



Linking Boulder County Transit Vision

April 2026



Introducing the Transit Vision

This document outlines the vision for transit in Boulder County over the next 15 years, setting the framework that will guide recommendations for new services, projects, and programs, as well as funding and governance.

The Linking Boulder County Transit Vision expresses what transit means to our community and what we hope it can do for Boulder County. The vision is informed by community and partner input, including our 2025 Transit Needs Survey. It's shaped by time riding transit in Boulder County, as well as by past plans.

The many analyses we completed as part of the State of Transit Report round out the existing conditions. To look ahead, the Transit Vision also considers the trends that will shape transit ridership and service delivery in the coming years, which we call forces of change.

The Transit Vision was shaped by these inputs:

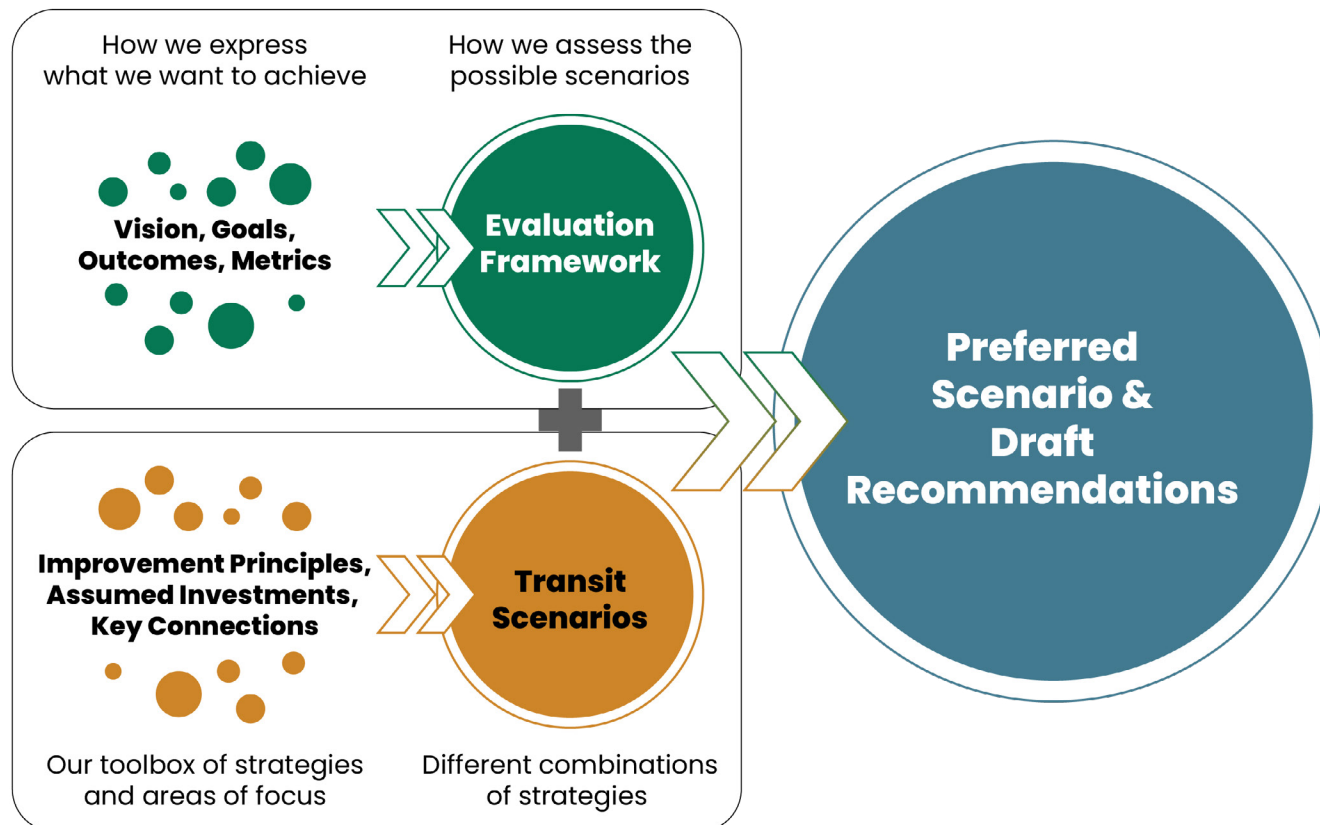


Elements of the Vision

The Transit Vision includes a bold **vision statement**, clear **goals, principles for improving transit**, and a **map of key connections**. The vision and goals set aspirations, the improvement principles outline our toolbox of strategies, and the key connections illustrate the areas and corridors where improvements are most important.

