



## RFTA Planning Department Update January 4, 2012

### ***RFTA Planning Department Vision Statement***

*We will work creatively, cooperatively and comprehensively with our partners in the public, private and nonprofit sectors and other groups to create healthy and vibrant communities.*

### **RFTA Strategic Planning Update**

The purpose of strategic plan is to create a long-term plan and vision for an agency, to establish values that serve as filters for decisions and actions, and to align all goals, objectives, strategies, critical tasks and measurements with the vision and values. Two of the most important considerations for developing a strategic plan are:

1. To ensure the plan that is developed is a 'living document' that truly guides actions and decision making for the organization. Too often, a tremendous amount of work is put into crafting mission/vision statements and putting strategies and actions into a plan that sits on a shelf, forgotten and unused.
2. To ensure that the plan brings all levels of the organization into a common strategic focus and purpose. This type of organizational 'alignment' leverages the power that comes from having all members of the organization 'rowing' in the same direction.

We have completed the Vision, Values, Objectives and Strategies. Consultants Pam Britton and Heather Henry are now working with all Departments and their staff (except Maintenance and Operations) to develop the Critical Tasks and Actions.

Strategic Planning for the operations and maintenance staff, which comprise the majority of RFTA employees, will be conducted in conjunction with in-service training in April/May.



# **Glenwood Springs Intermodal Facility Site Study**

The City of Glenwood Springs is a major connection point for RFTA, VelociRFTA BRT, Ride Glenwood, Greyhound, Amtrak and bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure. The City believes it is important to consider a site to integrate all these uses.

On December 13<sup>th</sup>, representatives from the City, Colorado Mountain College, and from the various transportation agencies met with consultant A.T. Stoddard of LSC Consultants to discuss facility needs, essential priorities, and site selection criteria.

## ***Facility Requirements***

- Connectivity
- All modes under one roof
- Minimize transfers by having a single connection
- Parking
- RFTA's BRT station (staging four buses)
- Ease of access
- Accessible
- Highly visible way finding (especially from I-70 corridor)
- Aesthetics
- Ride Glenwood Springs (two bus spaces)
- RFTA - local service
- Greyhound - package/storage
- Amtrak - office space/baggage
- Colorado Mountain Express
- Pedestrian/bicycles
- Bike shop
- Taxi space (especially with Amtrak and Greyhound)
- Retail
- Ticket sales
- Information service
- Structured parking
- Office/other uses to generate income
- Restrooms
- ATM
- Vending
- Amusement
- Waiting area lounge
- Wi-Fi
- Information signage (in real time)

## ***Essential Priorities***

- Connectivity
- All modes under one roof
- Minimize transfers by having a single connection
- Parking
- Ease of access
- Accessible
- Highly visible wayfinding (especially from I-70 corridor)
- Aesthetics
- Ride Glenwood Springs (two bus spaces)
- RFTA - local service
- Pedestrian/bicycle
- Ticket sales
- Information service
- Restrooms
- ATM
- Vending
- Waiting area lounge
- Information signage (in real time)

## ***Site Selection Criteria***

- Cost/ownership
- Location
  - Can't create congestion
  - Central location/activities
- Away from residential areas
  - Compatible - integrate with existing uses
- Soils
- Adequate space
- Ease of access/circulation
- I-70 access
- Public opposition/support
- Environmental conditions
- Maintainability
- Close to existing routes

## ***Possible Site Locations***

Sites identified for potential intermodal centers by the project team included:

1. Tomahawk/ Greyhound Station
2. Amtrak Station
3. 8th Street (near City Hall)
4. Midland Avenue

Additional sites identified by the stakeholder group were:

- A site near the Glenwood Springs airport (near the old rodeo grounds)
- Sewage treatment plant (7th Street and near the Amtrak Line)
- Glenwood Meadows Mall
- Highway 82 (old car dealers, near 27th street)
- 27th Street (Possible location for the BRT station)
- Automobile Dealer -6th Street
- Space under the bridge
- Deveureux Road (parcels along that road)

## ***Next Steps***

LSC Consultants will initiate a workshop with the Glenwood Springs Transportation Commission on February 7<sup>th</sup> followed by a public meeting the same day, to review the initial comments on facility needs and priorities, site selection criteria, and potential locations.

