



**COLORADO**

Department of Transportation

Division of Transit & Rail



# **STATEWIDE RURAL REGIONAL BUS NETWORK**

*Implementing the Colorado Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan*

DRCOG TAC - May 23<sup>th</sup>, 2016



## DIVISION OF TRANSIT AND RAIL

- **CDOT Role**
  - DTR receives and manages \$32M annually for capital, operating & administration the State's transit infrastructure
  - Administers \$1.6M in Federal money for rural and intercity transit operations
  - Administers \$1.0M in FASTER operating grants.
- **DTR's role/mission**
  - Plan....Operate....Build
  - Coordinate State and local transit services
  - Manage limited dollars to maximize opportunities at State & local levels.



---

## **DIVISION OF TRANSIT AND RAIL (Cont)**

- **Colorado's First Statewide Transit Plan**
  - Element in the Statewide Transportation Plan developed by the TPR's
  - Identified projects that:
    - ✓ Increase intermodal transit connectivity
    - ✓ Make transit more time-competitive with the automobile
    - ✓ Maximize mobility needs and system efficiency
    - ✓ Reduce VMT and greenhouse gas emissions
- **2014 Statewide Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan**
  - Identified statewide goals for development, stations and connectivity needs of the Rural Regional network
  - Identified policy, performance and financing issues
  - Defined preferred networks for intercity and regional bus networks.



## ***RURAL REGIONAL STATEWIDE BUS NETWORK MISSION***

Develop a statewide network of private and public services that addresses both regional & intercity trip needs

- Uses existing and new services (where possible)
- Offers convenient regional mobility between urban and rural areas, and with connections to the national and international locations.
- Based on what we learned through the ICB Network Study and SW Transit Plan.



## RURAL REGIONAL BACKGROUND

- In 2004 the intercity bus companies like Greyhound began shedding over 2,500 rural stops nationwide affecting 8.4 million rural residents in an effort to cut losses; states west of the Mississippi River were affected the most.
- To ease the impact under SAFETEA-LU, FTA implemented a pilot program that allowed ICB Companies (Greyhound) to provide unsubsidized capital or operating miles as “in-kind” match toward the local match to entice operators to reinstate the lost rural service.
  - Now codified in FAST ACT
- FAST Act continues the Federal policy of requiring 15% of FTA 5311 program dollars go to support intercity bus services for rural areas
  - 2016 - \$1.65M is available for Colorado annually
- **Current Challenges in Colorado**
  - Long distances and inconvenient schedules for the travelling public
  - Lack of common or well-aligned brand
  - Cost of Capital is often “operationalized”, thereby making the service more expensive.
  - Lack of connectivity between rural parts of the state and activity centers



---

## A BETTER SOLUTION: “The Washington State Model”

- In 2007 WSDOT launched a distinctive solution branded *Travel Washington*
  - Identified and prioritized the routes with Statewide RTPPO & MPO assistance.
  - Purchased the fleet
  - Allocated 5311(f) funds through a competitive bid process, rather than a grant selection process, to fund services on routes that the department identified through its planning processes.
  - Meets all conditions of meaningful ICB connections and has broad FTA support
- The Colorado Rural Regional Bus Network will mimic the WSDOT project in order to enhance the existing network
  - Create a more competitive environment to get the best performance out of limited dollars.
  - Costs savings will go to expanding the network over time.
  - Addresses multiple markets and needs that aren't met today
    - ✓ Enhanced connectivity to the intercity bus network
    - ✓ Addresses regional travel needs for day trips to regional center



