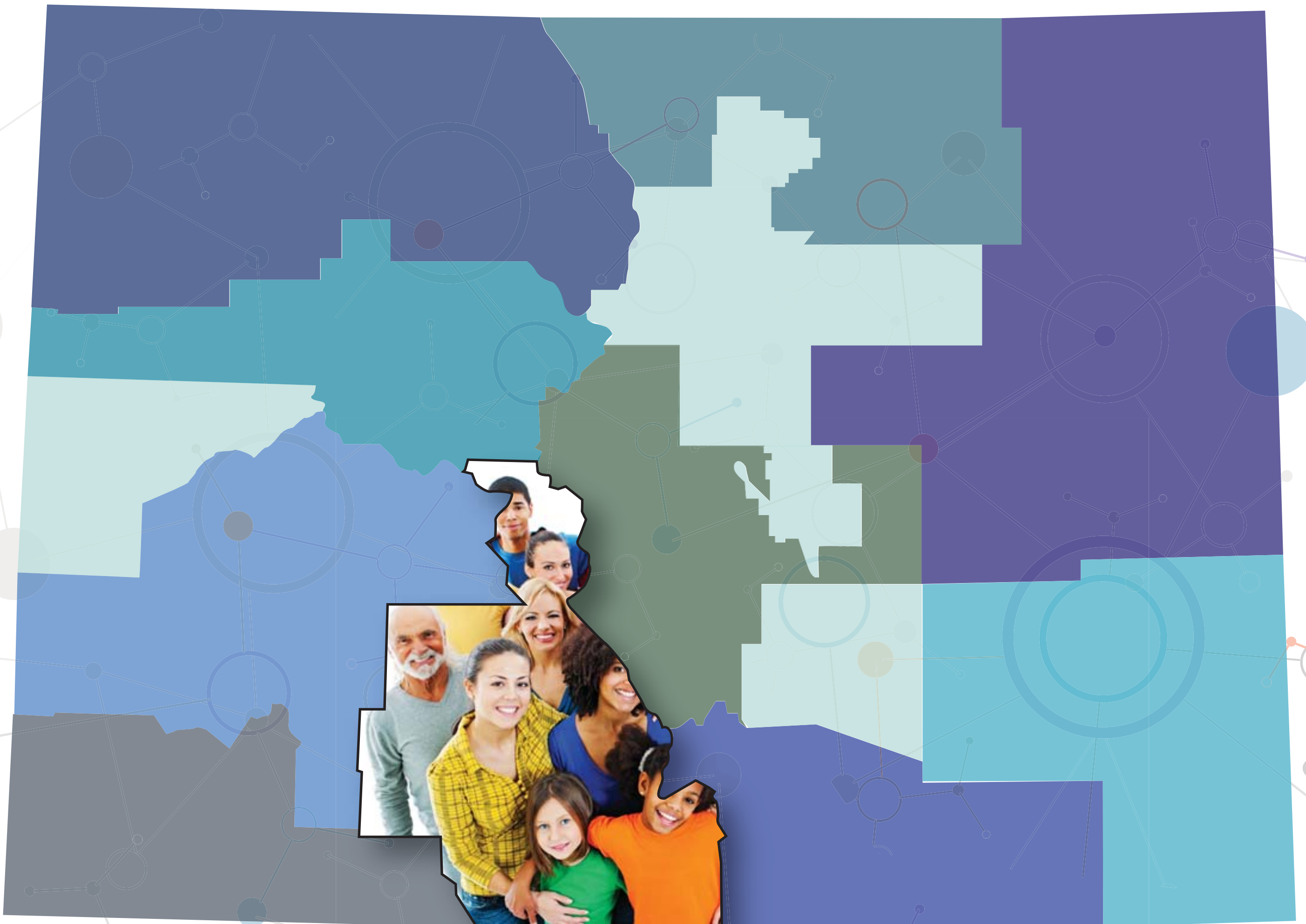
San Luis Valley

Transportation Planning Region Regional Coordinated Transit & Human Services Plan



Prepared for:

Colorado Department of Transportation
Division of Transit and Rail
and San Luis Valley Transportation Planning Region

December 2014

Prepared by:

FELSBURG HOLT & ULLEVIG

In association with:

Cambridge Systematics
Nelson\Nygaard Consulting Associates
OV Consulting
TransitPlus

SAN LUIS VALLEY TRANSPORTATION PLANNING REGION
REGIONAL COORDINATED TRANSIT AND HUMAN SERVICES PLAN

Prepared for:

Colorado Department of Transportation
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Public transportation is a lifeline for many residents throughout the San Luis Valley and state of Colorado. Transit services connect residents, employees, and visitors to major activity centers such as jobs, schools, shopping, medical care, and recreation. These transit services are important contributing factors to the economic, social, and environmental health of the state and also provide many benefits to individuals and communities. The following are just a few of the benefits:

- Economic benefits of transit include providing access to jobs, shopping and other destinations; creating jobs in public transit and related industries; reducing the cost of transportation for individuals and families with a portion of the cost savings redirected to the local economy; providing businesses with access to broader labor market with more diverse skills; and providing savings associated with the reliability effects of reduced congestion.
- Social benefits of transit include providing transportation options to access destinations; reducing household expenditures on transportation, allowing savings to be spent in the local economy; reducing non-transportation service costs; reducing travel time and accidents by lessening congestion on the road; providing access to transit by all segments of the population; providing health benefits associated with walking to/from transit; and providing an overall savings in time and money.
- Environmental benefits of transit include reducing emissions and the carbon footprint, reducing gas consumption, improving air quality with a reduction in associated health issues; and lessening the impacts on the environmental and neighborhoods due to transit’s typically smaller footprint.

The Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) within the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), in cooperation with the San Luis Valley Transportation Planning Region (TPR), developed this Regional Coordinated Transit and Human Services Plan to meet all CDOT and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) planning requirements for funding eligibility and planning for Colorado’s transit needs. CDOT will use this plan to evaluate grant applications for state and federal funds received by regional transit and human service providers over the next five years. Transit and human service providers in the TPR will use this plan to prioritize transit investments in the next several years that work toward implementation of the TPR’s long-term transit vision and goals, and priority strategies.

1.1 Purpose of Plan

This plan serves as the Regional Coordinated Transit and Human Services Plan for the region per FTA requirements. It identifies projects and strategies to enable the region’s transit and human service providers to improve mobility of the populations who rely upon human service transportation or public transit, to minimize duplication of federally-funded services, and leverage limited funds. The coordination projects and strategies identified generally have a short-term focus and are based on the prioritized needs of the TPR.

In addition, this plan identifies a regional transit vision and financial plan to guide transit investment over the next 20+ years. Along with the State’s other Regional Coordinated Transit and Human Services Plans, this plan will act as the foundation for Colorado’s first Statewide Transit Plan setting the stage for CDOT’s vision, goals, policies and strategies for long-term transit investment.

Key findings and recommendations from this Regional Coordinated Transit and Human Services Plan will be integrated into the Statewide Transit Plan and into the San Luis Valley TPR Regional Transportation Plan. Both of these documents will become part of the Statewide Transportation Plan, which is a long-term comprehensive policy document intended to address the state’s multimodal transportation needs.

1.2 Federal and State Planning Regulations

There are a variety of federal and state planning regulations and requirements that are met through the development of this plan and its incorporation in the Statewide Transit Plan. These are described below.

1.2.1 Federal Planning Regulations

Federal planning regulations are codified in 23 Code of Federal Regulations 450, which requires each state to carry out a continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive statewide multimodal transportation planning process. This includes developing a long-range statewide transportation plan with a minimum 20-year forecast period for all areas of the state and a statewide transportation improvement program that facilitates the safe and efficient management, operation, and development of surface transportation systems that will serve the mobility needs of people and freight (including accessible pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities) and that fosters economic growth and development within and between states and urbanized areas, while minimizing transportation-related fuel consumption and air pollution in all areas of the State. The long-range transportation plan shall consider connections among public transportation, non-motorized modes (e.g., bicycle and pedestrian facilities), rail, commercial motor vehicle, and aviation facilities, particularly with respect to intercity travel.

The transportation planning process considers projects, strategies, and services that address several planning factors including:

- Economic vitality of the US, state, metropolitan, and non-metropolitan areas
- Safety of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- Security of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users
- Accessibility and mobility of people and freight
- Protection and enhancement of the environment, promotion of energy conservation, improvement of the quality of life, and promotion of consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns
- Enhancement of integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes throughout the state, for people and freight
- Promotion of efficient system management and operations
- Preservation of the existing transportation system

The planning process is to be conducted in coordination with local officials in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, federal land management agencies, Tribal governments, health and human service agencies, and agencies responsible for land use management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation. In addition, preparation of the Regional Coordinated Transit and Human Services Plans should be coordinated and consistent with the statewide transportation planning process.

1.2.2 MAP-21

On July 6, 2012, President Obama signed into law Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21), providing approximately $10 billion per year nationally for transit funding in fiscal years 2013 and 2014. CDOT receives and distributes a portion of these federal transit funds to transit and human service providers throughout Colorado through a competitive grant process. Under MAP-21, several transit programs were consolidated and streamlined, and there is a new requirement that recipients of transit funds develop a Transit Asset Management Plan. There is also new emphasis on performance-based planning and establishment of performance measures and targets that must be incorporated into the long-range planning and short-term programming processes. Seven national goal areas were established: safety, infrastructure condition, congestion reduction, system reliability, freight movement and economic vitality, environmental sustainability, and reduced project delivery delays. In August 2014, MAP-21, which was set to expire on September 30, 2014, was given a short-term extension to May 31, 2015.

Similar to the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU), the previous transportation authorization bill, MAP-21 requires that projects selected for federal funding under the Elderly Individuals and Individuals with Disabilities program (Section 5310) be derived from a locally developed, coordinated public transit human services transportation plan. This plan meets this requirement for the region. While not a requirement for other FTA funds, FTA recommends, as a best practice, that all projects be identified through a coordinated planning process and be consistent with a plan.

1.2.3 Title VI

Title VI is a federal statute that is intended to ensure that programs (including public transit and human services) receiving federal financial assistance do not discriminate or deny benefits to people based on race, color, or national origin, including the denial of meaningful access to transit-related programs and activities for people with limited English proficiency (LEP). Title VI applies to CDOT and all CDOT grant partners receiving federal funds. While this document is not intended to be a Title VI compliance report, it does provide information on the demographic characteristics in the region compared to services provided in the region to assist with a Title VI assessment. The process to develop this transit plan includes information and outreach to individuals by providing language assistance upon request and by providing public information materials in Spanish.

1.2.4 Environmental Justice

Executive Order 12898 calls on all federal agencies to make environmental justice part of their mission by identifying and addressing disproportionate and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations. Similar to Title VI, this plan does not provide a comprehensive environmental justice evaluation. It does, however, provide information on low-income and minority populations in comparison service areas in the region to assist with understanding how well these populations are served by transit services in the region. The process to develop this transit plan included gathering information and providing outreach to low-income and minority populations in the San Luis Valley region.

1.2.5 Colorado Planning Requirements

CDOT is the agency responsible for providing strategic planning for statewide transportation systems to meet the transportation needs and challenges faced by Colorado; promoting coordination between different modes of transportation; and enhancing the state's prospects to obtain federal funds by responding to federal mandates for multimodal planning. State planning regulations, consistent with federal planning regulations, call for a multimodal plan that considers the connectivity between modes of transportation, coordination with local land use planning, focuses on preservation of the existing transportation system to support the economic vitality of the region, enhances safety of the system, addresses strategic mobility and multimodal choice, supports urban and rural mass transit, promotes environmental stewardship, provides for effective, efficient and safe freight transport, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2009, state legislation created DTR with responsibility for planning, developing, operating, and integrating transit and rail into the statewide transportation system. As part of that mandate, a statewide transit and passenger rail plan that identifies local, interregional, and statewide transit and passenger rail needs and priorities shall be developed and integrated into the Statewide Transportation Plan.

As a first step, a State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan was developed by DTR and adopted by the Colorado Transportation Commission adopted in March 2012 (see **Section 1.3.2** for a summary). The next step was to develop the Statewide Transit Plan, which was done concurrently to the development of this Regional Transit Plan. The Division may also expend funds to construct, maintain, and operate interregional transit, advanced guideway, and passenger rail services, among other things.

In addition, DTR is responsible for the administration of federal and state transit grants. In accordance with FTA, DTR will use this plan to determine if grant applications are consistent and compatible with the Plan's vision, goals, and strategies. Those that are consistent will be eligible for state and federal funding allocations through CDOT.

1.3 Relevant Statewide Background Reports/Plans

The following section describes transportation planning documents that have been completed in the last five years and their key findings and recommendations relevant to this Regional Transit Plan.

1.3.1 Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

CDOT adopted Colorado's first Statewide Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan in October 2012. The plan focuses on the development of investment criteria for evaluating bicycle and pedestrian projects and programs, and performance measures. These criteria are based on a vision and eight broadly supported goals that can be achieved in part through improved bicycle and transportation projects and increased bicycling and walking activity. The goals identified through extensive public and stakeholder input include the following:

1. Enhance safety
2. Increase bicycling and walking activity
3. Expand recreational opportunities and enhance quality of life
4. Improve public health
5. Improve environment, air quality, and fossil fuel independence
6. Provide transportation equity
7. Maximize transportation investments
8. Improve the state and regional economies

The plan points out that nearly all transit trips begin and end with a walking trip and many also include a bicycle trip at the origin and/or destination and that successful bicycle and pedestrian networks have the potential to greatly expand the reach and effectiveness of public transit. Colorado's major metropolitan transit agencies, as well as many mountain communities, operate buses with bike racks. The plan suggests that the next step will be to increase the percentage of transit stops and stations that are easily accessible by bike or on foot and the percentage that provide secure bicycle parking.

1.3.2 Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan

The Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan, completed in March 2012, offers recommendations for both short- and long-term investments in the state's rail system while embracing a performance-based evaluation process and positioning Colorado to receive federal funding for infrastructure projects. This plan provides guidance for investing in future rail needs and presents ways to enhance passenger and freight rail development to support economic growth and environmental sustainability. It is a project-based plan required to have a major update at least every five years. In 2014, CDOT amended the passenger rail elements with a high-speed transit vision, based on the conclusions of the Advanced Guideway System (AGS) Feasibility Study and the Interregional Connectivity Study (ICS). The high-speed transit vision encompasses 340 miles of high-speed passenger transit network through or affecting four I-70 Mountain Corridor counties west of the Denver region from Eagle County Regional Airport to Denver International Airport (DIA), and twelve I-25 Front Range counties from Fort Collins to Pueblo. The next update for the Plan is anticipated to begin in 2016.

No passenger rail elements of the Colorado State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan impact travel in the San Luis Valley region directly. However, a few planned projects will address improvements in bordering TPRs. The State Rail Plan identifies these suggested projects without any statement about the feasibility or likelihood of action.

The projects have been compiled based on recommendations/options from other plans or studies and through stakeholder and public comment during the plan development. Nearby projects include:

Project	TPR
Preserve Amtrak Southwest Chief Service	Southeast, South Central
Upgrade passenger rail cars on Zephyr Route	Denver, Eastern, Intermountain, Grand Valley
Acquire additional cars for Zephyr Route	Denver, Eastern, Intermountain, Grand Valley
Passenger rail link to Southwest Chief (Denver to La Junta or Trinidad)	Denver, Pikes Peak Area, Pueblo, Southeast, South Central
Rail service from Fort Collins to Trinidad	NFR, Denver, Pikes Peak Area, Pueblo, South Central
Rail service from Cheyenne to El Paso	Upper Front Range, NFR, Denver, Pikes Peak Area, Pueblo, South Central
Passenger Rail Glenwood Springs to Aspen	Intermountain
Passenger rail on Tennessee Pass Line Gypsum to Leadville	Intermountain
Provide connection to Amtrak's Zephyr, Pueblo to Leadville	Pueblo, Central Front Range, Intermountain
Passenger rail Glenwood Springs to Steamboat Springs	Intermountain, Northwest

1.3.3 Colorado 2011 Aviation System Plan

The Colorado Aviation System Plan Update, completed in 2011, is a performance-based plan that summarizes how airports of different classifications are meeting their assigned objectives and how the state airport system as a whole measures up. It identifies and describes actions and projects with the potential to improve system performance and offers generalized cost estimates for these policy choices.

This plan includes an objective for all airports in the Major and Intermediate categories to have access to ground transportation services for the millions of visitors who reach Colorado each year by air and support the Colorado economy. Ground transportation could include shuttles, taxis, buses, rail, and rental cars. There are four airports in the San Luis Valley region that have been identified in the plan as needing improved ground transportation.

Airports within the San Luis Valley region identified in this plan as needing improved ground transportation include:

Airport	County
Leach Airport	Saguache County
Mineral County Memorial	Mineral County
Astronaut Rominger Airport	Rio Grande County
Monte Vista Municipal	Rio Grande County

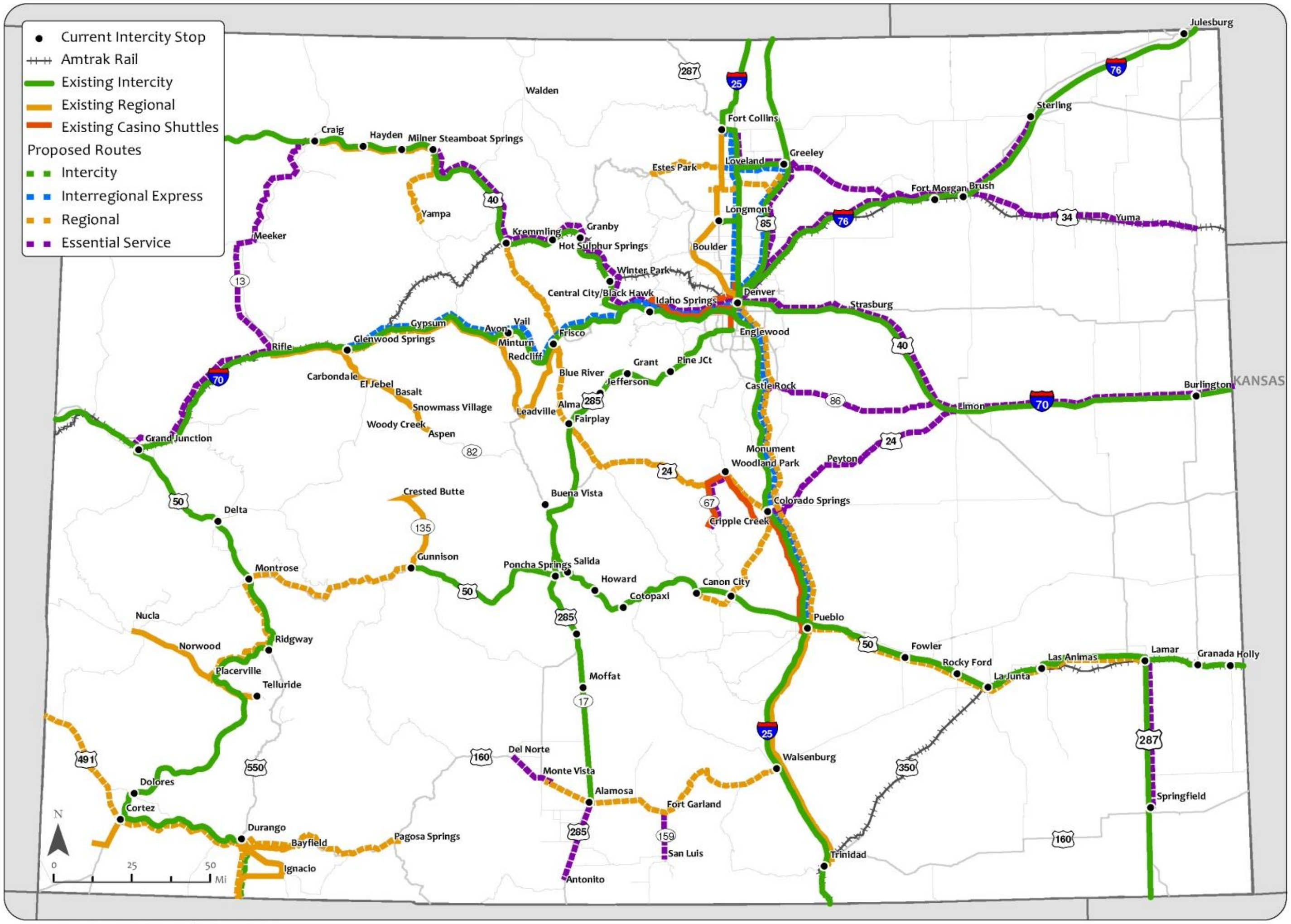
1.3.4 Colorado Statewide Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan

The 2014 Colorado Statewide Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan updates the 2008 plan. The plan develops a regional network and provides policies for extending regional services within Colorado in addition to state-to-state trips served by intercity bus. It also provides a specific analysis of the I-70 corridor. Several types of service are evaluated in the plan including:

- **Interregional express bus service:** Travels between regions, focuses on commuter service, typically operates weekdays, and attempts to provide time sensitive travel times.
- **Intercity bus service:** Provides long-distance travel connecting major hubs throughout the nation, is typically funded with fares, and carries luggage and sometimes packages.
- **Regional bus service:** Provides travel into urban areas and resort communities, typically provides more frequent bus service each day than intercity bus service. Administrative and operating funds come from federal, state, and/or local sources.
- **Essential bus service:** Focuses on meeting the needs of residents in rural areas for medical and essential services and typically provides very infrequent service.

Recommendations made in this plan for the San Luis Valley TPR include a new regional route between Monte Vista and Walsenburg, through Alamosa and Fort Garland; an essential service route between Monte Vista and Del Norte; an essential service route between Antonito and Alamosa; and an essential service route between Fort Garland and San Luis. **Figure 1-1** includes the existing and proposed statewide routes identified in the Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan.

Figure 1-1 Existing and Proposed Statewide Routes

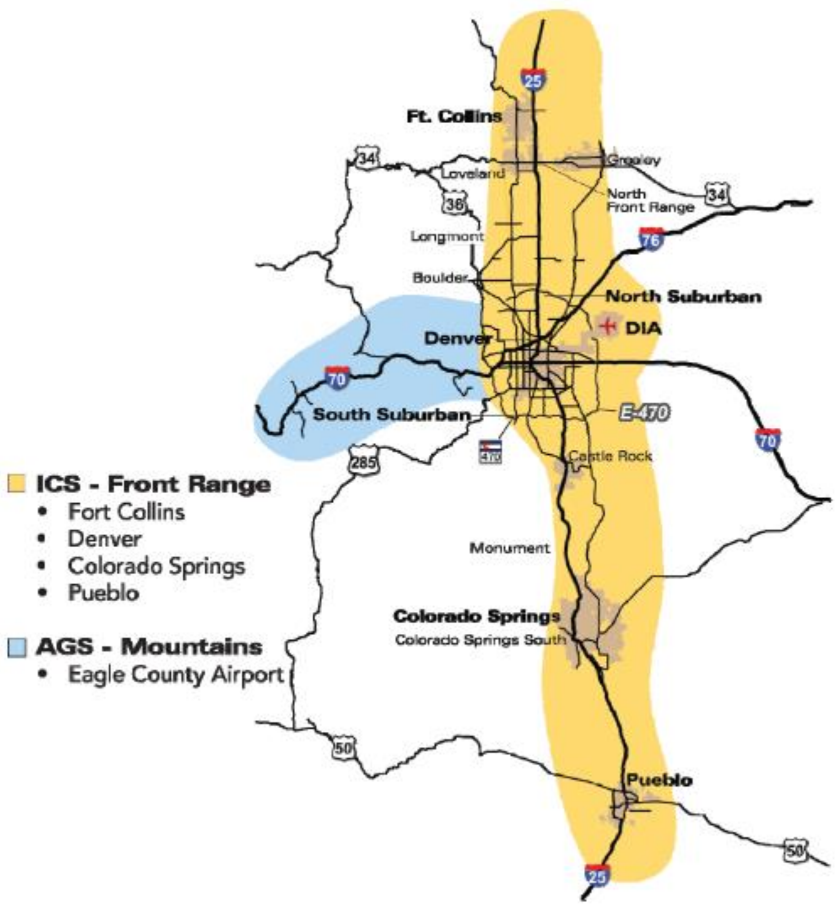


Source: 2014 Colorado Statewide Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan

1.3.5 Interregional Connectivity Study and Advanced Guideway System Feasibility Study

The ICS and the AGS Feasibility Study, together, represent the vision for a comprehensive future high-speed transit system in the state. The two studies were conducted between April 2012 and 2014 and were coordinated throughout the planning processes, each examining the potential for high-speed transit alignments and ridership along different corridors. The ICS study limits included DIA to the east, the C-470/I-70 interchange near Golden to the west, the city of Fort Collins to the north, and the city of Pueblo to the south. The AGS study limits extended from the C-470/I-70 interchange near Golden west to Eagle County Regional Airport. **Figure 1-2** provides a snapshot of the study area.

Figure 1-2 ICS and AGS Study Area



Source: Interregional Connectivity Study, 2014

The recommendations for the ICS system, combined with the I-70 Mountain Corridor AGS system, estimate 18 million riders per year in 2035, with corresponding revenue of $342 million to $380 million annually. Implementation of the high-speed transit vision (both ICS and AGS combined) is estimated at over $30 billion in capital costs. Implementation of the full high-speed transit vision from Fort Collins to Pueblo is assumed to begin with a Minimum Operating Segment such as DIA to Briargate to the south or DIA to Fort Collins to the north.

Detailed information and reports on each study can be found on CDOT's Transit and Rail Program website.

1.3.6 Southwest Energy Efficiency Project – Economic Benefits of Transit Systems: Colorado Case Studies

In September 2013, the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project released their report, "Economic Benefits of Transit Systems: Colorado Case Studies," which examined Fort Collins, the Roaring Fork Valley, and Grand Valley. This study showed quantifiable annual net benefits created by transit systems in the respective communities. These benefit calculations took into account gasoline savings, vehicle maintenance savings, reduced congestion savings, avoided public assistance payments, reduced parking infrastructure demand, reduced cost of medical trips, and income from employment accessible by transit. Other benefits of transit that cannot be monetarily quantified include increased independence for elderly and disabled citizens, improved air quality, and health benefits of walking or biking to and from transit stops.

