RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update
May 9, 2024

Grant Development

The Planning Department works collaboratively with all RFTA departments to strategize on grant opportunities that align with RFTA's seven strategic planning outcomes and the annual work plan shared with the RFTA Board. Substantial grant requests will be presented in more detail on the consent agenda in future board packets, and quarterly updates will be provided accordingly. These are grant applications that have recently been submitted or are under development and will be submitted in the near future.

Project Name	Grant Program	Grant Request
• GMF/RTC Phase 6A Transit Center • Phase 6B O&M Admin/Operations Center • Phase 8 ZEV Equipment Storage Building	FY24 FTA 5339b Bus & Bus Facilities & 5339c Low-No	$32,837,664
• GMF/RTC Phase 6A Transit Center • Phase 6B O&M Admin/Operations Center • Phase 8 ZEV Equipment Storage Building	CY24 CDOT Super Call	$32,837,664 (reduced if RFTA receives FY24 5339 award)
• RGT Corridor: VelociRFTA BRT Extension Study	FY24 USDOT RAISE Planning Grant Program	$1,028,450.00

• RGT Corridor: Roaring Fork River Bridge Rehabilitation	Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District (GCFMLD) Spring Cycle	$1,000,000.00
• RGT Corridor: Rosebud Trailhead Improvements	FY25 Senate Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) Appropriations – Bennett, Hickenlooper, Boebert	$850,000.00
• Safety & Training: RFTA Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Safety & Training Program	CDOT Office Innovative Mobility (OIM) ZEV Workforce Development Grant	$100,000.00
• Vehicles: 10 BEBs & Chargers	FY24 FTA 5339b Bus & Bus Facilities & 5339c Low-No	$13,200,000
• Vehicles: 10 BEBs & Chargers	CY24 CDOT Super Call	$13,200,00 (reduced if RFTA receives FY24 5339 award)

Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Transition Plan
Stantec provided a thorough project update at the April 11th RFTA Board Meeting, with positive feedback from several Board members. The planning process is about 80% complete. Staff is currently reviewing the *Draft Final ZEV Transition Plan* document, and the final plan should be delivered in early June. This technical document will contain comprehensive operations, maintenance, facility and facility data for RFTA to confidently plan for a bold ZEV fleet expansion, in step with the RFTA Climate Action Plan (CAP) and the State of CO climate and ZEV goals. The departments that will be most affected by this transition will be Operations, Vehicle Maintenance and Facilities.

Stantec will present a final presentation at the **July 11th Board meeting.** Based on feedback throughout the year-long process, and response from the RFTA Board in April, RFTA Staff and the consultant team will recommend that the RFTA Board adopt a goal of a **100% Mixed ZEV Fleet by 2050**. Please see below the original six ZEV fleet scenarios that Stantec presented to the RFTA Leadership Team for a comprehensive evaluation and scoring process.

The preferred option will include a mix of battery electric buses (BEBs) and hydrogen fuel cell electric buses (HFCEBs), which are all ZEV technologies. While BEB technology is more developed than hydrogen at this time for heavy duty vehicles, both Stantec and RFTA Staff believe that this path forward will allow for RFTA to observe the evolution of both technologies, while maintaining some flexibility to adapt to changes in technology and other factors. The primary benefit of HFCEB technology is increased range of 350 miles, which is about double of BEBs. The primary disadvantage is a reliable and affordable hydrogen fuel source in Colorado.

In case you missed it, HERE is a recent Aspen Daily News article about RFTA's ZEV fleet transition.

Table 1. Alternatives for ZEB fleet transition

Alternative	Timeline for Full ZEB Fleet	Fleet Make up	Bus Details	Non-Revenue Details
1	2040	BEV	On Route Charging + Reblocking	Limited mileage + midday charging
2	2040	FCEV	Midday Refueling	Midday Refueling
3	2040	Mixed	Aspen Maintenance Facility = BEB, Glenwood Maintenance Facility = FCEB	Based on overnight location
4	2050	BEV	On Route Charging + Reblocking	Limited mileage + midday charging
5	2050	FCEV	Midday Refueling	Midday Refueling
6	2050	Mixed	Aspen Maintenance Facility = BEB, Glenwood Maintenance Facility = FCEB	Based on overnight location

RFTA Awarded Champion of Sustainable Transit

On April 22, 2021, President Biden announced an ambitious goal: for the United States to achieve a 50–52 percent reduction from 2005 levels in economy-wide net GHG pollution in 2030.

