RTD Accountability Committee

January 21, 2026

Update for DRCOG

Accountability Committee: SB25-161 Overview

SB25-161 established the Committee within CEO:

- 14 voting members and 1 ex-officio member, appointed by the Governor, legislature and RTD, with specific areas of expertise / backgrounds (list available on CEO webpage)

SB25-161 tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to:

- Governance-related Topics
- Paratransit Topics
- Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

SB25-161 directs the committee to:

- By January 30, 2026, submit a report to the governor and legislature that includes a summary of the work accomplished by the committee, the findings of its evaluation, and any recommendations.
- Build on the work of the previous RTD accountability committee created in 2020.

Accountability Committee: Legislative Charge

SB25-161 established the committee within CEO and tasked the Committee with making recommendations relating to (see C.R.S. 24-38.5-124(3)):

Governance-related Topics

- "The **governance structure** of the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "**Compensation** for the Board of Directors and executive leadership of the District;"
- "The **representation of local governments and state agencies** within the District;"

Paratransit Topics

- "The **paratransit services** provided within the District's geographic service area."

As used here, "paratransit services" means complementary parallel transit services for individuals with disabilities who are unable to utilize regular or fixed-route transit services for some or all of their transit needs.

Workforce Retention and Labor-related Topics

- "The District's **workforce retention**."
- "How transit services within the District can be expanded while ensuring good-paying jobs with benefits for transit service and maintenance providers, given state investments to expand transit in the state;"
- "How transit services within the District may be served by implementing employer harmony agreements that protect against labor disputes and other disruptions that can lead to workforce retention challenges and service reliability and safety concerns;"

Accountability Committee: Members

Had to be appointed by August 1 2025:

- **Six voting members appointed by the Governor:**
  - Maria Garcia Berry
  - Matt Larsen
  - Harold Dominguez
  - Alexis Senger
  - Jackie Millet
  - James Flattum
- **One ex-officio member appointed by RTD**
  - Julien Bouquet

- **Eight voting members appointed by the Legislature:**
  - Andrew Iltis
  - Matthew Groves
  - Tobin Snook
  - Renée M. Chacon
  - Miller Hudson
  - Jaime Lewis
  - Lance Longenbohn
  - Kiplund Kolkmeier

Members include: representation from current and former RTD board members, environmental advocacy, local government, labor, equity, transit riders with disabilities, youth transit riders, and those with expertise in finance, multimodal transportation, economic development, urban planning, and workforce development.

Committee Staff: Intro to team

State staff

Kelly Blynn
Senior Policy Advisor, Land Use and Transportation, Colorado Energy Office

Facilitation

Berrick Abramson
President, Confluence PSG

Carrie Steele
Policy Director | Sr. Project Manager, Confluence PSG

CONFLUENCE POLICY & STRATEGY GROUP

Research support

David Bragdon
Hudson Skykomish
Focusing on governance

With support from:

NELSON NYGAARD

Focusing on paratransit

Eno
Center for Transportation

Focusing on workforce/labor topics

Elements of Stakeholder Input

Stakeholder input:

- SB25-161 identified a diverse set of interests and backgrounds to comprise the committee

- Public written comments available throughout via CEO webpage

- Time for public comment at each meeting

- Participation in meetings of external stakeholder organizations

- Confidential interviews with David Bragdon (and subcontractors), with synthesized findings to be shared with the committee:

  - DRCOG
  - Metro Mayors
  - Members of previous Accountability Committee
  - RTD staff
  - Environmental, transit, and disability advocates

  - Local elected officials
  - Local transportation and planning staff
  - State agency staff (CDOT)
  - Business leaders
  - Transit leaders in Salt Lake City, Twin Cities, SF Bay area

Process overview

Learning and Discussion

Pre-readings, meeting presentations, expert research, Q&A, discussions in meetings #1-7

Idea generation

Ideas for consideration generation during meetings and in follow-up surveys from topical meetings

Idea prioritization

Prioritization of ideas for consideration by the committee, and identification of anything missing

Idea refinement

Discussion and deliberation to combine, refine, and further hone in on potential recommendations

Voting on recommendations

Voting to approve recommendations for inclusion in the final report (bylaws require 8 votes, 10 person quorum)

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- **12** public meetings

- **43** hours of meeting time

- Over **4 ½** months

- **20** written public comments received (additional live public comment)

- **31** recommendations approved by a majority of the Committee

The Committee concluded its work on January 7th, 2026

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Governance Discussions: Problem Statement

The Committee concluded governance reform is urgent and necessary (though also not sufficient) for ensuring a successful transit service for our region.

