

RTD Access Live – Doug Tisdale
October 10, 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 of RTD happenings and also a new effort that we're just kicking off, Reimagine RTD. We're taking a look at how we provide service and design the mobility of the future.

Pauletta Tonilas: More on Reimagine RTD in just a few minutes. Joining me this evening is RTD board chair Doug Tisdale. Also sitting in to answer your questions are Jessie Carter, manager of service planning and scheduling and Doug Monroe managing of quarter planning. We're here to listen to you folks and to answer your questions. It's all about you. Your opinions do matter to us. They're very important to us. This is your opportunity to share your thoughts, ask us your questions about our service, tell us about concerns that you have or why we are looking to reimagine the future as it relates to you.

Pauletta Tonilas: If this is your first time on a telephone town hall, this is how it works. To ask a question, you just press *3 on your keypad, and you'll be transferred to someone who will take down some information and get you in the queue. Then just stay on the line and listen to the conversation. When I call your name, then please ask your question live. Please keep it brief because we want to get to as many of you as possible this evening.

Pauletta Tonilas: We also will be getting some information from you through a live telephone town hall polling opportunity where you'll use your keypad to press the number that corresponds to your answer. So if you want to get into the queue to ask us a question or give us a comment you can start by pressing *3 now.

Pauletta Tonilas: RTD has been celebrating our 50th anniversary this year. It's been a big year for us. Also, this week we're celebrating the 25th anniversary of Light Rail here in Denver, Colorado at RTD. We opened our central quarter Light Rail line back in 1994 from I-25 and Broadway to 30th and Downing, so we're celebrating Light Rail here, our 50th anniversary overall. RTD was created in 1969 by the Colorado General Assembly. In those 50 years, RTD has grown right along with the Denver Metro area. We're a region of three million people. RTD service area is over 2300 square miles. That's the largest service area of any transit agency in the country. We cover 40 cities in eight counties, and we offer nearly 100 million trips or rides a year.

Pauletta Tonilas: We're one of only a few agencies that has a publicly elected board of directors, and this week we're starting our board of director telephone town hall. We're so pleased tonight to have our board chair and the district H director from the board of directors, our Chair, Doug Tisdale. Chair, it's been an incredible year so far as we celebrate our 50th anniversary. We've had a lot to celebrate.

Doug Tisdale: Well, thank you very much. I appreciate the opportunity to speak with you and with all of the folks who are dialing in tonight. Yes, it's been an incredibly busy

year for the RTD this year. In addition to celebrating the 50 years of moving people that you're talking about, we had the G line opening earlier this year That's the gold line. That was the long awaited commuter rail line that goes from Denver Union Station out to Arvada and Wheat Ridge. In fact, we've opened six transit corridors in the past three years.

Doug Tisdale: Other than when the legacy systems were building themselves in New York, Boston, and Chicago and so forth, no agency has had that kind of vibrancy with new corridors as we have had. In addition to that, we put in our new fare structure. I know there are some people who are always concerned about fares. I'll tell you that our fares we believe are pretty much commensurate with all of the other systems around the country.

Doug Tisdale: But what's important and what we were able to do was to begin a new income based fare program. It's called Live. That began this summer. Now that program offers a 40% discount to riders who are at or below 185% of the federal poverty level, so people who qualify for that go through the Colorado State benefits site that's known as PEAK. They sign up for that. They can get that 40% discount.

Doug Tisdale: But in addition to that, something that I think is really significant, we now have a 70% youth discount for riders who are six to nineteen years old. So it covers most of our student population. And bear in mind too, if they're under six they ride for free. I think we want to let people understand that, and, of course, we continue our 50% discount for age advantaged individuals. Those are people who are 65 or older along with people with disabilities and Medicare recipients. We have a pretty vibrant discount program that's available.

Doug Tisdale: In addition to the opening I mentioned, one of the things that we did was we did the extension of our E, F and R rail lines. That's the extension that we have called the SERE, the Southeast Rail Extension, down through Lone Tree. That's been hugely successful, very popular. In the meanwhile, not to rest on our laurels, I've been talking with stakeholders about the possibility, let's say, of replicating the success of the SERE for the Southwest Rail Extension. I call that the SWRE. The SWRE, the Southwest Rail Extension, would go from Mineral on down to Lucent between the two hospitals in Highlands Ranch, University Hospital and the Children's Hospital.

Doug Tisdale: Those are some of the things that we've been doing physically, but we've been doing things that are quite innovative as well. Some of you have heard about the 61 AV pilot project. That's an autonomous vehicle. That's a shuttle bus that doesn't have an operator. It takes people along a guided path and can deliver them safely. We tested it out at the Panasonic Innovations Center out by the airport, and that was very well received, and we're looking at trying to do an expansion on that now and doing another pilot at the University of Denver next year if we can get a grant for that.

