

July 17, 2024

CEO & General Manager Debra Johnson and RTD Board of Directors  
1660 Blake Street  
Denver, CO 80202

Dear CEO & General Manager Debra Johnson and RTD Board of Directors,

We appreciate that you completed an organizational assessment. After reviewing it, we believe this assessment should serve as a wake-up call for the agency. Immediate measures should be taken to address the many unacceptable issues outlined in the report. Failure to act would have adverse impacts that extend beyond the organization, eroding trust even more with both decision-makers and the public.

Using the final [assessment report](#) (June 2024 by Segal) as a guide, we implore you to immediately and transparently announce and implement a corrective action plan that incorporates key recommendations (many of them already developed in the assessment) that address the themes for improvement that Segal identified:

1. RTD's organizational structure, staffing approach, and leadership dynamics are not supporting the agency to function in an optimal manner.
2. Certain agency practices discourage high performance and employee commitment.
3. RTD's hierarchical organizational culture impedes collaboration and coordination.
4. Employees, supervisors, and managers need more information to be effective in their roles.
5. Employees are unclear about RTD's future direction and worried about its prospects for success.

Employees interviewed as part of this assessment consistently identified two critical priorities:

1. Treating employees as valued organizational assets
2. Establishing higher performance standards

**RTD must demonstrate a commitment to resolving these issues and implementing the recommendations outlined in the report. RTD should immediately announce an initial phase of corrective actions to be implemented within the next six months and pledge to address additional recommendations in additional phases as soon as possible.**

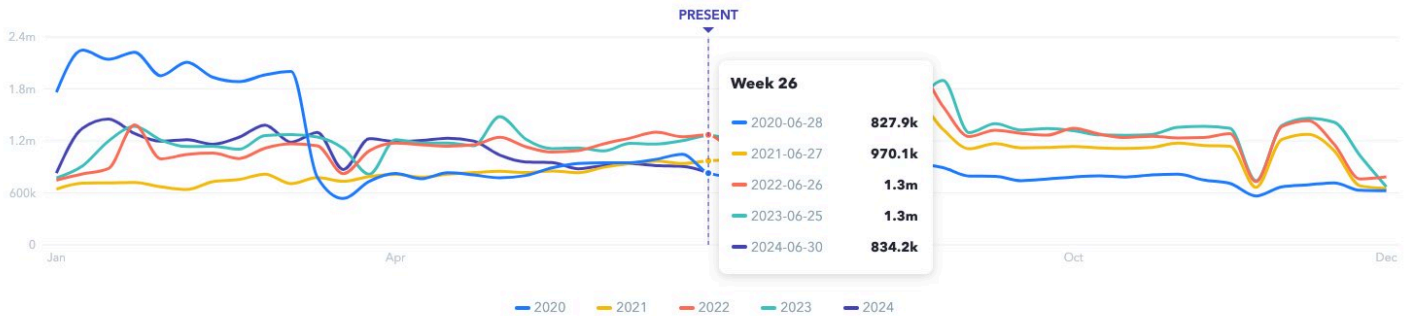
RTD's operational struggles are starting to manifest in significant ridership losses. According to the [American Public Transportation Association's ridership trends](#), RTD's June 2024 ridership levels dipped to June 2020 levels when Colorado was in the throes of pandemic social distancing orders.

## Year-over-year

See how ridership changes each year since 2020 for a single agency

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### Regional Trp District



We recognize the many challenges RTD is facing today—from the labor shortage to delivering public transit service in a large, sprawling region to trying to deliver underfunded legacy projects. We remain committed to supporting policies and funding to address these problems and create a better transit system for our region. However, we also need a commitment from RTD to implement essential internal reforms, present an inspiring vision of growth to satisfy the region’s transit needs, and provide more incentives for people to choose transit.

It is evident from the assessment that there are a number of challenges within RTD that must be addressed, including the “culture” and “climate” within the agency. We understand that this type of change can be complicated and take time, but **given the urgency of the moment, RTD needs to immediately announce and act upon a set of those recommendations.** This not only demonstrates responsiveness and seriousness but also builds momentum for further action. Small improvements can build trust, laying the foundation for larger changes.

By transparently and aggressively implementing recommendations in the assessment, RTD has the best chance to transform its internal culture and climate to create a more effective agency. Additionally, this approach will help build trust and confidence in RTD and the region’s transit among partners, riders, and the general public.

We welcome the opportunity to discuss this issue further and look forward to continuing to work together towards a bright future for public transit in our region.

Sincerely,

**Danny Katz, Executive Director, CoPIRG**

**Molly McKinley, Policy Director, Denver Streets Partnership**

**Matt Frommer, Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEET)**