Metro Vision
The Region's Plan

DRCOG
DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS
We make life better!

"If you bring the right people together in constructive ways with good information, they will create authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization or community." ~David Chrislip and Carl Larson – *Collaborative Leadership*

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 and plays several important additional roles.

- As the Regional Planning Commission per Colorado state statute, DRCOG prepares the plan for the physical development and social and economic health of the Denver region. For nearly two decades this plan has been known as Metro Vision.
- As the federally designated Area Agency on Aging (AAA), DRCOG is responsible for planning and funding the delivery of services to older adults through the federal Older Americans Act (OAA) and the state Older Coloradans Act.
- It is the region's federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization responsible for selecting how to invest millions of national transportation dollars.
- DRCOG is a council of governments, serving as a planning organization, technical assistance provider, and forum for local member governments to discuss emerging issues of importance to the region.

DRCOG members include over 50 local governments, each of which has an equal voice. The towns, cities and counties of the Denver metropolitan 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.

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Metro Vision: 20 Years of Progress

What is Metro Vision?

ORIGIN AND HISTORY – A SHARED VISION FOR THE REGION

For 60 years, the counties and municipalities of the Denver region have worked together to advance a shared vision of the future of the metro area and 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.

With regional cooperation as its keystone, Metro Vision promotes a high quality metropolitan setting that embraces the physical and cultural diversity of the many communities which comprise the Denver region and creates the opportunity for a wide variety of economic development initiatives and lifestyles. Effective and efficient cooperative use of limited resources, whether financial, societal or natural, is essential to achieve the goals of Metro Vision and progress toward a sustainable future. Through the implementation of Metro Vision, the region can be a place where people live close to where they work and play, where a balanced transportation network connects mixed-use urban centers, where access to open space and recreational opportunities is abundant, and where cultural diversity and respect for the natural environment is celebrated.

To advance and sustain this future, the region functions as an association of interrelated communities, each of which has a stake in planning for the health of the region as a whole. Individual communities should prosper by contributing to regional initiatives and in turn, a stronger, more "livable" region will serve to strengthen and sustain its individual communities.

KEY METRO VISION PRINCIPLES

The hallmark of the Metro Vision planning process is the collaborative and flexible nature of the dialogue. The region has a strong shared sense of its collective future, and the DRCOG Board of Directors (DRCOG Board) recognizes implementation of the plan requires local action, allowing individual communities to pursue Metro Vision ideals through different pathways and at different speeds. Six core principles have guided this dialogue since its inception and remain valid today:

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.

MILE HIGH COMPACT

MILE HIGH COMPACT SIGNING CEREMONY AUGUST 10, 2000

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 viewed as a model for regional cooperation by other regions across the country.

METRO VISION IS ASPIRATIONAL, LONG-RANGE AND REGIONAL IN FOCUS.

Metro Vision's planning horizon extends twenty 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 fulfill the vision of Metro Vision.

METRO VISION OFFERS IDEAS FOR LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION.

Local governments can use Metro Vision as they make decisions about land use and transportation planning and a range of related issues. Metro Vision also helps local governments coordinate their efforts with one another and with other organizations.

METRO VISION RESPECTS LOCAL PLANS.

The region's local governments developed Metro Vision, working collaboratively at DRCOG. The plan doesn't replace the vision of any individual community; 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 impacts associated with growth—traffic, air quality, and housing costs among others— don't recognize jurisdictional boundaries and jurisdictions must work collaboratively to address them. Metro Vision provides the framework for doing that; 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.

A CALL TO ACTION

Metro Vision's principles are central to the decisions of the DRCOG Board, providing an action agenda that integrates regional growth and development, multimodal transportation, environmental stewardship, community health and livability, and the vitality of the region's economy into one regional planning framework. The DRCOG Board adopted the first Metro Vision plan in 1997 – Metro Vision 2020—and has continued the dialogue about how best to achieve the plan's vision ever since.

This Metro Vision update process serves as a regional "call to action"—an opportunity to increase understanding of challenges and opportunities the region faces, identify common community values and regional priorities, and establish a clear course of action for the future.

While Metro Vision promotes regional collaboration by focusing attention on the long-term benefits and costs associated with the decisions we make today and their relationship to our desired outcomes, the ultimate success of Metro Vision depends greatly on implementation efforts by our partners, particularly the region's local governments.

Building on Success and Facing New Challenges

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TODAY'S METRO VISION: A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

As the Metro Vision planning process has evolved over the years, increasingly the DRCOG Board has prescribed the desire to broaden engagement and involvement, to get input from a wider segment of the region's population.

Today's Metro Vision emerged from a collaborative process that spanned more than three years. During this time DRCOG worked with its policy committees, member governments, partner agencies, a host of other regional stakeholders, and the community at large to transform the Metro Vision Plan into a shared vision for action relevant to everyone involved in shaping the future of the Denver metro area. A variety of outreach opportunities engaged participants and informed the process: 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 (SCI) among others. For additional background about key stakeholder engagement activities that shaped today's Metro Vision, refer to Appendix B.

DRCOG has heard from voices throughout the region through this collaborative process. They have helped identify areas of regional success worth continuing and building upon. They have helped identify new challenges that can be addressed in today's Metro Vision.

INTRODUCTION

Since Metro Vision was first adopted, the Denver region has seen many changes. Numerous successful regional initiatives have captured national and international attention, including:

- Construction of Denver International Airport (DIA) and several major sports venues;
- Voter approval and ongoing construction of the FasTracks transit expansion program (one of the largest public works projects in the nation);
- Major infill and redevelopment projects including Stapleton, Belmar, and the Central Platte Valley;
- 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.

The Denver region is the center of Colorado's growing national and international 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, centralized location, diverse communities and lifestyle options, access to ever-expanding recreational opportunities, and overall 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 forecasted to increase nearly 50 percent, from around 3 million to 4.3 million people. 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 over one million residents will be 60 or older. These changes illustrate the need for our region to prepare. With this growth comes increased demand on our land and natural resources and the need to continually improve the region's infrastructure and connectivity. These shifts also have profound implications for regional and local planning, as housing and transportation needs change with the needs of our aging population. Furthermore, as

the region's population grows, ensuring residents have access to opportunities, services, and care will be essential to promote a healthy population.

This section provides context on the complex challenges and opportunities that emerged through discussions with stakeholders during the preparation of this plan update and helped inform the overall process. Some of which have only recently emerged, and others that are ongoing. They generally fall into five categories:

- Changing demographics and lifestyles;
- Infrastructure and connectivity;
- Natural resources and resiliency;
- Access to opportunity; and
- Community health and wellness.

A brief discussion of each is provided below and on the following pages.

CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AND LIFESTYLES

Growth in older adult population. By 2040 one in four residents of the Denver region will be 60 years or older. In the near-term the region will experience a 65 percent increase in the population 75 years and older over the next 10 years (2014 – 2024). These changes are important as persons 75 years and older have different needs and often require support to remain in their homes and communities. In addition, a decreased share of residents in prime working age will increase demand for new workers. Despite this shift, many older adults are staying in the workforce longer—either by choice or out of necessity. A growing number, whether in the workforce or not, are seeking ways to remain active and engaged in their communities.

MEETING THE NEEDS OF A GRAYING REGION

Communities can choose a future that both protects vulnerable older adults and meets the needs of those who thrive. Today's older adults are seeking greater opportunities to age successfully and give back to the community. The power of the next generation of older adults can be of great benefit to the region and individual communities.

As the AAA for the Denver region, DRCOG plans and funds the delivery of services to older adults. DRCOG's AAA enables more than 25,000 persons in the metro area to receive services including personal care, assisted transportation, congregate and home-delivered meals, homemaker services, home modification, adult day care, and legal assistance. These programs allow older adults to remain in their homes and communities. The swelling ranks of Baby Boomers are increasing demands for aging services at the local and regional level.

Colorado is facing a looming long-term care crisis. Unless the state begins to invest now in cost-effective home and community-based services, the impact on future state budgets will be increasingly burdensome. Federal budget cuts have hit Colorado particularly hard. Colorado has been affected far more significantly than any other state by the reduction in federal funds for aging services—Colorado cuts have been as high as 15.4 percent, while some states received cuts of less than 1 percent. For some time, DRCOG has not been able to fully meet support levels requested by community agencies providing direct services to older adults throughout the region.

Meeting the needs of a rapidly growing older adult population in a constrained funding environment will require innovative and integrated approaches to delivering services to support healthy, successful aging. There is growing evidence that older adults who have access to 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 are healthier and require fewer supports and services. DRCOG and its partners are committed to addressing growing needs by creating lifelong communities that allow for maintaining independence as long as possible.

Increasingly diverse population. The region's racial and ethnic diversity continues to increase—34 percent of the region's residents were racial and ethnic minorities in 2013, compared to 28 percent in 2000. This trend is expected to continue,

adding to the region's diversity and vitality. However, few neighborhoods in the region mirror its overall racial and ethnic composition. The region is also somewhat divided economically and its youngest residents are most directly impacted. Children have the highest rate of poverty of any age group in almost every county in the region; however, significant disparities exist by location.

Demand for new and expanded housing options. As our population changes, so too will demand for new and expanded housing choices to better meet the needs of current and future residents. Many older adults will face challenges rooted in residential development patterns in largely auto-dependent communities with limited access to essential services. Continued in-migration of well-educated, young adults has and may continue to be an important part of the region's economic growth. Yet many of today's younger adults prefer to live in more urbanized areas with walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods served by transit.[1]Additionally, an expected increase in low- and moderate-income households will translate into increased demand for affordable and workforce housing. Another significant shift among all age groups is growth in single-person households, expected to be more than 30 percent of all households. All of these changes underscore the importance of maintaining a diverse mix of housing choices in the region, and present opportunities for growth and vitality in our region's communities.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND CONNECTIVITY

Balancing infrastructure needs. Building new infrastructure for water supply, wastewater treatment, technology, or mobility is challenging as the costs to simply maintain existing infrastructure in good condition have increased while revenues shrink. As such, it will be important to maintain the right balance between investing in expansion of infrastructure facilities to serve new areas and pressing needs for maintenance and improving the efficiency of existing systems. While the metro area generally retains a position of good fiscal health and strength, now is the time to consider the impacts of fiscal realities on our ability to maintain high quality services.

First- and final-mile connections to work and other destinations. For communities that currently or will soon have major transit service or stations, the ability to conveniently and safely get travel to and from transit to one's final destination from a transit station is important. While FasTracks has expanded regional mobility, the full benefits of the regional mass transit system will not be fully realized without easier connections for the "first- and final- mile" of a transit trip. These connections will be all the more critical as the region's demographics change over time, particularly with the rapid aging of the population.

> **INFILL AND INFRASTRUCTURE**
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> Metro Vision places a significant focus on infill and redevelopment in established areas as a means to accommodate a portion of future development. Investment in aging water and sewer infrastructure is necessary to address existing deficiencies. In some cases, current capacity will need to expand to support higher-density development.
>
> Some properties otherwise suitable for infill or redevelopment may be passed over due to infrastructure improvement costs. These and other costs associated with bringing the site up to current standards are often borne by the developer and can create uncertainty. Many local governments in the region have taken steps to encourage infill and redevelopment in their urban centers by adopting supportive policies and regulations, establishing streamlined development processes, and providing incentives.
>
> Historically, the focus of financing for capital improvement projects in the region has been on expanding infrastructure systems into new greenfield development or major redevelopment areas, not into established and developed areas. As a result, smaller infill and redevelopment opportunities can be more challenging to finance and implement.

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[1] Nielsen Media Research, "Millenials – Breaking the Myths", February 2014.

Linkages to green infrastructure. The region's extensive network of parks and open spaces provides an important visual and physical linkage between our communities. This "green infrastructure" is valued by residents and visitors alike and is recognized as a key contributor to our quality of life and ability to lead active lifestyles, the health of our environment, and our economic vitality. Many of the region's larger parks and open spaces are not accessible by transit, and green space is generally less plentiful near affordable housing. Parks and open spaces provide residents with more options to live healthy and active lifestyles, while protecting our natural systems. An emphasis on increasing linkages within our existing green infrastructure network is needed to promote more equitable access throughout the system and to support the varied roles these places serve as the region grows—providing residents with the ability to live healthy and active lifestyles, while protecting our natural environment.

NATURAL RESOURCES AND RESILIENCY

Air quality. Motor vehicle emissions are a significant source of the air pollutants that are a persistent problem for the Denver region. Reducing transportation-related emissions requires a suite of strategies such as cleaner fuels, more fuel-efficient vehicles, multimodal transportation facilities and services, and development patterns that reduce the need to help to reduce per capita VMT. While notable progress has been made, the region's ability to achieve further air quality improvements will be difficult with anticipated population growth.

