



Board of Directors handbook



Letter from the executive director

Welcome to the Denver Regional Council of Governments Board of Directors!

I am delighted to have your participation on the Board. Whether your role is as a director or an alternate, your service is essential to the spirit of collaboration and regional partnership that DRCOG exemplifies.

DRCOG has a long history of bringing communities together to make life better for the residents of the Denver region. Regardless of whether you represent a historic small town, a bustling city, a diverse, expansive county, or a partner agency, your perspective is essential to our work together. We look forward to your participation at monthly work sessions and board meetings. Your tenure on the Board may even offer opportunities for committee service within, or on behalf of, DRCOG.

DRCOG's Communications and Marketing team has assembled this handbook to acquaint you with the organization, its history, your role as a director or alternate, major program areas and current policy statements.

For a quick reference, please refer to [At a Glance](#) or the supporting materials provided with this handbook.

As soon as you're able, I invite you to spend some time with **Chapter 1: What is DRCOG**, **Chapter 2: How is DRCOG organized** and **Chapter 3: What is the role of the Board of Directors?** The information will help you prepare for your first Board meeting or work session.

Then, as your time and interest allow, please acquaint yourself with **Chapter 4: What does DRCOG do**, and **state and federal policy statements**.

If you have any questions about your service on the board, please don't hesitate to contact me (drex@drcog.org) or Melinda Stevens (mstevens@drcog.org), executive assistant, at 303-630-6701.

I look forward to working with you to make life better for your community and the region. I know we'll accomplish great things together, thanks to your commitment to making the Denver metropolitan area a great place to live, work and play.

In appreciation,

Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director

Table of contents

Chapter 1: What is DRCOG?	4
Mission statement	4
Vision statement	4
History	5
Mile High Compact	6
Member governments	7
Quick facts	8
How DRCOG helps its member governments	9
Chapter 2: How is DRCOG organized?.....	12
Key staff	13
Revenue sources and budget	18
Committee structure	19
Meeting schedule	20
Chapter 3: What is the role of the Board of Directors?	21
Guiding principles	22
Norms and code of conduct	24
Board director responsibilities	25
<i>Robert's Rules</i> and parliamentary procedures.....	28
Colorado Open Meetings Law	32
Chapter 4: What does DRCOG do?	33
Introduction	34
Area Agency on Aging	35
Regional Planning and Development	36
Transportation Planning and Operations	38
Appendix 1: Articles of Association.....	40
Appendix 2: Committee Policy, Guidelines and Descriptions	64
Appendix 3: Executive policies	87

Chapter 1: What is DRCOG?

Mission statement

The Denver Regional Council of Governments is a planning organization where local governments collaborate to establish guidelines, set policy and allocate funding in the areas of:

- Transportation and personal mobility.
- Growth and development.
- Aging and disability resources.

Vision statement

Our region is a diverse network of vibrant, connected, lifelong communities with a broad spectrum of housing, transportation and employment, complemented by world-class natural and built environments.

History

Early years

In **February 1955**, officials of Denver, Adams, Arapahoe and Jefferson Counties convened to discuss shared concerns about growth in the region, which was booming after World War II ended. They formed one of the nation's first regional planning commissions, the **Inter-County Regional Planning Association**, now known as the Denver Regional Council of Governments.

Among the first actions of the association was a resolution of support for an interstate route through the metro area. Two years later, the Bureau of Public Roads (a precursor to today's Federal Highway Administration) approved **Interstate 70** west of Denver.

In **1957**, the organization called for a freeway around the metropolitan area's circumference. The Valley Highway, named for its proximity to the Platte River Valley and known today as **Interstate 25**, opened in **1958** – the same year the newly renamed **Inter-County Regional Planning Commission** approved the region's first transportation plan. Six years later, I-70 east of the Valley Highway opened.

In **1963**, the organization signed the first memorandum of agreement with the Colorado Department of Highways (the forerunner of the Colorado Department of Transportation) after the Federal-Aid Highway Act established a “**continuing, cooperative and comprehensive**” **transportation planning process**. The organization released its first regional plan “Toward Greater Livability” in 1963 as well, establishing the foundation for today's Metro Vision plan. Although it has evolved significantly in the past five decades, its focus on regional cooperation remains unchanged.

Growing pains and maturation

In the early 1960s, the organization weathered changes among its membership. Its continued existence was uncertain due to fiscal problems, structure and policy disputes. But the organization survived and adopted a new name — **the Denver Regional Council of Governments** — in **1968**. The prominence of “Denver” in its name signified the responsibility of the core city to its neighbors.

DRCOG was a **leader in environmental planning** in the late 1960s and 1970s, coincident with national adoption of the Clean Air Act in 1970. In **1978**, DRCOG adopted a Clean Water Plan as part of local implementation of Section 208 of the federal Clean Water Act; and in 1978, the

regional element of the carbon monoxide and ozone State Implementation Plan. Local governments continue to have a vital role in air quality planning through the **Regional Air Quality Council**.

In **1969**, DRCOG supported legislation creating the **Regional Transportation District** and hosted its organizational meeting. In **1971**, DRCOG and the Colorado Department of Highways signed the first agreement with the Regional Transportation District to cooperatively plan for transportation within the region.

To this day, DRCOG develops the region's comprehensive, multimodal, 20-year transportation plan.

“Sometimes we can get a lot of common ground on issues, and sometimes it's more difficult.”

Click to watch informational videos from former DRCOG Board members!

DRCOG has served as the **metropolitan planning organization** for the Denver region since **1977**, acting as a forum for a collaborative transportation planning process. As a federally mandated and funded transportation policy-making organization, DRCOG ensures existing and future expenditures for transportation projects are based on a collaborative planning process involving local governments and major planning partners, such as CDOT and RTD.

In **1973**, DRCOG was designated the **Area Agency on Aging** under the federal Older Americans Act. Since then, the agency has expanded to include the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program (created in **1987**) to safeguard the well-being of residents of nursing homes and assisted-living facilities and designation as an Aging and Disability Resource Center for Colorado.

Today, Area Agency on Aging staff represent the largest contingent of DRCOG employees. They visit more than 300 long-term care facilities a month; provide case management services; help disabled veterans stay independent at home; field hundreds of calls a month and provide resources and assistance to older adults, people with disabilities and their caregivers; provide Medicare navigation services through the State Health Insurance



<https://youtu.be/-R6xFlJnuQ0>

Assistance Program; and are pioneering continuum of care partnerships with health care organizations.

In response to gas shortages caused by the 1973-1974 oil embargo, DRCOG began a carpool matching program in **1975**. Since then, under the umbrella of transportation demand management, DRCOG has coordinated vanpools and carpools for commuters and students.

Today, its Way to Go team works with employers and commuters to encourage transit, walking, biking and telework — anything other than driving alone.

Following the example of Boulder County, one of its member governments, DRCOG established regionwide Bike to Work Day in **1990**.

Today, the event is one of the largest in the nation, and is celebrated by tens of thousands of cyclists in the Denver region.



Regionwide contributions

Throughout its history, the organization has studied important projects to provide technical information to decisionmakers. The following represent DRCOG's legacy of behind-the-scenes accomplishments:

- A **metropolitan sewage treatment study** in 1956 that eventually led to the formation of the Metropolitan Denver Sewage Disposal District in the 1960s.
- A 1959 study of **demand and capacity for air travel** north of Westminster and in Arapahoe County in response to private aviation congestion at Stapleton Airfield.
- The **Metro Airport Study** (1979-1983), which determined the site of Denver International Airport.
- A task-force-commissioned site study for the Denver Reception and Diagnostic Center, which opened in 1991.
- A task force, convened by DRCOG, which resulted in the 1990 opening of the **Colorado Convention Center** with state financial support.

State statute requires DRCOG to assess rapid transit proposals for financial feasibility and technology, a role it first discharged in 1991 related to the Central Corridor light rail line from Auraria to Five Points.

Consistent with state statute, DRCOG's Board of Directors continues to assess rapid transit proposals for all corridors including an annual review of the FasTracks project.

A vision for the region's future

Throughout the region's history, periods of major population growth and job creation have aligned member governments in their efforts to responsibly guide growth. One of the Inter-County Regional Planning Commission's first major efforts, and reason for its creation, was the Metro Growth Plan of 1961. In addition to guiding growth, the plan suggested ways to implement and finance the public structures needed to accommodate such growth. The result of five years of work, the comprehensive plan laid the foundation for other regional plans the organization would produce through the years.

Metro Vision, first adopted in 1997 and updated every five years thereafter, represents the region's shared aspiration for its future.

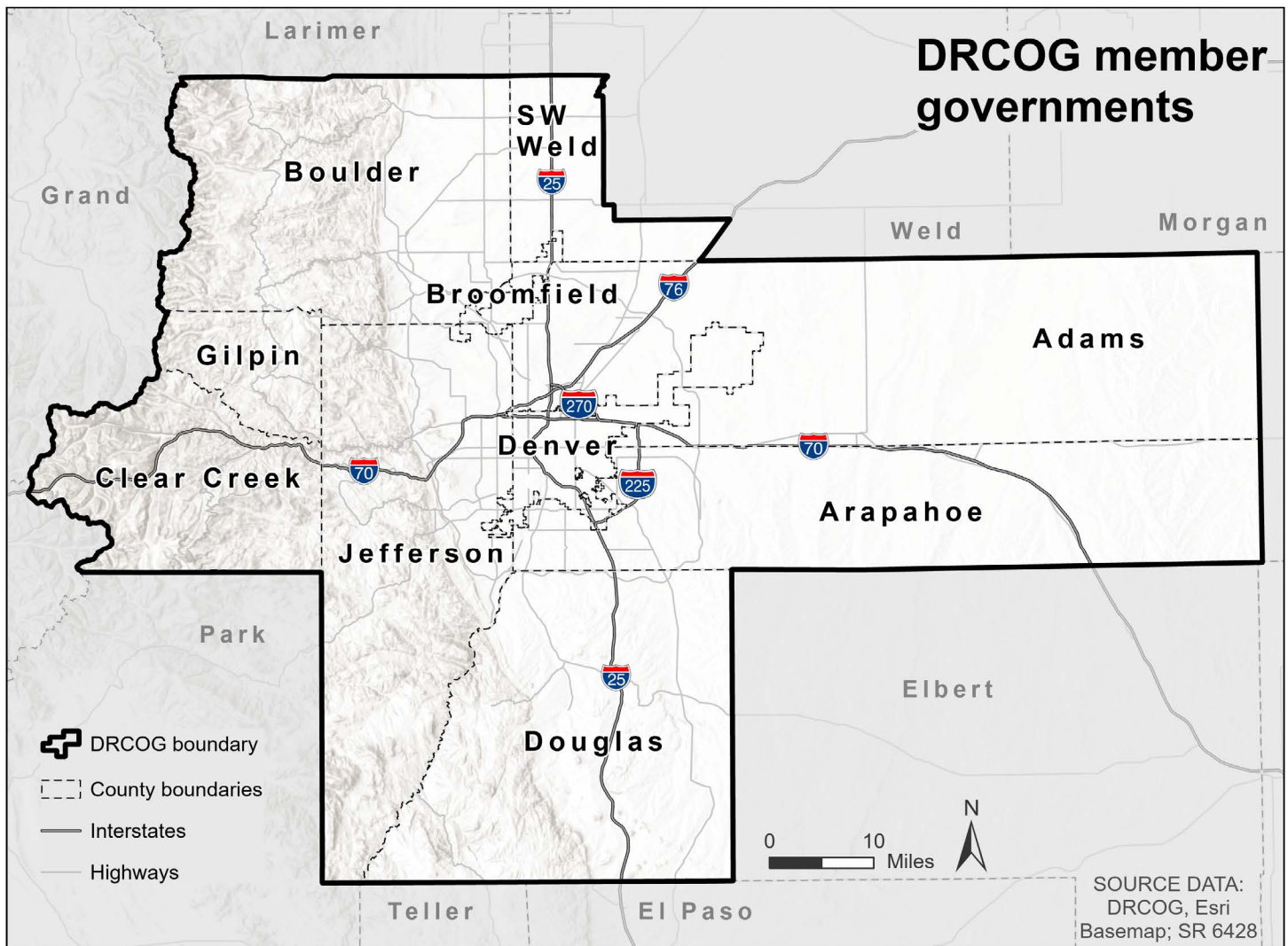
Mile High Compact

Since August 2000, cities and counties in the region have abided by the Mile High Compact, the first city- and county-led accord of its kind in the nation. The compact is an intergovernmental agreement that binds communities to work together to guide growth using Metro Vision. To date, 46 of the region's local governments, representing nearly 90% of the region's population, have signed on to the compact.



Member governments

Adams County	City of Castle Pines	Town of Frederick	Town of Morrison
Arapahoe County	Town of Castle Rock	Town of Georgetown	Town of Nederland
Boulder County	City of Centennial	City of Glendale	City of Northglenn
City and County of Broomfield	City of Central City	City of Golden	Town of Parker
Clear Creek County	City of Cherry Hills Village	City of Greenwood Village	City of Sheridan
City and County of Denver	Town of Columbine Valley	City of Idaho Springs	Town of Silver Plume
Douglas County	City of Commerce City	City of Lafayette	Town of Superior
Gilpin County	City of Dacono	City of Lakewood	City of Thornton
Jefferson County	Town of Deer Trail	Town of Larkspur	City of Westminster
City of Arvada	City of Edgewater	City of Littleton	City of Wheat Ridge
City of Aurora	Town of Empire	Town of Lochbuie	Non-voting members:
Town of Bennett	City of Englewood	City of Lone Tree	Colorado Governor's Office
City of Black Hawk	Town of Erie	City of Longmont	Colorado Department of
City of Boulder	City of Federal Heights	City of Louisville	Transportation
Town of Bow Mar	Town of Firestone	Town of Lyons	Regional Transportation
City of Brighton	Town of Foxfield	Town of Mead	District



Quick facts

What is the Denver Regional Council of Governments?

Local communities are the Denver Regional Council of Governments. DRCOG is a voluntary association of more than 50 cities, towns and counties which work together to realize a better future for our region.

When and why was the Denver Regional Council of Governments created?

DRCOG was created in 1955 by local governments to bring together cities, towns and counties to address issues that cross jurisdictional boundaries and to explore how the region's communities can work together to accomplish more than they could independently. With a population increase projected to exceed more than 1 million new residents by the year 2040, regional cooperation fostered by DRCOG is more vital than ever.

Geographically speaking, what does the Denver Regional Council of Governments cover?

The DRCOG region comprises Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, Gilpin and Jefferson counties plus the City and County of Broomfield, the City and County of Denver, and southwest Weld County.

Is DRCOG federal, state or local?

DRCOG is a public agency, but it isn't a government unit. DRCOG is a voluntary association of local governments which cooperate to create a better future for the region. DRCOG does not have statutory authority to require local governments to be members or adhere to its plans. It cannot tax, issue bonds or legislate.

What issues does DRCOG address?

DRCOG actively engages the issues that affect the future of the region, providing a forum for local governments to cooperatively:

- Advocate and provide services for the region's older adults.
- Keep the region's air clean.
- Preserve open space.

- Disburse funding for services for older adults and individuals with disabilities.
- Plan for regional growth and development.
- Promote commuting choice.
- Collect and analyze demographic information.
- Promote regional cooperation.
- Coordinate the efforts of cities, towns and counties within the region.
- Resolve shared problems.
- Provide services for cities, towns and counties within the region.

How do jurisdictions participate?

The DRCOG Board of Directors comprises local elected officials. Staff from local jurisdictions serve on multijurisdictional advisory committees and task forces. DRCOG also provides workshops, consortia and partnerships for the benefit of its member communities.

Click to watch informational
videos from former DRCOG
Board members!

IT'S WHAT
YOU DO
WHILE
YOU'RE HERE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DCIXQ6SDqoU>

How DRCOG helps its member governments

The Denver Regional Council of Governments offers various services to member governments and their residents, many at no additional cost beyond annual dues.

Analytical and research services

Upon request by the board of directors or member governments, DRCOG staff provide research and analytical services on policy and legislative issues, population and employment characteristics, land use and transportation data, and spatial analysis.

Boomer Bond

The Denver region is experiencing unprecedented growth among the region's aging population. The Boomer Bond assessment tool helps local communities evaluate their existing resources, programs and infrastructure, then determine how to leverage their resources and partnerships to become more age-friendly. A companion web directory provides successes and ideas from Colorado and beyond.

Civic Academy

The Civic Academy is a seven-week program during which participants learn from local experts and leaders, network with other residents and ultimately act on what they've learned. Over the past decade, Civic Academy has inspired and prepared numerous alumni to serve as elected officials, and hundreds of participants have gone on to positions in public agencies or nonprofit organizations that shape Colorado's future.

Community service provider funding

The Area Agency on Aging contracts with community-based organizations that serve older adults in the region. Funded programs help promote living independently at home, with meals and transportation services addressing the greatest needs among older adults and those living with disabilities. Other services include in-home care, chore and light home repair, and family caregiver support.

Denver Regional Data Consortium

DRCOG convenes member governments and partners around the development, maintenance and enhancement of data and geospatial initiatives within the region.

Educational benefits

Discounted tuition is available for elected officials and member government staff (and family members) at select higher-education institutions.

Information and assistance (303-480-6700)

The Area Agency on Aging offers information and assistance to older adults, individuals with disabilities and their caregivers.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act regional grants navigator program

Launched in 2023, the program is a partnership among the governor's office, the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs and DRCOG. Using funds made available in Senate Bill 22-215, DRCOG has contracted to deliver support to its communities and locations with underserved populations to identify opportunities for Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding for areas such as broadband, water (supply, quality and drought mitigation), transportation, resiliency and disaster preparedness, affordable and secure clean energy and energy efficiency.

John V. Christensen Memorial Award

Bestowed since 1973, DRCOG's John V. Christensen Memorial Award honors an individual who has made significant regional contributions. Nominations open at the November board meeting and DRCOG's Board of Directors hosts the annual awards celebration, frequently the last Wednesday in April.

Legislative advocacy

At the state and federal levels, DRCOG tracks and advocates on issues such as services for older adults, planning and transportation. DRCOG's legislative staff and contract lobbyists advocate with state and federal executive branch agencies regarding implementation of legislation and rule-making actions affecting the region.

Metro Vision Awards

DRCOG's Metro Vision Awards recognize regional collaboration and leadership, community innovation and cooperation across the public, private and nonprofit sectors. Metro Vision awards honor projects, programs and plans by member governments and their community partners.

Metro Vision Idea Exchange

Quarterly, DRCOG convenes member government staff and planning commissioners to discuss economic, sustainability, land use and transit-oriented development topics. American Institute of Certified Planners credits are frequently available for Metro Vision Idea Exchange participation.

Network of Care (drcog.networkofcare.org)

Through the Area Agency on Aging's information and assistance program, DRCOG provides Network of Care, a web directory of 650 local service providers for older adults, individuals with disabilities (including intellectual and developmental) and their families.

Ombudsmen and advocacy

The Ombudsman program works to ensure the rights of nursing home and assisted living facility residents are being respected and met, serving thousands of residents living in more than 400 facilities across the region. This federally mandated advocacy service is free for nursing home and assisted living facility residents in the Denver metro area.

DRCOG also houses the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly ombudsman. The role of the Program for All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly ombudsman is to act as an advocate for participants in programs outside of a long-term care facility situation, and assist participants in resolving issues related to care, health, safety or the participant's rights.

Regional data acquisition projects

DRCOG facilitates and manages cost-effective partnerships and projects that acquire foundational datasets including imagery, lidar, planimetric data and land cover in support of local and regional planning.

Regional Data Catalog (data.drcog.org)

DRCOG manages a repository of open data within the Regional Data Catalog. Datasets support communities in making informed, data-driven decisions in areas including mobility, land use and changing demographics.

Regional travel modeling

DRCOG's transportation-land use model and associated household survey results provide information for communities such as factors influencing where people live and how they get to work; current and future patterns for using personally

owned vehicles, public transit, walking or bicycling; where people come from who work in, visit or travel through the community; forecasts for future traffic volumes; the transportation needs of individuals with disabilities; and actors that contribute to successful urban centers and transit-oriented developments.

Small Communities, Hot Topics

DRCOG regularly convenes staff and elected officials of its smaller member governments. Participants discuss issues such as economic development, infrastructure, funding strategies, planning, transportation funding, intergovernmental collaboration and affordable housing from the perspective of cities, towns and counties with smaller populations, lower sales tax revenue or lower median household incomes than neighboring communities.

State Health Insurance Assistance Program

The State Health Insurance Assistance Program provides Medicare beneficiaries in Arapahoe, Douglas and Jefferson Counties with information, counseling, and enrollment assistance. Counselors provide free in-depth, one-on-one assistance with Medicare, supplemental insurance policies to beneficiaries, their families and caregivers. They also help eligible people obtain coverage through Medicaid, the Medicare Savings Program and the Low-Income Subsidy.

Click to watch informational
videos from former DRCOG
Board members!

THE
COMMITMENT

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42wVIRCw0x8>

Quarterly Managers' Forum

Once a quarter, city and county managers gather at DRCOG for a catered lunch, presentations by DRCOG staff and partners, and to identify and address shared challenges across communities.

Traffic signal timing and coordination

DRCOG funds traffic signal timing and coordination services and projects on regional arterials crossing jurisdictional boundaries to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. DRCOG staff provides technical advice to member governments and other regional stakeholders on traffic signal systems, communications technologies and advanced system features.

Traffic volume data and congestion information

DRCOG collects traffic counts on regional roadways in partnership with member governments and the Colorado Department of Transportation. Staff compile and analyze statistics about the region's major corridors.

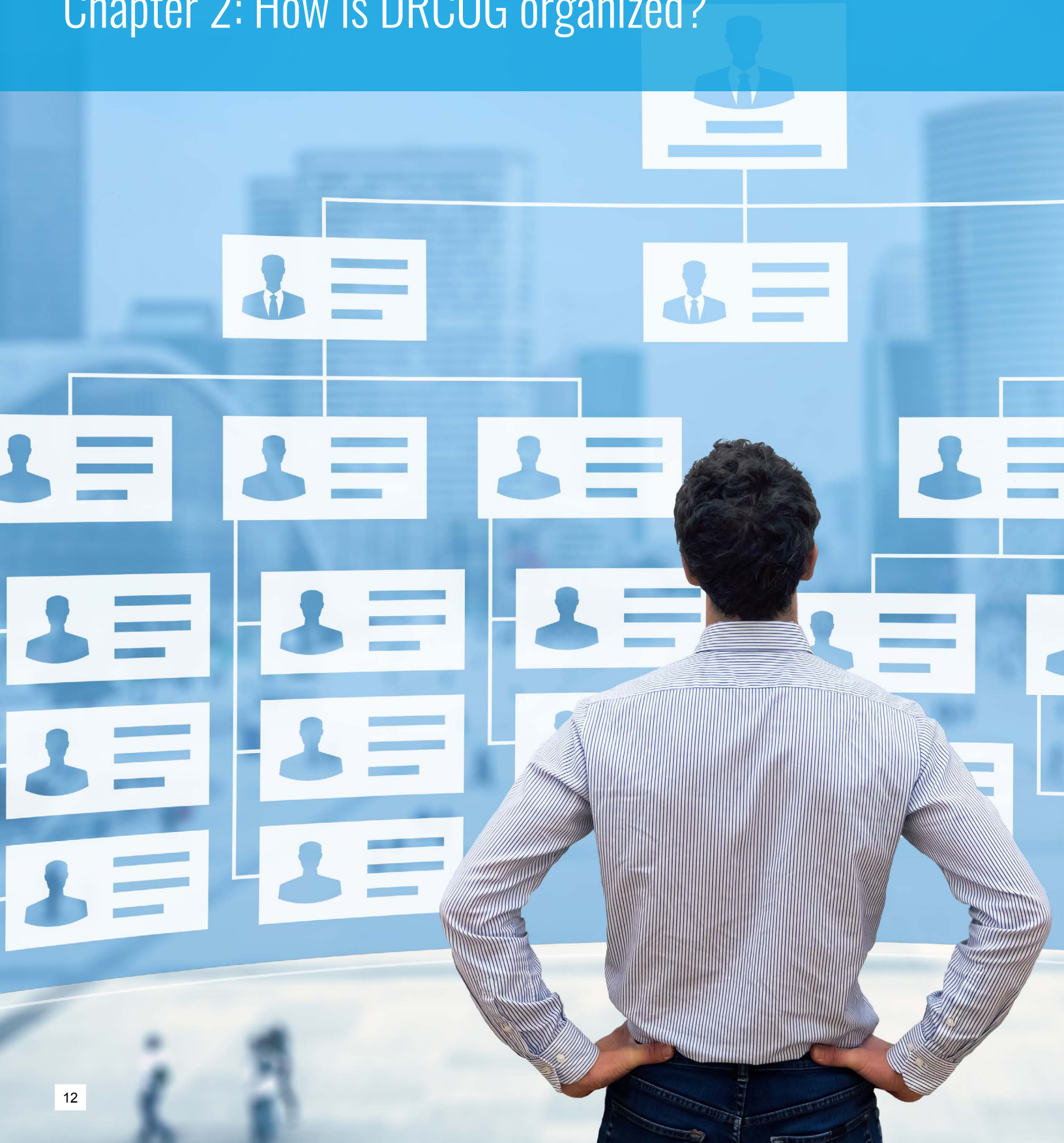
Veteran Directed Care

Veteran Directed Care supports eligible veterans of any age to safely remain in their communities and homes while receiving assistance with daily activities such as dressing, bathing and preparing and eating meals. The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs determines veteran eligibility and establishes a flexible budget for each veteran participating in the program. As a self-directed program, Veteran Directed Care provides veterans with the opportunity to determine what kind of support they need, when they need it, and who provides support and services for the veteran at home.

Way to Go

Way to Go is partnership among DRCOG and eight local transportation management associations to reduce traffic congestion, improve air quality and make life better for the region's residents. Way to Go helps commuters save money, lower their stress and save time. Through federal funding earmarked to preserve air quality and reduce congestion, Way to Go provides employers free assistance in offering commute options such as carpooling, vanpooling, using transit, biking and walking. Way to Go coordinates the region's annual Bike to Work Day event and helps employers leverage incentives like the Alternative Transportation Options Tax Credit (House Bill 22-1026) by offering the Colorado Clean Commute-approval program. Employers who invest in transportation benefits including purchasing transit passes for employees, offering Guaranteed Ride Home, providing bikes and more, can apply for a tax credit of up to 50% of their investment, or \$125,000 back.

Chapter 2: How is DRCOG organized?



Key staff



**Douglas W. Rex,
Executive Director**

drex@drcog.org

303-480-6701

**Responsibilities: DRCOG
Board and committees; state**

and federal legislative matters; policy analysis; Board member outreach; directing work of staff in areas of transportation planning, growth and development, older adult services and related activities

Doug leads a team of professionals dedicated to enhancing and protecting quality of life in the region. Doug works with the board of directors to establish guidelines, set policy and allocate funding.

He joined DRCOG in 2013 as director of its Transportation Planning and Operations division and moved into the executive director role in 2017. Under his leadership, the organization has redefined the process by which federal transportation funds are allocated, launched innovative programs and services in the aging division, and adopted Metro Vision, the region's plan for growth and development through the year 2040.

He works closely with planning partners and community leaders in the Denver metro area to help the region achieve its best possible future, emphasizing healthy, inclusive and livable communities, connected multimodal transportation, a vibrant regional economy, and a safe and resilient natural and built environment.

Doug has a master's degree in urban planning from the University of Kansas and more than 30 years' experience in transportation planning, policy and operations.



**Randy Arnold, Human
Resources Director**

arnold@drcog.org

303-480-6709

**Responsibilities: Human
resources, recruitment,**

benefits, training, performance planning and evaluation, facilities management

Randy is DRCOG's first division director for Human Resources. Since February 2019, Randy and the division have implemented procedures to streamline the recruiting and onboarding process and implemented a new classification and compensation program. Randy is currently directing the transition to a new human resources information system that will modernize and streamline human resources services to employees. The division is also evaluating new learning management software that will afford employees the opportunity to receive training on schedules compatible with their other job responsibilities.

Randy received an undergraduate degree in political science from Illinois State University and a master's in business administration with an emphasis in human resource management from Columbia Southern University. He holds accreditations from the Human Resources Certification Institute and the Society for Human Resource Management. He has worked in the field of human resources for 27 years, serving employers in the fields of long-term care, environmental services and higher education, most recently as the associate vice president for human resources and chief human resources officer at Naropa University in Boulder. Randy has made his home in Arvada with his partner, Gregg, for the last 23 years. They enjoy spending their free time traveling and playing tennis.

Key staff (continued)



**Jenny Dock,
Administration and
Finance Director**

jdock@drcog.org

303-480-6707

Responsibilities: Business

operations, finance/accounting, budgets, contracts, compliance, risk, information technologies

Jenny leads division staff in the daily business operations of the agency. She is responsible for maintaining the fiscal integrity of DRCOG as well as risk and compliance oversight. She also leads DRCOG's information technology and copy center teams. Jenny began her career at DRCOG in 2014 as the contracts and budget manager. In 2015, she was promoted to accounting services manager with responsibility for directing the agency budget and aiding in development of the annual strategic initiative plan. She also helped cultivate a fee-for-service business model and consulted on business development opportunities. Jenny brings more than 20 years of financial and business operations experience to DRCOG. Previously, Jenny managed teams as regional accounting manager and regional director for two large corporations. Her private sector experience equipped Jenny to bring fresh and innovative ideas to improving the daily business operations of DRCOG and directing the agency's financial course.



**Steve Erickson,
Communications and
Marketing Director**

serickson@drcog.org

303-480-6716

Responsibilities:

Communications, marketing, public relations, research, creative design and production, web and social media, the Way to Go partnership, Bike to Work Day, Go-Tober

Steve leads all communications and marketing initiatives at DRCOG, as well as the regional transportation demand management program, Way to Go. Steve is responsible for media relations, graphic design and production, DRCOG's websites and social media, and events. During his tenure, DRCOG rebranded, creating a new visual identity to better represent its innovative mission and vision, and redesigned and launched new user-friendly websites. In addition, the Way to Go brand was created to represent the groundbreaking travel demand management partnership, which promotes commuting choice regionwide. Way to Go is well-known for organizing Bike to Work Day, the second-largest event of its kind nationwide. He came to DRCOG in 2012 with 15 years of diverse leadership experience in marketing, advertising and public relations, with a strong emphasis in new media and web marketing, outreach and sales, media relations and promotions.

Key staff (continued)



**Sheila Lynch,
Regional Planning and
Development Director**

slynch@drcog.org

303-480-6839

Responsibilities:

Metro Vision plan implementation, evaluation and measurement; local government capacity building; partnership development to achieve shared outcomes; regional data development, analysis, distribution and visualization; land-use modeling and forecasting; internal and external technology solutions including web property development and interactive data tools

Sheila Lynch is the director of Regional Planning and Development for DRCOG. Throughout her career, Sheila has worked at the confluence of land use, transportation and health to promote thriving communities.

Prior to joining the DRCOG team, Sheila was the land use and built environment manager for the Tri-County Health Department, leading a team of diverse professionals who worked closely with local communities to incorporate health and environmental considerations in planning decisions and development projects. After obtaining her master's in city planning from the University of Pennsylvania, Sheila started her career as a case manager for a homeless youth program before leading community development initiatives at community-based nonprofits. After moving to Colorado, she worked in planning for the City of Lakewood, project-managing local land use entitlement processes and land development regulation updates. She brings to DRCOG more than 20 years of experience in promoting and applying planning innovations, securing funding to grow and sustain projects, pursuing continuous improvement of existing services and developing inspired and effective teams.

Sheila's passions include exploring Colorado's outdoor spaces with her husband and three kids. You can often find her near the soccer pitch as a player, coach, parent or fan.



**Ron Papsdorf,
Transportation Planning
and Operations Director**

rpapsdorf@drcog.org

303-480-6747

Responsibilities: Metropolitan

planning organization activities and programs; congestion mitigation (intelligent transportation systems, traffic operations, transportation demand management); Regional Transportation Plan; Transportation Improvement Program; and Transportation Advisory and Regional Transportation committees

Ron Papsdorf brings more than 25 years of transportation planning and government relations experience to his role at the Denver Regional Council of Governments. He has supervised, developed and implemented innovative multimodal transportation plans, projects and policies. He also has extensive experience with community and economic development and intergovernmental relations.

Before joining DRCOG, Papsdorf served as deputy director of the Colorado Department of Transportation Office of Policy and Government Relations. During his tenure at CDOT, Papsdorf managed the organization's federal affairs and local government relations for the Denver metro area and the West Slope. He also represented CDOT's High Performance Transportation Enterprise at the state legislature.

Ron served for nearly a decade as government relations director for the City of Gresham, Oregon. He spent seven years as Gresham's transportation planning manager, and an additional seven years as senior transportation planner for the City of Scottsdale, Arizona.

Key staff (continued)



**Florine (Flo) Raitano,
Director of Partnership
Development and
Innovation**

fraitano@drcog.org

303-480-6789

Responsibilities: Operational and service excellence for partners and stakeholders

Flo is actively involved in all agency programs and services, helping make recommendations on long-range activities; identifying opportunities to leverage cross-program strengths; developing stronger teams through feedback, coaching and mentoring; developing and maintaining collaborative external relationships; conducting targeted outreach to DRCOG's smaller, more rural communities; and developing strategies to ensure DRCOG's involvement in creating a smart region. She previously served as special projects manager where she was involved with the Sustainable Communities Initiative grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Metro Vision 2040 regional plan activities.

Twice elected mayor of Dillon, Flo has extensive local government and public-sector experience. She served as the first executive director of the Colorado Rural Development Council, a post she held for 10 years. In addition, she was executive director of the I-70 Coalition from 2006-2010, and was appointed by Gov. Bill Ritter in 2007 to the Technical Advisory Committee for the Blue Ribbon Panel on Transportation Finance and Implementation.



**Jayla Sanchez-Warren,
Area Agency on Aging
Director**

jswarren@drcog.org

303-480-6735

Responsibilities: Older adult information, issues and community services; Network of Care; Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program; Adult Resources for Care and Help; Advisory Committee on Aging

As director of the region's Area Agency on Aging, Jayla oversees grants via the federal Older Americans Act and state Older Coloradans Act to local providers for transportation, nutrition, home care and legal services for the region's 60-and-older population. To help people live and age successfully in their homes and communities, the AAA directly provides information and assistance, options counseling, ombudsman and care management services. Its programs also serve veterans, people with Medicare and older adult refugees.

Jayla has more than 30 years' experience in the field of aging, including work as a long-term care ombudsman advocating for the rights of residents in nursing homes and assisted living facilities. She co-founded DRCOG's Boomer Bond program, which helps local governments prepare for and respond to the needs of an aging population.

Under her leadership, DRCOG received a \$4.5 million funding opportunity to create the Denver Regional Accountable Health Community consortium, which bridges clinical care and community services to lower health care costs and improve health outcomes. Of the 30 recipients nationwide, the Area Agency on Aging is the only non-health care organization.

Jayla has successfully advocated to double state funding for area agencies on aging, significantly increasing services for the state's most vulnerable people.

She serves on the Colorado Aging Policy Advisory Committee, the governor's Strategic Action Planning Group on Aging and the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging's Mission Forward committee.

Key staff (continued)



Melinda Stevens, Executive Assistant

mstevens@drcog.org

303-480-6701

***Responsibilities: Board and
committee communication***

and administration

Melinda Stevens started working for DRCOG in August 2019 as the division assistant for Transportation Planning and Operations, where she gained an understanding of the organization's essential work to improve transportation for all Denver region residents. A year later — In August 2020 — was appointed to the role of executive assistant. Melinda considers it an honor and a privilege to be part of DRCOG and its member governments' efforts to improve the quality of life in the Denver metro area.

Melinda studied communications and criminal justice at the University of Northern Colorado. After college, she decided to focus on administrative work where she's spent 15 years serving in various capacities including general office management, customer service, clerical work and assisting lead employees. Melinda calls Aurora home with her husband, Sean, of more than a decade. They enjoy spending their free time traveling, cooking, singing and playing chess with their two children, Jude and Isla.



Ashley Summers, Director of Strategic Implementation

asummers@drcog.org

303-480-6746

***Strategy development;
project portfolio management; coordination among
divisions and teams, support and resources for project
managers***

Ashley serves in the Executive Office and is responsible for providing leadership in organizational change efforts. Ashley's work includes facilitating the development of a portfolio of work that aligns with DRCOG strategic objectives, enabling coordination among divisions and teams, and providing support and resources for project managers. Ashley came to DRCOG in 2011 and has 15 years of experience using project management and geospatial technologies to deliver value.

During her tenure at DRCOG, she has focused on partnership development, internal process improvement and expanding and enhancing products and services for member governments. Prior to serving as Strategic Implementation director, Ashley was DRCOG's information systems manager and responsible for the success of the Denver Regional Aerial Photography Program and its derivative products, such as planimetric, lidar and land use land cover data. Under her leadership, DRCOG also facilitated opt-in sharing of member government data with the State of Colorado Office of Information Technology, significantly reducing member government staff duplication of effort.

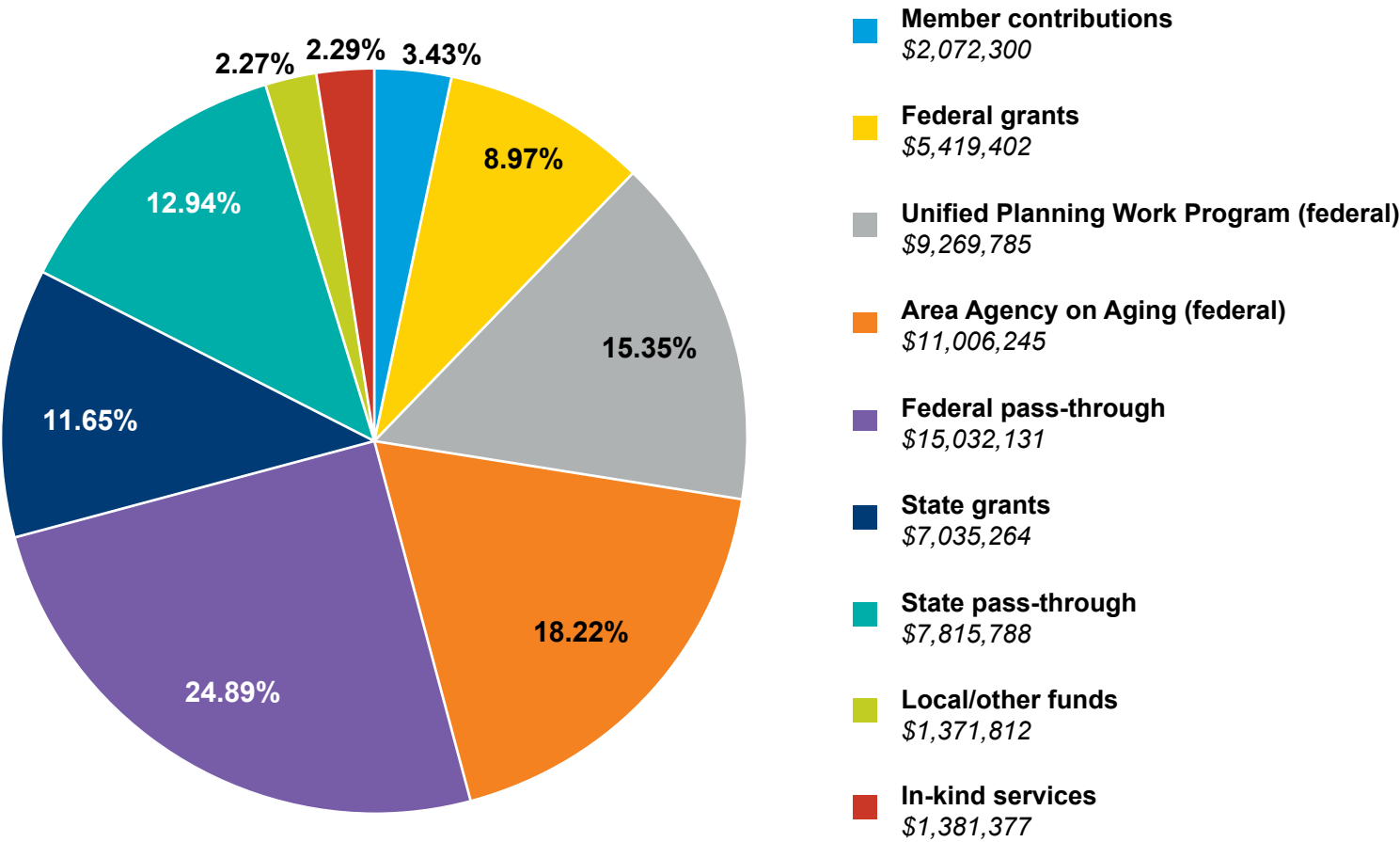
Revenue sources and budget

Because DRCOG is an organization that fulfills several roles in the Denver region, its funding sources are diverse. Central to DRCOG’s identity is its status as a voluntary membership organization of nine county and 48 municipal governments. Membership dues constitute less than 4% of the organization’s funding. As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization and area agency on aging, it receives federal funds in support of the services it provides under those auspices.

Although federal and state funding are important to DRCOG’s operations, its staff is exploring ways to diversify incoming funds.

DRCOG’s [current budget](#) is included as a separate document with this handbook.

2023-2024 funding

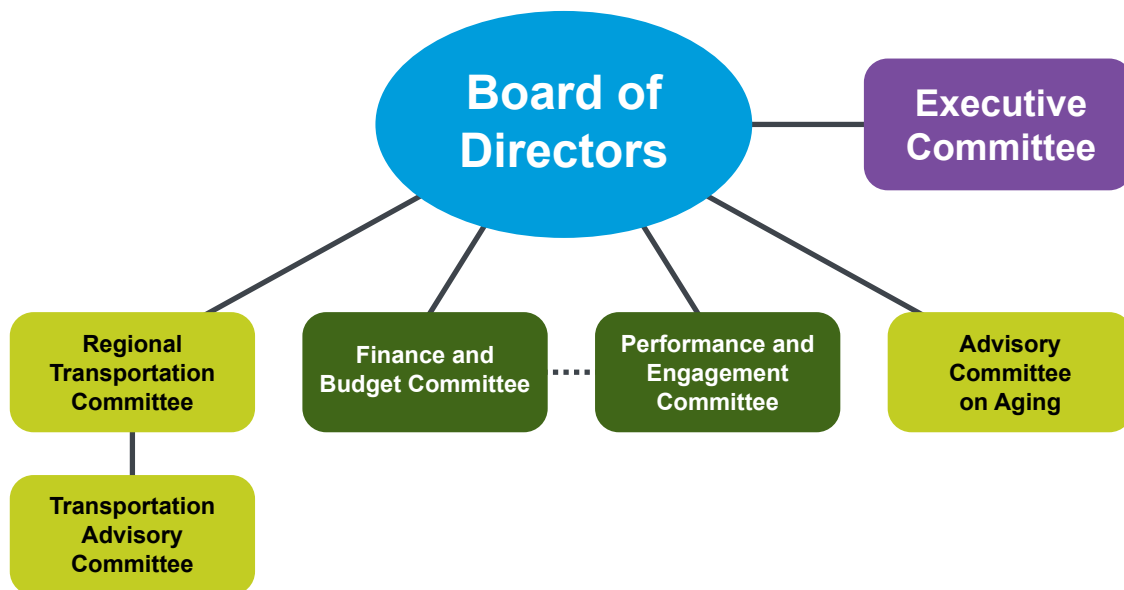


(table on next page)

2023-2024 funding (continued)

Source	Percent of total	Amount
Member contributions	3.43%	\$2,072,300
Federal grants	8.97%	\$5,419,402
Unified Planning Work Program (federal)	15.35%	\$9,269,785
Area Agency on Aging (federal)	18.22%	\$11,006,245
Federal pass-through	24.89%	\$15,032,131
State grants	11.65%	\$7,035,264
State pass-through	12.94%	\$7,815,788
Local/other funds	2.27%	\$1,371,812
In-kind services	2.29%	\$1,381,377
Projected total funding	100.00%	\$60,404,104

Committee structure



Meeting schedule

The meeting schedule and practices have been developed to:

- Limit how frequently Board directors and alternates must travel to DRCOG's offices.
- Encourage Board directors to conduct and participate in effective meetings.
- Ensure Board directors and alternates are prepared to make thoughtful and well-informed decisions by providing meeting agendas and materials ahead of time.

Unless otherwise noted, all meetings are at 1001 17th St., Denver, CO 80202.

Meetings are occasionally canceled, rescheduled or conducted virtually due to holidays or inclement weather. Check the calendar at drcog.org for changes.

For meeting agendas, presentations and other materials find the meeting at drcog.org > News and Events > Event Calendar.

Board work session

- 4 p.m.
- First Wednesday of the month.

Board of Directors

- 6:30 p.m.
- Third Wednesday of the month.

Executive Committee

- Twice per month, time varies.
- 3 p.m., first Wednesday of the month.
- 4 p.m., third Wednesday of the month.

Finance and Budget Committee

- 5:30 p.m.
- Third Wednesday of the month.

Performance and Engagement Committee

- 5 p.m.
- Third Wednesday of the month.

Click to watch informational videos from former DRCOG Board members!

THE
LEARNING
CURVE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=if131XJyc-g>

Chapter 3: What is the role of the Board of Directors?



Guiding principles

DRCOG Principles of Governance

1. Trust in trusteeship.
2. The Board speaks with one voice or not at all.
3. Board decisions are policy decisions.
4. The Board formulates policy by determining the broadest values before progressing to narrower ones.
5. The Board defines and delegates rather than reacts and ratifies.
6. The Board determines its own definition of governance.
7. The Board and Executive Director relationship.
8. Executive Director annual evaluation.

Key terms used in this document

Executive Policies – Executive Policies state conditions that must exist in order to achieve organizational goals and priorities. Executive Policies prevent the goals from being achieved through means that create liabilities for the organization.

Board – For purposes of this document, the term “Board” refers to the entire DRCOG Board of Directors and their alternates acting as such.

1. Trust in trusteeship.

Board directors act as trustees on behalf of their jurisdictions and the citizens of the region (which is called the “moral and legal ownership”). Because the Board is a subset of that group, the Board must do the following things:

- a) Clearly identify the constituents served by the Board directors and the whole of the organization.
- b) Make certain that strategic priorities are identified, relevant policies are set and that DRCOG staff achieves the mission and vision. This requires the Board to connect and communicate with its owners.

2. The Board speaks with one voice or not at all.

Although unanimity is not required, the Board’s group decision must be unambiguous, recorded in policy, and upheld by all members of the Board as if it had been a decision that each made individually. All Board directors have the latitude to communicate Board-approved information to the public. However, no director has the authority to make decisions or statements on the behalf of the whole Board unless specifically authorized to do so by the whole Board. The Board’s policies are the Board’s voice.

3. Board decisions are policy decisions.

The Board’s voice is expressed in its policies. Board decision-making consists of amendments or additions to existing policy. The Board establishes policies and approves projects for staff to administer or implement.

4. The Board formulates policy by determining the broadest values before progressing to narrower ones.

By “nesting” policies, Boards can delegate details and concentrate on why those details matter. For example, instead of deciding that staff members should receive a certain number of vacation days each year, the Board could decide that fair and competitive staff treatment is a Board value. Board directors can then leave it to the Executive Director to interpret their words, or they can go to the next level of specificity.

5. The Board defines and delegates rather than reacts and ratifies.

The Board’s purpose is to define the results the organization is to produce and to define the “acceptable boundaries” (Executive Policies) within which it can delegate the achievement of those results to the Executive Director. The Board must create a vision and directives for staff that outline the desired benefits, the constituents served, and the cost of delivering the desired outcomes. Advice and delegation are the Board’s principal tools for governance. The staff’s mandate is to execute that which has been delegated by the Board.

6. The Board determines its own definition of governance.

The Board's governance function is distinct from the staff's management function. The Board's purpose is not to oversee staff, but rather to define the future on behalf of the moral ownership and to ensure that this future is achieved in a legal, ethical and prudent manner (Executive Policies).

7. The Board and executive director relationship.

The executive director leads the organization to achieve the results established by the Board and by creating an environment of openness and candor to ensure the effective functioning of the organization. All activities and functions of the executive director shall be pursuant to and consistent with the executive director's contract of employment.

The executive director exemplifies the highest ethical standards and fosters a strong culture of ethical conduct, prudence and the professional development of staff.

8. Executive director annual evaluation.

The executive director serves at the pleasure of the Board. As stated in the Articles of Association, the executive director's performance is monitored and results reported annually to the full Board. The Board actively supports the continued development of the executive director.

Norms and code of conduct

Accepted by the DRCOG Board of Directors in 1999.

Respect

- All people are respected and all perspectives are valid.
- Be open to new ideas.
- Articulate local interests to the Board based on facts.
- Express all concerns and opinions on every issue during the Board meeting.
- Exemplify honesty and trust among members of Board and staff.
- Listen and contribute rather than react.
- Come to meetings prepared.

Unity

- Advocate with individual voices and for our local interests, but work to govern DRCOG with one voice.
- Cultivate a sense of group responsibility toward guiding DRCOG and resolving regional issues.
- Recognize that regional issues are as important as our local issues and we are committed to each other to work them out.
- Strive for and support the overall consensus actions adopted by the Board.
- Enforce within ourselves the discipline necessary to enable the effective governing of DRCOG.

Leadership

- Focus our energy and resources where DRCOG can be most effective.
- Focus on solutions that provide long-term benefit to the region.
- Focus on strategic and policy issues and not on administrative or programmatic items.
- Govern with excellence and direct and inspire the organization to achieve excellence.
- Mentor new members.
- Seek opportunities to serve as a positive voice with our external public by proudly representing ourselves as members of the DRCOG Board.
- Model effective governing for the rest of the metro area through our actions as the DRCOG Board.
- Communicate publicly all decisions and policies.

Board director responsibilities

As a regional decision-makers, the responsibilities Board directors and alternates are to:

- Regularly attend and participate in scheduled Board of Directors meetings.
- Review agenda and background materials, and prepare for discussion and decision-making at Board and committee meetings, as assigned.
- As soon as possible after appointment, become familiar with the Board handbook and supporting materials, and attend a Board orientation.
- Keep their jurisdiction's policymaking board apprised of DRCOG activities through regular briefings (some jurisdictions have a regularly scheduled agenda item for DRCOG briefings during city council, town board or county commission meetings).
- Become familiar with the DRCOG's services, programs and activities, and be available to represent the organization upon request.
- Maintain regular contact with jurisdiction staff and other elected officials on DRCOG's advisory and ad hoc committees to be prepared for policy recommendations that come before the Board for action.
- Represent DRCOG policies and issues with the governor and cabinet officials, members of the Colorado General Assembly and members of state rulemaking boards and commissions, as necessary.
- Attend DRCOG short courses and other workshops on transportation, aging services and Metro Vision.

In addition to their regular responsibilities:

- Board directors may be nominated to serve as officers. Officers assume leadership positions with the Board work session and Regional Transportation Committee. A director may also be nominated to serve as a member of the Performance and Engagement or Finance and Budget committee. (See "Board officer duties and responsibilities.")
- Board directors may be asked to serve on various DRCOG committees or represent DRCOG on regional committees

or with partner agencies. See "Appendix 2: Committee Policies, Guidelines and Descriptions.")

Board officer duties and responsibilities:

After officers are elected in February, they will determine when to hold the monthly Executive Committee meeting with the executive director during which upcoming Board agendas and other matters are discussed.

Chair:

- Preside over Board of Directors meetings.
- Serve as chair of the Regional Transportation Committee.
- Serve as a member of the Finance and Budget Committee (ex officio) or Performance and Engagement Committee.
- Appoint members to Board-created ad hoc committees.
- Make the 13 local government appointments to the Transportation Advisory Committee.
- Confirm appointments to the Advisory Committee on Aging.
- Attend twice-monthly Executive Committee meetings
- Present awards to the immediate past chair and the John V. Christensen Memorial Award recipient at DRCOG's annual awards celebration.
- Attend advocacy trips to Washington, D.C., depending on interest and availability of funds.

Vice chair:

- Presides over Board work sessions.
- Should the chair be unavailable, conduct Board of Directors meetings.
- Serve as vice chair of the Regional Transportation Committee.
- Serve as a member of the Finance and Budget Committee or Performance and Engagement Committee.
- Attend twice-monthly Executive Committee meetings.
- Represent the Board of Directors, as necessary.
- Present awards to Metro Vision Award winners at the annual awards celebration.
- Attend advocacy trips to Washington, D.C., depending on interest and availability of funds.

Secretary

- Serve as chair of the Performance and Engagement Committee.
- Should the chair and vice chair be unavailable, conduct Board of Directors meetings.
- Coordinate, organize and communicate the executive director's evaluation (May).
- Attend twice-monthly Executive Committee meetings.
- Represent the Board of Directors, as necessary.
- Present awards to Distinguished Service Award winners at the annual awards celebration.

Treasurer

- Serve as chair of the Finance and Budget Committee.
- Should the chair, vice chair and secretary be unavailable, conduct Board of Directors meetings.
- Attend twice-monthly Executive Committee meetings.
- Signatory for accounts payable.
- Represent the Board of Directors, as necessary.
- Present awards to Way to Go Champion award winners at the annual awards celebration.

Immediate past chair

- Should the chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer be unavailable, conduct Board of Directors meetings.
- Serve as a member of the Finance and Budget Committee or Performance and Engagement Committee.
- Serve as a member of the Nominating Committee.
- Attend twice-monthly Executive Committee meetings.
- Represent the Board of Directors, as necessary.
- Serve as alternate for the Regional Transportation Committee until new alternates are seated.
- Receive recognition at the annual awards celebration.

Board agendas

Any Board director may bring an item to the Board for consideration during the "Other matters by members" section of the agenda. A simple majority of the Board may determine whether to pursue the item. If Board directors become aware of an item between Board of Directors meetings that they

desire for the Board to address, they may request in writing to the Board chair and executive director that it be included on an upcoming agenda. The Executive Committee will, at its twice-monthly meetings, determine to which future Board meeting's agenda the item will be added.

Meeting materials

Agenda packets for the Board of Directors and Board work session meetings are emailed to directors and alternates, and posted to **drcog.org**, one week in advance of the meeting date. Agenda packets include memos and materials prepared by staff. Meeting agendas, presentations and other materials are available at **drcog.org > News and Events > Event Calendar**.

Board directors may request a mailed hard copy of the agenda packet from the executive assistant/board coordinator (see "Key Staff" in Chapter 2).

Board directors may distribute materials they consider relevant to matters at hand, whether at the Board of Directors meeting or electronically. If Board directors are seeking Board consideration or action, distribution of supporting materials at least 48 hours before the Board meeting is requested.

Jurisdiction staff and members of the public may distribute handouts at a Board of Directors meeting contingent on approval by the Board chair.

•

Directors and alternates are encouraged to contact the communications and marketing director (see "Key Staff" in Chapter 2) for assistance or lost passwords.

Direction to staff and staff communications

At its annual workshop (usually a two-day off-site retreat) the Board of Directors sets priorities for the year to come. DRCOG staff uses direction established at the Board workshop to provide guidance on strategic initiatives which inform the annual budget. The Board sets staff priorities throughout the year via action at Board meetings, and the executive director communicates such priorities to staff and ensures their completion. The executive director is accountable only to the Board as a body, and not to individual Board directors and alternates. As such, the relationship between the executive director and an individual

Board director, including the chair, is collegial rather than hierarchical.

Board directors may expect prompt and thorough responses to requests for information. Feel free to reach out to the executive director and key staff (see “Key Staff” in Chapter 2) with questions or concerns. If key staff determine that a response to a Board director’s request may require more than three hours of staff time, they may refer the request to the executive director for approval.

In the interest of full transparency, all staff will apprise the executive director of their communication with Board directors.

Working with the media

When DRCOG is contacted by local or national media about the organization, staff respond with accurate and timely information. When possible, staff will provide Board directors notice of anticipated major media coverage of DRCOG.

Board directors may be contacted by the media about their jurisdiction’s role with DRCOG. Directors are not expected to be able to respond in-depth about DRCOG policies and programs.

- Board directors may feel free to reach out to the executive director or communications and marketing director (see “Key Staff” in Chapter 2) in response to a current or anticipated media request.
- If Board directors prefer not to handle requests directly, staff will coordinate an appropriate response that may involve the Board chair or officers.
- To ensure a unified voice for DRCOG, Board directors are asked to contact the executive director or Board chair and officers before initiating media contacts regarding DRCOG policies or programs.

Robert's Rules and parliamentary procedures

(adapted from October 2010 and May 2017 presentations by Samuel J. Light of Light Kelly, P.C.)

General

The *Articles of Association* establish **some rules of order** and other **procedural rules**, including:

- Frequency of meetings.
- Adding matters to the agenda.
- Notice of Board meetings.
- Open meetings.
- Records.
- Quorum.
- Who may vote.
- How voting is conducted.

Robert's Rules of Order otherwise applies. If *Robert's* seems impractical or arcane, don't rule out amending the *Articles of Association* or *Committee Policy, Guidelines and Descriptions*.

The *Committee Policy, Guidelines and Descriptions* document addresses:

- Meeting agendas.
- Public comment.
- Meeting summaries.
- Record of all motions.

See **drcog.org** for the current versions of the *Articles of Association* and *Committee Policy, Guidelines and Descriptions*.

Articles of Association state: "[e]xcept as otherwise required by these *Articles*, the rules of order of the Council shall be in accordance with the latest edition of *Robert's Rules of Order*."

Robert's Rules of Order:

- Currently in **tenth edition** (published 2000).
- First published **February 1876** as the *Pocket Manual of Rules of Order for Deliberative Assemblies*.

- Robert was engineer and Army brigadier general Henry Martyn Robert.
- **704 pages!** The "In Brief" edition or some other guide is helpful.

Why use Robert's Rules?

- To run meetings in a **fair, efficient**, and **orderly** manner.
- To structure **complex discussions**.
- To maintain **order** and **fairness**.
- To protect the **rights of members**: those of the majority, the minority, individual members and absent members.
- To assist **documented record**.

Why use Robert's Rules for DRCOG?

- It's important that every DRCOG director **has a voice**.
- Discussions can get very **complex**, particularly around **funding**.
- **Order** and **courtesy** are paramount to maintain **respect**.

Common mistakes to avoid:

- Speaking when it's **not your turn**.
- **Moving backward**: when something has passed, it's in the past.
- **Not being as specific as possible** in what you say.
- **Losing respect** and allowing the debate to get out of control.
- **Prioritizing speed** over understanding.

Participation in meetings, the chair's role:

- Presiding officer over meetings of the Board.
- Recognizes members.
- Champions order and equity.
- Rules on votes, subject to call for roll.
- Rules on procedures, subject to appeal to body.
- Guides rather than drives discussion.
- Votes as a member representative.

Participation in meetings

Making a motion:

- The most basic rule of Robert's: **proceed by motion**.
- This helps frame and move the discussion along.
- No magic words; it's okay to say "I move that _____," or "I move for adoption of _____."

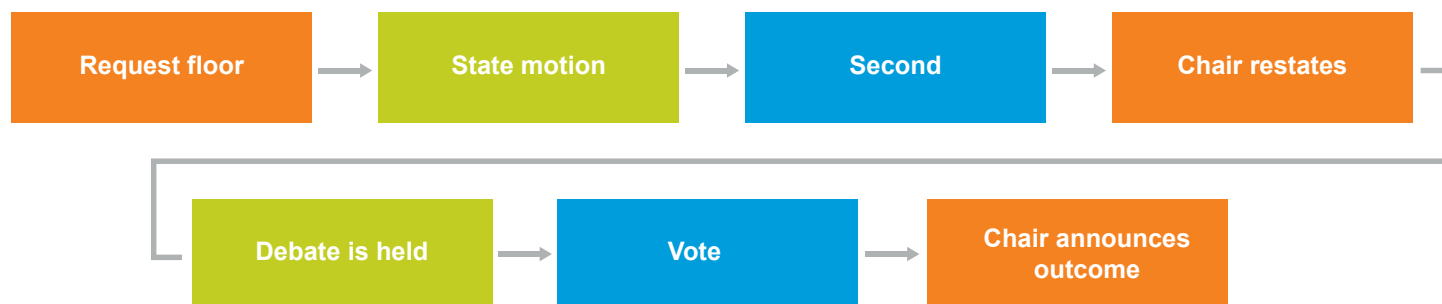
Seconding a motion:

- Another member may second without rising and obtaining the floor.
- A second merely implies that the seconder agrees the motion should come before the Board.

Debate:

- Members may subsequently debate (discuss) motions that are "debatable."

Main motion flowchart



Classes of motions

Main motion: the principal matter before the body.

Subsidiary motions: to do something with or to the main motion (such as amend).

Incidental motions: procedural matters related to the main motion that take precedence (such as point of order or suspend the rules).

Privileged motions: limited number that take precedence (recess, privilege, adjourn).

See *Robert's Rules*, sections 5-6.

Debatable vs. undebatable motions

Debatable motions require a group discussion, and members are required to submit a main motion for debate. However, many motions shouldn't require a group discussion and therefore are undebatable. Below are the types of motions for each.

Debatable	Undebatable
main motion	adjourn
postpone to definite time	recess
refer or commit	question of privilege
amend	lay on the table
postpone indefinitely	previous question
	limit or extend debate

Common motions

See Table III of *Robert's*:

- Reconsider.
- Amend or amend by substitution.
- Postpone indefinitely.
- Table.
- Point of information.
- Limit or extend debate.
- Recess.
- Call the question.
- Adjourn.

When the question is called, the person calling the question must be recognized by the chair.

To cut off debate requires unanimous consent or passage of a motion to end debate.

Motion to reconsider (Rule 37)

Key characteristics:

- Used for further consideration of a motion voted on **at the same meeting**.
- Must be made by someone who voted on prevailing side
- Anyone can second.
- Is debatable if the motion being reconsidered is debatable.
- If passed, places before Board the question to be reconsidered – back to same place you were just before the vote.

A motion to rescind, which accompanies a similar outcome, is allowed at a later meeting.

Motion to amend (Rule 12)

Basic forms of amendment:

- **Inserting or striking** words, sentences or paragraphs.
- **Rejection of a motion** to amend leaves the pending motion as originally worded.
- **Adoption of the motion to amend** does not adopt the motion amended, rather, it remains pending in its modified form.

Too much going on and the amendments are confusing? Amend by **substitution** (see below, under “Other types of motions”).

Keep it simple: Focus on the clarity of the motion.

It's okay to use devices to keep things moving, such as a friendly amendment (as long as the rights to object are honored).

The maker of any motion or amendment does not own the motion or amendment.

Other types of motions

Amendment by substitution:

- Replaces parts of, or an entire, motion; avoids rewriting one amendment at a time.
- Must be seconded, is debatable and amendable.
- Must still act on the substitute motion.

Substitute motions are not appropriate immediately after the original motion is introduced.

Postpone indefinitely:

- Is debatable.
- May come back.

Motion to lay on the table or take from the table:

- Temporarily delay taking action.
- Not debatable.

Point of information: No second required; member is recognized and is to get information before acting.

Motion to limit or extend debate:

Motion for a recess: Privileged motion, not debatable; length of recess should be stated.

Motion to adjourn: Also not debatable.

Voting

Methods: Voice, show of hands, roll call, general consent, ballot.

Roll call is not required, but may be requested and then is treated as a motion which requires a second and majority vote of the members present and voting.

When voting is complete, the **result should be announced** by the chair.

A “division” under *Robert’s* is a **call for verification** of a vote previously taken by voice vote or show of hands. Any member may call for a division, during which members stand to vote.

Abstentions and recusals:

- Recusal is sometimes characterized as **mandatory** while abstention is **discretionary**, however, the two overlap.
- There are procedural (*Robert’s*) and substantive (Colorado Revised Statutes) rules governing these areas.

Abstention votes are not counted.

In the case of abstention or recusal based on a conflict of interest, the best practice is to:

- Disclose.
- Recuse.
- Leave the room.
- Do not influence others.

Rules of Order in the *Articles of Association*

Frequency of meetings

“The Board shall meet at least quarterly and may hold special meetings at the call of the Chair, or by request of at least three member representatives.” Article IX.A

Adding matters to agenda

“Any member representative shall have the right to request of the officers the addition of any matter to the agenda of any Board meeting fifteen days in advance of the meeting, or by consent of a majority of the member representatives at the meeting.” Article IX.C

Notice of Board meetings

“Notice of meetings shall be given by email, fax or telephone, made at least two days in advance of the meeting, or by first class mail, post-marked at least five days in advance of the meeting.” Article IX.B

Open meetings

“All meetings of the Board shall be open to the public.” Article IX.E

Records

“The Board shall keep records of all its meetings. The meeting records shall be public records available for inspection by any interested person at reasonable times during regular office hours.” Article IX.D

Quorum

“A quorum for the transaction of Board business shall be one-third (1/3) of the member representatives.” Article IX.F.1

What rules are not addressed by the *Articles of Association*?

- Process for discussion/debate.
- Handling of motions, amendments, etc.
- Reconsideration.
- Voting procedures.
- Abstentions.
- If *Robert’s* answer to a problem seems impractical or arcane, **don’t rule out an Articles amendment** or other approach.

Personal conduct in meetings

The way you **conduct** yourself in relation to other directors, staff, and the assembly affects your **effectiveness**.

Avoid **incivility** and **divisiveness**.

Don’t be **baited to respond** inappropriately when something inflammatory is said.

- The commitment to avoid this runs every direction.
- De-escalate rather than escalate.

Use **courtesy**, **tact** and **diplomacy**.

Embrace and reflect the **leadership role**!

Colorado Open Meetings Law

(adapted from a February 2018 presentation by Samuel J. Light of Light Kelly, P.C.)

“It is declared to be a matter of statewide concern and the policy of this state that the formation of public policy is public business and may not be conducted in secret.”

- Colorado Open Meetings Law

Two key rules:

All meetings of a quorum or three or more members of a local public body (whichever is fewer) at which any public business is discussed or at which any formal action may be taken are public meetings open to public.

Any meeting at which the adoption of any proposed policy, position, resolution, rule, regulation or formal action occurs or at which a majority or quorum of the body is in attendance, or is expected to be in attendance, shall be held only after full and timely notice to the public.

Who is covered?

“Local public body” includes any board, committee, commission or other policymaking, rulemaking, advisory or formally constituted body of a political subdivision of the state.

Also includes any public or private entity that has been delegated any “governmental decision-making function.”

Definition is similar for “state public body.”

Who is covered at DRCOG?

- Board of Directors.
- Formally constituted committees.
- Executive Committee.
- Finance and Budget Committee.
- Performance and Engagement Committee.
- Nominating Committee.

What constitutes a meeting?

- A gathering convened in person, by telephone, electronically, or by other means of communication, of three or more members...

And, it's a gathering “at which any public business is discussed.”

- What is public business? The Colorado Supreme Court has stated: “[A] meeting must be part of the policy-making process to be subject to the requirements of the open meetings law. A meeting is part of the policy-making process if it concerns a matter related to the policy-making function of the ... public body holding or attending the meeting.” Board of County Commissioners v. Costilla County Conservancy District, 88 P.3d 1188 (Colorado 2004).
- Thus, a gathering of three or more that is connected to your policy-making responsibilities as DRCOG directors is subject to the open meetings law.

Meetings not subject to open meetings law:

Open meetings law expressly does not apply to:

- “Any chance meeting or social gathering at which discussion of public business is not the central purpose.”
- Or to “persons on the administrative staff.”
- Or to meetings of fewer than three (unless two is a quorum).
- Attendance at a meeting called by another entity, if not connected to DRCOG's policy-making functions (but the other entity may be subject to the open meetings law).

Chapter 4: What does DRCOG do?



Introduction

The Denver Regional Council of Governments establishes guidelines, sets policy and allocates funding in three key areas:

- Regional growth and development.
- Transportation and personal mobility.
- Aging services and our changing population.

Through our long history of working together, we've discovered that planning for housing, employment and recreation in our neighborhoods involves considering how we'll all get around, and accounting for all the region's residents and communities. A long view and a comprehensive approach to planning make DRCOG's achievements the envy of our peers.

The Board's participation in setting policy is most visible through development of regional plans under the umbrella of Metro Vision. Other documents included with this packet provide insight into DRCOG's major program areas. Related to the Board's policy-setting role, all board directors and alternates are encouraged to attend board orientation, short courses and the annual workshop.

It all starts with Metro Vision



Our region's communities have developed a shared, aspirational vision for enhancing our quality of life. In 2017, the board of directors unanimously adopted Metro Vision. The plan identifies our regional priorities, how we'd like the region to look in 2040, and encourages local communities to work together for a brighter future. Each community contributes to regional goals consistent with its own character and at its own pace. We'll measure how well we're doing, and stay flexible and dynamic as circumstances change.

Area Agency on Aging

Colorado is the sixth-youngest state in the U.S., but it is experiencing the fourth-fastest growth rate of people over 65. According to the Colorado Demography Office, the number of people between the ages of 75 to 84 is expected to increase by 68% by 2030 and the number of those 65 to 74 is expected to increase by 19% in the same period. The Denver region's older adults overwhelmingly (76%) want to stay in their communities through retirement, but a prosperous economy and related high demand for housing mean they are often priced out of their neighborhoods. It is important to understand what characteristics and services will help people age successfully. Affordable housing, transportation, nutrition and in-home services and quality long-term care options are essential. Walkable communities, affordable health services, employment and social events and activities are only some of the services needed to help people thrive in their older years.

Since 1974, DRCOG's Area Agency on Aging has developed programs, funded services and planned for current and future needs. As of 2022, the Area Agency on Aging has 13 internal programs and funds 40 community organizations that provide over 50 different types of services to support older adults. The organization continues to expand services and partnerships to meet the growing needs in the region and includes more assisted transportation services, medical nutrition services, home modifications, elder refugee case management and additional service to Spanish-speaking elders.

In addition, the organization's ombudsman program protects and supports residents living in nursing homes, assisted living and people who are part of the Program for All-Inclusive Care. The Area Agency on Aging partners with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to operate the Veterans Directed Care

Program and contracts with the Colorado Department of Health Care Policy and Financing to provide transition services. As a founding member of Lifelong Colorado, the Area Agency on Aging works with the state government, local governments and organizations to evaluate the age-friendliness of their communities and to make neighborhoods more livable for older adults.

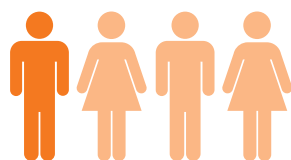
Under an organizational vision that promotes "vibrant, connected, lifelong communities with a broad spectrum of housing, transportation and employment, complemented by world-class natural and built environments," DRCOG champions choice in aging. Guided by a vision for the future in which every older adult chooses when, if and how they transition from the community into a care facility, DRCOG coordinates existing resources and partnerships to facilitate aging with choice for as many older people as possible.

Through the Finance and Budget Committee, **board directors** review and approve contracts for services (above a prescribed threshold) delivered under the Older Americans Act and Older Coloradans Act. Directors set policy and inform DRCOG's position on bills related to older adults and people with disabilities before the General Assembly during monthly Board of Directors meetings during the legislative session.

Board officers meet with Colorado's congressional delegation about issues related to the Older Americans Act and allocation of federal funding to states with fast-growing or large populations of older adults.

Directors and **alternates** are eligible for appointment to the Advisory Committee on Aging.

BY 2050



one in four

area residents will be **60 or older**



83%

increase among **people 60 or older**



Regional Planning and Development

Metro Vision

The counties and municipalities of the Denver region have been advancing a shared aspirational vision of the future of the metro area for more than 60 years. Working together to make life better for our communities and residents, that vision has taken various forms over the years — most recently as a regional plan known as Metro Vision.

The DRCOG Board of Directors adopted the first Metro Vision plan (Metro Vision 2020) in 1997 and has continued the dialogue about how best to achieve the plan's evolving vision ever since.

Metro Vision does not replace the vision of any individual community; rather, it is a framework for addressing common issues that reach beyond jurisdictional boundaries. It anticipates that individual communities will contribute to Metro Vision outcomes and objectives in different ways and at different speeds for collective impact.

Learn more about Metro Vision at metrovision.drcog.org.

Economics, data and analysis

DRCOG produces a wide array of data, information, maps and analyses in support of regional planning. Data and maps, addressing topics from transportation and land use to demographics and employment, are available for download from the [Regional Data Catalog](#). To understand and evaluate the need for transportation improvements, DRCOG forecasts future travel demand between different parts of the region. The first step in this process is to forecast the future distribution of households and employment.

DRCOG also facilitates and manages cost-effective partnerships and projects that acquire foundational data sets including [imagery](#), [lidar](#), [planimetric data](#) and [land cover](#) in support of local and regional planning.

Collaboration and capacity building

One of DRCOG's primary roles in the region is convening local governments and partners and facilitating conversations that advance Metro Vision outcomes. The region's cities, counties and towns regularly come together through DRCOG in recognition that their decisions — when aggregated across communities and over multiple decades — have long-lasting, regional effects.

Through workshops and events, DRCOG curates content around complex issues facing the region today and supports local governments in collaborating on solutions. Recent topics have included affordable and attainable housing, inclusive economic growth, climate resilience and multi-modal mobility.

DRCOG can also assist communities to further objectives aligned with the regional vision. These efforts include sharing tools, case studies and other reference material. These resources are intended to build capacity within local governments to contribute to Metro Vision while serving their community's unique needs. For example, local governments can take steps to make their communities more age-friendly by using DRCOG's Boomer Bond Assessment.

DRCOG also performs scenario analysis to identify how various strategies may help meet the region's vision, goals and objectives. These include evaluating factors like future zoning and land use policy and its potential effects on growth, transportation and air quality.

As regional conversations continue at DRCOG, directors are encouraged to:

- Seek guidance from their local planning staff.
- Review regional data products and analysis for local use.

Board directors set the direction for, adopt and update Metro Vision, the region's 20-plus-year plan for growth and development. Board directors also inform DRCOG's position on bills related to growth and development before the General Assembly during monthly Board of Directors meetings during the legislative session.

Directors, alternates and town, city and county staff are invited to attend Metro Vision Idea Exchanges, at which participants share their communities' experiences with growth and development. Watch for meetings and announcements of upcoming topics in the executive director's monthly "On Board" newsletter.



Transportation Planning and Operations

DRCOG has served as the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the Denver region since 1977, acting as a forum for a collaborative transportation planning process. DRCOG has been involved in transportation planning even longer – the organization’s first official action after its 1955 founding endorsed the construction of Interstate 70 through the metro area. DRCOG, the Regional Transportation District and the Colorado Department of Transportation are the primary partners in transportation planning in the Denver region.

DRCOG leads the continuing, cooperative and comprehensive metropolitan transportation planning process for all modes of transportation in the region, working in partnership with CDOT, RTD and the Regional Air Quality Council. DRCOG develops the long-term vision for the region presented in the Metro Vision [Regional Transportation Plan](#) and allocates federal transportation funds to near-term priorities through the [Transportation Improvement Program](#). [Framework for Transportation Planning in the Denver Region](#) provides details on how the process works.

DRCOG’s transportation planning process supports Metro Vision while complying with state and federal laws, policies, rules and regulations.

Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program describes all metropolitan transportation planning activities for the coming two years in the region. The Unified Planning Work Program provides the basis for the scope of work for the federal planning funds that DRCOG receives. Activities conducted

by DRCOG’s partner agencies with federal planning funds, as well as locally funded transportation planning initiatives in the region are also included in the Unified Planning Work Program. Federal agencies review and approve the Unified Planning Work Program to ensure that the proposed work activities are consistent with federal requirements and eligible for federal funds.

Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan

DRCOG develops the [Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan](#) which provides the framework for investments in specific projects and programs to address priorities for the region’s future multimodal transportation system. The RTP is integrated with and helps implement DRCOG’s [Metro Vision](#) plan. The Fiscally Constrained Regional Transportation Plan defines transportation facilities, programs and services to be provided over the term of the plan with reasonably expected revenues.

Transportation funding and the Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program identifies all federally funded transportation projects, as well as all other regionally significant projects regardless of funding source, to be completed in the Denver region during a four-year period. Consistent with DRCOG’s commitment to collaboration, local governments decide on a process and criteria for including projects in the TIP and awarding DRCOG-controlled federal funds, which allows the region to set and agree upon its transportation priorities. The TIP is fiscally constrained and conforms with the requirements of the federal Clean Air Act.

The TIP Policy, establishes the process for developing and maintaining the TIP under the current framework. The DRCOG Board allocates funds via a dual model (regional and subregional) process. A subregional share of 80% is

proportionally allocated for eligible projects recommended to the Board by eight county-based forums. All project recommendations by the county-based forums come to the Board for final approval before inclusion in the TIP.

Congestion Management Process

The congestion management process provides for effective management of the performance of transportation facilities. In the transportation management area, federal funds cannot be programmed for any highway project that would significantly increase capacity for single-occupant vehicles unless the project is based on a congestion management process. DRCOG staff identify and evaluate congestion management strategies at the regional level as part of the overall regional transportation planning process. At the project level, the sponsor conducts the needed congestion management analysis.

Traffic operations

Since 1989, DRCOG has been reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality through its Traffic Operations Program. Through the program, DRCOG, the Colorado Department of Transportation and local governments coordinate traffic signals on major roadways in the region. As one of the first metropolitan planning organizations to conduct this type of program, DRCOG remains the leader among very few throughout the country involved in traffic signalization.

Decision-making process

The DRCOG Board of Directors is the policy body for the metropolitan planning organization. A metropolitan planning agreement forms and directs the planning partnership among DRCOG, the Regional Transportation District and the Colorado Department of Transportation. The agreement organizes the transportation planning process through the establishment of the Regional Transportation Committee and the Transportation Advisory Committee. Both the Regional Transportation Committee and DRCOG Board must take favorable action before regional transportation planning policies and products are considered adopted.

See [Framework for Transportation Planning in the Denver Region](#) for more information.

Constructive public involvement is essential. Decisions are made only after the public is made aware of proposed actions and has had the opportunity to comment.

Board directors determine the process and criteria, recommend projects and award DRCOG-controlled federal funds for the TIP. Board directors inform DRCOG's position on transportation bills before the General Assembly during monthly Board of Directors meetings during the legislative session.

Board officers often meet with Colorado's congressional delegation about transportation issues and allocation of federal funding for transportation.

Directors are eligible for appointment to the Regional Transportation Committee.

Appendix 1: Articles of Association



ARTICLES OF ASSOCIATION
OF
THE DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

As Amended February 17, 2021

ARTICLE I. Organization.

These Articles of Association, hereinafter referred to as the “Articles,” shall constitute the bylaws of the Denver Regional Council of Governments and shall regulate and govern the affairs of the nonprofit corporation organized pursuant to the Colorado revised Nonprofit Corporation Act, Articles 121-137 of Title 7, C.R.S., as amended, as a regional planning commission pursuant to Section 30-28-105, C.R.S., as amended, and an association of political subdivisions subject to Section 29-1-401 et seq., C.R.S., as amended, with the authority granted pursuant to intergovernmental contracting statutes at Section 29-1-201 et seq., C.R.S., as amended, known as the Denver Regional Council of Governments, hereinafter referred to as the “Council.”

ARTICLE II. Purpose of the Council.

The Council shall promote regional cooperation and coordination among local governments and between levels of governments, and shall perform regional activities, services and functions for the Region as authorized by statute. The Council shall serve as a forum where local officials work together to address the Region’s challenges. The Council shall serve as an advisory coordinating agency for investigations and studies for improvement of government and services in the Region, shall disseminate information regarding comprehensive plans and proposals for the improvement of the Region, and shall promote general public support for such plans and programs as the Council may endorse.

ARTICLE III. Definitions.

- A. “Chair” means the incumbent holding the position of president of the Council.
“Vice Chair” means the incumbent holding the position as vice president of the Council.
- B. “Council” means the nonprofit corporation of the Denver Regional Council of Governments, with the duties and responsibilities specified by statute, which are to be carried out by the Board of Directors in accordance with the statutory authority.
- C. “Board of Directors” hereinafter referred to as “Board,” means the body of designated individual member representatives of municipalities, counties and city and counties maintaining membership in the Council.
- D. “Member” means a participating county, municipality, or city and county that meets the requirements for membership in the Council as specified in Article VI.

- 1 E. "Member Representative" means the local elected official, or local elected
2 official alternate, designated in writing by the chief elected official or the
3 governing body of a member county, municipality, or city and county to
4 represent that member on the Board as a voting representative.
5
6 F. "Plan" means a regional plan or a comprehensive master plan for the Region as
7 defined by statute, which Plan is currently denoted as Metro Vision.
8
9 G. "Region" means the geographic area composed of the City & County of Denver,
10 City & County of Broomfield, and the counties of Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder,
11 Clear Creek, Douglas, Gilpin and Jefferson, and portions of Weld County, and
12 other counties as may be necessary in the State of Colorado.
13

14 ARTICLE IV. Declaration of Policy.
15

- 16 A. The Board finds and declares that the need for a Council of Governments is
17 based on the recognition that, wherever people live in a metropolitan area, they
18 form a single community and are bound together physically, economically and
19 socially. It is the policy of this Council of Governments, through its members,
20 staff, and programs, to provide local public officials with the means of reacting
21 more effectively to the local and regional challenges of this regional community.
22
23 B. The Board finds and declares that the need for a Council of Governments is
24 based on the recognition that:
25
26 1. Plans and decisions made by each local government with respect to land
27 use, circulation patterns, capital improvements, and so forth, affect the
28 welfare of neighboring jurisdictions and therefore should be coordinated
29 on a voluntary basis; and
30
31 2. It is imperative for the regional planning process to be directly related to
32 the elected local government decision and policymakers, the locally
33 elected public officials.
34
35 C. The Board further finds and declares that the people within the Region have a
36 fundamental interest in the orderly development of the Region.
37
38 D. The Board further finds and declares:
39
40 1. That the members have a positive interest in the preparation and
41 maintenance of a Plan for the benefit of the Region and to serve as a
42 guide to the political subdivisions and other entities within the Region;
43
44 2. That the continuing growth of the Region presents challenges that are
45 not confined to the boundaries of any single governmental jurisdiction;
46
47 3. That the Region, by reason of its numerous governmental jurisdictions,
48 presents special challenges of development that can be dealt with best
49 by a regional council of governments that acts as an association of its

members and as a regional planning commission created under Section 30-28-105, C.R.S., as amended;

4. That the Region is well adapted to unified and coordinated consideration, and;
5. That in order to assure, insofar as possible, the orderly and harmonious development of the Region, and to provide for the needs of future generations, it is necessary for the people of the Region to perform regional activities and functions as defined by statute, and for the Council to serve as an advisory coordinating agency to harmonize the activities of federal, state, county and municipal agencies and special purpose governments/districts concerned with the Region, and to render assistance and service and create public interest and participation for the benefit of the Region.

ARTICLE V. Functions.

- A. The Council shall promote regional coordination and cooperation through activities designed to:
 1. Strengthen local governments and their individual capacities to deal with local challenges;
 2. Serve as a forum to identify, study, and resolve areawide challenges;
 3. Develop and formalize regional policies involving areawide challenges;
 4. Promote intergovernmental cooperation through such activities as reciprocal furnishing of services, mutual aid, and parallel action as a means to resolve local as well as regional challenges;
 5. Provide the organizational framework to foster effective communication and coordination among governmental bodies in the provision of functions, services, and facilities serving the Region's local governments or their residents;
 6. Serve as a vehicle for the collection and exchange of information of areawide interest;
 7. Develop regional or master plans for the Region;
 8. Serve as spokesperson for local governments on matters of regional and mutual concern;
 9. Encourage action and implementation of regional plans and policies by local, state and federal agencies;

10. Provide, if requested, mediation in resolving conflicts between members and between members and other parties; and
11. Provide technical and general assistance to members within its staff and financial capabilities. These services are inclusive of, but not limited to, assistance designed to:
 - a. Identify issues and needs that are regional and beyond the realistic scope of any one local government;
 - b. Compile and prepare, through staff and from members, necessary information concerning the issues and needs for Board discussion and decision;
 - c. Debate and concur in a cooperative and coordinated regional action to meet the need or issue;
 - d. Implement the details of the cooperative action among affected member governments, using such devices as intergovernmental contracts and agreements, parallel ordinances or codes, joint performance of services, transfers or consolidations of functions, or special operating agencies;
 - e. And, in general –
 - (1) arrange contracts among members on an intergovernmental basis;
 - (2) publish reports and current information of regional interest;
 - (3) provide advice and assistance on physical land use planning and other programs;
 - (4) sponsor regional training programs;
 - (5) sponsor, support, or oppose legislation on behalf of the Region and its members.

B. The Council shall maintain a regional planning program and process. In conducting such activities and functions, the Council shall:

1. Formulate goals and establish policies to guide regional planning;
2. Be responsible for developing, approving, and implementing a regional Plan through member governments;
3. Be the approving and contracting agent for all federal and state regional planning grants, as required;

4. Prepare and adopt a Plan and recommend policy for the development of the Region and the provision of services in the region. The Plan shall be based on careful and comprehensive surveys and studies of existing conditions and probable future growth and service needs of the Region. The Plan shall be made with the general purpose of guiding coordinated and harmonious development that, considering present and future needs and resources, will best promote the health, safety, and general welfare of the inhabitants of the Region.
5. Perform all planning functions incident to the exercise of the powers and duties set forth in Article XII; all plans adopted by the Board in connection therewith shall constitute portions of the Plan.
6. Exercise such other planning powers and functions as are authorized by statutes and the members.

ARTICLE VI. Membership.

- A. Members. Each municipality, county, and city and county in the Region shall be eligible to be a member of the Denver Regional Council of Governments. Membership shall be contingent upon the adoption of these Articles of Association by the governing body of any such municipality, county, or city and county, and upon the payment of an annual assessment as agreed upon by the Board.
- B. Member Assessment. Each member's annual assessment is determined by the Board when adopting the annual budget.
 1. Assessments will be billed as follows, and are due within ninety days of billing date:
 - a. Minimum assessment – billed annually.
 - b. 10% or more of the Council's total assessment – billed quarterly.
 - c. All others – billed semi-annually.
 2. Failure by any member to remit payment of an assessment within ninety days following billing date shall be grounds for termination of membership and such member shall be denied voting privileges and any other rights and privileges granted to members.
 - a. Not less than fifteen days prior to the termination of membership, written notice shall be sent by registered mail informing the member of the pending termination and loss of privileges and requesting payment by a date certain to avoid termination.
 - b. A member whose membership has been terminated pursuant to Section 2 shall be reinstated at any time during the calendar year

1 in which their membership was terminated, by payment of all
2 assessments then currently due and owing.

- 3
- 4 C. Member Representatives. Except as provided herein, only a local elected
5 official of a member may be designated a member representative, and each
6 member representative may have a designated elected alternate, as follows:
7
- 8 1. One county commissioner and an alternate commissioner from each
9 county, designated by the board of county commissioners.
- 10
- 11 2. The mayor or one member of the governing body, and a similarly elected
12 alternate, of each municipality and of the City and County of Broomfield,
13 designated by said mayor or governing body, and
14
- 15 3. Two representatives of Denver:
16
- 17 a. The mayor or, as the mayor's designee, any officer, elected or
18 appointed, of the City & County of Denver and an alternate
19 similarly designated, and
20
- 21 b. One city council member of the City and County of Denver and an
22 alternate council member designated by said council or its
23 president.
24
- 25 D. Term of Office. Member representatives shall serve until replaced, but shall
26 hold such office and have Board privileges only during their terms as local
27 elected officials, or an appointed official, if applicable, in the case of the
28 alternate for the mayor of the City and County of Denver.
29
- 30 E. Non-voting Membership. The State of Colorado shall have three (3) non-voting
31 members on the Board, appointed by the Governor, one of which shall be a
32 representative of the Colorado Department of Transportation (either the
33 Executive Director or a member of senior management). The Regional
34 Transportation District shall have one non-voting member on the Board, to be
35 appointed by the General Manager of the organization. The General Manager
36 may appoint themselves to the Board, or they may designate a member of their
37 senior staff.
38
- 39 F. Vacancies. Any vacancy shall be filled in the same manner as is provided for
40 the original designation.
41
- 42 G. Receipt of Documents. Each member representative shall receive notice and
43 minutes of meetings, a copy of each report and any other information or
44 material issued by the Council.
45
- 46 H. Other Membership Categories. The Council may establish other categories of
47 membership appropriate to carrying out the provisions of this Article.
48
49

ARTICLE VII. Board Officers.

A. Number and Title of Board Officers. The officers shall be Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, and Immediate Past Chair, all of whom shall be member representatives, and the Executive Director.

B. Duties of Board Officers.

1. Chair. The Chair shall preside at all meetings of the Board and shall be the chief officer of the Council in all matters acting as president. The Chair shall serve as presiding officer of the Board of Directors meetings and shall serve as a member of either the Finance & Budget Committee or the Performance & Engagement Committee.
2. Vice Chair. The Vice Chair shall exercise the functions of the Chair in the Chair's absence or incapacity acting in the capacity as vice president. The Vice Chair shall serve as the presiding officer of all Board work sessions and shall serve as a member of either the Finance & Budget Committee or the Performance & Engagement Committee. If there is no Immediate Past Chair, the Vice Chair shall serve on the Nominating Committee.
3. Secretary. The Secretary shall exercise the functions of the Vice Chair in the absence or incapacity of the Vice Chair and shall perform such other duties as may be consistent with this office or as may be required by the Chair. The Secretary shall serve as the chair of the Performance & Engagement Committee.
4. Treasurer. The Treasurer shall exercise the functions of the Secretary in the absence or incapacity of the Secretary and shall perform such other duties as may be consistent with this office or as may be required by the Chair. The Treasurer shall serve as the chair of the Finance & Budget Committee.
5. Immediate Past Chair. The Immediate Past Chair, who shall be the most recent past chair serving on the Board, shall exercise the duties of the Chair in the absence or incapacity of the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Immediate Past Chair shall serve on the Nominating Committee.
6. Executive Director. The Executive Director shall exercise the functions of the Chief Administrative Officer of the Council and shall be empowered to execute official instruments of the Council as authorized by the Finance & Budget Committee or Board.

C. Election of Board Officers.

1. Officer and Terms. The Vice Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected by the Board at the February meeting of each year. Except as

provided in Article VII D.4, the incumbent holding the position of Vice Chair shall automatically assume the position of Chair. However, if the Vice Chair is unable to assume the position of Chair, the Board shall elect a Chair at the applicable February meeting. A notice of election of officers shall appear on the agenda. Each officer shall serve a one-year term, or until the next election of officers and his/her successor is elected, so long as the jurisdiction he/she represents is a member of the Council, and he/she remains that member's official member representative on the Board.

2. Nominating Committee for Board Officers.

- a. At the January meeting of each year, the Nominating Committee shall present to the Board nominations for Board officers to be elected at the February meeting.
- b. Board officer nominations may be made from the floor, provided that the consent of each nominee is obtained in advance.

D. Board Officer Vacancies. If the Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary or Treasurer resigns or ceases to be a member representative, a vacancy shall exist and shall be filled for the remainder of the term by:

1. Appointment by a majority of the remaining Board officers of a member representative to fill the vacancy; or
2. Referral of the vacancy to the Nominating Committee to present to the Board at least one nominee to fill the vacancy if called for by a majority of the remaining Board officers. No later than the meeting held on the month following the month in which the Nominating Committee was referred the vacancy, the Nominating Committee shall present to the Board at least one nominee for an officer to be elected by the Board at that meeting to fill such vacancy.
3. Nominations may be made from the floor, provided that the consent of each nominee is obtained in advance.
4. In the event the remaining Board officers appoint the incumbent Vice Chair to fill a vacancy in the position of Chair pursuant to D.1 of this Article VII, the Vice Chair so appointed shall serve the remainder of the term for such vacancy and shall thereafter automatically retain the position of Chair for an additional one-year term, subject to other requirements for holding such position.

