

RTD Telephone Town Hall Meeting
Dave Genova, General Manger & CEO
October 2, 2019

Pauletta Tonilas: Good evening everyone, and thank you for joining us for this special live telephone town hall meeting hosted by the Regional Transportation District, also known as RTD.

I'm Pauletta Tonilas, Assistant General Manager of Communications for RTD, and I'm your moderator this evening as we talk about the latest updates at RTD, our projects and services, and a new effort that we're kicking off called Reimagine RTD. We're taking a look at how we provide service and design the mobility of the future. More on Reimagine RTD in just a few minutes.

Joining me this evening is Dave Genova, RTD General Manager and CEO, and also Jeff Becker, who is one of our veteran service planners. He is the Senior Manager of Service Development. We're here to listen to you, and to answer your questions. Your opinions are very important to us. It's your opportunity to share your thoughts, to get your questions answered, and to give us your ideas on reimagining the mobility of the future.

Pauletta Tonilas: Now, if this is your first time on a telephone town hall, here's how it works. To ask a question and get in the queue, just press *3 on your keypad and you'll be transferred to someone who'll take down some basic information. Stay on the line, and then I will call upon you and ask you to then ask your question live. Keep it brief, please, because we'd like to get to as many folks on this call in the next hour as possible.

We're also asking you some questions through live electronic polling, where you'll use your keypad to press the number to correspond with your answer. So, you can look forward to that. So, if you want to get into the queue to ask a question to us tonight, please, start pressing *3 now, and you'll get into the queue.

Now, this is a big year for RTD because we're celebrating our 50th anniversary. RTD was created in 1969 by the Colorado General Assembly. And in those 50 years, we have grown right along with the Denver Metro Area, a region of three million people now. Our service area is over 2,300 square miles. That is the largest service area for a transit agency in the country. It's a very large service area spread out across eight counties, 40 cities, and we offer more than 100 million trips per year to the traveling public.

One of only a few transit agencies that has a publicly elected board of directors, and starting next week on Monday, each of our RTD board members will be hosting their own telephone town hall meeting, giving you an opportunity to participate in their individual meetings for the district. So, we ask you to participate in those as well.

Pauletta Tonilas: It is now my pleasure to introduce RTD General Manager and CEO, Dave Genova. Dave, our 50th anniversary year, and it's been a big year. We've celebrated a lot already.

Dave Genova: Good evening, and thank you for joining us everyone. Yes, it's been an incredibly busy year already for us at RTD. In addition to celebrating 50 years of moving people, we had our G Line opening earlier this year. That's a commuter rail line that we opened from Union Station, and also travels through Wheat Ridge and Arvada. Then shortly after that, we opened our E, F, and R Light Rail Extension, and that's a light rail extension that is down in the southeast part of the city of Lone Tree.

And in fact, we've done six transit corridors in just three years, and that's highly unusual for a transit agency to be able to open that many transit corridors in such a short period of time. We've put some new fare structure into place, and we're really excited about a couple of programs that just went into place this year.

One of those is a new income-based fare program called LiVE that began this summer. This program offers a 40% discount to riders at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. So, this is very unique. There's not many transit agencies in the country that actually offer an income-based discount. So, very innovative on behalf of the organization and our board of directors to make this step. So, those who qualify can apply through the Colorado State benefits site known as PEAK, P-E-A-K.

Dave Genova: There's also now a 70% youth discount for riders 6 to 19 years old. That's an increase from our previous 50% discount. So, we're very happy to have that on board with us as well. And we continue our 50% discount for seniors, 65 and plus, and individuals with disabilities and Medicare recipients. So, there's a lot of ways in which people can access fare, and there's a lot of discounts, and there are also a lot of pass programs that we have in place.

We're also embracing our role as the regional mobility integrator and innovator. So, we've done some really exciting pilots. We had our 61 AV pilot project, and that was a project in which we did a six-month demonstration pilot of an autonomous vehicle shuttle. We did that in connection with our University of Colorado A Line at 61st and Pena. It was a fascinating demonstration project. We learned quite a bit about the autonomous vehicle technology. We're looking forward to future pilots in that area.

We've also done some very interesting and very unique collaborations with Uber, Lyft and Transit app. So, let me just mention the one with Uber. When a person opens the Uber app now in the Denver Metropolitan Area, you can not only have access to Uber and other things, but you can have access to transit planning where you can plan your trip. And this is the only region in the entire world on the Uber app where you can buy your transit fare. So, you can actually

pay your RTD fare on the Uber app. And similarly, you can also plan your trip and pay for your fare on the Transit app. And then with Lyft, you can do transit planning as well.

So, some great collaborations going on there, utilizing technology and smart phone devices for people to be able to interact with mobility and transportation in ways that they've never been able to before.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much, Dave. That's Dave Genova, CEO of RTD. Now, Dave, FasTracks is something that is on a lot of people's minds. We have been implementing FasTracks since January 2005. Our transit expansion program that has delivered much new transit across the Metro area. It's about three-quarters complete, but we're still not complete with FasTracks. This is tough, Dave, and it has been especially difficult for the communities that have not gotten their projects completed yet. But it's still on our radar, Dave?

