

# 2024

## Public Engagement Annual Report

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# Introduction

2024 provided many opportunities for Denver Regional Council of Governments staff to engage Denver metro area residents and local stakeholders with its varied programs and services, as well as the opportunity to continue

and refine in-person and virtual engagement. This report summarizes and evaluates 2024 engagement activities.

Figure 1: Denver Regional Council of Governments public engagement activities for 2024





*Photo by Jessica Hughes/DRCOG*

### **Alameda Avenue Corridor Planning Study**

Staff from DRCOG, in partnership with the cities of Lakewood, Glendale, and Aurora; the City and County of Denver; the Regional Transportation District; and the Colorado Department of Transportation, conducted the Alameda Avenue Corridor Planning Study to further plans for Alameda Avenue bus rapid transit, more holistically assess multimodal needs along the corridor, and develop recommendations for improvement.

More than 500 people provided input through in-person discussions, surveys, and other engagement opportunities. The final online survey demonstrated widespread support for this study’s recommendations for significant multimodal improvements along the corridor and helped refine and assess community support for the plans various recommendations. In 2024, the project website had 4,576 views and 1,959 visitors.

## Area Agency on Aging

The Area Agency on Aging received more than 90% positive response rates for all services on its annual customer satisfaction survey. Its staff distributed more than 12,000 surveys. Director Jayla Sanchez-Warren also got the word out about Area Agency on Aging services during an April 9 appearance on Colorado & Company.

*On Friday, April 26, the Advisory Committee on Aging celebrated the DRCOG Area Agency on Aging 50th anniversary. The committee looked back on some of the highlights of the agency in the past 50 years and heard speeches from Area Agency on Aging's division director, Jayla Sanchez and Advisory Committee on Aging's chair, Karie Erickson. Photo by Jessica Hughes/ DRCOG.*

## Active Transportation Plan

DRCOG's Active Transportation Plan is a guide for extending walking, bicycling and rolling to everyone in the Denver region. DRCOG staff are developing the plan in collaboration with local governments, partners and stakeholders. Staff kicked off the plan in May, released a survey in July, and continued the first phase of engagement through fall. In 2024, the project website had 747 views and 402 visitors with 77 comments.





*Photo by Jessica Hughes/DRCOG*

## Awards celebration

On August 28 at Seawell Ballroom at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts, DRCOG hosted approximately 500 attendees as staff honored 18

award recipients with Way to Go, Metro Vision, Distinguished Service and John V. Christensen Memorial awards.

## Civic Academy

DRCOG staff kicked off the 2024 Civic Academy on September 10. Each week, participants learned from local experts about regional issues such as transportation, affordable housing, food access and homelessness. Participants also had the opportunity to create an individual action plan for a project or initiative to implement in their community. At the end of the session on October 22, the 28 participants shared their action plans with DRCOG staff.

*Photo by Jessica Hughes/DRCOG.*

## Colorado Travel Counts

Over the past 40 years, DRCOG staff have administered three large-scale regionwide household travel surveys, of which a key component involves residents completing a daily travel diary. In 2024, CDOT led the effort to conduct surveys with a consultant team and in close partnership with DRCOG.

Approximately 20,000 households statewide completed surveys for designated days over 12 months. Participants were compensated. The consultant estimates it sent recruitment postcards to more than 200,000 households.





*On July 22, 2024, the Environmental Protection Agency awarded DRCOG a \$199 million federal grant to reduce climate pollution and promote sustainability across the region. The grant will fund an ambitious and comprehensive regional program to transform the building sector in the Denver area, with focused investment in underserved low-income and disadvantaged communities. Photo by JR Goodwin/DRCOG*

## Climate Pollution Reduction Grant

To ensure local community priorities were addressed, DRCOG staff convened three committees to facilitate creation of two Climate Pollution Reduction Grant plans — a project management team, a 10-stakeholder steering committee and an equity subcommittee. DRCOG staff held two virtual public meetings and used a public engagement website to gather public feedback. Staff made an initial draft available

in January for entities in the planning region to use to develop their implementation grant applications. The final Priority Climate Action Plan was completed in March. The Comprehensive Climate Action Plan is expected to be completed in December 2025. In 2024, the project website had 1,292 views and 633 visitors who provided 13 comments.



*DRCOG Executive Director Douglas W. Rex addresses attendees at the East Colfax bus rapid transit groundbreaking at East High School in Denver on October 4. Photo by Evan Semón.*

## East Colfax bus rapid transit

DRCOG is funding and managing the Colfax BRT Next study in partnership with the City of Aurora, Arapahoe and Adams counties, RTD and CDOT. The study will identify future bus rapid transit, known as BRT, options serving East Colfax Avenue between the RTD R Line's Colfax Station at I-225 and Picadilly/E-470. The corridor is part of DRCOG's 2050 Regional Transportation Plan

bus rapid transit network and among five such corridors slated for implementation by 2030. DRCOG staff kicked off the Colfax BRT Next study in October, with engagement scheduled to start in January 2025. Approximately 200 people attended the project groundbreaking at Denver's East High School on October 4.



