

RTD continues to operate as scheduled for essential travel. A service reduction plan will take effect April 19. Please limit time spent in stations to 10 minutes and, as often as possible, keep 6 feet between yourself and other passengers. RTD administrative buildings, including 1660 Blake St, are closed to all visitors. RTD Sales Outlets are open.

[View RTD updates related to COVID-19 \(https://web.archive.org/web/20200327213042/https://www.rtd-denver.com/coronavirus\)](https://web.archive.org/web/20200327213042/https://www.rtd-denver.com/coronavirus)



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RTD Board approves COVID-19 service reductions to start April 19 -- regular service continues until then

RTD BOARD APPROVES COVID-19 SERVICE REDUCTIONS TO START APRIL 19 -- REGULAR SERVICE CONTINUES UNTIL THEN

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RTD's Board of Directors at its March 24 meeting approved reducing service 40 percent beginning April 19 in reaction to a severe ridership drop amid COVID-19 lockdowns, running buses every day on a Saturday and Regional schedule and light rail trains on a Sunday schedule. RTD will retain current service until that date. The [Approved Service Change Plan \(/web/20200327213042/https://www.rtd-denver.com/service-changes/covid-19-service-plan\)](https://web/20200327213042/https://www.rtd-denver.com/service-changes/covid-19-service-plan) is now available.

The Board also passed the proposed service changes that had been planned to take effect in May. Calling the recent 70 percent drop in ridership "surreal" and unprecedented, RTD directors said they hoped to restore service to the newly approved May plan whenever the economic impacts of the coronavirus begin to pass and ridership demand increases.

RTD's interim General Manager and CEO Paul Ballard said the transit agency planned no personnel cuts. The eight-county transit service had been suffering an operator shortage before the coronavirus reached Colorado. Most bus and train operators have been working mandated six-day work weeks.

With the unanimously approved plan to reduced weekend scheduling beginning next month, mandating can be eliminated. If there are ore operators than available runs, they will be placed in a backup rotation for operators who are ill, or will receive refresher training.

The reduced service levels are planned to remain in effect through Sept. 20, the next planned service change.

Several Board members asked why the service reduction couldn't happen sooner, since RTD is losing money both at the farebox and in regional sales taxes. Ballard and RTD staff said the changes are already on an accelerated schedule, with union representatives agreeing to change rules pertaining to route planning and bidding in order to speed up the process.

In recommending the reductions, Ballard said RTD is already seeing "radical changes in our fare collections, and we anticipate challenges on reduced sales and use taxes" that make up the majority of the agency's budget.

Local and national transit officials are lobbying to include transit emergency funds in the \$2 trillion stimulus package being negotiated by Congress. Major transit agencies such as New York and Chicago say they are losing billions of dollars as entire cities shut down. RTD received rescue funds along with other metro areas after the 2008 Great Recession, and it seeks to be part of the 2020 funding.

The Board meeting was held remotely in accordance with distancing orders from Gov. Jared Polis and many metro area mayors. Citizens who called in to comment before the vote said they understood RTD was in an emergency situation, but were concerned that long-term cuts would hurt commuter access to jobs.

Justin Rogers of Aurora said he feared both for average commuters and for RTD employees under the cutbacks. "I know everyone's really hurting right now, and we wouldn't want to make this worse than it already is by putting them off work," he said.

Board Director Peggy Catlin said she supported the cutbacks even though the weekend schedule would mean some residents in her district would have no nearby rides at all. "Desperate times call for desperate measures," she said.

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