

RTD Access Live – Bob Broom
October 21, 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 your moderator this evening as we talk about the latest from RTD and the new effort that we're kicking off called Reimagine RTD. We're taking a look at how we provide all of our service and should be designing the mobility of the future more on Reimagine RTD in just a few minutes. Joining me this evening is Bob Broom, RTD Director for District F. Also sitting in on our call tonight is Bill Sirois, RTD Senior Manager, Transit Oriented Communities, and Maux Sullivan, Service Planner and Scheduler for light rail.

Pauletta Tonilas: We're here to listen to you folks and to answer your questions. Your opinions do mean a lot to us, that's why we're on this live telephone town hall with you tonight. This is your opportunity to share your thoughts with us, ask us questions, give us your ideas, and tell us what you think we should be thinking about as we reimagine the future of mobility. Now, if this is your first time on a telephone town hall, here's how it works, to ask a question, just press *3 on your keypad, and you'll be transferred to someone who will take down some basic information and get you in the queue. Then just stay on the line and listen to the conversation and when I call on your name, you can then ask us your question live. Please keep it brief though, because we do want to try to get to as many of you as possible.

Pauletta Tonilas: We'll also be asking you some questions through live electronic polling, where you'll use your keypad on your phone to press the number that corresponds with your preferred answer. If you want to get into the queue to ask us a question, just press *3 on your keypad, that's *3, and you can get into the queue to ask us a question. We're here tonight, as we've been celebrating a very important year, this has been RTD's 50th anniversary. We were created back in 1969 by the Colorado General Assembly. In those 50 years RTD has grown right along with the Denver Metro Area. We now are a region of 3 million people, we have a surface area of over 2,300 square miles, which is the second largest services area of any transit agency in America.

Pauletta Tonilas: We cover 40 cities in eight counties, and we provide nearly 100 million rides a year across our system. It is now my pleasure to introduce to you your RTD director, Bob Broom, for District F. Director Broom, thank you very much for joining us tonight, and this has been a big year for us, our 50th anniversary. We've already accomplished quite a bit.

Bob Broom: Well, thank you very much and good evening, and thank you for joining us, everybody. Yes, it's been a busy year. In addition to celebrating 50 years of moving people, we've opened the G Line, the E, F and R extension, six transit corridors in the past three years. We put in a new fare structure, riders now may buy three-hour local fare for \$3, a regional fair for 5.25 an airport fare for 10.50. The three-hour fare replaces the old one way ticket that you used to buy so that in a sense you can get on and transfer and have a meeting and get back on and

get back all on one ticket, if you can get it all done in three hours, rather than having to buy a round trip ticket,

Bob Broom: A new low income fair program, called the LiVE Program began this summer. This program offers a 40% discount to riders at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. Those who qualify can apply through the Colorado State Benefit site known as PEAK. There is now a 70% Youth discount for riders who are six to 19 years of age. Fares can start as low as 90 cents for our local three-hour paths with this discount. We also have continued our 50% discount for seniors 65+ and individuals with disabilities and Medicare recipients. We're embracing our role as the region's mobility integrator and innovator by having several new projects that we tried this past year.

Bob Broom: One is called a 61AV pilot project, which involved a vehicle that moved around from a light rail station without an operator. Of course, that's going to be the future is having vehicles without operators, but that's probably some years off. We're also working with Uber and Lyft to provide seamless connections between their services and RTD. We take your comments very seriously and we want to be sure to hear from you, so we hope you will join us on these conversations for your District.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much Director Broom. Director, you mentioned our collaboration with Uber and Lyft and the collaboration with Uber is the first of its kind in the world, where you can go on the Uber app, and it will actually show you RTD as a transit option through the Uber app. You then can also pay for your RTD fare and store your fare in the Uber app and then you use your phone as your fare when you get on RTD's system. Again, that's landmark, where we were the first in the world right here in Denver, Colorado to do that so just another way we're trying to look to the future. Folks, if you would like to get in the queue to ask us a question, press *3 on your keypad and we will get you in the queue. This is a live telephone town hall meeting, hosted by RTD with Director Bob Broom. We're delighted that you're here with us, and we're going to go now to our first person to ask us a question. That would be Marlon, I think it's Marlon, go ahead and ask the question.

Caller Marlon: Yes, thank you. First of all, I want to say good job so far on the expansion efforts, you guys are responding to the growth. Just a couple of questions in regards to some additional expansion, route expansions. I wanted to know if, it's kind of a two part question, if you have any routes going out to the Murphy Creek area and the plans as well as Colorado Springs for the light rail.

