AGENDA

RTD Accountability Committee
Governance Subcommittee
Monday, April 5, 2021
4:00- 5:00 p.m.
VIDEO/WEB CONFERENCE
Denver, CO

1. Call to Order

2. March 15, 2021 Meeting Summary
   (Attachment A)

3. Discussion of draft partnership recommendations
   (Attachment B)

4. Initial discussion on the RTD service Area
   (Attachment C)

5. Next Steps

   ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

6. Member Comment/Other Matters

7. Next meeting: April 19, 2021 at 4:00 p.m.

8. Adjournment
Joint subcommittee members present:
Julie Duran Mullica (Chair)
Elise Jones
Rutt Bridges
Lynn Guissinger
Troy Whitmore


Chair Mullica called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

March 1, 2021 Meeting Summary
Meeting summary was submitted. No revisions were requested.

Discussion of Subregional Service Council recommendation
Staff summarized the components of the recommendations. Specific questions/comments about the subregional service council recommendation included:
  - Kathleen Bracke (Boulder Co.)
    o Thanked the subcommittee and staff for the opportunities to participate in the roundtable discussions leading to this recommendation.
    o Overall, is supportive of the intent of the service council recommendation.
    o Ms. Bracke looks at the service councils as a way to offer customized service within the service area.
    o Supports the county-based concept. Ms. Bracke mentioned that the DRCOG subregional forums have fostered a collaborative working environment. She suggested that the RTD service councils could build from these experiences and strengths in and effort to track resources and accountability to stakeholders.
    o Also, the forums could create the opportunity to leverage resources providing mobility not only on the shoulders of RTD but all of us.
  - Debra Baskett (Westminster)
    o Wanted to build a case for the travel shed governance concept.
    o Acknowledging Boulder’s unique travel patterns, Ms. Baskett mentioned that travel in other counties (Adams, Broomfield, Denver) are more overlapping.
    o Ms. Baskett agreed with the recommendation to turn it back to RTD and the local stakeholders to figure out best travel shed boundaries.
Debra Johnson
- While not speaking on behalf of the Board, Ms. Johnson mentioned that RTD’s senior management team had a chance to discuss and are supportive of the proposal.
- Ms. Johnson requested clarification on the definition of equity in the fifth bullet.
- In the “Membership” section, she wanted to make sure first and foremost that the customers’ voice is heard and is adequately represented on these service councils.
- “Geography” section: supportive of the travel shed governance concept.
- “Resource Allocation” section: Ms. Johnson mentioned that when we think about “value”, she wants to make sure we are talking about moving people and the value of connecting people to activity centers throughout the district.

Lynn Guissinger:
- Mentioned that the proposal is scheduled for an upcoming RTD Board study session.
- Ms. Guissinger supports the idea of looking at the options and details associated with the service council concept.

Elise Jones:
- Supports the proposal and starting a conversation at RTD on the geography of the council districts.
- Ms. Jones supports the county-based approach because it provides the best opportunity for local funding commitment and it doesn’t add another layer of bureaucracy since the DRCOG forums can be utilized (adding more stakeholders) and would create a stronger bond between transit and other mobility conversations occurring at the DRCOG forums.

Rutt Bridges:
- Spoke to ensuring diverse representation on the subregional service councils.

Chair Mullica
- Thanked the subcommittee for their thoughtful conversation and mentioned that this recommendation will go to the full RTD Accountability Committee for discussion.

Discussion of TNC partnerships around the country
Natalie Shishido presented a review of how peer transit agencies are utilizing TNC partnerships to augment traditional transit services.

Chair Mullica
- Asked the subcommittee about its thoughts on next steps as it related to partnerships and possible recommendations.

Elise Jones:
- Mentioned that the final recommendation should build off the COVID-19 relief funding partnership recommendations provided to RTD. Possible additional stimulus funds provide the opportunity to explore additional partnerships such as finding solutions to the first/final mile issues.
• Rutt Bridges:
  o Believes there are good opportunities to work with TNCs for first/last mile trips with better cost effectiveness. TNCs offer a great way for RTD to increase ridership in areas a mile or more from fixed routes.

