

**ACPD and APAC Joint Committee Meeting  
July 11, 2023 – Time: 10:00 am – 12:15 pm  
Microsoft Teams Remote Meeting**

## Minutes

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### **Welcome, Meeting Protocol, Agenda Review**

Gabe Christie, RTD ADA Manager, called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m. He provided the welcome, meeting protocol and agenda review.

### **Roll Call - In attendance**

1. Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities:  
Earl Lee (Chair), Lynn Edmonds, Brenda Carney, Tim DaGiau
2. Access-a-Ride Paratransit Advisory Committee – Jody Erikson, Facilitator  
Craig Towler (Center for People with Disabilities), Cynde Vaughn, Josh Hursa, Julie Jennings, Lindsey Dent (Global Down Syndrome), Mary Sanders, Melissa Fishburn
3. Ex Officio Members:  
DeShawn Spears, Colorado Coalition of the Blind; Joe Beaver, Colorado Cross Disability Coalition; Catrice Thomas, Atlantis Inc.
4. RTD Board Members:  
Kate Williams
5. RTD Staff:  
Gabe Christie, Carl Green, Paul Hamilton, Larry Buter, Erin Vallejos, Jyostna Vishwakarma, Gretchen Vidergar, Dave Houston, Bill Sirois
6. Contracted Staff:  
Marcellinus Andrew (First Transit), Sarah Meredith (Transdev), Travis Menefee (Transdev), Lisa Bitzer (Via), Sarah Bohar (MTM), Denise Wright (MTM)
7. Others and Public:



### **Safety Moment – Gabe Christie, RTD ADA Manager**

Gabe Christie, RTD ADA Manager, encouraged attendees to beware of the heat index and practice heat safety as the region warms for the summer.

### **Public Comments**

No public comments.

### **Advisory Committee for People with Disabilities**

Gabe Christie, ACPD RTD Liaison, called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

### **Updates for ACPD Committee:**

#### 1. Updates:

##### **a. Civic Center Station Rededication – Earl Lee, Chair, ACPD**

- i. Earl Lee, Chair, stated he was able to attend a ceremony at Civic Center station in which RTD celebrated the city of Denver 's connection to the Americans with Disabilities act and RTD 's unique place in the history of the Americans with Disabilities act. On July 6th, General Manager and CEO Debra Johnson paid homage to Rev. Wade Blank one of the leaders of the Gang of 19 protest held on July 6 – 7 1978. She was joined by RTD board chair Lynn Geisinger and Mike Oxford, executive director of Atlantis Inc; they came together to rededicate a plaque placed in Civic Center Station in honor of Rev. Blank in 1995 that had been removed during the renovation of the station.

Earl stated that this event celebrated the heroes of the community and their efforts to improve the lives of others with disabilities. He stated that although the work of the ACPD and RTD may take years, the impact that these efforts have on the community will outlive the general membership.

Director Kate Williams thanked Earl for pointing out the value of these efforts. She stated that prior to her tenure as a member of the RTD board she previously lead an international sports center for people with disabilities in Miami where the Gang of 19 were heroes to all involved with the program.

Joe Beaver stated that he had initially believed that the station would be renamed to the Rev. Wade Blank station but enjoyed the rededication despite the absence of Julie Reiskin of CCDC. Joe asked that the renaming of the station be investigated in recognition of the contributions of Rev. Blank to the Civil Rights of Americans.

##### **b. Respect the Ride Code of Conduct Update – Earl Lee, Chair, ACPD**

- i. Earl Lee, Chair, brought forward the new Respect the Ride Code of Conduct updates that were approved by the RTD Board. The last time the code of conduct was updated was in 2019. Earl offered his apologies to the committee for not more strongly encouraging the members to provide feedback about Respect the Ride as the comment period has closed with the approval.



Earl also stated that there are adjustments that could be made. He asked members to review Respect the Ride closely as there are gaps in the policy. This review would help identify gaps and help make the policy more robust. If members find something they would like to have reviewed, please send the information to Gabe Christie to forward on to Earl. Earl will review and send comments to the board to inspire additional review.

**c. Elevator Repair Update: Nine Mile Station – Dave Houston, Technician, Contracted Public Facilities**

- i. Dave Houston reported to the committee that the repairs of the Nine Mile Station elevators have been completed and confirmed that both have returned to full function.