Top <u>system-level problems</u> related to governance identified by a majority of members:

- Low ridership and factors contributing to it
- Public trust & confidence
- Appearance of limited coordinated, strategic vision & plan

Top <u>governance related problems</u> to address identified by a majority of members:

- Need for diversity of expertise and experience
- Challenges with fulfilling oversight role due to dynamic between Board and Leadership and ability of a part-time Board to be as fully informed as necessary.
- Challenges working with, making decisions, finding consensus with larger board
- Lack of competition and attention to Board elections hinders effective oversight

Governance

Number & Topic	Recommendation Summary	Directed To
G1: Board Structure & Composition	Establish a 9-member Board with 5 elected and 4 members appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Senate.	General Assembly
G2 and G3: Appointee Criteria	Appointees must collectively have key areas of expertise (financial, land use, transportation planning, disproportionately impacted communities) as well as a labor seat.	General Assembly
G4: District-Based Elected Positions	All five elected seats should be district-based.	General Assembly
G5: Board Chair Authority	The Board shall select a full-time Chair (any appointed or elected member) to a two-year term.	RTD / General Assembly
G6: Timing of Implementation	Implement the new structure at the soonest appropriate time, at the latest in time for the 2028 election.	General Assembly

Governance (2)

Number & Topic	Recommendation Summary	Directed To
G7, G8, and G9: Terms, Limits & Staggering	Members should serve four-year terms with two full four-year term limits; terms should be staggered for continuity.	General Assembly
G10: Ballot Threshold	Review and increase the ballot signature threshold for elected members to better align with other elected positions.	General Assembly
G11: Statutory Implementation	Adopt all structural reforms through statute rather than ballot referral.	General Assembly
G12: Board Substructures	Add ex-officio seats for labor and CDOT on certain RTD standing committees	RTD
G13: Review of External Committees	Review, revisit, and strengthen the role of all RTD committees of external stakeholders to improve effectiveness	RTD

Governance (3)

Number & Topic	Recommendation Summary	Directed To
G15: Fiscal Oversight	Strengthen multi-year budgeting, audits, Board financial training, reporting, and review of District's current financial condition. Additionally, study the potential benefits and challenges of shared responsibility and/or ownership of the District's rail assets.	RTD / General Assembly
G16: Candidate Supports and Staffing	The Committee recommends reinstating a Transit Academy–style program, led by an outside entity, to train and inform prospective RTD Board candidates.	General Assembly
G17: Board Compensation	Increase and benchmark Board compensation to inflation, and make the Chair a full-time position	General Assembly / RTD
G18: Executive Leadership	Strengthen GM/CEO evaluation goals and metrics in alignment with the next strategic plan and tie executive compensation annually to performance.	RTD
G19: Board Staffing	Improve process for Board access to agency staff, ensuring support while respecting the GM/CEO's day-to-day management authority.	RTD

Paratransit Recommendations

One recommendation for RTD to complete a comprehensive planning process including:

Topic	Recommendation Summary
Needs Assessment	Study the population, needs, and service gaps of riders with disabilities.
Service Integration	Assess ways to improve integration of Access-a-Ride and Access-on-Demand.
Collaboration	Assess opportunities to collaborate with local and regional partners to address service gaps.
Engagement	Engage with paratransit users, riders with disabilities, service providers, etc.
System Vision	Establish an overarching framework and goals to guide paratransit decision-making.
Fiscal Sustainability	Assess long-term costs and tradeoffs using peer comparisons.
Innovation	Pursue innovative and technology-enabled service models.

