

Board of Directors Meeting Summary

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

Members/Alternates Present

Jeff Baker, Chair	Arapahoe County
Kathy Henson, Alternate	Adams County
Claire Levy	Boulder County
James Marsh-Holschen, Alternate	City and County of Broomfield
Rebecca Lloyd	Clear Creek County
Nicholas Williams, Alternate	City and County of Denver
Kevin Flynn	City and County of Denver
Andy Kerr	Jefferson County
Sharon Davis	City of Arvada
Nicole Speer	City of Boulder
Greg Mills	City of Brighton
Deborah Mulvey	City of Castle Pines
Tammy Maurer	City of Centennial
Robert Eber	City of Cherry Hills Village
Steve Douglas	City of Commerce City
Steve Conklin	City of Edgewater
Emily Baer	Town of Erie
Josie Cockrell	Town of Foxfield
Windi Padia	Town of Frederick
Rachel Binkley	City of Glendale
Lisa Virtz	City of Golden
Chuck Harmon	City of Idaho Springs
Brian Wong	City of Lafayette
Jeslin Shahrezaei	City of Lakewood
Stephen Barr	City of Littleton
Kat Bristow	Town of Lochbuie
Marissa Harmon	City of Lone Tree
Judi Kern*	City of Louisville
Colleen Whitlow	Town of Mead
Laura Dennis, Alternate	Town of Mountain View
Richard Kondo	City of Northglenn
John Diak	Town of Parker
Justin Martinez	City of Thornton
Bud Starker	City of Wheat Ridge
Darius Pakbaz	Colorado Department of Transportation
Bill Sirois	Regional Transportation District

Others Present: Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director, Melinda Stevens, Executive Assistant, DRCOG; Michele Riccio*, Adams County; Bryan Weimer, Arapahoe County; Art Griffith*, Douglas County; Mac Callison, Aurora; Larry Strock, Lochbuie; Kent Moorman*, Thornton; Chris Chovan*, Westminster; Ed Bowditch, Bowditch & Cassell; Jaina Proudmoore, Citizen; and DRCOG staff

*Participated via Zoom

Chair Jeff Baker called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. with a quorum present.

Move to approve agenda

Director Chuck Harmon **moved** to approve the agenda. The motion was **seconded** and **passed** unanimously.

Public Hearing for Public Engagement Plan Update.

Carolyn Klamm and Angie Shelbourn provided a handout of comments from the public and presented the update to the Board. DRCOG's Public Engagement Plan is a key tool designed to help staff and community members interact in meaningful and effective ways. The plan serves both as a commitment to transparency and a practical guide for community participation, outlining how the public can engage through hearings, comments, or advisory roles, and how that input influences policy. It also guides staff by detailing legal requirements, setting engagement expectations, and offering adaptable strategies for reaching different audiences. The update is necessary due to the rapid evolution of virtual tools post-COVID, the expansion of DRCOG's programs, and an ongoing effort to improve engagement quality.

Notable changes include more actionable engagement steps, expanded tools and metrics, and new content tailored to non-transportation programs like the Area Agency on Aging and regional planning. Additionally, a new appendix compiles external engagement resources for staff reference. The updated plan will move through committee approvals starting with the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) on July 28, followed by the Regional Transportation Committee (RTC) on August 19, and final board approval on August 20. The ultimate goal is a more inclusive, flexible, and impactful approach to public involvement across all DRCOG initiatives.

Chair Baker opened the public hearing at 6:45 p.m.:

- Director Marissa Harmon: "As I was reviewing the public comment that was submitted, one of the suggestions was to host something for the Civic Academy...if we could have some sort of an annual reunion...I would highly support that."
- Director Richard Kondo: Referencing one of the written public comments submitted, "It proposes adding a vetting system for online public comment submissions to verify the identity and locality of participants, suggesting concerns about authenticity and targeting the right stakeholder group."

Chair Baker closed the public hearing at 6:50 p.m.

Report of the Chair

- Director Kondo reported that the Performance and Engagement Committee did not meet but wanted to report that staff is actively planning a potential peer exchange trip, in place of next year's Board Retreat, with either Austin, Phoenix, or Seattle. Members interested in attending are encouraged to plan and allocate funds in their 2026 travel budget.
- Director Shahrezaei reported the Finance and Budget Committee did not meet.

