

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Well good evening everyone. Thank you for joining us for this special live telephone town hall meeting hosted by the Regional Transportation District, also known as RTD. Our hope is that you are warm, and safe, and healthy as you listen in tonight. We appreciate your time. I'm Pauletta Tonilas, assistant general manager of communications and your moderator this evening as we talk about the latest going on at RTD as we address COVID-19. We also want to share some updates about some other things that we have going on as we continue to march forward on many different things.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Joining me on the line this evening is Angie Rivera-Malpiede, RTD Board Chair and Director for District C, this is your District of RTD. Also, sitting in this evening to answer your questions are Michael Ford, chief operations officer; Henry Stopplecamp, assistant general manager of Capital Programs; and Jessie Carter, manager of service planning and scheduling.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Tonight we are here to listen to you, to answer your questions, also to just give us any feedback that you might have for us. This is your opportunity to share your thoughts, ask questions about our service, concerns, COVID, how we're dealing with this pandemic crisis, and also as we look to the future. If this is your first time on a telephone town hall here's how it works, to ask a question press star three on your keypad, and you will be transferred to someone who will take down some basic information for you, and then get you in the queue. Then we ask you to stay on the line and listen to the conversation, and then I will call upon you and then ask you to ask your question live. We ask you to please keep it brief because we want to get to as many of you tonight as possible.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

So again, if you would like to get in the queue to ask us a question or to give us some feedback, press star three on your keypad and you'll get in the queue. We have a lot to cover tonight, we want to make sure though that we get to your questions, and we'll kick it off this evening with our Board Chair Angie Rivera-Malpiede. It is my pleasure to bring in our board chair. Angie, this has been an incredibly busy time since you took over as chair in early January, it has just been full-throttle, non-stop. Tell us a little bit about what that's been like.

**ANGIE RIVERA-MALPIEDE:**

Well, thank you, Pauletta, and welcome everybody on this snowy evening. I just want to say thank you for calling on your night, there's a lot of things you could be doing and I'm really pleased that you've chosen to dial in and to listen what's going on. I have been the chairman of the board since January 7th, which seems like nine years ago because there's been so many huge issues that have happened, not just only at RTD, but in our world. It has literally changed the way people are living, thinking, and feeling. So let me just start by saying, good evening and thank you for joining us, everybody.

**ANGIE RIVERA-MALPIEDE:**

COVID-19 really has had a significant impact in every single one of our lives. As RTD upholds its core value of safety, it is especially important during these really difficult times that we focus on keeping our passengers and employees safe and healthy. RTD is providing a vital service and are a lifeline to many

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

people in the community, and it's crucial that we continue operating for the public that relies on us. In fact, we are still transporting 125,000 people daily who rely on transportation as essential workers. We are in close contact and in cooperation with our state, regional, and local authorities about the best practices, safe operation, and communication with you the public.

**ANGIE RIVERA-MALPIEDE:**

RTD's transit is a critical infrastructure, it continues to operate for essential travel. Essential travel really includes everything from trips for groceries to getting necessary healthcare and medication, or to reach an essential job. Then those essential workers in healthcare, public safety, food production and distribution, utilities, and government operations they rely on RTD daily, and our staff is essential worker as well.

**ANGIE RIVERA-MALPIEDE:**

We need everyone's help to keep the transit system safe. Don't take unnecessary trips, please limit the time you spend in RTD stations to 10 minutes, and as often as possible, keep your distance of six feet between yourself and other passengers. There's a lot to cover tonight, and we are here to answer your questions. I'm going to turn it back over to you, Pauletta.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thank you very much. That is Chair Rivera-Malpiede, the chair of the RTD board of directors. We already have quite a few people in the queue. Again, folks, we're here to talk about COVID-19 and how RTD is addressing this pandemic crisis. Things change daily, sometimes many times day, as you know from all the news alerts and the briefings, and all the news that you are following. But we're here to talk to you and to hear what you have to say. So we're going to go ahead and go right to our first person on the line with a question, and that is Sonny. So Sonny, go ahead.

**SONNY:**

I appreciate all that you do for us, but I wanted to ask you, I'm an elder and I use the bus and I do have a disability, and I go to MHCD for that. I go to school over to succeed. I do get a bus pass that lets me go but I don't know after this, are we going to be able to have that discount or not? Are you there?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Yes, thank you, Sonny. Thank you very much, appreciate that very much. So you're asking about the discount for you being one of our ADA riders, so we're continuing with, of course, our suspension of fares right now, and that's across the whole RTD system. A couple of weeks ago we moved to rear door boarding on our buses to try to encourage more social distancing, and with that, the suspension of fare collection. That is again, across our whole system. Once we ramp back up and we start with regular type service, we'll start back with the fares that were part of our system before.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

What I would like to do is go ahead and talk to Jessie Carter for a second and have Jesse, who is manager of service planning and scheduling, address some of the ADA efforts that we have put forth, and one in particular that's a neat program. Jesse.

