RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update
August 9th, 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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BUILD Grant – Glenwood Springs Maintenance Facility

In 2009, the Obama Administration initiated the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant Program, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, a stimulus package developed in response to the Great Recession. ARRA's primary objective was to save existing jobs and create new ones as soon as possible, including by investing in infrastructure, education, health, and renewable energy. Initial funding was about $750 million; over the years, the program was increasingly subscribed and funding reduced to $500 million, with about 5% of funding available to all projects proposed.

In 2018, the Trump Administration re-branded the program Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development, or BUILD. Fundamental differences include DOT's intention to award a greater share of BUILD grant funding to projects located in rural areas, and three times as much funding as last year's TIGER program.

RFTA applied for TIGER funding in 2015, 2016, and 2017 to renovate and expand the GMF. Each year, RFTA's application reached the "highly recommended" list of projects. This year, with roughly three times the funding and the specific emphasis on targeting projects in rural areas, RFTA feels that this may be the best opportunity to garner Federal funds for the GMF.

On July 16-17, a few days before the grant submittal deadline, RFTA staff and Board members (George Newman, Art Riddile, Dan Blankenship, Mike Hermes, and David Johnson) met with the Colorado Delegation (Gardner, Tipton and Bennett) and with officials from the USDOT to discuss RFTA's BUILD grant proposal. The meetings very productive, and RFTA gained valuable feedback, which it was able to incorporate into the proposal before the July 19 deadline.

RFTA is requesting $22.9 million in BUILD funding to create indoor storage for 60 buses, and operational and maintenance capacity for diesel, CNG and electric buses and the host of sophisticated bus-related equipment. Total project cost is $32.9 million. Competition for BUILD funding is significant. Even if RFTA receives an award, it is unlikely that RFTA will receive the entire amount requested. Consistent with RFTA's 2.65 property tax-funded program of projects scenario in Destination 2040, RFTA is aiming to reap 50% Federal funding for this project, and use property tax funding, if voters approve, for the other 50%. Grant awards are anticipated to be announced before the mid-term elections in November.

Analysis of the proposed 0.62% statewide transportation sales tax

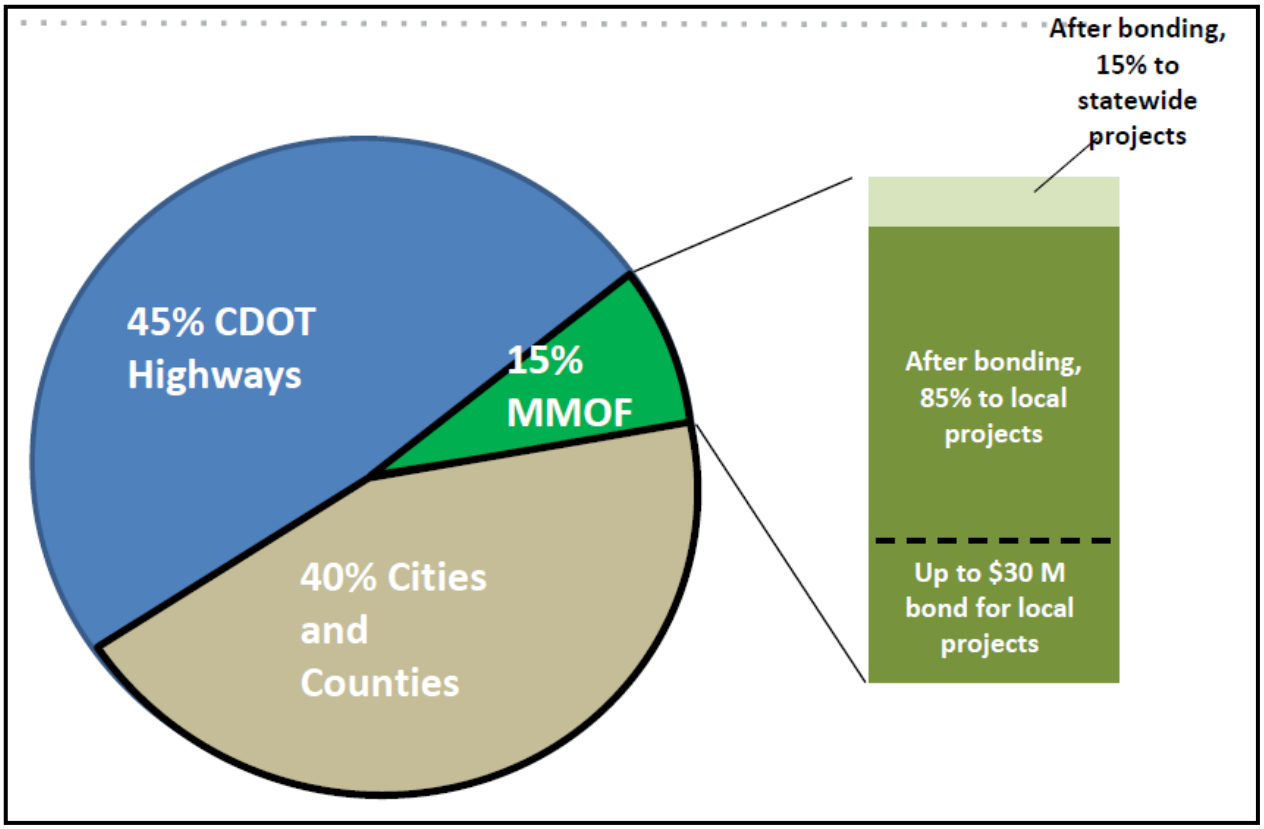
The Denver Chamber hopes to ask voters in November for a 0.62 percent statewide sales tax to pay for transportation. Meanwhile, a potential competing ballot question, backed by more conservative groups such as the Independence Institute, called Fix Our Damn Roads, intends to require the legislature to set aside $350 million each year from general tax revenues to repay $3.5 billion in bonds for transportation without a tax hike. CDOT forecasts $9 billion in needs over the next decade and $20 billion over the next 20 years.

