RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update

March 10th, 2022

On-Board Survey

On March 17-19, RFTA plans to conduct is biennial On-Board survey. One day for RFTA's regional routes and Ride Glenwood routes; a second day for the Aspen City routes; and RFTA's regional routes will be surveyed again on Saturday, to better understand weekday vs weekend travel behavior and perspectives. The 2020 survey was cancelled due to COVID.

RFTA will survey passengers to better understand origins and destinations, demographics, first-and-last-mile connections, and COVID-19 impacts and perceptions.

Intermountain TPR 10-Year Plan

In February 2022, RFTA and municipalities began the process to revise the region's 10-year plan of priority projects. Years 1-4 of the plan are completed, leaving 6 projects for years 5-10. These are:

1. I-70 Glenwood Canyon Critical Asset Repair
2. I-70 and CO 9 (Exit 203) Interchange Improvements
3. I-70 West Vail Pass Auxiliary Lanes
4. I-70 Interchange Improvements in Garfield County (near New Castle)

5. US 24 Safety Improvements between Minturn and Leadville

RFTA will propose the following projects for inclusion in the 10-yer plan:

- The Glenwood Springs Maintenance Facility
- BRT Extension to downtown Glenwood Springs and to West Glenwood Springs
- Aspen Maintenance Facility Renovation and Expansion (Phase 5 and Phase 6)
- 27th Street BRT Station Parking Expansion
- RFTA Employee Housing

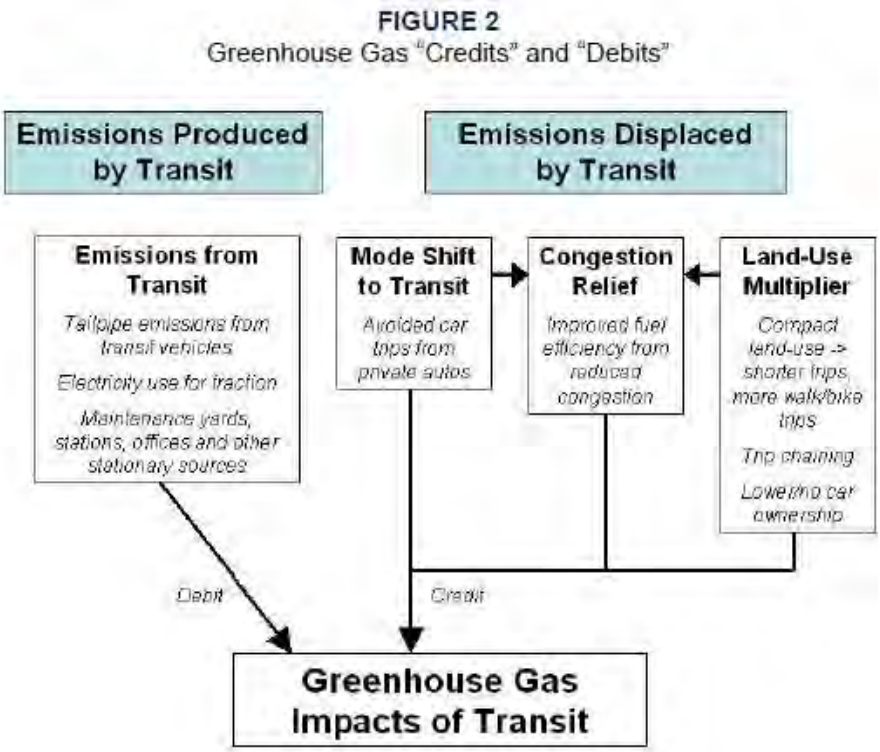
Pitkin County will propose these projects:

- Snowmass Transit Center (highest priority)
- Buttermilk Underpass & Transit Signal Bypass Lanes (priority)
- Brush Creek P&R to Rio Grande Trail Connection (priority)
- Entrance to Aspen (years 5-10)
- Basalt Midland Vehicle and Ped Underpass (years 5-10)
- Aspen Intersection Improvements (years 5-10)
- SH82 Access Control Plan (ACP) @ AABC/Airport (years 5-10)

RFTA Climate Action Plan (CAP)

Transportation is now the highest source of GHG emissions in the United States, accounting for 29 percent of U.S. emissions. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has made it clear that achieving net-zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions globally by 2050 is essential to stabilizing global temperatures at 1.5 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels and reducing the devastating health and economic impacts of the climate crisis. These health and economic impacts will be felt worldwide, in term of higher temperatures, more server storms and floods, and mass migration. In RFTA's service region, these impacts already appear manifest in shorter and drier winters, wild fires, flooding, and reduced snowpack.

