

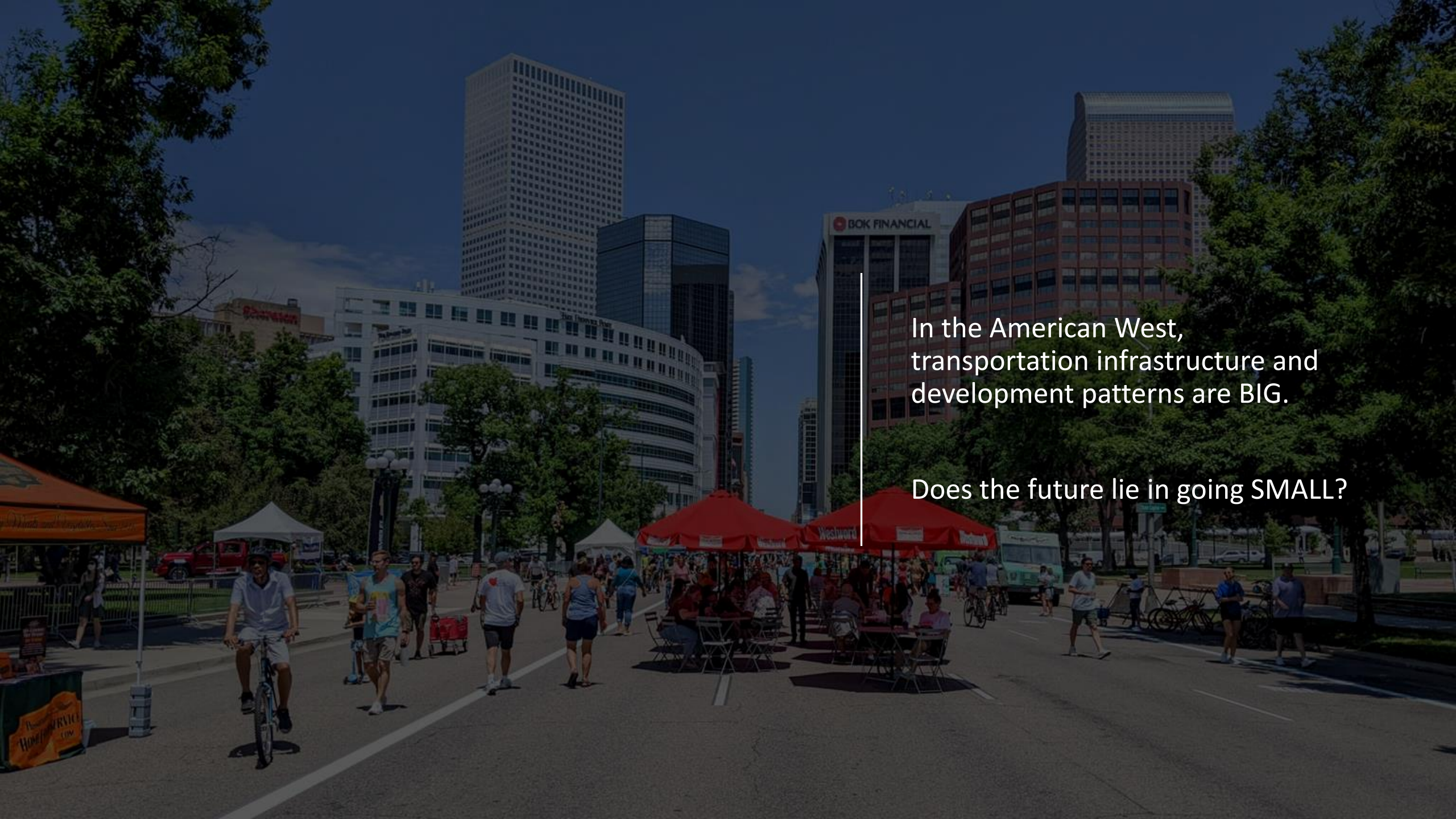


# Good Things Come in Small Packages

*Unwrapping the Shift Toward a More Compact Future*

Darcy Kitching

January 11, 2024



In the American West,  
transportation infrastructure and  
development patterns are BIG.

Does the future lie in going SMALL?