Bill Sirois: Thanks, Marlon, this is Bill Sirois, Senior Manager, Transit Oriented Communities. Unfortunately, we don't have any plans to expand light rail to the Murphy Creek area. I think that we have four remaining projects that we have on the books that we are trying to find funding for which include the extension to Boulder, and extensions down southwest and then Central Quarter extension and the completion of the North Metro Line past 124th. I believe the second

part of your question related to ... Oh, going to Colorado Springs, thank you. And you know what we have for Colorado Springs and we've been working with the Colorado Department of Transportation, they do provide a bus thing service that does go through Union Station and I believe has some intermediate stop, I think at our Colorado station along I-25 that does provide service to Colorado Springs. That's what we do and that's actually outside the district so we really can't service. We're partnering with CDOT on that service.

Bob Broom: Marlon, this is Bob Broom. Murphy Creek, as it turns out, is not in the RTD District. I've met with your homeowners association out there to talk about this. One of the things that's going to be looked at while we're doing this two-year study to determine what RTD is going to do in the future for service, is take a look at a lot of enclaves that are in ... particularly in Aurora that were annexed into the city of Aurora but weren't annexed into the RTD District. You might check with your homeowners association and see what their feelings are about becoming part of the RTD District.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much Director Broom. We're going to go now to Louie, go ahead and ask your question. Louie, are you there? Go ahead and ask your question. Okay, we do have a question from Louie that we saw and wondered if we were going to have light rail by Southlands Mall.

Caller Louie: I am on the line.

Pauletta Tonilas: Okay, go ahead. Yeah, go ahead.

Louie: My question was, I'm a resident of Southeast Aurora, near Southlands Mall area and is there any possibility of extension of the South rail RTD to our area because two of the stations that I take and my kids take ... Hello.

Maux Sullivan: Hi, thank you for your question. This is Maux Sullivan, Rail Service Planner and Scheduler, currently, there aren't any plans to provide rail service out there to connect to our other existing rail service. However, we do have bus service that does connect to those stations so you'd be able to take that and transfer to our rail system.

Caller Louie: Okay, thank you.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you. We're going to go now to our next caller, and that would be Chuck. Chuck, go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Chuck: You may have already addressed this, I was concerned about lower fares for people's 65 and over. I use RTD to go to ball games downtown and museums, I'm retired on a fixed income and ... I can drive, I live in Southeast Aurora outside of Centennial so I can drive to Nine Mile Station and get good rail service. To me it seems like \$9 fares, two ways seems somewhat onerous. Are there any discounts available? That's the end of my question.

Bob Broom: Well, there is a senior discount available. If you're retired but you're under 65, then you'll, I guess, have to wait until you're 65 to take advantage of the senior fare. Then in that case, it's half price for all the different fares.

Pauletta Tonilas: Yeah, and fares are one of those things that obviously we understand people don't like when they go up. One of the things about public transportation, public transit, however, is that it is highly subsidized and what we Garner from our fares is actually a very small percentage in the scheme of things. When you look at the cost of operating our system, it's about 20% that we get from our fares that help us to operate the service that we provide. Yet, we do have those discount programs for certain groups, like seniors and youths and folks who are lower income. We invite you to go to our RTD website where you can learn more about that, that's rtd-denver.com. We're going to go now to Crystal. Crystal, go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Crystal: Hi, thanks for giving me a chance. I was hoping to ask about a little extra time for those of us you need to stand up before we get off of a bus or the light rail. A lot of times the bus drivers are able to see us with a light rail, I just would like a little more time.

Maux Sullivan: Sure, thank you for your question. Again, this is Maux Sullivan, Rail Service Planner and Scheduler. We can definitely look into that, we do sort of build in a certain amount of dwell time to the schedule for the operators to be at those stations, but they do try to keep those trains on time. Yeah, it is recommended that you are prepared to exit as the train approaches the station but we can look into that and see what the operators do currently to be able to monitor that. Usually, they're able to see passengers entering and exit from the doors and those entering the train should wait till everyone's exited before they get on, and that's our operators queue. I can look into that further. Thank you.

Pauletta Tonilas: One other little tip, if you look for the little button that's on the inside of the train that is usually right there by the doors, you can always push that button and it will pop the doors back open if it looks like it's starting to close, that'll give you a little bit more time. But as Maux was saying, it's always good to be prepared when you're coming to your stop and gather your belongings and get ready. We don't want you to get up before the train stops for safety reasons, but to be prepared is always a good thing. We're going to do our first electronic polling question of the evening where you'll use your keypad on your phone to push the number that corresponds with your answer.