RFTA staff will soon issue an RFP to conduct RFTA Climate Action Plan (CAP), which will quantify RFTA's current GHG emissions, set short-term and long-term GHG reduction targets, and determine strategies to achieve those targets.



Graphic from the APTA report *Guidelines for Climate Action Planning*

Transit Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Roadmap
As an action item from the Colorado Electric Vehicle Plan 2020, The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) has released the final *Transit Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Roadmap* with State transit agency partners. This document was developed over the course of 2021 in partnership with CASTA members, participants in the Colorado EV Coalition (CEVC) Transit Subgroup, and other transit and utility partners statewide.

The document, including the Transit ZEV Roadmap, Executive Summary, and Appendices, was created to help guide CDOT and its partner agencies in achieving the statewide targets of 1,000 transit ZEVs on the road by 2030 and a 100% transit ZEV fleet by 2050. The Roadmap includes an inventory of the current Colorado transit fleet, explores near-term barriers and opportunities for conversion to ZEVs, and identifies realistic timelines and funding levels to achieve the statewide targets. Finally, the Roadmap lays out a number of strategies and policies for the state to support transit agencies in their fleet transition efforts moving forward.

AABC Micro-Grid Project
As presented at the January 13th, 2022 RFTA Board Meeting, RFTA is a stakeholder in the *Aspen Airport Business Center (AABC) Integrated Clean Energy Project*, or more simply, the *AABC Micro-Grid Project.* This innovative resiliency project is being led by Pitkin County and Holy Cross Energy (HCE).

The team received great news recently with a $1,700,000 grant award from the CO Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) for the implementation of Phase 1A of the multi-phase project. While this award fell short of the $2,500,000 request, the team met on 3/2/22 to discuss next steps.

The team decided that RFTA's grant match request will remain at $213,750, and the other project partners will increase their local matches to cover the funding gap of approximately $800,000. The intent is to maintain the

same scope of work for Phase 1A. For this first phase, RFTA will benefit specifically from design/engineering services for the rest of the project. Specifications will also be finalized for a future onsite battery to store electricity for the electric buses.

Liquid Hydrogen Hub Could Benefit Colorado

For several years now, RFTA staff have been interested in the potential benefits of utilizing hydrogen fuel cell electric buses (HFCEBs) to extend route mileage beyond the more limited range of current battery electric buses (BEBs), while also meeting strategic plan sustainability goals by expanding on the zero-emission bus fleet. More specifically, staff have been working with stakeholders to develop potentially a demonstration hydrogen production/fueling facility as part of the multi-phase Glenwood Springs Maintenance Facility (GMF)/Regional Transit Center (RTC) construction project.

RFTA's 2021 Senate appropriation request was not funded. RFTA received feedback that the planned onsite production of hydrogen using a more traditional type of steam methane reform (SMR), or essentially more natural gas, did not align with State greenhouse gas and emissions reduction goals. Because of the new federal infrastructure bill, and some high-level moves at the State-level, RFTA may have another funding opportunity to demonstrate this technology.

Colorado will join three other Rocky Mountain States to apply for federal money to create a hydrogen hub that would help Colorado meet its goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions over the next 28 years. Gov. Jared Polis joined the governors of New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming to announce their plans to create the regional hydrogen hub and to compete for $8 billion set aside for such projects in the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The U.S. Department of Energy is expected to open applications for the money in May. Read more about this project at the link below and we will keep the Board abreast of any funding opportunities.

Colorado will join New Mexico, Utah and Wyoming to create a hydrogen hub in the Rocky Mountain region (denverpost.com)