

Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Formation Committee – Meeting Recap

Location: Virtual – Zoom
Date: Wednesday, February 19, 2025
Time: 10:00 – 11:30 AM

Attendees: Michael Buccino (City of Steamboat Springs), Sonja Macys (Routt County), Randy Looper (City of Craig), Ryan Banks (Town of Hayden), Bryan Swintek (City of Steamboat Springs), Sarah Jones (Steamboat Ski and Resort Corp), Dan Foote (City of Steamboat Springs), Jia Carroll (City of Steamboat Springs), Jonathan Flint (City of Steamboat Springs), Peter Brixius (City of Craig), Mathew Mendisco (Town of Hayden), Ciara Bartholomew (South Routt School District), Bill Ray (WR Communications), Mikhail Kaminer (Fehr & Peers), Polly Jessen (Kaplan Kirsch), Kirsten Crawford (Kaplan Kirsch), Steve Kaplan (Kaplan Kirsch)

Quick recap

The Formation meeting involved a detailed discussion about the operational planning and funding options for the services being considered for the RTA. Bill Ray and Jason Miller briefed committee members on the Technical Committee meeting. The intergovernmental agreement section included planning for the public hearings that are required by state statute. The Kaplan Kirsch team walked the committee members through several decisions that needed to be made for the IGA. Bill Ray discussed community outreach as part of the public hearing process, and the committee discussed the need for polling to understand community support for funding the RTA.

Next steps

- Bill to work with member jurisdictions to finalize the public hearing dates.
- Bill to create the presentation materials for the public hearings.
- Bill to implement the communications plan to announce public hearings.
- Fehr & Peers to update the service goal document to be included in the IGA and presented during the public hearings.
- Kaplan Kirsch to create the documents needed for the public hearings, including a draft resolution for RTA jurisdictions to approve the draft IGA.

Technical Committee Update

The first technical committee meeting was held the week before. Committee members discussed the history of transportation planning in the region and improvements that have been

identified through those efforts. The committee members then discussed the overall goals for the RTA, including increasing bus frequency along U.S. 40, introducing new routes to unserved areas, especially in south Routt County, improving bus stops, enhancing safety measures, and incorporating wildlife crossings.

Funding Estimate

Bill presented a spreadsheet outlining funding estimates based on different taxation methods. The discussion included possible sources such as sales tax (notably excluding groceries), property tax (ruled out by the Formation Committee members), vehicle registration fees (which would not produce much revenue), accommodations tax (considered minimal), and alternative fees for services. The committee members wanted to know more about how a sales tax would work for the RTA. They showed interest in retaining sales tax as a potential funding source. The committee members noted the importance of polling to make sure that the public supported a tax for funding the potential RTA.

Community Outreach & Public Hearings

The process and dates for the public hearings were discussed. Committee members decided that these meetings must take place in each jurisdiction in March and early April to ensure that the RTA can proceed on the required timeline. The committee members discussed the importance of using these meetings to educate the public about the RTA process and the benefits of the proposed RTA. Bill reviewed a draft of messaging and a communications plan to support the public hearings.

Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) Review

Kaplan Kirsch reviewed the draft IGA by going through the decision memo prepared for the Formation Committee. The Kaplan Kirsch team discussed the need for the IGA to clarify service responsibilities for the RTA, noting that member jurisdictions will make the final decision on which services will be provided if voters agree to create the RTA. The Kaplan Kirsch team discussed the need for the IGA to be written with broad enabling language rather than mandatory obligations to provide flexibility in decision-making for the future RTA board.