RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update
July 11, 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	Status
RTC Phase 6A Transit Center Phase 6B Admin/Operations Center Phase 8 ZEV Equipment Storage Building	FY24 FTA 5339b	$32,837,664	Announcements of Awards Pending
RTC Phase 6A Transit Center Phase 6B Admin/Operations Center Phase 8 ZEV Equipment Storage Building	CY24 CDOT Consolidated Capital Call	$32,837,664 (reduced if RFTA receives FY24 5339 award)	Announcements of Awards Pending
RGT Corridor: VelociRFTA BRT Extension Study	FY24 USDOT RAISE Planning Grant Program	$1,028,450	Not Awarded

RGT Corridor: Roaring Fork River Bridge Rehabilitation	Garfield County Federal Mineral Lease District (GCFMLD) Spring Cycle	$1,000,000	Not Awarded
RGT Corridor: Rosebud Trailhead Improvements	FY25 Senate Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS)	$850,000	Not Awarded
Safety & Training: RFTA Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) Safety & Training Program	CDOT Office Innovative Mobility (OIM) ZEV Workforce Development Grant	$100,000	Award Pending
Vehicles: 10 BEBs & Chargers	FY24 FTA 5339b Bus & Bus Facilities & 5339c Low-No	$13,200,000	Announcements of Awards Pending
Vehicles: 10 BEBs & Chargers	CY24 CDOT Super Call	$13,200 (reduced if RFTA receives FY24 5339 award)	Announcements of Awards Pending

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.

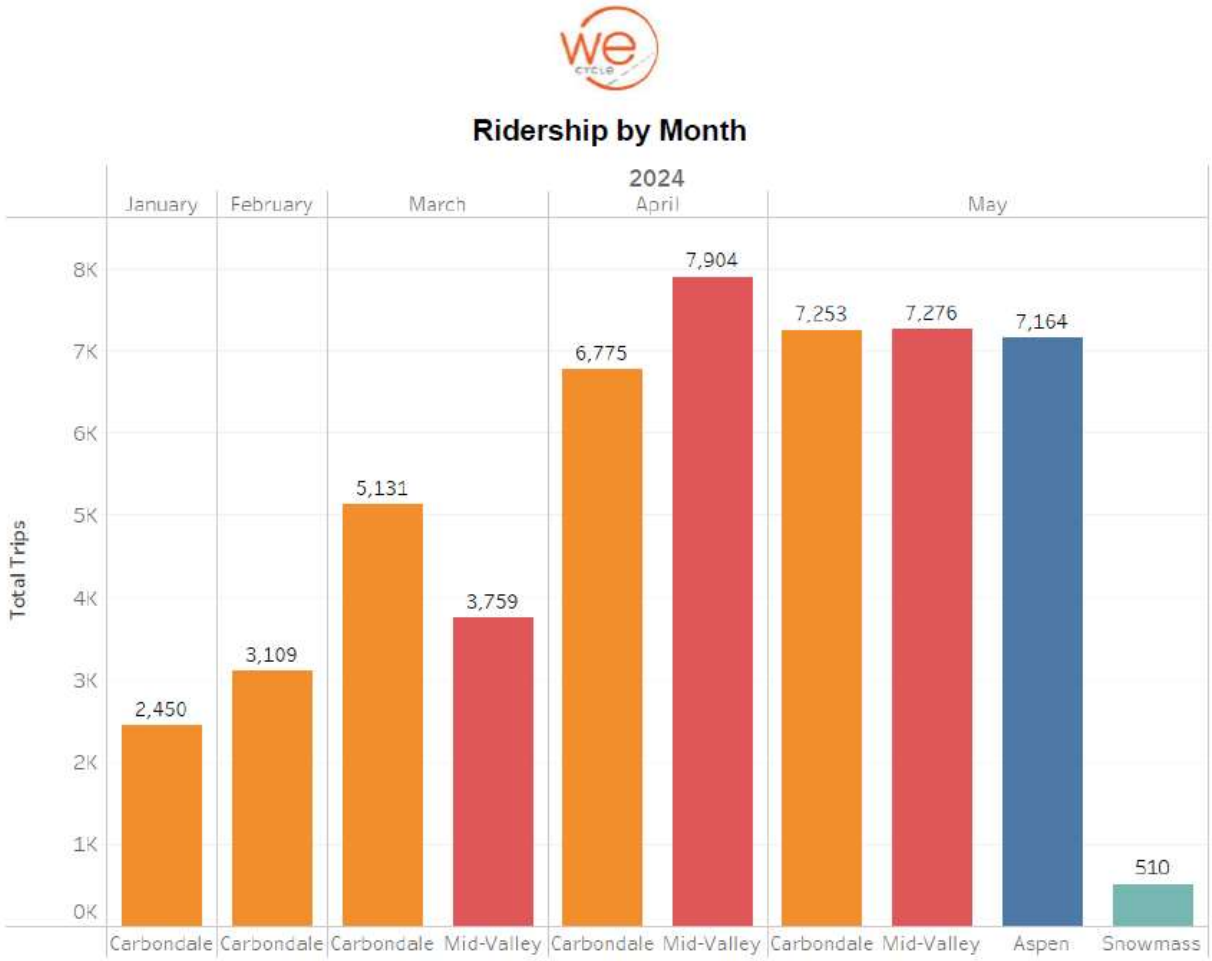
RFTA will receive physical award at the APTA TRANSform conference on September 29-October 2 in Anaheim, CA.

