



REIMAGINE RTD

Moving Everyone Forward

RTD'S MOBILITY PLAN FOR THE FUTURE



DECEMBER 2022

Introduction

Mobility in the Denver metro region has reached a critical crossroads. Concerns about access, equity, and sustainability of the public transportation system have existed for as long as the system itself, but the society-altering events – a global pandemic, numerous climate catastrophes – and social reckonings of these past few years have caused those concerns to escalate markedly in scale and urgency. It is clear today that to achieve the mobility goals laid out by individual communities, the region, and the state, the overwhelming reliance on personal automobiles for travel cannot be maintained. It is also clear that there is no simple way to change that pattern without RTD being a major part of the solution.

Public transportation has more potential to advance mobility and societal goals than any other transportation mode or innovation. Biking and walking are great options for some, but those aren't practical modes for every trip. Electric vehicles and autonomous vehicles are better than standard gas-powered vehicles, but they are still just cars, with the same individual costs and spatial needs. A high-quality network of bus and rail service can quickly move lots of people lots of places. For people who cannot afford a car, cannot drive a car, or would just prefer not to deal with the hassle of owning and maintaining one, high-quality transit maintains their freedom of mobility and ensures that lack of car ownership does not restrict their ability to participate in society.

RTD provides a critical public service to many people in the Denver metro region – since its first bus trip, the agency has supported regional sustainability, equity, and access. However, most would concur that there is much room for improvement in the RTD transit system. Financial challenges stemming from the substantial revenue losses during the Great Recession and exacerbated by cost increases in its wake have hampered the RTD's ability to increase capacity and frequency over the past decade. Expansion of the system's reach has not kept up with the rapid pace of population growth and sprawling development, and, in fact, ridership had been steadily declining even before the pandemic, attributable in part to a strong economy and the emergence of on-demand mobility options. Rising costs, staffing shortages, debt obligations, and other issues are making it challenging for RTD to meet the growing demands placed on the agency by local partners and the community. As a result, the agency finds itself with both financial and reputation

challenges. RTD is in a tough spot; there is a way forward, but it isn't simple. The agency needs to confront and address hard truths about FasTracks, district boundaries, and service priorities. A different, more ambitious vision – a reimagining – of what transit in the region could and should be in the future is necessary for RTD to get back on track.

Mobility Plan for the Future Aspiration

Through technical analyses and stakeholder, staff, and Board input, a set of four aspirational statements were crafted to reimagine and illustrate RTD's role in the community's future mobility landscape. Each statement is supported by a set of opportunities to guide RTD. Some opportunities are implementable with RTD's current funding, but many of the more robust recommendations can only be achieved with additional funding for the agency.

- 1. ACCESS**
 Mobility integrator that provides a high-quality/high-capacity regional transit backbone and partners with a broad group of stakeholders to support community-based services
- 2. EQUITY**
 Mobility provider that maximizes access to opportunity by prioritizing service to those who need it most
- 3. SUSTAINABILITY**
 Mobility leader that defines and evolves transit's role in mobility and environmental sustainability through proactive collaboration
- 4. FINANCIAL**
 Mobility agency that is well-funded, financially stable, and serves as a good steward of taxpayer dollars while supporting regional access, equity, and sustainability

