

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION





1.1 THREE PLANS AT ONCE


Advancing Adams was the process used to prepare three plans simultaneously to guide Adams County in future decision making. In addition to the *Transportation Master Plan*, Adams County concurrently conducted a planning process for the *Comprehensive Plan*, and the *Parks, Open Space, and Trails (POST) Plan*. Combined, these three plans will help guide decision making related to land use, transportation, and parks, open space, and trails and help the county achieve a coordinated vision for the future. Each plan takes a holistic view of the entire county for a long-term vision that will direct planning for the next ten years and shapes the county beyond that. These three plans are created to support goals of a safer, resilient, more equitable, and more prosperous county by creating a legacy planning effort for future generations.

1.2 INTEGRATION BETWEEN THE THREE PLANS

The *Comprehensive Plan* is the foundational document for the larger family of Adams County plans. Taken holistically, the three plans examine opportunities for increasing sustainability and preservation, managing growth, and improving accessibility. The *Transportation Master Plan* and the *Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan*, for instance, address accessibility by giving attention to off-street trails used primarily for recreation and connector paths that access parks and open space properties, and by focusing on land use connections throughout the county. The *Comprehensive Plan* and *Parks, Open Space, and Trails Plan* both address the role of land uses in rural preservation. The *Comprehensive Plan* identifies current conditions and areas of stability and change. Through this analysis, future land use maps were developed to help Adams County achieve its vision. In the process of developing these maps, it was crucial to coordinate efforts to ensure that rural lands are preserved and adjacent land uses are compatible.

1.3 VALUE LENSES

The three lenses of Equity, Sustainability, and Livability have been integrated into each step of the planning process. Throughout



analyzing the existing conditions, developing future scenarios, and creating goals and policies for the community to implement, the lenses were, and continue to be, key considerations.

1.3.1 DESCRIPTIONS OF EACH LENSE

Equity

The vibrance and strength of a community emerges from diversity and equity. Equity can be measured through the distribution of resources, access to those resources, and affordability and experiences. For the transportation network, equity means providing full community access so all users can enjoy opportunities to commute to work, travel to school, visit stores, and recreate. Removing financial and physical barriers, along with providing travel opportunities where they are currently lacking, are critical to make sure residents can access Adams County regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, income level, or ability.

Sustainability

Sustainability is a part of Adams County's identity. Sustainability is recognized through the conservation and celebration of the qualities and characteristics that make the county unique, including natural resources, habitat, and riparian environments. For the mobility network, this means identifying opportunities to make travel more sustainable by promoting

electric vehicles, shifting more trips to non-driving modes, and fostering walkable communities.

Livability

In western Adams County, there has been a recent expansion of the rail transit system and there have been commensurate shifts in development patterns that are resulting in mixed use, compact, and walkable neighborhoods where residents can more easily access various destinations. This trend is an example of how Adams County is focused on becoming a more livable area for residents and visitors.

1.4 PLAN PURPOSE

This *Transportation Master Plan* serves as an update to the *Imagine Adams County Transportation Master Plan* adopted in December 2012. That plan provided an update to the multimodal transportation plan of 1996, intended to continue guiding the implementation of transportation expansions and upgrades through the year 2035. The goals of the 2012 Plan were to:

- Coordinate with local and adjacent municipalities on local and regional transportation efforts
- Develop a prioritization process to guide implementation of transportation projects

- Pursue methods to finance transportation improvements by working with private developers and local municipalities to obtain regional, statewide, and national funding
- Coordinate locally, regionally, and with Regional Transportation District (RTD) to improve public transportation in Adams County
- Coordinate human services transportation so it is more efficient and affordable and provides countywide coverage for people with mobility challenges
- Coordinate county, city, and regional commuter and recreational bicycle and pedestrian travel through dedicated on and off-street facilities
- Establish and implement county design standards including “complete streets”
- Preserve the unique character of selected scenic roadways
- Coordinate land use and transportation

The mobility network and travel demand patterns in Adams County have changed since the 2012 plan; considering transportation needs today and to the future to 2040, Advancing Adams addresses short- and long-term needs for:


