RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update
January 12th, 2017

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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CDOT Monthly Grant Meeting

CDOT began conducting monthly conference calls with transit grantees across the State in June 2016 to better facilitate communication regarding grant administration and regulatory procedures between CDOT and its grantee agencies.

During the most recent call in January, Jason White discussed RFTA's Title VI Plan at CDOT's request; specifically how RFTA promotes transit access for low-income populations. Under the Title VI section of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, any agency receiving federal money cannot discriminate on the basis of color, national origin, gender, disability or age. Discrimination need not be intentional. It includes any decision that has an unjustified, unequal impact.

Jason first directed attendees to RFTA's website, which has links to RFTA's Title VI Report and links to RFTA's fare policies and discount pass programs. Here are a few of the incentive programs that RFTA has in place for low income and disadvantaged populations:

- Discounted One-way Ride Program
- Blankenbucks for eligible organizations
- Non-profit application program for annual contributions
- Ages 6-16 receive a $1 discount
- 50% off discount card for Veterans and Persons with Disabilities
- Children 5 and under, in groups fewer than nine, may ride for free
- Seniors, 65 years and older, may show a photo ID and ride for free on any RFTA route
- Bulk employee passes for participating Chamber employers

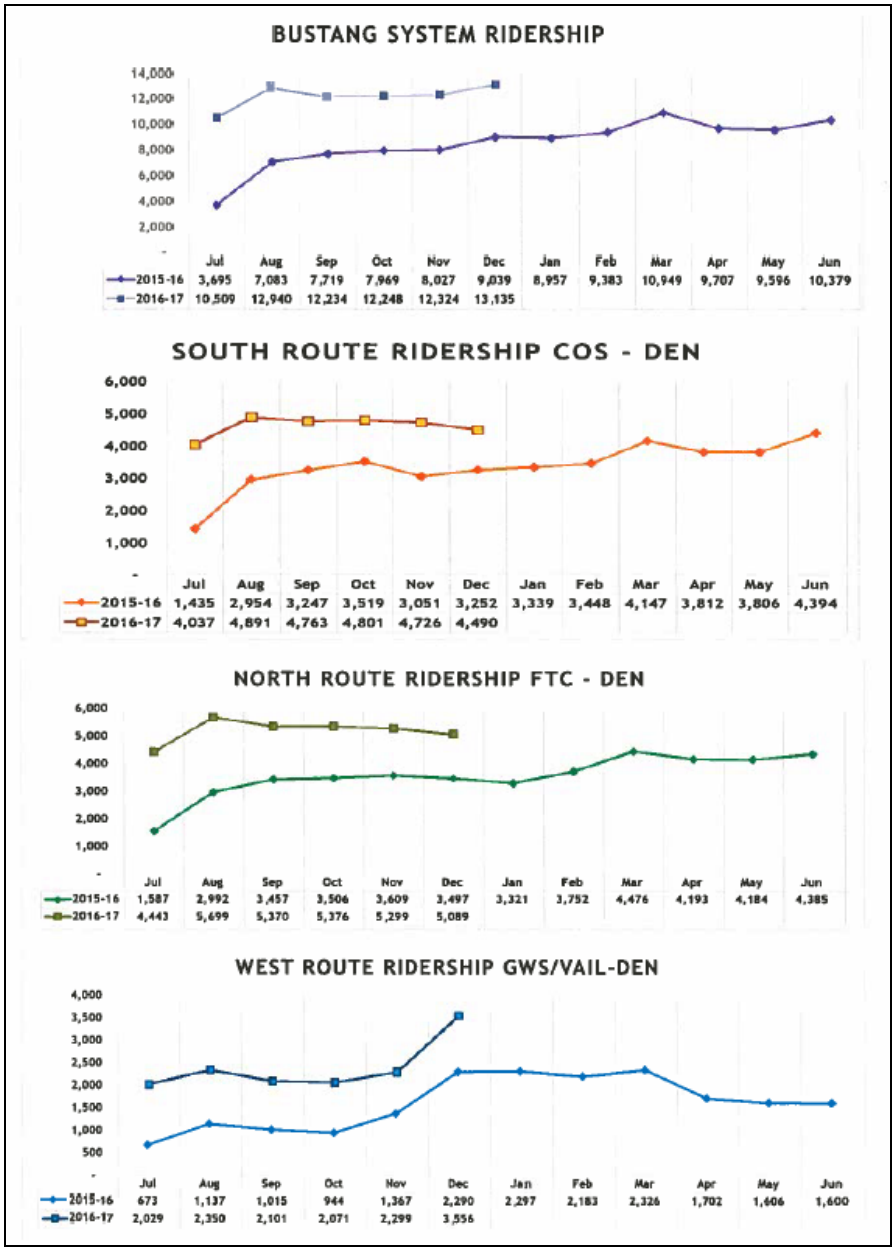
Additionally, all RFTA passengers can save money on cash fares by purchasing stored value cards and seasonal zone passes ahead of time at either authorized pass sales outlets (grocery stores) or at ticket vending machines located at one of nine of our VelociRFTA Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) stations between Glenwood Springs and Aspen. RFTA passengers can also take advantage of no-fare, subsidized, bus routes in the City of Aspen, routes between Aspen and Snowmass Village, routes between Aspen and Woody Creek and on the Carbondale Circulator service within Carbondale town limits.

