



**We make lives better  
through connections.**

---

# **RTD CONNECT**

**Aligning the transit network with  
our region's needs and resources**

**Virtual Stakeholder Briefing | August 13, 2026**

# Language Options

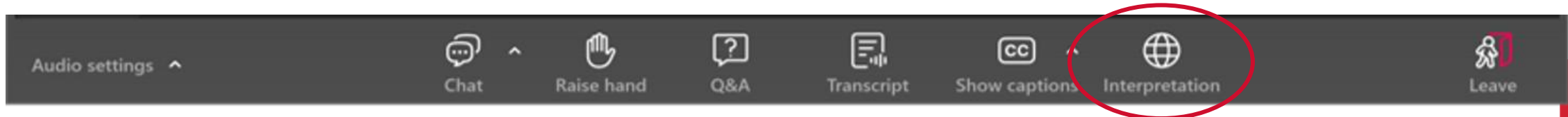
Para escuchar en español, haga clic en el icono del **Globo (Interpretación)** en la barra de herramientas inferior y seleccione **Spanish**.

## De oficina (Windows/MacOS)

- En los controles de su reunión/seminario web, haga clic en **Interpretación**.
- Haga clic en el idioma que desea escuchar.
- (Opcional) Para escuchar solo el idioma interpretado, haga clic en **Silenciar audio original**.

## Dispositivo móvil (Android/iOS)

- En los controles de su reunión, haga clic en los puntos suspensivos (tres puntos).
- Haga clic en **Interpretación de Idioma**.
- Escoja el idioma que desea escuchar.
- (Opcional) Para escuchar solo el idioma interpretado, haga clic en **Silenciar audio original**.
- Haga clic **en Listo**.



# RTD Project Leadership

---



**Kiernan Maletsky**

Director, Long-Range Planning  
Infrastructure and Planning Services



**Doug Monroe**

Manager, Corridor Planning  
Infrastructure and Planning Services

# RTD CONNECT Project Team

---



**Colleen Maleski**

Community Engagement



**Daniel Costantino**

Network Design



**Christian Jimenez**

Multicultural Outreach



**Angelica Rodriguez**

Multicultural Outreach

# Polls: Who is in the room?

## ■ What sector do you represent?

- Business Community
- Community Organization
- College/University
- Environmental Organization
- Faith Based
- Government
- K-12 Schools
- LGBTQ+
- Media
- Multicultural Organization
- People with Disabilities
- Seniors
- Transit Organization
- Unhoused
- Veterans
- Other

## ■ What county are you located in?

- Adams
- Arapahoe
- Boulder
- Broomfield
- Denver
- Douglas
- Jefferson
- Weld

# Agenda

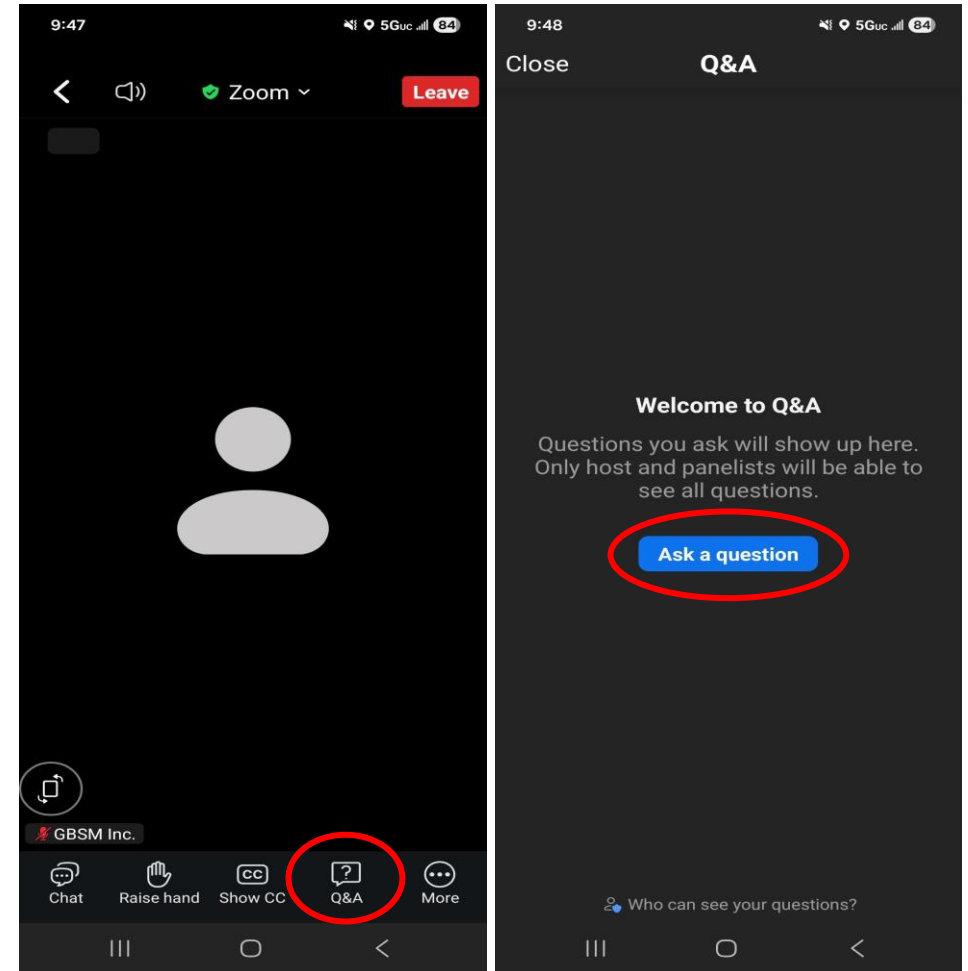
---

- RTD CONNECT Overview
- Transit and Access to Opportunity
- Transit Tradeoffs: Ridership vs. Coverage
- Project Timeline
- A Community Conversation: Engagement Opportunities
- Q&A



# Q&A and Chat Instructions

- **Use the Q&A feature to engage.**
- Questions are welcome throughout the presentation and will be addressed at the end, as time allows.
- If your question is not answered live, please email [RTDCONNECT@rtd-Denver.com](mailto:RTDCONNECT@rtd-Denver.com) for a response.
- Similar questions may be combined to allow for more topics to be discussed.





# RTD CONNECT Overview





# What is RTD CONNECT?

RTD CONNECT (**C**omprehensive **O**perations and **N**etwork **N**eeds **E**valuation for **C**ommunity **T**ransit) will create a roadmap for the future of transit service across the region. The project will:

- Evaluate the current transit network
- Connect with customers and the community to understand what matters most
- Design a network that provides sustainable service today while planning for future growth



# Why CONNECT Now?

- The RTD region is evolving, and so are the ways people travel.
- **Travel patterns, community needs** and **customer expectations** have changed over time.
- At the same time, **fiscal conditions** are shifting as costs increase faster than new revenues.



# RTD CONNECT will influence:

---

- **May/June 2027 Service Changes:** Short-term service changes to operate within the agency's current fiscal constraints
- **January 2028 Short-Range Service Plan:** A plan for optimized routes and service levels at a sustainable funding level
- **Long-Range Vision:** A guide for future investments and system growth