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 May, which is the latest data available, all systems are in operation, which consisted of 88 stations. WE-cycle provides free rides for up to 30 minutes with a focus on first and last mile connections to transit stops.

The Carbondale system is open year-round while the mid-valley system opened in March and the Snowmass and Aspen systems opened in May. In May, the Pitkin County system expanded into the AABC with 6 new stations and 35 e-bikes. In addition, the newly expanded Carbondale Park and Ride station is also operational and is now the largest station in the region.

Figure 1: Expanded WE-Cycle Bike Share Station 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): See 2024 Updates.

2024 Awards

With the approval of the below FLMM grant awards for 2024 as a part of RFTA's 2024 budget, all grant agreements have been signed and projects are starting

2024 Summary of FLMM Grant Requests

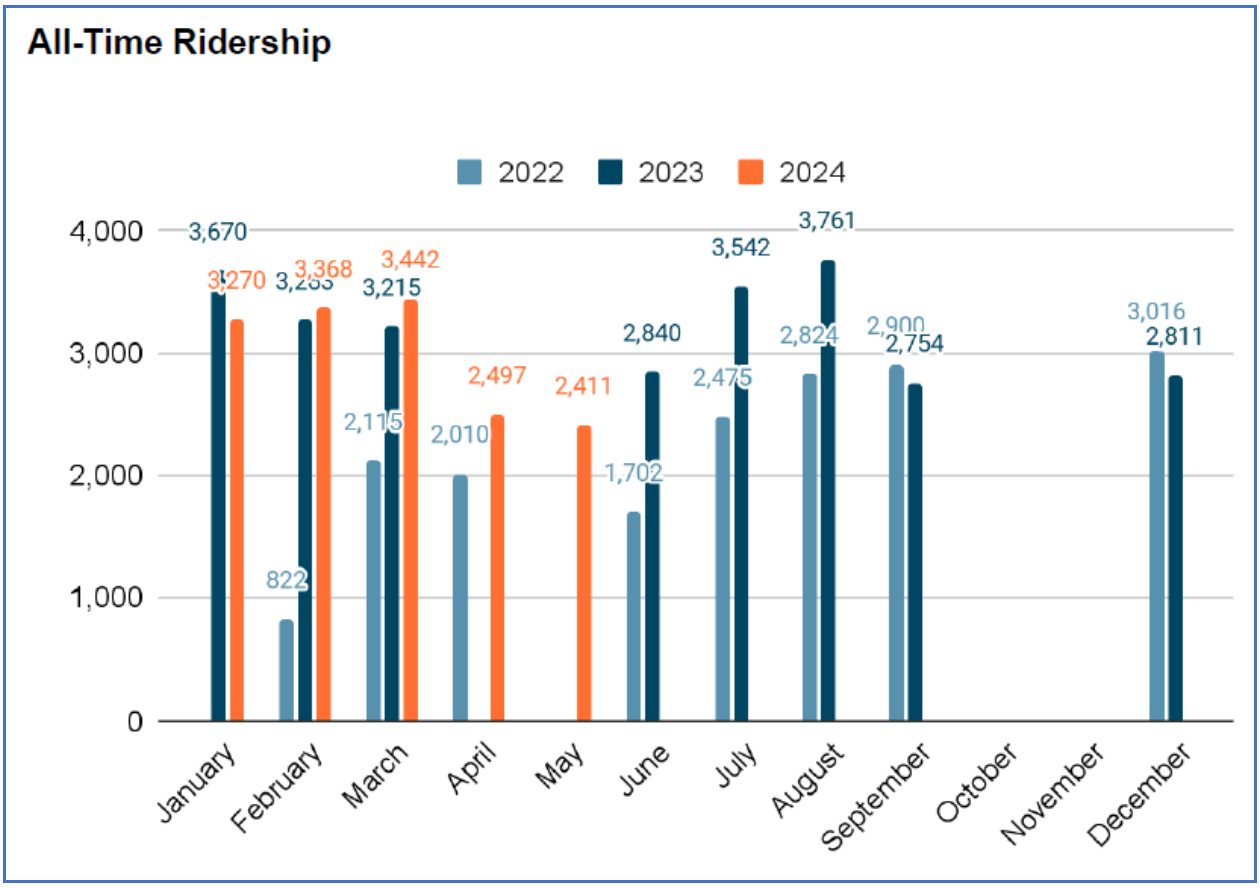
Applicant	Project Title	Summary	Amount Requested	Total Cost
Town of Carbondale	We-Cycle Bike Share	2024 Capital and Operating $143,790 Operating Request $1,840 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $145,630**	$72,815 (50%)	$71,895 operating + $920 R&ME = **$72,815 (100%)**
Town of Carbondale	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	

