# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
## Roaring Fork and Colorado River Valleys Regional Travel Patterns Study

Roaring Fork Transportation Authority

## REGIONAL GEOGRAPHY

The regional travel patterns profile includes data collected from all of Garfield and Pitkin Counties and the portion of Eagle County within the Roaring Fork Valley. This includes all 23 transportation analysis zone(s) (TAZs) mapped below.

Data for 2014 was collected from the 2014 Winter and Summer Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) Travel Patterns Survey unless otherwise indicated. Data for 2004 was collected from the 2004 Local & Regional Travel Patterns Survey unless otherwise indicated.

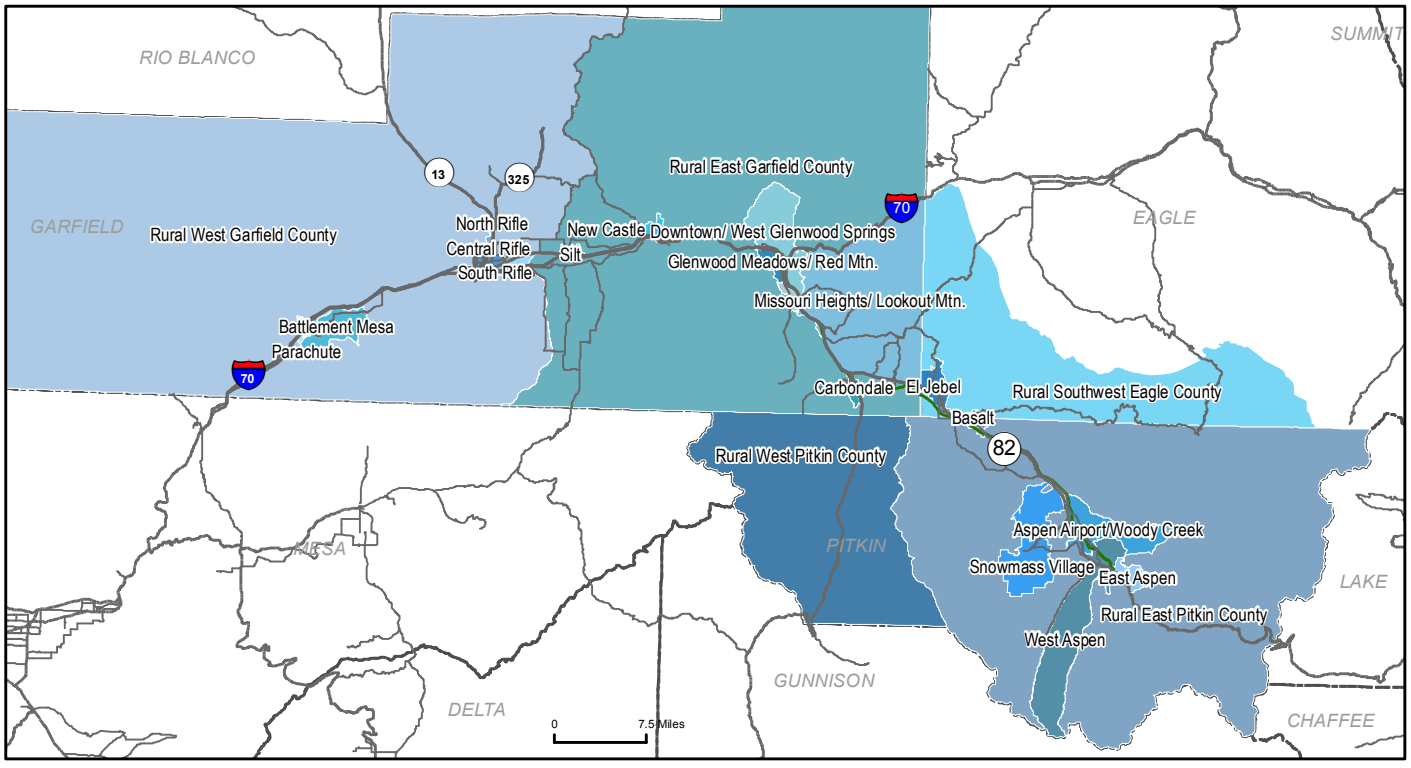
| Transportation Analysis Zones (TAZs) | |
|---|---|
| Parachute | Missouri Heights/ Lookout Mtn. |
| Battlement Mesa | Carbondale |
| North Rifle | El Jebel |
| Central Rifle | Basalt |
| South Rifle | Rural Southwest Eagle County |
| Rural East Garfield County | Rural West Pitkin County |
| Rural West Garfield County | Rural East Pitkin County |
| Silt | Snowmass Village |
| New Castle | Aspen Airport/ Woody Creek |
| Downtown/ West Glenwood Sprgs. | West Aspen |
| Glenwood Meadows/ Red Mtn. | East Aspen |
| South Glenwood Springs | |

