefore, agencies must work to foster a culture of positive affirmation and gratitude alongside the demands for organizational performance."

RTD data

The following table shows the retention rate of new hires and returning employees within their first year of employment. 2025 data is through June 10, 2025.

Year	*Non-Represented Employees*	*Represented Employees*
2025	91%	82%
2024	82%	76%
2023	87%	73%
2022	90%	76%
2021	88%	66%

As shown below, the retention rate for new hires is significantly lower in light rail operations than in bus and commuter rail operations.

Year	*Bus operations*	*Commuter rail operations*	*Light rail operations*
2025	86%	89%	80%
2024	78%	84%	70%

2023	75%	78%	73%
2022	81%	78%	69%
2021	70%	77%	60%

The following table shows the attrition numbers for light rail operators. Clearly the first 12 months are critical. *Note that this information is not available for other positions.*

Year	*0 to 12 months*	*13 to 18 months*	*19 to 24 months*	*Total attrition*
2025 (thru 10/1)	20	2	4	26
2024	13	4	2	19
2023	24	4	3	31
2022	22	6	4	32

One RTD manager said that younger workers have a different level of tolerance and "don't put up with the same kind of BS." If pushed around by customers and management, they will say, "this job is not for me."

As of September 30, 2025, the **absenteeism rates** were 10.5% in the Rail Division and 10% in Bus. This excludes planned/known leave.

According to the International Association of Public Transport's 2025 report, "Understanding Absenteeism in Public Transport Operations":

> "The transport sector, like other sectors in the economy, particularly services, has been experiencing difficulties in attracting employees since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many transport companies have seen a significant increase in absenteeism due to illness or accidents at work. While many agree that the arduous nature of the profession, with its atypical working hours and risk of aggression, is a key factor in explaining the rise in absenteeism, this is not the only explanatory factor.
>
> The COVID-19 pandemic incited a profound change in people's relationship to work, even if a majority of employees were never absent before or after the pandemic. Furthermore, there is a consensus that declining tensions on the job market and individual aspirations for a better work-life balance are also contributing to absenteeism."

The following table shows the percentage of employees who agreed or strongly agreed with these statements in RTD's 2025 employee survey.

Question	*2025*	*2024*	*2023*
I understand how my performance is linked to the success of the organization	86%	83%	73%
My supervisor is invested in my growth and success	76%	75%	63%
I feel comfortable taking risks, expressing ideas and concerns, speaking up with questions and admitting mistakes	75%	72%	64%
I have the resources to successfully perform my duties	77%	70%	62%

The following table shows the percentage of employees who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I have trust in my departmental manager(s) to make decisions that align with the values of the organization."

	2024	*2025*
Represented	62%	67%
Non-represented	78%	81%

The following table shows the percentage of employees who agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I am adequately informed about agency news, projects, and initiatives."

Represented	67%
Non-represented	84%

RTD reports most of its employee survey results only in aggregate form—that is, as a single measure for all agency employees and not broken up by department or between represented and non-represented. This limits the ability for stakeholders and the union to identify specific issues or trends within particular groups.

As shown in the table below, employee survey response rates have declined over time, reducing their reliability as a measure of employee satisfaction. Even more concerning, the share of responses from operations employees has dropped, potentially skewing results toward office staff. In 2023, bus operations employees accounted for 36% of responses, compared to 30% in 2025. Rail operations employees made up 23% of responses in 2023, falling to 17% in 2025. (Note, the survey methodology has not changed.)

Year	*RTD Response Rates*
2025	32%
2024	36%
2023	47%

The following table shows the number of RTD's voluntary and involuntary terminations.

Year	*Voluntary Terminations*	*Involuntary Terminations*
2023	233	65
2024	264	66
2025 (through August 30)	227	78

The five reasons most cited by RTD employees for voluntary terminations were:

- Unknown: 57
- Retirement: 44
- Family reasons: 39
- Other employment: 37
- In Lieu of Termination: 24

The five most cited reasons by RTD managers for involuntary terminations were:

- Performance: 76 (including poor job performance, violation attendance, and violation performance code)
- Medical / DOT: 6
- Drug / Alcohol: 4

Perspectives of RTD interviewees

Interviewees noted the challenges that new employees face after training. New employees can be physically exhausted from the job and not getting enough sleep because of their work schedules. When they first start, they may be excited and optimistic, but after a prolonged period they are likely to lose that enthusiasm when they find it difficult to get time off and get their preferred shifts.

Even though RTD tells job candidates about the selection process for picking routes and schedules, the interviewees said that new employees may have felt that RTD was just painting the worst picture or there would be more flexibility.

Most new operators go onto the Extraboard (a pool of workers who fill in for employees with assigned routes who are absent, on vacation, or otherwise unavailable.) They do not get experience working on the same routes and developing a relationship with

customers. Financial incentives that would encourage employees with more accrued seniority to work less-desirable routes and shifts could help improve retention.

Interviewees at RTD credited the following factors for improving retention rates in the past few years:

- RTD's new manager and supervisor training program.
- Job candidates are better informed of the challenges they will face before they begin working.
- If employees are not a good fit in one position, RTD considers other positions they might be better suited for.
- Some onboarding training is now offered late at night so that new employees are exposed to the problems they might encounter during those hours.

Interviewees at RTD noted that some managers could do a better job of creating a sense of camaraderie. During training, new employees might feel like they are part of a team with their training cohorts, but then they might lose that sense of belonging when they start working in somewhat isolating roles, such as rail operators. Interviewees referred to the value of providing food at celebratory and recognition events. This gives employees an informal opportunity to come together and share their experiences. RTD's training for supervisors and managers addresses this topic.

Career pathways

Providing clear career pathways for workers and prioritizing promotions from within an organization are proven retention strategies. Offering robust career paths and educational opportunities improves job satisfaction, employee motivation, and long-term commitment. They also help retain institutional knowledge. Consistent recognition, responsive engagement, and investment in career growth can help transit agencies foster loyalty, reduce turnover, and build a stronger workforce.

Interviewees noted that creating opportunities for operators, supervisors, and directors to move within the agency is valuable. Encouraging internal movement can create opportunities for people to gain additional experience, skills, and see more of what the agency does. This can broaden perspectives and contribute to a person's growth and development. However, interviewees noted the compression of salaries at RTD deters some hourly workers from seeking promotions. Because of overtime, some operators would earn less, if they were to be promoted to a supervisory or managerial role.

Enhancing the management / labor relationship

Interviewees referred to the typical tension that occurs between a transit agency and the union that represents its worker.

One issue raised by the union does not seem to be insurmountable. When the RTD sends emails to all its employees, the union office is not included. Sometimes, RTD officials will forward emails to the union, but that is done on an ad-hoc basis. The union would also like to be notified when an operator is in a serious accident, but RTD does not contact the union.

Interviewees noted that most communication between RTD and ATU leaders is done through RTD's labor relations department. Many RTD employees must go through an internal review process before they can share information with union officials. This could be a potential source of the union's frustration that they often feel ignored when it comes to recruiting, training, and management issues.

Union interviewees referred to a problem with some managers and supervisors exhibiting favoritism and retaliatory behaviors. Interviewees at RTD said that they investigate every complaint that is filed, but sometimes for privacy reasons cannot tell the union of their findings.

Contracting services is a sticking point between union and RTD management. State law requires that a minimum percentage of RTD's services must be provided by competitive contract. ATU would prefer that RTD operate all its bus and rail services, and not contract any of them out. RTD interviewees indicate that the service provided by private contractors outperforms RTD's services. To better inform policy makers, stakeholders, and unions -- RTD should share relevant statistics (such as on-time performance and mean distance between failures) that compare the services.

Summary of Retention and Motivation Recommendations

- Analyze absenteeism rates.
- Increase response rates for future employee surveys and share more disaggregated information (e.g., between represented and non-represented employees) so that stakeholders and the union are better informed.
- Evaluate whether workers are not seeking promotions because a new position would lead to a salary reduction.
- Share relevant statistics that compare RTD and contracted-out services to inform policy makers, stakeholders, and unions.
- Incentivize senior bus operators to choose less desirable shifts so that new employees have better chances of being able to pick routes and shifts they prefer. This is both a recruitment and retention recommendation.

For more information about retention and motivation

- Eno's Literature Review identifies more information about retention and motivation.

10. Appendix: Literature Review

Background

According to a 2022 survey conducted on behalf of the American Public Transportation Association (APTA), the transit workforce shortage is widespread and severe: 96 percent of transit agencies reported experiencing a workforce shortage and 84 percent said the shortage affects their ability to provide service. The survey focused on operations workers -- defined as transit operators, mechanics, and mid-level supervisors (e.g., street supervisors, operations supervisors, dispatchers).

The survey found that transit agencies face intense competition for workers. Applicants reject transit agencies' employment offers 35 percent of the time—more than twice the rate for jobs across all industries. Agencies reported that more departing employees leave to take jobs outside the transit industry than those who retire or leave the workforce combined.

Agencies report that concerns about work schedules and compensation are the leading reasons why operations workers quit. Most agencies said that concerns about work schedule and compensation were responsible for more departures than assault and harassment.

A survey of current and former transit workers found the following:

- According to current transit workers, increasing pay and providing better work schedules are the most effective ways to retain employees. Former workers emphasize "listening to concerns and changing procedures or practices", "increasing pay", and "improving worker safety" as the top strategies.
- Only 36 percent of current transit workers feel their pay is competitive with similar jobs in their area. At the largest 50 agencies by ridership, this figure is only 32 percent. (Note that RTD is the 12th largest in the U.S. after agencies in New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, Philadelphia, New Jersey, Washington DC, San Francisco, and Seattle, according to APTA's 2024 Fact Book.)
- At the 50 largest agencies, just 27 percent of workers agree that their employer is responsive to their concerns, whereas 47 percent disagree or strongly disagree.
- Although retirements make up a substantial share of worker departures, nearly twice as many departures occur in the first two years of employment.

Bus Operators

Bus operators make up more than 60 percent of employees in public transit. Given their high degree of interaction with customers, they play a major role in influencing transportation and mobility decisions among riders and potential riders. They also serve as ambassadors for transit agencies. Operators are responsible for driving a bus as well as passenger safety, answering passenger questions, logging trips, and maintaining communication with dispatchers and controllers about dangers, crashes, or weather-induced disruptions. Their performance directly affects service elements such as on-time performance and reliability.

According to the most recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, overall employment of bus drivers is projected to grow 2 percent from 2023 to 2033, slower than the average for all occupations. Despite limited employment growth, about 79,800 openings for bus drivers are projected each year, on average, over the decade. Most of those openings are expected to result from the need to replace workers who transfer to different occupations or exit the labor force, such as to retire.

Many transit agencies have experienced difficulties recruiting and retaining qualified bus operators. Long working hours, lack of adequate breaks, regulatory barriers to entry, and a perception of the transit industry as rigid, inflexible, and rules-based (particularly among younger workers) are among the many challenges transit agencies face in recruiting qualified operators.

The bus operator workforce has been and continues to face a wave of retirements. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics "Labor Force Statistics from the Current Population Survey" from 2024 shows that nationally, the median age of workers is 42.2. The median is nearly identical for bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists (41.7), and for railroad conductors and yardmasters (42.6). However, the median for "bus drivers, transit and intercity" is 56. In the U.S. 23.4 percent of employed people in the U.S. are over 55 years old, while for bus drivers that number is 56.2 percent.

The over-representation of older workers in the bus operator workforce highlights the need to attract younger candidates. Evidence suggests younger job seekers are less attracted to the prospect of a stable, long-term job at a single employer, but rather seek promotions and transfers. Younger job seekers also tend to prioritize more work-life balance and flexibility in their work. For them, the public transit industry often carries a reputation for being rigid, dated, and rules based.

The United States is not alone in experiencing workforce development challenges. A shortage of transit workers is a global phenomenon, attributable to the same factors present in the U.S. Recent news articles indicate a shortage of transit operators in

Malaysia, Japan, and China due to an aging workforce and fewer young people interested in driving buses. Transit operators in Singapore have increased pay, and in one case a provider recreated its buses in the online platform, Roblox, in an effort to attract younger operators.

Although the problem has been exacerbated since the Covid-19 pandemic began in 2020, workforce shortage issues predate the pandemic. For example, RTD in Denver faced a shortage of 60 light-rail and 80 bus operators in 2019.

Workforce Needs Assessment

Workforce plans help transit agencies determine the appropriate number and types of employees with the necessary skills to meet current and future service demands. These plans can help transit agencies increase the number of applicants, improve future applicant skills, screen applicants, promote existing staff, and brand the organization. Workforce plans profile the current and future workforce, identify important job knowledge, skills, and abilities; and assess workforce trends to anticipate future staffing needs.

Quantitative information collected from human resources, service, and planning departments can help to provide a better understanding of a transit agency's workforce needs, but at many transit agencies, this information is minimal or not shared strategically between departments. Although unions can offer valuable insight, they are not usually involved in conversations about estimating the number of bus operators that will be needed.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) forecasts for future workforce needs twice a year. The American Bus Benchmarking Group, a forum for mid-sized bus agencies to learn from each other, has helped DART improve its workforce needs forecasting. DART's Bus Operations Department has been working more directly with the department responsible for scheduling and planning routes for a more comprehensive approach to workforce needs assessment. The local Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) is also involved in workforce needs assessment by validating information and offering suggestions for adjusting schedules and routes.

For more information, see the U.S. Department of Transportation's "Human Capital Management: Guide to Workforce Planning" and the Transportation Research Board's "Knowledge Management Resource to Support Strategic Workforce Development for Transit Agencies."

Recruitment

The path to increasing workforce headcounts begins with recruiting -- activities related to attracting applicants, advertising, and attending community events. Transit agencies need to ensure they dedicate enough staff and resources to conduct these activities.

Recruitment Strategies

According to APTA's 2022 survey of transit agencies, employee referrals and online advertising are the two most effective forms of recruiting. A 2021 Eno survey of 348 transit agency representatives found similar results.

Respondents to Eno's survey were asked to select all the recruitment strategies that their transit agencies use to attract bus operators. The following table lists the most used strategies and the ones that were considered the most effective.