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

**JESSIE CARTER:**

Well, Jesse is not very good at operating his own phone, and I have to apologize for that delay. However, yes, one of the programs that we are offering right now for the disabled community is a grocery delivery program. Actually, we have our chief operating officer on line, who can probably give a little more information about that. But basically, those who are qualified for Access-A-Ride service are able to call in and actually have groceries delivered to their home via our Access-A-Ride service. I'm not sure if Michael wants to add more to that.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Yeah, and this is free. So Michael, would you like to add more information?

**MICHAEL FORD:**

I appreciate that. It's Michael Ford. No, we have begun that process a couple weeks ago, and it continues on. You can call in, there are identified supermarkets that will work with you. Those orders are called in and the food is brought to your door, the operator won't come into the house, but they will bring that order to the door. So we're working on that, it's something that we think is vital to help people, and keeps them safe and protected as well. It's just something that we thought was a very good idea and we've been hearing a lot of good, rave reviews about the service that we're providing to help people get the food so they can stay socially distant as well and not have to go into the store themselves. So I don't really have anything more to add, other than it's a program that's been well-received, and we want to continue as we experience these situations right now with the COVID-19 situation.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thank you very much. That's Michael Ford, he is RTD's chief operations officer. If you'd like to get in the queue to ask a question just press star three on your keypad. We're going to go now to Miguel. You're up next, Miguel, go ahead.

**MIGUEL:**

Equity. We have one of the highest bus fares in the country, and I too am disabled. I wanted to ask, for the people with the underlying risk that have to go to the grocery store, how frequently is the buses being cleaned throughout the day? Is this included to the fabric where I've seen before people who have soiled the buses before. I've been concerned about bus driver safety, even before this, for long time because they have a hard time with retention of the bus drivers. They're not paid well enough to be two jobs, being the bus driver and security guard. I think the RTD board is over-paid, since we over pay the bus fares in the country. My third part question, is the shopper buses... For the record, I'm ambassador to RTD riders in my neighborhood. The shopper buses that go to the AB Herschel Towers and other places, will they continue, and will there be any extension possibly of those like the Access-A-Ride for groceries or food bank runs?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thank very much for that, Miguel. I'm going to first turn it to Michael Ford, our chief operating officer to talk about the cleaning of the buses and the trains, which happens every day. Michael.

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

**MICHAEL FORD:**

Yes, I appreciate your question. We have really taken that to task in terms of upgrading our cleaning on the buses and on the trains using different chemicals that help get at the virus issues that could be associated with trains or buses. We actually also have additional resources that we repurpose to help clean, meaning that we have more people doing more cleaning, more thorough cleaning more frequently. So I just want to assure you of that, we have upped our efforts in those areas to make sure that we do everything we can to keep our vehicles as clean as possible and have more periodic checks on the cleaning as well. At the same time, protecting our folks with the appropriate PPE equipment to do the cleaning.

**MICHAEL FORD:**

As far as the operators concern, we don't want to put them in any type of accident producing situation. So when they're confronted with issues or concerns we instruct them to call in for help and support from supervisors and law enforcement that are dedicated to helping reduce issues and friction. We have a lot of information on different routes, and we try to deploy resources to help mitigate issues and concerns that may exist so we keep our operators out of harm's way so they can focus in on the job they have at hand.

**MICHAEL FORD:**

I don't remember the other question that you had, I think it was a three-parter.

**JESSIE CARTER:**

One of the other parts of [crosstalk 00:13:24] I'm sorry, Pauletta.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

No, go ahead.

**JESSIE CARTER:**

One of the other questions was regarding the SeniorShopper, and I do believe we are going to be running the SeniorShopper service off of the special service order, and I'd like for the gentleman to actually go to our website at [rtd-denver.com](http://rtd-denver.com) to look at the COVID-19 plan. There should be information regarding that SeniorShopper service by next Wednesday. Again, please go to the website and take a look at the service offerings that we'll be putting out.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thank you very much, Jesse. That's Jessie Carter with our service and scheduling. I am going to bring in Chair Rivera-Malpiede for a second because one of the comments that Miguel made was about our fares, and we've heard this some about our fares and people feeling that the regular general fare is higher than it used to be. So we did implement some new fare product, and one of them is the LiVE Program, and this is something that's very near and dear to our chair's heart because she was part of the process that ended up resulting in the LiVE Program. So, chair, would you like to just briefly outline our discounted fares, and especially the LiVE Program.

