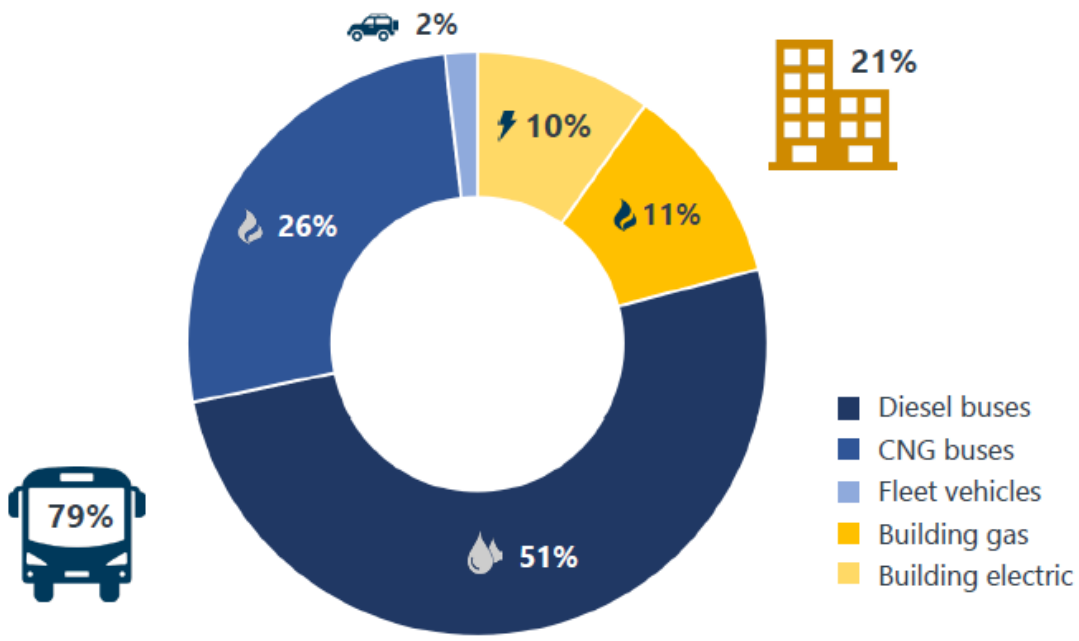
RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update

December 8th, 2022

RFTA Climate Action Plan (CAP)

During the CAP project update at the 11/10/22 RFTA Board meeting, the CAP consulting team heard loud and clear that Board members want to aim high by establishing aggressive emissions reduction goals. Research has shown that a regional stakeholder guidepost is in the range of 80% to 100% emissions reduction out to the year 2050. RFTA's exact target percentages and benchmark decision dates will be determined over the next few months. In the interim, bus ridership data and regional land use data will be modeled to help facilitate further understanding and analysis of transit ridership's overall emissions impact in the region.

The City of Aspen is also embarking on an update to the 2017 CAP, and RFTA Staff will be collaborating with regional data findings.



RFTA 2019 Baseline Emissions (Scope 1 and 2) from CAP Technical Discovery

RFTA Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Safety & Training Program

RFTA is still on the innovative cutting edge of battery electric bus (BEB) technology. Although the first eight buses are operating great in mountain conditions, the necessary safety, training, maintenance and operations needs for battery electric technology are very different from traditional diesel buses. RFTA Staff have accumulated many lessons learned over the last few years of operation in the Aspen area.

According to the CO Transit ZEV Roadmap, CDOT is charged with an aggressive goal of transitioning 1,000 transit vehicles to ZEV by 2030. CDOT is fully aware that these technology realities are shared with any CO transit agency operating BEBs. In an effort to advance the state goal and to proactively address ZEV Workforce development needs, CDOT Office of Innovative Mobility (OIM) developed the Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Workforce Development Grant to support workforce training and development focused on ZEVs, ZEV infrastructure, and ZEV-related commercial technologies. The purpose of this grant is to develop the skills and talent necessary to meet the changing demands of the transportation electrification sector. This grant addresses multiple challenges that Colorado and the wider mobility and electrification industry are facing: talent shortages, gap in new skillsets, and the growing need for training due to technology advances.

