

**RTD NEIGHBORHOOD ECO PASS
RESOURCE GUIDE**

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Introduction

The Neighborhood Eco Pass is a special RTD bus pass program that offers residents an annual bus pass with unlimited access to RTD's local, express and regional bus service, including skyRide to DIA, HOP, SKIP, LEAP, BOUND, JUMP and Eldora ski area routes. This program is offered by RTD, supported by the city of Boulder and organized by neighbors for their neighborhoods. Currently, 21 neighborhoods have secured the Neighborhood Eco Pass program, totaling over 4,500 pass holders.

This guide has been created to assist Boulder neighborhoods in organizing an RTD Neighborhood Eco Pass program. Although each neighborhood can use its own unique style for canvassing neighborhoods, raising money and creating materials, this guide gives step-by-step instructions on the basic tools needed to be successful. In addition, supplemental materials are included to give organizers samples of what other neighborhoods have used and other resources that are available.

Eligibility

To be eligible a neighborhood must be represented by either a county or city government entity, or a registered homeowner/neighborhood association (applicant) and neighborhood must be within the Regional Transportation District Boundaries. There must be designated individual(s) assigned as contacts for RTD and residents. Residents must be approved by the association and are eligible as long as they reside in the eligible neighborhood.

Identifying the Neighborhood Boundaries

1. A neighborhood is comprised of a group of blocks. A residential block is defined as an area of land bounded on all sides by streets, roads, or one or more geographic or physical feature. Physical features can be lakes, rivers, railroad tracks, highways, parks, large open spaces of land, and neighborhood boundaries (i.e. HOAs) or commercial areas. All blocks within the neighborhood boundaries must be contiguous: Definition of contiguous is:
 - a. Sharing an edge or boundary, adjacent
 - b. Connecting without a break, touching, neighboring
 - c. Connected, uninterrupted

The annual cost of a Neighborhood Eco Pass is individual to every neighborhood and varies based on available bus service and number of participants. The Neighborhood Eco Pass is a great way for an entire family to save on the cost of travel and for neighbors to make an impact on traffic congestion and air pollution.

The city of Boulder offers subsidies and will assist neighborhoods with introducing the program at group meetings, distributing promotional material, acquiring maps, photocopying fliers and obtaining other information.

There are two basic ways to enter into a Neighborhood Eco Pass contract with RTD:

- A neighborhood association can enter into a contract with RTD for the entire neighborhood with funding from association dues; or
- A city or county government entity representing the neighborhood can enter into a contract with RTD for the entire neighborhood. A group of neighbors can organize a volunteer effort to canvass their neighborhood door-to-door, raising funds to fulfill the contract amount.

Participation in the Neighborhood Eco Pass program requires:

- Representation of the community by a registered neighborhood association, or a city or county government entity. **A neighborhood association or government entity must be legally**

authorized to enter into a contract with RTD. (See step 5 – Obtaining and Signing the Contract.)

- A community appointed liaison, who will be responsible for providing all information required by RTD, coordinating the solicitation of households and collecting funds
- A \$5,000 minimum contract applies if the per house hold price is less. (See Appendix: Agreement Pricing.)

Step by Step Guide to Organizing Your Neighborhood

Step 1 - Neighborhood Planning Process

Present the Neighborhood Eco Pass program to the neighborhood association or generate interest by distributing a flyer in the neighborhood. The flyer should explain the program concept and invite volunteers to participate in the organizing effort. Once interested neighbors step forward, host the first Neighborhood Eco Pass meeting to choose the neighborhood organization leaders (including the person who will be the neighborhood coordinator for the program administration), identify potential block leaders and discuss strategy.

Step 2 - Identifying Neighborhood and Block Boundaries

Identifying the Neighborhood

Neighborhoods can range in size from 1-2 blocks up to 500. The name of the neighborhood and its boundaries are often determined by the initial home builder/developer. The neighborhood organization must obtain a map of the neighborhood from RTD. This map is an aerial view of the neighborhood showing the streets, blocks and the outline of each housing unit. RTD will define the minimum number of blocks required to establish a new neighborhood and compute a unit price for the neighborhood.

