Denver Regional
Council of Governments

Active Transportation Plan

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active transportation plan
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DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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Contents

Figures

Tables

Maps

Executive summary

This executive summary provides an overview of the Active Transportation Plan. It explains what it is, how it's structured, why it's important, who it's for and what the key takeaways are.

In this section:

- What is the Active Transportation Plan?
- The regional active transportation network
- Taking action

What is the Active Transportation Plan?

The Denver Regional Council of Government's regional Active Transportation Plan is a guide for extending walking, bicycling and rolling to everyone in the Denver region. DRCOG developed this plan in partnership with local governments, the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Regional Transportation District.

A vision for the region's active transportation network

The Active Transportation Plan envisions a region where all people living, working and visiting have access to safe and comfortable places to walk, bike and roll.

The plan establishes a regional active transportation network that is complete, connected and comprehensive, and recommends actions for DRCOG and its partners to extend access to active transportation through policy, programs, guidance and encouragement.

What is in the Active Transportation Plan?

The Active Transportation Plan includes the following sections:

Chapter	What it covers
Chapter 1. How the Active **Transportation Plan fits in**	This chapter explains how this document aligns with Metro Vision and relates to other local and regional planning efforts.
Chapter 2. Active transportation keeps the region moving	This chapter covers why walking, bicycling, and other micromobility is important, and sets a vision for active transportation in the Denver region.
Chapter 3. Universal access to walking	This chapter lists key challenges for improving walking conditions throughout region, sets guiding themes, and establishes the first leg of the active transportation network: Pedestrian Focus Areas.
Chapter 4. A complete and connected bicycle+ network	This chapter details the key challenges for improving bicycling and micromobility (also referred to as "bicycle+") conditions and trends, set guiding themes, and establishes the remaining legs of the active transportation network: Short Trip Opportunity Zones and Regional Active Transportation Corridors.
Chapter 5. Let's get to work	This chapter presents policy and program actions, as well as perfomance indicators for measuring success.

Why is the Active Transportation Plan important?

Walking, bicycling and rolling for transportation are critical tools for reaching the region's goals for safety, air quality and vibrant communities.

Who is the Active Transportation Plan for?

The plan provides guidance and recommends actions for promoting active mobility throughout DRCOG's ten county planning region (including Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Gilpin, Jefferson, and southwest Weld counties). The plan can be used by:

- **Local governments,** to guide local planning and coordinate with neighboring cities and towns to build a cohesive regional walking and bicycling network.
- **Elected officials and key stakeholders,** to work toward a shared vision and make the case for active transportation.
- **DRCOG staff,** to implement programs and policies, inform funding decisions and provide technical guidance to partners.
- **Community members,** to participate in regional planning and learn about opportunities to move around the region by active modes of transportation.

How does the Active Transportation Plan work?

The plan is anchored by a three-part regional Active Transportation Network, which sets a vision for pedestrian and bicycle mobility, helps DRCOG to allocate funding for transportation projects and informs local planning and helps cities, towns and counties to collaborate.

Pedestrian Focus Areas

More than half of the region's major roadways may currently have missing or too narrow sidewalks. Pedestrian Focus Areas, which were identified using demographic factors, destination access, the transit network and anticipated growth and land use, identify where people might want to walk but face barriers.

Short Trip Opportunity Zones

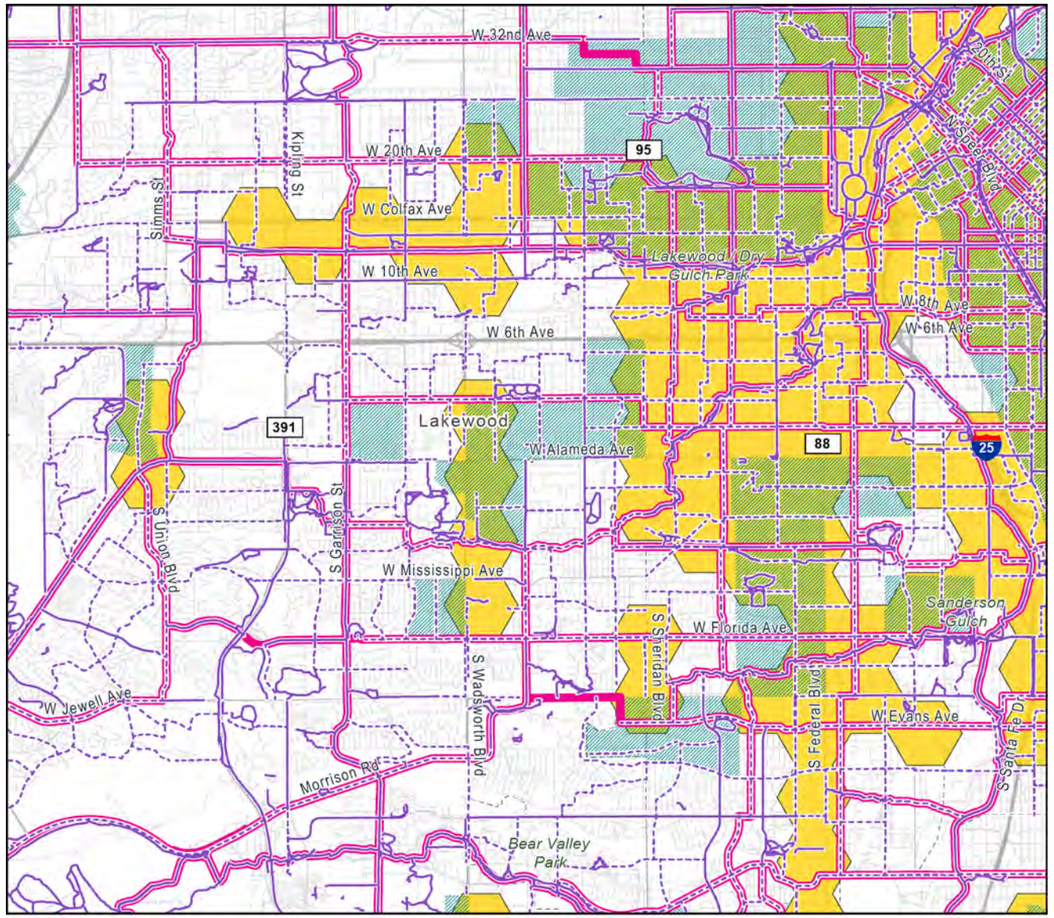
One in five drive-alone vehicle trips in the Denver region are shorter than two miles. The Short Trip Opportunity Zones identify where short trips are most concentrated—and where the most trips may shift to active transportation.

Regional Active Transportation Corridors

Connecting the Pedestrian Focus Areas and Short Trip Opportunity Zones are the Regional Active Transportation Corridors, or regional streets and paths that form the backbone of the active transportation system.

The regional active transportation network

Combined, the Pedestrian Focus Areas, Short Trip Opportunity Zones and Regional Active Transportation Corridors constitute a vision network for walking, bicycling and rolling across the Denver region. The network is aligned with local planned walking and bicycling networks.



Note: More information on the regional active transportation network, including the map above, is available in Chapter 2 (page 9). The interactive network can viewed at gis.drcog.org/datatool.

Taking action

The plan recommends concrete actions to expand access to active transportation.

DRCOG program and policy actions

1. Develop a robust needs analysis for completing the regionwide walking and bicycling network.
2. Expand DRCOG's capacity to support our member governments' multimodal planning, design, and engineering work.
3. Support land use and development initiatives that advance active transportation and mode shift for short trips.
4. Update the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Policy to include minimum active transportation facility standards and guidance that builds on the Regional Complete Streets Toolkit.
5. Develop and implement a Regional Active Transportation Counts Strategic Plan to benchmark active transportation activity.
6. Expand benchmarking of active transportation safety trends to achieve DRCOG's Vision Zero goal.
7. Explore creation of a regional transportation funding authority to raise funds for and support completion of the regionwide active transportation network.
8. Leverage the regional active transportation network to support operational activities at the local level.
9. Support and expand bicycling and walking promotion and encouragement programs including Bike to Work Day, Schoolpool, and local Safe Routes to School programs.
10. Revisit key performance indicators for active transportation progress that DRCOG supports.

Measuring progress

The plan will measure progress using key performance indicators such as:

- Reducing the number and severity of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Increasing bicycling and pedestrian trips.
- Increasing housing and employment access to rapid or high-frequency transit.
- Decreasing surface transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions per capita.
- Increasing the share of population living in proximity to high-comfort active transportation network to help alleviate housing and transportation cost burden on households.

1

How the Active Transportation Plan fits in

The Active Transportation Plan fits within a scaffold of regional and local plans to define themes, outcomes and priorities.

In this section:

- Metro Vision
- 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan
- DRCOG Regional Complete Streets Toolkit
- Taking Action on Regional Vision Zero
- Sidewalk Delivery Guide and Bicycle+ Program Guide
- Local plans

Metro Vision

DRCOG member governments have worked together to advance a shared aspirational vision of the future for the Denver metro area for over 60 years. Metro Vision's five organizing themes highlight how integral active transportation is to achieve the vision for growth and development across the region.

An efficient and predictable development pattern

Each of the region's cities, towns and counties contributes in different ways to the metro area's economy, resiliency, quality of life and sense of place. As the region grows, maintaining place-based distinctions will protect the ability of residents and businesses to choose the types of communities that meet their distinct needs and values.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

Investments that focus on existing and planned growth that is connected to the regional multimodal network aligns with this plan's network of Regional Active Transportation Corridors, Short Trip Opportunity Zones and Pedestrian Focus Areas.

A connected and multimodal region

The Denver region aspires to have a connected multimodal transportation system to provide everyone with viable travel choices. The needs of the region's transportation system include adapting quickly to major trends affecting the region, such as significant population growth, a rapidly aging population, new technology and evolving economy and changing residential and workplace styles.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

The Active Transportation Plan's network of Regional Active Transportation Corridors, Short Trip Opportunity Zones and Pedestrian Focus Areas support local agencies' investment in active transportation infrastructure that provides safe and comfortable access to local and regional destinations.

A safe and resilient natural and built environment

Metro Vision helps lay a foundation for regional cooperation to safeguard the region's natural resources for all residents and to ensure access to those spaces remain inclusive to all residents regardless of cultural identities, genders and socioeconomic levels. Preservation includes provisions for clean water and air.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

Safe, comfortable and connected infrastructure can support and encourage a shift to modes that do less harm to natural resources.

Healthy, inclusive and livable communities

Regional planning and investments support land use and transportation development that provide travel and affordable housing choice and access to resources and services for all.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

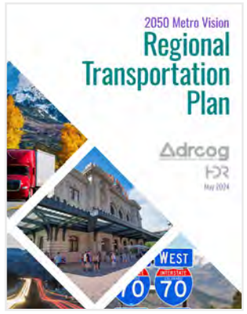
Infrastructure for active transportation can provide resilient travel options to shift short trips to active transportation that reduce transportation cost burdens, support improved air quality and promote physical activity.

A vibrant regional economy

The region's economy prospers when all residents have access to a range of transportation, employment, housing, education, cultural and recreational opportunities. The region's transportation network is critical in enabling commerce and providing access to basic needs and quality-of-life amenities that allow the region's residents to succeed.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

Walking and bicycling are critical means of accessing the housing, employment and commercial activites that power the region's economy. A complete and connected active transportation network creates opportunity and access.



2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan

The 2050 Regional Transportation Plan sets the vision for the Denver region's multimodal transportation system and guides investment in the projects and programs to achieve that vision. Through the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan's major project and program investment priorities, the region will:

- Increase safety for all users of the transportation system.
- Improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Expand the region's rapid transit network.
- Provide more ways to travel by car, bus, bicycle and foot.
- Expand travel options for vulnerable and underserved transportation users.
- Prepare for and adapt to future changes in transportation.

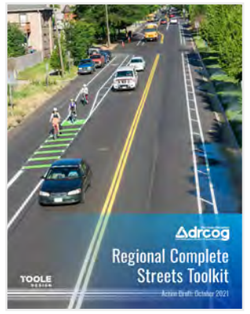
The planning process emphasized specific considerations for projects contained in the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan:

- Projects that are multimodal, recognizing the unique context of each project and its location, and that provide multiple benefits consistent with the investment priorities.
- Projects with potential regional benefit (instead of primarily local benefit or driven primarily by local growth or development).
- County transportation forum candidate project rankings.
- Regional agency priorities.
- Geographic balance of projects across the region.

The Regional Transportation Plan establishes six focus areas to guide actions (including active transportation), defines goals and performance measures, and adopts a fiscally constrained projects list to program and implement by 2050.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

The Active Transportation Plan is adopted as part of the Regional Transportation Plan.



DRCOG Regional Complete Streets Toolkit

The Denver Regional Council of Governments Complete Streets Toolkit provides guidance for local jurisdictions and project sponsors to adopt the Complete Streets approach where streets are balanced for all modes of transportation, including walking, bicycling, taking transit, freight, and driving.

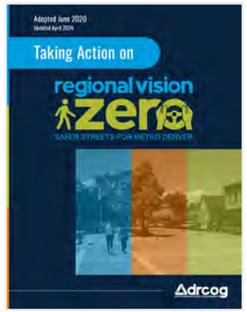
The toolkit is intended to:

- Support the implementation of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan.
- Provide resources for Complete Streets implementation.
- Encourage cross-jurisdictional collaboration to plan, design and build Complete Streets throughout the Denver region.

The toolkit establishes a vision for how local governments and project sponsors can adopt and apply Complete Streets policies, provides a multimodal street typology to supplement traditional roadway functional classifications, outlines design elements and guidelines that support the street typology and multimodal facilities and offers implementation considerations for local, regional and partner organizations.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

Modal hierarchy overlaps with the Active Transportation Plan in setting priority for users. Refer to the Sidewalk Delivery Guide and Building a Better Bicycle+ Program for supplementary application guidance.



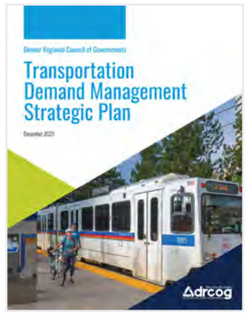
Taking Action on Regional Vision Zero

In June 2020, DRCOG adopted a Vision Zero commitment to eliminate traffic-related fatalities and severe injuries on the region's roadways and make safety a priority for all transportation system users by 2040. Taking Action on Regional Vision Zero includes a toolkit for local governments to use when planning a Vision Zero strategy in their communities.

While there are more than 15,000 roadway miles in the Denver region, fatal and serious-injury crashes disproportionately occur on only 9% of these roads.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

The High-Injury Network serves as a key input for developing the regional active transportation network. Additionally, the crash profiles were used to inform the supplementary guidance documents: the Sidewalk Delivery Guide and Building Better a Bicycle+ Program.



Transportation Demand Management Strategic Plan

In December 2023, DRCOG adopted a Transportation Demand Management Strategic Plan to guide the agency's transportation demand management work through 2029. The strategic plan addresses the evolving transportation needs of the region's residents and visitors, and refreshes a previous regional short-range transportation demand management plan. The plan includes goals, recommendations and a toolkit.

