Systemwide Fare Study and Equity Analysis

Customer and Community Meeting #3
October 20, 2022
Outline

- What is the Study?
- Fare Structure Alternatives Development
- Fare Structure Alternatives
  - Alternative A
  - Alternative B
  - Comparison
- Other Policies and Programs
- Next Steps and Staying Engaged
Presenters

Bill Sirois
Senior Project Manager

Chris Quinn
Project Manager

Carl Green Jr.
Deputy Project Manager
Question and Answer

- **Questions**: Enter your question in the Q&A box at any point during the presentation. Your question may be answered live (out loud), in the chat box or in the meeting notes following the meeting.

- **Feedback**: Send ideas and input to hosts and panelists in the chat box.

- **Polling**: A pop-up question will appear on your screen. Select your answer and click "Submit."
Poll Question #1

- In which county do you live?
  - Adams
  - Arapahoe
  - Boulder
  - Broomfield
  - Denver
  - Douglas
  - Jefferson
  - Weld
  - Other (enter your county in the Q&A box)
Poll Question #2

- Did you attend the previous Systemwide Fare Study Customer and Community Meetings?
  - I attended the April 2022 meeting but *not* the June 2022 meeting
  - I attended the June 2022 meeting but *not* the April 2022 meeting
  - I attended *both* the April and June meetings
  - I did not attend either meeting
What is the Study?

Study Overview and Goals
RTD Systemwide Fare Study and Equity Analysis
Study Overview

Why is RTD conducting another fare study?
- To make RTD services more equitable and easier to understand
- To align fares with service value provided
- To consider lowering fare revenues to accomplish broader affordability and ridership goals

Systemwide Fare Study Goals

**Equity**
- Support transit reliant/financially burdened customers
- Provide equitable and fair access to fares, products, and discounts
  - Regardless of race, color, national origin, income status, and for other marginalized communities

**Affordability**
- Align fares with the value of the service received

**Simplicity**
- Make fares easy to understand
  - With standardized discounts and streamlined fare payment options
Study Timeline

**April – May 2022**
- Customer Feedback (Milestone #1)

**June – July 2022**
- Identification of Conceptual Fare Options
- Customer Feedback (Milestone #2)

**Fall 2022**
- Evaluation of Fare Structure Alternatives
- Customer Feedback (Milestone #3)

**Early 2023**
- Development of Recommendations
- Customer Feedback (Public comment and hearing process)
- Board Decision on New Fare Structure

**Implementation of New Fare Structure**

*Timing TBD*
Fare Structure Alternative Development
Considerations in Developing Alternatives

- Customer and community feedback
- Fare strategies to achieve three fare study goals: equity, affordability and simplicity
- Other transit agencies’ fare pricing
- Fare pricing to maintain long-term financial sustainability
- Impact on minority and low-income customers
- Operational, technology and capital considerations
Two Fare Alternatives

- **Alternative A**
  - Lowers fares for customers overall
  - Retains Local, Regional and Airport fare levels

- **Alternative B**
  - Simplifies the fare structure
  - Combines Local and Regional fares while maintaining an Airport fare
Purpose of Alternatives

- Final recommended alternative likely different from alternatives
- Customer and community feedback regarding these alternatives and other policies and programs to inform recommended alternative
- Customers and community can comment on the final recommended alternative in early 2023
Fare Structure
Alternatives
Current Fares

How does RTD price its rail and bus services?

- The rail system is divided into four fare zones (A, B, C and Airport) with:
  - Local – travel in 1-2 zones
  - Regional – travel in 3 zones
  - Airport – trip originating or ending at the Airport

- Bus routes do not utilize zones:
  - Some routes are distance-based (Regional and SkyRide)
  - Shorter trips may only require Local/Regional fare

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Alternative A
Alternative A

- **Alternative A**
  - Lowers fares overall
  - Retains Local, Regional and Airport fare levels

- Feedback that informed Alternative A included:
  - **Decrease fare prices** – emphasis on lowering Local fare and Monthly Pass
  - Maintain current service levels *without* raising fares
  - Reward frequent customers
  - Lower Airport fare
Alternative A (cont’d)

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Alternative A* Benefits:

- Lowers all customers’ fares
- Lowers monthly pass prices, rewarding frequent customers including airport and airline employees
- Service levels maintained while still decreasing fare prices

*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change*
Alternative A (cont’d)

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Alternative A Tradeoffs:

- No fare structure/payment process simplification

*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change*
What if I’m a Local customer?