On June 15, 2021, FTA launched the Sustainable Transit for a Healthy Planet Challenge to encourage transit agencies to take bold action to further reduce GHG emissions from public transportation to support President Biden's GHG reduction goal. The challenge calls on transit agencies to develop climate, sustainability, or electrification or zero-emission transition plans that include strategies with measurable goals to achieve GHG emission targets.

Over the course of three years, more than 230 transit agencies have signed up to participate in the FTA Climate Challenge and over 100 climate action plans have been submitted.

On Earth Day 2024, FTA recognized three transit agencies as Champions of the Challenge awardees. The awards celebrate their development of robust climate action or sustainability plans that include strategies to significantly cut GHG emissions, implement resilience measures, or increase the sustainability of transit systems.

The 2024 awardees are:

- Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, San Jose, California
- Maryland Transit Administration, Maryland
- Roaring Fork Transportation Authority, Colorado

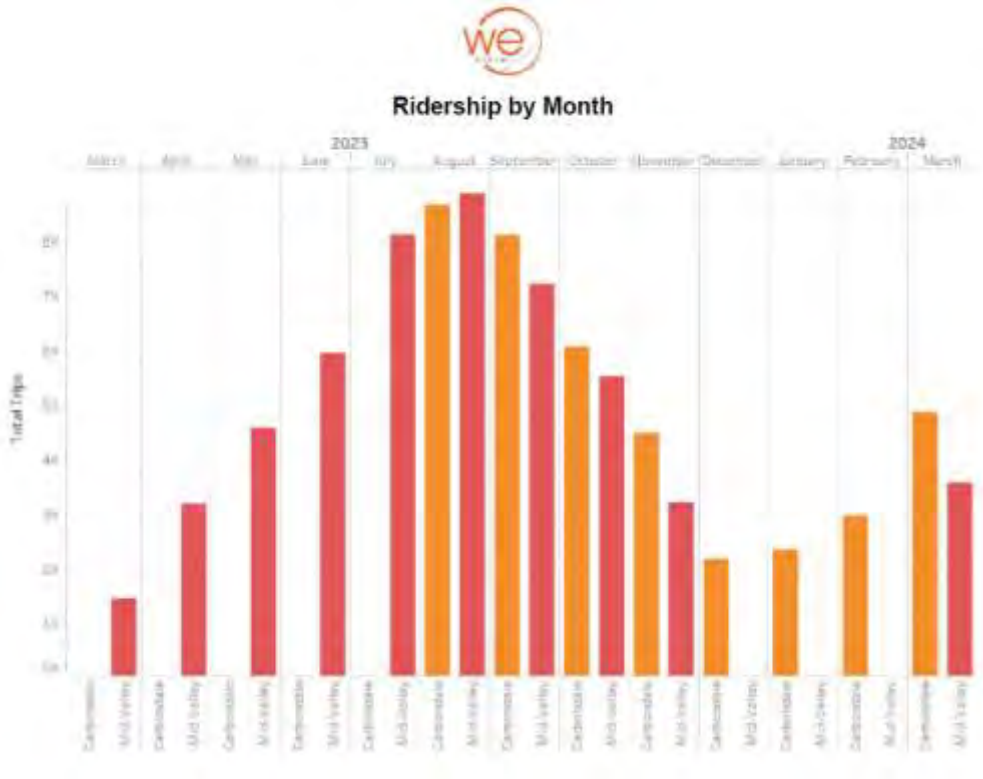
FTA noted RFTA's efforts in developing a comprehensive climate action plan that supports RFTA's goal of transitioning to a 100% electric fleet by 2050.

First / Last Mile Mobility (FLMM) Updates

Roaring Fork Valley bikeshare, provided by WE-cycle, continues to show strong performance. WE-cycle currently operates four systems including Aspen, Carbondale, Mid-Valley, and Snowmass. For the month of March, which is the latest data available, only the Carbondale and Mid-Valley systems were in operation, which consisted of 17 and 31 stations respectively. WE-cycle provides free rides for up to 30 minutes with a focus on first and last mile connections to transit stops.

The mid-valley system opened in March while the Snowmass and Aspen systems will be opening in May. In May, the Pitkin County system will be expanding into the AABC with 6 new stations and 35 e-bikes. In addition, the newly expanded Carbondale Park and Ride station will also be opening.

