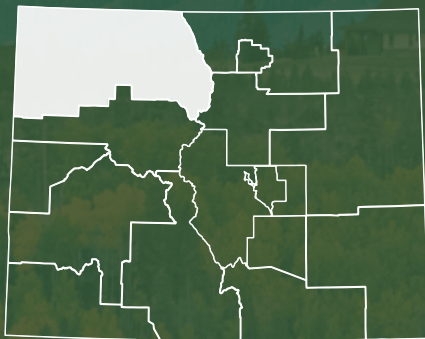

Northwest Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan

January 2026



Counties:
Grand, Jackson,
Moffat, Rio
Blanco, Routt

Above: The location of counties in the Northwest
Transportation Planning Region.

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Photo Credit: Visit Grand County

Northwest Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan

The Northwest (NW) Transportation Planning Region (TPR) includes Grand, Jackson, Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt counties. The Region includes 15 incorporated towns and cities, with the largest municipalities being Steamboat Springs and Craig, followed by Meeker, Rangely, Granby, Kremmling, Hayden, Fraser, and Winter Park. Public transit and human services transportation play an integral role in the Region's multimodal transportation network by providing mobility and promoting personal independence to residents in the Region. Transit improves quality of life and supports public health by providing access to jobs, schools, shopping, food, medical care, senior centers, social services, and recreation in the Region, while also providing connectivity to goods and services in nearby major activity centers.

NW Transit Vision

To form an enhanced, expanded, and cohesive network of transit options providing access and improved quality of life for the Northwest region's diverse population and visitors.

NW Transit Goals

1. Collaborate to maintain, enhance, and expand existing transit services.
2. Improve connectivity and coordination between the Region's transit systems and services along I-70.
3. Provide safe and reliable transit choices with multimodal connections for both transit dependent and choice users.
4. Enhance and expand transit access to medical services, employment, and other activity centers throughout the Region, especially in more rural areas where service does not exist.
5. Engage citizens with education and outreach on transit options within the Region.

Regional Transportation Coordinating Council Goals

1. Work collectively to address gaps and silos in the regional transportation network.
2. Ensure consistent operation of safe, accessible, and affordable service.
3. Encourage use of integrated technology and educate the region on the use of technology in transit.
4. Develop accessible information and materials for educating and engaging the public.
5. Support ongoing planning, coordination, and collaboration while creating new community partnership.

Every four to five years, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), in coordination with regional planning partners, refreshes the regional transit plans in all rural regions of the state. This plan refresh builds on the previous plan, completed in 2020, and focuses primarily on updating key components such as textual and data revisions to ensure continued alignment with evolving needs. While a larger overhaul of the Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plans will occur during the next full update in another four to five years, this refresh will ensure that the plan remains relevant and effective in addressing the mobility needs of Coloradans.

CDOT's Division of Transit and Rail, in coordination with NW TPR members and transit agencies, gathered input from the general public to develop this plan in compliance with CDOT and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning requirements. The TPR will use this refreshed plan to prioritize transit investments and work toward the long-term implementation of the Region's unique transit vision and goals, while maintaining a framework for developing an integrated statewide transit system.



D
PARKING
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9th Street



FAM LEGH
& SONS





Regional Snapshot

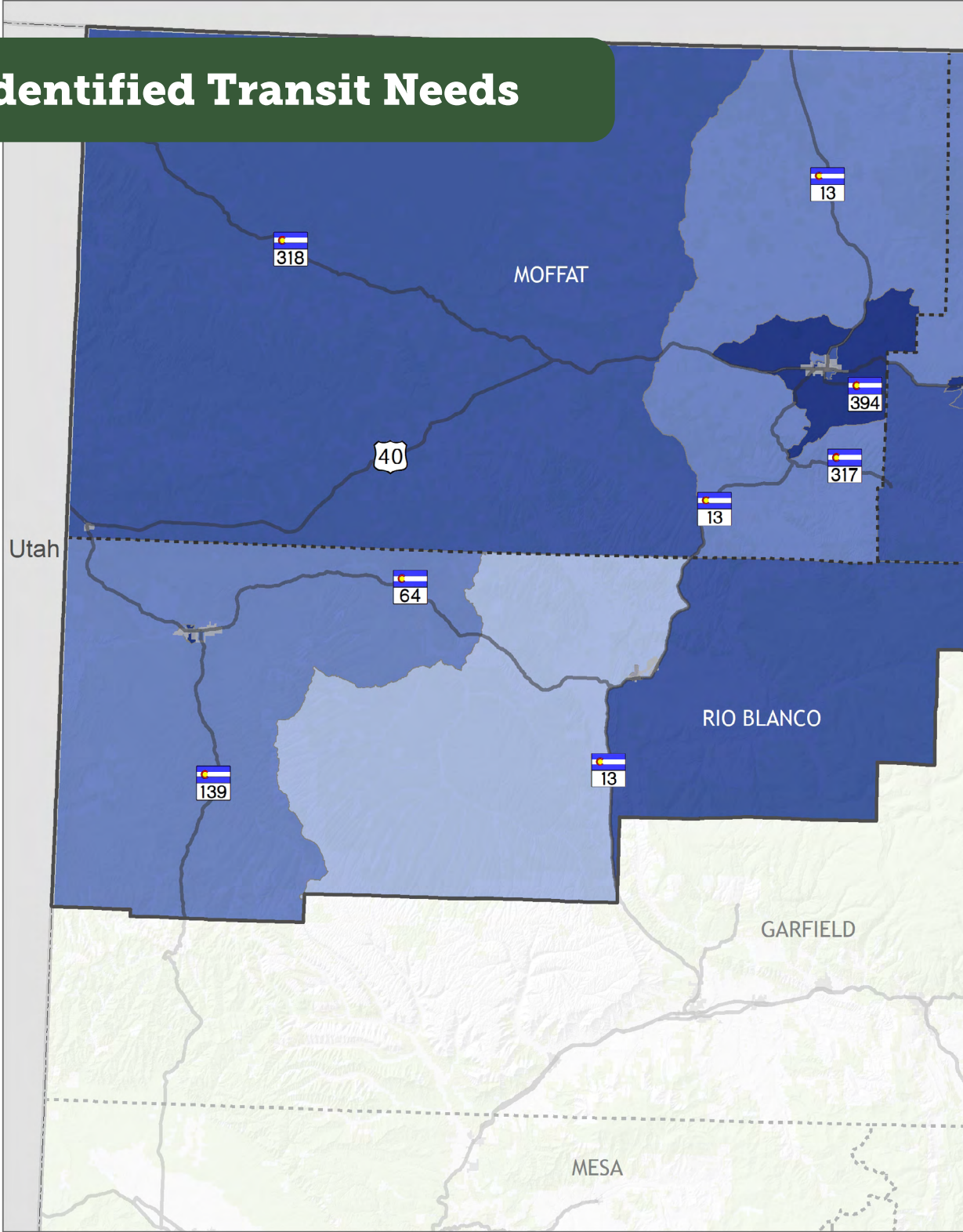
Transportation—whether walking, biking, taking transit, vanpooling, carpooling, or driving a car—is a critical element of everyone’s daily life and well-being. Providing access to safe and reliable transportation for all, regardless of who they are or from where they come, results in communities that meet the mobility needs of all, encourage healthier lifestyle choices, and improve economic prosperity.

When considering the NW TPR’s mobility future, reviewing and analyzing available data helps uncover potential transportation network gaps and needs. Populations that often have a higher than average need for transit and/or have limited access to transportation services and facilities must be considered as a part of any needs-focused assessment of transit access and connectivity.

Transit that Serves All Coloradans

Colorado’s statewide transit planning efforts consider the needs of all people. A strong transportation network that is conveniently located, easy to navigate, and serves everyone helps ensure reliable and affordable access to jobs, medical care, education, grocery stores, and social or recreational activities. This access creates opportunities that can positively affect personal health, employment, and overall quality of life.

Identified Transit Needs



Legend

Transit Propensity Index

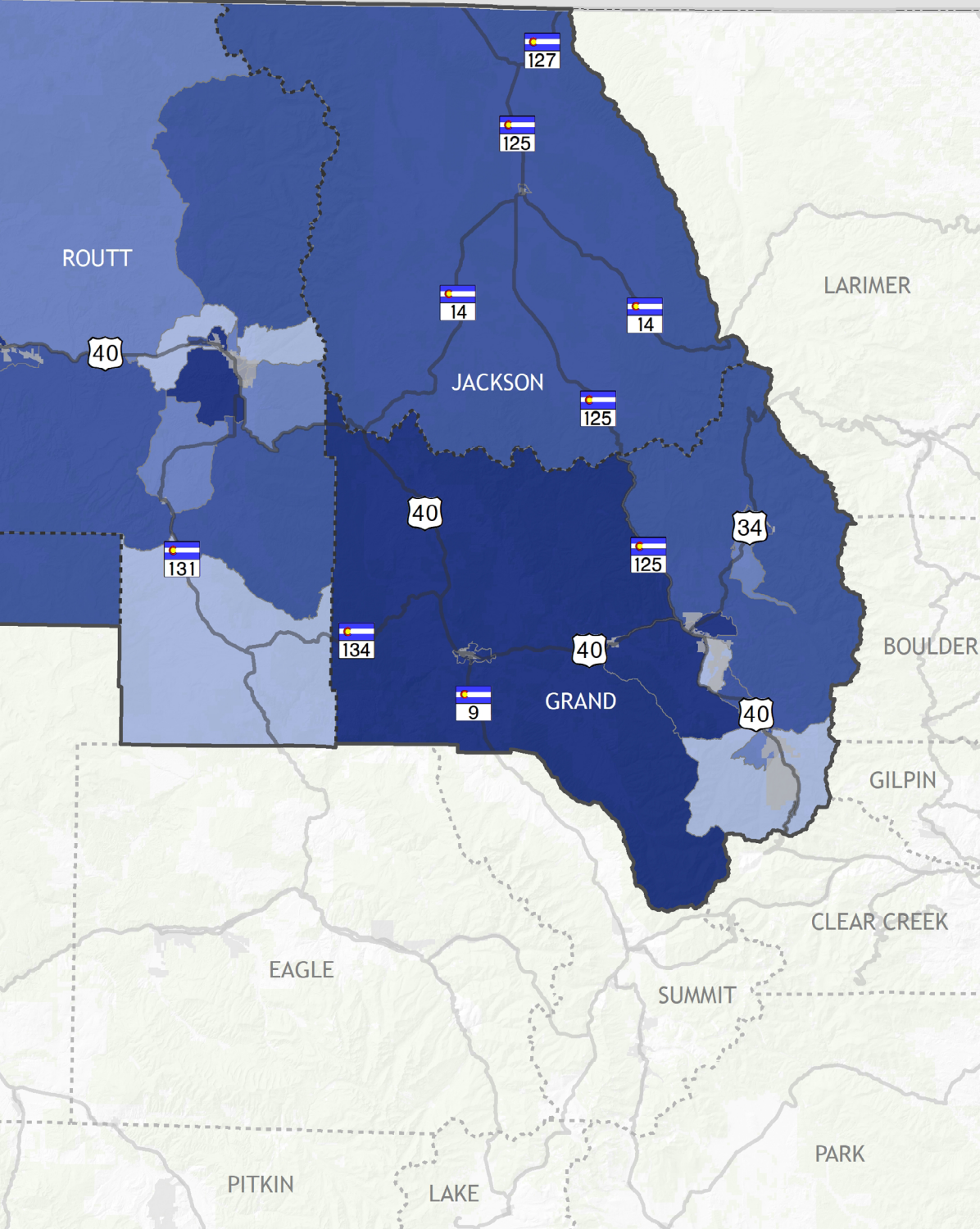
- Low Transit Need
- Low to Moderate Transit Need

- Moderate Transit Need
- Moderate to High Transit Need
- High Transit Need

— Interstate\Highways

Transit Propensity Index is developed by Communities of Color, Population v. Population under 18, Disabled Population. Data was derived from the U.S. Census Bureau.

