6.1 – KEY ISSUES

This chapter provides a summary of future investments Adams County can make to improve the comfort, reliability, and convenience of taking transit within the County.

There are three primary challenges associated with transit service in Adams County today:

1. First and last mile gap – or barriers to accessing transit service

2. No transit service in the eastern portion of the County

3. Insufficient transit service in other portions of the County

Barriers to accessing transit, also known as the first and final mile gap, are a significant challenge to many existing and potential transit users. This gap can be in the form of long distances to the nearest bus stop or commuter rail station, a lack of bicycle and pedestrian amenities, or insufficient available transportation options. Even in areas with significant RTD investment and frequent, reliable service, such as the N Line, there are many barriers to accessing N Line stations.

There is also a lack of transit options for the eastern portion of the County. The RTD service area boundary terminates at the Denver International Airport, leaving many communities in Adams County unserved by transit, including Colorado Air and Space Port, Bennett, and Strasburg.

Even areas within the RTD service area, such as the southwest portion of the County and around Brighton, are often underserved. RTD routes in these areas are infrequent, do not go where users are seeking to travel, or do not operate at sufficient days per week or hours per day.

6.2 – BIG IDEAS

To address the challenges outlined in the previous section, the County can pursue the following recommendations for improving the transit network.

6.2.1 – FIRST AND LAST MILE CONNECTIONS

To address the first and last mile gap, a suite of infrastructure, policy, and program strategies are recommended (**Figure 6.1**).

Bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvements
A connected network of low stress pedestrian and bicycle facilities provides an opportunity for transit users to access bus stop or commuter rail stations comfortably without a vehicle. This includes enhanced and frequent pedestrian crossings, a complete and ADA-compliant sidewalk network, and on- and off-street bicycle facilities such as protected bike lanes and trails. To enhance walk and bikeability, facilities should form a dense grid to reduce out of direction travel and increase access. Providing bicycle and pedestrian

Figure 6.1: First and Last Mile Connections

with opportunities to cut-through when roadways do not connect is an effective way to increase connectivity for people walking and biking.

Transit-oriented development (TOD) and mobility hubs

TOD is the planning and design of a development around high frequency transit stops and stations in order to increase access to transit for the most residents, visitors, and employees. This development should be compact, dense, walkable, and mixed use. The Comprehensive Plan coordinated closely with the Transportation Master Plan throughout the planning effort and identifying locations for TOD was a significant part of that coordination. They are identified on the preferred land use map shown in **Map 2.1**. These development patterns would make living without a vehicle in Adams County viable and convenient. Mobility hubs are centers that integrate various transportation modes to allow users to make seamless connections between their origins and destinations. Often centered around transit stations or high frequency bus stops, mobility hubs enable quick transfers from a bus onto a scooter or shared bike, and

can also share real-time information on connecting buses, availability of shared-use mobility devices, and walking directions to nearby destinations.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) strategies

