

# INTEGRATED TRANSIT AND MULTIMODAL STUDY

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

July 2025

# Executive Summary

This Douglas County ***Integrated Transit and Multimodal Study*** builds on previous planning efforts and provides recommendations for enhancements to the transit and multimodal transportation network throughout the northern portion of the county. The study area includes the urban and suburban locales of Castle Pines, Castle Rock, Highlands Ranch, Lone Tree, and Parker.

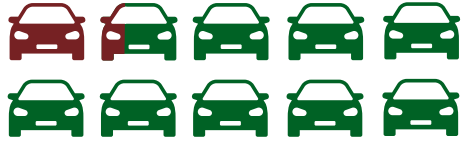
The study:

- Collaborates with municipal partners, organizational partners, and the public,
- Documents existing gaps in the transit and multimodal transportation network,
- Recommends physical and operational improvements,
- Identifies pilot projects to implement, and
- Develops a framework for the sustained enhancement and expansion of transit and multimodal transportation options.

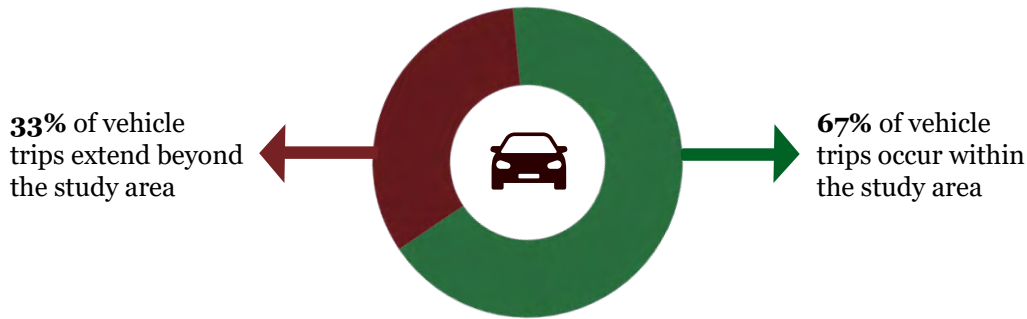
## Community Benefits of Transit

Transit systems can provide many qualitative benefits for communities and their surrounding areas, and Douglas County is no exception. By improving access to essential services and key destinations such as medical offices, grocery stores, employment areas, parks, recreation centers, and existing transit centers, the community's quality of life is improved when more mobility options are available. This is especially true for those without access to reliable transportation, such as youth, older adults, and people with limited mobility or mobility assistance devices. There are also community health benefits with increased transit use, including decreased emissions and improved air quality. Transit systems can also enhance the local economy by attracting businesses, stimulating investment near transit centers, giving more commute options, and increasing access to key destinations for residents, employees, and visitors. By focusing the transit opportunities for Douglas County on community needs and quality of life, the resulting benefits go beyond the simple movement of people and vehicles.

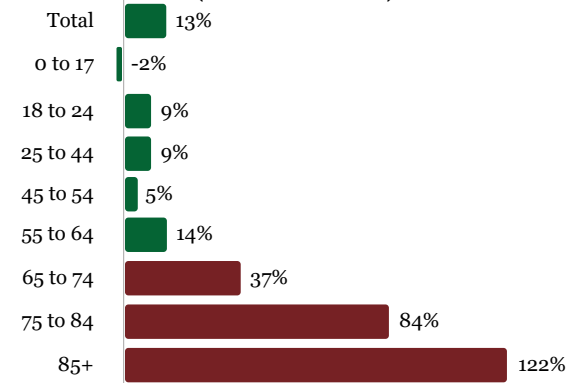
# Douglas County's Transit Needs by the Numbers



13% of households with limited vehicle availability



## POPULATION GROWTH BY AGE (2022 - 2032)



One of the fastest-growing senior populations in Colorado

### PEDESTRIAN AND MULTIUSE TRAILS

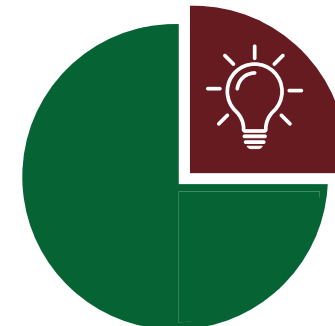
- 199** Miles of Paved Trails
- 238** Miles of Unpaved Trails
- 46** Miles of Unclassified/Other Pedestrian Trails
- 78** Miles of Off Highway Vehicle Trails

