

## 2.0 PLAN DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Development of a Statewide Transit Plan is one of the primary responsibilities of the Division of Transit and Rail. As part of this, the Division, in coordination with the Transportation Planning Regions (TPRs), developed nine of the state's 10 rural Regional Transit Plans. The tenth plan was prepared as part of an independent work effort by that TPR and the local transit agencies and provided to CDOT for inclusion in the Statewide Transit Plan. The five Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs), representing the urbanized areas of the state, are responsible for developing their own plans.

Of Colorado's 15 TPRs, five are MPOs for urban areas with populations greater than 50,000. The remaining 10 TPRs are considered rural TPRs. MPOs in Colorado include the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), Grand Valley MPO, North Front Range MPO, Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), and the Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG).

As stated in Chapter 1, the Statewide and rural Regional Transit Plans were developed consistent with federal and state planning regulations and requirements and included the following key tasks:

- ▶ Evaluating the existing transit network
- ▶ Assessing the state's existing and future demographics
- ▶ Identifying future transit needs
- ▶ Reviewing funding availability
- ▶ Conducting public outreach and coordinating with stakeholders
- ▶ Integrating the key findings and recommendations from the Regional Transit Plans and other plans and studies
- ▶ Developing a statewide transit vision and implementation plan

To support development of the Regional Transit Plans, Transit Working Groups (TWG) were formed in each rural TPR and consisted of representatives from a variety of stakeholders with an interest or role in providing transportation services. The TWGs met three times during the development of their Regional Transit Plans providing insight to the region's transit needs. The TWGs established regional transit visions, goals and implementation strategies that reflected the unique characteristics and needs of their region. Each rural TPR's Transit Plan is available on CDOT's website.

To guide development of the Statewide Transit Plan, CDOT established a Statewide Steering Committee (SSC) including interested stakeholders from around the state. The SSC met five times to provide input on the plan content, vision and goals, performance measures, and implementation actions, and to review the Statewide Transit Plan.

In addition to coordination with the TWGs and SSC, a public outreach program was developed to gather input from the general public. Public open houses were held in each of the 15 TPRs and all meeting materials and presentations were made available in English and Spanish. Telephone town halls were also conducted in all 15 TPRs as part of the Statewide Transportation Plan, and transit needs and issues were addressed in these calls.

The Statewide Transit Survey of Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities was conducted to identify the local, regional and statewide transportation needs and priorities of these two population groups.

### **2.1 Rural Transit Plans**

The transit plans developed for the rural regions of the state serve as the Coordinated Public Transit-Human Services Transportation Plans per FTA requirements. These plans identify strategies and projects to enable the transit and human service providers in each

region to improve mobility of the populations who rely upon their services, to minimize duplication of federally funded services, and to leverage limited funds. The coordination strategies and projects identified in the plans generally have a short-term focus and are based on the prioritized needs of the region.

Each plan also identifies a regional transit vision and goals, and a financial plan to guide transit investments over the next 20+ years. While each region is unique there were common themes heard in each region throughout the state and include:

- ▶ Additional and more flexible operating funds
- ▶ Increased coordination and marketing of public and human service transportation information
- ▶ More local, regional and interregional transit service
- ▶ Better connectivity and coordination between services
- ▶ Enhanced transit service for transit dependent populations
- ▶ Equitable distribution of funding to rural areas
- ▶ Increase communication with railroads, where possible to further passenger rail options and use of abandoned rail lines
- ▶ Improved multimodal connectivity and first/last mile connections

## **2.2 MPO Transit Plans**

Each of Colorado's five MPOs is currently developing or has completed their 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) and Coordinated Transit Plan. The following is a brief description on the status of each of the MPO plans. More detailed information on the MPO plans can be found on their respective websites.

### **DRCOG**

DRCOG is in the process of adopting its 2040 Fiscally Constrained Regional Transportation Plan (2040 RTP), scheduled for February

2015. The 2040 RTP contains fiscally constrained transit revenues and expenditures as well as a description of the existing and 2040 fiscally constrained transit system and performance measures. The transit component of the 2040 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan (2040 MVRTP), including the Coordinated Public Transit Human Service Transportation Plan, is currently under development. The transit component will be adopted as part of the 2040 MVRTP in mid-2015. The transit component provides a framework for the coordination of transit services serving the DRCOG region. Please visit the DRCOG website for more information on transit and transportation planning.

