



TOWN COUNCIL STUDY SESSION AGENDA
October 22, 2025
11:30 AM

I. Study Session Items

1. Link On Demand Microtransit Discussion - Fussa/Matthews - 1 hour

II. Staff Updates

III. Town Council Updates/Items



MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Bryce Matthews, Assistant Director - Planning
John Fussa, Community Development Director

DATE: October 22, 2025

SUBJECT: Douglas County Link on Demand Microtransit Proposal

ISSUE:

Douglas County has proposed an on-demand microtransit service called Link on Demand for part of the Town of Parker and adjacent areas in unincorporated Douglas County. The County has requested a financial contribution from the Town to initiate the service in Parker in 2026 that would have a budget impact.

FISCAL/BUDGET IMPACT:

\$250,000 per year in 2026 - 2027

BACKGROUND:

At the August 12, 2025 Study Session during the Community Development Update, staff introduced a proposal from Douglas County regarding expanding microtransit (Link on Demand) to areas of Parker. Town Council requested that staff return to Council to further discuss the proposal. The return discussion was originally scheduled for the September 26, 2025 Town Council Budget Retreat but was deferred. This Study Session discussion is to provide the Town Council with additional information and obtain Council direction.

In 2024, Douglas County initiated the Douglas County Integrated Transit and Multimodal Study. This Study was partially funded by DRCOG TIP funding. The Study made a number of phased recommendations regarding transit and multimodal transportation for the county. The Phase 1 recommendation included two (2) microtransit projects, a Highlands Ranch microtransit service and a Parker microtransit service. Douglas County has implemented the Highlands Ranch microtransit service (Link on Demand). Douglas County has requested that the Town consider a partnership to expand the Link on Demand service to the east, including parts of Parker.

Funding for the initial (pilot) eastern Douglas County and Parker Link on Demand service for 2026 - 2027 would include DRCOG TIP funding and Douglas County funding. Douglas County is requesting that the Town partner in the pilot project, including a financial contribution in the amount of \$250,000 per year. The DRCOG TIP funding lasts for 2026 and 2027 and must be spent in these years. If Douglas County and the Town decide to continue the pilot project past 2027, the County is committed to seeking additional partners (RTD, DRCOG, etc.) and funding sources but annual Town costs would be expected to increase in 2028 and beyond.

The attached PowerPoint and the presentation will cover the pilot project proposal, estimated costs and potential benefits.

RECOMMENDATION:

For Town Council discussion and direction.

REQUESTED DIRECTION:

For Town Council discussion and direction.

ATTACHMENT:

1. Link on Demand - DC funding request 9.26.25 Budget Retreat

Link on Demand Transit Proposal

Douglas County Partnership Request



PARKER
C O L O R A D O

2026 Budget Retreat / September 26, 2025

Order of Presentation

- Douglas County Integrated Transit & Multimodal Study
- Recommendation for Town of Parker & Parker Area
- Douglas County Link on Demand Details
- Douglas County Partnership Proposal
- Financial Impacts to Town
- Considerations & Potential Benefits
- Town Council Direction

Integrated Transit & Multimodal Study

Douglas County initiated Study to:

- Utilize DRCOG TIP funding
- Expand on previous planning efforts
- Respond to concerns about limited transit options, esp. from RTD
- Identify gaps in the transit and multi-modal transportation network
- Recommend improvements: service, operations, infrastructure
- Identify pilot projects to implement
- Provide a framework to guide, improve and sustain transit and multimodal transportation in the County

Study Goals

- **Projects:** Identify short- and long-term projects to help people move around the County more easily and efficiently including access to jobs, medical services, shopping and schools.
- **Connections:** Connect people to rail stations, transportation hubs and major activity centers through transit opportunities.
- **Travel Options:** Create a multimodal transportation system that increases options for moving around the County.
- **Walking/Biking:** Strengthen bicycle and pedestrian connections that support and encourage transit use.
- **Collaboration:** Expand collaboration between County and municipalities.
- **Service:** Supplement limited transit service by RTD and CDOT (Bustang).

