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Key Takeaways Eagle County Commuter Study

Key Takeaways

- The two most impactful actions that would support survey takers to leave their car behind 2x per week are:
 - Owning an e-bike (30%).
 - The ability to work from home (26%).
 - It's important to note, that these are the top two most impactful actions regardless of industry.
 - The third top response with 8% of votes was a commuter incentive program offered by an employer.
- Telecommuting is the biggest opportunity to address transportation emissions year-round for those industries where employees are able to work from home:
 - 90% of employers (15% of total respondents) said their willingness to allow employees to work from home increased after COVID.
 - The biggest barrier for employees offering a policy is lack of understanding of employee productivity.
- E-Bikes were selected time and again as the preferred option for commuting (if the respondents were to own one):
 - E-bike promotion in early summer with sales, events, test rides, rebates, etc. would allow a greater number of EC residents to access e-bikes and consider purchasing one for commuting.
 - E-Bikes can support summer commuting for those who can't work from home.
 - A critical component of scaling up this solution is providing secure bike racks in large employment centers that have a plug for recharging.
- Public transportation can be a solution for commuting for those who can't work from home, but many barriers first need to be addressed:
 - Bus incentives are provided to many, but bus still lags behind other modes of transportation as a percentage of total trips.
 - For all industries the overarching barriers to the bus were:
 - Bus takes too long.
 - No convenient stops.
 - The schedule doesn't align with work schedule.
 - Recommend using the highest density commercial centers (as identified in the survey) to prioritize express service to these areas (Vail, Avon/Eagle Vail, Edwards, Eagle).

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- There is a big opportunity to increase the number of electric vehicles (EV) on the road in Eagle County:
 - EV adoption is the number one thing we can do to reduce overall emissions in our community out to 2050 (CAC GHG Modeling, 2020).
 - Focus marketing and outreach campaigns on promoting EVs using the motivations presented in the survey data.
 - 92% of survey respondents currently do not own an EV or HEV.
 - 65% report that it is 'somewhat,' 'very,' or 'extremely' likely that their next vehicle will be an EV or HEV.
- Parking: 86% of survey respondents had free parking available to them:
 - Free, available parking does not provide an incentive for an employee to commute in anything other than an SOV.
 - Restricting parking in large commercial centers would encourage alternative forms of commuting for employees.
 - It's important to pair a parking restriction with an incentive program to encourage and reward other forms of commuting.

Strategic Direction

Telecommuting/Smart Commuting

The Collaborative is developing smart commuting policies (telecommuting, incentive programs for biking, walking, carpool, etc.) toolkit for businesses. The toolkit also provides resources that speak to the benefits of smart commuting/telecommuting that employers can and should review.

- Each stakeholder should survey their employees to learn the benefits employees have seen from telecommuting. For those industries/positions where in-office work is required, investigate if work-from-home days would be viable or if other smart commuting options would be a better fit.
- Each stakeholder that supports "9-5" employees that can work from home should adopt a telecommuting policy for their employees before the end of 2020.
- Each stakeholder that supports both employees that can work from home and those that must be in the office, should review other smart commuting incentive programs for their on-site employees to encourage smart commuting and ensure they have similar benefits as those employees working from home.
- Each stakeholder that has only on-site employees should put in place a smart commuting incentive program that encourages those employees to use alternative forms of commuting.
- All stakeholders should consider a parking limit for employees to encourage employees to use alternative forms of commuting.

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E-Bikes

E-bike promotion in early summer with sales, events, test rides, rebates, etc would allow a greater number of Eagle County residents to access e-bikes and consider purchasing one for commuting. E-Bikes can support summer commuting for those who can't work from home. E-Bikes are also rebated if you are a Holy Cross Energy customer. A critical component of scaling up this solution is providing secure bike racks in large employment centers that have a plug for recharging.

- Stakeholders should consider engaging in and expanding the e-bike demo with TOV and EC.
- Stakeholders should ensure each of their businesses/public spaces have secure bike racks with charging available for e-bikers.
- Stakeholders should review their sidewalk / bike path rules to ensure e-bikes are allowed in all areas where a normal bike is allowed (for commuting – not recreation).
- Stakeholders should consider additional rebates outside of Holy Cross Energy rebates for e-bike purchases.

