


Systemwide Fare Study and Equity Analysis

Equity Feedback Panel Meeting #3
December 5, 2022



1

Agenda and Interpretation

- Agenda:
 - Interpretation Needs and Meetings Instructions
 - Land Acknowledgement and Safety Moment
 - Fare Study Overview and Engagement #3 Activities
 - Fare Structure Alternatives and Engagement #3 Feedback
 - Overview of Alternatives A and B, and feedback received
 - Where RTD is thinking of going
 - Discussion - Feedback on Fare Structure Direction
 - Policies and Programs Under Consideration
 - Presentation and Discussions
 - Next Steps and Staying Engaged

2

Meeting Instructions

- Ensure your Zoom Name includes your organization
- All participants will remain muted unless called on. Please raise your hand if you wish to ask a question or provide input.
- Meeting observers will be muted throughout, leaving discussion time for Feedback Members
- **Chat box for Feedback Panel Members** – Feel free to enter a question or comment in the chat box. The project team will be monitoring questions and may answer your question with a typed answer or out loud. If the chat box submissions become unviewable, we will remove the function. Observers, please leave the chat box open for Feedback Panel members, submit your comments on the website: www.rtd-denver.com/farestudy
- If you are joining by the phone only: *6* will mute/unmute you; if you want to share questions or comments, please press a button on your phone and the facilitator will add you into the list of those interested in speaking.
- To hear interpretation, there is a globe icon at the base of the Zoom window, click and pick the language to hear.

3



Land Acknowledgement and Safety Moment

4

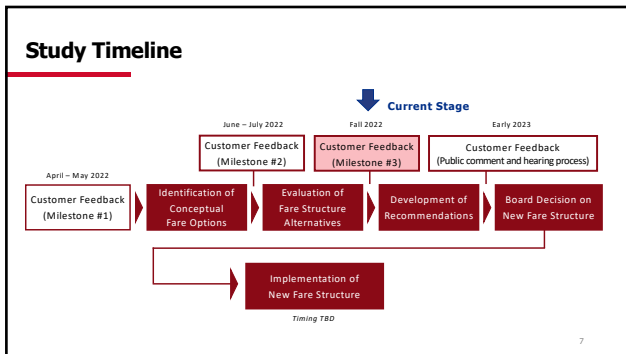
Overview of the Systemwide Fare Study and Equity Analysis

5

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

6



7

Engagement Activities in Milestone #3

- Website, Study Materials, and Social Media**
 - 4,600+ unique views of website and 63,000+ social media impressions in targeted ad campaign
 - New website (in English and Spanish) with detailed overview of fare structure alternatives
 - Fact sheets in English, Spanish
- Customer and Community Meetings**
 - Virtual Zoom webinar/meetings
 - 87 attendees
 - Conducted in English and Spanish
- Community Partner Focus Groups**
 - Led by six community partners
 - 65+ participants (as of Nov. 22)
 - Conducted in English and Spanish
- Stakeholder Groups**
 - Targeted Focus Groups
 - Feedback Forums (E, Equity, Pass Programs, and Jurisdiction)
- Online Survey**
 - 3,900+ respondents
 - In-person surveys conducted by community partners
 - Survey in English and Spanish
- Community-Based Organization Survey**
 - 51 respondents (as of Nov. 22)
 - Survey in English and Spanish

8

Fare Structure Alternatives Presented during Engagement #3

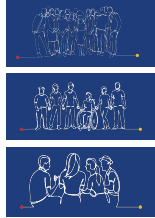
9

Alternatives A and B

10

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, structures and policies
- Fare pricing to maintain long-term financial sustainability
- Impact on minority and low-income customers
- Operational, technology and capital considerations



11

11

Alternative A

| Current Fare Structure | | | |
|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | LOCAL | REGIONAL | AIRPORT |
| 3-HOUR | \$3.00 | \$5.25 | \$10.50 |
| DAY | \$6.00 | | \$10.50 |
| MONTHLY | \$114.00 | | \$200.00 |

| Alternative A* | | | |
|----------------|---------|----------|----------|
| | LOCAL | REGIONAL | AIRPORT |
| 3-HOUR | \$2.75 | \$5.00 | \$10.00 |
| DAY | \$5.50 | | \$10.00 |
| MONTHLY | \$88.00 | | \$160.00 |

*Preliminary prices and structure subject to change

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

Alternative A Tradeoffs:

- No fare structure/payment process simplification

12

12

Alternative B

| Current Fare Structure | | | |
|------------------------|----------|----------|----------|
| | LOCAL | REGIONAL | AIRPORT |
| 3-HOUR | \$3.00 | \$5.25 | \$10.50 |
| DAY | \$6.00 | \$10.50 | |
| MONTHLY | \$114.00 | | \$200.00 |

| Alternative B* | | | |
|----------------|---------|----------|---------|
| | LOCAL | REGIONAL | AIRPORT |
| 3-HOUR | \$3.00 | | |
| DAY | \$6.00 | | \$10.00 |
| MONTHLY | \$96.00 | | |

* Preliminary prices and structure subject to change

Alternative B Benefits:

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

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

13

Feedback Received during Engagement #3

14

Preferences for Alternatives A vs. B

| Survey Group | Alt A (%) | Alt B (%) |
|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Overall (N=1,251) | 31% | 77% |
| Minority (N=402) | 45% | 60% |
| Low-Income (N=480) | 50% | 50% |
| Spanish Survey (N=281)* | 65% | 31% |
| Local Fare (N=1,042) | 70% | 65% |
| Regional Fare (N=512) | 81% | 82% |
| Airport Fare (N=107) | 81% | 82% |
| English C&C Meeting | 72% | 77% |
| Spanish C&C Meeting | 82% | 80% |
| Survey of (80) | 43% | 53% |
| Comm. Partner Focus Groups (P/F/G) | 87% | 87% |

Preference for Alternative B

- Across the Proposed Fare Alternatives Survey, Customer & Community Meetings, Survey of CBOs and Community Partner Focus Groups, respondents expressed a preference for Alternative B with support ranging from 57% to 90%
- Low Income respondents and those that completed the Fare Alternatives Survey in Spanish expressed greater support for Alternative A
- Among respondents that expressed a preference for Alternative A, both quantitative and qualitative feedback indicated that the lower Local fare pricing was a major reason for their choice

* 259 of the 261 Spanish Survey responses are Minority, Low Income or both, and are captured in those Equity Population categories

15

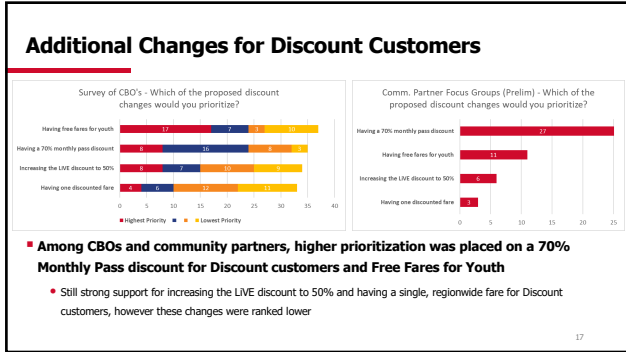
Single, Regionwide Fare for Discount Customers

| Survey Group | Yes (%) | No (%) |
|-------------------------|---------|--------|
| Overall (N=2,762) | 80% | 11% |
| Minority (N=724) | 90% | 10% |
| Low-Income (N=428) | 91% | 9% |
| Spanish Survey (N=221)* | 93% | 7% |
| English C&C Meeting | 80% | 20% |
| Spanish C&C Meeting | 100% | 0% |

Strong Support for a Single, Regionwide Fare for Discount Customers

- Support for the concept expressed in the Proposed Fare Alternatives Survey and Customer & Community Meetings ranged from 80% to 100%
- Although support for the concept was broad-based, feedback from the Survey of CBOs, and Community Partner Focus Groups ranked this concept behind other policies for Discount customers that are under consideration, including a 70% discount on Monthly Passes, Free Fares for Youth and Increasing the LIVE program discount to 50%

