State of Transit in Boulder County

Final Report **April 2026**



Boulder County

Linking BOULDER COUNTY
A Shared Vision for Transit

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1 Overview

Linking Boulder County is a vision and action plan to make public transit easier and more useful for people who live, work, and visit Boulder County. This chapter introduces the plan and explores the factors that have shaped the need for it.

What is the purpose of this chapter?

This chapter highlights the need for Linking Boulder County, describing factors that have contributed to the County's focus on transit. It also summarizes the planning process and takeaways from the first round of community outreach, helping to ensure that all Boulder County community members have a hand in shaping the vision and recommendations. Key findings include:

- **Local Values:** Boulder County is recognized for its leadership in environmental stewardship, equity, and multimodal mobility. The County and its municipalities have always been forward-thinking in delivering transit service, including the City of Boulder's investments in the HOP and new on-demand services in Longmont and southeast communities. Linking Boulder County unfolds in the context of strong values, current strategies and successes, and emerging opportunities.
- **Quality of Life:** The county is fortunate to have a strong economy, incredible recreational opportunities, and a world-class university that contribute to making Boulder County a great place to live. However, the region is prone to floods and fire and has seen dramatic impacts from climate change. Beyond reducing the county's climate impact, public transit can help create resilient mobility options that support a better quality of life for all residents.

- **Growth and Affordability:** Over the last 30 years, Boulder County's land uses and travel patterns have changed dramatically. The affordable housing crisis has swung jobs and housing out of balance, forcing long commutes and introducing multi-county travel patterns that are challenging to serve efficiently with traditional transit.
- **Regional Context:** Today, the county is a strong and growing transit market, and current services don't fully meet the diversity of resident, employee, and visitor needs. Doing so requires delivering new services and capital projects. Boulder County and the county's transit providers have an opportunity to think differently about what transit funding and governance might look like in the future.
- **Community Priorities:** The first round of community outreach for Linking Boulder County gathered transit needs and priorities across the county. Community members from mountain towns expressed a need for better connections between their towns and to larger communities in eastern Boulder County. Community members in Boulder, Longmont, and Lafayette focused on the need for better frequency and reliability on existing routes. These priorities will help to inform the vision.

1.1 Why Linking Boulder County?

As a desirable place to live, work, and play, Boulder County is facing challenges: rapid growth, a lack of affordability, new travel patterns, and transit service that has not kept pace with the community's needs. The County recognizes that high-quality, universally accessible public transit is the foundation of a sustainable, equitable mobility system.

Boulder County's 2020 Transportation Master Plan recognized that transit is an important piece of reaching the County's sustainability goals. However, the current multi-agency context can make it challenging to deliver the services that are needed to connect Boulder County communities. To effectively meet the needs of the county's diverse communities and varied geographies,

Boulder County is creating its first transit-specific plan, called **"Linking Boulder County: A Shared Vision for Transit."**

Linking Boulder County is a vision and action plan to make public transit easier and more useful for people who live, work, and visit Boulder County. Transit includes buses operated by the Regional Transportation District (RTD), shuttles to parks and mountains, and shared vehicles like Ride Free Lafayette and RIDE Longmont. This plan is the first time Boulder County has set a countywide vision for transit, and it's an important opportunity to better serve our community. Ultimately, Linking Boulder County will help public transit meet the needs of our growing county today and into the future.

Context for the Plan

Boulder County is a diverse and rapidly evolving region within the Denver metro area and Colorado's Front Range, recognized for its leadership in environmental stewardship, environmental justice, and multimodal mobility, of which transit service is a major component. Yet the County faces challenges ensuring that transit is a viable travel mode for all kinds of trips.

Boulder County's current transit system was designed in an era when all jobs required commuting to work five days per week and Longmont, Louisville, Lafayette, Erie, and Superior were affordable bedroom communities. Over the last 30 years, Boulder County's land use and travel patterns have changed dramatically, and the impacts of climate change have made the rapid reduction of greenhouse gas emissions even more important.

Land Use and Affordability

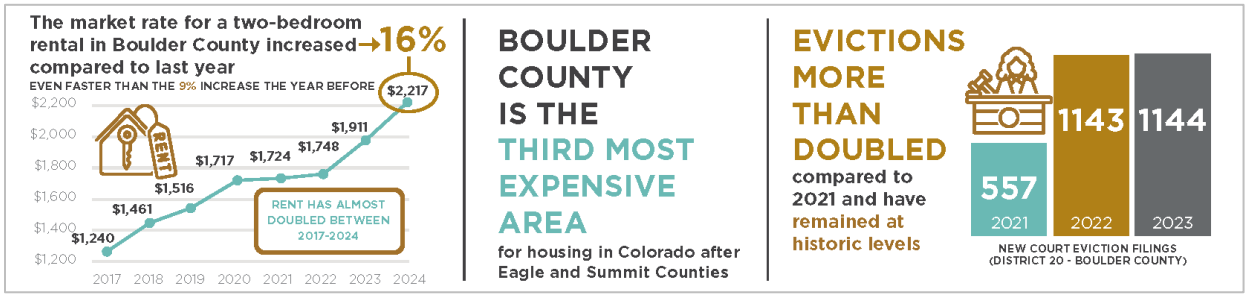
The County's unique natural features and physical geography—from the highest peaks of the Continental Divide, to the working farms on the plains, to small, vibrant towns and diverse suburban neighborhoods—also create unique travel demands that can't easily be served by a "one-size-fits-all" model of transit service delivery. The diversity of Boulder County's residents—including youth, older adults, people with disabilities, and lower-income

families—have travel needs that require flexible transit services beyond standard fixed-route offerings.

With the county's median home price now over $700,000, Boulder County is experiencing an affordable living crisis (see Figure 1-1). The county's aging population is struggling to afford to age in place, and increasingly people with blue collar jobs in Boulder County are commuting from neighboring counties. Post pandemic, many white-collar workers have hybrid schedules that require less traditional commuting; however, people are now making more short, local trips. Boulder County needs a broad range of integrated public transit options to meet its commitment to equitable, accessible mobility for all.

Recent state legislation encourages local communities to create higher density transit-oriented districts, remove parking requirements near high frequency transit, and relax restrictions on the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). With all of these changes, the county's transit system needs to adapt to better serve people living, working, and traveling throughout the county and connecting to the broader region.

Figure 1-1 Housing Costs in Boulder County (2024)



Source: Emergency Family Assistance Association

Transit Supply and Demand

Funded through two dedicated regional sales taxes, RTD is the primary transit service provider in Boulder County. Today, Boulder County accounts for roughly 10% of RTD's service area population and system ridership, but county residents ride transit at a higher rate than the average Colorado resident.

In 2020, RTD dramatically reduced service levels due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In response, the RTD Board of Directors adopted a System Optimization Plan (SOP) in 2022 to guide the restoration of service and allocation of RTD resources through 2027. Constrained by an ongoing operator shortage, RTD has also recently launched a partnership program to help fund local government-operated pilot services that meet local mobility needs.

Boulder County is a strong and growing transit market, and there is a gap between the level of transit service RTD has committed to in their SOP and the level of service Boulder County municipalities and residents envision and desire. As Boulder County home prices continue to rise, there is also increasing travel demand between Boulder County and adjacent counties that are not part of the RTD District, including Larimer and Weld Counties.



The Hessie Shuttle is one of the most popular services operated by Boulder County.

Local Commitments

The County's 2020 Transportation Master Plan laid the groundwork for an ambitious expansion of transportation investment—including transit service—that voters affirmed in 2022 with overwhelming approval of a perpetual extension to the County's $0.1 transportation sales tax. New state funding for local transit service from the Clean Transit Enterprise will become available in 2026, and a funding plan that would deliver long-promised rail service to Boulder County is underway.

The communities in Boulder County have adopted transportation plans that envision more future transit service than what RTD alone can provide. Some have demonstrated their commitment to exceeding RTD's offerings by funding and implementing their own services and programs: Boulder's HOP circulator (co-funded by the City, RTD, and CU Boulder), Longmont's microtransit service and free local bus service, partnerships with Via Mobility Services to operate The Climb, and seasonal routes like the Hessie Shuttle that meet the County's unique travel demands.

Linking Boulder County will help ensure these investments—and many more described in the following chapter—are coordinated, while setting a vision for the future that responds to our community's evolving needs and outlining the specific steps that will be necessary to realize that vision.

1.2 What's included in this plan?

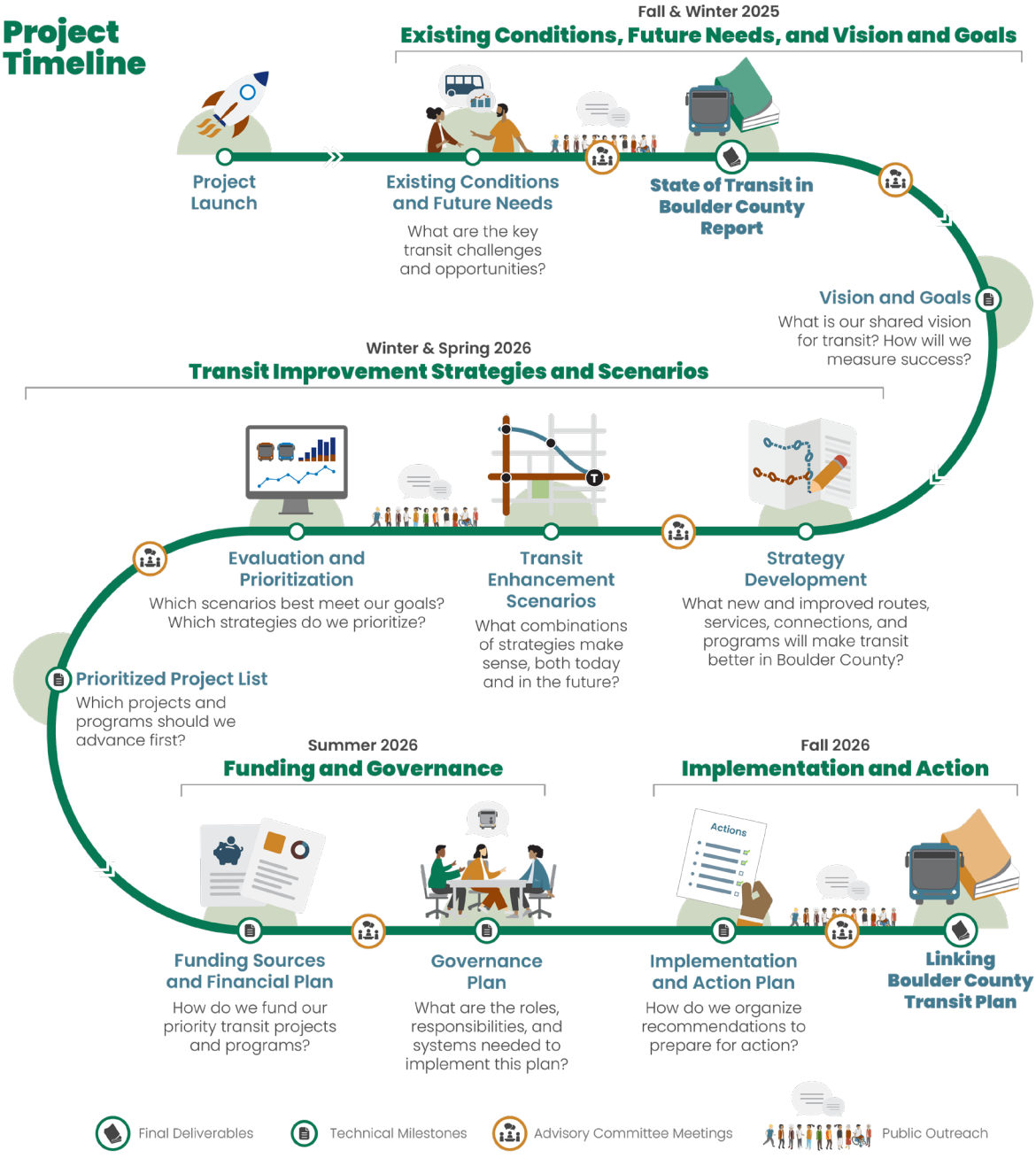
Linking Boulder County is an opportunity to think holistically about how to unlock transit's potential across the county. This includes building on and leveraging RTD's committed service improvements while tailoring transit services to specific community needs.

Based on a shared vision, Linking Boulder County will provide a roadmap for transit service expansion in Boulder County, including actionable recommendations and metrics. The plan will outline a collaborative decision-making process for prioritizing future transit investments and identify revenue sources to ensure sustainable financing for transit projects.

As shown in Figure 1-2, the Linking Boulder County project team will:

- **Analyze existing conditions** and travel demand, including recent transit enhancement projects and factors influencing future transit demand. The results of our findings are summarized in this State of Transit Report.
- **Reach out to the community** to understand their transit needs and priorities for improvement. Community input will inform every element of Linking Boulder County.
- **Establish a clear vision,** supported by goals, objectives, and performance metrics. These metrics will help us evaluate service scenarios and potential projects to shape recommendations.
- **Develop transit improvement strategies** and future scenarios to explore opportunities to provide faster, more frequent, and more accessible service across the county. The scenarios will lead to a prioritized list of projects and programs.
- **Create financial, governance, and implementation plans** to translate the vision into action. The financial plan will explore potential transit funding sources and inform a governance plan to help the County deliver the recommended services and projects. The implementation plan will outline near-, mid-, and long-term actions.

Figure 1-2 Linking Boulder County Project Timeline



1.3 How will the community be involved?

Central to the plan's success is a robust and inclusive public outreach process that meaningfully engages diverse communities and builds on extensive community involvement efforts across the county. The first phase of outreach for Linking Boulder County introduced community members to the project and gathered input on how they use transit in Boulder County now and would like to use it in the future.

Through 15 different outreach activities, we received more than 1,300 points of feedback. Although Boulder County communities are diverse—with distinct needs, desires, goals, and limitations—community members consistently expressed a need for improved transit frequency, reliability, comfort, and safety, as well as more service to the airport, to local jurisdictions beyond the City of Boulder, and to more recreational activities in the mountains.

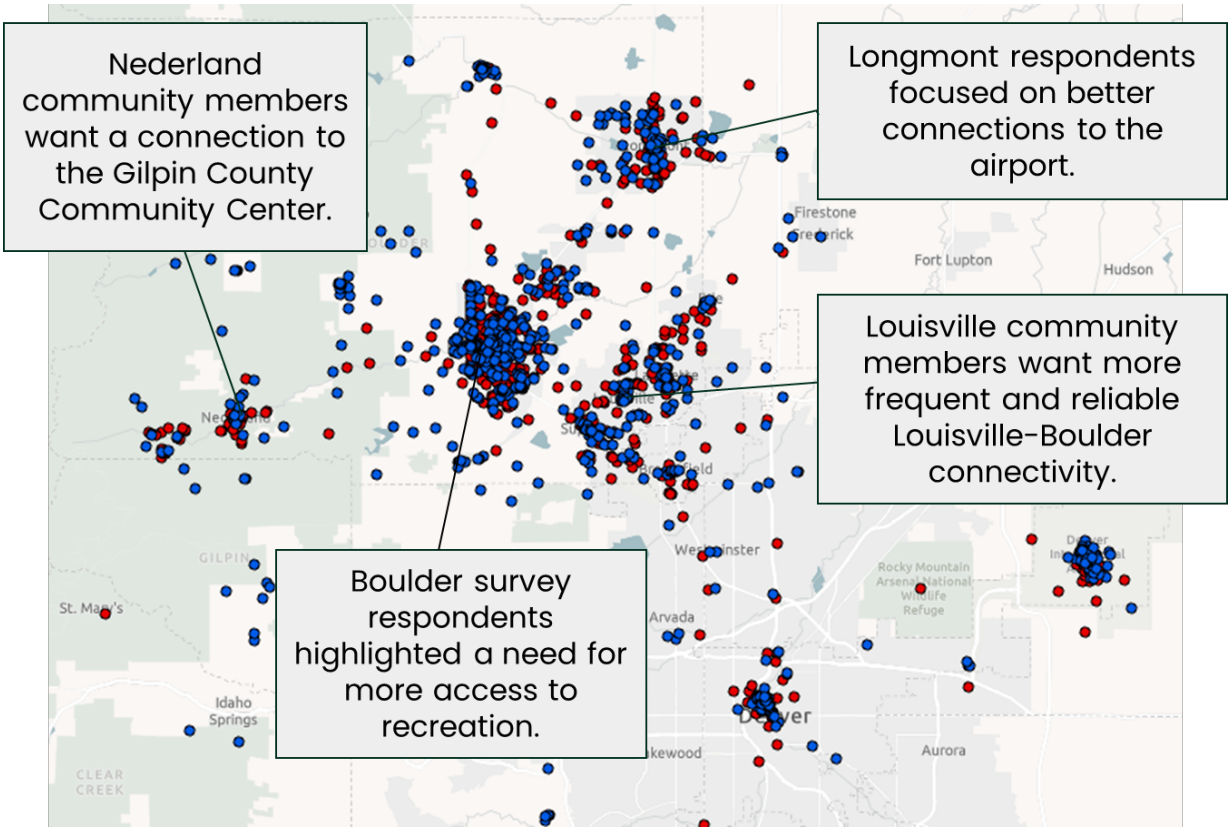


Community members shared feedback on their transit priorities at the Lafayette Farmers Market on October 26, 2025.

Respondents' transit priorities varied significantly based on their home locations. Community members from mountain towns, including Nederland, Ward, and Jamestown, expressed a need for better connections between their towns and to larger communities in eastern Boulder County. Community members from larger communities like Boulder, Longmont, and Lafayette focused on the need for better frequency and reliability on existing routes (see Figure 1-3).

Transit priorities also varied by demographic group and based on whether respondents use transit today. Community members who are car-free, low-income, and/or non-white were more likely than other demographic groups to emphasize the importance of connectivity to everyday destinations like grocery stores, schools, and medical services. Transit riders identified frequency as the most important improvement to transit, while people who do not regularly use transit prioritized connectivity.

Figure 1-3 Map of Existing (Red) and Desired (Blue) Transit Use



1.4 Conclusion

Linking Boulder County will set a vision for future transit investments that responds to the community's evolving needs and outlines the specific steps necessary to realize that vision. Chapter 2 provides information about the transit planning context in Boulder County today, introducing the service, governance, and funding structures within which Linking Boulder County's recommendations will be situated.

2 Boulder County Transit Planning Context

This chapter is a primer on the transit ecosystem in Boulder County. It outlines the transit service, regulatory, governance, policy, and funding landscape that will help to shape Linking Boulder County.

What is the purpose of this chapter?

This chapter introduces the transit planning context in Boulder County. It provides an overview of who operates, makes decisions about, and funds transit today. The chapter also describes past plans and near-term committed transit enhancements to explain the types of transit improvements that Boulder County residents can expect in the next five to ten years.

What are the key findings?

This chapter includes four sections, which describe the who, what, and how of providing transit service and supportive infrastructure in Boulder County today. Key findings from each section are as follows:

- **Transit Service Providers:** Boulder County's transit network is comprised of services from a dozen providers.
- **Transit Governance and Policy Context:** The authority to make decisions about transit serving Boulder County rests with the County and other local, regional, state, and federal entities. A complex set of regulations govern the planning, design, and operations of transit in

Boulder County. Local, regional, and state policies establish priorities for transit investments that reduce transportation emissions and improve road safety.

- **Transit Funding:** Funding for transit serving Boulder County generally comes from six sources, which include permanent and temporary sources, as well as one-time grants.
- **Past Plan and Transit Enhancement Review:** Previous planning efforts have recommended new and enhanced transit services across Boulder County, several of which are being implemented in the next decade.

2.1 Transit Service Providers

Since acquiring the City of Boulder's public bus system in 1974, the Regional Transportation District (RTD) has been the main provider of transit in Boulder County.[1] While RTD routes still account for most transit ridership in the county, a multitude of transit providers have emerged to supplement RTD's service.

Today, 12 transit entities[2] collectively provide fixed-route, on-demand, and paratransit services in the county (Figure 2-1), and each service meets a specific mobility need. Some local transit routes connect destinations within communities, while other routes enable people to move across the county or to regional destinations, such as Denver Union Station or Denver International Airport.

- As the regional transit agency, **RTD** provides fare-based local, countywide, and regional fixed-route, on-demand, and paratransit services in Boulder County. This includes:

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[1] Smith, Phyllis. 1984. "A History of Boulder's Transportation, 1858-1984". Prepared for the Transportation Division, City of Boulder, Colorado. https://localhistory.boulderlibrary.org/islandora/object/islandora%3A92090

[2] Since the CO 7 BRT operator and Joint Service passenger rail and Mountain Rail service providers have yet to be identified, and the Town of Erie's on-demand service has yet to launch, the number may grow to 15 providers.

  - The 200-series routes serving the City of Boulder and Southeast Boulder County
  - The 300-series routes in the City of Longmont, which are fare-free for passengers due to the City of Longmont "buying" the farebox from RTD
  - Five routes in Boulder's Community Transit Network (BOLT, BOUND, DASH, JUMP, SKIP)
  - Six critical connections between Boulder County municipalities (225, 228, BOLT, DASH, JUMP, NB)
  - Essential regional routes between Boulder County and Denver (FF, LD, LX), Golden (GS), and the Denver International Airport (AB)
  - On-demand transit service in Longmont, Louisville, and Superior (FlexRide)
  - Paratransit services across Boulder County (Access-on-Demand, Access-a-Ride)
- **Boulder County** provides fare-free fixed-route and on-demand transit services within the county, including:
  - Weekday service on the Lyons Flyer, along US 36 and Broadway from Downtown Lyons to Boulder
  - Summertime recreational shuttles to Eldorado Canyon State Park and the Hessie Trailhead
  - On-demand Ride Free Lafayette service throughout Lafayette and to Louisville's Kestral neighborhood
  - On-demand services in Gunbarrel, branded as Ride Gunbarrel, and in the southeast part of the county, branded as Ride SouthEast, both starting in 2026
  - A new bus rapid transit route, branded as the Boulder to Brighton Flyer, starting in 2026



Ride Free Lafayette is a public on-demand service provided by Boulder County.

- **Boulder County** and **Via Mobility Services** partner to provide two services within the county:
  - Fare-free fixed-route Mountain Rides service between Ward, Nederland, and Rollinsville
  - Fare-free Gold Hill Climb service with two daily trips between Boulder's 29th Street Mall and Gold Hill via Four Mile Canyon
- The **City of Boulder** provides fixed-route transit services within the city:
  - The 31-year-old HOP route, the oldest Community Transit Network route, through a partnership with RTD and the University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder) and federal funding support
  - A fare-free summertime Park-to-Park shuttle between Downtown Boulder and Chautauqua Park



The HOP operates as a circulator service in Downtown Boulder.

- The **City of Boulder** and **The Chautauqua Association,** in partnership with Colorado Music Festival and Via Mobility Services, provide the fare-free summertime HOP 2 Chautauqua shuttle between Downtown Boulder and events at Chautauqua Auditorium.
- The **City of Fort Collins** provides the fare-free regional FLEX route from Fort Collins' Downtown Transit Station via Coffman Street and 8th Avenue in Longmont and Downtown Boulder Station, to CU Boulder campus. This route is provided in partnership with Boulder County, City of Boulder, City of Longmont, Berthoud, Colorado State University, and CU Boulder.
- The **City of Longmont** offers RIDE Longmont on-demand transit service throughout the city and to the Firestone-Longmont Mobility Hub (CO 119 and I-25).
- The **City of Erie** will offer Erie Bee on-demand service throughout the city starting in 2026.
- The **Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)** provides the intercity Bustang service, with two routes serving Boulder County. The North Route operates daily along I-25 between Denver Union Station and Fort Collins, with a stop just outside Boulder County at the Firestone-Longmont Mobility Hub. In the summer, the Estes Park Route operates along US 36 from Union Station to Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park, serving US 36 and McCaslin Station, Boulder Junction, and Lyons along the way.
- **CU Boulder** operates several fare-free fixed-route and on-demand transit services within and between its Main and East campuses:
  - Buff Bus S: Stampede operates year-round
  - The Buff Bus W: Williams Village-Main Campus, Buff Bus ECX: East Campus Express, and Buff Bus RX: ROTC Express routes operate during the school year

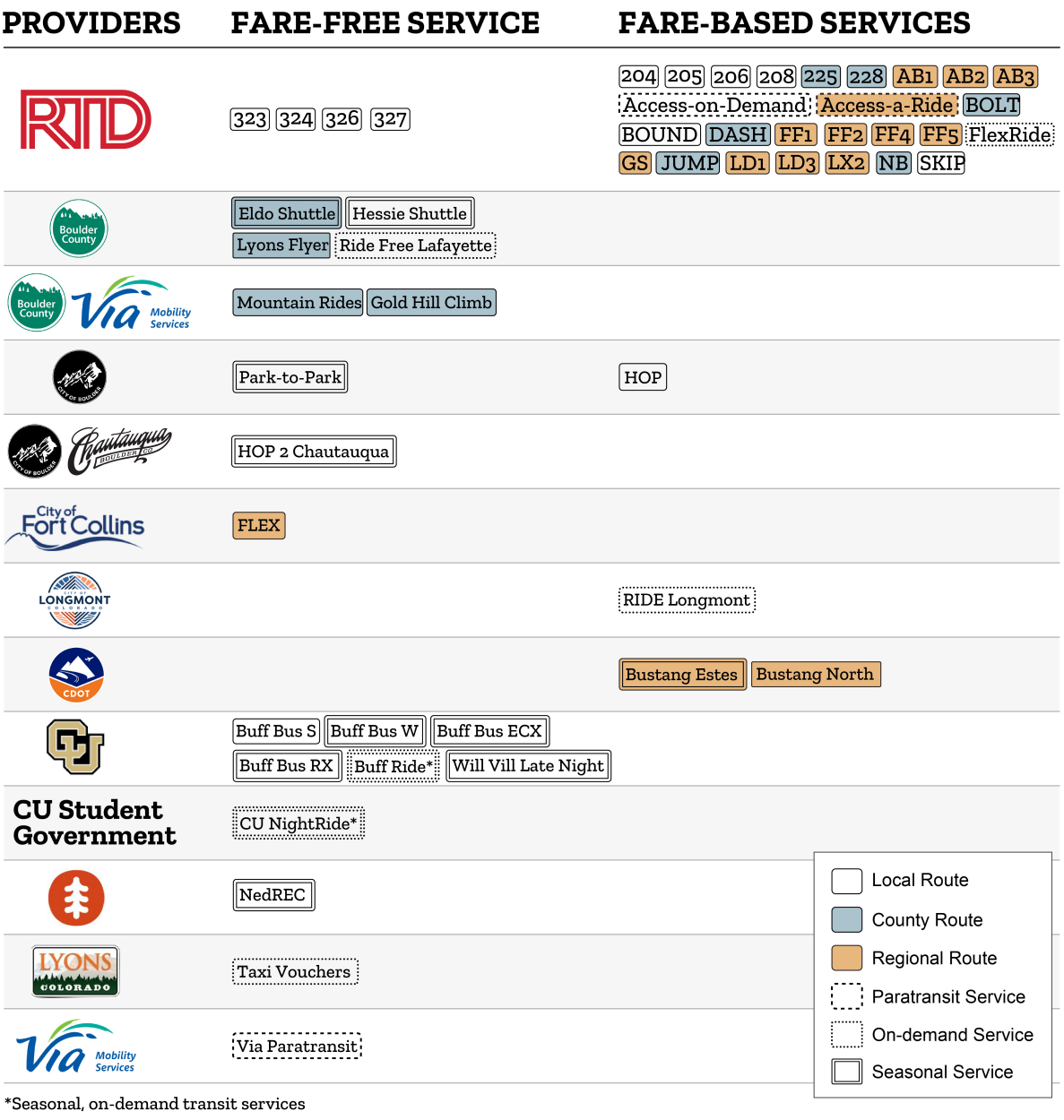
  - Williams Village Late Night (Will Vill Late Night) service operates between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m. Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays during the academic year[3]
  - The new on-demand Buff Ride service allows passengers to request a pick-up and drop-off at specific stations along the previous Marine Express route
- **CU Student Government** provides the on-demand CU NightRide service within City of Boulder limits during the academic year.
- **Eldora Ski Resort** provides a free wintertime shuttle service, the NedREC shuttle between the ski resort and the Nederland Community Center, in partnership with the Town of Nederland and Boulder County.
- The **Town of Lyons** offers free taxi vouchers to residents.
- **Via Mobility Services** is a non-profit transportation provider that delivers paratransit services across the county and region. Several of the providers listed above contract with Via Mobility Services to operate their services.



Via Mobility Services provides paratransit services across the county, including in Nederland.

[3] The Buff Bus RX and Williams Village Late Night routes are time-of-day extensions of the Buff Bus W route, with Buff Bus RX operating early in the morning and Will Vill Late Night operating late into the evening.

Figure 2-1 Existing Transit Service Providers in Boulder County



*Seasonal, on-demand transit services

Vanpool Services in Boulder County

Vanpooling is a commute option that provides an alternative to driving alone and can complement carpooling and public transit. A vanpool consists of a small group of commuters—typically four to eight people—who live and work near one another and share similar work schedules. Commuters travel together in a vehicle provided by the vanpool program.

Vanpool services are typically funded by participants who pay a monthly fee that generally covers the cost of the vehicle, fuel, insurance, and maintenance. (CU Boulder subsidizes vanpool membership for university faculty, staff, and students.) Driving responsibilities are typically shared among vanpool participants, and some employers may offer free or discounted parking for registered vanpools.

Boulder County is served by two regional vanpool programs: Way to Go, administered by DRCOG, and VanGo, administered by the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO).



Way to Go offers vanpool services throughout the greater Denver region.

Image Source: Commuting Solutions

2.2 Transit Governance and Policy Context

The authority to make decisions about transit serving Boulder County rests with the County and other local, regional, state, and federal entities. This section describes the regulations that govern the planning, design, and operations of transit in Boulder County, as well as local, regional, and state policies that establish priorities for transit investments.

Transit Authority and Agreements

Multiple entities have the authority to make decisions about transit planning, funding, capital improvements, and operations in Boulder County. This results in a transit ecosystem that requires coordination between agencies and can lead to complex and time-consuming decision-making processes.

Within the County

Entities within Boulder County have authority over some local transit services. They may fund and operate additional services to meet local needs and complement regional transit services.

Boulder County

Boulder County works with local, regional, and federal partners to coordinate a comprehensive regional multimodal transportation system. Three County Commissioners establish the County's strategic priorities, which are reflected in the County's Transportation Master Plan.

Boulder County has the authority to levy taxes to fund transit investments. For instance, the 0.1% Countywide Transportation Sales Tax funds road, transit, and multimodal projects, including transit planning and capital

improvements along regional corridors, as well as local, countywide, and regional fixed-route and on-demand transit services.[4]

Boulder County plays two transit roles: 1) it provides transit services (e.g., Eldo Canyon Shuttle, Ride Free Lafayette); and 2) it funds transit capital improvements, operations, and maintenance. The County also funds staff support for operations to help local agencies and transit providers establish new transit routes.

City of Boulder

The City of Boulder has developed a strategic vision for the transit system within its municipal boundary (Figure 2-2) and coordinates with RTD, Boulder County, and Via Mobility Services to plan, fund, and operate the City's local bus service. It is also responsible for cleaning and maintaining over 1,200 bus stops within the city limits.[5] The City's annual budget and strategic priorities are established by nine City Council members.

The City of Boulder launched the HOP route in 1994 as an inviting, frequent route connecting key destinations (Downtown, 29th St Mall, and CU Boulder campus).[6] The SKIP followed and eventually the full Community Transit Network (CTN)—HOP, SKIP, JUMP, BOLT, BOUND, and DASH—took shape.[7] RTD owns the majority of the CTN fleet and operates all routes except the HOP, which is currently operated by Via Mobility Services.

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[4] https://assets.bouldercounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/public-works-road-project-sales-tax-phasing-plan.pdf

[5] RTD and CU Boulder also maintain select bus stops with the City of Boulder. (2025 Report on Progress)

[6] https://www.dailycamera.com/2009/10/30/boulders-bus-scene-15-years-and-still-hopping/

[7] The LEAP and STAMPEDE routes were initially part of Boulder's Community Transit Network. The LEAP was replaced by the JUMP during a route reorganization, and CU Boulder assumed responsibility for operating the STAMPEDE, which is now the Buff Bus S: Stampede.

Boulder has had a voter-approved transportation sales tax for nearly 60 years, and this dedicated 0.75-cent tax is the City's primary mechanism for funding transit.[8] Until 2017, the City used a portion of the funds to buy additional transit service hours from RTD; that program was eliminated due to operator shortages.

Figure 2-2 Boulder Transportation Master Plan Renewed Vision for Transit

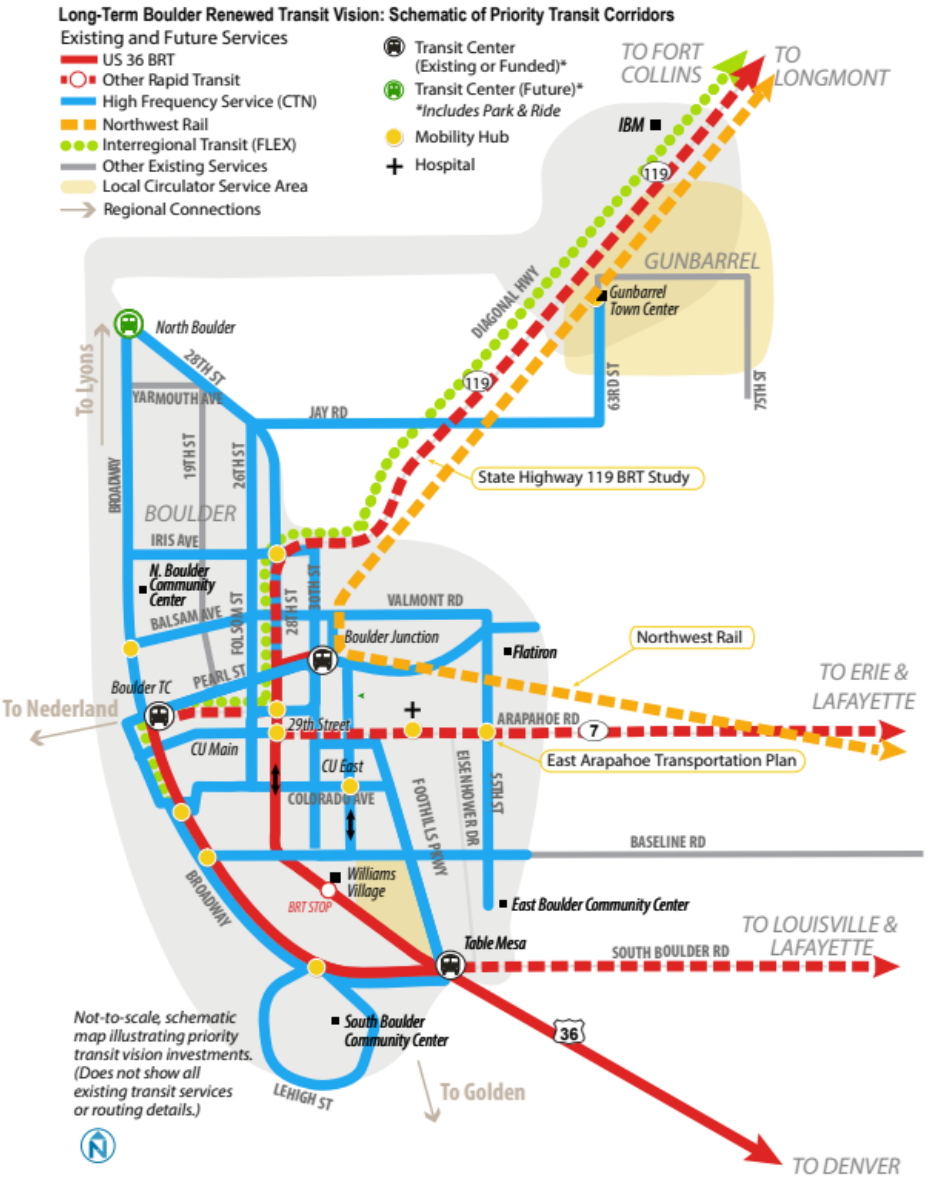


Image Source: City of Boulder

[8] 2025 Report on Progress

Other Local Municipalities

Each municipality in Boulder County oversees the non-RTD transit services within its boundary. The towns and cities have the authority to levy taxes to raise funds for transportation, among other uses. Several municipalities, including Longmont and Lyons, provide transit services that are operated by third parties. Local jurisdictions are typically responsible for maintaining the bus stops within their municipal boundaries.

University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder)

CU Boulder is responsible for on-campus transportation for its staff, faculty, and students. CU provides transit services within and between its campuses, partners with RTD, and contributes funding for the HOP service. CU Boulder faculty and staff are eligible for an EcoPass (a full-access transit pass) as an employee benefit, and annual student fees fund student passes.

CU Boulder Student Government (CUSG)

CU Boulder's elected student government directs the use of roughly $34 million in annual student fees, including an allocation to support the transit pass program. CUSG also provides the student-operated, on-demand CU NightRide service during the school year. Through an app, students, faculty and staff can request a ride to and from anywhere within City of Boulder limits.

Regional Transit Entities

Regional transit authorities govern transit service areas that extend well beyond Boulder County, in alignment with regional goals and priorities.

Regional Transportation District (RTD)

RTD and the regional public transportation system was established in 1969 by the Colorado General Assembly. RTD is generally responsible for the regional transit system, including bus, bus rapid transit, light rail, commuter rail, shuttle, and paratransit within its service area. The district encompasses eight counties, more than 40 municipalities, and a population of more than 3

million. RTD is governed by a 15-person publicly elected Board of Directors, each representing approximately 200,000 constituents. Boulder County is represented by two RTD Districts, Districts I and O.

RTD operates 21 bus routes in Boulder County and has jurisdiction over many aspects of the county's transit system: routing, service and operational characteristics, bus stop locations and spacing, and transit facilities. RTD has the authority to levy taxes through ballot measures (e.g., district-wide sales tax) and to raise bonds/securities. It is also a direct recipient of federal funding.

The Metropolitan Planning Agreement (2023) requires RTD, CDOT, and DRCOG to collaborate in regional transportation planning. The three agencies determine the transportation priorities and funding program, detailed in the Unified Planning Program of Work (UPPW), Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP).[9]



RTD operates the 300-series routes, including Route 324, in Longmont.

[9] Regional collaboration is described further in the RTD Accountability Committee August 26, 2025 presentation [link].

Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)

DRCOG is the federally designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the Denver metro region. Every four years, DRCOG leads an update to the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), which is the region's long-range vision for its multimodal transportation system. DRCOG also leads development of the TIP, the short-term, fiscally constrained implementation plan. The federal government requires all regionally significant transit capital projects, including those seeking federal funding, to be adopted into the TIP. State law (SB 90-208) also requires that DRCOG review and approve any fixed-guideway transit corridor (e.g., light rail, passenger rail, bus rapid transit) before construction.

DRCOG is a designated recipient for federal funding and distributes federal and state funding for transit planning, capital, and operations to RTD, Boulder County, and local governments.

DRCOG is governed by a Board of Directors comprised of an appointed elected official from each of its 59 member governments (municipal and county), three non-voting members appointed by the Governor, and one non-voting member from RTD. One of the Boulder County Commissioners serves on the DRCOG Board.

Front Range Passenger Rail District (FRPRD)

Founded in 2021 by the General Assembly of Colorado, FRPRD is the newest transportation authority in the region. FRPRD is comprised of 13 counties along the I-25 corridor between the Wyoming and New Mexico borders. This District is a political subdivision of the state separate from CDOT and is responsible for planning, designing, developing, financing, constructing, operating, and maintaining an interconnected passenger rail system along Colorado's Front Range. FRPRD is required to collaborate with RTD and Amtrak to ensure interconnectivity of the system.

The district has the authority to levy taxes through ballot measures to fund and support rail programs, including establishing station-area improvement

districts to construct and maintain the passenger rail stations. FRPRD is governed by a 24-member Board of Directors appointed by the Governor, MPOs, the rail companies, RTD, and other representatives.

Joint Service Executive Oversight Committee (JSEOC)

State legislation in 2024 (SB24-184) directed Colorado's three primary transit providers—RTD, FRPRD, and CDOT—to use their statutory authority to assess how they could collaboratively deliver the initial phase of Front Range passenger rail service, also known as Joint Service. RTD, CDOT, and FRPRD signed an intergovernmental agreement (IGA) that defined their cooperative governance structure and formed the JSEOC to act on behalf of the three entities. JSEOC includes executives or their appointees from RTD, FRPRD, CDOT, Colorado Transportation Investment Office (CTIO), CDOT's Clean Transit Enterprise (CTE), and the Governor's Office. JSEOC will negotiate access and construction agreements with BNSF Railway and select an operator for the passenger rail service.

State Transit Authorities

State transit authorities make statewide transit investment and funding decisions according to state goals and policies.

Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)

CDOT is responsible for the state highway system, which includes critical regional corridors in Boulder County: CO 7, CO 119, US 36/28th Street, CO 52, CO 66, CO 72, and CO 93. CDOT designs, constructs, operates, and maintains multimodal systems, operating the Bustang intercity bus service since 2015, as well as leading construction of the CO 119 BRT corridor and final design of the CO 7 corridor.

CDOT also prepares the long-range multimodal statewide transportation plan that sets the state's transportation vision, incorporating the regional transportation plans developed by MPOs across the state. Three oversight committees guide CDOT's transit and transportation activities: Colorado

Transportation Commission, Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee (STAC), and Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC).

Clean Transit Enterprise (CTE)

Established within CDOT in 2021, CTE's mission is to support the electrification of public transit and the expansion of transit and passenger rail services across Colorado. CTE provides funding to eligible transit entities for public transit infrastructure and operations but does not operate transit services directly. Grants for zero-emission transit vehicles are funded by the 2022 Clean Transit Retail Delivery Fee and support electrification planning, fleet acquisition, charging/refueling infrastructure, and facility upgrades.

The 2025 Oil & Gas Production Fee funds three new CTE grant programs:

- In 2026, the Local Transit Operations Program will begin allocating formula funds to more than 50 Colorado transit entities for the purchase of new vehicles and operations of new transit services.
- Beginning in 2027, the Local Transit Grant Program will award competitive funding for the creation of new regional transit authorities and the development or refurbishment of multimodal facilities.
- The Passenger Rail Grant Program currently supports the development of Northwest Passenger Rail and is anticipated to provide future support to RTD for the completion of the North Metro Corridor (N Line).

Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC)

This entity regulates utilities and facilities across the state, including some transportation services. PUC has been designated Colorado's lead oversight agency for rail public transportation systems in the state, including RTD. The PUC has jurisdiction over all public highway-rail crossings and administers the state's rail safety crossing program. PUC is governed by three Governor-appointed Commissioners.

Federal Transit Authority: United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)

Federal agencies preside over national transit investments and regulations, and USDOT also has authority over transit in Boulder County. The department provides technical assistance to local transit agencies, and provides funding to states, cities, and agencies. Within USDOT, the **Federal Transit Administration (FTA)** and **Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)** regulate and fund rail and bus transit in Boulder County. As a federal funding recipient, Boulder County must comply with federal project development and reporting requirements.

Figure 2-3 Entities with Authority Over Transit in Boulder County

Entity	Member Governments	Population	Transit Authority	Governance	Boulder County Representation
City of Boulder	1	108,150	▪ Levy taxes to fund transit investments ▪ Provide transit within Boulder ▪ Fund transit operations ▪ Fund bus stop maintenance	9 elected City Councilmembers; Citizen Transportation Advisory Board	--
University of Colorado Boulder (CU Boulder)	--	48,000	▪ Contract with RTD for student and staff/faculty transit passes ▪ Provide campus transit ▪ Fund operations (on-campus and within the City of Boulder), maintenance, and capital investments	Parking & Transportation Department; Sustainable Transportation program of student-run Environmental Center	--
CU Boulder Student Government (CUSG)	--	48,000	▪ Provide on-demand transit ▪ Fund operations on campus and within City of Boulder, maintenance, and fleet	Elected CU Boulder student government allocates $34 million in annual fees, including in support of student transit pass program	--
Boulder County	10	328,000	▪ Levy taxes to fund transit investments ▪ Provide transit within Boulder County ▪ Fund operational support for local transit agencies/providers ▪ Fund transit capital and maintenance ▪ Receive direct federal funding	3 elected County Commissioners	--

Entity	Member Governments	Population	Transit Authority	Governance	Boulder County Representation
Regional Transportation District (RTD)	40+ municipalities and 8 counties	3 million+	▪ Plan, operate, and maintain regional transit system, including routing, service, transit facilities, and bus stops ▪ Provide transit service and collect fares ▪ Receive direct federal funding	15 publicly elected Directors representing Districts of about equal population (200,000)	Represented by Districts I and O
Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)	50 municipalities and 9 counties	3.4 million	▪ Plan regional transportation system ▪ Develop guidelines and set policy ▪ Fund transit capital and operations ▪ Lead TIP development and approval ▪ Receive direct federal funding	63 appointed Directors, including an official from each member government and from RTD	1 Boulder County Commissioner serves on DRCOG Board
Front Range Passenger Rail District (FRPRD)	13 counties		▪ Levy taxes through ballot measures to fund and support rail programs ▪ Plan, design, develop, implement, finance, construct, operate, and maintain passenger rail system	24 appointed Directors, including 4 by MPOs, 1 by RTD, 1 each by freight rail companies	DRCOG appointee represents Boulder County
Joint Service Executive Oversight Committee (JSEOC)	--		▪ Assess how to deliver initial phase of passenger rail service ▪ Negotiate rail access and construction agreements with BNSF ▪ Select passenger rail operator	Executives from RTD, CDOT, FRPRD, CTIO, CTE, and Governor's Office	No direct representation
Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)	271 municipalities and 64 counties	6 million	▪ Hold authority over state highway system ▪ Prepare long-range transportation plan ▪ Provide transit service	Oversight by Colorado Transportation Commission, STAC, and TRAC	Boulder County is included in CDOT

Entity	Member Governments	Population	Transit Authority	Governance	Boulder County Representation
			▪ Design, construct, operate, and maintain transit		Engineering Regions 1 and 4
Clean Transit Enterprise (CTE)	271 municipalities and 64 counties	6 million	▪ Impose fees (Clean Transit Retail Delivery Fee and Oil & Gas Production Fees) to fund grantmaking ▪ Support public transit electrification ▪ Mitigate negative impacts of oil and gas production by investing in high quality public transit that can attract single occupancy vehicle trips to bus and rail	6 Governor-appointed Board Members and executive designees from CDOT, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE), and Colorado Energy Office	Current Board Chair represents City of Boulder
Colorado Public Utilities Commission (PUC)	271 municipalities and 64 counties	6 million	▪ Regulate transportation facilities ▪ Serve as designated State Oversight Agency for rail fixed-guideway public transportation systems, including RTD	3 Commissioners appointed by Governor	No direct representation
United States Department of Transportation (USDOT)	Approximately 35,700 municipalities[a]	342 million	▪ Regulate and fund public transit (FTA) ▪ Regulate and fund passenger rail (FRA)	US Secretary of Transportation appointed by President	FTA Region 8, FRA Region 6

Source: [a]US Census Bureau, 2022 Census of Governments, subcounty governments

Transit Regulations

A complex set of federal, state, and local regulations shape transit supply and demand in Boulder County. Regulations influence how and where transit service operates and how transit facilities, such as bus stops, are designed, built, and maintained.

A key focus of state, regional, and local regulations is to reduce transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions through a three-pronged strategy:

- Modeling future emissions from the transportation system and adjusting projects and policies to meet emissions reduction targets;
- Prioritizing transit investments that increase transit ridership; and
- Increasing transit-supportive land uses near frequent transit service.

Recommendations from Linking Boulder County will respond to this regulatory environment.

Transportation Policy Context

Strategies, policies, and goals established at the state, regional, county, and local levels of government steer transportation investments and priorities within Boulder County. Linking Boulder County's recommendations will integrate into this existing transportation policy context. Three types of policies influencing local transit planning and delivery are described below:

- Structural goals and objectives of the transportation system, such as mode share, vehicle miles traveled, and transit service hours;
- Climate policies to reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions; and
- Vision Zero policies to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes.

Transportation System Goals and Objectives

Boulder County and its partners and municipalities have developed transportation plans that outline clear goals and objectives for mobility

systems across the county. A sample of these transportation goals are described below.

- Boulder County's strategies to develop a multimodal transportation system include investing in transit improvements that are likely to increase countywide transit ridership and focusing transit investments on programs that reduce VMT, provide service to underserved communities, and enhance corridor service in key travel corridors.[10] The City of Lafayette has a goal of increasing non-single occupancy vehicle commute mode share from 2019 levels of 27%.[11]
- The City of Boulder has a goal of increasing transit service hours annually to keep pace with employment growth at a minimum. While employment in Boulder has grown 2.3% since 2019, transit service hours are 34% lower. [12]
- The Town of Erie established the principle that its transportation network should prioritize the needs of vulnerable populations.[13]
- RTD has an on-time performance goal of 86% for buses.[14] In 2025, RTD's bus services achieved an average on-time rate of 84% district-wide.

Climate Action Policies

Transportation is the largest source of greenhouse gases (GHG) in Colorado and the second largest in Boulder County.[15] Given robust state, regional, and

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[10] Boulder County, 2020. Boulder County Transportation Master Plan. https://assets.bouldercounty.gov/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/transportation-master-plan-tmp-update-summary-document-final.pdf

[11] City of Lafayette, 2023. Multimodal Transportation Plan.

[12] City of Boulder, 2025. Report on Progress.

[13] Town of Erie, 2024. Transportation Mobility Plan.

[14] RTD, 2020. 2021 Performance Measures. October 20, 2020.

[15] Boulder County, 2021. Greenhouse Gas Inventory. https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b84cd2357f9a4a5f9e094309b692a41e

local GHG reduction goals, Linking Boulder County will consider the GHG reduction potential of many types of transit investments.

- Colorado aims to reduce GHGs by 26% by 2025, 50% by 2030, and 90% by 2050 compared to 2005 levels.[16]
- Boulder County aims to reduce countywide GHG emissions by 80% of 2021 levels by 2030 and achieve carbon neutrality by 2035.[17]
- The City of Boulder strives to reduce GHG emissions to 50% of 2005 levels by 2030. As of 2023, the city had reduced emissions to 87% of 2005 levels.
- CU Boulder's campus climate goals include reducing emissions related to faculty, staff, and student commuting by 7% annually.[18]

Figure 2-4 Boulder County 2030 Emissions Reduction Goal

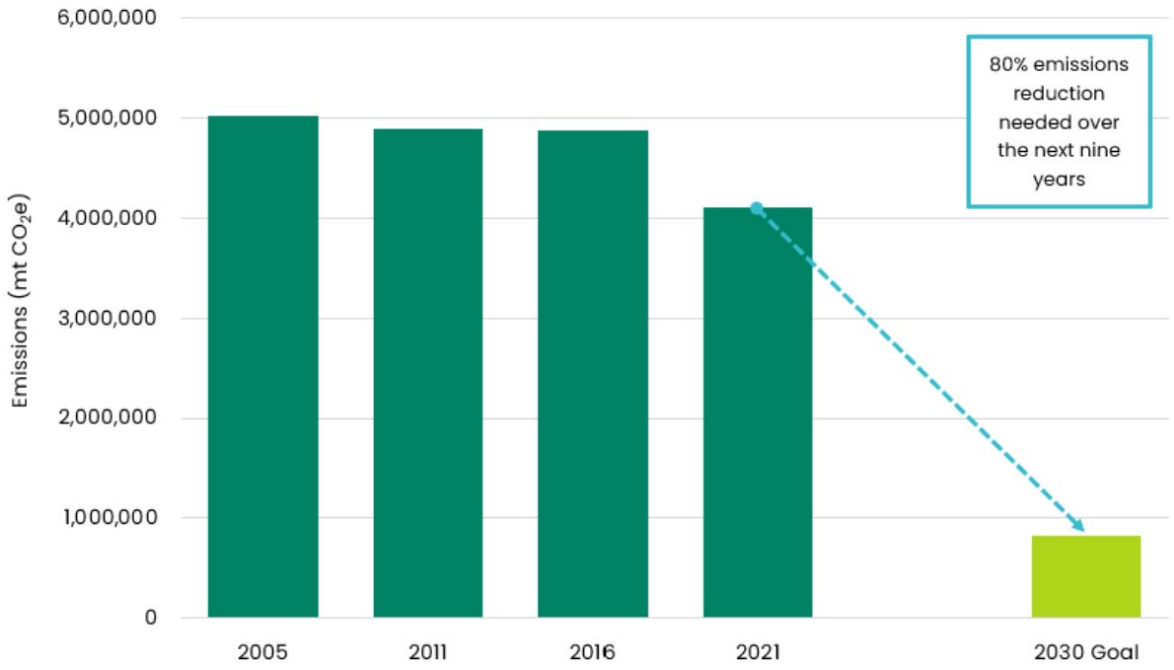


Image Source: 2021 Boulder County Greenhouse Gas Inventory

[16] CDOT 2021. Greenhouse Gas pollution Reduction Roadmap.

[17] Boulder County, 2021. Greenhouse Gas Inventory.

[18] University of Colorado Boulder, 2024. Climate Action Plan. https://www.colorado.edu/sustainability/media/10

Vision Zero Policies

Many municipalities within Boulder County have adopted Vision Zero goals and aim to eliminate fatal and serious injury crashes. Strategies to improve transportation safety include roadway design, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and enforcement.

- Boulder County's goal is to eliminate fatalities and serious injury crashes in unincorporated Boulder County by 2035. Through the first seven months of 2025, 13 people died in crashes in Boulder County, including eight deaths in unincorporated Boulder County.
- The City of Boulder adopted Vision Zero in 2014 with a goal of eliminating fatal and serious injury crashes by 2030. In 2024, Boulder reported 41 serious injury crashes and four fatalities.
- The City of Longmont adopted Vision Zero in 2023 with the goal of reducing traffic deaths and severe injuries on city roadways to zero by 2040.
- The Town of Superior developed a Vision Zero Action Plan in 2025 with the goal of eliminating serious injuries and fatal crashes on the town's transportation system.

2.3 Transit Funding

Funding for transit serving Boulder County generally comes from seven sources and includes permanent and temporary funding, as well as one-time grants. Understanding the funding landscape is critical to ensure Linking Boulder County's recommendations are realistic and implementable.

Today, transit funding generally falls into three categories: permanent funding, temporary or renewable funding, and grant funding. These categories are described below.

- **Permanent Funding:** Sources that are established as permanent revenue streams, such as local or county sales taxes approved by voters to be levied in perpetuity.

- **Temporary or Renewable Funding:** Sources that provide consistent revenue but have a sunset date (e.g., some local sales taxes) or may be changed or removed (e.g., CU funding, Eldora Mountain funding).
- **Grant Funding:** Often one-time payments (although certain grants may be multi-year or recurring) that are intended for a specific purpose (e.g., certain capital costs or operating expenses). Grants may provide higher funding amounts than other sources but are less consistent and reliable for ongoing funding.

The funding in these three categories comes from seven sources:

- **Federal:** Grants through the FTA, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and other federal agencies support transit capital and operating costs. These grants are generally provided via RTD and DRCOG. Boulder County recently became a direct recipient of FTA funds.
- **State:** Some funding from the federal government is given to CDOT to distribute to smaller agencies, and the department also distributes state funds. Additionally, CDOT directly funds Bustang service to Estes Park and Rocky Mountain National Park.
- **Regional:** The Metropolitan Planning Organization, DRCOG, provides grants for a variety of capital and operating costs using pass-through federal and state funds.
- **County:** Boulder County has a permanent 0.1% transportation sales tax; 15% is dedicated to transit service and 10% is dedicated to regional corridors, including transit capital improvements.
- **Municipality:** The City of Boulder and City of Longmont have permanent, dedicated funding sources for transportation, which fund transit services in those cities. The City of Boulder has an additional time-limited sales tax for transportation.
- **Farebox Revenue:** Farebox revenue, generated by rider fares, is a flexible source of revenue for both capital and operating costs. This is only generated by agencies and routes that charge fares.

- **Other:** CU Student Fees and funding from Eldora Mountain Resort support specific transit services.

Most transit services are funded through a combination of sources, such as multiple grants, using ongoing local funding (e.g., dedicated sales tax revenue) to leverage grant funding, and/or project partnerships that provide additional funding (e.g., CU Boulder).

Figure 2-5 Boulder County Transit Funding Sources

Transit Use / Program	Administering Agency	Farebox Revenue	Municipal Funding	County Funding	Regional Funding	State Funding	Federal Funding	Other	Funding Source
Regional Bus Service	RTD	●			●	●	●		FTA, RTD Sales Tax (0.6% permanent), Farebox Revenue
Eldo Shuttle	Boulder County			●					Boulder County Transportation Sales Tax (0.1%)
Hessie Shuttle	Boulder County			●					Boulder County Transportation Sales Tax (0.1%)
Lyons Flyer	Boulder County			●				●	Boulder County Transportation Sales Tax (0.1%), RTD (Partnership Program)
Ride Free Lafayette	Boulder County						●		American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)
HOP	City of Boulder				●		●		RTD, ARPA
HOP 2 Chautauqua	City of Boulder, Chautauqua Association		●					●	City of Boulder Sales Tax (0.6% permanent, 0.15% temporary), Colorado Chautauqua Association, Colorado Music Festival
Park-to-Park	City of Boulder							●	City of Boulder Parking Revenue (Chautauqua parking fees)

Transit Use / Program	Administering Agency	Farebox Revenue	Municipal Funding	County Funding	Regional Funding	State Funding	Federal Funding	Other	Funding Source
Bustang	CDOT	●				●	●		Farebox Revenue, Gas Tax (federal and state), vehicle registration fees, FASTER funds
Buff Bus	CU Boulder							●	CU Boulder Student Fees
CU NightRide	CU Boulder Student Government (CUSG)							●	CU Boulder Student Fees
Will Vill Late Night	CU Boulder							●	CU Boulder Student Fees
Buff Ride	CU Boulder							●	CU Boulder Student Fees
FLEX	City of Fort Collins (Transfort)		●	●		●	●	●	Fort Collins, Berthoud, Colorado State University, Longmont, Boulder, Boulder County Transportation Sales Tax (1.0%), State/Federal Grants
Eldora Shuttle	Eldora Mountain Resort							●	Eldora Mountain Resort
Lyons Taxi Voucher Program	Town of Lyons		●	●					Boulder County Transportation Sales Tax (1.0%), Town of Lyons

Transit Use / Program	Administering Agency	Farebox Revenue	Municipal Funding	County Funding	Regional Funding	State Funding	Federal Funding	Other	Funding Source
RIDE Longmont	City of Longmont	●	●				●	●	RTD (Partnership Program), Federal Government (Community Project Funding), City of Longmont, Farebox Revenue
Ride Free Longmont	City of Longmont		●						City of Longmont Streets Fund (0.75% sales and use tax)
Gold Hill Climb	Boulder County, Via Mobility Services			●			●		Boulder County Transportation Sales Tax (0.1%), FTA Section 5311 Grant (CDOT pass-through of federal dollars), Donations
Mountain Rides	Boulder County, Via Mobility Services			●			●		Boulder County Transportation Sales Tax (0.1%), FTA Section 5311 Grant (CDOT pass-through of federal dollars), Donations
Via Paratransit	Via Mobility Services							●	Contract revenue from other service operations, grants

2.4 Past Plan and Transit Enhancement Initiative Review

Previous planning efforts have recommended new and enhanced transit services across Boulder County, several of which are being implemented in the next decade. This section describes common themes and recommendations from past plans, as well as transit projects and programs that are assumed as part of the baseline for Linking Boulder County.

Review of Past Transit Plans

Many transit plans developed in recent years have proposed new transit services and infrastructure in Boulder County. Common recommendations and themes from the past transit plans include the need to:

- Focus transit investments on regionally significant corridors;
- Accelerate transportation emissions reductions, in part by shifting driving trips to transit;
- Increase transit coverage and service frequencies to better serve local municipalities;
- Acknowledge RTD's fiscal constraints and limitations in completing FasTracks projects and expanding base system service levels; and
- Explore innovative ways to deliver more transit to the county.

The five previous plans that have the most significant impact on Linking Boulder County are summarized below.

Boulder County Transportation Master Plan (2020)

Boulder County's 2020 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) identified a future transit network vision (Figure 2-6), developed in collaboration with the Consortium of Cities.[19] The vision includes a network of transit routes with different service types, infrastructure, and operations and calls for enhancing existing transit services and adding new connections.

Figure 2-6 Transit Network Vision, Boulder County Transportation Master Plan (2020)

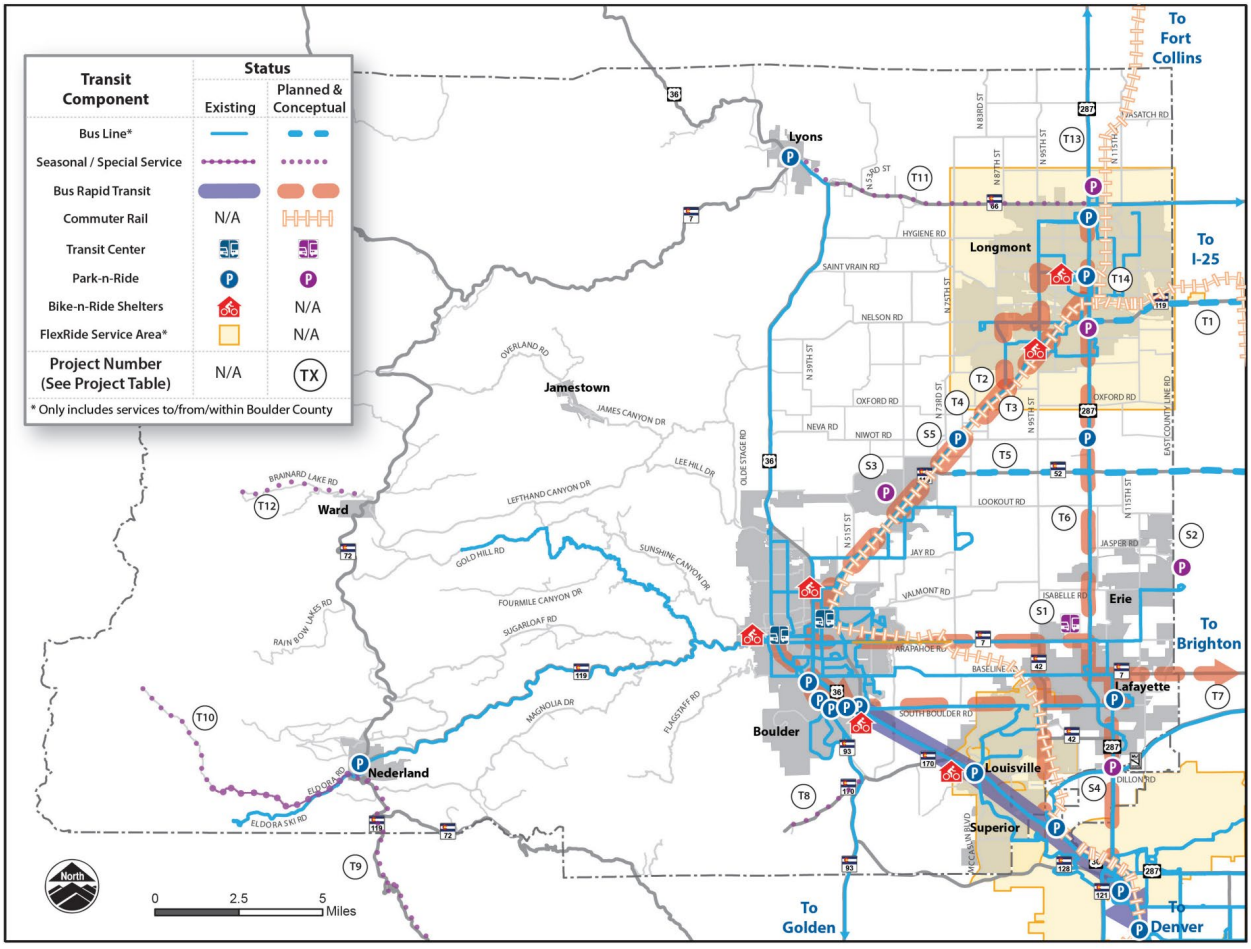


Image Source: Boulder County Transportation Master Plan, 2020

[19] Consortium of Cities includes representatives of Boulder, Erie, Jamestown, Lafayette, Longmont, Louisville, Lyons, Nederland, Superior, Ward, and Broomfield (non-voting member).

Key implementation actions include:

- **Expand and Enhance Transit Services and Infrastructure:** Improve existing services, develop new routes, and upgrade facilities (e.g., bus stops, shelters, bike racks) to improve safety, comfort, and reliability.
- **Advance Major Regional Transit Projects:** Support implementation of key bus rapid transit (BRT) corridors and focus on completion of the Northwest Commuter Rail and Peak Service Plan.
- **Promote Equitable, Sustainable, and Multimodal Mobility:** Prioritize investments that reduce vehicle miles traveled, improve access for underserved communities, and connect key north-south and east-west corridors.
- **Foster Collaboration and Innovative Service Delivery:** Partner with regional transit agencies and neighboring counties to coordinate mobility improvements, explore alternative service models, and address unique travel needs such as mountain and seasonal services.

RTD System Optimization Plan (2022) and Upcoming Comprehensive Operational Analysis

RTD's System Optimization Plan (SOP) was part of a visioning exercise called Reimagine RTD. The SOP outlined fiscally constrained service plan recommendations to address the most urgent service needs. Since adopting the SOP, RTD has incrementally implemented those recommendations in conjunction with pandemic-recovery service enhancements. Some SOP recommendations for routes serving Boulder County have yet to be implemented.

In 2026, RTD is launching a Comprehensive Operational Analysis (COA) to assess existing RTD services and develop a fiscally constrained short-term service plan and a long-range transit service vision. The COA may also address outstanding SOP recommendations.

City of Boulder Transportation Master Plan (2019 & 2014)

The City of Boulder's 2014 Transportation Master Plan (TMP) introduced the **Renewed Transit Vision** (see Figure 2-2), a package of transit services, capital investments, policies, and programs that the City is working to complete:

- Expand the high-frequency Community Transit Network (CTN) with at least 10-minute peak and 15-minute off-peak service.
- Enhance regional transit along the CO 119, CO 7, and South Boulder Road corridors.
- Build Northwest Rail.
- Implement a new North Boulder transit center at Broadway and US 36 and 10 mobility hubs (Figure 2-7).

Figure 2-7 City of Boulder Mobility Hub and Transit Access Vision (2019)

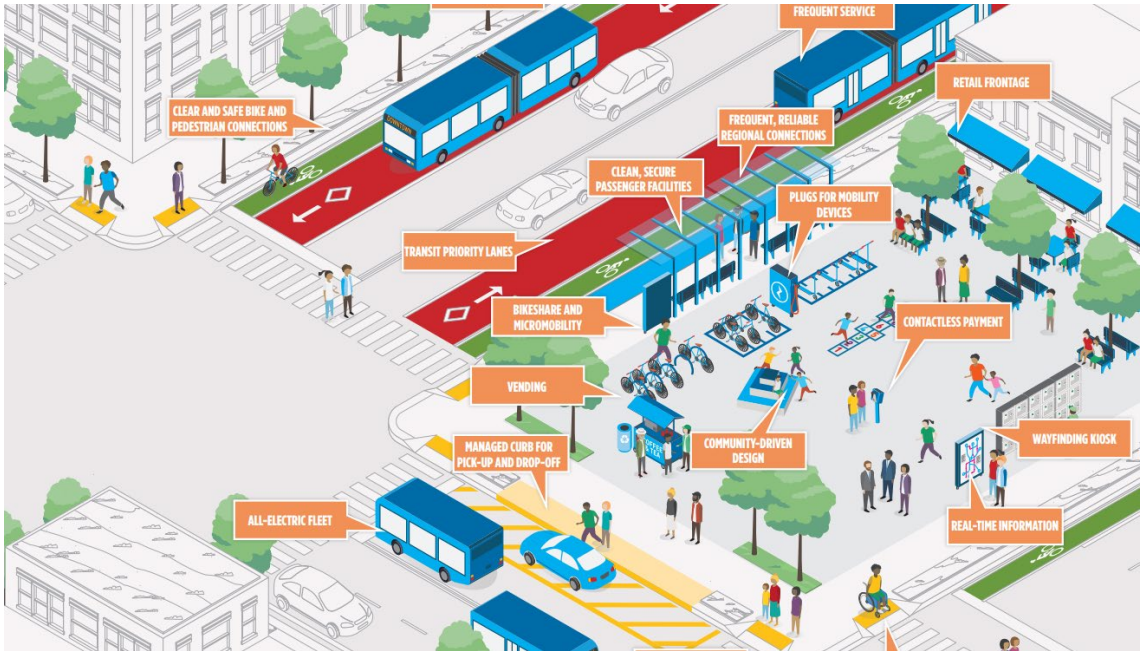


Image Source: City of Boulder TMP, 2019

Boulder's 2019 TMP identified policy and investment priorities that create safe, equitable, reliable, and sustainable travel choices. The City's policy framework for achieving the TMP goals includes transit-supportive policies such as Complete Streets, Vision Zero, and the Renewed Transit Vision. Boulder's priorities are to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips, promote an equitable

and accessible all-mode transportation system, and enhance regional coordination and connections.

The TMP listed 10 initiatives, including the following five related to transit:

- Provide mobility options by implementing the Renewed Vision for Transit (2014 TMP) and expanding HOP service to north and east Boulder.
- Deliver transit in new ways by expanding the City's role as local transit provider for CTN routes and exploring the creation of a county transit agency.
- Explore new transit delivery models and funding sources.
- Enhance regional connections by advancing the design and funding of all Northwest Area Mobility Study corridors (prioritizing the CO 119 and CO 7 multimodal corridors) and advocating for expansion of the Flatiron Flyer and FLEX transit services.
- Manage travel demand by expanding EcoPass programs.

Northwest Area Mobility Study (NAMS) (2014)

In response to significant delays and cost increases for the proposed FasTracks Northwest Rail project, NAMS identified and prioritized additional mobility improvements for the northwest area of RTD's service area. RTD led the study in collaboration with CDOT, DRCOG, and municipal and county governments, including Boulder County, the cities of Boulder, Lafayette, Longmont, and Louisville, the Town of Superior, and CU Boulder. NAMS evaluated five key areas:

- **Phased Construction of Northwest Rail:** Evaluated options to accelerate implementation of the commuter rail corridor between Westminster and Longmont. Due to funding challenges and the inability to secure a railroad right-of-way agreement, completion of Northwest Rail was identified as a long-term goal.
- **North Metro Rail Extension to Longmont:** Analyzed options to extend the N Line commuter rail from Westminster to Longmont. The high

estimated cost and low ridership resulted in a recommendation not to proceed with this corridor extension.