Wyoming



City Boundaries ----- County Boundaries

Northwest Transportation Planning Region Boundary



ed from inputs including Low Income Households, with Limited English Proficiency, Population over 65, Population, Zero Vehicle Households, and Veteran Population. Census Bureau/American Community Survey (2019-2023).





What We Heard

CDOT coordinated with each TPR to assess goals, priorities, and desired transit improvements for their communities, while also evaluating any changes since the last plan. What we heard from the TPR members and agencies is summarized below.

Interest in Mountain Passenger Rail



Continued support for the advancement of CDOT's Mountain Passenger Rail project within the Region. TPR members expressed a clear desire for the project to move forward, recognizing its transformative potential for the area. While they understand that the priorities of the passenger rail may evolve as planning progresses, they emphasized the importance of the NW TPR remaining flexible and aligned with any updates or changes to ensure the project's successful implementation.

Focus on Bus Stops to Improve Ridership



Need to enhance Bustang Outrider services in the Region to boost ridership, specifically through improved signage, bus stops, and local advertising. Interest in greater public awareness of Bustang services and routes as this will help to increase ridership and make the system more accessible to residents and visitors.

Roadway Project Coordination and Collaboration



Need to identify and prioritize roadways with heavy bus usage or bus stops, to ensure that they receive necessary improvements to prevent deterioration. Proactive maintenance of these roads is essential to accommodate frequent bus traffic, maintain road quality, and enhance the overall transit experience.

Public Engagement Overview

Telephone Town Halls

As part of the public outreach conducted for the statewide planning process, CDOT hosted a series of regional telephone town halls between April and June 2025. These live, over-the-phone events served as a highly accessible platform for engaging Coloradans across all regions of the state. More than 50,000 participants joined the town halls, where they had the opportunity to ask questions about transportation issues and provide input through interactive live polling. Each session connected residents directly with CDOT leadership, who answered over 120 questions live, addressing concerns ranging from road conditions and transit service expansion to safety, accessibility, and long-term investment strategies. On average, participants stayed engaged for more than eight minutes per call, reflecting a high level of interest and involvement. The telephone town halls were designed to broaden access, especially for those who may not be able to attend in-person meetings or navigate digital tools.

Statewide Online Survey

To complement this outreach, CDOT also conducted a Statewide Online Survey to gather additional public feedback on transportation priorities. More than 3,400 Coloradans from all 64 counties participated, providing valuable input on needs and opportunities related to transit and mobility. Together, the telephone town halls and online survey played a crucial role in understanding statewide, regional, and local transportation needs, to ensure that the planning process was informed by a wide and representative range of voices from urban, suburban, and rural communities alike.





Public Engagement Key Themes

1. Regional Transit Access and Expansion

- Expand transit services in underserved rural areas such as Craig, Steamboat Springs, and Grand County.
- Improve intercity and regional connectivity, particularly for older adults and residents without access to private vehicles.

2. Multimodal Integration

- Provide a connected multimodal system, including multiuse trail systems to link neighborhoods to transit in areas like Steamboat Springs.
- Improve bicycle and pedestrian access to transit services to provide first/last-mile connectivity.

3. Transit Inclusion

- Tailor transit services to rural demographics, including older adults and seasonal workers, with a focus on basic access to essential destinations.

4. Infrastructure and Facilities

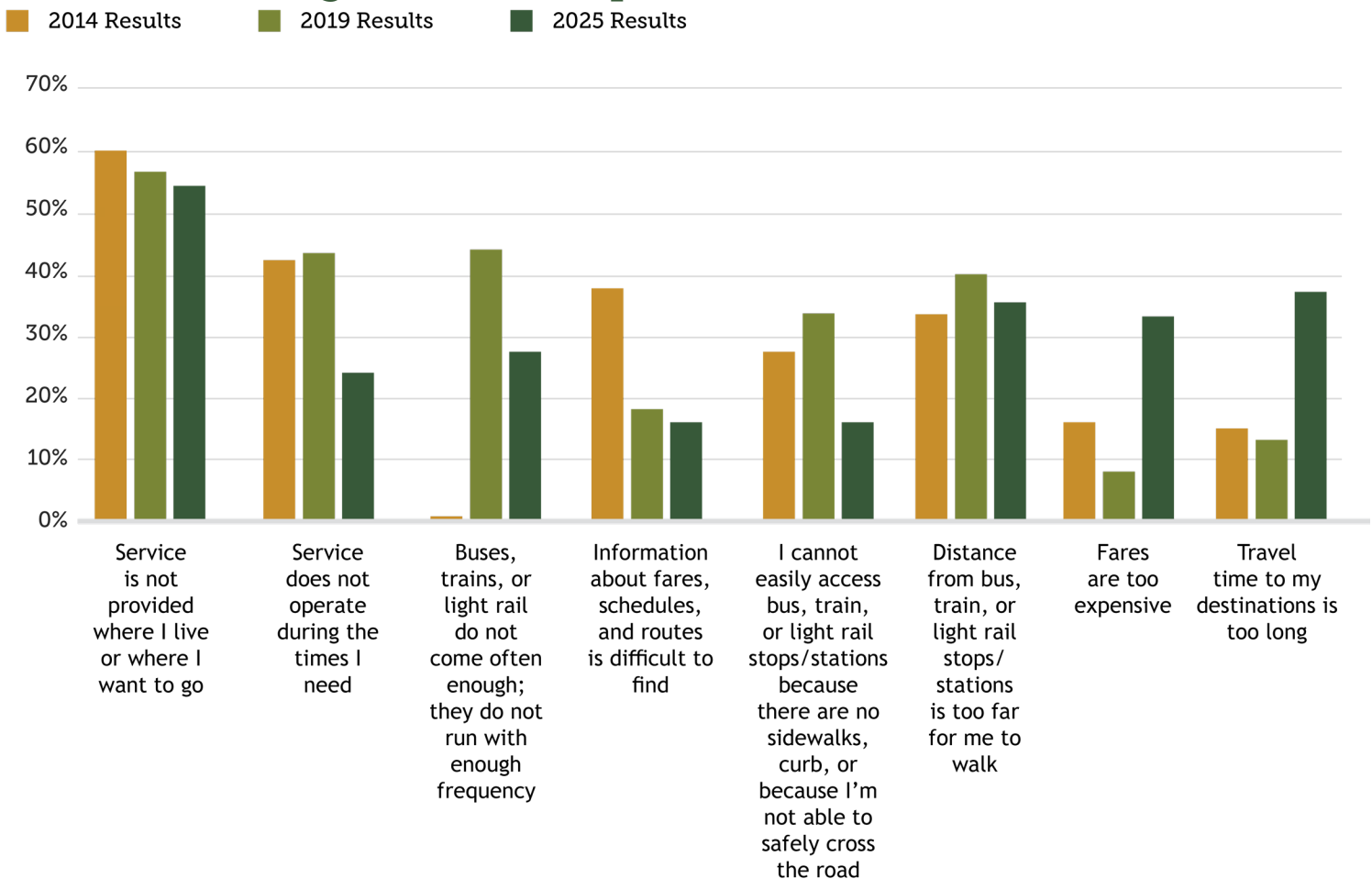
- Improve transit-supportive infrastructure (e.g., stops, shelters, and signage) to complement service expansion.

2025 Statewide Transit Survey of Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities

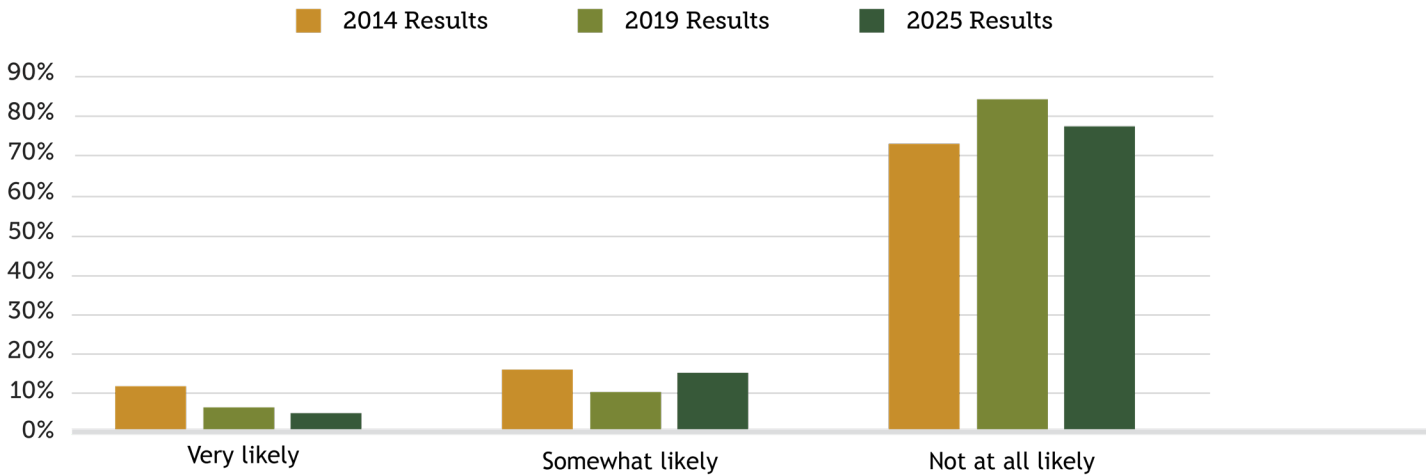
In 2014, CDOT conducted its first statistically valid statewide survey specifically targeting older adults and adults with disabilities. The goal of the survey was to better understand the unique travel behaviors and transportation needs of these populations, who often face distinct mobility challenges. CDOT conducted the survey in 2019 and again in 2025 to capture changes over time and provide insight into how shifting demographics, services, and infrastructure have impacted mobility.

While concerns about service availability remain high, the percentage of respondents reporting that service is not provided where they live or want to go has gradually declined from 60 percent in 2014 to 54 percent in 2025. Similarly, the percentage indicating that service does not operate at needed times fell from 41 percent in 2014 to 24 percent in 2025. In terms of service frequency, concerns dropped from 45 percent in 2014 to 29 percent in 2025. Difficulty finding fare, schedule, and route information was also less commonly reported over time, decreasing from 39 percent in 2014 to 17 percent in 2025. Physical accessibility remains an issue, though the percentage of respondents who reported challenges reaching stops or stations due to lack of sidewalks or unsafe crossing conditions dropped from 29 percent in 2014 to 17 percent in 2025. Meanwhile, concerns about the distance to bus or rail stops remained relatively consistent, with 35 percent of respondents citing it as a barrier in 2025 compared to 33 percent in 2014. Cost has become a growing concern, with those saying fares are too expensive increasing from 19 percent in 2014 to 32 percent in 2025. The most notable increase was in the number of respondents who said travel time to destinations is too long, rising from 14 percent in 2014 to 39 percent in 2025.

