



Why the Safe System Approach?

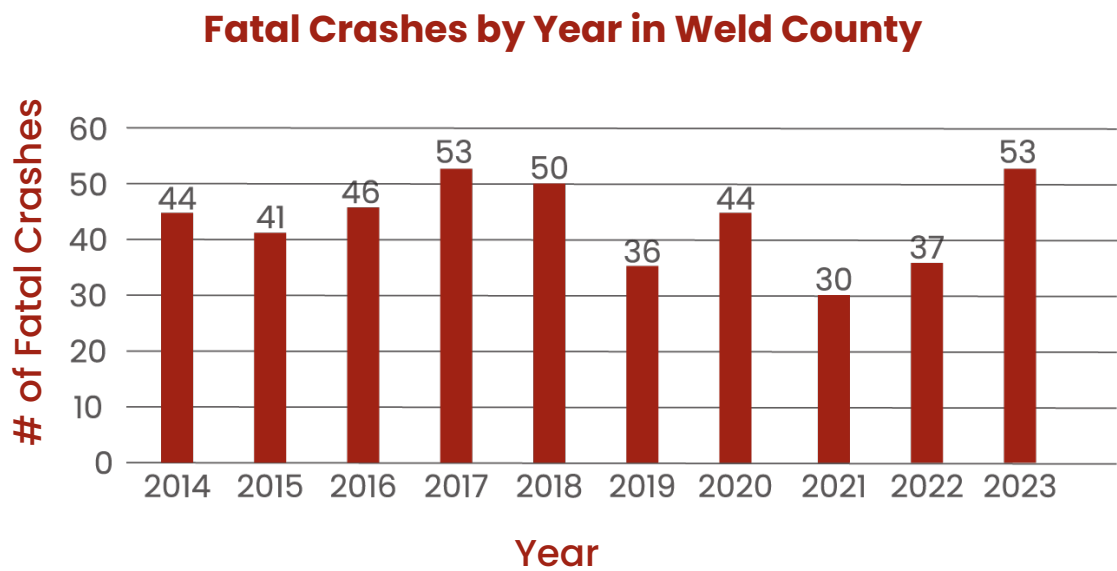
Between 2014 and 2023, Weld County experienced 434 fatal crashes, resulting in 561 lives lost. During this 10-year period, fatalities peaked in 2017 before beginning to decline; however, that trend has begun to reverse, with 2023 experiencing the same level of fatal crashes as six years prior.

Why the Safe System Approach?

