



BEAVER CREEK METROPOLITAN DISTRICT



# Communities working to improve Eagle County transportation by launching Eagle Valley RTA

Eagle County's evolution into a year-round community and world-renowned visitor destination has created significant transportation challenges for local businesses and residents alike. Employers, workers, seniors and other community members increasingly see a pressing need for a more comprehensive valley-wide, year-round approach to public transit.

An enhanced transit system will help local residents get to their jobs, schools, medical care, recreation and other community services safely and efficiently. Further investing in our valley-wide transit system will support the locally owned small businesses and visitors that contribute to our region's economy and tax base. Improved regional transportation will promote the livability, sustainability and economic vitality of Eagle County as our region grows over the next several decades. ■



Learn more by visiting [eaglecountyrta.org](http://eaglecountyrta.org)



## RTA FORMATION COMMITTEE

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Jeanne McQueeney</b><br><i>Eagle County Commissioner</i> | <b>Earle Bidez</b><br><i>Minturn Council</i>               |
| <b>Sarah Smith Hymes</b><br><i>Mayor of Avon</i>            | <b>Dana Veljacic</b><br><i>Red Cliff Trustee</i>           |
| <b>Nick Sunday</b><br><i>Town of Eagle</i>                  | <b>Barry Davis</b><br><i>Town of Vail</i>                  |
| <b>Tom Edwards</b><br><i>Gypsum Mayor Pro Tem</i>           | <b>Dave Eickholt</b><br><i>Beaver Creek Metro District</i> |

*Getting around Eagle County is more challenging, and when added to housing challenges and the cost of gas and parking, it is time to improve our regional transportation system to meet the current and future needs of our community and workforce.*

*Eagle County's local governments are working with business and nonprofit partners to improve transit across the valley to help benefit local residents, small businesses and visitors.*



## REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PARTNERSHIP:

Creating a comprehensive year-round system requires valley-wide collaboration and cooperation. Over the past year, Eagle County; the towns of Avon, Eagle, Gypsum, Minturn, Red Cliff and Vail; and Beaver Creek Metro District — along with local employers, nonprofit organizations and community partners — have been working to address regional transportation planning through the creation of an Eagle Valley Regional Transportation Authority (RTA).

RTAs are governed by elected officials representing each member community and follow the same open meeting and fiscal accountability laws as other Colorado governments. RTA creation must be approved by voters, so that local residents have a say in how an RTA will operate and what services it will provide.

Local transit options in Vail and Avon work well within these towns but getting between communities and from one end of the valley to the other could be easier and more efficient. Colorado mountain communities similar to ours have RTAs that address regional needs, like the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) and San Miguel Authority for Regional Transportation (SMART). These voter-approved authorities provide additional transit options to get residents to work, school and recreational activities while reducing traffic, parking demands and emissions from cars. ■

## EAGLE VALLEY RTA SERVICE GOALS:

The Eagle Valley RTA's goals are focused on improving transit options to help get workers to their jobs, seniors to medical appointments and shopping, and kids to school and recreational activities. Expanded transit services in resort areas can reduce the number of visitors and tourists driving on our mountain roads. The partners working on this proposal understand that not everyone can take a bus to work or school, but many more residents across the valley could utilize transit if services improve — primarily by increasing off-season, weekend and after-hours bus service to better match transit needs.

Additional objectives include improving how riders access buses between communities, including park-n-rides, e-bikes, circulators and van pools. The RTA will work to accelerate conversion of ECO Transit's buses to low and zero emissions and improve efforts to attract lower-cost flights into Eagle County Airport. Achieving these goals will help Eagle County be a thriving community for local families, workers and visitors. Improved transit services will reduce the need for cars, help with traffic and parking congestion, and improve air quality. ■

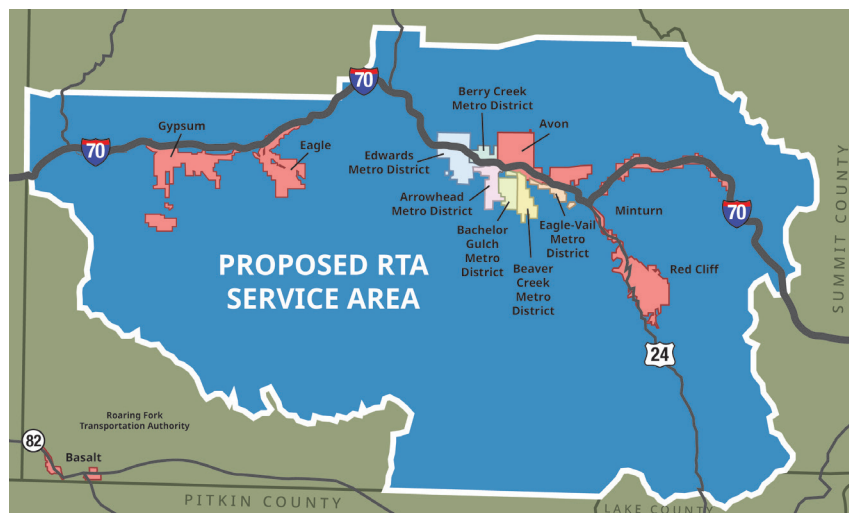
## Proposed RTA service improvements include:

- Fare-free transit service to reduce traffic congestion and parking demands from Edwards to Vail, including Avon, Beaver Creek, Minturn and Eagle-Vail.
- Limited-stop express ECO Transit service at peak workforce commute hours.
- Improved transit facilities, including affordable workforce housing for transit employees.
- Eagle-Gypsum Circulator to better connect those communities and to access ECO Transit.
- Zero-emissions conversion of ECO Transit's Highway 6 bus service.
- Year-round, lower cost flight options for residents at Eagle County Airport.

## TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND SERVICES:

Long-term, regional planning is one of the primary reasons that the local government, private sector and nonprofit partners are working to establish an RTA. An Eagle Valley RTA will give our region a greater voice at the state and national levels on transportation issues and better access to federal and CDOT funding and grants. As a truly regional body focused solely on providing the best possible transportation, an RTA will have more flexibility to address short-term transportation issues quickly and with a valley-wide approach. Developing a 20- to 30-year vision of regional transit needs will be one of the initial tasks after the final membership and service area are approved by voters.

The RTA's Technical Committee—a working group of local transportation experts as well as civic stakeholders—has developed short-term improvements that will be implemented if voters approve the RTA's creation and funding. A list of those proposed improvements is to the right. If established, the RTA will begin to rollout these services while planning for long-term improvements. ■



## FUNDING OPTIONS:

In 1995, Eagle County voters approved a half-penny sales tax to fund transit and trails in the county. The tax funds both ECO Transit in the Eagle Valley and RFTA in the Roaring Fork Valley. It's estimated that about 50 percent of this tax is paid by tourists and visitors to Eagle County. For ECO Transit, fares and passes only account for about 20 percent of its operational budget; the remaining operational funds are provided by the voter-approved tax, as well as grants, some state and federal funding. Any additional funding approved by voters would be used to improve and enhance services provided by ECO Transit, including frequency and capacity improvements along the Highway 6 and Valley routes and related equipment and infrastructure.

The existing ECO Transit tax does not provide sufficient funding to significantly expand services above the current offerings. Any service improvements would require additional funding, primarily from a voter-approved tax.

The RTA's committee members are considering an additional half-penny sales tax to fund the short-term service improvements and long-term transportation planning efforts. They are also discussing a lodging tax on hotel rooms and short-term rentals to ensure that visitors to Eagle County help fund our regional transportation needs. Both taxes would have to be supported by the elected officials representing each community and then approved by voters. ■

### 1¢ for Regional Transportation

The RTA Formation Committee is considering asking voters to approve up to a 0.5 percent sales tax to fund the service improvements being discussed as part of the new RTA. Eagle County already collects a voter-approved 0.5 percent sales tax that funds both the ECO Transit system and the Eagle Valley Trail.

#### ECO Transit 0.5% Sales Tax:

- Voter approved in 1995
- \$10.7 million collected in 2021
- Helps fund ECO Transit & Eagle Valley Trail
- Year-round, Valley-wide bus service
- ADA transportation

\$1 on a \$100 purchase



#### Proposed Eagle Valley RTA 0.5% Sales Tax:

- Requires voter approval
- Estimated \$11.5 million annually to support transit\*
- Fare-free zone from Edwards to Vail
- Increased frequency and capacity during peak times
- Eagle-Gypsum Circulator
- First/last mile options to access bus routes
- Conversion to electric buses

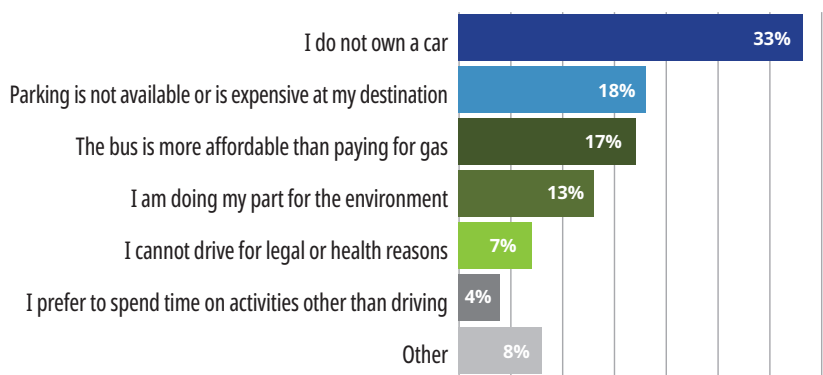
50% Paid by Eagle County Tourists & Visitors

\* Based on 2011 estimated sales-tax collections.

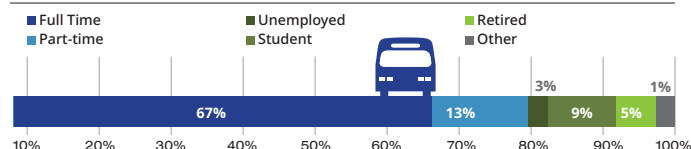
## Who rides the bus?

ECO Transit conducted a ridership survey in 2017 to better understand who the system's riders are and why they utilize the bus. These graphics show information about winter ridership, demonstrating the importance of transit to the county's workforce. ■

### Rider Reasons for Using Transit



### Employment Status of Riders



### Frequency of Use by Riders

