RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update
March 8, 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.

CONTENTS

RFTA 2018 PASSENGER SURVEY 3

RENEWABLE NATURAL GAS (RNG) 4

APTA LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE 5

RFTA 2018 Passenger Survey

Since 2004, RFTA Staff has been conducting a semi-annual, onboard passenger survey in English and Spanish, for a 24-hour period on all routes from Aspen to Rifle. The purpose of the onboard survey is to gauge passenger opinions on key aspects of RFTA services, such as safety, reliability, and courtesy. During the last survey in 2016, Staff received approximately 1,700 completed paper surveys, and 500 online surveys, with valuable data and feedback.

The 2018 survey date is set for **Wenesday March 21st**. This effort requires extensive pre-planning and inter-departmental collaboration and communication; most importantly utilizing the Operations Department and the drivers as survey promoters, distributors, and collectors. A pre-determined quantity of route-specific surveys are provided in shift envelopes at the AMF and GMF. Drivers handout the surveys to passengers as they board, and ask them to return the completed surveys to the driver when exiting. The completed surveys are then mailed to a consultant for bilingual data entry, cross-tab data analysis and organization of open-ended passenger comments. The data is used to compare data and feedback to previous years, as well as to provide guidance for department directors/managers to make improvements in our customer service, operations and overall public image.

In addition to the paper surveys, the RFTA Marketing/Communications Department also solicits a mirrored online survey. Utilizing Wi-Fi service on all of the RFTA buses, the IT Department is able to redirect the “splash” page to a Survey Monkey online survey. This gives riders the choice of either completing a paper or online survey. All survey respondents are also encouraged to provide their contact information in order to be entered into a drawing for a number of stored value cards for free fare. Planning staff will report on this year’s survey results at a board meeting later this year.

RFTA
ROARING FORK TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

2016 PASSENGER OPINION SURVEY

PLEASE complete this survey to provide feedback regarding your transit needs, helping RFTA to serve you better.

This survey can be completed online at **www.RFTA.com** or by logging onto the RFTA Bus WiFi and accepting the terms & conditions.

- Please return completed paper surveys to your driver.
- We are providing incentives for completed surveys. Please provide your contact info on the last page if you want to be entered into an April 1st drawing for 1 of 10 $20 RFTA Stored Value Cards.

THANK YOU for riding RFTA buses and doing your part in reducing your environmental footprint as well as auto congestion!

RFTA
ROARING FORK TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY

2016 ENCUESTA SOBRE LA OPINION DE LOS PASAJEROS DE RFTA

Por favor complete esta encuesta para informarnos sobre sus necesidades y formas de uso del transporte.

Esta encuesta se puede completar en la página, www.RFTA.com o ingresando en el WiFi en el bus de RFTA y aceptar los términos y condiciones.

- Después de completar la encuesta impresa, por favor de devolver al conductor del autobús.
- Estamos proporcionando incentivos por completar encuestas. Proporcione su información de contacto en la última página si desea participar en una rifa para 1 de 10 boletos de autobús RFTA($20). Esta rifa se llevara a cabo el 1 de Abril.

¡GRACIAS por viajar con RFTA, y por hacer su parte en la reducción de huellas ambientales, como la congestión de tráfico!

Snapshot of the 2016 bilingual passenger survey.

Renewable Natural Gas (RNG)

The term "renewable" natural gas might sound contradictory for a fossil fuel. Renewable natural gas (RNG) is an ultra-clean and ultra low-carbon natural gas alternative. The overall concept is to reuse otherwise wasted gas in place of raw gas. As organic waste breaks down it emits methane gas, called biogas, which can be processed to meet natural gas pipeline quality specifications. RNG can be produced economically and distributed via the existing gas grid, making it an attractive means of supplying renewable heat and renewable gas energy, while requiring no extra capital outlay of the customer.

Since 2009, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has mandated the blending of renewable fuels into the motor vehicle transportation supply under the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS). Renewable natural gas to compressed natural gas (CNG) or liquefied natural gas (LNG) is playing a growing role in satisfying the fuels mandate. RNG has been used for years, but it is becoming increasingly popular with both resource extraction industries and clean energy groups due to its versatility and ability to meet financial and environmental sustainability goals.