Dave Genova: Yes, Pauletta, and it's beyond being on the radar. It is a commitment that RTD stands behind as an organization, and the RTD board of the directors. So, since 2004, that's when FasTracks was approved by the Denver Metro Area voters, we've been working very hard to deliver the FasTracks program. FasTracks is now approximately 70% to 75% complete. It's an investment of over \$5.6 billion in transportation infrastructure that we've made regionally over the last handful of years. That's actually nearly \$1 billion more than the original estimate or commitment that came out of 2004.

It's also important to note that in addition to being able to provide additional transportation options, public transportation and infrastructure investment results in a huge economic impact for the area. So, APTA, our American Public Transportation Association, estimates that there's \$4.00 of economic impact for every dollar that's invested. And there's a lot of other kinds of things happening in terms of transit-oriented development around bus and rail stations. In fact, about 24% of multi-family housing that's going into place now is going in within a half mile of transit stations, and nearly 32% of commercial development's happening within a half a mile of transit stations and stops.

But talking about FasTracks some more, we have four remaining projects that we've not been able to finish because we don't have the capital funding and we don't have the operations and maintenance funding. Those four projects are: the remainder of the Northwest Rail, or the B Line, that would extend from Westminster to Boulder and Longmont; the last six miles of the North Metro Rail Line to State Highway 7, or our N Line, that will be opening next year; a short extension of our Southwest Light Rail Line from Littleton to Highlands Ranch, that's along the C and D Lines; and a short extension of the Central Rail Line, and that's a light rail extension, that would take light rail from our existing end at 30th and Downing to 38th and Blake, and connect up with the University of Colorado A Line.

Dave Genova: All of those projects, in total, are about \$2 billion worth of capital improvements that we need to find funding for. And no one wants to complete FasTracks more than RTD, but we're going to need to identify additional funding to get it done. Just like the State and many local governments as well, RTD needs additional funding to meet the current needs and demands for transportation in our region.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks very much, Dave. If you've just joined us, this is a live telephone town hall meeting hosted by RTD, the Regional Transportation District. We're here to hear from you. We want to hear your questions, your comments, your concerns. So, press *3 if you'd like to get into the queue, and wait to be called upon for us to hear your question.

So, we've talked about FasTracks, Dave. Now, FasTracks is one component of what we are about to look at in the context of our whole system called Reimagine RTD. Reimagine RTD is a two-year process that we're about to embark upon. Now, Dave, why is it important for us to be doing Reimagine RTD?

Dave Genova: Well, Pauletta, Reimagine RTD is part of a greater vision of ours, and what we call transportation transformation. Realizing a number of years ago that transportation is evolving very quickly, that we must evolve with it and we must think differently about transportation. We need to be thinking about the transportation of the future. While we've made a lot of progress over the last 50 years, there's still a lot more to do.

By 2050, the population in the Denver area is expected to grow by more than 30%, which will increase the need for transportation options. We must address the changing landscape of transportation to provide integrated transit options, and better connect people to where they want and need to go. With Reimagine, we want to have to hear from you, which is why we're kicking off Reimagine RTD by listening and learning from the people we serve on their mobility needs. Reimagine RTD is our opportunity to optimize current and future services, evaluate available resources and capacity, and determine how all of these and your input come together to meet our regional transportation needs.

RTD will be hosting more events like this one, as well as listening sessions, public meetings, focus groups, and conducting surveys over the next two years to hear from as many people as possible as we work through this program of reimagining RTD. We want to hear from non-riders, occasional riders and frequent riders. We also want to engage youth groups, senior population and anyone who wants to share with us their thoughts on how RTD should plan for the future. You can also engage any time, and provide your input through our online engagement tool by visiting the Reimagine RTD website at www.rtd-denver.com/reimagine.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks very much. We're going to get right to your questions. So, again, if you want to get in the queue to ask a question, press *3. We are going to go live to Mike. Mike, welcome, and go ahead and ask your question.

Mike: My question is basically two-fold. The first part of my question is, I know that everyone benefits from RTD by reduction in the traffic by having the public transportation, getting the vehicles off the road. But I'm just curious, what is the budgetary fulfillment of fares versus taxpayer contribution. I have heard rumors of a light rail along the I-70 corridor. I don't know if that's just a rumor, or if that is something that RTD is considering.

Dave Genova: Mike, thank you so much for that question. So, I'll take it in the order that you posed it. Regarding RTD revenues, I'll break that down for you. About 60% of RTD's revenue comes from the 1% sales tax that we collect in the seven county, approximately 2,300 to 2,400 square mile service area that RTD operates in. So, about 60% from sales tax, about 20% of our revenue comes from the farebox recovery, and about 20% comes from various types of federal grants that help and assist for us to provide our services.

