

Submitted as public comment to the RTD Board Meeting, January 30th, 2024.

January 30th, 2024

Erik Davidson, RTD Board Chair
Regional Transportation District
1660 Blake Street
Denver, CO 80202

Dear Chair Davidson,

Greater Denver Transit (GDT) would like to formally congratulate you on your election to RTD Board Chair. We look forward to another year of healthy, productive dialogue as we all work together in pursuit of a bigger and better RTD.

Proclamation for Kate Williams

We were saddened to hear that Kate Williams had to step down from her position due to serious health issues. Kate Williams is a true transit champ, and we believe her experience as a bus and train rider has been essential to informing changes in favor of the rider experience. We will miss her contribution to the RTD Board and her nuggets of very helpful advice - indeed this letter is one such product of that advice!

“Group 32” Fixed-Route Service Contract

As publicly elected officials with an oversight role, GDT expects RTD Directors who approve a multi-million dollar contract to have reviewed said contract in full. In this case, “in full” means the complete set of contract documents, which we understand comprises of:

- RTD Request for Proposal and all issued Addenda
- Transdev Technical Proposal
- RTD Cost Proposals completed by Transdev
- RTD DBE Program Plan and DBE Submissions completed by Transdev
- RTD Submissions completed by Transdev

GDT strongly urges directors who have not looked over these documents to vote “No” or abstain from voting on the “Group 32” Fixed-Route Service Contract.

2024 General Manager and CEO Performance Assessment Framework

GDT would like to start by putting on record that a GM & CEO who can genuinely make inroads into RTD’s serious issues with operator and mechanic headcount, rider experience, capital projects management, asset management and financial transparency should be rightly compensated for their work.

Therefore, we have the following concerns with the proposed performance assessment framework, as it pertains to measuring current issues within RTD:

- Service performance metrics such as reliability and recovery toward pre-pandemic frequencies are completely absent from the goals, which are the two things that most directly affect riders.
- Feedback from the rider survey has been removed from the performance assessment process, removing valuable input from riders as to the current condition of RTD.
- The Downtown light rail replacement plan and 5-intersection reconstruction goal is not appropriate to the caliber of the employee being assessed (i.e., it's too easy to achieve). The metric should be based on the achievements of the entirety of all capital projects, not a singular project.
- The staff retention goal is too general and does not provide specific targets in relation to the operator and mechanic labor shortage. It only refers to staff voluntarily leaving, not those lost due to all forms of attrition such as retirements, job abandonment and terminations, etc. The goal could hypothetically be met by adding significant numbers of white-collar workers while it is addressing the operator and mechanic shortage that is the first critical need for RTD at this time to resume full transit operations.
- The security goal doesn't provide for meaningful assessment regarding violence and assaults against bus and rail operators. We are concerned that without meaningful measurement of this issue, that there is a possibility of it going unaddressed. In addition, the currently suggested goal is vague and could lead to unproductive measures being implemented to address 'security' (e.g., putting up a fence).

While it is normal for employees to initially suggest goals as part of their performance assessment, it is clear that there is lack of oversight from the Board in what should be a Board-administered process. GDT would like to restate to the Board that the GM & CEO is the one major RTD staff appointment they are responsible for and the public are counting on them to provide appropriate measurements and incentives to solve the major challenges currently facing the agency.

Bylaw Change to Set a Time Limit on Board and Committee Meetings

GDT has written at length to the Executive committee on this topic. At a time where many in Colorado politics are openly questioning the future of a publicly-elected RTD Board, it is vital that the current Board puts their best foot forward and be seen to be governing RTD in the most effective manner possible. Bafflingly, the only official takeaway from last June's extremely problematic Board meeting where extensive numbers of riders and operators came before the Board to plead for change on the light rail network is this bylaw amendment. This bylaw amendment does not address the underlying problems raised during that meeting. As advocates for the current publicly-elected Board structure, GDT is looking for evidence to continue supporting a Board that is responsive to the public. We hope that the Board reconsiders this Bylaw amendment to maintain the existing public trust with the Board.

Thanks for all you do,



James Flattum
Greater Denver Transit



Richard Bamber
Greater Denver Transit

CC: RTD Board of Directors
Debra Johnson, RTD General Manager & CEO.