

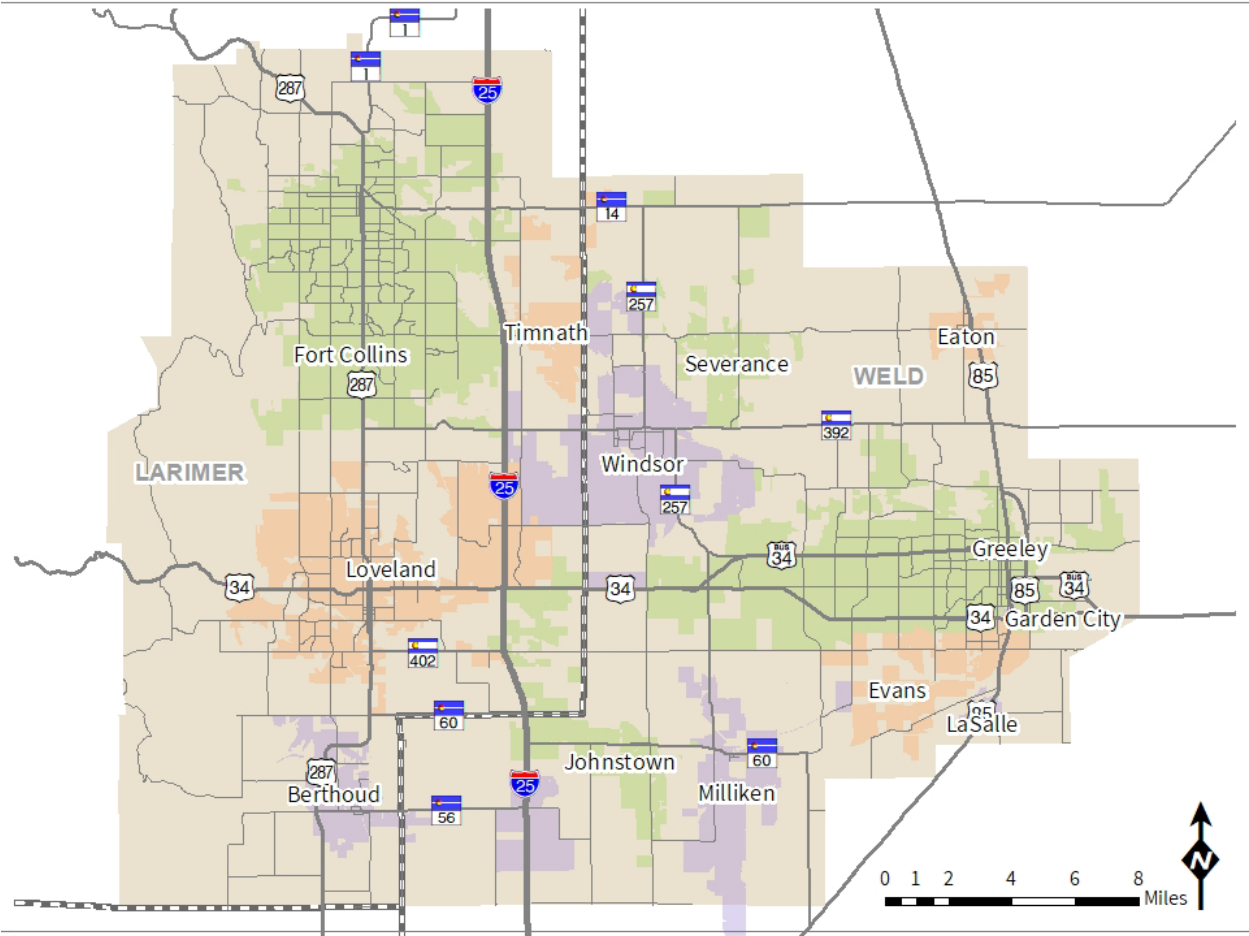
Chapter 1: Introduction

The North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) is a governmental agency responsible for the long-range regional transportation planning in Northern Colorado. The NFRMPO's 15 local member agencies include the communities of Berthoud, Eaton, Evans, Fort Collins, Garden City, Greeley, Johnstown, LaSalle, Loveland, Milliken, Severance, Timnath, Windsor, and Larimer and Weld Counties as shown in **Figure 1-1**. Through this role, the NFRMPO is federally required to address bicycle and pedestrian (active transportation) planning as a component of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). The NFRMPO is uniquely positioned to offer guidance and support policies and strategies endorsed by state and federal partners such as the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) and the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT).