Town of Basalt, Basalt Connect (on-demand service): The Basalt Connect on-demand service between Willits and Basalt started on February 7, 2022. 2024 is the third year of grant funding through FLMM and is paid 50% by FLMM and 50% by the Town of Basalt.

Since inception through the end of May 2024, the Basalt Connect service has provided 58,708 passenger trips. May 2024 provided 2,411 passenger trips to 333 unique passengers. The average wait time in May 2024 was only 9 minutes with 35% of trips being shared rides. Average demand fluctuates throughout the 7am to 9pm

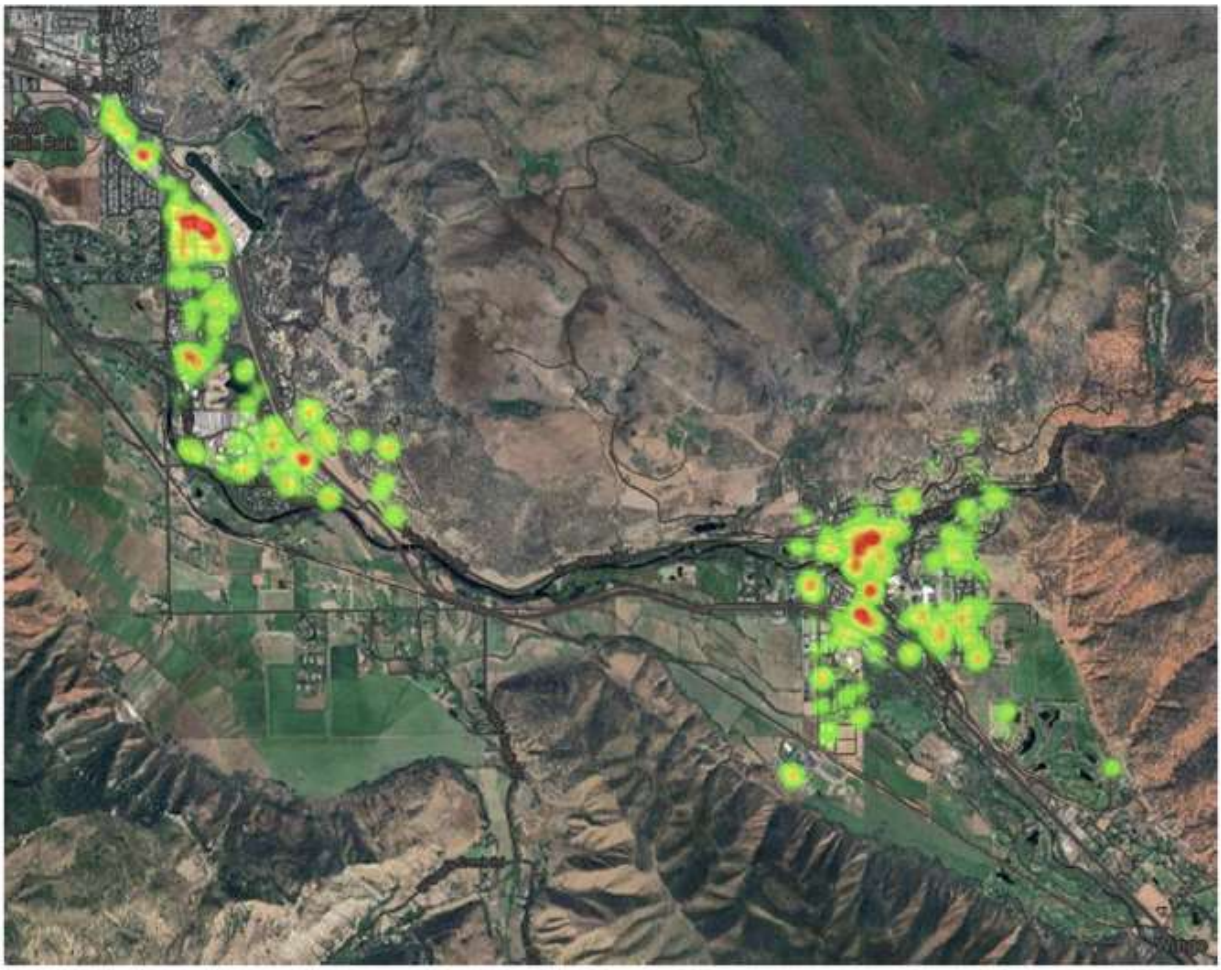
service timeframe with the strongest demand between 3pm and 9pm. The service has been highly rated by its customers with an average experience rating of 4.9 out of 5.

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



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

Pickups Heat Map



Town of Snowmass Village, Brush Creek Road Pedestrian Improvements: The Town of Snowmass Village is currently soliciting a contractor for this construction project.

2025 FLMM Grant Update

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the 2025 FLMM grant cycle was circulated on May 1, 2024. RFTA received the following applications on 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.

2025 Summary of FLMM Grant Requests (Updated June 21, 2024)

Applicant	Project Title	Summary	Amount Requested	Total Cost
Town of Carbondale	We-Cycle Bike Share	2025 Capital and Operating $166,281 Operating Request $840 Capital Request $6,133 Support Equipment Request $1,010 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $174,264**	$87,132 (50%)	$166,281 Operating + $840 Capital + $6,133 Support + $1,010 R&ME: **$174,264 (100%)**
Town of Carbondale	Carbondale Downtowner	Micro Transit Operations for 12 months of 2025	$336,713 (50%)	$673,425
Town of Basalt	Basalt Connect	Micro Transit Operations for 12 months of 2025	$289,237 (50%) (Does not include CASTA grant)	$578,474 (Does not include $29,756 CASTA Grant, when available and awarded) Total cost with CASTA grant, if awarded: $608,230