For the 0.62 percent proposal, the proposed formula would raise about $768 million per year, 45 percent of which would be used to pay back $5 billion in bonds over the next 20 years for road projects determined by the Colorado Transportation Commission, 20 percent to counties, 20 percent to cities and 15 percent for multimodal projects.

According to the CDOT Division of Transit and Rail, the 15% multimodal fund would generate $105 million per year statewide. This funding is of particular interest to the Roaring Fork region, which has a remarkably high rate of transit, walking, and bicycling, particularly for a rural area. Multimodal funds could be used, potentially, for fleet replacement, construction of park and rides, the LoVa trail, and pedestrian crossings.

However, this $105 million must be allocated Statewide, and the State is considering a combination of bonding for larger projects, and allocations by formula. For example:

- $30 million per year dedicated to approximately $800 million in bonding statewide for large multimodal transportation projects (in excess of $10 million project cost).
- $63.75 million per year to local projects by formula to MPOs and TPRs
- $11.25 million per year to statewide projects administered by CDOT, for bicycle, pedestrian, carpool/vanpool/on-demand, and transit
- $6-7 million/year to the Division of Transit and rail for Bustang and Outrider, with some passed through to "Rural Regional" operations.



In terms of multimodal transportation in the RFTA region, when the roughly $64 million per year is allocated statewide among all 15 Transportation Planning Regions (TPR) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), CDOT estimates that approximately $2.5 million would be allocated to the Intermountain TPR, to be divided among 8 transit systems, including RFTA, and other multi-modal transportation projects.