# **Transit and Access to Opportunity**

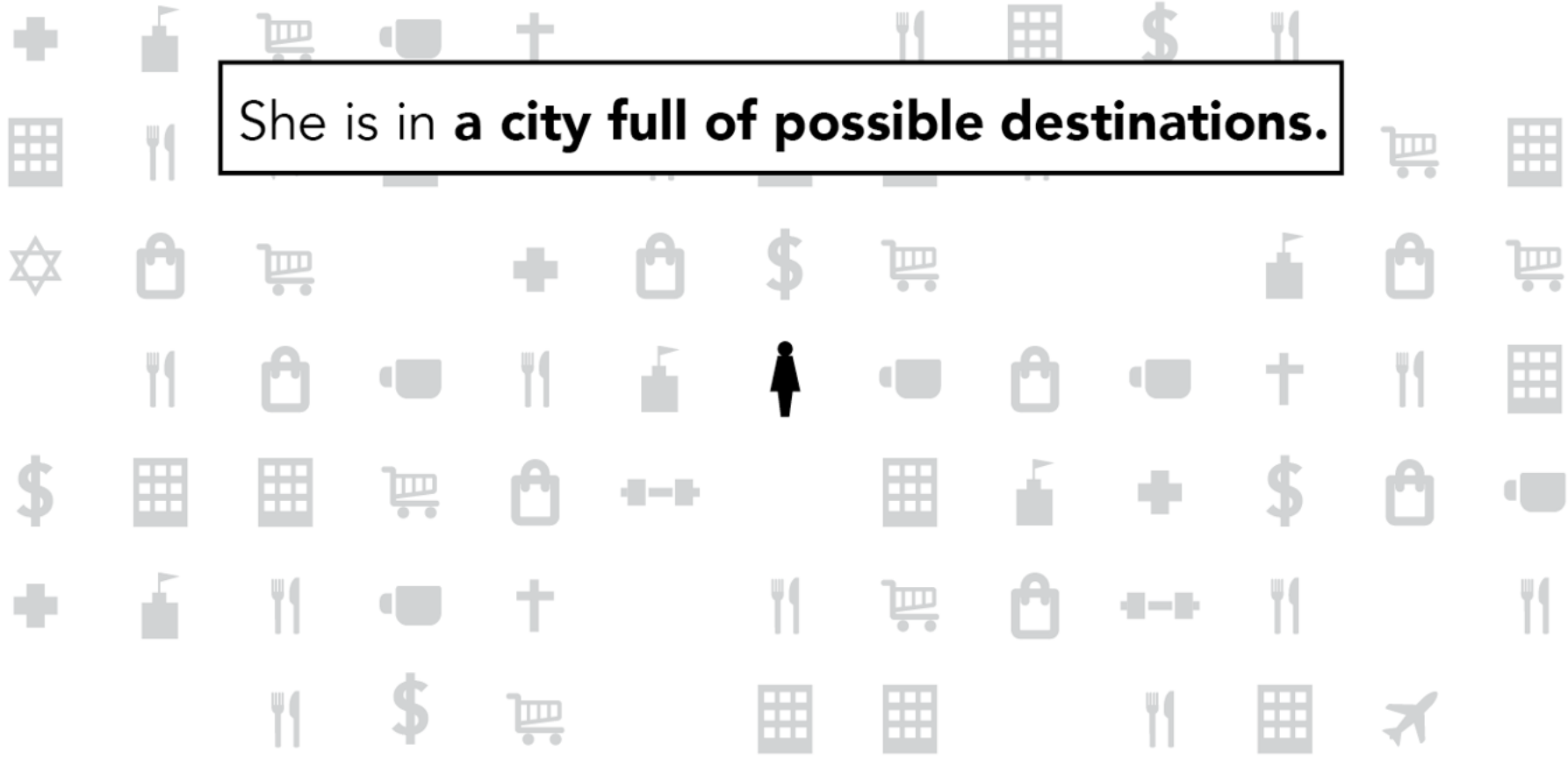
# Transit provides **access to opportunities.**

---

Here is a person.



# Transit provides **access to opportunities.**

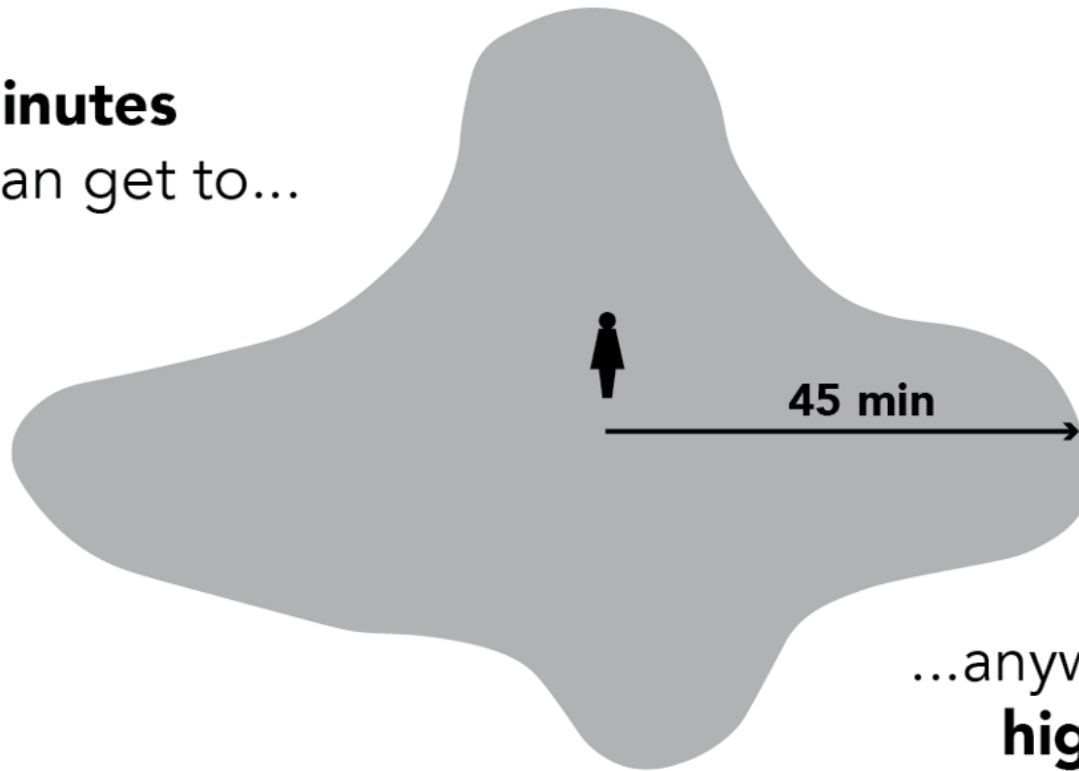


She is in **a city full of possible destinations.**



# Transit provides **access to opportunities.**

In **45 minutes**  
she can get to...



...anywhere in the  
**highlighted area.**

\_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

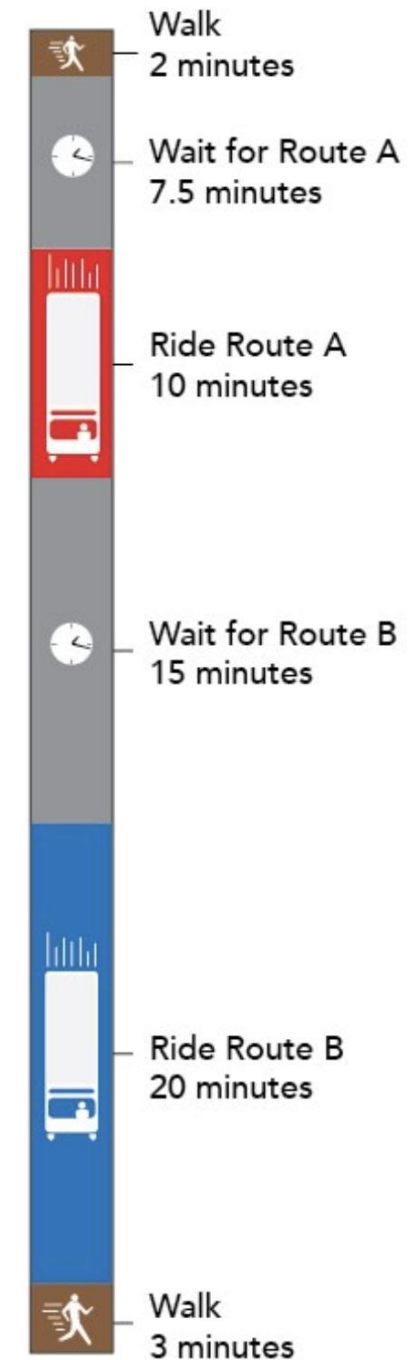
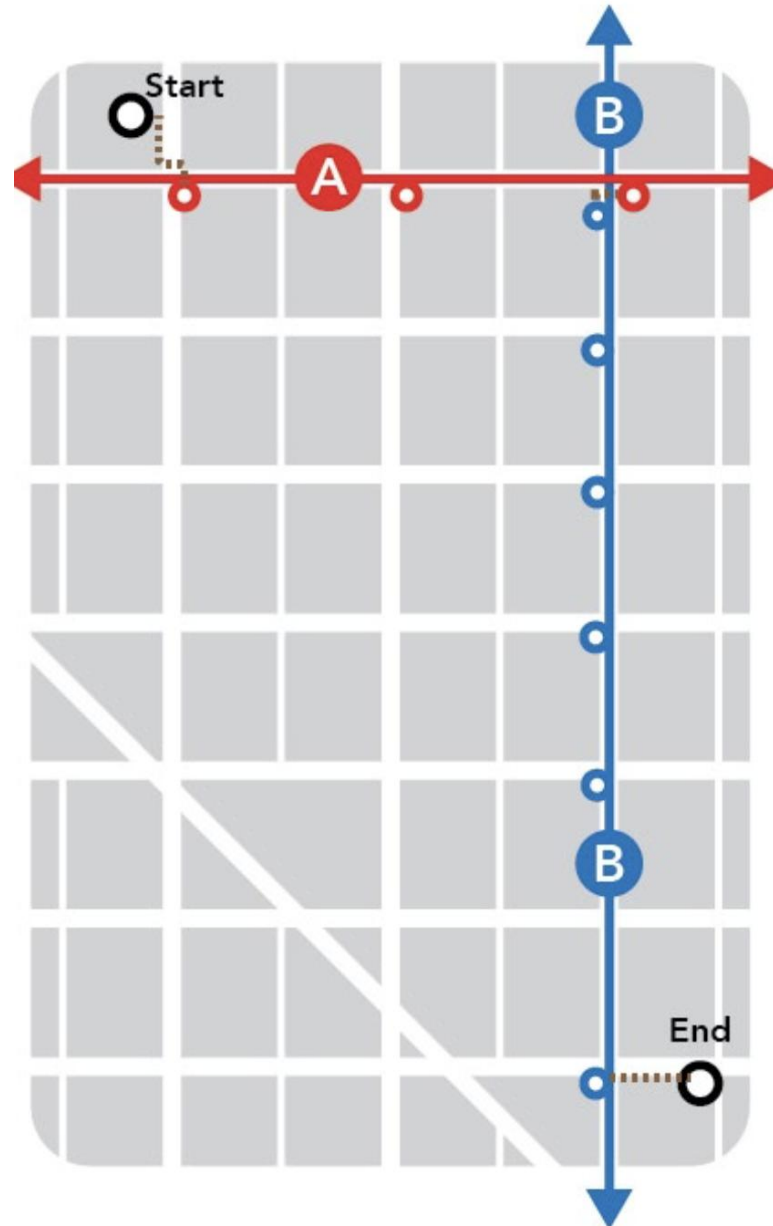
+ You can  
 count  
 \$ **the jobs  
 or schools  
 or shopping**  
 in that area to  
**re her access.**

