

RTD Access Live – Shelly Cook
October 28, 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'll be your moderator this evening as we talk about the latest from RTD and a new effort that we're just kicking off called re-imagined RTD. We're taking a look at how we provide our service so that we can design the mobility of the future with you in mind. More on re-imagine RTD in just a couple of minutes.

Joining me this evening is Shelly Cook, RTD director for District L. Also sitting in to answer your questions are Bill Sirois, our senior manager of Transit Oriented Communities as well as Dave Menter, senior service planner and scheduler. Now we're here to listen and to answer your questions. Your opinions are important to us. That's why we're on a live telephone town hall meeting with you tonight. This is your opportunity to share your thoughts, ask us questions, tell us your concerns, and tell us how we should be re-imagining the future of mobility.

Pauletta Tonilas: 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. You will be transferred to someone who will take down some basic information and get you in the queue to ask your question. Just stay on the line, listen into the conversation and when I call your name, then is when you will ask your question live. We ask that you please keep it brief so that we can get to as many of you as possible tonight. We also will be asking you some questions through our live electronic polling where you'll use your keypad on your phone to press the number that corresponds with your answer.

So, if you want to get into the queue to ask a question to director Cook, all you have to do is press *3 now. Now this has been a big year for RTD. We have been celebrating our 50th anniversary because RTD was created back in 1969 by the Colorado General Assembly. In those 50 years, RTD has grown right along with the metro area. We now are a region of three million people. We have a service area of over 2300 square miles. That's the largest transit service area of any transit agency in the country. We cover 40 cities in eight counties and we offer nearly 100 million rides a year.

It is now my pleasure to introduce RTD director Shelley Cook for District L. Director Cook, thank you very much for joining us tonight. This has been a big year especially for the people of your district.

Shelley Cook: Good evening everyone and thank you for joining us everyone and thank you Pauletta. Thanks. Yes, we've had a lot to celebrate this year. We've got some big challenges too. I thought by way of recap we could talk about the G Line. Also this year, yay. Also this year, of course the extension on the E Line, EFR Extension was opened and that makes six transit corridors in the past three years alone. We have a new fare structure that includes income based fare

program. It's called LiVE began this summer, and that offers a 40% discount to riders who are at or below 185% of the federal poverty level. Those who qualify can apply through the Colorado state benefits site. It's known as Peak.

Shelley Cook:

There's also now, this is really popular on the G a 70% youth discount for riders 6 to 19 years old. We continue our 50% discount for seniors and that's 65 or over individuals with disabilities and Medicare recipients. But of course, and this has been in the news, there's concerns to as many are probably hearing, we've got a budget shortfall. There's operator shortage and concerns about working conditions that have been expressed. Finally, as Pauletta had talked about re-imagined. We're not losing sight of the long term with lots of involvement within the district and the entire region, we'll be taking a fresh look at what role we shouldn't have and how we can most effectively assure residents we'll be able to get where they need to go, and in what is actually a pretty dramatically changing transportation landscape.

Meanwhile we take your comments seriously and we want to be sure to hear from you so that we hope you will join in on these conversations in your district.

Pauletta Tonilas:

Thank you very much. That is director Shelley Cook. One thing I do want to ask you as a follow-up director Cook, the G Line has been so big in your area. This was highly anticipated for many, many years. What are you hearing from your constituents about the G Line now that it's open?

Shelley Cook:

Pauletta, by and large the feedback is really positive. I think after a wait maybe that made it all the more of a great event. But ever since the grand opening back in April, people have been riding it and we've been seeing increases in the ridership and in the station activity. So just to give you a few particulars, the August ridership was up 184,000. That was a jump of 20,000 from the July ridership. Station activity showed similar gains with double digit increases in some of the Eastern stations and increases in every station in terms of aligning and forwarding, going on and off for all stations except for Ward Road.

So we're, we're seeing that great reception that the line has had born out in the numbers. Now we do know that train noise is a continuing issue for those along the rider way. Last summer, RTD hosted both of them and open house and a pancake breakfast and we were able to hear from residents not only about the train horns but also about the bells at the crossings. It's abundantly clear that, that's an issue for folks as well. Since then, staff had been working with Denver transit operators who maintain and operate the G Line and looking at what can be done to attenuate the noise, the horns and the bells.

Shelley Cook:

What they have in place now is a plan to explore being able to close off two of the three openings on the crossing bells. There's three apertures. The idea would be maybe we close off two of the three at each corner, in an effort to contain the sound within the crossing area for pedestrians while mitigating the sound that radiates outward toward residential homes. We'll be starting with

the private crossing ROB Street to gather data. In fact, they're doing some of that this week. They're out there measuring decibel levels and they're taking a look at pedestrian activity.