- **US 36 Corridor:** Defined the remaining FasTracks investment for the US 36 BRT corridor, including the opening day operating plan and desired 2035 service levels.
- **Six Candidate Arterial BRT Corridors:** Recommended completing the planning and design of the CO 119, CO 7, and US 287 BRT corridors and exploring arterial BRT or enhanced bus treatments along South Boulder Road, 120th Avenue, and CO 42 / 95th Street (see Figure 2-8).
- **Denver to US 36 Reverse Commute:** Identified ways to improve the reverse commute congestion between Denver Union Station and the US 36 corridor.

Figure 2-8 Northwest Area Mobility Study Recommendations

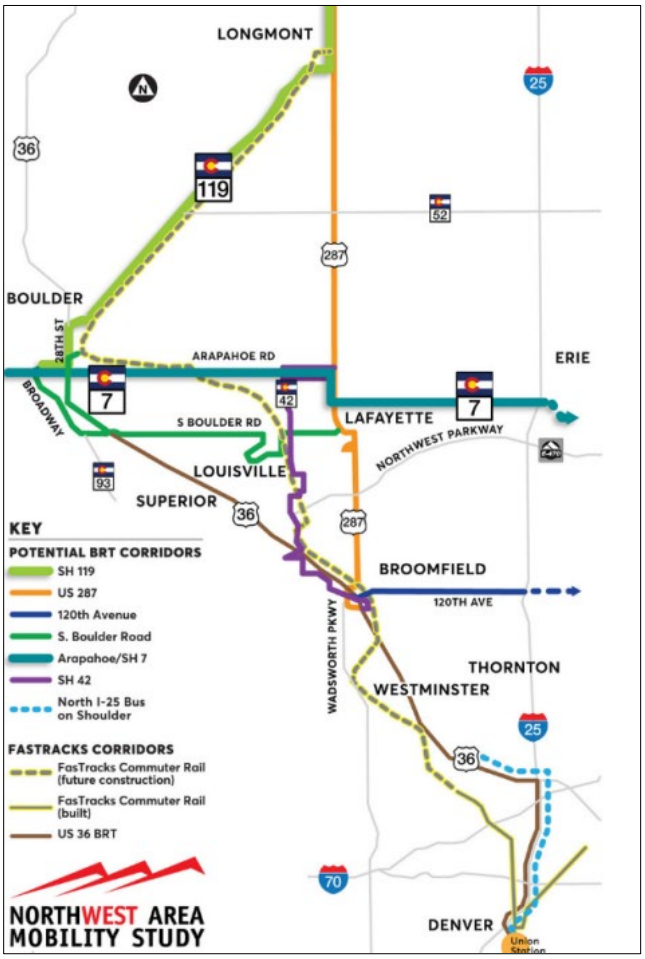


Image Source: RTD

FasTracks (2004)

Since 2004, RTD has completed 25 miles of light rail track and 53 miles of commuter rail track, implemented the Flatiron Flyer BRT service, and opened a renovated Union Station in Denver. While the originally proposed FasTracks budget was $4.7 billion, RTD has spent $5.5 billion to partially implement the package of transit investments.

RTD's *Finishing FasTracks* report (2025) acknowledged that the Northwest Rail (extending the B Line from Westminster through Louisville, Boulder Junction, and Downtown Longmont) and North Metro Rail (completing the N Line extension from Eastlake & 124th in Thornton to CO 7 / 162nd Avenue, approximately 5 miles east of Boulder County) commuter rail projects remain incomplete.[20] The costs are estimated at $650 million and $396 million respectively, and, without new funding sources, RTD does not expect to finish the projects before 2034. However, RTD is also exploring peak hour service, and the JESOC is developing the Joint Service development plan to launch passenger rail service by 2029 (see Figure 2-9).

[20] Two FasTracks projects outside of Boulder County are also incomplete: The Southwest Extension of the D Line to Highlands Ranch, and the Central Extension of the L Line to the A Line's 38th & Blake Station.

Figure 2-9 Proposed Joint Services Stations

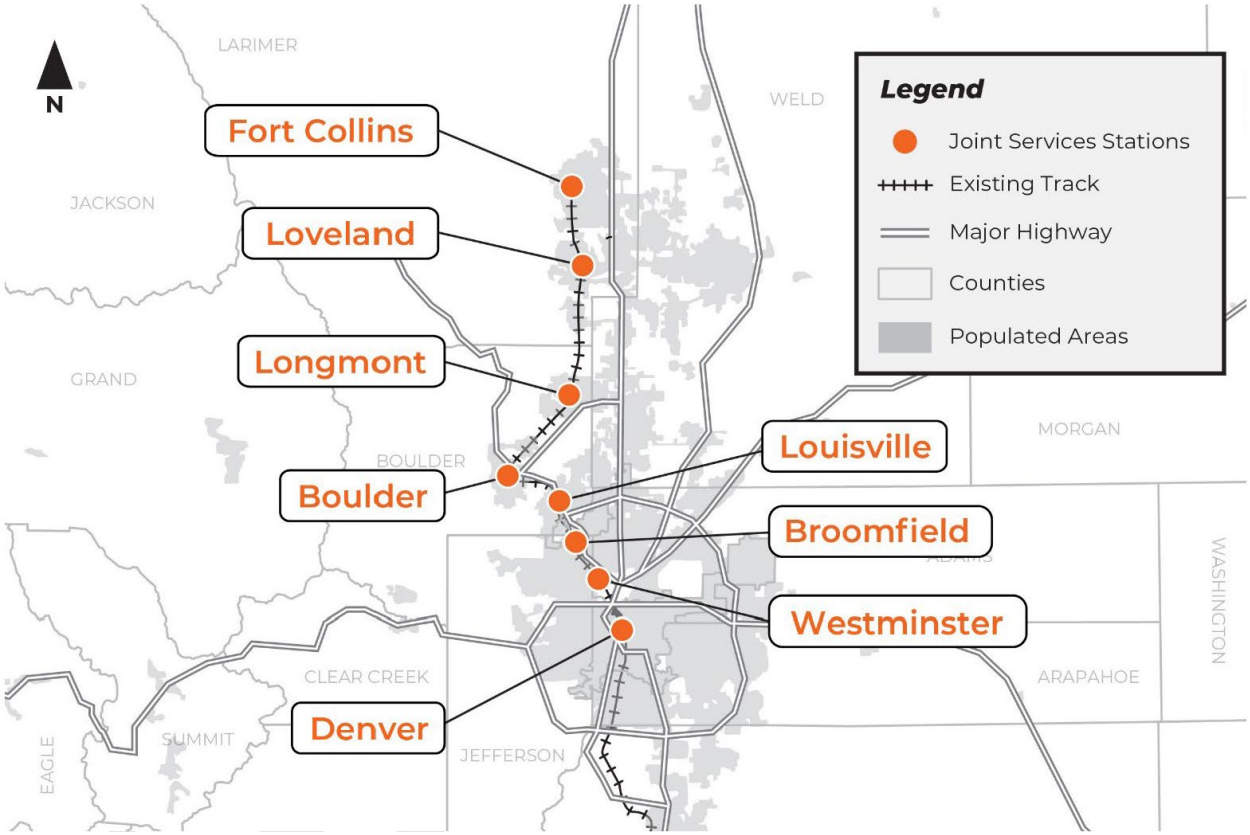


Image Source: Greater Denver Transit

What has the community said about transit in recent plans?

RTD's SOP (2022) process generated more than 1,600 public comments, with approximately a quarter relating to transit in Boulder County. Commenters stressed the importance of:

- Reopening and expanding service to Boulder Junction
- Restoring regional express routes (e.g., FF2, FF4, GS)
- Improving connectivity to CU Boulder's growing East Campus
- Service equity for Longmont, Erie, and Lyons
- Recognizing the tension between commuting efficiency and neighborhood access
- Addressing deep frustration over unmet FasTracks promises, especially Northwest Rail
- Improving airport access and service frequency

During **Boulder County's TMP** (2020) process, survey respondents identified reducing traffic congestion as the top transportation priority. Community members also emphasized the importance of enhancing transit services and walking and biking facilities, as well as improving the quality of bus stops. Increasing frequency and expanding the transit service area were the top priorities for improving transit in Boulder County. Secondary priorities included improving travel times, adding evening or weekend service, and reducing fares or increasing access to passes.

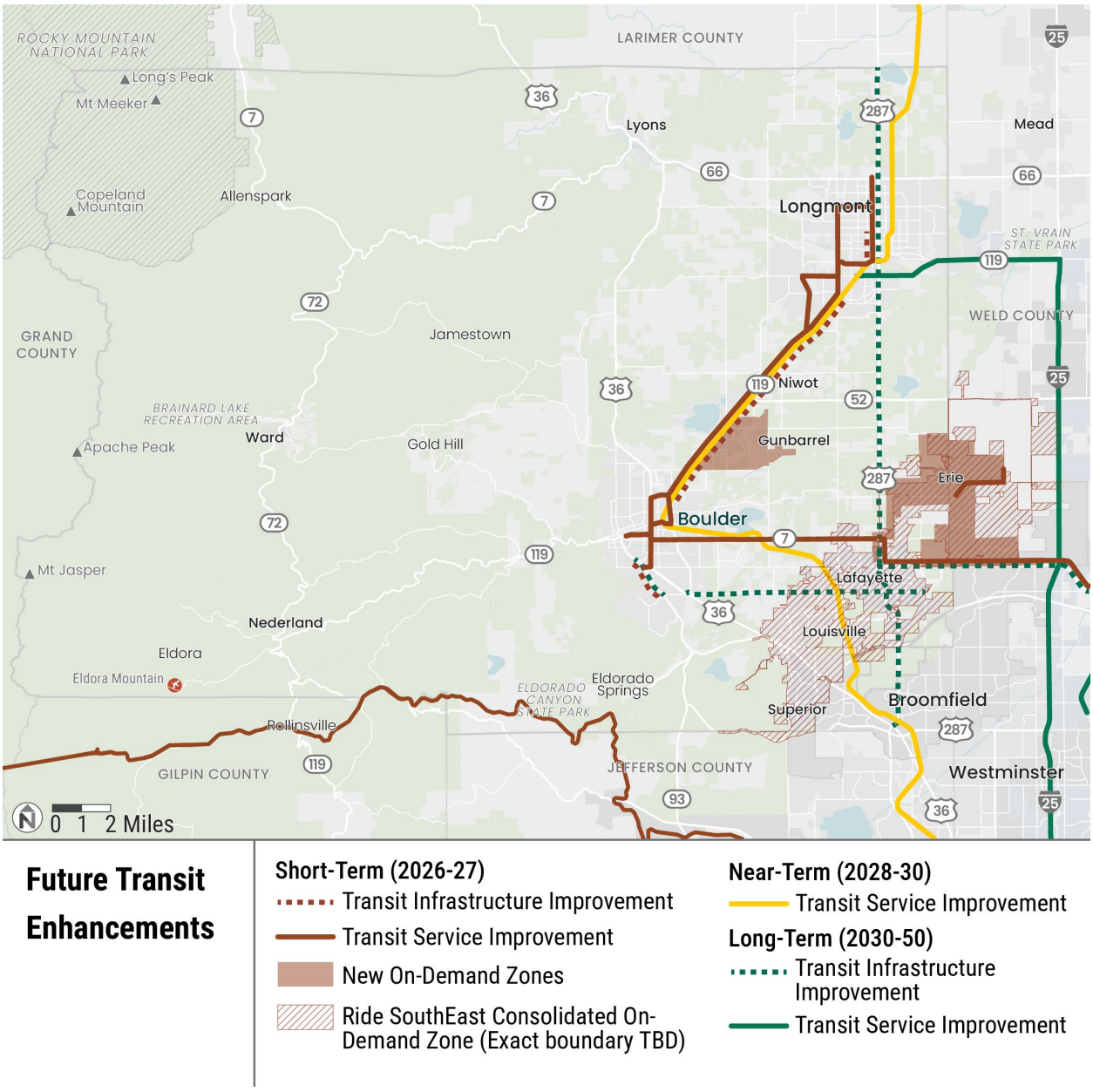
Public feedback during the **City of Boulder's TMP** (2019) process included the following themes:

- Focus on travel safety
- Recognize how land use, safety, and comfort influence travel choices
- Accelerate GHG reduction efforts
- Restore RTD service and reduce fares
- Create a regional solution to managing congestion
- Prepare for new transportation technology
- Identify new transportation funding sources

Future Transit Enhancements

Several transit projects with significance for Boulder County are planned and committed in the near term, including new and enhanced transit services and infrastructure improvements. These committed transit improvements are summarized in Figure 2-10 and key projects are described below.

Figure 2-10 Future Transit Enhancements



Source: Boulder County, RTD, CDOT, City of Boulder, City of Longmont, Front Range Passenger Rail District

CO 119 Diagonal Flyer BRT Corridor

CO 119 between Boulder and Longmont is currently being transformed into a multimodal corridor with BRT service and a commuter bikeway. The corridor will have three new BRT stations along Diagonal Highway, at 63rd Street, CO 52, and Niwot Road, as well as transit priority improvements such as transit queue bypass lanes and transit signal priority (TSP). The separated commuter bikeway will extend from CO 119 and Hover Street in Longmont to CO 119 and 47th Street in Boulder.



Construction of the Diagonal Flyer and commuter bikeway is underway on CO 119.
Image Source: Boulder County

Two new Diagonal Flyer BRT routes will replace the existing BOLT service between Boulder and Longmont. The Blue and Orange routes have the same terminus in Longmont (i.e., the new Park Ridge/Main St Station) and then take different routes to the Diagonal corridor. The Blue route will travel to Downtown Boulder station via 28th Street, and the Orange route will connect to CU Boulder's main campus (Baseline and Broadway) via Boulder Junction and 28th Street. Along CO 119, their combined frequencies during peak hours will be 15 minutes, replacing the Route J and operating twice as frequently as

the existing 30-minute BOLT service. The Diagonal Flyer BRT service is expected to begin in early 2028.

CO 7 Boulder to Brighton BRT Corridor

The CO 7 corridor between Arapahoe Avenue and 28th Street in Boulder and US 85 in Brighton will include Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes, TSP, station improvements, and multimodal connections, including regional bike facilities. The capital investments between Boulder and US 287 are funded by CDOT, City of Boulder, and Boulder County, and the BAT lanes have already been implemented in the City of Boulder between 28th Street and 65th Street.

The fare-free BRT starter service is funded through regional TIP funding and is expected to begin operation in summer 2026. It will operate in addition to the existing JUMP route and serve 16 stations along the corridor. In the first year, the new service will operate every 30 minutes between 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. on weekdays and expand to seven days a week in the second year.

On-Demand Services

Three on-demand services that have been in the planning phases for several years will be implemented in 2026. Ride Gunbarrel will supplement the existing Route 205. Ride Southeast's service area will cover Superior, Louisville, Lafayette, and Erie. The Erie Bee is a new, fare-free, on-demand service in Erie that will connect to the JUMP route, linking Erie, Lafayette, and Boulder.

Joint Service Passenger Rail

Joint Service is a collaboration between RTD, CDOT, and FRPRD to deliver intercity passenger rail service between Denver Union Station, Westminster, Broomfield, Louisville, Boulder, Longmont, Loveland, and Fort Collins by January 2029. The service will initially have three round-trips per day,[21]

[21] Kaufmann, Lisa, 2025. "Joint Service Overview: A process for delivering passenger rail from Denver to Ft. Collins." Boulder Chamber Transportation Connections, Connect Boulder Fall Meeting presentation, September 25, 2025. Boulder, CO.

functioning as the starter service for Front Range Passenger Rail between Fort Collins and Pueblo (and eventually Trinidad), which requires additional capital and operating funding. The Joint Service would follow the proposed FasTracks Northwest Rail alignment but operate as passenger rail rather than commuter rail.

Mountain Rail

CDOT's Mountain Rail project will bring increased passenger rail service to the existing Union Pacific Railroad mountain corridor as coal freight-rail volumes are declining. A new 25-year lease agreement for the Moffat Tunnel allows up to three daily round trips, while preserving freight rail access along the corridor.[22]

CDOT is developing a service plan for passenger rail between Denver Union Station, Winter Park, Steamboat Springs, and Craig. Initial daily service between Denver, Winter Park, Fraser, and Granby is targeted for launch in November 2026 and would be in addition to the existing Amtrak Winter Park Express and California Zephyr services. There are three service patterns envisioned on the Mountain Rail corridor:

- **Short Pattern:** Denver to Granby via Winter Park
- **Long Pattern:** Denver to Craig via Granby and Steamboat Springs
- **Yampa Valley Pattern:** Between Oak Creek and Craig

The short and long service patterns would use proposed new rail stations in Arvada, approximately 5 miles south of Boulder County, and Rollinsville, approximately 1 mile south of Boulder County. The Mountain Rides service connecting Ward, Nederland, and Rollinsville stops adjacent to the proposed new Rollinsville rail station.

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[22] CDOT, 2025. Mountain Rail Open House Presentation, June 2025. https://www.codot.gov/projects/coloradomountainrail/assets/june-mountain-rail-open-house-4-presentation.pdf

Figure 2-11 Committed Transit Enhancements in Boulder County by Estimated Completion Date

Project (Lead Agency)	Transit Improvement Description	Mode	Status	Estimated Completion Date	Transit Service
Erie Bee	On-demand pilot service in the Town of Erie.	On Demand	Contracting	2026	New service
Ride Gunbarrel	Supplementing existing Route 205 with flex-route service connecting Gunbarrel, the future Diagonal Flyer BRT (CO 119), and Boulder.	Flex Route	Contracting	2026	New service
Ride SouthEast	On-demand service covering Erie, Lafayette, Louisville, and Superior.	On Demand	Contracting	2026	New service
JUMP Extension to Erie High School (RTD)	Extension of existing JUMP pattern that serves Erie during AM/PM peak periods. Service will extend to Erie High School.	Bus	Planning	2027	Extension of existing service
CO 7 BRT Starter Transit Service (Boulder County)	Two-year pilot of fare-free BRT service from Downtown Boulder Station to Downtown Brighton, operating every 30 minutes. With the existing JUMP service, the combined transit service frequency on CO 7 will be 15 minutes.	Bus	Planning	2026	New service
US 36 / 28th Street and CO 93 / Broadway Corridor Project Phase 1 (City of Boulder)	Intersection improvements to provide transit priority at CO 93 / Broadway & Table Mesa and CO 93 / Broadway & Regent.	BRT, Bus	Final Design	2026	No service, infrastructure only
Coffman Street Mobility	Multimodal capital improvements between 1st Avenue and 9th Avenue, including dedicated bus lanes, queue bypass	BRT, Bus	Construction	Summer 2026 (9th to 3rd	No service, infrastructure

Project (Lead Agency)	Transit Improvement Description	Mode	Status	Estimated Completion Date	Transit Service
Improvements (City of Longmont)	lanes, TSP, enhanced shelters, boarding platforms, separated bike lanes, protected intersections, and bicycle parking. Relocating transit facility from 8th Avenue and Coffman Street to future transit hub at 1st Avenue and Main Street.			Avenues); December 2027 (3rd to 1st Avenues)	only (CO 119 BRT will use enhanced Coffman St)
Mountain Rail: Phase 1 (CDOT)	Initially one round-trip per day, using existing stations between Denver Union Station and Granby. Subsequently, additional trips with proposed new stations in Arvada (about 5 miles south of Boulder County) and Rollinsville (about 1 mile from Boulder County).	Passenger Rail	Preliminary Design	November 2026	New service
CO 119 Safety, Mobility, & Bikeway Project (CDOT)	Approximately 10-mile corridor between Boulder and Longmont. Capital improvements include stations (some with Park-n-Ride), queue bypass lanes, intersection improvements, TSP, and regional bikeway. Diagonal Flyer BRT service will replace existing BOLT and former Route J services and include two routes with combined frequencies of 15 minutes in peak hours and 30 minutes throughout the day and on weekends.	BRT	Construction	2027	Replace existing (BOLT) and former (Route J) services
Northwest Rail Joint Service (CDOT, RTD, FRPRD)	Three roundtrips per day along existing BNSF tracks from Denver Union Station to Westminster, Broomfield, Louisville, Boulder, Longmont, Loveland, and Fort Collins. Improvements to rail right-of-way to be determined.	Passenger Rail	Preliminary Design	January 2029	New service

Project (Lead Agency)	Transit Improvement Description	Mode	Status	Estimated Completion Date	Transit Service
Northwest Rail (B Line) Completion (RTD)	The full Northwest Rail corridor is 39 miles from Denver Union Station to Downtown Longmont. Six miles have been completed as RTD B Line from Denver Union Station to Westminster. Remaining are 33 miles from Westminster to Longmont, serving Boulder Junction and Downtown Louisville.	Commuter Rail	Voter approved but unfunded	Not before 2030	New service
North Metro Rail (N Line) Completion (RTD)	The proposed North Metro Rail corridor is 18 miles from Denver Union Station to CO 7 / 162nd Avenue in Thornton. RTD has completed 12.5 miles of the N Line from Denver Union Station to 124th Avenue / Eastlake. Remaining are 5.5 miles from 124th Avenue / Eastlake to CO 7 / 162nd Avenue in Thornton, approximately 3.5 miles from the county line.	Commuter Rail	Voter approved but unfunded	Not before 2030	New service
Increased Base System Bus Service Completion (RTD)	FasTracks included increased bus service, both bus feeders to rapid transit and suburb-to-suburb service. By 2025 RTD was to have provided 700,000 hours of bus service annually.	Bus	Voter approved but unfunded	Not before 2030	New service and increased frequency of existing service
CO 7 BRT: Boulder to Brighton (CDOT)	Multimodal improvements along the 26.6-mile corridor from Boulder (US 36 / 28th Street) to Brighton. Transit capital improvements include BAT lanes, queue bypass lanes, and TSP, along with regional bikeway and sidewalk improvements. Also planned are operational and safety improvements at CO 7 /95th Street intersection.	BRT	Planning and Final Design	Boulder BAT lanes complete; all other improvements by 2030-2039	Continuation of starter CO 7 BRT service

Project (Lead Agency)	Transit Improvement Description	Mode	Status	Estimated Completion Date	Transit Service
CO 119 BRT Extension	Extend service from Longmont east along CO 119 to I-25 Park-n-Ride. Includes BRT, safety and multimodal improvements, and the Firestone-Longmont Mobility Hub.	BRT	Adopted	2030-2039	New service
I-25 North BRT (CDOT)	Plan for BRT on 30-mile corridor along I-25 between Denver Union Station and the Firestone-Longmont Mobility Hub at I-25 and CO 119.	BRT	Adopted	2030-2039	New service
US 36 / 28th Street and CO 93 / Broadway Corridor Project Phase 2 (City of Boulder)	Analysis of converting general purpose lanes to BAT lanes along CO 93 / Broadway between Table Mesa and 18th Street.	BRT, Bus	Adopted	2030-2039	No service, infrastructure only
South Boulder Road Multimodal Corridor Improvements (Boulder County)	Recommended transit infrastructure improvements between South Boulder Road / Table Mesa Drive in Boulder and 120th Street in Lafayette include BAT lanes, queue bypass lanes, TSP, and bus stop enhancements. Unfunded service improvements to increase speed and frequency.	BRT	Planning	2040-2050	Infrastructure only
US 287 BRT (TBD)	Approximately 20-mile corridor between US 36 and Larimer County Line includes BAT lanes, queue bypass lanes, and stations. Unfunded service improvements include FLEX Express route between Fort Collins and Denver Union Station, BRT service between Longmont and Broomfield, and local service between Lafayette and Broomfield. Includes US 287 Superstation at Lucerne Drive.	BRT	Planning	TBD	Infrastructure only

2.5 Conclusion

The findings in this chapter illustrate that transit in Boulder County is delivered through a complex but coordinated network of service providers, governance structures, funding sources, and multi-level planning efforts. Dozens of entities share responsibility for transit decisions, and transit funding is drawn from a variety of sources. Recent and ongoing plans demonstrate a consistent commitment to expanding and enhancing transit services throughout the county. Chapter 3 builds on this context by reviewing the public transit services operating in Boulder County today.

3 Transit Service in Boulder County Today

This chapter provides a detailed review of the public transit services operating in Boulder County today. By exploring the characteristics and performance of existing services, we can better understand opportunities for Linking Boulder County.

What is the purpose of this chapter?

This chapter documents all transit providers in the county including service characteristics, ridership and performance trends, and how these services vary throughout a large, geographically diverse county. Key findings include:

- **Complex Transit Network:** Transit service in Boulder County is delivered by a complex network of 12 operators providing 54 distinct services, including fixed-route, general public on-demand services, and paratransit. This results in an extensive network, but one that can be challenging to understand and navigate.
- **Varied Local Coverage:** Local fixed-route service is heavily concentrated in the City of Boulder, which is home to some of the county's highest-performing routes: the SKIP, BOUND, and HOP. Service that runs every 15 minutes or better is also concentrated in Boulder and on routes that connect to other cities. Longmont is served by a combination of local fixed-route and on-demand services, while Lafayette, Louisville, and Superior are largely served by on-demand zones and longer county routes. Several areas in the county lack any

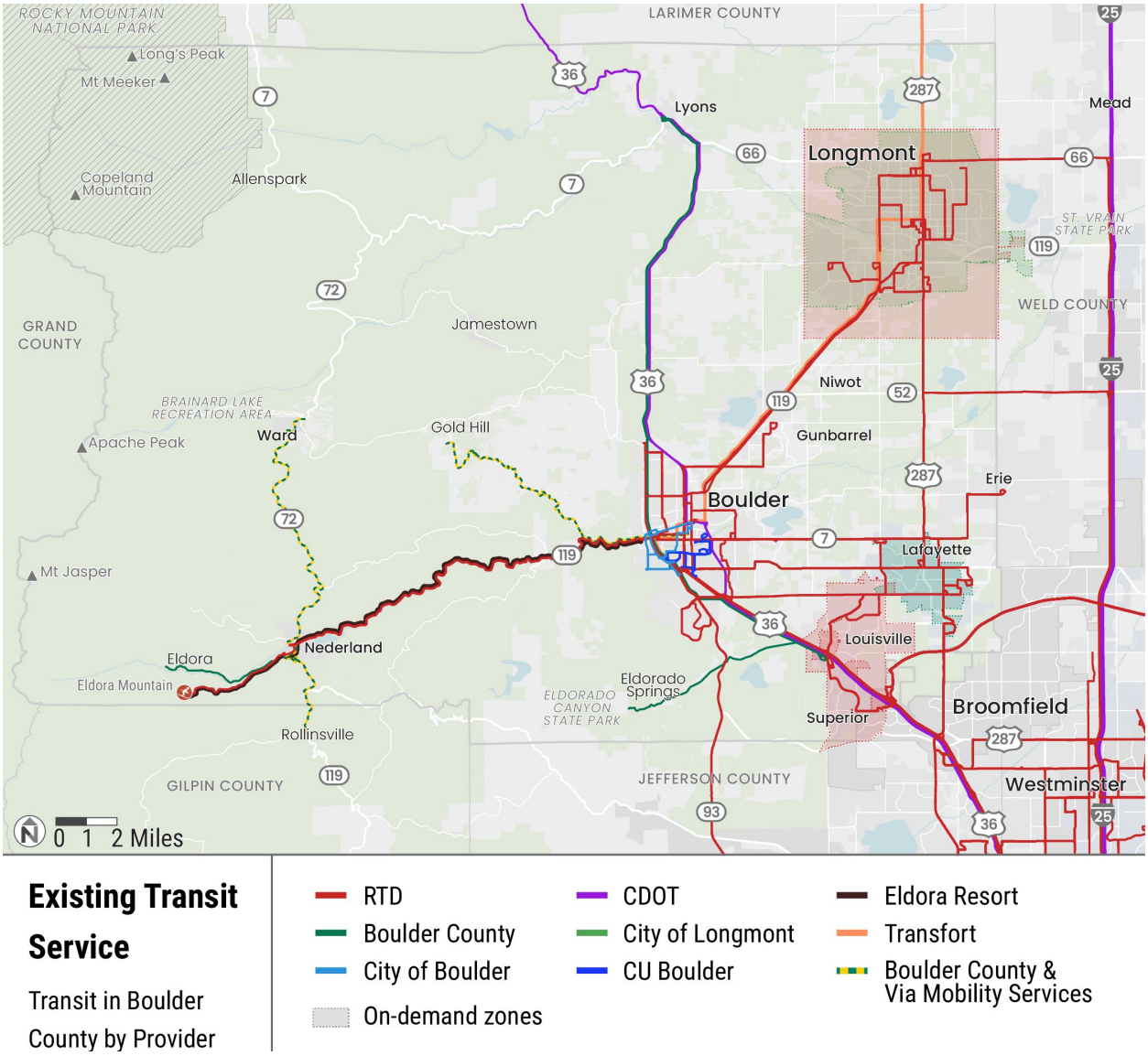
transit service, including Niwot (outside of the service provided on CO 119), Jamestown, and Allenspark.

- **Strong Regional Connections:** Regional transit service is concentrated along key corridors, including US 36 (Flatiron Flyer BRT to Denver), CO 119 (Boulder to Longmont), and the AB express routes serving Denver International Airport. These regional services form the backbone of the transit network but must be coordinated with frequent and reliable local services to meet a wide variety of travel needs.
- **Diverse Campus Mobility Offerings:** CU Boulder is well served by both fixed-route and on-demand services. While this plan is not focused on specific recommendations for CU Boulder services, they are an important part of the transit network in Boulder. Micromobility ridership is also very high among students, due to free BCycle memberships and access to large numbers of Lime scooters on campus.
- **Popular Recreational Services:** Recreational routes—particularly the Hessie Shuttle—are among the highest ridership services operated by the county. Other seasonal services also perform well, including the Eldo Shuttle and service to Eldora Mountain. The success of these specialized transit services points to high demand and opportunities for expansion.
- **Post-COVID Ridership Shifts:** Transit productivity declined across nearly all services from 2019 to 2024, with the steepest drops on several Longmont routes and the Boulder-Nederland (NB) route. While fixed-route ridership in 2024 remained well below pre-COVID levels, paratransit ridership has surpassed pre-COVID levels due to new Access-on-Demand service that supplements Access-a-Ride.
- **High Micromobility Use in Boulder:** Micromobility services in Boulder generate a substantial number of trips, with usage nearly matching the county's highest ridership transit services. These services complement the transit network in Boulder by providing first- and final-mile connectivity to places not directly served by fixed-route transit. Bikeshare is currently being considered elsewhere in Boulder County to help support local transit service and bridge first- and final-mile gaps.

3.1 Overview of Existing Transit Services

There are currently 12 distinct transit providers in Boulder County operating 54 separate fixed-route, general public on-demand, and paratransit services. Figure 3-1 illustrates where these services operate and which communities they serve.

Figure 3-1 Existing Transit Providers and Services* in Boulder County



Data Source: RTD, Boulder County, CU Boulder, Remix, City of Longmont

**Not pictured: Access-a-Ride available within ¾ mile of RTD fixed routes; Access-on-Demand available in RTD service area; Via Mobility Services paratransit offered in Boulder and surrounding counties; Lyons taxi voucher program; and CU Boulder on-demand service.*

Terms and Definitions

The following terms are used throughout this chapter to describe transit in Boulder County.

Service Provider: The organization or entity that plans for and funds a transit service. Some providers contract with other companies to operate their service, employ operators, and/or own and maintain transit vehicles.

Route Purpose: The primary types of trips that a transit route or service helps riders make.

- **Local** services typically serve shorter trips that often occur within the same city or area.
- **County** services connect cities, towns, and key destinations within Boulder County but are not necessarily operated by the County.
- **Regional** services connect to the larger Denver metro area, Larimer County, and beyond.

Service Type: The structure of service offered to riders.

- **Fixed-route** service follows a set schedule and route, serving designated stops.
- **On-demand** service is a shared-ride, demand-responsive service within set zones. Riders can typically call or use an app or website to request a pick-up or drop-off within these zones.
- **Paratransit** is a demand-responsive, curb-to-curb service available to eligible people with disabilities. Riders typically call or use an app or website to schedule pick-up and drop-off within ¾ mile of existing fixed-route services.
- **Micromobility** refers to shared devices, like e-scooters and bicycles, that complement transit services. These can be stored at docking stations or "dockless," meaning they can be parked anywhere within the operating zone that does not obstruct the path of travel.

Figure 3-2 lists each transit service in Boulder County and documents the provider, fare structure, service type, season, and frequency of operations.

Figure 3-2 Existing Transit Providers and Services in Boulder County

Provider	Route/Service	Route Purpose	Service Type	Span/Seasonality	Fare	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak or Weekend Frequency
RTD	DASH Boulder/Lafayette	County	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	15 min	30 min
RTD	SKIP Broadway	Local	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	10 min	15 min
RTD	JUMP Boulder/Lafayette/ Erie	County	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	15 min	30 min
RTD	BOUND 30th St	Local	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	15 min	30 min
RTD	BOLT Boulder/Longmont	County	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	30 min	60 min
RTD	204 Table Mesa/ Moorhead/North 19th	Local	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	15 min	30 min
RTD	205 28th St/Gunbarrel	Local	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	30 min	60 min
RTD	206 Conestoga/ Arapahoe/Fairview HS	Local	Fixed Route	Weekdays, year-round	Fare	30 min	60 min
RTD	208 Iris/Valmont	Local	Fixed Route	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	Fare	60 min	75 min
RTD	225/225D/225T Boulder/ Lafayette	County	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	15 min	30 min
RTD	228A/228F Lafayette/ Louisville/Broomfield	County	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	60 min	60 min
RTD	323 Skyline Crosstown	Local	Fixed Route	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	Free	60 min	60 min

Provider	Route/Service	Route Purpose	Service Type	Span/Seasonality	Fare	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak or Weekend Frequency
RTD	324 Main Street Crosstown	Local	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Free	30 min	30 min
RTD	326 Westside Crosstown	Local	Fixed Route	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	Free	30 min	30 min
RTD	327 Eastside Crosstown	Local	Fixed Route	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	Free	60 min	60 min
RTD	FF1 Denver-Boulder Station	Regional	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	15 min	30 min
RTD	FF2 Denver-Boulder Station Express	Regional	Fixed Route	Weekdays, year-round	Fare	5 morning + 4 afternoon trips	N/A
RTD	FF4 Denver-Boulder Junction	Regional	Fixed Route	Weekdays, year-round	Fare	4 morning + 5 afternoon trips	N/A
RTD	FF5 Boulder-Anschutz	Regional	Fixed Route	Weekdays, year-round	Fare	2 morning + 1 afternoon trips	N/A
RTD	LD1/LD3 Longmont/ Denver	Regional	Fixed Route	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	Fare	60 min	70 min
RTD	NB1/NB2 Boulder/ Nederland/Eldora	County	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	50 min	120 min
RTD	AB1/AB2/AB3 Boulder/Denver Airport	Regional	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	30 min	60 min

Provider	Route/Service	Route Purpose	Service Type	Span/Seasonality	Fare	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak or Weekend Frequency
RTD	GS Golden/Boulder	Regional	Fixed Route	Weekdays, year-round	Fare	2 morning + 2 afternoon trips	N/A
RTD	LX/LX2	Regional	Fixed Route	Weekdays, year-round	Fare	1 morning + 3 afternoon trips	N/A
RTD	FlexRide Longmont	Local	On Demand	Daily, year-round	Fare	On Demand	On Demand
RTD	FlexRide Louisville	Local	On Demand	Weekdays, year-round	Fare	On Demand	On Demand
RTD	FlexRide Superior	Local	On Demand	Weekdays, year-round	Fare	On Demand	On Demand
RTD	RTD Access-a-Ride	Regional	Paratransit	Year-Round	Fare	On Demand	On Demand
RTD	RTD Access-on-Demand	Local	Paratransit	Year-Round	Fare	On Demand	On Demand
Boulder County	Ride Free Lafayette	Local	On Demand	Daily, year-round	Free	On Demand	On Demand
Boulder County	Lyons Flyer	County	Fixed Route	Weekdays, year-round	Free	2 morning trips, 1 midday trip, 1 afternoon trip	N/A
Boulder County	Hessie Shuttle	Local	Fixed Route	Fridays, Weekends, and Holidays, summer and fall only	Free	15 min	N/A
Boulder County	Eldo Shuttle	County	Fixed Route	Weekends and holidays, summer only	Fare	20 min	N/A

Provider	Route/Service	Route Purpose	Service Type	Span/Seasonality	Fare	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak or Weekend Frequency
Boulder County	Gold Hill Climb	County	Fixed Route	Weekdays, year-round	Free	1 morning + 1 afternoon trip	N/A
Boulder County	Mountain Rides	County	Fixed Route	Mondays and Thursdays, year-round	Free	2 trips	N/A
City of Boulder	HOP	Local	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	15 min	25 min
City of Boulder	Park-to-Park	Local	Fixed Route	Weekends and holidays, summer only	Free	15 min	N/A
City of Boulder	HOP 2 Chautauqua	Local	Fixed Route	Concert and event nights	Free	15-20 min	N/A
City of Longmont	RIDE Longmont	Local	On Demand	Daily, year-round	Fare	On Demand	On Demand
CU Boulder	Buff Bus S: Stampede	Local	Fixed Route	Weekdays year-round, reduced during summer	Free	15 min	30 min
CU Boulder	Buff Bus W: Williams Village-Main Campus	Local	Fixed Route	Daily, during semesters	Free	5 min	30 min
CU Boulder	Buff Bus Williams Village Late Night	Local	Fixed Route	Thursdays-Sundays, during semesters	Free	N/A	12-15 min
CU Boulder	Buff Bus RX: ROTC Express	Local	Fixed Route	Mondays-Thursdays, during semesters	Free	1 morning trip	N/A

Provider	Route/Service	Route Purpose	Service Type	Span/Seasonality	Fare	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak or Weekend Frequency
CU Boulder	Buff Bus ECX: East Campus Express	Local	Fixed Route	Monday/Wednesday mornings/afternoons, Tuesday/Thursday afternoons/evenings, during semesters	Free	20 min	N/A
CU Boulder	Buff Ride	Local	On Demand (at set stops)	Weekdays, during semesters	Free	On Demand	On Demand
CU Boulder Student Government	CU NightRide	Local	On Demand	Daily (evenings), during semesters	Free	On Demand	On Demand
CDOT	Bustang to Estes	Regional	Fixed Route	Weekends and holidays, summer and fall only	Fare	2 morning + 2 afternoon trips	N/A
CDOT	Bustang North Line	Regional	Fixed Route	Daily, year-round	Fare	45 min	135 min
Eldora Resort	NedREC	Local	Fixed Route	Weekends, winter only	Free	30 min	30 min
Transfort	FLEX Express	Regional	Fixed Route	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	Fare	3 morning + 4 afternoon trips	2 morning + 3 afternoon trips
Via Mobility Services	Via Paratransit	Regional	Paratransit	Year-Round	Free	On Demand	On Demand
BCycle	BCycle Bikeshare	Local	Micromobility	Daily, year-round	Fare	N/A	N/A
Lime	Lime E-Scooters	Local	Micromobility	Daily, year-round	Fare	N/A	N/A

Micromobility as Transit

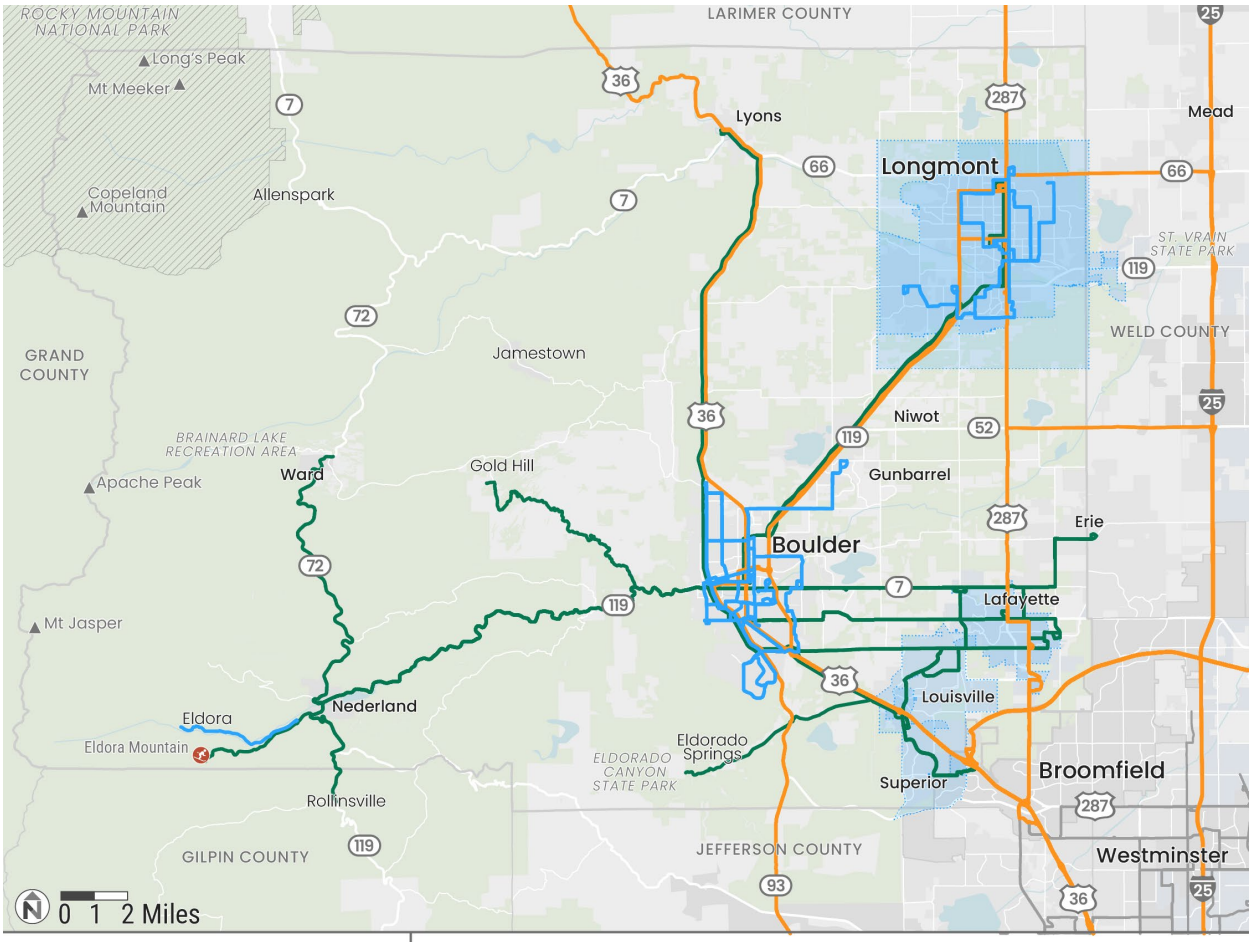
While not always considered “traditional” transit service, micromobility, like bikeshare and dockless scooters, are publicly accessible services that provide first- and final-mile connections for transit riders, complementing and extending the reach of bus and rail service. This chapter includes micromobility ridership information along with ridership on traditional transit services, illustrating the important role micromobility plays within the county’s transit network. More information on micromobility services in Boulder County is provided in Chapter 4.



Lime scooters help connect riders to the HOP in downtown Boulder.

Another way to understand existing transit services in Boulder County is to consider whether they serve a **local, county,** or **regional** function, as shown in Figure 3-3. While this map does not distinguish how much service is provided on each route, it shows that both Boulder and Longmont have a variety of local, county, and regional fixed-route services, Longmont has two local on-demand services in addition to local fixed routes, and southeast communities have county-focused fixed-route and local on-demand services.

Figure 3-3 Existing Transit Service in Boulder County (by Route Purpose*)



Existing Transit Service

Transit in Boulder County by Route Purpose

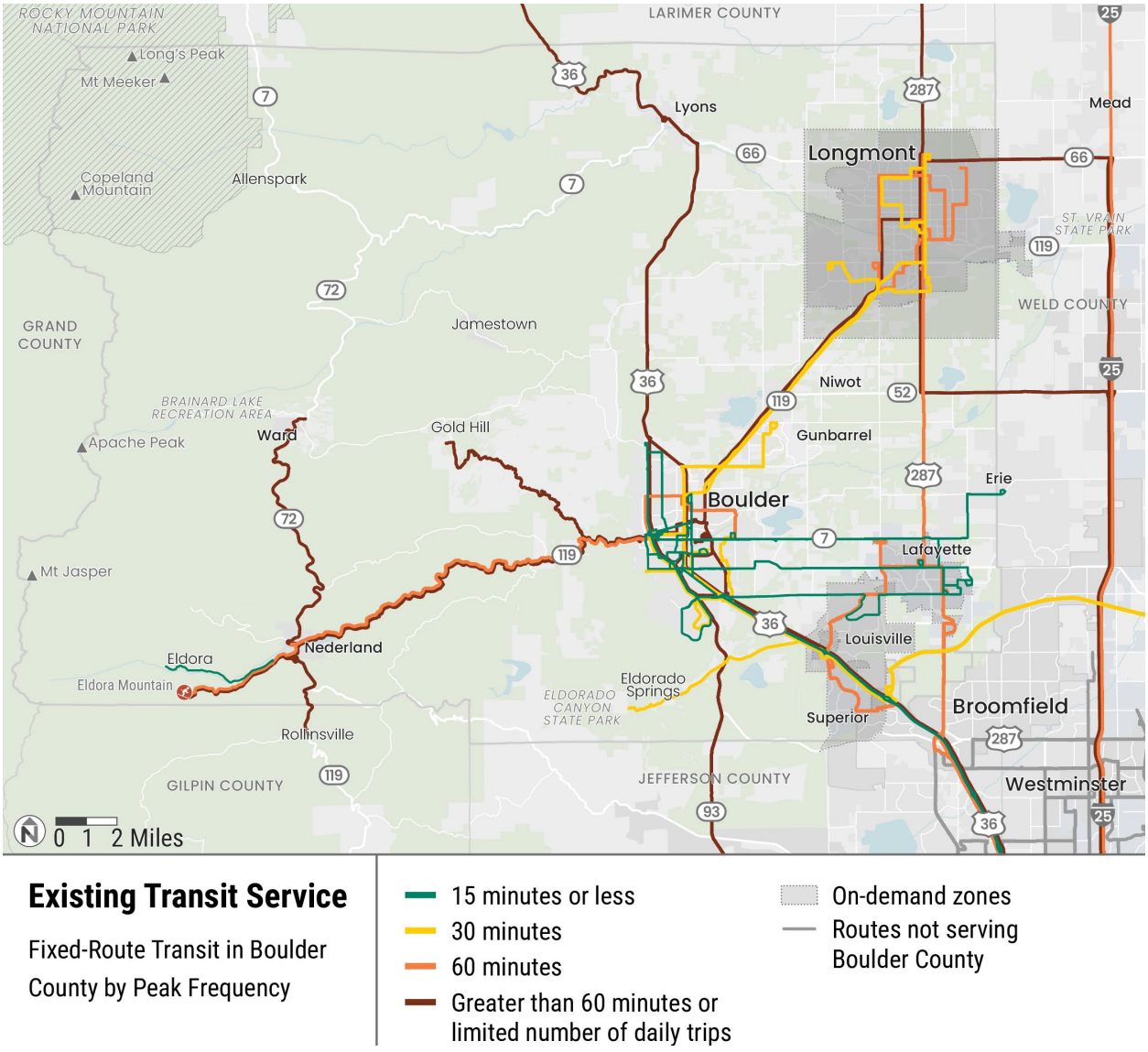
- Local routes that serve trips within the same city or area
- County routes that connect cities, towns, and destinations within Boulder County
- Regional routes that connect to the larger Denver metro area and beyond
- Routes not serving Boulder County
- On-demand zones

Data Source: RTD, Boulder County, CU Boulder, Remix.

** County routes are not necessarily operated by Boulder County.*

Figure 3-4 shows transit services in Boulder County by peak frequency, or how often buses serve a route during the busiest times on weekdays. Routes that run every 15 minutes or less (considered "frequent") are found primarily in Boulder, as well as on services connecting to cities in southeast Boulder County and between Boulder and the Denver metro area along US 36. Service between Boulder and Longmont operates every 30 minutes, but future BRT service will double frequency to every 15 minutes. Regional services are lower frequency, with some running only a few trips each morning and evening.

Figure 3-4 Existing Transit Service in Boulder County (by Peak Frequency*)



Existing Transit Service

Fixed-Route Transit in Boulder County by Peak Frequency

- 15 minutes or less
- 30 minutes
- 60 minutes
- Greater than 60 minutes or limited number of daily trips
- On-demand zones
- Routes not serving Boulder County

Data Source: RTD, Boulder County, CU Boulder, CDOT.

** Peak frequency categories are approximate.*

3.2 Transit Ridership Trends

Metrics such as ridership, productivity, and cost per passenger are often used to evaluate and monitor transit performance. This section explains these concepts and explores performance trends for all services operating in Boulder County, focusing on how the services compare to each other.

Ridership Trends by Service Type

The analysis below describes ridership trends, categorized by service type. Service types include fixed routes, on-demand services available to the general public, and paratransit services.

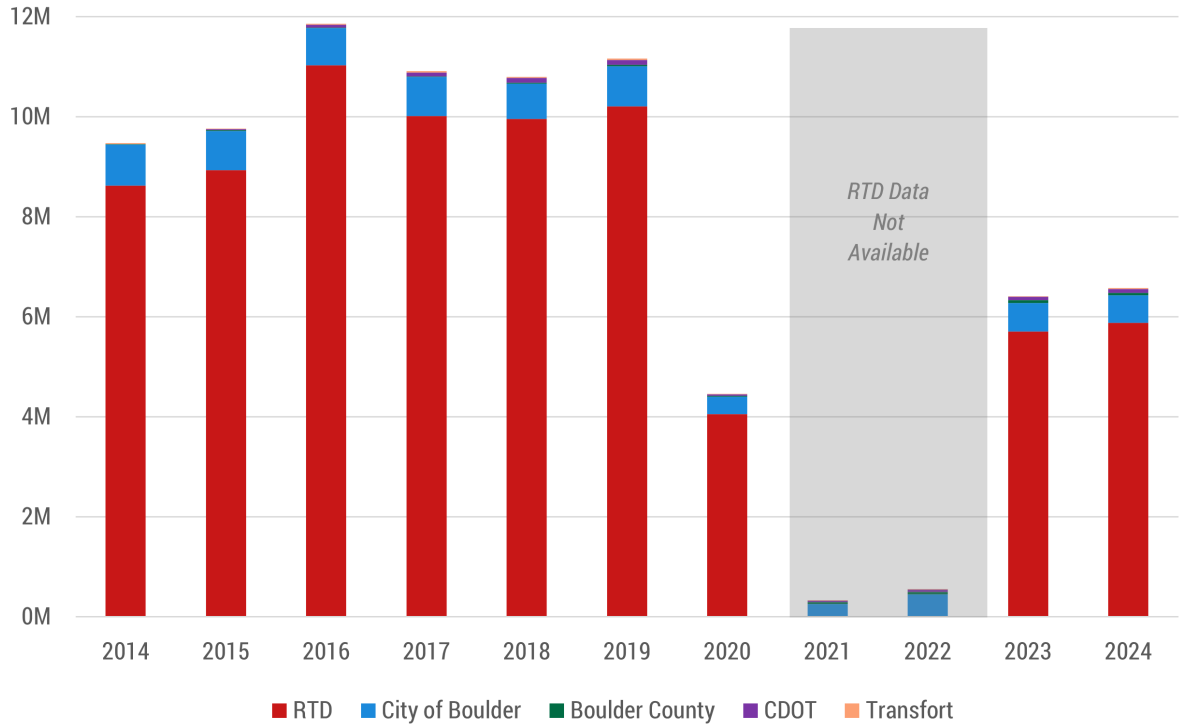
Fixed-Route Transit Ridership

Between 2014 and 2024, fixed-route transit services in Boulder County averaged 7.6 million annual riders. The highest ridership was 11.8 million in 2016, and the lowest was during the COVID-19 pandemic. A notable ridership increase occurred between 2015 and 2016, coinciding with the launch of the new Flatiron Flyer BRT routes, which replaced several regional routes.

In 2020, ridership plummeted to 42% of its 2019 level due to the onset of COVID-19. As of 2024, the system had seen a partial recovery, with ridership back to 55% of 2019 levels, indicating ongoing challenges attracting passengers back to transit. Additionally, service levels have not been restored to pre-COVID levels, which also contributes to lower ridership.

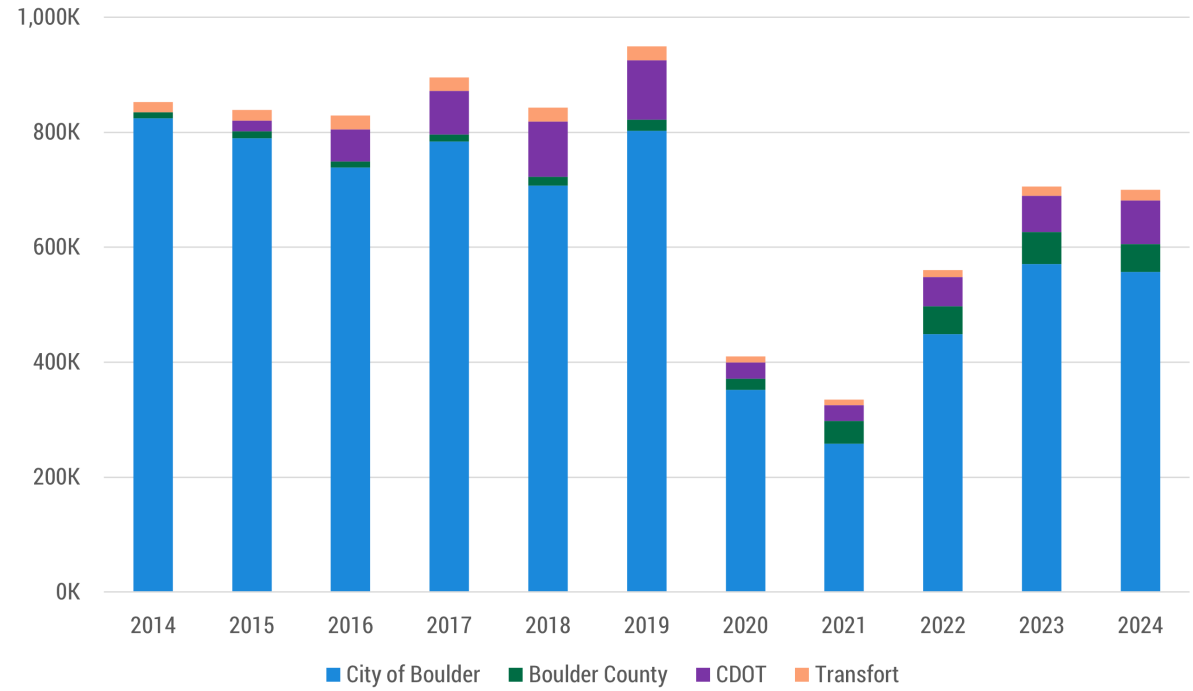
Based on available data, RTD accounts for most transit use in Boulder County, carrying more than 90% of all passengers in the county (Figure 3-5). The City of Boulder has the second largest share of transit riders, with its HOP and Park-to-Park services accounting for 7% to 9% of total ridership in Boulder County.

Figure 3-5 Annual Fixed-Route Ridership by Service Provider (2014-2024)



Data Source: Boulder County, CDOT, City of Boulder, RTD, Transfort

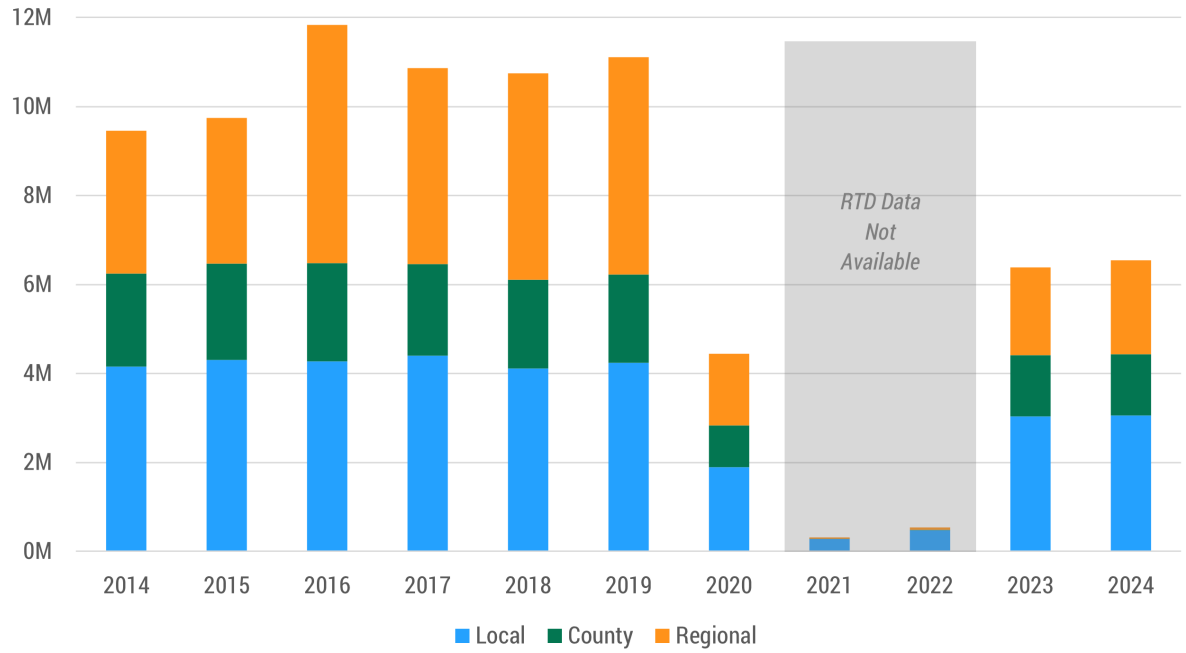
Figure 3-6 Annual Fixed-Route Ridership by Service Provider, Non-RTD Services (2014-2024)



Data Source: Boulder County, CDOT, City of Boulder, Transfort

Local and county routes historically accounted for 66% of all ridership, with regional routes making up 33%. Following the launch of the Flatiron Flyer routes in 2016, the ridership share of regional routes increased significantly, averaging 43% from 2016 until the onset of the pandemic. This suggests a successful shift toward regional commuting by transit during that period. However, in 2023 and 2024, the share of ridership on regional routes declined to 30%, potentially reflecting service reductions and post-pandemic changes in commuting patterns (see Chapter 6).

Figure 3-7 Annual Fixed-Route Ridership by Route Purpose* (2014-2024)



Data Source: Boulder County, CDOT, City of Boulder, RTD, Transfort

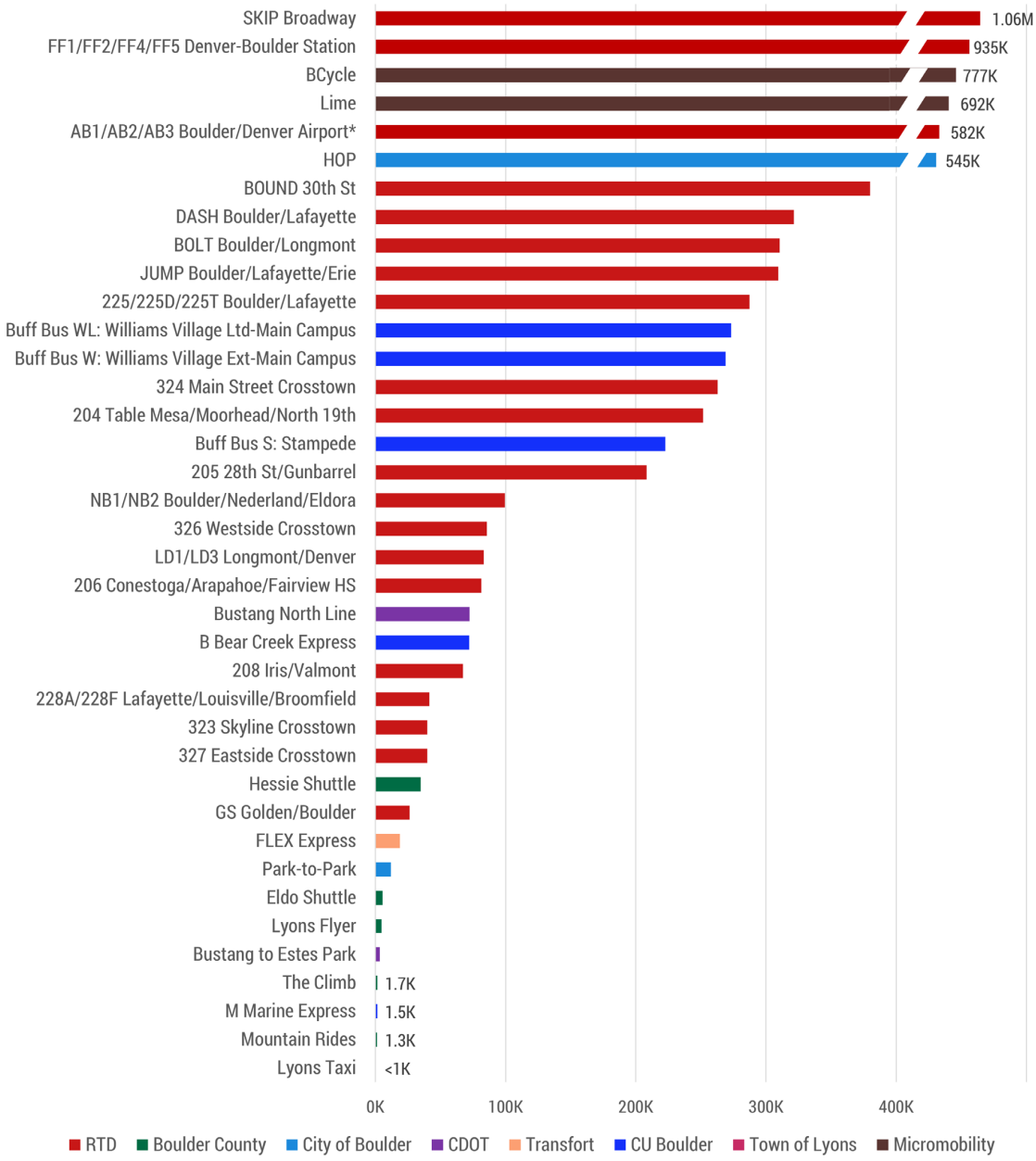
** County routes are not necessarily operated by Boulder County.*

Fixed-Route Ridership by Route

The SKIP and Flatiron Flyer are the highest ridership fixed-route services, accounting for approximately 30% of ridership on routes that primarily serve the county (Figure 3-8). Among local services, the HOP and BOUND routes consistently demonstrate high ridership. The AB1/AB2 route to Denver International Airport (DIA) is also well used, underscoring the attractiveness of this largely non-stop service to a destination with expensive parking.

Among the services provided directly by Boulder County, the Hessie Shuttle has the highest ridership, primarily due to the popularity of this summer destination that has limited parking. Two micromobility services, BCycle and Lime, also provide highly used and important mobility for shorter trips and first- and final-mile trips throughout the City of Boulder.

Figure 3-8 Fixed-Route Ridership in Boulder County by Route (2024)



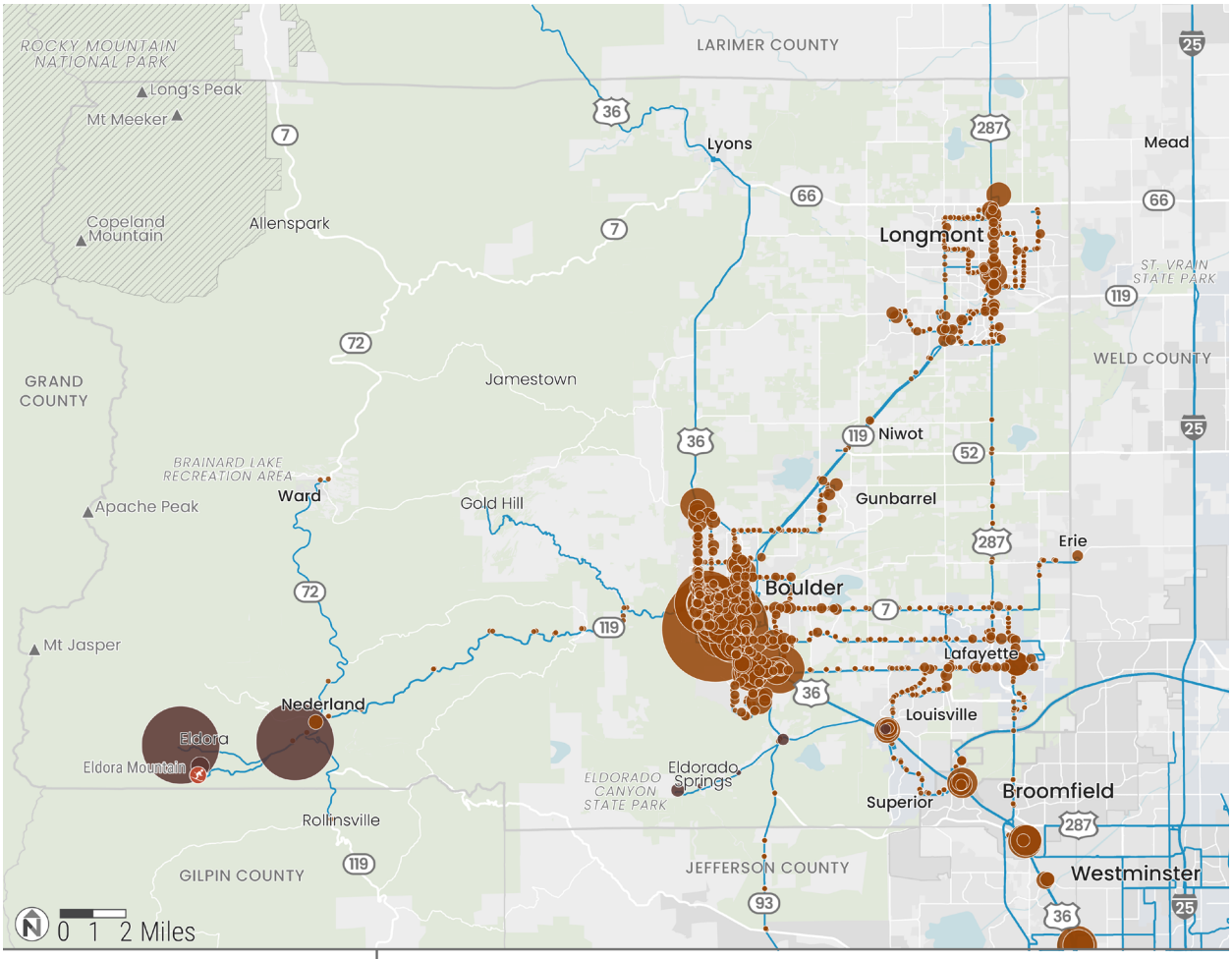
Data Source: BCycle, Boulder County, CDOT, City of Boulder, Lime, RTD, Transfort, CU Boulder

** AB3 is a new service as of August 2025.*

Fixed-Route Ridership by Stop

Ridership tends to be highest at major transit stations and Park-n-Rides, as well as near major destinations and services. Ridership by stop across Boulder County is shown in Figure 3-9; more detailed information and maps for different areas of the county are available in Section 3.3.

Figure 3-9 Transit Ridership in Boulder County by Stop (Fall 2024)



Weekday Ridership Activity

Stop-Level Weekday Ridership (Fall 2024)

< 10
10
100
500
1,000

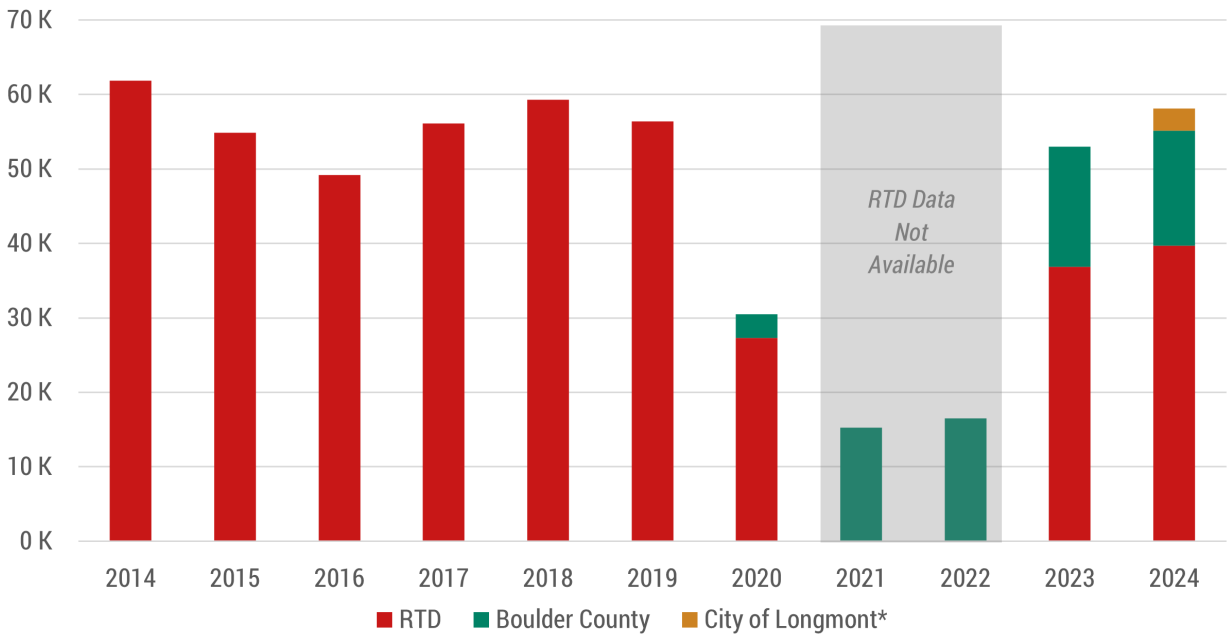
Existing Transit Service
Seasonal Ridership

Source: RTD, Boulder County

General Public On-Demand Service Ridership

There are five general public on-demand services operating in Boulder County today. Provided by RTD, three services are FlexRide zones in Superior, Louisville, and Longmont. Boulder County provides a similar service in Lafayette, and the City of Longmont provides RIDE Longmont in partnership with RTD. In 2026, the Town of Erie will launch a new on-demand service branded as the Erie Bee, and Boulder County will launch Ride Gunbarrel and Ride SouthEast.