*Photo by JR Goodwin/DRCOG*

## Edgewater School Transportation Plan

DRCOG, in partnership with Jefferson County School District and the City of Edgewater, and with support from Edgewater Collective and Y2K Engineering, developed the Edgewater School Transportation Plan. This plan was part of DRCOG's Community-Based Transportation Planning pilot program to improve transportation safety, mobility and connectivity in historically underserved areas. The team presented the plan in March and published the final plan in May. 2024 engagement activities included a steering committee meeting, two focus group meetings, attendance at Lumber Winterfest, and a temporary project demonstration.

The demonstration converted West 22nd Avenue into a one-way street from Newland to Pierce Streets and included temporary infrastructure and signs. Project managers provided school families with arrival and dismissal procedures, the new traffic pattern and options for pick-up and drop-off locations. Staff used mail, yard signs, the school newsletter and other school materials to notify school families and nearby residents, and invited them to provide feedback.

The project website had 818 views and 447 visitors with 53 comments.

## Metro Vision and Regional Transportation Plan amendments

Metro Vision is the region’s shared long-range plan for growth and development, and is intended to protect and enhance quality of life. The plan includes themes focused on development patterns, natural and built environment, healthy and livable communities, economic vitality, and transportation. In 2024 DRCOG engaged stakeholders and the public to inform amendments to Metro Vision and the associated Regional Transportation Plan.

The Regional Transportation Plan helps DRCOG and its many partners implement Metro Vision’s shared aspirational vision and sets the long-range vision and investment framework for the region’s multimodal transportation system. Concurrent with the cycle amendment process, in 2024 staff proposed amendments to Metro Vision performance measures and targets. 2024 project activities included:

- Public review period March 18 to April 17.
- Public hearing April 17.
- Transportation Advisory Committee recommendations April 29.

- Regional Transportation Committee recommendations May 14.
- Board of Directors adoption May 15.
- Social Pinpoint: 173 visitors.

In 2024, the project website had 301 views and 173 visitors.

## Nondiscrimination program update

DRCOG held a public review of draft nondiscrimination program updates with feedback opportunities for the Title VI Implementation Plan, Limited English Proficiency Plan and Americans with Disabilities Act Program Access Plan, along with the agency’s first Disadvantaged Business Enterprise Plan. The public review period was June 16 to July 17, with a public hearing on July 17, Transportation Advisory Committee recommendation on August 26, Regional Transportation Committee recommendation on September 17, and Board of Directors adoption on September 18.

In 2024, the project website had 195 views and 96 visitors.

## North Federal Community Transportation Study

DRCOG staff led the North Federal Community Transportation Study in partnership with Adams County, City of Westminster and Growing Home. Through the study, the staff's goal was to identify preferred mobility solutions for residents who are unable to access, or have difficulty accessing, essential services in southwest Adams County due to transportation barriers.

Initial engagement from May to August included marketing via DRCOG and partner channels, steering committee selection and kickoff meeting, in-person and online surveys, and in-person and virtual focus groups.

- 170 completed surveys (130 in English, 39 in Spanish, one in Hmong).
- Four in-person focus group meetings with nearly 60 attendees and one virtual focus group with 103 attendees. The project team did not use data from the virtual focus group due to heavy participation from outside the United States and artificial intelligence infiltration, invalidating the data.

Subsequent engagement from October to December included online surveys, steering committee, focus groups, community events and meetings.

- 87 completed surveys (81 in English, three in Spanish, three in Hmong).
- One steering committee meeting.
- Three focus group meetings.
- Three partner meetings (Westminster's Inclusivity Board, Westminster's Youth Advisory Panel, Speaking for Ourselves self-advocacy group).
- One community event with nearly 20,000 attendees (Westy Fest).

In 2024, the project website had 3,100 views and 1,220 visitors with 894 comments.



*Photo by Jessica Hughes/DRCOG*

### **Public Engagement Plan**

DRCOG staff began updating the existing Public Engagement Plan, which is slated to be finalized and presented to the Board of Directors in 2025. Since its adoption in 2019 and amendment in 2021, DRCOG staff have developed new plans and programs, refined existing strategies and

explored equitable engagement strategies. Staff initiated the update over the summer and conducted internal and external stakeholder outreach. Stakeholders and the general public will have the opportunity to review and comment on the updated plan in early 2025.