Public Transportation

Many survey takers are already provided incentives to ride the bus and yes bus ridership is still extremely low in the survey responses. The barrier “the bus takes too long” is a symptom of no express routes and options for commuters to quickly get from their town of residence to town of employment. The barrier “no convenient stops” aligns with the survey data for the large commercial centers in the Eagle Valley. Only a few of the commercial centers found from the survey have a valley-wide bus route and there are no direct express routes offered. The barrier “the schedule doesn't align with my work schedule” demonstrates an opportunity for ECO transit, Avon, and Vail to schedule express bus routes during typical commute hours (7-10am) and (3-6pm) or during hours that align with service-industry, tourism-based jobs.

- Stakeholders should use town specific survey data to identify where the employees live that work in their employment centers.
- Stakeholders should engage with public transportation providers to expand services that support commuter times.
- Stakeholders should engage with public transportation providers to identify which critical employment centers are not currently serviced by bus and work to expand service into these areas.
- Stakeholders should ensure first/last mile strategies are employed for each bus stop within their control. This includes ensuring safe and accessible sidewalks, bike paths, and/or park n rides are available for commuters to access each bus stop.

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- Stakeholders that represent a large workforce in the service industry should identify where those employees live and work with public transportation to provide express routes to and from residential centers to the two core service industry centers (Vail and Beaver Creek).

Electric Vehicles

Electric vehicle promotion is an opportunity to reduce transportation emissions from SOVs.

- Stakeholders should continue to host and provide Ride n Drive events and provide other local promotions or sales for EVs where residents can test drive an EV. Messaging should focus on why EV's are fun to drive and better for the environment.
- Stakeholders should engage with the annual EV Sales Event to bring in more EV types such as trucks, vans, and diverse EV types to showcase new EV's that have come to market in the last few years.
- Stakeholders should make commitments to transition their entire fleets to EVs. This should include leasing and testing newer EV truck and van models to demonstrate viability of these cars for other fleet managers in Eagle County.

Parking

According to survey data there is no lack of parking for employees in Eagle County, which means the most convenient option for most commuters is to drive themselves. When convenient, free parking is not provided in large commercial centers it encourages employees to consider alternative forms of commuting to find a more convenient option.

- Stakeholders should review parking provided in large commercial centers, as identified in the survey, under their control to determine the parking needs of the businesses within those centers.
- Stakeholders should consider paid parking, reserved parking, or other parking restrictions in large commercial areas. Work with businesses in each commercial center to ensure they are aware of, and have access to alternative means of commuting. This includes bus stops, bike lanes, sidewalks, etc. Work with public transportation providers to ensure the service at the stops in large commercial centers fit the needs of the businesses in those areas.
- Stakeholders should consider parking restrictions that limit on-site parking in commercial centers for only fleet and visitor parking.
- Stakeholders should identify excess parking areas and consider in-fill development in these areas.

Incentives for Smart Commuting

60% of employers do not offer a smart commuting incentive for their employees. The biggest reason identified for why they don't offer a program is because employees haven't asked or they don't understand the benefits.

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However, according to the survey, there are benefits incurred from commuter incentive programs including improved productivity and morale (54%) and the reduced parking need for employees (42%).

- Stakeholders should use the Smart Commuting Toolkit from the Collaborative (currently in development) or research types of employee incentive programs for smart commuting.
- Stakeholders should work with HR Staff to develop smart commuting policies and programs for employees that are equitable and provide a benefit to both staff and the business.
- If a need for a community-wide incentive program is identified, stakeholders should work with through the Collaborative to launch a community-wide smart commuting application/program to encourage smart commuting, create community-wide challenges, and track emission reductions from smart commuting across the community.

Additional Raw Survey Data & Preliminary Takeaways

- Survey takers were primarily **employed** within:
 - Town of Vail (29%)
 - *Top employment centers = Vail Village, Lionshead
 - 15% commute to TOV from Eagle/Gypsum/Dotsero
 - 37% commute to TOV from Vail, Avon or Edwards
 - Avon (19% + an additional 6% Beaver Creek)
 - *Top employment centers = West Core Area, Nottingham/Mecalf, East Core Area, Beaver Creek Village
 - 11% commute to Avon from Eagle/Gypsum/Dotsero
 - 23% commute to Avon from Vail, Avon or Edwards
 - Edwards (17%)
 - *Top employment centers = Riverwalk/Edwards Village
 - 15% commute to Edwards from Eagle/Gypsum/Dotsero
 - 18% commute to Edwards from Vail, Avon or Edwards
 - Eagle (15%)
 - *Top employment centers = Old Eagle/Broadway/Downtown
 - 36% commute to Eagle from Eagle/Gypsum/Dotsero
 - 3% commute to Eagle from Vail, Avon or Edwards
 - Gypsum (6%)
 - *Top employment centers = Cooley Mesa/Spring Creek/Airport Area
 - 1% commute to Gypsum from Vail, Avon or Edwards
 - 14% commute to Gypsum from Eagle/Gypsum/Dotsero

