

Chaffee County

Safer Roadways for All



Community Survey Summary

As of May 5, 2026

About This Survey

Chaffee County conducted a public survey as part of the first phase of the Chaffee County Safer Roadways for all Action Plan process. The survey asked respondents to identify traffic safety concerns in Chaffee County and flag specific locations of concern on an interactive map. The survey was open from October 2025 through April 2026.

A total of 470 people completed the written survey, with a total of 667 location pins placed on the interactive map, many of which also included written comments. This report summarizes the key findings.

How We Reached the Community

To gather as many survey responses as possible, the project team combined marketing and outreach, partnerships with local organizations, and in-person pop-up events across Chaffee County. This approach was designed to reach residents where they already gather, rather than relying on the survey alone to draw participation.

Engagement Events and Tabling

The project team set up in-person booths at high-traffic community locations and events, including:

- *What's Up Salida: Community Coffee Meeting* at the Salida Community Center on **February 19**
- The base of Monarch Mountain on **March 13**
- The Green Drinks Event in Salida on **April 22**

Community Connectors

The project team developed messaging materials for trusted community connectors and contacts to help introduce the project and encourage survey participation. These relationships helped extend the survey's reach into networks that might not otherwise engage.

- AHRA (Arkansas Headwaters Recreation Association)
- BV Singletrack Coalition
- Buena Vista Library
- Chaffee County (employees)
- Chaffee County Community Foundation
- Chaffee County Public Health
- Chaffee County Road & Bridge
- Chaffee Fire District
- City of Salida (employees)
- City of Salida Public Works
- Colorado Mountain College
- GARNA
- League of Women Voters

- Mt. Princeton
- Outdoor Rec Outfitters (Absolute Bikes)
- Salida Library
- Salida Mountain Trails
- Salida Senior Citizens Center
- S. Ark Fire District/Salida Fire Dept.
- SPOT
- Town of BV (employees)
- Town of BV Public Works
- UAACOG Area Agency On Aging
- Valley to Valley Senior Care Center
- Whitewater Boater Socials (BV Paddlers, Colorado Whitewater, Pikes Peak Paddlers, Colorado River Surfers, and Rubber Pushers of Colorado.)
- CPW

Media and Marketing

The project was also promoted through a range of media channels, including:

- County social media channels
- Local radio
- County press release
- Community connector social media channels

Together, these efforts were designed to meet residents where they already spend time, whether online, in local media, or at community gathering places, to maximize awareness of the project and survey responses.

Survey Results: Key Takeaways

The following themes emerged consistently across the written survey, open-ended responses, and interactive map data.

Takeaway	Description
Bike and pedestrian infrastructure is the top unmet need	Nearly half of respondents (44%) cited missing or inadequate bikeways as one of their top three concerns, making it the single most-selected issue in the survey. On the interactive map, 32% of all pins flagged locations where people feel unsafe biking. Open-ended responses consistently called for more protected bike lanes, a Salida-to-Buena Vista trail corridor along the unused rail line, and safer routes connecting town centers to trailheads.
Speeding and aggressive driving are widespread	Speeding (36%) and unsafe passing (29%) ranked second and third among all safety concerns. Respondents across the county described tailgating, reckless passing, and road rage as common

