



HIGH COUNTRY  
CONSERVATION CENTER

# Climate Equity Plan

October 2023



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The following HC3 staff also contributed to this effort:

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# Glossary

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Terms defined in the glossary appear in bold throughout the plan.

**Beneficial Electrification:** The conversion of equipment from fossil fuel use to electricity use, when the conversion results in at least one of these benefits: reduced air pollutant emissions including greenhouse gases, decreased customer energy costs, or improved utilization of grid resources.

Source: Beneficial Electrification League of Colorado.

**Clean Energy:** Energy that comes from renewable, zero-emission sources that do not pollute the atmosphere when used. This term is used interchangeably with renewable energy and renewable electricity.

Source: TWI Global.

**Climate Equity:** Ensures the removal of barriers to information and power structures and the inclusion of historically underserved communities in the process of developing climate solutions. As a result, the benefits of climate protection efforts are experienced by all community members, and unequal burdens of climate change are alleviated.

Source: Climate Equity Plan Steering Committee.

**Cold Climate Heat Pumps:**

A variation of an existing air conditioning technology, cold climate heat pumps are designed to

heat homes adequately in very cold weather (usually at or below 5°F) and, as a secondary function, cool these homes during warm weather.

Source: National Renewable Energy Laboratory.

**Deed Restrictions:** Stipulations written into a property's deed or recorded as a restrictive covenant that outlines conditions and/or restrictions for the property. Many of the deed restrictions in Summit County are designed to further the goals of affordable workforce housing.

Source: Summit County Government.

**Equity:** Promoting justice, impartiality, and fairness surrounding the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Tackling equity issues requires understanding and addressing the root causes of outcome disparities within our society. Equity must be core to both the process and the outcomes to ensure inclusive solutions for all.

Source: Climate Equity Plan Steering Committee.

**Energy Stressed:** A household is energy stressed when it spends at least four percent of its income on energy bills.

Source: Colorado Energy Office.

**Fine Particle Pollution:** PM2.5 is a name for tiny particles that can harm the heart and lungs. These particles come from many different sources, including vehicle tailpipes, smokestacks, dust from construction sites, fires, and chemical reactions in the atmosphere.

**Housing Cost-Burdened:** A household is housing cost-burdened when it pays more than 30 percent of its income on housing.

Source: U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Colorado Housing and Finance Authority.

**Low- and Middle-Income:** Households or residents who earn up to 160 percent of the area median income.

**Microtransit:** A type of transportation program that utilizes smaller vehicles for on-demand transportation services.

**Multimodal:** Consideration and accommodation of the many methods of transportation, including walking, bicycling, riding public transportation systems, and driving.

Source: U.S. Department of Transportation

**Ozone:** An air pollutant that can harm the respiratory system and cause asthma attacks, cardiovascular disease, and premature death. Ozone pollution forms when chemicals from natural and human-made sources mix in the air. Ozone concentration varies by location, time of year, and time of day.

**Pay as You Throw:** A pricing model for waste disposal that is based on the level of use. Users are charged based on how much waste they dispose of, with recycling often included at no extra cost.

**Recycling Service:** On-site pickup of recyclable materials, typically provided by a contracted waste hauler.

**Underserved/Underrepresented Communities:** Groups that have limited or no access to resources or that are otherwise disenfranchised. In this report, this term refers to low-income and minority communities.

Source: Federal Emergency Management Agency.





# Executive Summary

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**The Climate Equity Plan presents strategies that decrease local greenhouse gas emissions and ensure underrepresented residents have access to the benefits of climate action.**

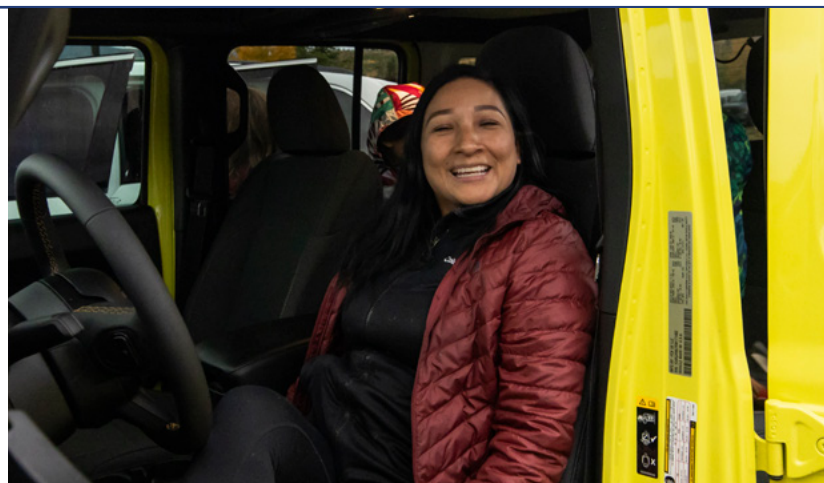
**Strategies in the plan address three key sectors: energy, transportation, and waste reduction.**

The Climate Equity Plan will be a dynamic document, providing guidance for current and future initiatives led by [High Country Conservation Center](#) (HC3) and local governments across Summit County.

## Energy Strategies

High energy use increases housing costs for residents. Energy efficiency improves affordability and promotes mental and physical well-being by ensuring healthy indoor environments. Strategies for the energy sector include:

- Improving existing energy efficiency programs and policies to increase participation among **low- and middle-income** residents.
- Providing increased incentives for **cold climate heat pumps**.
- Developing multilingual and multicultural educational materials.



## Transportation Strategies

Transportation challenges in Summit County include fixed-route public bus systems that do not meet the needs of all community members and limited access to electric vehicles. Transportation strategies focus on:

- Enhancing **multimodal** connectivity.
- Improving public transit services and bus stop infrastructure.
- Developing an electric vehicle car share program and promoting equitable access to electric vehicles.

## Waste Reduction Strategies

To achieve community waste reduction goals and create a healthier environment for all Summit County residents, strategies in this plan address:

- Adopting a **Pay-as-You-Throw** program that includes financial assistance.
- Increasing access to recycling and compost programs.
- Developing multilingual and multicultural educational materials.



# Introduction

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**Tucked away in valleys of the Rocky Mountains, yet only an hour's drive from the Denver metropolitan area, Summit County is one of Colorado's most accessible mountain regions.**

Inhabited for hundreds of years, Summit County has a long-standing history of attracting those looking for economic and adventure opportunities.