Town of Basalt	We-Cycle Bike Share	2025 Capital and Operating $96,531 Operating Request $68,152 Capital Request $15,534 Support Equipment Request $6,504 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $186,721**	$78,361 (41.9%)	$96,531 Operating + $68,152 Capital + $15,534 Support + $6,504 R&ME + - $30,000 existing = **$156,721 (100%)**
Town of Snowmass Village	We-Cycle Bike Share	2025 Capital and operating $90,488 Operating Request $18,000 Planning $328,558 Capital Request $10,874 Support Equipment Request $739 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $448,659**	$224,330 (50%)	$90,488 Operating + $18,000 Planning + $328,558 Capital + $10,874 Support + $739 R&ME = **$448,659 (100%)**
City of Aspen	WE-Cycle Bike Share	2025 Capital and Operating $249,551 Operating Request $95,606 Capital Request $29,854 Support Equipment Request $1,010 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $376,021**	$112,530 (29.9%)	$249,551 operating + $95,606 Capital + $29,854 Support Equipment + $1,010 R&ME - $150,960 existing = **$225,061**
Eagle County	WE-cycle Bike Share	2025 Capital and Operating $82,293 Operating Request $8,544 Support Equipment Request $1,010 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $91,847**	$23,423 (25.5%)	$82,293 operating + $8,544 Support Equipment + $1,010 R&ME - $45,000 existing = **$46,847**
Pitkin County	We-Cycle Bike Share	2025 Capital and Operating $78,123 Operating Request $6,214 Support Equipment Request $1,010 R&ME Request **Commitment Requested from We-Cycle: $85,347**	$42,673 (50%)	$78,123 Operating + $6,214 Support + $1,010 R&ME = **$85,347 (100%)**
City of Glenwood Springs	The 6th Street Corridor Improvements Project	6th Street from Maple St. to Olive St. – Protected Bike Lanes (Bike Connection from Grand Ave Bike/Ped Bridge to RGS stops at La Quinta / Rosie's Bavarian Restaurant)	$362,750 (6.6%)	Funding Sources: $362,750 RFTA FLMM + $1,167,000 CDOT RMS Grant + $2,200,184 DDA Funding + $1,800,000 COGS = $5,525,878
City of Glenwood Springs	Glenwood Springs On-Demand Transit Pilot	Micro Transit Operations for 12 Months of 2025	$400,000 (50%)	$800,000
FLMM Award Total			$1,957,149	