Shelley Cook: Then they'll also be working with the Colorado Public Utilities Commission in order to implement on a second street Salisbury. They'll monitor those two for two months to ensure that we have a lot of data. What they need to do is assure critical safety factor. They need to make sure that everybody still stays safe around the train crossings, that we're not introducing adverse sound or safe conditions. Also need to work with the Federal Railway Administration along the way just to make sure we're taking into all into account all the considerations, particularly safety. But we're hoping that we can do something that will help to attenuate that noise.

RTD has been sending out updates on the G Line and we can continue to let you know about those both the updates on that sort of thing as well as provide notifications about service outages or changes. So if you need to update your G Line email preferences, you can do those at communityengagement@rtd-denver.com. As always, you can feel free to get in touch with me if you can't reach somebody on the weekend. My email address is shelley.cook@rtd-denver.com, S-H-E-L-L-E-Y, .cook@rtd-denver.com. My phone number is (720) 935-9224. You're welcome to call me anytime.

Pauletta Tonilas: Director Cook, thank you very much. That is RTD director Shelley cook. We're going to go to our first person up to ask a question and that would be Dawn. Dawn, go ahead. Ask your question.

Caller Dawn: Hi Shelley, this is Dawn. I have a question about the service to the Bronco games. I've been riding the Bronco buses for the last 15 to 18 years, maybe even longer than that. That took about 25 minutes from either Ward Road or the Sheridan bus trip. But now RTD has decided to get rid of all the buses along the corridor, the I-70 and G Line corridor. It now takes an hour and a half and it's a good three quarters of a mile walk to the stadium. For us elderly people and other people when it's cold, this seems to be a very bad solution to a problem that that was never a problem, if that makes sense. What is RTD thinking about doing about this stuff?

Shelley Cook: Hi Dawn, this is Shelley and thanks so much for asking that question because I know it's on the mind of a lot of people who had been using the Broncos ride from both the Ward Road and the Olde Town Arvada Park-n-Ride. It's been the case that whenever there's a train service in a corridor that we can't continue the Broncos ride from that same set of locations. It's especially difficult right now because we'll talk about this in a bit, but the operator shortage. It's often the case that those games are at times when we're already stretched thin.

Shelley Cook: So I don't honestly see the prospect of adding them back in, but I want to just make sure you're aware that we still do have a Broncos ride at 88th and

Sheridan. So it's not terribly farther and they have ample capacity. Last time I checked, it's all the same as you would remember. So that would be one thing I could encourage you to do, especially if the walk from Wewatta to Chestnut Pavilion and then to the stadium is a bit of a hurdle. Thank you.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much Director Cook. If you would like to get in the queue to ask a question, we invite you to push *3 and that will get you in the queue. *3 and you can ask director Cook a question. We're going to go up next to Jonathan. Jonathan, go ahead.

Jonathan: Hi, I was just wondering with all the buses and transportation, well mainly the buses because I know like the chain things like electric and stuff. But I was just wondering how all this affects climate change. It's like pollution and all that with so many buses around getting so many rides a day, a year and all that. I was just wondering how that affects the climate change and pollution.

Bill Sirois: Jonathan, thank you very much for your question. This is Bill Sirois, senior manager of Transit Oriented Communities. That's a great question. We look at in terms of climate change, in terms of trying to reduce our reliance on fossil fuel vehicles and providing people other options to get around besides getting around their car by themselves. I think that's a big thing that transit does. Again, we are working on ways to make that even better and more efficient. I think you outlined the fact of looking at electric buses. That's something that's on our top of mind.

We are working with that. We currently have a fleet of 36 electric buses on the 16th Street Mall that we're looking to implement that on some of our fixed route service here in the near future. Again, we'll be looking at that over time. But again, it's really important to think about this in terms of ways to give people options to kind of not always use their car because we think that, that helps with our reliance on fossil fuel vehicles and then we can reduce that reliance if we can look at other options to get around.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you, Bill. We're going to ask you a question now. So get ready. This is through our live electronic polling and the question that we'd like to ask. 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 four for very dissatisfied and we'll share the results with you in just a couple of minutes. We're going to go up next to Christine. Christine, go ahead. Christine, are you with us?

Caller Christine: Oh, sorry. I was answering the poll and it timed me out. So, yes. Hi. Thank you for doing this tonight. I do have a question about, and you kind of briefed on it the bell situations on the trains. But my concern is mostly the sounding of the bells, the horns at the actual stops themselves. They actual where the train stops. I live a good maybe block away from the Sheridan stop and I can hear the bells clearly inside my house. So, I just want to know is there a way to, if you're

going to expand on the West side, but to bring that more East and hit every stop and turn those bells down at the stations, that would be very helpful.