REIMAGINE RTD'S GUIDING PRINCIPLES

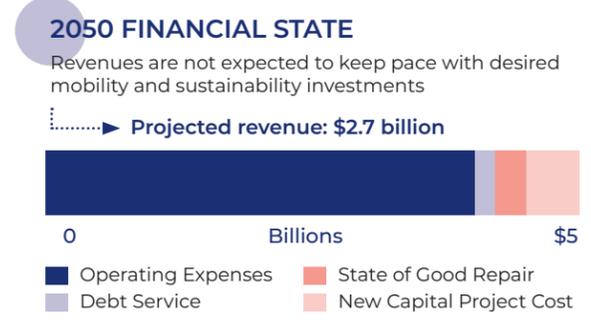
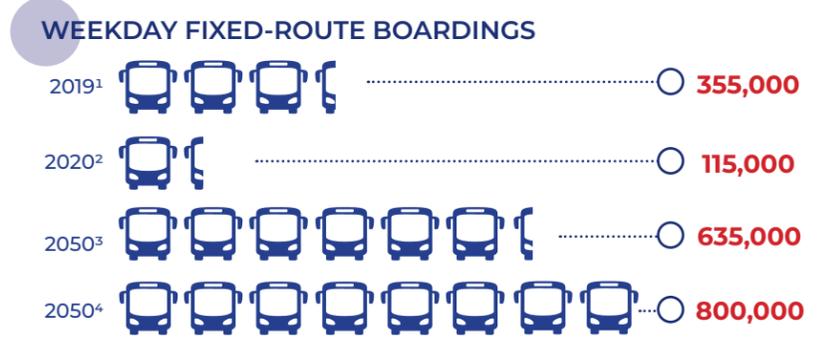
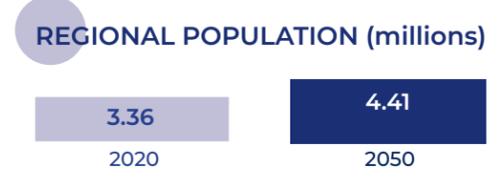
The guiding principles were defined collaboratively between the project team and stakeholders and adopted by the Board of Directors to serve as a framework for the Mobility Plan for the Future. Collectively, they define what RTD must focus on to sustain, strengthen, and expand its critical and multi-faceted regional role through the coming decades. Throughout development of the Mobility Plan for the Future, all technical analyses, public and stakeholder engagement efforts, and assessments of future opportunities have all been conducted through the lens of these guiding principles.

 Mobility Provide safe, reliable transportation service to improve the quality of life of residents, customers and visitors.	 Equity Remove barriers to accessing transportation services that enable customers to have the freedom to get where they want to go.	 Financial Leverage resources and maximize cost efficiencies, serving as a good steward of taxpayer dollars.	 Partnerships Pursue partnerships with both public and private organizations that can help identify innovative opportunities to enhance mobility throughout the region.	 Workforce Foster a dynamic, diverse workforce that promotes engagement and innovation, recognizing team members as RTD's greatest asset.	 Sustainability Provide sustainable mobility options while continually seeking to reduce RTD's environmental impact.
--	--	--	---	---	--

RTD STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

Change, Challenge, and Connections, RTD's five-year strategic plan outlines a road map of specific initiatives and programs the agency will undertake over the coming years and provides a framework for measuring success. Moving Everyone Forward, RTD's Mobility Plan for the Future, complements RTD's near-term strategic plan with long-range aspirations and opportunities.

 Community Value	 Customer Experience	 Employee Engagement	 Financial Success
--	--	--	--



RTD's MISSION:
 We make lives better through connections

RTD's VISION:
 To be a trusted leader in mobility, delivering excellence and value to our customers and community

Moving Everyone Forward Supporting Technical Memoranda

- Public and Stakeholder Engagement
 - Outreach Approach and Summary
 - Community Survey
- Market and Demand Analysis
 - Travel Model Improvement Portal Exploratory Modeling and Analysis Tool (TMIP EMAT)
 - Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Modeling
- Future Needs and Opportunities
 - Zero Emission Vehicle and Bus/Rail Service Summary
 - District Boundaries Analysis
 - Mobility as a Service and Customer Engagement
- Future Needs and Opportunities (continued)
 - Mobility On-demand and First/Last Mile Connections
 - Parking Strategies
 - Partnership Program
 - Workforce
- Fiscal and Financial Sustainability
 - Alternative Funding
 - Financial Assumptions
 - Financial Summary
 - Future Revenue Analysis

Access Aspiration

MOBILITY INTEGRATOR THAT PROVIDES A HIGH-QUALITY/HIGH-CAPACITY REGIONAL TRANSIT BACKBONE AND PARTNERS WITH A BROAD GROUP OF STAKEHOLDERS TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY-BASED SERVICES



RTD Strategic Plan Priorities Supported by this Aspiration



COMMUNITY VALUE



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT



FINANCIAL SUCCESS

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

By focusing resources on providing a regional transit backbone, RTD can do what they do best: deliver transit service across jurisdictional boundaries. RTD will provide support to local agencies, who will focus on delivering services at the community level, through technical assistance and operations. RTD will act as an integrator to ensure that customers can seamlessly plan and pay for their trips throughout the District. This approach reduces conflicting priorities, increases local agency control over community-based services, and provides opportunities to work in partnership to identify innovative mobility solutions. It focuses RTD's limited resources (funding and workforce) on the high-performing, regional services that would be difficult for local agencies to provide and facilitates customer travel by providing a single system for planning and paying for trips across all service providers.