Figure 3-10 Annual General Public On-Demand Service Ridership

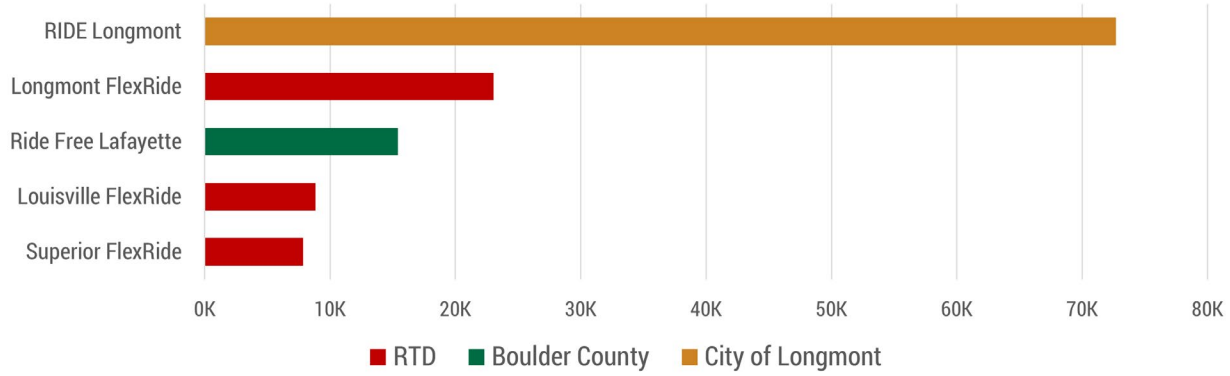


Data Source: City of Longmont, Boulder County, RTD

**Boulder County's Ride Free Lafayette opened in 2020, and City of Longmont's RIDE Longmont opened in December 2024.*

As shown in Figure 3-11, RIDE Longmont has the highest ridership among on-demand services in the county, followed by the Longmont FlexRide. More detailed ridership information for each service is provided in Section 3.3.

Figure 3-11 On-Demand Service Ridership (2024)



Data Source: Boulder County, City of Longmont, RTD

Figure 3-12 summarizes operating statistics of on-demand services in Boulder County. With two services, Longmont offers the most service hours compared to other municipalities, giving it highest combined ridership and the most productive service in terms of passengers per service hour.

Figure 3-12 On-Demand Service Operations (2024)

Service Name	Service Area Size (square miles)	Average Monthly Vehicle Service Hours	Average Ridership per Hour	Average Weekday Trip Duration (minutes)	Number of Vehicles
RIDE Longmont	32.7	1,453	3.7	13.0	6 (7 since June 2025)
FlexRide Longmont	48.4	396	4.8	18.3	2 (1 on Saturday and Sunday)
Ride Free Lafayette	6.4	514	3.0	20.4	2 (1 on Saturday and Sunday)
FlexRide Louisville	8.8	306	2.4	16.5	1
FlexRide Superior	5.8	300	2.2	10.8	1

Data Source: Boulder County (January-October 2025), City of Longmont (December 2024-July 2025), RTD

Paratransit Ridership

Paratransit services in Boulder County are offered by both RTD and Via Mobility Services:

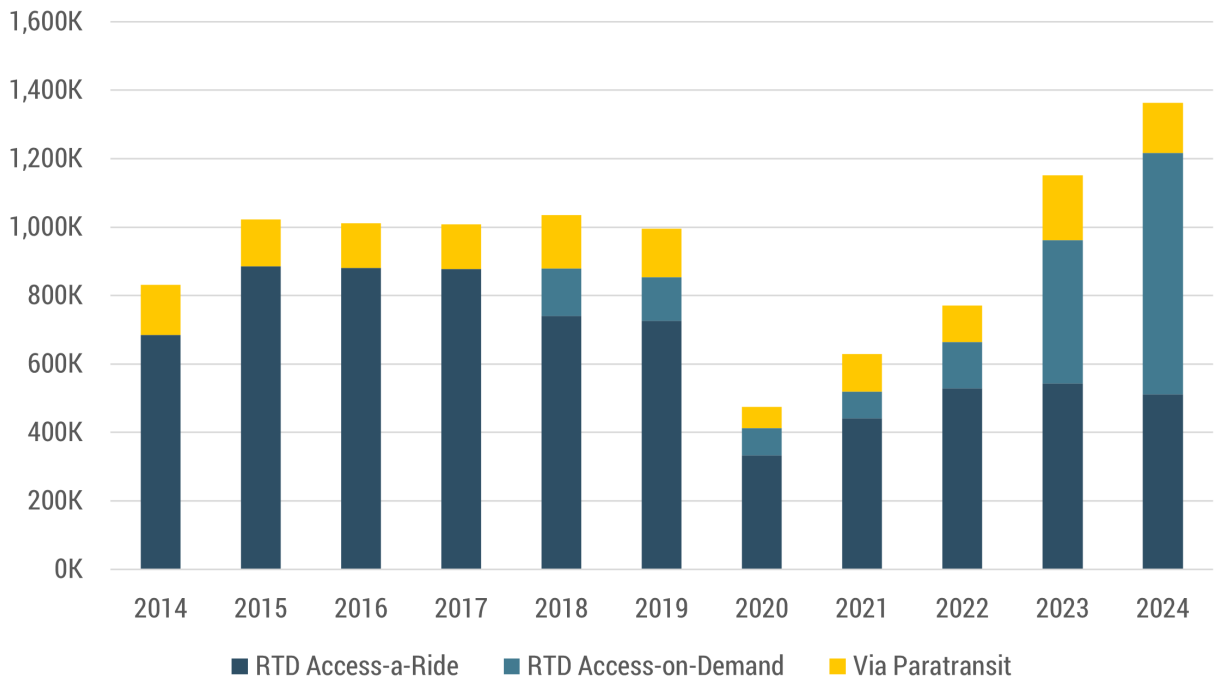
- **RTD's Access-a-Ride** is a fully ADA-compliant paratransit service for all trip purposes for those who cannot use fixed-route transit service due to a disability.
- **RTD's Access-on-Demand** (re-branded from Access-a-Cab in 2022) is a supplemental curb-to-curb service for people eligible for the Access-a-Ride program. Customers pay a subsidized fare when they ride with RTD's contracted providers, such as Uber, Lyft, Metro taxi, and zTrip.
- **Via Paratransit** offers older adults and people with disabilities accessible shared-ride transportation in seven counties: Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Denver, Jefferson, Larimer, and Weld.

At the RTD system level, Access-a-Ride and Access-on-Demand ridership consistently averaged just under 900,000 passengers per year until 2019 (see Figure 3-13). Following a sharp decline in 2020, these services demonstrated a strong and steady recovery, with average annual ridership growth of 30% through 2024. Ridership in 2024 surpassed 2019 levels by 40%. The growth has been driven largely by the significant increase in Access-on-Demand ridership, indicating a shift in demand toward flexible service options. Via Paratransit had approximately 150,000 annual riders across its service areas until 2019 and recovered to roughly the same level in 2024.

Peak Ride Volunteer Driver Program

Under Boulder County's Mobility for All program, the County's Peak Ride Volunteer Driver Program helps to address the transportation needs of mountain and canyon communities. The program provides free transportation to older adults, people with disabilities, and caregivers.

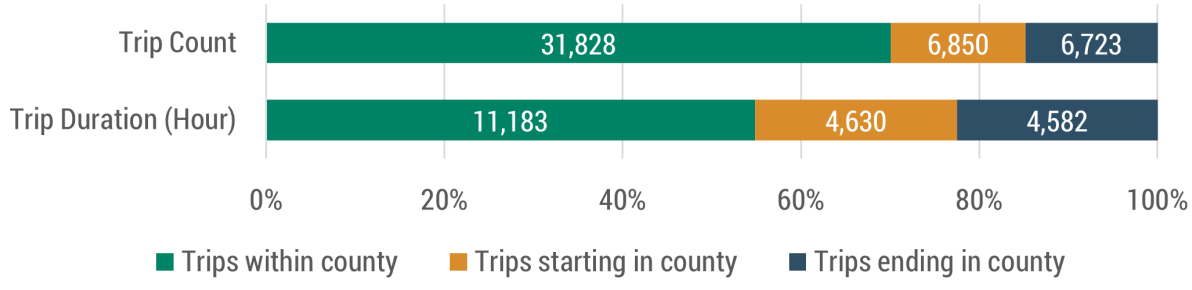
Figure 3-13 Annual Paratransit Ridership, 2014-2024



Data Source: RTD, National Transit Database

Between July 2024 and December 2025, RTD's Access-a-Ride and Access-on-Demand made about 45,500 trips with nearly 20,500 hours of service. Local trips within Boulder County accounted for 70% of all trips (Figure 3-14). Access-a-Ride trips and trips starting or ending in other counties were longer than Access-on-Demand trips and trips within the county. This suggests that Access-a-Ride paratransit services play an important role in filling transportation gaps for certain types of trips.

Figure 3-14 RTD Paratransit Trips and Durations by Origin and Destination

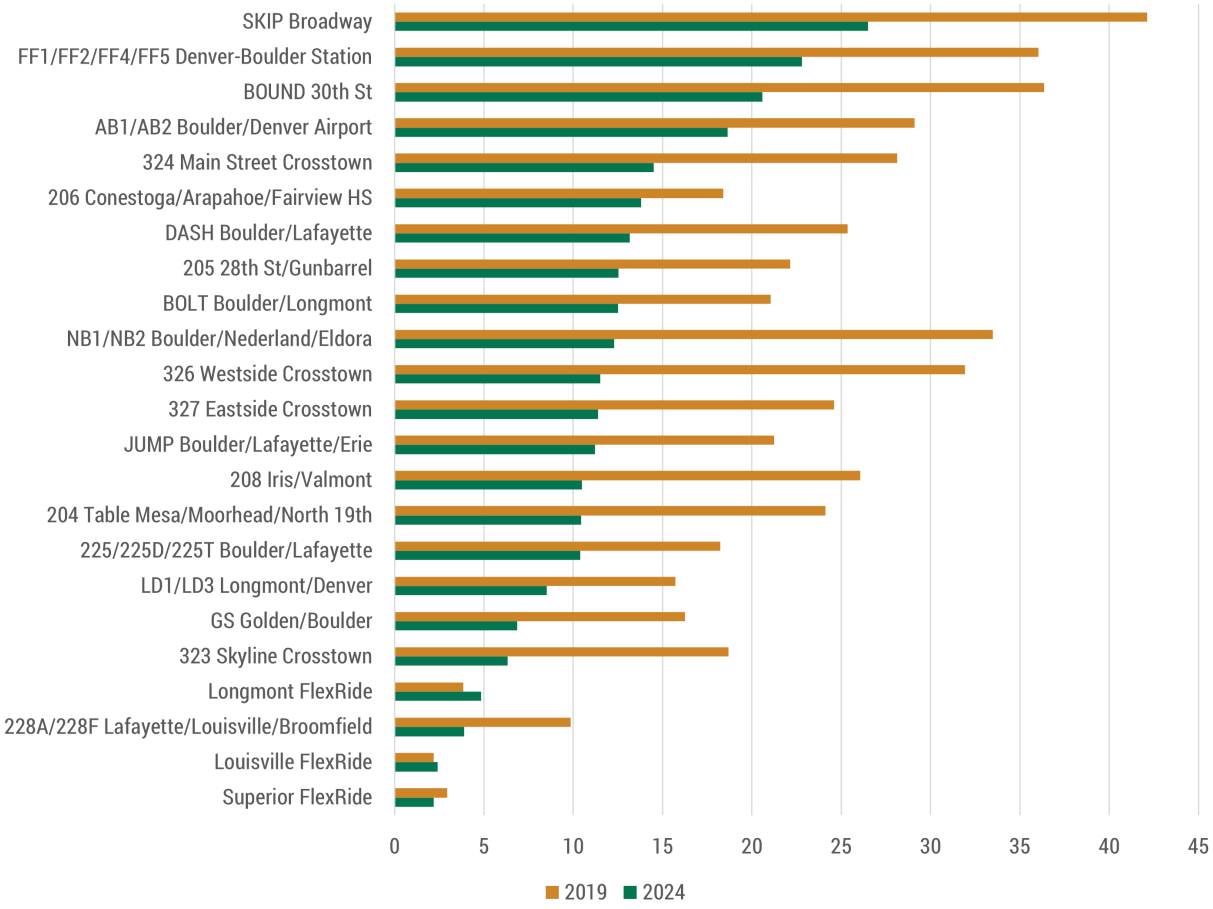


Data Source: RTD, National Transit Database (for Via Mobility Services)

Service Productivity (RTD Routes/Services Only)

In addition to understanding total transit ridership, it is equally important to understand how efficient routes and services are in terms of productivity, or passengers per hour of service. As shown in Figure 3-15, most RTD fixed-route and on-demand services operating in Boulder County were less productive in 2024 than in 2019. While most transit providers nationwide saw a drop in productivity over this period, some RTD routes and services had a more significant decrease than others. These include two routes in Longmont (323 and 326) and the NB route between Boulder and Nederland. The only services that were more productive in 2024 than 2019 were the Longmont and Louisville FlexRide services.

Figure 3-15 RTD Route Service Productivity (Passengers per Hour), 2019 and 2024



Data Source: RTD (data for other operators was unavailable)

Cost Effectiveness (RTD Routes/Services Only)

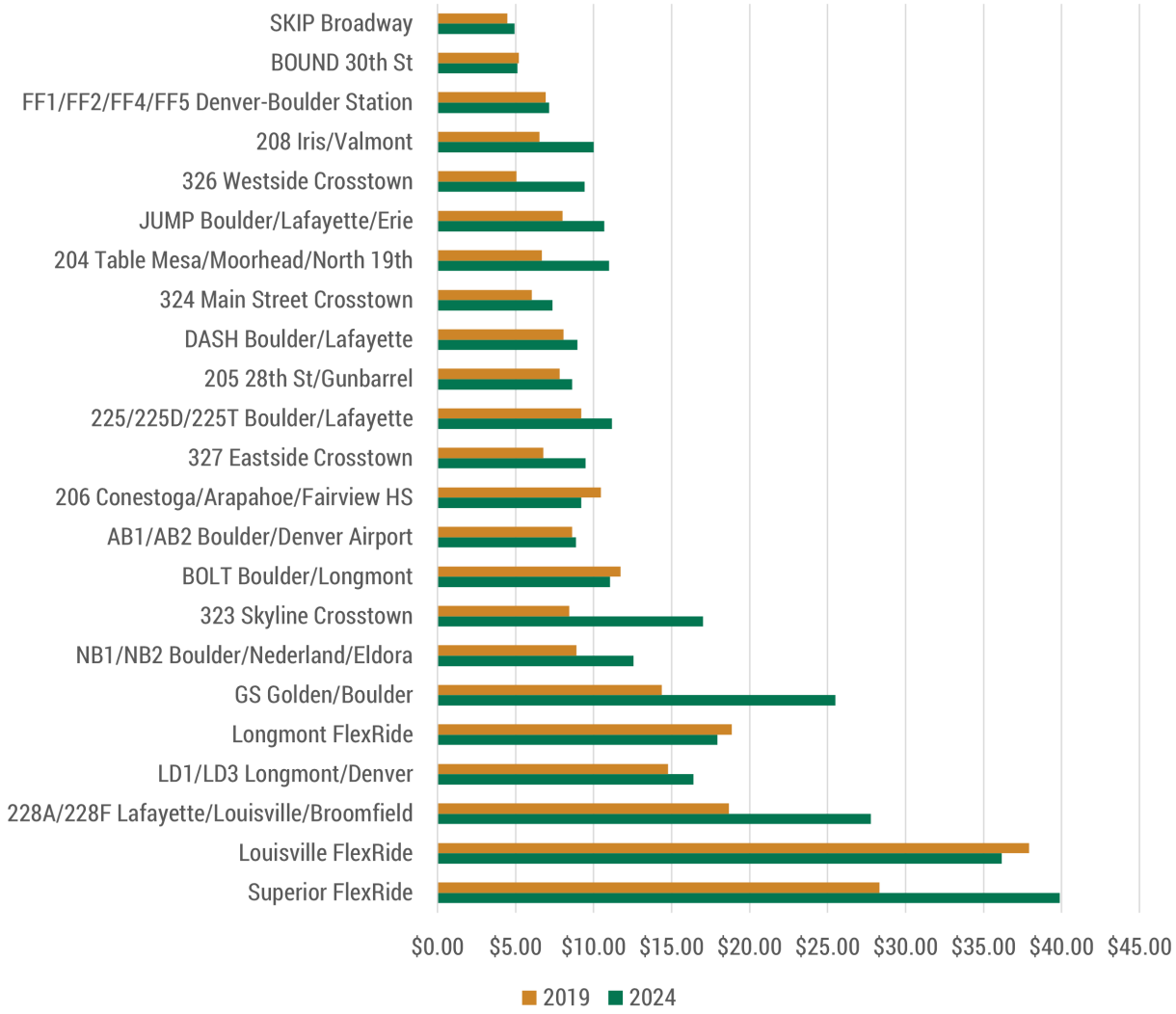
Another common way of understanding the effectiveness of individual routes and services is to compare annual ridership to the cost of providing a service. As shown in Figure 3-16, the routes that have the highest ridership (and are most productive) are also the most cost effective (SKIP, BOUND, and FF). Similarly, the routes and services that have less ridership and lower productivity are also less cost effective. For example, the GS route between Golden and Boulder has far less service and ridership in 2024 than in 2019; additionally, the fare structure has changed, meaning the amount of farebox revenue per trip is also lower.

Because transit services in Boulder County are designed to meet a variety of needs, this disparity within a *network of services* is to be expected. However, understanding differences between productivity and cost per passenger—as well as changes in both measures over time—can help identify those routes (or corridors) that may justify service changes or investments. For example, the AB route is very productive, but it is less cost effective than other routes due to the long distance it travels to the airport.

Transit Networks

Transit networks consist of an integrated system of routes, schedules, and transfer locations that allow passengers to move efficiently across a region. Transit networks include a variety of services that are designed to play a specific role within the network, such as local circulation, direct and frequent connections between regional destinations, or specialized services for people unable to use fixed-route services. Speed, reliability, and coordination of schedules between services are vital to a high-quality network that functions well for riders. Working together as a cohesive system, a network of services reduces duplication, maximizes vehicle and infrastructure use, and makes even complex, multi-leg travel fast, reliable, and predictable.

Figure 3-16 RTD Service Cost Effectiveness (Operating Cost per Passenger), 2019 and 2024



Data Source: RTD (data for other operators was unavailable)

Service Performance

Service productivity combined with cost effectiveness is one measure of a service's overall performance. Figure 3-17 illustrates how to interpret a service performance chart with ridership per hour on the x-axis and cost per rider on the y-axis. (Farebox recovery is not included due to limited data availability.) Services that fall in the upper right of the chart perform better than services in the lower left.

Figure 3-17 Service Performance Chart Illustration

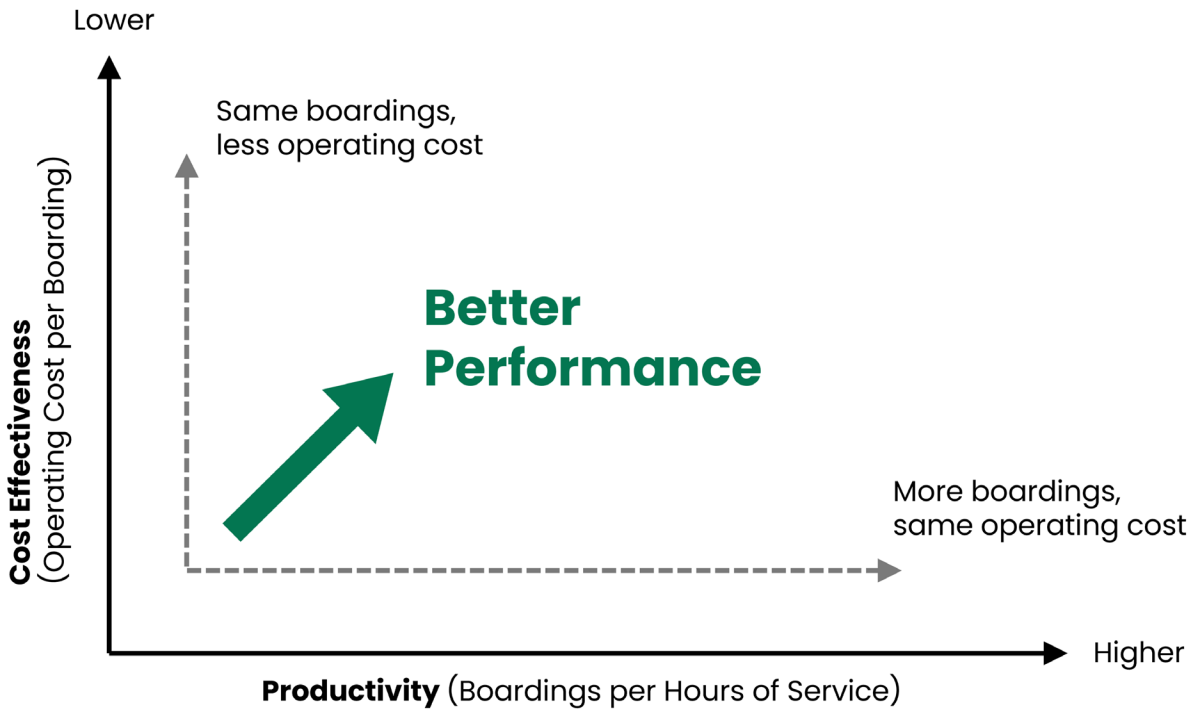
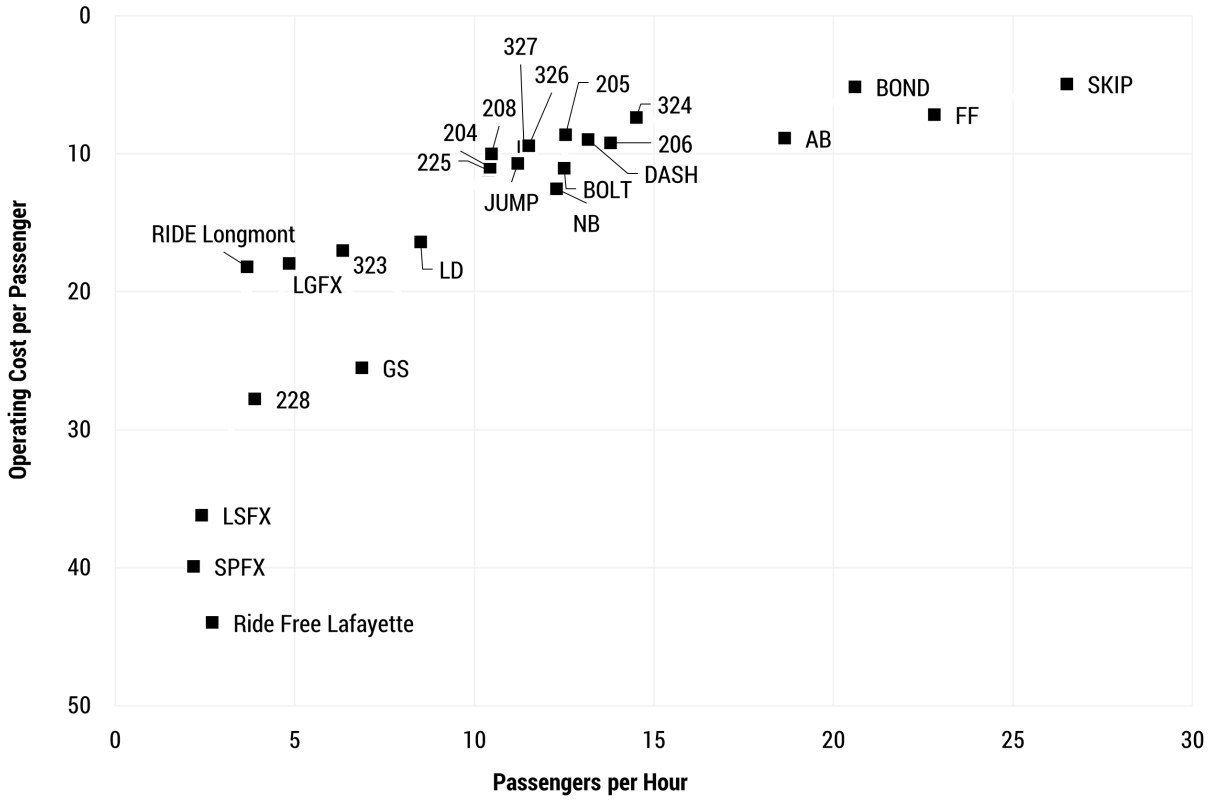


Image Source: Graphic adapted from RTD

Figure 3-18 presents 2024 service performance for all RTD routes, along with Boulder County services for which data was available. Routes such as the SKIP, FF, BOUND, and AB have the strongest overall performance, driven by higher productivity and better cost effectiveness. In contrast, on-demand services show lower performance due to lower productivity and higher costs. Overall, the figure highlights a clear trend: frequent, productive fixed-route services are more cost effective than on-demand services. Although on-demand services provide valuable transit coverage, they are more expensive

and less productive, making them challenging to scale in a way that achieves both high ridership and cost efficiency.

Figure 3-18 Service Performance (2024)



Data Source: RTD, Boulder County, City of Longmont (full data for other operators was unavailable)

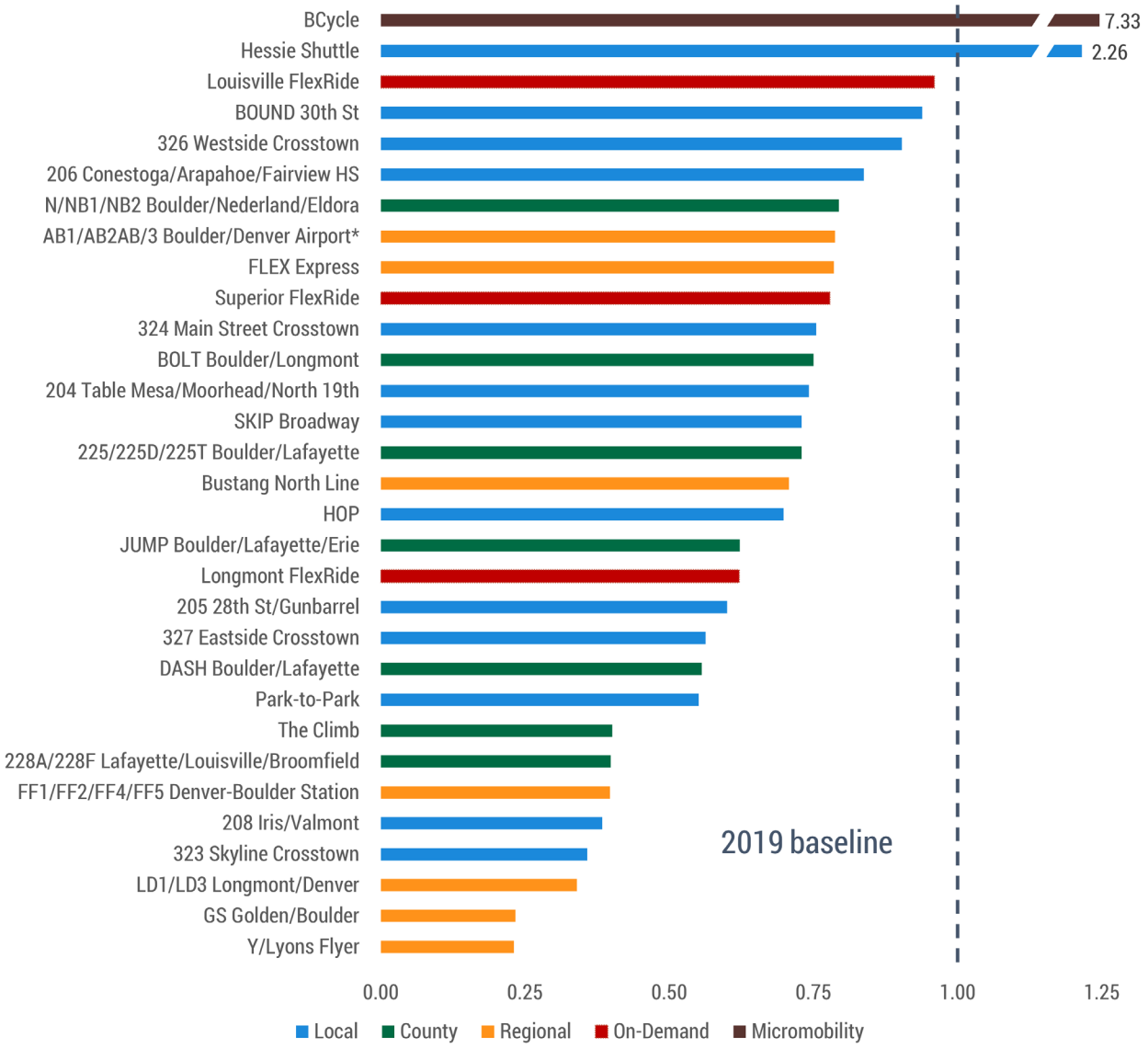
Ridership Recovery

As noted above, transit ridership in Boulder County is still well below pre-COVID ridership, matching trends seen by most U.S. transit providers. Figure 3-19 compares 2019 and 2024 ridership on each transit service in Boulder County. The Hessie Shuttle was the only service that had higher ridership in 2024, reflecting the unique and increased demand for recreational services in Boulder County. Ridership on local and county services also recovered more strongly than regional routes.

RTD's regional service ridership recovery has been slow on all routes except for the AB airport service. This is largely due to reductions in service hours on

the FF, GS, and LD routes; service hours in 2024 were 40% lower than in 2019, while local and county services offered an average of 30% more service hours. On-demand ridership has exceeded 2019 levels due to the addition of Ride Free Lafayette (2020) and RIDE Longmont (2024).

Figure 3-19 Ridership Recovery by Route and Service (2024 vs 2019)



Data Source: BCycle, Boulder County, City of Boulder, RTD, Transfort

** AB3 is a new service as of August 2025.*

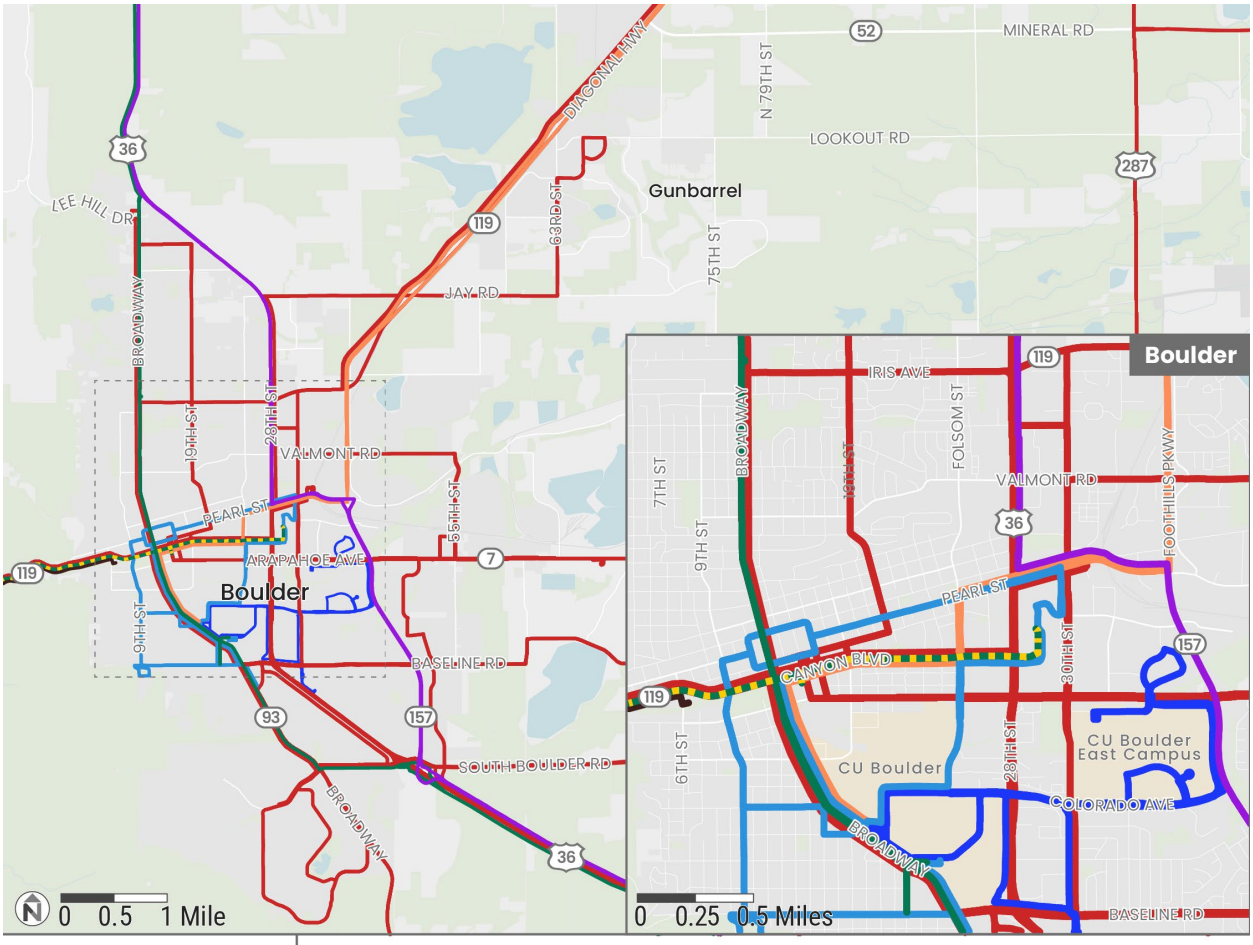
3.3 Existing Transit Service by Area

The following sections provide more detail on the transit services that operate in the individual jurisdictions within Boulder County, as well as highlights of each community's feedback during the first phase of outreach.

City of Boulder and Gunbarrel

This section describes the existing transit service that operates in and around the City of Boulder and the unincorporated area of Gunbarrel.

Figure 3-20 Existing Transit Service in the City of Boulder and Gunbarrel



Existing Transit Service

Transit in Boulder and Gunbarrel by Provider

- RTD
- Boulder County
- City of Boulder
- CU Boulder
- CDOT
- Transfort
- Eldora Resort
- Boulder County & Via Mobility Services

Data Source: RTD, Boulder County, CU Boulder, Remix

As the largest population and employment hub in Boulder County, the City of Boulder and surrounding areas are served by numerous transit services and providers. RTD provides several local routes within core neighborhoods in Boulder, as well as routes that connect to other municipalities, such as the DASH, JUMP, BOLT, and 225. The City of Boulder operates the HOP, a downtown circulator, as well as several seasonal routes serving Chautauqua Park; both are partnerships with other entities. Boulder County also provides services that fill gaps in this area, including regional routes from Boulder to Lyons and Gold Hill and seasonal shuttles to Eldorado Canyon State Park.

Most of the County's regional service connecting to the greater Denver region is anchored in Boulder, including the RTD Flatiron Flyer routes and AB1/AB2/AB3 airport service, Transfort's FLEX route, and routes that serve towns and recreational areas in western Boulder County. These regional routes connect to each other and to select local services at Downtown Boulder Station, making this the most prominent transit hub in the county.

Diagonal Highway/CO 119 is a key corridor served by routes that connect Boulder, Gunbarrel, Niwot, Longmont, and Fort Collins. In 2027, BRT (Diagonal Flyer) service will replace the existing BOLT route on this corridor, along with improvements to stations, transit priority investments, and a commuter bikeway. The CO 7 corridor connecting Boulder to Brighton will also have BRT service in the future; that will operate in addition to the existing JUMP route.

Buff Bus Service

CU Boulder's Buff Bus service supplements other local routes in the City of Boulder. Buff Bus serves student neighborhoods like Williams Village and connects the main and east campuses. Buff Bus services are free for students, staff, and faculty. Students and eligible staff and faculty can also ride RTD services fare-free with their Buff OneCard.

Figure 3-21 Existing Transit Routes Serving Boulder and Gunbarrel

Route or Service	Provider	Route Purpose	Span/Seasonality	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak Frequency
204	RTD	Local	Daily, year-round	15 min	30 min
205	RTD	Local	Daily, year-round	30 min	60 min
206	RTD	Local	Weekdays, year-round	30 min	60 min
208	RTD	Local	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	60 min	75 min
225/225D	RTD	County	Daily, year-round	15 min	30 min
AB1/AB2/AB3	RTD	Regional	Daily, year-round	30 min	60 min
BOLT	RTD	County	Daily, year-round	30 min	60 min
BOUND	RTD	Local	Daily, year-round	15 min	30 min
DASH	RTD	County	Daily, year-round	15 min	30 min
JUMP	RTD	County	Daily, year-round	15 min	30 min
SKIP	RTD	Local	Daily, year-round	10 min	15 min
FF1	RTD	Regional	Daily, year-round	15 min	30 min
FF2	RTD	Regional	Weekdays, year-round	5 morning + 4 afternoon trips	N/A
FF4	RTD	Regional	Weekdays, year-round	4 morning + 5 afternoon trips	N/A
FF5	RTD	Regional	Weekdays, year-round	2 morning + 1 afternoon trips	N/A
GS	RTD	Regional	Weekdays, year-round	2 morning + 2 afternoon trips	N/A
NB1/NB3	RTD	County	Daily, year-round	50 min	120 min

Route or Service	Provider	Route Purpose	Span/Seasonality	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak Frequency
Lyons Flyer	Boulder County	County	Weekdays, year-round	2 morning + 1 midday + 1 afternoon trips	N/A
Gold Hill Climb	Boulder County/ Via Mobility Services	County	Weekdays, year-round	1 morning + 1 afternoon trip	N/A
Eldo Shuttle	Boulder County	Local	Weekends and holidays, summer only	20 min	N/A
HOP	City of Boulder	Local	Daily, year-round	15 min	25 min
Park to Park	City of Boulder	Local	Weekends and holidays, summer only	15 min	N/A
Hop 2 Chautauqua	City of Boulder/ Chautauqua Association	Local	Concert/event nights	15-20 min	N/A
FLEX	Transfort	Regional	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	3 morning + 4 afternoon trips	2 morning + 3 afternoon trips
Bustang to Estes	CDOT	Regional	Weekends and holidays, summer only	2 morning + 2 afternoon trips	N/A
Buff Bus S: Stampede	CU Boulder	Local	Weekdays year-round, reduced span during summer	15 min	30 min
Buff Bus W: Williams Village – Main Campus	CU Boulder	Local	Daily, during semesters	5 min	30 min

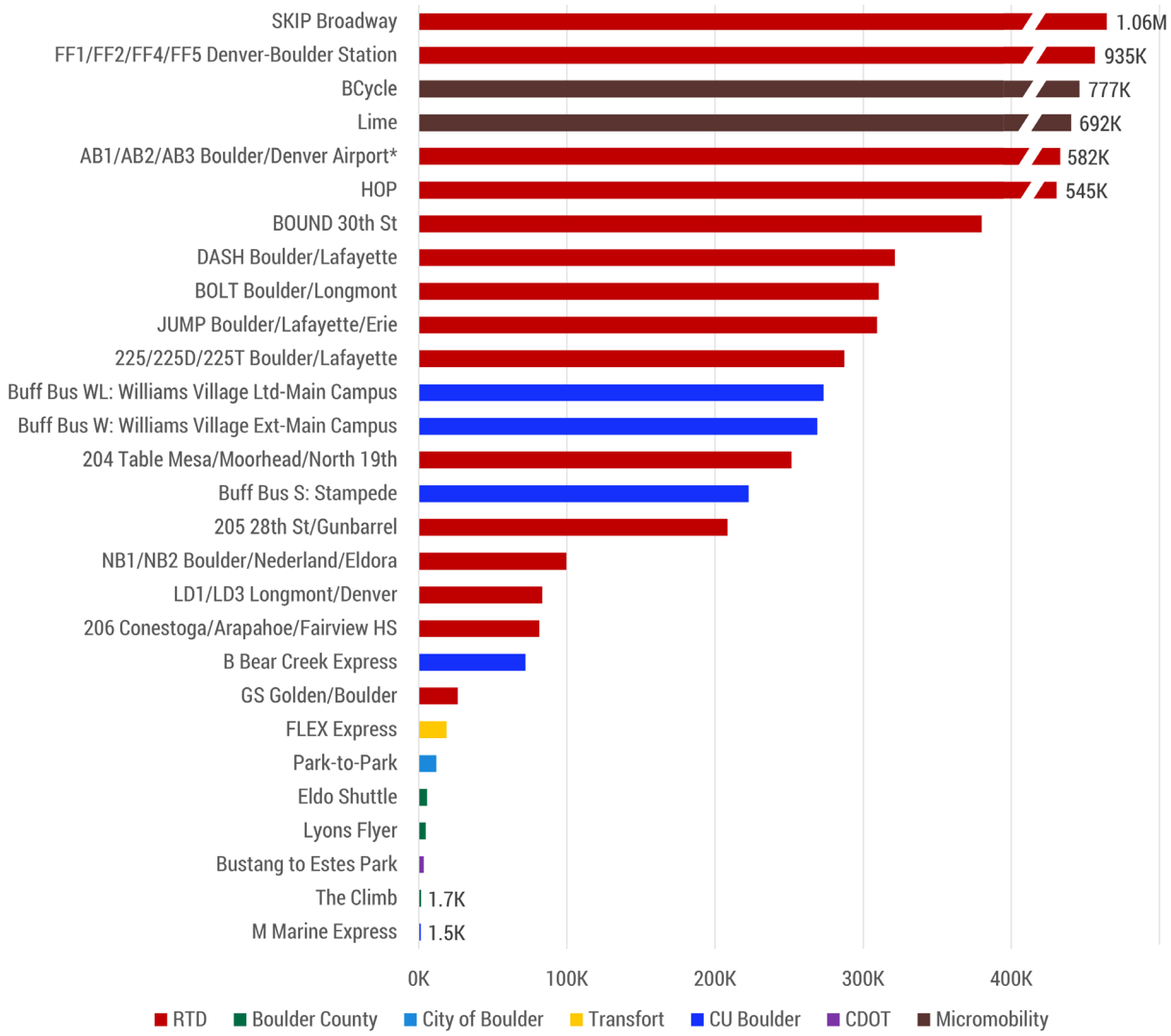
Route or Service	Provider	Route Purpose	Span/Seasonality	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak Frequency
Buff Bus Williams Village Late Night	CU Boulder	Local	Thursdays-Sundays, during semesters	N/A	12-15 min
Buff Bus ECX: East Campus Express	CU Boulder	Local	Monday/Wednesday morning/afternoon, Tuesday/Thursday afternoon/evening, during semesters	20 min	N/A
Buff Bus RX: ROTC Express	CU Boulder	Local	Mondays-Thursdays, during semesters	1 morning trip	N/A
Buff Ride	CU Boulder	Local	Weekdays, during semesters	On Demand	On Demand
CU NightRide	CU Student Government (CUSG)	Local	Daily (evenings), during semesters	On Demand	On Demand
Access-a-Ride	RTD	Paratransit	Daily, year-round	On Demand	On Demand
Access-on-Demand	RTD	Paratransit	Daily, year-round	On Demand	On Demand
Via Paratransit	Via Mobility Services	Paratransit	Daily, year-round	On Demand	On Demand

Figure 3-22 describes total ridership by route in 2024 for transit services in the Boulder and Gunbarrel area. (Data is not available for all routes and services.) The highest ridership fixed routes were the SKIP, a local north/south route serving Broadway, and the Flatiron Flyer routes that connect Boulder to Denver. The AB airport routes and the HOP downtown circulator had the next highest numbers of riders, followed by the local BOUND route and the DASH, BOLT, JUMP, and 225 routes, which all connect Boulder to nearby cities in Boulder County.

Services with ridership below 100,000 passengers were seasonal services and those that serve less-populated areas. The Transfort FLEX Express and RTD Route 206 are exceptions, although both are low-frequency, weekday-only

routes. CU Boulder's Buff Bus routes performed well despite their seasonal span and distinct focus on students, staff, and faculty. Additionally, the micromobility services available in Boulder are very well used, providing first- and final-mile connections and an option for shorter trips.

Figure 3-22 Ridership for Routes* Serving Boulder and/or Gunbarrel (2024)

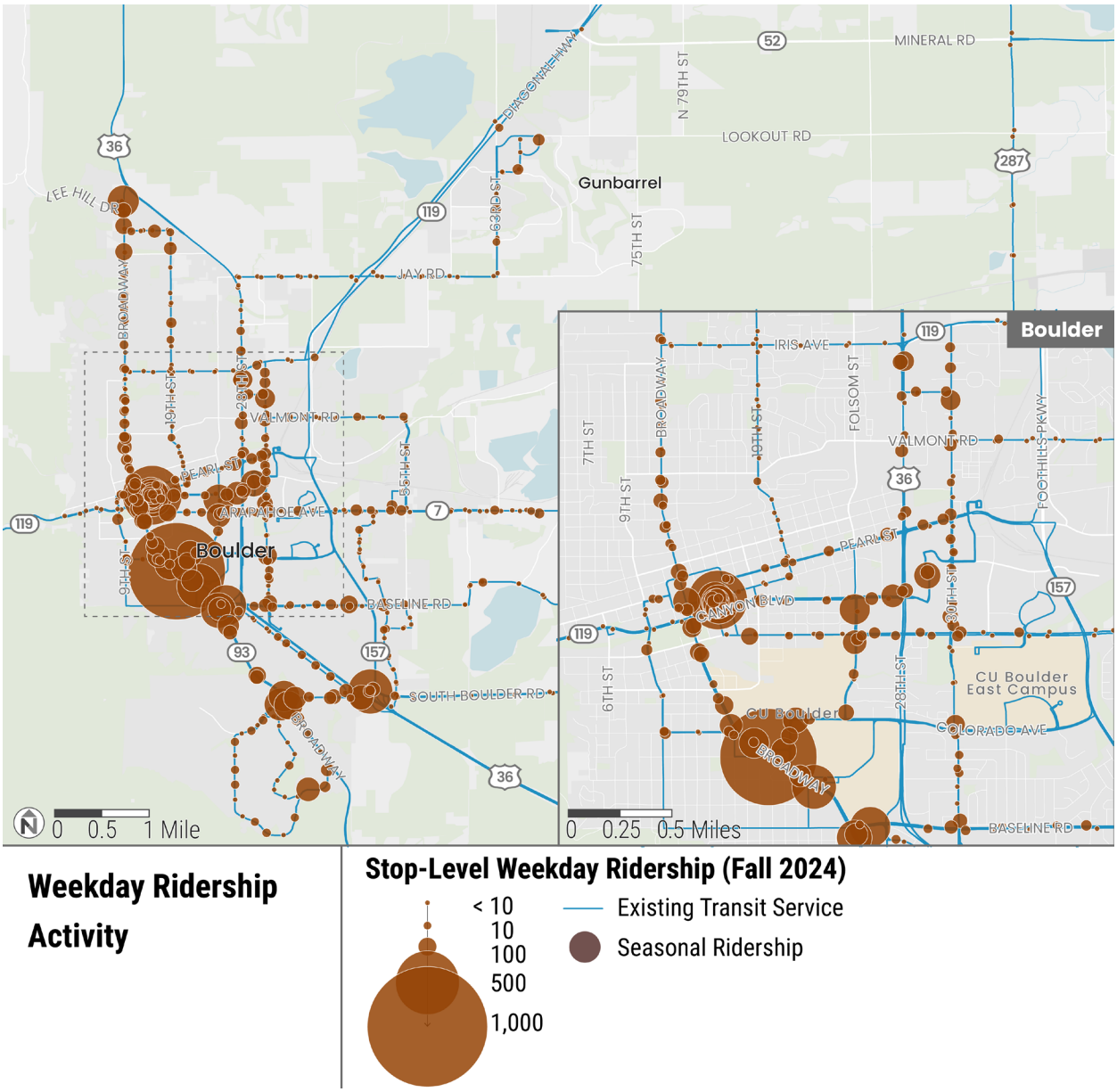


Data Source: BCycle, Boulder County, CDOT, City of Boulder, CU Boulder, Lime, RTD, Transfort

**Chart shows routes for which annual data was available. AB3 service added in August 2025.*

Ridership at the stop level shows the most activity near CU Boulder and in Downtown Boulder. The Park-n-Rides along Table Mesa and the stop at the terminus of Route 204 and the SKIP also have relatively high ridership.

Figure 3-23 Ridership by Stop in Boulder and Gunbarrel (Fall 2024)



Source: RTD, Boulder County

What We Heard: Boulder and Gunbarrel

Boulder and Gunbarrel community members identified more frequent service as their top transit need. Boulder residents requested increased frequency on the SKIP, FF2, and AB routes. Many survey respondents expressed a desire for restored service to the Frasier Meadows Retirement Community, as the closest stop is currently more than a 10-minute walk. Feedback from Gunbarrel residents focused on the need for restoration of pre-pandemic service, such as the 205T evening service to downtown Boulder, as well as more frequent service on Route 205.

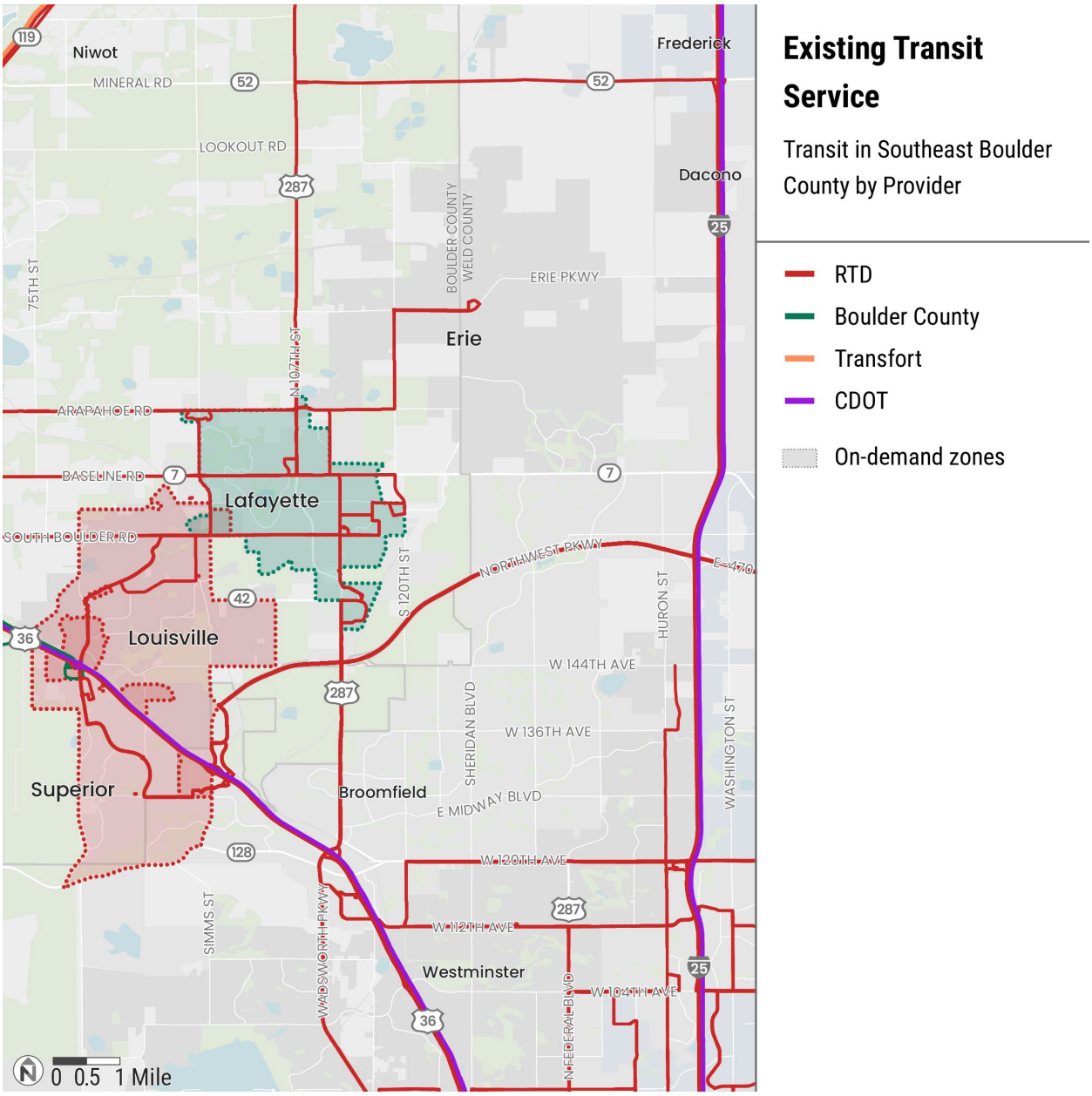


Gunbarrel residents noted the need for improved frequency on Route 205 to Downtown Boulder.

Southeast Boulder County: Erie, Lafayette, Louisville, and Superior

Figure 3-24 shows fixed-route and on-demand services operating in southeast Boulder County and serving Erie, Lafayette, Louisville, and Superior.

Figure 3-24 Existing Transit Service in Southeast Boulder County



Data Source: RTD, Boulder County, Remix

Service in this area largely focuses on connecting Lafayette, Louisville, Superior, and Erie to Boulder and Denver along major corridors. Routes such as the JUMP, DASH, and 225 provide east/west connections, and the LD1/LD3 connects Lafayette to both Denver and Longmont. Other regional routes—including the Flatiron Flyers, Bustang to Estes, and AB1/AB2/AB3—serve US 36 & McCaslin Station Park-n-Ride on the Louisville / Superior border.

Multiple providers offer on-demand services in this part of the county. RTD operates two FlexRide zones in Superior and Louisville, and Boulder County provides Ride Free Lafayette. Erie will launch an on-demand service in 2026.

Figure 3-25 Existing Transit Routes Serving Southeast Boulder County

Route or Service	Provider	Route Purpose	Span/ Seasonality	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak Frequency
225/225D	RTD	County	Daily, year-round	15 min	30 min
228A/228F	RTD	Local	Daily, year-round	60 min	60 min
AB1/AB2/AB3	RTD	Regional	Daily, year-round	30 min	60 min
FF1	RTD	Regional	Daily, year-round	15 min	30 min
FF2	RTD	Regional	Weekdays, year-round	5 morning + 4 afternoon trips	N/A
FF4	RTD	Regional	Weekdays, year-round	4 morning + 5 afternoon trips	N/A
FF5	RTD	Regional	Weekdays, year-round	2 morning + 1 afternoon trips	N/A
DASH	RTD	County	Daily, year-round	15 min	30 min
JUMP	RTD	County	Daily, year-round	15 min	30 min
LD1/LD3	RTD	Regional	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	60 min	70 min
Bustang to Estes	CDOT	Regional	Weekends and holidays, summer only	2 morning + 2 afternoon trips	N/A

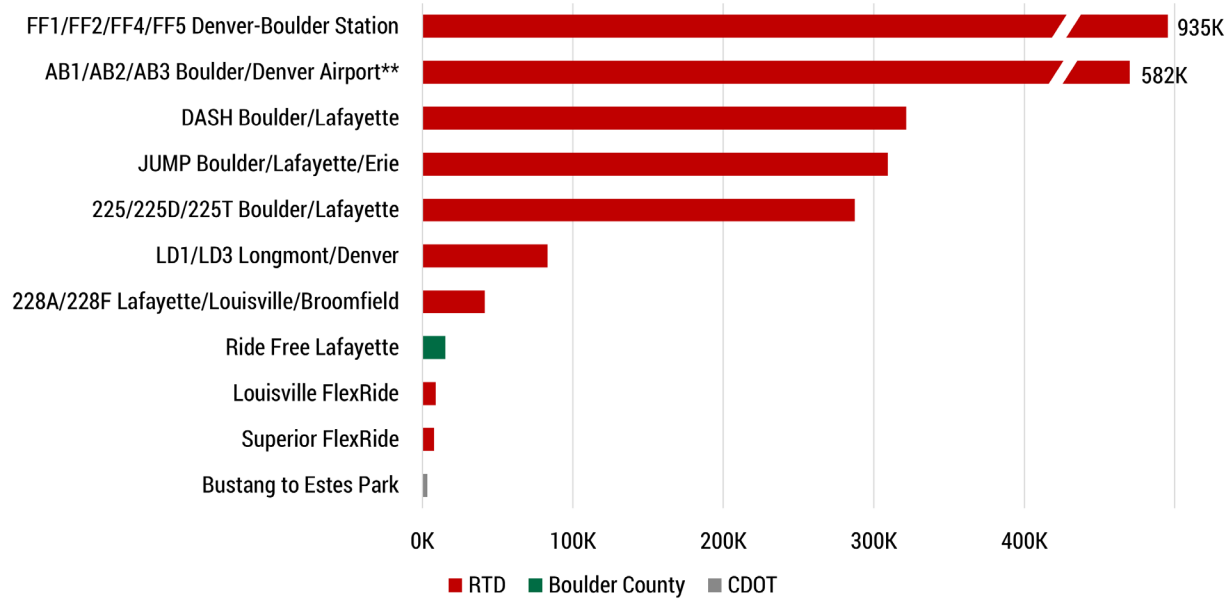
Route or Service	Provider	Route Purpose	Span/ Seasonality	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak Frequency
FlexRide Superior	RTD	On-Demand	Weekdays, year-round	On Demand	On Demand
FlexRide Louisville	RTD	On-Demand	Weekdays, year-round	On Demand	On Demand
Ride Free Lafayette	RTD	On-Demand	Daily, year-round	On Demand	On Demand
Access-a-Ride	RTD	Paratransit	Daily, year-round	On Demand	On Demand
Access-on-Demand	RTD	Paratransit	Daily, year-round	On Demand	On Demand
Via Paratransit	Via Mobility Services	Paratransit	Daily, year-round	On Demand	On Demand



A bus waits for passengers at the Lafayette Park-n-Ride.

As shown in Figure 3-26, the highest ridership routes in southeast Boulder County are regional services. The Flatiron Flyer and AB airport connector routes had the highest ridership, followed by the DASH, JUMP, and 225, which all provide connections to Boulder. The on-demand services had significantly less ridership than fixed-route services in this area.

Figure 3-26 Ridership for Routes* Serving Southeast Boulder County (2024)



Data Source: Boulder County, CDOT, RTD

**Chart shows routes for which annual data was available.*

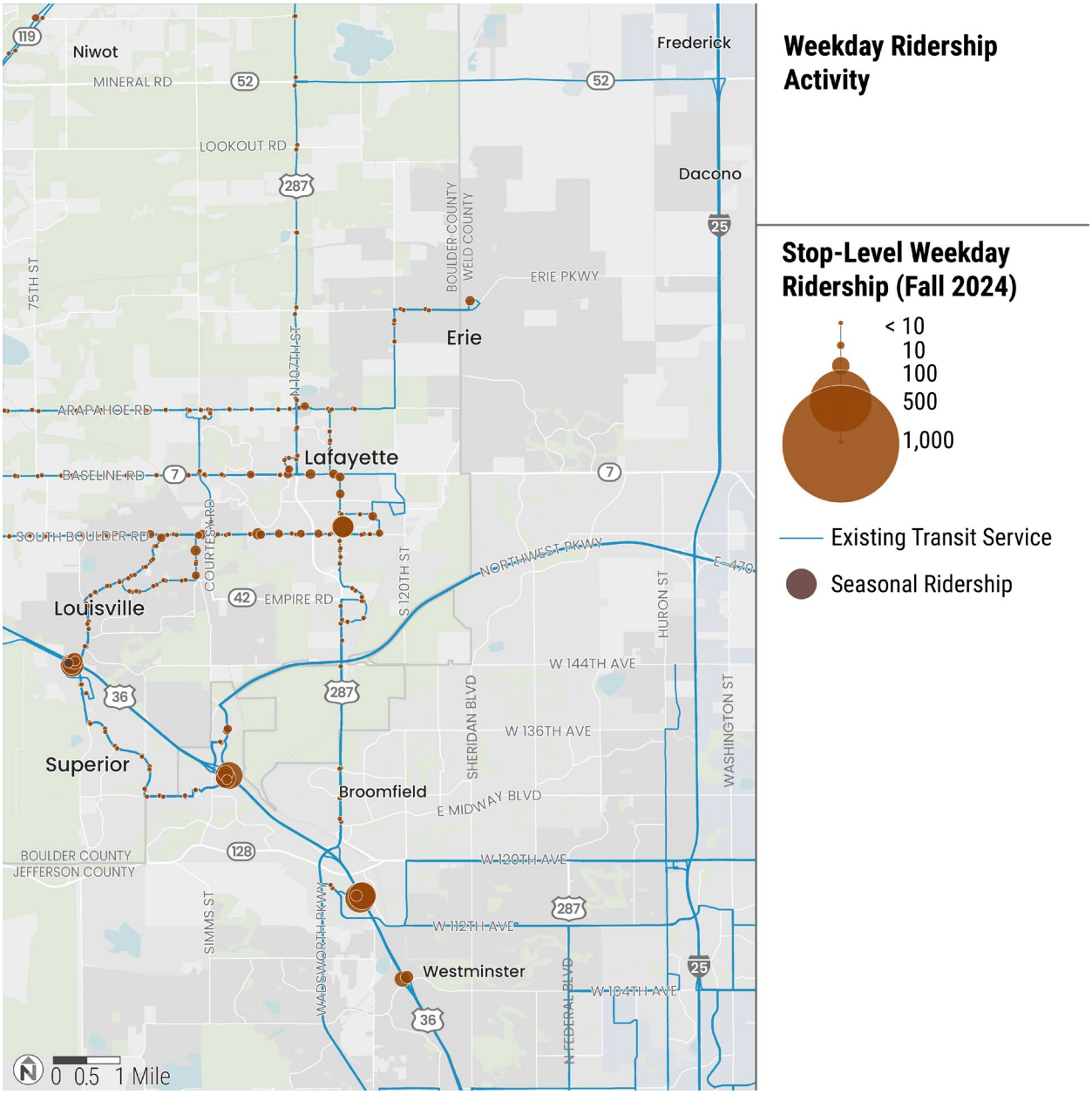
***AB3 is a new service as of August 2025.*

What We Heard: Southeast Boulder County

Survey respondents identified Erie's top transit need as service to new areas in Erie, while Lafayette, Superior, and Louisville residents highlighted the importance of more frequent transit service in their communities. Residents across the southeast Boulder County communities noted a need for more direct regional connections to other towns and cities and faster trips to the airport. People expressed appreciation for programs such as the Youth Ride Free program, a desire for more service from Access-a-Ride, and a need for more accessible buses and stops.

Transit ridership in southeast Boulder County is lower than in Boulder, reflecting the area's more limited service and dispersed land uses. In 2024, ridership activity was largely concentrated at major hubs on US 36, including US 36 & McCaslin Station, US 36 & Flatiron Station Park-n-Ride, and US 36 / Broomfield Station just outside the county. Lafayette Park-n-Ride also had moderate ridership.

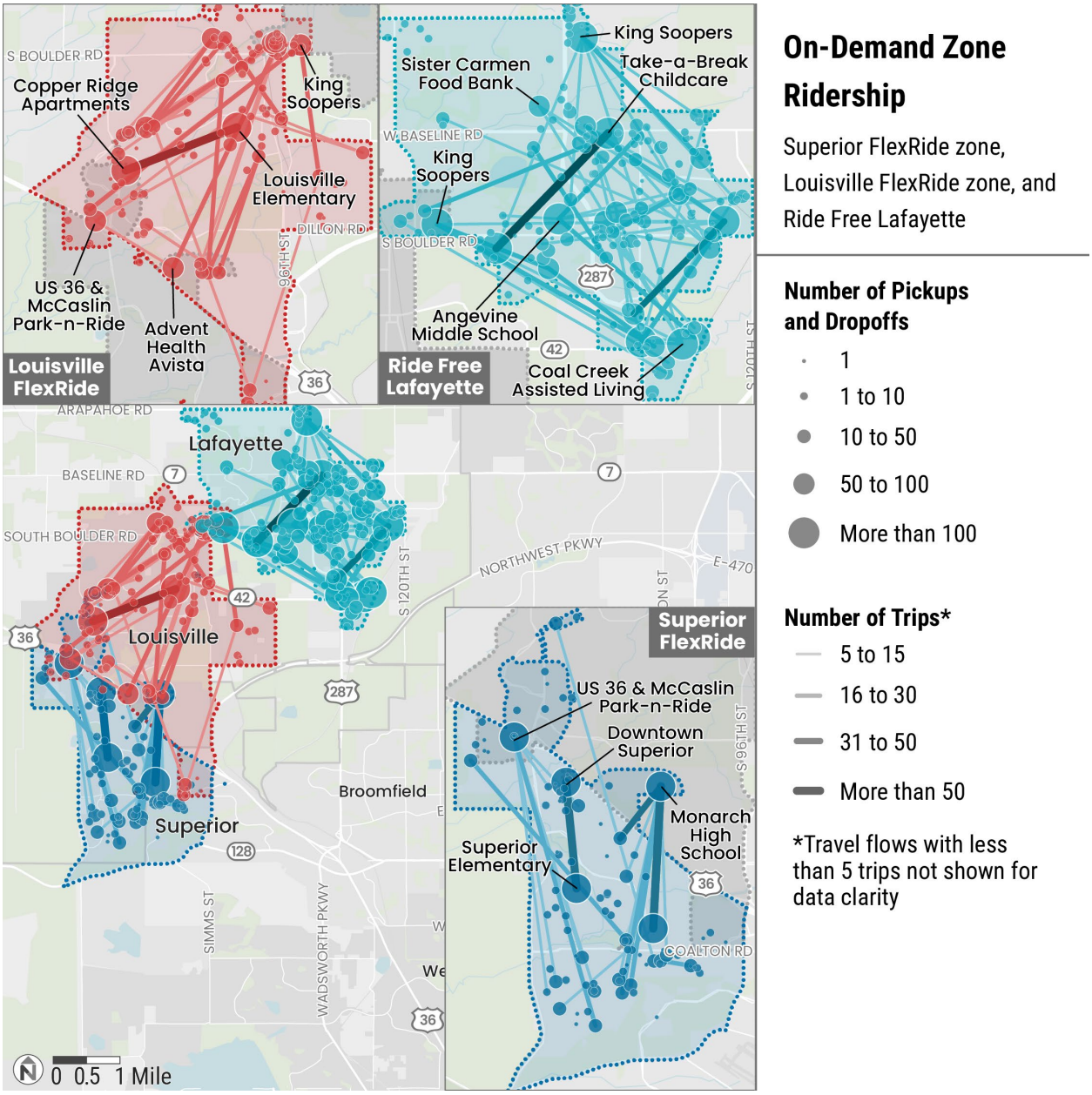
Figure 3-27 Ridership by Stop in Southeast Boulder County (Fall 2024)



Source: RTD, Boulder County

As shown in Figure 3-28, on-demand ridership in southeast Boulder County was well distributed throughout each community in 2024. There were concentrations of pick-up and drop-off requests at higher density residential complexes, schools, retail and downtown centers, and medical facilities.

Figure 3-28 On-Demand Ridership by Location in Southeast Boulder County (October 2024)

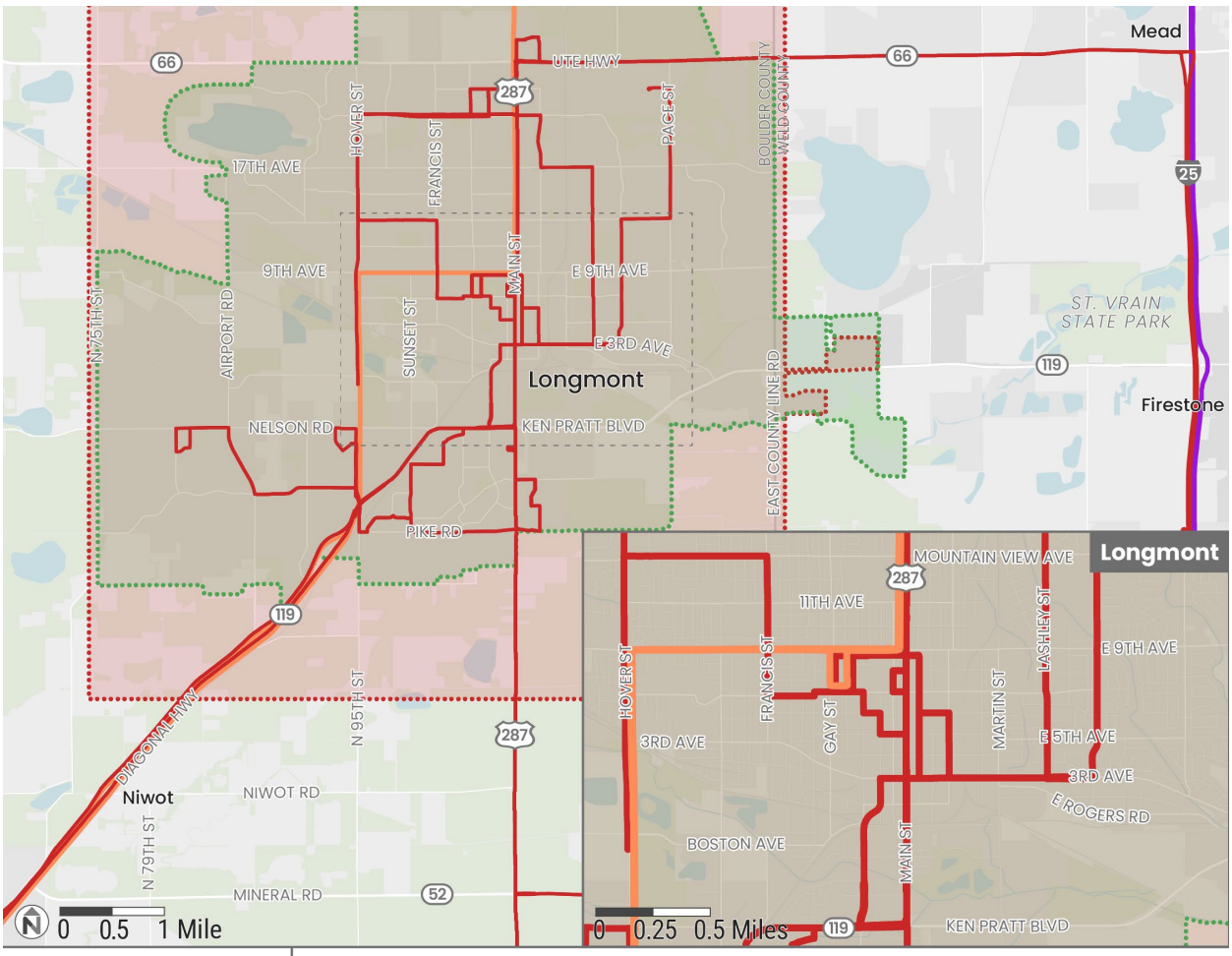


Data Source: Boulder County, RTD

Longmont and Niwot

The map in Figure 3-29 shows fixed-route and on-demand transit service coverage within and around Longmont and Niwot.