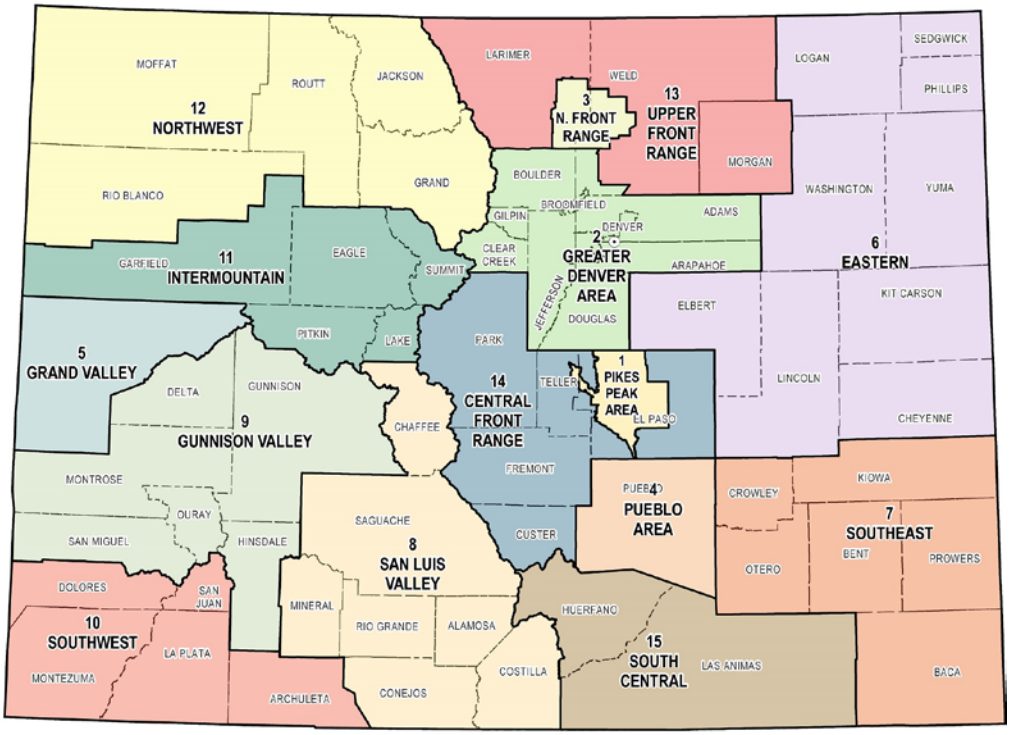


Figure 1: Map of Colorado's 15 Transportation Planning Regions

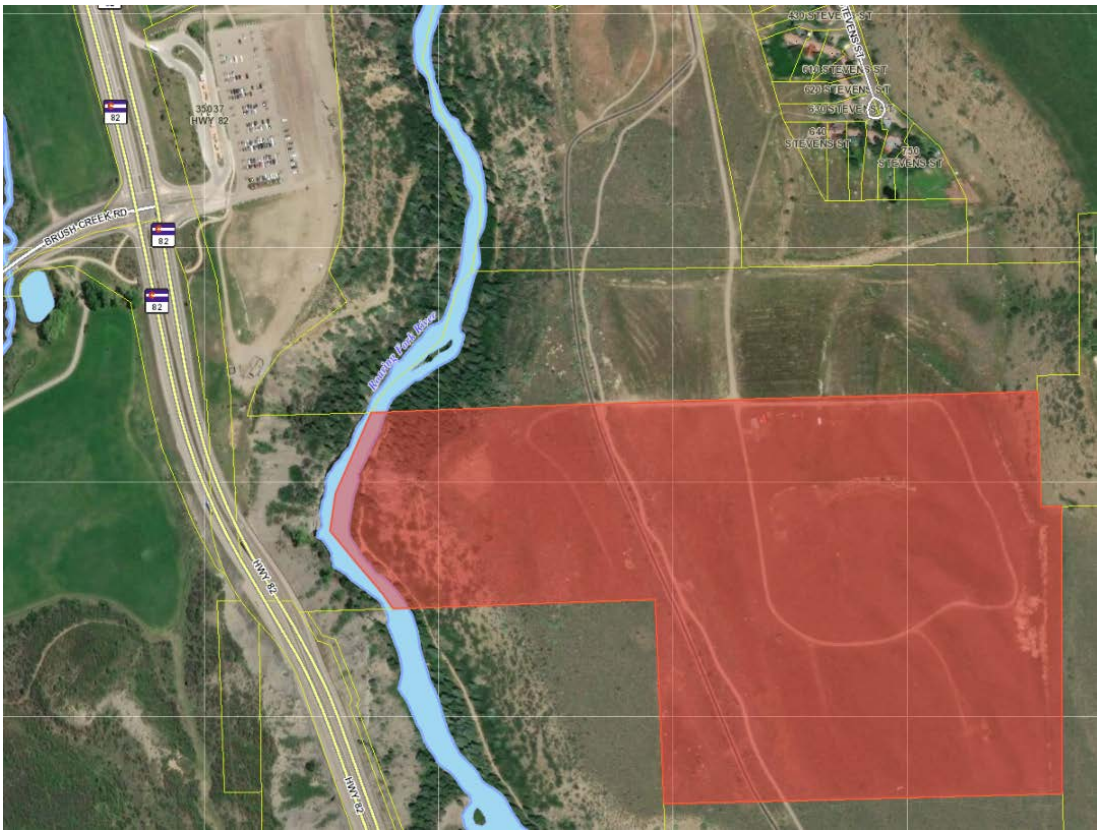
Solar Powered Electric Buses?

