

5.0 TRANSIT SERVICE GAPS AND NEEDS

This chapter identifies the regional and interregional service gaps and needs throughout the state of Colorado. These gaps were identified through the development and integration of 10 rural Regional Coordinated Transit and Human Services Transportation Plans, five urban area Transit Plans, and the 2014 Intercity and Regional Bus Network Plan. The gaps are broken down by type, including spatial, temporal, facility, coordination, governance, and funding. The analysis does not identify gaps and needs by mode (bus vs. rail), but rather shows where there is a lack of service in general.

On the rail side, the State Freight and Passenger Rail Plan will be updated in 2016 and will provide analysis and detail on the gaps and needs in rail service statewide. The current plan is available on the CDOT website and includes a rail system needs assessment. Rail plan recommendations identified by stakeholders are discussed in **Chapter 7**.

5.1 Spatial Gaps

Spatial gaps identify geographic areas that lack transit service. This can include lack of service to employment centers, medical services, shopping, and social services. Spatial gaps make it challenging or impossible for travelers to access these destinations using transit. **Figure 5-1** illustrates the gaps identified throughout development of the Statewide and Regional Transit Plans. As shown, many of the identified gaps focus on travel to the metropolitan areas. These trips are often needed to access specialized medical care and jobs. Within the urban areas, providers identified gaps in providing service to newly developing areas and those that are currently underserved.

CDOT’s Statewide Survey of Older Adults and Adults With Disabilities also identified spatial gaps. The following includes summary data of all survey respondents (urban and rural) from across the state:

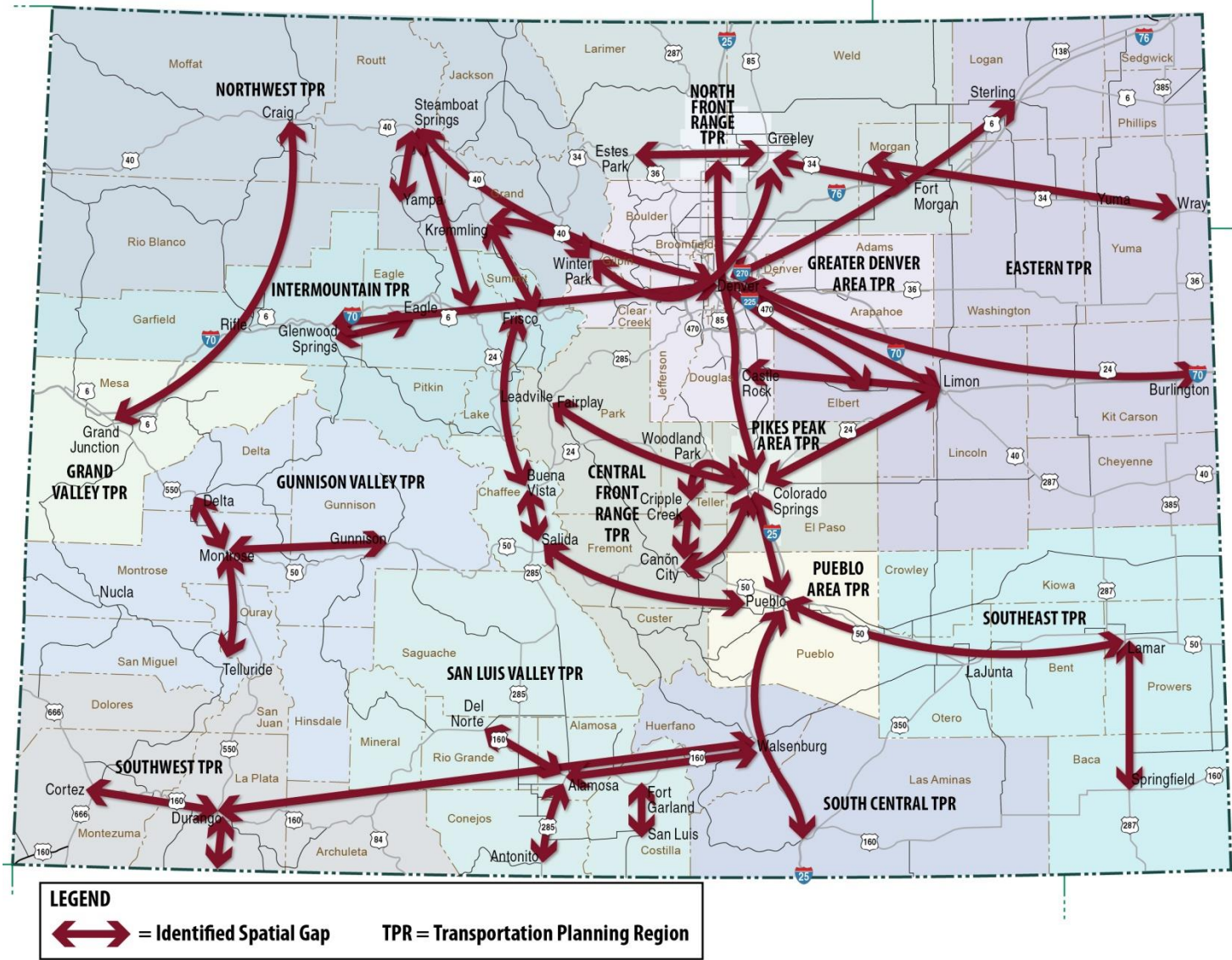
- ▶ Most of older adults and adults with disabilities surveyed have difficulty finding transportation to medical appointments (51 percent) and accessing activity centers for shopping and pharmacy trips (46 percent).
- ▶ Sixty-four percent of respondents indicated that they were unable to get somewhere because they could not find transportation at least once over the course of a month.
- ▶ Forty-seven percent of respondents have had trouble finding transportation for trips they needed or wanted to make.
- ▶ General public transportation service is not available where 66 percent of the survey respondents live and/or where they want to go.
- ▶ Paratransit service is not available where 60 percent of rural survey respondents live and/or where they want to go and 44 percent for urban respondents.
- ▶ Providing more transportation service to regional destinations was somewhat or very important for 58 percent of respondents.