** Key Takeaway: Only a few of these areas have ECO transit bus service – most do not. Stakeholders should ensure there is a bus stop within 0.5 miles maximum of each commercial center.*

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- Survey respondents primarily **lived** in:
 - Edwards (26%)
 - Eagle (21%)
 - Avon (20%)
 - Vail (13%)
 - Gypsum (12%)

- Public Transportation
 - 36% of survey takers have bus access to and from home
 - And additional 11% have access to a park n ride
 - 67% of those who were provided with an employer incentive (23% of total respondents) were given a free or discounted bus pass
 - But bus trips only make up 9% of overall trips in the winter and 4% in the summer

- Top barriers to public transportation
 - I prefer to drive myself
 - The bus schedule doesn't fit my work schedule
 - There are no convenient bus stops near my home/work
 - The bus takes too long

- Biking
 - 43% of survey takers have bike path access to get to and from work
 - But bike trips make up only 20% of trips in the summer and 1% of winter trips

- Top biking barriers
 - I don't own an e-bike
 - The weather is too unpredictable
 - My employment is too far from my home
 - It would take too long

- E-Bike
 - 58% of people would sometimes ride their e-bike to work if they owned one
 - 31% of people would ride their e-bike all the time work if they owned one

- Carpooling
 - 5-6% carpool in summer/winter

- Top barriers to carpooling
 - My schedule does not align with others
 - I need my car after work for other activities

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- Parking
 - 86% are provided parking on site
 - 44% is free and reserved for employees
 - 42% is free and available but not designated for employees
 - 53% state that parking is the responsibility of the employee
- Employer Incentives
 - 60% do not have a commuter incentive program or ability to work from home (pre-covid)
 - 23% do have incentives, top incentives:
 - Public transportation subsidy (67%)
 - Secure bike racks (37%)
 - Showers/changing rooms (28%)
 - Ability to work from home (23%)
 - 35% of employees are very likely or more to use alternative commuting if incentivized
 - 32% are somewhat likely
- Climate Change
 - 47% are extremely concerned
 - 32% are very concerned
- Willingness to commute using a different means of transportation 2x per week
 - 23% extremely willing
 - 35% very willing
 - 30% somewhat willing
 - PREFER to ride an e-bike or work from home
 - MOST LIKELY is to walk/ride bike or work from home
 - Most impactful to decision – own an ebike and ability to work from home
 - Most likely to aid in leaving your car behind 2x a week
 - Employer incentive program
 - Free bus system
 - Faster bus times
- For social and recreational activities people are more likely to:
 - Bike and walk
 - Carpool
 - Public transportation
 - Ride an e-bike
- Employers who have decision making power (15% total of survey respondents)
 - 64% allow employees to work from home
 - **Willingness to allow employee to work from home post-covid has increased 91%**
 - Most impactful to encouraging your staff to work from home:
 - 31% not an option

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- 68% don't provide a smart commuting incentives for employees
- 32% do provide smart commuting incentives
 - 52% provide free/discounted bus passes
 - 48% ability to work from home
- Benefits incurred from commuter incentive programs:
 - 54% improved productivity and morale
 - 42% reduced parking need for employees
- 68% of employers who **do NOT** provide incentive programs because:
 - Employees work different schedules
 - Employees have not asked/are not interested
 - Most impactful to help create incentive program:
 - Better understanding of incentive programs to offer
 - Better tax credits
 - More convenient public transportation
- Survey demographic information:
 - 86% of survey takers were active voters in Eagle County last year
 - Family Status:
 - 34% married with children
 - 26% single w/out children
 - 18% married w/out children
 - Household Income:
 - 31% \$100,000-200,000
 - 16% \$25k-54k
 - 16% \$75k-99k
 - 52% with bachelor's degree
 - 60% female, 39% male
 - 74% own their home

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