RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update
March 9th, 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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Electric Vehicle (EV) Sales Event

As a member of the Garfield Clean Energy (GCE) group, RFTA is helping to promote an innovative regional program aimed at increasing the share of electric vehicles on the road. Following successful national models, multiple local auto dealers have enthusiastically responded to participate in a three-county program offering discounted pricing on plug-in electric vehicles for a 90-day period.

Clean Energy Economy for the Region (CLEER) and its partners will announce the complete list of qualifying auto dealers and the vehicles to be offered at a press conference on March 15th at Holy Cross Energy in Glenwood Springs.

"Electric Vehicle Sales Event: REV Up Your Ride" will run from April 1st to June 30th, and will be promoted in Garfield, Eagle and Pitkin counties.

Buyers can take advantage of deals on plug-in hybrid vehicles, which can also run for longer distances on a gasoline engine, and battery electric vehicles, which operate solely on electricity. Buyers will also be able to tap into state and federal tax credits, whether they purchase or lease the new EVs.

Garfield Clean Energy (GCE) is working on the project with Refuel Colorado Fleets, a statewide program that promotes alternative transportation fuels such as electricity and compressed natural gas (CNG). CLEER staffers Heather McGregor and Matt Shmigelsky are coordinating the effort.

CORE is also funding the effort, along with City of Aspen, Town of Snowmass Village, City of Glenwood Springs, Eagle County, Town of Vail, Town of Avon and Holy Cross Energy, and in-kind support from Garfield County Public Health and Walking Mountains Science Center.

Electric vehicles generate about 40 percent less carbon emissions than comparable gasoline-powered vehicles, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. They are also less costly to operate, with reduced maintenance needs and fuel that costs the equivalent of about $1.10 per gallon.

GARFIELD
PITKIN
EAGLE

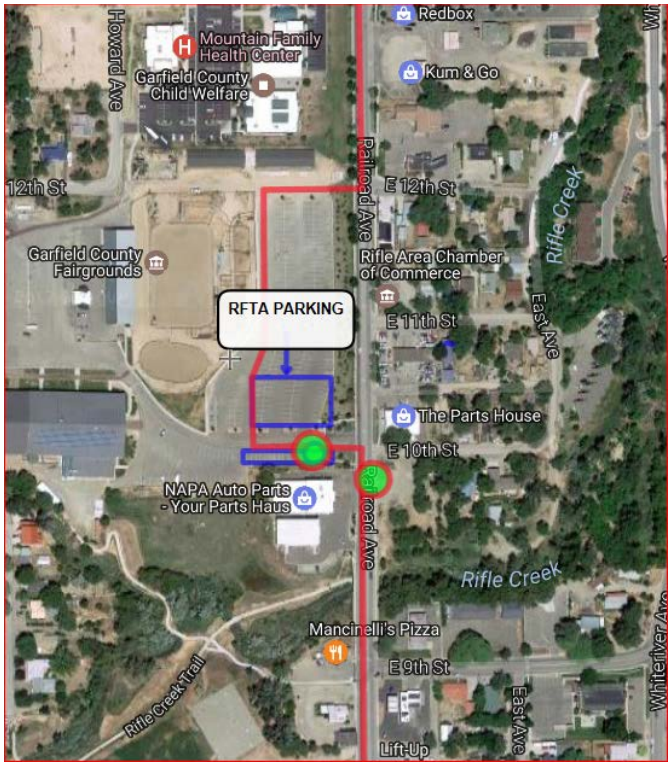
Electric Vehicle
Sales EVent
Rev up your ride!

Grand Avenue Bridge (GAB) Transit Mitigation

RFTA Staff continues to meet regularly with regional partners regarding transit mitigation measures during the Grand Avenue Bridge (GAB) closure; projected for Aug-Oct 2017. As we have reported in previous updates, here are a few of the transit mitigation services that RFTA will offer during the GAB closure:

- Three new shuttle routes operating within GWS
- Regional SH 82 Corridor BRT & Local buses will take and make transfers to/from Glenwood shuttles at 27th St. BRT Station
- Additional frequency on Grand Hogback routes between Rifle-GWS
- Grand Hogback Route extended to Parachute
- Grand Hogback service FREE during bridge closure
- Additional parking at RFTA West GWS PNR
- Collaboration with Western Garfield County communities on transit overflow parking
- Old pedestrian bridge has been repurposed at 14th St. in GWS
- Expanded public outreach

On February 24th RFTA, CDOT and Garfield County facilities, planning and operational staff met at the fairgrounds parking lot in Rifle to discuss how the facility could be utilized as a temporary transit park-n-ride during the GAB closure. Both parties agreed that it would be best for "inbound buses" (Parachute to Glenwood Springs) to pull into the north side of the fairgrounds using a new 12th Street extension that is set to be completed by the beginning of the County Fair at the end of July. Buses will be staged and transit parking will be designated at the southern end of the parking lot near the main entrance. The north side of the lot will be utilized for normal fairground operations with trailer access, livestock loading and RV hookups (please see exhibits below). ADA access will be provided on demand and the permanent overhead lights will provide safety and security for early morning and late evening passengers. All temporary usage details will be finalized in an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Garfield County and RFTA. Both the County and RFTA will provide consistent messaging and public outreach during the GAB closure period.



