

2025 Public Engagement Plan

Executive Summary

Public Engagement Plan overview

Public engagement is essential to the mission of the Denver Regional Council of Governments. The plan is:

- A guidebook to help DRCOG staff plan and implement effective public engagement.
- A statement of DRCOG's commitment to include the public in decisions.
- A list of DRCOG's principles, goals and implementation strategies for engagement.

Why this plan?

The 2025 Public Engagement Plan will help make sure DRCOG:

- Understands the needs and interests of people in the region.
- Is responsive.
- Addresses ideas and concerns raised.
- Informs the community of critical decisions.

How to prepare for public engagement

Understand the purpose of engagement

Public engagement is essential to project success and is often required by state or federal law.

Public engagement should:

- Provide meaningful opportunities to participate.
- Involve broad and varied perspectives.
- Communicate complete, accurate, understandable and timely information.

The public will have perspectives DRCOG staff need to hear. To develop a plan or project that will respond to the needs of the public, staff must learn what those needs are.

Understand the role of staff

The project manager, the public engagement planner and other DRCOG staff will plan the engagement work. Any employee can take on a public engagement role, but there are staff whose job is public engagement.

DRCOG also maintains robust relationships with organizations that may be important partners in public engagement activities.

Follow the steps for public engagement

While the process will vary somewhat with each project, there are eight important steps. These steps may not be linear; many steps may occur at the same time or may be implemented in a different order.

-  Determine federal, state or other partner requirements.
-  Define the goal of the project.
-  Determine the goal of inviting public participation.
-  Determine the appropriate level of public engagement.
-  Identify potential participants.
-  Identify the right tools and techniques.
-  Implement public engagement efforts.
-  Measure, demonstrate and report the results of engagement.

How to engage the public

Choose appropriate engagement techniques

Public engagement is a spectrum, and strategies can move up or down on the spectrum depending on the desired outcome. For example, an open house that has no opportunity for the public to comment (perhaps as an informational session at the end of the project) will be a strategy that informs. On the other hand, a focus group hosted by staff who are constantly listening and reevaluating their project with feedback could be upgraded to a strategy that collaborates.

For a complete list of engagement techniques, refer to page 29 of the 2025 Public Engagement Plan.

Follow legal requirements and best practices

DRCOG has internal policies to make engagement as effective as possible. For a

complete list of policies, refer to page 31 of the 2025 Public Engagement Plan.

DRCOG must follow many different requirements, which can change depending on the plan and topic. Staff should follow the requirements that apply to them. Policies by subject matter can be found on the following pages:

- Metropolitan planning organization: page 39.
- Regional planning and other initiatives: page 44.
- Area Agency on Aging: page 46.
- Other DRCOG roles: page 48.

Host a public meeting

Not every project will use public meetings, but they are a common platform for engagement. Many different techniques can be used at

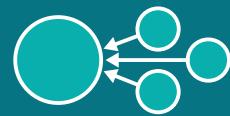
One-way



Inform

DRCOG staff provide fair and balanced information to help people understand the issue, alternatives, challenges, opportunities or solutions.

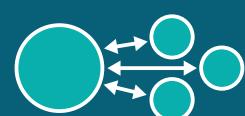
One-way



Consult

DRCOG staff obtain feedback on analysis, alternatives or decisions.

Two-way



Involve

DRCOG staff work with members of the public to ensure their concerns and aspirations are understood, represented and considered.

Multi-way



Collaborate

DRCOG staff partner with members of the public to make decisions, including developing alternatives and identifying the preferred solution.

public meetings; keep these tips in mind when running one.

- Ensure you have all the proper materials.
- Set expectations at the beginning of the meeting.
- Explain how decisions are made.
- Be a platform for people to share their needs.

Information on hosting a formal public hearing can be found on page 36 of the 2025 Public Engagement Plan.

Future engagement at DRCOG

DRCOG is committed to transparency and access to services, information and the decision-making process. Planning is about people and the communities they call home. Community participation improves all plans, policies, services and projects, and helps DRCOG meet people's needs today and into the future.