Strategy	*Used*	*Most effective*
Internet ads and social media	81%	48%
Employee referrals	62%	56%
On-vehicle ads (e.g., bus wraps, ads in buses and railcars)	56%	23%
Job fairs	50%	32%
Walk-ins	46%	14%
Newspaper ads	41%	16%
Recruit from known contacts of existing employees	29%	18%
Working with labor unions or community organizations	24%	25%

Recruitment strategies that leverage the existing employee base—who know and understand the job best—have proven successful. Some transit agencies use referral programs, while others involve employees directly. For example, bus operators may attend job fairs or appear in videos featured on agency websites.

Targeted educational outreach and apprenticeships can serve as effective recruitment tools. Community college and vocational school partnerships have a long history of serving as an early point in the transit workforce pipeline. Similar to educational opportunities, pre-employment apprenticeships can create career pathways for young people or those looking to switch careers. Examples of these opportunities include transportation-themed educational institutions such as the Transit Tech Career and Technical Education High School in Brooklyn, and internship programs for high school

and college students provided by DART and Introducing Youth to American Infrastructure.

Recruitment Challenges

Potential candidates may not consider working at a transit agency, if they have negative perceptions of transit, or if they feel that the job is in some way not a good fit. Negative public perceptions of transit can prevent some potential job candidates from pursuing transit agency positions. Transit managers have indicated the following concerns among potential job applicants for bus operator positions:

- The need to maneuver large buses or provide physical assistance to paratransit customers
- Fear of potential driver assault from passengers based on local news stories
- Long shifts with few restroom breaks
- Undesirable shifts due to seniority-based scheduling

Prospective applicants may also be discouraged from applying by federal drug testing requirements. For example, transit bus operators need a commercial driver's license (CDL), but CDL applicants must pass a drug test, including testing for marijuana, even in states where recreational use is legal.

More appealing work schedules and wages offered by other employers affect the ability of a transit agency to recruit transit bus operators. Transit bus operators are often required to work holidays and weekends for many years early in their tenure. Other industries requiring a CDL, such as trucking, may offer more flexible work schedules for drivers. This can lead to drivers training to obtain their CDL certification through a transit agency, but leaving transit after a short time for other employment opportunities.

Per APTA's 2022 survey, when asked which factors current and former operations workers thought might discourage potential workers from applying for a job in transit:

- Almost half noted reasons related to compensation, including pay and benefits.
- A similar share noted issues related to inflexible work schedules, long shifts, and feeling overworked.
- Almost a fifth of the respondents mentioned customer-related reasons, such as physical and verbal abuse from passengers.

APTA has found that "work-life balance, predictability, and adequate compensation matter more now to transit workers." Likewise, Houston Metro reports that applicants are motivated by time off, the opportunity to earn overtime, and benefits. Aspects of the job that have been attractive in the past (e.g., job stability and union protection) no longer resonate as strongly.

Potential Approaches

Transit agencies should consider the following recruitment strategies.

Education:

- Unions can offer pre-employment training opportunities. ATU Local 265 in the Santa Clara Valley has helped potential candidates pass the CDL test. In Oakland, ATU Local 192 has offered a pre-employment bootcamp targeted to individuals with minor issues on their criminal record.
- Even though individuals under the age of 21 cannot operate a vehicle, transit agencies can train young people on non-driving tasks and hire them to complete tasks that do not require having a CDL, before they become operators.

Sign-up Bonuses

- In July 2025, the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) offered a $7,000 signing bonus at an invitation-only hiring event.
- In March 2025, VIA Metropolitan Transit in San Antonio, Texas offered hiring incentives of up to $4,000 for bus and paratransit operators and up to $6,000 for mechanics.
- Portland's TriMet announced in November 2024 an increase in their hiring bonus from $2,500 to $7,500 for select maintenance positions, including mechanics and technicians.

Other Financial Incentives

- Increase compensation to remain competitive. (Note, the following section of this Literature Review offers more detailed information about compensation.)
- Offer incentives for employee referrals.
- Offer special incentives for applicants who already have a CDL to help recruit qualified drivers and reduce training needs and costs.

Mailings

- New Jersey Transit obtained the addresses for all the CDL-holders in New Jersey and then mailed out postcards to let them know that the agency was offering a hiring bonus for operators.
- San Antonio's VIA Metropolitan Transit reports its most successful advertising effort is targeted mailings. The agency works with a marketing firm to send flyers to residents in zip codes where people have applied for positions with similar qualifications as jobs at transit agencies, such as car dealerships and oil-change shops.

Targeting

- Hire a bilingual trainer for student bus operator training.
- Dallas Community College System used DART's seven-week new bus operator training as part of its ESL program. As ESL students learn the language of transit, they also learned about DART and its job opportunities.

- Offer part-time bus positions with benefits to attract potential applicants with family commitments.

Disseminating Information

- Agency websites can provide information about hiring events with clear information about wages and benefits. Metro Transit's website has a five-minute video, "A Day in the Life of Metro Transit Bus Operators."
- Have high visibility at public events with buses and current bus operators on-site. For example, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority has provided display buses and bus operators at job fairs to give potential applicants a hands-on introduction to the job.
- Use common language to describe positions. For example, many potential employees might not understand the term "rail operator" or "paratransit".
- With support from the FTA, the Transit Workforce Center has developed a transit frontline worker recruitment campaign toolkit, available at www.transitworkforcecenter.org.

Partner with workforce development agencies, social service agencies, and community organizations

- Chicago Transit Authority (CTA)'s Second Chance Program provides valuable job skills and career opportunities to Chicago residents who often face challenges re-entering the workforce, including those released from drug/alcohol treatment programs and work release centers. More than 725 Second Chance participants have been hired permanently by CTA.
- Through the California Transit Training Consortium, California's transit agencies have partnered with the state's community and technical colleges to develop training programs to prepare students to work as operators and mechanics.
- King County Metro and TriMet both reported success from their relationships with nearby military bases. CTA developed a tool that matches military occupation codes to transit jobs so that military service members can see that they have applicable skills.

Social Media

- CTA advertises on Facebook, which allows targeting by location, interest, and age.
- Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority's "Day in the life of an operator" video series, posted on Facebook, presents compelling personal stories about its workers.

Hiring Events

- In addition to using staff time more efficiently, mass hiring events reduce the time between application, interview, and offer, which decreases the chance that an applicant will accept a job from another employer while waiting to receive an agency's offer.
- Houston Metro's Fast Track hiring events are designed to cover as much of the hiring process as possible in a single touch. Applicants apply online before arriving at the event, where they can participate in an interview, receive a contingent offer, and

take their drug test. Applicants with contingent offers can return the following day for a physical exam conducted in a mobile clinic operated by a contracted medical services provider.

- IndyGo holds events at its downtown transit center as well as at the agency's operating garages, where staff is on-site to conduct interviews and make contingent offers. The hiring events held by GCRTA involve staff from across the agency interviewing more than 40 applicants a day and extending verbal offers on the spot.

Compensation

The most recent data from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics' "Occupational Employment and Wage Statistics" identifies the following median annual salaries at urban transit systems. The data is from May 2023.

Occupation	*Median Salary*
Dispatchers	$47,180
Bus operators	$51,730
Subway and Streetcar Operators	$56,920
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	$61,890
Bus and truck mechanics and diesel engine specialists	$62,260
Automotive body and related repairers	$67,980
First-line supervisors of mechanics, installers, and repairers	$79,230

Many employers link wage increases to employment benchmarks, such as completing training and the end of a probationary period. Regularly scheduled pay increases can incentivize workers to stay with the organization; however, a low starting salary may deter potential candidates from applying for a job. Even if the starting salary is high enough to attract new recruits, they may not stay on the job if they believe it takes too long to reach top-level wages.

For bus operators who work the less desirable shifts, some transit agencies offer shift differentials, or extra percentages added on top of the normal pay rate. However, according to APTA's 2019 Wage Rate Database, only 28 percent of fixed-route bus operators and 12 percent of paratransit operators surveyed indicated they provide shift differential compensation.

The APTA Public Transportation Wage Rate Database includes details on the range of wage rates by position, including shift differentials, salary increases, pension

contributions, and healthcare contributions. Its most recent release was in 2019. The database indicates the following average hourly wages.

Position	*Average hourly wages*
Paratransit operator	$17
Bus operator	$22
Bus mechanic apprentice	$24
Bus mechanic journeyman	$28
Light rail operator	$26
Light rail mechanic apprentice	$24
Light rail mechanic journeyman	$31

Note the national average for light rail operators may be higher than the national average for bus operators because rail systems are more likely to be located in large metropolitan areas where salaries are higher.

The chart above shows a wide range of wages depending on the position. Between agencies, there is also a wide range of wages. For example, Portland's TriMet negotiated a new agreement with ATU Local 757 which took effect in December 2024. Hourly wage for operators now start at $29.35 and increase to $42.75 within three years. New mechanics and technicians at TriMet start at $43.83. At the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA), the starting rate for bus operators is $26.50 per hour and the top rate is $37 per hour.

The Milwaukee County Transit System has launched two apprenticeship programs in partnership with the Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development and ATU to attract new operators and mechanics. The 18-month mechanic program has apprentice mechanics starting between $30 and $33 per hour (depending on their position prior to starting the program). Bus operators in their 12-month program start at $24.45 per hour.

Employee Benefits

The benefits that go beyond wages factor into a broader compensation package. According to APTA's 2019 Wage Rate Database, employers pay, on average, 80 percent

of healthcare premiums for a single employee (inclusive of dental and vision benefits) for fixed-route bus operators and 75 percent on average for paratransit operators.

Benefits for transit workers can include contributions to an employee's retirement fund, medical and dental insurance, paid time off, holiday and sick leave, parental leave, and bonuses for achievements or recruiting new workers. Transit agencies need to inform potential employees about the wide range of benefits that are available.

APTA's Findings

Increasing compensation is the most common strategy agencies have adopted to respond to the operations workforce shortage, according to APTA. However, only 36 percent of current workers agree or strongly agree that their pay is competitive with similar jobs, compared with 44 percent who disagree or strongly disagree.

APTA reported in 2022: "Many agencies said they were surprised that it has been harder to move the needle on attracting and retaining workers through pay increases than they expected. BART reported that pay seems to be of lower relevance to prospective employees than it was in the past; employees are now more motivated by remote work and other benefits. VIA reports that more and more workers are accepting lower pay for improved quality of life. Nevertheless, agencies have found that carefully structured compensation increases can effectively improve retention. Houston Metro increased pay for all operators last year to help boost retention, but reported that the more important change they made was to increase training pay to be equal to new operator pay, with a raise after the first six months on the road. This change helped them retain workers who might otherwise decide to take a more lucrative job rather than wait for a raise until they had completed training."

Potential Approaches

The following approaches were identified in the research and stood out as valuable ideas that transit agencies can consider with respect to addressing compensation issues:

- *Wage comparisons:* Conduct wage comparisons with other similar and major employers or industries in their geographic areas.
- *Incentives for employees opting out of healthcare programs*: The Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority offers a Medical Opt-Out Program for employees covered by health insurance plans outside the transit agency. Employees opting out receive a taxable monthly payment on their paychecks of 50 percent of the employer cost.
- *Incentivize senior bus operators to choose undesirable night and split-shifts*: These less-desirable shifts are often given to new employees by default, which may deter them from staying at the organization long-term.

- *Tie shorter wage progression periods to incentives:* Incentives can be tied to factors such as good attendance, no accidents, and no drug or alcohol positive test results.
- *Payment for unused vacation days:* The Fairmont-Marion County Transit Authority will pay a bus operator for any unused vacation days at the end of the year, providing eight hours of pay for each vacation day.
- *Tuition and child-care subsidies*: As part of TriMet's new Worker and Wage Agreement, the agency is providing tuition reimbursement of up to $5,250 annually. Additionally, the agreement includes a childcare subsidy of up to $150 per month.

Hiring Processes

Multi-step application processes that span several days or even weeks can cause some applicants to take positions with employers who are able to hire more expeditiously. Many agencies have been consolidating and speeding up their application and hiring processes to improve their ability to compete for talent, reduce applicant drop-off, and ensure that qualified candidates remain engaged from start to finish.

A realistic job preview can give applicants a clearer understanding of the job's day-to-day activities—both the positive aspects and the challenges—so that transit agencies can streamline the hiring process as well as improve retention.

It can be difficult to predict whether someone will make a good transit worker given the complex nature of some positions. For example, transit bus operators perform a variety of duties within the scope of their job that go beyond operating a bus, including customer service, assisting disabled passengers, and providing other health and safety services. Often, new recruits may not understand the possibility of encountering riders who have severe mental health issues. The lack of understanding of how to interact with these riders causes some to leave the job shortly after being hired.

While many transit agencies use various selection tests to help identify potential employees, assessments may not properly capture the "gray areas" of skills required in daily transit operations. For example, the assessments may not test for interpersonal and problem-solving skills. Furthermore, some candidates may have a language barrier and will be unable to reveal their full skill set and potential capabilities.

Along with selection tests, transit agencies use candidate interviews to help select qualified candidates. To improve the efficiency of the interview process and to assess job candidates fairly, many transit agencies use structured interview protocols in which the same questions are asked of all interviewees by all interviewers. This practice helps the

interviewer avoid subjectivity that may prevent them from assessing a candidate's ability to perform the job.

Once a candidate becomes an employee, learning their day-to-day responsibilities and transitioning them to work is critical. APTA reports that 16 percent of transit workers leave during onboarding and training, and 20 percent more during the probationary period.

The longer new hires wait to begin training, the more likely they are to take another position elsewhere. Agencies that have launched early onboarding and training programs report both improved worker retention in the hiring process, and more time for workers to get acclimated to an agency's culture and familiarize themselves with its services.

Approaches to consider

The following approaches stood out as valuable ideas that transit agencies should consider regarding hiring processes:

- *Sufficient staffing:* Human Resource departments need to have sufficient staffing and resources to accommodate a high volume of applications.
- *Customize assessment tests:* Transit agencies can use customized pre-hire assessment tests to evaluate candidates.
- *Ride-along experience:* After an interview at River Cities Public Transit, and in situations where both parties are interested in moving forward, the bus operator applicant is paired with one of the agency's bus operators for an hour of ride-along experience to get a better feel for the position.
- *Meet bus operators*: At the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, bus operators meet with new applicants to walk them through the hiring process and help them complete the requirements. This interaction gives applicants a chance to ask any questions they might have and helps to create realistic expectations of the job.
- *Study sessions:* Metro Transit in Minneapolis-Saint Paul noticed that many applicants were failing a screening test, even with the help of an online application assistance program. In response, the transit agency created a series of study sessions at community centers.
- *Early start program:* Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority initiated an Early Start Program which allows new hires to start immediately in a paid position, similar to a paid internship.
- *Peer buddy:* Sound Transit assigns new employees a "peer buddy" who regularly meets with them through their first six months as a bus operator.
- *Streamline and streamline again*: Agencies need to regularly review their hiring processes to remain competitive. For example, King County Metro recently

streamlined their 12-week hiring process down to 4 weeks. Per King County Metro, rather than going through a lengthy process, candidates go through testing, interviews, and pre-employment activities in one location.