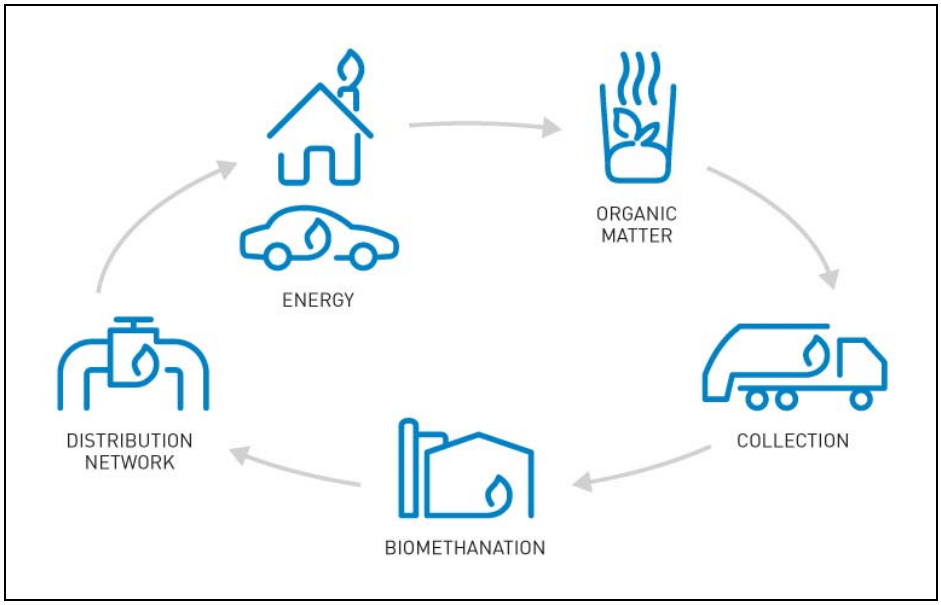
The feedstocks that can be used to create RNG are abundant. Large amounts of biogas (the raw, freshly emitted and untreated gas) can be collected at local landfills, wastewater treatment plants, commercial food waste facilities and agricultural digesters (dairies, etc.). Once this raw biogas is collected and upgraded (cleaned and conditioned) to meet natural gas pipeline quality specifications, it is then called biomethane or RNG.

What are the financial benefits? The currency of RFS compliance is the Renewable Identification Number (RIN), which is a credit generated for one ethanol equivalent gallon of renewable fuel. RINs are generated by renewable fuel producers and importers based on production, import or sale of renewable fuels. Because of an all-time high waiver credit value paired with strong advanced RIN prices, the financial incentive and an increasing demand trajectory are both at a point where they are creating opportunity for increased participation in the RNG to transportation fuel market.

For example, Grand Junction is currently receiving international press for an innovative project operating about 64 trash trucks and transit buses on RNG from their municipal wastewater treatment plant. Utilizing digesters already in place at the plant, staff figured out how to capture the gas and pipe it through a new pipeline to a fueling facility across town. A perfect storm of site feasibility and the RIN market is allowing the City to make market on their RNG.

How does the apply to RFTA? RFTA has received two unsolicited proposals in the last year about the possibilities of creating a RNG project in the valley. Project developers are very interested in RFTA as a potential RNG customer when they see that we use about 450,000 gasoline gallon equivalents (GGE) of CNG in our BRT buses each year. RFTA is in very early conversation with Clean Energy Collective (CEC) and a few other regional partners about a future project.

Source: *BioCycle* February 2017, Vol. 58, No. 2, p. 30



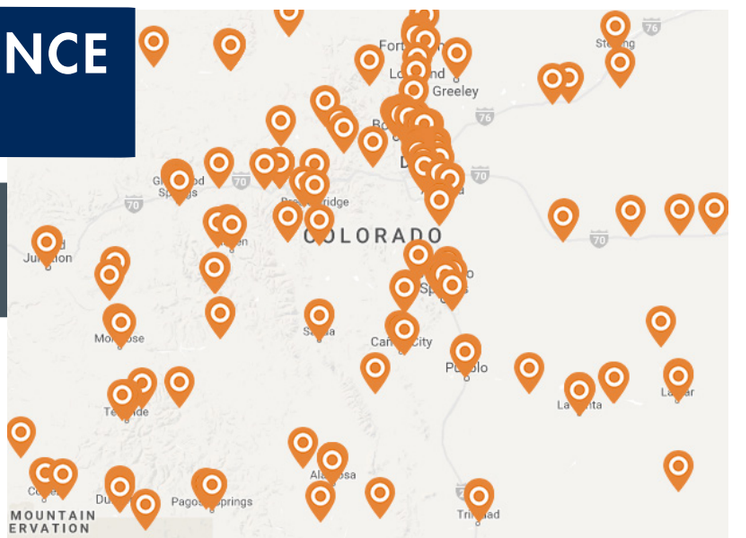
General Renewable Natural Gas (RNG) cyclical process

APTA Legislative Conference

On March 19 and 20, Aspen Mayor Steve Skadron and RFTA staff Micheal Yang and David Johnson will meet with Congressional delegates and staff in Washington DC to discuss RFTA's and Colorado's statewide transit needs, including RFTA's Glenwood Springs Mainteance Facility Renovation and Expansion. RFTA has requested $21 million in TIGER funds to deliver the project. Talking points are attached.