### **Grand Valley MPO**

The Grand Valley 2040 RTP was adopted by the Grand Valley Regional Transportation Committee in December 2014 and will be included in CDOT's Statewide Transportation Plan. The RTP will help guide investments in the region's transportation system to maintain and efficient and effective transportation system that supports the regional economy. As part of the RTP a Coordinated Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan was completed in November 2014. This plan highlights the transit needs in the region and recommends coordination strategies as well as a six-year financial plan for operating and capital needs. Please visit the Grand Valley MPO website for more information on their plans.

### **North Front Range MPO**

The NFRMPO is updating the Regional Transit Element (RTE) ahead of the 2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). This plan will update information about the existing transit services that serve the region and the recommendations presented in the 2035 RTE. The updated 2040 RTE will summarize the performance and costs of locally provided transit systems, review goals and objectives for potential future corridors, and take into consideration the inter-regional bus services being proposed by the Colorado Department of

Transportation for the I-25 corridor. Please visit the NFRMPO website for more information.

**PPACG**

PPACG is in the process of updating the Moving Forward Plan (2040 RTP) and developing the Transit and Specialized Transportation Plans with cooperation from the City of Colorado Springs’ Mountain Metropolitan Transit. The regional transit plan recommends route and operational improvements to the region’s public transport network and the specialized transportation plan recommends how to provide door-to-door transportation services for people with special needs, such as those with disabilities or who are aging. They will outline 5, 10 and 20+ year scenarios that serve as the basis for future planning and funding allocations. The plans are expected to be complete in spring 2015. Please visit the PPACG website for more information.

**PACOG**

PACOG is currently developing the new 2040 RTP, including the transit element. Once information is available it will be posted on the PACOG website.

**2.3 Transit Working Groups**

A TWG was formed in each rural TPR to guide development of the Regional Transit Plans. TWGs included representatives from public and private transit providers, human service agencies, senior services, workforce centers, area agencies on aging, veteran organizations, community centered boards, elected officials, county and municipal staff, CDOT Division of Transit and Rail (DTR), Division of Transportation Development, and regional staff, and key consultant team members. Fifty to 100 representatives were invited to each TWG meeting. Attendance at each meeting was typically between 10 to 20 representatives. The TWGs convened at three key

milestones (see **Table 2-1** for meeting dates) throughout the plan development process with the following objectives:

- ▶ **Meeting 1:** Identify the region’s transit and human service transportation issues and needs and provide information on the plan approach. Develop draft regional transit vision and goals.
- ▶ **Meeting 2:** Finalize regional transit vision and goals; gather input on the approach to prioritize regional transit projects; and identify potential regional coordination strategies.
- ▶ **Meeting 3:** Review key concepts and major findings; identify final plan strategies; provide an overview of financial scenarios; and reach concurrence on plan recommendations.

**Table 2-1 Transit Working Group Meetings**

TPR	Meeting 1	Meeting 2	Meeting 3
Central Front Range	July 29, 2013	Oct. 7, 2013	Jan. 27, 2014
Eastern	July 8, 2013	Oct. 15, 2013	Jan. 20, 2014
Gunnison Valley	July 30, 2013	Oct. 1, 2013	Jan. 22, 2014
Intermountain	July 26, 2013	Oct. 2, 2013	Feb. 28, 2014
Northwest	July 25, 2013	Oct. 16, 2013	Jan. 23, 2014
San Luis Valley	Aug. 20, 2013	Oct. 22, 2013	Feb. 20, 2014
South Central*			Feb. 27, 2014
Southeast	July 24, 2013	Oct. 1, 2013	Jan. 21, 2014
Southwest	Aug. 20, 2013	Oct. 23, 2013	Feb. 19, 2014
Upper Front Range	Dec. 11, 2013	Jan. 30, 2013	April 1, 2014

*\* South Central conducted an independent coordinated transit and human service transportation plan and meetings.*

## 2.4 Statewide Steering Committee

The SSC was formed to create a framework for the development of the regional and statewide transit plans, to create a statewide transit vision and supporting goals, and to guide the overall transit plan development process. The SSC included representatives from transit agencies from across the state, urban and rural transportation planning regions, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA), CDOT, and human service agencies. Members also represented nonprofit organizations, environmental action groups, Colorado tribes, economic development agencies, and rail advocacy organizations. **Table 2-2** identifies the five times the SSC met to provide input on the content of the statewide transit plan, vision and goals, performance measures, implementation actions, and review of the Statewide Transit Plan.