So, regarding I-70, I think your question is more around I-70 West up to the mountains and the ski areas and such. RTD does not have any plans to do any rail project or light rail that would go up into the mountains, or up along I-70 and serve those mountain areas. That's currently outside of the RTD district today. So, that would take a change in our boundary to even consider that. But that's our status on that now.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks very much, Dave. That's Dave Genova, CEO of RTD. We're going to go right to the next question. I believe I have this name right. I think Johann or Johann? So, you're live. Go ahead and ask your question.

Johann: Okay, I live near Highway 73, and I give a lift to two people who used to use the RTD. The bus used to stop along Highway 73, at the North Turkey Creek roundabout and by Marshmerry Lane. Two people depended on that for transportation into Evergreen, and the bus still goes down 73 on its way to a stop on Highway 74 by Christ the King Catholic Church, but it no longer stops along 73. I don't know why they discontinued those stops. One of the former riders said it was because the driver said it was because they didn't have enough drivers. So, I was wondering if they could re-establish the stops they used to make on Highway 73?

Jeff Becker: Thank you for that question. Yeah, that stop was discontinued because we really weren't able to pull into that stop any longer. It's not because of any driver shortages, it's because of the difficulty of having the bus getting in and out of there. But we'll certainly take another look at it for you, and we certainly appreciate your question.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks very much. That was Jeff Becker with our service planning and development. We're going to go now right to David. David, go ahead and ask your question.

David: Yes, I live in Longmont, and of course, I feel abandoned up here, light rail coming in 2045 now. Why don't you just run it down I-25 instead of trying to mess with Burlington Northern and going through Boulder? It'd be so much easier, and then eventually tie in going up north. If you've ever driven in traffic on I-25, you'd understand why.

Dave Genova: Thank you for that question. This is Dave Genova speaking. All of our plans, and our preliminary engineering and things, and particularly our environmental impact statements and such have shown that, that line, we would go along the current alignment, which is along US-36 on the Burlington Northern shared infrastructure there that would go into Boulder and then into Longmont. We currently don't have an option to go up I-25 in and of itself. However, we are in construction on our N Line, that while it doesn't really parallel I-25, it does go north from Denver Union Station up through Thornton and Northglenn. That line will open in 2020.

We've also had questions, is there a way we can connect that line and go from the east to the west over to the Longmont area as well. We do own some right of way over there, but that really hasn't been part of any of the engineering studies or anything. So, we continue to work with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe on what we call a peak service plan.

So, one of the things we've been doing is working with stakeholders all along the US-36 corridor through Boulder and Longmont about if we don't have the money to build the full build-out, what about just a peak commuter rail service that would go one direction in the morning, and the other direction in the afternoon or evening? We're working through those estimates and the possibility of what that could look like now. So, that's kind of where we are with the northwest rail section.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks very much, Dave. Okay, we're going to go to our first survey question. This is our first electronic polling question where you're going to answer by pushing the number on your keypad that corresponds with the answer that you want to give. So, here we go. The first question is, how satisfied are you with RTD's services overall? How satisfied are you with RTD services? Press 1 for very satisfied, press 2 for somewhat satisfied, press 3 for somewhat dissatisfied, press 4 for very dissatisfied. We will share the results with you here in just a couple of minutes.

If you want to get into the queue to ask a question, don't forget to press *3 on your keypad, and we will get you routed into the queue. We're going to go ahead and take our next question, and that is from Marcia. Marcia, go ahead, you're live.

Marcia: Sorry, it took me a minute because I was pressing buttons. So, I guess you've already addressed the FasTracks. Again, I'm just really annoyed that I'm paying taxes all these years, and I will get no benefit for it. I'll be dead before you get this thing done into Longmont. I wonder if the discount you mentioned through PEAK for low-income people, is that for an EcoPass, or is that just for individual rides?

Dave Genova: Thank you, Marcia. So, the discount that is with the LiVE program is based on taking regular trips. So, it's a discount off the regular fare that a person would pay. So, a 40% discount off of that regular fare. It doesn't apply to the EcoPass program because that's an employer program that already comes with various discounts.

I also want to point out while we're talking about the LiVE program, one of the interesting things that we found out as people have been pursuing eligibility is that some people actually qualify for a greater discount than even with the LiVE program offers that 40%. For example, if people are seniors or qualify for other things, they can get a 50% discount. And of course, youth from 6 to 19 can get a 70% discount on their fares. So, again, just to recap on that, the LiVE discount, the 40%, is off of a regularly priced fare.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much, Dave. Okay, we're going to give you the results of the polling question that we just did a couple of minutes ago. The question was how satisfied are you with RTD services? 25% of you said very satisfied, 37% somewhat satisfied, 28% somewhat dissatisfied, and 10% very dissatisfied.

Now, we're not just asking you these questions tonight just for nothing. We are taking your input and your comments and questions from this town hall meeting, and the ones we're going to do the rest of this month with our board of directors, and this will be compiled with all of the input through the engagement process that we're just launching for Reimagine RTD, as we look at designing the mobility of the future. So, it really does matter what you say to us tonight.

Okay, we're going to go now to Judy. Judy, you're live, go ahead and ask your question.