TDM strategies are policies, services, and programs to encourage people to travel by walking, rolling, bicycling, using transit, or carpooling, rather than driving alone. Shifting travel modes away from driving alone allows existing infrastructure (like roadways, signals, and sidewalks) to operate more efficiently. TDM strategies are a cost-effective compliment to infrastructure and help optimize available infrastructure and services. These strategies cover a wide range of approaches to improving access to transit. The most effective TDM strategies for improving transit access include: education and marketing; carpool to transit programs; promotion of RTD passes; employer outreach; trip planning information such as smart phone apps; Guaranteed Ride Home; bike parking; and improved amenities and information (real time transit
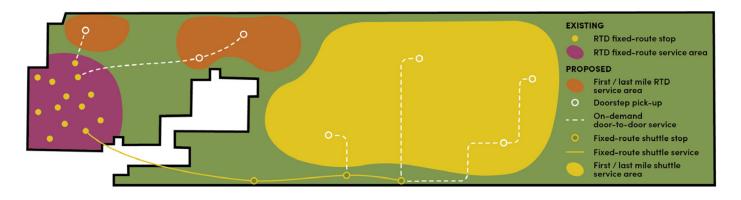
arrival information, maps, schedules in English and Spanish) at transit stops and stations.
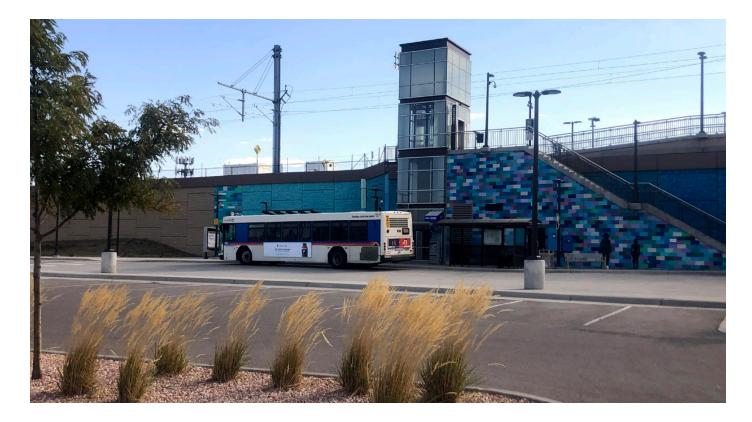
6.2.2 – SUPPLEMENTAL TRANSIT SERVICE

The second and third items addressed in the key issues section were a lack of transit service in the eastern and central portions of the County and insufficient service in other unincorporated portions of the County. This plan recommends a package of three service types as shown in **Figure 6.2** to supplement RTD service with improved coverage and frequency. Together, these services can connect people in the eastern and central portions of the County with either RTD fixed route service or destinations in the western portion of the County.

- A shuttle is proposed (shown in the solid yellow line) to connect small rural communities (such as Watkins, Bennett, and Strasburg along I-70) to either their final destination in the denser, western portions of the County or into the RTD network (shown as pink circles). Having this shuttle makes

not owning a vehicle a viable option.

- In order to provide access to the shuttle for those that live outside of the core rural community, a paratransit or on-demand door-to-door service could connect people in the very low-density rural parts of the County to the shuttle stops in Watkins, Bennett, or Strasburg. The service area for this on-demand service is designated by the yellow area, meaning anyone traveling from a point in the yellow area to a shuttle stop, would be eligible for this service. This service would only operate when requested and advanced bookings would be required, as this service can be expensive to provide.

- The orange circles represent other areas in the central and northwestern parts of the County where existing RTD service does not cover or operates at a low frequency. An additional on-demand door-to-door service is recommended to connect users from the orange circles to key

Figure 6.2: Illustration of Potential Locations for Supplemental Transit Service Across Adams County

EXISTING
- RTD fixed-route stop
- RTD fixed-route service area

PROPOSED
- First / last mile RTD service area
- Doorstep pick-up
- On-demand door-to-door service
- Fixed-route shuttle stop
- Fixed-route shuttle service
- First / last mile shuttle service area

destinations or RTD transit stations within the denser parts of the County (shown in the pink circles). This service is recommended east of Brighton and north of Thornton. This service would only operate when requested and advanced bookings would be required, as this service can be expensive to provide.

In summary, with this package of recommendations, those in rural areas use an on-demand service (white dashed lines) that can include shared rides that they have scheduled in advance to access a fixed route shuttle stop (in communities such as Watkins, Bennett, and Strasburg) (hollow yellow circle). The shuttle then travels at a fixed schedule (yellow line) to a larger city in the region where it may make multiple stops based on

previously identified common and key destinations and RTD transit stations. An additional service shown in the orange circles can also be offered that connects users to areas in western Adams County that have poor transit coverage. This package should be supplemented by programs including marketing, a dispatch service, and travel trainings.

Further study should be performed to forecast demand for these services and determine the operational models and costs. It is important to note, that these services will need to be heavily subsidized, but providing comprehensive, equitable, and affordable transit service to all residents and employees should be a priority for the County.