



2026-2027 Budget and Work Program



What's inside?

This document contains the Denver Regional Council of Governments 2026-2027 budget, the fiscal guide for the operation of DRCOG from July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. Additionally, the 2026-2027 work program, organized within four perspectives, highlights key efforts DRCOG plans to pursue as it serves simultaneously as the Denver area's regional planning commission, area agency on aging and metropolitan planning organization. The biennial [Unified Planning Work Program](#) outlines the full scope of DRCOG's work as the metropolitan planning organization.

If you need digital accessibility assistance, submit a request at drcog.org/access or call 303-455-1000. Please expect a response within 72 hours (three business days).





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May 20, 2026

Finance and Budget Committee and Denver Regional Council of Governments Board of Directors:

I am pleased to submit the proposed budget for the Denver Regional Council of Governments for fiscal year 2026-2027. This budget is transmitted to the Finance and Budget Committee for its review and recommendation to the Board of Directors for final approval.

The fiscal year 2026-2027 budget serves as the financial plan for DRCOG operations from July 1, 2026, through June 30, 2027. It supports activities within the metropolitan planning organization's Unified Planning Work Program, the Area Agency on Aging, Communications and Marketing, the Executive Office, Administration and Finance, and Human Resources.

Budget highlights and key variances from fiscal year 2025-2026

Revenues

- **Federal funding** is projected to increase by approximately 8% in fiscal year 2026-2027. In October 2024, DRCOG was awarded a \$197 million Climate Pollution Reduction Grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, now known as Power Ahead Colorado. DRCOG anticipates spending approximately \$53 million

on this program in fiscal year 2026-2027. In addition to supporting staffing needs, a significant portion of this funding will support rebate, incentive and stipend programs. Other federally funded set-aside programs also contribute to a modest year-over-year revenue increase, along with a Build America Bureau grant budgeted at \$626,000.

- **State funding** remains relatively flat compared to the prior year. DRCOG recently secured a Housing Action Plan Grant from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, budgeted at \$280,000 for fiscal year 2026-2027 and inclusive of Unified Planning Work Program match funds. Funding from the Colorado Department of Human Services, which supports a significant portion of Area Agency on Aging programs, is expected to remain consistent with fiscal year 2025-2026 levels.
- **Local and other revenues** are projected to increase by \$348,500. This increase is primarily attributable to rising vanpool ridership and partner contributions for data acquisition efforts, including the Denver Regional Aerial Photography Project and planimetric data. These revenues also include sponsorships supporting Way to Go and the annual awards dinner.
- **In kind contributions**, which reflect support from volunteers and partner organizations,



are expected to remain consistent with fiscal year 2024-2025 actuals. A substantial portion of in kind services is provided by the Regional Transportation District in support of Unified Planning Work Program projects, with additional contributions from volunteers assisting Area Agency on Aging programs. RTD in kind contributions are calculated to satisfy 75% of DRCOG's Unified Planning Work Program match requirement.

- **Area Agency on Aging reserve fund:** In the past two fiscal years, DRCOG budgeted a contingency reserve for the Area Agency on Aging to mitigate risks associated with funding volatility. Due to stabilized staffing levels and recent programmatic adjustments, the Area Agency on Aging budget is balanced in fiscal year 2026-2027, and no reserve is included.

Member contributions continue to support federal program matches, legislative and lobbying activities, and Board-related expenses such as meeting refreshments, the annual awards celebration, the Board workshop, quarterly City and County Managers' Forums, and periodic in person Small Communities Hot Topics Forums. In recognition of current economic conditions faced by many member jurisdictions, DRCOG will not increase member dues in fiscal year 2026-2027.

Expenditures

- **Personnel costs** include a 3.5% performance-based merit pool. The fiscal year 2026-2027 budget reflects a 12% increase in medical insurance premiums effective January 1, 2027. DRCOG recently underwent a class and

compensation survey with an outside vendor to ensure our wages are competitive. Through this process DRCOG was informed that overall, personnel costs remain aligned with inflationary and labor market conditions.

- Due to expanded organizational activity, a new program manager position is included in the Administration and Finance division. This role will support grant management functions, including grant training, grant application review, accessibility and cross agency initiatives.
- **Contractual obligations** increase by \$4.75 million in fiscal year 2026-2027, largely driven by implementation of the Power Ahead Colorado program. These costs reflect the launch of rebate, incentive and stipend programs, as well as other grant funded initiatives.

A significant annual contractual expense is also associated with fiscal management services for the Veteran Directed Care program. This contract is budgeted to increase by \$408,000 as DRCOG plans to expand veteran enrollment.