Judy: Thank you. I am one of the 10%, by the way. I live up in the Evergreen area of Colorado, and was most interested in the museum we had an opportunity to get. And because the board of directors for RTD decided that, in their greed, we did not need that museum, we lost the money that we would've gotten from the many thousands of people who would've come to that museum. Instead, it went to Arlington, Texas. The short-sidedness of the RTD board, and the slowness with which you move to get anything done is pure disgusting. You got funding for this and approval for this in 2004, and except for the inner city of Denver, crap has gotten done. So, if you're expecting more from those of us

who are paying the 1% and getting nothing, absolutely nothing, then you're sorely mistaken.

Dave Genova: Judy, this is Dave. Thank you for your questions and your comments. Let me clarify a little bit about that parcel of property. So, it wasn't an issue of selling the property because we lease that parcel. We have a long-term lease for that parcel of property, and our board did agree unanimously the last time they took it up to lease that property, so we could move forward with that. It was unfortunate news to hear today that Arlington was selected over Denver.

Pauletta Tonilas: And one thing I'll add, this is Pauletta, Judy, and thank you for your comments. Those are heartfelt. We know this is something people feel very passionate about. Our board of directors, once they had the information that they felt they needed to make this serious decision, as you look at how we work with our assets and the public's assets, which this is public property, once they had the information that they felt they needed, they voted unanimously in support of the parcel being used for the entrance park for the museum. These are tough decisions to make. Our board of directors take their job very seriously as public officials, and as it relates to our assets. So, that's just a little more information that I thought I would share. We appreciate your comments.

If you want to get in the queue to ask a question, press *3. Again, this is a live telephone town hall meeting being hosted by RTD. We're here with Dave Genova, General Manager and CEO, and Jeff Becker, Senior Manager of Service Development. We're going to go now to our next question, and that will be from Caroline. Caroline, you're live. Go ahead and ask your question.

Caroline: Yeah, I just wanted to know if Access-a-Ride and Mobility for the disabled was part of Reimagine RTD?

Dave Genova: Caroline, this is Dave. Thank you for your question. Yes, it will be. In fact, as many of you know, our Access-a-Ride services are very valuable services for those that use them. It's a door-to-door, curb-to-curb service. We will be looking at ways to make improvements to Access-a-Ride through the Reimagine process. And we're also, today, even looking at potential software improvements to make the scheduling more efficient, and also to make the trip planning more efficient, and just to overall increase our on-time performance for Access-a-Ride.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks very much, Dave. We're going to go now to Norman. Norman, you're live. Go ahead and ask your question. Norman, are you still with us? Okay, Norman might have had to go off the line, so we're going to go to Stephanie. Stephanie, you're live. Go ahead and ask your question.

Stephanie: Yes, thank you. My question is also about Access-a-Ride, and it's great to hear that you are making some scheduling improvements. My son's 20, and he has autism. He benefits tremendously from Access-a-Ride, and we appreciate it very

much. But my question is, we don't let them take him to work because 50% of the time, even if we went a little half hour earlier, he was still getting there late. Coming home, it just varies. He can come home within the regular window. He could be an hour late, two hours late. On that end, it's not so important, but getting to work, he could lose the job that he has. So, that was my question is, was there any way to improve the... When you set that half hour window-ish, to just make it a little bit more to that so we could utilize it for getting him to work as well.

Dave Genova: Thank you for that question, and we realize the challenge around the Access-a-Ride services, and particularly because of the window that we consider on-time for the scheduling. And because it is essentially a door-to-door service, that is some of the things that provide challenges for us in terms of narrowing down that window as much as we possibly can. But as I said, we are actively looking at some software improvements now. We're looking at some systems that some other agencies are using, and hopefully, be able to make improvements. But it's always on our radar to try to make all of our services as efficient as possible, especially with Access-a-Ride because we know what a lifeline it is for so many.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks, Dave. We're going now to Jonathan. Jonathan, ask your question, please.

Jonathan: Yeah, so, I heard that RTD loses money on every single fare that they collect. Is this true?

Dave Genova: Jonathan, this is Dave. So, I was talking earlier about the revenue make-up or the parts of revenue for RTD. We recover about 20% of our operating costs from the fare, or the farebox. About 60% of our revenue that it takes for us to operate and maintain our services comes from the sales tax that we collect, and about 20% comes from various federal funds. So, I would say if the question was phrased a little bit differently, I think the concept of what you're saying is that yes, we do not recover the cost to provide the service. In fact, we only recover about 20% of the cost to provide the service from the farebox.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks very much, Dave. You know, Dave, one question we're getting a lot these days is about the dropped trips because of our operator shortage. So, let's go ahead and address that. This is a tough situation, and dropping trips is nothing we want to do because we're here to provide service. But Dave, this is a very real, critical situation for us right now about workforce, right?

Dave Genova: Pauletta, yes. Workforce, or I should say the availability of workforce is our single biggest challenge that we have right now. So, I can tell you that in terms of this, we literally hire hundreds of rail and bus operators every year, but we have a lot of turnover in that area. Some of them get promoted into other jobs within RTD, they move into supervision or other areas, some of them are retiring, and some are leaving for other reasons.

