

**CITY OF BOULDER
TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD
AGENDA ITEM**

MEETING DATE: January 12, 2014

AGENDA TITLE: Staff briefing and TAB input on the US36 Bus Rapid Transit service plan and revised key messages for supporting the TMP Renewed Vision for Transit.

PRESENTERS:

Michael Gardner-Sweeney, Acting Director of Public Works for
Transportation
Kathleen Bracke, GO Boulder Manager
Randall Rutsch, Senior Transportation Planner
Natalie Stiffler, Transportation Planner II

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this agenda item is to brief the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) on RTD's updated proposed service plan for US36 "Flatiron Flyer" Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and the revised key messages for the Renewed Vision for Transit based upon the TAB discussion at the December 2014 board meeting. The key messages for transit are intended to support the TAB with their public outreach to policy makers, stakeholders and community members.

TAB ACTION REQUESTED

Key Questions for the TAB:

1. Does TAB have feedback regarding RTD's updated proposed service plan for the US36 "Flatiron Flyer" BRT?
2. Do the revised key messages for transit address the TAB questions and requests from the December TAB meeting?

BACKGROUND

Following completion of the 2014 TMP update and as part of establishing TAB's 2014-15 work program, TAB discussed selecting policy level TMP Action Plan items (www.bouldertmp.net) that will likely need assistance from the Board to successfully advance, such as those requiring community dialogue with local and regional agency partners and complex policy options/choices.

One of TAB's priorities is the successful implementation of RTD's US36 "Flatiron Flyer" BRT service that is scheduled to begin in January 2016. The City of Boulder along with Boulder County, 36

Commuting Solutions, and other communities along the US36 corridor are working with RTD to provide input for the opening day service plan.

In December 2014, Boulder and our partners provided comments and suggestions regarding RTD's initial BRT service plan. RTD is scheduled to release their revised service plan by January 8th and staff will provide an update to TAB at the January 12th board meeting regarding the details of these revisions. The goal is that RTD's revised service plan will address the prior concerns from staff, TAB, and the corridor stakeholders. There will also be future opportunities for community input to RTD as part of their service planning process throughout 1st Quarter 2015. RTD intends to finalize the US36 BRT service plan by April 2015.

To assist TAB with these efforts, staff has revised materials for TAB's review to support the outreach to fellow policy makers, local and regional stakeholders, and community members to support the goals of the Transportation Master Plan's (TMP) Renewed Vision for Transit. The revised key messages for TAB's review are provided in Attachment A.

STAFF ANALYSIS

Since acceptance of the TMP by the Boulder City Council in August 2014, staff has focused on implementation of the TMP Action Plan working in collaboration with local and regional agency partners and on-going community input. The Renewed Vision for Transit is part of the Complete Streets focus area of the TMP .

One of the most significant areas of transit related work for 2015 is working with RTD and agency partners to support the successful launch of the new US36 "Flatiron Flyer" Bus Rapid Transit planned to begin service in January 2016. City of Boulder comments regarding RTD's draft proposed service plan are highlighted in the transit key messages (Attachment A). Based on the TAB discussion at the December 2014 board meeting, the key messages have been revised and reformatted to include:

- Key overview points and concerns, including call to action/recommendations
- Set of examples of how the proposed service plan will differ from existing service levels
- Visuals showing differences between existing service and proposed service levels
- Links to online transit maps for existing service as well as TMP's Renewed Vision for Transit
- An updated Contact list

NEXT STEPS

- Staff will provide comments to agency partners and RTD regarding the revised proposed service plan for US36 BRT.
- Refinement of the TAB's transit key messages for upcoming outreach to agency partners, stakeholders, and the community in early 2015.
- RTD Director Chuck Sisk was invited to the January or February, 2015 TAB meeting and will be scheduled to meet with the Board when he is available.
- Transit Service:

- January 2015 RTD's service plan enhancements will take place for the Stampede and BOUND.
- In 1st Quarter 2015, RTD will be conducting additional public outreach on proposed local and regional transit service adjustments to accommodate the new US36 BRT with the goal to finalize the service plan by April 2015.

BOARD ACTION REQUESTED

The TAB is requested to provide input on the revised transit key messages:

1. Does TAB have feedback regarding RTD's updated proposed service plan for the US36 "Flatiron Flyer" BRT?
2. Do the revised key messages for transit address the TAB questions and requests from the December TAB meeting?