- **Non personnel expenses** include equipment, technology upgrades, software licensing, training and business insurance. Insurance premiums total approximately \$244,000 which is a decrease from fiscal year 2025-2026.
- Under the terms of DRCOG's lease agreement, rent and common area maintenance charges at 1001 17th Street will total approximately \$1.14 million in fiscal year 2026-2027, reflecting a modest annual increase.



- **Indirect cost allocation:** DRCOG’s annual indirect cost rate is developed by accounting staff following completion of the single audit, reviewed by independent auditors, and approved by DRCOG’s cognizant agency, the Federal Transit Administration. Indirect costs are allocated across all programs based on direct personnel expenditures. The fiscal year 2026-2027 indirect rate is projected to decrease from 48.5% to 33.7%. This is a result of organizational growth and increased programmatic capacity to absorb operating costs.
- **Capital outlay** is budgeted at \$50,000 for continued office reconfiguration, including reception area furnishings, office chairs and conference room furniture.
- **Pass-through funding** represents federal and state funds fully expended through contracts with service providers. A new pass through agreement with the Colorado Department of Transportation supports transportation demand management contract administration, totaling approximately \$1.46 million. Total federal pass through funding is budgeted at \$10.29 million, including Federal Transit Administration and Older Americans Act funds. State pass through funding totals \$7.57 million, primarily supporting Human Services Transportation and Colorado Department of Human Services programs.

Fund balance

The projected ending fund balance for fiscal year 2026-2027 is \$14.6 million. Approximately \$3.66 million of this balance reflects prepaid funds reserved for specific programs, including the Denver Regional Aerial Photography Project, Guaranteed Ride Home, and regional vanpool.

Given that a majority of DRCOG grants operate on a reimbursement basis, sufficient working capital is necessary to meet contractual obligations and daily operating expenses while awaiting reimbursement. DRCOG’s auditors consistently recommend maintaining a fund balance equivalent to three months of operating expenditures, a standard that is met in the fiscal year 2026-2027 budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Douglas W. Rex
Executive Director

Budget

Table 1: Fiscal year 2026-2027 budget summary and comparison

Description	2024-2025 actuals	2025-2026 budget	2026-2027 budget
Beginning balance	\$13,345,299	\$14,569,418	\$14,619,418
General funds	\$9,532,646	\$11,030,085	\$10,957,161
Program obligations	\$3,539,333	\$3,539,333	\$3,662,257
Revenues			
Member contributions	\$2,091,600	\$2,099,000	\$2,099,000
Federal grants	\$23,521,071	\$74,080,162	\$80,064,759
State grants	\$5,716,792	\$6,469,136	\$6,632,567
Local or other funds	\$2,012,145	\$1,694,288	\$2,042,780
In-kind services	\$647,222	\$1,305,192	\$1,471,980
DRCOG Area Agency on Aging Reserve Fund	\$0	\$320,868	\$0
Interest/investment income	\$33,228	\$50,000	\$50,000
Pass-through grant funds	\$17,449,125	\$16,759,813	\$17,860,534
Total revenues	\$51,471,183	\$102,778,459	\$110,221,620
Total funds available	\$64,816,482	\$117,347,877	\$124,841,038
Expenditures			
Personnel	\$16,829,883	\$20,494,454	\$22,050,000
Contractual services	\$17,449,125	\$58,308,354	\$63,060,412
DRCOG cash	\$1,202,357	\$1,381,669	\$1,471,980
Non-personnel	\$4,196,848	\$5,701,169	\$5,728,694
Capital outlay	\$0	\$83,000	\$50,000
Pass-through grant funds	\$10,568,851	\$16,759,813	\$17,860,534
Total expenditures	\$50,247,064	\$102,728,459	\$110,221,620
Ending balance	\$14,569,418	\$14,619,418	\$14,619,418
General funds	\$11,030,085	\$10,957,161	\$10,957,161
Program obligations	\$3,539,333	\$3,662,257	\$3,662,257

Notes: Beginning balance: The beginning balance for the fiscal year 2025-2026 budget is based on fiscal year 2024-2025 actuals.

Program obligations: Program obligations are prepaid funds set aside for specific programs: Guaranteed Ride Home, Denver Regional Aerial Photography Project and regional vanpool.

Area Agency on Aging Reserve Fund: The fund was budgeted at times in past years to temporarily support personnel expenses temporarily in the Area Agency on Aging while pursuing new or expanded funding streams in the event of lost funding. This is not anticipated to be needed in fiscal year 2026-2027.



