



FY 2026 Budget Book

Supplementary Budget Information

Table of Contents

2

Budget Process

Budget Alignment

Budgetary Basis of Accounting

3

2026 Budget Summary

Base System

FasTracks

Consolidated

Budget Process

The budget process begins with RTD's Budget Office estimating future revenues according to Fiscal Policy. Sales and Use Tax comprise the majority of revenues and is forecasted by Business Research Division at the University of Colorado's Leeds School of Business. Grants and other contributions are projected based on grants that are known to be awarded to RTD for the coming year. Fare revenue is estimated based on actual trends and forecasted ridership growth. Since fares only cover a small portion of the cost of service, service levels and other operating expenses are driven by the amount of sales and use taxes that RTD expects to receive.

Capital Expenditures are primarily determined through the agency's Transit Asset Management Plan processes and provided to the Budget Office for inclusion in the Proposed Budget.

Expense requests are submitted by each department into the agency's budget development software.

Personnel costs are managed through Position Management with budgets developed from actual salary and wage rates and fringe benefit costs calculated by the software.

Once all expense requests have been submitted, the Budget Office will verify if the projected revenues and existing reserves cover all capital expenditures and expenses. If not, the Budget Office will work with executive staff to determine what items can be reduced or eliminated to create a budget that is balanced and aligns with the Fiscal Policy.

Staff update the Board of Directors on a scheduled basis on the status of the budget process, provide budgetary assumptions, and alert the Board of any current or potential issues. Once staff has developed a budget that is balanced, a Proposed Budget is presented to the Finance and Planning Committee for its consideration and approval for submission to the Board of Directors for adoption.

Budget Alignment

The budget aligns with RTD's mission and strategic goals by focusing on Asset Management (State of Good Repair), investing in attracting and retaining a talented workforce, investing in a security force, and providing safe and reliable transportation. The 2026 Budget Book is aligned with the 2021-2026 Strategic Plan, having four strategic priorities of Community Value, Customer Excellence, Employee Ownership, and Financial Success, as well as 2025–2026 Strategic Initiatives of Customer and Community Connections, Enhancing Public Trust, Building a Better RTD, and Service Excellence.

Budgetary Basis of Accounting

The budget is prepared using the modified accrual basis of accounting with the exception of depreciation expense. Revenues are recognized when measurable and available, and expenditures are recognized when the related liability is incurred. The budget also incorporates encumbrance accounting for capital expenditures to ensure funds are reserved upon commitment.

2026 Budget Summary

Base System

Amounts in Thousands

	2024 Actuals	2025 Current Budget	2025 Projected	2026 Proposed Budget	Change (2026 Proposed-2025 Current)	% Change
Fares	\$63,906	\$37,165	\$55,901	\$43,043	\$5,878	15.8%
Sales and use taxes	514,447	541,902	527,849	526,298	(15,604)	-2.9%
Grant revenue and other income	115,968	385,728	221,068	340,737	(44,991)	-11.7%
Total revenue	694,321	964,796	804,818	910,078	(54,718)	-5.7%
Salaries and benefits	379,582	403,357	406,714	383,910	(19,447)	-4.8%
Materials and supplies	61,119	69,348	59,449	69,446	98	0.1%
Outside services	99,407	345,189	131,336	295,594	(49,594)	-14.4%
Utilities	14,556	18,703	13,183	15,991	(2,711)	-14.5%
Leases and rentals	724	4,064	2,920	2,965	(1,100)	-27.1%
Other expenses	(18,785)	(44,139)	(18,994)	(69,821)	(25,682)	58.2%
Insurance	11,395	12,600	13,318	14,100	1,500	11.9%
Purchased transportation	168,999	183,407	176,169	190,056	6,649	3.6%
Total operating expenses	716,997	992,528	784,094	902,242	(90,286)	-9.1%
Interest Expense	4,256	5,774	10,055	-	(5,774)	-100.0%
Principal Payments	37,990	35,253	61,488	-	(35,253)	-100.0%
Capital expenditures	43,923	354,327	30,355	598,556	244,229	68.9%
Total non-operating expenditures	86,169	395,354	101,898	598,556	203,202	51.4%
Operating Reserve	211,821	201,857	201,857	174,656	(27,201)	-13.5%
FasTracks Internal Savings	-	-	-	-	-	-
Capital Replacement Reserve	185,000	261,000	261,000	166,000	(95,000)	-36.4%
Unrestricted Fund	205,824	178,875	148,359	15,265	(163,610)	-91.5%

