



# EAGLE COUNTY

## TRANSIT DEVELOPMENT PLAN



## STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS: SUMMARY OF STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

June 2017



*Cover photo: Vail Times*





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# 1 INTRODUCTION

Eagle County is conducting the Eagle County Transit Development Plan (TDP) to determine how to best improve transit throughout the county. The plan will focus on ECO Transit and how it works with the county’s other three transit providers, which are Avon Transit, Beaver Creek Transit, and Vail Transit.

Stakeholder engagement represents the first phase of the TDP. Input from stakeholders and the Eagle County Regional Transportation Authority (ECRTA) Advisory Board will guide the plan’s direction and inform the TDP’s final recommendations. The second phase of the TDP will evaluate ECO Transit’s existing services, capital plans, and operating policies; review regional transit providers; and analyze regional demographic characteristics and countywide travel patterns. The final phase of the TDP is the development of an improvement plan with recommendations to enhance ECO Transit’s service and operating procedures, multimodal connectivity, fares, marking and information, passenger amenities, and the system’s capital and financial plans.

As part of this initial engagement effort, members of the consulting team conducted a series of stakeholder interviews with county jurisdictions, transportation partners, medical and recreational institutions, and other organizations. This report presents an overview of the input received via these stakeholder interviews. In total, 12 interviews were conducted with the following individuals and organizations:

Stakeholder	Participants	Interview Date
Vail Valley Medical Center	Darryl Torres	February 16, 2017
Colorado Workforce Center	Mary Cunningham, Employment Specialist	February 16, 2017
EGE Air Alliance / Vail Valley Partnership	Chris Romer, Executive Director	February 17, 2017
Town of Avon	Virginia Egger, Town Manager	February 17, 2017
Town of Red Cliff	Anuschka Bales*, Mayor	February 21, 2017
Town of Gypsum	Jeff Schroll*, Town Manager	February 21, 2017
Town of Minturn	Willy Powell, Town Manager	February 21, 2017
Vail Resorts	Jeff Babb, Parking and Transportation Director	February 21, 2017
Beaver Creek Resort Company	Jen Brown, Managing Director	February 22, 2017
Edwards Metro District	Bill Simmons, Board Member	February 22, 2017
Eagle County	Jeanne McQueeney*, Commissioner	February 22, 2017
Town of Vail	Greg Hall, Public Works Director	March 9, 2017

*\*Is also a member of the ECRTA Advisory Board*



## TOPICS

Each interview consisted of an introduction to the Eagle County Transit Development Plan followed by a discussion that centered on the following questions. All questions were intended to be open-ended as a way to initiate conversation rather than to elicit specific answers:

- What is your/your organization's interest or involvement in transit service?
- What do you consider to be the greatest transit issues/challenges for your employees, visitors/guests, clients, organization, etc.?
- Which transit services in Eagle County do you consider to be the most effective, and why?
- Which transit services in Eagle County do you consider to be the least effective, and why?
- Do you feel that transit service in Eagle County adequately meets the needs of employees and visitors to the region, and why?
- Are there particular seasonal service changes that could be made to improve transit service in Eagle County?
- Are there particular geographic areas where transit needs to be improved?
- What should the major considerations be in improving transit (e.g., cost-effectiveness, increased ridership, visitor experience, employee service, social equity, etc.)?
- There are several transit providers operating in the county; do you think there are opportunities for improvements in the way the different systems work together?
- What marketing and branding strategies do you consider to be the most effective, and what types of improvements do you believe could be made?

## 2 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

The summary of results is intended to provide a clear understanding of stakeholder perceptions of ECO Transit and transit in general in Eagle County, and to identify key issues and opportunities within specific municipalities and the region. This study will help stakeholders and the community envision the future of transportation in Eagle County.

### KEY THEMES

Stakeholders discussed a large number of topics, with feedback focused on the following key themes:



#### PROVIDE SERVICE FOR LONGER HOURS

The most frequently expressed sentiment was the need for longer service hours, particularly at night. This is mainly due to a large number of employees in the county working in service/tourism jobs. Many of these jobs are evening jobs with end of shift times late at night. Routes and areas where later service is most desired include the Vail – Beaver Creek Express route, Avon, Minturn, and Leadville.



#### PROVIDE MORE FREQUENT SERVICE

The second most frequently expressed desire was for more frequent service during the midday and evenings/nights. During these times, infrequent service makes the use of transit inconvenient, but as stated above, these times are when many service and tourism-related jobs begin and end. In addition, midday and evening service is desired where it currently does not exist, primarily on the Vail-Beaver Creek Express and to Minturn and Leadville.



#### DEVELOP A MORE ROBUST COUNTYWIDE SYSTEM

There is a fairly widespread consensus that ECO Transit does a good job at providing a basic level of regional service. However, many also believe that the county should develop a more robust countywide system more akin to Summit Stage service in Summit County and RFTA service in Pitkin County. The development of a more robust system would go beyond frequency and span of service improvements, and would include:

- New routes and services to new areas.
- Better integration and coordination of the services provided by the county's four transit operators (ECO Transit, Avon Transit, Beaver Creek Transit, and Vail Transit).
- The provision of better information.
- The provision of new types of services such as vanpool, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs.
- New technologies.

