DRAFT SERVICE REDUCTION PLAN TO ADDRESS OPERATOR SHORTAGE

Dec. 19, 2019
• Oct. 22: Staff presentation to the Board regarding need for a service reduction to address operator shortage

• Board requested staff gather input from stakeholders on a potential service reduction

• Nov. 4 – 17: Staff conducted a two-week input process
  o 13k survey responses
  o 59% indicated a desire to reduce service to improve reliability

• Nov. 21: Staff presentation to the Board of outreach results

• Dec. 19: Presentation to the Board of requested proposed service reduction plan
Current Situation

- Operator shortage continues to impact ability to deliver current level of service
- Current service level (weekdays):
  - Bus trips daily – 10,000
  - Light rail trips daily – 1,000
- Trips are being dropped daily – mostly light rail
- We’re providing 99% of bus service and 96% of rail service, but at the expense of our employees
- Weekly mandating:
  - 69% of bus operators
  - 42% of rail operators
Operator Shortage Impacts

- Affects our employees’ quality of life
- Affects our customers’ confidence level
- Affects our ability to uphold core values of safety and reliability
- Affects our overall credibility
Recruitment and Retention

Extensive measures over past three years:

• Marketing campaign within and outside RTD district, including colleges and tech schools
• On-vehicle advertising
• More efficient hiring process
• Job fairs, veteran/military expos
• Referral bonuses ($2,000 and $1,000)
• Pay increases
• Increased shift differential pay
• Incentive pay for mandated work and split shifts
• Increased professional funds for education
• Work environment adjustments and collaboration with the union
• Over a 33-month period through September:
  o 791 bus operators hired
  o 177 rail operators hired
Training

Bus Operators
7-week training program:
- half in the classroom
- half behind the wheel

Light Rail Operators
11-week training program:
- 5 weeks of classroom and field training
- 5 weeks of revenue training
- 1 week for certifications
- Current training class will be ready to begin service in mid-January; another class will begin then

- Increase in applicants, but challenges remain:
  - Processing and training new recruits
  - Providing support staff to assist our operators in mentoring, training and a buddy system
Framing Proposed Service Reduction

- Goal is to reduce the amount of mandating so that working overtime is a choice rather than a mandate.

- Goal of the service plan reductions is to:
  - Reduce mandating
  - Uphold our core value of safety
  - Improve reliability for our customers

- Would align service with our available workforce.

- Will allow opportunity to build up workforce while providing some relief to our operators.

- Will not completely eliminate our need to mandate.
Guiding Principles

Follows Board-adopted service standards:

• Service performance evaluation based on RTD service standards
• Effects on the overall integrity of the transit network and on transit-dependent markets
• Availability of alternative services to affected riders
• Cost-effective distribution throughout the District and family of services, and the ability to enhance service when possible
• Title VI of the Civil Rights Act: benefits and services are provided without regard to race, color and/or national origin; also disparate effects on low income and minority populations
• Response to changes in the communities where services are provided
Clarifying Points

• Poorly performing service that does not meet standards will likely not be reinstated – these eventually would have come as recommended changes

• Better performing service that was reduced will be considered for reinstatement when sufficient staffing levels are available

• Service will be reinstated during normal service change processes

• Tonight’s information is about reductions related to operator shortage

• Full May service changes will be presented in January
Bus Service Reductions

- 6 bus routes proposed for elimination
- 19 bus routes proposed to reduce service
- Suspension of special services (BroncosRide, BuffRide, Rockies service, RunRide)
- Routes: see attachment
- MallRide - Reduction of peak frequency to 3 minutes
- Paratransit Service
  - We are committed to not impact current paratransit services
  - Those currently being served will be grandfathered in provided they continue to reside at their current address
  - No new customers will be added to the program if fixed routes are eliminated in their area
Light Rail Service Changes and Reductions

- E,F,R Extension:
  - Ten trains per hour are required by the FTA grant agreement; the extension is currently overserved during peak periods
  - FTA was unable to grant our request to reduce the off-peak service levels to six trains per hour
  - Possibility to adjust R Line from four trains/hour to two trains/hour to align service with the lower ridership on that line

- D Line: Will no longer run service on weekends

- C Line: Weekend service will be expanded to provide an option for D Line riders

- Dropped trips are still likely, but not to the current degree
Next Steps

• Board guidance on proceeding with proposed plan
• Standard May service changes presented to the Board at January Ops Committee meeting
• Public input process in January/February
  o 15+ public meetings – one in each district
  o Will follow normal service change process
• Return to the Board in March with results of the public input and final service plan
• Staff recommendation to approve final plan and implement it as the May Service Change
Timeline

• January 14, 2020 – Staff presentation to Ops Committee on complete proposed May service changes

• January/February 2020 – Public input process on proposed service reductions and proposed May service changes

• March 2020 – Board takes action on proposed service reduction and service change plan

• May 2020 – Approved service changes go into effect
Thank you.

Questions?