



# Citizens Advisory Committee

## Meeting Summary

March 9, 2023

2:00 – 3:00

Colleen Roberts welcomed the group and had them do self-introductions.

### RTD News

Brandon said ridership trend for commuters is slowly improving. The biggest increase in ridership is for sporting events and concerts. To accommodate that increase, light rail lines will run until midnight on weekdays and until 2:00 am on the weekends. There will also be increased service on the FF2 due to increased demand.

The RTD Board is weighing options for having their monthly meeting occasionally in person with a hybrid option but have not made any decisions yet. If they start having in-person meetings, we may be able have ours in a similar way. This group would like to be kept up to date on the status.

### RTD Fare Study and Equity Analysis Update

Brandon said the Draft Fare Study proposal was presented to the Board of Directors in February. There are three overarching goals:

**Equity:** Support transit reliant/financially burdened customers, provide equitable and fair access to fares, products, and discounts regardless of race, color, national origin, income status and other marginalized communities.

**Affordability:** Align fares with service value.

**Simplicity:** Make fares easy to understand and have standardized discounts and streamline fare payment options.

Over the past year the project team has had public meetings in English and Spanish to get feedback on what people liked or disliked about the current fare structure. In the second round of meetings, they presented two alternatives. Alternative A reduced fare structure and Alternative B combined the current fare structure with a reduced fare structure.

#### Current Fare Structure

|         | Local    | Regional | Airport |
|---------|----------|----------|---------|
| 3 Hour  | \$3.00   | \$5.25   | \$10.50 |
| Daily   | \$6.00   | \$10.50  |         |
| Monthly | \$114.00 | \$200.00 |         |

#### Alternative A

|         | Local   | Regional | Airport |
|---------|---------|----------|---------|
| 3 Hour  | \$2.75  | \$5.00   | \$10.00 |
| Daily   | \$5.50  | \$10.00  |         |
| Monthly | \$88.00 | \$160.00 |         |

## Alternative B

|         | Local   | Regional | Airport |
|---------|---------|----------|---------|
| 3 Hour  | \$3.00  |          | \$10.50 |
| Daily   | \$6.00  |          | \$10.00 |
| Monthly | \$96.00 |          |         |

The community preferred Alternative B. It is easier to understand because if you are traveling anywhere but the airport, you pay one fare. The project team took their comments and recommendations and as a result, refined that alternative.

## Alternative B Proposed Draft

|         | Local   | Regional | Airport |
|---------|---------|----------|---------|
| 3 Hour  | \$2.75  |          | \$10.00 |
| Daily   | \$5.50  |          | \$10.00 |
| Monthly | \$88.00 |          |         |

There are discounted fares for 65+, the disabled, LiVE and Medicare recipients. The 3-hour fare is \$1.35; Day is \$2.75 and the monthly pass is \$27.00.

The biggest difference is in the Monthly Pass. It used to be \$114.00 for local and regional fares and it is proposed to be \$88.00, including airport fares.

There is a fare cap which is part of the mobile ticketing program or MyRide cards. When a rider purchases tickets through the mobile app or MyRide and reaches 32 local or regional trips in a month, the rest of their trips are free. A comment was made suggesting RTD should publicize the benefit of the fare cap and perhaps notify riders via email when they have reached the cap.

RTD realizes that not everyone has access to a mobile device so they will never eliminate paper tickets but the hope is that more riders will use the app to take advantage of the fare cap.

Overall, the group agreed this is an excellent proposal that will simplify and reduce the cost of our transit service and should help attract new riders, although there are some specific details that should be reconsidered.

The CAC strongly supports the recommended Option B with a single fare structure and significant reductions in fares for regional travel and monthly passes. We had previously recommended this option and continue to think it is the best option.

The CAC strongly supports the innovative concept of monthly fare-capping, but we recommend more media outreach about this and notification to riders when they reach this threshold so they know their rides will be free for the rest of the month.

Matt Appelbaum will draft a letter of support to the Board of Directors for the Fare Study proposal, Alternative B.

The group has several concerns about the airport fare:

- It doesn't seem to meet the goal of being proportional to the cost of service relative to the other fares, with riders being charged a large premium simply because they are going to the airport.
- Continuing this more expensive fare will discourage people from using transit to get to the airport, thus undermining a key goal of attracting more riders and reducing automobile travel.
- If there must be a premium charged, then the service must be improved to justify that extra cost to riders. Currently, it is not uncommon for buses and trains to be cancelled at the last moment – with little to no advance notice – leaving people (often at 4am) with no option since the next ride is an hour or longer away. These events, and the uncertainty they cause for riders, likely risk losing these riders forever.

## Next Steps for the Fare Study

April 2023: Board notification of proposed draft fare structure and draft fare equity analysis.

May 2023: Public review and comment on proposed draft fare structure and refinement based on feedback.

July 2023: Board consideration and final recommended fare structure and fare equity analysis.

Q1 2024: Implementation if approved by the Board.

*Comment: The proposed fare structure is lower, so the EcoPass also needs to be adjusted to make it low enough to entice businesses to offer it to their employees. We would like to be updated on this.*

Answer: Brandon said the Governor recently signed a bill for a 50% tax credit for businesses for EcoPasses. He is hopeful this will continue in the future.

The group requested additional information about EcoPass pricing given these newly reduced fares, and hope to be able to provide comments on this soon.

Brandon said RTD is looking into implementing a pilot program for Zero Fares for those 19 and younger but they need to find some partnerships to make it financially feasible. The group would like to get more information on this program in an upcoming meeting and have the opportunity to provide comments.

*Question: What percentage of riders use the app versus cash and are reaching the cap?*

Answer: Brandon will research and provide information when available.

Brandon said RTD has increased their recruiting efforts and it is paying off. Last week they welcomed 45 new employees. As they get more riders and operators, reliability will increase and more routes can be added. The System Optimization Study is also considering providing the "Right service" to available staffing.

*Question: Are the airport fares higher because the train is run by a private operator?*

Answer: Brandon will check into this and report back. The concessionaire runs the B & G lines so it seems unlikely that is the case.

*Question: Will the fare structure apply to the Flex Ride?*

Answer: Yes, Flex Ride is included.

## Chartering Update

John Fussa said he, Bryn and Devin are going to have another meeting soon and will share an update with the group at the April meeting.

## Open Discussion

Brandon is working with the Board administrator to get dates for RTD Board availability for one-on-one meetings with the CAC members in April, May, and June. He hopes to have the schedule prior to our April meeting and people can sign up to meet with whichever Board member/s they want to get to know better.

The group discussed the recent articles regarding unlimited riders on buses and light rail and the problems associated with this. The group agreed that the lack of security staff (checking tickets) and enforcement on light rail is a big factor with drug use, violence, and other safety issues. Solving these problems needs to include empathy for all riders whatever they are going through. The group discussed submitting a letter to the Board with CAC recommendations on the Code of Conduct.

Brandon said the Code of Conduct has been tabled until June while Police Chief Fitzgerald is on bereavement leave.

Director Guzman encouraged the group keep the conversations going on all these topics because the Board is interested in hearing your feedback. He can be contacted at: [michael.guzman@rtd-denver.com](mailto:michael.guzman@rtd-denver.com) or 720-252-4961.