# Travel time

- Walking
- Waiting
- Riding
- Transfers

## What's taking so long?

*Elements of Transit Travel Time*



# Transit can provide more access in less time when service is:

---

- **Frequent.** Service every 15 minutes or less requires less time waiting.
- **Direct.** A straighter path requires less time riding on the bus or the train.
- **Useful.** Connects people to places where many opportunities are available.

# Increasing easy access to destinations by transit:

---

- **Makes transit more useful** for trips people are already making.
- **Expands people's lives**, by providing more opportunities for jobs, education, shopping, social connection, etc.
- This is what RTD can do to set up the conditions for **increased ridership**.

# **Transit Tradeoffs: Ridership vs. Coverage**

Is ridership actually your main goal?





# Poll: What's the most important thing transit can do?

1. Provide easy access to places many people need to go.
2. Meet basic needs for people who can't drive.
3. Help reduce pollution and greenhouse gases.
4. Provide some service in every community.
5. Help reduce traffic congestion.
6. Reduce isolation of disadvantaged communities.
7. Support walkable communities.



## Some of these are **Ridership** goals.

---

- Transit can only **reduce pollution** or **congestion** if many people ride buses and trains.
- Focusing on **walkable communities** and **big destinations** concentrates service in places where the most people are likely to ride.

# Others are Coverage goals.

---

- Meeting **basic needs** and **reducing isolation** requires serving as many places as possible, regardless of ridership potential.
- **Serving every community** requires considering the needs of people located throughout the RTD district.

# Why does this matter?

- Transit debates often feature people with different goals talking past each other.
- Ridership and Coverage goals require RTD to focus on **different kinds of service.**

## Goals served by **Ridership**

Pay for the costs out of the farebox!

Help build a dense and walkable city!

Reduce congestion!

Reduce emissions!

## Goals served by **Coverage**

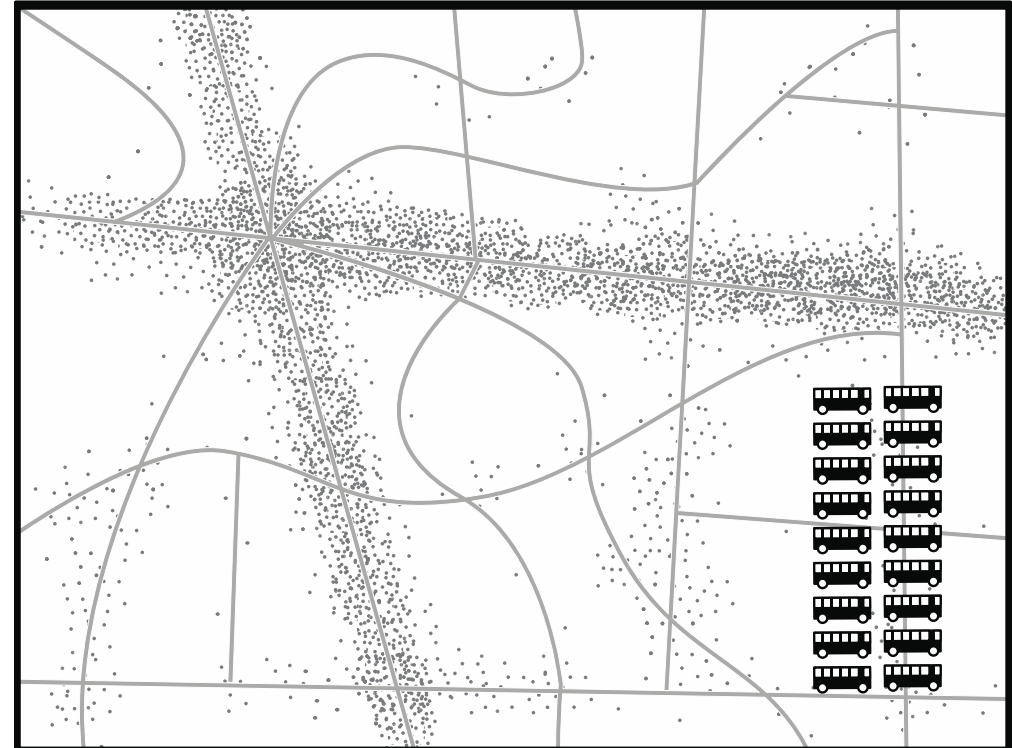
Meet lifeline needs of people who would be stranded!

Serve disadvantaged groups!

Serve us, because we pay taxes too!

# How **Ridership** and **Coverage** Goals Impact Service

- Welcome to this fictional town.
- Dots represent jobs or residents.
- We have 18 buses to serve this town.
- What should the network look like? It depends on the goal.



# This network maximizes **Ridership**.

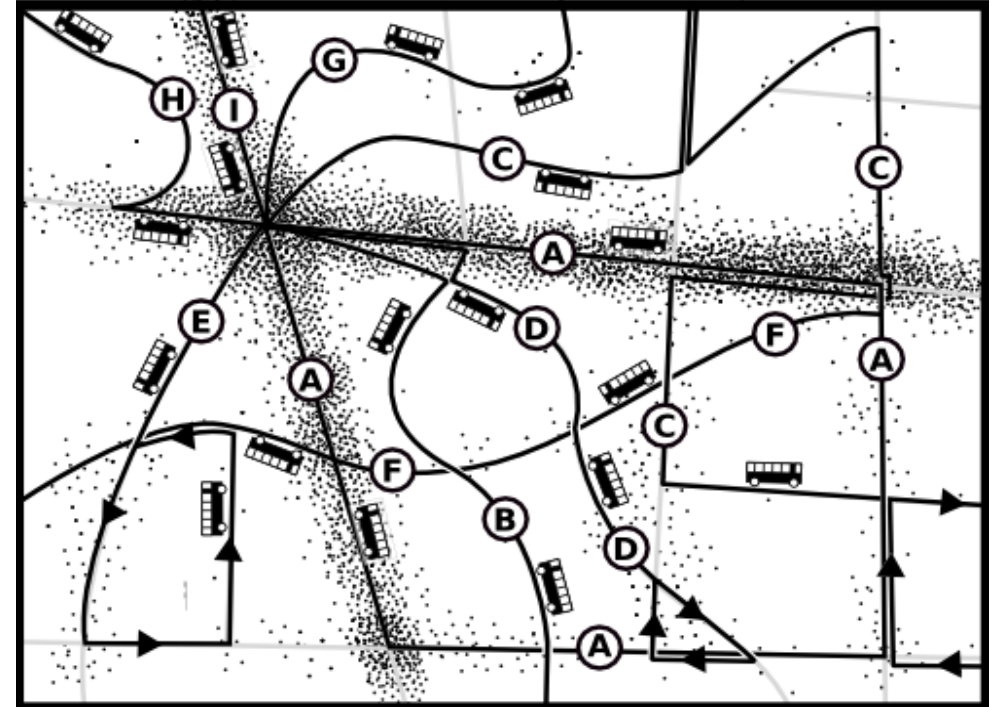
- Straight lines follow patterns of density and easy walkability.
- Because all 18 buses are focused on few lines, they are very frequent.





# This network maximizes Coverage.

- There are more routes that reach everyone.
- However, with only 18 buses to spread across a wider area, the buses are less frequent and the routes are more complex.
- This results in lower ridership.



# Why does a maximum **Ridership** network look like this?

- People only use transit when it's useful. This type of network serves more trips in a reasonable amount of time.
- Service is more frequent and direct. Higher frequency means little waiting and makes connections easy.
- Developmental features, like density, walkability, linearity and compactness, all contribute to ridership.



# Density

How many people are going to and from the area around each stop?