Pauletta Tonilas: The first question we'd like to ask you tonight is, how satisfied are you with RTD services? Press one on your keypad for very satisfied, press two for somewhat satisfied, press three for somewhat dissatisfied, and press for very dissatisfied, and we will share the results with you in just a couple of minutes. We're going to go now to Carol, Carol, go ahead and ask your question.

Pauletta Tonilas: Hello there Carol. Are you there? Okay, it looks like Carol's question was about Access-a-Cab, she uses Access-a-Cab, and how can we assure people that Uber drivers are safe? I can go ahead and start that and others can chime in, in trusting yourself to ride Uber or Lyft or any kind of ride hailing service, is something that I think we inherently hope we can do because there are safety guidelines with these ride hailing services as well as there are with us at RTD in operating our service for safety. I will touch on the topic of safety and maybe ask Director Broom to weigh in, that safety is a core value of RTD and really everything we do is prevalent on us operating safe service, whether it is bus service or rail service or what have you. Director, if you would like to expound upon that.

Bob Broom: Yes, safety is our number one priority at RTD. Even as our board meetings before we even start the meeting, we have a safety message that the chairman of the committee will provide to the board as well as to the audience at the board meeting.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much for that. We're going to go now to Alonzo, Alonzo go ahead.

Caller Alonzo: Hi, thanks a lot for the opportunity. I was calling to see if I can get an expansion ... if I can propose for an expansion on Zone B because currently as it stands, if I get on 2nd & Abilene Station I'll have to pay the regional just to get to the Union Station and there's Zone B areas that are further away than I am east. Yeah, that was ...

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you, Alonzo, for that question. Go ahead, Maux.

Maux Sullivan: Hi, Alonzo, thank you. The zones are tied to our fare program, so that was part of what was implemented in 2019 here. Those zones were evaluated at that time and those were locked into place for three years. Until the board reevaluates the fare structure, those zones will be in place. At that time, when they reevaluate the fares, they can also look at the zones. Thanks.

Pauletta Tonilas: The fare zones are something we get asked about from time to time and obviously, if you're just right outside of the fare boundary for the cheaper zone that creates a tough situation for you to pay a little bit more. But again, there's always the opportunity to drive or get dropped off at one of the cheaper fare zone stations, that's one way to look at it. We're going to give you the results of our first little electronic polling question. We asked you how satisfied you are with RTD services, 32% of you said very satisfied, 51% said somewhat satisfied, 15% said somewhat dissatisfied, and 2% said very dissatisfied. We'll ask you a couple more questions over the course of about the next 40 minutes. Right now, however, we're going to go to Jerry. Jerry, go ahead. Jerry, are you still with us? There we go.

Caller Jerry: Yes. I was concerned that on recently, they are discussing the fact that you do not have enough drivers and operators and you plan to cut certain routes. Could you tell me what you're doing to address that problem?

Pauletta Tonilas: Okay, sure. Thank you very much, Jerry. I'm going to start and then I'll ask Director Broom to weigh in as well. Yes, we have a critical shortage of bus and light rail operators right now and because of that, the operators we do have many of them have to work six days a week and some of them, the lower seniority operators, have been working six days a week for like three or four years, which is really tough on our staff. Our staff is our most valued asset and so we care about what can we do to lighten the load on those folks. Low unemployment is creating also a challenge in that we are not getting as many folks applying for jobs and there's a smaller pool of people available to work so we're looking at what can we do? We have done many things to create incentives for people to come on board and be operators, but we're in a tough spot.

Pauletta Tonilas: We own that, we admit it, we don't like being in the situation that we're in right now. Whether or not we look at a temporary service reduction that helps right-size the service level temporarily to the number of operators we have, that's a decision that the RTD board will make but director room this is a tough situation we're all in, we don't want to be here. What are your thoughts about this?

Bob Broom: There's no question there's a labor shortage in the Denver Metropolitan Area market. I think the latest numbers I saw was the unemployment rate in Denver proper is 2.2% which means there's not that many people out there looking for jobs. The board has worked on this for last two or three years, we've increased wages hoping to attract more people, the starting wages now are 19.98 to 25.31 per hour to start. We provide a \$2,000 hiring bonus for bus and train operators as well as mechanics, we've got a system where we pay premium pay for people that work split shifts, we pay an additional \$2 per hour. For those that work second shift, they get an extra dollar 75 an hour and anyone working, the third shift gets an extra 2.25 an hour. They also get a full benefits package with paid time off, medical, dental and retirement benefits.