## **Grants Update**

### ***Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Assessment/Placemaking Effort***

#### **Section 5304 Grant - TOD Assessment**

On October 4<sup>th</sup>, CDOT announced that RFTA has received a Section 5304 grant of \$25,000 from FTA to conduct regional Transit Oriented Development (TOD) Strategic Planning and Opportunities analysis.

The purpose of this project is to assess opportunities for, and the feasibility of, TOD in communities within RFTA's service region along State Highway 82 from Aspen to Glenwood Springs, and along I-70 from Glenwood Springs to Rifle. Successful TOD relies on creating walkable, mixed-use districts and neighborhoods in proximity to transit stations.

On November 18<sup>th</sup>, RFTA met with planners in Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin Counties and CDOT to review and refine the goals of this project and the scope of work that RFTA submitted to CDOT as a basis for the 5304 grant award. Everyone generally endorsed the concept and felt that we are moving in the right direction.

#### **National Endowment for the Arts Our Town Grants – “Creative Placemaking”**

Soon after the Planning Department finalized the scope of work of the TOD Assessment, the NEA issued a Notice of Funding Availability for “creative placemaking grants” (see <http://arts.gov/grants/apply/OurTown/index.html>). The NEA will award grants of up to \$150,000 for creative placemaking projects that contribute toward the livability of communities and help transform them into lively, beautiful, and sustainable places with the arts at their core.

NEA's Our Town program appears to be a perfect complement to the TOD assessment planning. RFTA now plans to apply for an NEA grant to combine the technical aspects of TOD assessment with the more creative aspects of the NEA initiative. Proposals are due March 1, 2012, awards will be announced in July, and funds cannot be expended until September. The project must be delayed until as late as September, and RFTA will add local and regional arts organizations to its extensive stakeholder network. However, the Planning Department believes that the benefits of increased funding and complementary goals are well worth the delays and complexities.

RFTA has discussed the viability of this project with the Carbondale Council for Arts and Humanities (CAAH). CAAH's main concerns are:

- That the project includes implementation, not just planning
- That local artists are genuinely engaged in the planning and implementation process

- That the Carbondale BRT station be the initial, pilot project for this regional placemaking effort

The new proposed budget is:

Source	Amount	Status
<b>FTA Section 5304 (Planning)</b>	\$25,000	Secured
<b>RFTA</b>	\$15,000	Secured
<b>State of Colorado – Heritage Grant</b>	\$25,000	Proposed
<b>NEA – <i>Our Town</i> Grant</b>	\$50,000	Proposed
<b>Cities, Counties (\$2,500 each)</b>	\$20,000	Proposed
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$135,000</b>	

The NEA grant requires a minimum 1/1 match, and cannot be matched with Federal funds (such as the FTA Section 5304 grant). The \$50,000 proposed NEA request should be considered a minimum, and will ultimately depend on the amount of cash and in-kind support from the local communities. All nine major BRT boarding locations will be considered for the creative place-making process, however prioritization will be a critical components of the overall project, and it is expected that three to four key locations will be considered suitable for more detailed planning. Those communities that wish to conduct more specific planning and implementation will naturally receive more funding, and will be asked to provide a commensurate amount of local match.

Assuming that four major boarding areas are the focus of more detailed planning, it is expected that \$100,000 will need to be devoted to planning, and the remaining \$35,000 can be used for implementation. Implementation may include signage or public art.

## ***Federal Funding***

### **Federal Funding Overview**

(From Patton Boggs and from Bennett staffer Noah Koerper)

On Monday, January 30, 2012 the Senate Banking Committee released its transit reauthorization bill as part of SAFETEA-LU reauthorization. The Banking Committee will be marking up the bill, known as the Federal Public Transportation Act of 2012, on Thursday, February 2<sup>nd</sup>. The Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee has already marked up the highway title of the reauthorization, and the Senate Commerce Committee has reported its freight and motor carrier safety provisions. The Finance Committee, which has jurisdiction over the revenue title and needs to find \$12-\$13 billion in offsets to fund a two-year bill at current levels, is expected to mark-up shortly. Once all of the committees of jurisdiction have marked-up their respective titles, the individual titles can be consolidated into a single reauthorization measure for floor consideration.

The Senate transit reauthorization bill maintains current funding levels for Formula and Bus Grants, providing \$8.36 billion in contract authority from the Mass Transit account of the Highway Trust Fund. The bill also authorizes \$1.955 billion from the general fund for New Starts.

The most significant changes in the funding apportionments result from the elimination of the \$984 million Bus and Bus Facilities program, which was historically earmarked and then – with the moratorium on earmarks – allocated by FTA through discretionary grants. The former Bus and Bus Facilities funds were used primarily to increase funding for the core formula programs, including the Section 5307 Urbanized Area formula program (which was increased from \$4.1 billion currently to \$4.7 billion per year in the Senate bill); the Non-Urbanized Area formula program (from \$465 million to \$591 million); and a new State of Good Repair formula program that replaces the prior Fixed Guideway Modernization program.

Other major highlights of the Senate bill covered below include:

- Modifying the Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program to include performance factors;
- Reforming and streamlining the New Starts program;
- Creating a new Transit Oriented Development (TOD) planning program;
- Reauthorizing the Urbanized Area formula program, with additional flexibility to use funds for operating expenses on a temporary and targeted basis;
- Reauthorizing the Clean Fuels Grants program;
- Creating a new Workforce Development program;
- Creating a new national transit safety program;
- Requiring agencies to develop transit asset management plans with state of good repair targets;
- Overhauling the Fixed Guideway Modernization program, which is reformed and reconstituted as a State of Good Repair program; and
- Refocusing the R&D programs and bringing them within the Mass Transit account.

### **Non-Urbanized Area Formula Program (Section 5311)**

The bill maintains the existing structure for the Section 5311 program, but adds the rural component of the JARC program which is being eliminated as a stand-alone program. The bill also makes changes to the apportionment formula, increasing the weight for rural land area; adding a factor for rural vehicle revenue miles in order to capture the level of public transportation service within a state's rural areas; and adding a factor for the number of low-income individuals who live within a state's rural areas. Overall, funding for the Section 5311 program is increased from \$465 million to \$591 million, with takedowns for RTAP (\$10 million); Public Transportation on Indian Reservations (\$30 million); Appalachian Development (\$20 million); and JARC (\$46 million).

Colorado is in the upper tier of states in terms of its rural transit vehicle revenue miles, as well as its rural land area. As a result of these changes, Colorado is expected to see a significant increase under the 5311 formula, from approximately \$7.7 million annually to approximately \$9.5 million under this legislation.

Federal Public Transportation Act of 2012								
Committee on Banking, Housing and Urban Affairs								
Data Source: Federal Transit Administration								
State	Urbanized Area Formula Sec. 5307	Rural Formula Sec. 5311	State of Good Repair Formula Sec. 5337	Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities Formula Sec. 5310	Metropolitan and Statewide Planning Secs. 5303/5304	Growing States and High Density States Formula Sec. 5340	Total Allocated FPTA FY 2012	Total Allocated SAFETEA-LU FY2011 <sup>1</sup>
Alabama.....	\$22,752,638	\$13,275,046	\$1,000,000	\$3,869,660	\$980,961	\$3,865,935	\$45,744,241	\$41,664,264
Alaska.....	\$8,914,326	\$7,307,057	\$6,529,266	\$409,810	\$518,370	\$595,119	\$24,273,947	\$19,314,101
Arizona.....	\$75,178,368	\$10,005,035	\$3,433,239	\$4,522,903	\$2,464,006	\$5,912,576	\$101,516,125	\$92,931,632
Arkansas.....	\$11,203,465	\$10,430,512	\$1,000,000	\$2,389,450	\$518,370	\$2,403,766	\$27,945,561	\$24,993,844
California.....	\$818,491,443	\$23,745,414	\$289,884,378	\$27,846,197	\$19,306,903	\$30,924,790	\$1,210,199,125	\$1,068,417,636
Colorado.....	\$71,845,887	\$9,172,195	\$8,454,007	\$3,187,610	\$1,876,208	\$4,359,124	\$98,895,032	\$88,954,024
Connecticut.....	\$56,966,275	\$2,506,675	\$53,394,898	\$3,481,136	\$1,439,508	\$27,679,980	\$145,468,472	\$130,338,964
Delaware.....	\$9,271,675	\$1,286,730	\$1,000,000	\$785,863	\$518,370	\$4,575,883	\$17,438,522	\$14,644,561
District of Columbia.....	\$94,492,535	\$0	\$126,990,791	\$533,550	\$518,370	\$0	\$222,535,246	\$199,141,657
Florida.....	\$227,745,522	\$13,559,964	\$33,576,200	\$19,663,519	\$8,124,795	\$15,894,032	\$318,564,033	\$284,401,089
Georgia.....	\$96,752,967	\$16,718,351	\$42,383,938	\$5,673,944	\$3,172,886	\$8,547,325	\$173,249,412	\$158,147,189
Hawaii.....	\$38,467,044	\$2,118,519	\$2,138,000	\$1,161,185	\$518,370	\$1,066,984	\$45,470,101	\$41,504,241

### Discretionary Grants

The US DOT plans to release Notices of Funding Availability (NOFA) for the following grants.

Program	Amount	Anticipated NOFA Publication	Award Announcements
<b>Bus &amp; Bus Facilities: State of Good Repair</b>	\$650 million	January 2012	Early July 2012
<b>Bus &amp; Bus Facilities: Livability</b>	\$125 million	January 2012	Late July 2012
<b>Bus &amp; Bus Facilities: Veteran's Initiative</b>	\$25 million	January 2012	Early July 2012
<b>Clean Fuels</b>	\$51.5 million	January 2012	Late July 2012
<b>Alternative Analysis</b>	\$25 million	February 2012	August 2012
<b>Tribal Transit</b>	\$15 million	February 2012	August 2012
<b>Over-the-Road-Bus</b>	\$8.8 million	March 2012	August 2012
<b>TIGER (4)</b>	\$500 million	Published	

## State Funding

### FASTER Grants

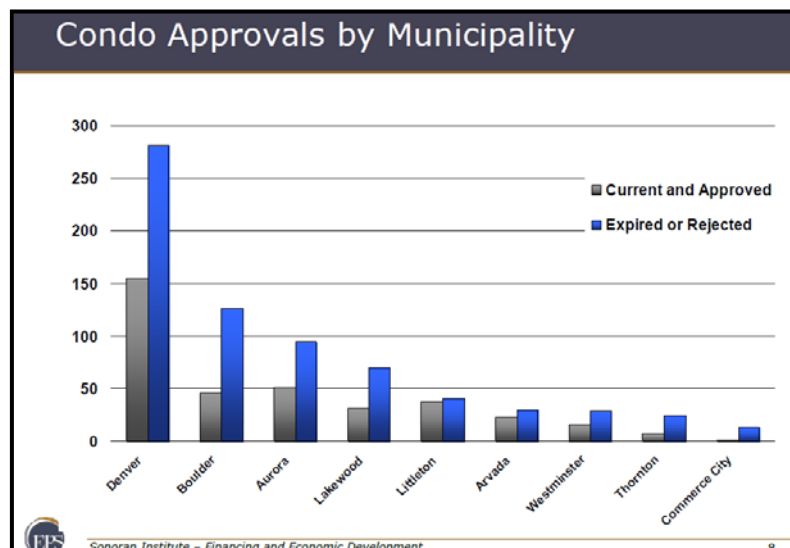
At the last Intermountain Transportation Planning Region meeting on Friday, January 27<sup>th</sup>, Pitkin County representatives George Newman, John Krueger and Brian Pettet were able to secure \$500,000 in FASTER Safety funding for the AABC SH 82 pedestrian crossing. RFTA plans to apply for a TIGER 4 grant to construct the pedestrian crossing, which is currently under design. At this point, cost estimate for construction is approximately \$4 million. While the NOFA does not require local matching funds for projects in rural areas, a project that lacks a local cash commitment will likely be deemed non-competitive. RFTA believes that 50% cash match is appropriate.

### Real Estate Financing and Economic Development Workshop: Challenges and Opportunities in Today's Economy

The Real Estate Financing and Economic Development Workshop, sponsored by the Sonoran Institute, Glenwood Springs Association of Realtors, and Garfield County Housing Authority, was held on January 25<sup>th</sup>. The workshop focused on the impacts of real estate financing on community and economic development efforts in our region.

Speakers included **Carolyn Meadowcroft of Vectra Bank**, who explained common lending challenges and how they affect project or resale financing; **Andy Knudtsen of Economic & Planning Systems (EPS)** who illustrated housing market trends in the new economy, and **Bill Kane, Basalt Town Manager** who discussed lessons learned at the local level.

In today's economy, financing for that next project or new home is increasingly hard to come by—especially for multifamily housing and mixed-use development. Lenders have regressed to funding traditional “vanilla” projects, namely single-family, suburban style housing, which is contrary to the smaller, clustered housing and mixed-use “places” that are increasingly advocated in comprehensive plans, increasingly demanded, and more appropriate to the land-



constrained mountain regions. Many existing condominiums and townhomes are “unwarrantable” for financing, due to stringent guidelines on ratio of owner-occupied units to investment units, the status of the HOA finances, and other concerns. Second homeowners with solid credit scores and equity are safer, more favorable clients for lenders than the middle class workforce, which the Roaring Fork Valley struggles to attract and retain. Similar issues exist for mixed-use projects, where strict requirements for pre-sales and high debt-coverage requirements make such projects difficult to finance.

Town of Basalt Manager Bill Kane offered strategies for communities to address current economic realities. Foremost, he says, is to consider your community “brand”: Who are you? What are your core values? These should be patent in your comprehensive plan, and growth and economic development should be consistent with those values. Towns should be proactive in facilitating such economic and community development.

## **The Downtown Rifle Project: Developing a Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) Strategic Plan**

On January 24<sup>th</sup>, RFTA was invited to the first Steering Committee meeting of the Downtown Rifle TOD Strategic Plan. The City of Rifle was awarded a Community Challenge Planning Grant totaling \$806,618 from the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) through Rifle’s participation in the Colorado Sustainable Main Streets Initiative. The project is entirely funded by federal agencies.

Downtown Rifle has made great progress in becoming a vibrant center for culture and commerce.

Recent years have brought new projects and people to the downtown—including Centennial Park, the new Rifle Library, the New Ute Theater, Brenden Theaters, multiple building renovations, and events like the Summer Concert Series. The Downtown Rifle Project will develop strategies that build on recent successes to implement the Downtown Master Plan.

The project will focus on transit, commercial and residential redevelopment, market analysis, streetscape design, energy, and placemaking. The major deliverable of Phase 1, to be completed in December 2012, is a TOD Strategic Plan that prioritizes projects and identifies strategies to attract investment. The project is an opportunity for community members, property owners, and business owners to work with a team of architects, engineers, and economists to advance Rifle’s economic development.

Another important focus is to expand the social and economic networks that are key to a vibrant downtown. The City of Rifle, the Rifle Regional Economic Development Corporation (RREDC), and the

Downtown Development Authority (DDA) are taking the lead in reaching out to the community and beyond to tell Rifle's story.

### ***Project Goals***

1. Advance the City Council mission statement to enhance Rifle's sense of community; promote economic vitality; and promote cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities.
2. Foster a spirit of creativity and entrepreneurship in the downtown.
3. Build relationships with partners—including the private sector, foundations, non-profit groups, and local, regional, state, and federal agencies—to advance the Downtown Master Plan.
4. Identify the City's downtown transit and mobility goals and integrate them with the City's transportation, land use, and economic development goals.
5. Create an Action Plan that prioritizes infrastructure investments and redevelopment opportunities.
6. Move catalytic projects as closely as possible towards a shovel-ready stage.

The lead on this project is Jim Charlier, a highly respected Transportation Planner, reflecting the project's focus on transportation, as opposed to land use or economic development. RFTA is enthusiastic to watch this process unfold, and to learn how it can adopt the lessons from this process to TOD efforts in the SH82 corridor. RFTA will take interest in how regional transit becomes part of the discussion, as thriving TOD is unlikely to occur without an integration of both local and regional transit.

### **2012: Goals for the Planning Department:**

The Planning Department has the following Goals for 2012.

***Begin with the End in Mind:*** Continually assess the vision and goals for the Planning Department, its internal and external roles and responsibilities, and how it can continually improve and evolve.

***Strategic Planning:*** Complete the strategic planning process. Outcomes will include descriptions and statements for vision, values, objectives, strategies, critical tasks and actions. All elements of the plan will align with the vision and values, and all critical tasks and actions will be measurable and easily reportable to the Board. RFTA will evaluate progress quarterly.

***Rio Grande Corridor Strategic Planning:*** Work with Facilities to conduct strategic planning for the Rio Grande Trail. Products of this process will include an updated Comprehensive Plan and ROW crossing policies.

**Asset Management:** Work with the Facilities and Maintenance Departments to develop a robust asset management program that will efficiently and accurately:

- monitor the inventory, maintenance schedule, replacement schedule, warranty, and parts inventories of fleet and facilities equipment
- assist in creation of annual and long-term budget needs to adequately maintain and replace equipment
- assist in analysis of the tradeoffs of deferring maintenance or replacement of fleet and facilities.

The basis of this program will be asset management software.

Work with CDOT to help provide education, training and procurement of this software to agencies across the state. Work with CDOT to help them achieve their goal of using the software to oversee the status of transit assets across the state, so that CDOT can make better decisions on how to allocate State and Federal funds.

**Capital Improvements Plan:** Assist the CEO, COO, Finance, Facilities and other departments in developing a CIP for fleet and facilities, with a 10-20 year planning horizon. Possible program areas include:

- Fleet
- Facilities
- Trails
- Infrastructure
- IT
- Transit-Oriented Development
- Sustainability (all sectors)
- Maintenance
- Security/Safety
- CEO/COO administration
- Housing
- Acquisitions
- Procurement
- Finance
- Public Outreach (marketing, communications)

**Project Programming:** Coordinate with Facilities and Finance on the project programming and project development process, to get projects to “shovel ready” or 30% design status. This stage of design provides more confident cost estimates, more detail on construction schedules, and alerts the agency to potential concerns that may impact schedule, budget or other issues. 30% design is critical for positioning the project for Federal and State funding and for other grant opportunities.

**Process Engineering:** Develop the tools and resources to help the agency identify and resolve roles and processes where there is conflict or lack of clarity. For instance, RFTA will experience a revolution in data collection as it replaces manual systems with numerous Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) components, such as automated scheduling, vehicle location, passenger counting and fare collection. Planning may be involved in determining how to collect, integrate, view, manipulate and broadcast this data.

**Regional TOD Assessment and Place-Making:** Establish at least \$125,000 in funding to assess the opportunities and constraints for transit oriented development at each of the BRT stations. In addition to assessing TOD potential, facilitate place-making opportunities at each station, to help communities create great places at each station location. Prioritize station locations for further TOD and place-making, and establish a game plan for achieving community visions and goals at the most promising locations.

**Grant Development:** Pursue all relevant State and Federal grant opportunities to advance RFTA's critical programs and projects.

**Performance Monitoring/Service Standards:** Establish service standards for various aspects of RFTA transit service that are relevant to performance, easily measurable, and adaptable to RFTA's rapidly-evolving ITS tools. In coordination with the CEO/COO, prepare a *2011 Ends Statement Report* for the RFTA Board.

**Regional Collaboration:** Establish an **Eagle/Garfield/Pitkin County Planners Round Table** that meets at least quarterly to discuss issues of common interest to transit and land use planners. One task will be to establish a uniform process for addressing transit impacts during the entitlement process.

**Peer Review:** To continually clarify the vision for RFTA Planning, its roles and relationships to other departments, and internal and external focus, conduct at least five peer agency planning assessments. Study how peer agency planning departments fits into their organizations, their visions, their main goals and activities.

**Professional Development:** Assess our current strengths and weaknesses and the professional skills that we will need in the future. Develop a training plan to develop these skills.