Background
First and Last Mile Mobility (FLMM) is an important part of a successful transit system, particularly for RFTA, where the highest stop activity is concentrated at the limited BRT stops: Rubey Park, Carbondale, 27th Street, El Jebel, and Basalt Avenue. Many of these stops have limited parking supply, and passengers arriving or disembarking at these stops need options for completing the “first/last miles” of their journeys, whether it be to or from home, work, medical facilities, shopping, or recreation.

The first and last mile mobility issue extends beyond improving access to transit. Nationwide, approximately 40% of all personal trips are 2 miles or less in length. Providing FLMM options has great potential to increase mobility and accessibility for those who cannot or choose not to drive an automobile, for reducing congestion, for reducing GHG emissions, and for addressing other community goals. Numerous studies in Aspen and Glenwood Springs, for instance, have asserted that local trips (trips beginning and ending within the town) are exacerbating traffic congestion, particularly during peak hours.

During the Destination 2040 planning process, many communities in RFTA’s service area suggested that bike sharing was a transportation priority. After the D2040 ballot measure was approved in November 2018, RFTA began a Regional Bike Share/First and Last Mile Mobility Study to develop plans for expanding bike share in Aspen, Basalt, and El Jebel, and implementing new bike share programs in Carbondale and Glenwood Springs. During the planning process, participating jurisdictions have expressed interest in considering FLMM strategies in addition to, or other than, bike share. In addition, it has become clear that Destination 2040 mill levy funding commitments will not be able to defray all the capital and operating needs required to implement an expanding regional bike share system.

The development of FLMM services was one of three main RFTA Board priorities for 2022 stemming from the Board’s July 8, 2021 Strategic Retreat. In December 2021, the RFTA Board approved the creation of a FLMM Reserve category in the General Fund to set aside resources to help fund discretionary grant applications for FLMM projects submitted by RFTA member jurisdictions. The initial FLMM Reserve fund was created by transferring $3 million from the existing Unassigned Fund Balance (estimated balance at 12/31/21 of $12.8 million) to a new FLMM in Committed Fund Balance.

Developing the capability for RFTA to plan, implement, and operate FLMM services throughout the region might require undue time and effort and may be cost-prohibitive. RFTA proposes to serve as a grantor to local jurisdictions, to fund the planning and implementation of FLMM in their municipal areas, at up to 50% RFTA FLMM matching funds. This may be the most feasible approach to implementing FLMM services more rapidly and at a lower overall cost to the partners and RFTA.

By Resolution 2021-20, RFTA Board Policy 2.5.5 was amended to read as follows (changes in bold italics):
Financial planning for any fiscal year or the remaining part of any fiscal year may not deviate materially from the Board’s Ends priorities, risk fiscal jeopardy, or fail to be derived from a multi-year strategic plan.

Accordingly, the CEO shall not allow budgeting that:

1. Fails to allocate at least an average of two (2) months of budgeted General Fund Revenues to Operating Reserves or an average of two (2) months of budgeted General Fund Expenditures, whichever is larger. Revenues include property tax, sales and use tax, service contracts, fares, operating grants and contributions. Expenditures include, operating expenditures, operating expenditures allocated to service contracts, and debt service. Such Operating Reserves may be drawn upon on recommendation of the CEO with Board approval to compensate for expected shortfall. At year-end, any available surplus in the General Fund will be allocated in the following manner: 70% to Committed Capital Reserves, 10% to Committed First and Last Mile Mobility (FLMM) Reserves, and 20% to Unassigned Fund Balance. The portion allocated to Committed Capital Reserves will be further allocated in the following manner: 75% Transit Capital Reserves, 20% Facilities Capital Reserves, and 5% Trails Capital Reserves. Such Capital Reserves may be drawn upon on recommendation of CEO with Board approval to fund capital needs and replenished using year-end surpluses. Such FLMM Reserves may be drawn upon on program requirements and recommendation of CEO with Board approval.

Additionally, by Resolution 2021-20, the Board amended Board Job Products Policy to add 4.2.5.B., as follows

B. Requirements for RFTA contributions to RFTA member jurisdictions for First and Last Mile Mobility (FLMM) solutions, to be known as “FLMM Grants,” shall be as follows:

1) The RFTA CEO shall establish and administer a FLMM Grant Program. Guidelines for the program will generally include, but not be limited to:
   a. Eligibility requirements;
   b. Evaluation criteria;
   c. A rating process that takes into consideration the project’s:
      i. Justification;
      ii. Nexus with (and ability to advance) RFTA’s strategic objective to provide increased first and last mile options for customers throughout service area;
      iii. Local financial commitment;
      iv. Plan for financial sustainability;
      v. Impact on the reduction of greenhouse gases.
   d. Performance metrics and periodic reports.

2) Total RFTA FLMM grant contributions will not exceed available resources in the FLMM Reserve unless additional funding is approved by the Board.

