
2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

ELECTED OFFICIALS TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE (EOTC)



Adopted July 2020

2020 Strategic Plan

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Introduction



In 1990 the Colorado state legislature passed Colorado Revised Statute 29-2-103.5 that provides counties the authority to levy sales and use taxes for the "for the purpose of financing, constructing, operating, or maintaining a mass transportation system within the county." In November 1993, per the Colorado State Statute, Pitkin County voters approved a 0.5% County Transit Sales and Use Tax for the purpose of financing, constructing, operating and managing a mass transportation system within the Roaring Fork Valley.

In conjunction with the countywide ballot measure, Pitkin County, the Town of Snowmass Village and the City of Aspen adopted a 1993 Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) establishing the Elected Officials Transportation Committee (EOTC), its structure, and further defining how the collected funds may be allocated. The EOTC is therefore responsible for allocating the countywide 0.5% sales tax and a 0.5% use tax funds in a manner that is consistent with State Statute, the 1993 ballot language and the IGA.

In addition, the IGA expanded upon the enabling legislation from State Statute and the ballot language by adopting a Comprehensive Valley Transportation Plan (CVTP) as a means to guide future allocations. The IGA includes:

- Establishment of a Committee (i.e. Elected Officials Transportation Committee or EOTC) comprised of all jurisdictions within the Transit Sales and Use Tax administration area, including Pitkin County, Town of Snowmass Village, and the City of Aspen.
- The EOTC is a recommending body only for expenditure of 0.5% Transit Sales and Use Tax.
- That, for any EOTC action, all jurisdictions must have a majority vote to progress a recommendation.
- That the only actions that must be approved (rather than recommended) are annual and project budgets. Approval of annual and project budgets must be formally approved within each of the member jurisdictions.

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Enabling Legislation Detail

C.R.S. 29-2-103.5 (Colorado Revised Statute) provides that a county is authorized to levy a sales and use tax "for the purpose of financing, constructing, operating, or maintaining a mass transportation system within the county." Local jurisdictions "may enter into intergovernmental agreements with any municipality or other county ... for the purpose of providing mass transportation services either within the county or in a county in which the county mass transportation system is permitted to operate."

"Mass Transportation" is defined as "any system which transports the general public by bus, rail, or any other means of conveyance moving along prescribed routes, except any railroad subject to the federal "Railway Labor Act", 45 U.S.C. sec. 151 et seq".



Significant Ballot Initiatives Impacting the EOTC

1993 - The sales and use tax ballot measure further defined the purpose of the tax. Most significantly it limits the purpose to "increasing and improving the public mass transportation system within the Roaring Fork Valley" and requires that such mass transportation system improvements "be approved by the City of Aspen, Pitkin County and the Town of Snowmass Village".

2000 – Aspen, Snowmass Village, and Pitkin County residents vote to join the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority and dedicate 48.131% of the 1986 Pitkin County-wide 1% mass transit tax and 48.04% of the 1993 Pitkin County-wide 0.5% mass transit tax to RFTA. The remainder of the 1% mass transit tax is allocated to Aspen and Snowmass Village based on their proportional share of annual sales tax revenues to help support their transit services. The remainder of the 0.5% mass transit tax was retained by the EOTC to fund transportation projects and programs within the Roaring Fork Valley.

2004 – In order to secure additional funding for RFTA to improve transit and trails, voters in all existing RFTA member jurisdictions including Pitkin County approved to increase their contribution to RFTA from countywide Transit Sales Tax revenues. Per the 2004 ballot measure, the countywide contribution to RFTA was increased from 48.04% to 81.04% of the 0.5% Transit Sales Tax. As a result, the remaining 18.96% of the Transit Sales Tax collections and 100% of the Use Tax collections are available to the EOTC to fulfill the purpose as outlined in the enabling legislation, ballot measure, as well as the IGA and Comprehensive Valley Transportation Plan.