Dave Genova: But with the historically low unemployment that we have, it's very challenging for us to find pools of workers with the right attributes and skills to be able to be bus and rail operators because it's not everyone that is inclined for those jobs, and it's a challenging job. So, right now, we're currently down about 60 light rail operators that were currently approved and budgeted for. And on the bus side, we're down about 87 or so operators.

So, oftentimes, people will say, "Hey, are some of these other technology companies, or some of the other transportation companies, are they disrupting your service by taking your riders?" Well, unfortunately, right now, the availability of workforce is disrupting our ability to deliver service, and that's the last thing we want to do is drop a bus run or drop a rail run. So, we have done a lot over the last couple years in terms of wages and benefits and overall work rules, and trying to improve quality of life. We still need to do more, obviously.

So, I would just put a pitch out there, if there's anyone that's looking for a great job, we have jobs available at really great wages, great benefits. So, check us out.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks, Dave. And we're going to go now to David. David, you're next in the queue to ask your question. Go ahead.

David: Good evening. Thank you for this telephone interaction. Why are numerous bus stop shelters on East Colfax Avenue, which is one of Denver's major population routes, being dismantled? Also, seating benches are being removed, causing great discomfort for the senior citizens and handicapped who use these routes on a regular basis. I hope you realize with winter weather approaching, the wind chill factor may very well cause serious medical consequences for these poor and highly vulnerable riders who are most susceptible to these windy conditions. RTD staff have informed me, many of these structures are being relocated to very affluent areas like Cherry Hills, Highlands Ranch and Lone Tree areas. And if they are, please... Why are the structures going there?

Jeff Becker: This is Jeff, and I can really appreciate your question because I take the bus every day myself. On Colfax Avenue, there's a bit going on, and we're working very closely, actually, with the City of Denver. Over the last few years, quite a bit of effort on the City's part making what they call "complete streets". In other words, making it not just for cars, but for pedestrians and for transit riders, which is very good. So, what you're seeing is, essentially, renovation.

We are taking out some of the old shelters and demolishing some of the curbs to put in what we call "curb bulb-outs" so that it's more convenient for people to take the bus, putting in a whole new line of shelters. And also, I'm going to say that over the last several years, we've actually put in some traffic signal priority at about 15 intersections along that route. We're starting to see now the benefits of that, and we'll probably be rescheduling these services so that it'll actually be faster service and more reliable on Colfax Avenue.

Pauletta Tonilas: Jeff, we're here talking about RTD. And also, our Reimagine RTD effort that we're just starting. But as we look at evaluating our current system, and redesigning the mobility of the future and looking at how do we optimize our system, this is no small feat. There's a lot that we have to think about when we go through this effort.

Jeff Becker: Yes, Pauletta. Certainly, there's quite a bit of effort that goes into taking a look at the performance of our services. We do that every four months, we put out changes. So, that's nothing new. The Reimagine allows us to take a much bigger look at everything, and as service planners, we don't get too much time take a big picture look. We take a look at well, what services are doing well that we could add to and make them work better, and what services or routes are not doing so well, and we need to make adjustments to them.

So, it's going to be a big effort. Each time we open up a new rail line, for example, we look at the whole corridor and reimagine, restructure the bus services all around that. So, we have a lot of experience with this, but this is an opportunity to really take a look at the big picture.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much, Jeff. That's Jeff Becker who is Senior Manager in our Service Planning and Development.

Okay, we're going to go to our second polling question. This, you'll have the opportunity to answer by pressing the number on your keypad that corresponds with the answers. So, here is the next question. What can RTD be doing better? Press 1 for improve reliability, press 2 for enhance bus-rail connections, press 3 for provide better technology and apps, press 4 for improve safety and security on the system. So, again, 1 for improve reliability, 2 for enhance bus route connections, 3 for provide better technology, 4 for improve safety and security. We'll share those answers with you in just a couple of minutes.

We're going to go now to our next question. That is going to be by Matthew. So, Matthew, you're live. Go ahead.

Matthew: Hi. I'm just loving this, imagine the future. I'm thinking that if you guys put all your buses like you do the 16th Street Mall, where they're all electric, and you don't have to pay fuel, you don't have the pollution, and you can charge them with solar panels on green roofs from the bus barn, and you can grow crops underneath on the green roof underneath the solar panels, and that can be another revenue stream. I'm just thinking, man, if you guys can think that way—think big, I mean, it would be awesome. And those buses on 16th Street that are electric, and I don't have to breathe the fumes are just fantastic. I think you guys, if you could do that, you're going in the right direction.

Dave Genova: Hi, Matthew. This is Dave. Hey, thanks for your comments. Yes, we're so excited about our 36 fleet mall shuttle. As you mentioned, it's an all-electric, zero-emission bus. At one time, and it might still be, it was the largest fleet of electric

buses in transit in the country. We've had those buses in service now a couple of years, and the great thing about it is, we are learning so much about the technology of electrification. It's really a lot more complex than it seems on the surface.

