



Sheridan Boulevard Corridor Safety Study: Existing Conditions Summary Executive Summary

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Executive Summary

The Sheridan Boulevard Corridor Safety Study is funded and led by the Denver Regional Council of Governments, commonly known as DRCOG, in close coordination with the City and County of Denver, City of Lakewood, City of Edgewater, City of Wheat Ridge, Town of Mountain View, Town of Lakeside, Colorado Department of Transportation, commonly known as CDOT, and the Regional Transportation District, commonly known as RTD, to improve safety and mobility along the 10-mile corridor between Interstate-76 and U.S. Highway 285 (Hampden Avenue). The purpose of the Study is to evaluate opportunities and propose recommendations to make Sheridan Boulevard safer for all users, whether they are driving, taking transit, walking, or biking.

This Existing Conditions Summary recaps the Study's first phase, including a comprehensive evaluation of the safety challenges and needs of all roadway users. The evaluation included a(n):

- Detailed analysis of historic traffic crashes.
- Evaluation of multimodal mobility.
- Review of previous plans and studies.
- Assessment of zoning and land use.
- Investigation into future growth and development.
- Review of demographics.
- Synthesis of key findings to inform the next stage of recommendations development.

Safety Analysis Findings

Sheridan Boulevard has been identified as a roadway on the DRCOG Regional High-Injury Network, with the section south of W 26th Avenue designated as a Critical Corridor due to the frequency of fatal and serious-injury crashes. To provide applicable recommendations to address observed traffic crash patterns and types along the corridor, five years of crash data (from January 1, 2018, to December 31, 2022) was analyzed for the safety assessment.

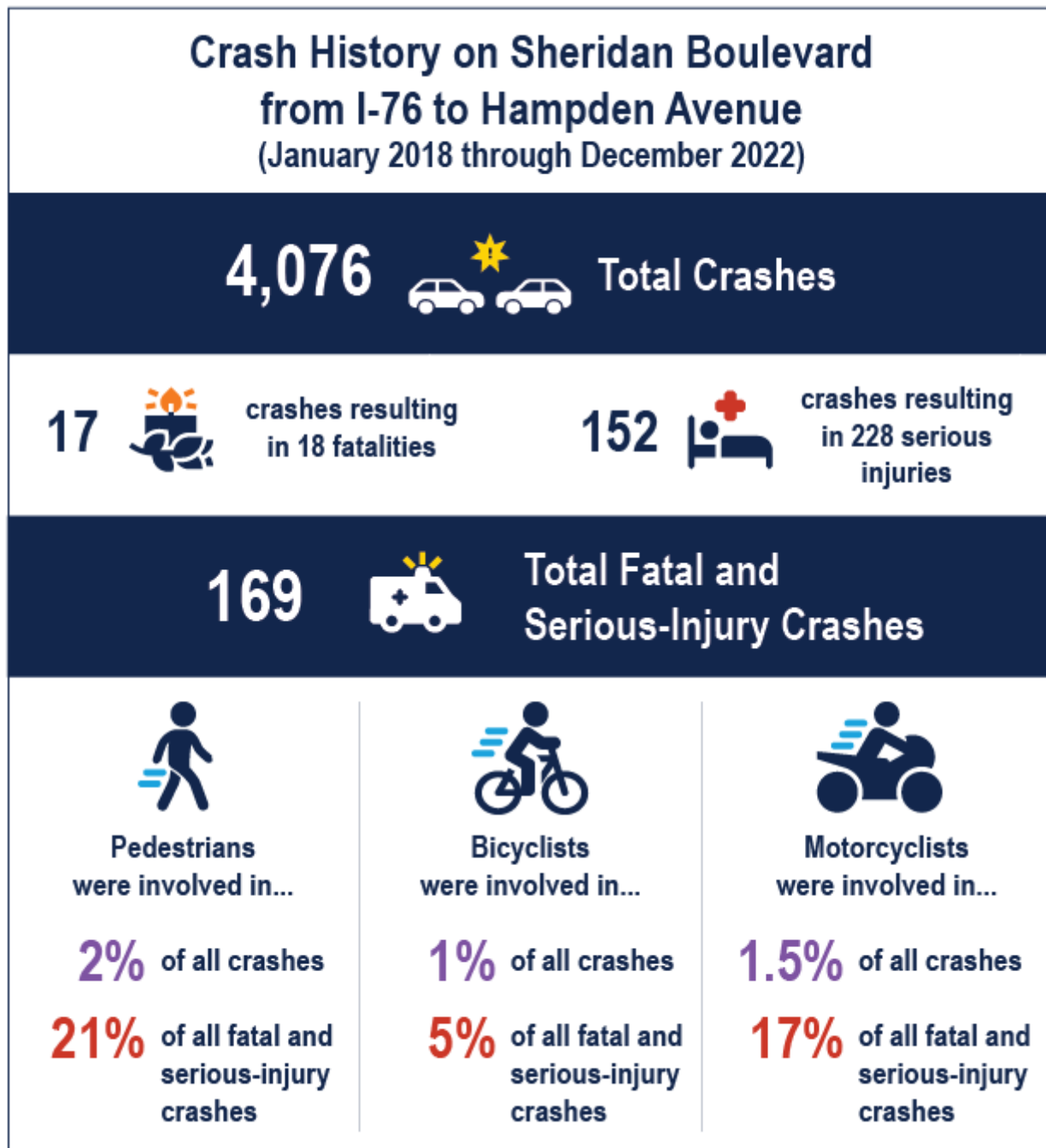


Figure 1. Crash Statistics Infographic.