## Regional Vision Zero Implementation Plan Update

In 2020, the Denver Regional Council of Governments adopted a Regional Vision Zero commitment to zero traffic-related fatalities and severe injuries on our roadways and to make safety a priority for all users of the transportation system. While stakeholders across the region continue efforts to make our roads safer through engineering, education and legislation, further collaborative action is needed to work towards an inclusive approach to roadway safety. The draft plan was provided to the public for comment via online survey from January 29 to February 27, with 949 views. In 2024, the project website had 622 views and 311 visitors with 11 comments.

## Sheridan Corridor Safety Study

DRCOG initiated the Sheridan Corridor Safety Study to make Sheridan Boulevard safer for all users, whether they are driving, riding the bus, walking or rolling. The study focuses on the corridor between Interstate 76 in the north and U.S. Route 285 in the south. The Sheridan Corridor Safety Study is a collaborative partnership between DRCOG, CDOT, Adams County, Jefferson County, the City and County of Denver, the cities of Lakewood, Edgewater and Wheat Ridge; and the and towns of Mountain View and Lakeside. Staff will provide opportunities for community input throughout 2025, with the draft and final plan expected at end of 2025.

In 2024, the project website had 688 views and 403 visitors with 52 comments.



*Photo by Nicole Lovato/DRCOG*

## South Boulder Road Study

Through a series of community engagement activities, staff and partners facilitated consensus toward a shared regional vision for the future transportation needs of South Boulder Road. The vision helps define future transportation investment to meet the shared goals of the communities surrounding South Boulder Road.

The project consisted of two outreach phases with an online survey, in-person pop-up events, and a virtual public meeting. Staff presented the final corridor plan to the public in the summer.

In 2024, the project website had 5,925 views and 3,049 visitors with 961 comments.



Photo by JR Goodwin/DRCOG

## Transportation Regional Improvement Projects and Survey

To improve transparency and access to information on regionwide transportation projects, staff from the Regional Planning and Development and Transportation Planning and Operations divisions have completed a major update to the Transportation Regional Improvement Projects and Survey ([TRIPS](#)) database. The database, which provides visitors a way to review planned transportation projects within the Denver region, includes the latest information on projects included in the [2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan](#).

Visitors can search for individual projects by keywords or can use the sorting tool to find projects by categories that align with information presented in the PDF version of the 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan as well as the [website map](#). Visitors can search by county, investment priority, funding type or staging period.



*Photo by JR Goodwin/DRCOG*

## Way to Go

Way to Go is a federally funded program that reduces traffic congestion to improve air quality. In addition to regionwide marketing that reaches tens of thousands of residents, program staff conduct both community and employer outreach.

Way to Go staff participated in events like Earth Day, the Colfax Marathon and numerous community fairs. Additionally, the project team hosted three National Week Without Driving rider appreciation events: September 30 at the RTD Littleton-Mineral station, October 3 at the RTD Olde Town Arvada station, and October 4 at the RTD Nine Mile station in Aurora.

Through its annual Go-Tober campaign, Way to Go staff work directly with employers to promote commute alternatives and compete against similarly sized companies to challenge their employees to explore new commute options. In 2024, 78 organizations participated in Go-Tober with 914 total event participants. Participants tracked 20,850 trips and traveled 205,000 non-solo driving miles — the equivalent of going around the earth eight times.



*Photo by Jessica Hughes/DRCOG*

More than 4,000 cyclists participated in Winter Bike to Work Day on February 9, coordinated by DRCOG's Way to Go team. Organizations throughout the region hosted rider appreciation stations where visitors could pick up hot drinks, breakfast and free giveaway items from event sponsors.

An estimated 19,000 commuters across the Denver region left their cars at home and made the trip to work by bike on June 26 for Bike to Work Day. More than 250 organizations hosted rider appreciation stations across the state, welcoming riders with food, drinks, smiles and giveaways. More than 500 employers and local governments took part in the fun by participating in the Bike to Work Day Business Challenge.

## Website refresh

Communications and Marketing staff created a new user-friendly [drcog.org](https://drcog.org) website that complies with state accessibility guidelines that went into effect on July 1. The updated website features a cleaner and simpler design, more intuitive navigation and the integration of ancillary sites such as [WayToGo.org](https://WayToGo.org). The web refresh also included an emphasis on improving public engagement, with sections focused on "getting involved" and features to highlight public meetings and events.

## Looking ahead to 2025

DRCOG staff anticipate several projects and public engagement opportunities in 2025.

Staff have been working on an update to the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan, a project which will require innovative forms of engagement. Staff will also initiate work on several new projects and studies that will kick off in 2025. Additionally, staff will engage with the public during winter and summer Bike to Work Day events, and Go-Tober.

