

Board of Directors Meeting Summary

Wednesday, January 21, 2026

Members/Alternates Present

Jeff Baker, Chair	Arapahoe County
Kathy Henson, Alternate	Adams County
Claire Levy	Boulder County
Austin Ward	City and County of Broomfield
Rebecca Lloyd	Clear Creek County
Adam Paul	City and County of Denver
Kevin Flynn	City and County of Denver
Susan Berumen	Gilpin County
Rachel Zenzinger, Alternate	Jefferson County
Sharon Davis	City of Arvada
Royce Pindell, Alternate	Town of Bennett
Nicole Speer	City of Boulder
Greg Mills	City of Brighton
Christine Sweetland	City of Centennial
Robert Eber	City of Cherry Hills Village
Charles Dukes	City of Commerce City
Steve Conklin	City of Edgewater
Jack Bethel	City of Englewood
Emily Baer	Town of Erie
Georgia Koefed	Town of Georgetown
Gerchard Pfau	City of Golden
George Lantz	City of Greenwood Village
Chuck Harmon	City of Idaho Springs
Jeslin Shahrezaei	City of Lakewood
Robert Reichardt	City of Littleton
Kat Bristow*	Town of Lochbuie
Susie Hidalgo-Fahring	City of Longmont
Judi Kern	City of Louisville
Colleen Whitlow	Town of Mead
Angela Bernhardt	Town of Morrison
Kathleen Bailey*	Town of Mountain View
Richard Kondo*	City of Northglenn
John Diak	Town of Parker
Jay Whittaker	City of Sheridan
Neal Shah	Town of Superior
Justin Martinez	City of Thornton
Sarah Nurmella	City of Westminster
Rachel Hultin	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; Josh Sender*, Steven Odorisio*, Adams County; Jodie Hartman-Ball, Clear Creek County; DJ Beckwith*, Douglas County; Mac Callison, Aurora; Kent Moorman*, Thornton; Jessica Myklebust, Heather Paddock, Jordan Rudel*, John Gardocki*, Colorado Department of Transportation; Jennifer Cassell, Bowditch & Cassell; Kelly Blynn, Colorado Energy Office; Jamie Lewis, Jason Stone*, Citizens; and staff.

*Participated via Zoom

Chair Jeff Baker called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m. with a quorum present.

The Chair noted new members and alternates: Matthew Popkin, new member for the City of Longmont; Jay Whittaker, new member for the City of Sheridan; Jack Bethel, new member for the City of Englewood; Gerchard Pfau, new member for the City of Golden; Susie Hidalgo-Fahring, new alternate for the City of Longmont; Sally Daigle, new alternate for the City of Sheridan; Craig Kim, new alternate for the City of Commerce City; Othoniel Sierra, new alternate for the City of Englewood; Emily Kurzinski, new alternate for the City of Golden; Ann Taddeo, new alternate for the City of Brighton; and Rob Andrews, new alternate for City of Aurora.

Move to approve agenda

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

Regional Transportation District (RTD) Accountability Committee Update

Jacob Riger introduced Kelly Blynn, Colorado Energy Office, and Jamie Lewis, Vice Chair of the RTD Accountability Committee, to present an update to the Board. The RTD Accountability Committee, created by legislation signed in 2024 and housed within the Colorado Energy Office, was tasked with evaluating RTD governance, paratransit, and workforce retention and delivering recommendations to the Governor and Legislature by January 30, 2026. The 15-member committee (appointed by the Governor, Legislature, and RTD) met intensively over four months, supported by a professional facilitator and national transit experts, and incorporated public comment and stakeholder interviews. The process moved from learning and research to idea generation, prioritization, and voting, resulting in roughly 30 recommendations. A major focus was governance, building on prior committee work from 2020 - 2021, with the committee concluding that governance reform is a critical lever for improving ridership, restoring public trust, and strengthening RTD's strategic vision, even if it is not the sole solution.

Recommendations include strengthening RTD board capacity and effectiveness, potentially by reducing board size while increasing compensation to attract qualified candidates, improving oversight and balance in paratransit services (including evaluating the cost growth of Access-on-Demand alongside federally required Access-A-Ride), and addressing workforce recruitment and retention challenges that contribute to service cancellations. The committee also emphasized the need for stronger collaboration with local governments and state agencies, clearer expectations for subregional service councils, better alignment with long-range local transportation plans, and more focus on first-mile/last-mile connectors to improve access to transit. Overall, the committee found RTD is already moving in the right direction on many fronts, but needs greater funding, and coordination, paired with stronger communication across state, and local partners to deliver reliable, future-ready transit for the region.

