

3.0 STATE PROFILE

Colorado, located in the Rocky Mountain region, is home to approximately 5 million people and 3 million jobs. Colorado is the 22nd most populous of the 50 states and the 8th largest in land area, with a relatively low population density in many areas of the state. By 2040, the population is expected to increase to 7.8 million people (a 47 percent increase) and 5 million jobs (a 51 percent increase).

Key industries include agriculture, tourism, and energy development. Approximately 40 percent of the land area in the state is comprised of state, federal and tribal lands, including parks and forests. **Figure 3-1** illustrates these designated lands.

Colorado's largest urbanized areas are Denver, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, Pueblo, and Grand Junction. Outside the urbanized areas, the state's mountainous terrain and low population densities create challenges to providing transit service efficiently. However, Colorado transit providers serve more rural transit trips than any other state, largely attributed to the demand for transit in the mountain resort areas by residents and visitors alike.

Chapter 3 includes an overview of the state's key industries and employment sectors and presents a review of demographics that typically align with transit use.

3.1 *Key Industries and Employment Sectors*

In 2012, there were approximately 2.9 million total jobs (DOLA NAICS data, 2012) in Colorado. Jobs are largely focused on the state's largest urbanized areas: Denver region, North Front Range region, Pikes Peak region, Pueblo region and Grand Valley region. The three largest job sectors are government, health services, and retail trade and represent the top three industries in the state.

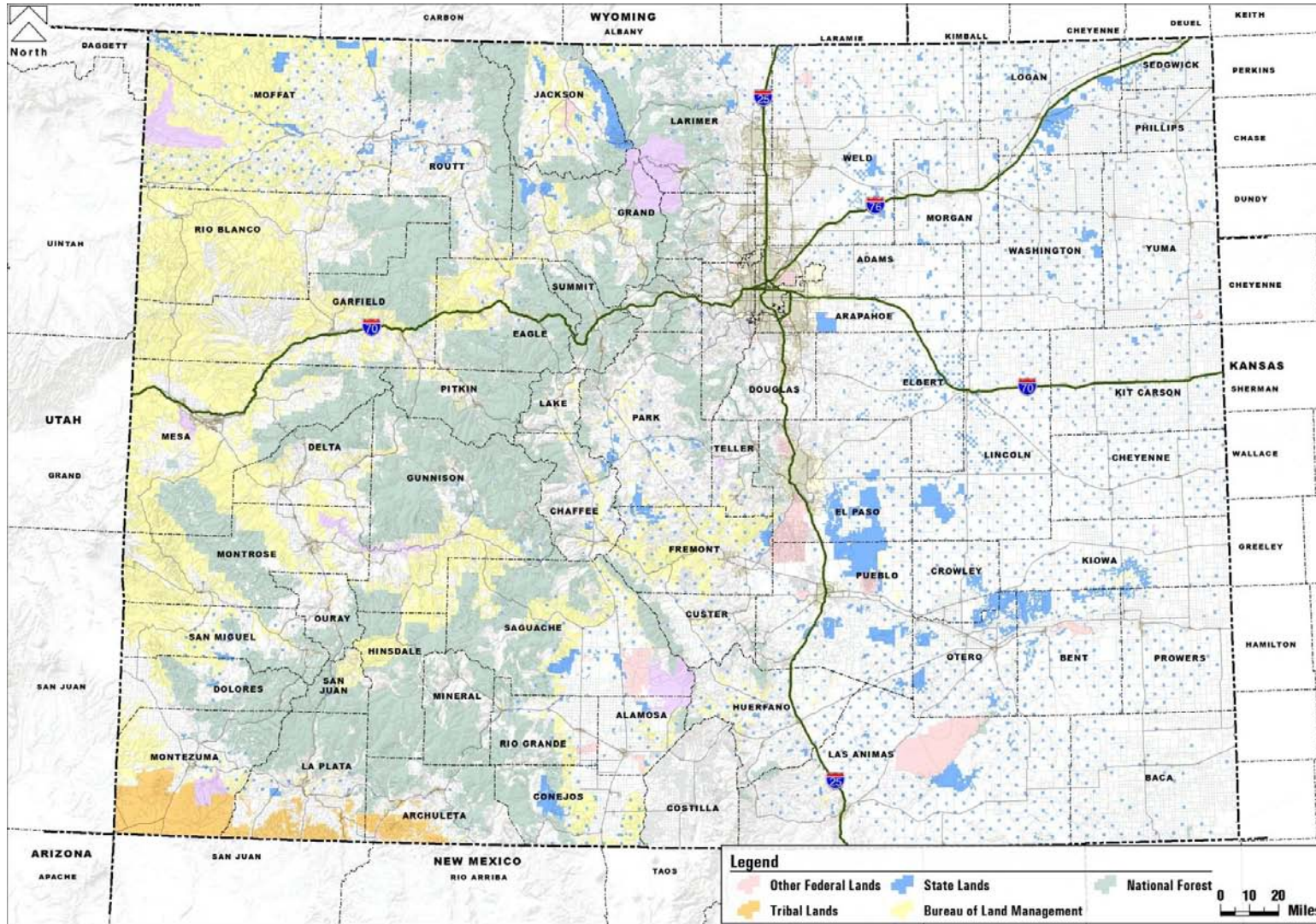
Transit plays an important role in connecting residents to the job market. The ratio of jobs to residents in each county ranges from a

low of 0.25 to a high of 1.13, with a state average of 0.55 jobs per person. Counties whose ratio is particularly low often find that residents travel to nearby counties for work. **Table 3-1** summarizes the job to resident population ratio for each county. Those with high ratios typically attract residents from nearby counties.

Figure 3-2 illustrates the density of jobs throughout the state. As shown, the highest density of employment is concentrated in the state's urbanized areas.

Figure 3-3 illustrates county to county work flows recorded in the American Community Survey. As shown, the largest commuter travel patterns are to/from and within the Denver metropolitan area. There are also significant travel patterns between Larimer, Weld and Adams counties to the north, Teller, El Paso, Pueblo and Fremont counties to the south, and Pitkin, Eagle, Garfield, and Mesa counties to the west.

1 **Figure 3-1 Colorado Land Jurisdiction**



Land jurisdiction mapping provided by the Colorado Ownership and Management and Protection (COMaP)

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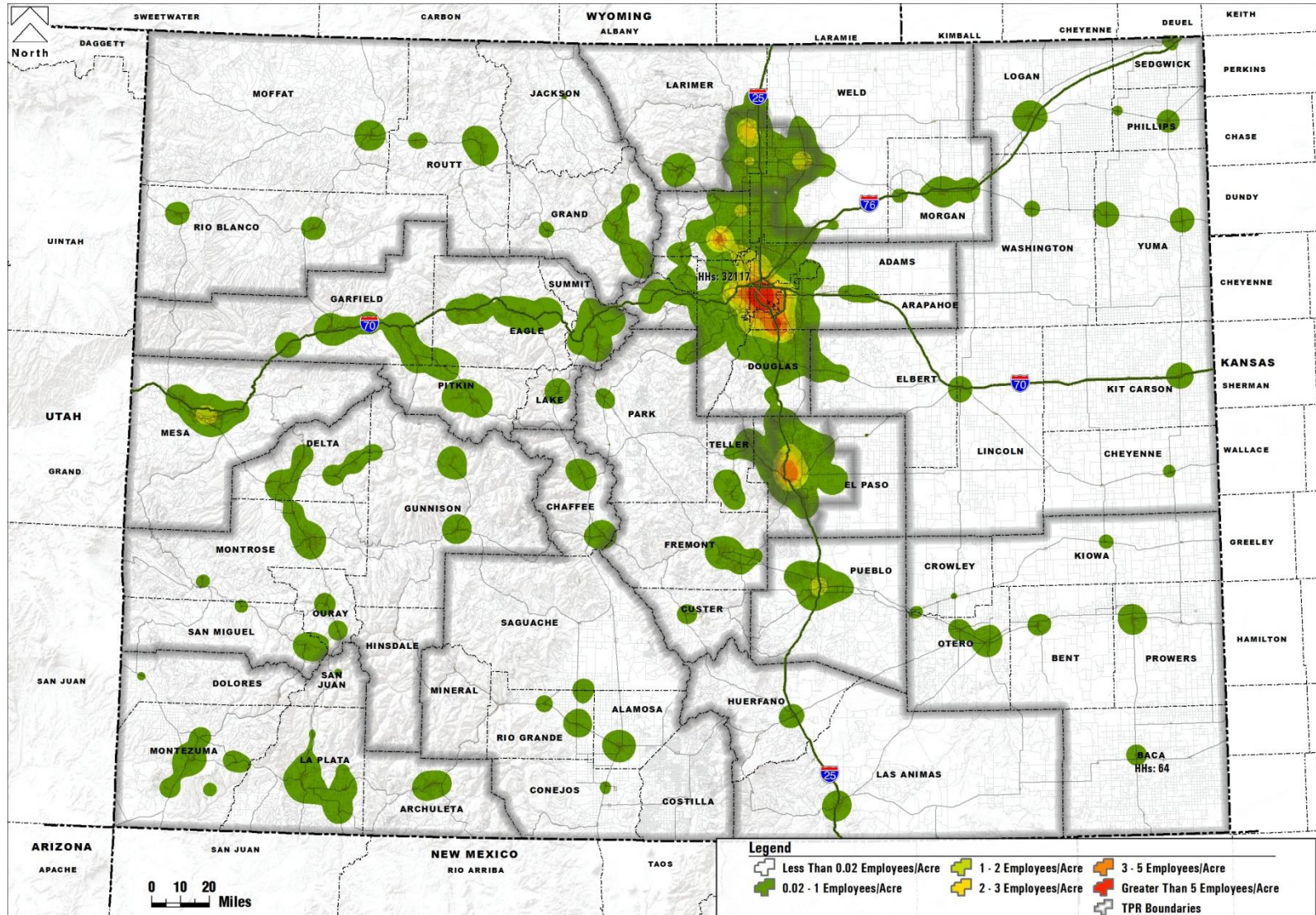
Table 3-1 Ratio of Employment to Residents by County

County	Employment to Population Ratio	County	Employment to Population Ratio
Adams	0.42	Dolores	0.33
Alamosa	0.60	Douglas	0.43
Arapahoe	0.59	Eagle	0.66
Archuleta	0.43	Elbert	0.51
Baca	0.51	El Paso	0.51
Bent	0.27	Fremont	0.35
Boulder	0.68	Garfield	0.54
Broomfield	0.63	Gilpin	1.06
Chaffee	0.49	Grand	0.59
Cheyenne	0.60	Gunnison	0.66
Clear Creek	0.47	Hinsdale	0.50
Conejos	0.28	Huerfano	0.39
Costilla	0.31	Jackson	0.57
Crowley	0.25	Jefferson	0.51
Custer	0.34	Kiowa	0.68
Delta	0.39	Kit Carson	0.53
Denver	0.82	Lake	0.36

County	Employment to Population Ratio	County	Employment to Population Ratio
La Plata	0.58	Pitkin	1.13
Larimer	0.55	Prowers	0.47
Las Animas	0.44	Pueblo	0.42
Lincoln	0.54	Rio Blanco	0.59
Logan	0.49	Rio Grande	0.47
Mesa	0.50	Routt	0.74
Mineral	0.88	Saguache	0.42
Moffat	0.47	San Juan	0.56
Montezuma	0.45	San Miguel	0.79
Montrose	0.44	Sedgwick	0.50
Morgan	0.51	Summit	0.77
Otero	0.41	Teller	0.41
Ouray	0.52	Washington	0.49
Park	0.26	Weld	0.42
Phillips	0.51	Yuma	0.56
Statewide Average			0.55

Source: DOLA 2012

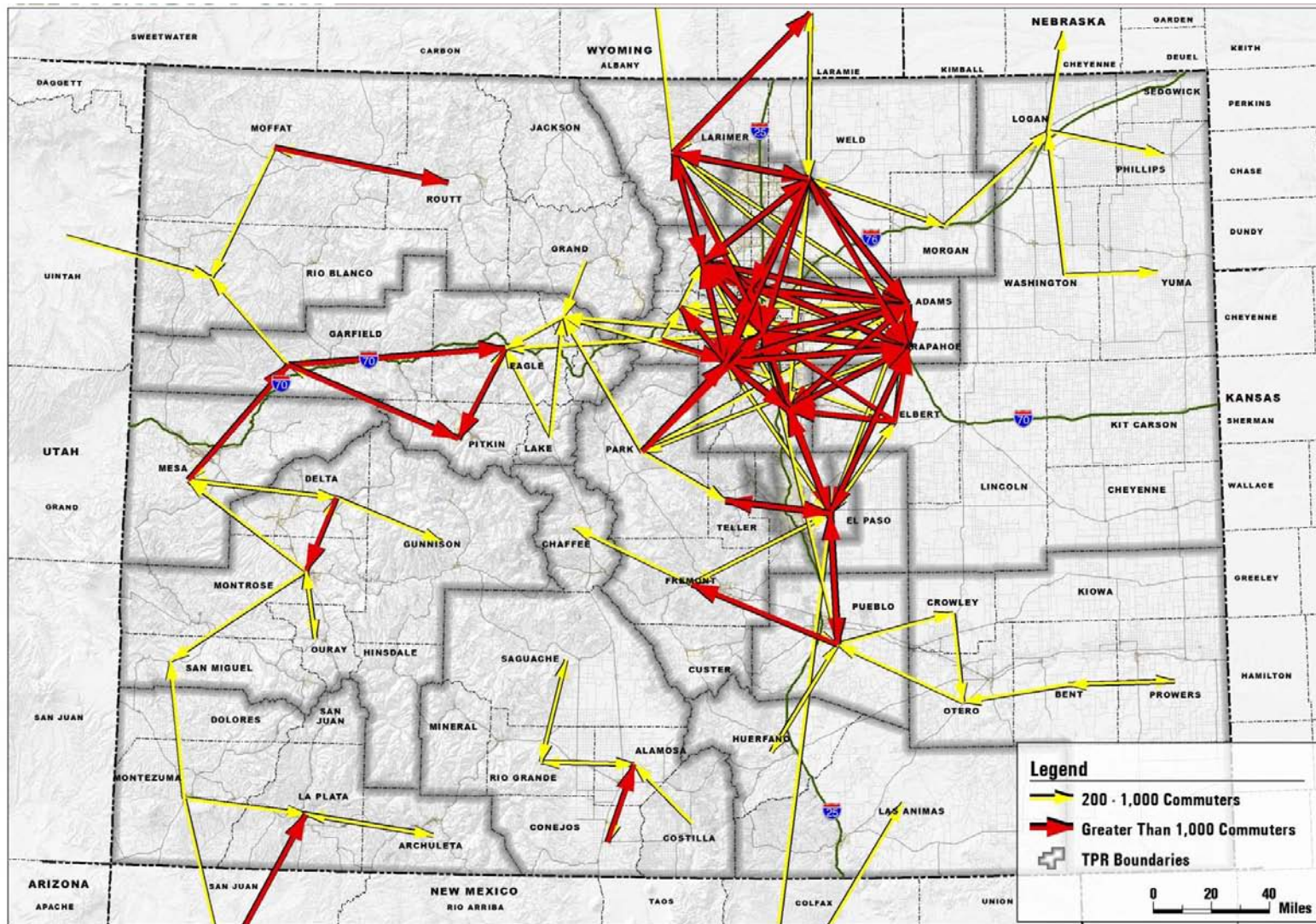
1 Figure 3-2 Existing Employment Density



Based upon 2011 ESRI business location and employment data, calculated using kernel density with a search radius of 10,000 meters.

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1 **Figure 3-3 County to County Work Flows**



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3 *Source: US Census 2010.*

3.2 Population Characteristics

Understanding the distribution and density of the population and related characteristics is an integral part of the transportation planning process. Demographics such as population, income, 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 in this chapter focuses on transit-dependent persons and is illustrated in a series of maps.

Typically, transit dependency is related 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).

Some demographic groups demonstrate a greater willingness to use local transit service to access employment, even when they do not need to rely on transit as a primary means of transportation. These “choice” riders tend to be more receptive to express services to employment hubs.

In general, there are two markets for public transportation services:

- ▶ “Transit Dependent” riders do not always have access to a private automobile and include 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 usually or always have access to private automobiles (either by driving a car or by being picked up by someone) but choose to take transit because it offers more or comparable convenience. For example, choice

riders might choose to add 10 minutes to their overall trip via bus to save a \$10 all-day parking charge. Choice riders might also choose to take a bus if they can work along the way rather than focusing on driving.

Figure 3-4 illustrates demographics collected from the U.S. Census and the State Demographer and compares the state’s transit propensity demographics to those at the national level.

3.2.1 Population Growth

In 2013 the state’s population was approximately 5.27 million. By 2040, the state demographer estimates that the population will increase by 47 percent to approximately 7.75 million. Projections take into account several variables, including economic, age and gender-specific survival rates, fertility rates, migration patterns, elderly population, and special populations such as college students, prison inmates, and military populations.

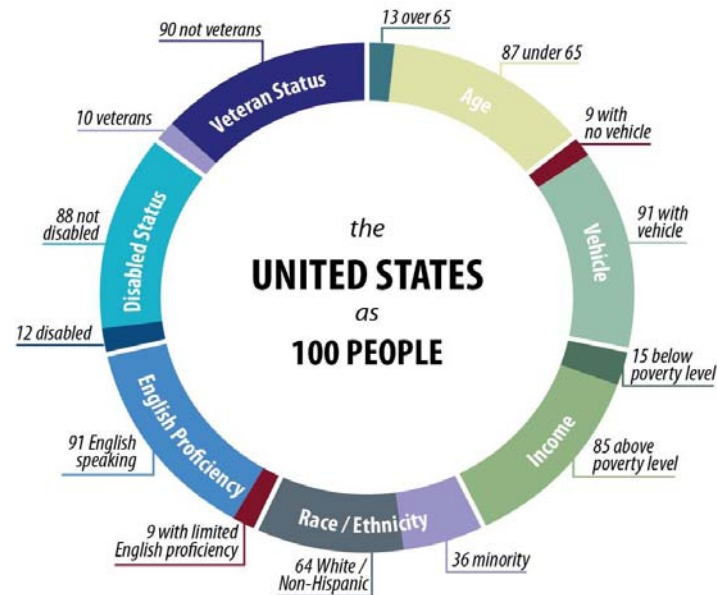
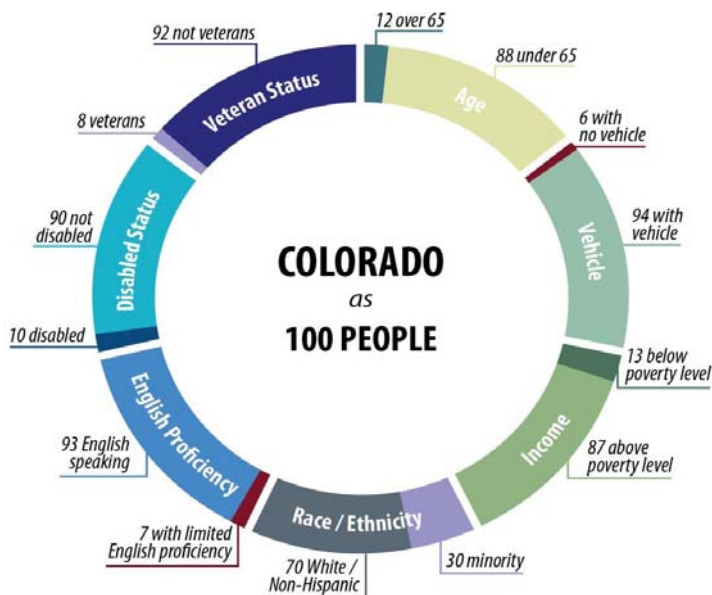
Colorado’s population is projected to increase by 47% by 2040.

The following sections analyze the spatial distribution of the general population as well as people who are more likely to use transit, as well as the location of activity centers and destinations that are likely to generate transit ridership.

General Population

The state’s population growth is expected to be concentrated along the Front Range in the Denver metropolitan area counties, El Paso County, Larimer County, and Weld County. In addition, several counties with small populations are expected to double or nearly double in population by 2040. This large relative increase in population will impact transportation within Archuleta, Custer, Delta, Eagle, Elbert, Garfield, Montrose, Park, San Miguel and Summit counties.

1 **Figure 3-4 Comparison of Colorado and US Transit Propensity Demographics**

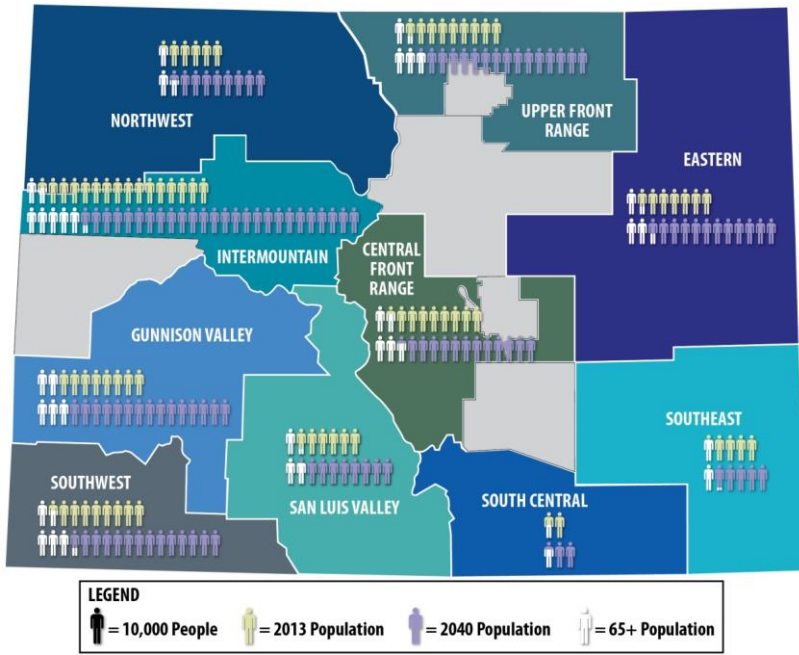


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3 **Population Over Age 65**

4 Transportation is a critical service that enables people to age in
5 their community. By 2040, the state will see a sizeable increase in
6 the number of people over the age of 65. In 2013, people age 65 and
7 older accounted for 12 percent of the state's population
8 (approximately 646,000 people). In 2040, this portion is expected to
9 increase to 18 percent of the population (approximately 1,424,000
10 people). This equates to an increase of approximately 120 percent.

12 **Figure 3-5** illustrates anticipated growth in the general population and
13 and in people over the age of 65 for each rural transportation
14 planning region. **Figure 3-6** illustrates anticipated growth in the
15 general population and in people over the age of 65 for each urban
16 transportation planning region. **Please note that the two figures**
17 **use different scales in accounting for population size and**
18 **growth.**

1 **Figure 3-5 Colorado Population Growth 2013 to 2040 by Rural**
2 **Transportation Planning Region (based on**
3 **increments of 10,000 people)**



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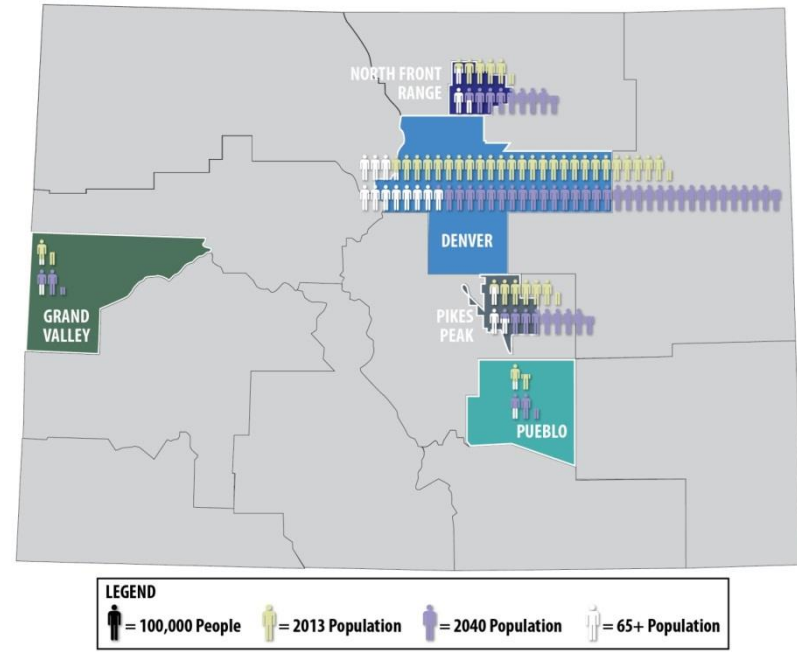
6 **3.2.2 Other Demographics**

7 This section summarizes other key demographic features used as an
8 indicator of a community's propensity and need for transit services.

9 **Zero Vehicle Households**

10 Because people without ready access to an automobile have
11 more constraints on their ability to travel, transit planners must
12 consider those populations that do not have vehicles in their
13 household. According to the 2011 American Community Survey
14 5-year estimates, nearly 6 percent (over 110,000) of households
15 in the state were "zero vehicle households."

16 **Figure 3-6 Colorado Population Growth 2013 to 2040 by**
17 **Urban Transportation Planning Region (based on**
18 **increments of 100,000 people)**



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21 These numbers will likely increase as Millennials are choosing not
22 to own vehicles in addition to those who cannot afford to own a
23 vehicle.

24 A comparison of the state's counties shows that Denver County has
25 both the highest number of households (over 32,000) and the highest
26 percentage of households (12 percent) without a vehicle. The
27 following 15 counties have the greatest portion of zero vehicle
28 households: Alamosa, Cheyenne, Conejos, Costilla, Denver, Huerfano,
29 Las Animas, Lincoln, Logan, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo, Rio Grande, San
30 Juan, and San Miguel. **Figure 3-7** illustrates the locations of zero
31 vehicle households throughout the state.

1 **Low-Income**

2 Data from the American Community Survey provide an overview of
3 how wealth and poverty are distributed throughout the state. Due
4 to the costs of owning and maintaining a car, poverty is one factor
5 used to identify populations that may need to rely on transit.

6 Federal poverty thresholds take into account household size, ages of
7 persons in the household, and number of children. The statewide
8 poverty rate is 13 percent. County averages range from 3 percent to
9 26 percent of the population being low income. In the following nine
10 counties, 20 percent or more of the population is identified as low
11 income: Alamosa, Bent, Costilla, Huerfano, Lake, Otero, Prowers,
12 Saguache, and San Juan. These same counties also have the greatest
13 portion of low-income people. **Figure 3-8** illustrates the portion of
14 low-income people by county.

15 **Minority**

16 Information on minority populations is derived from Census data on
17 race and ethnicity. While race and ethnicity have no direct bearing
18 on a person's willingness or ability to use public transit services,
19 these characteristics are often considered for fairness reasons. Title
20 VI is a federal statute intended to ensure that programs (including
21 public transit and human services) receiving federal financial
22 assistance do not discriminate or deny benefits to people based on
23 race, color, or national origin. Information on CDOT's Title VI
24 program is available on the CDOT website.

25 The 2011 US Census American Community Survey 5-year estimate
26 indicates that approximately 30 percent of the state's population
27 identifies themselves as a minority by either race or ethnicity.
28 County averages range from 3 percent to 69 percent.

29

30 Portions of the following counties have the greatest minority
31 populations: Arapahoe, Conejos, Costilla, Denver, El Paso, Fremont,
32 Huerfano, Lake, Montezuma, Otero, Prowers, Pueblo, Saguache, and
33 Weld. **Figure 3-9** illustrates the portion of minority populations by
34 census tract.

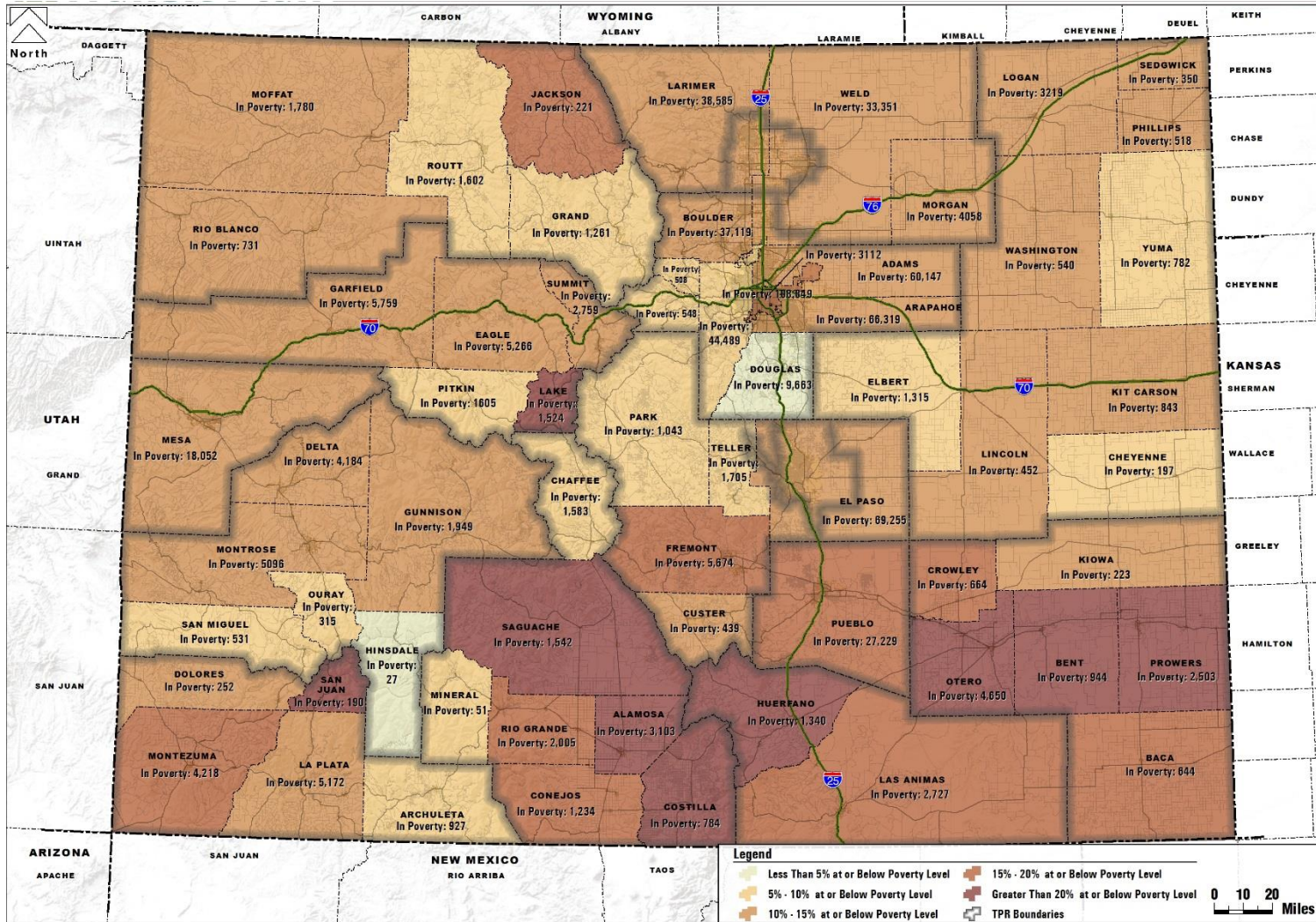
35 **Limited English Proficiency**

36 English proficiency is also considered under Title VI and is
37 important to understand to ensure that potential riders are
38 provided information in a comprehensible format. **Figure 3-10**
39 illustrates the portion of LEP persons by county throughout the
40 state. The American Community Survey categorizes this information
41 based on how much English people are able to speak. For the
42 purposes of this Statewide Transit Plan, the portion of the
43 population that is classified as having LEP represent those who
44 speak English "not at all," "not well," or "well" but not fluently.

45 Overall, the rate of LEP in the state is 7 percent. County averages
46 range from almost zero LEP to over 15 percent LEP. Counties with a
47 notably high LEP population include those counties in the Denver
48 metropolitan area, as well as Lake and Summit counties.

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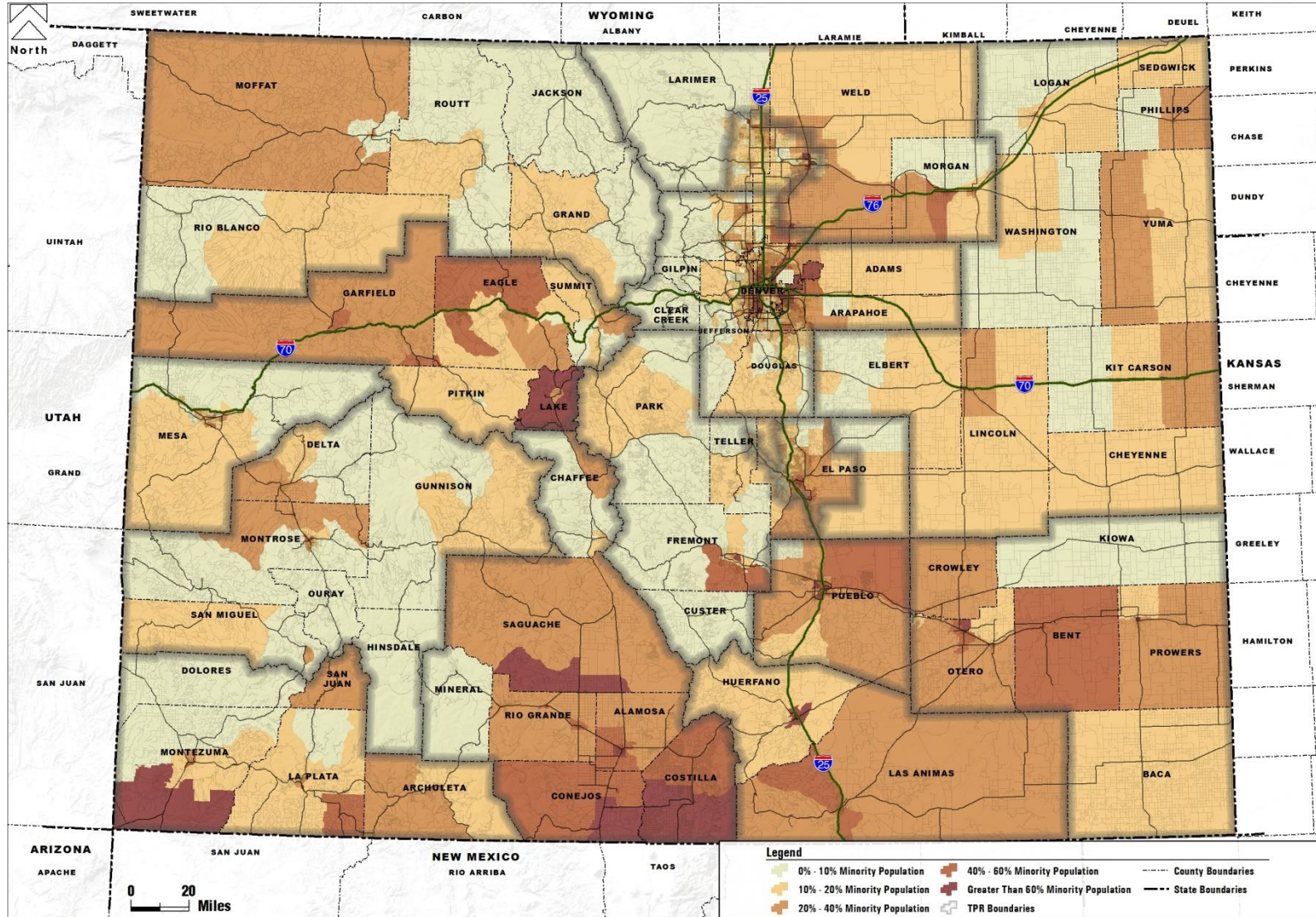
1 **Figure 3-8 Low-income Population by County**



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

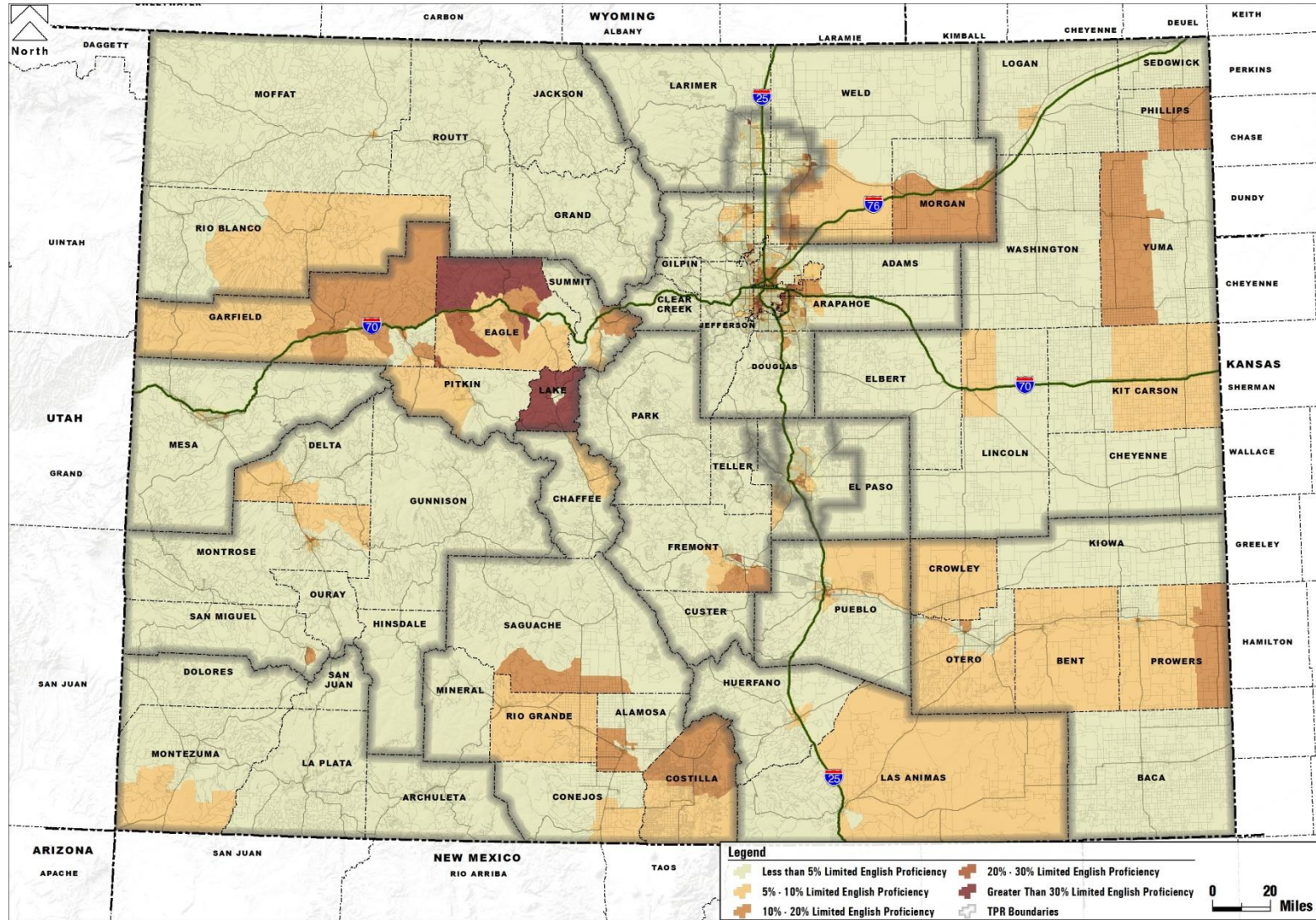
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1 **Figure 3-9 Minority Population by Census Tract**



2 Minority Population is based on the 2007-2011 American Community Survey Table B02001 - Race; based upon non-white population (does not separate hispanic ethnicity) by 2010 Census Tract.

1 **Figure 3-10 Limited English Proficiency by Census Tract**



Percentage is based on the 2008-2012 American Community Survey Table B16004, and on values for "Speak English - well, not well, or not at all".

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1 **People with Disabilities**

2 **Figure 3-11** illustrates the percent of the population that has a
3 disability by county. People with disabilities are likely to depend on
4 transportation services to maintain their personal mobility. Rural
5 counties with a sizeable disabled population are likely to exhibit a
6 strong need for transportation services, especially to provide access
7 to critical medical services in other counties. According to the
8 American Community Survey, about 10 percent of the overall
9 population in the state is disabled. County averages range from
10 4 percent to 26 percent. Counties with a notably high portion of
11 disabled people include Bent, Costilla, Crowley, and Huerfano.

12 **Veterans**

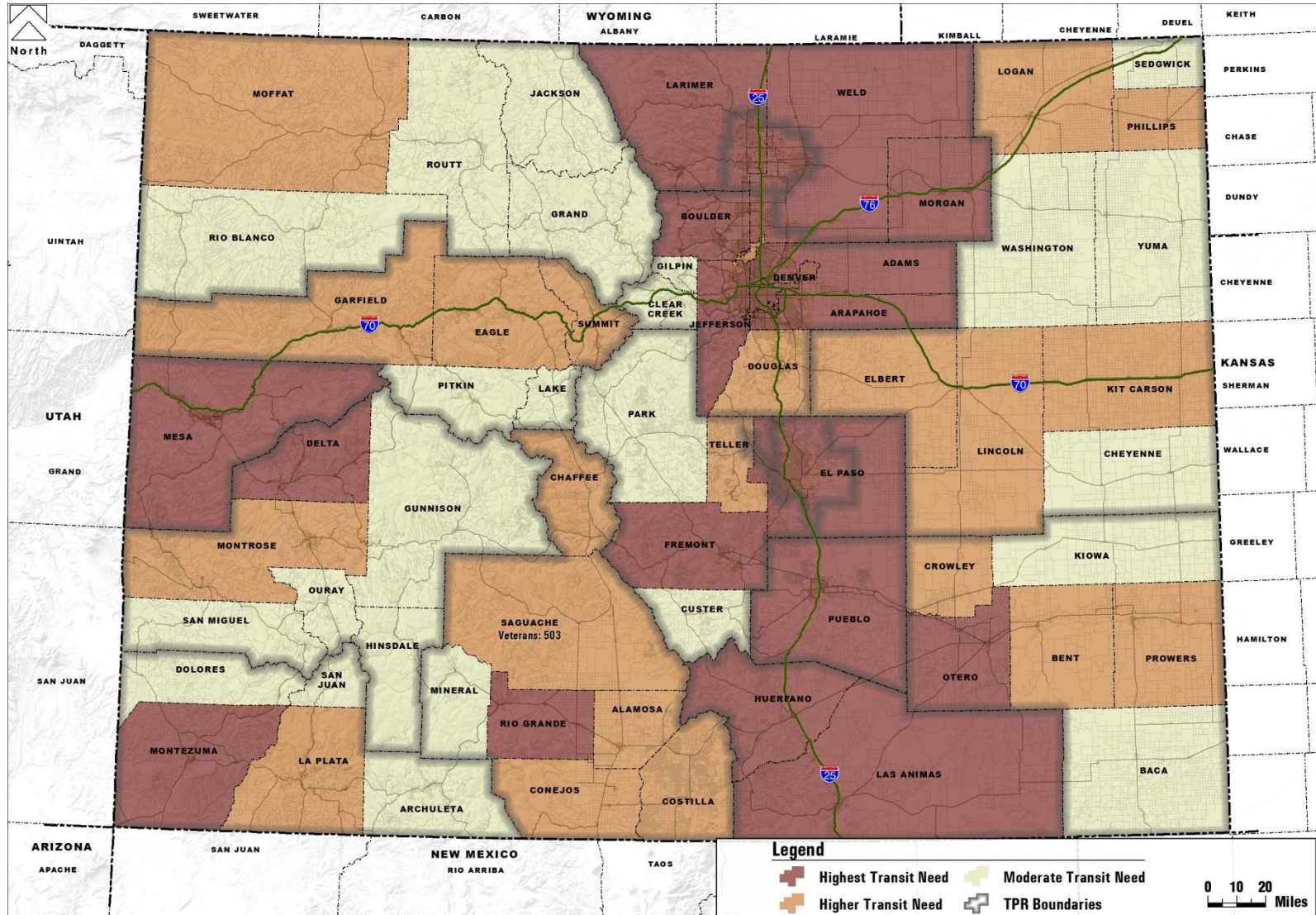
13 Veterans do not have an inherent transit dependency, but because
14 many veterans receive medical care at centralized Veterans hospital
15 facilities, it is important to understand a person's status as a veteran
16 and the potential need for transit service to access medical services.

17 **Figure 3-12** illustrates the veteran population throughout the state.
18 Veterans represent approximately 8 percent of the state's
19 population. County averages range from 3 percent to 16 percent.
20 Counties with a notably high portion of veterans include Chaffee,
21 Costilla, Crowley, Custer, El Paso, Fremont, Hinsdale, Huerfano,
22 Jackson, Mineral, and Teller.

24 **Demographic Summary**

25 Together, the demographics described above help to understand
26 where transit-dependent populations are located within the state
27 and can help to identify where limited transit resources should be
28 focused to ensure that mobility is provided throughout the state. To
29 identify those counties with the highest level of transit need, the
30 demographic characteristics were compared to that particular
31 county's total population and then to the state's total for each
32 characteristic. Then counties were ranked based on each transit-
33 dependent characteristic. The use of this methodology revealed the
34 counties exhibiting the highest level of combined transit-dependent
35 characteristics: Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Delta, Denver, El Paso,
36 Fremont, Huerfano, Jefferson, Larimer, Las Animas, Otero, Pueblo,
37 Mesa, Montezuma, Morgan, Rio Grande, and Weld. **Figure 3-13**
38 illustrates the results graphically.

1 **Figure 3-13** Compilation of the Transit Need and Propensity Indicators by County



Transit Need Index produced through aggregate ranking of over 65, zero vehicle household, minority, limited english proficiency (LEP), disabled, and veteran populations.

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