

February 9, 2022

To: RTD Board of Directors
CC: Wheat Ridge City Council

Re: Wheat Ridge Active Transportation Advisory Team's comments on RTD System Optimization Plan

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed System Optimization Plan for RTD. The Wheat Ridge Active Transportation Advisory Team (ATAT) is a citizen-led, volunteer-run organization that envisions a physically and economically vibrant community where people of all ages and abilities can maintain safe, healthy and connected lives through easy and equitable access to active transportation options. The ATAT focuses on outreach and education, advocacy, and connecting community members through walking and biking, and since its founding in 2012 has provided community input on city and regional projects affecting bike, pedestrian, and transit access and safety.

We appreciate the difficult tradeoffs RTD is facing as it works to rebuild ridership following the COVID-19 pandemic, and generally support the priorities RTD has focused on, including equity and supporting transit dependent riders. At the same time, we urge RTD and its partners at other levels of government to seek ways to increase service far beyond what is currently planned to improve mobility choices and address our air pollution problems.

As an inner ring suburb, Wheat Ridge has significant numbers of households with access to zero or one car (over 40%), who are renters (48%), and who live in multi-family housing (nearly 25%). There are also significant employment centers, recreation areas, and retail destinations in the City that employees and visitors must reach. We appreciate the service still proposed for Wheat Ridge, and would also like to offer the following comments regarding specific routes:

- **Route 32:** We support increasing the headways on this line during peak periods as proposed, but are disappointed to see the shorter route that ends at Wadsworth that was established during the pandemic preserved. This truncated route no longer serves major destinations further west, including Wheat Ridge High School, Crown Hill Park, and the Luthern campus, currently a major hospital with plans for redevelopment into a mixed use center. Losing the connection to Wheat Ridge High School in particular seems to be a missed opportunity to encourage transit use amongst younger riders. We hope you will consider extending the route further west, at least to Kipling, but ideally to also serve the new Clear Creek Crossing development or to a light rail station.
- **Route 28:** We also support the higher peak hour frequencies proposed for Route 28, but are similarly disappointed about the truncated route established during the pandemic. This now means many neighborhoods in Wheat Ridge and Lakewood no longer have access to east-west transit service.
- **Route 38:** West 38th Ave is the main commercial corridor for Wheat Ridge, and includes several small and large businesses and retail centers, senior housing and care facilities,

multi-family housing, the soon to be redeveloped Lutheran Campus, Wheat Ridge Recreation Center, and more. Currently there is no high frequency east-west transit service between Colfax and the G line - Route 38 would be a natural east west connection to establish higher frequencies, and indeed used to have 15-minute peak hour frequencies, instead of the current 30 minutes.

- **Route 44:** We support the increased frequency during peak hours on this route, as the other main commercial corridor in the city.
- **Route 76:** We support the concept of providing increased frequency between the Arvada and Lakewood light rail stations along Wadsworth to provide connectivity between these major transit corridors, and support access to the major commercial destinations, such as Old Town Arvada and Belmar, as well as many other businesses and destinations along the corridor.

Thank you for your consideration, and for your work to improve transit access in our region.

Sincerely,

Wheat Ridge Active Transportation Advisory Team

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