At the July RFTA Board meeting, staff received final approval to purchase eight (8) battery electric buses (BEBs) and depot battery chargers from New Flyer. RFTA Procurement and Vehicle Maintenance staff are finalizing bus specifications and negotiating contract details. Once the buses are ordered, there is an estimated 10-month delivery schedule, which would mean RFTA could be operating the buses in the upper valley in late 2019, or early 2020, at the latest.

The buses are just part of the equation for this innovative pilot project. Just as important is the electrical infrastructure that will allow RFTA to depot charge the buses at the AMF on the Holy Cross Energy grid during less-expensive, off-peak times in the middle of the night. Once RFTA staff finalizes operational and maintenance details, RFTA and Holy Cross engineers will estimate energy consumption by timer of day, and determine pricing for on-peak and off-peak charging scenarios. To flatten the energy spikes and rate variabilities, New Flyer sells a "smart charger" that has the option to turn off charging during more expensive peak demand periods.

RFTA planning staff has also been investigating the potential to purchase approximately 1 megawatt (MW) of local solar power production in a forthcoming Holy Cross Energy solar farm to offset the electricity required to operate the eight BEBs. Holy Cross will sell the solar power production in the 5MW array as part of a new Renewable Energy Purchase Program (REPP). The solar farm will be located on the W/J Ranch, across the Roaring Fork River from the Brush Creek BRT Station/Park-n-Ride, and the project will most likely receive final Pitkin County approval this fall.

If this vision becomes a reality, this 1 MW solar purchase would be in addition to 507 kilowatts (KW) that RFTA purchased from the Clean Energy Collective Sunnyside solar farm in May 2015. Very few transit agencies can proudly say they are responsibly offsetting their buses and facilities with 1.5 MW of locally produced solar power.



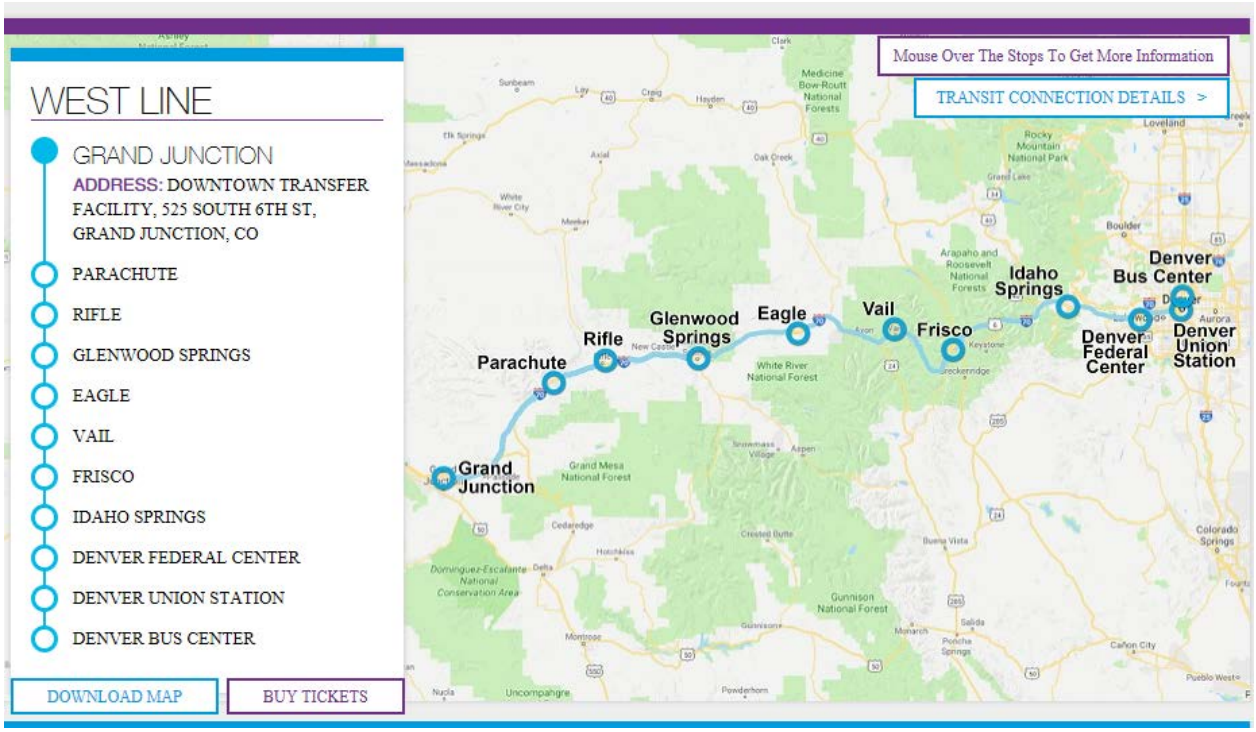
Proposed location of a new 5 MW Holy Cross Energy/RES solar array on the W/J Ranch in Pitkin County, near the Brush Creek BRT Station and Park-n-Ride. Local permitting and final location details are expected to be finalized this fall.

