RFTA Planning Department Monthly Update
July 12th, 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.

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2018 Passenger Survey

Purpose
RFTA Staff has conducted an in-house, onboard passenger survey for a 24-hour period; on even calendar years since 2004. The most recent survey was conducted on Wednesday March 21st, 2018 on all RFTA routes from Aspen to Rifle. The purpose of the survey is to reach out to our passengers and solicit their opinions on RFTA's facilities, bus operations and overall customer service.

Overview
According to automatic passenger counters installed on each bus, total RFTA ridership on survey day was 12,814 riders, with a total of 144,683 miles driven.

The 2018 bilingual survey consisted of 26 multiple choice and open-ended, opinion questions. Planning Staff distributed approximately 5,800 English and Spanish paper surveys (color-coded by service type) to drivers and asked for their assistance in conducting the survey. Approximately 1,956 completed surveys were returned (a 34% return rate); a very high return rate for any survey project. Drivers were once again offered bonuses, $1 per completed returned survey, and added to paychecks. Additionally, about 134 valid electronic surveys were collected utilizing Survey Monkey, via a link from the onboard Wi-fi splash page directing them to the RFTA website.

RFTA's consultant, Marc Warner Transportation, has been providing survey data entry and comparative analysis since 2006. Unfortunately, we experienced a data setback this year. About 1,500 completed surveys were lost in transit by the Postal Service. Only about 650 valid responses were recorded in the data analysis. However, the data trends are still telling and useful to RFTA. For example, two new questions in 2018 focus on public awareness about RFTA's forthcoming property tax ballot initiative (or Destination 2040). Distilled data is included below from Marc's more substantial deliverables; full data reports can be obtained from the Planning Department.

2018 Data Trends
On survey day, across all RFTA routes, the highest percentage of respondents were White (62%) females (51%), 19-25 years of age (36%), using VelociRFTA buses (35%), Valley local buses (19%) or no-fare Aspen-Snowmass buses (11%) for work commuting (69%) 5-days per week (34%), or for recreation (17%). The majority of respondents are locals (72%) that live mostly in Aspen (27%), Carbondale (15%) or Glenwood Springs (13%); and work in Aspen (64%) or Snowmass Village (15%). About 59% of passengers rate the overall quality of service as excellent, and predominately use RFTA to avoid traffic and road conditions (40%) or to preserve the local environment (24%). RFTA passengers are an even 50-50 split of transit-choice and transit-dependent customers, dependent on their ability to transport themselves if the bus were not available. Public safety/security and customer service are RFTA's highest priorities. 50% of passengers strongly agree that they feel safe on buses and at park-n-rides; 46% agree that

buses are comfortable and clean and 46% strongly agree that bus drivers are helpful and drive safely.

2018 Passenger Comments

There were approximately 300 written comments (a combination of onboard and online surveys) provided by passengers in either English or Spanish. Comments were further sub-divided, by category and by bus service, for the purpose of directing feedback to proper RFTA departments for thoughtful improvements. These written comments offer some of the most helpful and relevant Staff feedback.

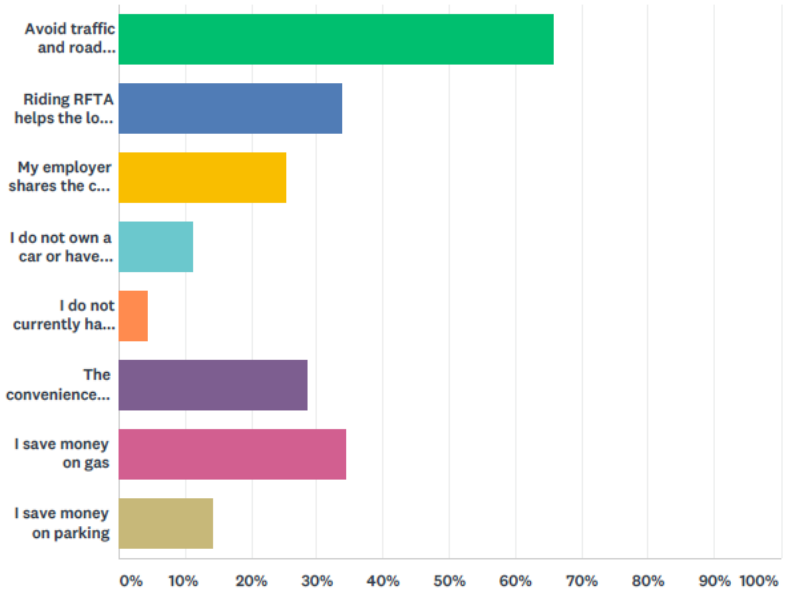
Categorically, passengers were most vocal about frequency of service or the quality of bus facility amenities. Passengers greatly appreciate the BRT station amenities, new technology, frequent headways, and reduced travel times. As a result, there were also requests for some local stops to be converted to BRT stops with more substantial shelters, increased bike parking, public bathrooms and more weekend service. Many of the parking comments were focused on a lack of parking at the 27th St. BRT Station in GWS and the Carbondale Park-n-Ride lots. There were also several comments regarding how helpful drivers may/may not be and how safe/un-safe they might be driving.