OPPORTUNITIES WITH CURRENT FUNDING

- Focus operating budget on delivering a high-quality regional transit backbone
- Fund and implement a partnership program
- Integrate services through development of a trip platform
- Foster a dynamic, diverse workforce
- Enhance transit security
- Encourage development of mobility hubs
- Promote transit supportive development

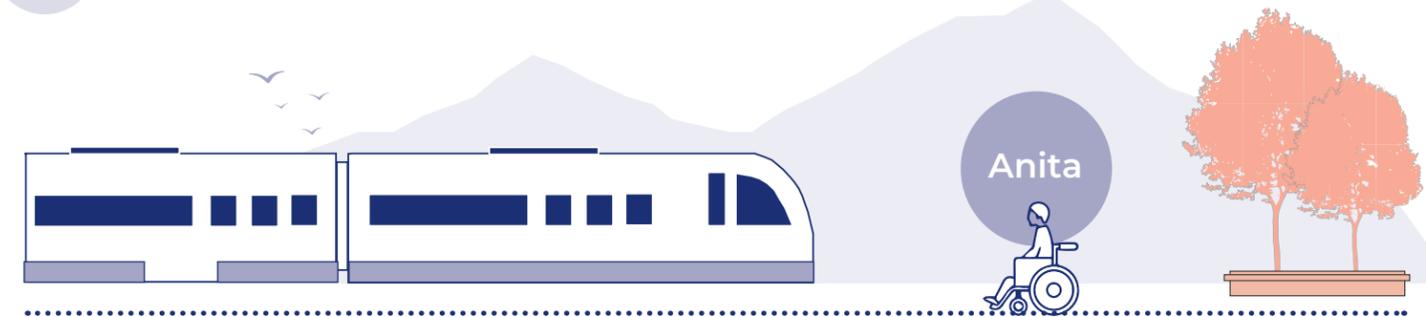
OPPORTUNITIES WITH INCREASED FUNDING

- Implement a bus rapid transit (BRT) system
- Increase bus system capacity
- Increase rail system capacity

METRIC:

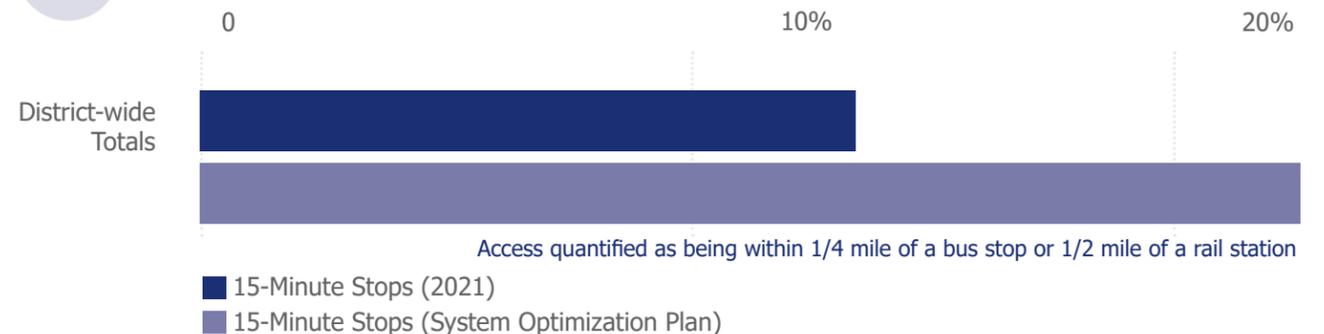
- Increasing number of transit trips linked to multimodal connections and services

HOW DOES THIS ASPIRATION SUPPORT RTD CUSTOMERS?