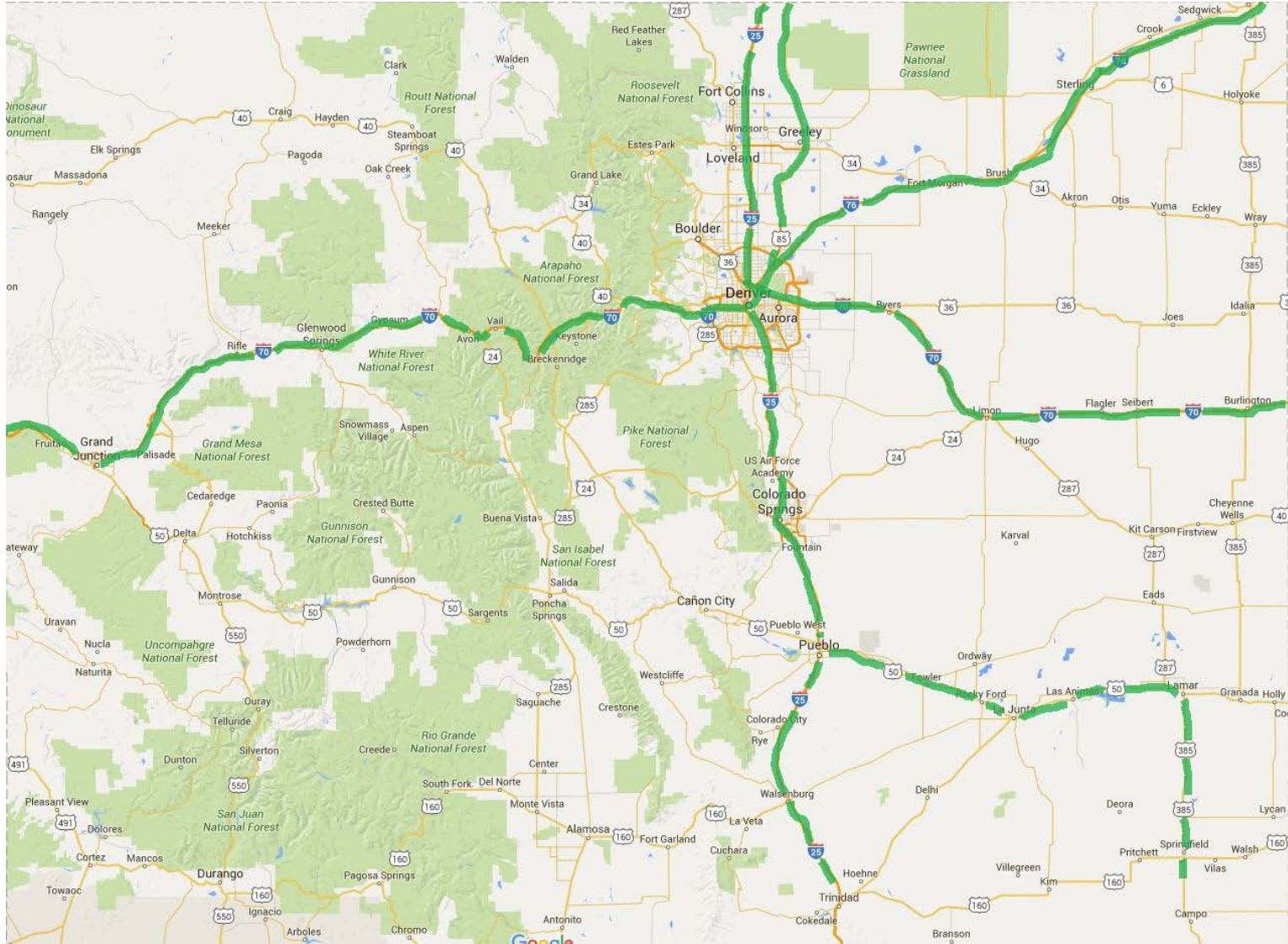
# CREATING THE MOST EFFECTIVE NETWORK

## Will require:

- Considerations of both markets: Intercity Bus & regional services
- Understanding scheduling & operating constraints
  - Greyhound
  - Bustang
  - Proposed CO Rural Regional statewide services
  - Locally operated regional services
- Maximize local funding and Greyhound “in-kind” match
- Other means of supporting multiple markets - subsidized and profitable routes
  - Fares & Ticketing
  - Customer information
- Routes will need to be prioritized due to funding constraints
  - 5311(f): approx. \$1.65m available annually
  - FASTER Regional Operating assistance: approx. \$500k available



