RFTA 5 Year Plan Quarterly Update
July - September Q3 2015

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BACKGROUND

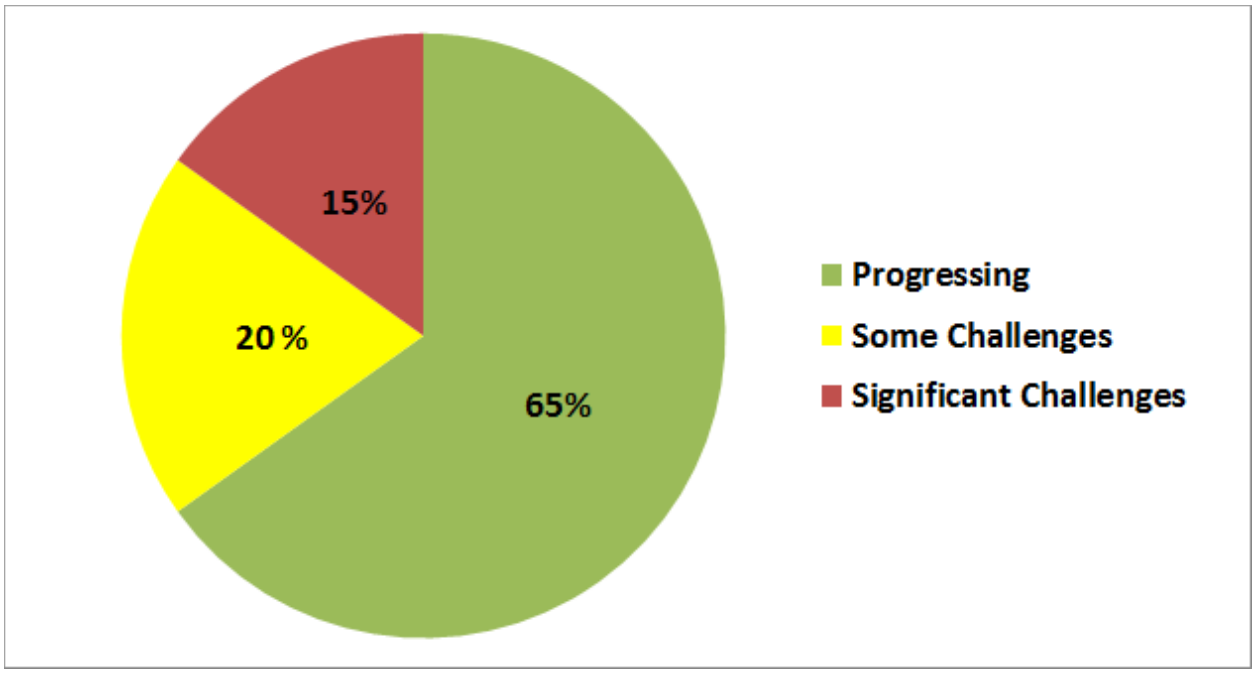
The primary purpose of the RFTA 5 Year Strategic Plan Quarterly Update is to serve as a progress report for each department to track their 2015 goals that were chosen for monitoring throughout the year. The most relevant project successes and challenges are presented for the purpose of cross-departmental communication and awareness.

The following pie chart illustrates progress of approximately 150 projects, or tasks, currently being managed by 14 departments at RFTA. New for this quarterly update, the Rio Grande Railroad Corridor, the Rio Grande Trail and the Garfield County Traveler have been separated to better represent the specific projects and goals that these departments are managing.

Some of the major challenges that RFTA Staff face this quarter include:

- Striving to recruit, hire, train and retain acceptable levels of bus operators.
- Establishing long-term dedicated funding for RFTA.
- Securing competitive external grant funding for the 6-phase $35M GMF Renovation/Expansion Project.
- Building Phase 1 of the GMF Renovation/Expansion Project and solving current and future site capacity issues with increased transit demand and the forthcoming Grand Ave. Bridge Project.
- Advancing grant funding for construction of the New Castle Park & Ride.
- Finishing construction on the Carbondale Park & Ride Expansion and Rubey Park Renovation Project.
- Working through landowner concerns in regional jurisdictions with regard to the Rio Grande Corridor Access Control Plan.
- Creating a seamless ITS Data Transition Plan that will affect all departments.
- Begin work on a RFTA Integrated Transportation System Plan (ITSP).

