**RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update**
***April 8, 2021***

***Evolving Customer Service***

As seen in the graphic above, Customer Service is one of RFTA's seven strategic outcome areas that guide the organization. Although RFTA has set a high bar of customer accountability over the years, and different departments provide varying levels of customer service, the existing exchange of information is somewhat disjointed and there is not one group or department that is accountable for tracking, reporting, disseminating to correct staff and then responding back to the customers. During all three years of the successful RFTA Leadership Academy, groups have highlighted this topic and adopted is as a group project. With leadership from the CEO, COO and CFAO, a cross-departmental Customer Service Committee has been formed to assess what is lacking, what is needed and what an ideal structure might look like for a phased customer service department. The group intends to solidify the problem statement and submit the project idea to the Strategic Initiatives Group as a possible selection for a 2022 project of concern.

***Regional Bike Share/First and Last Mile Mobility (FLMM) Plan***

**Background of Study**

RFTA has contracted with Toole Design to conduct the regional Bike Share/First and List Mile Study. The proposal evaluation committee, consisting of staff of RFTA's member jurisdictions, selected Toole unanimously.

The purpose of this study is to develop a regional bike share implementation and expansion plan for the State Highway 82 corridor from Glenwood Springs to Aspen, the Brush Creek corridor to Town of Snowmass Village, and the I-70 corridor from Glenwood Springs to New Castle. Recognizing that each community will have unique bike sharing goals and needs; levels of investment; levels of current implementation; and other unique policies or preferences.

The plan is intended to develop estimates for each community's operating and capital costs and identify shared regional costs. Recognizing that resources are limited, cost sharing agreements and a regional cost allocation plan will need to be developed by and among RFTA and the participating communities.

RFTA is committed to implementing this plan in partnership with WE-cycle, the region's sole and established bike share provider in Aspen, Basalt, El Jebel and Snowmass Village. WE-cycle will be a vested stakeholder in the study's process and outcome, as the Regional Bike Share Plan will become its future roadmap. RFTA has been providing financial support for WE-cycle since its inception, and the 2018 Destination 2040 campaign indicated that WE-cycle would operate the expanded bike share services.

In anticipation that discussions about other FLMM opportunities may arise, and that and other viable FLMM strategies could be considered, the RFP was structured as a base bike share study, with the option to add on a more conceptual study of other first-and-last mile strategies. During the RFP process, it became clear that it would be awkward to limit discussions to bike share and then restart the process later with discussions about other alternatives. As a result, RFTA awarded Toole Design the contract for both.

**Technical Advisory Committee Meetings**

Adrian Witte of Toole Design is leading the project. As a first order of business, Adrian invited staff from every RFTA member jurisdiction to participate in the Technical Advisory Committee to set the direction of the study. Proposed content of the six TAC meetings is summarized below.

| Meeting Month | Content |
|---|---|
| April 6 | 1. Project Scope and Schedule<br>2. Role of the TAC<br>3. Input on the vision, goals, and objectives of the expanded bike share program and on other First and Last Mile strategies<br>4. Opportunities and challenges<br>5. Describe and explore in detail the existing WE-Cycle program including its development, history, expansion, organizational model, and expansion framework<br>6. Organizational Models to consider |
| Late April | 1. Respond to follow-up questions about WE-Cycle operations<br>2. Review bike share organizational models in other communities with a focus on communities with non-profit-run systems that have either retained that model or transitioned to a different model<br>3. Introduce and get feedback on key considerations for deciding the future organizational structure<br>4. Start the discussion on other modes and programs including e-scooters and other first and last mile mobility options<br>5. Discuss how these modes may or may not fit within the same operating model |
| May | 1. Review results of local context analysis and interviews with individual cities and focus groups (including bike shops and other groups) to identify locally-specific needs and considerations<br>2. Present and discuss a short-listed option of organizational models with the intent of identifying 1-2 preferred models to take forward for further analysis |
| June | 1. Facilitate group input on the implementation needs for the preferred models including how regional decision making occurs, funding and oversight responsibilities, expansion planning, role of public, private, and other partners.<br>2. Introduce the public engagement plan that will collect feedback on the existing bike |

| | |
|---|---|
| | share system, desired expansion or program enhancements, and interest in different first and last mile mobility strategies |
| August | 1. Update and summarize public outreach efforts to gauge participation and feedback received<br>2. Present materials and get feedback on different first and last mile mobility strategies and technologies and a sense of which technologies are most preferred by the group. |
| September | 1. Present the draft report to gather feedback from the group that will be incorporated into the final report before it is presented to the RFTA Board |