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

**ANGIE RIVERA-MALPIEDE:**

Yes, thank you, Pauletta. Miguel, Pauletta is absolutely right, the fares and the issue around how much our patrons pay to utilize our service is near and dear to my heart because I've been transit-dependent most of my life as well and have been riding the buses in RTD's district for over 50 years. I wanted to just let you know that one of the key issues for me has always been the working poor and making sure that there was some kind of a product in place where it would equal the playing field. So last year RTD voted unanimously to institute the LiVE Program which is a fare program at a 40% reduction so that folks would have access to affordable fares. Do I want to get it lower? Yes, I do, but we've just launched this, we are also working in unison with over 300 non-profits. So thank you for that question. It's something that I will continue to work on.

**ANGIE RIVERA-MALPIEDE:**

But what I would like to say to everyone as well, is that the safety of our employees and customers is the board's priority, and I know that's a lot of your priority as well. Our board and staff is really involved, and they're all being taken care because we are all part of this community together. So thank you so much for that question.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thank you Chair Rivera-Malpiede. That is our RTD board chair. If you want to get in the queue just remember to press star three, and we're going to up to Diana next. Diana, you're next.

**DIANA:**

I was just wondering what's going to be going on with the buses and the light rails this weekend because I did see on Facebook that the COVID-19 is going to be affected for most of the light rails and buses. I was just wondering if we still can go out and do things, like to go to grocery stores or anything like that?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Yes, Diana, thank you so much. I'm going to bring in Jessie Carter. Jesse will be able to give some highlights of the service reduction that will start this Sunday.

**JESSIE CARTER:**

Thank you, Pauletta. That is an excellent question. With the service plan, what we are attempting to do is reduce the level of service to be a little closer to what we're seeing as far as ridership out there. So the COVID-19 service plan is largely based on providing Saturday level of service for bus on weekdays and providing Sunday levels of rail service on weekdays, Saturdays, and Sundays. So yes, you will be able to utilize the light rail if you use the C Line, I believe that was one of the lines that you mentioned, and also you'll be able to use bus services that currently have Saturday services. I hope that answers your question.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thank you very much, Jesse. We're going to go now to Lou. Lou, go ahead.

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

**LOU:**

Yes, how long is the suspension of fare fees? Well, I have three questions. How long is the suspension of fare fees? Is C Line to Union Station every 20 minutes? One more, is A Line to DIA train to the plane every 15 minutes still?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Okay, so I'll go ahead and talk about the fares for a second, and then I'll bring Jesse back in. So as far as the fares, we have temporarily suspended the fares because when we started the rear door boarding on our buses the cash fare box is at the front of the bus, so when you get on the bus the front door that fare box is right there. But asking people to board through the rear with exception of people with wheelchairs, we aren't able to collect fares in the same way. So just to be equitable across the board, we're suspending fares temporarily, and this is just while we're doing rear door boarding. We will be ramping back up at some point, we don't know when. We will be having more of a normal operation then starting to collect fares again. So Jesse, I'll let you ahead and answer about the C Line and the A Line.

**JESSIE CARTER:**

Okay, thank you, Pauletta. The C Line will be operating on a Sunday schedule, so that's service every 30 minutes. Also, the University of Colorado A Line service will remain at the same levels as it is currently with service every 15 minutes. I believe that was the whole question, Pauletta, you can correct me if there's another part of that question.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Yeah, I think that was it. I think that's good, Jesse. Thank you very much. One thing I would like to do is bring in Henry Stoppolecamp, who is our assistant general manager of Capital Programs. One of the units Henry oversees is our facilities group, and they also are highly involved in some changes of how they're working and keeping things clean. So Henry, do you want to just touch quickly on how your team has stepped up during this time?

**HENRY STOPPLECAMP:**

Sure, Pauletta. This is Henry Stoppolecamp, I'm the assistant general manager of Capital Programs for RTD. The biggest thing that we're doing is social distancing, that is number one. But then we get into the cleaning and sanitizing of our facilities, and Michael Ford's group does the cleaning and sanitizing of the buses and light rail vehicles and our commuter rail vehicles and our contractor. So all vehicles are taken care of on a daily basis, our facilities are cleaned on a regular basis. If we've got an issue that comes up, we do deep cleanings through the facilities. So our number one priority is to our patrons and to our employees. Some of these facilities that our patrons would see would be Denver Union Station, Civic Center, Water Transit Facility, big stations, but we're also doing the rail platforms in them as well.

**HENRY STOPPLECAMP:**

So across the system, we're out there on a regular basis, and our employees are provided with the appropriate PPE to do their job, along with our bus operators and our service and cleaning folks. In a nutshell, we have stepped up. We've always had a productive and proactive cleaning regimen, but we are going to the next level. So Pauletta, back to you.