We do have plans in the future to buy more electric buses. And in fact, we've just received a variety of grants that are going to allow us to expand our electric fleet by around maybe 18 buses or so that we're going to be looking at here in the next year or so. While there's a lot of benefits in terms of the environment and things, there's a lot of challenges around electrification of a fleet in terms of what kind of range those vehicles can deliver, and the cost of maintenance is still a little bit higher than a traditional diesel bus.

Dave Genova: Actually, the cost of electricity right now is actually a little bit higher than what we had expected to pay. But we have some good news around that, that we've been working with Xcel and Colorado Public Utilities Commission to get some rate changes that'll help have some more favorable rates for us on the charging side. Then, of course, there's the infrastructure, some of which you talked about, but the infrastructure that's necessary at the facilities to do the charging and all of the charging stations. So, while we believe this is going to be a great technology for the future, we still have a lot more to learn, but we're committed to doing more with electrification of our bus fleet.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks, Dave. So, we're going to share the results of our last electronic polling question, which asked you what can RTD be doing better? 38% of you said improve our reliability, 39% said enhance our bus-rail connections, 6% said provide better technology and apps, and 17% said improve safety and security. So, thank you to those of you who participated in our electronic polling. We'll have one more towards the end of the program.

Again, if you've just joined us, this is RTD in a live telephone town hall meeting talking about what you want to talk about, and getting to your questions and concerns. So, we're going to go right now to Nicholas. Nicholas, you're next up, go ahead.

Nicholas: I'd like to talk FlexRide. So, I have three questions concerning FlexRide. Number one, will FlexRide be sticking around? Number two, what is the plan to minimize the average subsidy cost for FlexRide?

So, I live in the Green Mountain area, and I think I read an article, CPR article that said the average fare is subsidized \$27.00, and I think I read that Broomfield was higher, like \$30.00 or \$33.00 per ride, which with the current budget constraints of RTD, I would think you would start it at the service that has the highest subsidy cost and work your way down. I would imagine that FlexRide is at the top of that list.

Nicholas: One way you could bring the average subsidy cost down is actually increase the ridership, so my third question is, what is the plan to increase the marketing for FlexRide? I just discovered that it actually existed last week.

Jeff Becker: Thank you, Nicholas. That's a good question, or three questions. First one, I think is yes, we are going to continue FlexRide. It's still in the program for next year. Now, about the subsidies, I mean, I'm not sure where you got those numbers from. The operating subsidy, on average, is probably about \$10.00 per ride, which, of course, is higher than any bus services.

So, the question is how do you get more riders, or how do you reduce the subsidy and reduce that cost per ride? One thing we're doing right now is that we found that, for example, in the Denver Tech Center where we have quite a few FlexRides that feed the stations to the light rail, during the middle of the day, there are very few riders. So, one thing that we are working on right now is to work directly with a taxi cab company. Instead of having one of our dedicated vehicles out there for four hours and there's only two or three people riding, we would just pay them a taxi fee, which would be much less, and we would save quite a bit of money. So, that reduces the cost.

In terms of marketing, I must tell you that if you think that marketing transit in general is difficult, marketing something like FlexRide is like an order of magnitude harder. For one thing, it doesn't even appear in our trip planner for you to put it in. But that is another thing that we're working on right now, it's in progress, which is to add FlexRide into the trip planner, which is actually quite a technical feat. It's only got started about a couple years ago. So, we are trying to make some pretty big efforts. It's not a big part of RTD's service offering, but it's still important for people out in the suburbs in making that last mile connection.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks very much, Jeff. That is Jeff Becker. We're going to go now to Liz. Liz, you're next up to ask your question.

Liz: Good afternoon and evening. I was wondering when RTD made the rail trip over to the airport from Denver that they didn't have a stop at the National Western Complex or one close to it. Perhaps they could have a shuttle from a stop to go there. They have a lot of activities there, just like they do at the Convention Center, which we're glad you have a stop there. So, do you have any reason for that, just because you want to make it fast?

Dave Genova: Liz, this is Dave. Thank you so much for that question. In fact, while you're correct on the University of Colorado A Line, we do not have a station at the National Western Center. We do have a transit there right now that's under construction that's almost complete, and that's going to be on our N Line. That's also going to be a commuter rail line. It's going to be the same kind of cars and vehicles that operate on the University of Colorado A Line and the B Line and the G Line.

Dave Genova: That N Line service, we are anticipating opening in 2020, and you'll be able to get to the National Western Center. It will be the first station outside of Denver Union Station on the N Line. So, people will be able to take a train, will be able to take the N Line from Union Station, and the very first station on that trip will be at the National Western Center. Then there'll be a few more stations along the N Line that go north all the way up into Thornton and Northglenn.

Pauletta Tonilas: Hey, Dave, while we're talking the N Line, let's just touch real quickly on the line because obviously, we are not on schedule of opening the line when we had intended. That was supposed to happen in 2018. We now are looking at 2020. But these projects are very dynamic, Dave, and a lot is involved. We have to meet a lot of milestones, and make sure that these lines are operating safely with testing and such. So, why don't you just quickly just touch on that?