## HOUSING/DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

| | 2004 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|
| Population[1] | 71,037 | 82,227[2] |
| Population residing year-round | 94% | 94% |
| Lived in region > 1 year | 92% | 93% |
| Households with children under 16 | 31% | 31% |
| Households receiving housing assistance | 12% | 12% |
| Median annual household income | $75,000[3] | $66,000 |

1. U.S. Census Bureau
2. 2012 Population (American Community Survey)
3. Inflation adjusted for 2014 dollars

Transportation Analysis Zone Map of the Region




OVERVIEW

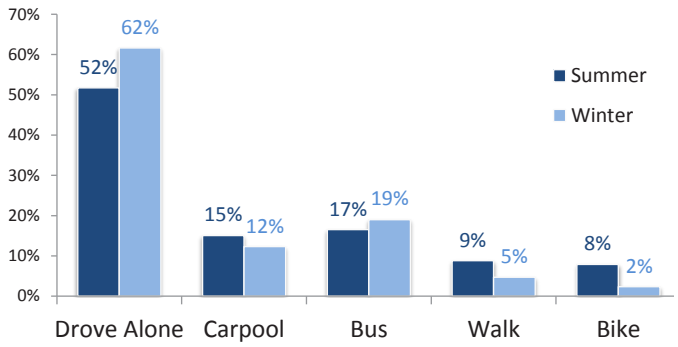
COMMUTING

## COMMUTING DATA

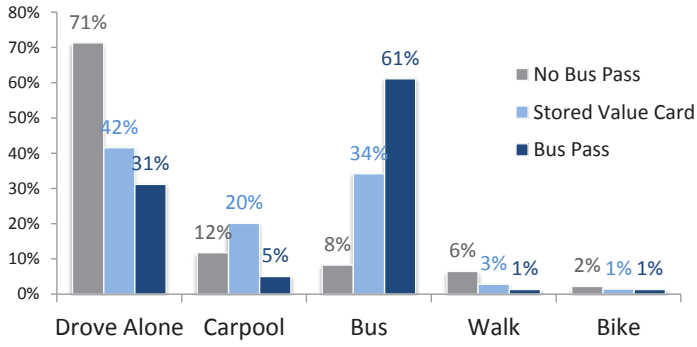
| | 2004 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|
| 2012 Worker population[2] | 43,000[4] | 48,385[5] |
| Vehicle available for commuting | 85% | 87% |
| Average commute distance | 15 miles | 16 miles |
| Average commute time | 23 mins | 25 mins |
| Work and live in same community | 41% | 37% |
| Workers with free parking at work | 81% | 91% |