- Integration with the current and future land use for the county,

by understanding the type and magnitude of travel demand

- Incorporation of evolving preferences of the community, including a desire for increased transportation options that include bicycling, walking, and riding transit
- Leveraging of new assets within the county such a commuter rail and regional trails
- Adoption of policies and programs that leverage and plan for new technologies, so they can be implemented in a way that is in line with the county’s goal
- Developing a project prioritization methodology that reflects the community’s goals
- Successfully positioning the county for new and evolved funding sources

1.5 EXISTING CONDITIONS SUMMARY

The Phase 1 Existing Conditions report provides a full documentation of the existing transportation network in Adams County and highlights opportunities for strengthening connectivity throughout the county. During Phase 1 of the planning process, a set of challenge and opportunity areas were identified through an assessment of the Adams County roadway, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian networks. Considering



Adams County has just over half a million residents and nearly 140,000 commuters traveling into the county for work each day, the transportation network is a critical asset for accommodating the demands of a fast-growing population and economy.

The Phase 1 analysis resulted in the following key findings about the unique nature of mobility in Adams County:

Driving

The Adams County roadway network includes Adams County-owned roadways and CDOT-owned roadways, as well as paved and unpaved roadways. The roadway network provides a connected and efficient means of moving vehicles, including freight, to and through Adams County.

Walking

The pedestrian network in Adams County consists of sidewalks and crossings. Based on an inventory completed by the county, there are 407 miles of sidewalks in the unincorporated parts of county and about 13 miles of missing sidewalks.

Bicycling

The bicycle network in Adams County consists of on and off-street bicycle facilities. These facilities are primarily in the western portion of the county. There are 31 miles of bike lanes and shared use paths used for both recreation and transportation.

Transit

Transit in Adams County consists of local and regional buses, commuter rail, FlexRide (which is the RTD first and last mile service), paratransit and human service providers. Transit investment in Adams County has been high in recent years with the addition of the B and G rail lines as well as the recent opening of the N Line. These rail lines connect various parts of Adams County to downtown Denver, greatly improving access to jobs and other amenities. However, there is no fixed route service in the eastern portion of the county.

Safety

The majority of crashes in Adams County have historically occurred in the southwest portion of the county. The number of crashes resulting in severe injuries stayed close to the six-year average of 60 severe injuries per year, while the number of crashes resulting in deaths has steadily been increasing since 2013, with the exception of a decline in 2018.

Parking

Adams County has nearly 13 square miles of off-street surface parking, 97% of which have impervious surfacing. Recent studies of on and off-street parking revealed that the county generally has an excess of parking and opportunities to better match parking demand with supply.

Freight

Adams County has a high level of freight activity due to its proximity to Denver, presence of distribution and logistics centers, access to multiple interstate highways, and presence of freight railroad lines. I-270 is the main freight corridor, with trucks constituting 19% of vehicle traffic on average.

1.6 FIVE STRATEGIC CORRIDORS

As part of *Advancing Adams*, five strategic corridors were selected for deeper analysis and identification of opportunities for strengthening connectivity, developing a stronger tie between transportation and land use, and tying major travel corridors in with Adams County's growing trails network. The five strategic corridors are:

1. Federal Boulevard
2. Washington Street
3. Pecos Street
4. 104th Avenue
5. 120th Avenue

Each corridor presents different challenges and opportunities; for example, where Federal Boulevard is currently auto-centric with limited pedestrian access, 120th Avenue maintains a rural parkway feel where travel by other modes can be challenging despite adjacent trail access. **Chapter 2** provides an in-

depth analysis of each corridor and a detailed set of recommendations for transforming the five corridors into multimodal assets that advance the Advancing Adams goals.

1.7 PLANNING PROCESS

The *Transportation Master Plan* was developed as a tool to guide how mobility can play a role in shaping the Adams County community. In alignment with the overall explorations and planning work, engagement for *Advancing Adams* was divided into two consecutive phases: Phase 1, Grounding and Phase 2, Plan for the Future. Each phase provided a distinct touchpoint to engage the community. During both engagement phases, community members were presented with information and questions relating to all three plans to ensure an integration of these conversations, preferences, and priorities as a vision for the future and proposed policies for achieving it are put forward. At the outset of Phase 1, the planning team introduced the community to the *Advancing Adams* planning process through an education campaign and a multi-pronged communication and outreach strategy. At project launch, a press release was distributed and published, introducing the planning process to communities across the county. Engagement mediums included a project website that served as an information hub about the three plans and a resource for sharing updates, engagement opportunities,

draft recommendations, and points of contact with the planning team.