- 
- Today, we'll discuss ...
    - How Colorado is changing
    - Places we can learn from
    - And how planning for the smallest community members benefits everyone



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Man riding a bicycle

Group of people walking

Westword

Skyscraper

BOK FINANCIAL

Skyscraper

State Capitol





- What does “thinking small” mean to you?
- How do you see Colorado changing where you live and work?



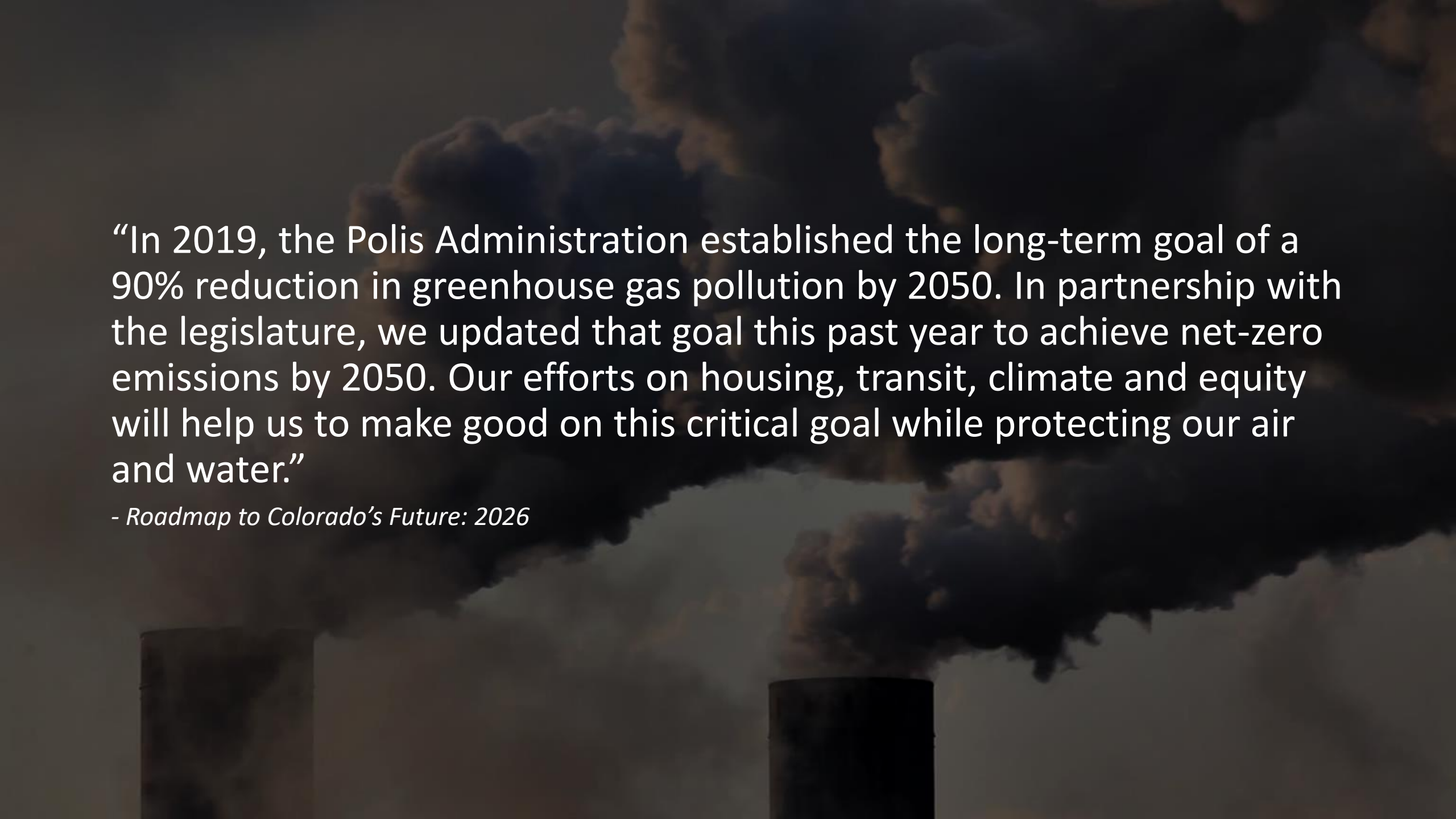
# Colorado is Changing

Policy and planning innovations geared toward more compact, accessible, and multimodal communities that reduce GHG emissions:

- Roadmap to Colorado's Future: 2026
- Senate Bill 260 (2021)
- New transit-oriented communities bill being drafted now
- DRCOG & CDOT regional focus on neighborhood centers and mobility hubs







“In 2019, the Polis Administration established the long-term goal of a 90% reduction in greenhouse gas pollution by 2050. In partnership with the legislature, we updated that goal this past year to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. Our efforts on housing, transit, climate and equity will help us to make good on this critical goal while protecting our air and water.”

*- Roadmap to Colorado's Future: 2026*





“In cities, the best transportation plan is a great land use plan!”

- Brent Toderian, Toderian UrbanWorks

# Places We Can Learn From

Case studies in the benefits of thinking small:

- **Culdesac Tempe, Arizona** – Brand-new, innovative, car-free and transit-linked community on the edge of one of the most car-dependent metros in the US
- **Austin, Texas** – Eliminated parking minimums to increase access and incentivize infill development
- **Minneapolis, Minnesota** – Longtime leader in bike/ped safety and connectivity with a compact urban core



# Culdesac Tempe, AZ

“[Culdesac Tempe](#), is a 17-acre lot just across the Salt River from Phoenix. ... The site will eventually feature 761 apartments, 16,000 square feet of retail, 1,000 residents — and exactly zero places for them to park. The people who live there will be contractually forbidden to park a car on site or on nearby streets, part of a deal the development company struck with the government to assuage fears of clogged parking in surrounding neighborhoods.”

- *Conor Dougherty*, [“The Capital of Sprawl Gets a Radically Car-Free Neighborhood”](#) The New York Times, 10/31/23



“The benefits of [building human-scale cities] are way bigger than almost anyone can imagine. We’re not just talking about eliminating a bit of pollution or a few traffic jams or car crashes. No. This is about far richer, healthier, and most importantly **more fun** living for everyone.

“To put even conservative numbers to this, we’re talking about a lifetime boost of over \$20,000 per person per year, which compounds into well over two million dollars per adult lifetime.”

- *Mister Money Mustache (Peter Adeney)*

[“Less Cars, More Money: My Visit to the City of the Future”](#)

Car-free city Benefits	Individual Level		Nationwide Level	
	Savings per Year	Wealth Increase over 50 Years	Savings per Year (Trillions)	Wealth Increase over 50 Years
Reduced Road Spending (60%)	\$800	\$90,237	0.3	29.8
Less land wasted (25%)	\$2,000	\$225,594	0.7	74.4
Reduced Car Miles (80%)	\$8,000	\$902,375	2.6	297.8
Reduced Medical Spending (25%)	\$3,000	\$338,391	1.0	111.7
Increased Productivity (10%)	\$7,000	\$789,578	2.3	260.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$20,800</b>	<b>\$2,346,175</b>	<b>\$7</b>	<b>\$774</b>



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## Austin, TX

“In addition to making room for more housing, doing away with parking eliminates the cost of having to build spaces. Researchers with the U.S. Government Accountability Office [found that](#) building a parking garage alongside apartment buildings in California and Arizona added an average cost of \$56,000 per apartment.”

- Audrey McClinchy, [“Austin Becomes One of the Largest Cities in the Country to Get Rid of Parking Requirements,”](#) KUT News, 11/2/23



# Minneapolis, MN

“Minneapolis' status as one of the top cities for bicycling is both a combination of strategic multimodal investments that include [an extensive] urban trail network, as well as deliberate complimentary policy guidance over time. Those pieces go hand in hand to create our current bike network.”