Figure 1 summarizes key takeaways from the corridor-wide safety analysis. Notably, the share of fatal and serious-injury crashes involving a vulnerable road user is disproportionately high. A few other key takeaways include:

- The majority of crashes resulting in serious injury or fatality were **approach turn (left turn)** crashes.
- The majority of crashes along the corridor were **rear-end** crashes, but only about 2% of these crashes resulted in serious injury or fatality.
- **There were 92 crashes** (2% of all crashes) **that involved a pedestrian.**
 - Of these, 8 were fatal (47% of all fatal crashes) and 28 resulted in serious injury (18% of all serious-injury crashes).
- **There were 42 crashes** (1% of all crashes) **that involved a bicyclist.**
 - Of these, 1 was fatal (6% of all fatal crashes) and 8 resulted in serious injury (5% of all serious-injury crashes).
- **There were 62 crashes** (1.5% of all crashes) **that involved a motorcyclist.**
 - Of these, 4 were fatal (24% of all fatal crashes) and 25 resulted in serious injury (16% of all serious-injury crashes).

A detailed safety analysis was completed for each location along the corridor where at least one fatal or serious-injury crash occurred to better understand location-specific crash trends and contributing factors. This analysis is located in **Appendix A**.

Multimodal Findings

The multimodal network along and adjacent to Sheridan Boulevard was analyzed to understand how potential gaps or limitations in the network may be impacting safety. The following summarizes the key takeaways from the analysis:

- **Pedestrian Infrastructure Deficiencies:** The sidewalk network is incomplete, with gaps and deteriorating pavement conditions in some locations. Signalized crossings are spaced up to 4,000 feet apart, resulting in situations where pedestrians may choose to make unsafe midblock crossings. Many sidewalks are attached to the roadway and extremely narrow, failing to provide basic pedestrian comfort let alone to comply with Americans with Disabilities Act standards. A lack of adequate lighting may cause navigation concerns for people walking and biking and compound visibility concerns between user groups.

- **Bicycle Infrastructure Gaps:** The corridor lacks dedicated bike facilities, forcing bicyclists onto sidewalks or alternate routes. Many east-west side-street bike facilities end before crossing Sheridan Boulevard, and existing crossings lack safe infrastructure for bicyclists.
- **Transit Limitations:** RTD Route 51 is the primary bus route serving the corridor and is constrained by infrequent service (30 minutes peak frequency and 1 hour off-peak frequency) and long dwell times, resulting in low reliability. Route 51 runs from Westminster to Englewood, with many bus stops located at unsignalized intersections, increasing the likelihood of transit users making unsafe crossings.
- **Vehicular Traffic and Congestion:** Daily traffic volumes range from 21,600 to 43,000 vehicles, with the highest volumes observed between 6th Avenue and W Alameda Avenue. The high density of driveways along the corridor contributes to a significant number of vehicle-vehicle and vehicle-pedestrian conflicts and crashes.

Other Findings

Zoning, growth, future development, and demographics were analyzed to help understand the context of the corridor and identify how existing and future conditions may impact recommendations. The following summarizes the key takeaways from the analysis:

- **Prior Planning Efforts:** Relevant previous plans were reviewed to inform the existing conditions analysis, many of which shared common recommendations and visions for Sheridan Boulevard. These plans identify key intersections and nodes where public and private investment could be leveraged to enhance safety through new development or targeted infrastructure improvements.
- **Zoning and Land Use:** Much of the corridor is characterized by low-density residential and commercial uses. North of 6th Avenue, land uses and zoning densities become more varied and mixed, presenting opportunities for transformative projects that can improve housing, mobility, economic resilience, and public health through coordinated planning and partnerships.

- **Future Growth and Development Trends:** Household and employment growth are expected throughout this corridor between 2020 and 2050, particularly between 6th Avenue and W Colfax Avenue, shifting travel patterns and reinforcing the corridor's role as a location for future development. This growth is expected to shape transportation demand, infrastructure planning, and land use decisions.
- **Demographics:** DRCOG Index scores vary among census tracts in the study area. The census tracts on the north and south ends of the corridor have populations that have been less marginalized than others. The census tracts in the center of the corridor, specifically on the east side of Sheridan Boulevard in Denver, show the highest levels of marginalization on the map. The highest scores are located just south of W Alameda Avenue.

Synthesis of Findings

A comprehensive table that summarizes key findings exists at the end of the full Existing Conditions Summary. The findings from this summary will inform subsequent phases of this Study's planning and recommendation development, ensuring a safer and more accessible multimodal transportation corridor.