Figure 1: Expanding WE-Cycle Bike Share Capacity at Carbondale BRT Station



FLMM Grant Award Updates (excluding Bike Share)

2023 Awards

Glenwood Springs Blake Ave. Corridor Planning:
The Blake Avenue Phase 1 construction project went out to bid in this spring. The project will be completed in the Fall of 2024. As the design was not completed within 2023, the City of Glenwood Springs has requested that RFTA carry forward the FLMM grant funds to 2024.

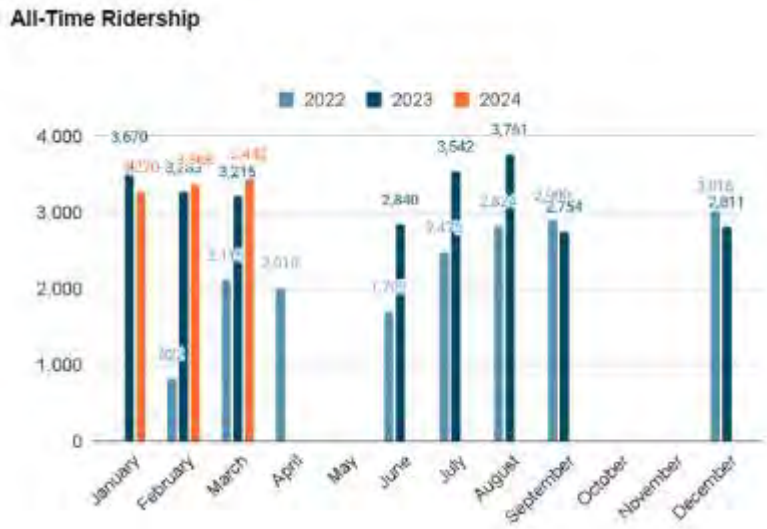
Pitkin County, Truscott to Owl Creek Trail Design:
Pitkin County and the consultant team are currently at 90% construction plans. The project entails design, construction documents, public input, identification of funding sources, and coordination with City of Aspen trails capital planning. Among the next steps is to secure several easements for the trail which are outside of CDOT right of way. Coordination with City of Aspen is taking place for inclusion in their trail's capital planning for 2026 as the City of Aspen will be eventual owner of trail. The goal is to have all necessary easements secured by fall of 2024, which will allow the project to move forward to 100% construction plans followed by putting the project out for bid and construction in 2026. As the design was not completed within 2023, Pitkin County has requested that RFTA carry forward the FLMM grant funds to 2024.

Buttermilk Crossing Design:
At the June 29, 2023 Elected Officials Transportation Committee (EOTC) meeting, the Committee voted to end the design process of the Buttermilk Crossing due to the anticipated high cost of the project.

Town of Basalt, Basalt Connect (on-demand service):
The Basalt Connect on-demand service between Willits and Basalt started on February 7, 2022. Year 2023 was the second year of grant funding through FLMM and is paid 50% by FLMM and 50% by the Town of Basalt. The 2024 FLMM grant agreement has been executed.

Since inception through the end of March 2024, the Basalt Connect service has provided 53,800 passenger trips. March 2024 provided 3,442 passenger trips to 454 unique passengers. The average wait time in March 2024 was only 12 minutes with 41% of trips shared rides. Average demand fluctuates throughout the 7am to 9pm service timeframe with the strongest demand between 3pm and 9pm. The service has been highly rated by its customers with an average experience rating of 4.9 out of 5.

Below is a graph showing ridership by month for the Basalt Connect.



Consistent with 2023, in 2024, the Basalt Connect will operate for 8 months of the year: January, February, March, June, July, August, September, December. The service will not operate in April, May, October or December.

Below is a heat map of Pickup locations for Basalt Connect for the month of January 2024. The drop off locations are very similar to the pickups.

2024 Awards

With the approval of the below FLMM grant awards for 2024 as a part of RFTA's 2024 budget, RFTA staff have circulated grant agreements for each of the awarded projects. Executed grant agreements are nearly all received with the remainder expected in the next few weeks.