Adjournment
The meeting adjourned at 4:47 p.m.
To: Members of the Governance Subcommittee

From: Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director
(303) 480-6701 or drex@drcog.org

Meeting Date | Agenda Category | Agenda Item #
---|---|---
April 5, 2021 | Discussion | 3

SUBJECT
Draft partnership recommendations

PROPOSED ACTION/RECOMMENDATIONS
N/A

ACTIONS BY OTHERS
N/A

SUMMARY
The second of the four subcommittee focus areas is an exploration of how to enable partnerships with other transit agencies and nonprofits to provide for better service inside and outside of the RTD service area.

For the purposes of discussion, staff has drafted the attached partnership recommendations based on conversations that have occurred at prior subcommittee meetings.

PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS/ACTIONS
N/A

PROPOSED MOTION
N/A

ATTACHMENT
1. Draft Partnership Recommendations
2. Recommendations to RTD for use of COVID-19 Relief Funds

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
If you need additional information, please contact Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director, at drex@drcog.org or (303) 480-6701
Draft Partnership Recommendations

As RTD continues to evaluate new innovative solutions to improve service delivery, collaborative partnerships will be an important facet of its strategic plan. Building on the RTD Accountability Committee’s partnership recommendations for the use of COVID-19 relief funding, the governance subcommittee recommends RTD consider the following:

- Leverage existing and new partnerships to improve service efficiency and grow ridership. RTD should emphasize partnerships with local governments and employers or employment centers who have a unique understanding of local mobility needs.
- Explore opportunities to provide cost-effective local transportation services through collaboration with existing mobility service providers (e.g., Via, Uber, Lyft) in areas where traditional fixed route may not be the most appropriate mobility solution.
- Consider developing a competitive Innovation Grant program to drive bold ideas to increasing ridership. Recipients would receive funds to dive deeper into project concepts and implementation, creating models of innovation for the entire service area.
- Encourage RTD to develop a public-facing partnership dashboard to highlight existing private and public partnerships.
- Regularly evaluate existing partnerships to determine their effectiveness and opportunities to “re-scope” relationships to ensure maximum benefit.
RTD Accountability Committee: Finance Subcommittee
Recommendations to RTD for use of COVID-19 Relief Funds

Background
RTD received approximately $232 million in federal CARES Act funding in 2020. Through service reductions and other cost cutting measures including furlough days for non-represented staff, travel and training reductions, and deferred asset management projects, RTD was able to retain all employees during 2020 and add approximately $80 million to reserve funds. The Accountability Committee has reviewed RTD’s use of those funds with the following findings:

- RTD utilized CARES funding in alignment with the earmarked intention for spending – to support operating costs and employee salaries in the interest of avoiding layoffs. Funds were reimbursed by the Federal government for the following two expense types:
  - Represented and Non-Represented Wages and Benefits: Employee wages for both unionized and non-union employees; roughly 64% of CARES funding drawn through September 2020.
  - Purchased Transportation – Bus OR CRT (“Commuter Rail Transit”): Externally contracted routes with Denver transportation partners; roughly 36% of CARES funding drawn through September 2020.
- Funding appears to have been spent in alignment with FTA intentions.
- RTD appears to have balanced provision of transportation options with responsibility for its workforce and regional economic stability in its funding decisions.
- RTD appears to have worked to implement cost cutting measures to reduce the funds required for continued operations as buoyed by CARES funding.
- RTD’s use of CARES Act funds was not transparent or easily understandable.

In anticipation of continued declines in ridership, farebox revenues, and sales and use tax receipts, RTD adopted its 2021 budget based on a continued service level of approximately 60% of pre-pandemic levels and a reduction of approximately 400 positions. The 2021 budget is $1.66 billion, a reduction of $125.3 million from the amended 2020 budget and did not assume any additional federal COVID relief funds beyond the CARES Act.