Barriers to Using Public Transportation Services

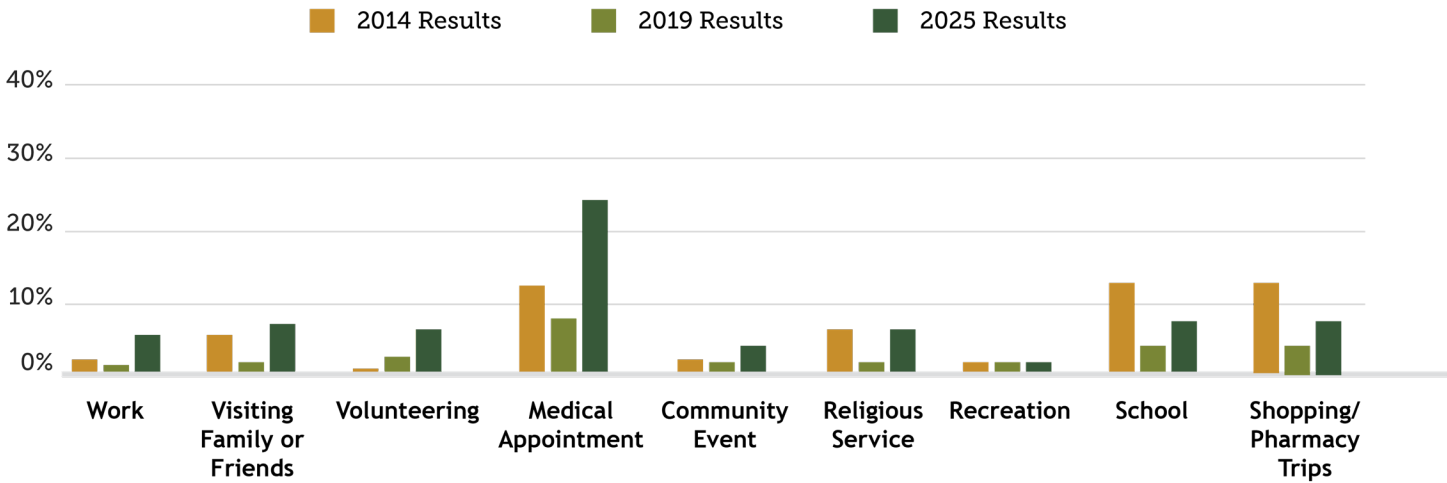


For the times you drive yourself, how likely would you be to use fixed route public transportation or demand-response transportation services instead of driving?



In 2014, 11 percent of respondents reported they would be very likely to make this shift, with 18 percent saying they were somewhat likely and 71 percent indicating they were not at all likely. By 2019, the share of those very likely dropped to 6 percent, and somewhat likely also declined to 10 percent, while the proportion of those not at all likely rose to 83 percent. In 2025, the number of respondents very likely to use public transportation instead of driving decreased slightly again to 5 percent, while the somewhat likely group rebounded to 18 percent. However, the not at all likely group remained high at 77 percent.

For what types of trips do you need transportation but have trouble finding transportation?



In 2014, the most frequently reported challenge was for shopping or pharmacy trips at 12 percent, followed by medical appointments at 15 percent. By 2019, challenges had increased notably across nearly all categories, with medical appointments (23 percent), shopping or pharmacy trips (23 percent), and volunteering (18 percent) being the most cited. Visiting family or friends and attending school also saw increases, each at 20 percent and 18 percent, respectively. In 2025, medical appointments remained a significant need at 22 percent, while difficulty accessing transportation for shopping or pharmacy trips declined slightly to 16 percent. Transportation issues for recreation dropped slightly to 18 percent, and for visiting family or friends to 7 percent.



Existing Providers and Coordination Activities

All transit service provider information and associated data for the NW TPR were collected from the 2023 National Transit Database, previous plans, CDOT’s Division of Transit and Rail, tailored outreach to providers, and internet research. While extensive efforts were made to collect information about all providers, the information may not be comprehensive.

Bustang Outrider

Bustang, Colorado’s statewide bus service, offers affordable and reliable transportation between major cities and regions. Bustang’s mainlines serve I-70 and I-25 to connect Denver with destinations such as Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, Vail, Glenwood Springs, and Grand Junction and to provide convenient options for travelers across the state. In addition, Outrider extends service to rural communities, to offer regional connections and enhance access to areas not covered by Bustang.

Snowstang to Steamboat Springs

Bustang operated one of its “Snowstang” routes through the NW TPR between 2019 and 2024. This seasonal service previously provided weekend and Monday holiday shuttle services between Denver and Lakewood and Steamboat Springs (including Howelsen Hill) from December to mid-April. Service was temporarily discontinued during the COVID-19 pandemic but then resumed in December 2021. There were no Snowstang services to Steamboat Springs for the 2024-2025 winter season.

Northwest stops: Steamboat Springs

Denver to Craig Outrider Route

The route connects the NW TPR to the Denver metro area via the US-40 and I-70 corridors. Operated by Ace Express, it offers one daily trip in each direction: from Craig to Denver in the morning and from Denver to Craig in the afternoon/evening.

Northwest stops: Craig, Hayden, Milner, Steamboat Springs, Muddy Pass, Kremmling, Parshall, Hot Sulphur Springs, Granby, Tabernash, Fraser, and Winter Park



Intercity Transit

Amtrak serves the NW TPR and connects Colorado to the national transit network.

Amtrak – California Zephyr

The California Zephyr operates once daily passenger transit rail service from Chicago, Illinois, to San Francisco, California, with six stops in Colorado.

Northwest stops: Fraser and Granby

Amtrak – Winter Park Express

The Winter Park Express is an Amtrak train that runs once daily in each direction between Denver Union Station and Winter Park Resort, Thursday through Monday, from January to March. For additional access to the resort, the California Zephyr provides service to Winter Park Resort via a shuttle connection in Fraser.

Northwest stops: Winter Park and Fraser

Colorado Mountain Rail

CDOT is exploring a new initiative to enhance transportation options in the central Rocky Mountains. The plan involves developing a network of passenger rail lines that connect the mountain towns and regions with urban centers and recreational locations. This project aims to use existing rail infrastructure to meet the growing demand for passenger rail service. The Mountain Rail route will use the existing rail line that extends from Denver to Craig. The specific station locations along the new route are still under consideration. CDOT is currently evaluating multiple factors to identify the most suitable sites for these stations.



Transit Service Types

- **Fixed-route:** Transit service that operates on a defined route and schedule.
- **Deviated Fixed-Route:** Transit service that follows a defined route and schedule but will deviate off route within a defined area to pick up passengers upon request.
- **Commuter Bus:** Local fixed-route bus transportation primarily connecting outlying areas with a central city. Characterized by a motorcoach, multiple trip tickets and stops in outlying areas, limited stops in the central city, and at least 5 miles of closed-door service.
- **Demand Response:** Typically door-to-door service where riders call ahead to schedule a trip (e.g., Dial-a-Ride, Call-n-Ride, Access-a-Ride).
- **Vanpools:** Service organized in advance by a group of people who travel to and from similar locations at the same time.
- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT):** Fixed-route bus systems that operate at least 50 percent of the service on a fixed guideway. These systems also have defined passenger stations, traffic signal priority or preemption, short headway bidirectional services for a substantial part of weekdays and weekend days, low-floor vehicles or level-platform boarding, and separate branding of the service.
- **Aerial Tramway:** Unpowered passenger vehicles suspended from a system of aerial cables and propelled by separate cables attached to the vehicle suspension system. Engines or motors at a central location, not onboard the vehicle, power the cable system.

Transit Service Categories

- **Interstate Public:** Open to the general public and connects one or more regions/TPRs to regions outside the state of Colorado.*
- **Interregional Public:** Open to the general public and connects one region/TPR of the state to another region/TPR.*
- **Regional Transit Service:** Open to the general public and connects communities and counties within a region/TPR.
- **Local Transit:** Open to the general public and operates primarily within a city, town, or community.
- **Human Services Transportation:** Provided by a human services agency that is typically for a specific population, such as older adults, people with disabilities, or veterans.
- **Private For-Profit Transportation:** Operated privately and includes taxis, resort transportation, ridehailing services (Uber, Lyft), etc.

* Interstate and interregional services, as defined in this plan, include intercity bus service. For more information on intercity bus services please refer to FTA's Section 5311(f) Intercity Bus Funding circular.



Interregional, Regional, and Local Transit Providers

The NW TPR has a range of interregional, regional, and local public transit providers that operate fixed-route, deviated fixed-route bus, commuter bus, and on-demand services.

Note: Ridership, budget, mileage, and revenue hours are 2023 numbers from the National Transit Database and include all service types.

Provider	Service Area	Types of Service	Span of Service	Fare	2023 Annual Rider-ship	2023 Ops and Admin Budget	2023 Vehicle Revenue Miles	2023 Vehicle Revenue Hours
Steamboat Springs Transit (SST)	Multicounty: Moffat and Routt counties	Commuter Bus, Demand Response, Fixed-route	Daily, 7am to 12am	Free	1,187,752	\$5,364,485	598,295	43,078
Town of Winter Park (The Lift)	Granby, Fraser, and Winter Park	Commuter Bus, Demand Response, Fixed-route	Daily, 6am to 12am	Free	435,588	\$2,829,532	454,305	32,099
Granby Connect*	Granby	Demand Response	Thurs-Sat, 10am to 9pm	\$2	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

* Service started February 2025

Source: 2023 National Transit Database, Town of Granby and Tailored Provider Surveys

Regional Transportation Authorities in the Northwest TPR

In November of 2025, voters in six jurisdictions in Northwest TPR voted to approve of the formation of the Yampa Valley Regional Transportation Authority (RTA): Steamboat Springs, Craig, unincorporated Routt County, Hayden, Oak Creek, and Yampa. The goals of the Yampa Valley RTA are to enhance the quality of life for area residents and shape the region’s future by supporting local workforce, increasing transportation options, improving roadway safety, connecting communities, and strengthening regional collaboration. This includes providing year-round transit and creating new transportation options, especially for underserved communities in the Yampa Valley. The Yampa Valley RTA will also be a key partner in supporting transportation initiatives such as Mountain Rail. Overall, the RTA will provide more funding opportunities and a more robust transit network in the future. RTA projects and initiatives will be accounted for in future long-range planning efforts.

