NEWS RELEASE

RTD launches new portal for Access-a-Ride customers

Progressive web app enables trips to be booked online, shows vehicle location and estimated time of arrival

DENVER (Oct. 26, 2020) – Starting today, Regional Transportation District (RTD) customers who rely on the agency's Access-a-Ride service can access a highly anticipated resource: a web-based Customer Portal that allows them to track their ride in real time, book new trips and cancel scheduled trips, all from a desktop or mobile device.

The Access-a-Ride Customer Portal – developed entirely in-house over the last year by RTD's IT team – is a progressive web app that allows for easy monitoring and management of upcoming trips for Access-a-Ride, RTD's complementary paratransit service. It updates every 30 seconds to provide customers with a location and an estimated time of arrival (ETA) for their vehicle. The portal, available through the RTD website, can be bookmarked on a web browser and added to a smartphone as a new icon. To ensure that the Customer Portal is accessible, it has been independently certified as having met or exceeded Web Content Accessibility Guidelines.

"This is definitely the type of app that, when you use it once, you will be hooked," said Access-a-Ride Manager Larry Buter. "It is the game-changer that our customers have been waiting for and asking about for years."

To this point, Access-a-Ride customers could manage trips and confirmations by contacting reservations or dispatch, or by using RTD's Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, a voice-activated phone tree. The IVR system places calls to passengers the night before their next-day trip as a reminder, and it calls again the day of the trip to let passengers know when their vehicle is 10 to 15 minutes away. While helpful, such an estimate can be altered by traffic and other variables, which makes a difference to someone waiting in inclement weather, for example. The ETA in the Customer Portal reflects data from Mapbox, a mapping and location cloud platform that is aware of real-time traffic.

The Customer Portal was designed with simplicity and ease of use in mind – providing users with the information they want without anything extra that could prove distracting. It includes three tabs:

- **"ETA"**, which provides real-time information for the next trip and updates automatically every 30 seconds with the following details:
  - Estimated minutes until pickup or drop-off
  - Scheduled pickup or drop-off time, if estimated time is unavailable
  - Map of vehicle location, predicted vehicle route, intermediary stops and destination
- **"Scheduled"**, which details scheduled trips that are not in progress or canceled. Through this tab, customers can select and cancel trips that are not to occur within the next two hours. (To cancel a trip scheduled within the next two hours, the customer will need to call Access-a-Ride.)
- **"Book"**, which allows a customer to book a trip to or from any of their favorite locations. The customer's home address is included in this list by default. Trips can be booked two to five days out.

Before release, RTD tested the Customer Portal in beta form with six members of RTD's Access-a-Ride Paratransit Advisory Committee to better understand how it performs, gauge experience with navigation and determine whether there was room for improvement. Those who took part spoke highly of the portal, rated its functionality favorably, said it is easy to navigate and expressed appreciation for the ETA function.

Individuals qualify for travel on Access-a-Ride by being unable to access a bus stop or a lift-equipped fixed-route bus by themselves, or by having a disability that prohibits independent travel on a fixed-route bus, criteria set forth in the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA). RTD has more than 16,000 active Access-a-Ride customers and has continued to deliver an average of 21,025 trips each month during the pandemic. Frequent travel destinations include day programs, medical offices, dialysis centers and workplaces. Access-a-Ride began offering grocery delivery and pickup to its customers in March.

New customers interested in using Access-a-Ride service can sign up by filling out an application on the RTD website or by calling 303-299-2960. From there, they must provide a medical verification form and complete an in-person interview and transportation assessment.

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. RTD's buses, rail lines, shuttles and additional services provide approximately 100 million annual passenger trips. For more information, visit rtd-denver.com, call 303-299-6000 and follow along on social media: www.facebook.com/RideRTD, @RideRTD on Twitter, @ridertd on Instagram and rideRTDco on YouTube. For the most current RTD news, visit the News Stop, at rtd-denver.com/news-stop.

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