RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update

July 9, 2015

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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The RFTA Planning Department is here to protect and serve in 2015!

Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian & Transit Access Plan

RFTA was awarded a FTA Section 5304 grant in 2014 to conduct a *Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian & Transit Access Plan,* herein RBPTAP, for the Roaring Fork and Colorado River Valley region. Pitkin County, Eagle County and Garfield County are providing local cash match for the grant award. The technical advisory committee (TAC) consists of RFTA trail staff, CDOT bicycle-pedestrian staff and the three counties.

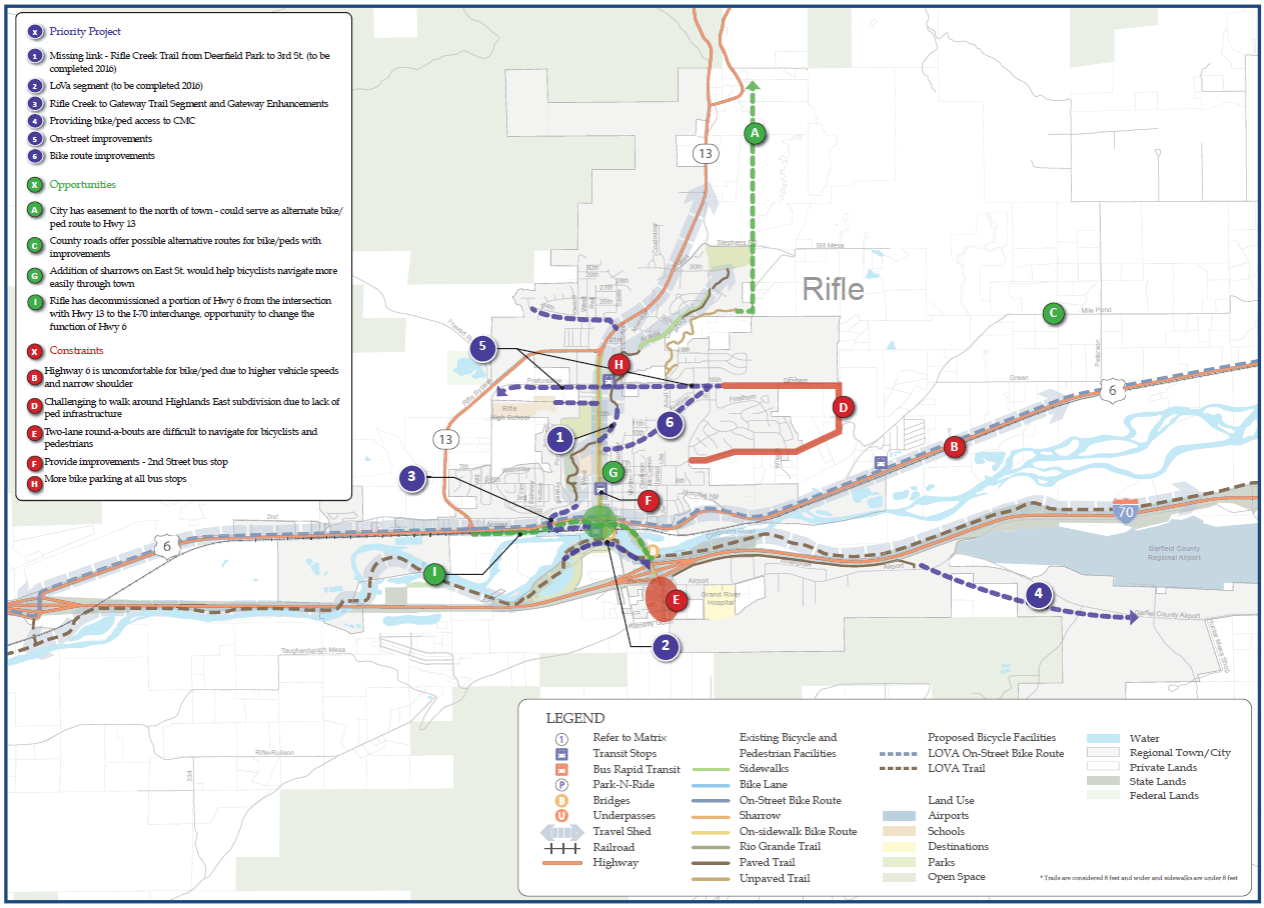
The purpose of the RBPTAP is to establish a region-wide vision with goals, objectives and a 25-year list of projects that integrate the bicycle and pedestrian system with the overall transportation system. This plan does not intend to overstep local jurisdictions; rather this regional plan will bring attention to localized plans for the purpose of creating a seamless regional trail network in the future. A regional bike-ped plan will set our region up for success for future bike-ped funding at the Federal and State levels.