CDOT's Policy Directive ([Bike and Pedestrian Policy 1602](#)) and subsequent [State Statute 43-1-120](#), make clear the Colorado Transportation Commission's (TC) directive for CDOT to promote mode choice and provide for the needs of bicyclists and pedestrians. Through this policy the TC has directed the safe and reliable accommodation of bicyclists and pedestrians in all CDOT's planning, design, and operation of transportation facilities. The [USDOT policy](#) is to incorporate safe and convenient walking and bicycling facilities into transportation projects.

Every transportation agency has the responsibility to improve conditions and opportunities for walking and bicycling and to actively integrate them into their transportation systems. The Active Transportation Plan (ATP) reinforces the NFRMPO's commitment in working with all Northern Colorado partners to ensure safe, accessible, and reliable active transportation accommodations are prioritized in the transportation planning process.

Figure 1-1: The NFRMPO Region



April 2023
Sources: CDOT, NFRMPO

Legend

- County Boundary
- NFRMPO Planning Area



What is Active Transportation

For the purposes of this plan, and subsequent planning efforts, the NFRMPO is defining active transportation as human-powered and human-scaled modes of transportation, including:

- pedestrian (walk or wheel)
- bicycle
- electric bicycle (e-bike)
- scooter



Above: Image Credit: City of Fort Collins

- electric scooter (e-scooter)
- skateboard
- other personal mobility devices

The term active transportation acknowledges the emerging trends in personal- or micro-mobility solutions. For instance, it is more inclusive of electric assist technologies than the term ‘non-motorized.’ Additionally, active transportation acknowledges the fluidity in the way public space is used, more so than the term ‘bicycle and pedestrian.’ Many jurisdictions define electric-assist scooter (e-scooter) users as pedestrians but limit their operation exclusively to roadways in certain areas. As much as possible, ATP will use the terms ‘active transportation’ and ‘active modes.’

Purpose of the Active Transportation Plan (ATP)

The ATP is an update to the NFRMPO’s *2013 Regional Bicycle Plan (RBP)*, *2016 Non-Motorized Plan*, and *2021 Regional Active Transportation Plan*. The primary purposes of the ATP are to:

- Fulfill the federal requirement to address bicycle and pedestrian planning as a component of the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP);
- Present a consolidated summary of the existing bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure, data, policies, programs, and standards throughout the region;
- Summarize best practices for topics such as emerging micromobility solutions (electric bikes, scooters, and skateboards, etc.);
- Identify opportunities to connect and enhance the local and regional active transportation system, with implementation strategies;
- Provide updated tools, analysis, and guidance supporting local and regional planning, funding and implementation efforts; and
- Position the NFRMPO and its planning partners to pursue state, federal, and other funding opportunities

Benefits of Investing in Active Transportation

Accommodating bicyclists and pedestrians for transportation and recreation has numerous benefits in health, safety, air quality and climate, economy, congestion, and community resiliency. These benefits are too numerous to be listed in this plan, but some quick highlights are listed in this section. The Northern Colorado (NoCo) Bike & Ped Collaborative has developed a more comprehensive [Why Invest in Active Transportation?](#) document to underscore the value that thoughtfully planned, designed, and implemented active transportation infrastructure can bring to a community. Research and data on benefits are

ever-changing along with our ability to quantify them. The NFRMPO and its planning partners should stay updated on the latest and most locally-specific findings.

