

Telephone Town Halls – Spring 2020

Frequently Asked Questions

RTD hosted a series of virtual town halls between April 16 and May 11 in each of the 15 RTD districts to discuss the agency's response to COVID-19, impacts on service and projects, as well as the health and safety measures that are in place.

More than 16,700 Denver metro area residents participated in the calls and asked RTD's Board members, senior leadership and other staff questions. Below are the most frequently asked questions from these telephone town hall meetings and answers to those questions.

1. Does RTD have any plans in place to put hand sanitizers and wipes on buses and light rail?
 - The supply of sanitizer supplies, as well as masks and some cleaning supplies, became very limited with the onset of COVID-19.
 - RTD has been able to secure a stock of these supplies for employees – namely our operators – and continues to place and receive orders to keep supplies available for staff. Currently, we do not have an ample supply to make them available on all of our buses and trains.
2. How is RTD helping individuals with disabilities access our services safely?
 - RTD's Access-a-Ride service is still operating, including grocery delivery to our paratransit customers to prevent them from having to go out to stores or food banks.
 - RTD has implemented rear-door boarding on buses to allow for social distancing between riders and operators. Any passengers with disabilities requiring assistance with boarding can board at the front door and use the ramp if necessary.
3. Is RTD enforcing the mask rule?
 - RTD has a Use of Face Covering Policy that requires employees to wear a face covering when in public and on duty.
 - Operators are required to wear face coverings.
 - We urge all our riders to take responsibility for the safety of themselves and others by wearing a mask or face covering.
 - RTD is not putting our operators in the position of being enforcers, as they need to be focused on moving people safely.
 - We ask our riders to be our partners in safety and follow the spirit of the local and state orders as they are intended.
 - Effective May 6, all people over the age of 3 out in public in the City and County of Denver must wear a face covering – including while riding public transportation.

Other jurisdictions may have similar requirements, and riders are encouraged to check city and county websites.

- Enforcing mask orders is a challenge for RTD given the inconsistent orders across the metro area. Since RTD serves eight counties and 40 cities, riders traverse through different cities and counties during their travel. Plus, RTD doesn't have enough transit police officers or guards to enforce the mask orders across the whole system.
4. How often is the bus wiped down? The handles and everything need to be wiped down and it looked like it hasn't been wiped down.
 - Bus and rail vehicles are cleaned daily, including wiping down handrails and other high-touch surfaces with an industrial-strength disinfectant cleaner.
 - Videos of our cleaning processes are available here: [Bus cleaning](#) and [rail vehicle cleaning](#)
 5. What additional PPE is being provided to drivers? Where can people donate PPE for drivers?
 - RTD has distributed hand sanitizer, face masks and gloves to our front-line employees and continues to distribute these items as they become available from suppliers.
 - Several organizations and individuals have donated masks and face coverings to RTD for front-line employees.
 - RTD Director Natalie Menten organized a mask-making project, and she and her many volunteers produced 1,700 face coverings for operators.
 - RTD's own Upholstery Shop pivoted and starting making cloth face coverings for staff.
 - To donate masks and other PPE, please contact Brian Iacono at 303-299-2226.
 6. How does grocery pick up work?
 - Grocery pickup is available for free to Access-a-Ride customers. For details, visit www.rtd-denver.com/services/access-a-ride.
 7. Can I get a refund on my passes or tickets I already bought?
 - Refunds or exchanges are available for RTD fare media. To review information on how to process a request, visit the [RTD website](#) or call RTD Customer Care at 303-299-6000.
 8. Are you still hiring in the current situation?
 - RTD continues to hire operators, mechanics and other positions. Visit www.rtd-denver.com/careers for open positions.
 - Training processes have had to be restructured to respect social distancing, so getting operators trained and into service is taking longer.
 9. How do people with service animals access RTD during this period?
 - There are no changes and riders may continue the use of service animals.
 10. Is Access-a-Ride free as well at the moment?
 - Fare collection is suspended on all services due to COVID-19, including Access-a-Ride.
 - RTD is requiring its drivers and passengers to wear a mask, or face covering, while traveling on Access-a-Ride for the safety of themselves and others.
 - Access-a-Ride will suspend 5-day advanced booking allowing customers to book for next-day trips only. For questions call 303-299-2960 Relay Line: 711. Monday - Friday, 8 - 5pm.
 11. Do we get an extension or refund on an EcoPass?

