

# TRANSPORTATION

## INTERSTATES AND ROADS

Garfield County is situated with convenient state highway and interstate access. Three major highways run through or alongside communities in the Colorado River Valley, including Interstate 70, and State Highways 13, 6, and 24. State Highway 82 provides efficient access through the Roaring Fork Valley to the neighboring communities to the south and State Highway 133 provides access south and west to Mesa, Gunnison, and Delta counties.

In addition to having one of the nations' main interstate corridors bisect the region, western Garfield County also has U.S. Route 6 and U.S.

Route 24 that support I-70 and connect towns to Interstate 70 in western Colorado. U.S. Route 6 also runs from western Utah to eastern Nebraska.

Highway 13 is another highway option for local communities, providing a main north/south arterial for Rifle. Highway 13 has a central interchange south of Rifle, which connects with Interstate 70. The route crosses the Colorado River and intersects with U.S. Route 6 and U.S. 24. Running north to south, Highway 13 connects to and provides easy access to the United States' second longest interstate, Interstate-80.



I-70

## COMMERCIAL AIRLINES

Grand Junction (GJT)	Eagle/Vail (EGE)	Aspen-Pitkin County (ASE)
AMERICAN AIRLINES	AMERICAN AIRLINES	AMERICAN AIRLINES
DELTA	DELTA	DELTA
UNITED	UNITED	UNITED
ALLEGiant AIR	AIR CANADA	



## AIRPORTS

Multiple commercial airports within close proximity to Garfield County offer service for business and tourism travelers, although Garfield County does not have a commercial airport. These airports include the Grand Junction airport (GJT), Eagle/Vail airport (EGE) and Aspen-Pitkin Airport (ASE). Denver International Airport (DEN) is also accessible with a three hour drive.

### Rifle-Garfield County Airport

Garfield County is home to a general aviation airport, Rifle Garfield County Airport (RIL). The airport is located in Rifle, Colorado. Because of its location in a mild climate zone, winter flights are rarely a problem. This makes the airport a preferred choice to nearby mountain and resort airports where winter storm closures often inhibit air travel. Rifle-Garfield County Airport is only 27 miles from Glenwood Springs, 46 miles from Eagle, 61 miles from Aspen, 65 miles from Grand Junction, and 88 miles from Vail.

Rifle-Garfield County Airport is highly suitable for private aircraft, designated in Colorado as a preferred General Aviation Mountain Business Jet Airport. Open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and has no noise restrictions. As a General Aviation airport, commercial airport security regulations do not apply. Rifle is also Special Traffic Management Procedures friendly.

In 2010, Rifle Garfield County Airport underwent infrastructure improvements of \$47 million. Recent upgrades included nine developed hangar parcels, an asphalt overlay for the ramp, a new aircraft parking ramp and more. Design standards include a 7,000-foot long, 100-foot wide seamless runway, paved in continuous uniformity to avoid jolts for landing aircraft. The runway and full parallel taxiway are designed for heavy aircraft traffic, up to 134,500 pounds gross landing weight, making the Rifle Garfield County Airport suitable for a wide range of aircraft.

### Glenwood Springs Airport

Glenwood Springs also has a small municipal airport (GWS) accessible to private aircraft.

# TRANSPORTATION

## TRAINS

Amtrak has year-round daily arrival and departures into Glenwood Springs from more than 500 destinations throughout the West and Midwest. The California Zephyr travels from Chicago to San Francisco for passengers wanting to utilize a safe and historic means of transportation.

The historic Union Pacific Railroad dates back to 1867 in Colorado. Union Pacific operates a major network of east-west and north-south lines that carry freight to all parts of Union Pacific's 23 state-system, a large portion of such running directly through the Garfield County communities in the Colorado River Valley. Major commodities handled by Union Pacific in Colorado are grain, coal, automobiles, and consumer

and manufactured goods. In the last two years, Union Pacific's capital investment in Colorado was more than \$120 million.

Figure 8: Amtrak California Zephyr Route  
Source: <http://www.amtrak.com>



There are a variety of bus services available in and around Garfield County. The predominate service is provided by the Roaring Fork Transportation Authority (RFTA) that provides frequent commuter bus service between Rifle and Aspen, Colorado.