Bob Broom: I'd just like to say a couple things. One, there's no experience necessary to become a driver. RTD will provide the training, you don't need a commercial driver's license to be hired, you can be trained. One area that we could really improve on would be female drivers. There's nothing very strenuous about driving RTD equipment that would maybe scare some people away, so I would certainly encourage people if they're looking for a job with really good benefits to give us a call. Thank you.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you, Director Broom. You're on a live telephone town hall meeting being hosted by the Regional Transportation District, RTD, for Director Bob Broom's District and we thank you for being on the line with us. We're going to give you the results of our first ... Or not, we're going to do our second polling question.

Sorry, we already did the first one. The second one, we would like your input, what can RTD be doing better? Press one on your keypad for improved reliability, press two for enhanced bus rail connections, press three for provide better technology and apps and press four for improved safety and security on the system, and we'll give you those results in a couple of minutes. We're going to go now to Kerry. Kerry, you're next up so go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Kerry: Hi, I'm wondering ... I'm in Aurora, Nine Miles Station has got one of the worst records for safety and security and breaking into vehicles. Aurora is about ... well, is starting already a project for millions of dollars to improve the area for shopping et cetera. Are you doing anything to approach Aurora for maybe putting in some security in Nine Mile? I realize your budgets are strained but I also feel that if Aurora is going to be doing this planning that they should maybe kick in a few bucks for security.

Bob Broom: Thank you for your question. I actually parked at Nine Mile tonight on my way down town to attend this town hall meeting. What I found in Nine Mile is that there are security people there, they're not there all the time, obviously people like to see them there all the time but we move them around so that the ... and of course their security cameras and that type of thing there. One area of safety that's going to be added at that particular stop is there's going to be a pedestrian bridge built across Parker Roads, so people have to cross Parker Road on foot, which is ... it's about nine or 10 lanes wide at that particular area and it's very, very dangerous. That's one thing that we're looking forward to in the future and that was funded through federal gas tax money and through the Denver Regional Council of government and the city of Aurora participating.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much Director Broom. Okay, we're going to go up next to Niton, go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Niton: Can you guys hear me?

Pauletta Tonilas: Yes, we can. Go ahead.

Caller Niton: Thank you for taking my question. I had a question about the H Line that goes from Nine Mile, it currently goes only to the area campus but does not go to our area west side of the entrance of the area. I was wondering, are there any plans to have a Nine Mile that goes along that ... from Nine Miles that goes along that side? Because right now if I have to go to where I need to transfer to three trains and it just seems a little odd that you have nothing that goes from Nine Mile towards that area, towards Pepsi Center and further up.

Bill Sirois: Thanks for your question, this is Bill Sirois again. That's one of the things that we're going to be looking at as part of Reimagine, is looking at bus and rail service in terms of optimizing and are there any trips like that, that if we changed our service that we could catch and we could improve our ridership. That is one of the things that we'll be addressing over this two-year long process

and we hope to hopefully make some changes that will improve that and optimize our services that we have out there today.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks, Bill. The responses from the last polling question, we asked you what can RTD be doing better? 24% of you said improve reliability, 30% said enhanced bus rail connections, 9% provide better technology and apps and 37% of you said improve safety and security on the system, so thank you for that feedback. All right, we're going to go now to Mark. Mark, go ahead.

Caller Mark: Hi, thanks for taking my phone call. I'm curious, I hear these questions about expansion and stuff and another caller already addressed this. I myself, am a CDL driver and I'd be very interested in driving for, or driving a light rail for RTD. My question is, do you foresee any pay increases anytime soon because that's a lot of responsibility with people, and it just seems like a 19 to \$20 an hour start is pretty low?

Bob Broom: The current contract with the union is a three-year contract. The first year of the contract has an 8% salary increase in it and then the second and third year of the contract has 3% increases in it. Of course, when the union contract comes back up again for renegotiation, we'll be looking at that again. Obviously, we like to pay as much as we possibly can, which will help us with to recruit more people but there is ... we do have budgetary constraints that we have to consider as well.

Pauletta Tonilas: What we do have to say is you're hired, so go ahead and fill out the application and say, "They told me I'm hired." We would love to have you come in and work for us as a light rail operator. We are launching a program called Reimagine RTD, which is intended to look at all the service that we provide and look at how we design the mobility of the future to reflect the way that you, our riders and even those who currently don't ride RTD we'd like to get you to hop on board, how you would like to Move around the region. We are getting input and hearing your thoughts, that's why we're on this live telephone town hall meeting with you tonight. Director Broom, this is really important that we hear from people and it isn't a camp process where we just say, "Hey, tell us what you think." It really is critical that we hear from people so that we know how to even put the framework together of whatever the mobility plan for the future is going to be.

