



THE CITY OF ASPEN

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mayor and City Council

FROM: Ashley Perl, Climate Action Manager

THROUGH: Barry Crook, Assistant City Manager

DATE OF MEMO: December 8, 2017

MEETING DATE: December 12, 2017

RE: Aspen Mobility Lab

SUMMARY:

This past summer, Mayor Skadron introduced the idea that the City of Aspen should conduct a large-scale, bold experiment that would increase mobility options while decreasing the reliance on the personal automobile in the Aspen community. After further consideration, City Council directed staff to create a project plan and scope. Since then, City of Aspen staff have partnered with consultants and regional groups to create a plan for the Aspen Mobility Lab. Staff is prepared to present a comprehensive plan for the Lab that will deliver transportation options that are competitive with the ease and speed of personal vehicles to all members of the Aspen community, revolutionizing the way people move within the boundary of the Intercept Lot to east of Aspen in June, July and August 2018. The Lab will be a community-wide initiative to increase convenient mobility options, environmental sustainability, safety and quality of life in the upper Roaring Fork Valley without a focus on adding lanes or parking spaces.

REQUEST OF COUNCIL:

Staff is presenting a detailed plan and scope for the Lab and requesting City Council's feedback.

BACKGROUND:

Aspen and the Roaring Fork Valley have a long history of leading the way with innovative transportation measures. These accomplishments and the services that are offered to the community are renowned across the country, particularly for a community as small as Aspen. Despite these aggressive actions, the community continues to be greatly impacted by traffic congestion and the absence of mobility services that are adequate to serve the unique needs of locals, commuters and visitors. Data and evidence from the community shows that the current mobility options are not convenient, inexpensive, or attractive enough for community members to leave their personal automobile and choose another way. There is a need for new approaches to Aspen's transportation landscape, and those approaches must be innovative, creative and competitive. The Aspen Mobility Lab will provide a demonstration ground for the concepts that were put forward by the Community Forum on Transportation.

DISCUSSION:

The mission of the Aspen Mobility Lab is to provide community members, commuters and visitors with an improved quality of life and experience by delivering convenient alternatives to driving alone. If the Lab is successful, those who no longer desire to sit in traffic in their personal automobile will abandon their private vehicle for another way. The Lab will draw on lessons from select pilot programs in over 25 cities worldwide, and will be the most advanced community-wide pilot program executed to date. The lessons learned from the Lab will be actively disseminated to national partners, municipal leaders, and transportation directors across the US. The City of Aspen will seek out unique ways to share insights with others, starting with design and implementation, and concluding with a Summit in November 2018 to provide all interested parties an opportunity to connect and recap the Lab. Most importantly, the City of Aspen and regional partners will learn what modes are accepted and used by the community to inform responsible future investments and planning.

The Lab will include four key elements: increased transit options, increased support for bicyclists, incentives to drive behavior change, and outreach to the community.

Aspen Mobility Lab Guiding Principles:

- Provide new transportation modes to encourage new users. The Lab will prioritize funding and resources towards deploying new technologies and new transportation modes over existing modes. The Lab seeks to change the behaviors of those who currently drive alone, and secondarily, to improve the experience for those already using mobility services.
- Deliver a comprehensive mobility system. If full funding and support is not realized and Aspen decides to pursue a scaled-down Lab, all elements including new mobility, bike support, incentives, disincentives, and outreach must be included.
- Provide real solutions to positively impact the local community. The Lab will first and foremost support the practical needs of locals, commuters and visitors and must inform the future of local transportation investment. It will favor these solutions over glitzy high-tech options that are not yet available in the market or that do not enhance the Aspen lifestyle.

Opportunities: The Aspen Mobility Lab will provide ample opportunities to businesses, commuters, locals, visitors, and transportation planners. These opportunities may include:

- Impacting real change in commuting patterns and modes
- Creating new opportunities for existing businesses to attract customers
- Increasing the vitality and connectedness of downtown
- Supporting the goals of sustainability, quality of life, mobility and innovation
- Improved convenience and experience

Proposed Project: The Aspen Mobility Lab is proposed to run from approximately June 1-August 31, 2018 and would create a testing ground for addressing transportation and mobility needs in Aspen. This section details the specific components of the Lab.

Mobility options. The Lab will provide new and expanded ways for people to move into and out of town from the Brush Creek Intercept Lot, the Buttermilk Parking Lot, and Aspen's

neighborhoods, as well as improved options for in-town movement. To do this, the City will partner with local and national mobility providers to bring new technologies to the community while expanding and supporting the existing modes.

A Request for Proposals was recently released in the following categories of mobility:

- Bicycles:
 - Dockless bike share program
 - Electric bike share program
 - Specialty bike share program (cargo bikes, etc.)
 - Electric bike lease program
 - Specialty bike lease program
 - Discounted electric bike sales program
- Transit:
 - On-demand transit services
 - Specialty fixed route services
 - Microtransit services

Incentives. To support the use of the new and existing mobility options, the Lab will provide incentives for those who participate. Some of those incentives may include:

- Discounts at local businesses
- Coupons or gift certificates to be used at local businesses
- Prizes and rewards for long-term behavior changes
- Recognition programs

In addition, the City will strive to make as many services as possible free or inexpensive to the user.

Parking Lots. One goal of the Lab is to encourage 600-800 drivers to park at the Brush Creek Intercept Lot instead of driving into town. To do this, the City will submit a permit to Pitkin County requesting permission to host a coffee cart at the Intercept Lot, as well as higher quality portable toilets and temporary improved seating to enhance the experience. Additionally, the City will encourage parking at the Buttermilk parking lot for those who wish to park and bike into town. The City will provide amenities to support bike commuting and will work with local bike shops to make Buttermilk a hub for bike commuting.