- Luke Hanson, a senior transportation planner for the city, in [“How Minneapolis Became a Top U.S. Bike City,”](#) by Kiran Herbert, 7/27/23





# Planning for the Smallest Community Members Benefits Everyone

Lessons from adopting “all ages and abilities” infrastructure and planning

- A “child-friendly city” is a city friendly to all
- Children are drawn to natural elements, places to sit, public art, safe places away from cars, places to see and be seen, and places with amenities such as food carts or restaurants
- Young people crave independent mobility

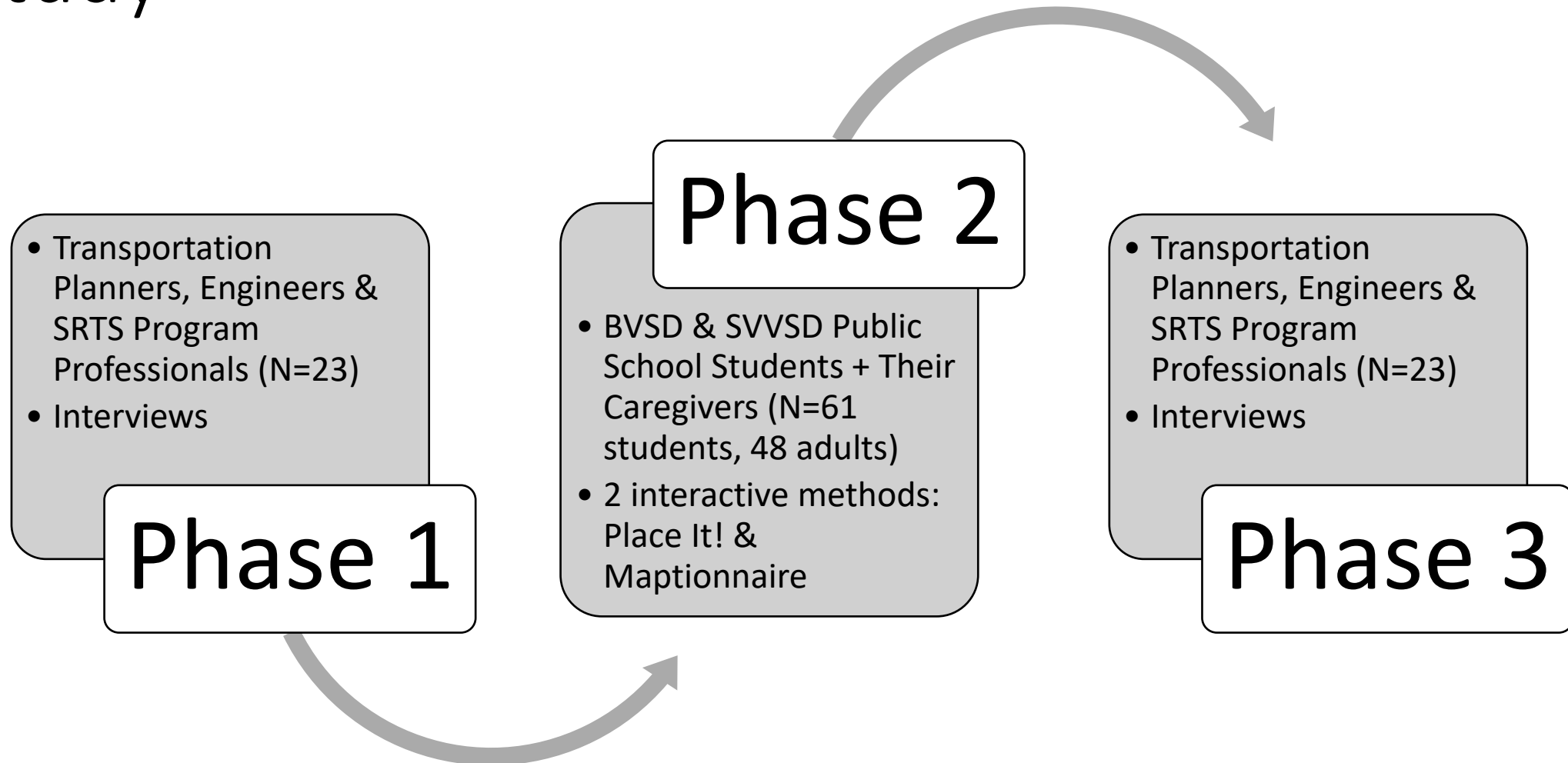
# Planning for the Smallest Community Members Benefits Everyone

Lessons from Boulder County transportation professionals and families

- Transportation professionals' own challenges with "autonormativity" vs. goals to build more accessible places
- What young people and parents/caregivers say about their transportation needs
- How we can learn from community members to keep planning and designing projects relevant to their lived experiences and needs