Study Recommendation

Phase 1 Pilot Projects (2025-2027)	Phase 2 (2028-2030)	Phase 3 (2031-2033)	Future Phases (2033 and Beyond)	Other Concurrent Efforts
- Highlands Ranch microtransit (funded by Douglas County) - Parker microtransit (currently funded by DRCOG TIP)	- Highlands Ranch to Parker via Lone Tree subregional fixed route - Associated infrastructure improvements	- Castle Rock local transit (circulator or microtransit) - Lone Tree to Castle Rock via Castle Pines subregional fixed route - Lone Tree to Castle Rock via Parker subregional fixed route - Associated infrastructure improvements	- Castle Pines local transit (circulator or microtransit) - Sterling Ranch local transit (circulator or microtransit) - Highlands Ranch to Sterling Ranch subregional fixed route - Highlands Ranch to Castle Rock via Sedalia subregional fixed route - Associated infrastructure improvements	- Continued refinement of Link On Demand zone - Enhancing countywide existing senior/specialized transit services - Collaborating with RTD for route improvement and FlexRide restructuring - Coordination with continued evolution of existing and future transit services - Associated infrastructure improvements

Recommendations from Town Plans

Parker 2035 Master Plan, Chapter 10:

- Goal 4A - Work with RTD to provide adequate bus service to meet the needs of those who live in Town and those who commute to Town.
- Goal 4B - Continue to work with RTD to provide services to meet immediate community needs such as the Call-n-Ride.

Parker Transportation Master Plan Strategies:

- Work with RTD to expand Call-n-Ride area and to add a flex route to supplement lack of in-Town and weekend service.
- Work with RTD to improve and expand transit service between Parker employment centers and light rail stations