E. Executive Committee. The incumbent Board officers shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Council. The Executive Committee shall be the primary executive leadership of the Council, providing leadership to the Board and guidance to the Executive Director. The Executive Committee has no policy making authority. The Executive Committee helps set Board meeting agendas;

1 provides guidance on resolution of conflicts; provides process guidance,
2 receives updates from and assures the progress of committees of the Council,
3 and takes action on complaints of violations of the rules of conduct for member
4 representatives as adopted by the Board from time to time.
5

6 ARTICLE VIII. Finance & Budget Committee.
7

- 8 A. Membership on the Finance & Budget Committee. The administrative
9 business of the Council concerning finances, contracts and related
10 matters shall be managed by a Finance & Budget Committee. The
11 Committee membership shall not exceed more than one-quarter of the
12 total membership of the Board. Members of the Finance & Budget
13 Committee shall be appointed by the Board upon recommendation of the
14 Nominating Committee.
15
- 16 B. Finance & Budget Committee Officers. The incumbent Treasurer of the
17 Council shall serve as chair of the Finance & Budget Committee. The
18 vice chair of the Committee shall be elected by the Committee at its first
19 meeting following election of Board officers and to serve until the next
20 election of officers.
21
- 22 C. Powers and Duties. The following powers and duties are vested in the
23 Finance & Budget Committee:
24
- 25 1. To review contracts, grants and expenditures and authorize the
26 expenditure of funds and the entering into contracts, within the
27 parameters of the Council budget.
28
 - 29 2. To execute official instruments of the Council.
30
 - 31 3. To review and recommend to the Board the budget as provided in
32 Article XV.
33
 - 34 4. To review the Council's audited financial statements with the
35 Council's auditor, and to undertake, oversee and/or review other
36 organization audits.
37
 - 38 5. To receive and review other financial reports and provide regular
39 updates to the Board.
40
 - 41 6. To compensate member representatives for expenses incurred in
42 attending to the proper business of the Council.
43
 - 44 7. To exercise such other powers, duties, and functions as may be
45 authorized by the Board.
46
- 47 D. Meetings of the Finance & Budget Committee. The Finance & Budget
48 Committee shall meet every month and may hold special meetings at the
49 call of its chair or by request of at least three member representatives on

the Finance & Budget Committee. The Committee chair, in consultation with the Executive Director, may cancel a meeting if there are no action items for the Committee's consideration. Members of the Finance & Budget Committee may attend meetings of the Committee by telephone in accordance with written policies adopted by the Committee, which policies shall define the circumstances under which attendance by telephone shall be permitted.

E. Quorum. A quorum for the transaction of Finance & Budget Committee business shall be one-third (1/3) of its members, plus one.

F. Voting. A majority of those present and voting shall decide any question brought before the meeting. The Finance & Budget Committee chair shall vote as a member of the Committee. A Committee member's designated alternate on the Board may attend meetings of the Committee and participate in deliberations, at the discretion of the chair, but may only vote in the absence of the member.

ARTICLE IX. Performance & Engagement Committee.

A. Membership on the Performance & Engagement Committee. The administrative business of the Council concerning the performance and evaluation of the Executive Director, the oversight of onboarding of new Board members and related matters shall be managed by a Performance & Engagement Committee. The Committee membership shall not exceed more than one-quarter of the total membership of the Board, plus the Board Chair who shall be an ex officio, voting member of the Committee. The Board Chair's attendance at meetings is at the Chair's discretion. Members of the Performance & Engagement Committee shall be appointed by the Board upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee.

B. Performance & Engagement Committee Officers. The incumbent Secretary of the Council shall serve as chair of the Performance & Engagement Committee. The vice chair of the Committee shall be elected by the Committee at its first meeting following election of Board officers and to serve until the next election of officers.

C. Powers and Duties. The following powers and duties are vested in the Performance & Engagement Committee:

1. To develop the process for recruitment of the Executive Director.
2. To recommend appointment of the Executive Director to the Board.
3. To execute an employment contract with the Executive Director, within the parameters of the Council budget.

4. To develop the process for, and execute and document the annual performance evaluation for the Executive Director, including approval and execution of amendments to the Executive Director employment contract in connection therewith, within the parameters of the Council budget.
5. To hold quarterly meetings with the Executive Director to provide performance feedback to the Executive Director.
6. To recommend to the Board, as needed, policies and procedures for the effective administration of the Executive Director.
7. To provide oversight of onboarding programs for new Board appointees.
8. To implement and review Board structure and governance decisions.
9. To plan the annual Board workshop.
10. Review results of any Board Assessments and recommend improvements.
11. To receive and review reports related to the business of the Committee and provide regular updates to the Board.
12. To review and make recommendations to the Board regarding the rules of conduct for member representatives.
13. Through a panel of the Committee, to review and make recommendations to the Executive Committee of the Council regarding complaints of violations of the rules of conduct for member representatives as adopted by the Board from time to time, in accordance with the following:
 - a. The vice chair of the Committee, along with two members of the Committee selected by the vice chair, shall comprise a review panel to review any written complaint of a violation. If the complaint concerns the vice chair or the vice chair is unavailable, the chair of the Committee shall select three members of Committee, excluding the vice chair, who shall comprise the review panel. Upon completion of its review, the panel shall provide a recommendation to the Executive Committee for its review and action, which recommendation may include, without limitation, issuing a letter of reprimand, reporting the matter to the designating governing body or elected official, with or without a request that the member representative be replaced, or adopting a finding of no violation.

b. The panel's review shall be in accordance with rules and procedures adopted by the Board from time to time.

14. To exercise such other powers, duties, and functions as may be authorized by the Board.

D. Meetings of the Performance & Engagement Committee. The Performance & Engagement Committee shall meet every month and may hold special meetings at the call of its chair or by request of at least three member representatives on the Performance & Engagement Committee. The Committee chair, in consultation with the Executive Director, may cancel a meeting if there are no action items for the Committee's consideration. Members of the Performance & Engagement Committee may attend meetings of the Committee by telephone in accordance with written policies adopted by the Committee, which policies shall define the circumstances under which attendance by telephone shall be permitted.

E. Quorum. A quorum for the transaction of Performance & Engagement Committee business shall be one-third (1/3) of its members, plus one, not including the ex-officio Board chair.

F. Voting. A majority of those present and voting shall decide any question brought before the meeting. The Performance & Engagement Committee chair shall vote as a member of the Committee. A Committee member's designated alternate on the Board may attend meetings of the Committee and participate in deliberations, at the discretion of the chair, but may only vote in the absence of the member.

ARTICLE X. Nominating Committee.

A. Membership on the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall be appointed in November of each year and consist of member representatives herein designated:

1. The Immediate Past Chair of the Board (or the Vice Chair if there is no Immediate Past Chair);
2. One Board member representing the City and County of Denver;
3. One member selected by the Performance & Engagement Committee, except that in the initial establishment of the Nominating Committee, such member shall be selected by the Board;
4. One member selected by the Finance & Budget Committee, except that in the initial establishment of the Nominating Committee, such member shall be selected by the Board;

5. One member selected by the Board; and
6. One member selected by the Board Chair.

B. Member Qualifications.

1. Members of the Nominating Committee shall have served not less than one year on the Board before being eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee.
2. No more than one Board officer and no more than one member from the City and County of Denver may serve on the Nominating Committee.
3. A designated alternate may not serve on the Nominating Committee.
4. In the appointment of the Nominating Committee, consideration shall be given to providing representation of a broad cross-section of the Board, taking into account community size, geographic location, the rate of growth, county and municipality, rural and suburban and other factors.
5. If a vacancy arises on the Nominating Committee, the person or entity that selected the departing member shall select a replacement.

C. Nominating Committee Officers. At its first meeting upon annual appointment of its members, the Nominating Committee shall elect its chair and vice chair.

D. Powers and Duties. The following powers and duties are vested in the Nominating Committee:

1. To make recommendations regarding nominations for Board officers and Board officer vacancies as provided in these Articles. A Nominating Committee member may not be a nominee for Board officer.
2. To recommend member representatives for appointment by the Board to the Finance & Budget Committee and the Performance & Engagement Committee. Such appointments shall be made in accordance with the following procedures and requirements:
 - a. The combined membership of the two Committees shall include the following:

- (1) One member representative who is designated as the member representative to the Board of each elected board of county commissioners and each city council, provided each such county and city contains a population of 120,000 or more as estimated by the U.S. Census, the Council, or the State Demographer;
 - (2) The Mayor or, as the Mayor's designee, any elected or appointed officer of the City and County of Denver who is designated as the member representative to the Board;
 - (3) One Denver City Council member who is designated as the member representative to the Board;
 - (4) The Immediate Past Chair of the Board; and
 - (5) Other member representatives to the Board not included in (1), (2), (3) or (4) of this section, up to the maximum permitted membership.
- b. The Nominating Committee shall recommend to the Board candidates for appointment to the Finance & Budget Committee and candidates for appointment to the Performance & Engagement Committee. In addition to the recommendations of the Nominating Committee, nominations for membership to the Committees may be made from the floor, provided that the consent of each nominee is obtained in advance. No individual shall be a member of the two Committees at the same time, except the Board Chair, who may serve on both committees at the same time.
 - c. Consideration shall be given to member representatives' requests to be appointed to a particular Committee, and to providing representation of a broad cross-section of the Board, taking into account community size, geographic location, the rate of growth, county and municipality, rural and suburban and other factors.
 - d. The City and County of Denver shall have one representative on each Committee.
 - e. Committee members shall be appointed to two-year terms, except that in the initial establishment of the Committees the Board shall appoint one half of the members of each Committee to an initial one-year term so as to achieve staggered terms. Terms extend until Board appointment of

1 successors, provided no term is thereby shortened by more
2 than 30 days. A Committee member may seek re-
3 appointment at the expiration of his or her term, but the
4 Board shall have no obligation to re-appoint any member to
5 successive terms.

6
7 f. Committee members are eligible to serve so long as the
8 jurisdiction he/she represents is a member of the Council,
9 and he/she remains that member's official member
10 representative on the Board.

11
12 g. Membership on the Finance & Budget Committee and the
13 Performance & Engagement Committee shall be
14 designated to the member's jurisdiction. Therefore, if a
15 member appointed to a Committee is no longer able to
16 serve, membership on the Committee shall transfer to the
17 succeeding member representative of that jurisdiction on
18 the Board, for the remainder of the term of the Committee
19 appointment.

20
21 3. To make recommendations to the Board for appointment to fill any
22 vacancy on the Finance & Budget Committee and the
23 Performance & Engagement Committee, which vacancy shall be
24 filled in accordance with the requirements herein.

25
26 E. Meetings of the Nominating Committee. The Nominating Committee shall
27 meet as needed to exercise the powers and duties vested herein in the
28 Committee. The Nominating Committee may hold meetings at the call of
29 its chair or by request of at least two of its members.

30
31 F. Quorum. A quorum for the transaction of Nominating Committee
32 business shall be all six (6) of its members.

33
34 G. Voting. A majority of those present and voting shall decide any question
35 brought before the meeting.

36
37 ARTICLE XI. Meetings of the Board.

38
39 A. Frequency. The Board shall meet at least quarterly and may hold special
40 meetings at the call of the Chair, or by request of at least three member
41 representatives.

42
43 B. Notice. Notice of meetings shall be given by E-mail, fax or telephone,
44 made at least two days in advance of the meeting, or by first class mail,
45 post-marked at least five days in advance of the meeting.

46
47 C. Agenda. Any member representative shall have the right to request of
48 the officers the addition of any matter to the agenda of any Board

meeting fifteen days in advance of the meeting, or by consent of a majority of the member representatives at the meeting.

D. Record of Meetings. The Board shall keep records of all its meetings. The meeting records shall be public records available for inspection by any interested person at reasonable times during regular office hours.

E. Open Meetings. All meetings of the Board and committees of the Council shall be open to the public, except as provided otherwise by state statutes.

F. General Board of Directors Procedural Provision.

1. Quorum. A quorum for the transaction of Board business shall be one-third (1/3) of the member representatives.

2. Voting.

a. Regular. Only member representatives or alternates shall have voting privileges. Such privileges shall be exercised personally and voting by proxy is not permitted. The vote of a majority of the member representatives present and voting shall decide any question except as otherwise provided in these Articles. The Chair shall vote as a member representative.

b. Weighted.

(1) Upon the specific request of any member representative, whether seconded or not, a weighted vote must be taken in compliance with the weighted vote resolution in effect at the time of the request.

(2) Denver Allotment. In any weighted vote, the Mayor of the City and County of Denver, or the Mayor's alternate, is authorized to cast two-thirds (2/3) of the total vote allotted to the City and County of Denver and the member representative designated by the City Council of the City and County of Denver or its President is authorized to cast one-third (1/3) of the total vote allotted to the City and County of Denver.

(3) Plans and Articles of Association. Adoption and amendment of plans pursuant to statute and amending the Articles of Association shall be accomplished without the use of the weighted voting system.

- 1 c. Plan Adoption and Amendment. An affirmative vote of a
2 majority of member representatives shall be required for
3 the adoption or amendment of the Plan, or portion thereof,
4 in accordance with Article XII.
5
6 d. Amendment of Articles of Association. An affirmative vote
7 of a majority of member representatives shall be required
8 for the amendment of these Articles, in accordance with
9 Article XVI.
10
11 e. Positions Taken on Ballot Measures and Legislative Issues.
12
13 (1) An affirmative vote of a majority of member
14 representatives shall be required to adopt a
15 resolution taking a position on any ballot measure.
16
17 (2) An affirmative vote of two-thirds (2/3) of members
18 present and voting shall be required to take a
19 position on any legislative issue.
20
21 f. Mail Vote. The Chair shall, on the Chair's own initiative, or
22 when so directed by the Board, declare that action on any
23 motion or resolution, including plan adoption or amendment
24 and amendment of the Articles of Association, shall be
25 taken by certified mail vote of member representatives or
26 their alternates, or if neither has been appointed by a
27 member, its chief elected official may vote instead. Certified
28 mail votes shall be returned by the next regular Board
29 meeting, and any action becomes effective on the date the
30 Chair certifies the results to the Board.
31
32 3. Rules of Order. Except as otherwise required by these Articles,
33 the rules of order of the Council shall be in accordance with the
34 latest edition of Robert's Rules of Order, Revised.
35

36 ARTICLE XII. Powers and Duties.
37

- 38 A. Regional Plan. The Council shall prepare, maintain and regularly review
39 and revise a Plan for the Region. In preparing, maintaining, reviewing
40 and revising the Plan, the Council shall seek to harmonize the master or
41 general comprehensive plans of municipalities, counties, cities and
42 counties, and other public and private agencies within or adjacent to the
43 Region. The Council shall seek the cooperation and advice of
44 municipalities, counties, cities and counties, state and federal agencies,
45 organizations and individuals interested in the functions of the Council.
46 The Plan may consist of such plans, elements and provisions as required
47 or authorized by statute or the members.
48

- 1 B. Plan Adoption. The Board may adopt the Plan or portions thereof, or
2 amendments or additions thereto, by a majority vote of member
3 representatives. Adoption of the Plan or portions thereof shall be
4 preceded by notice and public hearing as required by statute. Action by
5 the Board on the Plan or any amendments thereof shall be recorded in
6 the minutes of the Board meeting and as otherwise required by statute.
7
- 8 C. Certification of Plan. To the extent required by statute, the Council shall
9 certify copies of the adopted Plan, or portion thereof, or amendment or
10 addition thereto, to the board of county commissioners and planning
11 commission of each county and the governing body and planning
12 commission of each municipality lying wholly or partly within the Region.
13
- 14 D. Review of Local Plan Referrals. The Council shall review all matters
15 referred to it in accordance with law. The Council may review local laws,
16 procedures, policies, and developments, including any new or changed
17 land use plans, zoning codes, sign codes, urban renewal projects,
18 proposed public facilities, or other planning functions that clearly affect
19 two or more local governmental units, or that affect the Region as a
20 whole, or that are subjects of primary responsibility for the Council.
21 Within thirty days after receipt of any referred case, the Council shall
22 report to the concerned commission or body. An extension of time may
23 be mutually agreed upon.
24
- 25 E. Metropolitan Planning Organization. As may be authorized or required by
26 federal and state law, the Council shall serve as the metropolitan
27 planning agency (MPO) for the area and shall exercise such powers and
28 perform such functions as are required or authorized by statute in
29 connection therewith.
30
- 31 F. Area Agency on Aging. As may be authorized or required by federal and
32 state law, the Council shall serve as the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for
33 such planning and service areas as are designated to it, and shall
34 exercise such powers and perform such functions as are required or
35 authorized by statute in connection therewith. The Council shall be the
36 approving and contracting agent for distribution of Older Americans Act
37 funds and other aging services federal and state funds and grants, as
38 authorized.
39
- 40 G. Other Activities, Services and Functions. The Council shall undertake
41 and perform such other activities, services or functions as are authorized
42 to it by its members or as are designated to it by federal or state law,
43 consistent with its purposes and in service and support of its member
44 governments.
45
- 46 H. Committees. The standing committees of the Council shall consist of the
47 Executive Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Finance & Budget
48 Committee and the Performance & Engagement Committee, as
49 established in these Articles. The Board may establish other committees

of the Board and advisory committees to the Board as necessary, and the Chair of the Board, except as otherwise provided by the Board, shall appoint the membership of these committees.

- I. Cooperation with Others. The Council may promote and encourage regional understanding and cooperation through sponsorship and participation in public or private meetings, through publications, or through any other medium. The Council may offer its facilities and services to assist in the solution and mediation of issues involving two or more political jurisdictions.
- J. Functional Review. The Council may study and review the nature, scope, and organization under which the functions of the Council may best be carried on, and report to federal, state, and local jurisdictions, and agencies thereof, on ways to improve proposals concerning legislation, regulations, and other actions taken for the effectuation of the provisions of these Articles.
- K. Coordination of Research. The Council may make recommendations to legislative bodies, planning commissions, and other organizations and agencies within the Region for the coordination of research, collection of data, improvement of standards, or any other matter related to the activities of the Council.
- L. Contracts. The Council may contract for any service necessary or convenient for carrying out the purposes of the Council.
- M. Real Property. As provided in the Council's Articles of Incorporation, the Council shall have all the powers granted to nonprofit corporations by Articles 121 through 137 of Title 7, C.R.S., as amended, but the Board reserves final approval of the acquisition and disposition of real property.

ARTICLE XIII. Council Executive Director.

- A. The Board after receiving a recommendation of the Performance & Engagement Committee and by the affirmative vote of a majority of member representatives shall appoint an Executive Director hereinafter referred to as the "Director," who shall serve at the pleasure of the Board. The Performance & Engagement Committee shall develop the process for, and execute and document an annual performance evaluation for the Executive Director.
- B. The Director shall be the Chief Administrative Officer and authorized recording officer of the Council. The Director shall administer and execute all other functions and duties determined by the Board, including but not limited to the following:
 - 1. Appointment, removal, compensation and establishment of the number and duties of the Council staff;

2. Establish and implement policies and procedures for the efficient administration of personnel matters;
3. Serve, or designate personnel to serve, as recording secretary of the Council and be responsible for preparing and maintaining all records and information required by law to be kept by nonprofit corporations, including those records required to be kept by Section 7-136-101, C.R.S., and for authenticating the records of the Council;
4. Designate personnel to provide staff services to committees; and
5. Serve as registered agent for the Council and register as such with the Colorado Secretary of State.

ARTICLE XIV. Filing of Local Reports.

To facilitate planning and development of the Region, all legislative bodies, planning agencies, and others within the Region are requested to file with the Council all public plans, maps, reports, regulations and other documents, as well as amendments and revisions thereto, that clearly affect two or more local government units, or that affect the Region as a whole, or that are subjects or primary responsibility for the Council.

ARTICLE XV. Financial Provisions.

- A. Budget Submission to the Finance & Budget Committee. Each year, no later than the regular April meeting of the Finance & Budget Committee, the Director shall submit an estimate of the budget required for the operation of the Council during the ensuing fiscal year.
- B. Budget Approval by the Board. Each year, no later than the regular May meeting of the Board, the budget recommended by the Finance & Budget Committee shall be presented for approval by the Board. The funds required from each member in the Region shall be apportioned as determined by the Board in the approved budget.
- C. Contract and Other Funds. The Council is specifically empowered to contract or otherwise participate in and to accept grants, funds, gifts, or services from any federal, state, or local government or its agencies or instrumentality thereof, and from private and civic sources, and to expend funds received therefrom, under provisions as may be required of and agreed on by the Council, in connection with any program or purpose for which the Council exists.
- D. Records and Audit. The Council shall arrange for a systematic and continuous recordation of its financial affairs and transactions and shall obtain an annual audit of its financial transactions and expenditures.

1 ARTICLE XVI. Adoption and Amendment of Articles of Association.
2

- 3 A. The Articles shall become effective upon their adoption by the boards of county
4 commissioners, and the governing body of any municipality or city and county
5 within or adjacent to the Region desiring to participate in the Council activities.
6
- 7 B. These Articles may be amended at any regular meeting of the Board by an
8 affirmative vote of a majority of the member representatives, provided that at
9 least one week's notice in writing be given to all member representatives setting
10 forth such amendment. These Articles may also be amended by an affirmative
11 vote of a majority of member representatives obtained through a certified mail
12 vote in accordance with Article XI, F.2.f when so directed by the Board or on the
13 initiative of the Board Chair.

AMENDMENT HISTORY

- AMENDED July 19, 1966. Provided for local elected official representation.
- AMENDED April 18, 1967. General assembly representation added. Policy Advisory Committee created.
- AMENDED July 18, 1967. Quorum changed from 1/2 to 1/3.
- AMENDED April 15, 1968. (Effective July 1, 1968) Name changed to “Denver Regional Council of Governments”
- AMENDED December 17, 1968. Changed election date to first meeting in year. Added municipal representation of Executive Committee.
- AMENDED March 25, 1970. Provided for membership on Executive Committee by either the mayor of the City and County of Denver or the deputy mayor.
- EXTENSIVELY AMENDED February 16, 1972. Incorporated the changes of the Committee on Structure and Organization. See S & O Report.
- AMENDED November 15, 1972. (effective January 1, 1973) Provided for a weighted voting formula for the participating membership.
- AMENDED May 16, 1973. Incorporated a section regarding members which are delinquent in payment of annual assessments.
- AMENDED January 16, 1974. Included the Counties of Clear Creek, Douglas and Gilpin on the Executive Committee, provided each such county contained a population of 120,000 or more.
- AMENDED June 18, 1974. Clarified the section on officers and their election, and provided for a nominating committee for election of officers each year.
- AMENDED January 19, 1977. Added three non-voting members, to be named by the Governor, to the full Board as outlined in the Metropolitan Planning Organization Memorandum of Agreement.
- AMENDED August 3, 1977. (through mail ballot) Increase the membership on the DRCOG Executive Committee from 6 to 8 by adding the Vice Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer of the Board to the Executive Committee membership.
- AMENDED December 19, 1979. Made the Immediate Past Chairman of the Board an officer of the Board, and by virtue of being a Board officer, the Immediate Past

Chairman would also be a member of the Executive Committee. This increased the Board officers from 4 to 5 and the Executive Committee from 8 to 9.

- AMENDED December 16, 1981. Changed the name of the policymaking body from “Council” to “Board of Directors”; Provided definitions of Council, Board of Directors, member, and member representative; Provided for Executive Committee alternates; Provided clarification and modification of certain agency procedures; and made extensive editorial changes.
- AMENDED June 22, 1983. Changed the structure of DRCOG from an unincorporated association to a nonprofit corporation, designated officers of the corporation, and provided for Board approval of real property transactions.
- AMENDED March 19, 1986. Changed to provide for election of Executive Committee officers at the first meeting following election of Board officers.
- AMENDED February 15, 1989. Expanded Executive Committee membership from 9 to 12 members with the three new members elected by the Board; provided for Board designation of a member representative of a county or a municipality to the Executive Committee in instances where the officers of the Board are already included as members of that Committee.
- AMENDED July 17, 1991. Provided the Mayor of Denver with a designee and an alternate to the Board; added a process for filling Executive Committee vacancies; changed the Mayor of Denver’s alternate on the Executive Committee from the Deputy Mayor to the Mayor’s designated representative to the Board; clarified the powers and duties of the Executive Committee regarding personnel matters and the Executive Director; revised the process for certification of adopted plans; and made extensive editorial changes to conform to statutory language.
- AMENDED June 17, 1998. Made technical changes in accordance with the newly adopted Colorado Revised Nonprofit Corporation Act regarding notice of meetings, termination of membership, and responsibilities for record keeping.
- AMENDED July 21, 1999. Revised to provide membership on the Executive Committee for counties with 120,000 or more estimated by either the U.S. Census, the Council or the state demographer.
- AMENDED April 18, 2001. Revised to change the Executive Committee name to Administrative Committee and provide membership on the Administrative Committee for each county and city containing a population of 120,000 or more.
- AMENDED January 15, 2003. Revised to split the Board Officer position of Secretary-Treasurer, creating the positions of Secretary and Treasurer, thus expanding the Administrative Committee membership, and to recognize the City and County of Broomfield.



Appendix 2: Committee Policy, Guidelines and Descriptions

COMMITTEE POLICY, GUIDELINES AND DESCRIPTIONS

JULY 2008

AMENDED FEBRUARY 18, 2009

AMENDED JULY 21, 2010

AMENDED OCTOBER 20, 2010

AMENDED JANUARY 19, 2011

AMENDED SEPTEMBER 21, 2011

AMENDED JANUARY 18, 2012

AMENDED JANUARY 16, 2013

AMENDED MARCH 19, 2014

AMENDED APRIL 20, 2016

AMENDED SEPTEMBER 21, 2016

AMENDED JULY 19, 2017

AMENDED APRIL 24, 2023

DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

1290 Broadway, Suite 100

Denver, Colorado 80203

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	POLICY STATEMENT	1
II.	GUIDELINES.....	1
A.	PURPOSE	1
B.	AUTHORITY FOR FORMATION	1
C.	MEETINGS.....	1
D.	COMMUNICATIONS BY COMMITTEES	2
E.	MEMBERSHIP	2
F.	ELECTION OR APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS	3
G.	SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY	3
H.	QUORUM AND VOTING.....	3
I.	OTHER PROCEDURES.....	4
III.	COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS	5

I. POLICY STATEMENT

The Denver Regional Council of Governments declares its desire to obtain the broadest possible involvement in its programs and decision-making process. The principal means of obtaining this participation is through the Board of Directors and its standing and advisory committees.

II. GUIDELINES

A. PURPOSE

The Board of Directors' decision-making process is designed to achieve the following goals:

1. increase participation by Board members and Board alternates in the policy process;
2. integrate technical and political issues into policy discussions and actions under the umbrella of Metro Vision;
3. undertake specific tasks as requested by the Board;
4. develop proposals and recommendations, with DRCOG staff assistance, for Board consideration;
5. interact with staff and Board members so the concerns of local governments are fully understood in the formulation of region policies; and
6. actively seek the involvement of other regional agencies, and business and citizen groups so that their perspective can be incorporated in DRCOG's program activities and decisions.

B. AUTHORITY FOR FORMATION

The categories for DRCOG committees include:

- Standing committees
- Ad hoc committees

Each is formed as provided by Board action, interagency agreement, federal or state statutes, memorandum of understanding or memorandum of agreement signed by the Board Chair or Executive Director. Descriptions follow.

C. MEETINGS

Committees may meet as needed or as specified in the committee description. If a committee wishes to request a meeting that is not regularly scheduled, the committee

chair must consult with DRCOG on staffing and meeting room availability. It will be the responsibility of DRCOG staff to maintain membership lists of the committees. Meeting notices will be distributed through DRCOG.

D. COMMUNICATIONS BY COMMITTEES

It is important for committees to understand their relationship to the staff of DRCOG and to the Board.

Most committees have a direct relationship with the DRCOG Board of Directors, while some have an indirect relationship with recommendations made through a designated committee. DRCOG staff provides information and administrative support to all committees and the Board.

To provide for effective communication throughout the committee structure, the following guidelines will apply.

1. The Board may provide direction to any committee on issues for consideration.
2. Committees with a direct relationship to the Board will review communications from committees with an indirect relationship and make a policy action recommendation to the Board.
3. Recommendations from ad hoc committees to the Board may be supplemented by specific information relative to implications and options for consideration.
4. Committee officers are encouraged to make presentations of committee actions to the Board.
5. Correspondence from committees to agencies, organizations or individuals outside DRCOG are to be prepared and forwarded to the Executive Director for review. The Executive Director has the discretion to obtain approval of the full Board for correspondence before signing.

E. MEMBERSHIP

Committee membership is based on differing authorities, which authorities address the number of members, qualifications, terms of office, and other requirements concerning committee membership. Specific committee membership information is as set forth in the authorities establishing or describing committees, and summarized for each committee in the below committee descriptions.

Standing Committees

Authorities for these committees and their criteria for membership come from the DRCOG Articles of Association, memoranda of agreement, intergovernmental

agreements, federal or state statutes, or Board authorization. These committees include:

- Executive Committee
- Finance & Budget Committee
- Performance & Engagement Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Regional Transportation Committee
- Transportation Advisory Committee
- Advisory Committee on Aging

Ad Hoc Committees

The Board of Directors may create ad hoc committees to review and study specific issues within a specified timeframe. Ad hoc committees will have a written charge or scope of work set by the Board. The number of ad hoc committees must be aligned and within available DRCOG budgetary and staffing resources.

Ad hoc committee membership will comprise at least a half-plus-one of interested Board members and Board alternates. Other elected officials, as well as local staff and other stakeholders may be appointed, as appropriate. The Board Chair will appoint members to those committees created by the Board and will designate the committee chair. Members of ad hoc committees may not appoint an alternate to the committee. Meetings will be conducted on an informal basis and the spirit/intent is to reach consensus decisions.

F. ELECTION OR APPOINTMENT OF OFFICERS

Officers of a committee are designated or elected as provided in the authorities establishing or describing the committee. If not specifically stated in such authority, the chair and vice chair for a committee shall be elected from among the members annually.

G. SCOPE OF RESPONSIBILITY

Each committee has the scope of responsibility as provided in the authorities establishing or describing the committee.

H. QUORUM AND VOTING

Quorum and voting requirements are as provided in the authorities establishing or describing the committee. If not specifically stated in such authority, a quorum consists of one-third of the total voting members, a quorum is required for formal action, and a simple majority of those present, assuming a quorum, carries a motion or other action.

I. OTHER PROCEDURES

In general, committee proceedings should be conducted on an informal basis. The rules of order shall be in accordance with the latest edition of Roberts Rules of Order, Revised.

All committee meetings will have an agenda that will be posted in the designated area for posting notice of meetings at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting. Agendas may also be posted to the DRCOG website. If the committee wishes to solicit input, it should schedule a specific time and notify all stakeholders of that opportunity. Seating for the public will be provided in an area of the meeting room that is distinct from that of the committee members. A meeting summary should be kept to the extent necessary to record decisions made. All motions must be recorded, including the person making the motion and the outcome of the vote. A committee may convene in executive session solely for purposes authorized by and in compliance with the procedures and requirements of the Colorado Open Meetings Law. Participation in an executive session shall be limited to members of the committee and such other persons identified by the committee as participants as part of the request or motion to convene in executive session.

Review of these guidelines and committee descriptions will occur periodically, but at least every four years.

III. COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Type: Standing Committee

Authority: Articles of Association, revised March 16, 2016

MEMBERSHIP

The incumbent Board officers shall constitute the Executive Committee of the Council.

OFFICERS

The incumbent DRCOG Chair and Vice Chair shall serve in such capacity on the Executive Committee.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The Executive Committee shall be the primary executive leadership of the Council, providing leadership to the Board and guidance to the Executive Director.
- The Executive Committee has no policy making authority.
- The Executive Committee helps set Board meeting agendas; provides guidance on resolution of conflicts; provides process guidance, and receives updates from and assures the progress of committees of the Council.

QUORUM

A quorum for the transaction of Executive Committee business shall be four (4) of its members.

VOTING

A majority of those present and voting shall decide any question brought before the meeting.

FINANCE & BUDGET COMMITTEE

Type: Standing Committee

Authority: Articles of Association, revised March 16, 2016

MEMBERSHIP

The administrative business of the Council concerning finances, contracts and related matters shall be managed by the Finance & Budget Committee. The Committee membership shall not exceed more than one-quarter of the total membership of the Board. Members of the Finance & Budget Committee shall be appointed by the Board upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, in accordance with procedures and requirements set forth in the Articles of Association.

Committee members are appointed to two-year terms, except that in the initial establishment of the Committee, one half of the members are appointed to an initial one-year term so as to achieve staggered terms. A Committee member is eligible to serve so long as the jurisdiction he or she represents is a member of the Council, and he or she remains that member's official member representative on the Board. Membership on the Committee is designated to the member's jurisdiction; therefore, if a member appointed to the Committee is no longer able to serve, membership on the Committee shall transfer to the succeeding member representative of that jurisdiction on the Board, for the remainder of the term of the Committee appointment. A Committee member may seek re-appointment at the expiration of his or her term two-year term, in accordance with the procedures and requirements set forth in the Articles of Association, but the Board shall have no obligation to re-appoint any member.

OFFICERS

The incumbent Treasurer of the Council shall serve as chair of the Finance & Budget Committee. The vice chair of the Committee shall be elected by the Committee at its first meeting following election of Board officers and to serve until the next election of officers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The following powers and duties are vested in the Finance & Budget Committee:

- To review contracts, grants and expenditures and authorize the expenditure of funds and the entering into contracts, within the parameters of the Council budget.
- To execute official instruments of the Council.
- To review and recommend to the Board the budget as provided in Article XV of the Articles of Association.
- To review the Council's audited financial statements with the Council's auditor, and to undertake, oversee and/or review other organization audits.
- To receive and review other financial reports and provide regular updates to the Board.

- To compensate member representatives for expenses incurred in attending to the proper business of the Council.
- To exercise such other powers, duties, and functions as may be authorized by the Board.

QUORUM

A quorum for the transaction of Finance & Budget Committee business shall be one-third (1/3) of its members, plus one.

VOTING

A majority of those present and voting shall decide any question brought before the meeting. The Budget & Finance Committee chair shall vote as a member of the Committee. A Committee member's designated alternate on the Board may attend meetings of the Committee and participate in deliberations, at the discretion of the chair, but may only vote in the absence of the member.

PERFORMANCE & ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Type: Standing Committee

Authority: Articles of Association, revised March 16, 2016

MEMBERSHIP

The administrative business of the Council concerning the performance and evaluation of the Executive Director, the oversight of onboarding of new Board members and related matters shall be managed by a Performance & Engagement Committee. The Committee membership shall not exceed more than one-quarter of the total membership of the Board, plus the Board Chair who shall be an ex officio, voting member of the Committee. The Board Chair's attendance at meetings is at the Chair's discretion. Members of the Performance & Engagement Committee shall be appointed by the Board upon recommendation of the Nominating Committee, in accordance with procedures and requirements set forth in the Articles of Association.

Committee members are appointed to two-year terms, except that in the initial establishment of the Committee, one half of the members are appointed to an initial one-year term to achieve staggered terms. A Committee member is eligible to serve so long as the jurisdiction he or she represents is a member of the Council, and he or she remains that member's official member representative on the Board. Membership on the Committee is designated to the member's jurisdiction; therefore, if a member appointed to the Committee is no longer able to serve, membership on the Committee shall transfer to the succeeding member representative of that jurisdiction on the Board, for the remainder of the term of the Committee appointment. A Committee member may seek re-appointment at the expiration of his or her two-year term, in accordance with the procedures and requirements set forth in the Articles of Association, but the Board shall have no obligation to re-appoint any member.

OFFICERS

The incumbent Secretary of the Council shall serve as chair of the Performance & Engagement Committee. The vice chair of the Committee shall be elected by the Committee at its first meeting following election of Board officers and to serve until the next election of officers.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The following powers and duties are vested in the Performance & Engagement Committee:

- To develop the process for recruitment of the Executive Director.
- To recommend appointment of the Executive Director to the Board.
- To execute an employment contract with the Executive Director, within the parameters of the Council budget.

- To develop the process for, and execute and document the annual performance evaluation for the Executive Director, including approval and execution of amendments to the Executive Director employment contract in connection therewith, within the parameters of the Council budget.
- To hold quarterly meetings with the Executive Director to provide performance feedback to the Executive Director.
- To recommend to the Board, as needed, policies and procedures for the effective administration of the Executive Director.
- To provide oversight of onboarding programs for new Board appointees.
- To Implement and review Board structure and governance decisions.
- To Plan the annual Board workshop.
- To review results of Board assessments and recommend improvements.
- To receive and review reports related to the business of the Committee and provide regular updates to the Board.
- To Exercise such other powers, duties, and functions as may be authorized by the Board.

QUORUM

A quorum for the transaction of Performance & Engagement Committee business shall be one-third (1/3) of its members, plus one, not including the ex-officio Board chair.

VOTING

A majority of those present and voting shall decide any question brought before the meeting. The Performance & Engagement Committee chair shall vote as a member of the Committee. A Committee member's designated alternate on the Board may attend meetings of the Committee and participate in deliberations, at the discretion of the chair, but may only vote in the absence of the member.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Type: Standing Committee

Authority: Articles of Association, revised March 16, 2016

MEMBERSHIP

The Nominating Committee will consist of six Board members who shall be appointed in November of each year. Members include the Immediate Past Chair of the Board (or Vice Chair if there is no Immediate Past Chair); one Board member representing the City and County of Denver; one member selected by the Performance & Engagement Committee; one member selected by the Finance & Budget Committee; one member selected by the Board; and one member selected by the Board Chair. Member qualifications for the Nominating Committee are as follows:

- Members of the Nominating Committee shall have served not less than one year as a member or an alternate on the Board before being eligible to serve on the Nominating Committee.
- No more than one Board officer and no more than one member from the City and County of Denver may serve on the Nominating Committee.
- A designated alternate may not serve on the Nominating Committee.

In the appointment of the Nominating Committee, consideration shall be given to providing representation of a broad cross-section of the Board, taking into account community size, geographic location, the rate of growth, county and municipality, rural and suburban, and other factors. If a vacancy arises on the Nominating Committee, the person or entity that selected the departing member shall select a replacement.

OFFICERS

At its first meeting upon annual appointment of its members, the Nominating Committee shall elect its chair and vice chair.

RESPONSIBILITIES

The following powers and duties are vested in the Nominating Committee:

- To make recommendations regarding nominations for Board officers and Board officer vacancies as provided in the Articles of Association. (A Nominating Committee member may not be a nominee for Board officer.)
- To recommend member representatives for appointment by the Board to the Finance & Budget Committee and the Performance & Engagement Committee, in accordance with the procedures and requirements set forth in the Articles of Association.
- To make recommendations to the Board for appointment to fill any vacancy on the Finance & Budget Committee and the Performance & Engagement Committee, which

vacancy shall be filled in accordance with the procedures and requirements set forth in the Articles of Association.

QUORUM

A quorum for the transaction of Nominating Committee business shall be all six (6) of its members.

VOTING

A majority of those present and voting shall decide any question brought before the meeting.

OTHER PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

- The Nominating Committee will meet at a time(s) convenient for all members in November. In January, the Committee will present to the Board nominations for Treasurer, Secretary and Vice Chair, and recommendations for appointment to the Finance & Budget Committee and Performance & Engagement Committee. The election of officers and appointment of Committee members will take place at the February Board meeting.
- Any candidate for Board officer or the filling of a Board officer vacancy who receives a majority or tie vote of the Nominating Committee shall be presented to the Board for consideration.
- The incumbent holding the position of Vice Chair automatically becomes the Chair. In the event the incumbent Vice Chair does not assume the position of Chair or in the event of a vacancy in the position of Chair, the procedures and requirements set forth in the Articles of Association shall be followed for any Nominating Committee presentation of nominees to the DRCOG Board.
- With the goal of encouraging broad participation from the DRCOG Board, the Nominating Committee will consider interested Board members for the positions of Treasurer and Secretary to serve one-year terms without regard to an individual's term limit or length of term with their respective jurisdiction board. For the position of Vice Chair, the Nominating Committee will ascertain the ability of the individual nominated for Vice Chair to serve as Chair without interruption due to term limits or elections.
- The Nominating Committee will request a short written statement from all interested Board members stating why he or she wishes to serve as a DRCOG Board officer and why the Nominating Committee should favorably consider them.
- The Nominating Committee will consider the following criteria when evaluating Board members for the positions of Treasurer, Secretary, Vice Chair, and if applicable Chair:

- Commitment to DRCOG's vision and mission,
 - Substantive experience with DRCOG,
 - Strong willingness to serve, and
 - Capacity to be "ambassadors" for DRCOG and represent the organization as needed and desirable.
- For the position of Vice Chair, the Nominating Committee will consider and present a Board member with substantive past experience as a member of the DRCOG Board that includes serving in the position of Treasurer or Secretary or membership for at least one year on Finance & Budget Committee or the Performance & Engagement Committee. Participation as a member of another standing committee or ad hoc committee also may constitute substantive past experience.

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Type: Standing Committee

Authority: Memorandum of Agreement between DRCOG, the Colorado Department of Transportation, and the Regional Transportation District, dated July 10, 2001.
Modified by the three agencies, June 17, 2008
Revised September 21, 2016

MEMBERSHIP

Sixteen members as follows:

Denver Regional Council of Governments - Board chair and vice chair, and two designees from the Board, and the Executive Director.

Colorado Department of Transportation - Three metro area Transportation Commissioners and the Executive Director.

Regional Transportation District - Three Board members and the General Manager.

Other Members - Three members appointed by the Committee chair upon unanimous recommendation of the Executive Directors of DRCOG, CDOT and the General Manager of RTD. The DRCOG Executive Director will consult with the Committee chair prior to the three agency executives forming a recommendation.

USE OF ALTERNATES

It is the clear goal of the Committee to minimize use of alternates. However, recognizing that there will be times when it is inevitable that members cannot attend, alternates will be allowed on the following basis:

- Each agency shall designate annually, in writing to the chair, standing alternates (board members/commissioners and staff).
- No more than two staff (members or designated alternates) from each agency can vote on any given issue.
- The appropriate level of staff that can be designated as alternates are:
 - DRCOG: Division Directors
 - CDOT: Regional Transportation Directors or equivalent or above
 - RTD: Senior Managers of planning and development or above
- No alternates are permitted for the Other Members.
- No proxies are permitted.
- The new Immediate Past Chair of DRCOG shall serve as an alternate until the DRCOG Board acts to designate new alternates after the February Board elections.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Through the Regional Transportation Committee, DRCOG, as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO), administers the urban transportation planning process for the region in accordance with *The Prospectus - Transportation Planning in the Denver Region* and applicable federal regulations. Accordingly, the responsibilities of the Regional Transportation Committee shall include:

- Overall direction of current work activities established by the Unified Planning Work Program.
- Review and approval of items to be submitted to the DRCOG Board of Directors, as the MPO policy body, for adoption.
- Approval of plans, programs, documents and annual endorsements related to surface transportation as outlined in the Memorandum of Agreement. Should the DRCOG Board approve a policy action that differs from the Regional Transportation Committee's recommendation, the action shall be referred back to the Committee for reconsideration.

QUORUM

Twelve members, or designated alternates.

VOTING

Twelve votes are required to carry any action.

OTHER

DRCOG representatives will attend a briefing with the DRCOG Executive Director immediately prior to the regularly scheduled RTC meeting.

TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Type: Standing Committee

Authority: Memorandum of Agreement between DRCOG, the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Regional Transportation District adopted July 10, 2001 Board of Directors Action August 15, 2001. Revised July 2008, and September 21, 2016.

MEMBERSHIP

Transportation Advisory Committee Membership shall include:

- Two members each from Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Douglas and Jefferson counties and one member from Weld County within the MPO boundary, with at least three appointed from county government and at least seven from municipalities. Of the municipal representatives, at least two, but not more than three, shall represent communities with under 35,000 population;
- Two members from the City and County of Denver and one member from the City and County of Broomfield;
- One local government member from the non-MPO area of the Transportation Planning Region;
- Local government representatives shall be city or county managers/administrators, public works directors, transportation or planning directors or their equivalents;
- The Regional Transportation Directors from the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) Regions 1 and 4, or their designee; the Director of CDOT's Transportation Development Division, or their designee; and the Director of CDOT's Division of Transit and Rail, or their designee;
- The Assistant General Manager for Planning of the Regional Transportation District, or their designee;
- The Director of Transportation Planning and Operations of DRCOG;
- The Executive Director of the Regional Air Quality Council;
- One representative of each of the following special interests:
 - environmental interests;
 - freight interests;
 - transportation demand management/non-motorized transportation interests;
 - aviation interests;
 - business/economic development interests;
 - a non-RTD representative of transit interests;
 - senior interests; and
- In an ex officio capacity, a representative of the Federal Highway Administration and of the Federal Transit Administration. Ex-officio members are non-voting.

The Chair of the DRCOG Board of Directors shall make the 15 local government appointments. The seven special interests – Environment, Freight, TDM/Non-motorized, Aviation, Economic Development, Non-RTD Transit and Senior– shall be nominated by the

DRCOG Chair and confirmed by the Regional Transportation Committee. The DRCOG Chair shall review membership annually in the second quarter of the calendar year. The DRCOG Chair can take into consideration such factors as issues to be addressed, continuity of the Committee, attendance, and turnover in reconfirming or determining new appointments and nominations.

USE OF ALTERNATES

It is the clear goal of the Committee to minimize the use of alternates. However, recognizing that there will be times when it is inevitable that members cannot attend, alternates will be allowed on the following basis:

- The member will submit the name of their designated alternate in writing to the DRCOG Board coordinator.
- The member shall be responsible for briefing their alternate in advance on the Committee's format and issues so that the alternate is empowered to act on behalf of their agency or interest.
- The designated alternate will be allowed to vote in the member's place.

OFFICERS

Committee members shall elect a chair and vice chair to serve two-year terms. Elections shall be held during the fourth quarter of odd-numbered years.

RESPONSIBILITIES

To assist the Board of Directors and the Regional Transportation Committee by reviewing the work of the transportation planning process, advising on methods of planning and implementation and working with staff to develop policy options and making recommendations to the Regional Transportation Committee. Specifically, the Committee shall:

- Establish a dialog on regional transportation issues among local government, regional agencies, the state and other transportation stakeholders;
- Review the transportation planning process;
- Provide advice and guidance on methods of planning and implementation;
- Assist in coordinating and facilitating implementation of Metro Vision through the transportation planning process;
- Facilitate coordination of regional plans and programs among local government, regional agencies and the state; and
- Provide advice and recommendations to the Regional Transportation Committee on transportation plans and improvement programs.

QUORUM/VOTING

Fifteen voting members, or designated alternates, as fifteen votes are required to carry any action.

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON AGING (ACA)

Type: Standing Committee

Authority: Older American's Act of 1965, as amended, and the Contract between DRCOG and the Colorado Department of Human Services, State Unit on Aging dated February 8, 1974 and revised March 15, 2006.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership shall include individuals eligible to participate in the program, minority and low-income adults, older individuals, residents of geographically isolated areas, and at least three members of the DRCOG Board who shall be appointed by the DRCOG Chair. Interested DRCOG Board alternates also may be considered for appointment to the ACA in addition to the minimum Committee membership of three Board members.

Membership on the Committee or changes to membership requires a written request to, and confirmation by, the DRCOG Chair. Membership shall be assessed annually and a member's attendance at ACA meetings will be considered.

It is the goal of the DRCOG Board that (1) at least one-half of the members should be age 60 and older, and (2) include at least one individual from each of the counties served by the Area Agency on Aging (AAA), and (3) include five community partner representatives from areas including but not limited to: transportation, lifelong communities, foundations, financial institutions, aging, disability, LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender), elder rights, and developmental disability.

Members representing each of the counties served by the AAA shall be recommended for appointment by their respective county council/commission on aging through their respective governing body (board of county commissioners or mayor, as appropriate) and confirmed by the DRCOG Chair. Representation shall proportionately reflect the 60+ population within each county and shall be according to the graph below.

60+ Residents	Number of Representatives
0 – 50,000	2
50,001 – 100,000	3
100,001 and over	4

County population shall be determined using DRCOG's demographic estimates. There will be a maximum of four representatives per county.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Members are expected to be aware of any potential real or perceived conflicts of interest and make them known to the DRCOG AAA Division Director immediately. Members shall

abstain from any discussion of, or voting on, any funding issue in which a conflict of interest exists or may arise.

Committee members that are board members of an agency that submit requests for funding are prohibited from taking part in evaluating such requests.

OFFICERS

The ACA elects officers from among the members annually in May. The term of the office for chair and vice chair is one year, from July 1 through June 30. An individual may serve two consecutive years in the same office but only with an affirmative vote of the Committee.

In the absence of the chair, the vice chair assumes the role of the chair.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Represent the needs of persons age 60 and older, with special emphasis on the needs of those persons in greatest social and/or economic need.
- Advocate for the enhancement and well being of the region's current and future older adult populations.
- Assist DRCOG staff in assessing the strengths and needs of older adults and their caregivers.
- Assist DRCOG staff in developing and updating the AAA 4-Year Plan; make recommendations concerning the same to the DRCOG Board.
- Assist DRCOG staff in developing policies, procedures, and priorities for planning and funding activities; make recommendations concerning the same to the DRCOG Board.
- Assist DRCOG staff in assessing funding proposals to serve the 60 and older population pursuant to the Older Americans Act and Older Coloradans Act; make recommendations concerning the same to the DRCOG Board.
- Actively become and remain educated on the issues concerning the aging and their caregivers.
- Serve as an ambassador to the community and to the County Councils on Aging by communicating the purposes, responsibilities and functions of the AAA.

QUORUM

A quorum shall consist of one-third of the members present at a regularly scheduled ACA meeting or at a special meeting called by the Committee chair.

MEETINGS

The ACA meets monthly and shall be open to the public. Summary minutes shall be taken at Committee meetings and shall be available to the public upon request for review.

The ACA, in consultation with the AAA Division Director, may cancel regular monthly meetings or call for special meetings.

It is the responsibility of the AAA Division Director to develop the monthly agenda. The committee chair may request the AAA Division Director develop the agenda in consultation with the chair.

SUBCOMMITTEES

- The ACA, in consultation with DRCOG staff, shall determine the need for subcommittees.
- Duties of subcommittees include making recommendations to the ACA regarding matters pertaining to their specific interest.
- Any ACA member may serve on any of the subcommittees but shall include, whenever possible, at least one member from each county represented.
- Voting is limited to one vote per county.
- Each subcommittee shall appoint a chair and the meeting schedule for the subcommittee shall be determined by the chair and other members in consultation with DRCOG staff.
- All subcommittee activities shall be reported by the subcommittee chair or their designee at the next regular ACA meeting.
- It is the responsibility of the AAA Division Director or designee to develop the monthly agenda. The subcommittee chair may request the agenda be developed in consultation with the subcommittee chair.

Type: Ad Hoc Committees

Authority: DRCOG Board

MEMBERSHIP

Ad hoc committee membership will comprise at least one-half plus one Board members and alternates. All members will be appointed by the DRCOG Board Chair, who will also designate the ad hoc committee chair. The ad hoc committee will elect the vice chair from among its members. Other elected officials as well as local staff and other stakeholders may be appointed as appropriate.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- The ad hoc committee will have a written charge and/or scope of work that will be approved by the DRCOG Board. The written charge and/or scope will include a timeframe within which to complete work.
- Members may not appoint an alternate to the committee.
- Proceedings are conducted on an informal basis. Committee members only will be seated at the table with distinct seating available for other attendees.
- Each meeting will have an agenda that will be posted on the DRCOG website in advance of the meeting.
- There will be a designated time on the agenda for public comment. If the committee wishes to solicit additional input, it will schedule a specific time and notify all stakeholders of that opportunity.
- The spirit/intent is to reach consensus decisions.
- Staff will keep a general record of meetings, capturing important points of discussion and decision outcomes.

QUORUM

A quorum is one-third the total voting members.

VOTING

A simple majority carries a motion; the chair is a voting member.

Appendix 3: Executive policies



The following executive policies are contained in this document:

1. General executive director constraint
2. Treatment of citizens, taxpayers, staff and volunteers
3. Compensation, benefits, employment
4. Financial planning and budget
5. Fiscal management and controls
6. Protection of assets
7. Immediate succession
8. Communications with and support of the board

Executive policies

Executive policies provide the necessary guidance for the Executive Director to effectively lead the organization toward progressing the goals and priorities of DRCOG. Executive Policies state conditions that must exist in order to achieve organizational strategic initiatives. Executive Policies prevent the goals from being achieved through means that create liabilities for the organization. For purposes of this document, the term “Board” refers to the entire DRCOG Board of Directors and their alternates acting as such.

1. General executive director constraint

- 1.1. Within the scope of authority delegated to him/her by the Board, the Executive Director shall ensure that any practice, activity, decision or organizational circumstance is lawful and prudent and adheres to commonly accepted business and professional ethics. The Executive Director shall ensure that conditions are safe, fair, honest, respectful and dignified.

2. Treatment of citizens, taxpayers, staff, interns, and volunteers

The success of DRCOG depends upon the partnership between the Board, agencies, jurisdictions, citizens, taxpayers, elected officials and DRCOG employees.

The Executive Director shall ensure:

- 2.1. Community opinion/input on relevant issues is obtained when decisions materially affect a community.
- 2.2. Communities are informed on a timely basis about relevant decision-making processes and decisions.

- 2.3. Interactions with the community are organized and clear.

- 2.4. Relevant problems raised by the community are addressed in a timely manner.

- 2.5. Staff is competent, respectful and effective in interactions with the Board, public, etc.

- 2.6. Confidential information is protected from unauthorized disclosure.

Accordingly, pertaining to paid staff, interns and volunteers within the scope of his/her authority, the Executive Director shall ensure:

- 2.7. Written personnel policies and/or procedures, approved by legal counsel, which clarify personnel rules for staff, provide for effective handling of grievances, and protect against wrongful conditions are in effect.

- 2.8. Staff, interns and volunteers are acquainted with their rights upon entering and during their work/time with DRCOG.

- 2.9. Avenues are available for non-disruptive internal expressions of dissent, and protected activities are not subject to retaliation.

- 2.10. Established grievance procedures are readily available and accessible to staff. The Board is appropriately apprised of violations of Board policies and of matters affecting the Board.

3. COMPENSATION, BENEFITS, EMPLOYMENT

With respect to employment, compensation and benefits to employees, consultants, contract workers and volunteers, the Executive Director shall ensure:

- 3.1. The fiscal integrity of DRCOG is maintained.

Accordingly, the Executive Director shall ensure:

- 3.2. His/her own compensation is approved by the Performance and Engagement Committee according to adopted procedures.

- 3.3. Compensation and benefits are consistent with wage data compiled in DRCOG's regular independent salary survey and approved in the annual budget.

- 3.4. Adherence to appropriate employment law practices.

3.5. Deferred or long-term compensation and benefits are not established.

4. FINANCIAL PLANNING AND BUDGET

With respect to strategic planning for projects, services and activities with a fiscal impact, the Executive Director shall ensure:

4.1. The programmatic and fiscal integrity of DRCOG is maintained.

Accordingly, the Executive Director shall ensure:

- 4.2. Budgets and financial planning are aligned to Board-adopted strategic initiatives.
- 4.3. Financial solvency is maintained by projecting in two-to five-year increments, in addition to annual budgeting.
- 4.4. Financial practices are consistent with any applicable constitutional and statutory requirements.
- 4.5. Adherence to Board-adopted strategic initiatives in its allocation among competing budgetary needs.
- 4.6. Adequate information is available to enable: Credible projections of revenues and expenses; separation of capital and operational items; cash flow projections; audit trails; identification of reserves, designations and undesignated fund balances; and disclosure of planning assumptions.
- 4.7. During any fiscal year, plans for expenditures match plans for revenues.
- 4.8. Maintain at a minimum 3 months of operating expenses, excluding amounts for in-kind and pass-through expense or as recommended by the independent auditor.
- 4.9. A budget Contingency Plan is capable of responding to significant shortfalls with the DRCOG budget.
- 4.10. No risks are present based on situations described in the Fiscal Management Control Policy.
- 4.11. Board activities during the year have been adequately funded.
- 4.12. Reserves and designations are available according to applicable constitutional and statutory requirements and “Generally Accepted Accounting Principles” consistently applied.

5. FISCAL MANAGEMENT AND CONTROLS

With respect to the actual, ongoing financial condition of DRCOG, the Executive Director shall ensure:

- 5.1. Board-adopted strategic initiatives are adhered to and financial controls prevent fiscal jeopardy.
- 5.2. Funds for expenditures are available during each fiscal year.
- 5.3. DRCOG obligations are paid in a timely manner and within the ordinary course of business.
- 5.4. Prudent protection is given against conflicts of interest in purchasing and other financial practices, consistent with the law and established in DRCOG Fiscal Management Control Policy.
- 5.5. Funds are used for their intended purpose.
- 5.6. Competitive purchasing policies and procedures are in effect to ensure openness and accessibility to contract opportunities.
- 5.7. Purchases, contracts and obligations which may be authorized by the Executive Director do not exceed the financial authority approved by the Finance and Budget Committee. Purchases, contracts and obligations exceeding the Executive Director’s authority are approved by the Finance and Budget Committee.
- 5.8. In the absence of the Executive Director, the Director of Transportation Planning and Operations signs on behalf of the Executive Director. If the Executive Director and Director of Transportation Planning and Operations are unavailable for a signature, the Administrative Officer provides authorizing signatures.
- 5.9. Adequate internal controls over receipts and disbursements prevent the material dissipation of assets.
- 5.10. DRCOG’s audit is independent and external monitoring or advice is readily accepted and available.
- 5.11. Revenue sources are consistent with the Board-adopted strategic initiatives and operations are financed without incurring debt that exceeds the Executive Director’s authority unless approved by the Finance and Budget Committee.
- 5.12. Reserved, designated and undesignated fund balances are at adequate levels to mitigate the risk of

current and future revenue shortfalls or unanticipated expenditures.

5.13. Creditworthiness and financial position are maintained from unforeseen emergencies.

6. PROTECTION OF ASSETS

Within the scope of his/her authority in the Executive Director and given available resources, the Executive Director shall ensure:

- 6.1.** Assets are protected and adequately maintained against unnecessary risk.
- 6.2.** An insurance program exists to protect DRCOG in the event of a property and/or liability loss, including coverage insuring the Board, officers, employees, authorized volunteers and DRCOG against liabilities relating to the performance of their duties and DRCOG's activities in an amount equal to or greater than the average for comparable organizations and, for tort liabilities, in an amount equal to or greater than statutory limits on amounts DRCOG may be legally obligated to pay.
- 6.3.** A policy exists to insure against employee dishonesty and theft.
- 6.4.** Facilities and/or equipment are used properly and maintained (except normal deterioration and financial conditions beyond the Executive Director's control.)
- 6.5.** Practices and policies are in place for DRCOG, Board and staff to minimize or prevent liability claims.
- 6.6.** A policy exists to ensure protection from loss or significant damage of intellectual property (including intellectual property developed using DRCOG resources), information, files.
- 6.7.** Internal control standards for the receipt, processing and disbursements of funds are at adequate levels to satisfy generally accepted accounting/auditing standards and costs for internal controls shall be consistent with the benefits expected.
- 6.8.** DRCOG's public image, credibility, and its ability to accomplish Board-adopted strategic initiatives goals are upheld.
- 6.9.** Adequate planning is done for short and long-term capital or facility needs.

6.10. Board auditors or other external monitors or advisors are independent from internal influence.

7. IMMEDIATE SUCCESSION

7.1. To protect the Board from sudden loss of Executive Director services, the Executive Director shall have at least one other member of the management team familiar with Board and DRCOG issues and processes.

8. COMMUNICATIONS WITH AND SUPPORT OF THE BOARD

The Executive Director shall ensure:

- 8.1.** The Board is informed and supported in its work.
- 8.2.** The Board is provided complete, clear information for the accomplishment of its job.
- 8.3.** The Board is informed in a timely manner about relevant events and issues regardless of reporting/monitoring schedule.
- 8.4.** Required reports to the Board are submitted in a timely, accurate, and understandable fashion.
- 8.5.** The Board is aware of actual or anticipated non-compliance with Board-adopted strategic initiatives or Executive Policies.
- 8.6.** The Board is provided decision information it requests, information on relevant trends, or other points of view, issues and options for well-informed Board decisions.
- 8.7.** The Board is aware of incidental information it requires, including anticipated adverse media coverage or material external and internal/organizational changes. Notification of planned, non-personnel-related internal changes is provided in advance when feasible.
- 8.8.** In consultation with legal counsel, Board is appropriately apprised of pending or threatened litigation.
- 8.9.** The Board is informed when the Board is not in compliance with its own policies, particularly in the case of the Board behavior that is detrimental to the work relationship between the Board and the Executive Director.
- 8.10.** Information provided to the Board is not overly complex or lengthy.

Revision History

Dec. 16, 2015 - General housekeeping edits to align language with the Balanced Scorecard, reference interns as appropriate; use consistent language throughout the document; clarify location of other adopted policies/procedures.

Feb. 15, 2017 – Deleted reference to Administrative Committee and changed to Performance and Engagement Committee and Finance and Budget Committee, as appropriate.



Denver Regional Council of Governments

1001 17th St., Denver, CO 80202

303-455-1000 | drcog.org

Getting to know your **doctor— COG,** that is

Do great places just happen? Not a chance.

Since 1955, the Denver Regional Council of Governments has been bringing local governments together for the benefit of our region. A nonprofit through which 59 leaders from nine counties collaborate to make life better, DRCOG establishes guidelines, sets policy and allocates funding in three key areas:



regional growth
and development



transportation and
personal mobility



aging services
and our changing
population

Through our long history of working together, we've discovered that planning for housing, employment and recreation in our neighborhoods involves considering how we'll all get around, and taking into account all the region's residents and communities. A long view and a comprehensive approach to planning make DRCOG's achievements the envy of our peers.

It all starts with Metro Vision.

Our region's communities have developed a shared, aspirational vision for enhancing our quality of life. In 2017, our board unanimously adopted Metro Vision. The plan identifies our regional priorities, how we'd like this region to look in 2040, and encourages local communities to work together for a brighter future. Each community contributes to regional goals consistent with its own character and at its own pace. We'll measure how well we're doing, and stay flexible and dynamic as circumstances change.

What kinds of issues does DRCOG address?

- Transportation system planning and multimodal project funding.
- Aging and disability services, funding and advocacy.
- Traffic congestion and air quality.
- Promoting healthy, livable communities with affordable and accessible housing.
- Fostering a vibrant economy.
- Enhancing and protecting open space, parks and trails.

Programs, initiatives and services

Metro Vision:

Our 58 communities' shared vision for the future of the region, which guides decision-making by our board of directors and has resulted in national recognition for coming together to get things done.

Transportation planning:

In partnership with the Colorado Department of Transportation and Regional Transportation District, DRCOG develops programs and plans for a multimodal system that helps people get around.

Transportation funding:

As the region's federally designated metropolitan planning organization, DRCOG selects and approves roadway and public transit projects for funding based on long- and short-range regional priorities.

Transportation operations:

DRCOG works cooperatively with communities to synchronize traffic signals and other technology to improve mobility in the region.

Reducing traffic congestion and improving air quality:

Through its Way to Go program, DRCOG educates and encourages commuters to drive alone less often by offering solutions such as transit, carpools, vanpools, biking, walking and alternative work schedules.

Aging:

As the federally designated Area Agency on Aging, DRCOG develops and enacts a four-year plan to serve older adults in coordination with community and county organizations.

Aging services funding:

The DRCOG Area Agency on Aging allocates federal Older Americans Act funds to provide services such as transportation, nutrition, home health care and legal help.

Ombudsman program:

The DRCOG Area Agency on Aging advocates for residents' rights in assisted living and skilled nursing home facilities. We help residents resolve and mediate concerns and complaints, and we advocate for better conditions and care for our region's most vulnerable older adults and individuals with disabilities.

Other Area Agency on Aging programs:

- case management
- information and assistance
- veteran-directed home and community-based services
- elder refugee program
- elder abuse prevention
- Boomer Bond

Data, maps and modeling services:

DRCOG produces a wide array of data, information, maps and models to support planning throughout the region. We also compile and share this information with our local jurisdictions and much of it is available publicly on our websites:

- Regional Data Catalog
- Regional Equity Atlas
- Denver Regional Visual Resources (DRVR)

Economics and land use:

DRCOG's economists evaluate trends related to housing, employment, transit and real estate throughout the region. They provide resources and advice to local government leaders on the region's economic condition.

Advocacy:

DRCOG advocates at the state and federal levels to protect and enhance regional interests identified as priorities by our board of directors.

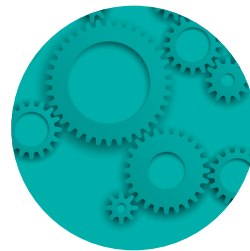


1001 17th St., Suite 700 Denver, CO 80202 | 303-455-1000

drcog.org | drcog@drcog.org



2023-2024 Budget and Work Program



What's inside?

DRCOG's 2023-2024 budget, the fiscal guide for the operation of DRCOG from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. Additionally, the 2023-2024 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 agency and metropolitan planning organization roles. The biennial Unified Planning Work Program outlines the full scope of DRCOG's work as the metropolitan planning organization.





Budget

Budget summaries, comparisons, funding sources and anticipated expenditures.

Page 6



Communities and residents

Objectives that represent continuous improvements needed for the region's communities and their residents.

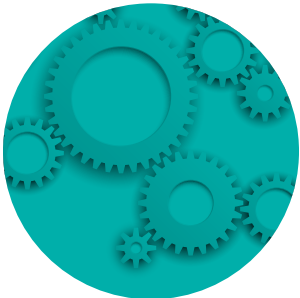
Page 10



Financial stewardship

Objectives related to cost management, funding and resource investment.

Page 15



Business operations

Objectives related to process improvement, partnering, products and services.

Page 16



Skilled workforce

Objectives related to organizational culture and staff development.

Page 17



Letter from the executive director

May 17, 2023

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

I am pleased to submit the proposed budget of the Denver Regional Council of Governments for fiscal year 2023-2024. The budget is transmitted to the Finance and Budget Committee for review and recommendation for approval by the Board of Directors.

The budget is a fiscal guide for the operation of DRCOG from July 1, 2023, through June 30, 2024. It supports work activities in the DRCOG metropolitan planning organization's Unified Planning Work Program, and its Area Agency on Aging, Communications and Marketing, Executive Office, Administration and Finance, and Human Resource divisions.

Variations of note between the 2022-2023 fiscal year budget and the 2023-2024 fiscal year budget include:

Revenues

- **Federal funding is expected to increase by 8.5% or \$2.2 million** due to the recent approval of Transportation Improvement Plan set-aside projects totaling \$1.5 million. Federal funds are also inclusive of approximately \$400,000 in Older Americans Act administrative carryover as well as almost \$700,000 in American Rescue Plan Act administrative dollars.
- **State funding** will increase by approximately \$1.0 million from the 2022-2023 fiscal year budget. The increase is primarily due to a Human Services Transportation TIP set-aside award in the amount of \$900,000 that will assist in funding DRCOG's internal programs that support transportation efforts for vulnerable populations.
- **Local/other funds** reflect a decrease of approximately \$519,000 which is primarily a result of regional data acquisition projects (which includes the Denver Regional Aerial Photography Project) being in the second year of a two-year programmatic cycle. Historically, a larger amount of participant payments are received in the first year of the cycle as compared with the second year.

Additionally, the decrease can be attributed to a decline in employer enrollment in the Guaranteed Ride Home program and vanpool program participation.

- **In-kind services**, where in-kind contributions from volunteers and partnering organizations are reflected, are expected to remain relatively flat.
- **Member contributions** provide match for federal programs and help fund initiatives such as legislative activities and strategic partnerships which assist in increasing overall funding. Contributions also fund Board-related expenditures associated with monthly Board meetings and other committees of the Board, the annual awards celebration, the Board Retreat, quarterly meetings of the region's city and county managers and hosting the annual Small Communities, Hot Topics Forum.

Contributions are calculated annually using the most recent data from the Department of Local Affairs and are based on each member jurisdiction's population and assessed valuation. Contributions for the 2023-2024 fiscal year will increase slightly overall by 3.19%.

Expenditures

- **Personnel expenditures** were budgeted with a 4% market adjustment increase and a 3.5% performance-based merit pool. DRCOG health insurance premiums are renewed on Jan. 1 of each year. The 2023-2024 fiscal year budget includes a 12% increase in medical premiums. There is no budgeted increase for dental.

Due to expanded activities across the organization, there are four new positions budgeted in Administration and Finance. Three of these positions will be fully paid with Federal Transit Administration and Human Services Transportation funding. The onboarding of these new positions will be staggered throughout the year. The 2023-2024 budget also includes four new positions in the Area Agency on Aging. Two of these positions will be paid for with American Rescue Plan Act funds to support DRCOG's respite program and two navigators will be hired using Public Health Workforce grant funds.

- **Contractual** obligations increase in fiscal year 2023-2024 by approximately \$2.9 million. The increase is primarily due to new Human Services Transportation and TIP set-aside projects which account for \$2.2 million. Unified Planning Work Program contractual expenses make up most of the remaining increase and include contracts to support mobility hub planning, corridor studies, traffic data collection and efforts to develop the first phase of a housing transportation coordination plan as well as a Transit and Active Transportation Design Standards Manual for local governments.
- **Non-personnel expenditures** include funds for direct business expenses such as equipment, technology updates, license renewals and training. Business insurance premiums are also included, which total approximately \$195,000. Per the terms of DRCOG's lease agreement, the rent obligation for DRCOG's offices at 1001 17th St. increases slightly in June of each year.
- **Capital outlay** includes \$10,000 for the installation of a secure door to the Area Agency on Aging office space and \$5,000 to replace a number of office chairs that are in decline. There is also \$65,000 set aside for office reconfiguration. Due to agency growth, DRCOG explored multiple options over the last year that would accommodate additional staff in its current office space, including desk hoteling and office space reconfiguration. Such items as lockers, cubicle movement and redesign, space reallocation planning, consulting and technology needs are included in the estimated cost.

daily expense outlays while awaiting grantor payments. DRCOG's auditors have consistently recommended maintaining a fund balance equal to three months' expenditures. Based on the audited fiscal year 2021-2022 statement, expenses and contractual rent obligations totaled nearly \$45.6 million suggesting a fund balance of approximately \$11.4 million. Member contributions collected in excess of program obligations and activities will be applied toward the general fund to replenish its balance and further strengthen DRCOG's overall financial position.

Pass-through funds are estimated to total \$22.9 million. This year's pass-through funds will be received through Older Americans Act/State Funds for Senior Services, Federal Transit Administration 5310 awards and state Human Services Transportation funds.

Respectfully submitted,



Douglas W. Rex
Executive Director

Fund balance

The fiscal year 2023-2024 ending fund balance for DRCOG is projected to be approximately \$11.8 million. Approximately \$2.9 million of the fund balance reflects prepaid funds set aside for specific programs such as regional data acquisition projects, Guaranteed Ride Home and regional vanpool.

Because most of DRCOG's grants operate on a reimbursement basis, substantial working capital must be available to pay contractual obligations and meet

Budget

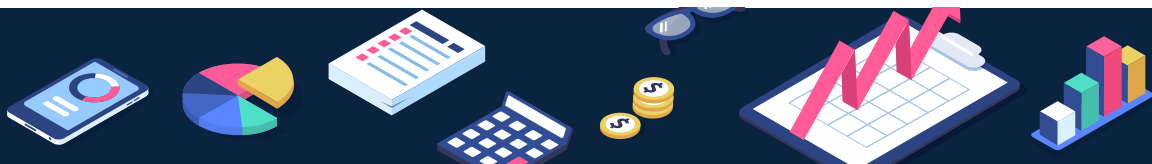


Fiscal year 2023-2024 budget summary and comparison

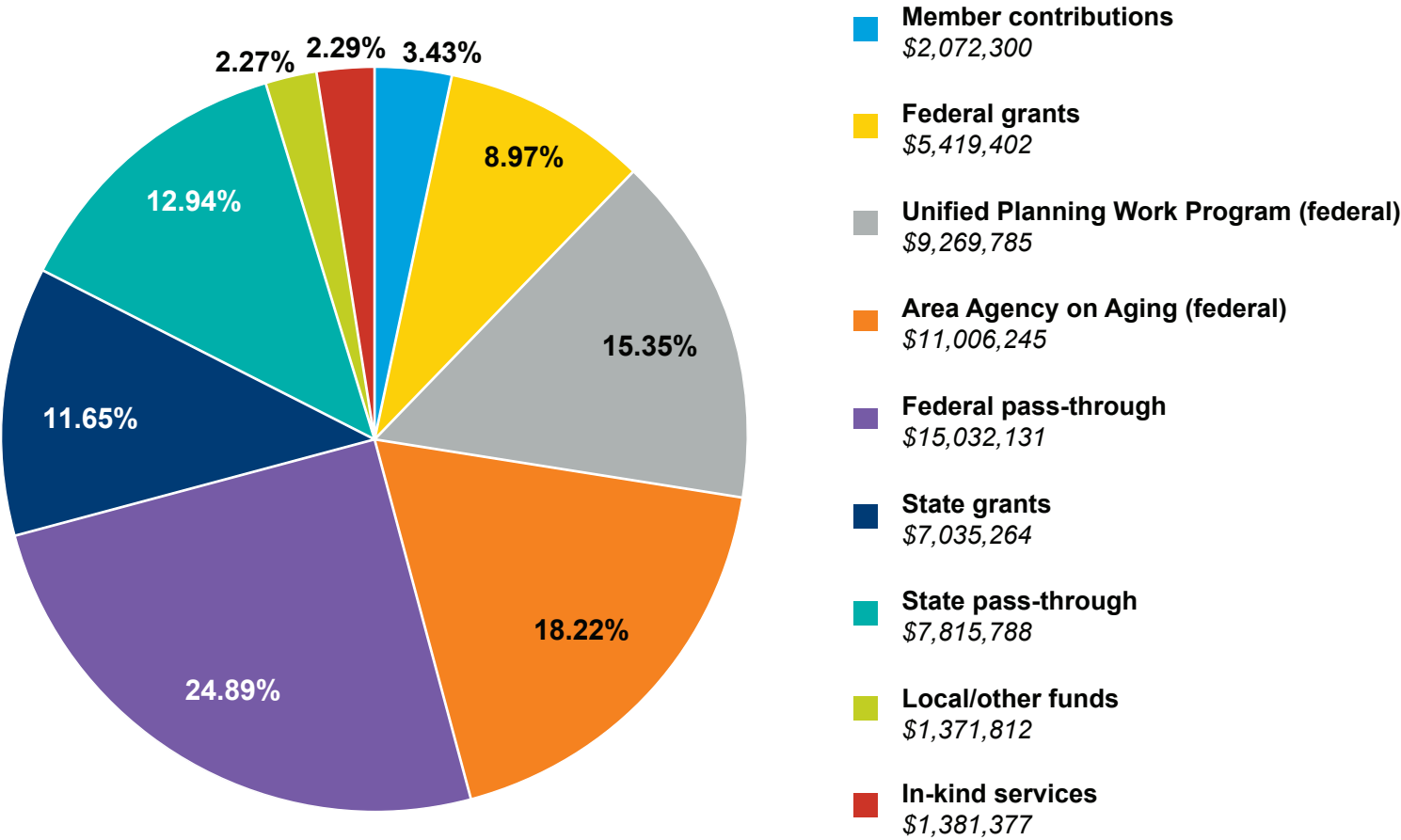
	2021-2022 actuals	2022-2023 budget	2023-2024 budget
Beginning balance ¹	\$12,509,447	\$11,754,369	\$11,754,369
General funds	\$9,436,219	\$8,813,636	\$8,813,636
Program obligations ²	\$3,073,228	\$2,940,733	\$2,940,733
Revenues			
Member contributions	\$1,740,000	\$2,006,200	\$2,072,300
Federal grants	\$14,853,923	\$23,525,019	\$25,695,432
State grants	\$12,867,479	\$6,018,094	\$7,035,264
Local/other funds	\$1,617,738	\$1,931,805	\$1,371,812
In-kind services	\$503,493	\$1,332,970	\$1,381,377
Interest/investment income	-\$203,279	\$30,000	\$30,000
Pass-through grant funds	\$13,483,097	\$23,697,130	\$22,847,919
Total revenues	\$44,862,451	\$58,541,218	\$60,434,104
Total funds available	\$57,371,898	\$70,295,587	\$72,188,473
Expenditures			
Personnel	\$12,691,997	\$16,778,541	\$17,956,470
Contractual services	\$9,134,703	\$12,489,508	\$15,338,800
DRCOG cash	\$503,493	\$1,285,115	\$1,593,386
Non-personnel	\$3,529,080	\$4,220,924	\$2,617,529
Capital outlay	\$0	\$70,000	\$80,000
Pass-through grant funds	\$19,758,256	\$23,697,130	\$22,847,919
Total expenditures	\$45,617,529	\$58,541,218	\$60,404,104
Ending balance	\$11,754,369	\$11,754,369	\$11,784,369
General funds	\$8,813,636	\$8,813,636	\$8,843,636
Program obligations ²	\$2,940,733	\$2,940,733	\$2,940,733

¹ The beginning balance for the fiscal year 2022-2023 budget is based on fiscal year 2021-2022 actuals.

² Program obligations are pre-paid funds set aside for specific programs: Guaranteed Ride Home, regional data acquisition projects, Regional Vanpool, and Veteran Directed Care.



2023-2024 fiscal year funding

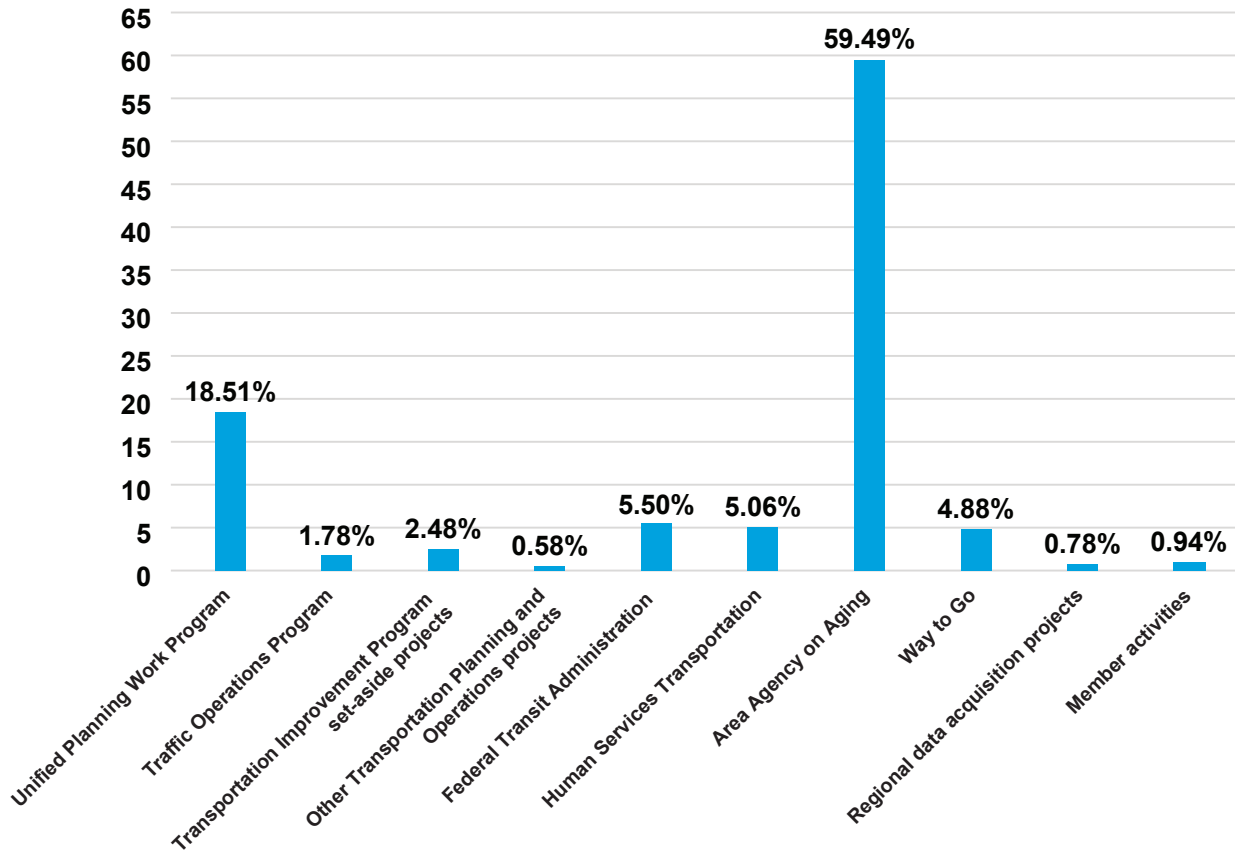


Source	Percent of total	Amount
Member contributions	3.43%	\$2,072,300
Federal grants	8.97%	\$5,419,402
Unified Planning Work Program (federal)	15.35%	\$9,269,785
Area Agency on Aging (federal)	18.22%	\$11,006,245
Federal pass-through	24.89%	\$15,032,131
State grants	11.65%	\$7,035,264
State pass-through	12.94%	\$7,815,788
Local/other funds	2.27%	\$1,371,812
In-kind services	2.29%	\$1,381,377
Projected total funding	100.00%	\$60,404,104

Budget



Fiscal year 2023-2024 expenditures by strategic initiative



Strategic initiative	Percent of total	Amount
Unified Planning Work Program	18.51%	\$11,178,574
Traffic Operations Program	1.78%	\$1,077,926
Transportation Improvement Program set-aside projects	2.48%	\$1,500,000
Other Transportation Planning and Operations projects	0.58%	\$350,929
Federal Transit Administration	5.50%	\$3,319,422
Human Services Transportation	5.06%	\$3,055,663
Area Agency on Aging	59.49%	\$35,932,292
Way to Go	4.88%	\$2,949,954
Regional data acquisition projects	0.78%	\$470,000
Member activities	0.94%	\$569,344
Strategic initiatives total	100.00%	\$60,404,104

Budget



Fiscal year 2023-2024 strategic initiatives funding summary

Project	Federal	Federal pass-through	State	State pass-through	Local/other funds	In-kind services	Service income	Member contributions: cash match and DRCOG funded	Total
Unified Planning Work Program	\$9,269,785					\$1,281,242		\$627,547	\$11,178,574
Traffic Operations Program	\$1,077,926								\$1,077,926
Federal Transit Administration 5310	\$292,914	\$3,026,508							\$3,319,422
Transportation Improvement Plan set-aside projects	\$1,500,000								\$1,500,000
Other Transportation Planning and Operations projects*	\$196,929				\$154,000				\$350,929
Human Services Transportation			\$1,100,000	\$1,955,663					\$3,055,663
Area Agency on Aging	\$11,006,245	\$12,005,623	\$5,935,264	\$5,860,125	\$109,196	\$50,000		\$965,839	\$35,932,292
Way to Go	\$2,351,633				\$548,186	\$50,135			\$2,949,954
Regional data acquisition projects					\$470,000				\$470,000
Member activities					\$90,430			\$478,914	\$569,344
Total funding summary	\$25,695,432	\$15,032,131	\$7,035,264	\$7,815,788	\$1,371,812	\$1,381,377		\$2,072,300	\$60,404,104

*Budgeted projects include Regional Transportation District FasTracks annual review, 405(c) federal safety grant, and Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee.

Funding summary does not reflect \$30,000 in projected interest income



Communities and residents

Collaboration with peer agencies

Ongoing collaboration with forward-thinking groups on topics of regional growth and development, transportation planning and to promote and support communities that facilitate healthy and successful aging.

Population and employment forecast coordination

DRCOG staff will collaborate with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs to improve local, regional and state coordination on accurate, timely and transparent forecasts. The Small Area Forecast Work Group will continue to engage local stakeholders to ensure the incorporation of local plans in regional forecasts.

Metro Vision Idea Exchanges

Metro Vision Idea Exchanges provide a forum where DRCOG's planning partners and other stakeholders share information and ideas, identify local and regional successes worth continuing, as well as emerging and ongoing challenges and actions to address them.

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. Managers identify the topics for conversation and DRCOG staff coordinates the meetings and identifies information and relevant resources.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act regional grants navigator program

Launching in 2023, the program is a partnership among the Governor's Office, the Colorado Office of Economic Development and International Trade, the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, and DRCOG. Using funds made available in SB22-215, DRCOG has contracted to deliver support to its communities and locations with underserved populations to identify opportunities for Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funding for areas such as broadband, water (supply, quality and drought mitigation), transportation, resiliency and disaster preparedness, affordable and secure clean energy, and energy efficiency.

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. As the work environment and commute behavior continues to evolve post-pandemic, Way to Go outreach and marketing will augment promotion of telework, walking and biking with a renewed emphasis on transit, carpooling and vanpooling.

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. DRCOG staff will continue to build on efforts using online tools and new tactics, while initiating new community partnerships and leveraging the Civic Advisory Group to expand the range of voices offering input.





Communities and residents

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.

Boomer Bond

DRCOG's Boomer Bond Assessment tool and online resource directory help communities become more age-friendly. DRCOG will continue to help communities with assessments and technical assistance for implementation strategies.

Smart Region Initiative

DRCOG continues to maintain an active partnership with the Colorado Smart Cities Alliance and other organizations in the Smart City space, including Smart Cities Connect which frequently hosts its annual conference in Denver. DRCOG staff continue to search out best practices and innovations in key focus areas, including mobility, connectivity, health and aging, safety and resilience, and energy. A mostly weekly e-newsletter – the Somewhat Weekly Smart Region Syllabus is available for anyone interested in subscribing to it, including Board directors.

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.

Legislative affairs

DRCOG provides ongoing analysis of the potential effects and benefits of proposed legislation that may accrue for all DRCOG activities, with a specific emphasis on transportation funding and funding and policy for aging services. 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.

Ride Alliance trip exchange

The Area Agency on Aging piloted a transportation trip exchange developed under the Veterans Transportation and Community Living Initiative. Staff and partners are evaluating the exchange's strengths and weaknesses and making adjustments before planning for a full program launch.

Area Plan on Aging webinar series

DRCOG's Area Agency on Aging staff is working with the county councils on aging and city commissions on aging across the region to help them advocate for older adults at the local level. Area Agency on Aging staff will provide a series of webinars to share the 2024-2027 Area Plan on Aging and the results from the recent Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults.

2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Program

Transportation Planning and Operations staff will complete the Transportation Improvement Program calls for projects and programming decisions for fiscal years 2024-2027 and the TIP adoption process including a public hearing and Board action. DRCOG staff will begin administering approved TIP Set-Aside programs.

Advanced Mobility Partnership

DRCOG convenes regional and local participation in the Advanced Mobility Partnership to evaluate, prioritize, coordinate and implement Mobility Choice Blueprint tactics and other transportation technology innovations and initiatives. DRCOG staff is also working with regional partners to explore processes to collect, manage, maintain and share regional transportation data.

Metro Vision

Metro Vision serves as the foundation for DRCOG's regional planning programs and initiatives. In 2023-2024, DRCOG's Board of Directors will consider amendments to align the plan with regional implementation partners' strategies and initiatives.

Communities and residents



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 are eager to take stock of local initiatives and projects that strengthen the Denver region. Staff is refreshing its approach to community visits after a few years of modified engagement due to the pandemic. Staff use community visits as an opportunity to support DRCOG's member governments in their efforts to advance well-planned development, connect them to data and resources to enhance their work, and celebrate their successes.

Through a revamped program, the DRCOG team will visit member government communities and hear from local government staff. The ultimate goals are 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 so it meets the needs of its diverse communities. With the programmatic refresh, DRCOG staff can sustain and enhance its approach as needed.

Older Adult Refugees and Friends

In 2022-2023, the Older Adult Refugees and Friends program will continue to reduce isolation and increase community connections with older adults from refugee and immigrant communities. The program provides educational opportunities, exercise activities and time to socialize. The program will also continue to help older adults access technology and provide case management and resource navigation to ensure older adults from refugee and immigrant communities are connected with resources in their area. In addition, the program will continue to increase understanding of cultural considerations among other DRCOG programs and its contractors by providing training and technical assistance.



Communities and residents

Regional housing strategy

The rising cost of housing is at the forefront of considerations for the Denver region. While several of DRCOG's member governments are assessing housing needs and planning for future housing supply, many solutions may require or benefit from regional coordination. Staff expects to help develop a regional housing strategy focused on future housing investments to anticipate the changing needs across the region and provide pathways shared among local partners.

DRCOG's unique position as a local government convener, steward of regional growth forecasts and facilitator of transportation investments provides a solid foundation for developing collaborative approaches. As DRCOG staff continues to reassess forecasted growth, its local governments need well-designed considerations to address diverse and evolving housing needs and a range of related issues. A regional housing strategy will help local governments collaboratively leverage existing and planned investments in transportation, support an aging population, and efficiently consider the allocation of resources to ensure the region's residents can find a place to call home.

The tasks ahead are complicated yet achievable. Together with the DRCOG Board of Directors, staff will develop a scope for a regional housing strategy, identify and secure funding, and develop a shared work plan for effective implementation.



Photo courtesy of Regional Transportation District.



Communities and residents

Regional corridor plans

DRCOG will coordinate and lead multimodal corridor planning efforts for priority corridors identified in the 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan. These efforts include planning for regional bus rapid transit projects.

2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan

DRCOG will conduct an amendment cycle for the 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan that will include considering any jurisdiction or agency-requested plan amendments.

Community-based transportation plans

DRCOG staff will work with member governments and community groups on planning efforts to improve mobility options for low-income and disadvantaged populations. The grassroots effort will focus on identifying local communities' most important transportation challenges and developing strategies to overcome them. The first planning effort will be complete in fall 2023. DRCOG staff will also conduct the next selection process for two additional planning efforts.

Regional data acquisition projects

DRCOG facilitates and manages cost-effective partnerships and projects that acquire foundational datasets including imagery, lidar, planimetric data and land cover in support of local and regional planning.

Civic Academy

DRCOG continues this valuable program, formerly known as Citizens' Academy, to build civic capacity and engagement. Through the seven-week course, DRCOG staff facilitate education and discussions about essential regional issues like transportation, growth and economic vitality, housing, civic engagement and more.

Innovative mobility

The Innovative Mobility Transportation Improvement Program Set-Aside facilitates planning for and developing innovative solutions for mobility challenges throughout the region, with a particular focus on innovative mobility preparedness, planning, demonstrations and pilots. Through a cohort model, the program engages regional partners to prepare and invest in innovative mobility solutions. The set-aside program will identify and deploy innovative mobility solutions throughout the region.

Technical assistance program

DRCOG provides resources, data analysis, and best-practice guidance to incorporate inclusive and equitable approaches to community planning. DRCOG staff will continue to offer technical assistance to support communities with plan implementation.

Regional Transportation Demand Management Strategic Plan

DRCOG staff and partners involved in developing the Regional Transportation Demand Management Strategic Plan are evaluating existing programs, practices, partnerships and policies and identifying and prioritizing actions and activities to support transportation demand management in the Denver region. Transportation demand management includes strategies, activities and investments that help people use the transportation system more efficiently to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. Through its Transportation Planning and Operations division and Communications and Marketing's Way to Go program, DRCOG coordinates regional transportation demand management investments and behavior change efforts in the Denver region.



Financial stewardship

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 July for the prior fiscal year.

DRCOG budget

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

Compliance

To ensure the integrity of grant operations, DRCOG has added a new position (fiscal specialist, grant compliance) to the Administration and Finance team. The position conducts Area Agency on Aging field audits to ensure compliance (both programmatic and fiscal) by DRCOG contractors. In fiscal year 2023-2024, the accounting department will add an additional position to conduct internal audits of programs across DRCOG. The position will identify and address any potential weaknesses in DRCOG's fiscal operations.



