

BOARD UPDATE



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Oct. 19, 2016

COMMITTEE UPDATES

The DRCOG Board of Directors nominating committee will be seated in November. Board Chair Elise Jones asked Board directors to indicate their interest in serving on the executive committee to Connie Garcia, executive assistant and board coordinator (cgarcia@drcog.org or 303-480-6701).

BOARD APPROVES FUNDS FOR STATE HIGHWAY 7 STUDY

At its October meeting, the DRCOG Board of Directors approved using \$160,000 in federal funds, returned from the City of Thornton, to fund a study submitted by the City and County of Broomfield. The funds had been allocated to Thornton under the Station Area Master Plan/Urban Center set-aside for a study of the North Thornton and State Highway 7 transit-oriented development master plan. In July, Thornton informed DRCOG it did not intend to use the grant.

In fall of 2015, the Project Selection Panel had ranked the remaining unfunded projects in case funding became available. The next study eligible for funding, submitted by Broomfield, relates to State Highway 7 arterial bus rapid transit station design, multimodal station connectivity recommendations and right-of-way needs. DRCOG staff contacted Broomfield and received written acceptance of the funds. Broomfield and Boulder County agreed to have Boulder County be the official sponsor for the project in the Transportation Improvement Program due to the county's involvement with a related State Highway 7 bus rapid transit feasibility study.

BOARD APPROVES 120-DAY VARIANCE FOR CENTENNIAL ROADWAY PROJECT

Under Board-adopted Transportation Improvement Program policy concerning second-year project delays, project sponsors have the opportunity to appeal to the Board for a variance to continue their delayed project if it continues to be delayed after Oct. 15. Through conversations with project sponsor staff, DRCOG became aware that a City of Centennial roadway operational improvement for the intersection of Smoky Hill Road and Himalaya Street would continue to be delayed for a second year. Colorado Department of Transportation staff confirmed the delay. The project sponsor anticipates being able to advertise the project in November, thereby removing the delay restriction. Centennial submitted a letter expressing its desire to appeal.

Following conversation about setting expectations for project sponsors requesting future variances, the Board unanimously approved a 120-day variance for the project.

BOARD DIRECTS DRCOG STAFF TO PROVIDE WRITTEN COMMENTS RELATED TO EMISSIONS SETTLEMENT

The Board received an informational briefing from Chris Colclasure of the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's Air Pollution Control Division regarding the Volkswagen and Audi emissions settlement. The terms of the settlement include buy-backs, lease terminations and modification payouts for individual vehicle owners, as well as a nationwide \$2 billion investment for zero emission vehicles and \$2.7 billion environmental mitigation trust fund, including a \$61.3 million initial allocation for Colorado. The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment has requested comments related to how the state will maximize air quality benefits, set funding priorities and select projects. It will hold a stakeholder meeting from 9 to 11:30 a.m. Nov. 7 at the Sabin-Cleere Conference Room, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, 300 Cherry Creek South Dr., Denver, CO 80246.

Upon conclusion of the presentation, the Board recommended that DRCOG provide written comments to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment based on recommendations from the Southwest Energy Efficiency Project's transportation program emphasizing investment in electric vehicle infrastructure and electric buses.

BOARD RECEIVES REPORT ON REGIONAL TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Robert Spotts of DRCOG's Transportation Planning and Operations Division presented to the Board an overview of the 2015 Annual Report on Traffic Congestion in the Denver Region, which was also distributed during the meeting. DRCOG has published the report annually since 2006. This year's report highlights a four percent increase in vehicle miles traveled – the highest percentage increase since the 1990s and possibly the largest raw growth ever. The report identifies a booming economy, population growth, decreasing fuel costs, behavioral changes and an increase in urban truck traffic as factors contributing to increased vehicle miles traveled. The report also discusses new methodologies and data sources DRCOG staff will use to enhance its analysis of roadway congestion.