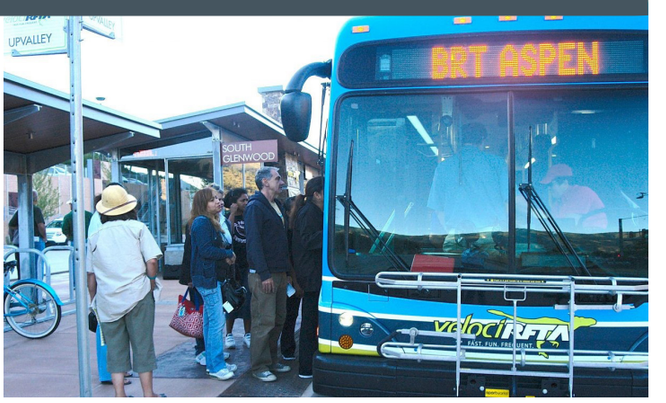
2018 APTA CONFERENCE TALKING POINTS

ABOUT COLORADO STATEWIDE TRANSIT



The State of Colorado has about 60 transit agencies, carrying more people in rural areas than any other state in the country – approximately 15 million trips. Collectively, these transit agencies are essential to meeting statewide goals for mobility, accessibility, economic and environmental sustainability, air quality and quality of life.

ABOUT ROARING FORK TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY



According to APTA, the United States is served by approximately 439 rural bus transit agencies, providing about 160 million annual trips; an average of 364,000 annual trips per agency. The Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA), provides over 5 million annual passenger trips in Eagle, Garfield and Pitkin Counties in central Colorado.

By these metrics, RFTA alone is:

- The largest rural transit system in the United States
- The equivalent of 14 average–size rural transit agencies
- The size of two average-ridership States

RFTA is more than a transit agency; it is the mobility manager, and the de facto Regional Transit Planning Organization for three counties and 8 towns in central Colorado. The agency operates in a 70-mile linear corridor along Interstate 70 (I-70) from Rifle to Glenwood Springs, and along the State Highway 82 (SH82) BRT Corridor from Glenwood Springs to Aspen. RTFA provides a wide range of services that rival the scope and influence of many rural and even urban transit systems. These services and features include:

- The nation's first Rural Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) system operating in the SH82 corridor
- A fleet of diesel-electric hybrid and CNG-fueled vehicles
- Regional commuter and local transit services
- Paratransit and Senior Citizen ride services in Garfield and Pitkin Counties
- Circulator services in Aspen, Carbondale and Glenwood Springs
- Public transit serving 4 major ski areas on the White River National Forest
- In partnership with the United States Forest Service (USFS), public transit serving the world renowned Maroon Bells-Snowmass Wilderness Area
- Workforce commuter services along the Grand Hogback I-70 Corridor
- Transit mitigation services during regional construction projects such as the Grand Avenue Bridge replacement in Glenwood Springs

- Special event services for major local events such as ESPN's X-Games when the organization moves up to 59,000 additional attendees per day
- WE-cycle public bike share services in Aspen, Basalt, and El Jebel
- Emergency transportation and evacuation services in coordination with first responders
- Platform ticket sales, real-time next bus passenger information, and Wi-Fi on every bus and at BRT stations
- A 34-mile paved recreational hiking-biking rail in the Rio Grande railroad corridor

RFTA transcends the benchmarks for rural transit services in America and is unequaled in the quantity, quality and variety of services it provides to its constituents.

ABOUT RFTA (CONTINUED)

