

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS REGARDING RTD ACCESS-A-RIDE SERVICE

From its inception, the goal of the RTD Access-a-Ride program has been to adhere to the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act and to align itself with the policies established by the RTD Board of Directors and the ADA Paratransit Implementation Plan. Our current effort to limit the provision of Access-a-Ride service to the established service area is not a change in policy. The recent upgrades to our scheduling software have simply improved our ability to identify those trips that do not qualify for ADA complementary paratransit service. Some questions and answers regarding to our stricter adherence to the ADA guidelines are listed below

1. Who decided that the service area would only be 3/4 of a mile?

The RTD paratransit service policies were established in 1993 with the assistance of an advisory board comprised of members of the disabled community. At that time, with the guidance of the advisory board, RTD made the determination to adhere to the minimum federal guidelines of providing ADA complementary services within 3/4 mile of a local fixed route and during the same days and hours of operation. Those areas that are within the RTD boundary and are surrounded by 3/4 mile corridors may also be eligible for ADA complementary service. RTD refers to these areas as “donut holes.” RTD limits the provision of ADA complementary service to “donut holes” that are less than one square mile in size. The RTD’s ADA Paratransit Implementation Plan was submitted to and approved by the Federal Transit Administration. RTD, to the best of its abilities, has been adhering to the policies associated with the plan since 1993. This information has always been made available to all Access-a-Ride passengers through our User’s Guide.

In light of the fact that we already face extreme difficulties meeting all of the demand within the ADA service area and due to the magnitude of the financial commitment necessary to support the provision of such service, RTD is not in the position to provide complementary paratransit service that exceeds the minimum services required per the ADA.

2. Where in the ADA document does it state that on weekends Access-a-Ride passengers cannot go to areas fixed routes do not serve?

In Section 37.131 (e) of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) titled Hours and Days of Service, it states, “The complementary paratransit service shall be available throughout the same hours and days as the entity’s fixed route service.”

According to the ADA regulations, “this criterion says simply that if a person can travel to a given destination using a given fixed route at a given time of day, an ADA paratransit eligible person must be able to travel to that same destination on paratransit at that time of day.” It is important to remember that paratransit service was designed to be “comparable” to the level of service provided to individuals without disabilities who use the fixed route system. Accordingly, complementary paratransit service must be provided on the same days and during the same hours as the non-commuter (local) fixed route service.

3. It has been suggested to RTD that they grandfather existing Access-a-Ride passengers that fall out of the service area or time of day, day of week guidelines so that they can continue to receive Access-a-Ride service for those trips.

RTD is currently exploring the option of grandfathering existing Access-a-Ride passengers into the program. However, one of the concerns we have with this option is the inequity of providing service to some but not all passengers. New passengers call us expecting service and are told they live outside the service area. They of course tell us that they see our vans picking up their

next door neighbor every day. We then explain the “grandfathering” and are criticized for unfairly providing services. This also sets a precedent for the future as changes in the fixed route routing and/or schedules could eliminate service for other Access-a-Ride passengers. As a provider of public transportation services, it is important that RTD provide service in a fair and consistent manner for all passengers.

4. How will the proposed service changes affect Access-a-Ride service?

The Access-a-Ride service boundaries, days, and hours of operation are defined by the RTD fixed route service network. As such, changes to the fixed route service network may impact the ADA service area boundaries, days, and hours of operation. Therefore, it is impossible for RTD to guarantee that any address will always be served by Access-a-Ride service.

5. Are there any options?

Passengers that are eligible to use Access-a-Ride service can schedule their trips using Access-a-Cab. For Access-a-Cab trips, the passenger pays the first \$2.00 of the fare, RTD pays the next \$12.00 of the fare, and the passenger pays any additional fare in excess of \$14.00. Access-a-Cab trips must be scheduled through the Access-a-Ride reservation system.

There are other types of specialized, demand responsive transportation services available in the Metro area, including senior transportation providers and medical transportation providers. The services of these providers are not tied to the RTD fixed route services and their eligibility requirements have nothing to do with Access-a-Ride. Additional information on these services can be obtained from the Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC) – 303-861-3711 or visit www.drmac-co.org for more information.

QUESTIONS:

For questions concerning RTD’s adherence to the ADA requirements or the Access-a-Ride service guidelines, please contact one of the following individuals:

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