Bustang Expands the West Line

Since its inaugural run on July 13, 2015, Bustang's ridership has increased by more than 300 percent and provided service to more than 450,000 passengers. This year, ridership is averaging 17,000 passengers per month.

On June 29, the Bustang West line extended its western terminus from Glenwood Springs to Grand Junction, and expanded to three daily routes. One day later, CDOT initiated "Outrider" service between Denver and Gunnison, service 1,600 passengers in the first month.

Figure 2: West Line Map



The schedules below are effective August 15.

Table 1: Bustang West Line - EASTBOUND

SCHEDULE NUMBER		701	731	711
8/15/2018 MT		GLENWOOD SPRINGS - DENVER	VAIL -DENVER	GRAND JUNCTION - DENVER
		DAILY	**DAILY**	DAILY
Grand Junction, CO (GVT Downtown Station)	LV			**12:25 PM**
Grand Junction, CO (Greyhound 5th & Ute)	LV			**12:35 PM**
Parachute (Rafting Center I-70 & SH215)	LV			**1:30 PM**
Rifle (US6 & SH 13 RFTA Park & Ride)	LV			**1:50 PM**
West Glenwood Springs P&R	LV	7:25 AM		**2:25 PM**
Eagle *(Eby Creek Rd. & I-70)*	LV	8:05 AM		**3:05 PM**
Vail *(Vail Transportation Center)*	LV	8:40 AM	7:05 AM	**3:45 PM**
Frisco *(Frisco Transfer Center)*	LV	9:20 AM	7:45 AM	**4:25 PM**
Idaho Springs *(13th Ave between Miner & Idaho)*	LV	10:15 AM	8:30 AM	**5:15 PM**
Lakewood *(Denver Federal Center RTD LRT Stn. - gate L)*	LV	10:55 AM	9:10 AM	**5:50 PM**
Denver Union Station *(bus concourse)*	LV	11:15 AM	9:25 AM	**6:20 PM**
Denver Bus Center *(Greyhound)*	AR	11:25 AM	9:40 AM	**6:35 PM**

Table 2: Bustang West Line - WESTBOUND

SCHEDULE NUMBER		700	730	710
18/15/2018 MT		DENVER - GLENWOOD SPRINGS	DENVER - VAIL	DENVER - GRAND JUNCTION
FREQUENCY		Daily	Daily	Daily
Denver Bus Center (*Greyhound*)	LV	**5:15 PM**	**2:30 PM**	6:45 AM
Denver Union Station (*Gate B3*)	LV	**5:40 PM**	**2:45 PM**	7:00 AM
Lakewood (*Denver Federal Center RTD LRT Station*)	LV	**6:15 PM**	**3:10 PM**	7:25 AM
Idaho Springs (*13th Ave. between Miner & Idaho*)	LV	**6:55 PM**	**4:05 PM**	8:00 AM
Frisco (*Frisco Transfer Center*)	LV	**7:30 PM**	**4:50 PM**	8:45 AM
Vail (*Vail Transportation Center*)	LV	**8:10 PM**	**5:30 PM**	9:20 AM
Eagle (*ECO Transit Station-Eby Creek Rd. & I-70*)	LV	**8:45 PM**		10:00 AM
Glenwood Springs (West Glenwood Park & Ride)	LV	**9:35 PM**		10:45 AM
Rifle (US6 & SH 13 RFTA Park & Ride)	LV			11:15 AM
Parachute (Rafting Center I-70 & SH215)	LV			11:35 AM
Grand Junction, CO (Greyhound 5th & Ute)	LV			**12:30 PM**
Grand Junction, CO (GVT Downtown Station)	AR			**12:40 PM**