Attachment:

- A. Draft Key Messages and Contacts for TAB Outreach

KEY MESSAGES FOR RENEWED VISION FOR TRANSIT

Draft – Revised January 2, 2015

Since acceptance of the Transportation Master Plan (TMP) update by the Boulder City Council in August 2014, the City of Boulder is focusing on implementation of the TMP Action Plan based on on-going community input and collaborations with local and regional agency partners.

The January 2015 RTD service enhancements for the Stampede, Bound, and HX are appreciated by Boulder and are a positive step to address existing needs. The following key opportunities and challenges remain:

US 36 “Flatiron Flyer” BRT Service

- Bus Rapid Transit is new to the region. It should be revolutionary and stand out from regular existing regional bus service. US 36 BRT is a major regional investment and RTD’s premiere BRT line in the Denver Metro region.
- The quality of the BRT service on opening day is critical because it will impact how riders perceive BRT as a new transit option for the metro region. The US 36 BRT service is critical to provide greater access to jobs and enhance the environmental health of our community.
- US 36 BRT serves as an opportunity to create a regional and national model for high quality BRT corridors.
- Flatiron Flyer branding and simplification of the route naming system for local service will enhance user experience, for existing and new transit riders.

RTD’s Proposed US 36 BRT Service Plan for Opening Day January 2016:

- RTD proposal exchanges prime peak hour express service for all-stop service mid-day and eliminates direct mid-day service to East Boulder employment areas.
- RTD’s US 36 BRT and associated local route changes only focus on serving existing transit travel markets and miss opportunities to serve new markets.
- The proposal discounts current development happening now in CU East Campus, East Arapahoe corridor/Boulder Community Health campus, Flatirons Business Park, and Boulder Junction.
- The plan offers no real improvement for commuters headed into Boulder on a daily basis and proposes eliminating local service to existing neighborhoods and senior residential facilities. (see following examples and figures)

Boulder Recommendations:

- No areas that are currently served by routes operating along the US 36 corridor should face service level reductions. The FasTracks Program is intended to be a service enhancement program and any degradation of existing services in our highest productivity transit corridor is unacceptable.
- Due to the need to meet existing and future service demands, it is necessary to have service improvements over and above existing service – express and mid-day, local and regional, direct to/from Downtown Boulder as well as to/from Boulder Junction.
- Make the most of the new managed lanes, bypassing Boulder-oriented peak hour congestion
- Boulder requests that any service hour reductions to local routes be reinvested in improved local service within the community.

Boulder’s Proposed Next Steps for US 36 BRT Service Plan:

- RTD should develop options for public consideration for opening day January 2016:
 - Fiscally constrained service plan (modified per community comments to-date)
 - Existing service plus limited new service
 - Optimized BRT and local service plan to maximize existing and new transit ridership

Other Important Transit Issues

- **NAMS** - Continue to work with regional partners to advance the recommendations from RTD's Northwest Area Mobility Study (NAMS), particularly to support grant funding applications to further the corridor planning needed for the SH119/Diagonal and SH7/East Arapahoe arterial BRT corridors. Policy level support is needed to advance the planning and engineering work for these important corridors.
- **Real Time Information** – Implementing real time passenger info is one of the Renewed Vision for Transit top priorities. Need on-going support with RTD to advance this work so that it is completed in time for opening day of US 36 BRT.
- **Community Wide Eco Pass** – As this effort moves into its second phase, representatives from agency partners have been asked to participate in policy and technical level advisory committees to help shape a possible community-wide Eco Pass program. Boulder appreciates the local and regional support to explore a community wide Eco Pass program.
- **RTD Fare Study** – local and regional agency partners, community stakeholders, and transit riders, need to provide input to RTD regarding the importance of continuing and enhancing the existing business and neighborhood eco pass fare programs as part of RTD's Fare Study.

Suggestions for contacts:

- RTD Board of Directors: Chuck Sisk, 303-956-8336
 - Boulder County Commissioners: Elise Jones, Cindy Demenico, Deb Gardner
General phone number for Commissioners: (303) 441-3500
 - City of Boulder City Council:
 - <https://bouldercolorado.gov/city-council>, general phone number: (303)441-3002

Mayor Matt Appelbaum	Tim Plass
Macon Cowles	Andrew Shoemaker
Suzanne Jones	Sam Weaver
George Karakehian	Mary Young
Lisa Morzel	
- Boulder Chamber of Commerce:
 - John Tayer
President & CEO
(303) 442-1044, ext 110
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 - Angelique Espinoza
Public Affairs Director, Public Policy, Advocacy Outreach
(303) 442-1044 ext 122
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- Southwest Energy Efficiency Project
Will Toor
Transportation Program Director
Phone: (303) 447-0078 x6
Email: wtoor@swenergy.org
- Better Boulder: <http://betterboulder.com/>
- Open Boulder: <http://openboulder.org/>