Report of the Executive Director

- Bike to Work Day: The event will take place on June 25. Staff encouraged directors to collect merchandise and continue promoting the large-scale event.

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- 2025 Awards Celebration: The annual awards celebration will take place on August 27 at the Sewell Ballroom and is free for board members, with guest tickets available for \$49. Board members were urged to speak with city or county staff about sponsoring a table for \$1,200.
- National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) Conference & Peer Exchange Planning: Executive Director Rex attended the NARC Summer Conference in Seattle and had discussions with executive directors from potential peer exchange cities. Next steps and costs will be discussed at an upcoming Performance and Engagement Committee meeting to assist with budgeting.
- Employee of the Year Celebration: DRCOG hosted its annual Richard Schwieder Employee of the Year event and the 2024 recipient was Robert Spotts.
- Executive Director Rex informed the Board that this was Ron Papsdorf's, Director of Transportation Planning and Operations, last meeting. He is leaving to become the Chief Transportation Officer for the Houston-Galveston region.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Move to approve consent agenda

Director Flynn **moved** to approve the consent agenda. The motion was **seconded** and **passed** unanimously.

Items on the consent agenda included:

- Summary of the meeting May 21, 2025
- Amendments to the 2026-2029 Transportation Improvement Program

Discussion of possible HVAC licensure program.

Clay McCombe provided an overview of the program for discussion and possible action by the Board. The Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning, and Refrigeration (HVACR) industry in Colorado is rapidly growing, with projections of 16% growth over the next decade, potentially up to 30% when bolstered by accelerator programs. One such program aims to distribute 40,000 heat pump incentives, retrofit 1,600 low-income homes, and introduce 3,800 new, previously inexperienced workers into the field, which is all part of a \$200 million investment, when combined with state and utility programs, approaches nearly \$1 billion over the next 5–10 years.

HVAC technicians are not licensed at the state level in Colorado, only locally with each jurisdiction having its own requirements. This creates inconsistency, confusion, and burden for workers who often maintain 20+ licenses across jurisdictions, which is especially difficult for small businesses. These inconsistent standards can lead to unsafe or inefficient installations, with one county estimating up to 50% of HVAC work goes unpermitted. To explore solutions, DRCOG is considering leading an application to the Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies (DORA) for a "sunrise review," which would evaluate whether HVAC professionals should be regulated statewide. This would not impose regulation but would initiate a six-month study to gather feedback and assess potential benefits.

The potential state license would serve as a basic standard—maintaining local control while reducing burdens on contractors, improving consumer safety, and expanding opportunities for registered apprenticeships. Case studies like that of Cornelio “Corn” Martinez, a small business owner licensed in over 25 jurisdictions, highlight the daily administrative strain and the desire for streamlined processes that maintain professionalism and safety. Reciprocal licensing already exists in some areas, and many chief building officials have expressed support for a standardized floor of certification. DRCOG’s deep engagement with 59 jurisdictions positions itself well to lead an inclusive, grassroots approach to licensure reform. If pursued, the DORA application is due by July 1, with a follow-up review and stakeholder engagement process occurring over the next six months.

The Board had a robust discussion on whether to proceed with submitting the application. Supporters emphasized the opportunity to protect consumers, streamline contractor operations, and enhance workforce development, while those who were potentially opposed raised questions about risks of overregulation, potential burdens on small businesses, and the need to preserve local control. Ultimately, the Board agreed to move forward with submitting the sunrise application, clarifying that doing so would not mandate licensure but simply initiate a formal state-level review process. The application will give DORA six months to assess whether regulation is warranted, with extensive stakeholder engagement along the way.

Director Levy **moved** that DRCOG proceed with an application to DORA for a licensure program for HVAC professionals. The motion was **seconded** and **passed** with 29 in favor and 5 opposed.

Community Based Transportation Planning Program Update.

Nora Kern presented an overview of the program update to the Directors. The Community-Based Transportation Planning Program launched in 2022 to help member governments and community partners improve mobility options for low-income and historically marginalized communities. The program emphasizes inclusive, locally driven planning efforts focused on real-world barriers such as access to schools, grocery stores, and health services.