Training

Training and development are strategies for both recruitment and retention. If employees feel the training they receive through the onboarding process prepares them well for the day-to-day tasks of the job, they are more likely to continue to pursue employment with the organization. Likewise, if employees feel they have access to growth opportunities, they may be more likely to stay with an organization.

Training and development begin with onboarding once new employees are hired, and ideally continues throughout their careers. Training encompasses both hard skills training (essential job tasks such as driving a bus) as well as soft skills (working and interacting with other workers and the riding public.) New Jersey Transit's training program attempts to cover the whole gamut of bus operator experience including interpersonal skills, personal resilience, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

Sometimes, training programs do not keep pace with the rate at which new technologies are adopted. Increasingly sophisticated vehicles can improve driver safety and rider comfort, but also require additional training for operators and maintenance staff. More computerized systems also require transit workers to become familiar with handling more sophisticated vehicles. For example, operators may need to help riders resolve smartphone issues that arise when paying fares. Likewise, bus operators may need to learn to navigate transit signal priority, articulated buses, queue jump lanes, and dedicated rights-of-way.

Agencies should use their own data to shape training programs. For example, New Jersey Transit conducted a skills-gap analysis survey to assess operators' knowledge. By comparing current and desired skill levels, the agency modified its training accordingly.

Involving labor partners early in the development and implementation of a workforce development program can improve a program's effectiveness. The International Transportation Learning Center facilitates multiple national training consortiums that bring together transit agencies, labor unions, and industry experts to collaboratively develop standards-based training courseware for key frontline occupations across public transportation. Participating agencies contribute subject matter expertise and benefit from shared resources, peer learning, and access to nationally vetted training materials.

Some agencies leverage partnership opportunities with other community partners. In California, a statewide consortium of transit agencies, labor unions, and community colleges known as California Transit Works! (CTW), provides training and development programs, including programs aimed at fostering health and wellness among bus operators. In addition to serving as a convening body, CTW documents best practices in workforce development and provides online training resources.

Mentorship programs

Mentorship programs, where new employees are paired with more tenured employees for formal or informal learning, are used by some transit agencies as training and development opportunities. Exposing applicants to a real-life job setting can help them gain a better sense of the job responsibilities before deciding to continue to pursue the job. This approach may reduce dropout rates later in the training process.

The Greater Cleveland Regional Transit Authority has funded a union-led mentorship program, focusing on bus operators in the first five years of their career. The operators learn about basic job skills and elements of the transit agency culture (such as greeting colleagues, making eye contact, and shaking hands.)

At Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority, after training is complete, new hires are assigned to mentors as they begin their individual route assignments. The mentors are employees who manage the day-to-day work on the road and are responsible for jobs such as dispatching, scheduling, and road calls. Candid discussion, often helpful in a mentoring environment, is possible between the mentor and new operator since most disciplinary action is handled by senior managers. The mentor program does not end at a specified time, but rather when bus operators gain comfort on their route. The mentor program is also available for operators who reach out for additional support after their formal mentorship is completed.

A 2024 Transit Center report entitled “Developing Transit Talent Pipelines,” described some mentorship programs from other agencies. Golden Gate Transit in California developed a no-cost, semester-long pre-apprenticeship in partnership with the ATU Local 1575 and Santa Rosa Junior College. The program equips candidates with core operator skills, realistic job exposure, and coaching to enter the formal apprenticeship. Golden Gate Transit also has an apprenticeship program, which trains new employees to become bus operators and pairs apprentices with experienced operators who can pass on institutional knowledge of the profession.

CTA’s Second Chance program helps Chicago residents who have a barrier to employment (formerly incarcerated, victim of domestic violence, or homeless) re-enter the workforce by providing job training, networking, and mentorship to build skills for

roles at CTA or with other employers. Since 2011, it has served more than 1,800 participants, with CTA hiring over 500 and many others securing private-sector jobs.

One of the benefits of a formalized mentor program is that it addresses the common issue of new bus operators getting inadequate or incorrect information about on-the-job challenges. In the absence of being paired with a trusted mentor, new bus operators may reach out to a bus operator who may not be the most qualified and/or experienced for mentorship purposes.

Safety, Health, and Working Conditions

Promoting health and safety and providing a generally agreeable work environment is important to maintaining transit workers' sense of comfort and belonging at a transit agency and thus, to retention.

Operating a bus can be physically and emotionally taxing work. Among the workplace and environmental stressors that affect bus operators are long working hours; the sedentary nature of the job; extended periods of focus on driving, sometimes in unsafe conditions; uncomfortable seats; and hostile passengers. If unaddressed, safety and health concerns can affect the workplace by leading to excessive absenteeism, increased health care costs, or operational problems and delays, among other stressors.

Many transit agencies have health and wellness programs. For example, DART's Health and Wellness program allows participating employees to earn points for their healthy habits and efforts, like routine physical exams, participating in a heart walk, joining a gym, and obtaining a flu shot. At the end of the year, the points are converted to cash. Pinellas Suncoast Transit Authority offers walking and weight loss challenges and prizes throughout the year. The agency also provides an on-site gym, available for free to employees.

Assault is one of the biggest safety concerns in the work environment for bus operators, since they interact frequently and directly with the public, have mobile workplaces, and handle money. Beyond physical effects, bus operators can also experience adverse psychological effects. Negative and sometimes violent interactions with passengers have been linked to adverse psychological effects on transit workers.

TCRP Synthesis 193, "Tools and Strategies for Eliminating Assaults Against Transit Operators", identifies measures that transit agencies can employ to reduce the instances and severity of assaults including policies, protocols, police and security staffing; automatic

vehicle locators and emergency alert buttons; surveillance and observation systems; driver protection systems incorporated into buses; and training.

Restroom access is an often-overlooked component of a bus operator's working conditions but one that can put a daily strain on the operator and lead to adverse health outcomes, like urinary tract infections. While it is ideal that bus operators have access to permanent restroom facilities along their route, providing comfortable, clean portable restrooms can be a cost-effective approach for transit agencies. Another option is making arrangements with local business owners for on-route restroom facility access. Metro Transit provides bus operators with an "authorized bus operator restroom locations chart" that identifies businesses, hours of operation, and any pertinent information (e.g., "you will be buzzed in").

A 2022 Transit Center report, "Bus Operators in Crisis" presents strategies that some transit agencies are using to improve employee facilities. Green Mountain Transit in Vermont added break rooms to its new transit center. The new break rooms have a kitchen, restrooms, computers for operators, and a separate room with napping chairs. Maryland's MTA added reclining couches with USB connections in their break rooms.

Unions can offer valuable insights into the day-to-day issues faced by workers. New Jersey Transit collaborates with the ATU State Council to address safety issues. The union encourages workers to report issues immediately by telling their direct supervisor and letting the union know so that the union can provide additional support. The union is also involved in the agency's safety committee, which is comprised of union and agency members and meets monthly to go over any outstanding safety issues.

Some agencies offer transit workers input into bus procurement so that bus operators and mechanics have an opportunity to weigh in on selecting buses. These employees can provide important input on critical bus issues such as maintainability, seat ergonomics, blind spots, crash safety, and other features that can improve safety and efficiency.

Retention and Motivation

This section of Eno's Literature Review discusses retention and motivation, focusing on employee engagement programs. Previous sections addressed other measures relating to retention and motivation, such as compensation, hiring, training, and working conditions. For example, as discussed in the Training section, mentorship programs can strengthen recruitment, training, and retention simultaneously.

To reduce turnover, transit agencies can pay more attention to employees' job satisfaction and implement strategies that demonstrate their commitment to their workers, in turn building up the workers' commitment to their employers. Highly engaged employees perform better and are less likely to leave an organization than disengaged.

APTA reports: "Strong, encouraging agency culture appeals to workers, whether they are already part of the agency or considering joining. Agencies can attract new workers and retain existing ones through responsive, meaningful engagement with their workers, acknowledging their accomplishments, and providing clear pathways for career growth without having to leave the agency."

APTA's 2022 survey asked respondents to rank actions that would encourage long-term retention. Current workers ranked "increasing pay" highest, while former workers placed it second. Instead, former workers ranked "listening to concerns and changing procedures or practices" as the most effective measure to encourage retention. Both groups ranked "better work schedules" highly, and many also highlighted the importance of work-life balance measures such as childcare access and flexible hours.

APTA's survey found disconcerting answers from their questions about engagement. At larger transit agencies, only 27 percent of operations workers agree that their employer is responsive to their concerns, while 47 percent disagreed.

Rewards programs can increase employee retention by providing an achievable goal to work towards and by creating an environment in which employees feel valued. Direct cash bonuses can be used to encourage desirable behaviors while boosting morale. Transit stakeholders, convened by Eno and its research partners, recommend that agencies convene regular meetings with transit workers to learn about their experiences and needs. Oftentimes, workers can identify problems that are easy to resolve.

According to APTA, "Transit operations work is stressful and difficult, and the public often treats operations workers with less than kindness. Therefore, agencies must work to foster a culture of positive affirmation and gratitude alongside the demands for organizational performance." Examples of engagement programs can be found in Seattle, Dallas, and South Dakota.

- Each year, transit agencies nationwide celebrate their bus operators during Transit Driver Appreciation Day. For example, King County Metro developed an online platform where riders can send a note of praise to operators. Other transit agencies direct riders to social media platforms, where they can share photos of themselves and drivers.

- The Voices of DART Employees Matter program sends monthly questionnaires to employees for their feedback. A management committee awards gift cards to those who submit the most valuable feedback.
- River Cities Public Transit hosts special events for workers and their families including an annual Christmas party and a summertime family picnic at a farm.

Providing clear career pathways for workers and prioritizing promotion from within are proven retention strategies. Offering robust career paths and educational opportunities improves job satisfaction, employee motivation, and long-term commitment. They also help retain institutional knowledge. Together, consistent recognition, responsive engagement, and investment in career growth can help transit agencies foster loyalty, reduce turnover, and build a stronger workforce.

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Mark Miller, "Join TriMet's maintenance team and make over $90,000 in year one," *TriMet News*, March 2025.

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Operations Workers Recruitment and Retention

November 5, 2025

Philip Plotch, principal researcher

Eno Center for Transportation

Eno's Tasks

- ✓ Literature review
- ✓ Reviewed RTD data and initiatives
- ✓ Interviewed RTD and labor representatives
- ✓ Presented preliminary findings
- ✓ Prepared final report
- ✓ Presentation to Committee

Background
Recruitment
Compensation
Hiring Processes
Training
Retention and Motivation

High Level Items

1. Highly regulated and unionized industry structured by schedules, rules and hierarchy.
2. RTD does not have authority to unilaterally adopt all recommendations.
3. RTD should identify best practices and benchmark data.

Background
Recruitment
Compensation
Hiring Processes
Training
Retention and Motivation

Recruitment
Recommendations to Consider

1. Both RTD and/or ATU can offer pre-employment training opportunities.
2. More partnerships with local organizations.
3. Expand part-time positions.
4. If possible, send mailing to all CDL-holders in region.
5. Use RTD's training elements as part of a school's ESL program.
6. Financial incentives encouraging employees to work less desirable routes/shifts

Example of Incentive to Take Less Desirable Shifts

ATU LOCAL 758

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT
By and between
PIERCE COUNTY
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION BENEFIT AREA
AUTHORITY CORPORATION
And
AMALGAMATED TRANSIT UNION
LOCAL 758, AFL-CIO

January 1, 2024 – December 31, 2026

PierceTransit

Graveyard Shift Premium
8:00 PM to 3:00 AM.

Background

Recruitment

Compensation

Hiring Processes

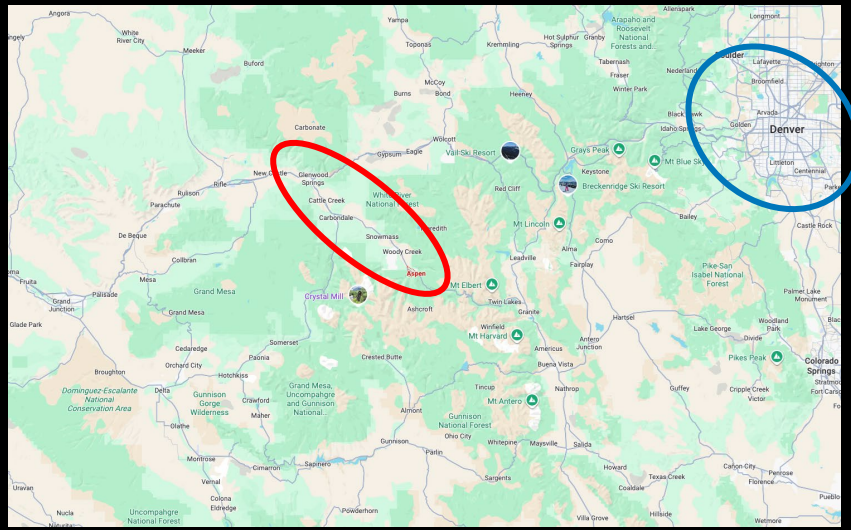
Training

Retention and Motivation

Following up about housing

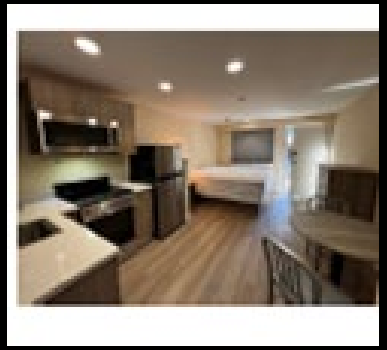
Park City, Utah

Aspen – Glenwood Springs



RFTA
ROARING FORK TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

- Purchased a motel for $4.9 million.
- $8 million for renovation.
- 42-unit housing opened in January 2025.
- Studio apartment rent ≈ $1,300 per month



Eno does *not* recommend this for RTD

Compensation
Recommendations to Consider

1. Incentives for employees opting out of health insurance
2. Tie shorter wage progression periods (or bonuses) to achievements
3. Child care subsidy

Background
Recruitment
Compensation
Hiring Processes
Training
Retention and Motivation

Hiring Process
Recommendations to Consider

1. Provide ride-along experience to potential candidates.
2. Early start program.
3. Review interview and screening programs.
4. Report more data about new hires.