Shelley Cook: Hi Christine. This is Shelley and yes, that's the idea and I didn't make that clear. So thank you for asking that clarifying question. The idea is to try it out at one or two stops. The first one being the Private stop and then another one that is well suited to the trial. But then we would hope to see that moved to all the other stops that are in close proximity to homes. I mean, I'm saying stops. I mean crossing, sorry. So yes, I can't say what the timeframe will be, but it is something that they're working on. The intent is to actually expand that measure if we're able to move ahead with it to all the crossings where there are homes nearby.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much Director Cook. All right, we're going to go right up to Connie. Connie, go ahead.

Caller Connie: I've got a couple of questions to find out what can be done about it. One, I live on Carr Street and the 72 runs right along there. If you're going up Carr, not going back to 52nd, there's a stop on the property of Park View, but it's in a very bad spot because our tenants here do not allow for the buses to be able to get in to park. But there is another potential, real nice spot on just very short distance from where it's at, that could be used and it's still on the property. Then there's not one across the street from where that's at, for us to catch it to go up and we have to go almost two blocks up to get to Brentwood. Then they had one on Alison and they took it out and we were using that regularly. What is going to...?

Dave Menter: Hi David Menter and Connie, thank you very much for your question. Yeah, we are working on a several bus stops that still are yet to come on route 72. It was rerouted Route 72 as you know, just when the G Line was opened to be able to open up the route to more riders in the area of Arvada that didn't have service before. So we have a brand new area that Route 72 is now serving between Olde Town Station and where it goes back up to the old routing where it joins up at Independence Street and 58th Avenue. We are working on a couple of more stops are coming. One is in the eastbound route direction, there is a stop coming, on southbound Independence before the bus turns eastbound on 57th Avenue. Right near, I think there's an old cleaners in there.

We have been working with the city and we'd had a lot of bus stops to build with the new G Line and so that's coming. There's another bus stop coming eastbound that'll get constructed right just before Carr where the bus turns south on Carr from eastbound 57th to southbound Carr. In the northbound direction on Carr where you're talking for the route westbound direction, there is a long segment in there where the city of Arvada has yet to install sidewalks. So we are not likely to be able to have another stop added in the westbound route direction on northbound Carr anytime soon.

Dave Menter: Then there is another stop coming in the eastbound direction on eastbound 52nd Avenue before Route 72 then turns North on Alison. So we've got a couple of stops we're working on in there, we're aware of them and we thank you for your patience on that while we get those final. We have to get some documents together for easements or right of way documents to make sure that we are constructing those in the right spot. But they're coming and thank you so much for your question.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks Dave. Going to give you the results of the question that we asked you a few minutes ago. We asked you how satisfied are you with RTD services? 23% of you said very satisfied. 52%, somewhat satisfied, 17% said somewhat dissatisfied, and 8% say very dissatisfied. Thank you for your participation and we'll ask you a couple more questions a bit later. We're going to go now to Aaron. Aaron, go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Aaron: Hi. Thank you. I just remember years ago that there were plans for a Boulder Light Rail and I'll admit that this is probably a pretty basic question, because I've been out of the loop for a while. But I was just wondering what happened to those plans because I seem to remember there was even some construction happening?

Bill Sirois: Thanks for your question Aaron. Again, this is Bill Sirois. It's still on the books. We still have a plan. We did construct the first segment of that. It's called the B Line from Union Station to Westminster and that opened in 2016. But we have the remaining section from Westminster to Longmont that we do not currently have the funding for. So we're looking for that. It is in our plans to do and our board has made it a priority for us to kind of look for every different kind of way we can to fund that line. So we are working on that. But that's kind of where it stands right now.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you Bill. That's Bill Sirois, our senior manager of Transit Oriented Communities. We're going to go now to Dan. Dan, go ahead and ask your question. Hey there, Dan, you still there?

Caller Dan: Thanks Everybody.

Pauletta Tonilas: Yeah, go ahead.

Caller Dan: Oh yeah, just taking my phone off mute to make sure that everyone can hear me. So thank you for taking my call. I had a couple of questions regarding First and Last Mile, especially around the Arvada area. I know that First and Last Mile is definitely something that's been tackled by transit agencies across the United States, and that finding solutions to go ahead and get people at First and Last Mile is challenging at the best. So, I guess my question is, as far as bicycles, scooter, other infrastructure regarding the First and Last Mile around the Arvada stations in particular, are there any projects in place to go ahead and improve bike infrastructure at those stations? That's question number one.

Caller Dan: Question number two is have any programs been considered with maybe Denver B cycle, so that on the tail end of that ride going down to downtown Denver, you could maybe grab a B cycle rental for a couple of hours at the discount if you already used RTD? Then question number three is extending it to maybe first or last couple of miles. The Candela neighborhood and the neighborhoods kind of to the West of Indiana are a little bit underserved by RTD right now. I was wondering what plans might be in the works to go ahead and bring those communities some transit service, maybe even just to get to the Ward station? So, thank you.