- Plan Boulder: <http://planboulder.org/>
- Local businesses/major employers/CU/BVSD/BCH

Trip Examples comparing existing service levels with RTD's proposed service plan:

Route BX and BMX:

Boulder to Denver - Currently passengers can travel from Boulder to Denver with a limited stop service, in 44-48 minutes, during mid-day on week days. The proposed BRT service, would eliminate Route BX and offer no limited stop service from Boulder to Denver during the mid-day on week days. The alternative service would be an all-stop service all day during the week resulting in longer travel times. The current all-stop service takes an additional 12-16 minutes longer than the BX service.

Denver to Boulder - Current service allows passengers to travel from Denver to Boulder with limited-stop service, in 44-48 minutes, during mid-day on week days. The proposed service, would eliminate Route BMX and offer no limited stop service from Denver to Boulder during the mid-day on week days. The alternative service would be an all-stop service all day during the week resulting in longer travel times. The current all-stop service takes an additional 12-16 minutes longer than the BX service.

Route S:

Currently, there are three AM peak hour trips from Denver to East Boulder on Route S and four PM peak hour trips from East Boulder to Denver. The proposed BRT service plan would eliminate Route S and require passengers to travel on Route HX. The proposed Route HX would be bi-directional from Denver Civic Center to Boulder Junction. The proposed Route HX will make two additional stops to serve Westminster and Broomfield; likely increasing total trip travel time.

Route HX:

Existing Route HX operates in the morning peak hours to Denver Civic Center from East Boulder and in the evening peak hours from Civic Center to East Boulder. The proposed Route HX would operate during peak hours every 15 minutes bi-directional service with additional stops at Westminster and Broomfield. The proposed change will add frequency but will increase total trip travel time with the two additional stops.

Route 206:

Existing Route 206 allows riders to travel from the Boulder's Downtown Transit Center to Table Mesa Park and Ride (PnR) via Boulder Junction. The proposed BRT service plan would discontinue Route 206 service between Boulder Junction and downtown Boulder so that the route only operates from Boulder Junction to Table Mesa PnR. Boulder's Downtown Transit Center to Boulder Junction is currently served by the HOP so passengers will have that option, but it will no longer be a one seat ride.

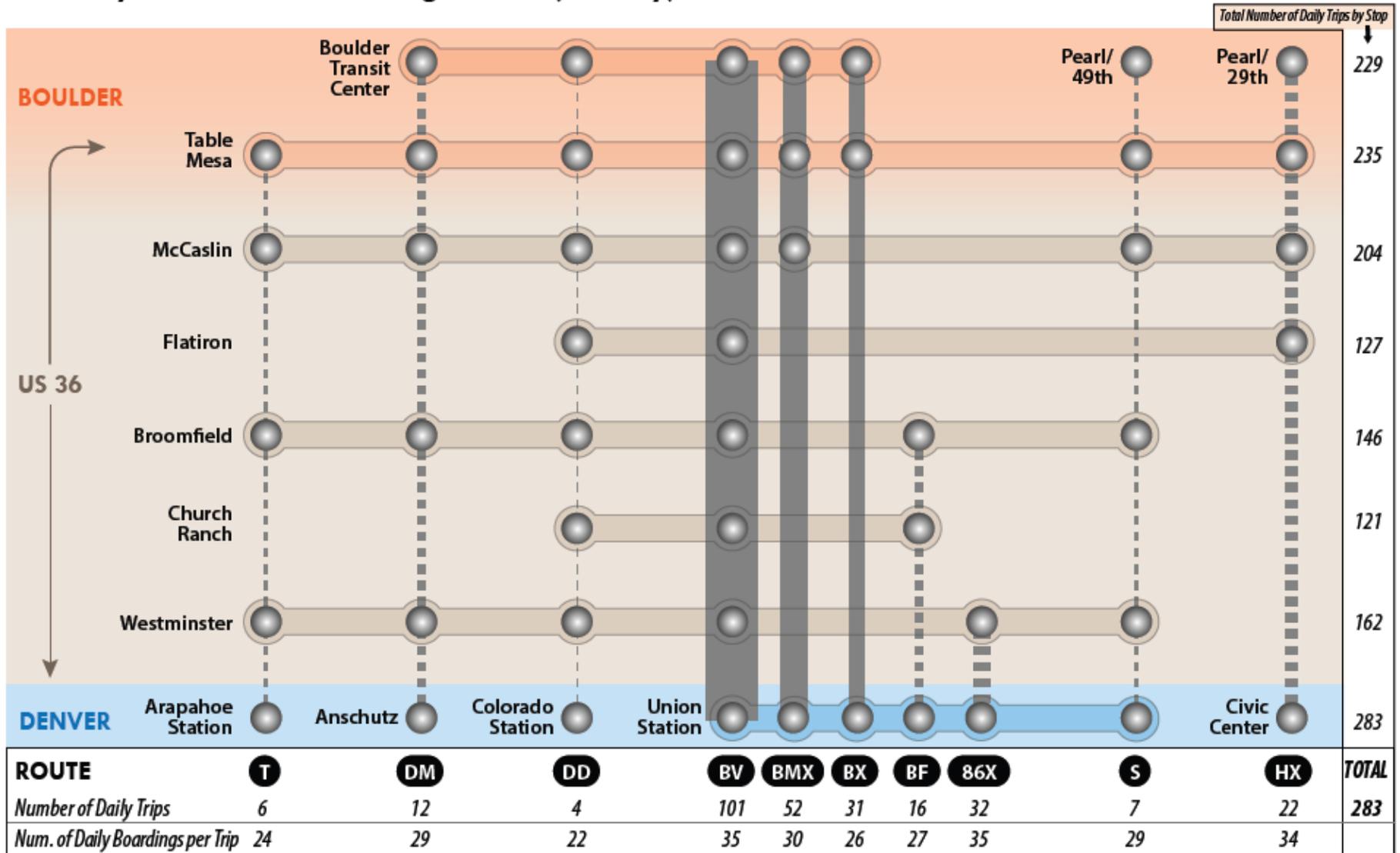
Route 209:

Currently, riders can travel from CU to Table Mesa PnR. The proposed BRT service would stop Route 209 service at Baseline due to low ridership between Baseline and Table Mesa PnR. This change would leave a lack of service for the Frasier Meadows and Thunderbird area, including impacts to senior housing. Boulder's request is that if route 209 is changed, then RTD needs to provide alternative transit service to serve Frasier Meadows to avoid impacts to residents, visitors, and employees.

Map of Existing Local and Regional Transit Routes: <https://bouldercolorado.gov/goboulder/bus>

Illustrations of Service Changes

Weekday Service Level: Existing Service (All-Day)



Number of Daily Trips*

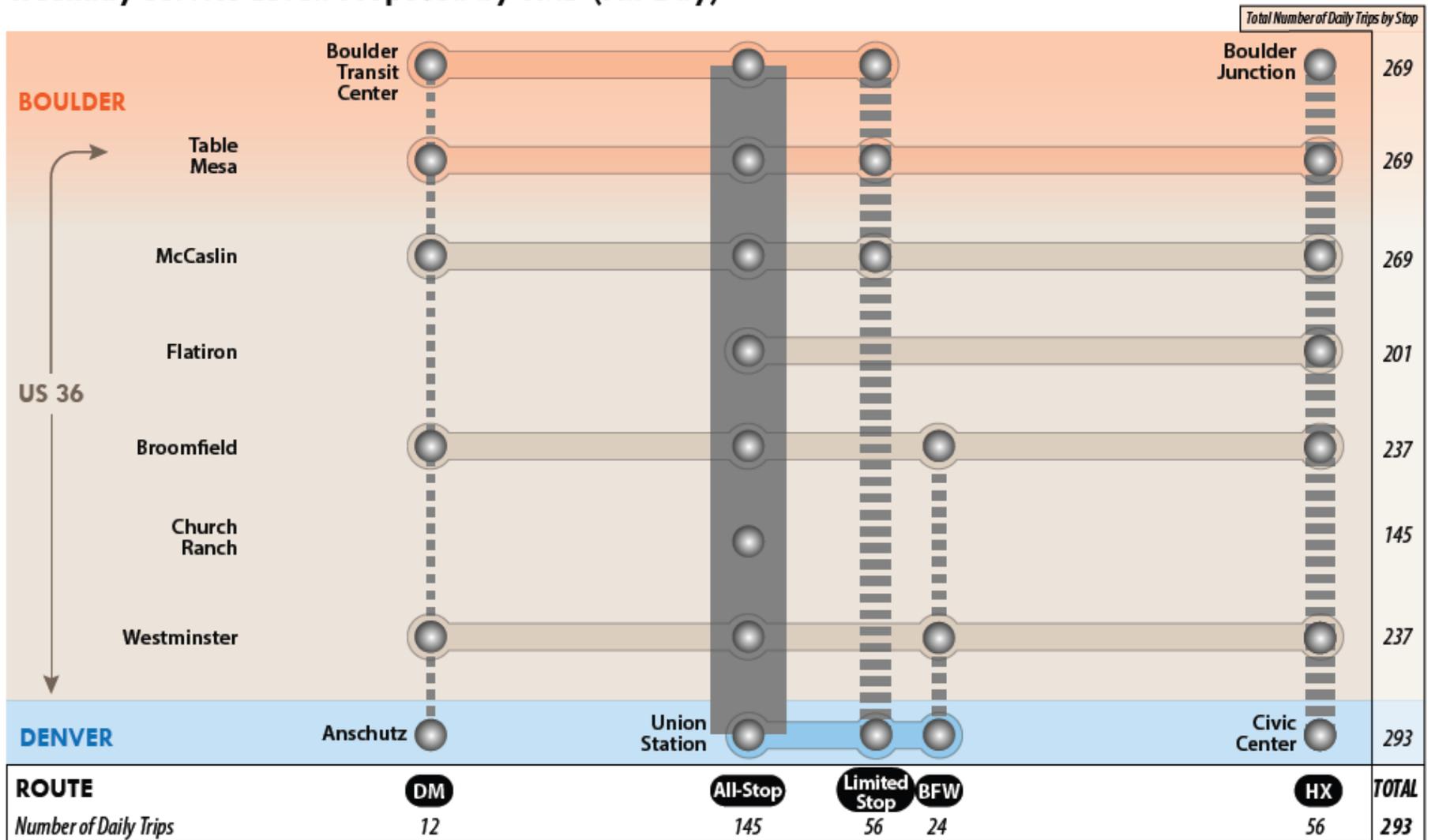
— 10 — 25 — 50
(Proportionally sized)