1.4 Relevant San Luis Valley TPR Background Studies/Plans

Past studies conducted within the San Luis Valley TPR provide a framework for understanding the transportation needs throughout the region. Relevant reports and plans are listed below with a brief description and key findings.

1.4.1 2035 San Luis Valley Local Transit and Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan

In 2008, the San Luis Valley TPR completed its Local Transit and Human Service Transportation Coordination Plan as part of its 2035 Regional Transportation Plan. As a result of related study and analysis, the previous coordination plan included a list of 26 recommended capital, operating, and coordination projects for the TPR.

1.4.2 CDOT Statewide Survey of Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities (2013)

In 2013, CDOT DTR 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. Both Spanish and English versions were available for respondents. Survey results are reported at the statewide level and by TPR. Chapter 5 of his plan provides additional Information and findings from the survey. **Appendix E** includes the full survey report for the San Luis Valley region.

1.4.3 San Luis Valley Trails and Recreation Master Plan

The San Luis Valley Great Outdoors currently is updating the region's 1996 Trails and Recreation Master Plan. The plan will offer strategies for improving access to the outdoors, expanding recreation opportunities, and increasing awareness and promotion of all there is to do and see in the San Luis Valley (http://www.slvgo.com/). From a transportation perspective, this plan has the potential to impact the region by attracting new visitors and tourism revenue.

1.4.4 Local Public Health Improvement Plans

The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment led an effort to create local public health assessments and improvement plans in counties across the state. While not directly tied to transportation improvements, local plans often cite transportation challenges as they relate to local health issues.

The Chaffee County Public Health Department, for example, found that one of the top health concerns locally is a need for adequate transportation for seniors, but the action plan did not address a specific solution.

1.5 Plan Methodology

Many strategies were used to obtain the data and public input needed to develop this Regional Coordinated Transit and Human Services Plan. One of the foundational elements of the methodology was to use the Guiding Principles developed by CDOT's Transit and Rail Advisory Committee (TRAC) to guide the process. A Statewide Steering Committee (SSC) was formed to create a framework for the development of the regional and statewide transit plans, to create a statewide vision, supporting goals and objectives for transit, and to guide the overall plan development process. Demographic data were used to identify regional characteristics and growth projections for transit demand in the future. Additionally, the region created a Transit Working Group (TWG) that met three times over the course of the planning process, developed a survey to obtain operational data and issues and needs from stakeholders, and held public open houses to gather input from the public.

1.5.1 Transit and Rail Advisory Committee Guiding Principles

The following are the guiding principles developed by the TRAC, which serve as a foundation for developing transit policies at CDOT. The guiding principles were also used to guide the development of this plan.

TRAC Guiding Principles

- When planning and designing for future transportation improvements, CDOT will consider the role of transit in meeting the mobility needs of the multimodal transportation system. CDOT will facilitate increased modal options and interface to facilities for all transportation system users.
- CDOT will consider the role of transit in maintaining, maximizing, and expanding system capacity and extending the useful life of existing transportation facilities, networks, and right-of-way.
- CDOT will promote system connectivity and transit mobility by linking networks of local, regional, and interstate transportation services.
- CDOT will work toward integrating transit to support economic growth, development, and the state's economic vitality. CDOT will pursue transit investments that support economic goals in an environmentally responsible manner.
- CDOT will establish collaborative partnerships with local agencies, transit providers, the private sector, and other stakeholders to meet the state's transit needs through open and transparent processes.
- CDOT will advocate for state and federal support of transit in Colorado including dedicated, stable, and reliable funding sources for transit. Through partnerships, CDOT will leverage the limited transit funds available to seek new dollars for transit in Colorado.

1.5.2 Plan Development Process

At the inception of the planning process for the San Luis Valley Region, the planning team identified key stakeholders to be invited to participate in a TWG to guide and direct the development of the Regional Coordinated Transit and Human Services Plan. The TWG included representatives from public and private transit agencies, human service organizations, workforce centers, area agencies on aging, veteran organizations, community centered boards, elected officials, municipal staff, CDOT DTR, DTD, and regional staff, and key consultant team members. The TWG convened at key intervals throughout the planning process with the following objectives:

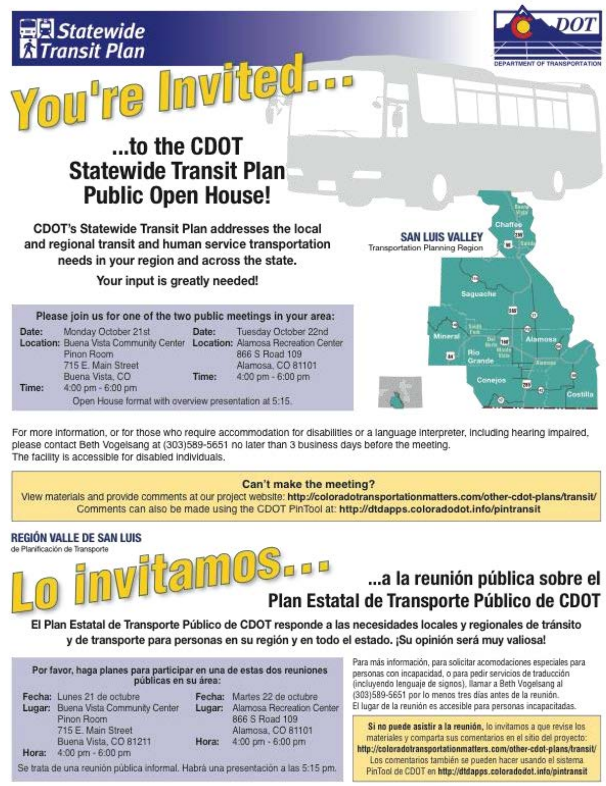
- **Meeting 1 (August 2013)**: Identify the region's transit and human service transportation issues/needs and provide information on plan approach. Develop draft transit vision and goals.
- **Meeting 2 (October 2013)**: Finalize regional transit vision and goals; gather input on approach to prioritization of regional transit projects; and identify potential regional coordination strategies.
- **Meeting 3 (February 2014)**: Review key concepts and major findings; identify final plan strategies; provide an overview of financial scenarios; and concur on plan recommendations.

The TWG identified visionary concepts for transit within their region at Meeting 1, and from that juncture, the planning team drafted a transit vision statement and key supporting goals. At Meeting 2, the TWG reviewed the statewide transit vision, goals, and objectives developed by the SSC to ensure that their region was compatible with the larger statewide transit vision and goals. The TWG refined and provided comment on the region's transit vision and goals to ensure that it met the needs of the region. The transit vision and supporting goals were used to vet key strategies and projects to include in the plan. At Meeting 3, the TWG identified high-priority strategies for inclusion in the implementation portion of this plan. **Appendix B** includes a list of TWG invitees, TWG meeting materials and minutes, and TWG meeting sign in sheets.

Additionally, as part of the plan development process, a transit provider and human service agency survey was developed and distributed to obtain provider service, operational, and financial information. The TWG assisted with completion of the survey. Survey results were used to identify needs and gaps in service for human services and general public transit, to develop financial summaries of agencies in the TPR, and to support the development of high priority strategies for implementation in the TPR. **Appendix D** includes provider and human service agency survey respondents and survey questionnaires.

Another element of the planning process was the review of demographic characteristics, growth projections, and the development of a future transit demand methodology. The methodology developed included the use of general population growth projections through 2040, as well as the growth of the population aged 65+ through 2040.

1.5.3 Public Involvement Process



Public outreach and involvement for the Statewide Transit Plan and Regional Coordinated Transit and Human Services Plans was conducted to be inclusive of all interested stakeholders. Strategies included public open houses, three TWG meetings, a Transit Plan website for sharing plan information, and an online comment form. The website provided up-to-date information on SSC meetings, TWG meetings, and public meetings in each TPR. Exhibit boards, PowerPoint presentations, meeting materials, and meeting notes for all meetings were made available on the website.

Seventeen public open house meetings were held throughout the rural areas of the state across the 10 rural TPRs. Notification of the open houses was provided to the TWG members, local agencies, transit providers, local libraries, community centers, senior centers, and local media. Information was prepared in both Spanish and English. Translation services were provided upon request for language and hearing impaired. Meetings were held in ADA accessible facilities.

The San Luis Valley TPR public open house meetings were held on October 21, 2013, at the Buena Vista Community Center in Buena Vista, and on October 22, 2013, at the Alamosa Recreation Center in Alamosa. The meetings had an open house format with the project team making a presentation. Public comments were collected via computer, hard copy comment forms, and the Transit Plan website. Additionally, an online GIS-based mapping tool was created to record geographically based comments. Attendees included general public, transit providers, elected officials, and agency staff. Input received from attendees included the following key comments:

- Significant improvements to Highway 24 through Buena Vista should improve transit.
- There is a need for collaboration among Chaffee County, Buena Vista, and Poncha Springs.
- A shuttle between Buena Vista and Salida is important, as is a shuttle from Buena Vista to Leadville.
- Park-and-ride lots need to be incorporated.
- There is interest in a rail line that would use the Tennessee Pass line through Buena Vista.
- Student and medical travel throughout the region requires additional operating funds to meet service demand.
- Education about transit needs/services is important to share with the public and agency staff.
- A local shuttle would be helpful to add multimodal connectivity linking regional trails and bicycle facilities.
- Airport demand has grown and there is much potential to have a shuttle and transit center at the airport.
- A shared maintenance program would be beneficial and provide efficiencies.
- There is a need for operating funds; had to eliminate service due to lack of funds.
- The area is completely overwhelmed with the need for medical trips.
- A fixed route is needed to serve local destinations, including the County building where employment numbers are growing.
- A regional bus to Walsenburg would be a great contribution.
- There is an interest in using the rail line for freight and passenger service.

Appendix C includes meeting materials and the sign-in sheets and meeting materials from the San Luis Valley TPR public meetings**.**

1.6 Relationship to Statewide Planning Efforts

As previously mentioned, this Regional Coordinated Transit and Human Services Plan will be integrated into the Statewide Transit Plan and the Regional Transportation Plan. The Statewide Transit Plan and Regional Transportation Plan will then be integrated in the Statewide Transportation Plan, which is a long-term comprehensive policy document intended to address the state's multimodal transportation needs.

The Statewide Transit Plan is a performance-based plan that includes a statewide transit vision statement and a set of performance measures to track CDOT's progress at achieving the statewide transit vision and goals over time.

1.6.1 Statewide Transit Vision and Goals

This region's transit vision and goals directly support the statewide transit vision, supporting goals, and objectives that were developed through the statewide planning process. The statewide transit vision and goals are broad and reflective of the entire state. They were developed through a series of meetings with the SSC over the course of this plan's development.

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

Goals and objectives that are related to the impacts of transit on the statewide transportation network were crafted in the planning process. Statewide goals and objectives include:

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

1.6.2 Statewide Transit Performance Measures

Under MAP-21, the U.S. DOT will establish performance measures and state DOTs will develop complementary performance targets. For transit, MAP-21 focuses on the state of good repair and asset management. Transit agencies receiving federal assistance are required to develop performance targets for state of good repair. They will also be required to develop asset management plans, which include capital asset inventories, condition assessments, decision support tools, and investment prioritization. Within four years of the enactment of MAP-21 and every other year thereafter, states are required to submit reports on the progress made toward achieving performance targets.

DTR initiated the development of transit performance measures in their document entitled *Establishing a Framework for Transit and Rail Performance Measures*, December 2012. They have continued the effort through the inclusion of measures in CDOT Policy Directive 14, which provides a framework for the statewide transportation planning process, which will guide development of a multimodal Statewide Transportation Plan and distribution of resources for the Statewide Transportation Plan, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, and the annual budget.

Based on this work, an initial set of performance measures was developed and reviewed with the SSC for the Statewide Transit Plan followed by approval of the full TRAC. Comments and suggestions from the SSC were then taken to the TRAC Performance Measure Subcommittee and the TRAC Statewide Transit Plan Subcommittee for review followed by approval of the full TRAC. Through this process, the performance measures below were identified as a reasonable starting point for DTR to initiate its performance-based planning work. These performance measures meet the requirements of MAP-21.

At the regional level, transit agencies are encouraged to review and use these categories and performance measures to identify and implement projects that help achieve the state's transit vision and meet the national goals.

Table 1-1 CDOT Division of Transit and Rail Performance Measures

Category	Goal	Performance Measure
System Preservation and Expansion	Establish public transit as an important element within an integrated multimodal transportation system.	▪ Portion of CDOT grantees with Asset Management Plans in place for state or federally funded vehicles, buildings, and equipment by 2017 (PD 14) ▪ Percentage of vehicles in rural Colorado transit fleet in fair, good, or excellent condition, per FTA definitions (PD 14) ▪ Annual revenue service miles of regional, interregional, and intercity passenger service (PD 14)
Mobility/Accessibility	Improve travel opportunities within and between communities.	▪ Percentage of rural population served by public transit ▪ Annual revenue service miles of regional, interregional, and intercity passenger service (PD 14) ▪ Percent of agencies providing up-to-date online map/schedule information ▪ Annual small urban and rural transit grantee ridership compared to five year rolling average (PD 14)
Transit System Development and Partnerships	Increase communication, collaboration, and coordination within the statewide transportation network.	▪ Percentage of grantee agencies reporting active involvement in local/regional coordinating councils or other transit coordinating agency
Environmental Stewardship	Develop a framework of a transit system that is environmentally beneficial over time.	▪ Percentage of statewide grantee fleet using compressed natural gas, hybrid electric or clean diesel vehicles or other low emission vehicles ▪ Passenger miles traveled on fixed-route transit
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.	▪ Percentage of major employment and activity centers that are served by public transit
Safety and Security	Create a transit system in which travelers feel safe and secure and in which transit facilities are protected.	▪ Percentage of vehicles in rural Colorado transit fleet in fair, good, or excellent condition, per FTA definitions (PD 14) ▪ Number of fatalities involving transit vehicles per 100,000 transit vehicle miles ▪ Percentage of grantees that have certified CDOT Safety and Security Plans which meet FTA guidance

1.6.3 Transit Asset Management

Asset management is a critical area of focus for any transportation provider regardless of mode. In fact, it is seen as so important that it will soon become the driving force behind CDOT's department-wide approach to resource allocation and project prioritization.

Furthermore, with the adoption of MAP-21, Transit Asset Management (TAM) is now a priority area of focus for the FTA. MAP-21 requires that all FTA grant recipients develop TAM plans and that the states certify these plans. CDOT's approach to helping its grant partners meet this new set of requirements is based on a combination of general oversight of asset management practices at the agency level and providing focused and direct technical assistance where appropriate.

At the time of this writing, FTA had not provided final rules or guidance regarding how to satisfy the new asset management requirements in MAP-21. However, the legislation itself articulates two basic requirements that TAM plans must contain: an inventory of all transit capital assets and a prioritized capital development/ replacement plan. CDOT is helping its grant partners meet these most basic requirements through the ongoing Statewide Transit Capital Inventory (STCI) project, which will provide a comprehensive inventory of transit assets throughout the state, including rolling stock, facilities, and park and rides. In addition to completing an asset inventory for each recipient of federal funds, CDOT and its STCI consulting team will prepare prioritized capital development/replacement plans for each transit provider. In the case that an agency has already developed an asset management plan, CDOT will review the plan for conformity with FTA's expectations and regulations.

CDOT is also providing technical assistance in the form of a guide to the preparation of Asset Management Plans, a revised guide to implementing a preventative maintenance program for rolling stock, as well as training and information sessions at conferences. A Transit Infrastructure Specialist is an available resource to all grant partners as a subject matter expert on the creation and implementation of TAM plans, maintenance procedures and policies, and the development of capital projects.

Progress on CDOT's asset management initiatives will be measured by several performance metrics. Some of these are identified in CDOT's Policy Directive 14 and others have been developed as part of this plan. Chapter 7 discuses asset management related strategies.

1.7 Overview of Plan Contents

The Regional Coordinated Transit and Human Services Plan is organized into seven chapters as described below. Overall, the plan is intended to paint a picture of the region, document the transportation needs based on various demographic data and trends, illustrate available funding, identify the transit needs, and recommend strategies for meeting the needs over the short, mid, and long term. This plan is intended to be an action plan and used to guide the region in making decisions about how best to invest limited resources to implement transit projects that improve mobility and offer transportation choices for the region.

Chapter 1 – Introduction: Describes why the plan was developed, the process used to develop the plan, and the planning requirements fulfilled by this plan.

Chapter 2 – Regional Overview: Describes the region's major activity centers and destinations, key demographics, and travel patterns. It includes existing data on populations that are often associated with transit demand in a community (people over age 65, low-income people, and households without vehicles). Other data are included on persons with disabilities, veterans, race, ethnicity, and English proficiency to paint a comprehensive picture of the region's need for transit.

Chapter 3 – Existing Transit Provider and Human Service Agencies: Summarizes the key features of the region's public and private transit providers, as well as the human service agencies in the region. Information is provided on service areas, types of service, eligibility, and ridership.

Chapter 4 – Current and Potential Funding: Describes the variety of transit funding sources at various levels of government and the challenges faced by transit and human service transportation providers in seeking these various funding sources.

Chapter 5 – Transit Needs and Service Gaps: Describes key findings from the review of the region's demographic profile and the existing and future unmet transit needs.

Chapter 6 – Financial and Funding Overview: Summarizes the anticipated funding through 2040 and the funding needed through 2040 based on population growth.

Chapter 7 – Implementation Plan: Provides an overview of the high priority strategies identified in the region to meet the region's transit vision and goals over the next 15 years to 2030.

2.0 REGIONAL OVERVIEW

This Chapter includes an overview of the San Luis Valley Transportation Planning Region (TPR), provides a map that identifies major activity centers and destinations in the region, and provides demographic information about populations that are typically aligned with transit use.

2.1 Transportation Planning Region Description

The San Luis Valley TPR is a scenic valley and is rural in character. Alamosa, Chaffee, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande and Saguache counties make up the San Luis Valley TPR. The primary population centers are Alamosa, San Luis, Monte Vista, Del Norte, Saguache, Salida, and Buena Vista. Its population is projected to grow moderately over the next three decades, with a growth rate similar to that of the state overall.

Geographically, it is a high-elevation, broad, flat valley bordered to the west by the San Juan Mountains (Continental Divide) and the Rio Grande National Forest, and to the east by the Sangre de Cristo Mountains. The region also contains the Great Sand Dunes National Park and Preserve. With its ample supply of land and sunny weather, the region is rich in solar and geothermal energy sources.

There are no major highways through the region, and the primary roads are US 160, 50, 24 and 285. A tourist train, the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad, operates between Monte Vista and La Veta, through Alamosa. The San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad operates freight service to South Fork, Del Norte, Monte Vista, Alamosa, Antonito, Romeo, La Jara, and connects to Center via another short-line railroad, the San Luis Central. It also connects with the Union Pacific Railroad in Walsenburg.

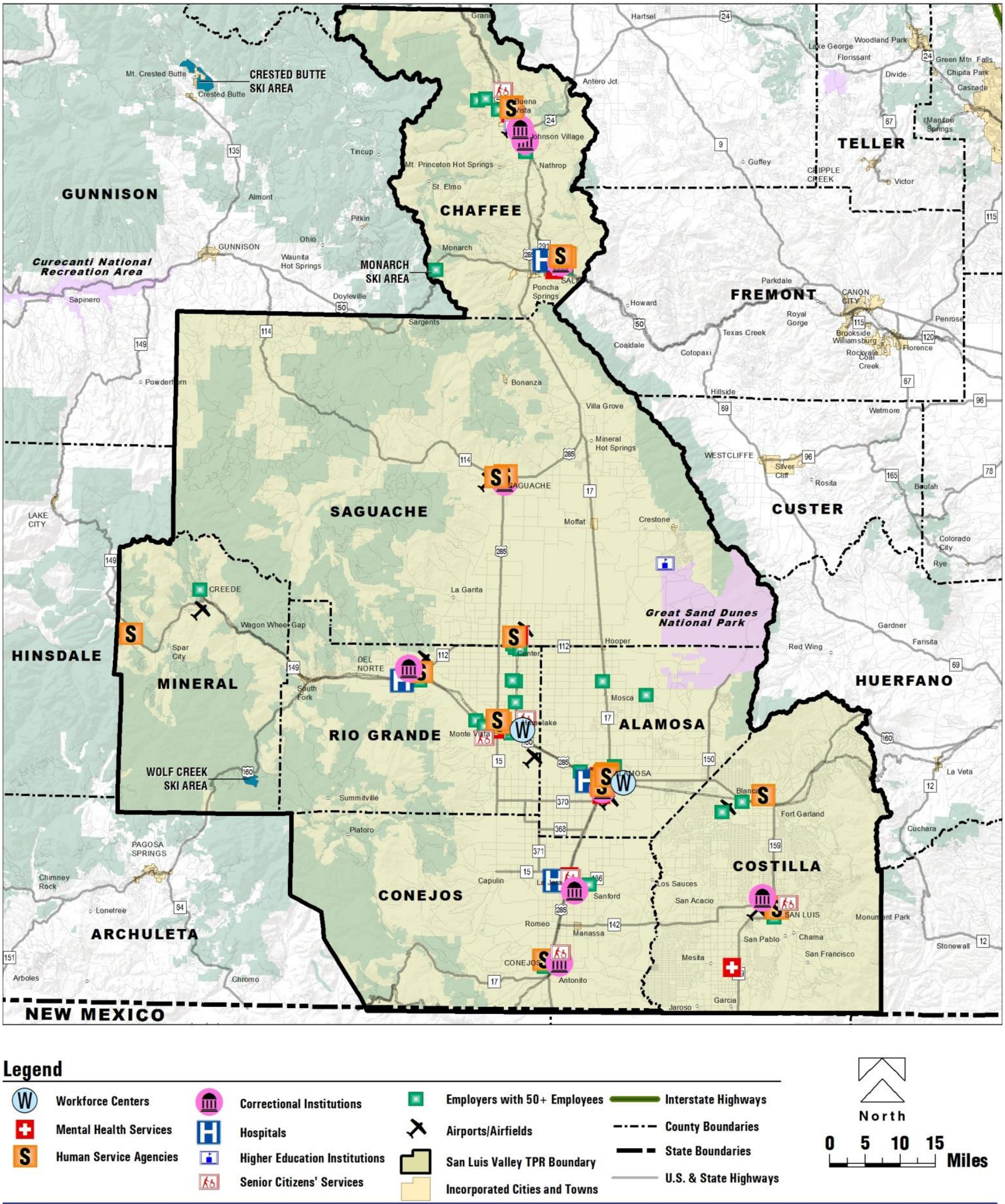
The region relies heavily on agriculture as its main economy and is prevalent throughout Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Rio Grande and Saguache counties. The region produces potatoes, alfalfa, barley, wheat and beef, as well as some specialty products. Monte Visa and Center are home to large potato marketing and distribution companies. Potato warehouses are scattered throughout the region at farm locations. Monte Vista, Center and Alamosa also are centers for agricultural machinery and supplies.

Visitors are also attracted to the area for its many outdoor recreational opportunities, including skiing, hiking, rafting, fishing, and rock climbing. It is also home to two colleges: Adams State University and Trinidad State Junior College. Wolf Creek Ski Resort along US 160, east of Pagosa Springs, offers recreation in the area.

Figure 2-1 illustrates the major activity centers and destinations within the San Luis Valley TPR. The map is intended to demonstrate the concentration of activity centers rather than identify specific locations. Chapter 3 includes a table of the region's primary transit and human services providers.

Figure 2-1 Major Activity Centers and Destinations Map

Business locations derived from 2011 ESRI data.



2.2 Regional Transit Vision and Goals

The San Luis Valley Transit Working Group (TWG) developed a high level vision and supporting goals for transit in the region. These were developed with consideration for the transit vision and goals developed for the Statewide Transit Plan by the Statewide Steering Committee (SSC). The outcome of this process resulted in the following transit vision and goals for the San Luis Valley TPR:

San Luis Valley Transit Vision:

Provide coordinated transportation services that enhance access to local, regional, and interregional destinations and serve local residents and visitors alike.

Supporting Goals:

- Increase transit connectivity through enhanced intercity and demand response services that support the region's diverse population
- Ensure the transit system contributes to the economic vitality of the region by providing options and minimizing transportation costs for residents, businesses, and visitors
- Support the needs of the region's diverse population by providing access to basic and critical services such as medical, employment, educational, and recreational services
- Seek funding opportunities to maintain existing services and expand the transit network
- Expand mobility options to ensure access within the region and to other Colorado regions and New Mexico

2.3 Population Characteristics

An understanding of the distribution and density of population and employment is an integral part of the transportation planning process. Demographics such as population, employment, and age distribution can tell a story about the complex travel needs of residents and employees, especially as they relate to the use of transit service. The presentation of relevant data focusing on transit-dependent persons including older adults, persons with disabilities (including some veterans and older adults), and low-income individuals, in this Chapter is based largely on a series of maps and tables. They show key population characteristics emphasizing the transit-dependent populations that tend to have limited mobility options and a higher propensity to use and need public transit services.

Some segments of the population have a greater need for public transit and depend on it as their primary form of transportation. Typically, the reasons relate to economics, ability, or age, and whether individuals own or have access to a private vehicle. Transit dependency characteristics based on age include both youth (individuals 18 or younger) and older adults (persons age 65 or older). Others who typically rely on public transit include people with disabilities, individuals with low income, zero-vehicle households, veterans, and persons with limited English proficiency (LEP).

In general, the two key markets for public transportation services are:

- "Transit Dependent" riders who do not always have access to a private automobile. This grouping includes individuals who may not be physically (or legally) able to operate a vehicle or those who may not be able to afford to own a vehicle.
- "Choice" riders are those who usually or always have access to a private automobile (either by driving a car or getting picked up by someone) but choose to take transit because it offers them more or comparable convenience. For example, a choice rider might choose to add 10 minutes to their overall trip via bus to save a 10 dollar all-day parking charge. A commuter might choose to take a bus if they can work along the way rather than focusing on driving.