Bill Sirois: Hi Dan. Thanks for your question. Again, this is Bill Sirois. Well, one of the things that I want to say is we just completed our First and Last Mile strategic plan, which really was our first time getting into a comprehensive look at First and Last Mile throughout the district. We had a lot of involvement from our local jurisdiction partners and looked at kind of ways that we can encourage people to access our stations. Some of your specific questions related to Arvada. I think you talked about bike and scooter access from some of the Arvada stations. Again, we're relying a lot and we work with local jurisdictions on the bike access is something we typically don't provide because again, it's usually through the local street system which is under control of local jurisdictions.

So we are constantly working with local jurisdictions to do that. I'll let Shelley in terms of, if she has any specific comments to any specific projects that Arvada may be doing, but I know that we are looking for any kind of partnerships we can. On the scooter side, I know that scooter have really been only focused on downtown Denver. Again, that's really the purview of the scooter companies themselves. We've been working with the city and County of Denver on that. But as to my knowledge, they have not proposed to expand beyond downtown, at least as of now.

Bill Sirois: That's not saying they can't do that in the future, but maybe that will be somewhere coming down the pike and we would work with again, work through the city of Arvada on that issue. On the B Cycle side, and Denver B Cycle is a nonprofit that is focused in the city of Denver. I know that they have a B Cycle light type organization in Boulder. Again, B Cycle right now actually is going through some major challenges associated with some of their operations because of their equipment is kind of becoming out of date and they don't have the money to necessarily replace it. So it's a challenge and they're getting competition from scooters and other folks that are providing the E bikes.

What I would say in terms of the evolution of that, I could see that becoming a private operation in the near future, in terms of how that would play out. Then that could be obviously expanded to some of the local jurisdictions. Then lastly, I'll touch on the extended beyond two miles, which is certainly something we can look at it from the bike side. I know Dave probably could even talk to about the bus side because buses is just something that we just started our new bus service to the G Line in August. Again, we weren't able to start that service until

August in terms of redirecting that. So we're going to be constantly looking at the ways that we can evolve that process as we move forward.

Dave Menter: Hi. This is David Menter. You had a question then about the bus service connecting to Ward Road, the Ward Road Rail Station. Wheat Ridge Ward Road Rail Station. Yeah, we do have a brand new service that goes out. The bus goes up from Wheat Ridge Ward Station up of Ward Road up and then turns West on 64th Avenue all the way to Quaker. So in the morning, there's 30 minutes service right now from 64th and Quaker, all the way down to the Ward Road Rail Station at half hourly intervals. In the middle of the day, it's hourly and then at rush hour in the evening, it's half hourly. It's brand new service.

Dave Menter: We've had a little couple of growing pains with this brand new route. We were a little optimistic on the running times when we put the service together. We're going to put a brand new schedule out in January for this route to make sure that it's more on time. So thanks for bearing with us. But in the morning, the early morning trips have been pretty good. The 5:30, 6:00, even 6:30 trip have been good connections and have been making their trips lately. The other trips later in the day, we are having trouble with. As I say, we'll put out a new schedule in January.

Shelley Cook: This is Shelley. So I'll just add one little bit that I know about with this city if you can hear me. The transportation committee for the city has made Last Mile and First Mile a priority for its efforts this year and in fact the city is looking to undertake a six month trial with scooters with the transportation networking company and see how that works. So that's something on the horizon. We can connect you with that committee. I know they'll be interested in input from residents. Then regarding [inaudible 00:25:41]. I agree and I'm hoping that as we move forward, especially as we're looking at our new system, our re-optimization of our system, that we can focus on that whole Northwest side because of the great amount of development that's taken place up there. So thank you very much for your call.

Pauletta Tonilas: This is a live telephone town hall meeting being hosted by the Regional Transportation District, RTD. Thank you for being on the line with us. We're here with RTD director Shelley Cook to answer your questions and to hear what we should be keeping in mind as we look to redesign mobility for the future. One thing that you may have heard a lot about recently is the shortage of our operators, both bus and rail operators that is causing us to have to drop some of our service because we don't have enough operators.

This has been a really tough situation and a lot of it has to do with the fact not only is it hard to hire operators, but it's tough to keep them when they're working six days a week. Director Cook, this has been something that we have done a lot of different strategies to try to hire operators and keep them. But we're now in a situation where we're wondering if a possibility is a temporary service reduction to match the level of service we can provide reliably with our

workforce. This is tough. The board is not crazy about the idea of a temporary service reduction, which is why we're going to be doing some outreach and we want to hear what people have to say about that.

Shelley Cook:

Yes, this is Shelley. As mentioned, the operator shortage is a big part of the reason for the drop runs that you have heard about or experienced recently, especially on the light rail lines. They've not so far, fortunately much impacted the commuter rail lines such as the G Line to the same extent anyway. We heard some testimony about this today actually in talking with members of the legislature and you know that unemployment is a historic low here in Colorado. We know that other companies, not just ours, construction and trucking companies, they're experiencing the same issue.

