

Regional Transportation District
District E Director Claudia Folska
April 16, 2020

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Good evening, everyone, and thank you for joining us for this live telephone town hall meeting hosted by the regional transportation district also known as RTD. I'm Pauletta Tonilas, assistant general manager of communications for RTD, and I'll be your moderator this evening as we talk about the latest with RTD and how we're addressing Covid-19. I hope that this finds you well and safe and healthy and warm joining us here tonight. We want to thank you for being on the line with us, as we're here to answer your questions. Also to hear your comments, if you have feedback for us. That is why we're here.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Joining me tonight is Claudia Folska, who is the RTD board member for District E, that is your RTD board district. Also sitting in tonight 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. So folks, it's all about you tonight. That's why we're on the line with you. So get cozy, get yourself something to drink, and we're here to hear what you have to say.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Now, if this is your first time on a telephone town hall, this is how it works. All you have to do is press star three on your keypad to get into the queue, and then you'll be asked some questions and get in the queue, and then you'll listen in on the call, and then when it's time for you to ask your question live, I will call upon you and you'll ask us your question. Or if you just simply have feedback for us, and we ask you to please keep it brief because we do want to get to as many of you as possible tonight. So again, if you'd like to get into the queue to ask us a question, press star three on your keypad.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

It is my pleasure to introduce to you RTD director, Claudia Folska for District E. Director Folska, it is a pleasure to be here with you tonight. We were talking earlier that this is your last telephone town hall as a director. So that's somber and sad, but we're pleased to have you here, Director.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Well, Pauletta, thank you so much. It's really a fun, usually, a fun time to have a town hall. I really enjoy the communication that we have together with our community. But unfortunately this is a really difficult time for everyone, not just in my district or the regional transportation district, Colorado, the state, but the whole planet. It's pretty overwhelming, I'd say. So part of this call has to be dedicated to talking about safety, which is a core value for us here at RTD.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

That means safety for our staff, our front line employees, really, who are essentially workers. We really, really care about their safety and well-being, and along with our passengers. So a couple of things to remember, guys, when you're out there riding the buses, please, please remember only go out when it's absolutely necessary, and make sure that when you go out, you wear a mask, right? We have some states and some cities like Los Angeles like state of New York requiring people to wear a mask when they go out. We don't know that we have this virus. We're asymptomatic and we could be transferring it, so it's important for us all to work together, and that's the only way we're going to be able to flatten

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that curve. So we need to wear masks, wear gloves. I do every time I go out. Or if you have to go to the doctor or something, by all means.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

RTD must continue to operate. We're operating at a pandemic schedule, so we've reduced our services, I think, about 40% as of April 19th. That will go into effect. But again, there are folks out there who absolutely need to use RTD. They go to work, they're on the front lines, they are government workers, they are working for our hospitals, and they need to use that transit. Remember it's free now, so anyone can use it at any time. Be sure to keep your distance. We have reduced the number of people on the buses. We have put things in place so that you can board from the back door. We have a plastic [teen 00:04:36], I guess, to keep people away from our drivers and keep them safe. Naturally folks in wheelchairs would be able to use the front part of the bus to get on if need be, but that's really important.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

We're in constant communication with our state, local and federal elected officials, and we're taking guidance from everyone. As soon as we have that information, RTD's assistant general manager of communications, Pauletta Tonilas, who's on the phone with us tonight, sends that out. She has an incredible staff in there working hard to keep everyone informed, our employees and our community.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

So there's a lot to cover tonight. I really want to spend my time listening to you guys, so please feel free to chime in, ask as many questions as you like, and we'll try to keep ourselves as brief as possible because it's all about you. We're going to beat this thing together, just remember that. So let's take our first question.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Absolutely, thank you so much, Director Folska. That is Director Claudia Folska. So, we are going to go to our first person who is in the queue to ask a question. If you would like to ask a question, press star three on your keypad and we'll get you in the queue. But we're going to go up first to Phyllis. Phyllis, go ahead.

PHYLLIS:

Hi. I was wondering as far as the ADA, as far as securement, how are we going to deal with that, when they want securement?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Okay, Phyllis. So securement, if you're in a wheelchair. That's a great question. Thank you for bringing that up. Like I just said, if you're in a wheelchair and you want to use a fixed route bus or light rail, you're going to get on the same way you always got on the bus, and the driver will secure you.

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PAULETTA TONILAS:

Right, and I think that's really important that while we're doing this, we're door boarding folks with a mobility device still can go through the front door and get that assistance, and we do have the area behind the driver and the wheelchair securement area roped off, as Director Folska said earlier, as an added protection. So that is still available. Let's go ahead next to Jason. Jason, go ahead.

JASON:

If you're providing hazard pay to the drivers, because they are putting themselves directly in the path of the virus, especially if they are doing securement? If not, do you plan on doing so?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

So this is about hazard pay and whether or not we'll be having hazard pay for our drivers. I'll ask Michael Ford, our chief operations officer. Michael, if you'd like to address that?