**Higher  
ridership**

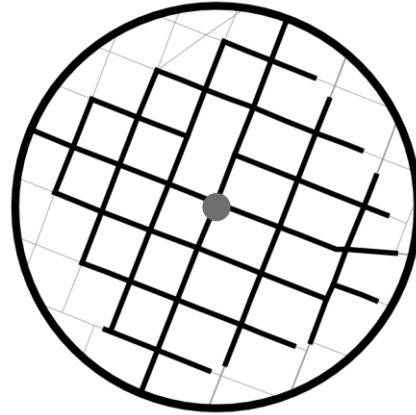


**Lower  
ridership**



# Walkability

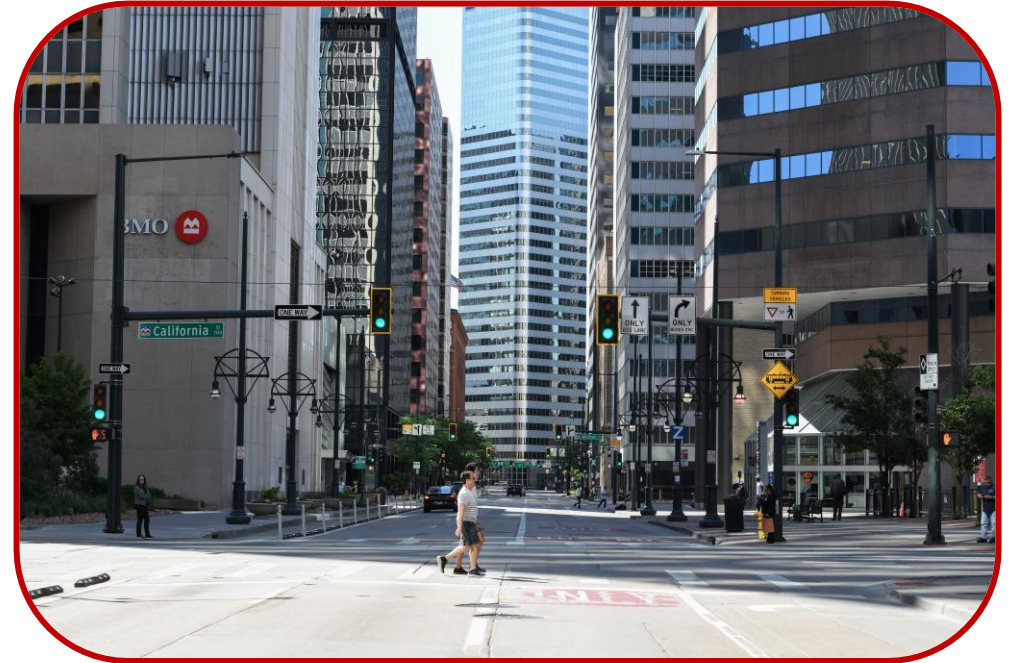
**Higher  
ridership**



**Lower  
ridership**



Can people near the stop  
walk to the stop?



Is it possible to cross  
the street at the stop?

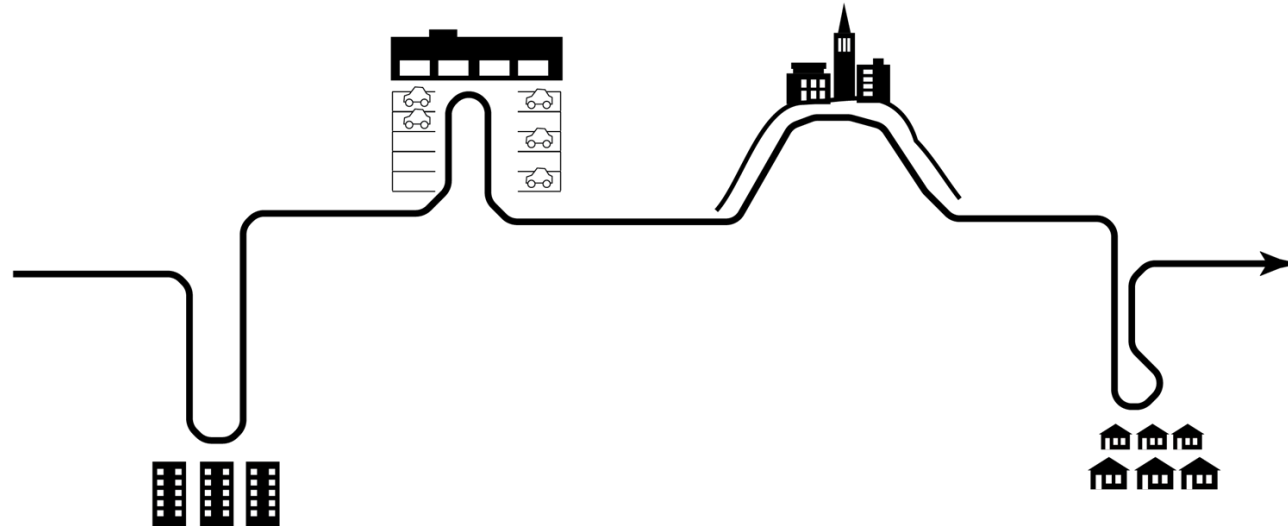
# Linearity

Can transit run in straight lines that are useful to through-riders?

**Higher  
ridership,  
lower cost**

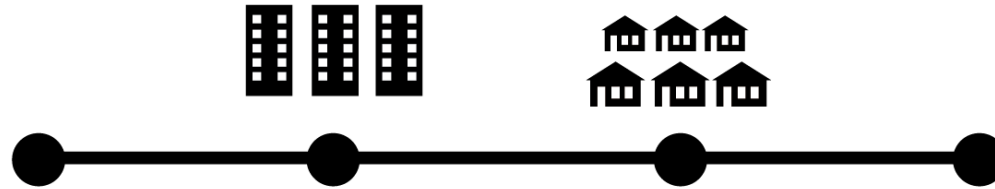


**Lower  
ridership,  
higher cost**



# Compactness

Higher  
ridership,  
lower cost



Lower  
ridership,  
higher cost



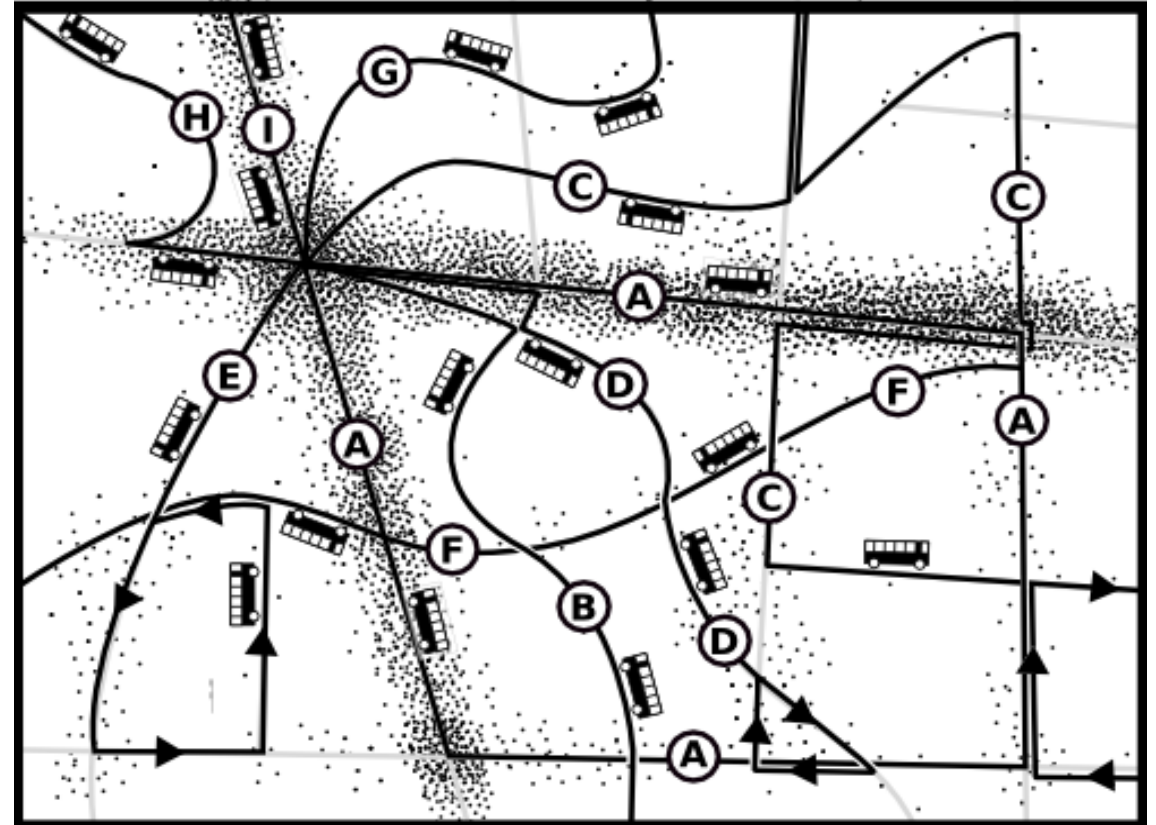
Do buses have to traverse large  
areas with little demand?