Bob Broom: Well, there's no question that planning is critically important as we begin our second 50 years of service to the Metropolitan Area. The only way we can do it and do it right is to get a maximum amount of input from the public. Everything we do is to serve the public and it's important that we hear what's important to them. What will make it easier for you to ride RTD, what will make You start riding RTD if you currently don't ride RTD? We need to public self and answering the question, what's next for RTD? In addition to our listening phase Reimagine RTD will include a review of our programs, our finances and our workforce constraints, examination of RTD's existing bus and rail service and other technology integration.

Bob Broom: At completion, we are looking for a mobility plan for the future. RTD will be going out into the communities, hosting listening sessions, pop ups on our system and going to the community events. As we evaluate and look at the plan for the future, which we will complete in the next two years, it's important that we hear from you on these types of concerns and what your thoughts are. You can make your comments right now by visiting www.rtd-denver/reimagine.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you, Director Broom. That's Director Bob Broom, who is on the call with us and his district is District F, that is serving all of you who are on the call with us tonight. Thank you for being on the line. We do have a pretty nifty interactive engagement tool that is available on the RTD website, where we want you to give us input even through that interactive tool. You can leave us comments right there on that platform, you can even drop a pin and leave a comment about that particular area of the region, so we invite you to go on the RTD website and check out the interactive tool on our Reimagine RTD section. All right, we're going to go now to Terry. Terry, you are next up, go ahead.

Caller Terry: Hello, and thank you for this opportunity tonight. My original question got taken already so I'm going to ask a different one. Basically, for people who have mobility limitations, currently right now my understanding is they have to go down to RTD to complete paperwork. I'm wondering if there's any chance that in the future things might get a little easier for those people who are having mobility issues. I know I went through several occasions over the last year where I lost my mobility and I would have really liked to visit RTD but it was too much of an effort to even try given everything you have to do, the hoops you have to jump through to obtain ability to use, for example, Access-A-Ride or things like that. That's my question

Bob Broom: Well, I don't know that I can give you a direct answer to your question. What we can do is we can take a look at it to see if there's a way that we could make it easier for people to apply for that type of service. I can understand it is difficult for people to go downtown, but eventually you have to have your picture taken, but obviously like getting a passport, you could have your picture taken somewhere and provide it as well. So, let us look into that.

Pauletta Tonilas: One of the thing that I'll say is we really have simplified our application form as well and we have made it as easy as we can for a medical professional to sign off on the paperwork, making sure that of course applicants meet the criteria so that ... I know there are still some steps that people have to go through, but we have really improved the process from what it was and we'll continue to look for ways to do that. Thank you very much for that. Okay, Chad, you're up next. Go ahead.

Caller Chad: Yes. Good evening, thank you for taking my call. Everybody there?

Pauletta Tonilas: Yeah, you're welcome and thank you for being on the line with us.

Caller Chad: Perfect. I've used light rail a couple of times, I have a nine year old daughter, she actually had some extra needs. When I was young and a teenager that's how I got around, it was on the bus. I didn't get a car and I had a bike and a bus, that's what I got around on. I live in a tight-knit family and my sister Jeannie, God lover, she don't let her teenage children ride the bus. She barely lets them cross the street, she has these fear levels of safety and security. What sad to say about that is that's the image that the public has. My sister is four years older than me, and I'm in my '40s and I'm curious, my question is, how do you plan to effectively change that image because that is the public image for some middle class people, for instance, myself I feel a little bit of my sister's fear when it comes to my daughter who has some extra needs and her safety using the system when she gets older?

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you so much for that, that's really a very interesting question and comment. One thing that I can say, and I had an opportunity to work with a group of youths I'd say like, maybe a year, year and a half ago. We had asked them what it would take for them to hop on board and ride the transit system, and what they could come up with as ideas, and many of them told us that their parents did not like them riding transit by themselves. They came up with the idea that if youth rode together and teamed up, that they could learn how to ride transit or if they already know how to ride transit, that it's more of a comfort level for them to travel in groups, which I thought was a great suggestion.

Pauletta Tonilas: It is intimidating to ride transit, especially for people who have not ridden transit before because you're trying to figure out the schedule, and if you need to transfer, "How do I do that? If I need to buy a ticket, how can I buy that at the ticket vending machine?" Once you get over that initial hurdle of riding transit, you realize how easy it is. The safety aspect of that is again, who else could write with you, and teaming up and having a buddy system is one thought. I'll ask Director Broom to weigh in as well.