Figure 3-29 Existing Transit Service in Longmont and Niwot



Data Source: RTD, Boulder County, City of Longmont, Remix

Local fixed-route service in Longmont includes four routes operated by RTD—Routes 323, 324, 326, and 327—that connect at Roosevelt Park and the Walmart at N 107th Street and Parkridge Avenue. Two overlapping on-demand

zones serve most of the city, including a FlexRide zone operated by RTD and RIDE Longmont, provided by the City of Longmont and operated by Via.

Regional service in Longmont consists of several RTD routes connecting to Denver and Boulder, including the LD1/LD3, BOLT, and LX. Transfort's FLEX route also connects Longmont to Fort Collins and Boulder. The Bustang North Line operates along I-25 just east of Boulder County, serving the county at the Firestone-Longmont Mobility Hub.

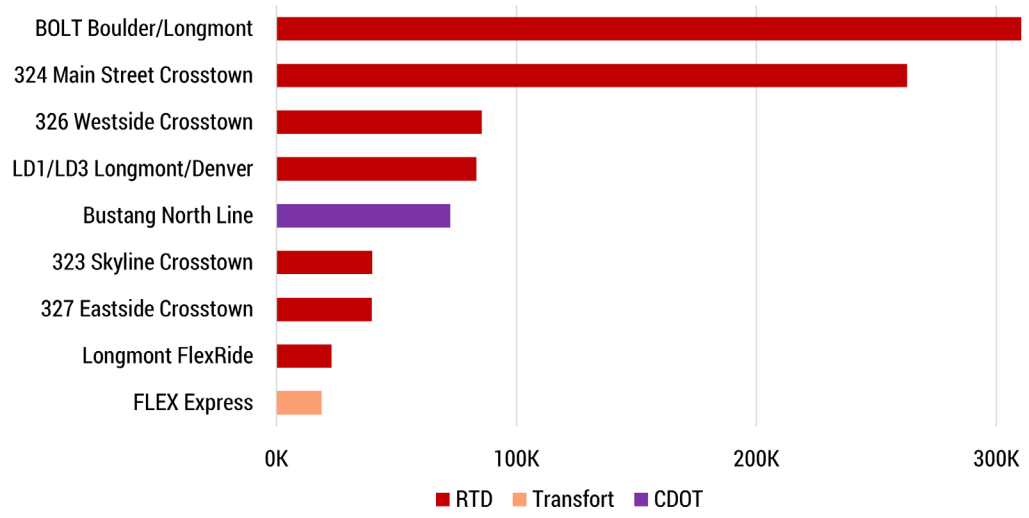
Figure 3-30 Existing Transit Routes Serving Longmont and Niwot

Route or Service	Provider	Route Purpose	Span/ Seasonality	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak Frequency
323	RTD	Local	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	60 min	60 min
324	RTD	Local	Daily, year-round	30 min	30 min
326	RTD	Local	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	30 min	30 min
327	RTD	Local	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	60 min	60 min
BOLT	RTD	County	Daily, year-round	30 min	60 min
LD1/LD3	RTD	Regional	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	60 min	70 min
LX1/LX2	RTD	Regional	Weekdays, year-round	1 morning + 3 afternoon trips	N/A
FlexRide Longmont	RTD	On-Demand	Daily, year-round	On-Demand	On-Demand
RIDE Longmont	City of Longmont	On-Demand	Daily, year-round	On-Demand	On-Demand

Route or Service	Provider	Route Purpose	Span/ Seasonality	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak Frequency
FLEX	Transfort	Regional	Weekdays and Saturdays, year-round	3 morning + 4 afternoon trips	2 morning + 3 afternoon trips
Bustang North Line	CDOT	Regional	Daily, year-round	45 min	135 min
Access-a-Ride	RTD	Paratransit	Daily, year-round	On Demand	On Demand
Access-on-Demand	RTD	Paratransit	Daily, year-round	On Demand	On Demand
Via Paratransit	Via Mobility Services	Paratransit	Daily, year-round	On Demand	On Demand

In 2024, the BOLT route connecting to Boulder was the highest ridership route in the Longmont area; the Transfort FLEX Express had the lowest ridership. These routes follow a similar travel pattern, but the BOLT is much more frequent. Of the routes providing local service, Route 324 had significantly higher ridership than the rest of the 300 series. The LD route connecting Longmont directly to Denver had lower ridership than services to Boulder.

Figure 3-31 Ridership for Routes* Serving Longmont and Niwot (2024)

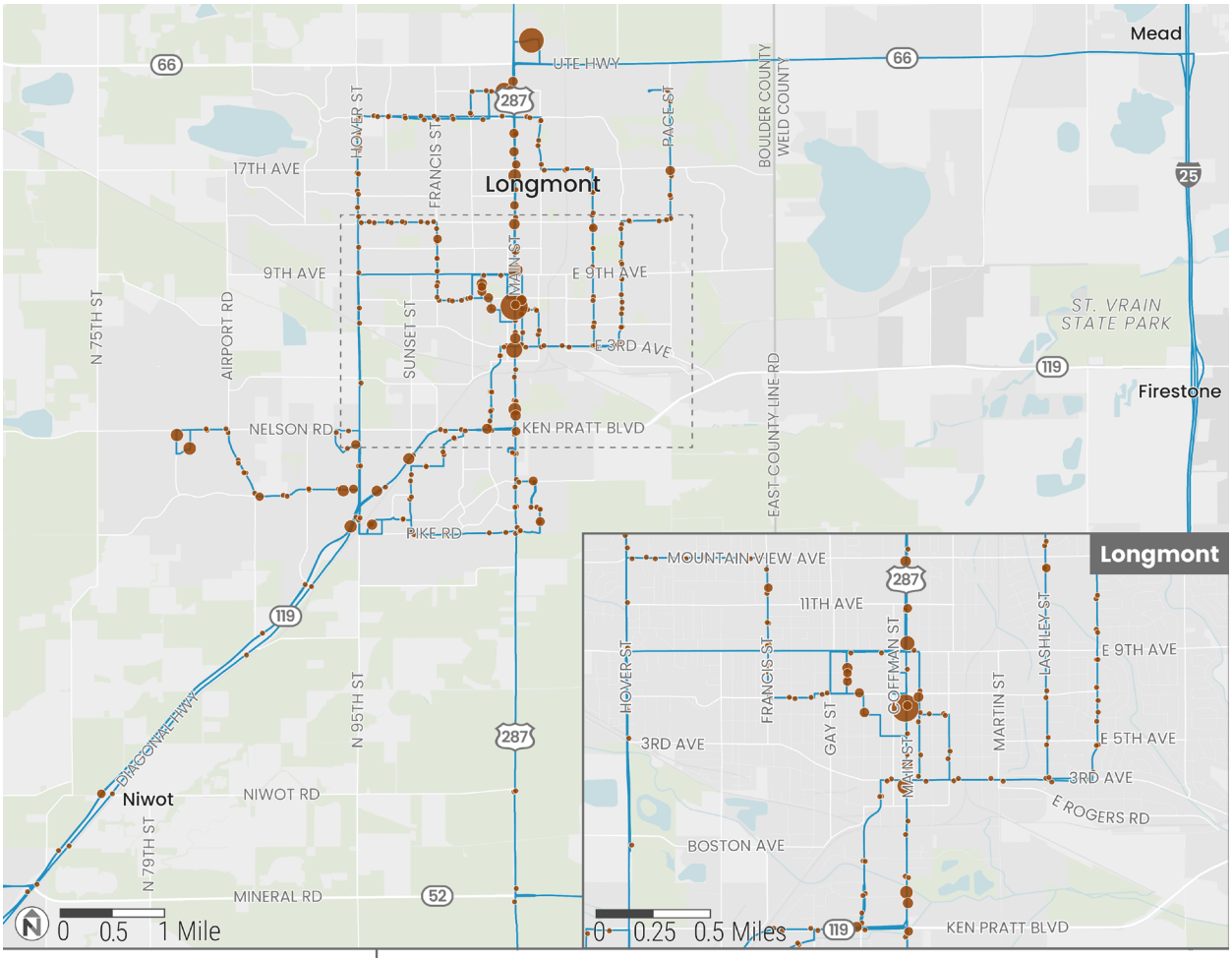


Data Source: CDOT, RTD, Transfort

**Chart shows routes for which annual data was available.*

Ridership activity was highest on Main Street in downtown Longmont and adjacent to Roosevelt Park, where many routes connect. The Walmart at Main Street and Ute Highway, which also serves as a transfer and layover hub for several local routes, also had relatively high ridership.

Figure 3-32 Ridership by Stop in Longmont and Niwot (Fall 2024)



Weekday Ridership Activity

Stop-Level Weekday Ridership (Fall 2024)

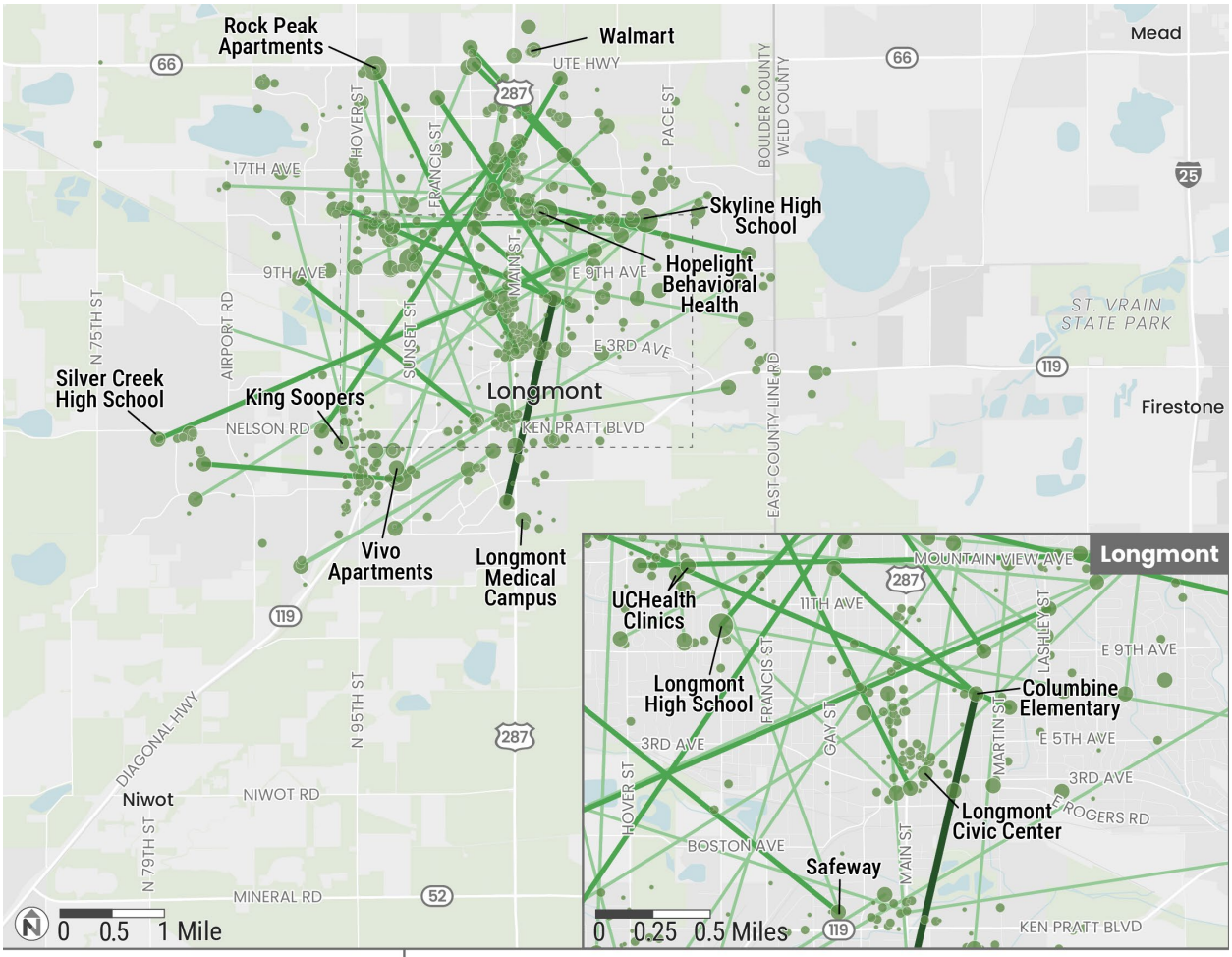
Existing Transit Service

< 10
10
100
500
1,000

Source: RTD, Boulder County

Figure 3-33 shows ridership by location on the Longmont FlexRide service. While ridership is well distributed throughout the city, major destinations include Main Street, retail centers throughout the city (especially around Hover Road and Highway 119), destinations both east and west of Main Street on Mountain View Avenue, and several large apartment complexes.

Figure 3-33 Longmont FlexRide Ridership by Location (October 2024)



On-Demand Zone Ridership

Longmont FlexRide Zone

Number of Pickups and Dropoffs

- 1
- 1 to 10
- 10 to 50
- 50 to 100
- More than 100

Number of Trips*

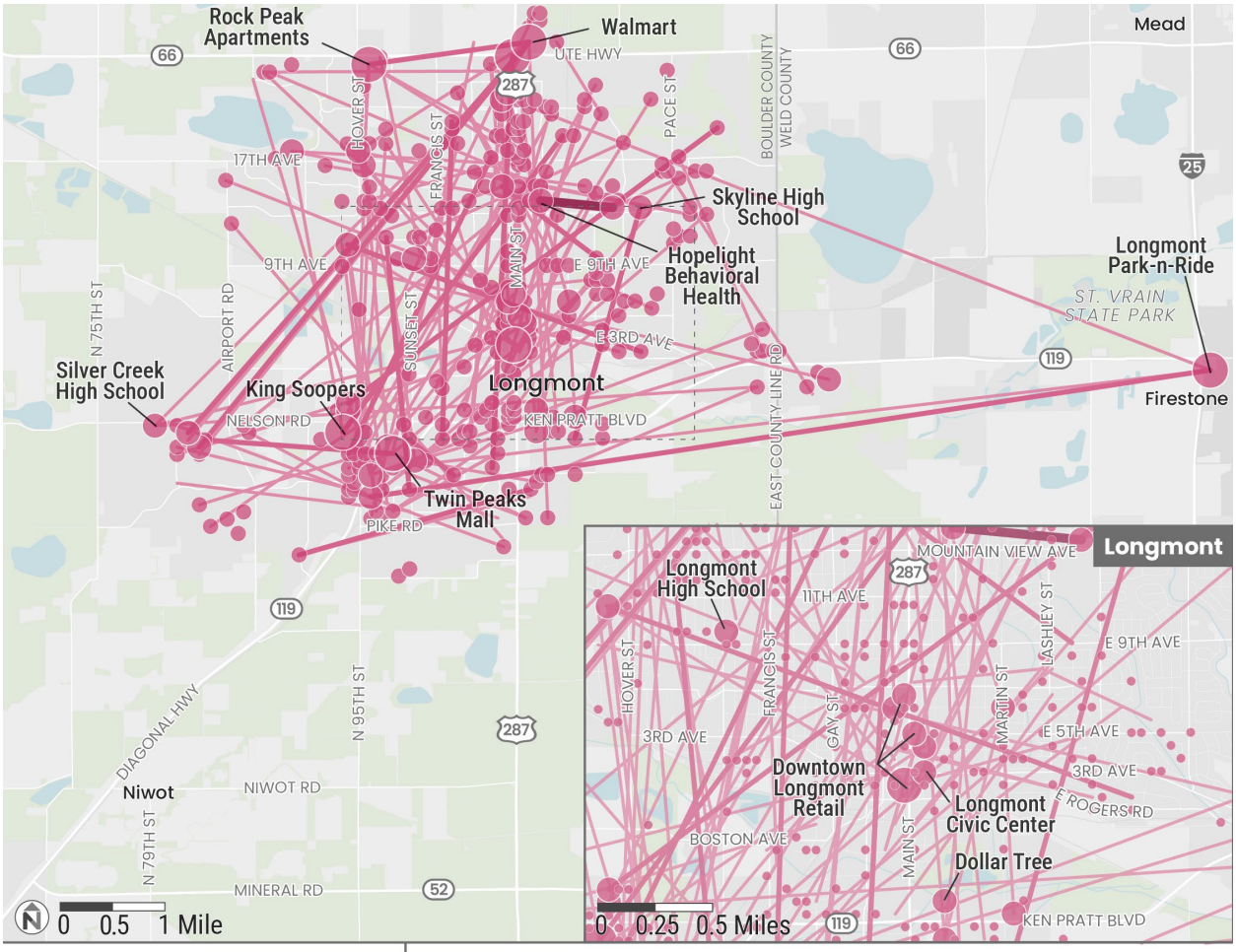
- 5 to 15
- 16 to 30
- 31 to 50
- More than 50

*Travel flows with less than 5 trips not shown for data clarity

Data Source: RTD

As with Longmont FlexRide, RIDE Longmont ridership by location (shown in Figure 3-34) is distributed throughout the city. There are concentrations of pick-ups and drop-offs in downtown Longmont (along Main Street and Coffman Street), along the length of Hover Street from Ute Highway to CO 119, at the retail hub near Hover Road and CO 119, and at large apartment complexes throughout the city.

Figure 3-34 RIDE Longmont Ridership (April 2025)



On-Demand Zone Ridership

RIDE Longmont

Number of Pickups and Dropoffs*

- 10 to 50
- 50 to 100
- More than 100

Number of Trips*

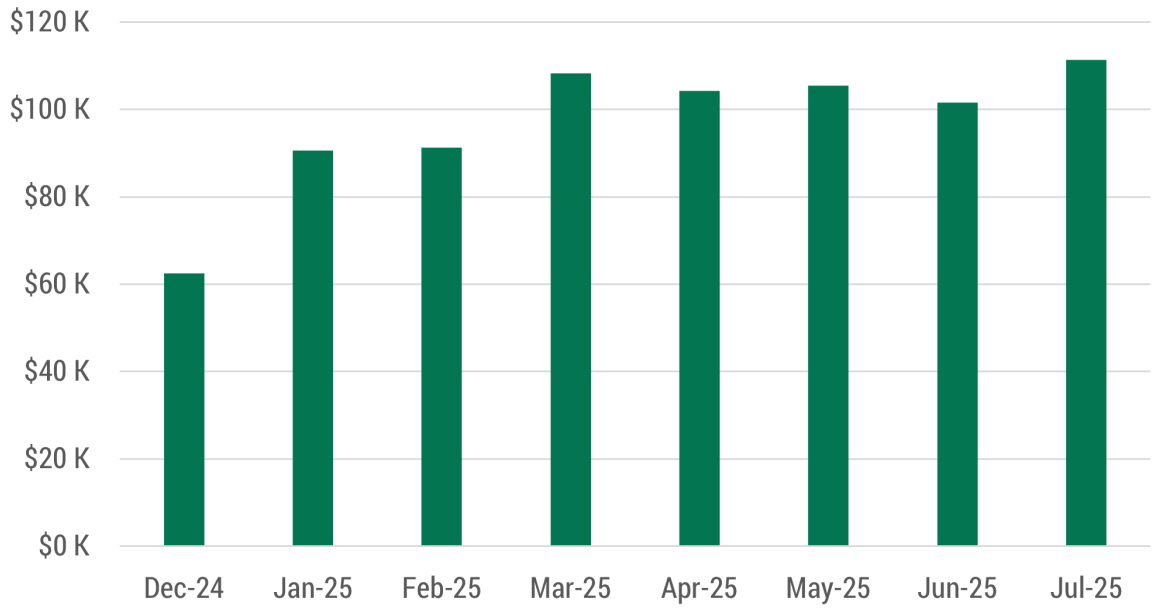
- 5 to 15
- 16 to 30
- 31 to 50
- More than 50

*Travel flows with less than 5 trips and points with less than 10 pickups or dropoffs not shown for data clarity

Data Source: City of Longmont

Monthly service hours and costs on RIDE Longmont increased during the first few months of operation but stabilized to approximately $110,000 per month in March 2025 (see Figure 3-35). Service hours will increase from approximately 1,500 hours per month today to 2,000 hours per month in the 2026-2028 budget cycle, with an estimated operating cost of $130,000 per month.

Figure 3-35 RIDE Longmont Total Monthly Cost



Data Source: City of Longmont

What We Heard: Longmont and Niwot

Longmont residents identified more frequent bus service as their top transit need, while Niwot residents highlighted the need for transit to serve new areas. Survey respondents from Longmont described wanting better connectivity on the 300 series buses, as well as better service and an enhanced passenger experience on RIDE Longmont. Niwot respondents described wanting more convenient access to Niwot Park-n-Ride.

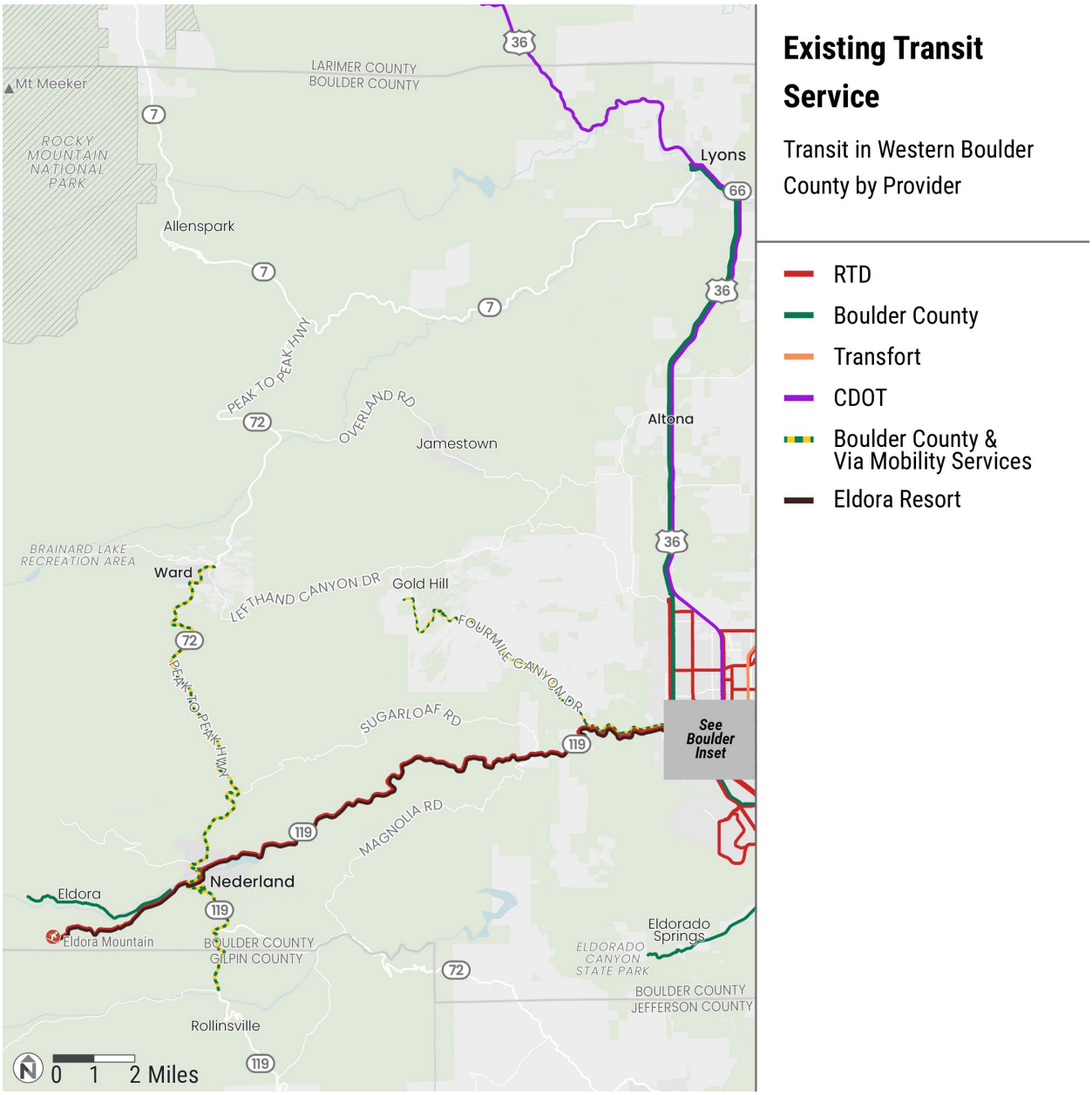


Route 324 provides 30-minute service in downtown Longmont.

Western Boulder County and Mountain Communities

West of the City of Boulder, the county is mountainous and rural. The map in Figure 3-36 shows transit services that connect communities within and to the western portion of Boulder County.

Figure 3-36 Existing Transit Service in Western Boulder County



Data Source: RTD, Boulder County, Remix

This part of the county is dominated by state and national parks and recreational areas and is home to smaller towns and unincorporated areas. Transit service is focused on connecting to Boulder and the broader region and providing seasonal access to trailheads and resorts.

Recreational Service Gaps

Boulder County is home to many popular recreational destinations in Roosevelt National Forest, Rocky Mountain National Park, and local and county parks. While seasonal services provide transit access to the Hessie Trailhead and Eldorado Canyon State Park, many popular destinations are not accessible by transit. This puts pressure on the limited parking facilities near Brainard Lake, Mount Sanitas, and Flagstaff Summit.

RTD's main service in this area is the NB route that follows CO 119 between Nederland and Boulder. In the winter, some trips extend farther west to serve Eldora Ski Resort, which also offers a supplemental shuttle route on the weekends during the winter.

Boulder County provides the Gold Hill Climb and Mountain Rides routes in partnership with Via Mobility Services. These are year-round routes, with a limited number of trips each day. The Lyons Flyer, also provided by the County, connects Lyons to Boulder on weekdays. These routes are critical for linking residents of rural parts of the county to essential jobs and services.

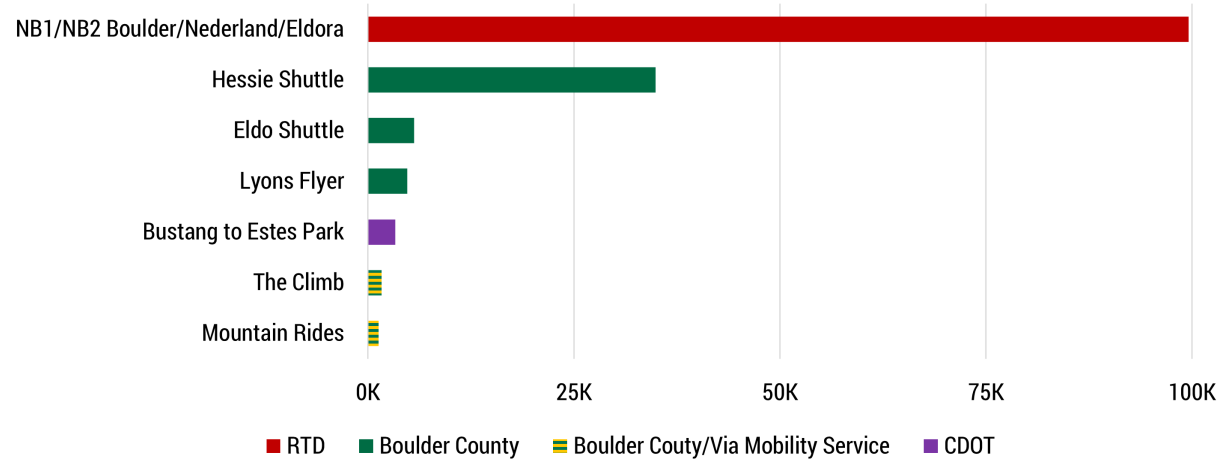
The County also provides the Eldo Shuttle on weekends during the summer, connecting Boulder, Superior, Louisville, and Eldorado Canyon State Park. The seasonal Bustang route to Estes Park links Boulder and Lyons to Denver and Rocky Mountain National Park during the summer.

Figure 3-37 Existing Transit Routes Serving Western Boulder County

Route or Service	Provider	Route Purpose	Span/ Seasonality	Peak Frequency	Off-Peak Frequency
NB1/NB2	RTD	County	Daily, year-round	50 min	120 min
Lyons Flyer	Boulder County	County	Weekdays, year-round	2 morning + 1 midday + 1 afternoon trips	N/A
Gold Hill Climb	Boulder County/Via Mobility Services	County	Weekdays, year-round	1 morning + 1 afternoon trip	N/A
Mountain Rides Shuttle	Boulder County/Via Mobility Services	County	Wednesdays and Thursdays, year-round	1 trip	N/A
Hessie Shuttle	Boulder County	Local	Fridays, Weekends, and Holidays, summer only	15 min	N/A
NedREC	Eldora Resort	Local	Weekends (as a pilot service)	30 min	30 min
Bustang to Estes	CDOT	Regional	Weekends and holidays, summer only	2 morning + 2 afternoon trips	N/A
Via Paratransit	Via Mobility Services	Paratransit	Daily, year-round	On Demand	On Demand

In 2024, transit ridership in this part of the county was highest on the NB routes connecting Nederland and Boulder (Figure 3-38). The Hessie Shuttle was also very popular during its summer weekend service hours. Mountain Rides Shuttle and the Gold Hill Climb operate year-round but serve areas with fewer residents through one to two trips per day; the population density and limited number of trips lead to lower ridership.

Figure 3-38 Ridership for Routes* Serving Western Boulder County (2024)



Data Source: Boulder County, CDOT, RTD

**Chart shows routes for which annual data was available.*

What We Heard: Western Boulder County and Mountain Communities

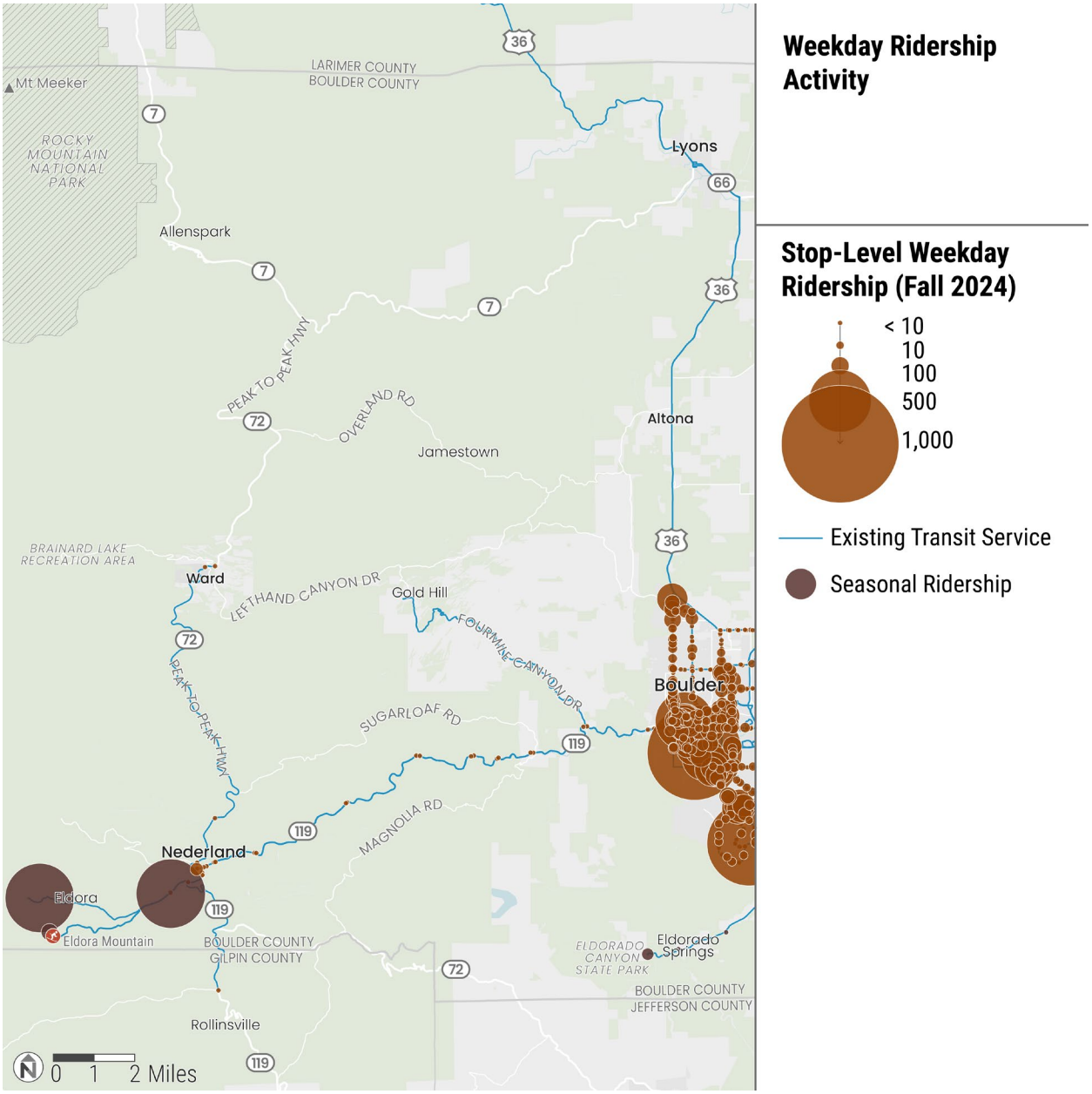
Nederland residents identified more frequent service as their top transit need, while Jamestown residents highlighted the need for transit to serve new areas. Survey respondents from Nederland noted the importance of better mountain service for people with disabilities and older adults, service earlier in the day between Nederland and Boulder to support airport trips, and new service to Gilpin County.



The NB3 route and Mountain Rides Shuttle connect at Nederland Park-n-Ride.

Consistent with this area's population and geography, ridership activity by stop was lower in the western part of the county than in larger cities, as shown in the map below. Most riders board services at Nederland Park-n-Ride year-round; however, seasonal stops at Nederland High School, the Hessie Trailhead, and Eldora Ski Resort had the highest ridership in the area overall.

Figure 3-39 Ridership by Stop in Western Boulder County (Fall 2024)



Source: RTD, Boulder County

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that transit in Boulder County provides excellent coverage through a diversity of service types and providers across a very large area. The transit network offers important regional routes and high-performing local services that typically travel through the City of Boulder, leading to an uneven distribution of ridership and quality of connections between communities.

The City of Boulder is the core of fixed-route transit activity in the county, with 33 routes operating throughout the year. Other communities rely more heavily on on-demand services, regional connectors, and seasonal or specialized routes to meet local transit needs. Across all jurisdictions, respondents to the transit needs survey identified the importance of improving frequency, adding new connections, and making transit easier to use for more types of trips.

Chapter 4 focuses on supports for transit, including amenities, information, facilities, first- and final-mile connections, and infrastructure. These elements of the transit system have a profound impact on the transit experience in Boulder County today and play an important role in making transit a travel mode of choice for residents, employees, and visitors.

4 Transit Amenities and Infrastructure

This chapter describes Boulder County's transit amenities and facilities, highlighting opportunities to improve transit connections, accessibility, and the passenger experience.

What is the purpose of this chapter?

This chapter includes five sections that document the major transit facilities, amenities, and infrastructure in Boulder County today. It also describes the current transit branding environment, transit priority treatments, and first- and final-mile connections to explore the experience of taking transit in Boulder County today. Key findings include the following:

- **Transit Access Points:** Boulder County transit stations and Park-n-Rides are key access points, especially for people who drive to connect with transit. Facilities range from high-capacity Park-n-Ride locations, such as Downtown Boulder Station and Table Mesa, to smaller but high functioning sites like the Nederland Park-n-Ride. Maintaining and improving transit amenities and information at these locations is critical to enhance the experience of using transit.
- **Bus Stops:** Most RTD bus stops in Boulder County have few amenities, and the majority include only a sign. About half (52%) of the stops meet ADA accessibility requirements, with a landing pad and appropriate paths and access. Non-accessible bus stops are a barrier to transit use, especially for passengers with disabilities.

- **Transit Branding:** Boulder County's 12 transit providers use multiple passenger-facing brands, with a variety of vehicles and bus stop treatments. Passengers must navigate multiple mobile applications, fare systems, and accounts depending on jurisdiction and service.
- **Transit Priority Measures:** Treatments to give buses priority in the right-of-way are limited in the county, although exclusive bus lanes on key corridors in Boulder and transit signal priority along US 287 in Lafayette and Longmont are planned. Additional service and infrastructure improvements are planned, as described in Chapter 2.
- **Speed and Reliability:** Respondents to the transit needs survey identified frequency, reliability, and speed as their top priorities. Buses coming more often with travel times that are more comparable to driving would allow people to use transit for more trips. Today, the Broadway corridor in Boulder has the most transit delay and would benefit from speed and reliability improvements.



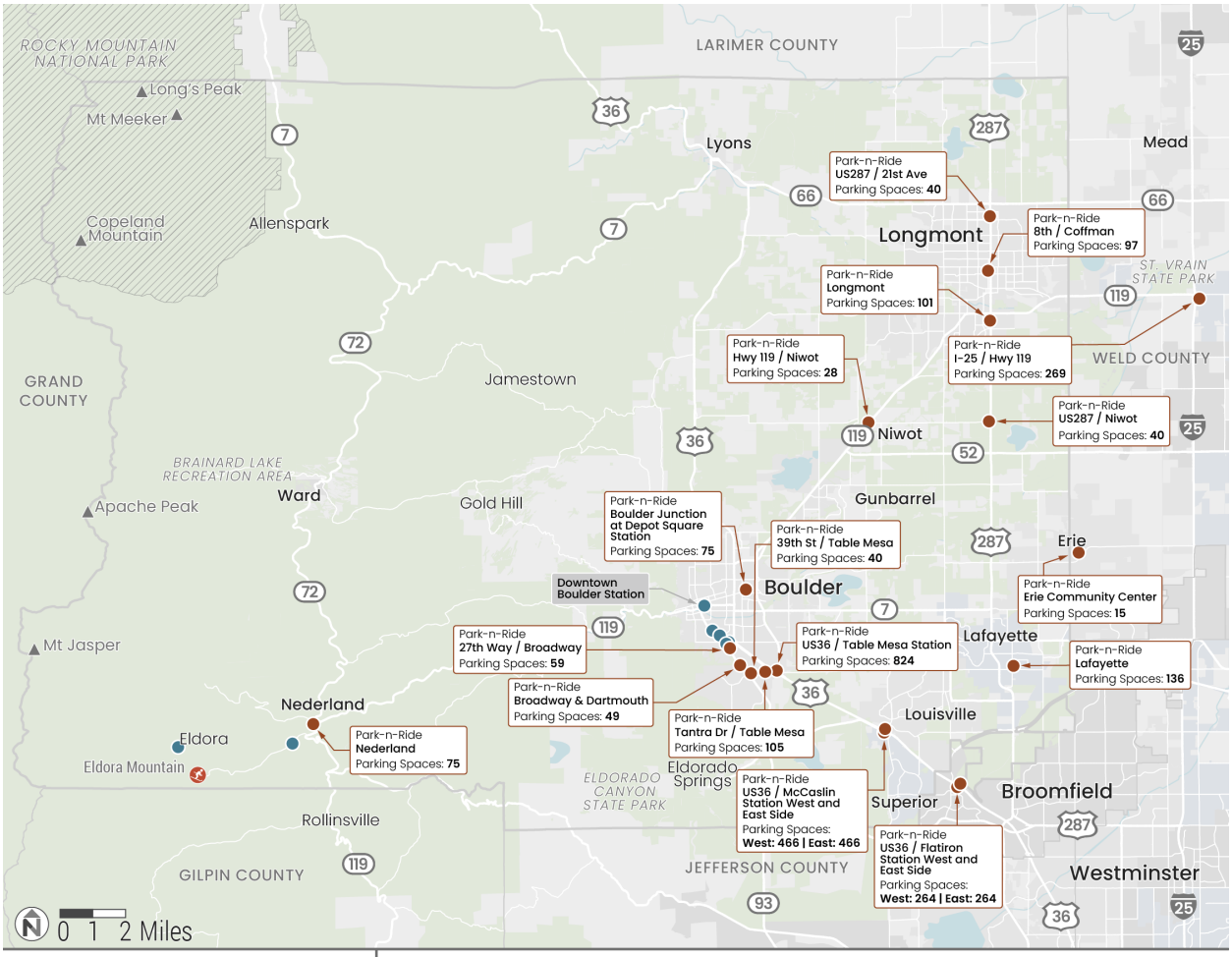
The Broadway Transit Improvement Project will add segments of dedicated bus lanes and two queue jumps between Regent Drive and Table Mesa Drive. Image source: City of Boulder.

- **First and Final Mile:** While one-third of streets in Boulder County have accessible sidewalks on both sides, about 12% of bus stops in the county do not have sidewalks. Shared micromobility devices, such as bikes and scooters, expand the reach of transit but are currently only available in Boulder. Enhanced walking, rolling, and biking facilities and a new regional bikeshare program could improve connections to transit.

4.1 Transit Stations and Park-n-Rides

Transit stations and Park-n-Rides are major points of connection to the transit services in Boulder County. There are 3,129 parking spaces throughout the county with a mix of free and paid parking; vehicles registered within RTD's service area can park for free for 24 hours at RTD Park-n-Rides. Figure 4-1 shows the location and number of high-ridership stops and stations (250+ daily passengers) and Park-n-Ride facilities in Boulder County.

Figure 4-1 Major Stations and Park-n-Rides in Boulder County



Major Stations and Park-n-Rides

- Park-n-Ride
- Higher-Ridership Station/Stop (Fall 2024)

Source: RTD

Among the largest facilities are the US 36 & McCaslin Station, with a combined 932 parking spaces (east and west sides), and the US 36/Table Mesa Park-n-Ride with 824 parking spaces.



Signs at the US 36/Table Mesa Park-n-Ride direct passengers to boarding gates that serve different parts of the region.

Downtown Boulder Station is also a major transit hub, with 18 connecting routes and services. Signs and information at transit facilities vary throughout the county, as shown at the Nederland Park-n-Ride and the Lafayette Park-n-Ride.



Passenger information signs help people navigate transit services and parking at Nederland Park-n-Ride (left) and Lafayette Park-n-Ride (right).

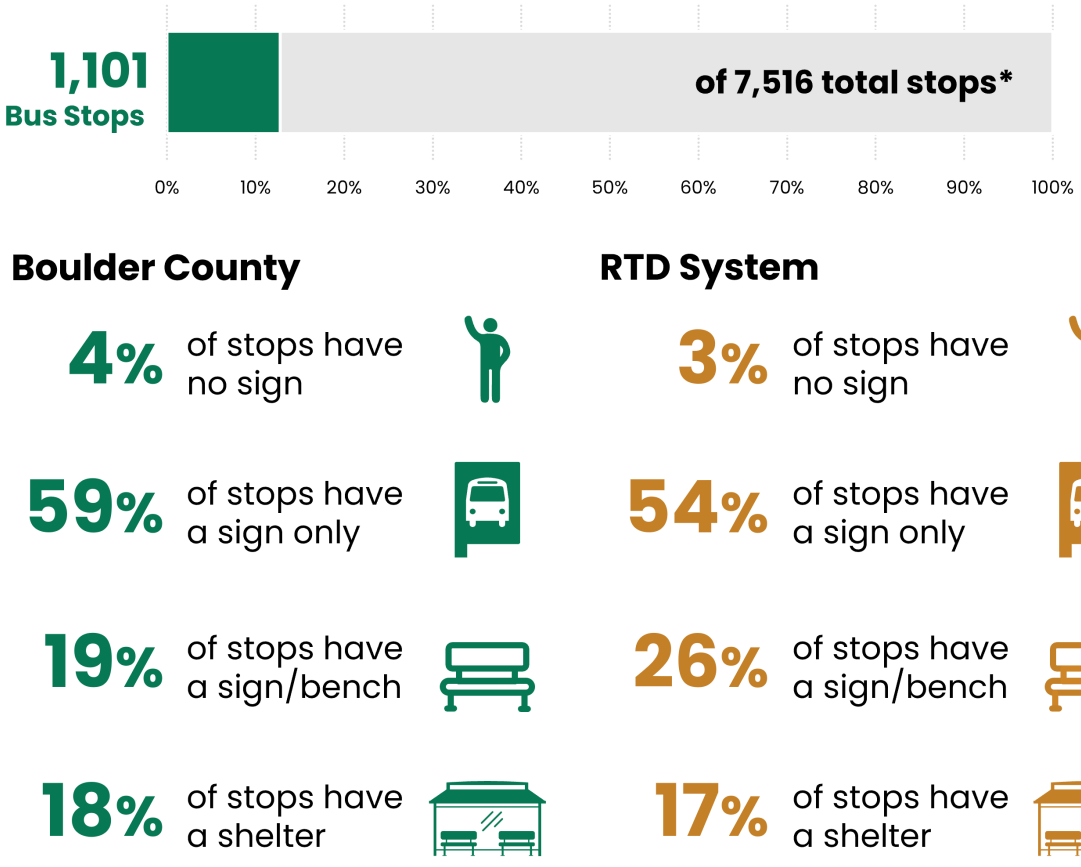
4.2 Bus Stops

There are over 7,500 bus stops in the RTD system, and 1,101 are in Boulder County. These are complemented by stops owned and maintained by Boulder County, as well as stops owned and maintained by local jurisdictions.

Amenities

Consistent with stops across the RTD system, most RTD bus stops in Boulder County have only a sign (see Figure 4-2 for a comparison of amenities). Figure 4-3 shows the level of RTD stop amenities across the county. RTD's Bus Stop Infrastructure and Accessibility Assessment project is currently evaluating all bus stops in the system, including those in Boulder County, and will provide an in-depth analysis of stop amenities and accessibility.

Figure 4-2 Bus Stop Amenities in Boulder County



**Inventoried stops (regardless of active/inactive status)*

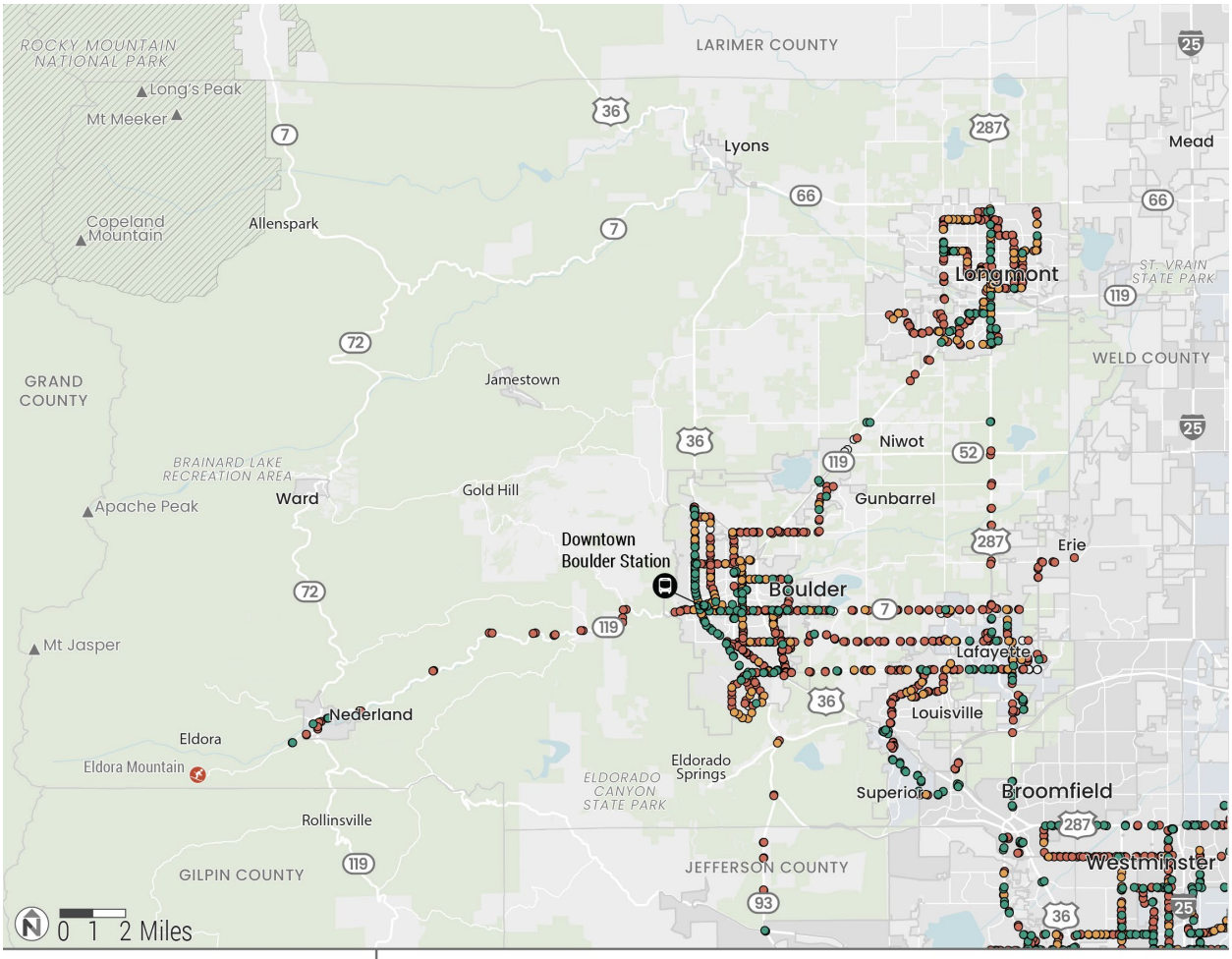
Data Source: RTD

RTD Stop and Amenity Policy

RTD has minimum design standards for BRT stations and bus stops that recommend far-side bus stops, set ridership thresholds for shelters (40+ passenger boardings per day), and outline placement for furnishings.

Source: RTD

Figure 4-3 Map of Bus Stop Amenity Levels in Boulder County



Bus Stop Amenities

Level of stop amenities in Boulder County.

- No Sign
- Sign Only
- Sign and Bench
- Shelter

Data Source: RTD

What We Heard: Bus Stop Amenities

The first phase of community outreach for Linking Boulder County invited people to share their transit needs and identify opportunities for improvement. Only 3% of survey respondents described current bus stops as comfortable and many people highlighted a desire for more shelters:

- *"I wish there was better shelter at the stops. Some are very much out in the road. The stops on Arapahoe are an example. Most just have signs and no place to take cover."*
- *"There are so many bus stops that either have no seating or shelter from rain/snow/blistering sun, that really should."*
- *"More shelters, lighting, real-time arrival displays, and safe pedestrian/bike access to stops would make the overall experience far better."*



A bus operator uses a tree for shade during a layover stop.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Accessibility

Of the 1,101 RTD bus stops in Boulder County, nearly half (47%) meet accessibility requirements (other than allowed slope). RTD evaluated ADA compliance based on the presence of a landing pad, path condition, and clear access free of obstructions.

Figure 4-4 shows the features and dimensions of a fully ADA accessible bus stop and compares the proportion of accessible stops in Boulder County with the RTD system. Figure 4-5 shows the location of ADA-compliant and non-compliant bus stops in Boulder County.

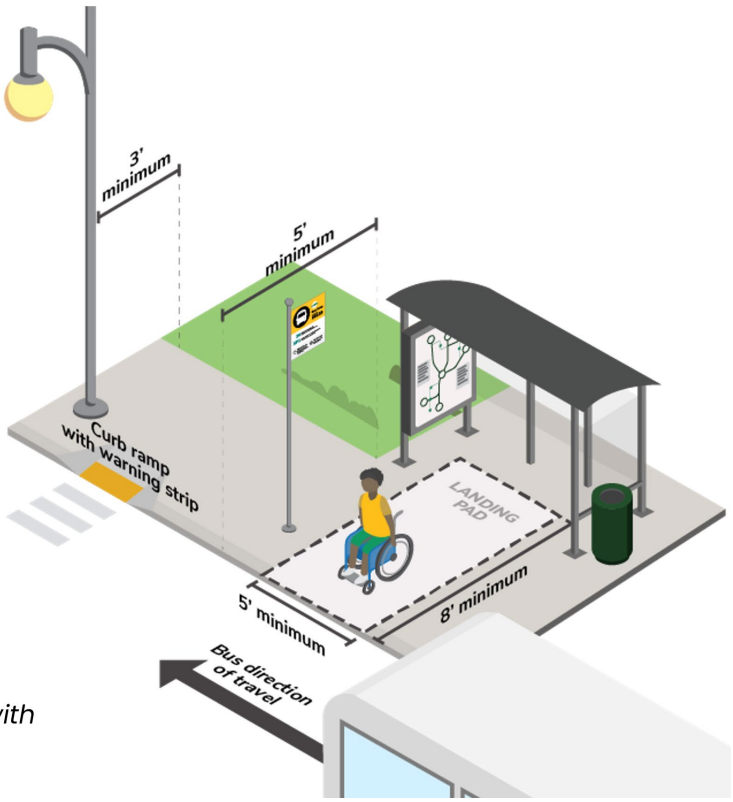
Figure 4-4 Accessible Stops in Boulder County

Boulder County

47% of stops are accessible*

RTD System

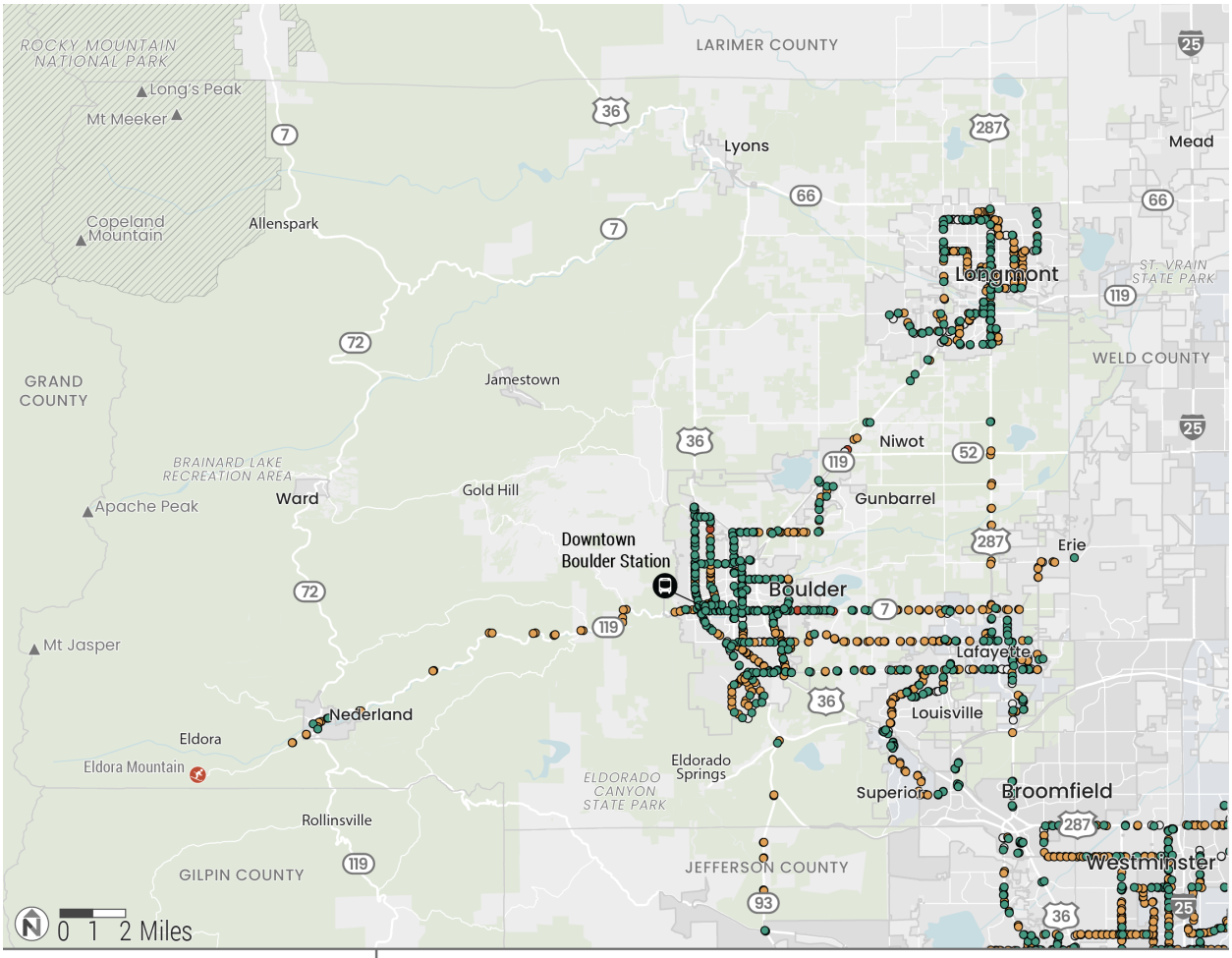
36% of stops are accessible



**Meet accessibility requirements, with the exception of slope*

Data Source: RTD

Figure 4-5 Map of Bus Stop Accessibility in Boulder County



Bus Stop Accessibility

Bus stop ADA compliance based on pad presence, path condition, and access (excluding slope).

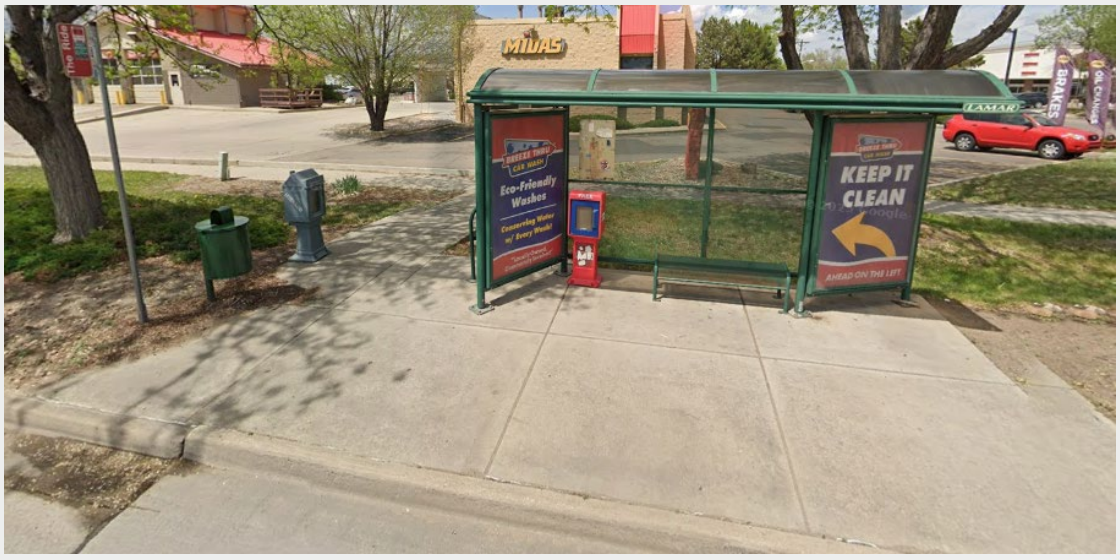
- Unknown
- Construction at Bus Stop
- ADA Non-compliant
- ADA Compliant

Data Source: RTD

Accessibility at Bus Loading Areas and On-Street Bus Stops

The ADA Standards set requirements for accessibility at bus loading areas and bus stops, including the following standards:

- At bus stops with a shelter, the bus stop boarding and alighting areas (called "pads") can be located either within or outside of the shelter.
- Bus stop pads shall have a firm, stable, and slip-resistant surface, meet minimum dimension requirements, and be connected to streets, sidewalks, or pedestrian paths by an accessible route.
- The slope of the bus stop boarding and alighting area shall be the same as the roadway if parallel, or not steeper than 1:48 (2% grade) if perpendicular.
- Bus shelters shall provide a minimum clear floor or ground space entirely within the shelter.
- Station platforms shall be positioned to coordinate with vehicles in accordance with ADA Accessibility Guidelines for Transportation Vehicles which are applicable to all public transportation vehicles.



The bus stop at Ken Pratt Boulevard and S Bowen Street in Longmont is an example of an ADA-compliant stop with a shelter.

Image Source: Google Maps

4.3 Branding and Information

Transit branding is found on vehicles; at bus stops, transit stations, and Park-n-Rides; in digital applications; and on printed media. Clear and consistent branding makes it easier for passengers—both regular and occasional riders—to navigate the transit system. Today, transit branding in Boulder County reflects the diverse system of local, regional, seasonal, and CU Boulder routes and services. Each of the 12 transit providers in Boulder County has their own visual identity and customer information practices.

Fleet Branding

Boulder County has a variety of transit vehicle types and brands:

- Local, higher-frequency routes that primarily serve Boulder form the Community Transit Network (CTN) and are named routes (HOP, DASH, BOLT, JUMP, SKIP, and BOUND).
- The 200 and 300 series numbered routes operate in Boulder and other communities across the county and provide lower-frequency service.
- Lettered routes represent connections between regional destinations, such as AB (Airport-Boulder), NB (Nederland-Boulder), LD (Longmont-Denver), and LX (Longmont-Denver Express).
- The Flyer brand (Flatiron Flyer and Diagonal Flyer) represents high-frequency, limited-stop service between regional destinations.
- Services with Ride (Louisville FlexRide and RIDE Longmont) branding are on-demand services.
- Routes with Shuttle branding are seasonal, recreational services.



The City of Boulder's Community Transit Network has distinct brands for local services.
Image Source: Boulder's Community Transit Network

While service-branded buses can help to distinguish routes and make services more recognizable, branded vehicles in Boulder County often operate as other routes due to operational needs caused by fleet availability, service expansion, and the region's growth. This can be confusing for passengers. The first image below shows a non-branded bus operating as a Flatiron Flyer (FF1), and two Flatiron Flyer-branded buses operating as an AB route to the airport and the BOLT to Longmont. The second and third images show a DASH-branded vehicle operating as Route 204, and a non-branded vehicle operating on the DASH route.



Branded and non-branded Flatiron Flyer buses operate on various routes.



A DASH-branded bus operates as Route 204.



A non-branded bus operates as the DASH.

While there are challenges with branded vehicles, some specialized services use them effectively, such as routes serving the CU Boulder campuses, the recreational shuttles, and paratransit vehicles (see photos below).



The transit vehicles used in Boulder County vary depending on the market and terrain they are serving. Clockwise from the top left is a CU Boulder Buff Bus, the Hessie Trailhead Shuttle, a Senior Services van in Longmont, and a Via Mobility Services paratransit vehicle in Nederland.

Bus Stop Branding

Depending on the jurisdiction that owns and maintains them, bus stops in Boulder County have varied brands, shelter designs, amenities, and signs. The photos below illustrate differences in the color of bus stop signs, the display of stop information, and the color of bus shelters. Additionally, some bus stop signs are attached to poles that have other roadway or transit information, which may create confusion about passenger pick-up/drop-off locations.



Bus stops and shelters look different across Boulder County, such as stops on US 287 in Lafayette (left), on McCaslin Boulevard at US 36 (middle), and at US 36 / Table Mesa Station (right).



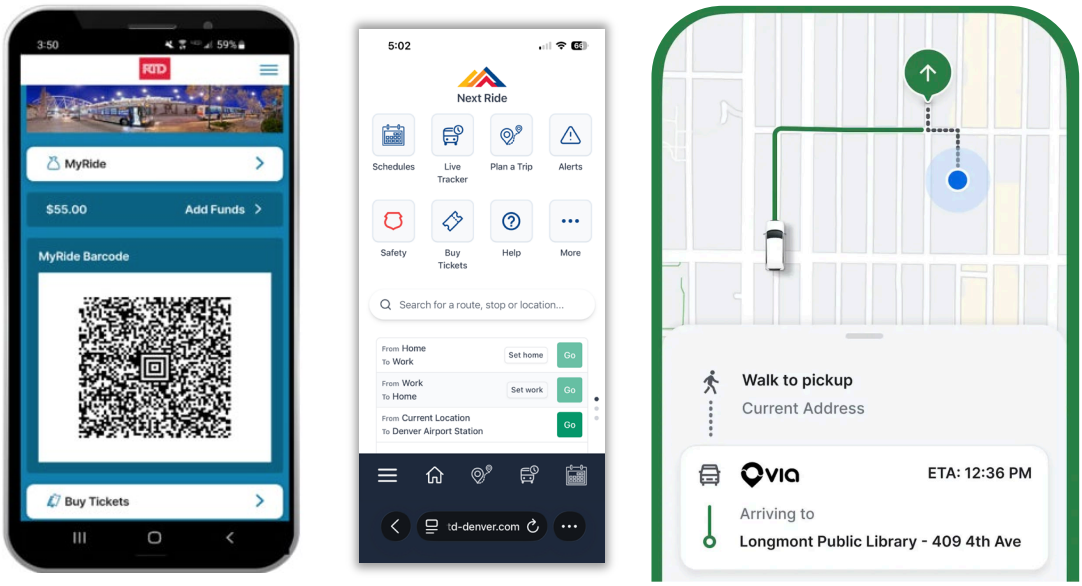
Specially branded signs for seasonal/occasional services are often placed on poles with other roadway signs, which can be confusing for transit riders and drivers.

Mobile Applications and Fare Payment

Transit passengers traveling between jurisdictions in Boulder County must navigate several mobile applications and registration points to get information or pay fares. For example, passengers using the RIDE Longmont service must book rides and pay their fare on an app powered by Via Transportation, Inc. Passengers on RTD buses can use the Next Ride app for trip planning, schedules, and route information and can follow a link to the MyRide app to purchase and display tickets. RTD's new Tap-n-Ride payment system also allows payment via contactless credit/debit cards or with a mobile wallet. Cash can also be used as fare payment on all RTD buses.

Since some transit services in Boulder County are easiest to access through mobile applications, people who do not have a smartphone or cell service in more remote locations may have difficulty booking or boarding. Figure 4-6 shows examples of mobile applications for transit services in Boulder County.

Figure 4-6 Mobile Applications for Transit Services in Boulder County



Source: RTD (MyRide and Next Ride apps), Google Store (RIDE Longmont app)

Via Mobility Services operates the HOP and Via Paratransit services. Via Transportation, Inc., a separate entity, operates the RIDE Longmont service. The two providers have similar names but use different booking mechanisms, which can be confusing for riders.

Digital and Analog Information

Beyond bus stop signs, passenger information throughout Boulder County is provided on analog maps and posters, as well as on digital signs and displays at Downtown Boulder Station, Boulder Junction at Depot Square, US 36 & Table Mesa Station, and US 36 & McCaslin Station. Analog signs require manual updates, and the branded BRT maps at these stations have not been updated since their installation prior to the pandemic. Though easier to update than printed signs, digital displays are subject to outages and can leave passengers without access to information. In the first phase of Linking Boulder County outreach, survey respondents noted that maps at stations and stops can be difficult to understand, especially for people who speak languages other than English.



Table Mesa Station has digital passenger information signs at Gates A and C.



Printed signs at Table Mesa communicate routes, connections, and departure times.

Language Barriers and Passenger Experience

Transit providers in Boulder County communicate nearly all information in English, which can be a barrier for non-native speakers. For example, monolingual Spanish speakers (the second most common language in Boulder County) may have difficulty accessing transit information and services. Similarly, transit operators who speak only English may be unable to assist passengers who are more comfortable using another language.

RTD's Language Access Program provides free language assistance to people who speak languages other than English. Passengers may access RTD's online trip planning tool in 10 different languages and can call RTD's Customer Care line to request an interpreter seven days a week during certain times. In the future, offering language courses to operators and information in multiple languages may help passengers better navigate transit services.



Passenger information is available in English at Downtown Boulder Station.

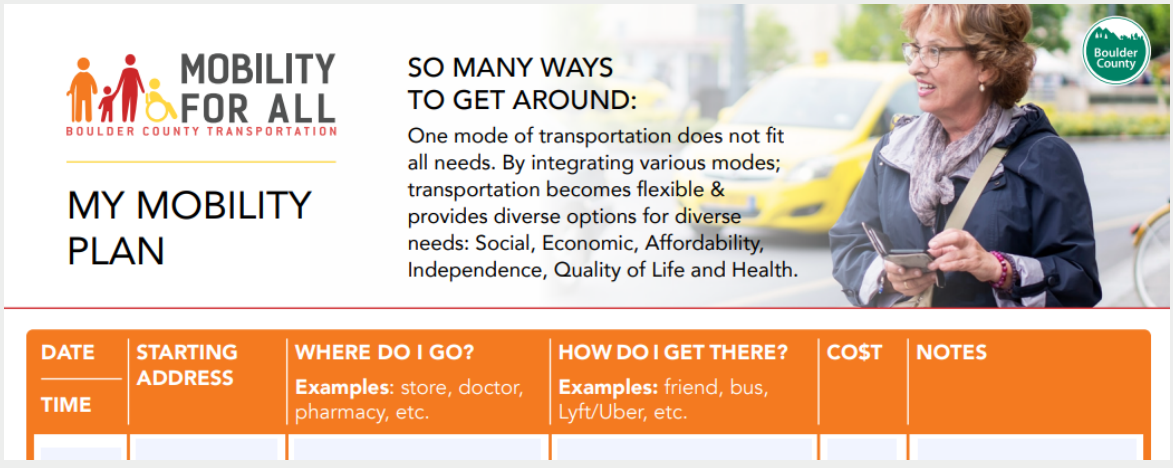
The diversity of transit brands and information in Boulder County can make it difficult to navigate the region's transit system. People who are unfamiliar with transit may find the services, brands, and apps confusing, which may limit their interest in riding transit. Providing an easy-to-understand and seamless transit experience is critical for increasing transit ridership.

Mobility for All (M4A) Program

Boulder County operates the Mobility for All (M4A) program to provide transportation services for residents of all ages and abilities. This community-driven and inclusive program offers:

- Direct assistance with transportation information, travel training, and trip planning, including M4A Ambassadors and the Mobility Plan Tool;
- Public education and collaboration with human service organizations, including the Peak Ride Volunteer Driver Program; and
- Employee transportation benefits, such as EcoPass, bike share benefits, Guaranteed Ride Home, carpool matching, and free EV charging and bike tune up services.