# Every transit agency has to choose a point somewhere in between the two extremes.

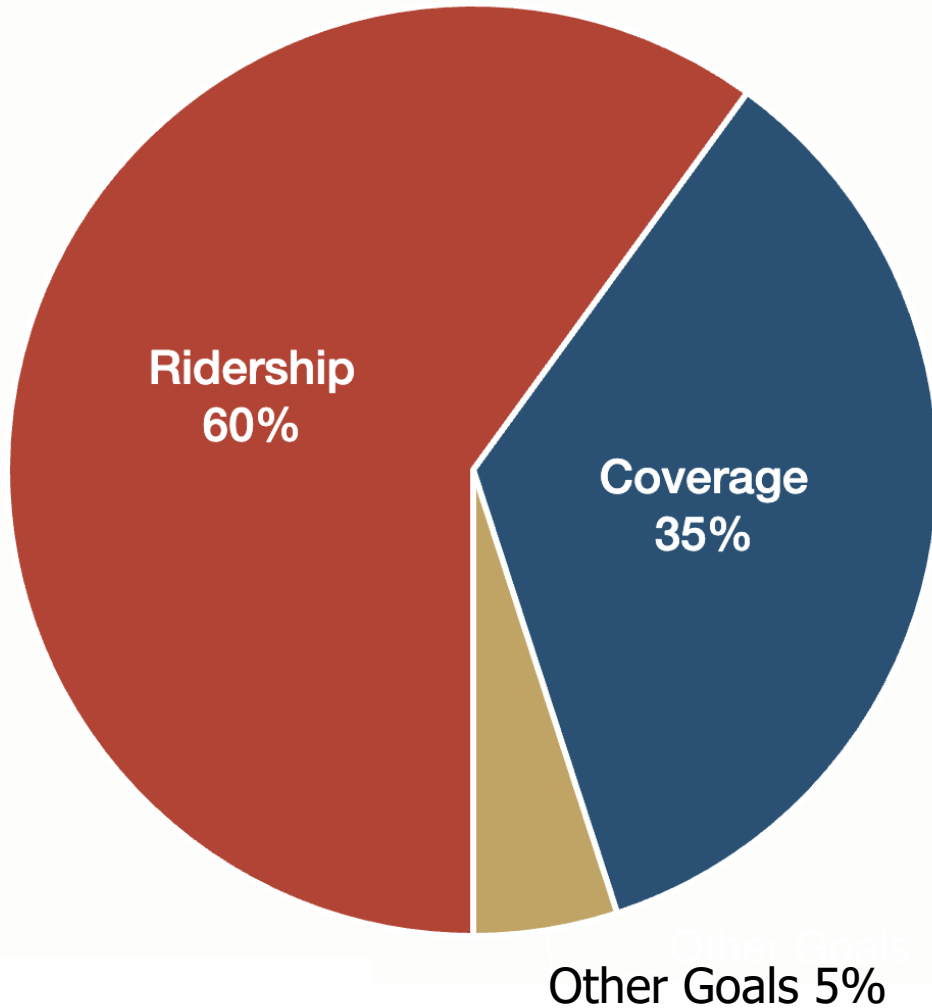


**Maximizing Ridership**



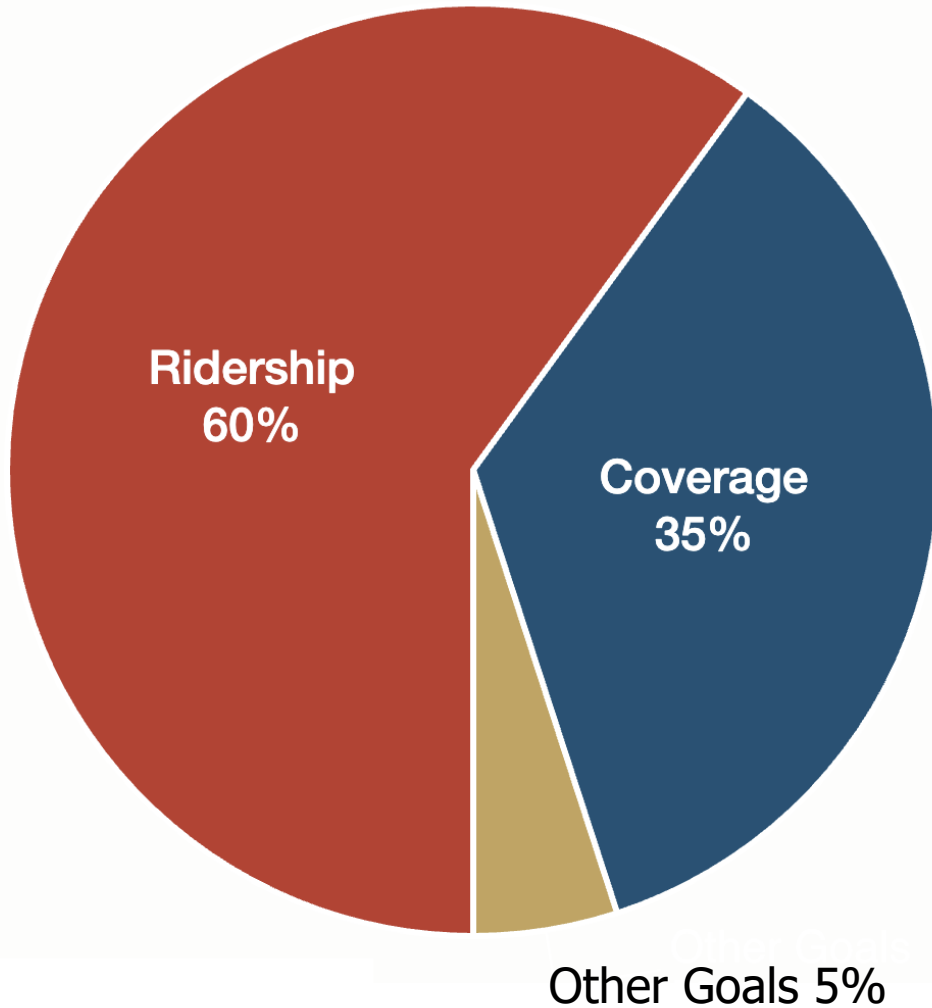
**Maximizing Coverage**

# This is the balance in RTD's existing network.



- About 60% of RTD's current service supports **ridership** goals.
- About 35% of RTD's service is oriented towards **coverage**.

# Is this still the right balance?



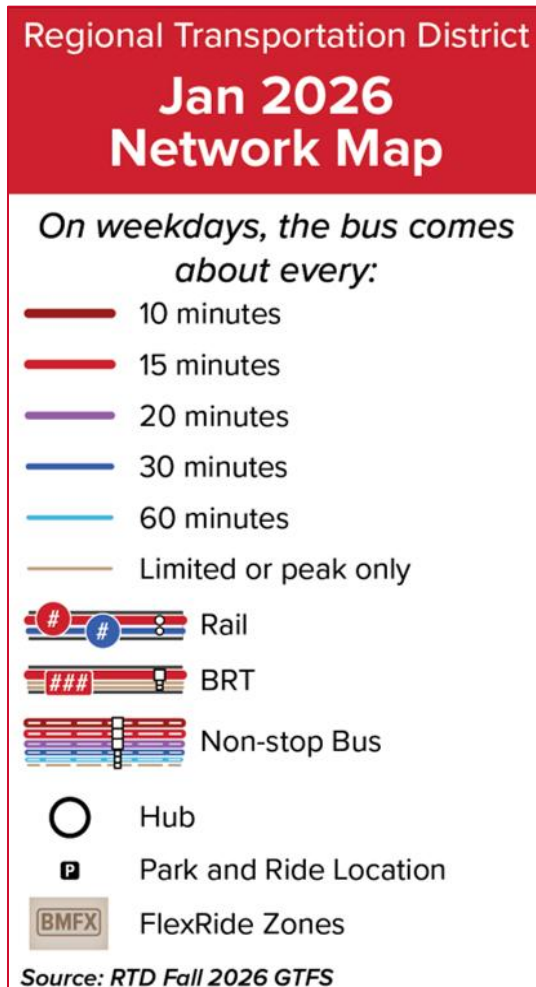
- The structural deficit will require RTD to reduce service between now and early 2028.
- Which goals should RTD prioritize in considering which services to maintain, change or reduce?

# **This fall, two contrasting Network Alternatives will illustrate how this choice applies to your community.**

---

- We will present two alternative visions for reduced service in early 2028.
- Each alternative will be described in maps, charts and reports that will allow you to visualize how they would affect people and places you know and care about.
- We will seek feedback from this group, and from the broader public, about the direction RTD should go.