Anita is a 60-year old climate scientist who uses a wheelchair to get around. She lives alone with her two cats, so transit has long been her mode of choice for most trips – when it's practical. Anita mostly works from home in north Thornton but regularly travels to the Boulder area to meet with university colleagues and attend social events. That used to be difficult on transit – several transfers and an infrequent local bus resulted in travel times of over two hours each way, and some of her stops had accessibility issues – so Anita would often end up relying on rides from friends instead of using transit. The north extension of the N Line and the new BRT line along SH 7 have made Boulder so much more accessible on transit. She can roll herself to the York • 144th Station, ride the train north to a seamless transfer at SH 7, and take the bus straight to Boulder – a substantially shorter trip than it used to be. And what's more, RTD's partnership program has helped provide local agencies with funds to made accessibility upgrades at other transit stops she uses!

Percent of District Population with Access To Stops



Equity Aspiration

MOBILITY PROVIDER THAT MAXIMIZES ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY BY PRIORITIZING SERVICE TO THOSE MOST IN NEED



RTD Strategic Plan Priorities Supported by this Aspiration



COMMUNITY VALUE



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



FINANCIAL SUCCESS

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Providing service to those who need it most improves the health and financial well-being of communities. Analysis shows that there is a reinforcing relationship between providing quality backbone transit service and the quality of life for customers by removing mobility barriers and enabling them to get where they want and need to go. Experience and analysis illustrate that prioritizing service to equity communities, in conjunction with providing a high-quality/high-capacity regional transit backbone, increases ridership. This approach also sets clear priorities for how and where RTD provides service to better manage stakeholder expectations and clearly communicates the rationale for service adjustments.

OPPORTUNITIES WITH CURRENT FUNDING

- Prioritize partnership program investments that serve social equity populations
- Connect social equity populations to key destinations
- Implement innovative and equitable fare programs
- Evaluate and enhance service access for social equity populations

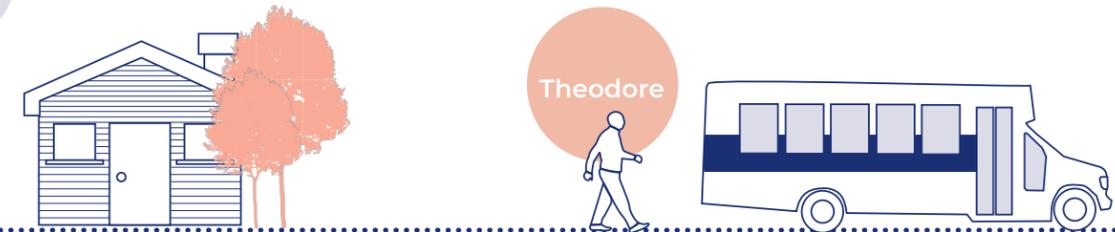
OPPORTUNITIES WITH INCREASED FUNDING

- Improve bus accessibility for all
- Improve rail accessibility for all

METRIC:

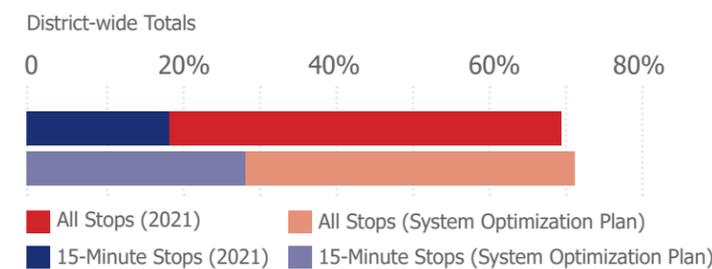
- Increasing portion of social equity populations served with high-frequency transit service
- Increasing portion of highly satisfied on-board survey responses from social equity populations

HOW DOES THIS ASPIRATION SUPPORT RTD CUSTOMERS?