Earl Lee asked if the County Line Station elevator was up and running; Dave confirmed that the elevator is not functional. RTD is currently awaiting an ETA for the parts necessary to fix the elevator from the contractor repairing the elevator.

Earl Lee asked if anyone had any communication with the City of Englewood as the Englewood Station elevator has been down for nearly a month. Dave stated that he reached out to the contact at the City of Englewood, and reported that city is reporting difficulty keeping the elevator in clean and functional due to the presence of people who are unhoused. The City of Englewood stated that they are waiting on a service provider to come out and do repairs but, the service provider will not service the elevator until it has been professionally cleaned. City of Englewood is working on getting a cleaning service to the elevator this week, to get the repairs started.

Earl Lee asked that outages in non-RTD managed elevators be communicated as soon as possible. He also stated that he was in the Arapahoe elevators which were dirty and contained a great deal of debris. Dave stated their teams are working hard to clean and sanitize the elevators at least twice a day. Earl thanked Dave and his team for their efforts.

**Access-a-Ride Paratransit Advisory Committee**

**1. Updates:**

**a. QRyde Software and Mobile Portal Launch (Routematch replacement)**

- i. This was initially launched in April for a couple of days. The April launch revealed the areas that needed updating and improvements before the official relaunch. Challenges are as expected with any new software calibrated to specific agency needs. RTD will reach out to those who volunteered to do a second beta test of the mobile portal before the relaunch. RTD will not relaunch Q-Ryde until they are sure there will be very few challenges, particularly to the mobile portal; likely this means a launch in the early fall (no guarantees).
  - **ACTION:** Mary will email Larry the email address of a suggested additional beta tester (Keisha).

**b. RTD Fare Study**

- i. Bill Sirois, tonight (July 11) the RTD Board Committee will review and recommend new fares and programs for full RTD Board [following the meeting, the committee did approve recommending the new fare/programs to the full RTD Board]. On July 25, the full RTD Board will review and approve new fares and programs. Implementation will be rolling, starting with Zero Fares for Youth on September 1 (following free fares for Zero Air for Better Air, ending August 31). Other new fares and programs will be implemented when technology, capacity and/or third-party coordination is completed; most are expected to be implemented in the first quarter of 2024.
  - **Question:** Was fare media discussed at part of the Fare Study?  
**Answer:** RTD is considering how to create a fare-paid zone at Union station, for security purposes. It is difficult because there are so many fare media – phone, card, paper ticket, etc. The Fare Study did not reconsider fare media. Considering different fare media depends on the fare medium payment platform. As with many RTD contracts, the payment platform contract is resolicited every 5 years; and the fare media is likely to be reconsidered at that time. The current vendor, Mesabi's contract will be reconsidered in the next year or two.
- c. **Call Center RFP Process – Status**
  - i. The solicitation received two proposals: TransDev (formally First Transit) and CXperts. Tomorrow night (July 12) the RTD Board Committee will review the staff recommendation and forward it to the RTD Board for approval on July 25. The staff recommends TransDev (the current contactor First Transit was purchased by TransDev).
    - **SUGGESTION:** Dispatch needs to engage with great sensitivity to people with disabilities. Have additional sensitivity training, hire more people with disabilities and/or have APAC members observe the call center and provide feedback to improve the training.
      - There are several people with disabilities on staff, one is blind the others' disabilities are unknown.
- d. **Access-a-Ride (AaR) New Contactors/Vendors Started July 1**
  - i. New vendor contracts (3) started July 1 with MTM, TransDev (accessible vehicles), and TransDev-On-Demand (non-accessible vehicles). Previous vendors (4): MV, TransDev, TransDev-On-Demand, and VIA.
    - **Question:** What is the difference between the two TransDevs and MTMs contacts?  
**Answer:** MTM has different staff, management, and locations for the eligibility and training services and for AaR services. TransDev will have separate contracts, staff, and locations for the AaR services and the call center services.
- e. **Access-on-Demand Services (AoD)**
  - i. This is a curb-to-curb service provided by Uber, Lyft, zTrips or Meto Transportation. It is an on-demand/same-day service, the voucher program does not allow scheduling in advance. An AaR customer enrolls in the program with RTD, and then signs up directly with AoD vendors web based service (any or all vendors).
    - **Getting an accessible vehicle is a challenge** – often there are no drivers/vehicles available or send a non-accessible vehicle.
      - There have been some challenges at peak times (e.g., July 4 weekend).
      - RTD has a large services area, it hard to ensure a vehicle is always in range.
      - If a vehicle isn't available, call dispatch (303-299-6611); there are dedicated dispatchers for AoD. The dispatcher will view the transit dashboard and see where available drivers are, or where drivers may become available soon (near

