2012 Listening Tour
December 28, 2012
Executive Summary

In spring 2012, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) retained BBC Research & Consulting (BBC) to conduct a regional Listening Tour in advance of the launch of the Metro Vision 2040 planning process. A Listening Tour is a qualitative research process designed to listen to stakeholders’, subject matter experts’, and residents’ vision for 2040 and the steps they believe must be taken to achieve that vision. This research effort served to help DRCOG identify key issues, begin to engage stakeholders, and inform the overall scope of the Metro Vision 2040 planning process. TheMetro Vision 2040 planning process will include numerous additional opportunities for stakeholders, experts, and residents to provide input. This report provides a review of information gathered during the Listening Tour along with process recommendations for further exploration of issues raised.

DRCOG and Metro Vision

DRCOG is an association of 56 municipalities and counties in the Denver region. DRCOG’s Metro Vision Plan is the collective vision of these local governments for the future growth and development of the Denver region, and establishes a framework for coordinated land use, transportation and environmental planning. The Regional Development Plan Task Force, comprised of local government officials, business leaders, developers, representatives of the transit agency and state agencies, neighborhood associations and other regional stakeholders, guided the development of the original Metro Vision 2020 Plan. The Task Force began its work in the early 1990s and culminated in the DRCOG Board’s adoption of Metro Vision in 1997.

This inclusive, deliberative process provided a strong foundation for regional planning for nearly 20 years, as DRCOG has continued to update Metro Vision and extend the planning horizon. The most recent iteration of the plan, Metro Vision 2035, was adopted in January 2011. Over time, however, new issues have emerged, new people have risen to leadership positions, and awareness and regional “ownership” of the Metro Vision Plan may have changed. DRCOG initiated the Listening Tour to identify emerging issues and to begin the process of engaging residents and stakeholders in the Metro Vision 2040 planning process.

Listening Tour Objectives

DRCOG conducted the Listening Tour to achieve the following objectives:

- Identify issues the DRCOG Board may wish to explore in depth during the two-year Metro Vision 2040 planning process, including emerging issues not specifically addressed in earlier plans; and
- Engage a broad and diverse set of stakeholders and residents of the region.

Twenty-one in-depth interviews, 11 listening groups with more than 190 participants and an online survey completed by 1,177 stakeholders comprised the data collection methods for the Listening Tour. BBC and DRCOG developed the interview questions, focus group guidelines, and the survey instrument. In addition to resident participants of various incomes, ages and abilities,
other contributors included individuals with subject matter expertise in the fields of transportation, health, business, technology, homebuilding, real estate, finance, utilities, civic and cultural affairs, environment, and disability and aging issues. The research plan for the Listening Tour centered on soliciting input from a wide range of stakeholders, subject matter experts, and residents, and giving those participants an opportunity to provide detailed responses about key issues to consider as DRCOG embarks on the Metro Vision 2040 process. As a result, it was not intended to be a statistically representative poll of the attitudes or perceptions of regional residents.

Characteristics of Listening Tour interview and focus group participants are described below.

**Interview participant summary.** DRCOG staff identified and invited leaders in the fields of transportation, health, business, technology, homebuilding, real estate, finance, utilities, civic and cultural affairs, sustainability, and aging to participate in the interviews. BBC completed 21 one-on-one in-depth interviews with these subject matter experts. Those interviewed included the presidents, CEOs and other executive officers. The organizations represented are included in Figure ES-1.

**Figure ES-1.**
**Organizations Represented by Interview Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizations Represented by Interview Participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AARP Colorado</td>
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<td>Alliance for Sustainable Colorado</td>
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<td>CH2M Hill</td>
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<td>Colorado Department of Transportation</td>
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<td>Colorado Health Foundation</td>
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<td>Colorado Housing and Finance Authority</td>
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<td>Colorado Technology Association</td>
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<td>Hispanic Chamber of Commerce</td>
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<td>Xcel Energy</td>
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<td>RE/MAX Alliance</td>
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<td>Regional Transportation District</td>
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<td>Scientific and Cultural Facilities District</td>
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<td>State of Colorado</td>
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<td>Trammel Crow Company</td>
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<td>University of Colorado</td>
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<td>US Bank - Colorado</td>
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Source:  DRCOG 2012 Listening Tour, BBC Research & Consulting.