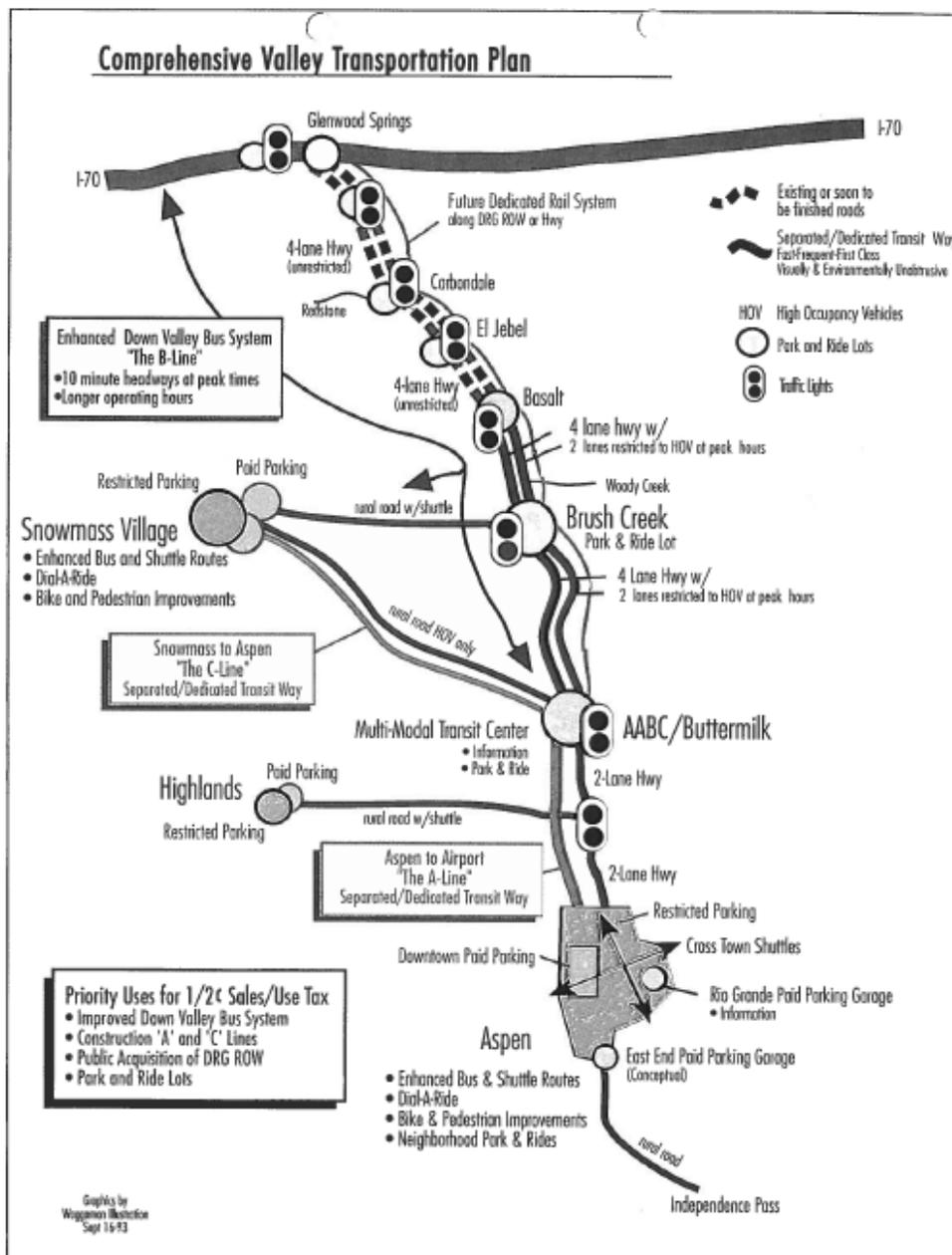
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1993 EOTC IGA Detail

The County, City and Town entered into an IGA on September 14, 1993. This IGA identifies that all three entities must agree to expenditures and representatives from each jurisdiction are to meet regularly. This requirement was incorporated into the IGA as a result of the ballot language.

In addition, this IGA adopts a Comprehensive Valley Transportation Plan (CVTP) to establish a framework for a mass transportation strategy for “addressing mass transportation problems and issues in the Roaring Fork Valley”, sets forth procedural steps to implement the Plan, and establishes a mutual understanding of a process for funding the Plan and other mass transportation elements.