Currently, five projects are underway across the region, including corridor and circulation studies in Federal Heights, Brighton, and Adams County, and two Denver-based community-led implementation plans. Challenges include engaging hard-to-reach populations, meeting short-term community expectations despite long-term planning timelines, limited funding, and navigating multi-jurisdictional coordination. Nonetheless, DRCOG is making progress by partnering with nonprofits, piloting community-friendly engagement strategies, and supporting temporary infrastructure solutions. A new call for projects is expected this fall, with opportunities to align with other technical assistance programs in a single application round.

Announcement of the 60-day review period of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment.

Sheila Lynch provided an overview of the review to the Board. The 60-day public review period for DRCOG’s Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) begins July 14 and ends September 12. This review enables local governments to adopt DRCOG’s assessment in place of creating their own, as permitted by Colorado’s newly passed

Senate Bill 24-174, which mandates housing planning at the local level. DRCOG's RHNA has already been deemed "substantially conforming" by DOLA, allowing local governments to use it to meet state requirements if they formally review it during a public meeting within the 60-day window. Staff have proactively supported outreach efforts, including a webinar, sample materials, and direct communication with all 59 member governments. So far, 16 jurisdictions have confirmed participation, 3 are using their own approved assessments, 30 are still deciding, and 10 have not responded. An official email announcing the review period will be sent out on July 14.

Committee Reports

State Transportation Advisory Committee

Ron Papsdorf stated the group received several updates from CDOT, including information on anticipated federal and state funding for the Statewide Transportation Plan, winter maintenance, and the long-underfunded state rest area program. Most notably, staff discussed the state legislature's recent \$70 million cut to the Multimodal Options Fund, of which DRCOG lost \$30 million, including \$5 million already allocated to local projects through FY27, and an additional \$25 million that will no longer be available for future project funding.

Metro Mayors Caucus

Director Starker stated at the June 4 full caucus meeting, members received presentations and updates from Rise Above Colorado, RTD leadership, CDOT, the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, and Vista Strategies, and discussed forming a new Vitality, Business, and Economy Task Force.

Metro Area County Commissioners

There was no report.

Advisory Committee on Aging

Jayla Sanchez-Warren stated there were significant federal changes to aging services discussed, including the dissolution of the Administration on Community Living and proposed cuts to key programs, prompting advocacy efforts that successfully preserved funding in the President's 2026 budget proposal. Locally, updates included state legislative outcomes, changes to the Choice Services Transportation Program to address high demand and limited funding, and the unexpected closure of the On the Go call center, which DRCOG staff are now temporarily managing to maintain service continuity.

Regional Air Quality Council

Executive Director Rex stated that at its June 6 meeting, the RAQC approved administrative updates to the 2015 State Implementation Plan for the 70ppb ozone standard and received a staff presentation on preliminary discussions around setting emission targets for non-road sources like equipment, with further updates expected as the concept evolves.

E-470 Authority

Director Diak stated the E-470 Transportation Safety Foundation awarded \$70,000–\$80,000 in grants to local health departments and high schools for safety initiatives, including car seat distribution and after-prom events, while the Colorado State Patrol reported increased roadway activity and enforcement; the board also approved contracts for the State Patrol and IT operations.

Report from CDOT

Director Pakbaz reported there was a landslide on Father's Day, which briefly closed Loveland Pass, but it has since reopened in record time; meanwhile, the Transportation Commission approved an interagency agreement for Front Range Passenger Rail and marked the final meeting for three outgoing metro-area commissioners whose terms end this month.

Report from RTD

Director Sirois reported that RTD's August service changes are currently open for public review through the 26th, with board approval expected next month and implementation at the end of August, marking the third or fourth consecutive round of service increases; additionally, RTD received 10 project applications totaling over \$6.5 million through its partnership program, with funding decisions to be announced in early August.

Next meeting – July 16, 2025

Other matters by members

There were no other matters by members.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 8:47 p.m.

Jeff Baker, Chair
Board of Directors
Denver Regional Council of Governments

ATTEST:

Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director