# Design of the Boulder County School Travel Study



More information about my research here: <https://www.schooltravelstudy.com/>

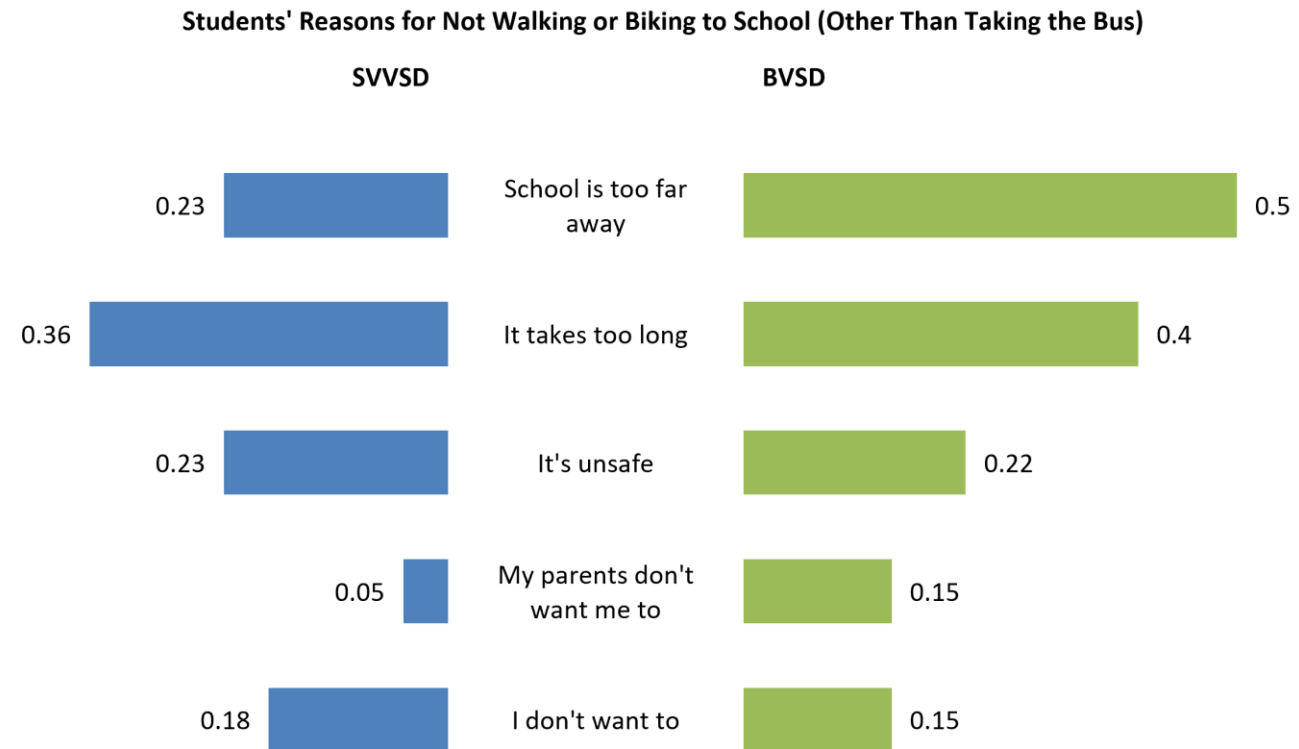


“So my perspective of living in Longmont and being a parent: if you’re in our newer, more developed areas that were built under the idea or guidelines of interconnected bikeways, actually in neighborhoods, you have an excellent infrastructure in place to walk and bike and whatever. If the parents are not letting their kids walk and bike, it’s because they’re choosing convenience over active transportation. So, for whatever reason, they think it’s more convenient to drive down three or four cul-de-sacs and hop all over the place and sit in line for 15 minutes. But they could just put their kid on the bike trail and then they could walk in and the kid would be there within 15 minutes. So, yeah, I felt that pain.”