Throughout both phases, the planning team utilized a variety of tools and media to keep community members informed and offer opportunities for direct engagement with the planning work. Taking place in 2020 and 2021, engagement was directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and virtual engagement techniques were used to engage with community members. Activities like online surveys, virtual public workshops facilitated through Zoom, and live polling through online tools like Mentimeter ensured the team was hearing from a broad cross-section of residents despite limitations on face-to-face engagement. Early engagement of key stakeholders was also delivered virtually. For

example, the Transportation Master Plan team led a virtual forecasting exercise with county staff to discuss the implications of COVID-19 on travel demand in Adams County.

In-person meetings and events were held during the second phase of the planning process to show community members initial recommendations and verify that the initial direction for *Advancing Adams* matched the vision of the community. Phase 2 also included a virtual public workshop in October 2021 where community members were presented with scenarios and preliminary recommendations, along with a summary of initial community feedback and insight collected from surveys and in-person engagement events. At this final workshop, community members were

Figure 1.1: Example of a Mentimeter polling question on transportation

What regional parks are a priority for transit accessibility?



engaged in interactive polling to submit ideas, respond to questions and presented material, and confirm or suggest revisions to overall plan recommendations and priorities (Figure 1.1). A full profile of the community engagement activities that were conducted as part of the *Advancing Adams* process is included in the Comprehensive Plan.

emerging technologies and trends in mobility to help make these visionary travel networks a reality.