MICHAEL FORD:

Thank you, Pauletta. We certainly care about our operators and want to see them protected. We have seen other agencies do that. We have not come to a conclusion on that at this point, but we want to take every preventative effort to make sure that they're protected, give them the proper gear, giving masks, cleaning devices, aerosols, wipes and everything else. At this time, I don't have an answer for you, but it is something that we've heard, but we have not ruled or made any decision on that at this point.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Okay, thank you, Michael. That's Michael Ford, our chief operating officer. If you'd like to get in the queue, press star three on your keypad, and we will get to as many of you as we can in the next 50 minutes. We're going to go to Carmen. Carmen, go ahead.

CARMEN:

Yeah, this is Carmen. My main question, like I said, I do catch RTD, but I haven't been getting out because of that Corona Virus. I am 72 years old and I've got to be very careful. I do wear a mask, I wear my gloves, I stay six feet away from people. I do my best to stay healthy, but my question was I know right now, I mean, not right now but maybe in the near future, I was wondering how would I go about, like I said, I used to have access...

CARMEN:

I do have Access-a-Ride card, but the thing, it's expired. It expired [inaudible 00:09:06] December. I wasn't able to get it fixed, and I'm wondering how, as an elderly, how would I go about, later on, not right now, whenever the Corona Virus is gone, how do I go about getting that done...

PAULETTA TONILAS:

So is that request-

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CARMEN:

... in order...

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

So I'm sorry, I'm appreciate that, and I'm going to go out on a limb here and I'm going to say that we can reach out to you tomorrow and see what we can do to renew your eligibility... I bet you're still eligible, go through that with you. Here's why. More importantly than you going out right now, Phyllis... I hope that's correct, your name... is that you are able to get food. Right? That's essential. Right now RTD's Access-a-Ride for people that are eligible can order food at various locations like King Super, Safeway, and even some food banks. I think Pauletta can tell you specifically who they are. They will do the free food delivery. You can order it, pay for it online or over the phone with your credit card, and then they'll come and bring you the food and leave it on the porch for you so you don't even have to go out. Then you'll be able to stay healthy.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

In the meantime when it is time for you to go out, say, to a doctor, well, then we'll just renew your Access-a-Ride card. Okay? If you have any more questions, call us in the office. My number, and it's on the website, is 303-525-2411. You don't need to remember that right now. You can just look it up online. You can call the main number and ask for your director, and then we will sort those details out. You can also email us. We will do whatever needs to be done to make sure you and all of us in our district remain safe. That's an important thing I was going to talk about, the Access-a-Ride food delivery service, and I think that's real important for everyone to know about.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

But we can get into that in more detail later. I'd love to take another question.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Absolutely. We are going to go next to Dericka. I hope I'm saying that right? Dericka, go ahead.

DERICKA:

Hi. Yes, you said it right. My question is how limited will the buses be during the week?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Well, I'm going to answer that, but then I'm going to pass it over to Jessie Carter to give you specific details. But it's going to be operating on our Saturday and Sunday schedule. But in more detail, I think Mr. Carter can answer that question.

JESSIE CARTER:

Thank you, Director Folska. Yes, actually just as Director Folska said, we'll be operating bus service on week days using the Saturday level service. So we want you to go to the RTD website at RTD-denver.com. There is a Covid-19 service plan there. You can get the actual details on the route that you actually use, but yes, we will be running Saturday levels of service on weekdays, and Saturday level of

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service on Saturdays, and Sunday's levels of service on the bus. For rail, rail will be operating a Sunday schedule on the weekday, Saturday and Sundays.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Jessie, thank you very much. I do want to offer the general phone number where Phyllis or anyone else who has questions about your discount pass programs or anything to do with the service reduction that starts Sunday or anything else, it's 303-299-6000. 299-6000 is our general information number, and our telephone information center agents are fantastic. They are very well informed. They are wonderful customer servants, and so that's always a great resource for you.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Okay, we're going to go now to our next caller, who is on the line waiting to ask a question, and that's Anita. Anita, go ahead.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Thank you. I am wondering if they are going to continue with the no pay on Access-a-Ride like they are on the [inaudible 00:13:38] route buses?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Mr. Ford, do you have an idea about that?

MICHAEL FORD:

Yes, Director Folska, thank you for the question. Yes, we've suspended fares for all our services, even our contractors at this point. We still will continue to monitor the situation, and as we're able to restore our services, then other decisions will be made about fares. But for right now, all our services are free at this point.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Okay. Thank you very much. We're going to go now to Ezekiel. Ezekiel, go ahead.

EZEKIEL:

Yes. I am concerned-

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Go ahead. Yes.

EZEKIEL:

Yes. I'm am concerned about the safety of the virus and I don't want to get about sick right now, so how do you go by being safe?