2024 Summary of FLMM Grant Requests

Applicant	Project Title	Summary	Amount Requested	Total Cost
Town of Carbondale	We-Cycle Bike Share	2024 Capital and Operating $143,790 Operating Request $1,840 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $145,630**	$72,815 (50%)	$71,895 operating + $920 R&ME = **$72,815 (100%)**
Town of Carbondale	Carbondale On-Demand Service Pilot	Operations for 6 months of 2024	$181,500 (50%)	$363,000
Town of Basalt	Basalt Connect	Operations for 8 months of 2024: January, February, March, June, July, August, September, December	$270,610 (50%)	$541,211
Town of Basalt	We-Cycle Bike Share	2024 Capital and Operating $72,744 Operating Request $460 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $73,204**	$21,602 (29.5%)	$72,744 operating + $460 R&ME - $30,000 existing = **$43,204 (100%)**
Town of Snowmass Village	We-Cycle Bike Share	2024 Capital and operating $10,580 Operating Request $200 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $10,780**	$5,390 (50%)	$5,290 operating + $100 R&ME = **$5,390 (100%)**
Town of Snowmass Village	Brush Creek Rd. Pedestrian Improvements-Mountain View to Snowmass Mall	Construct an 8' multimodal corridor along Brush Creek Rd from Divide Rd to Carriage Way.	$150,000 (11.5%)	$1.3 Million
City of Aspen	We-Cycle Bike Share	2024 Capital and Operating $186,008 Operating Request $920 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $186,928**	$17,984 (10.6%)	$186,008 operating + $920 R&ME - $150,960 existing = **$35,968 (100%)**
Pitkin County	We-Cycle Bike Share	2024 Capital and Operating $39,552 Operating Request $49,790 Capital Request $460 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $89,802**	$44,901 (50%)	$39,552 operating + $49,790 Capital + $460 R&ME = **$89,802 (100%)**
FLMM Award Total			$764,802	

2025 FLMM Grant Update

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the 2025 FLMM grant cycle was circulated on May 1, 2024. 2025 grant applications are due by June 21, 2024. Following staff review of the submitted applications, RFTA staff will bring a recommendation for 2025 grant awards to the Board this summer.

APTA Mobility Conference, Portland
On behalf of RFTA, Jason White attended the American Public Transportation Association (APTA) Mobility Conference in Portland, Oregon in late April.

This annual conference is a great opportunity for transit planners, transit operators, decision makers, bus manufacturers and innovators to come together to share industry solutions and return home with fresh ideas. As is the case with any APTA conference, this conference was top notch. There is always a wide range of relevant content from ADA mobility solutions to zero-emission technologies to multimodal innovations.

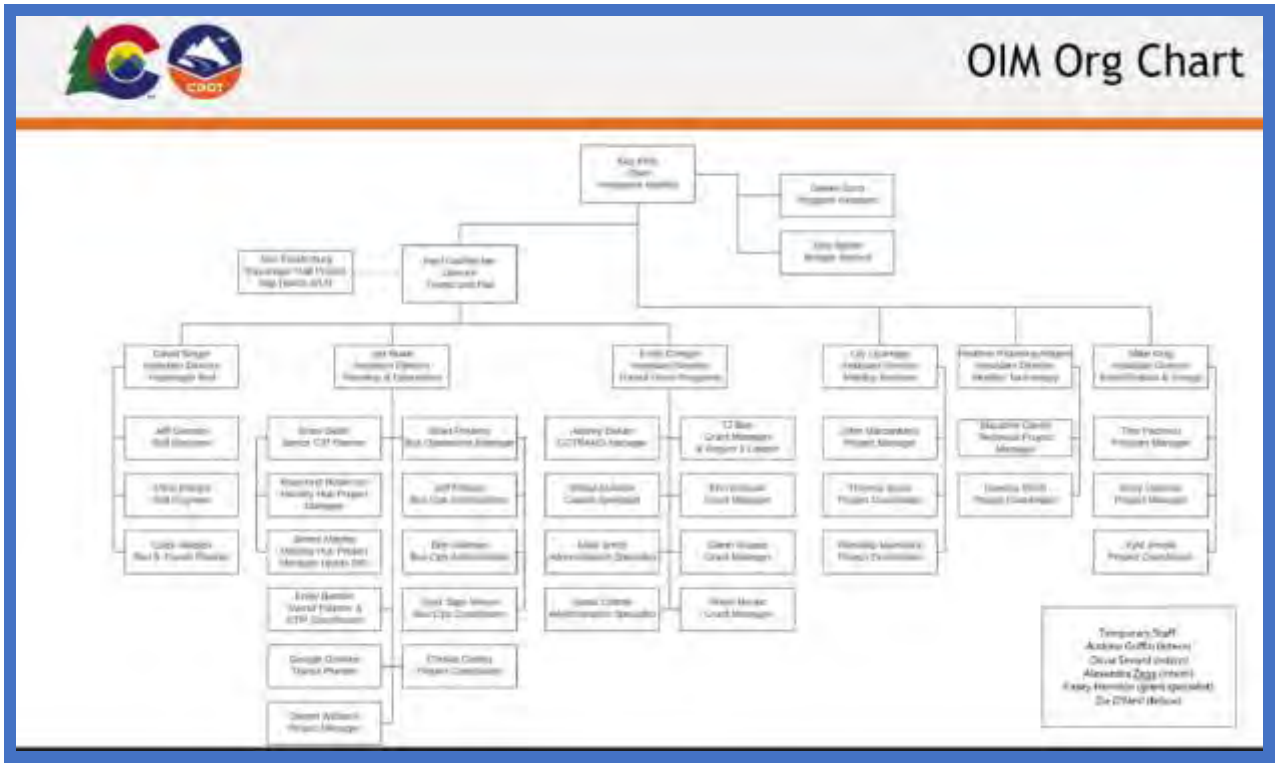
More specific to RFTA, Jason was able to connect with Stantec staff that are currently working on our ZEV Transition Plan (see section above). The Stantec team presented to a packed house about the very basics of hydrogen fuel cell electric technology, and lessons learned from California transit agencies that have been pioneering the technology for 20 years. Panelists shared great insight into vehicle procurement, facility design, fuel sources and fueling systems integration. The primary takeaway was that while BEB technology currently is a more feasible ZEV technology for transit agencies outside of CA, IIJA funding and the creation of seven national hydrogen hubs will likely begin to move the needle on research, development and beneficial supply/demand outcomes.