Expansion Overview

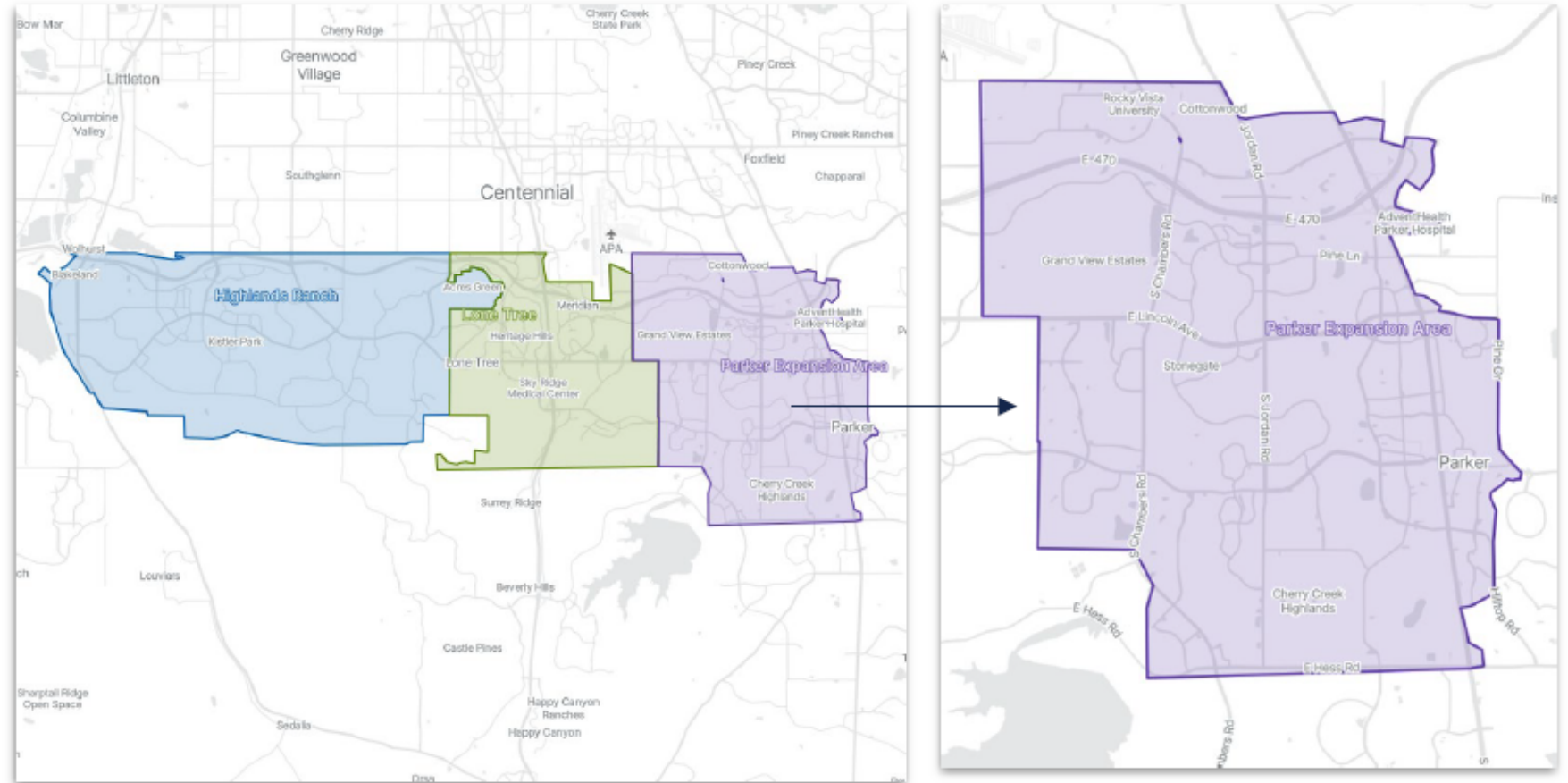
East Expansion Zone Overview

Overview

This zone extends the existing service to Stonegate and Parker.

The Parker zone covers the most densely populated areas of Parker, and closely aligns with the “target zone” in the DCTF Integrated Transit and Multimodal Study.

Not included in the zone as mapped are the furthest areas south of Hess or East Parker towards Canterbury and east / North of Hilltop Road, which are part of the “expanded service” area from the DCTF study.



Via estimates hours needed for each service using demand modeling from our 750+ partnerships as well as local factors

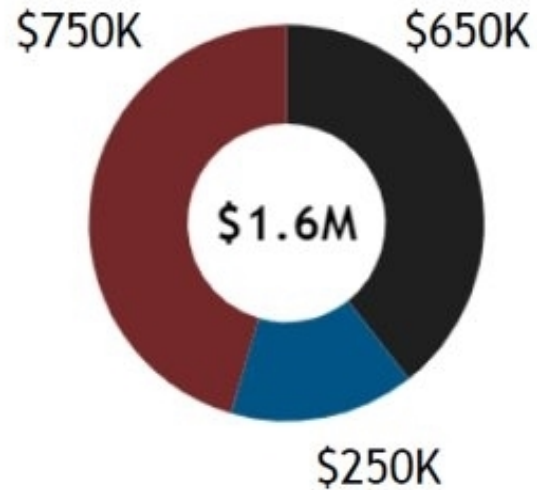
Example factors informing resource estimates

	West Zone (Current)	South Zone	East Zone
Expansion Zone Square Miles	38	39	30
Population + Jobs	184,500	91,000	133,000
Density	4,855	2,333	4,433
Utilization	2.5 - 3.0	2.0 - 2.4	2.4 - 2.9
Ridership (Trips/Year)	106,500	40,000	62,000
Vehicle Hours	~39,000	~18,000	~23,000
Active Vehicles	~15	~6	~8