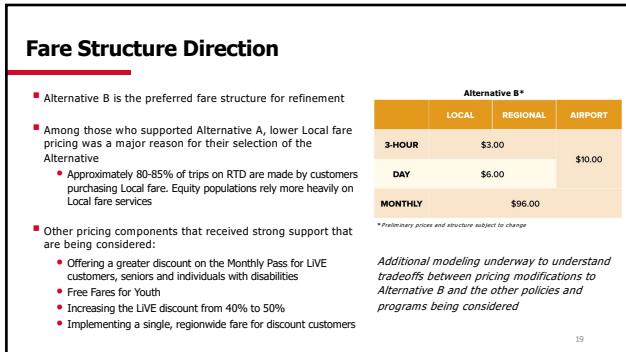
16



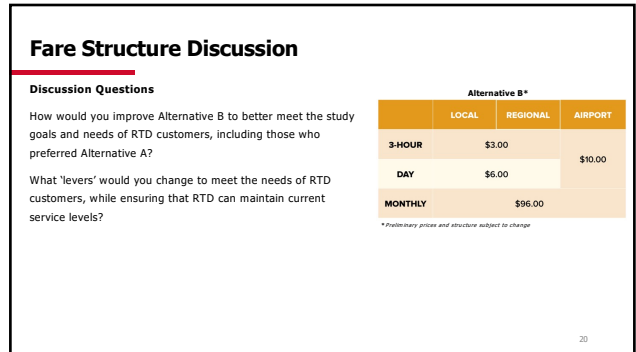
17



18



19



20

Policies and Programs

- LIVE Program Expansion
- Free Fares for Youth
- Transit Assistance Grant Program
- Bulk Purchase Program
- Affordable Housing Pass
- Time Permitting:
- Semester Pass

21

LiVE Program Expansion

Discussion Questions – Feedback on the proposed methods to reduce enrollment barriers?

How could RTD further improve access to LIVE fares for income-eligible populations?

22

LiVE Program

Objectives: Expand access to the LIVE Program and reduce barriers to enrollment so that more financially burdened individuals can benefit from reduced fares

- RTD is considering LIVE Program changes that broadly fall into two categories:
 1. Reduce Barriers to Enrollment in LIVE
 2. Expand Access and Increase LIVE Benefits

23

LiVE Program – Reduce Enrollment Barriers

- Nearly every respondent indicated that **lack of awareness of the LIVE program** was a substantial barrier to promoting LIVE (survey of CBOs)
- Three of the top six responses relate to **challenges with access to, or familiarity with technology** (survey of CBOs)

Survey of CBO's - What challenges have the community members you serve had in signing up for LIVE?

| Challenge | Proportion of Respondents (%) |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Lack of awareness of the LIVE program | ~85 |
| Access to a computer to sign up | ~75 |
| Having the required documents that prove income eligibility to upload | ~70 |
| Comfort with the use of technology | ~65 |
| Understanding what is required in the application process | ~60 |
| Highlighting the web application platform | ~55 |
| Having the required photo to upload | ~45 |
| Concerns about the confidentiality of the application data | ~35 |
| Finding the application on the website | ~30 |
| Having an address to mail the LIVE pass to | ~25 |
| Communications about the application either on problems that need... | ~20 |
| Having the income threshold | ~15 |
| Having an address within the RTD district | ~10 |
| Other (please specify) | ~5 |

The study team continues to review qualitative feedback from the written responses on the Survey of CBO's, Community Partner Focus Groups, Fare Alternatives Survey and CBC Meetings

24

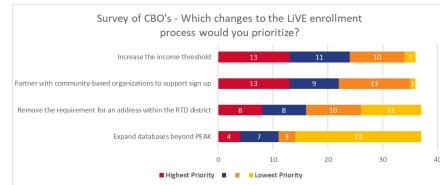
LiVE Program – Reduce Enrollment Barriers

- Partnering with community-based organizations to support clients/customers by improving the LiVE application process
 - RTD is considering a more robust outreach and training program
 - Enabling government entities/organizations to undertake LiVE eligibility confirmation, outside of PEAK
 - Focused on entities/organizations already undertaking income verification (e.g., affordable housing providers)
 - May include the addition of categorical eligibility criteria, beyond Federal Poverty Level (e.g., Area Median Income thresholds)
 - Opportunities to minimize enrollment barriers exceed current staff availability. Additional resources need to be identified to support the LiVE program
- Discussion Question – What feedback do you have for RTD on the proposed methods to reduce enrollment barriers?**

25

25

LiVE Program – Expand Access and Benefits



- Increasing the LiVE income threshold and partnering with CBOs to support enrollment** were the top priorities of CBOs

- Increasing the LiVE income threshold also ranked as a top priority for Community Partner Focus Groups

26

26

LiVE Program – Expand Access and Benefits

- Increase discount from 40% to 50%, aligning with discounts for seniors and individuals with disabilities
- Increase income threshold from 185% to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level
 - 85% of respondents to the survey of CBOs indicated that this increase would support the community that they serve
- Expand access to LiVE fare products, including fare capping
 - Launch of new MyRide Stored Value, offering new Monthly fare cap for LiVE customers (available as of Sept 2022)
 - Expanded retail network, providing more locations for customers to reload their MyRide accounts (planned for 2023)
 - MyRide fare collection system outreach will launch soon, with animated videos, on-vehicle advertisement, advertising in multiple languages, media events, and ongoing community outreach
- Remove in-District address requirement
- LiVE photo ID requirement likely to remain unchanged

Discussion Question – How could RTD further improve access to LiVE fares for income-eligible populations?

