

AGENDA

RTD Accountability Committee
Governance Subcommittee
Monday, May 17, 2021
4:00p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
VIDEO/WEB CONFERENCE
Denver, CO

1. Call to Order
2. May 03, 2021 Meeting Summary
(Attachment A)
3. Continued discussion of RTD Board structure
(Attachment B)
4. Next Steps

ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

5. Member Comment/Other Matters
6. Adjournment

ATTACH A

SUMMARY
RTD Accountability Committee: Governance Subcommittee
Monday, May 3, 2021
Note: Meeting held virtually via GoToMeeting

Joint subcommittee members present:

Julie Duran Mullica (Chair)
Deya Zavala
Elise Jones
Jackie Millet
Rutt Bridges
Dan Blankenship
Lynn Guissinger
Troy Whitmore

Others Present: Doug Rex, Ron Papsdorf, Matthew Helfant, Melinda Stevens, Natalie Shishido, Debra Baskett, Justin Begley, Mac Callison, Kent Moorman, Kathleen Bracke, Angie Rivera-Malpiede, Debra Johnson, Brian Welch, Bill Van Meter, Luke Palmisano, Shelly Cook, Bill Sirois, Doug MacLeod, Barbara McManus, Tanya Eydelman, Anna Danegger, Miller Hudson, George Gerstle, Jon Girand, Roger Sherman, Michael Davies.

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

April 19, 2021 Meeting Summary

Meeting summary was submitted. No revisions were requested.

Discussion of revised draft partnership recommendations

Staff summarized the components of the revised recommendations. Specific questions/comments about the partnership recommendations included:

- Jackie Millet
 - Suggested the inclusion of a new bullet to express the importance that potential partners know what the rules/guidelines are if wanting to partner with RTD.
 - Elise Jones suggested the following language: RTD should clearly identify and communicate guidelines for partnerships
- Rutt Bridges
 - Pointed out that it is important to any partnership that there is a clear understanding what the goals of the partnership are.
 - Chair Mullica noted the importance of making sure there are metrics that allow the partnership to measure success.
 - Jackie Millet said that the new bullet should also include the goals that RTD is trying to accomplish.
- Elise Jones
 - Expressed the importance to expand the partnership recommendation to include not just COVID relief funds, but any other federal funding opportunities as well.

- Lynn Guissinger
 - Agreed on the importance of having a set of criteria for partnerships
 - Debra Johnson agreed and pointed out that groups may not be aware of the parameters that RTD utilizes in order to make informed decisions on whether to partner.

Discussion of RTD boundary focus area recommendations

Chair Mullica provided some background on the proposed structure of the recommendations. She noted that since the service area discussion was included in the Reimagine RTD scope, the subcommittee discussed bringing forth recommendations that were formed as questions for RTD to consider during the Reimagine RTD initiative.

Specific questions/comments about the boundary focus area recommendation included:

- Chair Mullica
 - What will be the process for right-sizing the service over time? Especially given the amount of growth expected in the next 30 years.
- Elise Jones
 - Believed the right-size comment was more about that some areas may not be ripe for full fixed route service, but may be better served with other microtransit options. Ms. Jones also mentioned that the minimum service levels is based on the mobility type.
- Jackie Millet
 - Expressed her desire for the minimum service language to reference the amount of people served – should there be some service standards to ensure that transit-dependent customers are being served.
- Elise Jones
 - Agree with Ms. Millet's point but mentioned that RTD may not be a viable option for human service-type trips and other providers may be better positioned to meet those needs.
- Deya Zavala
 - Summarized the conversation by suggesting revisions to the second question to further clarify that if the minimum service can not be provided and a third-party partner cannot be established to develop a viable product "then" should RTD explore removing affected areas from the RTD service boundary.
- Dan Blankenship
 - What is the process for adding/removing geography from RTD?
 - Lynn Guissinger in discussing the legislative action that would be required briefed the subcommittee on the status "Parker" bill stating that it had been postponed indefinitely.
 - Mr. Blankenship mentioned that although certain communities do not have the densities to support fixed route service, they still have access to other services that RTD has available.

Discussion of RTD Board Structure

North Highland staff provided a presentation of their draft report evaluating RTD's governance structure and how it compares with peer entities from around the country.

Specific questions/comments about the Board structure recommendation included:

- Elise Jones
 - Mentioned that the last time the subcommittee had this conversation, some of the members posed the question: What problem are we trying to solve and what does improvement look like. Ms. Jones asked North Highland staff if they were aware of a best practice that has resulted in an increase in a board's effectiveness.
 - Tanya Eydelman said that comments she has heard from stakeholders is that RTD Board can sometimes get into the weeds and their strategic direction seems to get lost. The possibility of subregional service councils may allow them to get refocused on strategy.
 - Ms. Jones stated that her views on RTD depends on who is on the RTD Board. In the past, RTD has had board members that were anti-transit and not very collaborative. The current board is very collaborative, positive, working well and aligned to making positive change. So maybe it's not the board structure but the board members.
- Jackie Millet
 - Mentioned that she does think a 15-member board maybe a little too unwieldy and not the most efficient. Ms. Millet believes it has resulted in parochial decision-making and not big picture regional thinking. She wanted to emphasize that she is not referring to any one board, she just believes the idea of a smaller board representing larger districts should be explored.
- Chair Mullica
 - Asked who is the audience for the recommendation? Is it the RTD Board or the legislature? The answer makes a difference on how the subcommittee makes its recommendation.
- Dan Blankenship
 - Mentioned that for RFTA, communities appoint members to serve on the board and it seems to work rather well, acknowledging there is no perfect number for a board.
- Lynn Guissinger
 - Mentioned she has been hesitant to comment because she didn't want to come across as defensive. She did want to raise a factual issue with North Highland's presentation. Specifically, she didn't think the 2.3 million population for the RTD service area was correct. She believes the population number is around 3.1 million. Ms. Guissinger mentioned that the RTD board moved to an elected board in 1980. She believes that like legislators, RTD Board members represent their districts but also keep the broader view of the

entire RTD service area when making decisions. She referenced a few examples including the Reimagine RTD initiative.

- Jackie Millet
 - Wanted to reiterate that her opinion was not about any particular board member, it's just that a 15-member board lends itself to being parochial since decisions are made with smaller constituencies. Ms. Millet expressed her interest in exploring a board in the 11- or 12-member range.
- Deya Zavala
 - A question she is wrestling with is assuming the subregional service council recommendation moves forward, it opens us up to rethink how the RTD Board is structured to serve in a more strategic sense, provide direction for the entire organization and not in the weeds as much.
- Chair Mullica
 - Circled back to the question about who the audience is for this recommendation. If it is the legislature and a recommendation is made, it could be something like suggesting further study be done to determine the appropriate board size understanding that certain metrics around success need to be ascertained to confidently answer the board-size question.

Next Steps

Continue conversation about RTD Board structure recommendations

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

ATTACH B

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 #
May 17, 2021	Discussion	3

SUBJECT

The RTD Board structure recommendations

PROPOSED ACTION/RECOMMENDATIONS

N/A

ACTION BY OTHERS

N/A

SUMMARY

The fourth subcommittee focus areas is an assessment of RTD Board structure.

At the last subcommittee meeting, the RTD Accountability Committee's consultant, North Highland presented its preliminary report evaluating RTD's governance structure and how it compares with peer entities from around the country.

At the May 17 meeting, North Highland will present its draft final report including recommendations for the consideration by the subcommittee. Staff has also included two documents referencing the history of the 1980 RTD Board change from appointed to elected.

PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS/ACTIONS

N/A

PROPOSED MOTION

N/A

ATTACHMENT

1. Draft Final Report: RTD Governance Evaluation
2. RTD History: 1969-1982
3. Link: [Why does RTD have an elected board? Let's look back](#)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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



RTD GOVERNANCE EVALUATION

Draft Final Report

RTD Accountability Committee
May 12, 2021

RTD Governance Assessment

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

At the request of the Denver Regional Transportation District (RTD) Accountability Governance Subcommittee, North Highland is pleased to submit this report summarizing the findings of a high-level review of how RTD's Board Structure compares with peer entities' boards.

The RTD Accountability Governance Subcommittee requested an independent assessment to identify external structures that may improve the RTD Board's effectiveness. To do this, North Highland conducted peer agency evaluations, facilitated a discussion with the Subcommittee, and sought to develop recommendations for consideration by the Subcommittee. The purpose of this report is to inform the Subcommittee of the findings of the assessment and provide recommendations for moving forward.

Through this assessment North Highland found:

- RTD's term durations are on par with peer agencies
- Comparatively, the RTD Board's compensation is on par with peer agencies
- The RTD Board is on par with its peers as it relates to transparency and public participation
- RTD is unique in that Board Members are elected
- It is unclear if the size of the Board is comparable to its peers
- Approaches to regional/subregional Board representation vary among different properties

North Highland does not recommend developing potential Board structures for RTD at this time as these high-level findings are not sufficient to develop structural changes. This review indicates that RTD's Board is on the large side of peers and that Board coverage of the RTD region and population yield different outcomes in terms of Board size (peer Boards generally cover less geographic space but a greater service population). While this review found that RTD's structure is not notably different than peer agencies, discussion with the Governance Subcommittee noted potential problem areas with RTD's Board. The RTD Accountability Governance Subcommittee may wish to recommend an independent study of the RTD Board to investigate its effectiveness and determine if changes are required.

FINAL REPORT

I. Scope and Project Objectives

North Highland, as part of its on-call consulting service contract with the RTD Accountability Committee and coordinated through though the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), was asked to conduct a high-level governance assessment for the Regional Transportation District (RTD) Accountability Committee. The following subsections define the governance assessment scope, key objectives, and findings.

The RTD Governance subcommittee requested an independent comparison of the RTD Board with external structures to identify potential opportunities to improve the RTD Board's effectiveness. Key activities within the project scope include the following:

- **Peer Agency Evaluations** – Conduct research of peer agencies to understand their Board structures and responsibilities.
- **Facilitated Conversation with RTD Accountability Governance Subcommittee** – Share findings about peer agency Board structures that may improve the RTD's Board effectiveness and gather subcommittee feedback and insights.
- **Develop Recommendations** – Submit recommendations to the RTD Governance Subcommittee about how to improve the RTD Board's effectiveness. The recommendations will incorporate feedback received during the facilitated discussion regarding preliminary findings and will result in three recommendations for consideration by the RTD Accountability Committee.

II. Approach

To complete this assessment, North Highland followed the approach portrayed *Figure 1: North Highland Assessment Approach* below:

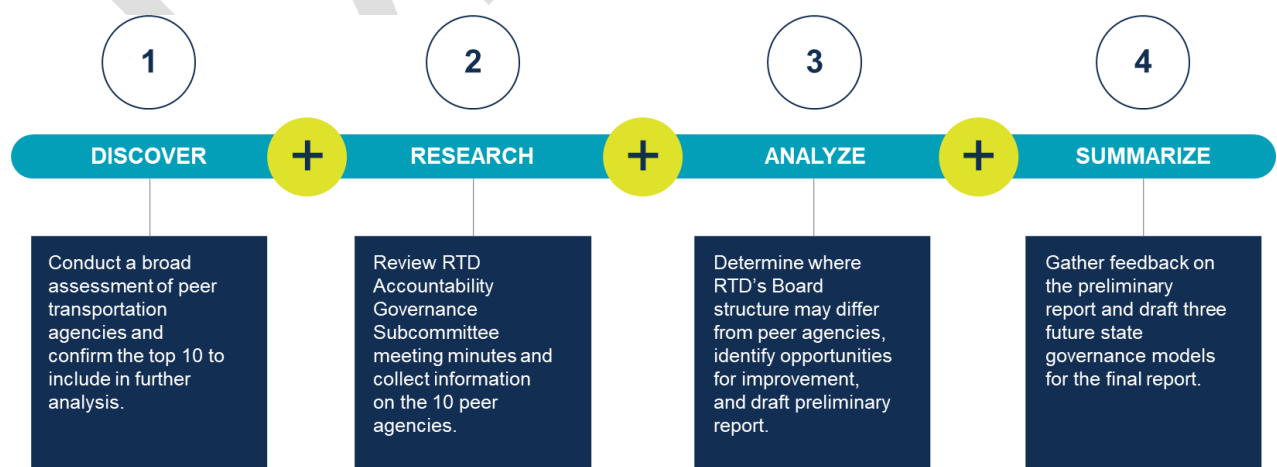


Figure 1: North Highland Assessment Approach

Overview

The following sections describe our planned four project phases in further detail, describing the key tasks for each activity and the outcome following the facilitated discussion with Governance Subcommittee.

Discover:

- Conduct a broad assessment of peer agencies to determine which agencies to include in the research assessment.
- Confirm 10 peer agencies with service and geographical characteristics comparable to RTD's current operating structure.

Research:

- Review publicly-available information about the RTD Board and its current operations.
- Review RTD Accountability Governance Subcommittee meetings minutes and document any mentions of other transit agency Boards and suggestions on how to improve the RTD Board.
- Gather and document the following information regarding 10 peer agencies as available:
 - **Board Size / Scope:** Number of Board members, scope of services provided, area served
 - **Board Selection:** Term duration and method of selection (i.e. appointed or elected)
 - **Structure:** Types of Board subcommittees
 - **Community Representation:** Approach to regional representation
 - **Compensation:** Amount of compensation provided to Board members
 - **Transparency:** Types of material available to the public and methods for community participation

Analyze:

Assess peer agency Board structures and outreach tactics that may help RTD reach its desired future state. Draft a preliminary report outlining peer agency research and initial findings.

