RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update

May 14, 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 Dept. 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.

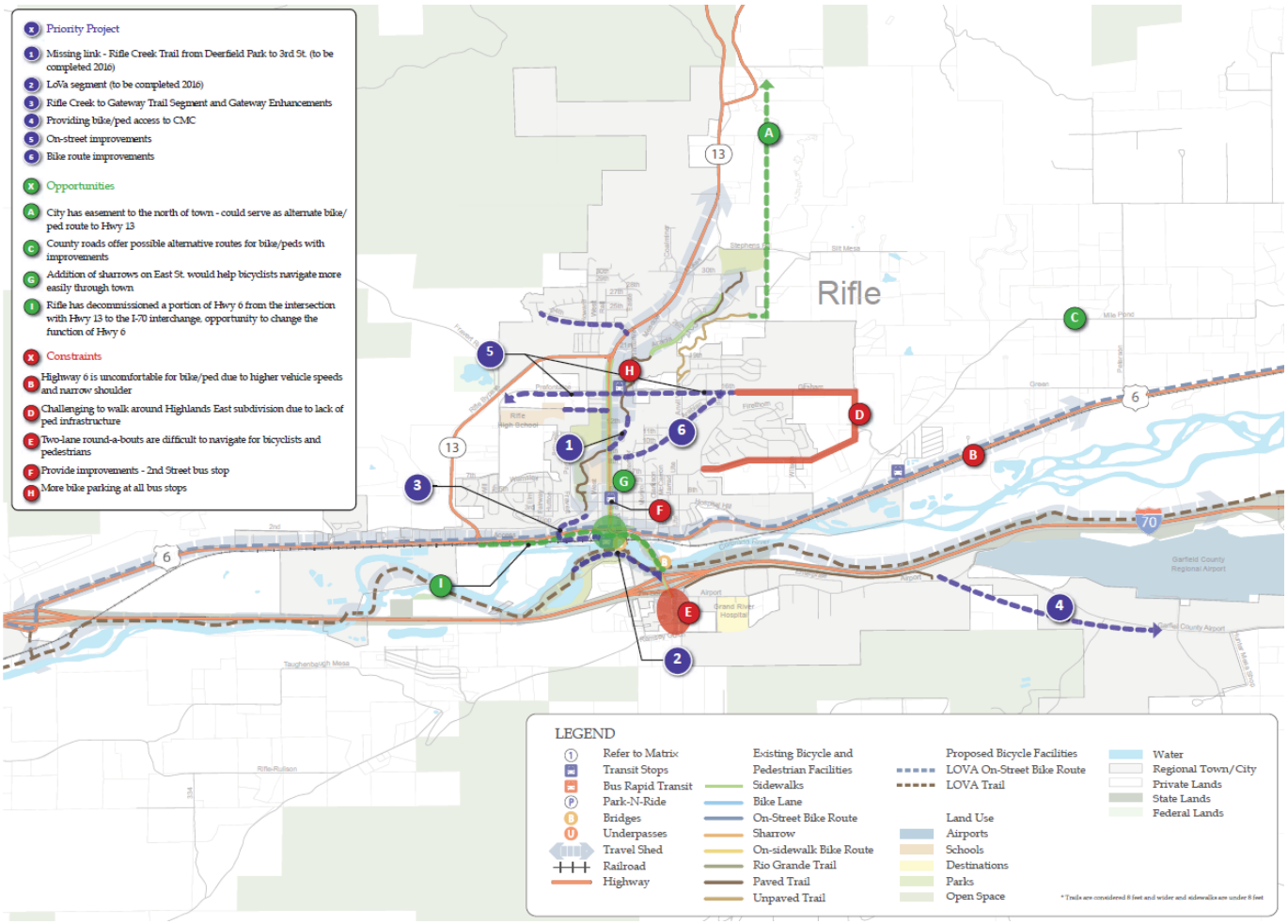
The purpose of the RBPTAP is to establish a region-wide vision with goals, objectives and a 25-year list of projects that integrate the bicycle and pedestrian system with the overall transportation system. These projects shall improve bicycle and pedestrian accessibility to home, education, employment, training, health care, shopping, entertainment, recreation, and other daily necessities; with a particular focus on access to major transit stations. This regional effort will build upon existing and planned local transit, bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure projects. It is RFTA's expectation that this study will provide planning justification needed to improve the funding potential for critical bicycle, pedestrian and transit access projects.

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)
- Two technical advisory committee (TAC) meetings for project guidance

The next steps are for Alta to create project prioritization criteria and useable online maps for the public. The group will closely follow criteria that have been presented in the CDOT State Bike-Ped Plan, and projects will be prioritized by County.

