RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update
April 12th, 2018

RFTA Vision Statement
RFTA pursues excellence and innovation in providing preferred transportation choices that connect and support vibrant communities.

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.

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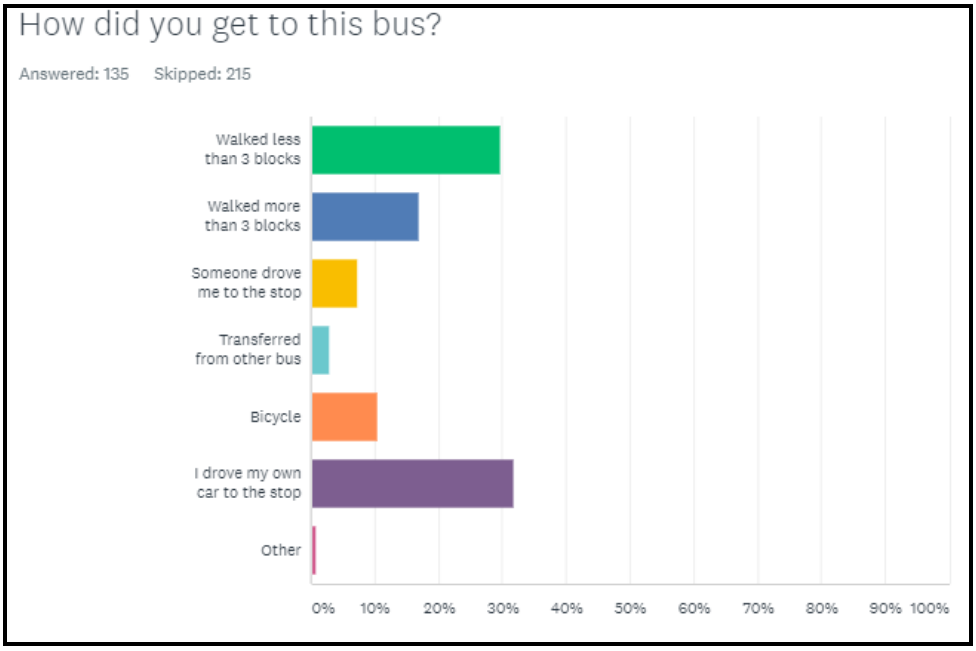
RFTA 2018 Passenger Survey

Since 2004, RFTA Staff has been conducting a semi-annual, one-day onboard passenger survey in English and Spanish all routes from Aspen to Rifle. The purpose of the onboard survey is to gauge passenger opinions on key aspects of RFTA services, such as safety, reliability, and courtesy. The feedback assists Staff in providing the best transit and trail services.

The 2018 Passenger Survey was successfully conducted on **Wednesday March 21st**; onboard and online. The Operations Department, specifically the supervisors and the drivers, did a great job distributing blank surveys on the buses and collecting completed surveys from the AMF, GMF and Rubey Park. Preliminary data reveals that about 1,900 of the 5,800 surveys were returned and deemed complete. This 34% return rate is above average for survey efforts.

In addition to the paper onboard surveys, the RFTA Marketing/Communications Department conducted the same survey on RFTA's website for one week. Preliminary Survey Monkey data reveals that about 350 customers answered at least part of the survey. The online data will be combined with the paper survey data for a full data analysis; projected to be available by the RFTA Board Retreat on May 10th.

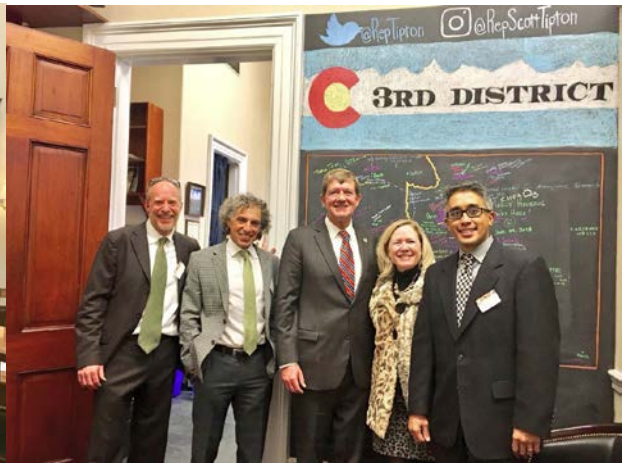


Snapshot of a typical Survey Monkey result from the Passenger Survey

APTA Legislative Conference/Meeting with Congressional Delegation

On March 20, Michael Yang, David Johnson and Steve Skadron met with RFTA's congressional delegates in Washington DC to discuss RFTA's significant role in rural bus transit, both regionally, statewide, and nationally. RFTA is the largest rural transit agency in the United States; approximately 3% of all rural bus trips in the US are taken on RFTA. RFTA also advocated for continued Federal investment in transit, contrary to efforts to reduce or eliminate Federal transit funding. Critical projects such as RFTA's Glenwood Springs Maintenance Facility Renovation and Expansion cannot be funded entirely by local sources, and cannot be funded by the private sector, as advocated by the current Administration.