Business operations

Increase Area Agency on Aging funding

Diversifying funding continues to be a priority for the Area Agency on Aging and essential to keep pace with the growing demand for services. Staff will partner with Denver Health to improve health outcomes for patients by connecting them with needed community services like nutrition, transportation and in-home services. The Area Agency on Aging will also partner with other health providers and payers and work with national partners to advocate for including payment for community services in Medicare.

Board collaboration assessment

An annual improvement activity, DRCOG's Board of Directors uses the Board Collaboration Assessment to provide feedback on collaboration with directors, committee structure and leadership.

Geographic information systems data development

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

Regional Crash Consortium

DRCOG staff will 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.

Accessibility improvements

DRCOG will continue to improve the accessibility of its services, programs and activities, and will review and update practices related to internal and external communications. As outlined in the new state requirements, staff will develop a plan and begin implementation to ensure better access by July 2024.

Website refresh project

DRCOG staff will complete redevelopment and redesign of DRCOG's primary website and consolidate other web properties. The web refresh project will raise DRCOG's public visibility, improve access to its services and programs, and improve the security of its digital properties.

Virtual server cloud project

Moving local virtual servers to the cloud will enhance staff's teleworking experience and reduce operating costs. Using cloud-based virtual servers aligns with DRCOG's business continuity strategy in the event of an emergency.

Area Agency on Aging infrastructure improvements

In 2022, DRCOG worked with a vendor to build ASPIRE, a data collection and reporting system, to reduce the administrative burden on staff and improve data quality. DRCOG received a SB21-290 grant in 2023 to add functionality to ASPIRE — specifically, the ability to track how often referrals lead to services provided to clients. Additionally, staff will implement a new contractual payment and tracking system.

Story maps

DRCOG's staff develops data visualizations to engage stakeholders around planning and transportation topics, using informative and easy-to-explore web maps and infographics. In 2021, staff added story maps to DRCOG's visualization toolbox, launching a Complete Streets story map. Story maps enhance spatial analysis with narrative and photography to provide context to what might otherwise seem like abstract concepts. During the 2023-2024 fiscal year, DRCOG staff will develop a Regional Vision Zero story map to help residents, planning professionals and elected officials better understand the context around the region's High-Injury Network and critical corridors.

Office reconfiguration

The post-pandemic hybrid working environment at DRCOG continues to evolve with the recent adoption of a desk hoteling policy. Having only a portion of DRCOG staff in the office on any given day has allowed DRCOG to add staff without adding desks or requiring more physical space. Staff are also exploring how the hybrid work arrangement might facilitate development of a different office layout to accommodate more team interaction across and within divisions.

Skilled workforce



Professional certification

In order to support staff's professional development and enhance networking opportunities that benefit the organization, DRCOG reimburses up to \$400 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.

Third Thursday Lunch and Learn

Once-a-month lunchtime learning opportunities provide DRCOG staff with a midday diversion that provides interesting, intellectually stimulating presentations on a variety of topics from DRCOG partners, Board members and subject-matter experts

Training and development

DRCOG has a legacy of investing in its staff through training and development opportunities. Auzmor is a web-based learning management system that employees can use as their schedule allows, as opposed to during a set time in a classroom or meeting space for training. DRCOG also partnered with Go1, the world's largest training content hub. Go1 maintains over 100,000 training classes from which DRCOG's Human Resources division, division directors and managers have developed a custom training library specific to employee needs.

Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey

An annual improvement opportunity, the Employee Engagement and Satisfaction Survey facilitates staff feedback on their overall experiences at DRCOG, their work groups, supervisor, division director and the executive director.

Equity Action Committee

DRCOG's Equity Action Committee is an internally focused advisory group that works closely with Human Resources and senior management on diversity and equity topics.

Peer resource exchange

After successfully implementing Microsoft Teams during the pandemic for remote collaboration, staff are further leveraging the platform to share tools, resources and best practices with each other.

Continuing education

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

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

Internship site

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.





Licensed clinical social worker sponsorship

DRCOG offers a licensed clinical social worker sponsorship program to eligible employees, affording them the opportunity to advance their careers while working in their field.

The candidate must hold a master of social work degree and complete a rigorous training program consisting of 3,360 hours of work over a two-year period and 96 hours of supervision by a licensed clinical social worker, of which 48 hours must be engaged in one-on-one practice with the supervisor. Candidates are then eligible to take the licensed clinical social worker exam.

Generally, individuals who are interested in becoming certified need to independently find a qualified sponsor and pay them for their services. Through the sponsorship program, DRCOG is investing in its candidate employees while offering staff members who already hold licensed clinical social worker designations the opportunity to help their coworkers and earn an additional financial incentive for their added work.

This program, which was suggested by DRCOG employees, serves as a differentiator when recruiting staff for the Area Agency on Aging program.



Skilled workforce



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. A variety of events are organized 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 have contributed hundreds of hours each year to "make life better" across the region by supporting organizations such as Café 180, Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado, Frontline Farming, Bienvenidos Food Bank and Project C.U.R.E. In addition, staff comes together for meaningful activities like holiday card-making and gift-giving for veterans and older adults.

While the pandemic limited the number of opportunities available for in-person volunteering, COG Cares returned re-energized with a full slate of activities planned for the coming fiscal year, including opportunities to help with homebuilding, park maintenance and improvement, preparing and delivering meals, and food drives.





1001 17th Street
Denver, CO 80202



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PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN PEOPLE-CENTERED PLANNING, PROJECTS AND SERVICES

TABLE OF CONTENTS

A message from the executive director.....	4
I. PUBLIC GUIDE.....	5
How to use this document	5
Stay informed	6
Committees	6
Attend a meeting	7
Connect with us.....	7
Major plans and programs	8
Get involved	9
Let us know your thoughts	9
II. INTRODUCTION: DRCOG AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT	10
Let's get started!	10
Development of the public engagement plan	10
A refresher: The Denver region and DRCOG	10
What is DRCOG?	13
Is DRCOG federal, state or local?.....	13
How is DRCOG funded?	13
What does DRCOG do?	13
Mission statement	14
DRCOG's commitment to engagement.....	14
Principles	15
Early engagement.....	15
Ongoing engagement.....	15
Timely and adequate notice	15
Consistent access to information	15
Invitation for public review and comment	15
Invitation and consideration of perspectives from those traditionally under-represented	16
Regular review of public engagement processes	16
III. PREPARING FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: THE PROCESS	16
Purpose and application	16
Building upon existing relationships.....	17
The role of DRCOG employees in public engagement	17
Steps for public engagement.....	19
Step 1: Determine state, federal and funding partner minimum requirements.....	19
Step 2. Identify the overall goal of the project.....	20
Step 3. Identify the purpose for inviting public participation.....	20
Step 4. Determine the appropriate level of public engagement	20
Step 5. Identify potential participants	21
Step 6. Identify tools and techniques	21
Step 7. Implement public engagement activities	22
Step 8. Measure, demonstrate and evaluate results of engagement.....	22

IV. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING	22
Introduction	22
Federal and state regulations for transportation planning	23
Low-income communities and minority communities	23
Improving access to services for individuals with limited English proficiency	23
Americans with Disabilities Act	24
Transportation planning process and public involvement	24
Transportation planning committee structure	24
Composition and responsibilities of the DRCOG Board of Directors and transportation committees	25
Reaching community members, stakeholders and interest groups: transportation planning	26
Goals	26
Broadening public engagement efforts	27
Coordination of public participation	27
Regular opportunities for public comment in transportation planning activities	27
DRCOG transportation planning process meetings – standing meeting times and dates	27
Policy action process for transportation planning	27
Policy action steps	27
Agency integration for transportation planning	28
Key transportation planning activities	28
Table: Key planning activities and public engagement methods	29
Documenting transportation planning activities	30
Distribution of materials related to transportation planning	30
Notification of activities related to transportation planning	30
Future measurements and reviews for transportation planning projects	30
V. IMPLEMENTATION	32
Techniques	32
Tools	32
The medium is not the message	32
Potential participants	32
Demonstrating results and evaluation	33
Summary: A place to begin	33
VI. APPENDICES	34
Appendix A: Federal transportation planning regulations	34
Appendix B: Project Purpose Form	39
Appendix C: Potential participants	41
Appendix D: Techniques for public engagement	43
Appendix E: Tools for public engagement	50
Appendix F: Evaluation criteria	54

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A MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Great places don't just happen. DRCOG has been bringing local governments together for more than 60 years to work on some of the region's most challenging issues. We're the third oldest council of governments in the nation, and since inception, we've recognized the need for public engagement and participation in our work. Because DRCOG is a voluntary association of city, town and county governments, our Board of Directors is made up of people their communities have elected to represent them. As such, DRCOG is, by our very nature – accountable to all residents of the Denver metro area. The people who live, work and play here have varying needs and priorities related to transportation, growth and development, aging in our communities and a host of other important issues. Their voices must be heard if we're to make this the best region for everyone. While this plan serves first and foremost as a guide for DRCOG

employees, I hope it demonstrates — to anyone who might read it — our organization's commitment to meaningful public engagement and participation.

This document's title, "People-centered planning, projects and services," serves as a reminder to keep the best interests of our residents at the forefront. There's no question that DRCOG is well-known for our region's ambitious, aspirational plans and involvement in high-profile infrastructure projects. It's my hope that this plan strengthens our reputation for meaningful engagement with the many and diverse people who make their homes in our region.

Douglas W. Rex
Executive Director

I. PUBLIC GUIDE

How to Use This Document

Have you ever wondered how regional planning choices are made? Or how you or your organization can be part of the process?

This document is a guidebook to help DRCOG staff plan and implement effective public engagement, as well as a statement of DRCOG's commitment to providing our region's residents with opportunities to participate in regional planning decisions. While it is written for DRCOG staff, it will also help you understand our guiding principles, goals and implementation strategies for ensuring effective engagement.

We encourage you to participate in the discussion and decision-making processes for DRCOG's work. There are a range of opportunities for the general public and regional stakeholders to participate in DRCOG's plans and programs, and to obtain information. These first few pages summarize current resources and ways to stay informed and get involved in what DRCOG does to support our region.

Stay Informed

COMMITTEES

DRCOG's Board of Directors is informed by its committees, which involve many individuals, groups and organizations in DRCOG's decision-making process.

Advisory Committee on Aging

The Advisory Committee on Aging focuses on issues that pertain to the region's rapidly growing aging population.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is made up of the current Board officers and the executive director. The group is the primary executive leadership of DRCOG, providing guidance to the Board and to the executive director.

Finance and Budget Committee

The Finance and Budget Committee manages the administrative business of DRCOG concerning finances, contracts and related matters.

Performance and Engagement Committee

The Performance and Engagement Committee manages the administrative business of DRCOG concerning the performance and evaluation of the executive director, the onboarding of new Board directors and related matters.

Regional Transportation Committee

The Regional Transportation Committee administers the region's transportation planning process. As the metropolitan planning organization, DRCOG is responsible for the lead role in transportation planning in the Denver region. The Regional Transportation Committee brings together representatives of the region's transportation planning partners.

Transportation Advisory Committee

The Transportation Advisory Committee assists the Board of Directors and the Regional Transportation Committee by reviewing the transportation planning process, advising on methods of planning and implementation, working with DRCOG staff to develop policy options, and making recommendations to the Regional Transportation Committee.



Attend a Meeting

Most of DRCOG's meetings are open to the public. Interested community members are encouraged to attend. Meetings of the Advisory Committee on Aging, Regional Transportation Committee and Transportation Advisory Committee always include time for public comments. All meetings are listed on the event calendar at drcog.org.

Connect With Us

Keep up to date with DRCOG's work by following the organization's social media accounts.



Major Plans and Programs

These regional plans and programs are the primary focus of DRCOG's policy work, with Metro Vision serving as the policy framework for most decisions. Future updates of these plans will involve a number of opportunities for public input and will be guided by individual engagement strategies developed using the principles and steps outlined in this public engagement plan. Information about how to get involved with future updates of these plans and programs can be found online at drcog.org.

Metro Vision

Metro Vision is our region's plan for continued success. The most basic purpose of the regional plan is to safeguard for coming generations the region's many desirable qualities by calling on all of us to become active participants in planning for our present needs with an eye toward our desired future. Through Metro Vision, cities and counties throughout the region work to preserve what's great about our past, protect what we love about the Denver we live in today, and come together to create a better future for ourselves, our children, and the people who will come to join us here.

Regional Transportation Plan

As the federally designated transportation planning agency for the Denver region, DRCOG develops the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan (MVRTP) to guide the region's future multimodal transportation system. The MVRTP is integrated closely with and helps implement DRCOG's Metro Vision plan. The plan presents the region's unconstrained vision for a

multimodal transportation system needed to respond to future growth and demographic trends. It also presents a financially constrained perspective of the system.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Denver region implements the fiscally constrained short-range transportation plan through DRCOG's Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP identifies all current federally funded transportation projects to be completed in the Denver region over a four-year period. At the DRCOG table, local governments collaboratively decide on a process and criteria for including projects in the TIP and awarding DRCOG-controlled federal funds, which allows the region to set and agree upon its transportation priorities.

Area Plan on Aging

The Area Plan on Aging guides the work of the DRCOG Area Agency on Aging for a four-year period. It reflects the needs of our region, highlights our service goals and demonstrates outcomes, strategies and measures that will be used to evaluate progress and the success of our work. The plan is carried out through programs provided directly by the Area Agency on Aging and through contracts with community-based agencies to provide a continuum of services.

Other plans and initiatives

In addition to the plans described above, DRCOG has several other important adopted plans and initiatives that guide our region, with additional new and innovative plans continually under development.

Get Involved

Let us know your thoughts

We want to hear from you on the work we're doing! Share your thoughts or ideas on any of DRCOG's projects at any time by:



MAIL

Send written comments to DRCOG, 1001 17th Street, Suite 700, Denver, CO 80202



EMAIL

Send us an email at drcog@drcog.org



ATTEND A MEETING

Come to any of our public meetings – all events are posted on our website at drcog.org

When a major plan is presented for public review or has an upcoming public hearing, the DRCOG website will provide information about how to provide comments for that document and details about attending the hearing.



II. INTRODUCTION: DRCOG AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Let's Get Started!

Public engagement and participation is essential to our mission. This plan will help ensure DRCOG:

- seeks early and ongoing input from people and organizations throughout the region
- is responsive
- addresses ideas and concerns raised

While this plan's primary purpose is to serve as a guidebook for staff, it also stands as a written declaration to our region's residents: "We take meaningful public engagement seriously." It also documents the actions to be carried out by DRCOG to ensure that opportunities exist for the public to be involved specifically in transportation planning activities, pursuant to 23 CFR part 450.316 of Metropolitan Transportation Planning and Programming and 40 CFR part 93.105(a) Conformity to State or Federal Implementation Plans of Transportation Plans, Programs, and Projects. In addition, this plan responds to the Federal Highway Administration's and Federal Transit Administration's recommendations from their most recent four-year planning process review, completed in 2016.

We want to be sure that DRCOG employees feel confident when called upon to represent our organization's role within the region and invite community participation in our activities. So this plan begins with an overview of our organization and a statement of our commitment to engagement, along with guiding principles. It then outlines how to prepare for public engagement and presents an eight-step process. The fourth section, "Public engagement in regional transportation planning," provides a detailed description of engagement efforts specific to transportation planning. The document concludes with an overview of implementation techniques and tools. Detailed implementation information is provided in the appendices, which can be customized and adapted for each project.

While this plan contains resources and a guide to inform our efforts, only follow-through and commitment by DRCOG employees will ensure success. And ultimately, it's a team effort with support from senior staff as well as resources throughout the organization, including an engagement specialist.

Development of the Public Engagement Plan

This plan builds upon and replaces the Public Involvement in Regional Transportation Planning document that was adopted in 2010. Throughout 2017-2018, DRCOG staff developed this updated public engagement plan that extends beyond transportation to encompass the wide range of DRCOG's work functions. The draft plan was available online for public review and comment from Jan. 17 through March 20, 2019. The comment period included:

- posting the draft plan for online review and comment at DRCOG's website, drcog.org
- notifying the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration of the opportunity to comment on the draft plan
- providing a promotion toolkit to the Board of Directors to promote the plan within their networks
- introducing the plan as informational items to the Transportation Advisory Committee and Regional Transportation Committee
- providing the opportunity to comment at a public hearing held on March 20, 2019, at the Board of Directors meeting
- publishing a legal notice of public hearing and public comment period in The Denver Post
- announcing the public comment period and public hearing on DRCOG's Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn accounts

Revising the Public Engagement Plan

Periodically, as needs and conditions change, it becomes necessary to revise the plan. For the purposes of this plan, there are two forms of revisions, an administrative modification and an amendment.

An administrative modification may involve any revision of references to applicable regulations; misspellings; omissions; or clerical/typographical errors. These revisions do not affect the guidelines for public noticing or adoption/amendment of plans and programs. For this type of revision, the process does not involve any formal action by the Board of Directors. DRCOG staff is responsible for preparing the administrative change to the document, submitting the prepared material to necessary state and federal partners, and updating DRCOG's website.

An amendment includes any substantive changes. An

amendment requires forty-five (45) days of public review and comment and formal action by the Board of Directors.

For both administrative modifications and amendments, DRCOG staff is responsible for preparing the change to the document, submitting the prepared material to necessary state and federal partners, and updating DRCOG's website.

This plan was last amended in 2021 with a public comment and review period.

A Refresher: The Denver Region and DRCOG

The Denver metropolitan area is a thriving region with more than 3 million people living in a wide range of places – from open, relatively undeveloped spaces to the lively, dense cities of its core and fast-growing suburban communities. Together these communities, spread across nine-plus counties, make up the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG). The region's scenic setting, climate and economic vitality have long attracted residents, and years of careful planning and a collaborative Western spirit have contributed to making metro Denver one of the best places to live in the country.

At the heart of the region's vitality are planning activities that guide how we grow while protecting and enhancing our quality of life. And grow we will, from our current population to roughly 4 million by 2040. In addition to the rise in raw numbers of residents, the area is undergoing a transformation, becoming increasingly diverse with especially fast growth in key demographic groups, including



our aging residents and minority populations.

Good planning is ultimately rooted in the needs of the people, even though conversations around growth, development, transportation and demographics may seem to focus on the physical elements of infrastructure – the roadways and built environment. As the designated planning agency for the greater Denver area, DRCOG is committed to hearing the full range of voices at the table.

DRCOG is responsive to the people of the region, provides clear and concise information and addresses the ideas and concerns raised by members of the community

WHAT IS DRCOG?

In 1955, when Denver Mayor Quigg Newton invited fellow elected officials from Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder and Jefferson counties to talk about joint issues and concerns, the Denver region was experiencing a post-World War II growth spurt. These leaders decided working together to enhance our region's quality of life was a much better approach than going it alone, and created what would become the Denver Regional Council of Governments to foster collaboration and cooperation and to speak with one voice.

DRCOG endures today as one of the nation's three oldest councils of governments. Representatives of our region's counties, cities and towns work together to make life better. They are guided by the Metro Vision regional growth and development plan, which defines goals and actions needed to ensure the region remains a great place to live, work and play.

- DRCOG is a council of governments, serving as a planning organization, technical assistance provider and forum for visionary local member governments.
- DRCOG functions as a regional planning commission per Colorado state statute and prepares the plan for the physical development of the region, known as Metro Vision.
- DRCOG is the region's federally designated area agency on aging.

- DRCOG serves as the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the region's transportation planning process.

DRCOG's planning area consists of Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, Gilpin and Jefferson counties, the City and County of Broomfield and the City and County of Denver, and southwest Weld County.

DRCOG creates the long-range development plan for the region, called Metro Vision, and facilitates its implementation. The current version looks out to the year 2040 and was unanimously adopted by DRCOG's Board of Directors in early 2017. Metro Vision is dynamic and evolves as conditions and priorities change. The region's progress toward outcomes and targets are being measured as a shared effort among the area's communities. The region's success in meeting its aspirational goals depends on many partners, contributing by various methods and at different speeds.

In addition to Metro Vision, the organization constantly works to help shape the region in positive ways and fulfill its mission.

IS DRCOG FEDERAL, STATE OR LOCAL?

DRCOG is a nonprofit, voluntary association of local governments in the Denver region. Although DRCOG is a public agency, it isn't a unit of government. DRCOG does not have statutory authority to require local governments to be members or to follow its plans. DRCOG also can't tax, issue bonds or legislate.

HOW IS DRCOG FUNDED?

Federal dollars constitute the majority of DRCOG's funding sources. The work of DRCOG's Area Agency on Aging is primarily funded through the Older Americans Act and the Older Coloradans Act. Participating member jurisdictions pay dues (based on their population and assessed valuation), which contribute 7 percent of DRCOG's budget and provide important local matching funds for federal funds. In addition, the dues facilitate the organization's state and federal legislative advocacy efforts. The DRCOG Board of Directors adopts its operating budget each fall.

WHAT DOES DRCOG DO?

DRCOG has three major and distinct areas of focus: transportation and mobility; regional planning and development; and aging and disability services. The

organization's regional reach includes a wide range of projects and partnerships. Its staff represents a breadth and depth of expertise, maintains connections with diverse professional networks and interacts with various stakeholder groups and members of the public. DRCOG influences the lives of the region's residents. Residents are affected by DRCOG's work when they travel within the region by car, bus, train, foot or bike; when they visit a neighboring community to use a park, retail establishment, service, restaurant or arts venue; and when a loved one 60 or older needs a little assistance to live safely and independently at home. Because the people whose lives are affected by DRCOG represent the diversity of the entire region, the organization involves a range of public representatives in its activities.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Denver Regional Council of Governments is a planning organization where local governments collaborate to establish guidelines, set policy and allocate funding in the areas of:

- transportation and personal mobility
- growth and development
- aging and disability resources

DRCOG prepares plans to improve transportation and mobility, to guide growth and development and to enhance and protect the lives of some of our community's most vulnerable populations.

The Board of Directors, committees and working groups convene to establish policy and to provide guidance and direction in a host of areas. DRCOG staff works with local governments across the region to develop strategic and tactical approaches to some of the area's biggest challenges. Similarly, the organization coordinates delivery of critical services such as meals and transportation for aging Coloradans, helps veterans stay safe and independent at home, and assists communities in becoming more livable for residents of all ages.

DRCOG's Commitment to Engagement

This public engagement plan provides the vision, the framework and the process for meaningfully engaging the public in regional decision-making.

DRCOG is committed to transparency and access to services, information and the decision-making process for people throughout the region. Because planning

DRCOG is committed to meaningful public participation.

is about people and the communities they call home, it is about where and how the region's residents live, work and play, making life better for people of all ages, incomes and abilities. Community participation improves the relevance of plans, policies, services and projects, and helps DRCOG meet people's needs today and into the future.

Throughout this plan, there is an emphasis on engaging individuals and segments of the public who are directly affected by a project. DRCOG staff is encouraged to both reach out to groups of people traditionally under-represented and significantly affected by the decisions a project entails. However, leveraging DRCOG's existing, robust relationships with the jurisdictions where the members of the public reside will also be useful. Many DRCOG employees (especially within Regional Planning and Development and Transportation Planning and Operations divisions) are in regular conversation with jurisdiction staff. Colleagues should approach one another for their insights and for help reaching out to their established connections at member governments. In addition, employees in the Executive Office can help discern the best ways to reach out to elected officials from our member governments.

DRCOG is committed to an engagement model that fosters shared problem-solving, supportive partnerships and reciprocal relationships. DRCOG believes that the region's decision-makers need to hear its residents' full range of perspectives to better understand issues, explore alternatives and create a shared action plan. Through the principles outlined in this plan, DRCOG intends to demonstrate that it provides clear and concise information, is responsive to the people of the region and addresses ideas and concerns raised.



TIP: Regardless of whether public engagement is sought around a project, program, initiative, decision or project phase, this plan will use the word “project” throughout.

Principles

To support the commitment described above, DRCOG uses the following principles to guide engagement:

EARLY ENGAGEMENT

DRCOG engages the public toward the beginning of each project, or when members of the public can have the greatest effect on shaping the direction of DRCOG's efforts.

ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

DRCOG engages the public throughout development of a project, or at specific phases identified early in the process. DRCOG provides members of the public with clear and specific timelines and methods for providing their perspectives.

TIMELY AND ADEQUATE NOTICE

DRCOG ensures that the public receives timely and adequate notice of opportunities for public engagement.

CONSISTENT ACCESS TO INFORMATION

DRCOG follows state, federal and funding partner requirements, as well as organization policies, regarding making supporting material available for topics on which it has invited members of the public to provide their perspectives.

INVITATION FOR PUBLIC REVIEW AND COMMENT

DRCOG invites public review of, and comment on, essential plans and programs. Invitations will be made no later than is required by federal and state requirements or funding partners (typically 30 to 45 days). For projects lacking specific partner requirements for public engagement, DRCOG will determine the appropriate length of the review period. Copies of public review drafts are made available at DRCOG's office and website. Comments are accepted by mail, email and via drcog.org or other online engagement tools. Although DRCOG maintains a robust social media presence and promotes opportunities for public involvement through social media, comments are not directly accepted through social media (such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram).

Current Plans and Programs With Specific Public Engagement Requirements

The following is a list of current plans and programs with established public engagement processes:

PRODUCT	PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD	PUBLIC HEARING
Active Transportation Plan	✓	
Area Agency on Aging four-year plan	✓	✓
Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan (MVRTP), major updates and major amendments	✓	✓
Metro Vision, major updates and amendments	✓	✓
MVRTP and/or TIP-associated documents demonstrating conformity with state air quality implementation plans	✓	✓
other various regional or modal transportation plans	✓	
public engagement plan	✓	✓
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)	✓	✓

Public Hearing

When DRCOG conducts a formal public hearing, members of the public may testify for a maximum of three minutes each. Action is typically scheduled for the next regular meeting of the Board of Directors. Some plans and projects are also discussed in committee meetings prior to the formal public hearing. Public hearings are typically held in-person, but may be held virtually if necessary. Virtual platforms must be able to accommodate public attendance using either a computer (or similar device) or a telephone.

Consideration of Public Input

Comments collected during formal public comment periods and hearings are provided in their entirety and with staff responses to the Board of Directors when it is slated to take action. The format of these responses may vary based on the project, but will typically be incorporated into a matrix. In other instances, DRCOG balances its employees' professional expertise and technical analysis with perspectives gathered from the public during project development.

Response to Public Input

For formal comment periods and hearings, all comments are provided to the Board of Directors for consideration. During other opportunities for the public to provide their perspectives, DRCOG responds as is appropriate to the situation.

INVITATION AND CONSIDERATION OF PERSPECTIVES FROM THOSE TRADITIONALLY UNDER-REPRESENTED

DRCOG invites participation by members of populations traditionally under-represented in regional decision-making processes due to demographic, geographic or economic circumstances, to allow DRCOG to appropriately consider their needs. Such populations include, but are not limited to, individuals who speak languages other than English, individuals representing diverse cultural backgrounds, low-income individuals, people with disabilities, older adults and young adults. DRCOG uses demographic and stakeholder analysis to identify communities for projects for which it seeks public engagement. Specific engagement strategies for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved groups are detailed in Appendices D, E and F of this document. DRCOG's Limited English Proficiency plan guides staff in providing customer service to, and facilitating participation by, members of the public whose proficiency in English is limited.

REGULAR REVIEW OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PROCESSES

DRCOG regularly reviews the implementation of this plan and the ability of the principles, steps, techniques and tools in this document to advance meaningful public engagement. DRCOG will use a variety of means to determine the effectiveness of engagement strategies including data collection, feedback from participants of public events, review of attendance at public events and evaluation of the implementation of a variety of techniques and tools. The outcomes of these evaluations will inform future engagement, and successful activities will be continued while those that underperform will be eliminated. A routine evaluation summary of engagement activities will also be compiled to share results of the organization's recent engagement efforts and review areas of success and potential improvement.

In addition to DRCOG's commitment to continuous improvement and evaluation of its public engagement activities, the organization's efforts are periodically reviewed by funding partners and agencies such as the

Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration during every four-year MPO planning process certification reviews.



TIP: See Communications and Marketing for help:

- placing timely public notices in mass and niche media (for example, publications serving speakers of languages other than English)
- ensuring that media alerts and releases are distributed to diverse news outlets
- posting announcements to DRCOG's website and social media properties

III. PREPARING FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT: THE PROCESS

Purpose and Application

The primary purpose of this plan is to help DRCOG employees prepare for — and invite the region's residents to share their perspectives on — essential regional issues. This plan also documents the organizational commitment to a robust process of public engagement and outreach. In addition, it outlines the actions to be carried out by DRCOG to ensure that opportunities exist for the public to be involved in transportation planning activities, as required by federal regulations.

Among other projects, DRCOG uses public engagement processes to guide development of its:

- Metro Vision, the region's plan for physical development
- Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan
- Transportation Improvement Program
- Area Plan on Aging, the four-year plan for delivering aging services



Learn more about DRCOG's relationships with the Regional Transportation District and the Colorado Department of Transportation, and other regional transportation partners, in Section III: "Agency integration for transportation planning" (page 28).

As part of its designation as a metropolitan planning organization, DRCOG's Board of Directors allocates and programs federal and state transportation funds throughout the region. Like its MPO counterparts nationwide, DRCOG is required to adhere to federal and state regulations. Throughout this document, look for the symbol for more information about public engagement as it relates specifically to transportation planning. Section IV, "Public engagement in regional transportation planning" (page 22) covers topics related to state and federal transportation planning regulations in more detail.

For projects without partner or funding agency requirements for public engagement, DRCOG will pursue appropriate levels of public engagement, especially when projects affect older adults, specific ethnic or language groups, youth, people with disabilities, people with low incomes and those previously under-represented in the region's planning processes.



For more information on the federal and state requirements for transportation planning, see "Federal and state regulations for transportation planning" (page 23).

Building Upon Existing Relationships

By following the practices recommended in this plan and reaching out across organizational divisions, DRCOG staff can go beyond existing networks. The practices outlined in this plan may help staff identify regional residents who may never have been invited to participate in previous decision-making efforts, or who are valued contributors to another division's programs but who are unfamiliar with the entirety of DRCOG's activities.

In addition to relationships with our member governments, DRCOG also maintains robust relationships that include, but are not limited to, the following organizations that may also be important partners in public engagement activities:

- area agencies on aging
- Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
- chambers of commerce
- Colorado Department of Human Services
- Colorado Department of Local Affairs
- Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

- Colorado Department of Transportation
- Colorado Governor's Office of Information Technology
- community-based nonprofit service providers
- Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council
- Department of Veterans Affairs
- Federal Highway Administration
- Federal Transit Administration
- health care providers
- member governments
- Regional Air Quality Council
- Regional Transportation District
- transportation providers
- transportation management associations
- U.S. Census Bureau

The Role of DRCOG Employees in Public Engagement

In many circumstances, DRCOG staff for whom public engagement is not an explicit part of their job description will be called upon to provide their professional expertise to support formal and informal engagement. Roles of employees related to public engagement are ultimately at the discretion of their supervisor. The engagement work for each project will typically be planned and implemented by a project team (formal or informal) that includes the project manager, the engagement specialist, and other members of DRCOG staff as needed. Although any employee may take on (or be assigned) roles related to gathering public input and fostering public engagement, there are staff who have formal roles related to such endeavors.

The public engagement specialist will assist other staff members with:

- determining relevant approaches to public engagement and opportunities for engagement of stakeholders, partners and the public
- coordinating, leading and implementing engagement strategies
- developing processes for evaluation and measurement
- supporting formal and informal events such as public meetings, hearings, open houses, workshops, focus groups and stakeholder or partner meetings
- developing and implementing integrated communications to support engagement by coordinating all communications and marketing needs related to engagement activities

STEPS FOR PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

STEP 1

determining federal,
state or other partner
requirements

STEP 2

defining the goal
of the project

STEP 3

determining the goal of public
engagement (inviting public
participation)

STEP 4

determining the
appropriate level of
public engagement

STEP 5

identifying potential
participants

STEP 6

identifying the right
tools and techniques

STEP 7

implementing public
engagement efforts

STEP 8

measuring,
demonstrating and
reporting results of
engagement

Steps for Public Engagement

DRCOG is committed to building meaningful relationships with partners, stakeholders and members of communities throughout the Denver region. While the process will vary somewhat with each engagement effort, this section describes eight important steps that will likely be integrated. Note that these steps may not be entirely linear; many steps may occur at the same time, or may be implemented in a different order depending on the specific project.

1. determining federal, state or other partner requirements
2. defining the goal of the project
3. determining the goal of public engagement (inviting public participation)
4. determining the appropriate level of public engagement
5. identifying potential participants
6. identifying the right tools and techniques
7. implementing public engagement efforts
8. measuring, demonstrating and reporting results of engagement

Because DRCOG is ultimately accountable to its Board of Directors, funding partners and the region's residents, determining the members of the public from which to solicit perspectives may seem like a daunting task. This plan is intended to help staff discern the appropriate level of public involvement.

STEP 1: DETERMINE STATE, FEDERAL AND FUNDING PARTNER MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS

If the project will receive state, federal or partner funding, there are likely specific requirements to solicit public participation in specific ways. Funding of the project — or consideration for future funding — may be contingent on demonstrating how the public has been involved.

This step addresses only minimum requirements for public engagement in each division of DRCOG. If it is determined that the project is subject to no minimum requirements by state, federal or partner funding, this step may be skipped.



Public comment, review and response for transportation planning in the Denver region has a defined and Board-approved process and requirements. See “Agency integration for transportation planning” (page 28).

AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Every four years, the Area Agency on Aging is required to submit to the Colorado Department of Human Services an **Area Plan on Aging**, a four-year plan for providing aging and disability services. Although the plan always requires a public review and comment period and a public hearing, as well as community input in the form of community conversations and key informant sessions, other State Unit on Aging requirements for public engagement vary with each quadrennial submission requirement. Staff involved in preparing this document must be sure to review the current requirements.

COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

DRCOG's public engagement plan (this document, **People-centered planning, projects and services**) requires a 45-day public review and comment period per federal regulations, and a public hearing.

REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Metro Vision updates and amendments require public review and comment periods, and public hearings.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND OPERATIONS

The following products prepared by the Transportation Planning and Operations division require public review and comment periods, and public hearings:

- **Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan**, updates and amendments
- **Transportation Improvement Program**, updates and major amendments
- associated **documents demonstrating conformity** with state air quality implementation plans

Public review and comment periods, but not public hearings, are required for:

- **Active Transportation Plan**
- other various regional and modal transportation plans

DRCOG considers the requirements noted above the minimum standards for public engagement. Even if a project lacks formal requirements for public engagement, as a responsible, representative organization, DRCOG considers the perspectives of the region's residents integral to its work. Once the minimum requirements for public engagement have been determined, exceeding them is encouraged.

The considerations throughout this plan will help to determine the approach and clarify goals. They can also help determine how public engagement will enhance the project, invite participation, publicize opportunities to provide comment, document efforts and measure success.

STEP 2. IDENTIFY THE OVERALL GOAL OF THE PROJECT

Intentionally inviting the public to shape the discussions, deliberations – and sometimes the decisions – that affect them is something with which some staff may not have previous experience. Combined with DRCOG’s long organizational history of engagement with its member governments and the expertise of other staff members, this plan can help navigate the main stages of public involvement:

- creating a plan to solicit public input
- inviting perspectives from the public
- incorporating public perspectives into the project plan
- evaluating the success of engagement efforts

Before inviting the public to share its perspectives on a project, staff should take some time to consider the broader goal of the effort. The project likely has several phases, so it may be helpful to consider the approach to inviting input for each phase of the process. A well-defined structure for the various phases involved in the project has probably already been created. Staff should determine which project phases are best suited for public involvement. There may be a different goal for each project phase, and – as such – each phase may involve different levels of public engagement.

If the design of the project plan or scope has been deliberate, the prompts below should be easy for a staff member to complete. If completing the prompts below is difficult, or if they are found to be so broad as to be meaningless, revisiting the project plan or scope is advised before resuming public engagement planning.

- The goal of this project is to ...
- This project will result in ...
- The project will be successful if ...

STEP 3. IDENTIFY THE PURPOSE FOR INVITING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Once it has been determined what the project is desired to accomplish, articulating why DRCOG wishes to invite public engagement will be easy. Without understanding the purpose for public engagement, it will be harder to

determine the levels of participation to invite (see “Step 4. Determine the appropriate level of public engagement,” later in this section on page 20).

The following prompts may help determine the objectives for inviting public participation:

- The purpose of public engagement for this project (or phase) is ...
- Successful public engagement will involve ...

See “Appendix B: Project Purpose Form” (page 39) for DRCOG’s project purpose form, which can help staff discern and document a project’s purpose and the expectations for public engagement as planning begins.

STEP 4. DETERMINE THE APPROPRIATE LEVEL OF PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The goal identified for the project, as well as the purpose for public engagement, will help determine the appropriate level to pursue.

The following four levels of public engagement, based loosely on concepts developed by the International Association for Public Participation, can help determine how to invite public participation around a project’s goals.

The appropriate level of public engagement will be different for each project. As the right level is discerned for a project, staff must consider the number of people who will be affected and the role of the public in informing decisions.

INFORM
DRCOG provides fair and balanced information to help people understand the issue, alternatives, challenges, opportunities or solutions.
CONSULT
DRCOG obtains feedback on analysis, alternatives or decisions.
INVOLVE
DRCOG works directly with members of the public to ensure that stakeholder concerns and aspirations are accurately understood, represented and considered.
COLLABORATE
DRCOG forms partnerships with members of the public for every aspect of decision-making, including development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.

If the project is likely to affect most of the region's residents or wide range of people from various backgrounds, "inform" and "consult" approaches are likely most appropriate. If the project will affect a smaller number of people, or those in specific neighborhoods, communities or with particular demographic characteristics, "involve" or "collaborate" approaches may be more suitable. Each project is unique and may warrant a different level of engagement.

Consider the role for the public in making decisions related to the project. A consultative role may mean that people provide their perspectives in advance of key decision-making milestones, but those decisions are ultimately made by another entity (for example, DRCOG's Board of Directors). A collaborative role for the public would equip them to provide direction or develop alternatives.

STEP 5. IDENTIFY POTENTIAL PARTICIPANTS

The specific segments of the public who will be invited to provide input must be identified. To help better define who will be engaged, staff should consider analyzing who will be affected by the project and how to ensure their perspectives are considered, with the help of the engagement specialist. Other staff may be able to help leverage existing tools for not only identifying segments of the public from whom input is desired, but also those who may have provided input on similar projects. If the project budget allows, other staff members may be able to help compile, analyze and interpret the demographic profiles of the neighborhoods and communities potentially affected by the project. They may be able to help with relevant data for information including race, ethnic background, income, educational attainment, and household size of the people in the areas the project will affect.

Employees in other DRCOG divisions may help determine whether they maintain partnerships or can leverage relationships with people in the communities that have been identified, to help solicit the best input from the public in the affected areas or demographic profiles. A list of community services and organizations that may help to determine which segments of the public to approach for engagement can be found in "Appendix C: Potential participants" on page 41.

Consider how the involvement of a representative cross-section of the region or affected communities, including people of all races, colors, national origins,

languages and incomes will be facilitated. With the help of the engagement specialist, staff should identify a range of strategies that invite and encourage the participation of:

- business leaders
- civic organizations
- community organizations
- faith-based organizations
- individuals with disabilities
- member governments
- neighborhood associations
- older adults
- partner organizations
- people who speak languages other than English (see DRCOG's Limited English Proficiency plan)
- populations traditionally under-represented in similar projects (consider demographic, geographic and economic factors)
- youth and young adults

STEP 6. IDENTIFY TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Once the goals for public participation, the appropriate level of public engagement and the members of the public to engage have been determined, the foundation for outreach has been established. As noted previously, these steps might not be linear for each project and some steps may need to be completed concurrently or reassessed as the project is further planned or implemented. For instance, the potential participants might need to be modified based on the tools and techniques that are chosen, or the appropriate level of engagement might be determined after identifying possible participants.

As planning the engagement activities begins, DRCOG staff should identify, with the help of the engagement specialist:

- the techniques and tools selected to achieve the goal for engagement
- the effort expected to be invested by those engaged

If people are asked to provide more information than will be used, they may form a negative opinion of DRCOG or be reluctant to participate in future projects. Consider not only how people's perspectives will be collected, but also how DRCOG will communicate to them:

- how the information they provide will be used
- how their perspectives will inform decision-making
- how their participation reflects the diversity of the region

- the outcome of the decisions for which they provided input
- how they can provide feedback on their experiences of the public engagement process

The budget available to conduct public engagement must also be considered. The level to which other DRCOG divisions will be involved, and whether their time will be charged to a specific grant or project, is an important part of this consideration. Also, the extent of work needed with Communications and Marketing to produce printed materials, develop and analyze surveys, obtain translation services or engage contractors to conduct focus groups must be considered. Many potential techniques, tactics and tools will require time and effort from employees in different divisions or work groups, so enough time and funding must be incorporated into the project plans to accommodate the contributions of the various DRCOG staff involved.

STEP 7. IMPLEMENT PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES

After the tools, techniques and potential participants have been identified, the public engagement efforts can be implemented. A strategy should be developed with the help of the engagement specialist to coordinate each activity with timelines of the various engagement efforts. This strategy should be easy to develop using the work completed in the previous steps. This strategy will document the purposeful engagement process outlined in this document and will be archived by the engagement specialist. While the strategy will provide a helpful guide to organize efforts, engagement activities can and should be modified as needed throughout the process. See Section V on page 32 for more information on implementation.

STEP 8. MEASURE, DEMONSTRATE AND EVALUATE RESULTS OF ENGAGEMENT

After public engagement activities have been implemented, they must be evaluated for their effectiveness. Staff should begin to consider how the success of the public engagement efforts will ultimately be measured and evaluated before engagement begins and while activities are taking place.

User feedback should also be reviewed, such as including a final question at the end of an online survey that asks how to improve the process or by considering the number of participants who gave input and evaluating if certain strategies are more effective in encouraging

involvement. In addition, participants should know what happens to their input, what happened to the project as a result of the engagement process, and how decision-makers were influenced by their participation.

Appendices D and E on page 43 and 50 provide techniques and tools, as well as guidance for the level of engagement for which each is best suited, and potential evaluation metrics for evaluating the success of public engagement activities. These evaluations will aid in crafting future engagement efforts.

Evaluation of public engagement activities should be based on the metrics in Appendices D and E and the relevant evaluation criteria for the objectives in Appendix F page 54. Using this evaluation process, the success of the various techniques and tools will inform future engagement efforts.

IV. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT IN REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Introduction

As noted in Section II, DRCOG expects its employees to determine whether federal, state or partner requirements will inform the public engagement process they pursue. Among all DRCOG employees, those engaged in transportation planning are most frequently required to meet federal and state regulations related to public engagement.

Regardless of whether they are part of the Transportation Planning and Operations division, if a staff member is engaged in transportation planning (especially if working on a Unified Planning Work Program-funded project), or is providing professional expertise to those engaged in transportation planning, it is helpful to become acquainted with the requirements set out by the federal government and State of Colorado, the formal arrangements among DRCOG and its planning partners, and DRCOG's expectations of its employees.



TIP: For public engagement efforts that do not involve transportation planning, please feel free to skip this section.

DRCOG ensures the public has opportunities to be involved in transportation planning activities, pursuant

to the Code of Federal Regulations. Specifically, public involvement in transportation planning is addressed in Title 23, Section 450.316, “Interested parties, participation and consultation” and Title 40, Section 93.105(a): “Consultation.”



For more information on Code of Federal Regulations requirements, see “Appendix A: Federal transportation planning regulations” (page 34)

Although the other sections of this document outline guidance for staff related to public engagement, this section includes required public involvement guidelines and policies which specifically apply to development of regional transportation planning products. Agencies that implement projects (such as the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Regional Transportation District and member governments) define public involvement procedures and practices for specific projects.

DRCOG may occasionally make minor administrative and informational edits to nonpolicy sections of this section. Major policy changes go through the complete federally required public review and Board adoption process.

Federal and State Regulations for Transportation Planning

Federal regulations require a public participation component to the metropolitan transportation planning process. The Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act was signed into law in 2015. As the metropolitan planning organization for the Denver region, DRCOG is required to implement the FAST Act through plans and programs that consider all modes of transportation, and which are “continuing, cooperative and comprehensive to the degree appropriate” per FAST Act § 1201; 23 U.S.C. 134. The FAST Act emphasizes broadening public participation to include people who have not traditionally been involved. The FAST Act specifies that transportation planning be performed in conjunction with state and local officials, transit operators and the public.

Metropolitan planning organizations are responsible for conducting the locally developed public participation process as required by the joint Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration planning rule (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 450.316;

and Title 49, Section 613). The legislation requires that the metropolitan planning process “include a proactive public involvement process that provides complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions and early and continuing involvement of the public in developing plans and transportation improvement programs (TIP)” (Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 450.316). Additional metropolitan planning organization public involvement requirements and criteria are specified in “Appendix A: Federal transportation planning regulations” (page 34).

The State of Colorado also requires public involvement related to transportation. The public records law of Colorado states that all public records shall be open for inspection by any person at reasonable times (Colorado Revised Statutes 24-72-201). Public records include all writings made, maintained or kept by the state or any agency, institution or political subdivision for use in the exercise of functions required or authorized by law or administrative rule or involving the receipt or expenditure of public funds.

DRCOG employees facilitating public engagement for transportation planning are expected to provide the opportunity for full and fair participation of all interested parties and populations. (For a list of potential participants, see “Appendix D: Techniques for public engagement” on page 43.) By doing so, DRCOG ensures that the public engagement process fully adheres to the principles and guidance outlined in the following federal actions:

LOW-INCOME COMMUNITIES AND MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Executive Order 12898, “Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations” promotes nondiscrimination in federal programs affecting human health and the environment. It ensures that minority and low-income communities have an opportunity to participate in matters relating to transportation and the environment. See “Appendix A: Federal transportation planning regulations” for more information about Executive Order 12898.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Executive Order 13166, “Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency” ensures that programs and activities normally provided in English are accessible to individuals

with limited English proficiency and do not discriminate based on national origin. See “Appendix A: Federal transportation planning regulations” for more information about Executive Order 13166.

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that individuals from disabled communities be involved in the development and improvement of transportation services. See “Appendix A: Federal transportation planning regulations” for more information about the Americans with Disabilities Act.

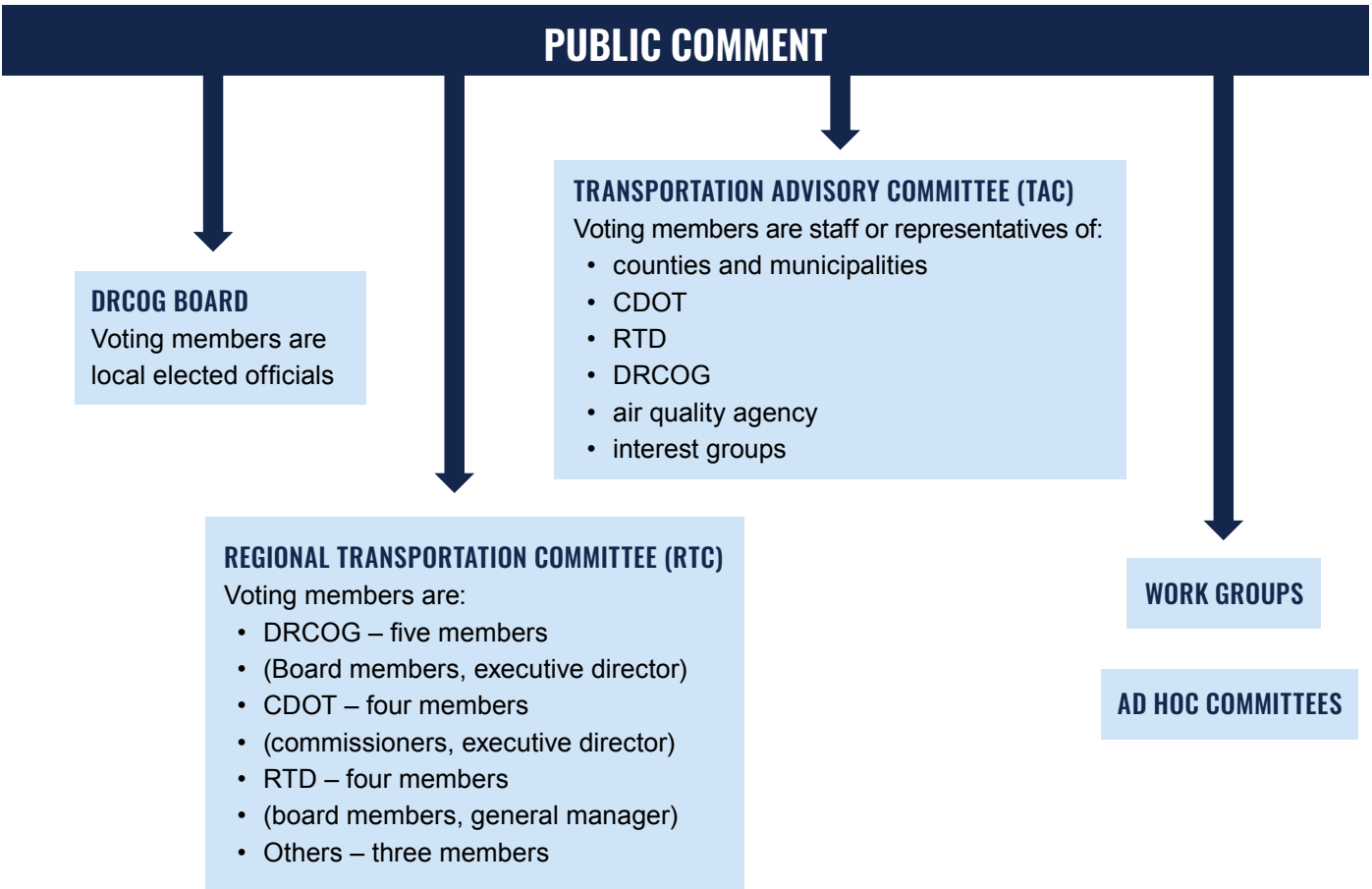
DRCOG employees engaged in transportation planning are responsible for ensuring that DRCOG and its partner agencies provide opportunities for –

and encourage individuals from – such communities to participate in long-range planning.

Transportation Planning Process and Public Involvement

DRCOG believes that constructive public involvement is essential at all levels of transportation planning. DRCOG is responsible for proactively engaging the public in the regional transportation planning process and embracing federal regulations that require metropolitan planning organizations to provide the public with complete information, timely public notice, full public access to key decisions, and early and continuing involvement in developing planning products.

Transportation Planning Committee Structure



Composition and Responsibilities of the DRCOG Board of Directors and Transportation Committees

	DRCOG BOARD	REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE	TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AUTHORITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State and federal statutes DRCOG Articles of Association 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Federal statute 2001 MOA DRCOG Board adopts committee description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2001 MOA DRCOG Board adopts committee description
RESPONSIBILITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prepares, maintains and regularly reviews comprehensive regional plan (Metro Vision) Adopts all regional transportation planning products, including the Metro Vision RTP and TIP Products and policies are adopted when the Board and Regional Transportation Committee both take favorable action Board holds regularly-scheduled non-voting work sessions (typically monthly) at which every Board member is invited to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assists the DRCOG Board in regional transportation planning Prepares regional transportation planning policy recommendations for action by the DRCOG Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitates dialogue and cooperation among local governments, regional agencies, the state and other stakeholders on regional transportation issues Provides advice and guidance on methods of planning and implementation, and helps develop policy options Assists the DRCOG Board and RTC by reviewing planning products and processes Makes recommendations to the Regional Transportation Committee on transportation plans and improvement programs
MEMBERSHIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each municipality, county, and city-and-county within the nine-plus county region is eligible to be a member of DRCOG Each member may designate one local elected official as its member representative and one as its alternate <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Denver may designate two members Governor appoints three non-voting members, including one member from CDOT RTD has one non-voting member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Five from DRCOG – the chair, vice-chair, two Board directors and the executive director Four from CDOT – three Denver-area transportation commissioners and the executive director Four from RTD – three board members and the general manager DRCOG, CDOT and RTD may designate alternates in writing Three others – appointed annually by the Regional Transportation Committee chair upon unanimous recommendation of the DRCOG, CDOT and RTD executives (DRCOG executive will consult with the chair prior to the three agency executives forming a recommendation) 16 voting members total 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 15 local-government representatives appointed by the DRCOG chair: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> two each from Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Douglas and Jefferson counties, and one from southwest Weld County <ul style="list-style-type: none"> at least three are appointed from counties at least seven are appointed from municipalities (at least two but no more than three are from cities smaller than 35,000 in population) two from Denver and one from Broomfield one from the non-MPO (Mountains and Plains) area of the transportation planning region appointees are city or county managers/administrators; public works, transportation or planning directors; or equivalent CDOT directors (or their designees) for regions 1 and 4, division of transit and rail, and transportation development division RTD's assistant general manager of planning DRCOG's transportation planning and operations director Regional Air Quality Council executive director

	DRCOG BOARD	REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE	TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEMBERSHIP			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One representative each of environmental, freight, transportation demand management/ non-motorized, senior, aviation, non-RTD transit and business/ economic development interests (nominated by the DRCOG chair and confirmed by the Regional Transportation Committee) • Alternates may be designated in writing • FHWA and FTA have ex officio representation • 29 voting members total
QUORUM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-third of all voting member representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 voting members or designated alternates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 voting members or designated alternates
DECISIONS MADE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular questions: With a majority of voting member representatives present • Adoption or amendment of elements of regional plan: With a majority of all voting member representatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With 12 affirmative votes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With 15 affirmative votes

Reaching Community Members, Stakeholders and Interest Groups: Transportation Planning



TIP: Consult DRCOG's Limited English Proficiency plan for information about interacting with those whose proficiency of English is limited.

GOALS

Staff's diligence in inviting public engagement will ensure that decisions regarding a proposed plan or project are made only after the public is made aware of, and is provided the opportunity to comment on, the proposal. DRCOG has established the following goals for public involvement specifically related to the transportation planning process:

- **present information and educate the public** about the regional transportation planning process.
- **continually solicit public input** through its Board of Directors, public forums, public hearings, local community and interest group meetings, questionnaires and newsletters — especially at the beginning of

planning processes, at key decision points, and when final drafts are prepared. DRCOG makes maximum use of opportunities to speak to communities and organizations at their scheduled meetings. DRCOG has discovered it is more productive to go out to the public rather than expecting the public to come to a DRCOG-hosted meeting.

- **facilitate information flow between the public and decision-makers** by compiling public issues, comments and concerns into complete and concise documents.
- **consider and respond to public concerns** in preparing draft documents. The transportation committees and the DRCOG Board consider expressed public concerns when making decisions. DRCOG is responsible for drafting responses to identified concerns and for documenting the consideration given to major issues by decision-makers. For certain processes (specifically, the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program), if a significant number of comments are received on the draft documents, DRCOG prepares a summary, analysis and report on the disposition of those comments.

BROADENING PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT EFFORTS

Recent federal regulations and executive orders have emphasized broadening public participation in transportation planning to include affected groups that have not traditionally been very involved such as minority constituents and people with disabilities, and those with lower incomes or limited English proficiency. All DRCOG-hosted public hearings and forums are held in venues that are Americans with Disability Act accessible, and DRCOG accommodates and provides services for people with other disabilities when such services are requested in advance. All steps will be taken to accommodate participation at virtual meetings as well.

COORDINATION OF PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The DRCOG transportation planning process corresponds with coordinated efforts by metropolitan planning area partner agencies to ensure public participation at all levels of the region's transportation system – local, regional, state and federal. However, public participation takes place at the city, county, corridor and project levels, too. Individuals concerned about a specific project or citywide plan, for example, will often find their participation to be more meaningful in a public involvement process conducted specifically for that project or plan by the project sponsor or the subject community. While DRCOG provides opportunities for further public comment on proposed projects during development of regional products such as the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan or Transportation Improvement Program, DRCOG's public involvement is intended to augment, not replace, project-specific public involvement activities.

Regular Opportunities for Public Comment in Transportation Planning Activities

The role of DRCOG employees engaged in transportation planning includes encouraging the public to attend committee meetings or contact representatives with comments and concerns. The DRCOG Board of Directors, Regional Transportation Committee, Transportation Advisory Committee and ad hoc committees provide an opportunity for public comment on the agenda of all meetings. Visit drcog.org for a calendar of meeting dates and associated agendas.

DRCOG TRANSPORTATION PLANNING PROCESS MEETINGS – STANDING MEETING TIMES AND DATES

Board of Directors

6:30 p.m., Third Wednesday of every month

Board of Directors work session

4 p.m., First Wednesday of every month

Regional Transportation Committee

8:30 a.m., Third Tuesday of every month

Transportation Advisory Committee

1:30 p.m., Fourth Monday of every month

Policy Action Process for Transportation Planning

DRCOG employees involved in transportation planning follow a policy action process to ensure the Board of Directors has ample opportunity to consider all aspects of an issue or action in question, including the perspectives of the public. Such major actions are associated with:

- Metro Vision, update or amendment
- Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan, update or major amendment
- Transportation Improvement Program, update or major amendment
- associated air quality conformity determination document

See the RTP Revision Procedures or TIP Policy for more information on what a major amendment entails.

POLICY ACTION STEPS

Employees involved in conducting, coordinating or publicizing major actions must ensure that they follow the policy action steps below related to soliciting and considering public comments:

1. The chair of the DRCOG Board of Directors sets a public hearing date that allows at least a 30-day period for document review before the public hearing. The hearing date is announced at the next Board of Directors meeting (which may be fewer than 30 days from the close of the review period). The 30-day period may be reduced by the Board chair in the event of a special or emergency circumstance that necessitates prompt action by the metropolitan planning organization. In such circumstances, every effort will be made to provide a minimum of 15 days' notice before the public hearing.
2. After setting the public hearing date, a legal notice of the hearing is published in the media of record (currently the Denver Post) at least 30 days in advance of the public hearing (or at least 15 days in unique cases to respond to federal legislation requiring immediate action). Notices may also be published in other media. The

notice includes the time, date and location of the public hearing as well as how documents or materials can be reviewed. The document and public hearing notice are also made available on the DRCOG website (drcog.org).

3. The public may provide comment during the 30-day public comment period through the end of the public hearing. (Occasionally the comment period is extended beyond the hearing.) Those who desire to provide public comment may:
 - contact the Transportation Planning and Operations administrative assistant to express their intent to speak at the public hearing
 - sign in to speak immediately before the public hearing
 - submit written comments during the 30-day comment period
 - post comments online through the DRCOG website or other online engagement tools

Written and online comments receive the same consideration as comments made at the public hearing. Such comments must include the name of the person submitting them. Anonymous comments may not be included in the staff-prepared summary.

4. A formal public hearing is conducted at which the public can testify on the policy document. Individuals are typically allowed a maximum of three minutes to testify. Action on the policy document is then typically scheduled for the next regular meeting of the Board.
5. DRCOG staff prepares a written summary of the comments presented at the hearing and received via email, website or letter during the comment period. Staff responses are provided. The summary of public comments and staff responses is provided to the Transportation Advisory Committee, Regional Transportation Committee and the Board of Directors prior to their next regular meetings.
6. After considering public comment and DRCOG staff responses, the Transportation Advisory Committee recommends an action to the Regional Transportation Committee.
7. After considering public comments, DRCOG staff responses and the Transportation Advisory Committee recommendation, the Regional Transportation Committee recommends an action to the Board.
8. After considering all comments and recommendations, the DRCOG Board of Directors takes action.
9. The summary of public comments and responses is included in the final published policy document or made available as a separate document.

Agency Integration for Transportation Planning

The regional transportation planning process, and its corresponding public participation process, is a coordinated approach among DRCOG, the Regional Transportation District and the Colorado Department of Transportation. In 2018, the three agencies updated the memorandum of agreement for transportation planning and programming outlining their plans for communication, collaboration and coordination in transportation processes. This updated agreement serves as the metropolitan planning agreement (MPA) in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 450. Transportation Planning in the Denver Region, published by DRCOG, outlines coordination efforts of the three agencies, augments the memorandum of agreement and was revised in 2017.

Additionally, staff from the CDOT, DRCOG, RTD, the Regional Air Quality Council, the Colorado Air Pollution Control Division, Federal Transit Administration, Federal Highway Administration and Environmental Protection Agency meet to ensure coordination among the agencies. The Agency Coordination Team reviews the transportation planning activities of CDOT, DRCOG, RTD, the Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration and coordinates the Unified Planning Work Program activities and timing with individual agencies' planning activities. Agencies consult as appropriate with federal, state and local resource agencies responsible for land management, natural resources, environmental protection, conservation and historic preservation.

Air quality coordination tasks are conducted under the auspices of the Interagency Consultation Group. The Interagency Consultation Group usually meets right after the Agency Coordination Team to address air quality conformity planning topics.

Key Transportation Planning Activities

The framework described in the table that follows ("Key planning activities and public engagement methods") identifies types of planning products, the most appropriate agency responsible for the public engagement activity and the usual methods for ensuring public engagement. Additional methods to obtain public input may be used, as appropriate. Agendas for all DRCOG committee meetings are posted on the DRCOG website calendar and offer a period to provide public comments.

Table: Key Planning Activities and Public Engagement Method

ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	OPPORTUNITIES AND METHODS
<i>People-centered Planning, Projects and Services</i>	DRCOG	guides DRCOG employees in public engagement approaches; describes implementation of federal and state transportation planning regulations; public hearing and comment period before adoption
<i>Metro Vision plan and Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan</i>	DRCOG	public interest forums at key points throughout the development process; DRCOG committee review and recommendation; public hearing and comment period before adoption and amendment; staff outreach to communities and organizations using workshops, presentations, questionnaires, website techniques
<i>Transportation Improvement Program</i>	DRCOG, local governments, CDOT, RTD	project sponsor conducts public outreach in communities regarding specific projects; DRCOG committee review and recommendation; public hearing before adoption of new TIP or a TIP amendment requiring conformity finding; posting of all amendments on website as part of agenda packet prior to committee discussion and Board action
<i>Conformity of the RTP and the TIP</i>	DRCOG	DRCOG committee review and recommendation; public hearing on draft conformity finding
<i>Unified Planning Work Program</i>	DRCOG, CDOT, RTD	periodic transportation forums to identify key planning tasks; DRCOG committee review and recommendation
<i>Active Transportation Plan</i>	DRCOG	ad hoc committees or work groups; DRCOG committee review and recommendation; solicitation of comments and input announced via website and email notification; public review and comment period before adoption
<i>Major Corridor/ Sub-Area Studies</i>	CDOT, RTD, DRCOG, local governments	task forces, committees and public meetings in the study area; meetings conducted in affected neighborhoods; other outreach efforts (newsletter, website, comment forms)
<i>Strategic Plans or Programming Documents</i>	DRCOG	stakeholder and practitioner workgroups; DRCOG committee review and recommendation; Posting of draft documents on website prior to committee discussion and Board action
<i>Project Development</i>	Implementing Jurisdiction	task forces, committees and/or public meetings in the project locale at key decision points



See “Section V: Implementation (beginning on page 32),” for public involvement methods for new projects or those not covered by the state and federal requirements in this section.

Documenting Transportation Planning Activities

DRCOG employees are responsible for making documentation pertaining to transportation plans and programs available for public review and comment.

DRCOG produces policy documents via adopting resolutions, technical reports, white papers, consultant reports and popular reports, all of which document the policies, plans, programs and planning activities of the transportation planning process.

DRCOG staff drafts policy documents which are published in final form after adoption by the Board of Directors. DRCOG makes policy document drafts available for public comment at least 30 days prior to any public hearing on the subject. Drafts of **People-centered planning, projects and services** (this document, DRCOG’s public engagement plan) will be available at least 45 days prior to a public hearing per federal regulations. Public comments received on the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan or Transportation Improvement Program are summarized and included with the policy document along with responses and the disposition of the comments.

DRCOG employees prepare summaries of all meetings of DRCOG committees and the Board of Directors, which are available upon request from DRCOG staff and on the DRCOG website. DRCOG provides documentation of key decision points in planning processes through public outreach.

Distribution of Materials Related to Transportation Planning

The public may request copies of, or to view, all reports developed and compiled by DRCOG. All DRCOG publications can be downloaded from the DRCOG website (drcog.org), or are available upon request from DRCOG staff. Publications are also available for public review at the DRCOG offices.

Notification of Activities Related to Transportation Planning

DRCOG makes improvements and enhancements to the DRCOG website every year to facilitate providing information to the public and opportunities to provide input on specific transportation topics to decision-makers. DRCOG informs the public about the agency’s actions or activities through its website and distributes notices of pending policy actions and decisions to regional, community and minority media. Public hearings are advertised in the media of record (currently the Denver Post).

DRCOG maintains a list of elected officials, public officials and special interest groups to ensure the wide distribution of documents. DRCOG employees use the list to inform the public of upcoming meetings and events pertaining to transportation planning processes and products. Various DRCOG contact lists are continuously consolidated and expanded to notify the public of events and activities.

In addition to the DRCOG website, a written notice of each regular and special Board of Directors or committee meeting at DRCOG is kept in the reception area of the DRCOG offices. Such meetings are open to the public, and include the opportunity for public comment.

Future Measurements and Reviews for Transportation Planning Projects

Every four years, the Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration review and certify DRCOG’s planning process to ensure DRCOG complies with the federal regulations for a metropolitan planning organization. In addition, DRCOG is required to conduct a self-certification review following the adoption of a new Transportation Improvement Program. DRCOG’s public participation processes are essential to these reviews. As part of its self-certifications, and for its own monitoring purposes, DRCOG periodically measures and reviews the public participation process, considering the following items:

- measurement of the quantity and response to specific public involvement strategies, including:
 - website activity – hits, downloads, comments submitted
 - emails and phone calls received
 - attendance at speaking engagements with the public and elected representatives, noting specifically those with low-income communities,

minority communities and groups, organizations of the disabled and senior groups

- attendance at public hearings and meetings
- timeliness of informational materials on the web
- validity and accuracy of mailing and email lists
- compilation and acknowledgement of any complaints lodged regarding the public involvement process

- assessment of the value of the public input to decision-makers
- assessment of the need for new strategies or adjustments
- determination if changes or amendments are necessary to this document, **People-centered planning, projects and services.**



V. IMPLEMENTATION

Whether a project includes a formal process (as may be required for transportation planning as outlined in Section III) or engagement is related to a DRCOG project without federal, state or partner requirements, implementation can take many forms. To start, staff must “Determine the appropriate level of public engagement” (page 20) and carefully consider the goals for the project as well as the purpose of public engagement.

As a reminder, the four levels of public engagement include:

INFORM
DRCOG provides fair and balanced information to help people understand the issue, alternatives, challenges, opportunities or solutions.
CONSULT
DRCOG obtains feedback on analysis, alternatives or decisions.
INVOLVE
DRCOG works directly with members of the public to ensure that stakeholder concerns and aspirations are accurately understood, represented and considered.
COLLABORATE
DRCOG forms partnerships with members of the public for every aspect of decision-making, including development of alternatives and identification of the preferred solution.

DRCOG staff should consider the techniques and tools that might best encourage the appropriate level of public engagement for the project. The techniques and tools that are chosen can facilitate the level of engagement to be achieved. For example, an eblast announcing a new report is informational. A poster announcing a public hearing is not consultative on its own, but facilitates consultation at the hearing it promotes. An email announcing that the public is invited to submit their community’s five most serious challenges represents the “involve” level. A focus group at which members of the public suggest alternatives for how to spend limited funds on transportation projects represents the “collaborate” level. Very few techniques or tools, in and of themselves, result in participation that is collaborative. Collaborative

opportunities for organizations structured like DRCOG, which operates under priorities established by a board of directors, are rare. However, in some circumstances it’s appropriate to consider greater decision-making involvement by the public.

Techniques

Techniques (see “Appendix D: Techniques for public engagement”, page 43) represent tactics for approaching public involvement. They always involve interaction among people – usually representatives of DRCOG (employees, committee members, Board directors) and members of the public. Discern the techniques that will be used for public engagement before thinking about the tools that will be used to support it.

Tools

Tools (see “Appendix E: Tools for public engagement”, page 50) are what can be used as part of the public engagement techniques. A tool’s success depends on how well it is a) designed to support its corresponding technique and b) how effectively it is deployed. Not every tool will be relevant for every technique. However, every tool requires an employee to take responsibility for using it and measuring how its use contributes to the success of its corresponding technique.

The Medium Is Not the Message

Simply using a technique or tool won’t guarantee meaningful results. Consider how the techniques will be refined and tools will be developed to ensure meaningful public engagement. For tools that are static materials, such as posters, postcards and other printed matter, create a clear call to action that will allow staff to measure how many people saw the collateral and how they responded. DRCOG staff is encouraged to consult the engagement specialist for help developing techniques and tools at any stage of a project process.

Potential Participants

Although staff may have a well-defined idea about the types of people to engage in a project (see “Appendix C: Potential participants”, page 41), staff should consider other types of organizations, professionals and members of the public with whom DRCOG has not previously interacted – or who may have provided input in the past but who have not recently been actively engaged.



For more on federal guidance related to identifying potential participants in transportation planning, see “Reaching community members, stakeholders and interest groups: transportation planning” (page 26)

Demonstrating Results and Evaluation

During development of a project, the purpose, goals and results of the project were considered. The elements that would contribute to its success – or the success of its public engagement component – were also considered. The groups of people who have been historically under-represented in similar efforts were specifically considered. And the ideal level of public engagement for the project was determined.

Consult “Appendix F: Evaluation criteria”, page 54, for questions that can be used before, during and after an engagement project to determine whether the project is on track to meet its objectives. Evaluating the success of engagement strategies is critical to improving the overall effectiveness of engagement in the future.

Criteria includes three major objectives:

- provide meaningful opportunities to participate
- involve under-represented communities
- communicate complete, accurate, understandable and timely information

Some but perhaps not all criteria will be relevant to the project. Before data is collected, determine which criteria are relevant to the project.



For guidance on creating, distributing and notifying the public about policy documents, technical reports and meeting summaries related to transportation planning, see “Distribution of materials related to transportation planning” (page 30) and “Notification of activities related to transportation planning” (page 30).

A member of the project team should be designated to coordinate how the team will gather, compile and report on criteria and measurements throughout all project stages. By measuring progress toward goals throughout

the project, corrections may be made while the efforts are still underway.

Because collecting and evaluating data may require collaboration across DRCOG divisions, be sure to allow adequate time for employees in other divisions to help. The results of these evaluations are vital for the continual improvement of engagement efforts.

Summary: A Place to Begin

Each day DRCOG staff contributes to enhancing and protecting the quality of life in our region. Along with our member governments, the organization plans, funds and delivers services to maximize the benefit to the people of our region – people of all ages, incomes and abilities -- and DRCOG recognizes the importance of hearing as many voices as possible. To fulfill DRCOG's mission, the organization must effectively engage the community and involve the public.

This public engagement plan and appendices help DRCOG employees plan, implement and evaluate effective engagement activities that invite greater public participation in the organization's projects. DRCOG is committed to going well beyond just meeting the minimum requirements, and its employees not only inform the public of what DRCOG is doing, but also encourage and enable meaningful engagement.

The process and tactics in this plan are a place to begin. Successful public engagement depends on a shared commitment throughout the organization — and at all levels — to involve the public, and to take responsibility for facilitating engagement activities.

VI. APPENDICES

Appendix A: Federal Transportation Planning Regulations

The federal laws and processes covering public participation in the transportation planning process include the following:

FIXING AMERICA'S SURFACE TRANSPORTATION ACT (FAST ACT), PUBLIC LAW AS PASSED BY CONGRESS AND SIGNED BY PRESIDENT OBAMA ON DEC. 4, 2015

As mandated under the Code of Federal Regulations, Title 23, Section 134 and directed by the FAST Act, or other, current supporting federal regulations, MPOs must establish, periodically review and update public participation processes. These processes should assure early and continued public awareness of and access to the transportation decision-making process.

The planning regulations contain a number of performance standards for public involvement, including:

- providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes
- providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the metropolitan transportation improvement program
- demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the metropolitan transportation improvement program
- employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and metropolitan transportation improvement programs
- making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means

THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT OF 1990, THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973 (SECTION 504) AND THE REHABILITATION ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1998 (SECTION 508)

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 mandates that public facilities be made accessible to people with disabilities and has been the basis for requiring that transit buses and street curbs be retrofitted or reconstructed with appropriate equipment and design details.

The Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) states that “no qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall be excluded from, denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under” any program or activity that receives federal financial assistance.

The Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998 (Section 508) states that federal agencies must ensure that electronic and information technology is accessible to employees and members of the public with disabilities to the extent it does not pose an “undue burden.”

TITLE VI OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS ACT OF 1964

Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 states that “no person in the United States shall, on the grounds of race, color or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.”

EXECUTIVE ORDER 13166, IMPROVING ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR PERSONS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY (2000)

The basis of Executive Order 13166 lies in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. It requires that federal agencies work to ensure that recipients of federal financial assistance provide “meaningful access” to their limited English proficiency applicants and beneficiaries.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 12898, FEDERAL ACTIONS TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN MINORITY POPULATIONS AND LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS (1994)

The basis of Executive Order 12898 lies in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. The Executive Order directs that “each federal agency shall make achieving environmental justice part of its mission by identifying and addressing, as appropriate, disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects of its programs, policies, and activities on minority populations and low-income populations.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE ORDER 5610.2(A)

The U.S. Department of Transportation Order 5610.2(a) sets forth the U.S. Department of Transportation policy to consider environmental justice principles in all U.S. Department of Transportation programs, policies and activities. The three fundamental environmental justice principles include:

- to avoid, minimize, or mitigate disproportionately high and adverse human health and environmental effects, including social and economic effects, on minority populations and low-income populations
- to ensure full and fair participation by all potentially affected communities in transportation decision-making
- to prevent the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of benefits by minority and low-income populations

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION ORDER 6640.23A ACTIONS TO ADDRESS ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE IN MINORITY POPULATIONS AND LOW-INCOME POPULATIONS

The Federal Highway Administration Order 6640.23A is the directive that establishes policies and procedures for the Federal Highway Administration to use in complying with Executive Order 12898. In addition, it defines the following terms:

- low-income – A person whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines.
- low-income population – Any readily identifiable group of low-income persons who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons who will be similarly affected by a proposed program, policy, or activity.
- minority – A person who is:
 - Black: a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa;
 - Hispanic or Latino: a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race;
 - Asian American: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent;
 - American Indian and Alaskan Native: a person having origins in any of the original people of North America, South America (including Central America), and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition; or
 - Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.
- minority population – Any readily identifiable groups of minority persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons who will be similarly affected by a proposed program, policy, or activity.

CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS, TITLE 23, SECTION 450.314 METROPOLITAN PLANNING AGREEMENTS. (AS OF NOVEMBER 29, 2017)

- (a) The MPO, the State(s), and the providers of public transportation shall cooperatively determine their mutual responsibilities in carrying out the metropolitan transportation planning process. These responsibilities shall be clearly identified in written agreements among the MPO, the State(s), and the providers of public transportation serving the MPA. To the extent possible, a single agreement between all responsible parties should be developed. The written agreement(s) shall include specific provisions for the development of financial plans that support the metropolitan transportation plan (see § 450.324) and the metropolitan TIP (see § 450.326), and development of the annual listing of obligated projects (see § 450.334).
- (b) The MPO, the State(s), and the providers of public transportation should periodically review and update the agreement, as appropriate, to reflect effective changes.
- (c) If the MPA does not include the entire nonattainment or maintenance area, there shall be a written agreement among the State department of transportation, State air quality agency, affected local agencies, and the MPO describing the process for cooperative planning and analysis of all projects outside the MPA within the nonattainment or maintenance area. The agreement must also indicate how the total transportation-related emissions for the nonattainment or maintenance area, including areas outside the MPA, will be treated for the purposes of determining conformity in accordance with the EPA's transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93, subpart A). The agreement shall address policy mechanisms for resolving conflicts concerning transportation-related emissions that may arise between the MPA and the portion of the nonattainment or maintenance area outside the MPA.
- (d) In nonattainment or maintenance areas, if the MPO is not the designated agency for air quality planning under section 174 of the Clean Air Act (42 U.S.C.

7504), there shall be a written agreement between the MPO and the designated air quality planning agency describing their respective roles and responsibilities for air quality related transportation planning.

- (e) If more than one MPO has been designated to serve an urbanized area there shall be a written agreement among the MPOs, the State(s), and the public transportation operator(s) describing how the metropolitan transportation planning processes will be coordinated to assure the development of consistent metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs across the MPA boundaries, particularly in cases in which a proposed transportation investment extends across the boundaries of more than one MPA. If any part of the urbanized area is a nonattainment or maintenance area, the agreement also shall include State and local air quality agencies. The metropolitan transportation planning processes for affected MPOs should, to the maximum extent possible, reflect coordinated data collection, analysis, and planning assumptions across the MPAs. Alternatively, a single metropolitan transportation plan and/or TIP for the entire urbanized area may be developed jointly by the MPOs in cooperation with their respective planning partners. Coordination efforts and outcomes shall be documented in subsequent transmittals of the UPWP and other planning products, including the metropolitan transportation plan and TIP, to the State(s), the FHWA, and the FTA.
- (f) Where the boundaries of the urbanized area or MPA extend across two or more States, the Governors with responsibility for a portion of the multistate area, the appropriate MPO(s), and the public transportation operator(s) shall coordinate transportation planning for the entire multistate area. States involved in such multistate transportation planning may:
 - (1) Enter into agreements or compacts, not in conflict with any law of the United States, for cooperative efforts and mutual assistance in support of activities authorized under this section as the activities pertain to interstate areas and localities within the States; and
 - (2) Establish such agencies, joint or otherwise, as the States may determine desirable for making the agreements and compacts effective.
- (g) If part of an urbanized area that has been designated as a TMA overlaps into an adjacent MPA serving an

urbanized area that is not designated as a TMA, the adjacent urbanized area shall not be treated as a TMA. However, a written agreement shall be established between the MPOs with MPA boundaries, including a portion of the TMA, which clearly identifies the roles and responsibilities of each MPO in meeting specific TMA requirements (e.g., congestion management process, Surface Transportation Program funds suballocated to the urbanized area over 200,000 population, and project selection).

- (h)
 - (1) The MPO(s), State(s), and the providers of public transportation shall jointly agree upon and develop specific written provisions for cooperatively developing and sharing information related to transportation performance data, the selection of performance targets, the reporting of performance targets, the reporting of performance to be used in tracking progress toward attainment of critical outcomes for the region of the MPO (see § 450.306(d)), and the collection of data for the State asset management plan for the NHS for each of the following circumstances:
 - (i) When one MPO serves an urbanized area;
 - (ii) When more than one MPO serves an urbanized area; and
 - (iii) When an urbanized area that has been designated as a TMA overlaps into an adjacent MPA serving an urbanized area that is not a TMA.
 - (2) These provisions shall be documented either:
 - (i) As part of the metropolitan planning agreements required under paragraphs (a), (e), and (g) of this section; or
 - (ii) Documented in some other means outside of the metropolitan planning agreements as determined cooperatively by the MPO(s), State(s), and providers of public transportation.

SECTION 450.316 INTERESTED PARTIES, PARTICIPATION, AND CONSULTATION

- (a) The MPO shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing individuals, affected public agencies, representatives of public transportation employees, public ports, freight shippers, providers of freight transportation services,

private providers of transportation (including intercity bus operators, employer-based commuting programs, such as carpool program, vanpool program, transit benefit program, parking cash-out program, shuttle program, or telework program), representatives of users of public transportation, representatives of users of pedestrian walkways and bicycle transportation facilities, representatives of the disabled, and other interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.

- (1) The MPO shall develop the participation plan in consultation with all interested parties and shall, at a minimum, describe explicit procedures, strategies, and desired outcomes for:
 - (i) Providing adequate public notice of public participation activities and time for public review and comment at key decision points, including a reasonable opportunity to comment on the proposed metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
 - (ii) Providing timely notice and reasonable access to information about transportation issues and processes;
 - (iii) Employing visualization techniques to describe metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs;
 - (iv) Making public information (technical information and meeting notices) available in electronically accessible formats and means, such as the World Wide Web;
 - (v) Holding any public meetings at convenient and accessible locations and times;
 - (vi) Demonstrating explicit consideration and response to public input received during the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP;
 - (vii) Seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved by existing transportation systems, such as low-income and minority households, who may face challenges accessing employment and other services;
 - (viii) Providing an additional opportunity for public comment, if the final metropolitan transportation plan or TIP differs significantly from the version that was made available for

public comment by the MPO and raises new material issues that interested parties could not reasonably have foreseen from the public involvement efforts;

- (ix) Coordinating with the statewide transportation planning public involvement and consultation processes under subpart B of this part; and
 - (x) Periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies contained in the participation plan to ensure a full and open participation process.
- (2) When significant written and oral comments are received on the draft metropolitan transportation plan and TIP (including the financial plans) as a result of the participation process in this section or the interagency consultation process required under the EPA transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93, subpart A), a summary, analysis, and report on the disposition of comments shall be made as part of the final metropolitan transportation plan and TIP.
- (3) A minimum public comment period of 45 calendar days shall be provided before the initial or revised participation plan is adopted by the MPO. Copies of the approved participation plan shall be provided to the FHWA and the FTA for informational purposes and shall be posted on the World Wide Web, to the maximum extent practicable.
- (b) In developing metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs, the MPO should consult with agencies and officials responsible for other planning activities within the MPA that are affected by transportation (including State and local planned growth, economic development, tourism, natural disaster risk reduction, environmental protection, airport operations, or freight movements) or coordinate its planning process (to the maximum extent practicable) with such planning activities. In addition, the MPO shall develop the metropolitan transportation plans and TIPs with due consideration of other related planning activities within the metropolitan area, and the process shall provide for the design and delivery of transportation services within the area that are provided by:
 - (1) Recipients of assistance under title 49 U.S.C. Chapter 53;
 - (2) Governmental agencies and non-profit organizations (including representatives of the

agencies and organizations) that receive Federal assistance from a source other than the U.S. Department of Transportation to provide non-emergency transportation services; and

(3) Recipients of assistance under 23 U.S.C. 201-204.

(c) When the MPA includes Indian Tribal lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Indian Tribal government(s) in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(d) When the MPA includes Federal public lands, the MPO shall appropriately involve the Federal land management agencies in the development of the metropolitan transportation plan and the TIP.

(e) MPOs shall, to the extent practicable, develop a documented process(es) that outlines roles, responsibilities, and key decision points for consulting with other governments and agencies, as defined in paragraphs (b), (c), and (d) of this section, which may be included in the agreement(s) developed under § 450.314.

Appendix B: Project Purpose Form

This form can help you and the engagement specialist discern and document your project's purpose and your expectations for public engagement as you begin to plan. See Step 3 on page 20 for more information.

This project purpose form was adapted from the Public Engagement Guide created by Metro, a similar regional organization in the Portland, Oregon metropolitan area.

PROJECT PURPOSE FORM

The purpose of this project is to:

This project will result in:

The purpose of public engagement for this project is to:

Members of the public who should be engaged are:

The public engagement will be successful if:

This project will be successful if:

EXAMPLE PROJECT PURPOSE FORM:

AREA AGENCY ON AGING FOUR-YEAR PLAN

Below is an example of how the project purpose form could be used by the Area Agency on Aging for their Four-Year Plan. In preparing the plan, DRCOG staff engages the public to identify their concerns and needs. The Area Agency on Aging asks the public to provide input through an online questionnaire, conversations with county councils on aging, community conversations, and meetings with key informants. Their responses shape development of priorities identified in the Area Plan on Aging.

PROJECT PURPOSE FORM

The purpose of this project is to:

- comply with federal and state requirements
- plan for how the Area Agency on Aging help older adults stay independent and safe in their homes for the next four years

This project will result in:

- compliance with federal and state requirements
- allocating funding per the prevalence of need identified by the region's older adults
- documenting how the Area Agency on Aging will achieve its mission to help older adults stay independent and safe in their homes for the next four years

The purpose of public engagement for this project is to:

- receive input about the needs of seniors in the region
- learn about challenges related to housing experienced by older adults and people with disabilities
- identify unmet needs within the region's older adults and people with disabilities
- determine what kind of services help the region's older adults stay independent at home
- identify how to reach, per federal requirements, more clients who are not receiving services from other organizations
- identify trends and patterns in obtaining services (or challenges obtaining services) by older adults
- take the emotional pulse of older adults regarding their experience obtaining services – whether they feel anxiety around particular issues, or relief, or desperation
- allow older adults to offer information they may not otherwise be specifically asked about
- dive deeper into topics of concern as volunteered by older adults

Members of the public who should be engaged are:

- people who the Area Agency on Aging staff don't usually interact with, but who would qualify for its services
- people living in campgrounds
- people who use a Five Points library
- high-income older adults
- low-income older adults
- people attending Salute to Seniors at the Colorado Convention Center
- people at the Asian Pacific Development Center

The public engagement will be successful if:

- people volunteer topics of concern that are new or surprising to Area Agency on Aging staff
- Area Agency on Aging staff gathers data that informs its plan
- people gain an increased awareness of the Area Agency on Aging
- Area Agency on Aging staff witness tears or emotion (a hint that they've uncovered sensitive or gut-wrenching challenges)

This project will be successful if:

- the Area Agency on Aging maintains federal and state compliance
- the Area Agency on Aging receives requests for services represent those identified in the conversations
- the Area Agency on Aging can demonstrate the relevance of its services to the region's older adults
- the Area Agency on Aging receives inquiries from researchers and academics about its four-year plan

Appendix C: Potential Participants

Below are several lists of community services and organizations that may help you and the engagement specialist determine which segments of the public to approach for engagement. See Step 3 on page 20 for more information. The lists below are merely suggestions and are not comprehensive. Names of organizations are provided as examples only, and do not represent endorsement.

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

- chambers of commerce
- city, county and local agency staff
- community-based service providers (such as Volunteers of America or family service organizations)
- economic development corporations
- Federal Highway Administration
- federal lands agencies
- federal regulatory agencies
- Federal Transit Administration
- state divisions, agencies, commissions and boards
- transit districts
- transportation management associations

COMMUNITY AGENCIES AND EMERGENCY SERVICE PROVIDERS

- 911 dispatch staff
- ambulance services
- community emergency operations departments
- conservation districts
- fire districts
- hazardous materials responders
- hospitals
- irrigation districts
- police departments
- school bus fleet managers
- school districts
- sheriff's departments
- state patrol
- water/sewer/fire protection districts

SHIPPING AND FREIGHT

- port authority
- railroad associations
- railroad companies
- trucking associations
- trucking companies

CONSERVATION, OPEN SPACE AND AGRICULTURE

- agricultural organizations, farm bureaus
- agriculture companies
- conservation interest groups (such as Metro Denver Nature Alliance, Natural Resources Defense Council, Nature Conservancy or Sierra Club)
- environmental centers
- forest product companies
- parks
- wildlife interest groups (such as Audubon Society, Trout Unlimited or Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation)

ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

- advocacy organizations
- communities of speakers of languages other than English
- communities representing a diversity of ethnic and racial backgrounds
- low-income communities

MEDIA

- newspaper
- online
- radio
- television

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

- automobile associations (such as AAA)
- bicycle associations (such as Bicycle Colorado, Bike Denver, People for Bikes)
- community service clubs (such as Kiwanis, Optimist, Junior League or League of Women Voters)
- disability or access organizations (such as Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition or the Denver Regional Mobility and Access Coalition)
- environmental interest groups
- older adult organizations (such as AARP)
- pedestrian associations (such as Walk2Connect)
- professional organizations (such as American Planning Association, WTS International, Urban Land Institute)
- religious organizations

PROPERTY OWNERS

- adjacent or somewhat affected by the project
- along corridors related to the project
- directly affected by the project

RESIDENTS

- along affected corridors
- bicyclists
- commuters
- in the city/county/town
- in the neighborhood
- in the vicinity
- individuals with disabilities
- neighborhood associations
- pedestrians
- users of public transit

ELECTED OFFICIALS; LOCAL JURISDICTIONS AND COMMISSIONS

- city and town council members
- Colorado Commission on Aging
- Colorado Transportation Commission
- county commissioners
- county commissions on aging
- DRCOG Board of Directors
- elected officials serving DRCOG's member governments
- mayors
- state representatives
- state senators
- U.S. representatives
- U.S. senators

CULTURE AND TOURISM

- area attractions
- arts associations
- arts districts
- entertainment venues
- fairgrounds
- festival organizers
- tourism bureaus
- visitor centers

BUSINESSES; OWNERS AND EMPLOYEES OF

- along affected corridors
- commercial business areas
- delivery companies
- health clinics
- health systems
- industrial parks
- office complexes
- those affected by the project
- those in the city/county/town
- those in the neighborhood
- those in the vicinity

SERVICES

- charter bus companies
- private transit providers
- truck stops
- utility companies
- vanpool companies

Appendix D: Techniques for Public Engagement

Techniques represent tactics you might use for approaching public involvement. They always involve interaction among people – usually representatives of DRCOG (employees, committee members, Board directors) and members of the public. You should review this list with the help of the engagement specialist to determine which techniques are relevant to your project. See Step 7 on page 22 for more information.

These techniques were adapted from the Public Engagement Guide created by Metro.

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	TECHNIQUE	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EVALUATION METRICS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Attend standing meetings of community, partner or faith-based organizations. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of meetings attended. Number of post-meeting inquiries from attendees
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Co-host workshops with community groups and business associations. NOTES:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of workshops co-hosted. Number of post-workshop inquiries from attendees.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Contract with community-based organizations for outreach among low-income communities, under-represented communities and people with disabilities. NOTES:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Number of contacts made. Number of incoming inquiries from contacts after initial contact.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Sponsor a forum or summit with partner organizations or the media. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of forums sponsored. Number of post-forum contacts from partners/media/attendees.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Conduct focus group meetings with key interest groups for discussion and input. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Number of attendees. Number of comments received.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Conduct open houses. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of attendees. Number of comments received.

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	TECHNIQUE	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EVALUATION METRICS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Facilitate public discussions.		✓	✓		Number of participants. Number of post-discussion comments received from participants.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Conduct question-and-answer sessions.	✓	✓			Number of attendees.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Conduct breakout sessions or small-group discussions.	✓	✓			Number of participants. Number of post-discussion comments received.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Vary time of day for workshops.	✓	✓			Number of participants.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Offer translation services.	✓				Number of people who received translation services
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Buy print advertising.	✓				Print circulation.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Buy online advertising.	✓				Number of clicks.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Buy radio/television advertising or negotiate for free public service announcements.	✓				Number of listeners.
NOTES:						

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	TECHNIQUE	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EVALUATION METRICS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Conduct news briefings.	✓				Number of media who attend. Number of stories as a result.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Meet with editorial boards, writers and editors.	✓				Number of editorials written on topics of importance to DRCOG. Number of contacts from editorial boards, writers and editors following the meeting.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Submit op-eds to local news outlets.	✓				Number of op-eds published compared to number submitted.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Submit media releases.	✓				Number of stories as a result.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Negotiate to insert buck slips into a partner organization's mailings.	✓				Depends on call to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Submit media releases and op-eds to niche outlets serving under-represented communities.	✓				Number of stories and op-ed placements related to the release.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Meet with writers, reporters and editorial boards from niche news outlets serving under-represented communities.	✓				Number of stories and op-ed placements following the meeting.

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	TECHNIQUE	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EVALUATION METRICS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Make local media aware of DRCOG employees who can speak on-the-record and with expertise on various issues. NOTES:	✓	✓			Number of incoming requests for spokespeople/quotes.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Develop video content for distribution via the web and public access television. NOTES:	✓				Number of views.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Use social media to reach larger audiences. NOTES:	✓	✓			Number of retweets, fans, friends.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Maintain a web archive of documents related to past public meetings and workshops. NOTES:	✓				Number of unique visitors, visits and downloads.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Maintain a video/audio archive of past public meetings and workshops. NOTES:	✓				Number of unique visitors, visits and downloads.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Leverage the web's interactivity through surveys and opportunities for users to comment. NOTES:	✓	✓			Number of survey responses and comments.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Make data available to the public via the web. NOTES:	✓				Number of unique visitors, visits and downloads.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Provide information in advance of public meetings or events. NOTES:	✓	✓	✓		Number of days' substantive public notice is provided before public meetings or events.