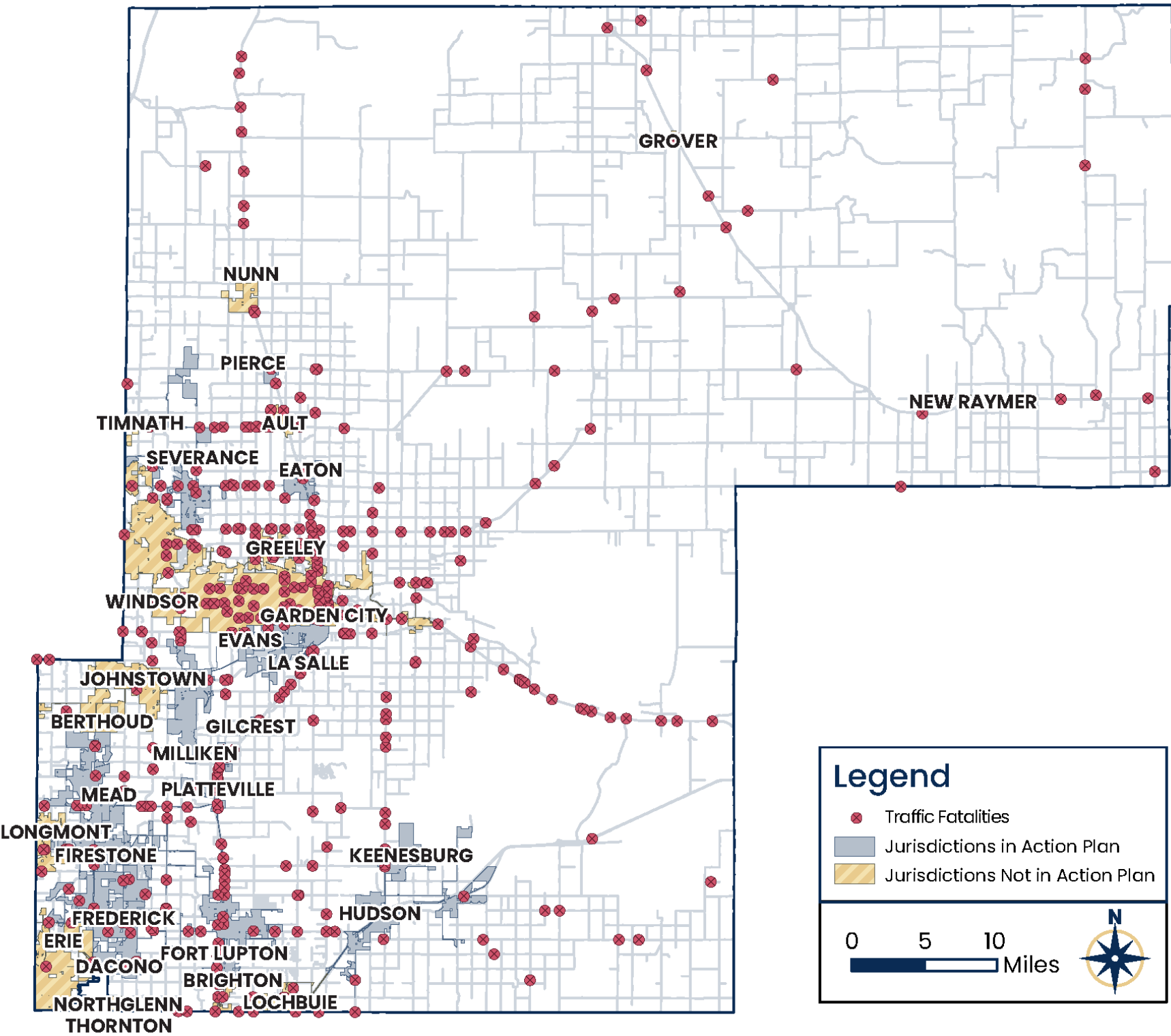
Fatal crashes are the most impactful type of crash. The impact caused by the loss of life on Weld County's roadways is astronomical; according to the U.S. Department of Transportation, Weld County's roadway fatalities equate to a societal impact of approximately \$6.4 billion dollars.

The Safe System Approach addresses the most impactful crashes. This approach prioritizes policies and practices to ensure that human error will not result in a crash causing a traffic fatality.

*It should be noted that interstates, highways, and streets within **Ault**, **Berthoud**, **Brighton**, **Garden City**, **Grover**, **Johnstown**, **Lochbuie**, **New Raymer**, **Northglenn**, and **Windsor** are not part of the Weld County Safety Action Plan. Additionally, **Erie**, **Greeley**, **Kersey**, **Longmont**, **Nunn**, and **Timnath** are completing or have completed their own Safety Action Plans.*



Weld County Fatal Traffic Crashes



What is the Safe System Approach?

The Safe System Approach is a global traffic safety initiative that originated in Sweden in the late 1990s and is now endorsed by the U.S. Department of Transportation. The core principle of Vision Zero is the belief that all traffic fatalities and serious injuries are preventable and that no loss of life is acceptable. The goal of Vision Zero is to create a transportation system that prioritizes safety above all else, using data-driven analysis to identify the root causes of traffic crashes and addressing them with comprehensive strategies rooted in a Safe System Approach.

The Safe System Approach is a comprehensive strategy for managing road safety that is closely aligned with Vision Zero principles; the goal of the Safe System Approach is to create a transportation system that is forgiving of human error and does not rely on individual road users to be perfect. Instead, the approach recognizes that people will make mistakes and that the transportation system must be designed to the extent possible to protect the road user from the consequences of those mistakes.

The Safe System Approach is based on six foundational principles*:

DEATHS AND SERIOUS INJURIES ARE UNACCEPTABLE: A Safe System Approach prioritizes the elimination of crashes that result in death and serious injuries.