27

27

Free Fares for Youth

Discussion Question – How should RTD consider defining free fare for youth eligibility?

- Age-based
- K-12 enrollment
- Limit to participating school districts, community colleges, etc.

28

Free Fares for Youth

Objectives: Reduce costs for families, provide youth with reliable, no-cost way to travel to school or work, encourage lifelong transit use

- Free Fares for Youth ranked #2 (Community Partner Focus Groups) and #1 (survey of CBOs [prelim results]) **as a way to increase discounts for financially burdened customers**
- Introducing Free Fares for Youth would lead to a **reduction in fare revenue and may require service increases** to meet additional demand
 - Forgone fare revenue is anticipated to be between \$4M to \$7M by 2024, depending on program eligibility criteria
 - Program introduction is expected to increase youth ridership; other free fares for youth programs have seen youth ridership increase by ~30%
- Free Fares for Youth would **require financial support from external funding partners**. The availability and source of funding may determine eligibility requirements

29

29

Free Fares for Youth – Program Design Elements

- Eligibility
 - Age-based Definition
 - Current youth definition: ages 19 and under
 - Most free fares for youth programs rely on age-based criteria: ages 18 and under, several are limited to children ages 12 and under
 - Examples - WA State / San Diego / SF Muni / Orange Co. / Austin
 - K-12 Student Enrollment
 - Programs may include or exclude GED, most exclude colleges/universities
 - Example - Sacramento
 - Limited to participating school districts, community colleges, etc.
 - Schools, school districts or community colleges may opt-in, but are generally expected to provide funding for participation
 - Example - LA Metro
 - Funding approaches differ, and generally align with the eligibility approach
 - Age based programs are typically funded through city, county, Metropolitan Planning Organization or State funding agreements
 - Programs focused on school district/community college participation typically rely on direct funding from participating institutions, and may be supplemented with additional funding
 - K-12 programs have a mix of funding sources

30

30

Free Fares for Youth – Program Design Elements

- **Proof of Eligibility**
 - Most free fares for youth programs have a special youth ID card that is issued on smart card fare media, in order to provide proof of eligibility and enable data tracking
 - Pros - Single Card for ID and transaction, measures program participation, consistent experience for transit operators and transit security, potential access to future gated areas
 - Cons - Higher administrative effort, including procurement of smart card fare media
 - Some programs accept school IDs and/or government issued IDs
 - Pros - Lower administrative effort, including ability to introduce the program more quickly
 - Cons - Less reliable counts of program participation, challenges for transit operators and transit security, potential future gated areas would need alternative access approach
 - Eligibility requirements and the source of funding may inform proof of eligibility requirements
 - Proof of Eligibility may be limited to a subset of Free Fare for Youth participants
 - Youth under certain age may not be required to have proof of eligibility (e.g.: only youth from 13 to 18, or middle and high school students)

31

31

Free Fares for Youth

Discussion Question - How should RTD consider defining free fare for youth eligibility?

- Age-based
- K-12 enrollment
- Limit to participating school districts, community colleges, etc.

32

32

Transit Assistance Grant Program

Discussion Question -
Other suggestions that RTD should consider?

33

Transit Assistance Grant Program

Objective: Provide free or deeply discounted fare products to organizations and social service agencies to distribute to financially burdened individuals/clients with immediate transportation needs, in order to improve access to transit and reduce mobility barriers

- Annual grant program for eligible organizations to obtain free or deeply discounted RTD fare products
 - Annual amount set aside for the grant program by RTD is to be determined
 - Eligible nonprofit community-based organizations and social service agencies able to apply
 - Organizations/Agencies would distribute tickets to clients at no cost
 - Products available include full fare 10-Ride Tickets (no proof of eligibility for LIVE or discounted fares required)
- Outside of the Grant Program, organizations would also be able to purchase fare products through the bulk purchase program and receive a 10% discount on purchases over \$2,000