We need to fill something like 61 light rail operator positions and about 80 operator positions. So we feel like we're at a point where something has to be done and that could include redoubling. We've as a board, not made a decision on a service cut, but in order to bring relief to our employees and provide our riders with reliable service, the staff have proposed a temporary reduction of service that would align our service with the number of operators we have and sort of scaled back to that. It would allow RTD to provide service without requiring as much over time.

Shelley Cook:

Over the past few years, as many as 70% of our operators have had to work a mandated six day. That's very hard on a person. You can't spend time with your family, go to school functions and things like that. In addition, there's been some concerns raised about other issues of bathroom breaks and such. So we recognize that we may need to work on this, but we will be forward going ahead with service cuts. We will plan for a pretty active outreach with our stake holders, the communities, the union with the agencies involved in special services.

Then I think we would plan to discuss any proposed change with the communities as a whole. So, we may have to do it. We want to do it thoughtfully and in a way that addresses not just the mandatory overtime but other conditions and so forth. So really appreciate your call and the chance to talk that.

Pauletta Tonilas:

Thank you very much Director Cook. Okay, we're going to ask you another electronic polling question. So get ready to push the number on your keypad that is your preference for an answer. The question we'd now like to ask you is, what can RTD be doing better? Press one for improve reliability, press two for enhance bus rail connections, press three for provide better technology and apps, press four for improved safety and security on our system and we'll share those results soon. We're going up next to Laurie. Laurie, go ahead.

Caller Laurie:

Hello?

Pauletta Tonilas: Hello there Laurie, go ahead.

Caller Laurie: Oh, sorry about that guys. So you guys had just been touching base on it previously. So with the lack of operators and things like that, do you guys have any information on what routes might be scaled back? Is there any details that have been talked about yet with that?

Shelley Cook: Hi Laurie, this is Shelley and thanks so much for asking that because that would be a question. No, we don't have that at this point. There has been circulated a plan for outreach at this point, but beyond that and a tentative schedule for bringing things forward, we don't yet have information about what lines or what runs within a line might be cut. So nothing on that as of yet, but please stay tuned because we want to get input as well.

Pauletta Tonilas: The way that this is going to work is my team, the communications team is going to be going out and getting input. They'll be a large use of social media. We'll be doing a social media campaign. You can go right on social media and take an online survey. We'll be doing some pop up events and so we'll be doing various things. That input will then be presented to the board of directors and the board will then consider that as they give some direction to the staff. If the board is interested in pursuing a plan of a temporary service reduction, the staff will then put together this draft plan and present it to the board. That is pretty much how that process is going to work.

So please stay engaged with us because you'll be hearing more from us literally in like the next week because we're ready to jump right on this. Because this is a serious problem where we are having to drop runs, mainly light rail as director Cook said right now. So again, how do people feel about that and cutting back or scaling back service temporarily so that the service we do provide it's going to be reliable? So you can look for more of that. We're going to go up next to Sandy. So Sandy, go ahead.

Caller Sandy: Hello.

Pauletta Tonilas: Sandy, go ahead.

Caller Sandy: Even before that we didn't have enough drivers and everything like that, that it's kind of been covered on the miles afterwards to get anywhere if you're not right along the light rail line to go to work or do anything that even those little buses like the Broomfield that they had them in Greenwood Village were very unreliable and made it extremely difficult in the weather. As the one gentleman said about the football games and stuff, for those that are older, they're riding a bicycle or one of those little scooters. Because when I go downtown, that's just out of our realm to do that.

I think it's not a new problem. It's been the whole time. I haven't seen light rails adding any value. When I ride the bus to Greenwood Village or I ride the bus to

the airport, it the best is more efficient than the light rail. So, I can't say I'm a champion on it. Another thing especially downtown, with the homeless on it and taking the corners of it and bringing more homeless to Arvada, I'd like some safety things concerned on that, especially when you get off and you're having to go any distance away from the light rail.

Pauletta Tonilas: So, thank you very much for that Sandy. First of all, what I will say is safety is a main value for RTD and it is something that we take very seriously and we have various components of how our safety program works. One thing that does give some people a comfort level is our Transit Watch app. Our Transit Watch app is easy to download and if you keep it handy when you're walking or you're around an area of where you might feel a little intimidated, you can always text in or call through our Transit Watch app and it really is very effective. It goes right into our security command center.

Pauletta Tonilas: So that's just one thing and I don't know if anyone else has anything else to offer, but it is something that we are always looking at how to make the transit environment as safely as possible. Bill, do you have something you want to add?

Bill Sirois: Well, I was going to address your first question, which you were talking about the rail system and the First Last Mile and then kind of the bus connections and then the buses more efficient. I would agree with you on some parts in terms of the bus being more efficient. That's one of the reasons why again, as part of re-imagine that we are looking at ways to optimize our bus and rail service so that we can make it work better. So we are looking at that. We have also have just completed a bus rapid transit feasibility study, which again is part of our kind of look forward in terms of ways that we can improve connections within our system. So we will be looking at that and bus will be a big part of our future as we look to reimagine. Thanks.