Theodore is a married father of two young children who lives in Commerce City with his family and works in downtown Denver in the service industry. The family can only afford one car, which his wife uses, so Theodore takes the N Line into and out of downtown six days a week, often working such long hours that he hardly gets to see his kids. He has to use rideshare services on occasions when he needs or wants to get home earlier than the full transit commute would allow, which places an additional strain on the family's finances. RTD recently partnered with local agencies in the northeast metro area to establish an on-demand shuttle service that brings residents directly from their homes to the rail station. It is much faster and more reliable than the bus connection Theodore used to rely on for filling the first and last mile, meaning he spends less of his free time commuting and more of it at home. There is no additional fare for using the shuttle, so it has also helped the family's budget.

Percent of District Equity Zone Population with Access to Stops



Access quantified as being within 1/4 mile of a bus stop with 15-minute or better service, or within 1/2 mile of a rail station

Quality Rating Among all Survey Participants

	2019 All Respondents
Rating of RTD service	4.17
Rating of RTD train service	4.30
Rating of RTD bus service	4.15
Likelihood to choose RTD again	4.80
Likelihood to recommend RTD to others	4.44

Passengers were asked to rate the quality for each aspect on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicated poor and 5 indicated excellent

Source: 2019 RTD Customer Satisfaction Survey

Sustainability Aspiration

MOBILITY LEADER THAT DEFINES AND EVOLVES TRANSIT'S ROLE IN MOBILITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY THROUGH PROACTIVE COLLABORATION.



RTD Strategic Plan Priorities Supported by this Aspiration



COMMUNITY VALUE



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

This approach encourages RTD to lead discussions and make recommendations about how transit technologies, service, policy, and strategies can be used to support state and regional mobility and climate action goals. As Colorado's largest transit provider, it is important that RTD take a proactive role, leveraging their staff's technical expertise to lead these discussions and provide insights to policy-makers and other agencies across the state.

OPPORTUNITIES WITH CURRENT FUNDING

- Test and monitor emerging technologies
- Provide local agencies with technical support
- Lead transit-focused mobility and climate action initiatives
- Implement backend service enhancements

OPPORTUNITIES WITH INCREASED FUNDING

- Transition to a zero emission fleet
- Follow LEED best practices

METRIC:

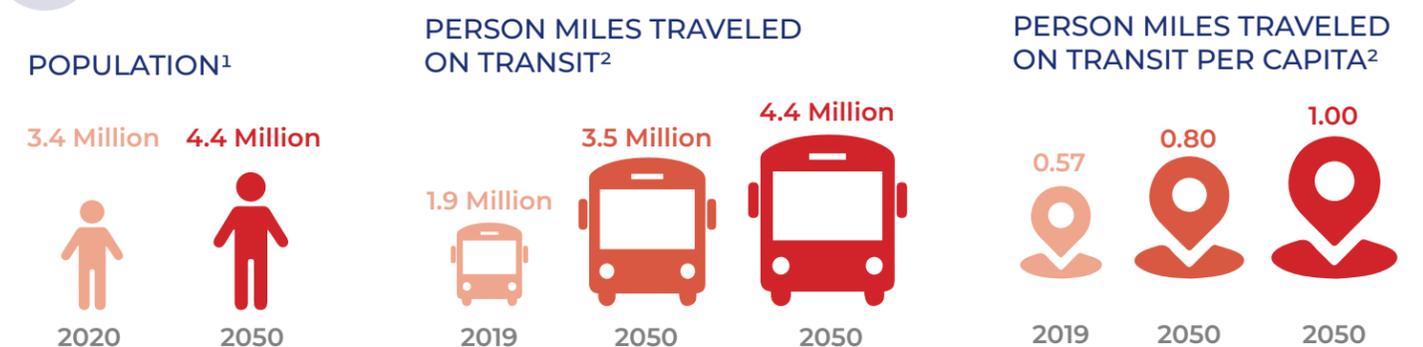
- Increasing number of person miles traveled on transit

HOW DOES THIS ASPIRATION SUPPORT RTD CUSTOMERS?