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PAULETTA TONILAS:

Well, that's a great question. Director Folska, would you like to start with that and then we can have Michael talk about some of the specific things we're doing in the agency?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Yeah, absolutely, Pauletta. Like I said early on when I opened up this town hall, we are, at RTD, concerned for everybody's safety in our community, not only in District E but the region, the state, the nation. We have all kinds of protocols now implemented for cleaning the trains, the buses. There is this ultraviolet lighting thing, there is Lysol sanitizers, masks, gloves. This place is as clean as you can possibly get, but it also means we, the community, need to do our part.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

We have a part of responsibility in this whole thing too, that is, cannot use the service unless it's absolutely essential. That is that when you go out, you wear a mask and you wear gloves. That is you do your social distancing by standing six feet or more away from other people as best you can. It means that when you get on the bus, you can expect no more than 20 people on a bus. The bus will not pick up if it has 20 people on it, but another one will be called by the driver to dispatch, as buses are staged in areas along busier routes, to pick up people if the buses get to a capacity.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

So on a regular 40-foot bus, 20 people. On an articulated bus, it's 30 people. On a train car, it's 30 people per car. So we don't have a lot of traffic use on our trains, but certainly there are some bus routes that do have that. So it's a partnership. We are all in this together. You do your part, we do our part, and we'll be okay. We will get through this together. But mind you, this isn't going to happen overnight. This is a long haul, and you can expect to have this kind of safety precautions in place for some months to come, I would say. That's my thinking.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Michael, Pauletta, if you have something else to add, Jessie, please do so.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yeah, Michael go and talk-

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yeah, go ahead, Michael.

MICHAEL FORD:

Yes. So Michael Ford here. Just, Director Folska, you captured it very well, but again, additional cleaning that we've done. We've actually repurposed some of our [inaudible 00:17:27] resources to do even heavier cleaning, cleaning the driver's area, cleaning the seats, cleaning the windows, using higher caliber cleaning that addresses that virus. So you will find floors, our train cars, our buses getting much more detailed attention on cleaning. As Director Folska said, that everybody has a responsibility in this, but we also provide our employees with gloves, with Lysol spray, with wipes and other features to help

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continue to protect them along with masks as well. So again, as Director Folska said, it's everybody's responsibility, but you can rest assured that we're [inaudible 00:18:13] our responsibility in the cleaning of our buses, our rail cars, our facilities and protecting our operators with the appropriate equipment.

MICHAEL FORD:

So those are some of the things that we are doing, and as Director Folska indicated, there are some things that you can do to take personal responsibility and ensuring your safety as well. Thank you.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Thank you guys, very much. If you'd like to get in the queue to ask a question, just press star three on your keypad and we'll get you in the queue. We're going to go now to Sandra. Sandra, go ahead.

SANDRA:

Good evening. I bought a bus pass in April. I always buy a bus pass. My question is will I be given some kind of a credit when we go back to charging fares, or is there any compensation for my April bus pass? Can I continue to use it?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yes, Sandra, absolutely. We are offering exchanges. One thing I will let you know is you can call 303-299-6000. That's our customer service line, and those folks are doing that for people who had bought April passes. So that's just a quick answer to that. But again, 303-299-6000, and yes we are exchanging any pass product that people purchased. Director Folska, did you want to add something?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Yeah, I was going to say the same thing, actually. Thank you, Pauletta. Folks are going to be able to return them or get a credit or something like that when things get back to normal. But right now, the focus is we need to keep everybody safe. So call that number, like Pauletta said. 303-299-6000. Do we have another question?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

We do. We have them lined up. So we're going to go now to Atif. Atif, you're up next. Go ahead.

ATIF:

Good evening. I would like to say first, this is unique. If no other reason if I didn't have a question, I'm paying attention to other people's questions as well as your responses, and I think you guys are really on top of this. It's probably the most [crosstalk 00:20:32] do it if the general public doesn't know about it. But I think you are definitely on top of it. One question I have-

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Well, thank you.

ATIF:

... is, and again, I've learned a lot just by listening to other people's questions and you guys' answers. I think that's the bomb. However, are drivers being instructed not to allow persons to board either the rail or the bus lines if that person or persons do not have a mask on? No matter what they say, I've got to get to work. I've got to go pick up my kids from day care. If they don't have a mask on, are they still being allowed to board the buses? I'm thinking that the only person who can say yes or no would be the drivers. So what instructions are you giving the drivers should any of them be confronted with this type of a situation? That's my question.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Well, thank you so much, Atif. Yes, [inaudible 00:21:27] director.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Yeah, I'm going to take a piece of that question. I think it's really good. Different agencies have made these mandates. We do not want our drivers to come in conflict. They're already under a lot of pressure. Even before the pandemic, we didn't want them coming into conflict with people. There was a time when there was a challenge between wheelchairs and strollers, and so for... We want to protect our drivers and we want everyone to be safe. I don't know what the current policy is about telling people if you don't have a mask, you don't board the bus. I like it and I say we should do it. There are people, leaders in different municipalities in America who are saying that. So what do you think there, Pauletta?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yes, Director Folska. Thank you. So we are not requiring it and we're definitely not going to kick somebody off of a vehicle or not pick them up if they don't have a mask on. We have been messaging that we would really encourage people to wear a face covering or a mask, but again, as Director Folska said, we do not want to put our operators in a situation, or even our transit police, of being enforcers in this way. That's why we really ask people to use common sense and good judgment. Michael, I don't know if you have anything else that you'd like to add the instruction to operators?