In Silt, RFTA Staff is negotiating a temporary land lease with Alpine Bank, on the approximately ½ acre, bank-owned parcel in eastern Silt near the Silt Co-op bus stops on SH 6. The Town of Silt

is already receiving complaints from Main Street business owners that commuters are taking up downtown parking by trying to park as close as possible to the 7th Street bus stops. The Alpine parcel would be a Plan B option for RFTA in case Hogback ridership increases dramatically and RFTA needs ample overflow parking during the closure.

In New Castle, RFTA Staff continues to negotiate with the City Market Center private landowners and parking lot association to utilize some of the ample parking without competing with local businesses. Commercial tenants are complaining that commuters are parking up to eight hours per day in the spaces in the western section of the lot, which is a closer walk to the RFTA stops on SH 6 near McDonalds. RFTA will be submitting a parking space schematic that proposes striping new diagonal spaces along the southern curb to provide additional parking options during the GAB closure.

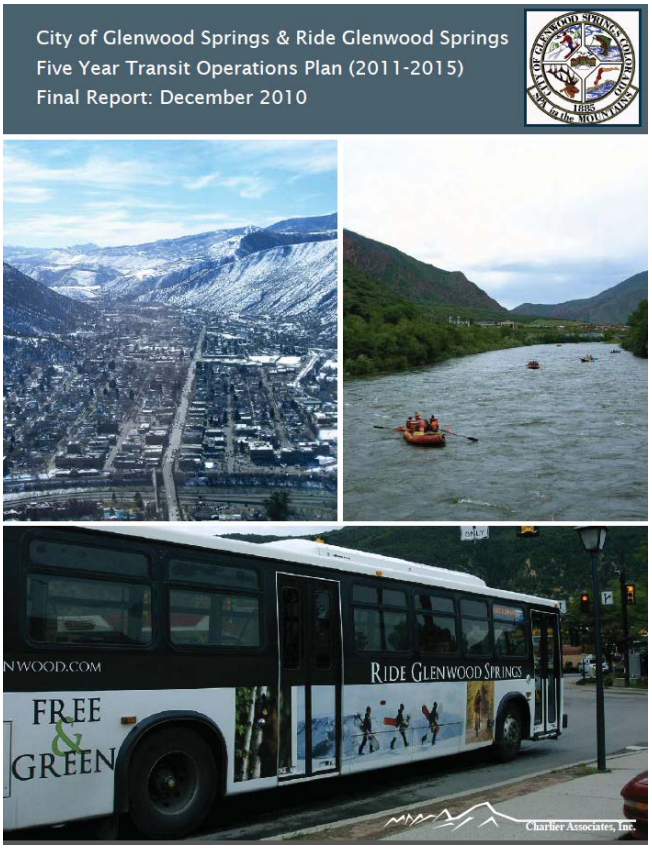
Unfortunately, plans to expand the existing CDOT Park-n-Ride in Parachute (north of I-70 near the rest area) are no longer being pursued. The Town and CDOT could not reach a financial agreement for either the temporary, or the future expansion plans. The Town continues to consider where the RFTA buses will turn around at the western terminus of the Hogback route. It is likely that RFTA will approach a private landowner near the Parachute Town Hall (south of I-70 on the way to Battlement Mesa) to lease parking spaces and provide a safe bus turnaround.

Glenwood Springs 5-Year Transit Operations Plan (TOP)

The City of Glenwood Springs (COGS) is updating the Ride Glenwood Springs (RGS) 5-Year Transit Operations Plan (TOP), for the period 2017-2021, which was last updated in 2010. A primary objective of this project is to streamline RGS operations and promote full integration into and synchronization with regional RFTA services. The primary goal of this project is to update the City's most recent 2010 Five-Year Transit Operations Plan to better respond to existing conditions and possible changes in travel patterns following the completion of the new Grand Avenue Bridge (GAB). This project will also anticipate future funding availability and needs, ridership trends, and local travel patterns. The results of this project can be used by any public transit agency, but will be particularly useful to small rural transit providers. Operations efficiencies realized from the results of this study can be immediately implemented by RGS staff; note that RFTA can also directly benefit from this plan update as they contract RGS operations with the City and many customers combine both RFTA and RGS services to move throughout the Roaring Fork Valley.