Monica is a baker who works in the Denver Tech Center and lives in Littleton with her fiancé, Jordan, a veterinarian in Highlands Ranch. Sustainability is a huge part of their lives – they are vegetarian, they have a xeriscaped lawn, their home is fully solar-powered. They have long desired to be a one-car family, but in the past, transit was just not a practical option for either commute. The implementation of BRT service along the Arapahoe Road corridor, between Downtown Littleton and Arapahoe at Village Center Station, has finally made it practical for Monica to commute via transit. What was once a 30-minute, meandering trip to her office, which only operated once an hour, is now a 20-minute straight shot running every 15 minutes. She has found she can even hop off on the way home to grab takeout or groceries without dragging out the commute time too much. Monica and Jordan are now a one-car household!

Population and Person Miles Traveled



¹ 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan, DRCOG
² Estimates based on RTD August 2019 Runboard, DRCOG 2020 transit ridership projections, DRCOG 2050 Metro Vision data, and Reimagine RTD 2050 aspirational transit investment scenario travel demand model

Financial Aspiration

MOBILITY AGENCY THAT IS WELL-FUNDED, FINANCIALLY STABLE, AND SERVES AS A GOOD STEWARD OF TAXPAYER DOLLARS WHILE SUPPORTING REGIONAL ACCESS, EQUITY, AND SUSTAINABILITY



Financial



Partnerships



Workforce

RTD Strategic Plan Priorities Supported by this Aspiration



COMMUNITY VALUE



CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



FINANCIAL SUCCESS

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

RTD's current financial projections show that RTD will not be able to meet the basic mobility needs of the growing region by 2050. Service per capita will have to shrink for RTD to remain financially solvent without additional funding.

OPPORTUNITIES WITH CURRENT FUNDING

- Prioritize state of good repair
- Operate within fiscal capacity
- Remove TABOR revenue limits
- Seek additional funds in collaboration with stakeholders
- Reassess FasTracks Plan
- Implement demand-based parking pricing
- Identify long-range regional transit needs and priorities
- Assess and prioritize high-quality regional backbone annually

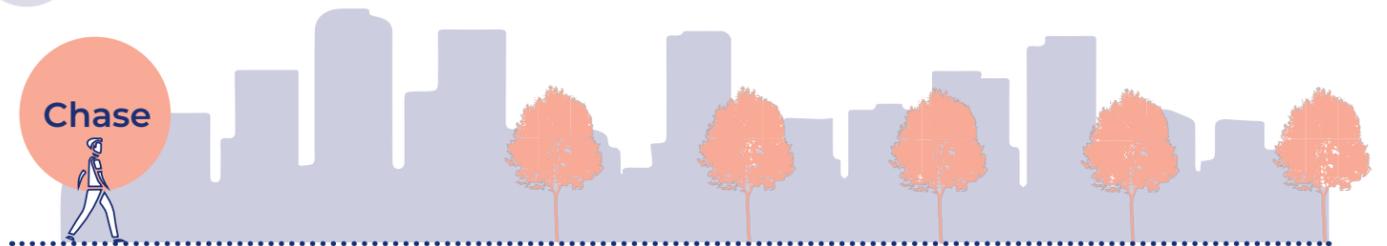
OPPORTUNITIES WITH INCREASED FUNDING

- Increase funding dedicated to partnership program
- Expand services through operating and infrastructure enhancements

METRIC:

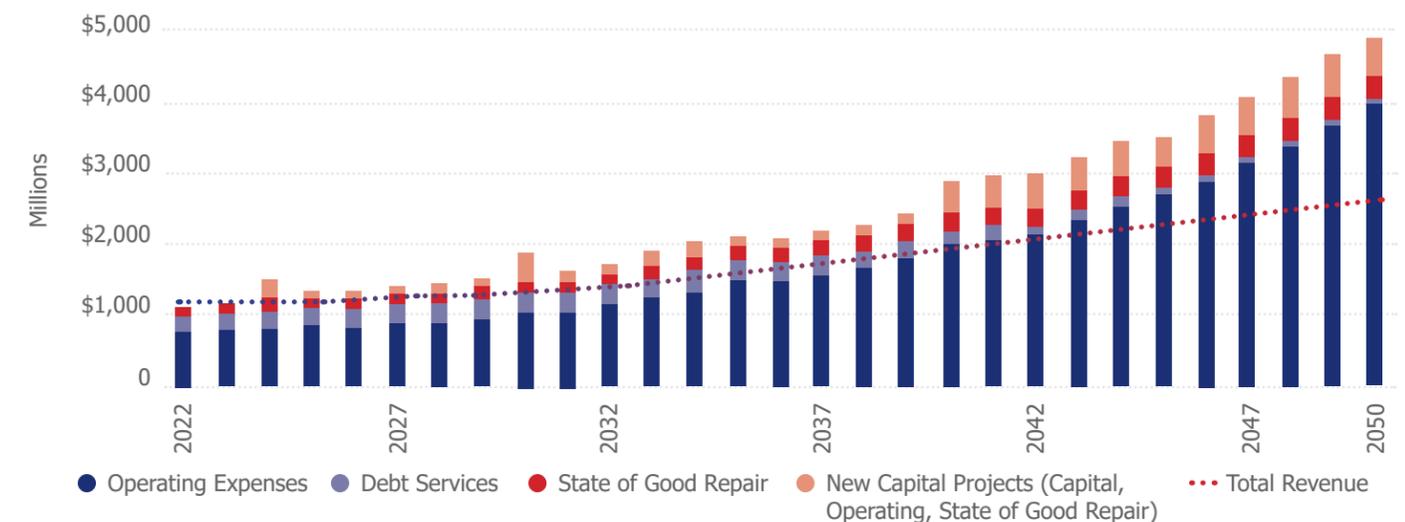
- Agreement on long-range regional transit needs and priorities among RTD Board, staff, and stakeholders
- Resources sufficient to address the region's transit needs and priorities

HOW DOES THIS ASPIRATION SUPPORT RTD CUSTOMERS?



Chase is a car guy living in Lone Tree who loves taking his Cadillac everywhere. His girlfriend, Alexis, has been trying to convince him to use the train more for trips downtown, instead of dealing with the cost and hassle of parking. On the few instances Chase did try to take trains, he found that service would have already ended by the time he was ready to go home. He understood that RTD was doing its best with the resources available, but it wasn't enough to convince Chase to leave his beloved car at home. A recent increase in funding, which has allowed the agency to stabilize and expand its rail service, has made the train to downtown a more appealing option: dropped rides are a thing of the past and frequency is up. Chase gave transit another chance last week to attend the Avs game with Alexis, and it was great! More pleasant than the downtown driving, and although the game went into overtime, there was still a train ready to take them home afterwards.

Projected Revenues Compared to Expenses Needed to Support Future Mobility and Sustainability Goals



Implementation & Phasing

- + Applies to identified funding scenario
- ✓ Applies to identified phase

Access

Opportunity	Funding Scenario		Initial Phase		
	Current	Increased	Near-term	Mid-term	Long-term
Focus operating budget on delivering a high-quality regional transit backbone: Building on the System Optimization Plan (SOP), place a primary focus of the operating budget on high-quality regional backbone service (rail, bus rapid transit, and cross-jurisdictional arterial routes)	+		✓		
Fund and implement a partnership program: Establish a partnership program and allocate funds geographically by Subregional Service Council on an annual basis	+		✓		
Integrate services through development of a trip platform: Develop an RTD-owned trip planning and payment platform to seamlessly integrate mobility services throughout the region	+		✓		
Foster a dynamic, diverse workforce: Be intentional on developing and messaging RTD's purpose to attract and retain a diverse and engaged workforce needed to meet the growing travel demand	+		✓		
Enhance transit security: Continue to work with local partners, social services, and law enforcement to enhance safety and security for customers, staff, and the public	+		✓		
Encourage development of mobility hubs: Partner with local jurisdictions, CDOT, and Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) to implement mobility hubs that support the high-quality regional transit backbone	+			✓	
Promote transit supportive development: Work with local partners to promote land use development that supports transit service and to evaluate the district boundaries; pursue joint development projects that embrace Equitable Transit-Oriented Development(eTOD) policy	+			✓	
Implement a bus rapid transit (BRT) system: Partner with local jurisdictions, CDOT, and DRCOG to advance BRT corridors with dedicated lanes to increase ridership and improve service quality and customer experience	+	+	✓		
Increase bus system capacity: Increase the size of the fleet, service hours, and supporting infrastructure to increase bus system capacity		+		✓	
Increase rail system capacity: Implement capital and operating improvements such as track and signal improvements and improvements to Union Station to increase throughput of rail and expand the rail fleet to increase system capacity		+		✓	