Figure 1: Fiscal year 2026-2027 funding

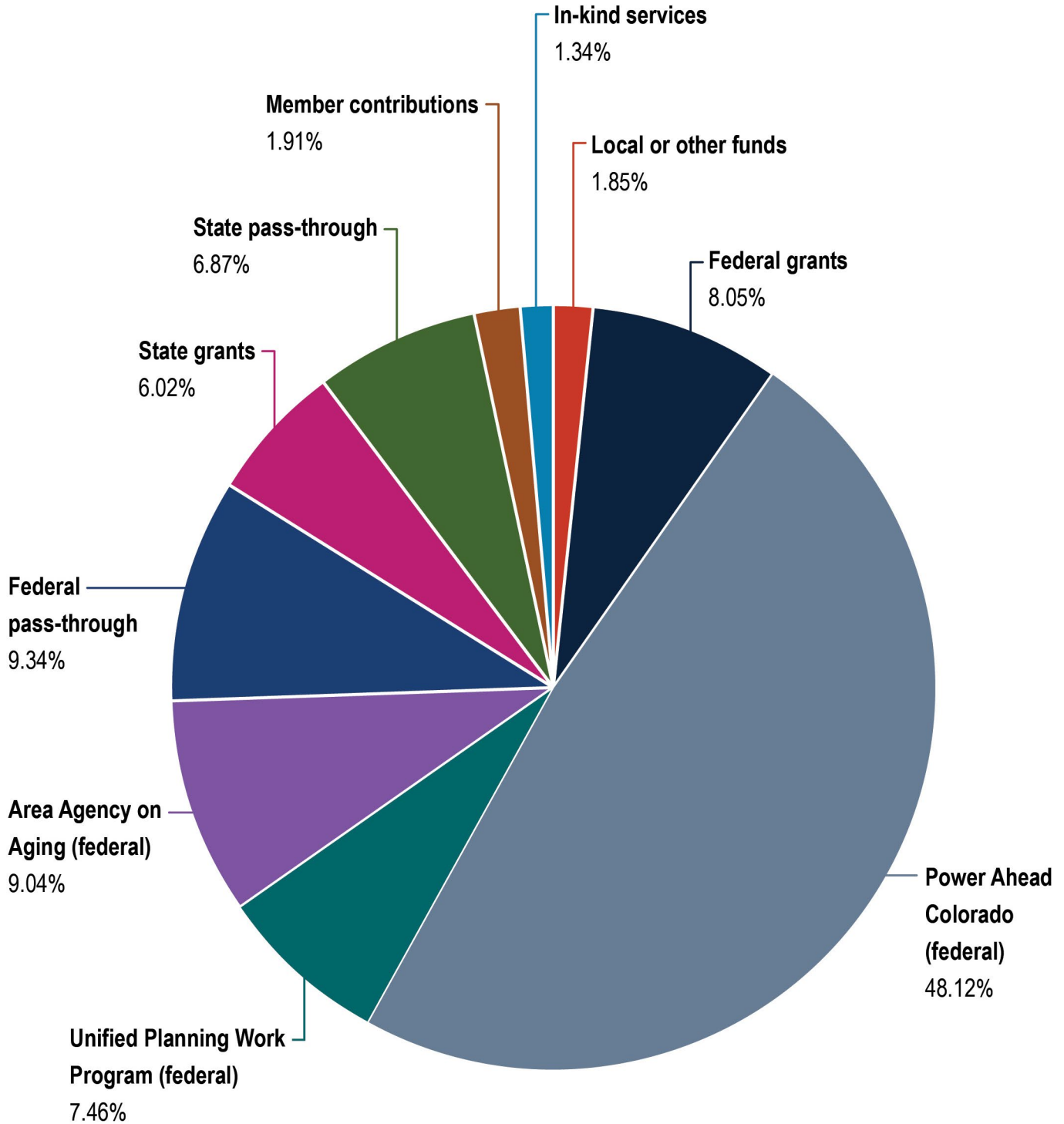




Table2: Fiscal year 2026-2027 strategic initiatives funding summary

Strategic initiative	Federal	Federal pass-through	State	State pass-through	Local or other funds	In-kind services	Member contributions: cash match and DRCOG funded	Total
Unified Planning Work Program	\$8,219,622	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,350,579	\$392,678	\$9,962,878
Traffic Operations Program	\$972,214	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$972,214
Transportation Improvement Program Set-Aside projects	\$3,300,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,300,000
Build America Bureau	\$626,178	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$626,178
Federal Transit Administration 5310	\$987,189	\$2,137,804	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$3,124,993
Human Services Transportation	\$0	\$0	\$300,000	\$2,100,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$2,400,000
Power Ahead Colorado	\$53,018,571	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$53,018,571
Area Agency on Aging	\$9,957,388	\$8,151,975	\$6,107,567	\$5,470,755	\$80,000	\$50,000	\$441,806	\$30,259,491
Way to Go	\$2,927,347	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$1,206,395	\$71,401	\$0	\$4,205,144
Data acquisition projects	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$666,385	\$0	\$0	\$666,385
Housing action plan grant	\$56,250	\$0	\$225,000	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$281,250
Member activities	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$90,000	\$0	\$1,264,516	\$1,354,516
Total funding summary	\$80,064,759	\$10,289,779	\$6,632,567	\$7,570,755	\$2,042,780	\$1,471,980	\$2,099,000	\$110,171,620

Note: The funding summary does not reflect \$50,000 in projected interest income.