### BIKE NETWORK

- 152** Miles of Existing Bike Lanes
- 4** Miles of Proposed Bike Lanes
- 264** Miles of Existing Bike Sharrows
- 3** Miles of Proposed Sharrows
- 542** Miles of Existing Multiuse Trail
- 55** Miles of Proposed Multiuse Trails
- 2** Miles of Cycle Track



Link On Demand microtransit expansion into Meridian and Highlands Ranch

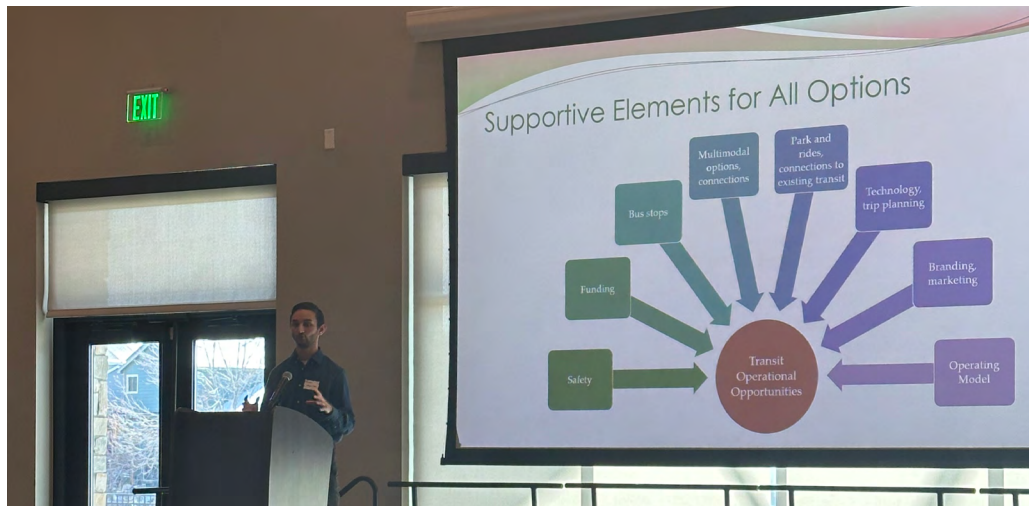


Transit and multimodal network gaps can be enhanced and improved to better serve Douglas County residents

## Public and Stakeholder Input

Throughout the study process, the project team met with and surveyed staff, key stakeholders and focus groups, elected officials, the Douglas County Transportation Forum, and the public. Here is what we learned from these discussions and surveys:

- Seventeen percent of survey respondents said they currently use transit within northern Douglas County, about half of whom use RTD light rail line and a quarter use RTD bus routes.
- Local transit options in Parker received 72% “favorable” votes in the survey. Highlands Ranch and Castle Rock both received 59% “favorable” votes. Subregional transit options were also viewed favorably, but less than the local transit options.
- About half of survey respondents said they would use transit at least monthly if it served their destinations. The top reasons for using transit were connecting to existing public transit services, running errands, accessing recreation, and social activities.
- Focus groups with vulnerable populations, older adults, youth, commuters, and business interests expressed a need to fill the transit gaps in Douglas County. Transit options were viewed positively for improving the quality of life for people in Douglas County and allowing them to access critical services, commute to their jobs, and better connect them to where they need to go. Participants emphasized that while populations have different needs, all transit options need to be safe, reliable, convenient, and comfortable.
- Stakeholders, elected officials, and the public also expressed their priorities for who the transit system should serve, how to be financially sustainable, how to partner with municipalities and organizations, and how to ensure multimodal connectivity.