Doug Tisdale: But then let's talk about how people connect with us and how they want to do things. One of the things that people like to do is to say, "Well, can I use an Uber to get to a train station? Can I use a Lyft to get from a train station? I have this transit app that I really am very interested in using because it gives me all this information. What do you do with that?"

Doug Tisdale: Now we are listed on Uber and Lyft as a transportation alternative. You can go to Uber and Lyft, and you can find out where the transit opportunities are and on Uber you can actually buy your ticket for RTD. And if you go to the transit app, you can buy your ticket there too.

Doug Tisdale: We've had all kinds of things that we've been doing. We continue to believe that we can successful move people and innovate for another 50 years with our continued emphasis on and commitment to communication, collaboration, and cooperation.

Pauletta Tonilas: Mr. Chair, thank you very much. That is RTD Chair Doug Tisdale. This is a live telephone town hall meeting being hosted by RTD. If you would like to get into the queue to ask us a question or give us a comment, press *3 on your keypad right now, and we will get you in the queue. Now, Chair, you were talking about innovation and all that we've been doing on that front. We also have FasTracks on our mind. Our FasTracks, which we've been implementing since January of 2005 after voters passed the measure 58%, 42% back in 2004, has been a massive endeavor. It has been something that has really changed the face of the Denver Metro area. While we've opened up many lines and made many improvements, there are still four FasTracks projects that we do not have the funds currently to complete.

Pauletta Tonilas: This is on a lot of people's minds. This is something RTD would love to be able to complete, but, again, there are some challenges with this, and it's going to take a lot of thinking and a lot of money to get these projects done. Right?

Doug Tisdale: There's no question about that in terms of the additional funds that we need. People say, "Now, wait a minute. We raised our taxes so that you could build FasTracks, so why haven't you completed FasTracks yet?" Well, first of all we are about 70% complete on the total project, and we have invested over 5.6 billion dollars, that's billion with a B. The original estimate that we had for doing FasTracks was right around two billion dollars or so, so we spent well over twice that we thought. There were a lot of reasons. A lot of things got more expensive. We went through the great recession. A number of things came up. We provided commuter rail trains instead of light rail trains and so forth, but we've spent a lot of money.

Doug Tisdale: For every dollar that we have put into FasTracks, there's been a measurable \$4 economic impact. Think about that. We've got almost 25 billion dollars of impact from the money that we have invested. We do have those unfinished quarters remaining however, and that's the remainder of the Northwest Rail out

to Boulder and Longmont. That's the most significant one in terms of its length and significance. That's the continuation of the B line. We have the last six miles of the North Metro Rail. We'll be opening up the North Metro Rail line next year out to 124th. But we have another six miles that we want to do out to State Highway Seven. Then, of course, as we mentioned earlier the SWRE we have the short extension on the southwest rail line, and there's an extension on the central rail as well. I promise you, no one, no one wants to complete FasTracks more than RTD, but the sad reality is we're going to have to identify some additional funding in order to get that done because of all the circumstances that obtain and some of which I just mentioned.

Pauletta Tonilas: Mr. Doug Tisdale, he is our Chair for the RTD board of directors. Thank you very much. The FasTracks projects that are remaining are going to be considered and looked at and analyzed as part of our Reimagine RTD effort, and we're going to talk about that in just a minute, but we're going to go right now to our first caller, and that is Irene. Irene, go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Irene: Hi, Doug. This is Irene. I have a question. First of all, I'd like to congratulate you for 25th anniversary for the Highlands Ranch Trail System. I was there for the opening. It's great. I use it constantly. I have a question. You mentioned earlier about the senior discount. Is that happening right now, and how can I go about it?

Doug Tisdale: You know, thank you very much for the question, Irene. We appreciate your participating with us. That's one of the easiest things in the world to do. If you've got a driver's license or your Medicare card, that's all you need. If you are age advantaged, if you are 65 years or older, you get that discount. You don't have to sign up anywhere with anyone. You don't need a special card. You just indicate that you are, in fact, age advantaged, and you get that 50% discount.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks very much Chair Tisdale. We're going to go now to Marion. Marion, you are next up. Go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Marion: Hi there. Congratulations on your 50th anniversary and your 25th anniversary. My husband and I enjoy taking the Light Rail to the theater, but we live in Greenwood Village, and our station is the Orchard Station. It's the E line that does not run past 8:30. The shows that we go to extend past 8:30, and we are not able to take the Light Rail to Orchard Station. We do take the H line to Southmoor, but it would be a delightful convenience to be able to get off at Orchard. Is there any possibility of a later E line for theater goers?

Doug Tisdale: That's an excellent question. Thank you very much for that question. I've got tell you, I've had a number of people ask me about this because my district that I was elected to is district H, and that consists of Cherry Hills Village, Greenwood Village, Centennial, Littleton, Columbine Valley, and Highlands Ranch. I've had that question. We've made some adjustments to some of these, but I'm going to

turn it over to the other Doug now and let him give you some further responses to that.

