



2024 RTD Director Candidate Questionnaire

Name Bernard Celestin

RTD District F

Why are you interested in serving on the RTD board of directors?

I recently retired from RTD after fifteen years of great service, we have one of the best public transportation agencies in the country. I am interested in service on the RTD board of directors because I will prioritize strengthening the connection between RTD and the public, the public need to be showed the value of service that is provided everyday by the operators (safely) and how important of a hearth beat this agency is when it comes to keeping our wonderful state moving forward.

While many other transit agencies have restored service levels close to what they were before the COVID-19 pandemic, RTD has only restored service to 70% of pre-pandemic levels. Please share your thoughts about how the agency has approached restoring service post-pandemic and tell us about your vision for RTD's ridership, including how would you work to advance that if elected to the board.

RTD keep moving and serving the communities of all the districts every day during COVID-19, the main thing that changed from "pre" to "post pandemic is that there were not so many people working from home and thus lowered the passenger count. I will be the first to say that RTD needs more operators due to many retirements, but the buses are still running and RTD cannot force the public back but as a director of the board, I will do my very best to inform them that they would be welcomed and respected back on the buses and rails.

RTD's service intersects with a number of other jurisdictions and agencies. Tell us about what role, if any, you think RTD board members should play in building partnerships and collaborating with other elected leaders, local governments, and agencies, like DRCOG and CDOT?

RTD is already very well involved the with both DRCOG and CDOT in many aspects of transportation and board members sit on various comities. I do believe that the relationship between RTD and elected city and state leaders should be or rather have to be improved and made public in order to move forward and increase the number of riders on the buses and rails. The public does not see any relationship between these entities currently.

RTD recently conducted an organizational assessment which sheds light on a number of areas for improvement within the agency and recommendations for addressing those. What recommendations do you think should be prioritized, if any, and how would you work to address the key findings if elected to the board? What experience do you have with organizational management?

The first should be the security of the passengers, I have had great conversations with the leaders of RTD's police force, my opinions come from having served six years as a Civil Service Commissioner with the city of Aurora. overseen the hiring and training of police and firefighters for the city. I also served has a supervisor for the Department of Homeland Security and I successfully completed two leadership academies (each of them, a yearlong) with RTD.

Please share what equity means to you as a prospective RTD Board Director and what responsibility, if any, you think RTD has in advancing transportation equity in the Denver region.

As a Board Director, I plan on owning up to the issues that face the Agency and do my very best to not only keep the public well aware of what is being done but also how we will move forward to take care of such issues, transparency will be my number one priority.

Do you ride RTD today? If so, tell us how often, what routes you frequent, and what your experience is like as a rider and how it informs your perspective as a prospective board member. If not, tell us why.

I have been taking the bus and train to go to various meetings during my campaign, I am all the more convinced that I have to do all I can to bring the pre-pandemic RTD back.