Area Plan on Aging

In accordance with federal requirements, the Denver Regional Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging will develop an Area Plan on Aging to guide the delivery of support and services for older adults across the region. The plan identifies community needs, priorities and strategies to improve access to nutrition, caregiving support, health promotion and independent living services. The planning process ensures programs respond to the changing needs of older adults, align with federal and state requirements, and promote equity, coordination and effective use of resources.



Population and employment forecasting

DRCOG staff regularly update a robust predictive socioeconomic forecasting model that leverages data sources collected and maintained by DRCOG, subscription data sources, and State Demography Office state, regional and county forecasting products. The critical socioeconomic modeling work guides DRCOG's transportation modeling, housing needs analysis and many other data-driven initiatives for the Denver region. The robust model of engagement with local stakeholders ensures alignment with local plans in regional forecasts.

Metro Vision Livable Centers technical assistance

Metro Vision articulates the importance of aligned land use and mobility options. Through the Livable Centers program, which is supported through the Transportation Improvement Program Set-Aside, local communities have the opportunity to examine key locations where more intentional land use considerations can leverage existing and future transportation investment. Matched with land use and transportation consultants, local governments can receive targeted planning consultation and technical assistance to transform important hubs in their communities.



City and County Managers Forum

DRCOG began hosting quarterly forums for the region's city and county managers in February 2019. The forums provide an opportunity for DRCOG staff to keep the region's managers apprised of current and emergent issues, programs, and opportunities, as well as hear directly from the managers about challenges in their communities that may require a regional solution.

Way to Go

Way to Go is a foundational regional partnership between DRCOG and eight transportation management associations that reduces traffic congestion and improves air quality through education, marketing and outreach to encourage non-single-occupant vehicle travel. In accordance with DRCOG's transportation demand management strategic plan, Way to Go will expand efforts beyond commute trips and focus on broader access, while continuing to promote carpooling, vanpooling, transit, biking and walking, as well as telework. The Colorado Clean Commute marketing and outreach campaign will highlight tax credits available to employers for promoting commute options in the workplace.

Public engagement

Through its ongoing public engagement initiative, DRCOG provides people-centered planning, projects and services by proactively offering opportunities for the region's residents to learn about and engage with DRCOG. Engagement

efforts will focus on expanding access through DRCOG's online platform, engagement tools and outreach, along with building new partnerships to ensure input from people and communities across the region.

Bike to Work Day

DRCOG will once again work with partners across the region to promote Bike to Work Day in June. Organized by the Way to Go program, the event is the second largest of its kind in the country, and introduces people to bike commuting in a fun, supportive environment, resulting in long-term behavior change. The signature summer event is complemented by Winter Bike to Work Day in February, a celebration of those who bike throughout the year.

Community visits

Metro Vision, the region's shared vision for its future, is implemented through collective contributions and efforts at the local level. DRCOG's Regional Planning and Development staff have established a community visits program to strengthen staff-level relationships, connect member governments to technical assistance and resources, and identify opportunities to elevate their work. Community visits are one of many ways that DRCOG complements and informs programming and engagement to meet the needs of the region's diverse communities.



Economic Development District designation

DRCOG staff continue to finalize all elements to submit an application for designation to the Economic Development Administration, part of the U.S. Department of Commerce. During the 2025-2026 fiscal year, staff worked with the DRCOG Board of Directors to form the Economic Development District Advisory Committee, which meets on a quarterly basis.

Small Communities, Hot Topics

Started in 2014, the Small Communities, Hot Topics forum provides an opportunity for DRCOG staff to relay timely and targeted information about programs, opportunities and developing trends relevant to the region's smaller communities. In 2025-2026, DRCOG staff moved to holding shorter quarterly meetings for a deeper look at a single topic. Following a series of meetings focused on data — where to find it, how to analyze it and how to make it useful for communities — DRCOG staff are exploring topics of relevance for the 2026-2027 fiscal year.

Legislative affairs

DRCOG staff provide ongoing analysis of the potential effects and benefits of proposed legislation that may accrue for all DRCOG activities, with a specific emphasis on funding and policy issues for transportation, aging services, regional growth and development, and sustainability. At both the federal and state levels, DRCOG's legislative team is always available to provide insights on the effects of proposed

legislation on the mission, vision and daily activities of DRCOG and any potential effects on member communities.

