



EV Columbus Resident Learnings December 2021

The Assignment

Columbus is exploring the adoption of a standardized, equitable electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure strategy that would significantly increase the number of, and access to, EV charging stations community-wide. By 2030-35, US major car manufacturers have a goal to have all electric vehicles. This means in the next 10 years, most cars will run on batteries and electric vehicles to reduce environmental impact.

CommEN Strategies is a women-and-minority-owned small business with a rich history of fortifying relationships between community partners. Through a series of resident conversations, the CommEN team will better understand what matters most to Columbus residents when it comes to personal transportation, as well as their perspective on EV pros and barriers. This direct input will inform a draft EV Readiness Ordinance for Columbus City Council consideration.

Objective:

Share community EV learnings and suggested next steps for the City of Columbus to consider in its EV Readiness Ordinance.


Reach Criteria:

Columbus residents, primarily BIPOC

- Ages 18+
- Not gender specific
- Mixture of engaged and not engaged

Research Methodology:

Engagement: Focus groups (N=25)

A portrait of a woman with short dark hair, wearing a patterned top, looking directly at the camera. The image is overlaid with a blue and green gradient.

'Today, people of color are far more likely to live in areas with higher rates of air pollution, toxic waste facilities, landfills, and lead poisoning.'

- INSIDER

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Resident Thoughts About Transportation

- 1 “It has to be great on gas.”** Affordability consistently was the top thing residents viewed as most important in their personal transportation. Everyone sees transportation as critical to their lifestyle and something they all need it. However, being able to afford it, whether owned vehicle or public, is even more critical.
- 2 “What is the purpose of transportation? My expectation is it does what it should do.”** Nothing can disrupt a day more than unreliable transportation. Residents talked about having a vehicle to get them to point A to point B on time , whether it is their own car, public transit or carpool/taxi/assistance is key. Transportation should be thinkless and shouldn't add stress to our lives.
- 3 “Transportation has given me access”** For many, transportation has not only met their functional needs, but also given them the ability to have a lifestyle, meet new people and have new experiences.

Their Thoughts about EVs

1 EVs sound cool, but what is the benefit to me above what I am getting from my current transportation? I understand the environmental impacts. I don't know the value it will add to me.

Indicated Actions:

- 1) Develop talk track and key messages of EV personal and environmental benefits and incentives.
- 2) Implement engagement campaign to share out key messages with broader community.

2 What is the true cost of EVs? Affordability is the number one priority to me. Further, beyond financial costs, what else will I be giving up? Time, variety in car choice?

Indicated Actions:

- 1) Build in EV talk track estimated costs, along with line by line items, to get and maintain an EV vehicle.
- 2) In addition to outlining the EV benefits, it is helpful to understand impactful shifts consumers will experience (time to get gas vs time to recharge, etc.)

3 IF the true objective is to reduce environmental impact, why are we only focused on individual EVs. What about EV public transit?

Indicated Actions:

- 1) Explore and communicate out EV opportunities within the public transit ecosystem. Be clear on timing and what is possible.

Their Thoughts about Evs Cont.

4 What about those who work in the automotive industry now? What is their job protection plan? The entire industry, from the big box manufacturers to your neighborhood mechanics, has been built on natural gas. It seems their careers are at risk.

Indicated Actions:

- 1) Co-design educational programs to help the industry shift over to EV and support infrastructure costs to make that shift.

5 Safety? When I think of electricity, I think of what could go wrong is water or force interacts with it. Further, not every neighborhood is safe enough to just leave my car anywhere outside. It feels like safety risks increase with an EV.

Indicated Actions:

- 1) Conduct a study to assess potential risk and engage residents along the way to address concerns.

Additional Resident Learnings about EVs

6 Are they concerned about being left out or left behind?

- 1) Key finding- residents 55+ plus don't see electric vehicles as obtainable. They fear the learning curb around renewable energy and EV cars will leave them behind. "I have trouble working my phone how will I work a car" (resident "southside")

7 Is having a electric car obtainable?

- 1) College student: "electric cars are not affordable" needs to be more accessible to different economic class ." I can't afford a used vehicle, my apartments don't have charging stations." (resident MLK/ Bronzeville)
- 2) Carbon footprint will still be high with EV cars because most cities don't use renewable energy to power city. Reduction of carbon footprint not that effective.
- 3) Some residents wanted to see a even playing field with manufacturers of Electric Vehicles. They don't support Elon Musk , and would buy from another company (not Tesla).