Summarize:

Following feedback from the RTD Accountability Governance Subcommittee, develop three governance models for further consideration. The RTD Accountability Committee will determine the recommendation they choose to put forth in the final report.

Selecting Peer Agencies

To determine the appropriate peer agencies to consider in this assessment, North Highland considered the request of the RTD Accountability Governance Subcommittee to include property size (as indicated by vehicle operated at maximum service), and geographical service area. Data from the National Transit Database (NTD) was leveraged to ensure metrics were comparable across each agency. An analysis

of the following variables¹ was completed to determine which properties were most reflective of RTD's current state:

- Primary Urbanize Area (UZA) Population: Indicative of the size of the population served
- Primary UZA Square Miles: Indicative of geographic size of service area
- Agency Vehicles Operated in Maximum Service (VOMS): Indictive of property service size
- Vehicle Revenue Miles: Indicative of service levels
- Modes: Indicative of service scope and operating characteristics

North Highland also reviewed Governance Subcommittee meeting minutes to assess which governance models the Subcommittee had expressed interest in. The comparison, informed by the Subcommittees previous work, and vetted with Transportation Subject Matter Experts, resulted in the selection of the peer agencies found in *Table 1: Selected Peer Agencies*.

PROPERTY	CITY	STATE
Utah Transit Authority (UTA)	Salt Lake City	Utah
Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART)	Dallas	Texas
Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet)	Portland	Oregon
San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS)	San Diego	California
Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA)	Philadelphia	Pennsylvania
King County Department of Metro Transit (King County Metro)	Seattle	Washington
VIA Metropolitan Transit (VIA)	San Antonio	Texas
Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA)	Washington	District of Columbia
Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit)	Seattle	Washington
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA METRO)	Los Angeles	California

Table 1: Selected Peer Agencies

¹ Please see Appendix 1: Data Supporting the Selection of Peer Agencies for further detail

III. Research

The research component of this work included collecting and organizing data related to the RTD Board, peer agency Boards, and previous RTD Accountability Governance Subcommittee meeting minutes. These are discussed in more detail in the following subsections.

Regional Transportation District Board

The Regional Transportation District supports 40 municipalities and is the primary transit provider for Denver and its surrounding areas, including the Boulder, Broomfield, Denver and Jefferson counties, and parts of Adams, Arapahoe, Douglas and Weld Counties. RTD provides bus, light rail, demand response, and commuter rail services.

RTD Board structure:

- **Board Size / Scope:** The RTD Board is composed of 15 members serving 8 counties and 40 municipalities. RTD provides bus, light rail, demand response, and commuter rail services.
- **Board Selection:** Members are publicly elected and serve four-year terms.
- **Structure:** RTD Board Committees include the Executive Committee, General Manager Oversight and Performance Management Committee, Planning/Capital Programs and FasTracks Committee, Finance, Administration, and Audit Committee, Operations/Customer Service Committee, Communications and Government Relations Committee, and Ad Hoc Committees as appropriate.
- **Community Representation:** Each Board member represents a particular district in an effort to provide equal representation and encourage equity of all Board activities.
- **Compensation:** Board members are compensated \$12,000 per year plus any expenses incurred.
- **Transparency:** The Board must provide notice of all meetings types to the public at least 24 hours prior to a meeting. Agendas, documents, and video of past meetings are available online. Board meetings are open to the public and include an opportunity for public comment. Committee meetings are open to the public but do not allow a period for public participation.

RTD conducts staggered elections so that eight seats are open for one election, followed by seven available seats in the next election. The Board holds regular meetings once a month, special meetings as called by the Board or the Chair's when necessary, annual Board planning meetings, study sessions as needed at the beginning of each year, public meetings, and executive sessions. Any Board action requires an affirmative vote of at least eight Directors. The Board must provide notice of all meeting types to the public at least 24 hours prior. Agendas, documents, and video of past meetings are available online.

Outside of the Board activities, RTD's community practices provide opportunities for anyone in the area to get involved by simply staying informed, or engaging further by sharing their voice, becoming a partner, or engaging with RTD. The public also can participate in town halls, comment on proposed service changes, submit a project feedback form, or contact a director or customer care agent. Additionally, the public can act as a partner by serving on an advisory committee or participating in pilot programs and market research; and further engagement is encouraged through presentations by RTD staff and participating in the RTD transit experience.

Governance Meeting Minutes and Key Themes

North Highland aligned its research of peer agencies with the established scope of work in conjunction with key recurring pain points gathered through analysis of the RTD's governance committee. The research of the RTD's Governance Committee's meeting minutes uncovered themes (illustrated in *Figure 2: Governance Subcommittee Themes*) as potential opportunities for improvement in RTD's governance. These themes were considered while researching peer agencies.

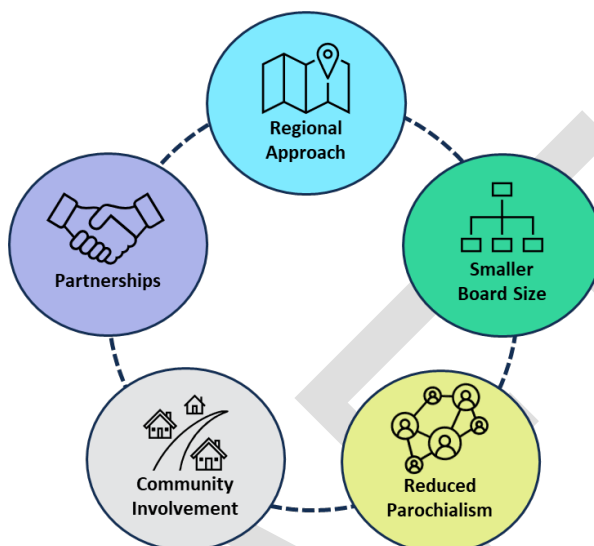


Figure 2: Governance Subcommittee Themes

The key themes that emerged from North Highland's Governance Committee research include the following:

- Regional/subregional exploration:
 - Interest in providing better regional representation
 - Consideration of whether regional Board members are elected officials
 - Interest in exploring the right number of regions
 - Regional funding distribution approaches
- Concerns of parochialism in Board activities
- Interest in more partnerships
- Questioning of the existing Board size with consideration for a smaller Board
- Community participation:
 - Potentially unclear process for community member participation prior to Board meetings
 - Consideration of whether to allow public comment at both Board and committee meetings

Both the established scope of work and these key areas of interest for the RTD governance future state drove the analysis content for the peer agencies. The following section provides details of the collected information regarding peer agencies' Board structure, governance processes, subregional approach when applicable, and community outreach and representation.

Information for Selected Peer Agencies

North Highland reviewed the documentation available regarding Board structures for the selected peer agencies. This included (where available) Board bylaws, meeting minutes, legislation, resolutions, and manuals as available. The following variables were evaluated:

- **Board Size / Scope:** Number of Board members, scope of services, area served
- **Board Selection:** Term durations and method of selection (e.g., appointed or elected)
- **Structure:** Types of Board subcommittees
- **Community Representation:** Approach to regional representation
- **Compensation:** Amount of compensation provided to Board members
- **Transparency:** Types of material available to the public and methods for community participation

This information provided sufficient detail to assess RTD's Board in comparison with peer Agencies, the results of which can be found in the following section, **Findings**. Case studies of each property are included in this document with resources provided in **Appendix 2: Resources**.

III. Findings

The information collected enabled North Highland to compare RTD's Board structure with that of peer agencies. In some respects, RTD's Board structure is on par with peer agencies, yet there are some marked differences. These findings are detailed further below.

Commonalities with Other Boards

- ***RTD's term durations are on par with peer agencies.*** All of the ten agencies evaluated posed term durations either ranging from one to five years, or whose appointment coincides with the term of their appointer. For those agencies with defined durations, a term duration of nearly three years was the average. With term durations of four years, RTD appears to be on par with their peers. Additionally, RTD staggers terms, such that the full Board does not turn over at one time. Many Board bylaws reflected the importance of continuity, in which case, RTD also appears to be incorporating best practice.
- ***Comparatively the RTD's Board compensation is on par with peer agencies:*** While many of the Boards evaluated in this assessment are compensated according to the number of meetings attended (ranging from \$0 to \$200), the RTD Board is compensated at an annual rate of \$12,000 per year (or \$1,000 per month) as detailed in *Table 2: Board Member Compensation*. When examining the RTD Board calendar, it is possible that members could be attending a handful of meetings, to up to eight meetings per month. In the event Board members

could be attending as many as eight meetings, this would result in compensation of \$125 per meeting, putting RTD Board compensation on par with their peers.

PROPERTY	COMPENSATION
RTD	\$12,000 per year + expenses
UTA	N/A ²
DART	\$50.00 per meeting + expenses
TriMet	Board members are volunteers
MTS	\$150 + expenses per meeting \$1,500 monthly for chairperson
SEPTA	Expenses only
King County Metro	N/A ³
VIA	\$50.00 per meeting
WMATA	\$200 per day + expenses
Sound Transit	\$100 per day + expenses ⁴
LA Metro	\$150 for one business day, not more than \$600 per month

Table 2: Board Member Compensation

- **The RTD Board is on par with its peers as it relates to transparency and public participation:** The agencies included in this assessment shared similar practices of transparency, in that, all peer agency Board meetings are open to the public (executive sessions are largely closed) and materials are posted online. Posted materials include Board agenda, minutes, packets/presentations, and video of the proceedings. With the exception of Sound Transit, who shares materials for six months, there seemed to be no time constraint on sharing these materials. This indicates RTD's practices are on par with peer agencies in transparency.

The RTD Board approach for public participation includes a public comment period as a part of the Board meeting agendas. This is consistent with all agencies evaluated. The period of time allotted for public comment varies, from either no time constraint to as few as 15 minutes. Many Boards pose a time limit on individuals (such as two or three minutes) in place of limiting the time allotted on the agenda. Both WMATA and Sound Transit also allow individuals to provide written comments which are read at Board meetings.

Unique Aspects of the RTD Board Structure

- **RTD is unique in that Board Members are elected:** Of the ten peer agencies evaluated, only RTD has elected Board Members. With the exception of King Country Transit (who is governed by elected County Commissioners), all other agencies Board members are appointed.

² Board members are compensated as fulltime employees, including benefits

³ Board members consist of elected county commissioners, whose service to the King County Metro Board is a job responsibility

⁴ Unless the board member is a full-time government employee

Appointees may or may not be elected officials. Appointments often reflect the regional/subregional model by which agencies are represented. For example, agencies governed at the county or state levels are often appointed by the State Governor or legislative bodies. In other cases, district models, similar to that applied at RTD, are leveraged, yet Board Members are appointed, often under the requirement that the member live in the district they represent.

- ***It is unclear if the size of the Board is comparable to its peers:*** Best practice shows that as governing Boards grow in size, the efficacy of their work decreases. When evaluating Board size, RTD's peer agencies average 11.6 Board members wherein RTD's Board is comprised of 15 members, indicating the RTD may be large in comparison with its peers. Other agencies with similar Board representation include DART, MTS, SEPTA, and LA Metro. It should be noted however, that both DART and MTS board members represent the smallest area and the smallest number of constituents (see *Table 3: Board Member Representation Analysis*), indicating these agencies may have a disproportionately large Board. When comparing member representation per square mile only two other properties, UTA and King County Metro, have Board members representing more square miles. However, when comparing member representation to service area population size, six other properties represent more people, and RTD falls more than 110,000 members per person below the average. These numbers are inconsistent and thus it is unclear if the size of the RTD is comparable to its peer agencies.

PROPERTY	BOARD MEMBERS	SERVICE AREA POPULATION	SERVICE AREA SQ. MILES	MEMBERS/ PERSON	MEMBERS/ SQ. MILE
RTD	15	2,920,000	2,342	194,667	156.13
UTA	3	1,883,504	737	627,835	245.67
DART	15	2,407,830	698	160,522	46.53
TriMet	7	1,565,010	383	223,573	54.71
MTS	15	2,462,707	720	164,180	48.00
SEPTA	15	3,426,793	839	228,453	55.93
King County Metro	10	2,149,970	2,134	214,997	213.40
VIA	11	1,986,049	1,213	180,550	110.27
WMATA	8	3,719,567	950	464,946	118.75
Sound Transit	18	3,158,800	1,087	175,489	60.39
LA Metro	14	8,621,928	1,469	615,852	104.93
Average ⁵	11.6	3,138,216	1,023	305,640	105.0

Table 3: Board Member Representation Analysis

Approaches to regional/subregional representation vary

In reviewing how Board membership relates to geographic representation, models across the Boards included in this assessment varied with little consistency as shown in *Table 4: Regional Representation Approach*. In the classification outlined below, a regional model indicates representation at the county or state level, while a subregional classification indicates representation at a district or municipality

⁵ The average represents the average of peer agencies, and thus excludes RTD.

level. Other agencies, however, deploy a hybrid approach, with both regional representation and local level representation either with municipalities or established districts/regions. In most cases, representatives are required to live within the district or region they represent.