Health

According to the 2016 report, [2016 Economic and Health Benefits of Bicycling and Walking](#), a 10 percent increase in bicycling and walking in Colorado would prevent an additional 30-40 deaths per year and lead to \$258-\$387M in additional annual health savings to the state. A 30 percent increase could equal up to \$2B in additional health savings. Bicycling currently contributes \$511M in health benefits to the State of Colorado annually and prevents an estimated 50 deaths. Walking currently contributes \$2.7B in health benefits to the State of Colorado annually and prevents an estimated 285 deaths.

Safety

Improvements such as road diets, defined as removing travel lanes from a roadway and utilizing the space for other uses and travel modes, can lead to fewer and less severe bicycle and pedestrian crashes. This is due to pedestrians spending less time crossing travel lanes, bicyclists having new or better dedicated facilities, and vehicle speeds being reduced. The FHWA [2014 Road Diet Informational Guide](#) suggests roads under 20,000 vehicles per day (vpd) may be good road diet candidates.

Lower speeds limits, design that discourages high speeds, and/or physical separation between vehicle traffic and bicyclists or pedestrians lower the risk of serious injury or death. According to an Institute of Traffic Engineers study on crashes between a vehicle and pedestrian, fatality rates are 10 percent at 20 mph, 40 percent at 30 mph, and 80 percent 40 mph or faster.