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	TECHNIQUE	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EVALUATION METRICS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Use engagement platforms and the web to share information and solicit comments on draft documents prior to decision-making. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of days' substantive public notice is provided before public meetings or events.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Distribute public notices widely via community-based and interest organizations. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of organizations that share public notices.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Attend project groundbreakings and ribbon-cuttings. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number attended. Number of incoming contacts because of attendance.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Attend community events such as farmer's markets, festivals, religious organizations and health centers. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of events attended. Number of incoming contacts because of attendance.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Conduct personal interviews or use audio recording to obtain oral comments. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of oral comments recorded.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Arrange for interpreters and cultural mediators to be available at public meetings. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Feedback from cultural mediators.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Include information on how to request translation or Americans with Disabilities Act accommodations for meetings. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of requests.

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	TECHNIQUE	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EVALUATION METRICS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Employ robust visualization techniques such as maps and graphics to illustrate trends and choices. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Announce participation opportunities in community and media affiliated with under-represented communities. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of participants from under-represented communities.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Make web-based translation tools available to site visitors. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of times translation tools are used.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Offer on-call translation for meetings. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of times on-call translation services are used.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Submit translated news releases to non-English media outlets. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of stories resulting from news release.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Train staff to be alert to and anticipate the needs of low-literacy participants. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of staff trained.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Place advertisements in non-English media outlets. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Summarize the themes of public comments in reports. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whether reports contain summarized public comments.

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	TECHNIQUE	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EVALUATION METRICS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Provide comment summaries to the public. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whether comment summaries were provided.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Send direct mail and email to meeting participants to report on final outcomes. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of people reached.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Send surveys to meeting participants. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of respondents.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Develop a newsletter. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Provide information or listening post tables or booths at community events and public gathering spaces. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of events attended. Number of members of the public with whom staff engaged. Number of follow-up incoming contacts.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Participate in member jurisdiction, corridor and statewide decision-making processes, as appropriate. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Identify a staff liaison for engaging specific communities. NOTES:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of participants from specific communities.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Other technique: NOTES:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Metric:

Appendix E: Tools for Public Engagement

Tools represent the things you can use as part of your public involvement techniques. A tool's success depends on how well it's a) designed to support its corresponding technique and b) how effectively it is deployed. Not every tool will be relevant for every technique; this list is intended to allow you to brainstorm appropriate tools with the help of the engagement specialist and determine whether they can feasibly be incorporated in your project. See Step 7 on page 22 for more information.

These tools were adapted from the Public Engagement Guide created by Metro.

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	TECHNIQUE	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EVALUATION METRICS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Map	✓				Depends on call to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Chart	✓				Depends on call to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Illustration	✓				Depends on call to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Photograph	✓				Depends on call to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Public meeting notice	✓	✓			Number of attendees at public meeting.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Project-specific interest list (Customer-relationship management)	✓				Number of new additions to the list.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Tabletop display or model	✓				Depends on call to action.
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO NOTES:	Web content	✓				Unique visitors.

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	TECHNIQUE	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EVALUATION METRICS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Interactive games	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of players. Average amount of time spent playing the game.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Electronic voting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of voters.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Slide deck	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Video	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Telephone survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of willing respondents compared to number of calls made.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Web/email survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of respondents compared to site visitors or email recipients.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Intercept interview at areas of high foot traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of interviewees compared to number asked to participate.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Printed survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of surveys returned compared to number mailed.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Household survey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of surveys taken compared to number distributed.
NOTES:						

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	TECHNIQUE	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EVALUATION METRICS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Report	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Postcard	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Newsletter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Handout	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	News release	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of media outlets which placed the release in whole or in part.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Media calendar listing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of participants who indicate they learned about the event through a particular media outlet.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of fans who engaged, shared or commented on the post
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Twitter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of retweets or replies.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	RSS Feed	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of subscribers.
NOTES:						

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	TECHNIQUE	INFORM	CONSULT	INVOLVE	COLLABORATE	EVALUATION METRICS
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Blogs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Numbers of readers and number of comments.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Audio	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Web commenting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of comments.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Social media tagging/commenting	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Eblast	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Open rates, click-through rates.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Letter	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Depends on call to action.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Public Hearing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Number of public comments received.
NOTES:						
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Other Tool:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Metric:
NOTES:						

Appendix F: Evaluation Criteria

Below are questions you can use before, during and after your engagement project to determine whether you are on track to meet your objectives.

Not all of the criteria below will be relevant to your project. Before you start collecting data, determine which of the criteria are relevant to your project with the help of the engagement specialist. With assistance from the project team, the engagement specialist will be primarily responsible for tracking progress toward the evaluation criteria questions below.

OBJECTIVE: PROVIDE MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	PLANNING: BEFORE YOUR PROJECT BEGINS	ADAPTING: DURING YOUR PROJECT	EVALUATING: AFTER YOUR PROJECT
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you provide information to community organizations and invite their networks to participate?	Are community organizations effectively sharing information and invitations with their members?	Did you provide information to community organizations representing and invite the participation of their members?
NOTES:			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you invite people to share their perspectives before each decision-making milestone?	Are people sharing their perspectives before each decision-making milestone?	Did you invite people to share their perspectives before each decision-making milestone?
NOTES:			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you share input from people directly with decision-makers?	Do decision-makers have access to input directly from decision-makers?	Did you share input from people directly with decision-makers?
NOTES:			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you give people opportunities to shape alternatives?	Are people shaping alternatives?	Did you give people opportunities to shape alternatives?
NOTES:			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will project information be available on DRCOG's website? How will you measure whether people are accessing or downloading the information?	Is project information easy to find on DRCOG's website? Are people accessing or downloading project information?	How many people accessed or downloaded project information from DRCOG's website?
NOTES:			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you identify who receives electronic communications about the project?	What percentage of recipients are unsubscribing from electronic communications compared to the number sent?	How many people unsubscribed from electronic communications about the project?

**RELEVANT TO
YOUR PROJECT?**

**PLANNING:
BEFORE YOUR PROJECT BEGINS**

**ADAPTING:
DURING YOUR PROJECT**

**EVALUATING:
AFTER YOUR PROJECT**

☐ ☐
YES NO

How will people sign up for your project's interest list?

Are people signing up for your project's interest list?

How many people opted-in to your project's interest list?

NOTES:

☐ ☐
YES NO

How will you work with Communications and Marketing to create eblast and social media content that encourages recipients to follow links to information at DRCOG's website?

Are recipients following links in eblasts and social media to DRCOG's website?

From eblasts and social media, how many people clicked through to information on DRCOG's website about your project?

NOTES:

☐ ☐
YES NO

How will you work with Communications and Marketing to create content that encourages recipients to open emails or surveys about your project?

How many recipients are opening emails or surveys about your project?

Compared to the number sent, how many recipients opened emails or surveys about your project?

☐ ☐
YES NO

How will you work with Communications and Marketing to craft social media content to garner replies, mentions or comments?

How well are social media posts garnering replies, mentions or comments compared to typical performance?

How many replies, mentions or comments did information about the project garner on social media?

NOTES:

☐ ☐
YES NO

How will you encourage people to attend in-person opportunities (such as public hearings or open houses) to provide their perspectives?

How many people are attending in-person opportunities (such as public hearings or open houses) to provide their perspectives?

How many people attended in-person opportunities (such as public hearings or open houses) to provide their perspectives?

NOTES:

☐ ☐
YES NO

How will you determine whether venues for in-person participation are accessible?
How will you select venues for in-person participation?

Are your in-person opportunities to participate being held according to the accessibility guidelines you established?

Did you hold in-person opportunities to participate at accessible locations? How did you define accessibility?

NOTES:

**RELEVANT TO
YOUR PROJECT?**

**PLANNING:
BEFORE YOUR PROJECT BEGINS**

**ADAPTING:
DURING YOUR PROJECT**

**EVALUATING:
AFTER YOUR PROJECT**

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you determine the various times at which in-person opportunities to participate will be held? Do they accommodate a range of people's other commitments (work, school, family)?

Are the in-person opportunities to participate held at times that accommodate people's other commitments?

Did you hold in-person opportunities to participate at various times? How did you determine what those times would be?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you supplement in-person opportunities to participate with online opportunities to participate?

Are you supplementing in-person opportunities to participate with online opportunities to participate?

How did you supplement in-person opportunities to participate with online opportunities to participate?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you encourage people to comment on your project?

Are you receiving comments on your project?

How many comments did you receive on the project?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you ensure that the comments you receive on the project represent a diversity of perspective?

Are the comments you are receiving representative of a diversity of perspective?

Did the comments you receive represent a diversity of perspective?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you engage people of various demographic groups?

What demographic groups do people participating and providing comment represent?

What demographic groups did people participating and providing comment represent?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you ensure participants remain willing to provide their perspectives in the future? How will you measure such willingness?

Are people indicating an interest in future participation with DRCOG or around the issues represented by your project?

Did people indicate a willingness to provide their perspectives in the future?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you modify or change the project based on public input?

Should you modify or change the project based on public input?

How did you modify or change the project based on public input?

NOTES:

OBJECTIVE: INVOLVE UNDER-REPRESENTED COMMUNITIES

RELEVANT TO YOUR PROJECT?	BEFORE YOUR PROJECT BEGINS	DURING YOUR PROJECT	AFTER YOUR PROJECT
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you engage community organizations affiliated with low-income communities, communities of color, people who speak languages other than English, youth or people with disabilities?	Does participation include youth, people with disabilities, people from low-income communities, people from communities of color, or people who speak languages other than English?	Did participation include youth, people with disabilities, people from low-income communities, people from communities of color or people who speak languages other than English?
NOTES:			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Will you conduct a demographic analysis of people affected by the project to identify race, language proficiency, income and other factors?	How is the demographic analysis of people affected by the project to identify race, language proficiency, income and other factors affecting your efforts to engage the public?	Did you conduct a demographic analysis of people affected by the project to identify race, language proficiency, income and other factors?
NOTES:			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Will you facilitate translation of materials or meeting presentations into languages other than English?	Are translated materials being used? Is there a need for materials or presentations in languages other than what has already been developed?	Did you facilitate translation of materials or meeting presentations into languages other than English?
NOTES:			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you make project information available at community locations such as health care clinics, local markets, markets serving speakers of languages other than English, community centers and schools?	Is project information available at community locations such as health care clinics, local markets, markets serving speakers of languages other than English, community centers and schools?	Did you make project information available at community locations such as health care clinics, local markets, markets serving speakers of languages other than English, community centers and schools?
NOTES:			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you track comments you receive in languages other than English?	Are you receiving comments in languages other than English?	How many comments did you receive in languages other than English?
NOTES:			
<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Will publicity for meetings and meeting materials include an Americans with Disabilities Act notice?	Does publicity for meetings and meeting materials include an Americans with Disabilities Act notice?	Did meeting materials include an Americans with Disabilities Act notice?
NOTES:			

**RELEVANT TO
YOUR PROJECT?**

**BEFORE YOUR PROJECT
BEGINS**

DURING YOUR PROJECT

AFTER YOUR PROJECT

<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you respond to requests to provide materials in alternative formats, such as Braille?	Are you receiving requests to provide materials in alternative formats, such as Braille?	Did you receive requests for materials to be provided in alternative formats, such as Braille? If so, did you accommodate such requests?
--	--	--	--

NOTES:

<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you define accessibility? How will you select venues for public participation that are accessible and barrier free?	Are opportunities for public participation being held in venues that are accessible and barrier free?	Were opportunities for public participation held in venues that were accessible and barrier-free?
--	--	---	---

NOTES:

OBJECTIVE: COMMUNICATE COMPLETE, ACCURATE UNDERSTANDABLE AND TIMELY INFORMATION

**RELEVANT TO
YOUR PROJECT?**

**BEFORE YOUR PROJECT
BEGINS**

DURING YOUR PROJECT

AFTER YOUR PROJECT

<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	Do federal regulations guide public engagement? How will you comply with all federal requirements?	Are you complying with all federal regulations?	Did federal regulations guide public engagement? How did you comply with all federal regulations?
--	--	---	---

NOTES:

<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you test information, materials or surveys for clarity among people not involved in the project?	Are you testing information, materials or surveys for clarity among people not involved in the project?	Before distributing to people, did you test information, materials or surveys for clarity among people not involved in the project?
--	---	---	---

NOTES:

<input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	How will you review (or invite review of) information for accuracy?	Are you reviewing (or inviting review of) information for accuracy?	Did you review (or invite review of) information for accuracy?
--	---	---	--

NOTES:

**RELEVANT TO
YOUR PROJECT?**

**BEFORE YOUR PROJECT
BEGINS**

DURING YOUR PROJECT

AFTER YOUR PROJECT

☐ YES ☐ NO

Will any information be deemed a vital document? If so, will you translate it into other languages as guided by DRCOG's Limited English Proficiency plan?

Has any information been deemed a vital document? Are you translating it into other languages as guided by DRCOG's Limited English Proficiency plan?

Was any information deemed a vital document? If so, did you translate it into other languages as guided by DRCOG's Limited English Proficiency plan?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you make people aware of the availability of information through email, web or partner networks?

Are people aware of the availability of information through email, web or partner networks?

Did you make people aware of the availability of information through email, web or partner networks?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you clearly advertise meetings, workshops, surveys and other opportunities to participate on DRCOG's website?

Are you clearly advertising meetings, workshops, surveys and other opportunities to participate on DRCOG's website.

Are you clearly advertising meetings, workshops, surveys and other opportunities to participate on DRCOG's website.

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you provide notice of meetings, workshops and other opportunities to participate? How far in advance are you providing notice?

Are you providing notice of meetings, workshops and other opportunities to participate? How far in advance are you providing notice?

Did you provide at least two weeks' notice of meetings, workshops and other opportunities to participate? How far in advance did you provide notice?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you invite community organizations to share opportunities to participate with their members?

Are you inviting community organizations to share opportunities to participate with their members?

Did you invite community organizations to share opportunities to participate with their members?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you invite people to indicate whether they believe their involvement will be considered or influence the project?

Are people indicating they believe their involvement is being considered or influencing the project?

Did people indicate they believed their involvement was considered or influenced the project?

NOTES:

**RELEVANT TO
YOUR PROJECT?**

**BEFORE YOUR PROJECT
BEGINS**

DURING YOUR PROJECT

AFTER YOUR PROJECT

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you work with Communications and Marketing to email information about meetings, workshops, surveys and other opportunities to participate to relevant DRCOG lists?

Are you emailing information about meetings, workshops, surveys and other opportunities to participate to relevant DRCOG lists?

Did you email information about meetings, workshops, surveys and other opportunities to participate to relevant DRCOG lists?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you work with Communications and Marketing to provide information and notice of opportunities to participate via social media?

Are you working with Communications and Marketing to provide information and notice of opportunities to participate via social media?

Did work with Communications and Marketing to provide information and notice of opportunities to participate via social media?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you work with DRCOG's public relations coordinator to provide information about the engagement process to the media?

Is the engagement process garnering media coverage?

What type of media coverage did the engagement process associated with your project receive?

NOTES:

☐ YES ☐ NO

How will you make information about pending decisions available to the public at least one week in advance of any decision-making milestones?

Are you making information about pending decisions available to the public at least one week in advance of any decision-making milestones?

Did you make information about pending decisions available to the public at least one week in advance of any decision-making milestones?

NOTES:



Denver Regional Council of Governments
1001 17th St. Suite 700
Denver, CO 80202
303-455-1000 | drcog.org



*Aging
with
choice*

in the Denver region

As the Denver Regional Council of Governments' Area Agency on Aging enters its fifth decade of working and advocating on behalf of adults 60 and older, the region's elders and their caregivers face profound challenges.

THE POPULATION IS AGING, AND DEMAND FOR SERVICES IS GROWING.

BY 2030



area residents will be **60 or older**



94%

increase among **people 75+**



34%

increase among **people 90+**

The Denver region's older adults overwhelmingly (82 percent) want to stay in their communities through retirement, but a prosperous economy and related high demand for housing means they are often priced out of their neighborhoods. In recent years, an increasing number of calls to the organization's Information and Assistance line have been from elders and people with disabilities struggling to find affordable housing.

Forty years ago, DRCOG worked to develop programs for older adults, fund construction of senior centers and purchase equipment for providing free or affordable nutritious meals in central locations.

Today, the organization's priorities include helping communities become more age-friendly and enabling older adults and people with disabilities to remain in their homes for as long as they desire.

In addition, the organization works with its member governments to evaluate the age-friendliness of their communities and to make neighborhoods more livable for older adults.

Under an organizational vision that promotes "vibrant, connected, lifelong communities with a broad spectrum of housing, transportation and employment, complemented by world-class natural and built environments," DRCOG champions choice in aging. Guided by a vision for the future in which every older adult chooses when, if and how they transition from the community into a care facility, DRCOG coordinates existing resources and partnerships to facilitate aging with choice for as many elders as possible.



Despite a vision for a brighter future, many of the region's older adults face challenges today. Waitlists for affordable housing communities and those that can accommodate people with disabilities are long. Amid record demand, elders seeking nutrition assistance and help to stay safe and independent in their homes also wait their turn. Response to the Colorado Choice Transitions program, which helps people move from rehabilitation centers, nursing homes and assisted-living facilities back into the community, has been tremendous.

Area Agency on Aging

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Area Agency on Aging is the largest in the state of Colorado. It provides information and services to older adults and people with disabilities in Adams, Arapahoe, Clear Creek, Douglas, Gilpin and Jefferson counties, as well as the City and County of Broomfield and the City and County of Denver. Forty-seven percent of Colorado's older population lives in the region.

THE AREA AGENCY ON AGING ADVOCATES ON BEHALF OF LONG-TERM CARE RESIDENTS



2,972

Number of ombudsman visits
to long-term care facilities



33,100

Hours of service
provided through adult
day programs

9,721

Number of beds at skilled
nursing facilities



11,523

Number of beds at
assisted-living facilities



55,222

Hours of chore,
homemaker and personal
care services provided



121,189

One-way transportation
rides provided



778,907

Meals provided at
community centers or
by home delivery

Aging and Disability Resource Center

DRCOG also serves as the Aging and Disability Resource Center for the region, providing information, assistance and options counseling for older adults (60-plus) and people 18-plus with disabilities. The program streamlines access to long-term services and community resources. Options counselors offer personalized education and support individuals and their caregivers in decision-making. The services of the Aging and Disability Resource Center are available to family members, caregivers, friends and professionals.

*What
the future
holds*



As the Denver region's population ages and continues to grow, the demand for services provided by DRCOG and its partners will only increase.

Between now and 2019, the Area Agency on Aging will target its services to those most in need:

elders who are frail
low-income
confined to their homes
living in rural areas
members of minority communities
those at risk of premature admission to nursing homes

The Area Agency on Aging will continue to expand its clients' access to transportation, nutrition, mental health and in-home resources. Because caregivers are often key to older adults and people with disabilities remaining in their communities, the organization will provide friends and family with support and assistance.

DRCOG will launch a program to help people transition from nursing homes into the community. It will significantly expand its new program that helps disabled veterans live independently and direct their own care.

During 2015, the Area Agency on Aging conducted nearly **20 community conversations** related to increasing or maintaining independence for older adults in the metropolitan Denver area.



Nearly 500 people participated, ranking the following six services as most important:



transportation



in-home
services



home repair
or chore



nutrition



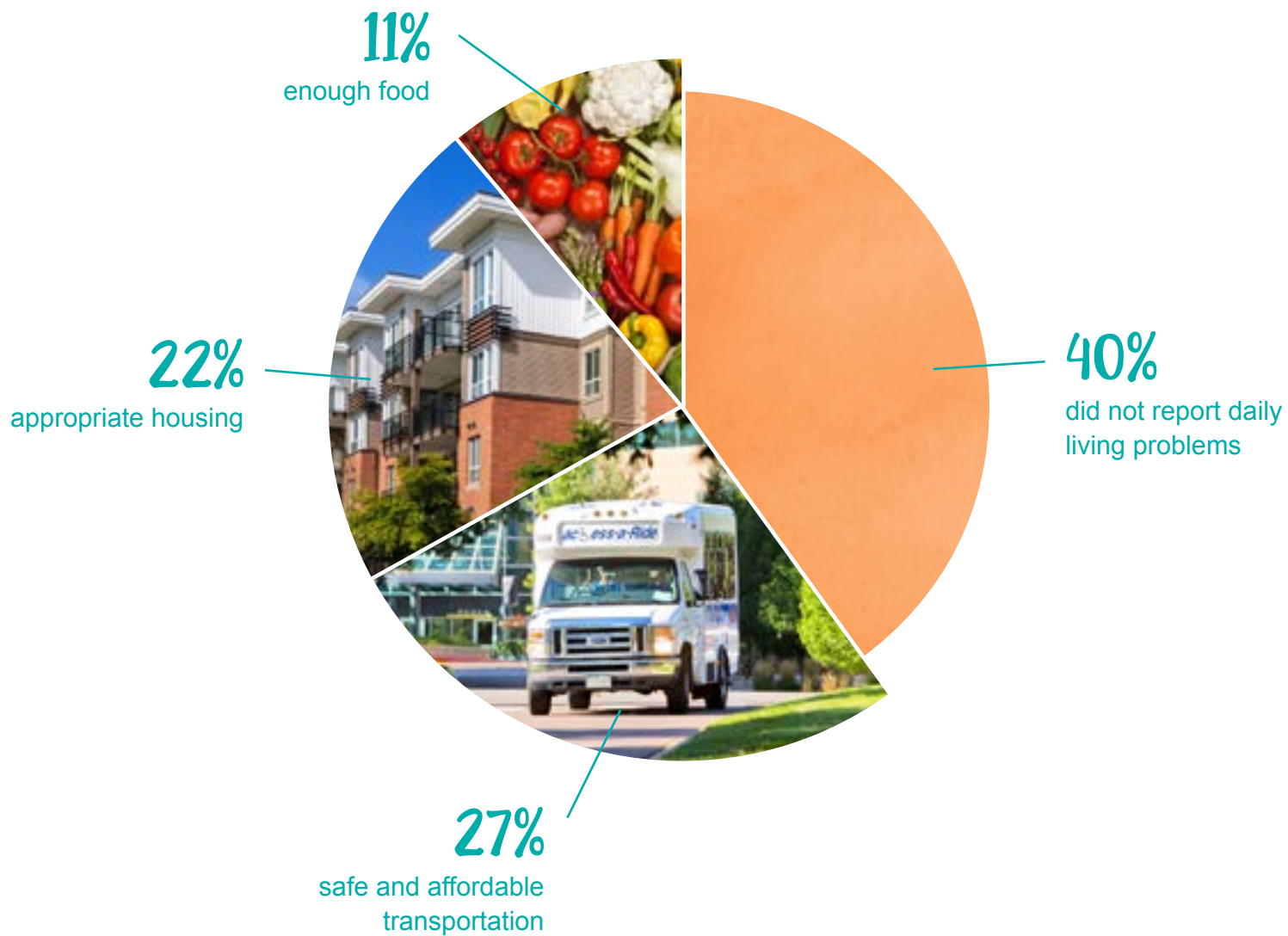
information,
referrals and
assistance



caregiver
support

DAILY LIVING PROBLEMS

The Denver region's older adults indicated at least a minor problem with the following aspects of daily life:



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

The Area Agency on Aging currently allocates funds to a variety of services offered by nonprofit community partners. Those services include:



adult day



counseling



blind and visually
impaired services



hearing aids
and eyeglasses



minor home
repair or
chore



health education
and wellness
resources



in-home



legal



nutrition



respite and
caregiver
support



screening
and
evaluation



transportation

The Area Agency on Aging also provides direct services including:

information, referrals, resources and assistance (over the phone, in-person and online at drcog.networkofcare.org)

options counseling

through the Ombudsman program, advocating on behalf of residents in skilled nursing facilities, nursing homes and assisted-living facilities

through the Ombudsman program, investigating complaints made by or on behalf of long-term care residents and working toward resolution

through the Ombudsman program, promoting awareness of elder abuse

services for elders from refugee communities

managing residents' transitions home from hospitals and long-term care facilities

helping communities evaluate their age-friendliness and plan for the demographic shift

helping disabled veterans remain independent at home

individual support for at-risk adults

DRCOG also provides short-term case management for older adults requiring assistance during life transitions. With the goal of helping older adults remain active and independent in their communities, case managers perform needs assessments, coordinate services, help the older adult apply for and access benefits for which they may be eligible, and consult with family members.

A critical component of the Area Agency on Aging's work is advocacy on behalf of individual elders as well as Colorado's older adults. Advocacy helps secure critical funding for community services for adults older than 60 and people with disabilities.

*Stronger
communities,
more
choices*



The vast majority of the region's soon-to-be older adults intend to remain in their current communities and homes for as long as possible.

Fiscal analysis shows that keeping seniors in their homes for as long as possible saves them — and the rest of us — significant amounts of money. And we know from experience that our communities are stronger and more resilient when they include elders.

\$77	The monthly cost of services that allow an older adult to remain living at home and prevents premature admission to assisted-living or skilled nursing facilities. (provided through the Older Americans Act)
\$1,840 to \$4,600	Typical monthly expenses for a resident at an assisted-living facility (if billed to the resident or her family)
\$2,232	Typical monthly expenses for a resident at an assisted-living facility (if billed to Medicaid)
\$5,500 to \$13,000	Typical monthly expenses for a resident at a skilled nursing facility (if billed to the resident or his family)
\$7,197	Typical monthly expenses for a resident at a skilled nursing facility (if billed to Medicaid)

AGING WITH CHOICE

Levels of care and associated cost



However, throughout the region, many older adults encounter waiting lists for services offered by DRCOG's partners. Demand already exceeds the availability of affordable housing, nutrition and other services that help elders live independently. When outpaced demand causes older adults to lose access to the services that help them remain in the community, they are prematurely forced to move into nursing homes and assisted-living facilities.

Some older adults work past typical retirement age, but many contribute to their communities by volunteering, providing informal help to family and friends and caregiving. During 2014, elders in DRCOG's eight-county region contributed more than \$9 billion in economic value to their communities.

Aging in communities

An ideal and a challenge



Although most older adults desire to remain in their homes and communities as they age, several factors make doing so a challenge.

Colorado lost fewer jobs during the Great Recession, and rebounded quickly. Its job growth outpaces New York City, Los Angeles, Chicago and Houston. The unemployment rate has dropped year after year since 2010. And the City and County of Denver has grown by more than 100,000 people since 2000, with another 100,000 expected during the decade to come.

With a thriving economy comes demand for housing. Home prices are high, with sellers worried they may not be able to afford their next home. Rent increases have, until very recently, kept pace with Silicon Valley. Although additional rental units are being built, most are above market rate and are resulting in rents regionwide to rise.

When older adults consider downsizing, many move from single-family homes into condominiums. Partly due to construction defects litigation, and partly due to a lack of condominium options, affluent empty-nesters who might otherwise downsize to a condo instead choose market-rate or luxury rentals. On the other end of the spectrum, a significant volume of calls received by DRCOG's Information and Assistance phone line are from elders who are having difficulty finding low-income housing.

The suburban appeal of large lots and few neighbors can be attractive when access to, and the ability to drive, a personal vehicle is guaranteed. But without access to affordable, accessible public transportation, as mobility decreases aging-in-place becomes a challenge. For older adults in suburban areas, being unable to drive a car limits their access to health services and everyday essentials such as grocery stores.



*On the
horizon*



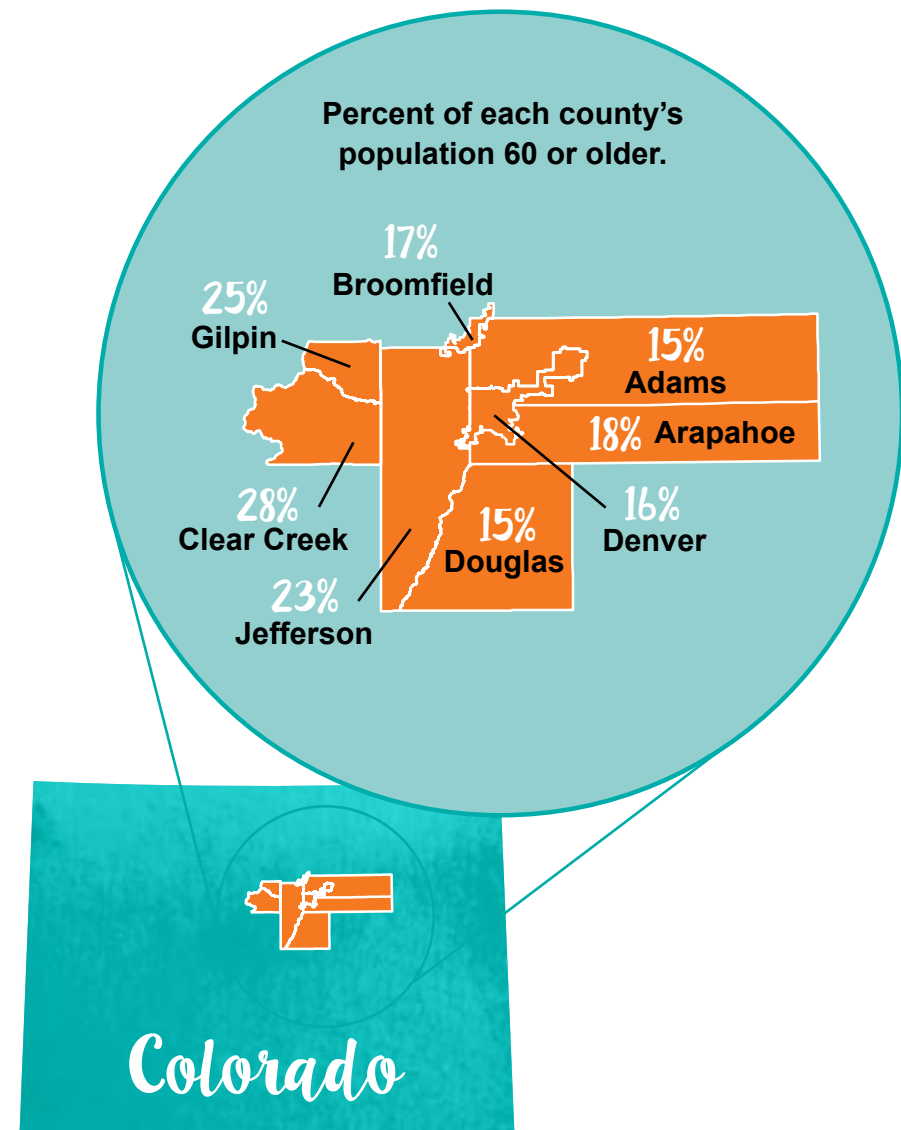
Through the Affordable Care Act, DRCOG continues to expand its role as a bridge between health care providers and community service organizations.

The Area Agency on Aging continues to explore public and private funding opportunities to enhance the quality of life for older adults in both clinical and community settings.

Throughout the region, residents 60 and older account for 15-20 percent of most counties' populations. By 2030, 25 percent of the region's population will be 60 or older. Counties currently exceeding those regional averages are Jefferson County (22.54 percent of its population represent households 60 or older in 2015) and Clear Creek County (28.08 percent). Southwest Arapahoe County also has a high concentration of older adults.

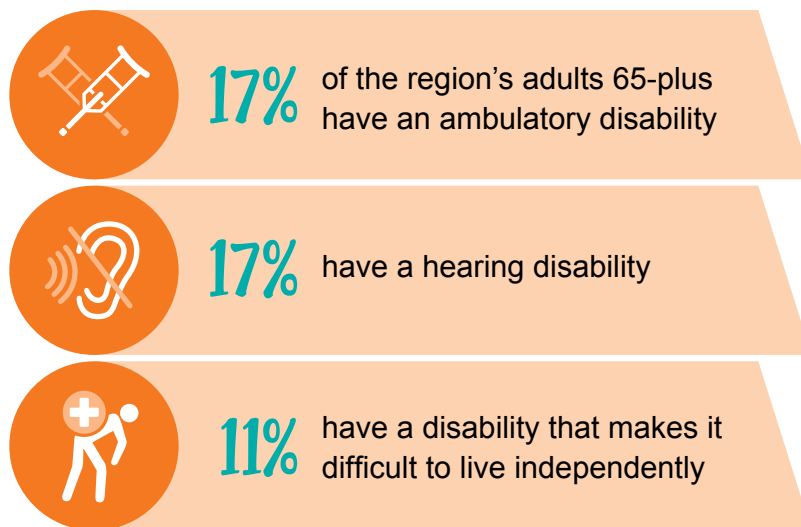
At the municipal level, certain parts of Wheat Ridge, Arvada and Lakewood have concentrations of older adults exceeding the regional average.

Within the region, higher concentrations of older adults from minority races and ethnicities (including Black, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, American Indian, and people identifying as two or more races) are found in East Denver, West Aurora, West Denver, Lakewood, Commerce City and Thornton. Douglas County and southwest Arapahoe County have the lowest concentrations of people older than 60 from minority races and ethnicities.



DRCOG continuously works to identify the gaps between the services it facilitates and the needs of the region's older adults. In 2016 the organization hired two Spanish-speaking case managers, in response to findings that showed 22 percent of Latinos lack health coverage. Among Hispanics, one-third of older adults feel physically, emotionally and financially burdened by caring for another person. In a partnership with Colorado Latino Age Wave, DRCOG will explore outreach, training and respite services for Latino caregivers.

As the Denver region's population ages, so will the number of residents with disabilities. On average;



Among the region's counties, Adams has the highest representation of older adult residents with disabilities (14 percent in 2013).

The number of people involved in care for older family members is growing along with the region's increasing population of older adults. Although DRCOG has always offered assistance to caregivers of older adults and people with disabilities, during the next four years the organization will sharpen its strategies for supporting its clients' spouses, family and caregivers.

CAREGIVING



In response to area seniors identifying transportation as a top concern, DRCOG has already worked to reduce no-show rates for existing transportation services. With a goal to increase the number of elders using transportation services, DRCOG will continue to work with its partners to expand the types of rides available beyond trips to nutrition and medical services.



One of DRCOG's most visible programs is its ombudsman service on behalf of residents at long-term care (including assisted-living and skilled nursing) facilities. In addition to advocacy on behalf of individual residents, DRCOG's advocacy through its ombudsman program will also include providing recommendations on long-term care facility regulations related to residents' rights; training, education and certification for administrators and staff; and provider accountability.



In coordination with the **GLBT Community Center**, DRCOG is developing a case management program for clients who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT). LGBT elders are twice as likely to live alone, four times less likely to have children and five times less likely to use senior services than their heterosexual peers.



Challenges and opportunities



The Area Agency on Aging is largely funded through the Older Americans Act, a half-century-old federal program that allocates funds to states based on their 60-plus populations.

Without the act, many of the programs DRCOG and its partners offer would have to secure private funding. A drawback to this significant funding source, however, is that the 2016 reauthorization of the Older Americans Act kept funding at 2006 levels. The frozen formula means that funding to states such as Colorado, with fast-growing senior populations, has not kept up with the actual population of older adults. Although DRCOG supports the Older Americans Act, it advocates for the next reauthorization to reallocate funding based on each state's actual population of adults 60-plus.

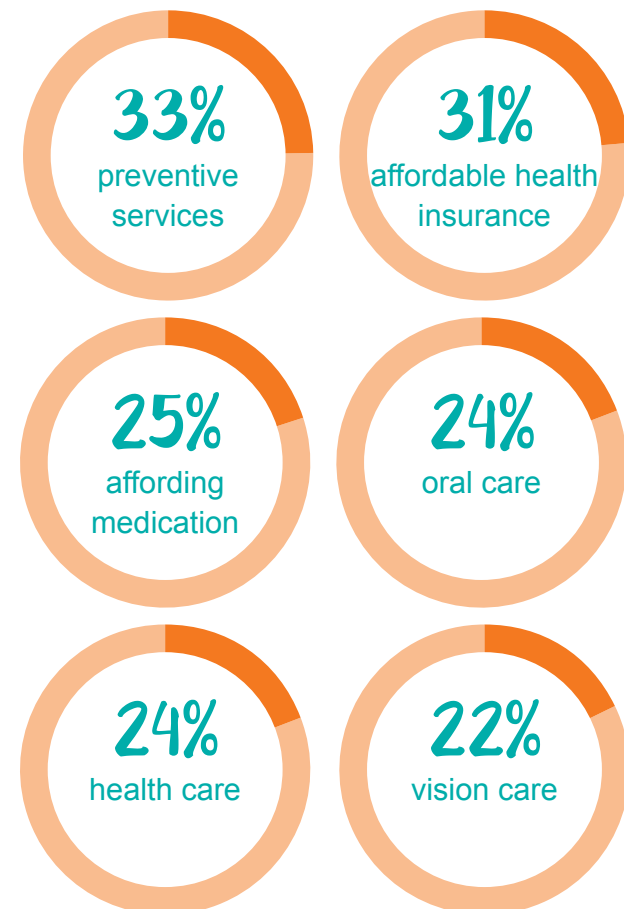
Through advocacy efforts, DRCOG's staff has worked with Colorado's legislature to successfully secure an additional \$4 million each year for three years (\$12 million total) for older adults via Long Appropriations Bill funding. DRCOG staff also identified unused Senior Property Tax Exemption funds, which translated to DRCOG receiving \$656,880 to provide services for older adults in the eight-county region.

The unpredictable nature of government funding means that DRCOG continues to explore innovative approaches to meet the needs of the region's older adults. In addition to strengthening essential community partnerships, DRCOG is working with clinical medical providers to identify social concerns that may contribute to hospital readmissions, high medical bills and

poor health. With DRCOG as a bridge, nonprofit, community partners and clinical medical sites will work together to make strides toward reducing health care costs and improving the quality of life for the region's older adults.

ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE

In the Denver region, significant percentages of older adults reported at least a minor problem accessing the following types of medical care:



In this together

DRCOG's Area Agency on Aging is just one entity working on behalf of the metropolitan area's older adults and people with disabilities. Combined efforts within the nonprofit, government and private sectors represent countless organizations and individuals working toward a common goal of allowing the region's residents to age with choice.

There's no silver bullet for the challenges of meeting a growing population of older adults' unmet needs. It's no single organization's responsibility to advocate on behalf of, provide education on the issues around, and increase funding for older adults and people with disabilities. Rather, it's by leveraging and coordinating the strength of each partner's contributions that will succeed in making the Denver region as age-friendly as possible.



Older adults want to stay in their homes and communities. And if the right resources are available to help them do so, it costs much less for them, their families and the state's taxpayers.

The fastest way for the region to achieve its goal of keeping older adults independent and at home for as long as they choose is to increase the variety and availability of community-based services.

DRCOG continues to work to identify gaps in service among various populations. Whether it's poverty, crime, food deserts or places where access to public transportation is difficult, the challenges facing some segments of the region's older adults are daunting. But together, individuals and organizations from throughout the region can work together to address these issues.

DRCOG has recently started allocating available grant money to organizations that prove they're providing solutions for previously underserved communities. *(For up-to-date maps of the places where community-based services are most needed, please visit drcog.org.)*

In the region's vision for the future, all its region's elders are able to age with choice in their communities, rather than being prematurely forced into care facilities that exceed their needs.

The cost for everyone increases when older adults are forced to move into long-term care facilities because no community-based services are available (or because waiting lists are too long).

Community-based services provide for seniors' nutrition, basic wellness, transportation and minor household needs at a fraction of the cost of assisted-living facilities or skilled nursing centers.

	Receiving in-home services	Assisted-living facility	Skilled nursing facility
Average monthly cost	\$77	\$1,840 to \$4,600	\$5,500 to \$13,000
Who pays?	State of Colorado using Older Americans Act funds	The resident, her family or Medicaid	The resident, his family or Medicaid





The value of community-based services represents much more than cost savings. If seniors who can remain independent at home and in their communities use community-based services, waiting lists for long-term care facilities will be reduced, allowing more access for older adults who truly need a spectrum of specialized care. When wellness and preventive services are easily available, older adults are more likely to use them, meaning they're healthier and less at risk of using emergency services. The need to expand community-based services is imperative. Elders' wisdom, experience and knowledge enrich our communities. When community-based services are available, the social connections between older adults and other generations are enhanced through day-to-day interactions with other residents of the neighborhood.

You can help.

Continue to advocate and work with your local city council and county commission to make living in community both attractive to and accessible for older adults. Continue to advocate for increased funding for seniors at the local, state and federal levels. Whenever possible, discuss the issues facing older adults. Let your contacts in business, government and nonprofit spheres know that there's a need for more community-based services, and encourage them to provide services where DRCOG has identified gaps within the region.

Sources: Community Assessment Survey for Older Adults (Denver Regional Council of Governments, 2015 Report of Results and 2015 Hispanic Report of Results); DRCOG Area Plan on Aging 2015-2019; Senior Housing in the Denver Region (Maggie Lyons, University of Colorado Denver, December 2015); U.S. Census Bureau; The United States of Aging Survey (Denver Full Research Findings, July 2015); Colorado Department of Local Affairs; Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation.



Take the Boomer Bond assessment

Several communities within the region have already demonstrated innovative and successful ways to become more age-friendly (see “*Boomer Bond Assessment Tool*” — above).



1290 Broadway, Suite 100
Denver, CO 80203
303-455-1000
drcog@drcog.org

www.drcog.org



A grayscale photograph of the Denver skyline, featuring several tall skyscrapers. In the foreground, there is a bridge with a distinctive arching steel structure. The image is partially covered by a large blue diagonal graphic element that extends from the top right towards the bottom left.

Framework for Transportation Planning in the Denver Region

Fall 2022



This document was prepared and published by the Denver Regional Council of Governments and is prepared in cooperation with and financial assistance from the following public entities: The Federal Highway Administration, the Federal Transit Administration and the Colorado Department of Transportation. To receive this document in accessible formats, such as in languages other than English, please call 303-455-1000 or email drcog@drcog.org so we can coordinate your request.



Table of contents

Document highlights..... 4

Chapter 1: Introduction 12

Chapter 2: Policy direction 18

Chapter 3: DRCOG committees and public and stakeholder engagement.....28

Chapter 4: Planning process products.....42

Chapter 5: Coordination with other transportation processes.....78

Appendix: Statutory and regulatory references.....78



Document highlights

Chapter 1—Introduction

The Denver Regional Council of Governments is a voluntary association of local governments in the Denver region, currently numbering 58 member governments. DRCOG is also the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the Denver region. Exhibit 1 depicts the MPO boundaries. DRCOG is the designated recipient for the Federal Transit Administration's Section 5310 program funds for the Denver-Aurora, Colorado Large Urbanized Area. Exhibit 1 also depicts the Denver-Aurora Urbanized Area.

The metropolitan transportation planning process is a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive (3-C) process, per federal requirements. As the region's MPO, DRCOG leads the 3-C planning process.

DRCOG, the Regional Transportation District and Colorado Department of Transportation are the primary partners in this process. The Metropolitan Planning Agreement specifies principles and objectives for carrying out the regional transportation planning process. This Framework for Transportation Planning document provides details on how the process currently works. The document will be reviewed and revised as necessary.

Chapter 2—Policy direction

Regional transportation planning processes are guided by federal and state laws, regulations/rules and policies. Federal law also requires that MPOs take the lead in regional transportation planning in urbanized areas. Transportation planning within the transportation management area is guided by the federal metropolitan planning regulations. Statewide transportation planning is guided by state statutes and federal planning regulations. CDOT carries out its responsibilities in the portions of the DRCOG transportation planning region outside the transportation management area in consultation with DRCOG. The 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan is the region's vision for its desired future; implementing the strategic initiatives of Metro Vision is a primary objective of the DRCOG regional transportation planning process.

Chapter 3—DRCOG committees and public and stakeholder engagement

The DRCOG Board of Directors is the policy body for the MPO. The Metropolitan Planning Agreement organizes the transportation planning process through DRCOG's Regional Transportation Committee and the Transportation Advisory Committee. Both the RTC and the DRCOG Board of Directors must take identical action before regional transportation planning policies and products are considered adopted. At the staff level, the Agency Coordination Team and Interagency Consultation Group facilitate interagency coordination, cooperation and communication. Proactive public engagement is essential. Decisions are made only after the public is made aware of proposed actions and has the opportunity to provide feedback.

Chapter 4—Planning process products

Unified Planning Work Program

The Unified Planning Work Program describes all transportation planning activities for the coming two years in the MPO region. The UPWP is the “scope of work” for the federal planning funds that DRCOG receives, such as the federal Consolidated Planning Grant funds. CPG is a combination of Federal Highway Administration metropolitan planning funds and Federal Transit Administration metropolitan planning funds. Also included in the UPWP are activities conducted by our partner agencies with federal planning funds, as well as locally funded transportation planning initiatives in the region.

Federal agencies review and approve the UPWP to ensure that the proposed work activities are consistent with federal requirements and eligible for federal funds. FHWA and FTA jointly develop sets of planning emphasis areas on a regular basis. These areas of federal emphasis guide the development of work tasks listed in the UPWP and are an important tool to ensure MPO activities align with national priorities. The current planning emphasis areas are listed in the UPWP, along with those tasks that are directly related to each area.

Long-range transportation plan

The 2050 RTP is the Denver region's long-range multimodal transportation plan. The 2050 RTP sets the framework for the region to invest in specific projects and programs to address the plan's multimodal priorities. It also incorporates DRCOG's related mode- and topic-specific plans. The 2050 RTP is typically updated every four years and may be amended

between major updates. The fiscally constraint portion of the plan demonstrates sufficient available revenue to fund its project and program investment priorities and identifies how funds (regardless of source) will be spent on projects and programs identified in the 2050 RTP. It conforms to all applicable federal air quality and state greenhouse gas reduction regulations. The 2050 RTP at a minimum ensures that transportation decisions don't negatively affect low-income and minority communities more than other areas and provide at least as much benefit compared with the entire region. The 2050 RTP includes a geographic- and travel time analysis-based environmental justice analysis of the major transportation projects included in the plan. It also incorporates the ten federal planning factors into the planning process:

- Economic vitality.
- Safety.
- Security.
- Accessibility and mobility.
- The environment.
- Multimodal connectivity.
- System management and operations.
- System preservation.
- Resilience and reliability.
- Travel and tourism.

The 2050 RTP also links investment priorities to achieving the federally required transportation performance measure targets.

Transportation Improvement Program

DRCOG's Transportation Improvement Program identifies the federally funded transportation projects to be implemented in the transportation management area during a four-year period. DRCOG staff develop a new TIP every two years, while calls for projects to add new projects to the TIP are typically held every four years. The two-year update is necessary so the fiscal years of the adopted TIP match the annual update cycle to the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The TIP also implements the air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP. No project using federal and state surface transportation funds can be included in the 2050 RTP unless it is listed in the TIP. TIP calls for projects are conducted in line with a standing policy document that is reviewed and revised as necessary through the regional transportation planning process prior to the opening of each project call process. CDOT and RTD staff follow their own processes to select projects administered with their funding. Through coordination with DRCOG, the selected projects from those partner agencies are incorporated in the TIP. Federal law requires collaboration and consultation in project selection and prioritization.

CDOT staff identifies projects for funding in the TIP within the transportation management area and in the STIP in the mountains and plains area. CDOT staff's project selection processes serve as the basis for projects CDOT staff identifies and submits to DRCOG for inclusion in the TIP in the transportation management area. Projects are identified for potential inclusion in the TIP through processes which include asset management systems, safety processes,

competitive evaluation and consultation with planning partners. CDOT staff reviews proposed projects and solicits input from planning partners and the public through the Project Priority Programming Process. DRCOG and RTD staff participate in the countywide meetings of CDOT's 4P process to promote interagency coordination. The TIP is incorporated directly into the STIP without modification, per federal requirements. The TIP is fiscally constrained and conforms to the requirements of the Clean Air Act.

Congestion management process

The congestion management process provides for effective management of the performance of transportation facilities. In the transportation management area, federal funds cannot be programmed for any highway project that would significantly increase capacity for single-occupant vehicles unless the project is based on a congestion management process. DRCOG staff identify and evaluate congestion management strategies at the regional level as part of the overall regional transportation planning process. At the project level, the sponsor conducts the needed congestion management analysis.

Planning process certification

Every four years, FHWA and FTA jointly conduct a planning certification review of the 3C planning process.

The FHWA and FTA review certifications from DRCOG, CDOT and RTD to ensure compliance that the transportation planning process is conducted in accordance with all applicable federal regulations. Certification holds an MPO and all planning partners accountable for the compliance of the planning process in its region. A joint self-certification process is conducted when a new TIP is prepared. The last certification was in October 2020.

Chapter 5—Coordination with other transportation processes

Greenhouse Gas Transportation Planning Standard

On Dec. 16, 2021, the Transportation Commission approved CDOT's greenhouse gas rule to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector, improve air quality and reduce smog, and provide more travel options. The greenhouse gas rule is one of several transportation strategies identified in the state's Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Roadmap and is a key requirement established in the 2021 state transportation funding bill (Senate Bill 21-260).

CDOT's interchange approval process

CDOT's interchange approval process defines the policy and procedures by which CDOT will consider applications for new or modified interchanges on state and federal highways. Analytic requirements and approval responsibility vary depending on the category type CDOT assigns to the application. For certain types of improvements, the applicant must prepare a system-level study. The process requires transportation demand management strategies to be included in certain new interchange projects. The CDOT Transportation Commission must approve the system-level study before the interchange project is included in DRCOG's air quality conforming, fiscally constrained 2050 RTP.

Revision to state highway access categories

The State Highway Access Code specifies a classification system for access management purposes. Every state highway is assigned an access category and the code establishes the process and procedures for making changes to the assigned category.

Major environmental processes

The National Environmental Policy Act requires the environmental impact of projects that receive federal funding to be assessed. Planning and Environmental Linkage studies are often conducted prior to NEPA level evaluations. The relationships between major NEPA environmental studies and the regional transportation planning process include listing environmental studies in transportation improvement plans and unified planning work programs, and interagency review of environmental study work scopes and involvement in NEPA studies. The description and cost of the project to be cleared in an environmental decision document must be consistent with that in the adopted air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP. This sometimes requires an amendment to the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP.

DRCOG fixed guideway RTD transit review

State statute (per Senate Bill 90-208) requires DRCOG to review and approve any fixed guideway mass transit system element proposed by RTD before it can be constructed. Criteria for review of proposed fixed guideway RTD transit projects are adopted by the DRCOG Board of Directors through the transportation committee process. The Senate Bill 90-208 assessment explicitly confirms or rejects the technical and financial feasibility of the proposal. DRCOG staff established procedures for the evaluation of FasTracks Change Reports submitted by RTD. The DRCOG Board of Directors, through the transportation committee process, determines if the changes identified require further Senate Bill 90-208 action.

Front Range Passenger Rail District Board

Created by Senate Bill 21-238, the Front Range Passenger Rail District Board recently replaced the Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission. The board is charged with completing the planning and project development work to assess the feasibility of a proposed 180-mile Front Range passenger rail system from Fort Collins to Pueblo. Upon completion of the planning and project development work, the board may put a funding proposal in front of voters within the legislatively defined rail district. The board is legislatively authorized to design, build, operate and maintain a Front Range passenger rail system, if feasible. Four appointees from DRCOG are voting members of the board. The CDOT executive director also appoints a voting member. RTD is allotted a non-voting member.

Planning and development process for FTA Capital Investment Program (New Starts, Small Starts and Core Capacity)

FTA has a defined process that applicants must follow for capital investment grants for new fixed guideway systems or extensions to existing ones. The project type and overall cost determine the category of the project: New Starts, Small Starts or Core Capacity. For New Starts and Core Capacity projects, federal regulations require completion of two phases in advance of receipt of a construction grant agreement: project development and engineering. For Small Starts projects, there is one phase in advance of receipt of a construction grant agreement: project development. FTA staff evaluate each proposed capital investment project nationwide according to a defined set of criteria. Project sponsors provide FTA with relevant information each time they advance a corridor into a new phase, for a full funding grant agreement and annually to support FTA's report to the U.S. Congress.

State implementation plans for air quality

The federal Clean Air Act requires that states prepare state implementation plans to show how a nonattainment area will attain national air quality standards and how attainment will be maintained. State implementation plans establish motor vehicle emissions budgets and specify control measures. In air quality nonattainment-maintenance areas, fiscally constrained regional transportation plans and transportation improvement plans must conform to the appropriate state implementation plans; i.e., the region does not exceed the emissions budgets for criteria pollutants and required transportation control measures are being implemented.

The Denver region currently meets national air quality standards for carbon monoxide and PM-10 and has approved state implementation plans (maintenance plans). The region is considered by the Environmental Protection Agency to be attainment-maintenance for those pollutants. In 2022, the region became one of the first in the nation to achieve attainment for carbon monoxide emissions. In 2015, the EPA set a new eight-hour ozone standard of 70 parts per million for which the region is now planning. In 2016, an area that includes much of the Denver region was designated as moderate nonattainment for ozone based on a 2008 75 parts per billion eight-hour standard. In 2022, the EPA indicated its intent to reclassify the region as severe (from serious) non-attainment for ozone.

CDOT program distribution

CDOT's investment strategy is reflected in the program distribution process. Program distribution is a part of the Statewide Transportation Plan and outlines the assignment of projected revenues to various program areas for the time period of the Plan. Program Distribution reflects an investment strategy based on the policies and priorities established as part of the development of the SWP. While revenues are updated and programs are funded annually through the annual budget process, program distribution provides a long-term view of what revenues are likely to look like, and how they will likely be allocated among programs in the future. Federal law requires the state and MPO to cooperatively develop estimates of funds available for implementation of air quality-conforming, fiscally constrained long-range transportation plans and transportation improvement plans.

RTD Mid-Term Financial Plan

The Mid-Term Financial Plan is RTD's six-year fiscally constrained operating and capital improvement plan. This plan is revised annually. RTD uses the plan to identify its federally funded projects for inclusion in the TIP.

DRCOG toll facilities review

Colorado statute 43-4-806 requires DRCOG review and approve any toll highway plan proposed in the DRCOG area by the Colorado Transportation Investment Office (formerly known as the High-Performance Transportation Enterprise). Additionally, the federal legislation requires the Colorado Transportation Investment Office (or other public tolling authorities) to consult with DRCOG concerning the placement and amount of tolls on a facility. House Bill 06-1003 also requires the same review of proposals by private toll companies. Criteria for review of proposed projects are adopted by the DRCOG Board of Directors through the transportation committee process. Assessment findings for the toll highway/system proposal consider the operation, technology, feasibility and financing of the toll facility.



1

Introduction

Transportation planning for the Denver region is a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive process. Three agencies—DRCOG, RTD and CDOT are the primary partners in this effort. A Metropolitan Planning Agreement forms and directs this partnership. The Metropolitan Planning Agreement was previously executed in 2017. Another agreement will accompany this plan.

DRCOG, CDOT and RTD are the three signatories of the Metropolitan Planning Agreement and are referred to as the regional agencies.

Purpose of this document

This Framework for Transportation Planning in the Denver Region document augments the MPA by providing the details of how this transportation planning process works. It has been approved by the Regional Transportation Committee (see Section 3.A), which has DRCOG Board of Directors and executive management membership from all three MPA regional agencies.

The framework:

- Describes the policies and procedures of the process, in the context of federal, state and regional requirements (Chapter 2).
- Details how the three partners cooperate in carrying out the process (Chapter 3).
- Identifies the key regional transportation planning products required by federal law and explains how the participants work together to produce those products (Chapter 4).
- Shows how the regional process dovetails with individual processes of the three partners, and interacts with local governments, air quality planning agencies and other participants to accomplish transportation planning in the Denver region (Chapter 5).

This document presents current details and understandings. However, process details change continually in response to new federal and state laws and regulations, regional issues and initiatives and the evolving focus of each regional agency. DRCOG staff will periodically review this document to ensure it is an accurate reflection of the regional planning process. If revisions are deemed necessary, staff will recommend revisions to the RTC and identify which revisions can be completed administratively, which can be accepted simply by committee action, and which must be referred to the boards of all three MPA partner agencies for endorsement.

Planning geography

For transportation planning purposes, the Denver region includes the following geographic areas:

Metropolitan planning organization

DRCOG has been designated as the metropolitan planning organization for the Denver region since 1977 and represents 58 local government members, while coordinating planning efforts with various state and federal agencies. A MPO is a federally required transportation policy-making organization in the U.S. that is made up of representatives from local government and governmental transportation authorities. MPOs are required for all urbanized areas with populations greater than 50,000. The MPO boundaries are depicted in Exhibit 1.

Transportation management area

Federal law requires that each urbanized area in the nation (as defined by the U.S. Census Bureau) with a population greater than 200,000 be designated as a transportation management area. That transportation management area must cover the entire urbanized area(s) and the contiguous geographic area(s) likely to become urbanized within, at a minimum, a 20-year period. Federal law further requires that regional transportation planning in a metropolitan area be conducted by a metropolitan planning organization and encourages designation of a single MPO to serve multiple urbanized areas that are adjacent to each other.

The FHWA/FTA-designated Denver-Aurora Transportation Management Area depicted in Exhibit 1, for which DRCOG is the MPO, includes four urbanized areas, encompasses slightly more than 3,600 square miles, and consists of the portions of Adams and Arapahoe counties west of Kiowa Creek; all of the City and County of Broomfield, the City and County of Denver, and Douglas and Jefferson counties; all of Boulder County except its portion of Rocky Mountain National Park; and an urbanizing portion of southwest Weld County.

Transportation Planning Region

The Greater Denver Transportation Planning Region, depicted in Exhibit 1, encompasses 5,288-square-miles with the inclusion of areas outside the Denver-Aurora Transportation Management Area, Gilpin and Clear Creek counties as well as portions of Adams and Arapahoe counties east of Kiowa Creek. State statute requires the state transportation planning process be conducted in cooperation with local governments. For this purpose, Colorado has been subdivided into 15 transportation planning regions. Regional planning commissions lead planning efforts for their planning region. As a designated regional planning commission, DRCOG leads planning in the Greater Denver TPR.

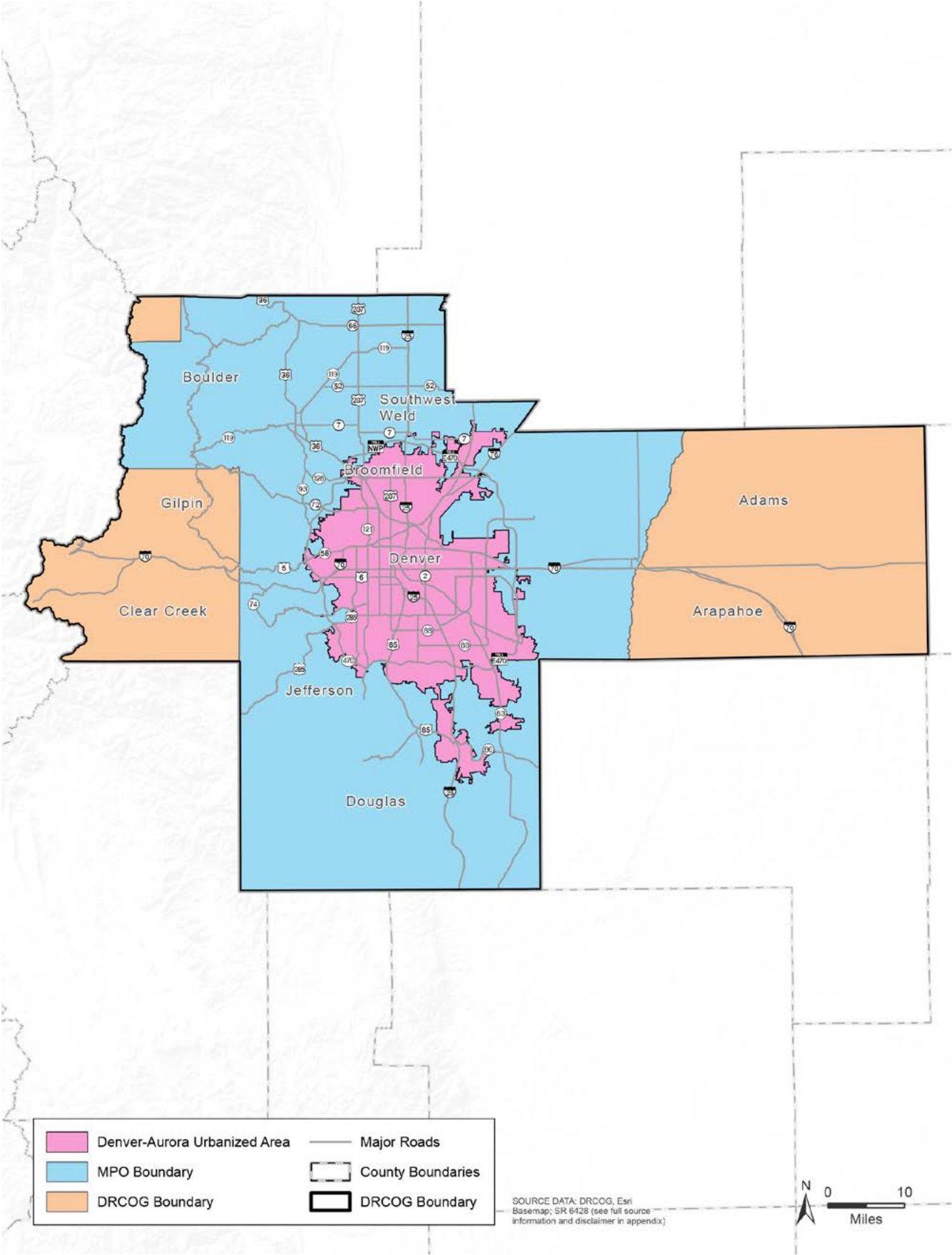
The Denver-Aurora Urbanized Area

The Denver-Aurora Urbanized Area, also depicted in Exhibit 1, covers nearly 667 square miles and a population over 2.6 million. An urbanized area is a census-designated large-urbanized area used for apportioning several federal formula transportation funding programs including the Enhanced Mobility of Seniors & Individuals with Disabilities — Section 5310 program (5310). The program provides formula funding for the purpose of assisting private nonprofit groups in meeting the transportation needs of older adults and people with disabilities when the transportation service provided is unavailable, insufficient, or inappropriate to meeting these needs. Formula funds are apportioned to direct recipients. DRCOG became the designated recipient for 5310 program funds for the Denver-Aurora Urbanized Area in the spring of 2020.

Revisions to boundaries

Each of the boundaries can change over time. For example, the boundaries were revised in 2008 to include the contiguous portion of southwest Weld County anticipated to be urbanized within the next 20 years. Prior to 2007, the transportation management area included all the region's air quality nonattainment or maintenance areas. But in 2007, the EPA declared an area that includes the DRCOG transportation management area plus the remaining portions of Adams, Arapahoe and Boulder counties, plus portions of Larimer and Weld counties, as nonattainment for ozone under the eight-hour standard. DRCOG's travel model also includes areas outside DRCOG boundaries: small sections of Elbert and Park counties. A memorandum of agreement noted in Section 4.B governs the transportation conformity evaluations conducted for this nonattainment area.

Exhibit 1: DRCOG Transportation Management Area, Transportation Planning Region and Denver-Aurora Urbanized Area





2

Policy direction

Regional transportation planning processes are guided by laws, regulations/rules and policies set by the federal and state governments. In the Denver region the transportation planning Metropolitan Planning Agreement provides further direction.

Federal policy requirements

The requirements and responsibilities for transportation planning are contained in federal law and in federal regulations that implement the law. The appendix lists relevant federal legislative and regulatory references.

Federal law

Every few years, the U.S. Congress enacts a law to authorize funds for surface transportation programs. Congress typically uses these reauthorization acts to review, revise and refine all aspects of federal surface transportation policy, including state and metropolitan transportation planning. Since 1973, federal transportation law has placed the responsibility for carrying out the regional transportation planning process in urbanized areas on MPOs.

The most recently enacted reauthorization is the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. Signed on Nov, 15, 2021, the law incorporates many of the aspects of and builds on its predecessor, the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act of 2015.

Federal law requires that a metropolitan planning organization take the lead in regional transportation planning in urbanized areas. DRCOG is the MPO for the Denver region.

As has been the case with reauthorization acts for the past several decades, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act tasks MPOs with developing plans and programs to accomplish the act's objectives within metropolitan areas, using a continuing, cooperative and comprehensive process. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act continues the Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act's emphasis on performance-based planning that considers measures and targets, identifies planning factors that the metropolitan transportation planning process must address (see Exhibit 2), requires that the process be certified as compliant with federal law, and designates the major products of the process.

Chapter 4 provides descriptions of the required planning products and activities.

Transportation planning within the transportation management area is guided by federal metropolitan planning rules.

Federal transportation planning regulations

Federal regulations are typically issued to implement the federal law. Usually, a year or two after each reauthorization act, the U.S. Department of Transportation revises portions of the code of federal regulations to reflect not only changes explicitly stated in the act, but also changes in philosophy that were part of the discussion and debate leading to adoption of the act. The portions of the federal regulations pertaining to transportation planning are commonly referred to as the planning rules.

The planning rules for metropolitan transportation planning provide more specifics about major products and certification. Beyond that, the rules state the requirements for other process elements including:

- Agreements that define transportation planning partnerships between the state and public transportation providers and the MPO.
- Agreements between MPOs and air quality planning agencies regarding air quality-related transportation planning.
- Defining and adjusting planning area boundaries and MPO policy body membership.
- Inclusion of other transportation-related agencies and groups.
- Public involvement.

Exhibit 2: Planning factors in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act states that the metropolitan transportation planning process must provide for consideration of projects, strategies and services that will:

- Support the economic vitality of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency.
- Increase the safety of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users.
- Increase the security of the transportation system for motorized and nonmotorized users.
- Increase accessibility and mobility of people and freight.
- Protect and enhance the environment, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth, housing and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the integration and connectivity of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient system management and operation.
- Emphasize the preservation of the existing transportation system.
- Improve the resiliency and reliability of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of the transportation system.
- Enhance travel and tourism.

State policy requirements

Other federal laws and regulations

While federal reauthorization acts and federal regulations govern the metropolitan transportation planning process, the process must also respond to numerous other federal actions, including (but not limited to) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 the National Environmental Policy Act, the Clean Air Act, the Clean Water Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and related executive orders.

Nondiscrimination requirements

DRCOG is a recipient of federal financial assistance. All recipients are required to comply with various nondiscrimination laws and regulations, including Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which forbids discrimination against anyone in the U.S. because of race, color or national origin by any agency receiving federal funds.

Further, DRCOG adheres to other federal nondiscrimination statutes that afford legal protection; specifically: Section 162(a) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1973 (23 USC 324) (gender); Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (age); and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973/Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (disability).

For more information, visit DRCOG's nondiscrimination webpage to review the Title VI Implementation Plan, Limited English Proficiency Plan and Americans with Disabilities Act Program Access Plan.

Federal relationship

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act requires state departments of transportation, including CDOT, to conduct statewide transportation planning and programming and federal planning rules for statewide transportation planning provide regulatory details. Although the requirements in federal laws and regulations for statewide planning are similar to those for metropolitan planning, statewide and metropolitan planning requirements are defined in separate sections of federal law.

Federal law does not require statewide long-range transportation plans to be fiscally constrained. However, federal law does require the statewide process to interact with the metropolitan process in areas where the metropolitan process is required. DRCOG leads the federal transportation planning process in cooperation with CDOT and RTD.

Outside of metropolitan areas, federal law requires states to conduct their transportation planning process in cooperation with local officials responsible for transportation.

State statute

Colorado statute specifies that statewide transportation planning and programming is to be done in cooperation with local governments. The Greater Denver Transportation Planning Region is one of 15 transportation planning regions established for this purpose. It has both MPO and non-MPO areas for which DRCOG, organized as an association of political subdivisions and regional planning commission, has transportation planning region coordination responsibilities. State statute also requires that:

- A 20-year regional transportation plan be developed for each transportation planning region
- CDOT integrate and consolidate the regional transportation plans into a comprehensive statewide transportation plan.
- The Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee review and comment on all regional transportation plans submitted and provide advice to CDOT (a representative from each of the 15 transportation planning regions in the state serves on this committee).

Greenhouse gas planning standard

The Greenhouse Gas Transportation Planning Standard was adopted by the Transportation Commission in December 2021 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector, improve air quality and reduce smog and provide more travel options. It requires CDOT and the state's five MPOs to model the travel impacts of their transportation plans using travel demand models, with a subsequent greenhouse gas analysis of these plans through EPA's Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator . If agencies do not meet their individual reduction levels as required by the greenhouse gas rule, they can change the mix of projects in their transportation plans and/or use greenhouse gas mitigation measures. Ongoing state planning factors include:

- An emphasis on multimodal transportation considerations, including the connectivity between modes of transportation.
- An emphasis on coordination with county and municipal land use planning, including examination of the impact of land use decisions on transportation needs and the exploration of opportunities for preservation of transportation corridors.
- The development of areawide multimodal management plans in coordination with the process of developing the elements of the state plan.

“FASTER” legislation

In 2009, the Colorado state legislature passed Colorado Statute 43-4-806, Funding Advancement for Surface Transportation and Economic Recovery. FASTER created new state transportation enterprises, funding sources and programs. It also identified the following additional factors that should be addressed by the statewide plan, and by inference, the MPO transportation plans as well:

Targeting of infrastructure investments, including preservation of the existing transportation system safety enhancement.

- Strategic mobility and multimodal choice.
- Support of urban or rural mass transit.
- Environmental stewardship.
- Effective, efficient and safe freight transport.
- Reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

Senate Bill 21-260

Senate Bill 21-260 creates new sources of dedicated funding and new state enterprises to enable the planning, funding, development, construction, maintenance and supervision of a sustainable transportation system by preserving, improving and expanding existing transportation infrastructure, developing the modern infrastructure needed to support the widespread adoption of electric motor vehicles, and mitigating adverse environmental and health impacts of transportation system use. It also authorizes a transportation planning organization, subject to territorial restrictions and TPO member jurisdiction approval requirements, to exercise the powers of a regional transportation authority. Among other powers, the powers of a RTA include the power to impose various charges, fees and, with voter approval, visitor benefit, sales and use taxes to generate transportation funding for the purpose of financing, constructing, operating, and maintaining regional transportation systems.

Transportation Commission rules and regulations

As required by state statute, the Transportation Commission has adopted rules and regulations for the statewide transportation planning process. As with federal regulations, these rules augment statutory language. Included in the commission's rules are requirements for:

- Public participation.
- Transportation planning region boundary revisions.
- Elements to be included in regional transportation plans.
- Review of regional plans by the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee.
- Development and approval of the statewide transportation plan.
- Updates and amendments of regional and statewide plans.

The Transportation Commission routinely adopts policy directives or rules for other transportation planning-related processes. Those most relevant to the DRCOG regional process are discussed in Chapter 5.

Relevant state statutes are listed in the appendix.

Metro Vision guidance

The counties and municipalities of the Denver region have been advancing a shared aspirational vision of the future of the metro area for more than 60 years. The DRCOG Board of Directors adopted the first Metro Vision plan (Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan 2020) in 1997 and, since then, has continued the dialogue about how best to achieve the plan's evolving vision.

Metro Vision guides DRCOG's work and establishes shared expectations with the region's many and various planning partners. The plan outlines outcomes, objectives and initiatives established by the DRCOG Board of Directors to ensure the coordinated efforts of DRCOG's many partners meet the evolving needs of the region's existing and future residents.

The degree to which the outcomes, objectives and initiatives identified in Metro Vision apply in individual communities will vary. The region's local governments will determine how and when to apply the tenets of Metro Vision based on local conditions and aspirations.

DRCOG and its many partners implement the shared aspirational vision of Metro Vision by working together to identify, implement and evaluate specific improvements to the transportation system and its operations.

Metropolitan Planning Agreement guiding principles

As stated in Chapter 1, the three regional agencies (DRCOG, RTD and CDOT) entered into a memorandum of agreement in July 2001 for the transportation planning process for the DRCOG region. The memorandum of agreement was modified in June 2008 to expand the geographic scope to include southwest Weld County. Under requirements of the FAST Act, the memorandum of agreement was replaced with a Metropolitan Planning Agreement in 2018 to reflect a greater emphasis on performance- based planning coordination and to meet other federal requirements. The purpose of the MPA is to implement federal and state statutes and regulations addressing regional transportation planning to ensure that a collaborative process occurs among the three agencies.

The MPA describes the roles and responsibilities of the three agencies regarding transportation planning as defined by federal and state laws and regulations. The MPA further describes the functions, products and organization of the planning process. The MPA formally commits DRCOG, RTD and CDOT to work together on transportation planning for the Denver region.

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DRCOG committees and public and stakeholder engagement

Transportation planning in the Denver region incorporates the experience and input of many people and organizations. Through the RTC, DRCOG, as the MPO, administers the urban transportation planning process for the region in accordance with this framework document and applicable federal regulations. All MPO related items adopted by RTC must be identically adopted by the DRCOG Board of Directors and vice versa. CDOT and RTD are partner agencies in the regional transportation planning process as affirmed in the MPA. Local officials, interest groups, the public and others provide essential direction and comments. Other federal, state and regional agencies also play key roles.

DRCOG committee structure

As stated in the MPA, the regional transportation planning process is organized around a series of committees shown in Exhibit 3. Exhibit 4 details committee composition and responsibilities.

The DRCOG Board of Directors is made up of local elected officials from the 58 participating member governments. It also includes three non-voting members from CDOT (appointed by the governor) and a non-voting representative from RTD. The DRCOG Board of Directors is the policy body for the MPO.

Transportation planning products described in Chapter 4 typically require adoption by the DRCOG Board of Directors through the transportation committees process, which includes:

- Sequential review by TAC, RTC and the DRCOG Board of Directors.
- RTC and the DRCOG Board of Directors must both take identical action for MPO-related policies and products to be considered adopted.

RTC is a permanent committee that prepares and forwards policy recommendations to the DRCOG Board. DRCOG Board of Directors' MPO-policy actions that differ from the RTC recommendation must be referred back to the RTC for reconsideration, as both bodies must take identical actions for an MPO-related item to be considered adopted.

TAC is a permanent committee that assists the RTC and the DRCOG Board of Directors by reviewing the work of the transportation planning process.

Ad hoc committees (or task forces) and work groups may be established by the DRCOG Board of Directors, RTC or TAC. They are given short-term assignments to assist on specific topics, tasks or activities.

At the staff level, the Agency Coordination Team and Interagency Consultation Group promote interagency coordination, cooperation and communication.

Participating members in these bodies include the MPA partner agencies, air quality planning agencies and federal agencies such as the FHWA and the FTA.

Agency Coordination Team duties include:

- Synchronizing the schedule of planning activities (including TAC and RTC consideration).
- Coordinating UPWP (see Chapter 4) activities with agencies' planning activities.

The Interagency Consultation Group is responsible for reviewing transportation planning and air quality conformity products, methodologies and schedules.

Exhibit 3: Transportation Planning Committee structure

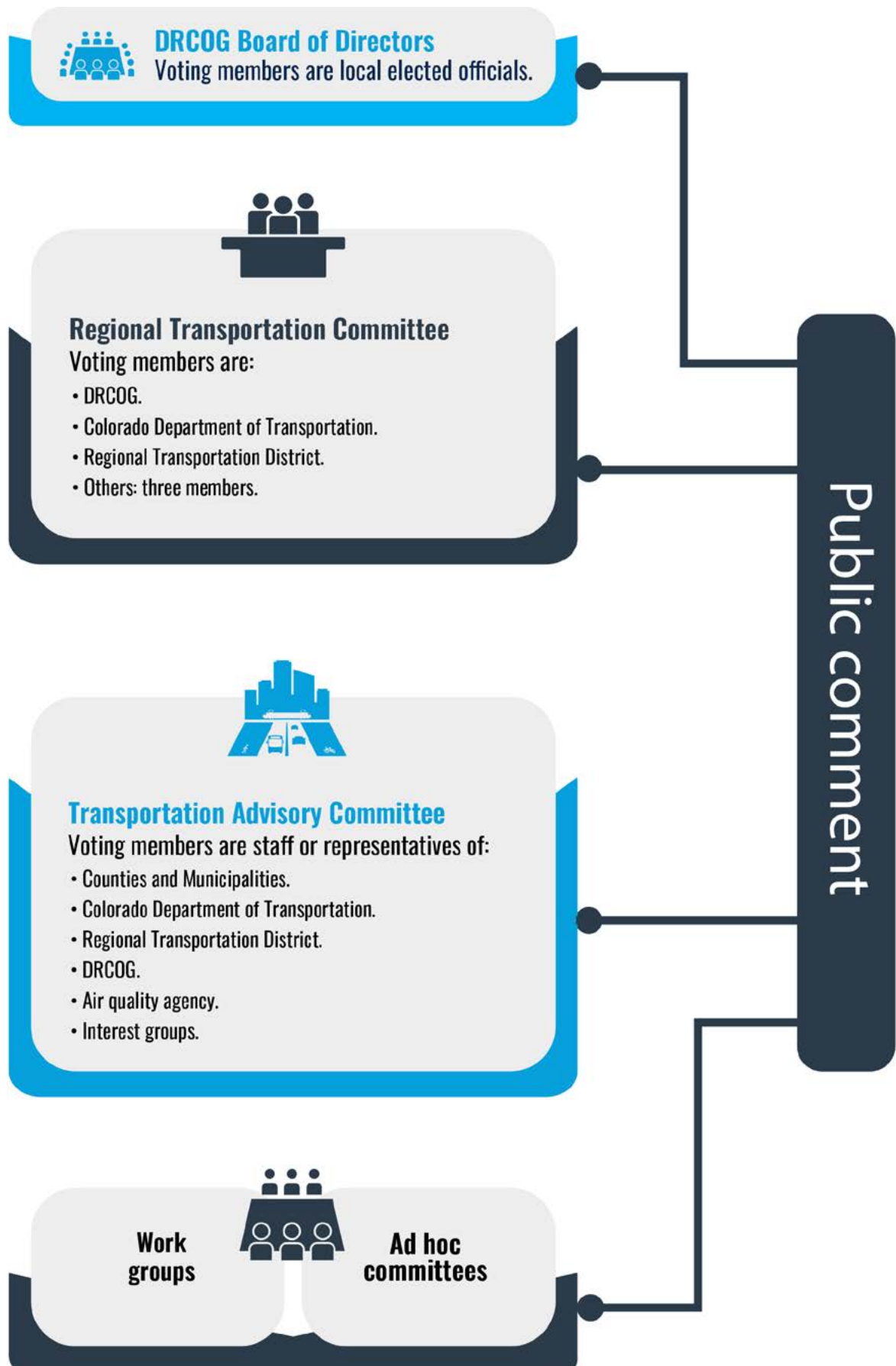


Exhibit 4: Composition and responsibilities of the DRCOG Board of Directors and transportation committees

DRCOG Board

Authority

State and federal statutes.

DRCOG Articles of Association.

Each municipality, county and city-and-county within the nine-plus county region is eligible to be a member of DRCOG.

Each member government may designate one local elected official as its director and one as its alternate.

- The City and County of Denver may designate two directors and two alternates.

The governor appoints three nonvoting members, including one member from the Colorado Department of Transportation.

The Regional Transportation District has one nonvoting member.

Responsibilities

Prepares, maintains and regularly reviews comprehensive regional plan (Metro Vision).

Adopts all regional transportation planning products, including the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan and Transportation Improvement Program.

Products and policies are adopted when the Board and Regional Transportation Committee both take favorable action.

Board holds regularly scheduled nonvoting work sessions (typically monthly) at which every Board member is invited to participate.

Quorum

One-third of all voting member representatives.

Membership



Decisions made

Regular questions: With a majority of voting member representatives present.

Adoption or amendment of elements of regional plan: With a majority of all voting member representatives.

Regional Transportation Committee

Authority

Federal statute.

2001 memo of understanding.

DRCOG Board adopts committee description.

Responsibilities

Assists the DRCOG Board in regional transportation planning.

Prepares regional transportation planning policy recommendations for action by the DRCOG Board.

Membership

Includes members representing the following organizations:

The DRCOG Board of Directors, the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Regional Transportation District.

For an up-to-date committee roster please visit the Transportation Advisory Committee webpage: drcog.org/about-drcog/committees-and-working-groups/regional-transportation-committee.



Transportation Advisory Committee

Authority

2001 memo of understanding.

DRCOG Board adopts committee description.

Responsibilities

Facilitates dialogue and cooperation among local governments, regional agencies, the state and other stakeholders on regional transportation issues.

Provides advice and guidance on methods of planning and implementation, and helps develop policy options.

Assists the DRCOG Board and Regional Transportation Committee by reviewing planning products and processes.

Makes recommendations to the Regional Transportation Committee on transportation plans and improvement programs.

Membership

Includes members composed of local government technical staff and representatives from key constituencies.

For an up-to-date committee roster please visit the Transportation Advisory Committee webpage: drcog.org/about-drcog/committees-and-working-groups/transportation-advisory-committee.



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Public engagement

The following are excerpts from people-centered planning, projects and services, DRCOG's public engagement plan and its Limited English Proficiency Plan. Please refer to the documents, available on the DRCOG website, for further details.

DRCOG's commitment to engagement

The public engagement plan provides the vision, the framework and the process for meaningfully engaging the public in regional decision-making. DRCOG is committed to transparency and access to services, information and the decision-making process for people throughout the region. Because planning is about people and the communities they call home, it is about where and how the region's residents live, work and play, making life better for people of all ages, incomes and abilities. Community participation improves the relevance of plans, policies, services and projects, and helps DRCOG meet people's needs today and into the future.

Throughout the plan, there is an emphasis on engaging individuals and segments of the public who are directly affected by a project. DRCOG staff is encouraged to both reach out to groups of people traditionally underrepresented and significantly affected by the decisions a project entails. However, leveraging DRCOG's existing, robust relationships with the jurisdictions where members of the public reside will also be useful. Many DRCOG employees (especially within the Regional Planning and Development and Transportation Planning and Operations divisions) are in regular conversation with jurisdiction staff. Colleagues should approach one another for their insights and for

help reaching out to their established connections at member governments. In addition, employees in the Executive Office division can help discern the best ways to reach out to elected officials from member governments.

DRCOG staff are committed to an engagement model that fosters shared problem-solving, supportive partnerships and reciprocal relationships. DRCOG staff believe that the region's decision-makers need to hear its residents' full range of perspectives to better understand issues, explore alternatives and create a shared action plan. Through the principles outlined in the public engagement plan, DRCOG staff intend to demonstrate that DRCOG provides clear and concise information, is responsive to the people of the region and addresses ideas and concerns raised.

Principles

To support the commitment described above, DRCOG staff use the following principles to guide engagement:

Early engagement

DRCOG staff engages the public toward the beginning of each project, or when members of the public can have the greatest effect on shaping the direction of DRCOG efforts.

Ongoing engagement

DRCOG staff engage the public throughout development of a project, or at specific phases identified early in the process. DRCOG staff provide members of the public with clear and specific timelines and methods for providing their perspectives.

Timely and adequate notice

DRCOG staff ensure that the public receives timely and adequate notice of opportunities for public engagement.

Consistent access to information

DRCOG staff follow state, federal and funding partner requirements, as well as organization policies, regarding making supporting material available for topics on which it has invited members of the public to provide their perspectives.

Invitation for public review and comment

DRCOG staff invite public review of, and comment on, essential plans and programs. Invitations are made no later than is required by federal and state requirements or funding partners (typically 30 to 45 days). For projects lacking specific partner requirements for public

engagement, DRCOG staff determine the appropriate length of the review period. Copies of public review drafts are made available at DRCOG's office and website. Comments are accepted by mail, email and via the DRCOG website (drcog.org). Although DRCOG staff maintain a robust social media presence and promotes opportunities for public involvement through social media, comments are not directly accepted through social media (such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram).

Invitation and consideration of perspectives from those traditionally underrepresented

DRCOG staff invite participation by members of populations traditionally underrepresented in regional decision-making processes due to demographic, geographic or economic circumstances, to allow DRCOG to appropriately consider their needs. Such populations include, but are not limited to, individuals who speak languages other than English, individuals representing diverse cultural backgrounds, low-income individuals, people with disabilities, older adults and young adults. DRCOG staff use demographic and stakeholder analysis to identify communities for projects for which it seeks public engagement. Specific engagement strategies for seeking out and considering the needs of those traditionally underserved groups are detailed in appendices D, E and F of Person-centered planning, projects and services. DRCOG's Limited English Proficiency plan guides staff in providing customer service to, and facilitating participation by, members of the public whose proficiency in English is limited.

Regular review of public engagement processes

DRCOG staff regularly review the implementation of the plan and the ability of the principles, steps, techniques and tools in the public engagement plan to advance meaningful public engagement. DRCOG staff use a variety of means to determine the effectiveness of engagement strategies including data collection, feedback from participants at public events, review of attendance at public events and evaluation of the implementation of a variety of techniques and tools. The outcomes of such evaluations will inform future engagement, and successful activities will be continued while those that underperform will be eliminated. DRCOG staff compiles a routine evaluation summary of engagement activities to share results of the organization's recent engagement efforts and review areas of success and potential improvement.

In addition to staff's commitment to continuous improvement and evaluation of its public engagement activities, the organization's efforts are periodically reviewed by funding partners and agencies such as the FHWA and FTA during every four-year metropolitan planning organization" planning process certification reviews.

Implementation

Whether a project includes a formal process or engagement is related to a DRCOG project without federal, state or partner requirements, implementation can take many forms. To start, staff must determine the appropriate level of public engagement and carefully consider the goals for the project as well as the purpose of public engagement.

DRCOG staff should consider the techniques and tools that might best encourage the appropriate level of public engagement for the project. The selected techniques and tools that are chosen can facilitate the level of engagement to be achieved. For example, an eblast announcing a new report is informational. A poster announcing a public hearing is not consultative on its own but facilitates consultation at the hearing it promotes. An email announcing that the public is invited to submit their community's five most serious challenges represents the "involve" level. A focus group at which members of the public suggest alternatives for how to spend limited funds on transportation projects represents the "collaborate" level. Very few techniques or tools, in and of themselves, result in participation that is collaborative. Collaborative opportunities for organizations structured like DRCOG, which operates under priorities established by a board of directors, are rare. However, in some circumstances it's appropriate to consider greater decision-making involvement by the public.

Techniques

Techniques represent tactics for approaching public involvement. They always involve interaction among people – usually representatives of DRCOG (employees, committee members, Board directors) and members of the public. Discern the techniques that will be used for public engagement before thinking about the tools that will be used to support it.

Tools

Tools are what can be used as part of the public engagement techniques. A tool's success depends on how well it is a) designed to support its corresponding technique and b) how effectively it is deployed. Not every tool will be relevant for every technique. However, every tool requires an employee to take responsibility for using it and measuring how its use contributes to the success of its corresponding technique.

The medium is not the message

Simply using a technique or tool won't guarantee meaningful results. Consider how the techniques will be refined and tools will be developed to ensure meaningful public engagement. For tools that are static materials, such as posters, postcards and other printed matter, create a clear call to action that will allow staff to measure how many people saw the collateral and how they responded. DRCOG staff is encouraged to consult the planner – public engagement staff member for help developing techniques and tools at any stage of a project process.

Potential participants

Although staff may have a well-defined idea about the types of people to engage in a project, staff should consider other types of organizations, professionals and members of the public with whom DRCOG staff has not previously interacted — or who may have provided input in the past but who have not recently been actively engaged.

Demonstrating results and evaluation

During development of a project, the purpose, goals and results of the project were considered. The elements that would contribute to its success — or the success of its public engagement component — were also considered. The groups of people who have been historically underrepresented in similar efforts were specifically considered. And the ideal level of public engagement for the project was determined.

Evaluating the success of engagement strategies is critical to improving the overall effectiveness of engagement in the future. Criteria includes three major objectives:

- Provide meaningful opportunities to participate.
- Involve under-represented communities.
- Communicate complete, accurate, understandable and timely information.

Some criteria, but perhaps not all, will be relevant to the project. Before data is collected, determine which criteria are relevant to the project.

The project team should designate a member to coordinate how the team will gather, compile and report on criteria and measurements throughout all project stages. By measuring progress toward goals throughout the project, corrections may be made while the efforts are still underway.

Because collecting and evaluating data may require collaboration across DRCOG divisions, be sure to allow adequate time for employees in other divisions to help. The results of these evaluations are vital for the continual improvement of engagement efforts.

Language assistance

DRCOG staff is committed to engaging and involving all residents of the Denver region, including those with limited English proficiency, in its activities. Therefore, in accordance with the best practice standards for public involvement identified by state and federal partners, together with assistance from CDOT, FHWA and the FTA, DRCOG has developed a Limited English Proficiency Plan. The goal of the Limited English Proficiency Plan is to ensure all residents of the DRCOG region can, to the fullest extent practicable, participate in DRCOG activities.

The U.S. Department of Transportation and limited English proficiency policy guidance

In accordance with Executive Order No. 13166, the U.S. Department of Transportation, on Dec. 14, 2005, issued its Policy Guidance Concerning Recipients' Responsibilities to Limited English Proficient Persons. Adopting the framework established by the Department of Justice in its Aug. 11, 2000, guidance, the U.S. Department of Transportation identifies four factors that should be considered by a recipient of federal funds in assessing the needs of individuals with limited English proficiency and implementing a plan to address those needs.

The four factors include:

- The number or proportion of persons with limited English proficiency served or encountered in the eligible service population.
- The frequency with which persons with limited English proficiency come in contact with the programs, activities or services.
- The nature and importance to persons with limited English proficiency of your programs, activities and services.
- The resources available to the recipient and costs.

The greater the number or proportion of eligible individuals with limited English proficiency, the greater the frequency with which they will have contact with a program, activity or service and the more likely enhanced language services will be needed. The intent is to strike a balance ensuring individuals with limited English proficiency have meaningful access to critical services without unduly burdening the local agency.

Older Americans Act guidance on “targeting” services

In accordance with the Older Americans Act and the Colorado Department of Health and Human Services, State Unit on Aging Rule Manual Volume 10, area agencies on aging are required to target older adults who are in some way socially or economically disadvantaged. This includes, but is not limited to, giving “preference and priority in the delivery of services ... to older adults with limited English proficiency.” It is expected that each contracted service provider has a policy in place detailing how to do so.

Senate Bill 21-260 disproportionately impacted communities requirements

Both CDOT and DRCOG are required as part of SB-260 to fully evaluate the potential environmental and health impacts on disproportionately impacted communities. SB-260 defines these communities as communities of color, people with low-income and housing cost-burdened households.



4

Planning process products

Federal laws and regulations require the performance-based regional transportation planning process to produce five major products. The following sections describe what each product contains and how each is prepared:

Unified Planning Work Program

The UPWP describes all regional transportation planning activities, regardless of funding source, on a two-year cycle, addressing the planning priorities of the MPO region. It identifies tasks to be accomplished using federal transportation planning funds as well as state and locally funded regional transportation planning tasks. The primary source of federal funding for UPWP tasks is the Consolidated Planning Grant funding. CPG is a combination of FHWA metropolitan planning funds and FTA metropolitan planning funds.

The MPA partners participate in the activities of the UPWP, with each contributing information, effort and resources. The work program defines the nature and extent of the partners' participation. The three partners conduct their individual planning programs in coordination with the regional program. Each agency is responsible for:

- Identifying priority planning issues of concern.
- Preparing work tasks to address issues of concern.
- Completing assigned tasks.
- Cooperating with other agencies so that shared tasks can be completed.

The UPWP provides the basis for the scope of work of the contract DRCOG executes with CDOT to receive federal transportation planning funds.