# Maps of each alternative will show possible future RTD bus routes and rail lines, and their frequency.

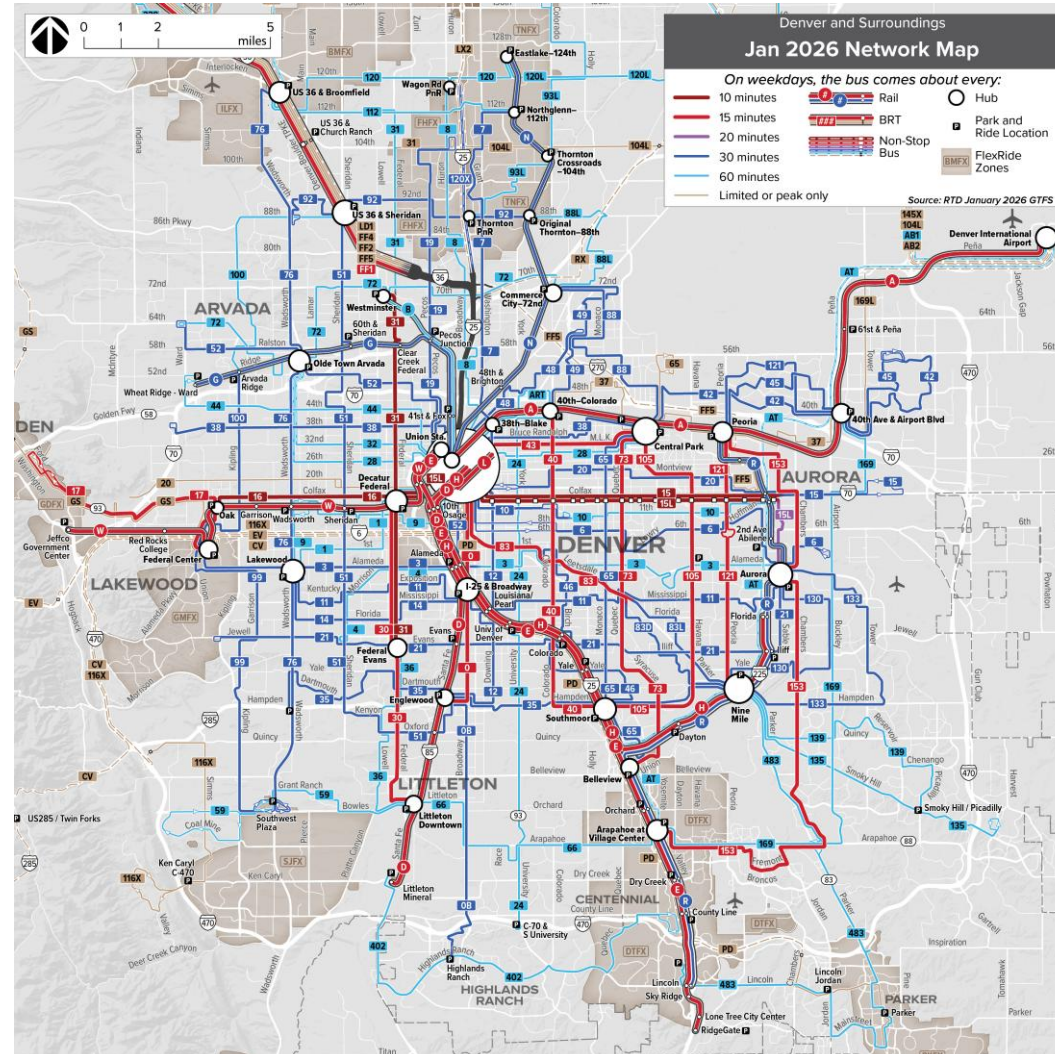
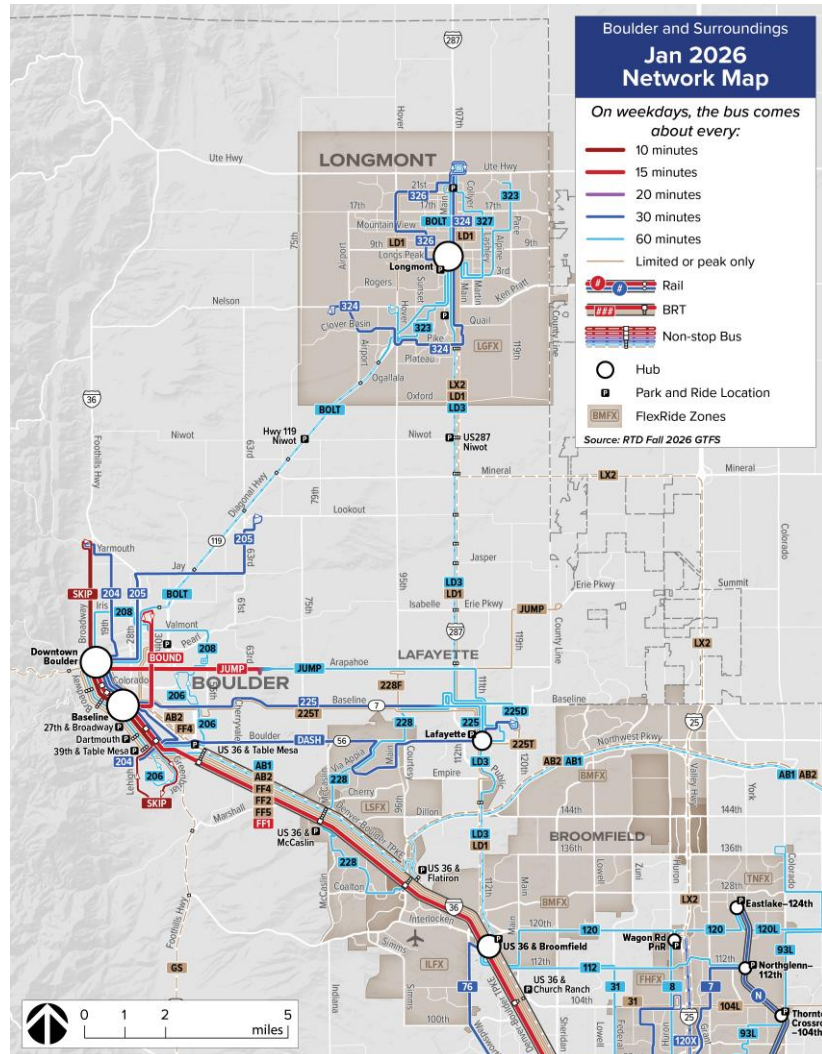


On RTD CONNECT maps:

- **Red lines** are frequent, with a bus or train **every 15 minutes or better** on weekdays in the daytime.
  - These lines usually serve a ridership purpose.
- **Dark blue lines** come about **every 30 minutes**.
  - These lines usually serve a mix of ridership and coverage purposes.
- **Light blue lines** come about **every 60 minutes**.
  - These lines usually serve a coverage purpose.