While the vision doesn't include transit modes or specific projects, the elements of the Transit Vision help to set the Linking Boulder County evaluation criteria and inform transit scenarios. These will shape our preferred scenario and recommendations.

The Transit Vision will guide recommendations:



Our Vision Statement

A **vision** statement is future-based and is meant to inspire and give direction. It describes the anticipated long-term results of Linking Boulder County and conveys the purpose of this planning effort.

Our vision statement is:

In Boulder County, transit is woven into the fabric of our community. By providing people with dignified, safe, and convenient transit services, we expand access to opportunity, support our community's health and wellbeing, and create a more resilient Boulder County.



Our Transit Goals

Goals articulate what we want to achieve through Linking Boulder County. Goals are ambitious and may take years to reach. They answer the question: “What is transit in Boulder County?” **Desired outcomes** are statements that make goals more concrete. They outline the specific changes we hope to see.

The goals and desired outcomes are described on the following three pages. They build on the vision and point to evaluation criteria and types of investments. When the goals are finalized, we will add metrics that help us measure progress.

The Linking Boulder County goals are:



Connected & Equitable

Expand equitable opportunities by connecting to all that Boulder County offers.



Competitive & Reliable

Increase ridership by making it easier and more desirable to take transit.



Sustainable & Resilient

Improve climate outcomes by creating a resilient transit system.



Connected & Equitable

Expand equitable opportunities by connecting to all that Boulder County offers.

- ✓ Better connect people to their daily needs, including housing, jobs, schools, services, and activity centers.
- ✓ Use transit to create a transportation system responsive to the needs of people for whom transit is a necessity.
- ✓ Improve all-ages-and-abilities access to transit services and facilities in Boulder County.
- ✓ Enhance transit connections with surrounding counties to develop a stronger regional system.
- ✓ Provide a diversity of services to link people and geographies.
- ✓ Create safe and complete first- and final-mile connections throughout the county.
- ✓ Use transit as a way to enhance healthy, complete communities.



FlexRide provides on-demand service to help people of all ages and abilities connect to the places they want to go across Boulder County.

“My daughter takes the DASH every day from school to our home in Louisville. Riding the bus gives her more independence and enables our family’s schedule to function smoothly by saving time and car trips. I am really thankful that youth fares are free and that she can take RTD.”

—Fall 2025 Survey Respondent



Competitive & Reliable

Increase ridership by making it easier and more desirable to take transit.

- ✓ Provide dignified, reliable, convenient, and affordable transit options that appeal to a broad cross-section of Boulder County residents, workers, and visitors.
- ✓ Improve transit service quality, safety, frequency, and reliability.
- ✓ Make transit travel times competitive with driving times in key corridors.
- ✓ Integrate mobility options across services, operators, and modes.
- ✓ Provide high-quality transit stops and stations and a safe, comfortable passenger experience.
- ✓ Offer travel information that is readily available, attractive, and easy to understand.



The Lafayette Park-n-Ride has transit service throughout the day and includes shelters to wait for your bus.

“It would be great if things ran more often and more reliably. I took the [BOLT] every day for years working in Boulder and the lack of reliability was very stressful, especially getting home. I go to both Louisville and Fort Collins for work now and can bike/bus/bike, but the limited schedule to Louisville is tricky.”

—Fall 2025 Survey Respondent



Sustainable & Resilient

Improve climate outcomes by creating a resilient transit system.

- ✓ Reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, local air pollution, and vehicle miles traveled (VMT).
- ✓ Improve climate resilience and adaptability of transit infrastructure with a focus on electrification.
- ✓ Integrate transit facilities with supportive land uses and community hubs.
- ✓ Embrace opportunities to innovate and explore new technologies.
- ✓ Develop reliable and predictable revenue streams that grow with Boulder County's economy.
- ✓ Expand partnerships within the county, with neighboring jurisdictions, and with shared-mobility providers.
- ✓ Support the vitality of Boulder County's downtowns, neighborhoods, and job centers.



Partnerships make it possible to operate more bus service that helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

“Newer buses would be nice for local routes. We should continue to replace older buses with hybrid or electric options. The airport bus is typically clean and comfortable.”