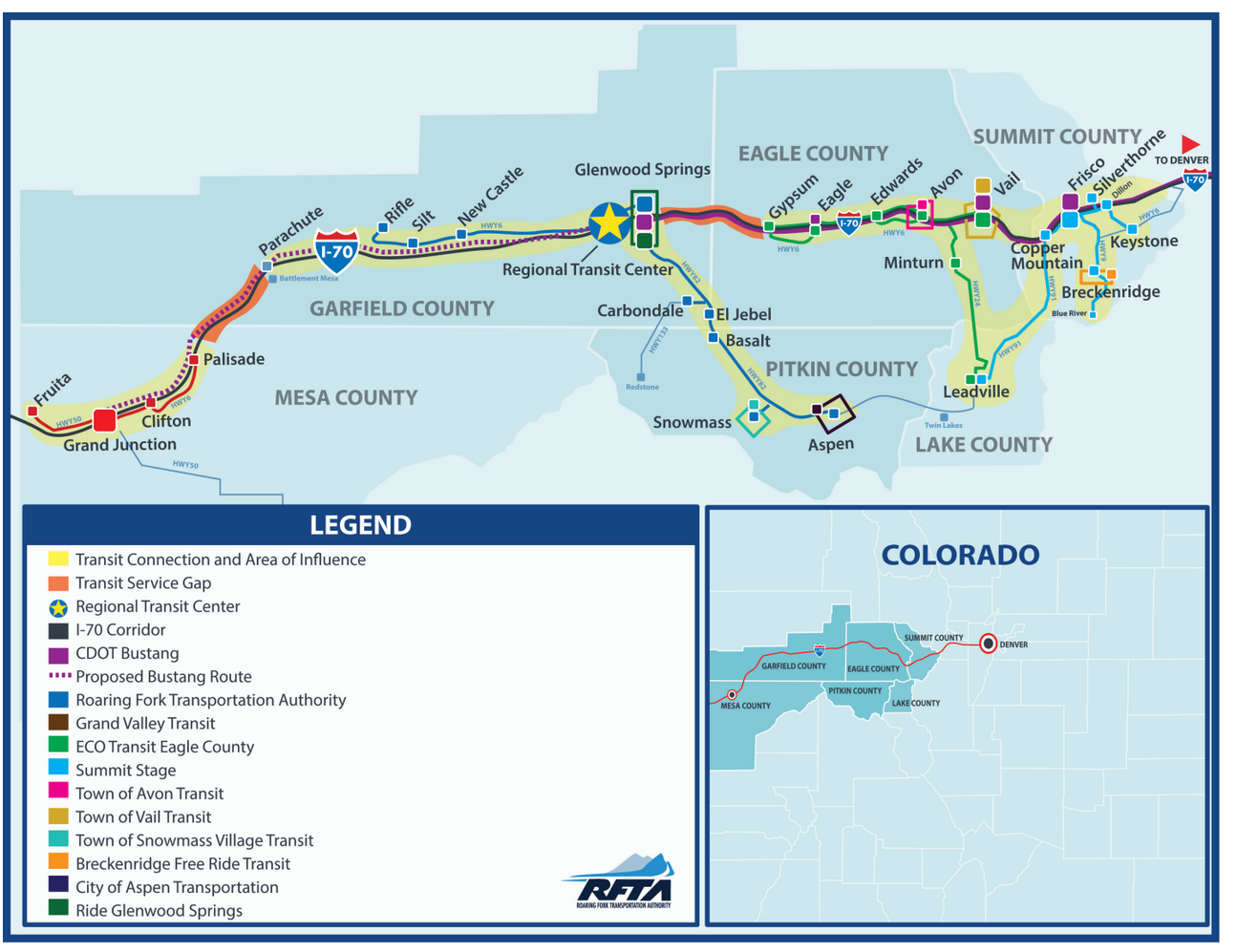
RFTA's impact on regional transportation is undeniable. According to the Local and Regional Travel Patterns Study (2014) statewide vehicle miles traveled in Colorado remained constant over the last decade, while transit use in RFTA's region increased by nearly 40%, and transit mode split is three times the national average, and even higher for a rural area. In 2011, the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project (SWEEP) estimated that RFTA provided $52 million-$63 million in annual benefits to RFTA's service area.

Federal Transit Administration (FTA) has been critical to RFTA's success. Thanks to an FTA Very Small Starts grant of $24.972 million, RFTA implemented the nation's first rural BRT system, called VelociRFTA in 2013. The system has been operating successfully for over four years.

According to forecasts, even under a conservative operating scenario, RFTA ridership will increase 26% over the next 20 years. RFTA will experience great challenges meeting this demand, such as generating the estimated $50 million required for fleet replacement and expansion. Any transportation funding legislation that relies heavily on private contributions or bonding is unlikely to be effective to Colorado's transit agencies, including RFTA.

SPOTLIGHT ON RFTA'S REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION CENTER

RFTA's most critical capital project is renovation and expansion of its primary maintenance and operation Center in Glenwood Springs, now called the Regional Transportation Center. RFTA built this facility in 2001, intending it to be a small, satellite facility. Consistent with RFTA's history and innovation, this project will be more than a traditional storage and maintenance facility. The vision of this project is to be the cornerstone of a Rural Regional Transportation Network (RRTN), connecting transit agencies and services in a roughly 250-mile corridor spanning central Colorado.

According to RFTA's ridership forecasting tools and travel patterns studies, under conservative service planning scenarios, ridership is estimated to grow by at least 25% over the next 20 years. This project will enable RFTA to increase it bus storage, operations, maintenance and administrative capacity by over 200 percent. RFTA anticipates this capacity will be necessary for it to sustain current operations and accommodate future needs and ridership demand under a variety of population and employment-based growth scenarios and service plans.

This facility is estimated to cost about $35 million to construct. RFTA ask its Congressional delegates to support this project through RFTA $20.9 million TIGER grant request and any other appropriate funding sources.