Key reasons expressed for doing so are to help Eagle County better compete for visitors with other resort areas, increase transit use to better manage parking issues, and to provide better transportation options for residents, particularly to and from work.



## **PROVIDE BETTER SUMMER AND SHOULDER SEASON SERVICE**

Countywide, service levels are currently highest in the ski season, second highest in the summer, and much lower during the shoulder seasons. While this reflects overall demand levels, lower service levels outside of the winter ski season make transit unattractive during other seasons. While ECO Transit does not have a specific shoulder season schedule, other transit operators in the county do, which can affect ECO Transit's connections, ridership, and overall productivity. To make transit more convenient throughout the year, better summer and shoulder season service should be considered.



## **IMPROVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN COUNTY TRANSIT OPERATORS**

Most stakeholders believed that there are significant opportunities to improve collaboration between the county's four transit operators to provide more seamless service, to implement technology improvements such as county-wide real time passenger information, and to provide better information.



## **PROMOTE ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION SERVICES**

In addition to ECO Transit's current service, a number of stakeholders suggested that the agency promote alternative transportation services. This includes vanpool services, Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs, and coordinating with transportation services operated by Eagle County Human Services.



## **USE TRANSIT TO COMPETE MORE EFFECTIVELY FOR VISITORS**

Eagle County competes for visitors with other counties in Colorado, and especially with Summit County and Pitkin Counties. Many stakeholders viewed transit service in other counties as better than that in Eagle County and believe that better transit service in Eagle County, including to and from the airport, would make the county more competitive.



## **REDUCE OR ELIMINATE ECO TRANSIT FARES**

Service on Avon Transit, Beaver Creek Transit, and Vail Transit is fare-free, while ECO Transit's fares range from \$4 to \$7. Many stakeholders believe that these fares are too high, especially for lower income residents, and that they discourage transit use since it can be cheaper to drive and pay for parking. Stakeholders believe that fares should either be eliminated altogether or for shorter trips, and/or reduced. Stakeholders also noted that service is fare-free in Summit County (Summit Stage) and for many shorter trips in Pitkin County (Roaring Fork Transportation Authority operates eight free shuttles in Aspen and to several other regional locations; fares between Rifle and Brush Creek, Snowmass, and Aspen are \$10).



## 3 RESULTS BY TOPIC

Due to the unique and, in some cases, competing needs for transit, feedback varied significantly by stakeholder. This section includes a summary of responses by topic.

### GREATEST TRANSIT-RELATED ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

#### PERCEPTION OF TRANSIT IN EAGLE COUNTY

Most stakeholders believe that transit service in Eagle County is generally good, but that it could or should be better. The most commonly desired improvements, by far, are for longer service hours and more frequent off-peak service. In this and other respects, comparisons were often made with Summit and Pitkin Counties, where Summit Stage and Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) services were generally perceived as better. As described further below, the desires for better transit are driven by a number of factors, but perhaps the most important are to make it easier for residents to access jobs without driving and to help Eagle County compete more effectively for visitor-related business.

#### SERVICE TO MULTIPLE MARKETS

Transit in Eagle County is viewed as serving multiple markets, many of which have different demands and needs:

- Job access for residents with the largest demand going to and from Vail. Job-related travel varies by season, with the largest volumes in the winter, followed by summer, and lowest in the shoulder seasons.
- Resident travel for other purposes, including shopping, medical, and social activities. The demand for these types of trips also varies by season in a similar manner as job-related travel.
- Wintertime tourists whose activities are largely centered on travel between their lodgings and the ski resorts and dining. These activities are geographically concentrated and can be served effectively by transit.
- Wintertime tourists who fly in and out of Eagle County Airport.
- Summertime tourists, whose activities are more geographically diverse, and more difficult to serve with transit.

#### FREQUENCY AND HOURS OF SERVICE

As described above, the most commonly stated desires are for service to operate for longer hours and more frequently, especially:

- Midday and evening service on the Vail – Beaver Creek express route and to Minturn and Leadville.
- Extended evening service in Avon (Avon Transit service currently terminates around 6 pm).
- More frequent service on most or all routes during the midday and evening.

The desire for expanded hours, especially later at night, is primarily to serve those who work in service-related jobs with late ending times. The desire for more frequent service is largely related to making transit more attractive by making it more convenient.



## BETTER YEAR-ROUND SERVICE

Related to the issue of hours of service and frequency, many stakeholders desire better countywide summer and shoulder season service. While there is an understanding that demands are lower during those periods, many still believe that more service should be provided.

## SERVICE COVERAGE

Most stakeholders believe that transit service coverage in Eagle County is good. However, some also believed that additional areas should be served. These areas are described in more detail in the “Geographic Areas Where Better Transit is Needed” section.