RFTA Staff from several departments have been collaborating on a grant application for this program. It is now more apparent that very specific BEB training is difficult to find, and expensive to implement. Applications are due December 9th. Staff will request letters of

support from the RFTA Board and Holy Cross Energy for this timely and proactive new safety/training program for RFTA.

RFTA Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) Transition Plan

On the theme of climate action and electric vehicles, RFTA Staff have also solicited an RFP for a Zero Emission Bus (ZEB) Transition Plan. RFTA will use this planning document to determine the capital investments and operational changes required for successful implementation of zero emission buses, equipment, and facilities, consistent with the goals set forth in RFTA's Climate Action Plan (to be completed in May 2023) and the State of Colorado's goal to transition the state transit fleet to 100% ZEB by 2050.

This planning process will also be an opportunity for RFTA to see a fuel-to-fuel comparison, operationally and financially, of diesel, CNG, battery electric and potentially hydrogen fuel cell electric. The consulting team will go beyond analyzing RFTA's fleet and facilities, to also include local utility capacity, regional co-beneficial electric charging opportunities and financial realities. Proposals are due Dec. 16th and the internal RFP evaluation committee will consist of Staff from several departments. We hope to have a solid draft plan in the spring of 2023 and a final plan no later than the end of 2023.

Grants Update

As of the end of November 2022, RFTA Staff are managing an unprecedented number of Federal/State grant projects for operating funding, bus replacements, transit safety infrastructure and facility improvements. There are 17 "active grants" with either executed grant contracts, or awarded grants working their way through the execution process. The total combined grant awards are **$73 million, with total combined grant match of $57 million, for total grant project costs of $130 million**.

Most recently, RFTA has received an additional award of $1 million in CDOT Multimodal Options Funds (MMOF) for the SH 82/27th St. Pedestrian Crossings project in Glenwood Springs. This funding is timely, as construction bids for this project are well above projections, and RFTA Staff will be re-soliciting the project for hopefully more competitive pricing.

Staff has also received news of $1.2 million in FTA 5311 funding for much-needed operating and administration funding for the entire RFTA service region.

Pending Proposals

The Glenwood Springs Maintenance Facility (GMF)/Regional Transit Center (RTC) remains RFTA's highest priority capital project, and a strategic project for smart growth of the entire RFTA organization. Staff have been busy strategizing and aggregating Federal/State grants from many different programs.

RFTA has applied for $750,000 in Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) Energy and Mineral Impact Assistance (EMIA) Funds to complete the funding package for the $6.3 million Transit Hub, which is part of Phase 6 of the GMF renovation and expansion.

On September 30, RFTA submitted a grant proposal for FY2023 CDOT "Super Call" capital funds for $15.5 million (and $3.9 million local match) to complete the remainder of Phase 6, now called 6B, which consists mostly of constructing a 3-story Operations and Administration center on top of Phase 6A, the West Glenwood Springs Transit Hub. In addition to Phase 6B, RFTA is requesting funding to construct Phase 8. Phase 8 is approximately 10,000ft^2 of enclosed space dedicated to storage and maintenance of fleet and facility-related equipment.

Cost estimate of Phase 6B and Phase 8 is about $19.5 million. IF RFTA receives $15.5 million in CDOT funding, Phase 6B and Phase 8 can be added to the design-build construction package, and the core GMF Phases 1-8 can be complete and implemented by end of 2025, culminating in about 15 years of planning, design and construction.

CDOT did not publish the extent of funding available, however, it did report being very over-subscribed, with $56 million in requests, including about $25 million for capital and $11 million for fleet replacement

Phase 6A: West Glenwood Hub (funded by a $4.8 million RAISE grant

Phase 6B: The Administration and Operations Center (3 stories above Phase 6A)