**Regional Bike Share/FLMM Operating Model**
One of the critical components of the study is to provide guidance on a long-term operating model for bike share and FLMM. Currently, the regional bike share system is owned and operated by the non-profit We-cycle, which founded bike share in Aspen about 8 years ago.

Toole Design will reach out to the following peer cities that have non-profit bike share systems, that are either maintaining that model or have transitioned to a different model.

- Austin
- Boise
- Colorado Springs
- Fort Worth
- Minneapolis
- Kansas City
- Topeka
- San Antonio

**Multimodal Options for a Vibrant Economy (MOVE) Study**
Last the month; the Board approved an additional $51,000 to complete the MOVE study. Over the next month, staff from RFTA and from the City will be reviewing the following draft Technical Analyses:

- The Parking Memo
- Implementing Paid Parking Memo
- Parking occupancy maps
- Aspen Parking Case Study memo
- Pedestrian and Bicycle Improvements Plan
- Grand Avenue Alternatives Analysis VISSIM
- Alternatives Analysis Report
- Summary of public outreach process
- Conceptual Designs and Cost Estimates
- Implementation and Funding and Phasing
- Transit Recommendations
- Renderings

These technical documents will eventually be summarized in the final report and will be included as appendices.

At the request of the City Council, the project team will meet with the Council over a series of work sessions, reviewing the project components and requesting approval. The components include:

- Parking
- Intersection Analysis

- Transit Center Location
- BRT Extension Alignment Options
- Regional Transit Improvements
- Local transit improvements
- Bicycle and Pedestrian Improvements

Presentation and updates will also be provided to the RFTA Board.

***Battery Electric Bus (BEB) Data Collection Project***
Denver Metro Clean Cities (DMCC) and CALSTART are embarking on a *Medium/Heavy Duty EV Deployment: Data Collection* project. This coalition will collect and analyze data from a diverse set of electric vehicles across different applications, geographies, terrains and climate conditions. Data from electric school buses, transit buses and off-road equipment is of particular interest to support the anticipated growth of electrified transportation nationally. Now that CALSTART has appended a governmental addendum to the contract, we are ready to setup a call with the consultants to discuss more specific data logistics and process flow.

***Battery Electric Bus (BEB) Leadership Group***
The purpose of the Battery Electric Bus (BEB) Leadership Group is to give RFTA and City of Aspen staff across several departments an opportunity to discuss the pros/cons of the BEB Pilot Project that has been operating for 18+ months. The group will use current qualitative and quantitative performance data and observations. Some of the project criteria include: staff culture, public perception, operational needs, Holy Cross time of use charging tariff, smart charging software and greenhouse gas reduction goals. The information gathered during 2021 will better inform future decisions about fleet replacement and capital projects, as well as assist all stakeholders in furthering their local greenhouse gas (GHG) emission reduction goals.

The next task for this group will be to find the most strategic location along SH 82 to install an on-route charger, that will allow a bus to charge for only 5 minutes to top-off the battery and extend the operational range on longer Valley and BRT routes. We will work closely with Holy Cross Energy for this analysis.

**FTA Releases American Rescue Plan Act Apportionments**
On March 29, FTA announced a total of $30.5 billion in federal funding is now available to support the nation's public transportation systems as they continue to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic and support President Biden's call to vaccinate the U.S. population. Funding is provided through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Pub. L. 117-2), signed by President Biden on March 11, 2021.

