

# NATA Board Meeting Agenda

March 23, 2023

7:30-9:00am

**In-Person Only**

Adams County Government Center  
4430 South Adams County Parkway, Brighton CO 80601  
Conference Rooms Platte C & D

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## NATA Members (who signed in)

<b>Lisa Hough</b>	AC-REP	<b>Jay Jaramillo</b>	Northglenn Council
<b>Lynn Baca</b>	AdCo Commissioner	<b>Sara Dusenberry</b>	Northglenn Staff
<b>Chris Chovan</b>	Adams County Staff	<b>Ben Ortiz</b>	Longmont Staff
<b>Janet Lundquist</b>	Adams County Staff	<b>Carson Priest</b>	Smart Commute
<b>Greg Mills</b>	Brighton Mayor	<b>Tammy Herreid</b>	Smart Commute
<b>Tom Green</b>	Brighton Council	<b>Julia Marvin</b>	Thornton Council
<b>Katie Shahin</b>	Brighton Staff	<b>Karen Bigelow</b>	Thornton Council
<b>Austin Ward</b>	Broomfield Council	<b>Kent Moorman</b>	Thornton Staff
<b>Shawn Poe</b>	Commerce City Staff	<b>Nancy McNally</b>	Westminster Mayor
<b>Malcolm Fleming</b>	Erie Staff	<b>Debra Baskett</b>	Westminster Staff
<b>Kevin Ash</b>	Frederick Staff		

## SC Members (who signed in)

<b>Carla Perez</b>	HDR	<b>Neal Goffinet</b>	FHU
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## Agency Partners (who signed in)

<b>Danny Herrmann</b>	CDOT	<b>Michael Davies</b>	RTD
<b>Stephen Henry</b>	CDOT		

## Welcome, Introductions and Pledge of Allegiance – Chair Greg Mills

*Chair Greg Mills welcomed participants and attendee and led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor Mills reminded attendees to please sign in on sign-in sheets at door.*

## Approval of February Meeting Minutes

*A motion to approve the minutes was made by Mayor Nancy McNally seconded by Councilmember Karen Bigelow and approved unanimously.*

## Smart Commute Update

*Carson Priest (Smart Commute) – I wanted to do a brief overview of HB22-1026, the Alternative Transportation Options Tax Credit law. It is a 50% income tax credit for alternative transportation options that runs through the calendar year 2024. It is 50% of \$250,000 in expenses OR a maximum of \$2,000 per employee, so essentially a maximum tax credit of \$125,000. The language is very vague on*

what is actually included in the rule such as: generally accepted TDM strategies (don't specify which ones); ridesharing arrangements (generic); sharing micromobility options like bike/scooter share; and RTD Eco Pass. The TDM professionals (including the TMOs) are meeting with the Department of Revenue on March 31st to clarify the language before rulemaking starts. Once the bill is out, there will be a big outreach push from all TMO's to employers. We have a FAQ sheet from Smart Commute and one from DOR that we can provide you if you have employers who are interested.

*Lisa Hough (AC-REP)* – I have heard concerns about how businesses account for employees joining and leaving the company? Can you file comments before the hearing?

*Carson* – This hasn't been discussed and I am not sure yet how it will work; if they will get a partial year credit or not is not clear. Yes, I can send you the link along with the questions that our TMAs are bringing to the hearing.

*Carson* – Bike To Work Day (BTWD) is June 28<sup>th</sup> branded "Joyride" this year. We are still working out what booths we will be supporting and staffing this year. We will be doing Final Fridays again at the RTD stations and Park-n-Rides in our region, to interact with riders and get feedback on their experiences riding transit. We will also be doing community events throughout the summer so please send your summer events to us so we can get these on our calendars.

*Councilmember Jay Jaramillo (Northglenn)* – Northglenn's annual Food Truck Event would be a good one for you to be at, since we have a lot of attendees, several of which park at the Wagon Road Park-n-Ride and walk over to the E.B. Rains Park. It's our largest event of the year.