New Transportation Improvement Program

DRCOG is developing a new Transportation Improvement Program covering federal fiscal years 2029-2032. The 32-month process will include discussions leading to an amendment of the existing Transportation Improvement Program policy document in 2026, two calls for projects in 2027-2028 and an adoption of the new Transportation Improvement Program document in 2028.





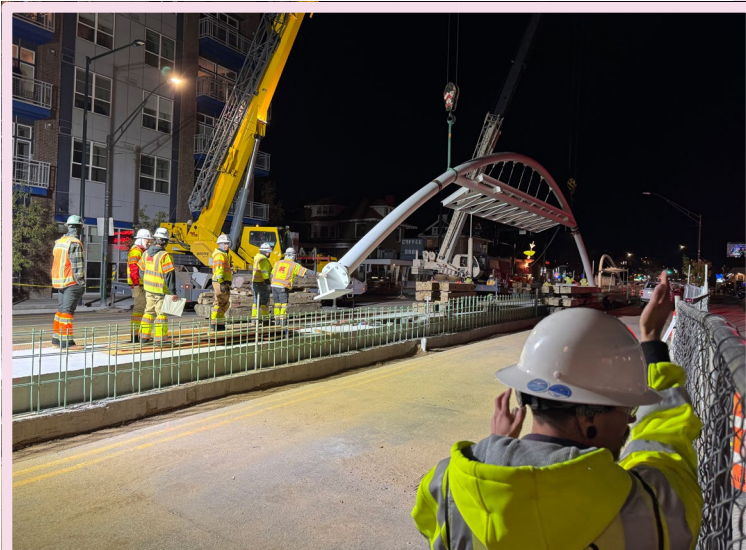
Ombudsman Program

The Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program advocates for the rights, health, safety and dignity of residents living in nursing homes and assisted living residences, as well as for people living outside of long-term care facilities, through the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly. The Ombudsman Program provides education, investigates complaints, and resolves concerns related to quality of care and quality of life. With more than 20,000 residents of long-term care facilities in the Denver region, many rely on ombudsmen to ensure their concerns are heard and addressed.



Bus Rapid Transit Partnership

The Denver region has committed to implementing a regional bus rapid transit network consisting of 11 corridors by 2050 as part of DRCOG's Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan. Regional partners have formed a Bus Rapid Transit Partnership to lead the implementation of the network and coordinate work on corridor planning and project development. In 2025 DRCOG, in collaboration with the Bus Rapid Transit Partnership, received a grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation's Build America Bureau for a project called Advancing Bus Rapid Transit Implementation. The project, which kicked off in early 2026, involves developing a strategy to fund and finance the region's next five bus rapid transit corridors.