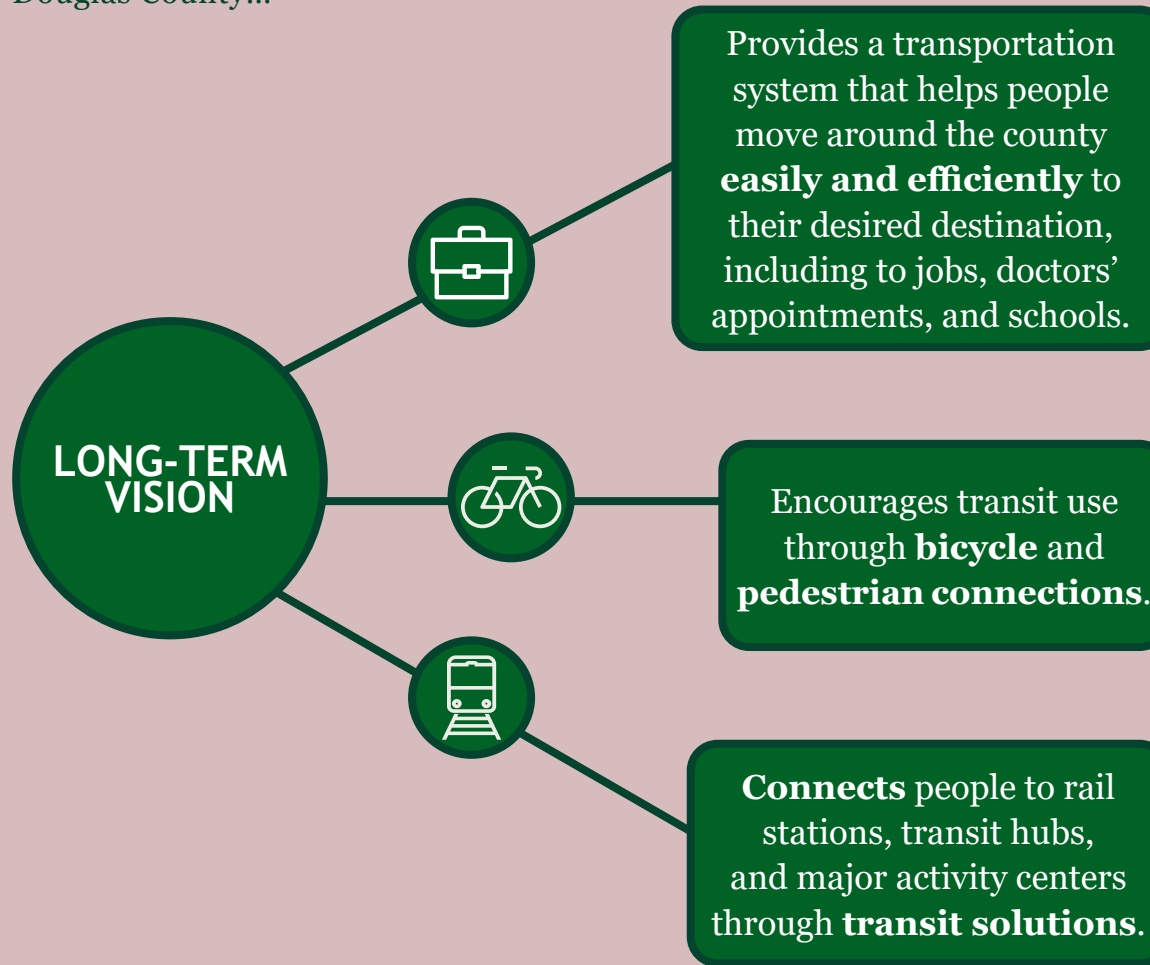
Presentation at Public Open House. Source: Fehr & Peers.



Source: Kearns & West.

## Long-Term Vision

In collaboration with its municipalities and partner organizations, transit in Douglas County...



## Infrastructure Programming

Infrastructure programming aids Douglas County in developing a phased implementation approach that reflects the study's technical work, public and stakeholder engagement, long-term vision, and implementation considerations. The method splits the development of transit services in Douglas County into three key steps.

### STEP 1

#### Facilitate Local Connections

- Start with microtransit for maximum flexibility.
- Identify potential origins and destinations that may be better served by a local circulator.

### STEP 2

#### Facilitate Subregional Connections

- Connect areas with local transit services by longer-distance routes.
- Integrate multimodal infrastructure elements.