5.2 Temporal Gaps

Throughout the Plan development process, it became apparent that there are also temporal gaps in many regions. Temporal gaps identify a need for more transit service across a span of time. Temporal gaps may include a need for expanded service hours in the early morning or late evening hours or the extension or addition of service hours on the weekend. Similar to spatial gaps, temporal gaps create challenges for passengers trying to access education, medical, service, shopping, and employment centers at certain times during the week/day. The following provides an overview of the recurring temporal gaps identified across the state:

- ▶ A limitation on transit service frequency in the late evening, in the early morning hours, and on weekends. The lack of services during these times impacts the ability of service industry workers to access employment where jobs do not typically fall in the 8:00 am to 5:00 pm timeframe.

1 **Figure 5-1 Statewide Regional and Interregional Spatial Service Gaps**



2

- 1 ▶ A need for additional and/or expanded weekend human
- 2 service and fixed-route transit service. Weekend service
- 3 allows transit-dependent populations access to
- 4 employment, recreation, social activities, and services.
- 5 ▶ Many human service transportation providers offer service
- 6 only on limited days during the week. This limits the ability
- 7 of transit-dependent populations to access employment,
- 8 medical services, recreation, and social activities on a daily
- 9 basis.
- 10 ▶ Interregional and intercity services operate with low
- 11 frequencies, which often means that people cannot access
- 12 medical and other services in urban/centralized locations
- 13 without also incurring the costs of an overnight stay.