The American Rescue Plan Act includes $30.5 billion for public transportation, including $26.6 billion to be allocated by statutory formulas to urban and rural areas, tribal governments, and for the enhanced mobility of seniors and individuals with disabilities, and $2.2 billion to FTA grant recipients in communities that demonstrate additional pandemic-associated needs. Funds will be made available at 100-percent federal share and primarily directed to operations and payroll. An additional $1.7 billion is provided for projects in the Capital Investment Grants (CIG) Program and another $25 million for competitive planning grants.
FTA will host a webinar about the American Rescue Plan Act funding on Friday, April 2, at 2 p.m. to provide additional guidance to transit stakeholders. More information about the webinar and additional resources are available on FTA's website.

The Act includes approximately $18 million for Colorado's rural transit agencies, to be districted through FTA Section 5311 formula funding.

**Biden Administration American Jobs Plan**

On March 31, 2021, President Biden released his proposed infrastructure plan, The American Jobs Plan. The approximately $2 trillion proposal is an eight-year plan that encompasses sweeping investments in our nation's surface transportation, water, and other infrastructure. This $2 trillion proposal includes the following transportation components:

- $571 billion additional spending on transportation infrastructure
  - This is on top of assumption of separate FAST Act reauthorization or extension at current funding levels for highways, transit and rail
- $115 billion: Highways, roads and bridges (fix it first-no new capacity)
- $20 billion: Road safety – safe streets for all, vision zero plans
- $85 billion: Transit
- $80 billion: Amtrak
- $160 billion (plus $14 billion in tax incentives)
  - EV charging stations
  - Electrify 50,000 diesel transit buses
  - Clean Buses for Kids program to electrify 20% of school bus fleet
  - Electrification of federal fleet including Postal Service
- $25 billion: Airports and NextGen air traffic control and new program for terminal renovations and multi-modal connections
- $17 billion: Inland waterways, ports and public ferries – emphasis on mitigation of air pollution near ports
- $25 billion: New program for infrastructure to address historic inequities/racial equity/environmental justice
- $44 billion: Projects of regional and national significance

**House Committees Provide Further Information on Congressional Earmark Process**

Both the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) and the House Committee on Appropriations have announced Congressional earmark processes for their respective bills. House Democrats and Republicans are expected to request earmarks. To date, neither Senate Democrats nor Republicans have outlined their processes for considering earmarks.

Earmarks are available under the last year of the current Transportation bill, though the FY2022 Appropriations process, and under the proposed 5-year Transportation Reauthorization. Earmarks under FY2022 Appropriations are likely to be limited, like $1 million or less.

In the Reauthorization Bill, each Member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee can expect $15-20 million in earmarks, which means Members not on the Committee (including the Colorado Delegation) will likely receive less. CASTA intends to work with its 56+ member transit agencies to develop a proposal for a Statewide earmark.

Although the Senate has not provided guidance, it is likely that CASTA's Statewide proposal is the best strategy, as the Colorado Delegation is unlikely to want to pick winners and losers among its constituents, and Representative Boebert has made it clear that she will not support earmarks: https://boebert.house.gov/media/press-releases/rep-boebert-fights-against-earmarks-corruption-and-government-waste.

Once CASTA has determined its strategy and proposal, RFTA will determine how to approach earmarking under the FY2022 Appropriations and under Reauthorization. This must happen before the April Board meeting, as deadlines are looming.

### *Grants Update*

As of the end of March and Q1 2021, RFTA Staff are managing 21 active grants, with 13 executed grant contracts and 8 grant awards pending contract execution. The estimated total of all grant awards (FTA and/or CDOT) is **$75.8 million**, with an estimated total local match of **$25.1 million**, and an estimated total grant-funded project cost of **$100.9 million**. This may be the first time that RFTA has broken the $100 million-threshold for project management.