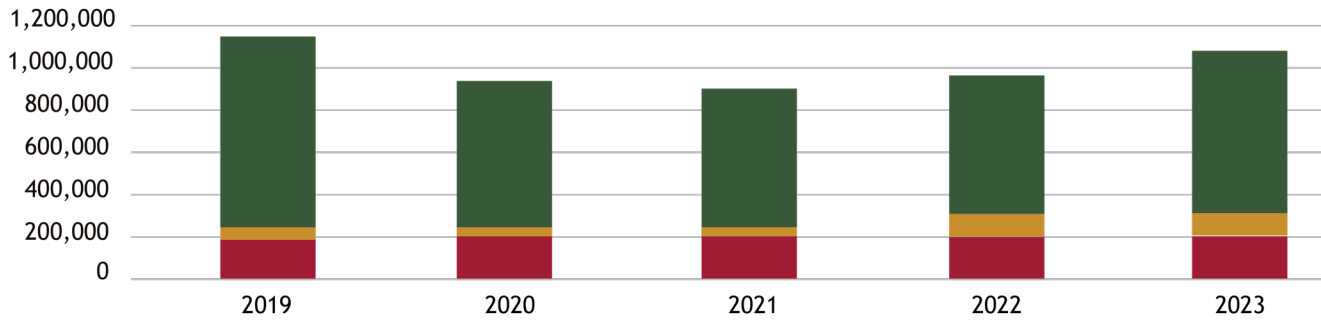
Information from Steamboat’s webpage on the RTA:

<https://www.steamboatsprings.net/1460/Yampa-Valley-Regional-Transportation-Aut>

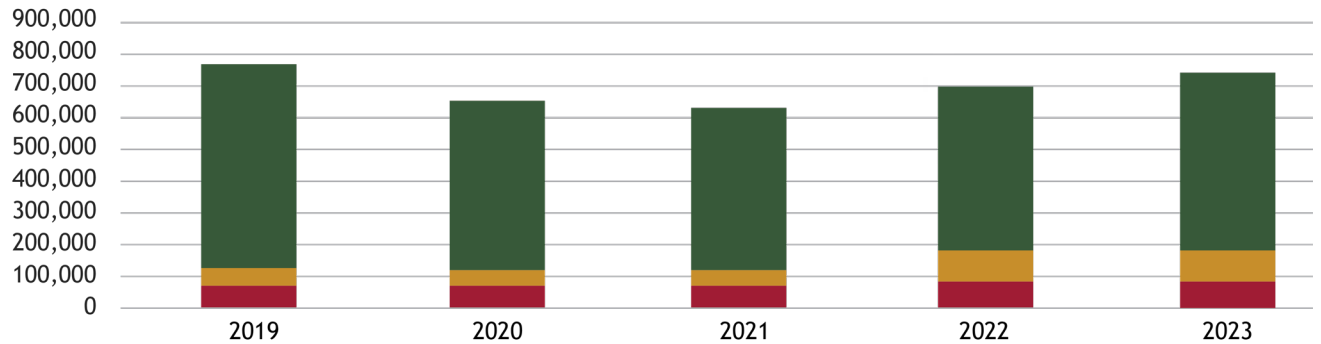
5-Year Historic Operating Data

Five-year historical trends for key transit operating metrics—such as ridership, revenue miles, and revenue hours—across all local and regional public transit service providers in the NW TPR show a significant decline in all areas around 2020, coinciding with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Ridership, in particular, saw a sharp drop, indicating fewer trips were taken, even though transit agencies continued to cover long distances over extended periods. However, after 2021, providers in the NW TPR experienced a recovery. It is important to note that two of the identified providers also serve ski resorts, and the influx of riders to these destinations may have contributed to the rebound in ridership.

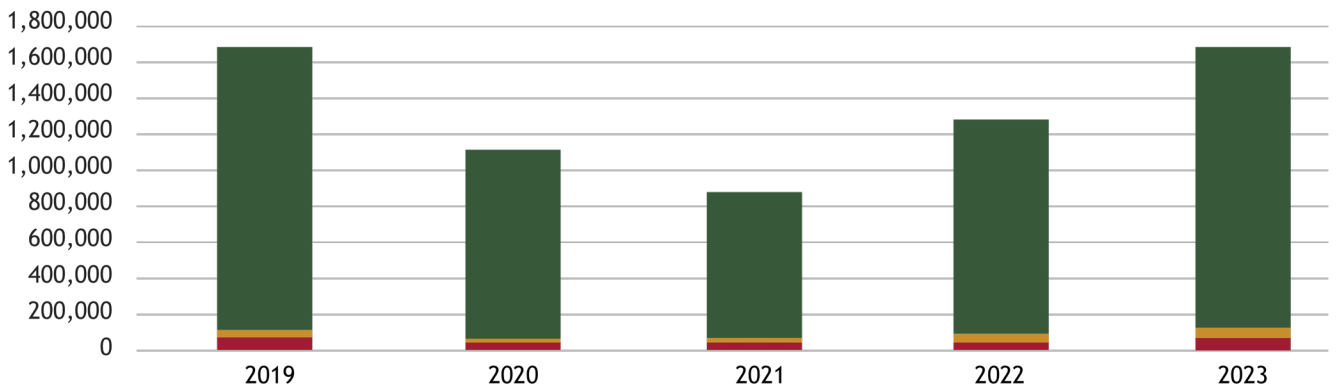
Total TPR Vehicle Revenue Miles



Total TPR Vehicle Revenue Hours



Total TPR Unlinked Passenger Trips



■ Fixed-route ■ Demand Response ■ Commuter Bus

Source: 2019-2023 National Transit Database

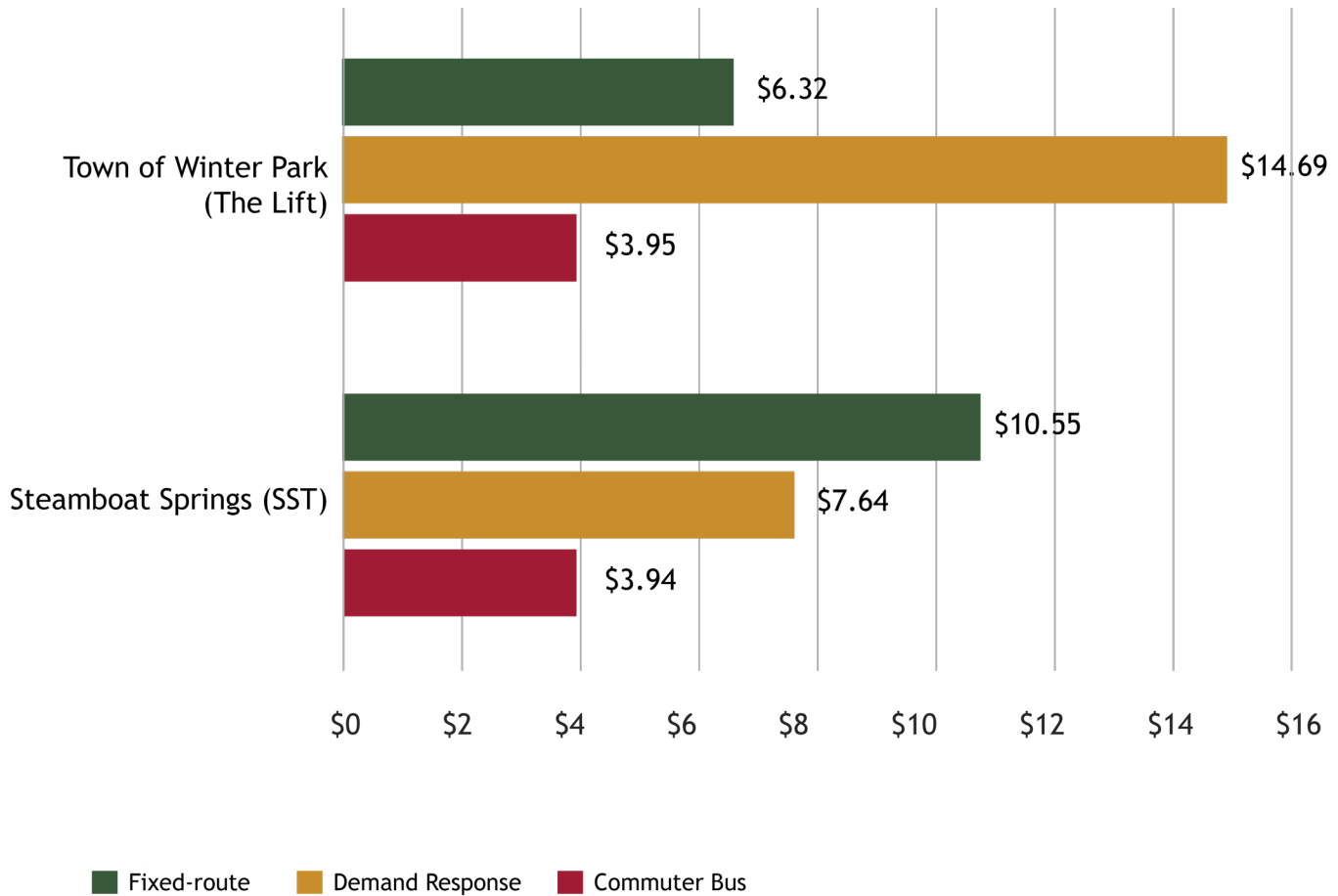


Transit Provider Service Performance Metrics

Key performance data indicate the efficiency of an agency's service operations. NW TPR cost per trip, cost per revenue hour, and cost per revenue mile are highlighted to identify performance across agencies.