Background
Recruitment
Compensation
Hiring Processes
Training
Retention and Motivation

Benefits of Quality Training

Recruitment

Retention

- Better prepared on Day 1 – more likely to stay.
- More career opportunities.
- Improve managers’ skills - improves their employees’ retention

Training: Rail & Bus

Bus and rail divisions train their own employees.

HR provides management and supervisor training

New Bus Mechanic Apprenticeship Program

- Collaboration between RTD and ATU local.
- 10 mechanics selected to be mentors.
- Developed in cooperation with US Department of Labor's Office of Apprenticeship and approved by the Colorado State Apprenticeship Agency.

RTD's Mentors

Training
Recommendations to Consider

1. More follow-up after managers and supervisors training.
2. Expand apprenticeship program or set up a less resource-intensive mentoring program.
3. Ensure all trainers fully prepared.
4. Enhance coordination of bus and rail training.
5. Promote educational assistance program and consider offering financial resources so employees do not have to pay out of pocket.

Background
Recruitment
Compensation
Hiring Processes
Training
Retention and Motivation

Agree or Strongly Agree

Year	*My supervisor treats me with respect*	*My supervisor is invested in my growth and success*	*My perspective is invited and valued, even if it differs from that of my supervisor or leadership*
2023	83%	63%	59%
2024	88%	75%	74%
2025	90%	76%	74%

Data Problem

Year	*RTD Response Rates*	*% of respondents who worked in bus and rail operations*
2023	47%	59%
2024	36%	52%
2025	32%	47%

Retention
Recommendations to Consider

1. Analyze absenteeism rates.
2. Improve employee survey process and share more disaggregate information.
3. Incentivize bus operators to choose less desirable shifts.

RTD's four Strategic Priorities

Strong community partner

High-quality customer service

Attract and retain highly skilled & engaged workforce

Financial Success

October 22, 2025

Accountability Committee
Agency Update

Charlene Polege
Chief People Officer

People Power

People Power

- Workforce Demographics
  - Budget vs. actual headcount
  - Headcount by employee type
  - Vacancy rate
  - New hire retention rate

People Power – Headcount Overall

Year	Budget (FT/PT)	Actual	YE Variance	YE Vacancy Rate (%)
FY2025	3,639	*3,160 ⇧	**420	**13
FY2024	3,457	3,068 ⇧	389	11
FY2023	3,199	2,815	384	12

*as of September 3, 2025

**forecast to YE

People Power – Headcount Breakdown

Employee Type	FY2025 (Actual)	% of Total	FY2024 (Actual)	% of Total	FY2023 (Actual)	% of Total
**Represented (FT/PT)	*2,079	65.7	1,948	63.4	1,766	62.7
Non-represented (FT/PT)	*1,081	34.3	1,022	36.6	974	37.3

*as of September 1, 2025

**reflects ATU Local 1001 only

People Power – Headcount Breakdown (Bus)

	Operators			Mechanics		
Year	Budgeted (FT/PT)	Actual (FT/PT)	YE Vacancy Rate (%)	Budgeted (FT)	Actual (FT/PT)	YE Vacancy Rate (%)
FY2025	1002	*894 ↑	*14.17	151	*140 ↑	*7.28
FY2024	952	879	7.7	151	131	13.25
FY2023	952	811	14.81	151	127	15.89

*as of August 31, 2025

Excludes trainees

People Power – Headcount Breakdown (Rail)

	Operators			Mechanics		
Year	Budgeted (FT/PT)	Actual (FT/PT)	YE Vacancy Rate (%)	Budgeted (FT)	Actual (FT/PT)	YE Vacancy Rate (%)
FY2025	276	*237 ⇧	*14.2	79	*66 ⇩	*16.5
FY2024	262	229	12.6	79	70	11.4
FY2023	250	204	18.4	79	65	17.7

*as of September 4, 2025

Excludes trainees

People Power – New Hire Retention Rate (Overall - all FTEs)

Start of Range	End of Range	Year	Retention Rate
Jan. 2025	6/10/2025	**FY2025	**85%**
Jan. 2024	Dec. 2024	FY2024	77%
Jan. 2023	Dec. 2023	FY2023	78%
Jan. 2022	Dec. 2022	FY2022	80%
Jan. 2021	Dec. 2021	FY2021	73%

*"New hires" includes new and returning employees within their first year of employment or re-hire
**Captures 23 weeks of a 52-week fiscal period

People Power – New Hire Retention Rate (Represented FTEs)

Start of Range	End of Range	Year	Retention Rate
Jan. 2025	6/10/2025	**FY2025	**82%
Jan. 2024	Dec. 2024	FY2024	76%
Jan. 2023	Dec. 2023	FY2023	73%
Jan. 2022	Dec. 2022	FY2022	76%
Jan. 2021	Dec. 2021	FY2021	66%

*"New hires" includes new and returning employees within their first year of employment or re-hire
**Captures 23 weeks of a 52-week fiscal period

People Power – New Hire Retention Rate (Non-represented FTEs)

Start of Range	End of Range	Year	Retention Rate
Jan. 2025	6/10/2025	**FY2025	**91%
Jan. 2024	Dec. 2024	FY2024	82%
Jan. 2023	Dec. 2023	FY2023	87%
Jan. 2022	Dec. 2022	FY2022	90%
Jan. 2021	Dec. 2021	FY2021	88%

*"New hires" includes new and returning employees within their first year of employment or re-hire
**Captures 23 weeks of a 52-week fiscal period

People Power – New Hire Retention Rate (by mode)

Mode	**FY25	FY24	FY23	FY22	FY21	Δ FY21-25
Bus	86%	78%	75%	81%	70%	16% ↑
Commuter Rail	89%	84%	78%	78%	77%	12% ↑
Light Rail	80%	70%	73%	69%	60%	20% ↑

*"New hires" includes new and returning employees within their first year of employment or re-hire
**Captures 23 weeks of a 52-week fiscal period

Talent Acquisition

Talent Acquisition

- Compensation
  - Market competitive
    - ATU 1001 CBA Wage Increases
      - 2022-25
      - 2025-27
- Hiring Incentives
  - Signing/Employee Referral Bonuses
- Outreach Strategies/Candidate Sourcing

Talent Acquisition – Compensation (ATU)

- RTD Bus Operator (top rate)
  - 2024 ranked 64/269 transit agencies
  - 2025 ranked 37/269 transit agencies
- RTD Bus Mechanic (top rate)
  - 2024 ranked 28/269 transit agencies
  - 2025 ranked 16/269 transit agencies

Source: John Dash & Associates (Dash), the preeminent wage and benefits data aggregator used by virtually every public transportation system in the U.S.

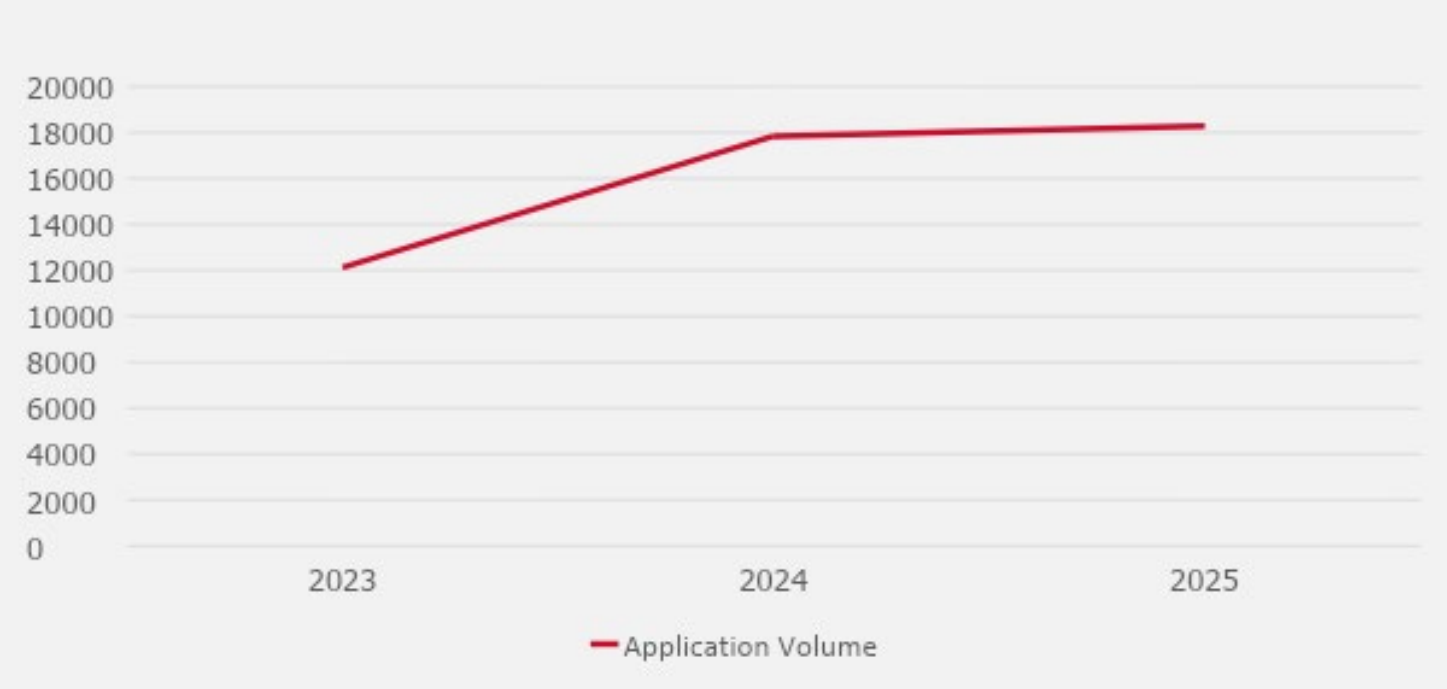
Year	Wage Increase %
2022	16%
2023	3%
2024	3%
2025	6.5%
2026	4.5%
2027	4.5%

Talent Acquisition – 2025 Outreach Strategies

- 15 community engagement, job fair, or career fair events resulting in 945+ connections
- Position Specific Marketing Campaigns:
  - Operators (Bus and Light Rail)
  - Transit Police Officer
  - Dispatcher (Public Safety)
  - Mechanic positions
    - Electro Mechanics
    - Facilities Maintenance
- *Total applications received 18,293

*as of September 15, 2025

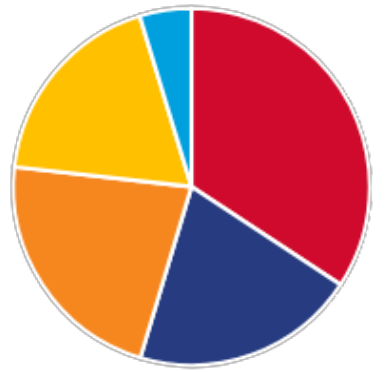
Talent Acquisition – Candidate Sourcing



2023: 12,122 2024: 17,851 *2025: **18,293**

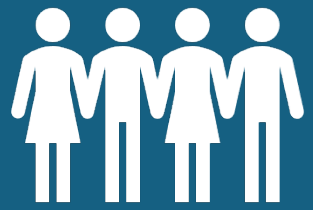
*as of September 15, 2025

Top Application Source: 2025



Source	# Applications
RTD Career Site	5,879
Indeed	3,802
LinkedIn	3,503
Employee Referral	3,180
Handshake Network	807

2025 Employee Survey

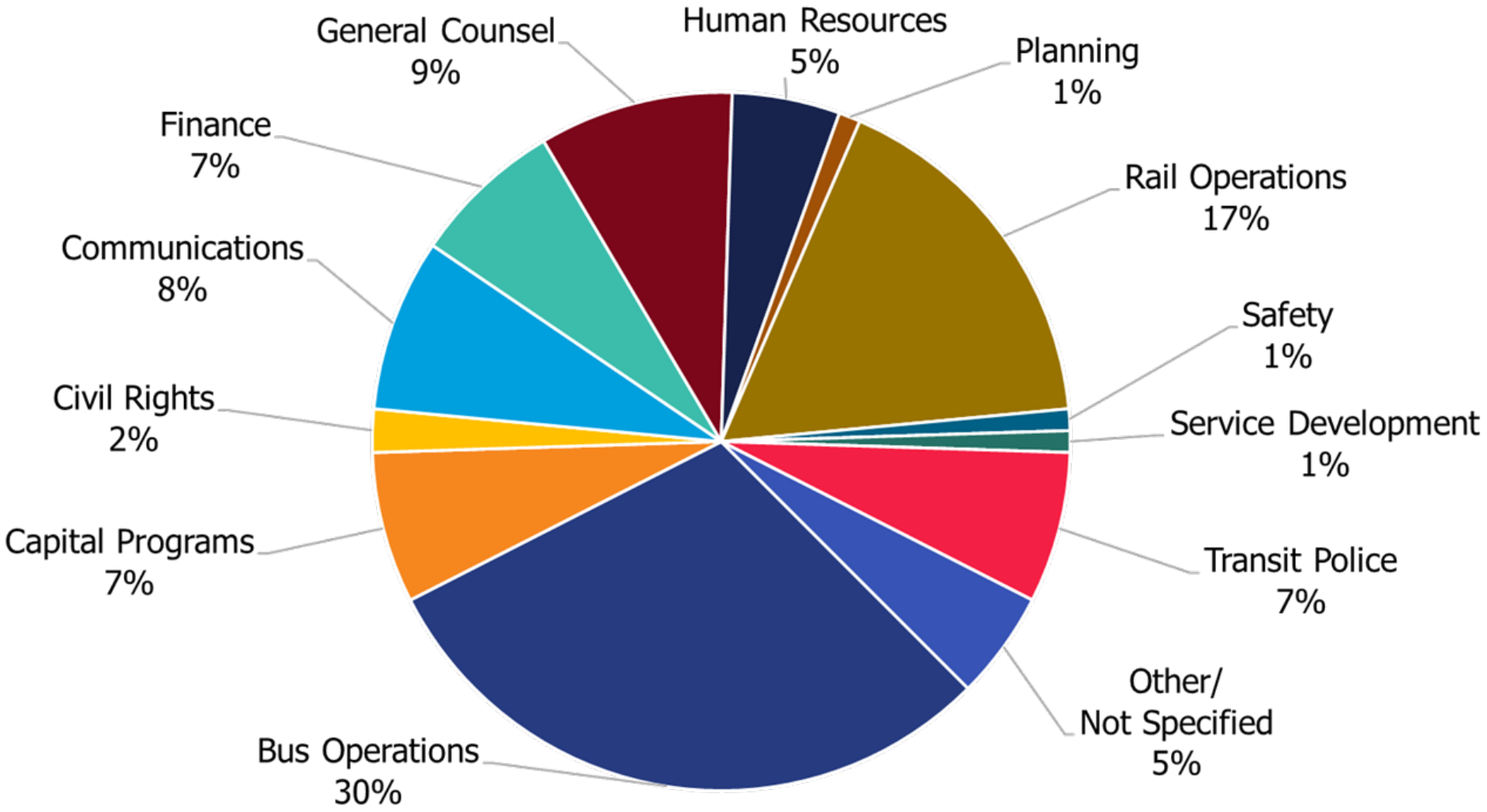


Participation

Response Rate

2025 Response Rate	2024 Response Rate	2023 Response Rate
32%	**36%**	**47%**
1,014 surveys submitted / 3,114 total employees	1,056 surveys submitted / 2,958 total employees	1,259 surveys submitted / 2,686 total employees
Four-week survey period	Three-week survey period	Four-week survey period
Paper survey option (18%)	Paper survey option (24%)	Paper survey option (17%)
Digital tablets	Digital tablets	Digital tablets
37 multiple choice question, one ranking question	37 multiple choice question, one ranking question	35 multiple choice questions
One open-ended question	One open-ended question	Five open-ended questions
RTD swag giveaways	Snacks and RTD swag giveaways	ID holder giveaway