- *SVVSD Planner, Longmont*

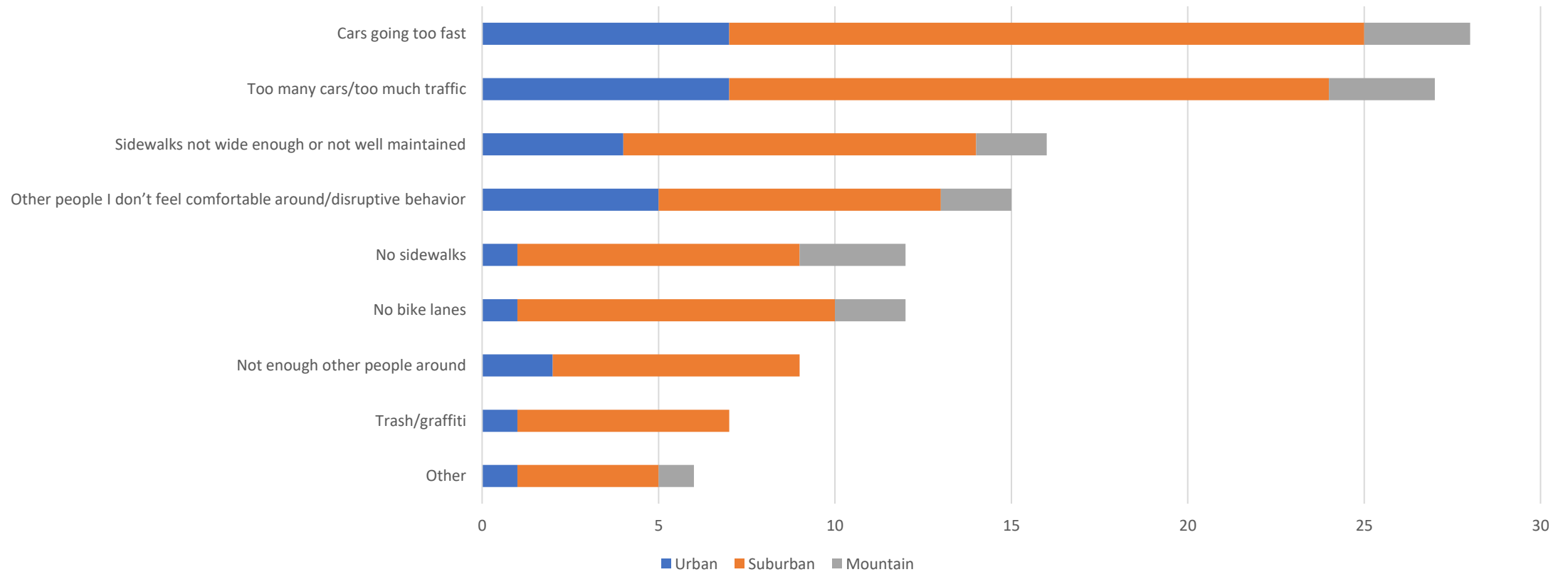
# Student Travel Modes by District

- 50% of participating students say they would like to travel to school independently, at least part of the way
- 73% of participating parents start their day driving; 20% say work schedule requires it



# Caregivers' Concerns About Children's Safety

If you feel it is unsafe for you or your child(ren) to walk, bike, or ride the bus, which of these things make you feel that way?



“So, our ideal walk to school would be – we’d live next to a coffee shop, so we can maybe get snacks on the way. We’d also live closer to our friends so we could walk to school with them, and say hi to them during the [walk]. We’d also live next to a place that has lots and lots of plants, and maybe a stream, because it would be really pretty to walk through a bunch of nature.”