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Where We Are Today

Historically, transit service has been a part of the Roaring Fork Valley since the mid-1970's when the City of Aspen ran fixed route in-city transit service and Pitkin County ran regional transit service as far down valley as El Jebel. In 1983, the City of Aspen and Pitkin County merged their transit systems creating the Roaring Fork Transit Agency. In 2000 the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) was established in its current form when residents in Aspen, Snowmass Village, Pitkin County, Basalt, Eagle County, Carbondale and Glenwood Springs voted to create RFTA. By 2018, RFTA had become the second largest transit agency in Colorado and the largest rural transit agency in the nation with annual system ridership of 5.1 million passenger trips spanning a 70-linear mile service area from Aspen to Rifle. Since its inception in 1993, the EOTC has been a loyal supporter of RFTA. Supporting transit in the Roaring Fork Valley, and by extension RFTA, remains central to the EOTC's statutory, ballot, CVTP and IGA requirements.



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Where We Are Today

In addition to its ardent support of RFTA, the EOTC has also made significant progress carrying out the Comprehensive Valley Transportation Plan (CVTP) and supporting transit ridership in the 25+ years of the Transit Use and Sales tax. Examples of the progress made to date include:

- Participation in Entrance to Aspen Record of Decision (ROD)
- Acquisition of the Denver Rio Grande right-of-way
- Support for the creation of the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA)
- Design and installation of the Highway 82 exclusive bus lanes
- Design and construction support for the Maroon Creek Bridge and Roundabout
- No-fare bus service between Aspen, Snowmass and Woody Creek
- Ongoing support of RFTA
- AABC pedestrian underpass
- Basalt pedestrian underpass
- Ongoing support for We-Cycle and X-Games bus service
- Establishment of the 15-minute RFTA bus connections
- Renovation of the Rubey Park bus station
- Support for the purchase of RFTA Battery Electric Buses
- Operation and improvement of the Brush Creek Park and Ride as well as the Dynamic Message Sign (DMS) on Highway 82

The EOTC has demonstrated ongoing commitment to upper valley mobility with the establishment of the Regional Transportation Administrator position in 2018. The Regional Transportation Administrator position consolidates the administrative functions of the EOTC and provides additional staff resources that were not previously available.



Credit: Rising Sun Photography

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Where We Are Today



The EOTC currently has two significant projects underway that have been considered for many years and are supported by the CVTP. The two projects are: enhancements to the Brush Creek Park and Ride facility and the Town of Snowmass Village Transit Center. While these two projects are still several years from completion, they both continue to move forward with EOTC funds allocated in 2020 and 2022, respectively.

With progress made toward carrying out the Comprehensive Valley Transportation Plan, the EOTC is uniquely situated to look to the future to address mobility in the Roaring Fork Valley. To that end, on August 7, 2019 the EOTC held a retreat with the following goals:

1. Establish a baseline understanding of the EOTC purpose, requirements, structure, funding and operations;
2. Identify the strengths, opportunities and challenges facing the EOTC today, and
3. Create a priority list of themes, major topics, and projects to help guide the EOTC's next steps and vision.

The collaborative discussions and direction amongst the EOTC members at the retreat have provided a framework for the EOTC and staff to guide future decision-making as it looks ahead.

Based on the retreat, the top two priorities for the EOTC to focus initially on include: 1) EOTC governance and decision-making; and 2) updating EOTC plans and governance documents. To achieve these priorities, the EOTC agreed to develop a strategic plan as a part of their 2020 Work Plan.

The development of an EOTC strategic plan is among the first steps to move the needle in these two outcome areas by identifying and documenting an agreed upon Mission Statement, Vision, Guiding Principles, and Key Strategies for the EOTC.

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Strengths, Opportunities, and Challenges (As identified at August 2019 EOTC Retreat)

During the 2019 retreat, the 14 EOTC members (one member was absent) conducted a Strengths, Opportunities, and Challenges discussion about the EOTC and its future. Below is a summary of the results from these conversations. It was noted that each of the opportunities and strengths may also pose numerous challenges and opportunities for future action.