M4A trains volunteer Ambassadors who provide community members with free, personalized support to learn about transportation options. Ambassadors may conduct group presentations, assist with travel training, or ride transit with community members to empower their use of transportation options. Ambassadors come from diverse backgrounds and lived experiences and may speak languages other than English. M4A also offers trip planning resources, as well as the Mobility Plan Tool that helps people navigate their transportation options.



M4A's My Mobility Plan helps people explore and plan transportation options.

4.4 Transit Speed and Reliability

Reducing the amount of time buses spend in traffic or are delayed due to traffic signals helps improve transit speed and reliability, making transit more competitive with driving and a more attractive way to travel. Improving speed and reliability also improves on-time performance, a standard transit measure of how often a route adheres to its published schedule.

Regional Transit Priority Analysis

In 2015, RTD evaluated bus speeds and delay throughout the region and identified corridors where transit enhancements would have the greatest impact on operational performance and customer satisfaction. RTD then developed recommendations for transit priority treatments on seven corridors. In Boulder County, the highest priority corridor was Broadway from Baseline Road to Iris Avenue. Recommended improvements included bus stop consolidation and relocations, bus stop amenity improvements, transit signal priority, and bypass lanes and queue jumps. While RTD did not implement stop consolidation recommendations, the City of Boulder is advancing transit priority treatments on Broadway, including a bus-only lane study from Euclid Avenue to Table Mesa Drive (see Figure 4-7).

Service Standards

RTD maintains service standards to ensure consistent and efficient operations and to identify areas for improvements:

- **Service Frequency:** Routes must meet minimum frequencies of 15, 30, or 60 minutes depending on the service type. Services that cannot meet minimums may be candidates for service changes.
- **Ridership and Crowding:** A minimum ridership performance standard applies to all routes operating at the minimum service frequency target. Crowding, defined as a seated load plus the standing passenger space, can impact boarding times. Solutions may involve changing the bus assignment or frequency of service.

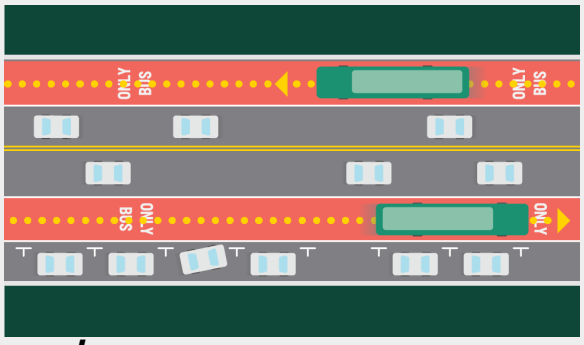
- **Vehicle Assignment:** RTD uses small, standard, or intercity coaches depending on service type, frequency, and ridership. Certain fleet choices work in tandem with speed and reliability measures.
- **On-Time Performance:** RTD defines on time for fixed-route service as not more than 1 minute early and/or 5 minutes late.
- **Route and Stop Spacing Standards:** Route design should be as direct as possible, with limited deviations. Minimum and maximum stop spacing depends on service type and land use.

Factors Affecting On-Time Performance

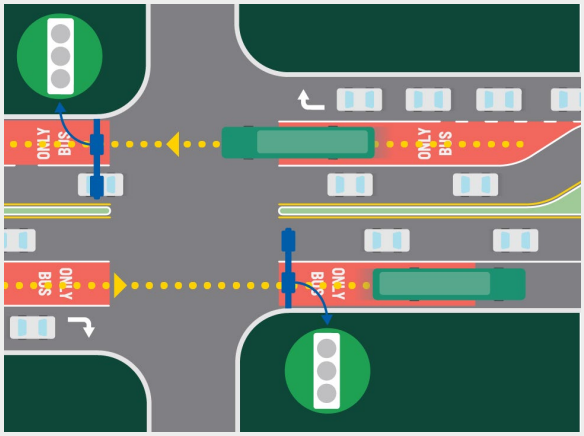
Travel speeds and dwell time (the time a bus spends stopped with doors open) are the two primary factors affecting on-time performance. Travel speeds can be slow due to congestion, roadway design, and signal timing. Dwell times are affected by passenger volumes, fare payment methods, stop spacing, and vehicle layout. The common transit priority treatments described below help to address areas where on-time performance is poor.

Transit Priority Treatments

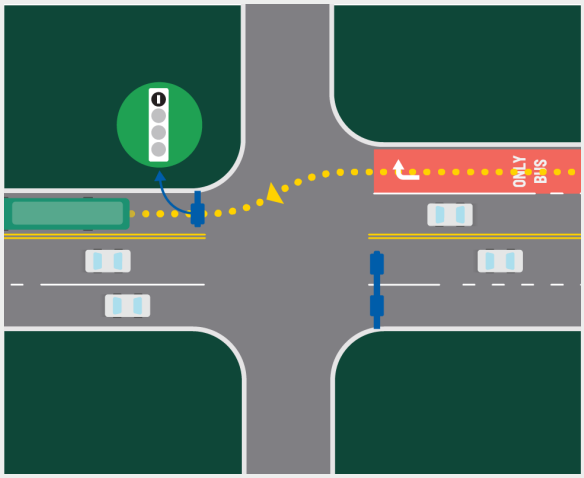
There are six types of transit priority measures that can be used to address different kinds of delay.



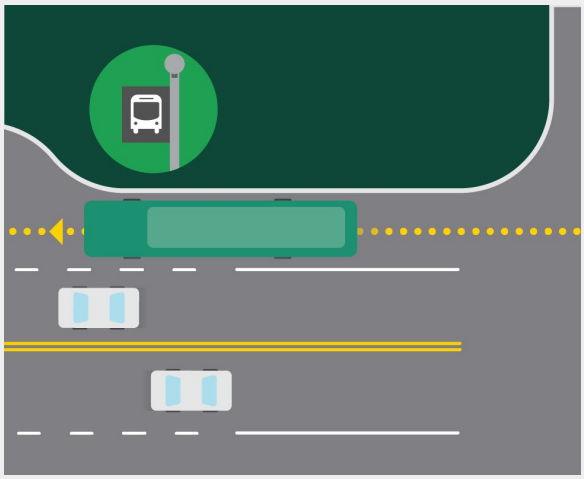
Bus / BAT Lanes: Bus lanes are reserved exclusively for buses, while Business Access and Transit (BAT) lanes allow vehicles to make right turns. Some bus or BAT lanes allow general use or parking at off-peak times.



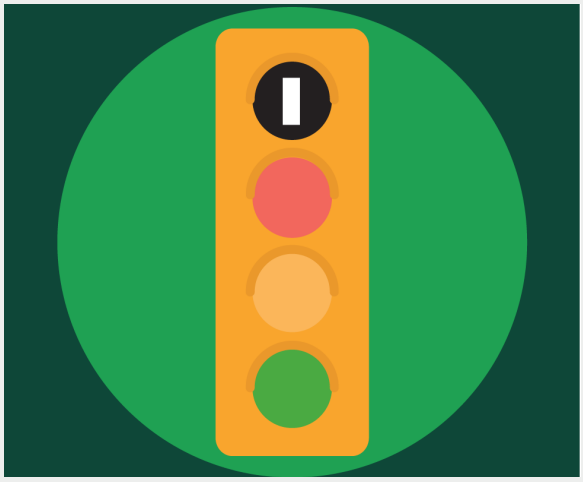
Approach Lanes: Approach lanes are short, dedicated lanes at intersections that separate buses from traffic queues. Approach lanes allow buses to bypass general-purpose traffic and proceed through the intersection on a green light with other motorists.



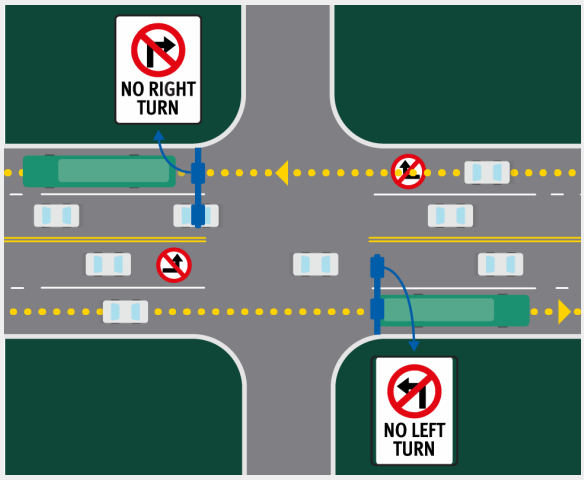
Queue Jumps: Queue jump lanes are short dedicated transit lanes (similar to approach lanes) or lane shared with right-turning vehicles that is paired with a transit signal treatment. Queue jumps allow transit vehicles to "jump" ahead of traffic at an intersection.



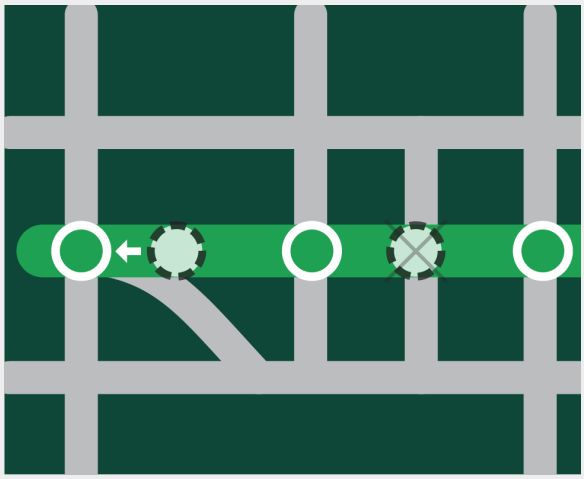
In-Lane Stops (Bus Bulbs / Floating Bus Stop): In-lane bus stops—often created with a bus bulb or an island bus stop—allow buses to stop directly in the travel lane in front of the bus stop rather than pulling over to the curb. This eliminates the need for a bus to merge back into traffic after picking up or dropping off passengers.



Signal Upgrades: Signal upgrades may add a new traffic signal or a signal phase that gives buses priority. Signal upgrades are typically used with queue jump lanes, approach lanes, or bus-only or BAT lanes.



Turn Restrictions: Turn restrictions limit left or right turns for general-purpose traffic to reduce delay for buses and other vehicles along a corridor. Buses and bicycles are typically exempt from the restrictions.

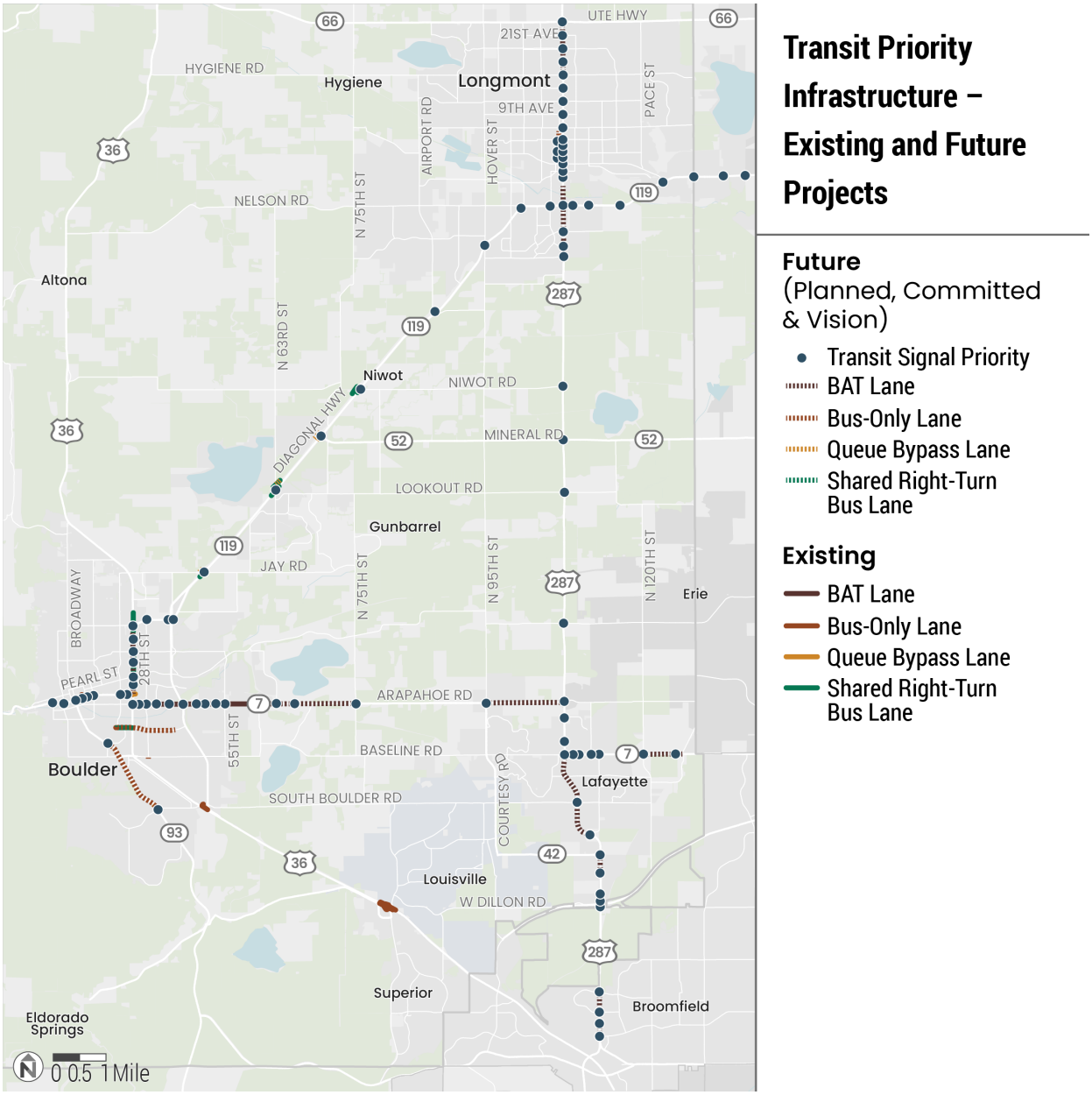


Bus Stop Balancing: Bus stop balancing (also called bus stop consolidation) includes thoughtful removal and/or relocation of bus stops along a corridor to achieve more consistent spacing, maintain convenient access, and provide faster, more reliable service.

Transit Priority Treatments in Boulder County

Existing and planned transit priority treatments in Boulder County are shown in Figure 4-7. The City of Boulder has existing BAT and bus-only lanes on 28th Street and Arapahoe Avenue, with additional lanes planned on both streets. Planned transit priority measures include transit signal priority along US 287 in Longmont and Lafayette and additional BAT lanes on CO 7.

Figure 4-7 Existing and Planned Transit Priority Infrastructure

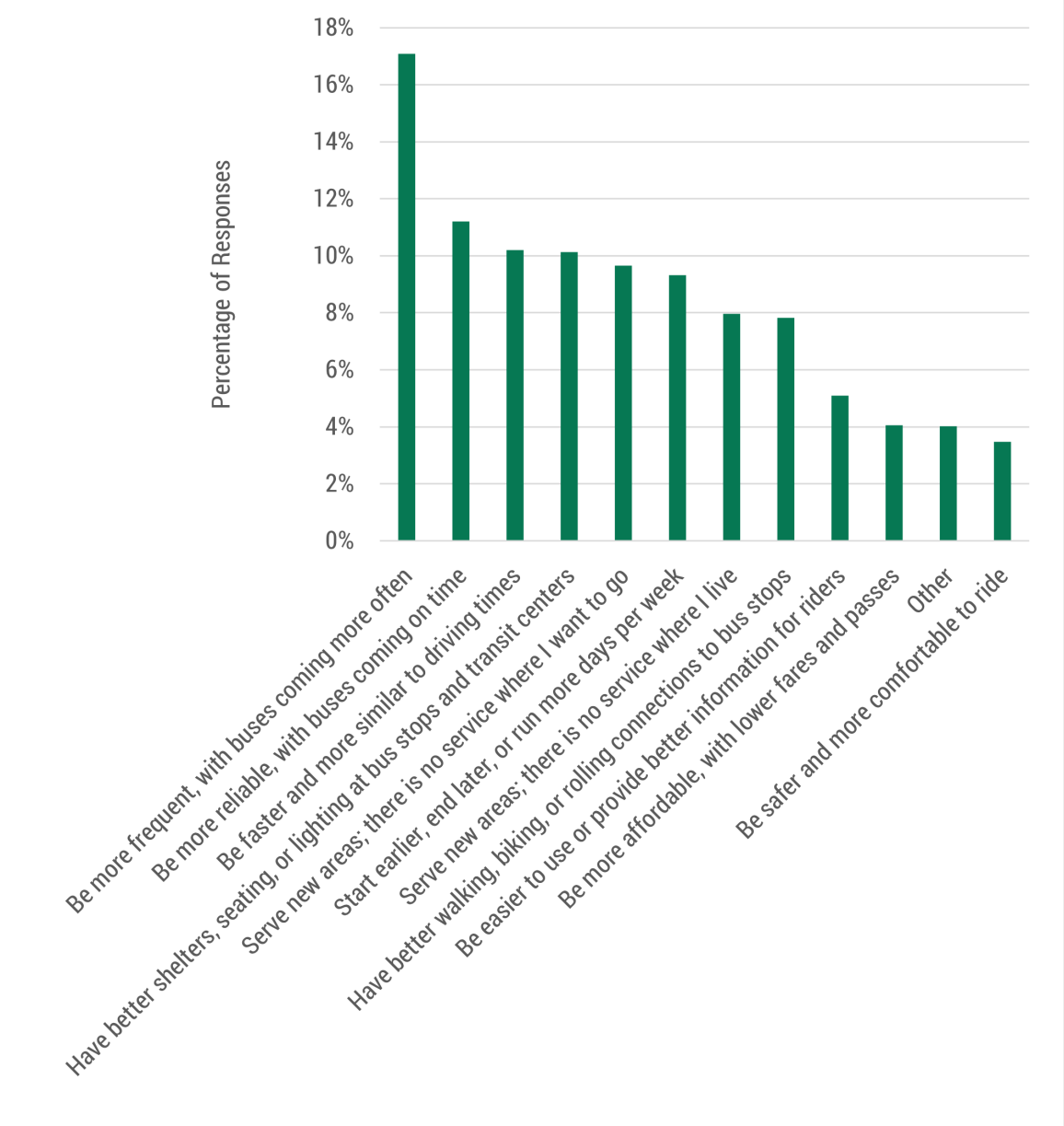


Source: CDOT, Boulder County, City of Boulder

Survey Responses: Transit Improvements

Frequency, reliability, and speed were the top three transit needs identified by respondents to the recent Linking Boulder County survey. Approximately 17% of people want buses that come more often, 11% want buses that arrive on time, and 10% want faster travel times that are more similar to driving times.

Figure 4-8 Responses to Linking Boulder County Transit Needs Survey



4.5 First and Final Mile

First- and final-mile (FFM) connections refer to the beginning and ending segments of a person's transit trip. The "first" mile is the distance between the place a trip starts, such as one's home, and the nearest transit stop. The "final" mile is the distance from the stop where someone gets off the bus and their destination, such as a store. FFM links are critical to a successful transit system—people must have safe, convenient, and comfortable ways to reach transit stops and stations. The presence and quality of walking, rolling, and bicycling facilities all shape how easy it is for people to access transit.

Bikes and Buses

Today, bikes are not allowed inside RTD buses. Instead, bike racks on the front of buses can hold up to two bicycles, e-bikes, or e-scooters (up to 55 pounds each). Passengers must load their own bikes at any bus stop not marked as a "non-bicycle stop." If the on-bus racks are full, riders must lock their bikes near the bus stop or wait for the next bus. There is no way to know if a bus has capacity for a bike until the bus arrives at the stop.

On non-RTD vehicles, on-board bicycle storage varies. For example, RIDE Longmont vans cannot hold bicycles, and Transfort bus racks can hold up to three bicycles. On larger RTD coaches used to operate the Flatiron Flyer, Regional, and AB service to the airport, bikes can be loaded on front bike racks as well as into the baggage bin.

Bike-n-Ride RTD shelters are available throughout Boulder County and provide transit riders with secure long-term bicycle parking. All shelter locations require key card access for extra security.

Micromobility Services

Shared micromobility services, including bikes and scooters, are a common mode of transit access across the country. Today, shared micromobility services in Boulder County are only available in the City of Boulder (BCycle

and Lime) but will soon be introduced in Longmont, Superior, and Lafayette. Boulder has been very successful at leveraging shared mobility options to connect people to transit, especially in areas where BCycle stations are placed at key transit connections. The City of Boulder does not fund micromobility services; rather, BCycle and Lime both pay a fee for operating in the city.





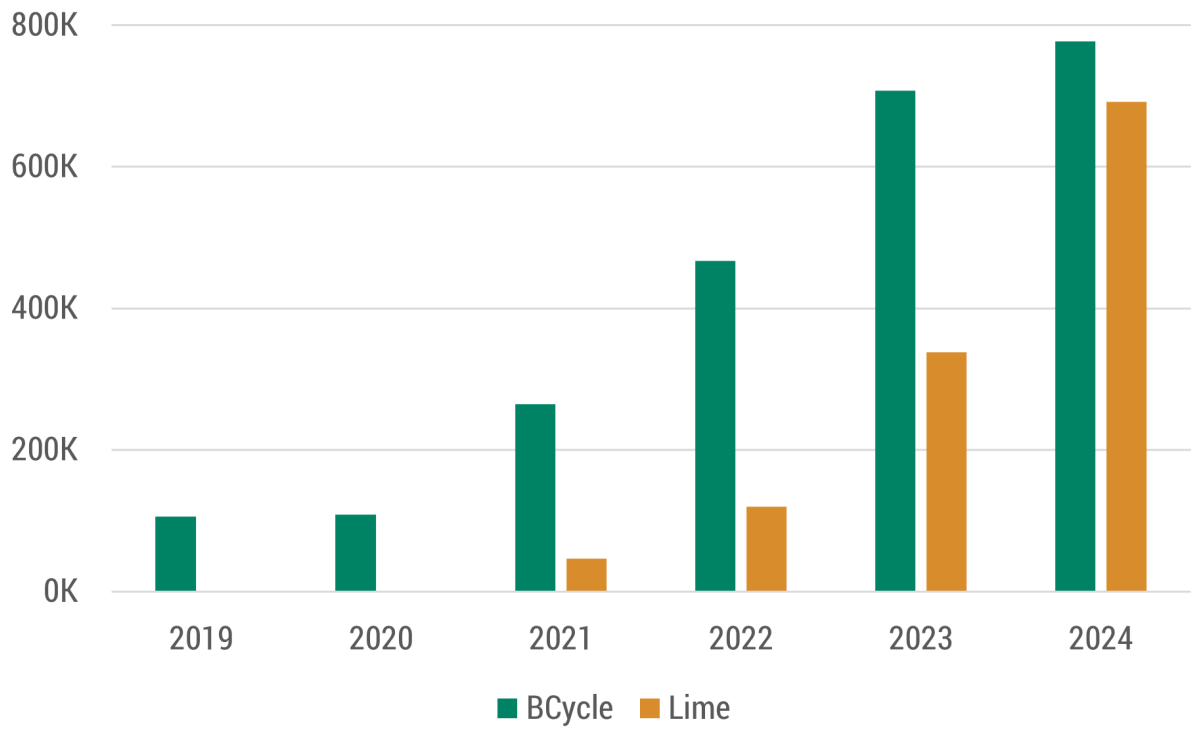


Bikeshare stations and Lime scooters are often located near bus stops in Boulder.

The use of both BCycle and Lime has increased dramatically in recent years. BCycle ridership grew more than 600% between 2019 and 2024 (Figure 4-9).

Similarly, Lime ridership more than doubled in 2024, following a tripling of the scooter fleet (from 250 to 750 scooters) in late 2023.

Figure 4-9 Number of Micromobility Trips (2019-2024)

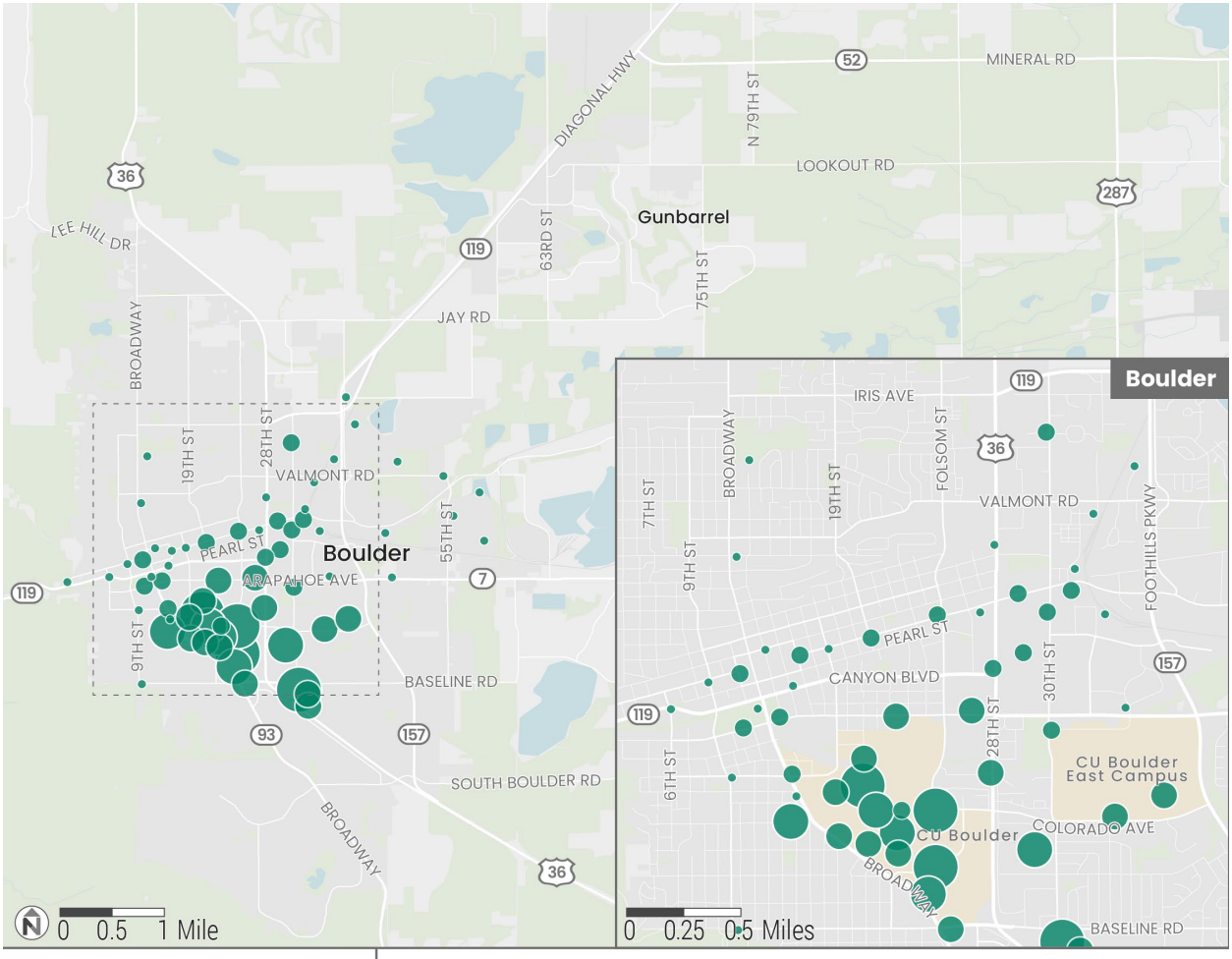


Data Source: BCycle, Lime

Bikeshare

Currently, BCycle stations are concentrated in central and east Boulder, as shown in Figure 4-10, and most trips begin or end on and near the CU Boulder campus. A comparison of transit ridership data and BCycle ridership helps to illustrate the ways people are using BCycle for trips that may not be well-served by transit. For example, the southern parts of Boulder and the North Broadway area do not have bikeshare stations but do have high transit ridership. The CU Boulder campuses have very high BCycle use but much lower transit ridership between the two sides of campus, demonstrating the value of BCycle for short, intra-campus trips.

Figure 4-10 BCycle Use by Station Location (2025)



BCycle Utilization by Station Location

BCycle Station locations and the number of rides in 2025.

Number of BCycle Rides

- 10 - 4,999
- 5,000 - 9,999
- 10,000 - 24,999
- 25,000 - 39,999
- 40,000 or More

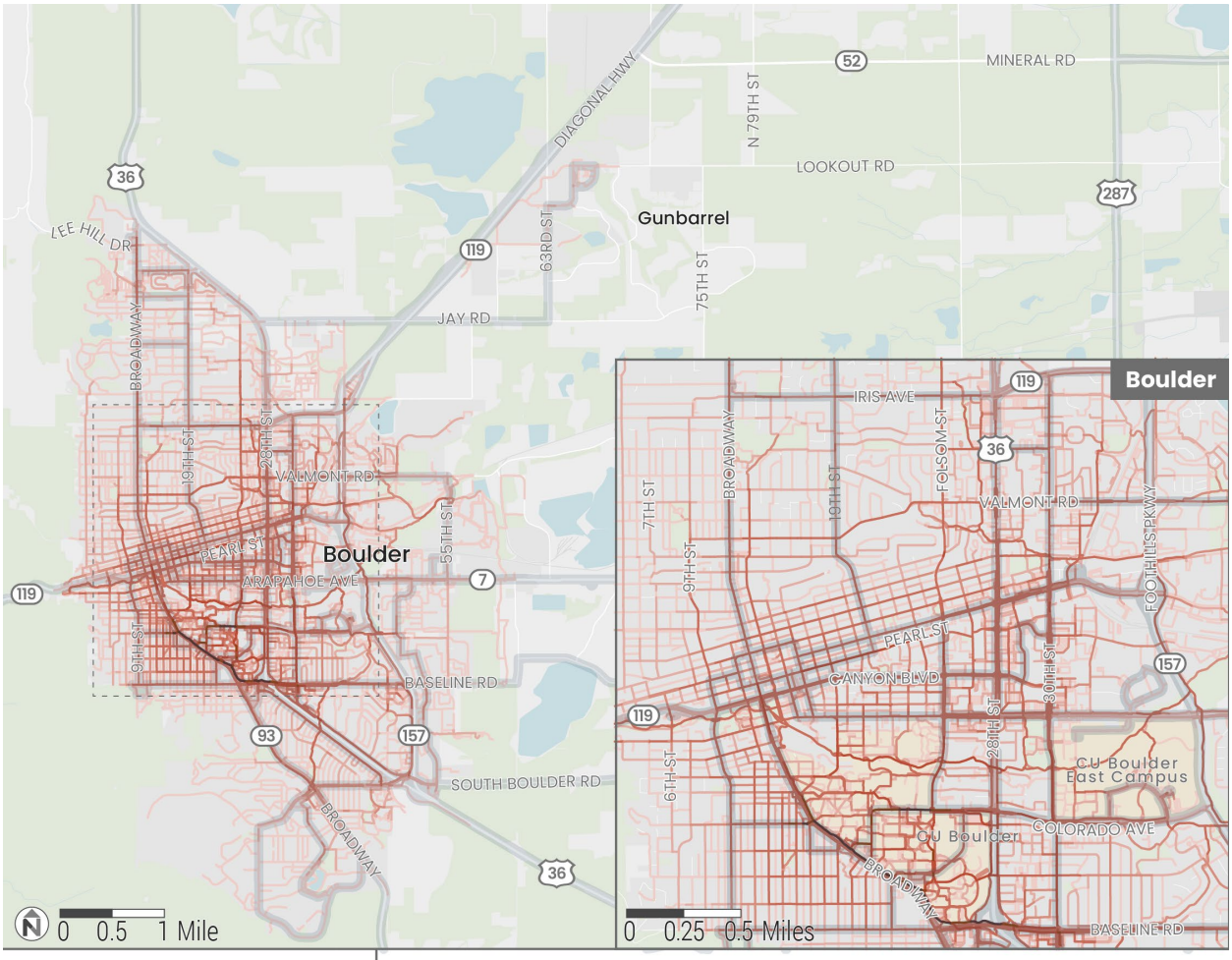
Data Source: BCycle

Scooter Share

Between July and September 2025, the highest numbers of Lime trips were along Broadway near the CU Boulder campus (Figure 4-11). There were also many trips along major arterials served by transit. Comparing scooter trips with transit ridership shows that south Boulder and Arapahoe Avenue have

strong transit ridership and fewer Lime trips, indicating that scooter trips are not replacing transit trips.

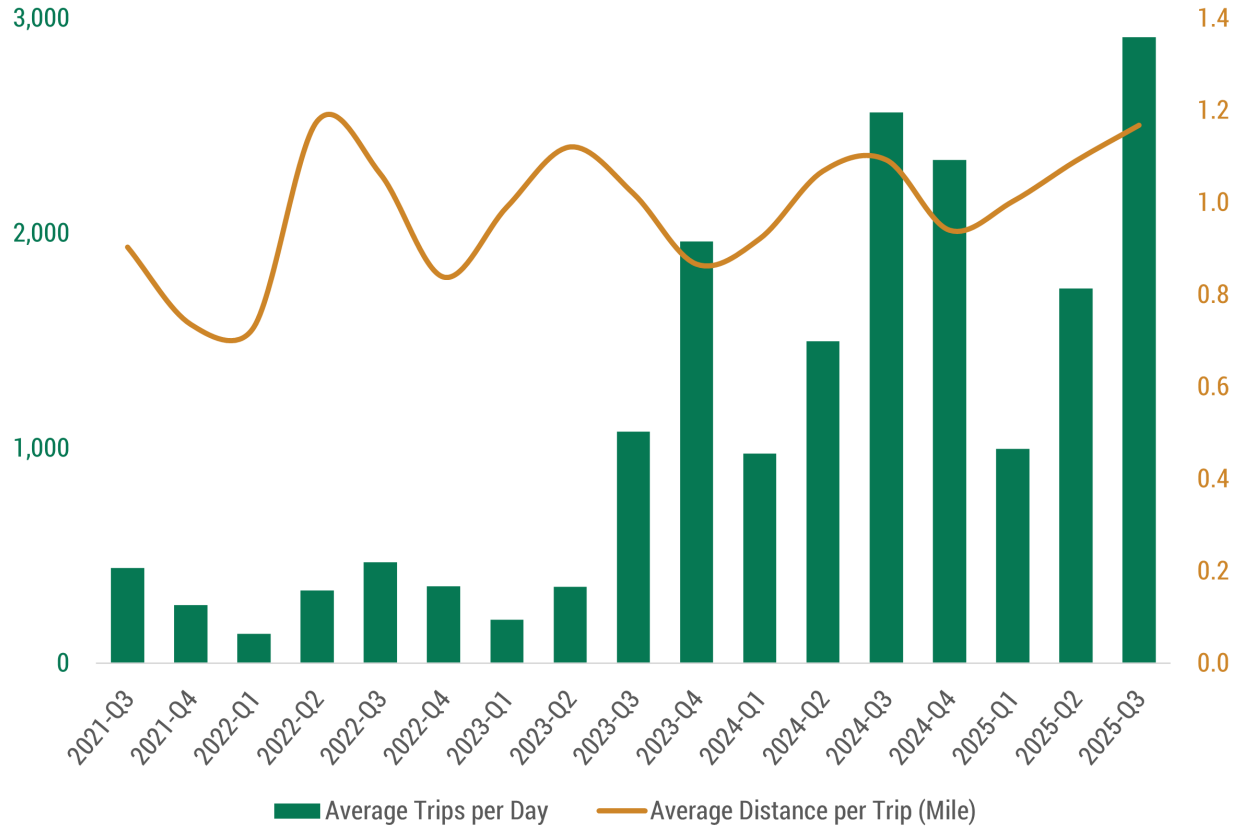
Figure 4-11 Number of Lime Trips by Street Segment (July to September 2025)



Data Source: Ride Report

In the past year, there were approximately 2,000 daily Lime trips; the average trip distance was about 1 mile (Figure 4-12). Both trip counts and distance tend to increase in September and October when CU Boulder and other students return. Trip counts and distances also increase on Fridays and Saturdays.

Figure 4-12 Average Daily Count of Lime Trips and Distance per Trip by Quarter (2021-2024)



Data Source: Ride Report

Regional Bikeshare Program

The Northwest Regional Bike Share Feasibility Study explored the feasibility of expanding BCycle bike share in the northwest metro region. The Boulder BCycle system launched in May 2011 as a partnership between the City of Boulder and CU Boulder. High student ridership helped grow the program, which is now an important part of the city's mobility system.

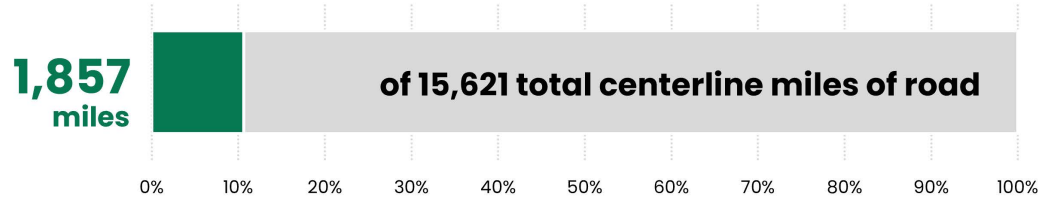
The Feasibility Study assessed regional sentiment toward bike share, which was very positive. Most survey respondents (83%) believed a shared e-bike system would benefit their community, and 67% of respondents said "yes" when asked if a shared e-bike system would help connections with transit. Survey respondents also suggested locations for bike share stations, such as central business districts, major intersections with bicycle infrastructure, Park/Bike-n-Rides, paved greenway entrances, and major destinations.

The study found that a regional e-bike share system is feasible, predicting that a regional system of 1,000+ e-bikes could provide 1,000,000 or more trips annually with a docked system. The study recommended regional bike share expansion to close the gaps of first- and final-mile travel, alleviate parking demand, expand access to transit locally, and provide a healthy and affordable transportation option.

Pedestrian Facilities

Of the county's 1,800 miles of streets, an estimated 32% have ADA-compliant sidewalks on both sides of the road (Figure 4-13). Within municipal boundaries, most streets have ADA-compliant sidewalks on at least one side of the street.

Figure 4-13 Sidewalk Presence and ADA Compliance in Boulder County and DRCOG Region



Boulder County

51% of roads have no sidewalk

4% of roads have sub-standard sidewalks

14% of roads have compliant sidewalk on one side of the street

32% of roads have compliant sidewalk on both sides of the street

DRCOG Region

42% of roads have no sidewalk

9% of roads have sub-standard sidewalks

11% of roads have compliant sidewalk on one side of the street

38% of roads have compliant sidewalk on both sides of the street

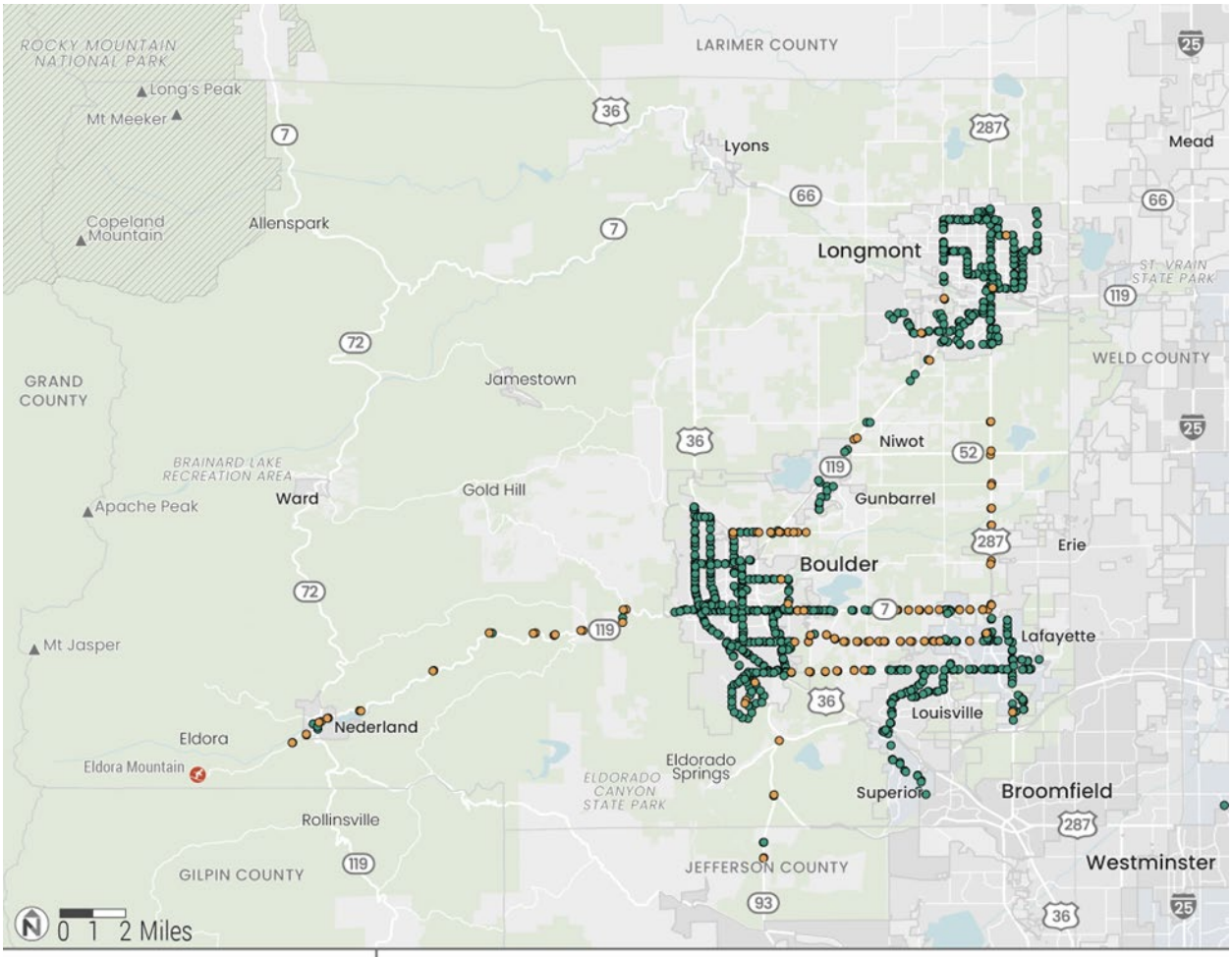
Data Source: DRCOG Regional Data Catalog, May 2024 (CC BY 3.0)



Sidewalks are limited in some parts of the county, especially in Nederland and other mountain communities.

There are sidewalks at 88% of RTD stops in the county, compared to 94% across the RTD network (Figure 4-14). Stops without sidewalks are primarily in less urban areas, such as along CO 7, Baseline Road, South Boulder Road, and US 287. However, other more suburban areas—such as Jay Road in Boulder and parts of CO 7 and Baseline Road in Lafayette—also lack sidewalks.

Figure 4-14 Sidewalk Presence at RTD Bus Stops in Boulder County



Data Source: RTD

Bicycle Facilities

Boulder County has more than 500 miles of bicycle facilities, ranging from on-street bike lanes to shared-use paths. The three primary types of bike facilities in the county are described below.

Existing Bicycle Facilities in Boulder County

Off-street shared-use paths / side-paths (222 miles)



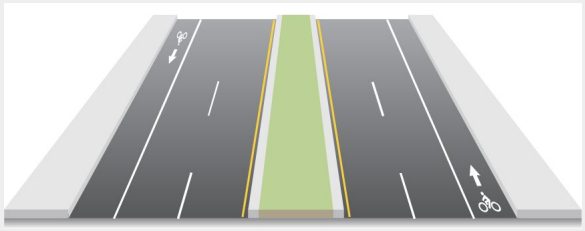
Fully separated bikeways are typically shared with pedestrians and other non-motorized travelers. Shared-use paths run in their own alignment, while side-paths run adjacent to the roadway. Paths are typically at least 10 feet wide and may be widened as activity increases. Shared-use paths are generally comfortable for people of all ages, abilities, and capabilities, including newer and less confident bike riders.

On-street separated bicycle lanes (4 miles)



On-street bikeways are fully separated from vehicles and pedestrians by physical and visual barriers such as parked vehicles, delineators, bollards, concrete barriers, or curbs. Separated bicycle lanes are comfortable for most people and can meet the needs of all ages, abilities, and capabilities.

On-street bicycle lanes (163 miles)



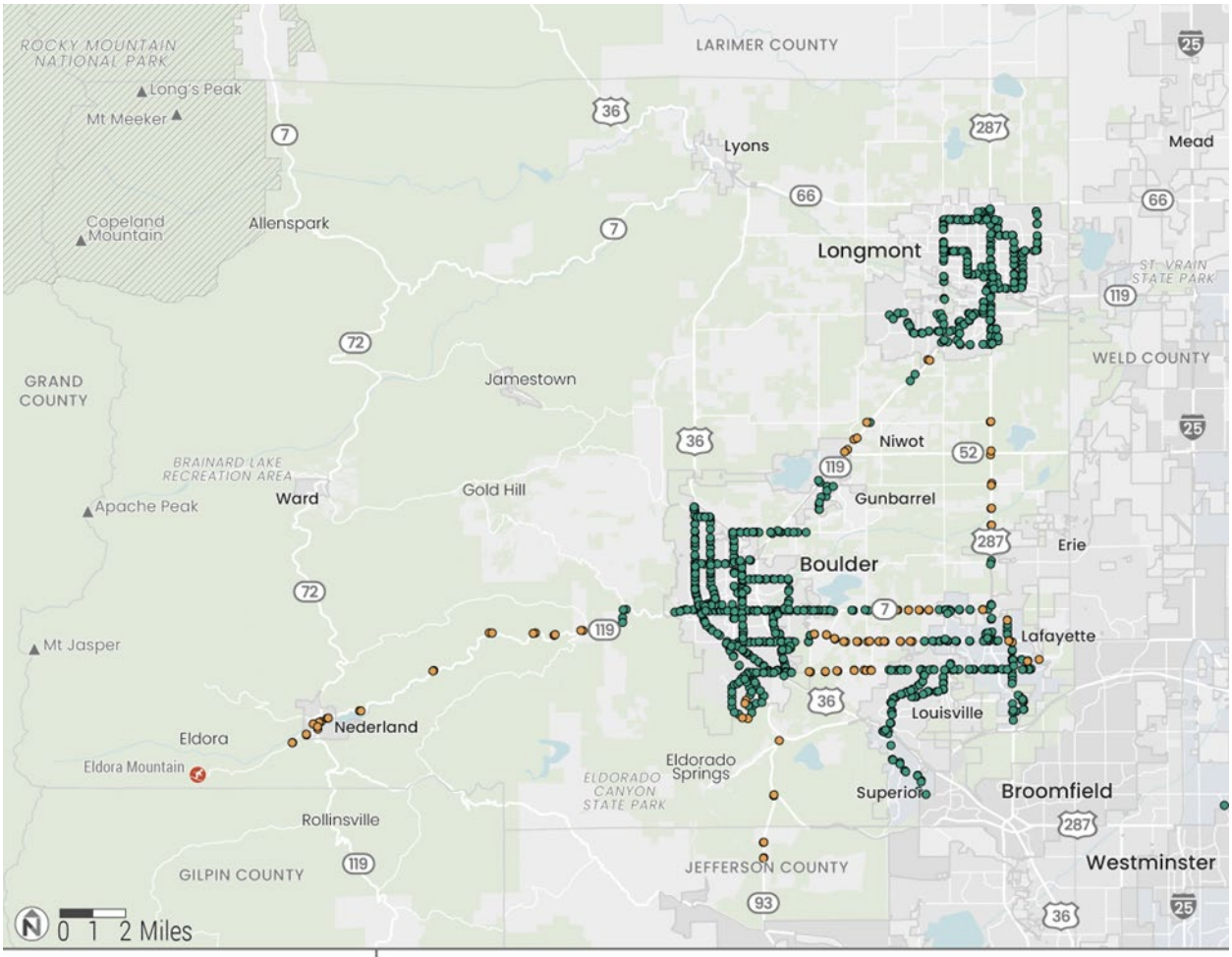
On-street bicycle lanes have markings and signs but operate adjacent to motor vehicles lanes. Bicycle lanes vary in level of comfort based on motor vehicle speed and volume, as well as physical separation (such as a buffer). Bicycle lanes should be at least 5 feet wide, and buffers should be 2 to 3 feet wide. They primarily serve more confident and experienced bicyclists.



A separated on-street bike lane in Boulder provides a safe and comfortable environment for people of all ages, abilities, and capabilities.

Bus stops in Boulder County are better connected to bicycle facilities than stops in other parts of the RTD system. Within Boulder County, about 89% of stops are adjacent to or within ¼ mile of a bicycle facility, while 81% of all RTD stops have a bicycle facility nearby (Figure 4-15).

Figure 4-15 Bus Stop Access to Bicycle Facilities in Boulder County



Data Source: RTD, DRCOG Regional Data Catalog (CC BY 3.0)

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter highlights the variety of transit access points and facilities in Boulder County, including the ways different modes connect to each other. Transit stations and Park-n-Rides play a critical role in connecting different types of transit services. They are also important points of access for people who drive to access transit. The first- and final-mile connections across Boulder County, including shared micromobility services, are important extenders of the transit system.

The quality of amenities and level of accessibility at bus stops and stations impacts ease of access and passenger experience, particularly for people with disabilities. Similarly, the diversity of branding and passenger information across providers can make it difficult for people to navigate Boulder County's transit system, especially people for whom English is not a first language.

To create more seamless transit trips for more people, Linking Boulder County will explore opportunities to improve multimodal access to transit, enhance passenger information, and make transit faster and more reliable through expanded transit priority treatments. People who participated in the first round of community outreach noted the importance of frequency, speed, and reliability to make transit a viable transit option for more types of trips.

Chapter 5 explores the current and future transit market in Boulder County, including looking at demand through population and employment, as well as through socioeconomic factors like income and vehicle access. Understanding where people may need to or want to use transit in the future will help to shape the Linking Boulder County vision and future service scenarios.

5 Boulder County's Current and Future Transit Markets

Transit connects people to all aspects of their lives: jobs, services, recreation, entertainment, and more. This chapter explores the underlying markets for transit service in Boulder County and identifies gaps between existing transit services and demand.

What is the purpose of this chapter?

This chapter uses demographic and land use data to explore the demand for transit in Boulder County, highlighting areas where improvements may be needed. Key findings from this analysis include the following:

- **Population Density:** Population density is the highest and most consistent in central Boulder. There are also smaller pockets of density in southeast Boulder, Longmont, Lafayette, and in emerging areas like Superior and Gunbarrel. Nearly all of Boulder County is expected to add residents in the coming years, but southeast Boulder County and Longmont will see the most significant growth. This growth will put more pressure on transit to serve new residential areas and provide stronger regional connections.
- **Employment Centers:** While downtown Boulder and CU Boulder are the major employment centers in Boulder County, there are significant concentrations of jobs along CO 7, CO 119, Main Street in Longmont, and in parts of Gunbarrel, Superior, Louisville, and Lafayette. These employment hubs are expected to add more jobs over time, reinforcing

more dispersed travel patterns. In addition to supporting high-quality service in Boulder, future transit investments should prioritize frequent and reliable service to these expanding employment centers.

- **Transit Gaps:** The transit propensity analysis focuses on demographic groups that are more likely to use transit, especially low-income and zero-vehicle households. Comparing areas of transit need, as well as combined population and employment density, with existing transit service levels highlights transit gaps in Boulder County. While these analyses are not prescriptive, there are opportunities for improvement in northeast Boulder, Gunbarrel adjacent to CO 119, southeast Boulder along Foothills Parkway, Louisville and Superior around McCaslin/US 36, and in neighborhoods in south Louisville and southeast Lafayette, particularly along South Boulder Road.
- **Land Use Regulations:** Several state laws enable and encourage transit-oriented development and local commitments to affordability, but implementation varies across jurisdictions. While all communities in Boulder County are advancing transit-supportive development, Boulder and Longmont are leading the way.

5.1 Boulder County Overview

Where people live, and especially where people are concentrated, points us to areas that may generate transit ridership. Similarly, where people work, especially where jobs are concentrated, tells us where transit riders might be traveling for regular work trips. Understanding where employment is concentrated can also indicate where people need to travel for services and shopping. Combined, high population and employment density are two of the strongest indicators of where transit demand is likely to be high.

Current Population and Employment Density

The urbanized areas of Boulder County with **high population *and* employment density**—which are areas more likely to have stronger transit demand—are largely located in central Boulder and around the CU Boulder

campus (Figure 5-1). There are also areas with higher combined densities in several central Longmont neighborhoods, in the mixed-use area of Gunbarrel, in the central areas of both Lafayette and Louisville, and along US 36, specifically at McCaslin Boulevard.

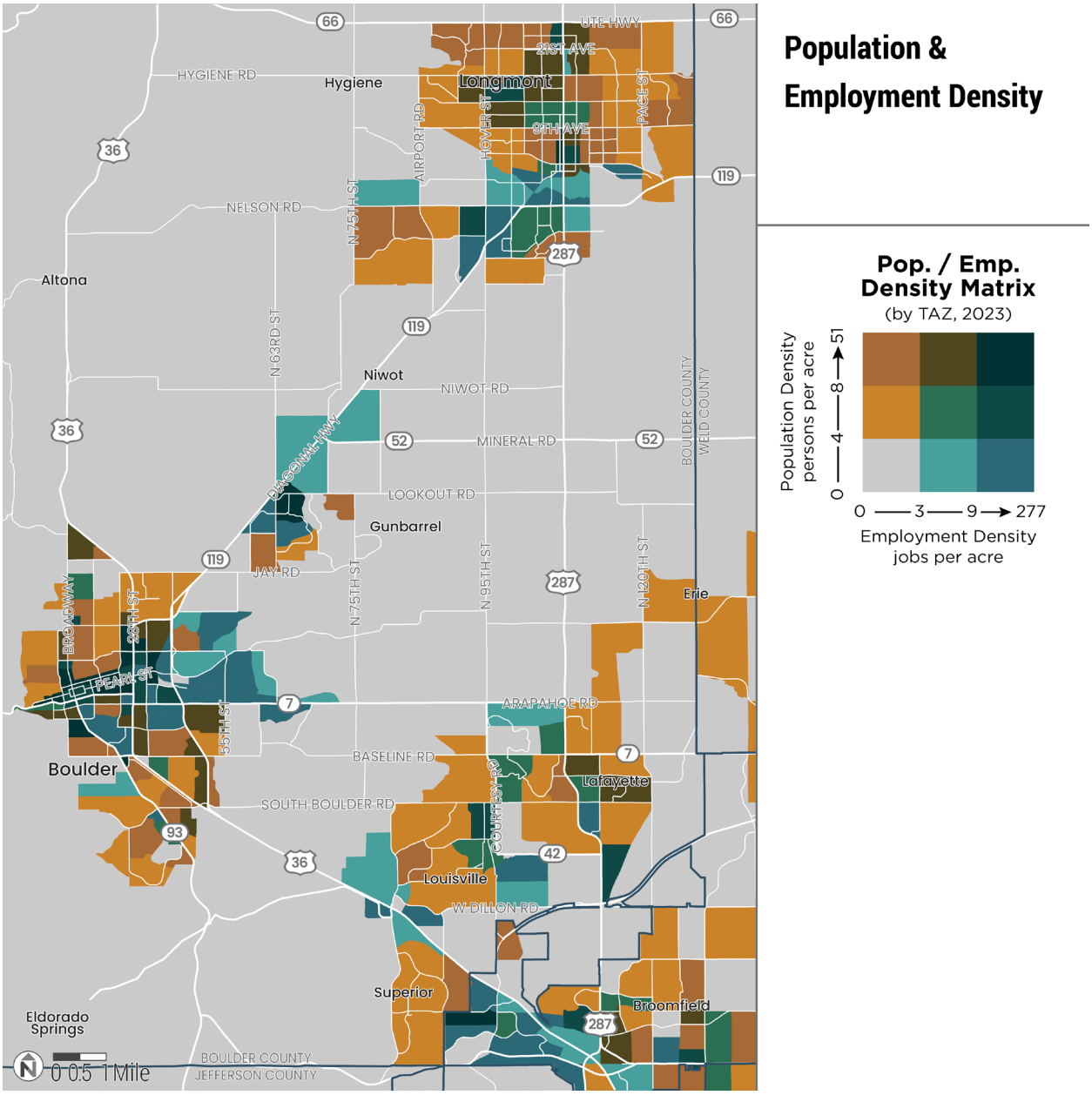


Neighborhoods near Main Street in Longmont have high combined population and employment densities.



Main Street in Louisville also has relatively high combined population and employment densities, reflecting the growth in southeast Boulder County.

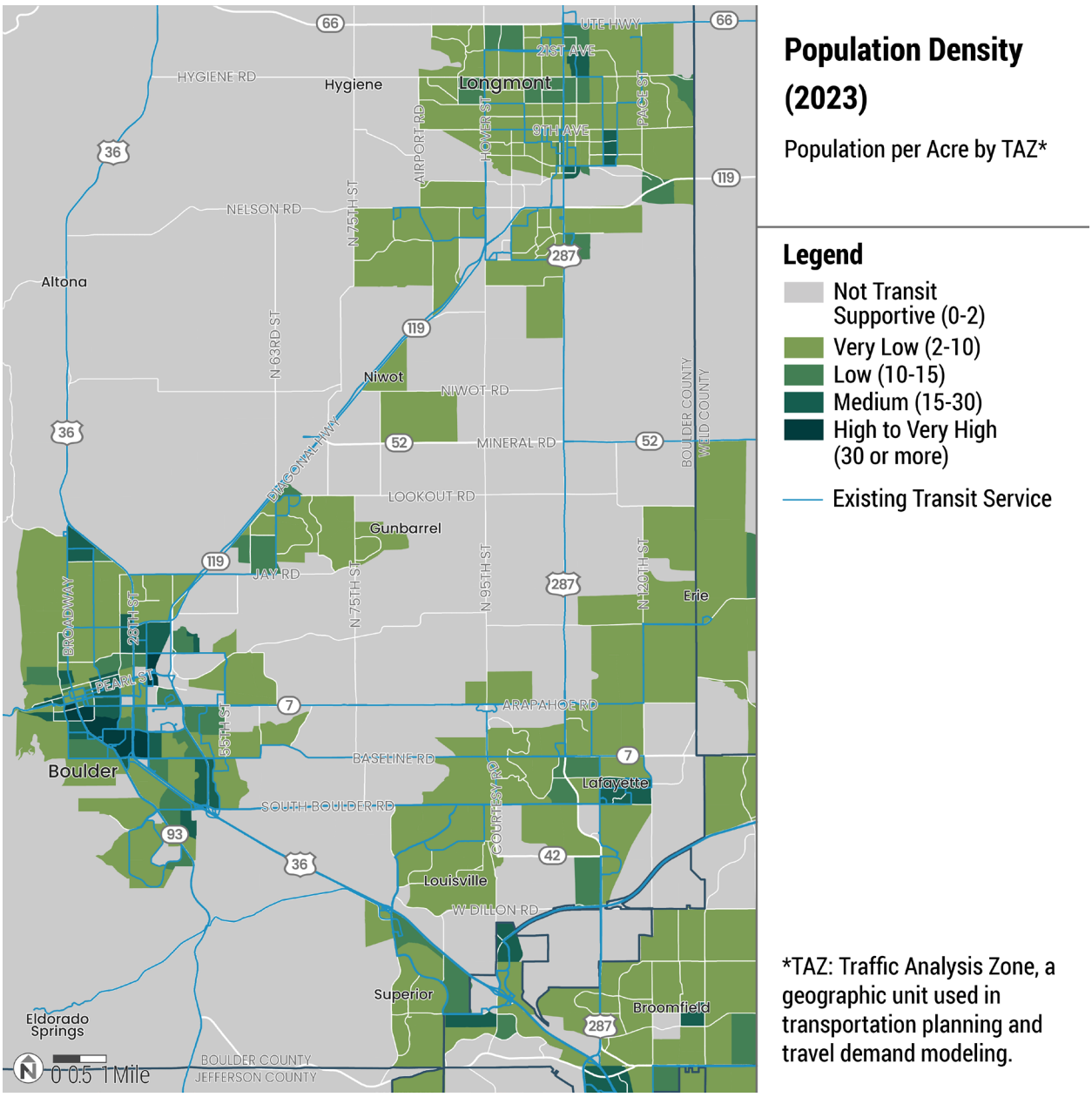
Figure 5-1 Current Combined Population and Employment Density



Source: DRCOG

Population density is most concentrated in downtown Boulder, around the CU Boulder campus, and along Broadway and 28th and 30th Streets in Boulder (Figure 5-2). There are smaller high-density pockets in central Longmont (east of Main Street/US 287) and in central Lafayette. And while not reflected in the data, downtown Superior and Gunbarrel, as well as parts of Lafayette and Louisville, are increasingly becoming areas of higher population density.

Figure 5-2 Current Population Density

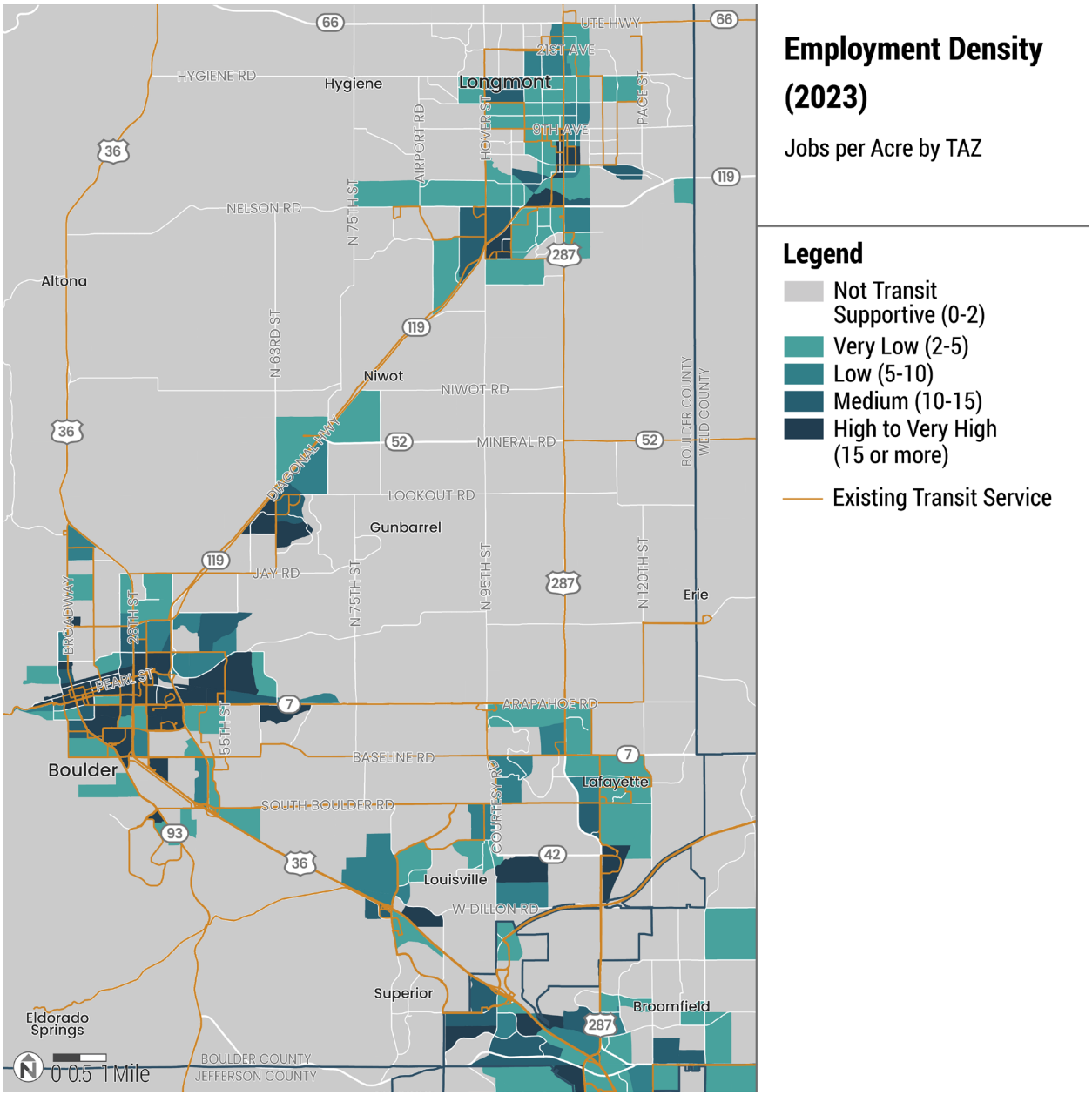


Source: DRCOG

While **employment density** is the highest in central Boulder and on and around the CU Boulder campus, there are also concentrations of jobs along the Pearl Parkway/CO 7 corridor in east Boulder and along the Main Street and CO 119 corridors in Longmont (Figure 5-3). Secondary employment hubs are distributed countywide, including in Gunbarrel, at the Colorado Tech

Center in Louisville, in Superior near US 36 & McCaslin Station, and at major medical centers in Louisville and Lafayette.

Figure 5-3 Current Employment Density

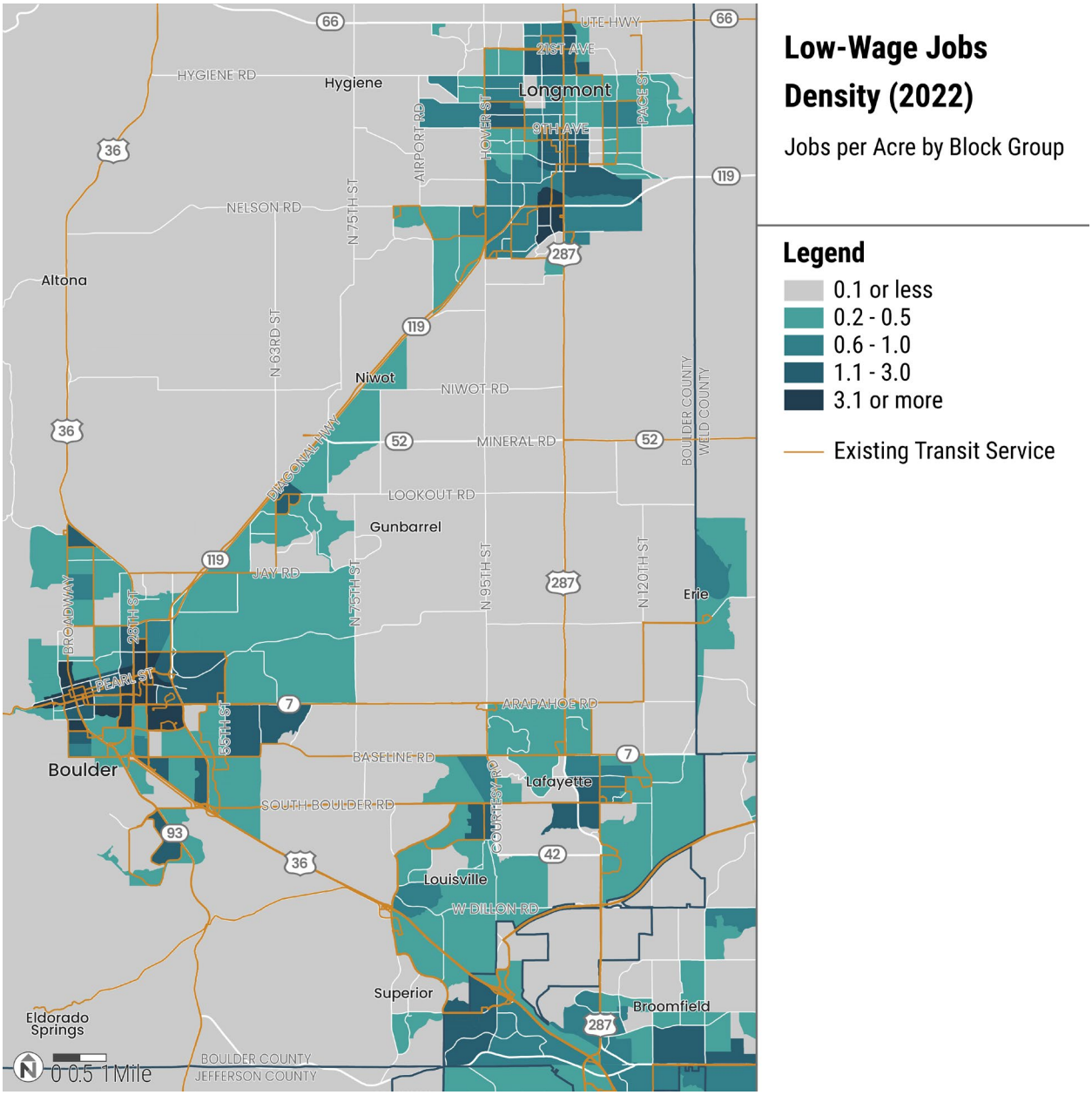


Source: DRCOG

Another important way to look at employment density is to consider concentrations of **low-wage jobs** (earnings of $1,250 per month or less), which tend to attract a higher proportion of transit riders. In Boulder County,

higher densities of low-wage jobs are clustered in commercial and industrial areas, especially along Main Street in Longmont and near the Longmont Park-n-Ride (Figure 5-4). There are also low-wage jobs in Gunbarrel, in central Boulder (specifically on Broadway and 29th and 30th Streets), in select nodes in downtown Louisville, and in Lafayette near the Community Medical Center at US 287 and South Boulder Road.

Figure 5-4 Density of Low-Wage Jobs



Source: US Census 2022

Future Population and Employment Growth

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) develops and maintains a regional travel demand forecasting model that supports long-range transportation and land use planning in the region. The Focus model is an activity-based model, meaning it forecasts travel behavior at the individual and household level. The model uses inputs such as population, households, employment, vehicle ownership, and proposed roadway, transit, and land use changes to provide a detailed picture of how people make travel decisions.

This section reviews projected changes in population and employment in Boulder County and describes how those changes may influence future transit demand. Shifts in population and employment help explain changes in transit service needs by indicating where demand for transit may increase and the size of the potential transit market. Population growth expands the overall pool of potential transit riders, and employment growth helps identify where trips are likely to be concentrated. Together, these factors are among the strongest indicators of future ridership potential and inform the type, frequency, and geographic focus of transit service.



Since the Marshall Fire, Superior has seen an influx of new mixed-use development southeast of US 36 & McCaslin Station.