**Table 2-2 Statewide Steering Committee Meetings**

Date	Key Agenda Items
May 29, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Key issues or concerns for transit in Colorado</li> <li>▪ Vision for transit in Colorado over the next 20 years</li> </ul>
August 7, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Statewide &amp; regional demographic data and trends</li> <li>▪ Refine vision, create goals &amp; objectives</li> <li>▪ Performance based planning overview</li> </ul>
October 30, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Performance measures / targets</li> <li>▪ Funding sources, Expenditures, Future Funding Scenarios</li> </ul>
February 13, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Regional Transit Working Group Feedback</li> <li>▪ Implementation recommendations</li> </ul>
June 24, 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Elderly &amp; Disabled Survey results</li> <li>▪ Regional Transit Plans &amp; roll-up to State Transit Plan</li> <li>▪ Implementation recommendations &amp; action steps</li> </ul>

### 2.4.1 Statewide Transit Vision, Goals, and Objectives

As an initial step, working with the SSC, a statewide vision for transit with supporting goals and objectives was created. The statewide transit vision and goals are broad and were used to develop strategies and will guide investment in transit to meet identified needs around the state.

#### Statewide Transit Vision

*Colorado's public transit system will enhance mobility for residents and visitors in an effective, safe, efficient, and sustainable manner; will offer meaningful transportation choices to all segments of the state's population; and will improve access to and connectivity among transportation modes.*

#### Supporting Goals and Objectives

- ▶ **System Preservation and Expansion:** Establish public transit as an important element within an integrated multimodal transportation system by supporting and implementing strategies that:
  - Preserve existing infrastructure and protect future infrastructure and right-of-way
  - Expand transit services based on a prioritization process
  - Allocate resources toward both preservation and expansion
  - Identify grant and other funding opportunities to sustain and further transit services statewide
  - Develop and leverage private sector investments
- ▶ **Mobility/Accessibility:** Improve travel opportunities within and between communities by supporting and implementing strategies that:
  - Strive to provide convenient transit opportunities for all populations

- Make transit more time-competitive with automobile travel
- Create a passenger-friendly environment, including information about available services
- Increase service capacity
- Enhance connectivity among local, intercity, and regional transit services and other modes
- Support multimodal connectivity and services
- ▶ **Transit System Development and Partnerships:** Increase communication, collaboration, and coordination within the statewide transportation network by supporting and implementing strategies that:
  - Meet travelers' needs
  - Remove barriers to service
  - Develop and leverage key partnerships
  - Encourage coordination of services to enhance system efficiency
- ▶ **Environmental Stewardship:** Develop a framework of a transit system that is environmentally beneficial over time by supporting and implementing strategies that:
  - Reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions
  - Support energy efficient facilities and amenities
- ▶ **Economic Vitality:** Create a transit system that will contribute to the economic vitality of the state, its regions, and its communities to reduce transportation costs for residents, businesses, and visitors by supporting and implementing strategies that:
  - Increase the availability and attractiveness of transit
  - Inform the public about transit opportunities locally, regionally, and statewide

- Further integrate transit services into land use planning and development
- ▶ **Safety and Security:** Create a transit system in which travelers feel safe and secure and in which transit facilities are protected by supporting and implementing strategies that:
  - Help agencies maintain safer fleets, facilities, and service
  - Provide guidance on safety and security measures for transit systems