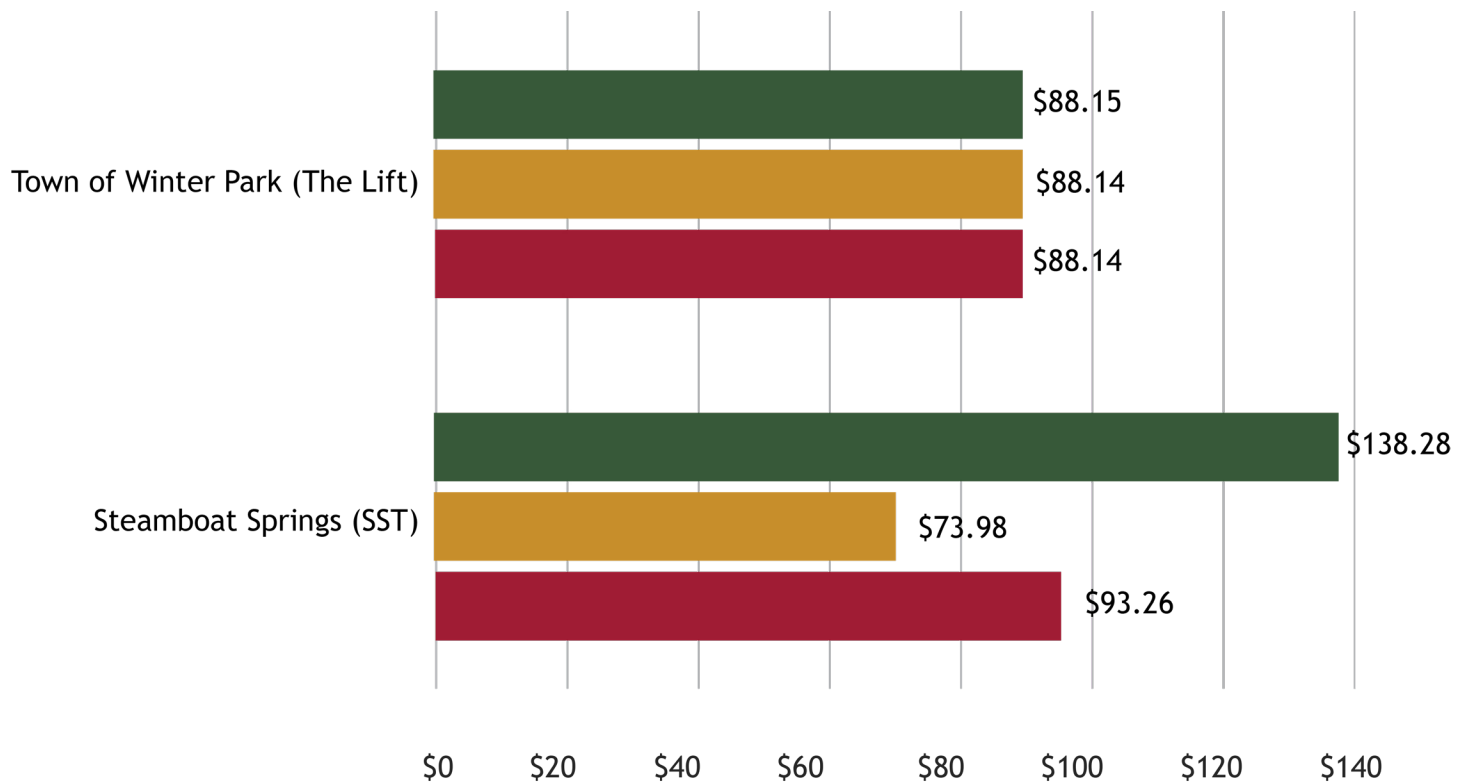
Cost per Mile

The Lift reports the highest cost per mile among the two communities, with demand response service costing \$14.69 per mile, fixed-route at \$6.32 per mile, and commuter bus at \$3.95 per mile. In comparison, SST reports a fixed-route cost of \$10.55 per mile, demand response at \$7.64 per mile, and commuter bus at \$3.94 per mile. Across both providers, commuter bus services are the most cost-efficient mode on a per-mile basis, while demand response is the most expensive.



Cost per Hour

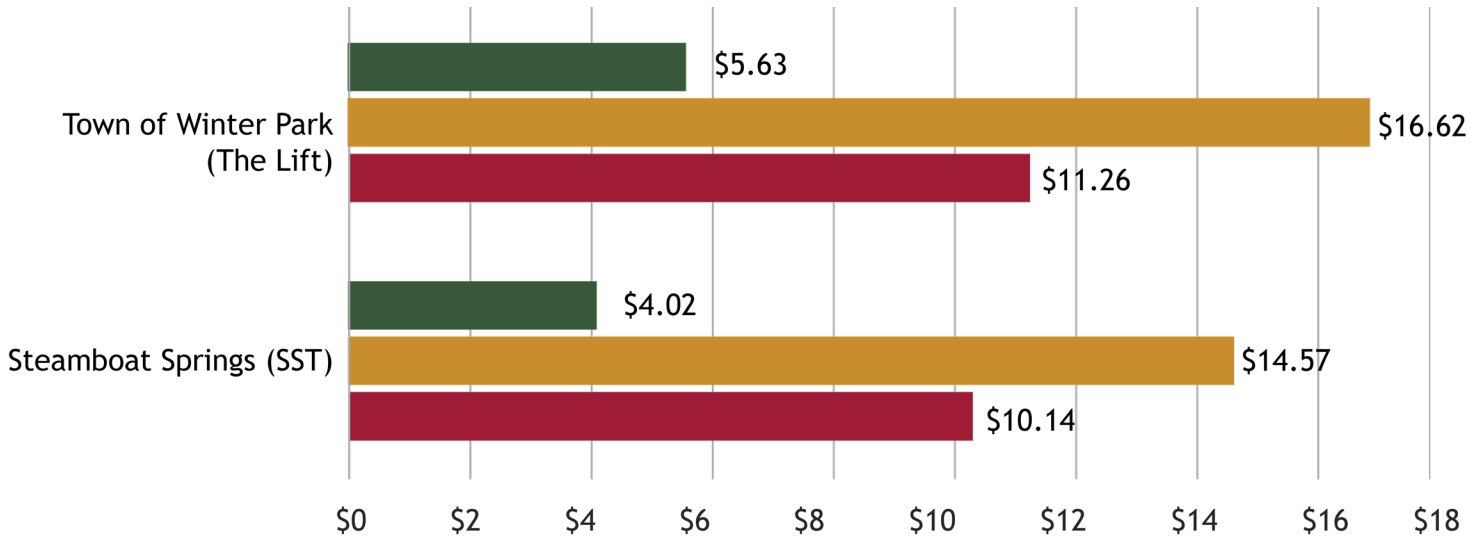
The Lift's three services report nearly identical hourly costs, with fixed-route and commuter bus services each at \$88.15 per hour and demand response at \$88.14 per hour. In contrast, SST shows more variation across service types. SST's fixed-route service is the most expensive at \$138.28 per hour, followed by commuter bus at \$93.26 per hour and demand response at \$73.98 per hour.



Source: 2023 National Transit Database, Tailored Provider Surveys

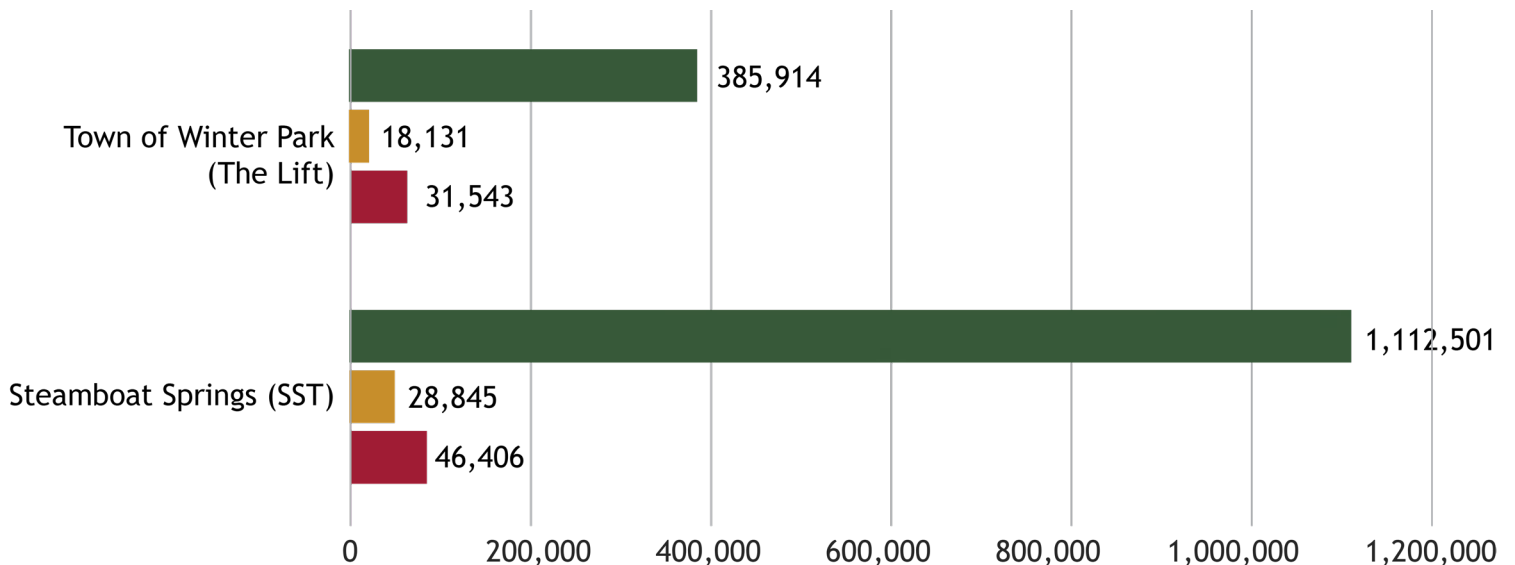
Cost per Ride

The Lift reports a cost of \$5.63 per ride for fixed-route service, \$16.62 for demand response, and \$11.26 for commuter bus. SST reports slightly lower costs across all service types, with fixed-route service at \$4.02 per ride, demand response at \$14.57, and commuter bus at \$10.14 per ride. In both communities, demand response services are the most expensive per ride, while fixed-route remains the most cost-efficient. Commuter bus service falls in between. These figures highlight the consistent cost advantage of fixed-route service, while also illustrating the higher operational cost of demand response, especially in resort and rural mountain communities.



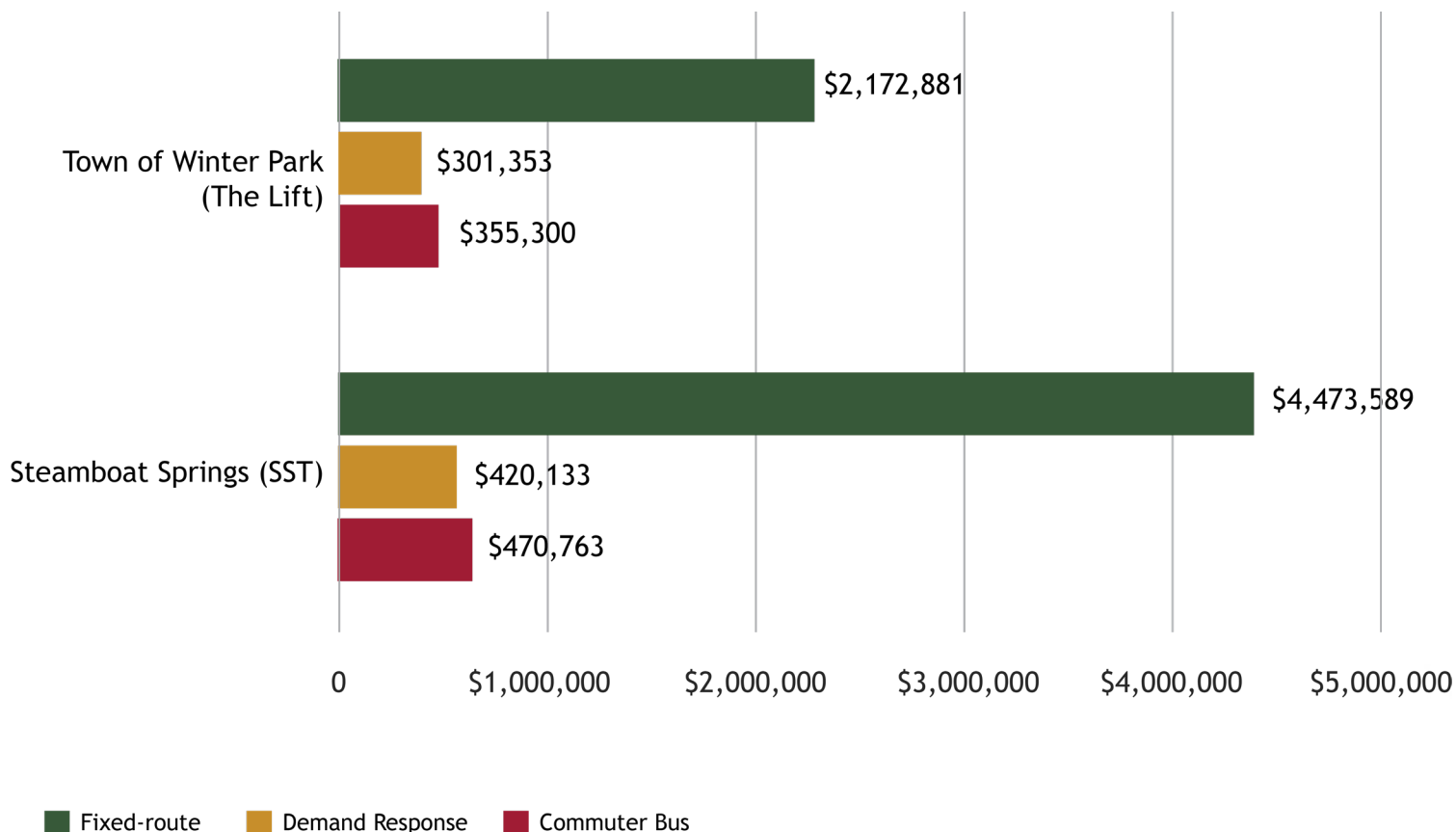
Annual Ridership

SST reports the highest overall ridership, with 1,112,501 rides provided through fixed-route service, 28,845 demand response rides, and 46,406 commuter bus rides. The Lift reports significantly lower totals, with 385,914 rides on fixed-route service, 18,131 demand response rides, and 31,543 commuter bus rides. In both communities, fixed-route services account for the vast majority of total rides.