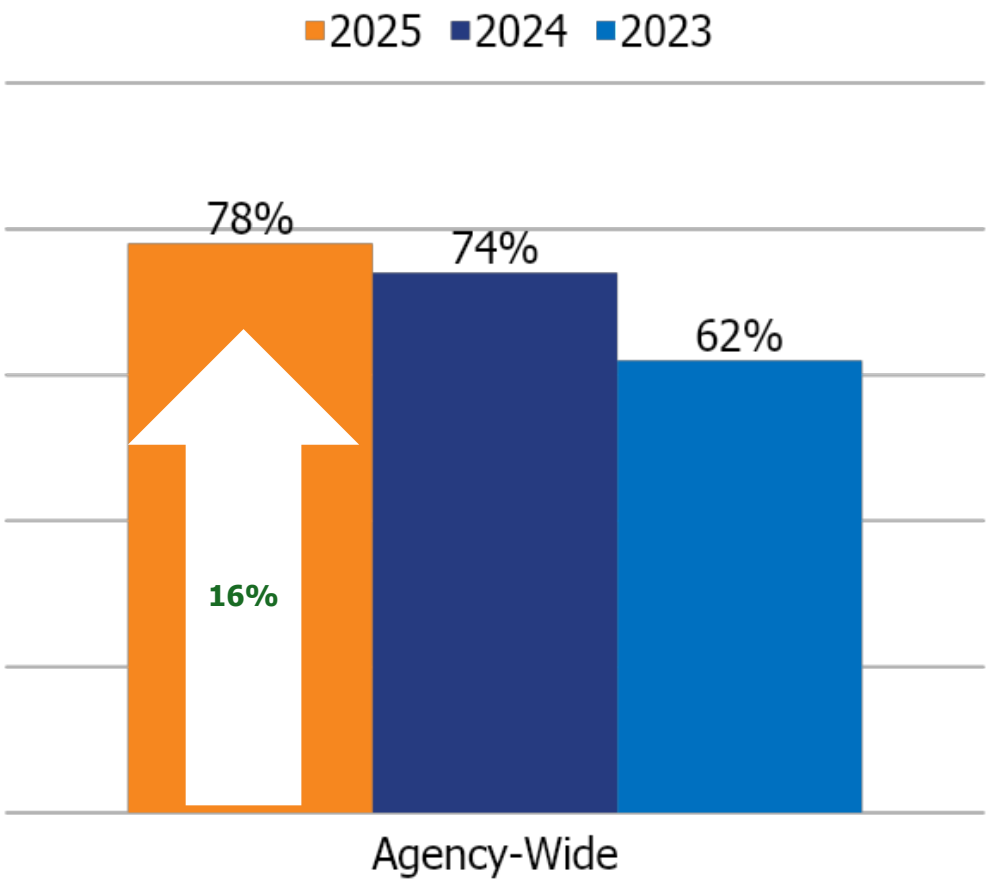
Survey Participation By Work Unit



Composite Index Score

Employee Ownership Composite Index Score

Agency-Wide

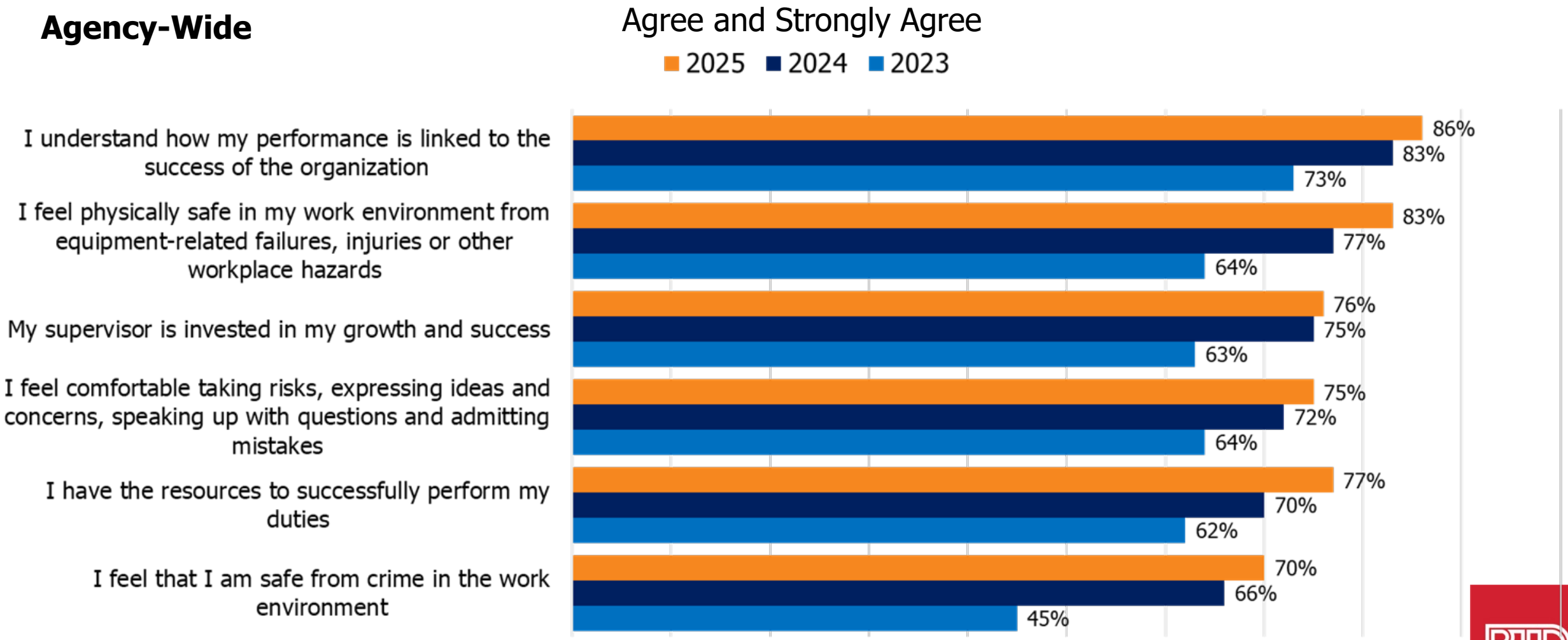


Composite index score is the average of employee survey scores related to how engaged, supported, safe feeling and understanding of how employees contribute to agency success.

Engagement	Supervisor Support
Resource Support	Physical Safety
Safe from Crime	Psychological Safety

Employee Ownership Composite Index Score (cont'd)

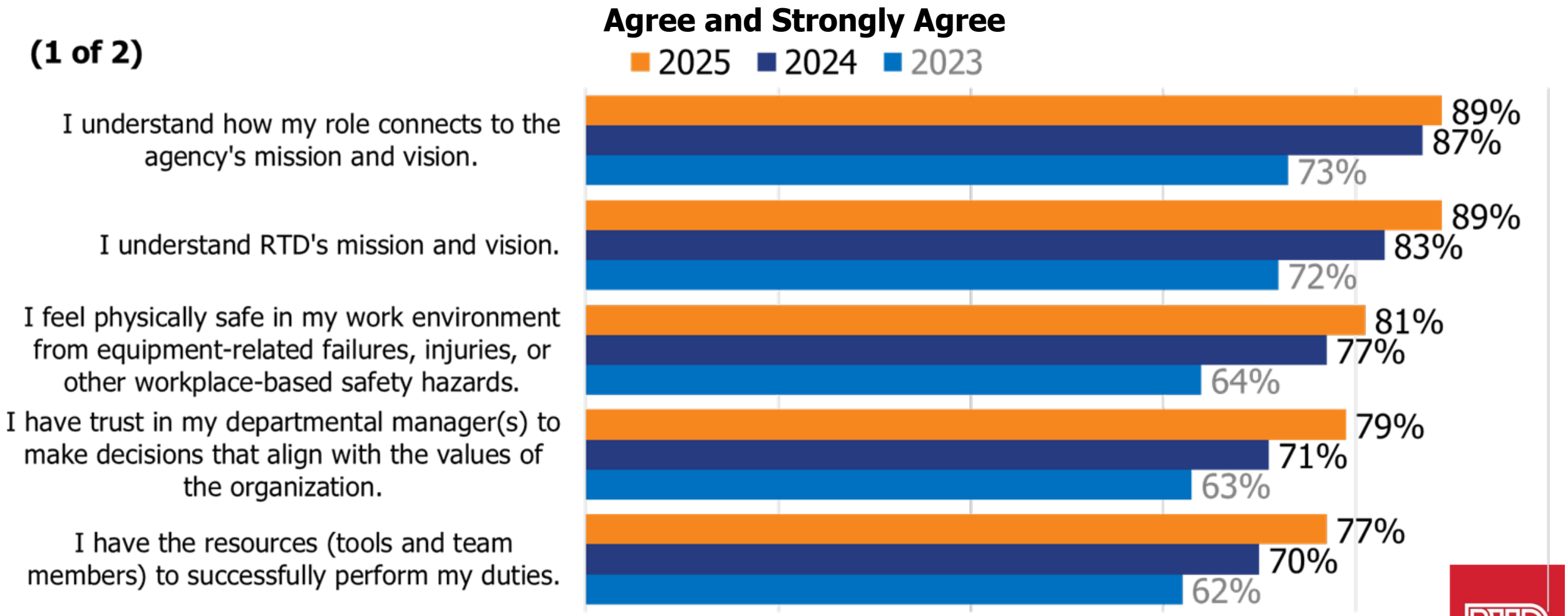
Agency-Wide



Significant Improvements

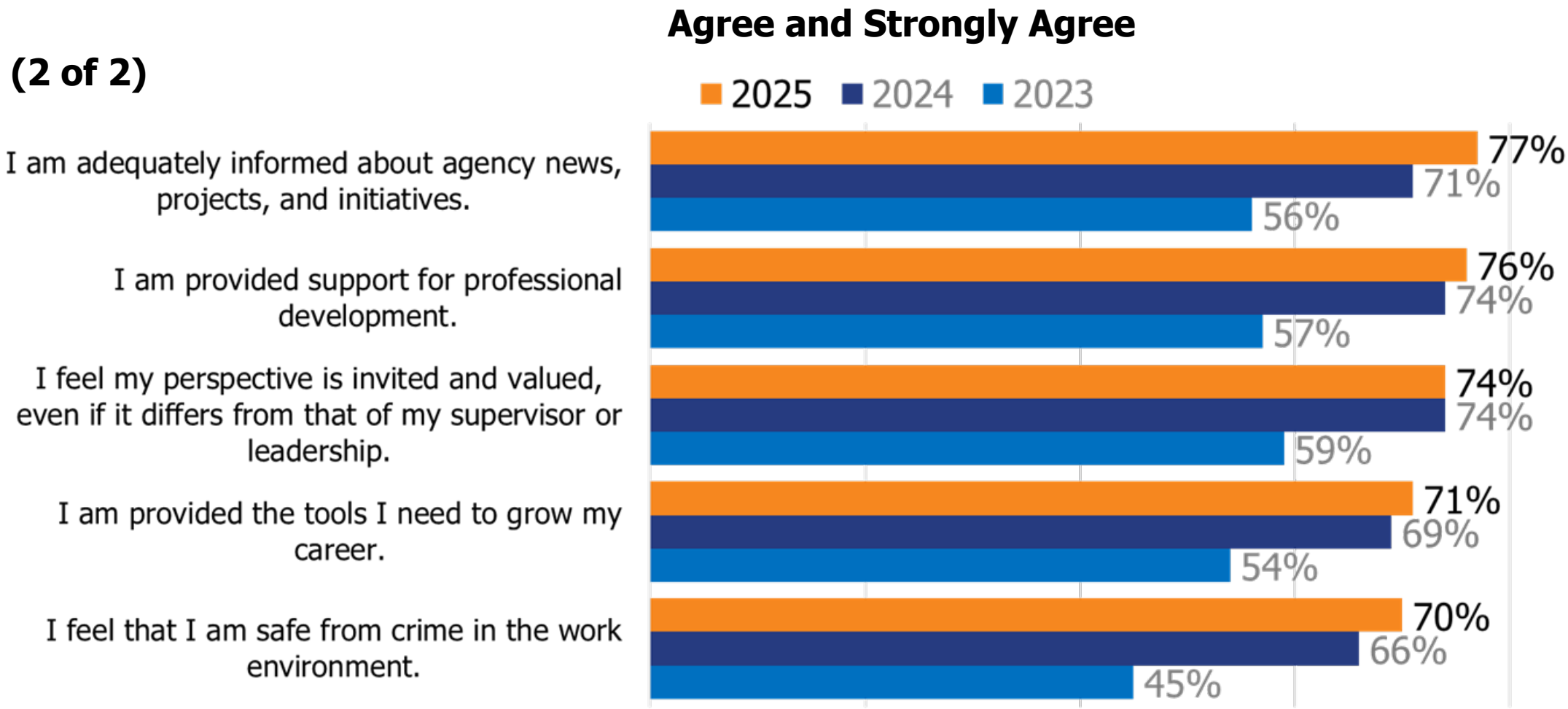
Significant (15%+) Improvement Over Two Years