—Fall 2025 Survey Respondent



Transit Improvement Principles

To improve transit in and to Boulder County—and to address the opportunities identified by our community, in the State of Transit Report, and in other recent plans—Linking Boulder County will identify specific strategies. These strategies will match services and improvements with the needs of our diverse communities and markets.

We've identified **six principles that are the building blocks to make transit a competitive option** in Boulder County. They point to the types of improvements we'll consider for scenarios, going a step further than the goals and desired outcomes.

The Linking Boulder County transit improvement principles are:

- ✓ Improve Existing Services
- ✓ Respond to Changing Travel Patterns
- ✓ Expand the Network
- ✓ Develop High-Capacity Transit Services
- ✓ Make Transit Easier to Use
- ✓ Improve Access to Transit

The following three pages introduce the focus areas within each principle.

Improve Existing Services



Given the level of funding available, the Regional Transportation District (RTD), Boulder County, and partners currently provide service to many areas that need transit. However, there are clear opportunities across the county to make transit more attractive for both current and future riders.

Focus areas include:

- A Frequent Transit Network to the county's major destinations
- Buses that come more often on many routes
- Transit priority to improve speed and reliability

Respond to Changing Travel Patterns



Since the pandemic, travel patterns within Boulder County have changed dramatically. People are making more trips throughout the day, and the pressure on "traditional" commute times has decreased. To make transit a better option for more trips, there must be more hours of service across the network, including on weekends.

Focus areas include:

- Earlier and later service, especially in the early evening
- Midday service to match the times people travel
- More weekend service to support more types of trips

Expand the Network



As Boulder County and the Front Range continue to grow, the demand for transit service will expand. Community members have expressed a need for more service to local destinations like grocery stores, better access to recreation from areas other than Boulder, and new connections to communities like Firestone.

Focus areas include:

- Better connections to everyday destinations within communities
- More access to recreation and trailheads
- Service to new areas, both within and near Boulder County

Develop High-Capacity Transit Services



To make transit more attractive, Boulder County and its partners will need to develop high-capacity transit and premium services. These services should be focused on the county's most important corridors. Successful high-capacity transit services require more transit-oriented development, better multimodal access, and other transit-supportive improvements.

Focus areas include:

- Advancing the vision for the Northwest Area Mobility Study (NAMS) Corridors
- A premium services network of bus rapid transit (BRT) and BRT lite
- Regional connections, including Front Range Passenger Rail

Make Transit Easier to Use



With 12 transit providers serving Boulder County today, there are various brands, bus stop designs, mobile apps, and types of information available. While there is good service in many places, it can be hard for people to learn about and navigate the system. Providing clear information, seamless connections, and transit-supportive programs can encourage new riders.

Focus areas include:

- More widely available and accessible information, including in multiple languages
- Clear branding that better links to service types
- Expanded programs that encourage more people to ride transit

Improve Access to Transit



Every transit trip starts and ends with a trip by another mode. Providing safe, convenient, and comfortable access to and at transit stops and stations is fundamental to serving existing transit customers and attracting new riders. Accessible, seamless, and integrated pedestrian, bicycle, drop-off, and parking infrastructure makes transit better for everyone.

Focus areas include:

- Seamless connections to other modes
- Expanded micromobility (BCycle and scooters) access
- Better amenities at stops and stations