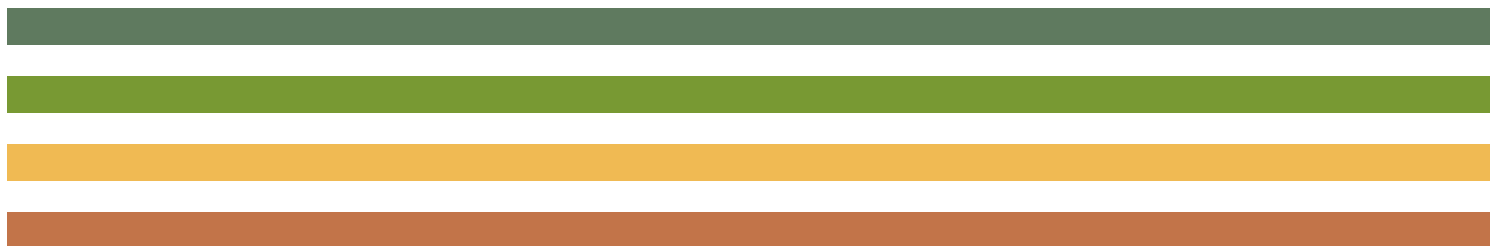


Annual Operating Costs

SST reports the highest overall operating cost, with \$4,473,589 for fixed-route service, \$420,133 for demand response, and \$470,763 for commuter bus, totaling over \$5.3 million. In comparison, The Lift reports \$2,172,881 in annual operating costs for fixed-route service, \$301,353 for demand response, and \$355,300 for commuter bus, totaling just under \$2.83 million. In both communities, fixed-route service accounts for the majority of total operating expenses, while demand response and commuter bus services represent smaller but still significant portions of the transit budget.



Source: 2023 National Transit Database, Tailored Provider Surveys



Human Services Transportation Providers

Several human services agencies in the NW TPR offer transportation services, although transportation is just one of the many services they provide. The following table outlines the human services agencies in the Region that offer transportation, along with the populations they serve. This table includes providers from the 2045 NW Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan that were still operational in 2023, as well as additional providers identified through online research. Since this list was compiled using available online information, it may not include all providers in the NW TPR, especially those without websites.

Provider	Service Area (Within NW)	Additional TPRs	Type of Service	Days of Service	Passenger Eligibility
Boys and Girls Club of Craig	Craig	N/A	Fixed-route Bus	Mon-Thurs, after school	Youth (Boys and Girls Club members)
Boys and Girls Club of Steamboat	Steamboat Springs	N/A	Fixed-route Bus	Mon-Fri, After school	Youth (Boys and Girls Club members)
Delta Transport	Grand County	IM	Demand Response (Medical)	Upon Request	General Public
Grand Seniors at Mountain Family Center	Grand County, Steamboat Springs, Kremmling	IM, DRCOG	Demand Response	Mon-Thurs, 8:30am to 4pm	Older adults and people with disabilities
Jackson County Council on Aging OATS Van	Jackson County, Steamboat Springs	UFR, Laramie, WY	Fixed-route Bus, Demand Response	Two days a month per route, upon request	Open to all passengers requiring transportation services, although an older adult (age 60 or older) must be a part of every trip
MedRide	Grand, Jackson, Moffat, Rio Blanco and Routt counties	All of Colorado	Demand Response (Medical), Specialized Services	Mon-Fri, 6am to 7pm; Sat-Sun, 6am to 5pm	Colorado Medicaid patients through Health First Colorado with no other means of transportation
Meeker Streaker Transit	Meeker, Craig and Steamboat Springs	GVMPO, IM	Demand Response	Mon-Fri, 8am to 4pm	Open to all passengers requiring transportation services
Moffat County Housing Authority - Sunset Meadows	Moffat County (within 5 miles of Sunset Meadows)	N/A	Demand Response, Specialized Services	Mon-Fri, 8am to 3pm	People with disabilities, older adults, low-income populations, veterans, Medicaid recipients
Northwest Colorado Center for Independence	Grand, Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt counties	IM, GVMPO	Demand Response, Specialized Services	Upon Request	Older adults (65+), people with disabilities, veterans

Provider	Service Area (Within NW)	Additional TPRs	Type of Service	Days of Service	Passenger Eligibility
Rangely Rambler	Rangely	GVMPO Vernal, UT	Fixed-route Bus, Demand Response	Fixed-route: Thurs, 8am to 5pm Demand Response: upon request	Seniors and low-income community members that cannot find other transportation
Routt County Council on Aging	Steamboat Springs, Hayden, South Routt	N/A	Demand Response	Upon Request	Older adults (60+)
Sunshine Rides	Grand, Moffat, Rio Blanco, and Routt counties	CFR, DRCOG, Eastern, GV, GVMPO, IM, PPACG, SE, SLV, SW	Demand Response	Daily	Open to all passengers requiring transportation services
Vintage	Grand, Jackson and Routt counties	IM	Vouchers or Reimbursement	Upon Request	Older adults (60+)

Source: 2045 NW Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan, Desktop Review

Other Human Services Agencies

Some human services providers do not offer direct transportation services but may fund transportation programs, offer transportation-related services, or coordinate with transportation providers in the Region. The following table includes providers from the 2045 NW Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan that were still active in 2023, along with additional providers identified through online research. Since this list was compiled through available online resources, it may not include all providers in the NW TPR, especially those without websites.

Provider	Service Area (Within NW)	Additional TPRs	Type of Service	Days of Service	Passenger Eligibility
Area Agency on Aging of Northwest Colorado	Moffat and Rio Blanco counties	GVMPO, IM	Coordination with Other Providers	Mon-Fri	Older adults (60+)

Source: 2045 NW Coordinated Public Transit and Human Services Transportation Plan, Desktop Review

Private Transportation Providers

Thirteen private for-profit companies in the NW TPR provide transportation services, including Alpine Express, Colorado Mountain Express, GO Alpine, Granby Ranch, Grand Mountain Rides, High Mountain Taxi, Home James Transportation Services, Homes James Transportation, Lyft, Sober Buddy Shuttle LLC, Storm Mountain Express, Uber, and Valley Taxi. Treadshare, a digital platform that connects drivers and riders and creates opportunities to carpool, serves the NW TPR.

State of Good Repair

CDOT’s Division of Transit and Rail comprehensive Transit Asset Management Plan meets federal requirements and was last updated fall 2023. The plan evaluates the condition of assets funded with state or federal funds to help prioritize investments that ensure Colorado’s transit systems remain in a state of good repair. Currently, nearly 50 percent of CDOT tracked transit vehicles in the NW TPR are beyond their state of good repair. In total, the cost of backlog is nearly \$30 million and will grow if vehicles that are beyond their state of good repair are not replaced.

Provider	Total Revenue Vehicles	Vehicles Beyond State of Good Repair	Percentage of Vehicles Beyond State of Good Repair	Cost of Backlog
Granby Connect*	2	N/A	N/A	N/A
Steamboat Springs Transit (SST)	24	10	41.67%	\$9,511,723
Town of Winter Park (The Lift)	28	16	57.14%	\$17,600,000
Total	54	26	48.15%	\$27,111,723

Source: 2023 Transit Asset Management Plan
 * Service started February 2025

Regional Coordination Activities

The Northwest Colorado Council of Governments (NWCCOG) serves as the Regional Transportation Coordinating Council (RTCC) for both the NW and IM TPRs. The RTCC’s primary goal is to foster coordination between the NW and IM TPRs, strengthen regional transit partnerships, and support the development of transportation projects that enhance mobility options for key populations—including older adults (over age 60), low-income families, individuals on Medicaid or Medicare, persons with disabilities, and veterans. The RTCC provides coordination across a broad geographic footprint, serving Routt, Jackson, and Grand Counties in the Northwest TPR, as well as Garfield, Pitkin, Eagle, Summit, and Lake Counties in the Intermountain TPR. Park County, though part of the CFR TPR, also participates in the RTCC.

The RTCC for the NW TPR convenes regularly to bring stakeholders together, ensuring coordinated efforts and practical implementation of projects across community boundaries. Current initiatives include first/last mile solutions, technology-driven enhancements to regional transit, and the development of a dedicated funding pool to support RTCC-led regional transportation efforts. The RTCC’s mission remains centered on advancing coordinated transportation services, particularly for veterans, individuals with disabilities, older adults, and low-income populations.

While individual TPRs tend to focus on large-scale capital projects, the RTCC targets smaller, broader, or less-defined initiatives that may not align neatly with CDOT’s Rural Transit Plans. Instead, RTCC partners work collaboratively to refine these concepts, preparing them to be “RTP-ready” and eligible for future funding and implementation.

Local Coordination Efforts

The NW TPR serves as the local coordination group for the Northwest. The Town of Winter Park Transit Advisory Committee (TAC) also advises the Town’s Council on the annual transit budget and service recommendations. Because Winter Park’s The Lift operates in Fraser, representatives from the Town of Fraser and Grand County participate in the TAC to coordinate efforts between the two communities.

In addition, Vintage (previously known as Alpine Area Agency on Aging [AAA] provides funding to RCCOA, OATS/JCCOA and Grand Seniors/MFC.

Mobility Management

In July 2012, the NWCCOG hired a mobility manager with the goal of streamlining coordination efforts in the NW TPR. The mobility manager serves two TPRs, NW and IM, because NWCCOG’s members span these two TPRs. The NWCCOG mobility manager leads the RTCC and works with partner organizations to expand coordination of, and access to, existing and new transportation resources.

Service and Communication Coordination

Several service and outreach initiatives are currently underway in the NW TPR. Alongside efforts to prepare “RTP-ready” projects, the RTCC has partnered with CDOT to host a “train-the-trainer” event. This event is designed to connect CDOT and local transit providers with community members who may be interested in using transit—particularly services like Bustang—but are not yet comfortable navigating them independently. To further improve access, the RTCC is also developing an updated print and digital rider guide, available in multiple languages, to make transit information more accessible and understandable.