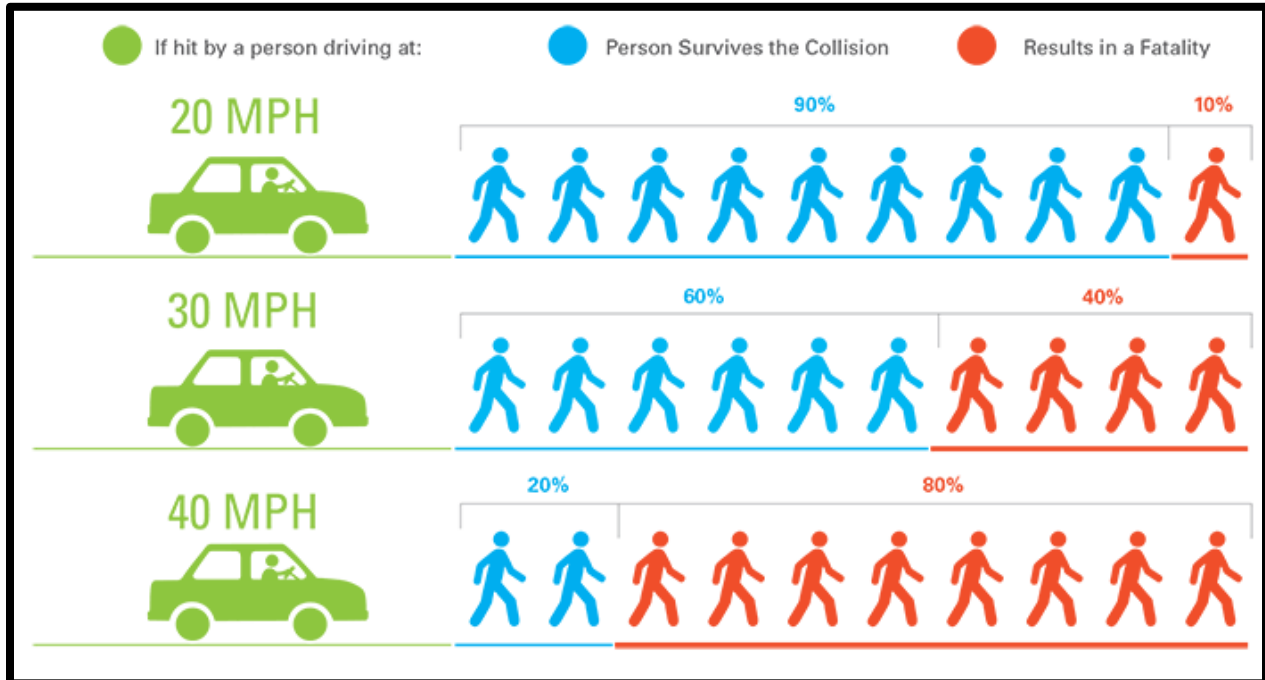


Photo Credit: Institute of Transportation Engineers

Economy

Bicycling has a \$1.1B annual economic impact on the Colorado economy, including \$484M from out-of-state visitors (excluding health benefits). Walking has a \$497M annual economic impact on the Colorado economy (excluding health benefits), according to the 2016 Colorado-specific report, [2016 Economic and Health Benefits of Bicycling and Walking](#).

Replacing a car trip with a bike trip saves individuals and society \$2.73 per mile in costs related to congestion reduction, roadway cost savings, vehicle cost savings, parking cost savings, air pollution reduction, energy conservation, and traffic safety improvements, according to [Biking, On-Street Parking, and Business](#) by Clean Air Partnership.

In the 2023 study, [Wheels to Meals: Measuring the Impact of Micromobility on Restaurant Demand](#), researchers found that the introduction of shared e-scooters through shared micromobility programs led to a 5.2% increase in restaurant spending. This study notes there was a stronger positive effect on fast food restaurant spending, and a weaker effect on sit-down restaurant spending.

Congestion

Congestion costs the Fort Collins-Loveland Urbanized Area \$186M annually, or \$489 and 25 hours of delay per commuter. Congestion costs the Greeley Urbanized Area \$72M annually, or

\$527 and 23 hours of delay per commuter, according to the Texas A&M Transportation Institute's (TTI) [2023 Urban Mobility Report](#). The capacity of a 10-foot lane (or equivalent width) at peak conditions with normal operations is 600-1,600/hr for private motor vehicles only, 1,000-2,800/hr for mixed traffic with frequent buses, 7,500/hr for a two-way protected cycleway, and 9,000/hr for a sidewalk, according to the [Transit Street Design Guide](#) by the National Association of City Transportation Officials (NACTO).

Community Resiliency

According to [Gas Prices and Bicycling](#) by Bikes Belong, when gas prices peaked to \$4.11/gallon in 2008, bike commuting increased 15 percent nationally and 23 percent in the 31 largest bicycle-friendly cities (BFCs) compared to 2007.

Northern Colorado (NoCo) Bike and Pedestrian Collaborative

The NoCo Bike & Ped Collaborative (NoCo) is composed of staff and elected officials from the NFRMPOs member agencies, NFRMPO staff, state partners, and other partners, regardless of affiliation or location, who are interested in helping achieve the vision of safe, convenient, and cost-effective bicycle and pedestrian network for people of all ages and abilities. NoCo typically meets monthly to discuss current initiatives, best practices, and approaches for improving active transportation in the region. Although NoCo is an independent group from the NFRMPO, the group advises NFRMPO Staff and the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on a variety of plans, programs, and projects. NoCo has been involved in the awarding of several million dollars in federal and state funds to active transportation projects across the region.

NoCo has played an instrumental role in the implementation of the NFRMPO's *2013 Regional Bicycle Plan*, the *2016 Non-Motorized Plan*, the *2021 Regional Active Transportation Plan*, and will do the same for the ATP. NoCo is referenced throughout the ATP as a critical link for making progress towards the NFRMPO's aspirational goals. Learn more about NoCo's values and operating procedures at <https://nfrmpo.org/bike-ped/noco/>.

Public Stakeholder Engagement

Many elements of the ATP were guided by the NoCo Bike & Ped Collaborative, as well as community members and planning partners who provided feedback through various mediums. Formal dialogue about the ATP between NFRMPO staff and the community began in December 2023 and carried into early 2024; however, conversations have been ongoing since the adoption of the 2021 ATP through the NoCo Bike & Ped Collaborative, NFRMPO Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) meetings, and NFRMPO staff outreach efforts across the region.