From Ute Mountain Native Americans, miners, and homesteaders to outdoors enthusiasts and everyone in between, many have played a role in shaping the County into a thriving alpine community. Now a vibrant and culturally diverse population of 31,000 people, the County is made up of 15 percent Latino/a residents, 1.5 percent Black, 1 percent Native American, and 1.6 percent Asian.<sup>1</sup> Nearly six percent of residents are immigrants, and eight percent of households speak a language other than English.<sup>2</sup>

The County's tourism-based economy and mountain lifestyle are intrinsically linked to its surrounding natural resources. However, despite the seemingly pristine ecosystems, Summit County experiences impacts of localized environmental pollution. Data from the [Colorado Department of Public Health's EnviroScreen Tool](#) shows that Summit County residents are exposed to higher-than-average ground-level **ozone** and traffic volume, subjecting those living near busy roads to **fine particle pollution** and harmful noise levels.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>"Summit County, Colorado," Quick Facts, United States Census Bureau, 2021, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/summitcountycolorado>.

<sup>2</sup>"Summit County, Colorado," Profile, United States Census Bureau, 2021, [https://data.census.gov/profile/Summit\\_County,\\_Colorado?g=050XX00US08117](https://data.census.gov/profile/Summit_County,_Colorado?g=050XX00US08117).

<sup>3</sup>"Colorado EnviroScreen Environmental Justice Mapping Tool," Colorado EnviroScreen, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, May 2023, [https://teeo-cdphe.shinyapps.io/COEnviroScreen\\_English/#map](https://teeo-cdphe.shinyapps.io/COEnviroScreen_English/#map).

<sup>4</sup>"Climate projections in Summit County, Colorado," Rocky Mountain Climate Organization, August 2021, [https://summitcountyco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/33131/55-Page-Report\\_Climate-Projections-in-Summit-County-Co](https://summitcountyco.gov/DocumentCenter/View/33131/55-Page-Report_Climate-Projections-in-Summit-County-Co)



Summit County is also vulnerable to the broader impacts of climate change such as decreased annual snow runoff and increased wildfire risk.<sup>4</sup> Recognizing these threats, the community has undertaken significant climate action work to create a more sustainable future. In 2018, High Country Conservation Center (HC3) brought together diverse community partners to establish the Summit Climate Action Collaborative. This group was tasked with developing the Summit Community Climate Action Plan (CAP). The plan, which sets community-wide goals to reduce emissions 50 percent by 2030 and 80 percent by 2050, was adopted in 2019 by the Towns of Breckenridge, Dillon, Frisco, and Silverthorne as well as Summit County Government.<sup>5</sup> In partnership with these local jurisdictions and other organizations and businesses, HC3 is diligently implementing CAP strategies within the energy, transportation, and waste reduction sectors.

Beyond environmental issues, cost of living is another factor impacting quality of life for Summit County residents. Due to the desirability of the community, the rate of second homeownership is unusually high compared to the US average.<sup>5,6</sup> This has resulted in increased property

<sup>5</sup>Summit Climate Action Collaborative, "Summit Community Climate Action Plan: Strategies for a Sustainable Future," Climate Action and Sustainability, Summit County Government, April 23, 2019, <https://www.summitcountyco>.

<sup>6</sup>Taylor Washington and Thy Vo, "How bad is the housing crunch in Colorado's high country?" The Colorado Sun, August 30, 2021, <https://coloradosun.com/2021/08/30/colorado-high-country-vacancy-rates/.gov/DocumentCenter/View/31980/Summit-Community-Climate-Action-Plan>.

<sup>7</sup>Evan Brassell, "Most U.S. Vacant Housing Is Seasonal Housing," America Counts: Stories, United States Census Bureau, May 25, 2023, <https://www.census.gov/library/stories/2023/05/vacant-seasonal-housing.html>.

values and a proliferation of short-term rentals and seasonally used housing. With limited developable land, there is a countywide shortage of affordable housing for locals to rent or purchase. The most recent countywide housing needs assessment found that nearly one-third of the working population is **housing cost-burdened**, with many residents paying more than 40 percent of their income on housing.<sup>8</sup> The local Latino/a population is much more likely to be cost-burdened and reports higher incidence of substandard housing.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, with a long winter heating season, the average household in Summit County spends four percent of its income on energy bills, an amount defined as **energy stressed** by the Colorado Energy Office.<sup>10</sup>

Written almost five years ago, the Summit Community CAP used climate science and carbon emissions accounting to develop community-specific emissions reduction strategies. While the plan is an important catalyst for change in the region, input from low-income and minority residents was absent from the original planning process. Yet these residents experience climate impacts more severely and face more barriers to climate action solutions than the rest of the population.<sup>11</sup>

**It is important to rectify this omission, because just as climate change impacts are not universal, neither are the solutions.** Affordability and accessibility must be prioritized, and all voices must be included to maximize the impact of local climate action initiatives.

<sup>8</sup> Used by both the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Colorado Housing and Finance Authority, the commonly accepted definition of housing affordability is that costs are affordable if they account for no more than 30 percent of a household's income.

<sup>9</sup> "Summit County Housing Booklet," Summit Combined Housing Authority, October 2018, <https://www.summithousing.us/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/2018-10-XX-Summit-County-Housing-Booklet.pdf>

<sup>10</sup> Jeffrey J. Cook and Monisha Shah, "Reducing Energy Burden with Solar: Colorado's Strategy and Roadmap for States," National Renewable Energy Laboratory, March 2018, <https://www.nrel.gov/docs/fy18osti/70965.pdf>.

<sup>11</sup> EPA Press Office, "EPA Report Shows Disproportionate Impacts of Climate Change on Socially Vulnerable Populations in the United States," News Releases, United States Environmental Protection Agency, September 2, 2021, <https://www.epa.gov/newsreleases/epa-report-shows-disproportionate-impacts-climate-change-socially-vulnerable>.



It is time to shift the sustainability narrative with a new Climate Equity Plan. HC3 and the Summit County community have an opportunity to demonstrate regional and statewide leadership via an equity-centered, community-led approach to developing climate solutions within the energy, transportation, and waste reduction sectors.

But this process does not end simply by outlining a list of strategies. The partners who developed this plan recognize that climate equity is a continuous process of learning and engaging. Looking ahead, HC3 will establish an Equity Coalition for the Climate Action Collaborative. This coalition will guide climate action efforts in the community, ensuring all community members have opportunities to engage. Furthermore, the Coalition will work to embed climate equity into each of the existing Climate Action Collaborative working groups.



# Community Input

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**The primary purposes of the Climate Equity Plan are to ensure that:**

- 1. Implementation of the CAP addresses and integrates the needs and concerns of the County's underserved populations; and**
- 2. Local climate action programs benefit all residents, especially minority and low-income community members.**

To fulfill these goals, a concerted effort was made to empower previously underrepresented voices to engage in the planning process and share ideas. The result is a series of climate mitigation strategies deeply rooted in community input.