HUMANS MAKE MISTAKES: People will inevitably make mistakes and decisions that can lead or contribute to crashes, but the transportation system can be designed and operated to accommodate certain types and levels of human mistakes and avoid death and serious injuries when a crash occurs.

HUMANS ARE VULNERABLE: Human bodies have physical limits for tolerating crash forces before death or serious injury occurs; therefore, it is critical to design and operate a transportation system that is human-centric and accommodates physical human vulnerabilities.

RESPONSIBILITY IS SHARED: All stakeholders—including government at all levels, industry, non-profit/advocacy, researchers, and the public—are vital to preventing fatalities and serious injuries on our roadways.

SAFETY IS PROACTIVE: Proactive tools should be used to identify and address safety issues in the transportation system, rather than waiting for crashes to occur and reacting afterwards.

REDUNDANCY IS CRUCIAL: Reducing risks requires that all parts of the transportation system be strengthened, so that if one part fails, the other parts still protect people.

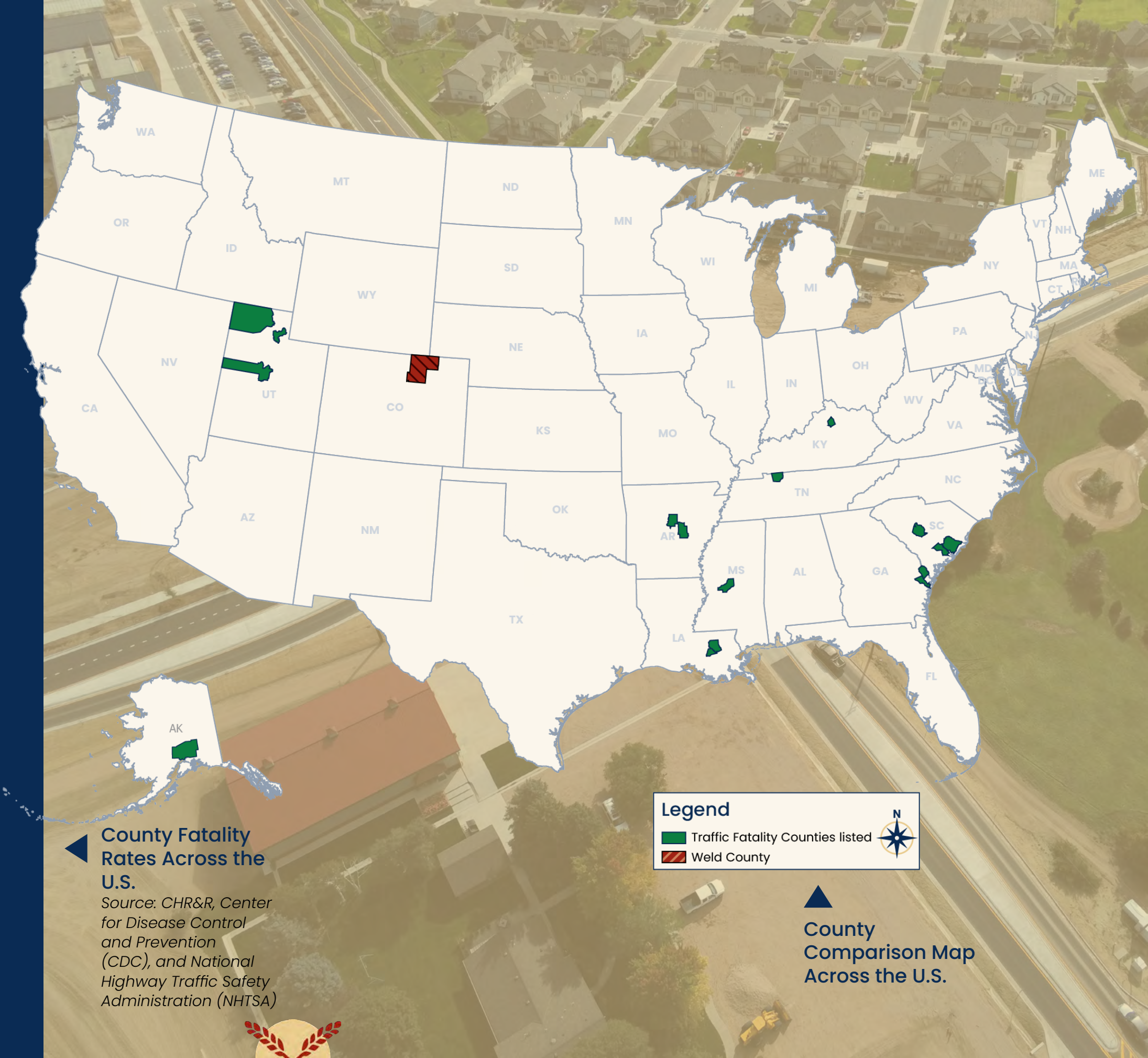
**Source: U.S. Department of Transportation*