**Listening group participant summary.** DRCOG staff arranged 11 listening groups. Some leveraged existing meetings while others recruited participants individually. Figure I-3 details the listening groups. Groups ranged in size from four participants to more than 40. Overall, more than 180 individuals participated in the Listening Groups.
**Metro Vision 2040 Process**

The Listening Tour was designed to help DRCOG identify key issues facing the region at the beginning of the Metro Vision 2040 process. Figure ES-3 shows the timeline for Metro Vision 2040, which will conclude in late 2014.

**Figure ES-3. Metro Vision 2040 Timeline**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
<th>2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Identify key issues (Listening Tour)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Explore key issues</td>
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<td>Conduct scenario analyses</td>
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<td>Discuss policies and strategies</td>
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<td>Adopt final plan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stakeholder engagement</td>
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**Note:** The number of participants for each session are included in parentheses.

**Source:** DRCOG 2012 Listening Tour, BBC Research & Consulting.
Strengths of the Region

Listening Tour participants provided feedback on their perceptions of the current strengths of the Denver region. The major strengths discussed were:

- **Outdoor amenities** — The region’s — and Colorado’s — outdoor amenities were often the first strength mentioned by Listening Tour participants. The natural environment, access to the mountains, parks and open space, and the weather were frequently discussed.

- **Transportation system** — The region’s transportation system, particularly the FasTracks light rail project, received praise from Listening Group participants. Many participants discussed the growth in multimodal transportation infrastructure, the importance of having a “world class” airport like Denver International Airport (DIA), and the willingness of the region to invest in projects like T-REX as strengths of the transportation system.

- **Core city** — The resurgence of downtown Denver as a place to live, work, and play was often cited as a strength of the region, especially when compared to other regions of the same size. "Vibrant" was the most common word used to describe downtown Denver.

- **Western spirit and commitment to regional collaboration** — Throughout the Listening Tour, participants praised the spirit of the people of the region, our Western values, commitment to regional cooperation, and individualism. Participants credited residents’ willingness to “think big” for the region’s growth, and cited examples such as bringing the original railroad spur to Denver and building DIA. Participants also valued the region’s diversity of community and housing types which reflects a desire to provide a place for all types of people and lifestyles.

Region in 2040

Listening Tour participants described the qualities that would make the Denver region the best place in the country for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes to live without considering any constraints and without prioritizing among the qualities. Overall, the characteristics of the region that make it the best place to live in 2040 were remarkably similar across all participants. Participants emphasized the transportation system, housing and development, the environment, the economy, the education system, and regional coordination. Figure ES-4 summarizes the main components of the region that will make it the best place to live for people of all ages, abilities, and incomes in 2040 as envisioned by Listening Tour participants.¹ Throughout the report, footnotes are used to weave findings from the survey into the body of the report.

¹Given the quantitative nature of survey data collection, participants were asked to identify aspects of the region that are important to a high quality of life rather than develop a specific vision for the region in 2040. As detailed in Appendix A, the aspects selected by survey participants, such as a well-performing educational system, environmental quality, and access to parks, trails and open space are consistent with those described in the interviews and focus groups.
The components of the individual visions listed in Figure ES-4 share seven key elements. Below is a brief summary of Listening Tour results on seven key elements of the individual visions for 2040. This overview includes a discussion of the collection of individual visions for each element as expressed by Listening Tour participants. Section III provides additional detail on each issue area.

A. Transportation. Broadly, the participants in the Listening Tour envision a transportation system in 2040 that is robust, efficient, well-maintained, and truly multimodal. The system as envisioned would extend beyond the Denver region and link DIA to the mountains in the west, and link Fort Collins to Colorado Springs, with a goal of efficient movement of people and goods and minimizing congestion. The system allows for access and mode choice by all populations, including older adults, persons with disabilities, and low income residents.

B. Housing and development. With respect to housing and development in the year 2040, Listening Tour participants visualized a region characterized by dense mixed-use, mixed-income homes located around transit nodes. Sustainable and healthy designs are incorporated into developments. While they see the region becoming denser, they also see that traditional rural and suburban housing remains a choice. Those few participants who were familiar with the urban growth boundary suggested that the boundary would not be radically different from that of today. Traditional suburban developments will include walking and biking connections to

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Note: Components are presented in alphabetical order because participants were not asked to assign priorities.