One of the most inspiring sessions for many attendees was the keynote speaker, Phil Hansen. Phil is a life-long multimedia artist, and now international inspirational speaker, that overcame severe nerve damage in his dominant hand that he depends on for his artwork. The takeaway message is that when faced with adversity we must pause, reflect and pivot. Using proprietary art software, Phil was able to aggregate interactive sketches from about 2,000 attendees and create a real-time, pre-built mosaic of a TriMet bus, which is Portland's award-winning transit system. Everyone was buzzing about this presentation for the whole conference.

CDOT Office of Innovation and Mobility Updates

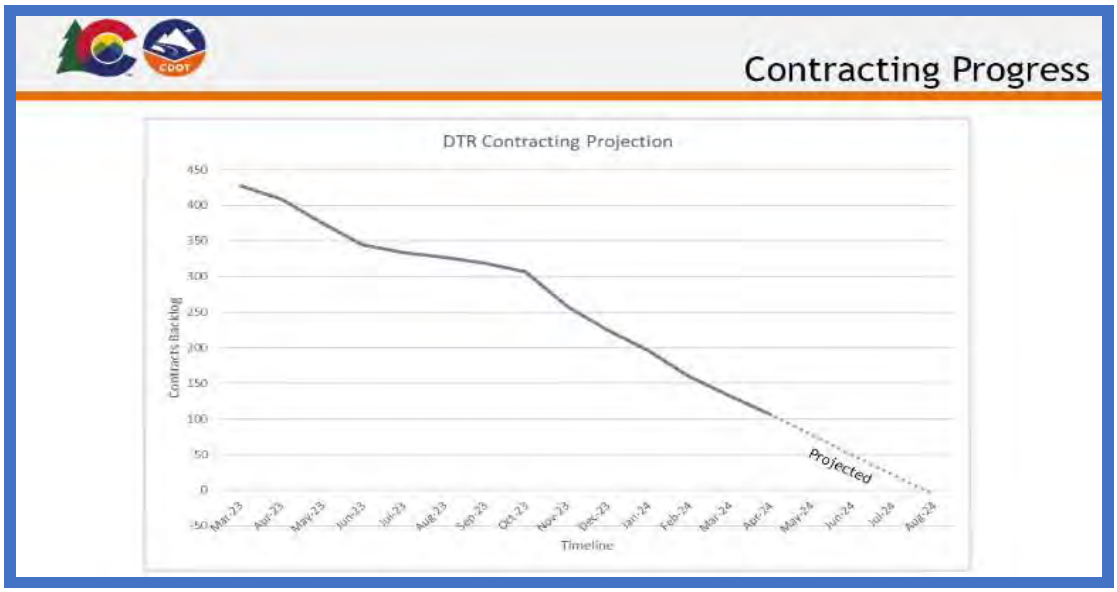
CDOT Division of Transit and Staffing

For the first time in years, the Division of Transit and Rail is fully staffed. The Organizational Chart is shown below.