On January 11, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) released the apportionments for $14 billion in Federal funding appropriated by Congress through the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act of 2021 (CRRSAA). The apportionment to RTD is approximately $203.4 million.

Recommendations
The RTD Accountability Committee offers the following recommendations to RTD on the use of these additional federal relief funds. The recommendations are aimed at stabilizing RTD operations, restoring services, rebuilding trust, attracting new and returning riders, and positioning the agency for strategic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. **Provide a transparent process and make priorities clear**
   RTD should provide full transparency during its process to consider its use of CRRSAA funds so that stakeholders and members of the public can follow the tradeoffs and pros and cons of their decisions. RTD should clearly define its priorities for this funding, what issues are being addressed by additional funds, and the amount of funding allocated to each priority.
This transparency should continue as funds are spent so that the public can track expenditures.

2. **Strategically recall previously laid off front line employees**
   The Committee acknowledges and supports RTD’s decision to recall approximately 200 direct-service employees. However, in keeping with the above recommendation, RTD should explain the amount of CRRSAA funding needed to recall these workers and what amount of funding is available for additional priorities. The focus of these recalls should be to ensure that RTD has capacity to restore quality transit service, particularly to transit-dependent communities as quickly as possible.

3. **Share federal stimulus funding with other transit service providers in the metro area**
   There are several non-profit and community-based transit service providers in the RTD district. They supplement RTD’s fixed-route and para transit services, often at lower cost than RTD could provide comparable service. As with RTD, these providers have been impacted by reduced ridership and revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic and will benefit from CRRSAA funding.

4. **Implement a reduced flat fare for 6 months to rebuild ridership and attract new riders**
   Market it as a simple, affordable, and easy to understand way to ride RTD and an incentive to attract returning and new riders. Offer half-off fare for seniors/people with disabilities, as necessary to comply with FTA requirements and consider extending half-ff fares for youth riders. This will reduce costs for financially struggling essential workers who are still riding RTD. During the pilot program, use this time to explore other ways to improve affordability of existing and/or new pass programs, including LiVE, that can be put in place as a longer-term solution.

5. **Work to improve uptake and ease of use of passes**
   Allow flexibility in the EcoPass programs and contracts so that more neighborhoods and businesses can participate. For example, allow master EcoPass contracts to support county-wide affordable housing programs and create more options for businesses to obtain employee EcoPasses for a subset of their workers.

   Help fund PEAK eligibility technicians/caseworkers at county HHS departments to help people through LiVE enrollment. Continuing to get the LiVE ID cards in qualified participant’s hands is essential and counties can provide this customer assistance, but need funding to help support this function.

6. **Offer free RTD parking and transit “Day Pass” benefits to anyone traveling to a COVID vaccination facility for a primary or ‘second dose’ shot**
   A printed a digital COVID immunization reservation acknowledgment would serve as an RTD “Day Pass” on the vaccine appointment day. No additional RTD staff effort is required other than notifying drivers and security staff of this benefit. A verbal “I am scheduled for (or I received) a COVID vaccination today” comment to the driver would be sufficient for boarding, though fare inspectors may ask for the printed or digital documentation.
7. **Implement an RTD trial ridership program by offering temporary free RTD rail or bus service for anyone receiving a COVID vaccination**

Offer free RTD rail or bus service for anyone receiving a COVID vaccination, valid until three days after their second dose shot is due. After the second dose, they get another pass valid for 15 days of free rides. Those receiving a single-dose vaccine receive a 30-day pass.

People receiving vaccinations are required to remain on-site for 15 minutes to monitor for adverse reactions. With the cooperation of existing vaccine distributors, RTD would set up a table nearby to offer this special RTD COVID vaccination passes. The person issuing the pass and the recipient would both sign the pre-printed paper pass (see example). The large text would ensure that drivers could easily read the expiration date through their plexiglass shields. A detailed embossed background image would help make them more difficult to counterfeit.