## 2.5 Public Outreach

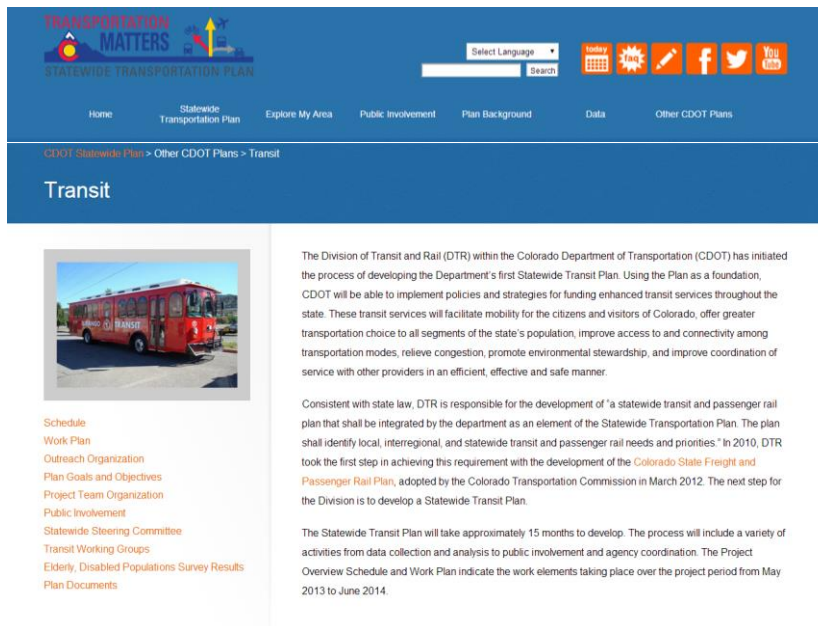
A comprehensive public and agency outreach program was conducted for the Regional Transit Plans and the Statewide Transit Plan. Throughout the planning processes, public engagement was designed to inform the public about the transit planning efforts occurring in their regions and throughout the state, and solicit input on local, regional and statewide transit needs. Stakeholder and public input was critical to the development of plan recommendations. Numerous engagement strategies and communication tools were used to ensure that the rural and urban communities participated in the development of their area transit plans and the statewide transit plan.

A database with over 4,000 contacts was developed and used to send meeting notices and provide updates. The database includes state and federal agencies, transit providers, elected officials, advocacy groups, human services agencies, and interested stakeholders. Public meeting attendees could add their names to the database, and any interested person could add their name online. Email notifications were sent to regional and statewide contacts at project milestones.

### 2.5.1 Website

The website, an essential part of the public outreach and information program, highlighted plan progress and schedule, public and committee meetings, and SSC direction throughout the development of the plans. Presentations, meeting notices, and meeting materials were posted in English and Spanish. Viewers had the ability to select from a number of languages in which to view the information on the website. The website provides information not only on the Statewide and Regional Transit Plans, but also includes information on a number of other CDOT modal plans.

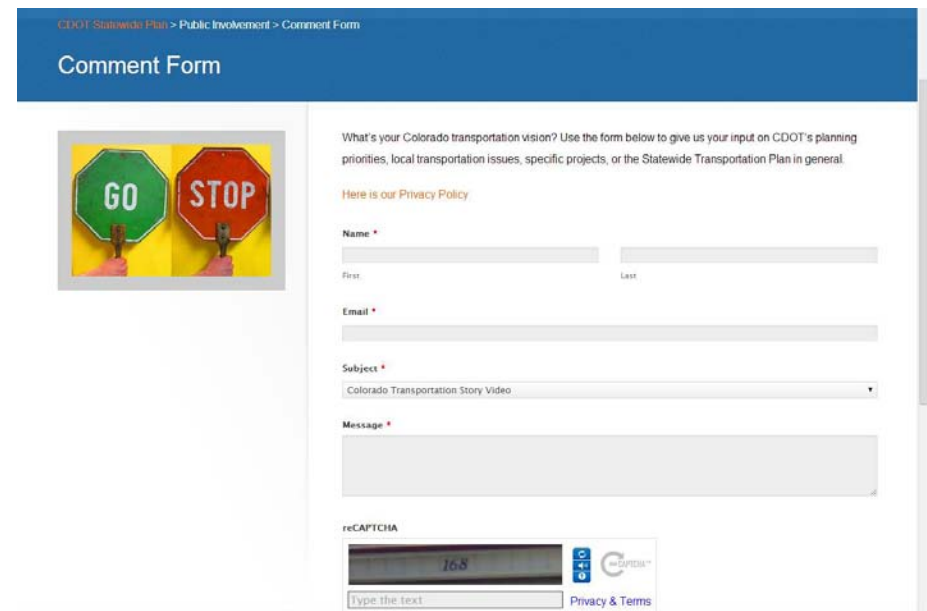
#### Transit Plan Main Page



The screenshot shows the website's main navigation bar with links for Home, Statewide Transportation Plan, Explore My Area, Public Involvement, Plan Background, Data, and Other CDOT Plans. Below the navigation is a 'Transit' section featuring an image of a red bus and a text block describing the Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) within the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT). The text explains the process of developing the Statewide Transit Plan and the role of DTR in integrating transit and passenger rail into the state's transportation infrastructure.