- RTD will provide pro-rated refunds and/or credits to EcoPass employers and organizations for the time of suspended fare collection.
 - We do not know what the length of time will be for rear-door boarding and suspended fare collection at this time, but we will process refunds and credits after fare collection is resumed.
 - Employees should contact their employer for questions about payroll deductions for passes.
12. When will you start selling bus passes again?
- RTD has not made the determination on when fare collection will be reinstated.
 - Contact RTD Customer Care at 303-299-6000 if you have questions about fares and passes.
13. When will regular service come back, including routes that have been suspended due to COVID-19?
- We are currently operating Saturday bus/Sunday light rail schedules, which reduces our service levels by about 40%. The buses and operators freed up by this move are being assigned to provide backup service on bus routes that are experiencing larger loads and reaching recommended capacities of 15 people on standard buses, 20 on larger buses.
 - RTD is monitoring ridership and passenger loads as businesses and services re-open. As ridership returns, RTD will adjust and increase service as demand grows. Service is anticipated to be restored to regular levels as noted in the current service plan.
14. How are you ensuring social distancing on buses, when the service has been reduced?
- RTD continues to ask our riders to be our partners in safety – only take essential trips, wear a face covering and follow social distancing guidelines.
 - The time patrons can spend inside RTD facilities has been limited to no more than 10 minutes prior to the departure of their vehicle.
 - Operators are calling dispatch when they see buses becoming crowded. We have set capacity limits to no more than 15 people per standard bus, 20 people per larger bus and 30 people per train car at a time.
 - Additional buses are staged on the most popular routes so they can be dispatched to pick up waiting passengers at bus stops once capacity limits are reached on buses.
15. When will you start collecting fares again?
- We aren't sure yet when we'll start collecting fares. There's no set timeframe, but we're monitoring how health guidelines change and when the region starts to recover. We will publicize it widely when we do plan to begin fare collection again.
16. What is the most up-to-date method of getting proper time information on particular routes?
- Check the RTD website for route information through RTD [NextRide](#) or call RTD Customer Care at 303-299-6000. Third party apps are also available, including Transit app and Google maps.
17. Have you thought about using Google, Transit app and other apps to notify riders when a bus or train is at capacity?
- Some third-party applications are using data to provide information to users about vehicle capacity or estimated crowd size. Visit these apps directly for information.
18. How much was RTD given in CARES act and how are you using it?
- The agency can expect to receive \$232 million through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, signed by President Donald J. Trump on March 27.
 - The funds are provided on a reimbursement basis as COVID-related expenses occur.

- The funds are intended to help offset the loss of revenues and can be applied to costs associated with COVID-19, such as personal protective equipment, cleaning supplies, operations expenses and labor.
19. What is the financial impact to RTD from COVID-19 and how will RTD move forward to ensure service?
- RTD is in the process of evaluating the economic impact to the agency. Reduced ridership and fare suspension along with sales tax revenues that make up a large part of the agency's funding, have dropped significantly and are anticipated to have a substantial financial impact.
 - For the most recent information on this topic, visit the RTD Board webpage to access audio and transcripts of the [RTD Board Financial Administration & Audit Committee](#).
20. When the quarantine ends, what does RTD plan to do to restore ridership?
- Service was reduced on April 19 as part of RTD's [COVID-19 service plan](#), in response to decreased ridership and demand. Service will be restored as the region reopens and demand increases. RTD continues to monitor passenger load for increases in ridership and will add service as ridership grows.
 - The Reimagine RTD project, which was launched in 2019, comes at the perfect time. The intent of the effort is to analyze how RTD provides service now and how best to optimize resources to provide service in the future that best meets the transit needs of the region. The agency's financial and resource constraints, including those related to COVID-19, will be considered as part of the Reimagine RTD process. Opportunities for public input will initiate in the summer of 2020. For updates and to provide feedback, visit www.rtd-denver.com/reimagine.
 - RTD will implement a widespread communications campaign to help restore ridership and instill the public's confidence in riding transit.