## COST OF PROVIDING BETTER SERVICE

While stakeholders desire more frequent service for longer hours, they also understand that there are significant challenges in paying for better service, in terms of both the amount of additional costs and who would pay them. Most stakeholders recognize that transit service is subsidized, and that the resources to pay for transit are limited.

## FARES

While most stakeholders understood the challenges in funding transit, many also believed that ECO Transit’s fares were too high, especially considering that all transit in Summit County is free. The most common complaint was the \$4 fare from Gypsum to Vail, followed by the \$7 fare for the Leadville and Vail-Beaver Creek routes. Some also felt that the \$4 Minturn fare was inequitable compared to the \$4 Valley fare considering that the distance to Gypsum is much longer (38 miles versus 8 miles). Leadville is also about the same distance from Vail as Gypsum, but the Leadville route costs \$7, and closer towns on the route (such as Red Cliff) pay the same cost.

## MOST EFFECTIVE SERVICES

Stakeholders believe that many of Eagle County’s transit services are very effective. Services and service characteristics that received multiple mentions for being particularly effective included:

- The geographical reach of ECO Transit’s service.
- Gypsum and Eagle to Vail Valley Express service.
- Edwards to Vail Highway 6 service.
- Avon Station as a major transfer point between transit operators and routes.
- Vail Transit, which is frequent and free.

Multiple stakeholders were also happy that service had recently been implemented to Dotsero.

## LEAST EFFECTIVE SERVICES

In terms of the least effective aspects of existing services, many comments mirrored those presented above in the “Greatest Transit-Related Issues and Challenges” section, above. These included:

- Lack of frequency.

- Service hours that are too short.
- High fares on ECO Transit.

A number of comments were also made about the role of ECO Transit. These were generally of the theme that ECO Transit does a good job of providing the service that it does, but that it should do more, and that it is not sufficiently nimble because it is held back by county bureaucracy. Some also expressed frustration that ECO Transit's Advisory Committee is dominated by small towns, which distorts decision-making. Some also asked whether an RTA would make things better.

Minturn service was also mentioned as being insufficient, partially due to limited connectivity between the Forest Service Transfer Station and south Minturn. Additionally, stakeholders are interested in establishing direct (one-seat) service between Minturn, Vail, and Avon to transport residents, tourists, and improve access to ski and recreation areas.

## ADEQUACY OF MEETING NEEDS

Overall, there is a high degree of satisfaction with the degree to which ECO Transit and the county's other transit providers meet the needs of residents and visitors. Still, there were a number of comments on how service could be improved. One sentiment expressed by a number of stakeholders was a belief that the county may have an appetite for a much more robust transit system, that this study should consider that concept, and that there may be high levels of public support. There was also the suggestion that ECO Transit should become more of a transit agency than just a bus operator, and add other services such as vanpool, bikeshare, etc.

Other, more targeted, improvements that stakeholders either proposed or stated should be considered included:

- Additional down valley park and ride lots to improve access to transit and help manage parking in Vail and Beaver Creek.
- Local circulator service in Avon and Edwards.
- A general need for more local service (e.g. service into Red Cliff).
- Better service between Minturn - Vail and Minturn - Avon.
- More frequent service and later service.
- Summer service that is the same as winter service.
- Event-based services (both winter and summer).

## SEASONAL SERVICE NEEDS

All stakeholders agreed that transit demands were greatest in the winter ski season followed by summertime. Some stakeholders also noted that wintertime visitors were easier to serve with transit because their activities are focused in more limited areas – their lodging areas, the ski resorts, and areas with dining and shopping. By contrast, summertime activities are much more spread out.

For residents, cutbacks in summertime and, in particular, shoulder season service, makes the use of transit more difficult. Most stakeholders would like to see additional service in the summer and shoulder seasons, but also understand that demand is lower during those periods. Some also noted that there is less demand during the summer because parking is much easier and free. For example, free parking likely discourages many employees from taking transit and encourages them to drive.

## GEOGRAPHIC AREAS WHERE TRANSIT SHOULD BE IMPROVED

In terms of geography, stakeholders suggested consideration of service to many new areas, as well as improvements to existing services.

### IMPROVEMENTS TO EXISTING SERVICES

In areas that are already served, stakeholders suggested a number of improvements:

- Better connections between Edwards and Beaver Creek.
- Additional service on the Highway 6 route to serve new demand in Edwards.
- With new development coming to Edwards, there is going to be increased transit demand especially on the Hwy 6 route.
- Gypsum – Eagle service, especially to meet the needs of high school students.

### AREAS WHERE NEW SERVICE SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

Areas where the consideration of new service should be considered include:

- Wildridge and Mountain Star, which are suburban communities to the north; about 50/50 split between residents and second home owners. *A recent two-month pilot program sponsored by Avon Transit offered service to Wildridge with connections to other transit services at Avon Station. The free 30-minute loop ran twice in the morning and twice in the afternoon. Performance results indicate that a ridership base failed to develop.*
- Buffalo Ridge employee housing.
- Dotsero (*service was recently implemented*).
- Red Cliff (current service does not go into town, only stopping outside of town on US 24).
- Bond, McCoy, State Bridge.
- Singletree in Edwards
- Wolcott as it develops.
- Frisco Transit Center for connections to Summit Stage.
- Service to Silverthorne for shopping.

## MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS WHEN IMPROVING TRANSIT

Stakeholders view transit as fulfilling many roles, and in reflection of that, there was a wide diversity of opinions on important considerations as to how transit should be improved. These included:

- Focus on providing better service to employees.
- Enhance social equity.
- Provide service that is cost-effective.
- Minimize the need for parking.
- Get cars off of the roads.
- Use transit to reduce the climate impacts of transportation.
- Make transit more convenient.

- Make Eagle County more competitive as a visitor destination.
- Consider additional subsidized fares for low-income youths. ECO Transit currently offers a \$25 annual youth pass (18 years and under); one-way fare is \$1 for youths who do not purchase the annual pass; children five years and under ride fare-free.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO BETTER COORDINATE/INTEGRATE COUNTY TRANSIT SERVICES

Four different transit operators serve Eagle County – ECO Transit, which is the regional provider; Vail Transit, which provides service in Vail; Avon Transit, which provides transit in Avon; and, Beaver Creek Transit, which provides transit focused on Beaver Creek and Arrowhead. All four transit providers provide their own information, which varies in quality and distribution methods. Nearly all stakeholders agreed that the fragmentation of service made transit use at least somewhat difficult, especially for visitors who were unfamiliar with available services. Vail Transit and Beaver Creek Transit desire to maintain unique identities and control over their own services, while Avon Transit would consider consolidation with ECO Transit.

At the same time, the four transit operators and nearly all stakeholders agree that improvements could be made in terms of how services are coordinated, and especially in how transit information is provided and distributed. The most common area of agreement is that there should be a single source of information for all services and that better information, including real-time information, should be provided. There may also be opportunities for ECO Transit to base more buses and staff at Avon's transit facility, which could reduce ECO Transit's deadhead costs.

Beyond Eagle County, some stakeholders believe that ECO Transit should provide connections with Summit Stage in Frisco and RFTA in Glenwood Springs.

## POTENTIAL MARKETING AND BRANDING ENHANCEMENTS

As described above, nearly all stakeholders agree that the provision of transit information for all four transit operators through a single source would make the use of transit easier, especially for visitors. Additional suggested improvements included:

- Development of a comprehensive map.
- Real-time info for all systems (via smartphones and at stops)
- Transit information on Google Maps. *ECO Transit and Avon Transit have recently added their schedules to Google Maps.*
- Similar/same signage for all systems.
- Joint informational and marketing campaigns.
- Partnerships with lodging establishments and short-term rental properties (i.e., AirBnB and VRBO) to provide transit information to guests.

# APPENDIX: UNABRIDGED STAKEHOLDER COMMENTS

## INTEREST/INVOLVEMENT IN TRANSIT SERVICE?

Avon is a resort community and needs transit to move tourist and workers.

Many worker housing areas need transit service, including a large mobile home park and Buffalo Ridge.

Avon and the county have adopted Climate Action Plans, and transit is an important way to reduce carbon emissions.

Need for employees to be able to get to Beaver Creek resort to work at ski company, resort, restaurants, hotels, etc. from throughout the valley.

Beaver Creek Transit meets most needs locally for guests.

To help connect people with jobs.

Much of the county's population lives outside of Vail and Avon, which is where most of the jobs are, and workers need to get to those locations.

Eagle County identified to provide spine service in the valley with a focus on employee transit in peak periods (ECO cannot be all things to all people).

ECO Transit is a part of the County, but is an enterprise fund that must operate within an identified budget – does ECO have a desire to dream big? Tradeoff between operating within budget constraints and being creative.

An interest in transit service to meet the needs of residents and employees in Edwards.

Understanding transit needs for future development (stops, infrastructure, etc.).

Commuter service for residents.

Economic development – everyone “goes east” want to create his or her own community vitality.

Getting residents directly to Vail & Avon (and back).

Getting tourists directly to Minturn.

Youth population/residents want to access ski areas and recreation.

Involvement has potential to be increased. Minturn may be able to play a role in helping to “fill the gaps” for their specific user group's needs.

Interest in advocating for transit service in Red Cliff (stops on Hwy 24) but does not come in to the Town of Red Cliff. Red Cliff has a seat on the ECO Board, but no direct service.

Need to get employees to work (people do not work 8-5 – need to accommodate the early/late schedules of employees).

Only 250 parking spaces for line level employees and 300 for management per day with a total of 1200 working per day.

Vail Resort operates 365 days per year – need consistent year-round service schedule.

Vail Resorts pays 50% of employee monthly ECO passes.

Vail operates/funds Vail Transit, which includes the in-town shuttle.