*in one direction

— All-Day service
- - - Peak-only service

● Station location

Weekday Service Level: Proposed by TMD (All-Day)

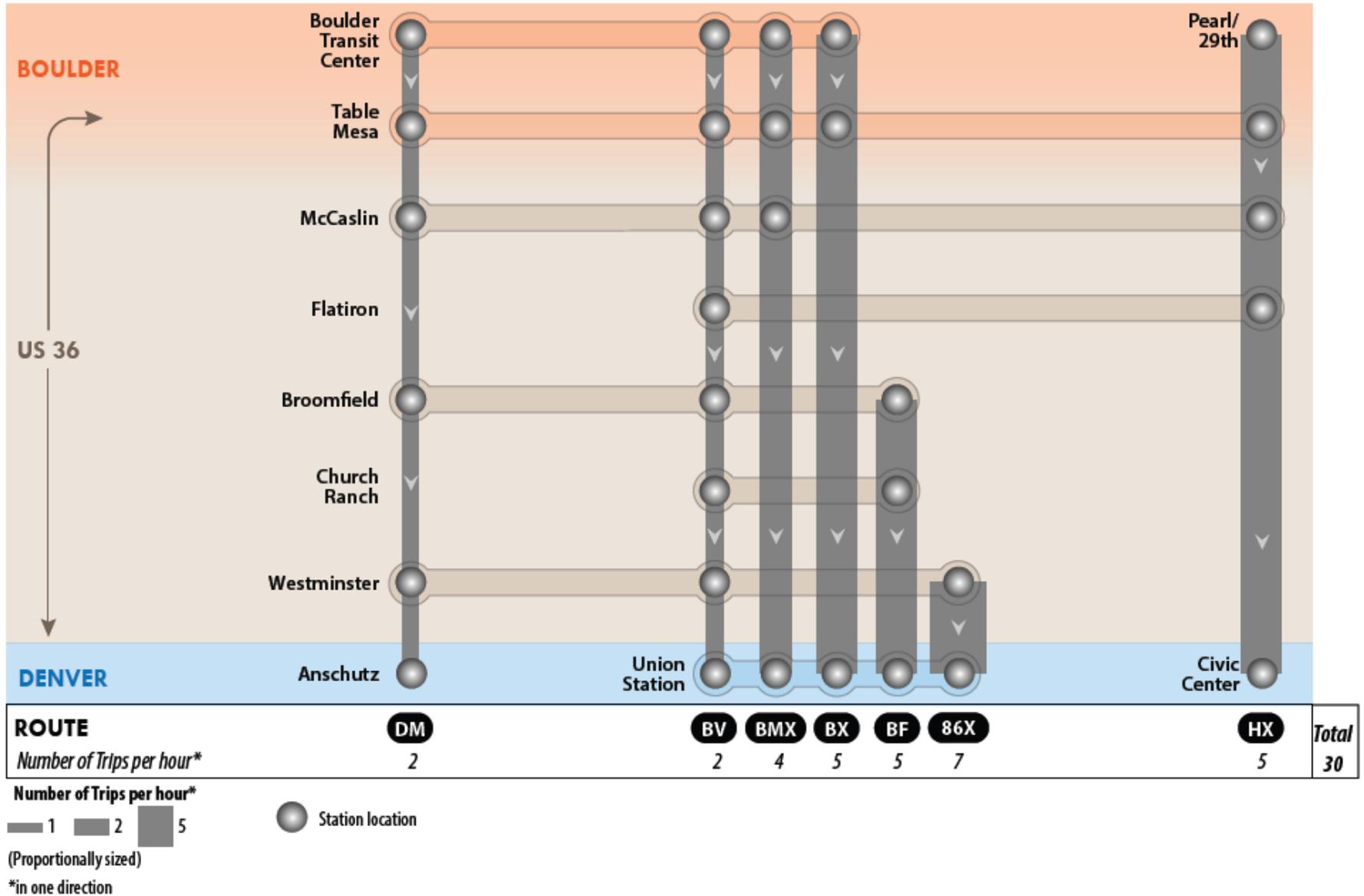


