

Board UPDATE



Nov. 18, 2015

The Board Update is a capsule report of action taken at the monthly meeting of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Board of Directors and includes other DRCOG news and events of interest. The Update is prepared especially for members of county commissions, city councils and town boards. More detailed information may be obtained from your jurisdiction's DRCOG representative or DRCOG staff at 303-455-1000.

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BOARD APPROVES 2016 BUDGET

DRCOG's Board of Directors approved the organization's 2016 budget. Since spring, the organization's staff and Board have been working to synchronize its budget and strategic initiative plan (work plan). At its September meeting, the Board reviewed the organization's operational objectives, including opportunities for innovation. At its October meeting, the Board's administrative committee recommended budget approval. The approved budget represents a 10 percent decrease in federal funding and a 26 percent increase in state funding. In-kind funding remains flat, and the budget reflects no change to its member dues structure, which makes up 7 percent of the organization's budget. Dues are determined by member governments' populations and assessment valuations, and these figures had been frozen since 2009 as a result of the economic downturn. For 2016, that freeze will end and dues calculations will return to using the current year's figures.

BOARD RECOMMENDS DUE DILIGENCE REGARDING DENVER REGION MOBILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY COUNCIL BECOMING PART OF DRCOG

DRCOG's Board of Directors instructed the organization's staff to conduct due diligence in exploring the Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC) becoming part of DRCOG.

Formed in 2005 (with DRCOG as a founding member), DRMAC improves transportation for mobility-challenged residents throughout the Denver region. It operates a call center and publishes the print and online "Getting There Guide." A 501(c)3 working under the auspices of the Colorado Nonprofit Development Center, DRMAC is funded through Federal Transit Administration grants (allocated by the DRCOG Board through the Transportation Improvement Program), as well as the Colorado Department of Transportation, foundations and contributions. DRMAC requested exploration of the feasibility of becoming part of DRCOG in recognition of the organizations' overlap in services and service area. Due diligence is estimated to cost \$10,000 and will include evaluating staff, structure, facilities, governance, financial and contractual considerations in consultation with DRCOG's auditor and legal counsel.

BOARD SELECTS NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Each November, DRCOG's Board of Directors selects its nominating committee. The Board's administrative committee appointed Denver City Council Member Robin Kniech and Louisville Council Member Ashley Stolzmann. Although the Board and its Chair are separately eligible to appoint two members each, Chair Jackie Millet followed recent precedent by naming to the nominating committee the four members who received the most votes from their peers: Douglas

County Commissioner Roger Partridge, Greenwood Village Mayor Ron Rakowsky, Mead Trustee Colleen Whitlow and Golden Councilor Saoirse Charis-Graves.

BOARD BRIEFED ON FEDERAL TRANSPORTATION LEGISLATION

DRCOG's Board of Directors received a presentation on the federal surface transportation reauthorization bill. Mickey Ferrell, under contract with DRCOG as a federal lobbyist, briefed Board members on the bill, which is currently in conference committee. It has been 15 months since the previous transportation bill (MAP-21) expired, resulting in short-term extensions while the House and Senate attempt to find consensus on their disparate versions of the next long-term transportation bill. Although both bills would, in theory, span six years, the availability of funding might limit their effectiveness to two or three years, at most.

The Senate passed its version of the bill, known as the DRIVE (Developing a Reliable and Innovative Vision for the Economy) Act, in late July. Under the Senate's version of the bill, the amount of federal funding for which Colorado would be eligible would increase from \$540 million today to approximately \$624 million in 2021. The Senate version of the bill also includes a funded freight program (although MAP-21 included a freight program, it was unfunded). The Senate's DRIVE Act would also result in benefits for Colorado's transit infrastructure, including a program to reincorporate bus replacement and bus facility costs into the transportation bill. To some degree, the Senate bill's redefinition of bus rapid transit also benefits Western-style bus transport which includes bus routes along HOV lanes (as opposed to practices followed in Eastern states which establish fixed guideways for bus travel).

The House of Representatives' version of a new long-term transportation bill was passed in early November and included 300 amendments, of which about half were related to transportation (highway and transit). The House bill does not have a freight program, instead creating a competitive grant program related to freight. Although the House bill would also return some inflationary increases in funding to Colorado, the starting point would be lower (\$524 million) and increase only to \$580 million by 2021. An amendment introduced by Rep. Jared Polis would designate Interstate 70 (Denver to Salt Lake City) as a high-priority corridor.