- their drop off point). They can then advise callers to resubmit trip requests based on that data.
- **ACTION:** Gretchen Vidergar will reach out to those with specific complaints/events to investigate further and work to implement system improvements.
  - Confusion of the Dispatch operators about AoD – Recently, when an AoD driver could not be located, a customer called the AoD phone number, but the dispatcher that answered did not seem to understand AoD.
    - Customer must book the AoD trip before calling dispatch, otherwise dispatch will not see their trip in their system.
  - Acceptance of services animals is still an issue on Uber – Uber drivers are still dropping trips when they see an animal, before they even arrive to pick up the customer. This doesn't seem to be as much of an issue with Lyft.
    - AaR riders can sign up for all AoD vendors; if it is less of an issue with Lyft consider using them.
    - RTD is aware of this ongoing issue and revisits it regularly.
    - Customers should submit a complaint to/directly through the vendor (e.g.,Uber).
    - SUGGESTION: Make Uber Pet and option in the RTD voucher program.
      - For many, a pet is not a luxury, service animals are needed.
      - Transportation issues with service animals is a reason a person may choose to not get a services animal.
      - **ACTION:** RTD will look into Uber Pet as an option.
      - *[Following the meeting, RTD spoke with Uber, Uber Pet has been added as an option and RTD will reach out to let customers know.]*
  - Additional Passenger Protocols – Can an AoD rider bring additional people and how many?
    - The number of passengers depends on the vendor/driver's capacity.
    - Customers book the vehicle and can fill the capacity, no need to tell the driver.
    - **ACTION:** RTD will ask Uber about adjusting the capacity limit on WAV vehicles (current capacity is listed as 2).
    - *[Following the meeting, RTD spoke with Uber, Uber is looking into increasing the capacity of wheelchair accessible vehicles.]*
  - Airport pick-up/drop off curb-side or Island 5 – AoD riders can text drivers to request curb-side drop-off/pick up (not at island 5). Curb-side cannot be requested in the AoD web systems, but text the driver directly and the airport allow it. Uber WAV and paratransit vehicle drop off/pick up is on level 6; all other transit vehicles, including on demand services is on level 5.
    - AaR has one drop-off location on each side of the airport.
  - Free fares for Zero Air for Better Air applies to AoD and AaR - Doesn't seem to be working on Uber but does on Lyft.
  - Improving web site access to information on AoD – RTD is working with their marketing team to improve the AaR website, improving visibility of and access to AoD information.



- *Great service* – There are a lot of satisfied customers. AoD ridership rose from 15% of all paratransit trips during the pilot, to over 40% of all paratransit trips in June. Several APAC members use the service regularly and greatly appreciate it.
- f. **Out of State Eligible Paratransit Users** – People eligible for paratransit out of the RTD district need to notify RTD of their eligibility prior to arriving and then have 21 days of RTD paratransit travel. Students and anyone spending a prolonged time (more than 21 days) here are encouraged to become RTD eligible.
- g. **Appreciation for APAC Members and especially those ending their 3-year terms (3)** – APAC members and meetings have been positive for RTD, AaR programs, and AaR customers. The concerns raised by the APAC members have been productive and led to tangible improvements. RTD greatly appreciates the commitment and contribution of those members who have served their three-year term as of August 31, 2023: Craig Towler (Center for People with Disabilities), Lyndsey Dent (Global Down Syndrome), and Melisa Mascarenas (Shalom Denver).
  - Next Step - RTD has received 20-30 applications over the last year. RTD will review those applications and select three or four new APAC member who will bring September 1, 2023. Feel free to forward the APAC application to anyone: [APAC APPLICATION ONLINE](#)

## I. Next Steps

<i>APAC</i>	<i>ACPD</i>	<i>JOINT</i>
September 12	<i>August 9</i>	November 14