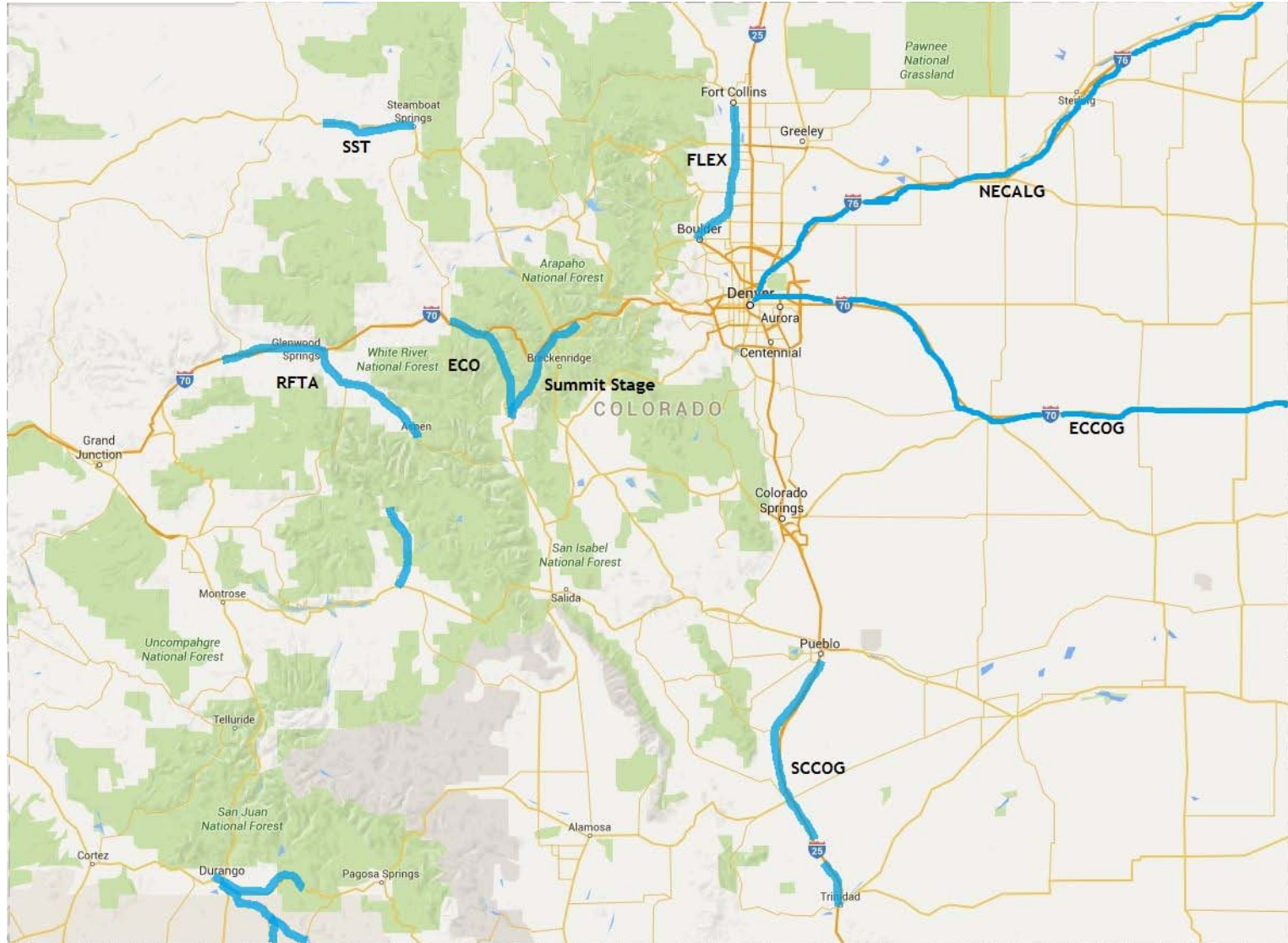
# Unsubsidized ICB Network





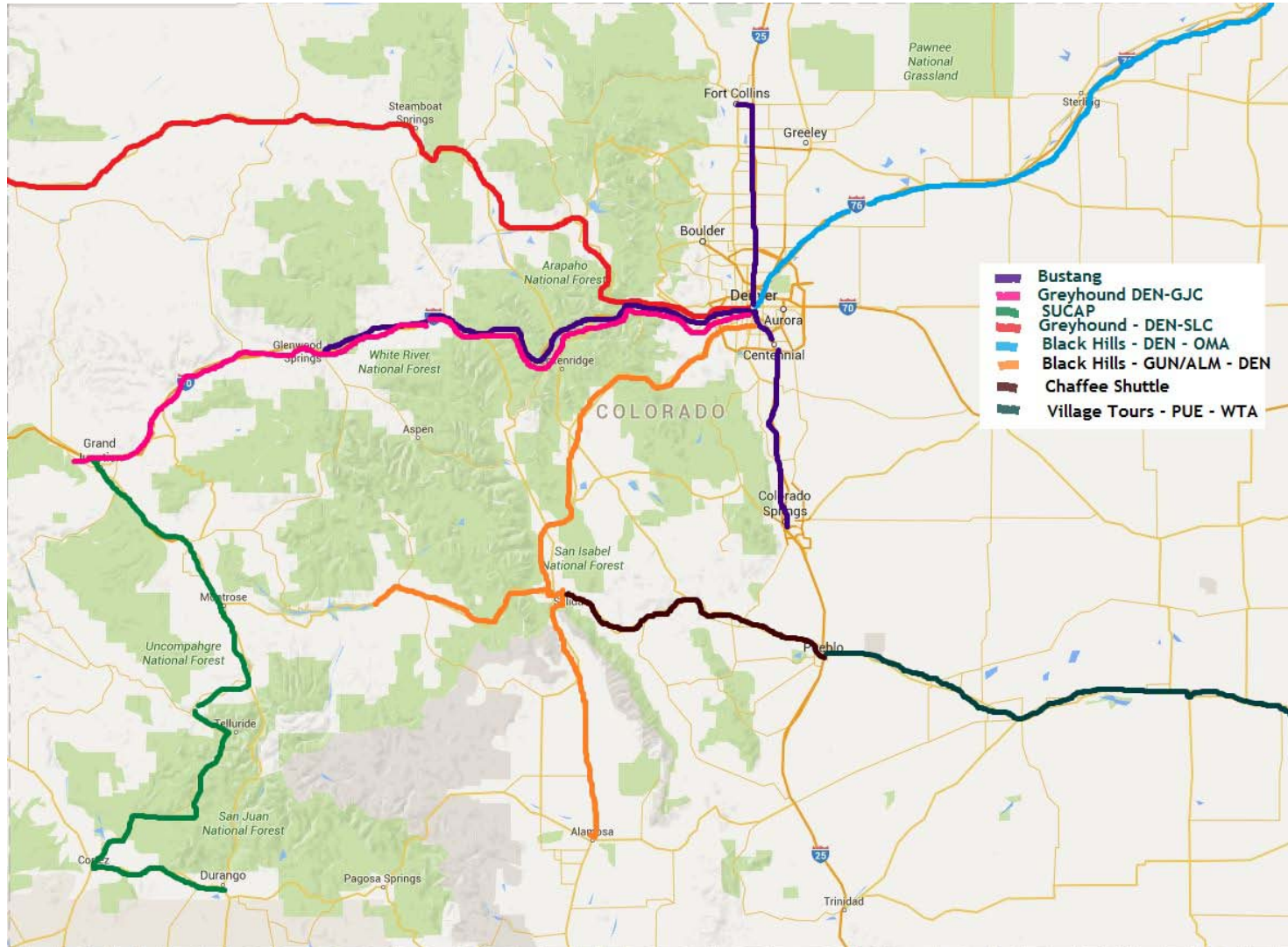


# RURAL REGIONAL OPERATED BY LOCAL TRANSIT AGENCIES



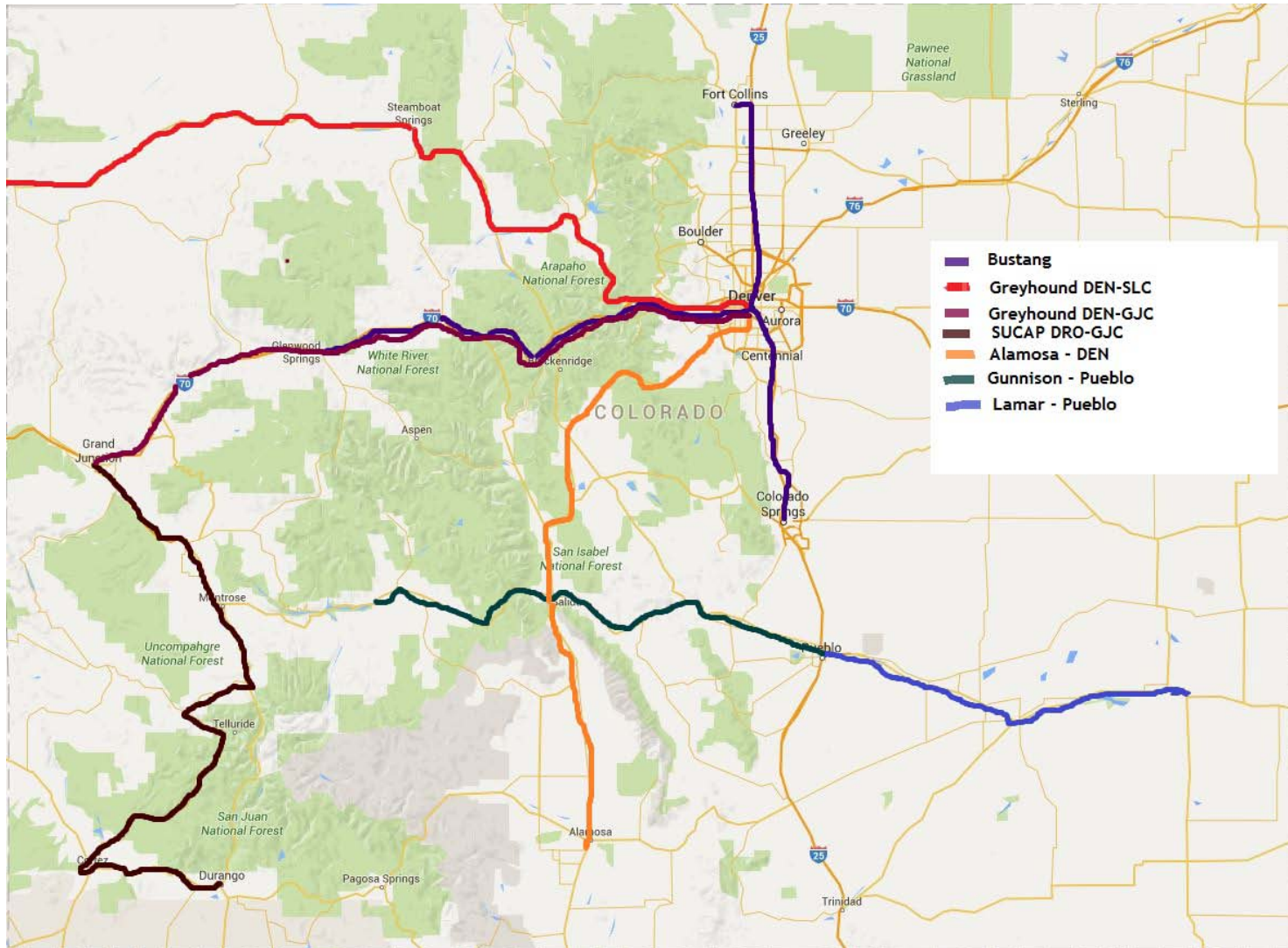


# Current Subsidized Network



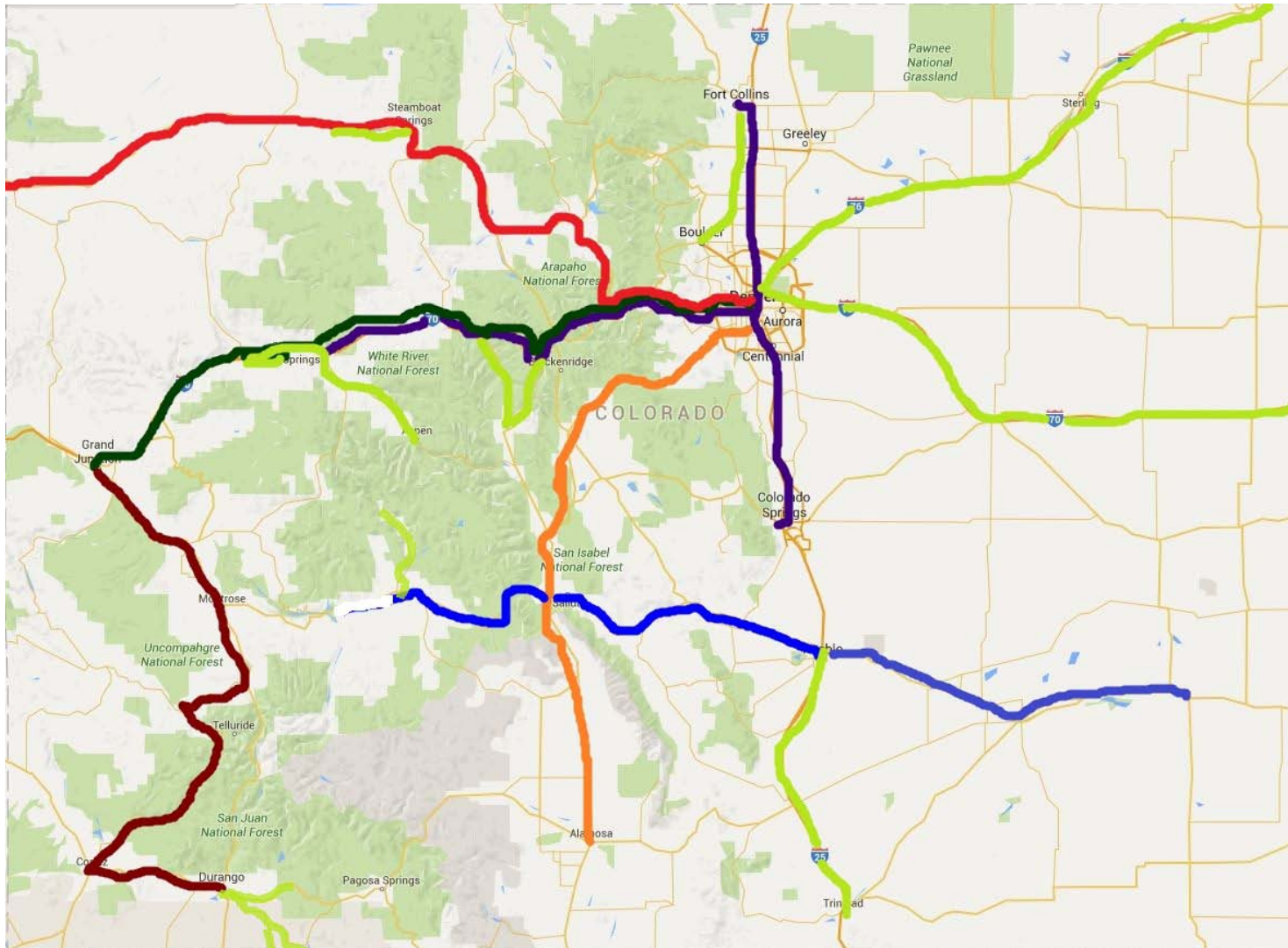


# Proposed Basic Rural Regional Network



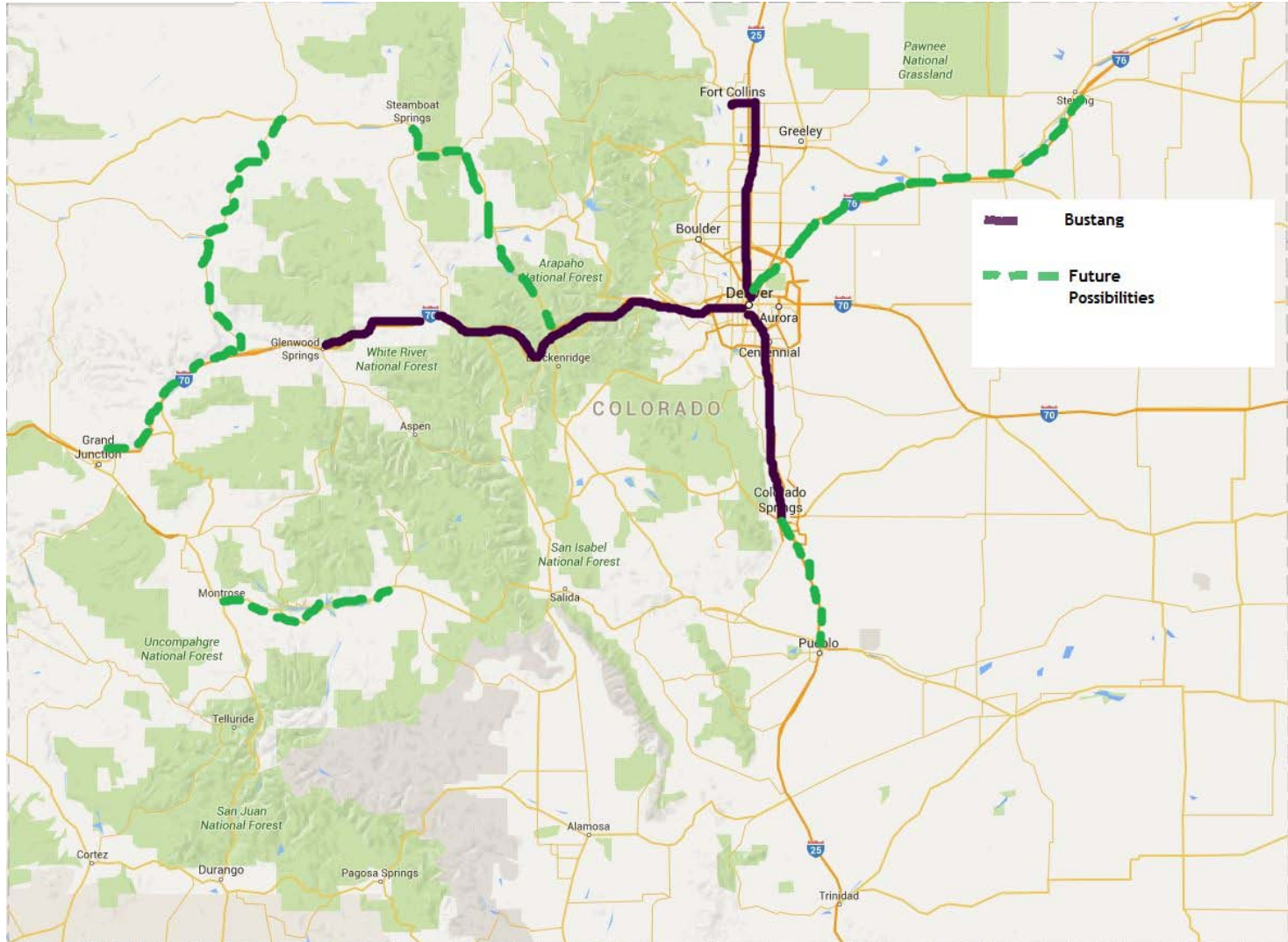