*Carson* – We could do a Bike Valet at or near the park for this event – let's connect offline on this point.

*Chair Greg Mills (Brighton)* – I encourage you to all share your events with Smart Commute for the summer, I know they've participated in our Full Moon Bike Rides in the past.

## **CDOT Update**

*Steven Henry (CDOT)* – I know we don't have any Commissioners here, but we welcome any questions you have, and Danny and I will do our best to answer them.

*Danny Herrman (CDOT)* – The Town Hall meeting for I-25 is open until Friday on the CDOT website for questions.

*Mayor Mills* – I encourage you all to reach out to Commissioner Karen Stuart, she is very helpful to our region in getting our issues addressed quickly.

## **RTD Directors Update**

*Carson* – I know we don't have any directors here, but we welcome any questions for RTD staff in the room.

*Michael Davies (RTD)* – I'll give a short update from the Board perspective. RTD staff is working on bringing our Fare Study & Equity Analysis report next month to the Board. According to the report, monthly passes will go down to \$88/month (including the airport), which will be very helpful to

businesses and the 50% tax credit under HB22-1026. There will also be flat fare across the board of \$3.00 one-way, with the exception of the airport fare.

### **RTD Regional Ridership Report**

*Michael* – Today I am going to try to cover ridership updates, staffing and May service changes specific to your region. Unfortunately, we didn't have the time or bandwidth to do a route-by-route presentation today, so we will do that presentation to NATA at a later time. RTD is actually increasing service in our May service change, which is a big difference from the COVID years. These are baby steps and not major increases, but it is getting us back to some normal. We are not to a point yet to where we can bring everything back that is in the SOP due to staffing and financing deficiencies. The biggest additions are FF1, FF2, FF5 and North Broomfield FlexRide.

People Power and Staffing: From 2021 to 2022, losses vs hiring of staff has changed drastically. In 2021 we hired 302 vs 708 for 2022. The most drastic change is the number of employees we are losing, for example in 2021 we lost 1,165 vs 2022 a loss of 401. We currently have 2,631 employees and are budgeted for 3,199 for 2023. As of January 2023, for Bus Operations staffing vacancies we have bus operators full time at 19%, bus operators part time at 17%, maintenance staff at 33% and service cleaning & vault at 30%. For Rail Operations staffing vacancies, we are at 16% for full time rail operators, currently fully staffed for part time rail operators, light rail maintenance staff is at 35% and maintenance of way & infrastructure staff is at 40% vacancy. We have the budget and have increased salaries for new hires, we just need the people. RTD does have partnerships with community colleges, these classes but they have struggled lately because of the challenges presented by COVID. Front Range Community College is our primary college we work with on this effort, with classes taught by RTD staff.

*Councilmember Karen Bigelow (Thornton)* – Is there any way we can partner with high schools as well? I would be happy to help, we can connect after this meeting.

*Michael* – Yes, we would like to we just don't have those relationships right now and we don't have the HR staff available. We are currently hiring right now for these HR positions. We are also holding job fairs at our operations centers.

*Carla Perez (HDR)* – Would these types of positions be eligible for the new funding bill for construction jobs?

*Michael* – We are aware of the bill but will have to look into it further to see if could help address better hiring rates.

Regional Ridership: Ridership was just under 106M in 2019 system wide. Wall Street is predicting a **permanent** 20% loss in ridership worldwide. In 2021 we saw just over 49M system-wide and in 2022 about 61.5M, about a 25% increase over 2021. The big transit agencies in the U.S., rely on about 40-50% on fares for revenue. 2022 is what most agencies are looking at for their projections for 2023-2024. RTD is actually doing better right now than what CTA in Chicago is doing. To bring these numbers down closer to your region, the N Line ridership is up 30% since 2021, the highest increase in all of the train lines in RTD (2021 was at 763K and 2022 at 990K). We are operating at about 95% reliability for the N Line, this is the only commuter line that RTD operates.