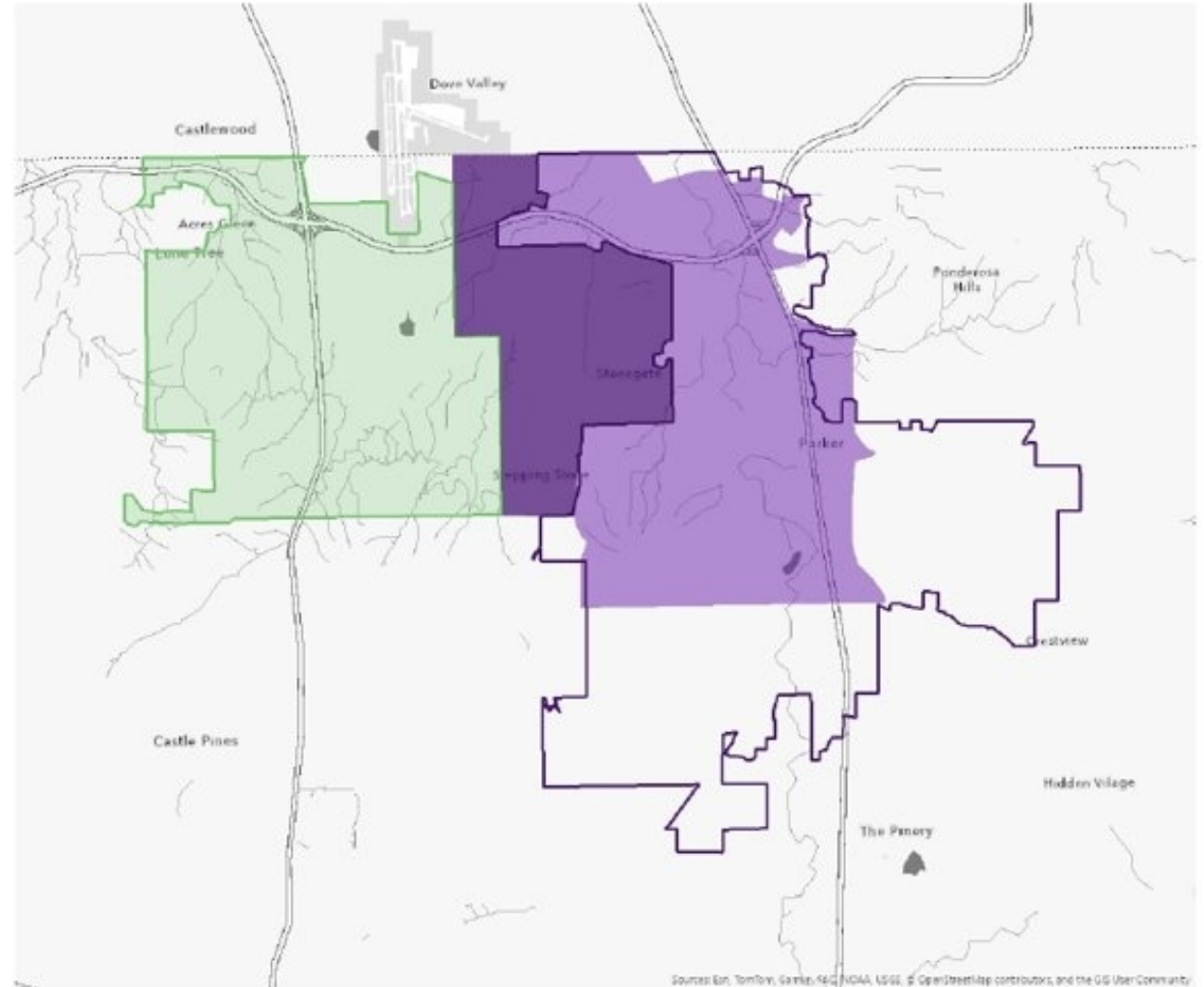
2026 and 2027 Cost Share

Link Expansion - Eastern Zone

**Stonegate & Parker
Study Defined Target**
approx. \$1.5M - \$1.65M



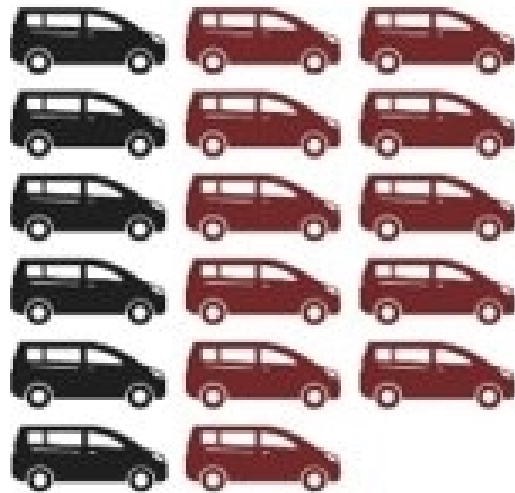
 External partner funding  Municipal partner funding  Douglas County funding



