

## RTD launches real-time arrivals in Next Ride interactive voice response (IVR) system

*Customers will also notice more accurate speech recognition and a better-quality voice engine*

DENVER (May 8, 2023) – The Regional Transportation District (RTD) has introduced predicted arrival times into its Next Ride interactive voice response (IVR) system, enabling customers to call the agency's Customer Care number and hear when any fixed-route bus or train is expected to arrive at a specific stop.

The improved technology replaces the scheduled stop times that previously were provided when RTD customers called Customer Care, at 303.299.6000, to locate a vehicle in real time. Scheduled times are not useful when service deviates because of an issue or disruption, for example. The data presented by phone are the same used by the Next Ride web application on the RTD website, meaning that customers seeking this information will now receive identical data by phone or online, including stop cancellations or suspensions.

A notable improvement Next Ride IVR provides is more accurate speech recognition, enabling callers to better interact with the system without using a touch-tone keypad. Should certain words be detected that suggest the customer needs to speak with a Customer Care agent – including "I need help" or "I don't know" – the call will be automatically transferred. The quality of the system's voice has improved, too, with the use of a Neural Text-to-Speech (NTTS) voice engine that uses machine learning to offer richer, more lifelike speech quality.

Next Ride IVR was built entirely by RTD's IT staff, who worked in earnest on this project for more than a year. The small, talented team that was involved is passionate about delivering solutions that improve the customer experience and spend public money wisely. With the debut of this system, RTD will save hundreds of thousands of dollars in development, support and maintenance costs that would have been incurred through an outside vendor. And by keeping the project in-house, staff can make changes, such as adjustments to a script, within minutes if needed.

### **To use Next Ride IVR:**

- Call RTD's main Customer Care phone number, at 303.299.6000.
- Press 1 to select the next departures from a specific stop using the Next Ride system.
- Provide the 5-digit stop number by entering it on a telephone keypad or by enabling voice recognition. If needed, press # to connect with a Customer Care agent.
- The caller will hear the next three stop times, and can choose to hear three additional stops beyond these.
- On the same call, times can be requested for a different stop.

### **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](http://rtd-denver.com), call 303-299-6000 and follow along on social media: [www.facebook.com/RideRTD](https://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](http://rtd-denver.com/news-stop).

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