A comment form and corresponding database tracked public comments and questions throughout the planning process and were an integral part of collecting input on a regional and statewide basis. In addition, an online geographic information system (GIS) tool and map were available for the public to post comments directly to a statewide map. CDOT reviewed and considered all comments in the development of the Statewide and Regional Transit Plans. In addition to the online commenting options, attendees at public meetings could submit comments via a hard copy comment form at the meeting or mail in at a later date.

#### Online Comment Form



The screenshot displays the 'Comment Form' interface. It includes a breadcrumb trail 'CDOT Statewide Plan > Public Involvement > Comment Form' and a title 'Comment Form'. The form contains a 'GO STOP' image, a text prompt asking for input on CDOT's planning priorities, and a 'Privacy Policy' link. The form fields include 'Name' (with first and last name sub-fields), 'Email', 'Subject' (with a dropdown menu), and 'Message'. A reCAPTCHA verification box is located at the bottom of the form.

### 2.5.2 Rural Public Meetings

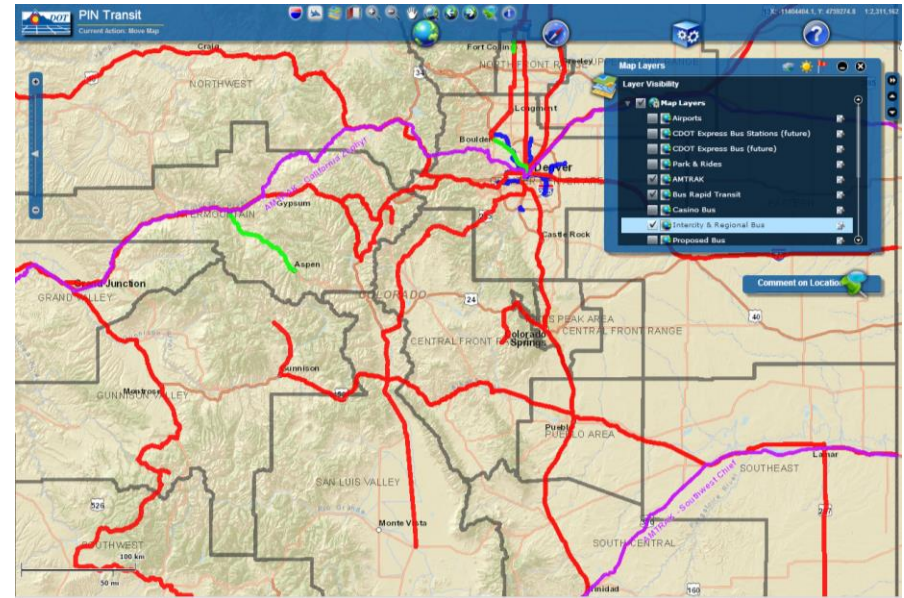
Seventeen public open house meetings were held in the 10 rural TPRs across the state. The contact database was updated for each TPR to include TWG members and numerous regional contacts such as health and human service agencies, transit service providers, senior centers, recreation and community centers, libraries and other civic offices. E-postcards advertising the public meetings were developed in English and Spanish for each TPR and sent directly to TWG members with requests to be forwarded to their constituents.

Additionally, E-postcards were emailed to all TPR contacts within the database, and hard copy flyers mailed directly to primary human service agencies, transit service providers, senior centers, recreation centers and libraries in each TPR. Transit service providers were provided copies of flyers for distribution to their passengers. CDOT issued press releases to media outlets within each TPR describing the plan and announcing the specific public meetings within the area.

Translation services were provided upon request for language and hearing impaired. Meetings were held in Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessible facilities.

The meetings were open house format and included a presentation. Public comments were collected via computers at the meetings, the online mapping tool, hard copy comment forms, and the plan website. Attendees included the general public, transit providers, elected officials, and agency staff.