Source: DRCOG 2012 Listening Tour, BBC Research & Consulting.

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2 The majority of survey respondents (69%) identified "easy access to everyday destinations by public transit" to be important to a high quality of life, and a majority of survey respondents (66%) identified "easy access to everyday destinations by walking or bicycling" as important to a high quality of life.

3 Among survey respondents, 60% identified diverse housing options for all income levels as important to a high quality of life.
transit, retail, and services. Aging-in-community is an option for older adults throughout the region. The accessibility and affordability of housing stock is increased to persons with disabilities, and located along transit routes.

C. Environment. Listening Tour participants envision the characteristics of the Denver region's environment in 2040 as the same, if not improved: the quality of outdoor amenities; air quality that meets federal standards; efficient water use; and increased renewable energy use.

D. Economy. In 2040, Listening Tour participants described the key elements of the region's economy as: a strong local small business community; a greater number of Fortune 500 companies headquartered in the region; and jobs for residents of all ages and abilities, across the income spectrum. Participants who were familiar with DRCOG recognized that this area was not traditionally associated with the organization, but suggested ways that DRCOG could engage with regional stakeholders on this issue. The suggestions are provided below (and in Section IV) in the form of process recommendations for developing Metro Vision 2040 and other DRCOG initiatives.

E. Education. A common theme in the Listening Tour is a need to improve K-12 public education in the region. Not surprisingly, participants’ depiction of the education system in the region in 2040 reflected their desire to solve the challenges facing the region's current education system. Concern for closing the achievement gap and raising quality in the region's school districts was a central theme for many participants. Conversation about higher education centered on its capacity to serve Coloradans in the context of the Colorado Paradox — low high school graduation rates and a highly educated populace due to importing talent. As with the economy, participants with knowledge about DRCOG’s past work acknowledged that education was not traditionally included in the purview of DRCOG, and suggested ways that DRCOG might consider participating in the regional discussion on education.

F. Community health. Discussions of the region in 2040 included the topic of community health, particularly the healthcare system and resident access to healthy food options. Compared to other topics, community health was not a major discussion focus, although it was important to a majority of survey respondents.

G. Western spirit and commitment to regional collaboration. Participants envisioned a Denver region in 2040 characterized by inclusiveness and meaningful regional cooperation. Beyond that, participants encouraged the region to “think big,” similar to the visionary thinking that led to our investment in DIA, SCFD, the stadium district, and the original railroad line that

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4 The majority of survey respondents (76%) identified “environmental quality (clean air and water)” as important to a high quality of life, and 75 percent selected “easy access to parks, trails and open space.”

5 The majority (68%) of survey respondents selected “employment opportunities for workers of all skill levels” as important to a high quality of life.

6 Nearly 80 percent of survey respondents identified a “well-performing educational system” as important to a high quality of life.

7 More than half of survey respondents (61%) selected “quality healthcare options” as important to a high quality of life, and 58 percent selected “easy access to healthy food options.”
put Denver on the map. They viewed this spirit and commitment to collaboration as critical to achieving the vision. Listening Tour participants did not see the region’s qualities changing in 2040, rather that the region would build on and strengthen the qualities identified as regional assets today.

Issues to Explore and Process Recommendations for Each Key Element

Listening Tour participants identified the key issues that they believe need to be addressed in order for the region to achieve their individual vision for 2040. Below we present a brief summary of the issues discussed by participants along with potential process recommendations for DRCOG to consider as it begins to develop Metro Vision 2040 and other initiatives.

A. Transportation issues to explore. The most commonly mentioned transportation issues facing the region were: the completion of FasTracks; ensuring access to bus service for low income residents, older adults, and persons with disabilities; improving walking and bicycling facilities throughout the region; and finding ways to fully fund regional transportation needs. Completion of FasTracks was seen as a critical issue by the majority of participants, not just those whose communities have delayed corridors.

Transportation process recommendations. Based on input from Listening Tour participants, DRCOG should consider the following recommendations for further exploration in the Metro Vision 2040 process or other initiatives:

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8 When asked to select one area that most needs to be improved in the Denver region to enhance the overall quality of life, 37 percent of respondents selected “access to everyday destinations by public transit.” This aspect was selected by the second largest proportion of respondents overall, following behind the “educational system” at 38 percent. Only 5 percent chose “access to everyday destinations by car” as the area most needing improvement in the Denver region and 15 percent chose “access to everyday destinations by walking or bicycling.”
- Continue to explore alternative funding mechanisms for transportation investment, including demand driven pricing structures, and other methods beyond the gas tax. Consider how alternative financing mechanisms impact freight traffic versus non-commercial users.

