

Boulder County Mobility for All Program: Low-Income Assessment

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Master of Urban and Regional Planning

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE AND PLANNING

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **DENVER**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Mobility for All Program, run by the Boulder County Transportation Multi-Modal Division, works to promote affordable multi-modal transportation options (transit, bike, etc.) and raise awareness that transportation is a basic social and economic need. The program provides transportation resources to vulnerable populations such as older adults, people with disabilities, and households with low-income. In 2015, the County completed the Mobility For All Needs Assessment to provide a clear and strategic vision for addressing some of the current gaps in Boulder County's transportation system. In particular, the Needs Assessment identified a need for Boulder County to continue its investment in affordable transportation programs to low-income individuals. This capstone project addresses the need to better tailor affordable transportation options to low-income communities in Boulder County in order to reduce rising transportation cost burdens and enhance economic resiliency.

In particular this project will address the following research questions:

- 1). What low-income areas within Boulder County are the least connected to alternative transportation options?

And

- 2). Which areas should be prioritized first for improvement?

CONTEXT

For most households, transportation is the second highest expense after housing. According to the Center for Neighborhood Technology (CNT) afford-ability index no more than 45% of a household's income should be spent on housing and transportation combined (2017). In Boulder County, rising housing costs have hindered the ability of many residents to meet this threshold, and the average household spends 49% (CNT, 2017) with low-income populations spending an even greater amount. Transportation costs disproportionately affect low-income households and can "account for 55 percent of the budget of an average very-low income household, compared with less than 9 percent of a high-income household's budget" (Center for Transit Oriented Development, 2014, p. 12).

This project helps the Mobility for All program address this challenge by locating the low-income areas most in need of mode diversification and the cost saving benefits that come with it. Subsequent transportation improvements to these priority

areas should take into account the 3D's of transportation – density, diversity, and design – in order to encourage and create opportunities and communities that can best reap the transportation cost saving benefits, and health benefits that increased access to alternative transportation options provide.

METHODS

The method for this project can be broken down into four different phases:

1). Identify Low-Income Areas

Low-income areas were identified at two different scales: block group and housing site.

- Low-income block groups were identified as block groups with a collective median income of 30, 60, or 80 percent that of Boulder County's median income. In total there were 91 block groups within this classification
- Housing sites were identified through contacts with Boulder County Housing Authority (BCHA), Boulder Housing Partners (BHP), and Longmont Housing Authority (LHA). In total there were 108 identified subsidized housing sites from the housing authorities.

2). Locate Alternative Transportation Options

Transportation options included:

- RTD Bus Routes/Stops – local and regional routes
- FLEX Bus routes/Stops
- RTD Call-n-Ride services
- Bicycle Paths – includes striped, buffered, and protected bike lane
- Pedestrian Paths – includes multi-use paths, trails, and sidewalks
- Boulder B-Cycle stations
- eGo Car share locations