How Blocks Work

Blocks in a neighborhood qualify for inclusion in the Plan by collecting the block price, an amount of money equal to the number of houses in the block multiplied by the unit price. Not all houses on the block need to contribute to the fundraising effort; all that is necessary is for the block to collect its block price. Only as many blocks as necessary to meet the RTD minimums need to qualify for the neighborhood to be eligible for the program.

Step 3 - Program Kick-off, Block Leader Training and Implementation

Program Kick-off Meeting

There are four things that should be known before the kick-off meeting:

- Neighborhood boundaries and blocks
- The RTD neighborhood unit price
- Names of potential block leaders
- Bus routes serving your neighborhood.

At the meeting, the organization leaders explain the program to potential block leaders and distribute information, including informational fliers that the organization has prepared, block maps, and block sign-up sheets.

Block Leaders

The program relies on the hard work of block leaders who are responsible for qualifying the blocks in the program. Block leaders canvass their blocks, collecting money and registration information from program participants. The style of canvassing can be individual, different block leaders stressing different benefits to the program in their solicitation techniques. One block leader can canvass several blocks.

Step 4 - How to Raise the Money

It does not matter how a block leader raises money. Every household or individual can contribute, or one generous neighbor can pay for the whole block. Contributions may vary depending on the level of motivation

or the total number of contributions. Several of the more successful strategies that have emerged are:

- Individuals can be encouraged to contribute at a rate based on their projected use.
- The block leader can determine an equal price for all individuals on their block by dividing the block price by the number of participants.
- The block leader may collect money based on the ability of an individual to pay.
- Getting pledges first, then returning for the money is one way to assure the collection of the needed amount.

All checks must be made payable to either your neighborhood organization or government entity, who will in turn pay RTD. The entity is the Boulder Building Blocks Fund (BBBF).

Step 5 - Obtaining and Signing the Contract

When the neighborhood is successful in reaching its goal, the neighborhood organization submits the following documentation to RTD.

- An alphabetical roster of each eligible resident with his/her address via email attachment in Excel.
- RTD will create the agreement. The agreement will be sent to either the city of Boulder or the HOA for signature.
- THE BBBF will notify the city of Boulder and RTD once all the money has been deposited at which time The city will sign the agreement and send it directly to RTD. BBBF will then forward payment.
- If the neighborhood is working through and HOA, then they signed agreement and payment will be forwarded to RTD directly from the HOA.

NOTE: The contract must be signed by an authorized representative for the neighborhood. That would be either an officer of the association or a person that is legally authorized to enter into a contract for the neighborhood.

Step 6 - Photo Session and Pass Distribution

A week before the photo session, block leaders distribute fliers to the neighbors announcing the date, time, and place of the session as well as someone to call for information and what each person must bring: photo ID and proof of residency.

The neighborhood organization will arrange for a photo site (usually a public room that can hold at least 100 people). Lobbies of public buildings, library conference rooms, school gyms, clubhouses and private residences have been used. Because 100 photos can be taken per hour and RTD can provide two cameras if necessary, a one or two-hour evening session should be scheduled between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m., Monday through Thursday. Saturday sessions have been used also. During the photo session RTD requires:

- 6 tables: 2 for reception, 2 for signatures and bus schedules, 2 for cameras
- 4 or more chairs
- Power for the cameras
- 2 or more neighborhood volunteers to assist with registration and decal distribution.

As residents enter, they show their picture identification (drivers license) and proof of residency (drivers license; current utility bill; voters registration; federal, state or local records; or dated homeowner or tenant records). They receive a decal and a photo card containing a signature line. They then move to the table to sign their cards. Taking their completed cards and decals to the photographer, they have their pictures taken and receive their Neighborhood Eco Pass. The passes can be used immediately on any standard RTD bus route.

Any qualified resident, who misses the photo session, can contact the coordinator and get a decal and authorization form (see attached). The resident may then go to any of three photo locations to receive a pass (Downtown Denver, 1600 Blake; DIA, 5th floor Main Terminal; Boulder RTD Bus Terminal 1400 Walnut).

Tips for Success

You will need a lot of help. Take time to create an organization in which many people and/or teams of people will help share the load.

Appoint a neighborhood coordinator that is extremely organized. A second person that has good office skills is extremely helpful in assembling the database to create the required lists for RTD. Set strict deadlines. Keep them. Organize, organize, organize.

Renewal Process

The renewal process is identical to the initial process, except that everyone will be more expert at canvassing and collecting money. Neighbors who have Eco Passes will be able to use last year's Neighborhood Eco Passes by obtaining a new decal at the photo session to be placed over the old decal.

Frequently Asked Questions for Block Leaders

Q: I only ride skyRide to DIA once in a while. Why should I buy a pass?

A: The regular round-trip fare on skyRide is \$18. The Eco Pass will save you money even if you travel to DIA a few times a year.

Q: I don't ride the bus very often. Why should I buy a pass?

A: By contributing to the program, you are helping us to qualify our neighborhood and encouraging your neighbors to use the bus. If your neighbors are on the bus, traffic congestion will be reduced, benefiting drivers as well as bus riders.

Q: What can an Eco Pass offer to a regular bike commuter?

A: All RTD buses are equipped with bike racks. In addition, bike parking and lockers are available at more than 50 RTD park-n-rides. Bike commuters can get around more efficiently using both their bikes and Eco passes.

Q: Isn't driving more convenient than trying to figure out how to take a bus?

A: The bus system often is more convenient than driving, especially when you are traveling to areas in which parking is both expensive and often unavailable. When you are traveling to areas like downtown Denver that are prone to traffic jams, the bus has its own congestion-free lane, assuring you quick service. Route and schedule information is available at 299-6000 (M-F, 6 a.m. - 8 p.m., SS, 8 a.m. - 8 p.m.). Because you never have to worry about having the exact fare, taking the bus is extremely easy when you have an Eco Pass and your pass offers you unlimited access to the bus system.

Q: Why should I ride the bus?

A: Taking the bus saves money on parking, gasoline, and car repairs. Plus, you can sit back while someone else does the driving.

Program Resources

RTD

General Information

(303) 299-6000; <http://www.RTD-Denver.com>

Theresa Sabrsula

1600 Blake Street, Denver, CO 80202

(303) 299-2122; (303) 299-2600 (fax) Theresa.sabrsula@rtd-denver.com

*Contact for agreement information, agreement pricing, map approval, photo sessions

City of Boulder

Andrea Robbins, Transportation Dept.

1736 Broadway, 2nd Floor, Boulder, CO 80306

303-441-4139; 303-441-4271 (fax), robbinsa@ci.boulder.co.us

The Agreement

The Neighborhood Eco Pass Agreement is a contract between RTD and the neighborhood or government entity acting for the neighborhood. **NOTE: The contract must be signed by an authorized representative for the neighborhood. That would be either an officer of the association or a person that is legally authorized to enter into a contract for the neighborhood.**

It specifies the number of blocks, residents, households, and the cost per household and the total dollar amount. It is used for new neighborhoods as well as the addition of new blocks to existing neighborhoods and is approved by the neighborhood association (or government) and RTD. The agreement lists the terms and conditions - eligibility, required documentation, payment terms, issuance of passes, adding additional blocks, confiscation of passes, lost passes or decals and how passes may be used.

It must be signed before photo passes and decals can be issued.

Necessary Documents

The complete list of documents required for participation in the Neighborhood Eco Pass Program are the Agreement, the RTD-approved neighborhood map, the neighbor list, and proof of residency for each resident (supplied by the resident at the time of picture taking).

Agreement Pricing

The minimum neighborhood cost is \$5,000, \$2,500 for six months or less. Neighborhoods are comprised of one or more contiguous (adjacent) blocks to form a large "mega" block. The agreement price per mega block is the number of housing units multiplied by the unit price or \$5,000, whichever is higher. Each neighborhood block must be contiguous and all housing units on every block will be included in the cost calculations, regardless of the size of the block. The minimum price per housing unit is \$51. The price per household is pro-rated if a neighborhood signs up or additional blocks are added any time in the year other than January 1.