



What are your top 3 priorities (e.g., specific initiatives such as Vision Zero) if elected as a Board member?

*When I'm elected, I'll advocate for smart alternatives to the status-quo. "Fast, frequent, safe and reliable service" are boringly obvious, yet sadly unmet standards for RTD.*

*To achieve those standards, these are my top 3 priorities:*

*1) Retain Transit Workers & Eliminate Privatization of Fixed-Route Bus Services - I'm a proud former member of ATU International, one of the most progressive Unions within the AFL-CIO. Sadly, ATU Local 1001 and RTD's March 2022 Collective Bargaining Agreement failed from the start.*

*For RTD's labor & services agreements to be successful - the status quo has got to go!*

*According to the Colorado Center on Law & Policy's Self-Sufficiency Model for 2022, the hourly wage necessary for a young Denver family of 2 adults, 1 preschooler and 1 school-age child at that time was \$42.41 per hour. With full-time bus operators' starting wage at \$25.96/hour, topping out at \$32.88/hour the gap between RTD Transit Workers' wages and their needs is a root cause of RTD's retention problems.*

*2) Tell the Truth - RTD's Management and Board has lost the trust of taxpayers, its primary source of funding. Who wants to use a transit system that takes two or three times as long as driving somewhere? Whenever an issue becomes newsworthy, the agency stonewalls the press and the public in the process.*

*The last sentence in a recent Denver Post article concerning a fatality was: "RTD did not respond to multiple requests for comment." Honesty is the*



*best policy; the public expects accountability. RTD's Board has been passive at best, complicit at worst. It's time for a system reboot!*

*3) Acknowledge, Prioritize, and Address RTD's Public Drug Use Problem - The forced exodus of what GM/CEO Johnson in 2021 referred to as "non-destination individuals" from Union Station, aka "Denver's Living Room" has resulted in these vulnerable people spreading out across the transit system in multiple cities with a continued increase in public drug use and overdose deaths.*

*Instead of pushing folks to different stations with minimal and harmful effect, we need to engage with them to reduce public drug use and provide a welcome environment to all that access RTD's facilities.*

*When accomplished through the lens of harm reduction and coordination of service providers to meet the needs of people who use drugs/homeless folks, we create a community that promotes public safety.*

*By providing a safe destination where needs can be addressed and care provided with respect, folks are then invested in the community in which we all live, work, and love. I know we can do better to make a "welcoming transit environment" a reality.*

*Potential sites include the basement of Union Station or within the 40,000 square feet of retail space at the University of Denver Station, vacant since opening 18 years ago!*

**Why are these your top 3 priorities?**

*My priorities are informed by my experience. As a bus driver, union local President and transit advocate I've been doing this work for years. I'm the only candidate in District A with direct experience of RTD's operations, security, management and governance. One role of an RTD Director is to*



*provide leadership on policy and to set metrics designed to gauge success. I'll work hard to help get the agency back on track.*

*Do these align with what you believe should be the overall Board's priorities?*

*Yes. Of course, the Board has additional, ongoing responsibilities. However, RTD failing to meet its mission is a crisis. It's supposed to be helping achieve Colorado's climate goals by reducing vehicle miles traveled on our streets and highways. The prolonged decline in ridership is the antithesis of RTD's purpose.*

*In my experience it's extremely rare for the Board to act with urgency. For RTD to proceed in slow motion during this moment is a dereliction of duty. We must work to rapidly increase ridership. Young people fully grasp climate change's threat. Rapid transit holds a better future - let's get there together!*

*What do you think is the most effective way to make change and/or advocate for effective policies on the Board?*

*First, by establishing a shared sense of purpose through listening and considering other perspectives, with a goal of cultivating majority consensus. Then, hopefully by putting in the time and work with staff towards establishing service-related policies aimed at attracting and retaining passengers, as well as transit workers.*

*How would you advocate for increased transparency on and for the Board?*

*Fervently and frequently. Over time it seems that a low-grade 'siege mentality' has set in. RTD's regrettable tendency to cover-up or to 'fudge' when hard facts are in demand causes consternation. Proactive communication is a sign of respect. Taxpayers, riders and would-be riders deserve no less.*



What are your plans for constituent outreach?

*Robust and creative. I will make myself open and available to sit down or stand up at meetings with stakeholders on an ongoing basis. Shouldn't be hard to spot me riding RTD or my bicycle either.*

How will you work to ensure the riders in your district and the general public are able to successfully engage with you and/or RTD on issues concerning them?

*Diligently. I'll continue to ride the buses and rails traversing District A and make my presence known at community meetings and events. Folks won't have any problem reaching me. I'll respond faithfully to calls and emails.*

There has been a lot of talk about growing ridership in recent years. Who do you see as the most important groups to focus on in growing ridership?

*The reported 97% of the public who don't ride, including RTD managers, Board members, anyone driving a car in traffic, anyone recently moved here, senior citizens, Swifties, sports fans, suburbanites. Especially anyone whose sense of independence has suffered due to RTD's shortcomings.*

What actions can RTD take to increase this ridership in the near future (outside of hiring more operators)?

*Expedite & expand the 2025 System Optimization Plan and work to implement the 3 priorities listed above. The hiring challenge has apparently been successfully addressed. It's time to put those folks to work, not just leave them sitting on "Extra Board" benches.*

Do you think the current service changes process needs overhaul?

