

# Nederland, RTD - N bus winter operations

11-27-2017

## Meeting Minutes

**Attendees: RTD- Chuck Sisk, Len Grant, Boulder County- Jared Hall, NEPPIDAC- Katrina Harms, Shirin Chahal, Scott Ptach, Vera Schulte-Pelkum, Topher Donahue**

- Introductions
- Overview of NEPPIDAC & responsibilities
  - Formation of Nederland PID district
    - Formed by passing of 2013 ballot item. 10 year property tax mill levy funded district.
    - Covers cost of Nederland community EcoPass and “transit-related improvements”
    - Chuck previously discussed community pass with former Nederland Mayor Joe Gierlach
  - NEPPIDAC roles & responsibilities
    - Five member committee, overseeing admin of Eco Pass. Advisory capacity representing district for transit-related issues.
- N bus winter operations overview
  - Overview of N bus operations during winter months
    - Perception that N bus often gets stuck in the Canyon and blocks all traffic. Often other vehicles but the gets blamed.
    - Last year RTD installed an “autochain” system on N route buses starting in March/April 2017.
      - Engaged by driver-activated switch no need to “chain up” in the field.
      - Anecdotal feedback that system has helped winter operations (only run for two winter months so far)
      - Issue is that once bus stop, they still won’t be able to get started again, need to maintain momentum even with autochain.
    - Biggest bottleneck where blockages occur in Boulder Canyon is west of the falls.
    - RTD not allowed by to use on-vehicle sanders by City of Boulder.
      - Supervisors have ice melt that can be applied to help free stuck buses.
    - When bus gets stuck, passengers encouraged to stay on bus for safety reasons but are not required to stay on the bus.

- Older RTD buses performed better than current buses in winter conditions. Autochain should help address this.
- RTD doesn't always get advance notice from CDOT that roads are closed.
- RTD rider alerts and real-time (Next Ride) system
  - RTD real-time system, works along Boulder Canyon Dr. from Boulder to Fourmile Canyon but doesn't have signal once bus is west of the Canyon.
  - When there is a delay on the N bus, RTD pushes out rider alerts to people who have previously signed up for them (opt-in). Riders are alerted via previously selected method (email, text, etc).
    - Typically less than 5 minutes delay from when put into alert system and pushed to riders.
- Driver training – discussion on RTD driver training for inclement weather
  - All drivers trained for 8 weeks, including winter and other mountain route driving.
  - RTD – it is difficult to guarantee experienced driver on N bus due to union procedures/bids
    - RTD “runblocks” recently changed to provide long blocks vs. split shifts which encourage more experienced drivers to bid.
    - Drives on weekends are generally less experienced than those on weekdays.
- Eldora resort service
  - RTD was previously discussing additional N route service with Eldora Resort, but can't currently provide enough drivers and vehicles to run existing service and likely won't be adding service in the near term.
  - RTD previously approached Eldora to discuss keeping travel lane and stop locations open for bus a couple of years ago. Issues have largely been resolved since then.
  - Weekend delays at Eldora and on shelf road can cause bus to run off schedule.
    - When this occurs, RTD has two buses available to put on route
    - Can't add buses to schedule but can provide additional trips at scheduled times.
    - Adding off schedule trips would compete with private carriers and conflict with RTD charter.
  - Eldora will be providing more private shuttle service in 2018. Guercio field near post office will be a new pickup spot.
  - Could RTD add another ski loading location(s) at bus stops in Nederland.
    - Len w/ RTD will look into this.
  - In order to add additional service on the N bus ridership would have to increase 30-50%

- In summers, weekend service to Nederland is often people bussing up and riding down canyon.
  - Individuals store their own bikes in under bus bays., driver's don't handle
- Next steps
  - RTD will look into real-time issues on N bus
  - RTD will look into adding additional "loading location" status for existing bus stops within Nederland.