Pauletta Tonilas: Okay, time now for the results of the polling question we asked you. We wanted to know what can RTD be doing better? 28% of you said improve reliability. 36% said enhance bus rail connections. 19% say provide better technology and apps and 17% say improved safety and security on the system. So thank you for that. We'll have one more question for you a little bit later and we're going to go up next to Ted. So Ted, go ahead.

Caller Ted: Yes, thanks for taking the call. Can you tell me when the northbound rail system will be completed and just exactly what route does it take?

Bill Sirois: Ted, this is Bill, which northbound area are you talking about? Are you talking the N Line to Thornton or are you talking about the B Line to Boulder?

Caller Ted: I think the Thornton.

Bill Sirois: The N Line is currently under construction. We have been working through some issues with the contractor. We are looking to open up next year. We

haven't set a target date yet, but is likely going to be May or August associated with our run board or change that we do three times a year. So we are focused on that and trying to focus that and to address all the things that we need to, to open up that corridor safely and efficiently.

Pauletta Tonilas: If you would like to get in the queue to ask a question to director Cook, press *3 on your keypad now and we'll get you in the queue. We're going to go now to Jim. Jim, go ahead.

Caller Jim: Hi guys. I don't use RTD at lunch, but whenever I have used it, it's been very good. I know you face a lot of issues, infrastructure funding and everything else, but hey, I appreciate it. I'm just glad you got the G Line opened Arvada. I've been on a board for Tiny Town. I've worked 30 years in IT. Gosh, if you give me a job, I'll be glad to come and work for you.

Shelley Cook: Hi, Jim. I'm sorry, I turned my phone off mute and I just wanted to say thank you very much for your call and we need to hear all kinds of comments, but it's always a pleasure to hear somebody who's pleased. I ride the G Line and the buses all around every day and very often that's the experience I see, is people are glad for the glad for the service and glad that it's there. So it was so nice to have you acknowledged that. Thank you very much.

Pauletta Tonilas: Press *3 if you'd like to get in the queue and we're going to go now to Ryan. Ryan, go ahead. Hey there Ryan, are you there?

Caller Ryan: Sorry about that. I was on mute.

Pauletta Tonilas: Oh yeah, go ahead.

Caller Ryan: Sorry. I live out in the Candelas area. So just a follow up question as far as the train goes. What's the timeline look like for potentially getting something out towards the Candelas area? Also, what does the actual timeline look like to get the train in and out from Boulder as well?

Shelley Cook: Hi there, Ryan. It's Shelley Cook. So, regarding Candelas, I don't think this is what you're asking, but just in case, no plan for a train out that direction unfortunately. But I do hope as we move forward in planning with the re-imagine effort and otherwise, that we can see added bus service and better rail or better connections as the survey showed people desire. But on the Boulder, that one is something that we've talked about just briefly here tonight. Within the current timeframe, it's something like 2050 or something where the currently could be built out.

Shelley Cook: But just this year, the board passed a resolution asking the staff to come back with a report with ideas about ways to move forward on that sooner than that. So they have done so and we are beginning to give them feedback about the kinds of things we'd like to see them to explore in order to do that in a narrow

time frame than what if things were left at the status quo it would be. So, it is definitely top of mind something we're still working on, but nothing I can offer you at this point. Thank you.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you Director Cook. All right. Terry, we're going to go ahead and you're up next.

Caller Terry: Yes. Good evening. I have a question on Highway 93, the GS runs between Golden and Boulder and it's my understanding that the 68th Avenue bus stop along Highway 93 has been discontinued by RTD. I would like to know what RTD is going to do to replace that somewhere. There is one bus stop out by Candelas at Highway 72 and 93 currently. But the bus service in Arvada, especially out west in West Arvada is very limited. To discontinue this bus stop at 68th and 93 is very problematic. I just was wondering what RTD has planned to do to help those, those residents out in West Arvada.

Shelley Cook: Is this is Terry Binder.

Caller Terry: Yes, it is.

Shelley Cook: So Terry, thank you for asking that question because I didn't realize that was you and I said we have to answer that. There is work underway to address that. We have the ability to put that bus pad back in place. You may know this, the city wants us to put it back in place at 64th Parkway and Highway 93 because there is a signalized intersection there. It's much safer. There's some curb gutter and sidewalk already in place. So with the city we're talking with the school district about the possibility of using some of the parking there at the North Area Athletic Complex or at some other location nearby for folks who are using that park or that who would be using that bus stop again. So thank you very much for bringing that up.