Another newer trend that has increased transit ridership over the last several years is the increase in the Millennial population choosing to use public transportation as a lifestyle choice. This generational shift is occurring across the United States as the Millennials and many other Americans are increasingly choosing to use modes of transportation other than the private automobile, such as transit, carpools, vanpools, biking, and walking. Millennials are choosing to live in walkable communities closer to jobs, recreation, and amenities so that they can use transit and eliminate the expense of vehicle ownership. This is impacting the typical travel patterns that have been seen in the United States since the coming of age of the automobile in the 1950s. Transit agencies must now consider not only the transit dependent users but also consider the impact that the Millennial generation will have on transit system ridership.

The following sections detail various demographic data as collected from the U.S. Census and from the State Demographer, that are typically aligned with the primary markets for transit ridership and use. They also analyze the spatial distribution of people who are more likely to take transit as well as the location of activity centers and destinations that are likely to generate transit ridership. Population within the San Luis Valley TPR is concentrated in Alamosa and Chaffee counties, with local population centers located at the intersections of highways through the region: US 285, 24, 50, and 160 and CO 17, 159, 291, and 142. The key demographic characteristics highlighted in this plan include older adult (65+), households with no vehicle, low-income, race and ethnicity, LEP, persons with disabilities, and veteran population.

2.3.1 Population Growth

Though growth is predicted, no county in the San Luis Valley TPR has more than 20,000 total residents today and only Chaffee County is predicted to grow to 30,000 by 2040. Chaffee County, one of the smallest by land area, is the most populous county.

As shown in **Table 2-1** and **Figure 2-2**, each county in the San Luis Valley TPR is expected to experience population growth between 2013 and 2040, and only two counties—Alamosa and Chaffee—are projected to grow faster than the state average (47 percent). Conejos and Costilla counties, located on the southern Colorado border, are expected to grow the least over the next few decades.

These growth projections take into account several variables, including economic variables, age-specific and sex-specific survival rates, fertility rates, migration patterns, the base year population, elderly population, and “special populations” (including college students, state prison inmates, ski resorts, and military populations), whose growth projections differ systematically from the projection for the population at large.[1] Home to Adams State University and Trinidad State Junior College, Alamosa County is an economic hub whose population growth projection is influenced by the presence of these schools. Secondly, a state prison, the Buena Vista Correctional Facility and Minimum Center, is located in Buena Vista (Chaffee County). The presence of these facilities could contribute to the higher population growth predicted in these counties.

[1] See Colorado Department of Local Affairs’ Forecast Methodology, available for download here: http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/DOLA-Main/CBON/1251593300013

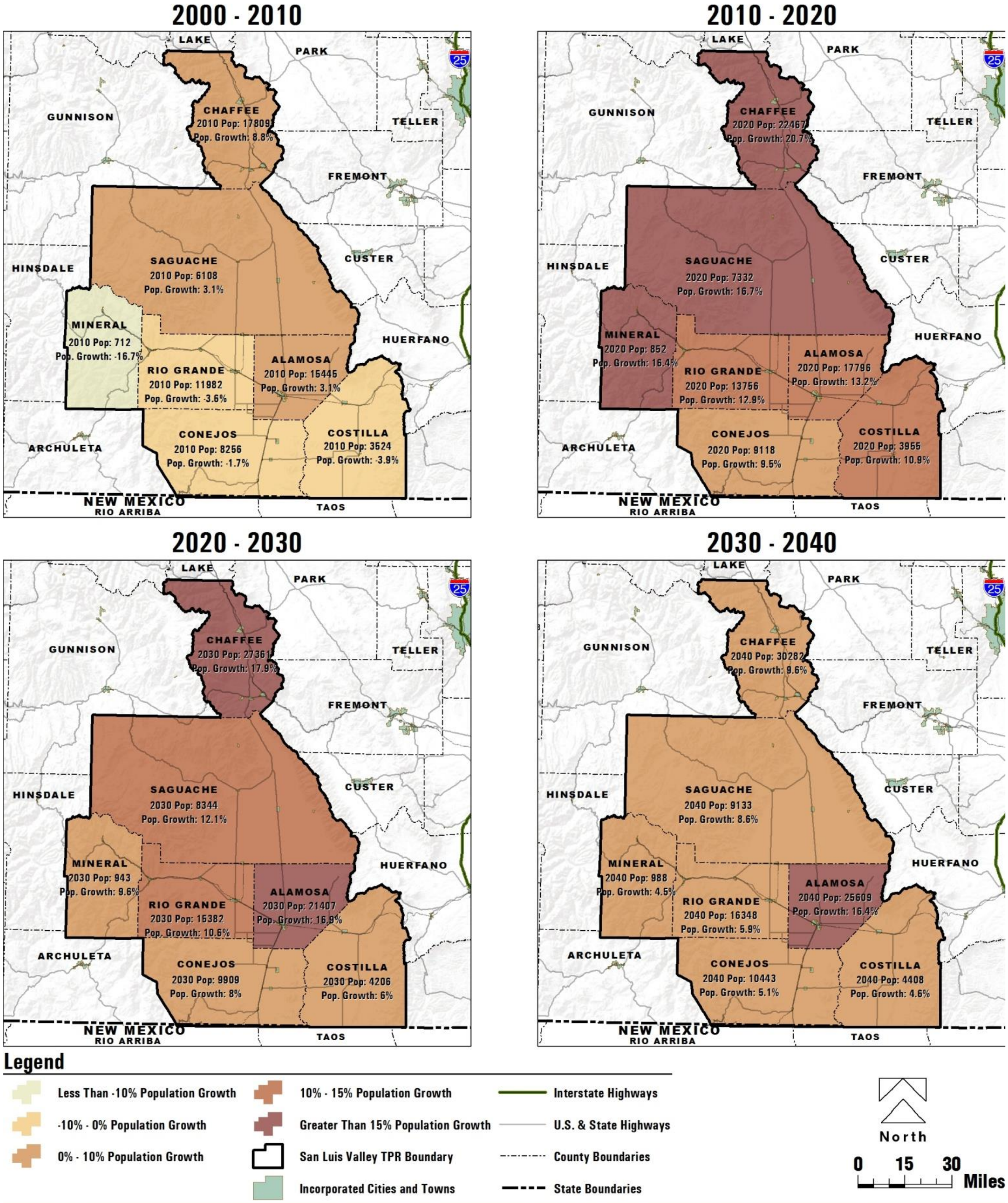
Table 2-1 Projected Population Growth by County

County	2013	2020	2030	2040	Total % Growth from 2013 to 2040
Alamosa	16,046	17,796	21,407	25,609	60%
Chaffee	18,726	22,467	27,361	30,282	62%
Conejos	8,456	9,118	9,909	10,443	23%
Costilla	3,716	3,955	4,206	4,408	19%
Mineral	747	852	943	988	32%
Rio Grande	12,285	13,756	15,382	16,348	33%
Saguache	6,478	7,332	8,344	9,133	41%
TPR Overall	**66,454**	**75,276**	**87,552**	**97,211**	**46%**
Statewide Total	**5,267,800**	**5,915,922**	**6,888,181**	**7,749,477**	**47.1%**

Source: Based on 2012 estimates provided by the Colorado State Demographer's Office through the Department of Local Affairs

Figure 2-2 Population Growth

Population growth based on 2012 estimates provided by the State Demographer's Office through the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and 2000 - 2010 U.S. Census Summary File 1 100% Population Count statistics.



2.3.2 Population Growth Ages 65+

Transportation is a critical service that enables people to age in their community. **Table 2-2** and **Figure 2-3** illustrate the projected growth in older adults (people aged 65 and older) for the San Luis Valley region. Overall, the area is projected to see a low rate of growth of the older adult population relative to the state as a whole. The region's projected 49 percent growth in people aged 65 or above is less than one-half the increase predicted for the state by 2040 (120 percent).

The change over time differs drastically between counties. The two fastest growing counties, Alamosa and Chaffee, are also expected to have the largest growth in elderly population between 2013 and 2040. However, in Costilla and Mineral counties, growth in this population will be basically negligible.

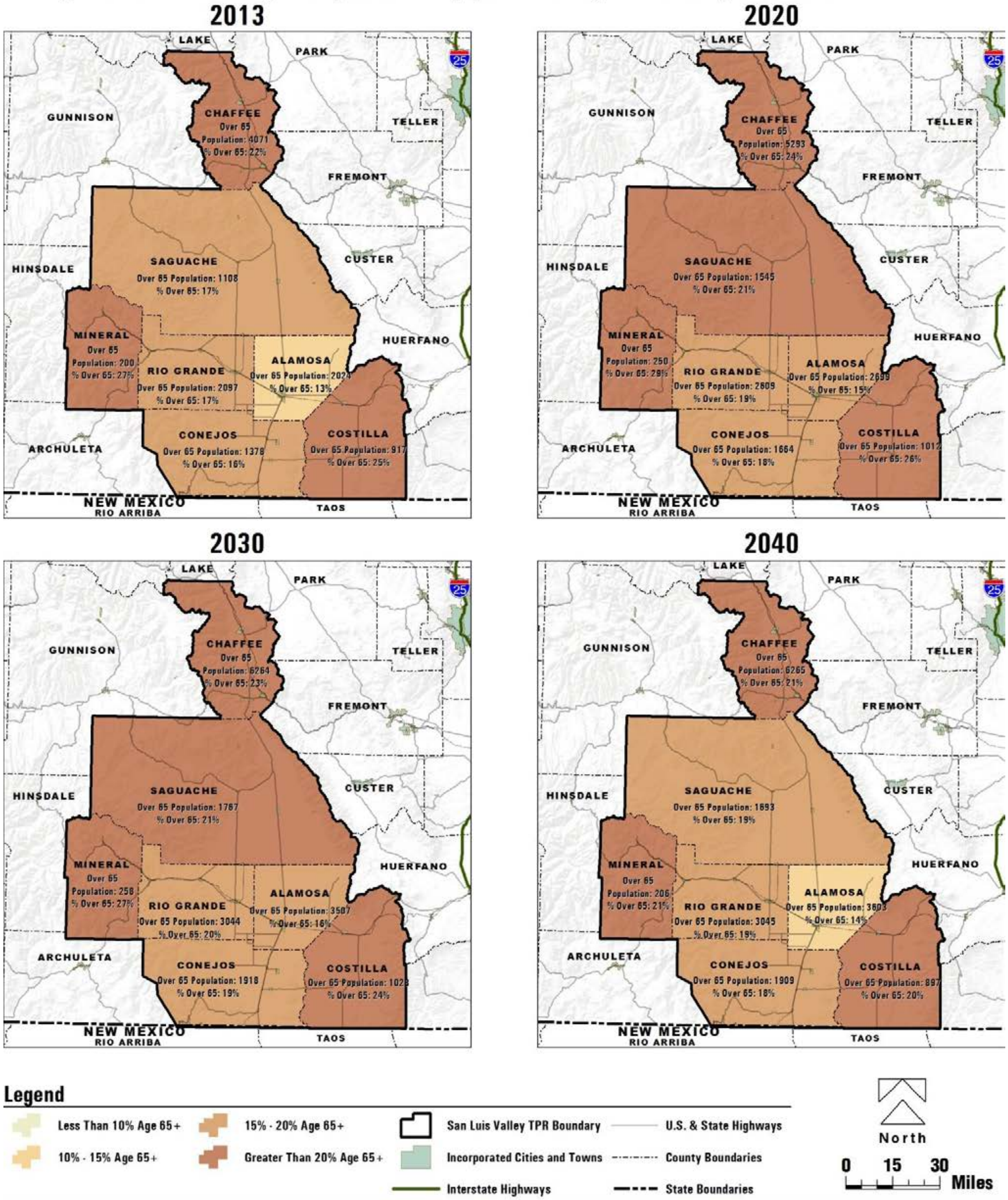
Table 2-2 Projected Growth of Residents Age 65+

County	2013	2020	2030	2040	Total % Growth from 2013 to 2040
Alamosa	2,024	2,699	3,507	3,603	78%
Chaffee	4,071	5,293	6,264	6,265	54%
Conejos	1,378	1,664	1,918	1,909	39%
Costilla	917	1,012	1,028	897	-2%
Mineral	200	250	258	206	3%
Rio Grande	2,097	2,609	3,044	3,045	45%
Saguache	1,108	1,545	1,767	1,693	53%
TPR Overall	**11,795**	**15,072**	**17,786**	**17,618**	**49%**
Statewide Total	**645,735**	**891,805**	**1,240,944**	**1,423,691**	**120.5%**

Source: Based on 2012 estimates provided by the Colorado State Demographer's Office through the Department of Local Affairs

Figure 2-3 Projected Growth of Residents Age 65+

Percentage is based on 2012 estimates provided by the State Demographer's Office through the Colorado Department of Local Affairs.



2.3.3 Zero Vehicle Households

Because people without ready access to an automobile have more constraints on their ability to travel, there is a need to consider those populations that do not have vehicles in their household.

According to the 2011 American Community Survey 5-year estimates, about 4.8 percent of households in the region were "zero vehicle households." This is in comparison to 5.7 percent in the state overall.

Mineral, the least populous county, had no zero vehicle households when these data were recorded. Six percent of households in Alamosa County, the fastest growing county in the region, are without a vehicle. In Chaffee County (the second fastest growing county), that rate is much lower (2.3 percent). Conejos County has the highest rate of zero vehicle households at 7.1 percent.

Table 2-3 contains the data shown geographically in **Figure 2-4**.

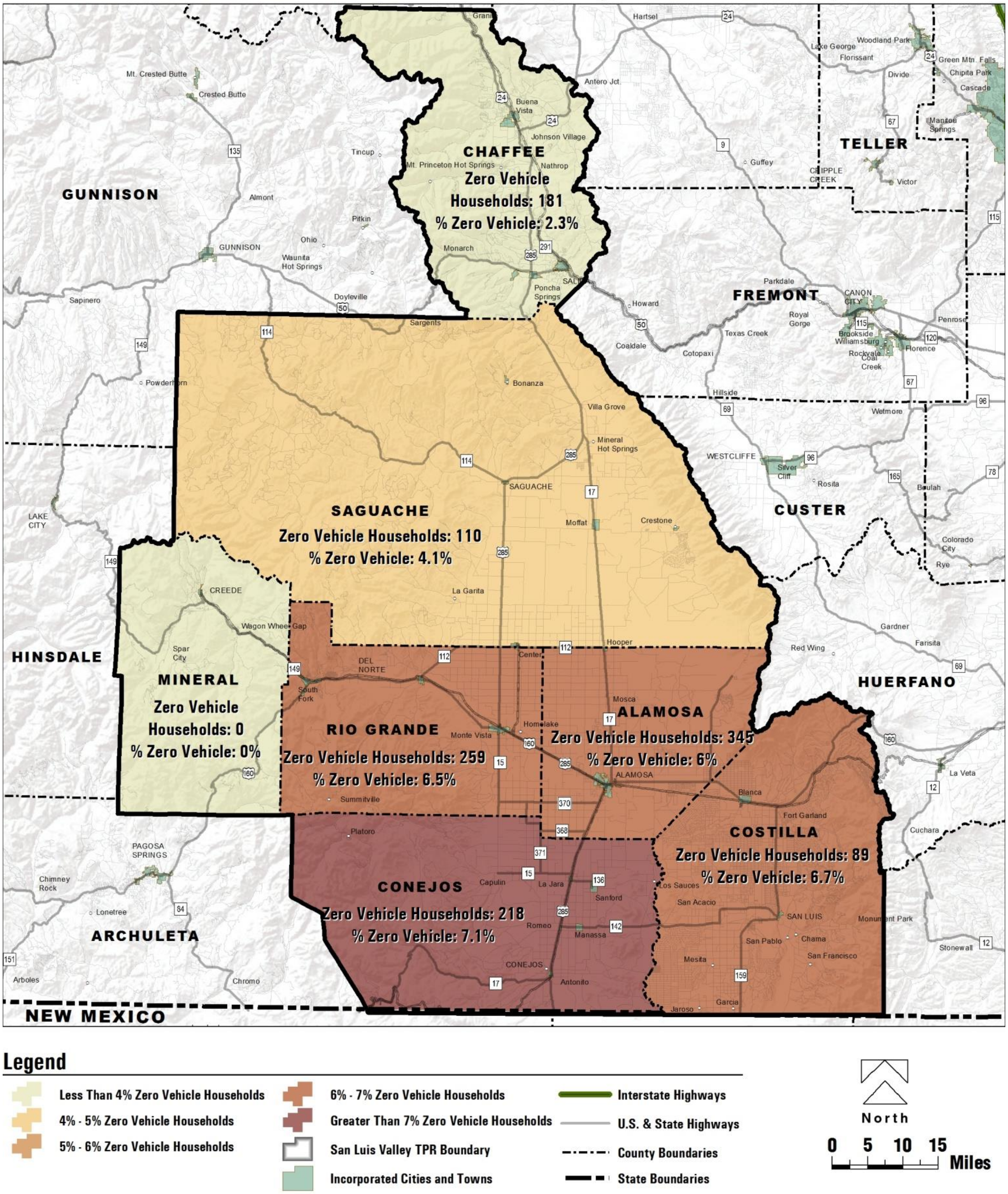
Table 2-3 2011 Households with No Vehicle

County	2011	% Households with No Vehicle
Alamosa	345	6.0%
Chaffee	181	2.3%
Conejos	218	7.1%
Costilla	89	6.7%
Mineral	0	0.0%
Rio Grande	259	6.5%
Saguache	110	4.1%
TPR Overall	**1,202**	**4.8%**
Statewide Total	111,148	5.7%

Source: 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate

Figure 2-4 2011 Percentage of Households with No Vehicle

Zero vehicle household data extracted from 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey Table B08201 - Household Size by Vehicles Available.



2.3.4 Poverty Level

Data from the American Community Survey provide an overview of how wealth and poverty are distributed in the San Luis Valley region (see **Figure 2-5**). Due to the costs of owning and maintaining a car, poverty is one of several factors used to identify populations that may need to rely on transit.

Federal poverty thresholds take into account household size, ages of persons in the household, and number of children. **Table 2-4** shows the estimated population within each county that falls below the poverty level, as indicated in the 2007–2011 American Community Survey.

The region's poverty rate (16.4 percent) is higher than that for the state overall (12.5 percent). In three counties—Saguache, Costilla, and Alamosa—more than one-fifth of the population is below the federal poverty level. Alamosa is dually burdened (from a transportation standpoint) by poverty and limited access to household vehicles.

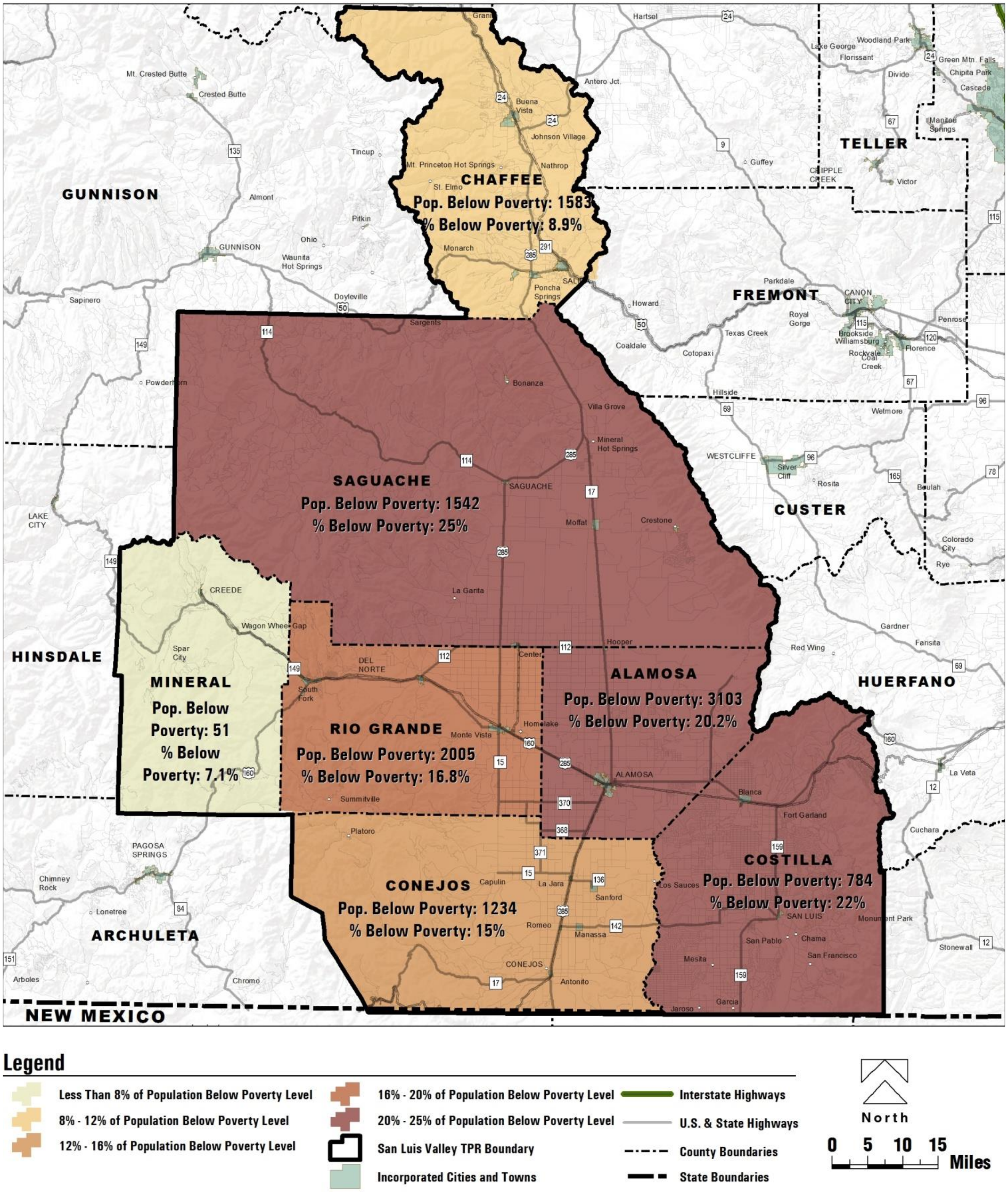
Table 2-4 2011 Population Below Federal Poverty Level

County	2011	% Below Federal Poverty Level
Alamosa	3,103	20.2%
Chaffee	1,583	8.9%
Conejos	1,234	15.0%
Costilla	784	22.0%
Mineral	51	7.1%
Rio Grande	2,005	16.8%
Saguache	1,542	25.0%
TPR Overall	**10,302**	**16.4%**
Statewide Total	607,727	12.5%

Source: 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate

Figure 2-5 2011 Population Below Federal Poverty Level

Poverty status data extracted from 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey Table S1701 - Poverty Status in the Past 12 Months



2.3.5 Race and Ethnicity

While race and ethnicity have no direct bearing on a person's willingness or ability to use public transit services, these characteristics are often correlated with others that could influence individuals' transit-dependency.

Though the region has a similar racial makeup to the state overall, with 15.2 percent of its population being non-white, there is significant variation across counties, and five of seven counties are less white than the state overall. About 20 percent of Conejos, Costilla, and Rio Grande counties are non-white. This is in contrast to Mineral (2.2 percent) and Chaffee (6.7 percent).

In addition, approximately 36 percent of people in the San Luis Valley identified themselves as Hispanic or Latino. This is substantially higher than the statewide percentage of 20 percent.

Table 2-5 and **Figure 2-6** illustrate the geographic distribution of the non-white population in the San Luis Valley TPR.

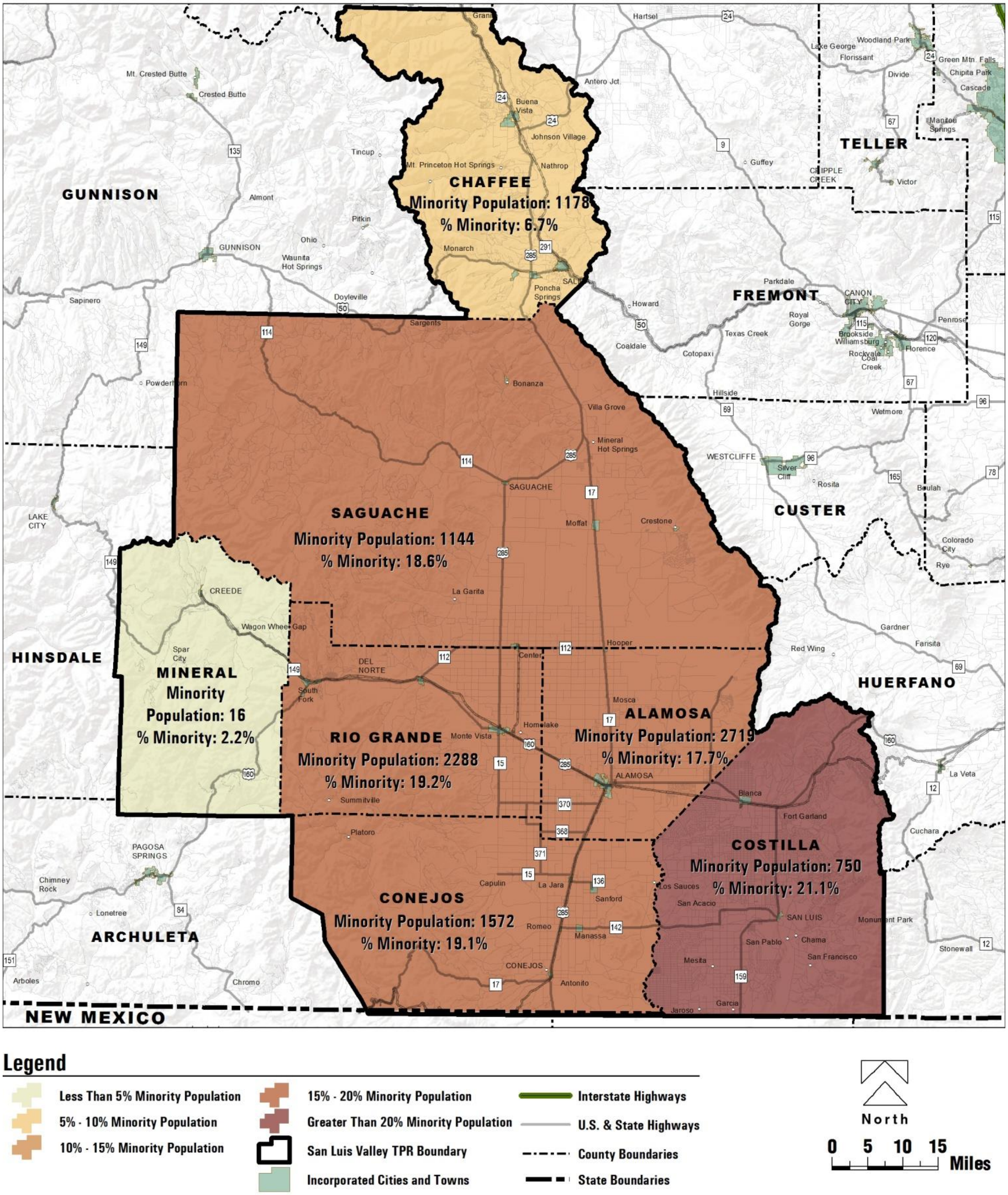
Table 2-5 2011 Race

County	White Alone	Black or African American Alone	American Indian and Alaska Native Alone	Asian Alone	Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander Alone	Some Other Race Alone	Two or More Races	Minority Percentage (Non-White Alone)
Alamosa	12,676	57	125	159	13	1,146	1,219	17.7%
Chaffee	16,529	489	148	57	0	320	164	6.7%
Conejos	6,656	41	78	23	0	493	937	19.1%
Costilla	2,806	13	15	60	189	473	5	21.1%
Mineral	707	0	3	1	0	6	6	2.2%
Rio Grande	9,625	41	160	22	4	1,719	342	19.2%
Saguache	5,021	26	101	53	5	596	363	18.6%
TPR Overall	**54,020**	**667**	**630**	**375**	**22**	**4,469**	**3,504**	**15.2%**
Statewide Total	4,167,044	195,640	48,201	134,228	5,798	255,364	159,786	16.1%

Source: 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate

Figure 2-6 2011 Minority Population

Minority population data extracted from 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey Table B02001 - Race



2.3.6 Limited English Proficiency Population

Table 2-6 and **Figure 2-7** illustrate the number of people within the region who have Limited English Proficiency (LEP). The American Community Survey categorizes this information based on how much English people are able to speak. For the purposes of this report, the LEP population is classified as those people who speak English not at all, not well, or well but not fluently.