## **GREATEST TRANSIT ISSUES/CHALLENGES**

Avon Transit Valley Floor service ends at 6 pm, which is too early. (City has started pilot project with a local taxi company for service from 6 pm to 11 pm. Is very new and too soon to know results.)

Need feeder routes to Beaver Creek.

Extend span of service to operate later at night.

Increase frequency of service to high-density residential areas.

Need to get cars off the road and minimize impacts on roadways. Increase the ability for people to move around the Valley - but who pays for this?

The increase in the bed base in Avon has changed need. How do we effectively get people from Avon to BC, and is this a resort or Avon issue?

Spans of service are too short. Service needs to operate 24/7. Too many service employees work hours that start or end outside of transit service hours.

Frequency of service less of an issue than short spans.

ECO Transit fares are too high. Service in Summit County is free; it should also be in Eagle County.

Service frequency.

Span of service - ECO does not run late enough.

Challenging to hear what service people want in locations that do not currently have transit service. Also, not a lot of public forums to hear from riders and non-riders in the County.

Need for simple fare structure, but senses frustration from Edwards residents that the fare is the same as from Gypsum.

Desire for more service, but who pays for it?

Transit service from Gypsum to Eagle for high school students.

Need for a Gypsum/Eagle Connector service (not a part of the larger route).

Direct routes (the transfer at the Forest Service stop hinders efficiency for Minturn users) - one seat trips needed.

Costs – costs for Minturn users to ride the bus to Vail is the same as Gypsum users...not sure why.

Why isn't ECO free like Summit Stage?

Perception that Red Cliff is “so far” that it is hard to serve.

ECO implemented an extension of the Minturn service (one am and on pm trip) to Red Cliff for one season (approximately 2013) – no ridership. But was it due to limited frequency?

Getting employees to work on the mountain.

Frequency of service.

Reduce the number of single-occupant vehicles in the Town of Vail – transit needs to be competitive to accomplish this.

ECO needs to operate later in the evening (at least until 2 am).

Express service not very “express like” – a lot of people won’t ride ECO Transit due to long travel times. Is there an opportunity for express service from mid-valley (e.g., Edwards)?

Lack of Park-n-Rides – need additional capacity at Freedom Park, Forest Service has been having discussions about getting rid of the Forest Service station at the Minturn exit – how will that impact ECO?

Cost of transit – does the free service actually improve ridership in Summit County? Is this something to consider? Or, should fares be changed based on trip length?

Transit fares cannot compete with parking (even at \$25/day) if people are carpooling.

## **MOST EFFECTIVE TRANSIT SERVICES**

Avon Station as a major transfer facility with connections with ECO Transit and Beaver Creek Transit (largest transfer facility in ECO Transit system?).

ECO Transit routes that move employees up and down the Valley.

Hwy 6 Route – doesn’t feel that the express bus should be the focus – make the stops all along the way to collect employees along Hwy 6.

Broad geographic reach of ECO Transit – happy that it is there.

Dotsero service added last summer.

Eagle/Gypsum routes to Vail.

Some of the Edwards routes are the most heavily used – and some of the most important because of the mass of employees in Edwards (between 1-2,000 going to Beaver Creek and Vail from Edwards each day).

Hwy 6 route.

Vail/Beaver Creek Connector – what has the ridership been? Has it been productive since it was added back post-recession?

Express bus seems to work okay - standing room only the whole trip is a problem though.

Anything with direct service: taxi, Uber (cost is proportional to the service provided).

Vail Transit is great because it is free and has high frequency.

Beaver Creek to Vail connection.

High frequency of service from Edwards to Vail to serve employee housing.

Seems like ECO is serving the right locations (besides local Red Cliff).

Bringing back Dotsero service is great.

Senior Bus service gets used a lot (operated by Eagle County Human Services) – for trips to doctors, community dinners, etc.



The Town of Vail's winter peak season bus service works well – suffer from capacity issues during peak times although shadowing does seem to meet the need.

Vail Resorts works with Vail Transit to have a transit run serve Timber Ridge (employee housing in Vail) to get lift operators to base before regular service begins at 6 am.

Vail/Beaver Creek Connector was a great service before being eliminated pre-recession. Is it still a high performing route?

## LEAST EFFECTIVE SERVICES

Lack of frequency throughout Valley, especially in summer between 7 and 9 am and 4 and 6 pm.

ECO Transit's \$4 fare is too high – should ECO Transit be free?

Vail to Beaver Creek shuttle, which costs \$7.

Buses should be better sized to demand – not all service needs to be run with 40' buses.

ECO Transit is not nimble – mostly because of county bureaucracy.

In addition, ECO Transit's Advisory Committee is dominated by small towns (for example, Eagle, Dotsero, Minturn, Red Cliff), which distorts decision-making.

Would an RTA make things better? It probably depends on the composition of the Board.

Express service on I-70 – should focus on Hwy 6 Route.

Vail Beaver Creek Connection – good for tourists, but doesn't run late enough.

Again, short spans of service. Many employees can get to work on transit but not home.

Route leaving Vail at 4:20 is often standing room only to Gypsum.

Feels that there should not be a focus on the express routes (as identified in previous studies) – Hwy 6 route most important for locations closer in to Vail and BC.

Very limited number of people take the bus from EGE Airport.

Minturn is not set up as the most “walkable” community. This is said in regards to the lack of sidewalks in south Minturn as well as the lack of a dedicated path from Minturn's downtown to the Forest Service Transfer Station (we see folks trying to hitchhike to the transfer station consistently). Minturn has capital improvements scheduled for the summer of 2019 for sidewalks on the east side of HWY 24 in south Minturn, but until then, our community is not conducive for a large number of our residents to easily/safely access public transit.

Summer Minturn Mile – Cougar Ridge Trail – what role will transit play in to this? How will people get back to Vail from Minturn?

Winter Minturn Mile – Turtle Bus provides winter trips to get people back to Vail at 5 and 7 pm.

Discussions with Turtle Bus Company – storing their buses on land in South Minturn in exchange for free service – 2 morning and 2 afternoon trips to Beaver Creek and Vail – could be free or low fare.

Fare from Red Cliff considered a “premium fare” – way too expensive – should be just the \$4 fare.

Could ECO be free like Summit?

Biggest shortfall is not looking at the “bigger picture” – connecting to Glenwood Springs, Summit County, etc.

Vail/Beaver Creek Connection – not frequent enough; if you miss the bus it requires many transfers.

Off-season shoulder season bus service does not work – still have employees needing to get to Vail/Beaver Creek.

Need to look at peak frequencies for US 6 and Express service – is it meeting demand? Need to increase frequencies?

Greyhound is providing bad service – notoriously late service.

Off-season shoulder season bus service does not work – still have employees needing to get to Vail/Beaver Creek.

Bustang is not an option for commuting from Summit County to Vail due to schedule.

## ADEQUACY OF MEETING NEEDS

Eagle County may have the appetite for much better transit. There could be very high levels of public support. A much more robust system should be considered.

Doesn't hear much about employees having issues with fares.

For recreational use, it is cheaper to park (\$10) than to take the bus.

Is there a need for additional local service and/or Park-n-Rides down valley to manage parking needs?

Transit does well in meeting the needs of visitors, who stay in smaller geographical areas, but less so for residents who need to travel longer distances.

Has heard that Avon and Edwards want circulator service.

Is there any capacity at Park-n-Rides?

ECO Transit does a good job of getting employees to and from work.

Residents have okay service to the mountain for skiing/recreating.

Reasonable, need for more local service.

A solid schedule of direct service from Minturn/Vail and Minturn/Avon would greatly improve the effectiveness of the service to meet specific needs in Minturn. Have heard many times from the folks at the Vail Transit Station that visitors would like to get to Minturn but there is no “easy” way to get here, but as a small town, Minturn cannot afford to run the service.

ECO Transit has done a good job meeting the needs of transit dependent

Need for later evening service from Vail to Red Cliff/Leadville.

Need for event based services (concerts, summer and winter special events in Vail).

Need for a skier shuttle.

Need for more express service from Gypsum to Vail and vice versa.

Summer service schedule should be the same as winter service.

## SEASONAL SERVICE NEEDS

Winter and summer tourism drives economy.

Shoulder seasons are tough, when many things close. It would be nice to have better shoulder season service.

There do not seem to be issues with summer service, maybe because parking is easier, and free in Vail?

ECO Transit is definitely impacted by seasonality – there is a fluctuation of need during these seasons and shoulder seasons

Year round employees more likely to drive in the summer because of free parking.

Seems to be okay as is.

For Minturn, yes. Having a bus schedule that coincides with the ski schedule is helpful for getting both to and from the mountain.

Direct routes from Vail/Avon to Minturn and back on a consistent basis.

Should only have summer/winter schedules – no shoulder schedules.

## GEOGRAPHIC AREAS WHERE TRANSIT SHOULD BE IMPROVED

Wildridge and Mountain Star, which are suburban communities to the north; about 50/50 split between residents and second home owners.

Buffalo Ridge employee housing.

Need to look at commuter O-D patterns.

Dotsero.

Bond, McCoy, State Bridge.

Service to Frisco Transit Center.

Better connections between Edwards and Beaver Creek.

Singletree in Edwards has no service.

GEM service recently started that serves veterans, older adults and disabled with trips to Grand Junction – if capacity is available, general public can use service as well but must book in advance (partnership between Eagle and Mesa Counties and Glenwood).

With new development coming to Edwards, there is going to be increased transit demand especially on the Hwy 6 route.

Need to consider the potential of Wolcott developing and needing service eventually.

Need for a Gypsum/Eagle Connector service (not a part of the larger route); especially to meet the needs of high school students.

Minturn is not on the main Vail Valley (I-70) corridor which is a hindrance when working with the ECO Transit service whose main user group is located on the corridor. We may need to start thinking outside the box on how we can best work with ECO Transit to meet the needs of the Minturn Valley users.

ECO Transit has done a good job meeting the needs of transit dependent.