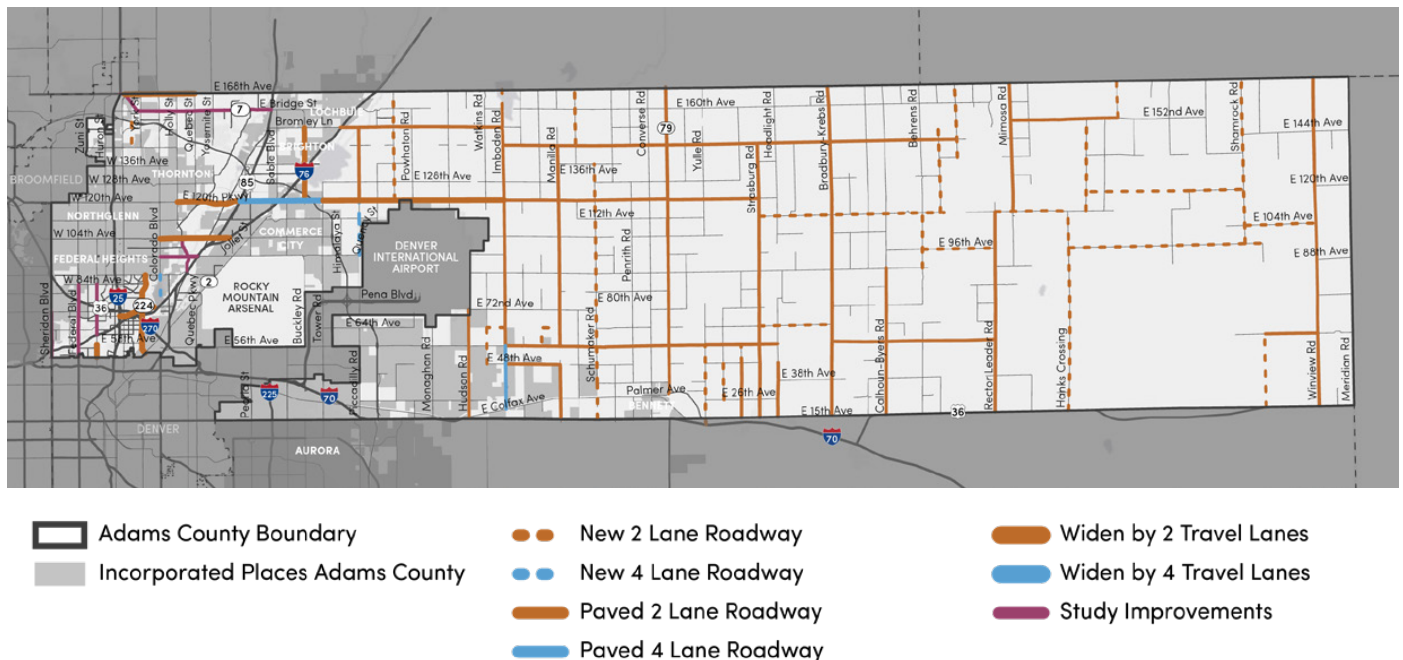
1.8.1 ROADWAY NETWORK

The roadway plan in **Chapter 3** focuses on ensuring that the portions of the county that are most likely to have higher levels of development per the *Advancing Adams Comprehensive Plan* are served by the roadway network and that areas of dense development with high transit access offer multimodal corridors that comfortably accommodate people driving, walking, bicycling, and riding transit (Figure 1.2). In addition, **Chapter 3** highlights a framework Adams County can use moving forward to make decisions about how to prioritize the management and paving of gravel roads.

1.8 MOBILITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Chapters 3, 4, 5, and 6 feature recommendations for future roadway, pedestrian, bicycle, and transit networks that are intended to cohesively provide a strong level of community connectivity throughout the county. **Chapter 7** discusses how Adams County can leverage

Figure 1.2: Adams County Proposed Roadway Network



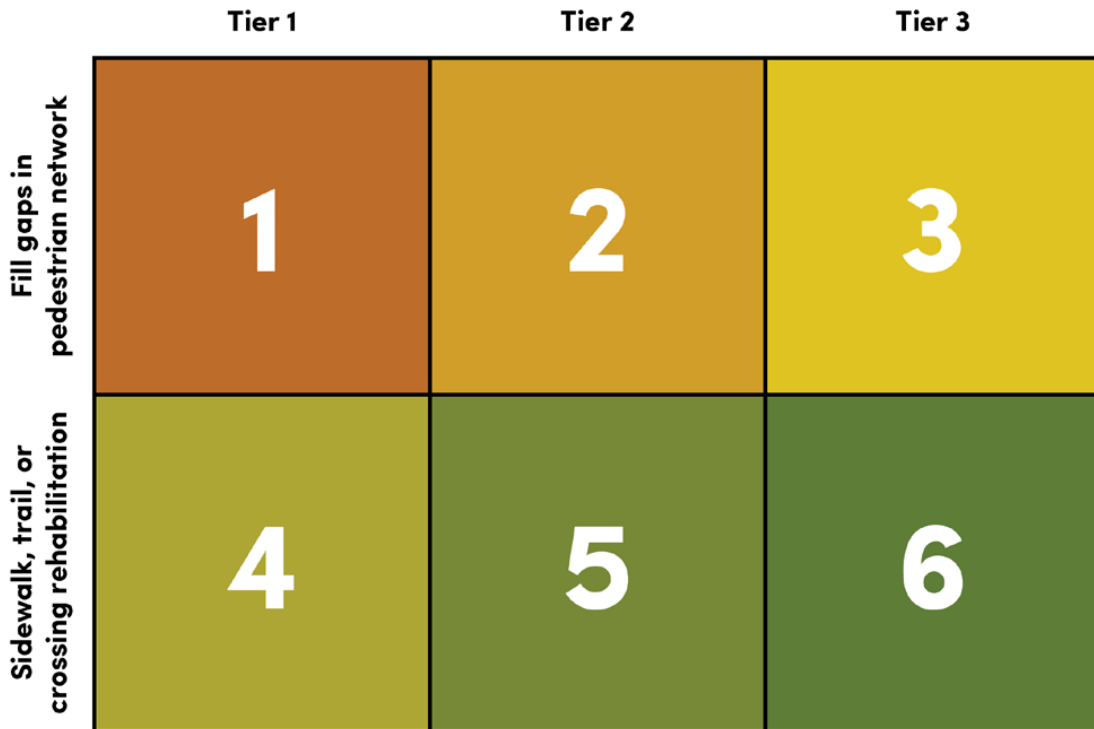


Figure 1.3: Adams County Pedestrian Prioritization Methodology (source: Fehr & Peers)

1.8.2 PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

Chapter 4 discusses opportunities to strengthen pedestrian connectivity in Adams County by completing sidewalk gaps in key areas, rehabilitating damaged sidewalks, implementing enhanced pedestrian crossings, and fostering connectivity between the sidewalks and trails network. Recommendations for improving pedestrian facilities are prioritized based on a set of factors including proximity to transit, trails, open space, and key community destinations like grocery stores, as well as the crash history on the adjacent corridor. The prioritization is divided into three

tiers to help Adams County assess which pedestrian facilities should be completed or upgraded in the near-term vs. long-term (**Figure 1.3**).