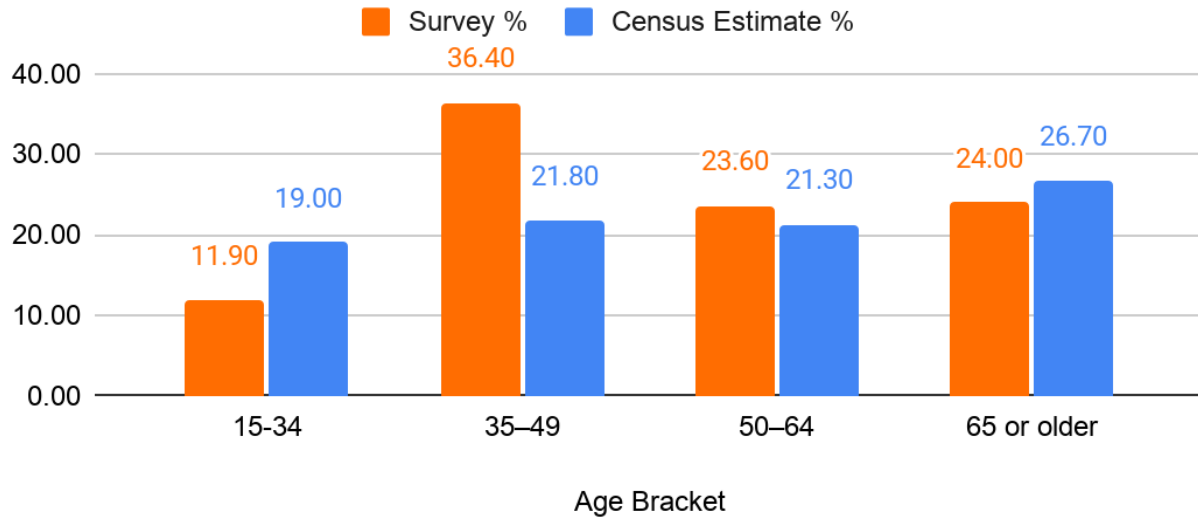
Takeaway	Description
	experiences, particularly on Highway 50 near Maysville and Highway 24 north of Buena Vista. Some noted that enforcement is often insufficient and inconsistent.
Pedestrians and cyclists are interested in improved highway crossings	25% of respondents identified inadequate pedestrian crossings as a top concern, and 15% of map pins marked locations as challenging to walk or cross. Crosswalks on Highways 24, 50, and 285 were repeatedly flagged particularly where these highways pass through developed communities, including Buena Vista, Salida, Poncha Springs, and Nathrop. The flashing yellow crosswalk lights currently in use in Buena Vista were widely described as ineffective, with many calling for upgraded signals or fully signalized crossings.
Wildlife conflicts are a serious and underappreciated hazard	28% of respondents ranked unexpected wildlife crossing as a top concern, nearly matching unsafe passing in frequency. The interactive map identified 77 wildlife-related pins concentrated along Highway 285 between Salida and Nathrop, Highway 24 north of Buena Vista, Highway 291, and Highway 50 west of Poncha Springs. Respondents called for wildlife crossings, improved signage, and in some cases seasonal road closures on unmaintained county roads.
E-bikes and OHVs are an emerging and growing concern	Across both survey questions, respondents flagged youth on e-bikes running stop signs, unlicensed OHV use on closed county roads, and a lack of education and enforcement as issues that are getting worse. Several respondents noted that e-bike speeds on shared paths and trails pose a particular risk to other users.

Survey Results: Who Responded

Understanding who participated in this survey helps interpret potential biases in the findings and identify gaps for future outreach.

