RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update

December 12, 2019

RFTA Vision

RFTA pursues excellence and innovation in providing preferred transportation choices that connect and support vibrant communities.

RFTA Mission

Connecting our region with transit and trails.

RFTA Values

Safe, Accountable, Affordable, Convenient, Dependable, Efficient, Sustainable

RFTA Strategic Outcomes

Safe Customers, Workforce and General Public; Accessibility and Mobility; Sustainable Workforce; Financial Sustainability; Satisfied Customers; Environmental Sustainability; High Performing Organization

Current Planning Projects

Battery Electric Bus (BEB) Pilot Project Update

Following the start of the winter season on December 3rd, BEBs will begin operating initially on Hunter Creek and Castle-Maroon and other routes. The four BEBs purchased by the City of Aspen will be focused on shorter City routes, and RFTA intends to operate its four BEBs eventually on short regional routes and possibly on Highlands, Buttermilk or on the new Flyer service. RFTA and the City of Aspen hosted an in-service celebration at Rubey Park on Tuesday, December 3, 2019.

Figure 1: Aspen Transportation Manager John Krueger speaks during the Maiden Revenue Service Voyage of the pilot BEBs

Intermountain Transportation Planning Region (IMTPR) Meeting
CDOT is now engaged in updating its 2045 Statewide Transportation Plan and the Regional Transportation Plans for its 15 regions. On November 1, CDOT worked with the counties, municipalities, and transit agencies to prioritize projects. After a laborious effort, CDOT requested that each County reach consensus on their 2-3 highest priority road projects and multimodal transportation projects, and reconvene on November 22. Then IMTPR discussed those projects on November 22, and determined that an elected official from County will meet to develop the strategic priorities for the Intermountain region.

Glenwood Springs Corridor Study
Creating a balanced, safe, and affordable multimodal transportation system is a common goal to both the City of Glenwood Springs and RFTA. The two partners have hired a consultant team led by Parsons Transportation Group to identify, evaluate and implement transportation strategies and opportunities that will optimize the efficiency and utility of the transportation system through Glenwood Springs and that will align with the City's goals for mobility, land use, economic vitality, economic sustainability and quality of life.

The study will address several key and interrelated transportation elements: BRT extension, local transit service, intersection and traffic operations, pedestrian/bicycle mobility, and parking plans and facilities.

This study effort will provide a strategic blueprint to guide RFTA's and the City's near- and long-term infrastructure investments, and provide a foundation for design, funding and implementation initiatives.

Parsons has arranged a kickoff meeting with RFTA and City staff on December 10. Topics included:

- Review of Scope of Work, proposed Schedule and Deliverables
- Public Outreach
- Organization Structure for Parsons, RFTA and Glenwood Springs
- Roles and Responsibilities

The study is anticipated to require 12 months of effort.

Aspen Airport Visioning
In February of 2019, the Technical Working Group (TWG) was created to advise the Airport Vision Committee (AVC) on technical areas of the proposed airport improvements. RFTA is part of this committee. Specifically, the AVC has asked the (TWG) to answer the following questions:

- To meet our community values and goals, what is our desired "design aircraft?"
- How could the existing or future "fleet mix" meet the air pollution reduction, modest enplanement growth, and noise abatement goals established by the ASE Vision process?
- In light of those community goals, what does the future airfield look like in terms of safety and airport design?
- What are the implications of the status quo vs Design groups II and III? Could any variations exist within these design groups that might help us attain our community goals?
- What should be the commercial Design Aircraft for Aspen given what aircraft are currently available and known future aircraft?
- For the desired Design Aircraft, does the airfield need to be ADG II or ADG III?

The TWG submitted a report of findings and recommendations to all groups on December 5th. Meeting materials and recordings can be found at: https://www.asevision.com/twg/.

On-Board Passenger Survey
RFTA issued a request for proposals in November to conduct RFTA's biennial, on-board passenger survey, in March 2020. RFTA held a pre-bid meeting on December 2nd to review the RFP and address questions. Approximately 4-5 potential responders attended the meeting.

27th Street Pedestrian Crossing, Glenwood Springs
RFTA and the City of Glenwood Springs will also be submitting grants to design and construct grade-separated pedestrian crossings of SH 82 and 27th St. near the 27th St. BRT Station. Construction of this crossing is a high priority for RFTA, the City of Glenwood Springs and for the region. It was programmed for 50% funding in the Destination 2040 plan; RFTA committed to funding the remainder of the project through grants and partnerships. RFTA has the unique opportunity to solicit the remaining funding from the following sources for design and construction:

- Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) – draft proposal for $1 million submitted on December 2nd. Final proposals are due January 20.
- CDOT Multimodal Options Funds
- CDOT Regional Priority Projects Funding
- Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District
- City of Glenwood Springs

Current cost estimate is roughly $8 million to $10 million, and will be refined as the design advances.

Grants Update
Currently, RFTA Staff across several departments are managing approximately $18 million in grants, representing about 20 capital and operating projects in different stages of grant execution. Investments total approximately $25 million. The following are a sample.

Charge Ahead
With approximately $70 million coming to the State from the VW Settlement Program, coupled with Governor Polis's aggressive transportation electrification goals, towns and agencies have some grant options. RFTA received a $48,000 Charge Ahead grant to replace the dated Level 2 electric vehicle charger at both the Carbondale BRT Station/Park-n-Ride and the New Castle Park-n-Ride. With grant funds and encouragement from the Town of Carbondale and engineering assistance from Holy Cross Energy, RFTA will also install a new Level 3 DC Fast Charger at the Carbondale PNR. A Level 3 DC charger is a big deal for EV car owners because the charge time is 4x faster than a Level 2 charger. These EV chargers will also expand the regional EV charging network and increase the adoption of electric vehicles. RFTA is working with Town of Carbondale, Holy Cross Energy, and other partners to generate the resources needed for design and installation.

Bus Replacement and Expansion
Thanks to Destination 2040 funds and two FTA grants, RFTA will soon take delivery of ten (10) new buses, and will be ordering an additional (10) in early 2020,.

Aspen Maintenance Facility Fuel Tank Replacement
RFTA received $1 million in Senate Bill 267 funds to replace 6 underground fuel tanks. Pending timely receipt of a fully executed grant, RFTA intends to complete the project by the end of year 2020.

Glenwood Maintenance Facility: Maintenance Building Expansion
RFTA also received $1.6 million in CDOT FASTER grant to renovate and expand its fleet maintenance building at the GMF. Pending timely receipt of a fully executed grant, RFTA intends to complete the project by the end of year 2021.

On-Route Bus Charging

RFTA received $480,000 in CDOT FASTER funds to install an on-route bus charging station that will provide a rapid, small boost in energy to the battery electric buses to extend range. RFTA intends to complete about one full year of operations with the eight (8) battery electric buses before determining optimal locations for additional on-route chargers.