*See Appendix A for a detailed description of the engagement process.*

To ensure the planning process was community-led, the project team convened a Steering Committee consisting of local non-profit leaders, trusted community representatives, and municipal staff. Acting as a guidepost for engagement, the Steering Committee helped to define climate equity for the plan, create an online survey, identify community members to participate in informational interviews, and direct the approach for community focus groups. The Committee also held a crucial role in reviewing draft strategies for the Climate Equity Plan.



## Definitions to Guide the Planning Process

### Equity

Promoting justice, impartiality, and fairness surrounding the procedures, processes, and distribution of resources by institutions or systems. Tackling equity issues requires understanding and addressing the root causes of outcome disparities within our society. Equity must be core to both the process and the outcomes to ensure inclusive solutions for all.

### Climate Equity

Ensures the removal of barriers to information and power structures and the inclusion of historically underserved communities in the process of developing climate solutions. As a result, the benefits of climate protection efforts are experienced by all community members, and unequal burdens of climate change are alleviated.

The online survey was available in English, French, and Spanish and drew approximately 250 responses. Results provided feedback on existing programs within the energy, transportation, and waste reduction sectors; barriers that may prevent access to those programs; and resources that would be most effective in removing those barriers.

Complementing the survey results were ten informational interviews conducted with community leaders, Summit County residents, and Steering Committee members. The interviews provided an opportunity to dive deeper into specific issues and the lived experiences of participants. Finally, for unfiltered community feedback, trilingual community focus groups were held in coordination with English as a Second Language classes at Colorado Mountain College as well as the local Food Equity Coalition.

This allowed over 100 Summit County residents to provide their insights in the language in which they were most comfortable speaking. Several recurring themes were highlighted throughout this engagement process:

## Energy Input

A primary concern raised during the energy conversations was housing affordability and security. With the skyrocketing cost of living, many residents face substantial hurdles to homeownership. Participants, particularly those in the immigrant community, expressed an unequal power dynamic between landlords and tenants. Because of the short supply of affordable housing, tenants feel uncomfortable requesting energy efficiency measures out of fear of being displaced.



## Transportation Input

Residents voiced concerns about transit services and infrastructure. Because housing affordability varies across the county, many community members do not live where they work. Those without vehicles rely on transit for commuting. It was often reported that the bus system, although free, does not have the route frequency necessary for efficient commutes. Safety is also a priority, with opportunities to improve sidewalks and bus stops.

## Waste Reduction Input

Many community members shared an interest in recycling and other forms of waste diversion. However, convenient access to these services is often lacking, particularly at rental properties and multifamily buildings. For others, recycling and composting are simply not a top priority, especially if their household is financially burdened.

## Strategy Development

Based on this feedback, HC3 and the Steering Committee worked to develop detailed yet feasible strategies to ensure that future implementation efforts are available to and benefit all residents. These strategies build upon existing work in the County and seek to fill gaps with new policies, programs, and educational efforts.

*Refer to Appendix B for a detailed strategy list including tactics for implementation.*



# Energy Strategies

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**Buildings heated by efficient mechanical equipment and powered by renewable electricity can significantly reduce countywide greenhouse gas emissions.<sup>12</sup>**

**These systems also reduce costs for building occupants and, in the case of beneficial electrification, improve indoor air quality and occupant health and safety.**

Summit County will not be able to meet its energy goals without including the entire community in a transition to **clean energy**. However, energy efficiency and electrification measures can have burdensome upfront costs, and energy improvements can be

### Climate Action Plan Energy Use Goals:

- Reduce emissions from electricity use 100 percent by 2035.
- Reduce emissions from building energy use 21 percent by 2030 and 36 percent by 2050.

### Beneficial Electrification

According to the Beneficial Electrification League of Colorado, “Beneficial electrification means converting equipment from fossil fuel use to electricity use, when the conversion results in at least one of these benefits: reduced air pollutant emissions including greenhouse gases, decreased customer energy costs, or improved utilization of grid resources.”

<sup>12</sup> Greenhouse gas emission reduction potentials were modeled for the Summit County Climate Action Plan by Lotus Engineering and Sustainability. Lotus Engineering and Sustainability, LLC., 2018, Summit County Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction Model.

inaccessible to renters. These energy strategies aim to enhance access to the benefits of a healthier built environment in Summit County for the entire community.

#### 1. Work with local governments to require energy efficiency improvements for multifamily properties.

Improving energy efficiency in multifamily properties is essential for reducing energy cost burden and increasing the quality of life for the County’s low-income and workforce population. This work includes policies, incentive and rebate programs, and bilingual technical assistance and education for property managers, owners, and tenants. Ensuring that costs are not passed on to tenants is of key importance.

#### 2. Improve existing efficiency programs to offer bigger rebates for energy assessments and upgrades for low- and middle-income groups.

**Low- and middle-income** households (i.e., those who earn up to 160 percent of the Area Median Income) face barriers in accessing affordable home energy assessments and efficiency upgrades. Larger rebates will help reduce the cost of efficiency projects for these individuals and families.

#### 3. Enhance rebates and incentives for electrification.

Building electrification reduces carbon pollution and improves indoor air quality, thereby improving health outcomes for residents. Voucher and bulk purchase programs for cold climate heat pumps can be used to reduce the upfront cost of equipment for residents.

#### 4. Identify and pursue a sustainable funding source for efficiency and electrification programs.

The development of a sustainable funding source ensures that energy efficiency programs will continue to be funded and fiscally supported long into the future, thereby increasing the impact of this work. Example programs from other communities include climate action taxes and mill levies.

#### 5. Enhance energy efficiency in deed-restricted homes during construction or at point of sale.

The lack of affordable housing in Summit County is an ongoing challenge, and **deed restrictions** are one tool being used to address this challenge. Developing programs and policies to increase energy efficiency in new and existing workforce housing will help to further reduce energy use and costs for residents.

#### 6. Develop a multilingual and multicultural energy efficiency communications plan.

There was a noted need to provide multilingual and culturally relevant program information so that everyone is aware of programs and incentives. To ensure that program information is accessible across the community, it will be necessary to conduct outreach in partnership with trusted organizations that provide services to underserved residents.

## Deed Restrictions

Summit County Government defines deed restrictions as "stipulations written into a property's deed or recorded as a restrictive covenant that outlines conditions and/or restrictions for the property. Many of the deed restrictions in Summit County are designed to further the goals of affordable housing and workforce housing."

Locally, deed restrictions often result in a lower upfront purchase price. In return, homebuyers agree to a lower market appreciation rate.

As a result, the value of certain home improvement projects, including energy efficiency upgrades, can't be fully realized upon resale. This acts as a disincentive for homeowners to make investments in energy efficiency and electrification.