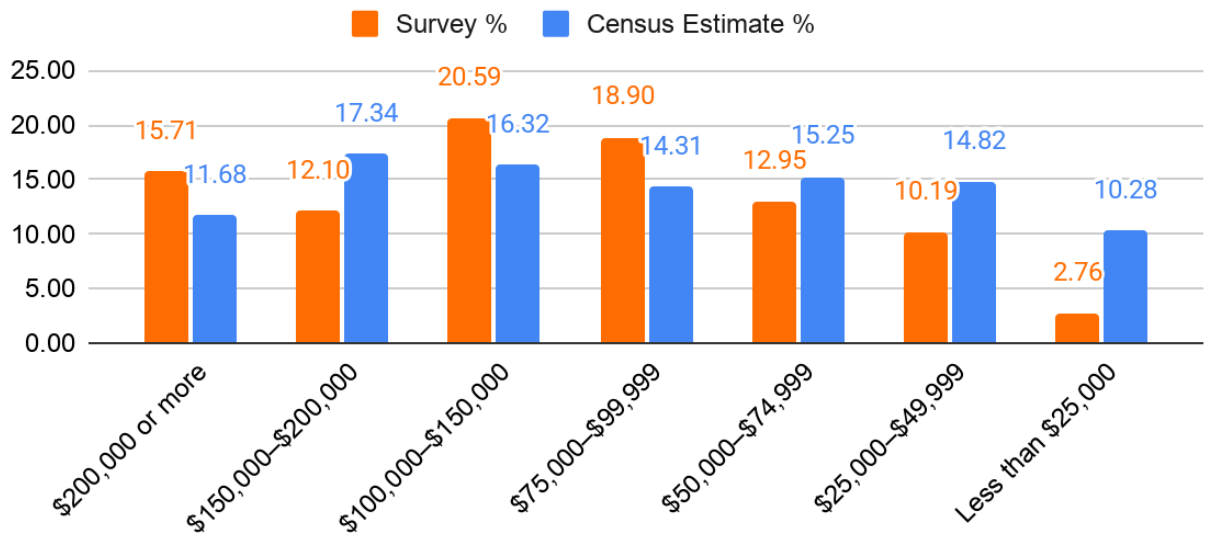
Age

When compared to the Census estimates respondents were well distributed across all adult age groups, except they were a little under representative of people under 35 and skewed slightly toward middle-aged adults. Adults 35 to 49 years old made up 36% of survey respondents but only 22% of the county population according to Census estimates. People under 35 made up 12% of the survey respondents, but 19% of the county population were aged 15-34. The school districts were engaged and helped distribute the survey via their listservs.



Household Income

Survey respondents reflected a diversity of household incomes covering all income levels and were reasonably close to the Census distribution in the county for most income levels. However, households earning less than \$25,000 were underrepresented compared to census data (3% of respondents vs. 10% in the Census).



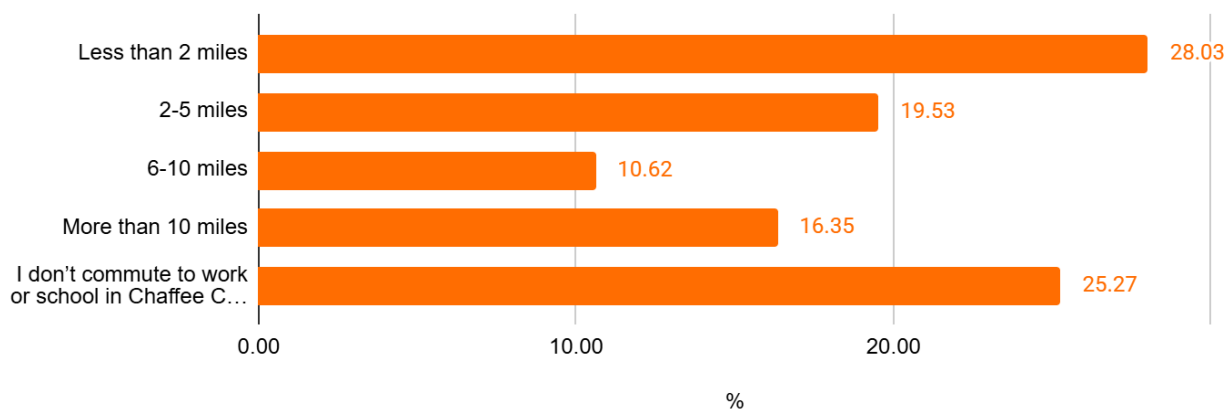
Where Respondents Live

Nearly half of respondents live in the Salida area, followed by Buena Vista and then Poncha Springs. The distribution closely follows the distribution of population among these communities in the county. A small number of regular visitors from outside the county also participated.

Area	Population	% of Respondents
Salida area	5,861	48.6%
Buena Vista area	3,010	28.5%
Poncha Springs area	1,568	11.0%
Another part of the county	-	8.9%
Outside Chaffee County, regular visitor	-	3.0%

