

RTD Accountability Committee Proposal

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) board, in collaboration with the Governor of Colorado and the Transportation chairs of the General Assembly, will create the RTD Accountability Committee (the “Committee”). The Committee will be fully independent from RTD.

The Committee’s mission is to provide feedback and a set of recommendations for improvement to the operations of and statutes related to RTD, to the board and staff of the RTD, the Governor, the General Assembly, and the public. The Committee will be appointed by July 15, 2020 and will hold its first meeting by July 31, 2020 and will continue for one year. If the Committee decides additional work is needed, the Committee may continue its work for a second year, or may recommend other action to continue this work.

Pending additional arrangements, the Committee will be hosted by an independent agency. The Committee will be staffed with resources provided by RTD. Using resources, the Committee may contract with services of a third-party consultant with expertise in transit authority operations.

RTD, the Governor’s office, and the leadership of the General Assembly will jointly announce and commit to the process through a joint press release and/or press conference.

The Committee may issue a preliminary report by December 31 of 2020, and shall issue a report with recommendations no later than July 1, 2021. It shall submit the report to the Governor, the chairs of the transportation committees in the Senate and House of Representatives and the RTD Board of Directors. The Committee will hold one or more public hearings on the report and will consider public comment and adopt these recommendations as appropriate.

The District shall make each report issued by the Committee available to the public on its website. The RTD Board shall, within 45 days of issuance of the report, either adopt the recommendations or issue a report stating its reasons for not adopting specific recommendations.

The Committee will consist of eleven members. Appointing authorities may receive suggested names and input for the committee from RTD, DRCOG, Metro Mayors, community organizations and members of the public; however, it is essential that the committee is perceived as independent, and free to do its work without interference. The Governor will appoint five members of the Committee and the transportation chairs of the House and Senate will appoint six members of the Committee. The Committee composition should reflect the diverse political views and partisan makeup of RTD’s service area. The RTD board chair will appoint two ex officio members from the RTD board.

The table below shows the recommended expertise for the board, although the goal is to appoint qualified, respected community members; actual members’ expertise may vary.

Accountability Committee Makeup (11 members)

Members
Four Local Government Representatives within District
At least one member with economic development expertise
At least one member with expertise on issues facing transit riders with disabilities
At least one member with human resources expertise, preferably for transit agencies
At least one member with transit services expertise or multi-modal expertise
At least one member with transportation equity expertise
At least one member with financial planning and management expertise
At least one member with urban planning expertise

The Governor will make the following appointments:

- 1 member with financial planning expertise
- 1 member with transportation equity expertise
- 1 member with urban planning expertise
- 1 member with economic development expertise
- 1 member who represents a local government served by RTD

The chairs of the House and Senate transportation committees will make the following appointments:

- 1 member with expertise on issues facing transit riders with disabilities
- 1 member with human resources expertise, preferably for transit agencies
- 1 member with transit services or multi-modal expertise
- 3 members who represent a local government served by RTD

Committee Scope and Organization:

The parties will enter into an interagency agreement or letter agreement that allocates up to \$200,000 for staffing and resources such as consulting for the committee. The committee will endeavor to use existing resources when possible. If \$200,000 is determined by the committee to be inadequate to fulfill the work, the committee and RTD will work in good faith to find other potential funding sources.

The Committee shall elect a Chair and Vice-Chair at their first meeting, and shall meet as often as necessary to complete its tasks.

The Committee shall perform a comprehensive review of the District, taking into account the perspectives of the staff, board, employees and the public. The District will provide the Committee access to board members, employees, consultants and documents.

The work of the committee should include a review of at least the following:

- A review of recent financials from the district, including any recent audits and a thorough review of the agency's use of CARES Act stimulus funds;
- The structure of RTD governance and executive leadership
- A review of the district's short-term and long-term prioritization of resources to maximize the district's limited dollars for the benefit of taxpayers;
- How RTD can better serve all riders including those with disabilities, how it can better serve transit-dependent populations, a review of the district's plans for how to expand ridership, how the district is addressing coverage gaps, how the district is prioritizing route planning, and how the district is serving its entire service area;
- A determination of the long-range financial stability of the agency, and how the agency can achieve stability and growth while still meeting its core mission.

In issuing its report and recommendations, the Committee may consider but is not limited to including the following topics:

1. District's partnerships with local governments;
2. Use of CARES Act and other pandemic-related funds to support RTD's mission;
3. ADA compliance and accessibility of District services and facilities, including paratransit;
4. Equity in services provided to the District, analyzed in terms of geography, social equity, fare structures, and needs of transit-dependent populations;
5. Organizational assessment (financial health, human resources, work culture, management and governance of the District);
6. Services provided by the District, plans and criteria for expansions or reductions in service;
7. Review of current state audit, including with respect to staff management, retention, and hiring;
8. District's efforts to address the state's climate change goals;
9. District's role in fostering economic development