Brush Creek Park&Ride to AABC Trail Connection

The Pitkin County Board of County Commissioners and Pitkin County Open Space and Trails Board met jointly on March 6 to discuss moving forward with further study of a proposed trail connection between the Brush Creek Park & Ride and the Aspen Airport Business Center. All meeting materials can be found here. The commissioners did not reach a decision, but agreed to hold another meeting on the topic and to accept public comment during the discussion

On June 26, 2024 the Project Interest Group, of which RFTA is a member, discussed potential locations of the AABC bridge connection, focusing on bridge locations closer to the existing dirt trail and closer to the heart of

the AABC. All feedback will be summarized in a report and presented at a joint meeting between the Pitkin County Board of Commissioners and the City of Aspen City Council on July 15th.

This project dates back to 2012, when Pitkin County Open Space and Trails (PCOST) conducted a Recreation Inventory and Analysis that identified a safe trail connection from the AABC to the Rio Grande Trail as one of the top five gaps identified in the 2011 Open Space and Trails Visitor Use Survey. Following adoption of the Rio Grande Trail Management Plan, the BOCC choose not to pursue the bridge crossing at that time.

This has been the current condition of the Rio Grande Trail for the past ten years. Cyclists use the AspenMass and Jaffee Connector trails as recreational routes between Brush Creek Park&Rde and the Rio Grande Trail; however, use is limited since trail users have to drop and climb over 240 feet and travel approximately 2 miles to get to the same point on the other side of the river from the Brush Creek Park and Ride. This additional distance and elevation change make it an advanced/non-accessible route to access otherwise ADA-compliant transit, recreation and commuter facilities. Similarly, at the AABC, existing singletrack trail routes exist to access the Rio Grande Trail, but they do not serve people with mobility devices, strollers, road bikes, e-bikes or bike trailers – limiting the connectivity of AABC/Burlingame residents to the Rio Grande Trail.

Strong community support for improvements to this area have been documented year after year. In 2021, funding from the County OST, City of Aspen, and the Elected Officials Transportation Committee (EOTC) was budgeted to provide a more thorough analysis of trail connection feasibility with updated costs from the preliminary alignment study completed in 2014.

In 2023, staff worked with Kimley-Horn and PR Studio to conduct a community engagement and data analysis study. An engineering study of feasible alignment options was completed in 2022. The study resulted in a preferred alternative with a projected cost of $20 to $25 million. The new connection would also provide access to the Rio Grande Trail and the upper Roaring Fork Valley's greater trail network. The preferred alternative (the "Twin Bridges option") requires two bridges over the Roaring Fork River Gorge - one linking the Brush Creek

Park & Ride and the Rio Grande Trail, and one farther south, situated between the Rio Grande Trail and a point near the AABC.