- Continue to examine potential scenarios and timelines for the completion of FasTracks by the original estimated date timeline and evaluate the impact of slowing implementation (compared to original build out plans). Educate the public and stakeholders about why FasTracks is off schedule.

- Continue to work with stakeholders, experts, and residents to prioritize regional transportation investment, including system maintenance and expansion of other modes.

- Explore the needs of freight traffic in planning the transportation system for the future; some stakeholders are working on these issues outside of the traditional planning process, and DRCOG should examine how best to capture this work.

- Explore best practices for suburban transit centers.

- Explore the potential for strengthening trail connections throughout the region to resolve existing gaps in the system. Trails originally developed for recreational purposes are increasingly used for commuting, which underscores the need to resolve gaps.

- Explore how traditional suburban communities and major transportation corridors can become more accessible for walking and bicycling as a mode of transportation.

- Consider the needs of transit-dependent populations, including low income residents and persons with disabilities, and the impact of transportation investments on their ability to efficiently access transit for commuting and other trips, particularly in light of growth in these populations outside the urban core.

- Explore how transportation investments can support efforts to foster aging-in-community.

B. Housing and development issues to explore. Participants were particularly concerned about: maintaining an appropriate mix of housing and neighborhood types; addressing the need for affordable housing throughout the region; looking for ways to encourage cooperation between communities for land use; and encouraging growth largely within the current urban growth boundary.9

Housing and development process recommendations. Based on participants' discussion of these issues, DRCOG might consider the following process recommendations as it develops Metro Vision 2040 and other initiatives:

- Explore possibilities for developing a regional strategy for affordable housing, including financial supports (e.g., affordable housing trust fund); subject matter experts suggested DRCOG lead this effort.

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9 “Diversity of housing options for all income levels” was selected by 14 percent of survey respondents as the aspect of the region that most needs to be improved to raise the overall quality of life. About one in 20 respondents selected either the “location of residential and commercial development” or the “mix of residential and commercial development” as the aspect most needing improvement.
• Explore possibilities for regional collaboration on affordable housing.
• Explore the impacts of development and transportation investments on older adults, low income residents, and disabled residents.
• Examine areas where local governments have effectively coordinated residential and commercial development with transportation infrastructure investment to maximize efficient use of public resources.
• Explore opportunities for locating accessible and affordable housing units for older adults and persons with disabilities throughout the region and along transit nodes. The majority of supportive housing options are concentrated in Denver and there is a need throughout the region.
• Explore opportunities for all communities within the region to facilitate aging-in-community.
• Explore the perspective of some Listening Tour participants that the 2040 Urban Growth Boundary should be similar to the current boundary. 10
• Explore perceptions of making the Urban Growth Boundary enforceable.
• Explore opportunities for revenue sharing such that retail and other commercial development is properly situated to optimize land use.
• Explore tax policy that promotes good planning and reduces competition and encourages coordination and collaboration between local governments.
• Explore best practices for increasing density in suburban areas such as TOD and mixed-use developments.

C. Environment issues to explore. Listening Tour participants expressed concern about the adequacy of the regional water supply and whether that would limit future growth. Additionally, many participants emphasized the importance of maintaining or improving our outdoor amenities such as parks, trail systems, and open space.11

Environment process recommendations. Based on participant input, DRCOG could consider the following process recommendations for Metro Vision 2040 and other initiatives regarding the environment:

• Explore opportunities to advance the conversation on the relationship of water availability to growth and development; this was the dominant environmental issue raised by participants.
• Continue to work with stakeholders on issues of water quality and conservation.

10 Very few participants were familiar with the Urban Growth Boundary. Those familiar with it suggested that the 2040 boundary be similar to that of the current plan and recommended options for making it enforceable.

11 One in ten survey respondents selected “environmental quality (clean air and water)” as the most important aspect of the Denver region to improve and 4 percent selected “access to parks, trails, open space and outdoor recreation.”
- Continue regional discussion on ways to improve air quality to meet federal standards, particularly in light of forecast population growth. The region's success in meeting air quality challenges in the past resulted in participants being confident that air quality issues will be successfully addressed in the future.