4. Estimate based on Bureau of Economic Analysis data
5. 2012 5-yr ACS, Worker Population by Workplace Geography

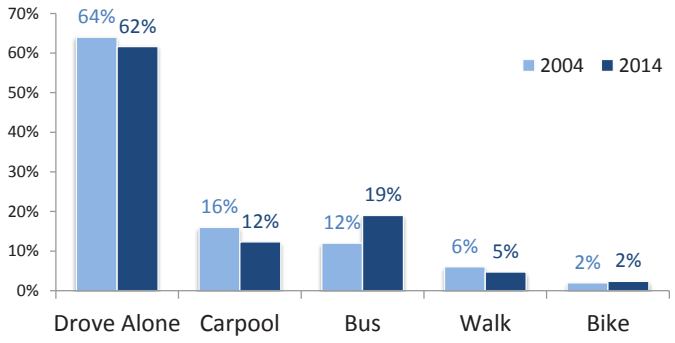
### 2014 Commute Mode Share



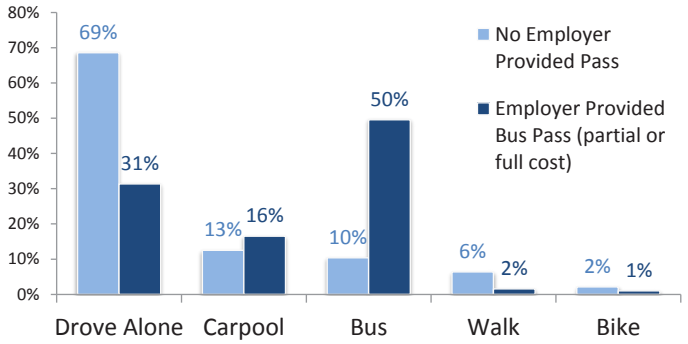

### Commute Mode Share by Bus Pass Ownership*



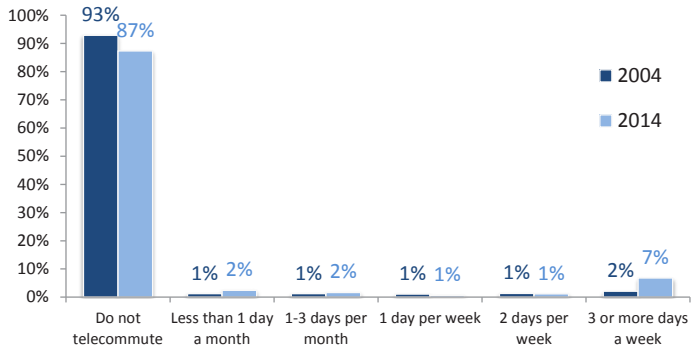

### Winter Commute Mode Shift



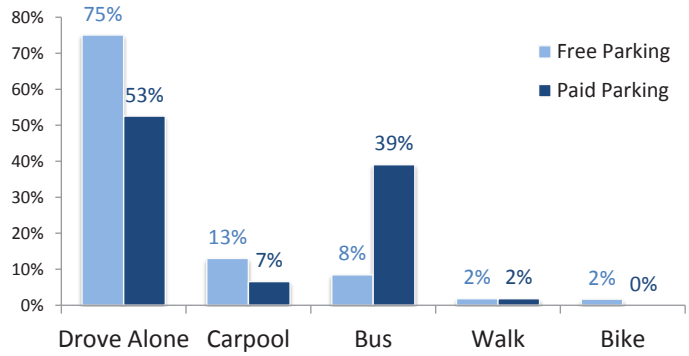

### Commute Mode Share by Employer Provided Bus Pass*




### Telecommute Mode Shift




### Commute Mode Share by Parking Type at Work*

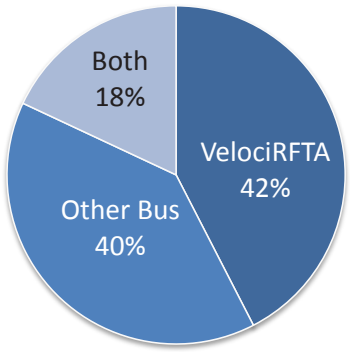



*2014 winter data

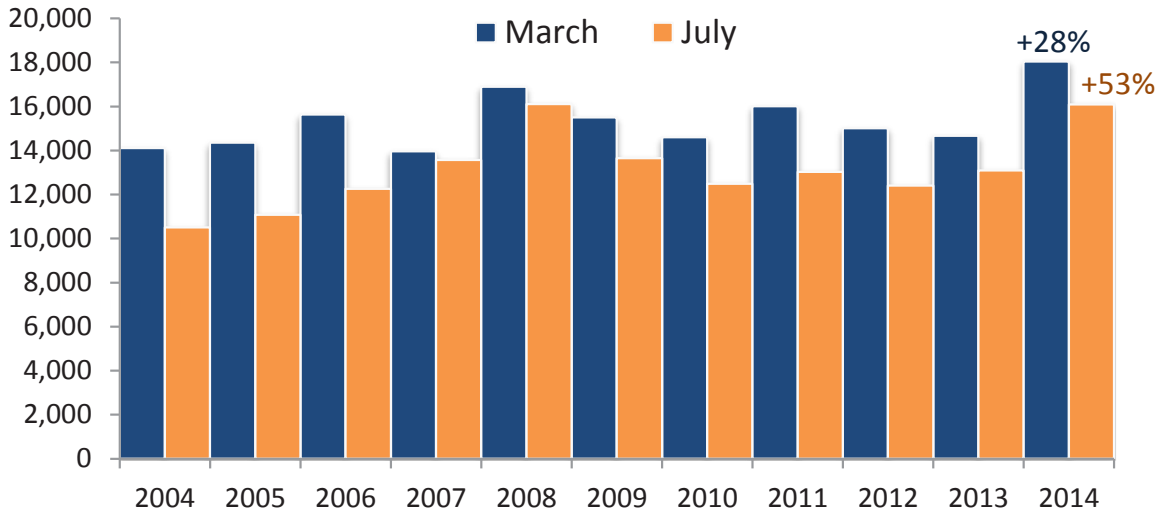
## TRANSIT DATA

| % of Residents who . . . | 2004 | 2014 |