PROPERTY	REPRESENTATION APPROACH	REPRESENTATION CLASSIFICATION
RTD	Each Board member represents a particular district	Subregional
UTA	One member represents Salt Lake County while the two other members represent two counties each	Regional
DART	Board members represent either one or two municipalities proportional to the ratio as the population of the area served	Subregional
TriMet	Consists of representation from seven regions	Subregional
MTS	Board members representatives consist of county and local municipalities	Hybrid
SEPTA	Two members from each county in the service area, state representation	Regional
King County Metro	County representation	Regional
VIA	Four Board members represent municipalities, three members represent the county	Hybrid
WMATA	State, District of Columbia (local representation), and Federal representation	Hybrid
Sound Transit	Representation at the county level with one state appointee	Regional
LA Metro	Seven Districts, county representation	Hybrid

Table 2: Regional Representation Approach

For Consideration

- Consider Board size and regional representation:** RTD may wish to evaluate the size of the Board and bringing this into alignment with agencies of similar geographical and population size. A smaller Board may enable streamlined processes while still providing adequate representation for the community. Additionally, RTD may wish to consider incorporating regional representation and/or a hybrid approach to enable representation for all stakeholders. Incorporating state and regional representation may build trust across the region and within the State.
- Consider means to improve public participation and transparency:** While RTD may be in alignment with other transit agencies in terms of Board transparency and public participation, there is an opportunity to improve and set a new standard for the industry. Opportunities might include adding service councils comprised of riders and regional stakeholder that advise the Board. The transit agencies evaluated for this assessment host a variety of committees that interact with the Board, from Advisory Committees, Service Committees, Access Paratransit Advisory Committees, and Planning Committees. Committee sizes vary from a small as nine to as large as 49. In all cases, the committees advise the Board of recommendations that the Board then considers and votes on adoption. The purpose of the activities of these committees

is advise the Board on matters related to day-to-day operations and allow the Board to focus on shaping policy and determining strategic direction.

In addition, while Board material may be published online, it can be difficult and cumbersome to sort through or find materials of particular interest. This was true for all agencies reviewed. RTD may wish to consider setting a new standard in revising the manner which Board content is shared with the public by reorganizing the content and adding search tags.

- **Consider appointing Board Members:** Within the selected peer agencies, this assessment found that RTD was the only Board which is publicly elected, with the exception of King County Metro, where the County Commissioners govern the agency along with other responsibilities. As is the nature of publicly elected officials, RTD Board members are held accountable to their local constituents, which can result in Board members losing site of the broader view of RTD's strategic direction. Appointment of Board members will hold a Board member accountable to RTD and the appointing body, enabling the Board to define policy and guide the future of RTD. When coupled with the implementation of advisory councils, Board members can focus on the large view with support from advisory councils to address the needs of the riding public and the community at large.

IV. Recommendation

As a result of the facilitated discussion with the Governance Subcommittee, North Highland does not recommend developing potential Board structures for RTD at this time. While our review of comparative board structures found that RTD's structure is not notably different than peer agencies, the discussion noted potential problem areas with RTD's Board, but the scope of this assessment is beyond investigating and verifying these problem areas more thoroughly. As such, recommendations for further analysis are shared below.

This assessment was conducted at a high-level to seek an understanding of the commonalities between RTD and peer agencies as well as ways in which the current RTD Board Structure differs. Through our discussion with RTD Accountability Governance Subcommittee, there is not consensus on the effectiveness of the RTD Board, nor is there a clarity on the existence of a problem or what that problem may be. In addition, the RTD Accountability Committee is making a series of recommendations (e.g., Subregional Service Councils) which, if implemented, may impact Board operations. These high-level findings are not sufficient for developing recommendations, as they simply note areas of differences and commonalities, as opposed to effectiveness. Therefore, it would be premature to develop recommendations for future Board structures and we suggest further study and analysis be completed by an independent body with input from regional stakeholders. Specifically, the committee may wish to recommend the following course of action:

1. Investigate the effectiveness of RTD's Board structure. In partnership with regional stakeholders, evaluate the historical context and of RTD's Board structure. Understand when and how Board Members came to be elected. Define Board effectiveness, success and efficiency, and evaluate past Boards for meeting this criteria. Determine if a problem exists, and if so, develop a problem statement. If it is determined a problem does not exist, the RTD Board structure should remain intact.
2. If a problem does exist, conduct a deep and thorough study of RTD's Board structure in comparison with peer transit agency and agencies within the region. Further examine the findings in this assessment, and develop an understanding of the impacts the implementation of any RTD Accountability Committee recommendations.

3. Based on the findings of the study, determine if a new Board structure would better serve both RTD and region's constituents. If so, outline a new Board structure, including roles and responsibilities, and revise the by-laws if necessary.

DRAFT

APPENDIX 1: CASE STUDIES

Utah Transit Authority

The Utah Transit Authority (UTA) is a special service district that enables numerous transportation options for the Wasatch Front of Utah. UTA offers vanpool, bus and light rail, demand response, commuter rail, and commuter bus services. It also offers innovative mobility offerings such as ridesharing, autonomous vehicles, micro transit, mobility-as-a-service, smart roads, connected vehicles, mobility-on-demand, public-private partnerships, shared use, and its Utah Ride Link partnership enables numerous opportunities.

UTA reduced their 15-person Board down to three full-time Board members that serve four-year terms, each of which oversee their respective service regions. Research indicates that they receive \$129,000 annually plus benefits for full-time employees. To further UTA's community representation, there is a 9-member Local Advisory Council with appointees that are responsible for setting Board salary, reviewing and approving recommendations for the Board, and advocating for citizens. UTA's Board has Board of Trustees meetings and Advisory Council meetings regularly. For decision-making, a majority vote with a quorum present is required.

The UTA Board structure portrays how all key areas of operations report to the executive director, who ultimately reports to the Board of Trustees. Within the Board of Trustees organizational chart, a Board Office, Government Relations division, and an Internal Audit division report to the Board. UTA's committees include an Advisory Council, Committee on Accessible Transportation, Audit Committee, and ad hoc committees as needed. All meetings of the Board of Trustees, Advisory Council, and committees are open to the public. Notices of meetings are posted on the Utah Public Notice website. Meetings minutes are publicly available, and meetings are currently virtual with recordings that are publicly available. Public comment is an agenda item on Board meetings.

UTA as an agency outside of Board activities drives public engagement through promoting a public forum called Open UTA that offers a platform for continual civic engagement. Open UTA allows anyone to input commentary online. The site requests users' name and home address to store confidentially for their first post. This demographic information allows UTA to understand which comments are by local constituents. UTA posts prompts for discussion in the form of topics and requests feedback from users. For example, UTA recently posted a prompt requesting feedback on the 2021 budget. Such an approach allows anyone to provide their valuable input on UTA's most crucial topics.

Dallas Area Rapid Transit

The Dallas Area Rapid Transit (DART) is a transit agency that serves the Dallas and Fort Worth area of Texas. DART's service area spans 13 cities and provides vanpool, streetcar rail, bus, light rail, demand response, demand response taxi, and commuter rail.

The Board is comprised of 15 Board members collectively, that rotates its terms between eight and seven Board members. All Board members are appointed and serve at the pleasure of the governing body for two-year terms. The Board is compensated \$50 for each meeting of the executive committee or subregional Board meeting attended and is reimbursed for expenses. Each Board member must be a resident within the DART service area. Board membership is proportional to the ratio of the population of the area served. DART Board committees include a Board Audit Committee; Ad Hoc President/Executive Director Search Committee; Economic Opportunity and Diversity Committee; Customer Service, Safety and Mobility Committee; and a Planning and Capital Programs Committee.

For governance procedures, DART meets regularly once a month and also has annual meetings that are more comprehensive and strategic in nature. The Board Chair may call special meetings as needed, and emergency meetings commence when there is an urgent matter. Majority vote with a quorum present is required for decision-making. The Board must provide a 72-hour notice of meetings and allow for public participation. Public comment is accepted via email and read at the Board meeting.

Outside of Board activities, the agency provides quarterly community meetings to review progress of the Silver Line Regional Rail Projects for attendees' respective cities. During these meetings, DART provides presentations that cover the project facts and updates, design-build progress, betterments program progress, station design progress, construction progress and safety, and contacts for further questions.

Portland Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon

The Portland Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon (TriMet) is the primary service provider for the Portland, Oregon area. The TriMet Board representation spans seven regions. TriMet provides bus, light rail, demand response taxi, demand response, and hybrid rail.

The TriMet Board is comprised of seven members that are appointed. Board members serve four years at the pleasure of the Governor. If a Board members' term expires, they will continue to serve as a Board member until the Governor appoints their replacement. Board members are volunteers and not compensated. Board members must live in the geographical districts that they represent, helping ensure that there is true regional representation. The Board's committees include a Finance and Audit Committee, Committee on Accessible Transportation, Transit Equity Advisory Committee, and ad hoc committees as needed.

The Board holds regular monthly meetings, and special and emergency meetings as called by the president. Decision-making requires a majority vote with a quorum present. The Board must provide notice of all meetings types to the public at least 24 hours prior. Agenda, documents, and video of past meetings are available online. A 30-minute public forum is held prior to Board meetings to gain public participation.

Beyond the Board, TriMet strives to increase equity through low income reduced fare, fare relief, a high school pass program, transit equity oversight through 16 regional partnerships, a decriminalized system for citations, civil rights policies, minority contracting, climate justice, and equitable development.

San Diego Metropolitan Transit System

The San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS) is the primary transit service provider for Central, South, Northeast, and Southeast San Diego County. MTS provides bus, light rail, demand response taxi, demand response, and commuter bus services.

MTS has 15 Board members that are appointed for two years. Board member representatives consist of county and local municipalities. Board compensation is \$150 plus expenses per meeting, or \$1,500 monthly for the Chairperson. The MTS Board has an Executive Committee, Audit Oversight Committee, and ad hoc committees as needed. Board meetings include regular, special, and joint meetings. Decision-making requires a majority vote with a quorum present. The Board must provide an annual calendar of scheduled meetings made available on the MTS website. The agenda is posted 72 hours in advance of the meeting Board. Meeting materials and video recordings are available on the MTS website. Public comment is limited to 15 minutes during Board meetings.

Outside of Board activities, MTS has numerous initiatives to drive public participation. MTS recently published a Community Participation Plan on March 24, 2019. The document outlines a process for community involvement and numerous opportunities, including an ad-hoc ballot committee, working groups for several working groups to gather input and guidance for ballot measures, a Community Advisory Committee that provides guidance for ballot measures, public outreach to maximize public participation, survey research to gather public feedback, and ensuring that underserved communities have ample opportunity to participate in the ballot measure development. The agency also plans to use social media, website updates, and paid advertisements to gain awareness in the public, with consultants to support the efforts.

Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority

Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) is a regional public transportation authority that serves Philadelphia and its surrounding counties. SEPTA's services include streetcar rail, bus, demand response, commuter rail, heavy rail, and trolley bus spanning five counties in Pennsylvania – Bucks, Delaware, Montgomery, Chester, and Philadelphia.

SEPTA's Board includes 15 appointed members which represent the service area by having two members from each county. County representatives serve five-year terms and assembly appointees serve without term limits. Board members only receive compensation as reimbursement for incurred expenses. Board committees include an Administration Committee, Citizens Advisory Committee, Operations Committee, and ad hoc committees including a Budget, Planning, and Information Technology Committee.

The Board holds regular monthly meetings. The Board meeting schedule is posted annually, and meeting agenda and transcripts are posted online. Some meeting videos are available online. Public comment is held prior to the start of Board meetings. Decision-making requires a majority vote with a quorum present.

Outside of Board activities, SEPTA is increasingly emphasizing its approach to community involvement and regional representation. SEPTA has a Customer Service department aimed at providing innovative methods for customer communication. Recently, SEPTA launched its SEPTA Customer Connection (SCC) outreach season that provides meet and greet opportunities, SEPTA information handouts, and the ability to provide SEPTA suggestions and recommendations through SCC staff.

King County Department of Metro Transit

Seattle's King County Department of Metro Transit (King County Metro) is the leading transit agency that serves the King County area in Washington state. It provides vanpool, streetcar rail, bus, demand response taxi, demand response, ferryboat, and trolley bus services. The Board includes 10 members that are publicly elected and serve four-year terms. County Commissioners govern the Board.

Beyond the Board's scope of activities, the Metro strives to represent the community's interests most notably through its Community Connections program, which is an outreach process that is a part of Metro's Mobility Division that focuses on providing new travel options. Metro works with local government and partners in the community to strategize on transportation solutions in King County areas lacking in core services because of infrastructure, density, or land use limitations.

VIA Metropolitan Transit

VIA Metropolitan Transit (VIA) is the primary transit agency serving San Antonio, Texas. Its coverage is 1,208 square miles including 98% of the Bexar County. VIA also covers surrounding municipalities including Alamo Heights, Balcones Heights, Castle Hills, China Grove, Converse, Elmendorf, Kirby, Leon Valley, Olmos Park, San Antonio, Shavano Park, Sandy Oaks, St. Hedwig, and Terrell Hills. Also included in VIA's service region is the Bexar County portion of Cibolo. VIA provides vanpool, bus, demand response taxi, and demand response services.

VIA's Board has 11 appointed members that serve two-year terms. Two Board members represent San Antonio, two members represent suburban municipalities, and three members represent the county. Board committees include an Audit Committee, a Transit Community Council Meeting, and an Accessible Transit Advisory Committee. The Board meets monthly at a specified date and time. Board agenda, packets, and video are available online. Public comments are incorporated into Board meetings agendas. Members of the Board are compensation \$50.00 per meeting.