The consultant team, Alta Planning and Design and Design Workshop, began work on this project in early December 2014. To date, the team has completed the following deliverables:

- Existing conditions maps for the study area (Nov/Dec 2014)
- Extensive outreach with staff and public (Feb. 2015)
- Condensed notes/maps from the outreach listing priority community projects (March 2015)
- An opportunities/constraints memo that distills feedback on priority projects (April 2015)
- Three technical advisory committee (TAC) meetings for project guidance
- Project prioritization criteria and weightings (June/July 2015)

Alta is currently working with the technical advisory committee (TAC) on project selection criteria, cost estimation and exploring interactive online mapping features for the final plan.

The final report is expected in middle to late July 2015. Online mapping elements, using the online Mapbox software, will be available in late July/early August. Regional planners, including the LiveWell Garfield County Built Environment group, are eagerly awaiting results from this regional project. RFTA feels confident that this regional plan will set up the RFTA service region for future Federal/State funding opportunities and increase overall multimodal awareness for healthier lifestyles.



Sample map from the Opportunities & Constraints Technical Memo, created by Alta Planning (lead consultant)

Solar Farm Renewable Energy Offset

RFTA staff is committed to advancing the authority's environmental and financial sustainability goals by offsetting traditional electricity consumption with local, renewable power production. At the May RFTA Board meeting, the Board of Directors gave final approval for the purchase of 507 kW in local solar power production at the new Clean Energy Collective (CEC) Sunnyside Solar Farm, near Carbondale. This purchase will allow the authority to hedge against future electricity costs and save money by owning local renewable energy production. Power generated by RFTA's solar will offset Holy Cross Energy (HCE) utility bills; expenditures RFTA would normally make to HCE will be used to offset annual payments on the lease purchase agreement.

Unlike Eagle County, RFTA was not in a financial position to use its cash reserves to purchase the solar panels outright. Therefore, staff worked diligently with Kutak Rock (Bond Counsel) and Alpine Bank through the financing complexities necessary for RFTA's unique financial conditions. A 2-step process will be used for acquisition: outright purchase and lease-purchase financing.

Using its fully-refundable $195,713 deposit issued in November, RFTA proposes to pay approximately $195,713 in cash for the purchase of an interest in the capacity of approximately 202 solar panels. For reasons related to the federal tax credits (in place for 5 years), RFTA cannot own the panels until after 5 years from the date the panels are placed in service. Therefore, for the first 5 years RFTA will have an

interest in the solar panel capacity that results in bill credits relating to such capacity. After year 5, RFTA will be able to acquire ownership of the panels for a de minimis amount.

RFTA's panels went "live" on May 27, 2015 and started producing solar bill credits immediately. RFTA Staff has been working diligently with CEC staff to establish the most efficient and user-friendly monthly reporting systems for RFTA to track the solar production from its PV panels. The RFTA Finance Dept. will use the monthly CEC report and the monthly HCE meter bills to account for solar credits on our utility bills.

Clean Energy Collective (CEC) Sunnyside Solar Farm, near Carbondale, where RFTA now owns 507kW of solar power production capacity. Photo courtesy of Sunsense, project installers.

Regional Travel Patterns Study

Background

The original ***Local and Regional Travel Patterns Study*** for the Colorado River and Roaring Fork River Valleys from Parachute to Aspen was conducted in 1998. In 2004, Garfield County led the update effort; in 2014, RFTA is taking the lead, incorporating additional information as requested by the local jurisdictions.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this project is to update the 2004 Study, which details how, why, and when residents and tourists are moving within the Roaring Fork and Colorado River Valleys region from Parachute to Aspen.

Status

The travel behavior component of the project has been completed, and the community travel profiles can be accessed here: http://www.charlier.org/index.php?id=1,347,0,0,1,0.

The Consultant team delivered the final draft report to RFTA on July 2. RFTA will schedule a meeting with the counties and municipalities and the end of July to review and comment on the draft.

Current/Future Grant Opportunities

The Planning Department invests great effort in researching, applying for, and administering a variety of grant opportunities. We provide these tables in our quarterly projects updates for the benefit of all RFTA departments.

Grant Program/Year	Project	Deadline	Amount Requested	Anticipated Award Date	Status
DOLA Energy Mineral Impact Assistance (EMIA) Program	GMF Construction – Phase I	4/29/2015	$1,500,000	August 2015	Meeting with Statewide Advisory Committee on July 20-21
CORE Randy Udall Grant	AMF Geo-Exchange System #2	5/1/2014	$200,000	July 2015	RFTA's application did not score as high as other projects. A final decision is expected in mid-August
USDOT TIGER 7	GMF Renovation/ Expansion	6/5/2015	$18 million	November 2015	
FTA 5311 FY2016-17 Admin/ Operating	General Operating Funding	6/5/2015	$1,065,278	September 2015	
Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District (GCFMLD)	GMF Renovation/ Expansion	8/28/2015	$450,000	October 2015	
DOLA Alt Fuels	Incremental cost of CNG for Carbondale Circulator Vehicle	8/1/2015	$35,000	October 2015	If RFTA does not receive an award for the incremental CNG cost then local funds will be used to make up the difference.
Great Outdoors CO (GoCo)	Rio Grande Railroad Corridor/Trail improvements	11/5/15	$200,000	March 2016	The appropriate grant program, project and amount will depend on a meeting with GoCo