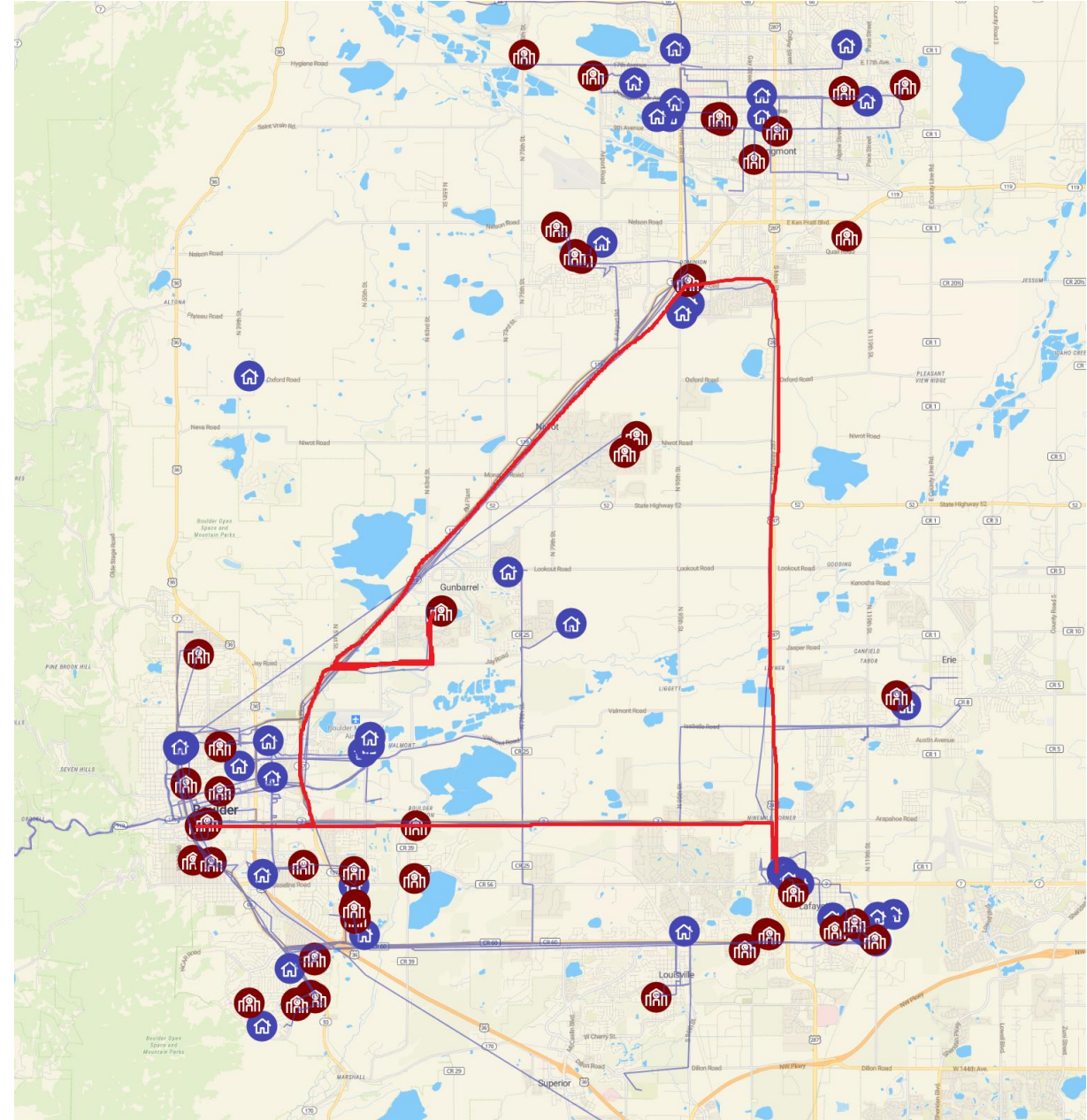
- *SVVSD middle school student*





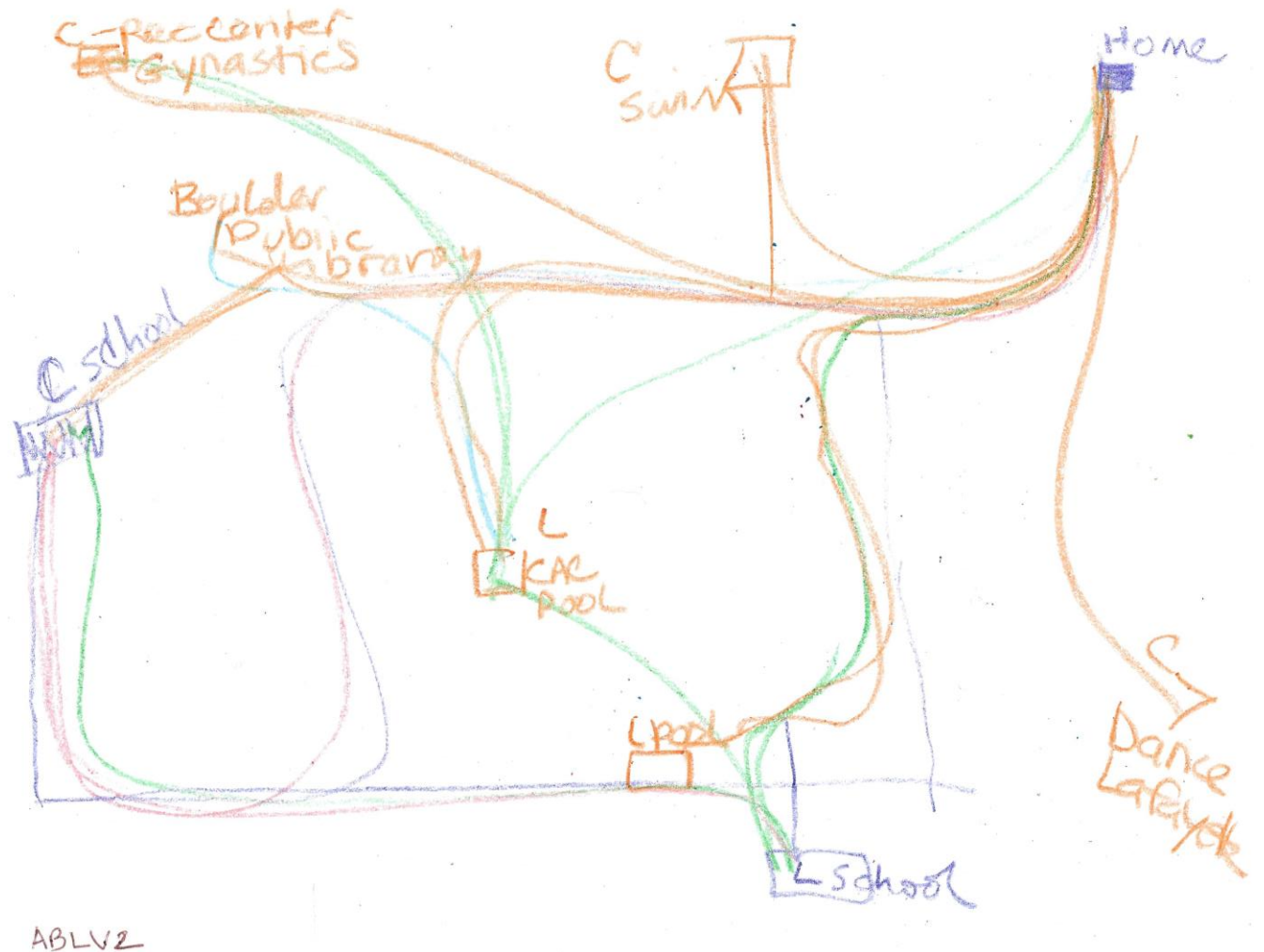
“In the morning, we just  
**go, go, go,**  
and we don't really  
think, what's our route?  
**Look at all this**  
I have to do in the  
morning!”

- Parent, BVSD



“It’s **so much driving!**  
We chose to open enroll in  
schools. If we went to  
neighborhood schools,  
one would walk and the  
other would take the bus.  
When I drew it, [my son]  
was able to **see what I do**  
**for him** everyday!”

- Parent, BVSD



An aerial, high-angle photograph of a city street grid. The buildings are multi-story, with a mix of brick and lighter-colored facades. The streets are dark, and there are some trees with bare branches. The overall tone is somewhat muted and historical. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

A 4-step process to do “the hard work of iteratively building a successful city or town”:

1. Humbly observe where people in the community struggle.
2. Ask the question: What is the next smallest thing we can do right now to address that struggle?
3. Do that thing. Do it right now.
4. Repeat.

- Chuck Marohn, [“Most Public Engagement is Worthless,”](#) *Strong Towns*

Discussion – Q&A, Your Thoughts

The image features a dark blue gradient background. On the right side, there is a dense cluster of 3D question marks in a dark grey color, creating a textured, abstract effect. The text "Discussion – Q&A, Your Thoughts" is centered in the middle of the image in a white, sans-serif font.



Thank you!

Darcy Kitching

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Boulder Transportation Connections/Boulder  
Chamber