CDOT "Hitting the Mark" on Contracting

DTR Director Paul DesRocher reports that CDOT is nearly complete with addressing all outstanding contracts, projecting that the backlog will be cleared out by August 2024, when CDOT intends to award the FY2024 Consolidated Capital Call for Projects grants.



CDOT Legislative Update
CDOT is monitoring the following bills, which may be relevant to RFTA:

1. SB24-032, which creates a statewide transit pass exploratory committee, extends the Ozone Zero-Fare program, and creates a Youth Zero-Fare program.

2. SB24-230, imposes a production fee for clean transit to be paid by every producer of oil and gas in the state, with revenues to be used for the following:

    a. 70% to the local transit operations cash fund to be used for expanding local transit service and prioritizing transit improvements in certain communities;

    b. 10% to the local transit grant program cash fund to be used for providing competitive grants to certain eligible entities for expenses associated with providing public transportation; and

    c. 20% to the rail funding program cash fund to be used for passenger rail projects and service.

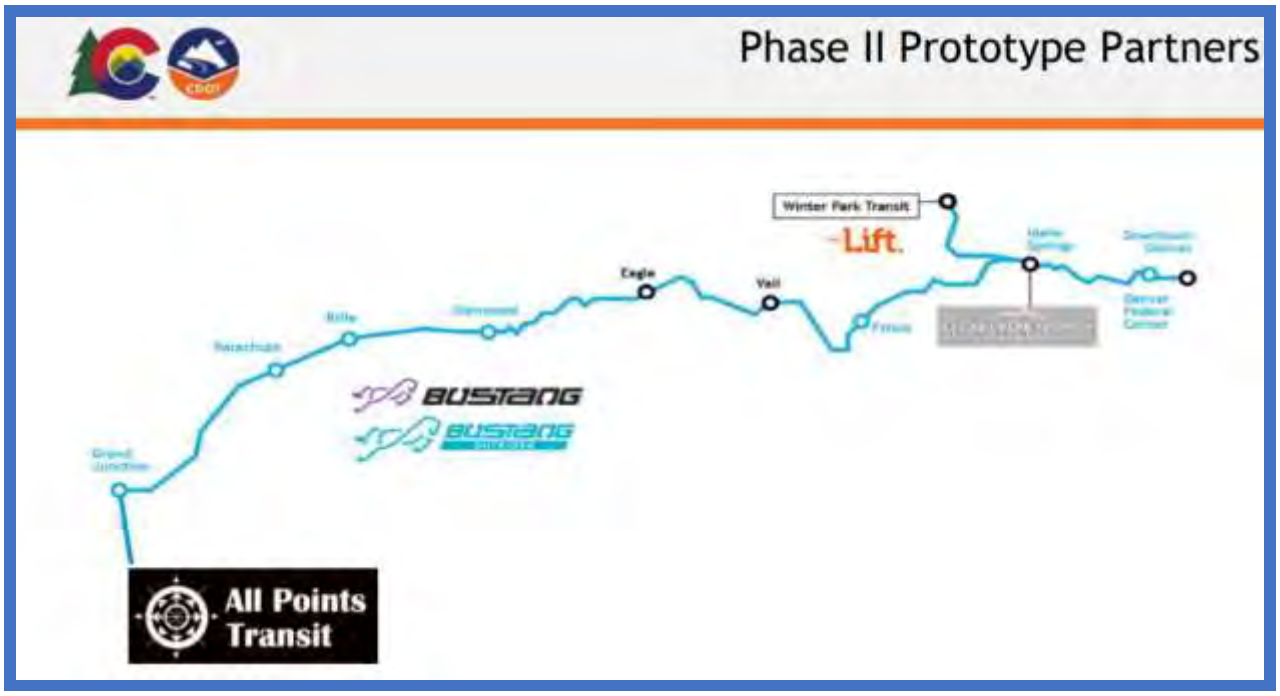
CDOT Establishing Digital Mobility Hub
CDOT intends to create a connected and integrated statewide mobility platform for transit that allows passengers to find the information needed to travel seamlessly in Colorado using transit.
The project is composed of four stages:

- **Phase 1:** Statewide GTFS-General Transit Feed Specification project that publishes transit data to be consumed by a wide variety of applications (ex: Google Maps)
    - **Project MVP:** Creation of GTFS-feeds - features over 40 transit agencies GTFS information: https://colorado-gtfs.trilliumtransit.com/

- **Phase 2:** Digital Mobility Hub featuring Trip Planning and Universal Ticketing for Colorado transit providers and passengers.
    - **Project MVP:** Prototype platform

- **Phase 3:** Expansion! Add in additional agencies, platform capability enhancements, explore integration with private transportation providers and other transportation modes

Project partners include Winter Park Transit, Clear Creek County, Bustang, and All Points Transit

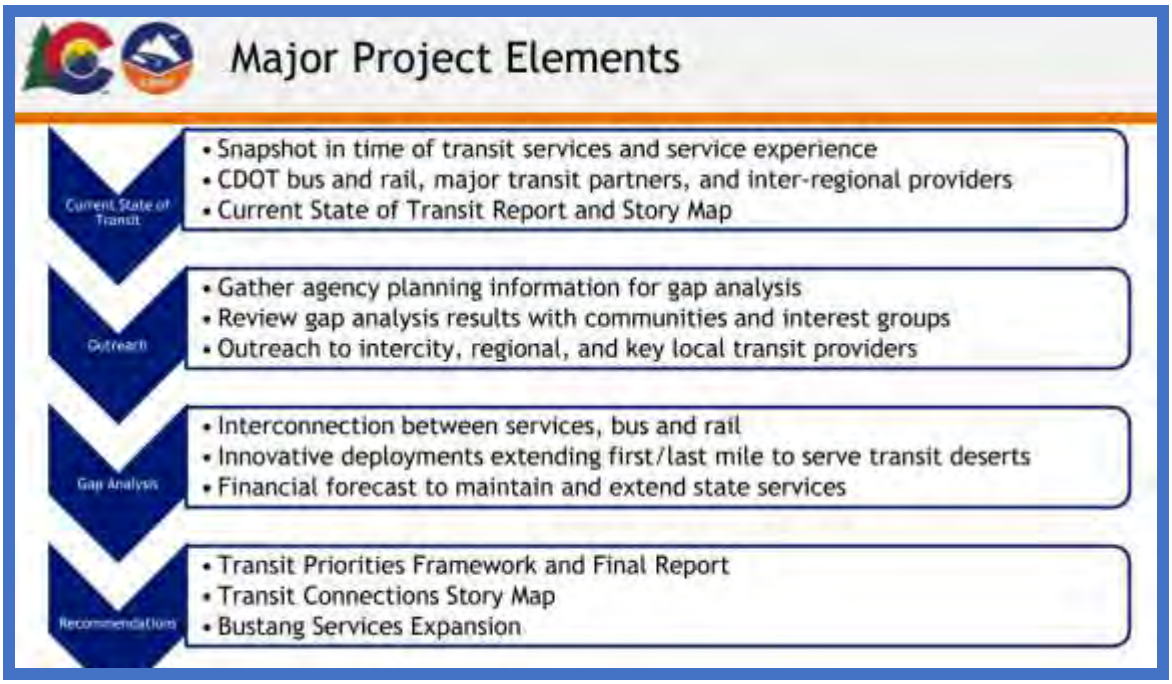


CDOT is currently in Task 3 Software Development, building out the platform with the Trip Planning Functionality, Universal Payments, and Bus tracking.

Connected Colorado Phase II Schedule												
Task Description	2023				2024				2025			
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
Task 1: Project Initiation and Kick-off				■								
Task 1: Procurement	■	■	■									
Task 2: Systems Engineering Analysis and Agreements				■	■	■						
Task 3: Vendor Onboarding				■								
Task 3: Software Development					■	■	■					
Task 3: Software Development Review						■	■					
Task 4: Soft Rollout, Testing and Training for Prototype Agencies							■	■				
Task 5: Full System Rollout								■	■			
Task 5: Demonstration / User Outreach									■			

CDOT Transit Connections Study

The Transit Connections Study (TCS) aims to provide a strategic vision for a statewide transit network as part of a transformational, interconnected multimodal system. This includes improving and expanding the Bustang Family of Services, adding passenger rail services, and ensuring seamless connections with local and regional transit/mobility providers. This study will inform CDOT's transit planning and investment decisions for the next decade.