Number of Daily Trips*
 — 10 ■ 25 ■ 50
 (Proportionally sized)
 *in one direction

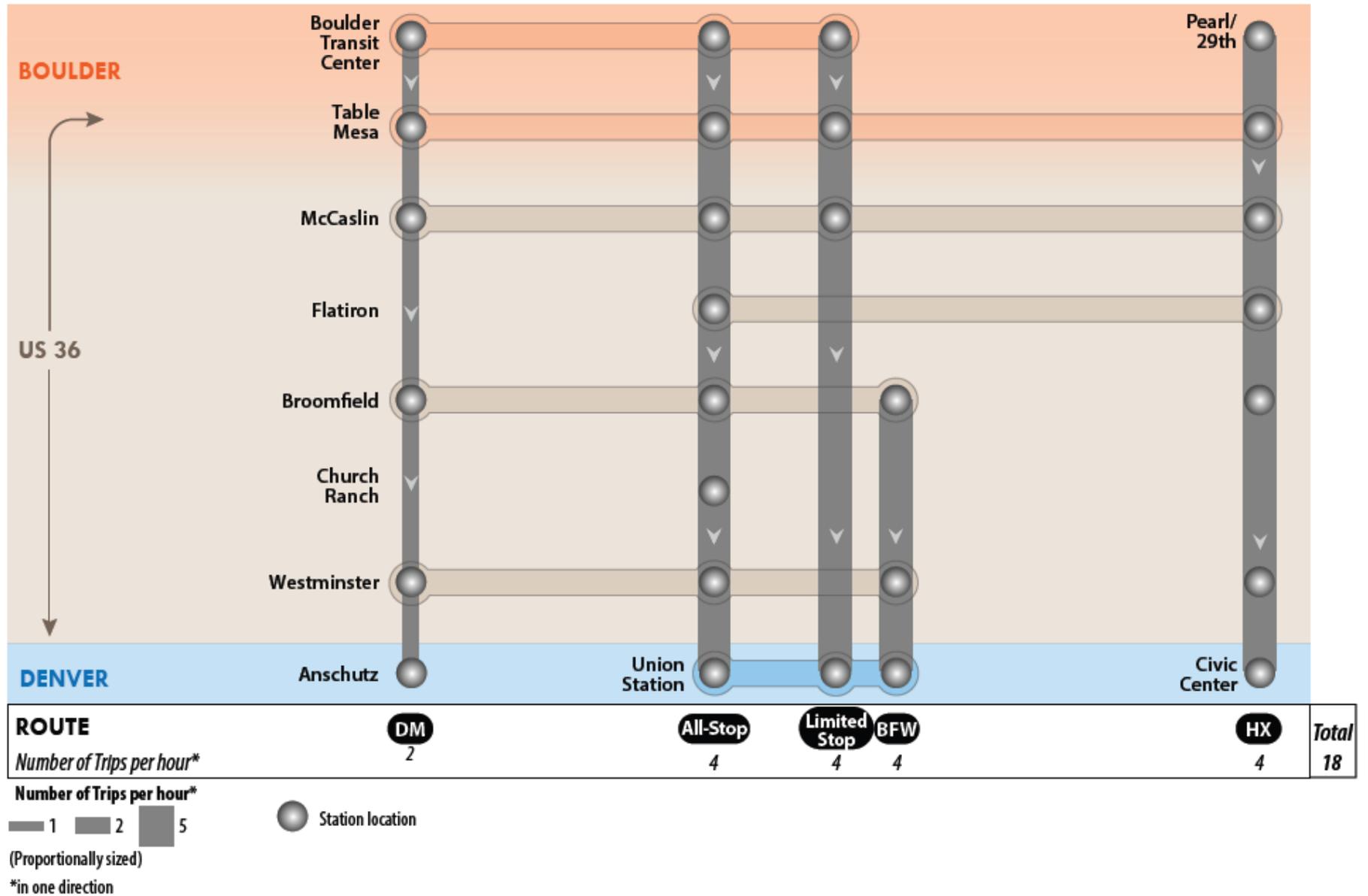
— All-Day service
 - - - Peak-only service