	2024 Actuals	2025 Current Budget	2025 Projected	2026 Proposed Budget	Change (2026 Proposed-2025 Current)	% Change
Fares	\$-	\$20,000	\$5,996	\$18,447	\$(1,553)	-7.8%
Sales and use taxes	342,964	361,268	351,899	350,865	(10,403)	-2.9%
Grant revenue and other income	22,278	6,000	15,303	-	(6,000)	-100.0%
Total revenue	365,243	387,268	373,198	369,312	(17,956)	-4.6%
Salaries and benefits	18,490	20,831	19,869	18,732	(2,099)	-10.1%
Materials and supplies	84	482	270	311	(171)	-35.5%
Outside services	16,367	43,072	20,499	32,736	(10,336)	-24.0%
Utilities	3,514	3,947	3,688	3,687	(260)	-6.6%
Leases and rentals	295	1,124	1,067	1,018	(106)	-9.4%
Other expenses	24,533	57,965	32,687	79,915	21,950	37.9%
Insurance	3,233	4,000	3,434	4,000	-	0.0%
Purchased transportation	87,383	115,146	114,310	70,590	(44,556)	-38.7%
Total operating expenses	153,899	246,568	195,822	210,989	(35,579)	-14.4%
Interest Expense	126,794	138,503	151,764	118,504	(19,998)	-14.4%
Principal Payments	30,067	49,897	63,397	72,131	22,234	44.6%
Capital expenditures	10,772	6,819	-	4,788	(2,031)	-29.8%
Total non-operating expenditures	167,632	195,219	215,161	195,424	204	0.1%
Operating Reserve	45,392	16,445	16,445	52,747	36,302	220.7%
FasTracks Internal Savings	191,599	190,099	191,532	191,532	1,433	0.8%
Capital Replacement Reserve	-	-	-	-	-	-
Unrestricted Fund	(147,108)	157,236	130,475	211,879	54,643	34.8%

Consolidated

Amounts in Thousands

	2024 Actuals	2025 Current Budget	2025 Projected	2026 Proposed Budget	Change (2026 Proposed-2025 Current)	% Change
Fares	\$63,906	\$57,165	\$54,931	\$61,490	\$4,325	7.6%
Sales and use taxes	857,411	903,171	888,004	877,163	(26,008)	-2.9%
Grant revenue and other income	138,246	391,728	211,608	340,737	(50,991)	-13.0%
Total revenue	1,059,563	1,352,064	1,154,543	1,279,390	(72,674)	-5.4%
Salaries and benefits	398,072	424,188	412,500	402,642	(21,546)	-5.1%
Materials and supplies	61,203	68,979	59,958	69,758	779	1.1%
Outside services	115,773	383,078	177,351	328,330	(54,748)	-14.3%
Utilities	18,070	22,884	18,787	19,678	(3,206)	-14.0%
Leases and rentals	1,019	5,188	4,654	3,983	(1,206)	-23.2%
Other expenses	5,749	13,955	13,028	10,094	(3,861)	-27.7%
Insurance	14,628	16,600	17,037	18,100	1,500	9.0%
Purchased transportation	256,381	298,553	280,332	260,647	(37,906)	-12.7%
Total operating expenses	870,895	1,233,425	983,647	1,113,232	(120,194)	-9.7%
Interest Expense	131,050	144,276	161,819	118,504	(25,772)	-17.9%
Principal Payments	68,057	85,150	124,885	72,131	(13,019)	-15.3%
Capital expenditures	54,695	361,146	30,355	603,344	242,198	67.1%
Total non-operating expenditures	253,801	590,573	317,059	793,979	203,406	34.4%
Operating Reserve	257,213	218,302	218,302	227,403	9,101	4.2%
FasTracks Internal Savings	191,599	190,099	191,532	191,532	1,433	0.8%
Capital Replacement Reserve	185,000	261,000	261,000	166,000	(95,000)	-36.4%
Unrestricted Fund	58,716	336,111	278,834	227,144	(108,967)	-32.4%



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