Doug Monroe: That is the F line that you're thinking of actually that runs from Central Loop downtown out to Lincoln or Ridgeway Station there. That F line does only tend to operate during the day, so it's not there when those shows get out. It's difficult to operate a rail system with trains going from everywhere to everywhere especially as ridership drops off in the evening. We rely on transfers between our lines at those times of day. At that time of the day when you get out of the theater if you are taking the Light Rail you can take the H line down to the I-25 and Broadway Station from the theater district convention center station and then transfer to the E line, which runs all day and all night on the Southeast Corridor there. That'll drop you off at the Orchard Station.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks very much to both of the Dougs. We appreciate that. Next up, we're going to go to Kyle. Kyle, go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Kyle: Hi, this is Kyle. Mr. Chairman, I just have a concern about the constant operator shortage RTD is currently experiencing. I've noticed a significant uptick within the last month and a half about this. What is RTD doing about this? Furthermore, I want to address the constant tardiness of RTD rail lines. Do we have any implements or anything like that that are alleviating these particular shortcomings?

Doug Tisdale: Thank you for the question, Kyle, because I really do want to address the issue of operator shortages. Yes, I think you're right that in the last month and a half, two months, we have noticed a number of dropped runs solely by virtue of operator shortages. We are working very hard to find operators. It's a tough situation right now because there's so low unemployment. We don't have a lot of people who are looking for work. We are reaching out, and I have spoken with our general manager and our chief operating officer relative to this, and we have programs that we are instituting at community college of Aurora, at Community College of Denver, at Arapahoe Community College, and other institutions of higher education trying to get them to work with us in creating a program where we might be able to train students to come on as bus and Light Rail operators.

Doug Tisdale: We hope that by doing that we'll have an increased opportunity for drivers to come on. It's been a significant issue for us, and I really definitely appreciate your observation relative to that. Quite challenging, no question, but we are working on it. Believe me, we are very aware of it. In terms of the second part of your question relative to tardiness on trains, on the whole we are really very good at our on-time ratios for the Light Rail. We are in the neighborhood of 95 plus percent on time. Anywhere from 90 to 95 depending upon which line, which time of day because I'm averaging over the entire system, of course. We're very happy that we are at that.

Doug Tisdale: There are always situations that arise that will make a train run late. We do have the opportunity for you to go online to our website, RTD-Denver.com, RTD-Denver.com, to sign up for rider alerts where you can get specific information. Also, as I said the transit app on your smartphone does a very good job of telling you when exactly the trains will arrive at your station. They get real time communication of the trains on that app. That's something that's very useful.

Doug Tisdale: Thank you again for your question, and trust me, we're working on it.

Pauletta Tonilas: One other thing that I will add to that is with low employment comes challenges because the pool of people looking for work, of course, is much smaller, and also companies that rely on truck drivers to deliver goods, they're having a challenge, and even CDOT, our partner who is the State Department of Transportation, they're having challenges with getting enough snowplow operators across the state. This is having an impact on a lot of people who rely on drivers or operators, and we're doing all we can. No one wants to drop a trip especially us, and we're doing all we can, folks, to try to get more operators.

Pauletta Tonilas: If you or someone you know is looking for a great opportunity to come and work for a great agency, you can start out at \$20 an hour, maybe even more depending on your level of experience, great benefits, and we'd love for you to be part of the RTD family.

Pauletta Tonilas: Chair Tisdale, we are launching an effort called Reimagine RTD. This is substantial for us to take a holistic look at how we provide service. What should RTD be? How should we provide that service in the future so that it reflects how people want and need to get around the Metro area in the future? This is significant, and the reason we're holding this series of telephone town halls is because we want to hear from the people. Their voice is going to be very important to us through this process. I know you're anxious to hear what people have to say.

Doug Tisdale: Pauletta, that's very well said because it is important that this is a collaborative process. Remember I said communicate, collaborate, cooperate. We want to communicate with people, but more importantly we want people to communicate with us to say what are they looking for. What do they want to see in a transportation system? Transportation has evolved. It will never stop evolving. That's the nature of human progress. It evolves, and we have to evolve with it. That means that sometimes we have to think outside the box. Sorry to use a tired expression. But we have to think outside of our normal comfort levels and push past the past and think about and focus on the future. We've made a lot of progress over the past 50 years. No question about that.

Doug Tisdale: We also recognize there's a lot more to do. Consider this as one factor. By 2050, the population in the Denver Metro region is expected to grow by more than 30%. Now more or less what that means is we're about three million people in the RTD right now, in the Regional Transportation District, three million people.

That's the size of the State of Utah. We expect that by 2050 to be over four million people. We have to address this changing landscape of transportation to provide these integrated transit options and better to connect people to where they want to go and where they need to go.

Doug Tisdale: In order to do that we're not going to sit in an ivory tower and try to come up with what we think are the best academic solutions if you will. We want to hear from you, from everyone who's listening to my voice right now. Forgive the cold because I have a bit of a cold that I'm fighting, and that's why. I may sound a little nasally, and I apologize for that.