Bob Broom: Well, the district has contracts with the Aurora Police Department, the Denver Police Department and Lakewood Police Department, to put uniformed officers on buses, and particularly those buses in areas where we've experienced problems. We have our own transit security force and we deploy those people as well. Most people feel comfortable if they get on and see somebody in uniform, but again, cost is a consideration here and you just simply can't afford to put uniformed person on every vehicle in our fleet.

Pauletta Tonilas: Go ahead, Maux.

Maux Sullivan: One other thing I wanted to mention, I don't know if you've heard of the RTD transit watch app. It's an app you can download on your phone and maybe those teenage daughters could then download on their phone and if there's an issue, right on the app, you can contact our Transit Police Force, so that if there isn't someone on that bus or at that next stop they can notify them to meet

them there. That's a great way where you can discreetly ask for help and it has some really rapid response time. That would be an option, especially for teenagers who are really tech savvy and have phones.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you, Maux. Okay, Ron, you're up next, go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Ron: I've lived in the RTD for about two years and one of the things that disturbs me is the way that people treat the drivers. Like one man one time got on and he wasn't going to put any money in the meter because he didn't have the right change. Another guy, he threw boulder at the back of the bus, put it on a tire came out the front of the bus, and it could have killed somebody you know. This driver had his head on straight and he handled it very well. The other thing, this is a different type question but at the RTD bus terminals, where they stop to pick up passengers, they have trash cans up there that are overflowing. I've been going by this one for three and a half weeks and then four weeks ago, I called them and every day. Who's responsible for taking that up, RTD or the city?

Bob Broom: I think it depends. That's a funny answer, but in some cases the cities have contracts with advertising companies that put in bus benches and trash receptacles, and then they're responsible ... the city then is responsible, through their contractor for cleaning those things up. In others if it's a major facility of RTD's, then it's RTD's responsibility to do that. It depends on the particular locations, I just would encourage you to continue to call in and complain when you see that.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks, Director Broom. takin care of the station areas is our responsibility, RTD's, on our rail stations, but as it relates to the bus stops, the bus stops, the cities or a special district are responsible for taking care of the area around the bus stops and the bus shelters. Sometimes, and this is going to be timely. when it snows we will oftentimes get comments from people who were frustrated because the snow was not cleared around different bus stops or the bus shelters. We invite you to make sure and contact your local city, your local jurisdiction if that happens, because they're the ones who really roll that into their maintenance program. That's just something to come up for the winter season. Okay, we're going to go now to Mon Cheri. I like saying that, so Mon Cheri, you're up.

Caller Mon Cheri: Hi, thank you so much for taking my question. I was wondering is sometime in the near future, would you guys consider a monthly bus pass for the transit systems like Access-A-Ride? Like the bus tickets, could there maybe someday be a bus pass, like a monthly pass? That's it.

Pauletta Tonilas: Well, we can always look at different options. We did just a year ago go through a past program working group where we looked at all of our fare products and our fare structure in general and through a group of a lot of community members, different stakeholders around the region we came up with the fare

structure that we implemented in January. But clearly there's always opportunities for us to continue to look for other past programs or different niche programs. Access-A-Ride is the most expensive service that we operate so we would need to be able to weigh the operation of that service with what we could do to make it more conducive for people, because obviously those are some of our more transit-dependent folks around the region.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you so much for that, Mon Cheri. It's something that we'll make sure and keep on our radar. Thank you very much. We're going to go now to our third and final electronic polling question. You'll use your keypad to push the number that corresponds with your answer. We would like to know how you would keep involved and engaged with RTD throughout our Reimagine RTD process, so in addition to live telephone town hall meetings like this one right now, what would you do to keep involved with us? Press one, if you would use the interactive online engagement tool that you can get to through our RTD website, press two for reading emails or E-newsletters, press three for attending a public meeting, press four for taking short surveys at stations or transit centers, and we'll give you those responses in just a couple of minutes.

Pauletta Tonilas: Director Broom, we get asked from time to time about the service on the R Line. That service since it opened, had to be scaled back a bit to basically address the ridership. We make these changes to our service after we observe what the actual ridership is and the traffic patterns, but these are things that are never easy to do. When we have to cut back on service and maybe not run the train as frequently, these are tough things but it's what we do to try to be fiscally feasible and responsible too.

Bob Broom: Well, that's true. The one thing about the R Line, which is encouraging is that this year to date ridership on the R Line is up 2% while ridership on light rail in general is down about three or 4%. The R Line is continuing to pick up ridership and that's obviously the answer in the long run, to have frequent services to have a lot of riders. I would certainly encourage people in Aurora to use the R Line, because that's what it takes to get good services, is to have a lot of usage.

