

RTD Accountability Committee
Equity Assessment for Proposed Legislative Changes
December 2020

The proposed legislative changes address four distinct issues: fare box recovery ratios; provision of retail and commercial goods and services at RTD facilities; parking fees at RTD lots; and transit services contracted to non-profits and local governments. This equity assessment addresses each provision separately based on the *Operationalizing Equity in the Deliberation of the Committee and Subcommittees* guidelines adopted by the RTD Accountability Committee.

1. CRS 32-9-119.7 Farebox recovery ratios – plans

- a) How could this recommendation benefit or burden communities of concern? Is there likely to be an increase or decrease in equity?

This recommendation may benefit communities of concern by making fares more affordable for them since removing the required fare recovery ratio could provide RTD more flexibility in how much it charges riders. This recommendation may burden communities of concern since it could reduce fare revenue that would otherwise go toward operating and maintaining the transit system. This could result in reduced services and breakdowns. There is more likely to be an increase in equity than decrease because the lower fares would make transit services more affordable for communities of concern. The potential negative impact is less likely because farebox revenues do not cover most of the costs to operate and maintain the system.

How are we defining benefit and burden?

A benefit is something that can help improve the mobility of communities of concern. A burden is something that can curtail it.

- a. How do we measure this impact?

This impact can be measured by assessing travel time to key destinations for communities of concern as well as frequency of service for those communities.

- b) Could this recommendation impact specific communities or geography more than others? If so, which communities and how?

This recommendation could benefit many communities, but it would likely benefit individuals with low income the most because of the potential to make riding transit more affordable. While there are concentrations of low-income individuals in certain places, there are individuals with low-income living across the entire RTD district.

- a. What are the demographics of the most impacted areas?

While people of any demographic could have low-income, certain groups may be more vulnerable: veterans, older adults, individuals with disabilities, minorities, zero car households, and other communities of concern.

- b. Are neighborhoods equally required to help achieve the policy recommendation? If not, does this raise issues of equity and justice?

This recommendation is for an action district wide. It is not anticipated that any disproportionate impacts or requirements will fall upon any neighborhoods.

- c) Could there be unintended consequences? If so, can they be mitigated?

As previously mentioned, there is a possibility that lower fare revenue may reduce RTD's ability to fully fund operations and maintenance for the transit system. This could disproportionately impact communities of concern since they rely more heavily on transit for their mobility and access to opportunity than the general public. This unlikely impact can be mitigated in several ways including charging higher fares from individuals not within communities of concern to make up for a deficit, finding new revenue sources, or an increase in volume due to higher ridership individuals not within communities of concern lower fares that may bring in off-setting revenue.

- d) Does this policy/strategy address historic, systemic, environmental, or institutional barriers that have impacted this community?

This recommendation can address barriers to providing affordable fares for low-income riders by removing the farebox recovery requirement. This will provide RTD flexibility to reduce fares, especially for low-income riders.

2. CRS 32-9-119.8 Provision of retail and commercial goods and services at district transfer facilities – residential and other uses at district transfer facilities permitted – definitions

- a) How could this recommendation benefit or burden communities of concern? Is there likely to be an increase or decrease in equity?

RTD-owned land and facilities are valuable transit-oriented development opportunities and can play a beneficial role in generating additional revenues and increasing use of the transit system. Eliminating restrictions related to parking and business competition could further enhance equitable Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) on RTD properties and allow RTD to derive more revenue from the use of its properties. Another potential benefit could be an opportunity for RTD to work with disadvantaged small business owners giving them access to retail properties on RTD sites. A potential burden for communities of concern could be that TOD properties may not be affordable for them.

- a. How are we defining benefit and burden?

A benefit is something that can help improve the mobility of communities of concern by giving them greater access to their community by living on a TOD property or having access to retail opportunities for disadvantaged small businesses. A burden is something that can disadvantage communities of concern through TOD development that is not affordable for them to own or rent.

- b. How do we measure this impact?

The impact can be measured by the affordability of TOD properties for communities of concern.

- b) Could this recommendation impact specific communities or geography more than others? If so, which communities and how?

This recommendation impacts areas at and near RTD properties more than other places in the RTD district as the policy is focused on those areas.

- a. What are the demographics of the most impacted areas?

The demographics of the most impacted areas vary based on the locations of the RTD facilities.

- b. Are neighborhoods equally required to help achieve the policy recommendation? If not, does this raise issues of equity and justice?

The neighborhoods abutting the RTD sites will equally be required to help achieve the policy recommendation.

- c) Could there be unintended consequences? If so, can they be mitigated?

As previously stated, there is a possibility that TOD sites on RTD properties may be unaffordable for communities of concern to rent or own. A mitigation strategy could be for RTD to require that all TOD developments on RTD property be affordable.

- d) Does this policy/strategy address historic, systemic, environmental, or institutional barriers that have impacted this community?

