

Author: Lyndsay Gavin, Center for Advanced Hindsight (Duke University)

Presentation Title: Personalized Route Tools And Commuter Commitments Increase Uptake Of Alternative Transit Modes

Abstract: Cities across the US are examining strategies to reduce the number of individuals commuting via single-occupancy vehicle (SOV). Municipalities have an interest in reducing SOV commutes to meet climate goals, reduce driving and parking infrastructure and maintenance costs, address traffic congestion as populations expand, and equitably enhance quality of life for residents. Transportation Demand Management (TDM) programs aim to reduce SOV trips with non-infrastructure measures. While this field has incorporated behavioral ideas, there is room for more holistic integration of behavioral science in developing effective strategies. Many commuters intuitively recognize that driving alone less will be good for their health, the environment and their wallets. As such, they may intend to use alternative transportation, but do not always follow through on these intentions. Aside from infrastructure shortcomings, behavioral barriers like the action-goals gap, present bias, status quo bias, and the sunk cost effect all work against people's willingness to use sustainable commute options. The Center for Advanced Hindsight (in collaboration with researchers at Harvard Business School, the London School of Economics, RideAmigos, and Alta Planning and Design) are designing and testing various behavioral interventions aimed at overcoming these barriers and reducing SOV use. We've run two iterations of a personalized route tool delivered via email to City of Durham employees and NCCU students and seen a 7-9% subsequent SOV trip reduction. We've prompted City of Austin employees with a Commuter Commitment, resulting in higher rates of alternative mode use. We've run multiple lab studies examining the power of framing, both in terms of trip planning and incentivizing alternative commute modes. We're also launching a behaviorally-informed experiment, looking to harness the fresh start effect in the transportation context. Finally, we are examining the impact of replacing annual parking permits for faculty, staff, and students at a university with daily parking charges.