|---|---|---|
| Own a bus pass/stored value card | 30% | 28% |
| Employer provided buss pass/ value card | 15% | 18% |
| Live within 5 blocks of a bus stop | 52% | 43% |
| Live over a mile from nearest bus stop | 29% | 34% |
| Have taken VelociRFTA in last 30 days | N/A | 35% |
| Have taken other bus in last 30 days | 38% | 39% |

Bus used for typical commute



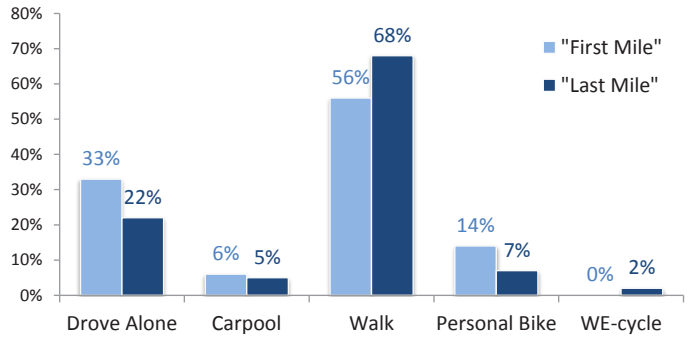

RFTA daily ridership 2004-2014





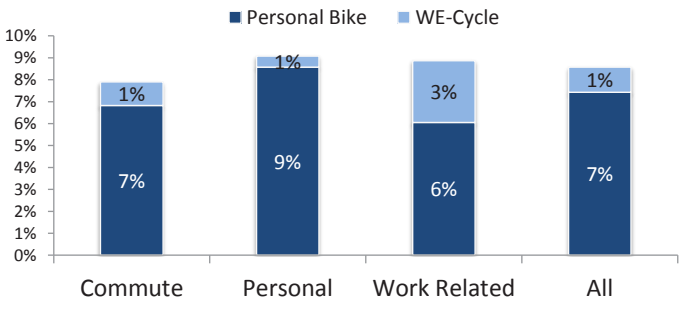

## TRANSIT ACCESS

How bus riders got to/from the bus




## BICYCLING

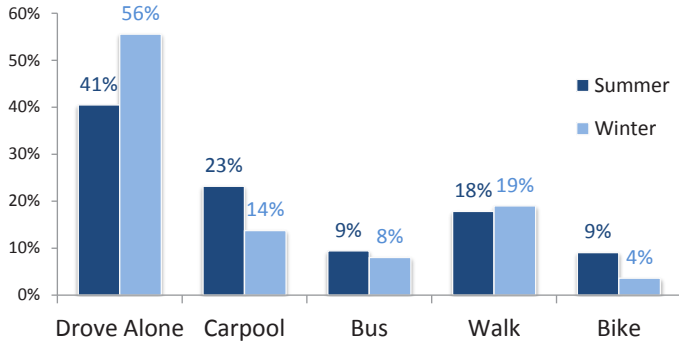
Summer bicycle mode share by trip purpose