Outside of Board activities, VIA is working towards its 2040 vision that does show a subregional approach which includes the following geographic regions; northwest, north-central, south-central, northeast, southeast, east-west, and near-west. Vision 2040 is an update to VIA's Long Range Comprehensive Transportation Plan. Creation of these regions, even if only service-oriented for now, does provide an opportunity to adjust the Board structure as well to provide more targeted regional support. Additionally, VIA is making efforts to include the public in its planning for future transit improvements. The VIA website indicates that the agency provides public meetings including proposed service changes discussions, budget meetings, and strategic conversations. VIA has two other programs aimed at public involvement - VIA Moves Me, which focuses on rider stories, and Ride VIA to Vote which provides public transportation for voting. One example of public involvement specific to governance processes at VIA is in the budgeting process, which requires a 14-day public review and comment period that includes a public hearing. VIA's Vision 2040 does state that the agency seeks to further engage the community throughout the execution of its vision and associated activities.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority (WMATA) operates transit service in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area. WMATA's services include bus, demand response taxi, demand response, and heavy rail. The service area includes the state of Maryland and Virginia, and District of Columbia.

The WMATA Board has eight appointed members with terms that coincide with the term of the office of the appointer. Representation includes the District of Columbia, each state, and appointees at the Federal level. Board members are compensated \$200 per day plus expenses. Board committees include an Executive Committee and ad hoc committees as needed. Advisory committees include an Accessibility Advisory Committee, Riders' Advisory Council, and a Joint Coordinating Committee. The Board holds regular monthly meetings, special meetings, and emergency meetings.

The Agency requires that the public have 15 days advance notice prior to any hearing, and 30 days' notice prior to discussing adoption or amendment to a transit plan. Board meeting agendas, minutes, and materials are available online. Meetings are streamed live, and recordings are available to the public. Public comment (written and oral) can be given at Board meetings at the discretion of the chair. Public hearings are held as it is deemed appropriate. Decision-making requires a majority vote with a quorum present.

Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority - Seattle (Sound Transit)

Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority (Sound Transit) operates the regional transit that serves Pierce, King, and Snohomish counties in Washington. Sound Transit provides a streetcar rail, light rail, commuter rail, and commuter bus.

Sound Transit's Board is comprised of 18 appointed members that serve two-year terms. Representation is achieved at the county level with one state appointee. Board members are compensated \$100 per day plus expenses unless the Board member is a full-time government employee. The Board subcommittees include an Executive Committee, Finance and Audit Committee, Rider Experience, Operations Committee, System Expansion Committee, and ad hoc committees as needed.

The Board meets once a month on the 4th Thursday for regular monthly meetings. The Board also has special and emergency meetings as needed. Meetings are held via Webex. The agendas, presentations, and minutes are published for six months on the Sound Transit website. Public participation is permitted at regular Board meetings, through written or oral means. Decision-making requires a majority vote with a quorum present.

Outside of the Board activities, Sound Transit manages its subregional activities through the Office of Civil Rights, Equity, & Inclusion (CREI.) CREI ensures businesses provide regional representations, cultivates a diverse workforce and inclusive culture, and ensures equal employment opportunities and equal access to the agency's services.

Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority

The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LA Metro) plans, operates, and secures funding for transit in Los Angeles County. LA Metro provides vanpool, bus, light rail, heavy rail, and bus rapid transit services.

LA Metro has 14 appointed Board members. Each Board member serves a one-year term. Board members represent seven districts and include county representation. The Board meets once a month for regular meetings and holds special, annual, and adjourned meetings as needed. The Board meeting schedule, minutes, agenda, videos, and packets are available online. Public participation is permitted at regular Board meetings. Decision-making requires a majority vote with a quorum present. Compensation for Board members is \$150 for one business day, not to exceed \$600 per month. Board committees include a Selection Committee; Special Executive Management Committee; Special Construction Committee; Planning and Programming Committee; Operations, Safety and Customer Experience Committee; Measure R Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee; Measure M Independent Taxpayer Oversight Committee; Independent Citizen's Advisory and Oversight Committee; Finance, Budget and Audit Committee; Executive Management Committee; and a Construction Committee.

Outside of the Board activities, LA Metro as an organization supports community involvement through several initiatives. The Metro has an internal group called Community Relations unit that strives to engage the public through three key integrated sections - Community Education, Local Government and External Affairs, and Operations and Countywide Initiatives (OCI.) Community Education increases the public's transit safety awareness. The Local Government and External Affairs group assigns team members to geographic subregions to ensure all regions have equal understanding about Metro services, projects, upcoming initiatives in meetings, public hearings, and city council meetings. The OCI unit cultivates outreach strategies and ensures that all communities have an equitable voice.

APPENDIX 2: DATA SUPPORTING THE SELECTION OF PEER AGENCIES

AGENCY	PRIMARY UZA POPULATION	PRIMARY UZA SQUARE MILES	VOMS	VEHICLE REVENUE MILES	MODES OF OPERATION
RTD	2,374,203	668	1,483	66,983,759	Bus, Light Rail, Demand Response, Commuter Rail
UTA	1,021,243	278	1,141	39,461,217	Vanpool, Bus, Light Rail, Demand Response, Commuter Rail, Commuter Bus
DART	5,121,892	1,779	1,092	53,517,632	Vanpool, Streetcar Rail, Bus, Light Rail, Demand Response Taxi, Demand Remand Response, Commuter Rail
TriMet	1,849,898	524	973	38,140,614	Bus, Light Rail, Demand Response Taxi, Demand Response, Hybrid Rail
MTS	2,956,746	732	969	34,225,743	Bus, Light Rail, Demand Response Taxi, Demand Response, Commuter Bus
SEPTA	5,441,567	1,981	2,390	92,714,347	Streetcar Rail, Bus, Demand Response, Commuter Rail, Heavy Rail, Trolley Bus
King County Metro	3,059,393	1,010	3,233	64,544,102	Vanpool, Streetcar Rail Bus, Demand Response Taxi, Demand Response, Ferryboat, Trolley Bus

VIA	1,758,210	597	933	38,685,650	Vanpool, Bus, Demand Response Taxi, Demand Response
WMATA	4,586,770	1,322	3,391	144,489,307	Bus, Demand Response Taxi, Demand Response, Heavy Rail
Sound Transit	3,059,393	1,010	400	19,711,242	Streetcar Rail, Light Rail, Commuter Rail, Commuter Bus
LA Metro	12,150,996	1,736	3,469	126,325,069	Vanpool, Bus, Light Rail Heavy Rail, Bus Rapid Transit

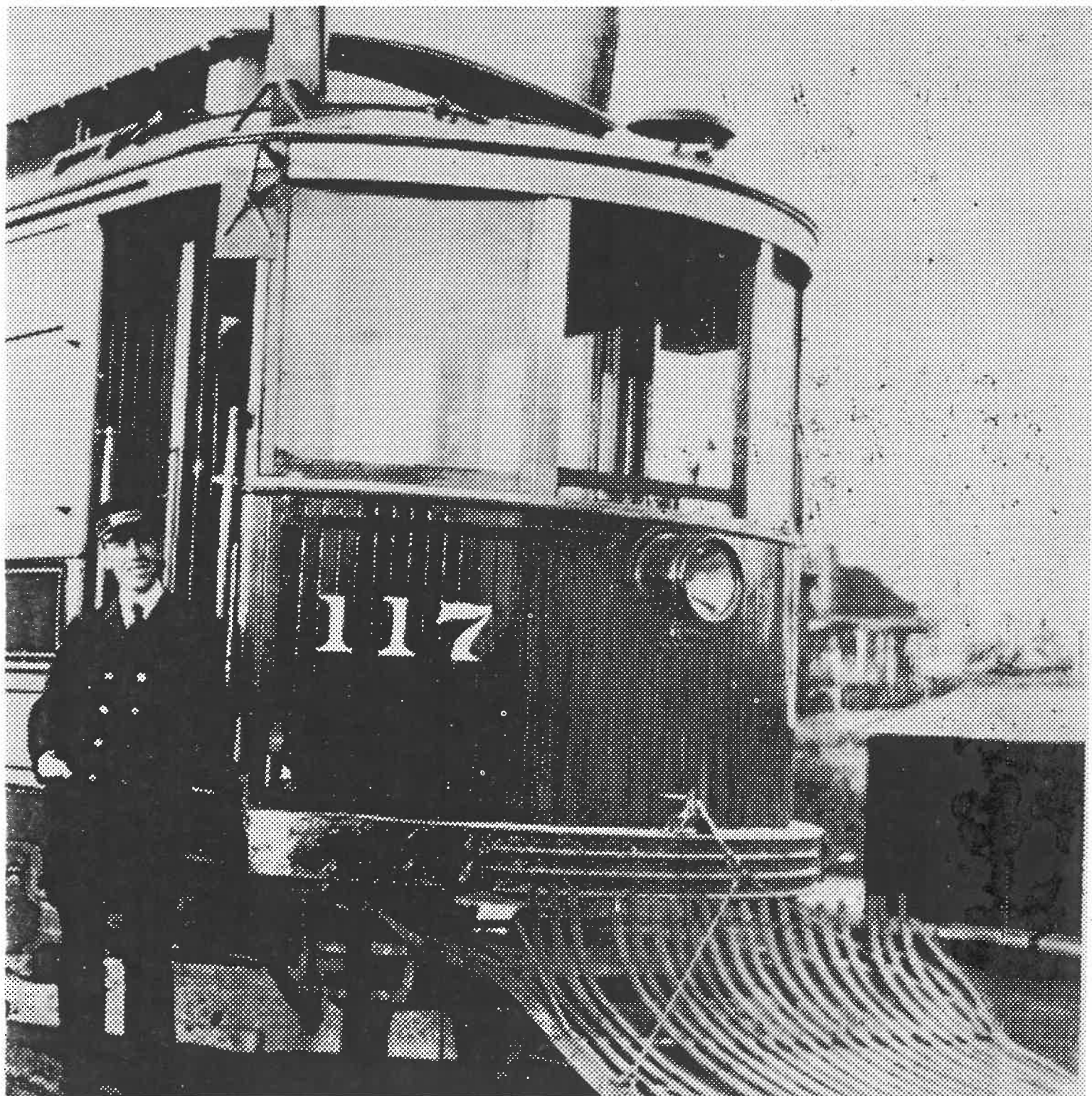
APPENDIX 3: RESOURCES

SECTION	SUBSECTION	RESOURCES
Research	RTD Board Overview	RTD Board of Director Governance Manual RTD Board Bylaws RTD Community Involvement Webpage RTD Board Meeting Portal
Research	Review of Current Governance Meeting Minutes and Key Themes	RTD Accountability Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
Discover	Selecting Peer Agencies	NTD: 2019 Annual Database Agency Information NTD: Annual Service Data
Case Studies	UTA	Utah Code, Part 8: Public Transportation Act UTA Board of Trustees and Advisory Board Meeting January 6, 2019 UTA Community Relations and Transit Education UTA Board Bylaws UTA Authority Board Policies
Case Studies	DART	DART Board Bylaws Government Code Title 5 Open Government; Ethics DART Board Agendas and Presentations Transportation Code Title 6 Roadways
Case Studies	Portland Tri-County Metropolitan Transportation District of Oregon	Board of Directors Meeting Agenda February 24, 2021 ORS Chapter 267 Adopted Budget 2019-2020 Board of Directors

Cast Studies	San Diego Metropolitan Transit System (MTS)	Policies and Procedures No. 22 Policies and Procedures No. 1 SDMT Development Board Codified Ordinance No. 10 Board of Directors Meeting Agenda January 21, 2021
Cast Studies	SEPTA	PA Consolidated Statute: Title 74 SEPTA Board Meeting: February 2021 SEPTA's Board
Case Studies	Seattle King County Department of Metro Transit	King County Metro Overview King County Charter
Case Studies	VIA Metropolitan Transit	VIA Board Meetings City of San Antonio Department of Public Affairs VIA Homepage VIA FY 2020 Annual Business Plan
Case Studies	Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority	WMATA Bylaws House Report U.S. Government Publishing Office WMATA Public Comment for Board Meetings
Case Studies	Central Puget Sound Regional Transit Authority – Seattle (Sound Transit)	Washington State Legislature Section 43.03.250 Sound Transit Board of Directors Sound Transit Resolution No. R2021-01 Sound Transit Resolution No. R2018-45 Sound Transit Board of Directors Public Comments
Case Studies	Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority	Board Rules and Procedures Subregions Org Charts Metro Funding Sources Guide