MICHAEL FORD:

At this point, we are not trying to put operators into conflict there. We encourage people and you hear it from the CDC and others that if you go out, you should wear a mask. But we are not having drivers take that responsibility. We do provide our drivers masks and other employees as well. By way of this, I know this was a situation, I believe, in Philadelphia, where somebody was pulled off the bus because they didn't have a mask. But then shortly thereafter, the agency made the decision to allow people on without masks. So there's different situations going on throughout the industry. But at this time, we do not want to put our operators in harm's way. We're protecting them by having some social distancing, limiting the number of people on the bus, having a partition or barrier in the ADA section to give them some space and social distancing as well, and just giving them the tools and the wipes and other materials to keep their selves safe and distant from having to get any other exposure.

MICHAEL FORD:

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So we are taking measures, but to address people coming on the bus, we are not instructing drivers to get into that kind of altercation whatsoever.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

If I could add a little bit to that as well. Governor Polis has said over and over he can't sit there and enforce and make everybody wear a mask, but wearing a mask, social distancing, staying home, sheltering in place will reduce the curve or flatten the curve faster if we comply with this. It's up to us how long we want to endure this kind of situation.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Now, lots of people aren't able to get a mask, and we know that. I would encourage you to go online, if you're able to, or ask a friend to go online. There are tutorials all over the internet on how to make a homemade mask until they're more readily available at your local supermarkets or drug stores using things like a bandana, rubber bands and coffee filters. They're not perfect, but something is always better than nothing. Thank you so much for your call, really appreciate it.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Director Folska, what I'd like to ask you to just chime in and just briefly mention is an extraordinary thing that one of your fellow RTD board members took up, which is an initiative of a mask-making project. So do you want to touch on that just real quick about how we're all trying to think outside the box?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Oh, I would love to, yeah. Yeah, that's right. Nobody was ready for this and what to do. This is an absolutely uncharted territory, unprecedented global event. So bear with everybody; we're doing the best that we can. My colleague, Natalie Menten, she's director of District N, isn't it? N? M?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

It's M. M, yes. M as in Michael.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

[crosstalk 00:26:07] M like Menton. M like Menton, and we call it the Menton Mask. We're all, at RTD, so grateful and proud of her for getting volunteers from all over Colorado to make masks for our drivers and the people who are cleaning our buses and being exposed to the virus conditions. So she's awesome. If we're lucky, on the board we'll get a Menton mask. One of our other directors wanted one. I got in the queue. But she's really terrific for doing that, sewing them herself. I think other board members are also trying to sew masks. I'm not one of them for obvious reasons here, but yeah. So we're all doing a full court press, and it's yeoman's work and we're going to be at it for a long time.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Thank you very much, Director. Okay, we're going to go to Charletta. Charletta, go ahead and ask your question.

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CHARLOTTA:

Thank you, and I can echo what the gentleman said about I got some of my questions answered, and I just want to say hats off to you all there at the Regional Transportation District. The two questions that I had, and I want to change them just a tad bit based on what I already heard. Okay, so now the first thing is I've purchased bus passes because I reach out to the homeless and we provide bus passes. Then we also got some free bus passes for the Access-a-Ride and the light rail that we were going to give out. So will that be the same instructions for us, to get a refund on the bus passes that we purchased? Just contact that number and we'll be able to get those, because they will expire 2020. That's my first question.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yeah, and that is correct.

Yes, go ahead, Director.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

No, I was going to say the same thing, Pauletta. You got it. Thank you.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yeah. So the answer is yes, and then what was your next question?

CHARLOTTA:

Okay. Okay, next question is now, like I said, hats off to all of the things that you guys are doing to keep the drivers safe, also the passengers that board. But it's like a catch 22. If they're boarding without any stipulations to wear a mask, isn't that defeating the purpose for the drivers that are... and the riders that are being... that want to be safe and that are keeping their distance? So that's one thing.

CHARLOTTA:

But then I'm looking at the fact of my main question was is there any way to regulate that to where the word gets out, the buzz word, just like it got out that RTD is free. Can they say well, they're not really allowing anybody to board unless they're taking the responsibility, listening to what the governor says and putting that mask on? Couldn't that buzz word get out there as well so that you're not defeating your purpose of all the sterilization that doing on the bus? Because to me, it is too compact for it not to be affecting the other riders that are being safe. So what policy and what... Can RTD single-handedly say let's recommend that a mask must be worn, where the buzz word is out, just like it's free?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Well, Charletta, I'm so glad that you asked that question. Indeed, that is the policy. We encourage everyone, just like the governor, to wear a mask. I think what's going to happen is like what Governor Polis said. If you go out, you wear a mask. That's the rule in his place. He's not going to try to enforce it, but the social pressure of the other people around you will shun you and shame you into getting a mask or wearing it. We don't want people fighting and kicking people off buses either. People have to get where they got to go, and some people can't get them, and that's why the social distancing is also so

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important and why we will not allow more than 20 people on a 40-foot bus or 30 people on an articulated bus at any time.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Again, we go in and we're constantly cleaning everything. The seats, the railings, the doors, the thing to pull for the ding ding on the bus to say that you want to get off. We're doing our best effort. Like I said, it's a full court press on all of our parts. Michael, do you want to add something to that?