Key Connections

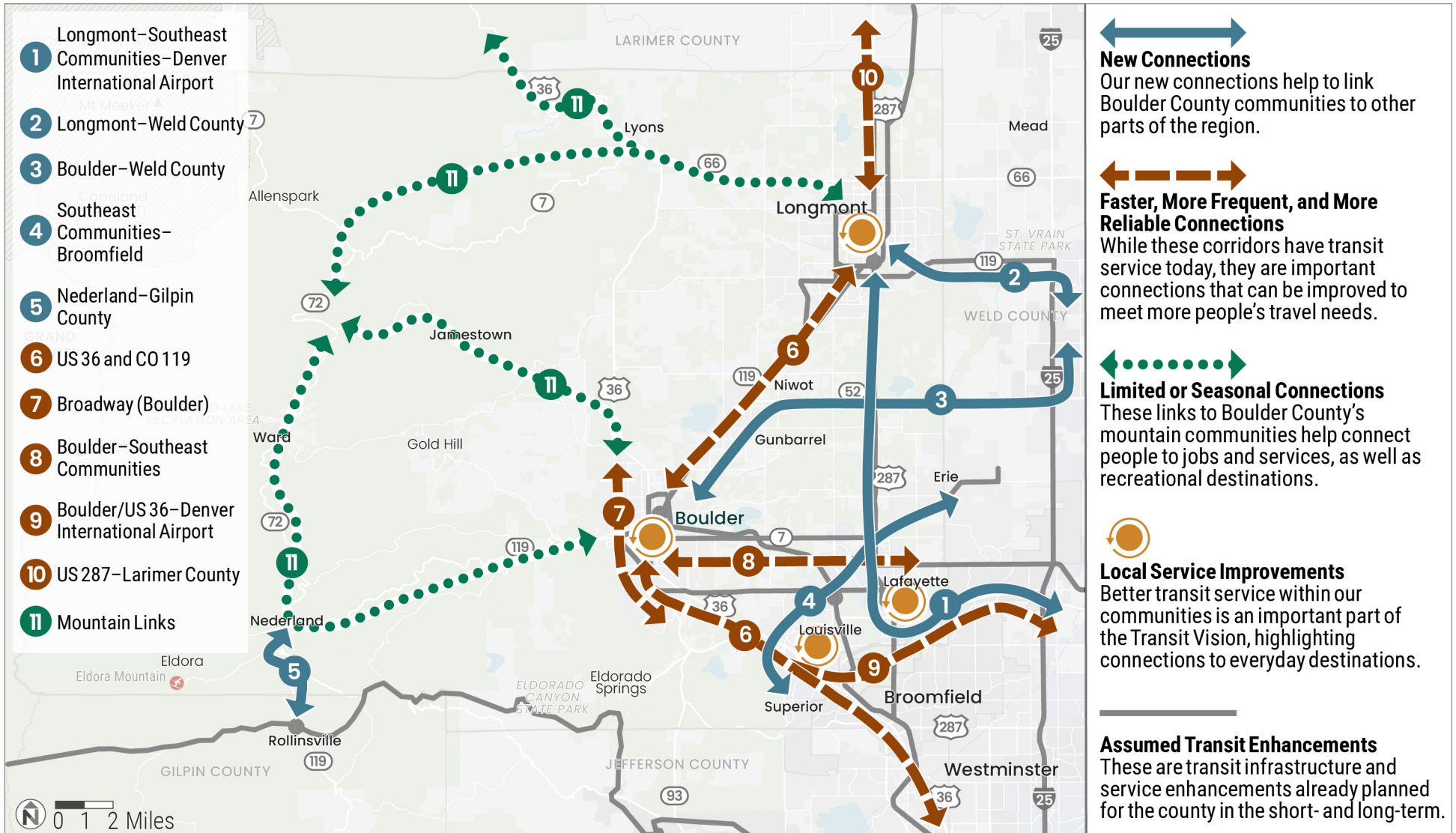
Key connections are the final piece of the Linking Boulder County Transit Vision. Building on the transit service and infrastructure improvements that are already planned, **the Key Connections map highlights new and enhanced county and regional connections** that will play an important role in achieving the vision and goals.

The lines on the Key Connections map represent connectivity rather than transit mode. They are not yet prioritized, either by cost or by contribution toward the

goals. While the map does not capture every need, especially new and enhanced connections within communities, it points to areas of focus.

Following community review, the Key Connections map—along with the Transit Improvement Principles—will guide our work to identify specific projects, programs, and policies. These will be combined into transit scenarios to illustrate tradeoffs and help shape recommendations.

Linking Boulder County Key Connections



Next Steps

The Linking Boulder County Transit Vision helps us look to the future without losing sight of what's needed today.

There are many transit needs across our county, and we know it won't be possible to do everything, everywhere, all at once. Resources are limited, and we'll need to make tradeoffs as we move forward. We'll look closely at **who** is served by different transit strategies, **where** certain types of improvements work best, and **when** investments are most needed.

The Transit Vision will help us weigh those tradeoffs and shape scenarios, which are packages of projects, programs, and policies that answer the questions above. We'll also use the Transit Vision to set our evaluation framework, which will determine how the different scenarios contribute to the vision and goals.

Working closely with the Linking Boulder County advisory committees and our community, we will develop a recommended scenario with a clear plan for implementation. The Transit Vision is an important first step in this process; moving to action will require more resources and strong partnerships.



Get Involved!

You can help shape the Linking Boulder County recommendations by participating in an upcoming outreach activity. Learn more at: <https://boco.org/LinkingBoulderCounty>