Approximately 65% of current projects are progressing on time and within budget. Approximately 20% of the projects may require some departmental coordination to get the project back on track. And approximately 15% of projects are experiencing significant schedule and/or budget challenges due to a variety of factors.



Areas of Accomplishment

- The 15-Year Long Range Financial Forecast has been completed and is being updated during the 2016 budget process.
- A new COO, Kelley Collier, was hired in May and her first day was in July.
- The Grand Avenue Bridge Transit Mitigation Plan has been completed, in cooperation with the City of Glenwood Springs and CDOT.
- The Carbondale BRT PNR Expansion is under construction and should be completed by Thanksgiving 2015.
- In May 2015, the RFTA Board approved the lease-purchase of 500 kW of Holy Cross Electric solar power in the Clean Energy Collective (CEC) Sunnyside solar array, near Carbondale.
- The Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian & Transit Access Plan is near completion; a final report is expected in late September. Several regional jurisdictions are already using the data to further bike-ped projects at the local level.
- An update of the Regional Travel Patterns Study (RTPS) has been completed.
- Wi-Fi access has been installed on the entire RFTA bus fleet.
- A new Fleet Maintenance staff position has been created to focus on the full development and integration of EAM software into the department.
- RFTA has received $600,000 in grants for design/construction of Phase 1A and Phase 1 of the GMF Renovation/Expansion Project.
- A 5-Year Strategic Plan for the Garfield County Traveler Senior Transportation Program has been completed and integrated into quarterly strategic plan updates.
- Design is complete for Rubey Park Renovation Project. The facility will be functional by the end of 2015 and final paperwork and project closeout will occur in early 2016.

- Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the 20-Year Office Space & Housing Master Plan have been completed.
- Phases 1 & 2 of the AMF Recommissioning Project are complete. AMF Phase 3 is under construction and design for Phase 4 is expected by the end of 2015.
- Design of the West Glenwood Springs Park & Ride, including trail & sidewalk improvements, is complete.
- Enterprise Asset Management (EAM) software is up and running for both Fleet Maintenance and Facilities.
- CDOT's Bustang service was launched in the spring and RFTA staff worked cooperatively to integrate headways at both the 27th St. BRT Station and the West Glenwood Springs Park & Ride.
- All Rio Grande Trail routine and emergency maintenance projects have been completed for 2015 (approximately 1,400' of trail repairs).
- Rio Grande Trail and Planning Staff continue to collaborate with CCAH and The Town of Carbondale on the Carbondale Creative District project, which includes the 1-mile Rio Grande Artway project through Carbondale. Edible landscaping and sculptures have been installed in the corridor.
- HR, Operations and Safety/Security have worked collaboratively to institute successful New Hire Orientation trainings.
- HR is working with MSEC to conduct market surveys for all RFTA job descriptions to determine if there has been a recent movement in wage scales.
- Marketing/Communications is working on a complete website overhaul, including coordination with real-time scheduling in Google Transit to make our 5-season schedule changes more automatic.
- Marketing/Communications is working on a more user-friendly system-wide map and riders' guide, both to be highlighted on the new website.
- In August 2015, the Operations Department added hours and miles to BRT, Snowmass and City of Aspen routes to improve level of service, efficiency and on-time performance. The Procurement Department has been working collaboratively with the City of Glenwood Springs, Pitkin County, CMC and City of Aspen to coordinate procurements and facilitate round table discussions regarding best practices, training, etc.
- Safety/Security implemented and trained 70 operators on ADA/Wheelchair refresher training.
- Finance Department successfully started the 2016 budget process in August and provided a draft budget to RFTA Board in September to allow more time to review budget priorities and projects.

