

Michael B. Hancock
Mayor



City and County of Denver

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The Honorable Doug Tisdale
Chairman of the Board, RTD Board of Directors
1660 Blake St.
Denver, CO 80202

July 31, 2018

RE: Pass Program Working Group Recommendations – Requesting Support of Option 3

Director Tisdale,

Thank you for allowing two representatives from the City and County of Denver to serve on the twenty-five-member Pass Program Working Group (PPWG). We were pleased to serve and proud to help develop "*Option 3*" which offers a 40% discount for families living under 185% of the Federal Poverty Level and an increased discount for youth. On behalf of the residents of the City and County of Denver, I am writing to urge the RTD Board of Directors to adopt *Option 3*. These recommendations would advance transit affordability for low-income riders and young people - while investing in safe, reliable and affordable mobility options for residents across the Denver Metro Area.

By adopting *Option 3*, RTD will improve; 1) *ACCESS* to affordable public transit for Denver metro area residents; 2) *CLIMATE* by increasing RTD ridership and reducing the number of cars on the road, and; 3) *EQUITY* by enhancing mobility options for vulnerable populations - including seniors and children.

At its core, I see the PPWG's recommendations as a critical equity issue for Denver and our neighboring jurisdictions. As our population swells and the cost of living surges across the metro area, more and more residents are facing financial pressures and, I fear, becoming increasingly isolated as they wrangle with mounting housing and transportation costs. Since transportation is the second highest contributor to our cost of living after housing, many residents - particularly those with disabilities, seniors, youth, and low-income families - find themselves struggling to afford other costs such as food, childcare, education and healthcare resources. Further, transportation costs create an additional barrier for youth seeking employment and other opportunities. Enhanced mobility options lead to better health, economic, environmental, and social outcomes for all residents.

With this in mind, the City and County of Denver adopted a goal in 2016 to increase the number of neighborhoods where households spend less than 45% of their monthly income on housing and transportation combined. By voting yes on Option 3, the RTD Board can help us reduce the cost burden on residents while empowering countless households who depend on public transit – and draw new riders into the system. Finally, a discounted or free transit pass program for youth would be an investment in future mobility options and boost transit ridership. Young people who learn to use public transit today are more likely to continue using public transit as adult commuters in the future.

Thank you for your careful consideration of the options before you. I applaud the work of RTD's board and staff to drive extensive public engagement around this issue and I appreciate the efforts of the PPWG. I look forward to our continued partnership to enhance mobility, health and opportunity for Denver Metro Area residents.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Hancock", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

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