The project is intended to conclude at the end of 2024.

Mountain Rail Corridor Development

In addition to Front Range passenger rail between Fort Collins and Pueblo, CDOT is also examining the feasibility of rail to the west of the Front Range, focused on the Denver to Craig and Denver to Grand Junction corridors, shown below.

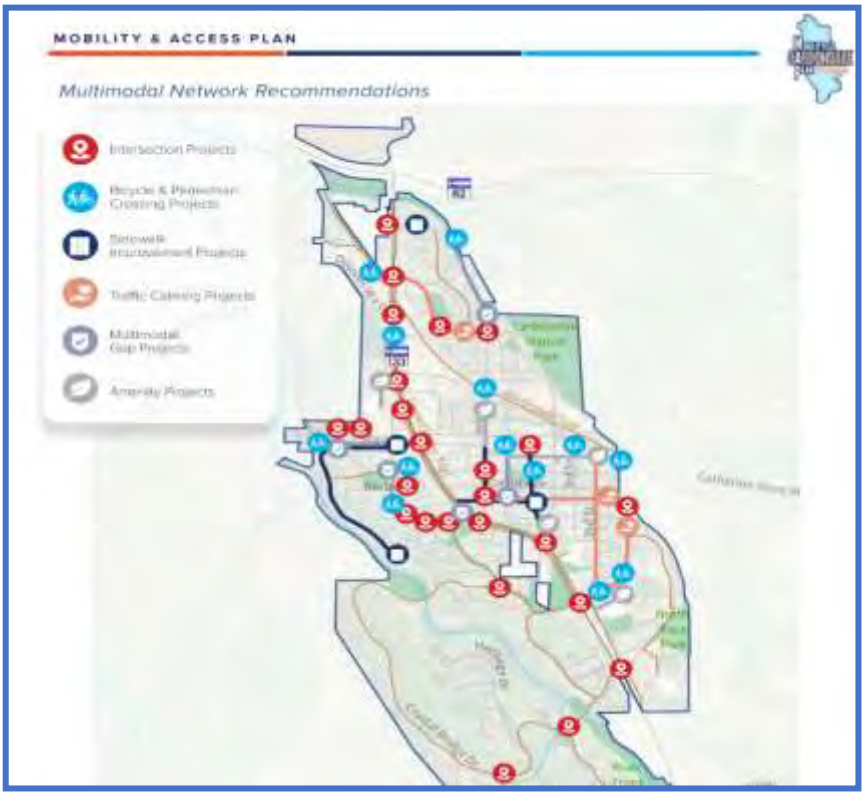
The feasibility study will analyze various alternatives, and will develop capital, operational, and financing plans. A model of the process is shown below.

Carbondale Transportation Mobility and Access Plan (MAP)
The Town of Carbondale has contracted with FHU Engineering to study transportation challenges, identify mobility issues, and develop recommendations to make Carbondale comfortable and accessible by any mode. FHU held a stakeholder meeting on Friday, May 3.

The study is focused on two main priorities:

1) Identifying issues and opportunities related to local mobility (such as active transportation and connectivity gaps and SH133 Highway 133 safety concerns).

2) Establishing a long-term multimodal vision. This vision will build upon Carbondale's Comprehensive Plan with focused mobility goals, which will be followed by recommendations to achieve Carbondale's multimodal objectives, followed by a multimodal project list.



This plan goals and projects are intended to position the Town for external funding opportunities.

The recommendations being developed for this project fall into two main categories:

1) **Multimodal Improvement Toolbox** – Types of infrastructure improvements that should be considered for addressing the common types of transportation issues in Carbondale.

2) **Priority Location Improvements** – For specific intersections and street segments in Carbondale that arose as priorities for improvement through the initial public outreach and existing conditions work.

Comments from participants included the importance of considering the transportation needs of the age 60+ demographic, which is growing significantly in Carbondale (and throughout the nation), and how to ensure that development is aligned with Carbondale's transportation needs and priorities, in terms of acknowledging these needs in transportation impact plans and in funding the improvements.