Caller Terry: You're welcome.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much director Cook and thank you Terry. Sharon, you are up next. Go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Sharon: Hi Shelley. This is Sharon from Adams County. I want to thank you first for being a wonderful representative. I'm curious, what is the roadblock to hiring for RTD?

Shelley Cook: Sharon, thank you very much for asking that. It's something that I've had other people, so I don't think it's too well known and other folks may chime in. But my understanding is it's a combination of things. It's a very good economy where the unemployment rate is at record lows. So people have other options. You've got new circumstances. This came up today as well. Anybody who's a driver needs to get a CDL who's working for RTD and they fall under federal rules that require drug tests. So, Colorado being a state where marijuana is legalized, the sense is that that has constrained the number of people who will apply because

they have to be able to pass a drug test. As you may know, the marijuana stays in your system long after you're impaired. It's not something that you can test for the next morning and be cleared on. So that has had an effect.

Shelley Cook: The problem has spiraled to the point where because we have a shortage, we've had a require drivers to work extra shifts every week, simply to maintain the service that we've committed to. Once people become aware of that, also if they're less senior, they have to work split shifts very often. So it's combination of a very good economy with a lot of options, assertive winnowed down pool of applicants. Then finally, people who once we can hire them, they find it difficult with family life to sustain that kind of a schedule over time. Now, I will tell you that we are looking at all kinds of means of improving our retention and not just that way.

Shelley Cook: We offer \$2,000... I'm trying to find my page here... \$2,000 signing bonus. There's training provided, you don't need a CDL, so we get you all the training needed to get that Commercial Driver's License. The starting pay was hiked quite a bit last year. It's now at 19.98 an hour and it goes to 25.30 an hour to start. That depends upon bus versus rail I think. It remains an attractive job, but I think given the demands of mandated overtime, the split shifts and the availability of other employment, that's where we find ourselves right now. So thank you so much for asking that.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks director Cook. We still have about 15 minutes left of this telephone town hall. So we're going to try to get in as many folks as we can. So we're going to go up next to Mike. Mike, go ahead.

Caller Mike: Hello?

Pauletta Tonilas: Yes Mike, my go ahead.

Caller Mike: Yes, I'm another rider on the GS and I know Terry well myself. I promised I would help support her activism on this, but I don't want to be a broken record. It's of a huge disadvantage for me and all the riders that used to get on at that stop to now have to drive three and a half miles up a steep curvy roads sometimes and [inaudible 00:46:57] weather for a bus that went right by where we used to sit. So you don't have to build another bus stop at 64th and go through all of that be, maybe you have to stand up to the city of Arvada and say, "We're putting the signs back where they were because there's parking there for that."

Usually about 10, 15 cars, we'll park right off the highway and then with 30 yards where the bus goes right past. I've been riding it for 14 years and there's actually a community of people, it's mostly lifers and every one of us has to find something else to do because you took the sign out of the ground so the construction could go on across the street and now you say, we can't put it back in the ground. I want common sense. I want people still goes to bureaucrats.

Well that's you and the larger issue here is, can we have common sense? Put the sign right back where it was, let us park like we always did. We don't have to drive three and a half miles up a steep, curvy sometimes dangerous road.

Caller Mike: By the way, the parking at 72nd and 93 is death defying. I take my life in my hands every time I try to get my car out of there because I'm going south, I've got to cross all the north bounders, zooming up pass there and then the other people come in the other way that way, and that you have to have a race car. I have a pretty fast car. I couldn't do it.

Shelley Cook: Listen for all the reasons that you're talking about, this is a top priority to me and I want to make it clear that it's not the city of Arvada that's preventing it from going back in at 68. It's an ADA requirement. When that stop was in place, it was a grandfathered stop. It didn't meet the requirements for ADA, but once there was some construction nearby that removed it temporarily, no longer qualified. So then it became a question of where can we put it back in. Arvada has been our ally in this. I don't want you to think that they have been anything, but and have been right there with us helping to get it reinstated.

Shelley Cook: So first of all, I agree with you about the undesirability of the intersection of 72 and 93. I recognize how difficult it is to get out of there and unsafe and it's a top priority to get it put back in place 64th Parkway. We have real allies in the city and also working with the school districts. So thank you.

Pauletta Tonilas: Okay, we are going to go to our last electronic polling question. We want to ask you a question and the question that we are looking for from you is, other than telephone town hall meetings, like this one right here, how else do you see yourself staying engaged with us? Press one for use the interactive online engagement tool on the RTD website. Press two for read emails or e-newsletters. Press three for attend a public meeting. Press four, excuse me, for take short surveys at stations or transit centers. We'll share those results in just a couple of minutes. We're going to go to Sarah. Sarah, go ahead.

Caller Sarah: This is Sarah.

Pauletta Tonilas: Sarah, go ahead.