Water. Water is a particularly scarce resource in the arid mountain west—a fact underscored by periods of drought over the past decade. An ongoing consideration is the need to focus on the ability of the region's finite water supply to accommodate projected growth, and protecting water quality. Both of these are mandated and monitored at the state level. There must be close collaboration at the local, regional, and state level.

Hazard mitigation and resilience. Wildfire and flooding events have become common in our region over the past decade. The impacts of these events in the future will be intensified if urbanization expands in areas prone to wildfires and flooding—as will costs for disaster response, management, and reconstruction. Educating the public and local officials about the risks and potential costs of developing in all types of hazard areas is extremely important. Local plans and regulations are critical to managing growth in these areas.

ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY

Increasing options and removing barriers to opportunities and services. One of the region's greatest challenges is ensuring residents of all ages, abilities, and income levels can take advantage of the full range of community services—health care, education, job training, social services, housing, recreation, and public transportation. It includes the need for access to and information about other things that contribute to a high quality of life—employment opportunities, recreational opportunities, healthy food and nutrition, arts and culture, and participation in civic life, to name a few. In all these instances, the important issue is <u>access</u>: the ease with which people can gain it, the barriers that keep them from it, and the opportunities provided for them to take advantage of.

Accessible workforce housing. Development patterns shape the travel patterns of the region's population. The average working family in the Denver region spends 49 percent of its income on housing and transportation costs combined, whereas 45 percent is considered an affordable level for these combined costs.[2] Affordability is not just a function of housing cost. 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 and more time traveling between

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[2] The Location Affordability Index (www.locationaffordability.info) models housing and transportation costs for households with varying characteristics. This household includes four people with two commuters earning median household income.

destinations. However, higher land prices near rail-transit stations have resulted in home prices and rental rates beyond the reach of many households. As the region grows it will be important that there be housing located where it can maximize available infrastructure, and where job centers and transit are readily accessible.

Workforce availability and training. During stakeholder interviews conducted to help inform the Metro Vision update, the region's well-educated labor force was consistently cited as a strength, along with our ability to attract talent. In addition, the state's major universities (University of Colorado, Colorado State University, and Colorado School of Mines) were cited as assets. The region competes well for companies looking for IT and engineering talent. Yet education funding constraints for both K-12 and higher education systems and reliance on importing talent make the regional economy vulnerable if we cannot provide the necessary training for existing residents or continue to attract new talent. A shortage of science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) skills for advanced manufacturing was identified as a gap in the education system and is being addressed by the State Office of Economic Development.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Access to care. There is a widening gap between different demographic and socioeconomic groups in the region in terms of health care accessibility.[3]   Higher health care costs reduce access to care for lower-income households, including older adults on fixed incomes. These higher costs not only affect overall health, but ripple through the community and region in other ways, such as 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 help alleviate the impact of other aspects of health care beyond our control, such as the actual cost of care.

Healthy food access and affordability. The availability and affordability of food influences nutrition and overall health. Consumption of nutritious foods, such as fruits and vegetables, supports good health, while consumption of unhealthy foods may lead to health issues such as diabetes or obesity. Access to healthy food is influenced by food costs, and the availability and proximity of grocery stores, specialty and convenience food stores, restaurants, farmers' markets, and other food outlets and distributors. The divide between those in the region who can afford fresh and healthy foods, and those who cannot, is growing.[4] For some people, it may simply be a matter of convenience or location, and food options near their neighborhood may be limited to fast food restaurants or convenience stores. For others, the costs of healthier foods, time constraints, or a lack of cooking skills may lead them to choose less healthy options.

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[3] Health Disparities Report. Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, 2013. http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite/CDPHE-Main/CBON/1251647897443. Accessed March 3, 2014.

[4] Food Research and Action Center, *Food Hardship 2008-2012: Geography and Household Composition*, September 2013.

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Plan Framework: A Focus on Outcomes

How This Plan is Organized

Metro Vision guides DRCOG's work and establishes shared expectations with our partners. It outlines the broad outcomes, objectives, and strategies chosen by the DRCOG Board to make life better for the region's residents. It also establishes the performance measures and targets used to track progress toward our desired outcomes over time. This section provides an introduction to individual components of the Metro Vision Plan Framework and defines key terms used in subsequent sections.

Plan Elements

While Metro Vision's core values have been carried forward through various updates over the years and remain valid, today's Metro Vision is markedly different than its predecessors.   Metro Vision's has been expanded from three elements—growth and development, transportation, and environment—to five. Each of the five elements listed below represents a focus of our vision for the region:

- An Efficient and Predictable Development Pattern
- A Connected Multimodal Region
- A Safe and Resilient Built and Natural Environment
- Healthy, Inclusive, and Livable Communities
- A Vibrant Regional Economy

This shift reflects the collective desire for a plan that strongly links issues and topics and clearly defines a desired outcome for the region. Today's Metro Vision reflects an increased emphasis on planning for the region's social and economic health as well as its physical development. Accordingly, the plan incorporates new and/or expanded topic areas: housing, economy, community health and wellness, and community resilience.

Metro Vision is dynamic and flexible, and represents current direction on the critical issues of the day, but the plan will be updated as conditions and priorities change. Moreover, today's Metro Vision places an intentional focus on connecting the dots between individual plan elements since in practice each one is cross-cutting, directly relating to and influencing the others. While they are often referred to as discrete topics or groups of topics for discussion—such as transportation or the built or natural environment—in practice each is cross-cutting, and relates to and influences the others. To demonstrate this concept, each plan element contains a discussion regarding why it is important to the other four elements.

Key Terms and Structure

Each of the plan's five elements establishes three tiers of guidance to help the region move towards its vision as follows:

- **Outcomes:** represent a region-wide aspiration that local governments and other partners will collectively work toward, each contributing in a manner appropriate to local circumstances and priorities.
- **Objectives:** identify continuous improvements needed to achieve a desired outcome

> **WHAT'S DIFFERENT ABOUT TODAY'S METRO VISION?**
>
> - Emphasis on the region's social and economic health as well as its physical development;
> - New and/or expanded topic areas: housing, economy, community health and wellness, and community resilience;
> - Stronger emphasis on "connecting the dots" between individual plan elements and topics; and
> - Reflects the collective desire for a more outcome-oriented plan.

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- **Strategies:** provide guidance for the types of actions that may need to be taken to help achieve a specific objective (e.g., policy or regulatory changes, partnerships, identification of funding sources).

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

Metro Vision's ultimate success depends on both regional and local implementation efforts.   With this in mind, the plan outlines a set of *supportive actions* to promote the implementation of each objective and accompanying strategies.

- *Regional actions* generally reflect ways in which DRCOG and other regional partners can support local governments in their efforts to implement specific objectives and strategies.
- *Local actions* reflect specific steps local governments can take on their own, or in collaboration with DRCOG and other partners, to implement specific objectives and strategies.

MEASURES OF PROGRESS

To help track the region's progress toward the outcomes and objectives identified in each plan element, the plan identifies a series of *performance measures* for each element 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.

Performance measures are used to obtain regular measurement of outcomes and results, in order to generate reliable data on the effectiveness and efficiency of programs. Effective performance measures use a unit of measurement that can be tracked and compared over time. Using regular tracking, DRCOG and its regional partners can verify whether our collective actions to implement the plan are moving the region toward the desired outcomes.

The *foundational measures* listed below were identified as critically important in monitoring the region's progress toward the outcomes contained in Metro Vision.   For each foundational measure there is 1) a *baseline*, which indicates the region's current status for that measure; and 2) a *target*, which establishes the desired future outcome for that measure.

Several foundational measures carry forward goals and targets set in Metro Vision 2035. DRCOG will report on plan implementation progress using these foundational 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.

	Foundational Measure	Baseline	Target
1	Share of region's housing and employment located in urban centers	10.2 percent of region's housing (2014) and 37.5 percent of region's employment (2010)	Increase to 25 percent of region's housing and 50 percent of region's employment by 2040
2	Housing density within the urban growth boundary/area (UGB/A)	1,154 units per square mile (2014)	25 percent increase between 2014 and 2040
3	Combined cost of housing and transportation as a percent of income for a median-income family	Housing costs: 29 percent Transportation costs: 20 percent Combined costs: 49 percent (2012)	Decrease to 45 percent by 2040
4	Share of the region's households that are housing cost burdened (spending 30 percent or more of income on housing)	36.2 percent (2013)	Reduce to 25 percent by 2040

	Foundational Measure	Baseline	Target
5	Share of health services in urban centers, in rural town centers, within ½ mile of rapid transit stations, or within ¼ mile of high frequency bus stops	54.4 percent (2013)	Increase to 75 percent by 2040
6	Surface transportation related greenhouse gas emissions per capita	26.8 lbs./person (2010)	60 percent decrease between 2010 and 2040
7	Non-SOV (single occupancy vehicle) mode share to work	25.5 percent (2013)	Increase to 35 percent by 2040
8	Daily vehicle miles traveled (VMT) per capita	25.4 daily VMT per capita (2010)	Reduce 10 percent from the 2010 level by 2040
9	Severely congested roadways on the Regional Roadway System (RRS)	1,172 lane miles (2011)	Not to increase above 2,000 lane mile through 2040
10	Number of traffic fatalities	176 (2013)	Less than 100 per year by 2040

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A Plan for a Sustainable Future

Introduction

This policy framework includes five plan elements:

- **An Efficient and Predictable Development Pattern**
- **A Connected Multimodal Region**
- **A Safe and Resilient Built and Natural Environment**
- **Healthy, Inclusive, and Livable Communities**
- **A Vibrant Regional Economy**

As noted in the Plan Framework section, each of the plan's five elements establishes three tiers of guidance to help the region move towards its vision: **Outcomes—**represent a region-wide aspiration that local governments and other partners will collectively work toward, each contributing in a manner appropriate to local circumstances and priorities; **Objectives—** identify continuous improvements needed to achieve a desired outcome; and **Strategies—**provide guidance for the types of actions that may need to be taken to help achieve a specific objective (e.g., policy or regulatory changes, partnerships, identification of funding sources).

The degree to which the outcomes, objectives, and strategies identified in each plan element apply in individual communities will vary. As the Metro Vision principles state—the 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. These issues include traffic congestion, air quality, availability of housing, community health and wellness, and resiliency. Local governments will ultimately determine how and when to implement Metro Vision through their local comprehensive plans, land use regulations, and other programs, based on local conditions and aspirations.

Metro Vision's ultimate success depends on both regional and local implementation efforts. With this in mind, each element outlines a set of **supportive actions** to promote the implementation of each objective and accompanying strategies, and establishes a series of **performance measures** to help track the region's progress over time.

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An Efficient and Predictable Development Pattern

INTRODUCTION

Each of the Denver 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, it will be important to maintain these important distinctions and protect the ability for residents and businesses to choose the type of community that meets their unique needs and values.

Metro Vision supports this ideal 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; protecting the region's sensitive open lands and natural resources; and helping attain regional goals related to travel patterns, resource consumption, and air and water quality.

Achieving an efficient and predictable development pattern is dependent upon the region's ability to collectively work towards the following outcomes.

OUTCOMES FOR AN EFFICIENT AND PREDICTABLE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN:

- **Diverse, livable communities offer a continuum of lifestyle options;**
- **Urban development is focused within the region's defined urban growth boundary/area;**
- **Vibrant and connected urban centers and multimodal corridors accommodate a growing share of the region's housing and employment needs; and**
- **Freestanding communities and rural town centers remain distinct from the larger urban area.**

The objectives and strategies in this section aim to influence the type, location, and characteristics of development—both greenfield and infill/redevelopment—required to accommodate future population growth and changing demographics.

Metro Vision acknowledges that the decisions local governments make in determining when, where, and how growth will occur and also recognizes each community has its own view of the future. The plan recognizes many areas in the region will experience significant change over the next 10 to 20 years, while other areas are well-established and likely to remain comparatively stable. Because this element 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. Importantly, this element further recognizes that communities across the region contribute to regional goals and priorities in ways as diverse as the region's communities themselves.

CONNECTING THE DOTS: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

A Connected Multimodal Region. Maintaining a clear linkage between land use patterns and multimodal transportation systems is integral to the region's ongoing success. Compact urban centers and neighborhoods can be more readily served by transit and other alternative modes of transportation, reduce the need for vehicle trips by making walking a part of everyday life, and ensure a variety of housing and employment options are accessible to people of all ages, abilities, and income levels. By concentrating urban development within the UGB/A, the region can promote the efficient use of available infrastructure.