New in 2018, two questions were added inquiring about the public's knowledge of RFTA's potential 2018 property tax ballot initiative (Destination 2040), and their tendency to vote yes or no. The majority of respondents, in March of this year, said they were somewhat familiar with the plan. Approximately 30-35% of respondents said they would probably support, or definitely support, a property tax ballot question.

The survey feedback will be added to more substantive phone polling data that has been completed by the Parsons consulting team, and RFTA Staff will likely roll out an official campaign plan in August 2018. A few of the online survey results are pasted below.

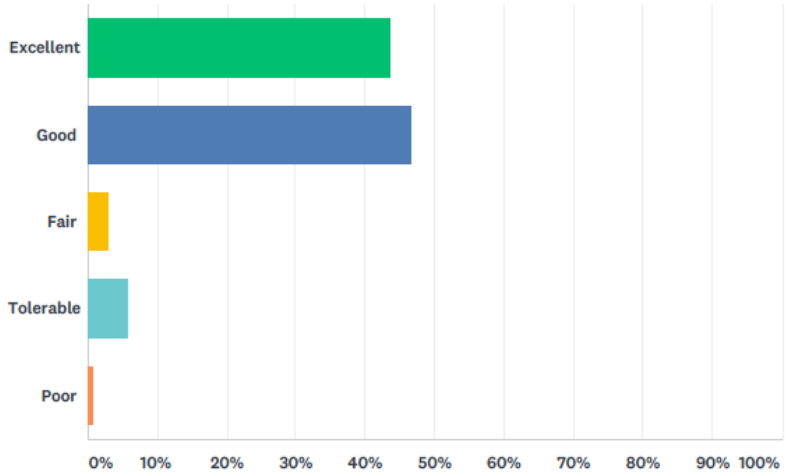
Q21 Why do you personally use RFTA (Please mark ONLY two choices)?

Answered: 134 Skipped: 216



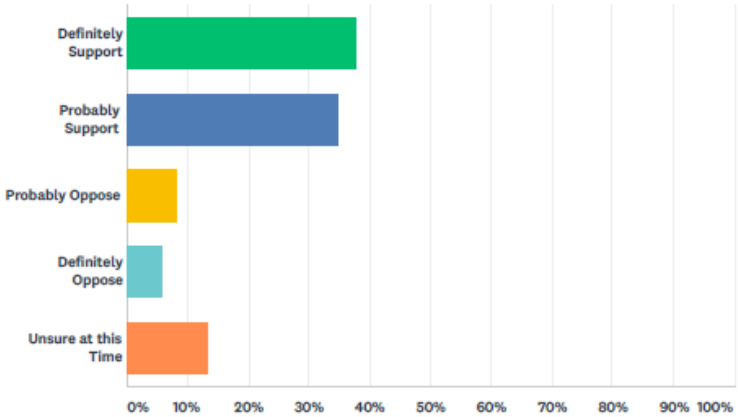
Q23 Please rate the overall quality of RFTA's services:

Answered: 135 Skipped: 215



Q27 More specifically, RFTA is considering up to a 5 mill property tax ballot question on the November 2018 ballot for RFTA member jurisdictions ONLY. If approved, property taxes for the entire RFTA district would be increased up to $19.5 million annually (starting in 2019). Regional transit improvements would include, but not be limited to: electric buses for noise and emissions reductions; expanded and improved bus services, park and rides and bus stops; multi-use trail improvements and stable bus fares. IF THE ELECTION WERE TODAY, WOULD YOU:

Answered: 135 Skipped: 215



Analysis of the proposed 0.62% statewide transportation sales tax

The Denver Chamber hopes to ask voters in November for a 0.62 percent statewide sales tax to pay for transportation. Meanwhile, a potential competing ballot question, backed by more conservative groups such as the Independence Institute, called "Fix Our Damn Roads," intends to require the legislature to set aside $350 million each year from general tax revenues to repay $3.5 billion in bonds for transportation without a tax hike. CDOT forecasts $9 billion in needs over the next decade and $20 billion over the next 20 years.