# Transportation Strategies

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**Getting around a mountain community can be challenging. Unlike larger and denser metropolitan areas, development in Summit County is more dispersed. The high alpine environment means that transportation infrastructure and safety are impacted harshly by winter weather systems.**

These community characteristics encourage driving personal vehicles to get around, increasing transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions.

## Climate Action Plan Transportation Goal:

Reduce emissions from transportation by 25 percent by 2030 and 91 percent by 2050.

In order to meet the CAP transportation goal, it is critical for the County to enhance **multimodal** connectivity between communities, as well as improve existing fixed-route transit services so that the needs of the whole community are met.

### 1. Develop a microtransit program in Summit County.

Getting around Summit County generally requires a vehicle or reliance on a fixed-schedule and fixed-route public transit service. **Microtransit** programs, which utilize smaller vehicles for on-demand transportation services, can help to connect community members with necessary jobs and services and solve first-and-last mile connection issues.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Unlike privately owned ride-hailing services like Uber or Lyft, publicly operated microtransit programs are often designed to enhance existing public transit networks – rather than compete with them.

### 2. Enhance public transit bus stop infrastructure and service.

The Summit Stage and Breck Free Ride provide free transportation across the community, but the current schedules limit their usefulness for community members who rely on them the most. More frequent routes and enhanced infrastructure will help community members benefit from this service.

### 3. Develop an EV Car Share Program.

Not everyone in the community has a personal vehicle. Whether residents cannot afford to – or intentionally choose not to – own a vehicle, electric vehicle (EV) car share programs are a low-carbon solution for connecting people with places of work and essential services. Local governments and institutions in Summit are in the process of conducting feasibility studies for these programs.

### 4. Invest in infrastructure improvements to improve access and safety of multimodal transportation across Summit County.

Improving the safety and connectivity of pedestrian and bike infrastructure will help more people across the community engage in multimodal transportation.

### 5. Advocate for policies and infrastructure investments that enhance equitable access to EVs.

While there is interest in EVs among the community members, these vehicles remain out of reach due to cost and lack of access to charging infrastructure. Enhanced incentives and installation of charging stations at multifamily and commercial locations can boost uptake of EVs. The community's existing [EV Readiness Plan](#) can be leveraged for this work.



## Waste Reduction Strategies

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## Climate Action Plan Waste Goal:

Reduce emissions from waste 50 percent by 2030 and 90 percent by 2050.

**Reaching the CAP waste reduction goals requires reducing consumption, reusing materials, and recycling and composting as much as possible. During engagement efforts, Summit County community members expressed prior experience with waste reduction practices and a desire to recycle and/or compost at home if they were made more convenient.**

Waste reduction strategies within this plan aim to minimize hurdles created by lack of infrastructure (e.g., disposal bins and collection services) at residences, inaccessible educational materials, and financial barriers.

### 1. Adopt Pay as You Throw and Universal Recycling Policies Countywide.

**Pay as You Throw** (PAYT) and **Universal Recycling** will expand access to recycling infrastructure by requiring waste haulers and multifamily properties to provide **recycling service**. Offering financial assistance to low-income households will ensure that costs do not increase for these residents.

### 2. Increase access to compost programs and provide incentives for participation.

Lack of accessible food scrap drop-off locations is a barrier to participation. By partnering with community service providers to provide incentives for participation and convenient access to composting drop-off sites, more households can use this service.

### 3. Develop a multilingual and multicultural waste diversion communications plan.

By developing creative and culturally relevant communications materials, HC3 can support more diverse households and businesses across Summit County in waste reduction, recycling, and composting. To ensure that program information is accessible across the community, it will be necessary to conduct outreach in partnership with trusted organizations that provide services to underserved residents.



# Conclusion: Equity in Action

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**Sustaining all Summit County has to offer for future generations means not only mitigating climate change but also creating a vibrant community where everyone enjoys the benefits of a healthy environment.**

The Climate Equity Plan acknowledges the important role prior Summit County climate action work has played in establishing emissions reduction goals and mobilizing working groups to advance those efforts.

Additionally, the Plan recognizes the crucial network of community-based organizations across Summit County that are working to improve quality of life and access to services, particularly for underserved residents. HC3 understands that the work identified in this plan cannot be accomplished alone. Rather, genuine and mutually beneficial partnerships with organizations like the Family & Intercultural Resource Center and Mountain Dreamers, as well as local businesses and government entities

across Summit County, will be essential for success. The strategies within this plan seek to ensure that future climate action work integrates everyone in the community and removes obstacles underserved residents face to fully realize the benefits of a more sustainable community.

Moving forward, HC3 and the Summit County community are positioned to be leaders in addressing climate equity within the mountain region and are committed to empowering historically marginalized populations through collaborative implementation of climate action initiatives.





Appendix A

# Detailed Engagement

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## Steering Committee

To ensure the strategies included in the Climate Equity Plan reflect community values, HC3 convened a Steering Committee of ten community leaders. Members from local and state governmental entities joined meetings to listen and share. The committee met five times during the planning process to vet the community engagement approaches, debrief results, and thoroughly review draft strategies. Steering Committee members were offered financial compensation for their time

## Informational Interviews

Ten informational interviews were conducted throughout the development of the Climate Equity Plan to collect direct insight from community members on issues impacting Summit County. The interviews were designed to gain an understanding of the lived experiences of Summit County residents and leaders. A list of questions was prepared prior to the interviews to guide each conversation, although an organic flow of topics was welcomed. Generally, each person was asked about their personal perspective on the most salient community concerns related to energy, transportation, and waste reduction. Ways in which the Climate Equity Plan could realistically address those issues were also explored.

While the interviewees brought unique experiential knowledge to the conversation, high-level themes for each sector emerged and were repeated throughout the planning process. These themes are summarized below.

<b>Energy Efficiency</b>
1. Energy efficiency must be prioritized prior to electrification. Energy efficiency is more attainable financially and prepares a building for more cost-effective electrification.
2. A sustainable funding source for energy efficiency improvements is necessary. These measures help improve quality of life and support emissions reduction goals but need to be subsidized in order for all community members to take advantage of the benefits.
3. Many community members rent their residences, therefore the responsibility to make energy improvements falls to the landlord, property manager, and/or homeowners' association. It will be crucial to engage these groups.
4. There are many energy-related resources available through HC3, the County, the state, and other organizations, but they are difficult to navigate and often have complex applications. Education and outreach on these programs will help more community members benefit from them.

## Transportation

1. Pedestrian safety and general walkability in several neighborhoods throughout the County need to be improved to accommodate those who might not have easy access to personal vehicles or the public transportation system.
2. For those who utilize the free public transportation system, first-last mile gaps and inadequate route frequency impose increased burdens, particularly for those who work outside of typical hours. The system needs to work for all community members.
3. Air quality in neighborhoods located next to major commuting arteries poses a health risk to residents.