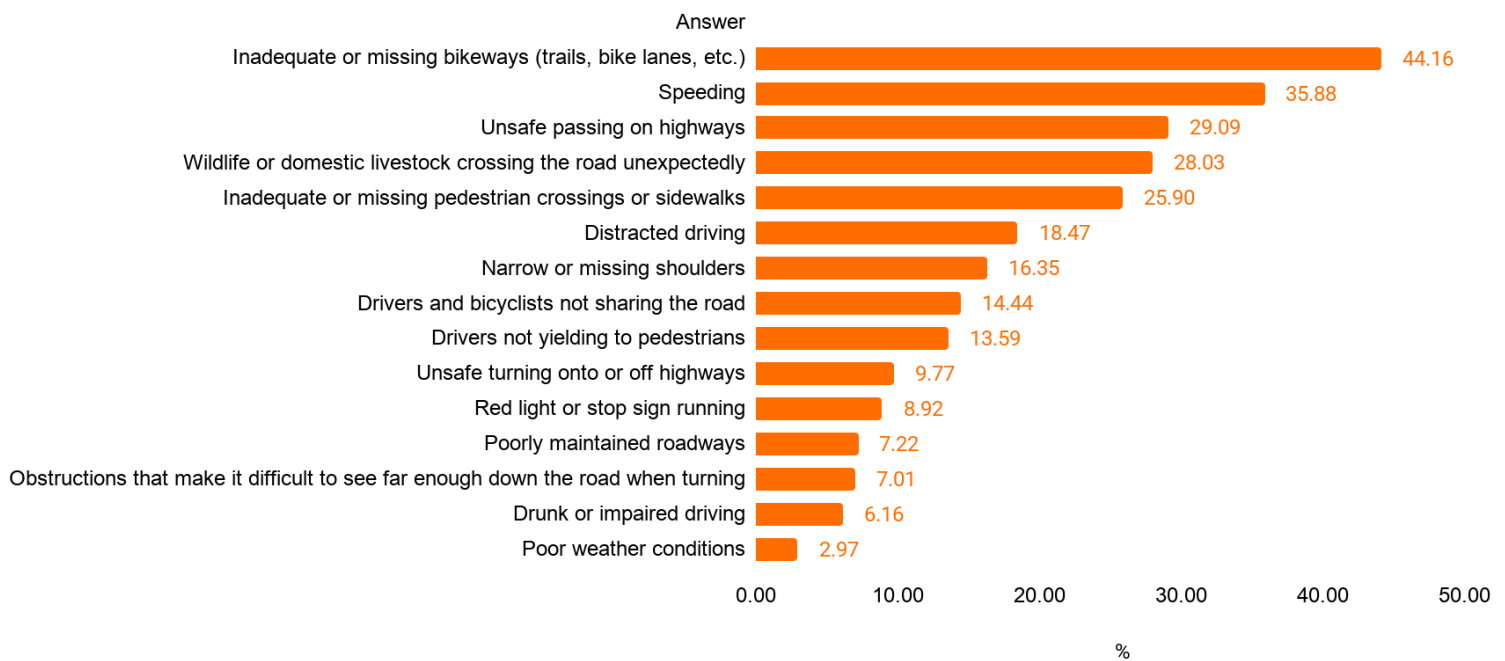
Commute Patterns

Respondents were asked how far they travel one-way to work or school in Chaffee County. About 25% do not commute within the county, while nearly 50% travel less than 5 miles. A meaningful share (16%) travel more than 10 miles, highlighting the importance of safety on rural highways and county roads.



Survey Results: Top Traffic Safety Concerns

Respondents were asked to select up to three traffic safety concerns. Missing or inadequate bikeways was the most frequently selected concern, with 44% of respondents listing it as one of their top safety concerns. This was followed by speeding, with 33% of respondents listing it as one their top safety concerns. Unsafe passing, wildlife on the road, and inadequate or missing sidewalks were also all cited as top safety concerns by at least 25% of respondents. The full results are shown below.



Survey Results: Safety Improvement Suggestions

The following themes emerged from respondents' answer to the question "Do you have additional insights on traffic safety challenges and suggested safety improvements in Chaffee County?"