This recommendation addresses access to frequent transit and there is the opportunity to focus on improving that access for communities of concern.

3. 32-9-119.9 Limited authority to charge fees for parking – reserved parking spaces – penalties – definitions

- a) How could this recommendation benefit or burden communities of concern? Is there likely to be an increase or decrease in equity?

Having more flexibility with regards to parking would also allow RTD to use parking spots and subsidies to incentivize desired outcomes, e.g., giving electric vehicle drivers, carpoolers, and vulnerable populations less expensive parking or parking spots closer to the platform. A potential benefit to communities of concern could be that increases in parking fee revenue could help subsidize more affordable fares for communities of concern, especially individuals with low-income. A potential burden for communities of concern could be an increase in parking fees may not be affordable for low-income riders who live too far from transit to make anything but parking and riding feasible. Also, persons with disabilities may have no other feasible way to connect with transit than parking and riding as well and they too may be impacted by higher parking fees. Since RTD would control parking fees and regulations, they could mitigate these negative impacts by offering reduced or free parking and/or parking closer to the platform to low-income customers and those with disabilities.

- a. How are we defining benefit and burden?

A benefit is something that can help improve the mobility of communities of concern. A burden is something that can curtail it.

- b. How do we measure this impact?

The impact can be potentially measured by how much increased parking fees reduce fares for communities of concern. Studying how many vulnerable people are impacted by higher parking fees may also help measure a potential impact.

- b) Could this recommendation impact specific communities or geography more than others? If so, which communities and how?

This could impact communities of concern but not necessarily any specific geography except perhaps members of that community that due to where they live have no other viable option than parking and riding to use transit.

- a. What are the demographics of the most impacted areas?
Low-income and disabled riders could be the most impacted either with a benefit, a burden or maybe both.
- b. Are neighborhoods equally required to help achieve the policy recommendation? If not, does this raise issues of equity and justice?
As previously stated, there may be more impact to communities of concern that due to where they live have no other viable option than parking and riding to ride transit.
- c) Could there be unintended consequences? If so, can they be mitigated?
A mitigation strategy to reduce unaffordability for communities of concern that due to where they live have no other viable option than parking and riding to use transit could be to offer a reduced fees or free parking for members of that community.
- d) Does this policy/strategy address historic, systemic, environmental, or institutional barriers that have impacted this community?
Allowing RTD more flexibility in choosing parking fee policies can give them the opportunity to generate additional revenue. This recommendation can potentially address barriers by using parking revenues to decrease fares, which could yield equity benefits and enhance ridership.

4. CRS 32-9-119.5 Competition to provide vehicular service within the regional transportation district

- a) How could this recommendation benefit or burden communities of concern? Is there likely to be an increase or decrease in equity?
The proposed change would make the statute clearer on who RTD may contract with to provide transit service. Adding non-profit and local government service providers to the statute could be beneficial by stating in the affirmative that non-profit and local government service providers are a potentially cost-effective option that RTD may choose.
 - a. How are we defining benefit and burden?
A benefit is providing more mobility options for communities of concern and additional funding to non-profits and local governments. A burden could be loss of contracts for for-profit service providers.
 - b. How do we measure this impact?
We can measure cost savings for RTD and additional funding for non-profits and local governments.
- b) Could this recommendation impact specific communities or geography more than others? If so, which communities and how?
This recommendation can benefit communities of concern by potentially generating savings for RTD that could be invested in operating and maintaining the transit system which could help communities of concern since they are the most likely to rely on transit. It can also benefit communities of concern by generating more revenue for non-profits and local governments since

those entities would have the option to invest that funding in programs that help those populations.

- a. What are the demographics of the most impacted areas?

This policy recommendation, if enacted, would impact communities throughout the RTD district although there can be some localized impact to communities served by any non-profits and local governments through the services provided by those entities and through the additional revenue. Communities of concern could benefit if those additional funds are invested in programs targeted at helping them.

- b. Are neighborhoods equally required to help achieve the policy recommendation? If not, does this raise issues of equity and justice?

As stated above, the impact could be district wide with the possibility of some additional impact in certain communities based on who provides the contracted service and where it is provided.

- c) Could there be unintended consequences? If so, can they be mitigated?

An unintended consequence could be a loss of jobs at for profit service providers if their contracts are not renewed in favor of contracting with non-profits and local governments. This can be mitigated by the non-profit or local government offering jobs to workers who lost their jobs as a result of their employer not having their contract renewed.

- d) Does this policy/strategy address historic, systemic, environmental, or institutional barriers that have impacted this community?

The proposed legislative change can address barriers by making it clearer that RTD may contract with non-profit and local government service providers. This could potentially save money for RTD which could be reinvested in operations and maintenance of the transit system, providing benefit for the community, especially communities of concern who rely on public transportation for their mobility. This could also provide additional revenue for non-profits and local governments and an opportunity to invest that revenue in programs that help communities of concern.