RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update
June 14th, 2018

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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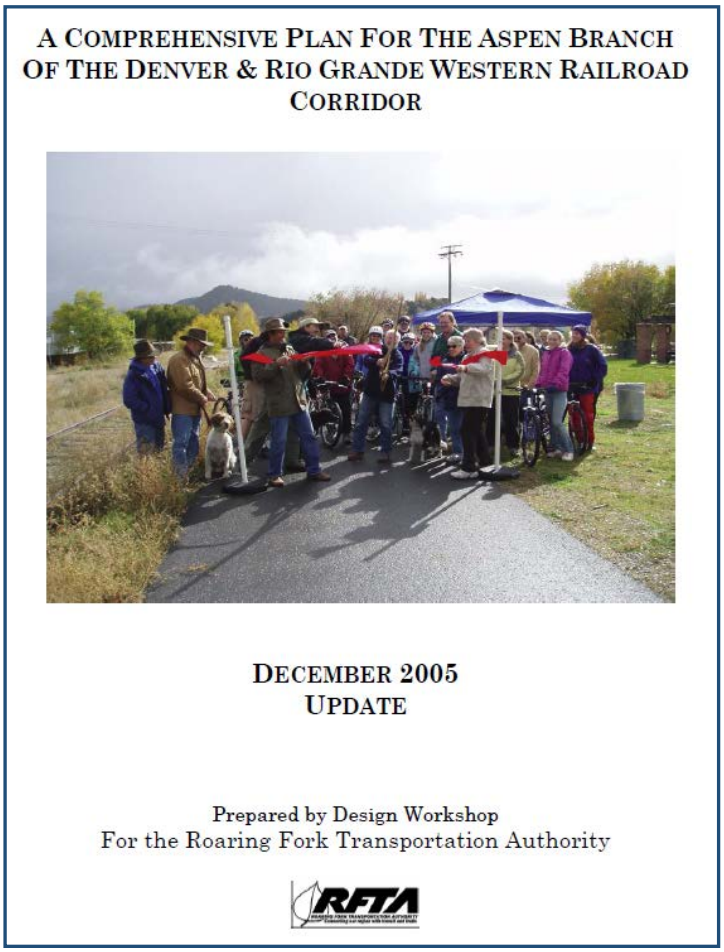
A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR THE ASPEN BRANCH OF THE DENVER & RIO GRANDE WESTERN RAILROAD CORRIDOR

DECEMBER 2005
UPDATE

Prepared by Design Workshop
For the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority

As summer approaches, regional planners are busy working to update plans and conduct public outreach during the warmer biking and walking weather. RFTA has been in the process of working through an update to the *Comprehensive Plan for the Aspen Branch of the Denver & Rio Grande Western Railroad Corridor*, or more simply, the Comp Plan. The first of the two documents that make up the Comp Plan, the Access Control Plan (ACP), was recently updated, finalized and adopted by the RFTA Board of Director's in a second reading and unanimous vote on February 8th, 2018.

RFTA staff will now begin the process of updating the second and final document in the Comprehensive Plan, the *2005 Recreational Trails Plan (RTP)*. The RTP is also the guiding management document for the very popular Rio Grande Trail. A lot has happened in the railroad and trail corridor since the 2005 plan so now is the time to bring awareness to RFTA's ownership of the corridor and how everyone can work together to protect it.

The intent of the update process is to re-affirm goals set forth in the 2005 plan, and address any new community goals. For example, are there enough designated trailheads, and where might new facilities be located? The planning process will last about 9 months and the revised plan will be informed by feedback from a stakeholder group, a public survey and public outreach events. The stakeholders invited to participate in this process are members from each of the seven original member jurisdictions that made up the RFRHA (now RFTA): Glenwood Springs, Carbondale, Basalt, Snowmass Village, Aspen, Pitkin County and Eagle County; and as the newest member jurisdiction to RFTA, New Castle is also welcomed and encouraged to participate. The other stakeholders in this process currently include Pitkin County Open Space and Trails, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), Garfield County and Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO).

RFTA is currently working to create a task order with a contracted public outreach consultant. Keep an eye out on the RFTA website for posted project materials and forthcoming public outreach events in the valley.

Regional Transit Center (RTC) BUILD Grant Proposal

The Glenwood Springs Maintenance Facility was constructed in 2002, and intended to be a small satellite facility with an operational capacity of 34 buses. Since 2002, RFTA has expanded its scope of ridership and services significantly. The GMF is now the cornerstone of RFTA's operations and maintenance, and will grow in that role over the next 20 years, and expand its array of services. In 2002, most buses were industrial workhorse people-movers; today, they are far more sophisticated, with an array of complicated electrics and operating on multiple propulsion technologies, including diesel (with ultra-low emission engines), GNG and battery-electric.

RFTA has been successful in securing some grant funding for site preparation and initial construction phases, but has been challenged in securing more robust, but highly competitive USDOT Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) Program funding for the larger project. The TIGER program was initiated in 2009, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, a stimulus package developed in response to the Great Recession. ARRA's primary objective was to save existing jobs and create new ones as soon as possible, including by investing in infrastructure, education, health, and renewable energy. The Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development, or BUILD Transportation Discretionary Grant program finally succeeded the TIGER program in 2018. Guidance is very similar. Fundamental differences include DOT's intention to award a greater share of BUILD grant funding to projects located in rural areas, and three times as much funding as last year's TIGER program.

RFTA has applied for TIGER funding for the GMF since nearly the program's inception. This year's proposal will be the fundamentally the same is last years: $21 million in BUILD funding and $10 million local match to build Phase 1 of the RTC. This phase has independent utility and addresses most of RFTA's most critical needs. RFTA is optimistic that this year's grant application will build on strengths from previous applications, and will receive the political support that is necessary with such a competitive federal grant process. Grant award announcements are projected for late 2018.

RFTA Regional Transit Center (RTC) Site Plan Schematic