The UPWP typically includes:

- Purpose, background and guidelines for planning activities
- The accomplishments of preceding unified planning work programs and the current status of major transportation planning documents.
- An overview of UPWP priority activities.
- Description of the planning tasks to be performed using federal transportation planning funds and matching funds (and other funds identified by mutual agreement). Specifically, descriptions identify work activities, objectives, tasks, deliverables, participants, responsibilities and expected completion schedule.
- Identification of funding sources, with revenues and expenditures shown by agency by activity, and with documentation that meets federal and state requirements.
- Descriptions of other major transportation planning activities by MPA partner agencies and local governments using other funds. These projects are briefly identified for informational purposes.

The work program year is the federal fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1. Preparation of the UPWP typically begins in the spring of odd-numbered years. DRCOG leads this effort, with significant collaboration from RTD and CDOT and assistance from other agencies through the Agency Coordination Team. The UPWP is adopted by the DRCOG Board of Directors through the transportation committees process no later than July (see sidebar to Section 3.A). FHWA and FTA review the work program to ensure the proposed activities are consistent with federal requirements and eligible for federal funding. When the adopted work program receives formal federal approval, CDOT prepares and executes the consolidated transportation planning grant contract with DRCOG using a summary version of the UPWP as the scope of work. Exhibit 5 shows a typical timeline for developing the UPWP.

Relationship to the statewide transportation planning/programming process

CDOT provides input on planning issues and concerns and on UPWP tasks, deliverables and timing desired for the statewide process. As funding allows, the UPWP includes the mutually-agreed-upon activities necessary to ensure seamless products and consistent schedules.

Amendments

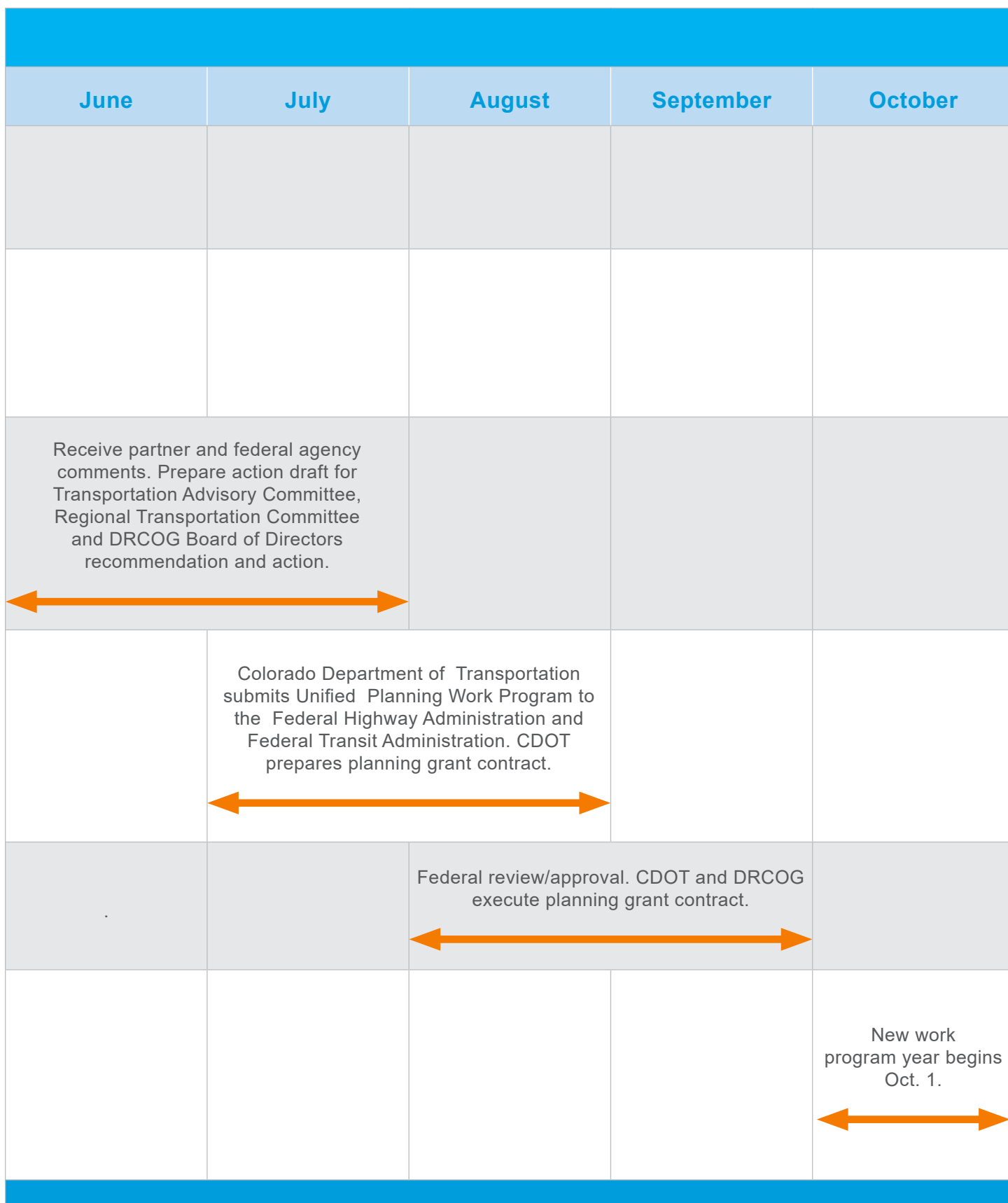
As needed, revisions are identified and an amended UPWP is adopted by the DRCOG Board of Directors through the transportation committees process. CDOT conveys the adopted amended UPWP to FHWA and FTA for approval.

Mid-year and end-of-year reports

In April and October (mid-year and the end of the fiscal year), DRCOG coordinates to develop a report which demonstrates progress made toward the tasks and deliverables in the UPWP. The completed reports are discussed at a meeting of the Agency Coordination Team to determine if revisions to the document are needed or if further coordination between agencies is necessary to move tasks forward.

Exhibit 5: Typical UPWP timeline (odd-numbered years)

Months				
January	February	March	April	May
Assess progress of current work program. Gather input on issues and objectives and establish framework for next program.				
			Propose work task/activity descriptions. Identify other major planning efforts. Prepare first draft for internal review.	



Long-range transportation plan

As the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the Denver region, DRCOG develops the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan to guide the region's investments in the multimodal transportation system. The 2050 RTP sets the framework for the region to invest in specific projects and programs to address the plan's multimodal components. It also incorporates the vision and needs from other plans and studies completed by DRCOG. DRCOG updates the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan every four years and amends it as needed between major updates to ensure that its content remains relevant and reflects current trends, needs and priorities. The 2050 RTP includes two key components:

- The Metro Vision transportation system reflects a transportation system and accompanying programs and services necessary to enhance the region's quality of life and adequately respond to mobility demands. Not fiscally constrained, the Metro Vision transportation system is the region's 20-plus-year transportation plan required by state law and referred to in state rules as the "vision plan."
- The fiscally constrained 2050 RTP is the subset of the Metro Vision transportation system required by federal law for transportation management areas. The fiscally constrained performance-based 2050 RTP identifies the affordable, multimodal transportation system that can be achieved during a minimum 20-year planning horizon (as of the effective approval date) with financial resources that are expected to be reasonably available.

Federal regulations require the air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP to include both long-range and short-range strategies/actions that provide for the development of an integrated multimodal transportation system to facilitate the safe and efficient movement of people and goods in addressing current and future transportation demand.

The air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP contains at a minimum:

- The current and projected transportation demand of persons and goods in the metropolitan planning area over the period of the transportation plan.
- Existing and proposed transportation facilities that should function as an integrated metropolitan transportation system, giving emphasis to those facilities that serve important national and regional transportation functions over the period of the transportation plan.
- A description of the performance measures and performance targets used in assessing the performance of the transportation system.
- A system performance report and subsequent updates evaluating the condition and performance of the transportation system with respect to the performance targets.
- Operational and management strategies to improve the performance of existing transportation facilities to relieve vehicular congestion and maximize the safety and mobility of people and goods.

- Consideration of the results of the congestion management process in transportation management associations that meet the requirements of this subpart, including the identification of single-occupancy vehicle projects that result from a congestion management process in transportation management associations that are nonattainment for ozone or carbon monoxide.
- Assessment of capital investment and other strategies to preserve the existing and projected future metropolitan transportation infrastructure, provide for multimodal capacity increases based on regional priorities and needs, and reduce the vulnerability of the existing transportation infrastructure to natural disasters. The metropolitan transportation plan may consider projects and strategies that address areas or corridors where current or projected congestion threatens the efficient functioning of key elements of the metropolitan area's transportation system.
- Transportation and transit enhancement activities, including consideration of the role that intercity buses may play in reducing congestion, pollution and energy consumption in a cost-effective manner and strategies and investments that preserve and enhance intercity bus systems, including systems that are privately owned and operated, and including transportation alternatives, as defined in 23 U.S.C. 101(a), and associated transit improvements, as described in 49 U.S.C. 5302(a), as appropriate.
- Design concept and design scope descriptions of all existing and proposed transportation facilities in sufficient detail, regardless of funding source, in nonattainment and maintenance areas for conformity determinations under the EPA's transportation conformity regulations (40 CFR part 93, subpart A). In all areas (regardless of air quality designation), all proposed improvements shall be described in sufficient detail to develop cost estimates.
- A discussion of types of potential environmental mitigation activities and potential areas to carry out these activities, including activities that may have the greatest potential to restore and maintain the environmental functions affected by the metropolitan transportation plan. The discussion may focus on policies, programs, or strategies, rather than at the project level. The MPO shall develop the discussion in consultation with applicable federal, state and tribal land management, wildlife and regulatory agencies. The MPO may establish reasonable timeframes for performing this consultation.
- A financial plan that demonstrates how the adopted transportation plan can be implemented.
- While the 2050 RTP is being developed, the regional agency partners work on a complex series of interrelated and overlapping tasks spanning 18 to 24 months. A general description of typical tasks follows. Exhibit 6 illustrates the tasks along a sample 18-month timeline and Exhibit 7 shows the long-range transportation plan development responsibilities of the MPA partners.

Exhibit 6: Typical long-range transportation plan timeline

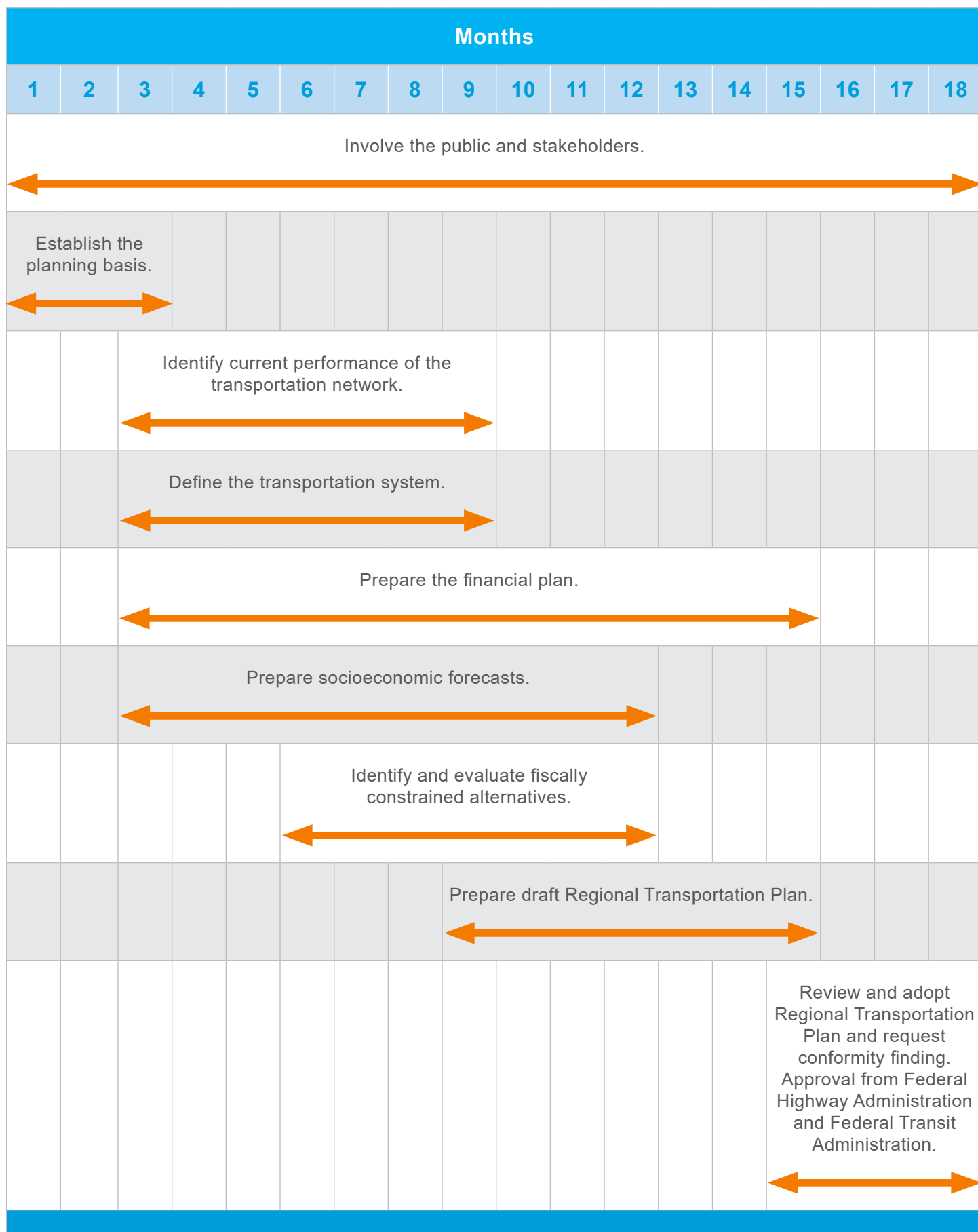


Exhibit 7: Partner responsibilities in developing long-range transportation plans (cont.)

DRCOG:

- Prepares and adopts the 2050 RTP, including transportation-related outcomes, objectives, initiatives, performance measures and performance targets.
- Prepares and adopts the 2050 RTP including both the Metro Vision transportation system and the air quality conforming fiscally constrained regional transportation plan.
- Coordinates, prepares and adopts the finding of air quality conformity for the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP.
- Coordinates activities, ensures collaboration, facilitates review and approval process.
- Prepares a small area forecast of households and jobs in consultation with local and state planning partners.
- Runs regional travel model.
- Calculates, compiles and presents performance measures and results.
- Identifies and evaluates transportation strategy alternatives including congestion management options.
- Leads the process that selects priority capital projects for the integrated multimodal system.
- Leads development of the financial plan demonstrating fiscal constraint.
- Conducts public involvement activities and consults with land management and environmental resource agencies.
- Provides an overview of environmental mitigation opportunities.
- Publishes Metro Vision, the 2050 RTP and conformity documents and makes them available to the public maintains process for amending the 2050 RTP.

CDOT:

- Provides guidance about state regulations, Transportation Commission investment priorities and plan preparation.
- Provides state highway system and Bustang performance data and goals.
- Identifies mobility needs, safety, operations and preservation needs for state highways to implement the 2050 RTP and participates in the project evaluation and selection process for the integrated multimodal system.
- Reviews highway networks and regional travel model results including data for air quality conformity.
- Provides revenue forecasts and program distribution information.
- Works with DRCOG and RTD to cooperatively estimate long-range transportation revenues and cooperates in the development/review of the financial plan.
- Provides an overview of environmental mitigation opportunities.
- Assists with the development of strategy and project cost estimates.
- Reviews the 2050 RTP and facilitates review by the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee.
- Participates in public involvement and agency consultation activities.
- Integrates and consolidates the 2050 RTP into the statewide transportation plan.

RTD:

- Provides transit system performance data.
- Identifies capital expansion, safety, preservation, security and operations needs for the transit system to implement the 2050 and participates in the capital project evaluation and selection process for the integrated multimodal system.
- Reviews transit networks and assists with regional travel modeling.
- Works with DRCOG to cooperatively estimate long-range transportation revenues and assists with preparing the financial plan.
- Assists with the development of strategy and project cost estimates.
- Reviews the 2050 RTP.
- Participates in public involvement and agency consultation activities.

Public involvement and agency consultation

DRCOG's general public involvement procedures are discussed in Chapter 3 and are applied to the entire process of regional transportation plan development. Public involvement includes outreach from the beginning of the process through its completion. Agency consultation typically takes place as appropriate in steps three through seven. DRCOG usually holds a minimum of two public meetings when working on a new plan and may conduct public forums or open houses as well. As possible, the public participation events of the MPA partner agencies are jointly sponsored or mutually attended. DRCOG holds formal public hearings with appropriate public notice for adopting an update or revising Metro Vision and for adoption of the 2050 RTP. DRCOG summarizes all public comments received via outreach, forums, meetings, phone and email messages, and other sources; then drafts responses and presents all comments and responses to the transportation committees and DRCOG Board of Directors to consider. If significant public comments are received on draft documents, a summary, analysis and report on the disposition of such comments are included as part of the final 2050 RTP documentation. DRCOG's public outreach recent efforts for the 2050 RTP actually substantially exceeded these goals, with activities numbering in the hundreds.

The planning basis

The region's adopted long-range transportation plan policy and strategy components are examined in concert with Metro Vision. Through public and stakeholder outreach and the transportation committee process, the plan and strategy components are reconfirmed or revised as appropriate to establish the long-range planning basis and foundation of the new Metro Vision RTP.

Socioeconomic forecasts

To understand how demands on transportation system will change, DRCOG forecasts how growth and development will affect the distribution of users of the system – households and jobs – throughout the region.

The State Demography Office in the Colorado Department of Local Affairs forecasts future population, household and job levels in the state's 64 counties. DRCOG must allocate this county-level growth across 2,804 small areas within the Denver region, each of which is known as a transportation analysis zone.

DRCOG relies on a predictive model to allocate household and employment growth. The UrbanSim block model simulates household and employment location choices with real estate market dynamics and within natural and regulatory constraints. DRCOG relies on extensive feedback from local government partners on preliminary model results to improve model inputs and the resulting small-area allocations. During the allocation process, household and employment growth remains within the county-level totals established by the State Demography Office. With forecasts available for each transportation analysis zone, DRCOG and its partners can model future travel demand between zones to anticipate the effects on the transportation network and vehicle emissions, as well as mobility and accessibility for people and freight.

In addition to modeling tools and processes, DRCOG relies on myriad data sources to produce small-area forecasts, including data collected from local governments, data developed by DRCOG for these purposes and third-party proprietary data products and services.

Current system performance and the implications of growth

DRCOG summarizes the current performance of the regional transportation system using applicable data from CDOT, RTD, local governments, public transportation authorities and the regional travel model. DRCOG also uses preliminary data from the regional travel model to quantify how much travel demand will increase by mode during the time period covered by the plan. This step establishes base measures of performance against which potential improvement options can be compared.

As part of this step, DRCOG may identify future scenarios using alternative growth allocations and transportation system assumptions, and external factors to examine benefits, tradeoffs and costs.

Defining the Metro Vision transportation system

In this step, DRCOG works with the MPA partners, local governments, public highway authorities, other interested parties and the public to identify the future transportation system that would best align with and implement the other components of Metro Vision. The Metro Vision transportation system typically describes an integrated multimodal system that includes elements from DRCOG's other modal and topical specific plans and program:

- Rail and bus transit service and multimodal passenger facilities.
- The principal and major regional arterial and freeway network.
- Key regional active transportation corridors.
- Basic needs for maintenance and preservation, management and operations, safety, security, environmental mitigation and enhancement of the transportation system.

Conceptual cost estimates are prepared, and the total amount of funding needed to build, operate and maintain this system is identified. This system has no fiscal constraints. The Metro Vision transportation system becomes the starting point for defining the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP.

The financial plan

The fiscally constrained component of the 2050 RTP must include a financial plan that reconciles the estimated costs of constructing, maintaining and operating the proposed transportation system with reasonably expected revenues during the time period covered by the plan. Developing the financial plan is a cooperative effort among the MPA partners, local governments, public highway authorities and other stakeholders.

To comply with federal requirements, the financial plan for any fiscally constrained 2050 RTP must consider and ultimately define numerous financial aspects including (but not limited to):

- The base fiscal year for revenue estimates (values in year of expenditure and constant-year dollars).
- The precise number of years covered by the plan.
- All funding sources and revenue amounts available to be spent in the region on transportation, including traditional federal-formula and state sources, discretionary sources, local governments, private developers, tolling, existing and new public transportation authorities, public-private partnerships, transit farebox and potential new state, regional or local transportation funding initiatives.

- Any recommendations for additional financing strategies to fund projects and programs and the appropriateness of those strategies.
- For any agency whose responsibilities extend beyond the DRCOG region (CDOT, for example), how much revenue is allocated within the DRCOG region.
- Cost estimation, such as what is needed at the broad investment category level and what is needed for specific projects.

The Agency Coordination Team and/or ad hoc committees may work through technical issues pertaining to fiscal constraint. Relevant information is provided to the transportation committees for explicit consideration of draft revenue and cost estimates prior to DRCOG Board of Directors approval of networks for air quality conformity testing (Step 7). The final financial plan is explicitly considered by the transportation committees as it becomes part of the 2050 RTP document to be adopted by the DRCOG Board of Directors.

Fiscally constrained regional roadway and rapid transit system

The air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP must specify only those improvements that can be afforded. This step defines the major capital projects and strategies that best achieve Metro Vision's planning and transportation objectives within the constrained level of funding.

Typically, the roadway and transit capital improvements of the currently defined Metro Vision transportation system are verified with partner agencies and local governments. Envisioned projects may be added, modified or removed. The projects are then evaluated based on agreed-upon criteria which may be related to such factors as the scale of the problem, benefits of the project, number of users, safety and other attributes related to the implementation of Metro Vision. Projects must then be identified which can be included within the financially constrained revenue estimates for the 2050 RTP.

Future funding allocations are also made for "system categories" for which specific future projects are not identified. These categories are analyzed based on performance management efforts (for example, safety and reconstruction) and other factors (funding for future bicycle, pedestrian and transportation demand, and system operational projects).

Air quality conformity

The fiscally constrained components of long-range transportation plans must conform to appropriate State Implementation Plans for air quality (see Section 5.H). As established in federal regulations for conformity determinations, the proposed fiscally constrained 2050 RTP networks are modeled in combination with the final transportation analysis zone-level socioeconomic forecasts to determine travel on the roadway and transit system.

The regional travel model results including traffic volumes, vehicle miles of travel, average vehicle speed and transit ridership by time of day are used to predict the amount of various pollutants emitted by these on-road mobile sources. The amount of predicted pollutant emissions must not exceed budgets established in State Implementation Plans. Implementation of transportation control measures is also assessed. These criteria are examined for the long-range horizon year of the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP and for interim years established considering federal and State Implementation Plan requirements. All criteria must be met for all years evaluated. If all criteria are met, DRCOG staff prepare a technical document supporting a conformity finding. Unless the finding is deemed “routine in nature” by the Air Pollution Control Division of the Colorado Department of Health and Environment according to the Air Quality Control Commission’s Regulation 10, this document is taken to the AQCC in a public hearing; that body formally comments on the finding. A public hearing is also held by the DRCOG Board of Directors.

The DRCOG Board of Directors adopts the conformity finding through the transportation committee process as part of the 2050 RTP adoption.

After approval by the DRCOG Board of Directors, the conformity finding documentation, along with the plan documentation, is provided to FHWA, FTA, and EPA for the federal conformity determination. The federal conformity determination for a fiscally constrained 2050 RTP is valid only for up to four years. Exhibit 8 shows air quality conformity responsibilities.

Greenhouse Gas Transportation Planning Standard

The Colorado Department of Transportation and DRCOG, as a MPO, are required to achieve individually set greenhouse gas reduction levels at four different time periods — 2025, 2030, 2040 and 2050. To determine compliance with the reduction levels, agencies must model their existing transportation networks and all future regionally significant capacity projects in CDOT’s 10-Year Plan in non-MPO areas and DRCOG’s fiscally constrained 2050 RTP using travel demand models, with a subsequent analysis through the EPA’s Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator. Overall, the standard encourages CDOT and DRCOG to develop long-range transportation plans that support travel choices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Exhibit 8: Air quality conformity responsibilities with fiscally constrained 2050 RTP

A memorandum of understanding between the DRCOG, the RAQC and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment outlines specific roles and responsibilities for transportation conformity evaluations. A second agreement between DRCOG and RAQC highlights the staff-level coordination of regional transportation, development and air quality planning efforts. A third agreement between DRCOG and five other transportation or air quality agencies specifically addresses eight-hour ozone conformity. The working interpretation of these agreements includes:

- The Interagency Consultation Group process shall be convened at the outset of the plan development process and at key points throughout.
- The draft fiscally constrained 2050 RTP roadway and transit networks approved in Step 6 serve as the transportation system basis. Per the eight-hour ozone MOA, the DRCOG travel model covers all of the southern subarea of the eight-hour ozone nonattainment area (the subarea boundary line is the nominal alignment of Weld County Road 38, the extension of the Boulder County/Larimer County boundary eastward to the Morgan County line). DRCOG staff coordinates with staff from Weld County and CDOT Region 4 to define the networks outside of the DRCOG area.
- DRCOG staff, in cooperation with staff from RTD, CDOT and affected local governments and public transportation authorities, develops a schedule of regionally significant improvements for the interim staging years identified for the conformity process.
- DRCOG staff adjust the networks to reflect roadway classification, laneage, area type, transit service frequency, parking costs and other attributes.
- DRCOG staff and staff from the ICG also determine other planning assumptions, such as:
 - Local government and agency commitments to decreased sanding or improved street sweeping reducing small particulate pollution.
 - Socioeconomic, demographic and vehicle fleet forecasts.
- DRCOG staff run the regional travel model and provides the results to the Agency Coordination Team and ICG to check reasonableness.
- DRCOG staff submit the final transportation data to the Air Pollution Control Division, which calculates the final pollutant emission levels and provides the results to DRCOG.

- DRCOG staff prepare the conformity determination technical document. The eight-hour ozone MOA and SIP allow DRCOG staff to prepare an ozone conformity determination for the southern subarea of the ozone nonattainment area. The North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization staff prepare ozone conformity determinations for the northern subarea.
- The DRCOG Board of Directors holds a public hearing on the conformity determination. DRCOG staff distribute the document at least 30 days before the public hearing.
- For non-routine conformity determinations, the Air Quality Control Commission holds a public hearing for conformity determinations associated with new plans or major amendments (at its discretion as provided for in Regulation 10) and provide comments to DRCOG.
- Upon adoption by DRCOG the conformity determination plan documentation is transmitted to FHWA and FTA.
- FHWA receives concurrence conformity determination from EPA.
- FHWA and FTA issue the federal conformity determination.

2050 RTP preparation

DRCOG leads the development of the 2050 RTP document. The 2050 RTP includes all the elements noted in previous steps. The financial plan is described in detail and transportation benefits and impacts are documented. DRCOG staff prepare drafts of 2050 RTP text and, through review by the transportation committees, finalizes the draft. A copy of the draft is also provided to CDOT to coordinate review by the Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee.

2050 RTP adoption

The 2050 RTP conformity finding requires public review and adoption by the DRCOG Board of Directors through the transportation committee process. Upon transportation committee recommendation of the draft 2050 RTP and conformity finding documentation, DRCOG staff announce a formal public hearing and makes documents available for public examination. Final transportation committee recommendations and DRCOG Board of Directors action take place after consideration of public input. Upon adoption, DRCOG staff transmit the 2050 RTP to CDOT; for integration into the state's transportation plan.

Relationship to statewide transportation planning/programming process

Federal regulations require statewide transportation plans to be coordinated with metropolitan transportation plans and states to cooperate with MPOs on the portions of the plans affecting metropolitan planning areas. These requirements are acknowledged in the MPA. State statute requires CDOT to integrate and consolidate regional transportation plans into a comprehensive statewide transportation plan. The rules for statewide transportation planning indicate that "regional transportation plans...shall...form the basis for developing...the statewide transportation plan" and that "at a minimum, the statewide transportation plan shall include priorities as identified in the regional transportation plan." The 2050 RTP is developed in a process consistent with state rules and is responsive to Statewide Transportation Advisory Committee and CDOT reviews (reflected by favorable action by the RTC). At that point, CDOT staff integrate it into the statewide plan.

Transportation Improvement Program

Amendments

Changing needs and conditions within the region sometimes make it necessary for DRCOG to amend the 2050 RTP. DRCOG follows an established process with minimum thresholds for amending the 2050 RTP outside of the four-year update cycle.

The amendment procedures ensure that prioritized projects continue toward implementation. Depending on the level of air quality impacts and scope of changes needed, the following thresholds apply for making an amendment:

- **Level 1 – Administrative Modification:** A minor change to a project with regionally significant air quality impacts that does not require public review or comment, redetermination of fiscal constraint or redetermination of transportation air quality conformity.
- **Level 2 – Minor Amendment:** A major change to the total estimated project cost of a project with regionally significant air quality impacts that requires an abbreviated public review and comment period and redetermination of fiscal constraint. Redetermination of transportation air quality conformity is not required.
- **Level 3 – Major Amendment:** A major change to a project with regionally significant air quality impacts that requires a full public review and comment period, redetermination of fiscal constraint and redetermination of transportation air quality conformity.

The TIP is a staged multiyear program of projects to implement the 2050 RTP. The TIP identifies the federally funded surface transportation strategies and projects (or phases of projects) to be implemented in the DRCOG transportation management area during the next four years, per federal requirements. Per state protocol, the TIP also includes projects being implemented using only state funds.

While federal regulations require the TIP to be updated at least every four years, DRCOG staff develop a new TIP every two years, while calls for projects to add new projects to the TIP are typically held every four years. CDOT develops an annual Statewide Transportation Improvement Program which directly incorporates the TIP per federal requirements.

Like the 2050 RTP, the TIP must conform with the requirements of the Clean Air Act, so it must identify all regionally significant projects, regardless of funding source, being completed during the TIP period. Regionally significant projects include roadway capacity projects being built by local governments with local funds, new tollways or capacity increases to existing tollways by public highway authorities and major fixed guideway transit projects such as new rail and bus rapid transit.

DRCOG staff lead the TIP development, working collaboratively with the MPA partners, air quality agencies, local governments and others. TIP development (policy updates, calls, document development and adoption) typically takes about 20 months and a general description of usual tasks follows. Exhibit 9 shows a typical timeline.

Ongoing public involvement

Project selection considers the concerns of the public. Project sponsors are responsible for providing opportunities for public comment on projects and applications submitted to DRCOG. RTD's and CDOT's processes include public participation. A formal TIP public hearing, with appropriate public notice, is conducted by the DRCOG Board of Directors prior to adoption. The public notice of public involvement activities and time established for public review and comments on the TIP will satisfy the Program of Projects (RTD's Mid-Term Financial Plan) requirements of the FTA Section 5307 Program.

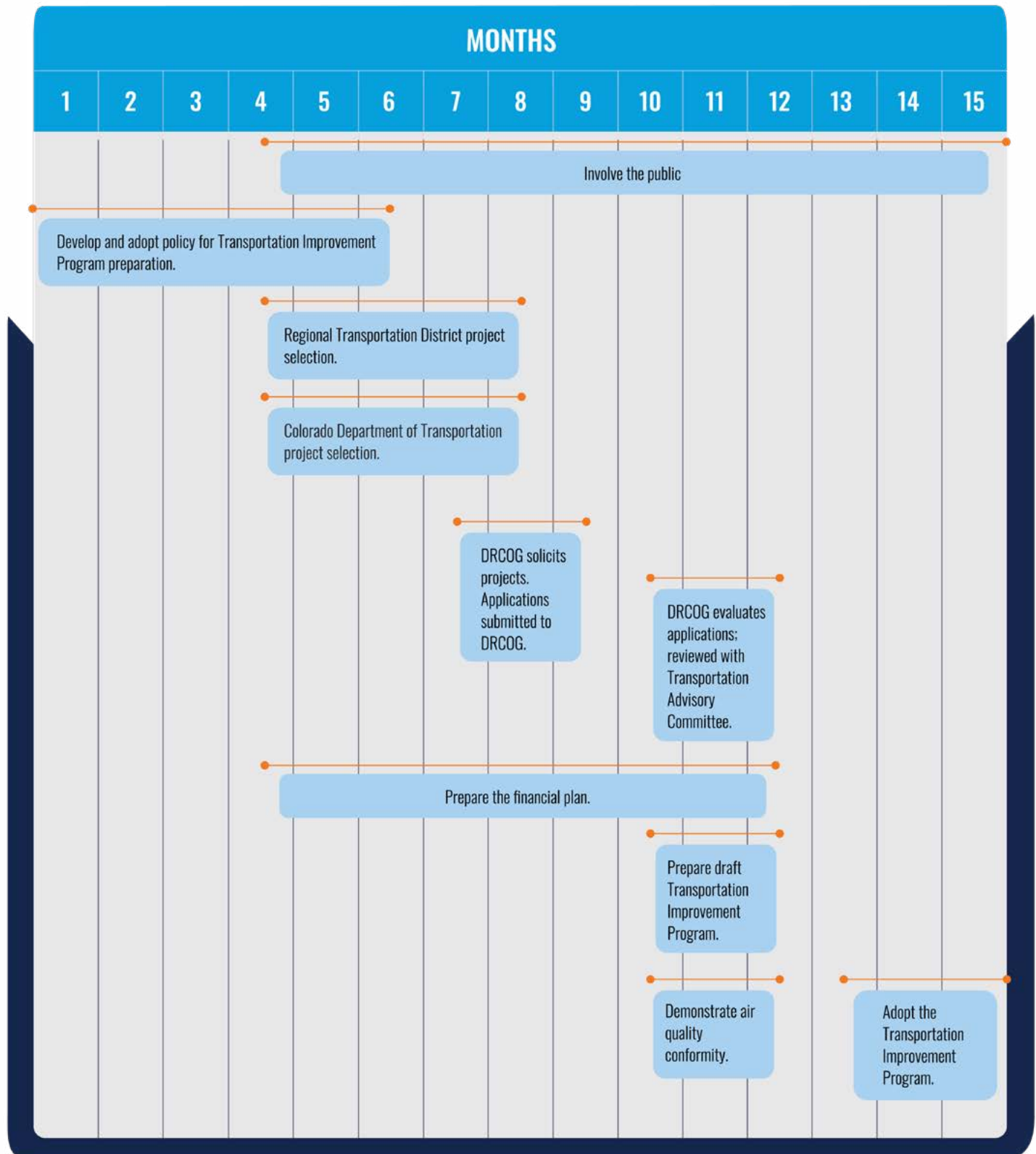
DRCOG staff summarize all public comments received during the public comment period, draft responses as appropriate and present this information to the transportation committees and DRCOG Board of Directors. If significant public comments are received on draft documents, a summary, analysis and report on the disposition of such comments are included as part of the final TIP documentation.

Develop policy for TIP preparation

Each time a new TIP is prepared, the first step is to review the existing process and procedures used to develop the TIP, as outlined in the adopted Policies for TIP Program Development document (typically referred to as the TIP Policy). If changes are warranted through committee and DRCOG Board of Directors discussions, these changes are gathered and the document is amended by the DRCOG Board of Directors through the transportation committee process. Ad hoc committees or working groups may be established to assist in this effort. The policy document is always amended before DRCOG staff solicit applications for TIP funding (Step 4).

No project using federal surface transportation funds can move forward unless it is included in the TIP.

Exhibit 9: Typical TIP timeline



Policy items typically considered and discussed include:

- The relationship of the TIP and project selection to the 2050 RTP. Because the TIP is the mechanism to identify the projects and strategies from the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP that are the highest priority to implement in the immediate future, the project and program priorities from the 2050 RTP are reviewed to provide a TIP project selection basis.
- Available funding allocations between the regional and subregional share, and the percentage targets to each individual subregional forum.
- Establishing project eligibility, including eligible agencies.
- Identifying set-asides, or off-the-top funding allocations, not subject to the TIP call for projects.
- Specifying other application requirements, such as responsibility for providing local matching funds and funding possible project cost increases, recipient responsibility for timely implementation and who (from the applicant's organization) are allowed to submit the applications.
- Defining the evaluation criteria to rank/rate applications.
- Defining the subsequent methods or procedural steps that result in project selection for the draft TIP.

Federal surface transportation funds are provided to states and regions through numerous federal funding programs or categories. DRCOG directly selects projects for funding in programs titled:

- Federal Surface Transportation Block Grant.
- Federal Transportation Alternatives.
- Federal Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality.
- Federal Carbon Reduction Program.
- State Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options Funds.

Exhibit 10: Partner responsibilities in developing the TIP

DRCOG staff:

- Coordinate activities, ensures collaboration and facilitate the review and approval process.
- Develop eligibility requirements and selection criteria for DRCOG-selected categories.
- Solicit projects through regional and subregional calls for projects and assists potential applicants, including developing data resources.
- Assist subregional forums to navigate the process.
- Coordinate the evaluation of applications in DRCOG-selected categories.
- Ensure consistency of proposed projects with the air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP.
- Develop the financial plan, demonstrating fiscal constraint.
- Coordinate the air quality conformity process including running the regional travel model if needed.
- Conduct public involvement activities.
- Prepare and adopt finding of air quality conformity.
- Prepare and adopt the TIP document.
- Publish and distribute the TIP, including online application for viewing planned and programmed projects.
- Maintain process for TIP modifications and amendments.
- Undertake Section 5310 program and activities.

CDOT staff:

- Provide guidance about state regulations.
- Work with DRCOG staff to cooperatively estimate available short-range state and federal revenues and cooperates in the development and review of the financial plan.
- Solicit proposals and select projects for funding with CDOT-controlled revenue.
- Provide details of CDOT-selected projects for inclusion in the TIP.
- Participate in interagency review of proposed projects.
- If needed, review highway networks and regional travel model results including data for air quality conformity.
- Review TIP information and documentation.
- Participate in public involvement activities.
- Incorporate the TIP into the STIP after the governor's approval.

RTD staff:

- Work with DRCOG staff to cooperatively estimate short-range regional and federal transit revenues and assists with the financial plan.
- Identify projects for federal funding through its Mid-Term Financial Plan.
- Provide details of RTD projects using federal funds to be included in the TIP.
- Provide details of other significant RTD projects using non-federal funds.
- Participate in interagency review of proposed projects.
- If needed, review transit networks and assists with regional travel modeling.
- Review TIP information and documentation.
- Participate in public involvement activities.

RTD project selection

RTD has primary responsibility for selecting projects for the TIP that use federal transit formula funds (Section 5307, 5309, 5337 and 5339) and transit discretionary (competitive) funds. RTD staff use RTD's Mid-Term Financial Plan as the basis for its project selections and initial submittals to DRCOG (see Section 5.K). RTD staff provide its Section 5307 Program of Projects to DRCOG.

CDOT project selection

CDOT receives federal highway funds from a variety of federal programs and receives revenues from the Colorado Highway Users Tax Fund and is eligible to receive funds from the Colorado General Fund (as provided by the state legislature). The Transportation Commission has established a structure for identifying and addressing needs on the state highway system with this combination of funds (see Section 5.J). CDOT projects are defined for purposes of the TIP in the following investment category or program areas:

- Strategic projects.
- Surface treatment.
- Regional priorities.
- Congestion relief.
- Bridge.
- Safety.
- FASTER Safety.
- FASTER Bridge Enterprise.
- FASTER Transit.
- Transit for older adults, adults with disabilities and transit for rural areas.

Section 5.J describes CDOT's selection processes for projects in the DRCOG TIP. Projects selected in the transportation management area are included in the TIP. Since CDOT programs projects by investment category, instead of specific funding source, they are all listed as state funds within the TIP. CDOT operations and maintenance projects are not required to be listed in the TIP unless they are of a capital nature.

Solicitation for DRCOG-selected projects

Once the TIP preparation policy document has been adopted (Step 1), DRCOG staff formally announce it is soliciting applications for TIP funding through two calls for projects: the regional share and subregional share. The application specifies instructions and evaluation criteria per the adopted policy document. The solicitation announcement gives sponsors eight weeks to complete and submit applications.

DRCOG staff conduct training workshops on the application jointly with CDOT and RTD. This training also includes details on what it means to implement projects using federal funds. DRCOG staff also provide relevant material on its website.

Review and evaluation of submittals

For the regional share call, a project review panel evaluates TIP applications using the process and methodology adopted in Step 1. The recommended projects are then brought through the DRCOG MPO committee process for recommendation to be placed into the draft TIP. In the subregional share, each forum meets and makes a recommendation of projects within their funding targets. Those projects are then also brought through the DRCOG MPO committee process for recommendation to be placed into the draft TIP and for final approval.

An interagency review phase allows the MPA partners to share their tentative selections with each other (along with proposed, but not selected, projects) for review and comment on synergistic and multimodal opportunities and implementation conflicts.

Financial plan

To comply with federal requirements, the TIP must contain a financial plan showing proposed expenditures are consistent with reasonably expected revenues. DRCOG staff work cooperatively with staff from CDOT and RTD to determine reasonably expected revenue by funding category, by year. The financial plan may contain proposals for new revenues, new revenue sources (for example, federal discretionary funds) or innovative financing, if such funding can be established as reasonably available. Costs are supplied by CDOT, RTD and other project sponsors as part of their applications/submittals. The final financial plan is explicitly considered by the transportation committees and the DRCOG Board as part of adopting the TIP.

Draft TIP

After interagency review, the tentatively selected projects from the DRCOG process and the potentially revised submittals from RTD and CDOT are reviewed for consistency with the air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP. DRCOG then assembles a consolidated draft TIP document, adding any federal discretionary projects.

Air quality conformity

The process for demonstrating the TIP's air quality conformity is similar to that used for the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP (see Section 4.B). Regionally significant roadway capacity and major transit guideway improvements selected for the TIP or implemented using non-federal funds in the TIP time horizon are compared to the projects anticipated to be completed during the first interim stage of the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP (see Section 4.B, steps 6 and 7). Applicable reports are provided to FHWA and FTA to issue the federal conformity determination.

Greenhouse Gas Transportation Planning Standard

CDOT and DRCOG, as a MPO, are required to achieve individually set greenhouse gas reduction levels at four different time periods — 2025, 2030, 2040, and 2050. To determine compliance with the reduction levels, agencies must model their existing transportation networks and all future regionally significant capacity projects in CDOT's Four-Year Prioritized Plan in Non-Metropolitan Planning Organization areas and DRCOG's TIP using travel demand models, with a subsequent analysis through the EPA's Motor Vehicle Emission Simulator. Overall, the standard encourages CDOT and DRCOG to develop long range transportation plans that support travel choices that reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

TIP adoption

The TIP and conformity finding require public review and adoption by the DRCOG Board of Directors through the transportation committees process. Upon transportation committee recommendation of the draft TIP and conformity documentation, DRCOG staff announce a formal public hearing and makes available documents for public examination. Formal transportation committee recommendations and DRCOG Board of Directors action take place after consideration of public input. Upon adoption, the TIP is transmitted to CDOT for inclusion in the STIP and governor approval. FHWA and FTA issue a federal conformity determination concurrently to approving the TIP in the STIP.

Relationship to the statewide transportation planning/programming process

The projects in DRCOG's adopted TIP are included without modification in the STIP, provided that the TIP was prepared in a process consistent with federal regulations, demonstrates air quality conformity and is approved by the governor.

TIP revisions

The TIP may be revised between formal development cycles following the policies adopted in Step 1. For any revision, air quality conformity must be considered. Revisions are either classified as TIP Amendments or Administrative Modifications. DRCOG has an agreement with CDOT that DRCOG's public involvement and notification procedures will meet the requirements for CDOT's project amendments. TIP amendments entail significant changes that require public review and adoption by the DRCOG Board of Directors through the transportation committee process. The TIP policies of Step 1 define the types of revisions that might require them to be classified as TIP amendments. Examples from the current policy include:

- Adding a new project or changing an existing project would affect the air quality conformity finding.
- Changing a regionally significant project.
- Deleting or significantly changing a feature (for example, changing the project termini).
- Deleting or deferring it from the four years of the TIP.
- Changing a project to be inconsistent with 2050 RTP.
- Adding or deleting funding for any project by more than \$5 million over the four years of the TIP.
- Changes as deemed by the DRCOG transportation planning and operations director and/or executive director.

Administrative modifications are less significant and, by definition, do not affect air quality conformity. DRCOG staff process them and no committee review or DRCOG Board of Directors approval is required, however they are provided to the DRCOG Board of Directors as an informational item.

CDOT TIP pool flexibility

There is an agreement on the degree of CDOT's flexibility concerning amending projects within CDOT TIP pools (for example, Bridge Off-System, Bridge On- System, Congestion Relief, FASTER Bridge-Safety-Transit and Surface Treatment). CDOT staff are allowed to shift funds without going through the amendment process each time if the total amount of funding in the pool does not change.

Annual listing of obligated projects

Each fiscal year, DRCOG prepares a list of projects for which federal funds were obligated by Sept. 30 from data supplied by CDOT and the FTA. This list is presented to transportation committees and posted on the DRCOG website no later than Dec. 31.

In transportation management areas such as Denver that are non-attainment-maintenance for air quality (see Section 5.H), federal funds cannot be programmed for any highway capacity project that would significantly increase capacity for single-occupant vehicles unless the project is based on an approved congestion management process.

Congestion management process

In transportation management areas, federal law requires the regional transportation planning process to include a congestion management process: “that provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation...of new and existing transportation facilities...and through the use of travel demand reduction and operational management strategies.”

The DRCOG area’s congestion management framework addresses many federal requirements within several transportation planning tasks, processes and documents to the extent possible. Congestion management fits into the overall regional transportation planning process; it does not stand alone and is not a static product. The congestion management strategies of travel demand reduction (including transportation demand management strategies) and operational management to ensure the efficient and effective use of transportation facilities are considered in all project development and transportation planning processes in the region. As the MPO of the area, DRCOG is responsible for coordinating the congestion management process.

Congestion mobility grade measures

Duration – How long does the congestion last (number of hours per day congested)?

Severity – What is the extra travel time caused by delay during rush hour compared to off-peak (percent of travel time in delay in peak hour).

Magnitude – What is total amount of delay for all travelers at that location (total daily delay time per mile)?

Reliability – How frequently do crashes, incidents or events occur (crashes per mile per year)?

The key components of the congestion management process are:

- Congestion definition at the regional level. In the DRCOG region, congestion is considered severe for linear segments of the designated regional roadway system that have a congestion mobility grade of “D” or “F.” The congestion mobility grade is calculated on a 1- to 20-point scale for every roadway segment. Points are calculated for each of five unique congestion measures, summed to a grand total, and used for assignment of a grade. A map of roadway locations with a grade of “D” or “F” is produced annually. The regional level congestion definition should not be used in place of engineering level analyses required for corridor, project or environmental documentation studies.

- **Performance monitoring.** DRCOG assembles congestion information from a variety of sources including the regional travel model, local government and CDOT traffic counts, private companies using vehicle probe data (for example, INRIX) and other sources such as the national Urban Mobility Report prepared by the Texas Transportation Institute. DRCOG staff produce annual reports to present updated information and new types of measures. The performance-based planning process established in MAP-21, continued through subsequent federal reauthorizations requires that DRCOG and CDOT develop transportation plans and transportation improvement programs through a performance-driven, outcome-based approach to planning. DRCOG and CDOT transportation plans shall include performance targets that address performance measures and standards and a system performance report. Plans requiring performance targets include:

- The 2050 RTP.
- The TIP.
- The Statewide Transportation Plan.
- The STIP.

- **Strategy identification and evaluation.** In this component, the causes of congestion are examined, and congestion management strategies are explored. This activity takes place at two distinct levels, the regional level and the project level, as described in Exhibit 10. Many types of congestion mitigation strategies are identified in DRCOG's Congestion Mitigation Toolkit.
- **Implementation.** To comply with federal requirements, projects must implement specific congestion management actions defined in the project level evaluation (for example, the National Environmental Policy Act). Decisions as to schedule, responsibilities and funding sources for the more regional congestion management strategies are made during the TIP process.
- **Monitoring of strategy effectiveness.** Recipients of Congestion Mitigation/Air Quality program funds (see Section 4.C) have a benefits-reporting requirement to FHWA and the Transportation Commission. DRCOG staff also monitors the results of other TIP-funded projects related to congestion.

Exhibit 11: The two levels of congestion management strategy evaluation in the Denver region

Regional level

During the development of long-range regional transportation plans, strategies for congestion management are identified and evaluated. The region's key strategies are identified as part of the 2050 RTP transportation system and the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP identifies the subset that will be emphasized with the reasonably expected funding resources. Separate but consistent documents may be prepared for certain strategies, such as intelligent transportation systems.

Project level

For major highway and transit capacity projects, project level evaluation examines specific congestion management actions either alone, in combination, or in support of the project. Project level analysis is a more detailed and geographically focused evaluation of costs, benefits and effects of specific strategies. One source of information on strategies is the DRCOG Congestion Mitigation Toolkit. The agency managing project development is responsible for project level congestion management evaluations.

There are two key examinations:

- 1) Identification and evaluation of a “management strategy only” alternative to determine whether it could substitute for the additional capacity of the “build” alternatives being considered.
- 2) If building additional highway or transit capacity is the preferred alternative, then congestion management strategies that most effectively support the operation of the “build” alternative are included in and implemented by the project.

Relationship to the statewide transportation planning/programming process

Federal law only requires a congestion management process in transportation management areas, not throughout the remainder of the state. In the DRCOG transportation management area, the statewide transportation planning process must explicitly consider, analyze as appropriate, and reflect in its transportation planning products the DRCOG congestion management process.

Planning process certifications

Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, DRCOG and CDOT must certify to FHWA and FTA that the metropolitan transportation planning process is being conducted in accordance with all applicable federal requirements each time a new TIP is submitted. Similarly, every four years FHWA and FTA must conduct a federal review of the process. Both the self-certification and the federal quadrennial planning certification review hold an MPO and all planning partners in the transportation management area (including FHWA and FTA) accountable for the function and quality of the planning process in its region.

DRCOG staff initiate the self-certification process, working with CDOT to conduct a critical review of the federal requirements (see Chapter 2). DRCOG staff prepare a certification documentation that is approved by the DRCOG MPO committee (the RTC) and signed by the executive directors of each agency.

Federal law mandates that the self-certification accompany the submittal of an adopted TIP to FHWA and FTA.

FHWA and FTA are jointly responsible for conducting the quadrennial planning certification review for the U.S. Department of Transportation. The EPA and other federal agencies may also participate. As part of the review, the federal agencies typically conduct an evaluation, meet with key staff from the partner agencies and provide the public and stakeholders the opportunity to provide comments on the transportation planning process. The federal agencies then prepare a report to document the review and any findings. FHWA and FTA jointly conclude the quadrennial planning certification review with one of the following actions:

- Certify the transportation planning process.
- Certify the process subject to required corrective actions.
- Certify the process as acceptable for a portion of the overall requirements (in other words, not certify the process for some programs).
- Or withhold certification.

A certification conclusion is valid until a new FHWA and FTA quadrennial certification process is conducted which is valid for four years and not dependent on any other actions. DRCOG has been recertified without any conditions or corrections for the last several reviews. The latest certification and finding was dated Oct. 16, 2020.

If certification is limited or withheld, some federal funding to the region may be withheld by FHWA and/or FTA.

Relationship to the statewide transportation planning/programming process

The MPO self-certifications and quadrennial certification review conclusions are considered by CDOT in its certification to FHWA and FTA that the statewide transportation planning process is being carried out in accordance with all federal requirements.

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A black and white photograph of a person riding a bicycle on a paved path. The person is wearing a helmet, sunglasses, and a light-colored jacket. They are riding towards the camera. In the background, there is a concrete bridge with a sign that reads "E-470". The path is bordered by grass and trees. The image is overlaid with a large blue diagonal graphic element.

5

Coordination with other transportation processes

Staff from RTD, CDOT, air quality planning agencies and local governments undertake numerous transportation planning and programming activities that intersect with the regional process. This chapter identifies those most relevant to the regional process, describes them and shows how they relate to the regional process and how the activities are coordinated.

Greenhouse Gas Transportation Planning Standard

On Dec. 16, 2021, the Transportation Commission approved CDOT's greenhouse gas rule to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the transportation sector, improve air quality and reduce smog, and provide more travel options. The greenhouse gas rule is one of several transportation strategies identified in the state's Greenhouse Gas Pollution Reduction Roadmap and is a key requirement established in the 2021 state transportation funding bill (Senate Bill 21-260).

Interchange approval

CDOT's Interchange Approval Process Policy Directive was established to ensure fair and consistent treatment of proposals for new interchanges or major interchange improvements on state highways. The CDOT "1601 process" is applied to all state highways (interstates, other freeways and non-freeway facilities) and to all applicants (local governments, public highway authorities and CDOT itself) to manage the location of interchanges so that the state highway system's mobility and level of service is preserved. Such interchanges and improvements cannot be constructed until the applicant completes all the steps of the 1601 process identified in the procedural directive. Exhibit 13 summarizes those steps.

Categories of applications

Type one: New interchanges on interstates or freeways, or any application not initiated by CDOT that seeks CDOT cost-sharing. Approval by Transportation Commission.

Type two: New interchanges not on interstates or freeways, or any modification or reconfiguration to existing interchanges (with no CDOT cost-sharing). Approval by the CDOT chief engineer (may be elevated to the Transportation Commission).

Type two-a: Minor interchange improvements with little or no impact to the transportation system. Approval by the CDOT chief engineer (may be delegated to the CDOT regional director).

Relationship to the regional transportation planning process

The air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP must depict proposed new interchanges or major interchange improvements for purposes of fiscal constraint and, in some instances, air quality conformity, either through the development of a new regional transportation plan or an amendment to an existing one.

The following types of interchange improvements, which will typically be either Type 1 or Type 2 1601 applications, are considered regionally significant and must be reflected in the conformity modeling network:

- New interchange.
- Improvements upgrading a local service interchange to a freeway-to-freeway interchange.
- Improvements adding missing movements to an existing interchange (for example, changing a half diamond to a full diamond, or adding new freeway-to-freeway ramps not currently provided).
- Removal of an interchange or elimination of movements.

For regionally significant interchange improvements in the transportation management area, appropriate CDOT approval of the system level study is needed no later than three weeks after DRCOG's due date for candidate project requests in the development of a new regional transportation plan or for 2050 RTP amendments. The applicant must provide the draft system level study (Type 1 and Type 2), or other data (Type 2a), to DRCOG 20 days before the date of needed CDOT action.

For non-regionally significant interchange improvements in the transportation management area, and for any interchange improvements in the remainder of the transportation planning region, appropriate CDOT approval of the system level study (type one and type two) or other data (type two-a) is needed at least 45 days prior to the DRCOG public hearing on a new air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP or 2050 RTP amendment. If CDOT staff approval is not obtained in these time frames, the request must be deferred until the next scheduled 2050 RTP amendment cycle. In all cases, applicants must provide DRCOG a conceptual level cost estimate, even if a system level study is not prepared. The DRCOG land use forecasts for the current plan horizon are the analytic base for 1601 studies for which fiscally constrained 2050 RTP funding sources are expected or desired. CDOT may also request a build-out assessment to further define project level requirements and financial commitments.

As appropriate, CDOT reports on the status of 1601 studies in the region to DRCOG transportation committees.

Exhibit 12: Steps in the 1601 process

The seven steps in the 1601 process are briefly summarized as follows (for detail, see the 1601 Procedural Directive):

- 1) The applicant notifies the appropriate CDOT region of its desire to build a new interchange or improve an existing interchange on the state highway system, and the CDOT region sets a pre-application project scoping meeting. The purpose of the meeting is to determine the scope category and anticipated process and schedule for the proposed project. The CDOT regional director must approve the progression of any application to step two.
- 2) The applicant is responsible for all costs associated with the development, administration and evaluation of such applications. If the applicant is not CDOT, an initial intergovernmental agreement is developed between the applicant and CDOT addressing: anticipated improvement category; responsibility for administrative and application costs; identification of needed studies and analytical procedures; level of design detail needed; environmental study expectations; long-range plan consistency requirements; access permitting and other relevant topics.
- 3) The applicant completes a system level study to identify the short- and long-term environmental, community, safety and operational effects on the state highway and surrounding transportation system. The system level study includes a preliminary financial plan that identifies all costs and proposed responsibility for funding and the effect of the proposed funding on the fiscally constrained RTP. Type two-a applications do not require a system level study, but the applicant must prepare data sufficient to substantiate that there is no potential for significant negative effects.
- 4) Additionally, there is a transportation demand management requirement for type one and type two interchange proposals.
- 5) The Transportation Commission (type one) or CDOT chief engineer (type two) reviews and, if acceptable, approves the system level study, with conditions.
- 6) DRCOG staff must establish that the proposed new interchange or interchange improvements are consistent with the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP; often this requires an amendment to the 2050 RTP.
- 7) The applicant must prepare a conceptual design, which must be approved by the CDOT chief engineer or regional director. The design report must contain any State Highway Access Code-related requirements. The applicant must complete the NEPA process, with the CDOT chief engineer or FHWA issuing the appropriate decision document. When the interchange is on the interstate, FHWA must grant access approval.

If the applicant is not CDOT, a final intergovernmental agreement between CDOT and the applicant is executed that details the actions to be implemented, ownership, costs and a funding plan clearly identifying responsibilities. The CDOT chief engineer approves the final intergovernmental agreement if it is acceptable. If the final funding plan differs substantially from that approved by the Transportation Commission in step four, it is submitted to the Transportation Commission for reconsideration.

Upon completion of the final intergovernmental agreement, CDOT staff issue a state highway access permit. The applicant completes design, right-of-way acquisition and construction per the approved final intergovernmental agreement and access permit.

Revisions to state highway access categories

The State Highway Access Code identifies the procedures and standards by which CDOT and local governments regulate property access to or from state highways. The code, revised by the Transportation Commission in 1998 (a major revision) and 2002 (a minor revision) pursuant to state statute, specifies a classification system of eight separate categories for access management purposes, as shown in Exhibit 12. In 1999, CDOT and local governments cooperatively assigned each state highway segment a category based on existing and future function and location of the highway or segment.

The code establishes the process and procedure for making changes to the assigned category, which is accomplished through a rule-making hearing by the Transportation Commission. Exhibit 13 outlines the process. CDOT maintains the current schedule of assigned categories reflecting the original category assignment and all changes approved since 1999.

Relationship to the regional transportation planning process

Managing the state highway system to enhance safety, maintain smooth traffic flow and protect the functional capability of the system (the intent of the code) is consistent with policies of the 2050 RTP. In concept, state highways shown on the 2050 RTP network should carry an access designation consistent with the regionally- significant nature of that plan, specifically F-W, E-X, R-A and NR-A (see Exhibit 12). In the already developed portions of the region, established roadside development may make assignment of these high-level access categories unrealistic and lower classifications based on the existing level of development may be the best that can be achieved.

Exhibit 13: State highway access categories

When notified by CDOT of a proposed access category revision, DRCOG staff:

The State Highway Access Code identifies eight categories for access management as follows (for detail, see the code):

- F-W (interstate, freeway).
 - E-X (expressway, major bypass).
 - R-A (rural regional highway).
 - R-B (rural highway).
 - NR-A (nonrural regional or principal highway).
 - NR-B (nonrural arterial).
 - NR-C (nonrural arterial, low speed character).
 - F-R (frontage road).
- For any NR (nonrural) designation requested, examines the request for consistency with the 2050 RTP urban growth boundary/area.
 - For any state highway on the 2050 RTP, checks whether the proposed access category is generally consistent with the expectations that come with being shown on that plan.

If there are no concerns, DRCOG staff does not submit testimony at the rule-making hearing. If there are inconsistencies or concerns, DRCOG staff immediately alerts the local agency and CDOT staff. If the problems identified can be addressed or reasonably explained, DRCOG staff does not submit testimony. If concerns are not, or cannot be, addressed, DRCOG may present testimony. There may be a need to revise or adjust the 2050 RTP during the next update or revision cycle to reflect approved access category changes.

As appropriate, CDOT updates the transportation committees on the outcome of relevant access category change requests.

Exhibit 14: Process for changing state highway access category

Major environmental processes

The process for making changes to the assigned state highway access category is briefly summarized as follows (for detail, consult the State Highway Access Code or the CDOT Access Program administrator):

- 1) Relevant local government, MPO or transportation planning region (with the approval of the local government by resolution), or CDOT initiates a request for a category change.
- 2) At least 90 days before anticipated Transportation Commission action, the applicant provides information to CDOT to support the request, including an explanation of the need for the requested change and a discussion of how the change is consistent with the purposes and standards of the Code.
- 3) CDOT:
 - Reviews each request.
 - Prepares a recommendation to the Transportation Commission.
 - Provides a copy of pertinent documents to the appropriate local governments and MPO or transportation planning region 30 days prior to Transportation Commission action.
 - Prepares the notice of the rule-making hearing.
- 4) At the hearing, all interested persons are provided the opportunity to submit written or verbal testimony.
- 5) The Transportation Commission acts on the changes, based on the record of the rule-making hearing, as soon as practical following the hearing.

The National Environmental Policy Act, signed into law Jan. 1, 1970, requires federal agencies to assess the environmental impact of major federal actions, including projects that receive federal funds, using an interdisciplinary approach that provides opportunities for public review and input. Since then, a large body of regulations, processes and procedures, and case law has specified how these assessments are completed. Further, numerous other public health laws, regulations and executive orders have been enacted, broadening the scope of and requirements for environmental-type considerations, which are typically folded into the NEPA process.

Environmental Process acronyms:

- EA: Environmental Assessment.
- EIS: Environmental Impact Statement.
- PEL: Planning and Environmental Linkage.
- NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act.
- CatEx: Categorical Exclusion.

The purpose of this section is to define the relationships between the regional transportation planning process and major environmental studies. For this relationship to be understood, some NEPA terminology and process information is briefly presented. Exhibit 16 identifies the categories of environmental study and indicates which are considered major. Exhibit 17 summarizes the general process for conducting major environmental studies. CDOT's Environmental Stewardship Guide provides a good overview and additional detail is contained in the CDOT NEPA Manual.

Relationship to the regional transportation planning process

The federal regulations for NEPA and for metropolitan transportation planning have evolved since their initial adoption several decades ago. Congress has expressed its intent that transportation planning and environmental considerations be better coordinated with clear relationships.

Exhibit 15: NEPA environmental action categories

The following relationships are typically established:

Proposed transportation actions or potential projects are categorized according to the likely environmental impact:

Categorical exclusion

Categorical exclusions are assigned to actions or projects that individually or cumulatively do not have a significant environmental impact. A categorical exclusion is not considered to be a major environmental process. Approximately 90% or more of CDOT's projects are cleared with a categorical exclusion. While the majority of projects funded through the U.S. Department of Transportation (Federal Highway Administration and Federal Transit Administration) can be cleared as Categorical Exclusions, compliance with Section 106 is still required, including consultation on effects to historic resources. The Federal Transit Administration's Categorical Exclusion worksheet must be completed for transit project sponsors requesting to use FTA funds.

Environmental assessment

For actions or projects where the significance of the environmental impact is not clearly known, an environmental assessment is prepared.

Environmental impact statement

An environmental impact statement is required for actions or projects that are likely to have significant impacts to the environment.

- Authorizing the study. Within the transportation management area, an EIS or EA is included in the TIP if federal, state or RTD funds are being used. EISs or EAs, regardless of funding source, are listed in the informational section of the UPWP.
- Pre-study activities. The applicant provides a draft work scope for a specific EIS or EA directly to the other MPA partners at a time no later than the release of the consultant solicitation for work. The MPA partners review that draft and provide timely comments. Areas of concern are worked out between the applicant and the MPA partner agencies before the consultant work scope is finalized. As part of this review, the MPA partners confirm which relationship requirements the study needs to meet. The relationship requirements are considered to be standard for all EISs, but for EAs the determination is made on a case-by-case basis cooperatively between the MPA partners and applicant at an agency coordination team meeting.
- Early review of regional planning process linkages and consistency.
- Purpose and need. As the NEPA study is developing a draft purpose and need statement

during scoping, DRCOG is customarily asked to provide review comments from the perspective of the MPO. To assist in developing its response, DRCOG may solicit input from the TAC or individual jurisdictions that could be affected by the proposed project.

- 2050 RTP. As one of its evaluations, the NEPA study expressly considers and articulates the relationships (consistency or conflicts) between the project, its alternatives and the 2050 RTP.
- Project location and RTP placeholder. The NEPA study identifies whether the study location is within the area subject to regional air quality conformity determination and what placeholder projects the then-current air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP shows within the corridor (see background discussion in Exhibit 15).

Land use forecasts

Regional air quality conformity is demonstrated for the

fiscally constrained 2050 RTP based on the DRCOG small area land use forecasts. As such, those forecasts form the baseline for the transportation measures, criteria and related evaluations within the NEPA study. Other forecasts may be used for sensitivity analysis, investigating even longer-range improvement needs, examining the implications of a transportation alternative on inducing growth or redefining land use (an indirect effect), and for the portion of the Greater Denver Area Transportation Planning Region where air quality conformity is not applicable.

Congestion Management Process requirements. Within the transportation management area, the NEPA study addresses the project level congestion management requirements (see Section 4.D) or references such efforts that may be conducted outside the NEPA study. Outside the transportation management area, a congestion management examination is not required, but is encouraged.

Approaching the NEPA decision. Relationship of NEPA preferred alternative to the Metro Vision transportation system. If the NEPA preferred alternative differs substantially from the project concept depicted in the Metro Vision transportation system of the 2050 RTP, DRCOG staff should be alerted. The project is brought through the regional transportation planning process to be considered for inclusion in the plan during the next scheduled plan amendment or update process. As a preferred alternative is developed in the NEPA study, the applicant alerts DRCOG staff, and that issue may be brought to transportation committees for discussion.

Relationship of NEPA decision to the air quality

conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP. Exhibit 17 presents a matrix for synchronizing the NEPA decision document with the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP. Close coordination among the applicant, lead agency and DRCOG is encouraged during this period to avoid delays to the NEPA study or unreasonable expectations on the regional transportation planning process.

Relationship of NEPA decision to the TIP. Within the transportation management area, the elements of the project anticipated during the period of the TIP, including environmental impact mitigation, must be part of the adopted conforming TIP before the NEPA decision document can be issued.

CDOT's Environmental Stewardship Guide states: "A carefully prepared Purpose and Need statement provides a credible foundation for the subsequent study and promotes acceptance by the public and review agencies." Early input from the regional transportation planning process assists in creating this credible foundation.

Planning and environmental linkage studies

A planning and environmental linkage study can be conducted as an interim step of evaluation for a transportation need or project that has not entered formal NEPA level analysis. The purpose of a PEL study is to perform preliminary analysis and make decisions not normally completed as part of the traditional regional planning process. PEL studies may also be conducted for transportation corridors to more clearly identify the problem and develop refined solutions for inclusion in the regional transportation plan. This in turn will make NEPA level evaluation and decision-making more transparent to resource agencies and the public, promote environmental stewardship, minimize duplication of effort, and reduce delays in project implementation. Agencies preparing a PEL study must coordinate with FHWA at four points in the process and complete an FHWA questionnaire to verify the activities conducted as part of the study and their relationship to future NEPA document preparation.

An environmental disclosure document can be issued for alternatives, or a preferred alternative not

included within the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP, but completion of such document is no guarantee of funding and no guarantee of inclusion in the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP.

A NEPA decision document, however, cannot be issued until the selected project, project elements or project phases are included within an adopted, fiscally constrained 2050 RTP that, in air quality nonattainment-maintenance areas, has demonstrated air quality conformity.

Exhibit 16: General process for conducting a NEPA study

Exhibit 17: Coordination between the 2050 RTP and a NEPA study's decision document

The general process for conducting an EIS or EA is similar, as described in the following overview. For any specific study, some steps may be conducted in a different order. There are also some specific requirement differences between an EIS and an EA.

- 1) Identify roles. The lead agency in a major environmental study is a federal role (for example, FHWA, FTA or joint lead). The lead agency is responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the relevant NEPA processes are completed per federal requirements. The applicant (CDOT, RTD, public transportation authorities or local governments, sometimes cooperatively) typically completes or manages the work under the lead agency's guidance.
- 2) Define and conduct agency coordination and public involvement, including initial notification to the public and affected agencies.
- 3) Define the scope of the proposed project and its purpose and need, for example, what the project is trying to accomplish and why it is needed, what the problems are that need to be addressed.
- 4) Describe the affected environment. Identify, assess and understand the existing conditions of the numerous potentially sensitive environmental resources.
- 5) Identify alternatives that respond to the purpose and need. A no-action alternative must be defined as a baseline for comparison.
- 6) Screen the alternatives. Quantify how well each alternative addresses the needs and the environmental (and other) impacts or consequences. In larger studies, a multi-step evaluation and screening process is probable (though not required), with an initial step that eliminates alternatives that are not viable due to fatal flaws, followed by a preliminary screening using select criteria to eliminate alternatives that are clearly inferior, followed by a more detailed assessment of the remaining alternatives using a full set of criteria.
- 7) Analyze the environmental impacts of the alternatives. Identify the impacts to environmental and human resources for each of the remaining alternatives, and proposed mitigation for those impacts.
- 8) Identify a preferred alternative, including needed avoidance, minimization and mitigation of project impacts. In studies where funding is not available to fully construct the preferred alternative, priority project elements or phases must be identified for inclusion in the decision document.
- 9) Prepare and distribute the environmental disclosure document. The lead agency issues the EA, or the draft EIS.
- 10) During a formal comment period, solicit public and agency review. Appropriately address comments submitted.
- 11) Prepare and distribute the decision document. For an EIS process, the lead agency issues a record of decision. For an EA process, it issues a finding of "no significant impact" if the proposed project has no significant impacts that cannot be mitigated. If impacts of environmental significance are considered likely, the EA process may conclude that an EIS must be prepared.

The appendix lists the relevant state statute. Senate Bill 90-208 provides the legislature assurance that fixed-

Background: Prior to a major NEPA study, the transportation improvements identified in the 2050 RTP may be considered best estimate placeholders. In the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP, the placeholder is assumed in the cost computations for fiscal constraint and, in air quality nonattainment-maintenance areas, is part of the modeled network used to demonstrate regional air quality conformity. EISs and EAs intend to identify a preferred alternative that can be implemented. To do so, the description (design concept and scope) and cost of the project to be approved in the NEPA decision document must be consistent with that in the adopted fiscally constrained 2050 RTP. If they are not consistent, either the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP must be amended, or the NEPA study priority elements or phases of a preferred alternative must be modified. The cost of any project or phase included in the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP must include and account for environmental mitigation measures anticipated in the NEPA decision document.

Scenarios and associated requirements:

- 1) A project described in the NEPA decision document is not substantially different financially from the adopted fiscally constrained 2050 RTP placeholder:
The project must still be within the placeholder budget for fiscal constraint or within an acceptable tolerance level. The tolerance level will be agreed upon by CDOT, DRCOG and FHWA, based on the overall cost of the project. As a general guideline, “smaller” projects (e.g. <\$30 million) may have a project cost tolerance within 30% of the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP placeholder cost in constant-year dollars. The cumulative cost of all individual NEPA process projects may have a project cost tolerance within 20% of the total cost of those projects as shown in the fiscally constrained TIP. Progressively lower tolerance levels may be determined jointly by CDOT, DRCOG and FHWA for larger projects. No 2050 RTP amendment is needed and the NEPA decision document can be issued.
- 2) A project described in the NEPA decision document is substantially different from the adopted fiscally constrained 2050 RTP placeholder:
 - Within the air quality nonattainment or maintenance area: A new air quality conformity determination may be required. A fiscally constrained 2050 RTP amendment is required, which DRCOG would consider during the next scheduled plan amendment or development cycle. The NEPA decision document can be issued after the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP is revised and air quality conformity demonstrated.
 - Outside the air quality nonattainment-maintenance area: A fiscally constrained 2050 RTP amendment is needed, but would be considered minor since air quality conformity is not involved. Applicant should coordinate with DRCOG on timing of fiscally constrained 2050 RTP amendment and issuance of NEPA decision document.

- 3) A project described in the NEPA decision document is beyond the agreed-upon tolerance level, but the applicant has a proposal for how 2050 RTP fiscal constraint will be maintained (for example, deleting or deferring other projects in the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP, or adding additional revenues): A fiscally constrained 2050 RTP amendment is required, which DRCOG would consider during the next scheduled plan amendment or development cycle. The NEPA decision document can be issued after fiscally constrained 2050 RTP is revised and air quality conformity is demonstrated.
- 4) A project described in the NEPA decision document is beyond the agreed-upon tolerance level and the applicant has no proposal for how fiscal constraint will be maintained: The NEPA decision document cannot be issued until project is in the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP. DRCOG would consider this project only during the next scheduled new plan development cycle.

Note that coordination between the 2050 RTP and rapid transit environmental studies are addressed as part of the FasTracks Annual Review process between DRCOG, RTD and FTA.

5) DRCOG Fixed-Guideway Transit Review

Senate Bill 90-208 is a Colorado statute enacted in 1990 that states:

“The Regional Transportation District (RTD) Board shall take no action relating to the construction of a regional fixed-guideway mass transit system until such a system has been approved by the designated metropolitan planning organization (MPO). Each component part or corridor of such system must be approved by the MPO. Such action shall include approval of the method of financing and the technology selected for such projects.”

guideway construction projects proposed by RTD are technologically sound, financially feasible and consistent with the expectations of affected jurisdictions as represented in the MPO process.

Criteria for the review of proposed projects per Senate Bill 90-208 are adopted by the DRCOG Board of Directors through the transportation committee process. RTD staff submit fixed-guideway transit proposals to DRCOG and, in its proposal, describes the specific project in detail, provides a rationale for why it is being pursued, and provides information pertinent to each of the criteria. DRCOG staff conduct a technical assessment of each proposal using the information provided by RTD staff and their own examinations. Based on the criteria, DRCOG staff prepare a draft assessment report making preliminary findings and conclusions, which is reviewed by RTD staff. The proposal is also presented to the public in a hearing at a DRCOG Board of Directors meeting. DRCOG staff prepare a final assessment report reflecting resolution of technical and financial issues with RTD and summarizing public comment. Final transportation committees' recommendations and DRCOG Board of Directors action to approve the specific proposal (or not) take place upon consideration of the final report.

Relationship to the regional transportation

planning process

The Senate Bill 90-208 evaluation is conducted by DRCOG through the regional transportation planning process. As a priority transportation planning activity, such evaluations are identified in the UPWP. RTD fixed-guideway transit facilities must be in the air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP and the TIP before they can be implemented. The Senate Bill 90-208 assessment confirms the fiscally constrained nature of the proposal per the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP or provides a rationale for plan amendment. The project can be included in the TIP for construction only after the DRCOG Board of Directors has issued a favorable Senate Bill 90-208 finding.

FasTracks review

Senate Bill 20-208 review applies to FasTracks projects that otherwise would meet the statutory criteria. In April 2004, DRCOG completed the initial Senate Bill 90-208 review of RTD's FasTracks Plan, which was subsequently approved by the region's voters in November 2004. FasTracks is a broad, regionwide, long-term program and numerous assumptions were made about both technology and financing. To ensure the legislative intent of the review but address the likelihood of change during FasTracks implementation, DRCOG defined a process via DRCOG Board of Directors resolution in 2013 to evaluate changes to the most recently approved FasTracks Plan to determine if such proposed changes warrant new Senate Bill 90-208 approval action by the DRCOG Board of Directors. In 2014, RTD staff submitted a Baseline Report. RTD staff must submit a Proposed FasTracks Plan Change Report for DRCOG action whenever RTD proposes changes from the most recent DRCOG-approved FasTracks Plan to any of the following categories listed in Senate Bill 90-208:

- Project definition/scope/technology.
- Financial plan.
- Implementation schedule.
- Operating characteristics.
- Level of bus service.

The DRCOG Board of Directors, through the transportation committee process, determines whether changes require further action pursuant to Senate Bill 90-208. The September 2013 DRCOG Board of Directors resolution also requires RTD staff to provide a FasTracks Status Report annually by May 1. The report is for information purposes and does not require an associated action.

Front Range Passenger Rail District

In 2021, the Colorado General Assembly approved Senate Bill 21-238, which created the Front Range Passenger Rail District Board. This district, the successor to the then-existing Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission, was created for the purpose of “planning, designing, developing, financing, constructing, operating, and maintaining a passenger rail system...” along Colorado’s Front Range. The district, whose boundary stretches from Wyoming to New Mexico along the I-25 corridor, has a 24-member board of directors (17 voting members) comprised of:

- Six directors appointed by the governor and confirmed by the state senate, including one director who is a resident of a city or county with an unfinished FasTracks rail service project.
- Ten directors appointed by metropolitan and rural transportation planning organizations, including DRCOG, and confirmed by the state senate.
- One director appointed by the executive director of CDOT.
- Three non-voting directors appointed (one each) by BNSF Railway, Union Pacific and Amtrak.
- One non-voting director appointed by RTD.
- One non-voting director appointed by the I-70 Mountain Corridor Coalition.
- Two non-voting directors appointed (one each) by the governors of Wyoming and New Mexico.
- Four voting members appointed by DRCOG. Two of whom serve two-year terms, and two who serve four-year terms. The district began meeting in April 2022.

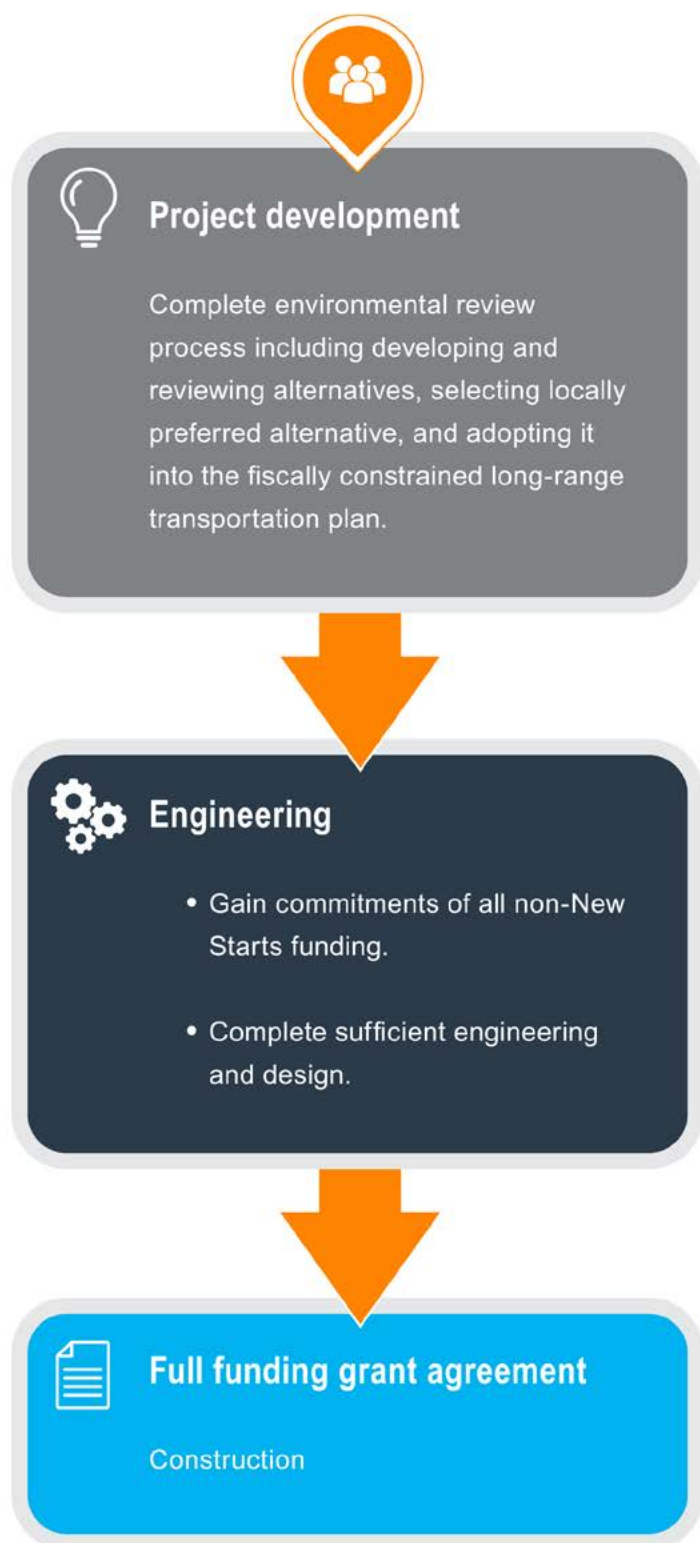
Planning and development process for Capital Investment Grant Program

The Capital Investment Grants is the FTA's primary grant program for funding major transit capital investments, including heavy rail, commuter rail, light rail, streetcars and bus rapid transit. Projects seeking CIG funding must complete a series of steps during several years to be eligible for funding. The project type and overall cost determine the category of the project: New Starts, Small Starts or Core Capacity. For New Starts and Core Capacity projects, the law requires completion of two phases in advance of receipt of a construction grant agreement – project development and engineering. For Small Starts projects, there is one phase in advance of receipt of a construction grant agreement: project development.

Exhibit 18: Capital investment grant project development process

Project sponsors must submit a letter to FTA requesting approval to enter into project development. Once a project is

New Starts and Core Capacity process



Small Starts process



Federal Transit Administration approval.



Federal Transit Administration evaluation, rating and approval.

approved, the following activities must be completed:

- The project sponsor must select a locally preferred alternative.
- The project sponsor must get the locally preferred alternative adopted into the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP.
- The environmental review process required under NEPA must be completed as signified by a final FTA environmental decision (for example, categorical exclusion, finding of no significant impact, combined final environmental impact statement/record of decision, or record of decision) covering all aspects of the project proposed for FTA funding. This process does not need to be completed prior to entry into Project Development.
- And the project sponsor must develop sufficient information for FTA to develop a project rating.
- After a project is included in the Annual Report and funds are apportioned, the project sponsor works with the FTA Region 8 office to process a grant agreement to obligate the funds before the projects may proceed. This grant agreement (dependent on the completion of NEPA and Section 106, in addition to meeting other federal requirements) is required before construction may begin. RTD and the City and County of Denver are currently working on this process for the Colfax Avenue bus rapid transit project.

preferred alternative into the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP. For a project to be included in the plan there must be a reasonable expectation of funding. This can be met, in part, by using anticipated funding from the CIG as a financial planning assumption.

FTA staff evaluate each proposed project according to a set of defined criteria, summarized in Exhibit 17. FTA staff use the information to rate CIG candidates and make recommendations to the U.S. Congress regarding a project's viability for federal funding. FTA staff prepare an annual report that provides a snapshot of all projects, including each one's strengths and weaknesses. Once given FTA approval, projects can move on to construction. For more information, review FTA's [Policy Guidance](#).

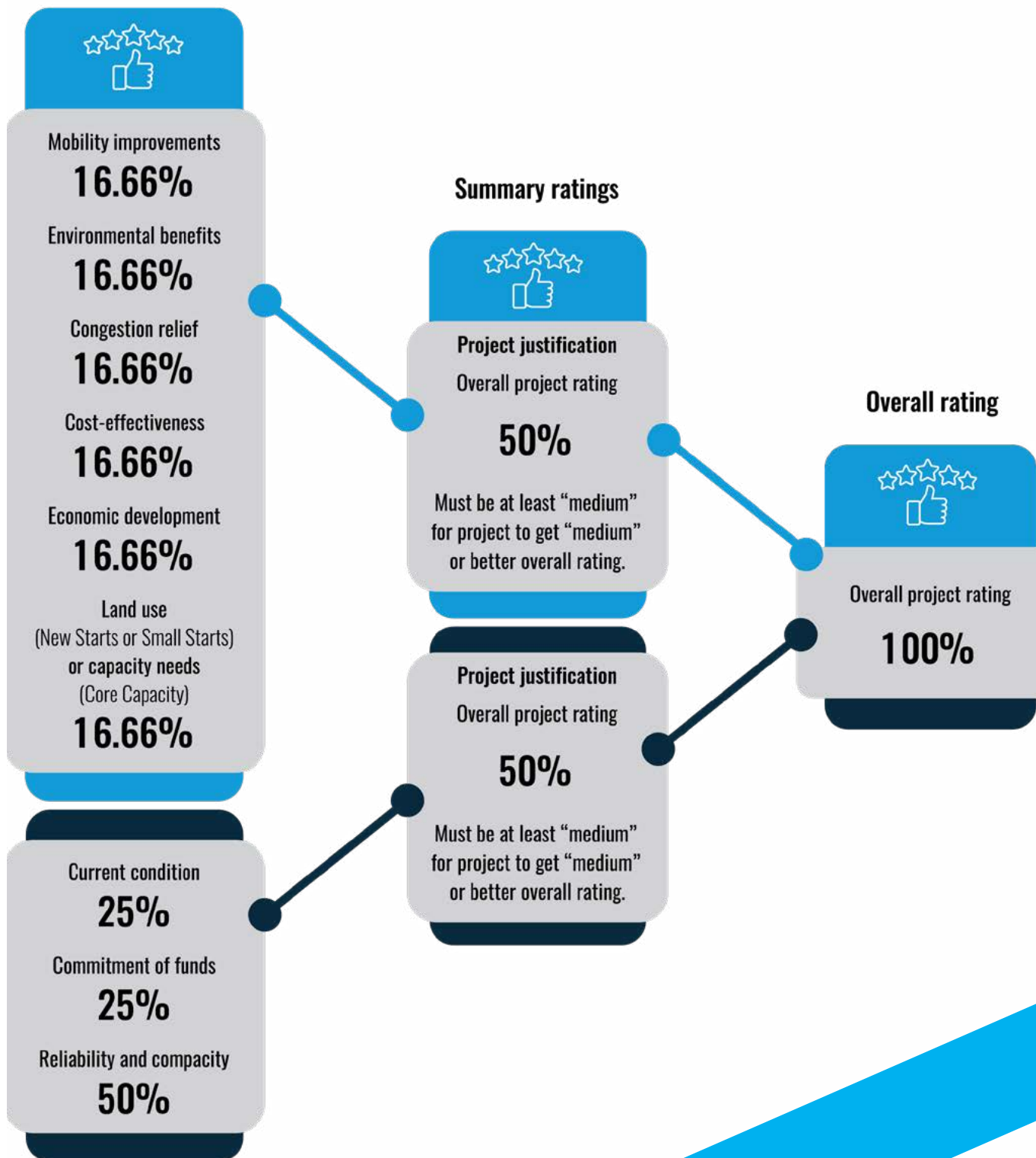
Exhibit 19: FTA

DRCOG staff play a key role in adopting the locally

capital investment grant project evaluation rating

The Federal Clean Air Act defines a process for EPA development and approval of national ambient air quality standards for a variety of

Individual criteria ratings



pollutants that can adversely affect human health (for example, carbon monoxide, ozone and small particulates). The law requires state implementation plans be prepared to show how a nonattainment area—that is, a region that does not currently meet the air quality standards — will attain standards by implementing and enforcing emission control strategies and how attainment will be maintained. The appendix lists relevant legislative and regulatory references.

Nonattainment-area SIPs are pollutant-specific plans that detail how a region will meet the specific air quality standard by specific dates.

- Maintenance plans are pollutant-specific SIPs that outline how an area that has met the specific air quality standard will continue to do so for a 10-year period. EPA requires two subsequent 10-year maintenance plans be submitted upon attainment of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards.
- Regional haze SIPs show how visibility will be improved in national parks and wilderness areas (for example, Rocky Mountain National Park in the Denver area).
- Conformity SIPs are the federally enforceable state regulations governing transportation conformity determinations.

The requirements of each SIP depend on the pollutant, classification and attainment dates. The term SIP generally refers to all the

individual plans and regulations that are submitted to and approved by the EPA. Key elements typically included in SIPs are:

- An inventory that accounts for all relevant emissions and emission sources. The inventory is used in (one) establishing emissions reduction.
- A motor vehicle emissions budget, which is the maximum allowable amount of each pollutant from mobile sources.
- Control measures as needed to help reach or maintain the emissions budget, including transportation control measures focusing on reducing vehicle use and/or congestion.

Exhibit 20: Developing

and adopting an air quality state implementation plan

Exhibit 20 shows general tasks for SIP development and adoption. The Air Quality Control Commission, a regulatory

DRCOG staff:

- Provide data from the Denver regional travel model for base and future years (vehicle miles traveled, speeds and transportation network).

Air Pollution Control Division staff:

- Develop the pollution emissions inventory for the base year.
 - For on-road mobile sources using the EPA Motor Vehicle Emissions Simulator model reflecting the latest available information on such factors as number and type of vehicles in the region, rate of fleet turnover and transportation characteristics.
 - For non-mobile sources using MOVES and local models.
- Project the inventory to a future year.
- Determine the maximum amount of mobile source pollution emissions that would allow the region to meet the National Ambient Air Quality Standards (the motor vehicle emissions budget).

Regional Air Quality Council staff:

- Identify control measures to reduce air pollution in the Denver Metro/North Front Range Ozone Nonattainment Area.
- Prepare SIP for compliance with federal air quality standards.
- Receive public comment on the proposed SIP prior to submittal to the Air Quality Control Commission.

RAQC and APCD staff:

- Develop draft regulations to implement control measures.

Air Quality Control Commission staff:

- Hold a public hearing and receives public comment on the proposed SIP and draft regulations.
- Adopts the SIP and regulations.

The Colorado General Assembly:

- Reviews the SIP.
- Grants permission to submit, if warranted.

The governor:

- Approves the SIP, if warranted.
- Submits the SIP to the EPA, if warranted.

EPA staff:

- Determine the completeness and legal and technical adequacy (this determination makes new emissions budgets applicable).
- Approve the SIP (one, this makes the SIP and its regulations federally enforceable) targets, (two) setting caps on mobile source emissions (for example, from roadways and traffic) and (three) as needed, performing air quality dispersion modeling.

body appointed by the governor, is responsible for the adoption of SIPs and their implementing regulations in Colorado through a public rule-making process.

The Regional Air Quality Council is the lead air quality planning agency for the Denver region, so designated by the governor. The RAQC has the primary responsibility for preparation of Denver area SIPs including identification of control measures. The Air Pollution Control Division of CDPHE operates the air monitors, collects emission inventory information, provides technical assistance to entities engaged in the SIP process and enforces adopted air quality regulations.

- The Clean Air Act provides for sanctions if a needed SIP is not submitted to EPA or if EPA finds it incomplete, inadequate or disapproves it. Sanctions can include federal funds being withheld for certain categories of transportation projects.

Exhibit 21 identifies the Denver region's air quality status.

Exhibit 21: Denver regional air quality status

Relationship to the regional transportation planning process

As of 2002, the Denver region met national air quality standards and has approved maintenance plans for the following pollutants and, as such, is considered to be attainment-maintenance for them:

- Carbon monoxide.
- Particulate matter 10 (particulates less than 10 microns in size).

In 1997, the EPA established a new, more stringent standard for ozone, based on measurements averaged over an eight-hour period. In 2004, the EPA defined a new nonattainment area for ozone using the new 80 parts per billion eight-hour standard. It encompasses all the Greater Denver Transportation Planning Region except for Clear Creek and Gilpin counties plus portions of Larimer and Weld counties including the Fort Collins-Loveland and Greeley urbanized areas. EPA formally designated the region as nonattainment in 2007. A SIP for this ozone standard was prepared in 2008 and was approved by EPA in 2011. In 2008, EPA revised the eight-hour ozone standard to 75 ppb, and in July 2012, the EPA designated the Denver Metro/North Front Range region as marginal nonattainment. Based on a court decision in December 2014, the attainment date for the region was advanced from Dec. 31, 2015 to July 20, 2015. As a result, attainment had to be demonstrated by the end of the 2014 ozone season. Due to the region not attaining by the end of 2014 and due to not all monitor values being below the standard for the 2014 season, which would have afforded the region a one-year extension to attain, the Denver Metro/North Front Range region was bumped up to a moderate nonattainment area in May 2016. The new designation has an attainment deadline of July 20, 2018, and requires the development of a new SIP, which was approved by the AQCC in November 2016

and will be submitted to EPA in spring 2017. In 2015, the EPA further strengthened the eight-hour ozone standard, lowering it to 70 ppb. Final designations under the new standard will occur by October 2017, and the region is expected to initially be classified as a marginal nonattainment area. While this classification does not require the development of a SIP, the region will begin planning and control measure evaluation to address this new standard. Visibility (the metro area “brown cloud”) is not regulated by Clear Air Act requirements.