Doug Tisdale: But we want to hear from you as we kick off this Reimagine RTD and hear what you have to say. It is an opportunity for all of us collectively, collaboratively to optimize our current and our future services, to evaluate our available resources and our capacity, and to help determine how all of these and your input will come together to meet our regional needs. So we're doing a number of things in regard to that. We're hosting events like this one, these telephone town halls. We're doing listening sessions. We're doing public meetings. We're doing focus groups. We're conducting surveys. All of this over the next two years to have as broad an outreach as possible. We don't just want to hear from our frequent riders, we want to hear from occasional riders, and we want to hear from nonriders.

Doug Tisdale: I always tell nonriders when they say, "Well, why should I give you my opinion? I don't ride. It doesn't matter to me." I say, "Oh, no. It matters to you a great deal because if you want to have less congestion on the road while you're out there in your single occupancy vehicle, you want to make sure you work with us so we put more people on the buses and trains." We want to engage the youth. We want to engage the age advantaged population. Anyone who wants to share with us, we're listening. How can you do this you might ask? I'm glad you brought that up.

Doug Tisdale: You can visit the Reimagine RTD website. Go to www.rtd-denver.com/reimagine. Just remember the word reimagine. Go to the rtd-denver.com website. You can type in Reimagine in the search box or you can do slash or stroke reimagine, and you will find more information about all of this.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much, Chair Tisdale. We're going to get some input from you right now, so we're going to go to our first live electronic polling question where you're going to push the number on your keypad that corresponds with your answer. The question is, how satisfied are you with RTD services? Press one for very satisfied. Press two for somewhat satisfied. Press three for somewhat dissatisfied. Press four for very dissatisfied. We will share with you the results in just a couple of minutes.

Pauletta Tonilas: Right now, we're going to go to Dan. Dan, you are in the queue next up. Go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Dan: I'm very interested in the Highlands Ranch and the Southwest extension that you were talking about. It seems to be on indefinite hold, and you just indicated that there is a funding that that is one project that has fallen through the cracks as far as having available funding. What, if anything, can be done? Highlands Ranch is not an incorporated area, so it's difficult to go to one's mayor and pound on their desk so to speak. I would love to see it happen in our lifetimes.

Doug Tisdale: I thank you so much for that question. Believe it or not I'm telling everyone in the room here, I did not set you up to ask that. I will tell you that on September the 25th, so just two weeks ago, I had a meeting of stakeholders that we held at University Hospital Highlands Ranch. At that time we had elected leaders and business leaders and community leaders from Highlands Ranch, Douglas County, Arapahoe County, Littleton, Englewood, Highlands Ranch Community Association, and the rest come together and principally so that we could have everyone here firsthand the success story of the Southeast rail extension.

Doug Tisdale: You see, what happened with the Southeast rail extension, the E, F and R line down to Lone Tree there was that City of Lone Tree and Douglas County and Coventry Development said, you know, this thing's not going to be built for a long time unless somebody comes forward and helps by raising additional funds so that we can create what they call in transportation biz the local match. So we got Lone Tree, Douglas County and Coventry Development to come up with about a 22 million dollar local match. That was matched by RTD. We went to the Federal Transit Administration and said, "This is what we've done. We've pulled this together. We moved to the very top of the list, and we got the additional funding to build the Southeast rail extension. That extension opened up 25 years earlier than it was scheduled to open because we had that.

Doug Tisdale: So I said to the folks at the Southwest rail extension, at the SWRE stakeholders meeting, I said, okay, we can do the same thing. We can extend from Mineral across 470 and end up at that station at Lucent Boulevard, a station that sits right at the front door of Children's Hospital and next to University Hospital, and we can create that. But we need to get some participation from our partners down here, our stakeholders in order to give us that capacity to be able to create that local match, go back to the FDA, move ourselves up on the list, and get some special funding for it so that that can happen because without some innovative creative solutions such as that. We are talking well over 20 years away from being able to create that.

Doug Tisdale: So at the end of the meeting they said, "Okay, what are the next steps?" I said, "Well, I have pledge cards at your places. I expect all of you to leave and fill out that pledge card and tell us how much you're going to contribute." It was only half a joke because the point is, yeah, you don't have a mayor you can yell at in Highlands Ranch, but you do have Douglas County commissioners that you can speak with in this regard. You do have folks in the City of Littleton and in the City of Englewood who want to see that too because once we have that built the pressure on the Mineral station and the Littleton station for their parking,

which is just awful. Those are two of the most occupied park and rides that we have in the entire system.

Doug Tisdale: We have 88 park and rides throughout the RTD in the Metro area. Of those, the busiest ones, the most crowded are Mineral and Littleton Station. That needs to be fixed. We need to be able to provide good service to Highlands Ranch, and that's one way we can do it.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much, Chair Tisdale. You know, the whole concept of a public private partnership to get mega projects funded is really the way a lot of projects are actually going to happen these days. Obviously we don't have enough funding anywhere in this country to do all of the transportation improvements that we need, and there is not a lot of confidence right now in the availability of federal funding, federal loans and grants, so what can we do as community members to pool funds to get this projects done? That's one of the things that our board has been looking at and partnering with our stakeholders.

Pauletta Tonilas: I'm going to ask Jessie Carter who is one of the veteran service planners at RTD. Jessie, to do a project like Reimagine RTD where we're looking at redesigning how we provide service and the mobility of the future, this is no small feat with the things that we have to take into consideration to do this. Tell us about some of that.

Jessie Carter: Well, I have to agree with you, it is no small feat. As you've mentioned before the RTD districts is over 2,300 square miles of fixed route bus service, nonfixed route bus service that we call flex ride, and rail service that's offered throughout the district, so reimagining it is a very tough concern for sure. However, we are actually excited about the whole planning prospect of looking at this and talking with the community about it and taking a look at our services and seeing where they're working and where they're not and what changes we can actually make.

Jessie Carter: We are absolutely excited about the challenge of this planning project.

Pauletta Tonilas: Jessie, thank you very much. I'm sorry folks I forgot to take off the mute button. Jessie, I want to talk a second about what we do to kind of modify or tweak our service three times a year every year through our service changes where we make the changes that will make the system operate better and be more efficient. This is an effort that we do and that's even no small feat because these sometimes get to be difficult decisions.

Jessie Carter: Well, Pauletta, I'd like to think of them as great fun in that they do offer some challenges in looking at the limited resources that we may have and the ways that we can actually cure some of the on time performance issues that we face on a day to day basis. However, as you mentioned we do offer service changes in January, May, and August. We do that because we see a large change in the level of ridership each year with school going out in May and coming back in

August. During that whole process we also have a community outreach process that we do offer to the public to come in and tell us about the service changes at least six weeks prior to the time that we go back to the board for a vote. I'd like to invite anybody who is available or would like to participate in our public outreach process to please pay attention to the notifications that are on the buses and light rail about when those service change meetings are occurring so that you can come and participate.

Pauletta Tonilas: Yeah, Jessie. Sometimes people will say well, jeez, my input isn't going to make a difference anyway, but we actually do listen to the feedback and people come up with some great points and ideas, and we actually do make some changes and tweaks to what then goes to the board as a final plan, right?

Jessie Carter: Absolutely. We do have a somewhat transparent process. One of the things that's great about our having an elected board is that the processes that they go through are something you can actually witness and actually take a look at when you go onto the board website. Each service change start out as a proposal and then goes to a final change. In the final change we actually call out and list the things that have changed as a result of the public process, as a result of additional analysis. If you go onto the board website, you can actually take a look at some of those changes.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you. That's Jessie Carter. He is manager of service planning and scheduling. Okay, we're going to give you the results of the electronic survey that we did with you just a little bit ago. The question was, how satisfied are you with RTD's services? Twenty percent of you said very satisfied, 39% somewhat satisfied, 28% somewhat dissatisfied, and 13% said very dissatisfied. We thank you for the feedback. We do listen to it. It does mean something to us. That's what we're on the call with you tonight.

Pauletta Tonilas: We're going to go back to take in some questions, and we're going to go to Ronald. Ronald, go ahead and ask your question. Hello Ronald, are you there? Okay. Ronald may have had to go off the line. Folks, if you have to also get off the phone, you can push *9, and you can leave us a message or a comment or what have you. Star nine if you have to leave the call. We're going to go now to Denine. Denine, go ahead.

Caller Denine: Hi. Thank you so much for this opportunity. I think this is awesome that you guys are reaching out to get some feedback. I've ridden the light rail on the west side for many years. My biggest pet peeve is as you were talking about earlier the lack of parking at Mineral, Littleton. So I usually end up driving into Denver because I go from station to station to try and find parking. Then it was really salt in the wound when you guys put up that you could go and purchase, register for a parking spot at Mineral or Littleton where on the east side they have these beautiful parking garages. They're lovely. I'm thinking, all of these years, why do we not have that? Then when you think about it you've got less ridership, less revenue, and then I just recently heard that you guys have

decreased some of the trains on the west side because of lack of ridership. It's like nobody has a place to park.

Caller Denine: If you're talking about how expensive it is to build out transportation down to Highlands Ranch, isn't it cheaper to build a three story parking garage on the west side, at least a three story? Because if you're not there by 7:00, you're not getting a spot, and it's a wasted trip.

Doug Tisdale: Well, I thank you very much for that question, Denine. Again, this is one of those things where I say I did not set up this call, so I want people to know I'm hearing this for the first time too. Yesterday I spent well over an hour with the mayor of Littleton and with the city manager of Littleton talking about the parking situation at the Mineral Station and the Littleton Station. We also talked about the SWRE, the Southwest Rail Extension as I mentioned earlier. But we talked about that, and we talked about the prospect of creating a paved lot over to the west side of the current paved lot that we have there and what other steps we can do to try to address that. There's a lot that we are looking into in that regard. As I said before, it is the busiest park and ride. Those park and rides down there are the busiest ones that we have in the entire system.

Doug Tisdale: In terms of further response, I'm going to turn it over Jessie and also he will talk to you about the trains because it's not that we've taken away trains over there. We've done some schedule adjustments. Let me let Jessie pick it up from there and thank you again for the question.

Jessie Carter: Thank you, Chair Tisdale. In looking at what you may be referring to as far as reduction of service, that would've been on the W line where we actually had reduction of service on weekend service. That was in the earlier part of the year. That was due to lack of ridership on the weekends. The W unlike the C and D lines doesn't see the level of ridership that we'd like to see during the time periods where we reduce the service down to every 30 minutes.

Jessie Carter: That's the reasoning behind it. However, I really can appreciate your concern about parking availability and the service in the southwest corridor. At this time I would like for you to give us a call. I wanted to ask you a little bit more about when you look for parking, where you're looking and what other consideration you're giving to perhaps using the bus to then connect to Mineral Station.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks very much, Jessie. We're going to take a question that came in online, and the question is being asked by Jennifer. Jennifer's question is, "Light rail trains are often so dirty compared to other state trains I've been on. What's being done to clean up the trash on the trains?" We actually have quite a great and robust cleaning process of our trains, and I'm a daily train rider, and I have to say I look for these things every day, and I've actually been very impressed at how clean our trains are. Yes, there will be some trash depending on the time of day. We do have cleaning that happens in the evening and periodically we have folks that will go on the trains when they're in the layover.

Pauletta Tonilas: Yeah, this is something that means a lot to us, the cleanliness and safety of our system. Those are priorities. Chair, do you want to weigh in at all on that pride that we take in our system?

Doug Tisdale: I absolutely would because I appreciate the question. It gives me the opportunity to say that I think on the whole we really do have very clean trains. Now, I recognize there may be circumstances when you get on and there's been someone who has left some trash or something, and that's a reality that we all face. But, no, every night we go through, and we clean those trains. They get a thorough cleaning. I forget the exact schedule now. They get a thorough cleaning and a washing of the seats on a regular basis. I have to tell you, I'm very proud of the fact that unlike other systems with which I am familiar, we do not have websites popping up telling people which trains to avoid to watch out for discarded needles and things like that. We do not have that problem.

Doug Tisdale: On the whole I would say we have a very clean system, and one of which I am personally very proud and, again, I would suggest just as Jessie Carter mentioned a moment ago, if you have specific issues that have arisen, please give us a call, send us an email, and let me take this opportunity now. My email is doug.tisdale@rtd-denver.com. That's my name, Doug, D-O-U-G, dot Tisdale, T-I-S-D-A-L-E @ rtd-denver.com. I will be more than happy to look into those situations for you.

Pauletta Tonilas: We're going to go now to our second electronic polling question folks. This is where you'll use your keypad again to give us the answer that you prefer. The question is, what can RTD be doing better? Press one for improved reliability. Press two for enhanced bus rail connections. Press three for better technology and apps. Press four for improved safety and security on our system. We will share those results with you in just a couple of minutes. But we're going to go now to Tom. Tom, go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Tom: Can you elaborate on what you learned from the driverless bus testing near the Panasonic facility and how you see that being incorporated in the RTD system?

Doug Tisdale: Thank you very much for that question, Tom. I'll tell you it was a very interesting and educational experience. The company, EasyMile, that's doing this technology for us learned a lot, and we have learned along with them. As a result of what they've learned, they've actually now begun work, we had a Generation One vehicle. They then went through Generation Two and now they're already developing Generation Three. Here's some examples.

Doug Tisdale: When we have the autonomous vehicle out there at 61st and Pena, and it was driving along the road, when we had snow and then the next morning the snow would start to melt and evaporate you create a ground fog, and we're all... in the Denver area we're familiar with seeing that. The ground fog was perceived by the autonomous vehicle as an obstruction, and so it would stop, and it didn't know what to do. They've worked on the software to address that. Heavy rain

was perceived as an obstruction, so they've worked on that. There are these tall grasses, weeds, whatever that are around the area, and sometimes when they rustle with the wind, they saw that as an obstruction. They did a lot to continue to develop it. That research that they did with our autonomous vehicle, the 61 AV at the 61st and Pena station has now been incorporated into the new autonomous vehicles that they currently have running in 27 other countries.