During the summer of 2023, a consulting team engaged the community through an online survey and other outreach efforts to collect feedback from a variety of stakeholders in order to determine the level of support and desire within the community for the potential trail.

Castle Creek Bridge

In late 2022 and early 2023, the City of Aspen engaged in a community awareness effort to discuss the current conditions of the Castle Creek Bridge, the options for repair and replacement presented by Jacobs, the potential impacts of bridge construction, and the NEPA implications.

Inspections of the 63-year-old bridge have identified several issues, including signs of wear and major deterioration and corrosion of structural steel and concrete bridge components. During a 2009 inspection, (CDOT 2009) a decline in the superstructure condition code to 3 ("Poor") was noted, necessitating immediate attention.

According to CDOT records, extensive repairs and rehabilitation efforts were implemented on the bridge in 2011 to improve the condition code of the bridge. Despite these substantial rehabilitation efforts, they were only sufficient to elevate the superstructure to a "Fair" code. Reconstruction of the bridge will require three years, and impacts to general purpose traffic and transit may be significant.

Figure 51. Outbound and Inbound Detour Options during Castle Creek Bridge Reconstruction or Rehabilitation

The Entrance to Aspen Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision (ROD), which includes transportation improvements along State Highway (SH) 82 from Buttermilk to Rubey Park in downtown Aspen, was approved by FHWA in 1998. The Preferred Alternative (PA) that was identified in the 1998 ROD calls for rerouting SH 82 to connect to Main Street, which would be extended to the west and require construction of a new Castle Creek bridge. The portion of the PA involving rerouting SH 82 and reconstructing a new bridge over Castle Creek remains to be completed. The existing Castle Creek bridge,

constructed in 1961, is now approaching the end of its service life. When the bridge condition is rated poor through CDOT inspections, it will enter the Statewide Bridge and Tunnel Enterprise eligibility pool for funding and replacement. At that time, CDOT has indicated it would replace the bridge as directed in the PA, unless an alternate NEPA decision is made prior to the need for bridge replacement.

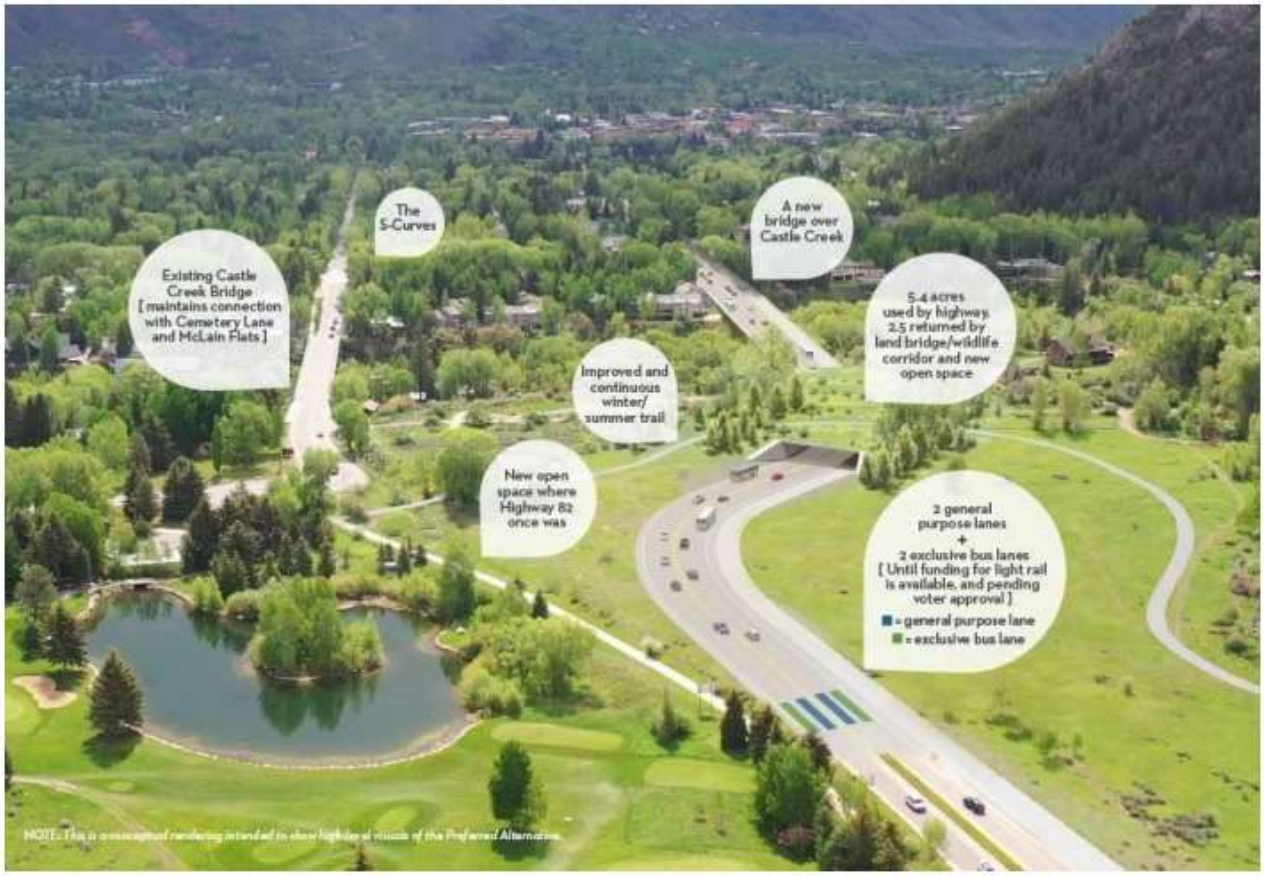
The following courses of action related to the Castle Creek Bridge potentially are available to the City:

1. Implement the PA identified in 1998 fully or in phases,
2. Implement the PA identified in the 1998 ROD with minor changes,
3. Study and implement alternatives that were considered previously in the 1997 FEIS and were either fully evaluated but not selected as the PA or dismissed during the alternatives screening process, or
4. Study one or more new alternatives.

Table 2: Elements of the Preferred Alternative

Highway Component	Transit System	Incremental Transportation Management Program
▪ Two-lane highway (one lane in each direction) along the existing SH 82 alignment from Buttermilk Ski Area to the Maroon Creek Bridge. ▪ Relocate existing Owl Creek Road and West Buttermilk Road to create a new combined intersection at SH 82 near Buttermilk Ski Area. ▪ Highway crosses Maroon Creek on a new bridge north of the existing bridge, then return to the existing alignment and continue to roundabout at Maroon Creek Road intersection. ▪ East of the roundabout, highway shifts southeast across the Marolt-Thomas property and through a cut-and-cover tunnel 400 feet long to connect with the intersection of 7th Street and Main Street via a new Castle Creek bridge.	▪ Light rail (LRT) system on the south side of the highway running between the new LRT maintenance center near Service Center Road and Rubey Park in downtown Aspen. ▪ The LRT system will be developed initially as two exclusive bus lanes one in each direction) if local support and/or funding are not available.	▪ Doubling of bus service between Aspen and El Jebel. ▪ Increased bus service in town and between Aspen and Snowmass Village. ▪ Expanded park-and-ride facilities throughout the valley. ▪ HOV lanes between Basalt and Buttermilk and preferential parking for HOVs. ▪ Rideshare matching program. ▪ In-town parking fees. ▪ Residential parking permit program, commuter incentive programs, and employer bus passes.

Figure 2: Preferred Alternative: Uncompleted Improvements



In October 2002, the RFTA Board voted for a highway alignment alternative that would support or enhance mass transit. At that time, based on the 1999 City of Aspen "Entrance to Aspen Supplemental O&M Analysis," the Preferred Alternative was expected to reduce transit travel times and operating costs compared to the existing "S" Curves Alignment so, in essence, the RFTA Board voted to support the Preferred Alternative. Much has happened since then, including construction of a new Maroon Creek Bridge, construction of exclusive bus lanes inbound from the Airport to the Maroon Creek Roundabout and outbound from the Maroon Creek Roundabout to Buttermilk, as well as implementation of fare-free bus service between Aspen and Snowmass Village, and implementation of the VelociRFTA BRT system.

The next Council Meeting on the COA's evaluation of options for the CCB will be a work session on August 5, with a Work Session.