## BUSES

Named the "Best Mass Transit System in North America" by Mass Transit Magazine, and awarded other top state and national transportation honors, including "Large Transit Agency of the Year" by the Colorado Association of Transit Agencies, RFTA allows for both ease and availability for much of western Garfield County's workforce as well as tourists to be mobile. Traversing the Roaring Fork and Colorado River valleys, RFTA carried 4.9 million passengers in 2014. Also in 2015, RFTA open its new Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service between Glenwood Springs and Aspen. Named VelociRFTA, it is the first rural bus rapid transit system in the country. RFTA reflects the region's commitment to sustainability in the use of Biodiesel, Compressed Natural Gas, and ethanol fuels. In 2014,

augmenting RFTA's services, the City of Glenwood Springs provides affordable and frequent bus service and the Town of Carbondale provides a circulator bus system, Garfield County provides bus service called The Traveler throughout the county for senior citizens and individuals with disabilities that prevent them from using their own transportation or accessing transportation available to the general public.

Other bus services includes Colorado Department of Transportation's (CDOT) Bustang, Greyhound Lines and the private operator Colorado Mountain Express. Greyhound Lines, the largest intercity bus service across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, also provides bus service to and from Glenwood Springs.

In 2015 CDOT began operating daily bus service, called the Bustang, between Glenwood Springs and Denver's Union Station making additional stops in Eagle, Vail, and Frisco. Colorado Mountain Express (CME) is a private shuttle company in the Roaring Fork Valley that has been providing transportation services for over 30 years. CME provides airport transportation to multiple Colorado ski resorts as well as to Eagle/Vail airport and Denver International Airport.

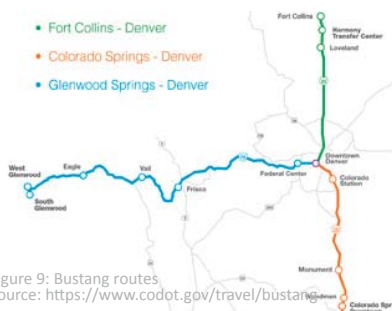


Figure 9: Bustang routes  
Source: <https://www.codot.gov/travel/bustang>

The commute time for employees within Garfield County is an important measure of the quality of life in the County. Since 2004, the average commute distance and time have decreased. In Rifle, for example, the average commute decreased dramatically from 24 miles to 14 miles; a reflection of the fact that more residents are working in Rifle.

Also of note, is the trend for trips within the County and surrounding region to be alternative modes of transportation. The region, on a yearly average in 2014, drives fourteen percent less frequently for trips while healthy transportation choices including walking and biking exceed national averages.

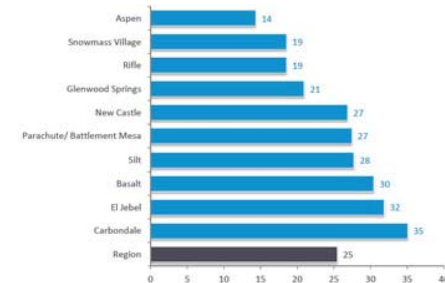


Figure 10: Average commute duration  
Source: Source: 2015 RFTA Travel Patterns Study

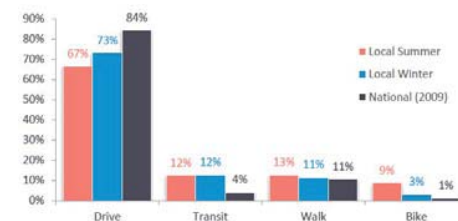


Figure 11: Form of transportation by season  
Source: Source: 2015 RFTA Travel Patterns Study

## COMMUTING

Dirt and paved trails abound in Garfield County. There are nearly endless miles of single track for biking and running, and plentiful hiking, horseback riding, and motorized trails.

Two renowned trails in the area include the Glenwood Canyon Trail and Rio Grande Trail. The Glenwood Canyon bike and pedestrian trail sits adjacent to the interstate, but feels like a world away. This stretch of canyon has been described by many as one of the most scenic stretches of highway in the world, and it is best observed from the trail. The trail follows the curves of the Colorado River on a 16.2 mile route that is an unparalleled experience.

The Roaring Fork Valley's Rio Grande Trail is a 42-mile continuous paved surface multi-use trail protected from vehicular traffic, except at intersections. This trail serves as a bicycle commuter corridor and major recreation route between Glenwood Springs and Aspen.

## TRAILS

