



Board of County Commissioners

September 11, 2020

RTD Board of Directors
Paul Ballard, Interim General Manager and Chief Executive Officer
Regional Transportation District
1660 Blake Street
Denver, CO 80202

Dear RTD Board of Directors and General Manager Ballard,

We write today to make clear our strong opposition to the potential diversion of FasTracks Internal Savings Account (FISA) funds, as was discussed at a recent RTD Board meeting. These funds were collected from Boulder County taxpayers for the sole purpose of building voter-approved FasTracks projects. They should not be used for any other purpose.

Since the FasTracks vote took place in 2004, RTD has had a binding agreement with the voters of our region who have been paying both the .06 cent RTD sales tax for base system improvements as well as the additional .04 cent FasTracks sales tax.

Northwest Rail was promised to Boulder County voters by 2017. All other promised rail lines are substantially complete, but RTD has stated that Northwest Rail will not be completed until 2050. It is critical that RTD timely meet its rail commitments made under FasTracks, and this includes not raiding the FISA reserve account. As discussed in more detail below, authorizing FISA funding to support the 30% engineering study requested by BNSF would represent tangible progress towards completing Northwest Rail. In addition, we appreciate the Flatiron Flyer bus service on US 36 but would note that there still station improvements on that line that need to be completed.

Fulfillment of the voter-approved investments in the Northwest area communities is critical to rebuild public trust. Just as our community has been fulfilling its commitments to RTD, we fully expect RTD to do the same for us.

In stating this expectation, we appreciate the severity of the near-term financial challenges RTD faces in light of the COVID pandemic and other issues. We support the efforts of RTD leadership to address those challenges and maintain the essential services upon which so many of residents, particularly the most vulnerable, rely upon. In addition, we recognize the severe impacts RTD's financial situation is having on its workforce, and expect that the steps taken to address that situation will treat all of RTD's workers, including its front-line workers, fairly and equitably.

Deb Gardner *County Commissioner*

Elise Jones *County Commissioner*

Matt Jones *County Commissioner*

Our community is doing its share to support RTD's financial stability, through significant service cuts that we know might grow even more significant in the months to come. Completion of our region's FasTracks projects, however, is a longstanding commitment to our region that we expect RTD to keep.

In the meantime, RTD's focus should be on immediate actions needed to respond to the impacts of the pandemic. To that end, we support the recommendation from the Northwest Mayors & Commissioners Coalition (formerly the US 36 Mayors & Commissioners Coalition) that the RTD board prioritize development of a financial plan for 2021-22 focused on responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. That plan should include use of FISA funds to support the 30% design study of the Northwest Rail peak service passenger line from Westminster to Longmont. The remaining four years of the mid-term financial plan, including the \$33 million in base system funding for the SH 119 BRT shown in 2023, should remain as-is and can be considered at a later date when the immediate crisis has abated.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Sincerely,



Deb Gardner
Chair



Matt Jones
Vice-Chair



Elise Jones

CC: Governor Jared Polis
Senate Majority Leader Stephen Fenberg
Speaker KC Becker
Senator Faith Winter
Senator Mike Foote
Representative Matt Gray
Representative Edie Hooton
Representative Shannon Bird
Representative Jonathan Singer
Representative Sonya Jaquez Lewis
John Tayer, Boulder Chamber of Commerce/Northwest Chamber Alliance
Audrey DeBarros, Northwest Mayors & Commissioners Coalition