- Explore the impact of forecast population growth and other trends on the region's ability to preserve and increase outdoor amenities, such as parks and open space.

D. Economy Issues to Explore. As discussed in Section II, participants considered the region's diverse economic base to be a strength of the region. The vision for the economy in 2040 builds off of that strength. The economy was one of the greatest points of concern in The Denver Foundation research as well.12 While DRCOG is not traditionally associated with regional economic issues, the following process recommendations reflect participants' input on ways that DRCOG can engage with the regional community on this topic. In particular, participants noted that few organizations have a regional reputation, as a result DRCOG may fit well into this conversation.

Economy process recommendations.
- Explore how decisions made in areas traditionally addressed by DRCOG impact regional economic growth (e.g. How does transportation policy help attract new businesses?).
- Examine ways to encourage regional collaboration for economic development.
- Explore strategies to encourage member communities to take a regional approach to economic development rather than competing with each other.

12 "Employment opportunities" was identified as the most important aspect of the region to improve to enhance overall quality of life by nearly one-quarter of respondents.
E. Education issues to explore. The education challenges faced by the region today, particularly in successfully serving minority and low income children, were discussed by Listening Tour participants.\textsuperscript{13}

- Low graduation rates persist, particularly among minority children.
- Urban schools have higher dropout rates.

As noted earlier, education is not a topic area that DRCOG has traditionally included in the Metro Vision process. Based on participant input, the next page provides some suggestions about ways in which DRCOG can participate in the regional discussion regarding education. From their perspective, DRCOG should not necessarily lead on education, but should be engaged.

Education process recommendations.

- Explore ways in which DRCOG can contribute to the regional conversation regarding education.
- Explore opportunities to engage representatives from K-12 and higher education in the development of Metro Vision 2040.
- Explore the link between transportation and school choice for K-12 and access to secondary and higher education.

F. Community health issues to explore. Participants credited the region’s healthcare system today for its quality and discussed the need to maintain that quality in 2040. The need to include the healthcare community in the Metro Vision planning process was discussed.\textsuperscript{14}

- The current medical community and healthcare system is considered a regional asset and one which participants would like to see preserved.
- Given the significant role of the healthcare community in the region, and the needs of an aging population, participants encouraged continued engagement with the healthcare community throughout the Metro Vision 2040 process.

Similar to education and the economy, community health has not traditionally been included in DRCOG’s purview. Participant input provided the following suggestions for DRCOG to consider as it begins to develop Metro Vision 2040.

Community health process recommendations.

- Continue to engage the healthcare community throughout the Metro Vision 2040 process.
- Access to health food is an emerging issue that DRCOG may want to consider from the perspective of transportation and land use decisions.

\textsuperscript{13} Among the aspects survey respondents considered, “education” was selected by the greatest proportion of respondents (38\%) as the area that most needs to be improved to enhance the overall quality of life in the Denver region.

\textsuperscript{14} Overall, 7\% of survey respondents selected healthcare as the area most needing improvement and one in 20 selected “access to healthy food options.”
Western spirit and commitment to regional collaboration issues to explore. The most commonly mentioned issues related to regional cooperation facing the region were: the need to have broad agreement in the region for a shared vision; the desire for communities to have the appropriate amount of flexibility in implementing elements of the vision; and the continued cooperation towards common goals in the form of large projects or initiatives (e.g. DIA, SCFD, FasTracks).

Western spirit and commitment to regional collaboration process recommendations.
- Explore best practices for how a regional Metro Vision plan can best be individualized by communities while still supporting the overall regional vision.
- Explore strategies to encourage member communities to take a regional approach to economic development rather than competing with each other.
- Explore opportunities to focus on near-term strategies that set the course toward 2040.
- Explore opportunities to increase the diversity of Metro Vision 2040 participants, including older adults, persons with disabilities, and low income residents.
- Explore best practices in municipal finance that support optimal land use.
- Explore opportunities to communicate with the public about transportation funding and other funding challenges.
- Explore opportunities to secure the buy-in and participation of the region’s governments and other stakeholders to resolve the transportation funding deficit.