(1 of 2)



Significant (15%+) Improvement Over Two Years (cont'd)

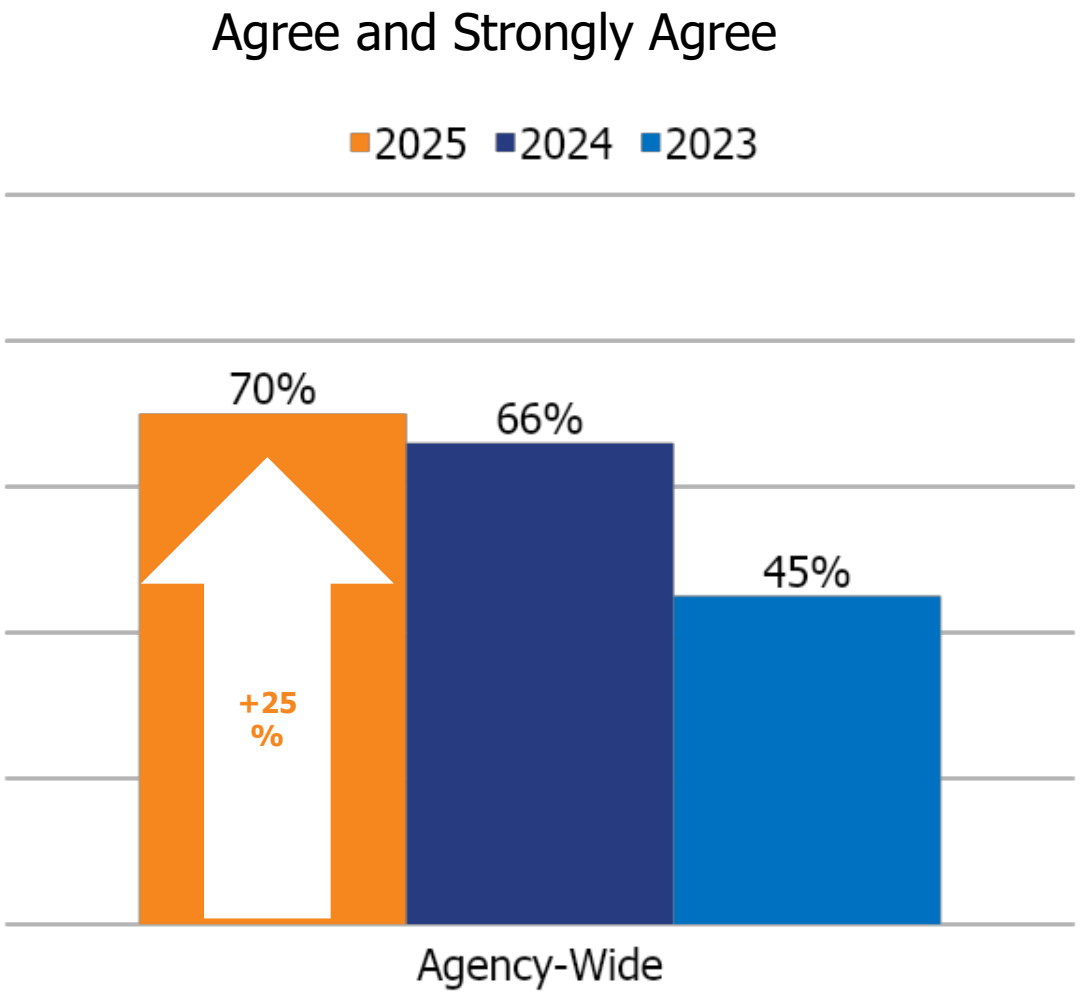
(2 of 2)

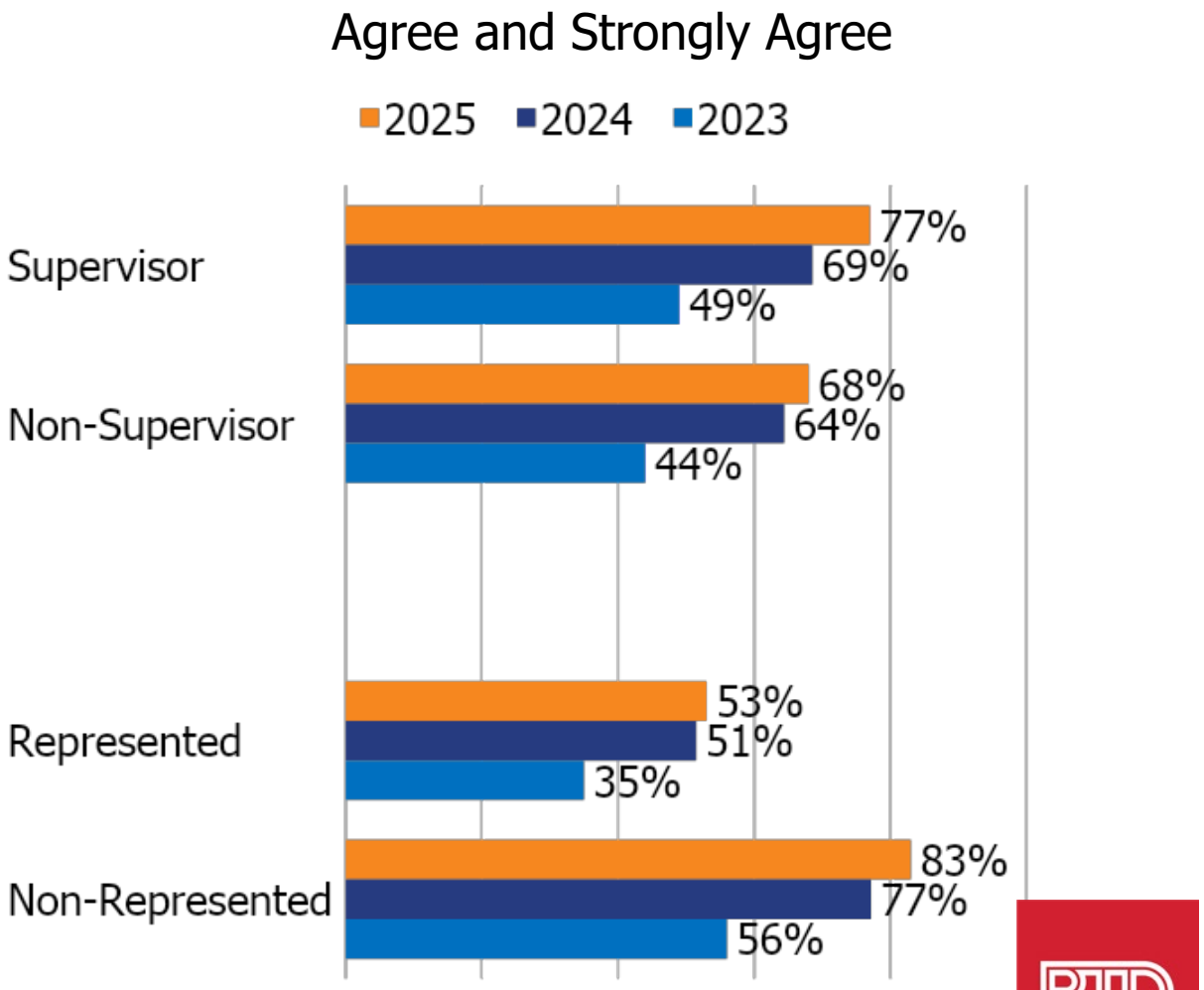


Strategic Initiatives

Welcoming Transit Environment: Employee Security

I feel that I am safe from crime in the work environment





2020-21 Accountability Committee

Operator Retention Recommendations

Operator Retention Recommendations

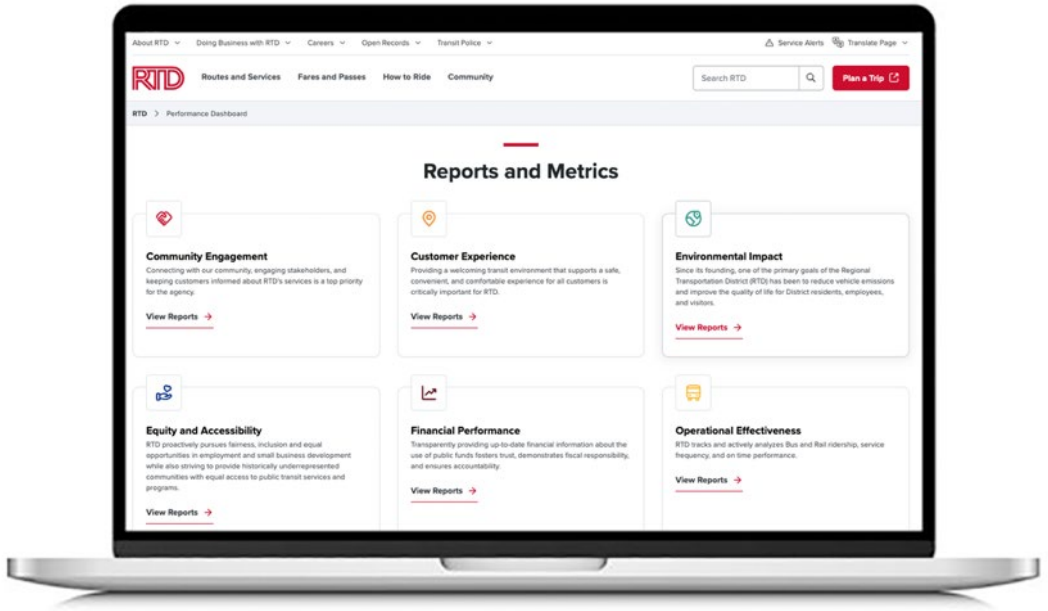
- Improve supervisory practices around performance feedback to address operator turnover
- Improve process to help ensure that bus operators receive adequate rest breaks during their work shifts, in accordance with Collective Bargaining Agreement
- Improve processes for assigning schedules to operators

- Recommendations derived from December 2020 state audit report
- RTD agreed to implement recommendations in the Agency Responses to the Accountability Committee Final Report (2021)
- Implementation status reflected in August 2024 state audit report and subsequently in May 2025 status update

Performance Dashboard

Performance Dashboard

- Provides transparent agency performance overview
  - On-time performance metrics, security data, community outreach reports, boardings, and finance information
- Regularly updated to identify trends and measure service delivery efficiency



rtd-denver.com/performance-dashboard

- Annual survey data

Thank you.

rtd-denver.com

Hudson Skykomish

Memorandum

Date: 3 November 2025

To: RTD Accountability Committee and interested parties

From: David Bragdon, Principal, Hudson Skykomish LLC

Subject: RTD and Local Government Relations

Your committee's scope, assigned by the legislature, includes evaluating the "representation of local government and state agencies within RTD," as stated in the bill summary. You asked me to research this issue through interviews with stakeholders in the Denver region, and to provide perspectives from experience in the transit industry nationally. This memo is in response to that request.

Summary of Findings

My off-the-record interviews with stakeholders revealed a striking paradox:

- Many local elected officials convey dissatisfaction with RTD, and civic sector observers describe an atmosphere of mistrust between RTD and city and county leaders, writ large.

Yet

- Many local cities and counties, CDOT and DRCOG work collaboratively and successfully with RTD on a variety of projects and programs. Participants directly involved in the work describe a constructive, mutually respectful relationship among the professionals employed in those agencies.

This jarring contradiction between characterizations at the political level and practice at the staff level are mostly due to differences in what issues participants focus on:

- Political leaders' dissatisfaction with RTD is expressed mostly in the context of under-delivery of the 2004 FasTracks program, accompanied by an unquantified sense that their respective jurisdictions are not receiving a "fair share" of both capital investment and operating service. Critically, "fair share" (or even the "right amount") of transit service has no objective definition in the region. A secondary theme is that many local elected officials, including those inclined to be supportive of transit, have not been given a clear sense of RTD's current mission and priorities or capabilities, or participated iteratively in the development of such a vision. Observations on the relationship between city/county governments and RTD at the political level are sometimes tinged with strong emotional language, like the observation that "all the Mayors hate RTD," indicating an unhealthy rancor extending beyond policy differences.
- By contrast, local, MPO, state and RTD staff and civic observers who report a more positive view of RTD-local relations tend to cite examples of specific programs or projects (*apart* from FasTracks) that are producing good results and tangible achievements, like installation of bus lanes, intermodal "first and last mile" connections, or collaborative planning that encourages transit-oriented development. Positive relationships and healthy mutual understanding actually does exist among municipalities, RTD, DRCOG and CDOT, and is producing results, at some finer-grained scale.

This stark bifurcation of views presents both obstacles and opportunities. The palpable sense of "broken promises" from a 2004 ballot measure infects the political atmosphere over two decades later, hampering the ability to move forward. The lack of a shared high-level vision for transit in 2025 and beyond inhibits various interests from pulling together for mutually-identified shared goals for today and tomorrow. At the same time, the work that some local jurisdictions are doing hand-in-hand with RTD, literally at the street level, shows that the Denver region still retains transit ambition and collaboration in its DNA, and provides models for expanded cooperation and accomplishment going forward.

National practice: Think in terms of special districts and public utilities

While SB-25-161 speaks in terms of "representation," a word implicitly limited to governance, a more comprehensive approach is to think in terms of "relationships." A useful way to look at relationships between RTD and other forms of local government is by framing it in the mindset of how cities and counties tend to work with other special purpose districts, of all types.

RTD, like the vast majority of transit agencies across the U.S., is part of the species of public agency variously termed "special districts" or "authorities" or "limited purpose governments," varying with legal nomenclature in different states. Transit agencies are rarely controlled by a local "general purpose" government, like a city or county, because they span multiple cities and/or counties or portions of them. For that reason, they have to learn to get along, for practical reasons, *regardless of their respective governance structures.* I suggest the Accountability Committee look at RTD-local relations in that broader framing.

