



City of Glenwood Springs Transportation Commission

October 2020 Meeting Minutes

The October 2020 meeting of the City of Glenwood Springs Transportation Commission was called to order at 7:37 a.m. on October 6, 2020 via Zoom™.

Present were Commission Chair Sandy Lowell (SL), and Commissioners John Stephens (JS), Ralph Trapani (RT), Roger Poirier (RP), Lee Barger (LB), Steve Smith (SS) and Robert Gavrell (RG).

Also present were City Council Members Charlie Willman (CE), Jonathan Godes (JG) and Shelley Kaup (SK), City Engineer Terri Partch (TP), and Transit Planning Development Lead Linda DuPriest (LD).

Also present were various representatives of RFTA and the consultants who were authors of the MOVE study, including RFTA CEO Dan Blankenship (DB), RFTA COO Kurt Ravenschlag (KR) and consultant Emily Kushto (EK).

I. Modifications to the Agenda.

None presented at the time.

II. Adoption of the minutes from 8-4-2020 and 9-1-2020.

RG had previously presented suggested revisions to the proposed minutes from the August and September 2020 meetings via redlines.

RG moved to adopt the August meeting minutes, with changes as proposed. RP seconded. Proposed August revised minutes adopted unanimously.

SL moved to adopt the September meeting minutes, without changes. LB seconded. Proposed September revised minutes adopted unanimously.

I. Modifications to the Agenda (revisited).

TP asked that Item V.5. be moved up in light of the amount of guests participating in the meeting. By general agreement, Commission allowed the modification.

V. Updates / Old Business.

5. **MOVE Study** – Update on the study generally and specifically as to results of consultants' investigations re: (a) sending BRT buses on I-70 and (b) using peak-only dedicated bus lane routing on Grand as options for BRT optimization.

Commission members generally expressed dissatisfaction that important materials on the study were only presented the same morning of the meeting. JG asked RFTA representatives generally about the timing of the MOVE study. EK commented that there have been two rounds of public outreach with one more round to occur. RT expressed concern that delay in taking a position on the study by the Commission may be disadvantageous in light of other groups already beginning to take positions.

All council members present emphasized that the City was in no position to rush any decisions on this important issue and that no movement was likely to occur until 2021. With that representation, the Commission by general agreement agreed to hear the presentation.

TP generally presented material that had been provided to Commission earlier that morning, emphasizing that a Midland route had been added to the Study, as well as inline stations on the proposed Grand Ave. route.

Discussion about the importance of keeping bulb out pedestrian features of downtown Grand Ave. in any use of Grand as a BRT route, and questions by Commission toward the consultants on how to best use Grand as an alternative BRT route with, at the same time, keeping these amenities in place.

SS asked RFTA representatives and consultants what the reason was for all this effort to save 3.5 minutes of BRT time through GWS, at a cost of millions of dollars. Explaining RFTA's position, KR explained as follows:

So, for RFTA, bus rapid transit has been the option that has been chosen to help move people throughout our service area, which is a seventy mile service area, efficiently, effectively and reliably. And for that BRT to work in needs to be high frequency, it needs to be reliable, and it needs to be easy to use. And the point I just wanted to touch on which was just mentioned by one of the Commissioners, was that this is a seventy mile service area that RFTA serves, and we currently are only serving forty miles of that with our BRT service. We are truncated at the south end of Glenwood Springs, and there is a wall of congestion from our current 27th Street station to I-70. And what we're really hoping that we can determine from this study is 'how can we reliably move our BRT service through Glenwood Springs to not only serve the downtown area but be able to

provide connections to the I-70 corridor eventually.'? Because we do have member jurisdictions currently in the I-70 corridor and possibly more jurisdictions in the future. Which is what this study is also trying to address for us is - how can we not only more effectively serve GWS reliably and effectively, but how can we also provide those connections to our members jurisdictions in I-70?

I wanted to touch on the travel times as well. That currently and today those travel time savings may be minimal, but what we're trying to do is plan not only for today but also the next five, ten, fifteen, twenty years. And by providing some form of a protected lane for our BRT service, we are going to be able to reserve that travel time. And as congestion and travel times continue to degrade on the Highway 82 corridor, we'll be able to preserve those travel times and provide that reliable service for the BRT.

TP discussed improved options for Rio Grande corridor, including the option of conducting a contemporaneous Rio Grande trail enhancement project whereby the existing pedestrian trail was moved away from the corridor onto City properties adjacent along its length, with enhancements made throughout the corridor in all or portions of the City limits. TP explained that pedestrian crossings along the Rio Grande route and detailed rendering showing what these improvements could look like had not yet been explored pending concrete interest in using this route. Commissioners and JG expressed that this presented a chicken and egg problem, in that detailed renderings showing what these enhancements would look like / cost was essential to making the determination as to whether to use such an option in the first place.

DB explained that RFTA's interest in using the Rio Grande corridor for buses, specifically, is to bring the bus service close to the anticipated redevelopment of the confluence area, which would allow for bus service directly imbedded at an urban hub. Specifically DB explained:

Part of the rationale of this study was the potential to do some development in the "wye" area – in property that the City owns. So the question is, if you have the I-70 corridor and you have the highway 82 corridor, where do you want to affect a transfer? Where do you want to intercept traffic? How can you design your system so the bulk of your people get a one-seat ride? If In fact there's going to be development in the downtown area, I think you're going to want to try to serve it conveniently. Whether its pass-through with the BRT, or with a significant transfer station where that development's occurring, or whether that station is kind of the terminus where the I-70 corridor transit system interfaces with the highway 82 corridor transit system.

I don't know where that "wye" area planning stands at the moment; I know that some people think it would be great and others are opposed to it, but I think that was part of the rationale for the study, was to try to integrate transit with land use, and try to make the service as convenient as possible for the greatest number of people, so that we can get more people out of their cars and onto transit.

Discussion that the Rio Grande Route would also provide an option for GWS specific BRT inline stations, potentially at GSHS and GSES.

RT suggested that any use of the Rio Grande would need GWS and RFTA to come to a stipulation on the number and types of buses that would be allowed to use it. A BRT service option allowed to operate on the corridor would be one thing, a private road for RFTA to run all its buses on, with no restrictions, through GWS' primary pedestrian corridor would be an entirely different thing and unsatisfactory.

JS asked about what efforts had been made to engage traffic signal optimization along Grand to increase efficiencies of the existing system; TP confirmed no review of this possibility had yet been done.

TP then generally discussed all the remaining alternatives the study was exploring and the pros and cons of each, as documented in the materials showing the consultants' evaluations of each, side by side, based on various criteria.

SS asked how the "ridership improvement" number was generated in light of the fact that it appears to be pure speculation as to how each kind of route may, or may not, increase ridership. TP confirmed this number was an educated guess based on the consultants' assumptions and experience.

SL offered that there was a lot of information to digest and that the Commission would need to spend some time and energy reviewing the materials presented.

The Commission discussed holding a special meeting to further discuss the MOVE study and also other issues, including our housekeeping issues. SL asked Council Members if there were any burning issues that required the Commission to make an immediate decision on this study and corridor. JG reported that the City's calendar and issues that had to be dealt with was chockablock and this issue, though important, would not realistically come to a conclusion until 2021. KR confirmed that from RFTA's perspective, also, this could wait.

SL suggested a meeting on Oct. 20 at 7:30 am, to discuss structural questions and also to cover all the items not discussed in this meeting. By general consensus, a special meeting for these purposes was agreed to.

Adjourned at 10:00 a.m.