14 CDOT’s Statewide Survey of Older Adults and Adults With
 15 Disabilities also indicated temporal needs of those surveyed. The
 16 following includes summary data of all survey respondents (urban
 17 and rural) from across the state:

- 18 ▶ Fifty-eight percent of respondents indicated public
- 19 transportation service not operating during needed times
- 20 was a “major or minor problem” and a barrier to their using
- 21 transit.
- 22 ▶ Fifty-one percent of respondents indicated that it was
- 23 difficult to find transportation on weekdays from 10:00 am
- 24 to 4:00 pm; 36 percent indicated this same challenge on
- 25 weekdays from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm.
- 26 ▶ Lack of transportation services during the day on Saturday
- 27 and Sunday also was a time that many survey respondents
- 28 indicated needing transportation services, 45 percent and
- 29 50 percent, respectively.
- 30 ▶ Forty-five percent of respondents indicated that paratransit
- 31 service does not operate during the needed times.

- 32 ▶ Eighty-two percent of respondents indicated that expanding
- 33 hours during which transportation services are offered is
- 34 either somewhat or very important.

35 There are many challenges to addressing a passenger’s desire for
 36 more service versus the operator’s ability to deliver the service.
 37 The *Transit Capacity and Quality of Service Manual, 3rd Ed.*, offers
 38 guidance and provides analysis to assist a transit operator with
 39 service planning to best meet the needs of passengers within budget
 40 constraints. The cost and logistics of adding more service can be
 41 very complicated for transit operators.

42 **5.3 Older Adults and Adults with Disabilities**

43 **Needs**

44 In addition to the spatial and temporal gaps and needs identified in
 45 previous sections from the Statewide Survey of Older Adults and
 46 Adults with Disabilities, additional survey findings provide an
 47 overall perspective into the needs of these user groups across the
 48 state:

- 49 ▶ Fifty-two percent of respondents rely on family, friends,
- 50 aides, or volunteers for transportation for some or all of
- 51 their trips.
- 52 ▶ Many older adults and adults with disabilities report
- 53 making trips by driving themselves in a personal vehicle;
- 54 the proportion doing so in the Rural TPRs (78 percent) was
- 55 higher than that in Urban TPRs (65 percent).
- 56 ▶ About 4 in 10 respondents who drove themselves said they
- 57 would be very likely or somewhat likely to use public
- 58 transportation or paratransit in their community instead of
- 59 driving.
- 60 ▶ The most frequently cited barriers to using public
- 61 transportation and paratransit were a lack of service and
- 62 wanting to use the service during hours it was not available.

1 Two issues were deemed most important for the Statewide Transit
2 Plan by those completing the survey: 1) developing easily accessible
3 and understandable transportation information and referral
4 services and 2) providing lower fares for seniors and disabled
5 riders.

6 **5.4 Facility Needs**

7 Many facility needs were identified through the development of the
8 Statewide and Regional Transit Plans and the Intercity and Regional
9 Bus Network Plan. Most of these needs fall into the following
10 categories:

- 11 ▶ Administrative/office facilities
- 12 ▶ Bike/pedestrian improvements and infrastructure
- 13 ▶ ADA compliance
- 14 ▶ Intermodal facilities
- 15 ▶ First/last mile connections
- 16 ▶ Maintenance facilities
- 17 ▶ Park-and-rides/parking
- 18 ▶ Shelters/stops/stations
- 19 ▶ Transfer/multimodal centers

20 All regions across the state have a need for ongoing maintenance of
21 existing facilities, and many regions also identified facility needs
22 that are more unique to their area. For example, the Intermountain
23 region has identified a high number of bike and pedestrian
24 improvements that support transit, such as the building of major
25 pedestrian bridges over roadways, the addition of bike lanes, and
26 enhanced sidewalk/trail connectivity projects. The Gunnison Valley,
27 Central Front Range and San Luis Valley TPRs identified a number
28 of park-and-rides that will need to be built to support transit service
29 development in the short- and mid-term planning timeframes.
30 Parking and other facility improvements are also identified along
31 the I-25 corridor to support the implementation of interregional
32 express bus service between Fort Collins, Denver, and Colorado

33 Springs. Several regions and cities have identified the need for new
34 transit/transfer centers, including Colorado Springs and Trinidad.

35 CDOT's Statewide Survey of Older Adults and Adults With
36 Disabilities identified that a lack of adequate facilities limits transit
37 usage. About 36% of survey respondents indicated that the lack of
38 sidewalks, curb cuts or safe roadway crossings impacts their ability
39 to access bus stops or rail stations.

40 **5.5 Transit Asset Management Needs**

41 Under MAP-21, Transit Asset Management (TAM) is a priority area
42 of focus for the FTA. MAP-21 requires that all FTA grant recipients
43 develop TAM plans and that the states certify these plans. Today,
44 many of Colorado's FTA grant recipients do not have TAM plans in
45 place. This has been identified as a gap that needs to be addressed
46 in order for all areas to be compliant with MAP-21 requirements.

47 **5.6 Coordination Needs**

48 Coordinating human service transportation and public transit
49 programs can increase efficiency in the use of limited transportation
50 resources. While the state has made progress in the development of
51 Regional/Local Coordinating Councils and the implementation of
52 coordination strategies, gaps still persist. As identified in **Chapter 4**,
53 not all regions in the state have coordinating councils in place. In
54 addition, many coordinating councils reported having lack of staff
55 and sporadic attendance making it difficult to take action on
56 recommendations and providing limited feedback to CDOT
57 regarding their activity. Improved coordination among providers,
58 an increase in the number of coordinating councils and their
59 attendance and additional staff, such as a mobility coordinator is
60 needed.

5.7 Regional Governance Needs

Lack of a regional governing structure can limit the improvement and expansion of regional and interregional transit services. Several transit agencies and municipalities stated that while a need for service had been identified, limited regional governance structure has made it difficult to develop and implement services that require coordination between multiple jurisdictions and transit operators.

The following needs were identified through development of this plan and the supporting Regional Transit Plans:

- ▶ Assistance with development of intergovernmental agreements
- ▶ Identification of equitable cost sharing agreements
- ▶ Development of oversight and decision making structures
- ▶ Assistance with the creation and implementation of Regional Transportation Authorities

5.8 Funding Gaps

Demand for general public and human service transportation is expected to grow in the years to come due to increases in population, increases in the older adult (65+) population, and an increase in tourism in some of the mountain regions. Several funding gaps currently, and in the future, will impact the ability of service providers to maintain and expand services:

- ▶ The lack of ongoing, consistent operating funding remains an issue in the state of Colorado. While capital funds are needed, the lack of operating funds to maintain current service and to support the development of new service is a major concern among providers. Urban and rural areas identified a need for a dedicated funding source to fill this gap.

- ▶ Exponential growth of the older adult population in most TPRs in the state will put additional strain on general public and human service transportation agencies, which will likely require additional funds to expand services to meet demand.
- ▶ Limited capital funding for replacing aging fleets, constructing park-and-ride lots, or expanding existing vehicle fleets puts strain on all service providers.
- ▶ The state of Colorado provides limited financial support for transit across the state. The addition of FASTER funds for transit is a needed first step, but the very small and fixed amount of funding (\$15 million) to be spread across the state is not a long-term solution. FASTER funds for transit do not increase as FASTER revenue increases.
- ▶ Medicaid's Non-Emergency Medical Transportation (NEMT) Program, which funds a significant portion of transportation services, is expected to be depleted by 2026. The stability of other federal funding sources used across the state, 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.
- ▶ Tourism is expected to grow in several mountain TPRs and will result in the need for additional funds to expand service to meet demand. With already limited funding available, an increase in tourism will place additional strain on service providers.

Chapter 6 includes a more detailed discussion on Colorado's funding and financial outlook for transit.