A Safe and Resilient Built and Natural Environment. Where and how we grow has a significant effect on our air and water quality, and the health of our natural environment. Continuing to slow the expansion of the urban area; supporting mixed, higher-intensity land uses; and increasing overall regional density will be key development strategies to promote transit usage, walking, and biking, and to reduce growth in vehicle trips and miles of travel—all of which help reduce harmful emissions. Infill and redevelopment projects will also induce similar benefits.

Healthy, Inclusive, and Livable Communities. The region's built environment plays an important role in regional and community health and wellness. People who live or work in walkable communities and have the option of walking or bicycling to meet their daily needs are more likely to incorporate regular physical activity into their lives and, as a result, are more likely to maintain healthy weights and benefit from regular physical fitness.

A Vibrant Regional Economy. The region's diverse communities—rural, suburban, and urban—play a large role in its appeal to both residents and businesses. The ability of residents to choose whether to live in a compact and walkable urban center; a suburban neighborhood; or on a working ranch or mountain property is a factor in the region's success in recruiting companies and skilled employees. In addition, carefully managing growth and development and encouraging infill and redevelopment can help the region achieve a more sustainable future by capitalizing on existing infrastructure, reducing energy consumption, and reducing VMT—all of which can help support the more efficient use of resources.

Outcome 1: Diverse, livable communities offer a continuum of lifestyle options.

The Denver metro region will continue to embrace its diverse communities, ranging from urban downtown areas to suburban communities as well as freestanding cities and towns. Varied housing options, access to employment and a range of services and recreational opportunities, and the successful integration of multimodal transportation choices will promote livable communities that meet the needs of people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

OBJECTIVE 1.1: PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS AND COMMUNITY DESIGN FEATURES THAT MEET THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE OF ALL AGES, INCOMES, AND ABILITIES.

Strategy 1.1(a): Embrace the unique characteristics of the region's communities

Recognize that the way(s) in which rural, urban, or suburban communities support the implementation of the region's objectives may be distinctly different, based upon local context.

Strategy 1.1(b): Promote investment/reinvestment in existing communities

Promote investment/reinvestment in established centers, corridors, and neighborhoods to help make them more livable and economically competitive, leverage the region's investment in transit and other transportation infrastructure, and limit the need for the expansion of development outside the UGB/A.

Strategy 1.1(c): Promote compact, mixed-use development patterns

Promote development patterns that make walking, bicycling, or taking transit viable options; enhance the independence of people who prefer not to drive or are unable to because of age, income, or ability; and increase access to services, such as housing for older adults near social service providers, medical offices, and shopping.

Strategy 1.1(d): Create pedestrian- and bicycle-friendly environments

Provide continuous sidewalks, narrowed street crossings in heavily pedestrian-traveled areas, curb ramps, adequate crosswalk signal timing, medians as midway stopping points, traffic calming measures, improved bike paths and trail systems, and other improvements to enhance safety and mobility.

Strategy 1.1(e): Encourage a diversity of housing types

Increase access to, and availability of, affordable rental and for-sale units and other housing types that expand housing options for residents throughout life's various stages. Locate housing in areas where transit service exist or is planned or where access to employment, services, shopping, volunteer and educational opportunities, entertainment and cultural venues is maximized.

Strategy 1.1(f): Integrate universal design strategies

Develop built environments that enable the widest spectrum of people—regardless of age, income or ability—to more easily participate in community life. Design buildings and spaces that are accessible to people of all ages and abilities; ensure safety and comfort; support wayfinding; facilitate social interaction, learning and social enrichment; and can be easily adapted to meet changing needs.

ACCOMMODATING ALL AGES, INCOMES AND ABILITIES

Growth in people over the age of 60 will result in increased demands for aging services at the local and regional level. To support healthy, independent aging the Denver region must also consider how the design of our communities, services and infrastructure must evolve to meet the needs of this growing population.

DRCOG's Boomer Bond initiative provides education and support to local governments around the region in the form of strategies and tools that can support healthy, independent aging, allowing older adults to remain in their homes and communities for as long as they wish. Working closely with stakeholders around the region DRCOG developed the Boomer Bond Assessment Tool. The tool is a resource local governments can use to evaluate how well the community's existing resources, programs and physical design serve older adult residents.

Jurisdictions around the region have used the Boomer Bond assessment to assist staff and policymakers in determining effective ways to meet the needs of existing and future older adult residents. How local governments in the Denver region support healthy aging in their communities will vary widely. The Boomer Bond supports the ongoing efforts of DRCOG's member governments to implement measures to overcome barriers, become more livable, and improve the quality of life for older adults in the Denver region.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Provide education and technical assistance in support of local efforts to integrate land use and transportation, promote increased diversity in housing options, and meet the needs of people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Adopt policies, regulations, and incentives to support the implementation of universal design strategies.
- Manage parking near rail and along corridors with frequent bus service to promote increased ridership.

- Consider allowing accessory dwelling units in appropriate zoning districts.
- Target local funds to expand bicycle facilities and to create pedestrian- friendly environments
- Establish street design guidelines and standards that improve the environment for pedestrians.

Outcome 2: Urban development is focused within the region's defined urban growth boundary/area.

A defined UGB/A promotes an orderly, compact and efficient pattern of future development within the region. Continuing to focus urban development within the UGB/A will prevent unnecessary and inefficient extension of roads, transit services, water and wastewater treatment plants, and other infrastructure; thereby reducing associated costs. In addition, it will reduce regional vehicle travel, help achieve greater density, conserve open land outside the boundary/area and maintain separation between communities. A limited amount of semi-urban or rural development will continue to occur beyond the UGB/A in response to locally adopted policies and market demand, contributing to the region's diversity of land uses. This may include very low-density residential development as well as industrial/employment uses and commercial activities in targeted locations.

OBJECTIVE 2.1: CONTAIN URBAN DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THE URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY/AREA

Strategy 2.1(a): Maintain and monitor the Urban Growth Boundary/Area

Ensure that urban development occurs within the defined UGB/A. Continue to maintain the UGB/A and update the growth allocations for each community in the region annually, or as needed.

DRCOG'S URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY/AREA: A MODEL FOR REGIONAL COLLABORATION

The Denver region has adopted a unique bottom-up policy for growth management that starts at the local government level and relies on voluntary collaboration among communities. The UGB/A defines where urban development will take place in the region over the next 25 years. The UGB/A currently encompasses 980 square miles of urban development, and is intended as a tool to:

- anticipate and direct growth;

- efficiently phase development to maximize infrastructure investment (especially transportation), saving money and resources for taxpayers;

- stimulate infill and redevelopment activity; and

- increase overall regional density within the UGB/A by at least 25 percent between 2010 and 2040.

The DRCOG Board of Directors allocates growth areas to each community within the region, based on historical development trends and future projections. Each community determines the specific geographic location of this growth allocation.[1] Communities have the flexibility to postpone committing their allocated urban growth area until specific development plans are in place. These communities will be referred to as urban growth area (UGA) communities.

The DRCOG Board of Directors remains committed to the UGB/A as a tool for promoting sustainable growth. The success of this voluntary approach has garnered both national and international praise for the Denver metro region.

Strategy 2.1(b): Direct growth to areas with infrastructure and services

Direct future urban growth within the UGB/A to areas where a complete package of infrastructure and services—including streets, water and wastewater, transit, police, fire, parks—already exist, or where plans are in place to provide such services.

Strategy 2.1(c): Encourage and plan for infill and redevelopment

Encourage infill and redevelopment on overlooked vacant parcels and on under-developed parcels as a means to increase housing and employment options and density in existing developed areas. Identify appropriate infill locations that will use existing infrastructure and reduce the need for costly infrastructure expansion. Create plans and regulations that thoughtfully match desired public- and private-sector outcomes.

TRANSFORMING THE REGION THROUGH INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT

Encouraging and incentivizing infill and redevelopment activity can help energize and promote the economic vitality of older neighborhoods and help transform brownfields and other underutilized sites in the region from eyesores into vibrant communities. The revitalization of these areas through infill and redevelopment makes efficient use of existing infrastructure and helps promote regional goals, such as increasing overall regional density, increasing housing options and access to opportunity, and reducing VMT.

Many communities in the Denver region are working to promote infill and redevelopment. Some successful strategies include establishing a supportive policy foundation through adopted plans and policies; removing potential regulatory barriers and providing increased flexibility in development standards (e.g., parking, setback and height requirements; parks and open space set-asides; and minimum lot sizes/permitted density) in areas where infill and redevelopment are desired; streamlining development approval procedures; and updating building and fire codes. In recent years, the results of these efforts have become visible—ranging from the construction of new housing options in established neighborhoods to the ongoing expansion of some of the region's newest communities—Stapleton, Belmar, Midtown at Clear Creek, and the Central Platte Valley. Other emerging locations include the ongoing redevelopment of the former Gates Rubber Factory and environs—including complementary plans to transform the Denver Design Center area north of I-25. Other redevelopment areas include Aria Denver, River North, Olde Town Arvada and surrounding areas, Midtown at Clear Creek in Adams County, Westminster Station area and countless others.

Strategy 2.1(d): Coordinate on municipal annexations of unincorporated areas within the Urban Growth Boundary/Area

Annexation of unincorporated areas within the UGB/A is encouraged when it represents a logical extension of a municipality's boundaries and is consistent with local comprehensive plans and annexation procedures. Cities and counties should develop intergovernmental agreements that provide for the resolution of any UGB/A issues.

Strategy 2.1(e): Protect the long-term viability of significant regional facilities

Ensure the intensity or types of uses associated with future development will not conflict with or affect the day-to-day operations of or long-term viability of an existing or proposed facility of regional significance. Significant regional facilities may include airports, solid waste disposal sites, and other facilities with unique access and land use compatibility considerations.

Strategy 2.1(f): Minimize conflicts with extractive resources

Discourage development in areas with commercially viable deposits of sand, gravel, quarry aggregate, or other extractive resources until these deposits are extracted to minimize potential conflicts with surrounding land uses and maintain access to these resources within the region.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Work with local governments to monitor the extent of current and future urban development patterns as defined by the Metro Vision Growth and Development Supplement.
- Prioritize investments in infrastructure and transportation systems within the UGB/A.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Reflect local growth aspirations through the location of urban growth boundary/area (UGB/A), including aligning land use, transportation and infrastructure planning to focus urban development within the UGB/A.
- Coordinate with DRCOG on local growth area allocation and adjustments to the location of urban growth boundary/area as needed.
- 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.

OBJECTIVE 2.2: MANAGE THE EXTENT OF DEVELOPMENT OCCURRING BEYOND THE URBAN GROWTH BOUNDARY/AREA[5]

Strategy 2.2(a): Prioritize funding to serve urbanized areas

Prioritize regional transportation infrastructure funds and other services in urbanized areas within the UGB/A by not expending regional funds to serve development in other locations.

Strategy 2.2(b): Limit development in Priority Preservation Areas[6]

Avoid development in areas identified as Priority Preservation Areas (see map on page x), and in other sensitive environmental areas in need of preservation or restoration, or that enhance connections between designated areas.

Strategy 2.2(c): Conserve opportunities for future urban development[7]

Plan for and conserve appropriate areas for urban development beyond 2040, maintain separation between the larger urban area and smaller outlying communities, and avoid open spaces and environmentally sensitive areas.

Strategy 2.2(d): Require adequate facilities and services

Ensure that adequate water supply, wastewater treatment, and other facilities and services can be provided in areas where development outside the UGB/A is necessary.

Strategy 2.2(e): Discourage development on non-conforming parcels

Discourage development on mining claim parcels that do not meet the development standards of the jurisdiction, especially access and setback requirements.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Monitor the amount of land consumed by development type outside of the urban growth boundary/area.
- Maintain a map of Priority Preservation Areas, working with local communities to refine and potentially expand designated areas as appropriate.

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[5]Former Large-Lot Development section—references to "large lot" have been adjusted to reflect broader intent of the section, as characterized by the outcome.

[6]Changed from Regional Open Space Plan to be consistent with "Safe and Resilient Built and Natural Environment "section.

[7]Moved from 'Extent of Urban Development' section (existing policy re: joint planning areas or future urban development moved to local actions)

- Coordinate with local communities and infrastructure service providers to identify urban reserve areas that should be conserved for future growth.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Use intergovernmental agreements to identify joint planning areas where future contiguous urban development beyond 2040 will occur.
- Adopt policies and regulations that limit development occurring outside the UGB/A – location and service provision requirements for development that occurs outside the UGB/A should be shaped by local plans and policies.
- Ensure development outside the urban growth boundary/area pays its own way, to the extent practical.
- Promote infill and redevelopment through zoning and funding for public infrastructure.