# These maps show where RTD provided different frequencies of service in early 2026.



# In a service reduction, moving RTD's network in the direction of **Ridership** means:

---

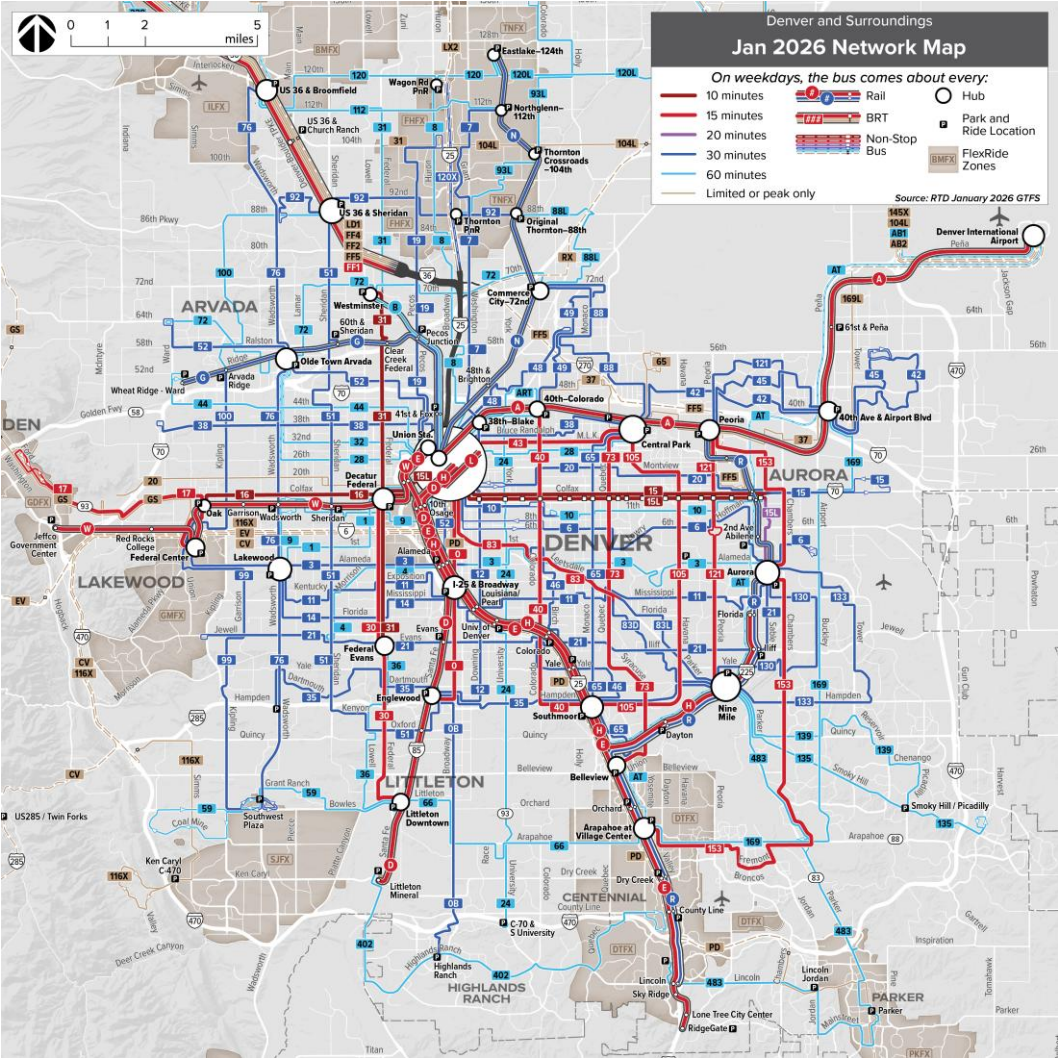
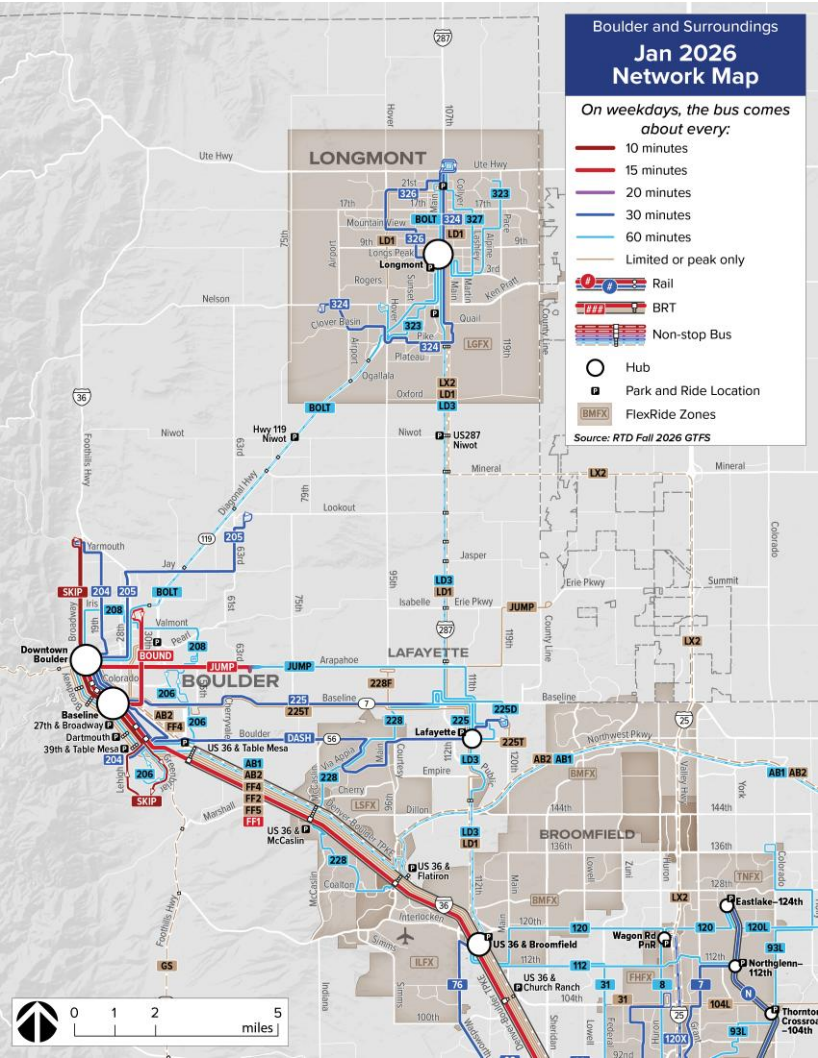
- More routes with frequent service, every 15 minutes or better.
- More people with high levels of access to destinations.

BUT:

- Many areas with infrequent service today would have no service at all.
- No FlexRide service.



# RTD Network Maps – January 2026



# In a service reduction, moving RTD's network in the direction of **Coverage** means:

---

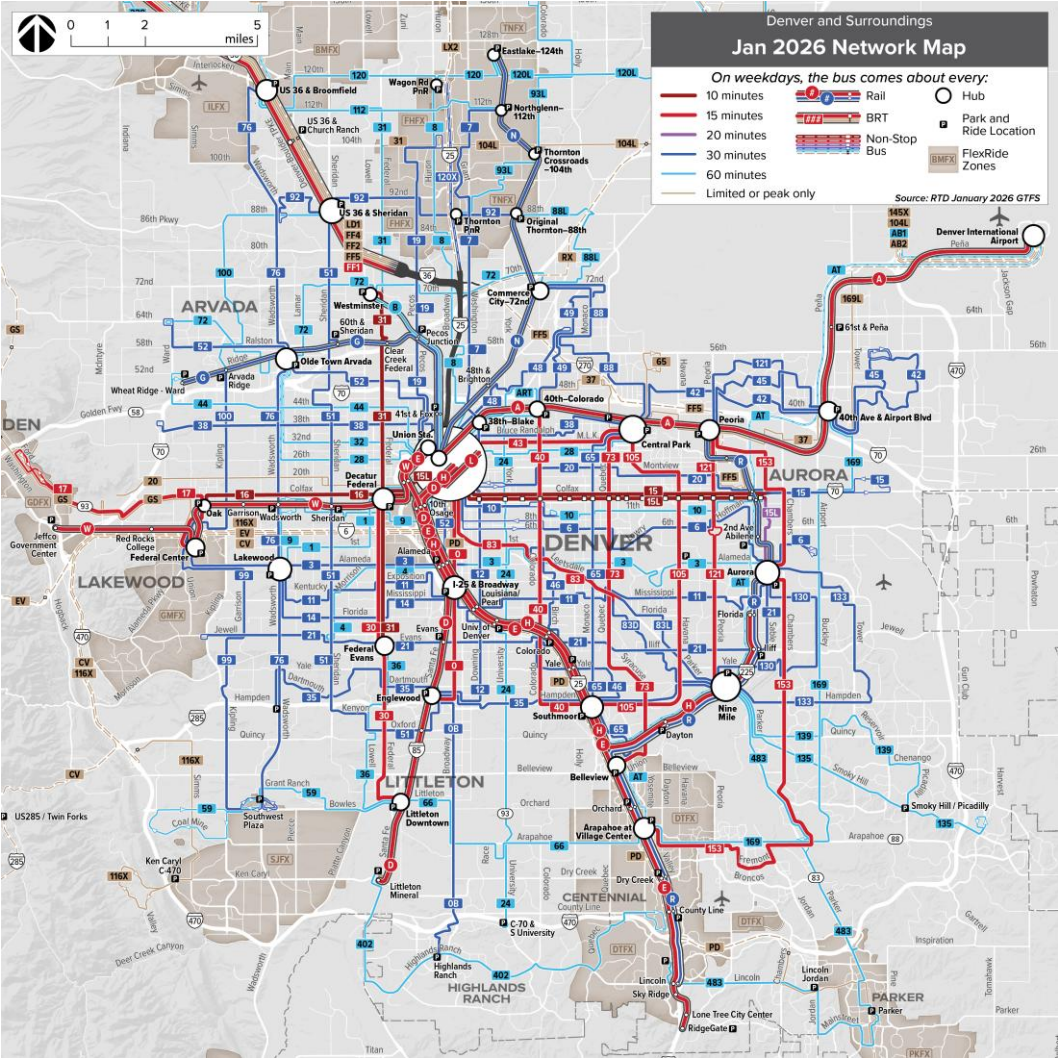
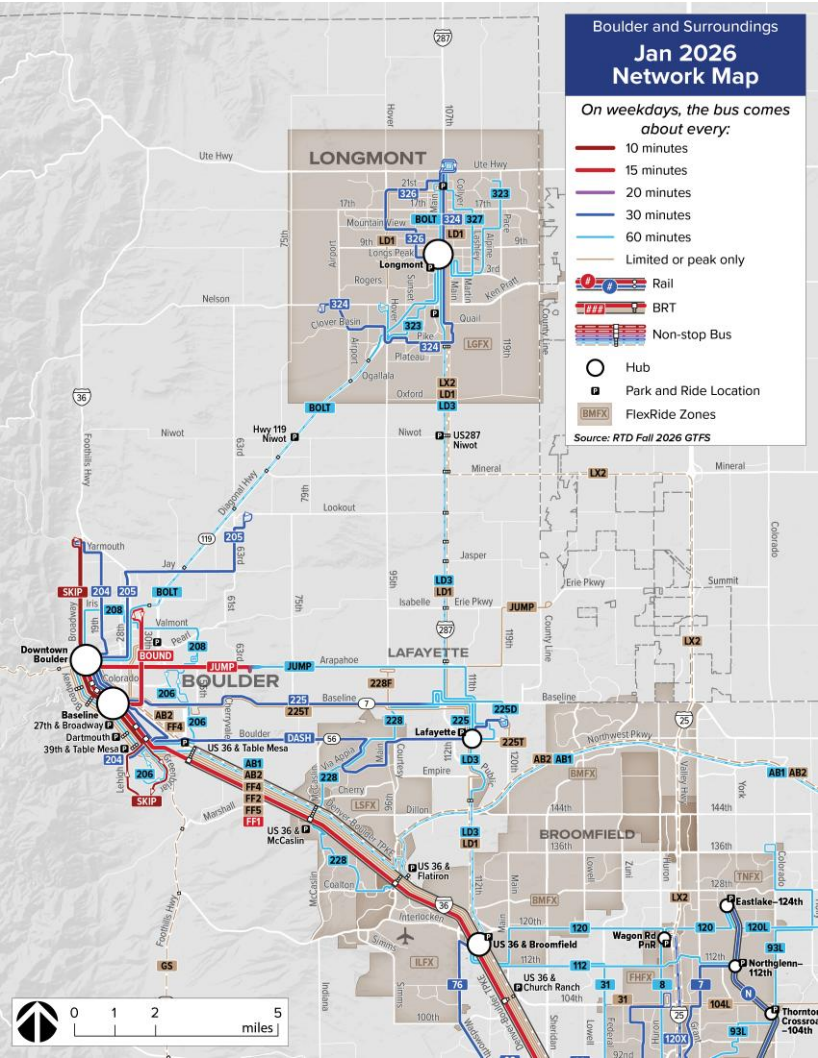
- Some service maintained in all areas RTD serves today.