The final report is expected in middle to late June. Mapping elements will be available in late June/early July. Regional planners, including the LiveWell Garfield County Built Environment group, are eagerly awaiting tangible results from this exciting regional project. RFTA feels confident that this regional plan will set the RFTA service region up for success as future statewide multimodal funding is allocated.



Sample map from the Opportunities & Constraints Technical Memo

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 options. RFTA staff is continuing due diligence with the Clean Energy Collective (CEC) on a purchase of photovoltaic (PV) solar panels in CEC's new HCE3 solar farm for the purpose of offsetting a large portion of RFTA's Holy Cross Energy (HCE) electrical utility bills. This solar farm purchase will allow the authority to hedge against future electricity costs and save money by owning local renewable energy production. Power generated by the array will offset HCE bills; expenditures RFTA would normally make to HCE will be used to offset annual payments on the lease purchase agreement.

Unlike Eagle County, RFTA is not in a financial position to use its cash reserves to purchase the solar panels outright. Therefore, staff has been working diligently with Kutak Rock (Bond Counsel) and Alpine Bank through the financing complexities that will be necessary for RFTA's unique financial conditions. Staff is proposing a 2-step process to acquire the panels: 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.

There are still several project contract and financing details to work out. For the May Board meeting presentation there are a few current issues that may affect RFTA's purchase. More details can be found in the agenda packet, but in general:

- CEC's original conservative annual production estimate was 1,826 kWh/KW. Now that the array is constructed, the actual production estimate is closer to 2,000 kWh/KW. This discrepancy results in 10% higher production estimate, which affects leasing terms and return on investment projections
- RFTA may be wise to downsize the array from 574 to 507 kW to avoid excess credits on some meters. By Holy Cross terms, RFTA can only maintain 120% of consumption on each meter. Power production above that amount will cost RFTA extra money. A size adjustment would allow RFTA to project more actualized annual utility bills
- A system size reduction would decrease the purchase/lease costs for the project, and the increased production rate of the array would increase the return on investment to RFTA. This is a positive result, but the detailed financial paperwork will have to be revamped
- The power purchase agreement (PPA) between CEC and HCE is firmly defined for the first 20 years. There are uncertainties beyond that time that make RFTA nervous.

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. Thanks to a $75,000 planning grant from CDOT and roughly $75,000 matching funds from local governments, this will be the most comprehensive analysis of travel behavior since the 2003 Corridor Investment study.

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. The study will provide information about current and future needs for motor vehicles, for public transit, and for walking and bicycling. Data compiled by this study will be used to make more informed decisions about transportation improvements and to justify funding.

Charlier & Associates is the lead consultant, with the supporting firms Alliance Transportation Group, RRC Research and the local planning/outreach firms Bluegreen (Aspen) and Sonoran Institute (Glenwood Springs). Charlier and RRC successfully completed the two previous studies.

Status

The travel behavior component of the project has been completed, and the findings presented by Jim Charlier and Clark Anderson at a regional transportation forum in Glenwood Springs October 17, 2014. The community travel profiles can be accessed here: http://www.charlier.org/index.php?id=1,347,0,0,1,0.

The Consultant team is generating a report on the efficacy of developing a regional travel model for the region. Data generated from the Travel Patterns Study would be used to develop trip generation rates and other inputs.

The project should be complete by the end of May.

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.

Grants Submitted

Grant Program/Year	Project	Amount Requested	Award /Anticipated Award
FTA/CDOT Consolidated Call for Capital Projects (CCCP); 5311, 5339 and FASTER funding	GMF Renovation/Expansion Project: $500,000 New Castle PNR Construction: $600,000; Carbondale PNR Expansion: $802,050 AMF Phase IV Re-commission: $896,000		AWARDED
Energy Mineral Impact Assistance (EMIA) Program	GMF Expansion/Renovation Project – Design, Phase 1A	$105,000	AWARDED
DOLA Alt Fuels Grant Initiative	Incremental cost of MCI CNG bus and two CNG vans for GarCo Traveler	$165,049	AWARDED
FASTER Operating Funding	Operating funding for the Grand Hogback Route	$200,000	AWARDED
Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District (GCFMLD)	GMF Renovation/Expansion Phase 1 Construction	$450,000	NO AWARD
Energy Mineral Impact Assistance (EMIA) Program	GMF Construction – Phase I	$1,500,000	July 2015
CORE Randy Udall Grant	AMF Geo-Exchange System #2	$200,000	May 2015

2015-2016 Grant Possibilities

Grant Program/Year	Project	Amount Requested	Anticipated Notice of Awards
USDOT TIGER 7	GMF Renovation/Expansion Phases 3-6	$18 million	November 2015
FTA 5311 FY2016-17 Admin/Operating	General Operating Funding	$1,065,278	September 2015