



RTD Systemwide Fare Study and Equity Analysis Pass Program Feedback Panel Meeting

November 30, 2022, 1:00-3:00pm

Meetings Summary

Meeting Objectives:

- Provide an overview of RTD's current alternatives, policies and programs based on Engagement #3 community, customer and community based organization feedback.
- Gather Feedback Panel input on improving a refined alternative, and input on policies and programs under consideration.

Systemwide Fare Study and Equity Analysis

Chris Quinn, RTD Project Manager, provided an overview of the Systemwide Fare Study and Equity Analysis purpose, goals and timeline and activities conducted in Engagement #3.

Fare Structure Direction and Discussion

Andrew Amey, Amey Consulting, presented the alternative fare structure RTD is considering in order to seek input from the Feedback Panel members. The single alternative for refinement is the result of input from the Engagement #3 activities. Andrew provided an overview of what RTD heard from customers and the community on two draft alternatives. Engagement #3 activities included: community and customer meetings (in English, and in Spanish), an online survey (3,900 respondents in English and Spanish), Community Partner Focus Groups (65+ participants, in English and in Spanish) and a community based organization survey (45 respondents). The input from the activities showed a preference for Alternative B (depending on the activity, the preference was 59-90%). Those who expressed a preference for Alternative A indicated that the lower Local fare pricing was a major reason for their choice.

To see all presentation slides: www.rtd-denver.com/faresstudy/feedback-panels.

Discussion - *How would you improve the alternative to benefit as many RTD customers as possible? What levers would you change and keep balance?*

- All feedback panel participants mentioned support for alternative B.
 - A single fare is simpler, it is easier for customers to understand and to know what to pay.
 - It is good to have a more affordable fare for airport commuters/employees and a different fare for airport single fare tourists/travelers from out of the RTD district.
- Consider:
 - The extra expense for riders getting on the airport line at Pena/61st - they must pay the full airport fare for a one stop trip.
 - Ensuring small businesses have equitable access to transportation.
- SUGGESTIONS:
 - Lower the monthly pass to \$90 – this lowers the number of trips needed to economically break-even (\$96 would be 16 days of round-trips); pass holders are more apt to ride transit.
 - To financially balance lowering the monthly pass, raise the airport single fare. If RTD raised the airport single fare, ensure airport employees are not paying the higher fare.
 - Provide a mechanism for organizations to add value to a client's RTD account or be able to subsidize a client's RTD fare. *[NOTE: RTD does have a feature to allow organizations to issue mobile passes in bulk to customers, but, at this time, technology does not allow organizations to add dollars to a customers stored value account.]*

Policies and Programs Direction and Discussion

Andrew Amey presented the policy or program for Feedback Panel input.

Pass Programs & Policies: *Overall, EcoPass Business, CollegePass and Semester Pass, NECOPass, and Bulk Purchase program*

- Generally, Feedback Panel members supported the direction in almost all programs and policies presented.

EcoPass Business

- *Question:* Is RTD looking at changing the EcoPass all-in pricing model?
Answer: RTD is not considering another model for EcoPass pricing at this time, it will remain the all-in/insurance model. RTD is considering adding a bulk purchase discount which would be an opt-in type alternative for businesses.
- *Question:* For an airport EcoPass, would the price be based on the \$10 fare?
Answer: The airport EcoPass would be based on utilization at a \$3 rate, for Local, Regional or Airport (currently, airport EcoPass is based on \$3 Local, \$5.25 Regional, and \$5.25 airport fare).

- *Question:* Why is the proposed SLA D pricing category roughly \$400 more than other SLAs?
Answer: Pricing has a lot of variables; we don't know the actual number for an individual employer in SLA D but wanted to give a rough estimate for discussion. It is not possible to even guess at what the price would be for all 34,000 airport employees, it would depend on how individual employees used the system, but if there was broad participation, the costs would go down.
- *Question:* Would a school district, with over 4,000 employees, be considered SLA D and pay \$550 per employee for EcoPass?
Answer: A school district with 4,000 employees would be considered a large employer, and price would be based on their own utilization; this is the same approach as now, but with the new fare structure the overall price may be lower.
- This is an optimum time for RTD to advocate for more EcoPass participation, the new transportation tax credit will make EcoPass more attractive to organizations.

NECO Pass

- Concern: The changes to NECO Pass being considered – no application of other discounts (e.g., youth, seniors, people with disabilities, LiVE) – will make the NECO pass seem not worth the administrative work.
 - The policy of not applying other discounts is consistent with other pass programs, and, at this time, the current fare collection system cannot track rider categories (e.g., youth, senior, LiVE, people with disabilities).
- SUGGESTION: Create a mechanism where a city or organization could subsidize someone's RTD fare or add value to someone's RTD account. Boulder wants to support and encourage residents to use transit.
 - Currently, Boulder provides a subsidy to NECO pass engagement from Boulder residents. The subsidy and NECO is a critical part of meeting Boulder's climate change goals.
 - [NOTE: RTD does have a feature to allow organizations to issue mobile passes in bulk to customers, but, at this time, technology does not allow organizations to add dollars to a customers stored value account.