● Station location

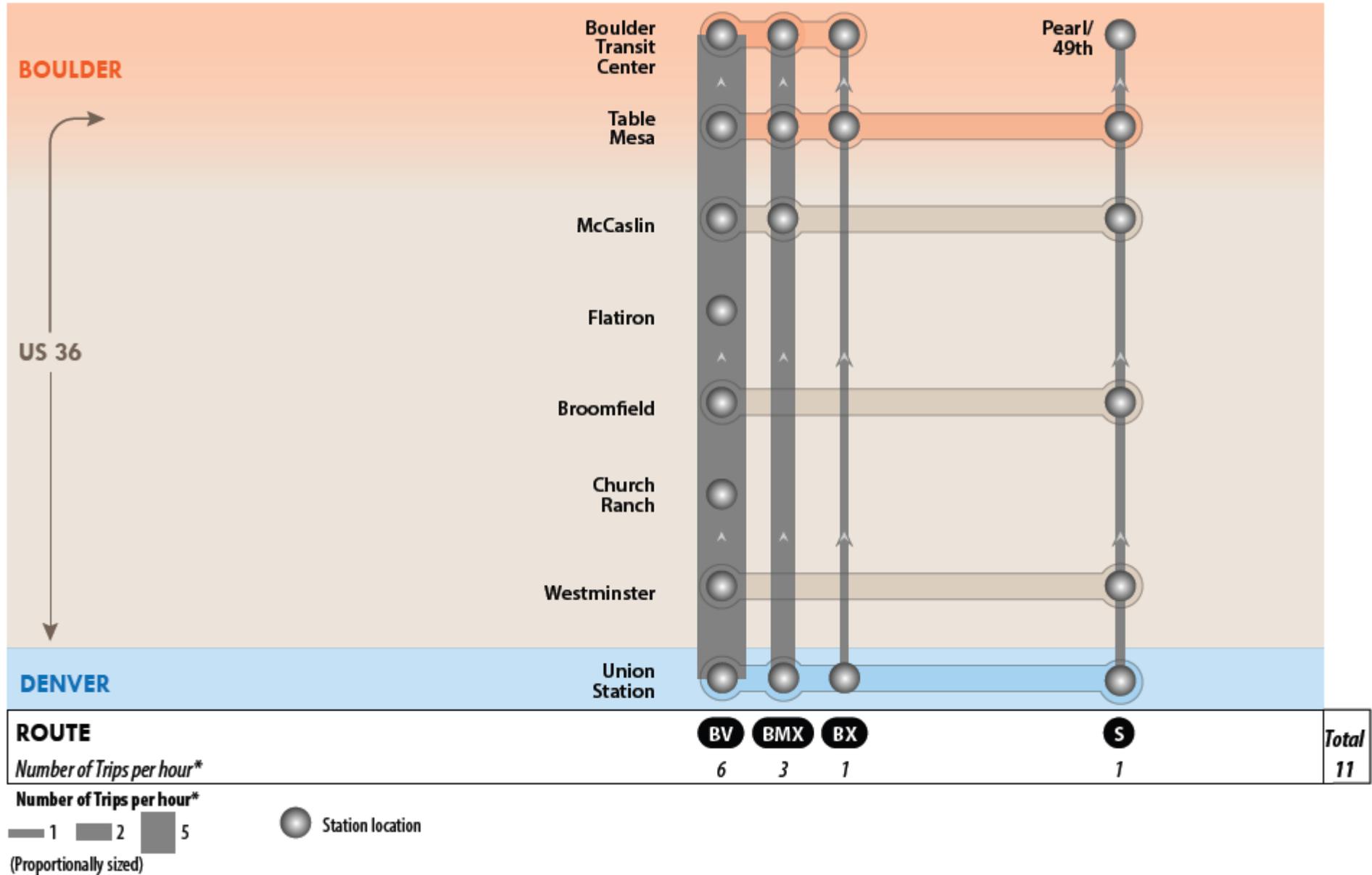
Weekday Service Level: Existing Service (AM Peak Hour, Toward Denver)



