



## MEMORANDUM

P.O. Box 4100 ♦ FRISCO, COLORADO 80443

**TO: MAYOR AND TOWN COUNCIL**  
**FROM: DON REIMER, COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**  
**RE: TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVES**  
**DATE: NOVEMBER 8, 2022**

**Summary and Background:** Increasing alternative transportation options for Frisco residents and visitors has been a community goal for several years. The 2019 Frisco Community Plan includes goals related to improving mobility within the community, environmental goals related to reducing climate impacts from vehicles, and continuing to improve pedestrian and bicycle connectivity to promote alternative modes of transportation in and around our community. These goals have been incorporated into the Town Council Strategic Plan, originally adopted in 2019, as well as the subsequent Plan updates.

As the Town has begun to develop more workforce housing units, Council has raised questions concerning Town Code's parking requirements. Council directed staff to consider whether the existing parking requirements are consistent with community plan goals, and if reductions in the parking requirements would allow for higher densities in workforce housing developments. Most recently, the March 8, 2022 Town Council meeting included a discussion of parking options for workforce housing. A focus of that discussion was that if parking reductions were going to be effective in achieving goals, viable alternatives to passenger vehicles would be necessary.

**Background and Analysis:** Frisco's geographic location, climate, population density and development as a mountain resort community has resulted in limited transportation alternatives for residents and visitors. For those residents and visitors without access to passenger vehicles, a variety of transportation options are required to meet daily needs, including regional transit, local fixed-route service, private taxi or ride-share services, and bicycle or pedestrian self-powered mobility.

The 2019 Community Plan includes several Guiding Principles related to mobility, transportation, and associated environmental goals that Town Council could use to guide decision making in long-range strategic planning and the annual budget process. While most of these guiding principles related to transportation are included within the Mobility section of the plan, improvements to the transportation network and increased mobility options also are identified within the Inclusive Community, Quality Core Services, and Sustainable Environment sections of the Community Plan.

### **Mobility:**

- 4.1 – Provide a Safe and Efficient Multimodal Transportation System
  - 4.1A – Update the Town's Comprehensive Multimodal Transportation Plan

- 4.1B – Place a higher priority on bicycle and pedestrians for moving around town in accordance with the Frisco Trails Master Plan
- 4.1C – Explore opportunities to improve the frequency and proximity of transit options around town.
- 4.1D – Manage parking resources in downtown to promote the efficient use of available spaces
- 4.2 – Promote Walking, Biking, and Other Alternate Modes of Travel
  - 4.2A - Improve the safety and efficiency of bicycle crossings and travel along Summit Blvd.
  - 4.2B – Ensure connections to Marina, the Peninsula Recreation Area, and local schools are safer and more efficient
  - 4.2C – Prioritize high traffic corridors within the Central Core for the construction of more developed, urban streetscape.
  - 4.2D – Improve year-round connections between neighborhoods and commercial areas, and the County-wide recreational pathway system.
- 4.3 – Continue to Expand Regional Transportation Options for Frisco Residents and Visitors
  - 4.3B – Collaborate with Summit County, CDOT, Copper Mountain, and others to maintain / increase the frequency of Summit Stage, Bustang, Greyhound, and others.

*Inclusive Community:*

- 1.1B – Invest in targeted improvements (e.g. trail connections, bike paths and drainage improvements) that enhance the safety and quality of life of residents.

*Quality Core Services:*

- 3.1A – Maintain and improve public infrastructure such as multi-use pathways, roads, sidewalks, and transit, and municipal utilities to maintain a high quality of life for the community.

*Sustainable Environment:*

- 6.2B – Encourage the use of alternative transportation modes – mass-transit, walking, and bicycling, for local and regional trips.

The Community Plan also includes an Action Plan that outlines strategies the Town could pursue in order to progress towards achieving the Guiding Principle goals listed above. These include:

*Mobility:*

- 4.1-a: Adopt ‘complete street’ design standards that include safe and attractive multi-modal transportation options.
- 4.1-b: Explore Frisco Flyer-type shuttle for around town movement.
- 4.1-c: In collaboration with CDOT, develop a plan for improved crossings of SH9 at the Marina, School Road, and Lusher Court.
- 4.1-d: Begin enforcement of established time limits for on street parking and consider expanding time limits in areas adjacent to a Summit Stage stop.
- 4.1-e: Improve wayfinding signage to direct drivers to public lots and offer alternative options for all day parking for skiers and workers.
- 4.2-a: Develop and implement “complete streets’ plans for Granite and Galena.

4.2-c: Implement the 2017 Frisco Trails Master Plan.