- $0.25 less per 3-Hour Pass
- $0.50 less for Day Pass
- $26 less for Monthly Pass

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### Alternative A – Customer Profiles (cont’d)

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**What if I’m a Regional customer?**

- $0.25 less per 3-Hour Pass
- $0.50 less for Day Pass
- $40 less for Monthly Pass
Alternative A – Customer Profiles (cont’d)

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What if I’m an Airport customer?

- $0.50 less per 3-Hour Pass
- $0.50 less for Day Pass
- $40 less for Monthly pass

*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change
**Alternative A - Analysis**

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**How does Alternative A perform against the study goals?**

- **Equity:**
  - Low-income and minority customers experience greater decrease
  - Lower Local fare and Monthly Pass price

- **Affordability:**
  - All customers benefit
  - Retains current distance-based fare levels (Local, Regional, Airport)
  - Local fare and monthly pass price decrease improves transit competitiveness

- **Simplicity:**
  - Limited/no simplicity improvements

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*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change*
Q&A

- Please ask questions in the Q&A (see the icon on the bottom of your screen)

Questions for Participants:

- What questions do you have about Alternative A?
  - Remember: following this Q&A break, the study team will present a second alternative as well
Alternative B
Alternative B

- **Alternative B**
  - Simplifies fare structure by combining Local and Regional fares
  - Maintains Airport fare, making fares easier to choose and pay

- Feedback that informed Alternative B included:
  - **Simplify fare structure**
  - Maintain current service levels *without* raising fares
  - Remove distance-based fares
  - Reward frequent customers
  - Lower Airport fare
**Alternative B (cont’d)**

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**Alternative B Benefits:**

- Single fare for all non-airport travel
- Lower Regional fare
- Lower Monthly Pass price, including for Local customers
- One Monthly Pass for ALL travel
- Airport and airline employees pay less to travel to the airport – only paying for 10 days per month

*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change*
Alternative B (cont’d)

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Alternative B Tradeoffs:
- Local fare stays the same
- Local customers who are infrequent travelers may not benefit from lower Monthly Pass price
- Regional trips charged same amount as Local trips, which does not account for distance traveled

Alternative B*

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*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change
Alternative B – Customer Profiles

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What if I’m a Local customer?

- Same cost for 3-Hour Pass
- Same cost for Day Pass
- $18 less for Monthly Pass

*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change*
Alternative B – Customer Profiles (cont’d)

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What if I’m a Regional customer?

- $2.25 less per 3-Hour Pass
- $4.50 less for Day Pass
- $104 less for Monthly Pass

*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change
### Alternative B – Customer Profiles

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**What if I’m an Airport customer?**

- $0.50 less per 3-Hour Pass
- $0.50 less for Day Pass
- $104 less for Monthly Pass
Alternative B - Analysis

How does Alternative B perform against the study goals?

- **Equity:**
  - No Local fare decrease
  - Non-low-income and non-minority customers experience greater average fare decrease than low-income and minority customers

- **Affordability:**
  - Only half of customers benefit
  - Single fare for non-airport trips eliminates distance-based fare
  - Regional fare and Monthly Pass price decrease improves transit competitiveness
  - No Local fare trip competitiveness improvement

- **Simplicity:**
  - Simplified fare structure and payment except for Airport trips

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*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change
Q&A
Please ask questions in the Q&A (see the icon on the bottom of your screen)

Questions for Participants:
- What questions do you have about Alternative B?
  - Remember: following this Q&A break, the study team will present the alternatives in a side-by-side comparison
Alternatives: Comparison
### Alternatives – Comparison

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- Lowers fares for customers overall
- Retains Local, Regional and Airport fare level
- Simplifies the fare structure
- Combines Local and Regional fares while maintaining an Airport fare

*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change*
Polling and Q&A
Poll Question #3

- Polling: Which alternative fare structure do you prefer?

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- Note: In the chat box tell us why you selected your answer

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Q&A

- Please ask questions in the Q&A (see the icon on the bottom of your screen)

Questions for Participants:
- What remaining questions do you have about the fare structure alternatives?
Other Policies and Programs
## Other Policies and Programs Under Consideration

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<th>Improving transit mobility and access for financially burdened customers</th>
<th>Simplifying pass programs and promoting opportunities to encourage pass purchases</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Fare discount changes</td>
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<td>• Expanding LiVE program access</td>
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<td>• Nonprofit and social service agency grant program</td>
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<td>• Affordable housing program</td>
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<td>• Semester pass for non-CollegePass institutions (e.g., community colleges)</td>
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<td>• Bulk purchase program with 10% discount</td>
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<td>• EcoPass pricing simplification for employers with &lt;3,000 employees</td>
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Discounted Fares

**Recommended:**
- 50% LiVE discount would align with discount for seniors, persons with disabilities and Medicare cardholders

**Under Consideration:**
- 70% Monthly Pass/fare cap discount for customers paying discounted fares
- Single fare for discount customers *regardless of distance traveled or services used*
- Free fares for youth (external funding partner may be needed)
- Opportunities to increase access to the LiVE program
- LiVE eligibility for adults in households at or below 200% of federal poverty guidelines

**Not Under Consideration:**
- Aligning the Youth discount by reducing the discount from 70% to 50%
70% Monthly Pass Discount

What would this look like?

- 70% discount on full fare Monthly Pass/monthly fare cap for LiVE customers, seniors, persons with disabilities and Medicare cardholders (3-Hour and Day Passes would be discounted 50%)

  • **Alternative A** - discount fare Local Monthly Pass would be $27.20 and discount fare Regional/Airport Monthly Pass would be $48.00

  • **Alternative B** - discount fare Monthly Pass would be $28.80

- Youth currently receive 70% discount on 3-Hour, Day and Monthly Passes
70% Monthly Pass Discount (cont’d)

Why is RTD considering a greater Monthly Pass discount?

- Provides greatest relief for financially burdened discount fare customers
- Encourages financially burdened customers to enroll in LiVE
Single Fare for Discounted Fares

What would this look like?

- Travel to any destination throughout service area at Local discounted fare
- If Local full fare is $3
  - $1.50 - seniors, persons with disabilities and LiVE customers at 50% discount
  - $0.90 - youth at 70% discount
Why is RTD considering a single fare for discounted fares?

- Alternatives A and B both maintain multiple fare levels
  - Single fare for all customers disproportionately benefits higher income and non-minority customers

- Regional or Airport fare may present barriers for financially burdened customers and families
  - Eliminating higher fare for regional and airport trips increases access to destinations throughout region
Polling and Q&A
Q&A

- Please ask questions in the Q&A (see the icon on the bottom of your screen)

**Questions for Participants:**

- What remaining questions do you have about the other policies and programs under consideration?
Poll Question #4

- Should RTD consider offering a 70% Monthly Pass discount for customers paying discounted fares?

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Alternative A</th>
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<th>Alternative B</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LOCAL</td>
<td>REGIONAL</td>
<td>AIRPORT</td>
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<tr>
<td>3-HOUR</td>
<td>$1.35</td>
<td>$2.50</td>
<td>$5.00</td>
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<tr>
<td>DAY</td>
<td>$2.70</td>
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<td>MONTHLY</td>
<td>$27.20</td>
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- Note: in the chat box, tell us why you selected your answer

*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change*
Poll Question #5

- For customers paying discounted fares (e.g., LiVE low-income customers, seniors, individuals with disabilities, youth), should RTD consider a single fare for travel anywhere in the RTD service area, including the airport?

(Travel to any destination throughout service area at Local discounted fare for $1.50 (discount) or $0.90 (youth) if the full fare is $3)

- Note: in the chat box, **tell us why you selected your answer**
Next Steps and Staying Engaged
Next Steps

▪ Thank you for your time!

▪ Provide additional feedback through the RTD Fare Structure Alternatives Survey – available at https://www.farefeedback.rtd-denver.com
  • You can also access past meeting materials, FAQs, the last feedback panel information, and additional resources

▪ Next public engagement anticipated for early 2023 to provide public comment on the fare structure recommendation
We Make Lives Better Through Connections.