## Waste Reduction

1. Waste reduction is not always a top-of-mind priority when basic needs are not met. Any waste reduction strategy needs to prioritize easy integration into daily life.
2. Waste reduction infrastructure is expensive, posing a barrier to access.

## Focus Groups

In partnership with two community organizations, the project team conducted focus groups to gain a more nuanced understanding of community needs, barriers, and opportunities within each sector of the Climate Equity Plan. The first set of meetings was held with English as a Second Language (ESL) classes taught at Colorado Mountain College. All meetings were bilingual, with one including trilingual interpretation. Nearly 90 class members representing a variety of ages and backgrounds were first provided with information about the Climate Equity Plan's purpose and process.

Then, students were asked questions about each of the plan's key sectors: energy efficiency, transportation, and waste reduction.

Another focus group was held in partnership with the Food Equity Coalition, a committee facilitated by the Family and Intercultural Resource Center. A full meal and childcare were provided for focus group participants.

Overall concerns and solutions that arose from these community discussions shed light on the feasibility of equity-focused strategies and identified discrepancies between what was perceived to be best practice in climate action and what had potential to be beneficial for all Summit County residents.



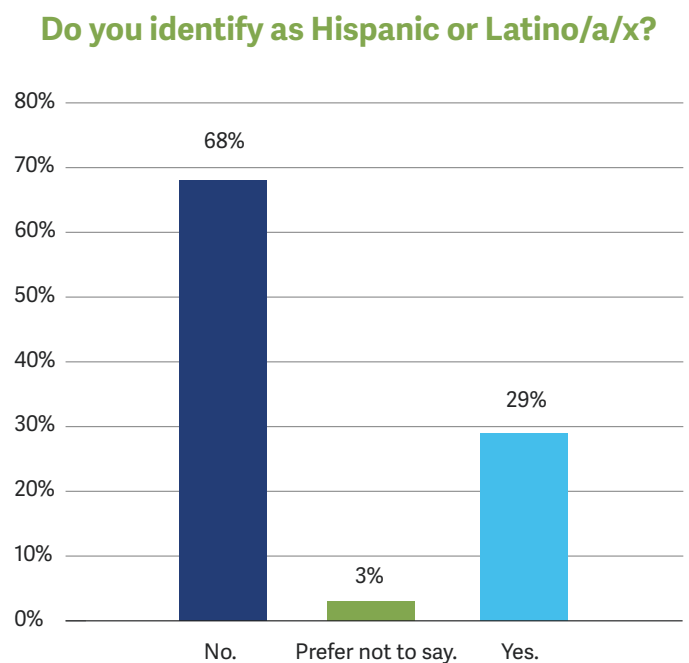
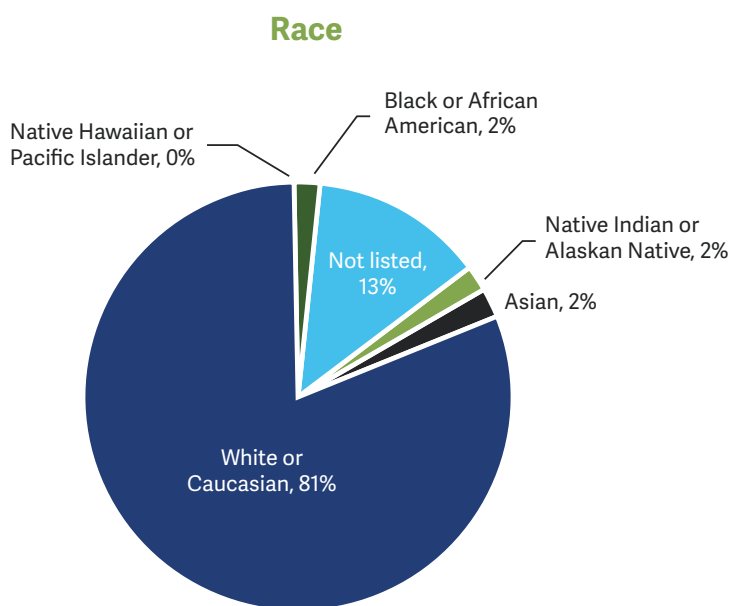
# Summit County Climate Equity Plan Community Survey

A public engagement survey was distributed both online and in-person, with translations available in English, French, or Spanish. The survey consisted of both multiple choice and open-ended questions addressing community needs, barriers to accessing existing resources, desired additional resources, and strategy ideas in the plan’s three sectors. While the survey itself was anonymous, an optional hyperlink at the end allowed participants to submit contact information in order to receive a grocery store gift card as compensation for their time.

## Survey Results

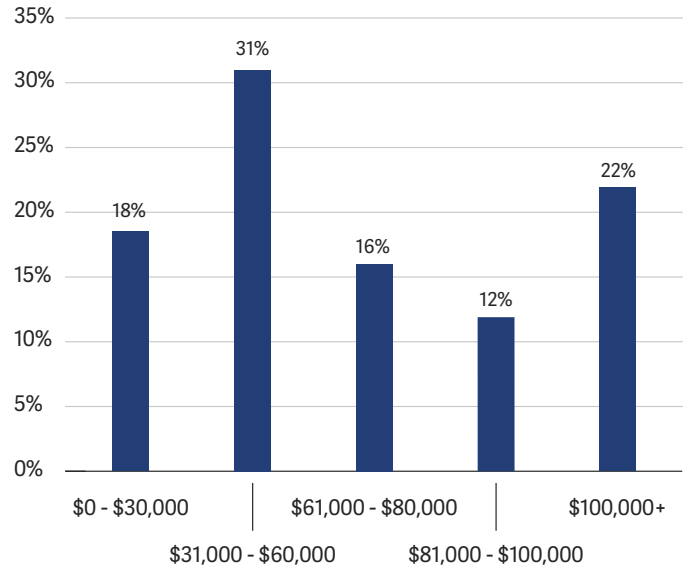
### Demographics

Over 250 responses were collected. Of the respondents who answered the demographics questions, 81 percent identify as white or Caucasian and 29 percent as Latino/a. Nearly 40 percent of respondents speak Spanish.