Equity

Opportunity	Funding Scenario		Initial Phase		
	Current	Increased	Near-term	Mid-term	Long-term
Prioritize partnership program investments that social equity populations: Prioritize capital and operating investments that directly benefit social equity populations	+		✓		
Connect social equity populations to key destinations: Structure services to efficiently connect social equity populations to key destinations	+		✓		
Implement innovative and equitable fare programs: Develop innovative fare programs, such as a "mobility wallet," to reduce fares and better meet the mobility needs of equity communities	+		✓		
Evaluate and enhance service access for social equity populations: Annually evaluate the transit network to identify unserved and underserved social equity populations to guide partnership opportunities with local agencies	+		✓		
Improve bus accessibility for all: Enhance bus accessibility in equity communities through comprehensive station upgrades and improved stop amenities to meet and /or exceed Americans with Disabilities Act requirements	+	+	✓		
Improve rail accessibility for all: Improve light rail system accessibility by converting the light rail system to level boarding		+	✓		

Implementation & Phasing

+ Applies to identified funding scenario

✓ Applies to identified phase

Sustainability

Opportunity	Funding Scenario		Initial Phase		
	Current	Increased	Near-term	Mid-term	Long-term
Test and monitor emerging technologies: Implement demonstration projects to determine the viability of emerging mobility and climate technologies; share findings with the public and stakeholders	+			✓	
Provide local agencies with technical support: Provide technical support to local agencies seeking to operate transit or explore new technologies, including Mobility on Demand (MOD)	+		✓		
Lead transit-focused mobility and climate action initiatives: Lead the development of local, regional, and state transit-focused recommendations to support mobility and climate initiatives, including the relationship between land use and transit service	+		✓		
Implement backend service enhancements: Evaluate and implement backend enhancements to improve the seamless operation of RTD's services (e.g., FlexRide and Access-a-Ride dispatch)	+			✓	
Transition to a zero emission fleet: Develop a fleet transition plan compliant with FTA requirements to access grant funding and convert to a zero emission fleet		+		✓	
Follow LEED best practices: Incorporate Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) practices into facility, station, and stop design and construction		+	✓		

Financial

Opportunity	Funding Scenario		Initial Phase		
	Current	Increased	Near-term	Mid-term	Long-term
Prioritize state of good repair: Prioritize state of good repair projects in the Mid-Term Financial Plan to create a more reliable and efficient system	+	+	✓		
Operate within fiscal capacity: Operate services within the agency's fiscal capacity and minimize additional debt issuance	+		✓		
Remove TABOR revenue limits: Seek to remove RTD's Taxpayer's Bill of Rights (TABOR) potential restrictions on 0.4% sales tax growth	+		✓		
Seek additional funding: Collaborate with regional, state, and local stakeholders to develop a sustainable long-term approach to transit funding that meets the region's transit vision	+		✓		
Reassess FasTracks Plan: Reevaluate the unfinished FasTracks investments to determine their current viability, ability to meet evolving regional travel patterns/demand, and their benefit cost ratio	+		✓		
Implement demand-based parking pricing: Implement demand-based parking pricing and convert underused parking facilities to higher and better uses	+				✓
Identify long-range regional transit needs and priorities: Collaborate with DRCOG and stakeholders during the long-range regional transportation planning process to clearly identify regional transit needs and priorities	+		✓		
Assess and prioritize high-quality regional backbone annually: Reassess the network annually to prioritize operating funds to the delivery of the high-quality regional backbone; RTD's three times per year service evaluation process should continue as should the monitoring of the cost per boarding	+		✓		
Increase funding dedicated to partnership program: Allocate additional funds to the partnership program to increase capacity and number of partnerships with local agencies and other potential stakeholders		+			✓
Expand service through operating and infrastructure enhancements: Increase system capacity to meet the expanding regional mobility needs through capital and operating investments		+			✓



REIMAGINE RTD