*Councilmember Bigelow* – Do we still have someone riding as security? Are they trained to handle fights and such?

*Michael* – Yes, it is required by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) that two security guards be on board every train. The second crew member must be trained in safety, but isn't required to carry a firearm anymore thanks to negotiations with FRA. For the N Line we try to hire our own security officers. Yes, the conductors and safety officers are all trained to handle disturbances.

*Kent Moorman (Thornton)* – What percent of this staff is RTD vs 3<sup>rd</sup> party for the N Line? The other lines are light rail lines correct?

*Michael* - I don't have those specific stats. The 2nd crew member requirements has changed, in that they are not required to be armed now, which has made a large difference to be able to maintain trips. Yes, the light rail does not require the 2<sup>nd</sup> crew member.

Top Performing FlexRides – I wanted to touch on the FlexRides for a moment, those specifically in this northern area. Out of the top five performing FlexRides region-wide, Broomfield is #3, Thornton is #4 and Wagon Road #5. So, this really shows that FlexRides are key for up here in the Northern area, that means these are all over 10,000 riders.

*Malcolm Fleming (Erie)* – Are there numbers that show where people are coming from and going to the N Line ridership?

*Michael* – Yes, we do have those numbers, I just don't have them with me right now, but I can get them for you.

*Kent* – I have that info from Dave, I will send that to Carson to send to the whole group. One of the interesting things I saw on boardings, especially at the 124<sup>th</sup> Eastlake station is that about 40-60 people going southbound are getting off at 112<sup>th</sup> Station and then vice versa on the way home so they must be connecting to local busses there. We set up the N Line originally to be a 20-minute headways and we are second or third in ridership numbers for commuter rail lines. When can we expect that?

*Michael* – The N line is actually lower ridership than they originally projected in pre-COVID, so I am not sure when we will be able to get to that headway quite honestly.

*Lisa Hough (AC-REP)* – Regarding the governor's new bill about density and building of housing around RTD stations, do you have any info on that from an RTD perspective?

*Michael* – RTD doesn't have control over certain laws but we do have law of control over the RTD properties with an unsolicited TOD policy. If a developer wants to build on RTD land we will work with them providing the know the "rules of the road". We have provided the Governor with several examples on how we have worked with developers in the past and building on RTD land. There isn't much more we can do that offer our insight to developers to make them aware on what they are getting themselves into if they want to develop near a transit line. We have offered our services as a resource to him and his team on this bill. We have analyzed all our RTD properties according to the zoning restrictions and there are only 2 that are impacted by this bill, Greenwood Village and Cherry Hills. All the others already do have the zoning laws in place.

*Councilmember Tom Green (Brighton)* – Do you have any update on the recent W line derailment?

*Michael* – All information regarding that incident must kept confidential until the investigation is completed per state law. We still have some minor repairs that have to take place along the tracks and hope to have that service back up and running sooner than expected.

*Councilmember Austin Ward (Broomfield)* – How is RTD planning for the future with the prediction on the 20% loss of ridership?

*Michael* – I would look at the partnership program, that is how RTD was set up. The Partnership Program will help us be a regional transit provider while providing local transit as well, that is where we figure out how to stretch the funds to meet those needs. What are the funding differences for RTD than all the other state transit agencies in major metro areas? State funding standard is 23% across the U.S. and RTD is lucky if we get 1% from the state. All of the major metro cities in the country have more than one transit agency servicing them, and RTD is the only one that is the single provider to a major metropolitan area. Part of the partnership program is to seek local funding but how much more does RTD need to invest in this program to make cities want to do it? If we got 20% funding from the state of Colorado we could provide a full local transit service on top of regional service. This program is still in the beginning phases.

*Austin* – Speaking for Broomfield solely, we don't have a budget for that. We have contributed over \$14M in tax money to RTD and a lot of our routes have been cut which is like a slap in the face to us. Do you actively seek out individual developers for the adjacent properties?