3) Requests for RFTA FLMM grant funding from RFTA member jurisdictions will be considered during RFTA’s annual budget process, although the RFTA Board may grant exceptions to this requirement in 2022, the first year of the RFTA FLMM grant program.
4) Requests for RFTA FLMM grant funding shall be submitted by deadlines to be established by RFTA each year.

5) Requests for RFTA FLMM funding will require a 50% local match by the requesting organization.

6) FLMM grant requests by quasi-governmental and non-profit organizations must be made in partnership with and submitted by RFTA jurisdictions, which will be the grantees.

7) The RFTA CEO will present recommendations for FLMM grant awards to the RFTA Board during the annual budget process.

Program Purpose
The purpose of RFTA FLMM discretionary grant program fund is to provide funding to initiate first and last mile mobility programs in RFTA member jurisdictions, recognizing that FLMM can support access to/from major transit stations and can provide general mobility and accessibility alternatives to single occupant automobiles, thereby reducing pollution and congestion and improving options for those who choose not or cannot drive a private automobile.

General Project Eligibility
RFTA’s FLMM fund is intended to help start up viable new First and Last Mobility (FLMM) transportation services that demonstrate alignment with the criteria set forth herein and that will eventually be self-sustaining to the greatest extent feasible. Other funding sources should supplement and ultimately replace RFTA FLMM funds for capital and operating assistance, as these projects should become part of the baseline FLMM transportation network. The RFTA FLMM fund is intended to provide initial capital support or operating support for up to three years, subject to annual appropriations.

Applicants must be RFTA member jurisdictions, who can conduct the project entirely in-house or partner with public, non-profit or private partners. All projects funded by this program will not be owned or operated by RFTA; however, for capital purchases, RFTA may retain the right to recover assets that cease to be used by FLMM grant recipients prior to reaching the end of their useful lives.

Public/Private (or nonprofit) Partnerships (PPPs) between jurisdictions and other entities should have a legally-binding written agreement in place before a RFTA-funded project may be implemented. These agreements should be developed under relevant Federal, State and local law, where applicable, and should specify the intended use for RFTA FLMM funding; the roles and responsibilities of the participating entities; and how the disposition of land, facilities, and equipment will be carried out should the original terms of the agreement be altered (e.g., due to insolvency, change in ownership, or other changes in the structure of the PPP). Public funds should not be invested where a strong public benefit cannot be demonstrated. Consequently, RFTA funds should be devoted to PPPs and projects that benefit the general public by clearly improving FLMM, reducing emissions and congestions, and supporting other RFTA FLMM goals discussed herein, not for financing marginal projects.
Eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- Bike or E-bike sharing
- FLMM-scale fixed route or demand response transit services
- Secure Bike Parking
- Community Carpooling
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure

Funding for operations should be limited to one calendar year.

**Project Selection Criteria and Process**

A committee of RFTA staff will evaluate projects subject to the following criteria:

1. **First and Last Mile Access To/From Transit**: Potential to improve first and last mile access to/from a major transit station and to improve the overall function of the transit system.
2. **General First and Last Mile Mobility**: Potential to improve trip making of two miles or less distance without the use of a personal automobile.
3. **Mobility and Accessibility to Under-Served Populations**: Potential to improve mobility for low-income, mobility-impaired, seniors, transportation-challenged or other disadvantaged populations.
4. **Congestion Reduction**: Potential to reduce congestion created by trucks and automobiles.
5. **GHG Reductions**: Potential to reduce emissions of CO2 and other greenhouse gases.
6. **Emissions Reductions**: Potential to reduce emissions of criteria pollutants (NOx, SOx, CO, PM, etc.) and other harmful emissions.
7. **Safety**: Ability of the project to enhance the safety of the traveler and the safety of the overall transportation system.
8. **Cost-Effectiveness**: Overall capital and operating cost of service (and cost to users) on a per-trip basis or by other measures.
9. **Financial Sustainability**: Local financial commitment and plans to ensure the long-term stability and success of the project or program. Is it anticipated that this project can be sustained within or beyond three years without a grant from RFTA’s FLMM Reserve?

Applicants are encouraged to address the above criteria by providing both qualitative and quantitative information and data when possible.

The committee will prioritize and propose funding for all selected projects and will make recommendations to the CEO, who will in turn submit them to the RFTA Board for approval during the annual budget process each year. RFTA will consider grant funding equity among jurisdictions when possible and appropriate.

**Matching Requirement**

All projects require a minimum 50% local investment. In-kind match will be considered, but cash match is a priority.

**Program Administration**

RFTA will issue requests for proposals in June of each year. Proposals will be due on August 1st. Awards will be announced in conjunction with the adoption of the annual budget by the RFTA Board, typically in
December. Projects may begin January 1. All grants funds must be expended within two calendar years of award, no later than December 31.

Please email inquiries and applications to djohnson@rfta.com.

**Reporting Requirements**

All jurisdictions must provide RFTA monthly reports, as well as an annual report submitted by January 31st following the year in which the service was provided. Specific reporting requirements will be set forth in the grant agreement between RFTA and the applicant.