BUT:

- Fewer routes with frequent service, every 15 minutes or better.
- Service in many areas replaced with lower frequency service.
- Fewer people with high levels of access to destinations.



# RTD Network Maps – January 2026



# What is the right balance of goals for RTD?



**Ridership  
Alternative**  
**80% Ridership**  
**20% Coverage**

*Somewhere in Between?*

**Coverage  
Alternative**  
**60% Ridership**  
**40% Coverage**

This is **not** a technical question.  
It's about your community's **values** and **priorities** for transit.

# PROJECT ROADMAP

## PHASE 1: CURRENT CONDITIONS

Understand the current network, market and industry conditions.



## PHASE 3: DRAFT PLAN

Share short-range service and long-range vision plans for input from the public, stakeholders and Board.

**Do we have the network right?**



## PHASE 2: NETWORK ALTERNATIVES AND ANALYSIS

Share alternatives that show what the network could look like if designed to maximize ridership or maximize coverage. Understand the public, stakeholders and Board's priorities for a future network.

**What should our priorities be?**



## PHASE 4: FINAL PLANS

Finalize short- and long-range plans and prepare for implementation.





# **A Community Conversation: Engagement Opportunities**



# A community conversation

Our community will shape the future of transit in the region, together. RTD CONNECT will engage:

- Current transit customers
- Community members and organizations
- Neighborhood groups
- Local governments and regional leaders
- Advocacy organizations
- Service councils and advisory committees
- RTD staff and Board Members
- **YOU**



# Phase 2 and 3 Engagement

Each phase will include opportunities to engage:

- Three in-person stakeholder workshops
- Three in-person community meetings
- Two virtual community meetings
- Pop-up events
- An online survey
- Presentations at community meetings
- Digital tools (e.g., project inbox)
- Communications toolkits for partners
- Community Ambassadors



# Stakeholder Workshops

- Join us this fall for interactive workshops designed for stakeholders like you to explore ridership and coverage tradeoffs and inform the short- and long-term network design.
- **Save the Dates:**
  - September 30
  - October 1
  - October 2





# Community Ambassador Program

- The Community Ambassador Program will recruit 30 community representatives, two per RTD Board District, to ensure community members across the region have a voice in the future transit network design.
- Ambassadors will play a vital role in sharing information, gathering feedback and connecting community members to engagement opportunities.
- **Applications are due August 28.**



# Join us!

---



## **CURRENT CONDITIONS**

Stop #1

**SUMMER 2026**

Get familiar with RTD CONNECT and  
recruit Community Ambassadors

---

## **NETWORK ALTERNATIVES**

Stop #2

Engage in Stakeholder Workshops and encourage community  
participation to inform ridership vs. coverage tradeoffs

---

## **DRAFT PLANS**

Stop #3

**MID 2027**

Engage in Stakeholder Workshops and encourage community  
participation to inform short- and long-range designs

---

## **FINAL PLANS**

Stop #4

**LATE 2027**

Tune in to see how your feedback informed the final design

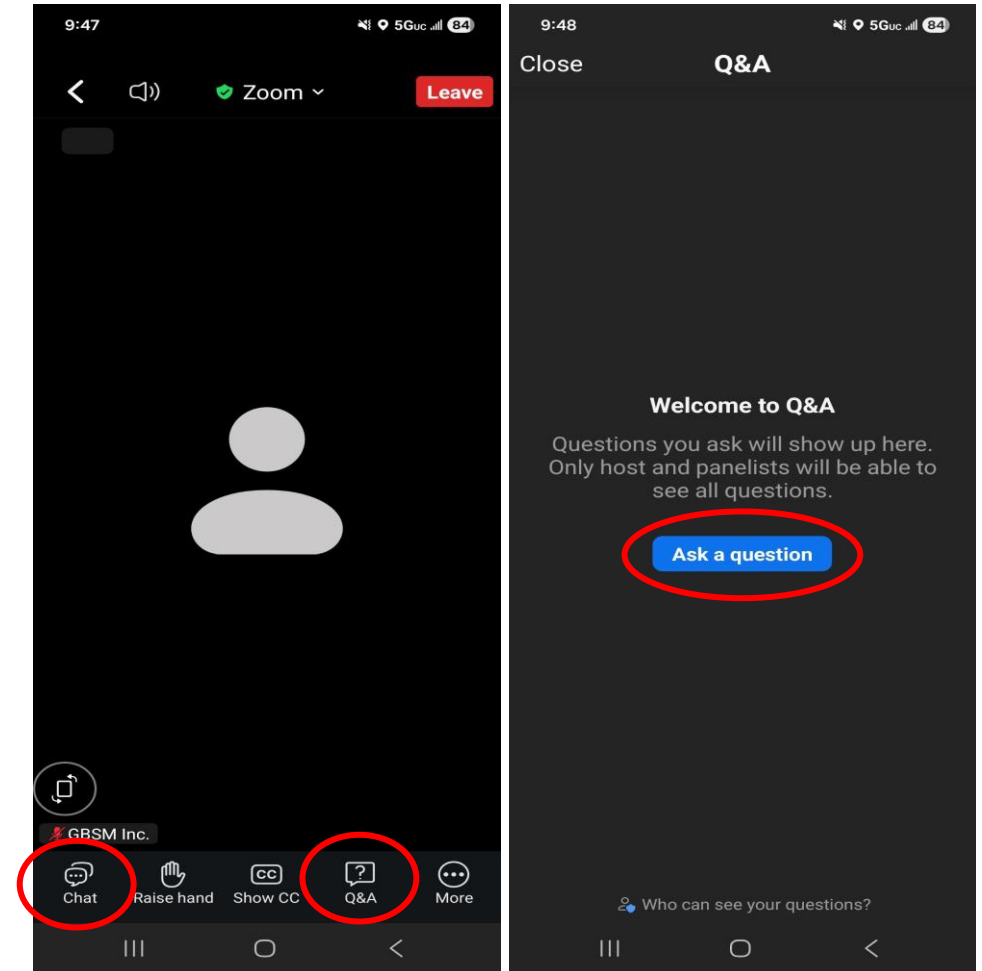


**Q&A**

**RTD**

# Q&A and Chat Instructions

- **Use the Chat and Q&A features to engage.**
- Questions are welcome throughout the presentation and will be addressed at the end, as time allows.
- If your question is not answered live, please email [RTDCONNECT@rtd-Denver.com](mailto:RTDCONNECT@rtd-Denver.com) for a response.
- Similar questions may be combined to allow for more topics to be discussed.



# Thank you!

## Let's Stay Connected

[RTDCONNECT@rtd-denver.com](mailto:RTDCONNECT@rtd-denver.com)

[www.rtd-denver.com/about-rtd/rtd-connect](http://www.rtd-denver.com/about-rtd/rtd-connect)

