RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update

September 10, 2020

RFTA Vision
RFTA pursues excellence and innovation in providing preferred transportation choices that connect and support vibrant communities.

RFTA Mission
Connecting our region with transit and trails.

RFTA Values
Safe, Accountable, Affordable, Convenient, Dependable, Efficient, Sustainable

RFTA Strategic Outcomes
Safe Customers, Workforce and General Public; Accessibility and Mobility; Sustainable Workforce; Financial Sustainability; Satisfied Customers; Environmental Sustainability; High Performing Organization

CURRENT PLANNING PROJECTS

Grants Update

RFTA applied for $13.5 million in Federal Transit Administration Section 5339 funds and received notice of award of $11.5 million this month, for renovation and expansion of the Glenwood Springs Maintenance Facility (GMF)/Regional Transit Center (RTC). On Saturday, August 29, 2020 Senator Cory Gardner and State Representative Perry Will visited the GMF and offered their congratulations and support.

While $11.5 million is no small sum, the GMF renovation and expansion is a large-scale, long overdue task. The purpose of this project is to ensure that RFTA, the largest rural transit agency in the United States, can

store, maintain and operate a fleet over 100 buses with an array a propulsion systems and modern technologies. Cost of the core renovations is anticipated to be at least $40 million. Dan Blankenship and RFTA Board Chair Art Riddile also encouraged Gardner to support RFTA's $13.5 million USDOT BUILD funding request, which will be announced by mid-November.

See articles in the Aspen Daily News and the Aspen Times.

Year 2021 Consolidated Capital Call for Projects (CCCP)

For Fiscal Year 2021, transit funds administered by CDOT through the CCCP process will be heavily weighted toward Administrative and Operating (A&O) expenses. CDOT conducted a survey of transit agencies in July 2020 to gauge financial impacts of COVID for years 2020 and 2021. While transit agencies commented that the severity and duration of COVID-19 impacts on transit service are difficult to predict, 85% of agencies expected 2021 to be the same or worse than 2020. In 2020, $30 Million of CARES Act funds were passed through to Rural Colorado agencies. If 2021 is similar, rural transit agencies will need another $30 Million to maintain service at or near pre-COVID levels.

Outside of special programs, CDOT usually allocates $11 Million in FTA A&O funds and $16 Million in a variety of capital funds. This year, most of those capital funds, as allowed by law, will be converted to A&O funds. Only $3.5 million in FTA Capital funds and $5.0 million in VW settlement funds (for Alternative Fuel Vehicles) will be available for rural transit agencies statewide. However, there will be a boost in A&O funding for 2021. RFTA will receive about $3.4 million in Phase II appointments of CARES Act funding, for the remainder of 2020. The amount of A&O funding to be made available through the CCCP has not been determined.

CASTA Fall Conference

As is the case with most events during the COVID-19 pandemic, the annual Colorado Association of State Transit Agencies (CASTA) fall conference that was planned to be held in Steamboat Springs is now virtual. The CASTA Fall Conference & Expo will take place over the course of 2-weeks and provides training on a variety of topics, including transit management, COVID-19 protocols, zero-emission fleet developments, driver safety, system safety, human services issues, mobility, and FTA and CDOT policy issues. The conference spans two weeks (September 1st – 11th) to allow for screen breaks and time agencies to assign appropriate staff.

27th Street Pedestrian Crossings FMLD Grant Proposal

RFTA and the City of Glenwood Springs intend to construct a grade separated crossing of State Highway 82 at 27th Street to facilitate safe crossing for bicyclists and pedestrians, free of conflicts with vehicles.

The need for this crossing has been well-documented since 2011 or earlier, when Fehr and Peers conducted a study, commissioned by CDOT, to investigate and prioritize safety, geometric, and operational characteristics of 47 intersections within Region 3. The 27th Street intersection ranked as the 3rd highest priority intersection in the 4-county Intermountain Region.

During the Destination 2040 Plan, and Ballot Issue 7A, RFTA's committed to funding $4.3 million of the roughly $9 million project's estimated project cost, and that the remaining funding would come from other sources. RFTA and the City have received an additional $1.1 million in CDOT MMOF funding, $1 million in CDOT Regional Priority Project (RPP) funds, and $1 million in Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds. To date, about $7.4 million of the estimated $9 million needed has been secured.

Funding Source	Progress
CDOT MMOF	$1.1 million secured
Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)	$1 .0 million secured
Destination 2040	$4.3 million secured (note: some funds will be expended on design and engineering)
CDOT Regional Priority Program	$1.0 million secured
Total Acquired	**$7.4 million**
Garfield County FMLD	$500,000 + $500,000 City of Glenwood Springs match
Remainder Needed	$600,000 estimated + design costs

Last month, RFTA submitted a grant proposal to the Garfield County for $500,000 and a generous local match of $500,000 from The City of Glenwood Springs. Awards will be announced within two months.