

US 36 Mayors & Commissioners Coalition

Comments on RTD's Proposed Fare Study

Recommendations

April 3, 2015

The US36 Mayors and Commissioners Coalition, with membership from Longmont, Boulder, Superior, Louisville, Lafayette, Broomfield, Westminster and Boulder County, submits the following comments on the proposed restructuring of the RTD fare structure.

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

We believe that all FasTracks improvements should be charged the same fare and that there should be no distinction between the fare charged for FasTracks improvements in the different corridors. It is not appropriate to charge a local fare for FasTrack rail corridors, yet charge over twice that amount for the FasTracks Bus Rapid Transit improvements, which is touted as our version of rail for the foreseeable future. In addition, under the current proposal, 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. That is certainly not consistent with the goal of simplifying fares.

One approach that achieves the RTD 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. An alternative approach, that would also 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 and Access a Ride) combined with a discounted pass system for lower income clients. This would achieve the goals of fairness and simplicity while also resulting in the necessary increased fare revenue for RTD to meet its fiscal obligations. Based on financial analysis by the MCC member agencies, it appears that a flat fare of \$2.70 – a simple 10 cent increase over proposed RTD local fare – would provide sufficient funding to cover revenue projections if this were to be applied within the US 36 corridor BRT service or an 18 cent fare increase if this were to be applied throughout the RTD region for all similar types of service.

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 as it will serve as a framework for future BRT corridors throughout the District.

The US36 MCC looks forward to continuing to partner with RTD to enhance access to regional transit service for all of the communities in the Northwest Corridor and throughout the entire District.