RTD

A History: 1969-1982



1982 Board of Directors Regional Transportation District

Lowell R. Hutson, Chairman
Jefferson County
1979-1982

James L. Ogilvie
Chairman Pro-Tem
Denver County
1981-1982

Carlos A. de Moraes, Secretary
Arapahoe County
1981-1982

Kathi Williams, Treasurer
Adams County
1981-1982

Flodie Anderson
Member-at-Large
(Jefferson County)
1969-1982

Norma V. Anderson
Jefferson County
1980-1982

Stephan H. Andrade
Member-at-Large
(Adams County)
1979-1982

Jean R. Arthur
Arapahoe County
1969-1982

C. Thomas Bastien
Denver County
1981-1982

Edward F. Burke, Jr.
Denver County
1977-1982

Edward A. Cassinis
Douglas County
1979-1982

Roger P. Cracraft
Boulder County
1981-1982

Mary Duty
Adams County
1979-1982

Charlotte Houston
Boulder County
1974-1982

Elmer A. Johnson
Denver County
1982

Reverend Wendell T. Liggins
Denver County
1971-1982

Melvin J. Roberts
Denver County
1974-1982

Marcia Shpall
Denver County
1982

Leo F. Sullivan
Denver County
1970-1982

Ann Walton
Denver County
1979-1982

Clifford Wanebo
Denver County
1980-1982

Charles E. Rhyne
Counsel to the Board

Past Members of the RTD Board of Directors

Armand Asborno*
Denver County
1969-1971

William A. Baker
Denver County
1969-1970

Ann Beckvoid
Boulder County
1969-1973

Maynard Bellerive
Adams County
1969-1973

James L. Blakely
Denver County
1977-1979

James M. Bowers
Boulder County
1969-1981

Robert F. Clement*
Jefferson County
1973

Herbert Cook
Denver County
1969-1975

John R. Crowley
Arapahoe County
1969-1981

Charles DeMoulin, Jr.
Denver County
1979-1980

Roger DeVries
Douglas County
1975-1979

Perry Eberhart
Adams County
1969-1976

Annette Finesilver
Denver County
1975-1981

Eugene Fortier
Jefferson County
1973-1980

Samuel R. Freeman
Denver County
1973-1977

Maria Garcia
Adams County
1977-1979

John F. Harper
Jefferson County
1969-1979

Earl Howe*
Denver County
1969-1974

William H. Huntsbarger
Jefferson County
1976-1973

George V. Kelly
Denver County
1980-1981

John Fleming Kelly
Denver County
1969-1981

Henry C. "Hank" Kimbrough*
Douglas County
1969-1975

Elwood M. Kullgren
Denver County
1971-1974

W. E. "Bing" McMahan
Weld County
1970-1972

Albert G. Melcher
Denver County
1969-1973

John S. Mrozek
Denver County
1974-1977

Anthony J. Mullen
Adams County
1978-1979

Iris M. Mullen
Adams County
1974-1977

Daniel H. Murphy*
Denver County
1969-1972

Lowell E. Palmquist
Member-at-Large
(Arapahoe County)
1973-1981

Ronald E. Rinker
Denver County
1969-1971

Donald B. Robertson
Denver County
1969-1979

Leo Rodriguez
Denver County
1969-1981

Kevin Sampson
Adams County
1977-1978

Richard C. Thomas
Denver County
1972-1979

Jack L. Trezise, Jr.*
Jefferson County
1969-1971

John P. Watson
Weld County
1972-1973

William W. Wilson
Adams County
1973-1974

*Deceased

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Preface

Denver has a distinguished public transit history predating the statehood of Colorado. Beginning in 1867, the territorial government granted a charter to the Denver Horse Railroad Company, although horsecars did not appear on Denver streets until 1871—still five years before Colorado became a state.

In 1886, University of Denver Professor Sidney Short constructed a 3,100-foot conduit electrical trolley on 15th Street, one of the first operating electrical transit systems in the world. Problems with lack of drainage and people stepping on the conduit and rail at the same time lead to abandonment in less than a year.

The merger of two companies created the Denver Tramway Company, also in 1886. The Denver Tramway Company was destined to provide the bulk of public transportation in the Denver area until 1971. Additional mergers and reorganizations followed, and by 1889, Denver had the third largest cable railway system in the country. One single cable line was nearly seven miles long.

But, electric trolleys were coming of age and within 10 years, with further mergers, Denver grew from a 15-mile cable system to 156 miles of electric trolley lines.

The system continued to grow to include interurban rail lines to outlying areas. In Denver, these rail cars not only carried passengers, but ran to company-owned coal mines to transport the coal which generated the electrical power for the trolley system.

The 1900's were the golden years of the streetcars since Denver, with a

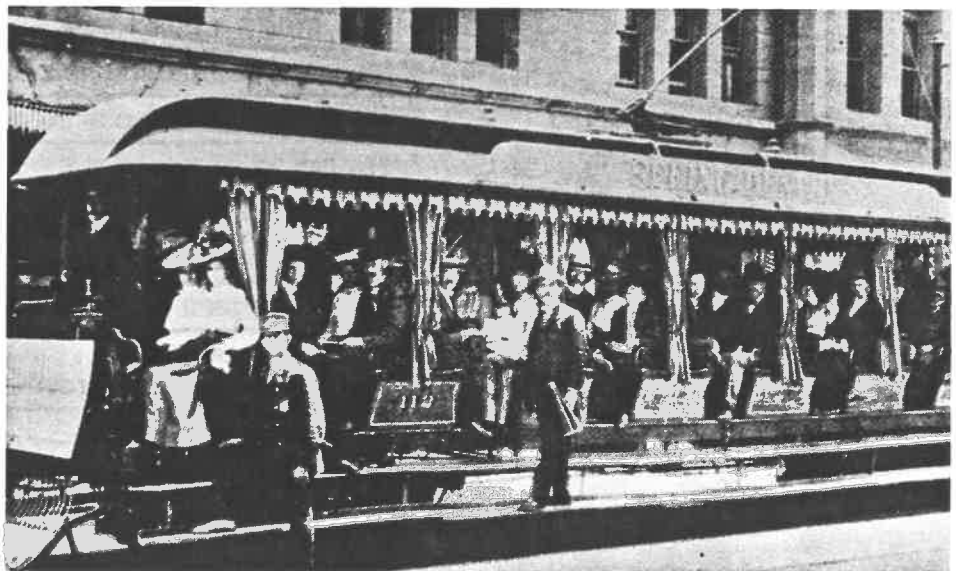
population of only 110,000, saw 36 million passengers use the public transit system.

Motorbuses were first introduced into service in 1919 and started the trend which would lead to the end of streetcar service in Denver on June 3, 1950.

Another more serious trend was also developing: people were turning to private automobiles. In the 1940's, World War II only temporarily reversed the trend from public transportation to the auto.

Increasing dependence on the private car and rising transit operating costs in the 1950's and 1960's caused the continuing decline of public transit. Daily ridership was down from 225,000 in 1945 to less than 60,000 in 1971. The need to maintain a public transportation system was apparent to many in the community. Along with other concerned groups, the Denver Chamber of Commerce spearheaded an effort, in 1969, to create a regional approach to public transportation.

At the turn of the century, mass transit was a viable and popular method of travel in the region.



1969

The beginning

The Regional Transportation District (RTD) was created by an act of the Colorado General Assembly in 1969, and became an operating unit on July 1 of that year. The last half of that year saw the organization of the Board of Directors and a small planning staff.

A link between RTD and local governments was provided through the 21-member Board of Directors.

Ten of the directors were appointed by the mayor of Denver and ratified by the City Council. Two members each were from the counties of Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder and Jefferson, and one from Douglas County. These were appointed by the respective county commissioners and ratified by a majority of the city councils in that county. The original Board had one member at-large and a member representing Weld County. After Weld County voted to withdraw from the District, there were two at-large members who were elected by the other members of the RTD Board. Board members served for four-year terms unless filling an unexpired term of office.

The first regular monthly Board meeting was held in September. Officers were elected in November, a first year's budget of \$185,000 was approved in January 1970, and all 21 members of the Board had taken office by February.

John Fleming Kelly, who had directed the Denver Chamber of Commerce effort to establish a regional public transportation system, became the first chairman of the RTD Board of Directors.

1970

Planning and organizing

In April, the Board selection committee concluded its review of applicants for executive director. In May, the Board appointed Harry L. Parrish, Jr., as RTD's first executive director. That same month, RTD offices were opened at 1050 Yuma Street in Denver, and these were later moved to 56 Steele Street, Denver.

The legislation creating the agency established a July 1, 1974, deadline for submitting a proposed bond issue to the voters of the District to implement a public transportation system. Voter approval of the RTD plan was required before RTD could actually begin developing, operating and maintaining a public transportation system.

The District became part of Denver's Tramway Review Team and was also represented on Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) and Colorado Department of Highways (CDH) committees to produce the coordination so important to modern transportation planning.

In October, RTD participated in a comprehensive transportation study for the Boulder Valley area which was to later add to planning the District would need to establish its Northern Operations Group (NOG) which would include Intercity, Boulder and Longmont service.

Boulder's transit system is now able to link that interesting community with other cities of RTD's six-county District.



Developing a regional plan

To meet this 1974 deadline, the Board began technical studies and community involvement programs. The Board, choosing not to build up a large staff, decided to utilize consultants to conduct planning work.

In February of 1971, the RTD Board selected a transit consultant team consisting of Development Research Associates of Los Angeles, and Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd of Philadelphia.

The Phase I Concept report of this team recommended several types of service to meet transit needs. These included an efficient, dependable local bus system, incorporating what was still operating, but with new extended service and vehicles. The report also recognized that regional activity centers, such as shopping centers and major employment areas, would need improved service to avoid traffic congestion and pollution.

It was apparent, even in 1971, that the urban areas of the District needed more than private cars and buses to meet transportation needs. For this, the Phase I report recommended a Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) system.

Phase I also suggested linking the urban areas of the District with express or regional bus routes initially, and, by the year 2000, with rail transit and other rapid transit modes.

The Joint Regional Planning Program (JRPP) was established in 1971 with RTD, DRCOG and CDH participating. The program included 44 separate tasks to assure that an effective urban transportation system, which could accommodate many modes of transportation including buses, cars, pedestrians, bicycles, and higher-

speed, higher-capacity systems would be planned District-wide.

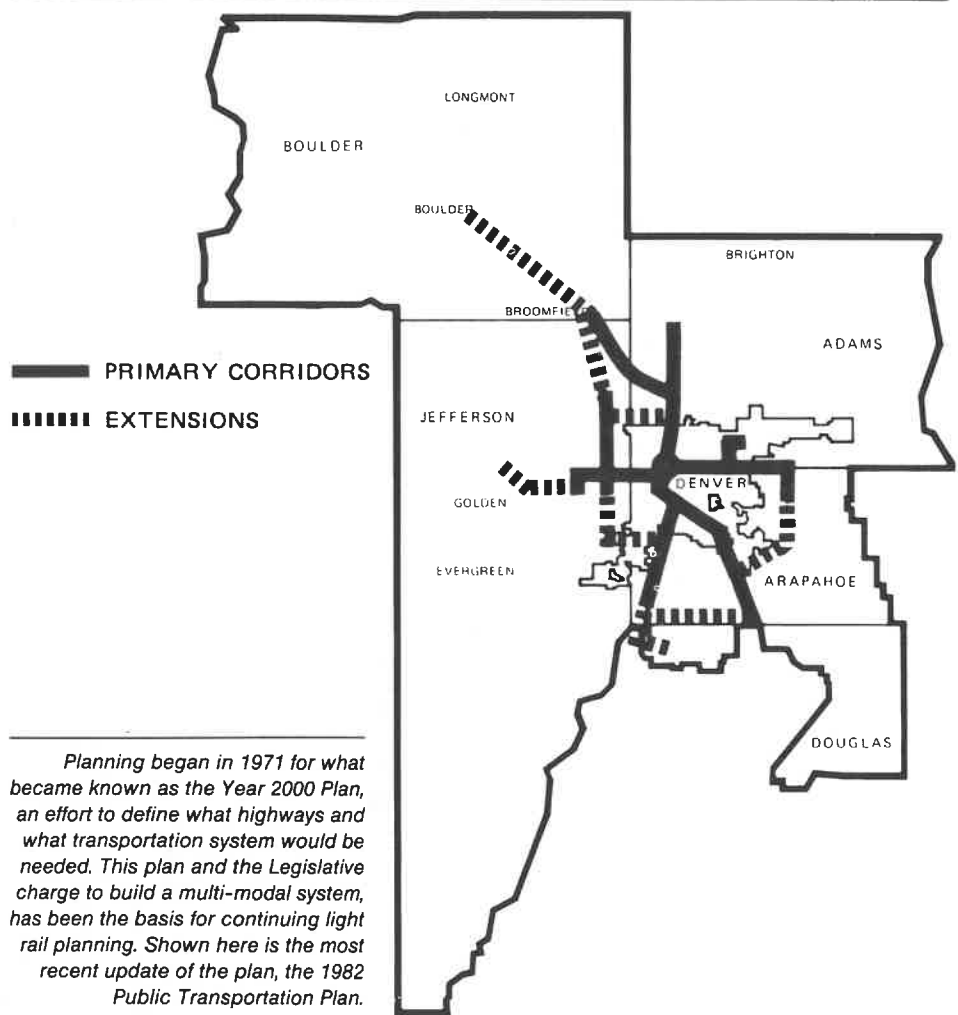
The massive amount of data collected from different areas of the region were of great assistance in compiling the regional transportation plan.

RTD also received a \$100,000 Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) grant to begin planning for a "people mover", PRT demonstration project. Such a PRT system would have small, four- to six-passenger

vehicles operating on separated guideways.

In the summer, 17 Citizen Advisory Committees (CAC) were organized with 11 in Denver and six in other counties. RTD Board members served as ex-officio members of their own county committees.

RTD speakers explained the progress and latest developments of the District. RTD Board members, staff, and consultants made more than 175 presentations during the year.



Early Action Program

In 1972, the emphasis continued on developing the rapid transit plan for the region and to convey the details of that plan to the voters. By the end of the year, a transportation plan was completed, a most significant accomplishment in complying with the RTD's 1969 legislative mandate.

This plan included a 98-mile network of PRT and an extensive bus system throughout the District. Its estimated cost at that time was \$1.56 billion over a 10-year construction period.