The relationship between a transit district and the cities and counties in its territory should be thought of as comparable to how cities and counties ideally relate to *other* special purpose districts and public utilities. *They are all "local" governments, but of different purpose.* General purpose governments (cities and counties) and special purpose governments (school districts, transit districts, water districts, etc.) occupy some or all of the same geographic territory, and have constituents (residents, voters) in common, but they have separate governance and usually separate funding streams. That separate governance structure (i.e. lack of "representation" of local general purpose government at the board level of the special purpose government) does not prevent their close collaboration.

For example, the Southgate Water and Sanitation Districts (SWSD) overlap with cities like Lone Tree, Greenwood Village or Centennial. The West Metro Fire and Rescue District (WMF&R) co-exists with cities like Wheat Ridge, Golden or Lakewood, or areas of Jefferson and Douglas Counties. Neither the city/county or the special district is hierarchically superior to the other, in the sense that neither is statutorily empowered to unilaterally order the other what to do, or institutionally represented on the other's board of directors (though cross-appointments do occur in some cases). But, living together within similar dimensions of space and time, they work together, often closely.

This *independence* of governance requires dedication to *interdependence* in practice. General purpose and special purpose governments need each other to be successful. The City of Centennial will not achieve its growth plans or desired quality of life (or public health) if the Southgate Water and Sanitation Districts cannot supply reliably clean water and take sewage away, and SWSD cannot achieve its mission if the City of Centennial does not coordinate its planning and building permits with SWSD, and grant water and sewer pipe easements beneath the city's streets. West Metro Fire and Rescue District personnel and Lakewood Police Department personnel need to work together as peer first responders at 3:00 AM, even though they report to different governing bodies. The elected members of the WMF&R board and the elected members of the Lakewood City Council (who, after all, report to a lot of the same voters and taxpayers) have an incentive to ensure that their respective agencies collaborate. It's a partnership of self-interest and joint public service, not merely structural.

The relationship between local governments and a transit district should be animated by a similar sense of partnership, applied where their common interests and their differing specializations overlap. It's obvious why West Metro Fire and Rescue needs to cooperate with the Lakewood Police Department, and why Southgate Water and Sanitation needs to cooperate with the Centennial Planning Department. It's common sense that a Mayor would do what he or she can to help the local school district succeed, even though he or she does not appoint the Board of Education, because a Mayor knows a city is better if it has good public schools. A Mayor should also believe a city is better if it has good public transit, and can help transit succeed regardless of who controls the transit board.

Common Matters of Collaboration Between Transit Agencies, Local Governments, MPOs, and State Departments of Transportation in the U.S.

Successful cities depend on successful transit agencies, and successful transit agencies depend on successful cities. They benefit from each other's mutual aid on issues like:

- *Zoning, housing, and land use:* to attract strong ridership, public transit requires residential and employment density, with origins and destinations (job centers like offices, medical centers, educational institutions) that are concentrated and arrayed along legible lines that can feasibly be served by buses and trains. If a local government has not zoned for transit-supportive land uses, and instead puts jobs in far-flung isolated locations and scatters

low-density housing across the landscape, then it won't generate much ridership, no matter how competently the transit agency is run.

- *Leveraging public investments that support transit:* local governments who care about sidewalks that connect to transit stops, dedicated right-of-way lanes for transit, traffic signal priority for buses, etc., will find that more of their residents will be able to use transit. If a local government has not created a receptive environment for fast and reliable buses, then buses probably won't be fast and reliable, no matter what a transit agency does.
- *Long-term service planning:* transit agencies and local general purpose governments should consult with each other about future growth areas and changes in land use, just the way a water agency and city would.
- *Connecting modes:* all "transit trips" start before the rider reaches the transit vehicle and do not end when the rider leaves the transit vehicle. The transit agency should have an interest in coordinating with local governments on how riders get to and from stops, whether on foot (safe sidewalks) or bike or short-distance vehicles like neo-taxi ridehailing services known collectively as "first-last mile."
- *Funding for supplementary services:* some regions, notably Salt Lake City and Seattle, provide mechanisms for local governments to "buy up" enhanced levels of transit service within their borders from their regional transit agencies, a practice that formerly existed in the Denver region.

Local governments in the Denver area *already* work with RTD on these issues. All can build on these initiatives, with or without statutory change in governance.

Current Status of Various Local Government – RTD Collaborations

The Denver region displays several examples of cooperation between local governments and RTD. Many of these programs could be more cohesive, standardized and widespread – and better publicized to local elected officials.

- *Regional Service Councils:* The 2021 RTD Accountability Committee managed by DRCOG recommended that RTD create "Regional Service Councils" to consult with the public and local jurisdictions about service changes. RTD determined (properly in my view) that these zones should align with "travel-sheds" (the ridership market) rather than political boundaries, and should involve technical staff from jurisdictions. My interviews found that the jury is still out on the effectiveness of this idea, as

implemented so far. Some participants describe it as a one-way information sharing from RTD rather than an iterative exchange, so far. The format, being new, is still evolving. Expectations of the model are not uniform.

- *Regional BRT Partnership:* Staff members from multiple municipalities and CDOT and RTD are enthused about DRCOG's "Regional BRT Partnership" effort, dedicated to implementing an ambitious network of Bus Rapid Transit corridors around the region. The cooperative effort brings together local governments and RTD and CDOT to fuse their diffused responsibilities: CDOT and counties and cities who own and control the rights-of-way and traffic signals, local governments that control spots where bus stops and shelters are placed and the sidewalks leading to them; RTD, which will run the buses; permitting agencies whose approval is needed, and DRCOG as convener and the state-designated channel for federal funds. Several sources called this effort a model of collaboration at scale, with potentially huge positive impact, and credited DRCOG with managing it in a manner that fosters a sense of shared mission.

- *RTD Partnership Program (for first/last mile services):* One suburban official told me, "what I'm most grateful to RTD for is the Partnership Program," and another said the program was "the best thing" that the local city had engaged with RTD on. This relatively nascent RTD program funds local jurisdictions to provide various services to connect with RTD's line-haul fixed route services. Initial uptake seems popular with local governments. Metrics like return-on-investment, ridership growth and fiscally responsible scalability are still needed. Learning from the Access-on-Demand experience, RTD should be methodical in forecasting the financial consequences of growth in any on-demand services, relative to the ridership generated by other potential service expansion expenditures.

- *Transit Oriented Development (TOD):* Several local government officials expressed appreciation that RTD staff worked closely with them to update zoning and lure development near transit stops. Joint city-RTD efforts have produced results for over a decade, evidenced by housing and commercial buildings in Lakewood, Arvada, Aurora, Denver and other jurisdictions. Pride in these past accomplishments is now tempered by concerns in the

field that RTD is not providing the frequent level of transit service required to induce the market to keep building near transit. Based on their understanding of consumer preferences and developer financing, informed observers believe that the physical existence of a transit line is insufficient to draw investment without assurances that buses or trains will be running on that line at least every 15 minutes, 18 hours a day, 7 days a week.

- *Law enforcement and joint efforts to address safety on and around the transit network:* Several sources lauded RTD's significant cooperation with local government in the past 2-3 years to address crime, civic disorder and homelessness. They reported that since the crime spike around 2022, RTD's expanded police force has been highly collaborative and effective with local police departments and social service agencies. For example, staff at one suburban jurisdiction reported that RTD had been "very responsive" by marshalling security to specific locations identified by city councilors.

- *Transit Signal Priority Working Group:* RTD convenes a technical working group of city, county and CDOT staff working to install transit signal priority across the heterogenous systems of traffic signals across the region. Staff at the agencies involved consider this effort productive, as it surfaces (and strives to resolve) differences between RTD's operational desires and local jurisdictions' varying capacities based on differences in technology. Healthy conflicts between what RTD wants and what local governments can do sometimes surface - it's not all "kumbaya" - but they work things out frankly and respectfully, according to participants.

- *Projects:* Numerous physical projects embody collaboration between RTD and local government. This list is not exhaustive, but a sampling:
  - The most significant current investment to generate transit ridership in the region today is sponsored by a city government, Denver, with strong participation from another city government, Aurora, in partnership with RTD and CDOT: the Colfax Avenue Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project. This major initiative, including significant funding, originated with the city government, but has regional impact, in terms of ridership growth, social mobility, economic impact, and emissions reduction. The speed and reliability improvements are anticipated to significantly increase

ridership on what is already the highest ridership transit line in the entire RTD system (the #15 Colfax bus is more heavily patronized than most if not all the RTD rail lines) as well as spark housing development along the corridor.
- On a smaller scale, the traffic signal priority and queue jumps on Havana Street in Aurora are just one example of a city and RTD working together to speed up transit for a heavily-used line, with investment strategically going to corridors where lots of riders benefit from the time savings.
- Redevelopment and operation of Boulder's transit center involves a partnership of a city, a county, the local business improvement district, and RTD, all working together.
- Boulder's local lines ("Hop," "Jump," etc.) are a legacy of localities' ability to enhance and expand RTD service within their own municipal boundaries by "buying up" service, a practice that ended around 2017.

In addition to examining RTD's local relationships, SB25-161 directs the Committee to consider relationships with other regional and state agencies. My assessment based on interviews and reviewing various policy documents is:

- DRCOG is well-attuned to the region's transit needs. Its staff and its committee structure incorporate a high level of transit expertise. As noted above, it hosts several efforts that directly bring RTD and local jurisdictions together. Institutionally, DRCOG includes RTD representatives as voting members on key committees, alongside local government. Functionally, DRCOG performs modeling and macroeconomic forecasting and oversight tasks that improve RTD's capacity for planning.

- CDOT stands out among its counterparts in other states for its attention to transit, a reflection of priorities inspired by leadership (and funds) from the Governor and legislature. CDOT's management is known nationally as a leader in modernizing transportation policy and practice, addressing the environmental and fiscal circumstances of this era. The agency employs a talented team to support urban, rural and intercity public transportation. Within the Denver region, I believe CDOT is a valuable partner to RTD and local cities and counties, a contrast to most of the other 49 state DOTs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The working relationship between RTD and other local, regional and state agencies, while fairly productive now, could be improved by the following:

Settle the festering dilemma flowing from the 2004 FasTracks ballot measure

As long as conversations about transit in the Denver region are persistently dominated by recriminations and rancor about a 2004 ballot measure that admittedly did not entirely deliver as foreseen, political leaders are seemingly unable to look to the future. It is beyond the scope of this memo to opine about what went wrong, or perhaps what was wrong from the start due to overly rosy estimates made in 2003. Nor is it for this memo to recommend what is to be done now, in facing the reality that financial limitations have prevented the completion of the FasTracks network, including the non-delivery of the two decades of significant increases in bus service which were part of the same measure. This memo can only observe that local-RTD relations suffer because these questions fester, unresolved. If people want to re-set local-RTD relations, the region needs to decide what to do about the FasTracks package, based on where it finds itself *now* in terms of resources and priorities and current cost/benefit estimates.

Whether that decision means raising the funds to fulfill the whole package of the 2004 measure, including the bus frequency increases, or if that decision means concluding that the budget and cost/benefit estimates of a quarter-century ago are now invalid and that it is no longer feasibly cost-effective to complete that package, or, alternatively, if it means repurposing parts of the 2004 plan as part of a new Pueblo-Fort Collins plan that was not even a dream back then, almost any resolution would be preferable to continued lack of resolution. Without closure on the FasTracks legacy, conversations about a past plan continue to infect the relationship between local government leaders and RTD, several generations of leadership after the former officials who devised that plan departed the scene.

For whatever the consolation is worth, the Denver region is not alone in facing delivery shortfalls caused by inflation and the recalculation of benefit relative to cost that have occurred in the many years since a ballot measure was proposed. Sound Transit in the Seattle-Tacoma region (measure passed 2016), Los Angeles Metro (measure passed 2016) and CapMetro Austin (2020) are all now grappling with fiscal and physical realities that severely challenge their ability to deliver

projects that were promised to voters. (Many highway projects in the U.S. are way over budget and behind schedule also, but not subject to the same scrutiny because they were never voted on.) Leaders in Seattle and Los Angeles and Austin are having to reconsider plans and make painful, unpopular choices, based on the information they now have and the conditions they are now in. Anything they decide will partially be at variance with what was once described in their ballot measure, and accordingly will anger and disappoint many people. But they, like the Denver region, need to make decisions and what forward progress they can.

Establish and explain clear standards for service allocation

A similar factor influencing relations between local government and RTD is service levels, and, at least implicitly, dissatisfaction with the allocation of service across the district, where everyone naturally wants more. The remarkable geographic size and heterogenous mobility needs across the Regional Transportation District makes it extremely difficult to satisfy elected officials in all sub-regions, *in the absence of some explicit, clearly understood method of service allocation and fiscal responsibility*. The refrain about sub-regions deserving a "fair share" of transit service will persist until some objective and broadly understood criteria are established to explain why different parts of the region justifiably receive different levels of transit service.

Twice the size of Rhode Island, and ranging from high-rise urban neighborhoods to unpopulated rural lands, RTD faces an extreme case of a classic dilemma for all transit agencies: the trade-off between the option of spreading a minimal amount of transit out over sub-areas where population density is insufficient to generate significant ridership (the "coverage" strategy, using transit expert Jarrett Walker's word) or the option of concentrating service in the more urbanized areas where lots of people are more likely to use it (the "maximize ridership" strategy.) Not facing that choice head on creates grounds for dissatisfaction for everyone – the situation RTD is in today.

Expectations of some nebulous amount of "coverage" to areas with low ridership potential, if the basis for those expectations is non-quantifiable, lead to persistent dissatisfaction based on any particular official's own interpretation of what constitutes a "fair" share of service. "Fair" remains a subjective, self-interested opinion, rather than something defined by a commonly accepted objective standard, applied with clarity about how underlying conditions drive the

allocation of a public service. Nebraska's "fair share" of U.S. Coast Guard stations and lighthouses, like Maine's "fair share" of federal ethanol production subsidies, is determined by verifiable facts on the ground as well as common sense, so the clear disparity in what they get doesn't lead to much grumbling.