Report of the Chair

Chair Baker presented past Board member of Sheridan (and current alternate) Sally Daige with an award honoring her many years of service on the Board of Directors.

- Director Kondo reported that the Performance and Engagement Committee met prior to the meeting and received a briefing on the first-ever peer exchange program with the Puget Sound Regional Council of Governments, which will be May 6 - 8.
- Director Shahrezaei reported the Finance and Budget Committee met and approved many resolutions for the Power Ahead project, including multiple grants, as well as HVAC and heat pump workforce trainings with Lutheran Family Services, and raised the contract approval threshold from \$75,000 to \$250,000 to better match the scale of current work.

Report of the Executive Director

- Regional Housing Needs Assessment: All 36 member jurisdictions that participated in the Regional Housing Needs Assessment were confirmed by the Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) to be fully compliant with state housing requirements, correcting an earlier error and restoring eligibility for compliance-based grant prioritization.
- Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) 2029–2032: DRCOG is launching the next four-year TIP process, which allocates roughly \$500 million in federal and state transportation funds to local projects, beginning with policy discussions led by the Transportation Advisory Committee.
- Advanced Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) Implementation Study: DRCOG is starting an 18-month Bus Rapid Transit implementation study funded by a \$1 million federal grant to develop funding and delivery strategies for the region's BRT network outlined in the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan.
- Winter Bike to Work Day: The February 13 Winter Bike to Work Day aims to promote year-round bicycle commuting and recognize residents who bike regardless of weather. The Board was requested to share event information locally.
- Board and Committee Participation Solicitation: Members will receive a survey from staff to volunteer for Board subcommittees and regional committees in the coming days..
- 2026 Board Officer Nominations: The Nominating Committee's recommendations for 2026 board officers were included in the agenda for review and will come forward for formal action at next month's Board meeting.
- Housing Brief for State Leadership & Candidates: DRCOG and regional partners created a high-level housing policy brief to proactively engage gubernatorial and state office candidates.

Public Comment

There were no comments.

Move to approve consent agenda

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

Items on the consent agenda included:

- Summary of the meeting January 7, 2026, special meeting
- Fiscal Year 2025 Transportation Improvement Program First Year Delays
- 2026 Policy Statement on Federal Legislative Issues

Discussion of the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan update – recommended investment priorities.

Alvan-Bidal Sanchez presented the recommendations for the plan to the Board. Staff is seeking approval of the recommended project list for the next Regional Transportation Plan, explaining that 133 submitted projects totaling \$11.4 billion were evaluated through scoring, partner coordination with CDOT, RTD, and DRCOG, a regional review panel, and equity and geographic balance analyses to fit within an estimated \$7.8 billion in available funding through 2050. The recommended list carries forward committed and resubmitted projects as priorities, adds a limited number of new projects (about 14% of funding), includes programmatic investments and multimodal priorities, reflects locally funded and vision projects, and incorporates recent technical updates to project names, costs, staging periods, and RTD financial assumptions following feedback from the Transportation Advisory Committee and local partners.

Director Flynn **moved** to adopt the recommended investment priorities for the 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan. The motion was seconded and passed unanimously.

Discussion of the Active Transportation Plan.

Aaron Villere presented the plan to the Directors. The Active Transportation Plan presents a vision for a region where everyone has comfortable access to walk, bike, and roll, supported by a complete and connected regional network and actionable policies, programs, and guidance. Developed over about 18 months with extensive input from member governments, partners, and targeted community, the plan's engagement focused on people facing the greatest barriers. The plan's core framework includes updated pedestrian focus areas, short-trip opportunity zones, and a refined system of regional corridors across urban, suburban, and rural areas, paired with ten implementation actions. The plan is supported by new resource guides on sidewalk delivery and "Bicycle Plus" modes (including e-bikes and scooters) to reflect rapid changes in technology and design guidance.

Director Flynn **moved** to adopt Resolution No. 2, 2026, adopting the Active Transportation Plan. The motion was **seconded** and **passed** unanimously.

