

Transportation Advisory Committee

Meeting date: August 24, 2026

Agenda Item #7: (Attachment E)

Active Transportation Gaps Analysis

Agenda item type: Informational briefing

Summary

A summary of a preliminary analysis of gaps in the region's active transportation system, including sidewalks, pedestrian crossing opportunities and high-comfort bikeways.

Background

In January 2026, the DRCOG Board of Directors adopted the [Active Transportation Plan](#), which included ten actions to be undertaken by DRCOG staff. The first is to “develop a regionwide gaps analysis for completing the walking and bicycling network,” to help identify key connections and advance planning and completion of the regional active transportation network. This gaps analysis includes three elements:

1. An assessment of sidewalk coverage and accessibility, including an estimate of how many roadway miles are currently lacking sidewalks on either side of the street.
2. An analysis of barriers to pedestrian access, specifically average distance to a comfortable crossing opportunity by street segment.
3. An assessment of the level of comfort of corridors for bicycling and micromobility users.

Using existing geospatial datasets that DRCOG collects and maintains, DRCOG staff completed a preliminary analysis of these three network elements, and is seeking guidance for next steps to enhance and make available as data resources to its member governments and partners.

Sidewalk network coverage

The assessment of sidewalk coverage and basic accessibility was completed for streets on the Regional Roadway System, with the goal of understanding which roadways have sidewalks on both sides of the street and whether those sidewalks meet a basic width that can be compliant with standards set forth by the U.S. Access Board in the *Public Rights of Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG)*. Using four feet as a minimum width—the required dimension for Pedestrian Access Routes—and acknowledging that some of these sidewalks may not necessarily be PROWAG-compliant due to slope or obstructions, the analysis finds that an estimated 38% of streets on the Regional Roadway System, excluding limited access facilities, have a sufficient sidewalk on at least one side. However, nearly 1,200 miles of streets lacking any sidewalks are located in the region's rural areas (as defined by DRCOG's [Taking Action on Regional Vision Zero](#)); confined to urban and suburban context, roughly 77% of these roadways have a basic sidewalk on at least one side (see Table 1).



Table 1: Estimated sidewalk coverage on the Regional Roadway System

Existing condition	Street centerline mileage (urban and suburban mileage)	Percentage of Regional Roadway System
Sidewalks on both sides of compliant width	581.5 miles (564.3 miles)	25% (53%)
Sidewalk of compliant width on only one side	298.5 miles (260.8 miles)	13% (24%)
No sidewalks present	1,420.3 miles (244.6 miles)	62% (23%)

Distance to low-stress crossing opportunities

In addition to complete sidewalks, regular and comfortable crossings are foundational to pedestrian access and mobility. Using a framework for assessing pedestrian crossing comfort set forth in Center for Pedestrian and Bicyclist Safety's (CPBS) [Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress](#) (PLTS) study, this analysis sets out to identify all comfortable crossing opportunities on streets with a functional classification of arterial or collector—with the intention to better understand network connectivity on streets both on and accessing the Regional Roadway System. Using the CPBS framework for grading pedestrian level of traffic stress (see Table 2), this analysis assumes that any crossing with PLTS of 3 or better is basically sufficient for most users.

Table 2: Definitions of Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress levels

Pedestrian Level of Traffic Stress	Description	Example criteria
PLTS 1	Most comfortable for users of all ages and abilities.	Typically less than 2 or 3 lanes to cross, and is stop- or signal-controlled with a marked high-visibility crosswalk. A refuge island can improve comfort.
PLTS 2	Somewhat comfortable for a broad range of users.	At low posted speeds and volumes, or moderate speeds and volumes with sufficient traffic control, crossings up to 3 (or even 4) lanes can be made broadly comfortable for most users.
PLTS 3	Somewhat uncomfortable, but generally sufficient for able-bodied adults.	At moderate posted speeds and moderate to high volumes, signalized crossings may be generally serviceable to pedestrians who are alert and able to walk at a brisk speed. At uncontrolled



PLTS 4		crossings of 3 lanes or fewer, some pedestrians may feel comfortable crossing, but children, older adults and people with disabilities may be uncomfortable and choose alternate routes or destinations.
	Highly uncomfortable for most users.	Generally more than 4 lanes wide and adjacent to high vehicle speeds (≥ 35 MPH) and/or volumes ($>7,500$ AADT). Signalized crossings greater than four lanes wide lack median refuge islands and have large exposure zones.

Using this framework, DRCOG staff used a GIS network analyst to identify mean distance by street segment (typically by block) to the nearest sufficient crossing. In the region's urban and suburban contexts, 40% of arterial and collector street segments are greater than ¼-mile to a comfortable crossing scoring PLTS 3 or better (in rural contexts, approximately 67% of street segments are greater than ¼-mile from a comfortable crossing). These segments indicate potential opportunities for enhanced pedestrian crossing treatments.

High-comfort bicycle facilities

Finally, using the [Bicycle Level of Traffic Stress](#) (BLTS) methodology for assessing bicycle routes, this analysis sought to identify existing conditions and comfort for bicycle and micromobility users along the on-street segments of the adopted regional [Active Transportation Corridors](#), which are intended to provide high-comfort connections for active travelers.

Of the 1,822 miles of regional Active Transportation Corridors identified in the adopted network, 857 miles are on-street routes, 289 miles of which are currently scoring BLTS 2 or better (meaning they are likely to be comfortable and inviting to the "Interested but Concerned" population of potential users, or the nearly 60% of people in the Denver region who would like to bicycle more but are discouraged by perceived stress). An estimated 568 miles of on-street routes are currently BLTS 3 or higher, meaning that they may benefit from enhancement.

This gaps analysis is a first step in identifying opportunities to bolster the region's transportation system to improve mobility and access for active users, and to make a resource for DRCOG's member governments to assess, prioritize, and leverage investment in completing the network.

Action by others

None.

Previous discussion/action

None.



Recommendation

None.

Attachment(s)

Staff presentation.

For more information

If you need additional information, please contact Aaron Villere, Senior Active Transportation Planner at avillere@drcog.org.

