

Summary of DRCOG Staff Proposed Metro Vision Amendments – *Metro Vision* Performance Measures

Recommended Metro Vision Performance Measure Amendments (Preliminary)

Two proposed amendments pertain to one of 13 plan performance measures listed on page 9 and page 75 of [Metro Vision](#). The proposed changes are as follows:

Measure	Where are we today? (Baseline)	Where do we want to be? (2040 Target)
Share of the region’s housing and employment near rapid transit stations or high-frequency transit stops	Housing: 29.7 <u>14.0</u> percent (2014)	35.0 <u>20.0</u> percent
	Employment: 48.4 <u>32.3</u> percent (2014)	60.0 <u>45.0</u> percent

1. Measure description language

The additional measure description language will more clearly describe the measure methodology, which continues to calculate the share of the region’s housing and employment within ½ mile of rapid transit stations, or within ¼ mile of bus stops with 96 or more departures per weekday, an average of 4 per hour throughout weekday service.

2. Measure baseline error correction and target adjustment

The adopted *Metro Vision* plan includes an erroneous 2014 baseline observation of this measure. The proposed amendments, detailed in table above, correct baseline observations – using established methodology, and establish new 2040 targets.

This measure relies on analysis of transit service schedules to determine the total number of departures for each stop for a typical weekday. Stops that have 96 or more departures over that 24-hour period qualify under this measure as high-frequency, and are used in the subsequent proximity analysis to measure nearby housing and employment.

Erroneously, weekday, Saturday, and Sunday departures were summed together for each stop in this analysis – a 72-hour period instead of 24 to reach the 96-departure threshold – resulting in nearly 3,000 stops being identified for the proximity analysis. The correct number over a 24-hour period is 835 stops. The housing and employment shares, as corrected, reflect this smaller number of stops qualifying as high-frequency.

With corrected and lowered baseline observations, staff proposed targets that maintain similar difference between the new 2014 observation and 2040 as was between the erroneous 2014 baseline observation and previously adopted 2040 targets.

Summary of Proposed Member Government Submitted *Metro Vision* Amendments – Urban Centers

Metro Vision allows for regional recognition of locally identified urban centers. One can find a full list of such designated urban centers in Appendix B of the plan (page 77).

DRCOG member governments submitted four proposed changes to urban centers recognized in *Metro Vision*. One proposed amendment seeks to designate a new urban center. The remaining three amendments, as proposed by member governments, seek to adjust boundaries of previously designated urban centers.

An evaluation panel of member governments and regional planning partners reviewed the proposed amendments, as well as DRCOG staff. A summary table of these recommendations is provided below, followed by a high-level summary of each proposed amendment and the rationale behind panel and preliminary staff recommendations. Final recommendations from DRCOG staff will also consider any input from the public. Final staff recommendations will be included in materials summarizing proposed amendments provided to the Board when they act to amend *Metro Vision* – currently anticipated to occur in April 2018.

Amendment Sponsor	Urban Center	New Center or Boundary Adjustment	Panel Recommendation	DRCOG Staff Recommendation
Douglas County	Highlands Ranch Town Center	Expansion	Not at this time	Include
Englewood	CityCenter	Expansion	Include	Include
Denver	East Colfax Main Street	Expansion	Include	Include
Denver	National Western Center	New	Not at this time	Not at this time

Proposed Boundary Adjustment: Highlands Ranch Town Center – Douglas County

The existing, 165-acre Highlands Ranch Town Center is in the Primary Urban Area of the County as identified in Douglas County’s 2035 Comprehensive Master Plan. Current development standards in this portion of the Highlands Ranch development support higher density mixed-used development and the area is a focal point for urban development in unincorporated Douglas County.

The proposed boundary adjustment includes:

- 90 acres of land in the early phases of development, also known as Highlands Ranch Park Central. The plans for this area include a University of Colorado Health hospital, medical offices, retail, a park, 200 units of single family housing, and 280 units of attached housing.
- A planned transit station area near C-470 and Lucent, served by a planned future extension of RTD’s Southwest Rail corridor. As one of the last parts of Highlands Ranch to see development activity, the Highlands Ranch Planned Development guide has been

amended over the years to focus mixed use residential and commercial growth in support of this future station area.

Evaluation panel recommendation: Boundary amendment not recommended at this time

Preliminary DRCOG staff recommendation: Amend boundary as proposed

Summary of evaluation panel findings:

- The Southwest Rail Extension is not currently included in the [2040 Fiscally Constrained Regional Transportation Plan](#)
- The proposal lacked specific examples of how the overall development program within the new areas will be consistent with the tenets of *Metro Vision*.
- The proposal noted the emphasis on senior housing options in the area, but did not address other strategies to promote a full-range of housing options that can meet the needs of residents at various income levels and stages of life.
- The application makes the case that this area is priority growth area for the county - a more modest expansion of the existing boundary could be considered. This could include an administrative boundary adjustment.

Summary of DRCOG staff findings:

- Although the Southwest Rail Extension is not currently included in the *2040 Fiscally Constrained Regional Transportation Plan*, it is a “Tier 1” corridor in the “2040 Metro Vision Rapid Transit System” as adopted in the [2040 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan](#). The expansion of this urban center shows the desire to proactively plan and prepare for this extension.
- The development of the *Lucent Boulevard Station Area Master Plan*, among other proactive planning activities, demonstrates that the County understands the relationship between this planned rail extension and the area encompassed by the proposed boundary adjustment.
- The proposed boundary adjustment encompasses the stated priority growth area for the County.
- Current development standards in this portion of the Highlands Ranch development support higher density mixed-used development.
- The proposed boundary amendment covers an area expected to continue to see significant growth and reflects the County’s intent to direct growth into this priority area.