Caller Sarah: Something that I'm really kind of concerned about. I have a wheelchair and it's a rather big power chair. The spaces that we can sit in or wheel in would be made a little larger so to speak, because that little tiny area at the front or back of the bus, is not always enough room.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much Sarah. One thing I will offer is on our light rail trains, we recently went through a holistic change in every one of our light rail cars where we made more space available for people with mobility devices. We took out seats in the light rail cars, a section of seats and made those more wide open areas for people with mobility devices. One little quick story, I'll tell you, when

we were in the process of the construction of the A Line to DIA and the G Line to Arvada and Wheat Ridge, when we were going to be implementing commuter rail cars in our system for the first time ever, we actually did an outreach process and asked people their feelings and got input about the manufacturing of the rail cars, certain features.

Pauletta Tonilas: One really neat thing happened where folks from the disabled community came onto this mock model of the commuter rail car and gave us some very valuable feedback about people needing to maneuver with a wheelchair on the train cars. We actually were able to modify the interior design of those commuter rail cars to accommodate this, which I think is a really neat way of how we worked the community into this process. So those are just some of the things that we have done. Clearly there's always more that we can do to enhance how we can make our system more advantageous for people to ride who have mobility devices. Bill, do you have something else?

Bill Sirois: Well, Pauletta, I was just going to say that, we work a lot with the disability community and we have our own committee of disability advocates and individuals that we work with on a regular basis to deal with issues like you've talked about. I can just say on the bus side that, we have had some conversations over the years about things like competing issues with strollers and other things on the bus that we've been able to work out. I do think I agree with you. In some cases there is a little bit of a narrow space, but again, fortunately there is a lot that we can do. We're working with buses that are kind of certified for ADA accessibility and we're working through that process. But again, we're always looking for ways to reach out and work with the disability community to ways to improve, to way to get access to our vehicles.

Pauletta Tonilas: The results of our final electronic polling question on how you see yourself keeping involved with us through everything, but especially through our re-imagined RTD effort where we're looking to you to be involved and give us input on how we should be designing the mobility of the future. The results of this, we asked you, how would you stay involved? 17% say that you'll use the interactive online engagement tool on our website. 38% say you'll read emails or e-newsletters, 28%. Say you'll attend a public meeting and 17% say taking short surveys at stations or transit centers. We have about five minutes left. So we're going to go to Dan and we ask you to keep it brief please Dan.

Caller Dan: I will. Follow up to the question on the train to Boulder. Is it possible to deal with diesel rail and if so, have those talks been started with the railway companies in order to do a diesel rail solution instead of building out a full electric solution?

Bill Sirois: Dan, that's a great question. Actually, that is the plan. The plan is to put diesel rail up to Boulder and Longmont. The plan is not currently to extend the, what we call EMUs, electric trains from Westminster unfortunately. But we are working with the railroads and we are trying to work out issues. We have some

challenges in this corridor because we're actually sharing track. So it's a little different than our other corridors that we don't ever own exclusive track to use. So it's a little bit more challenging in terms of working with the railroads to actually get the project implemented. Thanks.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you, Bill. All right, we're going to go now to Matt. Matt, go ahead.

Matt: I ride the 100 pretty regularly going up and down and Kipling. On Sundays they start it again and it only goes from the Federal Center [inaudible 00:55:43]. Is that due to a driver shortage or lack of ridership or what?

Dave Menter: Hi Matt. This is David Menter, service planning. We were really pleased with the start of the G Line to be able to start back up that limited Sunday service. We started it between just those two points that you mentioned, Arvada Ridge Station and Federal Center Station because we just needed to start small. Anyway, so we needed to start small, but we will be looking at our rider data to see how it's going. We've had couple other people that have mentioned the same thing, riders saying, boy, they'd like to go just a little bit farther.

We're starting small. We're going to be looking at the data and there's a chance that maybe in the future should funds be available, and that's a big stretch at some point, maybe but this might be something that could merit a little bit more service on Sunday at some point pending funds being available again. So thank you for your question.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much. We are almost out of time for our live telephone town hall meeting. I am going to turn it over to director Shelley Cook to close this out. Director Cook.

Shelley Cook: Thank you Pauletta and thanks to everybody who participated or just listened in. I wanted to tell you that everything we do is to serve the public and we want to hear from you about ways we can do it better, where we can do it better. Part of what we'll be doing going forward is making that specific request to hear from you about our re-imagined effort, to hear from you about any temporary service curtailments. So please do stay engaged and keep my number and my email in mind, shelly.cook@rtd-denver.com and (720) 935-9224. Feel free to call me. If I don't know the answer, I can get back in touch with you. Just wanted to say thanks so much for being part of our telephone town hall tonight.

Pauletta Tonilas: Director Shelly Cook, thank you very much. Folks, what I will tell you is your RTD board member works very hard for you. She is very involved and very engaged, asks great questions. So that's something that we can all be proud of. Thank you very much for being on the line with us tonight and good night.