



RTD Systemwide Fare Study and Equity Analysis Equity Feedback Panel Meeting

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

Meeting Summary

Meeting Objectives:

- Provide an overview of RTD's current alternatives, policies and programs based on Engagement #3 community, customers, 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

Carl Green Jr., RTD Deputy Project Manager and Civil Rights Director, 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, they indicated that the lower Local fare pricing was a major reason for their choice.

To see all presentation slides: www.rtd-denver.com/farestudy/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.
 - Benefits Regional travelers - lower income and commuters use regional trips.
 - One fare is good – easier to understand and use.
 - Benefits transit reliant users by lowering the Monthly pass.
 - Creates better access.
 - Good for families, and those whose older youth pick up younger siblings.
 - Lower costs will increase ridership which helps to address climate change goals – people are more apt to use transit if it is cheaper or free.
- Concerns:
 - No benefit for Local 3hr pass users.
 - Monthly Pass is still difficult for families – purchasing multiple Monthly Passes starts to equal the cost of a cheap car.
- Consider:
 - Make transit cards easier to access - cards make it easier to ride, customers don't have to carry change or figure out how to pay for the ride.
 - Family costs for transit versus the cost of a cheap car – this is the calculus on which many customers decide whether to ride transit regularly.
- SUGGESTION:
 - Expand 3-Hour Pass to 4-5 hours or lower the fare to \$2 – allow time for a regional round-trip in the hour pass timeframe (travel to, errand/appointment, travel back)
 - *[NOTE: RTD is not considering changing the 3-Hour Pass timeframe. The 3-Hour Pass was established during the 2018 Pass Program Working Group as an alternative to transfers for one-way trips.]*
 - Prefer lowering the fare to extending the timeframe.
 - Raise the Day Pass to offset either the decrease in the 3-Hour Pass or expanding the 3-Hour Pass timeframe.
 - Concern: the Day Pass is already too high.
 - Lower the Day Pass instead of adjusting the 3-Hour Pass - more people would be apt to buy a cheaper Day Pass.
 - Do both increase the time to 4hr and lower the Day Pass to \$5.
 - Lower the Day Pass to \$5 and remove the 3-Hour Pass.
 - Concerns:
 - The 3-Hour Pass goes a long way for trip chaining, particularly for low-income customers (e.g., grocery to child pick up)
 - \$5 is a lot for short trips.
 - Explore other funding sources to balance any fare decreases.
 - Concern: It is difficult to discuss trade-offs between the 3-Hour Pass and Day Pass without knowing more about the proposed discount program changes.

Policies and Programs Direction and Discussion

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

Discount Fares: LiVE Expansion

How to remove barriers?

- SUGGESTIONS:
 - Decrease the burden of the application process – consider the process used for seniors or have the applicant submit a letter confirming they qualified for SNAP or other income-based programs.
 - Chain the application process with other application processes, other RTD processes or other organizations (e.g., get a library card and sign up for LiVE or get an RTD card).
 - Advertise the program better
 - Advertise on bus/trains, add a QR code to easily learn more and/or sign up.
 - Partner with CBOs to reach and inform more people that the program exists
 - Pair up on “free” events like free museum day or free insurance day.
 - Put flyers for LiVE in CBO locations.
 - Go to CBO events.

How to improve access to LiVE?

- There was support for the direction presented.
- There was support for increasing the threshold to include other assistance programs – FPL is really restrictive in very expensive areas.
- SUGGESTIONS:
 - Make the threshold at or above SNAP eligibility – this might offer some additional RTD administrative benefits.
 - Consider alternatives to PEAK to address households with mixed-documentation status.
 - Partner with County Open enrollment efforts (e.g., King County ORCA Lift partnered with County Open Enrollment efforts)
 - RTD should increase their own marketing and not just rely on non-profits to promote LiVE.
 - Provide pick-up locations for those having trouble with accessing mail.
 - Provide same-day printing locations – partner with CBOs.

- Decrease the number of cards/documents necessary for LiVE discount customers to board – right now it requires two: 1. a LiVE card with photo id, and 2. the fare (paper ticket, MyRide card, or mobile app).
 - *[NOTE: Currently, it is not technologically possible to just use MyRide or mobile app as paper tickets are still being used which require a LiVE photo id as proof of the eligibility for the discounted fare.]*

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

- All mentioned support for the age-based definition of youth (verbally or in the chat)
 - Simplest.
 - Inclusive of youth not in school – transitioning, homeless, home-schooled, working to support family.
 - Supports families with older youth that are caretakers for younger siblings.
- SUGGESTIONS:
 - Use the easiest method to show proof of age/eligibility – not add another proof of eligibility card as youth are likely to forget it or lose it.
 - Up to 18- or 19-year olds – they are often still dependents and don't have the means to support themselves.
 - Do not require an application or proof (San Francisco Muni doesn't).
 - Free fare through middle school age youth and provide high school youth a semester pass option.
 - RTD is likely to prioritize exploring free fare for all youth and leave the semester pass for colleges.