Proposed Boundary Adjustment: Englewood CityCenter – City of Englewood

The recently adopted *Englewood Forward: The 2016 Englewood Comprehensive Plan* outlined a set of three districts that together make up the Englewood Central Business Districts. The three districts include Englewood Station (including the area currently designated as the CityCenter Englewood urban center in *Metro Vision*), the Downtown District, and the Medical District. The proposed expansion will add the areas within the Downtown District and the Medical District to the existing area designated in *Metro Vision*.

The three districts feature the city’s most intensive zoning district classifications, featuring high density employment and residential uses, in contrast with the predominantly single and two-family character of adjacent areas. The city has pursued numerous planning and zoning efforts in these areas for the past twenty years, which resulted in significant residential growth. Prior to these efforts, the area had seen little residential growth over several decades. The city

anticipates a 40% increase in housing units and 60% increase in jobs located within the expanded center over the next 25 years.

Evaluation panel recommendation: Amend boundary as proposed

Preliminary DRCOG staff recommendation: Amend boundary as proposed

Summary of evaluation panel findings:

- The proposed urban center and transit station location are regionally significant and have many existing attributes consistent with the regional vision for urban centers
- The application demonstrated the connection between local planning efforts and the proposed expansion.
- The application notes an emphasis of providing housing options for all residents, including current partnerships with private developers and the Englewood Housing Authority to provide workforce and low-income housing options.
- The anticipated housing and employment growth in the area is significant – the application also describes numerous initiatives to create a multimodal environment that can support mobility choices in the area as it grows.

Summary of DRCOG staff findings:

- DRCOG staff concur with the evaluation panel findings.

Proposed Boundary Adjustment: East Colfax Main Street – City and County of Denver

The proposed East Colfax Main Street Urban Center boundary adjustment would extend the eastern boundary of the corridor from Colorado Boulevard, currently the eastern boundary for the center as recognized in *Metro Vision*, to Yosemite Street. The proposed boundary typically includes parcels one to two blocks north and south of Colfax Avenue, covering most existing and anticipated mixed-used development within the corridor. The proposed extension also aligns with the upcoming capital investment in Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) on Colfax Avenue.

Significant capital investments are being proposed, studied, and funded in the corridor. Enhanced transit service has been recommended in previous planning efforts and currently the city is leading the Colfax Connections project to implement a Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project along the length of the urban center. Local funding for mobility improvements along the corridor have been secured through the recently approved bond package. Additional implementation support can be found through numerous city partners, including the West Colfax, Colfax, Bluebird and Colfax Mayfair Business Improvement Districts.

Evaluation panel recommendation: Amend boundary as proposed

Preliminary DRCOG staff recommendation: Amend boundary as proposed

Summary of evaluation panel findings:

- While the panel expressed some concern over the length of the proposed corridor boundary (6 miles), they also recognized the value of a consistent planning and investment approach along the entire length of East Colfax.
- The panel noted that the opportunity for significant housing and commercial development in such a corridor with existing and proposed high-capacity transit aligns with several *Metro Vision* outcomes and performance measures.

- Existing zoning will ensure that the corridor transitions to an area where the mobility needs of all users are accommodated.
- The city has demonstrated that this corridor is a priority growth area through coming multimodal investments that will meet current and future demands while also pursuing placemaking strategies that promote more transit-oriented commercial and residential development.

Summary of DRCOG staff findings:

- DRCOG staff concur with the evaluation panel findings.

Proposed Urban Center (New): National Western Center (NWC) – City and County of Denver

The proposed urban center will become a year-round destination and world-class hub for agriculture and innovation. The National Western Center Master Plan was adopted in 2015 and includes a vision for new housing and employment opportunities within the center. The NWC Master Plan envisions a “campus” or “community” dedicated to addressing the global challenges of food, water, energy and the environment, representing partnerships between the public and private sectors, and blurring the line between entertainment, competition, education and industry. The NWC bolsters a variety of opportunities through the involvement of partners including City & County of Denver, Western Stock Show Association, Colorado State University (CSU), the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, and History Colorado.

The NWC Master Plan includes a detailed implementation and phasing plan with an estimated cost for Phases 1 and 2 of \$856 million, of which \$669 million has been committed by the City and County of Denver. The Nation Western Center Commuter Rail Station, complete with multi-modal access improvements, is scheduled to open in 2019 providing direct service to Denver Union Station.

Evaluation panel recommendation: Urban center designation not recommended at this time

Preliminary DRCOG staff recommendation: Urban center designation not recommended at this time

Summary of evaluation panel findings:

- The panel was concerned that a “destination-oriented” center was not consistent with expectation of urban centers as outlined in *Metro Vision*.
- The application alludes to neighborhood planning efforts in the surrounding area, but did not make a clear connection between neighborhood desires and how the proposed design, development and programming at the NWC will respond to the community-driven plans from surrounding neighborhoods.
- The panel expressed concern that the area as proposed lacked residential uses, in comparison to other uses.
- The panel noted that a revised boundary might be more inclusive of residential- and neighborhood-oriented development and supporting amenities.

Summary of DRCOG staff findings:

- DRCOG staff concur with the evaluation panel findings.

Recommended Urban Center Amendments (Preliminary)

Based on the above preliminary recommendations, the urban center listing in Appendix B of *Metro Vision* would be amended as follows:

Urban Center Name	Jurisdiction	Classification	Area (Acres)
East Colfax Main Street	Denver	Existing	559 999
Highlands Ranch Town Center	Douglas County	Emerging	165 985
Englewood City-Center	Englewood	Emerging	62 487