Strengths:

- History of recognizing and appreciating the regional nature of transportation
- The multi-jurisdictional governance, leadership, and staffing of the EOTC
- History and legacy of the EOTC with enduring governing documents, history of successful action, consensus and agreement
- Existence of a stable funding source and structure for the EOTC

Opportunities:

- Utilize strengths of a regional approach, a strong staff and governance structure, and EOTC historic momentum to expand opportunities in regional thinking, projects, and strategic decision-making
- Emerging technologies
- Improved communication both within and outside of the EOTC
- Use of multiple modalities to change behavior
- Improve Airport connectivity
- Take advantage of excellent Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) resources

Challenges:

- Should the EOTC desire to expand to include broader regional input and/or representation, such broadening will require difficult changes to governance and relationship-building
- While expanding first/last mile transportation connectivity is critical to change people's behavior, it can be difficult to implement particularly outside the EOTC member jurisdictions
- Behavior change is – in and of itself – difficult to accomplish
- While the EOTC's governance has been a strength and is recognized as an opportunity to accomplish even more, clarifying how decisions are made is an ongoing challenge
- Changes to the EOTC funding starting in 2019
- While the linear nature of the Roaring Fork Valley topography has enhanced the effectiveness of regional trunk-line transit service, overcoming topographic challenges in first and last mile connectivity can be difficult
- Need for greater resiliency in emergency management
- Need for greater and faster response to climate-change

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How this Plan will be Used

The EOTC Strategic Plan provides a framework to guide the EOTC's decision-making, work planning and budgeting. The Plan also includes the following: Statutory and ballot requirements for the Transit Sales and Use Tax as well as the Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles, and Key Strategies of the EOTC. The Guiding Principles in this Plan represent the high-level deliverables that the EOTC strives to achieve throughout the Roaring Fork Valley. The Plan also includes Key Strategies that define approaches the EOTC will utilize to help realize the Guiding Principles. The Guiding Principles and Key Strategies inform the annual EOTC Work Plan, which will act as the tactical actions of this Plan. Each of the tasks completed in the annual Work Plan and money allocated by the EOTC will be connected to the Strategic Plan. This Plan is intended to be reviewed at least every five years and updated as necessary.



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Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles, and Key Strategies

Mission

Work collectively to reduce and manage the volume of vehicles on the road and parking system and continue to develop and support a comprehensive multi-modal, long-range strategy that will insure a convenient, equitable and efficient transportation system for the Roaring Fork Valley.

Vision

We envision the Roaring Fork Valley as the embodiment of a sustainable transportation system emphasizing mass transit and mobility that contributes to the happiness and wellbeing of residents and visitors.

Guiding Principles

Environmental Sustainability

All projects will promote a balanced natural and built environment while reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Economic Sustainability

Efforts will strive to increase emergency and economic resiliency while considering the financial, legal and physical practicality of each project.

Social Sustainability

Encourage a top-line transportation experience for all residents and visitors while striving to increase equity¹, proximity, reliability, and efficiency of the network to meet the transportation needs of all people.

Key Strategies

Multi-Modal Network that Encourages Mode Shift

All decisions will support public mass transit and mobility. In addition, new technologies that support mode shift away from private vehicles will be embraced.

Regionalism and Cross-Sector Approach

All decisions will consider the needs of the whole Roaring Fork Valley as well as the context of the greater regulatory and community environment, such as housing and land use controls.

Communication and Inter-Governmental Engagement

The EOTC will strive to communicate and engage with local stakeholders, citizens, partner organizations, and other local, State and Federal government agencies to support its Mission, Vision, and Guiding Principles and implement its Key Strategies.

¹ Note: Equity refers to the fairness with which impacts (benefits and costs) are distributed

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Implementation

Each year the EOTC shall adopt a work plan and budget for multiple upcoming years that will act as the tactical actions for the implementation of this Strategic Plan. Each action and expenditure made by the EOTC is to be connected to the promotion of the EOTC's Mission, Vision, Guiding Principles, and Key Strategies.