# Proposed Basic Rural Regional Network With Regional Services





# Potential Expansion of Basic Rural Regional Network





## Policy Areas to Explore with Stakeholders

- **Scheduling**
  - What level of service is needed in these corridors? 3 days a week? 5? 7?
  - Does a trip provide adequate time at regional centers - five hours? Four hours?
  - Are schedules meaningful and convenient?
  - Can we maintain connections with Greyhound within desired/required window?
- **Fares**
  - Should we work to build a system that maximizes farebox recovery or that maximizes ridership by using lower fares?
  - What type of fare medium should be employed? What role would ticket agents have?
  - What role should equity considerations play?
  - Should there be a threshold or cap for maximum subsidy amount?
  - How important should connections to local transit systems be in the decisions?



## NEXT STEPS

- Spring 2016: collaborate with TPR's and MPO's to gather input on policy questions and finalize the routes
- Summer 2016: Seek Transportation Commission approval
- Summer 2016: Begin to develop a bus specification
- Fall 2016 / Winter 2017: procure the fleet of OTR small coaches with SB-228 funds
- Calendar Year 2017: Develop Service Contracts
- Calendar Year 2018: Implement the Rural Regional Network



---

## Questions?

**Michael Timlin**  
**Bus Operations Unit**  
**4201 East Arkansas Ave Rm 227**  
**Denver, CO 80222**  
**(303) 757-9648**