Dave Genova: Well, Pauletta, you're correct. Any major capital program or major capital project has a variety of challenges. I've been with RTD for nearly 26 years now, and in that time, we've opened actually 14 capital projects. So, we have a lot of experience at delivering these major kinds of projects, and we have a very good track record of delivering on time and within budget, but we've had a couple projects that have flipped on schedule.

So, regarding the N Line, some of that is related to some of the construction work that we have going on. But mainly, where we're headed now with the N Line is construction is very close to being complete. We're probably 95% plus complete, and that's going to allow us to get into the more significant parts of testing. So, we have some new technology along that line in terms of our positive train control, and then the wireless communication to our grate crossings. And the good news is, some of the preliminary testing has been going well.

But until we get into that advanced testing on these very technical systems, that will really tell us how much more work we have to do. Then, of course, those are the critical pieces for us to gain the important regulatory approvals from the Federal Railroad Administration and from the Colorado Public Utilities Commission to be able to go into revenue service. So, our number one priority is safety when we open a new line, and right along with it is reliability.

So, we want to make sure, through a very robust testing period and training, of course, for all of our operators and other folks that maintain the system, that we are 100% ready to go when we open a line. And we're looking forward to delivering that N Line next. The community has been waiting for it, and we're anxiously waiting for opening day as well, and eager to deliver it.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks, Dave. Okay, we're going to go right to Michael next. So, Michael, what's your question?

Michael:

Hi, thank you for taking this call. I'm a Denver native of many, many years. I grew up on RTD, and traveled a lot back East and in Europe. What I noticed with them is they have a hub in this spoke system or whatever, rail on the outside of the city, and trains going out to the rail. So, first, I hope everything in FasTracks gets built, but I'm thinking where RTD is lacking is they don't necessarily serve the high-volume areas like Colfax Avenue. Maybe light rail could be built there one day.

And also, as a single person, for medical issues... Like I recently had surgery, and I don't have family in the area, and I was hoping that maybe Access-a-Ride maybe can even increase the price, can be extended to younger demographic or single demographic. I think that's a possible passenger stream that you can mine there.

Dave Genova:

Michael, this is Dave. Thanks for your question. So, let me talk about Colfax first, and then we'll talk about your question regarding Access-a-Ride. I might even bring Jeff in on part of that conversation because I think part of your question was around could we offer like a ride share in regard to that as well.

So, regarding Colfax, believe it or not, that is probably our busiest bus route. That's where we run our 15 and 15L. I believe our ridership, I'm going to look over to Jeff, is about 20,000 to 25,000 a day. Jeff's giving me a head nod. So, to give you some perspective on how many people we move on buses on Colfax, it's almost the same ridership... That's a daily basis, 20,000 to 25,000 on an average weekday. That's right around what we move on the University of Colorado A Line on a daily basis. Then to give another comparison on the mall shuttle, we move around 40,000 to 45,000 people per day on an average weekday.

Dave Genova:

So, right now, we don't have plans to do light rail on Colfax. It's been looked at. So, the City and County of Denver is the lead on a project for Colfax between Broadway and east to nearly the Aurora city boundary. So, Denver's looking at a bus rapid transit project for the Colfax corridor. In fact, we just had a meeting yesterday, myself, people from Denver, people from CDOT, people from our Denver Regional Council of Governments to talk about the status of that project. So, we're not looking at that for rail, but it's a great candidate for bus rapid transit. So, we're looking at that to the future.

We're also looking at a lot of other arterials around the Denver Metro Area in terms of bus rapid transit. We're just about ready to complete a bus rapid transit feasibility study that's identifying corridors that would be very good for that kind of service. And to also give you a comparison, we do operate bus rapid transit service from Denver Union Station to Boulder. That's called our Flatiron Flyer service, and that's a very robust service. It's been very successful since we've opened it.

Dave Genova: Regarding the eligibility around Access-a-Ride, a single person can be eligible if they meet the eligibility requirements around Access-a-Ride. And in addition to Access-a-Ride, we do have a service called Access-a-Cab, which is less expensive for our patron, and it's also less expensive for us. So, those are a couple different services that are available in the Access-a-Ride category, but people have to go through an eligibility requirement for that.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks, Dave. We have about 10 minutes left. We want to get as many questions of yours in. We're going to go now to Fran. Fran, go ahead and ask your question.

Fran: Yes, I have so many questions in my head, but I will at least start with the first one. I would like know, what are your plans for having dedicated lanes, like on Broadway, to put those dedicated lanes on other major arteries within RTD? There was...

Jeff Becker: Yes, Fran, that's a good question. That's part of like what we're looking at on Colfax is, how do we get the buses moving through traffic, and that is to give them priority. Some of the priority is kind of unseen, like I mentioned, the traffic single priority, you can't quite see it happen as you drive down the street, but the buses actually get priority at these traffic signals.