MICHAEL FORD:

Director Folska, I think you covered it very well, but again a full court press on our cleaning and social distancing, the masks for the operator. I think we urge and encourage people to, while they're out there, to wear masks to help protect, but again I think the social distancing, the cleaning and protection of the operator, and just the overall education of what kind of climate we're in and people doing the responsible thing is what we're trying to do. But we don't want our drivers to be at the spear or at the tip of trying to get into some kind of altercation. But I think you're seeing more and more people, I think, complying to go to supermarkets. Out on the streets I have noticed a big turn up of people wearing masks just because of the pressure, I also would conclude as well. So no, nothing else to add. Thank you.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Thank you. Next question, Pauletta?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Thanks very much. Thank you. Yeah, next question is Connie. Connie, go ahead?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Hey there, Connie, are you still there?

CONNIE:

Hello? Hi, I'm here.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yeah, go ahead. Go ahead, Connie.

CONNIE:

Yeah, sorry. So I was saying thank you so much for having this town hall. It's really important for our community to know what's going on. So my question [inaudible 00:31:57] Carter. The first part of my question is after COVID recovery begins to ramp up and folks are going back to work and school and everything else, and people start riding the RTD again, a lot of people are going to be out of jobs, people are in financially hard times, as you know, and it's going to be very straining. What things are you going to have in place about making RTD one, affordable moving forward so that we can combat this and not continue to have hardship financially? Two, how long will it be free so that folks can go out and look for jobs and things like and get back on their feet economically? What ways is RTD going to support the community? So that's my first question.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Okay. So Connie, that is a great question. I don't think about has a real answer for that right now, and I don't think you're going to get back to school. I have a couple of PhDs myself, and I talk to people in academia on a regular basis. The feeling that I'm hearing is that you're not going back to school in the fall, maybe in January, because... unless there's more ubiquitous testing that there's a therapy or a vaccine to cure the problem. Likewise, you can expect that for, I think, even the governor mentioned it yesterday, these big events like Red Rocks and [Test C Center 00:33:24] and so on and these big sporting events.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

So I think that we've seen that the government, the federal government, Congress and the president have been pretty responsive in sending some funds to support folks, whether it's going to be a \$1200 or \$600 a week in unemployment, small business loans. So for example in the Cares Act, we just received... Well, the transit agencies across America received \$25 billion in the Cares Act that just came out. Our share, which was based on a formula, was \$232 million, and that's something that we can use to reimburse ourselves or our employees and our essential workers. Our drivers, I think, have been designated that.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Then for the PTE things. So I think it's something that we're going to wait and see. I imagine that the federal government will put some mechanisms in place to enable transit agencies to ease back into their fares, and I think we have a great relationship with our federal delegation, and they do a great deal of work for us in Washington. That's why we've been able to build over \$5.5 billion of a multi-modal transportation system like the light rail, like the commuter rail, the L Line, like the Flatiron Flyer up to Boulder and so forth. So we have a very good relationship with the United States department of transportation and our federal delegation. So I would hope moving forward that they will be able to take that into account, and it looks like they really are. They want businesses and people to get back on their feet and they know you guys are hurting. Everybody is hurting. The economic impact is devastating to this country and to our community, so thank you so much for your question.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Thank you, Director Folska. If you want to get in the queue, you can push star three. We're going to go next to Victoria. Go ahead, Victoria.

VICTORIA:

Hello. I'd just like to first of all say thank you for the opportunity to participate in the conference. Just thank you for the great work that you're doing in attempting to keep the public safe. I have two questions, and one of them is when does the free scheduling... the free service and scheduling, the limited scheduling, when does that start for the bus and the train?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Well, the-

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VICTORIA:

My next-

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Okay.

VICTORIA:

Go on, I'm sorry.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Okay, Victoria. The first part of your question is it's free now, and the limited service begins on Sunday, April 19th. Your next question?

VICTORIA:

My next question is usually, well, frequently the train that comes to the Downing Station often only has one car. So are they going to add another car since it's limited to 30 people?

VICTORIA:

That's a suggestion.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Yeah, I'm going to let Jessie, but my feeling is no, they're not going to add another car because normally people would be cramming in those cars to go downtown to work. They're sheltering at home and working from home on their computer, so usually you're seeing about four, five people in a car as it is. But Jessie?

JESSIE CARTER:

Okay, thank you, Director Folska. That was an excellent question. We will continue to monitor the level of ridership on the L Line. As it stands right now, we're not seeing the need, as Director Folska mentioned, we're not getting the level of ridership that we normally would, especially on the L Line at this time. However, we'll continue to monitor it, and if we do see those numbers grow, we do have the ability to add a car on the L Line. Thank you.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Okay, thank you guys very much. We're going to go Dee. Go right to Dee.

DEE:

Yes, I've been working with senior citizens for over 20 years, and we've enjoyed the senior ride program. Is that going to come back after this foolishness is all over with?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Jessie, do you want to go ahead and answer that about the senior ride?