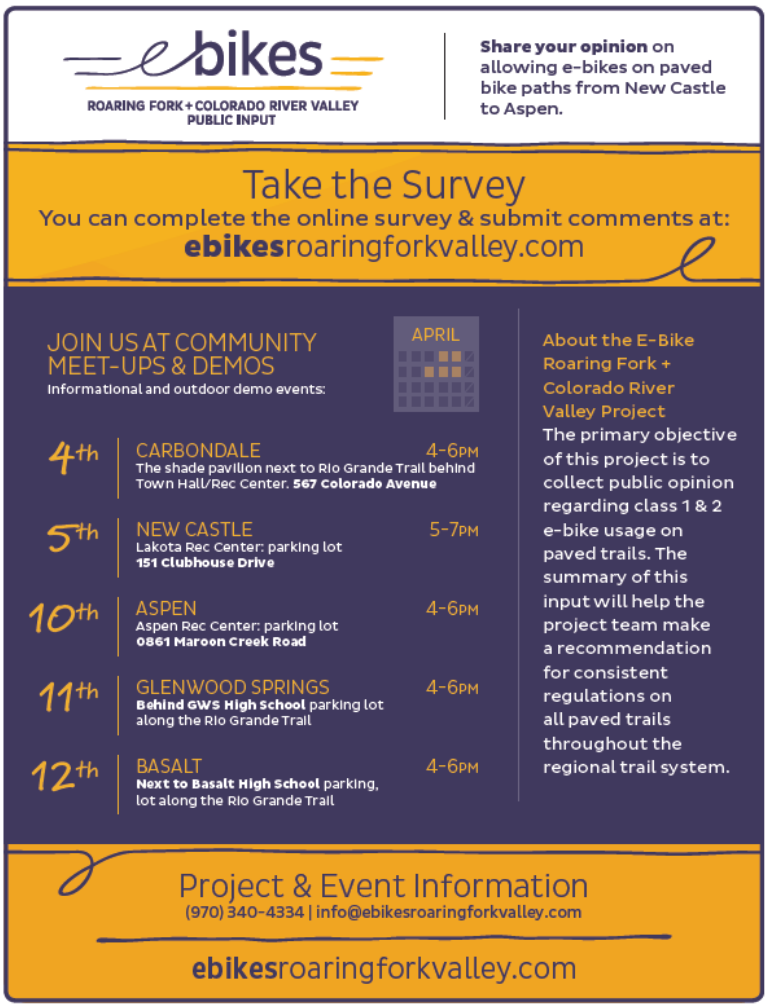
Both Senator Bennet and Representative Tipton were able to meet personally with RFTA, and were very receptive.



Electric Bike Public Process

Electric bikes, or e-bikes, are revolutionizing the biking world and challenging public lands policies for both soft and hard surface trails across the State. Bipartisan House Bill 1151 that Governor John Hickenlooper signed into law in 2017, made Colorado a permissive state by default for e-bikes.

The law says a person may ride Class 1 or Class 2 electric-assist bicycle where bicycles are authorized to travel, unless a local jurisdiction prohibits the e-bikes. More specifically, the law defines Class 1 e-bikes as those that only provide assistance when the bike reaches 20 miles per hour. Class 2 e-bikes are those that operate continuously, even when no one is pedaling, but switch off when 20 mph has been reached. The law leaves Class 3 bicycles — those that have motors that switch off at higher speeds — completely up to local jurisdictions; with an assumption they are not permitted.

Locally, the topic gained more attention in the summer of 2017 when CDOT approached downvalley jurisdictions about allowing e-bike usage along the Rio Grande Trail (RGT) during the Grand Avenue Bridge (GAB) project as a means of alternative transportation to reduce road congestion. The City of Glenwood Springs and the RFTA Board authorized the usage of Class 1 and Class 2 e-bikes along the lower sections of the Corridor, while Pitkin County and the City of Aspen placed a ban on all e-bikes along their sections of the RGT until a more robust public outreach process could be conducted.

On Feb. 20th, 2018 RFTA kicked off a roundtable discussion with regional trails partners about e-bikes. The group decided to shift outreach responsibility to Pitkin County and utilize the Aspen-based firm, PR Studio, to lead the public process. According to the project website, "Pitkin County Open Space and Trails in conjunction with Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) and the Lower Valley Trails Group (LoVa) is asking for public input on the use of e-bikes on hard-surfaced (paved) bike paths throughout our valley. The results from your input will help shape the recommendation on whether and where to allow class 1 & 2 e-bikes in the future." The flyer below directs users to a public survey and offers up five community meet-ups/bike demos in April from Aspen to New Castle.