34

34

Transit Assistance Grant Program – Design Elements

- Defining "Immediate Needs" / Eligible Organizations
 - Transit agencies define 'immediate needs' differently
 - RTD has not determined a definition or established eligibility criteria, but some examples of groups that RTD might target with such a program: **populations experiencing homelessness, clients seeking domestic violence support, clients exiting incarceration, refugee/recent immigrant populations**
- Grant Selection
 - Other transit agencies have used external organizations (e.g., a non-profit or foundation) to award grants
 - Other transit agencies have placed an annual cap on how much a grant recipient can receive
- Free or Deeply Discounted Passes
 - Some programs do not require financial contribution from the grant recipient, while others require minimum contribution (e.g., minimum 20% match)
 - Financial contributions can expand the reach of the program
- External Funding Sources
 - Some programs receive City/County or State funding to support long-term sustainability and expand the reach of the program

35

35

Bulk Purchase Program

Informational Item
Other suggestions that RTD should consider?

36

Bulk Purchase Program

Objective: discounted, simple and easy-to-use option for nonprofit organizations, employers and other organizations to provide the benefits of transit passes to their clients and employees

- 10% discount applied to bulk purchases over \$2,000 per invoice
- Discount applies to discounted and full fare products
 - Customers using discounted fares required to have proof of eligibility
- Organization required to set up an account and sign a contract with RTD
- Discount also applies for bulk purchases by conferences, special events, etc.

37

Affordable Housing Pass

Discussion Question –
Which of the two options presented would best meet the needs of your tenants/residents, and why?
Other suggestions that RTD should consider?

38

Affordable Housing Pass

| | Approach 1 Affordable Housing EcoPass | Approach 2 Affordable Housing providers become a LIVE certifying entity |
|-----------------|--|--|
| Overview | Neighborhood EcoPass contract limited to organizations/agencies with 100% Affordable units under management Definition of "affordable" units is being considered (may involve new categorical LIVE eligibility criteria, such as an AMI threshold) Contract priced at LIVE rates | Through existing income verification processes, designated affordable housing providers could confirm LIVE eligibility/certification as part of their eligibility confirmation process for housing Definition of "affordable" units is being considered |
| Pricing | | City, County, Housing provider can decide whether to subsidize transit for affordable housing tenants through bulk purchase, direct payment |
| Pros | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> LIVE eligible tenants may receive fare/discounted travel Likely more affordable than providing bulk purchase passes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tenants receive housing and transportation benefits "under one roof" Expands LIVE certification beyond PEAK system LIVE eligibility follows the tenant, even if they leave their affordable housing unit |
| Cons | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can only be implemented if 100% of units within the contract are affordable, increasing administrative burden | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> May require tenants to purchase their own fares Higher administrative requirement for affordable housing providers |

39

Affordable Housing Pass

Discussion Question
Which of the two options presented would best meet the needs of your tenants/residents, and why?
Other suggestions that RTD should consider?

40

Semester Pass

41

Semester Pass

| | |
|-------------------------------|--|
| Overview | 'Opt-In' Pass Program for Colleges/Educational Institutions |
| Distribution | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Available through participating institutions only • Not available through retail, mobile sales channels |
| Eligibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrolled Students only (no Staff or Faculty) • Valid for entire academic semester • Valid on all Fixed Route, bus and rail services (Local, Regional, Airport), not valid on Access-A-Ride |
| Pricing | ~\$75 per student per month |
| Program Administration | Collecting fee, paying RTD and managing student eligibility would be undertaken by the participating institution |

42

Next Steps

43

- ## Next Steps
- Thank you for your time!
 - RTD staff to prepare draft recommendation and seek public input
 - Q1-2023: Release Draft Recommendation and Title VI Fare Equity Analysis Draft Report for Public Comment, Public Outreach
 - Q2-2023: Public Outreach, Incorporate Feedback, Seek Board Approval
 - Hope you will stay engaged and encourage customers in your community to provide feedback during the Public Outreach and Public Hearing process
 - RTD will e-mail Feedback Panel participants when the Draft Recommendation and Equity Analysis are released, for distribution to RTD customers in your communities
 - Access past meeting materials, FAQs, the last feedback panel information, and additional resources by visiting the project website at www.rtd-denver.com/faresstudy; Feedback Panel materials at www.rtd-denver.com/faresstudy/feedback-panels

44

