

RTD launches two-month Zero Fare for Better Air campaign to begin July 1

Special event announces second year of initiative enabling customers to use agency services in July and August at no cost

DENVER (June 22, 2023) — Zero Fare for Better Air – a collaborative, statewide initiative designed to reduce ground-level ozone by increasing use of public transit – is set to begin July 1, and the Regional Transportation District (RTD) hosted a media event to kick off the second year.

Throughout the months of July and August, RTD will provide services – bus, rail, Access-a-Ride and FlexRide— at zero cost. Zero Fare for Better Air, which takes place during Colorado’s highest ozone months, is supported through a grant program created by Colorado Senate Bill 22-180 in partnership with the Colorado Energy Office. Governor Polis and RTD General Manager and CEO Debra A Johnson, along with other community leaders, marked the kickoff for media, elected officials and community members in attendance by ceremonially covering a farebox.

The two-month initiative provides an opportunity for individuals to take advantage of RTD services for daily commutes, leisurely activities or everyday errands. New customers can build commuting habits by learning what regular customers already know – riding transit is easy, convenient and better for the air.

“The Zero Fare for Better Air initiative was a success in 2022, as evidenced by positive customer and employee feedback and minimal disruptions to day-to-day operations,” said General Manager and CEO Debra A. Johnson. “Many thanks to RTD’s partners and stakeholders at the state and local level for joining with the agency to expand this initiative to two full months in 2023. I am personally optimistic that this zero-fare offering can drive real change in sustainable commuting behaviors within the Denver metro area.”

“Saving Coloradans money, increasing access to transit near where people live and work, improving air quality and addressing climate change are top priorities for our administration,” said Governor Jared Polis. “We hope this program will lead to an even bigger increase in ridership across Colorado and our administration was proud to partner with the legislature and was proud to provide important funding to make this possible.”

RTD’s is collaborating with community and jurisdictional partners around this initiative, which aligns with agency strategic priorities of Customer Excellence and Community Value. Support for the effort was demonstrated today at the event with remarks made by State Sen. Faith Winter; Colorado Energy Office Executive Director Will Toor; Lakewood Mayor and Metro Mayors Caucus Chair Adam Paul; DRCOG Executive Director Douglas Rex; and Colorado Department of Transportation Office of Innovative Mobility Chief Kay Kelly.

Zero Fare for Better Air returns this year for an additional month after a favorable inaugural year. A post [2022 campaign survey](#) found that overall ridership increased by 22% from July 2022 to August 2022, and 36% from August 2021; 72% of respondents indicated that they were likely or very likely to continue using RTD services

ABOUT RTD

The Regional Transportation District develops, operates and maintains a public transportation system that meets the transit needs of close to 3 million people within an eight-county service area in the Denver Metro region. For more information, visit rtd-denver.com, call 303-299-6000 and follow along on social media: www.facebook.com/RideRTD, [@RideRTD](https://twitter.com/RideRTD) on Twitter, [@ridertd](https://www.instagram.com/ridertd) on Instagram and [rideRTDco](https://www.youtube.com/rideRTDco) on YouTube. For the most current RTD news, visit the News Stop, at rtd-denver.com/news-stop.

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in the future. This year, the agency will include a question in the survey related to how behaviors might impact air quality in the metro area.

RTD is operating under its current service plan for the duration of the initiative. Agency staff has developed operational plans to meet increased service demands and will make adjustments as necessary. To supplement service as resources are available, rail cars will be added to trains and extra buses will continue to be positioned strategically throughout RTD's service area.

RTD's Transit Police division will use all available resources to support Zero Fare for Better Air. With this being a statewide initiative, RTD has spoken with municipalities and local police agencies within the eight counties it serves, with an expectation that every entity supports this effort and provides resources to ensure its success.

Customers who are new to the RTD system can plan trips or research routes by visiting the agency's app [Next Ride](#), where they can plan a trip using RTD's [Trip Planner](#), access schedules or sign up for [Service Alerts](#). [Next Ride](#) provides real-time vehicle information. To ask questions during normal business hours (6 a.m.- 8 p.m. M-F and 9 a.m.- 6 p.m. Sat and Sun), call Customer Care at 303.299.6000.