3). GIS Network Analysis

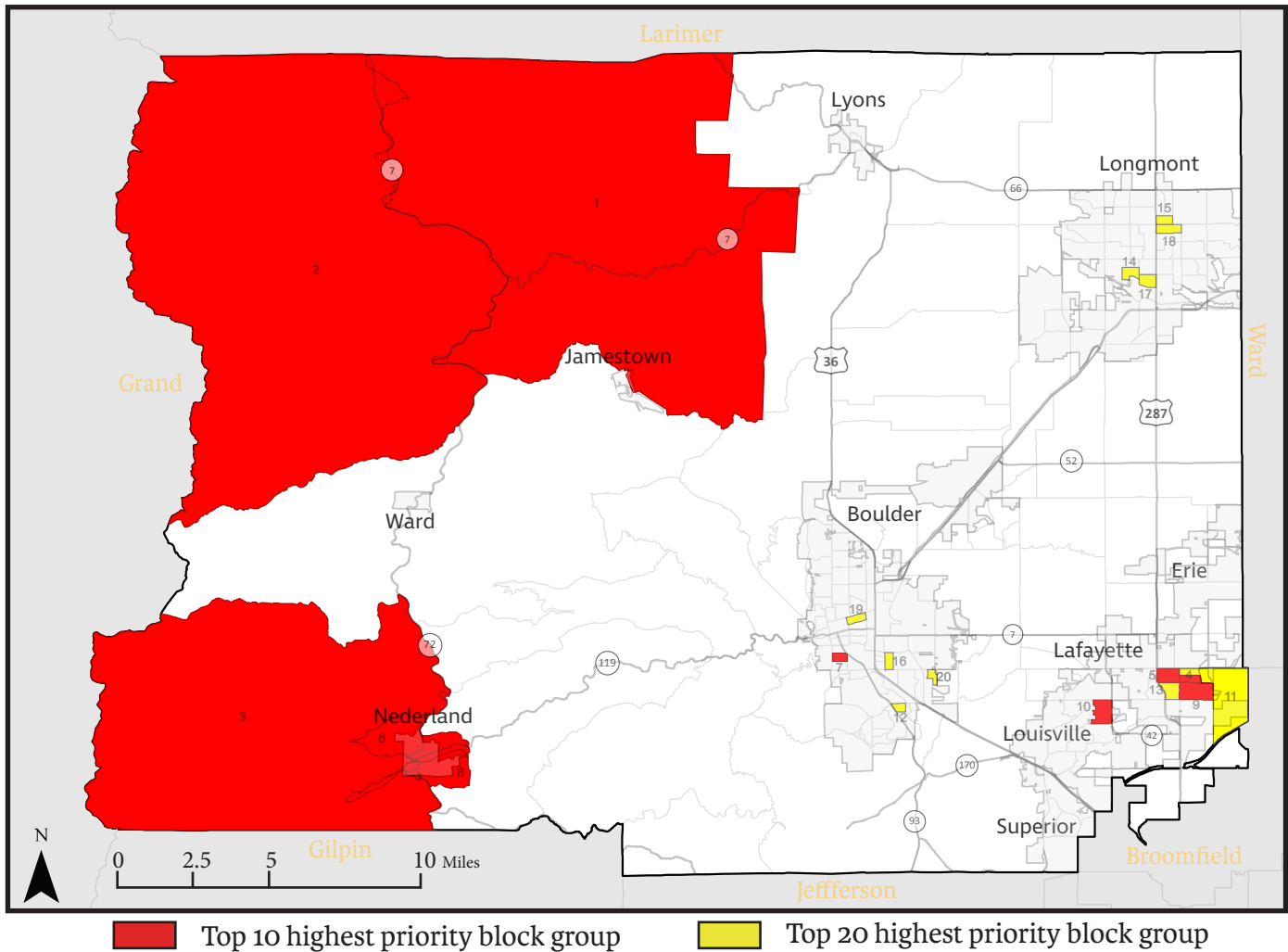
Service areas were created for subsidized housing sites to represent actual street network distances from transportation options. In addition, a closest facility analysis was conducted in order to provide a more detailed understanding of the transportation gaps for the highest priority sites.

4). Collect Results

Based on a low-income area's access to alternative transportation options, it was assigned points and ranked. From this ranking, block groups and housing sites were identified that should be first priority for transportation improvements due to lack of available options.