State of Safety in Weld County

County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (CHR&R), a program of the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, draws attention to why there are differences in health within and across communities. This program identifies similar counties to Weld County based on key demographic, social, and economic indicators. Looking at Weld County as compared to peer counties for traffic fatalities, Weld County is in the middle of the pack.

County	Fatalities per 100,000 People
Juab County, Utah	39.0
Morgan County, Utah	20.3
Box Elder County, Utah	19.2
Livingston Parish, Louisiana	19.0
Ascension Parish, Louisiana	18.8
Berkeley County, South Carolina	18.0
Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Alaska	17.0
Weld County, Colorado	16.9
Lexington County, South Carolina	16.4
Lonoke County, Arkansas	16.1
Bryan County, Georgia	15.2
Scott County, Kentucky	14.5
Effingham County, Georgia	14.0
Dorchester County, South Carolina	13.8
Montgomery County, Tennessee	13.2
Faulkner County, Arkansas	13.0
Madison County, Mississippi	12.7



County Fatality Rates Across the U.S.
Source: CHR&R, Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)

County Comparison Map Across the U.S.



Although Weld County has a higher fatality rate than the state of Colorado overall, many municipalities within the county have a low fatality rate. However, Platteville, Grover, Nunn, Fort Lupton, Mead, Hudson, Ault, and Dacono all experience higher traffic-related fatality rates; these communities are overrepresented due to the proportionally high number of fatal crashes compared to their low populations.

Garden City, Gilcrest, Keenesburg, LaSalle, and New Raymer have experienced no traffic deaths on their roadway but can benefit from the Safe System Approach to maintain this trend.

Municipality (Included in Plan)	Fatalities per 100,000 People	Municipality (Excluded in Plan)	Fatalities per 100,000 People
Platteville	66.7	Grover	62.1
Fort Lupton	32.7	Nunn	40.2
Mead	31.4	Ault	18.8
Hudson	25.3	Weld County	16.9
Dacono	17.5	Kersey	16.7
Weld County	16.9	Brighton	13.2
Colorado	10.9	Colorado	10.9
Pierce	10.7	Greeley	7.2
Severance	6.5	Lochbuie	6.2
Thornton	6.0	Longmont	6.2
Milliken	6.0	Northglenn	5.0
Eaton	5.2	Berthoud	4.8
Firestone	4.3	Timnath	3.1
Frederick	4.1	Windsor	3.1
Evans	2.8	Johnstown	1.2
Gilcrest	0.0	Erie	1.0
Keenesburg	0.0	Garden City	0.0
LaSalle	0.0	New Raymer	0.0



◀ Crash Fatality Rates by Jurisdictions within Weld County
Source: NHTSA, U.S. Census Bureau





Local, State, and National Resources

As a part of the plan development process, Weld County wanted to draw on the experiences of other municipalities (regionally and nationally) actively taking steps to reduce fatal and serious injury crashes and understand what best practices are working within their communities. Weld County wanted to review existing local, regional, state, and national plans to see the strengths within their plans and policies and where they had opportunities for improvements.

This review looked at safety initiatives in Weld County, the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO), the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), and the Upper Front Range Transportation Planning Region (UFR TPR); additionally, the review identified existing safety targets and performance measures, safety issues, and funding opportunities.

The findings of both the safety action plans review and the policies and plans reviews are found in Appendix A.