### STEP 3

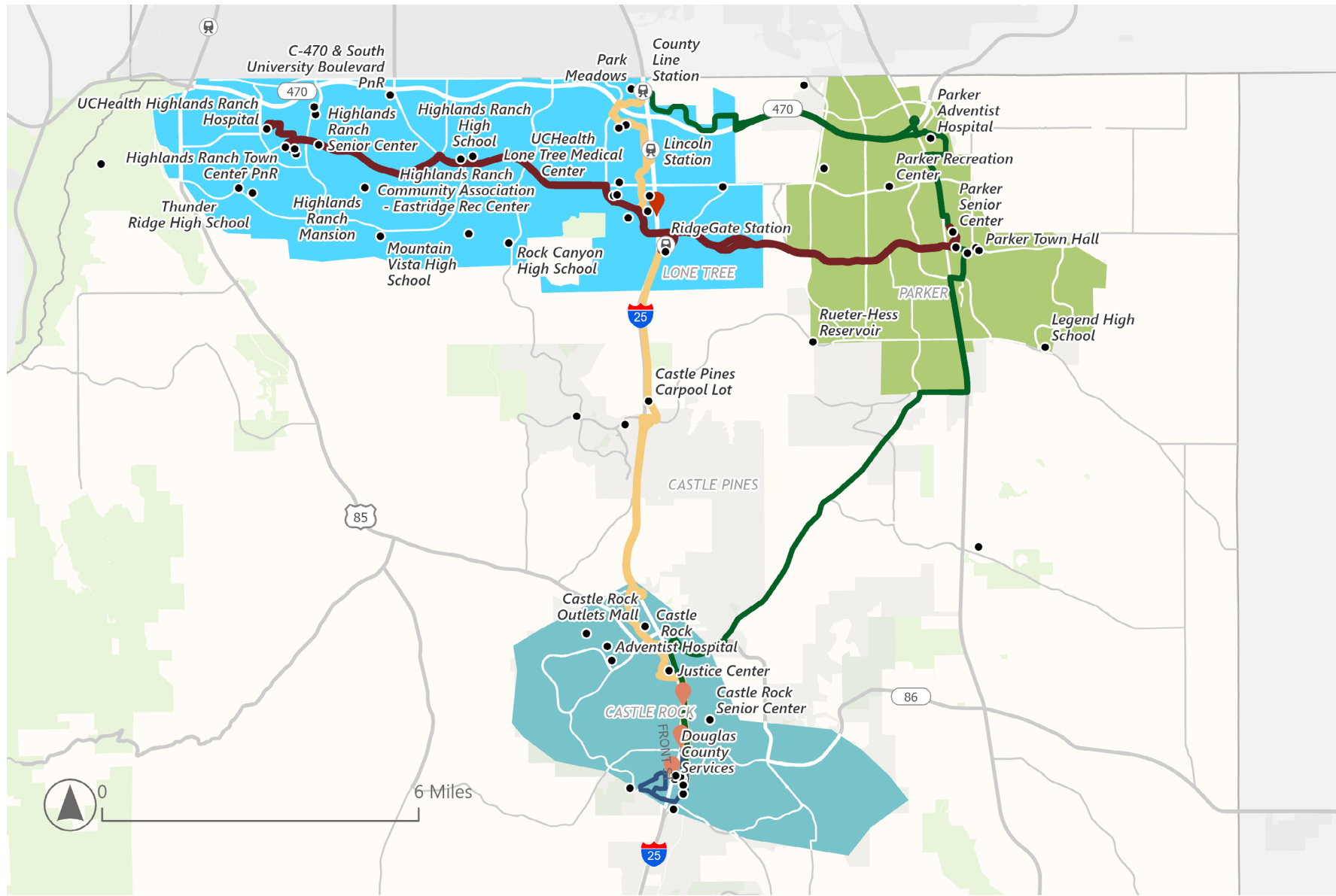
#### Adapt Consistently to Local and Subregional Needs

- Modify transit solutions to serve areas with most need, expanding or shrinking based on demand and alignment with the long-term vision.
- Integrate and collaborate with regional services like RTD and Bustang.

## Phased Approach for Transit Opportunities

The following phased approach represents the outcomes of refining the transit opportunities to match the transit and multimodal framework, informed by input from the public, stakeholders, and the technical analysis and evaluation. The implementation of the transit options is split into three potential phases between 2025 and 2033. The study has also identified transit options to be considered for future phases beyond 2033, as well as other coordinated efforts that would be complimentary to the phases. The dates of these phases are not meant to be prescriptive by year but more give a sense of how the services could get implemented in approximately three-year phases. It is likely that actual implementation timing will vary from this conceptual framework.