Theme	Description
Bike infrastructure gaps	The most frequently mentioned improvement was the need for more and better bike infrastructure, including protected bike lanes, paved multi-use paths, and connected routes between destinations. The most commonly requested project was a Salida-to-Buena Vista trail along the unused rail corridor. Respondents also called for improved access from town centers to popular trailheads, particularly on CR 108, CR 110, and CR 175.
Highway pedestrian and cyclist crossings	Concerns for pedestrian safety when crossing highways were flagged across all three communities. The flashing yellow pedestrian lights on Highway 24 in Buena Vista were widely described as ineffective, with many calling for signalized crossings that give drivers a red light, raised crosswalks, or pedestrian bridges. Missing crosswalks in Poncha Springs and

Theme	Description
	along Highway 50 in Salida were also frequently mentioned.
Speeding and aggressive driving on specific corridors	Respondents identified specific corridors as particular problems for speeding, including Highway 50 through the Maysville area, Highway 24 north of Buena Vista, and US 285 through Nathrop. Calls for reduced speed limits, more passing opportunities, and more enforcement were common.
Sidewalk and pedestrian network	Missing or crumbling sidewalks were noted throughout all three towns, with particular concern about disconnected routes to schools and community destinations. Several respondents described having to walk in the roadway because no sidewalk exists.
Intersection improvements	Respondents frequently requested turn lanes or roundabouts at several unsignalized intersections to improve access and crossings, particularly along CO 291, US 285 between Salida and Buena Vista, and in Poncha Springs. Improvements at US 24 and Main Street in Buena Vista to reduce conflicts between pedestrians and turning vehicles were also cited by several respondents.
Wildlife crossings	Respondents strongly supported formal wildlife crossings, particularly along Highway 285, Highway 24 north of Buena Vista, and Highway 291. Several noted that current signage is insufficient and that the problem is getting worse.
E-bike and cyclist education	Multiple respondents called for formal e-bike and cyclist education programs, noting that both new riders and drivers need better understanding of the rules. At least one respondent noted they are already working with a local organization to develop a safety course.
Truck and commercial vehicle concerns	Semi trucks speeding on winding mountain roads, the use of engine brakes (jake brakes) in the Maysville corridor, and increasing construction traffic on Trout Creek Pass were raised as concerns specific to commercial vehicle operations.

Survey Results: Additional safety concerns identified

The themes below emerged from respondents' written answers to the question about their top traffic safety concerns, beyond the multiple-choice options provided.

Theme	Description
Cyclists and e-bikes riding on roads	Some respondents expressed frustration with cyclists and e-bike riders disregarding traffic laws, including running stop signs, riding at excessive speeds on shared trails, and using vehicle travel lanes when a dedicated bike path is nearby.
Unsafe driver behavior	Tailgating, road rage, phone use while driving, and reckless passing were among the most commonly raised driver behaviors. Several respondents described near-miss incidents caused by aggressive drivers, particularly on two-lane highways where passing is limited.
Road design	Respondents pointed to a road network designed primarily around fast car travel, without adequate facilities for people walking and biking, and for different levels of traffic, as root causes of many safety problems. Roundabouts were frequently suggested as a solution at high-conflict intersections. Several respondents also noted that roads are increasingly carrying traffic volumes beyond what they were designed for.
OHVs and unlicensed vehicles	Illegal OHV use on closed county roads, underage and unlicensed operators, and e-bikes ridden by minors were raised as specific concerns. Several comments identified particular county roads where OHV use is problematic, including segments of CR 371, CR 210, and CR 375.
Enforcement gaps	A recurring theme was the sense that traffic laws are not consistently enforced, particularly on major highways. Several respondents noted that tourist unfamiliarity with local road conditions and rules adds to the problem. There were many calls for a more visible and consistent law enforcement presence.
Visibility and parking	Vehicles parked too close to intersections were frequently cited as a visibility hazard for drivers, cyclists, and pedestrians. Wrong-way parking and illegal parking on yellow corner markings were also raised as specific concerns.