A system of bus routes was envisioned that would improve transit service and would eventually provide access to the PRT network. This system included local intracity service with stops approximately every other block, express service running from suburbs or park-n-Rides directly to downtown Denver, and regional routes serving the more outlying areas such as Brighton, Conifer, Evergreen and Parker.

An Early Action Program was designed to immediately improve bus service in the region by 60 percent with the purchase of 115 new buses, an additional 270 miles of new routes and an increase of service on existing routes. The federal government was expected to bear two-thirds of the program cost, leaving a local share of approximately \$520 million.

Funding for the planning and community involvement programs was provided by less than a half-mill of property tax, and RTD later proposed that the development of the system be funded by a half-cent sales tax and removed the property tax levy.

Two successful transit demonstration projects were implemented. One, in cooperation with the City of

Longmont, was the start of "The Mini", two 16-passenger buses traveling two Longmont routes, weekdays from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. with a 25-cent fare. Initially designed for use by senior citizens, the Mini was accepted by residents of all ages and, in a year, carried 145,062 riders. The operation was assumed by Longmont at the end of the demonstration and financed by a tax on cigarettes until RTD became fully operational.

The second project, the Southglenn Easyrider, gave RTD valuable experience in providing express service to morning and evening commuters between the Southglenn area in Arapahoe County and downtown Denver. The three-month project utilized two buses with a monthly subscription fee of \$23 per person and carried more than 150 former auto commuters at the end of the one-year project.

Other achievements in 1972 included continuation of the Joint Regional Planning Program with DRCOG and CDH. RTD endorsed regional plans for highways and land use which would provide an overall perspective on regional development and progress.

Late in the year, UMTA announced that the Denver area had been selected as the site of the federal project to develop and demonstrate a new transit technology — PRT. This was thought to be an important step toward implementation of the RTD transportation plan. It was contemplated that this system would be available for the 1976 Winter Olympics scheduled for Denver. The Olympics were subsequently voted down in a referendum and the demonstration project was eventually dropped by the Department of Transportation (DOT).



The Longmont Mini, the first RTD demonstration project, was the first successful attempt to draw new riders.

Voters approve RTD

1973 was the year that citizens voted overwhelmingly for RTD's plan to finance the development of an integrated regional public transportation system.

The ballot proposal, which was approved on September 7 by 57.2 percent of the voters, authorized RTD to issue up to \$425 million in revenue bonds, backed by a half-percent sales tax, to provide for the local share of designing, constructing and operating a \$1.56 billion multi-modal transit system.

Immediately following the successful referendum, a preliminary capital grant proposal was submitted to UMTA for funds to enable RTD to acquire 120 new buses, purchase and construct a new bus storage and maintenance facility, construct 100 bus shelters, take over three privately owned bus companies, and other related improvements outlined under the Early Action Program. The Early Action Program which began in 1973 was designed to provide a 61 percent increase in bus service by early 1975.

Because of increasing air pollution in Denver and the severe energy shortage, RTD authorized the immediate lease of 25 over-the-road buses for use in express service.

Interim service agreements were also offered to the four area municipalities which had been providing public transit services to their citizens and to the nine municipalities in the District which had been providing transportation service under contract with Denver Metro Transit.

In addition to the interim service agreements with municipalities which subsidized approximately 70 percent of their transportation costs, RTD

entered into agreements with three common carriers that provided regional service for commuters in Boulder, Castle Rock, Parker, Perry Park, Brighton, Commerce City and Longmont.

Throughout 1973, as the Early Action Program evolved, close coordination was maintained between RTD, DRCOG and CDH. In addition, a citizens group, "Transit For All", was formed to provide volunteer speakers bureaus and information to fully inform the voters of the proposed transportation plan.

Another immediate action was launching a nationwide search for an executive director to organize and manage a staff to implement the Early

Action Program. John D. Simpson was selected as the successor to Harry L. Parrish, who had resigned earlier in 1973.

Near the end of the year, UMTA was considering a personal rapid transit system demonstration project to be located in Jefferson County. The project would have included two miles of guideway and necessary support facilities for extensive testing.

1973 was also a banner year for community involvement with RTD conducting seven public hearings, 22 public forums, 29 major community meetings and RTD representatives making 436 speeches and presentations.



When RTD took over the business of operating transit in the region, many of the buses were as old as 20 years. Within seven years, RTD's bus fleet was one of the most modern in the nation with an average age of 4.5 years.

Meanwhile:

Tramway to Metro Transit

During this 1969-1973 period of planning and organization before RTD became a fully operational transit system, public transit in the Denver area was struggling to exist.

By 1969, ridership on the Denver Tramway lines had reached new lows. Fares had been increased to 40 cents, and the company was facing another round of labor negotiations which would force operating costs still higher.

Ultimately, Denver Tramway management informed the City and County of Denver that it would soon be forced to suspend service. Mayor William McNichols, Jr., asked the City Council to consider public ownership to avoid the total abandonment of public transportation in Denver.

The City Council referred the matter to the voters in September 1970. It was defeated. A second alternate proposal went to council and the voters, and was approved in November 1970. Federal funding for two-thirds of the cost of the proposal was approved, and, on April 18, 1971, the Denver Tramway Company was out of the public transportation business.

The City did what it could to increase service and lowered fares to 35 cents.

Express routes and a downtown circulator were added, and service outside Denver was expanded. The suburban service was achieved through direct contract with the counties and municipalities since Denver could not subsidize routes outside city limits with Denver taxpayers' dollars.

After a little more than three years of operating public transportation in Denver as Denver Metro Transit, the system became part of RTD on July 4, 1974.

1 9 7 4

Acquiring six bus systems

On January 1, 1974, RTD began collecting the half percent sales tax and became fully operational.

Shortly after becoming fully operational, the District was faced with the challenge of rapidly increasing demand for public transportation that was brought on by soaring gasoline prices due to the Arab oil embargo. One of the first acts of RTD was to obtain extra buses to provide additional commuter service during the embargo and to adjust its budget to operate more buses and cover the large increase in the price of diesel fuel.

The service agreements continued providing municipalities with the money to keep their systems running as were those agreements with cities underwriting bus service extensions into their communities.

RTD inherited a fleet of 321 buses from Denver Metro Transit, but many of these were over 20 years old. (When RTD was created in 1969, there were only 213 aging buses in operation.) Total bus mileage was nine million miles per year with fewer than 20 million riders annually.

Only one maintenance and storage facility existed for buses, the Alameda Facility, which was built in the early 1950's. There was little or no maintenance capacity for buses in the other small systems operating in the District. These systems served several cities including Boulder and there was a private Denver-Boulder bus line.

As RTD began building a modern bus fleet and its needed support facilities, the planning continued for a rapid transit system. The conclusion of all the studies the District had commissioned showed that buses alone,

operating in mixed traffic, could not meet a significant share of the urban travel demand.

Expansion of service in 1974 brought ridership up for an overall increase of 58 percent since 1970. This resulted from a combination of added route miles, and new and leased equipment.

1974 also saw planning in the final stages for special services for the elderly and handicapped, and for upgrading and increasing park-n-Rides, bus shelters and modern bus maintenance facilities.

In addition to acquiring Denver Metro Transit in July 1974, RTD acquired Evergreen Transit on April 15, the Longmont Mini on July 1, Englewood-Littleton-Fort Logan on November 25, Northglenn Suburban on December 16, and Boulder City and Public Service assets in December 1974.

New and expanded bus service

New and expanded service for District residents was a key accomplishment in 1975. The six fragmented bus systems that had been providing service to different areas of the District were integrated into a single, unified system. Zone fares were abolished. Express fares were set at 50 cents and local fares at 25 cents during off-peak and 35 cents at peak times.

The improved service included the extension of 20 routes, 17 new local and express routes, more frequent service to 10 areas, new nighttime service on many routes, increased service to the mountain areas of the District, and inauguration of special service for the elderly and handicapped.

Twelve specially equipped FMC coaches were put into service to begin the handyRide. Thirty-seven buses were equipped with extendable steps, additional handbars, grab rails and high-visibility destination signs on the sides of the buses to make riding easier for the elderly and less-severely handicapped. Almost 150 other buses were equipped with these features, less the extendable steps. Reduced fares during off-peak hours were also implemented for elderly and handicapped riders.

Meeting these special needs made RTD the first transit system in the nation with a comprehensive bus program to serve the needs of the elderly and handicapped.

Other service improvements included assuming the Denver-Boulder operation and reducing those fares. Thirty-four of the large, over-the-road buses provided intercity service linking Boulder, Longmont and Denver.

Close cooperation with Boulder officials led to acquisition and renovation of an interim storage and maintenance facility for the Northern Operations Group.

The EasyRider demonstration project became part of regular RTD service. The TownRider was launched to provide new circulator service in Adams, Arapahoe and Jefferson counties using 27 FMC coaches. Ridership continued to increase on the Longmont Mini. New buses were put into service to replace older vehicles on the Boulder Ride. And 28 new suburban coaches were put into service with 40 more on order.

Four demonstration bus lanes were instituted in Denver's Central Business District exclusively for RTD buses. The lanes had a three-fold advantage. They provided a low-cost transit improvement, they improved the reliability of service, and, as ridership increased, they helped reduce air pollution in the Denver area. This increased to 10 miles of exclusive bus lanes on 16th, 17th and Lincoln streets and on Broadway.

The exclusive bus lanes, new and extended routes, and improved bus service did increase ridership. To maximize public awareness, RTD launched an innovative, multi-faceted new ridership program.

The distinctive dark brown, red and white "RTD - The Ride" design was developed and continues to give RTD buses their highly visible and attractive appearance. RTD also installed more readable destination signs on buses, began developing distinctive new signage for bus stops, published more informative schedules and printed information in both English and Spanish when possible.

BroncoRide was initiated to take fans directly to the Mile High Stadium for home football games of the Denver Broncos. RTD also featured "Nickel Days", when all fares were reduced to 5 cents, thus giving many residents the incentive to try public transportation.

To support and encourage new riders, RTD also launched a program to establish park-n-Ride facilities with plans to construct 10 metropolitan park-n-Rides, with space for approximately 250 cars each, and nine mountain facilities, holding approximately 50 cars each. Twenty-six joint-use park-n-Ride locations were in use around the District by the end of 1975. RTD also began planning for bus shelters at major stops and began to test various shelter designs.

Land near I-25 and I-70 was acquired and planning completed for a second maintenance and storage facility for the growing bus fleet. This facility included a large 250-bus garage, general maintenance, supply rooms, and body-and-paint shops, and an extensive solar-assist system to help offset utility costs.

Planning continued during 1975 for rapid transit. Strong bipartisan support from the Colorado Congressional Delegation and state officials was exerted in presenting RTD's case for federal funding for rapid transit.

\$100 to \$200 million offered to RTD

RTD studies all indicated that buses alone, operating in mixed traffic, could not meet a significant share of the Denver metropolitan area's demand. As a result, the District carefully prepared, honed and polished its rapid transit plans for a first segment extending from Northglenn to Littleton, with a spur penetrating downtown Denver via subway.

The hopes for federal subsidy to construct a rapid transit system were dashed on June 29, 1976, when UMTA rejected RTD's plan. RTD's application, planning and methodology were highly praised, but UMTA reasoned that there were urban areas with more pressing needs than Denver. Rail transit was thought to be "premature" for a region of such high automobile use, low population density and low transit ridership. Better news was that UMTA would provide financial assistance in the range of \$100 to \$200 million for short and intermediate term improvements to the bus system. This was the single largest offer ever made by the federal government to improve transit in the region.

RTD began a progressive expansion of bus service with new service concepts and increasing emphasis on making The Ride more convenient for area residents.

By the end of 1976, UMTA made a down payment on its commitment by approving more than \$20 million to construct modern bus storage and maintenance facilities in Boulder and Longmont, expand the park-n-Ride program to major urban sites and nine rural locations, purchase 231 new buses, and improve traffic design at 40 locations.

Three major park-n-Rides, Broadway,

Southmoor and Broomfield, were opened 1975. This helped minimize traffic congestion in the downtown area by accommodating approximately 750 cars.

Once again, as route miles were increased, service was improved and special programs introduced, bus ridership soared 17 percent from 27.8 million riders in 1975, to 32.5 million in 1976.

RTD took delivery of 40 new AM General coaches. It ordered 12 over-the-road buses, and with almost \$18 million in federal money, placed an order for 176 new 47-passenger AM General buses and 55 medium-sized Flexible buses.

While 1975 was a year of consolidation and expansion, 1976 was a period of improving service frequency, taking over routes previously serviced by commercial carriers and trying new service techniques. RTD introduced paratransit service to towns such as Louisville, Lafayette and Nederland. Service to Longmont, Boulder and Broomfield was doubled.

Planning was begun to convert the complicated system of routes RTD had inherited to a north-south, east-west grid system. Modern rider information programs were implemented and the Downtown Information Center was opened. The Telephone Information Center was modernized, doubling its capacity.

RTD continued to meet the needs of the elderly and handicapped. The new buses ordered had special "kneeling" features to make boarding easier. Special off-peak trips for the elderly were increased to help them with shopping and SeniorRide was initiated. SeniorRide provides pre-

scheduled trips to activity centers and public events such as plays, concerts and exhibits.

At the end of the year, the new Platte Division opened. The \$9.6 million facility, covering 5.88 acres, included a \$1 million solar-assist heating system, the nation's largest solar-assist at that time. The facility provides storage for 252 buses plus maintenance and repair work.