Staff collaborated with partner agencies and transportation demand management stakeholders regionwide to identify four goals that would foster a sustainable and inclusive transportation ecosystem, including:

- Improve mobility and travel choices.
- Improve air quality.
- Improve transportation safety.
- Enhance transportation fairness.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

Travel trends identified by the strategic plan helped to guide development of the Active Transportation Plan, which likewise seeks to help shift drive-alone trips to more efficient travel modes. Strategic Plan strategies have informed policy and program recommendations in the Active Transportation Plan.

Shared Micromobility in the Denver Region

Since 2018, riders have taken over 25 million shared micromobility trips across the Denver region. Denver and Boulder's shared micromobility systems are among the most productive bike and scooter share services operating in the United States.

Originally published in 2020 and updated in June 2025, Shared Micromobility in the Denver Region details the trends, programs, regulations, operations and collaboration opportunities for jurisdictions in the Denver region with current or previous shared micromobility programs, including station-based or dockless bike share or scooter share systems. This report was developed in partnership with local governments and local operators to document the recent history and current state of the practice for operating and managing shared micromobility at the local level.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

Shared micromobilty trip characteristics—including aggregated routes, time of day, time of year and micromobiltity mode—informed development of the Regional Active Transportation Network. The Active Transportation Plan does not make recommendations about shared micromobility management and operations, instead deferring to this report and DRCOG's local partners.

Local plans

Eight of the ten counties and 37 of the 49 cities and towns in DRCOG's planning boundary have adopted either a dedicated active transportation plan, or an active transportation network as part of a larger transportation or comprehensive plan. These local plans are truly where the rubber hits the road—they set priority networks, prescribe facility types, identify funding options and even establish work programs to deliver walking and bicycling projects.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

Local networks were a key input in developing the three components of the regional network: Regional Active Transportation Corridors, Short Trip Opportunity Zones, and Pedestrian Focus Areas and reflect the interconnectedness of regional and local planning.

Sidewalk Delivery Guide and Bicycle+ Program Guide

These two guidance documents have been developed as supplements to the Active Transportation Plan, and are intended to fill critical gaps in best practices for planning, designing, implementing and maintaining active transportation infrastructure. These two documents are intended as living resources to be periodically updated.

Relationship to the Active Transportation Plan

The Sidewalk Delivery Guide and the Bicycle+ Program Guide were developed to coincide with the Active Transportation Plan, and are referenced throughout the plan.

2

Active transportation keeps the region moving

In this section:

- Introduction
- Active streets are safer streets
- Active transportation supports cleaner air and water
- Walking and bicycling power a vibrant economy
- A vision for the region's active transportation network

Introduction

The Denver region is home to 3.4 million people, who each day make an average of 15 million trips. One in eight of those is made by active modes—nearly 2 million daily trips by walking or bicycling. These are trips to school, to work, to run errands, to catch the bus or the train, to see friends and loved ones or even just for fun.

In 2023, drivers traveled roughly 85 million miles in vehicles every day throughout the region. By 2050, on our current trajectory, DRCOG anticipates that the region will add nearly 850,000 new residents reaching a total or 4.2 million people. Together, residents and workers will travel more than 107 million vehicle miles each day to a 26% increase in total person miles traveled in the region. Without change, travelers can expect to spend more than double the amount of time they currently spend sitting in traffic by 2050.

However, investments in active transportation can help reverse this trend. Based on a scenario planning exercise conducted for DRCOG's Regional Transportation Plan, implementing complete streets on the regional roadway system alone could potentially reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled nearly 6% by 2050. Coinciding investments in transit and supportive land use can further amplify walking and bicycling use. Packaging land use, frequent transit, and complete streets investments together could decrease the total number of vehicle miles traveled regionally, unleashing a progressive cycle of growth while reducing congestion. Shifting trips to more efficient modes—including walking, bicycling, micromobility and transit—is essential for the region to continue to grow without gridlock.

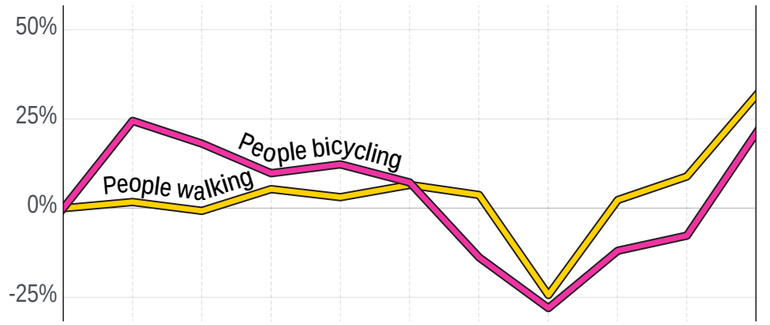
This plan sets forward the case for investing in and promoting active transportation across the Denver region. Meeting the region's goals to keep people moving reliably and safely means shifting more trips to efficient modes of transportation like walking and bicycling.

> Active transportation is a critical piece of the Denver region's transportation puzzle, without which the region cannot meet our targets for efficient movement, air quality, safety, and economic growth over the coming decades.

Active streets are safer streets

In 2023, 389 people walking and 144 people bicycling or using micromobility devices were killed or seriously injured on the region's streets. These numbers represent a 55 percent and 43 percent per capita increase respectively compared to ten years earlier. Even as the region's population has grown, per capita fatality and severe injuries for all travel modes have increased 35 percent, reflecting the current traffic safety crisis the Denver region faces (as does the rest of the U.S.).

Figure 1 Change in rates per capita of people killed or severely injured by travel mode



Source: DRCOG, 2013 – 2023

People walking and bicycling bear the disproportionate brunt of the safety crisis: while only 2% of crashes involve an active mode, 20% of fatalities or severe injuries are people walking or bicycling. DRCOG and its partners have committed to reducing all traffic fatalities to zero by 2040, starting with making the region's streets safer. DRCOG's 2020 Taking Action on Regional Vision Zero plan found that 75% of fatal or severe injury crashes occurred on just 9% of the region's streets, which formed the basis of the High Injury Network. 82% of fatal or severe pedestrian crashes and 67% of fatal or severe bicycling crashes occurred on the High Injury Network.

In responding to this safety crisis, investments in active transportation can play a crucial role in not only making streets more vibrant and inviting, but also in making streets safer for all users. Proven countermeasures that calm dangerous vehicle speeding and reduce regular conflicts between people walking, bicycling, rolling and driving are critical to both eliminating traffic injuries and improving access for active users. Additionally, national research has consistently demonstrated a "safety in numbers" effect—that as more people use active modes of travel and are visible on street, crash exposure decreases and systemic safety improves. Increasing walking and bicycling activity is a key tool for realizing the region's Vision Zero goal, and that effort starts with a safe, comfortable and connected network.

Active transportation supports cleaner air and water

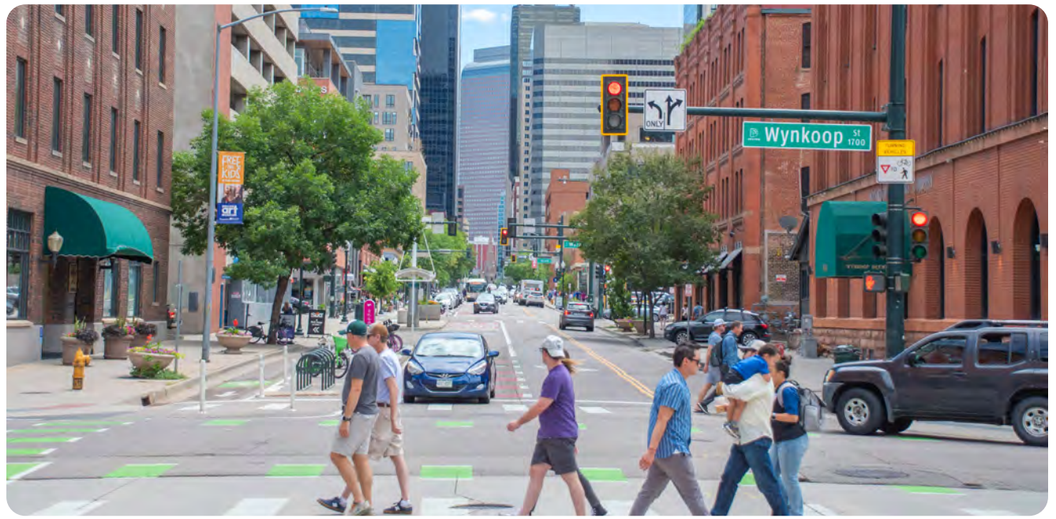
Reducing emissions and improving air quality are among DRCOG's core responsibilities as the metropolitan planning organization for the Denver region. Designated in 2004 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as a "non-attainment area" for air quality, DRCOG is part of a coalition of agencies responsible for bringing the Front Range's air quality into compliance with federal standards by reducing emissions. In particular, the Front Range has historically struggled with ground-source ozone and micro-particulates, both of which are driven by motor vehicle travel. Reducing these major sources of air pollution requires reducing single-occupant vehicle miles traveled, which means shifting trips to active transportation (as well as transit).

Additionally, in 2019, Colorado passed House Bill 19-1261: Climate Action Plan to Reduce Pollution. The bill sets a target of reducing statewide emissions by 90% from 2005 levels by 2050. With 34% of the region's greenhouse gas emissions come from the transportation sector, and 69% of transportation emissions are generated by gas-powered vehicles, meeting the region's requirements to improve air quality and provide a healthy environment for its population requires dramatically reducing vehicle emissions and shifting more travel to cleaner, more efficient modes.

Based on an analysis conducted for this plan, current walking and bicycling activities divert 8,730 metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions in the region every year. Along the same vein, an analysis completed for DRCOG's Priority Climate Action Plan in 2024, implementing the complete regional active transportation network could divert between 21,000 and one million additional metric tons of cumulative greenhouse gas emissions between 2025 and 2050.

Walking and bicycling fuel a vibrant economy

Active transportation investments help drive economic growth locally and regionally. A complete and connected active transportation system enables people to move freely, efficiently and reliably. Walking and bicycling networks increase foot traffic to local businesses, foster local cohesion in communities and improve local economic value. Sidewalks and amenities, like bicycle and micromobility parking, create more inviting commercial areas, encouraging people to shop locally and engage with their community.



The Denver region, with its mix of vibrant urban centers and iconic mountain trails and communities, is a national destination for outdoor tourism (especially bicycling and hiking). In 2016, CDOT completed a report entitled Economic and Health Benefits of Bicycling and Walking, which estimated that bicycling adds $1.1 billion to Colorado's economy each year (including household goods and equipment, bicycle event and vacation participation, and bicycle tourism from out-of-state visitors), and that walking activities add a further $497 million to the state's economy.

In addition to the economic activity generated by bicycle sales and tourism, active transportation provides significant savings to the region—according to an analysis conducted for this plan, walking and bicycling unlock $3.3 billion in health and air quality benefits to the region's economy each year. From diverted emissions to reduced time in traffic, these benefits accrue to everyone living and working in the region. Furthermore, localities implementing active transportation projects have realized true safety gains—which not only have a human impact in the number of lives saved and injuries prevented, but also a direct economic benefit in reduced medical costs, averted property damage and increased productivity. Investments in active transportation are investments in a safer, healthier, and more vibrant future.

A vision for the region's active transportation network

The Active Transportation Plan envisions a region where all people living, working and visiting have access to safe and comfortable places to walk, bike and roll.

The plan establishes a regional active transportation network that is complete, connected and comprehensive, and recommends actions for DRCOG and its partners to extend access to active transportation through policy, programs, guidance and encouragement.

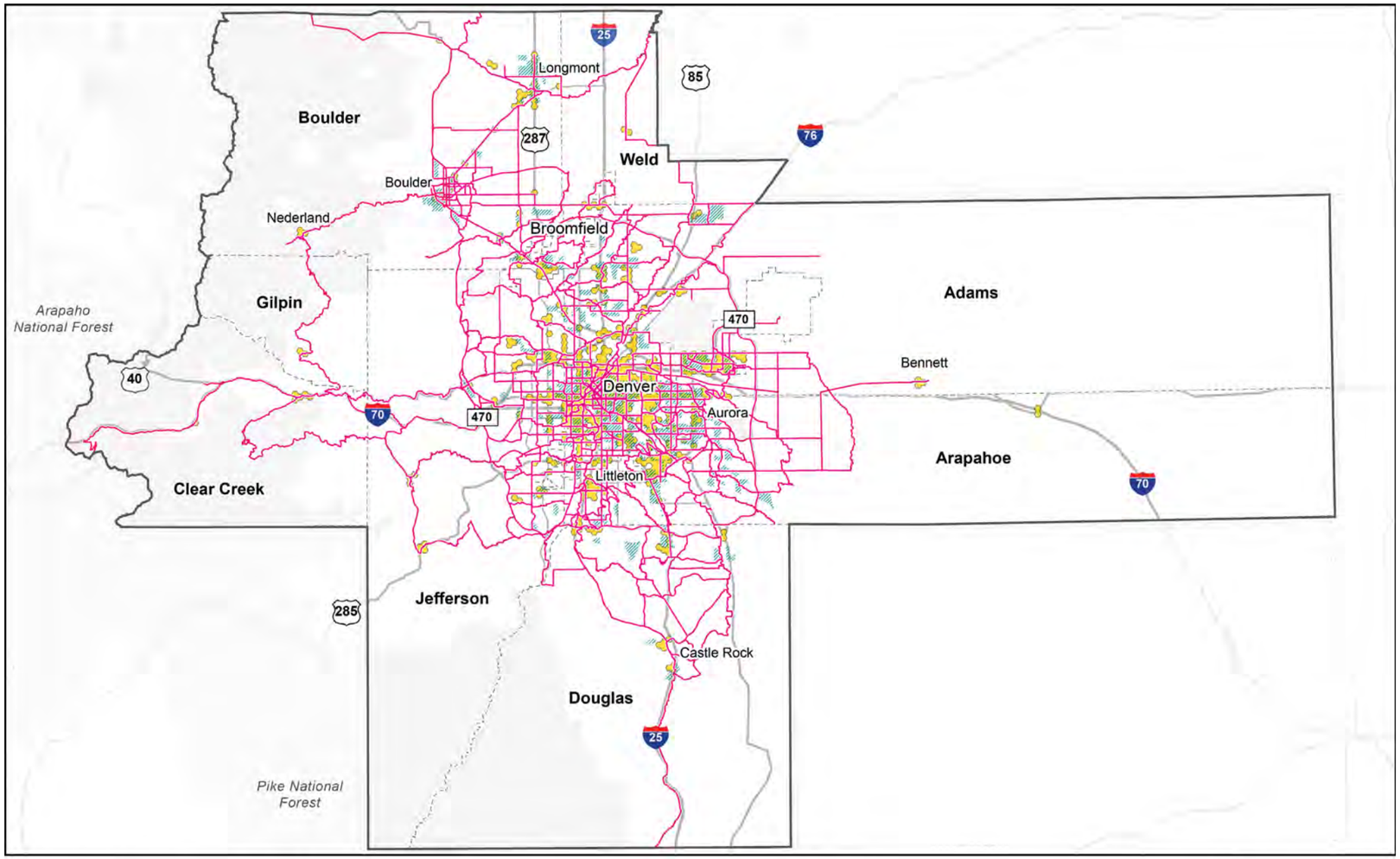
Components of the regional active transportation network

The regional active transportation network is made up of three primary components that focus on active transportation trips of various types and length on comfortable, connected, and safe facilities. The network helps to prioritize active transportation investment based on the role that the different components can play in mode shift and overall increase in active transportation trips.