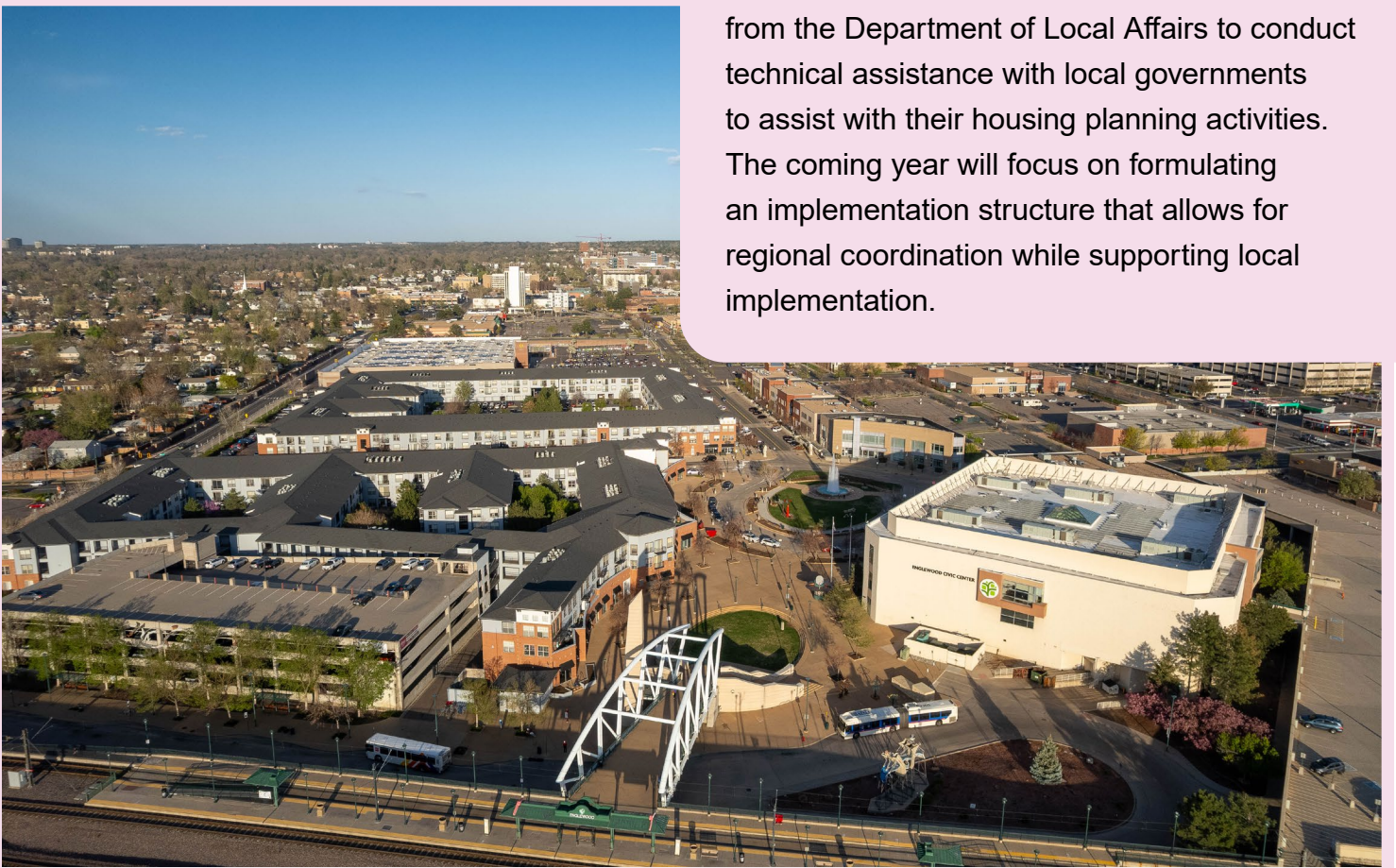
Workers install arches for the passenger boarding areas along the Colfax bus rapid transit corridor in the City and County of Denver.

Photo courtesy of the Regional Transportation District



Regional Housing Strategy

Over the last year, DRCOG has worked collaboratively with regional stakeholders to design a Regional Housing Strategy that will leverage meaningful collective work to address housing need. The work that lies ahead will include finalizing the strategy, mobilizing implementers, and establishing the collaboration structure to implement robust strategies. The Regional Housing Strategy will prioritize current housing shortfalls while developing new and enhancing existing policies and programs to respond to anticipated future demand. To assist in early implementation, DRCOG secured a grant from the Department of Local Affairs to conduct technical assistance with local governments to assist with their housing planning activities. The coming year will focus on formulating an implementation structure that allows for regional coordination while supporting local implementation.





Power Ahead Colorado

Power Ahead Colorado is a regional initiative led by DRCOG to reduce pollution from the building sector while improving comfort, health and energy efficiency across the region. Funded through a \$199.7 million grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the program equips residents and business owners with reliable guidance, financial incentives and access to qualified contractors to accelerate heat pump installations. Its mission is to create a pathway from initial interest to completed installation through four key initiatives:

Communications and engagement

Following its 2026 launch, Power Ahead Colorado will continue regional outreach and media efforts to promote programs like Cleaner Heat, Cooler Air. It will also partner with and fund community-based organizations to educate households on the benefits of heat pumps through trusted local voices.

Incentives, Comfort for All and innovation

Incentives and rebates will reduce upfront costs for heat pump upgrades. The “Comfort for All” program will deliver free improvements for vulnerable households, enhancing efficiency, air quality and resilience. The innovation program will support and fund new approaches to expand access to electrification and overcome market barriers.



Workforce and industry development

The program invests in workforce training and contractor support to scale electrification, including the Colorado Contractor Hub and partnerships with regional workforce centers to build career pathways in energy efficiency and electrification.

Policy

Power Ahead Colorado will continue to support local governments in advancing building policies through coordination, financial support and research to identify best practices and ensure effective implementation.

What's next

Power Ahead Colorado represents a coordinated regional investment in people, businesses and communities across the Denver region. Each of the program's initiatives work in tandem to transform the market and ensure all buildings are equipped with modern, clean heating and cooling technology. The program will deliver long-term benefits for local residents, economies and the environment.



Ride Alliance

Ride Alliance will transform the way the most vulnerable community members access and use services, such as medical appointments, grocery shopping trips and other essential activities. By bringing together local partners and human service transportation providers, Ride Alliance will streamline the coordination of transportation services, reducing wait times and trip denials. The innovative approach will not only enhance the quality of life for those who rely on on-demand transit services but also sets a new standard for accessible and inclusive transportation solutions.