RTD would incur no cost for people who decline this benefit. If someone does give RTD a try, they may become regular customers, thus building ridership and generating revenue. If they are already RTD customers, we just added a vaccinated rider—increasing their safety and the safety of our buses, trains, and neighborhoods. For loyal customers who already have a monthly pass, RTD might allow a free pass renewal with proof of vaccination.

8. **Leverage new partnerships**

Develop, expand, and leverage existing and new partnerships to improve service efficiency and grow ridership. This can also provide cost-effective service in areas experiencing RTD service cuts and leverage local community investments in the transit system. For example:

- Partnerships with new job centers
- Expanded partnerships with communities and non-profits to grow local FlexRide and other similar on-demand services (ex. Boulder County operated Lafayette service) to serve more people during and post-COVID
- Lyons/Boulder taxi voucher program, co funded with Boulder County
- Pursue other partnerships similar to the Englewood Trolley, DRCOG Vanpool, and support for the Lone Tree Link
- Evaluate partnerships with both for-profit and non-profit entities to address the need for first/last mile services for poorly served communities
- Merge several FlexRide services (and a Boulder County operated Lafayette service) into a joint SE Boulder County/Broomfield SuperFlexRide service area
- A mini-grant program with RTD and local communities to incentivize co-funding existing and/or new services to build back from prior service cuts as well as to grow service in the future
- Consider pursuing a partnership with CDOT for the I-25/SH119 grant
To: Members of the Governance Subcommittee

From: Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director  
(303) 480-6701 or drex@drcog.org

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Meeting Date</th>
<th>Agenda Category</th>
<th>Agenda Item #</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 5, 2021</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>4</td>
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**SUBJECT**
Initial discussion on the RTD Service Area

**PROPOSED ACTION/RECOMMENDATIONS**
N/A

**ACTION BY OTHERS**
N/A

**SUMMARY**
The third of the four subcommittee focus areas is an assessment of whether the size and structure of RTD’s service area is appropriate relative to its ability to provide transit service.

At the April 5 meeting, staff will present background information on population and employment density in the RTD district along with other demographic data for the region.

**PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS/ACTIONS**
N/A

**PROPOSED MOTION**
N/A

**ATTACHMENT**
Staff presentation

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**
If you need additional information, please contact Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director, at drex@drcog.org or (303) 480-6701
RTD SERVICE AREA
Transit supportive densities in the Denver region

Annie Rice
Research Assistant
Regional Planning and Development
GUIDING QUESTIONS FOR THE GOVERNANCE SUBCOMMITTEE

- Is RTD’s service area too large?
- Are constituents receiving adequate service?
  - What would be the optimal service size?
- What are the transit service options if communities are removed from the RTD district?
## Transit Supportive Density Rules-of-Thumb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Rule-of-thumb</th>
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<tr>
<td>Peak-period service to/from Park-n-Ride or Call-n-Ride</td>
<td>3-12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residents + employees per acre*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local service</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residents + employees per acre*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bus rapid transit</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residents + employees per acre**</td>
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<tr>
<td>???</td>
<td>0-270?</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Residents + employees per acre</td>
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*Transit Service Policies & Standards, Regional Transit District (RTD), Approved July 19, 2016.

Distribution of nonwhite residents in the Denver region

- RTD light rail
- RTD bus routes
- Each dot represents 100 nonwhite residents.
- RTD districts

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Distribution of low income residents in the Denver region

- RTD light rail
- RTD bus routes
- Each dot represents 30 low income residents.
- RTD districts

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Distribution of residents with disabilities in the Denver region

- RTD light rail
- RTD bus routes
- Each dot represents 50 residents with disabilities.
- RTD districts

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<th>RTD district</th>
<th>Population (appx)</th>
<th>Jobs (appx)</th>
<th>Area (ac)</th>
<th>People + jobs per acre (appx)</th>
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FURTHER RESEARCH

- Is RTD’s service area too large?
- Are constituents receiving adequate service?
- What would be the optimal service size?
- What are the transit service options if communities are removed from the RTD district?
THANK YOU!

QUESTIONS?

Annie Rice
Research Assistant, Regional Planning and Development
A_Rice@drcog.org