Outcome 3: Vibrant and connected urban centers and multimodal corridors accommodate a growing share of the region's housing and employment needs.

The Denver region has been recognized as an international model for healthy, livable communities in response to its focus on creating vibrant urban centers connected by a strong network of multimodal corridors throughout the metro area. While the location and context of each center and corridor will help define its unique character and density/intensity; they share a common set of characteristics. They are transit-, pedestrian-, bicycle-friendly places that contain a more dense and diverse mix of land uses than the surrounding areas; are designed to allow people of all ages, incomes and abilities to access a range of housing, employment, and service opportunities without sole reliance on having to drive. They also provide spaces where people can gather; aid in reducing per capita VMT, air pollution, greenhouse gas emissions and water consumption; and respect and support existing neighborhoods.

OBJECTIVE 3.1: ACCOMMODATE A GROWING SHARE OF THE REGION'S HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT IN URBAN CENTERS

Strategy 3.1(a): Direct new housing and employment growth to urban centers

Direct new housing and employment growth to urban centers, recognizing that the ability for individual urban centers to absorb future growth will vary based on the characteristics of each center—location, availability of infrastructure, type (infill vs. greenfield), status (existing vs. new), existing and planned mix of uses and development intensity, proximity to transit, and surrounding development context.

Strategy 3.1(b): Promote public/private investment and partnerships in urban centers

Provide resources and direct investment toward programs and infrastructure improvements that help local governments and the private sector develop successful urban centers.

Strategy 3.1(c): Prioritize investment in urban centers served by transit

Prioritize investment in urban centers located around existing or proposed rapid transit stations or in areas with high-frequency bus service and encourage the development of urban centers on infill and redevelopment sites within the UGB/A.

Strategy 3.1(d): Promote diverse housing options

Support the development of a variety of housing options in urban centers where jobs, services, and other opportunities may be accessed without driving. Encourage a mix of housing types within each urban center offering options for individuals and families at the full spectrum of life stages and physical abilities and attainable for a wide range of incomes.

Strategy 3.1(e): Foster the use of innovative tools and strategies

Foster the use of innovative planning, zoning, urban design, and parking management strategies and tools to support the implementation of higher-density, mixed-use development, pedestrian activity, and accessible public space within urban centers.

Strategy 3.1(f): Plan for balanced growth

Initiate collaborative planning to ensure the market demand for particular uses, such as retail, is taken into account for urban centers and multimodal corridors located within a shared trade area.

Strategy 3.1(g): Enhance internal and regional connectivity

Establish a network of clear and direct multimodal connections within and between urban centers and major destinations within the region that encourage transit usage, walking, or bicycling.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Coordinate with local governments to establish an online clearinghouse of potential development sites located within urban centers.
- Engage in a continuous dialogue with local governments and the private development community to understand the development and implementation success and challenges in urban centers.
- Continue to support ongoing planning for existing and future urban centers throughout the region.
- Establish an online clearinghouse for local governments and developers that provides a list of potential sites or jurisdictions meeting a specific set of project parameters (e.g., infill or redevelopment site of a particular size, adjacent to transit).

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Seek opportunities for public/private partnerships as a means to leverage available resources and implement infrastructure improvements or other catalytic projects within urban centers.
- Adopt policies and development regulations that support the implementation of higher-density, mixed-use development, pedestrian activity, and accessible public spaces within urban centers.
- Consider a range of parking management strategies, including but not limited to shared, unbundled, managed, and priced parking.
- Consider the use of regulatory tools and/or incentives to support the implementation of housing in urban centers that can meet the needs of people of all ages, incomes and abilities.

URBAN CENTERS FROM AROUND THE REGION

A sampling of the region's high-performing urban centers is provided below. These examples demonstrate the range of characteristics urban centers take within the region depending on the size of the community, transit service levels, the surrounding development context, and a host of other factors. (IMAGES TO BE ADDED IN FINAL DOCUMENT)

Example: Downtown Castle Rock

Location: The Downtown Castle Rock urban center is in the heart of Castle Rock.

Description: Downtown Castle Rock serves as the "Main Street" of Douglas County, providing an authentic western downtown for families and individuals to gather. A welcoming environment has been created through prioritizing the pedestrian experience, reinforcing bicycle and trail access, and maintaining an architectural scale that respects the urban center's historic past.

Highlights: The Town of Castle Rock's Downtown Overlay District provides zoning modifications that allow for building heights of four to six stories, mixed-use, no parking, and pedestrian-focused. There are bicycle and pedestrian trails connecting into and throughout Downtown Castle Rock.   There are multiple Castle Rock Free Cycle stations within the urban center offering bikes to rent, funded by Castle Rock Adventist Hospital. The Town of Castle Rock used Community Development Block Grant Funds to improve sidewalks and streets including ADA Accessible sidewalks and ramps. Downtown Castle Rock has also been successful in attracting small technology firms.

Example: Downtown Louisville

Location: The Downtown Louisville urban center incorporates the historic commercial core of Louisville.

Description: Downtown Louisville has the character of a thriving small town and provides a place for people to gather. Local implementation efforts have focused on programming community spaces to give residents and visitors a reason to spend time downtown.

Highlights: The city's Mixed Use Development Standards allow residential densities that exceed those historically allowed in the area and also require a mix of uses including retail, office, and residential. The city's Downtown Patios Program allows businesses to lease patio spaces in parking spots located close to downtown businesses. The patio spaces significantly increase pedestrian activity downtown during the summer months. The city is constructing the Louisville Gateway Underpass, which will provide continuous bicycle and pedestrian connections through the urban center, along Highway 42, and under the BNSF railway. The City developed preliminary design concepts for the underpass through DRCOG's Urban Center / Station Area Master Planning "next steps" funding program.

Example: SouthGlenn – City of Centennial

Location: The SouthGlenn urban center—known as "the Streets at SouthGlenn"— is located on the site of the redeveloped SouthGlenn Mall.

Description: The SouthGlenn urban center is located in the western quarter of the City of Centennial and serves as a multigenerational activity and entertainment node.

Highlights: The SouthGlenn Sub-Area Plan aims to integrate and connect adjacent neighborhoods to the center. The plan also calls for improving the pedestrian experience along major arterial roadways and intersections by breaking up the blocks to better integrate the urban center with surrounding neighborhoods. SouthGlenn includes a diversity of housing options, including new and existing multifamily residential to supplement the single-family options available in surrounding neighborhoods. As of 2014, there were 16 bus stops within the urban center and 34 bus stops within easy access.

38th and Blake TOD- City and County of Denver

Location: The 38th and Blake TOD Urban Center is at the western corner of Blake Street and 38th Avenue.

Description: The 38th and Blake station is the first stop along the East Corridor commuter rail project that will connect Denver Union Station to Denver International Airport. Development of the rail station and desires from the adjacent neighborhoods, including the rapidly redeveloping River North, for local retail and services provide great opportunity for the area to become a thriving node.

Highlights: The 38th and Blake Station Area Plan is centered around the goals of pedestrian and bike circulation, vehicular circulation, stormwater management and placemaking. The vision for the area calls for future development that will emphasize its industrial heritage, historic neighborhoods, emerging new residential and arts and entertainment districts, provide a mix of uses, ensure access and provide enhancements to the Platte greenway and make non-auto travel the travel modes of choice.

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URBAN CENTERS FROM AROUND THE REGION (CONT.)

Olde Town/New Town- City of Arvada

Location: Arvada's Olde Town district is located in downtown Arvada. The complementary New Town area is adjacent to Olde Town, just south a rail station on the Gold Corridor commuter rail project.

Description: Olde Town/New Town is a defined area with two distinct mixed-use districts. The Olde Town district provides lower density-mixed use while the New Town district includes an existing theater which preserves the remainder of the site for future higher density mixed-use redevelopment.

Highlights: The Arvada Transit Station Framework Plan aims to both preserve the historic character by maintaining the existing scale of buildings and selectively intensifying and diversifying land uses along with pedestrian friendly improvements to encourage walking through both districts. The plan also identifies priority streets where sidewalks are expected to be more active and vibrant and allow for increased pedestrian movement throughout the entire urban center.

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OBJECTIVE 3.2: CONTINUE TO CREATE AND REVITALIZE MULTIMODAL CORRIDORS THAT CONNECT AND SUPPORT THE VITALITY OF THE REGION'S URBAN CENTERSINVEST IN MULTIMODAL ENHANCEMENTS ALONG CORRIDORS

Retrofit auto-oriented corridors to include more transit, pedestrian, and bicycle facilities that will improve safety, enhance first- and final-mile connections to existing/planned transit, strengthen links to and between urban centers, and stimulate public/private investment.

Strategy 3.2(a): Transition existing corridors through infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse

Transition low-density, auto-oriented land use patterns along corridors to compact, pedestrian- and friendly development through targeted infill, redevelopment, and adaptive reuse. Promote intensifying existing uses where frequent transit service exists or is planned, accommodating an increasing portion of the region's population and employment.

Strategy 3.2(b): Provide direct connections between urban centers and surrounding neighborhoods

Provide direct pedestrian and bicycle linkages between corridors and adjacent neighborhoods, prioritizing connections that enhance first- and final-mile connections to transit and access to other services and urban center amenities.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Continue to allocate resources to support corridor planning efforts, infrastructure improvements, and other efforts to spur further public/private investment.
- Adjust urban center evaluation criteria to ensure corridors are specifically eligible for urban center designation.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Adopt policies and development regulations that support the implementation of multimodal enhancements and compact development along corridors.
- Prioritize investment in first- and final-mile connections to transit.
- Seek opportunities for public/private partnerships to leverage available resources and implement infrastructure improvements or other catalytic projects within urban centers.

Outcome 4: Freestanding communities and rural town centers remain distinct from the larger urban area.

The Denver metro area will continue to distinguish Boulder, Brighton, Castle Rock, and Longmont as freestanding communities, each of which will remain separate from the larger urban area, surrounded by an open space or rural buffer, and has an adequate mix of jobs and housing, an internal transportation system with regional transportation connections, and a town center at its core.   Likewise, the role of the region's rural town centers will be reinforced as unique places that provide services, employment, and entertainment for the surrounding community, as well as for tourists and travelers.

OBJECTIVE 4.1: STRENGTHEN THE VITALITY OF FREESTANDING COMMUNITIES

Strategy 4.1(a): Encourage self-sufficiency

Achieve a balance between employment and population and provide a diversity of housing types so people can live and work in the same community. Maintain a vibrant mixed-use town center or downtown core within freestanding communities to preserve each community's unique identity, protect historic resources, and support the needs of residents.

Strategy 4.1(b): Maintain physical separation from the larger urban area

Establish permanent open space or rural buffers to maintain physical separation from the larger urban area and retain a sense of community identity. Locate highway interchanges or transit stations away from these buffers to minimize development pressure.

Strategy 4.1(c): Develop internal and regional transportation options

Develop multimodal transportation systems within each freestanding community that include pedestrian and bicycle facilities, and internally- and externally-oriented transit services. Communities will be linked to the larger urban area with rapid transit and highway facilities

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Monitor the buffer between freestanding communities and nearby jurisdictions

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Adopt policies, regulations and incentives to support affordable, accessible, workforce and senior housing.
- Coordinate with adjoining communities and other organizations to establish and maintain open space and rural buffers.
- Engage broader region and transportation agencies in dialogue on effective means to connect freestanding communities to the larger urban area.
- Through the local comprehensive planning process evaluate if the tenets and expectations of freestanding community designation remain valid.

LEVERAGING THE REGION'S INVESTMENT IN TRANSIT

DRCOG directed significant Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) resources to demonstration projects along four transit lines that recently opened for service or are under construction. Each project was selected for its ability to serve as a model for effectively achieving economic, housing, transportation, community health and environmental objectives at the site level. Additionally, the projects are expected to catalyze development activity adjacent to station areas and throughout each corridor.

Peoria Station: As the transfer station connecting the East Rail Line and the I-225 Rail Line, Peoria Station is an important intersection for travelers and commuters between significant metro area destinations such as Denver Union Station, DIA, the Anschutz Medical Campus, and the Denver Tech Center. The project identified opportunities for development along Peoria Street to create a more attractive "front door" to the station. Activities focused on redevelopment planning for a 5-acre parcel owned by the Aurora Housing Authority. Additional strategies to transition parking from surface to structured, creating additional opportunities for development and investment, were developed.

Ward Road/Ridge Road Improvements: The cities of Arvada and Wheat Ridge each adopted plans that encourage higher density housing and employment adjacent to the Arvada Ridge and Ward Road (Wheat Ridge) transit stations along the Gold Rail Line. The Ridge Road corridor connects the two communities and provides an opportunity to create multimodal access between the stations and to adjacent neighborhoods. The project identified transportation system improvements to facilitate safe and convenient access to the stations for pedestrians, bicyclists, automobiles and RTD buses, setting the stage for a more comprehensive multimodal environment.