RFTA also prides itself on mobility options, specifically biking and walking, to increase public health and reduce parking issues at our park-n-ride lots. Low-income individuals access RFTA by walking, bicycling, driving, carpooling or being dropped off at a bus stop.

CDOT Bustang Ridership

On the CDOT January Grant Partner call, CDOT presented CDOT Bustang ridership numbers (graphic below). The West Line (between Denver and Glenwood Springs) has some of the

highest ridership in the State, with 2016 ridership up 35% over last year. There are plans in 2018 to extend the West Route to Grand Junction. Please access http://www.ridebustang.com for more information.



VW Settlement and CO Energy Mitigation Trust Fund

As mentioned in the November 2016 Planning Department Update, Volkswagen has agreed to settle some of the allegations that it violated the federal Clean Air Act by selling vehicles that emit more air pollution than the Clean Air Act allows, and by cheating on federal emission tests

to hide the excess pollution. VW has been charged with distributing mitigation dollars back to the states, following a formula that calculates the allocation based on the number of vehicles that were registered in each county and state. There are two mitigation funding streams.

First, there is a $2 billion Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) fund to be administered by VW. In late 2016, VW launched their *Electrify America* website with information on goals for the $2 billion fund and a solicitation for proposals on how to invest the funds. VW's plan is to structure the program in four 30-month investment cycles, and they are now accepting comments and proposals for the first of these cycles. The Colorado Energy Office (CEO), through the Colorado Electric Vehicle Coalition (CEVC), provided a consolidated submission for interested entities for the state of Colorado. In particular, the CEVC was looking for projects to submit that are "shovel ready" or in a later stage of project development as opposed to an idea for a project. This application was on a compressed schedule because the CEVC was reacting to a short timeline set forth by VW. RFTA Staff chose not to apply for this competitive funding opportunity, due to the constrained deadlines.

Second, the Colorado Department of Public Health & Environment (CDPHE) is tasked with managing approximately $61 million that will be allocated to the State of Colorado. RFTA has been monitoring the process closely and Staff feels as though our region is more poised to seek funding from this smaller statewide pot of funding. RFTA, CLEER and the City of Aspen will meet in mid-January to sharpen the pencil once again on the feasibility of battery electric buses for the Valley. Due diligence will include low-mileage routes, charging infrastructure needs, capital bus replacement etc. This information will help RFTA build a more "shovel ready" project in advance of forthcoming CDPHE funding opportunities; projected to be solicited in Q3 2017.

Lastly, the Colorado Energy Office (CEO) is putting together a statewide *Colorado Electric Vehicle Future* document describing the state's vision, goals, leadership, strategies and proposed outcomes for EVs and making the case that Colorado is a primed market for EV and EVSE deployment. The CEO and the CEVC will be taking comment on this document later in January. The City of Aspen is also working on their own EV Readiness Plan, which includes several stakeholders and is set to be complete sometime in 2017.