College Pass and Semester Pass

- *Question:* Would the price still be based on ridership/utilization, even if that price holds for 2-years?
Answer: Yes. Existing participating colleges would use utilization data from a period such as 2022/2023 to set the price for 2024/2025 and 2025/2026.

Discount Fares: Free Fares for Youth - How could RTD define eligibility – three options (age, k-12, limited to participating schools)?

- At least one Feedback Panel member supported each of the three options and one member added a fourth option.

- Age-based definition of youth (currently policy: 19-years old and under)
 - Inclusive of all, not just if they are enrolled in school.
 - 17 and under.
 - 18 and under, 19-year-old riders are usually in college and covered by CollegePass discount prices.
- K-12, and GED enrollment
 - More equitable to be open to students at any/all school districts in Colorado; all school districts across Colorado have rich and low-income families.
- Limited to participating schools (those school paying for passes)
 - Allows RTD to gather/include those interested school districts, and better tracking of youth ridership.
- NEW OPTION: Age (17 and under) and K-12 (regardless of age) and GED.
 - Allows 17-year olds who had to leave school to still get a discount – likely this rider needs the discount.
- Consider: What are the population differences between the options?
- *Question:* How would high school students who are taking college classes be addressed?
Answer: It is unknown if colleges are charging high school students the CollegePass fee or not, seems unlikely, but unknown. RTD will consider how this group would be addressed.
- *Question:* How would the youth discount be included in an airport EcoPass?
Answer: RTD will consider this, but it is likely that youth airport employees are part-time and therefore already removed from EcoPass pricing.

Pass Programs: Affordable Housing Pass - Which of the two approaches is best and why?

And any other suggestions?

- *There was little time for discussion.*
- Approach 1 (affordable housing providers with 100% affordable housing provide EcoPasses).
 - Concern: The extra burden for LiVE eligible riders in developments that are not 100% affordable housing units.
- Approach 2 (affordable housing provider verifies LiVE eligibility/certification, and may or may not pass on EcoPass costs to the resident) –
 - This approach may cover more affordable housing residents as many developments are required to have X number of affordable units; more developments are or will be mixed-income.
 - Concern: The administrative burden for affordable housing providers.
- There needs to be a technical mechanism to apply those discounts to customers and remove the administrative burden on the housing providers.

Discount Fares: LiVE Expansion (*Presented, but not discussed*)

Appendix A: Attendees

Feedback Panel

1. Auraria Campus, Tristy Hillestad
2. Boulder Valley School District, Jeanne Thrower Aguilar
3. Colorado University-Boulder, Brandon Smith
4. Denver International Airport, Amy Edinger
5. Denver International Airport, Rachel Gruber
6. Go Boulder/City of Boulder, Chris Hagelin
7. State of Colorado, Personnel, Sarah Bolt
8. RTD, Chris Quinn – Project Manager, Planning
9. RTD, Carl Green Jr. – Deputy Project Manager, Interim Civil Rights Director
10. RTD, Theresa Rinker – Senior Manager, Market Development

Others or Observers

1. RTD, Lilian Avila – Market Development
2. RTD, Dawn Plooster – Market Development

Project Team

1. RTD, Bill Sirois – Senior Advisor, Transit Oriented Communities
2. Four Nines Technologies, Curtis Pierce
3. Four Nines Technologies, Christina Winberry
4. Four Nines Technologies, Amy Martin
5. Amey Consulting, Andrew Amey
6. JSE Associates, Jody Erikson (Facilitator)

Appendix B: Agenda

RTD Systemwide Fare Study and Equity Analysis

Feedback Panel Meeting

PASS PROGRAM - November 30, 2022, 1:00-3:00pm

EQUITY - December 5, 2022, 10:00am -12:00pm

JURISDICTION- December 5, 2022, 1:00pm-3:00pm

Agenda – DRAFT

Meeting Objectives:

- Provide an overview of where RTD is at on alternatives, policies and programs based on Engagement #3 community, customer and community based organization feedback.
 - Gather Feedback Panel input on improving a refined alternative, and input on policies and programs under consideration.
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1:00 Welcome and Agenda review

1:07 Safety Moment

1:10 Presentation:

- Overview of the Systemwide Fare Study and Equity Analysis project
 - Purpose, Goals, Timeline
 - Engagement #3 Activities
- Fare Structure Alternatives Presented during Engagement #3
 - Overview of Alternatives A and B
 - What did RTD hear during Engagement #3?
 - Where is RTD thinking about going?

1:30 Discussion: Feedback on Fare Structure Direction - How would you improve the alternative to benefit as many RTD customers as possible? What levers would you change to make it work?

1:45 Discussion: Policies and Programs Direction - Feedback on Where RTD is going

1. Pass Programs & Policies:
 - Overall Pass Program Policies
 - EcoPass Business
 - CollegePass and Semester Pass
 - NECO Pass
 - Bulk Purchase Program
2. Pass Programs: Affordable Housing Pass
3. Discount Fares: Free Fares for Youth - How could RTD define eligibility?
4. Discount Fares: LIVE Expansion – What could RTD do to remove barriers? and How could RTD further improve access to LIVE?

2:55 Next Steps

3:00 Adjourn