Westminster Station: Before the SCI, the Adams County Housing Authority assembled several properties within walking distance to the Westminster Station on the Northwest Rail Line. SCI supported the development of a redevelopment plan for the properties. The plan focused on bridging the gap between a conceptual vision for redevelopment and being responsive to existing land uses, community input, physical conditions, market dynamics and real estate development fundamentals, including the sequencing or phasing of development.

Sheridan Station: Denver, Lakewood and the Urban Land Conservancy (ULC) identified implementation strategies and building blocks to create a 20-minute neighborhood around the Sheridan Station on the W Line. A 20-minute neighborhood provides residents with safe and convenient access by walking, bicycling, or taking transit to many of the places and services they use daily. The project also directed funds to the first phase of architectural and engineering design activities associated with a property owned by ULC. Adjacent to the Sheridan Station, the Jody Apartments will be transformed into a mixed-income housing community that will include permanently affordable housing units.

OBJECTIVE 4.2: STRENGTHEN THE VITALITY AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY OF RURAL TOWN CENTERS

Strategy 4.2(a): Maintain the unique characteristics of rural town centers

Maintain the unique characteristics of rural town centers by promoting infill and redevelopment and, the adaptive reuse of existing structures, protecting historic and cultural resources; and enhancing multimodal connections throughout the community.

Strategy 4.2(b): Support growth within rural town centers

Encourage growth within rural town centers where basic infrastructure, including central water and sewer, can be provided efficiently and cost-effectively.

Strategy 4.2(c): Foster economic development

Encourage economic development efforts that support the ability of rural town centers to be self-sufficient by focusing on issues such as jobs/housing balance, the availability of services to meet current and future needs of the larger surrounding community that supports the center, increasing affordable housing options, improving access to jobs in neighboring communities, and increasing access to health services.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Provide technical assistance and planning services to support rural town centers.
- Establish and convene a rural town center working group comprised of town staff, major employers, tourism and economic development professionals, and others as appropriate to promote collaboration on issues of common interest.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Adopt policies, regulations, and incentives to support the preservation and rehabilitation of significant historic structures and cultural resources that contribute to the town's authenticity of place and ability to attract tourism, where relevant.
- Encourage growth in the established, historic town center, and limit growth outside developed areas.

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS: AN EFFICIENT AND PREDICTABLE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

The table below contains some preliminary measures to track our progress toward achieving efficient and predictable growth patterns. Key considerations in selecting measures included the overall availability of data and the extent to which measures are currently being tracked by DRCOG or others in the region to minimize overlap and promote efficiency.

Outcome 1. Diverse, livable communities offer a continuum of lifestyle options.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 1.1	Promote development patterns and community design features that meet the needs of people of all ages, incomes, and abilities.	Seniors living independently[8]
		Foundational Measure 3: Combined cost of housing and transportation as a percent of income for a median-income family*
		Combined cost of housing and transportation as a percent of income for a moderate-income family and working individual*
		Regional housing unit type mix
Outcome 2. Urban development is focused within the region's defined urban growth boundary/area.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 2.1	Contain urban development within the urban growth boundary/area.	**Foundational Measure 2:** Housing density within the urban growth boundary/area (UGB/A)
Objective 2.2	Manage the extent of development occurring beyond the urban growth boundary/area.	Land area in semi-urban areas outside the UGB/A

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* Indicates measure used in multiple elements

[8] Seniors living outside group quarters (i.e. nursing homes) as tracked by the US Census Bureau's American Community Survey

Outcome 3. Vibrant and connected urban centers and multimodal corridors accommodate a growing share of the region's housing and employment needs.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 3.1	Accommodate a growing share of the region's housing and employment in urban centers	**Foundational Measure 1:** Share of region's housing and employment located in urban centers
Objective 3.2	Continue to create and revitalize multimodal corridors that connect and support the vitality of the region's urban centers.	Housing and employment within ½ mile of rapid transit stations, or within ¼ mile of high frequency bus stops
		Average urban center mode split*
Outcome 4. Freestanding communities and rural town centers remain distinct from the larger urban area.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 4.1	Strengthen the vitality of freestanding communities	Protected land in buffer between freestanding community and nearby jurisdictions
Objective 4.2	Strengthen the vitality and self-sufficiency of rural town centers	Presence of services[9] in each rural town center

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* Indicates measure used in multiple elements

[9] i.e. grocery, health services (full list to be determined)

A Connected Multimodal Region

INTRODUCTION

The DRCOG region aspires to have a connected multimodal transportation system that provides everyone viable travel choices. The region will have a multimodal approach to move people and goods, with transportation facilities and services tailored to the desires of individual communities. Public transit, bicycling, walking, and carpooling will be used for a greater share of personal trips over time. The region's transportation system will address and 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.

Transportation needs far outweigh available funding. This necessitates difficult tradeoffs and choices, such as balancing the need for additional multimodal capacity with maintenance and preservation needs. The region must use a range of funding solutions, such as public-private partnerships, managed lanes, innovative local funding strategies, and other cost-effective methods to build and maintain transportation infrastructure and services. Coordinated regional and statewide actions must be taken to increase transportation funding.

This Metro Vision element outlines an overall policy framework and vision for the transportation system through the year 2040, organized around three regional outcomes:

OUTCOMES FOR A CONNECTED MULTIMODAL REGION:

- **A well-connected, regional multimodal transportation system;**
- **A safe, dependable, and efficiently operated transportation system, and**
- **A transportation system contributing to a better quality of life.**

Supporting objectives and strategies will help the region achieve these outcomes. The companion 2040 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan (2040 MVRTP) implements the transportation element of Metro Vision. The 2040 MVRTP defines the specific transportation system the region desires and can fund through 2040.

MULTIMODAL CONSIDERATIONS

The region will have a multimodal system of regional roadways and local streets to serve people and goods via all travel modes. The roadway system will be managed and operated to optimize existing capacity and enable safe travel for all users. New capacity (new roads and widening projects) will address Metro Vision outcomes, and traffic congestion within the UGB/A and along major statewide connections. Managed lanes will be considered as part of new capacity projects where feasible. New and reconstructed roadways will be designed to optimize movement of people and vehicles.

Transit will also play a crucial role in moving people. This includes completing RTD's FasTracks rapid transit system and envisioning future intra- and inter-regional transit connections. Regional, local, specialized, and private transit services will be provided to meet the needs of the region's commuters, general public, and growing older adult and limited-mobility populations. Finally, the region and local jurisdictions will invest in transit solutions tailored to specific community needs, such as first- and final-mile connections, improved access to transit stations, and new or expanded transit service.

Walking and bicycling are valued travel choices in the DRCOG region, with their mode share steadily climbing. The region and local jurisdictions will increase the viability of walking and bicycling to reach destinations by expanding the bicycle and pedestrian network and providing additional supportive infrastructure. The network will also be accessible for people using mobility aids, such as wheelchairs and walkers.

Transportation demand management and other mobility innovations are also key transportation strategies. Carshare, rideshare, and bikeshare programs are important travel options within the region. Emerging technology innovations, such as connected and driverless cars, also have potential to influence personal mobility in the future. Technology and other innovations (e.g., broadband, smartphones, trip planning tools) play an important role in a connected multimodal transportation system, as does implementing strategies to avoid or manage travel, reduce congestion, and optimize existing capacity, such as teleworking, flexible work hours, and virtual meetings.

CONNECTING THE DOTS: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

An Efficient and Predictable Development Pattern. Maintaining an integrated approach to land use and transportation planning and investments in the region is essential. Focusing new housing and employment in urban centers that are well-connected to other destinations helps promote efficiency in the provision of transit services, increases transportation options for area residents and employees, and creates less reliance on motor vehicle trips. Likewise, encouraging infill and redevelopment in established parts of the region and limiting urban development outside the UGB/A minimizes the need to extend new transportation infrastructure or upgrade existing infrastructure.

Healthy, Inclusive, and Livable Communities. A well-connected transportation system plays a direct role in the health and wellness of the region's population. By providing travel choices to help reduce vehicle miles traveled, ground level ozone and other air pollutants can be reduced. This in turn will help reduce chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma. In addition, people who have the option of walking or bicycling to meet many of their daily needs are more likely to incorporate regular physical activity into their daily lives and maintain better health. Lastly, transit can help ensure people of all ages, income levels, and abilities have the means to access needed services and amenities.

A Vibrant Regional Economy. Ensuring people, goods, and services move through the region safely, efficiently, and predictably is essential to our economic health. Providing a range of multimodal travel options will help ensure the Denver region remains competitive with other major metropolitan areas for both new employers and residents seeking a high quality of life, lower transportation costs, and diverse lifestyle choices.

A Safe and Resilient Built and Natural Environment. The region's multimodal transportation system plays a direct role in the quality of our built and natural environment. Minimizing growth in VMT and providing multimodal travel options are key components to reducing ground level ozone, greenhouse gas emissions, and other pollutants. The design and proper use of transportation facilities can reduce the number of fatalities and serious injuries caused by traffic crashes. Likewise, designing roadways and other transportation facilities using stormwater best management practices (BMPs) can help minimize the effects of runoff on the region's water quality.

Outcome 5: A well-connected, regional multimodal transportation system.

A balanced, well-connected, multimodal transportation system will include regional and local roadways and streets, transit (bus and rail), bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and air and freight rail linkages. The integrated components of this system will provide reliable mobility choices to all users throughout the DRCOG region. The system will permit efficient regional, state, and nationwide connections for people and freight, and will evolve to address future technology and mobility innovations as appropriate.

OBJECTIVE 5.1: PROVIDE A MULTIMODAL ROADWAY SYSTEM THAT ENABLES PEOPLE, GOODS, AND SERVICES TO TRAVEL SAFELY AND RELIABLY

Strategy 5.1(a): Maintain and enhance a regional roadway system

Maintain and enhance a regional roadway system comprised of freeways, tollways, major regional arterials, and principal arterials that provides regional and statewide multimodal connectivity for the safe movement of people, goods, and services reliably (predictable travel times, minimal infrastructure closures, efficient incident clearing, etc.).

Strategy 5.1(b): Incorporate multimodal facilities or treatments into all roadways and streets

Build new streets and roadways, and retrofit existing facilities, with applicable multimodal elements, where feasible, that enable safe, convenient, and comfortable travel and access for people using all modes—driving, transit, walking, and bicycling.

Strategy 5.1(c): Expand the carrying capacity of existing regional roadways in the most critically congested corridors

Expand the carrying capacity of existing regional roadways (people, vehicles, and freight) in the most critically congested corridors, at key traffic bottlenecks, and along major statewide connections—such as I-25 and I-70. Agencies should first consider travel demand management and transportation system management and operations strategies to optimize the use of existing capacity.

Strategy 5.1(d): Consider the use of managed lanes in new capacity projects where feasible

Consider the use of managed lanes in new capacity projects where feasible to optimize the use of the new capacity, help fund the project, provide more reliable travel times, and encourage carpooling and transit use.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Coordinate efforts of the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Regional Transportation District (RTD), local governments, and other regional stakeholders to get the most efficient use of the existing multimodal roadway system while planning for future use.
- Maintain a fiscally-constrained regional transportation plan that identifies priority roadway improvements within fiscal realities.
- Adopt Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) project selection policies that consider all users of roadways.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- 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.
- Fund roadway preservation, operational, and expansion projects through local capital improvement programs.

Insert 2040 Metro Vision Regional Roadway System map

OBJECTIVE 5.2: EXPAND TRANSIT FACILITIES AND SERVICES TO ALL PEOPLE

Strategy 5.2(a): Complete FasTracks

Complete FasTracks' remaining corridors, including extensions to existing corridors.

Strategy 5.2(b): Develop and maintain an expanded metropolitan rapid transit system

Develop, operate, and maintain an expanded metropolitan rapid transit system to provide connectivity for people traveling throughout the region. The rapid transit system includes FasTracks and future rail lines, Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) corridors, transit-capable managed lanes, and bus-on-shoulder facilities.

Strategy 5.2(c): Provide a comprehensive bus system

Provide a comprehensive fixed-route bus system that includes high-frequency bus corridors, regional service, feeder routes to rapid transit lines, local route service, and call and rides.

Strategy 5.2(d): Provide demand -response service for targeted needs

Provide demand-response transit service to meet targeted needs for older adults and persons with disabilities, travelers in less densely developed areas, or for feeder service to rapid transit lines. Providers of such service include taxi companies, transportation network companies, and other for-profit companies and non-profit agencies.

