



## Research Reports

April 2009

Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

### Faculty and Staff Commuter Survey

In December 2008, 48% of all faculty and staff responded to a survey focused on commuting habits and attitudes toward alternative vehicles. Major goals of the survey included gathering information for the Berea's greenhouse gas (GHG) inventory and assisting in a project directed by Brad Christensen (Technology and Industrial Arts), Peter Hackbert (Entrepreneurship for the Public Good), and Jason Coomes (Sustainability and Environmental Studies) to determine the market niche for an alternative vehicle.

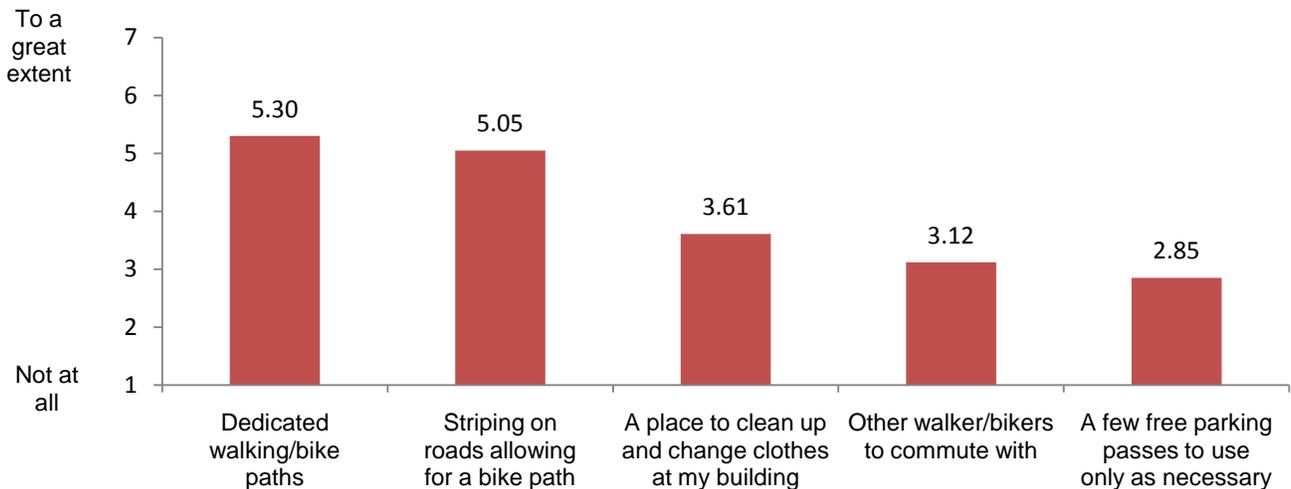
A year earlier (December 2007), President Shinn signed the *American College and University Presidents Climate Commitment*, a voluntary agreement to assess institutional carbon emissions and set goals and a timeline for making reductions and eventually achieving carbon neutrality. The greenhouse gas inventory conducted by Tammy Clemons, Sustainability Coordinator, and Diane Zekind, Energy Manager, this past year is a critical part of complying with the commitment.

According to the survey results, the average round-trip miles from home to work is 14; 72% of people drive their own vehicle alone while 10% drive with others. Nearly 20% of employees indicated that they walk or ride a non-motorized vehicle. Of those who walk or ride a non-motorized bike, most mentioned they did it for their health and enjoyment. The most common reasons given for not walking included "distance is too great," and "no safe route" followed by "bad weather" and "it takes too long."

When asked what would help *increase* the number of walkers and bikers, the most common response was "dedicated walking/bike paths" and having "striping on roads to allow for a bike path."

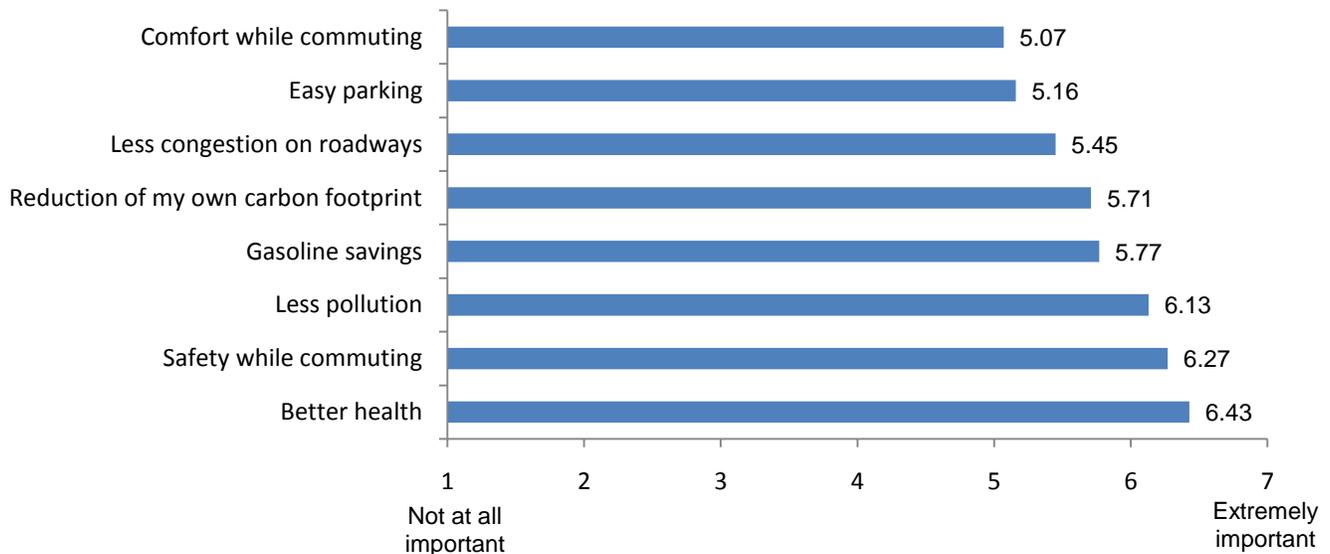


## To what extent would each of the following help increase the number of walkers and bikers?



Respondents were asked to rate the importance of several statements including: reduction of my own carbon footprint, gasoline savings, better health, less pollution, less congestion on roadways, easy parking, comfort while commuting, and safety while commuting. All items were rated highly while the highest rated were “better health” and “safety while commuting” followed by “less pollution.”

## Rate each of the following in terms of their importance to you



For the portion of the survey that focused on determining a market niche for an alternative vehicle, the data indicated that 65% of employees commute less than eight miles a day round trip. Of these employees, 41% drive their own car for a cost of approximately \$2300 per year. Extrapolated college-wide, employees driving a relatively short distance spend \$355,000 annually on their transportation to and from work.

Of the respondents who would be willing to consider an alternative vehicle, 55% indicated they would spend between \$1000 and \$4000 on it. Survey respondents indicated that an alternative powered vehicle would have to be relatively safe to drive with proper lighting and signals, roll-over protection, reinforced sides and front, seat belts, and crumple zones. It must get better fuel economy than a standard vehicle and be useful for commuting and errands around town (include some cargo space). The vehicle must be capable of around-town speeds and a range of over eight miles. Aspects that are most attractive about the vehicle are the reduction in pollution, personal health, and saving money on fuel and on car ownership. If such a vehicle existed, approximately 145 of the 539 people employed at Berea College might be interested in purchasing one.

For a complete set of survey results, click on the following link:

<http://www.berea.edu/ira/documents/CommuterSurveyReportFall2008.pdf>.