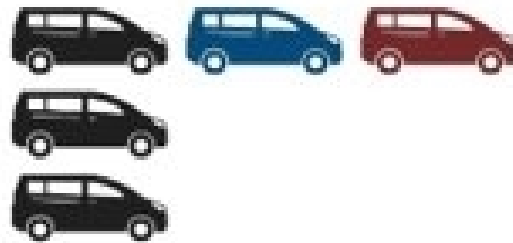
2028 Cost Share

\$11.5 - \$12.5 Million

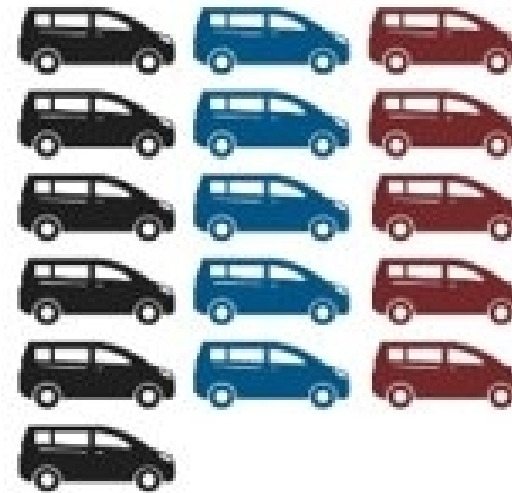
West Zone
~\$3.5M



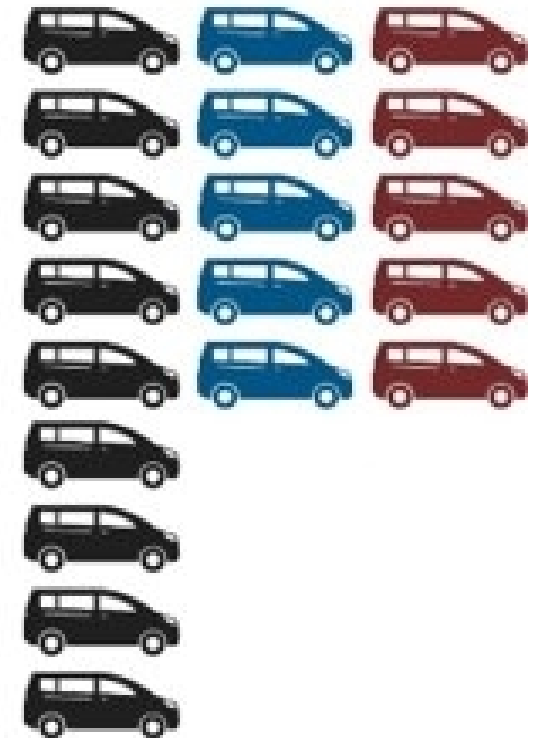
Central Zone
~\$1.5M



East Zone
~\$3.4M



South Zone
~\$3.8M



External partner funding



Municipal partner funding



Douglas County funding

Dates for Link Expansion



October

Request for Proposal to expand Link services



November

Funding commitments from partners to expand Link services



December

Select provider and initiate pre-launch system design



December

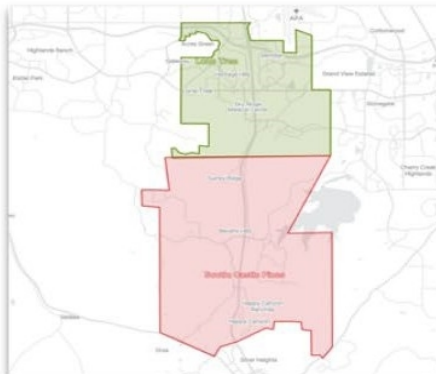
Execute IGAs with partners



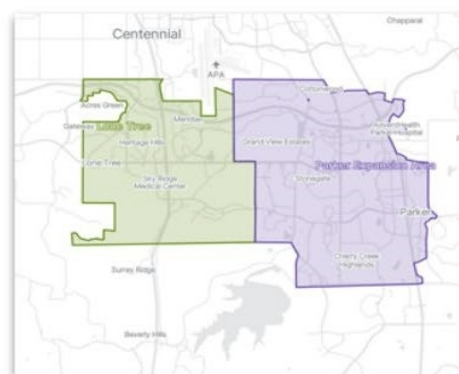
January

Launch expanded Link services to east and south

South Zone



East Zone



How can Parker partner with Douglas County?

Your County Commissioners stand committed to bringing Link on Demand to the Town of Parker in 2026. Here is what we need from you:

- Establishing an IGA with Douglas County to bring Link services to Parker in 2026
- Allocation of \$250,000 - \$300,000 in 2026 to provide services in Parker and to connect residents to services and destinations in Lone Tree
- Work with the County to bring additional funding to sustain services beyond 2027

Expansion Timeline

OCTOBER 2025

Release of 2026 RFP

NOVEMBER 2025

Funding commitments due

DECEMBER 2025

Execute IGAs

JANUARY 2026

Launch Link expansion in Parker



Taken from flyer distributed at Sept. 8, 2025 County meeting



Financial Impacts to Town

2026 & 2027

- \$250,000 from Town per year
- Total Cost Pilot Program: \$1.6 million per year

2028 & Beyond

- Up to \$800,000 per year depending on area served