CDOT program distribution

The EPA requires federal actions to conform to the appropriate SIP. Conformity in the Clean Air Act means conformity to a SIP's purpose of eliminating or reducing the severity and number of violations of the National Ambient Air Quality Standards and achieving expeditious attainment of such standards. Air quality conforming fiscally constrained long-range transportation plans and transportation improvement plans, and federally funded projects in nonattainment and maintenance areas, must conform to the SIP. Conformity for a fiscally constrained 2050 RTP or TIP is demonstrated by showing that expected mobile source emissions are at or below SIP emissions budgets and that adopted transportation control measures are being (or will be) implemented consistent with the schedule in the SIP. Conformity procedures are described in Sections 4.B and 4.C.

As appropriate, APCD or RAQC updates the transportation committees on SIP issues and status.

Federal and state laws require an air quality and transportation interagency consultation process. The consultation procedures are formally integrated into the SIP. The consultation process in the DRCOG region is facilitated by meetings of the Agency Coordination Team

CDOT's investment strategy is reflected in the program distribution process. Program distribution is a part of the Statewide Transportation Plan and outlines the assignment of projected revenues to various program areas for the time period of the plan. Program distribution reflects an investment strategy based on the policies and priorities established as part of the development of the SWP.

Revenues are updated and programs are funded annually through the annual budget process. However, program distribution provides a long-term view of what revenues are likely to look like, and how they will likely be allocated among programs in the future.

Step One. Revenue forecasting

Air quality conforming fiscally constrained long-range transportation plans must reflect financial resources that are expected to be reasonably available over the time period of the plan. Federal laws and regulations mandate that forecasting must be done cooperatively with relevant parties. To forecast revenues over a long period of time, many factors must be considered and defined. Such items typically include, but are not limited to:

- How traditional sources of funds should be forecast over a 20- to 25-year period.
- Whether different assumptions are needed for different funding sources, such as local resources or federal formula funds.
- How private development contributions should be estimated.
- The expectations for new sources of funding, such as tolling, public/private partnerships or revenue initiatives at the state, regional or local level.

Step Two. State highway system needs

CDOT staff have embraced a performance-based approach to financial decision-making and has developed a structure for identifying needs on the state highway system. CDOT's Policy Directive 14 guides the implementation of the multimodal SWP and the performance objectives that measure attainment of these goals. The goals are:

- **Safety** – The future of Colorado is zero deaths and serious injuries so all people using any transportation mode arrive at their destination safely.
- **Asset management** – Maintain a high-quality transportation network by working to maintain a state of good repair for all assets and a highly traversable road network.
- **Mobility** – Reduce travel time lost to congestion and improve connectivity across all modes with a focus on environmental impact, operations and transportation choice statewide.

Program Distribution is based on estimates of the level of funding required to meet Safety, Mobility and Asset Management performance objectives and targets established in Policy Directive 14.

Step Three. Allocation of resources

Federal law requires the state and MPO to cooperatively develop estimates of funds available for implementation of air quality conforming fiscally constrained metropolitan regional transportation plans and transportation improvement plans. To that end, CDOT works cooperatively with DRCOG and other planning partners in the program distribution process. Program distribution is a part of the planning process of the Statewide Transportation Plan and outlines the estimated assignment of forecasted revenues to various program areas during the time period of the plan. CDOT, DRCOG and other planning partners work cooperatively during the program distribution process to develop recommendations to the Transportation Commission for the distribution of revenues to programs, and for the formula allocation of applicable programs to CDOT regions and/or MPOs. The Transportation Commission approves program distribution, and CDOT and planning partners further cooperate to develop estimates of the federal and state funds from program distribution that might be reasonably anticipated to be available for transportation purposes within the MPO area for the time period of the TIP and the 2050 RTP.

Relationship to the regional transportation planning process

The regional transportation planning process determines which projects and strategies will be included in the air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP, and CDOT's participation in the regional process helps ensure that the fiscally constrained RTP's financial plan accurately reflects the program distribution and planning estimates. The planning estimates also guide DRCOG and CDOT as projects are developed for inclusion in the TIP/STIP. An annual CDOT budget is developed and adopted in the spring of each year. The annual budget is based on updated revenue forecasts, and on updated information on funding needed to achieve performance objectives. The annual budget for each year replaces program distribution as the fiscal constraint for that year in the TIP.

As part of RTP or TIP development, or as appropriate, CDOT updates the transportation committees on federal and state transportation funding for the DRCOG area.

CDOT selection processes for projects in the DRCOG TIP

CDOT has numerous funding programs organized around the following budget categories:

- Maintain – Maintaining what the region (and state) already has.
- Maximize – Safely making the most of what the region (and state) already has.
- Expand – Increasing capacity.
- Pass – Through funds/multimodal grants.

Federal law requires collaboration and consultation in project selection and prioritization. CDOT staff identify projects for funding in the TIP within the transportation management area and in the STIP in the mountains and plains area. Processes for identifying projects include:

- Asset management systems – Projects to maintain the transportation system are identified through asset management systems with input from CDOT regional staff. These systems incorporate performance measures and monitoring, strategy evaluation tools and predictive models to identify cost-effective projects that will assist in achieving established performance objectives.

- Safety processes – Targeted safety improvements for funding with sources such as FASTER Safety and Highway Safety Improvement Program are identified through the analysis of safety data with input from CDOT regional staff. Safety data are used to identify the locations where improvements are most likely to result in increased safety for the traveling public.
- Competitive evaluation – Projects for programs including Safe Routes to School, Transportation Alternatives Program, FASTER Transit and FTA programs are identified through competitive application-based evaluation processes. Projects are generally identified through a call for projects and applications are reviewed against established criteria to identify projects for funding.
- Regional Priority Program – The Regional Priority Program is a flexible funding source with projects identified by the CDOT regions in consultation with planning partners.

CDOT reviews proposed projects and solicits input from planning partners and the public through the Project Priority Programming Process. The 4P is guidance is developed by CDOT staff in cooperation with its planning partners. The current 4P document was adopted by the Colorado Transportation Commission in May 2021 and can be found here:

<https://www.codot.gov/programs/planning/transportation-plans-and-studies/stip>

The 4P guidance outlines the process for including projects in the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program. The process is conducted during each TIP/STIP development cycle via meetings with transportation planning regions and CDOT regions. In the case of DRCOG, meetings are held with individual counties. Exhibit 22 summarizes key steps of the process.

The CDOT funding programs for which projects are shown in the TIP and STIP are:

- Strategic projects.
- Surface treatment.
- Regional priorities.
- FASTER (bridge, safety and transit).
- Bridge.
- Safety.
- Transit for older adults, adults with disabilities (outside the Denver-Aurora Urbanized Area) and transit for rural areas.

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Exhibit 22: Steps in CDOT's project priority programming process

- 1) CDOT staff estimates available revenue and funding levels for programs in program distribution.
- 2) CDOT staff prepare background information, including relevant roadway and traffic information and the status of current TIP/STIP projects and phases. CDOT staff identify proposed projects and the latest cost estimates for projects currently under development are confirmed.
- 3) The two CDOT engineering regions typically hold a countywide meeting with each of the nine counties in the DRCOG region. At a location in each county, CDOT staff discuss projects, priorities and proposed revisions to the TIP, STIP and RTP consistent with updated cost and revenue estimates with local officials and staff. County officials take the lead in inviting other local agencies within their county and in publicizing meetings, which are open to the public. DRCOG and RTD staff discuss their processes for TIP project selection. Other issues, such as elimination of roadways from the state highway system and the potential for other funding mechanisms, may also be discussed. CDOT staff typically encourage each county to present a consolidated perspective of its project priorities.
- 4) Each CDOT engineering region meets individually with each MPO and transportation planning region in the area it serves. Considering input from the countywide meetings and other evaluations or information, this meeting leads to initial prioritization of projects within that planning region. For the DRCOG area, the transportation committees process may fulfill the intent of the individual MPO or transportation planning region meeting.
- 5) Each CDOT engineering region then holds a joint meeting of all its MPOs and transportation planning regions. DRCOG staff participate in such meetings in engineering regions one and four. Priorities are considered in the context of the entire engineering region, not just the DRCOG area.
- 6) Each CDOT engineering region then provides DRCOG with a list of proposed projects to be considered in the TIP. This is shared with MPA partners in the TIP interagency review phase. The final list is included in the draft TIP for public hearing and DRCOG Board of Directors approval through the transportation committee process.
- 7) Upon approval by the governor, CDOT staff incorporate the adopted TIP into the draft STIP. CDOT Region One staff inform DRCOG staff of the projects and phases it has selected for inclusion in the draft STIP in the mountains and plains area of the greater Denver TPR. CDOT verifies projects for fiscal constraint and consistency with long-range plans and makes the draft STIP available to the public for review and comment. Once the STIP is approved by the Transportation Commission, CDOT staff transmit it to FHWA and FTA for federal approval.

8) Coordination on the National Highway Freight Program (CDOT and DRCOG). Federal law requires the state and MPO to coordinate on funding for the NHF Program. CDOT is required to adopt and maintain a state freight plan and award NHF funding. NHF may only fund projects on the National Highway Freight Network, which will consist of the following components:

- a. The Primary Highway Freight System.
- a. Critical Rural Freight Corridors.
- a. Critical Urban Freight Corridors.
- a. Those portions of the interstate system that are not part of the PHFS.

As an MPO with an urbanized area with a population of 500,000 or more, DRCOG staff, in consultation with state officials, are responsible for designating the Critical Urban Freight Corridors.

RTD Mid-Term Financial Plan

The Mid-Term Financial Plan is RTD's six-year fiscally constrained operating and capital improvement plan that is revised annually. RTD staff use the plan for submitting projects to DRCOG for inclusion in the TIP. Exhibit 23 summarizes annual Mid-Term Financial Plan development steps.

Relationship to the regional transportation planning process

RTD staff present the proposed Mid-Term Financial Plan to the Transportation Advisory Committee for comment. Upon adoption, the Mid-Term Financial Plan becomes the basis for RTD's submittal to DRCOG of transit projects to be included for funding in the TIP.

Exhibit 23: Steps in preparing the RTD mid-term financial plan

- 1) RTD staff prepare revenue estimates for each year of the Mid-Term Financial Plan. Revenue estimates include state and local sales and use tax, farebox revenues and federal grants. Revenue projections are based on economic indicators, including regional growth projections, from state and local economists. Federal funds are estimated based on past trends, formula allocations and recent congressional actions.
- 2) Annually in December, RTD staff develop proposed projects for consideration. Standardized information including the estimated cost of the project is developed. Cost estimates consider such factors as capital cost, service hours by service project type and principal and interest payments on long-term debt.
- 3) RTD staff review each proposed project and prioritizes them.
- 4) RTD staff adjust the prioritized list to fit the expected revenues once the financial projections have been completed.
- 5) RTD staff review the draft strategic business plan for consistency with Civil Rights Act requirements. RTD staff review the draft strategic business plan with staff from local governments and transportation management organizations at the appropriate quarterly meeting.
- 6) The draft strategic business plan is brought to the RTD Board of Directors at a public meeting for adoption, typically before the annual budget is reviewed and adopted in August.
- 7) The adopted strategic business plan is incorporated into RTD's annual budget.

DRCOG toll facilities review

43-4-806 is a Colorado Statute enacted in 2009 that created the High-Performance Transportation Enterprise (currently known as the Colorado Transportation Investment Office) to:

“seek out opportunities for innovative and efficient means of financing other important surface transportation infrastructure projects and will ensure that such projects are also properly prioritized and accelerated”

And

“has the duty to evaluate any toll highway in the state that is owned and offered for sale or for lease and an operating concession by an entity other than the state in order to determine whether it is in the best interests of the state for the transportation enterprise to purchase or lease the toll highway”

And

“In considering the effect on regional or local transportation plans, the Transportation Enterprise Board shall consult with the appropriate regional or local transportation planning agency.... A surface transportation infrastructure project shall not proceed past the

planning stage until all metropolitan planning organizations entitled to participate in the planning, development, and approval process....have approved the project.

The appendix lists the relevant statute.

The DRCOG Board of Directors adopted by resolution in January 2009 criteria for the review of proposed projects with a tolling component for inclusion in the 2020 RTP. The review criteria respond to 43-4-806 and House Bill 05-1148 for CDOT/CTIO projects and House Bill 06-1003 for private toll company projects. The DRCOG Board of Directors amended the review criteria in July 2016 with updates, for clarity and to incorporate the content of CDOT's 2015 High-Occupancy Vehicle Policy. CTIO and other project sponsors must submit toll highway/system proposals to DRCOG with sufficient detailed information for DRCOG to evaluate the proposals per the adopted criteria. Information must be provided for six items: project operation, technology, feasibility, financing, other required federal information and other pertinent information.

DRCOG staff assess the proposal using information provided by the CTIO or other project sponsors and its own examinations. The proposal is presented to the public at a public hearing before DRCOG Board Directors. DRCOG staff present a final assessment either within the plan amendment summary report or, if deemed necessary, through a separate report reflecting resolution of technical, operational, feasibility and financial issues; summarizing public comment;

and identifying options for DRCOG Board of Directors consideration. Final transportation committees' recommendations and DRCOG Board of Directors action to approve the specific proposal (or not) take place upon consideration of the final assessment.

Relationship to the regional transportation planning process

Toll highways (or toll lanes) must be in the air quality conforming fiscally constrained 2050 RTP and TIP before they can be implemented. The DRCOG assessment confirms the fiscally constrained nature of the proposal per the fiscally constrained 2050 RTP or provides a rationale for plan amendment. The project can be included in the TIP and 2050 RTP for construction only after the DRCOG Board of Directors has issued a favorable finding.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act also contains the following provision (23 U.S.C. 166(g)) regarding tolling:

“(g) Consultation of MPO: If a HOV facility charging tolls under paragraph (4) or (5) of subsection (b) is on the Interstate

System and located in a metropolitan planning area established in accordance with section 134, the public authority shall consult with the metropolitan planning organization for the area concerning the placement and amount of tolls on the facility.”



DRCOG staff coordinated with staff from FHWA, CDOT and HPTE (now known as the Colorado Transportation Investment Office) in June 2016 to establish a process to address this requirement. The stakeholders agreed to an Agency Coordination Team meeting process to conduct the toll placement/amount-setting coordination when needed and decide if further action is needed.

Appendix: Statutory and regulatory references

Select federal and state legislative and regulatory references

Federal legislative references

Public Law 114-94	Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act
Public Law 117-58	Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL)
23 U.S.C. 134	Metropolitan planning
49 U.S.C. 5303 et seq.	Metropolitan planning (formerly 49 U.S.C. 1607)
23 U.S.C. 135	Statewide planning
23 U.S.C. 303	Management systems
42 U.S.C. 7401 et seq.	Code for Clean Air Act
23 U.S.C. 324	Code for Civil Rights Act (Title VI)

29 U.S.C. 794	Code for Civil Rights Act (Title VI)
42 U.S.C. 4321 et seq.	Code for National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
Public Law 101-336	Americans with Disabilities Act

Federal regulatory references

23 C.F.R. Part 450 (Sect. 300-338)	Metropolitan planning regulation
23 C.F. R. Part 490	Performance management regulation
49 C.F.R. Part 613 (Sect. 100)	Metropolitan planning regulation
23 C.F.R. Part 450 (Sect. 200-224)	Statewide planning rule
49 C.F.R. Part 613 (Sect. 200)	Statewide planning rule
23 C.F.R. Part 500	Management systems
23 C.F.R. Part 200	USDOT regulations for Civil Rights (Title VI)
49 C.F.R. Part 21	USDOT regulations for Civil Rights (Title VI)
49 C.F.R. Part 611	FTA final rule on major capital investment projects (New Starts)
40 C.F.R. Part 51	Environmental Protection Agency regulations for State Implementation Plan (SIP)

40 C.F.R. Part 93	Environmental Protection Agency conformity regulations 49 C.F.R. Parts 27, 37, & 38 USDOT regulations of Americans with Disabilities Act 23 C.F.R. Parts 770-772 USDOT regulations of NEPA
40 C.F.R. Parts 1500-1508	Council on Environmental Quality regulations of NEPA

Colorado statute references

30-28-105	Regional planning commissions
43-1-1101-1105	Transportation planning
43-2-147	Access code authority
32-9-107.7	Senate Bill 90-208
43-4-806	Senate Bill 09-108 (FASTER)
25-7-105(1)	Air Quality Control Commission authority for SIP
43-1-106	Transportation Commission
43-4-714.5	Senate Bill 21-260

Colorado regulatory references

2 CCR 601-22	Rules governing statewide transportation planning process and transportation planning regions
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1001 17th Street
Denver, CO 80202



303-455-1000



drcog.org





2023

POLICY STATEMENT
ON STATE
LEGISLATIVE ISSUES





INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines the key state policy issues of the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG).

It identifies policy positions intended to inform the General Assembly, state executive branch officials and others as they develop and implement state policy on these issues. This policy statement guides state legislative positions and actions taken by the DRCOG Board, its staff and members during the coming year.

DRCOG is a membership organization of local elected officials representing 48 municipalities and nine counties in the Denver metro area. Under federal law, DRCOG serves as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) coordinating transportation planning with air quality goals and serves as the Area Agency on Aging in eight counties to aid the 60-plus population. Under state statutes DRCOG, as the regional planning commission, prepares and adopts a regional plan for the metro area and has regional responsibility for oversight of transit projects and certain state-sponsored and private toll-road projects.

As the designated council of governments, regional planning commission, area agency on aging, and metropolitan planning organization for the Denver region, DRCOG recognizes the important role it plays in building and maintaining an equitable region where all residents and communities can thrive. DRCOG acknowledges its role in ensuring our region remains a diverse network of vibrant, connected, lifelong communities.



REGIONAL PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Regional growth and development is of significant concern for metro area residents, policymakers and community leaders. The counties and municipalities of the Denver region have been advancing a shared aspirational vision of the future of the metro area for more than 60 years. Working together to make life better for our communities and residents, that vision has taken various forms over the years—most recently as a regional plan known as Metro Vision.

Metro Vision fulfills DRCOG's statutory duty to make and adopt a regional plan for the physical development of the region's territory. The plan remains advisory for a local jurisdiction unless its planning commission chooses to adopt it as its official advisory plan under Colorado Revised Statutes 30-28-106(2). The current Metro Vision plan was most recently adopted by DRCOG's board of directors on May 19, 2019.

Metro Vision guides DRCOG's work and establishes shared expectations with our region's many and various planning partners. The plan outlines broad outcomes, objectives and initiatives established by the DRCOG board to make life better for the region's residents. Metro Vision is aspirational and long-range in focus, but it has historically served to inform nearer-term policies and initiatives.

The DRCOG board of directors recognizes that the success of the Metro Vision plan requires the coordinated efforts of local, state and federal governments; the business community; and other planning partners, including philanthropic and not-for-profit organizations.





DRCOG supports those efforts that contribute to the achievement of Metro Vision’s regional outcomes and encourages state and regional entities to align their policies and investment decisions with Metro Vision and other regional agreements to advance shared objectives.

Metro Vision establishes 14 interrelated aspirational outcomes, which describe a future that DRCOG, local governments and its partners will work toward together. DRCOG may support or oppose legislative proposals based on their potential to impact the region’s ability to achieve these outcomes and the associated performance measures, targets and action elements. These Metro Vision outcomes are as follows:

Outcomes – An efficient and predictable development pattern

- The region is comprised of diverse, livable communities.
- Through a coordinated effort between DRCOG and local communities, new urban development occurs in an orderly and compact pattern within regionally designated areas.
- Connected urban centers and multimodal corridors throughout the region accommodate a growing share of the region’s housing and employment.





The signers of the Mile High Compact agreed that their comprehensive/master plans will follow specific principles, contain specific elements and ensure consistency between local plans and Metro Vision.

Outcomes – A connected multimodal region

- The regional transportation system is well-connected and serves all modes of travel.
- The transportation system is safe, reliable and well-maintained.

Outcomes – A safe and resilient natural and built environment

- The region has clean water and air, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- The region values, protects and connects people to its diverse natural resource areas, open space, parks and trails.
- The region's working agricultural lands and activities contribute to a strong regional food system.

- The risk and effects of natural and human-created hazards is reduced.

Outcomes – Healthy, inclusive and livable communities

- The built and natural environment supports healthy and active choices.
- The region's residents have expanded connections to health services.
- Diverse housing options meet the needs of residents of all ages, incomes and abilities.

Outcomes – A vibrant regional economy

- All residents have access to a range of transportation, employment, commerce, housing, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities.
- Investments in infrastructure and amenities allow people and businesses to thrive and prosper.



Metro Vision also includes numerous objectives and strategic initiatives that identify areas for continuous improvements and specific voluntary opportunities that DRCOG and our many partners can consider. To help track the region's progress toward our shared outcomes, the plan establishes a series of regional performance measures. **More information on the Metro Vision plan, including objectives and performance measures that may inform DRCOG's position on legislative proposals can be found on the DRCOG website (metrovision.drcog.org).**

Transit-oriented development

The residents of the Denver metro area have made a significant financial commitment to expand the region's rapid transit system. To maximize the benefit of this investment, the areas surrounding existing and future transit stations should be developed or redeveloped to include appropriate higher-density, mixed-use, pedestrian- and bicycle-oriented development that supports transit use. **DRCOG supports legislative initiatives that foster transit-oriented development. DRCOG also supports initiatives that a) provide the Regional Transportation District (RTD) and local jurisdictions with the ability to manage parking facilities using best practices that help the region reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT); b) local infrastructure investment support; c) expand the ability of RTD and local jurisdictions to enter into joint-development agreements; and d) protect local authority to use tax-increment financing to leverage development in areas around transit stations.**

Local land use authority and planning

Local comprehensive/master plans provide a framework for the exercise of local land use authority. They form the basis for local growth and development decisions. **DRCOG supports the use of comprehensive/master plans as the foundation for local land use decision-making.**

Private property rights

DRCOG respects private property rights within a legal context that protects local land use authority and emphasizes that governmental actions often add value to private property. While acknowledging that there are concerns over a potential for inappropriate uses of that authority, DRCOG believes that U.S. Supreme Court decisions defining constitutional restrictions on local government regulation of private property are adequate to protect both public and private rights. When these restrictions are coupled with established precedents of the Colorado Supreme Court, protections accorded to landowners are reasonable, appropriate and balanced. **DRCOG opposes further restrictions on the ability of governmental entities to regulate private property for the benefit of the public and opposes takings and eminent domain legislation that goes beyond the existing rulings of the U.S. Supreme Court and the Colorado Supreme Court as an attempt to unconstitutionally restrict local land use authority.**

Planning data and technical support

DRCOG recognizes the importance of unbiased, reliable and consistent data in effective local and regional planning and decision-making. DRCOG also collaborates with the state to provide a variety of planning and technical assistance services to small communities. **DRCOG encourages the General Assembly and state agencies to further support efforts that would provide local governments with planning tools, technical assistance and other resources needed to enhance local and regional decision-making. DRCOG supports legislation that ensures readily available access to public data sets, including digital data, for use in planning analysis.**



Housing

An adequate supply and mix of housing options continues to be a concern of local governments. Housing choices allow individuals and families to find desirable housing that is affordable and accessible in communities throughout the region, allowing them to stay in their community of choice as their economic or life circumstances change. A range of housing options across the region benefits both individuals and families and can improve the economic vitality and diversity of local communities. **DRCOG supports the following principles pertaining to the quality, quantity and affordability of housing in the Denver metro area:**

- Policies and programs that support the private and public sectors in the creation and maintenance of an adequate supply of affordable rental and ownership options and providing a variety of housing sizes and types integrated with the community to meet the needs of people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.
- Regional approaches to addressing the affordable housing issue that incentivize local efforts, particularly as they relate to preservation of existing affordable housing stock.
- An adequate supply of permanently affordable housing located near job and transit hubs and continued public- and private-sector support for such an effort.
- Increased state financial support for loan and grant programs for low- and moderate-income housing, including associated supportive services and programs that promote wellness, stability and access to opportunity.
- Collaboration among public and private entities, including efforts to develop loan programs and address the jobs-housing connections.
- Renters and homeowners (including manufactured home owners) have appropriate protections from discrimination and displacement. Policies should emphasize the rights of residents and minimize disparities in treatment under the law.
- Actions to provide more accessible and obtainable housing options for seniors.



TRANSPORTATION PLANNING

Federal and state laws and regulations establish a critical role for the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in the transportation planning process. Congress has emphasized the importance of local government involvement, through the designated regional planning agency, in selecting projects and prioritizing funding for transportation. **DRCOG supports the process established between DRCOG, the Regional Transportation District (RTD) and the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to address the following issues before final adoption of the Statewide Transportation Plan and will evaluate state legislative and administrative actions for consistency with this process, including:**

- The fair and equitable distribution of estimated future transportation revenues and the range of certainty regarding estimated funding allocations.
- Rules and criteria for determining regional transportation project selection, including system preservation projects and immediate and future transportation priorities based on the Regional Transportation Plan.
- A dispute-resolution process to mediate disputes related to these requirements.





The synergy between transportation and land use affects the region's growth and development, use of transportation facilities and environmental quality. A coordinated approach between the state and regional transportation systems' planning efforts and local project development is crucial to ensure environmental compatibility, efficient system performance and cost-effective solutions. Although individual local governments can take actions to address these issues in their own jurisdictions, a regional approach to addressing them also is necessary. **DRCOG supports early and frequent consultations between state, regional and local agencies to coordinate regionwide system and project planning efforts, as well as to coordinate transportation, land use and air quality planning efforts and will evaluate state**

legislative and administrative actions for consistency with this policy.

Role of the MPO

The interdependence of transportation systems in metropolitan areas, particularly in the context of population growth and its demands on resources, necessitates a regional approach to transportation problem solving. As the MPO for the Denver metro area, DRCOG is responsible for planning, prioritizing and programming investments in the regional multi-modal transportation system. The role of the MPO and the importance of cooperation among transportation agencies are recognized in federal law and regulation. The MPO serves as the forum for collaborative decision-making on regional transportation issues and

brings together decision-makers from local governments, other regional agencies and state transportation agencies to consider strategic and innovative solutions.

The critical role of the MPO needs to be recognized and supported at the state level. **DRCOG supports the following principles with regard to the role of the MPO:**

- Transportation planning that is coordinated between DRCOG, CDOT, RTD and local communities, with each participating transportation agency's plan recognizing the region's priorities in the context of statewide transportation priorities.
- A strong role for MPOs placing them on equal footing with CDOT and regional transit agencies in selecting projects to be funded consistent with regional transportation plans to ensure that local, regional and state transportation needs are addressed in a coordinated and cooperative manner.
- Legislation that reinforces collaboration between state and regional transportation agencies and recognizes their respective roles, responsibilities and interests.
- Legislation to ensure that representation on the Transportation Commission reflects approximately equal populations based on the most recent population census.

Transportation financing

The region's long-term viability requires a built environment that includes effective and convenient transportation options that keep pace with growth and address the region's transportation, economic, and quality of life objectives. Colorado and the metro area need a revenue system that is reliable and sufficient to maintain the existing transportation system in good condition and to invest in the system to keep pace with population growth. Thus, enhancements to existing revenue sources and the enactment of new revenue sources are necessary.

DRCOG supports the following principles and actions to meet transportation financing needs:

- Increase funding for transportation to preserve the system, mitigate congestion, improve safety, and provide multi-modal options for people of all ages, incomes and abilities
- Allocate additional state funds to support transit services within and among communities in the DRCOG area.
- Reduce or eliminate off-the-top appropriations from the Highway Users Tax Fund.
- Allocate federal and state funds to achieve funding equity statewide based on justified needs (system preservation, congestion and multimodal options) and contribution to overall revenues.
- Re-examine state formulas and procedures to ensure an adequate amount of federal and state funds are made available to urbanized and metropolitan areas to relieve congestion, increase safety, and achieve and maintain air quality standards.
- Provide an appropriate share of new or increased revenues back to local governments.
- Protect and expand the authority of regions to implement regional financing tools.
- Consider alternative revenue and financing mechanisms, such as road usage charges, and, under certain circumstances, tolling and congestion pricing of existing roadways.
- Consider the effects of land use decisions on transportation infrastructure needs.
- Where appropriate, support the use of managed lanes, including tolled express lanes, to help drivers reliably anticipate travel time on major corridors in the Denver metropolitan area. Retain the requirement that any road, highway or tolled lane within or affecting the Denver metro area be



reviewed and approved by the DRCOG board for inclusion in the fiscally constrained regional transportation plan. Ensure toll receipts remain in the regional highway system that is being tolled.

- Allow toll receipts to be used for multimodal improvements and accumulated for system reconstruction.
- Consider revising the responsibilities for maintenance and supervision of the non-National Highway System portions of the current state highway system, subject to the condition that any devolution to local governments be accompanied by the funding necessary to avoid unfunded mandates and pursuant to review by, and consent of, affected local and regional agencies.

Multimodal transportation

Efforts to address transportation needs in the region must draw upon an array of transportation modes to reduce single-occupant vehicle trips and to provide a variety of transportation choices. DRCOG strongly believes multimodal travel options are imperative to preserve and enhance our quality of life. **DRCOG supports legislation that promotes efforts to fund, maintain and expand a multimodal transportation system. DRCOG also supports measures to improve safety for users of alternative modes, especially pedestrians and bicyclists. DRCOG supports funding for programs that provide transportation for access to jobs for low-income workers who cannot afford to live near where they work, and for safe routes to schools.**

Transportation demand management

Transportation demand management programs, projects and services can help reduce congestion and improve air quality by decreasing the amount of automobile traffic, especially during high-demand periods. DRCOG sees transportation demand man-

agement as an important element of the region's long-range growth management and transportation planning strategy.

DRCOG supports state investment in regional programs that promote transportation demand management efforts, including:

- Coordinated regionwide efforts (Way to Go) that promote and encourage adoption of non-single-occupant-vehicle (non-SOV) travel options.
- Active transportation to encourage healthier travel choices, including bicycling and walking.
- Public transportation, including buses, light rail and commuter trains and bus rapid transit.
- Telecommuting, flextime, compressed work weeks and other changes to normal work patterns to avoid peak traffic conditions.
- Carpooling, vanpooling and other forms of ridesharing including the underlying technologies to facilitate matches.
- Encouraging parents to use carpools for taking students to school and infrastructure that facilitates these transportation options.
- Non-automobile infrastructure investments by the state, counties and cities.
- Employer promotion of alternative mode use by employees.
- Coordination of transportation alternatives wherever traffic congestion occurs, such as at schools, large retail shopping centers and in connection with sporting or cultural events or major transportation infrastructure construction.
- Incentives to individuals who use alternative modes.





Transportation system management and operations

Efforts to promote the effective day-to-day operational management of the freeway and arterial road systems and transit facilities are important to making the best use of existing transportation investments. **DRCOG supports efforts that enhance the efficient use of roadways and transit facilities, including collaborative programs for incident management and intelligent transportation systems. DRCOG supports efforts that improve or expand situational awareness for transportation operators and supports their ability to both effectively manage transportation systems and distribute real-time traveler information.**

Safety

DRCOG's board-adopted *Taking Action on Regional Vision Zero* plan establishes a goal to eliminate traffic deaths and severe injuries on the transportation system with a proactive, preventive approach. The board will consider investments through the Transportation Improvement Program to improve the safety and security of the transportation system. **DRCOG supports efforts to improve the safety of the traveling public – drivers, transit riders, pedestrians and bicyclists. DRCOG supports efforts to increase transportation funding to create a reliable, dedicated funding stream for safety projects; require motorcycle drivers and passengers to wear helmets; and maintain ability to use safety cameras as an enforcement technique, including red-light running and speeding.**



Transportation for older adults and vulnerable populations

Access to transportation is critical for the health and independence of older adults and individuals with disabilities, low incomes, veterans and other vulnerable populations. Transportation allows people to obtain health care, food and to maintain and increase social, family and other life-sustaining relationships. DRCOG promotes the concept of regional cooperation and coordination among counties and local service providers to most effectively use the limited resources available for transportation for older adults and other vulnerable populations. **DRCOG supports the following:**

- A system that:
 - Ensures more and better service is provided to older adults and vulnerable populations.
 - Reduces administrative and service duplication.
 - Increases coordination among funding sources, providers, jurisdictions and trips.
 - Efficiently uses taxpayer dollars to provide life-sustaining mobility.
- Increased state funding for Medicaid transportation services and especially transportation services for older adults and other vulnerable populations above the Medicaid eligibility threshold.





OLDER ADULTS & INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

As the designated Area Agency on Aging (under the federal Older Americans Act) for Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Gilpin and Jefferson counties, DRCOG advocates, plans, funds and coordinates the provision of services for older adults. DRCOG also has been designated as an Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC) under the Affordable Care Act and in that capacity is charged with providing a coordinated and streamlined access point to long-term care services and supports for adults age 60 and over or age 18 and over living with a disability, and their caregivers. As an advocate for older adults, individuals with disabilities, veterans and their caregivers, DRCOG works with various agencies, groups and individuals to support state legislation, regulations and programs to meet their needs. DRCOG also provides the direct services of a long-term care ombudsman and information, referral and assistance. In performing these roles, **DRCOG supports the following:**

Planning and delivery of services

The federal Older Americans Act and the state Older Coloradans Act mandate critical roles for area agencies on aging: planning and developing programs and services to meet the needs of older adults; advocating for and representing the issues and concerns of older adults; and distributing federal and state funds to service providers. As an ADRC, DRCOG is directed to provide older adults, individuals with disabilities, and their caregivers with information and assistance about available resources and options counseling. DRCOG works with the state, other government agencies, consumers, service providers, private and nonprofit organizations, and foundations to identify needs for services and then brings the parties together to determine the preferred approaches to address these needs. **DRCOG supports:**

- State legislative and regulatory provisions reinforcing collaboration between the state and area agencies on aging and respecting their respective roles, capabilities and interests, consistent with state and federal laws.





- Collaboration and partnerships to better meet the service needs of older adults consistent with DRCOG's responsibilities as an Area Agency on Aging and an ADRC.
- Collaboration in the exploration of partnerships to provide access to area agency on aging and other community-based services through public and private health insurance benefits and health care engagement programs that would be coordinated with the area agencies on aging across the state to provide cost effective community-based services.
- The establishment of local "community care hubs" with locally controlled funds created to support community well-being and efforts that improve health outcomes and reduce the cost of health care.

Funding

Colorado and the Denver metro area face serious funding shortages related to economically and socially needy older adults, individuals with disabilities and their caregivers in the region. Regional and statewide assessments show that existing revenue sources are insufficient to meet current needs for services such as home modifications, meals, transportation to medical

appointments and health promotion.

Thus, enhancements to existing sources and development of more reliable sources are necessary. **DRCOG supports:**

- Increased funding for programs and exploration of programs providing services to older adults, individuals with disabilities, veterans and their caregivers, especially services that support individuals continuing to live independently in their homes and communities, including efforts to improve data collection and analysis of cost effectiveness.
- Efforts to use state funds for programs that provide prescription drugs more efficiently and effectively, including efforts to increase pricing transparency and reduce the costs of purchasing such prescription drugs to enable associated programs to better serve their growing caseloads
- Increasing the appropriations to the State Funding for Senior Services line item in the Long Bill. This includes increasing the continuing appropriation to the Older Coloradans Cash Fund, as well as any additional state general fund monies that might become available. DRCOG specifically supports a stable, long-term funding source that increases to meet the growing need for services, which would provide a level of funding certainty that would improve yearly program planning for needed services.
- Action by the General Assembly to fully fund the required share to match federal funds available to the state through the Older Americans Act, including the National Family Caregiver Support Program, so as not to require an increase in the required local share. Such state or local shares or matches should not be required to come from





existing program funds. Similarly, increases in federal funding should not be offset with reductions in state funds.

- Distributing State Funding for Senior Services monies, including the Older Coloradans Cash Fund, using the existing structure created to administer Older Americans Act funds. DRCOG also supports the equitable distribution of federal and state funds to area agencies on aging based on the needs and contribution of each region.
- Re-examination of state procedures and distribution formulas for federal and state funds to ensure adequate funds are available to urbanized areas to meet the needs of older adults.

Long-term care

Older adults receiving long-term care services, including those living in long-term care communities (such as nursing homes and assisted living facilities) and those enrolled in the Program of All-Inclusive Care for the Elderly (PACE) are some of the most vulnerable members of the regional community. As the operator of

the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program for the region, DRCOG is an advocate for the rights of residents and quality of care for those in long-term care communities and participants in PACE. Ongoing conditions of already critically low staffing in long term care, exacerbated by COVID-19 pandemic, have resulted in increased complaints from residents regarding delayed care of medical needs, symptoms left unattended, rough handling, and abuse. Poor quality of care alters quality of life for residents and can leave a lasting impact on their lives, making the ombudsman program more essential than ever. **DRCOG supports efforts to improve the quality of care and consumer protections for older adults and their caregivers and, in particular, legislation strengthening the role of the long-term care ombudsman and PACE ombudsman as resident and consumer advocates. DRCOG urges the state, when making decisions regarding funding for long-term care programs, to structure such funding to protect the quality of care for residents and participants, including funding for optimal ombudsman staffing.**

Housing

Available, affordable and accessible housing is a particular concern of older adults and individuals with disabilities, who mostly live on fixed incomes. However, an equally critical concern is the ability to live independently as part of the larger community.

As individuals age or experience disability, the availability of in-home and related services that enable them to remain in their homes becomes increasingly important. Growing evidence indicates older adults and individuals with disabilities are healthier and require fewer costly services when they have affordable and accessible housing choices, are provided with the ability to age in place, remain connected to the community and its networks, and have access to long-term care.

DRCOG supports:

- Increased funding and regulatory changes that improve the availability of supportive services, while maintaining consumer protections for clients and family caregivers.
- Property tax relief to help reduce a tax liability that especially burdens low-income seniors and older adults on fixed incomes.
- Policies, programs and services that preserve existing affordable housing stock, promote access to a variety of housing options in diverse geographic locations, and provide consumer protections that enable older adults and individuals with disabilities to age in place.

Driver safety and older adults

As individuals age, their ability to drive safely may diminish. However, DRCOG is concerned that addressing this issue solely based on age imposes undue hardships on older residents who can drive safely. When older residents are not allowed to drive,

the availability of transportation for medical appointments, grocery shopping and social activities is essential for seniors to maintain independence.

DRCOG supports functional assessments of driving ability rather than age cut-off as the basis for imposing limitations on driving by individuals. DRCOG supports adequate funding for providing transportation services for the elderly and individuals with disabilities.



ENVIRONMENT

Air quality and climate

Air quality affects all residents of the region and continues to be a concern. The region fails to meet current federal standards for ozone and more stringent standards are expected to be established by the Environmental Protection Agency. Meeting a more aggressive ozone standard will require continuous efforts from many parties. Surface transportation also contributes to greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and the region is subject to state requirements to achieve certain GHG emission reductions. **DRCOG**

supports:

- Efforts to reduce emissions from all sources sufficient to meet federal air quality standards.
- Transportation and land use strategies that improve air quality in the region.
- Alternative fuel sources and clean-burning technology and provision of infrastructure and services for alternative fuels.
- Incentives for purchasing high fuel economy or alternative fuel vehicles or for accelerated retirement of inefficient or high-polluting personal, commercial or fleet vehicles that are beyond repair..
- Offering services, including incentives that encourage and facilitate the use of alternative modes of travel.
- Examination of the potential of select speed limit reductions.



Water supply

An adequate, dependable supply of water is necessary for urban, agriculture, recreation and open-space priorities both in the Denver metro area and throughout the state. Metro Vision calls for maximizing the wise use of water resources through efficient land development and other strategies. **DRCOG supports:**

- Collaborative efforts among local governments, water providers and other stakeholders to promote water conservation.
- Data collection and research to increase understanding of the link between land development and water demand, and best practices to promote the efficient use of water resources across the region.
- Water resource planning, management and development within the existing constitutional framework and pursuant to the basin roundtables process established in the Colorado Water for the 21st Century Act (HB 05-1177), in which interbasin compacts are negotiated for the equitable distribution of the state's waters.
- Water reuse as one component in efforts to meet water supply needs and thus supports efforts to facilitate the reuse of water consistent with Colorado's constitutional water rights system.
- Policies and practices that, consistent with local government authority, protect Colorado's water resources.
- The development of Colorado's Water Plan that emphasizes conservation, storage, drought mitigation and streamlining of the regulatory processes, aligns the state's various water efforts and provides a benchmark for future collaboration in addressing Colorado's water supply needs.

Open space

Open space resources available to citizens in the Denver metro area are important to our quality of life. **DRCOG supports:**

- Planning, acquisition, protection and preservation of open space resources.
- Increasing funding for open space preservation.
- Great Outdoors Colorado and other efforts advancing major land acquisitions along the Front Range that link open spaces in the metro area to protect canyons and river corridors, the mountain backdrop and prominent geographic features, freestanding community buffer areas, and the east metro plains.



INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Intergovernmental cooperation

The state government, local governments and regional agencies all provide critical services and implement programs for the benefit of Colorado residents.

Legislative bodies and executive agencies at each level should respect the roles and responsibilities of the others.

DRCOG supports building consensus among state, local and regional entities in developing and implementing new and existing programs and improved approaches to planning and service provision.

Shared services

Many of the services provided by local governments to their residents are also provided by neighboring communities.

To address related coordination and funding concerns, local governments have entered into agreements with each other and with DRCOG for shared-service delivery.

DRCOG encourages local governments to enter into shared-services agreements and supports efforts to ensure such agreements are honored and endorsed by the state.





State-regional relations

As the state's policy issues become more complex, it is evident that the solutions are not one-size-fits-all. The Denver metro area has made significant progress in developing collaborative solutions and decision-making processes for several complex issues with which it has been confronted — especially in the related areas of growth and transportation. As the regional planning commission, the metropolitan planning organization for transportation, and the Area Agency on Aging, DRCOG is in a unique position to convene parties of interest on intergovernmental issues, provide the necessary forum for their resolution and facilitate a negotiated outcome. **In recognition of the importance of regionalism, it is an appropriate role for DRCOG to act as a facilitator of regional approaches. Consequently, it is appropriate for state agencies to ensure that actions they take affecting the region are consistent with regionally derived solutions and the adopted Metro Vision plan.**

Regional service delivery

The state plays an important role in the funding of public services and programs administered at the regional and local levels. When making such funding and programmatic decisions, it is appropriate for state agencies and the General Assembly to give consideration to which programs are most appropriately implemented at the local and regional level. State administration of federal programs can be problematic for local governments, as state agencies tend to be more removed from clients and less responsive to their needs. On the other hand, individual local governments may lack the resources to achieve desired efficiencies and cost-effectiveness. Also, some programs are most appropriately and effectively addressed at the regional level.

The collaborative partnerships typical of regional approaches can provide the critical mass of users and clients for services or programs to be cost-effective.

DRCOG urges the state, when making funding and programmatic decisions, including creating new programs or changing existing programs, to consider the following principles:

- Use existing local or regional service delivery systems wherever practical.
- Ensure a consultative process among federal, state and local governments and regional councils before making changes to services currently being delivered at the local or regional level.
- Ensure existing levels of services are maintained and adequate administrative funds are provided to implementing agencies.
- Ensure the state treats the continuity of service delivery as a key principle guiding any actions to create new programs or revise existing programs by respecting the local and regional programs already in existence.





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Senior Manager for Planning

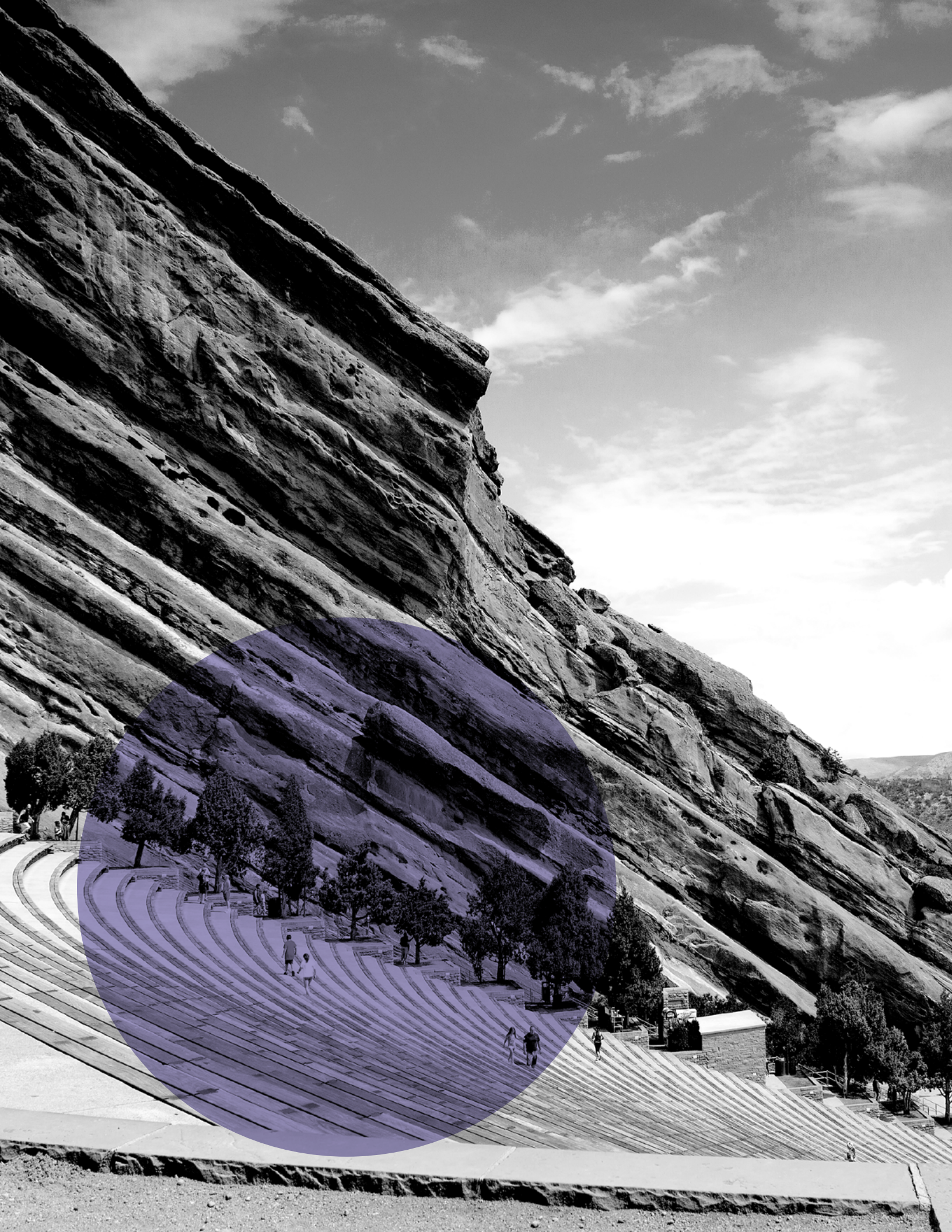
Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director

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2023

**POLICY STATEMENT
ON FEDERAL
LEGISLATIVE ISSUES**



INTRODUCTION

This paper outlines the key federal policy issues of the Denver Regional Council of Governments.

It identifies policy positions intended to inform the Colorado congressional delegation, Congress, federal and state executive branch officials, and others as they develop and implement national policy on these issues. This policy statement guides DRCOG's federal legislative positions and actions during the coming year.

DRCOG is a membership organization of local elected officials representing 48 municipalities and nine counties in the Denver metro area. Under federal law, DRCOG serves as the Area Agency on Aging for eight counties to aid the 60-and-older population and the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) to coordinate transportation planning with air quality goals. Under state statutes DRCOG, as the regional planning commission, prepares and adopts a regional plan for the metro area and has regional responsibility for oversight of transit projects and certain state-sponsored and private toll-road projects.

As the designated council of governments, regional planning commission, area agency on aging, and metropolitan planning organization for the Denver region, DRCOG recognizes the important role it plays in building and maintaining an equitable region where all residents and communities can thrive. DRCOG acknowledges its role in ensuring our region remains a diverse network of vibrant, connected, lifelong communities.



PLANNING

Comprehensive planning and land use.

Although comprehensive planning and land use are primarily matters for local determination and regional coordination, the federal government can play a supportive role in encouraging local and regional efforts through funding, technical assistance and other incentives. DRCOG's Metro Vision plan represents a shared regional vision for creating sustainable, livable communities that allow people of all ages, incomes and abilities to succeed. Metro Vision further recognizes that the success of the region's visionary plan requires the coordinated efforts of local, state and federal governments; the business community; and other planning partners, including philanthropic and not-for-profit organizations.

Metro Vision guides DRCOG's work and establishes shared expectations with our region's many and various planning partners. The plan outlines broad outcomes, objectives and initiatives established by the DRCOG Board to make life better for the region's residents. Achieving Metro Vision goals requires coordinated investment in a wide range of planning and implementation activities that transcend traditional funding categories. **DRCOG supports those efforts that help the region achieve the shared outcomes described in Metro Vision and encourages federal entities to align their policies and investment decisions to advance regionally determined objectives where appropriate.**



DRCOG's Metro Vision plan emerged from a collaborative process that spanned more than four years. During this time, DRCOG's policy committees, member governments, partner agencies, regional stakeholders and the community at large worked together to create a shared vision for action for shaping the future of the Denver metro area. The plan's shared vision of the future is captured in five overarching themes and 14 inter-related aspirational outcomes, which describe a future that DRCOG, local governments and partners will work toward together. **DRCOG may support or oppose legislative proposals that affect the ability of the region to achieve these outcomes and the associated performance measures and targets.**

Outcomes: Efficient and predictable development pattern

- The region is comprised of diverse, livable communities.
- Through a coordinated effort between DRCOG and local communities, new urban development occurs in an orderly and compact pattern within regionally designated areas.
- Connected urban centers and multimodal corridors accommodate a growing share of the region's housing and employment.

Outcomes: A connected multimodal region

- The regional transportation system is well-connected and serves all modes of travel.
- The transportation system is safe, reliable and well-maintained.

Outcomes: A safe and resilient built and natural environment

- The region has clean water and air, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- The region values, protects and connects people to its diverse natural resource areas, open space, parks and trails.



- The region's working agricultural lands and activities contribute to a strong regional food system.
- The risk and effects of natural and human-created hazards is reduced.

Outcomes: Healthy, inclusive and livable communities

- The built and natural environment supports healthy and active choices.
- The region's residents have expanded connections to health services.
- Diverse housing options meet the needs of residents of all ages, incomes and abilities.

Outcomes: A vibrant regional economy

- All residents have access to a range of transportation, employment, commerce, housing, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities.
- Investments in infrastructure and amenities allow people and businesses to thrive and prosper.





DRCOG further urges Congress to consider the following in support of local and regional planning:

- DRCOG supports improving the coordination of housing, community development, transportation, energy, and environmental policy in the United States; coordinating federal policies and investments to promote sustainable development; and encouraging comprehensive regional planning for livable communities.
- DRCOG supports federal policies and investments that help local governments and the private sector develop successful urban centers, including transit station areas.
- DRCOG supports federal funding, regulatory support and other incentives to bolster local and regional efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing, including housing suitable for fixed-income older adults. Additionally, DRCOG supports effective means to create and maintain supportive services for residents in affordable housing communities.
- DRCOG supports efforts to promote affordable housing options by:
 - Promoting policies and programs that support the creation and maintenance of an adequate supply of affordable rental and ownership options integrated with the community to meet the needs of people of all ages, incomes, and abilities. This should include expansion of the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, a critical tool for supporting private investment in the production and preservation of affordable housing in the state of Colorado and

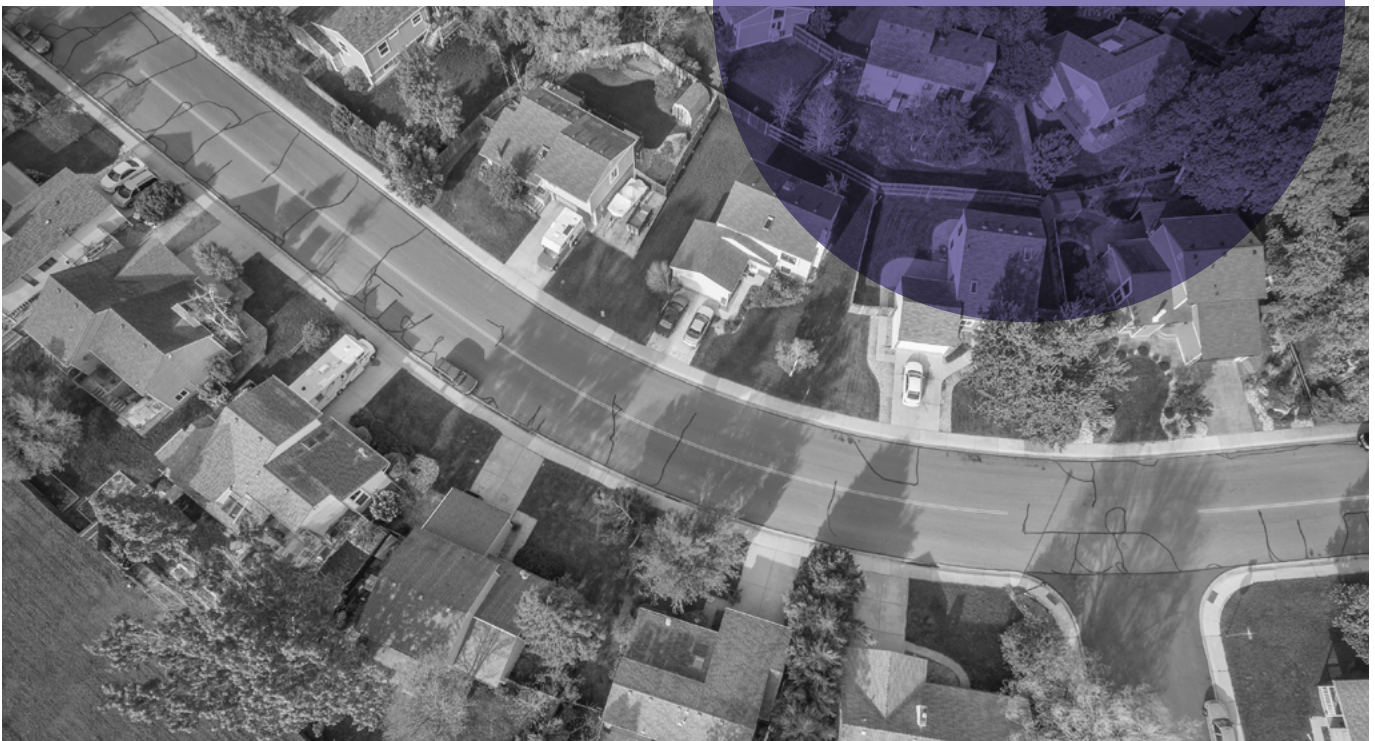


throughout the country, and efforts to strengthen communities through investments in transportation, economic opportunities, education, health services and other amenities that promote opportunity.

- Ensuring that renters and homeowners (including manufactured-home owners) have appropriate protections from discrimination and displacement. Policies should emphasize the rights of residents and minimize disparities in treatment under the law, while balancing the rights of property owners.
- Ensuring that policies, programs and other actions that affect land use and housing support the private and public sectors in providing a variety of housing sizes and types for people of all ages, incomes and abilities.
- Federal agencies and elected officials should respect and support local and regional plans and land use authority. This includes ensuring funding decisions and the siting of federal and other facilities are consistent with those plans and respect local and regional land use authority.

Federal agencies and elected officials also should ensure maximum local and regional participation in those decisions.

- The federal government should protect open space, including natural habitats, by fully funding the land conservation, preservation and infrastructure improvement trust fund programs and providing new incentives for land conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Federal investments in local and regional data and information programs help DRCOG deliver improved information, tools and services for local and regional planning and decision-making. DRCOG supports continued funding for these programs and legislation that requires local, regional and state governments to proactively share digital data with the public.



OLDER ADULTS

Older Americans Act reauthorization

DRCOG has been the designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA) for the metro area under the auspices of the federal Older Americans Act since 1973. In this capacity, DRCOG is responsible for planning and advocating for the needs of the region's older residents, as well as for providing a broad array of services and programs.

Congress reauthorized the Older Americans Act in 2020. Since the last full reauthorization (2016), the challenges to communities, states and the nation presented by the aging of the population have continued to accelerate across the U.S. but particularly in Colorado.

This critical national issue has continued to put pressure on services, especially the need for more tailored in-home and community-based services, the need for more focused prevention programs, the need for consumer advocacy in long-term care facilities, and increased support for family caregivers. After nearly 10 years of advocacy leadership by DRCOG and all members of the Colorado congressional delegation, the 2020 reauthorization finally addressed the funding imbalances in the existing Older Americans Act funding formula. The so-called "hold harmless" provision now will be phased out with Colorado (and DRCOG) already seeing significantly adjusted increases in funding. **It is critical for older adults across the DRCOG area to not have these federal funds offset by reductions in state funding as significant backlogs in providing services currently exist and DRCOG is being asked to provide unprecedented levels of support to older adults in response to COVID-19. DRCOG further adopts the following principles for current implementation and future reauthorization of the Older Americans Act.**



Eliminate obsolete funding provisions in the Older Americans Act

The population data used in the funding formula will need to be updated again after the 2020 census. Using the most up-to-date population numbers is critical so that all states receive the full distribution to which they are entitled under the Older Americans Act.

Encourage meaningful coordination with other systems and programs

The Administration on Aging should adopt rules and regulations incorporating the following specific concerns:

- Require states, area agencies on aging, Medicaid long-term care agencies and other relevant entities to continue efforts to better coordinate regional and statewide planning of services and programs for seniors.
- Coordinate all federal programs and planning processes that serve older adults, such as Older Americans Act, Medicaid, Fixing America's Surface Transportation (FAST) Act and Section 202 housing programs.
- Establish new policy and program guidelines to improve coordination and optimize all public and private benefits, services and resources aimed at promoting elder economic security.
- Remove institutional barriers to the coordination of elderly and disabled transportation services by providing the flexibility to allow trips for elderly and non-elderly disabled persons and for meal, medical and personal services to be served by the same provider using a combination of U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and U.S. Department of Transportation funding.



- Avoid shifting the cost burden from cash-strapped programs such as Medicaid to the Older Americans Act programs, simply to bail out those programs.
- Strengthen the collaboration between the area agencies on aging and federal, state and local governments with community-based organizations and national organizations that work with diverse older adults by providing resources, including funding research, programs and training to more effectively respond to changing demographics and target services to those most in need.

Establish a federal services identification database for senior services

To better provide coordinated services to seniors, DRCOG supports the creation of a federal database which will summarize all care that a patient is receiving regardless of which federal agency is providing the care. Currently, DRCOG has no ability to understand the complete umbrella of services a patient is receiving because there is no way to access information about that patient outside of the information that DRCOG has. This data sharing will allow the Area Agency on Aging to better shape and provide services for aging adults.



Maximize flexibility in use of Older Americans Act funds

Most federal funding provided to state and local entities under the federal Older Americans Act is specifically earmarked to particular services. Although all of the Older Americans Act-funded services, such as meals and transportation, are critically important, the area agencies on aging, local governments and service providers are in the best position to assess the specific needs in the local areas. Funding flexibility to meet local needs has been particularly important to the success of the Aging Network in Colorado in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Increased flexibility in the use of program funds would allow area agencies on aging to better meet the needs of older adults.

- Simplify rules and regulations to allow better coordination of senior services thus enabling area agencies on aging and service providers to more efficiently and effectively use federal funds to address local priorities. This could include the consolidation of certain funding categories to improve administration of the affected programs. For example, the Title III C-1 congregate meal and Title III C-2 home-delivered meal programs could be merged.
- Create flexibility in state- and federally specified allotments of Older Americans Act funds allowing area agencies on aging to use regional priorities to determine funding distributions at the local level, consistent with the goals of the act.
- Set required local match at 10% and required state match at 5% across all programs of the Older Americans Act. Currently, required local and state funding match percentages vary widely. For example, state/local match for the National Family Caregiver Support Program is 25%, while the Nutrition and Supportive Services Programs require a 15% state/local match. In some cases, states can completely opt out of providing a state match, as with the National Family Caregiver Support Program.



- Congress and the administration should, in consultation with the states and area agencies on aging, implement the lessons learned from the experience with the pandemic on an ongoing basis.

Fund aging-related planning for local communities

The 2006 reauthorization established new requirements for area agencies on aging to broaden their planning efforts beyond service needs to include senior-friendly community planning to promote livable communities for all ages but did not include funds for this new mandate. **To ensure these requirements are met, Congress must appropriate funds for state, regional and local collaboration, planning, community capacity-building and technical assistance. This should include funds for conducting analyses of the strengths and needs of seniors in a given area.**

Increase federal funding for Older Americans Act programs

The funding provided through the Older Americans Act has proved critical in maintaining a quality standard of living for many of the nation's older adults. For years, however, Older Americans Act funding has not kept pace with inflation or the growing population of individuals eligible for services. Yet, demand by at-risk older adults in need of supportive services has risen



and will continue to rise with the growth of the aging population. This long-term gap in funding translates to greater numbers of older adults and family caregivers with unmet needs and increasing pressures on state and local agencies, service providers and families. Meanwhile, waiting lists for Older Americans Act-funded services, such as Meals on Wheels, rides to medical appointments and in-home care, have burgeoned throughout the country.

Compounding these problems, the coming expiration of pandemic relief funding and financial pressures on other programs that provide services to seniors, such as Medicare and Medicaid, have led to reductions in the services provided by those programs, and a related increase in demands on Older Americans Act programs. At the same time, there are proposals for addressing the nation's long-term debt that actually would result in significant cuts in funding for these programs.

Funding cuts, such as those in the Budget Control Act of 2011 under sequestration, have had devastating consequences for vulnerable older adults in the metro area and across Colorado. Congress should fund the Older Americans Act adequately now and into the future in preparation for the aging of the baby boomers. **DRCOG specifically supports:**

- A balanced approach to addressing the nation's budget deficits and long-term debt.
- Any approach must protect those older adults in greatest social and economic need by fairly balancing increased revenues and targeted spending reductions and taking no actions that increase economic vulnerability or poverty.
- Significant annual increases in the overall funding for the Older Americans Act programs, which are necessary to catch up with the lag in historical funding. DRCOG supports the position of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, which is advocating total funding for Older Americans Act be increased to at least the inflation- and population-adjusted 2010 levels to restore the service capacity of Older Americans Act programs, with special attention to Title III B Supportive Services, Title III E National Family

Caregiver Support Program and Title VII State Long-Term Care Ombudsman program, as these programs have had no relief from the sequester.

- Future authorized appropriations at levels adequate to fund all identified needs but at least commensurate with the rates of growth in inflation and the economically and socially needy older population. Congress also should change budget rules to allow credit for discretionary programs that save money in mandatory programs.
- In general, priority for funding should be given to those Older Americans Act programs and services that:
 - Emphasize assisting clients to live in their homes as long and as independently as possible.
 - Support evidence-based health and wellness programs.
 - Bridge the gap between community services and health care through programs that promote care transitions and care coordination and encourage community-based service delivery models, including broader experimentation with Accountable Health Communities to





integrate social needs in the delivery of health services and the establishment of local community care hubs.

- Increase the funding for family caregiver support services (including training, respite care, counseling, and information and assistance) and the continued distribution of these monies through area agencies on aging, which are important to address the growing needs of families who provide extensive care to their loved ones.
- Increase funding for Long-Term Care Ombudsman programs, which are necessary to improve the ability to respond to complaints and safeguard residents' rights.

Provide a path for private sector investment in Older Americans Act services

As part of the Older Americans Act reauthorization, as well as other federal programs like Medicare Advantage Plans, Congress has allowed for area agencies on aging, outside of the Older Americans Act, to engage in private pay, integrated care and other arrangements to expand services. **Congress and the administration should incentivize such activities, including funding demonstration projects and evaluations of the benefits of community-based services in improving health care outcomes and reducing care costs.**

Long-term care facility quality of care

Older adults living in long-term care communities (i.e., nursing homes and assisted living) are some of the most vulnerable members of society. As the Long-Term Care Ombudsman for the region, DRCOG is an advocate for the rights of residents in long-term care communities and for improvement in the quality of care in such facilities. The quality of care provided by long-term care facilities is an ongoing concern to facility residents, their families, local governments and resident advocates. **DRCOG supports increases in consumer protections for older adults and their caregivers and, in particular, strengthening the role of the Long-Term Care Ombudsman as a resident/consumer advocate and reimbursement for long-term care communities structured to enhance the quality of care for residents. DRCOG believes the following issues require particular attention by Congress and federal agencies.**

- Federal regulations designed to ensure the quality of care in long-term care facilities are not fully enforced, largely due to inadequate staffing levels in state enforcement agencies. There also are several actions that could be added to the regulations to improve enforcement. These include increased inspections and penalties on long-term care facilities failing to comply with regulations. DRCOG supports such improved enforcement of long-term care regulations and an increase in funding for enforcement actions.



- Most complaints investigated by DRCOG ombudsmen are traceable to staffing issues in the long-term care facilities. The inability to maintain adequate staffing is a critical concern that negatively impacts long-term care facility quality of service. DRCOG supports federal legislation, policies and programs to improve the quality of service in long-term care facilities, including setting minimum staffing levels and providing financial and technical assistance for the recruitment, training and retention of long-term care facility employees.
- Nursing home transparency is an ongoing issue in advocacy for the rights of residents. Occasionally legislation has been proposed to enhance families' access to information about the quality of care in nursing homes and improve the government's ability to ensure quality care and a better-trained staff in those facilities. DRCOG supports legislation that includes stronger disclosure of ownership and control of facilities, better oversight of quality of care indicators, improved consumer information, and an enhanced complaint and penalty process.

Fund the Elder Justice Act

This legislation provides critical protection for residents living in nursing homes and assisted living; provides needed resources and coordination to address the problem of elder abuse; and includes increased funding for the Long-Term Care Ombudsman program.

The Elder Justice Act sets out a comprehensive approach to preventing and combating elder abuse, neglect, exploitation and self-neglect.

DRCOG supports full funding and implementation of the Elder Justice Act, consistent with the following principles:

- Provide a stronger and more coordinated federal response to promote elder justice.
- Increase federal support to states and communities for elder justice activities.
- Provide funding and training support to adult protection programs.
- Improve consumer protection by requiring the

reporting of crimes by nursing facilities or employees and communication of consumer rights information.

- Provide new funding to improve ombudsman capacity and training, and for training of health department surveyors investigating allegations of abuse.

Other health and community services

There are numerous other health and home care issues not covered under the Older Americans Act. In general, the following policies address concerns regarding consumer protection, access to treatment and access to services that increase independence. DRCOG believes it is appropriate for federal legislation, regulations and policies to promote access to health care coverage and the integration of long-term care into a continuum of medical and non-medical services, including health promotion and disease prevention.

- **Enhancing health and security of older adults.**

The Affordable Care Act contains several provisions regarding older adults and their ability to stay healthy and age in the community. These include provisions for aging and disability resource centers, prevention and wellness programs, care transitions and coordination, and efforts to rebalance the long-term care system relative to institutional and community care. The area agencies on aging are positioned to play a key role in implementing these provisions. **DRCOG urges Congress and federal agencies to recognize the full potential of the Aging Network and use area agencies on aging in implementing these Affordable Care Act provisions.**

- **Avoid institutional care.** Home- and community-based services are critical components in the continuum of care for the elderly and disabled and are more cost-efficient than services in institutions, particularly with regard to rural areas and for minority populations. Adequate reimbursements to providers are necessary to offset the costs of providing these important services. **DRCOG supports increased funding of home-**





and community-based care programs and higher Medicare and Medicaid reimbursements.

- **Prescription medication.** Older adults typically require more medication than younger people. Even with the adoption of a prescription drug benefit under Medicare, the high cost of prescription medication will continue to be a financial hardship for many older adults and federal programs.
 - DRCOG supports increased prescription drug pricing transparency.
 - DRCOG supports revisions to the Medicare Part D prescription drug benefit to simplify the application process and coverage offered, as well as cap out-of-pocket costs and address the gaps in coverage to provide a more comprehensive prescription medication benefit for all beneficiaries.
 - DRCOG supports allowing the federal government to negotiate prescription drug prices for patients using Medicare, Medicaid and other federal programs to lower cost to these critical federal programs.
- DRCOG also encourages the federal government to provide additional funding for area agencies on aging to provide public education, counseling and enrollment assistance for citizens about the Medicare drug program.
- **Patients' rights.** Enforceable federal protections in areas including access to care, quality assurance, patient information, grievances and appeals, the doctor-patient relationship and physician treatment decisions are necessary to ensure that quality health care and other services are available to all. **DRCOG supports legislation to protect consumers in managed care plans and other health coverage.**
- **Housing.** The ability to afford to live in a residence independently is a concern of older adults, especially those on fixed incomes. As the Denver metro area has grown and developed, the shortage of affordable housing has become an even more important concern. **DRCOG supports policies and programs designed to support older adults, especially those of low- and moderate-income, and**

persons with disabilities to live independently in the residence of their choice. This includes policies and programs to:

- Encourage the delivery of home- and community-based supportive services to assist older people and persons with disabilities in maintaining independence and actively engaging in their community.
- Improve home design to promote independence and aging in place, including home modification and repair, appropriate design features in new and rehabilitated housing (through principles such as universal design, visitability, inclusive home design and energy efficiency), and the use of innovative home products.
- Ensure that policies and funding for housing assistance and preservation programs continue to support residents who choose to remain in their homes as they age and

that low- and moderate-income households have access to well-designed, safe, decent, affordable and accessible housing integrated throughout well-designed communities.

- Promote financial security of housing assets to support the availability of affordable homeownership options, safeguard home equity and promote the innovative use of housing assets to maintain and improve the independence and quality of life of older people.

Transportation is an essential component of multidimensional efforts to advance economic development, industry growth and competitiveness; reduce the nation's dependency on fossil fuels; increase job access and mobility; and create communities having a high quality of life for people of all ages, incomes and abilities.



TRANSPORTATION

Funding

The Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU)-authorized National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission, which released a congressionally mandated report in January of 2008, called for interim investments of at least \$225 billion annually over the next 50 years at all levels of government. The February 2009 report of the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission set up under SAFETEA-LU estimated we need to invest at least \$200 billion per year at all levels of government to maintain and improve our highways and transit systems. The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was signed into law on Nov. 15, 2021. The act makes a significant investment in infrastructure and includes the federal transportation authorization for fiscal year 2022 through fiscal year 2026. While the act boosts federal transportation spending over the previous FAST Act levels, federal transportation investments will remain significantly below the needs identified in 2008 and 2009.

DRCOG supports the funding principles adopted by the National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission, which includes developing a funding and financing framework that:

- Supports a goal of enhancing mobility and accessibility for users of the transportation system.



- Generates sufficient resources to meet national investment needs on a sustainable basis with the aim of closing the funding gap.
- Causes users and all beneficiaries to bear the full cost of using the transportation system to the greatest extent possible.
- Encourages efficient investment in the transportation system.
- Incorporates equity considerations, including but not limited to geography, equity across income groups, population growth, and revenue generation.
- Synchronizes with other broad public policy objectives (and may include energy independence, environmental protection, and workforce housing).

As Congress and the U.S. Department of Transportation consider additional transportation issues and rulemaking for the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, DRCOG will evaluate each for consistency with the following policies.

- DRCOG supports an energy-efficient, environmentally sustainable, multimodal transportation system that ensures America's economic competitiveness and supports livable communities for its residents.
- DRCOG supports providing additional transportation revenues to accomplish this vision.
- Any new or increased sources of funding should be distributed through **existing funding formulas** with the greatest possible share going directly to local areas to decide how it will be spent.
- Maintain transportation program's use of contract authority, allowing states to advance money for multiyear construction projects.

- While supporting a shift to national performance standards and goals, consideration must be given to equity issues (geographic/return on dollar).
- Continue and expand funding for transportation projects that improve air quality.
- Congress should include a number of safeguards before earmarking transportation funds or modifying any discretionary programs, including ensuring transparency of the earmarking process; fully funding each phase of an earmarked project (no partial funding earmarks should be approved); not reducing formula funds that would affect projects already in an approved Transportation Improvement Program.
- Provide full-year appropriations at the start of the federal fiscal year to the level of the authorization. Limit the use of short-term continuing resolutions and rescissions. These tactics reduce the flow of or cut into formula funds and negatively impact fiscal constraint, responsible planning, implementation of federal requirements and project continuity.

DRCOG supports both short- and long-term federal funding policies to provide additional investment in the nation's infrastructure.

Short-term

- Boost the federal gas tax (at minimum, to restore the purchasing power of the Highway Trust Fund) and other existing Highway Trust Fund revenue.
- Index the federal gas tax to inflation.
- Reduce federal obstacles to options available to states and localities such as tolling, congestion pricing and public-private partnerships.
- Further expand current federal credit programs.

Long-term

- Carbon tax or trading programs (if Congress imple-



ments such a program) should ensure transportation activities that reduce greenhouse gas emissions receive a proportionate share of any new revenue generated by such programs.

- Transition to a new, more direct user-based system such as a road usage charge. This includes:
 - An aggressive research, development and demonstration program to address issues such as privacy rights, program administration, costs, revenues, partnerships with states and localities, and interplay with national policy objectives such as reducing vehicle miles traveled and congestion.
 - A national public education program.
 - A national pilot program.

Multimodal solutions

Addressing the nation's transportation challenges requires investment in a comprehensive, multifaceted approach. The nation will need to implement multimodal alternatives to provide congestion relief, improve air quality, reduce household transportation costs and increase independence for people unable to drive because of age, income or ability. DRCOG's Metro Vision plan includes targets for reducing vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions per capita, traffic fatalities, traffic congestion and single-occupant vehicle mode share.

Transit is an essential part of the metropolitan transportation system. Implementation of the Denver region's transit system is a high priority for DRCOG. Unfortunately, cost increases and revenue decreases forced the Regional Transportation District and DRCOG to remove some corridors from the fiscally constrained 2040 Regional Transportation Plan. DRCOG recognizes the importance of making transit-supportive improvements to bus and rail corridors throughout the region. The metro area has made a significant commitment of local resources for the regional transit system.

DRCOG supports adding multimodal transportation capacity appropriate to meet national and regional objectives.

- Maintain and expand funding programs that allow states and planning regions to develop, fund and implement integrated transportation solutions should be maintained and expanded. In addition, transportation funding must allow flexibility to address the multimodal, energy and environmental needs of individual urban areas.
- Establish national performance objectives and measures for increasing access and mobility for people of all ages, incomes and abilities should be established in addition to those for traffic congestion.
- Permit flexibility to allow each state and region to decide how to best make investments to show progress toward national safety, mobility and accessibility goals.
- Expand the National Freight Strategic Plan to include all major modes of freight transport including rail, water and air to better enable informed decision-making about efficient, long-distance freight movement.

DRCOG urges Congress and the administration to take the following actions in support of transit in the Denver region:

- Continue the federal investment for transit and multimodal projects in the Denver region.
- Provide dedicated sources of revenue and increased funding for bus rapid transit and rail new starts programs.
- Support federal funding for the Front Range Passenger Rail project through a direct appropriation or increased funding to the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) for the project.
- Continue to provide federal funding for the FasTracks corridors (over time this could include corridors that have had to be removed from the fiscally constrained regional transportation plan).
- Clarify with regard to transit-oriented developments that up to a half-mile from an existing or proposed transit station, parking and transportation infra-



structure, transit-oriented development planning, land acquisition and a project or program that supports compact, mixed-use, mixed-income, bicycle/pedestrian friendly development are eligible for federal transportation funding and require that this clarification be incorporated in funding program decisions, and work to identify additional sources of funding.

- Incorporate the Partnership for Sustainable Communities' livability principles into federal policy and investment decisions.
- Improve transportation services for older adults and individuals with disabilities by giving states added flexibility in utilizing their federal funds; enhancing the planning and coordination process; providing technical assistance; and promoting innovative community programs.
- Designate the "Rocky Mountain Corridor" (from Cheyenne, Wyoming, through Colorado to Albuquerque, New Mexico, and the Interstate 70 corridor from Denver International Airport to the Utah border) and the Western Regional Alliance high-speed rail network (to provide high-speed rail connections between Denver, Salt Lake City, Reno, Las Vegas, and Phoenix) as High-Speed Rail Corridors. This action would identify them as having potential for high-speed rail activity and enable these corridors to receive federal funds that might become available for corridor studies of high-speed rail options, development of plans for high-speed rail infrastructure, construction of high-speed rail facilities and highway/rail grade crossing safety improvements.

Metropolitan mobility

Metropolitan areas account for nearly 86% of the U.S. population and around 90% of employment, income, and production of goods and services (source: U.S. Conference of Mayors, Sept. 30, 2019). Growing congestion and reduced travel reliability, along with deteriorating infrastructure, threaten the ability of



regions and the nation to compete globally.

Metropolitan areas must play a stronger role in the nation's transportation programs, both in the authority to direct investment and demonstrate accountability for the system's performance.

DRCOG supports actions that minimize the barriers to the use of alternatives to the single-occupant vehicle and encourage changes to normal work patterns to avoid peak traffic conditions. DRCOG also supports efforts to provide incentives to employers, schools, rideshare agencies, and individuals to encourage alternative transportation use.

DRCOG supports transportation legislation that addresses metropolitan mobility and accessibility issues, specifically with consideration for the following:

- Enable major metropolitan areas to establish and implement overarching plans for mobility and accessibility with focus on:
 - Increased accessibility, modal choices and seamless transfers.



- Elimination of traffic chokepoints and reduction of severe traffic congestion.
- Strategies that manage transportation demand, provide transit service and implement nonmotorized methods of travel.
- Strategies for accommodating inter-regional movement of people and goods within and through the metropolitan areas.
- Fostering livable communities for people of all ages, incomes and abilities.
- Promoting the urban infrastructure necessary to support high-density development around transit.
- Performance metrics that extend beyond existing traffic congestion and motor vehicle emissions measures and consider vehicle miles traveled, reduction, economic development, environmental sustainability, global competitiveness, accessibility, etc.

Energy efficiency and environmental sustainability

Transportation plays a key role in achieving energy independence and addressing some of the nation's



environmental concerns. In the United States today, more than 60% of every barrel of oil is used by the transportation sector, and transportation sources accounted for 26% of total U.S. greenhouse gas emissions in 2016 (source: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency website). The competitiveness of our economy, the health of our citizens and the strength of our national security depend on reducing our reliance on and consumption of fossil fuels.

DRCOG supports strategies to reduce fossil fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions by the transportation sector.

- Expand investment in research and development for alternative fuels, new clean fuel technologies, more efficient vehicles and new ideas and technologies for transporting people and goods.
- Incentivize rapid conversion to more fuel-efficient and lower-emission vehicles or retrofits.
- Increase incentives for environmentally friendly replacement transportation fuels.
- Incentivize regions to more closely link land use and transportation infrastructure to reduce transportation energy consumption, increase nonvehicle transportation options and reduce vehicle miles traveled, through techniques including scenario planning and investments in projects that improve accessibility.
- Add public transit projects that enhance mobility, convenience and/or reliability to the exempt project list for Clean Air Act purposes; these types of improvements increase in importance in situations where conformity cannot be attained.

Project delivery and planning

The scope and complexity of transportation planning has increased significantly, including new performance-based planning requirements, rapidly changing vehicle technology, and changing job access and mobility needs. Efforts to streamline project planning and delivery are important but must be balanced against appropriate levels of regional and local coordination and environmental assessment.





DRCOG supports the following policies that promote efficiency, stability and reliability of funding, project delivery and planning:

- Allow metropolitan planning organizations to directly contract with subrecipients for non-infrastructure projects using federal funds.
- Continue to streamline project delivery and National Environmental Policy Act processes without compromising environmental or public participation values.
- Enhance and strengthen the cooperative, collaborative partnerships required under current legislation with all transportation planning partners.
- Support publication and dissemination of performance measurement results and analyses and widespread distribution of, and education about, the conditions of the transportation system.
- Increase the authority of metropolitan planning organizations to employ solutions at the regional

level and provide regions and local governments the direct authority, flexibility, and funding to create a safe and efficient transportation system.

- Provide maximum flexibility so that comparatively minor changes to the planned or programmed highway and transit network do not require a full air quality conformity analysis at taxpayer expense.

DRCOG supports clarifying and enhancing the role of the metropolitan planning organization.

- The metropolitan planning process establishes a cooperative, continuous and comprehensive framework for making transportation investment decisions in metropolitan areas. In many cases, MPOs provide the only regional, multimodal transportation plans that link transportation to land use, growth and air quality. Through the MPO process, local governments, in cooperation and collaboration with state and local transit operators, determine the best mix of transportation investments to meet the long-term transportation needs of a metropolitan area. **This important role must be strengthened to make metropolitan transportation planning successful.**
- The FAST Act requires adequate regional financial



forecasts be developed with the cooperation and collaboration of the state, MPO and public transit agency for use in preparing transportation plans. However, “collaboration, cooperation and consultation” are poorly defined in the context of developing such financial forecasts. States are given wide discretion in how and when those estimates of revenues are to be provided and allowing for various interpretations of the regulations. **DRCOG supports:**

- Expanding regulations to require all three entities (DRCOG, the Regional Transportation District and the Colorado Department of Transportation) to agree upon procedures governing the projection of future revenue estimates.
- Requiring all three agencies to agree upon distribution of estimated revenues.
- Establishing an external appeals process

to the U.S. Department of Transportation if there is disagreement among the parties regarding estimate procedures and revenues.

- **The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act strengthened consultation requirements for Surface Transportation Block Grant funds that are allocated to areas based on population.**

DRCOG supports:

- Expanding current regulations to require all three entities to agree upon procedures governing project selection and prioritization for transportation planning and there should be consequences for not following these procedures.



- As part of the normal memorandum of agreement between an MPO, state Department of Transportation and local transit agency, requiring the three entities to cooperatively establish a process for addressing project cost overruns.
- Requiring revenue suballocation to transportation management areas (MPOs representing populations greater than 200,000) to be based on the total population within the MPO boundary.
- Establishing a population-based air quality severity formula for suballocating Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds within a state and requiring suballocation of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funds to non-attainment MPOs representing populations greater than 200,000 on the basis of the total populations within the MPO boundary.



ENVIRONMENT

Water conservation

Water is a particularly scarce resource in the Denver region and the western United States, and a key consideration in planning for future growth and development. Recognizing this fact, the DRCOG Board of Directors added a water conservation element to Metro Vision, the Denver region's long-range plan for growth. The element calls on the region to maximize the wise use of limited water resources through efficient land development and other strategies, and establishes a goal of reducing regional per capita water consumption. **DRCOG therefore supports federal policies and investments that contribute to local and regional water conservation effort.**





Water quality. Local governments in the Denver region face increasingly complex water quality challenges in an environment unique to the arid West but without the resources to respond to them appropriately. Reauthorization of the Clean Water Act could provide local governments and regional water quality planning agencies the additional planning, financing and regulatory tools needed to address our growing water quality challenges. **As the legislative process proceeds in these areas, there are a number of issues of concern to DRCOG that Congress can address**

Integrated planning. DRCOG supports an integrated approach to water quality, tying together the management of point sources, nonpoint sources and stormwater through the involvement of the various stakeholders

Regional planning. The Clean Water Act recognizes the importance of planning to address the challenges associated with both point and nonpoint source pollution. The regional planning provided for in the act is even more critical, given the growing emphasis on watershed approaches. **Congress should maintain and strengthen the regional planning process as the key component of the watershed approach. The planning funds provided under**

section 604(b) need to be increased to assist responsible parties in meeting the expanding responsibilities that accompany implementation of a watershed planning and management approach

Infrastructure funding. Colorado and the nation are at a critical juncture regarding water and wastewater infrastructure. There are significant needs for new treatment plants and upgrades to existing plants. Local governments already shoulder a significant portion of water and wastewater capital investment. **Increased funding for infrastructure investment as well as the provision of greater flexibility of these funds will allow states and local governments to determine the best use, according to local prioritization of needs.**

Good Samaritan protection. Abandoned and inactive mines present a serious risk to the quality of nearby water supplies. Lack of adequate funding for reclamation and the potential liability for good Samaritans are serious obstacles that have prevented cleanup of many of these sites.





DRCOG supports federal funding for reclamation activities. DRCOG also supports legislation encouraging federal, state, tribal and local governments, as well as mining companies and nonprofit groups that have no prior ownership or responsibility for an abandoned mine, to clean up an abandoned or inactive mining site by granting them liability protections under several environmental statutes, including the Clean Water Act

Superfund. DRCOG is concerned that a number of Superfund issues have become serious problems in recent years while the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) has been awaiting reauthorization. **DRCOG urges Congress to address the following issues individually or as part of a comprehensive reauthorization**

Liability protection. Under current law and regulation, parties interested in cleaning up a Superfund site may decide not to pursue remediation efforts for fear of being held liable for preexisting problems. Lengthy cleanup delays have occurred in our region and elsewhere while parties litigate over responsibility. DRCOG supports federal funding for cleanup activities. **DRCOG supports legislation and regulations**

encouraging parties that have had no prior ownership or responsibility for a site to clean up the site by granting them liability protections under several environmental statutes, including the Superfund law. DRCOG also supports limiting liability when a party has complied with applicable environmental laws at the time of disposal to further the goal of timely and cost-effective cleanup of Superfund sites

Community participation. Local governments often face significant community and neighborhood concerns regarding contaminated sites. Public involvement in the assessment, planning and cleanup for such sites is an important aspect of efforts to bring these sites to a safe condition. **Provisions that assist local governments in establishing and funding formal mechanisms for citizens to participate in the cleanup and land-use decision-making process are appropriate and necessary**

Funding for cleanup. DRCOG is concerned that the federal government not reduce its commitment to assist with clean-up and redevelopment of these sites. **DRCOG supports the creation of new mechanisms to fund cleanup to the extent they are sufficient to make**



significant progress toward the act's goals. Allocation of cleanup costs among responsible parties should be according to the proportion of contamination caused by each

Health risk criteria. The safety and health of populations exposed to pollution associated with Superfund sites is a primary concern related to potential redevelopment. Health risk-based criteria are necessary to guide these efforts. **These criteria must reflect the intended reuse of a site and the risks to special populations including children, the elderly and those already disproportionately exposed to pollution. Risk-based standards specific to Superfund clean-up are needed to promote redevelopment of contaminated sites while protecting human health and the environment**

Brownfields. Redevelopment of brownfields is important for economic development and environmental and public health and safety in many areas within the Denver region. This is a specific issue related to CERCLA that is of particular significance and should be pursued separately, if inaction on the Superfund reauthorization continues. There are approximately 250 brownfields, former industrial and commercial sites, in both urban and rural areas throughout the Denver region. The redevelopment of brownfields is consistent with DRCOG's Metro Vision, which supports infill and redevelopment within the region. **DRCOG supports**



federal actions including increased funding to encourage the redevelopment of brownfields. DRCOG urges Congress to prioritize funding for projects that go beyond remediation and redevelopment of individual sites to focus on broader planning and economic development efforts, such as projects that incorporate brownfield remediation and redevelopment into larger infill development efforts.



INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

Intergovernmental cooperation

All levels of government – federal, state, local and regional – play an important role in providing critical services and implementing programs for the benefit of their residents. Legislative bodies and executive agencies at the federal and state levels should respect the roles and responsibilities of local governments and regional entities. DRCOG supports cooperation among federal, state, local and regional entities in developing and implementing new programs and improved approaches to service provision.



Federal/regional relations. The region is the nexus of local, state and federal issues and economic activities. DRCOG convenes parties of interest on intergovernmental issues, providing the necessary forum for their resolution, and facilitating a negotiated outcome. **DRCOG urges Congress, when new legislation is proposed and existing legislation is reauthorized, to identify and use regional agencies as critical partners in the implementation of such legislation, including the planning for and delivery of services.**

Regional service delivery. The federal government plays an important role in setting standards and priorities for the funding of public services and programs administered at the state, regional and local levels. **When making such funding and programmatic decisions, it is essential to consider the most appropriate level of government for delivery of such public services.**



State administration of federal programs can be problematic for local governments, as state agencies tend to be more removed from clients and less responsive to their needs. On the other hand, individual local governments may lack the resources to achieve the desired efficiencies and cost-effectiveness. Further, some programs, such as transportation, air quality and water quality, that address issues crossing local political boundaries, are most appropriately and effectively addressed at the regional level. Regional programs also often benefit from economies of scale. The collaborative partnerships of regional approaches can provide more cost-effective services and programs for users and clients. **DRCOG urges Congress to use existing regional service delivery systems.**

Principles for implementation. New programs or changes to existing programs must at least maintain the existing level of services and provide adequate administrative funds for implementation. Otherwise, there is a shift in responsibility without adequate funds for the services to be provided or programs administered. As such, it is important to treat the continuity of service delivery as a key principle guiding any actions to create new programs or revise existing programs. **A consultative process among the federal, state, local and regional agencies must be in place before any changes are made to services currently being delivered at local or regional levels.**







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Rebecca White
Colorado Department of Transportation

Sally Chafee
Colorado Department of Transportation

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION DISTRICT NON-VOTING APPOINTEE
Brian Welch
Senior Manager for Planning

Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director

EO-RP-23FEDPOLICY-23-03-22

METRO VISION

Our place, our plan

 **drccog** We make life better!
DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS





DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

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City and County of Broomfield

Clear Creek County

City and County of Denver

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City of Cherry Hills Village

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Town of Deer Trail

City of Edgewater

Town of Empire

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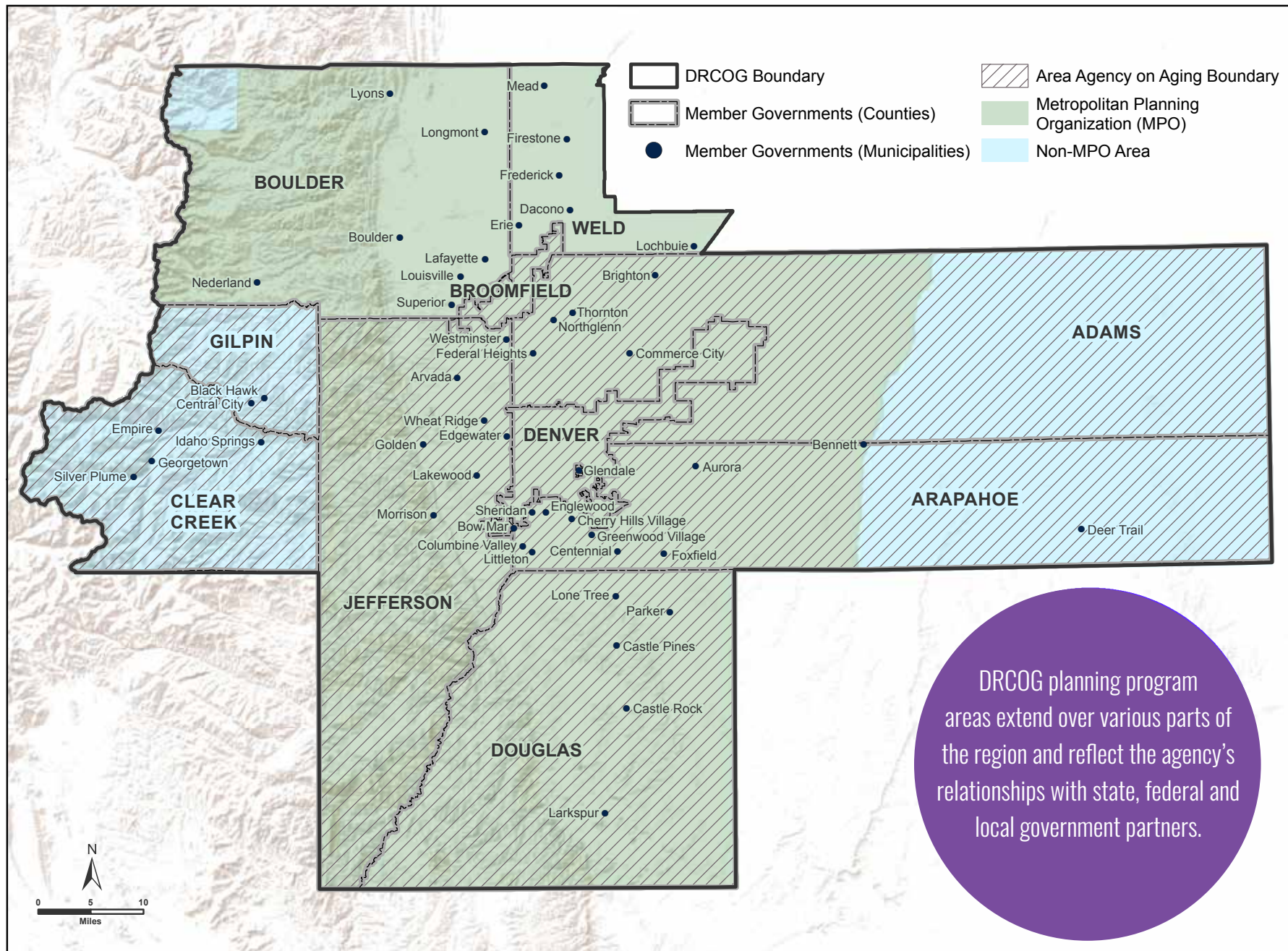
City of Wheat Ridge

NON-VOTING MEMBERS

Colorado Governor's Office

**Colorado Department
of Transportation**

Regional Transportation District



Source: DRCOG, DRCOG member governments, Esri

ABOUT DRCOG

Created in 1955 to foster regional collaboration and cooperation, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) is one of the nation's oldest councils of governments. DRCOG is a nonprofit, voluntary association of local governments in the Denver region. The Denver region, as defined by DRCOG, includes Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Clear Creek, Douglas, Gilpin and Jefferson counties, the City and County of Denver, the City and County of Broomfield and southwest Weld County. While DRCOG is a public agency, it is not a unit of government, nor does it have statutory authority to require local governments to be members or follow its plans, but it does play several important roles.