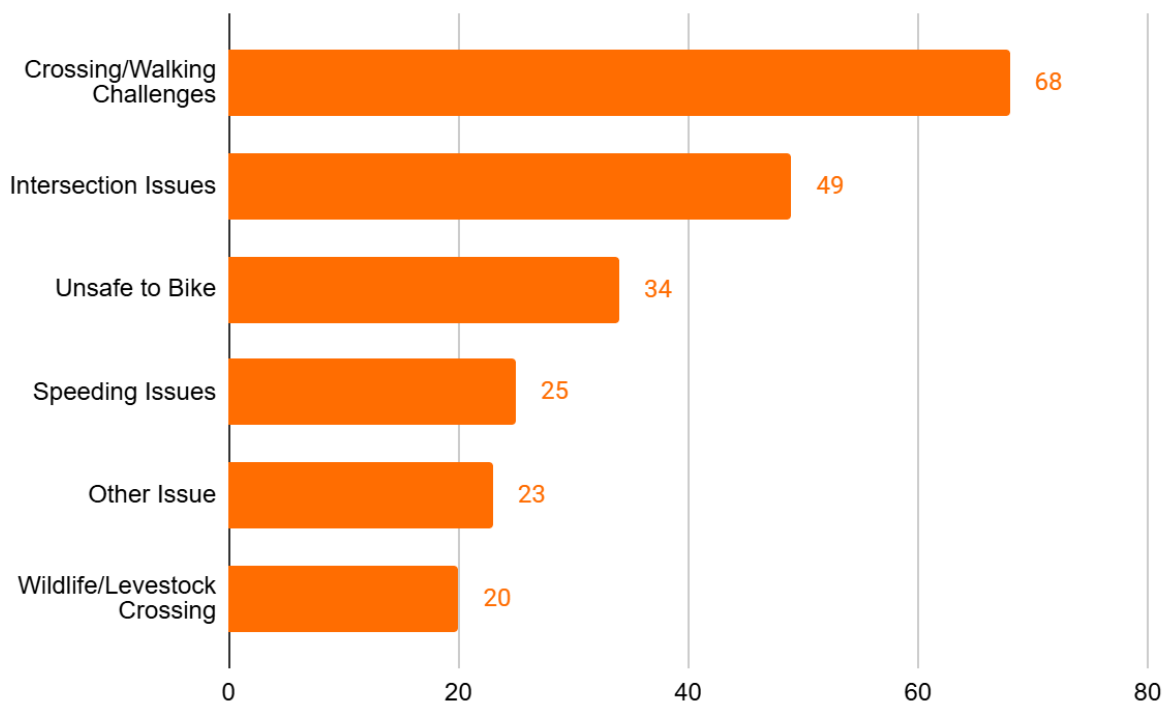
Interactive Map: Where Safety Issues are Located

667 pins were placed on the interactive map by survey participants. Each pin was assigned a category by the respondent. The distribution of pin types is shown below.

Issue Category	Number of Pins	% of Total Pins
Feels unsafe to bike	216	32%
Challenging to walk or cross	103	15%
Other issue	102	15%
Intersection issue	92	14%
Wildlife / livestock crossing	77	12%
Speeding	77	12%

Location Clusters and Hot Spots

Below is a chart showing issues at locations with 2+ comments.

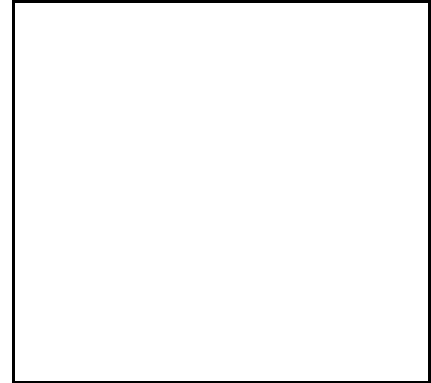


The following corridors and areas received the highest concentration of pins, with distinct issue patterns at each.