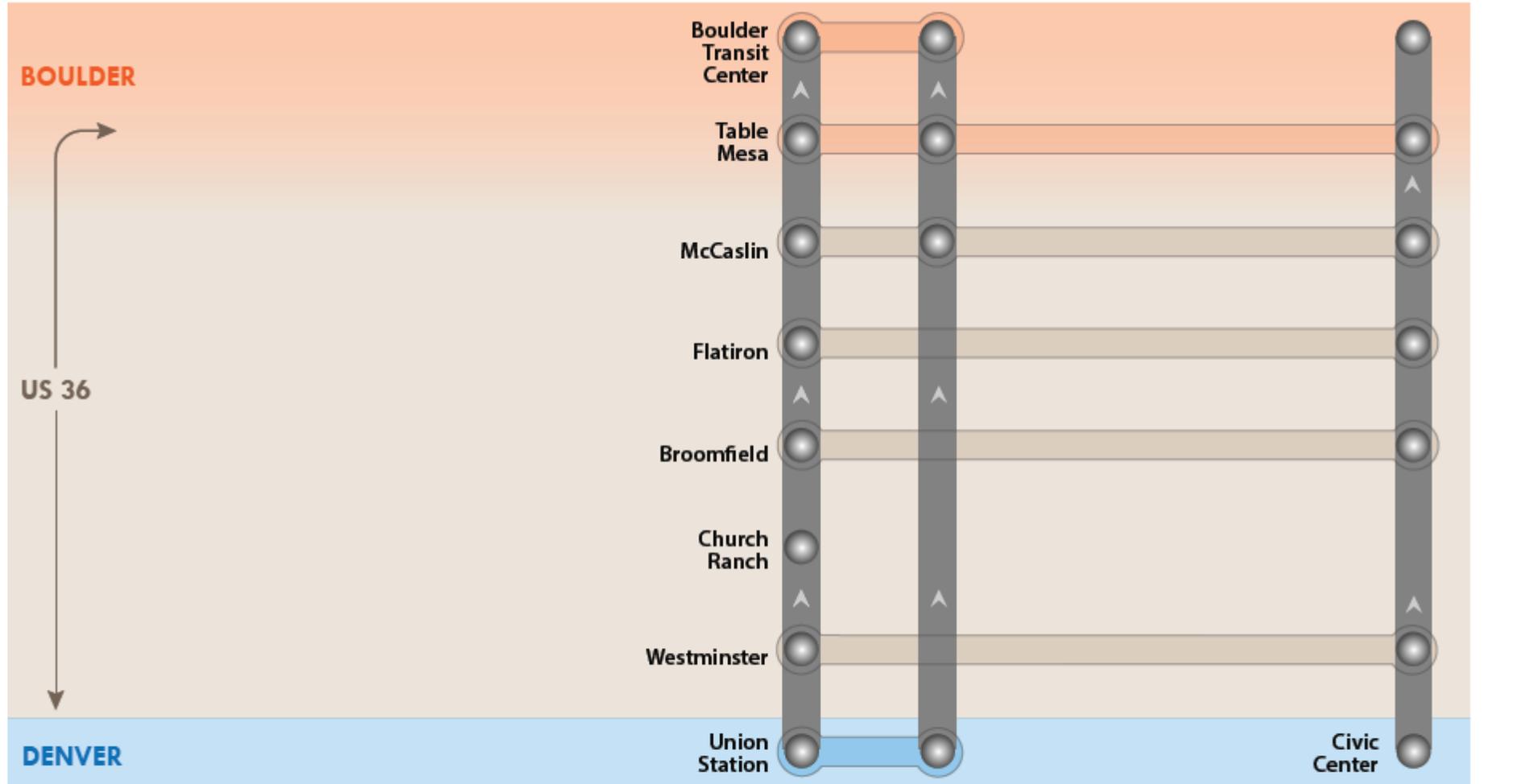
Weekday Service Level: Proposed by TMD (AM Peak Hour, Toward Denver)



Weekday Service Level: Existing Service (AM Peak Hour, Toward Boulder)



Weekday Service Level: Proposed by TMD (AM Peak Hour, Toward Boulder)



ROUTE	All-Stop	Limited Stop	HX	Total
Number of Trips per hour*	4	4	4	12

Number of Trips per hour*
 1
 2
 5
 (Proportionally sized)
 *in one direction

Station location