



**CITY OF BOULDER  
OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**Mayor Matthew Appelbaum  
Mayor Pro Tem Suzanne Jones**

**Council Members: Macon Cowles, George Karakehian, Lisa Morzel,  
Tim Plass, Andrew Shoemaker, Sam Weaver, Mary Young**

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April 8, 2015

Phil Washington, General Manager  
Regional Transportation District  
1600 Blake Street  
Denver, Colorado 80202

Dear Mr. Washington:

On behalf of the City of Boulder, I submit the following comments on RTD's proposed fare study recommendations, which should be considered complimentary and in support of comments already submitted by the U.S. 36 Mayors and Commissioners Coalition (MCC) and 36 Commuting Solutions. The city will provide detailed comments and recommendations regarding the proposed US36 BRT service operating plan separately as part of the public input process scheduled for later in April.

The city agrees that the current RTD fare structure is confusing to the public, and that the goal of developing a fair and simple fare structure that allows RTD to meet its fiscal needs is appropriate. We are extremely concerned, however, that the fare structure that has been proposed by RTD staff is neither simple nor fair.

It is our strong belief that all FasTracks improvements should be charged the same fare without distinctions made for the various corridors. It is entirely inappropriate to charge a local fare for FasTrack rail corridors, yet charge over twice that amount, as has been proposed, for the FasTracks Bus Rapid Transit improvements, which is our corridor's only version of rail for the foreseeable future.

Beyond the lack of equity, the proposal is confusing. At several stations along the US36 corridor, a rider would be charged three different fares for the identical trip in the identical vehicle with the same number of stops, depending on which bus happens to arrive next. This is certainly not consistent with the goal of simplifying fares.

One approach that achieves RTD's goals of fairness and simplicity is to charge the same, slightly increased, local fare for both rail and bus rapid transit services in all FasTracks corridors, irrespective of the transit technology. Based on financial analysis by MCC member agencies, it appears that a flat fare of \$2.70 would serve this purpose. An alternative approach, that would

meet the goals of simplification and fairness throughout the entire district, is to charge a universal, slightly increased, fare for all services throughout RTD (with the exception of unique service classes such as airport, Access a Ride, and call n Ride services) combined with a discounted pass system for lower income clients. Based on financial analysis by MCC member agencies, it appears that a flat fare of \$2.78 would serve this purpose. Either of these approaches would achieve the goals of fairness and simplicity while also resulting in increased fare revenue for RTD to meet its fiscal obligations.

Whichever approach is chosen, it is essential that RTD's fare policy leverage the substantial investment in the US36 corridor express lanes infrastructure and maximize ridership for the US36 BRT service and also serve as a framework for future BRT corridors throughout the District.

We appreciate RTD hosting public meetings for the Boulder community to directly share their input on RTD's proposals for the U.S. 36 BRT service operating plan and fare study recommendations. Many of the public comments from the community echo the city and MCC comments provided to RTD.

We hope that Boulder's long standing partnership with RTD and mutual investment in transit demonstrate our commitment to continue working with you to achieve our mutual regional transportation objectives.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matthew Appelbaum", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matthew Appelbaum  
Mayor