Overall, the rate of LEP in the region is similar to that statewide—just less than 6 percent. However, like other demographic characteristics, there is much variation in English capability across the region. In Mineral County, the smallest and least diverse county with the highest rate of vehicle ownership, there is almost no LEP population. Chaffee County, the most populous, also has a very low rate of LEP.

However, in some of the counties with racial diversity, English proficiency is relatively low. At least 10 percent of the population in Saguache and Costilla counties cannot speak English at all, not well, or well, but not fluently. Therefore, in specific population centers, having transportation information available in languages other than English will be extremely important.

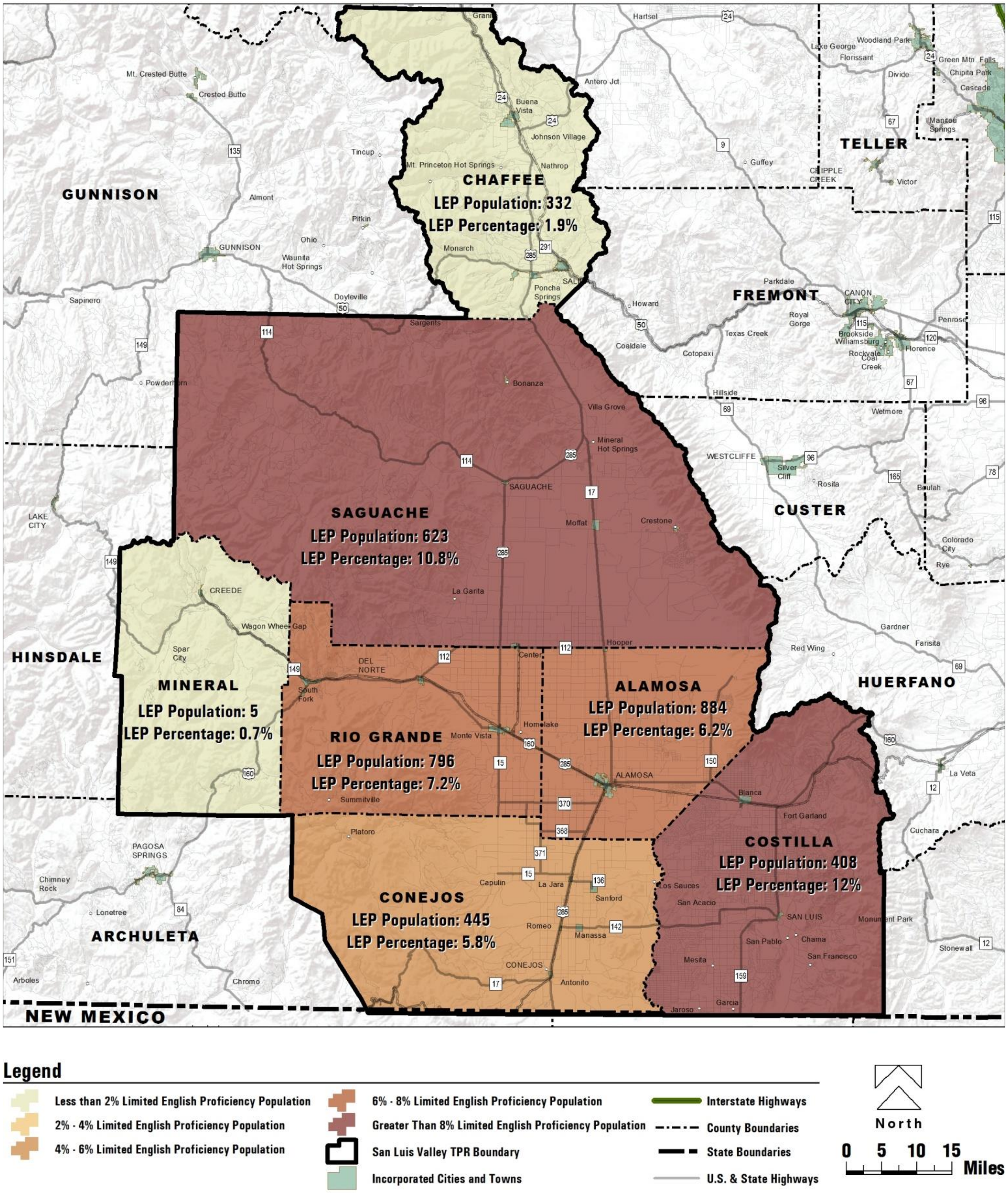
Table 2-6 2011 Limited English Proficiency Population

County	2011	% Limited English Proficiency
Alamosa	884	6.2%
Chaffee	332	1.9%
Conejos	445	5.8%
Costilla	408	12.0%
Mineral	5	0.7%
Rio Grande	796	7.2%
Saguache	623	10.8%
TPR Overall	**3,493**	**5.8%**
Statewide Total	264,397	5.7%

Source: 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate, based on values for “Speak English – not at all, not well or well”

Figure 2-7 2011 Limited English Proficiency Population

Percentage is based on the 2007-2011 American Community Survey Table B16004, and on values for "Speak English - well, not well, or not at all".



2.3.7 Population of People with Disabilities

Table 2-7 and **Figure 2-8** provide information about the percent of the population that has a disability within the San Luis Valley region. People with disabilities are likely to depend on transportation services to maintain their personal mobility. According to the American Community Survey, about 16 percent of the overall population in the San Luis Valley TPR is disabled. This is significantly higher than that of Colorado overall, in which almost 10 percent of people have disabilities.

More than 25 percent of the population of Costilla County has a disability. This county, which is one of the region's smallest and most rural, is likely to exhibit a strong need for transportation services, especially to provide access to critical medical services in other counties.

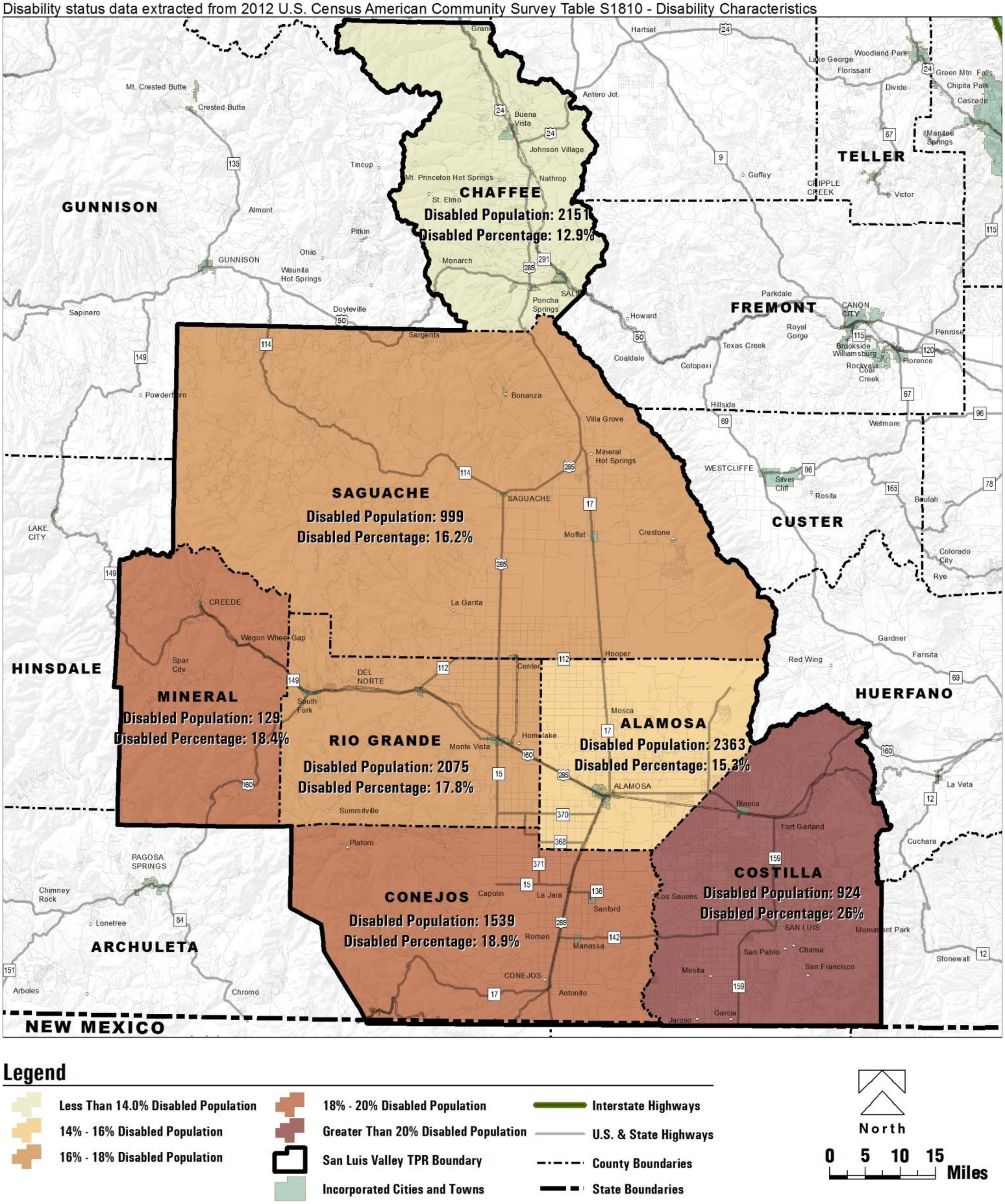
Table 2-7 2012 Disabled Population

County	2012	% Disabled Population
Alamosa	2,363	15.3%
Chaffee	2,151	12.9%
Conejos	1,539	18.9%
Costilla	924	26.0%
Mineral	129	18.4%
Rio Grande	2,075	17.8%
Saguache	999	16.2%
TPR Overall	**10,180**	**16.3%**
Statewide Total	487,297	9.8%

Source: 2012 U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate

Figure 2-8 2012 Disabled Population

Disability status data extracted from 2012 U.S. Census American Community Survey Table S1810 - Disability Characteristics



2.3.8 Veteran Population

Veterans do not have an inherent transit dependency, but a person's status as a veteran is often associated with other characteristics that suggest certain services (such as medical or transportation) may be important for their well-being.

Table 2-8 and **Figure 2-9** illustrate the veteran population within the San Luis Valley region. The region has a high veteran population in comparison to the state overall, with about 10 percent of people being a veteran. Unsurprisingly, the highest numbers of veterans reside in Chaffee County, which is the most populated county in the TPR. All counties' populations within the region are at least 7 percent veteran, and Chaffee, Costilla, and Mineral counties are 12 percent or more.

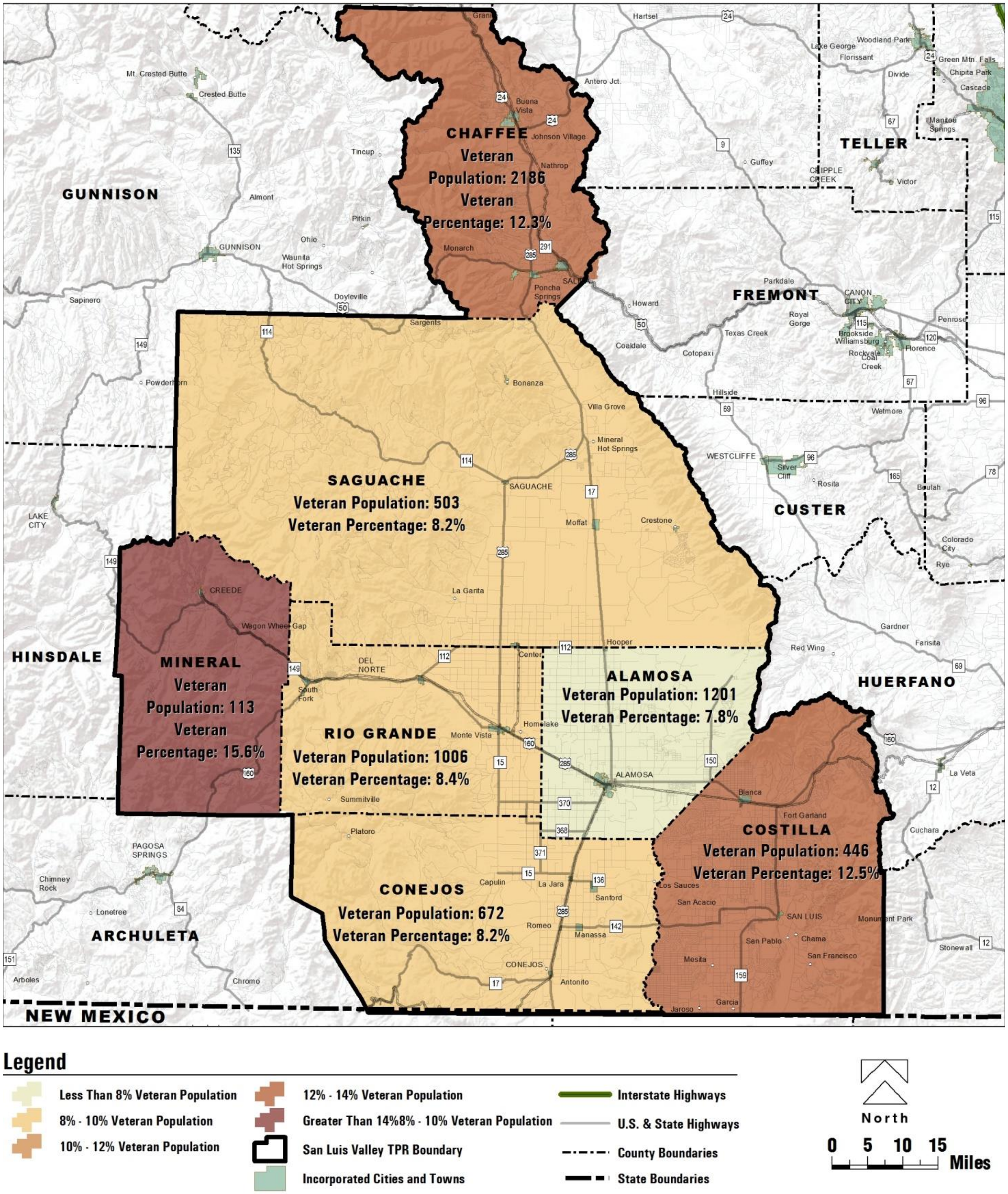
Table 2-8 2011 Veteran Population

County	2011	% Veteran Population
Alamosa	1,201	7.8%
Chaffee	2,186	12.3%
Conejos	672	8.2%
Costilla	446	12.5%
Mineral	113	15.6%
Rio Grande	1,006	8.4%
Saguache	503	8.2%
TPR Overall	**6,127**	**10.4%**
Statewide Total	405,303	8.2%

Source: 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey Five-Year Estimate

Figure 2-9 2011 Veteran Population

Veteran status data extracted from 2011 U.S. Census American Community Survey Table S2101 - Veteran Status



2.4 Employment and Job Characteristics

As a region, the primary employment sector is agriculture, with a lower annual average salary than its secondary employment sectors of health and wellness, transportation and logistics, and financial services. Tourism jobs are also prominent, especially in Alamosa County, with an average salary lower than that of agriculture.

Figure 2-10 illustrates projected job growth in the region through 2040. Though the region suffered job losses between 2000 and 2010, especially in Rio Grande, Conejos, and Costilla counties, between 2010 and 2040 growth is projected to increase, particularly in Chaffee, Saguache, Alamosa, and Rio Grande counties. The two fastest growing job types in the region are tourism and retiree-generated jobs, suggesting an increased need for services for older adults and transportation for those who cannot afford to live near where they work.

Figure 2-11 provides a snapshot of the commuting patterns in the region with each line indicating the number of commuter trips taken per day between counties. Alamosa County is the main job center and attracts up to a few thousand commuters daily, predominantly from other counties in the region. Rio Grande and Chaffee counties also have a net influx of commuters; Rio Grande draws primarily from within the region and Chaffee predominantly from outside the region.

2.5 Summary of Community Characteristics

The demographic and economic characteristics provide insight into locations and populations that are likely to need transportation-related services and investments over the next few decades (see **Figure 2-12**). As a whole, the San Luis Valley Region is expected to experience moderate population and job growth over the coming decades. Most growth will occur in Alamosa and Chaffee counties, the region's current economic centers. Agriculture is the predominant industry in the region, focused in Alamosa County, and supportive industries include tourism and recreation jobs and health services. The region has strong clean energy prospects with both solar and geothermal productivity. In comparison to the state, the region is poorer, more racially diverse, has a higher share of veterans, and has almost twice as many disabled residents.

Alamosa County is the regional center. In addition to absorbing much of the region's growth, it also has a high population of zero vehicle households and a growing population of seniors. Chaffee County, also an economic center, is home to the Heart of the Rockies Medical Center and a state correctional facility. It stands out also for its large senior population. Conejos and Costilla counties, the southernmost counties in the region, have the least growth prospects. They have the lowest rates of vehicle ownership and, like other counties, have large disabled, minority, veteran, and low-income populations. More than one-quarter of residents in Costilla are disabled. In Mineral County, the region's smallest county by population, virtually every household has access to a car. Its senior population is not projected to grow over the next few decades. It has the highest veteran population of any county in the region.

From a social service/transportation coordination perspective, the region has good potential due to its proximity to existing economic and service hubs. The agricultural economic base in Alamosa County attracts a relatively large population and associated services. Chaffee County, the second most populated county, is geographically separate from much of the rest of the region but is home to a large medical center and has proximity to Colorado's main population center in Denver. The economically disadvantaged populations in Costilla and Conejos are concentrated in towns in close proximity to Alamosa. However, given their low rates of vehicle ownership, these counties may need increased transportation services, including information in multiple languages.

Figure 2-10 Job Growth

Job growth based on 2012 estimates provided by the State Demographer's Office through the Colorado Department of Local Affairs.

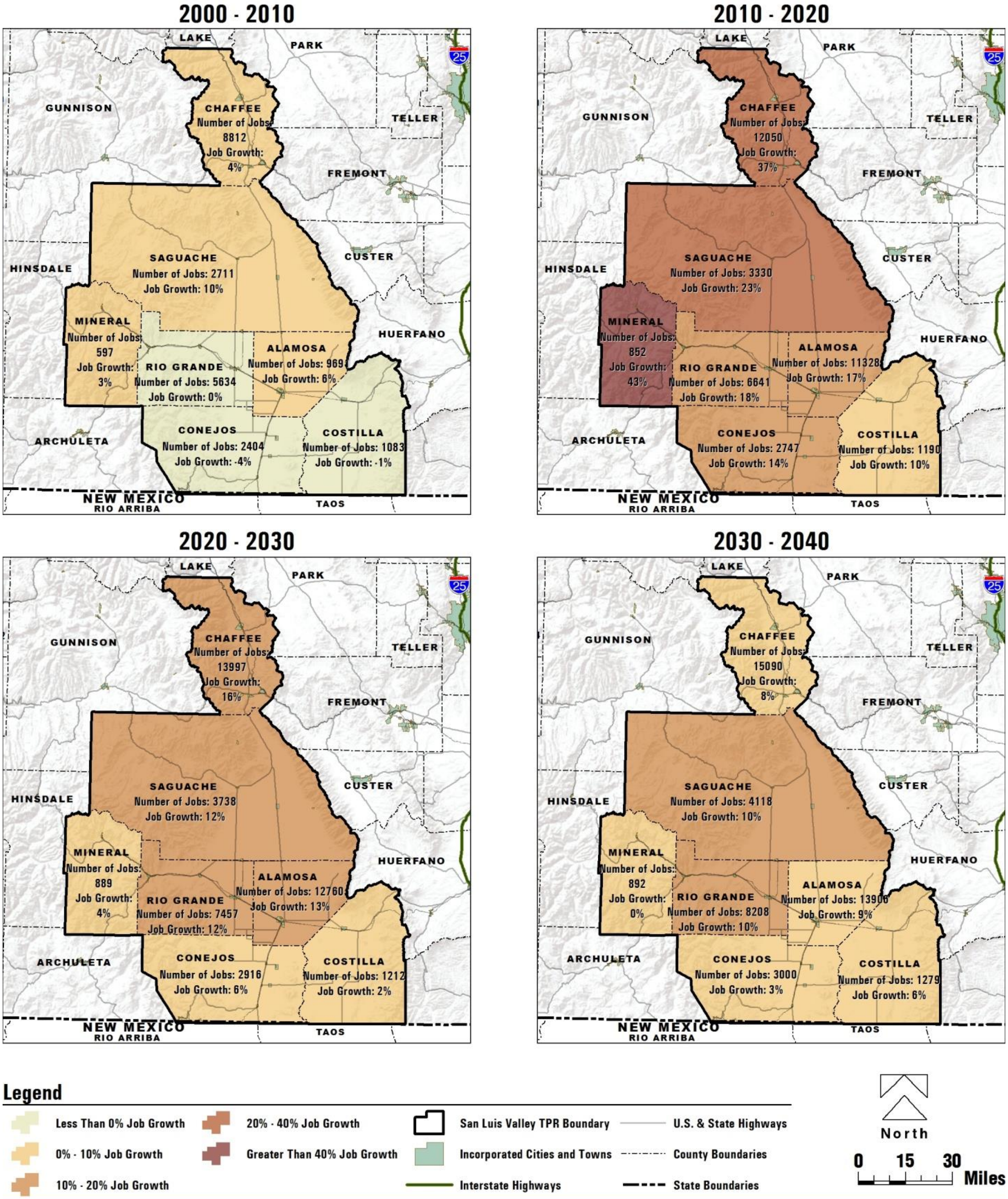


Figure 2-11 Employed Working Outside of County of Residence

*Note: Values are based on the 2006-2010 US Census American Community Survey (ACS) Metropolitan and Micropolitan Table 2 - Residence County to Workplace County Flows for the U.S. by Workplace Geography