The RTCC and NW TPR are collaborating with the Northwest Colorado Center for Independence (NWCCI). NWCCI works to provide safe, reliable, and accessible transportation that supports independence for individuals across the region. While NWCCI primarily focuses on serving older adults and individuals with disabilities, it also helps connect residents to broader transportation options—including Bustang, taxi services, and other local transit providers. The RTCC identified restrictive funding regulations and limited financial resources as key barriers

Identified Barriers

To regional coordination. Without dedicated funding, the RTCC is limited to coordination rather than direct project implementation. Currently funded through 5310, the RTCC is actively seeking additional partners to expand its local match funding pool.

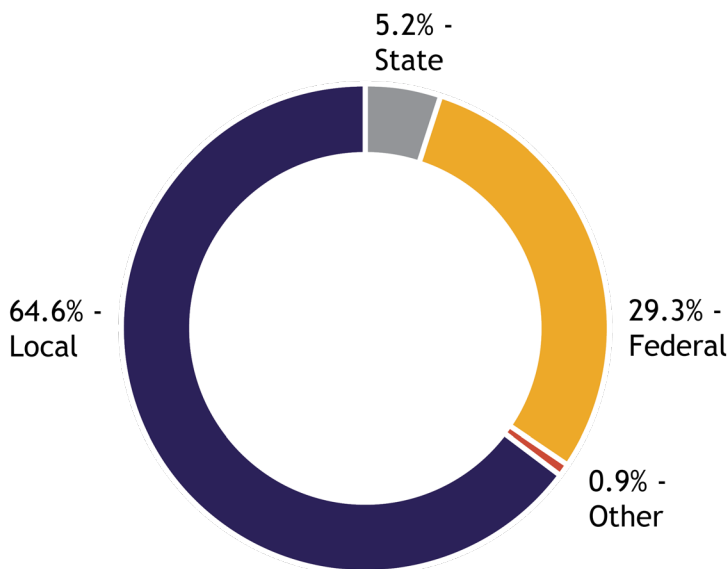
Other Partnerships

The City of Steamboat Springs, City of Craig, Town of Granby, and Town of Winter Park are actively coordinating with CDOT's Division of Transit and Rail on the planning and development of future mountain passenger rail service. Additionally, the Town of Winter Park has engaged in conversations with both Bustang and Amtrak to explore existing and potential bus service enhancements, although these discussions occur on an informal, as-needed basis rather than through regularly scheduled meetings.

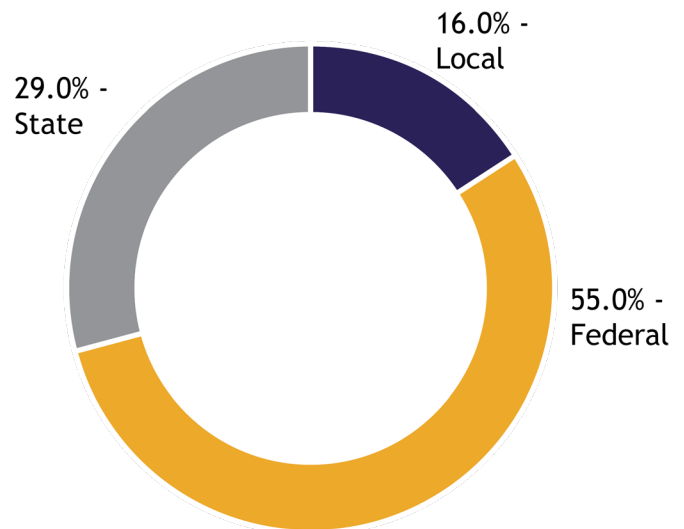
Financial Snapshot

Because transit funding is complex, Colorado providers typically use a patchwork funding approach that includes federal, state, local fares, donations, and/or tax revenues. Public funds are primarily used to support transit and transportation services in rural parts of Colorado, with most agencies relying on federal funds from FTA. For Operating Revenue Sources, the largest share, 64.6 percent, comes from local sources. Federal funding accounts for 29.3 percent, while the state contributes 5.2 percent. Other sources make up a small portion at 0.9 percent. This distribution suggests a strong local investment in day-to-day transit operations. For Capital Revenue Sources a more balanced distribution is present. Federal sources contribute the largest share at 55.0 percent, followed by state funding at 29.0 percent, and local contributions at 16.0 percent. This distribution indicates a collaborative funding approach among all levels of government when it comes to major capital investments such as infrastructure or vehicle purchases.

Operating Revenue Sources

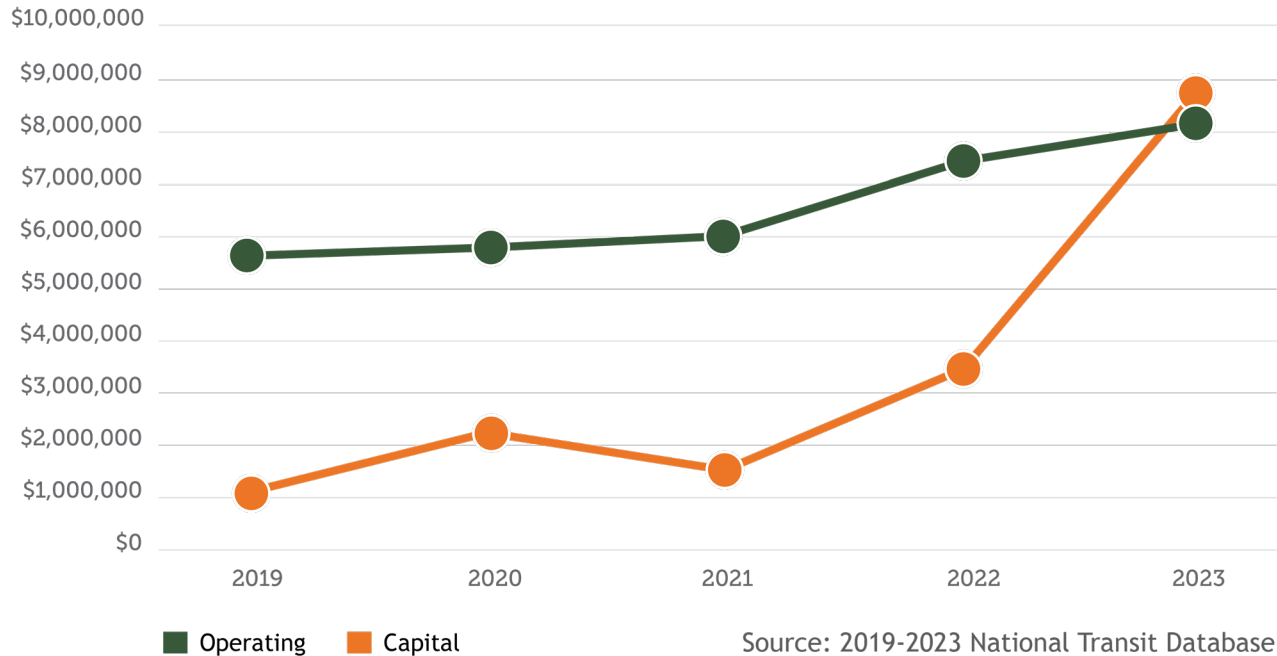


Capital Revenue Sources



Historic Revenue Data

The following chart shows five-year NW TPR operating and capital funding trends. Operating funds increased by approximately 40 percent over the five-year period, with an uptick in average operating funds in 2022. Notably, capital funding grew sharply in 2023, surpassing operating funds. This may be due in part to the nearly \$6 million in federal grants that Winter Park received.



Source: 2019-2023 National Transit Database, Tailored Provider Surveys

Regional Transit Revenue Trends

Annual Operating/Capital Projections

Regional transit funding projections provide a framework for transit planning in the future. However, while these projections are informative, many factors can significantly impact the accuracy of forecasts, including the availability and allocation of funding, economic volatility, and the rate of inflation. As part of this plan refresh, this financial snapshot section focuses exclusively on information from the 2023 TAM Plan data and 2023 NTD data to outline projected capital and operating needs through 2050. This financial snapshot is intended to provide a high-level understanding of the magnitude of projected capital and operating expenses relative to anticipated revenue streams. It highlights the scale of need across a region and identifies the funding gaps that must be addressed. These gaps will require a combination of local investment, competitive state and federal grant awards, and potentially new or currently unidentified funding sources to sustain and expand transit services over the coming decades.

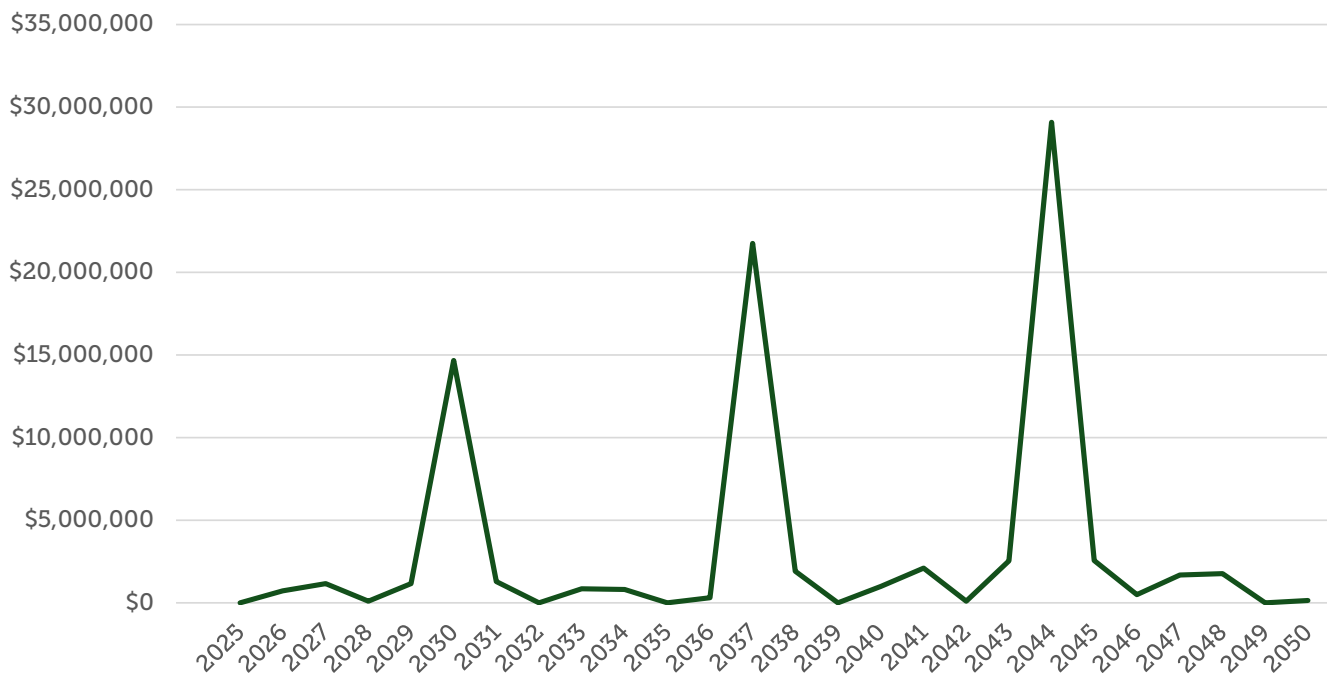
Capital and Operating Costs

The 2023 TAM Plan uses a four-year planning horizon (2023-2026), consistent with FTA requirements, and identifies asset conditions, anticipated replacement needs, and capital costs necessary to maintain a state of good repair over that period.