Strategy 5.2(e): Integrate bicycle and pedestrian elements with transit

Integrate bicycle and pedestrian elements at transit facilities, such as secure bicycle parking (racks, lockers, bike stations), bikesharing, bicycle repair kiosks, and infrastructure that supports bicycle and pedestrian trip-making to and from stations, park-and-rides, and major transit stops.

Strategy 5.2(f): Add transit service where needed

Support the establishment of new or increased transit service where needed.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Coordinate with RTD and other transit providers to implement major projects and services.

- Maintain transit system assets (vehicles and facilities) in a state of good repair per federal requirements.

- Coordinate with Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC) and transit operators to increase transportation services to older adults, persons with disabilities, and low income populations.

- Encourage and support fare structures and subsidy programs that keep transit service affordable to all users.

- Maintain a fiscally-constrained regional transportation plan that identifies priority transit improvements within fiscal realities.

- Conduct a region-wide evaluation of potential BRT corridors via a joint effort of RTD, DRCOG, CDOT, and other stakeholders.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Adopt transit-supportive policies and development regulations.

- Implement bicycle and pedestrian facility connections to transit service (e.g., first and final mile connections).

- Address the needs of mobility-limited populations in transportation planning activities.

- Coordinate with RTD and other transit providers on transit facilities and infrastructure components of development projects.

Insert 2040 Metro Vision Rapid Transit System map

OBJECTIVE 5.3: PROVIDE ROBUST BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ACCESSIBILITY THROUGHOUT THE REGION

Strategy 5.3(a): Encourage pedestrian and bicycle accommodations along all roadways

Encourage sidewalks or other pedestrian accommodations, as well as bicycle accommodations that meet applicable standards, along all roadways and within private developments.

Strategy 5.3(b): Develop local and regional bicycle facilities

Develop well-connected local and regional off-street and on-street bicycle corridor facilities to serve bicycle trips to all types of destinations.

Strategy 5.3(c): Provide bicycle and pedestrian support facilities and services

Provide bicycle and pedestrian support facilities and services, such as bikesharing, wayfinding, and bicycle parking in urban centers, at transit stations, and in association with major multi-use trails and other popular destinations.

Strategy 5.3(d): Provide first- and final-mile bicycle and pedestrian connections to transit

Provide specific bicycle and pedestrian facilities that connect transit services and stations to nearby neighborhoods, employment, schools, shopping areas, parks, and other major destinations.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Facilitate coordination between jurisdictions in expanding and connecting the region's bicycle and pedestrian network.
- Support bicycle sharing programs throughout the region.
- Provide tools, informational forums, and resources to jurisdictions regarding bicycle and pedestrian design, guidance, and implementation.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Adopt and implement local street standards and other development codes/standards that address multimodal connectivity objectives in a variety of land use contexts, such as pedestrian and bicycle cul-de-sac cut-throughs.
- Fund projects that address multimodal connectivity through non-MPO programs.
- Establish wayfinding signage, bicycle parking, and other supportive infrastructure in high traffic areas to assist pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Provide first and final mile bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connections to transit, such as sidewalks and bicycle facilities, bikesharing, wayfinding, bicycle parking and shelters, and carsharing at transit stations.
- Implement striped and/or protected bike lanes (on-street and separated by a barrier from traffic) with proper consideration of how users transition to and from the lanes.
- Implement off-street sidewalks and multi-use paths that are comfortable to a wide array of users by providing separation from traffic, such as landscaping.
- Conduct education and promotional events to encourage bicycling and walking.
- Partner with local law enforcement agencies and advocacy groups on education and enforcement activities related to all road users.
- Ensure Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards are met or exceeded in constructing or retrofitting facilities, such as curb cuts, ramps, etc.
- Coordinate with neighboring jurisdictions to ensure a well-connected system across boundaries.

OBJECTIVE 5.4: PROVIDE EFFICIENT INTERCONNECTIONS OF THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM WITHIN AND BEYOND THE REGION

Strategy 5.4(a): Facilitate the movement of goods and services throughout the region

Facilitate the movement of goods and services throughout the region by roadway, rail, and air travel by reducing obstructions such as congestion, bottlenecks, and disconnections between facilities; while providing sufficient opportunities for intermodal freight connection to destinations outside the region.

Strategy 5.4(b): Balance primary park -and -ride functions with opportunities for transit-oriented development

Balance the need for dedicated parking at park-and-ride lots with future transit-oriented development opportunities, taking into account potential increases in transit ridership, housing and employment options, and other location-specific considerations.

Strategy 5.4(c): Provide safe and convenient access for pedestrians and cyclists

Provide safe and convenient access for pedestrians and bicyclists to access rapid transit stations, bus stops, and park-and-ride lots. Also provide secure bicycle parking and bike sharing at these locations and maintain and expand the capability of transit vehicles to carry bicycles.

Strategy 5.4(d): Maintain Denver Union Station as the region's primary multimodal hub and further develop other transit mobility hubs

Support and maintain DUS as the primary multimodal hub of the region's transportation system. Further develop transit mobility hubs to support other urban centers and major destinations across the region.

Strategy 5.4(e): Improve transportation linkages to major destinations and attractions beyond the region

Support existing linkages and plan for future intercity bus and rail linkages to destinations beyond the region.

Strategy 5.4(f): Maintain multimodal access to Denver International Airport and the region's other airports

Maintain convenient access to DIA and other regional airports for all applicable travel modes. Support DIA's important role in connecting the Denver region to the rest of the world.

Strategy 5.4(g): Maintain and enhance airport capacity throughout the region

Maintain the capacity of DIA and general aviation airports throughout the region by supporting facility enhancements in response to air transportation demands, consistent with adopted plans.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Include major roadway and transit capacity projects in DRCOG's fiscally constrained Regional Transportation Plan once construction funding is identified for such projects.
- Manage and invest in the region's multimodal transportation system to support freight movement and freight users, such as trucks and commercial vehicles.
- Actively monitor and participate in discussions concerning through rail freight traffic to bypass population centers.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Adopt local multimodal transportation plans that address connections within and between jurisdictions and communities.
- Adopt land use standards around airports to guide compatible long range development.
- Provide wayfinding signage for bicyclists, pedestrians and transit users to reach key destinations.

Outcome 6: A safe, dependable, and efficiently-operated transportation system.
As the region continues to grow, maintaining the safety, dependability, and efficiency of the region's multimodal transportation system is essential. A variety of approaches will be used to monitor and manage the flow of people and goods throughout the system, and to identify ways to enhance safety and improve functionality. The region will maximize the multimodal transportation system's capacity through coordinated operations and management. As technology and mobility innovations occur, the multimodal system will evolve accordingly.

OBJECTIVE 6.1: ASSURE EXISTING AND FUTURE TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES ARE WELL-MAINTAINED

Strategy 6.1(a): Maintain the transportation system infrastructure in good condition

Fund and conduct maintenance and preservation efforts to keep roadways, multi-use trails, sidewalks, transit vehicles and all supporting infrastructure in good operating condition.

Strategy 6.1(b): Develop and apply asset management principles and techniques

Develop and apply asset management principles and techniques for operating, maintaining, and improving existing transportation infrastructure.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

* Collaborate with CDOT, RTD, local governments, and other regional stakeholders to implement and monitor asset management techniques.

LOCAL ACTIONS

* Maintain transportation facilities in good condition and implement asset management principles and techniques.

OBJECTIVE 6.2: ACTIVELY OPERATE, MANAGE, AND INTEGRATE SYSTEMS TO OPTIMIZE PERFORMANCE

Strategy 6.2(a): Monitor and manage transportation systems

Deploy Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS) such as roadway and traffic monitoring, transit monitoring, and coordinated and real-time traveler information systems (such as multimodal real-time trip planning technology) to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the transportation system. Develop and deploy performance monitoring procedures and processes and integrate into system operations.

Strategy 6.2(b): Implement Transportation Systems Management and Operations (TSM&O) projects

Implement transportation systems management and operations (TSM&O) processes and projects, such as intersection improvements, transit queue jumps and signal priority, ramp metering, acceleration/deceleration lanes, active traffic management, and real-time traveler information, to reduce bottlenecks and improve personal mobility while balancing operational considerations for all modes.

Strategy 6.2(c): Implement access management projects to optimize the efficiency of roadways, reduce conflict points, and improve safety

Manage access (curb cuts on arterials or interchange ramps on freeways) to optimize existing capacity, reduce conflict points, and improve safety for all users and travel modes.

Strategy 6.2(d): Develop and deploy incident management procedures and processes

Develop and deploy effective incident management to reduce the duration and impact of incidents, such as motor vehicle crashes or stalled vehicles, and to promote stakeholder collaboration and consistency across the region.

Strategy 6.2(e): Implement and operate coordinated traffic signal systems

Implement, operate, and manage coordinated traffic signal systems across jurisdictional lines that integrate transit signal priority and emergency vehicle pre-emption techniques.

Strategy 6.2(f): Support the use of congestion pricing and other tolling techniques

Where feasible, and when cooperatively decided, support congestion pricing and other tolling techniques on existing freeways, and implement a tolling component (price-management) on new freeway/highway lane-addition projects.

Strategy 6.2(g): Implement other active demand management strategies

Implement other active demand management strategies, including parking supply and pricing mechanisms, such as shared, unbundled, and priced parking, where appropriate.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Work with CDOT, RTD, and other regional stakeholders to expand effective TSM&O projects, incident management procedures and processes, transportation demand management initiatives, and other innovative tools and techniques to safely optimize performance.
- Consider supporting alternative pricing and revenue producing strategies that directly reflect the cost of vehicle travel to the user.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Develop and implement access management principles along major streets.
- Monitor and manage transportation systems (including traffic signal systems) in collaboration with neighboring jurisdictions.

OBJECTIVE 6.3: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A SAFE AND SECURE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Strategy 6.3(a): Identify and implement safety enhancement projects

Identify and implement safety enhancement projects that reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes involving motor vehicles, freight and passenger trains, buses, bicycles, and all travel modes.

Strategy 6.3(b): Develop and implement strategies that enhance security

Develop and implement projects and strategies that enhance the security of all transportation facilities for users, including air and transit passengers, and aid in the efficient movement of people and vehicles during homeland security events.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Support cost-effective improvements to driver, passenger, pedestrian, and bicyclist safety.
- 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.
- 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.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Accurately monitor and maintain crash and traffic safety data for all transportation modes.
- Implement projects that reduce the likelihood and severity of crashes involving motor vehicles, freight and passenger trains, buses, bicycles, and pedestrians.
- Enforce traffic laws and ordinances as they apply to all users of the transportation system.
- Participate in federal, state, and regional initiatives related to safety and homeland security initiatives.

Outcome 7: A transportation system contributing to a better quality of life.
Transportation planning and investments should be integrated with land use planning and the environment. Focusing new housing, employment, and services in urban centers, along multimodal corridors, and other areas served by transit will provide a broader range of travel options for residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities. Although specific needs will vary by location, development will be encouraged to incorporate – consistent with local jurisdictional plans – compact development patterns, a mix of land uses, complete streets, direct bicycle/pedestrian connections to transit and multiple land uses, and other features that can help reduce VMT, support aging in place, and enhance the region's economic vitality and quality of life. These actions will also help protect the region's essential natural resources—air and water, open space, parks, trails, and agricultural lands. Minimizing growth in VMT is also a key component to reducing ground level ozone, greenhouse gas emissions, and other pollutants.

OBJECTIVE 7.1: EXPAND TRANSIT-SUPPORTIVE LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

Strategy 7.1(a): Maintain and improve efficient transportation access to regional employment hubs

Continue to support transportation improvements that enhance access to downtown Denver and other existing and future major employment hubs within the region.

Strategy 7.1(b): Expand mobility options within urban centers and other areas of concentrated major activity centers

Within urban centers and adjacent to transit, provide internal pedestrian, bicycle, and transit connections between uses, as well as more mixed and compact land uses. Provide and connect multiple travel modes in urban centers and in other concentrated areas of activity.

Strategy 7.1(c): Focus roadway capacity increases within the urban growth boundary/area

Focus roadway capacity increases and new interchanges primarily in areas within the UGB/A, in the most critically congested corridors, at key traffic bottlenecks, and along major statewide connections. Link the provision of new capacity to assuring a balanced, well-connected, safe, multimodal transportation system, and add capacity after first considering demand management strategies and implementing operational efficiencies to optimize the use of existing capacity.

Strategy 7.1(d): Promote multimodal connectivity

Design new development and retrofit established communities to facilitate the efficient movement of pedestrians, bicyclists, buses, cars, goods, and services within and between centers, corridors, and neighborhoods.