New Programs: Transit Assistance Grant Program

- Good to support service organizations providing transit to the populations they serve.
- This will help organizations be green and meet climate change goals, by helping organizations provide transit passes for staff and/or clients.
- Consider: Will there be a cap per organization, if yes, what will the criteria be for that cap (e.g., number of people served by the organization)?
- SUGGESTIONS:
 - Do not limit access to the grant program to non-profits, offer it to small businesses as well – small businesses could then get matching funds from foundations and/or philanthropic organizations to provide more staff/clients transit opportunities.
 - Do fundraisers to ensure funds for the program.
 - Ask CBOs to help raise funds for the program.
 - Provide paper passes – good for those with persistent technological barriers.

Pass Programs: Bulk Purchase Program

- Helpful for nonprofits and small businesses too small for EcoPass.
- SUGGESTIONS:
 - Work with organizations with memberships (e.g., AARP, DRCOG) to include X number of passes as part of their membership – this would decrease the number of things people have to apply for.
 - Lower the \$2000 minimum – feels a bit exclusive for smaller employers and smaller organizations.

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

And any other suggestions?

- SUGGESTIONS:
 - Provide an option that allows for both 100% affordable housing providers and providers of mixed-income units – a different pass type depending on the property type.
 - Conduct an affordable housing focus group to work out details.
 - Do not create a new pass program, make the LiVE program more accessible.
- Concerns:
 - Housing authorities cannot transfer costs to residents, based on HUD regulations, they would have to be able to fund it all and many housing authorities would not be able to fund RTD passes.
 - Different housing authorities have different thresholds – some are 60% AMI, others 80% AMI.
 - Some affordable housing providers don't have the staff to manage a pass program.
 - Housing authorities are working toward mixed-income developments, there are less and less 100% affordable housing developments.

Pass Programs: Semester Pass *(Presented, but not discussed)*

Appendix A: Attendees

Feedback Panel

1. Athletics and Beyond, Nancy Jackson
2. Colorado Coalition for the Homeless, Tanith Nusbeitel
3. Colorado Cross Disability Coalition, Jamie Lewis
4. CREA Results, Fernando Pineda-Reyes
5. CWEE, Sarah Leopold
6. Cultivando, Rocio Franco
7. Denver Housing Authority (DHA), Angie Fletcher
8. Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC), Coleen Samuels
9. Denver Streets Partnership, Molly McKinley
10. Mobility for All, Angel Bond
11. National Federation of the Blind of Colorado, Curtis Chong
12. Northeast Transportation Connections, Nick Glenn
13. One Colorado, Meredith Gleitz
14. Pedestrian Dignity, Justin Bai
15. RTD, Carl Green Jr. - Deputy Project Manager and Civil Rights Director
16. RTD, Chris Quinn, Project Manager, Planning
17. RTD, Annette Hunter, Transit Equity Specialist

Others or Observers

0

Project Team

1. RTD, Bill Sirois - Senior Advisor, Transit Oriented Communities
2. RTD, Monika Treipl-Harnke - Senior Manager, Revenue
3. RTD, Theresa Rinker – Senior Manager, Market Development
4. RTD, Jyotsna Khattri – Market Development
5. Colorado Language Connection, Alejandro Arrieta (Interpreter)
6. Four Nines Technologies, Christina Winberry
7. Amey Consulting, Andrew Amey
8. 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

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.
-

10:00 Welcome and Agenda review

10:07 Land Acknowledgment and Safety Moment

10:10 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?

10:30 Discussion: Feedback on Fare Structure Direction: How would you improve the alternative to benefit as many RTD customers as possible?

- Presentation on levers
- Discussion

10:45 Presentation and Discussion: Policies and Programs

1. Discount Fares: LiVE Expansion - Feedback on methods to remove barriers? and How could RTD further improve access to LiVE?
2. Discount Fares: Free Fares for Youth - How could RTD define eligibility?
3. New Programs: Transit Assistance Grant Program
4. Pass Programs: Affordable Housing Pass
5. Pass Programs: Semester Pass and Bulk Purchase Program

11:55m Next Steps

12:00m Adjourn