DRCOG – Strengths and Opportunities
Beyond the process recommendations and individual visions for the region in 2040, Listening Tour participants provided feedback on DRCOG and the role of the organization in regional planning. Below is a brief summary of strengths and opportunities discussed by participants (See Section V for additional detail).

Strengths. Many participants pointed to the importance of DRCOG in current and past regional planning efforts. The ability for DRCOG to bring member government representatives to the table and provide a forum for dialogue was the most frequently mentioned strength. Among all Listening Tour participants, DRCOG is seen as the organization best positioned to facilitate a visionary strategic regional plan that incorporates transportation, economic development, changing demographics, environment, water, housing, and all of the other issues raised by participants. Participants also recognize the resource DRCOG provides in the form of tools and knowledge available for use by local community leaders and planners. DRCOG’s strong relationships with member government staff and the technical assistance offered to member governments is a valued strength.

Voluntary nature of DRCOG. Some Listening Tour participants want DRCOG to have more of a proactive and enforceable leadership role in implementing the vision for 2040 and taking a leading public role in communicating the challenges faced by the region. They recognize that DRCOG currently has little leverage on local government decisions — many carrots, but few sticks. Suggestions for empowering DRCOG ranged from creation of a special district giving DRCOG certain authorities to taking a stronger leadership role to address fiscal policy, growth,
and other critical regional issues. These participants want DRCOG to take a more active and proactive role than it has historically.

**Opportunities for change.** A common theme among participants was the idea that DRCOG was adept at leading the region regarding land use and transportation, but should consider addressing or contributing to the regional conversation on a broader set of issues, such as affordable housing (the highest priority among participants), education, water conservation, homelessness, services for those in need, and healthcare. Many participants pointed to the ability of member governments to disregard portions of regional plans produced by DRCOG as a key challenge for DRCOG and the region.

**Opportunities for expanded leadership.** Many participants suggested that the most helpful role played by DRCOG is encouraging regional collaboration on transportation, growth, land use planning, and environmental quality. In addition to leading this process, participants suggested that DRCOG could provide additional regional leadership by:

- Expanding outreach beyond traditional stakeholders and ensuring a role for older adults, low income residents and persons with disabilities;
- Continuing to provide leadership on regional aging issues as the Area Agency on Aging;
- Working with communities to help residents age-in-community, including best practices;
- Helping the region navigate the complex relationship between state and local tax policy and land use;
- Providing a forum to facilitate regional cooperation on economic development;
- Providing leadership on a region-wide affordable housing strategy; and
- Continuing to lead the region in developing a strong regional vision for sustainability.

**Opportunities for expanded engagement.** Listening Tour participants raised a number of opportunities for DRCOG to proactively engage on pressing issues facing both the Denver region and the state of Colorado. As pointed out by many participants, DRCOG is perhaps not the natural organization to lead the dialogue on these issues; rather these are opportunities for DRCOG to engage with other stakeholders as an active participant in ongoing and future processes:

- Transportation funding;
- K12 education;
- Higher education;
- Water policy; and
- Healthy communities.

**Beyond the Listening Tour**

The Listening Tour was designed to provide DRCOG with a scan of stakeholder, expert, and resident perspectives on strengths of the region today, ideas for a 2040 vision, and their perceptions of issues today that must be addressed in order to realize that vision. DRCOG has the
opportunity to incorporate process recommendations from the Listening Tour, as appropriate, into the Metro Vision 2040 planning process and other DRCOG-led initiatives.

**Opportunities to inform the Metro Vision 2040 process.** Under DRCOG's leadership, the Denver region's Metro Vision 2040 planning process can build upon participants' overwhelmingly positive thoughts about the region and its strengths today and can explore the challenges raised by participants that they believe must be addressed. The Listening Tour provides process recommendations to consider in the next steps of Metro Vision 2040 that can help DRCOG explore these issues. DRCOG should evaluate the process recommendations to determine those which are most informative to Metro Vision and to consider the applicability of other process recommendations to other DRCOG initiatives.

**Opportunities for DRCOG to engage.** From the perspective of Listening Tour participants, DRCOG has a substantial role to play in regional leadership, needs to provide strong leadership in traditional areas, consider taking a leadership role on some directly related areas (e.g., housing, funding) and engage in the conversation regarding more ancillary topics such as education, water, and healthcare.

Photo courtesy of Dreamstime.com.