Strategy 7.1(e): Implement transportation improvements that enhance transit-oriented development (TOD) opportunities

Target bus, other transit, bicycle, pedestrian, and other transportation improvements in locations where transit-oriented development (TOD) already exists or is planned.

Strategy 7.1(f): Consider issues of land use compatibility

Encourage coordinated decision-making to minimize potential incompatibility between high intensity uses—such as airport operations, intermodal facilities, or other similar uses—and neighboring land uses.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Encourage integrated land use and transportation planning among state and regional agencies, local governments, and the development community.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Coordinate local comprehensive plan and transportation plan updates with neighboring and affected jurisdictions.
- Adopt land use policies and development regulations to support compact, mixed-use development patterns where appropriate.
- Reserve adequate rights-of-way in newly developing and redeveloping areas, as feasible, for pedestrian, bicycle, transit, and roadway facilities.

OBJECTIVE 7.2: EXPAND TRANSPORTATION SERVICES AND ACCESS THAT ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF PERSONS WITH MOBILITY OBSTACLES OR IMPAIRMENTS

Strategy 7.2(a): Provide local and regional transportation services that improve personal mobility, employment access, independence and well-being, and access to health services for those with mobility obstacles or impairments.

Provide transportation services, such as fixed route and specialized transit, ridesharing, travel training, and other services that improve personal mobility, employment access, independence and well-being, and access to health services for those with mobility obstacles or impairments (mobility-limited populations).

Strategy 7.2(b): Address the transportation needs of mobility-limited populations in land use planning and development.

Address the transportation needs of mobility-limited populations in short- and long-range land use planning and development decisions as feasible.

Strategy 7.2(c): Address the needs of older adults and mobility-limited populations in upgrading and redeveloping existing transportation facilities.

Ensure traffic engineering and roadway redevelopment activities consider the needs of mobility-limited populations who are traveling on foot and/or with the use of mobility aids.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Routinely evaluate and address the mobility needs of persons with mobility obstacles or impairments.
- Coordinate information and services among all transportation providers.
- Address the transportation needs of mobility-limited populations as feasible in local and regional transportation and land use planning and decision-making.
- Increase coordination of transportation services to reduce trip times and increase access to employment and vital human services for low-income and mobility-limited populations.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Connect populations in need of transportation with service.
- Develop transportation service options to address mobility needs within communities.
- Upgrade existing facilities (sidewalks, signal timing, bus stops/shelters) to improve transit access for older adults and mobility-limited populations.

- Use DRCOG's Boomer Bond assessment tool to help address the needs of the region's rapidly increasing aging population.

OBJECTIVE 7.3: DEVELOP AND MAINTAIN A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT PROTECTS AND ENHANCES AIR QUALITY, ENERGY EFFICIENCY, AND THE OVERALL ENVIRONMENT

Strategy 7.3(a): Expand Travel Demand Management (TDM) services and strategies

Expand Travel Demand Management (TDM) services and strategies, including new and diverse incentives and targeted promotions that will reduce VMT and the demand for single-occupant motor (SOV) vehicle trips, and improve personal mobility and regional air quality. TDM services and strategies include carpooling, vanpooling, carsharing, bicycling, walking, trip-planning, teleworking, and others.

Strategy 7.3(b): Provide efficient, low-polluting alternatives to single-occupant vehicles

Provide varied transportation facilities, including rapid transit, bus service, high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes, and bicycle and pedestrian facilities, that are more energy efficient and less polluting in aggregate than SOVs.

Strategy 7.3(c): Ensure traditionally underserved populations receive a proportionate share of transportation improvements and are not disproportionally affected by negative impacts

Ensure that minority, low-income, and older adult populations, as well as individuals with disabilities, receive a proportionate share of transportation improvements and are not disproportionably affected by negative impacts associated with transportation projects and facilities.

Strategy 7.3(d): Reduce potential environmental impacts of roadway construction and maintenance activities

Promote improvements in roadway construction and street maintenance activities to reduce dust and particulates, decrease associated energy consumption and pollutant emissions, and minimize and mitigate stormwater runoff.

Strategy 7.3(e): Encourage the use of alternative fuel vehicles and infrastructure

Encourage use of alternative fuel sources and clean-burning technology infrastructure and services for alternative fuels that lead to lower levels of pollutants and greenhouse gas emissions.

Strategy 7.3(f): Support legislation that increases fuel economy standards and incentives

Support legislation that to increase fuel economy standards; establish fuel economy standards for heavy-duty vehicles; incentivize the purchasing of high fuel economy or alternative fuel vehicles; and provide incentives for accelerated retirement of inefficient and/or high-polluting personal, commercial, and fleet vehicles beyond repair.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Work with partners to expand the regional TDM 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 such as "Stop Being an SOV" and events such as Bike to Work Day.
- Provide funding, tools, informational forums, and resources to jurisdictions, TMA/Os, non-profits, and other TDM stakeholders to increase TDM awareness and use.
- Facilitate and provide services for ride-sharing (e.g. carpools, vanpools, and schoolpools).

- DRCOG Way to Go and TDM 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.
- Fund transportation system improvements that minimize transportation-related fuel consumption, as well as air pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Fund first and final mile bicycle and pedestrian facilities and connections to transit, such as sidewalks and bicycle facilities; and bikesharing, wayfinding, bicycle parking and shelters, and carsharing at transit stations.
- Support actions that reduce engine idling.
- Cooperatively develop mitigation strategies for transportation projects to address environmental impacts.
- Develop and invest in regional alternative fueling station infrastructure plans and projects focused on fuels that lead to the greatest reductions in air pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Support large-scale fleet conversions by local governments and shared fleets around the region.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Conduct activities to inform and promote the use of TDM strategies and services by Transportation Management Associations/Organizations (TMA/O) and local TDM providers.
- Implement parking supply and pricing mechanisms, such as shared, unbundled, managed, and priced parking in urban centers and other major activity centers to manage parking availability and incentivize walking, bicycling, carpooling, and transit use.
- Include alternative fuel infrastructure within transportation projects as appropriate.
- Develop supporting infrastructure and local regulations, policies, and ordinances regarding alternative fuels, fleet conversions, environmental preservation, and related topics.

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS: A CONNECTED MULTIMODAL REGION

The table below contains some preliminary measures to track our progress toward a connected multimodal region. Key considerations in selecting measures were the overall availability of data and the extent to which measures are currently being tracked by DRCOG or others in the region to minimize overlap and promote efficiency.

Outcome 5. A well-connected, regional multimodal transportation system.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 5.1	Provide a multimodal roadway system that enables people, goods, and services to travel safely and reliably	Miles of roadways with protected bike lanes, striped bike lanes, or parallel multi-use paths
		Miles or share of Regional Roadway System (RRS) arterial roadways in urbanized area with sidewalks on both sides of road
		Average weekday delay (person hours and vehicle hours) on the RRS
		Average travel time variation (peak vs. off-peak)*
		Foundational Measure 9: Lane-miles of RRS with severe congestion
Objective 5.2	Expand transit facilities and services to all people	Transit mode share to work
		Share of housing and employment within ¼ mile of bus stop or ½ mile of rapid transit station*
		Share of population with good transit-job

		accessibility (100,000 jobs within 45 mins.)
		Annual RTD boardings
		RTD transit on-time performance
Objective 5.3	Provide robust bicycle and pedestrian accessibility throughout the region	Bicycle and pedestrian mode share to work
		Share of housing and employment within ½ mile of a bicycle travel way facility[10]
		Number of bikeshare stations and bicycles
		Miles of off-street multi-use trails
Objective 5.4	Provide efficient interconnections of the transportation system within and beyond the region	Number of secure bicycle parking spaces at transit stations/park-and-ride lots
		Non-stop flights from Denver International Airport
		Lane-miles of the region's freeways with severe congestion
		RTD park-and-ride utilization

Outcome 6. A safe, dependable, and efficiently operated transportation system.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 6.1	Assure existing and future transportation facilities are well-maintained	Bridge structural ratings
		Share of the CDOT and arterial roadway system with high or moderate drivability life or fair/good pavement condition
Objective 6.2	Actively operate, manage, and integrate systems to optimize performance	**Foundational Measure 7:** Non-SOV (single occupancy vehicle) mode share to work
		Annual average weekday vehicle miles traveled (VMT)
		Foundational Measure 8: Annual average weekday VMT per capita
		VMT percent of total PMT (person miles traveled)
Objective 6.3	Develop and maintain a safe and secure transportation system.	**Foundational Measure 10:** Number traffic fatalities
		Rate of fatal crashes per VMT
		Rate of traffic fatalities per 100,000 population*
		Annual total of serious injury crashes and injuries
		Rate of serious injury crashes per VMT
		Rate of serious injuries per 100,000 population

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[10] A "bicycle facility," based on the categories assigned in the DRCOG Bicycle Facility Inventory, includes all categories except "Shared Lane Bicycle Route," which are signed but otherwise unmarked.

		Annual number of bicyclist and pedestrian fatalities and serious injuries
Outcome 7. A transportation system contributing to a better quality of life.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 7.1	Expand transit-supportive land use and development patterns	Average weekday vehicle trip length
Objective 7.2	Expand transportation services and access that address the needs of persons with mobility obstacles or impairments	Number of demand response trips provided by non-RTD public transportation service providers
		Share of population in low-income or minority areas with good transit-job accessibility (100,000 jobs within 45 mins.)*
		Share of bicycle travel way facilities in low-income communities/neighborhoods
Objective 7.3	Develop and maintain a transportation system that protects and enhances air quality, energy efficiency, and the overall environment	**Foundational Measure 6:** Surface transportation related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (total annual and per capita)*
		Petroleum fuel burned (total annual and per capita)
		Compressed natural gas (CNG) and electric vehicles*

A Safe and Resilient Built and Natural Environment

INTRODUCTION

The Denver region's unique setting and natural environment is one of our 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 the multiple natural disasters that occurred during a relatively short period of time.   Achieving a safe and resilient built and natural environment depends on the region's ability to collectively work toward the following outcomes.

OUTCOMES FOR A SAFE AND RESILIENT BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT:

- **A region with clean water and air, and lower greenhouse gas emissions;**
- **An interconnected network of widely accessible open space, parks, and trails;**
- **Working agricultural lands of significance are conserved for current and future generations; and**
- **Reduced risk and effects from natural hazards.**

The objectives and strategies in this section seek to protect our region's natural resources, increase access to recreational opportunities, and promote more resilient communities.

> ### CONNECTING THE DOTS: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?
>
> **An Efficient and Predictable Development Pattern.** How we grow and get around the region has a significant effect on our air and water quality, and the health of our natural environment. Slowing the expansion of the urban area; supporting mixed, higher-intensity land uses; and increasing density in urban centers will be key development strategies to increase transit usage and reduce growth in vehicle trips and miles of travel—all of which help reduce harmful emissions. Incorporating smaller parks, community gardens, and other types of open space as part of, or adjacent to, urban centers will also help reduce the need for vehicular trips.
>
> **A Connected Multimodal Region.** While the region's trails and greenways are often viewed primarily as recreational amenities, they play a critical role in the transportation system by increasing multimodal options for residents and linking neighborhoods, employment hubs, and other activity centers. Increased options for transportation and overall mobility can have a profound influence on public health and community livability. Transportation modes and commuting patterns also directly affect regional air quality. By reducing air pollution levels, the Denver region can reduce the burden of disease from stroke, heart disease, lung cancer, and both chronic and acute respiratory diseases, including asthma.
>
> **Healthy, Inclusive, and Livable Communities.** The conservation and stewardship of our region's air, water, and other natural resources are critical in maintaining the health of people, as well as the other ecological systems that support life. In addition, access to parks, trails, and open space affect regional and community health and wellness. People who live or work near these amenities are more likely to incorporate regular physical activity into their daily lives and, as a result, are more likely to maintain healthy weights and benefit from regular physical fitness. Moreover, safe and convenient access to transportation options such as walking and biking provides opportunities for populations to experience less stress and blend physical activity and transportation needs, which can positively influence overall health.
>
> **A Vibrant Regional Economy.** Businesses and residents alike choose to move to—and stay in—the region because of its scenic natural environment and access to outdoor recreational opportunities and numerous other quality of life amenities. These features play an important role in the region's success in recruiting companies and skilled employees and attract visitors from around the globe who travel to the region to hike, bike, ski, and pursue a host of other outdoor pursuits. The ability of our region to maintain the quality of these assets and the ability for residents and visitors to readily access them is critical to continued economic health.

Outcome 8: A region with clean water and air, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

Ongoing efforts to reduce ground level ozone, greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), and other pollutants will be necessary to improve the region's air quality over time, and reduce dependence on fossil fuels. In addition, the wise use and protection of the region's limited water resources will be promoted through efficient land development, implementation of BMPs, conservation programs, and other strategies to ensure future growth complies with applicable standards and requirements at the federal, state, and local levels.