Highway 50 through Salida	Salida downtown streets	US 285 corridor
This corridor received the most pins of any location in the survey. The dominant concern was cycling safety, with respondents describing the highway as having narrow or nonexistent shoulders, heavy and aggressive traffic, and not feeling safe for anyone on a bike. Pedestrian crossing concerns were also significant, with multiple respondents noting that Highway 50 through Salida can be difficult to cross on foot. The intersection at CR 110 and Holman Avenue was identified as a particular problem point.	Within the Salida street network, pedestrian crossing and intersection concerns dominated. Respondents flagged poor visibility at intersections due to parked vehicles, inadequate crosswalk markings, and speeding on residential streets. The I Street and 1st Street corridor and the F Street and 3rd Street intersection were called out multiple times. Several respondents noted that oversized vehicles are parking in bike lanes along Sackett Avenue, creating hazards.	Highway 285 generated a high volume of cycling safety pins, with respondents describing it feeling unsafe to ride due to high speeds, narrow shoulders, and aggressive drivers. Wildlife conflicts were also prominent, particularly between Salida and Nathrop, where elk and deer crossings are frequent. Unsafe turning movements at county road intersections along the corridor were also flagged.
Highway 24 through and near Buena Vista	Poncha Springs	Buena Vista downtown
The Highway 24 corridor in and near Buena Vista showed a mix of intersection concerns, cycling safety issues, speeding, and pedestrian crossing problems. Wildlife conflicts were also noted north of town. Specific locations flagged include the La Gree's intersection at Brookdale Avenue on US 24, the junction near CR 304, and the crosswalk at US 24 and CR 356. Respondents described cars entering town at highway speeds and the existing crosswalk flashing beacons as inadequate.	Poncha Springs had a notable concentration of both cycling and pedestrian crossing concerns. Respondents consistently described a lack of connected sidewalks, missing crosswalks, and the absence of safe pedestrian or bike infrastructure linking the town center to the bike path and grocery area and across the major highways: US 50 and US 285.	Downtown Buena Vista responses centered on pedestrian crossing concerns, speeding through residential streets, and intersection issues. Stop sign running at Gold Street and Court Street was flagged multiple times. Respondents also called out inadequate crosswalk infrastructure on West Main Street and the need for a safer crossing to the Peaks View Trail.
Highway 291	Nathrop area	
Highway 291 drew cycling safety concerns, wildlife conflict reports, and pedestrian crossing issues. The bridge over the Arkansas River was repeatedly	The Nathrop area showed a roughly even mix of cycling safety concerns and wildlife conflicts, along with intersection issues. US 285 through Nathrop	

identified as chokepoint for cyclists riding on shoulders. Wildlife crossing issues, particularly deer, were noted along the 291 corridor both north and south of Salida. Unsafe turning movements were also frequently flagged, with drivers having difficulty turning left onto and off the highway due to traffic volumes.

was described as carrying traffic at speeds incompatible with turning movements and pedestrian activity. The post office, located on the west side of 285 while most residents live on the east side, was specifically cited as an issue to address. Several respondents noted that the speed limit should be reduced through Nathrop.



Wildlife Conflict Hot Spots

Wildlife-related map responses clustered along four primary corridors. Many included specific comments describing repeated collision incidents, seasonal patterns, and known migration routes.

- **US 285 between Salida and Nathrop:** The densest cluster of wildlife pins in the county. Elk herds were specifically called out near mile marker 195, and deer crossings were flagged at multiple points along the corridor. One respondent noted that Colorado Parks and Wildlife has identified a known elk migration corridor crossing the highway in this area.
- **Highway 24 north of Buena Vista:** Multiple pins flagged deer and mule deer herds between BV and Twin Lakes, with one respondent describing the area as a 'historic wildlife crossing zone' with frequent vehicle collisions. Respondents called for formal wildlife crossings and habitat connectivity improvements.
- **Highway 291 north and south of Salida:** Deer and pronghorn crossings were noted along the full length of 291. One respondent described a deer strike that occurred just four weeks before submitting their comment. The bridge area near the Arkansas River was noted as a particular conflict point.
- **Highway 50 between Salida and Poncha Springs:** Deer crossings were flagged at multiple points, with one respondent noting many collisions and near-misses from the Salida edge to Poncha. A wildlife underpass beneath the highway was identified as a potential enhancement opportunity.

Next Steps

The findings from this survey will inform the development of Chaffee County's Safe Streets for All Action Plan. The survey is one part of a broader engagement process, and additional outreach will be conducted to reach groups that were underrepresented in this survey, including youth, lower-income residents, and people in rural parts of the county.