- **Regional Active Transportation Corridors:** Linear routes that are regionally significant and where people walking, bicycling, and using other active modes should expect a high level of comfort and substantive safety. The corridors network reflects both existing and proposed facilities.
- **Short Trip Opportunity Zones:** Areas where a high concentration of trips two miles or less in length by all modes are occurring and where investment in high-comfort, safe active transportation facilities may shift trips to walking and bicycling.
- **Pedestrian Focus Areas:** Areas where a high level of pedestrian activity is occurring or is expected to occur based on destination attractors and where there may be a higher level of need based on pedestrian crash history and demographic factors.

The complete interactive network can accessed at **gis.drcog.org/datatool**.

Map 1 Pedestrian Focus Areas, Short Trip Opportunity Zones and Regional Active Transportation Corridors (regional map)



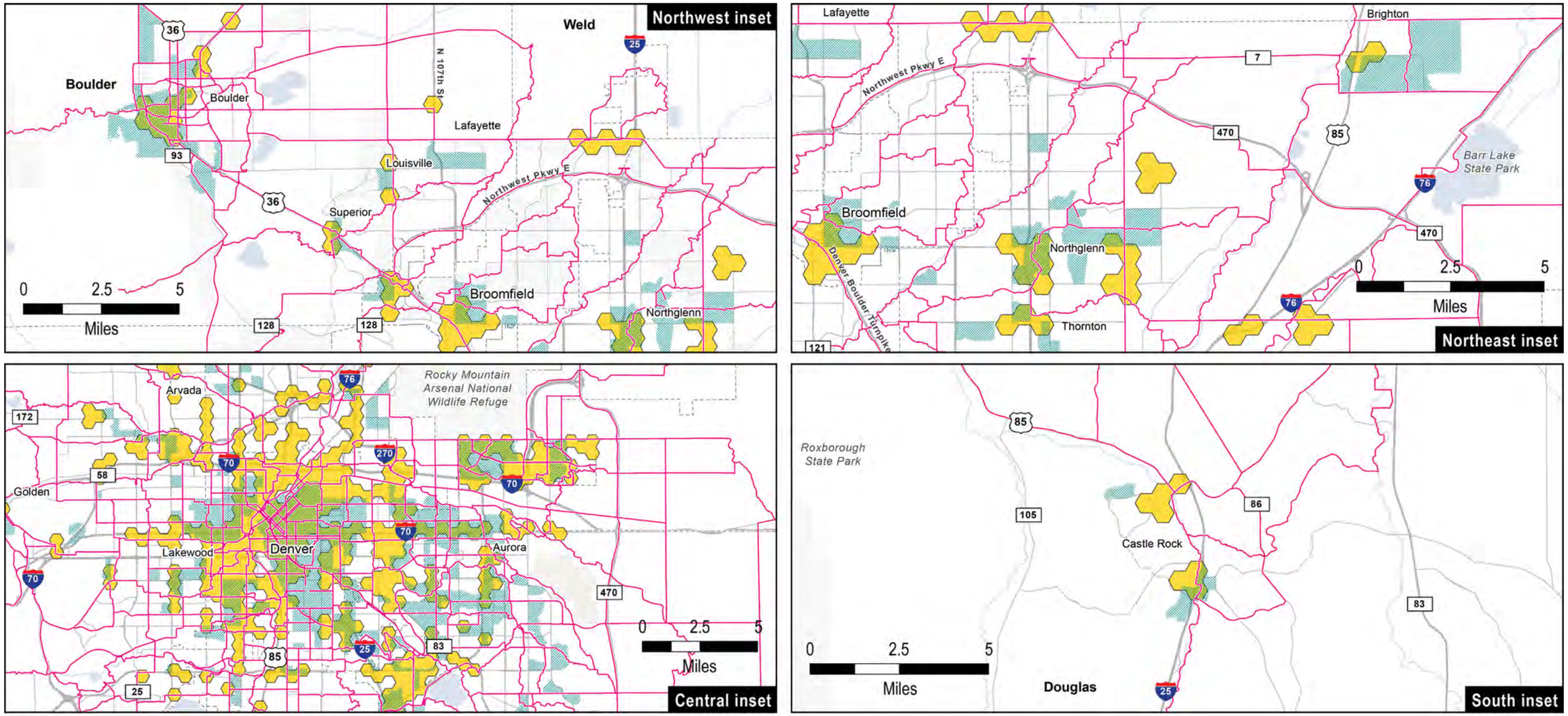
This map combines Pedestrian Focus Areas, Short Trip Opportunity Zones and Regional Active Transportation Corridors together.

Pedestrian Focus Area
Short Trip Opportunity Zone
Regional Active Transportation Corridor
DRCOG boundary

N
0 5 10
Miles

Source Data: DRCOG, 2025
Esri Basemap; SR 6428

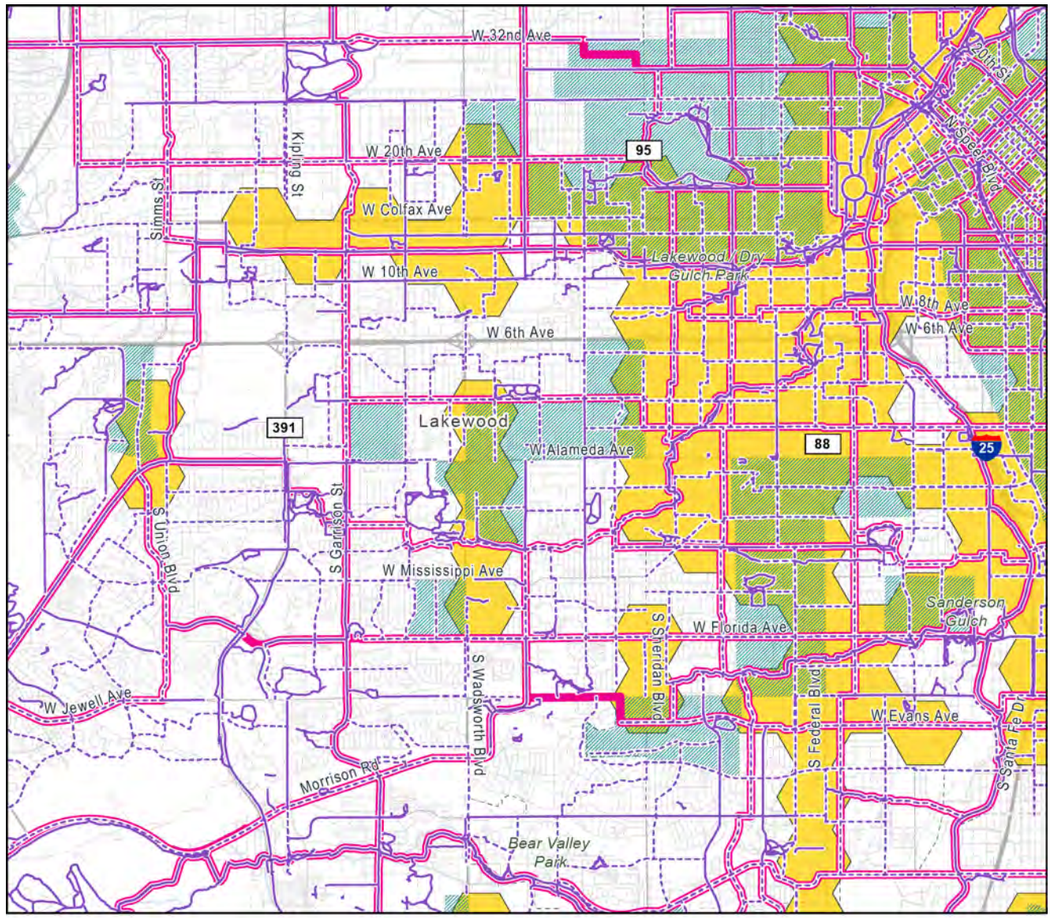
Map 2 Pedestrian Focus Areas, Short Trip Opportunity Zones and Regional Active Transportation Corridors (inset maps)



These maps combine Pedestrian Focus Areas, Short Trip Opportunity Zones, and Regional Active Transportation Corridors together.

Source Data: DRCOG, 2025
Esri Basemap; SR 6428

Map 3 Combining local data with Active Transportation Plan layers



How to use the regional Active Transportation Plan

Counties, cities and towns in the Denver region can use the three components of the regional active transportation network to seek funding, coordinate across jurisdiction lines, guide local planning and project development, and seek out best practices in active transportation network planning and implementation.

A critical fourth component of the regional active transportation network is local active transportation networks, which are planning, designed and implemented by counties, cities and towns. DRCOG has historically funded and supported development and implementation of local active transportation plans.

Local plans define local priorities and identify the fine-grained network that is necessary to support safe walking and bicycling in area communities. While not all local projects will rise to the level of regional significance (as illustrated in Map 3), the regional network can inform local network decision-making and unlock funding or support opportunities.

DRCOG member agencies were involved in the development of the three components of the regional active transportation network to ensure alignment with local plans. As examples, local practitioners are encouraged to use the regional network for many possible types of activities:

- When developing updates to local bicycle or pedestrian plans, the regional network can inform network planning or prioritization. A local jurisdiction may adjust facility routing, network density, or recommended facility type based on the regional network.
- In development of Transportation Improvement Program project applications (or during discretionary grant applications), sponsors can review whether a project coincides with the regional network geographies. DRCOG has developed online data tools to assist sponsors with quickly evaluating project extents relative to the region's modal networks.
- Localities can consult the active transportation network when developing projects that reach or cross jurisdictional boundaries, and seek opportunities to collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions.

The following chapters will provide additional details on each of the components of the regional active transportation network and provide examples of how they can be used by DRCOG and regional agencies to promote active transportation.

3

Universal access to walking

This chapter details the key challenges for improving walking conditions throughout region, sets guiding themes, and establishes the first leg of the active transportation network: Pedestrian Focus Areas.

In this section:

- A growing region with growing pains
- Complete the regional pedestrian network

A growing region with growing pains

Since 2010, the Denver region's population has added nearly a half million residents—growing from 2.9 to 3.4 million people—while the number of jobs has grown by 33%. In each year since 2015, the region has added at least 20,000 housing units annually (and as many as 35,000 units at the production peak). This continued growth is a boon to the region's economy but underscores the need to construct new transportation infrastructure to accommodate increased activity. In addition to new growth and infrastructure, jurisdictions are continually working to upgrade or retrofit existing streets with accessible sidewalks. Pedestrian infrastructure is critical to enabling people to move freely, reliably and safely. As the region continues to grow, improving the safety, connectivity and coverage of that network is critical to supporting current and future walking and rolling trips, and to provide universal access to the transportation system.

The COVID-19 pandemic transformed travel

Since March 2020, the way people move around the region has fundamentally shifted; while annual vehicle traffic volumes have rebounded to their 2019 pre-pandemic levels, the types of trips people are making, the days and times that people travel, and the modes of transportation have settled into a new normal. For instance, the share of workers who telework more than doubled from 9% to 22% from 2019 to 2023. Additionally, daily transit ridership continues to rebound, but is still roughly 40% lower than it was pre-pandemic. While there is evidence that recreational walking trips increased during the early years of the pandemic, more workers are staying home more days of the week, and are therefore walking and riding transit to work less frequently. There is also some evidence that walking for transportation has receded since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevertheless, DRCOG estimates that on a typical weekday, people make 1.6 million walking trips—8% of the region's daily travel—and expects the number of daily walking trips to grow to as much as 2.2 million by 2050. DRCOG and its partners are committed to investing in a frequent, connected and reliable transit system that is supported by complete streets infrastructure. Supporting these investments with comfortable and connected sidewalk networks that serve first- and last-mile trips to transit; social and recreational walking around neighborhoods; and functional walking trips to school, to parks, to stores, and to community centers and social institutions are key to meeting the region's targets for efficient and reliable mobility.

A national and regional safety crisis

The Denver region (like the rest of the U.S.) is facing a generational safety crisis for pedestrians. Between 2019 and 2023, while the population increased 8% and vehicle miles traveled stayed roughly even (after a sharp dip in 2020 and 2021), crashes resulting in death or serious injury for people walking increased a shocking 37%. Pedestrians were overrepresented in serious crashes in the region—people walking were involved in 2% of total crashes from 2021-2023, but 15% of fatal or severe injury crashes.

Different population groups are impacted disproportionately by the pedestrian safety crisis. For example, while comprising half the population, men are involved in two-thirds of severe pedestrian crashes. Based on DRCOG's index of demographic factors, there were 3.7 times as many pedestrians killed or severely injured in the most marginalized quartile of Census tracts compared to the least marginalized. Finally, older adults traveling by active modes—the fastest growing cohort in the region—are more than twice as likely to be killed or severely injured during a crash than someone in their 20s.

What did focus groups tell us?

DRCOG conducted focus groups in 2025 with older adults, refugees, blind travel trainers and families with school-age children. Key findings included:

Opportunities to cross the street can be prohibitively far apart, and the crossings themselves are uncomfortably long. Signal crossing time can be too short, especially for slower walking speeds.

The time and distance required to reach destinations can be a barrier to walking for many trips.

Regular opportunities for shelter and seating are important in the pedestrian environment.

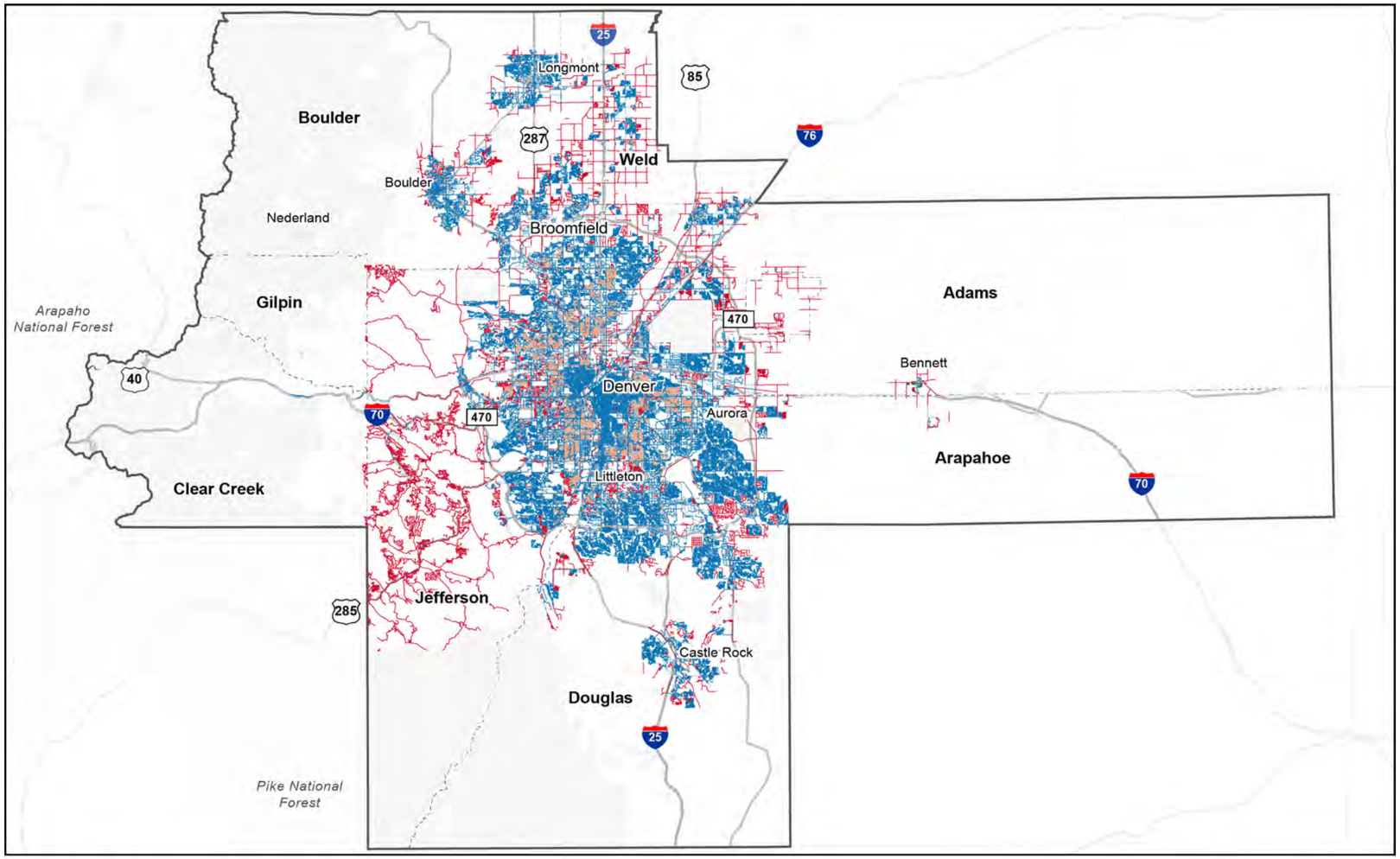
Consistent design treatments and materials enable users with disabilities to interpret and navigate more easily.

An incomplete walking network

Of the region's more than 15,000 centerline miles of street network, an estimated 58% of streets have the foundational elements of a pedestrian network: sidewalks, curb ramps and crosswalks. Many of the streets predate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and require capital improvements to be brought into compliance with federal law. Based on available data, an estimated 23% of the region's existing sidewalks do not meet the basic standard width required by the Public Right of Way Accessibility Guidelines (which requires continuous pedestrian access routes that are at least four feet wide). Additionally, an unknown portion of sufficiently wide sidewalks or existing curb ramps may still need improvement to reach ADA compliance—they may be interrupted by obstructions, have degraded surface quality or steep cross-slopes or lack required accessibility features such as tactile mats or accessible pedestrian signals. Even the sidewalks that meet legal requirements may be due for expansion to meet pedestrian demand and to be ready to serve anticipated growth in active trips.

During engagement for this plan, the project team heard from residents of the region that social walking is a high priority, especially for families and older adults. To truly achieve the goals of Metro Vision—to nurture healthy and livable communities and cultivate a connected multimodal transportation system—the walking network cannot simply meet minimal standards; it must be comfortable, inclusive and inviting.

Map 4 Sidewalk coverage (regional map)



The sidewalk coverage map shows street segments with no sidewalks, sidewalks that are likely sub-standard width, compliant sidewalks on one side of the street only and compliant sidewalks on both sides of the street.

- No sidewalks
- Sub-standard sidewalks
- Compliant sidewalk on one side of the street
- Compliant sidewalks on both sides of the street
- DRCOG boundary

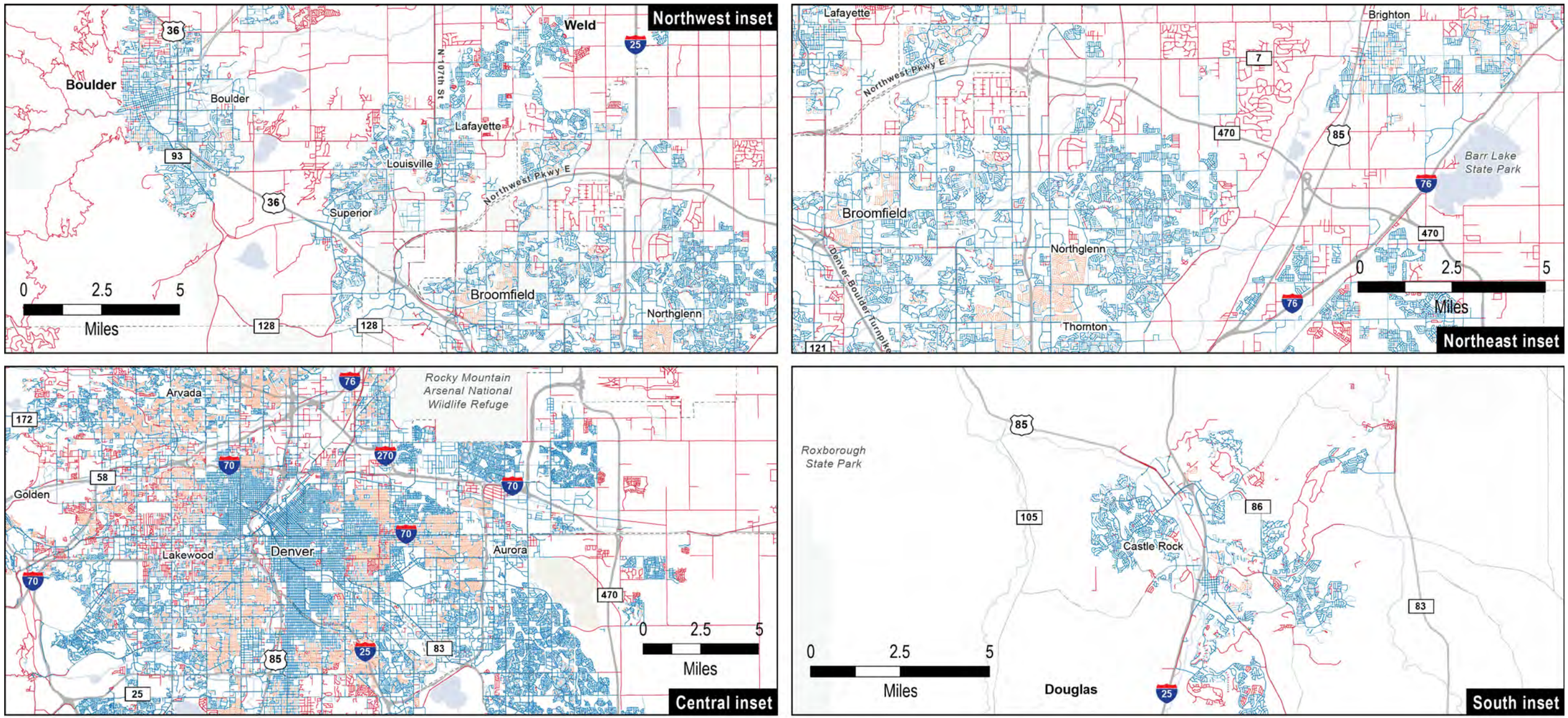
N

0 5 10
Miles

Source Data: DRCOG, 2025
Esri Basemap; SR 6428

Note: Planimetric data

Map 5 Sidewalk coverage (inset maps)

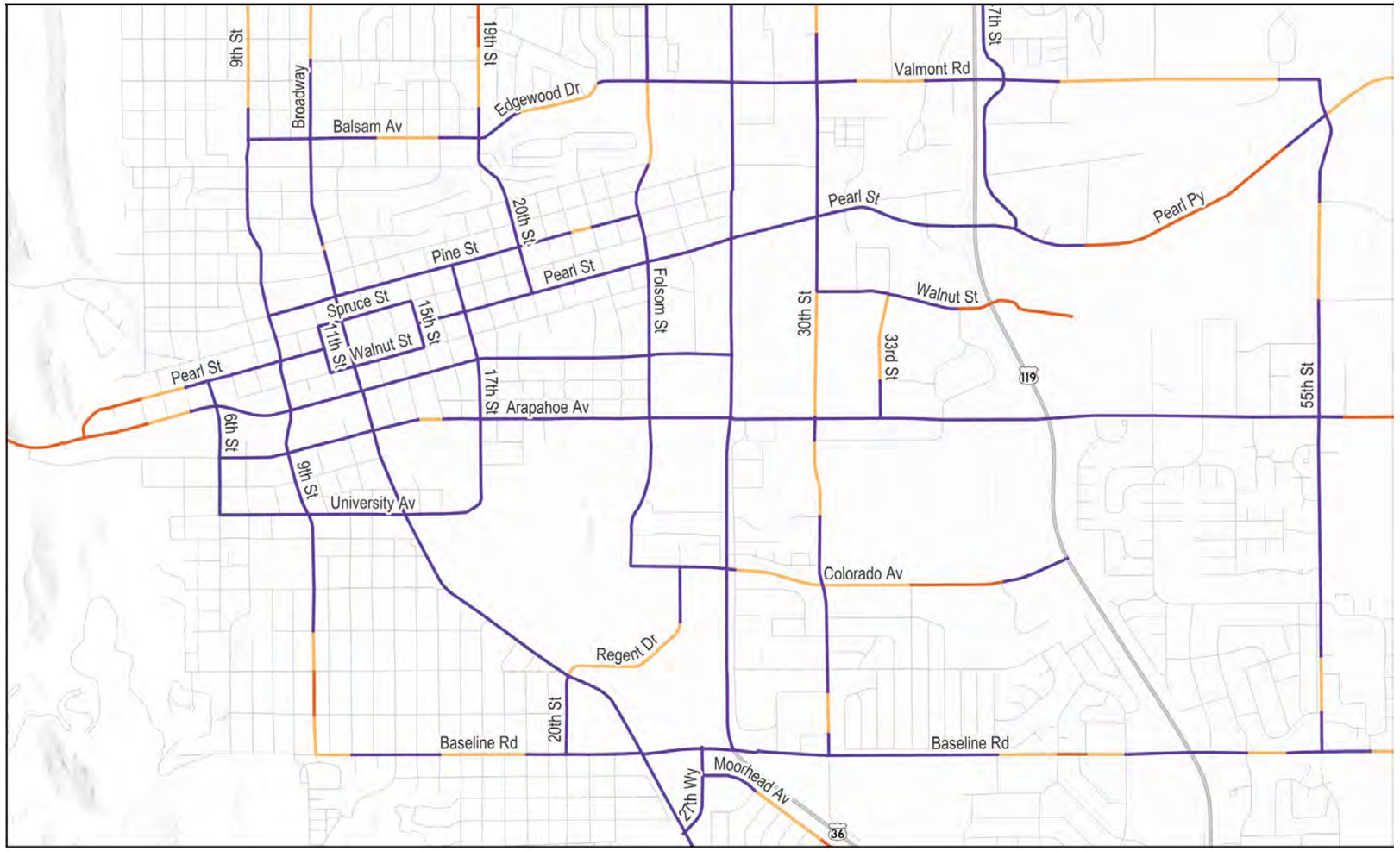


These sidewalk coverage maps show street segments with no sidewalks, sidewalks that are not compliant, compliant sidewalks on one side of the street only, and compliant sidewalks on both sides of the street.

Source Data: DRCOG, 2025
Esri Basemap; SR 6428

Note: Planimetric data

Map 6 Crossing gap analysis zoomed into an example local area



This gap analysis map shows the average distance between comfortable pedestrian crossings on arterial and collector street segments.

Distance between comfortable crossings

Less than 660 feet	660 feet to 0.25 miles	0.25 miles or greater
Less than 0.25 miles	0.25 to 0.5 miles	0.5 miles or greater

N

0 0.25 0.5

Miles

SOURCE: DRCOG analysis, 2025
Mapbox Basemap; SR 6428

In addition to sidewalk availability, a primary barrier to walking is a lack of safe and comfortable crossings along major corridors. The quality and distance between crossings are important elements that affect the level of comfort and feelings of safety that people experience when walking and rolling.

An analysis conducted for this plan found that over 80% of arterial and collector streets in the region's suburban contexts and 95% of streets in rural contexts (as defined by the Regional Vision Zero plan) may have prohibitively long distances between opportunities to cross the street: a quarter-mile in urban and suburban areas, and a half-mile in rural areas. When distance between comfortable crosswalks exceeds these thresholds, pedestrians must choose between either walking far out of route to cross an arterial or collector road, may cross in a less safe location between higher quality crossings or may not walk at all.

These gaps are a priority for further examination and intervention. This is especially important where they fall within one of the active transportation network components such as Pedestrian Focus Areas or Short Trip Opportunity Zones.

Complete the regional pedestrian network

The Active Transportation Plan identifies six themes for completing the regional walking network. These build on the themes and outcomes established in Metro Vision, the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, the Regional Complete Streets Toolkit and Taking Action on Regional Vision Zero. Themes that guide the Walking element include:

1

Great walking facilities anchor great places

Walkable, human-scale streets encourage people not just to travel through but to stop, stay and interact with urban and town centers, building permanent social and economic benefits and seeding a positive cycle of investment, activation and growth.

2

Accessible walking networks support social travel

According to the 2022 National Household Travel Survey, only 7% of walking trips are work commutes; the vast majority of walking trips are either social, recreational, school or shopping trips. Pedestrian facilities designed for side-by-side travel and passing provide a basic level of service, respect the diversity and dignity of pedestrians and their travel needs, and encourage more active travel.

3

Keeping pedestrians safe requires safe streets

The Denver region—like the nation as a whole—is in the midst of a pedestrian safety crisis. Since 2013, fatal and severe pedestrian crashes have increased across the region 55%. While vehicle design offers protection for motor vehicle occupants, people walking enjoy no such protection. People walking must rely on roadway design and operations for safety. Achieving the region's Vision Zero goal begins with safe streets for walking.

4

A complete, connected sidewalk network is foundational for equitable transportation

A complete and connected sidewalk network is critical to provide universal mobility and access. This plan uses the framework of "targeted universalism": to achieve the goal of a universally accessible pedestrian network, we must implement strategies targeted to those facing acute barriers created by the existing network.

5

Knit connections across infrastructural barriers

The regional walking network is often made up of "islands" of connectivity—local neighborhood streets that are safe and comfortable are bounded and isolated by wide, fast, difficult-to-cross roadways. Knitting together these islands with safe and regular crossings is key to unlocking pedestrian travel.

6

Pedestrians are the most sensitive to environmental experience

People walking most acutely experience the environmental impacts from other travel modes. Historically, the Denver region has grappled with air and water pollution resulting in large part from the transportation sector, and people walking bear the disproportionate brunt of that burden. Furthermore, during seasonal weather events such as rain, snow or extreme heat, pedestrians are the first to lose access to the region's transportation system and may be among the last to have access restored. Addressing these environmental inequities is key to promoting walking and active transportation.

Accelerating sidewalk projects and programs

The first leg of the regional active transportation network is the Pedestrian Focus Areas: small districts where DRCOG will prioritize support for expansion and improvement of multimodal streets and trails to make walking safer, more comfortable and more accessible. Pedestrian Focus Areas constitute roughly 125 square miles—or 2.3% of the region. These areas are home to an estimated 710,000 people, or 21% of the region's population. The geographies were identified in consultation with DRCOG member governments, partners, and stakeholders as places where investment in the pedestrian environment will have the most significant impact: extending accessible walking spaces to key demographic groups, improving safety for all users, and supporting a balanced and resilient transportation system.

Pedestrian Focus Areas were created by assessing and indexing a series of population and infrastructure factors, including:

Demographics

High propensity to walk demographic groups, including:

- Households without vehicle access.
- Low-income households.
- People with disabilities.
- Households with young children or older adults.
- Other indicators of historically marginalized communities.

Destinations

Proximity to high-propensity walking destinations including schools, parks and shared-use path access points.

Transit

Proximity to RTD transit stops and stations, especially those slated for frequent service.

Safety

Severity-weighted propensity of pedestrian crashes, as well as proximity to the regional high-injury network.

Employment

Job density.

Land use

Urban/suburban/rural context, as defined in the Regional Vision Zero plan.

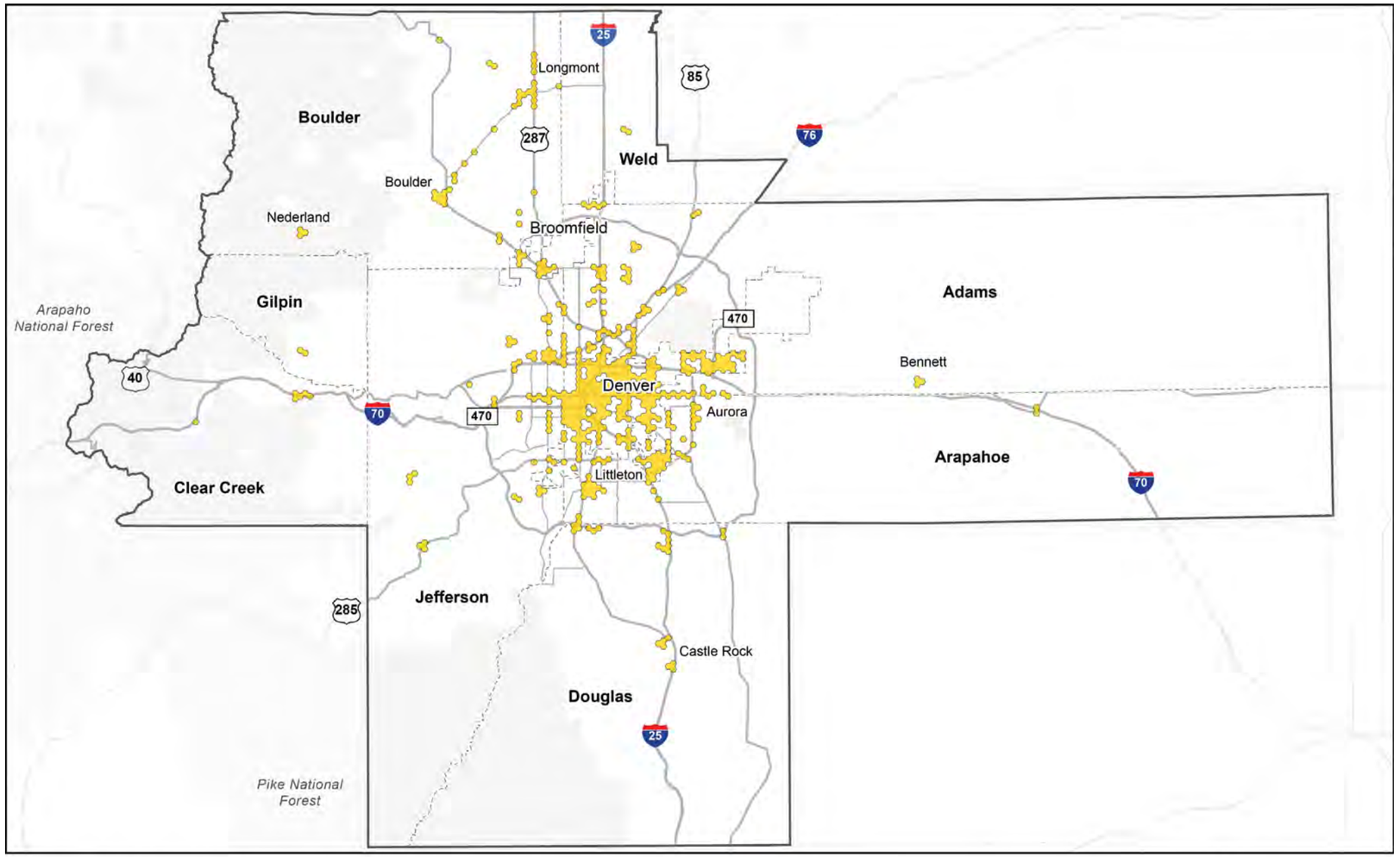
Growth

Existing and emerging Urban Centers as defined in Metro Vision.

Finally, the geographies were reviewed with plan stakeholders and manually adjusted.

As illustrated in page 23, Pedestrian Focus Areas reflect strategic locations where DRCOG encourages investment in and expansion of the walking network.

Map 7 Pedestrian Focus Areas (regional map)



Pedestrian Focus Areas identify areas with high population density; areas near key destinations, including transit; areas near pedestrian collisions and the High Injury Network and Critical Corridors; areas with high mobility, socioeconomic, or demographic needs; areas with high employment; areas within urban centers; and areas within urban, suburban or rural area types.

Pedestrian Focus Area
DRCOG boundary

N
0 5 10
Miles

Source Data: DRCOG, 2025
Esri Basemap; SR 6428

How to use the Pedestrian Focus Areas component

In addition to serving as a key planning tool for DRCOG in administering programs such as the Transportation Improvement Program, local jurisdictions are strongly encouraged to utilize the Pedestrian Focus Areas as one piece of their planning work in conjunction with their own tools and approaches. The Pedestrian Focus Areas can be used to guide the following activities:

1. Installing and/or prioritizing of pedestrian infrastructure, like sidewalk and pedestrian crossing improvements.
2. In combination with safety analyses, improvement of crossings using proven countermeasures such as lane reallocations, median refuges, curb extensions, daylighting or the elimination of left- or right-turn pockets at intersections to increase safety.
3. Installation of controlled or mid-block crossings to reduce distances between comfortable crossing opportunities
4. Conducting education and encouragement campaigns to promote active transportation and walking trips, in partnership with key destinations within Pedestrian Focus Areas.

In addition to the Active Transportation Plan, DRCOG has developed several companion publications to support regional and local network development.

For walking, the Sidewalk Delivery Guide provides detailed and locally relevant guidance for the planning, design, funding, implementation and evaluation of pedestrian facilities and programs.

Map 8 Pedestrian Focus Areas (inset maps)

Pedestrian Focus Areas identify areas with high population density; areas near key destinations, including transit; areas near pedestrian collisions and the High Injury Network and Critical Corridors; areas with high mobility, socioeconomic, or demographic needs; areas with high employment; areas within urban centers; and areas within urban, suburban or rural area types.

Source Data: DRCOG, 2025
Esri Basemap; SR 6428

4

A complete and connected bicycle+ network

This chapter details the key challenges for improving bicycling and micromobility (also referred to as “bicycle+”) conditions and trends, set guiding themes, and establishes the remaining legs of the active transportation network: Short Trip Opportunity Zones and Regional Active Transportation Corridors.

In this section:

- Keeping our momentum
- Expand the bicycling and micromobility network

Keeping our momentum

The Denver region has long been an outdoor recreation magnet and its growth over the past several decades has led to a complementary growth in people who ride bicycles for recreation and transportation. This trend is not only a reflection of changing demographics; it also reflects the increased investment in comprehensive, connected and dedicated bicycling infrastructure across the region.

Making generational investments

Since DRCOG's Board adopted the last regional Active Transportation Plan in 2019, local jurisdictions and partners have dramatically expanded the region's bicycling network—the regional high-comfort network (which includes either fully separated bikeways or streets where vehicle speeds and volumes have been calmed to a comfortable threshold) has grown by over 300 miles, a 23% increase in five years.

Table 1 Miles of bicycle facilities within DRCOG's boundary, 2019 – 2024

Facility type (miles)	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Change
Shared-use paths / sidepaths	1,317	1,364	1,397	1,520	1,561	1,591	21%
Separated bicycle lanes	8	12	13	20	32	34	320%
Bicycle boulevards / neighborhood bikeways	-	-	-	-	8	9	n/a
Bicycle lanes	626	659	695	821	857	872	39%

Source: DRCOG

The region has made significant progress toward implementing the bicycle network over the last five years. Constructed miles of Regional Active Transportation Corridors increased 38% between 2019 and 2025, and miles of bicycle facilities captured in DRCOG's Bicycle Facility Inventory increased 65%. Importantly, this includes a 26% increase in high-comfort bicycle facilities (as noted earlier), a 256% increase in the percentage of arterial and collector streets with bicycle facilities within one mile of transit stations, and an 88% increase in the percentage of transportation-disadvantaged population within half-mile distance of an existing Regional Active Transportation Corridor.

The 2050 Regional Transportation Plan highlights active transportation as a priority, and DRCOG and local member investment in the network reflect that. Since 2019, the Transportation Improvement Program has supported $367.8 million in projects that include active transportation elements, including 664 miles of bikeway. Significantly, this includes a 26% increase in high-comfort shared-use paths and a quadrupling of separated bicycle lane mileage. Investment in facilities like these improves the safety and connectivity of the regional and local networks—two key elements to increase people's comfort and confidence in taking trips by bicycle.

Bicycle facility types

Shared-used paths / sidepaths

Fully separated bikeways that are typically shared with pedestrians and other non-motorized users, though bicycle+ vehicles may be separated from pedestrians as activity increases. Shared-use paths run in their own alignment, while sidepaths run adjacent to the roadway. Paths are typically at least ten feet wide and should be widened as activity increases. Shared-use paths are generally high-comfort and should be suitable for users of all ages, abilities and capabilities. Well-designed sidepaths are high-comfort to most users including the Interested but Concerned, though intersections create distinct operational challenges.

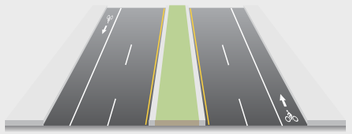
Separated bicycle lanes

On-street bikeways that are fully separated from vehicle and pedestrian traffic by physical and visual barriers such as parked vehicles, delineators, bollards, parking stops, concrete barriers or curbing. Separated bicycle lanes are high-comfort to most users including the Interested but Concerned, and can meet an all ages, abilities and capabilities threshold.

Bicycle boulevards / neighborhood bikeways

On-street bikeway where people bicycling operate in mixed traffic in the entire roadway, but motor vehicle traffic speed and volume is managed to reduce differential and increase comfort. Prevailing motor vehicle speeds should be held to 20 – 25 miles per hour, and volumes held to 1,500 – 2,000 vehicles per day. Successful bicycle boulevards are high-comfort for most users.

Bicycle lanes



On-street bicycle facilities demarcated by markings and signage, that may be buffered but operate adjacent to motor vehicles lanes. Bicycle lanes vary in level of comfort based on motor vehicle speed and volume, and primarily serve more confident and experienced bicyclists. Bicycle lanes are at least five feet wide, and buffers are generally two to three feet wide.

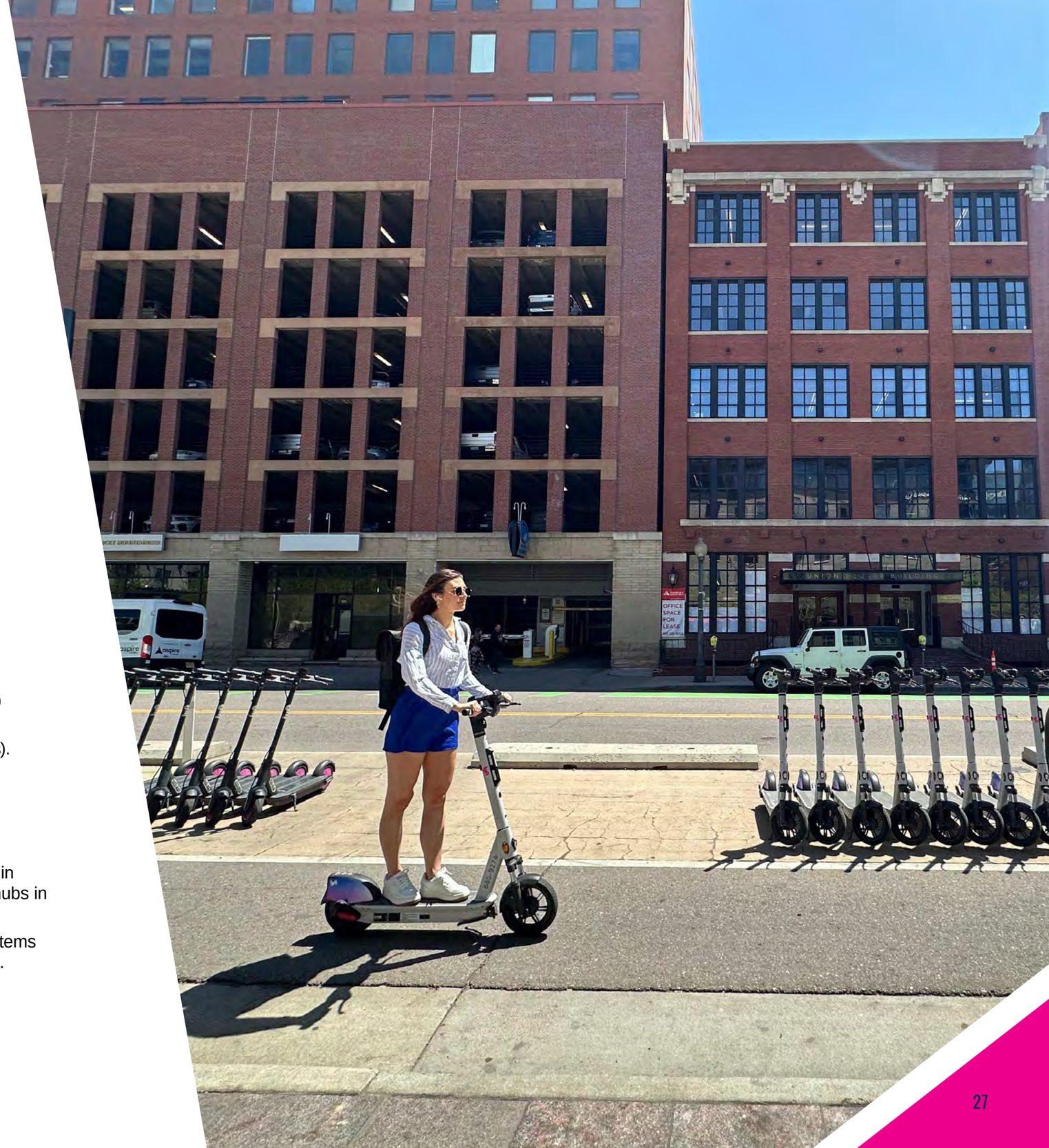
A culture of innovation

The Denver region has a history of being on the cutting edge of innovation, particularly related to multimodal infrastructure and programs. The region was the first in the U.S. to host a modern municipal bike share program (Denver B-Cycle in 2010). Jurisdictions in the region have emerged as national leaders in implementing a number of innovative design approaches to improve user comfort and experience while prioritizing safety. The State of Colorado and multiple cities have leading e-bike rebate and incentive programs. And DRCOG's own Way to Go program hosts the nation's second largest Bike to Work Day annually in June. Together, these innovative efforts work to make bicycling and rolling safer, more inviting and more inclusive.

Denver was host to the nation's first modern bike share system. Originally piloted during the Democratic National Convention in 2008, the City and County of Denver established a non-profit in 2010 to roll out B-Cycle, a station-based bike share system that operated until 2019. The initial system evolved into a privately operated, publicly regulated dockless bike and scooter-share system, which officially launched as a pilot in 2018 during which four million shared bike and scooter trips were taken. Denver and Boulder's current shared micromobility systems are among the most productive systems in North America. Currently, five jurisdictions operate shared micromobility systems:

- City and County of Denver, a privately-operated dockless bike and scooter system (9,000+ vehicles).
- City of Boulder, a nonprofit-operated station-based bike system (300 bikes) and privately-operated scooter system (900 vehicles).
- City of Arvada, a privately-operated dockless scooter system (200 vehicles).
- Meridian Metropolitan District in northern Douglas County manages a 100 vehicle program with 12 parking stations.
- City of Greenwood Village, a privately-operated dockless scooter system (20+ vehicles).
- Additionally, CDOT piloted a shared e-bike program at Chatfield Reservoir in 2024, and Smart Commute is currently piloting shared e-bikes at mobility hubs in Adams County, Thronton, Westminster, and Northglenn.

For a detailed summary and analysis of the region's shared micromobility systems and trends, refer to **DRCOG's Shared Micromobility in the Denver Region**.



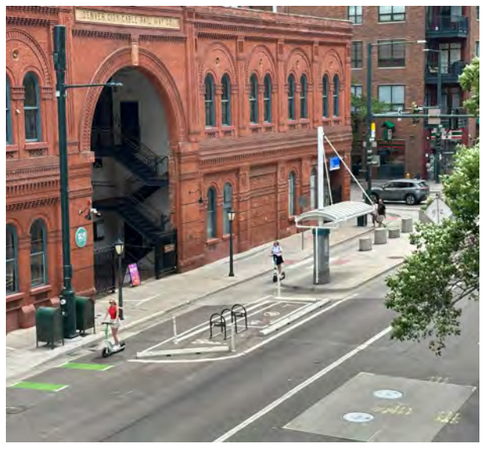
Coinciding with the entrepreneurial expansion of shared micromobility options, the region's governments have also led on advancing safe and comfortable design approaches. In a region where 60% of residents identify as interested in bicycling for transportation but concerned about doing so in traffic, the region's work to test, evaluate, and refine innovative street designs is setting a cadence for transforming the multimodal transportation network. Some notable design advances are shown on the right.

Protected corner/turn wedge

Bikeway means of separation

Bicycle signals

Green conflict markings



Transit boarding islands

Speed humps and cushions

Mini traffic circles and traffic diverters

On- and off-street bicycle parking

Along with the development of innovative designs, the region is at the forefront of developing complementary design resources and codifying engineering tools into the planning process. The Bicycle+ Program Guide provides further detail on how the region is accelerating design and construction of bicycle facilities for all ages, abilities and capabilities.

Access is also critical. Physical infrastructure that supports safe, connected and comfortable active travel is a necessary but not singular component to increasing the number of people taking trips by bicycling, scootering or rolling. Access to these devices is another important component, and the region is a national leader in several programs that expand access.

- **Denver launched one of the nation's first e-bike and cargo e-bike rebate programs in 2022,** using money from the voter approved sales tax that established a Climate Protection Fund. Since its launch, 9,169 e-bike vouchers have been redeemed in Denver alone, with just under half claimed by income-qualified participants, and approximately 46% for cargo e-bikes. To date, the city has put $8.6 million towards vouchers.
- **Following Denver's lead, the Cities of Boulder, Longmont and Lafayette have also piloted or implemented e-bike rebate programs,** often partnering with local bike shops or utility providers to administer. Across the state, the Colorado Energy Office (CEO) e-bike tax credit program also provided a $450 discount on qualified e-bikes and a $500 tax credit to participating retailers, which ran through 2025. This program was an evolution of the e-bike rebate program CEO in 2023, which helped 7,985 Coloradans purchase an e-bike.
- To encourage both overall mode shift and a shift towards less polluting vehicles, Denver's **Mobility Incentive Program offers funding support through the Climate Protection Fund for e-bike libraries and secure bike storage** for residents in under-resourced communities and E-Cargo Bikes for businesses for deliveries.
- **DRCOG's Way to Go program hosts the region's annual Bike to Work Day,** which brought out an estimated 19,000 riders in 2024, eliminating more than 725,000 vehicle miles traveled. Partners hosted 256 Bike to Work stations across the Front Range and Western Slope, and more than 500 businesses participated in the Business Challenge. While Bike to Work Day is only one day, it results in durable change to commuting habits: 25% of riders were first time participants, and participants' likelihood of continuing to commute by bike increased 5% following the event.

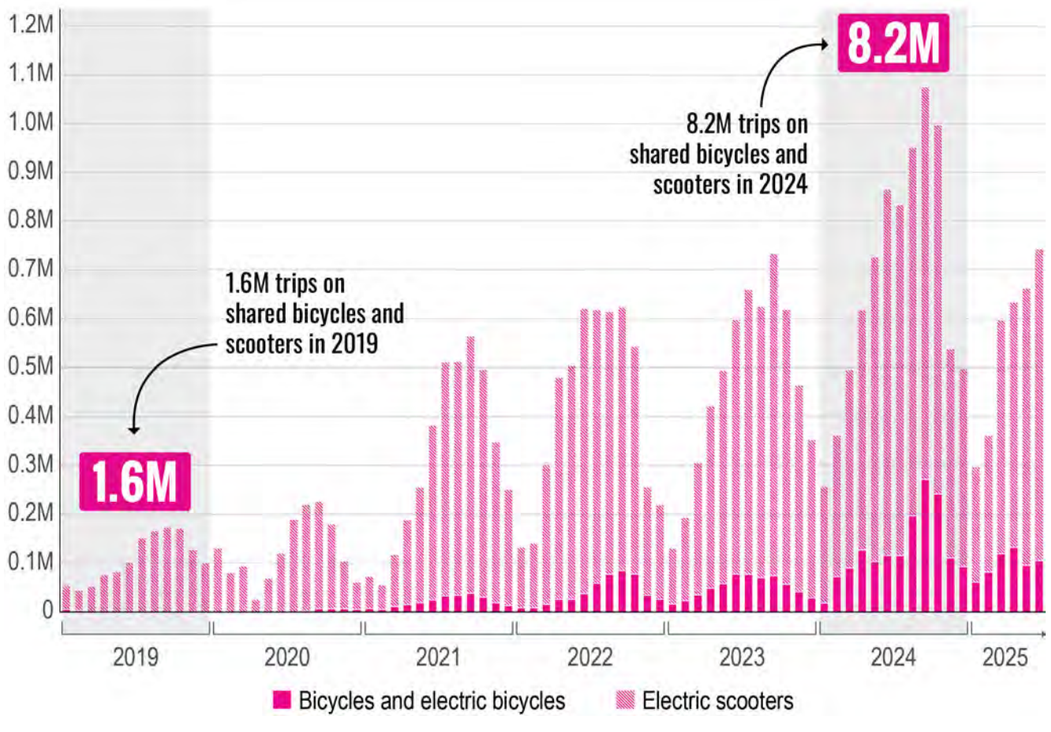
Building towards a more active future

There are several proxy measures that indicate sustained growth in bicycling across the region, despite DRCOG not having a master metric to assess network-wide bicycling volumes.

- Streetlight, a big data platform that uses mobile device Location-Based Services data to model activity by mode, observed a 32% increase in daily bicycling volumes within DRCOG's boundary between 2019 and 2022.
- Users on Strava, an activity tracking application for commuters and recreational riders, logged more than two million bicycle trips in 2024, a 41% increase over the 1.4 million logged regionally in 2019.

Annual ridership of shared micromobility systems has increased more than five-fold between 2019 and 2024, from 1.6 million trips to more than 8.2 million trips.

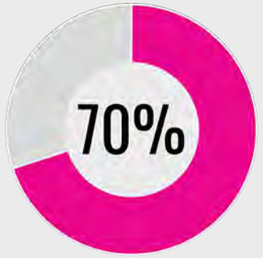
Figure 2 Monthly shared micromobility trips across the Denver region



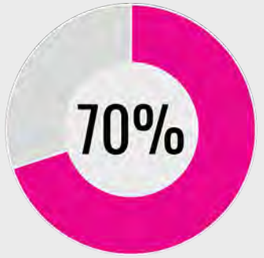
Source: DRCOG, 2019 – 2025

Taken together, these indicators suggest that the region's investments are powering significant increases in bicycling, scootering and rolling for transportation. However, to continue making gains, the region must continue to build high-comfort bicycling networks.

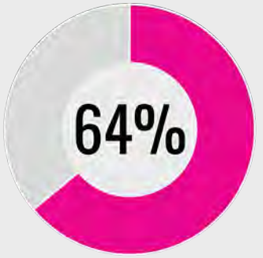
A 2018 statistically significant survey of the region's residents found that:



70% of people might bicycle for transportation more if they felt safer from traffic while riding

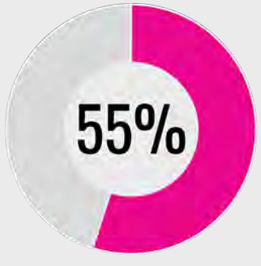


70% might bicycle more if there were more off-street trails or paths near them

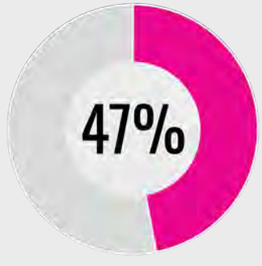


64% might ride more if there were more barrier-protected bicycle lanes.

More recently, the City and County of Denver evaluated its more innovative bicycle facility designs and found that on neighborhood bikeways in particular:



55% of people surveyed post-implementation felt safe and comfortable using the new facilities



Bicycling volumes increased 47 percent on the streets the City evaluated

The networks developed for this plan are intended to amplify these types of high-comfort designs and focus investments to expand the regional network most impactfully.

Expand the bicycling and micromobility network

The Bicycling themes are designed to reflect the desires of the region and consistency with Metro Vision and previous plans. The themes that guide the Bicycling element are listed below.

1

High-comfort bikeways are continuous and connected

Stress accumulates more quickly for people bicycling over the course of each trip; close calls and scary interactions with vehicles dissuade “interested but concerned” riders from bicycling. Complete, connected, high-comfort, low stress local networks are key to unlocking short trips.

2

The Denver region is a hub of bicycling innovation

The Denver region has a history of major innovations in bicycle planning and design, with a strong history and identity around bicycling from iconic mountain rides to urban activism. The region is home to one of the largest shared-use path networks of any large metro area in the U.S., and annually hosts the nation’s second-largest Bike to Work Day. The region’s spirit of invention and experimentation is a key ingredient to our future success in growing bicycling. The region has also made major advances in bikeway intersection and network implementation.

3

Design for all ages, all abilities and all capabilities

The Denver region is emerging as a national leader in e-bikes, shared e-bikes and e-scooters, cargo bikes and trikes. With diverse options comes diverse riders! Advances in riding options for children and families, people with disabilities, older adults, and all-purpose commuters requires rethinking infrastructure to accommodate these users—regardless of their age, experience, and ability or accommodation.

4

Local networks, regional corridors

A great regional bicycling system promotes dense and connected local infrastructure, knitted together by major regional bicycle routes that cross jurisdictional lines and unify the region. These interlocking pieces form a system that is redundant, resilient, and comprehensive, enabling anyone to access bicycling and micromobility as an efficient and reliable form of transportation.

5

Efficient travel in limited street space

Bicycles and micromobility vehicles are among the most spatially efficient modes of transportation—a single ten-foot wide bikeway has an estimated four times the hourly throughput capacity of a similarly sized vehicle travel lane. Streets and paths with dedicated travelways for people riding and rolling unlock valuable space for efficient movement, and can reduce overall traffic congestion.

DRCOG supports the expansion of the regional bicycling and micromobility network through two primary geographies in the overall active transportation network:

- **Short Trip Opportunity Zones**
- **Regional Active Transportation Corridors**

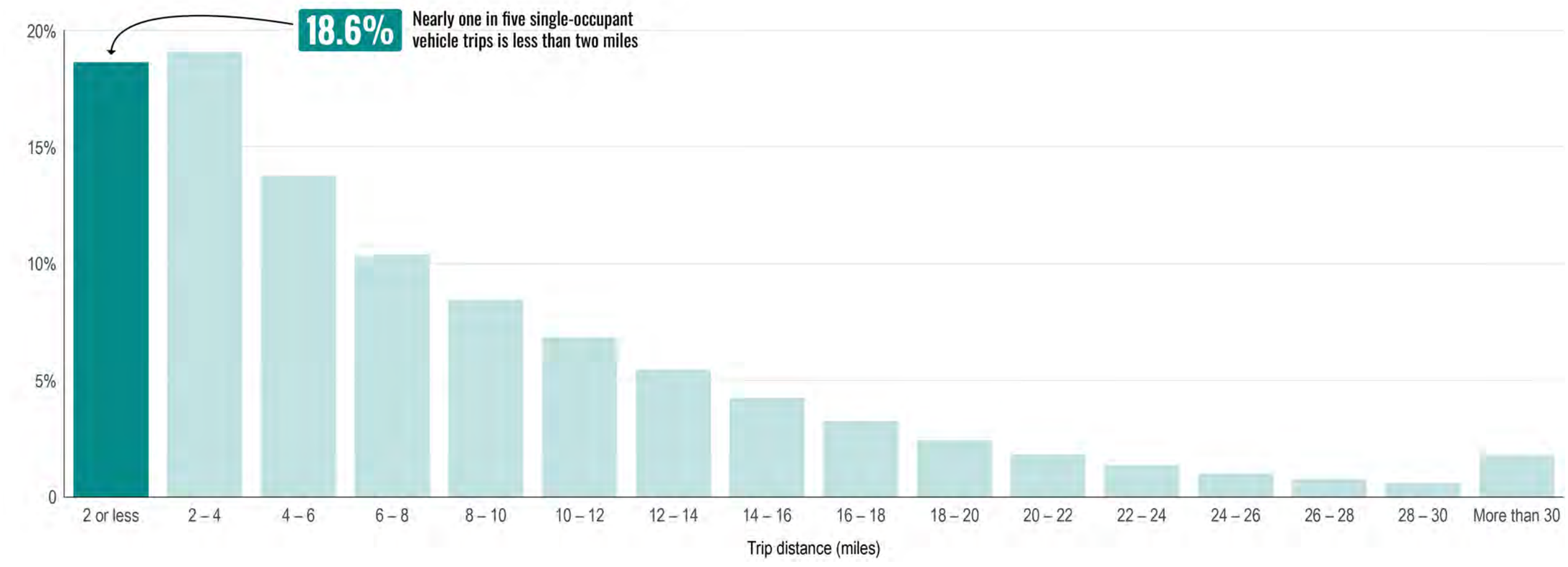
Capturing short trips

When deciding how to travel, bicycling and micromobility are the most competitive with other travel modes for short trips, especially in urban and suburban contexts. Trips that are two miles or less will have roughly the same travel time on a bicycle as in a motor vehicle and may be faster and offer more flexibility than taking the bus. Across the region, trips of two miles or less constitute 19% of all trips—4.6 million trips each year. In fact, nearly one in five single-occupant vehicle trips is less than two miles (Figure 3). This plan focuses on capturing and shifting more of those short trips to active transportation.

Unlocking these short, efficient trips for bicycling and micromobility relies on continuing to build out high-comfort bicycle facilities and streets across the region.

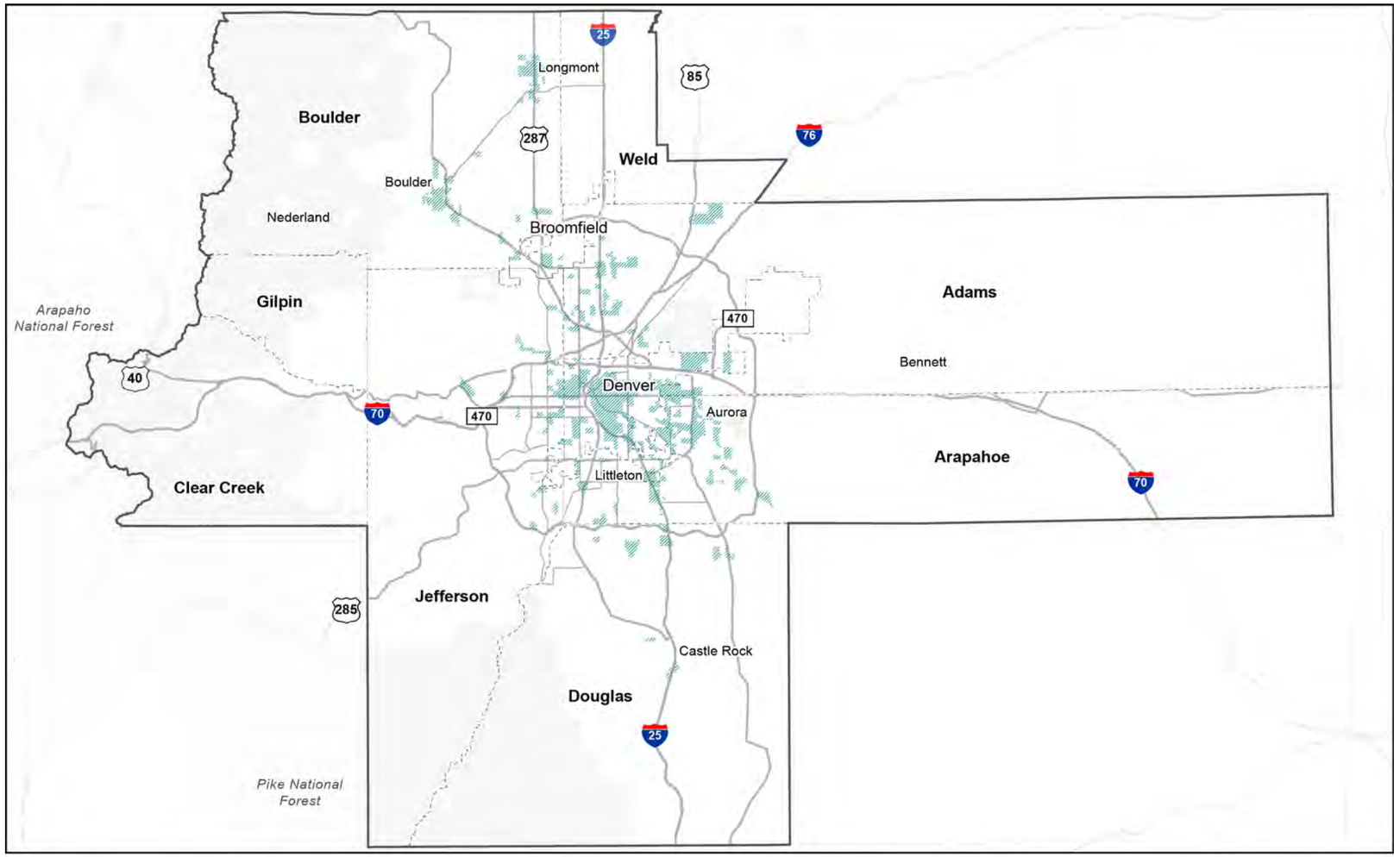
The second component of the active transportation network is the Short Trip Opportunity Zones, or the small areas with the highest existing concentrations of trips by any mode that are under two miles long. To identify these geographies, DRCOG used the region's Focus Travel Model to assess where high concentrations of short trips are happening, as well as areas in close proximity to major regional parks that are significant generators for active trips. Short Trip Opportunity Zones constitute 111 square miles, or roughly 2.1% of the region's land area, and are home to an estimated 900,000 residents (26% of the total population). This small subset of DRCOG's total area comprise the best opportunities to implement dense and connected bicycle and micromobility infrastructure to draw more riders and achieve the region's mobility and livability goals.

Figure 3 Percent of single-occupant vehicle trips by trip distance



Source: DRCOG Focus model, 2023

Map 9 Short Trip Opportunity Zones (regional map)



Short Trip Opportunity Zones are Transportation Analysis Zones with the top 20% of aggregate short trip densities, as well as areas identified by the public.

Short Trip Opportunity Zone

DRCOG boundary

N

0 5 10

Miles

Source Data: DRCOG, 2025
Esri Basemap; SR 6428

How to use Short Trip Opportunity Zones

Similar to the Pedestrian Focus Areas, local agencies can also use the Short Trip Opportunity Zones to guide local planning and network development, such as the following initiatives or activities:

- Prioritizing bicycling and micromobility infrastructure and their inclusion in complete street improvement projects in these areas.
- Closing gaps in the local bicycle network.
- Implementing changes to local traffic patterns (e.g., using diversion and filtering) to improve the safety and livability of low-traffic streets.
- In combination with safety analyses, prioritizing improvements at high-injury intersections and street segments within the Short Trip Opportunity Zones.
- Prioritizing supportive infrastructure in these areas, including lighting, parking, and storage.
- Expanding programming, education and encouragement campaigns to promote active transportation short trips, in partnership with key destinations within the zones such as schools, parks, local businesses and commercial districts.

Map 10 Short Trip Opportunity Zones (inset maps)

Short Trip Opportunity Zones are Transportation Analysis Zones with the top 20% of aggregate short trip densities, as well as areas identified by the public.

Source Data: DRCOG, 2025
Esri Basemap; SR 6428

Supporting regional connectivity

Regional Active Transportation Corridors set a vision for regionally significant multimodal linear routes where people walking, bicycling and using other active modes should expect a high level of comfort and substantive safety—preferably an "all ages and abilities" threshold. These routes provide direct connections within and between communities in the Denver region, increasing opportunities for both functional transportation as well as social or recreational riding. The corridors include regionally significant shared-use paths and on-street bicycle facilities or multimodal streets where active transportation is prioritized.

The plan identifies approximately 1,822 miles of Regional Active Transportation Corridors, adding about 426 miles compared to the 2019 network. 38% of the network has existing bicycle facilities. The Regional Active Transportation Corridors reflect a major update of the network adopted in the 2019 Active Transportation Plan.

Photo credit: Arina Habich

The plan sets three goals for updating the network:

1. Align with local plans.

Five member counties and 19 city or town governments have created or updated active transportation plans or comprehensive plan elements since 2019. This plan reflects changes in local active transportation plans completed since 2019, especially core routes identified by local jurisdiction partners.

2. Establish consistent coverage.

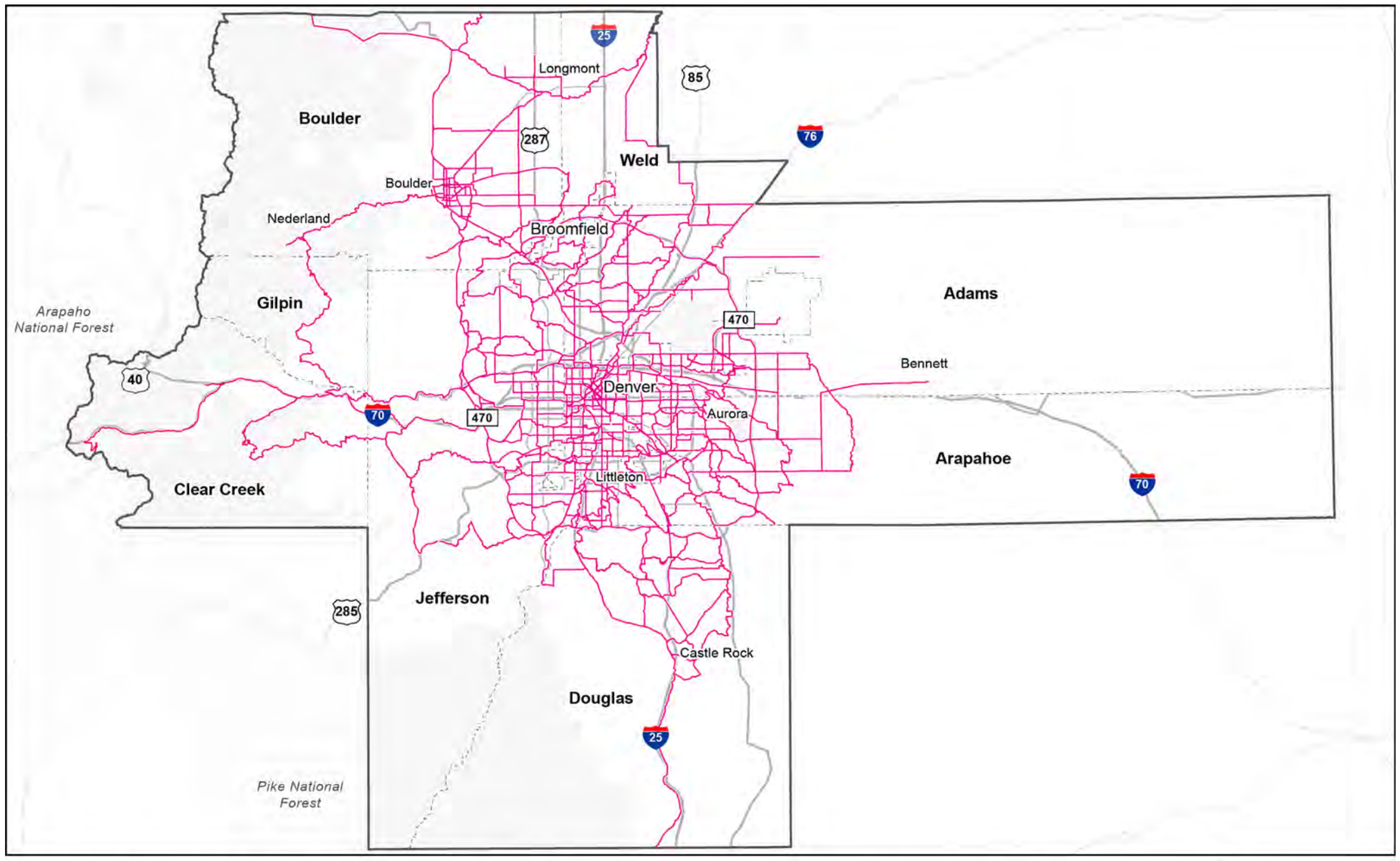
Establish a consistent network density by land use context, so that all people in the region have predictable access to the network. Using the urban, suburban and rural area types established in the Taking Action on Regional Vision Zero plan, this network aims to provide Regional Active Transportation Corridors:

- At approximately 1- to 1.5-mile spacing in urban places, though corridors may be more densely spaced in downtown areas. These corridors are intended primarily for functional travel, and should be designed for high capacity of active users.
- At a roughly 2- to 3-mile spacing in suburban places or Compact Communities. These routes are primarily shared-use paths or regional roadways, and should be designed for moderate to high capacity.
- In Rural areas, the network aims for 3- to 5-mile spacing. These may serve functional trips, but the key use is often recreational or tourism related.

3. Plan for the future.

With significant population and economic growth anticipated by 2050, the active transportation network needs to anticipate future trends and needs, including emerging micromobility vehicles and travel patterns.

Map 11 Regional Active Transportation Corridors (regional map)



Regional Active Transportation Corridors are regionally significant routes intended to meet a high level of comfort and safety for people walking, rolling and biking, and to connect to at least one other regional corridor.

Regional Active Transportation Corridor

DRCOG boundary

N

0 5 10

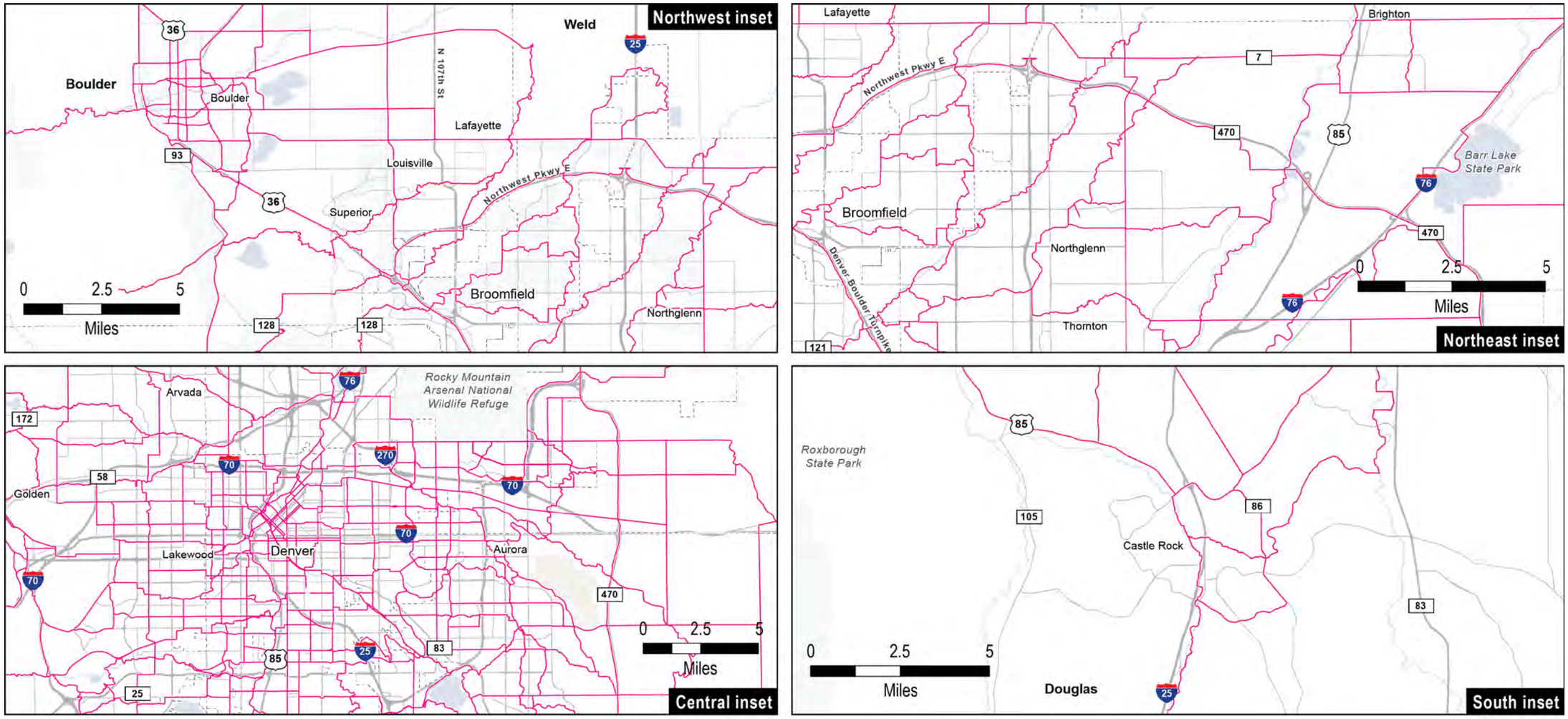
Miles

Source Data: DRCOG, 2025
Esri Basemap; SR 6428

How to use Regional Active Transportation Corridors

Like Pedestrian Focus Areas and Short Trip Opportunity Zones, member agencies can use the Regional Active Transportation Corridors to prioritize critical segments within their boundaries that may need completion or improvement. Additionally, the Regional Active Transportation Corridors can be a powerful tool to strengthen interjurisdictional planning and coordination with other regional partners for facility maintenance and funding pursuits.

Map 12 Regional Active Transportation Corridors (inset maps)



Regional Active Transportation Corridors are regionally significant routes intended to meet a high level of comfort and safety for people walking, rolling and biking, and to connect to at least one other regional corridor.

Regional Active Transportation Corridor

DRCOG boundary

Source Data: DRCOG, 2025
Esri Basemap; SR 6428

5

Let's get to work

The Denver region is changing, and DRCOG staff and member agencies must take actions to promote bicycling, walking and rolling to improve mobility. DRCOG can influence policy at a regional level, facilitate and encourage collaboration and coordination, and provide support and funding for local implementation. This section identifies programs and policy actions for DRCOG staff to implement this plan, as well as recommendations for local agencies.

In this section:

- DRCOG policy and program actions
- Key performance indicators

DRCOG policy and program actions

1

Develop a regionwide gaps analysis for completing the walking and bicycling network

- **Coordinate** on safety and Vision Zero planning for an update to the regional High-Injury Network that emphasizes known safety issues for active users, such as mode-specific high-injury networks or updated crash profiles.
- **Integrate** the updated Regional Active Transportation Corridors, Short Trip Opportunity Zones, and Pedestrian Focus Areas into the Regional Transportation Plan and Metro Vision.
- **Support** a regional multimodal priority corridors analysis to direct DRCOG's corridor planning and technical assistance, and coordinate multimodal planning with the Regional Active Transportation Network.
- **Identify** and support key multijurisdictional connections and leverage funding to close high-value gaps.

2

Expand DRCOG's capacity to support our member governments' multimodal planning, design and evaluation work

- **Explore** expanding DRCOG's available capacity and skill sets to support member needs and gaps, such as design and evalution for active transportation facilities. This may include designing for universal access and PROWAG compliance or all ages and abilities bikeways.
- **Explore** ways to continue to develop and improve the Transportation Improvement Program Set-Asides to provide technical assistance to member governments and meet the need for regional support for local planning efforts.

3

Support land use and development initiatives that advance active transportation and mode shift for short trips

- **Strengthen** collaboration within DRCOG among housing, regional planning and transportation programs to advance land use and development initiatives that support bicycling and walking.
- **Collaborate** with member governments and agency partners (such as the state Department of Local Affairs and the Regional Transportation District) to support implementation of transit-supportive development.
- **Provide** guidance and resources on local reforms to support active transportation, e.g., transportation demand management and vehicle parking policies, bicycle parking, and active user circulation and site planning.
- **Support** development and implementation of the Multimodal Supportive Development Toolkit (Built to Move).

4

Update the Transportation Improvement Program Policy to include minimum active transportation facility standards and guidance that builds on the Regional Complete Streets Toolkit

- **Set** minimum active transportation facility guidelines that are to be improved or retained on all projects, ensuring that new and enhanced streets are consistent with PROWAG and accommodate future bicycle and pedestrian capacity and user needs.
- **Develop** tools to assist Transportation Improvement Program project sponsors and applicants with implementing active transportation facilities, such as activity or vehicle miles traveled calculators or off-the-shelf street design templates that can be used and adopted by local governments.
- **Endorse** national guidance and best practices in active transportation planning and design, and encourage implementation of best practices in Transportation Improvement Program-supported projects.

5

Develop and implement a Regional Active Transportation Counts Strategic Plan to benchmark active transportation activity

- **Create** a Regional Active Transportation Counts Strategic Plan to recommend potential future count sites, technologies, procurement options and program goals or actions.
- **Increase** collection of active user counts. Collaborate with local agencies to ingest continuous counts from permanent count locations, and directly collect more short duration bicycle+ and pedestrian counts across the region. Explore emerging technology options to collect accurate activity data.
- **Evaluate** setting active transportation count requirements into the Transportation Improvement Program Policy. Develop context-sensitive count requirements by project type and expected activity post-implementation.
- **Build** a dataset of regionwide network volume estimates for bicycle+ and pedestrian activity. Use the findings of these network estimates to support calibration of the Focus Travel Model and revise DRCOG's seasonal factors for calculating active daily trips.

6

Expand benchmarking of active transportation safety trends to achieve DRCOG's Vision Zero goal

- **Update** the Active Modes Crash Report on a regular cycle (roughly every three years).
- **Support** continued improvement of crash data reporting through the Regional Crash Data Consortium. Partner with hospitals and public health agencies to improve reporting of non-vehicle crashes. Improve crash and injury reporting of emerging modes of transportation, including crashes involving e-bikes and scooters.
- **Support** development of safety-driven design guidance and Vision Zero safety project implementation.

7

Explore alternative funding strategies to raise funds for and support completion of the regionwide active transportation network

- **Explore** tax, bond and fee strategies to raise funding for active transportation and multimodal infrastructure projects.
- **Define** what kinds of projects and programs DRCOG would be best suited to fund and help deliver.
- **Explore** strategies to package similar projects across jurisdictions to reduce delivery costs and unlock efficiencies.
- **Assess** opportunities to establish cooperative purchasing agreements for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure to potentially lower costs and accelerate project delivery.

8

Leverage the regional active transportation network to support operational activities at the local level

- **Expand** geospatial data maintained through the Regional Data Catalog to support design, operations and maintenance of active transportation facilities. This may include information like bicycle and sidewalk facility inventories connected to a regionwide Linear Referencing System, as well as shared-use path mile markers, priority snow routes, construction zone location/status, pavement quality index, or local 311 or operations contacts to assist with local responsibilities like routine maintenance and emergency response.
- **Work** with partners to aggregate data inventorying supportive infrastructure (e.g., transit stops, benches, lighting, etc.).
- **Provide** high-level guidance to local partners on developing shared-use path and local street wayfinding systems for active transportation networks. Strengthen coordination among neighboring jurisdictions to enhance regional wayfinding.

9

Support and expand bicycling and walking promotion and encouragement programs

- **Strengthen** collaboration with Way to Go and regional Transportation Management Associations that lead community programs and work directly with residents and employers. Coordinate with DRCOG's Way to Go program to use efforts including Bike to Work Day and Schoolpool to connect education and promotion initiatives to policy and infrastructure investments.
- **Target** short trips and access to recreation through education and promotional activities. Customize recommendations based on the commuter's life stage (e.g., moving to a new neighborhood, starting a different job). Develop maps and route-finding resources, marketing toolkits, etc., at the hyper-local scale to encourage neighborhood short trips. Continue to survey people living and working in the region to better understand barriers to active transportation.
- **Provide** technical guidance for calming traffic and managing multimodal circulation in small districts that can be applied around school areas; collaborate with state and local Safe Routes to School programs.
- **Create** a promotional materials to allow transportation management associations and other agency partners to actively support walking and bicycling to school.

10

Update performance measures for active transportation progress that DRCOG supports

- **Revisit** the Metro Vision performance measures to include key bicycle and pedestrian measures that further promote a safe, comfortable and inviting transportation system.
- **Explore** continuous improvement of the Focus Travel Demand Model to more accurately calibrate and track mode share on an annual/biannual basis.
- **Bi-annually** report out on key performance indicators.

Key performance indicators

Tracking progress on the region's Active Transportation Plan requires setting grounded and actionable performance measures. Below are the indicators to align this plan with Metro Vision, the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan (MVRTP), and this plan's own goals for advancing walking, bicycling, and rolling in the Denver region.

These measures are:

- Reduce the number and severity of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Increase bicycling and pedestrian trips.
- Increase housing and employment access to rapid or high-frequency transit.
- Decrease surface transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions per capita.
- Increasing the share of population living in proximity to high-comfort active transportation network to help alleviate housing and transportation cost burden on households.

Reduce the number and severity of crashes involving pedestrians and bicyclists

DRCOG has adopted a Vision Zero goal to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries by 2040. Because people walking and bicycling bear the disproportionate brunt of traffic injuries, reduce pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and injuries is a regional priority for achieving the Vision Zero goal.

Performance measure	Baseline	Base year	Plan goal direction	2050 MVRTP target
Number of pedestrian and bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries	533	2023	Decrease	0
Number of pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries per 100,000 residents	12.2	2023	Decrease	0
Number of bicyclist fatalities and serious injuries per 100,000 residents	4.4	2023	Decrease	0

Increase bicycling and pedestrian trips

The Regional Transportation Plan expects that the region will see an increase in bicycling trips by 32% and walking trips by 44% by 2050. To accommodate this growth requires expanding infrastructure to meet anticipated demand. Metrics in this performance category include infrastructure tracking as well as impact on observed and modeled activity.

Performance measure	Baseline	Base year	Plan goal direction	2050 MVRTP target
Miles of existing Regional Active Transportation Corridors	942	2025	Increase	1,822
Miles of bicycle facilities in DRCOG's Bicycle Facility Inventory	3,585	2024	Increase	-
Miles of high-comfort bicycle facilities (shared-use paths, sidepaths, separated bicycle lanes, bicycle boulevards)	1,625	2024	Increase	-
Average daily bicycle trips	221,000	2023	Increase	-
Average daily walking trips	1.4 million	2023	Increase	-
Average daily bicycling and walking trips in Short Trip Opportunity Zones	914,000	2023	Increase	-
Number of member governments with Complete Streets policies/regulations/ codes	5	2024	Increase	-
Number of member governments with shared micromobility programs	12	2024	Increase	-
Number of schools participating in bike/walk to school day	117	2024	Increase	-

Increase housing and employment access to rapid or high-frequency transit

Both Metro Vision and the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan set targets and measures for the share of housing and jobs near rapid or high-frequency transit. The Active Transportation Plan supports this through strengthening first- and last-mile connections to the regional transit system.

Performance measure	Baseline	Base year	Plan goal direction	2050 MVRTP target
Percentage of arterial and collector streets with bicycle facilities within one mile of transit stations	64%	2024	Increase	-
Percentage of arterial and collector streets with sidewalks within 1/4-mile of transit stations	91%	2022	Increase	100%

Decrease surface transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions per capita

Metro Vision sets and the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan affirms the regionwide target of reduced surface transportation-related emissions. In 2019, the Colorado General Assembly passed House Bill 19-1261: Climate Action Plan to Reduce Pollution. HB19-1261 sets a target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 90% from 2005 levels by 2050. To reduce these emissions, both Metro Vision and the Regional Transportation Plan set targets to reduce daily vehicle miles traveled per capita and the percent of population using non-drive-alone vehicle modes to commute to work, both of which are supported by mode shift to active transportation.

Performance measure	Baseline	Base year	Plan goal direction	2050 MVRTP target
Daily vehicle miles traveled per capita	26.0	2023	Decrease	23.0
Percent of population using non-drive-alone mode to work	29%	2023	Increase	35%

Increase the share of population living in areas with affordable housing and transportation costs

Metro Vision sets a target to reduce the number of households experiencing burdensome housing and transportation costs. This plan sets concrete goals for expanding accessible infrastructure to everyone in the region, enabling more people to use affordable transportation options for their daily lives (thereby reducing transportation cost burdens). The indicators used to measure expansion of affordable transportation focus on infrastructural barriers: large arterial streets, Regional Active Transportation Corridors, and Pedestrian Focus Areas.

Performance measure	Baseline	Base year	Plan goal direction	2050 MVRTP target
Percent of streets in the regional roadway system with sidewalks.	46%	2022	Increase	-
Percent of streets in Pedestrian Focus Areas with sidewalks.	68%	2022	Increase	-
Percent of the population within 1/2-mile distance of an existing Regional Active Transportation Corridor.	57%	2022	Increase	-
Percent of marginalized communities within 1/2-mile distance of an existing Regional Active Transportation Corridor	62%	2023	Increase	-

Conclusion

The Active Transportation Plan sets a vision for walking, bicycling and rolling for the Denver region and guides local planning and regional investments in an accessible, comfortable and productive multimodal system. The actions recommended inform DRCOG's Unified Planning Work Program and will be shepherded by DRCOG staff and partners. DRCOG will track the key performance indicators either bi- or tri-annually to understand how the region is progressing toward a complete, connected and comprehensive active transportation network.

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