

Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) Formation Committee – Meeting Recap

Location: Virtual – Zoom

Date: Friday, August 8, 2025

Time: 8:00 – 9:00 AM

Attendees: Michael Buccino (City of Steamboat Springs), Sonja Macys (Routt County), Melissa Dobbins (Town of Oak Creek), Stacey Geilert (Town of Yampa), Randy Looper (City of Craig), Sarah Jones (Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation), Jay Harrington (Routt County), Dan Foote (City of Steamboat Springs), Peter Brixius (City of Craig), Mathew Mendisco (Town of Hayden), Jia Carroll (City of Steamboat Springs), Jonathan Flint (City of Steamboat Springs), Louis Finberg (Town of Oak Creek), Skyler McKinley (South Routt County), Bill Ray (WR Communications), Polly Jessen (Kaplan Kirsch), Kirsten Crawford (Kaplan Kirsch), Luke Bonucci (Alterra Corporation), Roger Levanduski (Steamboat Ski and Resort Corporation)

Quick recap

The Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation (SSRC) and Alterra Corporation team discussed their \$1 million funding pledge. Committee members shared concerns about renegotiating the pledge agreement. The meeting concluded with a promise by the resort team to provide a redline draft of the pledge agreement by the end of the day.

Next steps

- Steamboat Ski & Resort Corporation (SSRC): Provide a redlined version of the pledge agreement with updated terms by the end of the day.
- Michael/Bill: Present the updated SSRC pledge agreement status at the joint meeting with County Commissioners and Steamboat Springs City Council on Monday.
- Bill: Schedule a Formation Committee meeting for the second half of next week.
- Bill: Manage the extended timeline for jurisdictions.

Steamboat's Pledge Commitment

Sarah and Roger from SSRC emphasized their commitment to investing \$1 million annually for 20 years in a robust regional transportation system, while highlighting the need for clear guardrails and accountability due to their status as a private entity. They stressed that all parties should have "skin in the game" to ensure the success of the RTA program. Roger clarified that recent conversations should not be interpreted as a wavering of their commitment, as they remain fully committed to their pledge. Sarah explained the need for a smaller working group to finalize the pledge agreement, emphasizing the importance of addressing scheduling issues and

ensuring alignment on expectations. She highlighted the need for impactful, accountable funding. Roger and Polly stressed the importance of clear milestones, phasing, and language in the agreement to ensure the success of the RTA and avoid disputes. Sarah agreed to outline the specific elements she was looking for in the agreement to help the group move forward.

SSRC Pledge Agreement Renegotiation

The group discussed concerns about renegotiating the pledge agreement, with Sonia emphasizing that the RTA jurisdictions had not reached consensus on this issue. She highlighted the importance of a legally binding contribution agreement, which was previously discussed in April and supported by the County Commissioners. Michael suggested clarifying the current concerns and gathering input from other jurisdictions before making any decisions. The group agreed to seek clarity on SSRC's timeline and commitment to providing a legally binding agreement before moving forward with further discussions.

The group discussed funding mechanisms for an IGA that needs to be in place by January 1st. Michael explained that if the SSRC pledge is not finalized by November, local jurisdictions will need to provide their own funding. Roger confirmed that SSRC is committed to finalizing the pledge agreement by August 20th, while several jurisdictions expressed concerns about the timeline for local governments to create a sustainable funding mechanism, given their current budget season.

Roger requested a detailed RTA budget that outlines potential scenarios. Skyler McKinley expressed frustration at Roger's late involvement and the group's significant time investment. Mathew emphasized the need for a clear, detailed list of concerns to be addressed immediately, as time is running out for certifying the ballot.

Stacey Geilert and Melissa Dobbins expressed frustration that specific funding details were only recently requested, despite lengthy prior discussions, and questioned why SSRC's concerns were just now being discussed. The group agreed to listen to SSRC's proposal before making any decisions, with Melissa Dobbins emphasizing that while local governments have "skin in the game," they need more concrete information from SSRC about the pledge. Jay highlighted the importance of professional courtesy towards the county clerk and then discussed the significant investment in regional transportation being made by Routt County at the airport.

Sarah emphasized the need for annual budget transparency and reporting on fund usage to justify the investment to internal stakeholders. Sarah also highlighted the importance of maintaining regional service levels, ensuring the transit authority continues to serve the ski resort, and having a clause for service expansion by 2030. Additionally, she requested a clause for payment adjustments in case of operational disruptions, such as wildfires or COVID-19, and the return of any unused funds if the transit authority ceases to receive additional funding.

Sarah also emphasized that while the resort is not seeking year-over-year growth, they expect to see a build-out of robust services by 2030. Skyler pointed out that the Formation Committee cannot make such commitments until after a successful ballot, and the group acknowledged the need for a clear understanding of expectations for Year One expenditures and long-term growth.

RTA Advisory Committee Discussion

The group discussed creating a seat for business interests on the RTA board, but Polly clarified that while board positions weren't possible, advisory committees could be established under the IGA. Skyler suggested this could be a solution for Steamboat SSRC's concerns, but Sonja Macys opposed any changes to the governance structure at this point in the IGA, urging SSRC to put their specific requests in writing. The discussion concluded with Michael confirming that SSRC was not seeking matching funds or changes to the municipal governance requirement, but rather a clear 20-year commitment and specific bullet points for assurance regarding the funding mechanism in 2026.

IGA Service Growth Strategy Discussion

Sarah explained that IGA is seeking a commitment to robust service growth, requesting input from stakeholders on how to measure and achieve this, while emphasizing that specific numerical targets are not required. Stacey raised concerns about setting a 2030 deadline, citing the example of Eagle's gradual service expansion, and Bill suggested San Miguel's SMART as a more relevant case study due to its initial small system and subsequent tax funding. Michael clarified that any service requests must be approved by the future authority board, and Sarah acknowledged that the 2030 timeline could be adjusted to align with the three-year period related to the SST takeover.

Sarah discussed the importance of being able to reallocate funds if services remain unchanged. Roger clarified that the intention was to ensure alignment and accountability, not to hinder growth, and suggested focusing on progress toward the agreed-upon goals outlined in the IGA. Sonja highlighted that the RTA involves both service and capital investments, such as safety improvements, and proposed that progress on these objectives could demonstrate commitment. The conversation ended with an agreement to capture the discussion in writing for clarity and accountability.

Sarah and Luke agreed to provide a redline draft by the end of the day. Michael emphasized the importance of having a positive update for the upcoming joint meeting with the county commissioners and city council. Bill mentioned he would schedule follow-up meetings for early next week, while Polly advised Luke to strike a balance in the growth conditions to ensure reliability and flexibility.