A modern maintenance program was developed at Alameda which resulted in the rebuilding of 85 engines, 135 transmissions and 288 braking systems in the first six months. The inventory control system was converted from an outdated manual system to a computerized system to handle the approximately 400,000 items.

The freeRide, a unique public-private partnership with Downtown Denver, Inc., premiered in August of 1976. The freeRide provided circulator service in downtown Denver at no charge.

BuffaloRide, patterned after BroncoRide, was started and transported University of Colorado fans to home games of the CU Buffalos. TouristRide was also started. This service used buses during off-peak hours to take tourists to 17 visitor attractions.

RTD acquired the block bounded by East Colfax and East 16th Avenue, and Broadway and Lincoln Street in downtown Denver for future use as the major terminal for an integrated transit system.

At the end of the year, RTD reordered its priorities to include short- and intermediate-term bus and related capital improvements made possible by the \$100 to \$200 million offer of federal funds.

Transit development accelerated

1977 was characterized by continued growth, improved performance and innovation in transit service. Ridership increased for the fourth consecutive year to twice what it had been at the end of private ownership in 1971.

The RTD Board adopted an accelerated program which included rapid expansion of the bus fleet, early construction of additional maintenance and storage facilities, and development of transit centers and park-n-Rides.

In order to make full use of the federal financial assistance from UMTA, RTD sold \$45,145,000 in sales tax revenue bonds in November to cover its share of the capital projects that were on the planning boards.

During 1977, 231 new buses were ordered for delivery through March of 1978, increasing the operating fleet to 590 buses. Included were 176 AM General transit coaches and 55 medium-sized, 37-passenger buses manufactured by the Flexible Corporation. This allowed 160 old buses to be retired and brought the average age of the fleet to 12 years.

Maintenance efficiency improved as a result of better daily servicing, inspection and newer equipment. The District facilities for bus engine and transmission overhauls, painting, body work and tire shops were centralized at the Platte Division for maximum efficiency. In September, a regularly scheduled tune-up program was instituted. Special safety inspection procedures were established for all buses in mountain service. By the end of the year, nearly all RTD buses not scheduled for retirement had been painted with the "RTD - The Ride" design and colors.

RTD's commitment to special serv-

ices provided over 120,000 trips for the elderly and handicapped in 1977. Forty-one senior centers were now served each week by the Senior Shopper using regular buses during off-peak hours. SeniorRide was initiated in the Boulder area. Free service for the elderly during off-peak hours and on weekends and holidays was begun. The Boulder freeB circulator began operation through a joint agreement between RTD, the Boulder Chamber of Commerce and the University of Colorado.

With the expanded bus fleet came the need for more storage and maintenance facilities. The Platte Division, completed in 1976, was formally dedicated in June 1977. Construction of the \$8.8 million, approximately 173,000 square foot Boulder facility began. It, like Platte, was designed with solar-assisted heating. It also housed administrative services. Planning was underway for a \$1.4 million bus station, maintenance and storage facility for Longmont that would accommodate up to 25 buses.

A grant application was submitted to UMTA for a third major metropolitan bus garage. The East Metro facility would become the largest solar-assisted heating installation in the nation. This facility was designed with special attention to environmental features and allowed all functions to be done under one roof including maintenance, washing, fueling and storage.

The Nine Mile park-n-Ride was also completed and put into service in 1977, making it the fourth major park-n-Ride completed by RTD. Ten more park-n-Rides were in various planning stages.

Planning continued for creating a

mall from Civic Center to lower downtown Denver which would improve service in the Central Business District and metropolitan Denver, and increase the productivity of equipment and personnel. RTD worked closely with the City of Denver and businesses in the planning.

Negotiations were conducted with railroad companies regarding right-of-way acquisition for future implementation of rail transit along primary travel corridors in the metropolitan area. Rail lines included the abandoned Colorado & Southern in southeast Denver, the Santa Fe corridor, and the Associated Railroad from Denver to the Federal Center.

After two years of study and hundreds of meetings with citizens, RTD was ready to undertake the first comprehensive restructuring of routes in Denver's recent transit history. A major promotional campaign was conducted for the new grid system that would go into effect in 1978.

Free fare and the grid system

A new fare structure was implemented and the new grid system of routes went into effect, first in the north-east area of the District and then system-wide.

Increasing inflation prompted RTD to develop and implement a new fare structure aimed at encouraging ridership, especially during the off-peak, while assuring that riders would continue to pay a reasonable share of operating costs. The monthly pass program was instituted, providing significant savings for the regular rider, and a lower fare was charged during off-peak to increase ridership during those hours.

Transit Awareness Month in 1978 lead into a year-long project in co-operation with UMTA which offered free-fare during off-peak hours to encourage non-riders to try public transportation. The free-fare project resulted in a 45 percent increase in riders during the year. It was also hoped that the project would help to reduce air pollution in Denver.

The free-fare experiment was accompanied by the restructuring of the entire bus route and schedule system. RTD had inherited a system of routes dating back to streetcar routes that had been extended and resulted in a hodge-podge that confused many individuals.

The new grid system placed buses on arterials and important collector streets where the routes could be understood, the buses and stops seen, and where the buses could travel faster. A major information campaign was conducted to inform transit patrons and potential riders about the changes.

Despite the information program, the

change was a difficult one and there were some problems. Meetings were conducted along with surveys, and several routes were modified to alleviate concerns and problems that had been indentified.

Construction began in June on the 250-bus East Metro Division which became RTD's third major metropolitan bus facility, its third solar-assisted heated facility, and the nation's largest solar-assisted installation. President Jimmy Carter announced a \$16 million UMTA grant to help fund the construction.

Additional park-n-Rides were opened in 1978: Wagon Road park-n-Ride in Adams County, and three, smaller rural sites, the Genesee Park, Evergreen and Paradise Hills park-n-Rides.

The fleet of 12 handyRide buses was expanded with the arrival of 18 additional wheelchair lift-equipped buses which went into service on the circulator routes in downtown Denver and the hospital areas. A total of six circulator routes were made accessible. In addition, all 231 new buses delivered in 1978 had the special kneeling feature that lowers the entrance to curb level.

Public meetings and planning for The Mall project continued. RTD invited private developers to submit proposals for joint development of the air space above the southeast transit center close to the Civic Center. The state had earmarked funds for The Mall and UMTA authorized federal support for funding of design in 1978.

New, uniform bus stop signs were installed, replacing the previous non-standard signs. Installation of approximately 200 bus shelters continued.

More new facilities and service

New, modern bus facilities were completed in Boulder and Longmont. The Boulder facility provided maintenance and storage for the more than 125 buses used in local Boulder and intercity services. This facility became one of three RTD facilities to derive a large portion of its heating from solar collector units on the roof. The Longmont facility provided light maintenance and storage for 20 buses in local and regional service.

Two more major park-n-Rides were completed and opened in 1979 — the Cold Spring and the Smoky Hill Cutoff park-n-Rides. As part of the ongoing evaluation of ridership levels, six new routes were added to the metro Denver bus system, while three unproductive routes were eliminated.

RTD took pioneering steps in automated customer information with its new Stapleton Airport Transit Information Display. Automated passenger information is on a large overhead display that lists the seven routes serving the airport while indicating the bus departure times. This became RTD's first Transit Center with six others planned.

The capacity to handle public inquiries about routes, schedules, and other questions was doubled through the installation of an advanced telephone information system. Fully operational in 1979, the system handled up to 137,000 calls per month.

Tokens were introduced in early 1979 and gained widespread distribution as more than 110 grocery stores throughout the District served as sales outlets. Passes became an increasingly inviting fringe benefit for area companies to offer employees with nearly 30 major employers offer-

ing discounted or free passes to employees. RTD also implemented a special phone information service for hearing and speech-impaired patrons with Porta-Tel or similar equipment.

Planning for The Mall continued during 1979 and necessary arrangements were made to close 16th Street to traffic for the groundbreaking. In cooperation with the City of Denver, a major reordering of downtown traffic flow was set to be implemented with the closing of 16th Street. This would improve traffic patterns and minimize the impact of closing 16th Street.

The RTD Maintenance Division was reorganized to improve productivity. A management-by-objectives program and a policy of actively seeking creative staff input helped develop a clear understanding and direction. The first RTD Maintenance Rodeo was conducted and a Maintenance Supervisor Trainee Program was instituted.

The RTD Maintenance Incentive Suggestion Program was begun and was such a success that it was expanded to all employees. The program provides cash awards for suggestions that will save RTD money or improve service. During 1979, the value of such suggestions conservatively saved the District a quarter-million dollars, with employees receiving \$21,000.

Maintenance contracted for the installation of wheelchair lifts on 176 buses. Ongoing programs included retrofitting more buses with wheelchair lifts and restraints; utilizing the updated Maintenance Reporting System, testing of evaporative cooling systems, use of a drive-shaft retarder system to extend the life of the brakes, and development of a

Maintenance Certification Program.

Between 1970 and 1979, RTD received over \$126 million in federal capital grants to improve public transportation. Though the Denver area ranked 24th in population among U.S. cities, it was tenth in total federal funds received from UMTA as RTD continued its expansion and improvement programs.

Planning for a 73-mile light rail system to serve the metropolitan area continued to be refined. The State Legislature authorized a light rail funding proposal to be placed on the 1980 ballot. If passed, this would permit RTD to levy an additional three-quarters of one percent sales tax for 14 years to build the 73-mile primary system. Another feature of the proposal would remove RTD's authority to levy up to two-and-a-half

mills of property tax and would have eliminated the sales tax on food and residential utilities as well.

The proposed light rail system called for over 100 access points or stations with the primary rail corridors linking most of the region's activity centers. It was projected to carry at least 265,000 riders a day, and a total public transit ridership of a half million a day when integrated with the bus system.

The RTD Board of Directors adopted policies to ensure that the concerns and opinions of the public and communities most directly affected would be considered in the planning and development of light rail. An intensive community involvement program was aimed at achieving the broadest possible public understanding of light rail transit.



One of the early priorities of RTD was to meet the needs of the elderly and handicapped residents. RTD led the nation in 1975 with special programs and continued as a frontrunner with accessibility and service efforts. In June, 1982, one month ahead of schedule, Denver Local routes became accessible to wheelchairs ... 100 percent accessible on week-ends and off-peak and 50 percent accessible during peak hours.

The Mall, elected Board and light rail

Achievements in 1980 included reaching a record number of passengers per workday -- 160,000 -- completing East Metro, one of the nation's largest solar-assisted facilities, expanding the park-n-Ride system, acquiring 127 new buses, getting Mall construction underway, and making The Ride more accessible to the handicapped and elderly.

One of the major improvements in physical plants was the opening of East Metro at East Colfax Avenue and I-225. It provides storage and maintenance for up to 250 buses, all under one roof. East Metro enhances productivity and service by allowing better distribution of repair and preventive maintenance functions, and also reduces travel time and deadhead mileage.

Two more major park-n-Rides, Hallack Junction in Westminster and Boyd's Crossing in Arvada, were nearing completion. Boulder's popular Table Mesa park-n-Ride was expanded to accommodate 276 cars. Thirty-five transit-related projects, such as bus pull-outs, were completed in cooperation with local municipalities.

In mid-1980, RTD began testing a new fare collection system on evening express routes leaving downtown Denver. Riders boarded through both the front and rear doors, and paid their fares upon exiting. Loading time was reduced as a result, getting passengers and buses on their way more quickly and efficiently. The average amount of time an express bus spent at downtown stops was reduced by 22 to 37 percent, and both traffic and pedestrian congestion were significantly alleviated.

In accordance with its commitment to

the handicapped and with federal regulations, RTD continued retrofitting buses with wheelchair lifts. These, combined with the 127 new General Motors of Canada buses, already lift-equipped, made RTD one of the most comprehensive transit systems in the nation for meeting the needs of the elderly and handicapped.

A 1980 goal was the reduction of bus road calls to only one every 2,000 miles, and it was achieved. By the end of the year, there were 2,190 miles between roadcalls. The Maintenance Reporting System (MRS) was implemented to record data on fuel, oil, labor, parts usage, and individual coach history.

Two new paratransit routes were put into operation serving the Coal Creek Canyon and Niwot areas. In addition, RTD coordinated vanpooling programs with Storage Technology, Inc., and Rockwell International, Inc., where it was not feasible to provide regular bus service.

Even with improved service, RTD's operating costs only increased by 10 percent, despite increased inflation and labor costs. (The cost of diesel fuel alone had risen 150 percent since 1978.)

Work began on The Mall in 1980 with the majority of the underground utility work completed during the year. Vault reconstruction also began in 1980 on 16 vaults beneath the sidewalks. Major traffic engineering changes were made with the closing of 16th Street and the realignment of one-way streets. A major information campaign preceded the closing of 16th Street and, for a week, RTD employees spent their early mornings and evenings downtown assisting

bus riders and motorists.

Four blocks of The Mall were underway by the end of 1980; the first of 284,000 square feet of granite had arrived; and the 200 trees for The Mall had been shipped to Denver to acclimate. Minicar-Vetter was picked to design and manufacture the Mall shuttle, and demolition of existing structures was completed on the site for the Civic Center Station.

Voters decided two key issues regarding RTD: funding of light rail transit and the creation of an elected Board of Directors.