2026 legislative preview and discussion of state legislative issues: New, bills for consideration and action.

Rich Mauro and Jennifer Cassell presented a preview of the new session and a handful of bills to the Board. The legislative session just began, with over 100 bills introduced so far and many more expected. The budget will dominate the session amid significant projected state deficits, and major policy debates are expected around housing, land use and local control, potential Medicaid regionalization, and restructuring higher education to better align with workforce and talent development initiatives.

Colorado Department of Transportation 10-Year Plan update.

Jacob Riger introduced Darius Pakbaz, Jessica Myklebust, and Heather Paddock of the Colorado Department of Transportation, to provide an overview of the plan to the Board. The proposed 10-year transportation plan recently presented to the Transportation Commission, outlines a portfolio of large strategic projects drawn from a broader statewide process involving MPO and rural partners, with about 250 projects total and several dozen in Regions 1 and 4 in the DRCOG area. The plan organizes investments around statewide goals and includes major safety and capacity projects on I-25, phased reconstruction of the aging I-270 corridor, safety and access improvements near the new Broncos stadium site, raising low-clearance bridges at 23rd Avenue and Speer Boulevard and improve multimodal safety, modernization of outdated ramp meters, and new Bus Rapid Transit corridors on Federal and Colorado Boulevards to improve frequency, reliability, and transit access.

Statewide, the plan emphasizes collaboration with local partners and prioritizes asset management, with more than half of investments focused on pavement and bridge conditions, a significant increase in surface treatment funding, and major financial support from CDOT-affiliated enterprises. The program also aligns with greenhouse gas reduction targets already being met by regional transportation plans. The Plan is scheduled to open for public comment shortly before final adoption by the Transportation Commission.

Potential Metropolitan Planning Organization boundary expansion

Jacob Riger provided an overview of what the expansion would mean to the Board. DRCOG is federally required to review its Metropolitan Planning Area boundary after each decennial census by examining whether census-defined urbanized areas have expanded and whether the boundary still supports effective coordination around mobility, traffic flow, economic development, and regional planning. In response to recent census changes, particularly the expansion of the Evergreen urbanized area into Clear Creek County, DRCOG has begun discussions with Clear Creek and Gilpin counties about potentially expanding the MPO boundary to include them. While this would be a geographic change tied to the MPO planning function, it would not be a major organizational shift because both counties are already DRCOG members, part of the state-defined Transportation Planning Region, and included in DRCOG's Area Agency on Aging and other regional programs, reflecting existing strong connections to the Denver metro area via I-70 travel, recreation, commuting, and economic ties.

Ultimately, any boundary change would require board action, followed by a formal process through CDOT to the governor's office, which would make the official designation and notify federal partners (FHWA and FTA).

Committee Reports

State Transportation Advisory Committee

Director Ward reported at its January 8 meeting, the committee received updates on the 10-year plan, Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options Fund (MMOF) and Main Street revitalization funding, the live camera program, and the truck chain station feasibility study. STAC also voted to support a letter to the Joint Budget Committee backing MMOF funding.

Metro Mayors Caucus

Director Conklin stated the caucus will hold its retreat on January 24 with candidates from both parties to discuss state/municipal relationships, followed by the next full caucus meeting on February 4.

Metro Area County Commissioners

Executive Director Rex reported at their January 16 meeting, the Metro Area County Commissioners, now chaired by Douglas County Commissioner Abe Laydon, discussed 2026 priorities and discussed the USDA SNAP pilot program.

Advisory Committee on Aging

There was no report.

Regional Air Quality Council

There was no report.

E-470 Authority

Director Diak reported that following board elections for the new two-year cycle, Francois Bergen (Aurora) will remain as chair and he would be serving as vice chair, with Commissioner Baker as secretary and Commerce City Mayor Steve Douglas as treasurer.

Report from CDOT

Director Pakbaz stated that with a relatively light winter so far, it has allowed maintenance crews to catch up on roadway work.

Report from RTD

Director Sirois reported that RTD is boosting service for major events (like Broncos games) while developing a long-term major events service plan, beginning a comprehensive operations analysis (COA) consultant process with broad stakeholder engagement this spring/summer, and has elected Patrick O’Keefe (District H) as its new board chair.

Next meeting – February 18, 2026

Other matters by members

There were no other matters by members.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:34 p.m.

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

ATTEST:

Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director