1.8.3 BICYCLE NETWORK

While Adams County has a growing network of bicycle lanes that are being implemented by incorporated cities, **Chapter 5** lays out a vision for a fully connected network of on-street and off-street bicycle facilities that will serve bicycling trips throughout the County and will also connect directly with existing and planned facilities in communities that border Adams County.

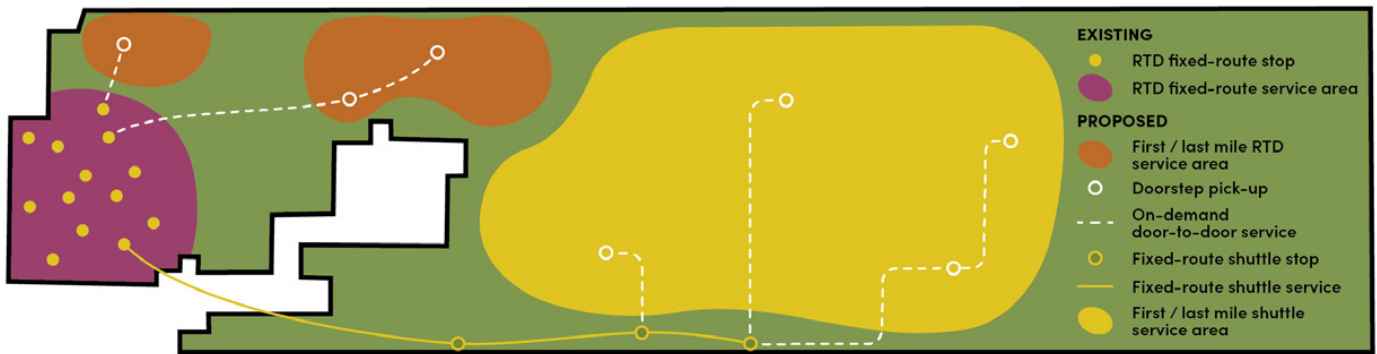


Figure 1.4: Adams County Transit Vision

1.8.4 TRANSIT NETWORK

Chapter 6 addresses the three primary challenges associated with utilizing transit service in Adams County today: a lack of first and final mile access to transit stops in many portions of the County, a lack of transit service in eastern Adams County, and low service levels in central and western Adams County. To address these challenges, the *Advancing Adams* transit recommendations call for countywide Transportation Demand Management strategies that will help encourage more community members to utilize transit services and a preliminary concept for on-demand transportation services that will feed shuttles and connect riders in with the wider existing transit system (**Figure 1.4**).

1.8.5 FUTURE MOBILITY

Chapter 7 highlights opportunities for Adams County to become a key driver in moving the region forward in transforming transportation

networks into technology-driven public assets that efficiently move people and goods. Solutions like Mobility as a Service (**Figure 1.5**), shared mobility, electric vehicle infrastructure, autonomous and connected vehicles, and mobility hubs are all profiled as potential strategies for balancing the increasing travel demand in Adams County with limited right of way to ensure future travel demand is accommodated as efficiently as possible.

1.9 IMPLEMENTATION

Advancing Adams is a roadmap for reshaping transportation in Adams County over the coming 30 years. **Chapter 8** details a prioritization process that was undertaken to help identify project recommendations that should be pursued in the short- (2022-2030), medium- (2030-2040), and long-term (2040-2050), with each resulting prioritized set of projects shown in order of the project's

likelihood to help the county meet the mobility goals of *Advancing Adams*.

Chapter 8 also includes an implementation guide and performance monitoring framework to help Adams County track plan implementation. Progress will be monitored by regularly tracking performance measures like crash severity, availability of multimodal transportation options, and alignment of transportation and land use. And to ensure that the *Transportation Master Plan* can be fully implemented, a guide on federal, state, regional, and local funding opportunities is included to guide the county on the range of funding sources available.