DRCOG's Focus model estimates that Boulder County will experience an average population increase of 156% from 2023 to 2050 (Figure 5-5). Although relatively small population declines are projected for a few areas, most are expected to grow substantially. The eastern part of the county—including Louisville, Lafayette, Superior, Erie, and Longmont—is expected to have the largest population increases.

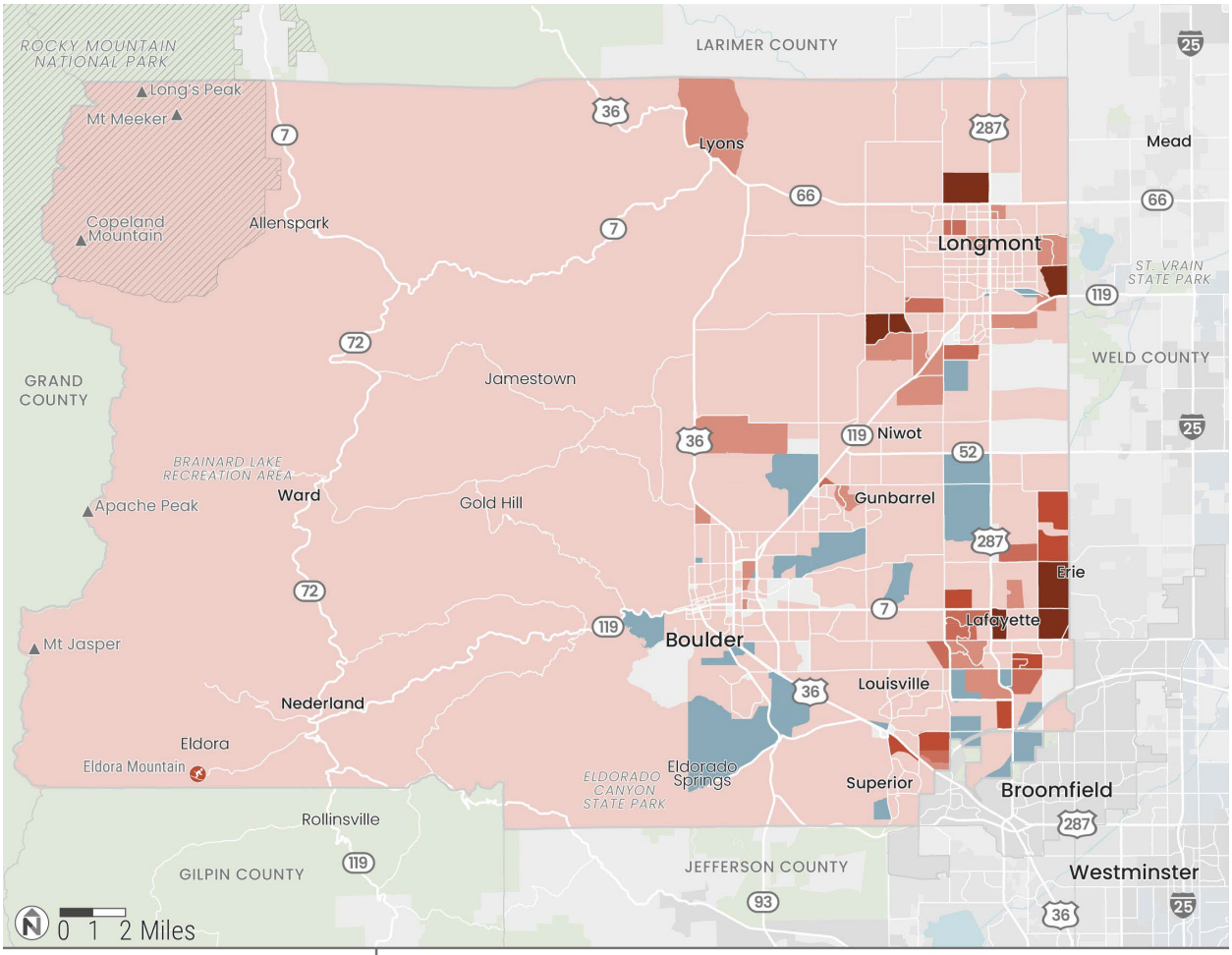
The largest percent increase in population is projected in southeast Louisville, where the population grows from 3 residents in 2023 to 536 in 2050, an increase of 533 people or 17,767%. The largest numerical increase is expected in northern Longmont, which grows from 305 residents to 3,374, adding 3,069 people for a 1,006% increase.

The largest population percentage decrease is expected in southeast Lafayette, although the projected change is just 12 fewer residents (17 in 2023 to 5 in 2050, a 71% decrease). The largest numerical decrease in population is projected to occur in southern Boulder, with 40 fewer residents (from 96 in 2023 to 56 in 2050, a 43% decrease).



The area near Downtown Boulder Station has the county's largest commercial buildings.

Figure 5-5 Change in Population 2023 to 2050 in Boulder County



Data Source: DRCOG Focus Model

Erie is projected to experience the most significant growth by municipality between 2023 and 2050, nearly doubling the population with more than 32,000 new residents by 2050 (Figure 5-6). Population is calculated by aggregating TAZ-level data within each municipal boundary. Because TAZ boundaries do not align perfectly with the municipal boundaries, the

population totals shown may differ slightly from the actual population reported by a jurisdiction.

Longmont and Lafayette are also expected to see substantial growth, adding about 28,000 and 20,000 residents respectively. Boulder, the county's most populous municipality in 2023, is projected to add only 14,000 residents by 2050, making it the second-largest municipality after Longmont. Smaller cities and towns such as Lyons, Louisville, Superior, Jamestown, Nederland, and Ward are projected to have small increases in population (although the percentage change is large due to low 2023 base populations).

Figure 5-6 Forecasted Population Change for Boulder County Municipalities

Municipality	2023 Population	2050 Forecasted Population	Forecasted Increase in Population	Forecasted Percent Change
Boulder	106,369	120,545	14,176	13%
Erie	34,134	66,637	32,503	95%
Jamestown	2,528	2,817	289	11%
Lafayette	34,401	54,510	20,109	58%
Longmont	102,352	130,369	28,017	27%
Louisville	23,756	31,625	7,869	33%
Lyons	3,043	4,291	1,248	41%
Nederland	1,593	1,809	216	14%
Superior	14,360	17,362	3,002	21%
Ward	80	120	40	50%
Unincorporated	36,946	44,776	7,830	21%

Data Source: DRCOG Focus Model

Development in the Works

There are multiple housing developments under construction in Boulder County today, including the following:

- Cheesman Street Residences is a recently constructed affordable housing community in Erie, offering home ownership opportunities to income-restricted families.
- Mountain Brook is a planned luxury mixed-residential development in southwest Longmont with single-family, townhomes, and multi-family housing units.
- True North Longmont is a middle-market housing community in southeast Longmont with 50+ detached homes and townhomes. Homes are affordably priced, and some lots are reserved for affordable housing. Construction will be complete in 2026.

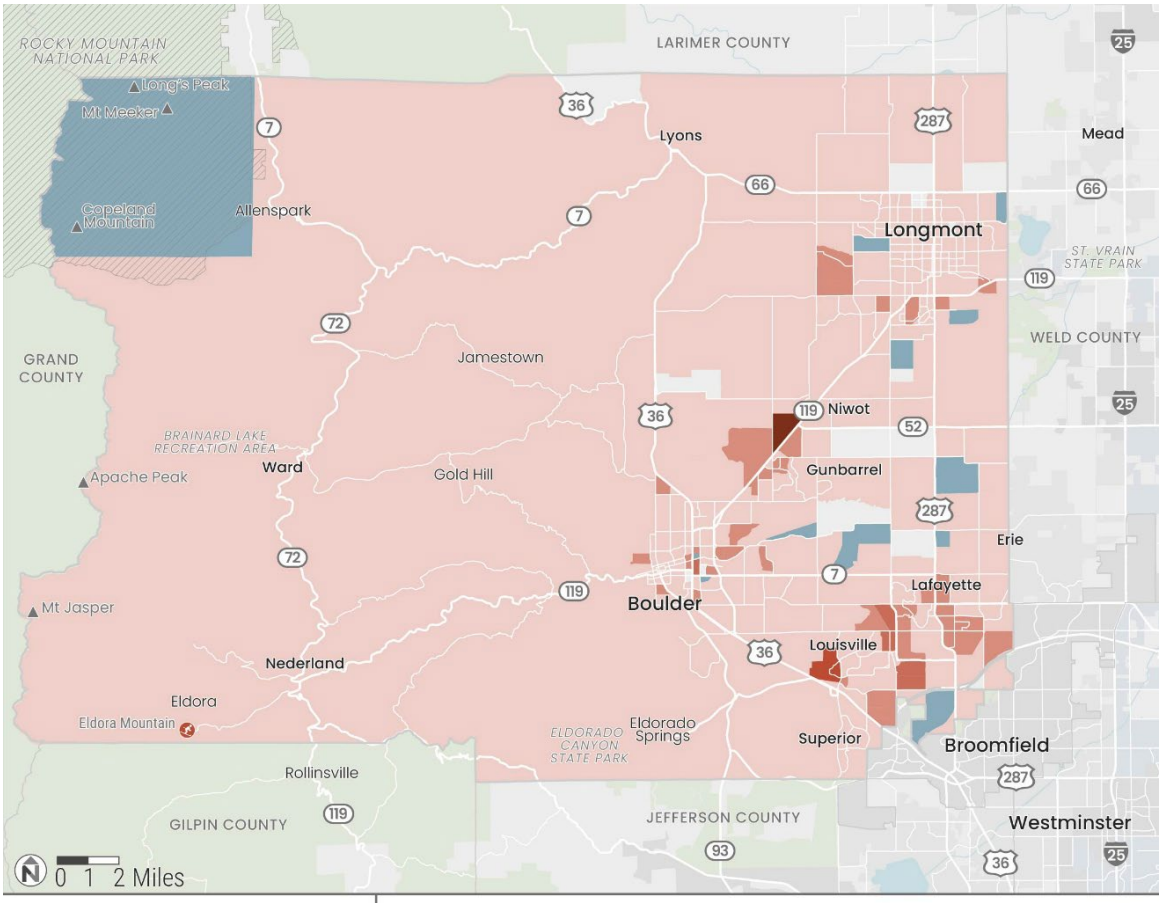


A rendering of True North Longmont shows a mix of single-family homes and townhomes.

DRCOG's Focus model estimates that employment will increase approximately 61% from 2023 to 2050, with varied growth across Boulder County (Figure 5-7). The largest increase is projected to occur in southeast Louisville, which also has high projected population growth. Other large

increases in employment are concentrated around Lafayette and Erie. The largest decrease in employment is projected to occur in northwest unincorporated Boulder County. The cities of Boulder and Longmont will see smaller percentage gains in employment.

Figure 5-7 Change in Employment 2023 to 2050 in Boulder County



Change in Employment

Change in number of employees from 2023 and 2050 according to DRCOG's Focus model.

Change in Employees

- -5 to -1
- 0
- 1 to 500
- 501 to 1,000
- 1,001 to 1,500
- 1,501 to 2,000
- > 2,000

Data Source: DRCOG Focus Model

The City of Boulder is projected to add almost 34,000 jobs between 2023 and 2050, maintaining its position as the county's largest employment center (Figure 5-8). Louisville and Longmont are also expected to add about 15,000

and 14,000 jobs respectively. Lyons is projected to have the largest percentage jobs increase, from a relatively small base of jobs in 2023. The DRCOG Focus model forecasts that most employment growth will be concentrated in Boulder, Longmont, Louisville, and Lafayette. As with population, employment totals were aggregated at the TAZ level, which may result in slight differences from actual counts.

Figure 5-8 Forecasted Employment Change for Boulder County Municipalities

Municipality	2023 Employment	2050 Forecasted Employment	Forecasted Increase	Forecasted Percent Change
Boulder	134,256	168,172	33,916	25%
Erie	6,766	11,872	5,106	75%
Jamestown	278	356	78	28%
Lafayette	21,368	33,735	12,367	58%
Longmont	53,746	67,406	13,660	25%
Louisville	26,352	41,161	14,809	56%
Lyons	1,059	1,993	934	88%
Nederland	1,017	1,215	198	19%
Superior	5,454	6,922	1,468	27%
Ward	6	7	1	17%
Unincorporated	18,005	25,262	7,257	40%

Data Source: DRCOG Focus Model



Recent development in the Boulder Junction neighborhood has added jobs and housing.

5.2 Composite Transit Demand

A combined concentration of people and jobs is one of the strongest indicators for where transit service can be most successful. Figure 5-9 and the maps that follow illustrate where different levels of transit frequency could be supported based on the density of people and jobs. While transit-supportive densities provide a baseline for areas that may support various types of service, they are one of many factors that help identify where transit investments are warranted and the most appropriate type of service.

Figure 5-9 Transit-Supportive Population and Employment Densities

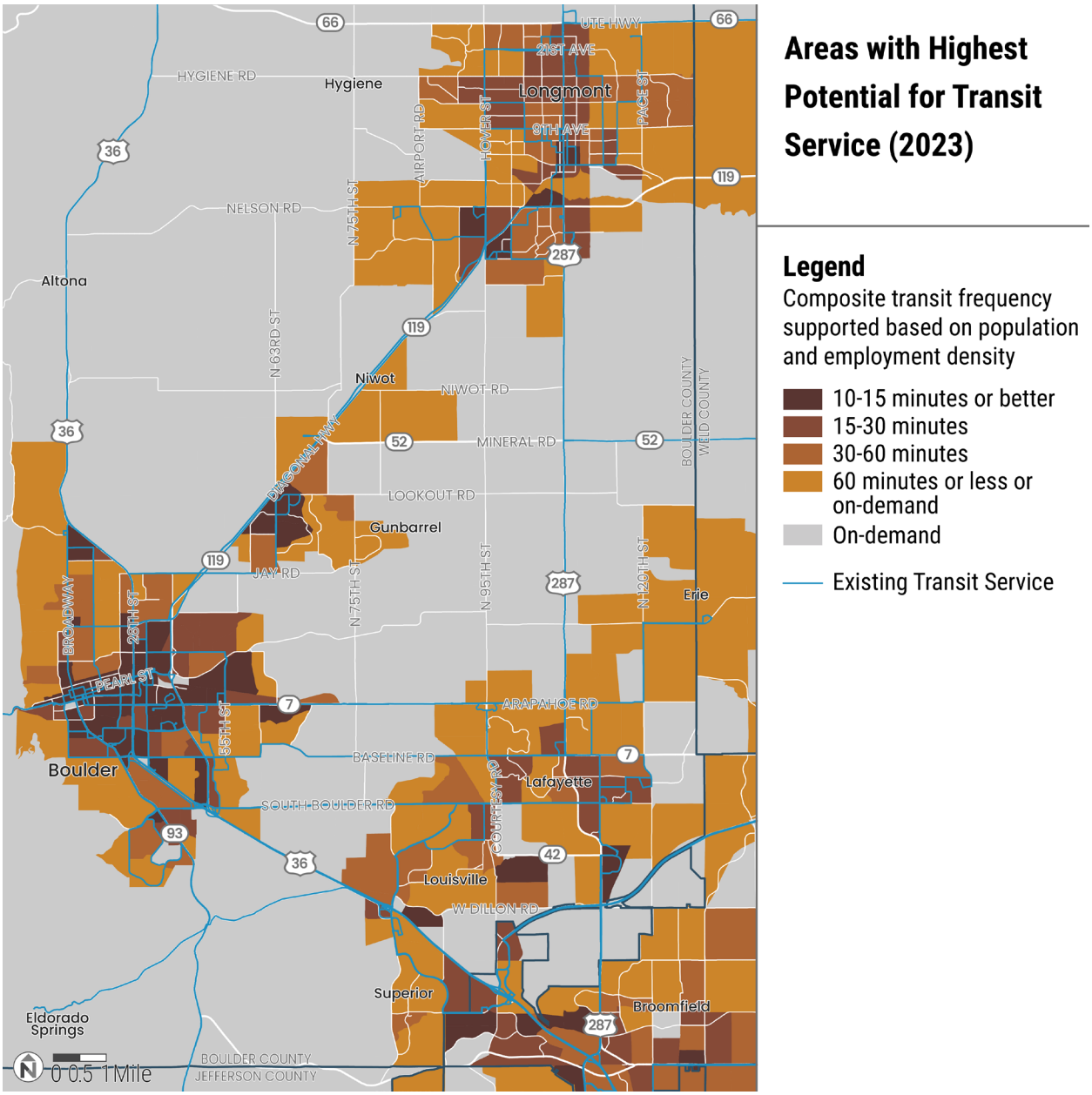
LAND USE			TRANSIT	
Land Use Type	Residents per Acre	Jobs per Acre	Appropriate Types of Transit	Frequency of Service
Downtowns, High Density Corridors, and Urban Mixed-Use	>30	>15	Light Rail, BRT, Rapid Bus, Local Bus	10-15 minutes or better
Neighborhood & Surburban Mixed-Use	15-30	10-15	Local Bus	15-30 minutes
Mixed Neighborhoods	10-15	5-10	Local Bus, Micro-transit	30-60 minutes
Low Density	2-10	2-5	Micro-transit, Rideshare, Volunteer Driver Pgm	60 mins or less or On Demand
Rural	<2	<2	Rideshare, Volunteer Driver Pgm	On Demand

Existing Composite Transit Demand

Areas with population and employment density that currently support higher frequency transit include downtown and east Boulder, around the CU Boulder campus, north Broadway in Boulder, Gunbarrel adjacent to CO 119, the commercial areas around Hover/CO 119 in Longmont, the Colorado Tech

Center in Louisville, and two major hospitals in southeast Boulder County (AdventHealth Avisa in Louisville and Good Samaritan in Lafayette).

Figure 5-10 Existing Composite Transit Demand (2023)

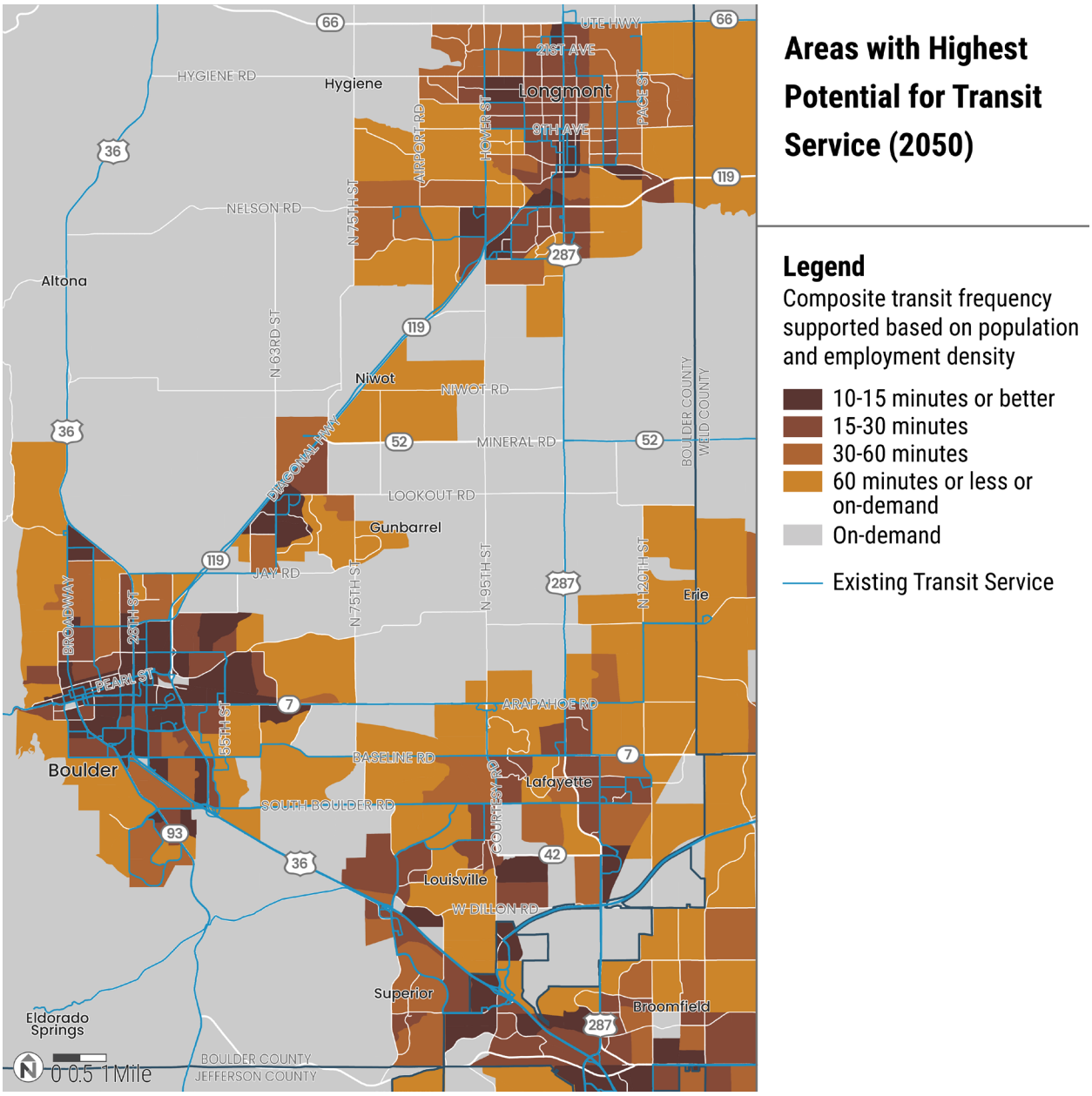


Source: DRCOG

Future Composite Transit Demand

Transit demand in 2050 will expand in all urbanized areas in the county but especially in Gunbarrel around CO 119, in south and southwest Longmont, and in all four southeast communities (especially at US 36 & McCaslin Station Park-n-Ride in Superior and along South Boulder Road in Louisville and Lafayette).

Figure 5-11 Future Composite Transit Demand (2050)



Source: DRCOG

5.3 Key Demographics for Transit Demand

In addition to where people live and work–and where future growth is expected–socioeconomic characteristics also greatly influence people's propensity to use transit. This is especially true of **zero-vehicle** and **low-income** households, two of the greatest indicators of transit demand.

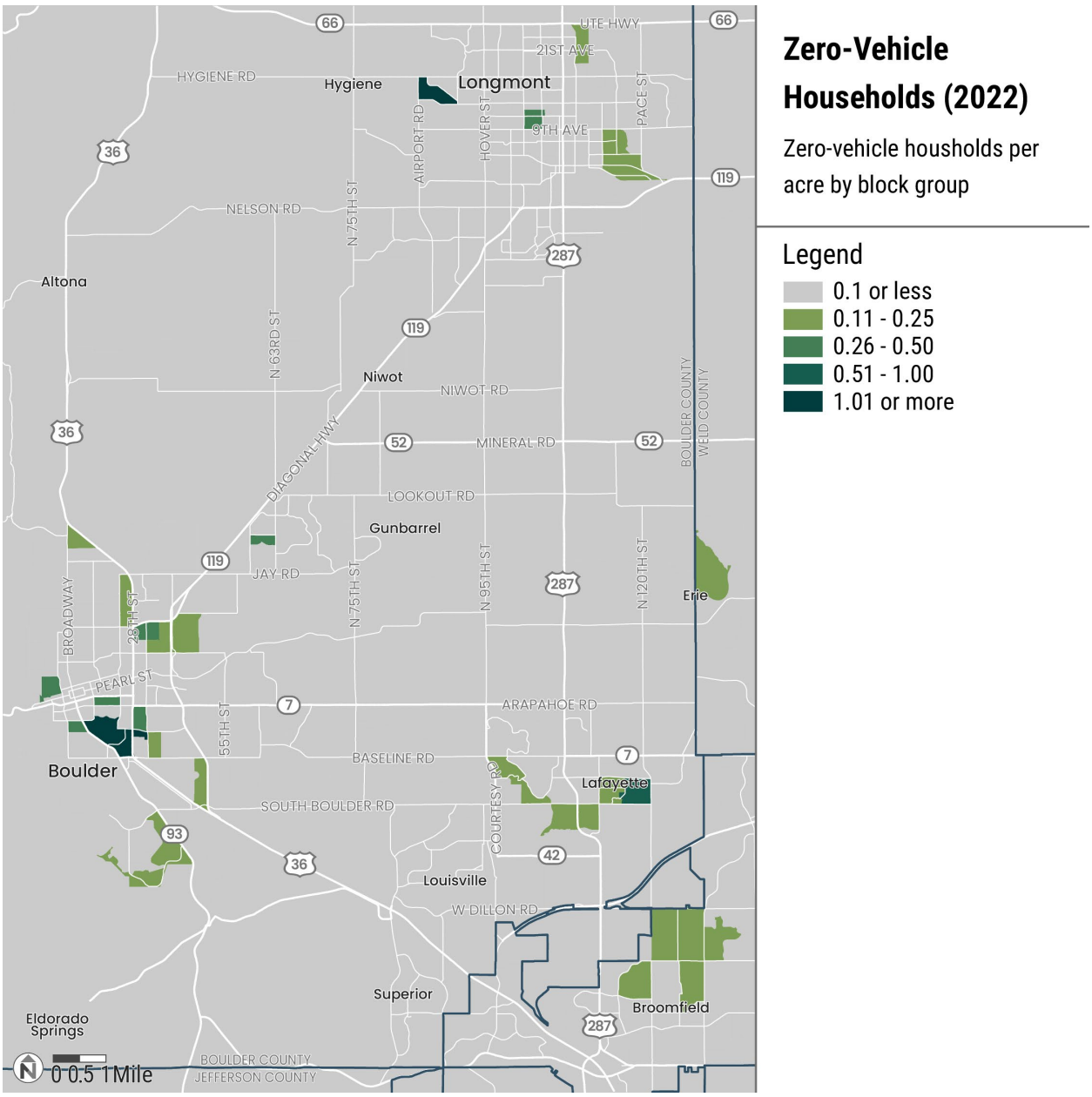
This section explores these two indicators in terms of **total numbers** to understand where zero-vehicle and low-income households are concentrated, as well as **percent** to understand geographic areas that may be lower-density but represent higher relative need. In section 5.4, we combine these two indicators with race/ethnicity and foreign-born populations to develop an index of transit propensity.

Zero-Vehicle Households

Figure 5-12 shows the density of zero-vehicle households in Boulder County using number of zero-vehicle households by acre. The neighborhoods with relatively higher densities of zero-vehicle households are around the CU Boulder campus, in eastern Lafayette near Merlin Drive, and in parts of Longmont, including near McIntosh Lake and east of downtown.

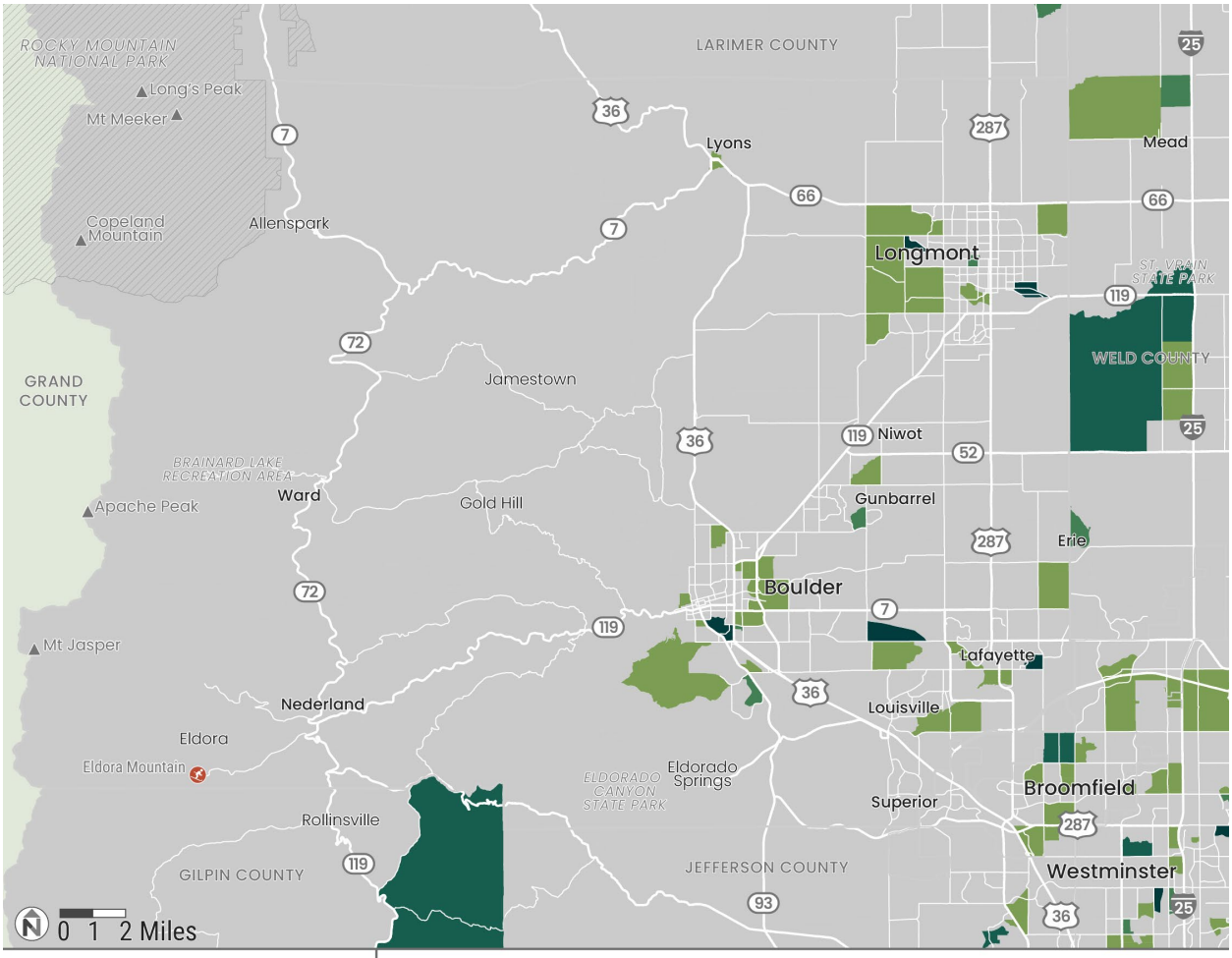
Figure 5-13 shows the percentage of zero-vehicle households in Boulder County at the block group level. Block groups with higher proportions of zero-vehicle households include the western neighborhoods of Longmont east of N 75th Street, eastern areas of Boulder along Foothills Parkway, and southern neighborhoods in Louisville along S 96th Street. The area west of Lafayette along Baseline Road also has block groups with a higher percentage (13% or more) of zero-vehicle households.

Figure 5-12 Number of Zero-Vehicle Households



Source: US Census 2022

Figure 5-13 Percent of Zero-Vehicle Households in Boulder County



Source: US Census 2022

What We Heard: Car-Free Respondents

The recent Linking Boulder County survey asked people about their transit needs. Respondents who do not own a vehicle highlighted the need for safe and convenient walking, biking, and rolling connections to transit. They also highlighted the importance of access to daily destinations like grocery stores and schools. Responses from car-free community members were more focused on frequent service and the need to spend less time waiting for buses than responses from the people who do own vehicles. People described the importance of transit access for those without a car:

- *"I don't have a car and use the bus or rideshares for grocery shopping, trips to the library, and medical/dental appointments. There are not many transportation options in East Boulder."*
- *"If there were a bus stop near Frasier Retirement Community, I'd get rid of my car. I'd like to go to Foothills Hospital, Avista Hospital, CU Boulder, Downtown Boulder, Longmont, and Lafayette."*
- *"For seniors who give up their cars, bicycles are not an alternative, but city buses are."*
- *"I want to live car-free. Right now that's not possible. I'm a senior in Gunbarrel and it should be so easy."*

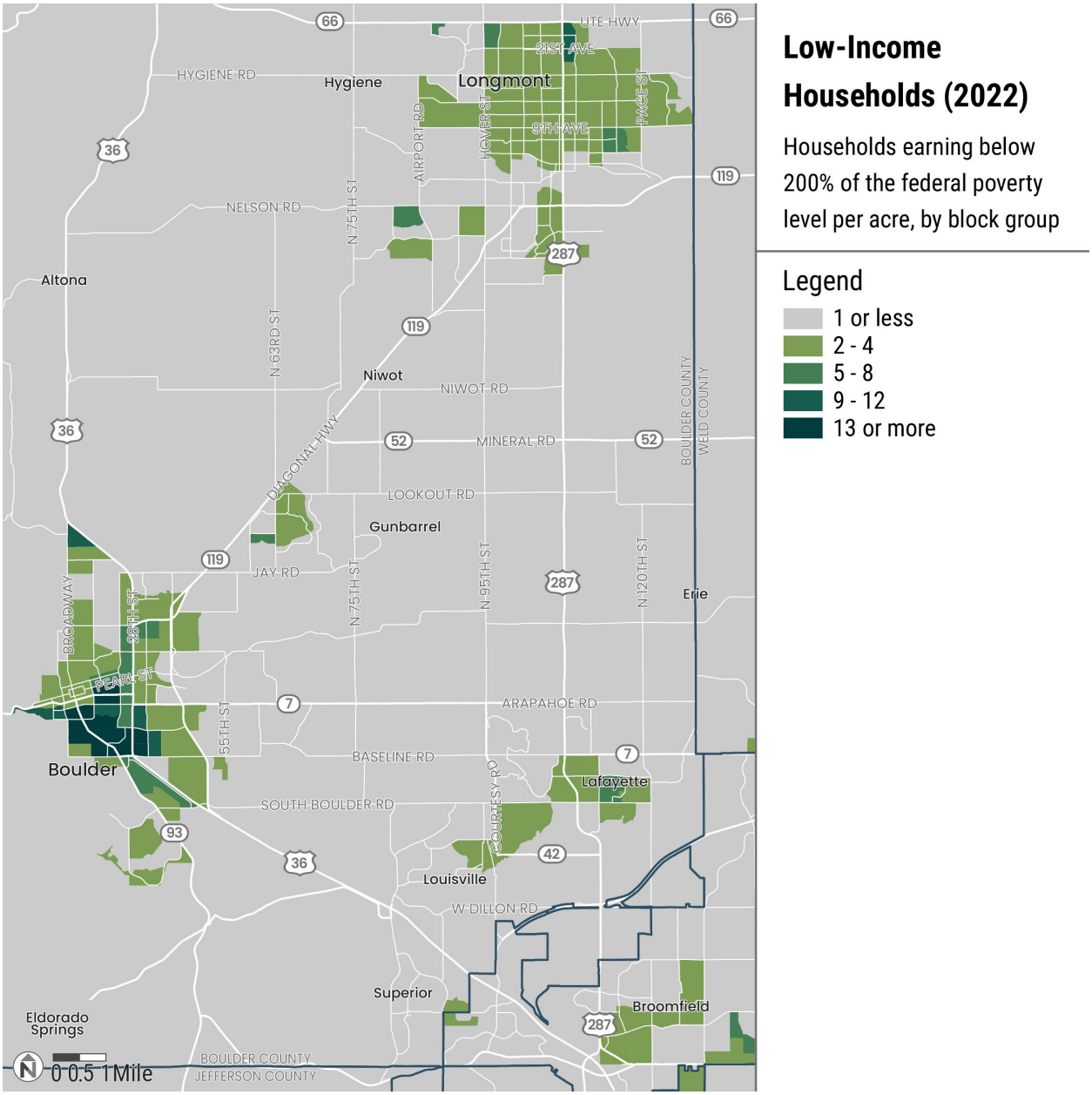
Low-Income Households

Figure 5-14 shows that **low-income households**—those with an annual income at or below 200% of the federal poverty level, which was $55,500 for a family of four in 2022—are concentrated near major institutions and centers, with a higher number around the CU Boulder campus (likely student households). Low-income households are also found in north Longmont east of Main Street, in central Lafayette east of Public Road, and in Gunbarrel south of Gunbarrel Avenue.

Figure 5-15 shows the percentage of low-income households in Boulder County at the block group level. A higher percentage (41% or more) of low-

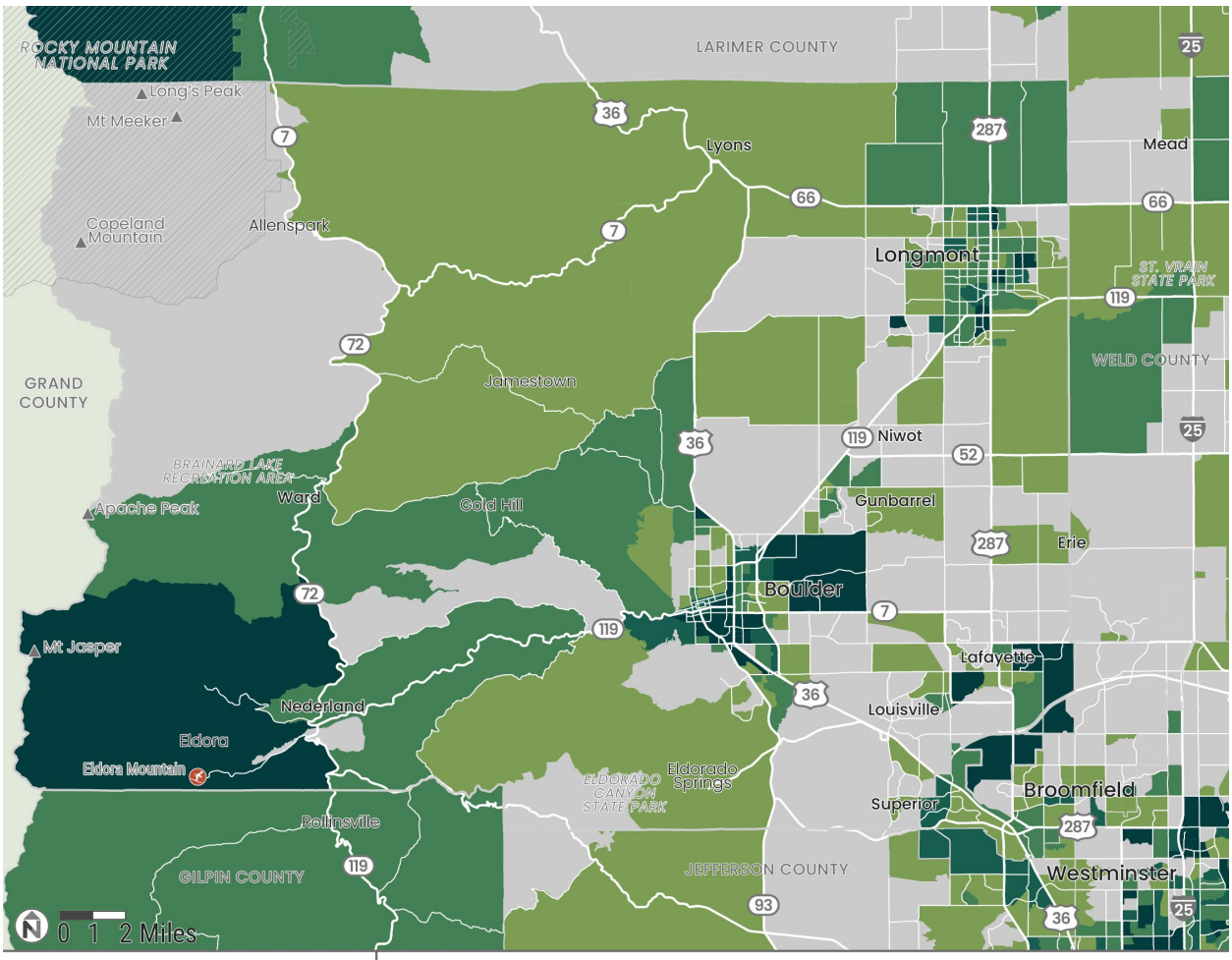
income households are in neighborhoods between Boulder and Gunbarrel and outer neighborhoods of Longmont. While population densities are low, there is also a higher percentage of residents who are low-income in mountain communities like Nederland, Ward, Gold Hill, and Jamestown. Eldora has the highest percentage of low-income households, likely due to seasonal workers at Eldora Mountain.

Figure 5-14 Number of Low-Income Households



Source: US Census 2022

Figure 5-15 Percent of Low-Income Households in Boulder County



Source: US Census 2022

Transit Propensity Index

When a significant number of people from select demographic groups live in an area, the underlying demand for transit is often higher than the population density might indicate. Conversely, in areas where populations that are likely

to take transit are less present, transit demand may be overrepresented by evaluating population densities alone.

To reflect the importance of key demographic groups, Linking Boulder County uses a **Transit Propensity Index (TPI)** to reflect relative transit demand (Figure 5-16). The TPI creates a single composite transit-demand score by comparing the following demographic groups to the total county population:

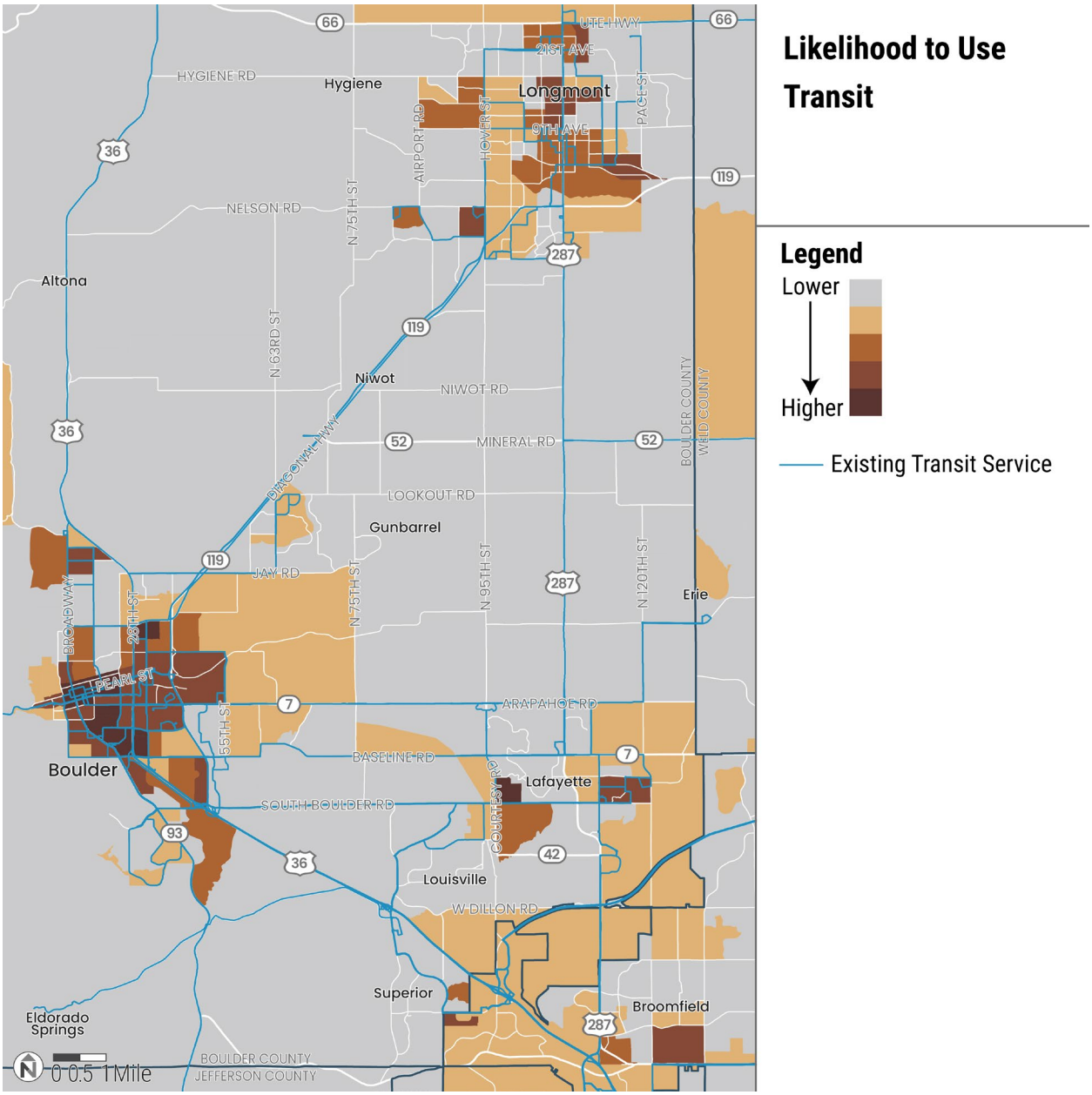
- **Auto Availability:** Not having a vehicle is the strongest indicator of transit propensity in Boulder County. Residents without a car are 5.9 times more likely to use transit than the average resident.
- **Income Level:** Household income is also a strong indicator of transit propensity. Households with incomes under $10,000 a year have more difficulty paying for basic needs, especially transportation costs, and are 1.7 times more likely to use transit. Higher-income households are progressively less likely to use transit.
- **Race and Ethnicity:** Race and ethnicity are often indicators of transit propensity. In Boulder County, Black residents are 2.7 times as likely to use transit as the average resident. Asian residents and Hispanic residents are 1.6 times and 1.1 times more likely to use transit, and white residents are somewhat less likely (0.9 times) to use transit.
- **Foreign-Born Status:** Boulder County residents born outside of the United States are 1.3 times more likely to use transit compared to the average resident.

What We Heard: Key Demographic Groups

Respondents to the Linking Boulder County survey highlighted different priorities based on their demographic group and use of transit. People who are car-free, low-income, and/or non-white were more likely than others to emphasize the importance of connectivity to everyday destinations like grocery stores, schools, and medical services. Transit riders identified frequency as the most important improvement to transit.

The transit propensity analysis is supplemented by the travel demand analysis (including origins and destinations) described in Chapter 6.

Figure 5-16 Transit Propensity Index (TPI)



Source: US Census 2022

Transit Supply Index

To identify areas where transit service may not align with demand, we developed a **Transit Supply Index** (TSI). The TSI indicates the level of fixed-

route transit service in different parts of the county by calculating how many weekday trips are provided within each Census block group and overlaying the number of on-demand services in an area.

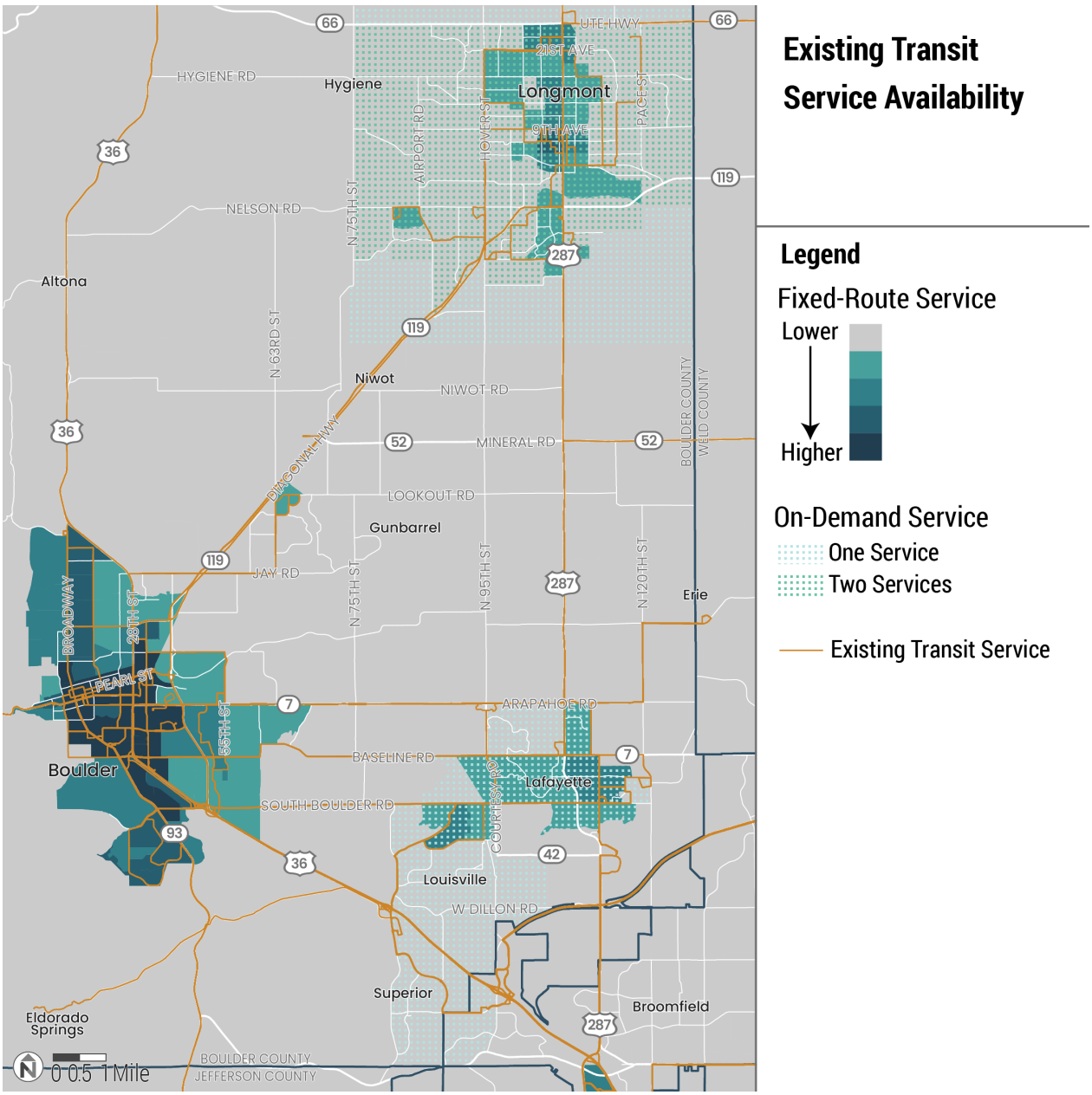
Figure 5-17 shows that transit supply is highest in several City of Boulder neighborhoods, especially downtown, around the CU Boulder campus, along the length of Broadway, and along 28th and 30th Streets. Supply is also high in parts of Longmont, especially along Main Street in the core of downtown; in areas with fewer fixed-route services, transit supply is supplemented by two on-demand services. The same is true in portions of Louisville and Lafayette, where several fixed routes converge within on-demand zones.

Although transit supply appears high in Longmont, Louisville, and Lafayette, that is due largely to on-demand services, which are more expensive to operate than fixed-route services. This makes it challenging to increase service levels and grow the number of riders.



FlexRide services in southeastern Boulder County increase the overall amount of transit service available but are difficult to scale in ways that increase ridership. (Image Source: RTD)

Figure 5-17 Transit Supply Index (TSI)



Source: Mobility Database, US Census 2022

5.4 Transit Gaps

To identify gaps between transit service and demand in Boulder County, the project team combined the **Transit Propensity Index** and **Composite Transit Demand** with the **Transit Supply Index.** The findings of these two combined analyses are summarized below.

Transit Propensity and Transit Supply Combined

Figure 5-18 compares Transit Propensity and Transit Supply, highlighting the following gaps:

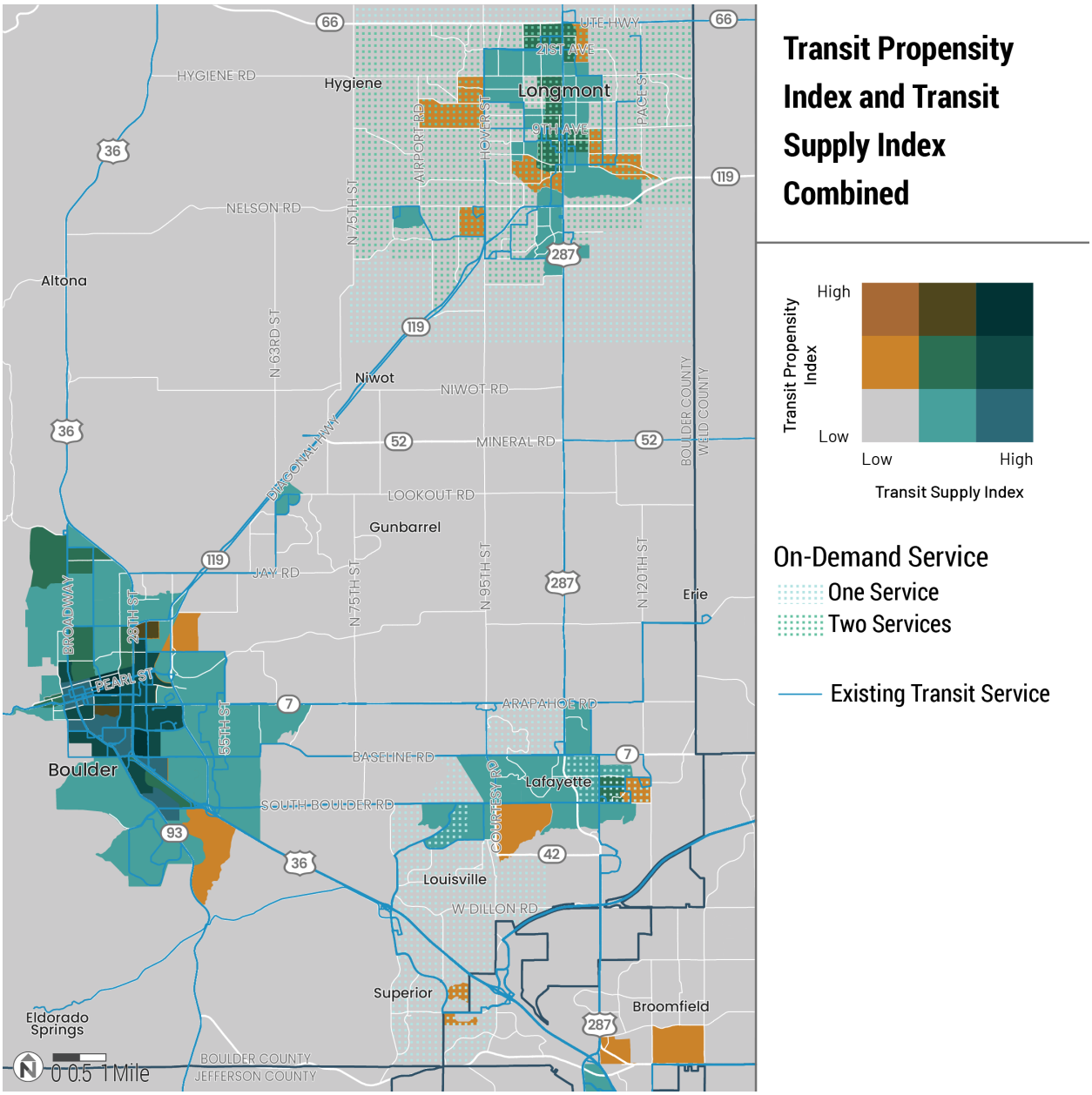
- In Boulder east of Foothills Parkway between Arapahoe Avenue and Valmont Road, as well as areas along Foothills Parkway near Table Mesa Drive and US 36
- In Longmont west of Hover Street and east and southwest of downtown
- In Louisville and Lafayette along South Boulder Road
- In Superior near the intersection of Rock Creek Parkway and Coalton Road

While transit is provided close to many of these areas, the gap analysis suggests that the level of fixed-route service may not meet current and future demand. While on-demand services in Longmont, Lafayette, Louisville, and Superior help to fill existing gaps, additional transit service may be needed to meet current demand.



Local fixed-route services converge in downtown Longmont, providing strong transit supply that is complemented by local on-demand services.

Figure 5-18 Transit Propensity Index and Transit Supply Index Combined



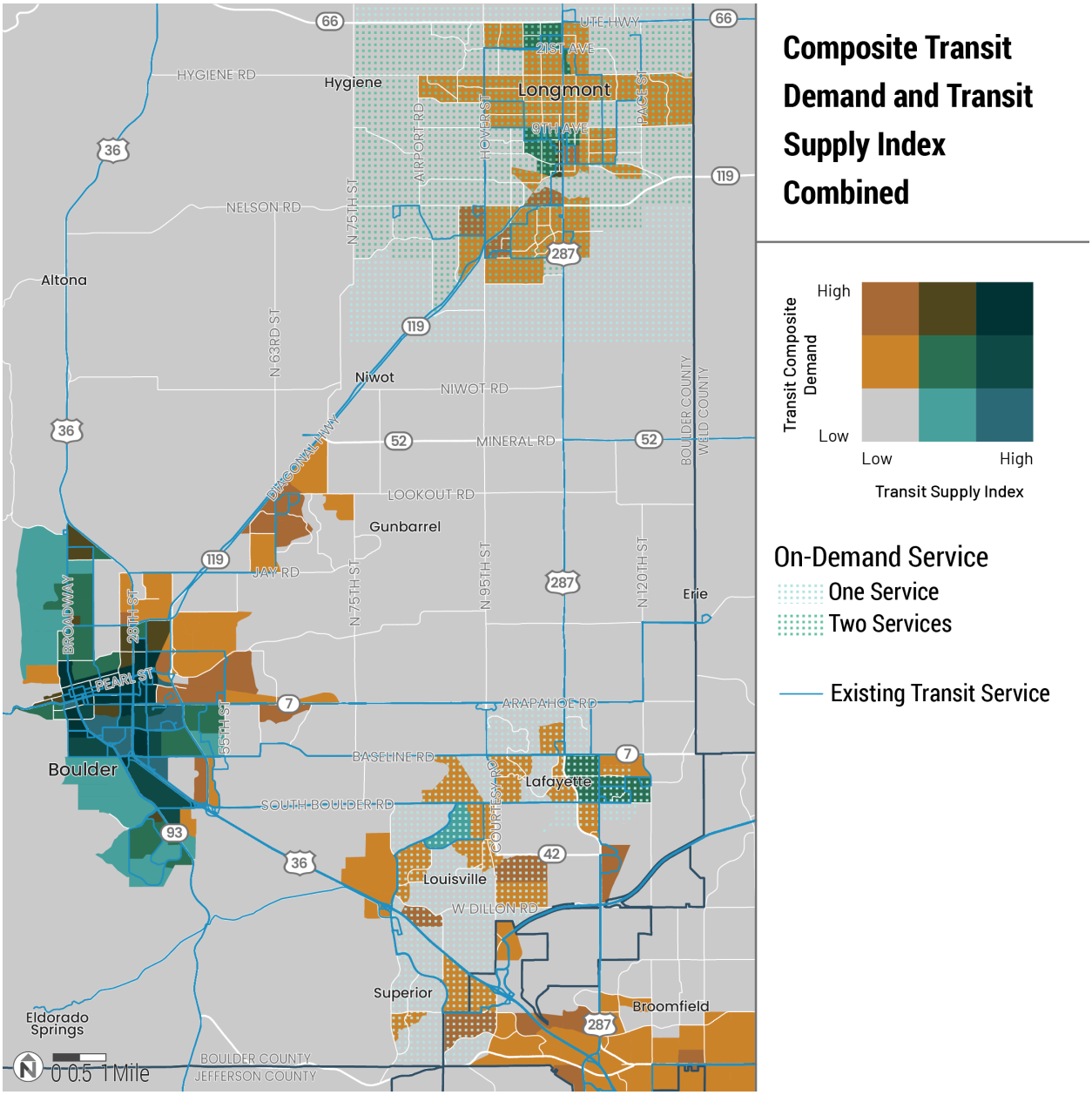
Source: Mobility Database, US Census 2022

Composite Transit Demand and Transit Supply Combined

Comparing Composite Transit Demand and Transit Supply (Figure 5-19) tells a similar story but shows additional need in many parts of the county. For example, Gunbarrel near Lookout Road and 63rd Street shows significant

unserved demand, primarily due to employment densities. Most of Longmont shows moderate unmet demand, although two on-demand services help to fill some gaps. There is also more significant need in East Boulder, in central Lafayette east of Public Road and around Good Samaritan Hospital, in Louisville at the Colorado Technology Center, and in Superior near McCaslin & US 36 Station, largely due to higher-density, mixed-use development.

Figure 5-19 Composite Transit Demand and Transit Supply Index Combined



Source: DRCOG, Mobility Database, US Census 2022

Colorado Technology Center

The Colorado Technology Center (CTC) in a 600-acre master-planned business park in Louisville that is home to several leading manufacturing and high-tech companies. The business park offers condominiums and commercial properties that can hold 7,000 residents and employees. Commercial properties at CTC are available for corporate campuses, research and development operations, or manufacturing or warehouse facilities. CTC partners with Commuting Solutions to offer its tenants and employees alternative travel options; however, the development is not currently served by fixed-route transit.



Colorado Technology Center, Source: Community Development Group, Colorado

5.5 Land Use and Transit

Land use has a significant impact on the efficiency and accessibility of transit service. Development patterns shape pedestrian conditions and the location and proximity of housing to jobs, entertainment, and community resources. These factors influence how easy and useful it is for someone to take transit. Understanding existing and planned land use patterns and how they vary across Boulder County helps us assess the potential for different types of transit services in different areas.

Countywide Land Use Goals

The Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (BCCP) establishes guiding principles for how the county should grow and build sustainably. While most municipalities in the county develop their own comprehensive plans through

land use intergovernmental agreements with the county, their plans align with countywide goals. Comprehensive plan goals with the strongest implications for transit include the following:

- Promote the concentration of urban development within municipalities and the preservation of open space, environmental resources, and natural ecosystems
- Plan for sustainable growth rates that maintain quality of life and municipal services
- Ensure that employment opportunity is balanced with housing availability
- Regulate for diverse and functional land use patterns

Open Space Preservation in Boulder County

The BCCP sets goals that prioritize clustered development around urban areas to limit sprawl and policies to protect natural areas, such as the open space sales and use tax that provides funding for County purchases of open spaces for preservation. Goals that limit sprawl help to create conditions that support fixed-route transit and other municipal services, which are most efficient in dense areas. However, spatial constraints to development must be balanced by housing policy that permits density and allows for a range of housing options at various levels of affordability.



Image Source: Boulder County Comprehensive Plan

Existing Land Use Patterns

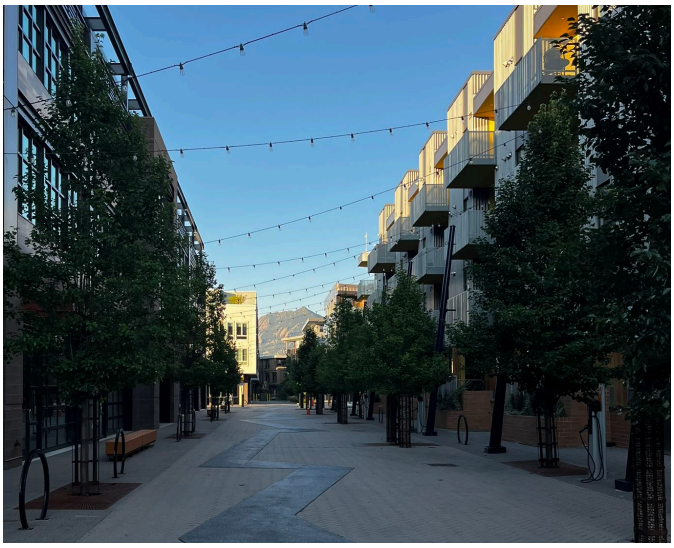
Development is concentrated in Boulder County's municipalities. Single-family residential land uses are the most common use, while commercial, office, and mixed uses are concentrated along major corridors and activity centers. Industrial uses are most often located on the edges of municipalities or along regional highways, but there are some industrial uses in central urban areas. Civic uses, which include publicly owned or oriented services like schools, government offices and buildings, places of worship, and childcare centers, are distributed throughout the county and in its cities. The sections below describe land use patterns in each municipality.

Boulder

Commercial, office, and higher-density residential uses are concentrated in central Boulder and surrounding neighborhoods, as well as along major corridors like Broadway, 28th Street, and Arapahoe Road. These uses are also more prevalent east of Folsom Street, at Boulder Junction, and near the Twenty-Ninth Street Mall. While much of the city's land use is single-family neighborhoods, apartments and other multi-family housing are located near CU Boulder and in areas with more commercial development. Industrial and warehousing uses are primarily located along and east of the BNSF railroad.



Land uses include commercial, industrial, and multi-family residential along North Broadway in Boulder.




Boulder Junction (left) and Downtown Boulder (right) have higher-density housing.

Longmont

A variety of commercial, office, civic, and residential uses are concentrated along Longmont's Main Street (US 287), as well as at other nodes along Hover Street, Mountain View Avenue, 9th Avenue, and Lashley Street. These areas are predominantly surrounded by single-family residential neighborhoods. Industrial uses are largely located south of 3rd Avenue and along CO 119.





Longmont's Main Street includes varied commercial and residential land uses.

Gunbarrel and Niwot

These communities consist primarily of single-family residential with smaller centers of commercial development. There are several industrial campuses just west of Gunbarrel along CO 119.

Lafayette

Commercial and multi-family development in Lafayette is located along US 287, S Public Road, W Baseline Road, and E South Boulder Road. In the southeast, an industrial park and public hospital are also surrounded by commercial and office uses. There are single-family residential neighborhoods throughout the city, often set back from larger corridors behind other uses.



There is significant multi-family housing near the Lafayette Park-n-Ride.



US 287 commercial corridor near single-family neighborhoods in Lafayette.

Superior

Superior's land uses have changed since the Marshall Fire. While land uses south of downtown are still primarily single-family residential, the town has a new mixed-use town center and a growing commercial center at US 36 and McCaslin Boulevard.



There has been significant new development in downtown Superior since the Marshall Fire.

Louisville

Commercial and industrial development in Louisville is located around McCaslin Boulevard and US 36 and concentrated along South Boulder Road and N 96th Street. The Colorado Tech Center is a large industrial park in the southeast part of the city. Single-family residential is the prevailing land use throughout most of the city.



Louisville has many commercial uses at US 36 & McCaslin (left) and downtown (right).

Erie

The portion of Erie located within Boulder County is primarily single-family residential development with a few industrial sites. Areas outside the county include newer mixed-use developments and multi-family residential.

Lyons

Low-density commercial and civic uses in Lyons are concentrated along Main Street and Broadway Street, with single-family residential throughout the rest of the town. West of town, there are industrial plants and offices.



Central Lyons houses the sheriff's office and Lyons Community Library.

Nederland

As a mountain town, Nederland has primarily single-family residential and low-density commercial uses, as well as many recreational areas.





Nederland has a mix of low-density residential and commercial uses.

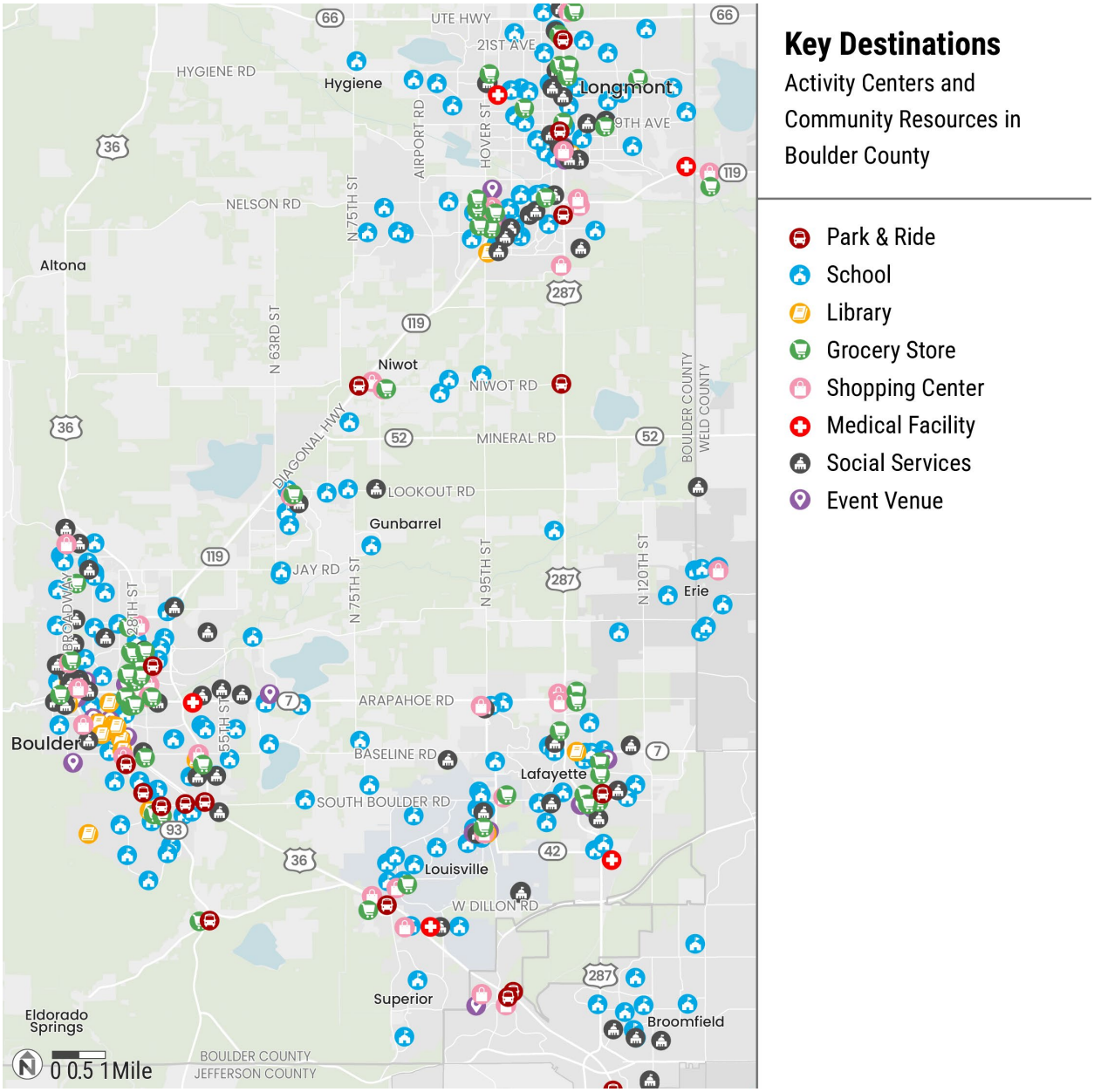
Unincorporated Boulder County

Areas between larger municipalities and smaller towns are primarily used for agriculture, mining, or ranching, with low-density residential land uses. Many areas are preserved as open space by Boulder County.

Key Destinations

Points of interest and community resources—including hospitals and doctor's offices, retail locations like grocery stores, schools and daycares, and civic destinations like libraries or government offices—are important generators of transit demand. Transit centers and Park-n-Rides also serve as important connections where riders switch modes or transfer between services.