FINDINGS: HIGHEST PRIORITY BLOCK GROUPS

These areas should be targeted for transportation improvements and programming

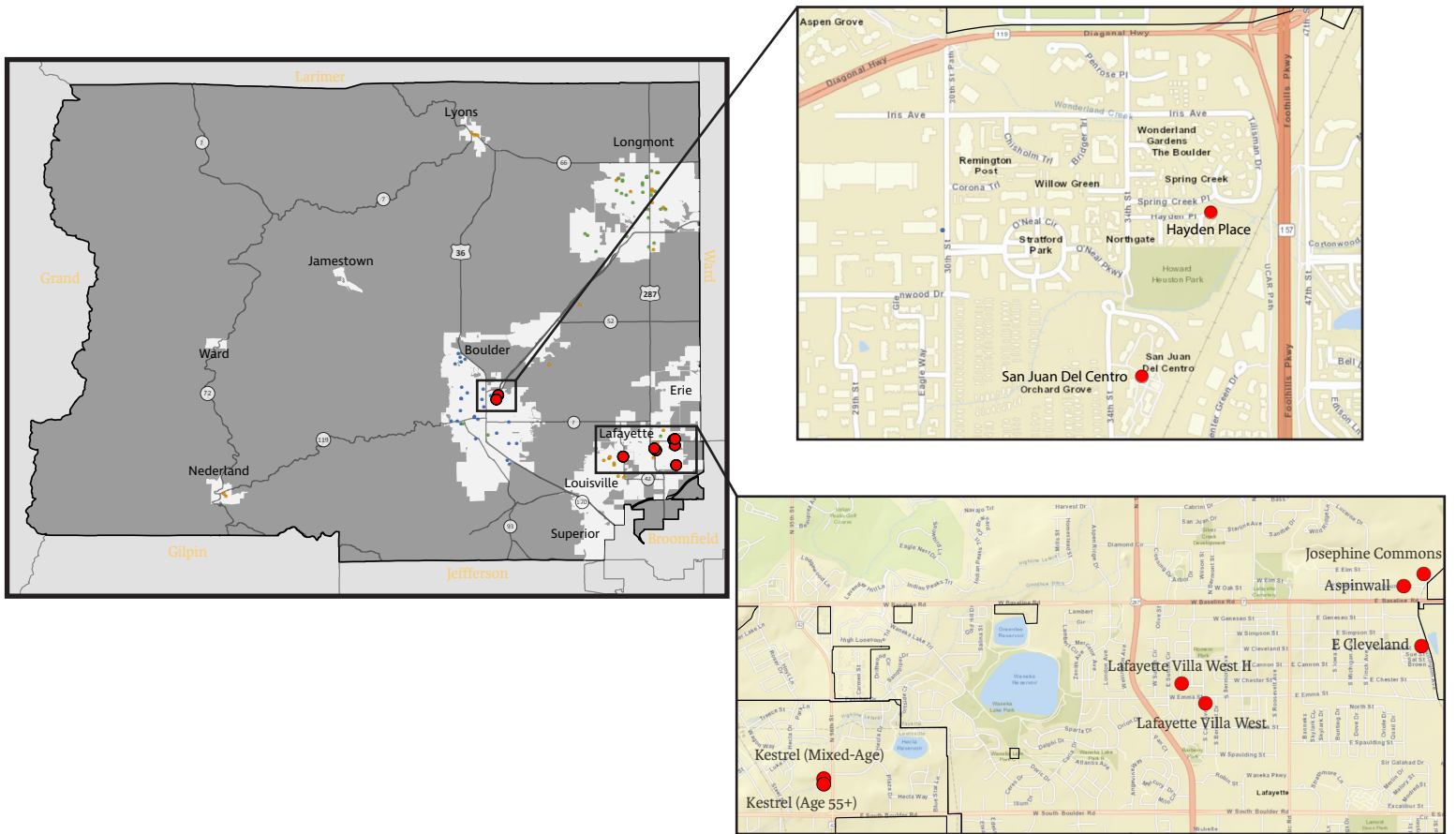


Highest Priority Block Groups

Rank	Location	Tract	Block Group	AMI	Score
1	Unincorporated NW/Jamestown	13602	1	80	6
2	Unincorporated NW	13602	2	80	7
3	Nederland/Unincorporated	13702	7	30	10
4	Lafayette	60800	4	60	12
5	Lafayette	12905	1	80	12
6	Nederland/Unincorporated	13702	6	80	12.5
7	Boulder	12401	4	30	13
8	Nederland/Unincorporated	13702	5	80	13
9	Lafayette	60800	5	60	18
10	Louisville	13005	1	80	19

FINDINGS: HIGHEST PRIORITY SUBSIDIZED HOUSING SITES

These sites should be targeted for transportation improvements and programming



Highest Priority Housing Sites

Rank	Name	Authority	Location	Units	Type	Score
1	Josephine Commons	BCHA	Lafayette	74	Age 55+	6
2	Aspinwall	BCHA	Lafayette	72	Mixed-Age	7
3	E Cleveland	BCHA	Lafayette	4	Mixed Age	9
4	Hayden Place	BHP	Boulder	30	Affordable Rental	9.5
5	Lafayette Villa West	BCHA	Lafayette	28	Mixed-Age	10
6	Lafayette Villa West II	BCHA	Lafayette	10	Mixed-Age	11
7	Sagrimore	BCHA	Lafayette	1	Mixed-Age	11
8	San Juan Del Centro	LHA	Boulder	150	Privately Owned Subsidized	12
9	Kestrel (Mixed-Age)	BCHA	Louisville	129	Mixed-Age	13
10	Kestrel (Age 55+)	BCHA	Louisville	71	Age 55+	13

**In event of a tie, the housing site with the most units was placed ahead.*

CONCLUSION

Providing transportation improvements to the identified priority areas can help reduce transportation cost burdens and improve economic resiliency for low-income populations in Boulder County.

The analysis and maps in this report reveal a need for additional outreach and study of the low-income populations living in the smaller mountainous communities of western Boulder County as well as the low-income housing sites in the southeast of the County—Lafayette & Louisville area. These areas were the least accessible to alternative modes of transportation and are recommended for priority implementation of transportation improvements and programming.