Phase 1 Pilot Projects (2025-2027)	Phase 2 (2028-2030)	Phase 3 (2031-2033)	Future Phases (2033 and Beyond)	Other Concurrent Efforts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlands Ranch microtransit (funded by Douglas County)</li> <li>Parker microtransit (currently funded by DRCOG TIP)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlands Ranch to Parker via Lone Tree subregional fixed route</li> <li>Associated infrastructure improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Castle Rock local transit (circulator or microtransit)</li> <li>Lone Tree to Castle Rock via Castle Pines subregional fixed route</li> <li>Lone Tree to Castle Rock via Parker subregional fixed route</li> <li>Associated infrastructure improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Castle Pines local transit (circulator or microtransit)</li> <li>Sterling Ranch local transit (circulator or microtransit)</li> <li>Highlands Ranch to Sterling Ranch subregional fixed route</li> <li>Highlands Ranch to Castle Rock via Sedalia subregional fixed route</li> <li>Associated infrastructure improvements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continued refinement of Link On Demand zone</li> <li>Enhancing countywide existing senior/specialized transit services</li> <li>Collaborating with RTD for route improvement and FlexRide restructuring</li> <li>Coordination with continued evolution of existing and future transit services</li> <li>Associated infrastructure improvements</li> </ul>



**Phase 1 Microtransit Zones**

- Highlands Ranch Zone
- Parker Zone

**Phase 2 Routes**

- Sub-Regional: Highlands Ranch to Parker via Lone Tree

**Phase 3 Microtransit Options**

- Option 1: Castle Rock Microtransit Zone
- Option 2: Castle Rock Circulator

**Phase 3 Routes**

- Sub-Regional: Lone Tree to Castle Rock via Parker
- Sub-Regional: Lone Tree to Castle Rock via Castle Pines

**Key Destinations**

- Study Area Destination
- Study Area Transit Connection
- Future Mobility Hub
- Potential Castle Rock Mobility Hub



All Phases

# Implementation Plan

Beyond the phased approach, this plan highlights additional elements such as infrastructure needs, costs and funding, and other supporting strategies.

## Infrastructure Needs



Source: Douglas County

- New/Upgrades to Connections to Transit Stops
- Modifications to Transit Stop Layouts
- New Transit Stop Amenities
- New Park-n-Rides and Upgrades
- Transit Vehicle Storage

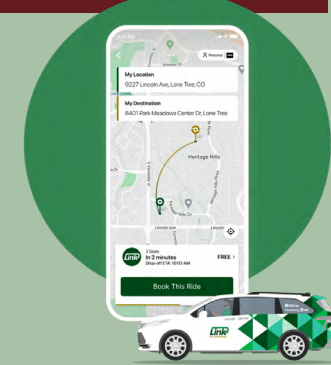
## Funding



Department of Transportation

- Local Funding and Partnerships
  - County, City, Town budgeting processes and funds
  - Partnerships with local organizations, business, and employers
  - Business Improvement Districts for infrastructure improvements/maintenance
- State and Regional Funding
  - CDOT grant programs (MMOF, OIM, CTE)
  - DRCOG TIP or Set-Aside grants
  - RTD partnership program
- Federal Funding
  - Formula and Competitive Grants (BUILD, Urbanized Area Formula, Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities, Surface Transportation Block)
  - Innovation-Focused Grants
  - Congressionally Directed Spending

## Supporting Strategies



Source: Link On Demand

- Technology and Trip Planning
- Safety
- Branding and Marketing
- Operating Model
- Service Reporting, Monitoring, and Adjustments
- Typical Implementation Timelines
- Managing Implementation Hurdles and Unknown Factors

## Path Forward

This ***Integrated Transit and Multimodal Study*** has been developed in partnership with local agencies in Douglas County. The commitment from staff and elected officials has provided invaluable input into the process. The robust stakeholder and public outreach ensured that feedback has been incorporated into the plan for those that may benefit the most from improved transit and multimodal travel opportunities.

Understanding the context and travel needs within the County, focusing on transit types that could be most effective, and prioritizing those transit opportunities through a detailed evaluation analysis led to a framework, phased approach, and implementation plan that can be used to guide transit and multimodal investment into the future.

Despite receiving broad support from the Stakeholder Engagement Team and agency leadership through the Douglas County Transportation Forum, work continues to refine, prioritize, identify funding, define partnerships, and build the political willingness needed to expand and enhance transit and multimodal travel in the County.

Starting with microtransit allows for the greatest flexibility and using the ridership, operation, and key destination data will be useful in informing future investment decisions. Funding availability and prioritization have been and will continue to be a challenge to enhancing and implementing new transit services and multimodal enhancements.

There are varying levels of political support for the transit options throughout the study area because of uncertainty with the viability of transit long term, budget constraints, existing priorities, and all other considerations that each municipal partner must balance. Only through on-going partnership, building of political will, and identification of necessary funding can the full vision identified in this document be realized. Douglas County is committed to continuing transparent and productive collaboration with all of those that contributed to the success of this study as we collectively move forward.