- As the regional planning commission per Colorado state statute, DRCOG prepares the plan for the physical development of the region. For nearly two decades this plan has been known as Metro Vision.
- As the federally designated Area Agency on Aging, DRCOG is responsible for planning and funding comprehensive services to address the needs of the region's older adults and people living with disabilities.
- DRCOG is the region's federally designated metropolitan planning organization serving as a forum for a collaborative transportation planning process, including efforts to address short-term needs and establishing and maintaining the long-term vision for transportation in the region.

As a council of governments, DRCOG serves as a planning organization, technical assistance provider and forum for member governments to discuss emerging issues of importance to the region.

DRCOG members include more than 50 local governments, each of which has an equal voice. The towns, cities and counties of the region work together to ensure the area remains a great place to live, work and play. DRCOG also has numerous partners, including regional districts; state agencies and departments; the business community; and other stakeholders representing a variety of interests.

MISSION STATEMENT

DRCOG is a planning organization where local governments collaborate to establish guidelines, set policy and allocate funding in the areas of:

- *transportation and personal mobility*
- *growth and development*
- *aging and disability resources*

VISION STATEMENT

Our region is a diverse network of vibrant, connected, lifelong communities with a broad spectrum of housing, transportation and employment, complemented by world-class natural and built environments.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	7
Metro Vision: Two Decades of Progress	7
Metro Vision Principles	8
Why Do We Need Metro Vision?	11
What's Different About Today's Metro Vision?	13
How is Metro Vision Organized?	14
1: OVERARCHING THEME: AN EFFICIENT AND PREDICTABLE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN	21
Outcome: The region is comprised of diverse, livable communities.	22
Outcome: Through a coordinated effort between DRCOG and local communities, new urban development occurs in an orderly and compact pattern within regionally designated growth areas.	26
Outcome: Connected urban centers and multimodal corridors throughout the region accommodate a growing share of the region's housing and employment.	32
Performance Measures	37
2: OVERARCHING THEME: A CONNECTED MULTIMODAL REGION	39
Outcome: The regional transportation system is well-connected and serves all modes of travel.	42
Outcome: The transportation system is safe, reliable and well-maintained.	50
Performance Measures	55

3: OVERARCHING THEME: A SAFE AND RESILIENT NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT	57
Outcome: The region has clean water and air, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.....	58
Outcome: The region values, protects and connects people to its diverse natural resource areas, open space, parks and trails.	62
Outcome: The region's working agricultural lands and activities contribute to a strong regional food system.	68
Outcome: The risks and effects of natural and human-created hazards are reduced.	72
Performance Measures	79
4: OVERARCHING THEME: HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES.....	81
Outcome: The built and natural environment supports healthy and active choices.	84
Outcome: The region's residents have expanded connections to health services.	88
Outcome: Diverse housing options meet the needs of residents of all ages, incomes and abilities.	90
Performance Measure	99
5: OVERARCHING THEME: A VIBRANT REGIONAL ECONOMY	101
Outcome: All residents have access to a range of transportation, employment, commerce, housing, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities.	104
Outcome: Investments in infrastructure and amenities allow people and businesses to thrive and prosper.	110
Performance Measures	117
Appendix A: Extent of Urban Development.....	120
Appendix B: Designated Urban Centers.....	123



INTRODUCTION

METRO VISION: TWO DECADES OF PROGRESS

The counties and municipalities of the Denver region have been advancing a shared aspirational vision of the future of the metro area for more than 60 years. Working together to make life better for our communities and residents, that vision has taken various forms over the years—most recently as a regional plan known as Metro Vision. The DRCOG Board of Directors adopted the first Metro Vision plan (Metro Vision 2020) in 1997 and has continued the dialogue about how best to achieve the plan's evolving vision ever since.

Metro Vision fulfills DRCOG's duty to make and adopt a regional plan for the physical development of the region's territory. The plan remains advisory for a local jurisdiction unless its planning commission chooses to adopt it as its official advisory plan under Colorado Revised Statutes 30-28-106(2). As adopted by Resolution No. 1, 2017 (Jan. 18, 2017) and amended by Resolution No. 6, 2019 (May 15, 2019), this Metro Vision plan supersedes any regional master plan previously adopted by DRCOG.

The region has a strong shared sense of its future, and the DRCOG Board recognizes that the success of the visionary plan requires the coordinated efforts of local, state and federal governments; the business community; and other planning partners, including philanthropic and not-for-profit organizations.

The Metro Vision plan does not replace the vision of any individual community; rather, it is a tool to promote regional cooperation on issues that extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries. The plan anticipates that individual communities will contribute to Metro Vision outcomes and objectives through different pathways and at different speeds for collective impact.

Six core principles have shaped the role of Metro Vision since the plan's earliest conceptions and remain valid today.

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

Mile High Compact

In 2000, five counties and 25 municipalities came together to affirm their commitment to a shared regional vision by signing the Mile High Compact, a landmark intergovernmental agreement to manage growth. Today 46 communities, representing almost 90 percent of the region's population, have signed the agreement. The binding agreement commits communities to:

- *Adopt a comprehensive land use plan that includes a common set of elements;*
- *Use growth management tools such as zoning regulations, urban growth boundaries and development codes;*
- *Link their comprehensive plans to Metro Vision, which outlines regional growth management; and*
- *Work collaboratively to guide growth and ensure planning consistency.*

The Mile High Compact is nationally regarded as a model for regional cooperation.



Mile High Compact signing ceremony on Aug. 10, 2000.



METRO VISION PRINCIPLES

Metro Vision protects and enhances the region's quality of life.

Metro Vision's most basic purpose is to safeguard for future generations the region's many desirable qualities, including beautiful landscapes, diverse and livable communities, cultural and entertainment facilities, and employment and educational opportunities.

Metro Vision is aspirational, long-range and regional in focus.

Metro Vision's planning horizon extends 20 years and beyond to help the region address future concerns, while considering current priorities, too. The plan expresses a high-level, regional perspective on how the region as a whole can achieve the future reflected in Metro Vision.

Metro Vision offers ideas for local implementation.

Local governments can use Metro Vision as they make decisions about land use, transportation planning and a range of related issues. Metro Vision also helps local governments coordinate their efforts with one another and other organizations.



Metro Vision respects local plans.

The region's local governments developed Metro Vision, working collaboratively through DRCOG. The plan doesn't replace the vision of any individual community, rather, it is a framework for addressing common issues. Metro Vision is sensitive to the decisions local governments make in determining when, where and how growth will occur. Metro Vision also recognizes that each community has its own view of the future related to its unique characteristics.

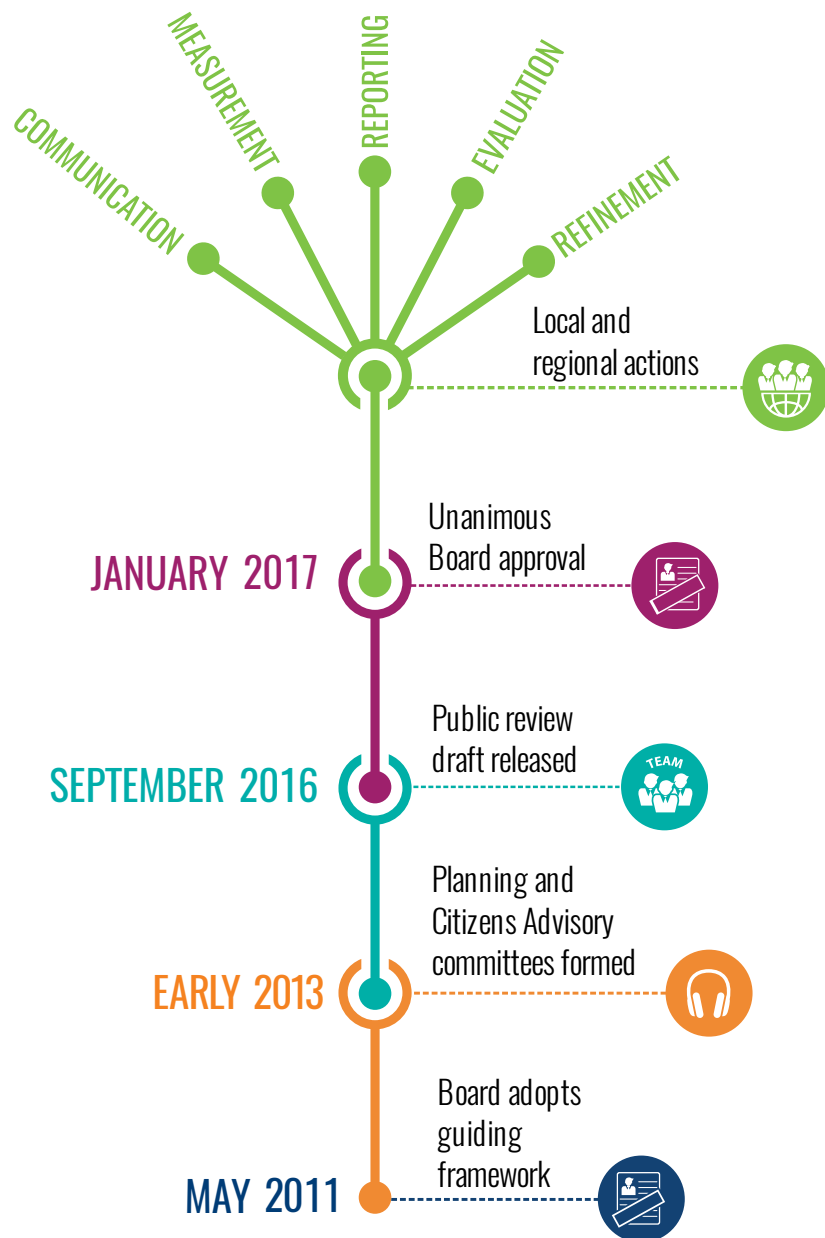
Metro Vision encourages communities to work together.

Many of the effects associated with growth—such as traffic, air quality and housing costs—don't recognize jurisdictional boundaries, and local governments must work collaboratively to address them. Metro Vision provides the framework for coordinated regionwide efforts; DRCOG provides the forum.

Metro Vision is dynamic and flexible.

Metro Vision reflects contemporary perspectives on the future of the region and is updated as conditions and priorities change. The DRCOG Board makes minor revisions to the plan annually and major updates as needed.





Applying the Metro Vision Principles in Practice

Metro Vision guides DRCOG’s work and establishes shared expectations with our region’s many and various planning partners. The plan outlines broad outcomes, objectives and initiatives established by the DRCOG Board to make life better for the region’s residents. It also establishes the regional performance measures and targets used to track progress toward desired outcomes over time. DRCOG may update and refine these measures as needed, should improved methods and datasets become available.

The degree to which the outcomes, objectives and initiatives identified in Metro Vision apply in individual communities will vary. Measures (see [page 19](#)) help to verify whether the shared actions of planning partners, including local governments, are moving the region toward desired outcomes. Measures are not intended to judge the performance of individual jurisdictions or projects.

Metro Vision has historically informed other DRCOG planning processes such as the Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). Any implementation of Metro Vision through future project or funding criteria will be applied in a holistic manner by considering the diversity of community values and the unique ways jurisdictions contribute to the vibrancy of the region.

WHY DO WE NEED METRO VISION?

Since Metro Vision was first adopted, the region has seen many changes. Numerous successful regional initiatives have advanced the region's vision for its future, including:

- Construction of Denver International Airport and several major sports venues;
- Voter approval and ongoing construction of the FasTracks transit expansion program;
- Major infill and redevelopment projects including Stapleton, Belmar and the Central Platte Valley;
- Tremendous progress in ensuring a sustainable water supply for many of our fastest-growing communities;
- Within communities, a growing awareness and response to the opportunities and challenges of growing older adult populations;
- The redevelopment and revitalization of Union Station as a mixed-use regional transportation hub; and
- Extensive local planning for transit-oriented communities along current and planned transit corridors throughout the region.

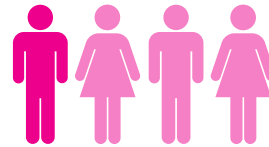
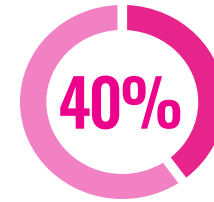
A water treatment operator at the Binney Water Purification Facility samples source water. Aurora Water tests thousands of water samples annually to ensure the quality and safety of drinking water. Through the Water Infrastructure and Supply Efficiency partnership, Aurora Water, Denver Water and the South Metro Water Supply Authority share water and infrastructure. Aurora's Prairie Waters Project pumps reusable water from the lower South Platte to a treatment facility.

Jim Havey / Havey Productions





By 2040, the region's population is forecast to increase nearly **40 percent**, from around **3 million** to approximately **4.3 million** people.



By **2040**, **one in four** area residents will be **60 or older**.

The Denver region is central to Colorado's growing reputation as a leader in innovation. Businesses and residents alike are choosing to move to—and stay in—the region because of the quality of life offered by its outstanding climate, central location, diverse communities and lifestyle options, access to ever-expanding recreational opportunities, and economic vitality.

As the region continues to grow and evolve, we face new and ongoing challenges to our quality of life and economic prosperity. By 2040, the region's population is forecast to increase nearly 40 percent, from around 3 million to approximately 4.3 million people. With growth comes increased demand on our land and natural resources, and the need to continuously adapt and improve the region's infrastructure and services. Furthermore, as the region's population grows, ensuring residents have access to opportunities, services, and care will be essential to promote a healthy population. At the same time, the region's 60-and-older population is growing at a faster rate than the rest of the region's population as a whole—by 2040, more than one million residents will be 60 or older. The demographic shifts also have profound implications for regional and local planning, as housing and transportation needs change with the needs of our aging population.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TODAY'S METRO VISION?

Although Metro Vision's core values have been carried forward through various updates and remain valid, today's Metro Vision is markedly different than its predecessors. Metro Vision's focus has expanded from three, topic-based plan elements (growth and development, transportation, and environment) to a theme- and outcomes-based approach. The shift in focus reflects:

- consideration of the region's social and economic health alongside its physical development;
- the addition of new or expanded topic areas such as housing, economy, community health and wellness, and community resilience;
- the desire for an emphasis on measuring shared achievement of regionwide goals.

Today's Metro Vision emerged from a collaborative process that spanned more than four years. During this time, DRCOG's policy committees, member governments, partner agencies, regional stakeholders, and the community at large worked together to create a shared vision for action for shaping the future of the Denver metro area. A variety of outreach opportunities engaged participants and informed the process, including Metro Vision Idea Exchanges, local government surveys, listening sessions, stakeholder interviews with public- and private-sector interest groups, online forums, neighborhood meetings, and the Sustainable Communities Initiative. Voices throughout the region have informed this collaborative process, identifying areas of regional success worth continuing and expanding, as well as new challenges that can be addressed in today's Metro Vision.

Throughout development of Metro Vision, the Denver Regional Council of Governments and partner organizations convened the region's residents, member governments and stakeholders in meetings like the one pictured at right to identify challenges and a shared vision for action to shape the future of the metro area.

Denver Regional Council of Governments



MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER



Metro Vision listening tour

The listening tour was a qualitative research process designed to reveal varied, individual visions of the future. The tour engaged residents, regional stakeholders and subject matter experts. More than 200 people participated in interviews and focus groups, and nearly 1,200 online survey responses were provided.

Metro Vision local government survey

A diverse cross-section of 27 communities shared their understanding of local growth and development challenges through an online survey.

Our Shared Vision

DRCOG's online platform generated ideas through stakeholder-to-stakeholder interaction. Participants provided feedback on numerous Metro Vision update topics.

HOW IS METRO VISION ORGANIZED?

Metro Vision guides DRCOG's work and establishes a shared aspirational vision with our many partners. DRCOG developed the plan's content and structure based on key stakeholder engagement activities (see the "Making Progress Together" sidebars in this section), the insights of the local elected officials who make up DRCOG's Board of Directors, and the themes and priorities that have guided the region's vision for the past 20 years. Throughout the plan, regional priorities are represented in a cascading series of elements, from top-level themes that describe our shared vision for the future down to actions that communities and individuals can take to support the region's desired achievements.

Five **overarching themes** begin to describe the region's desired future. These themes organize 14 inter-related, aspirational **outcomes**, which describe a future that DRCOG, local governments and partners will work toward together. Metro Vision links these future-oriented statements to action through **objectives** and **strategic initiatives**.

What Is Our Vision? — Overarching Themes and Outcomes

Each of the five **overarching themes** (see [page 15](#) and [page 16](#)) provides a destination point for the region and also serves to organize how shared values are presented in this plan.

Outcomes represent a regionwide aspiration, shared by DRCOG, its local governments and partners. Outcomes describe a desired future state and point to areas where the region hopes to succeed.



THEME: An Efficient and Predictable Development Pattern

Outcomes

- The region is comprised of diverse, livable communities.
- Through a coordinated effort between DRCOG and local communities, new urban development occurs in an orderly and compact pattern within regionally designated areas.
- Connected urban centers and multimodal corridors throughout the region accommodate a growing share of the region's housing and employment.



THEME: A Connected Multimodal Region

Outcomes

- The regional transportation system is well-connected and serves all modes of travel.
- The transportation system is safe, reliable and well-maintained.



THEME: A Safe and Resilient Natural and Built Environment

Outcomes

- The region has clean water and air, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- The region values, protects and connects people to its diverse natural resource areas, open space, parks and trails.
- The region's working agricultural lands and activities contribute to a strong regional food system.
- The risk and effects of natural and human-created hazards are reduced.

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER



Metro Vision Idea Exchanges

These ongoing events bring together local governments

and other stakeholders to share information and learn about best practices for supporting Metro Vision. During plan development, three exchanges helped gather feedback on key topics: infill development, community health and wellness, and planning for urban centers in areas outside the traditional core of the region.

Sustainable Communities Initiative

DRCOG, with funding from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), brought together numerous stakeholders to thoughtfully align investments. As a region with an existing regional plan, Sustainable Communities Initiative funds were directed toward fine-tuning Metro Vision. Two key issues were explored, as they were not directly addressed in previous versions of Metro Vision—housing and economic vitality.

Citizens' Academy

In 2013, Transit Alliance expanded its seven-week curriculum to help develop the Metro Vision plan. Session topics included economic vitality, multimodal transportation, community health and wellness, access to opportunity and housing.

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

DRCOG Board ad hoc committees

In July 2014 the Board of Directors formed two ad hoc committees to explore the issues of housing and economic vitality, and how such issues might be integrated into Metro Vision. Over the course of several months the committees consulted with economic development and housing stakeholders to identify key issues and initial ideas of how DRCOG might advance and complement the ongoing work of these critical partners.

Advisory committees

DRCOG convened two advisory committees to shepherd development of the plan. The Metro Vision Planning Advisory Committee worked closely with DRCOG staff to develop policy options and make recommendations to the DRCOG Board of Directors. The Citizens Advisory Committee advised DRCOG on ways to involve residents and businesses and helped make valuable connections with the broader community.



THEME: Healthy, Inclusive and Livable Communities

Outcomes

- The built and natural environment supports healthy and active choices.
- The region's residents have expanded connections to health services.
- Diverse housing options meet the needs of residents of all ages, incomes and abilities.



THEME: A Vibrant Regional Economy

Outcomes

- All residents have access to a range of transportation, employment, commerce, housing, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities.
- Investments in infrastructure and amenities allow people and businesses to thrive and prosper.

HOW CAN WE ACHIEVE OUR SHARED OUTCOMES?

Regional Objectives and Strategic Initiatives

While outcomes represent a shared regionwide aspiration, DRCOG, local governments and partners will work together toward these outcomes, each contributing in a manner appropriate to local circumstances and priorities.

To equip local governments and partners to take action toward these outcomes, Metro Vision **objectives** and **strategic initiatives** describe needed improvements and contributions. In this document, the objectives and strategic initiatives follow each theme, organized by outcome.

- **Objectives** identify continuous improvements needed to achieve a desired outcome.
 - Regional objectives identify the key areas of continuous improvement and are most closely aligned with plan outcomes.
 - Supporting objectives will move the region toward the improvements outlined by regional objectives, and ultimately the associated outcome.
- **Strategic initiatives** identify specific, voluntary opportunities for various regional and local organizations and governments to contribute to Metro Vision outcomes and objectives.
 - Regional opportunities reflect ways in which DRCOG and its regional partners can facilitate and support local contributions.
 - Local opportunities reflect specific contributions local governments and partners might volunteer to take on their own, or in collaboration with DRCOG and others.

The interchange at U.S. Route 6 and 19th Street in Golden increases safety and convenience for bicyclists, pedestrians and vehicle drivers alike.

Melissa Crocker / City of Golden





HOW WILL WE KNOW IF WE ARE MAKING PROGRESS?

Performance Measures

To help track progress toward our region's identified outcomes, the plan establishes a series of **performance measures** based on:

- relevance to plan outcomes and objectives;
- availability of regularly updated and reliable data sources; and
- use of measurable, quantitative information, rather than anecdotal insights.

Using regular tracking, DRCOG and its partners can verify whether our collective actions to implement the plan are moving the region toward its desired outcomes.

For each overall plan performance measure there is 1) a **baseline**, which indicates the region's current status for that measure; and 2) a **2040 target**, which establishes the desired future outcome for that measure. Relationships between performance measures and overarching themes are also indicated.

DRCOG will report on plan implementation progress using these performance measures, with reporting frequency based on data availability. As new information becomes available or circumstances change, targets or the methodology for measuring success may be refined. In addition to the core performance measures outlined on the opposite page, a dynamic and flexible performance management approach will be used. DRCOG will continue to research and share data and information that may illustrate progress toward shared outcomes.

The wellness of residents is central to much of the region's vision for its future. Access to open space, such as Sloan's Lake Park in Denver, gives residents and visitors the opportunity to pursue healthful activities like canoeing.

Jonathan Phillips / jonathanphillipsphotography.com

MEASURE	WHERE ARE WE TODAY? (BASELINE)	WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE? (2040 TARGET)
Share of the region's housing and employment located in urban centers	Housing: 10.0 percent (2014)	Housing: 25.0 percent
	Employment: 36.3 percent (2014)	Employment: 50.0 percent
Regional population-weighted density	4,850 people per square mile (2014)	25 percent increase from 2014
Non-single-occupant vehicle (non-SOV) mode share to work	25.1 percent (2014)	35.0 percent
Daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita	25.5 daily VMT per capita (2010)	10 percent decrease from 2010
Average travel time variation (TTV) (peak vs. off-peak)	1.22 (2014)	Less than 1.30
Daily person delay per capita	6 minutes (2017)	Less than 9 minutes
Number of traffic fatalities	185 (2014)	Fewer than 100 annually
Surface transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions per capita	26.8 pounds per capita (2010)	60 percent decrease from 2010
Protected open space	1,724 square miles (2014)	1,980 square miles
Share of the region's housing and employment in high risk areas	Housing: 1.1 percent (2014)	Less than 0.9 percent
	Employment: 2.9 percent (2014)	Less than 2.5 percent
Share of the region's population living in areas with housing and transportation (H+T) costs affordable to the typical household in the region	41 percent (2013)	50 percent
Regional employment	1.8 million (2014)	2.6 million (1 to 1.5 percent annual growth)
Share of the region's housing and employment near rapid transit stations or high-frequency transit stops	Housing: 14.0 percent (2014)	20.0 percent
	Employment: 32.3 percent (2014)	45.0 percent



Overarching theme | Our desired future will be realized through:

AN EFFICIENT AND PREDICTABLE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

Each of the region's communities contributes in different ways to the region's economy, resiliency, quality of life and sense of place. As the region continues to grow, maintaining these important distinctions will protect the ability of residents and businesses to choose the types of communities that meet their unique needs and values.

Metro Vision supports efficient and predictable development patterns by encouraging growth tailored to local communities; accommodating the needs of residents of all ages, incomes and abilities; making efficient use of available land and existing and planned infrastructure; and protecting the region's sensitive open lands and natural resources; and helping achieve other Metro Vision outcomes such as reducing vehicle miles traveled.

Achieving an efficient and predictable development pattern is dependent upon the region's ability to work together toward the following outcomes:

- The region is comprised of diverse, livable communities.
- Through a coordinated effort between DRCOG and local communities, new urban development occurs in an orderly and

- compact pattern within regionally designated growth areas.
- Connected urban centers and multimodal corridors throughout the region accommodate a growing share of the region's housing and employment.

Metro Vision reflects that the decisions local governments make in determining when, where and how growth will occur are determined by local circumstances and also that each community has its own view of the future.

The plan anticipates many areas in the region will experience significant change during the next 10 to 20 years, while other areas are well-established and likely to remain comparatively stable. Because this theme focuses largely on regional land use and growth management issues, it places an intentional focus on specific areas within the region that have historically been identified as key components of an overall regional development pattern that contributes to local and regional aspirations. The theme further recognizes that communities across the region contribute to regional goals and priorities in ways as diverse as the region's communities themselves.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Focusing investments

Maintaining a clear connection between land use

patterns and the region's multimodal transportation system is integral to the Denver region's continued success. Focusing development in compact urban centers that are served by transit and other alternative modes of transportation reduces the need for vehicle trips, minimizes land consumption and ensures a variety of housing and employment options are accessible to people of all ages, abilities and income levels. Concentrating urban development within local and regional priority growth areas can help the region capitalize on available infrastructure and promote the efficient use of resources.



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

The region is comprised of diverse, livable communities.

The Denver metro region will continue to embrace its diverse urban, suburban and rural communities. Varied housing and transportation options, access to employment and a range of services and recreational opportunities will promote livable communities that meet the needs of people of all ages, incomes and abilities.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Improve the diversity and livability of communities.

Urban, suburban and rural communities support a stronger, more livable region through their individual strengths and assets. These diverse communities will contribute to the achievement of regional outcomes in a variety of ways based on local needs and preferences. Communities throughout the region will pursue greater livability through built environments and development patterns that accommodate the widest spectrum of people—regardless of age, income or ability.

Supporting Objectives:

- Encourage development patterns and community design features that meet the needs of people of all ages, incomes and abilities.
- Preserve and leverage the unique characteristics of the region's communities.
- Promote investment/reinvestment in existing communities.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Provide opportunities for local governments to learn from and adapt local approaches to livability issues as appropriate to their unique characteristics.
- Foster the region's commitment to the Western values of cooperation and individualism.
- Coordinate with local governments, developers and other partners to establish an online clearinghouse of potential development sites and funding opportunities, searchable by specific parameters.

Education and Assistance

- Convene forums for small or rural communities covering topics related to maintaining and improving vitality and livability.
- Encourage local governments to use DRCOG's Boomer Bond assessment tool to help address the needs of the region's rapidly increasing aging population.
- Provide education and technical assistance in support of local efforts to integrate land use and transportation, promote increased diversity among housing options, and meet the needs of people of all ages, incomes and abilities.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Participate in forums that allow other communities to learn from local successes in advancing livability.

Policies and Regulations

- Adopt land use policies and development regulations to support compact, mixed-use development patterns and expanded housing options where appropriate.
- Adopt policies, regulations and incentives to support the implementation of universal design strategies.
- Establish guidelines or standards that improve the public realm for users of all ages, incomes and abilities as appropriate to the local context (such as street design guidelines that accommodate all users).
- Adopt policies, regulations and incentives to preserve and rehabilitate significant historic structures and cultural resources that contribute to a community's authenticity of place and ability to attract tourism.
- Promote infill and redevelopment through zoning changes.
- Encourage growth and redevelopment in and near established, rural communities; limit rural growth outside areas where basic infrastructure can be provided cost-effectively.

The region is diverse, and ranges from a dynamic central business district with a cosmopolitan urban atmosphere to small communities with a distinctly rural flavor and picturesque mountain towns nestled in the foothills of the Rockies.

Denver Relocation Guide,
Winter/Spring 2016

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Creating lifelong communities

By 2040 one in four residents of the region will be 60 or older. Older adults have

unique needs and often require support to remain in their homes and communities. Despite this shift, many older adults are staying in the workforce longer—either by choice or out of necessity—and a growing number, whether in the workforce or not, are seeking ways to remain active and engaged in their communities. Growing evidence indicates older adults are healthier and require fewer costly services when they have affordable and accessible housing choices, are provided with the ability to age in place, remain connected to the community and its networks, and have access to long-term care when needed.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS



Cooperating locally and regionally

Communities throughout the region have a long history of cooperation, including taking advantage of opportunities for growth and investment that lead to wide-reaching success. Each community also has its own history and legacy to build on through investment and reinvestment. The Western values of cooperation and individualism are not at odds. They can bring the region together on key growth and development issues. They also recognize that the region is stronger because of the diverse local contributions to our shared future that reflect both local and regional values.

Community gatherings and events are just one way the region's cities and towns celebrate their distinctive characteristics. For example, visitors from throughout the metro area flock to the Erie Town Fair and Balloon Festival. The festival begins a series of events held each summer in the town's Old Town district. These events have attracted new businesses and investments in the area.

[urbanlight/Bigstock.com](https://www.bigstock.com/urbanlight)

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

- Provide data and tools that help identify opportunities for strategic regional and local investments.
- Provide information and resources to help communities identify opportunities to retrofit suburban communities with design features that meet the needs of people of all ages, incomes and abilities.

Investments

- Continue to invest in helping people live independently as long as possible in their homes and communities.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

- Foster economic development that supports the ability for rural communities to meet the current and future needs of residents in their surrounding rural trade area.

Investments

- Consider investments in public infrastructure, public/private partnerships and catalytic projects that encourage infill, redevelopment and reinvestment in existing communities.
- Target local funds to create community design features that meet the needs of people of all ages, incomes and abilities (such as creating pedestrian-friendly environments and expanding bicycle facilities).





Preserving historic downtowns, such as along Miner Street in Idaho Springs, fosters pride among residents and attracts visitors from near and far. Unique destinations throughout the region can support local businesses and offer the community a full range of services.

Serenethos/Bigstock.com

BUILDING ON SUCCESS



Living and working in the best places

No single list of rankings can agree on the best places to live. However, across various methodologies, the communities in our region consistently rank as some of the best places to live in the country.

- Denver is No. 1 in U.S. News and World Report's 2016 "Best Places to Live." Data used for this ranking considers all the communities in the metro area.
- Boulder is No. 5 in Livability.com's 2016 "Best Places to Live." Longmont, Littleton, Lakewood and Lafayette round out the list's top 50.
- Centennial is No. 4 in USA Today's 2015 "Best Cities to Live." Arvada (No. 13) and Longmont (No. 16) also made the list.
- Louisville is No. 4 in Money's "Best Places to Live 2015." Erie is No. 13. The rankings also placed Denver among "The 5 Best Big Cities." Three of the region's communities made Money's list in 2014: Castle Rock (No. 4), Centennial (No. 13), and Boulder (No. 23).
- Wheat Ridge is No. 5 in Livability.com's 2014 "Best Places to Retire."
- Denver is the No. 8 large city in AARP's "The Most Livable Places at 50-plus," 2015. AARP's livability index also ranked Boulder as one of the "30 Easiest Cities to Get Around," and Denver as one of the "30 Best Cities for Staying Healthy."
- Superior is one of Money's top 5 "Best Places to Be a Kid," 2015.
- Castle Rock, Littleton and Parker were all included in WalletHub's "2016 Best Small Cities in America"



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

Through a coordinated effort between DRCOG and local communities, new urban development occurs in an orderly and compact pattern within regionally designated growth areas.

A process to identify local and regional urban growth priorities helps the region manage the growth of the region's urban footprint. While locally adopted policies and market demand determine the location of urban development, local commitments to coordinate and collaborate on the expansion of urban growth lead to better use of regional resources for infrastructure, reduced regional vehicle travel and conservation of open land.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Contain urban development in locations designated for urban growth and services.

Metro Vision will help focus and facilitate future growth in locations where urban-level infrastructure already exists or areas where plans for infrastructure and service expansion are in place. DRCOG will work with member communities to identify local urban growth priorities and aspirations that shape regional planning assumptions and influence the region's ability to achieve a compact regional footprint and other shared outcomes.

Supporting Objectives:

- Monitor and increase awareness of the region's existing and planned urban footprint.
- Coordinate local and regional urban growth priorities in order to improve forecasting, planning and investment decisions within regionally designated growth areas.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Work with local governments to monitor the extent of current and future urban development patterns using a mutually agreed upon methodology.
- Coordinate with local communities and infrastructure service providers to identify urban reserve areas that should be conserved for future growth beyond 2040.
- Coordinate local and regional investment in data sets to improve forecasting and other analyses related to the extent of urban development patterns.
- Develop a process to coordinate and integrate local urban growth priorities and aspirations into regional planning assumptions.
- Work with local governments to develop programs or update current initiatives that improve the coordinated efforts to identify and designate areas for new urban development.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Coordinate with DRCOG on information needed to understand local growth priorities and aspirations.
- Coordinate and establish intergovernmental agreements to address planning and service delivery issues in areas of mutual interest, such as in unincorporated portions of a community's planning area and/or areas planned for future annexation.
- Use intergovernmental agreements to jointly identify urban reserve areas for contiguous urban development beyond 2040.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS



Preparing for a demographic shift

DRCOG's Boomer Bond initiative provides education and support to

local governments through strategies and tools for supporting healthy, independent aging—allowing older adults to remain in their homes and communities for as long as they wish. Working with stakeholders around the region DRCOG developed the Boomer Bond assessment tool that local governments can use to evaluate how well the community's existing resources, programs and physical design serve older adult residents.

Jurisdictions regionwide have used the Boomer Bond assessment tool to help staff and policymakers determine effective ways to meet the needs of current and future older adult residents.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

The Denver region's urban growth boundary/area

The Denver region's urban footprint expanded rapidly during the 1980s and 1990s. Local plans and regional forecasts at the time suggested that accommodating the substantial growth anticipated in the following decades would result in a dispersed development pattern that would put the region's high quality of life and key environmental assets at risk. Through DRCOG, leaders from throughout the region came together to develop a proactive, cooperative approach to accommodate forecasted growth while achieving air quality standards, preserving open space and preventing the unnecessary expansion of infrastructure.

Since Metro Vision 2020's adoption in 1997, the urban growth boundary/area has been an important program in shaping growth and development in the region's long-range plans. An international model for cooperation, the UGB/A reflects a bottom-up approach to growth management that starts with local governments and relies heavily on voluntary collaboration among communities. Among other UGB/As nationwide, the voluntary (not legislatively mandated) nature of the Denver region's UGB/A is unique. >>>

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Education and Assistance

- Provide access to data and information that local governments can use to continue planning for future urban growth (such as the amount of land consumed by different development types; location of locally and regionally significant natural resources; and areas with commercially viable deposits of sand, gravel, quarry aggregate or other extractive resources).
- Offer data, analyses or other technical assistance that help identify opportunities for urban development within the existing urban footprint (such as infill and redevelopment on overlooked vacant or underused parcels).
- Provide education, technical assistance and other tools to help local governments track, monitor and update their local growth priorities.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Policies and Regulations

- Reflect local growth priorities and aspirations through local regulations and policies that align land use, transportation and infrastructure planning to focus urban development within these areas.
- Align local urban growth priorities and aspirations with local policies:
 - To direct growth to areas with adequate facilities and services.
 - That limit development in areas of locally and regionally significant natural resources;
 - That limit development in or near areas with commercially viable deposits of sand, gravel, quarry aggregate or other extractive resources.
 - That seek to prevent land-use incompatibility near significant regional facilities (such as airports or solid waste disposal facilities) over the long term.
- Adopt policies and regulations that limit development beyond priority growth areas identified in local plans. Location and service provision requirements for development outside these areas should be shaped by local plans and policies.
- Adopt policies and regulations that conserve opportunities for urban development beyond 2040 (such as urban reserve areas).

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Investments

- Invest in infrastructure and transportation systems within regionally designated growth areas that align with local growth aspirations and regional planning assumptions.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Investments

- Encourage efficient development within the existing urban footprint and areas identified through the DRCOG-led process to integrate local urban growth priorities into regional planning assumptions.
- Ensure urban development beyond locally determined urban service areas pays its own way, to the extent practical.
- Analyze the fiscal impact of expanding urban growth locations on operating revenues and operating and capital costs.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS

continued >>> In contrast to top-down approaches through which regional bodies play a key role in fixing an urban growth boundary on a map, the Denver region's UGB/A has significantly more flexibility. The Denver region's UGB/A allows local governments to make and change decisions about where growth can occur as local plans and markets change.

Both the Denver region and the current and future growth pressures it faces have changed since the inception of the UGB/A program. Although our region's approach has continued to achieve the regionally desired increase in urban area density (residents per square mile), the UGB/A program has not been evaluated in nearly a decade. This Metro Vision plan anticipates an evaluation of current and potential programmatic efforts to integrate local planning into regional growth priorities to continue making efficient use of available land and existing and planned infrastructure.



The design of Lakewood's new universal playground at Carmody Park encourages people of all ages and abilities to play together.

Photo courtesy of the City of Lakewood.

URBAN CENTERS

Anything but one-size-fits-all

Urban centers throughout the region vary greatly in size, context and location. Many centers are transitioning to a higher-density development pattern guided by local growth plans and aspirations. New townhomes and apartments have increased the share of the region's housing units in urban centers, while also diversifying housing options in these locations. Urban centers are also adding significant numbers of jobs.

The Denver region currently has 105 urban centers representing a range of characteristics. Local planning and implementation approaches vary depending on the size of the community, transit service levels, the surrounding development context and other factors.

Downtown Castle Rock serves as Douglas County's main street. By incorporating a downtown overlay district, the town has prioritized pedestrian access, enhanced bicycle and trail use, eased parking requirements and maintained an architectural scale that respects the urban center's Old West history. In addition to creating a welcoming environment for visitors, several technology companies are based in Castle Rock.

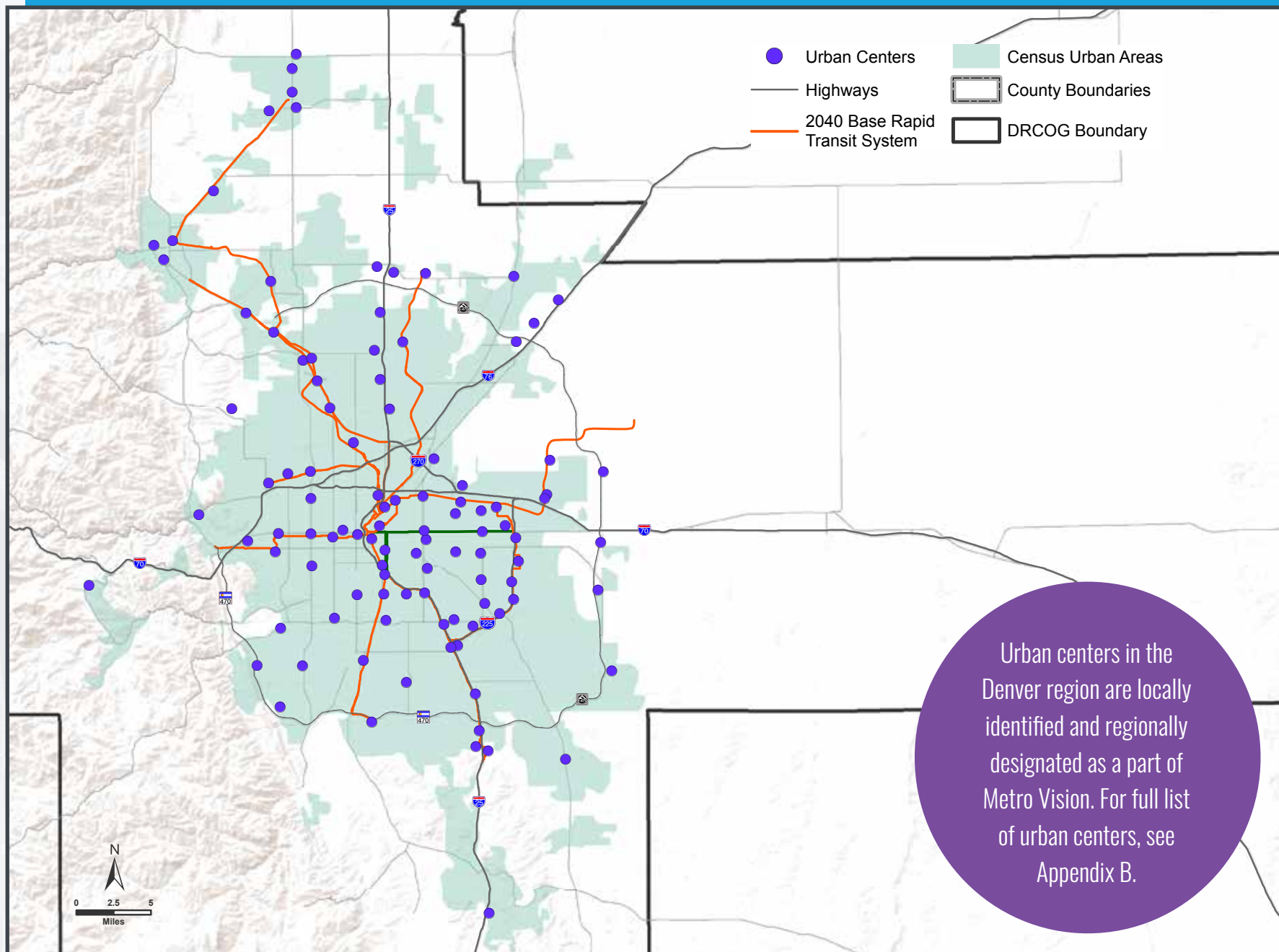
Community spaces entice **Louisville's** residents and visitors to spend more time in the heart of a thriving small town. The city's mixed-use development standards encourage high-density residential areas and require a mix of uses including retail, office and residential. A city program allows businesses to lease patio spaces in parking spots. An underpass improves safety at a railroad crossing and provides bicycle and pedestrian connections between the urban center and nearby north-south state highway.

Southglenn in the City of Centennial attracts all ages to conduct business, shop, dine and be entertained. The city plans to integrate and connect the urban center with adjacent neighborhoods, and improve pedestrian comfort and safety. Southglenn offers diverse housing, including multifamily choices that complement single-family options in surrounding neighborhoods.

The **38th and Blake** transit-oriented development in the City and County of Denver's rapidly redeveloping River North area is along the University of Colorado A Line commuter train connecting Denver Union Station to Denver International Airport. Its station area plan emphasizes walking and bicycling. The community envisions public spaces and private businesses that emphasize its industrial heritage, celebrate its historic neighborhoods, and embrace emerging residential, arts and entertainment districts.

Olde Town/New Town in the City of Arvada represents a vision for two distinct districts. Olde Town offers lower-density mixed use including retail and cultural amenities, while New Town includes an existing theater, preserving much of the area for future higher-density mixed-use redevelopment. The Olde Town Hub serves as a parking garage and bus facility, but also includes four plazas for gathering and shopping. It serves Regional Transportation District commuters and visitors.

Eastlake, in the City of Thornton, was originally settled as a railway village in the early 20th century. It will serve as a temporary end-of-line station for the North Metro rail line with higher density mixed-use development, including opportunities for high-tech and light industrial employment. By maintaining the characteristics of a vibrant small town center, Eastlake fosters an appreciation of history and sense of place in a traditional suburban environment.



Urban centers in the Denver region are locally identified and regionally designated as a part of Metro Vision. For full list of urban centers, see Appendix B.

Source: 2010 U.S. Census, CDOT, DRCOG, Esri, Tier 1 of the 2040 Metro Vision Rapid Transit System, see 2040 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

Connected urban centers and multimodal corridors throughout the region accommodate a growing share of the region's housing and employment.

The location and context of each center define its unique character. They are transit-, pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly places that contain a diverse mix of land uses and are denser than their surrounding areas; and are designed to allow people of all ages, incomes and abilities to access a range of housing, employment and services without sole reliance on having to drive. Urban centers provide public spaces where people can gather; help reduce per capita vehicle miles traveled, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption; and respect and support existing neighborhoods. The region includes a wide array of urban centers including, but not limited to traditional downtowns, transit station areas, employment centers and smaller scale compact mixed-use development in suburban settings.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Increase housing and employment in urban centers.

Collectively, urban centers will increase their share of the region's total housing and employment. The ability for individual urban centers to absorb future growth will vary based on the characteristics of each center. Specific projects and initiatives will establish a network of clear and direct multimodal connections within and between urban centers, as well as key destinations. Public and private partners will direct investment toward programs and infrastructure improvements that help local governments and the private sector develop successful urban centers and multimodal connections.

Supporting Objectives:

- Increase public/private investment and partnerships in urban centers.
- Increase transit service and ridership within and to urban centers.
- Invest in multimodal enhancements along corridors.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Engage in continuous dialogue with local governments and the private development community to address challenges to and opportunities for development in urban centers.
- Coordinate with local governments, developers and other partners to establish an online clearinghouse of potential development sites in urban centers.
- Help coordinate a network of clear and direct multimodal connections between urban centers and major destinations within the region, especially across jurisdictional boundaries.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Seek opportunities for public/private partnerships to leverage resources and implement infrastructure improvements or other catalytic projects in urban centers.

Policies and Regulations

- Adopt policies and development regulations that support higher-density, mixed-use development, pedestrian activity and accessible public spaces within urban centers.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

1995: *The DRCOG Board considered several development alternatives, or scenarios, for the location of growth and a range of transportation system improvements through 2020. The Board identified a preferred scenario that would achieve a 10 percent increase in urban density when compared to projections based on development trends. The region's voluntary urban growth boundary approach reflected in Metro Vision 2020 was based on analysis revealing positive effects from increased density, including supporting the use of existing infrastructure, encouraging transit-accessible development, limiting growth in vehicle miles traveled per capita, encouraging the use of a variety of travel modes, and stewardship of the region's water resources. >>>*

THIS IMPORTANT?

continued >>> 2007: A decade later DRCOG again explored future scenarios reflecting different land use and transportation policies, this time through 2035. Scenarios that favored compact development patterns and transit investments performed best on a variety of outcome measures including transportation system performance, infrastructure costs, accessibility and environmental effects. In contrast, scenarios that significantly expanded the region's urban footprint did not perform as well and resulted in greater strain on key regional transportation facilities. The results of the scenario analysis influenced the DRCOG Board's deliberations regarding the expansion of the region's urban growth boundary in Metro Vision 2035. >>>

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Education and Assistance

- Continue to support ongoing local planning for existing and future urban centers.
- Encourage local governments to designate corridors as urban centers by adjusting the urban center evaluation criteria.

Investments


- Continue to allocate resources to support corridor planning efforts, infrastructure improvements and other efforts to spur further public/private investment.
- Continue to allocate resources in local planning for existing and future urban centers throughout the region.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

- Consider a range of parking management strategies in and near urban centers, including (but not limited to) shared, unbundled, managed and priced parking.
- Consider the use of regulatory tools or incentives to support development of housing in urban centers that meets the needs of people of all ages, incomes and abilities.
- Adopt policies and development regulations that support multimodal enhancements and compact development or redevelopment along corridors, particularly those that connect and support urban centers.
- Direct new housing and employment growth to urban centers.
- Manage parking near rail stations and along corridors with frequent bus service to promote increased ridership.

Investments

- Prioritize investments in first- and final-mile connections to transit.
- Provide direct, multimodal connections between urban centers and surrounding neighborhoods.



The region's global economic competitiveness is bolstered by several established, growing and emerging employment centers throughout the region – including the southern I-25 corridor. Accessible by interstate, rail and bus, transportation connects residents to businesses, businesses to each other and to the rest of the world. The region's employment centers are increasingly recognizing the importance of housing options to a positive business climate.

urbanlight/Bigstock.com

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

continued >>> 2013: To prepare for the current Metro Vision update, DRCOG explored future scenarios reflecting different development patterns, as well as various transportation system investments and policies. Several scenarios focused housing and employment growth within the locally determined future urban footprint — specifically in urban centers and other areas well-served by transit. The scenarios that concentrated housing and employment growth in designated centers saw reductions in per capita vehicle miles traveled. Scenarios that concentrated population and employment growth in urban centers and areas well-served by the region's growing transit system also saw a greater share of trips to work via modes other than single-occupant vehicles, as well as the greatest decreases in per capita greenhouse gas emissions.

Traveling along U.S. Route 36, the region's commitments to both open space and orderly and compact development become apparent. Preserving and protecting the area's natural resources and working lands as the region continues to grow requires regional coordination and local commitment.

*John Wark/Airphoto/
Wark Photography, Inc.*

Performance Measures

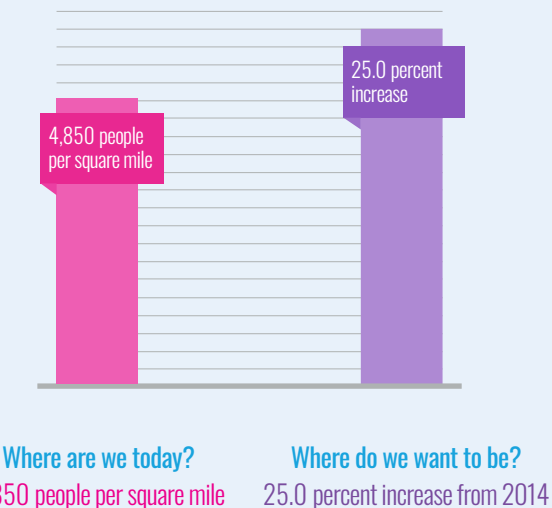
Performance measures are critically important in monitoring the region's progress toward Metro Vision themes and outcomes. They are used to periodically measure outcomes and results. They also generate reliable data to help member governments and partners evaluate policies, programs and initiatives. As part of its reporting on plan progress toward an efficient and predictable development pattern, DRCOG will include the performance measures outlined below.

MEASURE	WHERE ARE WE TODAY? (BASELINE)	WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE? (2040 TARGET)
Share of the region's housing and employment located in urban centers	Housing: 10.0 percent (2014)	Housing: 25.0 percent
	Employment: 36.3 percent (2014)	Employment: 50.0 percent
Regional population-weighted density	4,850 people per square mile (2014)	25.0 percent increase from 2014

Share of the region's housing and employment located in urban centers



Population-weighted density





Overarching theme | Our desired future will be realized through:

A CONNECTED MULTIMODAL REGION

The Denver region aspires to have a connected multimodal transportation system that provides everyone with viable travel choices. The region will have

a multimodal approach to move people and goods, with transportation facilities and services tailored to the needs and desires of individual communities. Over time, a greater share of travel will comprise public transit, bicycling, walking and carpooling. The region's transportation system will adapt quickly to major trends affecting the region, such as significant population growth, a rapidly aging population, new technology, an evolving economy and changing residential and workplace styles. Transportation and land-use planning will be integrated to improve the region's quality of life.

Current transportation needs far outweigh available funding. This necessitates difficult tradeoffs and choices, such as balancing the need for additional multimodal capacity with maintenance and system preservation needs. The region must leverage a range of funding

solutions to build and maintain transportation infrastructure and services. Coordinated regional and statewide actions must be taken to increase transportation funding.

The overall vision for the region's transportation system is organized around two regional outcomes:

- The regional transportation system is well-connected and serves all modes of travel.
- The transportation system is safe, reliable and well-maintained.

These outcomes focus on building and maintaining a world-class multimodal transportation system. Supporting objectives and initiatives will help the region achieve these outcomes. The companion 2040 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan implements the transportation element of Metro Vision. The 2040 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan defines the specific transportation system the region envisions and the portions that can be funded through 2040.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Operating, maintaining and expanding the transportation system

The region must operate and maintain our existing multimodal transportation system while accommodating more than 1 million new residents and 600,000 more jobs by 2040. However, transportation funding is limited. Our region must continue to facilitate the movement of people, goods and services to ensure the Denver region remains economically competitive. Providing a range of travel options will facilitate useful and convenient mobility for all travelers. New and reconstructed roadways must be designed to optimize movement of people and vehicles alongside system management and operations that leverage existing capacity and enable safe travel for all users.

Responding to increased demand for transportation



Population and employment growth in the Denver region will contribute to a significant increase in congestion by 2040. By exploring infrastructure approaches such as high-occupancy vehicle lanes and roadways that accommodate multiple modes of travel, transportation agencies and communities can provide the growing population with reliable travel choices to get around the region. Through transportation demand management, DRCOG and its partners help the region's residents and visitors discover various ways to travel to work, school, medical care, social and cultural activities, and their daily errands.



A new overpass at 19th Street in Golden helps bicyclists, pedestrians and drivers cross U.S. Route 6 safely. The collaboration between the city and the Colorado Department of Transportation represents the region's progress toward a safe and reliable transportation system.

*Photo by Melissa Crocker,
City of Golden*



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

The regional transportation system is well-connected and serves all modes of travel.

The transportation system integrates regional and local roadways and streets, transit (bus and rail), bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and air and freight rail linkages. The transportation system connects the region to the rest of the state and beyond, and will evolve to include future technology and mobility innovations as appropriate.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Improve and expand the region's multimodal transportation system, services and connections.

The region will continue to invest in a well-connected, multimodal transportation system to improve mobility and accommodate anticipated increases of more than 1.16 million people and 600,000 jobs by 2040. Transportation system investment initiatives may include expanding transit service and coverage, improving on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, widening and adding new roadways, and promoting travel options. The resulting transportation system will increase mobility choices within and beyond the region for people, goods and services.

Supporting Objectives:

- Improve the capacity of the multimodal regional roadway system.
- Improve the region's comprehensive transit system, including the timely completion of the FasTracks program.

- Improve bicycle and pedestrian accessibility.
- Improve interconnections of the multimodal transportation system within and beyond the region for people and freight.
- Expand travel demand management services and strategies.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Maintain a fiscally constrained regional transportation plan that defines long-range multimodal projects, services and programs to address mobility needs.
- Adopt Transportation Improvement Program project selection policies that consider all transportation users.
- Coordinate with the Regional Transportation District and other transit providers to implement major projects and services.
- Coordinate with Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council and transit operators to increase transportation for vulnerable populations, such as older adults, people with disabilities and low-income populations.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Coordinate with the Regional Transportation District and other transit providers on transit service, facilities and infrastructure components of development projects, such as bus bulbs and queue jump lanes.
- Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure a well-connected system across boundaries.
- Coordinate with public transit providers to improve regionally funded local service, maintaining the right to buy-up service for increased frequency and coverage.
- Coordinate local comprehensive plan and transportation plan updates with neighboring and affected jurisdictions.
- Coordinate transportation system improvements and operations to consider issues of land-use compatibility.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Making connections that increase access and travel choice

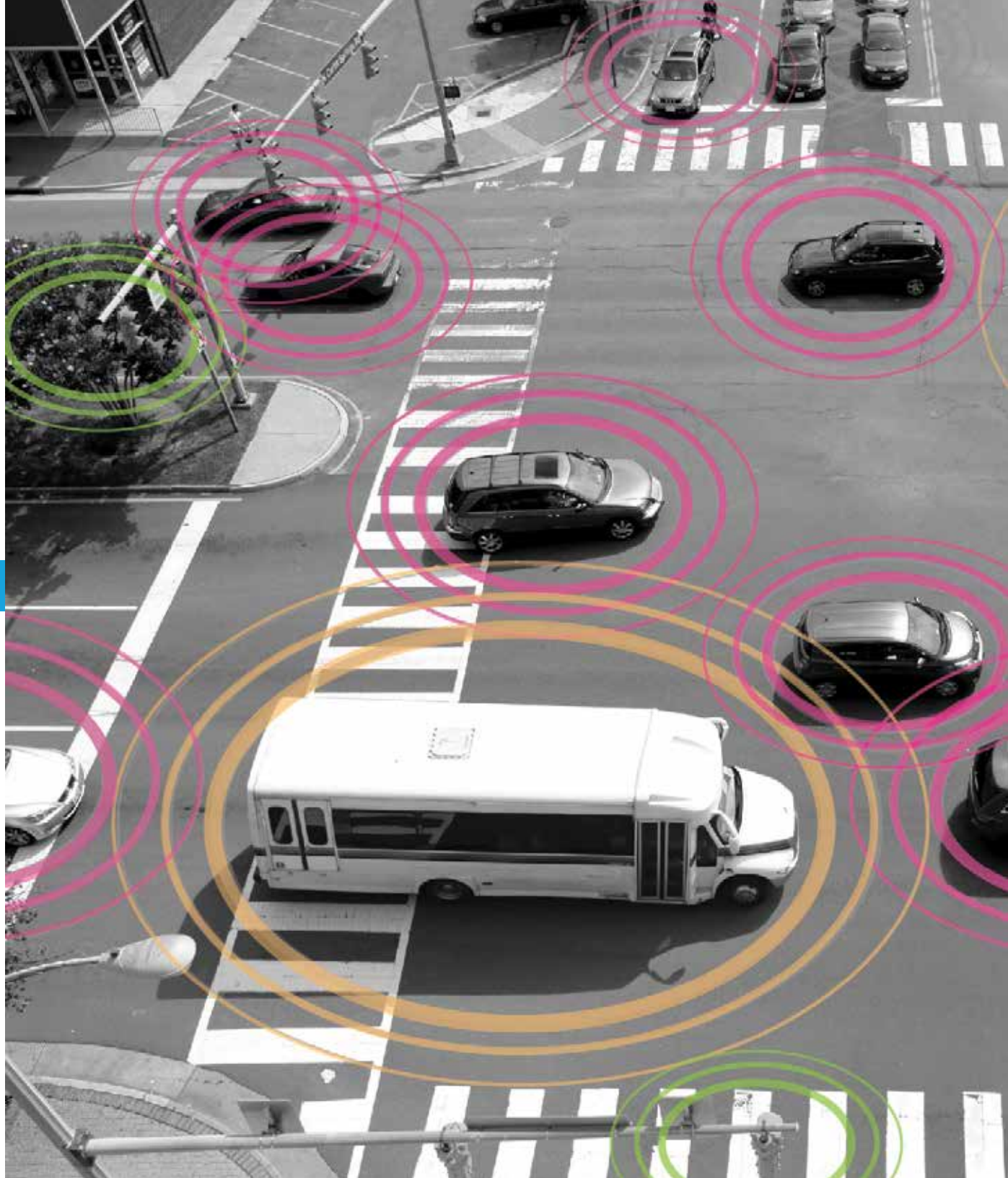
Our region continues to make significant investments in transit, such as the Regional Transportation District's FasTracks transit system while also envisioning future intra- and inter-regional transit connections. Although the completed portions of the FasTracks program have expanded regional mobility, such improvements cannot be fully realized without easier connections for those walking, biking, driving, sharing a ride, or riding a bus to first- or final-mile connections to transit. Our region and local jurisdictions continue to increase the viability of walking and bicycling by expanding the bicycle and pedestrian network and providing additional supportive infrastructure. Providing all of these travel choices can help reduce vehicle miles traveled, ground-level ozone and other air pollutants, which can lead to improved individual and environmental health. A transportation system that serves users of all modes of travel also helps ensure that people of all ages, income levels and abilities remain connected to their communities and have the means to access services, amenities and employment opportunities.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Embracing new technologies and innovations

Car-sharing, ride-sharing and bike-sharing programs are already significant travel options within the region. Emerging transportation innovations, such as connected and driverless cars, have the potential to dramatically influence future personal mobility. Broader use of technology and other innovations has the potential to optimize available capacity by helping multimodal transportation system users manage travel, make decisions to avoid congested areas and reduce overall congestion.



Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

- Facilitate coordination between jurisdictions in expanding and connecting the region's bicycle and pedestrian network.
- Encourage integrated land use and transportation planning among state and regional agencies, local governments, and the development community.
- Coordinate information and services among all transportation providers.
- Work with partners to expand the regional travel demand management program consisting of outreach, promotion, trip-planning and marketing activities to shift commute choices to non-single-occupant vehicle modes, including carpools, vanpools, transit, bicycling and walking, as well as telework and alternative work schedules. Continue and expand marketing consisting of advertising campaigns and events such as Bike to Work Day and Walk and Bike to School Day.
- Conduct a regionwide evaluation of potential bus rapid transit corridors via a joint effort of the Regional Transportation District, DRCOG, the Colorado Department of Transportation, and other stakeholders.
- Work with stakeholders regionwide to develop a vision for a hierarchical, high-comfort, low-stress bicycle network for the region that can accommodate most ages and abilities.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

- Coordinate planning efforts to ensure real estate needed for the expansion of multimodal transportation facilities is identified and preserved for mobility uses.

Policies and Regulations

- Implement parking supply and pricing mechanisms, such as shared, unbundled, managed and priced parking in locally defined activity centers to manage parking availability and provide incentives for walking, bicycling, carpooling and transit use.
- Adopt and implement street and development standards to improve multimodal connectivity in a variety of contexts (urban, suburban and rural) while considering unique land-use settings, such as schools, parks and offices.
- Adopt policies and development regulations that support transit.
- Address the needs of mobility-limited populations in local transportation plans and policies.
- Adopt and implement local street standards and other development codes and standards that address multimodal connectivity objectives in a variety of land-use contexts, such as cut-throughs for pedestrians and bicycles in cul-de-sacs.

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER



Regional Transportation Plan:

As the federally designated transportation planning agency for the Denver region, DRCOG develops the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan to guide the region's future multimodal transportation system. The Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan is integrated with the Metro Vision plan to address the mobility needs of people of all ages, incomes and abilities. It identifies the desired vision for our transportation system in a scenario under which funding is unconstrained. It also defines the fiscally constrained multimodal system to be implemented by 2040 using revenues that are reasonably expected to be available. In addition to funding construction of major roadway and rapid transit projects, revenues must also be used to maintain and operate the transportation system, and for transit service, bicycle, pedestrian and other types of projects.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS



Denver Union Station

After a multiyear rehabilitation and restoration project, the historic Denver Union Station reopened in 2014 as a hub of multimodal transportation options for the entire region. A regional coalition including DRCOG joined forces to develop the plan to revitalize the historic structure and surrounding properties. Today bus, light rail, commuter rail, bikeshare, ride-hailing and other travel options converge at Denver Union Station—a premier example of our vision of a connected multimodal transportation system. Denver Union Station has also emerged as a primary anchor in the central business district and is a primary catalyst for hundreds of millions of dollars in private development and investment.

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

- Coordinate with local governments to balance primary park-and-ride functions with opportunities for transit-oriented development.
- Collaborate with local and regional stakeholders in transportation planning activities to address the needs of mobility-limited populations
- Facilitate coordinated local and regional investment in datasets to improve transportation planning and investment.

Education and Assistance

- Encourage and support fare structures and subsidy programs that keep transit service affordable for all users.
- Provide tools, informational forums and resources to jurisdictions regarding bicycle- and pedestrian-facility design, guidance and implementation.
- Conduct activities to inform and promote the use of travel demand management strategies and services by transportation management associations/organizations and local travel demand management providers, such as ride-sharing, vanpools, carpools and school carpools.

Investments


- Consider the use of managed lanes in new roadway capacity projects where feasible.
- Support bicycle-sharing programs regionwide.
- Include major roadway and transit capacity projects in DRCOG's fiscally constrained Regional Transportation Plan once construction funding is identified for such projects.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

- Ensure Americans with Disabilities Act standards are met or exceeded in constructing or retrofitting facilities such as curb cuts and ramps.
- Adopt local multimodal transportation plans that address connections within and between jurisdictions and communities.
- Adopt land-use standards around airports, railroad lines and facilities to guide compatible long-range development.
- Reserve adequate rights-of-way in developing and redeveloping areas, as feasible, for pedestrian, bicycle, transit and roadway facilities.

Investments

- As a supplement to other funding sources, including federal funds, finance roadway preservation, operational and expansion projects through local capital improvement programs.
- Improve multimodal connectivity.
- Fund projects that address multimodal connectivity through non-metropolitan planning organization programs.
- Provide on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure that is comfortable, safe and convenient.
- Explore strategies to create multimodal connections between smaller scale suburban centers and the region's existing and emerging employment centers.



A worker helps guide a crane operator in setting one of the 192 girders on the Skyway Bridge between the 48th and Brighton – National Western Center and Commerce City – 72nd stations on the under-construction RTD North Metro Rail Line. At just under 9,533 feet, when it opens the Skyway Bridge will be the longest in Colorado, crossing 11 transportation corridors and waterways.

Photograph provided courtesy of the Regional Transportation District.

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER



Traffic Operations

Since 1989, DRCOG has been working to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality through its Traffic Operations program. Through the program, DRCOG, the Colorado Department of Transportation and local governments coordinate traffic signals on major roadways in the region. One of the first transportation planning agencies to conduct this type of program, DRCOG remains a national leader among agencies involved in traffic signal coordination. In 2015, the program retimed 259 signals on travel corridors in the region, reducing daily travel time for motorists along those corridors by more than 1,600,000 hours and reducing fuel consumption by 800,000 gallons. Additionally, pollutant emissions were reduced by 90 tons, while annual greenhouse gas emissions were reduced by 8,000 tons.



Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

- Invest in and manage in the region's multimodal transportation system to improve freight and goods movement within and beyond the region.
- Upgrade existing facilities (sidewalks, crosswalks, bus stops and shelters) to improve transit access for older adults and mobility-limited populations.
- Fund first- and final-mile bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connections to transit such as sidewalks, bicycle facilities, bike-sharing, wayfinding, bicycle parking, shelters and car-sharing at transit stations.

At Confluence Park in Denver, cyclists use a multiuse path as part of their commute along the Cherry Creek Trail. From 1990 until 2013, bicycle commuting rates in the Denver region increased by 130 percent, compared with a nationwide average of 62 percent. Events such as Bike to Work Day, sponsored regionally by the Denver Regional Council of Governments Way to Go program, are opportunities for commuters to try biking to work.

*Amanda B. Lindemann
Denver Regional Council of Governments*

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

- Provide wayfinding signage for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users to reach key destinations.
- Provide first- and final-mile bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connections to transit such as sidewalks, bicycle facilities, bike-sharing, wayfinding, bicycle parking and shelters and car-sharing at transit stations.
- Implement off-street sidewalks and multi-use paths that are comfortable for a wide array of users by providing separation from traffic.
- Conduct local activities to inform and promote the use of travel demand management strategies and services by transportation management associations/ organizations and local travel demand management providers.
- Promote educational and promotional events to encourage bicycling and walking, such as Safe Routes to School.
- Reserve adequate rights-of-way in developing and redeveloping areas, as feasible, for pedestrian, bicycle, transit and roadway facilities.
- Expand mobility options within urban centers and other locally defined activity centers.
- Implement transportation improvements that enhance transit-oriented development opportunities.

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

- Continue to allocate resources to support corridor planning efforts, infrastructure improvements and other efforts to spur further public/private investment.
- Provide funding, tools, informational forums, and resources to jurisdictions, transportation management associations/organizations, nonprofits, and other travel demand management stakeholders to increase travel demand management awareness and use.
- Maintain and enhance airport capacity throughout the region.
- Improve transportation linkages to major destinations, markets and attractions beyond the region.

By 2040, the region's population is expected to grow by 1.2 million people. Investments in the region's transportation system will not only accommodate more residents, but also support our region's growing economy. Transportation system investment initiatives may include expanding transit service and coverage, improving on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrian facilities, widening and adding new roadways, exploring new technologies and promoting travel options.

Denver Regional Council of Governments





Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

The transportation system is safe, reliable and well-maintained.

Educational, enforcement and engineering approaches enhance safety to reduce crashes, serious injuries and fatalities. Coordinated operations and management of the system maximizes capacity and reliability for all users. Transportation system physical components are well-maintained to extend their useful life and provide a quality travel experience.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Operate, manage and maintain a safe and reliable transportation system.

The region will optimize the multimodal transportation system to improve the safe and reliable flow of people and goods. System optimization will include projects and initiatives that make the multimodal transportation system's capacity as productive as possible. The multimodal system will require maintenance to continue safe and sound conditions. Safety projects and other related initiatives will reduce fatalities and serious injuries for all travel modes. The region will also increase the deployment of technology and mobility innovations to improve reliability and optimize capacity.

Supporting Objectives:

- Maintain existing and future transportation facilities in good condition.
- Improve transportation system performance and reliability.
- Improve transportation safety and security.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Collaborate with the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Regional Transportation District, local governments and other regional stakeholders to implement and monitor asset management techniques.
- Work with the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Regional Transportation District and other regional stakeholders to expand effective Transportation Systems Management and Operations projects, incident management procedures and processes, transportation demand management initiatives, and other innovative tools and techniques to safely optimize performance.
- Coordinate efforts of the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Regional Transportation District, local governments and other regional stakeholders to most efficiently use the existing multimodal system while planning for future use.
- Way to Go and travel demand management stakeholders continue to work with local jurisdictions and employers to distribute information about and encourage the use of technology, including multimodal real-time trip planning.
- Collaborate with public safety stakeholders to assess threats to and vulnerabilities of the transportation system, including consideration of national and regional homeland security initiatives, and establish and implement resolution processes in response.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Monitor and manage transportation systems (including traffic signal systems) in collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions.
- Participate in federal, state and regional initiatives related to safety and homeland security initiatives.
- Partner with local law enforcement agencies and advocacy groups on education and enforcement activities related to all road users.
- Accurately monitor and maintain crash and traffic safety data for all transportation modes.
- Support the use of congestion pricing and other tolling techniques.

Policies and Regulations

- Develop specific plans and strategies to operate roadways more efficiently (such as traffic signal coordination and better management of traffic incidents).
- Develop and implement access management principles along major streets.
- Enforce traffic and ordinances as they apply to all users of the transportation system.
- Implement Transportation Systems Management and Operations projects.

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER



Managing congestion

Through its congestion management process, DRCOG works with local, state and national partners to alleviate congestion and help people and businesses

avoid or adapt to it. DRCOG uses travel demand reduction and operational strategies to effectively manage transportation facilities.

DRCOG has developed a toolkit for addressing congestion through construction, demand management, real-time information and operational strategies. Many of the strategies are implemented through DRCOG programs such as its travel demand management program, Way to Go, and its Traffic Signal System Improvement Program and Intelligent Transportation Systems management and operations. This process and its associated strategies enables DRCOG to monitor performance of the region's transportation system (summarized in annual reports), as well as identify, evaluate and implement strategies through the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan and short-range Transportation Improvement Program. The congestion management process is integral to DRCOG's performance-based planning process.



Traffic management centers allow local governments and the Colorado Department of Transportation to respond in real-time to incidents on the region's roadways. Such centers support efforts to operate, manage and maintain a transportation system that is safe and reliable for all users.

Photo provided courtesy of the Colorado Department of Transportation.

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

- Coordinate with federal, state, regional and local agencies to implement applicable homeland security plans and initiatives.
- Facilitate interagency coordination on safety and homeland security initiatives.
- Work with communities and transportation providers to identify and address challenges faced by mobility-limited populations and employment sectors with non-traditional work schedules.

Education and Assistance

- Consider supporting alternative pricing and revenue-producing strategies that directly reflect the cost of vehicle travel to the user.

Investments


- Support cost-effective improvements to driver, passenger, pedestrian and bicyclist safety.
- Maintain transportation system assets (vehicles and facilities) in a state of good repair per federal requirements.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

- Implement other dynamic demand management strategies.
- Develop and implement strategies that enhance security.

Investments

- Maintain transportation facilities in good condition and implement asset management principles and techniques.
- Implement access management projects to optimize the efficiency of roadways, reduce conflict points and improve safety.
- Implement projects that reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes involving motor vehicles, freight and passenger trains, buses, bicycles and pedestrians.



Vision Zero is a worldwide movement to eliminate traffic fatalities and severe injuries. The City and County of Denver established a goal of eliminating all traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2030. Addressing safety issues associated with multilane arterials, such as Broadway, is an essential step in making systematic improvements throughout the city.

Jessica Fields



A public-private partnership in Lone Tree exemplifies how local organizations can provide first- and final-mile solutions. The city, Denver South Transportation Management Association, Charles Schwab, Sky Ridge Medical Center and the Park Ridge Corporate Center provide an employee shuttle and an Uber-powered pilot for door-to-door transportation within the city.

*Photo provided courtesy of
City of Lone Tree.*

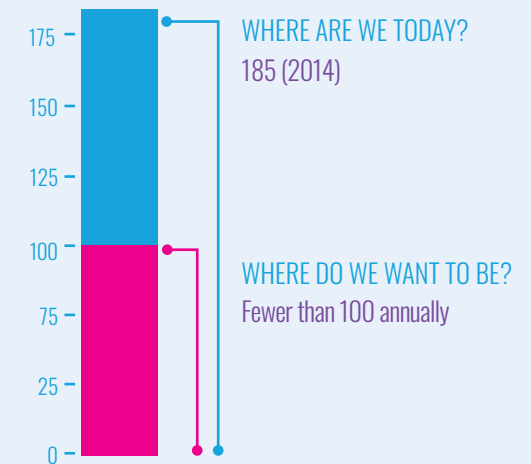
Performance Measures

Performance measures are critically important in monitoring the region's progress toward Metro Vision themes and outcomes. They are used to obtain regular measurement of outcomes and results. They also generate reliable data to help local governments and partners evaluate policies, programs and initiatives. As part of its reporting on plan progress toward becoming a connected multimodal region DRCOG will use the performance measures outlined below.

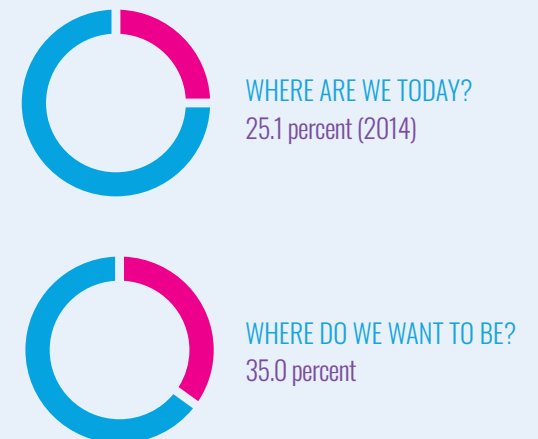
Large urban areas such as metropolitan Denver are vibrant places offering a variety of employment, service and recreation opportunities in locations regionwide. Therefore, at some points in time, traffic congestion is inevitable. Plan performance measures related to congested travel conditions establish targets that are higher than current baseline measurements, but below currently forecasted future levels of congestion.

MEASURE	WHERE ARE WE TODAY? (BASELINE)	WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE? (2040 TARGET)
Non-single-occupant vehicle (non-SOV) mode share to work	25.1 percent (2014)	35.0 percent
Daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita	25.5 daily VMT per capita (2010)	10.0 percent decrease from 2010
Average travel time variation (TTV) (peak vs. off-peak)	1.22 (2014)	Less than 1.30
Daily person delay per capita	6 minutes (2017)	Less than 9 minutes
Number of traffic fatalities	185 (2014)	Fewer than 100 annually

Number of traffic fatalities



Non-single-occupant vehicle mode share to work





Overarching theme | Our desired future will be realized through:

A SAFE AND RESILIENT NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The Denver region's unique setting and natural environment are among its greatest assets. Mountain views, an abundance of natural amenities and outdoor recreation opportunities, and a pleasant climate have helped spur steady and sustained growth in the region for decades. As the area becomes more populous, our region must maintain these assets and the quality of life enjoyed by so many.

In the nearly 20 years since Metro Vision was first adopted, the region has made great strides in its efforts to protect significant open space and agricultural lands—both at the local level and through collaborative regional efforts. Progress on the development of numerous parks and an interconnected regional trail and greenway system has also been significant, although a number of missing links remain.

One consequence of the region's growth has been the increase in the number of residents who live in areas that, while scenic, are at higher

risk for natural disasters such as flooding and wildfire. As a result, the region's resiliency—or ability to respond to and recover from major events—has been tested by the significant social and economic costs associated with multiple natural disasters that have recently occurred during a relatively short period of time.

Achieving a safe and resilient built and natural environment depends on the region's ability to work together toward the following outcomes:

- The region has clean water and air, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- The region values, protects and connects people to its diverse natural resource areas, open space, parks and trails.
- The region's working agricultural lands and activities contribute to a strong regional food system.
- The risks and effects of natural and human-created hazards is reduced.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Protecting air quality

Growth in the region represents significant challenges to the quality of the region's natural environment. As more residents and businesses call the region home the need for travel increases.

This contributes to a persistent problem in the region: air pollution, including ozone. Ground-level ozone is formed when emissions from everyday items combine with other pollutants and "cook" in heat and sunlight. Sources of such emissions include industry; power plants; oil and gas production; gasoline-powered vehicles; and lawn equipment. At ground level, ozone is a health hazard, especially for the young, elderly and people with pre-existing respiratory conditions, such as asthma.

Notable progress has been made, but the effects of air pollution are wide-ranging, putting at risk individual health, the experience and value of our outdoor assets, and the ability of our economy to grow.



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

The region has clean water and air, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

The region meets or exceeds applicable federal, state, and local requirements and regional targets for air and water quality.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Local and regional initiatives will reduce ground-level ozone, greenhouse gas emissions, and other air pollutants. Collaboration with regional partners, such as the Regional Air Quality Council, the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Regional Transportation District will be integral to improving air quality through reductions in ground-level ozone concentrations, carbon monoxide, and particulate matter. Additional initiatives will raise public awareness of the direct role of individual actions in pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions.

Supporting Objectives:

- Increase collaboration with local and regional partners on air quality initiatives.
- Increase public awareness of air quality issues.
- Improve the fuel economy of the region's vehicle fleet.

In the West, water is a valuable resource. In addition to providing water storage to capture spring mountain runoff, the region's reservoirs, such as Cherry Creek Reservoir in Cherry Creek State Park in Aurora, provide opportunities for outdoor recreation including swimming, fishing and boating.

urbanlight/Bigstock.com



Objective | Through various approaches, our region will: Improve the efficient use and quality of the region's waters.

In a semi-arid climate, water resources remain critically important to the region's quality of life and continued prosperity. The region will ensure clean water for consumption, recreation and a balanced, healthy ecological community through initiatives to restore and maintain the chemical and physical integrity of the region's waters. DRCOG will focus on collaborative initiatives among local governments, water providers, agricultural producers, the design and development community, and other regional stakeholders to promote water conservation and responsible water-management and land use practices.

Supporting Objectives:

- Increase collaboration with local and regional partners on water quality initiatives.
- Increase public awareness of water quality issues.
- Maximize the efficient use of municipal and industrial water.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Using limited water resources wisely

Water is a particularly scarce resource in the Mountain West—a fact underscored by periods of drought during the past decade. An ongoing consideration is the ability of the region's finite water supply to accommodate projected growth while protecting water quality. Both water supply and quality are mandated and monitored at the state level and require close collaboration at the local, regional and state levels. The conservation and stewardship of the region's water resources is critical to maintaining the health of people, as well as the other ecological systems that support life.

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

Regional Air Quality Council

Established in 1989, the Regional Air Quality Council serves as the lead air quality planning agency for the Denver metropolitan area. Its mission is to develop and propose effective and cost-efficient air quality planning initiatives with input from government agencies, the private sector, stakeholder groups and citizens of the metro region.

The Regional Air Quality Council prepares state implementation plans that demonstrate and ensure long-term compliance with state and federal air quality standards. DRCOG and the Regional Air Quality Council coordinate on a variety of regional air quality initiatives and projects. DRCOG provides travel model information to assist in the development of state implementation plans specifically related to forecasted emissions from the transportation sector. DRCOG also provides Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality funding to the Regional Air Quality Council for its Clean Air Fleets, Ozone Aware, and local air quality projects. To ensure transportation efforts align with Regional Air Quality Council initiatives, the executive director of the Regional Air Quality Council serves on the Regional Transportation Committee and is a permanent member of the Transportation Advisory Committee.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Facilitate communication and project implementation among state, regional and local agencies to maximize the efficiency of the transportation network.
- Cooperatively develop mitigation strategies for transportation projects to address environmental effects.
- Coordinate with the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission and other stakeholders to monitor land use changes in basins with adopted water quality plans and programs.
- Facilitate coordinated local and regional investment in datasets to improve forecasting and other analysis capabilities related to air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, water demand and surface water runoff.
- Collaborate with local and regional partners to increase the awareness and implementation of best management practices and incentives available to support regional water conservation efforts among all users.

Education and Assistance

- Encourage the use of alternative fuel vehicles and infrastructure.
- Support actions that reduce engine idling.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Collaborate with adjoining communities, water districts and other providers on efforts to promote the efficient delivery and use of water and infrastructure for commercial, residential and agricultural purposes.

Policies and Regulations

- Review and modify local comprehensive plans and development regulations to improve travel choice accessibility to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Adopt parking management strategies that reduce idling.
- Adopt policies and procedures to reduce the potential environmental effects of roadway construction and maintenance.
- Adopt and implement grading, erosion and sediment control ordinances to minimize sediment and other pollutant runoff.
- Adopt policies and regulations for industrial uses to limit potential groundwater contamination.
- Develop regulations and infrastructure needed to support the use of alternative fuel vehicles and the use of alternative modes, such as charging stations, bicycle parking and shower facilities for employees.

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

- Support the development of infrastructure and local regulations, policies and ordinances regarding alternative fuels, fleet conversions, environmental preservation and related topics.
- Continue to support programs and public awareness campaigns, such as Way to Go and others that promote behavior shifts on an individual level that improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- Maintain access to data and mapping of aquifers, recharge areas, wellheads, landfills and other information, as available, to help inform local land use decisions that may affect the region's groundwater resources.
- Support public awareness campaigns that promote individual, institutional and business behaviors that reduce pollutant runoff and opportunities for groundwater contamination.

Investments

- Fund transportation system improvements that minimize transportation-related fuel consumption, as well as air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Support large-scale fleet conversions by local governments and shared fleets around the region.
- Provide incentives for the use of cleaner technologies, such as alternative fuel vehicles.
- Develop and invest in regional alternative fueling station infrastructure plans and projects for fuels that lead to the greatest reductions in air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.

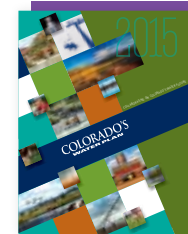
Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

- Promote water conservation through ordinance revisions and public information activities that encourage the use of low-flow plumbing devices; drought-tolerant and native vegetation for landscaping; conservation-oriented irrigation; and other low-impact site development techniques in new development and rehabilitation projects.
- Adopt policies that facilitate the use of Low Impact Development to take advantage of natural features that improve storm water quality.
- Encourage the use of xeric trees in development and redevelopment projects to increase the use of passive solar treatments.
- Require adequate wastewater treatment systems to serve new development.
- Require adequate long-term water services to serve new development.

Investments

- Include alternative fuel infrastructure within transportation projects as appropriate.
- Update business and government fleets to alternative fuel vehicles.
- Make investments that reduce water consumption and increase reuse.

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER



Planning the use of the state's water from the bottom up

"Colorado's water quantity and quality questions can no longer be thought of separately. Each impacts the other and our state

water policy should address them conjunctively."

Executive Order D 2013-005, issued by Governor Hickenlooper, directing the Colorado Water Conservation Board to develop a statewide water plan

In order to create the first Colorado Water Plan, the Colorado Water Conservation Board sought input from local stakeholders in each of the state's river basins. In the Denver region, these stakeholders came together through the South Platte Basin and Metro Basin roundtables. To provide input directly to the state, each roundtable was responsible for creating a basin implementation plan that reflected local needs and preferred approaches to meeting those needs, based on its own assessment.

The Metro Roundtable is the only roundtable not designated from a direct connection to a natural hydrological river basin. It represents about half of the state's population, and has unique challenges separate from the South Platte Basin as a whole. The Metro Basin and South Platte implementation plans will be updated periodically to continue to provide the state with up-to-date input on local needs and preferences.



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

The region values, protects and connects people to its diverse natural resource areas, open space, parks and trails.

The region's protection and restoration of its diverse natural resource areas—its mountain backdrop, unique prairie landscapes, extensive riparian corridors and other open space areas, parks and trails—is essential as the region continues to grow. Access to these areas provides the opportunity to participate in a variety of recreational pursuits that support physical and mental health and wellness.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Protect a variety of open spaces.

Open space and the natural environment are important assets in the region. A variety of open spaces of different sizes, settings and purposes will help define the urban area and distinguish individual communities. Additionally, these open spaces provide important wildlife habitat, support various outdoor recreational pursuits and protect the health of water and ecological systems. The region will conserve and protect natural resources including prominent geologic features, surface waters, riparian areas, wetlands, forests and woodlands, prairie grasslands and other environmentally sensitive lands for future generations.

Supporting Objective:

- Protect and restore natural resources of local and regional significance.

A water treatment operator at the Binney Water Purification Facility in Aurora samples source water. Coordinated efforts among communities such as through the Water Infrastructure and Supply Efficiency Partnership have resulted in well-managed regional water systems that provide clean, drinkable water for the region's residents.

Jim Havey / Havey Productions



Objective | Through various approaches, our region will: Connect people to natural resource and recreational areas.

In addition to local and regional initiatives to preserve, protect and expand open space assets, the region will ensure that residents and visitors may access these amenities. Active and passive open spaces will serve as a key component of the region's overall growth framework, connecting people to open space amenities. Local and regional initiatives will prioritize the completion of missing links in the regional trail and greenways network and improve other multimodal connections to increase park accessibility.

Supporting Objectives:

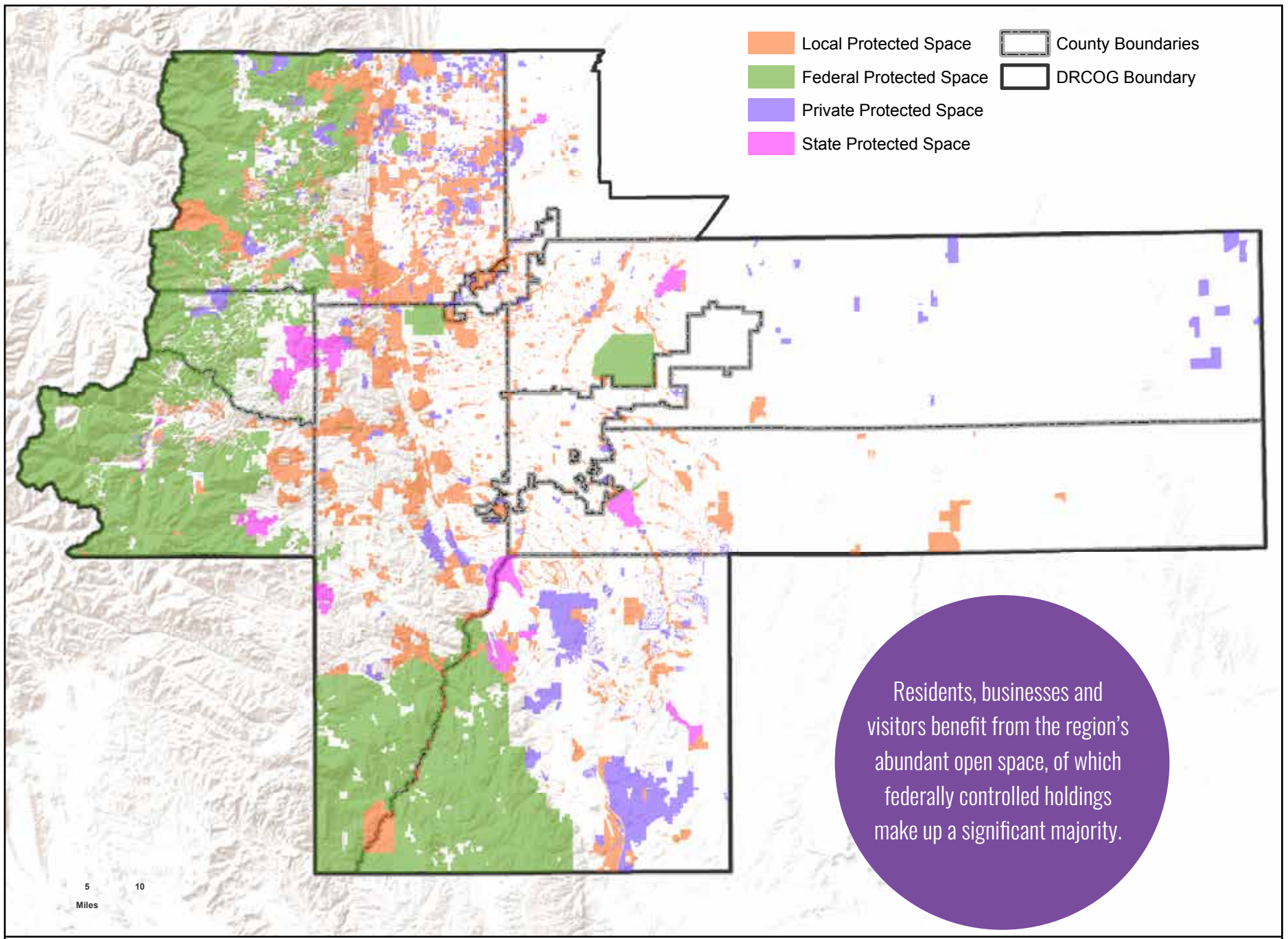
- Improve opportunities for recreation and access to nature.
- Improve multimodal linkages to and between the region's parks, open spaces and developed areas.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS



Maintaining and preserving outdoor amenities

The region's natural resource areas, open space, parks and trails add immeasurably to our region's quality of life and our residents are united in their support for preserving it. In 2012, DRCOG conducted a listening tour in advance of primary plan development activities to identify key planning issues, including emerging opportunities and challenges. The region's—and Colorado's—outdoor amenities were often the first strength mentioned by listening tour participants. Many participants emphasized the importance of maintaining or improving our outdoor amenities such as parks, trail systems and open space over the next 25 years. Due to significant population growth and associated development pressure, maintaining and preserving these outdoor amenities may be challenging.