Active Transportation Plan

Following the Board's adoption in January 2026, DRCOG staff will implement Active Transportation Plan recommendations, including assessing critical gaps in the active transportation network, and developing and deploying a regional active transportation count strategy.

Metro Vision

The last significant update to Metro Vision, the Denver region's vision and goals for growth and development, was adopted in 2017. With evolving needs across the Denver region, staff are eager to check in with regional partners to ensure the plan provides the vision and direction for ongoing regional planning work. An update will build upon work already underway including regional housing coordination, transportation enhancements and regional economic development initiatives. DRCOG staff will also incorporate new state

requirements for strategic growth and water planning. Their intent is to refresh the vision, incorporate emerging work, and ensure Metro Vision remains the guiding star for work across the region.

Regional corridor planning

The Corridor Planning Program advances projects and priorities identified in the 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan. It focuses on developing concepts and priorities for multijurisdictional regional corridors. The DRCOG Board approved the selection of a Speer/Leetsdale/Parker Bus Rapid Transit study as the next project in the program, which will kick off in summer of 2026.



Photo by Jessica Hughes/DRCOG



2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan

DRCOG staff will continue to update the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan with a targeted completion date at the end of 2026. Following Board of Directors adoption of its investment priorities, staff are drafting the plan document, modeling for air quality and greenhouse gas emissions, and preparing for final public and stakeholder engagement.

Community-based transportation plans

DRCOG staff will continue to work with member governments and community groups on planning efforts to improve mobility options for low-income and disadvantaged populations. The

people-centered plans focus on identifying local communities' most important transportation challenges and developing strategies to overcome them. DRCOG staff will begin work on the projects selected through the most recent solicitation process.

Regional data acquisition projects

DRCOG staff facilitate and manage cost-effective partnerships and projects that acquire foundational datasets, including imagery, lidar, planimetric data and land cover, in support of local and regional planning. DRCOG staff are also working with regional partners to explore processes to collect, manage, maintain and share regional transportation data.





Civic Academy

DRCOG continues to offer a long-standing program to build civic capacity and engagement. The curriculum of the seven-week program integrates the themes of Metro Vision to allow participants to explore and discuss essential regional issues like transportation, growth and economic vitality, housing, civic engagement and more. In addition to learning about the dynamic nature of these issues, the program includes skill-building activities to support participants in their civic pursuits. The program culminates in participants' development of action plans for further engagement in timely and relevant issues in their communities.

Innovative mobility

The Innovative Mobility Set-Aside facilitates

planning for and developing solutions for mobility challenges throughout the region. DRCOG staff are working with communities to advance mobility analytics tools, shared mobility planning and real-time management of the transportation system.

Built to Move: A Toolkit for Multimodal-Supportive Development Standards

DRCOG staff are working with local communities to develop a toolkit for Multimodal-Supportive Development Standards. The project — intended to help local governments integrate land use and transportation planning more effectively — will provide clear, adaptable guidance for urban, suburban and rural contexts in strengthening multimodal access, supporting sustainable growth and advancing Vision Zero and climate goals.



Strategic planning

A five-year strategic planning initiative will explore long-term organizational priorities and align programs, resources and operations to advance DRCOG's mission and effects on the communities it serves. It will identify strategies to address emerging needs and opportunities, while considering potential challenges. The resulting plan will guide decision-making, strengthen organizational sustainability and serve as a roadmap for coordinated progress over the next five years.

Audit

An analysis and report resulting in findings related to DRCOG's financial health and compliance with grant management guidelines, the audit will commence in August for the prior fiscal year. DRCOG has also enlisted the help of its auditors

to advise on tax matters related to rebate, incentive and stipend plans that will be executed under the Power Ahead Colorado programs.

DRCOG budget

A foundational annual product, the budget directs financial decisions made throughout the fiscal year. The budget process begins in January and concludes with final approval by the Board of Directors in May.

Cyber Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act audit

DRCOG underwent a cyber Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act audit in 2024, with favorable results. DRCOG staff continue to prioritize compliance through training and new software implementation.





Stabilize Area Agency on Aging funding

Securing and diversifying funding remains a key priority for the Area Agency on Aging as demand for services continues to grow. The Area Agency on Aging will continue to align with the Administration for Community Living's goals by operating as a Community Care Hub, strengthening partnerships with health care providers and payers. These partnerships allow the agency to access new Medicare payment opportunities to provide systems navigation and other support for older adults.