Another is getting a dedicated lane, which is the highest form of priority for a bus. You can see where that was done on Broadway and Lincoln, and that has worked very well. It actually saved two minutes out of the bus trip along that portion, which is now dedicated, which is extremely significant for speeding up service and making it more reliable. This is all with the City of Denver.

We're now looking at, and in fact, going to be implementing some bus exclusive lanes on both 17th Street and on 15th Street downtown, and I believe that's going to be happening over the next four or five weeks. So, you can expect to see that. And that's where we have the most bus traffic in the whole Metro area. This should really help improve reliability and improve service.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks, Jeff. We're going to go now to Mack. Mack, go ahead and ask your question. And if you could be brief, please, that would be great. Go ahead.

Mack: Yeah, I'm in that situation where I'm disabled, and it's the last mile, as has been indicated, that's very irritating. I live between the Iliff Station and the Parker Station, and if you had a shuttle like you had in previous years where you could call, then I could get to light rail and be perfectly mobile all over the system. But it's that distance that I certainly can't walk or get out to the nearest bus. Given the fact that we're all aging, I think RTD should take a closer look at how people get to the light rail stations. Thank you very much.

Jeff Becker: Thank you for that question. I'm in the category that you just mentioned. I'll be retiring myself very soon, and I'm very keen to what am I going to do? How do

we access service? Heather Gardens is a very large community, and there are people with disabilities such as yourself, and of course, aging. We do have a line that goes through there that you can use.

Jeff Becker: We have had actually FlexRide service out in that area at one time, it just didn't make... It wasn't too successful. We're finding that having these kind of customized access for people within relatively high-density areas doesn't really work too well. So, really, the best that you're going to be able to do is probably use Access-a-Ride if you really need to. Otherwise, it's difficult to serve pockets of communities such as yourself in Heather Gardens.

Pauletta Tonilas: We're going to take a question that came in online. This question is from Mario and it is, will RTD consider adding change machines to our buses so that exact change is not needed? So, Dave, do you want to just quickly touch on that item?

Dave Genova: We don't have plans to add any change machines on the buses, unfortunately. But we are cognizant when we do our fare structure and our fare rates, and when we look at them, we do try to make them as round as possible so it's as simple as possible to have the correct change. So, there's some other options available to you if you don't want to use cash. We have a stored value smart card where people can load a value on that card, and then it's just deducted from that card as you use that card. That can be loaded either online, or it can be loaded at sales outlets and some major grocery stores.

Another thing I'll point out is that we have a mobile ticketing feature. The mobile ticketing is something that you can do on your smart phone, where you can actually buy the RTD fare right on the convenience of your phone, and you just show that to the operator, or the fare inspector on rail. So, we do offer a number of, a variety of different ways in addition to cash, but we do try to make things as simple as we can. Thank you.

Pauletta Tonilas: Okay, real quickly, we're going to go to our final electronic polling question. The question is, other than these types of telephone town hall meetings, which of the following ways would you most likely use to stay involved with Reimagine RTD? Press 1 for use the interactive online engagement tool on the RTD website, press 2 read emails or e-newsletters, press 3 if you would attend a public meeting, press 4 for short surveys you'd participate in at our stations or major transit centers.

Dave, we're going to wrap up here in just a couple of minutes, so do you have some closing comments that you would like to round up here before we close out the meeting?

Dave Genova: Well, thank you, Pauletta. Really, my wrap-up comments are, I'm grateful. I'm grateful to all of you that participated with us tonight. I'm grateful for your questions and your input, and we take each one of your questions and all of your input very, very seriously. I just want to remind you that this isn't your only

chance to participate. You have much more opportunity to participate with us as we plan the future of transportation. We want to do it along with all of you, our important stakeholders that we serve.

Dave Genova:

So, please, if you have additional information, or concerns, or questions or comments that you want us to consider and that you want us to have to be able to inform where we go with the future of transportation, please visit our website and get onto that webpage at www.rtd-denver.com/reimagine. There are interactive tools on that website. You can sign up for an email subscription on that website to get updates on what's happening with Reimagine. There's a post-it wall where you can post your ideas and concerns and questions for us. And there's an interactive map, which is a great tool for you to be able to provide us input on an area that you might want additional services in, where you can drop a marker and a comment and let us know that.

So, we're just kicking off this process, so we want you all engaged and participating with us. So, hopefully you will. But for tonight, thanks so much for joining us. Pauletta?

Pauletta Tonilas:

Thank you, Dave. So, real quickly, the results of that last question, 24% of you say you're looking forward to using the online engagement tool through our website, 35% getting emails or e-newsletters, 22% attend a public meeting, 19% that you'll be interested in taking short surveys at stations or transit centers. So, that tells me, as the head of our communications department here at RTD that we're going to definitely be doing all of these things.

So, we want all of you to stay involved. As Dave mentioned, there's many ways for you to participate. It's all about you, folks. This is why we're on this call with you tonight. And on behalf of everyone here at RTD, we thank you for participating. Remember to visit our website, rtd-denver.com/reimagine, and stay involved. Have a great evening.