Areas of Challenge

- CEO and COO need to develop/implement a CEO & Management Team Succession Plan.
- In order to secure additional long term dedicated funding sources, the RFTA Board and Staff continue to discuss the pros and cons of presenting a mill levy property tax question on the 2016 or 2017 ballot.
- The RFTA Board has asked Staff to create an Integrated Transportation System Plan (ITSP) for the purpose of assessing regional transportation gaps, and any unmet agency services, resources and assets.
- Develop a web-based system for updating existing documentation for workflow policy/procedures and succession planning for integration with centralized best practices software. This will take three years to complete.
- RFTA Staff is awaiting resolution of open litigation in order to successfully closeout the BRT project.
- Operations and Fleet Maintenance are struggling with hiring, training and retaining competent and committed staff. A rebounding regional job market increases competition for employees.
- Address current capacity issues at the GMF, knowing there are forthcoming operational and overflow parking issues with large projects. Phase 1A and Phase 1 construction will be helpful, but increasing transit demand from BRT and the Grand Ave. Bridge Project will further restrain the site capacity.
- New Castle Park & Ride design is complete. However, grant award schedules are hindering the construction schedule. Staff received a grant deadline extension of 1 year (October 15, 2016) from GCFMLD Board. Staff also received notice of proposed funding from CDOT for $800,000; funding to be available July 2016. Staff is working with CDOT to get funding in place by February 1, 2016 after Transportation Commission approval.
- Staff struggles to find competitive, external grant funding to complete the entire 6-phase $35M GMF Renovation/Expansion Project. Staff has received a $105,000 Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance Program (EMIA) grant for design and a $500,000 grant from CDOT for construction. RFTA applied for a $300,000 grant from FMLD and a $1.5 million grant from EMIA for construction. Both grants were denied. RFTA has reapplied to both sources for the most current grant cycle. RFTA also applied for about $18 million in TIGER funds. RFTA's lobbyists believe that awards will be announced in October.
- Rio Grande Corridor Staff is developing a process to clean up the Federal Grant Right of Way (FGROW) areas where private properties are encroaching into the Rio Grande Railroad Corridor. Landowner outreach has started this year and will continue in 2016.

The FGROW project will require a Congressional ratification process led by the Colorado Congressional delegation.

- Rio Grande Trail Staff continues to assess the cost-benefits of building a soft surface pedestrian/equestrian trail adjacent to the existing Rio Grande Trail.
- EAM software is not currently able to track and integrate with CDOT's State of Good Repair (SOGR) reporting information.
- CEO, Maintenance, Planning and Finance need to assess the RFTA rolling stock and establish a realistic capital replacement schedule under tight budget conditions.
- HR has assessed that the NeoGov software is too expensive to use for the Administrative Personnel Performance Evaluation Forms. HR is currently working with the RFTA IT Department to develop forms so that each department can put in the competencies that relate to their department.
- The IT and Operations departments continue to work diligently on an ITS Data Transition Plan, integrating Clever Devices and UTA data to yield automated reports for ridership, miles and hours. The current issues are manual head sign data entry and assigning the correct amount of deadhead miles to the correct bus routes.
- Due to limited staff capacity and workload, the Procurement Dept. will push the update of the Procurement Policies & Procedures Manual to 2016.
- Planning needs to pursue vehicle grant funding through limited sources for two additional 14-passenger vans for the Garfield County Traveler.

ACTIONS

The following are key departmental action items for late 2015 and early 2016. Some of these action items may be in addition to the 2015 departmental goals that were set forth at the beginning of the year.

CEO, COO, Procurement & Finance

- Developing/implementing the CEO & Management Team Succession Plan
- Updating RFTA Board Governance Policies
- Securing federal grants for the $35M GMF Renovation/Expansion Project
- Receiving Board approval of the 2016 budget
- Continue to work with several departments on an ITS Data Transition Plan
- Resolving open litigation in order to close out the BRT project
- Working with regional jurisdictions to discuss landowner concerns with the Rio Grande Railroad Corridor Access Control Plan (ACP)
- Increase agency-wide utilization of the Procurement Calendar to facilitate long term procurement planning
- Hiring, training and retaining qualified staff in a competitive job market

- Continuing to explore options for additional dedicated funding by potentially placing a property mill levy question on the regional ballot in 2016 or 2017
- Working cooperatively with CDOT and the City of Glenwood Springs for transit mitigation during the Grand Avenue Bridge Project
- Update existing documentation for workflow policy/procedures and succession planning for integration with centralized best practices software for RFTA