Workforce Recommendations

Number & Topic	Recommendation Summary	Directed To
W1: Recruitment	Expand hiring, training, and test preparation efforts and partnerships to reach additional communities, and work with ATU to explore more flexible and part-time positions.	RTD
W2: Retention	Together with ATU and partners, expand opportunities for newer operators, strengthen employee voice and workplace culture, and explore childcare subsidies to improve recruitment and retention.	RTD / ATU
W3: Training and Mentorship	Expand or add apprenticeship and mentorship programs and incentivize senior operators to mentor new hires to improve training and retention.	RTD / ATU
W4: Data and Measurement	Strengthen employee and community data collection by improving participation methods, expanding recruitment and retention metrics, reducing reliance on surveys, and enhancing data quality where surveys are used.	RTD / ATU

Local Government Recommendations

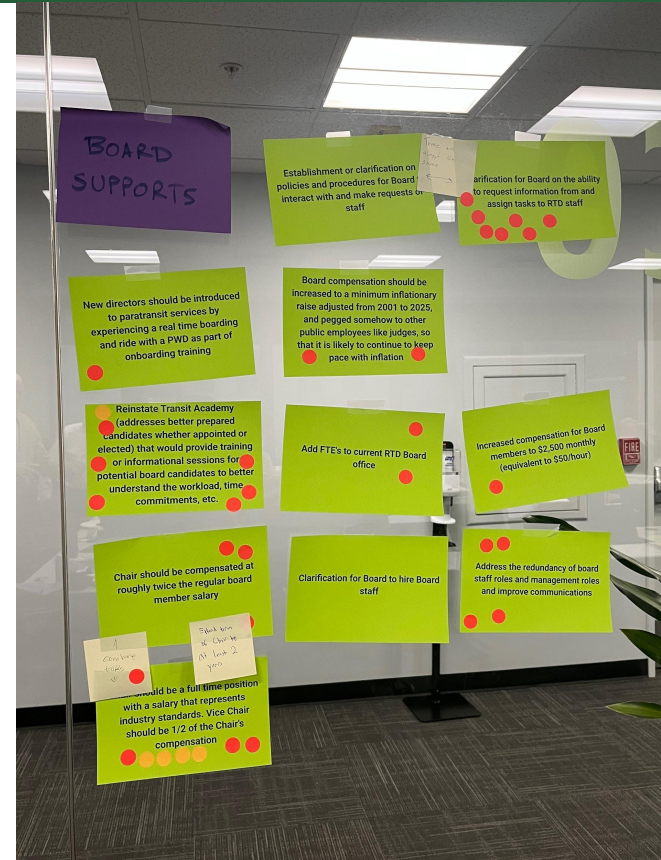| Number & Topic	Recommendation Summary	Directed To
LG1: Improve Subregional Service Councils	Reevaluate and improve the Subregional Service Councils, with local and community input, to clarify their role, broaden representation, strengthen facilitation, and enhance strategic focus.	RTD
LG2: Service Allocation Criteria	Recognizing growing ridership as a top priority, use the upcoming Comprehensive Operations Analysis to establish transparent, data-driven service allocation criteria that balance ridership growth with equitable geographic coverage.	RTD
LG3: Service Buy-up Policy	Reinstate a service buy-up policy to enable expanded local service.	RTD
LG4: Shared Information	Adapt and improve existing dashboards together with local government and partners to provide transparent reports on service data, project updates, and performance.	RTD

Local Government Recommendations

Number & Topic	Recommendation Summary	Directed To
LG5: Standardize Protocols for Bus Stops	Set clear bus stop safety and maintenance standards, defining responsibilities while accounting for local jurisdiction differences.	RTD
LG6: Collaboration on Large Capital Projects	Build on recent experience with past and current inter-jurisdictional cooperation on large capital projects that increase ridership opportunities.	RTD
LG7: Planning for the Future	Undergo a process with state, regional, and local partners to plan for a path forward that identifies opportunities including and beyond FasTracks, establishes a vision for a sustainable, efficient, and future-focused transit system, and increases investment in transit.	RTD / General Assembly / DRCOG / Local Governments

Final report

- Currently being finalized

- Will be published and delivered to the legislature on or before January 30, 2026

- Will include verbatim all recommendations, minority opinions, appendices containing all sources reviewed, public comments, agendas, minutes, etc.

Thank you!

Colorado Energy Office Project Lead

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Facilitators

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https://energyoffice.colorado.gov/rtd-accountability-committee