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Jessie Carter:

Actually I think this might be a better... a question better answered by Michael. I'll give him the opportunity, but it's my understanding that the senior ride program will be returning.

MICHAEL FORD:

That is correct. This is Michael Ford.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Chime in?

MICHAEL FORD:

Yes, that, Jessie, is correct. That would be coming back obviously when conditions are warranted. But we are looking to that service to be restored at some point when it's appropriate.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Great. Thank you very much. Okay. We're going to go to Hank next. Hank, you can ask your question.

HANK:

Yeah, hi. I have two questions. The first one, I'm visually impaired and so I take the R line to Anschutz. I have an appointment next month. So my first question is if I'm on the ramp and the train is full at the front of the train, will the operator give me a moment to find another spot down the line to board?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

You know what? Do you use a cane, Hank?

HANK:

Yes. Yes.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Okay. No, I'm blind and I use a cane, and so the driver will let you on. If somebody needs to move, then they need to move. But the front of the car where you get on the ramp, and I'm very familiar, it will be made accessible. I think that's the way it is anyway. Is that right, Mr. Ford?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Michael?

MICHAEL FORD:

That is correct. That is correct, yeah, Director Folska.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Okay. Great. Thank you very much. Hopefully that is a sufficient answer. Thank you. We're going to go to Latandra now. Latandra?

LATANDRA:

So my question already was answered, but I'm just going to elaborate more on it. It's about the sanitation of the buses. How frequently are they sanitized and wiped down and cleaned within a day?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Michael, would you like to go ahead and answer that about our cleaning process?

MICHAEL FORD:

Yes. They're getting cleaned quite frequently, in the mornings, during the midday, if they're coming back into the garage. It depends sometimes on the line and the interline and when they're coming back. We also are trying to look at other top opportunities while in the field, but that has not panned out at this point given the time that those buses are running. But we do a thorough cleaning throughout the day. It depends on the route, but I would say at least two, potentially three times. But it depends on the particular route, and that's the best answer I can give you. But it's a higher level of cleaning, more detail and more people on a bus or on a train doing more work and using different chemicals to eradicate or reduce the spread of the virus.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Okay, Michael, thank you very much. Going to go now to Gloria. Gloria, you're up next.

GLORIA:

Hello? Hello?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yes, Gloria, go ahead.

GLORIA:

Good afternoon. I've learned a lot and you've answered a lot of my concerns, honestly, through the other people's questions. So my question is if I understand that you all have cut out a lot of the bus stops now, and I'm just wondering will any of them be... that will be restored?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

You're talking about the bus stops, and so Jessie, do you want to address the bus stops and the consolidation process?

JESSIE CARTER:

Sure. Again, thanks for your call, Gloria. We did have a series of routes that were looked at for bus stop consolidation where we're trying to speed up the system and make it more reliable by reducing the

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number of times that it stops by looking at the utilization or how often a bus stop is used. That program, we don't have any plans moving forward with any newer bus stop consolidations. However we did do a bus stop consolidation on the route 40, which is on Colorado Boulevard, and the route three on Alameda, on East Alameda.

JESSIE CARTER:

So, I understand your question was about the Colorado and Alameda bus stops, and there, we still do have the bus stops in both directions allowing for transfers between those two major routes. However, we have, as you questioned, we have actually returned bus stops in the recent past due to customers needing access to it if they had disabilities, if the customer had a disability that made it harder for them to access the bus route. So I'm hoping that answers your question? I have taken your number down and I will give you a call tomorrow to get a little more information from you. Thank you.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Okay, Jessie. Thank you very much. We have about 17 minutes left and we want to get to as many of you as possible. We're going to go up next to Greg. Greg, go ahead.

GREG:

Yes, Ma'am. Do we get a refund for our bus fare that we bought as King Super?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Yes, yes, you do. All you have to do...

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yes, go ahead, Director.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Sorry about that. All you have to do is call 303-299-6000 and they will direct you as to how to get a refund.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Thank you. Thank you very much. Okay. We're going to go to Mark. Mark, you're up next. Hey there, Mark, are you still on the line with us?

MARK:

Pardon me, yes. Can you hear me?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yes. Go ahead.

MARK:

Hello?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Thank you. Yeah.

MARK:

Yeah, hi. Thanks for taking our questions. It's really great. I just had really two quick questions. The first one's a little bit related to some of the questions that people have had a little bit earlier, more specifically focused on the eco-pass, however. Before we shut everything down, I was notified that I had to make a decision as to whether or not to keep my eco-pass, which I get deducted from my payroll, either to let it go, at which point I would lose it for 90 days, or to keep it. So I kept it because I had no idea what it was going to look like in 90 days, and I still don't, actually, in 90 days. So, my question to you guys, the first one, is there any... where did that policy come from, first of all? Is that an RTD thing or is that coming from somewhere else? Is there some sort of a contingency plan if people are hanging onto the eco-passes month at a time, but they're realizing they're still shut in over several months, and they're not willing to let it go for 90 days because they're not sure if they're going to need it before 90 days is up?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yeah. Mark, thank you so much for that, and obviously this virus has thrown everything up to the wind, right? We're all having to change our processes. So as it relates to our discounted pass programs and our special programs like eco-pass and the neighborhood pass program and so on and so forth, we are working with the pass coordinators to accommodate the loss of time of benefiting from those passes. The folks who administer those pass programs work in my department in the communications department. I have your number and I will have them give you a call because we do have a model that we're going to be working through so that we can accommodate the time lost on those pass programs. They'll be able to answer any other questions way better than me. So we will make sure someone gets back to you. Thank you very much for that.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Okay. We'd like to go to our Artemis. I hope I'm saying that right. Artemis, go ahead.