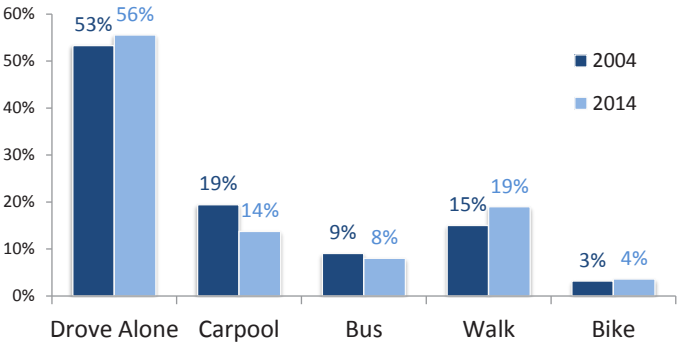
OTHER TRIPS

## PERSONAL TRIPS OF RESIDENTS

### Personal Trips Mode Share

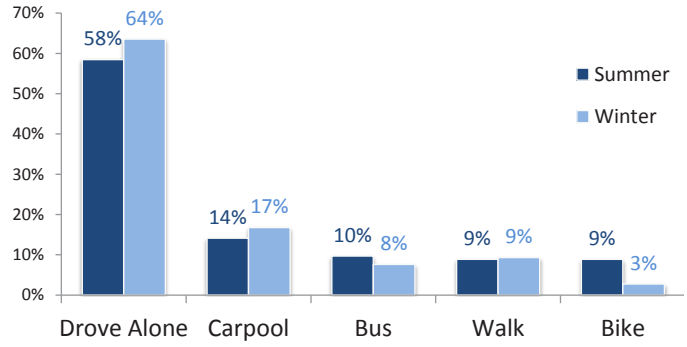



### Winter Personal Trips Mode Shift

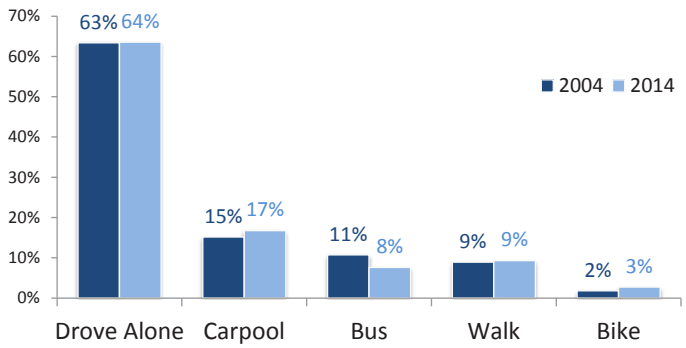



## WORK-RELATED TRIPS OF WORKERS

### Work-Related Trips Mode Share




### Winter Work-Related Trips Mode Shift



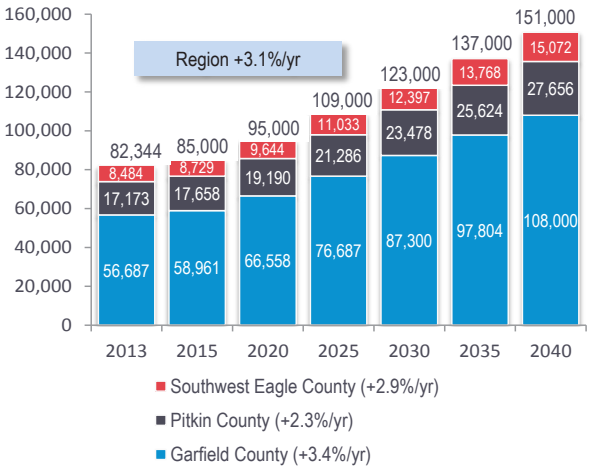

Mode share is displayed above for the two trips purposes other than commute trips (shown on page 2 in the "Commuting" section). These include work-related trips, which are trips made during work by employees for business purposes, and personal trips, which cover all other trips that are not commute or work-related trips.

## ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) conducted a regional travel patterns study in 2014 of the Colorado River Valley and Roaring Fork Valley from Parachute to Aspen. Previous studies were completed in 1998 and 2004. The project was a cooperative effort of RFTA, Colorado DOT, and area counties and municipalities. The project was conducted to provide local jurisdictions and planning agencies with information on travel demand within the study area. This includes information about current and future needs for motor vehicles, for public transit and for walking and bicycling. Data from the study was also used to develop travel forecasts and will help companies and agencies design commuter support programs to address needed changes in travel choices.

The data collection methodology included two rounds of surveys, a winter and summer survey. The winter survey targeted employees and employers within the study area. The summer survey targeted residents. A total of 1,679 surveys of residents and employees were collected (1,352 in the winter and 327 in the summer) and 110 employer surveys were completed. The region was divided into 23 transportation analysis zones (TAZs) and all data will be available at the TAZ level. A comprehensive report of the study's findings is available through RFTA.