### Demographics Cont.

Income level of respondents varied. Two-thirds of participants earn less than \$80,000/year, most of whom reported not having children. Over 20 percent of participants reported earning over \$100,000/year; over half of these participants also reported not having children under 18 in their households. The Area Median Income for Summit County in 2022 was \$99,800 for a four-person household.<sup>14</sup>

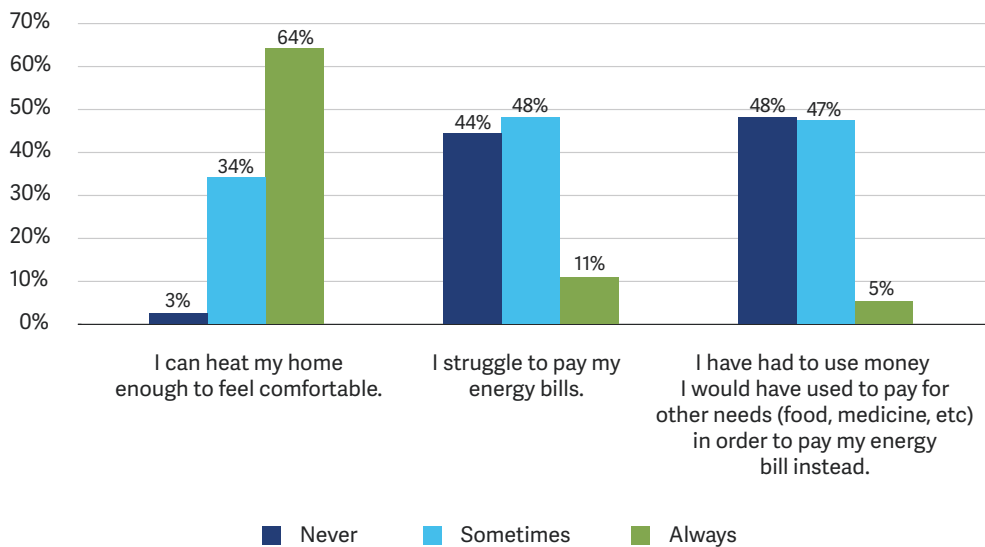


### Energy

Survey results showed a variety of housing types and ownership status, helping inform how to best approach energy strategies. Apartments, modular homes, duplexes, townhouses, and employee housing were all represented, though most respondents live in apartments or single-family homes.

Nearly 60 percent of respondents indicated that they rent their residence, while 37 percent own. Almost half of respondents reported that they sometimes struggle to pay their energy bills and use money originally budgeted for another need to pay them.

### Energy Bills



*"I never realized [the energy-savings program] could apply to me! I will absolutely reach out about this. Thank you, HC3!"*

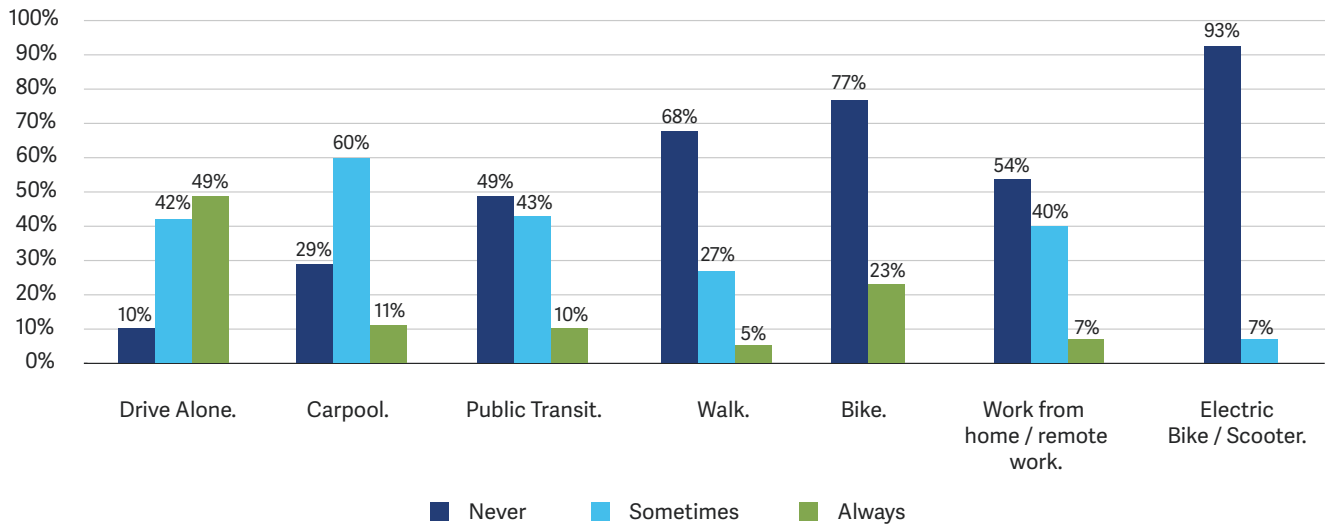
– Survey Respondent

<sup>14</sup>"2022 Summit County Area Median Income," Area Median Income, Summit Combined Housing Authority, April 18, 2022, <https://www.summithousing.us/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/2022-AMI-Summit-County.pdf>.

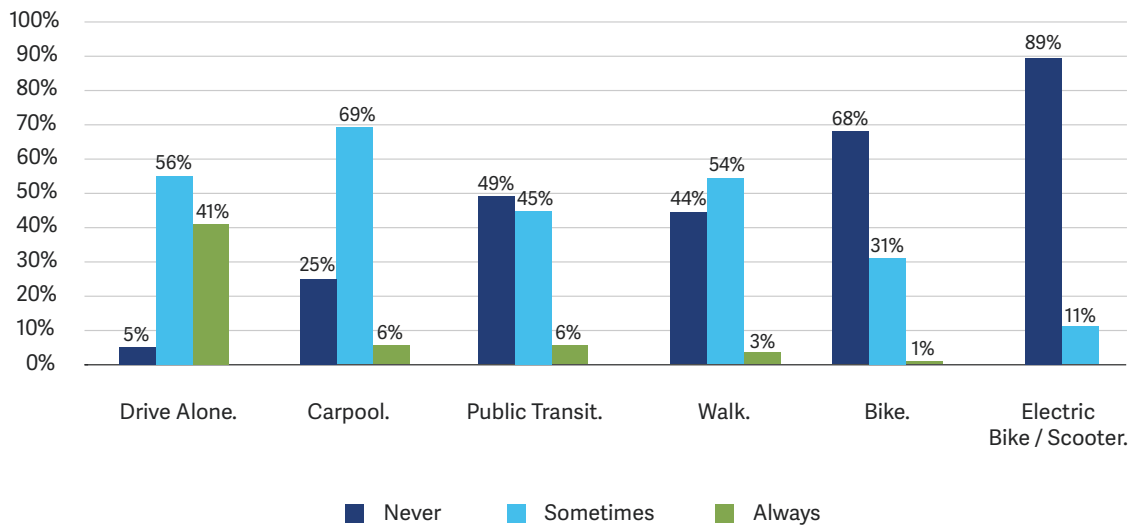
## Transportation

Whether for work or simply getting around the county, most residents rely on single-occupancy vehicles.

