



2024 RTD Director Candidate Questionnaire

Name Bob Dinegar

RTD District A

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

Because I care. I view public transportation as a vital service, much like hospitals, libraries and first responders provide. People's lives are improved by its existence, some truly depend on it. We can't have a great city without a great public transit system. I'm the only candidate in District A with direct experience of RTD's operations, security, management and governance.

I know I'm the best choice for this position.

I started paying close attention to RTD's Board in 2020 because my life literally depended on it. After only a few months behind the wheel of an RTD bus, the very real fear of being exposed to a deadly virus became part of my workday. The Agency was slow to respond, its Board was also, and I got angry.

So, I spoke up, writing emails and calling Board members. Some have credited my advocacy for helping to expedite the provision of personal protective equipment and the institution of rear-door boarding.

Having driven an RTD bus from 2019 - 2023 and after nearly five years of regularly observing Board and Committee meetings, organizing transit forums and town halls, I decided to run for the Board last Spring.

I'm a long-time progressive with a clear-eyed view of what we need from and for RTD and some considered views on what it's all about -

It's about respect!

Riders deserve the timely delivery of facts.

If a bus or train is delayed; tell us!

It's about safety!

Violent behavior is never acceptable. It's never acceptable that people feel intimidated when riding RTD. Of course we feel vulnerable riding alone in a light-rail car. There's safety in numbers.

Police shouldn't treat social problems as criminal matters. A loaded gun on public transit is never a good idea.

We need more people riding and an increased emphasis on the STAR model.

It's about trust!

If transit workers feel content and safe, riders will sense that.

Then trust can return.

It's about time!

Time is a precious resource - riding RTD shouldn't take 3X as long as driving.

It shouldn't be a personal sacrifice.

We need reliable service every 15 minutes.

Connections should be efficient.

I'll push the Agency to make transparency, safety, and reliability RTD's highest priorities. Rapid transit holds a better future - let's get there together!

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.

Unlike other cities where everyone, rich or poor, young or old ride transit without hesitation, we're still looking at the car as our personal transportation vehicle of choice. It's understandable, given RTD's recent track record. RTD has a responsibility to become our first choice for getting around.

We need to establish safety, transparency, and frequent, rapid service as RTD's Brand Identity. Ongoing problems have eroded public trust.

Its System Optimization Plan involves cutting long bus routes in half and increased service. With Bus Operator vacancies down to 3.19% it's time to expedite that plan!

RTD also needs to choose the right tool for the job - let's look at passenger vans with more frequent service on routes where buses have so many empty seats. Those buses cost nearly a million dollars!

Let's paint the streets with service! We need to develop a sense of urgency about public transportation. Unless efforts are made to modify our dependence on the single-occupancy vehicle, we'll never be able to achieve Vision Zero (no pedestrian casualties) or mitigate climate change.

RTD, DRCOG and CDOT need to take proactive steps. When I'm on the Board, I'll champion our public transit and bring that sense of urgency to my activities as a Board Director. We need someone with passion and direct experience of RTD's operations, security, management and governance to hold the agency's feet to the climate fire!

"Adding highway lanes to deal with traffic congestion is like loosening your belt to cure obesity." - Lewis Mumford in 1955.

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?

I'm currently participating in DRCOG's Fall Civic Academy - a seven week-long program, one night a week where my cohorts and I have the equivalent of a fast-track graduate level course in understanding how the 58 municipalities that are part of the Denver Regional Council of Governments work together.

We have the benefit of so many contacts and resources to take forward as we continue in our professional lives! I look forward to serving on the RTD Board's Operations, Safety & Security Committee where I can bring my many life experiences to that work!

RTD provides service in municipalities whose police only engage after incidents occur. We need proactive, community-based police work.

The bad actors recognize gaps in security and exploit them, consistently, putting front-line employees and riders at unnecessary risk.

I'll work with municipal leadership to assure a strong partnership with RTD Operations and RTD Police. I'll continue my work with the Transportation Legislation Review Committee at the State Capitol to find and support beneficial interactions for RTD with CDOT.

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?

First, it's unacceptable that RTD management has been without a Chief Technology Officer for more than a year. Any consideration of the use of AI without a CTO is foolishness. It's also lacked a Chief Operations Officer for roughly six months.

The organizational design assessment commissioned by RTD offered a key recommendation – “Articulate a clear, compelling, and inspiring vision for RTD’s future and ensure that all employees understand how they can contribute to the agency’s success.”

Ridership’s steep decline stems from the public’s perception of an unsafe, unreliable service. Management can’t identify solutions without first recognizing and admitting to problems. They shouldn’t ignore or deny issues, especially while feeling under siege!

The press exists to inform us. RTD Management must stop stonewalling when difficult questions are asked. It only serves to further erode trust.

Transportation ranks at the top of the list of greenhouse gas emitting sources. Personal transportation is the number two expense on household budgets.

I've operated my own businesses, and have served on several non-profit Boards and continue to serve, since 2001 with Southeast Denver Baseball & Softball League, first as coach, then Board Member and currently as a State Commissioner.

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.

I believe in taking people one at a time and treating everyone with respect and dignity. I'm proud of the unique place in the history of the Disabled Rights Movement RTD and Denver hold. RTD exists to serve the public.

We need to continue this great tradition by serving everyone who needs to get from here to there and extending RTD's Global Leadership in advancing equity through service.

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 do. But I'm not ashamed to drive a car occasionally. I also ride RTD, the 11, the 21, the 3, the 46 and Light Rail occasionally. The A Line to DIA is fantastic! People tend to choose their own best option. Our truly transit-dependent riders' good faith has been sorely tested by RTD.

Once again, t's about time!

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