- Cost reduced if County or Town obtains addl. grants
- Total Cost Program: \$3.4 million per year

- No funding for Link identified in 2026 Town budget at present.
- No clarity on long-term funding from RTD for subregional transit.
- RTD plans to offer subregional transit grants in 2026.
- Revisions to 2026 Town budget likely needed to fund pilot program.

Considerations & Potential Benefits

Lone Tree – Connects residents to jobs, shopping, train stations.

Highlands Ranch – Connects residents to services esp. seniors.

Parker – May be hybrid of both. Growing population increases demand for travel options esp. seniors.

Potential Benefits

- Provides transit access to Lone Tree train stations, employment.
- Adds Friday night, Saturday and weekday evening transit service.
- Provides transit service on west side of Town not served by RTD.
- Rides are free for users.
- Utilizes proven technology (Via app).
- Expands existing system already in operation.
- Leverages DRCOG TIP funding for local use.

If Not Parker...

If Town chooses not to participate, Douglas County will:

1. Proceed with Link service for Stonegate, Stepping Stone and Meridian residents on Town's western border.
2. Seek to partner with Castle Rock and/or Castle Pines to accelerate the South Zone Link service using DRCOG TIP funding that would have gone to the Town.

Direction from Town Council

Does Town Council wish to partner w/ Douglas County to fund the Link on Demand service for Parker starting in 2026?

Options

- Yes: proceed to negotiate the IGA
- No: decline to participate
- Maybe: propose a reduced Town contribution
- Wait: defer action until 2027 budget process