Need for later evening service from Vail to Red Cliff/Leadville.

Need for event based services (concerts, summer and winter special events in Vail).

Need for a skier shuttle.

Everything in Vail and Avon being served except for Buffalo Ridge (workforce housing) and Wildridge (Avon conducting pilot project now).

Edwards– no service that goes in to Homestead (which is part of unincorporated Eagle County) – 1 mile away from bus stop – but mostly single family homes – is there demand?

Leadville stop – is it viable?

Workforce housing is where the transit is needed.

During holidays and peak periods – would it make sense to add Avon to the Vail Beaver Creek Express route?

Opportunity for all transit providers to partner during peak times to increase service and/or provide connections between major towns.

Need to look closely at demographics and future land use – ECO is going to have to continue to increase service if population doubles over time as anticipated.

Need feeder routes to Beaver Creek – do not focus on the express, but the smaller stops along the way – Hwy 6 is the priority.

Implement Aspen-style free downtown shuttle.

## **MAJOR CONSIDERATIONS WHEN IMPROVING TRANSIT**

A county mill levy could generate significant funds for transit.

Should there be subsidized rides for low-income kids?

Service to employees.

Social equity.

Cost-effectiveness.

Implementation of Climate Action Plan.

Employees.

Minimizing need for parking.

Getting cars off the road.

Free service would be great. Maybe free service in Edwards but still charge for longer trips?

Employee access to work.

Resident access to recreation.

Convenience is key.

Employees.

Local residents.

Work trips are the most critical.

Low-income.

Recreational needs – e.g., to get people to the Minturn Market in the Summer, back to Vail from Minturn Mile (winter and summer).

Employees trying to get to Avon, Vail, BC.

Employees/residents are tourists on their days off – recreational service for these segments of the population are important.

Getting employees to work from outlying communities in a timely fashion.

Guest experience.

Visitors and locals (locals are also visitors).

Express service in to Vail.

Paid parking in Vail – looking to implement paid summer parking in 2018. Vail knows they will have to make changes to their system, but what impact will this have on ECO Transit's service?

## **OPPORTUNITIES TO BETTER COORDINATE/INTEGRATE COUNTY TRANSIT SERVICES**

Should look at an RTA to provide service, rather than different operators, which produces redundancy in administration. Small size of individual agencies also presents workforce problems when staff are sick or injured, etc.

ECO Transit should become more of a transit agency than just a bus operator – add other services such as vanpool, bikeshare, etc.

With consolidation, RTA could take over Avon maintenance facility.

Need to improve overall mobility in the Valley, but who pays for it? BC doesn't have the ability to fund additional transit service and the property owners already pay for transportation services through a mill levy.

Not sure, don't hear many complaints.

Sharing of space/maintenance facilities with school district (they are moving locations).

Need for employees to get to Glenwood.

Feels it's unlikely that Vail would consider a larger consolidation, Avon possibly.

Parking availability at the Edwards PnR – opportunity to promote more use of, and addition of, more PNRs in outlying areas?

Gypsum and ECO Transit have a good relationship. Gypsum sends development information to ECO Transit for review related to needed transit infrastructure.

Partner with RFTA to make the connection from Glenwood to Gypsum.

What about an experimental partnership with RFTA for shuttle service? When the canyon closes – shows the high number of O-D trips between the two towns (teachers, hospital workers, etc.)

CDOT is currently undergoing major bridge reconstruction in GW – could partner with CDOT as well?

Yes. ECO Transit might consider/review the best utilization of funds and how smaller, private operations may be able to play a role in meeting the needs of the different user groups while maintaining costs.

Perhaps a private entity, with the use of allocated ECO Transit funds can help fill the gap for the folks needing to get to and from Minturn.

Income disparities make the service not as effective as it could be – free system would change everything for low-income.

What about coordinating with Eagle County to use the Senior Van for senior outings, community trips, or employee service?

Coordinate with Bustang to create a “Denver Day” for locals to go to Denver for activities.

More express bus service that goes on I-70 to Vail - augment local service with express service all day (even at lower frequencies).

Need for more Park-n-Ride opportunities.

Majority of workers have cars – 50-70%, likely a demand for additional park-n-ride – good to have a PNR in Eagle Vail with an express bus.

Not enough parking spaces at workforce housing locations to handle parking demand – transit opportunity.

How many spare vehicles does ECO Transit have? Is there an opportunity to better coordinate the “ramp up” of service with other providers for key events/peak periods?

With ECO being the only service with a fare in the valley – makes it more complicated for visitors.

Create more interconnected service between providers – but whose responsibility is it?

Given that each agency controls their own service (and councils direct service changes) it would be challenging to become a more “regional” service as agencies would feel a loss of control.

## POTENTIAL MARKETING AND BRANDING ENHANCEMENTS

A number of improvements should be made:

One-stop shopping for information.

Real-time info for all systems.

Similar/same signage for all systems [maybe NC Triangle area approach?].

Gondola is partially funding by Avon, advertise as part of transit system?