ARTEMIS:

Yeah, well, I'm curious about the use of masks. When you say that it's possible to let somebody on without a mask, why don't the drivers have masks to give away to people that don't have the resources or the know-how to make a mask? If you give them back, they can be sterilized and used again, or that person leaves with a mask to visit the rest of their lives.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Thank you so much for that question. That's really a great one. Like I said earlier in this call, unfortunately the masks just don't exist. We have board members who are making them in their home for our staff and our employees, and the governor, like other governors across America, are trying desperately to get them. So the fact is that they're just not there. They're not available. My hope is that in the future, we would be able to have them plentiful, just like you walk into a restaurant or someplace and there's hand sanitizer everywhere. You know that we've had a shortage of that. We've had

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shortages of toilet paper. These are very strange times. It's a great idea. When it's possible, I think that we'd be more than happy to make them available.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Thank you very much, Director Folska. All right. We've got Brandon up next. Brandon, go ahead.

BRANDON:

Hi, how are you doing?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Good.

BRANDON:

First of all, I just wanted to say I'm completely astounded by the job Director Folska has done in this. One in particular was an elderly lady that I think you said you're going to get in contact to later tomorrow or [inaudible 00:49:07] to do that. I think that's just amazing. But my question is has there been considerable thought to allowing specific buses at specific time be allocated to just the elderly?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

That's a very interesting idea, Brandon. What do you think, Director Folska?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Yeah, I think that is interesting. We have, for a lot of the older adults, we call them super old [inaudible 00:49:36] because they're super heroes, right? We do. They have Access-a-Ride. Right now we really don't want folks going out in the first place, especially older folks. If they're older, 70... That's not that old any more, but 80s, 90s, they're at the highest risk of all from getting this and not recovering very well. Then we do have retirement communities that have buses that go through there and support them, but Jessie, what do you know? We don't have specially designated buses for older folks, do we?

JESSIE CARTER:

Director Folska, thanks. Actually the services that we do operate, we do have what's called a senior shopper service that is used by a lot of elderly, and then we have our senior ride. The senior shoppers' program will be maintained while we are under the COVID service plan. However, the senior ride program has not been. One of the things that we have to be careful with when we look at segregating any community, either by age or anything, is staying within the guidelines of our FDA standards as far as being open to all, pretty much. So, it's something we have to be very, very careful with, but we do offer senior only type services in normal times and are continuing our shopper special for seniors during this... even in the COVID plan.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

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Great. Thank you very much, Jessie. That's Jessie Carter, Manager of service planning and scheduling. Okay, we're going to go up next to-

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

And the best one we've got. He's great.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

He is pretty good. He's a rock star. He's been with RTD a long time and he's definitely one of all of our go-to guys. So, yeah.

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Yeah.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Okay, we're going to go now to Deija, that's pretty. That's a nice [crosstalk 00:51:39].

DEIJA:

Hi. Yes, can you hear me?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yes, we can.

DEIJA:

So my question for you is I work at Target, so I use the RTD. For the Google maps, is that going to be up to date? I always call and sometimes it's just not on the schedule when you look it up on Google's maps or you call, they have a different time. Even today I was waiting for the bus for 20 minutes and it had come five or 10 minutes early. It just wasn't up to date. Are those, with the new changes, going to be on track?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Thank you very much for that, Deija. Yes, so our systems integrate... The data from any service change gets integrated into all of our information systems, and that's what allows Google and Transit and other third party apps to be able to have our data and showcase that. So the answer is yes, it should. So we're hopeful of that. But when the service change starts this Sunday, April 19th, dropping us down to a Saturday service schedule for bus service and a Sunday service schedule for rail, that all should be integrated. Then of course you always can go through RTD's tools, our website and our mobile app as well. But yes, hopefully that will all be integrated to Google as well. So thank you for that.

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PAULETTA TONILAS:

Michael, go ahead and ask your question. Hey there, Michael, you still with us?

MICHAEL FORD:

Michael Ford here, yes. Oh, sorry.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Actually Michael, I'm trying to go to...

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Wrong Michael.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

I'm trying to go to a caller Michael, and I'm seeing if Michael is still with us. So Michael who's in the queue, are you still with us?

MICHAEL:

Yes.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Great. Go for it.

MICHAEL:

I have a couple of questions and comments. Can some efforts be made to have the drivers monitor that 15 passenger limit on buses? Because I've been on several buses that have exceeded that greatly, and I don't think there's any monitoring going on.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Yeah, that's a great one for you, Michael Ford talk about this.