While it's intuitively obvious why Nebraska doesn't have federal Coast Guard bases and Maine doesn't receive subsidized ethanol plants, allocating appropriate levels of transit service within a district is a more complex calculation, especially within a territory as huge as RTD, compounded by the fact that taxes are levied across the district. One objective tool applied in the Twin Cities by Metro Transit is a "transit propensity index," which applies factors like population density, job concentration, demographics, car ownership rates, poverty levels, walkability and other factors which tend to correlate to transit use (i.e. ridership and potential ridership) that informs the agency in allocating service to the areas of the region likely to need and use it the most. Other accompanying policies assure that some basic level of coverage is supplied in less dense areas, recognizing that all areas are paying some level of taxation (additionally recognizing that even areas without a lot of transit service benefit from breathing air that is cleaner because of transit use elsewhere in the region.) While jurisdictions will always tussle to maximize their share, they can have that debate on the basis of facts, rather than on each individual's interpretation of fairness.

Reinstate provisions for "buy-up" by local jurisdictions

While any area in a region might have individuals who need transit, some areas in a region are naturally home to more concentrated populations of lots of people who for reasons of demographics like age and income tend to need and use transit disproportionately more, and live in neighborhoods where density makes transit productive. "Buy up" is one means of people in those areas getting more of the service they want, when their local government (in a sub-area of a much larger transit district) is willing to make more transit in their jurisdiction a fiscal priority.

Two of the most successful transit agencies in the U.S. in terms of ridership growth are King County Metro, home to Seattle as well as suburban and rural communities in the Cascades, and the Utah Transit Authority, centered on Salt Lake City but extending far to the north and south to outlying areas. One feature KCM and UTA have in common is a provision to allow jurisdictions to "purchase"

additional service hours, to supplement the basic level of service provided district-wide. The City of Seattle and the City of Salt Lake City avail themselves of this option, raising local taxes to contract with the big regional agency to run more frequent bus service within the city boundaries. Due to demographics and density, the core city happens to be the most naturally fertile territory in the region for ridership growth (and emissions reductions, social mobility, economic opportunity, etc.) which makes the transit agency happy.

Los Angeles County also enables "layers" of service. L.A. Metro operates countywide, while local jurisdictions supplement that network with local systems. Santa Monica's Big Blue Bus system (more ridership than Raleigh, N.C. transit), Culver City Transit (more ridership than Memphis, Tenn. transit), or the City of Los Angeles DOT DASH service (more than twice the ridership of Indianapolis transit) in Hollywood and downtown LA all carry significant numbers of riders, well beyond what might be thought of as local shuttles. L.A. Metro and county government coordinate service and funding with those local agencies.

RTD once offered "buy up" provisions. For example, Boulder achieved ridership growth and became one of the region's transit mode share leaders by participating in that program. RTD had to eliminate the buy up option due to the bus operator shortage. As workforce recruitment and retention will ideally continue to improve, "buy up" and other means of allowing transit-supportive jurisdictions to supplement basic RTD service could well be re-introduced, because a section of SB25-161 requires RTD to update its service buy-up policy to provide a process for local governments to purchase additional service.

Standardize expectations and responsibilities for bus stop and shelter installations and maintenance

Bus stops and shelters are an important part of the rider experience, but their provision and quality across the RTD system is not of a consistently high standard. Staff from a variety of agencies report that this inconsistency is due to blurred responsibilities between local governments and RTD, and (from the local perspective) RTD not devoting sufficient resources to shelters and stops while also expecting local governments or business improvement districts to take up the slack, which not all of them are equipped to do. More clarity about what unit of government is responsible for bus stops and shelter installation and maintenance is needed. The lack of clarity is the source of some moderate tension between

local governments and RTD, and also provides a sub-standard experience for riders.

"Transit academy" for local officials

One city councilor in the region told me, "we [elected officials] don't even have a common language to talk about transit" and lack a shared understanding of the factors which make good transit work for their residents. This observation – from a politician who campaigned on a pro-transit platform and wants transit to succeed – indicates a latent desire on the part of some local officials to better understand the field of transportation, and to better understand RTD's functions and capacity. Once upon a time in the not-distant past, the Denver Transit Alliance ran an "academy" to educate civic leaders about transit. A version of such a program could benefit willing local officials, many of whom profess general pro-transit sentiment while simultaneously expressing dissatisfaction with RTD.

Position DRCOG as convenor and "honest broker"

To the extent that RTD is viewed with some skepticism by some local officials – fairly or not, based on a track record in the receding past or not, based on inherited factors beyond current management's control or not – the region has an additional body that is literally run by a board of directors consisting of local government officials: DRCOG. Their staff includes highly competent transit experts, and the agency regularly manages committees and programs related to transit. To the extent that convening objective forums about transit and bringing local leaders and RTD together will help, DRCOG owns some tables where that can happen.

Hudson Skykomish

RTD's relationship to other levels of government

Conversation starter for the committee, by David Bragdon (see also memo)

November 5, 2025
RTD Accountability Committee

Transit Governance and Local Jurisdictions: Typologies around the U.S. (from your Sept 22 meeting)

- ➔ Few transit agencies are a department of a city or county government. Most are “special purpose districts” (similar status as water or school districts, etc.)
- ➔ In some regions, elected officials from cities and counties sit on transit boards, an extension of their duty in their “home” jurisdictions
- ➔ In some regions, city and county government either appoint non-elected residents of their jurisdiction to a transit board, or nominate candidates for a Governor or someone else to make the appointment.
- ➔ In some regions (Twin Cities) the MPO board serves as the transit board.
- ➔ In some regions, local government has no role in transit governance

Regardless of governance - and perhaps more important - U.S. cities and counties collaborate with transit agencies

➔ Allocation of street space, traffic signal priority

➔ Sidewalks, crosswalks, curb bulb-outs

➔ Transit supportive zoning (density)

➔ Sometimes financial support

➔ Coordination of first/last mile connections

Interviews in the Denver region Reveal Paradox in Local Government Views of RTD

- ➔ At the political level, many elected officials express dissatisfaction and personal mistrust about RTD - even while professing general pro-transit sentiments
- ➔ At the staff level, many local jurisdictional staff work closely with RTD staff on significant projects (Colfax BRT the biggest example) as well as lots of smaller projects and programs

Ways to improve RTD-local relations, with or without governance reform

- ➔ Resolve lack of closure over the 2025 reality that the 2004 FasTracks costs and revenue estimates proved to be overly optimistic, and that delivery of that plan was not achieved. The lingering unresolved acrimony pervades the atmosphere.

- ➔ Set clearer standards for service allocation and investment

- ➔ Build on existing cooperative work on important issues like bus lanes, shelters, public safety

- ➔ Revive provisions for local governments to “buy up” additional service levels (major element of success in Seattle and Salt Lake City)

Two other important agencies work well with RTD

- ➔ The Colorado Department of Transportation, thanks to strong direction from a Governor and a legislature who understand the importance of reforming transportation policy for today's climate and economy, are led by a talented management team with expertise in public transit as well as intercity travel. RTD's participation in the Front Range Passenger Rail planning is just one example of the inter-agency cooperation that benefits the region and the state.

- ➔ DRCOG, overseen by a board consisting of a wide range of local elected officials, employs staff with transit expertise and the capacity to serve as technical resource, convenor, and "honest broker."

We make lives better through connections.

November 5, 2025

Local Government Collaboration

Accountability Committee

Bill Sirois
Senior Manager, Transit Oriented Communities

Outline

Subregional Service Councils

Partnership Program

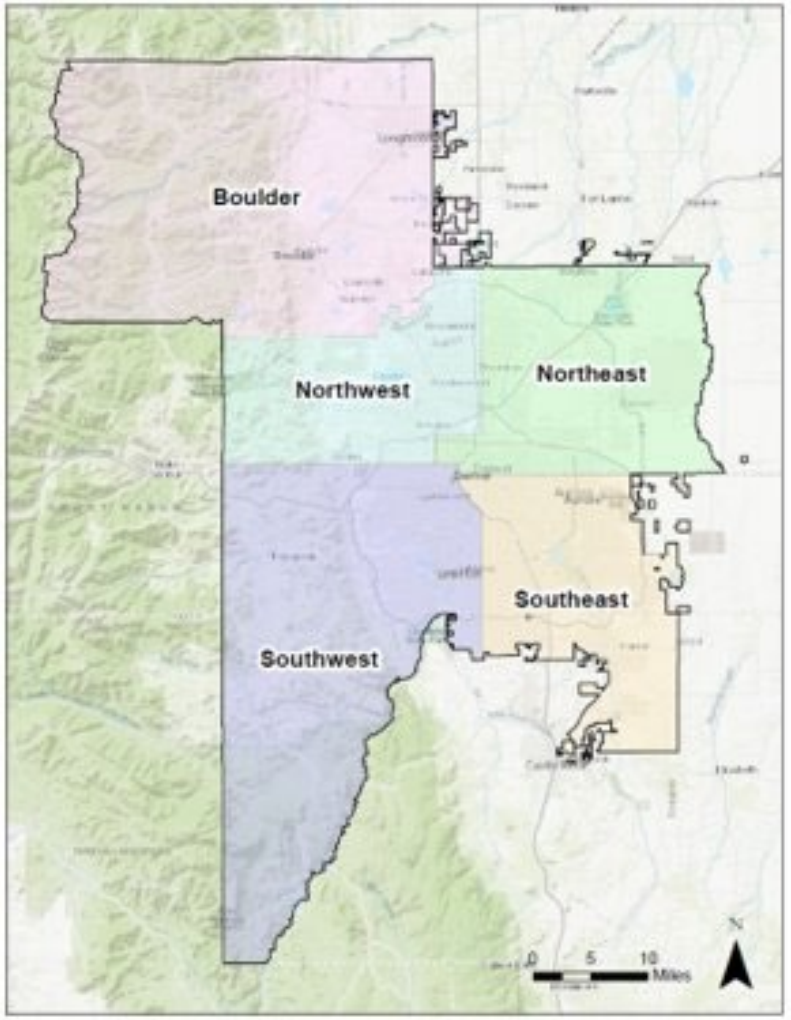
Denver Regional Council of Governments

Transportation Management Organizations and Other Collaboration

Subregional Service Councils

Subregional Service Councils (SSCs)

- Recommended by Accountability Committee in 2021
- Working group of local jurisdiction partners, advocacy groups and others provided recommendations for structure of SSCs to RTD Board in June 2022
- SSCs initiated in late 2022



Subregional Service Councils (SSCs)

Workgroup Recommendations:

- Purpose to provide recommendations and feedback to RTD from subregional perspective
- Generate ongoing dialogue about service
- Advisory bodies, not decision-making
- Meet 3-4 times/year (not tied to service change schedule)
- Composition of SSCs:
  - Staff from cities and counties
  - Transit advocates (Transportation Management Organizations/Associations, non-governmental organizations) representing customers
  - RTD staff

Partnership Program

Partnership Program

- Purpose: To leverage RTD and local funding to provide additional services that meet a community's local mobility needs
- Creates a dedicated budget set-aside for partnership matching
- Establishes a process to evaluate partnerships after implementation
- Incorporates input of Subregional Service Councils
- Connects people to more mobility options

Project Types

- Partnership Program projects fall into one of four categories:

Fixed-Route Service

- *Englewood Trolley*

On-Demand Service

- *Link-on-Demand, Denver Connector, RIDE Longmont*

Other Mobility Service

- *Smart Commute Micromobility Hub*

Other

- *Smart Commute FlexRide Optimization Study*

Project Selection Criteria

- Alignment with RTD Strategic Plan
- Local support and ability to meet local needs
- Provides service where there is a gap in existing service
- Provides service to equity zones
- Potential ridership
- Project readiness

Partnership Projects Funded

Year(s)	Project	Sponsor	Project Type	RTD Funding	Funding Years
2023	Gunbarrel On-Demand	Boulder County	On-Demand	$500,000	2025-26
2023 2025	Denver Connector – GES/Montbello	City and County of Denver	On-Demand	$1,603,333	2024-28
2023 2025	Denver Connector – West	City and County of Denver	On-Demand	$1,176,667	2024-28
2023	Englewood Trolley Expansion	City of Englewood	Fixed-Route	$900,000	2024-26
2023 2025	RIDE Longmont	City of Longmont	On-Demand	$2,550,000	2024-28
2023 2024	Link-on-Demand	Denver South	On-Demand	$2,334,400	2024-27
2023	FlexRide Optimization	Smart Commute	Other	$250,200	2024-26
2023	Smart eBike Hubs	Smart Commuter	Other Mobility	$145,719	2024-2

Partnership Projects Funded (cont.)

Year(s)	Project	Sponsor	Project Type	RTD Funding	Funding Years
2024	Brighton On-Demand Transit	City of Brighton	On-Demand	$1,800,000	2025-27
2024	Majestic Commuter	NETC	On-Demand	$1,122,845	2025-27
2024	Older Adults Microtransit	City of Aurora	On-Demand	$680,000	2025-27
2025	Erie Bee	Town of Erie	On-Demand	$500,000	2027
2025	Westracks Shuttle	Jefferson County	Fixed-Route	$840,000	2026-28
2025	First Mile Free – Decatur/Federal	West Corridor TMA	Other Mobility	$48,356	2026-27
2025	First Mile Free – University of Denver	West Corridor TMA	Other Mobility	$74,198	2026-27

Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)

Ways RTD is Involved with DRCOG

- GM/CEO and members of the Board participate on the Regional Transportation Committee
- RTD is a non-voting member of the DRCOG Board
- Staff participate on the Technical Advisory Committee
- Extensive coordination with DRCOG on Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) and Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)
- Regional BRT Partnership
- Advanced Mobility Partnership

Transportation Management Organizations/Associations (TMOs/TMAs) and Other Collaboration

Role of TMOs/TMAs and RTD Involvement

- Play critical role promoting/advocating for transit with businesses and local jurisdictions
- RTD staff regularly present information on key projects and initiatives at meetings
- Board members are active with groups and often participate on TMO/TMA boards

Other Types of Collaboration

- Coordination/partnership with local police departments
- Transit signal priority working group
- RTD Bus Stop Infrastructure Accessibility Assessment
- Project specific coordination and collaboration – East Colfax Bus Rapid Transit (BRT), SH 119 BRT, Federal Boulevard BRT, Colorado BRT
- Service Development Outreach – regular meetings with local jurisdictions by geographic team leads

Thank you.

rtd-denver.com

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Energy Office