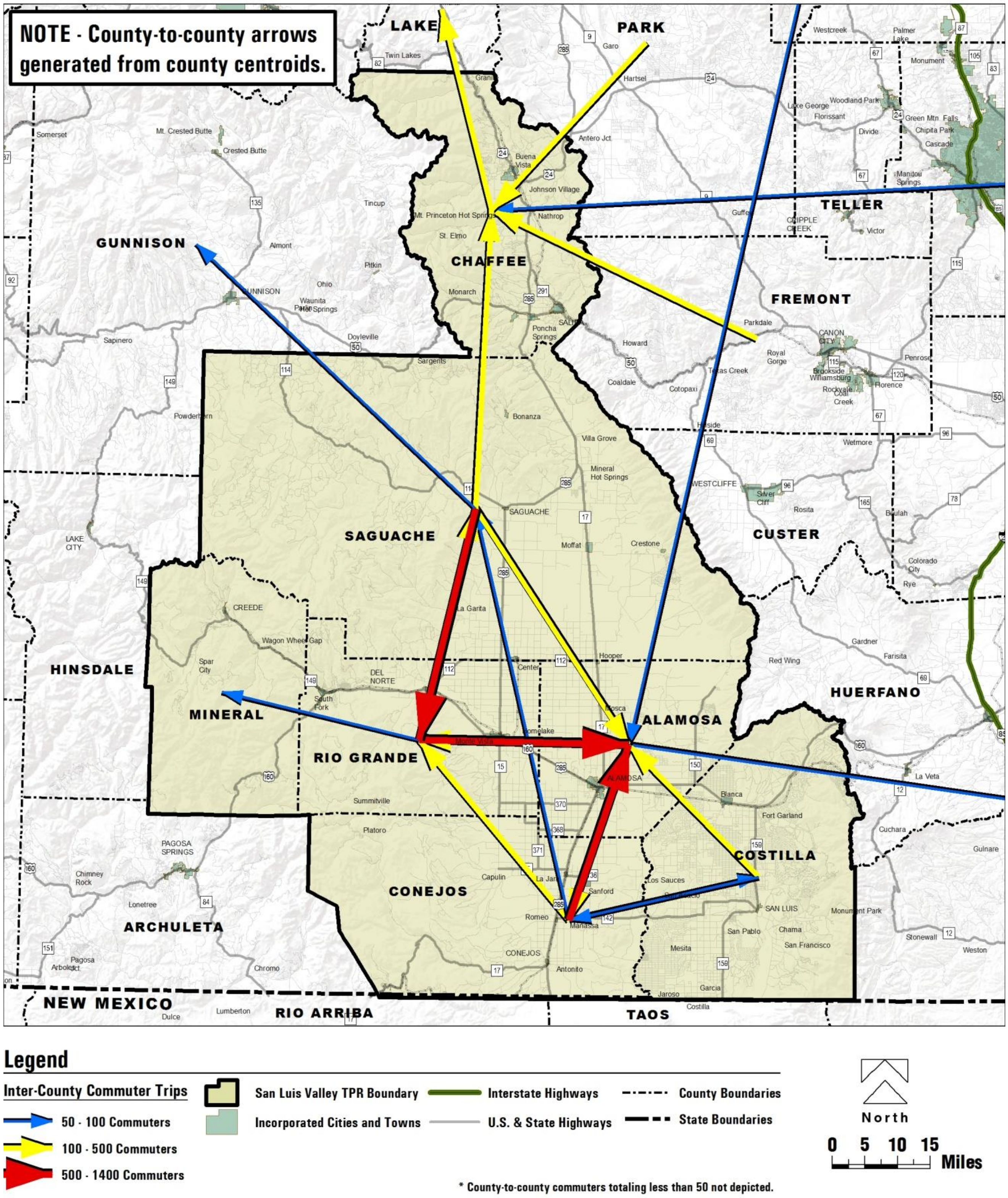
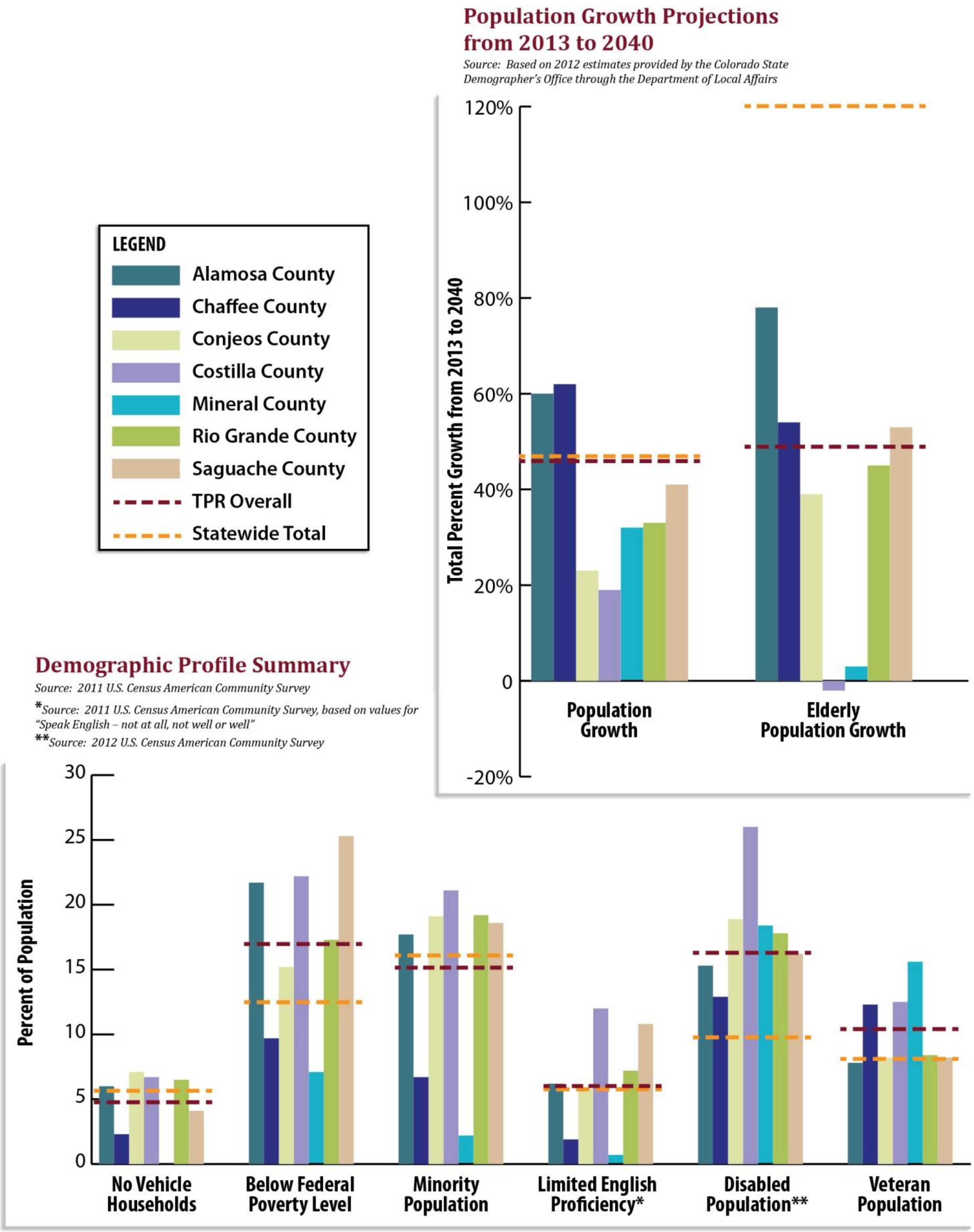


Figure 2-12 Counties with Higher than Statewide and TPR Average Transit Needs Indicators



3.0 EXISTING TRANSIT PROVIDERS AND HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES

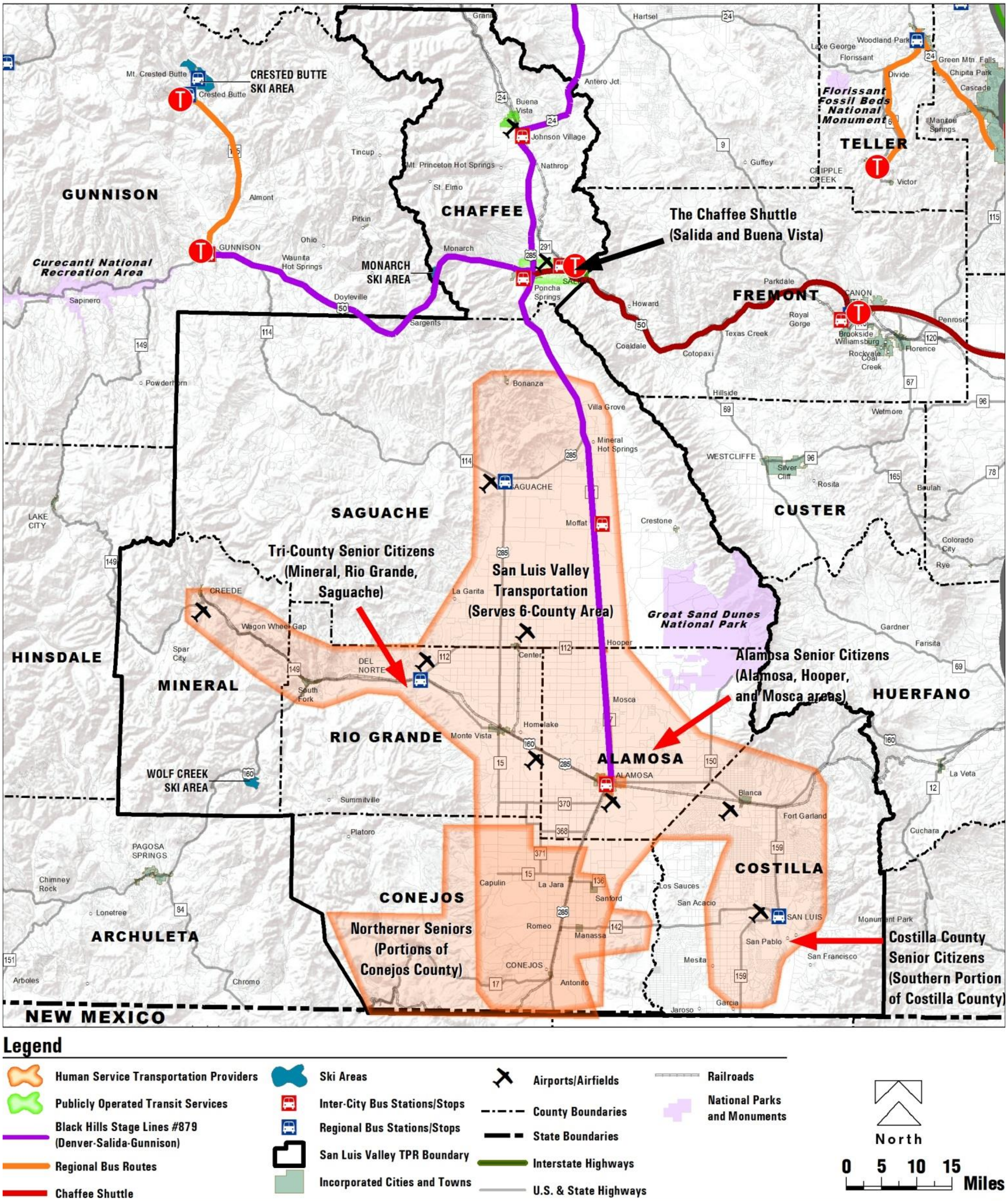
This Chapter describes existing public and private transit providers and the human service agencies in the San Luis Valley Transportation Planning Region (TPR) and their current coordination activities. **Figure 3-1** provides a snapshot of the primary transit providers and human service agency transportation services available in the TPR. While this map is not inclusive of every small agency, taxi service, or private transportation provider, it provides a useful summary of services that are available and illustrates gaps in service.

The inventory of services was developed primarily through survey responses collected from transit providers and human services agencies. Additional information was collected through feedback from the Transit Working Group (TWG), public meeting attendees, and agency websites.

Appendix A includes definitions of key terms used throughout this Chapter and the rest of the plan.

Figure 3-1 Transit Provider System Map

Transit service provider information based upon 2006 CDOT mapping.



3.1 Public Transit Providers

Public transit services are those that are funded by the local or regional agencies and are open to all members of the public. These differ from human service transportation providers that limit services to clientele who qualify such as people over the age of 65.

The San Luis Valley TPR has only one public transit service provider: the Chaffee Shuttle. It is operated by Neighbor to Neighbor Volunteers and provides demand response transportation to the general public in Salida, Poncha Springs and Buena Vista. Additionally, Chaffee Shuttle operates a fixed route, intercity bus service seven days a week from Salida to Cañon City and Pueblo.

These services provide coverage within the northernmost county of the San Luis Valley TPR with connections to destinations to the east (Cañon City and Pueblo) and to the west (Gunnison). Connections can be made in Pueblo to existing private intercity bus services along the I-25 and US 50 corridors to points north (including Denver), south, and east. The rest of the San Luis Valley region, however, does not have any public transit coverage. **Table 3-1** provides a summary of public transit services in the TPR.

Table 3-1 Public Transportation Provider Services Overview

Provider	Service Area	Service Type(s)	Span of Service	Days of Service	Fares	2012 Annual Ridership (includes all service types)	2012 Annual Operating and Admin Budget (includes all service types)
The Chaffee Shuttle (operated by Neighbor to Neighbor Volunteers)	Chaffee County; Salida and Buena Vista	▪ Demand Response	8:00 AM – 3:00 PM	M – Sa	By donation	16,786 one-way trips	$170,000 operating and admin expenses
The Chaffee Shuttle (Mt. Goat Bus)	Salida - Cañon City - Pueblo	▪ Intercity bus	6:20 AM – 6:30 PM	M - Su	$2 - $15	1,400	$85,000

Source: Transit Agency Provider Survey, 2013 and other research

3.2 Human Service Transportation Providers

Human service organizations often provide transportation for program clients to access their services and augment local public transit services. **Table 3-2** describes human service organizations that operate transportation service and participated in this coordinated planning process.

In contrast to public transit, San Luis Valley has a multitude of transportation services operated by human service agencies that provide mobility for specialized populations who might otherwise have very limited mobility. Their coverage area includes all seven counties in the region, but service is mainly concentrated in Alamosa, Chaffee and Rio Grande counties. Service eligibility is primarily for veterans, people with disabilities, seniors, or people with low incomes.

Table 3-2 Human Service Transportation Provider Overview

Provider	Service Area	Passenger Eligibility	Service Type(s)	Days of Service
Upper Arkansas Area Agency on Aging	Lake, Chaffee, Fremont, Custer counties	▪ Seniors	▪ Volunteers transport clients ▪ Gas vouchers	M–F
Costilla County Veterans Service Office	Costilla County (VSOs also in Alamosa, Chaffee, Conejos, Mineral, Rio Grande, Saguache counties)	▪ Veterans	▪ Program staff transport clients	T, Th
Rio Grande County Veterans Service Office	Rio Grande County (VSOs also in Alamosa, Chaffee, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Saguache counties)	▪ Veterans	▪ Volunteers transport clients ▪ Gas vouchers (as needed)	T, Th
Starpoint	Fremont, Chaffee, Custer counties and service to Denver	▪ Disabled	▪ Program staff transport clients (demand response) ▪ Bus ticket/passes	N/A
Tri-County Senior Citizens	Rio Grande, Saguache, Mineral counties	▪ Seniors (60+)	▪ Fixed Route ▪ Demand Response	3 – 4 days a week
SLV Behavioral Health Group (formerly SLV Community Mental Health Center)	Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Rio Grande, Saguache counties	▪ Clients	▪ Program staff and volunteers transport clients (demand response)	M–Sun
Blue Peaks Developmental Services, Inc.	Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande, Saguache counties	▪ Developmentally disabled	▪ Fixed Route ▪ Demand Response	M–Sun
Northerners Seniors, Inc.	Conejos County (La Jara, CO – Espanola, NM)	▪ Seniors	▪ Scheduled Trips	W
Red Willow/SLV Transportation	Rio Grande, Saguache, Mineral, Alamosa, Conejos, Costilla counties	▪ Medicaid transportation	▪ Demand Response	M – F (7:00 AM – 5:00 PM)

Note: Additional services exist in the San Luis Valley region; however the planning team was unable to provide detailed information for this table. Other services include Costilla County Senior Citizens, Alamosa Senior Citizens Inc., and Casa de Amistad.

3.3 Other Human Service Agencies/Programs

Many types of human service agencies in the region provide critical services and fund transportation programs but do not provide transportation directly for their clients. These agencies rely on public transit and human service transportation programs to get their clients where they need to go. The following human service agencies/programs provide supportive services in the region:

- Boys and Girls Clubs of Chaffee County: Buena Vista—contracts with transportation providers
- Alamosa Department of Human Services—contracts with transportation service providers, and provides gas and car repair vouchers
- Rio Grande/Mineral County Department of Social Services—contracts with transportation providers and provides gas vouchers
- Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Medicaid Program (NEMT)—funds transportation services

- Costilla County Department of Social Services—medical/health services
- San Luis Valley Development Resources Group—regional coordination and transportation planning services
- Town of San Luis—zoning and town planning services
- Town of Saguache—water and sanitation services
- South Central Colorado Seniors, Inc. (San Luis Valley's Area Agency on Aging)—nutrition, caregiver support, material aid, SHIP, homemaker services, care management, and information services
- Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Area—operation of a state park in Salida

3.4 Privately Operated Public Transportation Services

Aside from public transit and human service agency-provided transportation services, the San Luis Valley region has a few privately operated transportation services available to the general public. The core service is Black Hills Stage Lines, which provides intercity connections both within and between regions. In the San Luis Valley, it connects Alamosa, Saguache, and Chaffee counties along a north-south route. An east-west route connects Chaffee County with points in Gunnison County to the west.

There are two private tourist-focused passenger rail services in the region: the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad and the Cumbres and Toltec Scenic Railroad. The rail lines provide connections between La Veta, Alamosa, Monte Vista, Antonito, Osier and Chama (New Mexico). There is one taxi provider in Alamosa County.

Table 3-3 Privately Operated Public Transportation Services Overview

Provider	Service Area	Service Type(s)	Passenger Eligibility	Span of Service	Days of Service	Fares
Black Hills Stage Lines, Inc.	Gunnison, Alamosa, Hooper, Moffat, Villa Grove, Salida, Buena Vista, Fairplay, Jefferson, Grant, Pine Junction	▪ Fixed Route	▪ General Public	6 AM – 7 PM	M–Sun	Varies based on distance
Wilderness Journeys (shuttle to Wolf Creek Ski Area)	From Pagosa Springs to the ski resort Durango/La Plata Airport	▪ Demand Response	▪ General Public	Varies	M – Sun	$30 round-trip; $20 one-way $250 round-trip; $135 one-way
Little Stinkers Taxi Cab	Alamosa; Wolf Creek Ski Area from South Fork	▪ Demand Response	▪ General Public	Varies	M–Sun	$1.60 per mile

Source: Rates and schedules based on stakeholder input and internet information in Q1 2014.

3.5 Existing Coordination Activities

The main coordination activities in the region fall into the following four categories:

- Senior Resources Directory
- Regional Council of Governments
- Volunteer Driver Programs
- Partnerships

Specific projects and coordination efforts are described in more detail below.

3.5.1 Senior Resources Directory

The South-Central Colorado Seniors/Area Agency on Aging (AAA) publishes a resource directory for seniors and people with disabilities ("Adult Resources for Care and Help") with funding from the state Division of Aging and the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid. The directory covers the entire TPR, except for Chaffee County, which is part of the Upper Arkansas AAA. Its purpose is to "assist older persons in leading independent, meaningful, and dignified lives in their own homes and communities for as long as possible."

The directory, updated in 2013 and available only in print, contains information on resources targeted at seniors and people with disabilities. Organizations and phone numbers are available for health care providers, educational resources, housing, insurance, legal services, nutrition, recreation, social support, and transportation, among other topics. The resource is written in English and Spanish and can be obtained by visiting the Area Agency on Aging office.

3.5.2 Regional Council of Governments

The San Luis Valley Development Resource Group (SLVDRG) was formed in 1994 as a merger of the San Luis Valley Regional Development and Planning Commission, San Luis Valley Economic Development Council, and San Luis Valley Council of Governments. The group includes elected officials from six of the seven counties in the region. Chaffee County is not included as an official member of the group as it is part of the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments. However, SLVDRG has successfully included Chaffee County on at least one grant application and finds coordinating with them a "natural partnership" due to existing travel demands between the lower six counties and Chaffee. SLVDRG has three full-time staff positions.

With a mission to create jobs, improve income, and maintain quality of life in the region, members provide a multitude of coordination services to the region. Recent SLVDRG efforts include:

- Supporting transportation primarily through regional representation in statewide planning and funding discussions
- Inventorying historical private rail elements
- Authoring a grant to create the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, which includes a chapter addressing the impact of transportation on economic development
- Helping develop a Regional Trails and Recreation Master Plan, which views regional trail systems as an economic development tool
- Convening meetings for the TPR
    - Coordinating between different modal providers, such as rail, airports, and roads
    - Meeting as often as two to three times per month, but at least quarterly
- Helping facilitate a conversation to convert the historic Alamosa Train Depot and Welcome Center into a multimodal facility for locals and visitors
    - Taxis, tour buses, and the Rio Grande Scenic Railroad currently rent space from SLVDRG
    - Currently serves more visitors than locals; SLVDRG is interested in making the depot more useful for the general public, but has had difficulty finding funding to install essential facilities such as bathrooms and showers
- Assisting in TIGER grant efforts

3.5.3 Volunteer Driver Programs

Agencies in the region rely on volunteers to transport clients, including the Veterans Service Office and the Area Agency on Aging. However, there is no formalized or centralized volunteer driver program.

3.5.4 Partnerships

The Chaffee Shuttle, operated by Neighbor to Neighbor Volunteers, currently coordinates service with Cañon City, Pueblo, the Chaffee County Veterans Service Office, Red Willow, and Black Hills Stage Lines.

3.6 Summary of Existing Services

Transportation service available to the general public is extremely limited in the San Luis Valley TPR. What is available covers mainly Chaffee and Alamosa counties.

Due to the lack of public transit options, many human service agencies in the region provide their own transportation for clients and eligible populations. Most of these services focus on the region's population centers in Alamosa, Chaffee, and Rio Grande counties. Transportation is provided by volunteer drivers or by program staff.

Another way regional service agencies attempt to make up for a lack of affordable public transportation options is through subsidizing private transportation. Several agencies offer gas, bus, or car repair vouchers. However, many agencies in the region have no transportation-related services available.

There is no regional transit coordinating council in the San Luis Valley TPR, and overall, coordination activities are minimal. The Area Agency on Aging provides a resource directory that includes transportation services available to seniors, but it is not available online. The main coordination body for the region, the San Luis Valley Development Resource Group, addresses the region's transportation challenges mainly by providing regional representation in funding discussions, but to date has no member or staff devoted to coordinating regional transportation. A few transportation providers in Chaffee County have partnered to share the provision of transportation.

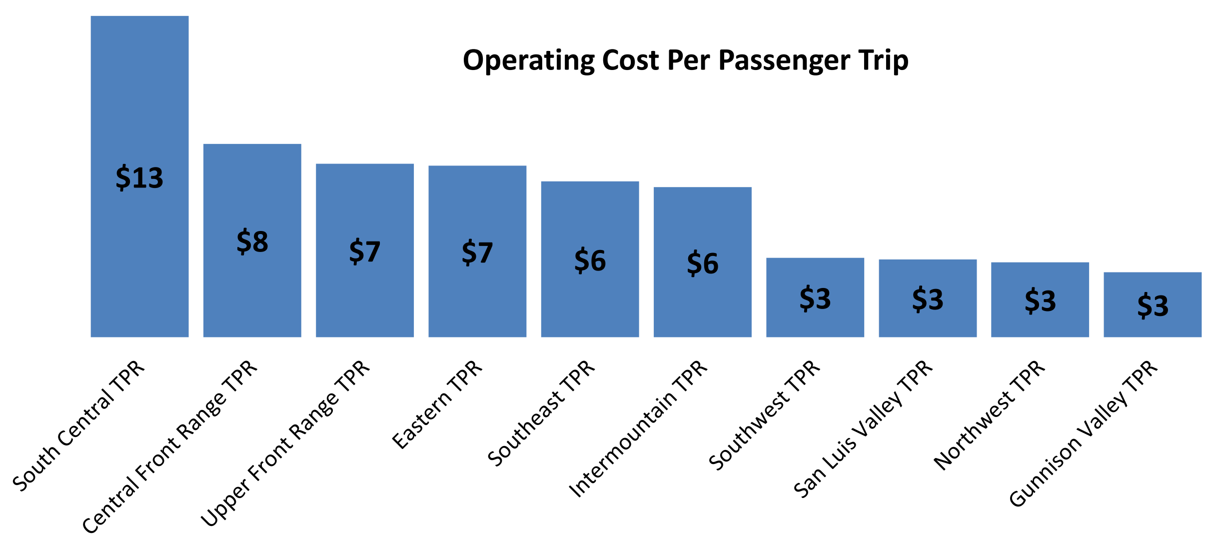
4.0 CURRENT AND POTENTIAL TRANSIT FUNDING

This Chapter presents a snapshot of current transit funding levels and potential sources of funds for the San Luis Valley Transportation Planning Region (TPR). Significant current and potential future funding programs are summarized, and estimates of funds generated through future potential revenue mechanisms are provided.

4.1 Current Transit Expenditures

Figure 4-1 illustrates the various levels of transit service provided in each of Colorado's rural TPRs as measured by operating cost per passenger trip. Each region varies considerably in the scale and type of operations, system utilization and ridership, full-time resident population, and population of seasonal visitors and other system users. In 2012, approximately $3 per trip was expended to support critical transit services within the region. While relatively low compared to other regions in Colorado, transit operating costs in the San Luis Valley TPR are still high due to the higher cost of fuel, trip distances, and general maintenance imposed by the region's geography and economy.

Figure 4-1 Operating Cost per Passenger Trip in Colorado Transportation Planning Regions

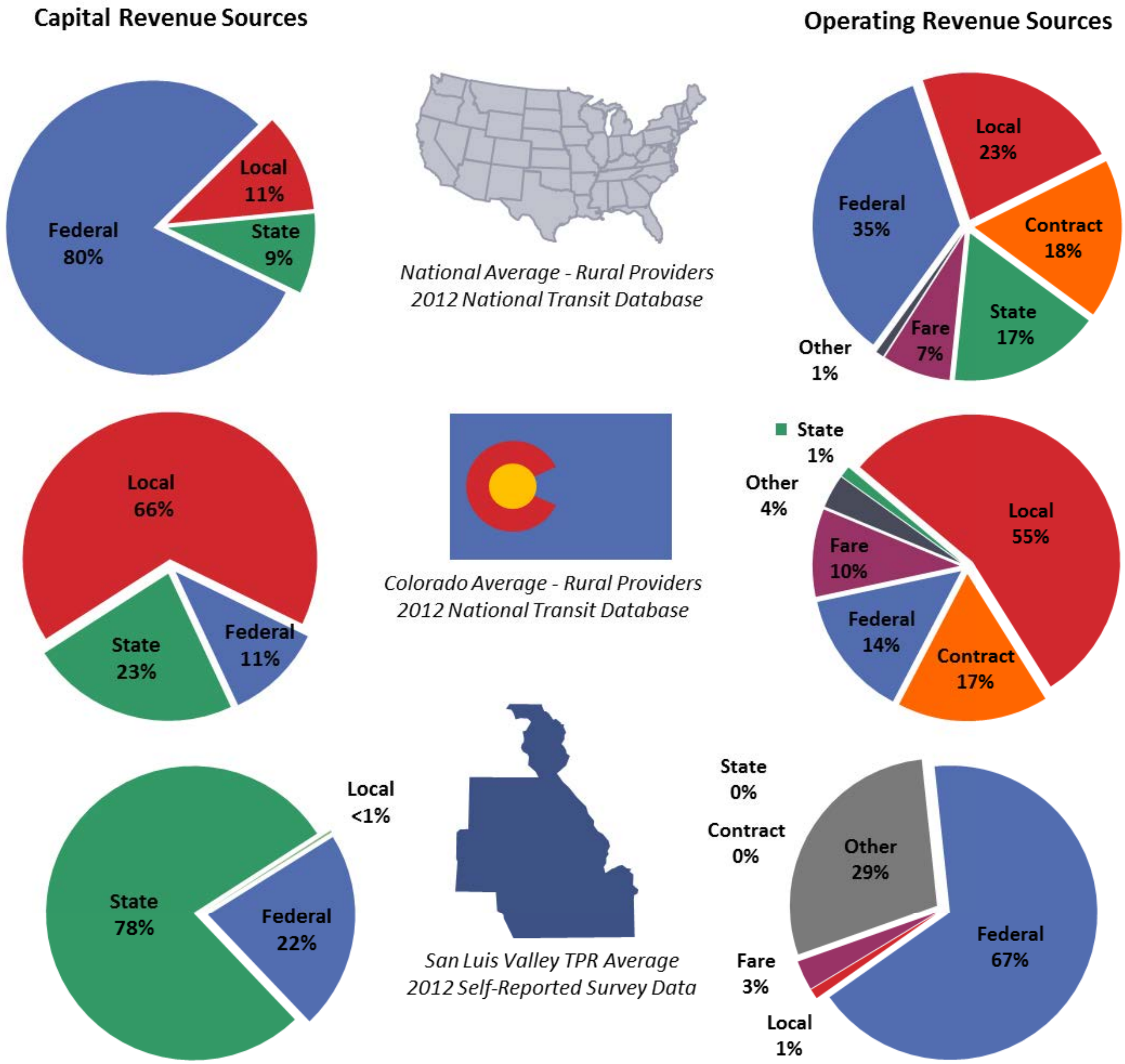


Source: 2012 Self-reported data from Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Transit Agency Provider Survey, 2013

4.2 Current Transit Revenue Sources

Transit service providers in the San Luis Valley TPR and across Colorado rely on a patchwork of funding sources to continue operations or fund improvements and system expansions. **Figure 4-2** displays information from the National Transit Database of rural providers for the nation and for Colorado. This information is compared to the aggregate regional financial information as reported to the Division of Transit and Rail (DTR) by providers in the region.

Figure 4-2 Comparison of National, State, and Regional Revenue Sources



Source: National Transit Database, 2012 | CDOT Transit Agency Provider Survey, 2013

At the national level, the majority of capital revenues are derived from federal sources, primarily Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grants. Over the past five years, federal capital spending increased substantially through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and some of those investments are still being awarded. In 2012, ARRA funding represented a third of all federal transit-related capital funding nationally. However, in Colorado, relatively few ARRA investments and other large-scale transit capital projects are underway and the federal share of capital revenues is substantially less at the state level—at just 11 percent. The State of Colorado contributes more than twice the national average toward capital investments, primarily through the FASTER program.

In the San Luis Valley TPR, the state provided most of the financial support for major capital investment projects in 2012. State support was primarily provided through FASTER funding. Federal capital investments made up 22 percent of regional capital funding in 2012. However, in previous years, federal investments have been the largest contributor. Capital expenditures and revenues are not consistent over time and different sources are used to fund different projects as needs arise. Local funding accounts for less than one percent capital investments and includes a wide variety of local government contributions to services throughout the region.

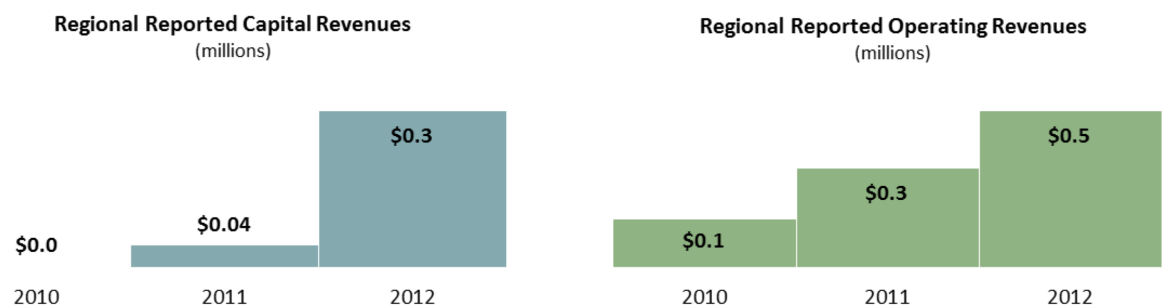
At the national level, operating revenues are relatively diversified among federal, local, agency-derived, and state funding sources. Colorado, on average, depends more on local sources and is less reliant on federal and state sources for operating funds. However, within the San Luis Valley region, the local share of operating revenues is substantially less than the state average (1 percent compared to 55 percent). Many providers in the region provide a variety of important local human services needs, which tend to be primarily funded through federal programs and others sources such as private and philanthopic funds.

4.3 Regional Transit Revenue Trends

While federal operating support for rural transit is relatively stable and predictable, many other funding sources are highly variable, including federal or state competitive grant awards, one-time transfers from local governments, private or philanthropic donations, or local tax revenues that are subject to fluctuations in local economies. When these funding streams decline or remain stagnant, transit agencies are forced to respond by reducing service, raising fares, eliminating staff positions, delaying system expansions, or postponing maintenance activities.

Figure 4-3 illustrates trends in reported capital and operating revenues for the past three years. Within the San Luis Valley region, providers have continued to fund services in recent years and partnered to undertake system expansions or needed capital projects. It should be noted that data for 2010 and 2011 are compiled from the National Transit Database and not directly comparable to data derived from survey information reported by providers in the region in 2013 based on 2012 data.

Figure 4-3 Recent Trends in Regional Transit Revenues



Source: 2012 Self-reported data from CDOT Transit Agency Provider Survey, 2013

4.4 Current and Potential Transit and Transportation Funding Sources

Public funds are primarily used to support transit and transportation services in Colorado's rural areas. Support from federal agencies, state programs, and local governments provide most funding to support capital construction and acquisition. Operating and administration activities are most often supported by local governments, FTA grants, private or civic gifts and from agency-generated revenues such as contract services, service fares, and investments.

The following sections detail a number of commonly used funding streams and provide estimates of potential new revenue sources for the region.

4.4.1 Federal Grant Programs – U.S. Department of Transportation

Grant programs administered by the FTA provide the most significant source of ongoing funds to support transit services in rural areas. CDOT conducts a statewide competitive application process to determine awards of FTA grants and to ensure that it and the local grantees follow federal laws and regulations. CDOT contracts with the local grantees once it selects the funding recipients. FTA funds are complex and governed by varying requirements and provisions for use.

Only the 5311 grant programs are specifically intended to support transit in rural areas, however under certain circumstances and with the discretion of the state, many other programs may be used to support rural services. The following list of major FTA and U.S. DOT programs cover grant assistance programs for rural areas. Providers in the San Luis Valley region may not be eligible for some of these programs. CDOT provides a clearinghouse of information on current grant programs and can provide limited technical assistance with grant applications.

FTA Section 5311 Formula Grants for Rural Areas program provides formula funding to states for the purpose of supporting public transportation in areas with populations of less than 50,000. Funds may be used to support administrative, capital, or operating costs, including planning, job access, and reverse commute programs, for local transportation providers when paired with local matching funds. States may distribute funding to public, private non-profit, or tribal organizations, including Local and Regional Coordinating Councils. Within this program, Section 5311(f) requires at least 15 percent of a state's funds under this program to be used to support intercity bus services, unless the governor has certified that such needs are already being met. The Rural Transit Assistance Program and the Tribal Transit Program are funded as a takedown from the Section 5311 program. The federal share of eligible capital and project administrative expenses may not exceed 80 percent of the net cost of the project. For operating, the federal share may not exceed 50 percent of the net operating cost of the project. For projects that meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Clean Air Act, or bicycle access projects, they may be funded at 90 percent federal match.

FTA Section (5311(b)(3)) Rural Transit Assistance Program (RTAP) provides a source of funding to assist in the design and implementation of training and technical assistance projects and other support services tailored to meet the needs of transit operators in rural areas. States may use RTAP funds to support non-urbanized transit activities in four categories: training, technical assistance, research, and related support services. Colorado receives a base allocation of $65,000 annually in RTAP funds. There is no federal requirement for a local match. CDOT provides RTAP funding to the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies (CASTA).

FTA Section 5304 Statewide and Metropolitan Planning funds can be used for a wide variety of transit planning activities, including transit technical assistance, planning, research, demonstration projects, special studies, training, and other similar projects. These funds are not available for capital or operating expenses of public transit systems. First priority is given to statewide projects, which includes grant administration; the provision of planning, technical and management assistance to transit operators; and special planning or technical studies. The second priority is given to the updating of existing regional transit plans. Third priority is given to requests for new regional transit plans. Fourth priority is given to requests to conduct local activities, such as: research, local transit operating plans, demonstration projects, training programs, strategic planning, or site development planning.

FTA Section 5310 Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities is a formula grant program intended to enhance mobility of seniors and persons with disabilities. It is used to fund programs that serve the special needs of transit-dependent populations beyond traditional public transportation services and ADA complementary paratransit services. Eligible recipients include states or local government authorities, private non-profit organizations, or operators of public transportation. At least 55 percent of program funds must be used on public transportation capital projects that are intended to meet the special needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities when public transportation is insufficient, inappropriate, or unavailable. The remaining 45 percent of program funds may be used for projects that exceed the requirements of the ADA or that improve access to fixed-route service and decrease reliance by individuals with disabilities on paratransit services or that provide alternatives to public transportation for seniors and individuals with disabilities. The 5310 program funds certain capital and operating costs, with an 80 percent federal share for capital and 50 percent federal share for operating.

FTA Section 5312 Research, Development, Demonstration, and Deployment Projects supports research activities that improve the safety, reliability, efficiency, and sustainability of public transportation by investing in the development, testing, and deployment of innovative technologies, materials, and processes; carry out related endeavors; and support the demonstration and deployment of low-emission and no-emission vehicles to promote clean energy and improve air quality. Eligible recipients include state and local governments, public transportation providers, private or non-profit organizations, technical and community colleges, and institutions of higher education. Federal share is 80 percent with a required 20 percent non-federal share for all projects (non-federal share may be in-kind).

FTA Section 5322 Human Resources and Training program allows the FTA to make grants or enter into contracts for human resource and workforce development programs as they apply to public transportation activities. Such programs may include employment training, outreach program to increase minority and female employment in public transportation activities, research on public transportation personnel and training needs, and training and assistance for minority business opportunities. Eligible recipients are not defined in legislation and are subject to FTA criteria. This program is initially authorized at $5 million total through 2014. The federal share is 50 percent with a required 50 percent non-federal share for all projects.

FTA Section 5339 Bus and Bus Facilities program provides capital funding to replace, rehabilitate, and purchase buses, vans, and related equipment and to construct bus-related facilities. This program replaces the previous 5309 program and provides funding to eligible recipients that operate or allocate funding to fixed-route bus operators. Eligible recipients include public agencies or private non-profit organizations engaged in public transportation, including those providing services open to a segment of the general public, as defined by age, disability, or low income. States may transfer funds within this program to supplement urban and rural formula grant programs, including 5307 and 5311 programs. Federal share is 80 percent with a required 20 percent local match.

FTA Section 5309 Fixed Guideway Capital Investment Grants (New Starts) program is the primary funding source for major transit capital investments. The 5309 program provides grants for new and expanded rail and bus rapid transit systems that reflect local priorities to improve transportation options in key corridors. This program defines a new category of eligible projects, known as core capacity projects, which expand capacity by at least 10 percent in existing fixed-guideway transit corridors that are already at or above capacity today, or are expected to be at or above capacity within five years. This discretionary program requires project sponsors to undergo a multi-step, multi-year process to be eligible for funding. Projects must demonstrate strong local commitment, including local funding, to earn a portion of this limited federal capital funding source. Generally, the program requirements limit funding to major urban providers; however, some rural systems have been competitive and received funding in recent years, including RFTA for the new VelociRFTA BRT service along SH 82. Maximum federal share is 80 percent.

FHWA Surface Transportation Program (STP) provides flexible funding that states and local governments may use for a variety of highway-related projects as well as pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure; transit capital projects, including vehicles and facilities used to provide intercity bus service; transit safety infrastructure improvements and programs; and transportation alternatives as defined by MAP-21 to include most transportation enhancement eligibilities. Funds may be flexed to FTA programs, local governments, and transit agencies to support transit-related projects.

FHWA Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including transit-related projects, pedestrian and bicycle facilities, infrastructure projects for improving non-driver access to public transportation and enhanced mobility, and community improvement activities. The TAP replaced the funding from pre-MAP-21 programs including the Transportation Enhancement Activities, Recreational Trails Program, and Safe Routes to School Program. Requirements and guidelines for this program, as related to transit, largely remain similar to the previous transportation enhancement program. TAP funds transferred to FTA are subject to the FTA program requirements, including a required 20 percent matching local funds.

FHWA National Highway Performance Program (NHPP) provides funding specifically to support the condition and performance of the National Highway System (NHS). While this is a highway-oriented program, NHPP funds can be used on a public transportation project that supports progress toward the achievement of national performance goals. Public transportation eligible projects include construction of publicly owned intracity or intercity bus terminals servicing the NHS, infrastructure-based intelligent transportation system capital improvements, and bicycle transportation and pedestrian walkways.

Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative (VTCLI) is a competitive grant program to support activities that help veterans learn about and arrange for locally available transportation services to connect to jobs, education, health care, and other vital services**.** The initiative focuses on technology investments to build One-Call/One-Click Transportation Resource Centers. The VTCLI program is a joint effort of the Departments of Transportation, Defense, Health and Human Services, Labor, and Veterans Affairs but is managed and administered by the FTA. Funded in 2011 and 2012 only, future funding for the effort has not been announced.

4.4.2 Federal Grant Programs – Other

Other federal agencies, including the Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Labor, Department of Education, and others provide grants or continuing financial assistance to support the needs of aging residents, military veterans, unemployed workers, and other populations. A 2011 Government Accountability Office report found that over 80 federal programs may be used for some type of transit and transportation assistance. For a complete inventory of other federal programs available see recent reports from the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination (http://www.unitedweride.gov/NRC_FederalFundingUpdate_Appendix.pdf). Most federal human services related funding assistances flow through state or regional organizations and may be used to cover a wide range of services, including, but not dedicated to, transit and transportation assistance. These other federal programs may provide for contracted transportation services, or offer reimbursement for transportation services provided to covered individuals or may be used as “non-federal” matches for FTA grants or may support transportation assistance and coordination positions

The following section briefly describes current and major federal grant programs that are most frequently used to support transit and transportation services, according to the National Resource Center for Human Service Transportation Coordination.

Medicaid is the only program outside the U.S. DOT that requires the provision of transportation. This federal-state partnership for health insurance and medical assistance is provided for low-income individuals. In Colorado, Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) is provided for medical appointments and services for clients with no other means of transportation. Medicaid in Colorado provides a significant source of funds for many transit service providers. However, these funds are provided on a reimbursement basis.

Older Americans Act (OAA), Title III provides funding to local providers for the transport of seniors and their caregivers. Eligible recipients include transportation services that facilitate access to supportive services or nutrition services, and services provided by an area agency on aging, in conjunction with local transportation service providers, public transportation agencies, and other local government agencies, that result in increased provision of such transportation services for older individuals. Under certain conditions, OAA funds can be used to meet the match requirements for programs administered by the FTA.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds for **Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)** is a federal program that provides funding to states. State TANF agencies, including Colorado Works, may use TANF funds to provide support services including transportation. States have wide latitude on how this money can be spent, but the purchase of vehicles for the provision of transportation services for TANF-eligible individuals is included. For example, supporting and developing services such as connector services to mass transit, vanpools, sharing buses with elderly and youth programs, coordinating with existing human services transportation resources, employer provided transportation, or guaranteed ride home programs are all activities that may be covered under the TANF program.

Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), administered by the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), cover funding for transportation. A portion of CDBG funds are spent on directly operated transit services, transit facilities or transit-related joint facilities, and services for persons with disabilities, low-income populations, youth and seniors. These grants have statutory authority to be used as the “non-federal” matching funds for FTA formula grants.

Community Services Block Grants (CSBG), administered by the Department of Health and Human Services, cover funding for transportation. CSBG funds are primarily intended to alleviate the causes and conditions of poverty in communities. Eligible transportation activities include programs or projects to transport low-income persons to medical facilities, employment services, and education or healthcare activities.

Vocational Rehabilitation grants are from the Department of Education. Often, a portion of these grants are used to provide participating individuals with transportation reimbursements, vouchers, bus passes, or other purchased transportation service, often from FTA grantees and subrecipients. State vocational rehabilitation agencies are encouraged to cooperate with statewide workforce development activities under the WIA. In Colorado, these grants are administered through the Statewide Independent Living Council and State Rehabilitation Council.

4.4.3 State, Local, and Agency-Derived Revenue Sources

In Colorado, local revenue sources provide an important source of funding for transit agencies and service providers. Transfers and grants from local governments provide ongoing operating support and assistance with one-time planning efforts or matching funds for major capital projects. The State of Colorado provides direct funding for capital equipment investments and for projects that support transit activities. A variety of other relatively small, but important funding sources are used by providers and agencies to meet the needs of transit dependent populations in the state.

Funding Advancement for Surface Transportation & Economic Recovery (FASTER) is a state funding source that provides direct support for transit projects. FASTER funds provide $15 million annually for statewide and local transit projects, such as new bus stops, bike parking, transit maintenance facilities, multimodal transportation centers, and other capital projects. FASTER transit funds are split between local transit grants ($5 million per year) and statewide projects ($10 million per year). CDOT DTR competitively awards the local transit grants and statewide funds. Local recipients are required to provide a minimum 20 percent local match. Among the types of projects that have been awarded are the purchase or replacement of transit vehicles, construction of multimodal stations, and acquisition of equipment for consolidated call centers.

In 2014, the Colorado Transportation Commission approved the use of these funds for operating and capital costs. As a result, $3,000,000 of the FASTER transit funds are now allocated to cover the cost of the planned Interregional Express Bus service and another $1,000,000 is available annually to cover the operating costs of other regional/interregional routes. From fiscal years 2010 to 2013, over $52 million in FASTER funds have been invested in transit projects throughout the state. However, while total revenues collected under the overall FASTER program ($252 million FY 2013) are projected to increase over time, the allocation for transit projects remains at a flat $15 million per year.

The Colorado Veterans Trust Fund, administered by the Colorado Department of Military and Veteran Affairs, supports organizations providing transit and transportation assistance to veterans. The state supports Veterans Service Offices in each county and grants are awarded to non-profit organizations providing transportation and other services to veterans. An estimated $200,000 a year is directed to supporting the transportation needs of veterans.

Highway Users Tax Fund (HUTF) is funded through revenues raised from statewide gas tax, vehicle registration fees, license fees, and user fees. These taxes are not indexed to inflation or motor fuel prices. As a result, revenues within this fund do not keep pace with actual construction or program costs over time. Funds are distributed based on a formula to CDOT, counties, and municipalities. Under Senate Bill 13-140, local governments (counties and municipalities) are authorized to flex HUTF dollars to transit-related projects. Transit and other multimodal projects allowed include, but are not limited to bus purchases, transit and rail station constructions, transfer facilities, maintenance facilities for transit, rolling stock, bus rapid transit lanes, bus stops and pull-outs along roadways, bicycle and pedestrian overpasses, lanes and bridges. Local governments may expend no more than 15 percent of HUTF allocations for transit-related operational purposes.

Local Governments including cities, counties, and special districts support or directly fund rural transit services. These services are typically funded through a city or county's general fund, although mass transit districts, metropolitan districts, and rural transportation authorities can levy and collect dedicated funding from sales and use taxes. Local funds flow to public or non-profit transit or transportation service agencies either on a contract basis or in the form of general operating support. Transit agencies also often seek direct local support to provide matching funds to federal grant awards. Local governments in Colorado are most commonly funded through general sales and use taxes or property taxes.

In 1990, Colorado provided the "authority of counties outside the Regional Transportation District to impose a sales tax for the purpose of funding a mass transportation system." Eagle, Summit, and Pitkin counties currently employ this Mass Transit District mechanism to support transit services. Unlike a rural transportation authority, this option does not require a geographic boundary separate from the county and does not require the creation of a legal authority.

In 1997, Colorado enabled the "Rural Transportation Authority Law" to allow any single or coalition of several local governments to create rural transportation authorities. These authorities are empowered to develop and operate a transit system, construct and maintain roadways, and petition the citizens within the authority boundary to tax themselves for the purpose of funding the authority and the services provided. There are currently five Rural Transportation Authorities active in Colorado (Roaring Fork, Gunnison Valley, Pikes Peak, Baptist Road, and South Platte Valley).

Fares and other revenues (such as advertising) generated by transit agencies are used to offset operating expenses. Farebox recovery varies by agency, but rarely do passenger fares cover more than half of total operating and maintenance expenses. Because of this, transit agencies are dependent on the federal, state, and local revenue sources they receive to continue operating.

Service contracts are a way for local agencies to fund operations for specific economic or employment centers, such as universities or the campuses of major employers. Examples around the country include CityBus in Lafayette, Indiana, which has a service contract with Purdue University and Ivy Tech State College; Kalamazoo Metro Transit in Michigan, which contracts with Western Michigan University; Corvallis Transit in Oregon, with a contract with Oregon State University. Service contracts can also be made with neighboring counties or municipalities. In addition to service contracts, another way to partner with local colleges or universities is through a College Pass Program. These programs often involve a student activity fee for transit services that is administered by the school. This can be paired with a discounted or free pass that students can use to ride the transit system.

Private support from major employers within a transit agency service area can be a source of funds. These employers may be willing to help support the cost of vehicles or the operating costs for employee transportation. Individual companies or business groups may also fully fund or subsidize new express routes, dedicated vehicles, or improved transit facilities that specifically serve their employees. Sponsorship opportunities can range from small-scale benefits programs to encourage ridership (such as commuter passes) to service subsidies (such as direct contract payments or on-vehicle advertising) to larger capital investments in new vehicles or facilities serving business centers.

Charitable contributions are a source of revenue for many rural transit or service providers. While contributions from individuals are uncommon, ongoing operating support or one-time grants for operating positions or even capital investments may be provided by community or private foundations.

4.5 Future Funding Options

The following section describes options that can be considered by Colorado's local agencies to fund transit service. These sources include revenue streams that are relatively common across the country or those that are not often implemented except in a small number of communities. Available options for any given community are dependent on state and local regulations, funding needs, and political considerations. Many of the examples listed in this section are drawn from TCRP Project J-11, Task 14: Alternative Local and Regional Funding Mechanisms.

Local Sales Taxes: Local sales and use taxes are one of the most common sources of revenue used to fund public transit by counties, cities, and special districts. Revenues derived from sales taxes may be dedicated to a transit agency or special district or may be collected by a local government and transferred to a local public provider for ongoing support. Dedicated assessments commonly range from 0.25 to 1 percent of total taxable sales. The use of these revenues is generally flexible and can provide funding for specific capital projects, or provide dedicated operating revenue to an entire agency. In Colorado, formation of special districts and any tax policy change resulting in net revenue gains requires voter approval under the TABOR constitutional amendment.

Property Taxes: Another common source of funding for transit agencies is property taxes. Property tax assessments are usually levied as a percentage of assessed residential and commercial value within a transit agency's service area. Property tax assessments that are levied solely on mineral or natural resource property value are infrequently used, but do exist. As with sales tax assessments, local communities seeking to raise property tax mil rates must seek voter approval and must consider TABOR and Gallagher limits.

Motor Fuel Taxes: Motor fuel taxes are commonly levied by states for transportation and most state funding for transit comes from fuel tax revenues. At the local or regional level, state motor fuel taxes are generally dedicated to roadways, although some local governments can transfer fuel tax revenues to transit, including in Colorado. In addition to state-collected fuel taxes, at least 15 states allow for local-option motor fuel taxes to be administered and collected at the city or county level.

Those states that enable local-option fuel taxes that may be used to support transit services within a local area include Tennessee, California, Florida, Illinois, Hawaii, and Virginia.

Vehicle Fees: Fees tied to vehicle ownership most commonly include annual registration titling fees and other mechanisms such as vehicle titling or sales fees, rental or lease taxes, toll revenues, parking, or taxi company licensing fees. State collected vehicle-related fees are used to support transit, including the FASTER program in Colorado. Locally collected vehicle related fees are not in widespread use to directly support transit, though there are a few examples around the country.

Triangle Transit in North Carolina and New York MTA both receive multiple types of vehicle fees that are collected at the local level. Allegheny County in Pennsylvania enacted a $2 rental car fee to support transit services in the Pittsburgh region.

Parking Fees: Fees and fines for parking vehicles within certain city areas may be imposed to achieve local goals, including managing congestion and encouraging mode shifts to transit. Local transit agencies may receive funding for operations from parking fees and fines levied by local governments or they may receive parking related revenues generated at facilities (e.g., parking garages or park and ride lots actually owned by that transit provider).

The San Francisco Metropolitan Transportation Agency (Muni) receives a significant amount of revenues for the provision of transit services through parking fees and fines. Eighty percent of city parking revenues are dedicated to Muni operations.

Employee or Payroll-Based Taxes: Payroll taxes are generally imposed on the gross payroll of businesses within a transit district or transit agency service area and are paid by the employer. An income-based tax is imposed on employee earnings and may be administered by a local government based on employees' place of work.

Transit agencies currently using payroll taxes include TriMet in Oregon, New York MTA, and CityBus in Lafayette, Indiana.

Value Capture: Value capture describes a range of revenue mechanisms related to residential or commercial development, including impact fees, tax increment financing (TIF), and special assessment districts. Impact fees are based on anticipated traffic and transit volumes of major new developments and are used to offset the costs of new transportation infrastructure. TIF mechanisms seek to capture some portion of the value of redevelopment or new development property value within a certain geographic area and usually administered by local business improvement or special districts.

Tampa, Florida's Hillsborough Area Regional Transit Authority uses a combination of three value capture mechanisms. Impact fees provide matching funds for bus capital projects, TIF funds operations for the city's streetcar system, and a special assessment district funds the capital costs of the city's streetcar system.

Utility Taxes or Fees: Utility fees are annual flat assessments per household or housing unit that range from $5 to $15. These fees are widely used in Oregon for operations and maintenance expenditures for transit and capital improvements of transportation infrastructure, primarily local roads and streets. Local governments in other states such as Florida, Texas, and Washington have enacted utility fees for transportation, but their use is not widespread across the country.

In 2011, the Corvallis Transit System implemented a Transit Operations Fee that is a hybrid revenue mechanism but most closely associated with a utility fee. The fee is indexed to the average price of a gallon of gas and adjusted each year. In 2012, the fee was $3.73 per month for single family residences and $2.58 per unit per month for multifamily properties. Pullman Transit in Washington State levies a voter-approved 2 percent utility tax on natural gas, electricity, telephone, water, sewer, and garbage collection services within the city of Pullman. This tax brings in approximately $1 million annually.

Room and Occupancy Taxes: Additional sales taxes for hotel and lodging purchases are common across the country and include flat service fees and percentage based sales taxes. This revenue source is popular in areas with high tourism demand to fund additional needs associated with visitors.

Savannah, Georgia uses room occupancy fees to fund free public transportation and Park City Transit in Utah relies on occupancy taxes to fund services.

Lottery or Limited Gaming Taxes: Taxes are imposed on the sale of lottery tickets, most often by a state, while local municipalities may tax casino revenues or assess a fee per machine. In Colorado, state lottery taxes are devoted to fund costs associated with open space and recreation as well as the state and local library system. Those municipalities or tribal governments that allow for gaming may also transfer limited gaming fees to support local transit systems, including in Cripple Creek, Colorado.

The State of New Jersey diverts a portion of the state Casino Revenue Fund to support a Senior Citizens and Disabled Residents Transportation Assistance Program. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania dedicates a percentage of lottery revenues to a free transit program for persons over 65 years old traveling in off-peak hours.

Vehicle-Miles Traveled Fees: A number of states are increasingly researching alternatives to fuel taxes that would instead charge drivers a fee based on the amount of miles traveled rather than a tax on the amount of fuel used. Fees could also be variable to help manage congestion at peak times. Generally, those states examining VMT-based fees consider this system to be a revenue-neutral alternative to fuel taxes, rather than a source of additional new funding.

Corporate Sponsorship: Businesses across the country have practiced funding private employee shuttles or vanpool options for decades and subsidized or fully-funded transit passes are a common employee benefit. Individual companies or business groups may also fully fund or subsidize new express routes, dedicated vehicles, or improved transit facilities that specifically serve their employees. Sponsorship opportunities can range from small-scale benefits programs to encourage ridership (such as commuter passes) to service subsidies (such as direct contract payments or on-vehicle advertising) to larger capital investments in new vehicles or facilities serving business centers. Private sponsorship can be uncertain and unsustainable, but partnerships and contracts do provide alternative revenue streams and offer opportunities for increasing system ridership.

Public-Private Partnerships: Public-private partnerships or P3 arrangements generally refer to a range of project delivery and financing agreements (loans) between a public agency and private business to complete infrastructure projects. P3 arrangements are becoming increasingly common for major public works or infrastructure projects. However, according to the National Council of State Legislatures, P3s are used for less than 20 percent of transportation projects nationally and not typically utilized for transit projects. In Denver, a recent agreement between the Regional Transportation District and Denver

Transit Partners was the first full design-build-finance-operate-maintain transit P3 project in the United States.

States and communities across the country have enabled and enacted a wide variety of revenue mechanisms to directly or indirectly support transit services. Generally, those states with more robust local transit operations or with state policies that are more supportive of public transit allow for more innovative revenue options. In Colorado, the constitutional TABOR amendment restricts state and local governments from implementing new taxes without voter approval and from raising revenues collected under existing tax rates in excess of the rate of inflation and population growth, without voter approval. Additional constitutional restrictions in Colorado limit the ability of local governments to creatively finance transit services.

4.6 Potential Revenue Estimates

Transit providers in the San Luis Valley TPR rely primarily on federal grant programs. However, the future of some of these programs is not clear and future funding levels may be substantially reduced. To meet future needs and continue to provide critical services in the region, alternative revenue sources should be considered.

Table 4-1 presents high-level estimates of the potential funds that could be generated by enabling additional or alternative revenue sources. These estimates are intended to provide an approximate gauge of the potential value of alternative revenue sources in closing future funding gaps. The exact amount of revenues that could become available depends on voter approval, implementation of the mechanism, and local limitations and tax policy. These estimates are intended to portray the approximate value of these potential funding sources and do not constitute an endorsement or recommendation. Values are based on currently published information for Alamosa, Chaffee, Conejos, Costilla, Mineral, Rio Grande, and Saguache counties.

Table 4-1 Estimates of Funds Generated Through Alternative Revenue Sources

	Mechanism	Revenue Source	2012 Revenue Base	Annual Funds Generated
1.	0.7% sales tax	Net Taxable Sales	$620,832,000	$4,345,824
2.	1.0 mill levy	Assessed Property Value	$987,853,755	$987,854
3.	$15 annual fee	Total Housing Units	35,298	$529,470
4.	2% equivalent fee	Local Tourism Tax Receipts	$5,595,500	$111,910
5.	10% flex transfer	Local Highway Users Tax Fund	$13,847,105	$1,384,711

1. **Sales Tax Increase**: If each county in the region were to enact an additional levy of 0.7 percent of net taxable sales in the region, annual revenues would vary but could have reached $4 million in 2012. An increase in sales taxes would require voter approval and would be collected by either a dedicated regional transportation authority or by local governments and then transferred to support transit services. Several counties and transportation authorities in the region currently levy dedicated mass transit sales taxes ranging from 0.4 percent to 0.8 percent, varying by city and county.
2. **Property Tax Increase**: If each county in the region were to increase property taxes the equivalent of 1.0 mill (or $1 per $1,000 of total assessed value), the potential revenue generated in 2012 could have reached nearly $1 million. An increase in taxes would require voter approval and local cities and counties may be limited by existing TABOR revenue limits.
3. **Utility Fee Enactment:** If each county in the region were to enact a $15 per housing unit annual fee to provide transportation and transit services, potential revenue could have reached $500,000 in 2012. Housing units account for single and multi-family residences, including those for seasonal use or second-home ownership. Housing units do not account for nightly lodging or rental units.

4. **Tourism Tax Enactment:** Visitors to the region generated over $5 million in local tax receipts. If each county in the region were to enact a fee or daily tax on lodging equivalent to 2 percent of all local tourism-based tax receipts, approximately $110,000 in annual revenues could have been generated. New taxes require voter approval in Colorado.
5. **Transfer of HUTF:** If each county in the region were to allocate 10 percent of HUTF receipts to transit, then approximately $1.4 million could have become available for transit-related investments. Some counties in the region use these funds to support transit infrastructure.

4.7 CDOT Grants Process

CDOT's DTR is responsible for awarding and administering state and federal transit funds to public transit and human service transportation providers throughout Colorado. State transit funds are provided through the FASTER Act passed by the state legislature in 2009. FASTER provides a fixed $15 million per year for statewide, interregional, regional and local transit projects.

On the federal side, the FTA provides funding for transit services through various grant programs. FTA provides several grant programs directly to Designated Recipients, primarily in urbanized areas. For rural areas, FTA transit funds are allocated by formula to the state and are administered by DTR through a competitive application process. These grant programs provide funding assistance for administrative, planning, capital, and operating needs. For more information on the various FTA grant programs, visit the FTA website at http://www.fta.dot.gov/index.html.

To begin the grant application process, DTR issues a Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) and a "call for projects" for FASTER and FTA funds on an annual or bi-annual basis. Capital and operating/administrative calls for projects are conducted separately and at different times during the year. Applications for FTA operating and administrative funds are solicited every two years. Applications for FTA and FASTER capital funds are solicited every year in a single application and DTR determines the appropriate source of funds (FTA or FASTER).

From the date of the NOFA, grant applicants have a minimum of 45 days to submit an application. The application process will soon be available online using DTR's new CoTRAMS grant management program. Prior to submitting an application, each grant applicant must submit an agency profile and capital inventory. Applications will not be reviewed until this is complete. Applicants applying for funds for a construction project must have National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation completed and submitted with the application and demonstrate the readiness of the project to proceed.

Following the 45 day grant application period, applications for operating/administrative funds are then evaluated, scored, and ranked by both internal DTR staff and an Interagency Advisory Committee made up of individuals outside DTR (including the Colorado Department of Human Services and the Public Utilities Commission). Amounts awarded are often less than the amount requested. Applications for capital funds are evaluated primarily on performance metrics (age, mileage, and condition).

DTR announces the awards and obtains CDOT Transportation Commission approval for projects that are awarded FASTER transit funds. Transportation Commission approval is not necessary for FTA awarded funds. All awards require a local match—50 percent local match for operating funds, and 20 percent for administrative and capital funds. All funds are awarded on a reimbursement basis; that is, grant recipients must first incur expenses before seeking reimbursement from CDOT.

Once funding awards are made, a scope of work for each awarded project is developed and negotiated between DTR and the grant applicant. Once the scope of work is complete, the project can be offered a contract. Once both DTR and the grant applicant fully execute a contract, CDOT issues a notice to proceed. For more information on the grant application process, visit the DTR Transit Grants website.

5.0 TRANSIT NEEDS AND SERVICE GAPS

This Chapter provides an assessment of key quantitative factors that play a role in assessing and understanding transit needs and gaps for transit in the San Luis Valley Transportation Planning Region (TPR). Additionally, an assessment of existing public transit and human service transportation services are reviewed with the needs and gaps expressed by a variety of sources and data collection efforts conducted as a part of this plan development. The sources used to prepare this subjective assessment of needs and gaps in the San Luis Valley TPR include, but are not limited to, the San Luis Valley Transit Working Group (TWG), provider and human service agency survey results, geographic analysis of the locations/concentrations of the likely transit user populations (see Chapter 2), CDOT survey of older adults and adults with disabilities, and input received from two public meetings in the region.

5.1 Quantitative Assessment of Needs and Gaps

This section provides information relevant to general population growth, elderly population growth, and growth in resort/tourism dollars spent in the TPR. These data aid in the quantitative assessment of transit needs and gaps in the San Luis Valley region.

5.1.1 Population and Elderly Population Growth

The seven-county San Luis Valley Region is extremely rural in character. As of 2013, less than 70,000 people were living in the more than 9,000 square mile area (an average density of less than 8 people per square mile). Based on 2012 estimates from the Colorado State Demographer's Office (see Chapter 2), the region is expected to experience moderate population and job growth over the coming decades. The two most populated counties, Alamosa and Chaffee, are the region's economic centers. They are predicted to experience the most growth in the region by 2040, suggesting that most economic activity in the region will continue to concentrate in these two counties. Alamosa is expected to add nearly 10,000 residents to its population by 2040, which represents 60 percent growth; Chaffee will increase by almost 12,000 residents at a 62 percent growth rate.

In addition to being the main population centers in the region, these two counties also have large and growing senior populations. Chaffee and Alamosa's older adult populations are expected to grow the fastest of all the counties (54 percent and 78 percent, respectively), but no county in the region is predicted to age as significantly as Colorado as a whole (120 percent growth in older adults by 2040). And, because access to health care becomes ever more important with age, it is important to note that two of the region's main medical centers, San Luis Valley Medical Center and Heart of the Rockies Regional Medical Center, are located in Alamosa and Chaffee counties. Saguache, Rio Grande, and Conejos counties are expected to experience moderate growth in this population as well; Saguache residents could be the most challenging population to serve given the county's large size and distance from existing medical centers.

5.1.2 Resort/Tourism Demand Assessment

Tourism and resort spending in the region are small in comparison to other areas of the state, though tourism does represent one of the region's largest employment sectors. It ranks third from the bottom in a list of resort spending in each of Colorado's 10 rural regions.

No one county in the region stands out for tourist activity, but resort spending in Chaffee and Alamosa counties made up 67 percent of the rural region's resort spending as a whole in 2012 (the most recent year for which data is available). Chaffee, with its proximity to other population centers and Interstates 25 and 70, and US 285 may attract tourists due to its relatively good accessibility, especially in comparison to other destinations in the region. For tourists seeking to experience other regional attractions such as Great Sand Dunes National Park, Wolf Creek Ski Area and Pagosa Springs, Alamosa may serve as a main lodging location due to its central location within the San Luis Valley.

5.2 Qualitative Assessment of Needs and Gaps

Various limitations impact transit service delivery to the general public and specialized populations. By reviewing these limitations within the San Luis Valley TPR, a baseline is established which then helps to identify the larger service needs and gaps. Identified service limitations and needs for the seven-county TPR are reviewed below.

5.2.1 Spatial Limitations

Like other Colorado regions, the San Luis Valley TPR is extremely rural in character, with great distances between regional population centers and only a few towns with critical services. As such, it is a challenging region in which to provide transportation coverage and access to services; essential services are the highest priority here. The following items have been identified as particularly challenging spatial limitations and needs in San Luis Valley:

- Limited access between Chaffee County, in the north, and the rest of the region to the south. There is local interest in reviving passenger rail that runs through Buena Vista.
- Limited transportation options specifically between the following population centers (which include intra- and inter-regional connections as well as out-of-state access:
  - Chaffee County and Colorado Springs
  - Alamosa and Walsenburg
  - Durango and Walsenburg
  - Buena Vista, Leadville, and Summit County
  - Alamosa to Albuquerque
  - Buena Vista and Salida (within Chaffee County)
  - Between communities within Alamosa County. Alamosa is a job center with growth expected. The county as a whole has a high percentage of zero-vehicle households and a growing senior population. Currently, there is no local transportation service available to the general public.
- No coordinated effort to plan feeder bus services—transportation that connects residents and visitors in more rural areas to the proposed intercity and regional bus stops identified in the Colorado Statewide Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan. These first/last mile connections can increase ridership and reduce the need for parking at bus stop locations. The following bus stops planned for the San Luis Valley would benefit from feeder service:
  - Buena Vista
  - Salida
  - Poncha Springs
  - Moffat
  - Alamosa
  - Monte Vista
- No regional carpooling or ridesharing programs exist for employment or recreational access. Wolf Creek Ski Area used to participate in a Share-the-Ride program, but low participation caused them to stop offering the web-based carpool matching service. They still strongly suggest carpooling to their facility but do not offer any resources for arranging such rides. Additionally, there is strong community support for more park-and-ride facilities.
- Limited connections between rural populations and job centers.
  - In comparison to other counties in the region, Conejos and Costilla counties are slow growth areas with a high percentage of people with low incomes, disabilities (more than a quarter of Costilla's population is disabled), and minority populations
  - There is a need to provide increased access to services, jobs, and educational opportunities in Alamosa County.

CDOT's survey of older adults and adults with disabilities also showed concurrence with many of the spatial needs in the San Luis Valley TPR, including:

- Forty-five percent of respondents in the San Luis Valley rely on others for transportation.
- Forty-six percent of respondents have difficulty finding transportation for trips they need or want to make. Of those 75 percent have difficulty finding transportation for medical appointments, 61 percent for shopping and pharmacy trips, and 33 percent for social activities, such as visiting friends and family, and community events.
- A majority of respondents (51 percent) were unable to get somewhere because they could not find transportation once or more in the last month.
- General public transportation (57 percent) and paratransit service (51 percent) is not available where respondents live or want to go and was identified as a "major problem."
- The distance to a bus stop showed to be a major problem for 40 percent of survey respondents and is a barrier to their use of transit.

5.2.2 Temporal Limitations

Similar to spatial limitations, temporal limitations create challenges for passengers trying to access education, medical, service, shopping, and employment centers outside their home service area at certain times during the week/day.

In San Luis Valley, transportation services are especially limited on weekends. Most services are offered on weekdays only, and in many cases they are offered only certain days per week. There is no evening service.

CDOT's survey of older adults and adults with disabilities in the San Luis Valley TPR also indicated temporal needs of those surveyed, including:

- Forty-eight percent of respondents indicated that general public transportation service not operating during needed times is a "major problem" and a barrier to their using transit. For paratransit, 42 percent felt this was a "major problem."
- Fifty-six percent of respondents indicated that it was difficult to find transportation on weekdays from 10 AM to 4 PM, 37 percent on weekdays from 6 AM to 10 AM, and 34 percent on Saturdays day and night.

5.2.3 Funding Limitations

All general transit and human service transportation providers identified funding limitations and needs in the region. The following are the main issues identified.

- Projected annual deficit of $29,000 in 2020, increasing to $115,000 in 2030 and $225,000 in 2040, for maintaining current service levels using existing funding sources.
- Limited operating funding for maintaining existing public transit and human services providers. Expanding service comes as a second priority as new operating funds are identified.
  - To provide the same level of service (per capita) in 2040 as today, the region will need to identify more than $600,000 in additional operating funds (given the expected population growth).
  - Operating and administrative expenses for transit providers have grown faster than available revenues or population growth as a result of rising fuel costs, workforce costs, and maintenance needs.
  - Not counting visitors to the region, more than $550,000 will be needed to support the critical transportation services that currently exist in San Luis Valley in 2030.
  - There is a need for a general public transportation service in the region, but there is no identified funding available.

- Limited capital funding for replacing aging fleets, constructing park-and-ride lots, or expanding existing vehicle fleets
- The Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Medicaid Program, which funds a significant portion of transportation services in the region, is expected to be depleted by 2026. The stability of other federal funding sources used in the region, including Title III of the Older Americans Act, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/Workforce Investment Act, Head Start, and Community Services Block Grants, is uncertain in the long term.
- Fares cannot be considered a significant long-term source of funding; likely there will need to be an increased reliance on locally-sourced funds, such as sales tax revenues.
- Given the region's high percentage of veterans relative to the state (more than 12 percent), there is a need for veteran-specific transportation funding. Currently, veterans can be reimbursed on a per-mile basis for driving themselves to Veterans Affairs health care services. The current per-mile rate is often more generous than actual fuel costs, which provides an incentive to veterans to drive instead of supporting a veteran-specific transportation service.

5.2.4 Program Eligibility and Trip Purpose Limitations

Program eligibility and trip purpose limitations also result in gaps and unmet needs in existing services. Often, these limitations arise due to restrictions on how certain types of funding can be used (e.g., Title III of the Older Americans Act funding is available for senior services only). Eligibility and trip purpose limitations in the San Luis Valley TPR include:

- There is extremely limited general public transit service available in most of the San Luis Valley region. Chaffee County, and Salida to Cañon City and Pueblo are covered by the Chaffee Shuttle, and Black Hills Stage Lines provides a north-south connection between Buena Vista and Alamosa, and an east-west connection between Salida and Gunnison. Red Willow and Little Stinkers are demand-response services in the Alamosa area; Red Willow serves both medical and non-medical trips but is currently overwhelmed by serving medical trips, leaving shopping and local trips extremely underserved. All other transportation services within communities and throughout the region are limited to people with specific eligibility requirements, such as for seniors or clients of individual human service organizations. The existing publicly available services are often too costly to rely on as a primary mode of transportation.
- Similarly, services available for general trip purposes, such as shopping, recreation, social, and errands, are extremely limited. These types of services are imperative to keeping older adults and people with disabilities connected and active in the community.
- There is limited transportation for recreational access. Two big recreational draws in the region are the Great Sand Dunes National Park and the Wolf Creek Ski Area. Taxi and shuttle service is available to access the ski area, but it is costly. There are no transportation services for Great Sand Dunes National Park.
- There is a need to focus on student transportation, specifically to reduce the need for students to drive alone.

5.2.5 Human Services Transportation Coordination Limitations

Representatives from the region on this plan's Transit Working Group reported that comprehensive and coordinated activities were a top priority in the region. They view efforts to better coordinate services in the region as the "lowest hanging fruit"—strategies that have the most potential to improve transportation in the region in the shortest amount of time and lowest cost.

The following coordination limitations were identified:

- No Regional Transit Coordinating Council. Other rural regions in Colorado support a Regional Transit Coordinating Council, whose job it is to maintain an inventory of available services and an action plan for addressing service gaps. Such a council in the San Luis Valley Region could champion solutions to several other regional transportation needs.
    - Valley Wide Health Systems recently stopped providing transportation services because it is no longer within their adopted scope of service. Casa de Amistad, located in San Luis, operates the service in the meantime. A coordinating council could serve the role of identifying and implementing a permanent provider, minimizing service disruptions for passengers.
- Two Council of Governments cover the San Luis Valley TPR: the San Luis Valley Development Resources Group includes all counties in the TPR except Chaffee County, which belongs to the Upper Arkansas Area Council of Governments.
- No centralized resource for volunteer drivers. Volunteer drivers currently support the otherwise limited public transportation in the region. There is no centralized resource for people who need rides to find volunteers who are available to provide them. Agencies that currently use volunteer drivers do not coordinate with other agencies to expand coverage or pool driver training.
- No centralized transportation directory. The Area Agency on Aging currently provides a directory of senior transportation, but there is no all-in-one resource for transportation options in the region. If developed, this resource will need to be available in multiple languages and provided on-line and in hard copy.
- Limited sharing of resources. Many human service agencies currently provide their own transportation in the region. There may be redundancies that could be resolved through shared vehicle usage, especially in Chaffee and Alamosa counties. This strategy could lower the costs of maintaining a transportation service, which is necessary given the region’s lack of funding.
- Difficulty in finding information on fares, routes and schedules for public and paratransit services was a barrier for 43 percent of San Luis Valley respondents to the CDOT survey of older adults and adults with disabilities. Creation of a regional transit and human services directory, providing information on services available in the region, would help residents and visitors to better understand and utilize existing services.

6.0 FINANCIAL AND FUNDING OVERVIEW

This Chapter presents current and estimated future operating expenses and revenues available in the San Luis Valley Transportation Planning Region (TPR) through 2040. These estimates are based on survey reported data from providers in the region. Through Transit Working Group meetings, every attempt was made to be inclusive of all providers and agencies operating in the region and to verify the accuracy of this data. These estimates reflect best available data and are intended solely to illustrate long-term trends in operating needs.

The 2040 operating revenue and expense projections presented here are intended to estimate the general range of future revenues available and the magnitude of future resource needs. While any forecast is subject to uncertainty, estimates may help guide regional actions and may indicate the need for future coordination, collaboration, and alternative revenue strategies.

6.1 Current and Future Operating Expenses

Generally, operating and administrative expenses for transit providers in the San Luis Valley Transportation Planning Region (TPR) have grown faster than available revenues or population growth, as a result of fast increasing fuel prices, workforce costs, and maintenance needs. As shown in Table 6-1, operating expenses are projected to grow by 0.9 percent (average annual growth) between 2013 and 2040, while operating revenues are projected to decline at an annual average rate of 0.4 percent for the same time period.

The region's full-time resident population is expected to grow 1.4 percent annually from 2010 to 2040 and reach over 97,000 persons by 2040. In 2013, approximately $418,000, or $7 per capita, was expended to support critical transit and transportation services within all counties of the TPR. Per capita measures account only for full-time resident populations and do not capture seasonal visitors or workers. To provide the same level of service (as measured by per capita expenses) in 2040 as today, the region will require approximately $629,000 in operating funds.

Table 6-1 Existing and Projected Operating Revenues and Expenses to Maintain Existing Service Levels (2013 – 2040)

San Luis Valley TPR	Year 2013	Year 2020	Year 2030	Year 2040	Average Annual Growth (2013-2040)
Operating Expenses	*$418,166*	*$486,000*	*$566,000*	*$629,000*	*0.9%*
Operating Revenues	*$418,166*	*$457,000*	*$451,000*	*$404,000*	*-0.4%*
Potential Funding (Gap) / Surplus	*$0*	*(-$29,000)*	*(-$115,000)*	*(-$225,000)*	*-1.30%*

Source: CDOT, Transit Agency Provider Survey, 2013. Dollars in year of expenditure value.

Table 6-2 provides an overview of several indicators often used to measure performance of transit systems. The operating cost indicators provide an additional perspective on the operational costs in the San Luis Valley TPR and the regional influences. Influences on operating cost measures include the rural nature of the area, long trip distances, higher fuel costs, and maintenance needs.

Table 6-2 San Luis Valley TPR Average Transit Operating Cost

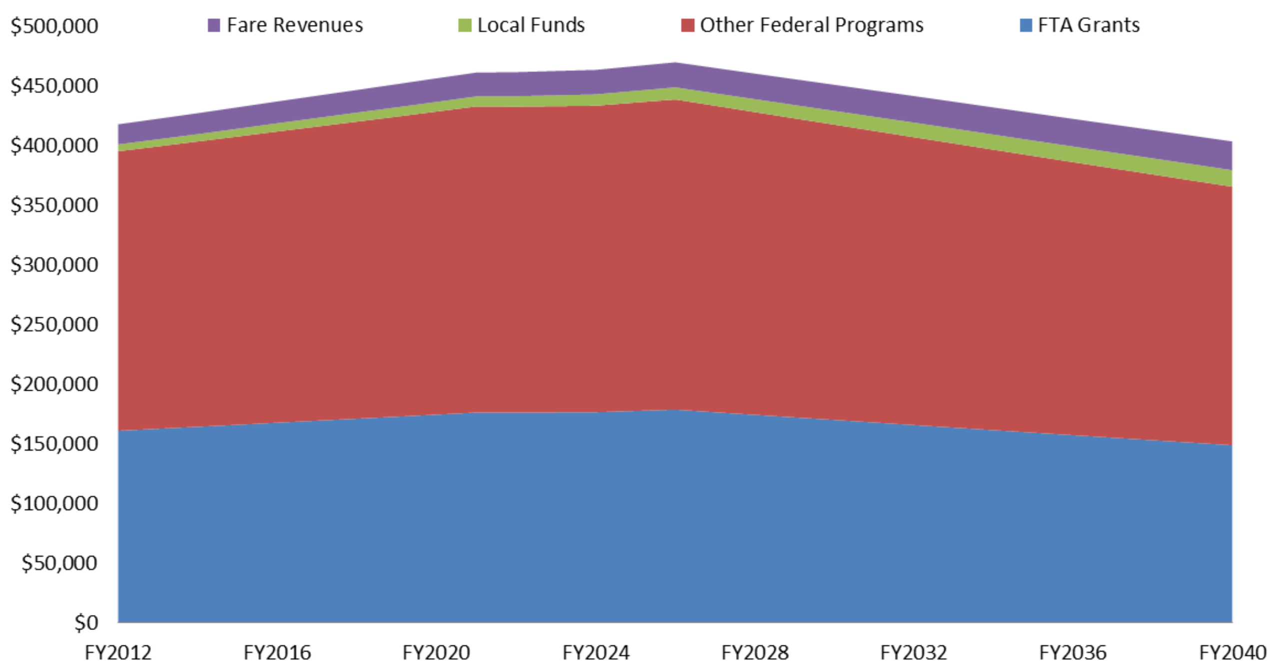
Performance Measure	Operating Cost
Cost per Capita	$6
Cost per Passenger Trip	$3
Cost per Revenue Mile	$1
Cost per Revenue Hour	$8

Source: Transit Agency Provider Survey, 2013

6.2 Current and Future Operating Revenues

By 2040, the San Luis Valley TPR could expect transit revenues available for operating and administration purposes to reach an estimated $404,000 per year. Future revenue projections are based on historical trends in provider budgets, current estimates of federal revenue growth, and state and regional population and economic growth rates. (All operating expenses also include administrative expenses as reported by the providers and as collected from available National Transit Database and survey reported data.) **Figure 6-1** illustrates potential future trends in major operating revenue sources currently used within the region.

Figure 6-1 Forecasted Operating Revenues in the San Luis Valley TPR



The following information summarizes each revenue category identified in **Figure 6-1** above.

- **Federal Transit Administration** (FTA) revenues depend on fuel tax revenues that are forecasted to grow slowly to 2025 and then decline through 2040. Operating support through 5311 rural funds is the primary FTA grant program supporting transit service in the region today. The Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) estimates future FTA funding levels per Congressional Budget Office forecasts.

- **Other federal funds,** such as the Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) Medicaid program funds a significant portion of transit and transportation services in the region. These Medicare Health Insurance trust funds are currently forecast to be depleted in 2026. Funding available through this program is uncertain and will likely see declining growth rates over the long term. Other federal programs used in the region include Title III of the Older Americans Act (OAA), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/Workforce Investment Act (TANF/WIA), Head Start, and Community Services Block Grants (CSBG). Revenues available through these programs are variable over the long-run. Sequestration, reauthorization, or policy and program changes could impact the funding available through these important programs. Additionally, over the long-run, funding available for discretionary spending (such as transportation assistance) within these programs is likely to decline, as spending shifts to direct care.
- **Local governments** contribute a small, but important, portion of operating funds to support transit and transportation services in the region. Cities and counties may provide matching funds for grant awards, general fund transfers, contract services, or in-kind contributions. Local funds are highly variable and depend on the fiscal health of governments and the state of the economy in the region. Local sales and use taxes provide a significant source of revenue for local governments in the region (approximately two-thirds of all revenues in many municipalities and counties). Future revenues are based on long-term taxable sales forecasts for the state. Growth in sales tax revenue is expected to slow by 2040 as consumer spending shifts from durable goods to non-taxable services, such as healthcare.
- **Fare revenues** tend to be variable and many transit agencies in the region operate on a subsidized or no-fare basis. Growth in fare revenues is linked to personal income growth, ridership growth, and policy changes. Based on historic regional trends, fare revenues are anticipated to grow at an annual average of 2 percent over the forecast period.
- **Other revenues** include additional FTA operating grant programs, contract revenues to local colleges, businesses, or organizations, and agency-derived sources such as donations, investments, and fees. These sources are important but relatively small sources of revenues for most providers and are assumed to remain stable over the forecast period.

Estimating future revenues is challenging, particularly for the diverse federal, state, and local funding mechanisms used to support transit services in rural areas. Federal legislation, such as Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, OAA, Social Security Act, and WIA provide significant and ongoing funding for transit and transportation services, but is subject to periodic re-authorizations and annual budget appropriations. Individual programs funded through the FTA, Department of Veteran Affairs, and Department of Health and Human Services continue to evolve over time and changes in state funding formulas can significantly impact the monies available to providers in Colorado.

Other federal grant awards are competitive, often one-time grants, and highly uncertain over the long-term. Revenues from local governments or regional transportation authorities are often not dedicated and are subject to variations in local tax revenues and local budget processes. Donations and awards from private, civic, or philanthropic sources are highly variable and not often recurring. Fare and contract revenues reflect demand for services but may also vary substantially with local economic fluctuations or changes internal to the agency. Every effort has been made to reasonably estimate the overall level of revenues available to support operating expenses at the regional level.

6.3 Status Quo Expense and Revenue Summary

Based on best available information and known trends, it is currently forecast that transit expenses in the San Luis Valley TPR will outstrip the growth in transit revenues by 1.3 percent (average annual growth including inflation) between 2013 and 2040. As illustrated in **Table 6-1,** these trends could result in a potential funding gap of approximately $225,000 in 2040. In terms of potential projects and strategies, this means the region will have to secure new funding sources to address funding gaps.

Future operating expense estimates represent only the resources necessary to maintain transit services at current levels on a per-capita basis. These estimates do not take into account any cost increases beyond inflation. For example, higher cost of labor, fuel, administration, and maintenance can significantly increase operating costs. As a result, actual operating expenses in future years may run higher than anticipated.

Additionally, revenue forecasts are highly variable and actual future values may be higher or lower than expected. Sales and use tax collections are cyclical and depend entirely on economic conditions. Given the magnitude of potential future funding shortfalls in the region, alternative revenue sources, such as those described in Chapter 4, or growth in current revenue streams will more than likely be necessary to continue to fund improvements and to meet the growing needs of the general public, visitors, businesses, elderly, veterans, low-income, transit dependent populations.

7.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Transit is an important economic engine that helps drive the State of Colorado's economy. Transit helps connect employees, residents, and visitors to jobs and recreation and much more throughout the San Luis Valley Transportation Planning Region (TPR). The strategies identified in this Chapter highlight the importance of continuing to make meaningful investments in transit in the region.

Based on the financial scenarios and the projected growth in the San Luis Valley TPR, the highest priority strategies for the region have been identified including the associated costs, common funding sources, local champions and partners, and the ideal timeframe for implementation. Each strategy falls in line with the vision identified by the San Luis Valley TPR Transit Working Group (TWG), aligns with one or more of the region's supporting goals, and supports the statewide goals and performance measures (see Chapter 1) established by CDOT with input from the Statewide Steering Committee.

7.1 High Priority Strategies

The following strategies are used as an implementation plan to help prioritize and fund projects over the next 15 years between now and 2030. The implementation plan should be used as a guide for moving the San Luis Valley region's transit vision forward. The TWG identified these strategies based on input from the public, identified needs and gaps in service, and gathered input from transit and human service providers in the region. The strategies are categorized by the regional goal that it supports and also includes information, as appropriate, on the performance measure categories the strategy supports. **Appendix D.5** includes a full list of regional transit projects identified by the San Luis Valley TWG.

It should be noted that the strategies identified in this Chapter complement and are congruent with the recommendations that have been identified in plans and studies completed in the region within the last five years. This includes the local plans identified in Chapter 1 as well as the *Statewide Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan*. It is important to connect all planning efforts in an effort to meet the overall combined vision and goals of various stakeholders and entities throughout the region.

Regional Goal 1: Increase transit connectivity through enhanced intercity and demand response services that support the region's diverse population.

Strategy 1.1: Establish a Regional Transit Coordinating Council.

- Annual Operating Cost: $40,000 (includes one full-time staff person)
- Annual Capital Cost: None
- Timeframe: Short-term (1–2 years)
- Champions/Partners: Regional organizations involved in the TWG
- Performance Measure Categories: Transit System Development and Partnerships
- Potential Funding Sources: FTA 5304 and 5310, CDBG,

This strategy creates a focal point for coordination and mobility management activities. It formalizes specific regional responsibilities and assigns them to one centralized organization. Regional and/or County coordinating councils could assist both in implementing the regional and county-scale coordination strategies and in encouraging the implementation of local initiatives.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	Potential Obstacles and Challenges
▪ Ensures that one body is responsible for addressing transportation needs in the community or region ▪ Enhances local/regional awareness of transportation needs and mobility issues ▪ Provides a vehicle for implementing strategies, facilitating grants, and educating the public and professionals	▪ Maintaining momentum with an ad-hoc group, before hiring staff to act in a leadership role, can be challenging ▪ Potential difficulty in identifying an ongoing funding source

Strategy 1.2: Update, expand, and promote the Adult Resources for Care and Help (ARCH) directory and make it available in multiple languages, online and in print.

- Annual Operating Cost: $15,000
- Annual Capital Cost: None
- Timeframe: Short-term (3–5 years)
- Champions/Partners: SLV Development Resources Group/Council of Governments, CDOT, South Central Colorado Seniors (AAA)
- Performance Measure Categories: Mobility/Accessibility, Transit System Development and Partnerships
- Potential Funding Sources:
  Operating – CDBG, VTCLI, FTA 5310, NEMT

The current version of the Directory was updated in 2013 and includes information on human services agencies and transportation providers (Black Hills Stage Lines, Little Stinkers Taxi Cab, Red Willow, and Tri-County Seniors Transportation). The guide is reasonably up to date, but a schedule for recurring updates should be established to ensure the guide includes the most current and comprehensive information possible. To facilitate this updating process, the TPR (or the regional coordinating council, as available) should consider supplementing the printed guide with a web-based version. It should continue to be translated into Spanish and other languages as needed.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	Potential Obstacles and Challenges
▪ Improves public awareness of available programs and transportation options ▪ Increases engagement with existing services	▪ Determining how to promote the guide can be a challenge ▪ Some people in the region may not be able to access a web-based guide

Strategy 1.3: Develop a regional transit marketing strategy, including web-based and print-based centralized transit information resources.

- Annual Operating Cost: $15,000
- Annual Capital Cost: None
- Timeframe: Short-term (3–5 years)
- Champions/Partners: South-Central Colorado Seniors (AAA), CDOT
- Performance Measure Categories: Mobility/Accessibility, Transit System Development and Partnerships
- Potential Funding Sources:
  Operating – CDBG, VTCLI

The purpose of this strategy is to promote information dedicated to transportation services in particular. This resource is separate from the ARCH Directory, which includes information on all of the region’s available human services. The centralized transit guide would increase awareness of existing services and promote use of those services. However, the region could be well served by combining the two into one overarching resource.

Advertising alone may not necessarily lead to an increase in ridership, but information, visibility, and tools to expose misinformation and build support for transportation services areas is one key element in attracting riders. Marketing and public awareness strategies counter misperceptions by confirming that transit is an integral part of any community. Additionally, brand identities that incorporate local geography into their name can instill a sense of local pride among riders and non-riders alike.

A number of the transportation strategies recommended in this plan lend themselves to proactive marketing. This can take different forms, such as printed materials or signage at bus stops, brochures for dial-a-ride service, a website with instructional videos, social media engagement, and youth-specific/student marketing programs. Key elements of this program would include the following:

- A centralized and web-based regional transit resource
- A printed guide to complement the website with information about transportation services
- Proactive posting and advertising of these resources throughout the County/Region, both to individuals and regional organizations

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	*Potential Obstacles and Challenges*
▪ Promotes awareness of available services ▪ Directs individuals to specific transportation services that are the most appropriate for their situation ▪ Engages both individuals and partnering agencies and organizations	▪ Determining a promotional strategy can be a challenge ▪ Some people in the region may not be able to access a web-based guide ▪ Advertising alone will not increase ridership

Regional Goal 2: Ensure the transit system contributes to the economic vitality of the region by providing options and minimizing transportation costs for residents, businesses, and visitors.

Strategy 2.1: Garner political and financial support to maintain existing services and implement and fund the Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan.

- Cost: Staff time
- Timeframe: Short-term (1–2 years)
- Champions/Partners: SLV Development Resources Group, transit providers
- Performance Measure Categories: System Preservation and Expansion, Mobility/Accessibility, Economic Vitality
- Potential Funding Sources:
  Operating – N/A

To support all of the strategies recommended in the Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan, the San Luis Valley TPR will need a regional champion to pursue the necessary political and financial support to implement the plan. The San Luis Valley Development Resources Group and the Upper Arkansas Area COG could potential partner on this effort.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	Potential Obstacles and Challenges
▪ Addresses shortfall in funding to maintain existing services ▪ Potential for increasing funding long-term	▪ Making the case for increased funding in an area with low population and other high priority needs

Strategy 2.2: Preserve the San Luis and Rio Grande Railroad right-of-way and explore opportunities to resurrect passenger rail service.

- Annual Capital Cost: Unknown
- Annual Operating Cost: $50,000 to $100,000 (depending on service level)
- Timeframe: Short-term (4–6 years)
- Champions/Partners: SLV Development Resources Group, CDOT, Iowa Pacific Holdings/Permian Basin Railways
- Performance Measure Categories: Mobility/Accessibility
- Potential Funding Sources:
  Operating – FHWA TAP, HUTF/General Funds, Corporate Sponsorship, Charitable Contributions

A tourism-focused service currently runs over La Veta Pass, connecting the San Luis Valley to Walsenburg, between May and October. The rest of the right-of-way capacity is used to transport freight. There is potential to increase the connections between San Luis Valley, Southwest Colorado to the west, and Walsenburg to the east by planning for future passenger rail.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	Potential Obstacles and Challenges
▪ Improves regional connections ▪ Increases transportation options for locals and visitors ▪ Increases tourism access	▪ Must negotiate the agreement with one or more private rail companies ▪ High capital costs and uncertain funding available

Regional Goal 3: Support the needs of the region's diverse population by providing access to basic and critical services such as medical, employment, educational, and recreational services.

Strategy 3.1: Formalize and promote a regional volunteer driver program.

- Annual Capital Cost: None
- Annual Operating Cost: Less than $5,000
- Timeframe: Short-term (1–2 years)
- Champions/Partners: SLV Development Resources Group
- Performance Measure Categories: Mobility/Accessibility, Economic Vitality
- Potential Funding Sources: FTA 5310 and 5311, General Fund, Corporate Sponsorship, Public-Private Partnerships

The San Luis Valley TPR is vast and there are long distances between each relatively small community. In areas like this, volunteer driver programs can provide a level of access and flexibility to travel that is otherwise difficult or impossible to provide. It is recommended that the SLVDRG pursue opportunities to develop a volunteer driver program that incorporates volunteer incentives and/or reimbursement opportunities to help recruit drivers for people with mobility needs.

Typically, a volunteer driver program is managed by a county government (or unit thereof, such as a Department of Human Services) or a nonprofit human service organization. SLVDRG could champion the development of this program and plan for the regional transit coordinating council or another social service agency to manage the program in the long term. SLVDRG is a strategic agency to start because of its ability to receive grant funding and/or donations and handle the administrative aspects of start-up.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	*Potential Obstacles and Challenges*
▪ Links people with the greatest need to a basic essential service ▪ Offers a low-cost way to address some transportation needs ▪ Facilitates a connection to social services and other programs for people who need it most	▪ Potential difficulty in finding volunteer drivers ▪ Developing an incentive/reimbursement program that encourages volunteers to commit to the program ▪ Transitioning responsibilities from SLV DRG to another managing entity in the long-term

Strategy 3.2: Develop a demand response service available to the general public focused on Alamosa with connections to adjacent counties.

- Annual Operating Cost: $250,000 to $300,000
- Capital Cost: $75,000
- Timeframe: Short-term (4–6 years)
- Champions/Partners: SLVDRG with support from the Counties
- Performance Measure Categories: System Preservation and Expansion, Mobility/Accessibility, Economic Vitality
- Potential Funding Sources: FTA 5311, HUTF/General Fund, Corporate Sponsorship, Public-Private Partnerships

"Dial-A-Ride" (DAR) or demand response service is a shared, curb-to-curb transportation service and is available to either the general public (known as General Public DAR) or to specifically eligible individuals (such as seniors or people with disabilities). General Public DAR services are a form of public transportation that provides rides in response to passenger requests. Passengers schedule their trip in advance and travel between pre-determined, requested locations. DAR services are frequently successful in rural areas where demand is too low to justify fixed-route services.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	*Potential Obstacles and Challenges*
▪ Provides service throughout county and beyond ▪ Provides intercity curb-to-curb travel beyond city limits to destinations throughout county ▪ Facilitates a connection to social services and other programs for people who need it most ▪ Meets basic mobility needs for transit-dependent people	▪ Securing capital and ongoing operating funding

Strategy 3.3: Maintain existing transportation services.

- 2030 Operating Cost: $566,000 (0.9% average annual growth)
- Capital Costs: Vehicle replacement costs
- Timeframe: Ongoing
- Champions/Partners: All local transportation providers
- Performance Measure Categories: System Preservation and Expansion, Mobility/Accessibility, Environmental Stewardship, Economic Vitality, Safety and Security
- Potential Funding Sources: FTA 5310 and 5311 and 5339, HUTF/General Fund, Corporate Sponsorship, Public-Private Partnerships

Some of the strategies in this plan are aspirational; they set up the region for future opportunities when funding is available. The maintenance of existing transportation services, however, is a critical current and ongoing need.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	*Potential Obstacles and Challenges*
▪ Continues to support the mobility needs of residents and visitors	▪ Identifying funding to fill funding gaps to support operations and capital needs

Regional Goal 4: Seek funding opportunities to maintain existing services and expand the transit network.

Strategy 4.1: Support efforts at the local, regional, and state levels of government for more transportation funding.

- Cost: Staff time
- Timeframe: Ongoing
- Champions/Partners: SLVDRG, Proposed Regional Transit Coordinating Council (when available)
- Performance Measure Categories: N/A
- Potential Funding Sources: N\A

With no regional transit coordinating council in place, the SLVDRG is the best-positioned entity to serve as an advocate for the region in local, regional, and state discussions regarding funding opportunities. Transportation funding will continue to be a challenge in Colorado, especially in rural areas, and an entity, supported by a broad range of agencies, charged with advocating for the essential transportation services in San Luis Valley will be essential for success.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	*Potential Obstacles and Challenges*
▪ Addresses shortfall in funding to maintain existing services ▪ May potentially increase funding long term	▪ Making the case for increased funding in an area with low population and other high priority needs

Strategy 4.2: Identify local funds to match federal funds.

- Cost: Staff time
- Timeframe: Short-term (1–2 years)
- Champions/Partners: SLVDRG, Counties, Transit providers
- Performance Measure Categories: N/A
- Potential Funding Sources: N\A

Many federal funding sources are available only to regions and localities that commit local support through matching funds. Matching funds requirements can range from 20 percent to 50 percent for some federal programs. Sources for the required matching funds can come from a combination of state, regional, local, and private funding sources.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	*Potential Obstacles and Challenges*
▪ Demonstrates local support for transportation improvements ▪ Provides opportunities to leverage state and federal funds ▪ Addresses shortfall in funding to maintain existing services and vehicle replacements	▪ Making the case for increased funding in an area with low population and other high priority needs

Strategy 4.3: Identify discretionary grant opportunities.

- Cost: Staff time
- Timeframe: Short-term (4–6 years)
- Champions/Partners: SLV DRG, Transit providers, Proposed Regional Transit Coordinating Council (as available)
- Performance Measure Categories: N/A
- Potential Funding Sources: N/A

Unlike formula grants, discretionary grant funding is awarded to projects or services on a competitive basis. Many of the strategies contained in this plan can be further developed and then discretionary funding sought at the federal or state level. As the SLVDRG has had success in securing funding in the past, it is recommended that they champion this effort and garner support from local providers to demonstrate the importance of a project or service and help justify the need for grant funding.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	*Potential Obstacles and Challenges*
▪ Addresses shortfall in funding to maintain existing services ▪ Provides opportunity to implement new services	▪ Making the case for increased funding in an area with low population and other high priority needs

Regional Goal 5: Expand mobility options to ensure access within the region and to other Colorado regions and New Mexico.

Strategy 5.1: Organize van service for long-distance trips to neighboring regions and New Mexico.

- Capital Cost: $75,000 (new vehicle cost)
- Annual Operating Cost: $50,000 to $100,000
- Timeframe: Short-term (4-6 years)
- Champions/Partners: SLVDRG in partnership with CDOT Region 5
- Performance Measure Categories: Mobility/Accessibility, Economic Vitality
- Potential Funding Sources: FTA 5304, 5307, 5311, 5311(f) and 5339, HUTF, FASTER, General Fund, Charitable Contributions, Corporate Sponsorship

Vanpools are a potential transportation solution for commute and long-distance trips. Vans usually group people who have similar origins, destinations, and work hours. Vanpools are best for groups large enough to justify a van rather than a carpool (more than four or five people from any one destination at a given time of day).

Vanpooling has proven to be most successful in areas with little or no transit service and is especially beneficial when serving employment locations or specialized medical centers with a limited supply of parking and/or where parking is expensive. Vanpools can be especially appropriate in areas where park-and-ride facilities are available so people can leave their car and travel via van to their work location.

Implementing vanpools is comparatively inexpensive versus the development of new transit services and can benefit from its multiple potential funding sources, including vanpool users (who would pay less than had they driven alone), employers, and a sponsoring agency.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	*Potential Obstacles and Challenges*
▪ Provides a commuter-focused transportation option to serve longer-distance commute needs ▪ Uses a public-private partnership model where riders pay a greater share of costs than traditional bus and rail transit ▪ Offers a lower-cost commute solution to individuals ▪ Provides mobility for specialized long-distance trips such as medical, employment and recreation ▪ Helps employers attract employees who live farther away and/or have limited mobility options	▪ Securing start-up capital to purchase vans ▪ Identifying employers willing to participate and financially support van service

Strategy 5.2: Conduct planning study to identify strategic locations for park-and-ride lots to serve commuters, tourists, and residents.

- One-time Administrative Cost: $50,000
- Timeframe: Short-term (4–6 years)
- Champions/Partners: CDOT (statewide study)
- Performance Measure Categories: TBD
- Potential Funding Sources: FTA 5304, 5307, 5311, 5311(f) and 5339, FASTER, FHWA funds, General Fund, Charitable Contributions, Corporate Sponsorship

Park-and-ride lots support the use of transit, group transportation services, carpooling, and vanpooling. As these activities help the state achieve its transportation goals, CDOT should lead this study at a statewide level because park-and-ride lots need to be strategically located throughout the state to maximize their usage. In urban areas, the park-and-ride lots could help increase ridership on existing transit services. In rural areas like the San Luis Valley, they can create an opportunity for new mobility options.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	*Potential Obstacles and Challenges*
▪ Facilitates carpooling and vanpooling and creates potential for transit connections within the SLV TPR and beyond ▪ Improves visibility for transit and ridesharing	▪ Identifying funding for planning studies ▪ Identifying locations for park and ride lots and funds to acquire property

Strategy 5.3: Provide feeder service and coordinate schedules for convenient access to intercity and regional bus service.

- Capital Cost: $75,000 (per vehicle)
- Annual Operating Cost: $100,000
- Timeframe: Mid-term (7–12 years)
- Champions/Partners: Proposed Regional Transit Coordinating Council
- Performance Measure Categories: System Preservation and Expansion, Mobility/Accessibility, Environmental Stewardship, Economic Vitality
- Potential Funding Sources: FTA 5304, 5307, 5311, 5311(f) and 5339, FASTER, General Fund, Charitable Contributions, Corporate Sponsorship

Feeder or connector service can be offered as a fixed-route service, demand-response service, or a flexible combination of the two. It is designed to "feed" passengers from low-density environments or communities not served by traditional fixed-route transit to nearby transit centers or rail stations. Feeder service can also be used to shorten paratransit trips by providing service to fixed-route transit, and are particularly important in environments with poor pedestrian networks or long walking distances.

As the planned enhancements are made to regional and intercity bus service in Colorado, feeder services that link more rural patrons with station areas will be critical to the success of the overall network.

Expected Benefits/Needs Addressed	*Potential Obstacles and Challenges*
▪ Increases access to improved regional transit connections, as planned in the Intercity and Regional Bus Plan ▪ Addresses first mile/last mile regional connections ▪ Potential to increase ridership on such services	▪ Identifying funding for new services amid an operating budget shortfall for existing services ▪ Identifying an agency or organization to operate the services

7.2 Implementation Plan Financial Summary

Table 7-1 provides an overview of estimated costs over the next 15 years associated with maintaining the existing system compared to implementing the high-priority strategies as identified in Section 7.1.

To maintain existing service levels in 2030, the region would require operating funds in the amount of approximately $566,000. Inflation rates in Colorado over the last decade have averaged 2 percent per year. Price inflation for transportation commodities has averaged 3 percent and motor fuel price inflation has averaged over 10 percent over the last decade. Inflation erodes the purchasing power of current revenue streams.

To implement the "growth" scenario, which implements the high priority strategies, an additional $1.2 million in operating and administrative dollars would be required, increasing the annual shortfall to approximately $1.3 million in 2030. Capital expenses associated with the high-priority strategies will require an additional $330,000 between 2014 and 2030 in 2013 dollars to implement.

As shown, to maintain existing services and implement high priority strategies identified in the region, the San Luis Valley TPR will need to secure new funding to ensure growth and expansion of transit and human services transportation in the region.

Table 7-1 Financial Summary

2030 Projected Annual Operating/Administrative Costs	
Status Quo – Maintain Existing Service Levels	$566,000
Growth – Implement High Priority Strategies	$1,200,000
Total - Status Quo and Growth Costs	$1,766,000
2030 Anticipated Revenues	$451,000
Shortfall	($1,315,000)

Values in 2030 dollars

2014-2030 Projected Capital Costs	
Growth – Implement High Priority Strategies	$330,000 in 2013 dollars $527,700 in 2030 dollars

As discussed in Chapter 6, it is currently forecast that transit expenses in the San Luis Valley region will outstrip the growth in transit revenues by 1.3 percent (average annual growth including inflation), resulting in a potential funding gap of approximately $225,000 to maintain existing service levels in 2040. In terms of potential projects and strategies, this means the region will have to secure new funding sources to address funding gaps.

Future operating expense estimates represent only the resources necessary to maintain transit services at current levels on a per-capita basis. These estimates do not take into account any cost increases beyond inflation. For example, higher costs of labor, fuel, administration, and maintenance can significantly increase operating costs. As a result, actual operating expenses in future years may run higher than anticipated.

To provide the same level of service (as measured by per capita expenditures) in 2040 as today, the region will require approximately $629,000 in operating funds.

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