| Project | Grant Source | Grant Amount | RFTA Match | *Total Project Cost |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ACTIVE GRANTS** | | | | |
| Buses: (4) Diesel Commuter Coaches | FY18 5339(b) Bus/Facility | $2,231,500 | $557,872 | $2,789,372 |
| Buses: 9 Diesels (7 low floors, 2 coaches) | FY19 FTA 5339 CCCP | $3,991,440 | $997,860 | $4,989,300 |
| Buses: (2) Cutaways | FY19 5339(b) Bus/Facility | $199,500 | $49,875 | $249,375 |
| Buses: (4) Diesel Low-Floor Replacements | FY19 5339(b) Bus/Facility | $1,788,312 | $447,078 | $2,235,390 |
| Buses: (1) Diesel Replacement | CY21 FASTER | $440,000 | $110,000 | $550,000 |
| Buses: (4) Diesel Replacements | FY20 FTA 5339 | $1,760,000 | $440,000 | $2,200,000 |
| Facility: BEB 450 kW (1) On-Route Charger | FY20 FASTER CCCP | $480,000 | $120,000 | $600,000 |
| Facility: GWS SH82/27th St. Ped X | FY21 TAP, MMOF, RPP | $3,050,392 | $1,300,392 | $4,350,784 |
| Facility: GMF/RTC Phase 2 | CY20 FASTER (CCCP) | $1,581,460 | $395,365 | $1,976,825 |
| Pitkin County Energy Box Master Plan (AABC Microgrid) | DOLA Energy Mineral Impact Assistance | $0 | $5,000 | $5,000 |
| Operating: Regional Commuter | FY21 5311 | $1,201,678 | $1,201,678 | $2,403,356 |
| Operating: Hogback | CY21 FASTER | $200,000 | $200,000 | $400,000 |
| Glenwood Springs MOVE Corridor Study | FTA 5304 | $80,000 | $20,000 | $100,000 |
| **TOTAL - Active Grants** | | **$17,004,282** | **$5,845,120** | **$22,849,402** |
| **AWARDED GRANTS PENDING EXECUTION** | | | | |
| Buses: (4) Diesel Replacements | FY21 FTA 5339 | $1,984,000 | $496,000 | $2,480,000 |
| Buses: (1) Diesel Replacement | FY21 FTA 5339 | $4,996,000 | $124,000 | $5,120,000 |
| Buses: (1) Traveler Cutaway | FY21 FTA 5339 | $76,000 | $19,000 | $95,000 |
| Facility: GMF/RTC P3 & P7 | FY21 FTA 5339(b), CDOT SB267 | $14,451,000 | $13,024,000 | $27,475,000 |
| Facility: GMF/RTC Phase 4 &5 | FY20 USDOT BUILD | $13,000,000 | $5,575,000 | $18,575,000 |
| Operating: FY21 5311 CRRSAA & CARES P3 Winter Surge | FTA 5311 Admin/Operating | $24,272,548 | $0 | $24,272,548 |
| Planning: Alternative Fuels Study | FY21 FTA 5304 | $75,000 | $75,000 | $150,000 |
| **TOTAL- Pending Executed Grant Contracts** | | **$58,779,548** | **$19,238,000** | **$78,017,548** |
| **Total Awarded Grants** | | **$75,783,830** | **$25,083,120** | **$100,866,950** |
| **GRANTS SUBMITTED - AWAITING NOTICE OF AWARDS** | | | | |
| Buses: (4) BEBs & Chargers | FY21 FTA 5339c Low-No | $2,700,000 | $2,700,000 | $5,400,000 |
| **RECENTLY CLOSED GRANTS** | | | | |
| Facility: AMF Phase 9: Replace Fuel Tanks | FY20 SB267 | $1,000,000 | $250,000 | $1,250,000 |
| Operating: CARES Act 1,2 Combined | CARES Act, 5311 Operating | $10,609,680 | $0 | $10,609,680 |
| Operating: Regional Commuter | FTA FY20 5311 | $1,201,680 | $1,201,680 | $2,403,360 |
| Operating: CARES Act 1 | CARES Act, 5311(f) Hogback | $100,000 | $0 | $100,000 |
| Operating: Hogback | CDOT CY20 FASTER | $200,000 | $200,000 | $400,000 |
| **TOTAL - Recently Closed Grants** | | **$13,111,360** | **$1,651,680** | **$14,763,040** |