The resulting TOP will be used to:

- understand and determine the community's transit needs;
- ensure service levels are appropriate to existing demands;
- make educated decisions regarding future transit operations, service enhancements, and management and staffing needs;
- assess and obtain funding for transit operations;
- evaluate existing City fixed-route and complementary para-transit service according to consistent performance standards;
- ensure compliance with all federal and state rules and regulations;
- educate the community about transit and other multi-modal travel options; and
- evaluate additional mobility options to relieve traffic congestion.



The updated TOP will include the following scope of work elements:

1. Service:

a. A description of current RGS route service, including route alignment and service area, route schedule, ridership by time of day and day of week.
b. Ridership trends since the $1/day fare was implemented.
c. Analysis of how the 2010 TOP has addressed the existing needs of the community.
d. Recommendations for transit service that meets the needs of residents and visitors and that aligns with RGS' mission to support a successful and comprehensive TDM strategy for the City.

2. Operations:

a. An evaluation of the current RGS route with respect to RFTA local service within COGS, identification of service redundancies, and recommendations for service optimization.
b. Analysis of at least two alternative RGS route options that would be feasible given existing equipment and staffing.
c. Analysis of at least one alternative route option where an increase in equipment and/or staffing would result in substantial service improvements.
d. A marketing plan and implementation strategy to attract visitors and new riders, drawing choice riders to use transit as a Transportation Demand Management strategy.
e. Identification of multi-mobility options that complement the existing system, including but not limited to bikeshare, with an emphasis on first- and last-mile connectivity.
f. Exploration of alternative fare levels and payment options with the potential to improve RGS/RFTA integration and provide a more seamless customer experience.

3. Funding:

a. Funding plans that align service levels with transit revenues from the dedicated City Bus Tax Fund, passenger fares, and other appropriate revenues and grants for transit service.
b. Identification of potential sources of additional transit funding, such as underutilized state and federal grants and public-private partnerships, as well as recommended strategies to solicit such funding.
c. The outline for a 5-year capital and operating plan and budget that optimizes service levels and efficiencies in the face of increasing operating costs.
d. Evaluation of new technological advancements that could be incorporated into Ride Glenwood's Service to improve transit operations and reduce capital investments.

4. Regulatory:

a. Analysis of all recent updates to Federal and State regulations and review of current and ongoing organizational compliance since the 2010 Transit Operations Plan.
b. Confirmation that all current and proposed changes in operations are in compliance with all FTA regulations including Environmental Justice Executive Order #12898, Title VI

of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, and any and all other applicable laws and regulations.

RFTA Planning Staff was a member of the selection committee, and we are already working closely with Tanya Allen and the chosen consultant, IBI Group, to provide reports and data that will benefit the initial assessment phase of the project. The project is expected to be completed by November 2017.

Bustang

To better manage capacity during the March peak ski period, Bustang will add one additional round trip between Glenwood Spring and Denver, between March 15 and Easter Sunday April 16, 2017.

The extra trip will depart the 27th Street BRT station in Glenwood Springs at 7:30 AM., and the West Glenwood Park & Ride at 7:50 AM. It will leave Denver Union Station at 6:10 PM, arriving at 27th Street at 9:20 PM to connect to the final evening Up Valley RFTA bus to Aspen and Snowmass.

Grants Update

RFTA received a roughly $1.7 million FASTER Statewide grant to replace four (4) Year 2005 New Flyer "Invero" Coaches. These 40-ft heavy-duty coaches are 12 years old, with mileages ranging between 350,000 and 500,000.

Normally, RFTA maintains heavy-duty buses far past the recommended 12-year/500,000 mile service life. Some vehicles last nearly 15-20 years and 1,000,000 miles. However, this sub-fleet was New Flyers' first attempt at developing a new, lightweight bus for BRT service. New Flyer hoped the lighter weight and more aerodynamic design would provide a modern look, better fuel efficiency and a platform for alternative propulsion systems such as hybrids and CNGs.

RFTA purchased the first four NF Invero buses as shells and retro-fitted the hybrid drive systems. At that time, hybrids were not commercially produced in the industry. RFTA's rigorous duty cycle results in premature battery failures due to deep cycling. Battery replacement and associated cost is approximately $50,000 per bus. It is not prudent for RFTA to invest this much money on these aging vehicles. In addition, since New Flyer produced a relatively small number of the Invero buses, RFTA is very concerned that parts for this unique vehicle may soon become costly or unavailable.