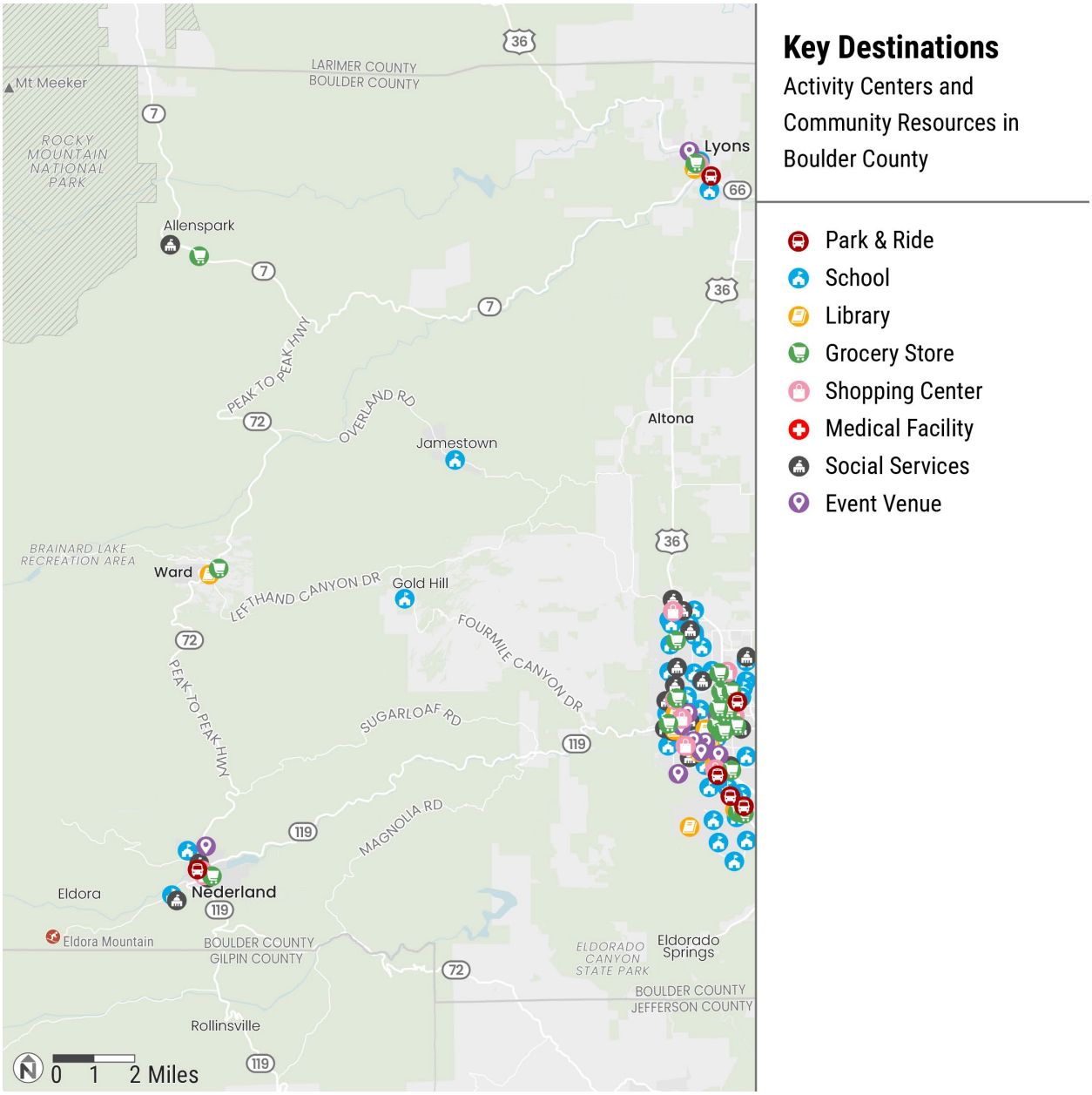
Figure 5-20 Key Destinations in Urbanized Boulder County



Data Source: Boulder County

In western Boulder County, key destinations are limited to community services, like schools, libraries, and grocery stores. Much of this part of the county is preserved open space or within national and state forests and parks. There are numerous camps, parks, and other recreational destinations in these communities.

Figure 5-21 Key Destinations in Western Boulder County



Data Source: Boulder County

Factors Impacting Future Land Use

Each Boulder County municipality is empowered to develop their own comprehensive plans that include future land use maps, which lay out planned land use and development goals. Zoning regulations, which are also left to municipalities' discretion, shape what can be built where, guiding the built environment to match the community's vision. Figure 5-22 provides links to the comprehensive plans for Boulder County's incorporated jurisdictions. Several municipalities are currently updating their plans.

Figure 5-22 Comprehensive Plans for Boulder County Jurisdictions

Jurisdiction	Governing Comprehensive Plan	Notes
Boulder County	Boulder County Comprehensive Plan (2020)	
City of Boulder	Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan (2020 mid-term update)	Currently being updated
City of Longmont	Envision Longmont (2016)	Future land use and transportation map was updated in 2025
City of Lafayette	Legacy Lafayette Comprehensive Plan (2021)	
City of Louisville	Louisville Comprehensive Plan (2013)	Currently being updated
Town of Superior	Town of Superior Comprehensive Plan (2012)	Currently being updated
Town of Erie	Town of Erie Comprehensive Plan (2024)	
Town of Lyons	Lyons Thrive Comprehensive Plan (2023)	
Town of Nederland	Town of Nederland Comprehensive Plan (2025)	
Town of Jamestown	Town of Jamestown Comprehensive Plan (2017)	

Land Use and Housing Affordability

Boulder County is home to major employers and offers direct access to beautiful nature and scenery. Housing in the City of Boulder and in central areas of Boulder County is in high demand—people want to live near their jobs and close to cultural and recreational opportunities. However, there are few affordable rentals, home and land values are high, space for new home

construction is limited, and housing production has not kept up with demand. While attached condos and apartments are more affordable, detached single-family homes are increasingly unaffordable for many residents.

A large percentage of people who work in Boulder live in surrounding communities. Over the past decade, many lower- and middle-income households have relocated to communities east of Boulder and along the I-25 corridor to find affordable housing. As a result, Longmont, Louisville, Lafayette, Erie, and communities in Weld County (Firestone, Dacono, Fredrick) have seen significant growth in the past few decades.

Impacts to Transit Service

This outward movement has reshaped regional travel patterns. Commute distances have increased as people move further from the core transit network in Boulder. Longer commutes follow major highway corridors, creating strong directional peaks and increasing dependency on single-occupancy vehicles. (Chapter 6 describes travel patterns in more detail.)

These shifting patterns impact the type and scale of transit service needed in Boulder County. Long-distance regional routes become more important, and frequency and reliability must improve to compete with auto travel. Transit services must also be coordinated across jurisdictions to serve dispersed residential areas rather than a single urban core, as well as meeting all-day travel needs to link people to jobs, schools, services, and destinations in their communities and across Boulder County. This can strain transit resources.

Policies to Improve Housing Supply and Affordability

Affordable housing is defined as households spending less than 30% of their income on housing. In recent years, the State of Colorado and local jurisdictions have adopted policies to promote residential density, varied housing types, and sustainable development patterns. These policies impact where and how development occurs, with implications for how transit may evolve to serve communities in the coming decades.

Statewide Policy

Over the past several years, the State of Colorado has enacted policies to increase the amount of available housing, improve affordability, and encourage sustainable land use patterns.

Density and Affordability

- **HB24-1313**, Housing in Transit-Oriented Communities, requires municipalities to permit higher-density housing near transit. In addition, municipalities must implement affordability and anti-displacement strategies to ensure this housing remains accessible to a range of income levels.
- Local governments are required by **SB24-174** to conduct a needs assessment that evaluates future housing needs and displacement risk and identifies an action plan with strategies to increase affordability.
- **HB24-1152** requires municipalities to allow accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in zones where any detached residential units are permitted. These detached or attached units are intended to encourage additional housing capacity and affordability in urban areas.
- Following the adoption of **HB23-1255 and HB25-1093**, local governments cannot implement land use regulations that limit population growth or the number of building permits for residential development, or regulations that decrease residential density minimums in an area without increasing them elsewhere.
- **HB24-1007** prohibits municipalities from limiting the number of non-related occupants who share a home, except for health and safety reasons.

Parking Requirements

- **HB24-1304** prohibits local governments from instituting off-street parking minimums for multi-family residential, adaptive re-use residential, or other mixed-use redevelopments that are more than 50% residential near transit stops and stations with service that runs every

30 minutes or less. This policy encourages compact development and reduces urban sprawl.

Building Form

- **HB25-1273** requires larger municipalities to allow multi-family residential developments to include only one stairwell. This policy supports building denser residential development on smaller infill parcels, as buildings with multiple stairways are typically larger and less flexible. This law applies to cities with over 100,000 residents; the City of Boulder is the only municipality in Boulder County currently affected.

Local Policy

In Boulder, affordable housing also refers to rented and owned homes that are deed restricted to ensure long-term affordability. The City uses several regulatory, financial, and programmatic strategies to increase density, affordable housing supply, and reduce housing costs.

The Boulder Valley Comprehensive Plan set a goal for 15% of all homes to be affordable for low-, moderate-, and middle-income households by 2035. From 1992 to 2024, the number of permanently affordable homes in the city increased from 981 to 4,094. Boulder's affordable housing efforts include:

- **Inclusionary housing requirements:** All new residential developments are required to contribute affordable units (20% in single-family homes, 25% in developments with more than five units). Developers can provide alternatives such as land dedication or cash contribution to the Affordable Housing Fund in lieu of providing affordable units.
- **Homeownership and rental programs:** There are several down payment assistance programs to support low- and middle-income buyers. The City also partners with local organizations to expand and support affordable rental options.
- **Housing supply strategies:** The City promotes flexible housing options such as Affordable Dwelling Units (ADU) and manufactured housing communities to increase the affordable housing supply.

The City of Longmont has an inclusionary housing requirement that requires at least 12% of units in new development to be affordable. The city also allows up to 25% additional density in residential districts for projects that include affordable housing and does not impose density limits in any of its mixed-use zones. Longmont also stewards an Attainable Housing Fund to help offset the cost of building affordable housing.

The City of Boulder eliminated parking requirements for all new developments and has established parking maximums for some residential and mixed-use zones. The City of Longmont has also eliminated parking minimums citywide for new developments, replacing them with parking maximums.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter describes how and where future transit demand in Boulder County will be shaped by continued population growth, expanding employment centers, and policy and economic factors such as transit-oriented development, elimination of parking requirements, and housing affordability. While central Boulder remains the County's densest area, growth in southeast Boulder, Longmont, Lafayette, and emerging nodes such as Superior and Gunbarrel will increasingly influence travel patterns.

The analysis in this chapter highlights several areas where demographic need and growth pressures are not well matched by existing service, underscoring opportunities to improve access and equity. Boulder County must invest in more frequent and coordinated transit options to support growing intercity travel demand and keep pace with where people are living. Transit access to jobs, services, and recreational opportunities enhances livability for all residents, especially for those without access to a vehicle.

Chapter 6 builds on this assessment through a more detailed travel demand analysis, examining the journeys people take within and to/from Boulder County and the ways travel behavior has changed in the last five years.

6 Travel Market Analysis

Analyzing existing travel patterns provides critical insight into where and how people move, highlighting opportunities for transit to better meet existing and future travel demand.

What is the purpose of this chapter?

This chapter uses three levels of analysis to understand existing local and regional connections and provide insight into where transit investments could most effectively support these travel needs. The travel market analysis examined trips at three scales:

1. **Within Boulder County:** Analyzes travel between municipalities and helps identify how transit could improve connectivity within the county.
2. **To and From the County:** Shows travel flows into and out of the county to understand how regional transit might be improved.
3. **To and From CU Boulder:** Reviews the effect of university-generated travel demand on local and county travel patterns, including student, faculty, and staff trips.

The analyses highlighted opportunities for improving connectivity and filling transit service gaps within and connecting to Boulder County. Key findings from this analysis include the following:

- **Auto Travel Dominates:** Over 77% of trips within Boulder County and more than 90% of trips entering or leaving the county are by private vehicle. Transit use remains below 1% and has declined since 2019.
- **Shifting Travel Patterns:** Trip volumes are more evenly distributed throughout the day compared to 2019. In 2024, there was more midday

and evening activity, and the traditional commute peaks were less significant. People are making more trips, but trip distances are shorter, keeping the number of vehicle miles traveled consistent.

- **Two Primary Hubs:** Boulder and Longmont are the primary generators of most internal and regional trips, with the US 36, CO 119, and US 287 gateways carrying the highest trip volumes into and out of the county.
- **University Travel Demand:** As one of the county's most important destinations, CU Boulder generates a significant amount of travel to and from the campus throughout the year. Although the number of trips to/from campus by car does not change dramatically between the school year and the summer, on-campus activity is lower during the summer months.
- **Making Connections:** To respond to evolving travel behaviors, transit service improvements should prioritize connectivity between Boulder, Longmont, and southeast municipalities; support priority regional corridors; and offer flexibility throughout the day.



Mid-morning travel on South Boulder Road illustrates how travel patterns have changed.

How was this analysis performed?

Most of the Linking Boulder County travel analysis used Replica, a nationwide activity-based travel demand model. Replica gathers data on travel patterns based on connected vehicle and location-based service data and models travel using traffic data, transit data, and other sources.

Standard Analysis Period: The baseline period used fall weekday 2024 data to represent typical travel conditions during the academic year.

- Replica uses an average Thursday as its standard for weekday data and Saturday as its standard for weekend data.
- Fall and Spring travel patterns were nearly identical, so we selected Fall as the standard.
- Data for the summer months is not available through Replica. We used another big data source (Streetlight) that samples data in the summer for travel analysis of CU Boulder. This analysis only samples data from trips made by car.
- To understand recent travel pattern shifts, we used data from 2019 for pre-pandemic comparisons.

Data Aggregation: The analysis aggregated trips to the municipality level to provide a clearer picture of travel flows, balancing detail with utility.

Focus Areas: The analysis concentrates on incorporated municipalities with the greatest data availability.

6.1 Travel Within Boulder County

The first level of analysis focuses on trips that both start and end within Boulder County. The goal at this scale is to understand opportunities to improve connectivity and support efficient movement between Boulder County communities through transit investments.

Where People Travel

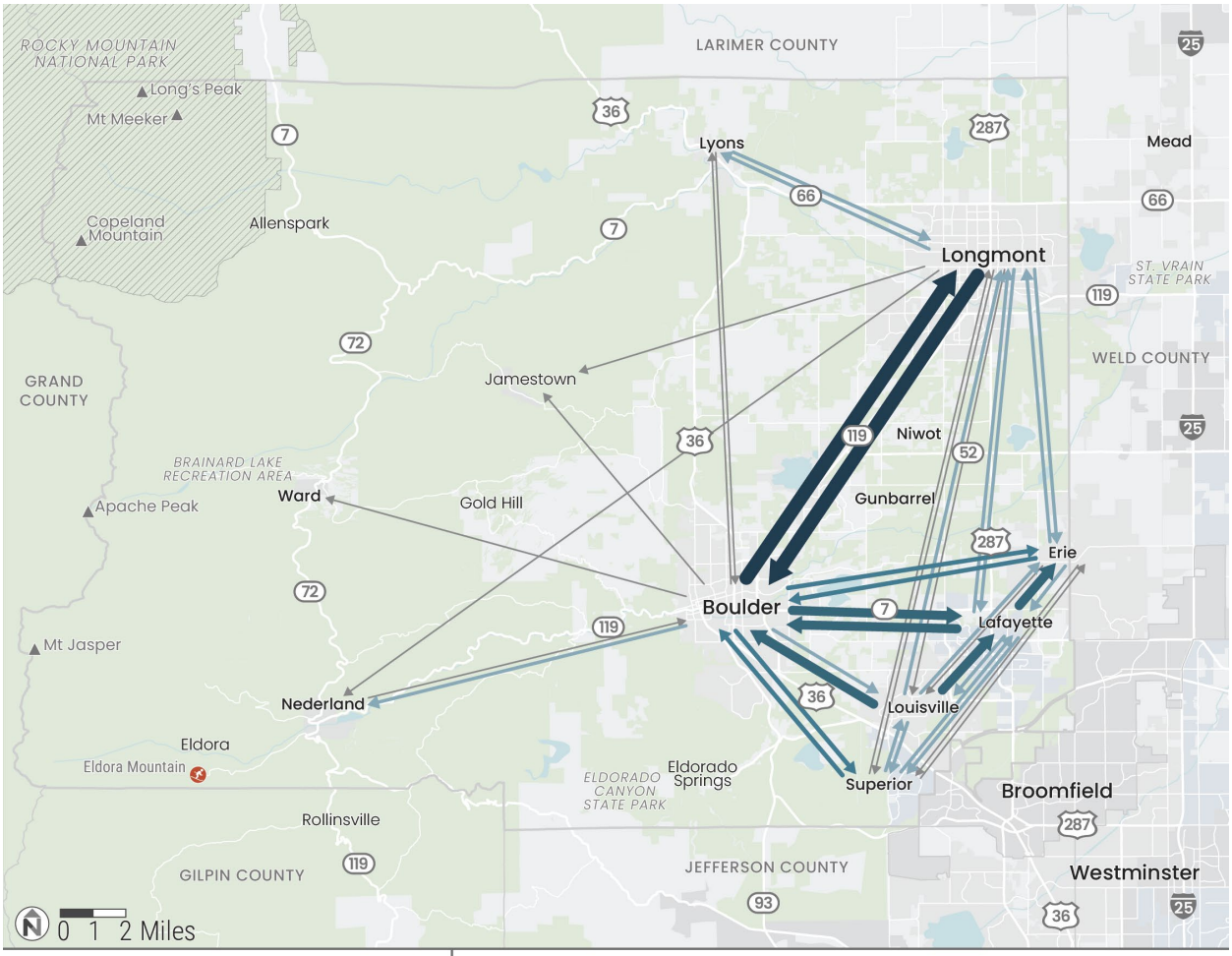
Most intra-county trips occur within the same municipality and between Boulder and Longmont (see Figure 6-1). Since 2019, trip activity has also increased in southeast Boulder County, particularly in Lafayette. Figure 6-2 illustrates the strongest origin-destination pairs across the county, and Figure 6-3 maps trip volumes to show the roadways people use to connect between different communities. Travel patterns during the summer were similar to fall travel patterns.

Figure 6-1 Top 10 Trip Pairs within Boulder County (Fall 2024 Weekday)

Origin Municipality	Destination Municipality	Number of Trips
Boulder	Boulder	385,835
Longmont	Longmont	271,518
Lafayette	Lafayette	47,624
Louisville	Louisville	35,123
Longmont	Boulder	23,088
Boulder	Longmont	22,956
Superior	Superior	14,316
Boulder	Lafayette	12,441
Lafayette	Boulder	11,491
Boulder	Louisville	9,723

We also analyzed the travel patterns of populations with high transit propensity (see Chapter 5). These populations follow similar patterns to the general population, with most trips ending in Boulder, Longmont, or southeast Boulder County. The patterns emphasize the benefits of prioritizing improved transit services to these areas.

Figure 6-2 Origin and Destination Pairs Between Boulder County Municipalities (2024)



Origins and Destinations of Travel within the County

Trip pairs for travel between Boulder County municipalities on a typical Fall 2024 weekday.

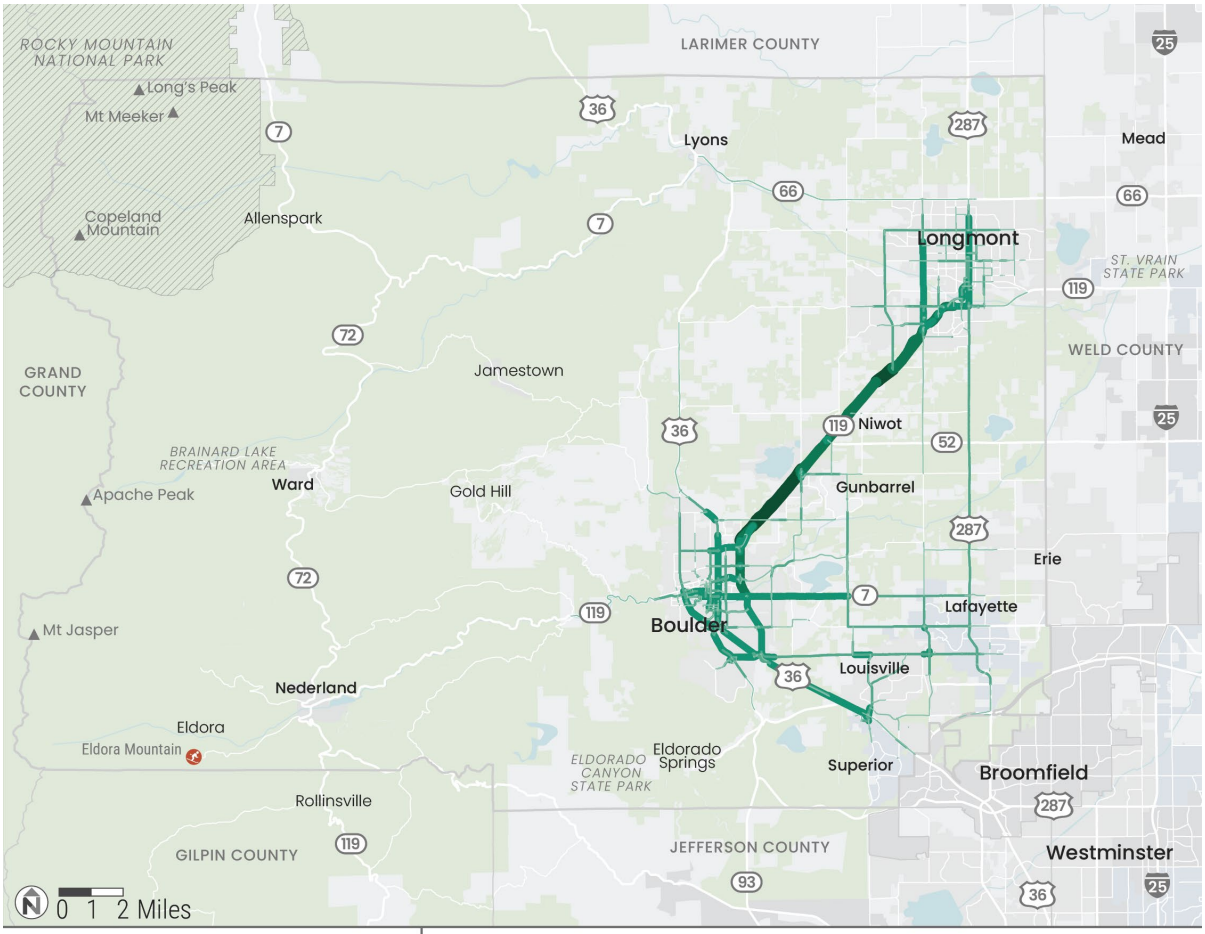
Trip Counts and Locations

- < 5,000 trips
- 5,000 - 10,000 trips
- 10,001 - 20,000 trips
- 20,000 - 30,000 trips
- > 30,001 trips

Origin → Destination

Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

Figure 6-3 Trip Volumes by Roadway for Intra-County Trips (2024)



Intra-County Trips by Roadway

Number of trips that start and end in Boulder County by roadway on a typical Fall 2024 weekday.

Count of Daily Trips

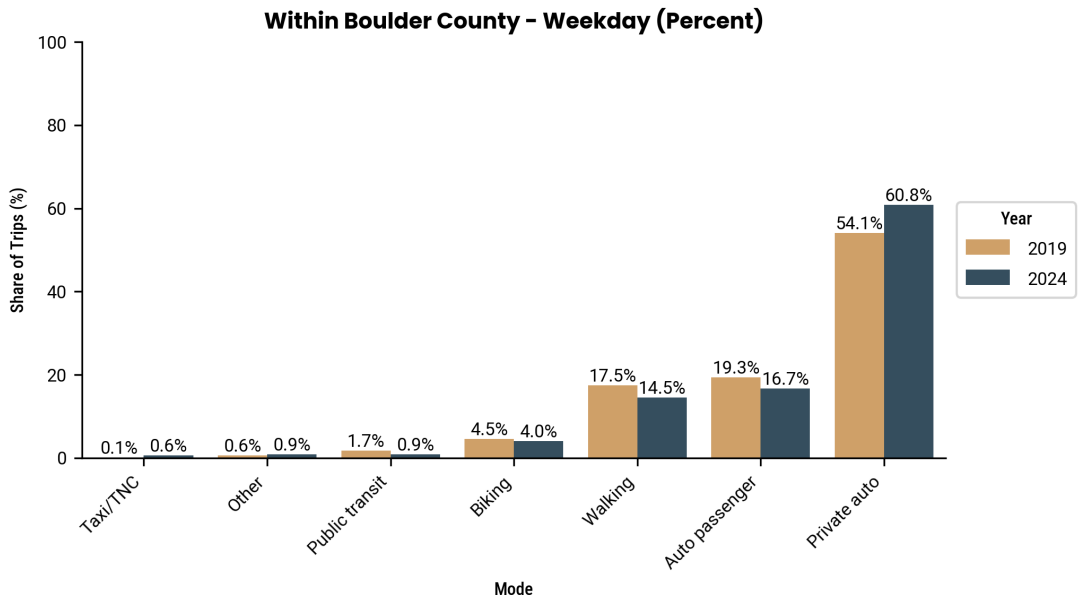
- ≤ 5,000 trips
- 5,001 - 10,000 trips
- 10,001 - 20,000 trips
- 20,001 - 30,000 trips
- > 30,000 trips

Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

How People Travel

Vehicle travel is, by far, the most common mode of travel within the county, with over 77% of trips in 2024 made by private auto or as an auto passenger (Figure 6-4). Public transit trips were less than 1% of trips within the county in 2024, or about half of what they were in 2019. This decrease may be due to a combination of transit service reductions, transit travel time, perceptions about taking transit, and changes in post-pandemic commuting behavior.

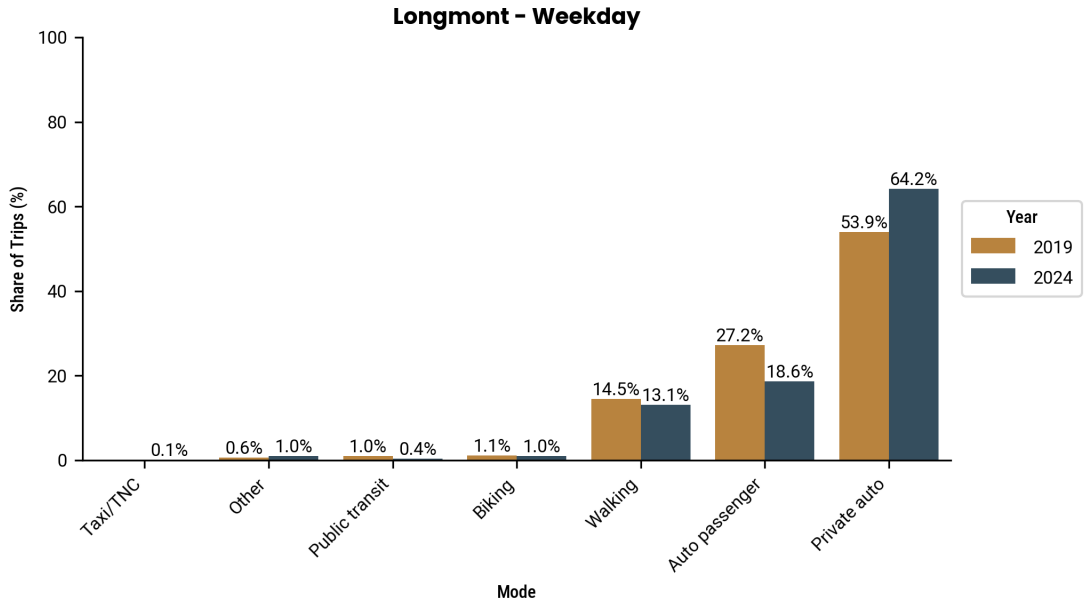
Figure 6-4 Mode Share for Trips within Boulder County



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

Mode share varies across the county. In Longmont, mode share for trips within the city closely aligns with the county's trends (see Figure 6-5). The share of trips by transit in Longmont decreased following the pandemic, from 1% in 2019 to 0.4% in 2024.

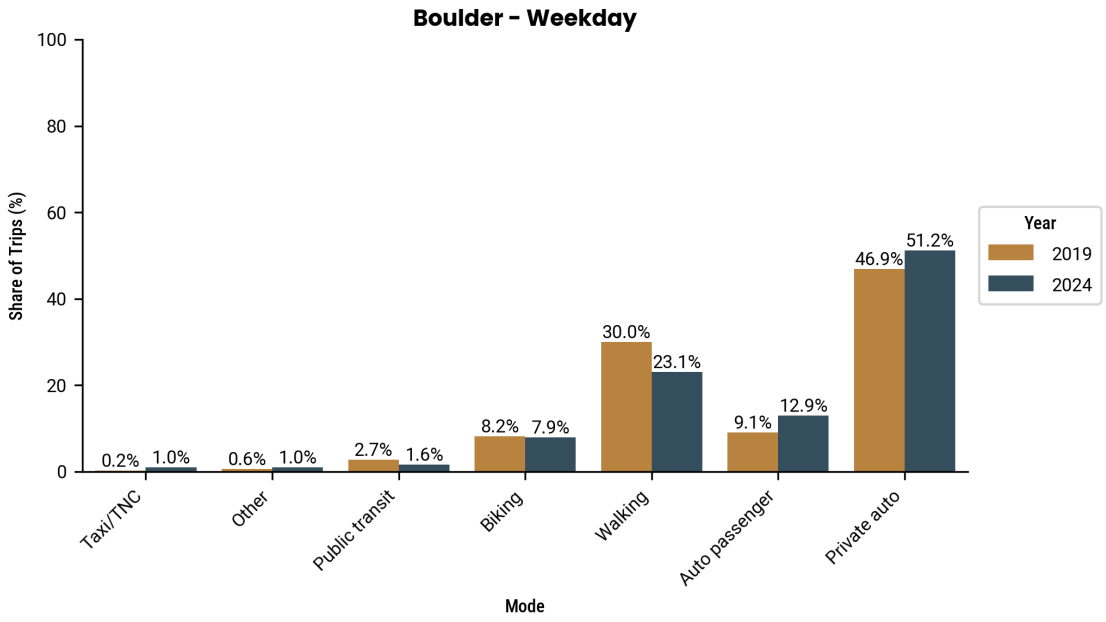
Figure 6-5 Mode Share for Trips within Longmont



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

In contrast, transit mode share within the City of Boulder exceeds the county average. In 2019, Boulder residents took 2.7% of their in-city trips by transit. That share fell to 1.6% in 2024, with trips shifting to private or shared auto modes (see Figure 6-6).

Figure 6-6 Mode Share for Trips within Boulder



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

How People Travel in Boulder

The City of Boulder's 2024 Modal Shift Report summarizes their **2023 Resident Travel Diary Survey,** which provides data on how Boulder residents travel. Highlights are described below, and more information is available in the full survey report on the City of Boulder's website.

- **Single-occupancy vehicle (SOV) travel** for all trips by Boulder residents continues to decline, with 35% of all trips by residents made in an SOV. While SOV has declined significantly since 1990, the city is not on track to meet its 2030 goal of 20%.
- **Transit system ridership** is recovering but has not rebounded to pre-COVID levels. Transit service cuts, fewer employer-provided EcoPasses, and more teleworking are impacting ridership.
- **Teleworking** by Boulder residents almost doubled. On the day of the travel diary survey, one in four residents reported working from home, almost double from the last survey in 2018.
- **Daily Per Capita Vehicle Miles of Travel (VMT),** the total number of miles the average Boulder resident travels in a motor vehicle, remained steady. VMT per day has declined 20% since 1990.
- Boulder residents are making more trips (18%) on **bikes or scooters,** with 4% of these trips on an e-bike or e-scooter. With the growth in public and private e-bike and e-scooter use, the city has begun surveying their impact on travel choices.
- **Home deliveries are replacing vehicle trips,** reducing overall VMT. Approximately 20% of residents received a delivery on the day of their travel diary, with 38% reporting the delivery replaced a vehicle trip.

Boulder uses these survey findings to track progress toward key city transportation goals, inform policy analysis, and improve planning efforts, programs, and services.

Source: City of Boulder

Comparing Transit and Driving Travel Time

Figure 6-7 shows the ratio of travel time by transit to travel time by auto between key destinations in Boulder County, as well as select destinations outside of Boulder County. Travel times are based on typical travel times from Google Maps, departing at 8:00 a.m. on a Wednesday. This approach compares trip time for travel by bus and travel by car. The comparison does not account for bus frequency, waiting time, walking time to/from stops, or parking time (for auto travel), nor does it add a penalty for bus transfers. Ratios under 2.0 are considered excellent, 2.1-2.5 are good, 2.6-3.0 are average, 3.1-3.5 are below average, and above 3.6 are poor.

The best transit to driving time ratios are for trips to downtown Boulder. As Boulder County's transit hub, most regional destinations connect directly to 20th Street and Pearl Street in Downtown Boulder. There are also good ratios for trips originating in Longmont and in Denver with destinations in Boulder County. There are notably poor ratios for trips to the Erie Community Center. Trips originating in Thornton and traveling to destinations in Boulder County also have poor transit to driving time ratios, likely because of the distance and lack of direct connections. Finally, there is a notably poor ratio for trips originating in southwest Longmont and going to 9th Street and Main Street in downtown Longmont, indicating a need for better intracity connectivity in Longmont. (Google does not account for RIDE Longmont service.)

Figure 6-7 Ratio of Travel Time by Transit to Travel Time by Auto

Origin/ Destination	Boulder: 20th and Pearl	Gunbarrel: Spine & Lookout	Longmont: 9th and Main	SW Longmont: Hover & Village	Superior: Main & Old Rail Wy	Louisville: Main & Spruce	Lafayette: Public & Cleveland	Erie: Erie Community Center	Broomfield: Arista Pl & Central Ct	Denver: Denver Art Museum	Westminster: Westminster Blvd & Central Ave	Thornton/N Metro: Wagon Road PnR	Arvada: Olde Town Arvada G Line Station	Loveland: US287 & 5th St	Denver International Airport
Boulder: 20th and Pearl		2.4	1.8	2.0	3.4	2.2	2.5	1.7	2.4	2.1	2.6	2.8	2.5	1.7	2.4
Gunbarrel: Spine & Lookout	2.4		2.0	2.4	3.9	3.4	4.0	3.9	3.0	2.2	3.1	4.1	3.1	2.4	2.6
Longmont: 9th and Main	1.5	2.3		3.3	2.4	2.0	1.5	3.8	1.8	1.7	2.1	2.5	2.3	1.8	2.9
SW Longmont: Hover & Village at the Peaks Mall entrance	1.3	2.9	5.7		2.2	2.8	2.0	3.5	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.9	2.1	2.0	2.6
Superior: Main & Old Rail Wy	2.9	4.4	2.9	2.8		3.3	2.8	2.8	2.3	1.8	3.0	3.6	2.6	2.6	1.8
Louisville: Main & Spruce	1.8	1.6	2.7	2.7	3.1		1.8	5.3	4.1	2.5	3.9	5.1	2.9	2.2	2.9
Lafayette: Public & Cleveland	1.6	4.0	1.5	3.5	2.5	2.0		4.0	1.7	1.6	2.5	3.7	2.5	1.6	3.6
Erie: Erie Community Center	1.7	4.1	2.6	3.1	1.8	3.0	3.6		2.5	2.1	2.5	4.3	3.0	3.1	3.9
Broomfield: Arista Pl & Central Ct	1.9	3.1	1.8	2.3	2.3	3.4	1.9	2.6							

Origin/ Destination	Boulder: 20th and Pearl	Gunbarrel: Spine & Lookout	Longmont: 9th and Main	SW Longmont: Hover & Village	Superior: Main & Old Rail Wy	Louisville: Main & Spruce	Lafayette: Public & Cleveland	Erie: Erie Community Center	Broomfield: Arista Pl & Central Ct	Denver: Denver Art Museum	Westminster: Westminster Blvd & Central Ave	Thornton/N Metro: Wagon Road PnR	Arvada: Olde Town Arvada G Line Station	Loveland: US287 & 5th St	Denver International Airport
Denver: Denver Art Museum	1.7	1.9	2.3	2	1.7	2.2	2.2	3.6							
Westminster: Westminster Blvd & Central Ave	1.8	3.0	2.7	2.5	2.7	3.4	3.3	2.9							
Thornton/N Metro: Wagon Road PnR	2.0	3.2	4	3.4	2.8	4.4	4	6.5							
Arvada: Olde Town Arvada G Line Station	2.0	2.5	2.3	2.4	2.6	2.8	2.2	3.0							
Loveland: US287 & 5th St	1.7	2.6	2.0	1.9	2.7	3.1	2.8	3.4							
Denver International Airport	1.5	2.2	2.5	2.4	1.5	2.2	2.9	3.8							

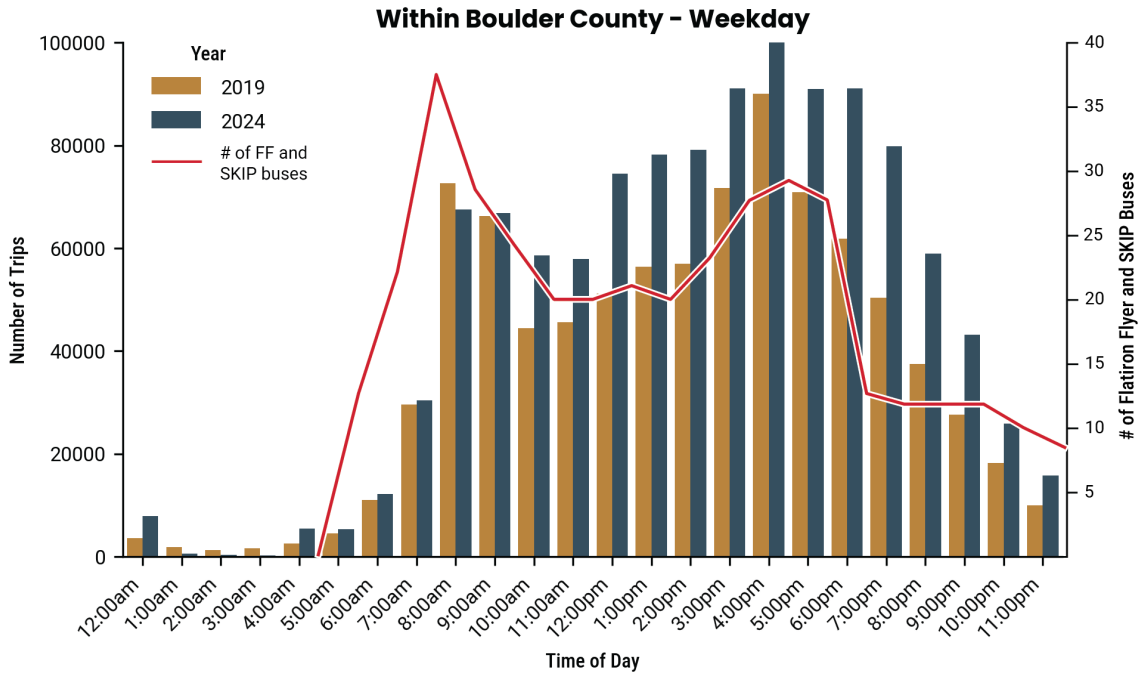
When People Travel

Weekday travel patterns within Boulder County have shifted post-pandemic, mirroring national trends. The total number of daily trips has risen from approximately 890,000 trips in 2019 to nearly 1.2 million trips in 2024, and the distribution of trips throughout the day has also changed.

Fall/Spring

As shown in Figure 6-8, in 2019, trips peaked sharply around 8 a.m. (approximately 73,000 trips) and again around 4 p.m. (approximately 90,000 trips), reflecting traditional commute times. While these peak times still had the highest trip volumes in 2024, trip counts remained high throughout the day, indicating a move away from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. work hours and toward more flexible schedules. The number of trips in 2024 continued to build throughout the afternoon, staying higher than 2019 well into the evening. By comparison, most Flatiron Flyer and SKIP service—shown as a red line in the figure—remains concentrated in the traditional rush hours, with most buses beginning their routes between 7-8 a.m. or 4-5 p.m.

Figure 6-8 Time Distribution of Trips within Boulder County (Fall/Spring Weekday)

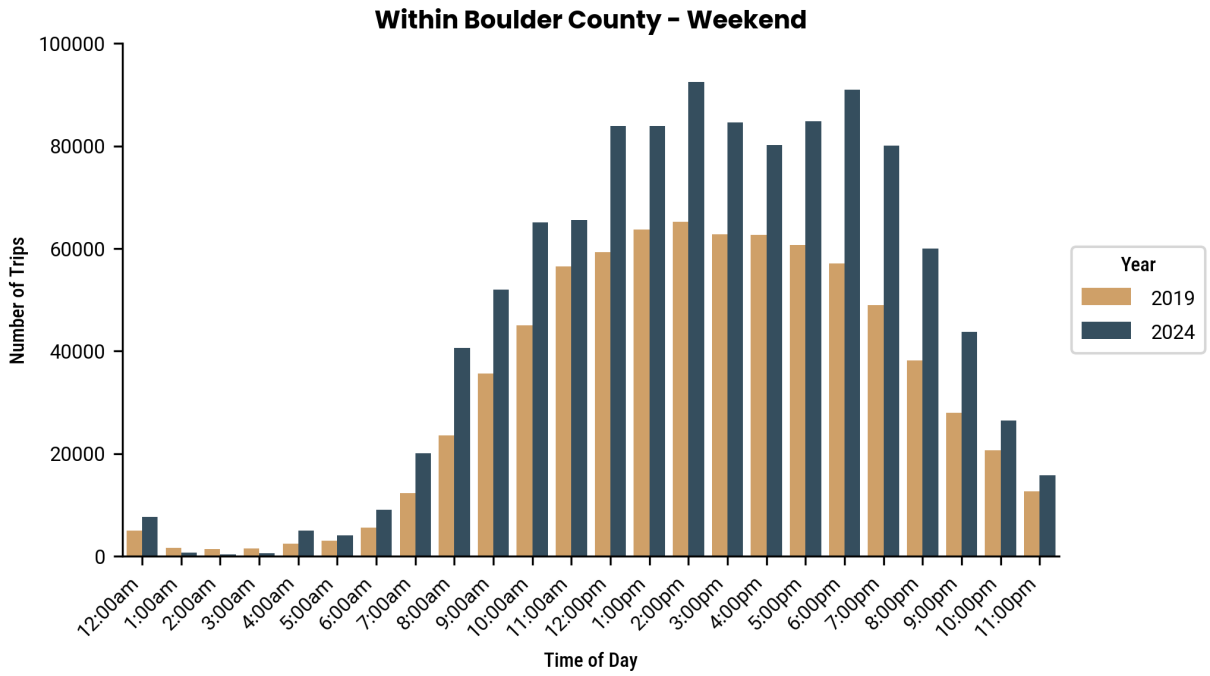


Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024 & RTD

Within Boulder County, the number of trips on weekdays (1.2 million) is about the same as on weekends (1.1 million). Compared to weekdays, weekend travel patterns remain closer to pre-pandemic travel, peaking in the middle of the day and tailing off later in the day (see Figure 6-9). Compared to 2019, there

were around 200,000 more trips per weekend day in 2024, with more of these trips happening later in the day.

Figure 6-9 Time Distribution of Trips within Boulder County (Fall/Spring Weekend)



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

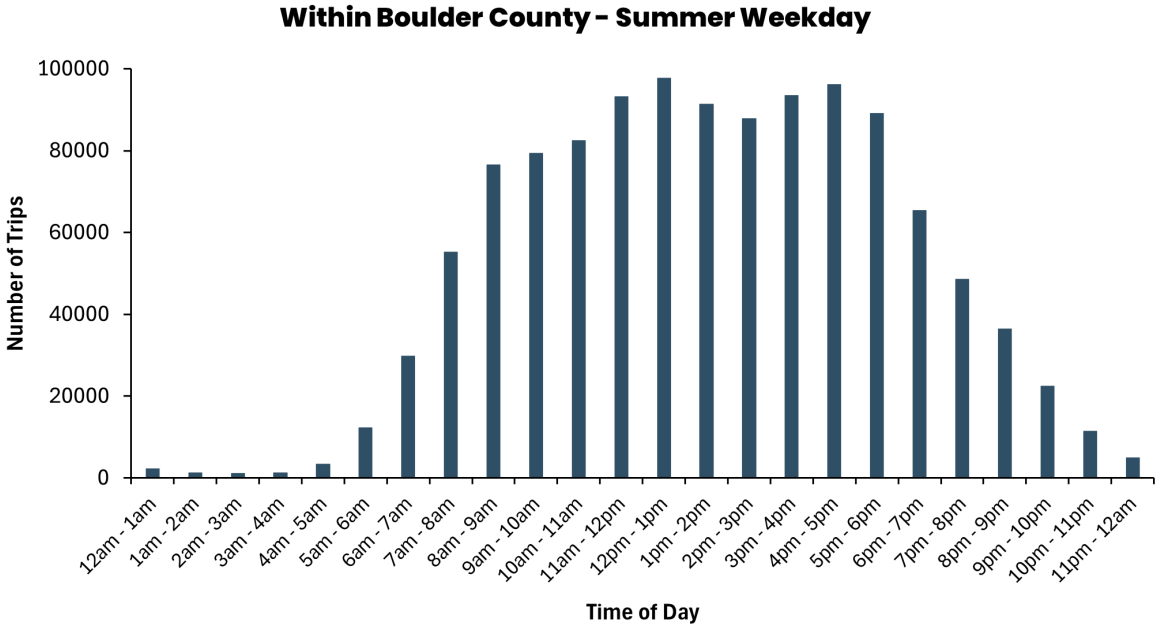
This analysis underscores the importance of transit service that supports a broad range of daily schedules. Current service remains concentrated around traditional commute hours, with fewer buses operating in the middle of the day and after 6 p.m. despite higher trip volumes in these periods. Aligning service levels to changing travel patterns would help ensure transit meets demand and better supports today's more flexible travel behaviors.

Summer

Weekday travel patterns in the summer are similar to weekday travel patterns in the fall (see Figure 6-10). Although 2019 data was not available for summer, the 2024 weekday summer travel patterns were similar to fall travel patterns, with high volumes throughout the day. Summer weekend trips, like fall weekend trips, followed a bell curve pattern, with trips increasing through the

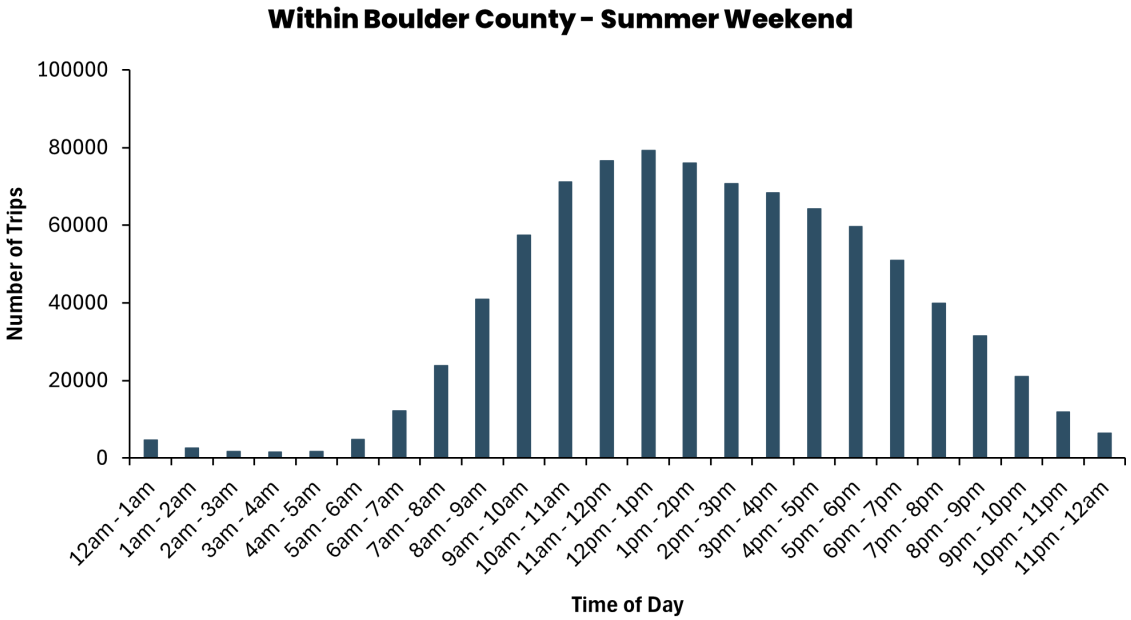
morning, peaking midday, and decreasing into the evening (see Figure 6-11). Unlike fall, there were fewer daily trips on the weekend than the weekday.

Figure 6-10 Time Distribution of Trips within Boulder County (2024 Summer Weekday)



Data Source: StreetLight

Figure 6-11 Time Distribution of Trips within Boulder County (2024 Summer Weekend)



Data Source: StreetLight

These findings indicate that transit schedules in the summer may need to be adjusted to accommodate a wider range of trip times during the weekday, with more peak late morning through evening service, and sufficient capacity for peak midday weekend riders.



The Hessie Shuttle often has long lines of passengers on summer weekend afternoons.

6.2 Travel Into/Out of Boulder County

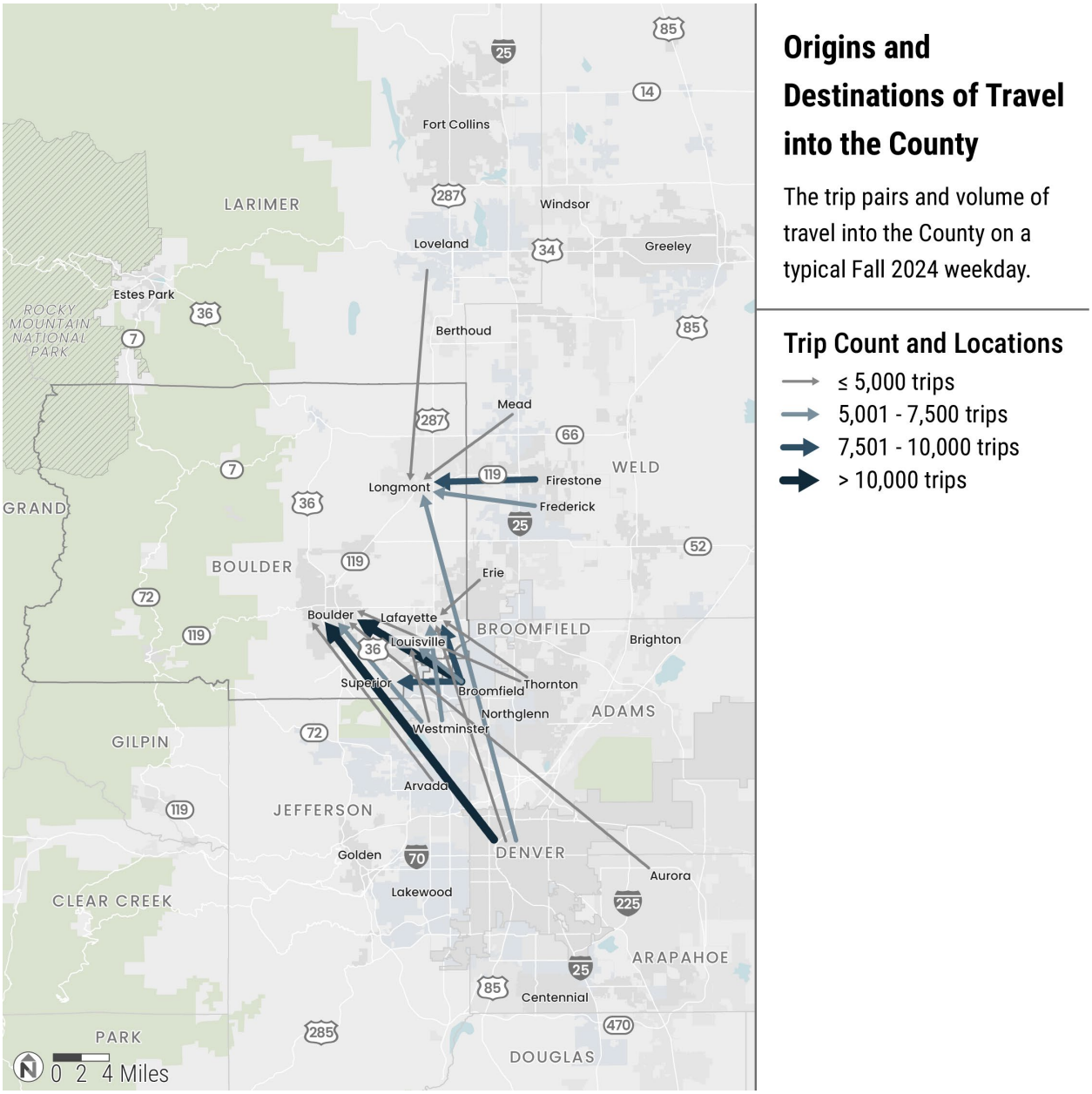
We also analyzed trip patterns into and out of Boulder County to understand how the county is connected to the region.

Where People Travel

The City of Boulder and the City of Longmont are the two most popular destinations for trips starting outside the county; most travelers come from Denver or the municipalities immediately adjacent to Boulder County (see

Figure 6-12). Over 32% of trips into Boulder County are made by non-county residents commuting in for work; only 19% of trips are made by county residents returning home, whether from work, leisure, or other activities. This highlights an imbalance in regional travel, as the county attracts more employees coming in for work than the number of residents who travel to jobs and other activities outside the county.

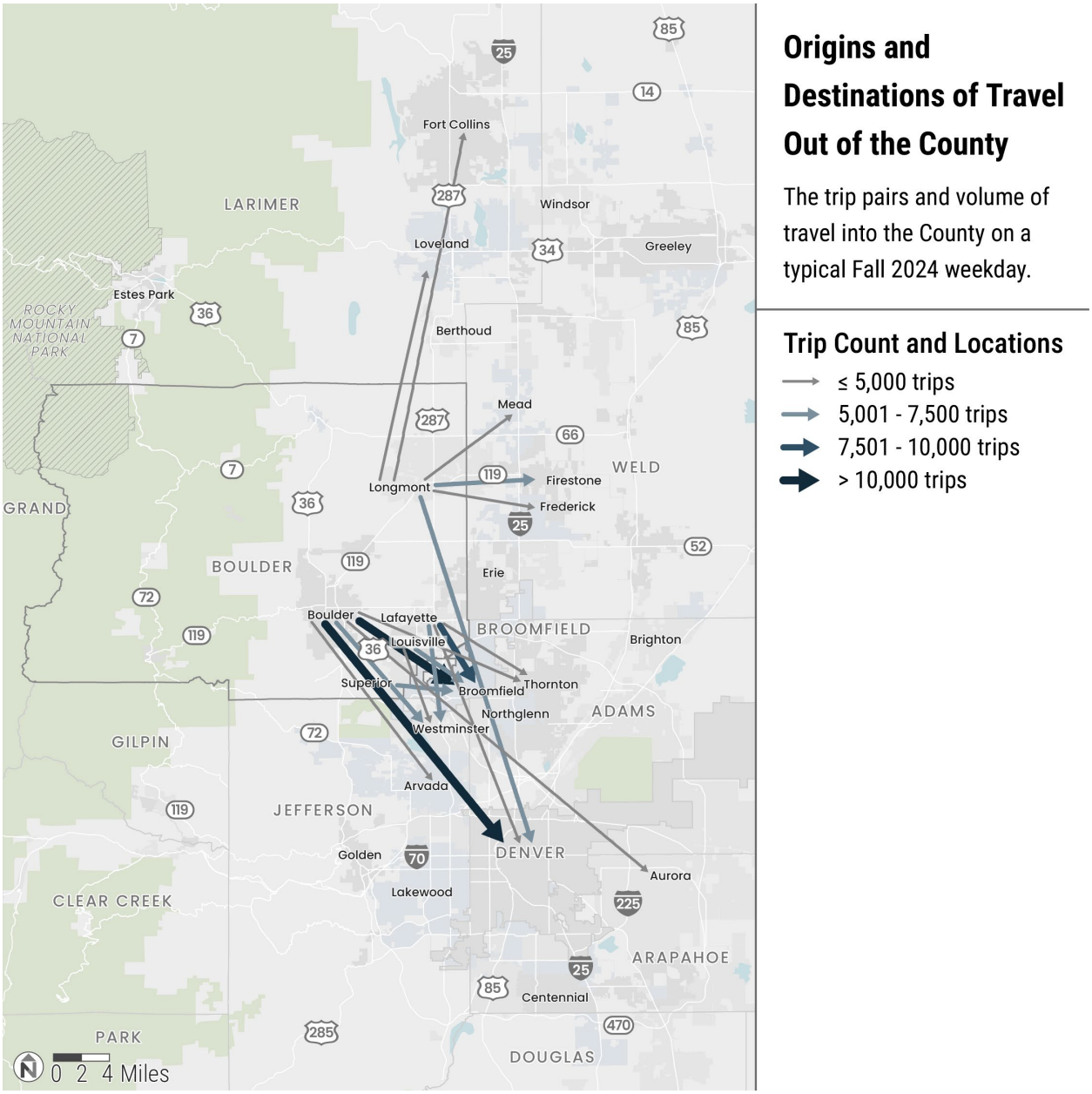
Figure 6-12 Origin and Destination Pairs for Travel into Boulder County (2024)



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

Trips leaving the county follow a similar pattern to trips entering the county, with the largest number of trips starting in Boulder and going to Denver (see Figure 6-13). Over 50% of trips out of the county are made by non-county residents returning home, whether from work, leisure, or other activities; only 8% of trips are made by county residents leaving the county for work.

Figure 6-13 Origin and Destination Pairs for Travel out of Boulder County (2024)



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

The strongest trip pair is from Denver to Boulder, with 14,500 daily trips, followed by Broomfield to Boulder with 13,600 daily trips (Figure 6-14). Outbound trips reflect the reverse of inbound patterns, starting in Boulder or Longmont and ending in Denver or nearby municipalities (Figure 6-15).

Figure 6-14 Top 10 Trip Pairs into Boulder County (Fall 2024 Weekday)

Origin Municipality	Destination Municipality	Total Trips per Day
Denver	Boulder	14,475
Broomfield	Boulder	13,611
Broomfield	Lafayette	7,995
Firestone	Longmont	7,751
Broomfield	Superior	7,723
Westminster	Boulder	6,973
Westminster	Lafayette	5,410
Denver	Longmont	5,223
Broomfield	Louisville	5,166
Frederick	Longmont	5,118

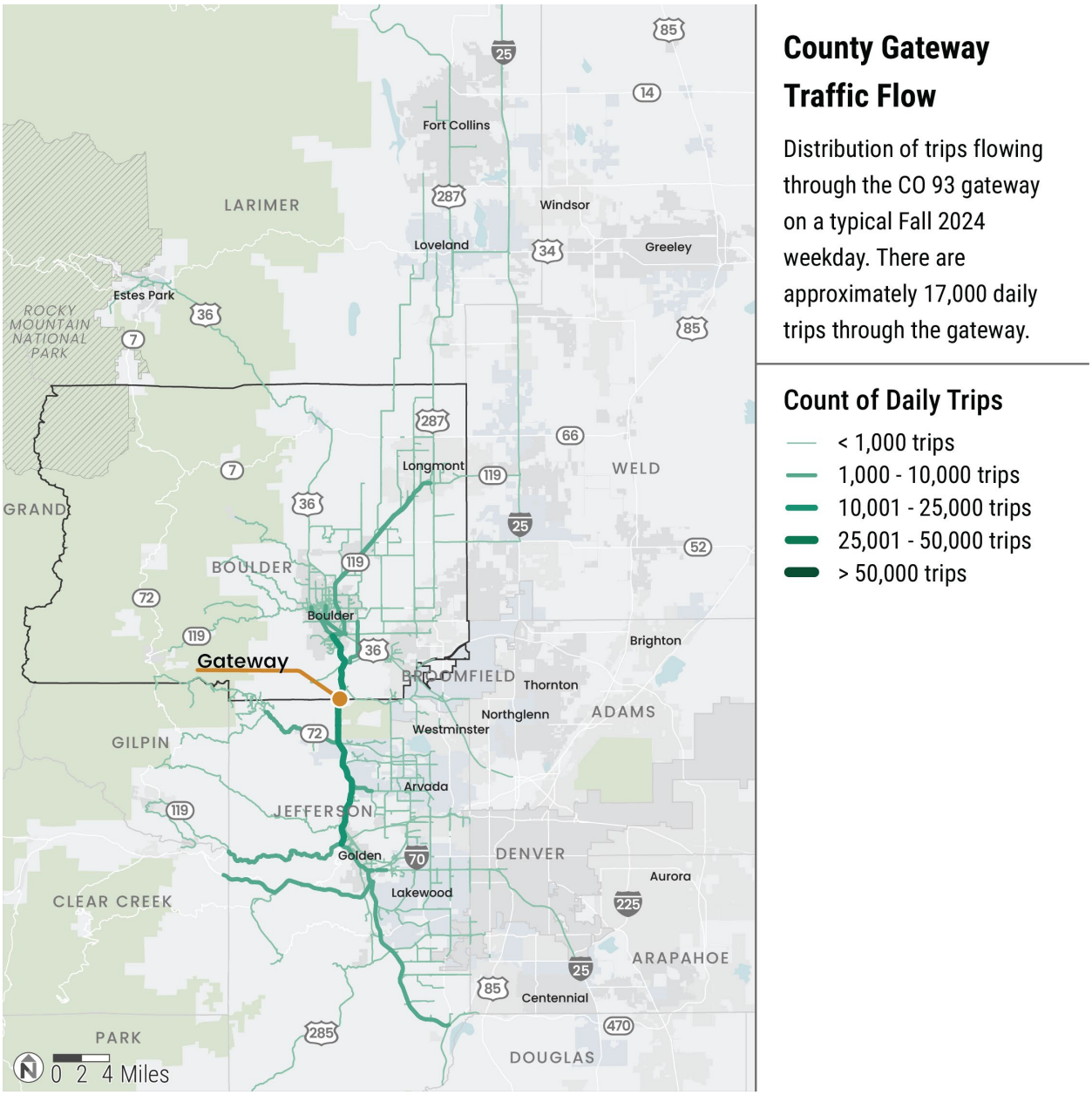
Figure 6-15 Top 10 Trip Pairs out of Boulder County (Fall 2024 Weekday)

Origin Municipality	Destination Municipality	Total Trips per Day
Boulder	Denver	15,485
Boulder	Broomfield	13,242
Lafayette	Broomfield	8,582
Superior	Broomfield	7,191
Boulder	Westminster	6,813
Longmont	Firestone	6,569
Longmont	Denver	5,924
Louisville	Broomfield	5,538
Lafayette	Westminster	5,150
Longmont	Frederick	4,967

Beyond travelers' origins and destinations, we analyzed trip volumes on the roadways people used after crossing the county line. Figure 6-16 through Figure 6-22 show travel volumes entering the county via seven gateways.

CO 93 is the primary connection from Golden and west Denver to Boulder County, with approximately 17,000 daily trips through this gateway. As shown in Figure 6-12, travelers are primarily bound for Boulder and Longmont.

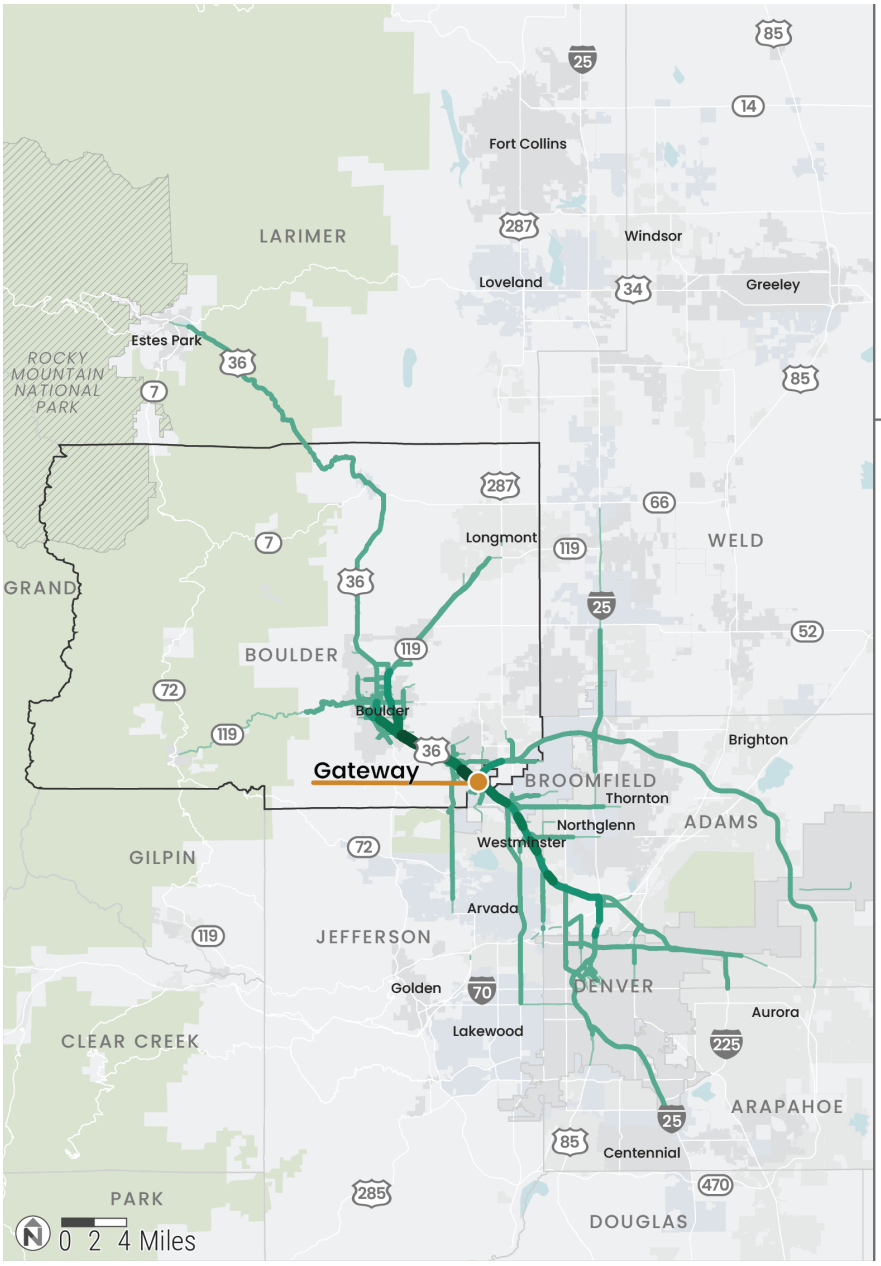
Figure 6-16 Trip Volumes Using CO 93 Gateway (2024)



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

US 36 is the primary connection between Denver and Estes Park, with most trips ending Boulder, and a smaller portion continuing onto Estes Park or Longmont (see Figure 6-17). This gateway has the highest trip volumes of any major roadway entering Boulder County, at approximately 75,000 daily trips.

Figure 6-17 Trip Volumes Using US 36 Gateway (2024)



County Gateway Traffic Flow

Distribution of trips flowing through the US 36 gateway on a typical Fall 2024 weekday. There are approximately 75,000 daily trips through the gateway.

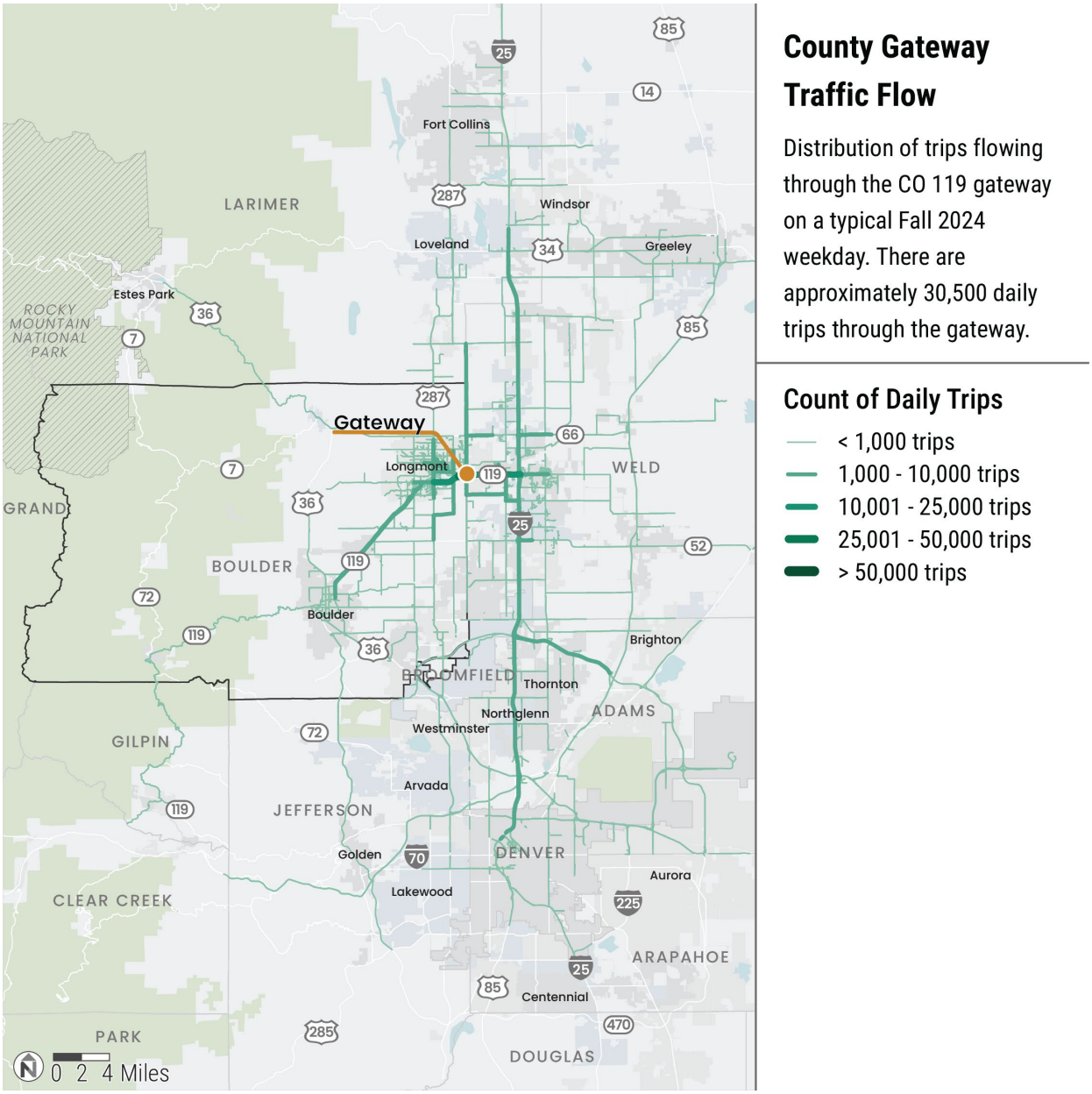
Count of Daily Trips

- < 1,000 trips
- 1,000 - 10,000 trips
- 10,001 - 25,000 trips
- 25,001 - 50,000 trips
- > 50,000 trips

Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

CO 119 is a key gateway on the eastern side of Boulder County, linking Longmont to the I-25 corridor and Weld County (see Figure 6-18). Most travelers on CO 119 end their trips in Longmont, with a smaller number continuing to Boulder. There are about 30,500 daily trips through this gateway.