*This is a conversation worth having. However, I would argue for less frequent schedule changes.*

If so, what actions would you take to redesign the process?



*RTD could save tremendously on printing and labor costs by conducting the 'Bid Vote' as usual, three times a year but making only one major schedule change annually. I would advocate for doing this in May, at the latest. Incremental changes would have minimal effect on workers' family lives and targeted communications could help assure riders' satisfaction.*

*If not, why not?*

*Constant disruption isn't a good way to achieve retention. As it is, reshuffling transit families' daily lives three times a year is upsetting enough to these working folks. This isn't something to be taken lightly.*

*What role do you believe Directors play in resolving the operator shortage?*

*Assuming for a moment, that the operator shortage isn't already resolved, the Board has delegated all negotiations entirely to the GM/CEO. This arrangement applies to all RTD contract negotiations, including Labor. The current CBA expires 12/31/24. That carte blanche delegation is worthy of a closer look, in my opinion.*

*How can RTD improve the recruitment and retention of operators?*

*Wages need to increase commensurate with the reality of housing costs having doubled in the past 10 or 15 years. RTD needs to be more transparent with the reasons it's chosen to announce significant service boosts for next year, while remaining non-committal about details.*

*If we are to believe the recruitment & retention numbers posted in the monthly Board Reports, vacancies for Full Time fixed-route bus operators have plummeted from 167 vacancies since the October 2023 report for August of last year to a remarkable 31 openings this June, from the August 2024 report, a net new hire of 136 new full time bus operators.*

*On the surface, this looks like a success story. But it begs the question - with 136 new bus operators in June, why couldn't RTD provide buses when*



*light rail slowed to 10 mph the same month? Instead CDOT's Bustang service had to step in.*

*I look forward to the possibility of serving on the Board's Operations, Safety and Security Committee, where my experience and insights can help the Board discern between facts and fudge. But the continued practice of "pulling the wool" must cease immediately.*

**Could working conditions be improved?**

*Absolutely. I suspect the retention numbers may reflect this in the coming months.*

**What performance/safety metrics, if any, would you like to see RTD make public?**

*RTD Police, Private Contractors', including Allied Universal, Paratransit, Access-A-Ride, DTP/DTO and TransDev's fixed route bus services, especially incident reports (minus Personally Identifiable Information), as well as recruitment & retention numbers.*

**Which of these metrics should the GM/CEO be subject to in their performance review(s)?**

*Although the buck stops at the GM/CEO's desk, there may be contracts still in place which preceded her tenure. I'm left to wonder if/how the GM/CEO's compensation package is affected by Operator Recruitment & Retention numbers. That said, the Board should require greater accountability from the GM/CEO than is currently the case.*

**The past two summers' worth of repairs to the light rail system, particularly within the SE corridor (E, H, and R lines), have significantly impacted the usability of light rail services.**

**What role do you see Directors playing regarding transparency with the public?**



*I would point to the terrific example my future predecessor Jaime Lewis has set, speaking truth to power, asking pointed questions and providing concisely worded soundbites that shed much-needed light on management's obfuscation and equivocations.*

*What do you think RTD, Board or otherwise, can do to mitigate similar issues going forward?*

*Tell the truth, before being asked and without having to be prodded or subjected to Colorado Open Records Act compliance requests.*

*Regarding safety on transit, there has been increased concern post-pandemic regarding the prevalence of substance abuse/drug use, crime, and other poor behaviors.*

*What do you believe is the root and/or cause of these issues on transit?*

*I don't know. The easy answers are almost always wrong. I drove an RTD bus for four years. Despite all that first-hand experience, I have more questions than answers. I'm not about to pontificate. I've witnessed behaviors by all manner of damaged human beings. My hope is that we 'crawl to judgement and sprint to empathy'. I trust the proven track record of Harm Reduction, no one's son or daughter has ever been lost to overdose at their facilities.*

*What solutions do you believe best solve these issues?*

*Again, instead of pushing folks to different stations with minimal and harmful effect, we need to engage with them to reduce public drug use and provide a welcome environment to all that access RTD's facilities. Done through the lens of harm reduction and coordination of service providers to meet the needs of people who use drugs/homeless folks, we create a community that promotes public safety.*

*By providing a safe destination where needs can be addressed and care provided with respect, folks are then invested in the community in which we*



*all live, work, and love. I know we can do better to make a "welcoming transit environment" a reality.*

**What do you believe RTD, Board or otherwise, needs to do to successfully address these issues?**

*Violent behavior is never acceptable. It's never acceptable that people are intimidated when riding RTD. Carrying a loaded weapon onto the RTD system is incredibly dangerous, doesn't matter by whom. I welcome informed discussion on these matters. RTD should consult with experts from our academic, medical, law enforcement and mental health communities.*

*I believe in the promise of Harm Reduction as an antidote to these issues. Instituting a pilot program on an expedited basis would be a good start.*

**What role(s) do you think localities should play in solving these issues? How will these interface?**

*RTD provides service in municipalities whose police only engage after incidents occur. We need proactive, community-based police working in coordination with Harm Reduction and associated providers.*

**Regarding the deBrucing ballot measure headed to voters this fall - do you support the deBrucing ballot measure?**

*Yes.*

**Why or why not?**

*No matter how much of a mess RTD is now, depriving it of these funds would be a kind of suicide for Colorado, for our region and its cities. We can't have a great city without a great transit system. Rapid transit holds a better future - let's get there together!*