Pauletta Tonilas: We still have some time to answer your questions, so you can press *3 on your keypad to get in the queue and we'll be happy to take you live, so *3 if you have a question. Even those of you who already asked one who might still be on the line, if you have a second question, feel free to push *3. We'll give you the results of our last polling question of the evening. We asked you what you would like to do to stay involved and engaged with RTD? 21% of you said use the interactive online engagement tool that you can get to through our website, 47% said that you would read emails or E-newsletters, 21% said attend to physical public meeting, 11% said take short surveys at stations and transit centers.

Pauletta Tonilas: As the person who leads the communications efforts here at RTD, I can tell you we will listen to those things because we like to provide a variety of ways for

people to engage with us that are going to be conducive for them to do that. Thank you very much for those responses. We're going to go now to Gary, Gary, you're up, go ahead and ask your question. Okay, we're going to go now to Carol. Carol, go ahead. I don't think she's in the queue. We're going to go to Jerry. Jerry, go ahead. I believe that Jerry's question was that he's been hearing a lot of discussion on not enough drivers and that we may cut routes because of this, and what is the plan for this?

Pauletta Tonilas: Yes, you have heard a lot about this because we have a critical shortage of light rail and bus operators. That's a difficult situation because then our current operators have to work overtime and work mandated extra overtime, which is very tough on them. We're looking at what can we do so that we don't have to keep dropping service and dropping trips because we don't have enough operators to provide that service? One thought is potentially cutting back on service for a temporary timeframe to give us a chance to catch up and to give our operators more days off, and then they only have to work five days a week instead of working six days a week, every week, which is a very difficult thing. That is just one proposal.

Pauletta Tonilas: The RTD board, however, is going to be the ones to decide whether or not that's something we do. Director Broom, any words on that?

Bob Broom: Well, it is a huge problem and it has been since I got on the board about two and a half years ago. We need to fill 61 light rail operator positions and 80 bus driver positions to get back to full capacity. You simply burn people out by working them six days a week and so one thing the board's going to have to consider is to reduce service to the to reduce some of this pressure that we have on our drivers. Otherwise, people will get fed up and they'll quit and we'll have an even worse problem. It's something that we're going to take up tomorrow at our board meetings and again next month, to try to find some ways to alleviate this particular problem. With unemployment rate in the Denver Metro area of 2.2%, it's really difficult to hire people.

Bob Broom: The other thing is that you have to pass a drug test. About 40% of the people that apply, wash out because they can't pass a drug test. The board can't do anything about that because that's a federal requirement and nobody wants people operating trains or buses that are on drugs anyway.

Pauletta Tonilas: Yeah, so a lot of challenges, a lot of things that we're looking at and considering so that we can provide you with the level of service that you deserve. We're going to go now to Roberta. Roberta, go ahead.

Caller Roberta: Hi, thank you a lot for letting me participate. I was just calling ... I ride the ATE bus from Nine Miles to the airport. I was interested in riding the light rail from Nine Miles to the train, but the timing seems to be off. When you do take the train, the light rail, it misses the train by about a minute or so either way. If you take the train coming back in from the airport, the light rail has just taken off 30

seconds or so before you get there. Is there a timing issue that can be fixed there?

Maux Sullivan: Roberta, Hi, this is Maux Sullivan, RTD Rail Service Planner. Yes, thank you for that question, you're not the first to bring that up. We have looked at that, however, our a line is on a pretty set schedule, people already know that schedule from Union Station, it leaves every 15 minutes. Therefore, the adjustments we need to make are on the R Line. However, the R Line interacts with four of our different lines. We have slowly been trying to make that connection better and we hope ... We did make some minor adjustments again, that will go into place in January, hopefully. Hopefully, that connection will be a little bit better because yes, we do know that the R Line pulls into Peoria right as the A Line is leaving. Yes, thank you for your comment, we are working on that.

Pauletta Tonilas: Okay, we've got a little bit of time left so we're going to go now to Jerry. Jerry, go ahead.

Caller Jerry: Director Broom, I want you to make note if you go home to Nine Mile, the lighting there is very poor at night, it does not lend itself to feeling safe there. The other thing, sir, is, is there any less cost not to run as many cars on a train late in the evening, because when we come home from performing arts center there isn't a lot of people on the train and it seems like you could ... Is it less costly to run less cars late at night? Thank you.