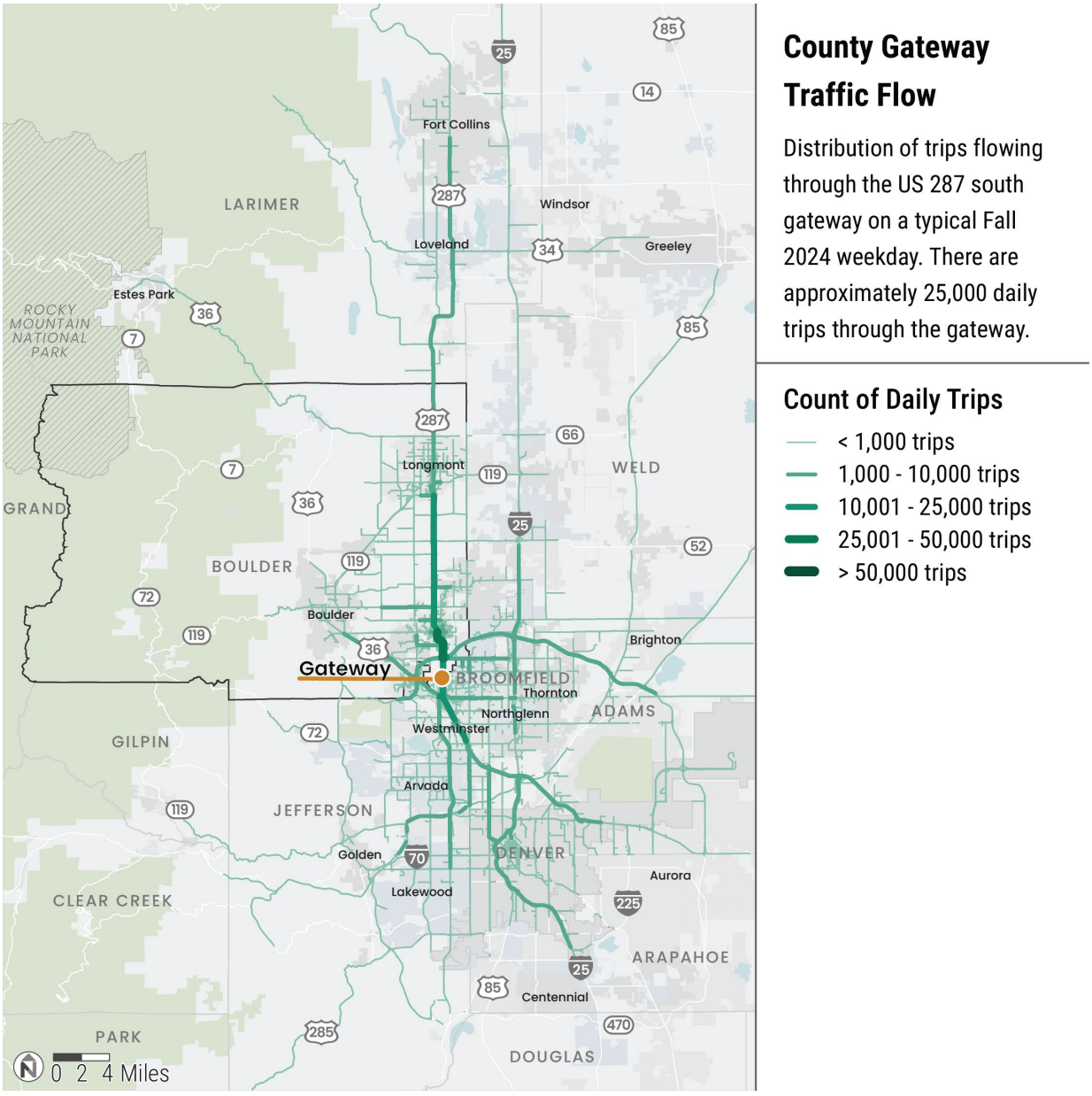
Figure 6-18 Trip Volumes Using CO 119 Gateway (2024)



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

The **southern US 287** gateway has more dispersed travel patterns compared to other gateways, generally connecting travelers from all areas of the greater Denver region to communities in Larimer County. Many of the trips that pass through this gateway end in Lafayette, Erie, Longmont, and, to a lesser extent, Boulder (see Figure 6-19). There are approximately 43,000 daily trips through this gateway.

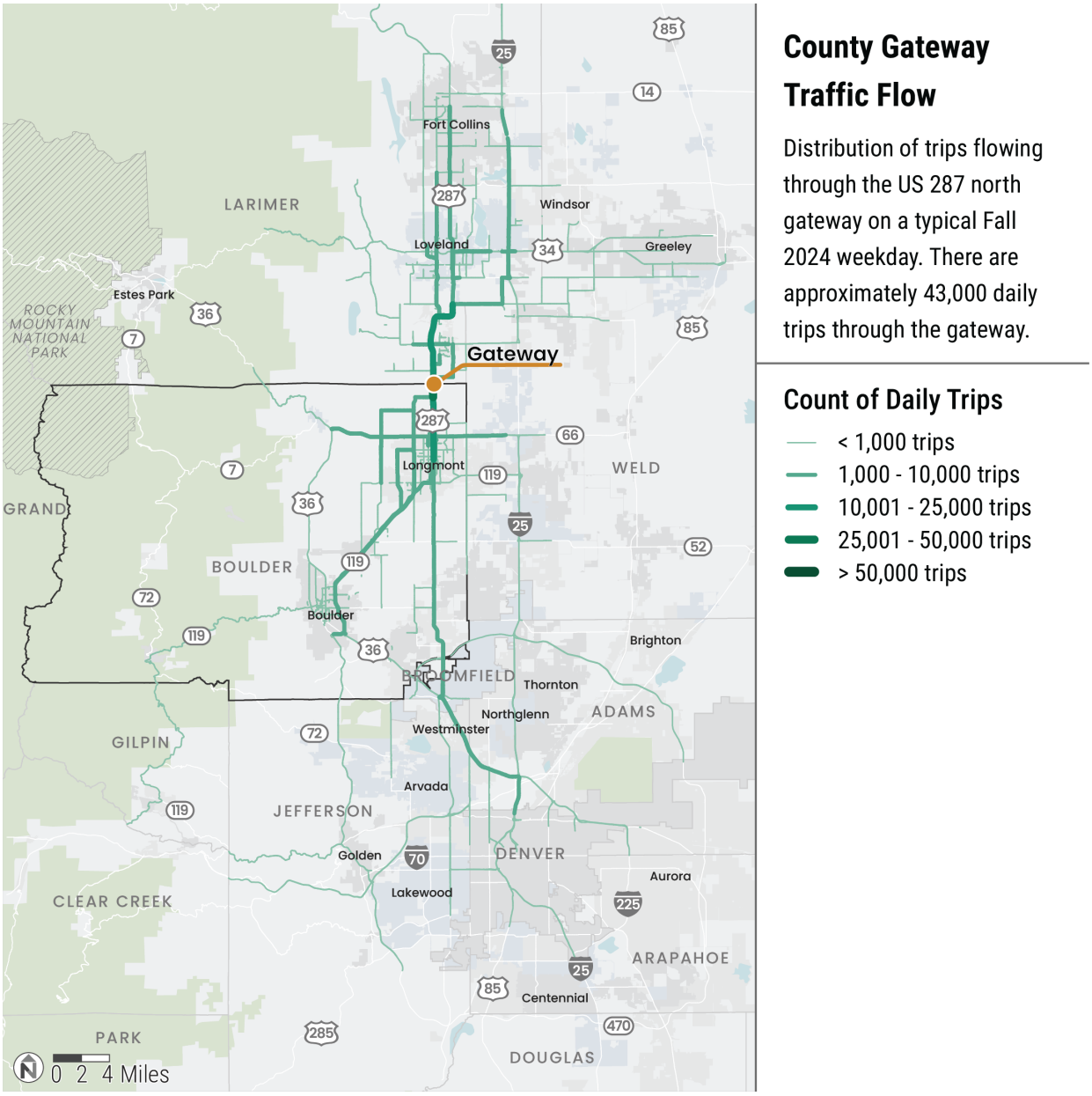
Figure 6-19 Trip Volumes Using US 287 South Gateway (2024)



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

The **northern US 287** gateway primarily serves travelers from Loveland, Fort Collins, and Greeley traveling to Longmont, Lyons, and Boulder. A smaller number of trips continue out of the county to Broomfield, Westminster, and Denver (see Figure 6-20). There are approximately 25,000 daily trips through this gateway.

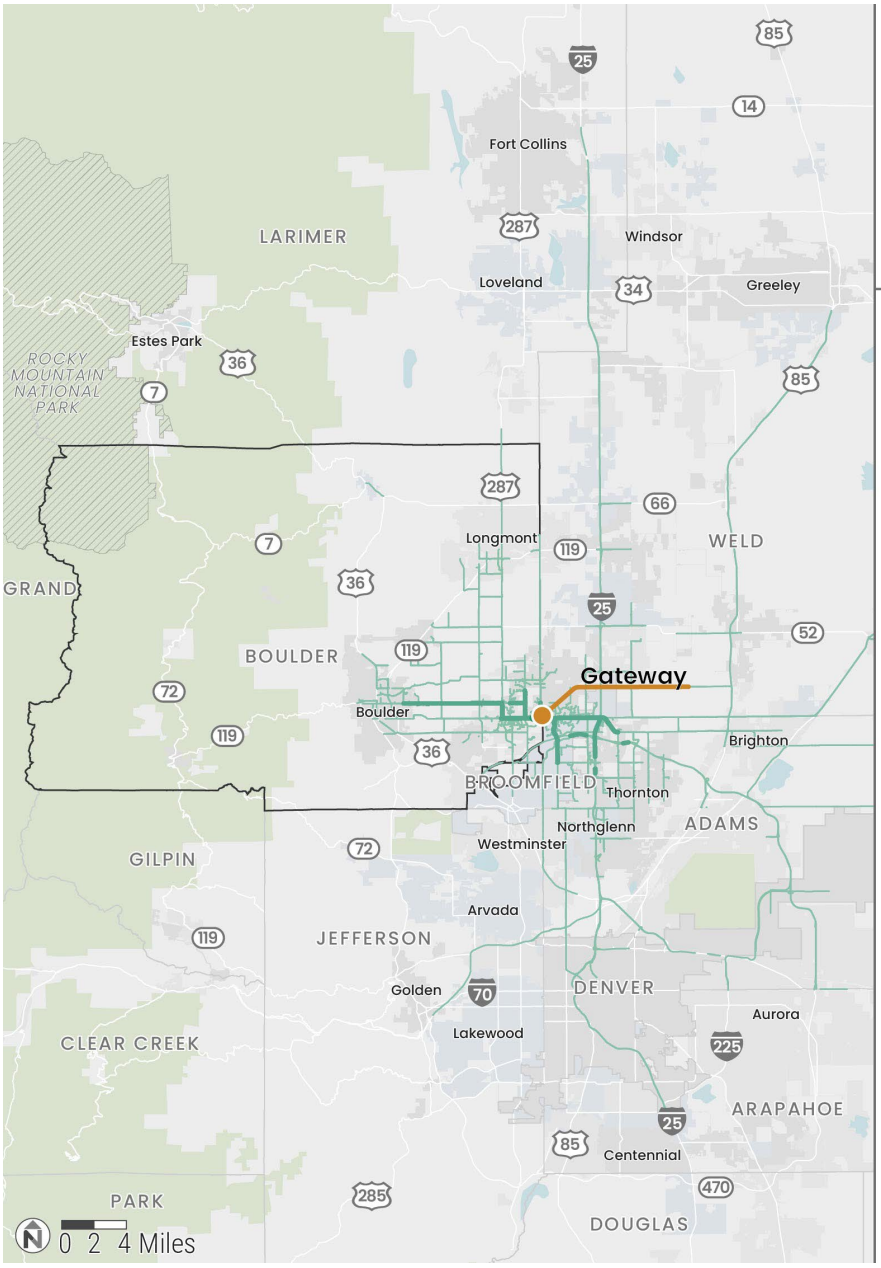
Figure 6-20 Trip Volumes Using US 287 North Gateway (2024)



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

The **eastern CO 7** gateway is the primary connection between Broomfield County, Lafayette, and Boulder (Figure 6-21). Trips from Adams County, south Denver, and farther east also enter Boulder County via CO 7. There are approximately 15,000 daily trips passing through this gateway.

Figure 6-21 Trip Volumes Using CO 7 East Gateway (2024)



County Gateway Traffic Flow

Distribution of trips flowing through the County gateway (Weekday/Fall 2024).

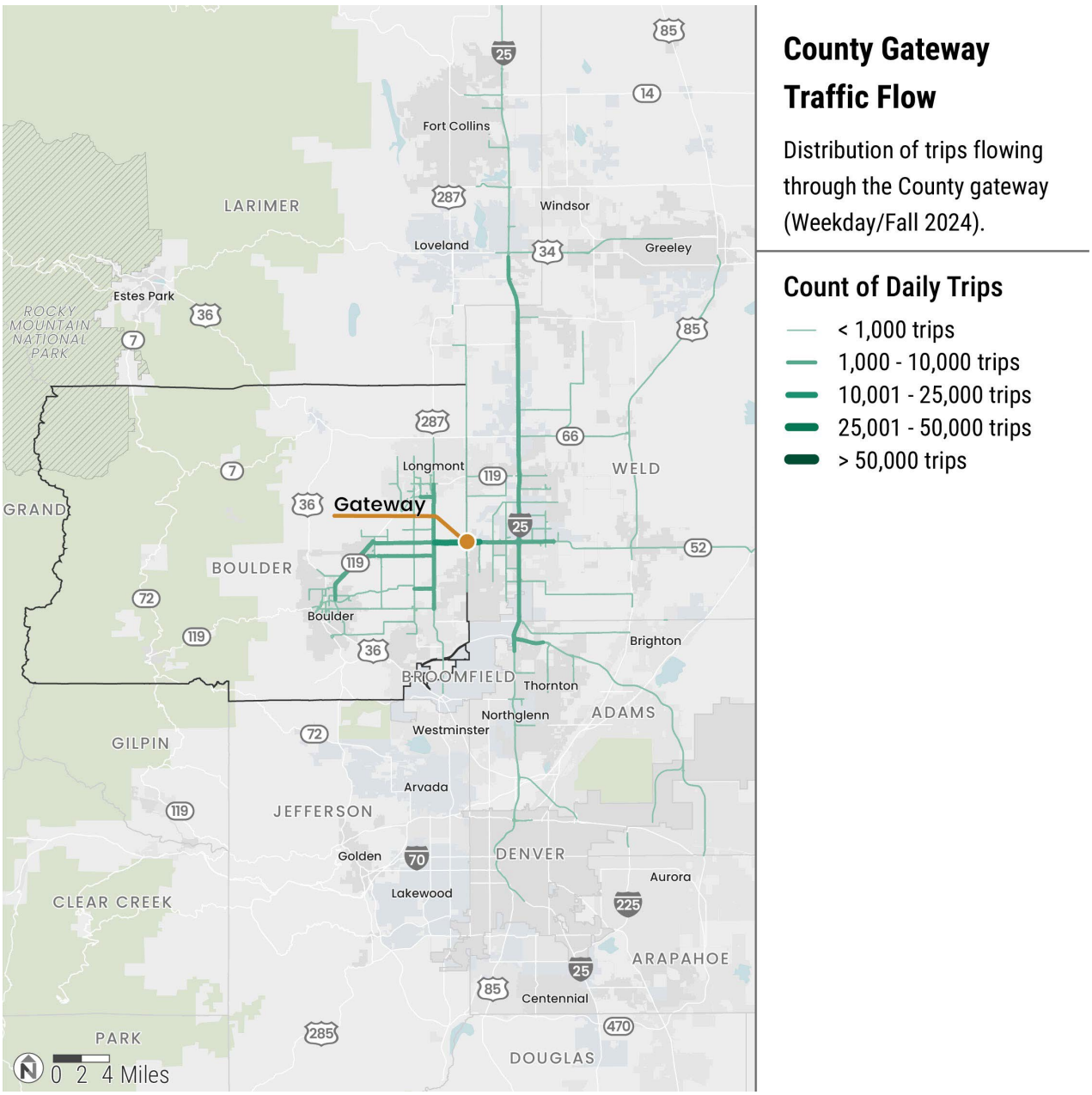
Count of Daily Trips

- < 1,000 trips
- 1,000 - 10,000 trips
- 10,001 - 25,000 trips
- 25,001 - 50,000 trips
- > 50,000 trips

Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

The **CO 52** gateway is the primary connection between I-25 and Boulder County, linking travelers from Larimer County, Denver, Weld County, and beyond to Boulder, Longmont, and Lafayette (Figure 6-22). There are approximately 20,000 daily trips passing through this gateway.

Figure 6-22 Trip Volumes Using CO 52 Gateway (2024)

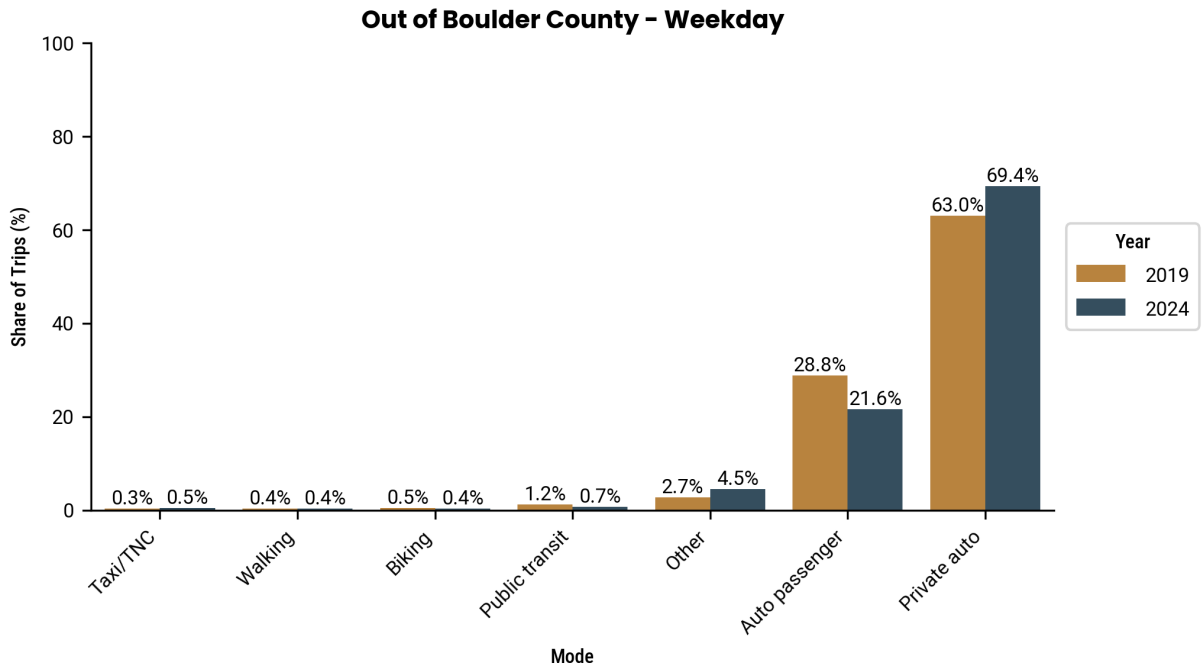


Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

How People Travel

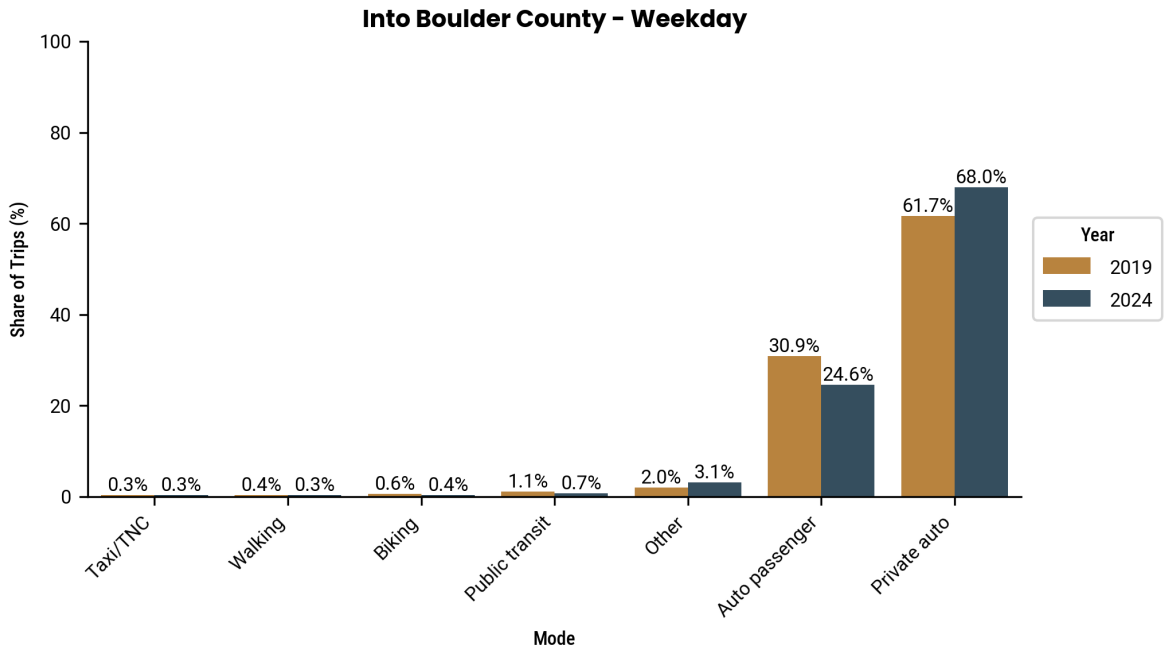
Over 90% of trips coming into and out of the county are auto trips, with the share of private vehicle trips increasing 6.4% since 2019 (see Figure 6-23 and Figure 6-24). Transit trips are less than 1% of all trips and have decreased 0.5% since 2019. The low proportion of trips taken by transit reflects longer distances and dispersed travel patterns for inter-county travel, as well as an increase in remote work and fewer people leaving the county for work.

Figure 6-23 Mode Share for Trips Leaving Boulder County (Weekday 2024)



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

Figure 6-24 Mode Share for Trips Entering Boulder County (Weekday 2024)



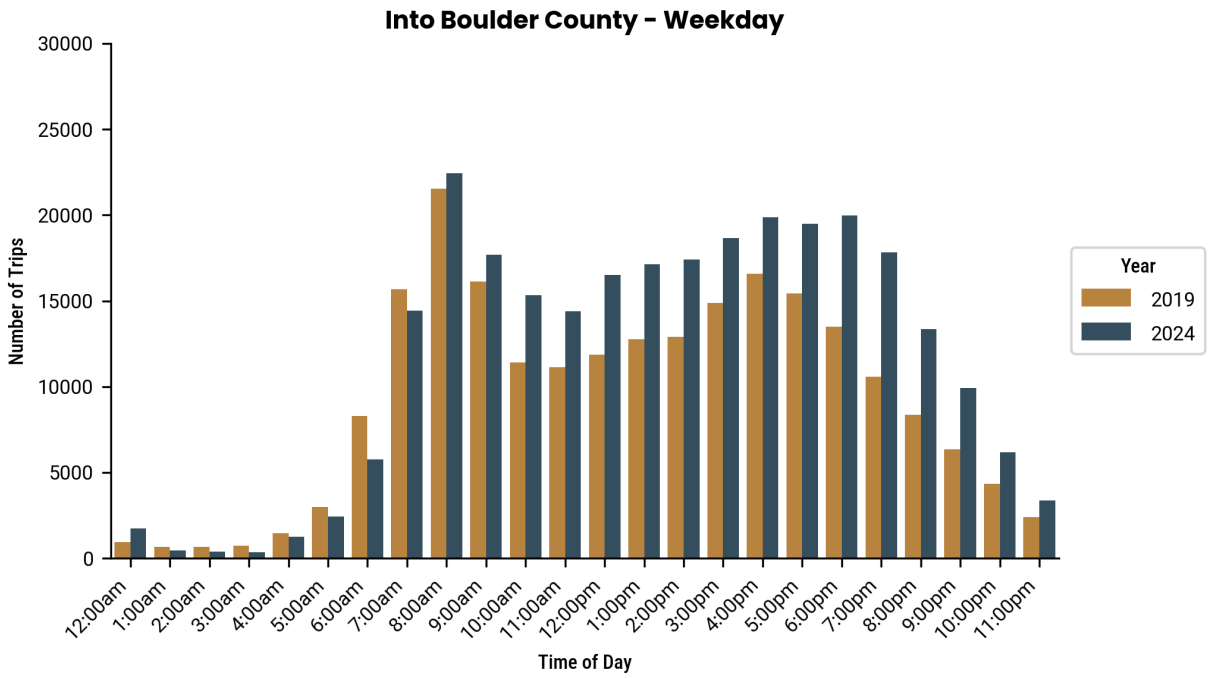
Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

When People Travel

As with intra-county travel, trips into and out of the county were more evenly distributed throughout the day in 2024. There was significantly more midday and evening travel compared to 2019, replacing the sharp peaks of traditional morning and early evening commute times. Travel volumes remained highest around 8 a.m. and again between 4-5 p.m., but were more consistent throughout the day compared to 2019 (see Figure 6-25 and Figure 6-26).

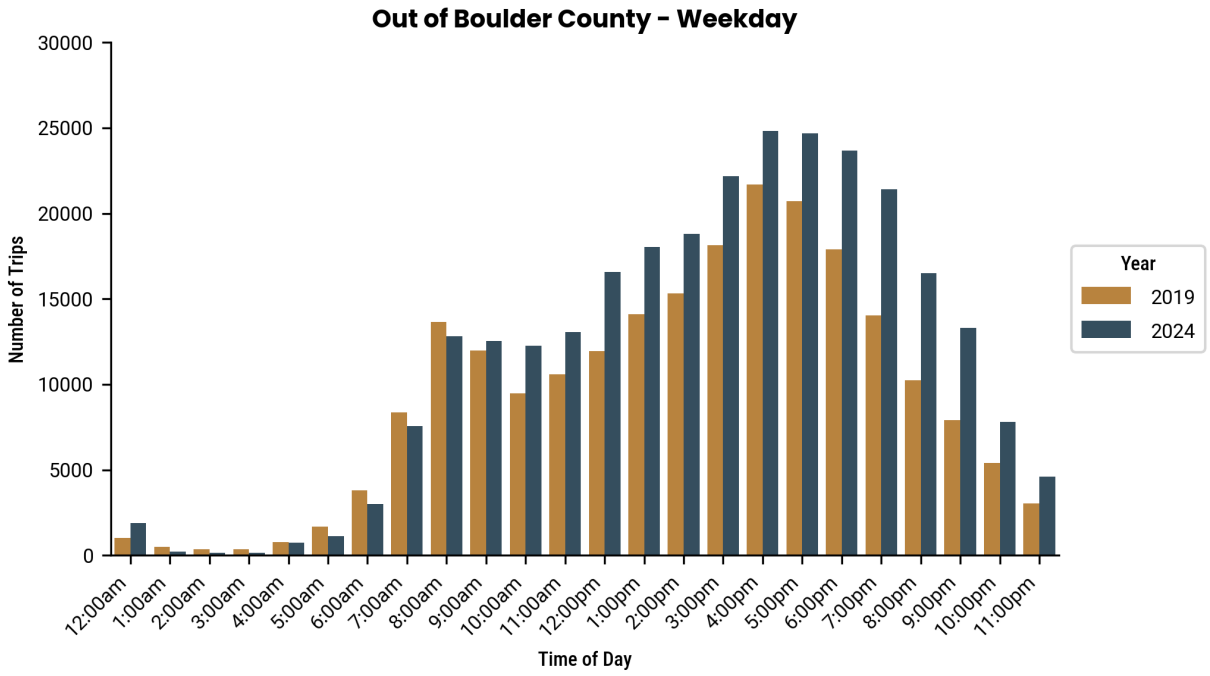
Despite this smoothing of travel times throughout the day, the analysis still highlights the influence of peak morning and evening travel. Although the traditional commute pattern has changed since the pandemic, a significant share of trips is still made by people coming into the county for work.

Figure 6-25 Time Distribution of Trips Entering Boulder County (Weekday)



Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

Figure 6-26 Time Distribution of Trips Leaving Boulder County (Weekday)

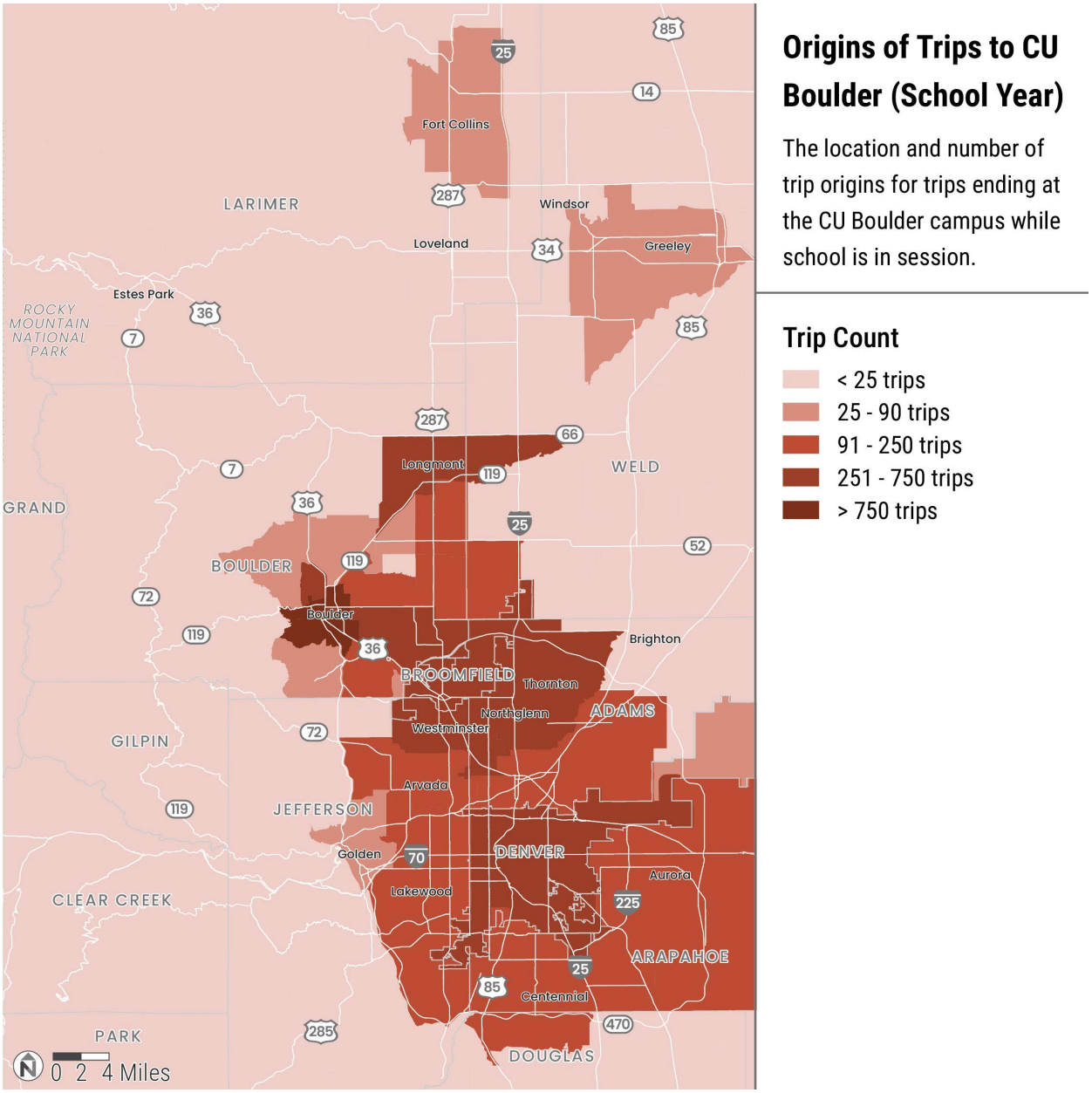


Data Source: Replica Places, Fall 2024

6.3 Travel To and From CU Boulder

To understand how travel to and from the CU Boulder campus changes when school is in session, we analyzed vehicle travel to the university. During the school year, most vehicle trips are from areas immediately surrounding the campus and within Boulder to the south and east of campus (Figure 6-27). Outside of Boulder, many vehicle trips are from Longmont, Erie, and Broomfield.

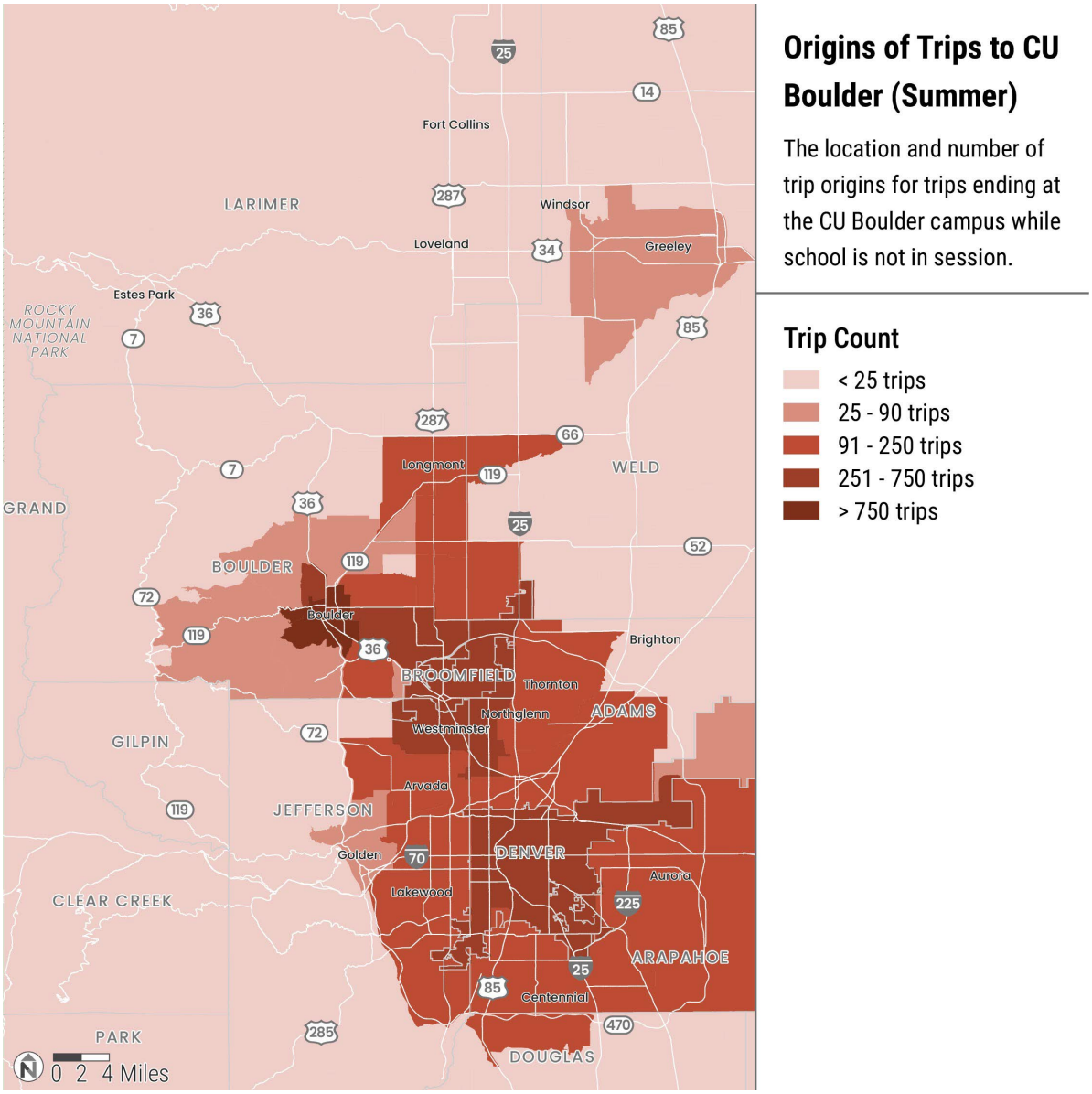
Figure 6-27 Origins of Auto Trips to CU Boulder (School Year 2024)



Data Source: StreetLight (2024)

When school is not in session, more vehicle trips come to campus from areas to the west, including from Nederland, Ward, and Jamestown (Figure 6-28). This may be due to increased recreational travel during the summer. There are slightly fewer vehicle trips to campus when school is not in session, but the vehicle travel volume does not decrease significantly compared to volumes during the school year. Because StreetLight data is limited to vehicle travel, multimodal travel differences between the school year and the summer are not captured in this analysis.

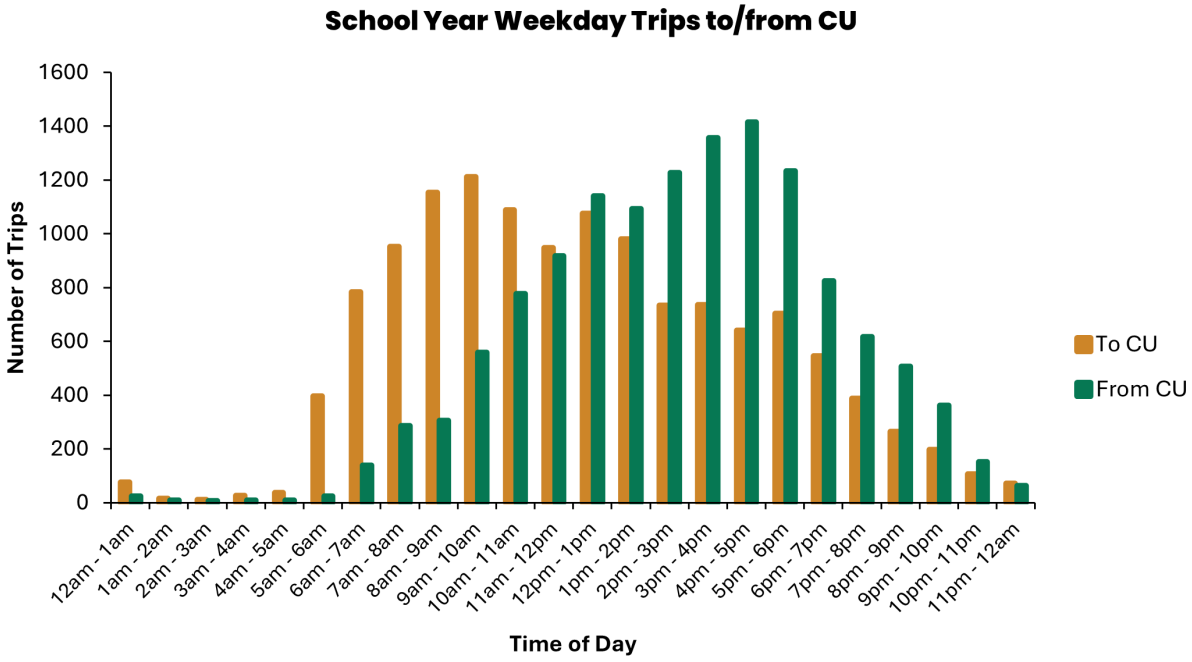
Figure 6-28 Origins of Auto Trips to CU Boulder (Summer 2024)



Data Source: StreetLight

During the school year, vehicle trips to campus peak between 8-9 a.m. as students, faculty, and staff arrive, and then gradually decrease throughout the day. Trips leaving campus peak between 4-5 p.m. and drop off sharply after that. Vehicle travel to and from CU Boulder during the weekday when school is in session follows a typical 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. schedule, suggesting the importance of transit service during the peak commute hours (Figure 6-29).

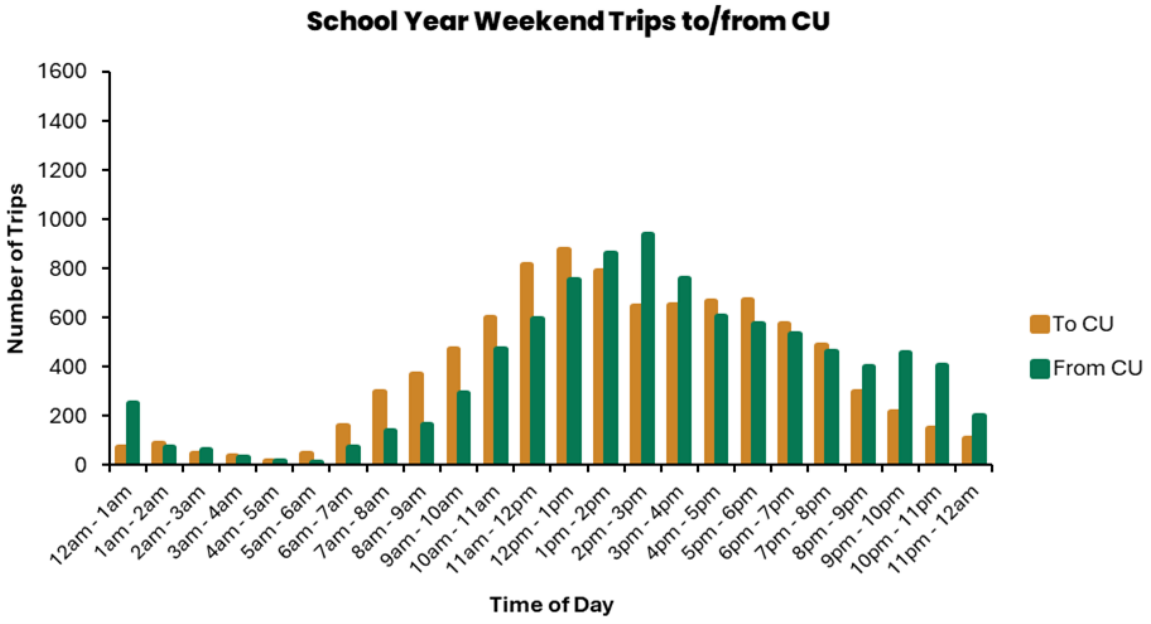
Figure 6-29 Auto Trips to/from CU Boulder (School Year Weekday 2024)



Data Source: StreetLight

On a typical weekend day during the school year, vehicle travel to and from campus is more evenly distributed (Figure 6-30), with a similar number of trips arriving and departing throughout the day. Auto travel to campus peaks between 12-1 p.m., while travel from campus peaks between 2-3 p.m. Auto trips to campus gradually decrease after 6 p.m., while trips from campus remain relatively steady until 10 p.m.

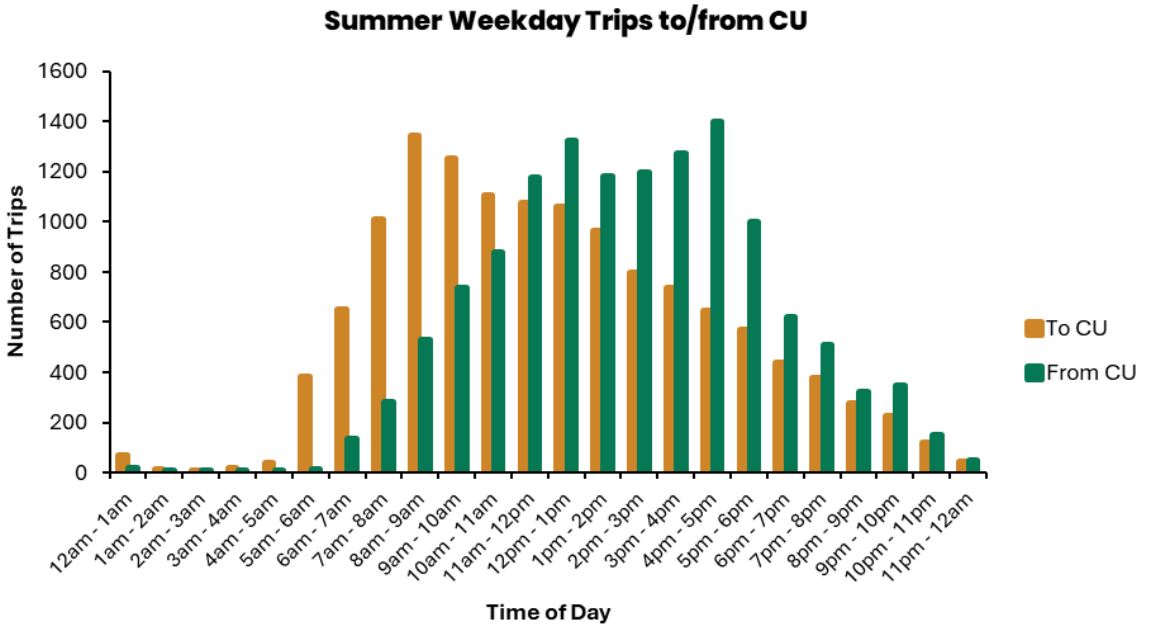
Figure 6-30 Auto Trips to/from CU Boulder (School Year Weekend 2024)



Data Source: StreetLight (2024)

Vehicle travel to and from CU Boulder on a weekday during the summer closely matches travel during the school year, with slightly lower volumes (Figure 6-31). Auto travel to campus peaks between 7-8 a.m., one hour earlier than during the school year, and travel from campus peaks between 4-5 p.m.

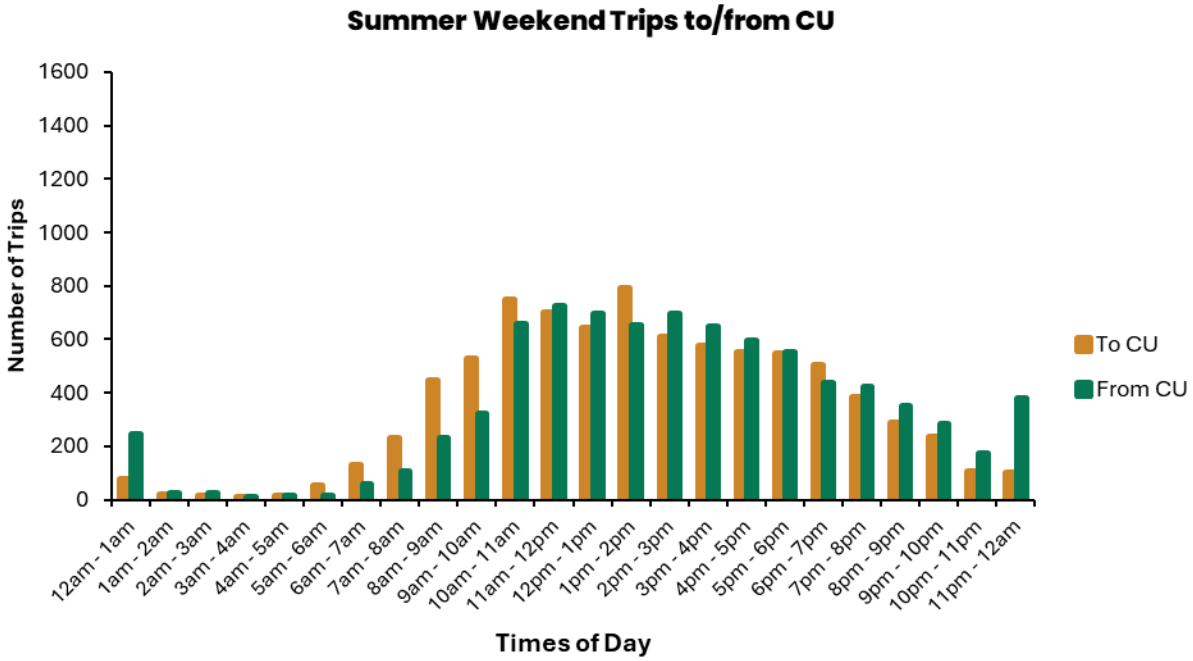
Figure 6-31 Auto Trips to/from CU Boulder (Summer Weekday 2024)



Data Source: StreetLight

Vehicle travel to and from campus on a typical summer weekend shows a more even distribution, with trips gradually increasing through the morning, peaking midday, and then gradually decreasing into the evening (Figure 6-32). Auto trip volumes leaving campus are highest between 11 p.m. and 1 a.m., indicating the potential benefit of more late-night transit service to campus.

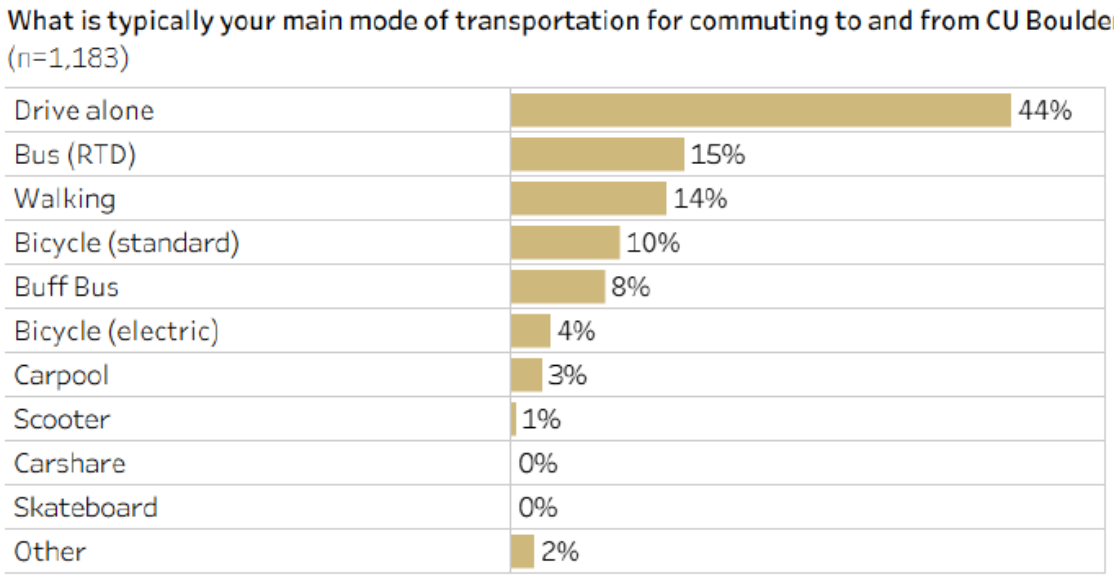
Figure 6-32 Auto Trips to/from CU Boulder (Summer Weekend 2024)



Data Source: StreetLight

The 2025 CU Boulder Transportation Survey provides additional insight into multimodal travel to and from the CU Boulder campus. Of the 1,183 students, faculty, and staff who responded to the survey, 44% reported driving to campus alone and 15% reported riding RTD services to campus (Figure 6-33).

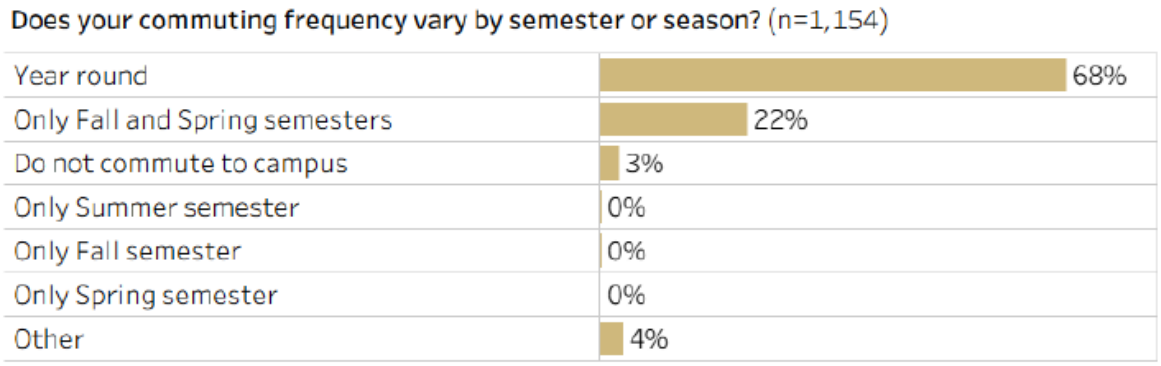
Figure 6-33 Self-Reported Mode of Travel to and from CU Boulder (2025)



Source: 2025 CU Boulder Transportation Survey Findings

Survey respondents also shared information about their commute patterns, shown in Figure 6-34. Nearly 70% of respondents commute to campus year-round, while 22% commute to campus only during the Fall and Spring semesters. This result aligns with the vehicle trip analysis above, with only a small change in travel volumes between the school year and the summer.

Figure 6-34 Self-Reported Seasonal Commute Patterns for CU Boulder (2025)



Source: 2025 CU Boulder Transportation Survey Findings

Figure 6-35 shows where survey respondents currently live, with 95% of respondents living off-campus. Nearly half of respondents live outside the City of Boulder.

Figure 6-35 CU Boulder Student, Faculty, and Staff Residential Location (2025)



Source: 2025 CU Boulder Transportation Survey Findings

Together, the vehicle travel analysis and CU Boulder Transportation Survey results paint a picture of a CU Boulder population that mostly commutes to campus year-round from off-campus housing located both in the City of Boulder and in surrounding towns.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that the majority of trips within and into Boulder County are centered around Boulder as the county's job and population center. The connection between Boulder and Longmont is also critical. Most trips within and into/out of the county are made by auto, and transit mode share remains low (under 1% countywide). Transit mode share is higher for trips within the City of Boulder, where more transit service is available.

Travel patterns in Boulder County show more trips in 2024 compared to 2019; however, distances are shorter, resulting in approximately the same number of vehicle miles traveled. Travel patterns have also changed in recent years, with fewer trips during traditional peak hours and more trips in the middle of the day and later into the evening. Chapter 7 builds on this analysis and focuses on the internal and external forces that will affect future transit demand in Boulder County, outlining how these trends will shape the Linking Boulder County vision.

7 Factors Influencing Future Transit Demand

The future of public transit in Boulder County will be shaped by an interplay of internal and external forces, from financial and operational challenges to economic, technological, environmental, and social trends. Understanding these factors, and what they could mean for transit operations and ridership in the county, will help to shape the Linking Boulder County transit vision.

What is the purpose of this chapter?

This chapter outlines the primary internal and external factors that are shaping and may contribute to the ways transit is funded, delivered, and used in Boulder County, today and in the coming years. Key findings that will influence the Linking Boulder County transit vision include the following:

- **Funding and Financial Stability:** Of the internal factors influencing transit demand, none are more important than the need to identify sustainable sources of funding to grow transit services in Boulder County. RTD's budget shortfall and limited County and municipal resources point to the need for a creative funding strategy.
- **Shifting Demographics and Travel Trends:** The population of Boulder County continues to grow and change, as do the times at which people are traveling. Since COVID-19, there are more trips made throughout the day, presenting important opportunities to serve new transit riders.

- **Affordability and Sustainability:** Boulder County is experiencing an affordability crisis that is pushing people further outside of the county's core urban centers. This stretches the limits of existing transportation infrastructure and creates new challenges for meeting local sustainability goals.

7.1 Internal Factors Influencing Future Transit Demand

Transit providers in Boulder County face internal pressures that will increasingly shape their ability to deliver connected, reliable, equitable, and resilient transit service. Challenges with funding, infrastructure, workforce capacity, operational decision-making, and leadership interact to determine the effectiveness of maintaining existing services while preparing for tomorrow's mobility needs.

Funding and Financial Stability

Budget shortfalls will limit transit providers' and municipalities' ability to maintain current service levels and infrastructure and may also constrain efforts to expand or introduce new transit services.

As described in Chapter 2, transit service in Boulder County relies on a mix of local, state, and federal funds along with fare revenue and special taxes. As RTD contends with a significant budget shortfall, its ability to maintain and expand services will be challenged. Boulder County is also facing a budget deficit of as much as $20 million due to a combination of rising costs and slower revenue growth, as well as the expiration of COVID-era relief funds. Local jurisdictions will likely need to find new sources of funding to fully meet the increased demand for services.

Infrastructure and Maintenance

Much of the existing transit infrastructure in Boulder County, including transit stations and bus stops, will need to be repaired or upgraded in the coming decades. Additionally, new infrastructure will be needed.

Today, just over half of the bus stops in Boulder County meet ADA accessibility requirements, and most have few amenities. Multimodal connections to bus stops and transit stations are inconsistent, and transit priority measures across the county are limited. High-quality transit service relies on seamless connections and investments that make the transit system reliable and comfortable for riders. Ensuring infrastructure and transit-supportive amenities are funded and well-maintained is key to attracting riders.



Many bus stops in Boulder County have weather damage and most lack basic passenger information and amenities.

Leadership and Investment Priorities

Boulder County has outlined clear goals, including equity, sustainability, and mobility innovation. However, local jurisdictions have been challenged to fully align resources with those priorities, and it is difficult to advance projects and programs that make transit faster and more reliable.

To improve transit service and increase ridership, Boulder County and its local jurisdictions must advance supportive programs and projects. The County

and its partners are already prioritizing investments aligned with local and regional goals via Longmont's Transportation Mobility Plan (15-minute frequency on the 300-series routes); Boulder's Transportation Master Plan (clear metrics that support transit priority); and Erie's Transportation Mobility Plan (future BRT, local route expansions, and mobility hubs).

However, securing funding to advance these initiatives from planning to implementation requires significant political will, as do efforts to prioritize transit within the right-of-way (e.g., adding bus lanes and transit signal priority). Stable yet visionary leadership can help to transform Boulder County's transit network in the years ahead.

Public Policy and Regulation

While most Boulder County residents live in urban or suburban communities, low-density and single-use development challenges fixed-route service models. Land-use regulations and parking reforms can help to create more transit-supportive communities and grow transit ridership.

Colorado's HB-1313 promotes increased housing density near transit through Transit-Oriented Communities, encouraging sustainable development that can make public transit more accessible. In Boulder County, HB-1313 supports local efforts to align zoning with transit availability, but not all communities are ready to embrace this legislation. Advancing policies that locate denser, mixed uses near transit makes it easier for transit to serve more people and increases ridership.

Additionally, managing parking through the elimination of minimum requirements and the adoption of parking maximums can support transit ridership. For example, Longmont has eliminated minimum parking requirements for new developments to lower housing costs, encourage transit use, and promote walkability. The combination of land use and parking policies can have a significant impact on transit-oriented growth, reduce car dependency, and boost transit ridership in the county.

7.2 External Factors Influencing Future Transit Demand

Complementing the internal factors described above are a mix of local and national economic, demographic, technological, and environmental factors. While the County recognizes transit as central to achieving its mobility, equity, and climate goals, new travel patterns are reshaping when and where people use transit. At the same time, an aging population, the housing affordability crisis, and fluctuating economic conditions continue to influence both transit demand and delivery. As Boulder County grows, the transit network will face increasing demands to connect people across urban, suburban, and mountain communities while meeting new local needs.

Pandemic Recovery

Throughout the U.S., municipalities have struggled to recover public transit ridership, even those that have returned to pre-pandemic levels of service. This is also true in Boulder County, where transit ridership remains at 55% of pre-pandemic levels.

According to the FTA, transit ridership fell 81% between April 2019 and April 2020, and 97% of transit agencies cut service. While many agencies have restored service to near 2019 levels, ridership across the country is only 74% restored. Boulder County is one of many communities that has identified the importance of public transit to achieve its mode share and environmental goals, but the unprecedented effects of COVID-19 have altered RTD's pre-pandemic plans. The slower-than-anticipated pace of service restoration has been further compounded by the pandemic's influence on traveler behaviors and preferences.

Travel Behavior

Travel patterns in Boulder County have changed since 2019: trips are more evenly distributed throughout the day, and people are making more, shorter trips. Transit services must evolve to meet these new travel needs.

The shift in travel patterns since COVID-19 reflects significant changes in the way people live, work, and play. Thanks to the flexibility of hybrid and remote work, especially for many white-collar jobs, there is less commuting demand on weekdays. However, people are making more trips in off-peak periods, including midday and evening, and on weekends. Transit service in Boulder County doesn't always align with these new patterns, making it difficult for transit to meet people's travel needs. As a result, people are making more trips by private or shared auto, and transit mode share has decreased. Providing services that are competitive with driving throughout the day and evening can help to bring people back to transit and increase ridership.

Demographic and Social Trends

Older adults are increasingly turning to public transit, while younger generations are less car-centric and more open to shared and sustainable mobility options. Perceptions of safety play a critical role in people's willingness to use transit.

As the population in Boulder County continues to age–especially in the most urban areas in the county–older adults may use transit more regularly to access healthcare, groceries, and social activities. To meet these changing mobility needs, transit must be accessible, easy to use, and comfortable. At the same time, Millennials and Gen Z show a strong preference for frequent and reliable transit that is supported by a network of cycling and walking infrastructure. Transit ridership among all groups is heavily influenced by transit vehicles and amenities that are clean, safe, and dignified.

Housing Affordability

Boulder County's housing affordability crisis is reshaping where people live in the county and the region, creating new pressures on how and where transit services are and will be needed.

The lack of affordable and workforce housing in Boulder County is driven by decades of rising prices, limited supply, and strong demand. Median home prices consistently rank among the highest in Colorado, placing

homeownership out of reach for many residents. The shortage of affordable units has pushed workers, families, and older adults to move farther from job centers, increasing commuting costs and straining transportation infrastructure. As people seek more affordable housing outside of Boulder County, a transit system that provides fast, frequent service to Weld and Larimer Counties would help to make transit a real option for more people.



Kestrel is an affordable housing community in Louisville, one of five Boulder County affordable developments. Transit service to Kestrel is limited today. (Image Source: Barrett Studio)

Technology and Innovation

Public transit will continue to be reshaped by rapid innovations in technology. The benefits of these transformations can be wide-ranging but require thoughtful regulation to support more equitable outcomes.

From electrification of transit vehicles to integrated fare payment platforms to autonomous vehicles, new technologies in the transit industry promise cleaner, more flexible, and more efficient service. However, they also demand new infrastructure, regulation, and operating models that can take years or decades to develop. For example, services like microtransit can expand

transit to more areas within Boulder County but are less cost effective than traditional transit service, especially when scaling up to generate higher ridership. Without careful oversight, real-time optimization of transit services via artificial intelligence runs the risk of prioritizing cost efficiency over equity.

Economic Forces

COVID-19 led to economic expansion but, as described above, dramatically altered how and when people travel. Six years later, rapid inflation and the impacts of tariffs are continuing to impact the local, national, and international economy.

Periods of economic expansion can often enhance the appetite and capacity for investment in transit infrastructure, such as during the early 2000s when voters approved FasTracks. However, the 2008 financial crisis significantly affected RTD's revenue forecasts and has had lasting impacts on project development and delivery. We've also seen economic recessions increase unemployment, which leads to reduced transit ridership.

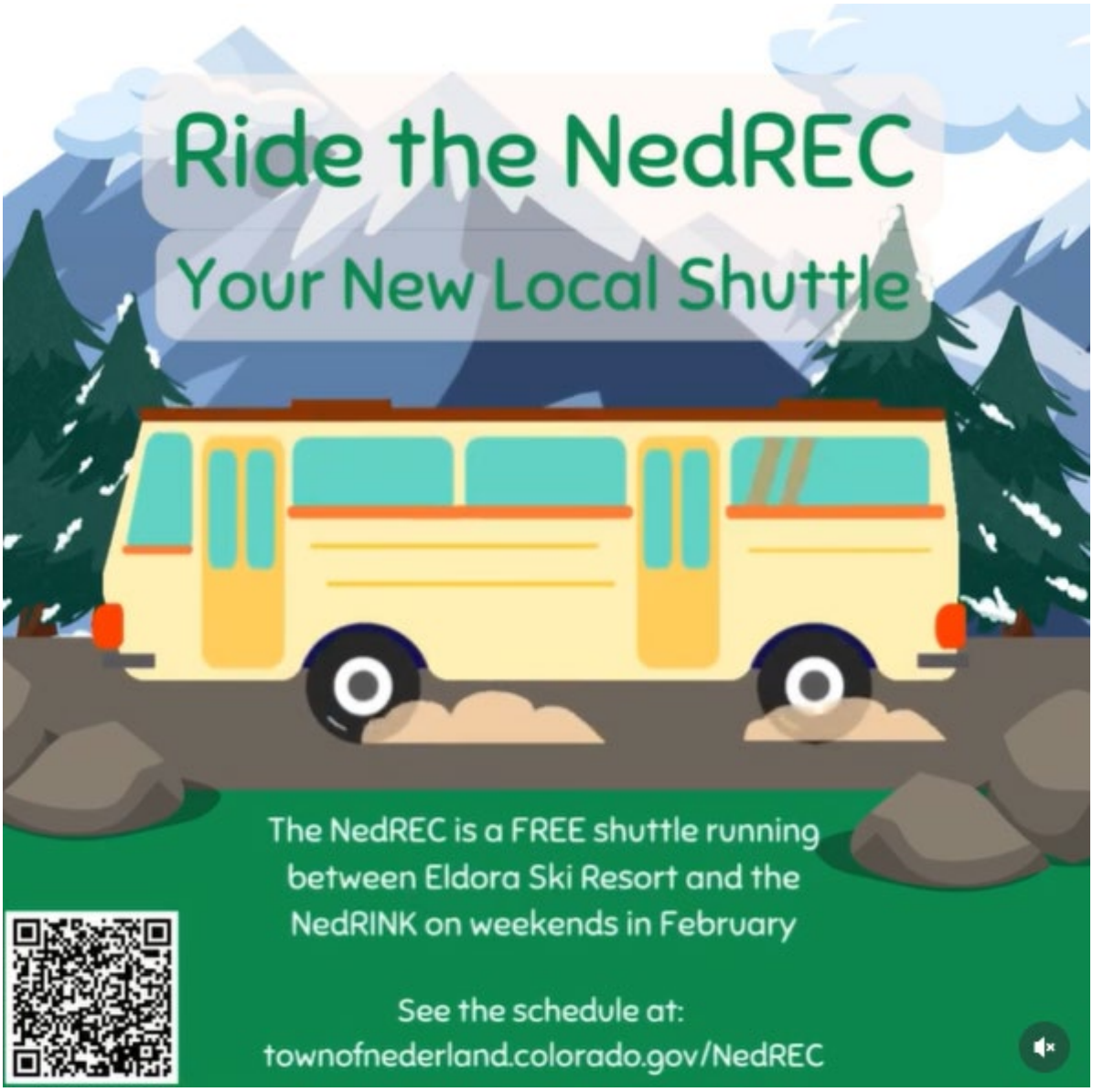
During economic downturns, transit ridership often increases when people are more cost constrained, although increased unemployment can also reduce transit ridership as fewer people commute. Strong economies can lead to higher car ownership, but higher gas prices tend to increase transit demand by making driving less affordable; low gas prices encourage more car use. The ways these economic forces impact transit delivery and ridership in Boulder County will likely vary dramatically over the next decade.

Access to Recreation

Boulder County has some of the most beautiful recreational destinations in the state, many of which are close to population centers and are already served by well-used transit shuttles.

Three of Boulder County's most popular trailheads (Chautauqua, Hessie, and Eldorado Canyon State Park) are already served by transit. Thanks to a combination of expanded service on the NB and the NedREC shuttle, Eldora Mountain has good transit access during the winter. However, dozens of other

trailheads and recreational destinations are currently inaccessible for people who do not have access to a vehicle. Transit can play an important role in enhancing and expanding access to recreational destinations across the county. Providing more service to recreational destinations is likely to generate higher transit ridership in Boulder County.



The new NedREC shuttle connects the Nederland Ice Rink and Eldora Ski Resort on winter weekends. (Image Source: Town of Nederland)

Special Events

Boulder County boasts dozens of museums, cultural amenities, music festivals, and attractions, and in 2027, the Sundance Film Festival will call Boulder home. Transit can play an important role in these events, helping to move attendees and supporting the host communities.

Community events and festivals, including the arrival of the Sundance Film Festival, will put more pressure on the county's transportation network, especially during the evenings and on weekends. Transit can play a critical role in supporting major events, allowing residents and visitors to travel without a car, reducing parking demand, and easing traffic congestion during peak periods. Transit can also advance local mobility goals, build long-term support for special events, and strengthen Boulder County's economy.

Environmental and Climate Pressures

A sustainable mode of transportation, public transit can help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in Boulder County. Transit also plays an important role in creating a resilient mobility system that supports people during emergencies, including floods and wildfires.

Over the past three years, Boulder County has experienced significant climate-related events that underscore the region's growing vulnerability to wildfires, flooding, and extreme weather. These events reflect broader climate trends across the Front Range, including hotter, drier conditions and more volatile weather patterns. Extreme weather, such as flooding and wildfires, can disrupt transit service and damage infrastructure. Boulder County has aggressive climate goals that require increased transit service to incentivize more people to use transit and more transit ridership to reduce emissions. County residents share sustainability values and have expressed support for low-carbon modes of travel, including public transit.



The 2021 Marshall Fire destroyed more than 1,000 homes and businesses. (Image Source: Colorado Newsline)

7.3 Conclusion

The future of public transit in Boulder County will be shaped by a dynamic set of factors—from internal funding, workforce, and operational practices to external demographic shifts, technological advances, environmental goals, and policy decisions. Success will require adaptability, innovation, and collaboration across government and private sectors, along with a focus on equity and sustainability.

Shaping a transit vision for Boulder County requires a careful balance between service and infrastructure investment; new and expanded policies, programs, and incentives; thoughtful integration with emerging mobility technologies and other modes; and the ability to respond to evolving social and economic realities. Linking Boulder County will help the County and its partners prepare for and respond to these factors and to increased demand for a more efficient, sustainable, and equitable public transit network within Boulder County.

Boulder County

Linking
BOULDER COUNTY
A Shared Vision for Transit

April 2026