Source: DRCOG, COMaP, Greenprint, DRCOG member governments, Esri

*Youth try slacklining at
Sloan's Lake Park in Denver
during National Get Outdoors Day,
the second Saturday in June. Federal,
state and local organizations help
youth experience outdoor activities
and explore healthy lifestyles.*

*Jonathan Phillips /
jonathanphillipsphotography.com*



BUILDING ON SUCCESS

Continuing a preservation legacy

Our region is fortunate to contain significant federal, state and local lands that contribute to our inventory of natural areas and open space. After an extensive environmental cleanup under the oversight of federal, state and local agencies, the approximately 15,000-acre Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge provides a protected environment for more than 330 species of animals.

The Great Outdoors Colorado amendment to the state constitution gives a portion of state lottery proceeds to projects that preserve, protect and enhance Colorado's outdoors. Great Outdoors Colorado has invested in 3,400 projects statewide since its inception, resulting in more than 1.4 million acres being placed under conservation easements.

Dating back to the early 1970s, the Jefferson County Open Space program is the nation's first sales tax funded open space program. Since its adoption, the open space program has acquired more than 52,000 acres of land.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Coordinate with local and regional partners to identify and map locally and regionally significant natural resources.
- Collaborate with local governments and other regional partners on the identification and implementation of important multimodal linkages to and between the region's parks, open spaces and developed areas.

Education and Assistance

- Provide data and information that helps local and regional partners operate and plan for open space, trails and other natural resource and recreational areas.
- Provide data and tools that help local and regional partners connect people to open space, trails and other natural resource and recreational areas.
- Help identify potential local, regional and state funding to protect and connect a variety of open spaces.
- Increase awareness of the need to plan for and accommodate smaller parks, green spaces and recreational amenities in and adjacent to urban centers.
- Support the integration of parks, open space and trails as part of the restoration of brownfields and other similar sites.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Coordinate with adjoining communities and municipalities and other organizations, such as Great Outdoors Colorado, to leverage available funding.

Policies and Regulations

- Adopt policies that protect locally and regionally significant natural resources.
- Adopt policies and establish guidelines or standards that promote the incorporation of natural features into new development and redevelopment.
- Adopt open space set-aside or fee-in-lieu requirements for future development or redevelopment.
- Adopt policies and regulations to enhance connections to parks and support the implementation of open space and recreational areas in urban centers.
- Preserve features of scenic, historic and educational value.
- Develop plans to address potential conflicts between conservation of natural resources and their public use and enjoyment.
- Use open space as a tool to shape growth and development patterns.



Festival Park in Castle Rock offers residents and visitors walking trails, picnic areas and an amphitheater. Many of its year-round events for residents and visitors are appropriate for families with young children. The park is easily reached on foot or by bike from local businesses and the town's municipal offices.

Nick Lucey/NickLucey.com

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Investments

- Encourage the role of land trusts to facilitate open space conservation (such as the donation or purchase of conservation easements).
- Increase low-impact transportation access to natural resource and recreational areas (such as transit).

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Investments

- Support the development of parks of various sizes, hosting a variety of recreational amenities.
- Complete local multimodal linkages to the region's parks and open spaces through strategic acquisition or other means.
- Enhance multimodal connections to existing parks and locate new parks in neighborhoods and other areas that are accessible to residents on foot, by bicycle, or using transit, such as within or adjacent to urban centers.
- Prioritize the protection or restoration of locally or regionally significant natural resources, as well as other locations that help fill missing links in the regional open space and greenway system in local plans and funding programs.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Protecting and expanding key economic assets

Businesses and residents alike choose to move to—and stay in—the region because of its scenic natural environment, access to outdoor recreational opportunities and numerous other quality-of-life amenities. These features have contributed to the region's success in recruiting companies and skilled employees, and attracting visitors worldwide who travel to the region to hike, bike, ski and pursue other outdoor pursuits. The ability of our region to maintain the quality and accessibility of these assets for residents and visitors is critical to continued economic health.



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

The region's working agricultural lands and activities contribute to a strong regional food system.

Working agricultural lands are essential to the region's heritage, health and economic and cultural diversity. Livestock feeding and production, growing feed and forage crops for livestock, food production, or greenhouse and nursery crops, agricultural lands and operations of all sizes create jobs in the region, support economic vitality and promote healthier communities by bringing people closer to their food source.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Support continued agricultural capacity in the region.

Agricultural land and the ability to bring additional land or operations into production, where viable, benefits local producers, saves energy resources and offers a level of food security for the region. Local and regional initiatives will expand opportunities for local food cultivation, processing and sales—improving the distribution of and access to food throughout the region.

Supporting Objectives:

- Conserve significant agricultural lands.
- Increase access to healthy and local foods.
- Increase the efficiency of food distribution.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Coordinate with local communities and local, regional and state conservation programs to identify and protect (through conservation easements, purchase or other means) significant agricultural resources at risk of being lost.
- Examine the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food in the Denver region and consider creation of a regional food system council.
- Encourage the creation of a network of regional food hubs to facilitate the processing and distribution of local food, particularly in support of farmers markets.
- Promote regional coordination of institutional purchasing efforts to increase access to market for small producers.

Education and Assistance

- Monitor the quantity and distribution of the region's agricultural lands over time using resources such as those provided by the American Farmland Trust. Consider both lands that are being actively used for agricultural purposes as well as those that are zoned for agriculture, but not currently in use.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

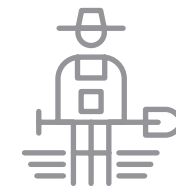
Collaboration

- Direct landowners or individuals interested in preserving working lands or starting a new farming operation to programs and incentives available through the American Farmland Trust, Colorado Open Lands and other organizations.
- Consider policies and programs that reduce food waste.
- Identify locations and facilities that can serve as pick-up or drop-off locations for fresh food and produce from community-supported agriculture operations.

Policies and Regulations

- Establish clear policy support for agricultural lands and operations in local comprehensive plans.
- Establish definitions for agricultural lands and operations at all scales in development regulations to ensure agricultural uses are allowed in appropriate areas.
- Identify and remove potential regulatory barriers to agritourism and other nontraditional agricultural uses.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS



Conserving agricultural land as an open space amenity

Boulder County actively conserves natural and agricultural resources to provide public use

that reflects responsible resource management and the community's values. The county protects land through direct acquisition or through conservation easements on private properties to protect open space resources. The county has acquired and protected more than 100,000 acres of land with 63,562 acres as county open space and the remainder protected private land. The county's open space program has emphasized the protection of agricultural lands; 30 percent of the open space lands are leased to local farmers and ranchers.

FACING NEW CHALLENGES



Producing food locally

In a recent survey of local governments in the Denver region, locally grown food, urban agriculture, and access to healthy food emerged as areas requiring further attention. Regional food systems refer to food production that is geographically localized—food is grown, harvested, processed and distributed over much shorter distances when compared to national and international food systems.

Regional food systems create healthy communities by improving food security, making local and fresh food available to populations with limited access to grocery stores and creating relationships between farmers and their urban customers around a shared goal to preserve farmland. This localized approach to food systems also stimulates local economies.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal, a former chemical weapons and agricultural chemical manufacturing facility in Commerce City, is now a national wildlife refuge. The arsenal is home to wild bison and about 50 black-footed ferrets, a native species once considered extinct.

Linda Broeren / U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

- Provide information and assistance to local and regional stakeholders seeking to improve the operations of the regional food system and increase access to healthy and local foods.
- Provide data and assistance for statewide and basin studies of the relationship between water supply and regional agricultural capacity.

Investments


- Encourage the role of land trusts to facilitate agricultural land conservation (such as through donation or purchase of conservation easements).

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Investments

- Purchase significant agricultural resources or their development rights through conservation easements as a part of a local open space strategy; consider the role of such lands in shaping future growth and development.





Farm workers tend a field of cabbage in Adams County. The District Plan, a partnership between Adams County and the City of Brighton, simultaneously preserves farmland and stimulates growth opportunities. As a result, residents of the area have access to locally produced food, livelihoods in agriculture and agritourism, and development consistent with the community's distinct heritage and the thriving regional economy.

—
Jay Weise Photography

FACING NEW CHALLENGES



Leveraging agriculture's economic benefits

Although the region's farms and ranches represent a small sector of the region's economy, the Census of Agriculture conducted by the U.S. Department of Agriculture found they sold nearly \$207 million in agricultural products in 2012. The lands needed to produce agricultural products is threatened by urbanization, reducing sales of farm products over time. However, between 2007 and 2012, the number of farms in the Denver region increased from 2,335 to 4,172.

The growth in farms is mostly driven by small farms, those operating on one to 50 acres. Further study is needed, but the increase in small farms may demonstrate a growing recognition of the importance of and desire to produce food locally. These farms may also serve as the foundation for a strong regional food system.



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

The risks and effects of natural and human-created hazards are reduced.

Hazard mitigation planning reduces injuries and loss of life, trauma, and damage to property, equipment and infrastructure. Communities are more resilient when planning also accounts for disaster response and recovery.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Reduce the risk of hazards and their impact.

The region will consider land use, open space protection and critical infrastructure in areas susceptible to potential natural and human-created hazards. Local and regional initiatives will limit new development, or the expansion of existing development, in areas recognized as having a high probability of being affected by natural and human-created hazards. More communities will have a hazard mitigation plan in place. Collectively, these initiatives will minimize the effect of community disruptions, as well as economic, environmental and other losses.

Supporting Objectives:

- Increase open space in high risk areas.
- Limit new development in areas susceptible to hazards.
- Increase the use of best practices in land use planning and management to decrease risk.
- Promote integrated planning and decision-making in hazard mitigation.



A Groundwork Denver Green Team student sits on a tree log while mitigating fire risk at Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge. The refuge provides sanctuary for native wildlife and an outdoors getaway for urban dwellers. Although wildfire is essential to a healthy wilderness ecosystem, human-caused fires are destructive to natural resources and infrastructure. By creating defensible space between structures and the vegetation that fuels fires, local organizations contribute to a safe and resilient natural and built environment.

Gabrielle Roffe/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will: Improve disaster response and recovery.

Preparing for, responding to, and recovering from disasters and traumatic events is essential to the physical, economic and emotional health of the region's communities and residents. The region will continue to proactively prepare for disasters, including by understanding and assessing risks and vulnerabilities that may challenge recovery. When disasters occur, affected communities will overcome the physical, environmental and emotional effects in the shortest time possible relative to the severity of the disaster. Affected communities will reestablish key elements of their economic, social and cultural fabric to pre-disaster conditions and, when needed, make improvements to become more resilient.

Supporting Objectives:

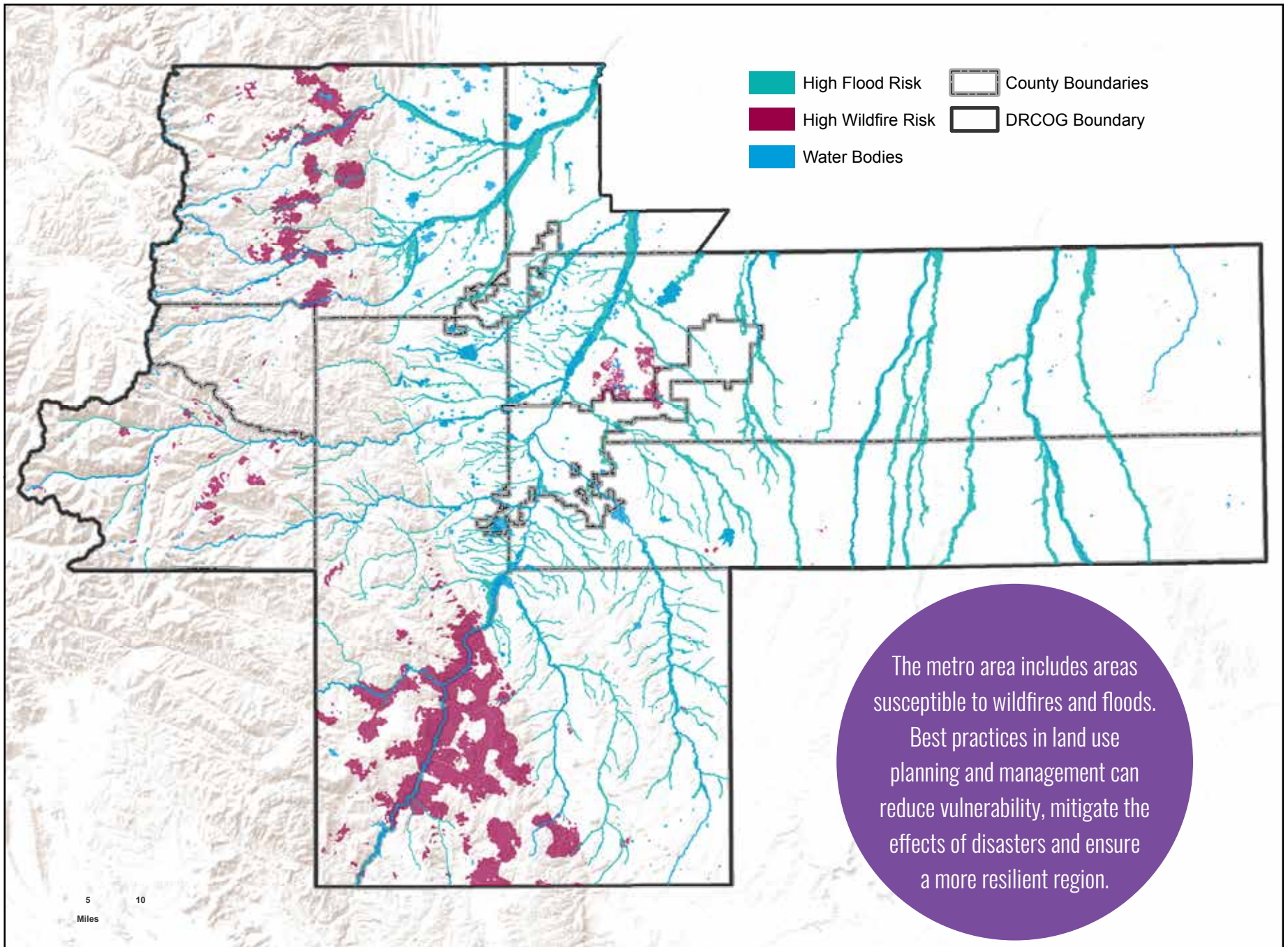
- Enhance community resiliency.
- Increase interagency coordination.

FACING NEW CHALLENGES

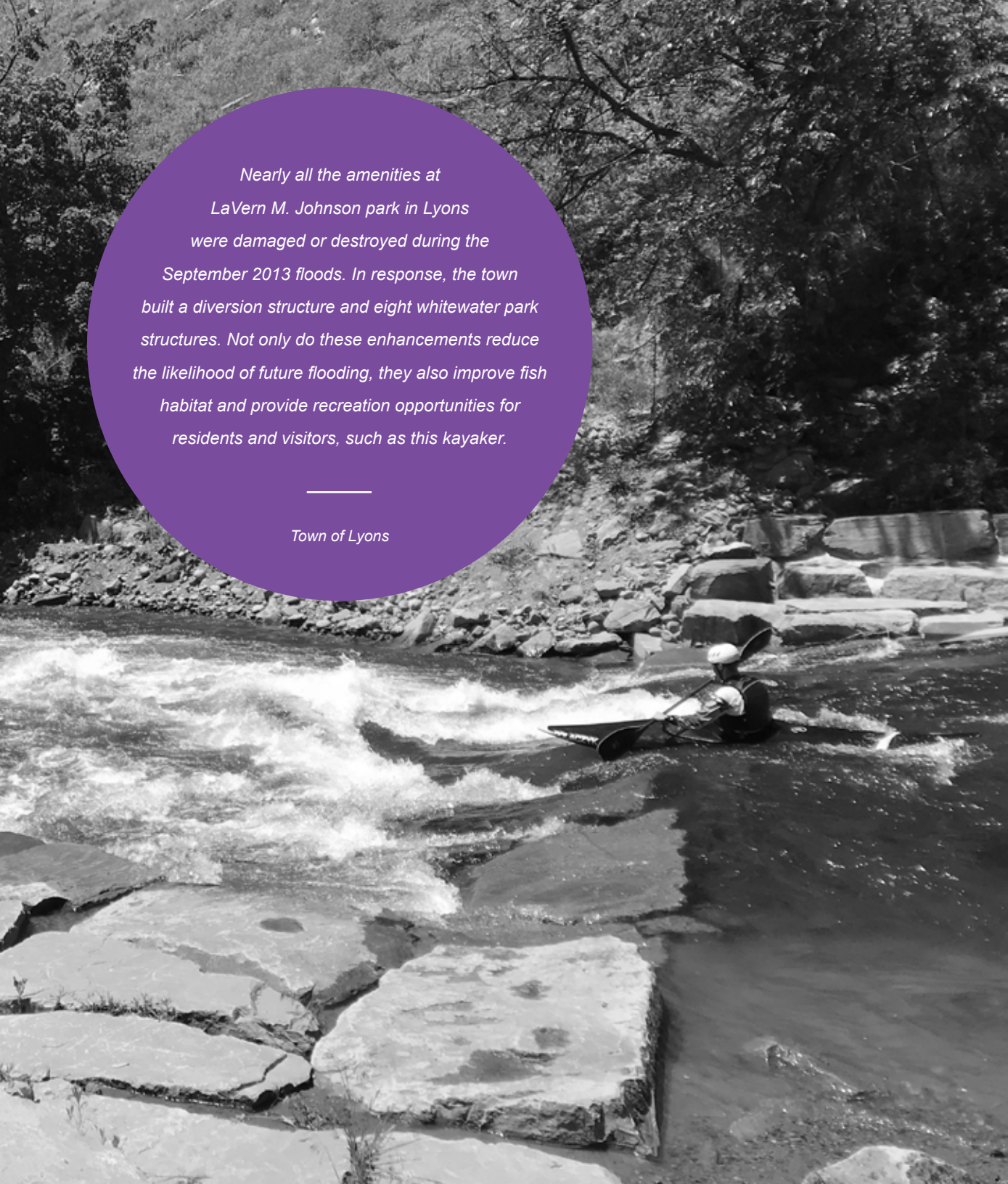


Identifying natural hazards

According to the 2010 Denver Regional Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan, local governments across the region face a number of natural hazards, including avalanches, drought, earthquakes, floods, hail, heatwaves, landslides, land subsidence, thunderstorms, lightning, tornadoes, severe storms, wind, winter storms, freezing, wildfires and public health hazards such as pandemic flu and West Nile virus.



Source: DRCOG, Esri, FEMA Colorado Wildfire Risk Assessment Program



Nearly all the amenities at LaVern M. Johnson park in Lyons were damaged or destroyed during the September 2013 floods. In response, the town built a diversion structure and eight whitewater park structures. Not only do these enhancements reduce the likelihood of future flooding, they also improve fish habitat and provide recreation opportunities for residents and visitors, such as this kayaker.

Town of Lyons

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Increasing community resilience

Resilient communities withstand, and recover quickly from, shocks and stresses with minimal outside assistance. According to research in support of the state's resiliency planning efforts, resilient communities have shifted planning away from one-time events toward recognition of hazards as ongoing and routine features of environmental systems and accepting uncertainty as part of planning. Community size and geographic location; technical, administrative and financial capacity; and community goals should influence hazard and resiliency planning. Planning for resiliency is a collaborative approach between land-use planners, emergency planners, elected and appointed officials, health departments, public works staff, citizens, community advocates, business owners, developers and numerous other stakeholders.

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

Planning for resilience

In May 2015, Governor Hickenlooper adopted the Colorado Resiliency Framework, establishing a vision and definition of resiliency for the state. The framework identifies guiding principles and outlines specific strategies including a resiliency plan that is developed and implemented each year.

In 2016, the Department of Local Affairs released Planning for Hazards: Land Use Solutions for Colorado. It provides guidance to Colorado counties and municipalities for integrating resiliency and hazard mitigation into plans, codes and standards related to land use and the built environment. The state's resiliency planning efforts provide a framework for communities in Denver region as they assess threats and refine local strategies to become more resilient.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Coordinate with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, emergency responders, and other local, state and federal stakeholders to help advance planning efforts, assemble best management practices and increase local and regional preparedness.
- Seek support necessary to update the Denver Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan every five years and make available to local communities all mapping and accompanying databases of county-level hazard profiles to support local planning efforts.
- Encourage local and regional coordination of, and investments in, datasets to improve disaster response and recovery (such as damage assessment and evacuation).

Education and Assistance

- Help local governments affected by disasters plan for recovery.
- Provide data and other information to support improved hazard mitigation planning, as well as disaster response and recovery.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Collaborate with emergency responders in the identification of critical facilities and the review of local plans, regulations and significant development projects.
- Collaborate with neighboring jurisdictions to identify projects that reduce the shared risk of certain hazards and their effects.

Policies and Regulations

- Integrate hazard mitigation considerations into local comprehensive plans and development regulations, either through an integrated plan update process, or by reviewing and updating existing policies and regulations on a more targeted basis.
- Adopt a hazard mitigation plan or consider working with regional partners to develop a regional plan if creating a locally tailored plan is not feasible.
- Incorporate Colorado State Forest Service guidelines into the land development and building permit approval process.
- Limit new development or the expansion of existing development in areas recognized as having a high probability of being affected by hazards (such as those on a floodplain or with a high wildfire threat).

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Investments

- Support projects that reduce the vulnerability of infrastructure to hazards.

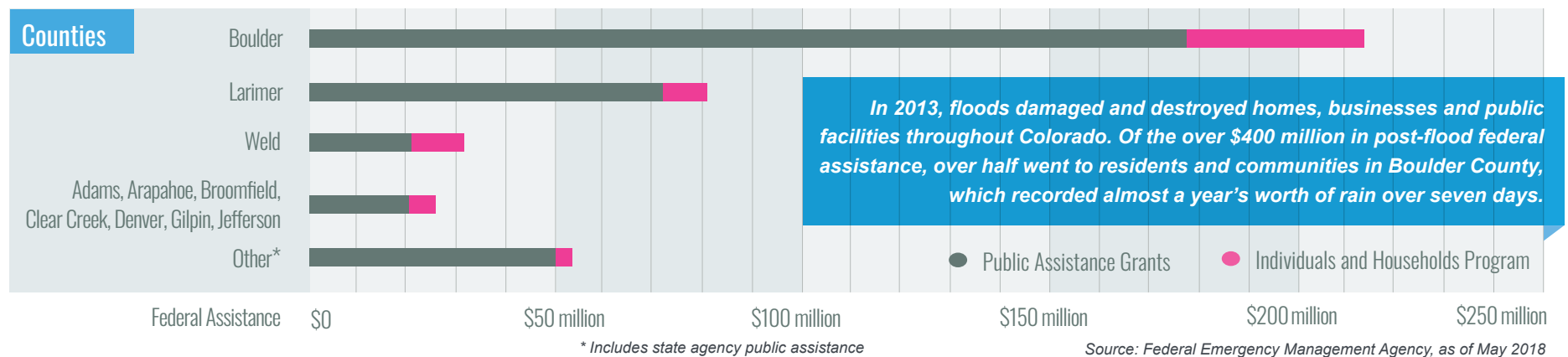
Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

- Establish guidelines for existing or future development in hazardous locations to minimize loss of life and property should a disaster occur.

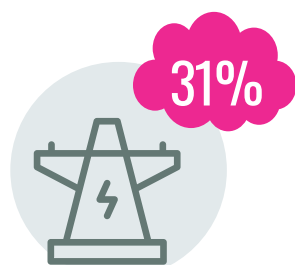
Investments

- Invest in local capital improvements that reduce the risk of hazards.
- Mitigate or eliminate hazards associated with brownfields, positioning them for redevelopment or restoration as natural resource areas.

Federal assistance for 2013 floods by county



Colorado greenhouse gas emissions by sector (2010)



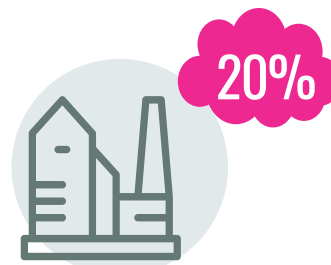
31%

Electric Power



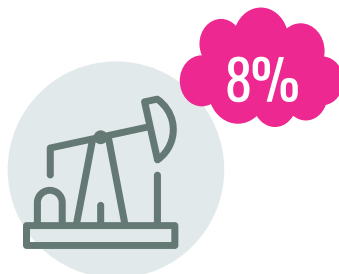
23%

Transportation



20%

Residential, Commercial and Industrial Fuel Use



8%

Natural Gas and Oil Systems



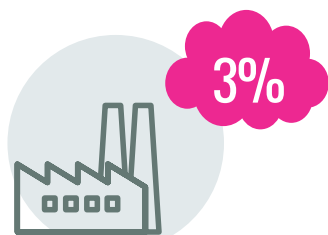
7%

Agriculture



6%

Coal Mining and Abandoned Mines



3%

Industrial Processes



2%

Waste Management

Source: Colorado Greenhouse Gas Inventory - 2014 Update

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

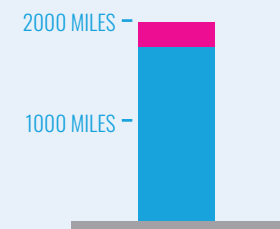
Performance measures are critically important in monitoring the region's progress toward Metro Vision themes and outcomes. They are used to obtain regular measurement of outcomes and results. They also generate reliable data to help local governments and partners evaluate policies, programs and initiatives. As part of its reporting on plan progress toward creating a safe and resilient built and natural environment, DRCOG will use the performance measures outlined below.

MEASURE	WHERE ARE WE TODAY? (BASELINE)	WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE? (2040 TARGET)
Surface transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions per capita	26.8 pounds per capita (2010)	60 percent decrease from 2010
Protected open space	1,724 square miles (2014)	1,980 square miles
Share of the region's housing and employment in high risk areas	Housing: 1.1 percent (2014) Employment: 2.9 percent (2014)	Housing: Less than 0.9 percent Employment: Less than 2.5 percent

Surface transportation-related greenhouse gas emissions per capita



Protected open space



WHERE ARE WE TODAY?
1,724 square miles

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?
1,980 square miles



Overarching theme | Our desired future will be realized through:

HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

The Denver region is widely recognized as a model of livability and health. Numerous publications consistently place our communities on their lists of the best places to live (see “An efficient and predictable development pattern,” [page 21](#)), and our residents are regularly ranked among the nation’s most physically fit. However, increasing rates of chronic illnesses such as diabetes and obesity, rising health care costs, an aging population, accessibility of services, insufficient housing for low- to middle-wage workers, local food access and socio-economic disparities are just a few of the many trends and issues of concern threatening to undermine the health and quality of life of our residents, and ultimately the region’s economy. To remain economically competitive, we must be more inclusive in our efforts to address these issues — considering the needs of residents of all ages, abilities, ethnicities and incomes in our planning and decision-making.

Many efforts to address these issues and concerns at the local, regional and state levels are working well. Examples include coalition building, information and awareness initiatives, grassroots efforts and the adoption of local programs, policies and regulations. However, the depth of understanding surrounding the importance of these issues at the regional level and the degree to which these issues are being integrated into local plans and policy-making across the region is uneven. There is much to be done at all levels.

Achieving success in making our communities healthy, inclusive and livable depends on the region’s ability to work together toward the following outcomes:

- The built and natural environment supports healthy and active choices.
- The region’s residents have expanded connections to health services.
- Diverse housing options meet the needs of residents of all ages, incomes and abilities.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Addressing health disparities

There is a widening gap between various demographic and socio-economic groups in the region in terms of health care accessibility. Higher health care costs reduce access to care for lower-income households, including older adults on fixed incomes. Higher costs not only affect overall health, but ripple through the community and region in other ways, reducing income available for other household expenses such as housing, food, transportation, and goods and services. Improving accessibility to health care through land-use and transportation planning decisions can alleviate the effects of other aspects of health care beyond the control of residents and local governments, such as the cost of care.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Keeping the cost of living attainable

The cost of housing is typically the largest item in a household's budget. For lower-wage workers, housing within their means is often located further from employment and educational opportunities, meaning people spend more of their household income on and more time traveling between destinations. Long commutes can lead to higher levels of stress and increase periods of sedentary behavior, which may negatively affect a commuter's health. However, higher property values near rapid transit stations have resulted in home prices and rental rates beyond the reach of many households. The region's growth will result in more housing locations, some of which will use existing infrastructure. Such additional housing will increase access to employment opportunities and transit.

The 4-mile 40 West ArtLine in Lakewood provides walkers and bicyclists the opportunity to experience more than 20 pieces of public art while traveling between parks, rail stations and neighborhoods.

Photo courtesy of the City of Lakewood





WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Making healthy choices easy

Eating nutritious foods, such as fruits and vegetables, supports good health, while consumption of less nutritious foods may lead to health issues such as diabetes or obesity. Unfortunately, residents across the region have uneven access to nutritious food due to the availability and proximity of grocery stores, specialty and convenience food stores, restaurants, farmer's markets, and other food outlets and distributors. The region's extensive network of parks, trails and open spaces is recognized as a key contributor to our residents' quality of life and ability to lead active lifestyles. Improved access to these recreational opportunities, as well as a built environment that supports healthy eating and physical activity opportunities, can lead to reductions in chronic diseases such as hypertension, obesity and diabetes.

Residents and businesses alike are attracted to the Denver region's reputation as a healthy place to live, and maintaining this expectation is essential to the region's economic vitality.

Health, or lack thereof, directly affects a household's budget. Individuals experiencing poor health may struggle with affordability or access to care, which also affects their employment options and available resources for housing, transportation, education and nutrition.



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

The built and natural environment supports healthy and active choices.

A deliberate focus on the built environment's influence on physical activity, mobility choices, access to healthy food and the natural environment supports the opportunity to lead healthy and active lifestyles throughout the region.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Increase access to amenities that support healthy, active choices.

The region will expand opportunities for residents to lead healthy and active lifestyles.

The region's streets and roads will be planned, designed, operated and maintained to enable safe, convenient and comfortable travel and access for users of all ages and abilities, regardless of their mode of transportation. A mix of well-connected land uses and recreational amenities in communities throughout the region will create places that make active transportation and recreational physical activity safe and part of an everyday routine. Additionally, local and regional initiatives will increase access to healthy food options in low-income neighborhoods and areas with high levels of food insecurity.

Supporting Objectives:

- Increase safe and convenient active transportation options for all ages and abilities.
- Expand the regional trail network.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Facilitate public/private partnerships to identify and address first- and final-mile connectivity issues associated with regional transit.
- Collaborate with local governments and other stakeholders to address the transportation needs of mobility-limited populations in transportation and land-use planning and decision-making at the regional and local levels.
- Raise awareness around the need for green space and recreational amenities in areas where a concentration of residents or employees exists or is planned (such as urban centers or employment centers).
- Collaborate with local governments to identify and implement projects in areas that have the greatest need for access to recreation and nature, as identified in the Regional Equity Atlas.
- Collaborate with local governments and other regional partners to identify and implement priority portions of the regional trail network.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Pursue agreements to share public properties or facilities that increase access to recreation areas or community gathering places.

Policies and Regulations

- Adopt policies and implement regulations that promote a mix of uses and active public spaces.
- Adopt and implement street standards that are locally tailored to meet Complete Streets objectives in a variety of contexts (urban, suburban and rural).
- Adopt and implement policies and regulations that increase opportunities for local food production and processing by allowing community gardens, keeping of fowl and small livestock, and small-scale agricultural operations.
- Consider ordinances that allow residential sales of produce grown on premises.
- Adopt policies and regulations to support small-scale parks, plazas and other indoor and outdoor recreational facilities. Consider providing incentives for projects that provide a range of recreational options.

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

Planning for healthy communities

Community planning in the United States is rooted in the public health challenges experienced by residents of urban areas during previous centuries. The Industrial Revolution brought factory workers into cities from rural areas or from abroad, resulting in large-scale urbanization of cities. Many workers and their families lived in crowded and poor conditions in tenement buildings with windowless rooms, no ventilation, and no place for waste. The spread of diseases such as cholera and tuberculosis was common and claimed many lives.

Community leaders also realized their cities could not continue to grow unless they had a safe and secure source of water for drinking and industry.

Community leaders addressed the issue by filtering water or by bringing distant, clean water to growing areas; and developed storm and sanitary sewers for the safe handling of unsafe water and human waste. Zoning as we know it today was created to address overcrowding and incompatible land uses, such as factories located next to housing. Cities developed zoning to identify which areas would be best for industry and commerce and prohibited incompatible land uses in those districts.

FACING NEW CHALLENGES

Identifying obstacles to health

In 2013, the Colorado Department of Public Health developed the Colorado Health Disparities Report Card to provide baseline data on how the region's distinct populations are experiencing social and economic obstacles to health. An individual's overall health and wellness is affected by a variety of factors including individual and family demographics, economic status and other social factors. In 2013, 54 percent of white adults in the state were overweight or obese compared to 75 percent of American Indian/Alaska Native adults, 64 percent of African-American adults, and 61 percent of Hispanic/Latino adults. Overall, adults in the state are some of the leanest nationwide but the state's childhood obesity rate is one of the fastest-growing in the country. One in four Colorado children are overweight or obese. Obese children and adolescents are more likely to become obese adults.

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Education and Assistance

- Monitor the accessibility of healthy food options from transit through periodic updates to the Regional Equity Atlas.
- Monitor the quantity and distribution of community gardens, small urban farms and land that is zoned and used for agriculture over time, using regional mapping and by working with local communities and partners.
- Promote awareness of the range of programs, services and other assistance available to help residents lead healthier and more active lifestyles, as well as opportunities for them to become involved in related efforts at the local and neighborhood level.
- Routinely evaluate and address mobility obstacles and impairments within the built environment.
- Support the integration of farmers markets and other green markets within urban centers and rural communities.

Investments

- Support projects that consider all users of roadways (such as Complete Streets objectives).
- Focus resources to build safe pedestrian and bicycle connections from transit stops to neighborhoods and activity centers within communities.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

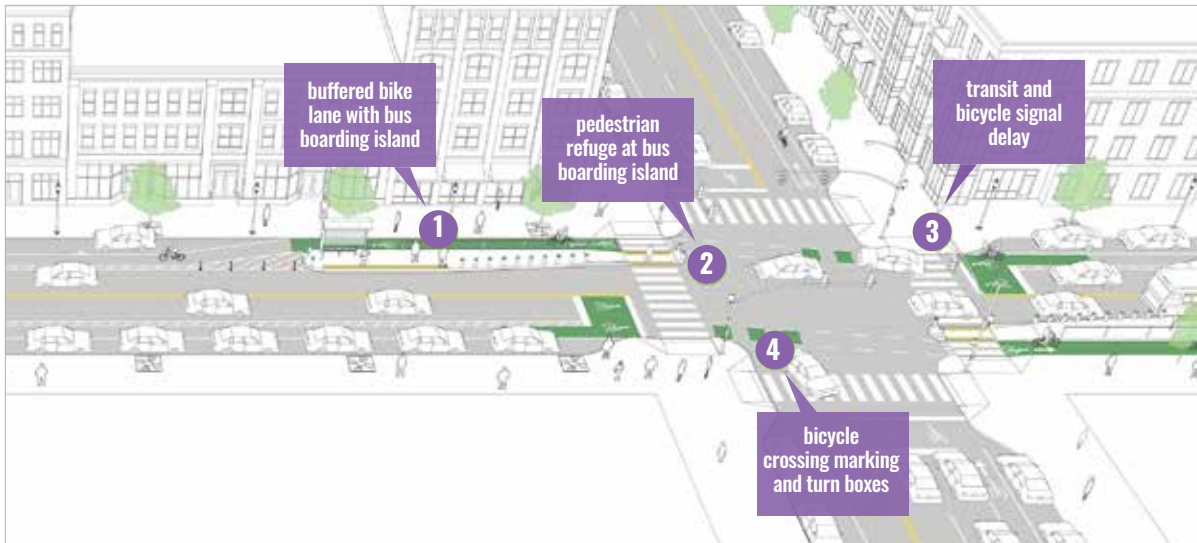
- Promote the development of shade canopy and/or appropriate vegetative cover to create/maintain a safe, comfortable pedestrian environment.

Policies and Regulations

- Promote crime prevention through environmental design planning concepts in local planning efforts.

Investments

- Prioritize funding for projects that meet Complete Streets objectives through non-metropolitan planning organization sources, including local capital improvement programs.
- Provide incentives for grocers who locate in urban centers and underserved areas of the community.
- Complete local links in the regional trail network through strategic acquisition or other means, prioritizing linkages that enhance connectivity to or within the regional network, or to nearby communities or urban centers.



Complete Streets concepts consider all users of the transportation system (for example, pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users and drivers), but how local communities implement them depends on local contexts.

National Association of City Transportation Officials Transit Street Design Guide



A pedestrian walks a dog along the Cherry Creek Trail in downtown Denver. Communities throughout the region have invested in infrastructure that meets the needs of people of all ages, incomes and abilities, and connects the region through pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environments.

urbanlight/Bigstock.com

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

Health impact assessments

Planners and health professionals are increasingly recognizing that health and wellness have social and environmental implications. Health impact assessments are an emerging practice in many communities. This tool helps planners evaluate the health effects of proposed projects, plans and policies; highlights health disparities; provides evidence-based recommendations to improve health; raises awareness; makes health effects more explicit; and engages and empowers communities to improve the health of their residents.

In 2013, Adams County and the Tri-County Health Department conducted a health impact assessment for the Federal Boulevard corridor. The health impact assessment included a five-step process including an initial inventory and analysis of conditions as well as a stakeholder and community engagement component. Through the health impact assessment tool, the partners identified critical issues in the corridor such as traffic safety, physical activity, community safety and housing affordability.



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

The region's residents have expanded connections to health services.

Expanded connections to health services improve the health and wellness of residents in the Denver region. Connections to health services are expanded through improved multimodal transportation access, the location of new health facilities and other innovative approaches resulting in more convenient access to health services.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Improve transportation connections to health care facilities and service providers.

The region will support the integration of health care facilities and service providers of all sizes into centers throughout the region—both urban and rural—where residents can access care by walking, biking, driving or using transit. Local and regional initiatives related to transit service, including on-demand and other specialized services, will increase transit access to health care facilities, social service providers and other retail outlets that offer health services.

Supporting Objectives:

- Increase awareness and knowledge of community health and wellness issues and support networks.

- Increase collaboration among stakeholders at the local, regional and state levels.
- Locate health services in accessible areas.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Convene regular meetings of regional stakeholders (health care providers, local governments, public health organizations, major hospitals, business leaders, the development community, foundations, and others) to facilitate and support health and wellness projects and regionally significant initiatives.
- Collaborate with health service providers to develop new datasets and analyses of access to preventative care and other health-related services, helping local and regional partners strategically target resources to clients.
- Strengthen partnerships between health and transportation providers to increase access to care, improve health outcomes and reduce health care costs.

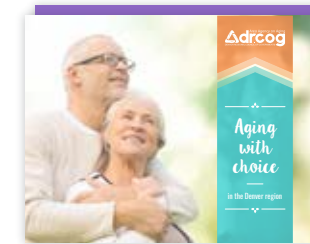
Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Work with local elected and appointed officials to integrate health and wellness priorities and goals into comprehensive plans. Incorporate supporting information into plan and policy development and decision-making.
- Leverage existing health and wellness programs and services.

Policies and Regulations

- Adopt and implement policies and regulations that support the integration of health services into urban centers, employment campuses, retail centers, rural town centers and other activity hubs.
- Consider policies and plans that encourage the location of health services in areas that are readily accessible.



Area Plan on Aging

As the federally designated Area Agency on Aging for the region, DRCOG is required to create and

implement a four-year Area Plan on Aging to establish service priority areas. Public input from nearly 500 stakeholders identified transportation as the most-needed service to help increase or sustain independence for older people in their community.

DRCOG contracts with transportation service providers using funding available under the Older Americans Act. Unfortunately, because of funding and capacity constraints, these providers must turn down hundreds of trips per month. Older adults often need transportation support in order to maintain their health and wellness — to access health care providers and pharmacies, maintain social interaction and reach community and social services. DRCOG and its partners continuously explore innovative ways to combine available funds, reduce inefficiencies and build additional transportation capacity.

FACING NEW CHALLENGES

Keeping rural residents healthy

Rural centers throughout the region—whether in the mountains or on the eastern plains—serve residents and visitors well beyond their boundaries. Many of these communities seek health service providers to complement the businesses and services already based in their areas. With the changing health care landscape, these efforts can prove difficult.

For rural communities, health services provide more than simple access to care. Local health services can help seniors remain in their community of choice. When a rural community can offer health services to its residents and visitors, it is better equipped to attract economic investments, including new and expanding businesses.

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Education and Assistance

- Conduct periodic updates to the Regional Equity Atlas and collaborate with local and state public health departments to conduct additional research at a neighborhood level to inform discussions surrounding areas of the greatest need.
- Establish a central clearinghouse of information to support health and wellness initiatives throughout the region (such as regional health indicators, access to services, programs and best practices).


Investments

- Coordinate investments in local and regional transportation services that improve access to health services for those with mobility obstacles or impairments.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Investments

- Collaborate with public health professionals, area hospitals, health and social service providers, and other regional stakeholders to implement transportation system improvements in areas with the greatest mobility needs.

A black and white photograph of a man with a beard and sunglasses, wearing a cap and a life vest, sitting in a kayak on a river. The kayak is on the water, and the man is holding a paddle. The background shows a riverbank with trees and a cloudy sky. A large purple circle is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing text.

Access to Colorado's rich natural resources, such as the South Platte River, offers opportunities for residents to stay active as they age. But when it comes to accessing health care, older adults in the Denver region reported at least a minor problem accessing preventive services (45 percent), obtaining affordable health insurance (40 percent) and affording medication (35 percent).

PixelsAway/Bigstock.com

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

Growing a health-oriented urban center

The former Fitzsimons Army Medical Center is a primary development area along the Regional Transportation District's R Line in Aurora. When the facility was put on the Base Realignment and Closure list in 1995, three partners came together to transform the area: the City of Aurora, the University of Colorado Health Sciences Center and the University of Colorado Hospital.

As a result of the partners' work and investment, Fitzsimons now hosts both the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus and Fitzsimons Life Science District. It is served by two rail transit stations. Shuttle service completes first- and last-mile connections for destinations within Fitzsimons. The importance of such access goes beyond those seeking the center's health services to the tens of thousands of employment opportunities the medical facilities offer.

The University of Colorado provides free service on the Anschutz Shuttle between Fitzsimons Station and the CU Anschutz Medical Campus.

*Photo courtesy of Matthew Kaskavitch
University of Colorado Denver.*





Anschutz Medical Campus

uhealth

en's Hospital

University of Colorado
Anschutz Medical Campus

VA



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

Diverse housing options meet the needs of residents of all ages, incomes and abilities.

Housing choices allow individuals and families to find desirable housing that is affordable and accessible to them in communities throughout the region, allowing them to stay in their community of choice as their economic or life circumstances change. A range of housing options across the region benefits both individuals and families, and can improve the economic vitality and diversity of local communities.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Diversify the region's housing stock.

The region will have housing that meets the needs of current and future residents as they progress through the various stages of their lives, including changes in familial status, income, employment and ability level. Local communities and regional partners will pursue initiatives that reduce barriers and expedite the development of housing in desired locations. The supply and range of housing options, including attainable and accessible units, in or near major employment centers will increase.

Supporting Objectives:

- Increase the regional supply of housing attainable for a variety of households.
- Increase opportunities for diverse housing accessible by multimodal transportation.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Convene local government officials and housing experts to identify ways to expand affordable, accessible housing development opportunities in local communities.
- Continue to support local planning that furthers the implementation of the region's transit system and urban centers.
- Participate in efforts to remove barriers and reduce cost of developing housing.
- Encourage transit investments where housing densities currently, or are planned to, support transit.
- Collaborate with local partners, including housing authorities, to understand current and future affordable housing needs.

Education and Assistance

- Share best practices in land-use regulations, zoning and housing policies with local governments and other stakeholders.
- Develop and share guidance based on best practices to aid local communities in the identification of high opportunity sites, districts or areas.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Develop and maintain cooperative efforts with entities focused on developing accessible and affordable workforce and senior housing.
- Identify effective means to create and maintain supportive services for residents in affordable housing communities.

Policies and Regulations

- Consider policies that promote a variety of housing options to meet the needs of older adults, including independent and supportive options.
- Consider allowing accessory dwelling units in appropriate zoning districts.
- Review local plans and regulations to ensure they encourage a mix of housing types and densities.
- Plan for increased residential density in high-frequency transit and other multimodal transportation corridors.

FACING NEW CHALLENGES



Metro Vision listening tour

In 2012 DRCOG conducted a listening tour in advance of primary plan development activities to identify key planning issues, including emerging opportunities and challenges. Listening tour results were informed by in-depth interviews, focus groups and an online survey. Diverse housing options emerged as a critical issue for stakeholders and residents who participated in the listening tour. Key observations include:

- *The region currently has a diversity of housing choices and neighborhood types in the region, including urban, suburban, exurban, and rural settings. Although the region will become denser in the coming years, traditional suburban housing should remain a choice for community residents.*
- *Most affordable and accessible housing opportunities for people with disabilities are primarily offered in the urban core; more options are needed in other parts of the region.*
- *Opportunities for aging-in-community are perceived to be rare throughout the region. Many seniors are not moving out of their homes—homes which may not meet their accessibility needs—because there are limited housing options that meet their needs, including affordability, within their current community.*

FACING NEW CHALLENGES

Baby boomers and millennials

How the country's two largest living generations, baby boomers and millennials, will influence future demand for housing and community attributes is unknown. Combined, these generations account for nearly 50 percent of the population in the United States, and more than 1.5 million residents in the Denver region represent these two generations. The Denver region will be dramatically affected as these generations continue to make decisions about the types of housing and communities that meet their needs. (See "Objective: Diversify the region's housing stock," page 90.)

In 2014, an American Planning Association survey found that while there are some variations in housing and community preferences among the two generations, there is also considerable alignment in preferences with a shared desire to live in walkable places in various types of communities, including urban, suburban, rural and small town locations. The survey also found that both generations will make future decisions about where to live based in large part on living expenses and the affordability of place, including housing and transportation costs.

Baby boomers
1946 to 1964

Millennials
1980 to 2000

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

- Monitor changing demands for new and different types of housing.
- Monitor issues around the cost of housing, providing information for local and regional partners through the Regional Equity Atlas and the Denver Regional Visual Resources website.
- Elevate awareness of the catalytic role of housing in transit-oriented community strategies.

Investments


- Encourage the development and expansion of regional funds to support housing options (such as the Denver Regional Transit-Oriented Development Fund).

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

- Develop a focused strategy for preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing located near current and future transit areas.
- Consider plans and policies to improve the balance of jobs and housing in employment- and housing-rich areas.
- Assess current and future housing needs and programs in transit-oriented communities.

Investments

- Consider incentives to support affordable and accessible workforce and senior housing, particularly in areas that are or may be served by transit.
- Consider projects that address transit and mobility gaps near housing that is higher density, affordable and accessible or which meets the needs of low- and middle-wage earners, including seniors.



Private, public and not-for-profit organizations can help meet the region's goal of offering diverse housing options for residents of all ages, incomes and abilities. Local governments can review local plans and regulations to ensure they encourage a mix of housing types and densities.

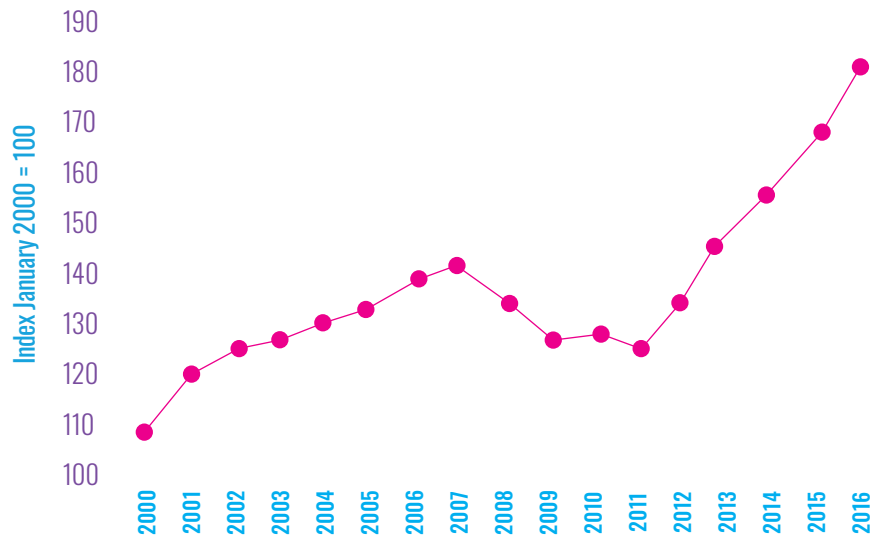
urbanlight/Bigstock.com

FACING NEW CHALLENGES

Responding to housing challenges

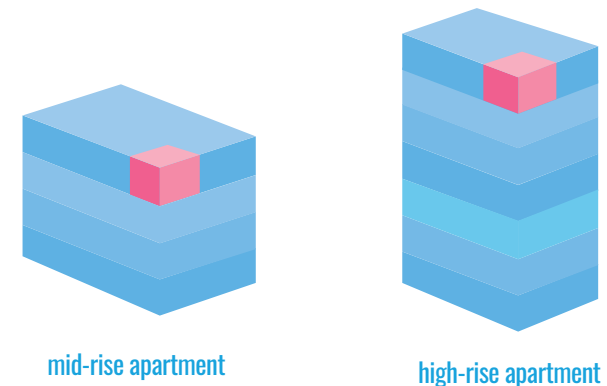
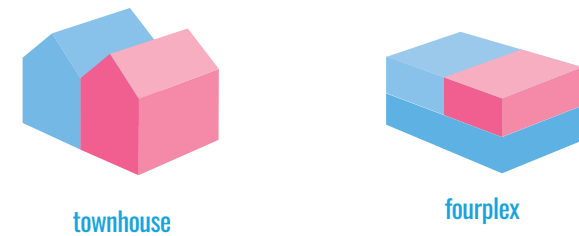
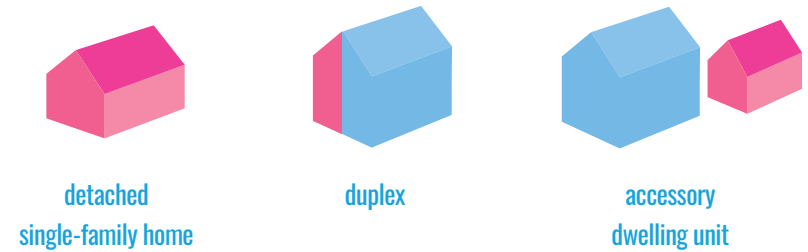
By nearly any measure the Denver region is facing unprecedented challenges to housing affordability. According to the Case-Shiller Index the Denver region is one of a handful of regions around the country where home-resale prices are at an all-time high. Between 2012 and 2015, the region experienced a prolonged period of double-digit, year-over-year increases in home prices. The region faces numerous affordable and attainable housing challenges including preserving existing affordable housing stock (both market rate and subsidized), producing affordable housing at a rate to keep pace with growing demand and meeting the housing needs of a growing older adult population, many of whom live on fixed incomes.

The Standard & Poor's/Case-Shiller home-price index for the Denver area has nearly doubled since 2000.



Source: Standard and Poor's Dow Jones Indices. National and Denver-Aurora metropolitan area Standard & Poor's/Case-Schiller home price indices are measured relative to the beginning of 2000. Values below 100 indicate lower prices than those observed at the beginning of 2000; values above 100 indicate higher prices than those observed in 2000.

A spectrum of housing types provides residents the opportunity to remain in their communities throughout the stages of their lives.



Expenses influence baby boomers' and millennials' decisions regarding where to live

The majority of baby boomers and millennials cite living expenses as most important when deciding where to live.

	Millennials	Baby boomers
Living expenses, such as housing and transportation costs	83%	80%
Metropolitan area features such as schools, transit and safe streets	57%	32%
Health and nature (for example, parks, trails, hospitals and healthy food options)	52%	59%

Source: *Investing in Place*, American Planning Association (2014)

Performance Measure

Performance measures are critically important in monitoring the region's progress toward Metro Vision themes and outcomes. They are used to periodically measure outcomes and results. They also generate reliable data to help member governments and partners evaluate policies, programs and initiatives. As part of its reporting on plan progress toward creating healthy, livable and inclusive communities, DRCOG will use the performance measure outlined below.

Housing and transportation are typically the two largest components of a household budget. Researchers at the Center for Neighborhood Technology have identified 45 percent of income as a key affordability benchmark for the combined costs of housing and transportation. This plan performance measure will quantify the percentage of the region's residents living in areas that fall below that benchmark. The threshold for 45 percent of income will be tied to the median household income for the region and will account for household size and number of commuters in the typical household in the region.

MEASURE	WHERE ARE WE TODAY? (BASELINE)	WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE? (2040 TARGET)
Share of the region's population living in areas with housing and transportation (H+T) costs affordable to the typical household in the region	41 percent (2013)	50 percent

Share of the region's population living in areas with housing and transportation (H+T) costs affordable to the typical household in the region

WHERE ARE WE TODAY? 41 percent
WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE? 50 percent





Overarching theme | Our desired future will be realized through:

A VIBRANT REGIONAL ECONOMY

An economically sustainable region balances economic vitality, environmental quality and a high standard of living for its residents. A

sustainable economy is also resilient—economic downturns are less severe and recovery is faster. The benefits of economic health, vitality and growth expand opportunities for all residents in a sustainable economy.

The underpinnings of a sustainable and resilient economy in the region include all of the region's assets: physical infrastructure and transportation, quality of life and amenities, an education system that supplies skilled labor and is accessible to all, the ability to attract and retain talented workers and innovators, a high-quality built environment, and housing options that are accessible and affordable for all ages, incomes and abilities. Maintaining a vibrant economy depends upon the region's ability to work together toward the following outcomes:

- All residents have access to a range of transportation, employment, commerce, housing, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities.
- Investments in infrastructure and amenities allow people and businesses to thrive and prosper.

The Denver region is home to an extensive network of economic development professionals engaged in business recruitment, expansion and retention efforts. Metro Vision aims to create a regional growth framework that ensures the underpinnings of a sustainable and resilient economy are considered by regional and local decision-makers. The objectives and initiatives in this section support the ongoing efforts of the many economic development organizations and local governments that promote the economic vitality of the region and reinforce essential connections between these groups.

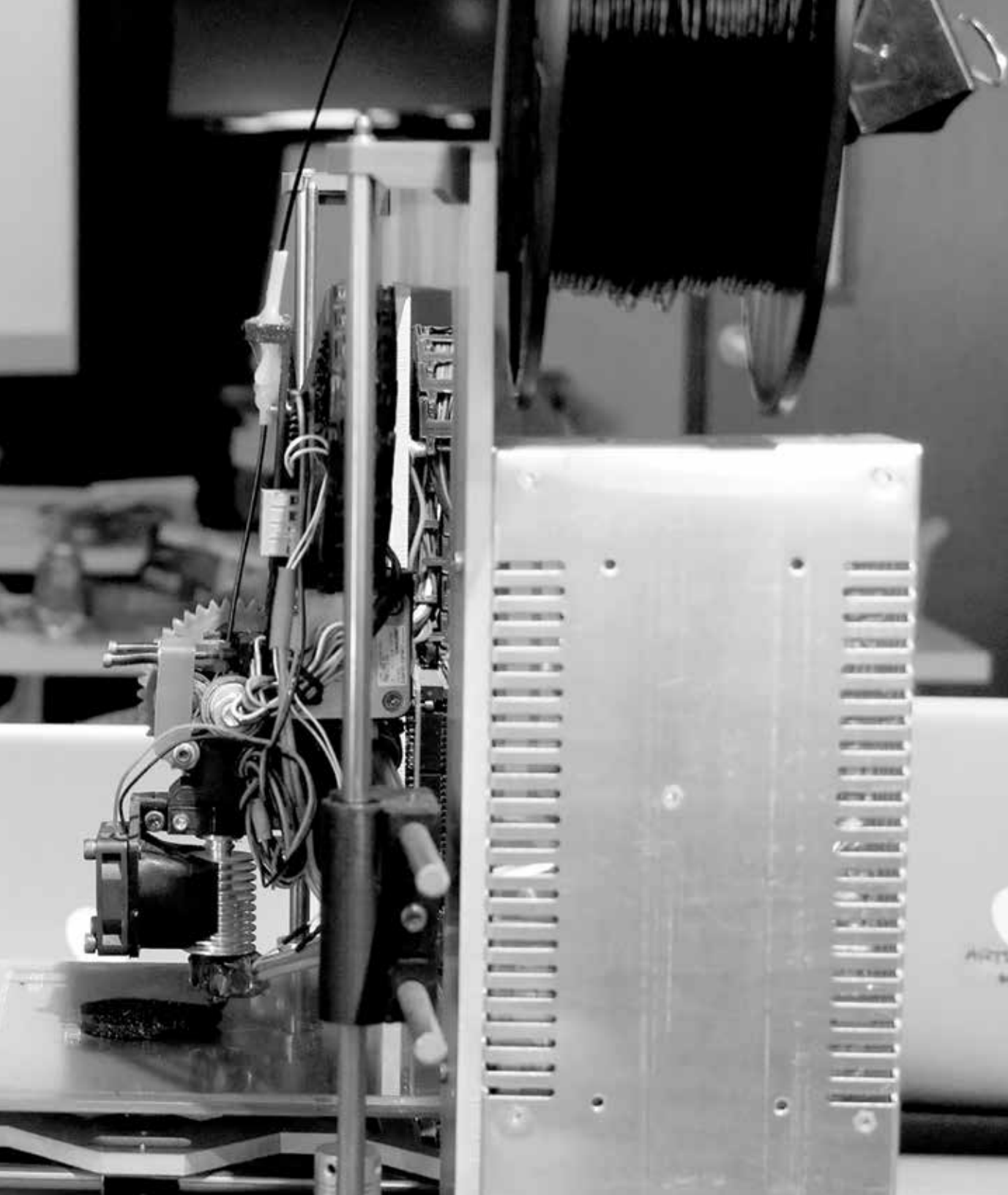
WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Attracting and retaining businesses and workers

Businesses and residents increasingly desire to locate in regions with access to the full range of community services and amenities, such as employment, health and human services, job training, housing and mobility options, recreation, arts and culture, and participation in civic life. One of the region's greatest challenges is to ensure existing and future residents of all ages, abilities and income levels can take advantage of these opportunities. The ease with which people can gain access to opportunities is critical.





WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Cultivating homegrown talent

Access for residents to jobs, and for employers to qualified workers, is fundamental to the health of the regional economy. The region's well-educated labor force, major universities and ability to attract talent are among its strengths. Current education disparities across races and between lifelong Coloradans and newcomers to the state suggest that the education system is not keeping pace with the needs of the workforce. A reliance on importing talent makes the regional economy vulnerable if we cannot provide the necessary training and opportunities for existing residents or continue to attract new talent. An untrained and underused workforce will hinder the economy, resulting in increased social service demands that divert public funds from more productive uses.



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

All residents have access to a range of transportation, employment, commerce, housing, educational, cultural and recreational opportunities.

The region's economy prospers when all residents have access to a range of transportation, employment, housing, education, cultural and recreational opportunities. The region's transportation network is critical in enabling commerce and providing access to basic needs and quality-of-life amenities that allow the region's residents to succeed.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Improve access to opportunity.

The region will reduce critical health, education, income and opportunity disparities in neighborhoods and communities. The region will capitalize on community, local regional and state amenities by promoting reliable transportation connections to key destinations. Local and regional initiatives will continue to leverage investments in transit by concentrating new housing and employment in centers accessible by transit.

Supporting Objectives:

- Improve the flow of people, goods, services and information within and through the region.
- Improve access for traditionally underserved populations.
- Improve access to and from the region's developed and emerging housing and employment centers.



STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Convene a technical committee to identify best practices in addressing first- and final-mile barriers.
- Work with a wide range of partners to track, assess and respond to the mobility needs of major employment centers.
- Facilitate data- and information-sharing in order to provide free and open regional data that for local and regional analyses.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Partner with transportation management organizations, service providers, and improvement districts to determine travel needs of employees.
- Work with property owners, developers, service providers and the Regional Transportation District to implement first- and final-mile strategies in employment centers.
- Connect residents and visitors to local cultural, educational and natural amenities, as well as in the Denver region and statewide.

Erin Croft helps customers check out while Walaa Almohammad and Vian Alnidawi prepare an order at Comal Heritage Food Incubator in Denver's RiNo Art District. A collaboration between Focus Points Family Resource Center and the Taxi mixed-use development, the lunch counter provides aspiring restaurateurs with hands-on food service experience while simultaneously celebrating the recipes, techniques and ingredients of their heritage. Since its launch in 2016, the incubator has served primarily Latin American and Syrian cuisine.

**Photo courtesy of
Comal Heritage Food Incubator.**

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Remaining globally competitive

Growing jobs and economic activity is increasingly tied to leveraging regional advantages and addressing areas for improvement. Competition for business investment is rarely entirely local, community to community. Often major opportunities for economic expansion involve competition among regions nationwide, and sometimes worldwide. Our region must remain competitive on the global stage through wise investments that improve access for people and businesses while maintaining and improving the quality of life that remains our region's core strength. The region's ability to build new infrastructure is challenged by the increasing cost of maintaining existing infrastructure.

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Education and Assistance

- Identify and monitor mobility trends including commuting patterns in employment and urban centers; freight and commercial vehicle travel; technological advances; and recreation and tourism.
- Identify best practices to expand and retain manufacturing and production businesses in areas served by transit.
- Conduct and share analyses that help local and regional partners understand challenges and opportunities in and near the region's employment centers.
- Acquire data and provide analyses that illustrate the gap between the types of jobs available in the regional economy and the requisite skills the workforce needs; use the resulting information to improve forecasting, planning and other initiatives.

Investments

- Fund transportation system improvements that improve the flow of people, goods and services.
- Provide local and regional transportation services that improve personal mobility, housing and employment access, as well as independence and well-being, especially for those with mobility obstacles or impairments.
- Ensure traditionally underserved populations receive at least a proportionate share of transportation benefits and are not disproportionately affected by transportation investments relative to the entire regional population.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

- Facilitate public/private partnerships to improve first- and final-mile connections to the region's high-capacity transit services, with an emphasis on enhancing connections to major employment centers and underserved populations.

Policies and Regulations

- Develop strategies supporting employment, housing and other opportunities directly adjacent to transit stops and stations.
- Preserve, protect and enable diverse employment and housing opportunities that are accessible by transit.

Investments

- Prioritize investments that will contribute to mobility enhancements for employment centers and housing options.



MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

Regional economic strategy

In 2011, as part of an 86-member partnership, DRCOG successfully secured a \$4.5 million grant for the benefit of the region. The three-year grant from the Sustainable Communities Partnership, a federal collaboration of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, the U.S. Department of Transportation and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, supported regional, corridor and site-level planning and implementation activities. DRCOG's Sustainable Communities Initiative included research that explored integrating emerging issues into the Metro Vision plan, including the issue of economic vitality.

An economic vitality strategy addresses all workforce, business, and quality-of-life requirements of a strong economy in order to sustain periods of growth and prosperity, and adapt to change. Although the region has numerous strengths including a high quality of life, strong track record of attracting skilled labor and investments in world-class infrastructure, challenges remain. Key threats to the region's economic vitality include: >>>

A mother and child use a computer at the Irving Street branch of the Westminster Public Library. The region's libraries, community and recreation centers offer life enrichment programs, help for job seekers, English and citizenship classes and fitness opportunities.

Xue Pritzkau/City of Westminster

Nick Zaragoza, left, and Dominic Sígala check the blood pressure and other vital signs of Chris Chavez in a simulation of work performed by emergency medical technicians during an event for high school students. Denver Health helps students explore careers in health care through training and mentorship.

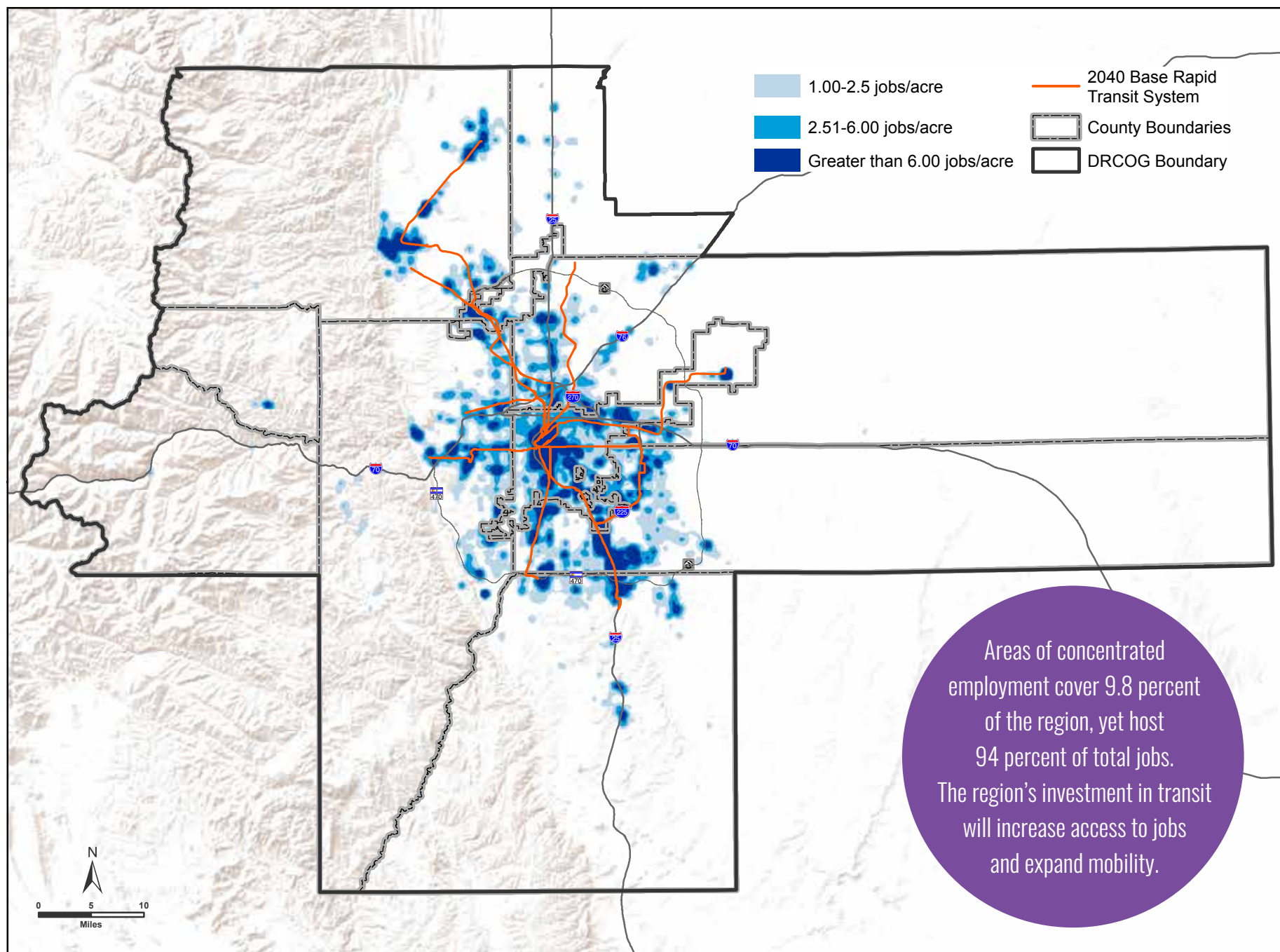
Jan Marie Locket

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

continued >>>

- *A large and growing population that does not have sufficient access to quality education and job-training.*
- *A reliance on importing educated and skilled labor while lifelong Coloradans have comparatively lower levels of educational attainment.*
- *Declining housing affordability and stability for lower-income workers affects the physical and social health of residents and employers' ability to attract and retain workers.*





Source: DRCOG, Esri, Colorado Department of Labor and Employment's Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, Infogroup, Tier 1 of the 2040 Metro Vision Rapid Transit System, see 2040 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan



Outcome | We're working toward a future where:

Investments in infrastructure and amenities allow people and businesses to thrive and prosper.

The region's continuous investments in infrastructure support a globally connected economy and offer opportunities for all residents to share and contribute to sustained regional prosperity. Vibrant and thriving communities, accessible and protected natural resources, and diverse cultural amenities are economic assets and make our region a highly desirable place to live, work and raise a family.

Objective | Through various approaches, our region will:

Improve the region's competitive position.

The region's economic vitality depends on providing a high quality of life in diverse communities. Investments in the region's infrastructure will help ensure the region remains globally competitive by establishing and maintaining the connected multimodal transportation system on which businesses depend for access to local, national and global customers, and an available, desirable workforce. Economic and community development initiatives and activities will ensure that the region's infrastructure will support and contribute to the growth of the region's economic health and vitality.

Supporting Objectives:

- Invest in the region's infrastructure to ensure the region remains globally competitive.
- Increase awareness of key regional growth, transportation and economic trends based on the region's shared vision for the future.

STRATEGIC INITIATIVES — Ideas for Implementation

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

Collaboration

- Coordinate economic and community development activities to maintain the region's infrastructure and contribute to the growth of its economic health and vitality.
- Coordinate local and regional investment in datasets to improve economic forecasting and analysis.
- Collaborate with the region's water providers to better understand and forecast the effects of water availability on growth and development.
- Collaborate with economic development partners to understand and forecast the role of increased diversification of economic activities on reducing the region's risk related to global shocks.

Education and Assistance

- Provide and analyze data on the region's demographic and economic conditions.
- Create annual progress reports using measures and targets related to how regional land use and transportation influence the region's economic vitality.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

Collaboration

- Collect and share local development data and trends that inform regional analyses and modeling of economic trends.
- Engage economic development and planning professionals in efforts to align community-wide goals with regional opportunities.
- Participate in regional economic development activities.
- Encourage coordination among regional governments, stakeholders and transit providers to ensure alignment of future transit investments and regional employment growth.

Policies and Regulations

- Develop measures and indicators to assess progress toward local policy goals.

BUILDING ON SUCCESS



Sustaining economic vitality through infrastructure

In addition to expanding the region's mobility, the Regional Transportation

District's FasTracks transit system and previous mobility investments are major economic development assets for the entire region. Communities on the Regional Transportation District's rail network consider these investments an asset that increases their ability to attract and retain employers through greater and more convenient access for existing and potential employees. Denver International Airport is also a critical economic asset for the entire region.

Airports play a critical role in fostering business growth and attracting tourists. They are significant economic engines in regions nationwide. The increasingly global nature of business means a key element in any region's success is its ability to move goods and people quickly and economically worldwide, with airports integral to this function. >>>

MAKING PROGRESS TOGETHER

continued >>> While the region has created a solid foundation of mobility infrastructure, financial resources for transportation during the next 25 years are expected to be less than needed to maintain and selectively expand it. Transportation funding has not kept pace with the continued growth in travel demand or increases in transportation construction costs. Fewer than half of the capacity improvements identified for the Metro Vision transportation system can be funded during the next 25 years with reasonably expected revenues. Additional federal, state, local and private revenue sources must be identified to fully address the future transportation needs and desires of the region's residents and businesses.

Voluntary Options Available to Regional Organizations

- Provide information on key economic trends influencing the region, such as the role of private equity investment in local commercial real estate; integrate this information into planning and forecasting processes.
- Provide analysis that links fundamental drivers of the region's economy (such as productivity, investment and trade) to infrastructure investments and improved connectivity.
- Consolidate regional data, analyses and information into a one-stop shop accessible to a wide variety of audiences such as Denver Regional Visual Resources.
- Develop and distribute information that highlights key trends affecting the region's ability to achieve desired outcomes.
- Provide data-driven stories and infographics that illustrate the state of the region in terms of economics, transportation and demographics.
- Provide data and assistance to communities seeking to develop long-run forecasts for population and employment under alternative scenarios.

Investments

- Identify and fund transportation system improvements to increase access to jobs and efficient freight and goods movement to support the region's global competitiveness.

Voluntary Options Available to Local Organizations

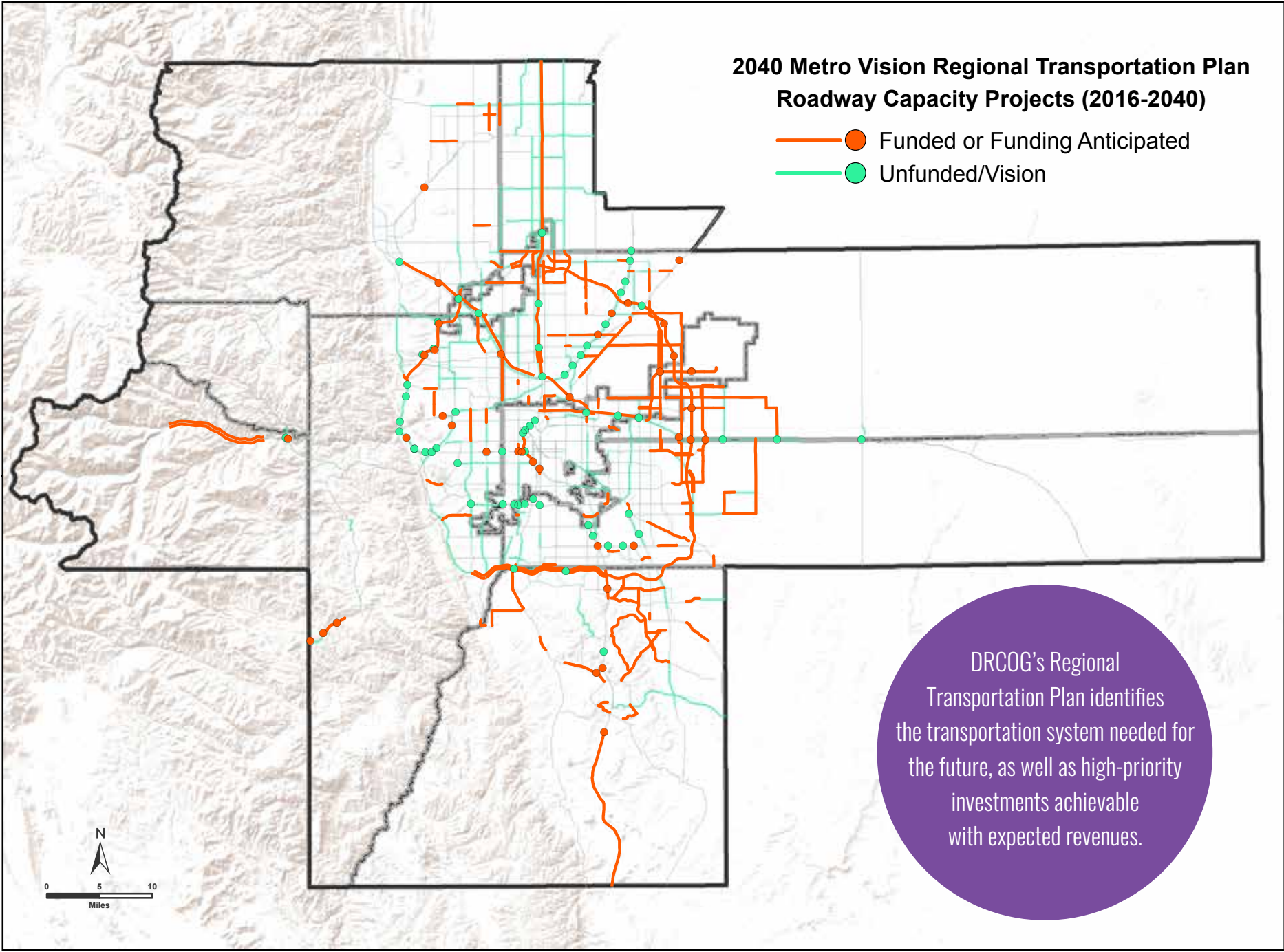
Investments

- Consider incentives and other investments to attract and enable employment growth near high-frequency transit.

To manage, operate, preserve, maintain and expand transportation in the region through 2040:

\$154 billion needed

\$107 billion available



Source: CDOT, DRCOG, Esri, 2040 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan

BUILDING ON SUCCESS



Cultural facilities and amenities

In addition to traditional infrastructure investments, arts and cultural investments and amenities are emerging as foundational elements in the sustained economic health of regions. Since 1989 the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District has funded nonprofit organizations and local government agencies that provide cultural benefit to Denver area residents. The Scientific and Cultural Facilities District spans seven counties including Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Douglas and Jefferson. Unlike many regions where cultural organizations compete with each other, the Denver region's culture of collaboration results in offerings that work together to engage, inspire and reflect the region's diversity.

In addition to funding large museums, the Denver Zoo, the Denver Botanic Gardens and performing arts organizations, the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District also funds hundreds of local grassroots cultural organizations annually. County cultural councils are instrumental in ensuring that investments in arts, culture, and science occur in all communities for the benefit of all citizens.

Thony Mena (left)

and Mehry Eslaminia star in a

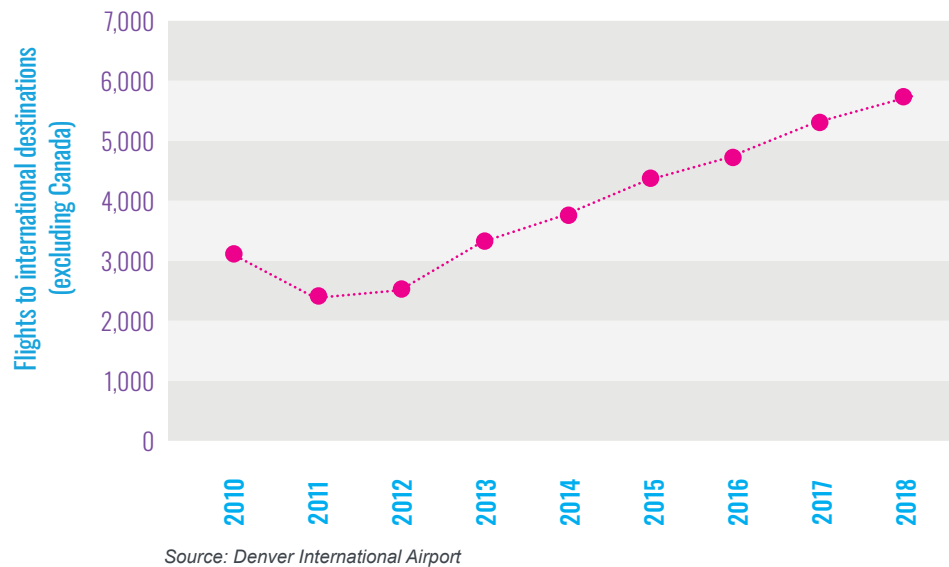
Curious Theatre Company production.

The theater is among 277 organizations across seven counties to receive funding from the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District, which supports local efforts to educate, entertain and enlighten the public.

Jeannene Bragg /

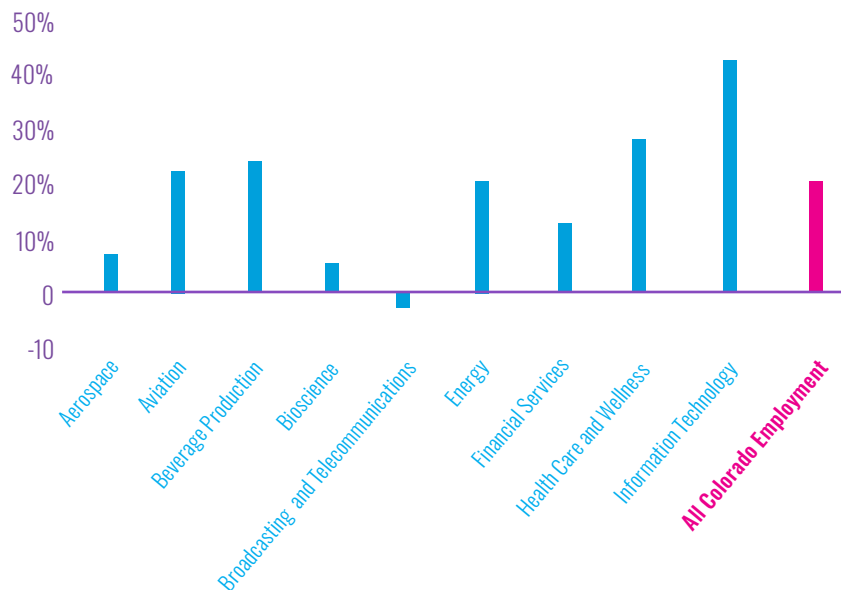
Curious Theatre Company





Flights from Denver International Airport (DEN) to international destinations

The Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation and DEN work collaboratively to attract international flights to the region, keeping Colorado connected to the world. Since 2010, the number of flights to international destinations (excluding Canadian destinations) have increased by 90 percent. Flights to Canadian destinations have decreased over the same period. DEN now offers nonstop service to 200 global destinations.



Employment growth by industry (2007-2016)

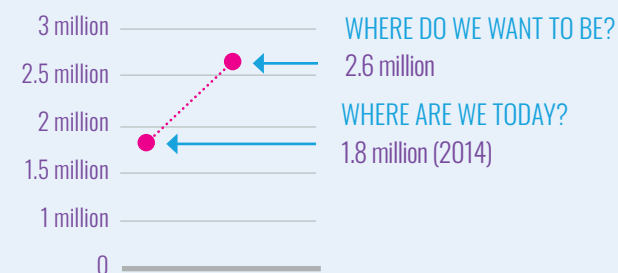
Many regional industry clusters — networks of businesses that drive wealth creation in the region — are outpacing employment growth across all job sectors in Colorado, according to the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation. The corporation, which helps companies select sites, expand and understand metro Denver's economic market, identifies and tracks employment growth in the region. The region's competitive environment, transportation infrastructure and low operational costs have attracted some of the country's most successful and diverse companies.

Performance Measures

Performance measures are critically important in monitoring the region's progress toward Metro Vision themes and outcomes. They are used to periodically measure outcomes and results. They also generate reliable data to help local governments and partners evaluate policies, programs and initiatives. As part of its reporting on plan progress toward creating a vibrant regional economy, DRCOG will use the performance measures outlined below.

MEASURE	WHERE ARE WE TODAY? (Baseline)	WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE? (2040 Target)
Regional employment	1.8 million (2014)	2.6 million (1 to 1.5 percent annual growth)
Share of the region's housing and employment near rapid transit stations or high-frequency transit stops	Housing: 14.0 percent (2014) Employment: 32.3 percent (2014)	Housing: 20.0 percent Employment: 45.0 percent

Regional employment



Share of the region's housing and employment near rapid transit stations or high-frequency transit stops



WHERE ARE WE TODAY?
Housing: 14.0 percent

WHERE ARE WE TODAY?
Employment: 32.3 percent

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?
Housing: 20.0 percent

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?
Employment: 45.0 percent

APPENDIX A: EXTENT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Since 1997, Metro Vision has included statements describing the future extent of urban development. Historically, this is also described as the region's Urban Growth Boundary/Area (UGB/A).

The Metro Vision 2035 Growth and Development Supplement outlines the Board-adopted policies to help achieve several of the plan's outcomes about growth and development. This includes the process through which local governments have the opportunity to request additional allocations under the UGB/A as a part of a regular cycle to take place every four years.

In 2013, the DRCOG Board of Directors delayed the commencement of the regular cycle of UGB/A requests until after the adoption of this Metro Vision update. Member governments remain able to make emergency, off-cycle requests.

This Metro Vision update anticipates an evaluation of the current UGB/A program and other potential methods to coordinate local planning and growth priorities with regional efforts to make efficient use of available land and existing and planned infrastructure. As this document is amended, relevant information associated with a revised approach to manage local planning and growth priorities will appear here, including an updated table accounting for the UGB/A allocations if needed. In the interim, please refer to Metro Vision 2035 (as amended).

APPENDIX B: DESIGNATED URBAN CENTERS

Urban centers recognized in Metro Vision reflect a variety of community types and places including traditional downtowns, transit station areas, existing and emerging employment centers, and greenfield areas with development plans consistent with the key characteristics of urban centers outlined in Outcome: “Connected urban centers and multimodal corridors throughout the region accommodate a growing share of the region’s housing and employment” ([page 32](#)). The process to designate urban centers uses the key Metro Vision characteristics, but also strongly considers local circumstances and commitments. DRCOG does not unilaterally identify and designate urban centers—all potential centers are submitted for consideration by local governments.

Any jurisdiction interested in designating an urban center should schedule an informal consultation with DRCOG staff. Through the Metro Vision Plan Assessment process, jurisdictions formally submit urban center proposals for evaluation by DRCOG staff and a panel of volunteers. An evaluation panel provides recommendations to DRCOG staff regarding urban center designations. Finally, recommended urban centers are presented to the DRCOG Board of Directors for its final consideration.

The following table lists urban centers currently recognized in Metro Vision. The table lists centers by jurisdiction and provides information on the size of the urban center and whether it is served by high-capacity transit. The table also classifies urban centers as emerging, existing or planned.

- Emerging centers are expecting significant growth relative to existing conditions (more than 50 percent growth in combined jobs and housing units).
- Existing centers are substantially developed. These centers are expecting less than 50 percent growth in combined jobs and housing units.
- Planned urban centers are largely undeveloped, but will become intensely developed over time. These areas currently have fewer than 100 housing units and fewer than 100 jobs.



URBAN CENTER NAME	JURISDICTION	CLASSIFICATION	AREA (ACRES)
Olde Town/New Town	Arvada	Existing	158
Candelas	Arvada	Emerging	631
Ralston Fields	Arvada	Existing	257
Iliff Avenue Center	Aurora	Emerging	315
Aurora City Center	Aurora	Emerging	868
Florida	Aurora	Existing	248
Iliff	Aurora	Existing	186
13th Avenue	Aurora	Emerging	179
Peoria - Smith	Aurora	Emerging	266
Smoky Hill	Aurora	Emerging	375
Interstate 225/Parker Road	Aurora	Emerging	209
Hampden Town Center	Aurora	Emerging	105
E-470 / Interstate 70	Aurora	Emerging	1,043
Fitzsimons	Aurora	Emerging	821
Jewell Avenue	Aurora	Emerging	294
Buckingham Center	Aurora	Existing	414
First Avenue Center	Aurora	Existing	339
Colfax Avenue	Aurora	Existing	336
Airport Gateway	Aurora	Planned	40
56th Avenue	Aurora	Planned	203
28th/30th Streets (Boulder Valley Regional Center)	Boulder	Existing	634
Gunbarrel Activity Center	Boulder	Existing	138
University Hill	Boulder	Existing	542
Downtown Boulder	Boulder	Existing	382
Adams Crossing Activity Center	Brighton	Emerging	779
Bromley Park Activity Center	Brighton	Emerging	393



URBAN CENTER NAME	JURISDICTION	CLASSIFICATION	AREA (ACRES)
Downtown Brighton Activity Center	Brighton	Existing	512
Prairie Center Activity Center	Brighton	Planned	436
Interlocken Loop Activity Center	Broomfield	Emerging	586
Interstate 25 and State Highway 7 Activity Center	Broomfield	Emerging	2,086
Urban Transit Village	Broomfield	Emerging	250
Original Broomfield Transit-Oriented Development	Broomfield	Planned	469
Downtown Castle Rock	Castle Rock	Existing	214
SouthGlenn	Centennial	Existing	146
Alameda Station	Denver	Emerging	201
Mile High Greyhound Park	Commerce City	Planned	66
62nd and Peña Transit-Oriented Development	Denver	Emerging	161
29th Avenue Town Center	Denver	Emerging	90
Broadway Station Transit-Oriented Development	Denver	Emerging	145
Denver Technology Center	Denver	Emerging	287
Southmoor Park Transit-Oriented Development	Denver	Emerging	50
Central Park Transit-Oriented Development	Denver	Emerging	63
St. Anthony's Urban Center	Denver	Emerging	30
38th and Blake Transit-Oriented Development	Denver	Emerging	238
Colorado Station	Denver	Existing	171
Decatur - Federal Transit-Oriented Development	Denver	Existing	282
Colorado Boulevard and Smith Road	Denver	Emerging	78
Central Business District	Denver	Emerging	1,705
Denargo Market	Denver	Emerging	112
Stapleton North Regional Center	Denver	Emerging	331
Belleview Station	Denver	Emerging	75
Sheridan Station	Denver	Emerging	168



URBAN CENTER NAME	JURISDICTION	CLASSIFICATION	AREA (ACRES)
Bear Valley	Denver	Existing	83
Colorado Boulevard Health Care District	Denver	Emerging	137
Federal and Evans	Denver	Existing	155
Tamarac and Hampden	Denver	Existing	79
University of Denver Campus Urban Center	Denver	Existing	204
Broadway	Denver	Existing	142
Evans Station Transit-Oriented Development	Denver	Existing	113
41st and Fox Transit-Oriented Development	Denver	Existing	311
Lowry Town Center	Denver	Existing	122
10th and Osage Station	Denver	Existing	171
East Colfax Main Street	Denver	Existing	999
Cherry Creek	Denver	Existing	603
Peña and 40th	Denver	Planned	50
Martin Luther King, Jr. Town Center	Denver	Planned	27
Highlands Ranch Town Center	Douglas County	Emerging	985
Englewood CityCenter	Englewood	Emerging	487
Glendale City Center	Glendale	Existing	353
Golden Downtown	Golden	Existing	132
Fehringer Ranch	Jefferson County	Emerging	334
Colorado 470 Corridor	Jefferson County	Existing	826
Bowles	Jefferson County	Existing	264
Bergen Park	Jefferson County	Existing	149
Southwest Plaza	Jefferson County	Existing	293
Denver West/Colorado Mills Center	Lakewood	Existing	546
Lakewood Center	Lakewood	Emerging	288
Union Center	Lakewood	Emerging	639



URBAN CENTER NAME	JURISDICTION	CLASSIFICATION	AREA (ACRES)
Wadsworth Boulevard	Lakewood	Existing	294
Oak Street	Lakewood	Existing	287
Littleton Downtown	Littleton	Emerging	220
RidgeGate West Village	Lone Tree	Emerging	375
Lincoln Station Transit-Oriented Development	Lone Tree	Emerging	61
RidgeGate City Center	Lone Tree	Emerging	195
State Highway 66 Mixed Use Corridor	Longmont	Emerging	159
Ken Pratt Extension	Longmont	Existing	158
Twin Peaks Activity Center	Longmont	Existing	240
North Main Street Activity Center	Longmont	Existing	122
Central Business District of Longmont	Longmont	Existing	591
Downtown Louisville	Louisville	Existing	357
Interstate 25 Corridor	Multiple	Emerging	5932
Northglenn City Center	Northglenn	Existing	252
Greater Downtown District (Parker)	Parker	Existing	280
Superior Town Center	Superior	Emerging	81
Eastlake	Thornton	Emerging	439
Interstate 25 / State Highway 7 Activity Center	Thornton	Emerging	583
North End Station	Thornton	Emerging	127
Thornton City Center	Thornton	Existing	491
South Westminster Activity Center	Westminster	Emerging	232
Westminster Center Activity Center	Westminster	Emerging	622
Westminster Promenade Act Center	Westminster	Emerging	538
North Interstate 25 Activity Center	Westminster	Emerging	561
West 120th Avenue Activity Center	Westminster	Existing	591
Wadsworth Wheat Ridge	Wheat Ridge	Existing	112
Northwest Transit-Oriented Development Wheat Ridge	Wheat Ridge	Existing	119

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Front cover photo: Creative Family/Bigstock.com

Back cover photo: Dana Coelho





MISSION STATEMENT

The Denver Regional Council of Governments is a planning organization where local governments collaborate to establish guidelines, set policy and allocate funding in the areas of:

- *transportation and personal mobility*
- *growth and development*
- *aging and disability resources*

VISION STATEMENT

Our region is a diverse network of vibrant, connected, lifelong communities with a broad spectrum of housing, transportation and employment, complemented by world-class natural and built environments.

Adopted
Jan. 18, 2017

Amended
April 18, 2018

Amended
May 15, 2019



1001 17th St., Suite 700
Denver, CO 80202

web: drcog.org
email: drcog@drcog.org

phone: 303-455-1000