For the 0.62 percent proposal, the proposed formula would raise about $768 million per year, 45 percent of which would be used to pay back $5 billion in bonds over the next 20 years for road projects determined by the Colorado Transportation Commission, 20 percent would go to counties, 20 percent would go to cities and 15 percent would be allocated for multimodal projects.

According to the CDOT Division of Transit and Rail, the 15% multimodal fund would generate $105 million per year statewide. This funding is of particular interest to the Roaring Fork region, which has a remarkably high rate of transit, walking, and bicycling, particularly for a rural area. Multimodal funds could be used, potentially, for fleet replacement, construction of park and rides, the LoVa trail, and pedestrian crossings.

However, this $105 million must be allocated Statewide, and the State is considering a combination of bonding for larger projects, and allocations by formula. For example:

- $30 million per year dedicated to approximately $800 million in bonding statewide for large multimodal transportation projects (in excess of $10 million project cost). RFTA has submitted a list of Destination 2040 projects to be included on the list of projects eligible for this funding.
- $63.75 million per year to local projects by formula to MPOs and TPRs.
- $11.25 million per year to statewide projects administered by CDOT, for bicycle, pedestrian, carpool/vanpool/on-demand, and transit. This funding would be discretionary and RFTA would need to compete for it each year along with numerous other applicants.
- $6-7 million/year to the Division of Transit and rail for Bustang and Outrider, with some passed through to "Rural Regional" operations.

When the roughly $64 million per year for local multi-modal projects is allocated statewide among all 15 Transportation Planning Regions (TPR) and Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO), the amount allocated to the Intermountain Transportation Planning Region (ITPR) in the first year is estimated be approximately $2.5 million according to CDOT staff. Since there are 8 transit agencies within the ITPR that would share this funding, it is not anticipated to be a major source of new revenue for RFTA.

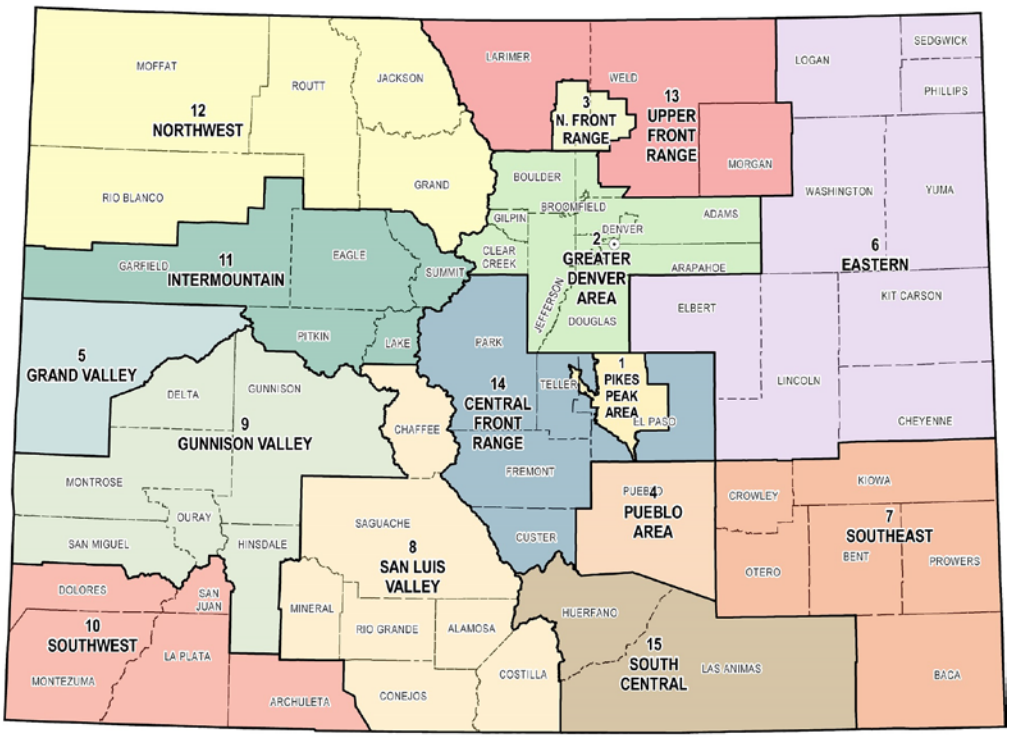


Figure 1: Map of Colorado's 15 Transportation Planning Regions