Inclusive Community:

- 1.12-a: Develop streetscape plans for the Summit Boulevard corridor that includes lighting, multi-modal enhancements, and wayfinding signage.

Sustainable Environment:

- 6.2-d: Prioritize implementation of multi-modal trail improvements in accordance with the Trails Master Plan over expansion of automobile infrastructure.

The Town has made significant strides in a number of these areas in the three years since adoption of the 2019 Community Plan; specifically, improved crossings of SH9 at the Marina and Peninsula Recreation Area, continued improvements in paved pathways and sidewalks to improve walkability and bike-ability, and adoption of the Downtown Complete Streets Plan. The 2023 budget includes a number of capital projects to continue progress on these items, such as sidewalk improvements along SH9, and implementation of some of the items identified in the Complete Streets Plan. However, minimal progress has been made on the public transit side, and in some cases, service has decreased as a result of limited availability of bus drivers. The following sections summarize the availability of transit options and other modes of transportation in Frisco.

Regional Transit Providers: [Greyhound](#) has provided regular daily regional and interstate bus service from the Frisco Transit Center for a number of years. In 2015, the State of Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) established the [Bustang](#) service with daily service east to Denver and west to Grand Junction with stops along the way. More recently in spring 2022, CDOT established an additional service, [Pegasus](#), with more frequent daily service between Avon and Denver, including a stop in Frisco. For each of these services, the only local pick-up or drop-off location is the Frisco Transit Center on Meadow Drive, operated by Summit County.

Regional Fixed-Route Service: The Summit Stage has been in operation in Summit County since the 1980's, with scheduled fixed-route service throughout the County, and commuter routes to Leadville and Fairplay. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, most routes operated on a 30-minute frequency approximately 18-20 hours per day. For the past two years route frequency has been reduced to hourly service, 17-18 hours per day, due to driver shortages. Indications are that the driver shortage is due in part to two key factors: the requirement that drivers maintain a Commercial Drivers License (CDL), and the lack of affordable housing for drivers.

Three Summit Stage routes within Frisco originate at the Frisco Transit Center: to Silverthorne, to Breckenridge, and to Copper Mountain. The Silverthorne route is a direct link between the Frisco and Silverthorne transit centers; while the Breckenridge and Copper Mountain routes offer a number of intermediate stops along the route to the final destination, with stops primarily located along major highways or main streets. There is no direct route from Frisco to Dillon, Summit Cove, or Keystone.

Local Fixed-Route Service: The Frisco Flyer was a neighborhood fixed-route circulator service operated by the Summit Stage during the ski seasons in the 1990's, apparently ending in 2001, according to a 2002 [article](#) in the Summit Daily News. At that time, the Summit Stage requested that the Town contribute a portion of the operating expenses; however the Town declined. The idea of re-establishing a form of the Frisco Flyer as a local fixed-route commuter has surfaced several times in recent years; however it has not progressed past the "idea stage."

**Micro-transit:** There is no current micro-transit service available in Frisco or Summit County. In short, micro-transit is a privately operated system that creates a variable point-to-point shared transit system within a designated geographic area. A transit user could request a ride from their current location to a destination, and the system would designate a pick up location and time, and additional riders going to different locations in the general area could be picked up en route. This could act in tandem with a fixed-route provider such as the Summit Stage, to provide rides to a fixed-route bus stop, or from a fixed-route stop to the final destination, filling the “first mile / last mile” gap faced by many rural transit providers.

Since the spring of 2022, staff has been working with a micro-transit provider, [Via](#), to investigate implementation of a micro-transit solution for Frisco. While the initial analysis appears attractive, there is a substantial price tag associated with operation, leading staff to believe that this option would be most effective if it was entered into on a regional basis. Staff has recently begun discussions with Summit County to see if a regional approach could be pursued. Based on these discussions, the Town will request a place on an upcoming Transit Board agenda to discuss support for collaboration on regional micro-transit. To date, staff-level conversations with the County and other Towns has indicated support for addition of micro-transit to the Summit Stage service and operational plans.

**Connectivity Improvements:** The Town continues to invest in improvements to the paved pathway and sidewalk system within Town. The Frisco Trails Master Plan was adopted in 2017, and updates to the Plan are currently in process. The Trails Plan identifies a number of potential improvements, which are then included in annual budgets for construction.

Examples of connectivity improvements since 2017 include the pathway along 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue from Granite to Belford, and along Belford from 4<sup>th</sup> Avenue to Frisco Elementary School; the tunnel under SH9 from the County Commons to the Peninsula Recreation Area, and improvements planned for 2023 to the sidewalk along SH 9 between School Road and Wal-Mart. These improvements will make the community more walkable and bikeable, especially in the non-winter months. It should also be noted that as additional pathways are constructed, additional funds must be set aside for annual maintenance.