### GIS Commenting Tool



### 2.5.3 Urban Public Meetings

Joint Statewide Transit Plan and Regional Transit Plan open houses were held in each of the five MPO areas: Denver (DRCOG), Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments (PPACG), Pueblo Area Council of Governments (PACOG), Grand Valley MPO and Northern Front Range MPO. The contact database was updated for each of the five MPO areas to include MPO staff, health and human service agencies, transit service providers, senior center, recreation and community centers, libraries and civic offices. E-postcards advertising the



public meetings were developed in English and Spanish and sent to both the Statewide Transit Plan and MPO contact databases. Each MPO advertised the meetings individually within the MPO area, and



press releases were issued by CDOT to all media outlets announcing the MPO meeting schedule, dates and locations.

The five MPO public meetings, held throughout May 2014, included an open house format with informational display boards and an informative presentation on both the MPO's

2040 Regional Transit Plan and the Statewide Transit Plan. Both CDOT and the MPO advertised each meeting. CDOT posted all presentations on the Statewide Transit Plan website. **Appendix B** includes materials from these meetings.

#### 2.5.4 Agency Coordination and Consultation

As part of the plan development process, outreach was made to state and federal agencies to keep them informed and to solicit input. To identify any environmental concerns, per federal regulations, a webinar was conducted with state and federal environmental resource and regulatory agencies and an online mapping and commenting system was used to gather input. Agencies were asked to look at priority corridors around the state and to provide input on potential conflicts that may arise at the project level.

In addition, state, federal, and tribal agencies participated as members of either the SSC or the regional TWG. Agencies were notified of the availability of the Statewide Transportation and Transit Plans for a 30-day review period.

#### 2.5.5 Telephone Town Halls

As part of the outreach effort of the multimodal Statewide Transportation Plan, telephone town halls were held in each TPR to hear from the public on what matters most to them in terms of transportation. Statewide, over 31,000 people participated in the calls.

As part of the call, participants were asked to participate in three polling questions:

1. What is most important to you about transportation?
2. How should CDOT invest limited dollars?
3. What kinds of transportation improvements can best help the economy in your area?

For the first question, survey participants in almost every region indicated that “safety” was most important to them. “Lets me live my life the way I want” and “gets me to work or vital services” were also most important to many participants. In the Denver metro area, the top response was “having transportation options besides a car.”

Most respondents felt that CDOT should invest limited dollars in maintaining the existing system. Other top responses included safety improvements and providing more travel options.

The three top responses for the types of transportation improvements that can best help the economy were providing better bus or rail to support tourism, improving pavement, and improving rail service. In the urban areas, a top response was reducing traffic congestion/providing more reliable conditions.



### 2.5.6 Public Review and Comment Period

To gather agency and public input on the Statewide and Regional Transit Plans, plans were made available for a 30-day review and comment period. Several strategies were used to notify agencies and the public:

- ▶ Plans were posted on the coloradotransportationmatters.com website.
- ▶ Hard copies were available at CDOT Headquarters, CDOT regional offices and TPR offices.
- ▶ Information on how to access the documents on the website was provided to libraries for posting.
- ▶ Contact information was provided on the website to request a hard copy, an electronic copy or translation services.
- ▶ Spanish translation of the Draft Statewide Transit Plan was available upon request.

Prior to the public release of the plans, draft Regional Transit Plans were provided to the members of each of the rural Transit Working Groups for their review and a draft of the Statewide Transit Plan was provide to members of the Statewide Steering Committee for their review.

## 2.6 *CDOT Statewide Survey of Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities (2014)*

In 2013, CDOT conducted a statewide survey to learn about the travel behavior and characteristics of older adult (65 years or older) and disabled (18 years or older) residents of Colorado, and to determine their transportation priorities, needs, and preferences. The survey also gathered information on the gaps and barriers to using transit and identified areas of focus to help address the transportation needs of older adults and adults with disabilities. The survey was conducted through direct mail efforts and also

distributed by agencies throughout the state that serve older adults and adults with disabilities, with over 3,000 respondents completing the survey. Both Spanish and English versions and an online version were available for respondents. Survey results are reported at the statewide level as well as by TPR and are discussed in **Chapter 5**. Information collected through this survey was used to inform recommendations made in the Statewide and Regional Transit Plans. The two issues deemed of highest importance for respondents were supporting the development of easily accessible and understandable transportation information and referral services, and providing lower fares for seniors and disabled riders. Also of importance were expansion of transportation services within communities and to regional destinations. The most frequently cited barriers to using public transportation and paratransit were a lack of service and wanting to use service during hours it was not available. **Appendix C** includes the Statewide Survey of Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities.