North Federal Boulevard Community Transportation

Implementation Plan - 2025



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Acknowledgements

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Executive Summary

This plan is a vision and implementation guide for a new community transportation service in the southwest corner of Adams County near Federal Boulevard. This recommended service is responding to the needs identified in the neighborhoods surrounding North Federal Boulevard between I-70 and US-36 for safe, affordable, and convenient transportation to meet the daily needs of the community. This study was led by the Denver Regional Council of Governments, known as DRCOG, but developed through a partnership between DRCOG, Growing Home, Adams County, and the City of Westminster.

This study ran from March of 2024 through April of 2025 and included two phases of public outreach, an analysis of existing conditions, an evaluation of service alternatives, and a collaborative process to develop the final service plan.

Based on the study phases, a zone-based microtransit service was determined to best meet community needs that exist today while allowing scalability, adaptability, and flexibility for future needs. See **Table 1** for the recommended characteristics of this new transportation service.

The goals of this new community transportation service are to:

- Meet everyday transportation needs.
- Improve safe mobility.
- Be affordable.
- Connect to transit.
- Be accessible.

Based on the findings of this study and conversations with partners, Adams County is likely best positioned to be the implementing agency for this service. DRCOG, Growing Home, the City of Westminster, and other organizations will continue to be important partners as this service is implemented.

Table 1: Summary of Recommended Microtransit Service

Type of Service	Type of Vehicles	Service Area	Span of Service	Average Response Times	Operating Agency	Other Characteristics
Zone-based, door-to-door microtransit	SUVs or Vans with 2 ADA-accessible vehicles	5.5 square miles	6am-8pm 7 days/week	Within 20-30 minutes of ride request	Adams County, contracting with a private operator	English and Spanish smartphone app English and Spanish call-in option

Community Need & Project Purpose

This plan is focused on the neighborhoods east and west of Federal Boulevard, north of I-70 and south of US-36. This area is home to a large number of people with limited transportation options including low-income families, older adults, people with disabilities, people of color and immigrants. In addition to these key populations, this study and resulting recommendations take into consideration the needs of the whole community. Through their local direct service work, Growing Home identified that many community members face challenges finding transportation to meet their basic needs. In particular, after the closure of the Walmart grocery store at Federal Boulevard and 72nd Avenue many community members are struggling with transportation to healthy and affordable food and affordable pharmacies.

There are several bus and commuter rail lines through the area, but many residents have trouble accessing stops and stations, cannot afford transit tickets, or their trip would take too long on transit. RTD Access-a-Ride and Adams County's A-Lift operate in these neighborhoods; however, these two services only serve qualifying individuals (people with disabilities and people over 60 years old for A-Lift). Additionally, these services require signing up ahead of time and scheduling rides days in advance which make them inflexible for many daily needs.

There are several other transportation related projects ongoing in this area, including the Federal Bus Rapid Transit project, the 72nd Avenue study, and several Adams County capital improvement projects, including the Goat Hill East study and the Berkley Gardens Neighborhood improvements. However, these services and projects do not directly address transportation options faced by community members without access to a private vehicle and for whom transit is unaffordable or inaccessible. It is this gap that this plan for a new community transportation service in the area aims to fill.

Growing Home, Adams County, the City of Westminster, and the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) have partnered on this plan to better understand and explore solutions to identified community transportation needs. The goals of this new community transportation service are:

- Design a service that meets the everyday transportation needs of all community members including those with the lowest incomes and who experience the most barriers to mobility (whether due to age, physical ability, etc.).
- Improve safe mobility in the area.
- Help people access food, healthcare, and other key destinations in the study area.
- Provide an affordable transportation option.
- Create first/last-mile connections to regional transit.
- Provide a transportation option that is accessible to community members who speak English as a second language.

This plan summarizes the community input, data analysis, and process that went into the development of the final plan for a new community transportation service.

Better Understanding the Need

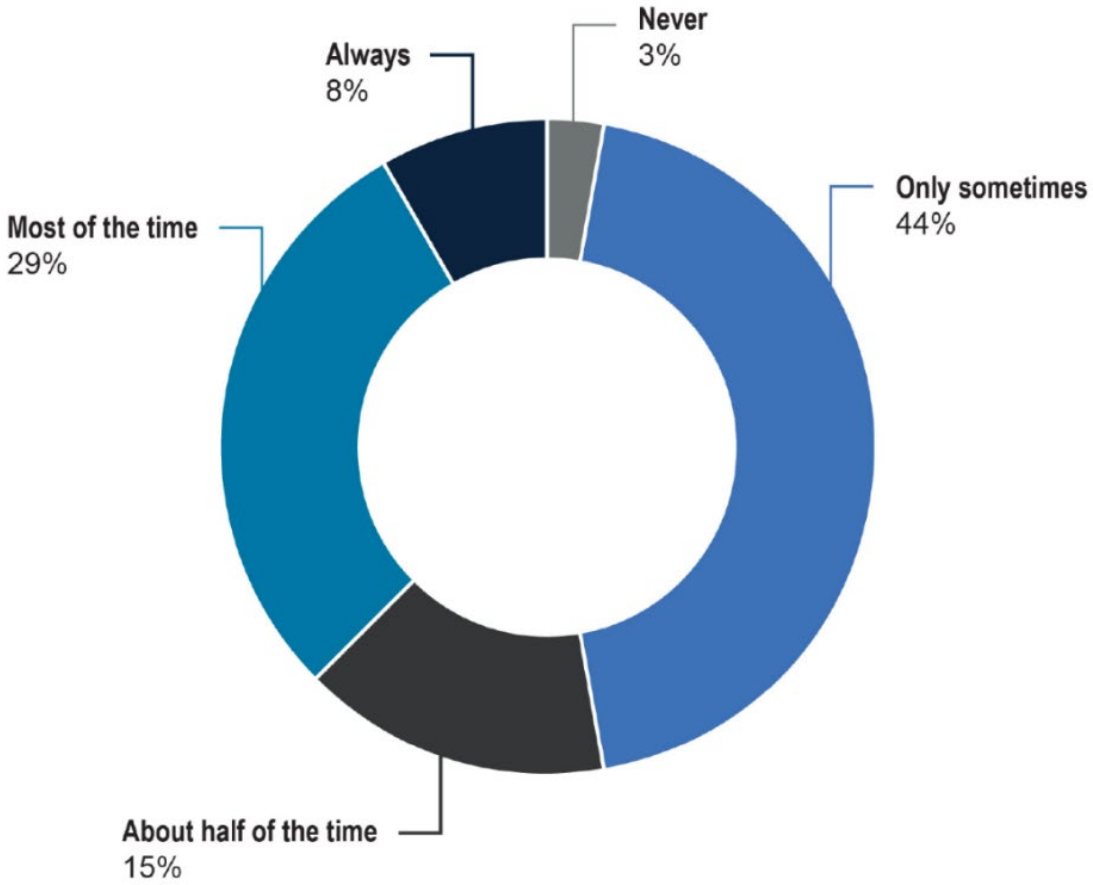
In order to develop solutions, the project team first needed to better understand the existing community need. To do this the project team conducted public outreach and analyzed existing demographics and travel patterns in the study area.

Community Input

In the summer of 2024, to better understand the existing transportation needs of the community and where and when they need to travel, the project team created a survey, conducted in-person surveys at Growing Home's food bank, hosted focus groups with community members, and checked in with a steering committee at key decision points. The steering committee included representatives from community-based organizations, healthcare centers, schools, and churches. Steering committee members helped distribute the survey and focus group information to their networks.

The survey received 158 responses and helped the project team better understand the existing transportation issues and where community members need to go.

Figure 1: Survey Responses about Access to Affordable Transportation



Of the survey respondents, only 8% indicated that they always have consistent access to affordable transportation.

Sixty-three percent indicated they only have access to affordable transportation half the time or less (see **Figure 1**). These

results confirm the need for an affordable transportation service in the study area to provide people with access to healthcare, food, human services, work, school, and recreation.

In addition to the survey, five focus group sessions were held with community members to discuss the challenges, needs, and opportunities of transportation in the study area. One highlight of this input was that older adults, people with disabilities, and people with low incomes expressed difficulty using fixed-route RTD services due to cost and difficulty accessing stops. This input from the focus groups underscored that current transit services in the area are difficult for residents to use, unaffordable for many community members, and do not serve local connections needed.

The focus groups also discussed what type of service would best meet the transportation needs they face today. The overwhelming consensus from focus group participants was that they would use a free door-to-door microtransit service if it were available. Microtransit is a form of on-demand transportation where people can request rides in real time on an app or through a call-in option. This input mirrors the survey responses where a free on-demand service was indicated as the top service respondents would use (tied with existing fixed-route transit).

From both the survey responses and focus groups the project team identified the top locations community members indicated they would like a new transportation service to connect to. These locations include grocery stores, healthcare centers, schools, transit stops, shopping, and other services. See **Figure 2** for a map of these locations.

To learn more about this first phase of community engagement and see more details about the input gathered through the survey and focus groups see **Appendix A**.

Demographics

In addition to community input, Fehr & Peers evaluated demographic data and DRCOG's internal equity index tool across the study area to better understand the neighborhood population, particularly in the context of race, ethnicity, income, disability status, age, and vehicle access. All of these demographic factors are associated with likely mobility opportunities and limitations and help complete the picture of the mobility needs in the community.

The study area has a higher Hispanic/Latino population than Adams County as a whole and the greater Denver region. Residents of this neighborhood have lower incomes, lower rates of vehicle access, and a higher rate of use of supplemental food benefits such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) than Adams County and the Denver region.

In the study area, 8% of households do not have access to a private vehicle, and 31% of households have access to only one vehicle. During community engagement, some respondents also indicated that they may have a vehicle, but due to high fuel costs and maintenance issues they are not always able to use their vehicles. Focus group participants also mentioned that their personal vehicles are not always safe to drive in the snow. These additional inputs indicate that vehicle access can be less certain than what the census data suggests.

To better understand how these different demographic factors are compounded in the study area compared to the larger region, the team evaluated DRCOG's equity index tool. This tool aggregates census data about economic status, mobility barriers, race, and ethnicity to

calculate a final index score of each census tract in the region. The majority of the census tracts in the service area fall in the 80th – 100th percentile of equity index scores in the entire DRCOG region indicating that residents of this study area likely experience greater barriers to mobility than the regional average. This aligns with what we heard from community members through public input.

Additionally, this study area is identified as an underserved area on a number of other indices including the Colorado Disproportionately Impacted Community Map, Colorado EnviroScreen, and the USDA Food Access Research Atlas.

To learn more about the demographic analysis that was conducted see **Appendix B**.

Existing Transportation

In addition to affordability and access to vehicles, residents of the study area face additional transportation challenges due to gaps in the existing transportation services and deficiencies in local infrastructure.

The public transit service in the area is relatively infrequent and there are limited east/west routes. Of the proposed service area, 82% is over a quarter mile away

Figure 2: Map of Community Identified Destinations

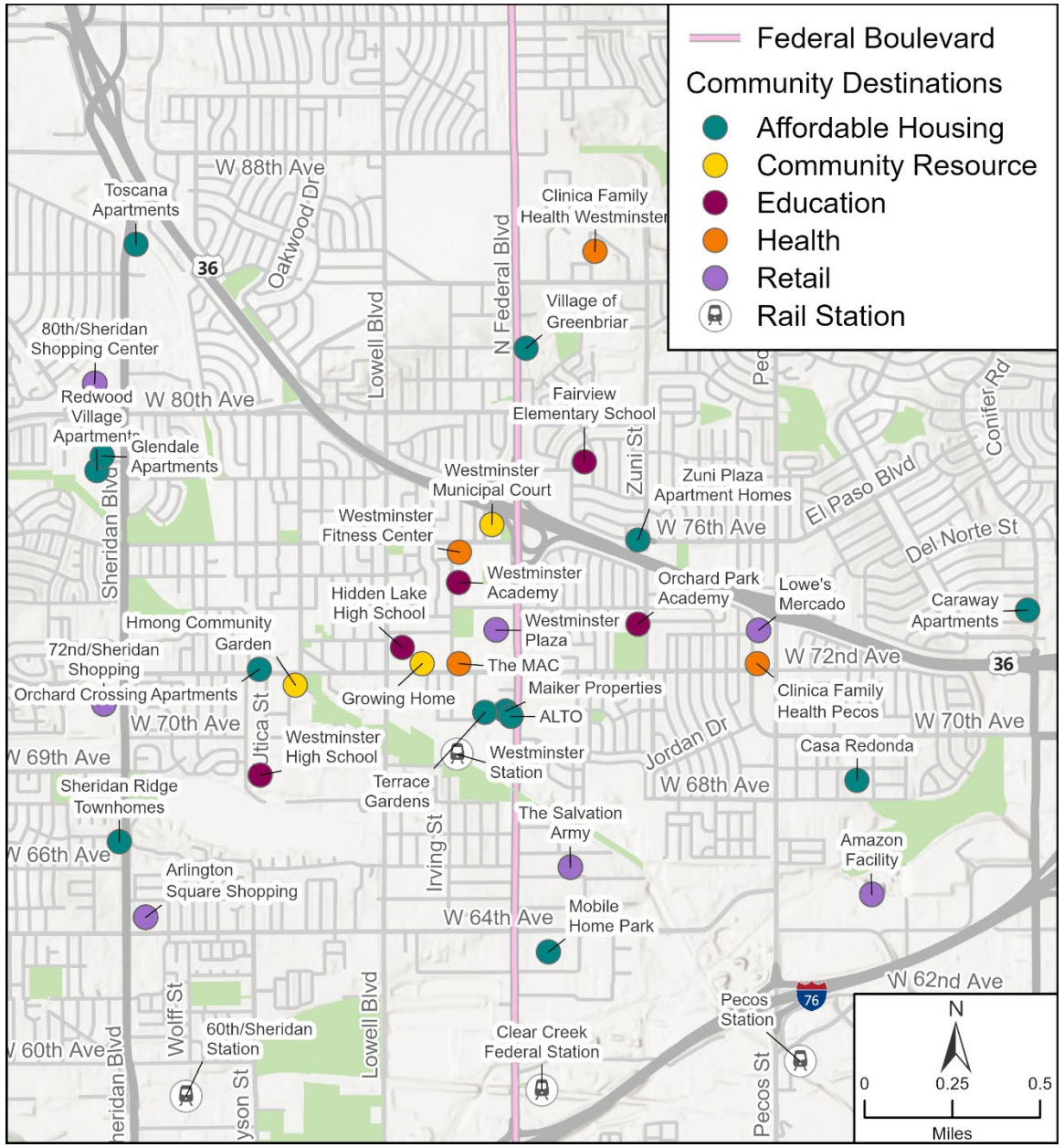
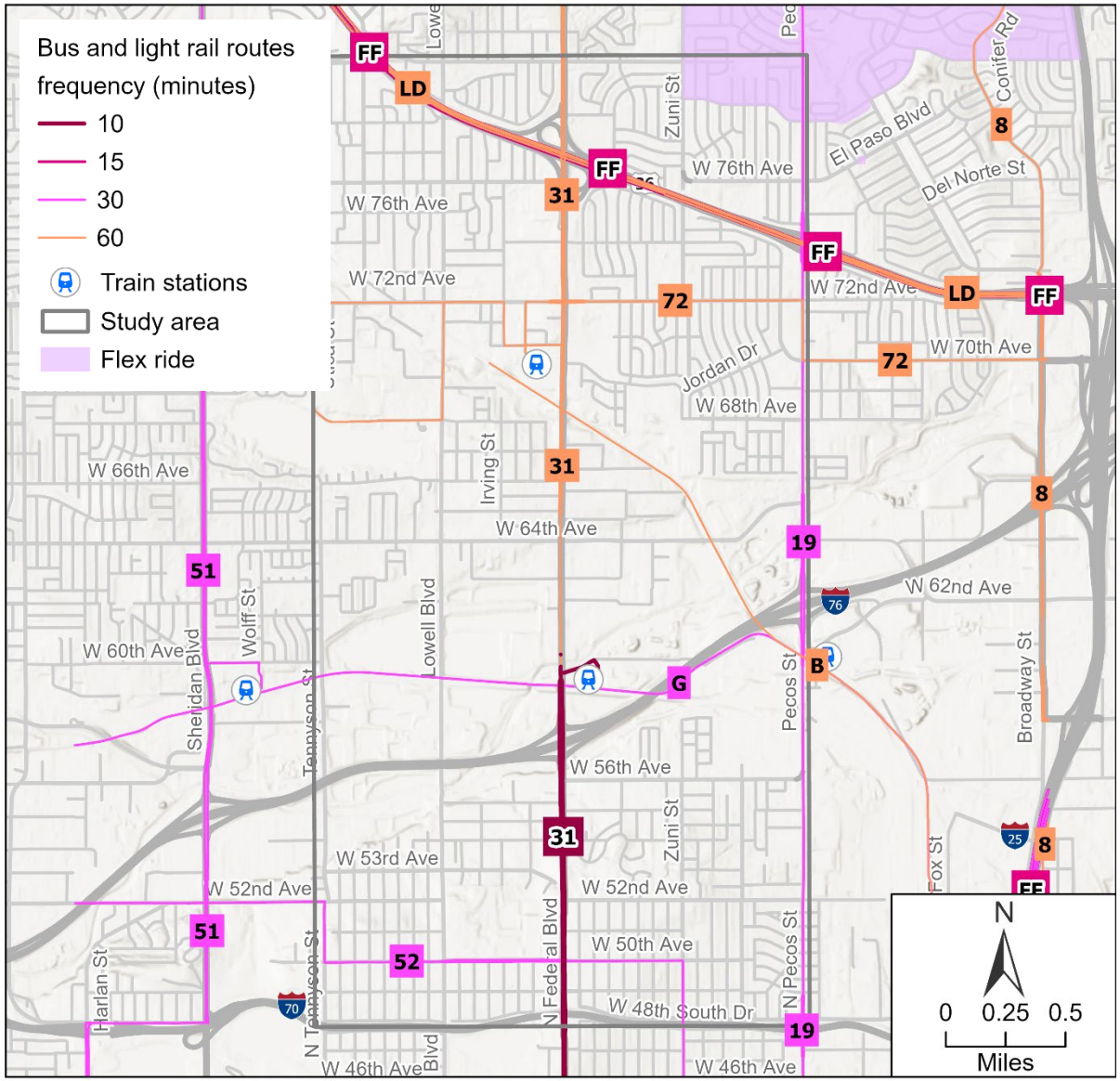


Figure 3: Map of Existing Transit Routes in the Study Area



from transit stops with 30 minute frequency or better (see **Figure 3**). Ongoing improvements along Federal Boulevard will improve access between the study area and regional destinations to the north and south but will not help residents make local trips to reach needed destinations within the neighborhood.

In the study area, bicycle facilities are limited, and sidewalks are nonexistent or in poor condition along several major roads. Additionally, many major roads in the area are not well lit and many bus stops in the area are missing basic amenities like shelters. Especially for community members without reliable access to a car, many are lacking safe, reliable, and affordable modes of transportation.

RTD's Access-a-Ride and Adams County's A-Lift also operate in these neighborhoods, however these two services only serve qualifying individuals (people with disabilities and people over 60 years old for A-Lift). Additionally, these services require signing up ahead of time and scheduling rides days in advance which make them inflexible for many daily needs.

To learn more about existing transportation options see Appendix B.

Travel Patterns

To supplement data provided on destinations and travel patterns by survey respondents and focus group participants we evaluated Streetlight Data. Streetlight is a “Big Data” provider that compiles origin-destination trip data from anonymized cellphone location data (used for the transit analysis component) and connected vehicle data (used for the vehicle analysis component).

Of car trips starting or ending in the study area, 28% are internal trips, where people are traveling entirely within the study area. This finding underscores the importance for a new transportation service to serve these local trips between two points within the study area. In particular the commercial areas along North Federal Boulevard are important destinations for the community. The highest trip volumes are in neighborhoods between US 36 and I-76. Many destinations are located in a small area clustered along North Federal Boulevard between the B Line rail corridor and US 36. This region was one of the most popular origins and destinations within the study area and is the center of the proposed service area.

The project team also evaluated trips starting or ending at one of the four nearby rail stations (60th and Sheridan, Clear Creek Federal, Pecos Junction, and Westminster Stations). Of these trips, 50% started or ended somewhere in the study area – indicating that half of riders using those stations either live in the neighborhood or use transit to access work, school, shopping, or other services in the study area. Additionally, 20% of trips from these stations start or end in downtown Denver. Both of these findings indicate that first-last mile connections to transit are an important need that a new community transportation should facilitate.

To learn more about travel patterns and Streetlight analysis see **Appendix E.**

Related Efforts

In addition to this study, there are other planning efforts being undertaken by CDOT, DRCOG, Adams County, and the City of Westminster that touch parts of the study area, however none specifically addresses the needs for an affordable transportation service for local trips around the neighborhood as this study does.

Many improvements are focused on Federal Boulevard, including the Federal Boulevard Multimodal Transportation Study (2021), Federal Boulevard Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Design (ongoing), Federal Boulevard Transit Reliability Project which all address multimodal transportation and transit along the Federal Boulevard corridor. The improvements being developed through these projects will improve north/south transit connectivity between the study area and the rest of the region. A second relevant study is the 72nd Avenue Study, which aimed to improve safety, livability, and multimodal access along 72nd between Pierce Street and Zuni Street. Third, the Goat Hill East improvements and the Berkley Gardens Neighborhood improvements will address localized transportation infrastructure issues in these respective residential neighborhoods.

The community transportation service proposed in this study addresses a community need not targeted through these other efforts, but implementation of the recommendations of this plan should continue to coordinate with these other ongoing efforts to maximize the benefits of each to the local community.

Finding the Right Solution

After investigating the existing barriers to mobility and access through community input and data analysis, the project team drafted potential transportation service alternatives to test in order to develop the final service plan. As part of this alternatives development and testing, the team conducted additional data analysis and went back to the community with another survey and set of focus groups. This process helped refine the final vision for a new transportation service.

Community Input

A second round of community engagement was conducted between October and December 2024 to assess potential service options. This phase of outreach included an additional survey, focus groups, talking with people at community events, and discussions with the steering committee. Through this work the team received detailed input on what characteristics of a service would serve community needs best.

A total of 87 people responded to this second survey. Survey respondents indicated that they prefer a smaller microtransit service area with shorter wait times. The most important destinations are grocery stores, commercial or shopping areas, health clinics, and rail stops. Specific destinations of importance are the Walmart Supercenter at 72nd Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard, the Westminster RTD station, and the King Soopers at 80th Avenue and Sheridan Boulevard. This input was used to help refine the service area in a way that prioritized convenience and improving access to the most important locations identified by the community.

Focus group attendees indicated that they would feel more comfortable with a service if they are provided with clarifying information about the service through either a newsletter, a phone hotline, or some other regular source of information. Focus group participants at Casa Redonda de Vigil (apartments for older adults and people with disabilities) also shared that even though there is a bus stop located half a block away from the entrance, only one resident is able to access it because of the steep incline. Respondents from this focus group also discussed challenges with getting on the bus, not always having the bus lowered for them, and difficulties with having to stand for long periods waiting for the bus. This input underscores the importance for a new service to be accessible and convenient for older adults and people with disabilities.

Across all focus groups, there was a consensus that respondents would use a free on-demand microtransit option if it was available. Community event attendees also expressed overwhelming support for a microtransit service and proposed the idea of being able to schedule rides ahead of time in addition to on-demand and ensuring that the microtransit service is able to accommodate various mobility devices.

The steering committee of community representatives and project members met to discuss alternative service models, priorities and trade-offs, and necessary components of the future service model. During the steering committee meetings, we heard about the importance of door-to-door service, accommodations for disabilities, and acceptable trade-offs in coverage versus wait time.

Community input determined the priority destinations, service span, and service type to ensure the service addresses the transportation challenges faced by community members in this neighborhood.

To learn more about the outreach activities conducted and the input the team received see **Appendix C**.

Types of Service Considered

To meet the transportation needs expressed by community members we considered various solutions including scheduled medical and shopping shuttles, flex-route bus service, microtransit, bike/scooter share, carshare, and Uber/Lyft subsidies. Each potential solution offers different benefits and drawbacks.

After discussions with the project team and the steering committee, combined with public input, it was determined that zone-based microtransit was the best service model for an initial new community transportation service. The primary reason is that microtransit best matches the largest share of the need we identified by providing accessible and convenient short trips. Microtransit is a good pilot service because it is flexible and easily adaptable after implementation as more data on trip needs is collected. Microtransit is also very convenient for riders, which tends to translate into strong ridership soon after implementation.

Microtransit Options

The project team considered a spectrum of different microtransit service models ranging from scheduled shuttle service to zone-based microtransit service.

Scheduled shuttle service operates similarly to a miniature fixed-route bus service, with designated pick-up and drop-off locations and consistent schedules. Some shuttle services provide small route deviations and others are purely set stops. This type of service is best if there are a few clear origins and destinations people need to travel to or if the service provides scheduled rides to medical appointments or shopping which people can plan their schedule around. Although some community members identified needs that aligned with these service types, the larger share of community needs follow a more dispersed trip pattern and are spread throughout the day and week.

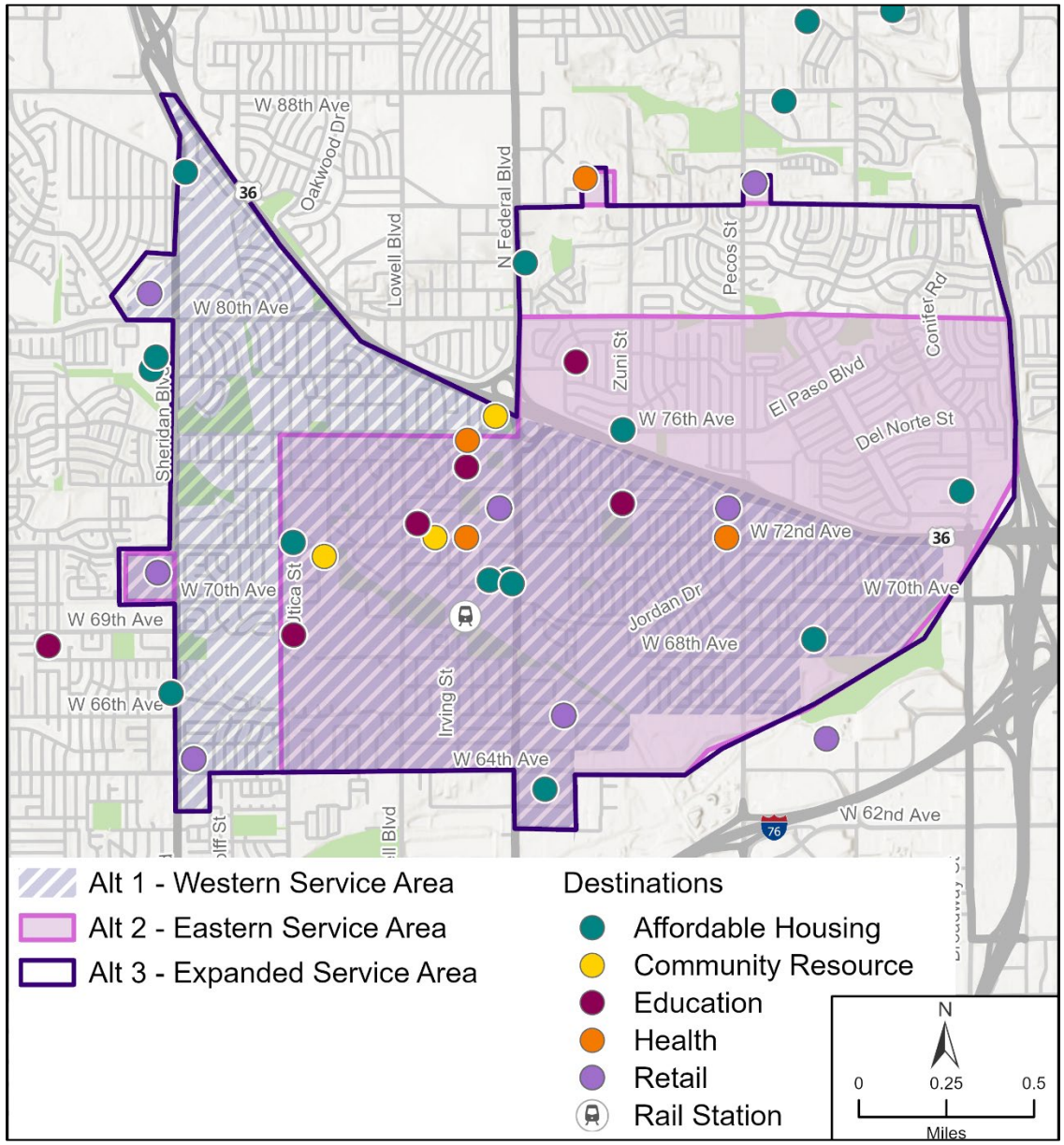
Designated pick-up and drop-off stops, rather than door-to-door service may recreate similar accessibility issues that community members face from fixed route RTD buses.

For these reasons it was determined that a door-to-door, zone-based microtransit service would best meet the needs expressed by community members of an accessible, free, on-demand service that brings them where they want to go within the service area.

Alternative Service Areas

With the type of service determined, the team next developed three potential service areas based on the travel pattern analysis and community input. **Figure 4** shows a map of the three alternatives along with key destination types. Alternative 1 – Eastern Connections and Alternative 2 – Western Connections serve smaller areas than Alternative 3 – Expanded Coverage. However, the smaller areas allow for faster average response times using the same amount of resources.

Figure 4: Map of 3 Alternative Service Area with Key Destinations



The Western Connection option serves a higher number of low-income individuals, households without a vehicle, people with a disability, cost burdened households, and residents older than 60 years old than the Eastern Connection option. The Expanded Coverage option serves the greatest number of community members, but this larger coverage area would provide a less convenient service unless additional resources were dedicated to it compared to the first two alternatives.

To learn more about the evaluation of alternative service areas, refer to **Appendix D.**

Selection of Service Area

Discussions with the steering committee and incorporation of community input informed the final recommended service area. The final service area is most similar to Alternative 1 – Western Service Area, with the addition of two affordable housing sites on the west side of Sheridan Boulevard and a crossover at Pecos Street to provide an access point north of US 36. The next section of this report details both the selected service area and service details recommended for the new community transportation system.

A Plan for Community Centered Transportation

Table 2: Summary of Recommended Microtransit Service

Type of Service	Type of Vehicles	Service Area	Span of Service	Average Response Times	Operating Agency	Other Characteristics
Zone-based, door-to-door microtransit	SUVs or Vans with 2 ADA-accessible vehicles	5.5 square miles	6am-8pm 7 days/week	20-30 minutes after time of ride request	Adams County, contracting a private operator	English and Spanish smartphone app English and Spanish call-in option

The recommended service plan addresses the most urgent transportation needs identified through community input and data analysis. It is intended that this plan serve as a starting point and a guide to implementation. The final details of an implemented service may vary depending on funding or additional information that informs the service design in future stages. See **Table 2** for a summary of the service characteristics.

Type of Service

The recommended service is a zone-based microtransit where passengers can request a ride between any two points within the service zone.

A zone-based microtransit service was chosen due to the dispersed origins and destinations within the study area – this is difficult to serve with a fixed-route, flex-route, or zone to point based transportation system. Zone-based microtransit provides a convenient option for local trips and allows for the collection of information on travel patterns and community transportation needs in order to adjust or expand services to meet additional needs in the future.

Requesting a Ride

People can request rides on the service through an app or call-in dispatch option for people who are less comfortable using an app or do not own a smart phone. The app and call-in service should be in at least both English and Spanish. Additional language options should be explored with a provider depending on need and an operator's capabilities.

Vehicles

This service will likely be best served by smaller vehicle types like mini-vans, SUVs, or passenger vans (like a Ford Transit). The service must have at least one ADA accessible vehicle, but it is recommended that two of the three vehicles be ADA accessible due to the high proportion of residents with disabilities in the area. Two ADA accessible vehicles will reduce wait times

Figure 5: SUV Used for the Denver Connector Microtransit Service



Photo credit: Fehr & Peers

Figure 6: Van Used for Bend Oregon's Ride Bend Microtransit Service



Photo credit: City of Bend

for passengers using a wheelchair or other mobility devices.

Adams County could procure and own the vehicles themselves or could require a private operator to provide the vehicles as part of the service agreement. Purchasing vehicles for this service would require a one-time up front cost but would lower the per hour cost of operations of the private operator. However, relying on operator provided vehicles may be more convenient than purchasing vehicles and managing them for the County.

Fully electric vehicles could be used to operate the service to align with sustainability goals for the region and to capitalize on certain funding sources which target the introduction of electric vehicles for this type of service. Feasibility of fully electric vehicles should be evaluated further considering the long span of service, charger availability, and high cost of long-range electric vehicles. Through conversations with the public and other stakeholders, the project team concluded implementation should prioritize accessibility, operator availability, and user comfort for the pilot ahead of electric vehicles, which could be an optional characteristic if feasible.

Recommended Service Area

See **Figure 7** for a map of the recommended service area with the key destinations labeled within.

The recommended service area for the initial operations is 5.5 square miles and extends south of US-36 except for a small section near Pecos Street in order to provide one connection point north of US 36 which is a major barrier. This section north of US 36 includes a post office and only requires a small deviation that will not significantly impact service quality. The service area continues south to 64th Avenue (or until reaching the industrial areas east of Federal Boulevard).

The area extends to Sheridan Boulevard to the west and includes all destinations on the west side of the street on Sheridan Boulevard and extends just past Sheridan Boulevard in one area near 80th Avenue to include two affordable housing developments: Redwood Village Apartments and the Glendale Apartments. The service area extends east including all of the Twin Lakes neighborhood ending at Kidder Drive and Jennie Drive before the start of the industrial area to the east.

The final service area includes:

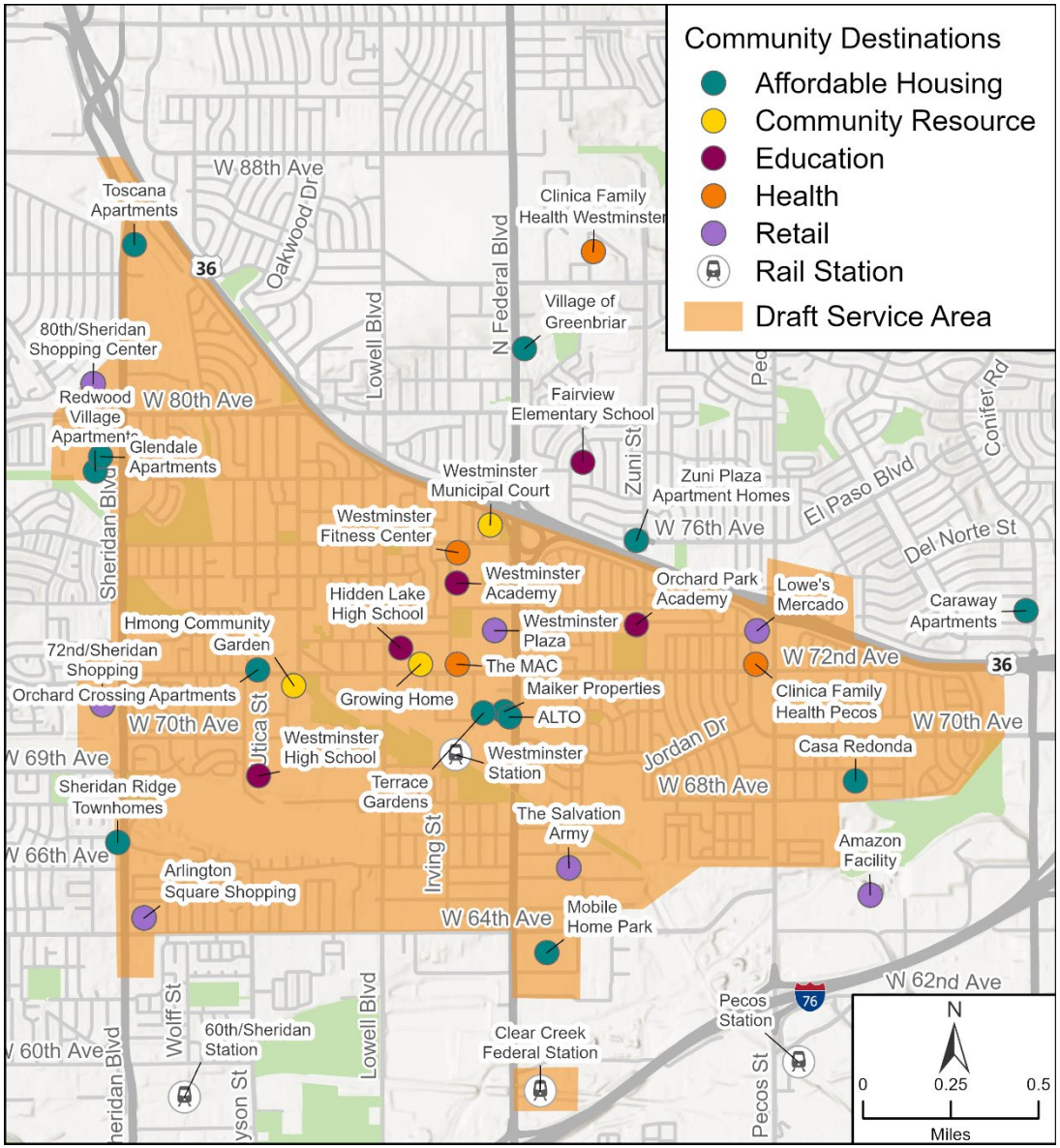
- 10 Affordable housing locations
- 3 Community resource centers
- 4 Schools
- 1 Medical clinic
- 2 Recreation centers
- 4 Grocery stores
- 2 Other shopping areas
- 2 Rail stations

This service area includes the most requested destinations community members mentioned during surveys, focus groups, and steering committee meetings. This service area also prioritizes an initial smaller service area that facilitates faster response times in order to gain community support and build trust. The area can be adapted or expanded after initial implementation if additional resources are available to do this while still providing convenient response times.

Service Characteristics

The following section details the recommended service characteristics for beginning service. These service characteristics map out a robust service that meets most transportation needs identified through this study. Adjustments to these service characteristics can be

Figure 7: Service Area and Key Destinations



made depending on future funding opportunities and other realities of implementation. Ways to adjust these service characteristics and still meet the most acute community needs are explored in this report under Opportunities to Scale.

Days & Hours of Service

We recommend this service begin running **7 days per week.** Through the public outreach conducted it was identified that there is significant demand for the service all days of the week. Although weekdays were most popular, people's travel needs do not stop on the weekends and this service would be a great benefit for people who need to get to work, worship services, errands, social engagements, or fulfill other needs on the weekends.

We recommend this service operate from **6am to 8pm** daily for a total of **14 hours/day.** This span of hours was chosen based on input from focus group participants and survey respondents in the first phase of engagement that identified morning and afternoons as times transportation is most needed. Some focus group participants reported that existing transit routes in the area stop running around six or seven in the evening, which does not allow enough time to get to the grocery store and then home after work. We believe this span of service will serve the greatest number of people, but it is easy to adjust in the future once the service is established and travel patterns are better defined.

Number of Vehicles in Operation

We recommend this service begins operations with **three vehicles** able to be deployed when needed, with two of these being ADA accessible to fulfil trips for people using wheelchairs or other mobility devices. This number of vehicles over a 5.5 square mile service area will allow for a convenient response time. In off-peak travel times when demand is lower, only one or two vehicles may be needed to fulfill trip requests in a timely manner and the third vehicle can be deployed during peak demand times to ensure response times stay relatively consistent throughout the day.

Acquiring Vehicles

Based on Adams County's preference, vehicles can either be purchased by Adams County or provided as part of the contract with a private operator. Purchasing the vehicles requires a larger one-time capital investment and Adams County would be responsible for major repairs and maintenance. However, owning the vehicles would result in a lower hourly rate from a private operator and capital grants can have lower local match requirements (20% for FTA capital funds is typical) which can be more feasible for a public agency to make the investment.

Opting for operator-provided vehicles will result in a higher hourly operating rate to cover the operator's investment and maintenance of vehicles. Conversely, operator provided vehicles allow for more flexibility to change vehicle type in the future as the service grows and service needs change.

Average Response Times

Based on similar services in peer communities, we believe the recommended service area size (5.5 square miles) with three vehicles available for operation will have an average response time of **20-30 minutes**. Response time is likely to vary depending on time of day and days of the week. This average response time is the recommended target for new services starting up. Focus group participants confirmed these wait times are acceptable for their needs and are an improvement

on current scheduling times for access-a-ride and A-lift services.

Estimated Operating Cost

This recommended service is estimated to have an annual operating cost of about **$1.15 million to $1.38 million** per year. The cost estimates are based on the following assumptions:

- **Turnkey operations**: Adams County would contract a third-party provider to operate the service, hire and manage drivers, provide and manage the booking platform, and track performance metrics.
- **Contractor provided vehicles:** The contracted third party provides the vehicles for operation.
- An average hourly cost per vehicle of **$90/hour** if the operator provides the vehicles.
- **Three vehicles operating 14 hours a day, 7 days a week**.
- Two of the vehicles are **wheelchair accessible**.

In addition to the annual operating cost, it is estimated that the service will require a quarter to a half of the full-time equivalent (FTE) of a county staff member to manage the contract with the vendor, collect and respond to customer inquiries, promote the service, review monthly performance metrics, plan for adjustments in service parameters based on performance, and regularly coordinate with the vendor.

Potential Capital Costs

Some capital costs to be considered could include purchasing county owned vehicles or paying for branding and vehicle wrapping for either county or service provider owned vehicles. Below are planning level cost-estimates for these capital investments:

- SUV or electric SUV– $50,000
- 14-passenger van – $95,000
- Vehicle branding/wrap - $5,000/vehicle
- Promotion and marketing ahead of launch - $20,000 to $30,000

Language & Cultural Accessibility

Focus group participants expressed a strong desire for drivers to be bilingual in English and Spanish and for the service to hire local drivers when possible.

Achieving this goal will depend on the available hiring pool, but Adams county can require a contractor to have a policy that gives priority to bilingual and local hires when possible.

Additional Implementation Considerations

Partnerships

Additional considerations for implementation can include having discussions with potential community partners. Depending on the organization community partnerships could include funding contributions, co-application on grants, or marketing and information sharing with their networks. Ideas to explore for partnerships could be additional government agencies, health care providers, local service providers, local community organizations, the local library, and other public service providers well connected with the community.

Service Provider Agreement

In addition to community partners, Adams County can consider how they wish to partner with a private service provider. For example, what services or infrastructure can Adams County provide to minimize operating costs and what should be asked of the private operator to improve rider experience and convenience.

Some items the County could provide to lower operating costs:

- Vehicles
- Vehicle storage
- Vehicle washing and maintenance
- Fuel
- Marketing support

Some items to consider asking the operator to provide could include:

- Annual rider surveys
- Tracking and reporting of out-of-zone ride requests

These additional considerations are optional but should be discussed as potential options to explore based on community needs and available resources.

Real Time Trip Planning

Being able to integrate trip planning and vehicle location information from the planned microtransit service into currently utilized rider trip planning apps is important in building confidence in the user experience. As a long-term goal, the County should work to take the service data and build it into apps such as Google Maps, RTD's Next Ride app, and the Transit App. Real time vehicle location information and trip planning can be done with Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), which help integrate the vehicular data with the mobile application and give realistic estimated time of vehicle arrivals and coordinated trip planning. Ideally, users could plan trips and see real-time travel time estimates across various modes and transportation providers. This integration is known as Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS).

Opportunities to Scale

The recommended service presented in this plan represents a robust initial service. If resources are limited, the initial scale of service could be paired down to better fit the budget or other constraints. However, limiting service too much may negatively impact the usefulness of the service to the community. Below are some guidelines on minimum levels of service in order to still provide a useful, convenient service that meets the needs of community members:

- 5 days/week of service
- 10 hours/day of service
- 20-30 minute average weight times
- At least 2 vehicles in operation to mitigate service interruptions if a vehicle needs maintenance

Regardless of the extent of the starting service, the County should commit (and identify sufficient resources) to operate the service at the initial level of service (or better) for a minimum of three years. This is a common amount of time that it takes to build awareness and trust in a new transportation system, and therefore ridership. Starting at a higher level of service and then decreasing service can break community trust in a service and negatively impact ridership.

Potential Future Expansions

Through conversations with community members and stakeholders we identified options for future service expansions once the service is established and looking to grow. Confirming these expansion ideas through additional community outreach is an important step before implementing any of them as the specific needs and priorities of the community may change. Below is a list of these potential expansion options to evaluate in the future:

- Regularly scheduled shuttles to regional shopping locations and/or medical centers.
- A flex-route bus service (if a clear route pattern emerges from the ridership data).

- Expanding the service area north of US-36 to serve the Sherrelwood neighborhood and the shopping and medical centers on 84th Avenue.
- Expanding south to connect to Regis University and the surrounding neighborhoods.
- Expanding to include the Amazon warehouse (including exploring a funding partnership with the Amazon facility to provide transportation for workers).

Measuring Success

Community transportation system performance is assessed based on metrics such as the number of passenger trips completed per day and the amount of time passengers have to wait between when a trip is requested and when the vehicle arrives (the response time).

Table 3: includes preliminary performance estimates and goals for this service based on the performance of the Denver Connector service, which is very similar in context to this study area and recommended service. Each factor is described in more detail following the table.

Table 3: Recommended Service Goals

Goal	Goal Metric
Passenger trips/day	50 to 65 per day (average for the first three months) 75 to 90 trips per day (average for the first year) 100 to 150 trips per day (average after a year)
Passenger trips /service hour	3 to 5 passengers
Trips to/from target areas	The trips to and from designated target areas should be overrepresented proportionally in ridership than the rest of the service areas.
Ridership from underserved populations	Ridership from target populations is proportional or overrepresented in total ridership compared to the overall population. This metric is tracked through rider surveys.
Response time goal	20-30 minutes average response time and 90% of trips fulfilled in 30 minutes or less
Average trip distance	2 miles
Average trip time	10 minutes

While the service plan presented in this report may prove to be effective for the life of the program, it is anticipated that the service will need to be adjusted periodically to better serve local needs.

The following section describes elements of a monitoring plan that should be implemented early in the life of the program and used to determine whether and when service changes are needed. Tracking and reporting of these metrics should be the responsibility of the private operator through the service contract.

Passengers Estimates

Given the demographics and density of development patterns within the proposed service area and based on examples from other similar programs it is estimated that the service would average about three passengers per service hour in the first 6-12 months and likely will grow over time. Assuming three vehicles operating 14 hours a day, seven days a week, it is recommended that the ridership goal for the first three months of service be approximately 50 to 65 trips per day,

growing to 75 to 90 trips per day by the end of the first year, and growing to 100 to 150 trips per day after the first year. If the service is not meeting ridership targets, then additional analysis may be needed to pinpoint when the service is most utilized, when the service is not being utilized, if certain destinations should be added or removed from the service area, or if additional marketing is needed to promote the service.

While ridership is a key metric, it should not be the single metric for measuring whether the microtransit pilot is performing successfully. When the County is determining whether to extend or adapt the service, metrics like response time, rider satisfaction, types of trips provided, and the rate at which the service completes the trip types it was intended for should be among the factors considered.

Average Response Time

The initial average response time is estimated to be between 20 and 30 minutes. As demand increases the response time will increase. If it is found that the average response time is 30 minutes or more or if more than 10% of trips have a response time over 30 minutes, then changes to the service area size or number of vehicles in operation may be needed in order to improve response times to keep the service reliable and convenient.

Average Trip Time and Distance

The estimated number of trips per day is based on the estimated trip time, the estimated time traveling between trips, the number of vehicles available, and the performance of similar microtransit programs. The average trip time of 10 minutes is based on a sampling of potential trips within the proposed service area zone. It is assumed that when the system first launches there will be instances where vehicles are traveling between passenger trips without any passengers onboard. To factor in time spent without passengers (deadhead time to get between trips and downtime during slower periods), the average trip time was increased by 60% from the estimated average to create a conservative estimate.

Driver Training & Support

Ensuring drivers are well trained and familiar with the service and booking system will be important. This training will be part of the responsibility of the private provider, but the County can request additional trainings if needed.

One factor to consider when choosing a private operator is whether their drivers are employees or private contractors. A model with employee drivers may allow for more targeted training for drivers assigned to this service in order to provide a more accessible and culturally responsive service to this community. There are benefits and tradeoffs to different models for hiring drivers and these should be one of the considerations in the review of proposals from private contractors.

User Experience

While metrics like ridership can convey system productivity, qualitative indicators are also important. The experiences of early riders should be captured in order to learn about any unanticipated issues with service provision. Rider feedback can be captured through customer service star ratings provided through the smartphone app after each ride is completed (this is automatic after each ride) and by compiling customer feedback received via email or through call-ins. More comprehensive surveys regarding detailed service or trip characteristics could be distributed electronically and

using paper copies by the service vendor. The survey can be used to assess ease of use of the reservation system, whether riders find the vehicles comfortable, whether riders have positive interactions with vehicle operators, and whether the rider travel experience has improved when compared with their pre-microtransit travel. To ensure the highest response rate possible, the survey should be brief and focus primarily on multiple choice responses with just one open-ended response. Surveying can be included in the contract with the operator and conducted at regular intervals.

Serving Target Populations

Surveys can also include targeted demographic questions to better understand how well the service is reaching target populations. Demographic questions should be limited and focused on identifying certain target populations. The service can have a goal of target populations being proportionally represented or overrepresented in the ridership of the service compared to the overall population.

Trip Origins & Destinations

The initial service zone has been drawn up based on the travel market assessment combined with community and stakeholder input. It is possible that some portions of the service area may be disproportionately heavy trip generators or popular destinations. Monitoring the origin and destination patterns by trip will allow the County to understand whether the service area needs to be modified or if there are particular origin-destination pairs and routes that are utilized at a high rate. The selected vendor should be able to provide visualizations of trip patterns to help county staff evaluate service utilization. This information will inform potential adjustments such as narrowing or expanding the service area or establishing fixed pick-up/drop-off locations that serve popular destinations.

Serving Target Areas

With the origin/destination ridership data, the County can identify target areas they are trying to serve (like affordable housing, grocery stores, etc.) and track trips taken to/from these target areas. The trips to and from designated target areas should be overrepresented proportionally in ridership than the rest of the service areas. (For example, 10% of the service area but 15% of trips.)

Unserviceable Trip Requests

Trip requests outside the microtransit zone will not be accepted. However, these trip requests can be tracked in order to understand if there are patterns in “un-serviceable” areas, as they can reveal where service could be expanded if there is sufficient user demand.

A Peer Example

The microtransit service recommended in this plan is not a unique service to the region. Many municipalities across the region have implemented or are currently exploring implementing similar services. One established example is the City and County of Denver's Connector, a microtransit service aimed at improving transportation access in the city. This report section provides details on the implementation and performance of this system in order to give an established service example that operates in communities similar to this study area.

Implementation

The Montbello Connector launched in 2021 as a two-year pilot program that operated between 6am– 8pm Monday through Friday in a 5 square mile area. The program started with three vehicles and five drivers. The GES Connector launched in 2022 with the same service span, size, and days of operation. The City and County of Denver contracts this service from a private provider, Downtowner.

The program transitioned from pilot to ongoing public transit service at the end of 2024 due to quick adoption by community members, positive rider feedback, and high ridership.

In December of 2024 Denver launched a 3rd microtransit zone in West Denver. The following summary, however, only includes data from the Montbello and GES Connectors as the West Denver Connector was too new at the time this report was completed, and data was not available.

Performance and Impact

Both pilot programs were immediately popular and grew in ridership quickly. This growth demonstrated the need for the service, but did initially create delays in response time, particularly for the Montbello Connector.

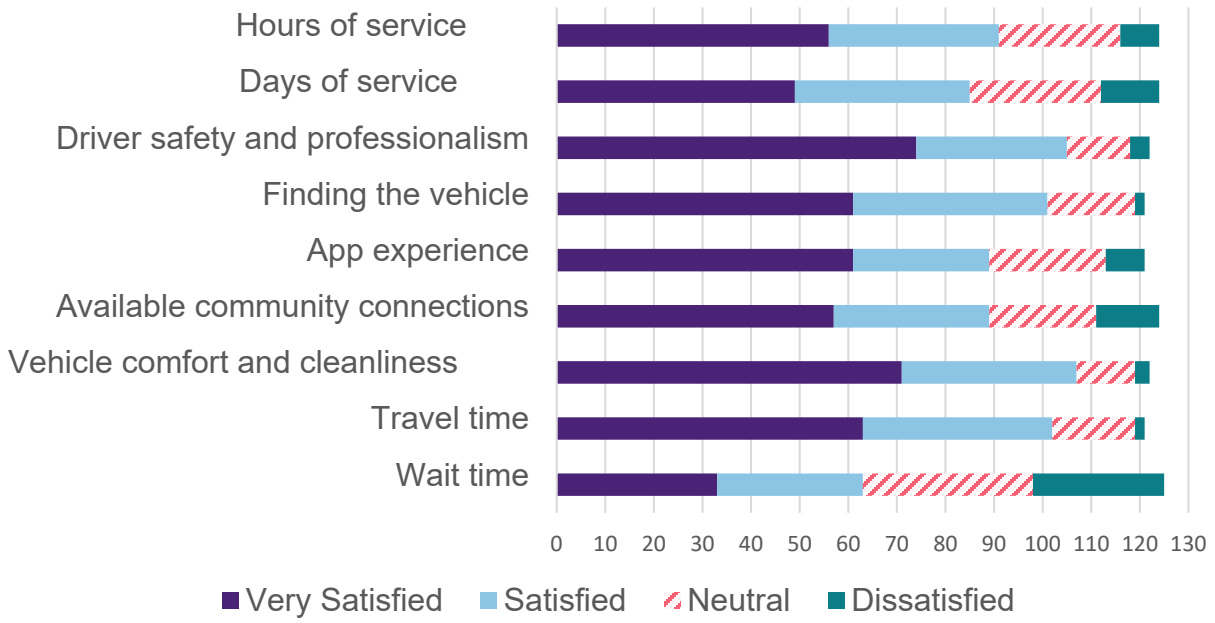
The average wait time for the Montbello pilot was 27 minutes and the average experience rating from riders was 4.8/5. The wait time for the Montbello pilot was higher than anticipated due to the overwhelming demand. On average, 248 passenger trips per day were provided in 2023 (for an annual total of 64,426 riders).

The average wait time for the GES pilot was 19 minutes and the average experience rating from riders was 4.8/5. The GES Connector pilot provided a total of 30,666 rides in 2023.

Photo credit: Fehr & Peers



Figure 8: Rider Satisfaction



Approximately 41% of residents across the Montbello and GES neighborhoods have Connector accounts.

As part of the pilot program, riders filled out a survey about their experience with the service. Riders used the services primarily for personal errands/shopping, connecting to RTD bus or rail routes, and commuting to/from school or work. Survey respondents indicated the top reasons they chose the service were because their household does not have access to a vehicle, the service is convenient, they do not have a driver's license, or because the service is fare free.

As shown in **Figure 8** a majority of surveyed riders were satisfied with the hours of service, days of service, travel time, vehicle comfort, available connections, and the safety and professionalism of drivers. The main cause for dissatisfaction was wait times. Survey respondents also expressed appreciation for the service in a qualitative response section. The popularity of the program and positive feedback from the surveys indicates that the pilot program was successful and met the needs of the community.

Lessons from Montbello

In the Montbello pilot, school trips became very popular and created a pinch point on the system in the morning and early afternoon. In response, ride requests at elementary schools were prohibited between 3 and 4pm, pick-up/drop-off locations were moved to a destination within a short walk of schools instead, and the app shared information about local school bus route options. These solutions, along with reserving one shuttle for non-school trips, helped improve response time during high popularity periods.

Key Takeaways

Microtransit can be an effective way to meet community transportation needs and piloting a program can introduce the concept to the community, help build support, and identify opportunities to grow, edit, and continue the service. Riders who try the service generally continue to use the service and provide positive feedback about their experience, in the case of the Denver Connector.

Next Steps

This final section of the report details the next steps for implementing the recommended service and concludes with a suggested timeline for implementation.

Identifying Funding

Below are lists of potential funding sources for this new service divided by funding type.

Local/Regional

RTD's Partnership Program

RTD allocated $3 million for 2025 to the Partnership Program to help local communities meet mobility needs through transportation pilots. The 2025 call for projects is open from April 16, 2025 – May 14, 2025.

DRCOG's Transportation Demand Management Services Set-aside

The Transportation Demand Management Services set-aside program has $1 million allocated for 2024-2025. Eligible project types include innovative projects that pilot and demonstrate effectiveness of the approach. The minimum match for the program is 17.21% from non-federal funds.

DRCOG Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

DRCOG conducts calls for projects every four years, the previous call was in 2023. A new 2026-2029 draft TIP plan will be voted on by the DRCOG Board of Directors in mid-April 2025.

The Colorado Health Foundation

The Colorado Health Foundation awards grants to nonprofit organizations and private-sector partners whose work aligns with their 10 priorities which include food access and economic opportunity. They have upcoming funding applications due in June 2025, October 2025, and February 2026.

Funding Partnerships

Adams County should explore potential local funding partnerships like the City of Westminster and Public Health agencies who may be able to contribute to the local match for grants or other funding sources.

State

CDOT's Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options Fund (MMOF)

The MMOF allocates funding to multimodal transportation projects throughout the state including fixed route and on-demand transit. Funds are distributed by formula among the 15 Colorado Transportation Planning Regions (TRR). The program requires a 50% funding match which can come from any federal, state or local fund, however qualifying county or municipal governments can receive a reduced match requirement based on population over 65, population in poverty, median household income, and median home value.

CDOT's Nonattainment Area Air Pollution Mitigation Enterprise (NAAPME)

The NAAPME grant funding program provides funds for eligible projects that provide improvements to air quality in nonattainment areas. The recent funding round closed in February 2025.

Colorado Energy Office Community Accelerated Mobility Project (CAMP)

The CAMP program provides up to $1.5 million for implementation grants and holds 1-2 application rounds per year. At the time of writing of this report, applications are being accepted until May 9, 2025. Local, county, and Tribal Governments, Community-based organizations (CBOs), nonprofit organizations, and schools are all eligible to apply. Proposed programs must meet unique community needs and include an electric mobility component.

Hiring an Operator

The County should solicit bids from qualified vendors to launch, manage, and operate the microtransit including providing and maintaining a vehicle fleet, qualified drivers, a trip booking platform, and performance monitoring program.

It is a good idea to make sure this is an FTA compliant process, even if no FTA funds will be used initially for the service, in order to leave the option open to fund the service with FTA funds in the future without having to go through procurement again. See the National Rural Transit Assistance Program and the FTA's Best Practices Procurement & Lessons Learned Manual to learn more about FTA compliant procurement procedures and other FTA compliant policies.

Enhancing Short Trips in Adams County Study

At the time of completion of this study the Enhancing Short Trips in Adams County Study was still ongoing. The two study areas overlap and seek to address related issues of mobility and access. It is important that any service recommendations that come out of the Enhancing Short Trips in Adams County Study integrate well, rather than conflict or duplicate, the recommended service in this study. Ideally, if a new microtransit service is recommended in the Enhancing Short Trips in Adams County Study a single adjusted service area should be designed to serve both areas without adding inefficiencies and rider confusion by operating two separate systems.

Continuing to Engage the Community

Going forward, Adams County should use the channels of communication established through this study to update community members and provide information on the implementation process and eventual launch of the service. In particular the County should leverage and continue to build the existing network of community groups identified through this study to raise awareness and promote the new service with community members. The agency should continue to engage key stakeholders on a regular basis and ask those stakeholders to pass the information on to their networks and serve as ambassadors for the new service. This role can be as simple as committing to including the new microtransit service as a discussion topic in community events or promoting the service on an organization's website and social media pages. The agency can also collaborate with ambassadors to periodically visit popular destinations throughout the study area and informally discuss the new service with residents.

Employers

Partnerships with local employers are another tool the agency can utilize. Local employers in the study area can begin informing their employees about the opportunity to travel from home if they live in the area or from one of the nearby RTD bus routes using microtransit to reduce their commute time, save money, and

arrive to work safely. The County should consider partnering with local employers and businesses to market service to this ridership demographic as one part of a larger marketing strategy.

Schools

Local schools, such as Daniel C. Vallez Family Education Center, Westminster High School, Colorado STEM Academy, and Westminster Academy of International Studies, can also advertise the new service. While some parents may not be comfortable allowing their child to walk, bike, or ride the public bus to school or after school activities, microtransit could be perceived as a safer travel option.

Community Hubs and Service Provider Partnerships

The agency should work with local service providers to promote the service. These providers can include medical providers, affordable and public housing providers, social services, non-profits, libraries, local foundations (like Westminster Community Foundation), local religious institutions, cultural associations, community associations, HOAs ,and recreation centers. Having flyers available or tabletop displays that announce the new service and how to use it can be an effective way to spread awareness of the service, especially to people with the fewest transportation options today.

Several organizations have already expressed interest in helping support a pilot microtransit service and should be continued to be engaged as the service is developed. The following list documents some ideas for partners and their potential roles.

Irving Street Library

The library has the only publicly accessible phones and computers in the study area, and their support and partnership can help reach community members without personal electronic devices. They could also be a great resource for distributing information and helping community members learn about the service.

Growing Home

Growing home could help distribute information to the community and educate community members about the service and how to schedule rides.

Maiker Housing Partners

Maiker Housing Partners could leverage their community organizers to spread the word about the service and help arrange rides.

The Arc

The Arc could be a partner in providing driver training about disability support needs.

PABNEEG and Smart Commute

PABNEEG and Smart Commute could be partners in helping distribute information about the service to community members.

Special Events

Adams County should consider having a presence at local events marketing the service. Setting a table with brochures and a friendly community ambassador is a relatively low-cost way to build awareness of the new service.

RTD

Although the microtransit service is a County program, it is important to collaborate with RTD, specifically with its customer service staff. It is likely that residents will not realize who is providing the service and may reach out to RTD

with questions about the microtransit service. The RTD customer service staff must be well equipped to answer questions about how the service works and how a user can request a ride. Providing marketing materials and training for RTD customer service staff will allow for seamless customer service, even if a potential rider is confused about whether the new microtransit service is a County or RTD service.

Similarly, a strong partnership with RTD can allow for ridership and other information to be shared between agencies to inform how the services work best together and how both can be improved.

Photo credit: DRCOG



Recommended Implementation Timeline & Roles

Table 4 lists the major actions needed for implementation of the service, what entity should lead each action, and what entities could be potential partners for these actions. The timelines in this table are rough estimates based on implementation of peer agency systems but may vary depending on the specifics of implementation for this program.

Table 4: North Federal Community Transportation Implementation Timeline

Timeframe	Actions	Lead	Potential Partners
1 year before launch	Apply to viable funding sources for operations (and capital funds if purchasing vehicles).	Adams County Public Works Department	City of Westminster, Adams County Health Department, Community Organizations, DRCOG, CDOT
6 months before launch	Once funding is secured, put out an RFP for a private operator.	Adams County Public Works Department	City of Westminster
3 months before launch	Finalize program management and oversight. Select turn-key service operator and associated vehicle fleet. Finalize budget and associated operating hours. Select program name, logo, and brand.	Adams County Public Works Department	City of Westminster
2 months before launch	Develop marketing materials and advertising plan. Formalize promotional partnerships with community groups. Work with a microtransit vendor on service plan adjustments. Install electric vehicle charging stations (if applicable).	Adams County Public Works Department	City of Westminster, Adams County Health Department, Community Organizations
1 month before launch	Install vehicle brand graphics (vinyl wraps). Begin intensive advertising and promotion of program launch. Coordinate with program partners and elected officials about launch. Test microtransit technology and dry-run service.	Contracted Service Provider	Adams County Public Works Department, City of Westminster, Adams County Health Department, Community Organizations

Timeframe	Actions	Lead	Potential Partners
Launch of Operations	Final planning, promotion, and coordination for launch event. Determine performance monitoring program. Launch event. Intensive advertising and promotion of service.	Contracted Service Provider	Adams County Public Works Department, City of Westminster, Adams County Health Department, Community Organizations
Month 1	Daily service quality monitoring. Responsiveness to passenger complaints or input. Weekly evaluation of performance metrics. Intensive advertising and promotion of service.	Contracted Service Provider	Adams County Public Works Department
Month 2	Review lessons learned in the first month with the vendor. Intensive advertising and promotion of service. Ongoing evaluation/monitoring/customer responsiveness.	Contracted Service Provider	Adams County Public Works Department
Months 3-6	Implementation of possible service adjustments . Ongoing advertising and promotion of service. Ongoing evaluation/monitoring/customer responsiveness. Report to elected officials and community partners on early results.	Contracted Service Provider, Adams County Public Works Department	City of Westminster
Months 7+	Plan for Year 2 of service and develop necessary resources. Ongoing advertising and promotion of service. Ongoing evaluation/monitoring/customer responsiveness. Review and report on final pilot results.	Contracted Service Provider, Adams County Public Works Department	City of Westminster