To develop a more complete picture of rolling stock replacement needs, data from the 2023 TAM Plan was compared against fleet replacement projections from the 2045 Statewide Transit Plan. This comparison helped reconcile discrepancies between the two sources by accounting for vehicles that were identified for replacement in the 2045 Plan but had not yet been procured as of 2023. It also allowed the inclusion of vehicles expected to reach the end of their useful life just beyond the TAM Plan’s four-year horizon (2023-2026), ensuring that the analysis captures both deferred procurements and emerging replacement needs through the full planning period. This combined approach supports a more realistic estimate of total capital costs over the long term. This data does not factor in revenue generated as part of the RTA due to the fact that the RTA was approved by voters in November 2025.

The chart below shows projected capital expenditures for rolling stock replacement among NW TPR rural transit providers from 2025 through 2050. Year-to-year cost fluctuations reflect the cyclical nature of vehicle replacement, influenced by fleet sizes, staggered procurement schedules, and vehicle life cycles. This forecast highlights the timing and scale of capital needs required to keep fleets in a state of good repair, assuming replacements only—without expanding fleet capacity—over the 25-year planning horizon.

Capital Expenditures to Maintain State of Good Repair

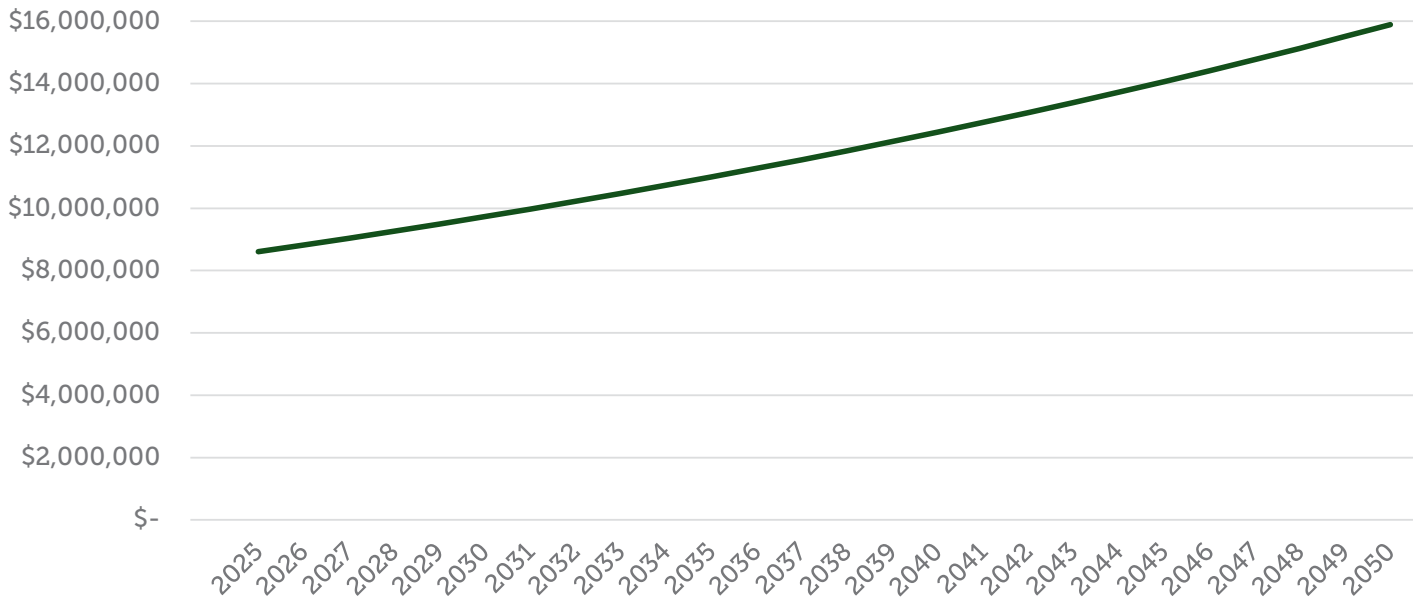


Operating cost estimates were developed using 2023 NTD data reported by transit agencies. To project future costs, these baseline figures were escalated using county-level population growth forecasts. This approach reflects anticipated increases in service demand driven by demographic changes.

Similarly, the following chart illustrates projected operating expenditures for transit providers from 2025 through 2050. The forecast assumes continuation of existing service levels and does not account for major changes in service, such as new routes or significant expansions. As such, the analysis provides an estimate of future operating needs, useful for identifying long-term funding requirements under a steady-state service scenario.

Anticipated Operating Expenditure Forecasts

(To Maintain Current Operations)



Funding Programs and Opportunities

Federal funding is the primary source of revenue for transit and human services providers in Colorado, although many NW TPR providers are also significantly supported by local funds. Federal funds support both operating and capital projects. CDOT serves as the designated recipient for rural transit funds, allocating Grants for Rural Areas (5311) funding based on a Colorado-specific rural funding methodology. CDOT distributes Bus and Bus Facilities (5339) and Planning (5304) funds through an annual competitive grant application process open to rural providers across the state. FTA also awards 5339 funds through a competitive process.

Historically, funding for both operating and capital transit needs has been limited. In the previous planning cycle, strategic funds from sources like Senate Bill (SB)-267 and others were allocated for transit capital projects over four years. Recently, the Clean Transit Enterprise, established through House Bill (HB) 21-260, created a Retail Delivery Fee to provide competitive funding for zero-emission transit planning, facilities, charging infrastructure, and bus replacement projects. Furthermore, SB 24-230 introduces an “Oil and Gas Production Fee” to fund future transit and rail projects, with implementation expected in January 2026. This bill allocates fees from oil and gas companies to fund a Formula Local Transit Operations Grant Program (70 percent),

Competitive Local Transit Grant Program (10 percent), and Rail Funding Program (20 percent). Due to limited state funding, many transit agencies in Colorado rely heavily on local funding, especially for operational costs. Alternative funding sources to support local and regional transit services include:

- General funds
- Lodging taxes
- Parking fees
- Property taxes
- Public-private partnerships
- Rural transportation authorities
- Sales and use taxes
- Sponsorships/donations
- Tourism taxes
- Utility taxes/fees
- Vehicle fees
- CDOT’s Office of Innovative Mobility Enterprise Funding

Federal Transit Administration Funding Programs

- Bus and Bus Facilities Discretionary Program -5339(b)
- Capital Investment Grant - 5309
- Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities - 5310
- Grants for Buses & Bus Facilities - 5339(a)
- Grants for Rural Areas - 5311
- Low or No Emission Vehicle Program - 5339(c)
- Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning - 20005(b)
- Planning Grants - 5304
- Rural Transportation Assistance Program - 5311(b)(3)
- State of Good Repair Grants - 5337



Implementation Strategies

Implementation actions are meant to be near-term, practicable measures related to the TPR's transit vision and goals and to support the implementation of identified transit projects in the Region.

- Advocate for full funding of TPR-identified transit capital and operating projects
- Maintain all assets in a state of good repair
- Maximize existing and seek new funding sources to expand local and regional services to include additional days, hours, and geographic coverage
- Maximize funding to expand transit fleets throughout the Region and provide increased service frequency and coverage
- Integrate technological improvements into transit fleets to improve overall efficiency
- Implement transit options and transit amenities in high activity areas, such as Winter Park and Steamboat Springs, to encourage greater transit use and reduce strain on local resources
- Implement transit centers to provide accessible, multimodal transportation connectivity
- Expand regional transit service to provide access to major activity centers
- Improve transit amenities in the Region through increased signage and shelters
- Partner and collaborate with CDOT and local agencies to increase coordinating council participation and expand coordination, marketing, and outreach between transit providers and human services agencies
- Effectively incorporate Mountain Rail planning in the comprehensive transportation network





Priority Projects

Based on findings from public input, data about gaps and needs, and input from stakeholders, TPR members prioritized their projects for the Region. It is important to note that priorities may change based on available funding, grant opportunities, agency needs, etc.

Project ID	Project Name	Project Total
1032	New Essential Bus Service between Grand Junction and Craig and between Craig and Frisco (Proposed Bustang Outrider Service)	\$400,000
1033	Essential Bus Service between Craig and Vail (Proposed Outrider Service)	\$2,660,000
1244	Winter Park Transit Maintenance Facility - Phase 1 and 2	\$2,800,000
1245	Steamboat Springs Transit Fleet Expansion	\$2,400,000
1246	Redesign and Construct the Steamboat Springs Transportation Center (Phase 1)	\$2,300,000
1247	Grand County Paratransit Van for Seniors Program	\$500,000
1248	Winter Park Cooper Creek Square Transit Center	\$560,000
1249	Middle Park Park-n-Ride	\$750,000
1250	Steamboat Springs Transportation Center Build (Phase II)	\$15,700,000
1251	Steamboat Springs Transit Facility Improvements	\$4,450,000
1252	Hayden Park-n-Ride	\$1,650,000
1253	New Local Transit Service in Craig	\$6,130,000
1254	Steamboat Springs Bus Rapid Transit Planning Study	\$300,000
1255	Western Steamboat Springs Transit Service	\$11,600,000
1256	Essential Bus Service between Craig and Idaho Springs (Proposed Outrider Service)	\$3,380,000
1263	Winter Park Maintenance Facility	\$200,000
1264	Steamboat Springs Transit Center Renovation	\$18,000,000
1693	Bus Garage	\$250,000
1694	Multi Gov Fleet Station	\$800,000
1748	Workforce Transit to Piceance Creek	\$1,500,000
1757	South Routt Park and Ride Facility	\$1,650,000
2378	Expand Jackson County Council on Aging Service	\$1,050,000
2379	New US 34 Fixed-Route Lift Service from Granby to Grand Lake	\$1,950,000
2494	Outrider Improvements at Fraser, Granby, Kremmling, and Hot Sulphur Springs	\$300,000

Project ID	Project Name	Project Total
2710	Winter Park Bus lane/parking improvements	\$320,000
2748	Outrider Improvements at Steamboat Springs, Milner, Hayden, and Craig	\$320,000
2749	Outrider Improvements at Winter Park and Tabernash	\$160,000
3237	Mountain Passenger Rail - Station Study (Hot Sulphur Springs)	\$500,000
3238	Mountain Passenger Rail - Station Study (Kremmling)	\$500,000
3239	Mountain Passenger Rail - Station Study (Oak Creek)	\$500,000
3240	Mountain Passenger Rail - Station Study (Steamboat Springs Resort)	\$500,000
3241	Mountain Passenger Rail - Station Study (Steamboat Springs Downtown)	\$500,000
3242	Mountain Passenger Rail - Station Study (Hayden)	\$500,000
3243	Mountain Passenger Rail - Station Study (Craig)	\$500,000
3244	Mountain Passenger Rail - Station Study (Yampa Valley Regional Airport)	\$500,000
3245	Outrider Improvements, Craig to Denver	\$800,000
3246	Fleet Replacement and Expansion - Outrider Craig-Denver Route	\$1,000,000

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