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thank you very much, Henry, appreciate that. Folks, press star three if you'd like to get in the queue to ask us a question. Henry was talking about PPE, personal protective equipment, which is masks, gloves, and such. We all know how difficult it's been for organizations all over the world to get their hands on his type of equipment we call PPE for short, particularly masks. This has been difficult for RTD as well. We have placed numerous orders for different types of masks to protect our front line workforce, and while we have had supplies come in, this has been a huge challenge. So I'd like Michael Ford to step into the conversation and briefly just talk about the commitment we do have to providing supplies, to particularly our operators, our service and cleaning crews and such. Michael.

**MICHAEL FORD:**

Thank you, Pauletta. Yes, we are very keen on this issue, and as Pauletta said, we have struggled to obtain masks. We've worked diligently with our purchasing people, we also have others making masks to be helpful. One thing, I want to give a shout out to the ATU, particularly the president there and his folks. They have been able to secure some additional masks that have helped. Those masks are there to obviously protect folks to make sure they have the protection they need to go out there. We've been able to distribute and train people on masks as well so they're prepared, they know how to maintain their mask, they know the duration and integrity of the mask, needs, attention, and care, and we're able to replenish.

**MICHAEL FORD:**

So this has really given us an opportunity to do mask management if you will, to make sure that we have enough, that we continue a supply, and that we're addressing the needs. Particularly those that are cleaning the buses, those that are out on the road, and then just others that need masks for additional protection. We've really stepped up our efforts on that, utilizing our support from others and partners, and also the work that we're just doing trying to get them with other vendors. We're continuing that process, and continuing to monitor and track, create an inventory list so we know where things are going and when we're going to need more, and managing that as well. So we've got a pretty good system that's been set up to do that.

**MICHAEL FORD:**

Again, we're wanting to be mindful protecting our operators. The masks alone aren't just, in and of themselves, it goes along with cleaning, washing your hands, wipes, sprays, all those things in conjunction work to reduce any vulnerabilities that could be just in one's day-to-day life. Thank you, Pauletta.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Yes, Michael, thank you so much. Go ahead, chair.

**ANGIE RIVERA-MALPIEDE:**

Thank you. Michael, if you wouldn't mind, since we have so many questions in the queue about are our bus being cleaned? It would be kind of helpful if you could give us a more detailed overview of how we are hand sanitizing our buses and stations, and how we're touching areas like railings and elevators and stuff. Can you just walk us through that?

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

**MICHAEL FORD:**

I can speak to some of that, and then I want to turn some of that over to Henry. But yes, we have cleaning materials, we follow CDC guidelines with the stations, the floors, the seats, the driver's compartments, all areas of the bus that are affected. We really do a deep clean dive, we take more time, concentrated efforts. Again, I mentioned earlier that we have dedicated other resources that normally would be doing other things so we can put more people on detail of the buses.

**MICHAEL FORD:**

So again, from the stations to the driver's compartments, to the seats, to the floors, to the windows, to the ceilings. We've done more work in those areas, more frequent work utilizing different cleaning products that will help address this issue with the virus. Then again, making sure that everybody's protected with the different types of equipment that they need to be protected. As far as the facilities and all that, we do bring in contractors to do deep cleaning that are trained, and we want to make sure that our people are trained. I could also just defer to Henry on maybe some of the more facility type focuses that you have in terms of deep cleaning.

**HENRY STOPPLECAMP:**

Once again, this is Henry Stoppolecamp. Yes, like I said before on the cleaning of facilities, we're wiping down common areas, mopping the floors. We are bringing aerosols in that will kill the bacteria. So the cleaning products that we're looking at have been state and federally certified to take care of the COVID-19 virus, so we're using that across the system. We are in the public facilities have dedicated custodial staff that start from one end, work their way through, and then they go back through, so they all do that. The other thing has been helping us out is the lighter ridership. We've been able to get in there and do some really deep cleaning of our facilities, so that's an ongoing exercise.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thank you all very much for that. I would like Chair Rivera-Malpiede to just quickly touch on an extraordinary effort by one of our RTD board members with mask-making project, and actually, some additional RTD board members have been participating in this. Why don't you go ahead chair and talk a little bit about that?

**ANGIE RIVERA-MALPIEDE:**

Thank you so much, Pauletta. In fact, one of our RTD board directors, Natalie Menten decided to take a mask project up and has been selling masks for our drivers and our frontline workers for the last, gosh, it's been a week or so. I know that First Vice-Chair Peggy Catlin is also selling, and Natalie's parents are part of the process. It really has become a way for the board of directors to support Director Menten and our drivers to make sure that they have essential masks. As you know, RTD has been deemed as an essential worker in the workforce during COVID-19 and there is a shortage of masks. So these kinds of projects are really essential to that. Thank you.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thank you, chair. You are listening to a live telephone town hall meeting hosted by the Regional Transportation District. We're here to hear from you whether it's comments, feedback, or questions. We're going to go now to Riannan, and I believe that's how to say your name. Riannan, go ahead.

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

**RIANNAN:**

Hi, this is Riannan. I have a question about staffing. During this time and thinking about moving into normal operation, what is RTD doing to recruit more and retain operators so that when regular service commences we don't have to see the continuation of lines being cut due to the lack of operators.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Yeah, that's great. That's an excellent question. I'm going to pull Michael in.

**MICHAEL FORD:**

Yes, **MICHAEL FORD**. We're continuing with our training. We have in light rail probably about 60 operators that we're utilizing. We do not want to lose the momentum that we started with, so we're continuing as we go through this COVID, continuing training classes, making sure they're protected when they're going through training. So we're still ramping up, still looking to hire and maintain a level of resources that are going to be needed so if and when we move back into a more normal service level, we'll be ready and not having to wait. We're looking at that with our contractors, we're looking at that with our regular RTD operators, as well as paratransit.

**MICHAEL FORD:**

So we want to be prepared and be able to be nimble and quick in terms of getting back on track. So we're continuing training on the bus side as well. We're working with the state on some CDLs, commercial driver's licenses that we can move forward on. I know there was some suspension of that for a while, but it looks like we may have some opportunity to get that back on track. So with rail, with the bus, and working with our contractors we're continuing to try to minimize the impact and keep nimble so we can get back into full operations when conditions change.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thanks very much, Michael. Okay, we're going to go next to Connie. Connie, go ahead.

**CONNIE:**

I'm glad you're finally giving the drivers some distancing, it's been a bad situation. Anyway, unfortunately, there's not enough buses for passenger distancing. I'd like to request that another number 19 bus be added from downtown to the northwest. It's too crowded now, and now you're going to go so they run once an hour, it's going to be even more crowded. We do desperately need another 19 bus between 5:00 and 6:00. I mean, it's obvious. I don't even know why there's an argument about it or why it's not being done. It would be nice if the people on this side of town could be social distancing. Why is RTD not joining the rest of the country?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Connie, thank you so much. Hear the passion in your voice, appreciate that. I'm going to bring Jesse in. So Jesse, she's asking the 19.

**JESSIE CARTER:**

Thank you, Pauletta, and thank you, Connie, for that request. We will have to take a look at the current ridership during the time period that you mentioned. Our service has been down as far as ridership,

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

we've seen a reduction in ridership of about 65%. So there are some routes that are still doing a little bit better than others, and we'll have to check to make sure that the 19 does offer social distancing. So we'll look into that, and if I can get you to hold on after the call, I can give you my contact information and you can give me a little more detailed information on that.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Okay Jesse, thank you very much. Let's go to Brett. Brett, you're up next.

**BRETT:**

Hey, everybody. How you doing? My name is Brett.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Great.

**BRETT:**

My name is Brett, I'm the founder of Positive Air Consortium. I'm right here your RTD center, on Brighton and Arkins where I live. We're a group of small business apparel manufacturers, with we're a Fashion Group International Denver and we have 2.5 million n95 for RTD. So we just need a contact to who to work with. We're doing a combination of donations of PPE and some for purchase to make sure we can protect the front line workers, but we are all pretty much apparel manufacturers here in Denver that have been impacted, and we've put together this group to protect you guys. So if Mike can provide his email information, I can after the call go ahead and introduce you to our group.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Wow, that's fantastic, Brett. We will keep your phone number for sure, and Michael or somebody can hang on the line maybe after, and we'll connect you. But Michael, any comments about that, about him wanting to help us with-

**MICHAEL FORD:**

I'm very appreciative of your generous offer. I'd love to talk to you more about what you may have to offer and what we can do to work with you to get some more protection for our employees and moving forward on that. So I'd be grateful to talk to you about that and what masks you have, and what other features you might have that we can discuss. Thank you so much.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Yeah, thank you very much. If you'd like to get in the queue, there's still time to do that, you just have to press star three on your keypad. Want to do a bit of a diversion real quick just to talk about another project that a lot of people are very excited about and that is our N Line, which is our next commuter rail line that we will be opening up this year, later this year. The N Line will be a commuter rail line that will go up to North Glenn and Thornton, up to 124th from downtown Denver Union Station. Henry Stopplecamp is overseeing that whole program. So one of the really great progressive things we have going on to keep a project moving forward, Henry, is keeping the N Line marching forward. Go ahead, Henry, do you want to tell them.

**HENRY STOPPLECAMP:**

Like Jesse [crosstalk 00:35:59] Yes, I've got this challenge on the mute. So the N Line, that's our line up to North Metro, and this is a line that has been in the works for some time, and we've got a lot of good news to talk about. We've been dealing with the contractor and been out there on-site, and just recently the contractor has stepped up and has made a lot of progress in the last several weeks. Now, this week with the snow is kind of a challenge. But we have started to [inaudible 00:36:41] multiple train testing and providing information to our regulatory agencies, which is the Colorado Public Utilities Commission and the FRA. We've been training our own operators and Maintenance Of Way folks, the men and women that maintain the tracks, the OCS signal system, along with our own dispatchers.

**HENRY STOPPLECAMP:**

Basically this corridor, RTD decided instead of assigning it to Denver Transit Partner's, who runs the Eagle project which is the line out to the airport, out Warren road, and to Westminster; the RTD staff would take on the commuter rail operations. So we've been hiring, training, and getting approval for the alignment operators and equipment. The rail vehicles will be maintained though by Denver Transit Partners and turned over to us in the morning. One important thing, we are still on track to open this year. In a nutshell, a lot of progress has been made, continuing to work forward. The COVID has really not stopped or slowed down our training a whole lot, and our contractor has kept going. So, in a nutshell, that's where we're at.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Great, Henry. [crosstalk 00:38:08] Thank you very much. Yes, thank you so much, Henry, appreciate that. Chair Rivera-Malpiede I want to bring you back into the conversation. Today in the Denver Post was published a guest column, a guest commentary that was submitted both you and our interim CEO and General Manager Paul Ballard. Lots of great messages and information in that talking about the service change that'll start Sunday, but a lot of other messages including how we want people to be our partners in safety and that social distancing on the system is really everybody's responsibility. So chair, do you want to touch on some of those messages and just some perspectives on that?

**ANGIE RIVERA-MALPIEDE:**

Yes. Thank you, Pauletta. You know, I was on the route 32 a couple of days ago, and it was a very interesting COVID-19 experience. What I realized as a transit rider and also as an RTD board director is that we live in a very giving community. We're very close in Denver, I think people really care about each other and because of that, and in the spirit of that, we would like to ask for all of your help that when you're in a bus or going to the bus that you make sure that you're standing six feet apart or sitting six feet apart from each other. I would just say to you, if it doesn't feel like you can do that, wait for the next bus because it'll come very, very shortly.

**ANGIE RIVERA-MALPIEDE:**

But I really would like to call upon all of our community partners to help us with the safety to protect each other, not only our drivers but to make sure that we're safe and healthy within the actual bus and trains. If you're waiting for a train or a light rail, then go into the next car because maybe there won't be as many people in that one. I would just ask for everybody to take a look at that as we move forward. But really I think that the Colorado way is really with open and transparency, and looking out for ourselves and each other. We don't know when this lockdown is going to be lifted, and we don't know

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

when the demand for our services will be coming back, but we're watching it consistently. But for right now, we would just like to ask if you would all join us by keeping our trains and our buses six feet apart safely and taking care of our drivers. Thank you.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thank you very much, Chair Rivera-Malpiede. Okay, we're going to go to Cathy. Cathy, you're up next, go ahead.

**CATHY:**

I would just like to know, I didn't understand what was said about the Access-A-Ride and groceries.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Okay, yeah, Kathy. Great. Because our Access-A-Ride demand really dropped significantly and there were still people that needed to take our Access-A-Ride service, some of them going to the grocery stores and such. Our ADA, our Access-A-Ride staff came up with an idea of using the service to do grocery delivery or delivery from certain food sources or food banks to our customers who are already approved for ADA service. They started this a couple weeks ago, and it really has been a remarkable way for us to help folks who are in need. Michael, I don't know if you want to step in and talk any more about that but this is a way that we're helping our ADA riders in a different way, and it's really been quite a success story so far.

**MICHAEL FORD:**

Yes, and we just want to make it more convenient for folks to be able to get food and not have to get up and go into the store, help create the social distancing we're all trying to strive for. So this is just another way in which our services could be helpful in bringing food and products to a person that would normally have to go to the store themselves, and it has been working out very well. We're offering that at selected stores and food banks as Pauletta mentioned, and it started about two weeks ago and it's continuing. There's been information put out there, and if you need more specifics we can provide that to you. But again, it's just another way we can work with our community and help relieve some of the stress and some of the challenges that we're going through during this time.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Thank you very much, Michael. Okay, we're going to go to William. William, you're up next.

**WILLIAM:**

Hello?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Hey there, William. Yeah, go ahead.

**WILLIAM:**

Hi, how you doing?

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Doing great. How are you doing?

**WILLIAM:**

I'm doing fine. I ride the bus all the time. I'm always riding the light rail train to DI airport where I work. Since I found out I don't have to buy a bus pass for a while... I always go down RTD station over on Broadway and Colfax to buy a regional discount bus pass there. So I want to find out when they'll start selling again?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Right. You can still purchase them. You wouldn't want to purchase one, obviously, a monthly pass for April. What we are doing is those who did buy an April monthly pass, for instance, because we have suspended fares we're offering people exchanges for that. So if anyone has an April pass, we are doing exchanges for those. As far as when we're going to start back up in collecting fares, we really aren't sure about that yet. A lot of it depends on our leaders and when they start to get people back in action so to speak. When our stay at home orders are lifted, and we start getting folks back out in public and going to work and going the places they need to go. So we can't answer that yet, but if you do have a fare product that you had paid for and now we're not collecting fares, we are offering exchanges for that. So just want to make sure people know about that. Okay, Joshua, you're up next. Go ahead.

**PATRICIA:**

Hello, this is Joshua Knight with North Denver and I ride the bus to help my elderly mother, and she is in Friendly Hills, which is in southwest Denver. The problem with Friendly Hills is that so many people own cars there that there is very little RTD service there, which is understandable. At the same time, for those few of us who do go there during the weekdays, I was just hoping that there'd be some amount of service, maybe Call-n-Ride or just something that would be available for those few people that do still use the bus to go to that area.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Yeah, Jesse, do you want to chime in?

**JESSIE CARTER:**

No, thanks Pauletta, I wish I could chime in. I'm right now at a loss to understand exactly where Friendly Village is. So if I could ask the caller identify an area with major cross streets?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

I think he's out of the queue already, Jesse.

**JESSIE CARTER:**

Oh, sorry. Okay.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

What we can do is we can take his number, maybe we can follow-up with him.

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

**JESSIE CARTER:**

Right, because if it's in the southwest Jeffco area that Call-n-Ride will still be operated. But I'm not too sure whether or not that is in the southwest Jeffco area.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Right, yeah. Anything you want to offer, Jesse, at all about the service change as it relates to the southwest area when it comes to Sunday and our service reduction?

**JESSIE CARTER:**

Sorry. Primarily in looking at the southwest area, many of the services that operate in what we would term the southwest area like the route 76, those services will still operate on their Saturday schedules on the weekday,; their Saturday schedule on Saturday, and their Sunday schedule on Sunday. However, there are some major changes to FlexRide in those areas. FlexRide hours will be reduced, they will only run until 5:00 p.m. So those are the biggest changes. Again, I would direct anyone who's curious about the level of service on the routes that they are utilizing currently to go to our website at [rtd-denver.com](http://rtd-denver.com)

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Great, thank you so much, Jesse. All right, we're going to go to Patricia. Patricia, you can ask your question.

**PATRICIA:**

Well, I am really grateful for you program. Hello?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Yes, thank you for that.

**PATRICIA:**

I do have a couple of questions. Is the Access-A-Ride cab still available?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Access-A-Ride service? Or you're talking about [crosstalk 00:48:29]

**PATRICIA:**

Access-A-Ride cab.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Yeah, you're talking about the Access-A-Cab. Yeah, Michael, do you want to address that? Or Jesse. Jesse or Michael?

**PATRICIA:**

Is anybody there?

**JESSIE CARTER:**

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

I'm not sure of its frequency, but I believe it's still available. I would have to check into more details on how that's operating right now, but it's probably in some kind of limited capacity.

**PATRICIA:**

Yeah. So if I was to call for Access-A-Ride cab for a friend of mine that's very disabled, would it be available for him?

**JESSIE CARTER:**

I would have to check on the specifics of when the travel was going to happen, but I believe there would be some level of service that we could probably offer. We would just need the details and we could work with you on that.

**PATRICIA:**

Okay, I appreciate that. Then the other thing is, I think this is a wonderful open forum that you guys are doing. I'm disabled as well, I was on 38th and Sheridan on West 38th, that area. About a year or so ago they stopped a service to a stop on 38th and Benton, it's right across from the King Soopers on Sheridan, basically, on West Sheridan. I don't understand why they stopped that spot because if you're handicap you have to walk two blocks one way or two blocks the other way, but there is also a stoplight right there where you push the button and people can stop, so you can get to your stop to catch the bus. I don't understand why you guys stopped that.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Okay, I'll go ahead and ask Jesse if you have an answer to that. Jesse?

**JESSIE CARTER:**

Thanks, Pauletta. I wish my memory was that good however, I think I know exactly which stop you're talking. We have undergone what's called Bus Stop Consolidation Program and what the effort was meant to do was to streamline the number of stops on our local service to actually speed up the level of services. However, one of the things that we wanted to be mindful of as we went through that process is that if people with disabilities were actually utilizing stops that were identified to be eliminated that they would have a voice in the process and be able to state what their issue was. Many times when that had been the case, we have actually placed those stops back in service. So I'm going to ask if the caller can leave her contact information and we can talk a little bit more about that particular stop.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Okay Jesse, thank you very much. That was Patricia, I believe. Okay, Lorraine. Go ahead, you're up.

**LORRAINE:**

Do you know how long the bus will be free and we will ever know when?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Hi, Lorraine. We aren't sure how long we're going to suspend our fare collection. It really is related to us having rear door boarding where people will board through the rear bus door instead of the front. That's really the impetus behind us not collecting fares right now, but when we start to get back on track, then

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

we will start collecting fares again. We don't know if that'll be in two weeks or three weeks, or a month. We just aren't sure about that. It is a temporary situation, however, it's I think very appropriate for right now. But we really don't have a specific answer, so I'm sorry we can't tell you more, but we will definitely be communicating that vastly and in many different ways when we do get to that point. Okay, we're going to go to Kimberly. We're going to ask folks to keep it short and sweet because we only have about six minutes. Kimberly, go ahead.

**KIMBERLY:**

Yes, I was calling because I take the 34 route to Havana and Martin Luther King, and you guys go on the Saturday schedule and I know that bus only runs out there Monday through Friday, but I do work at the last bus stop. If you guys suspend the service I don't know how I'm going to get to my job.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Yeah, that's a tough one. Jesse, I'm going to ask you if you have any information that you might be able to provide for insight.

**JESSIE CARTER:**

At this time, and thank you, Pauletta; I would say, Kimberly I'm going to go ahead and throw my number out there. Please contact me at (303) 299-2028. Again, that was (303) 299-2028. I want to hear about where exactly you're going on the route 34, and also I will double-check the level of ridership that we're currently seeing on the 34 to see if there's something that we need to do to mitigate that issue.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Okay Jesse, thank you very much. All right, we're going try to get another one or two in. So Randall, you're up next, go ahead.

**RANDALL:**

Hi, yes, I'm Randall. I'm a Class A commercial driver's license holder. I applied to be an operator for the light rail, I just received an email notifying me that it's going to be a little bit longer than normal as far as the interview process or hearing back. I'm just wondering what you guys are doing to speed things up so that I can possibly help out around town?

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

That's great. Well, we appreciate that very much, Randall. We still are moving forward with our applicants and trying to move folks into training as much as we can. Obviously, COVID-19 has changed that a little bit, we have had to obviously respect social distancing. Michael, you might be able to answer more to how it's impacted us and slowed us down just a little bit from the training aspect.

**MICHAEL FORD:**

We understand that this situation has caused some training difficulties. We're working on different facilities where we can house training that is enough where we can keep small classes in social distancing to the point that everybody remains safe and protected. We are working with our safety and security department right now to free up some opportunities for classes, and we will definitely be in contact with you soon. We were able to acquire some additional masks to help with the training as well,

Regional Transportation District  
District C Director Angie Rivera-Malpiede  
April 16, 2020

so we will be back on track very shortly. I don't have a particular date, I don't what order or when you were supposed to start, but we are gearing up again, and we do have the proper PPEs that will be needed to do that. The best I can tell you is just keep calling in, or I can give you my number and I can get back to you, and we can get some more relevant information for you. My number is (303) 299-2321. I will do some follow-up to see where we're at. Again, your name was? I just want to make sure I got your name.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

That was Randall I think, Michael. We've got a record of it.

**MICHAEL FORD:**

Okay. All right, thank you.

**PAULETTA TONILAS:**

Okay, folks. Yeah, thank you, Michael. Okay, so we only have a couple of minutes left so I do want to bring our Chair Angie Rivera-Malpiede back in to give us some parting words and insights as we round out tonight's meeting. I do want to thank everybody for being with us tonight, and there's probably lots more questions that you have, and what I will say is you can go to our website [rtd-denver.com](http://rtd-denver.com). We have then on the homepage a section for COVID-19 you can click into, and you can get a tremendous amount of information through our website. I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to the chair to take us out.

**ANGIE RIVERA-MALPIEDE:**

Thank you, Pauletta. I'd like to thank the RTD staff who are on this phone call with me, who are able to answer all of your questions, they are the experts. Let me just say that safety is our number one priority right now during the COVID-19, that is why we are not collecting fares, and that is why we're instituting social distancing. We want to keep you, and our drivers, and our workers safe. I would just also like to acknowledge our employees that are taking care of sick family members, or don't have daycare because their daycare is closed, or those who might be ill. I would just say that we are in this all together, we don't know when it's going to end, but we are just so thrilled to be working in unison with you to make sure that your needs are being met and that we're able to provide this valuable service to our community. So with that, I would just like to say goodnight, be well.