The light rail transit funding proposal attracted an affirmative vote of 46 percent, and was thus turned down in an election that had an extremely high voter turnout. The defeat could be attributed to two basic factors. First, the ballot was long and complicated, and had numerous controversial and well-publicized issues. Second, surveys conducted following the election showed those who rejected the proposal were opposed to an increased sales tax. In fact, almost a third of those who voted "no" indicated they wanted a light rail system.

The 1980 election also saw the approval of an initiative to create an elected Board of Directors to be elected in November of 1982 and to take office in January of 1983. The new Board will consist of 15 members elected from individual districts apportioned on the basis of equal population. This new Board will set a date for another election on funding light rail transit between March 1 and July 1, 1983.

127 new buses arrive, 89 articulated buses ordered

In spite of leaner finances in 1981, RTD made impressive strides toward more efficient and more convenient service.

RTD took delivery of the 127 new 40-foot buses from General Motors of Canada, all of which were equipped with wheelchair lifts, brake retarders and special turbo-charged engines. With a new average fleet-age of 4.5 years, the additional buses made RTD's fleet one of the most modern in the nation.

Eighty-nine articulated buses were also ordered in 1981. By participating in a consortium with other transit agencies, RTD was able to achieve substantial savings, but even so, the order was the single largest contract ever awarded by the District.

RTD acted on its pledge to make public transit more accessible to the handicapped through its program of retrofitting buses with wheelchair lifts in addition to the 127 new lift-equipped buses.

Three more park-n-Rides, the Pinery, Boyd's Crossing, and Hallack Junction, opened in 1981 while Broomfield park-n-Ride was expanded to a 530-car capacity. RTD continued to study and acquire land to construct 18 new park-n-Rides by 1986. Thirty-four more passenger shelters were completed.

The first RTD quarterly public forums began in 1981. These meetings were held throughout the District and allowed the public to talk directly to RTD management regarding any concerns they might have.

The system route map received new, expanded circulation as it was printed for the first time in the special "color pages" of the telephone direc-

tory which put it into more than one million homes and businesses.

Progress on The Mall included completion of the downtown traffic changes and the renovation of two historic buildings at the lower end of The Mall to serve as the RTD Administrative Offices. Construction on The Mall itself continued to progress with nearly all of the 200 honey locust and red oak trees planted, and six blocks of granite installed. Work was begun on the transfer facilities at both ends of The Mall.

RTD announced the joint development of the Civic Center block by a lease of the air rights above the transfer facility to a private developer. A visual corridor through the block was maintained to preserve the view of the Capitol and the mountains from The Mall.

The John W. Galbreath Company was selected as the developer to build a 610,000 square foot office building at the site. The value capture agreement is projected to yield millions of dollars of private funds to RTD's General Fund. The term of the lease is 65 years, after which the building will become the property of the District.

RTD implemented another program designed to better serve transit users and facilitate traffic in downtown Denver during rush hours. Local buses were assigned to one of three bus stop designations along 15th and 17th streets, loading and unloading only at an "X", "Y", or "Z" stop. By using only every third stop, bus speeds in downtown improved by as much as 12 percent. In addition, traffic and sidewalk congestion was lessened.

With the legislative requirement for another public vote on a light rail funding proposal in 1982 and the Public Transportation Plan developed by RTD, CDH and DRCOG calling for some form of rapid transit, plans for light rail were scrutinized and refined.

The District began acquiring critical parcels of land in order to preserve key sections of right-of-way needed for future rapid transit development. A revised plan proposed an initial 77-mile system for rail transit at a cost ranging from \$1.5 to \$2.5 billion in 1982 dollars.

With a continuation of record-high interest rates and continued inflation in 1981, RTD undertook a thorough analysis of its own financial position. The Board of Directors took immediate action to implement a cost-savings program so RTD would not face interrupted service and/or bankruptcy as have many other transit agencies.

The cost-savings program eliminated 241 positions, and resolved to further reduce expenditures over the coming five years. Other actions were also taken, including closure of Alameda on weekends, relocating the Umatilla Training Facility functions to East Metro; and moving art production, advertising, marketing, and printing in-house.

Fares were increased in June, and raised the portion of operating expenses recovered from fares from 24.5 percent in 1980 to 31.4 percent for the first seven months the new fares were in effect.

1982

Mall opens, transition to elected Board begins

Review of budgets, expenditures, revenue and route productivity continued in 1982. Inflation continued to be a problem, federal operating subsidies and other federal funds were being reduced and RTD worked to anticipate budget realities.

A month-long strike by represented employees of RTD in the summer ended with an agreement negotiated for a 13.6 percent increase in wages over a three-year time period. Transit ridership dropped nearly 16 percent following the strike but was expected to be built back up to pre-strike levels with the coming winter.

The Mall was opened and dedicated in early October with a week-long celebration that attracted hundreds of thousands of people. The special shuttles began providing free service along the mile-long Mall and work

progressed on the two stations at either end of The Mall.

Rail transit planning and community involvement continued. Specific alignments were being selected through a series of public meetings for the North and West corridors, while station location and design was considered at public meetings for the Southeast Corridor.

By June, one month ahead of schedule, 50 percent of all peak hour local service and 100 percent of off-peak local service were wheelchair accessible.

The Board of Directors and staff prepared for a smooth transition to the elected Board as 1982 ended. By-laws and other procedural matters had been changed to allow for the transition.

1983

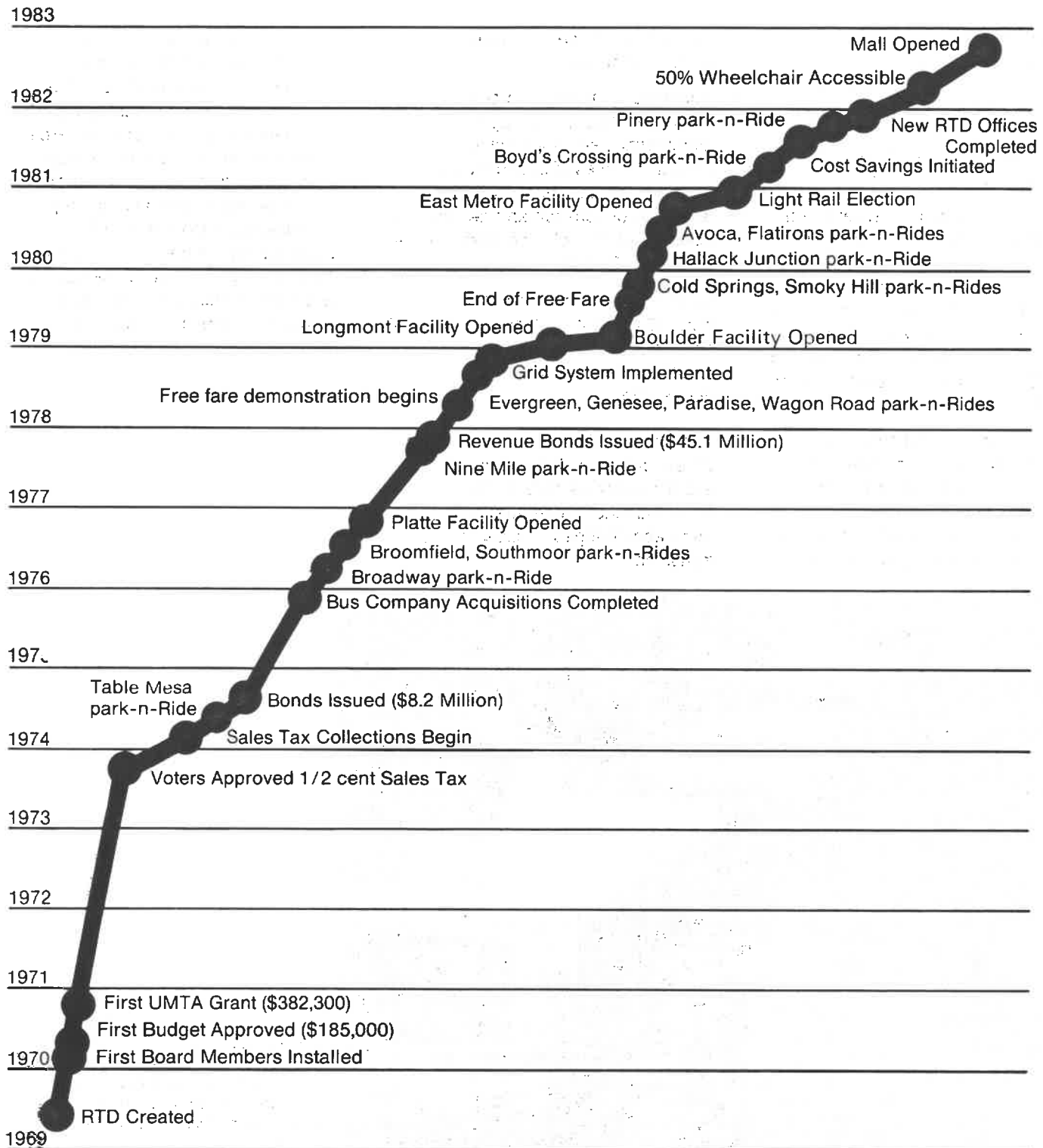
The Future: The challenge

As the newly elected Board of Directors prepares to assume the responsibilities of providing, increasing and expanding public transportation in the Denver metropolitan area, it will immediately have the opportunity to set the direction for rail transit. And, it will face the challenge of providing public transportation for a 2,304 square mile area with one of the highest per capita car ownership levels in the nation, and, correspondingly, one of the most serious air pollution problems in the country.

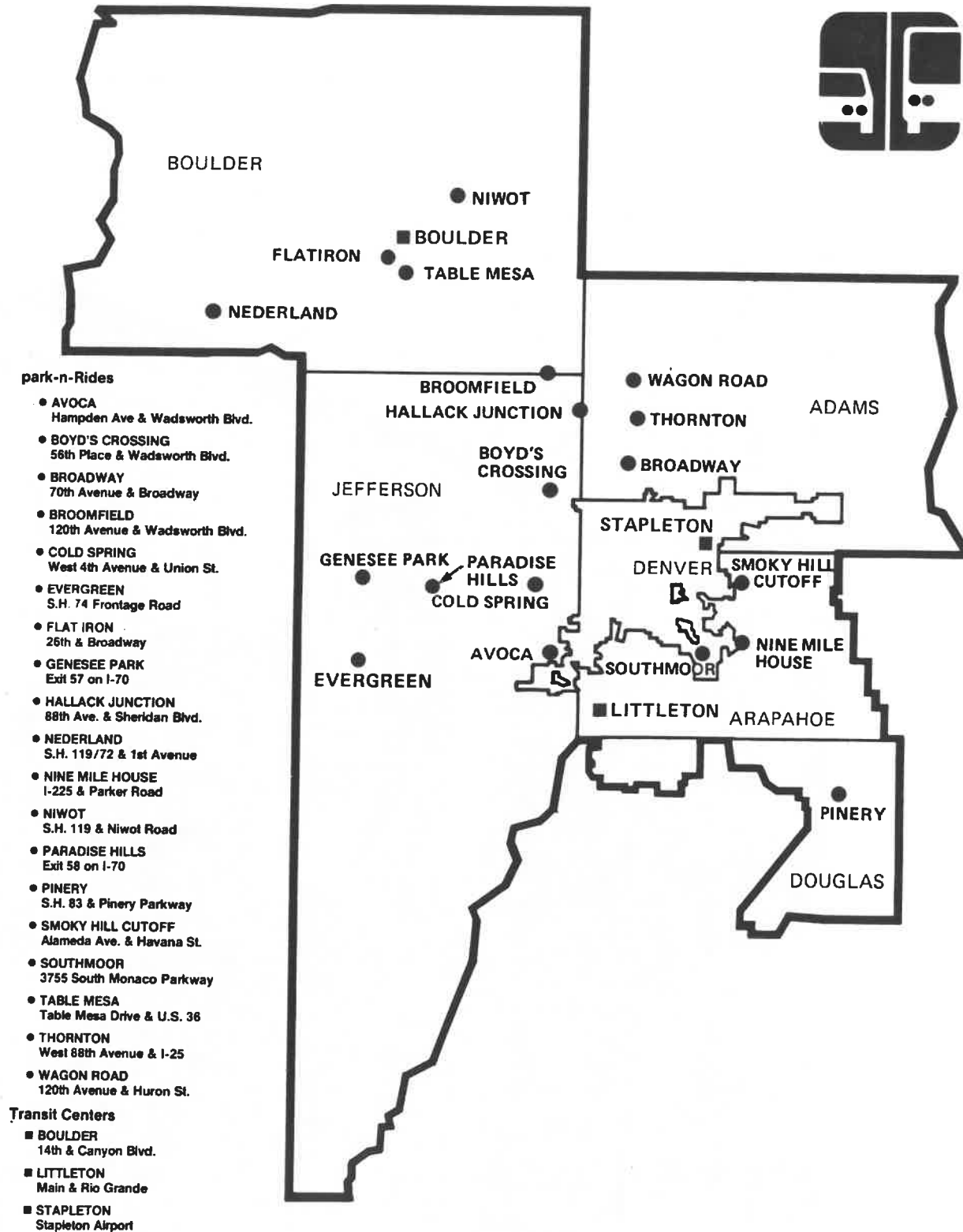


The Mall opened in 1982, the first step in a unique transit concept which would pull 50 percent of the buses off downtown streets at peak hours and provide opportunities for additional suburban service.

The District in Retrospect



park-n-Ride Facilities



Regional Transportation District
1600 Blake Street
Denver, Colorado 80202
303/628-9000
December, 1982