*Michael* – We don't seek one individual developer and ask them to develop on our property. Our TOD Manager knows every developer in this region, she is an expert in this area with all the requirements and restrictions for every area. We have to keep it an open playing field to all interested developers.

*Carson* – What is the future of NW Rail Study and what does it look like for this group?

*Michael* – The next round of open houses are planned for this summer. The study is going to try to develop the anticipated ridership and costs. Everything we do has to be done in conjunction with BNSF and approved by them. Coordination with Front Range Passenger Rail (FRPR) is required but FRPR has to be a lot further along in their SAP before that can happen.

*Mayor Nancy McNally (Westminster)* – The best thing is that Amtrack has rights to the rail and that means BNSF no longer holds the #1 card to the tracks.

*Carson* – Looking at the SOP boardings per hour and that's an evaluation tool for looking at success, how is RTD defining what success looks like for localized bus routes for the future with this reduced projected "normal"? Do we need to adjust this measurement?

*Micahel* – Yes, that is definitely an open question. The transit agency as a whole tracks with the national recording agency for trips and influences transit nationwide in so many ways.

*Mayor Mills* – Now that the operator issues are getting better, are we going to see the Broncos Ride coming back?

*Michael* – We are working with the new owner of the Broncos to see what we can do. Apparently RTD was breaking some FTA rules on operating charter services and the Broncos Ride was essentially a charter service. Plus, it was part of the overtime mandate from RTD back then (for example, if you want to keep your job then you have work your 7th day, your day off, on operating this bus). We are working with them, we would be happy to run it, BUT we are treading a fine line for RTD. We would be happy to hand over all the data to the Broncos and have them hire a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to run the Broncos Ride as well.

*Mayor Mills* – In regard to the Fare Study, I am getting ready to go to DC and was surprised by the cost of transit. Going into Dulles Airport, 29 miles to core of DC, and the Metro is only \$4-6 one-way. If you take the A line to DIA, it is \$10.50. How can we make this more affordable for people to want to take this to the Airport? The equity rule applies to all transit lines correct?

*Michael* – Part of it is an equity issue. Also, that is one of the lines that RTD actually does make a profit on. We are trying to do other things to offset this. Yes, every transit line is under the equity rule and every transit agency sets their fares differently by this rule. One thing we have tried to do is to be conscious of the workers going to airport. The feedback we got was how do we make it more affordable for the workers who ride, but in survey we did, we got back that they want us to increase fares to the business travelers, only. The airport does subsidize the parking for the airport workers at \$36/month. RTD can't compete with that price, but we are working on doing a EcoPass for all the workers & concessioners at the airport.

*Mayor McNally* – The other thing I like is the \$27 monthly senior pass.

*Malcolm* – Will the EcoPass rates reflect the overall reduction with the Fare Study?

*Michael* – Yes, the prices will also be lowered based on the other reduction percentages. The EcoPass is that insurance model by including all your employees, regardless of how many of your employee utilize RTD service. We are trying to create options that work for all types of businesses in the Fare Study.

## **Other**

*Mayor Mills* – Do we have anything else? It looks like next month we will have update on the CDOT Mobility Hub plans.

*Carson* – Yes, I have been working with Jennifer Phillips at CDOT. They will present on the 10-mile mobility hub plan and the larger one at CO 7 & I-25. The following morning will be the CO 7 Coalition Bus Tour. Then in May we want to have CTIO come and talk about their TIFIA loan along I-25. We can add anything else we want to on our list shown on this slide, would love to add an early summer legislative recap as well.

*Mayor Mills*: there will be a tour of Highway 7 next month, which involves a lot of our folks and we want to show the challenges to the people that may not see the challenges along that highway on both sets of I-25. We need to show our priorities there an advocate for improvements sooner than later.

ADJOURN @ 8:47AM