**Workforce Housing Transportation Needs:** As discussed at the March 8, 2022 Town Council meeting, reducing the amount of required parking for workforce housing projects may be an opportunity to increase the number of housing units in a development. However, it is also noted that the residents of these housing units may have the greatest transportation challenges, such as working off-hour shifts where transit is not available, or work in locations that are not directly serviced by transit. Further, it is not just place of employment that needs to be considered when looking at transportation options, it is also the need to get to critical places such as grocery stores, childcare and schools, and medical appointments.

The staff report for that meeting (Attachment 1) also discussed two workforce housing developments in Frisco, Mary Ruth and Peak One, which were developed with reduced parking requirements, each of which has demonstrated parking problems in the years since development. Additionally, it was discussed that reducing parking for those in workforce housing while not making any adjustments to parking requirements in other neighborhoods may not be consistent with some of Town Council's equity goals.

If the goal is to reduce the number of vehicles on the road and vehicle emissions, a more impactful action could be to introduce parking maximums on market rate homes, which frequently are used as short-term rentals or vacation housing, and may have several vehicles parked at a single unit

after driving multiple tenants from the airport or other locations. Or, allow developers to pay a fee-in-lieu of some of the required parking, so additional public parking could be developed to allow for overflow parking for these market rate units.

This discussion gets to equity – whether parking reductions place a disproportionate burden on those who may be most reliant on private vehicles to get to work. The resultant impact of parking reductions could instead be shared with those in market rate units such as remote workers, retirees and short-term renters who may have other options.

**Next Steps:** Continued implementation of the Downtown Complete Streets Plan and the Trails Master Plan is part of the Town Capital Improvement Plan, with annual appropriations included in the Town budget. While this is a multi-year program of improvements, these plans and resulting infrastructure provide much support to enhancing self-powered modes of transportation – primarily pedestrian and bicycle. However, improvements to public transit will not occur without significant financial investment, which could be lessened through collaboration with the other Towns and Summit County. A few options that could be considered include:

- Accelerate Implementation of Plans – Increasing annual appropriations for targeted projects to implement the Complete Streets and Trails Master Plans would result in increased walkability and bike-ability throughout the community.
- Transit study – partner with the other Towns, Summit County, and Summit Stage to perform a Transit study that would evaluate options for improvements to fixed route service, and whether micro-transit could be a viable addition to improve transit use. As part of this option, Town staff would work with our designated Transit Board member, Kent Willis, to ensure he is understanding of the Town’s goals to appropriately represent our interests.
- Transit implementation without study – via and other providers have a demonstrated history of success in implementing micro-transit, either in collaboration with a fixed-route service, or as a stand-alone service.

**Financial Impact:** No direct financial impact will occur as a result of this discussion, pending Council direction on further actions. The 2022 Budget included \$200,000 for a Transportation Master Plan, which has not yet been pursued as the potential scope has been evolving. The 2023 Budget includes a Capital Improvement Program for the period of 2023 – 2027. A Mobility Master Plan is included, with a planned budget expenditure of \$50,000 in each year from 2024 - 2027.

Funding for the Complete Streets Plan implementation is planned at \$250,000 in 2023, and \$125,000 for the years 2024 – 2027. Funding for the Trails Master Plan is planned at \$500,000 for 2023, and \$150,000 each year for 2024 – 2027; noting that this line item focuses on projects at the Peninsula Recreation Area and funding for the Frisco Backyard. Other in-Town connectivity improvements within the Trails Master Plan are in specific line items for 2023, such as \$1,350,000 for the SH9 sidewalk project.

**Environmental Sustainability:** Improving public transit and promoting alternative modes of transportation such as bicycles or walking aligns with the Town’s climate action goals through reduced greenhouse gas emissions and helps to meet the goal as stated in the Transportation Sector. A more robust analysis of environmental benefits and impacts will occur as specific projects are initiated.

**Alignment with Strategic Plan:** Promoting improved transit and alternative modes of

transportation align with several goals in both the Town Council Strategic Plan and in the Frisco Community Plan.

**Staff Recommendation:** Staff requests Council feedback on options which should be further pursued.

**Reviews and Approvals:** This report has been reviewed and approved by:

Tom Fisher, Town Manager  
Leslie Edwards, Finance Director

**Attachments:**

Attachment 1 – March 8, 2022 Staff Report – Parking Options for Workforce Housing