Interest in getting people to use alternative transportation.

Need an informational campaign about paid parking, employee use of transit etc. (TDM Coordinator to work with hotels, resorts, etc. to market transit and benefits?)

Do short-term rental properties (AirBnB, VRBO) include transportation information in welcome packet?

Need more digital information to make it easier for the public to take transit (combined service information).

PR campaign that if you come to the region, you don't need a car.

Keep ECO Transit name, but joint marketing would be good.

Would be helpful to have a unified look of transit in the valley – cooperative branding.

Eagle County willing to have a unified brand – if locals would be willing.

Vail and Beaver Creek are interested in their own brands – what if a brand was created that didn't reflect any existing brand?

Coordination of service information is important – if marketed better, demand would increase.

Would be helpful to have information easy to access via web.

Promote service through a combination of the Vail Daily, websites, social media and printed hard copies.

Improve marketing materials – would be good to have a comprehensive, valley-wide transit map.

Fare-free system would make it easier for visitors and help low-income population.

Need for a comprehensive service map.

Too many connections on different services makes it hard and confusing.

Not focused on choice riders – information must be easier to find to attract this audience.

Streamline information and have one website with all information.

People don't understand what ECO Transit is – too many connections/systems.

Improve marketing of Vail to Beaver Creek connection to guests.

AirBnB/VRBO marketing transit information in welcome packets? Could be an opportunity.

Vehicle design needs to be considered to improve perception/ridership (less utilitarian).

Challenge of not having Google Transit across providers – visitors from major metropolitan areas expect to use this as a tool.

How much does ECO use social media to push out information? Is there an opportunity to increase this?

“If you're providing great service, doesn't matter what it is called.”

Opportunity to sell seasonal passes in addition to monthly passes?

## OTHER

Avon has a 40% lodging tax, which generates \$1.2 million per year. Although this tax is not directly related to transit, it is about what the city spends on transit. All revenue is generated on the valley floor.

Avon has hired LSC to do a Multimodal Plan. Important component will be managed parking. City also desires to become more walkable and bikeable.

Some County Commissioners would like to experiment with pilot projects.

Avon has a new maintenance facility, with nine ECO Transit buses based there.



ECO Transit has a 39% reserve for transit. Does the county mandate that level and is it too high?

Parking is free in Avon, but Beaver Creek has started charging \$10. The town has seen some shift of skier parking from Beaver Creek lots into town, but not too much.

This project needs a strategic plan at the end.

Avon has different clients than ECO Transit.

Convenience is the most important factor for tourists, employees and residents.

It's the "Eagle Valley," not the "Vail Valley!"

Added advertising to the buses during the recession – won't rule out the possibility of getting rid of advertising in the future if possible.

Need to create a policy that requires that the ECO Transit name be on the bus somewhere with bus advertising (i.e., not a full bus wrap with no ECO Transit branding).

Advertising detracts from creating a brand for ECO Transit.

Eagle County Commissioners discussing moving social services facility from Avon to Edwards – but, there is no free bus service in Edwards.

Possibility of those going to social services offices to show EBT card for a fare-free trip?

Feel that in 30 years they won't be running buses in the region – need to be more proactive and plan big for rail or "something bigger."

If they ever go back to the voters, need to have something "shiny" to sell them (e.g., selling transit with trails) for them to get on board.

When people fly in to EGE, it says "Vail" on their ticket. People don't realize that they are 30 minutes from Vail when they arrive. Better opportunity for integrating air/transit?

Would be good to get people out of their vehicles using connector routes on the hillsides in Edwards, but is there demand? Edwards is not incorporated and the metro district doesn't have the money to fund this new service.

Navajo stop needs a shelter.

Seems like no one is ever at the stop at ECO Transit's facility on Cooley Mesa – why not move the stop out to the street to reduce route time?

Don't hear much of anything about fares – just learned there is a \$25 student pass – great deal!

Consider other service types to connect the valley (e.g., rail).

Currently working on a pilot project with ECO Transit – distributed 50 10-ride punch passes to locals to see if people would use transit – 14% increase in ridership since project began two months ago. Will be surveying participants in the next month – could be an opportunity to coordinate survey distribution with Michelle.

Get rid of the "No Pets" policy.

Perception that all of the issues are the "resort's problems" and that they should pay for solutions.

Frontline meets bi-weekly (less frequently in the summer) to talk about events, services, coordination, signage, wayfinding – also talk about bus schedules, bus stop signs, etc.

All buses need to have WiFi.

Perception that bus service should break even – but it's really just a cost of doing business – need for better “storytelling” about transit being a community service.

ECO Transit is dependent on sales tax – if sales tax drops, what happens to capital replacement schedules?

Vail has housing for seasonal drivers, which makes their operation work. Does ECO provide employee housing benefits?

Property tax to fund transit not realistic as many feel that visitors should pay for the service.

Due to the location of ECO Transit's facility in Gypsum, they have a lot of dead head miles. This has cost ECO a lot over time.