



# A Drive Toward Walking, Riding

## Healthier Transportation Options Clear the Air and Promote Fitness

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*For most people, getting from point A to point B is as simple as turning the ignition key and stepping on the gas. Transportation is a universal aspect of our daily lives, but it isn't universally healthy.*

"There is a growing awareness across communities that transportation systems impact quality of life and health," the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) says. "Government and non-government agencies are seeking innovative policies and programs that protect and promote health while accomplishing the primary transportation objectives."

To that end, the U.S. Department of Transportation, the CDC, the American Planning Association, public health agencies, nonprofits and many others have developed strategies and tools to address key transportation and health issues. Among the goals: to reduce air pollution; minimize traffic injuries and deaths; and lower rates of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and cancer by supporting alternatives to the car.

Several programs in Colorado promote public transit and active transportation — getting around by walking, cycling, using a wheelchair and other forms of people power. Examples include:

- **Bustang**, which began in July 2015, is an express bus services managed by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) with a home base at Denver's Union Station. Buses travel along Interstates 70 and 25 daily and once on weekends, carrying commuters to and from Denver, Colorado Springs, Fort Collins, Glenwood Springs and more. Each bus provides amenities for commuting, including Wi-Fi, USB ports and restrooms.
- **Safe Routes to School**, administered by CDOT, awards grants to encourage students to walk and bike to school. Money has been used to build sidewalks or painted crosswalks to enhance safety and support educational programs to motivate children to be active.
- **FasTracks** is a multibillion dollar project approved by voters in 2004 to expand public transportation in the Denver metro region. Among other things, it calls for 122 miles of new commuter rail and light

84.8%

of Colorado workers over the age of 16 commute to work by driving.



3 of 4  
Commuters  
drive alone.

Almost half of commutes are 20 minutes or less.



3.2%

of Colorado workers over the age of 16 use public transit to get to work.

rail, 18 miles of bus rapid transit and enhanced bus/rail connections. In April, the University of Colorado A Line opened between Denver Union Station and Denver International Airport.

- **Mile High Connects** is a coalition of public, private and nonprofit organizations that aims to create “paths to opportunity through local transit.” Its Affordable Fares Task Force, consisting of partners from more than 100 organizations, is proposing a 50 percent fare reduction for people making up to 150 percent of the federal poverty level, about \$35,000 for a family of four.

Affordable and active transportation also can influence the economy. According to the Urban Land Institute’s *Trends in Active Transportation*, bike-friendly cities generate more tourism revenue, and neighborhoods with a nearby bike path have higher home values than those that don’t. Property values in an Indianapolis neighborhood increased by 148 percent since 2008 when an eight-mile bike lane opened within a block of the area, the report said.



### Biking in Denver

Denver is **ninth in the nation** for bicycle commuting rates for large U.S. cities at **2.5 percent**, according to a recent publication by the Urban Land Institute. The highest rate of bicycle commuting is Portland, Oregon, at 7.2 percent.



## Colorado Pedals Project: Planning for a More Bike-Friendly State

Governor John Hickenlooper aims to make Colorado the healthiest state in the nation. He also wants Colorado to be the best state to ride a bike.

Last fall, Hickenlooper, an avid cyclist, announced the Colorado Pedals Project. The \$100 million initiative will be implemented over four years with funding from the federal government and Great Outdoors Colorado.

It will support added bicycle and pedestrian projects, better understanding and marketing of the cycling industry and efforts to promote safety through awareness and education.

Since the announcement, Hickenlooper has traveled the state to scope out where biking thrives and where it could be improved. Hickenlooper hopes that adding trails will encourage cyclists to explore more parts of the state, reducing overuse and alleviating traffic jams.

While the Colorado Pedals Project will reach peak



activity in coming years, it has already made moves toward friendlier biking.

By the end of 2015, accomplishments included fully funding Safe Routes to School, incorporating bikes and pedestrians into CDOT planning projects and presenting and listening to communities across the state.

Organizations like CDOT, the Colorado Tourism Office and the Department of Natural Resources are already putting plans into action for 2016. Projects range from completing bike trail links between communities and developing tourism campaigns to promote biking opportunities in Colorado.