Planning & Marketing/Communications

- Providing quarterly strategic plan updates to Directors and Managers for the purpose of tracking progress on departmental goals; as well as providing quarterly strategic plan updates to the RFTA Board.
- Continue to develop a scope of work for an On-Call Planning Services Contract that will streamline several forthcoming capital project planning processes from several RFTA departments i.e. onboard passenger survey, vehicle procurement, facilities improvements.
- Begin to develop a scope of work for an Integrated Transportation System Plan (ITSP), secure funding and solicit procurement for the estimated $100,000 process.
- Strategize and apply for applicable Federal, State and regional grant funding. The primary grant funding focus for this year is to secure very competitive transit funding for the estimated $35M GMF Renovation/Expansion project. Staff eagerly awaits TIGER VII award announcements in late 2015.
- Conduct an existing and future fleet inventory and service needs evaluation. This evaluation should consider various ridership increase projections, and show how those ridership increases will impact fleet needs, facility needs, and FTEs.
- Finalize the Regional Bicycle, Pedestrian & Transit Access Plan and continue to work with local jurisdictions to move local projects forward.
- Continue to integrate real-time seasonal schedule information in Google Transit.
- Finalize a new RFTA system-wide map and a redesign of the RFTA website.

Fleet Maintenance

- Address bus maintenance, operations, and capacity issues created by Grand Avenue Bridge reconstruction.
- Assess RFTA rolling stock and establish a realistic capital replacement schedule under tight budget conditions.
- Train new employees and mid-management to address the new needs and impacts of BRT expansion.
- Retain qualified employees with sufficient maintenance skills Continue to work with CDOT for State of Good Repair and EAM data integration.

Facilities

- Complete the remaining Phase 3 and Phase 4 of the *20-Year Office Space & Housing Strategic Plan* in order to assess the type of facilities that will be necessary, where they should be built and how they will be funded.
- Complete construction of the Rubey Park Renovation Project by the Spring of 2016.
- Complete construction of the Carbondale Park & Ride Expansion Project by the end of 2016.
- Continue to work with CDOT to advance grant funding for construction of the New Castle Park & Ride in early 2016.
- Continue to construct Phase 1 of the GMF Renovation/Expansion Project and integrate site work with the West Glenwood Springs Park & Ride Project.
- Finish construction of AMF Phase 3 in late 2015/early 2016 and secure 100% design of AMF Phase 4 by the end of 2015.
- Continue to utilize and update EAM software.

Railroad Corridor/Rio Grande Trail

- The Access Control Plan **(**ACP**)** will be updated and sent back out to the RFTA member jurisdictions and put out for another 30 day public comment period beginning October 1st through October 31st. The process for acceptance of the ACP has been changed and will now be a 2-stepapproval, with the first reading in November and the second reading in December or January (depending on whether or not we have a December meeting). Once the ACP update has been voted on and approved by the RFTA BOD, Staff will begin working on an update to the Recreational Trails Plan.
- Develop a process to clean up the federal grant right of way (FGROW) areas where private properties are encroaching into the Rio Grande Railroad Corridor.
- Install irrigation alongside the Rio Grande Trail through Carbondale.
- Work cooperatively with CCAH and the Town of Carbondale on the Rio Grande ArtWay. Project, to install integrated Wayfinding and Educational Interpretive Signs.
- Seek GoCo and CPW State Trails funding for Rio Grande Trail maintenance/beautification projects.
- Continue to perform a cost-benefit analysis for the construction of a soft surface pedestrian/equestrian trail parallel to the existing RGT.

Operations, IT, Safety/Training & Traveler

- Continue to work on a seamless ITS Data Transition Plan that will affect internal reporting for all departments.
- The Operations Department continues to adjust schedules and headways for optimum efficiency for both RFTA and our passengers. Examples include:
    - Snowmass BRT implemented for Winter 2014/2015. Reevaluation of services for winter of 2015/2016 analyzing a combination of locals and BRT services during afternoon commuter hours.
    - Off season weekend regional service added during commuter hours so that there is half-hourly service.
    - Hours and miles added to several routes for winter 2015, including Snowmass and City of Aspen, to improve level of service, efficiency and on-time performance.
- Continue to communicate with Facilities on construction operations during the remaining phases of the Rubey Park Renovation Project.
- Strive to hire and retain acceptable levels of full-time year round drivers.
- Continue updating Operations' Training Manual to accommodate changes in transit services and in regulations and policies.
- Conduct regular evacuation drills and training for all staff.
- Develop ADA/Wheelchair refresher training for operators.
- Pursue an additional grant (or use 5311 capital request) for 2 additional 14-passenger vans for the Traveler.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this narrative is to identify the major issues facing RFTA and distill them as simply and carefully as possible, so that RFTA staff can discuss them more effectively and arrive at more proactive courses of action.