MICHAEL FORD:

Yes.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Go ahead, Michael.

MICHAEL FORD:

I appreciate the question. No, the drivers are instructed to call in and let us know when they're getting close to capacity, and that's the 15 on a 40-foot bus and 20 on a artic or on a regional bus, and 30 on a train car. What we're doing right now is we have what's called loop extras, which we have other buses

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positioned in different areas that can be an extra section. So we can ensure that there's going to be enough capacity for social distancing. We encourage our drivers to not go over that limit and call for backup, and then we have another bus stationed in close proximity that can be another trailer of the bus. We definitely have data, statistics and information that we know where some of our high ridership is, and we try to accommodate that by having additional drivers and buses at those critical areas so they can help mitigate and reduce the loads.

MICHAEL FORD:

So the drivers are very keen on that. They're actually thankful for that, and we also have supervisors in the area along with security to help with mitigation of that well. So I'm not sure what you're seeing, but our drivers have been instructed to do that, and we want them to have the freedom to be able to navigate and have the protection they need and to call in for support and resource. So that's what they've been instructed to do. We'll continue to monitor that, and thank you for the question. Thank you.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Okay. We have about five minutes, so we're going to go ahead to another caller. If we can keep it brief, that would be great so we can get through to answer you. That would be going to Bob. Go ahead, Bob.

BOB:

Hi there. Thank you. Thank you for taking my call. My question is... by the way I'm just a little disturbed to hear that... I just got a notice from Wall Street Journal that as of yesterday, John's Hopkins is reporting that nearly 5000 died in 24 hours in the United States from Corona Virus. This is a very serious situation, obviously. I'd like to know with regard to the 15 passenger limit and social distancing, some other transit agencies such as have designated specific seats not to sit in to allow for social distancing of six feet. It strikes me that, if I'm not mistaken, the number of 15 as a ceiling for passenger capacity on a 40-foot bus is the same number as we have directors on our RTD board of directors. Would it be possible to have a photograph of them sitting in 15 seats demonstrating modeling that 15-passenger social distancing? And or could we get a diagram of what a bus would look like so folks would know what seats to sit in to allow for that?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

I think that is a great question, and with the power of technology today and Pauletta's office, they can put our photos, of which we have in the board office, in those designated seats and take a photo and put it online. So the technology's there for that, for sure.

BOB:

Awesome.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

I think that's a fascinating idea, actually. It really is. I'm going to have to think about that because that's a really interesting thought.

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CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Yeah. Yeah.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

So real quickly, we're going to go to Dimetria. Dimetria, if you could make this quick, we'll try to answer your questions quickly.

DIMETRIA:

Okay, I'll make it quick. Thank you for taking my question, and I know you guys have answered a lot of questions regarding volunteering, passengers wearing a mask on board voluntarily. But what if a driver has this situation on their bus where a person who is not wearing a mask and... gets on the bus and starts coughing and sneezing. Some people don't have no social skills where they would cover their mouth when they're coughing and sneezing. How would an operator handle that?

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Michael, you want to give that a try?

MICHAEL FORD:

Okay. Yes. A driver would probably call in to get some help, describe what's going on the bus, probably talk to the individual to see if they could modify their behavior, and probably get some help or maybe offer that... maybe there might be other alternatives for them. It's a difficult situation, and we don't want to put a driver into harm's way, but we recognize that we're... What we're trying to do is create the social distancing, protect the operator, create distance. There's a divide between the ADA section and the passenger section, and we are trying to limit the opportunities for these things. But we're counting on people to do the right thing as well. But to the operator, they have resources that are available to them, that they can call for support or help, and that's what we would instruct them to do in this case.

PAULETTA TONILAS:

Thank you very much, Michael. Folks, we've come to the end of our telephone town hall meeting, and we're so thankful that you were on the line with us tonight. It was great hearing from you. To round us out tonight, I'm going to go ahead and turn it over to Director Folska for some parting words. Director?

CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

Thanks so much, Pauletta. This is a great thing. I told you at the beginning of the call, I love our town halls, I love RTD, I actually love my RTD. You guys are awesome. It's been a great eight years working for you. I love our staff. RTD is an awesome transit agency. The folks that are here on the phone with you tonight, Pauletta, Jessie Carter, Henry Stopplecamp, you didn't get to hear from him, but I'm sure he's happy to... just to relax and eat a bonbon or two, and Michael Ford, our COO. Guys, thank you so much for everything you do, is all about the drivers and want you to thank them every time you see them. They're out there, they're risking their lives to help everybody get everything done, their essential needs. Thank you so much. Thanks to CRL for hosting these town halls, making sure that everybody gets a chance to call in.

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CLAUDIA FOLSKA:

If you didn't get your questions answered tonight or something comes up for you in the future, don't hesitate to reach out to me. If you like, my information is on the RTD-denver.com website, Claudia Folska, director of district E. Again, the phone number for customer service is 303-299-6000. Thank you very much. It's an honor serving you and stay well.