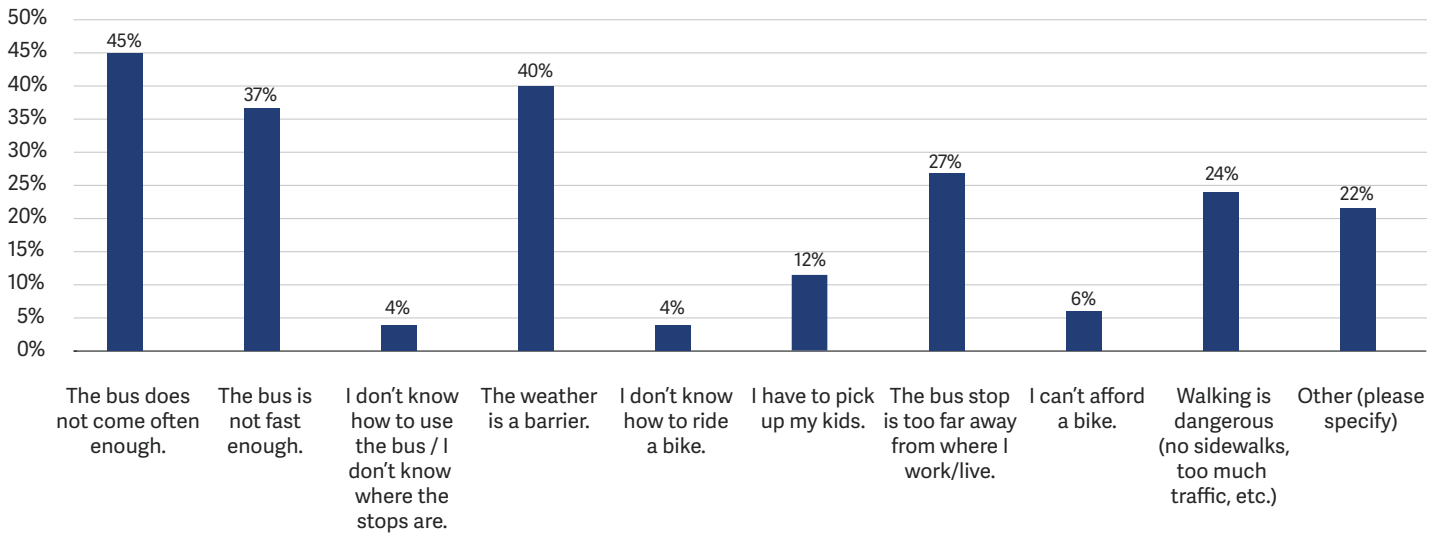
### How do you get to work?



### How do you travel for non-work trips?



### What prevents you from using public transportation or riding your bike/walking more?



### Transportation cont.

Survey questions asked what challenges impact public and/or alternative transportation use. The top three barriers to public transit use were: “The bus does not come often enough,” “The weather is a barrier,” and “The bus is not fast enough.” Other open-ended responses expressed concerns about the inability to tend to personal emergencies if relying on public transportation, the sidewalk infrastructure being inadequate, and work schedules that do not align well with route schedules.

*“Public transportation is very beneficial for many people who use it daily to get to work, medical appointments, and do their grocery shopping. Public transport is an essential service!”*

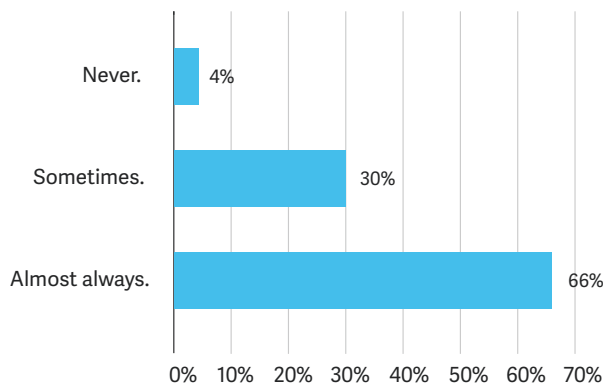
*– Survey Respondent*

### Waste Reduction

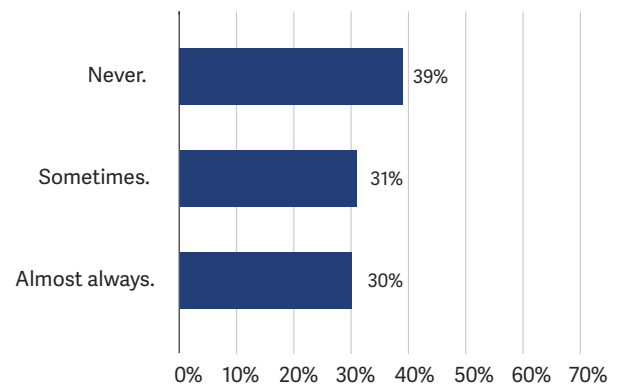
Results for waste reduction questions showed active community participation in existing programs, yet this participation is limited due to infrastructure and/or financial challenges and lack of education. 66 percent of respondents indicated they almost always recycle, however only 33 percent have recycling access at their residence. The discrepancy between recycling participation and home recycling access can be explained by answers to the open-ended questions. Many survey participants

take their recyclables to local recycling centers or to work. Other responses to open-ended questions reiterated themes heard throughout the engagement process: Many multifamily properties do not offer collection for recycling and/or composting. And, there is a need for further education around recycling and composting, including best practices and information about process and end markets to dispel cynicism about diversion.

Do you recycle?



Do you compost?



*"I would love at-home pickups for trash, recycling, and composting that would allow my family to divert as much as possible."*

*– Survey Respondent*



**Appendix B**

# **Detailed Strategy Matrix**

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# HC3 Climate Equity Plan Strategy Matrix