In fiscal year 2026–2027, the Area Agency on Aging will build internal capacity to submit reimbursement claims directly and expand community services through partnerships with health plans and care providers. At the same time, the Area Agency on Aging will adjust to reduced state and federal funding by focusing resources on those with the greatest need, prioritizing core Older Americans Act services, and sustaining services with fewer dollars. Staff will advocate for increased funding through the Colorado Association of Area Agencies on Aging and coordinate with state agencies and other partners to better align and leverage federally funded programs to support older adults.





Board collaboration assessment

The Board collaboration assessment gives DRCOG's Board of Directors the opportunity to provide feedback on collaboration with directors, committee structure and leadership.

Geographic information systems data development

Through an annual partnership with local governments, DRCOG staff create regional datasets, including information on employment, housing, open space and zoning, in support of local and regional planning.

Regional Crash Data Consortium

DRCOG staff will continue to convene stakeholders interested in improving the quality of crash data. Crash data accuracy is essential to identifying and solving safety issues in the region's transportation system.

Story maps

DRCOG staff develop data visualizations to engage stakeholders around planning and transportation topics using informative and easy-to-explore web maps and infographics. Story maps, a special addition to this suite of tools, enhance spatial analysis with narrative and photography to provide context to what might otherwise seem like abstract concepts.

Integrating accessibility best practices

In July 2024, a new state accessibility law went into effect, raising the standard for public entities to provide digital products that are perceivable, operable and understandable. DRCOG staff developed a plan, policies, procedures and training to ensure that accessibility is fully integrated into how the organization does business. The federal government has also announced new accessibility standards, which in many ways mirror State of Colorado requirements, but differ in some key implementation areas. In the coming year, DRCOG staff will continue to refine methods for prioritizing, testing and remediating digital products. In order to help implement accessibility requirements, a new position, largely focused on grant administration, will coordinate accessibility compliance in addition to overseeing grant submissions and management.





Professional certification

To support professional development and enhance networking opportunities that benefit the organization, DRCOG reimburses up to \$600 for each employee for approved job-related professional memberships and certifications.

Doug'n Donuts

Doug'n Donuts is an informal monthly town hall providing an opportunity for DRCOG staff to gather socially and interact with DRCOG's executive director, Douglas W. Rex, and the senior management team. Employees are encouraged to ask questions, offer suggestions and learn about activities, developments and policies.

Training and development

DRCOG has a legacy of investing in staff through training and development. DRCOG maintains a cloud-based learning management system where employees can access a library of tens of thousands of training classes. Additionally, DRCOG offers on-site, remote and hybrid live training for staff. These training classes are recorded and stored on the learning management system for employees who cannot attend live to access on their own schedule.

Employee engagement and satisfaction survey

An annual improvement opportunity, the Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey allows staff

to provide feedback on their overall experiences at DRCOG, their work groups, supervisor, division director and the executive director.

Continuing education

In addition to a tuition reimbursement program, DRCOG maintains relationships with a number of institutions of higher education that offer tuition discounts to employees.

Partnerships: Claremont-Lincoln University, Colorado Christian University, Colorado State University-Global Campus, DeVry University, Regis University, Western Governors University and Grand Canyon University. DRCOG has recently formed a partnership with All Campus, a company that offers tuition discounts at 25 colleges and universities (including the University of Southern California, Carnegie Mellon University, DePaul University and Johns Hopkins University) to DRCOG employees and their families.

Internships

DRCOG maintains relationships with several institutions of higher education, serving as an internship site for students completing their degrees.

Partnerships: Metropolitan State University of Denver, University of Central Florida, University of Colorado Denver, University of Denver, Regis University.



Classification and compensation survey

DRCOG's Human Resources division works to ensure that the organization is well-positioned to attract and retain high caliber staff. It conducts an extensive classification and compensation survey every five years. In the first quarter of 2026, staff partnered with Employers Council to conduct the most recent survey. Using the council's Payforce database of jobs and salaries, coupled with an analysis of 25 similarly sized councils of governments and area agencies on aging nationwide for more specialized job roles, staff will ensure DRCOG pays its employees competitively and makes adjustments to correct any gaps that may exist. The Human Resources team expected the survey to be completed by the second quarter of 2026.





COG Cares

COG Cares is a service-based employee volunteer program that organizes and implements volunteer activities and events for staff. It's a way for DRCOG employees to connect with and give back to the region's communities, and to build teamwork skills across work groups and divisions. COG Cares offers a variety of events at least quarterly throughout the year, giving staff the opportunity to participate based on interest, ability, schedule, weather and location. True to DRCOG's tagline, staff contribute hundreds of hours each year to "make life better" across the region by supporting organizations such as Project C.U.R.E., Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado and Denver Rescue Mission. In addition, staff come together for meaningful activities like holiday card-making and gift-giving for veterans and older adults.





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