Mobility Support. To support new users of mobility, the City must alter the downtown landscape to provide safer conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists and mobility technologies. To improve safety and wayfinding for bicyclists, the City will install protected bike ways on Hopkins, Galena and Cooper Streets. These bike lanes will allow bicyclists a safe and designated way to move about town while reducing bike/pedestrian and bike/car interactions. Although downtown Aspen currently supports biking through the use of ‘sharrows’ painted on the streets, a significant number of community members do not bike because of safety concerns. Data from the Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan shows that designated and protected bike lanes would decrease the barrier to biking for much of the community, leading to an increased number of new bicyclists in Aspen, which is one of the goals of the Lab. It is anticipated that electric bikes will be a critical component of the Lab because e-bikes remove barriers for bike commuting and travel and could lead to a significant number of new bikers.

In addition to protected bike lanes, the Lab will support new mobility by providing twelve designated locations for ride-shares, shuttles and others to drop off and pick up passengers, as well as increased valet services.

Outreach. The key to successful behavior change is education, outreach and marketing to different community groups. It is also critical to provide messaging and program design that is uniquely designed to speak to each group's values and address their challenges. A Request for Proposals has been issued to find a strategic outreach and marketing firm to oversee these aspects of the Lab and to ensure that the Lab is inclusive and equitable.

Work accomplished to-date:

The Mobility Lab project team is organized into working groups. Below is an update on recent accomplishments by each group.

Fundraising Working Group

- Created funding materials and funder communications
- Developed list of possible funders
- Facilitated initial meetings with funders
- Currently: Conducting follow up meetings

Downtown Design Working Group

- Established parameters for downtown mobility support
- Created detailed plan for bike routes, activation areas, bike storage, drop-off zones and parking
- Developed initial plan for Brush Creek Intercept Lot and Buttermilk Parking Lot

Bike Working Group

- Identified existing barriers to biking
- Recommended improvements to support biking
- Conducted initial outreach to local bike shops to solicit involvement

Data Working Group

- Identified data currently available
- Identified key measures of success
- Established an approach to communicate data to the public through a dashboard
- Created a data quality checklist and guidelines

Outreach Working Group

- Identified 20+ audiences and user groups
- Developed and issued RFP for comprehensive outreach, education, promotion and incentive program
- Finalized branding system

Mobility Provider Group

- Identified mobility services required
- Assessed capacity of local providers
- Issued RFI to solicit initial interest
- Issued RFPs in two categories: Bikes and Transit

Regional cooperation: The Mobility Lab has the support of the Aspen Community Foundation, the Aspen Community Forum, Core, Rocky Mountain Institute, SkiCo, the Association of

Colorado Ski Towns, and CDOT's RoadX, which supports the most innovative transportation projects in the state. There has been significant outreach to Pitkin County and Snowmass.

Next Steps:

The primary focus through the remainder of 2017 and into the first part of 2018 is fundraising. Staff will return to City Council on January 23rd to provide an update on funds raised. At that meeting, it is expected that the City will have soft funding commitments, but not contracts for funding or services. Depending on the success of fundraising efforts, staff will provide City Council with different levels of project design and scope and will ask City Council to determine a final direction and scope for the Lab.

FINANCIAL/BUDGET IMPACTS:

Bringing a truly innovative and comprehensive lab to Aspen will require funding most likely between \$5 and \$7 million. The City of Aspen cannot provide this level of funding and must create new partnerships and build upon existing ones to make the Mobility Lab a reality. It is expected that the City of Aspen will need to fund a percentage of the overall project, but the goal is to minimize the City's contribution.

Fundraising Developments:

- 1) Automotive, technology and telecom companies are proving to be the most likely partners and funders of the Lab. Additional meetings are scheduled between December 15 and January 15.
- 2) The City of Aspen is supported by mobility fundraising experts and specialists.
- 3) The Mobility Lab and the Aspen story has received positive responses so far. Some of the unique attractions to the sponsors include: the Aspen brand, the City's strong commitment, and the controlled environment for testing interaction between innovative options and real people.
- 4) Extrapolating from the first 10 meetings, there is adequate interest from funders to meet the City's fundraising goals, however timing is the biggest challenge.

Fundraising Challenges

- 1) The funding timeline has always been the biggest challenge in making the Lab a reality.
- 2) The fundraising goal has increased from \$1.5mm to over \$5.5mm, significantly increasing the challenge.
- 3) Companies are wary of short-term labs and experiments without ongoing opportunities to create a clear ROI for their investment. Staff is working on how to make the Lab attractive from an ROI perspective.

City Council has approved \$350,000 for use in 2017 and for the first part of 2018. Those funds are being used as follows:

- Contract with Design Workshop for downtown and parking lot design
- Contract with Fehr and Peers for mobility consulting
- Contract with Alta Planning and Design for construction and engineering assistance
- Project management and administration staff and consultant
- Fundraising consultants and activities
- Branding
- App research and creation

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

The Aspen Mobility Lab positively impacts numerous measures from City Council's Sustainability Dashboard including: Air Quality (PM levels, ozone levels); Greenhouse Gas Emissions; Castle Creek Bridge Counts; Acres of Trails; Mass Transit Use; Walkability and Bike-ability Rating; Health and Well Being; and Community Connections