New BYD electric bus to be deployed by RTD on the 16th Street Mall in 2017.

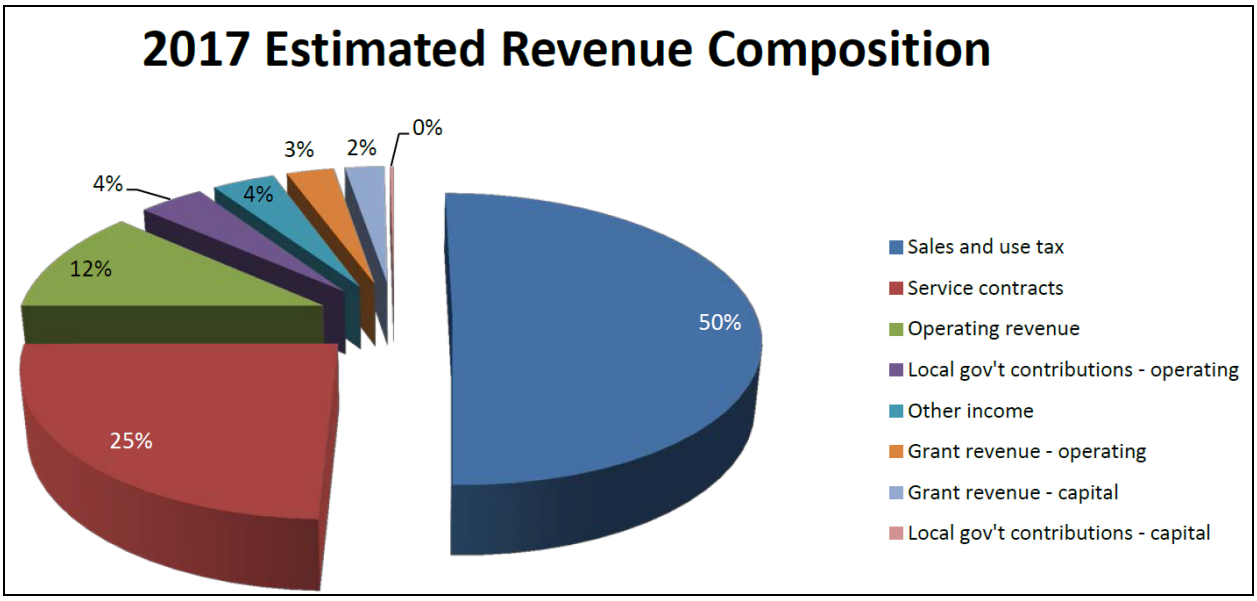
2016 a Big Year for Grant Projects

Although federal and state grant awards compose only 5% of total revenue in the RFTA 2017 Budget (see graphic below), these grants require significant inter-departmental collaboration among RFTA Staff.

The Planning Department is the primary department tasked with grant strategy, application development and general oversight. Most of the grants that RFTA receives are usually Federal Transit Administration (FTA) or CDOT grants for operating revenue and capital expenditures. Once grant funds are awarded, the Planning Department works closely with Finance, Procurement, Facilities, Fleet Maintenance etc. to appoint project managers and help to ensure that we are fulfilling reporting requirements and minding grant expiration dates to maintain good standing with grantors.

Year 2016 has been a very productive year for RFTA. Staff is in the final stages of closing out 13 grant projects totaling approximately $6.6 M in grant awards. Staff is now managing 12 active grants; totaling approximately $16.1 M in grant awards.

With an eye to the incoming administration and potentially decreased Federal transportation funding, especially for transit, RFTA Staff must work harder than ever to follow increasingly complex asset management procedures to make a case for increased funding; as well as work collaboratively and creatively with other state transit agencies to efficiently administrate limited transit dollars that are allocated to Colorado.



Although grant revenue composes approximately 5% of total revenue composition in the 2017 Budget, there is a lot of inter-departmental coordination needed.