# SUMMARY OF KEY TRENDS




Source: Colorado State Demography Office

2004 — 60% — work in Rifle, Glenwood Springs or Aspen — 2014 — 75%

winter — 7% — walk/bike commute mode share — summer — 17%

since 2004

## DAILY VMT*

(2.23k → 2.28k) ↑ 0.3%/yr

## PER CAPITA DAILY VMT*

(35.7 → 31.0) ↓ 0.5%/yr

Source: CDOT

## ANNUAL TRANSIT RIDERSHIP

(3.5k → 4.8k) ↑ 4.0%/yr

Source: RFTA

## KEY TRENDS

### Population Growth

- 2000-2013 population grew at 1.8% per year
- 2013-2040 population forecast to grow at 3.1% per year

### Emerging Employment Centers

- concentration of jobs into three primary regional employment centers: Aspen (33%), Glenwood Springs (29%), and Rifle (14%)
- emerging regional employment centers in Garfield County

### Active Transportation

- high walk/bike commute mode share in the summer contributes to lower summer driving mode share
- active commute mode share is particularly high in the regional employment centers

### Traffic Demand

- 0.3% growth per year in state highway VMT since 2004
- 0.5% decline per year in per capita state highway VMT since 2004

### Transit Ridership

- 4.0% growth per year in transit ridership since 2004
- 60% increase in the winter bus commute mode share since 2004

IMPLICATIONS

# SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

## Regional TDM Program

The key trends from this study suggest that this region may have an opportunity in coming years to encourage a broad shift away from reliance on personal vehicles. Such an effort would coincide with a general trend already underway. An effective way to encourage this would be to implement a regional transportation demand management (TDM) program that would coordinate local TDM programs in each community similar to the Transportation Program in the City of Aspen. The data provided by this study indicates that two significant opportunities could be the initial focus of a regional TDM program – transit passes and parking management.

## TDM – Transit Passes

The survey results revealed that the propensity to commute by bus is five times higher for workers with an employer-provided bus pass than for those without an employer-provided bus pass. Only 2% of employees in Rifle and 6% of employees in Glenwood Springs own a bus pass, whereas 19% of Carbondale, 27% of Snowmass Village, and 37% of Aspen workers own passes. A regional program coordinated by or with RFTA to increase the number of workers with bus passes would pay direct and significant dividends in increased ridership, reduced dependency on auto commuting and employment growth.

## TDM – Parking Management

The survey data indicates that 88% of commuters with access to free parking drive to work, while only 60% of those who do not have access to free parking drive to work. As employment grows in the regional job centers, local communities and employers should consider taking a more active role in parking management in order to reduce vehicle trips, more efficiently utilize developable land and facilitate the creation of more pedestrian-friendly urban environments.

## Strategic Community Development

Transit ridership growth has created the potential for municipalities in the region to integrate land use development with these transit services. One way to do this would be update local comprehensive plans to include transit-oriented development strategies. With population growth in the region forecast to continue above 2% annually, there will be ample opportunity to guide this new housing and employment toward transit-served places. Such an approach would pay major long-term dividends in the form of transportation and land use efficiencies that would reduce future tax burdens and encourage economic development.

## Transit service in the I-70 corridor

The emergence of Glenwood Springs and Rifle as significant employment centers has implications for the regional transit network. In 2014, 38% percent of all winter commute trips by Aspen and Snowmass workers and 23% by Carbondale workers were made by transit. However, transit only accounts for 3% of winter commute trips by Glenwood Springs employees, and 2% by Rifle employees. These differences in transit propensities are a direct result of the limited transit service currently available within and to these communities. Future transit could include the eventual extension of BRT-style services (bus rapid transit) to Rifle or even Parachute, an effort that could begin with an increase in regular bus and express bus service in the I-70 corridor.

## Access to VelociRFTA Service

The new VelociRFTA Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) between Glenwood Springs and Aspen has improved regional travel. However, the more streamlined system, with fewer detours off the highway is producing greater demand for "first and last mile" travel (to and from the BRT stations) in the communities along the route. Since 2004 the percent of bus commuters who drove to the bus increased from 15% to 25%. At the same time, RFTA's park-n-ride lots are at or near capacity throughout most of the transit system. To leverage the BRT program investment, future regional and local transportation investments should focus on improving facilities for walking and biking to the major bus stops and increasing local bus circulation within communities, particularly in communities north and west of Aspen and Snowmass.

## Local connectivity

The three regional employment centers are not only growing in size, but the percent of residents who both live and work in those communities is also growing. This presents an opportunity to increase the number of walk/bike commute trips. Local jurisdictions could support this by connecting missing links in the street, bike and pedestrian networks; establishing robust connectivity requirements for future developments; and establishing policies that support and encourage walking and biking within these communities.