1.8.7 LOOKING AHEAD

The *Transportation Master Plan* component of *Advancing Adams* considers mobility holistically and was developed with an awareness that land use and transportation are equal partners in fostering a high quality of life and a distinctive community character. The following chapters paint a vision of an Adams County that is seamlessly connected with all other Front Range communities while offering travelers of all ages and abilities a range of comfortable facilities that can be enjoyed on all modes of travel. A forward looking plan, *Advancing Adams* lays a groundwork for celebrating the best of Adams County today while preparing for the mobility network of tomorrow.

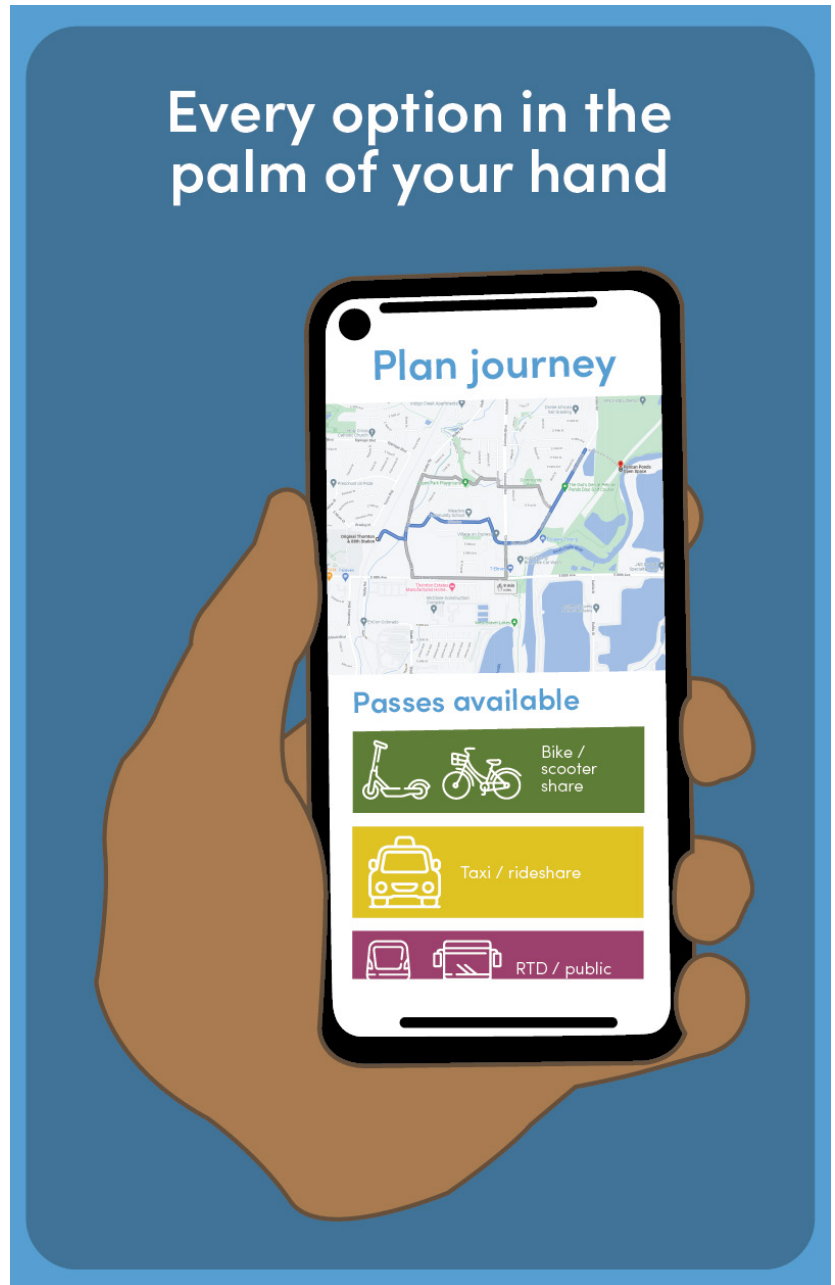


Figure 1.5: Graphic of Mobility as a Service (source: Fehr & Peers)