Doug Tisdale: They run those vehicles there. We don't have autonomous vehicles as buses here in the United States yet other than things such as the train at the airport that takes you down the concourses is an autonomous vehicle. There's not an operator on that train, but that's a fixed guideway system. But the other countries that use these systems have benefited from what we learned and we hope if we can get a grant to do this next year at the University of Denver and go along High Street there that we'll learn a lot more and continue, not only improving situations for the Denver area but also for people who use autonomous vehicles around the world.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you, Chair. We're going to give you the results now of our second polling question. The question was what can RTD be doing better? Eleven percent of you said improve reliability, 47% said enhance bus rail connections, 11% said provide better technology and apps, and 31% said improve safety and security on our system. Thanks for that feedback, and we will be compiling that with the rest of the input that we get. Okay, we're going to go to Alicia. Alicia, go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Alicia: Okay. I have question about bus number 24. Before this bus was touring from university around the old Glen Oaks Mall... No, it wasn't that. It was SouthGlenn Mall and stopped on the way. Then it went East Avenue to university. It was so comfortable. We have here 200 town homes and condominiums. Many people there they are older people. There are not many kids or teenagers, but they are single people, older people mostly. We need this bus to function like it was before. Right now you moved the bus to university, so the bus is just going straight university. It's much farther to the bus stop.

Caller Alicia: I think it should be returning to the route which was before. This is my first question. The second, I like to use light rails, but I don't use very much because it's very difficult to buy the tickets. You have to know computer well, number one. Then you have to know enough orientation about all the zones, and then I really don't know if I would like to go from here from center now that I live, for example, to Boulder how many zones. I always take my car when I have to do longer trips. There's two things about this light rail. Thank you.

Doug Tisdale: Thank you very much. I appreciate that because it gives us a chance to address two things that are very important. I'll start with the second one first, and that's relative to what we call fair media. How do you buy tickets and so forth? Yes, we have kiosks, ticket vending machines, at the stations where you can buy a ticket. You know, I have to agree. They can be somewhat intimidating. You look

at those things and you say, "I don't get it." The other day I was at Union Station, and I walked over, and there were some age advantaged people by one of the machines trying to buy a ticket to get out to the airport, and they were having a duce of a time trying to get that done. I walked over, and I said, "Hi, can I help you? My name's Doug Tisdale. I'm with the RTD. What can I do here?" They showed me, and they were having a problem with a credit card, and I tried doing it, and I couldn't get the machine to work.

Doug Tisdale: I said, "Well, I have a solution." I always carry around with me several complementary passes that can get people on the train to the plane so they can take the university of Colorado A line or other lines around. I said, "Here are two passes. Just tap this validator. Use that and get on." So, yes, I do recognize that sometimes those can be intimidating.

Doug Tisdale: But then let me point out. We do have in addition to that, we have... And maybe this is not a great solution for you, but I want you to know about it. We do have the opportunity for you to use an app on your smartphone, and you can do what we call mobile ticketing. It really is very easy to navigate that. If you have an app on the smartphone, you can find it in the app store and it's the RTD mobile ticketing app. In addition, we have these MyRide cards. The MyRide card is a little plastic card just like they have in the metro card in Washington DC or the Oyster Card in London, things like that. It's the same idea. It's a card that you can load fares on. You can register that card online, and then you can use that as long as you want. You just can replenish funds on that, and you will do it.

Doug Tisdale: We are also relative to the overall concern as to the usage of the ticket vending machines, we're always looking at ways to improve that, so we are trying to get the contractors who provide that to us to do other things to help. Remember also you can buy your RTD ticket on the transit app if you have that on your smartphone. I recognize you may not have a smartphone. Not everybody does. That's something that we have to address. But if you have the smartphone you can do a lot of that navigation to buy your ticket on the Uber app, to buy your ticket on the mobile ticketing app, to buy your ticket on the transit app, and we hope that those will help.

Doug Tisdale: As for the number 24 bus. I have been asked a number of questions about that. We've got Jessie Carter, the man with all the answers, is here with us this evening. We'll look to him too because I know they did around the SouthGlenn mall the line used to go through the SouthGlenn Mall. I have an office down there because one of my day jobs is with the south metro Denver chamber. We office there. I had several people say to me you changed this. What's up with that? Let's have Jessie weigh in on that subject with us.

Jessie Carter: Thank you Chair Tisdale. While I may not have all the most favorable answers I do have some reasoning behind why we actually changed the service up. You mentioned that the service now goes straight down university, and that's the term that was most often used by customers who were riding through who

would like to go straight down university rather than being deviated around [inaudible 00:53:03] or the SouthGlenn mall area. We did make that change a few years back and have received some calls about it. I don't want to diminish what you're saying about the need for the service in the area.

Jessie Carter: What I'd like for you to do is give me a call at area code 303-299-2028, and that's my number so we can talk about it a bit more. I'm not sure if there are some new developments that may have occurred in the area, but I sure would like to talk to you a little bit more about it. Again, the number is 303-299-2028. Thanks again.

Pauletta Tonilas: He's going to have a lot of new friends, that's for sure. He is a guy that has a lot of the answers. He's a major go-to guy for all of us at RTD. That is for sure. Okay, folks, the last electronic polling question that we have for this evening we hope you'll participate in it. Here we go. The question is, other than a telephone town hall meeting like this one that you are listening in on right now, what other ways would you be most likely to use to stay involved with RTD? 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 or pressure four for short surveys at stations or transit centers. We'll share with you the results before the meeting is over. We have about six minutes left, so we're going to try to get in a couple more questions, so please keep your questions brief, and we'll try to keep our answers brief so we can get to the rest of the folks here.

Pauletta Tonilas: Our next question is going to be from William. William, go ahead.

Caller William: My name is William. Given the competitive labor market that we're seeing in the City of Denver in metro area and also the importance in responsibility and how much we depend on the good judgment and behavior of the operators and the bus drivers, it seems that if we want to be really competitive and retain the people and not lose drivers to other services that the pay also needs to be competitive because the starting pay, and maybe even the higher level pay after someone's been on the board for a few years, is just not competing. I wonder why we're not talking about raising up the pay curves to retain the good drivers and operators upon which we depend for safe travel.

Doug Tisdale: Thank you for that observation. It's something that remains a problem to try to balance out what we can do with our budget and what we really need to do in order to create an answer to the operator shortage. We're right at around \$20 an hour around it. It's about 20 bucks an hour to start at RTD as an operator. We are hiring. I'll tell you a quick story about that. I mentioned the south metro Denver chamber, and I worked down there and I do a lot of chamber events. I was at an event, and a woman came up to me and said, "My son is looking for a job. Can you help him?" I said, "Well, have him come on by and talk to me." He came by the next week, made a very favorable impression, showed me his resume and stuff. He was a recent high school graduate, and I said, "Gosh, you should talk to somebody about getting a job with RTD as an operator."

Doug Tisdale: About two weeks later he was hired, and he now as about eight, nine months ago, he's now actually operating a light rail train. That guy is thrilled. He's happy. It's a great job for him. He's doing a wonderful job. We're hiring. Come on in and let us know. And I think that the starting pay at around 20 dollars an hour is a pretty attractive starting rate of pay. There are difficulties with the job, with split shifts and mandated overtime. I cannot, cannot say this without bringing those topics up. It's a challenge. But we definitely want people to know that we're hiring. We want people to know we have a very competitive pay rate. We have excellent benefits. We hope that we'll be able to address this as we go forward in the future.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you, Chair Tisdale. We're going to go now to Eric. Eric, go ahead and ask your question.

Caller Eric: Hi. Maybe this is an appropriate topic as you segue out of the end of the show. I'm from back east originally as many people here in the greater Metropolitan area are. As you look strategically 10, 20, 30 years in the future or maybe sooner than that, what is going to be the next new way of moving people obviously in Denver a consideration but across the unmanned or undriven, man driven cars or the Elon Musk solution to go around and shoot people. What's the next thing... What's the most realistic next thing that people in the greater Denver area should expect?

Doug Monroe: Well, as Chair Tisdale has talked about a couple of times tonight, RTD is very open to exploring new technologies. We've had our 61 AV trial that we tested out here over the last year or so, but as far as what the future holds, I think we're keeping that open with our Reimagine RTD plan. One of the big sections of that is the mobility plan for the future where we're going to look at what those new technologies might be and how we can implement those in Denver. One of the things that our general manager is big on is RTD being a mobility integrator, so as those new mobility options become available, RTD playing a key role in getting people to use those mobility options together both traditional bus systems and whatever those new mobility options might be.

Doug Monroe: One of the recent plans that we wrapped up here or that we're in the process of wrapping up right now is a regional BRT feasibility study. That might be one of the next things that RTD looks at after the FasTracks program wraps up as those corridors are completed looking at how those regional BRT lines might better integrate with our system. What the future holds I guess we can't say for sure at this point, but RTD is very open to any options.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thanks Doug. That was a great question actually. We don't know what tomorrow can bring. Real quickly, want to give you the survey results. How would you stay involved with us other than live telephone town hall meetings, 30% of you said our live interactive online tool through the website, 40% said reading emails or E newsletters, 15% attending an actual public meeting physically, and 15% say taking short surveys at stations or transit centers.

Pauletta Tonilas: Thank you very much because as the head of communications at RTD we like to know what is the best way to try to communicate with you and give you opportunities to engage. We have come to the end of our meeting, folks. I'm going to ask Chair Tisdale to give some brief closing remarks as we wind down our telephone town hall. Chair Tisdale.

Doug Tisdale: Thank you very much, Pauletta, and thank you all for your patience and hanging with us through this telephone town hall, which is a great opportunity for us to communicate with you as we seek ways to collaborate and cooperate. This is an elected board. The board runs the agency, but you run the board because you elect these representatives. Please remember to reach out to us. As I said before, my email, doug.tisdale@rtd-denver.com. We're always happy to hear your comments. We're always happy to respond. We hope you will engage with us as we explore the reimagination of RTD. Thank you for being part of this tonight.