Bob Broom: I'll take the first part of your question about the lighting. I've noticed that myself and I mentioned it to the chief engineer for RTD and he said, "The lighting there meets specifications," and there is adequate lighting in there. I would agree it is fairly dark in there, so I'll look at again tonight when I go into the garage and see. If it's still that way, I'll follow up again to see if I can get some better lighting in the garage. Thank you.

Maux Sullivan: To answer the second part of your question, the biggest costs with running light rail is actually the operator, so paying the driver to operate it. There's not a huge cost difference with the size of the consist, however we do ... we want our vehicles to be well maintained and so we are looking to make adjustments mid-day or even late at night so that there are fewer cars so that those light rail vehicles don't have to undergo you their half-life maintenance rebuilds that are costly and take a lot of time. Thank you for your comment.

Pauletta Tonilas: Okay, we're going to go right to Terry. Terry, go ahead.

Caller Terry: Yes, hi. My question relates to technology and as you're envisioning the future for RTD and mobility, what types of new technologies are you envisioning at this point so far?

Bill Sirois: Thanks, Terry, this is Bill Sirois. Yes, we are looking at new technology as part of the Reimagine process and we're going to be looking at various things.

Obviously, you've heard probably a lot about autonomous vehicles and where that's going. That will be part of our process, looking at things like fleet electrification, bringing in new technology to make it more ... clean running vehicles. We'll also be looking at things like apps, apps are so big right now and they weren't five years ago, I don't think we had these many apps. We're looking at how do we interface and how do we streamline people's trip making? a lot of times they'll get on their Google Maps or their Uber app and look into how to make a trip, but if things can be pulled together so they could make a seamless trip if they're transferring from public transit to Uber, or to a scooter or to a bike. We're hoping to make that a lot more seamless through technology, so we're going to be doing that.

Bill Sirois: Another thing that we're looking at is just in terms of our payment. That's something again, that I think there's been a lot of advancements in technology and we're working towards making that a much more easy and convenient way for people to access our system, is to make an easy way for them to pay for it, and get an account where they can actually have funding on their account. We'll be looking at all those things. Then there's things that we don't look at and we want to build in flexibility to our plan so that as new technologies come about, 10 years down the road, is there another Uber? Is there another thing that's out there, a new thing that we should, as a public transit agency for Denver, be looking and take advantage of. We're trying to build that into our plan as well.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks, Bill. Okay, real quickly, we're going to go to Lauren. We only have a couple minutes left, so Lauren, go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Lauren: Hi, I really want to say how thankful I am to the operators that are working all the long hours, I always appreciate the safe drive. I think most of what people's question are is how do we know what routes have been dropped? I've used rider alerts and it's not super accurate. I've written the same train at the same time for about two years now and lately, as soon as it got cold, we're standing out there for 20, 30 minutes at a time, sometimes for a train. How do we know if a route's been dropped?

Pauletta Tonilas: That's great and I'll go ahead and answer that for you. Our team, the customer care team, which are the customer service agents that are within my department, communications, they work very hard to try to get the rider alerts out and tweets out as soon as they know if trips are going to be dropped. Signing up for writer alerts through our website and following us on Twitter are going to be the quickest and easiest way for you to learn about any trips that were dropped. That being said, there have been some times where we weren't able to get those rider alerts out until just a couple minutes before a trip was going to be dropped. That's an unfortunate thing, we look for ways that we can continue to make that a little speedier of a process but we totally understand and feel your pain.

Pauletta Tonilas: I am a daily light rail rider and I've been affected too, where I find out after I'm already out the door that my trip is being dropped so I get the frustration personally. This is part of our reality, though, folks right now, and it's something we're trying to do something about so that we don't continue to inconvenience our passengers because, again if we say we're going to provide X amount of service and we can't do that and drop trips, it's very difficult for people to plan their days that way. I have to say, I'll speak for myself, but if I knew that my train was going to come every 30 minutes, then I can plan my day around that and at least I know, when I need to be out there at the train station. If that's a consistent service that I'm going to get, I would rather have that and so again, these are just questions that we're asking ourselves.

Pauletta Tonilas: We've come to the end of our telephone Town Hall; we want to thank you so much for being on the call with us. I'm going to ask Director Bob Broom to take us out with any final comments you might have. Director?

Bob Broom: Thank you for listening in and for all your valuable questions and comments. All of this information will be compiled and will be given to the entire board to review. We're just now working on our 2020 budget and so to the extent that we need to budget to make changes that have been suggested, now's the perfect time to get those suggestions into the hopper for consideration. Again, thank you very much for listening in.

Pauletta Tonilas: Good night.