Energy Strategies and Actions	
Programs	<p><b>1. Work with local governments to require energy efficiency improvements for multifamily properties.</b></p> <p>1a. Continue to pursue an energy reporting ordinance, building off of the State's Building Performance Standards and applying a lower square footage threshold to commercial, public, and multifamily buildings. Ensure technical assistance and bilingual resources are available to building owners.</p> <p>1b. Establish partnerships and dialogue with property management companies and HOAs around energy efficiency opportunities in Summit County. Build relationships and progress toward promoting programs.</p> <p>1c. Enhance rebates and incentives available for owner- or rental-occupied multifamily properties where a majority of tenants earn up to 160 percent of the Area Median Income. Include a requirement that states building owners may not increase rent or evict tenants for 24 months if receiving said funds.</p> <p><b>2. Enhance existing efficiency programs to offer bigger rebates for energy assessments and upgrades for low- and middle-income groups.</b></p> <p>2a. Provide at least \$3,000 in rebates for common energy efficiency improvements.</p> <p>2b. Target households with incomes above the CARE and WAP income qualifications.</p> <p><b>3. Enhance rebates and incentives for electrification.</b></p> <p>3a. Develop a voucher program that buys down the upfront cost for cold climate heat pumps and electric appliances.</p> <p>3b. Explore the development of an electrification and weatherization program that would provide free heat pumps and efficiency upgrades to mobile homes and other low-income housing that heat with propane or electrical resistance. This program would be an enhancement to traditional WAP and CARE funding programs, which generally have more restrictions for the work that can be funded in these homes.</p> <p>3c. Implement a heat pump bulk-buy program.</p> <p><b>4. Identify and pursue a sustainable funding source for efficiency and electrification programs.</b></p> <p>4a. Use revenue from sustainable funding sources (i.e., a climate mill levy) to expand energy efficiency programs. Funding can be used to support energy efficiency investments in deed-restricted housing, multifamily buildings, or for electrification.</p>
	<p><b>5. Enhance energy efficiency in deed-restricted homes during construction or at point of sale.</b></p> <p>5a. Incorporate energy efficiency requirements into deed-restriction programs by providing incentives to conduct energy assessments and invest in efficiency in existing deed-restricted homes; and by developing a program to provide grants towards the construction of new ADUs that are built beyond code.</p> <p>5b. Incorporate efficiency into existing buy-down programs by implementing energy efficiency improvements before homes are put back on the market.</p> <p>5c. Advocate for local policies to ensure all new workforce housing is electric or net zero</p>

<b>Education</b>	<b>6.</b>	<b>Develop a multilingual and multicultural energy efficiency communications plan.</b>
	6a.	Distribute education and outreach materials (including information about energy programs, at-home energy efficiency tips, video tours, highlights with diverse community members, etc.) through multiple media channels (i.e., Facebook groups, radio, short videos on Instagram, outreach materials shared with community partners, etc.) and in multiple languages so the entire community can access them.
	6b.	Collect testimonies of Spanish-speaking individuals who have undertaken home efficiency upgrades or translate English testimonials. Translate into other languages, like French, as needed.
	6c.	Hire or dedicate an HC3 staff member to be a 'navigator' to connect community members with programs and coordinate across efficiency service providers to ensure resources are up-to-date.
	6d.	Schedule annual meetings with partners who run energy and efficiency programs and those who support underserved residents to facilitate awareness and coordination.

<b>Transportation Strategies and Actions</b>		
<b>Programs</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>Develop a microtransit program in Summit County.</b>
	1a.	Use the results from the regional <b>microtransit</b> feasibility study as a preliminary step to identify opportunities for facilitating improved access to public transit and address route inefficiencies. Ensure the study identifies cost, gaps in existing public transit systems, and implementers. A potential microtransit program should focus on increasing accessibility to transit for multifamily properties, workforce housing, and lower income communities.
	1b.	Pending results of the microtransit study, explore grant funding for an all-electric microtransit fleet.
	<b>2.</b>	<b>Enhance public transit bus stop infrastructure and service.</b>
	2a.	Communicate community bus route needs and advocate for enhanced route frequency (e.g., more connections between Dillon/Silverthorne to Breckenridge).
	2b.	Improve transit stop safety by identifying specific locations in need of enhanced bus stop infrastructure, including improved lighting and sidewalks, rain/snow shelters, and covered bike storage.
	<b>3.</b>	<b>Implement an EV Car Share Program.</b>
	3a.	Create feasibility study leveraging results from the Town of Frisco, Town of Breckenridge, and CMC EV car share programs.
3b.	Launch pilot to identify community-specific challenges and opportunities. Work with Xcel Energy to identify a building to host a car share program. Explore opportunities with Dillon Valley Elementary School in collaboration with the school district.	
<b>Policies</b>	<b>4.</b>	<b>Invest in infrastructure improvements to improve safety of and access to multimodal transportation across Summit County.</b>
	4a.	Develop a county-wide master walking and biking plan that assesses all non-vehicle traffic infrastructure needs (i.e. pedestrian and bike traffic), first-last mile solutions, and safety improvements.
	4b.	Improve sidewalk safety and access with increased plowing in the winter.
	4c.	Provide rebates for ebike purchases and improve bike storage infrastructure at transit stations.



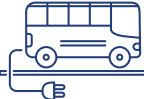


<b>Policies</b>	<b>5.</b>	<b>Advocate for policies and infrastructure investments that enhance equitable access to EVs.</b>
	5a.	Advocate for enhanced tax rebates and incentives at the State level, including ensuring State and Federal rebates can apply towards used EVs.
	5b.	Expand EV charging infrastructure at more accessible public locations. Focus on locations that are large employers, multifamily buildings, and community resource centers.
	5c.	Work with a property locally to conduct a pilot project through Xcel Energy's multifamily charging program.

	<b>Waste Reduction Strategies and Actions</b>	
<b>Policies</b>	<b>1.</b>	<b>Adopt PAYT and Universal Recycling policies countywide.</b>
	1a.	Where PAYT is not adopted, continue working with local governments to develop incentives for HOAs and multifamily complexes to provide recycling infrastructure.
	1b.	Continue working with local governments to extend financial assistance to income-qualified residents participating in the <b>Pay as You Throw</b> program.

## High Impact Strategies

Of the comprehensive list of strategies found on pages 31 - 33, those included here are expected to have the highest impact on reducing greenhouse gas emissions in Summit County.

Sector	Strategy	Effort
 <p><b>Energy</b></p>	Enhance rebates and incentives for electrification.	L
	Enhance existing efficiency programs to offer bigger rebates for energy assessments and upgrades for <b>low- and middle-class</b> income groups.	L
	Develop a multilingual and multicultural energy efficiency communications plan.	H
	Work with local governments to require energy efficiency improvements for multifamily properties.	H
	Identify and pursue a sustainable funding source for efficiency and electrification programs.	H
	Enhance energy efficiency in <b>deed-restricted</b> homes during construction or at point of sale.	H
 <p><b>Waste</b></p>	Adopt PAYT and Universal Recycling Policies Countywide.	L
	Increase access to compost programs and provide incentives for participation.	L
	Develop a multilingual and multicultural waste diversion communications plan.	H
 <p><b>Transportation</b></p>	Advocate for policies and infrastructure investments that enhance equitable access to EVs.	L
	Invest in infrastructure improvements to improve safety of human-powered transportation across Summit County.	H
	Develop a <b>microtransit</b> program in Summit County.	H
	Enhance public transit bus stop infrastructure and service.	H
	Implement an EV Car Share Program.	H

L = Low Effort	H = High Effort
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