

RTD Board to review potential new fare structure at Feb. 14 meeting

Proposal reflects feedback from thousands of people; changes, if approved, would be made in early 2024

DENVER (Feb. 9, 2023) – At its next Finance and Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 14, the Regional Transportation District (RTD) Board of Directors will review and discuss a potential new fare structure that reflects feedback from thousands of people. The feedback and input were gathered during the most comprehensive and wide-ranging fare study and equity analysis the agency has ever undertaken.

The updated alternative being brought for Board consideration next week lowers fare levels for all RTD services and replaces the current zone-based system.

RTD launched the systemwide fare study and equity analysis last year in response to public feedback and recommendations made by the RTD Accountability Committee. Prior to the study's launch, the agency recognized that customers found its fares to be expensive and hard to understand. The study set out to reexamine the RTD fare system with a customer-centered approach focused on equity, affordability and simplicity.

"We have really gone out to listen to the individuals that have been greatly impacted by our fare structure," said RTD General Manager and CEO Debra A. Johnson, noting the three rounds of public engagement to this point. "We have tried to connect with various populations that often are left out of the conversation. We wanted to understand what their experiences are.

"We need to look at public transportation as a means of garnering access to opportunity. The operative word in what we do is 'public,' and we want to ensure that we can help move people within this region."

The proposed draft fare structure, being presented by staff as an informational update at next week's Board meeting, is a modified version of one of the alternatives previously presented for public comment during the fare study. The study team moved forward with the Alternative B design because customers expressed a strong preference for simplifying the existing fare structure, but modified the alternative to include lower Local fares in response to customer feedback and to center the study's equity goals. A final Title VI fare equity analysis will be conducted prior to the Board's review of the final recommendation for adoption this summer.

The updated alternative being brought for Board consideration lowers fare levels for all RTD services. For full-fare customers, it replaces the current zone-based system with a single fare to all destinations except Denver International Airport. Discount-paying customers would pay a single fare, regardless of the distance traveled or services used throughout the region. Specifics in the proposal include:

- For full-fare customers: a lower 3-hour pass of \$2.75 and a day pass of \$5.50 for all Local/Regional destinations, an airport fare of \$10 and a monthly pass of \$88 (down from the current rate, which is as high as \$200)
- For discount-fare customers (individuals 65 and older, individuals with disabilities, Medicare recipients and customers enrolled in LiVE, RTD's income-based fare discount program): \$1.35 for a 3-hour pass,

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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\$2.70 for a day pass and \$27 for a monthly pass, regardless of the destination (including Denver International Airport)

The proposal also includes new policies that would expand the LiVE program as follows:

- Customers enrolled in LiVE would receive a 50% discount fare, up from the current 40%
- The income threshold for LiVE would move from 185% federal poverty level to 250%, enabling more individuals to enroll
- The in-district address requirement would be eliminated
- LiVE fares would be introduced for Access-a-Ride customers

The proposed alternative would also introduce new pass programs in response to community and customer input. The following are not fully formulated and require additional design, coordination and, potentially, securing of external funding to be implemented:

- A yearlong Zero Fare for Youth pilot program, for customers 19 and younger
- A Transit Assistance Grant program, which RTD would initially fund with \$1 million, for nonprofits serving clients with immediate needs
- A Semester Pass program for community colleges and technical schools, serving as an alternative to the CollegePass program

The remaining steps toward completion of the fare study and equity analysis are as follows:

- **Feb. 14 to March 1:** Board reviews and provides feedback on draft recommended fare structure
- **April:** Board authorizes release of draft recommended fare structure, policies and programs and draft fare equity analysis to the public
- **May:** Public reviews and comments on draft recommended fare structure
- **July:** Board considers final recommended fare structure and associated fare equity analysis
- **First quarter of 2024:** If approved by the Board, the new fare structure is implemented

To review the full report and presentation on this topic to be provided to the Board on Feb. 14, [click here](#). RTD Board meetings are available live on Zoom, using a Chrome or Firefox browser, and streamed via RTD's [YouTube channel](#). For links, agendas and more, visit the Board's [meeting portal](#). Public comments are welcome during Board meetings and can also be emailed in advance to RTD.BoardOffice@rtd-denver.com.

More information about the fare study and equity analysis is available at rtd-denver.com/farestudy.