OBJECTIVE 8.1: IMPROVE AIR QUALITY AND REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Strategy 8.1(a): Promote efficient development patterns

Promote regional and local development patterns that help reduce the need to make motor vehicle trips and thereby reduce growth in vehicle emissions.

Strategy 8.1(b): Incentivize alternative fuel vehicles and infrastructure

Incentivize the purchase of alternative fuel vehicles and implementation of supporting infrastructure and services, reducing the need for fossil fuels, enhancing energy security, and promoting environmental stewardship. .

Strategy 8.1(c): Expand multimodal transportation options

Increase multimodal transportation options such as ridesharing, transit, bicycling, or walking, as a means to reduce VMT.

Strategy 8.1(d): Improve the efficiency of transportation facilities

Improve the efficiency of the transportation system in the region for all modes by establishing multi-jurisdiction operational improvements, implementing HOV toll lanes and other congestion pricing strategies, providing dependable travel information, and reducing the impact of traffic incidents.

Strategy 8.1(e): Collaborate with local and regional partners on air quality initiatives

Collaborate with local and regional partners, such as the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC), CDOT, and RTD on efforts to improve air quality through reductions in ground level ozone concentrations, and Carbon Monoxide (CO) and PM10

OZONE—A PERSISTENT PROBLEM

Ground-level ozone is formed when emissions from everyday items combine with other pollutants and "cook" in the heat and sunlight. Sources of such emissions include local industry; power plants; oil and gas production; gasoline-powered vehicles and lawn equipment; and household paints, stains, and solvents. At ground level, ozone is a health hazard for all of us—especially the young, elderly, and people with pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. Those who are active and exercising outdoors may also experience breathing difficulties and eye irritation; prolonged exposure may result in reduced resistance to lung infections and colds.

In 2007, the 7-county Denver metro area plus parts of Larimer and Weld counties were designated as marginal nonattainment under 1997 National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for ozone. In 2008, the ozone standard was revisited by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to be more protective of human health, and in 2012, the region was once again designated as marginal nonattainment under this tighter standard. While the region has not exceeded the 1997 ozone standard since 2008, the deadline to come into compliance with the revised standard is December 2015. With the Denver metro area and North Front Range Ozone Action Plan as a guide, significant progress continues to be made toward attaining this goal. However, due to a mandate that requires EPA to reevaluate the NAAQS every five years, it is anticipated an even more stringent standard will be recommended in the near future. With the region not yet meeting the current standard and a tighter standard on the horizon, there will continue to be a need for regional partnerships to help address the issue of air quality and further promote strategies that reduce pollution, including clean vehicle programs, multimodal transportation options, and progressive land use policies.

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emissions.

Strategy 8.1(f): Increase public awareness of air quality issues

Continue to increase public awareness of the direct role individual actions play in pollutant and greenhouse gas emissions while promoting the benefits of behaviors that protect regional air quality and reduce greenhouse gases.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Continue to support programs and public awareness campaigns, such as Way to Go and others that promote behavior shifts on an individual level.
- Incentivize the use of cleaner technologies, such as alternative fuel vehicles.
- Facilitate communication and project implementation between state, regional, and local agencies to maximize the efficiency of the transportation network.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Review and modify local comprehensive plans and development regulations to improve community accessibility and to enhance pedestrian, bicycle, and transit travel opportunities.

- 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.
- Update business and government fleets to alternative fuel vehicles.
- Develop specific plans and strategies to operate roadways more efficiently (e.g., traffic signal coordination and better manage traffic incidents).

OBJECTIVE 8.2: RESTORE AND MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF THE REGION'S WATERS

Strategy 8.2(a): Require adequate wastewater treatment systems to serve new development

Support development only in areas where off-site wastewater treatment systems are already available or are planned, where new on-site wastewater treatment systems can be established consistent with state-adopted stream standards or in areas where on-site or individual sewage disposal systems are deemed appropriate.

Strategy 8.2(b): Promote best management practices

Ensure development in the region follows BMPs for addressing nonpoint pollution, such as stormwater retention or on-site wastewater treatment technologies; and grading, erosion, and sediment control ordinances to minimize sediment and other pollutant runoff into the region's waters.

Strategy 8.2(c): Pursue water protection and management initiatives

Define water quality protection and water resource management initiatives that will support a balanced community of aquatic life. Take into account the needs of both the natural environment and other resource uses, such as water supply.

Strategy 8.2(d): Limit groundwater contamination

Discourage the location of waste injection wells, sanitary landfills, and other uses that present potential for harmful discharge over alluvial aquifers or above recharge areas to bedrock aquifers to avoid groundwater contamination. Encourage appropriate mitigation measures, as adopted by the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission, for development over areas with permanently high groundwater levels.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Coordinate with the Colorado Water Quality Control Commission and other stakeholders monitor land use changes in basins with adopted water quality plans and programs.
- Maintain data and mapping of aquifers, recharge areas, well heads, landfills, and other information, as available to help inform local land use decisions that may affect the region's groundwater resources.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- 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 opportunities for potential groundwater contamination.

OBJECTIVE 8.3: REDUCE GROWTH IN REGIONAL PER-CAPITA WATER CONSUMPTION

Strategy 8.3(a): Reduce overall water consumption

Encourage compact development, innovative building design, drought-tolerant landscape materials and irrigation, graywater reuse, and other strategies to help reduce water consumption and related infrastructure costs. Consider these

factors in making service provision decisions. Overall, the regional increase in water consumption should be proportionally less than the population increase.

Strategy 8.3(b): Facilitate collaborative efforts to promote water conservation

Facilitate collaborative efforts among local governments, water providers, agricultural producers, the design and development community, and other regional stakeholders to promote water conservation.

Strategy 8.3(c): Require adequate long-term water service

Require adequate long-term water service in areas where urban development is occurring or is planned, either from existing or newly established service providers.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Collaborate with local and regional partners to increase the awareness and implementation of best management practices (BMPs) and incentives available to support regional water conservation efforts among all users.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- 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 techniques, and other low-impact site development techniques in new development and rehabilitation projects.
- 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.

Outcome 9: An interconnected network of widely accessible open space, parks, and trails.

As the region continues to grow, the protection of its diverse natural resource areas—its mountain backdrop, unique prairie landscapes, extensive riparian corridors, and other open space areas will be essential. Likewise, the restoration of natural features and open spaces, including those on brownfield sites that have been impacted by mining or other heavy industrial uses, will be important as they are redeveloped over time. Together, these areas will help define the urban area, maintain separation between individual communities, provide important wildlife habitat, and protect the health of our water and ecological systems. In conjunction with local and regional parks and the extensive trails and greenways that connect them, these areas will also provide the region's residents with the opportunity to participate in a variety of recreational pursuits that support community health and wellness.

OBJECTIVE 9.1: PROTECT AND RESTORE OPEN SPACE OF LOCAL AND REGIONAL SIGNIFICANCE

Strategy 9.1(a): Protect important natural resources and other preservation focus areas

Conserve and protect important natural resources, such as surface waters, riparian areas, wetlands, forests and woodlands, prairie grasslands, wildlife habitats, other environmentally sensitive lands, commercial mineral deposits, and other preservation focus areas (as identified on page X).

Strategy 9.1(b): Preserve features of scenic, historic, and educational value

Preserve prominent geologic and geographic features and important cultural resources for the visual, historic, and educational value they provide to the region.

PRIORITY PRESERVATION AREAS

Metro Vision encourages preserving open space in priority preservation areas, as shown in Figure X. Existing parks and open space managed by all levels of government are also shown. Priority preservation areas reflect places characteristic of the region's unique landscape and/or playing an important role in achieving an interconnected and widely accessible network of open space, parks, and trails. Key focus areas include:

Mountain preservation areas—intended to protect views of the foothills and high peaks, conserve unique geologic features such as the red rock hogbacks that span the length of the southern Denver metropolitan area, and visually distinguish urbanized parts of the region from its mountain backdrop.

Plains preservation areas—intended to protect areas of regional significance, including important habitat area along Box Elder Creek and the wildlife corridor from the Rocky Mountain Arsenal to the Lowry Range property, among others.

Reservoirs and rivers preservation areas —intended to protect six major reservoirs in the region and an extensive network of river and other drainage corridors. These corridors include the 100-year floodplain and, where practical, additional lands that buffer the floodplain and protect important wildlife habitat and other valuable resources.

Regional greenways—greenways, such as the South Platte, High Line Canal, Sand Creek, Cherry Creek, Bear Creek, Mary Carter, Ralston Creek, Clear Creek, Little Dry Creek, C-470 and Colorado Trail, connect the region's communities, function as critical wildlife corridors, and provide a wealth of recreational opportunities. Other greenways that will ultimately complete the system include the Rocky Mountain Greenway, Colorado Front Range Trail, northern parts of the South Platte Greenway, and the St. Vrain Greenway.

< INSERT PRESERVATION FOCUS AREA MAPS HERE>

Strategy 9.1(c): Use open space as a tool to shape growth and development patterns

Protect or restore open space lands that will help support desired growth and development patterns by establishing linkages within or between communities, maintaining separation between freestanding communities, shaping urban centers or neighborhoods, limiting urban development outside the UGB/A, and/or providing increased access to open space.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Coordinate updates to the regional Preservation Focus Areas map as appropriate and leverage local, regional, and state funding available for parks, open space, and trails.
- Support the integration of parks, open space, and trails as part of the restoration of brownfields and other similar sites.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Prioritize the protection or restoration of open space in preservation focus areas and other locations that help fill "missing links" in the regional open space and greenway system in local plans and funding programs.
- 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.
- Coordinate with adjoining communities and municipalities and other organizations, such as Great Outdoors Colorado, to help leverage available funding.

OBJECTIVE 9.2: PROVIDE A PARKS SYSTEM THAT IS WIDELY ACCESSIBLE TO THE REGION'S RESIDENTS

Strategy 9.2(a): Support a diversity of parks to meet the region's needs

Encourage the integration of active and passive parks of all sizes and a full system of recreational facilities as a core component of the region's overall growth framework.

Strategy 9.2(b): Increase park accessibility

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.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Increase awareness of the need to plan for and accommodate smaller parks, greenspaces, and recreational amenities in and adjacent to urban centers.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Adopt policies and regulations to enhance connections to parks and support the implementation of parks and recreational facilities in urban centers.

OBJECTIVE 9.3: ESTABLISH MULTIMODAL LINKAGES TO AND BETWEEN THE REGION'S PARKS, OPEN SPACES, AND DEVELOPED AREAS

Strategy 9.3(a): Complete "missing links" in the regional trail and greenways network

Identify and prioritize the completion of "missing links" in the regional trail and greenways network—exploring all potential connections, including road and railroad rights-of-way, floodplains, ditch service roads, and utility corridors.

Strategy 9.3(b): Increase transit access to major greenways and open space areas

Align transit service plans, local trail and sidewalk networks, and other multimodal improvements with major greenways and open space areas to increase the accessibility of these areas to the region's residents.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Collaborate with local governments and other regional partners on the identification and implementation of priority trails and greenway expansion projects.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Complete local links in the regional greenway and trails network through strategic acquisition or other means, prioritizing linkages that will enhance connectivity to or within the regional network, or to nearby communities or urban centers.

Outcome 10: Working agricultural lands of significance are conserved for current and future generations.

Working agricultural lands are an essential component of the region's heritage, health, and economic and cultural diversity. Whether used for livestock 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. In some parts of the region, protected agricultural lands also function as community separators, provide access to open space and trails, and provide agritourism and recreational services. Protection of existing 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.

OBJECTIVE 10.1: MAINTAIN THE REGION'S AGRICULTURAL CAPACITY

Strategy 10.1(a): Conserve significant agricultural lands

Conserve agricultural resources of state or national significance, ranches and other grazing lands of local or regional importance, and other lands that play a key role in the health of regional economy, local and regional open space systems, and local food systems.

Strategy 10.1(b): Support diversity and continued innovation in the agricultural industry

Protect the region's capacity for agricultural production at a variety of scales and for a variety of purposes—livestock or crop production, food production, greenhouse and nursery crops, aquaculture, and others—recognizing that advances in technology and industry practices will continually evolve and new industries may emerge over time.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- 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.
- 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.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- 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 barriers to agritourism and other non-traditional agricultural uses.
- 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.

Outcome 11: Reduced risk and effects from natural hazards.

Careful planning with respect to the relationship between areas susceptible to natural hazards and land use, transportation, and infrastructure investments throughout the region can help reduce injuries and loss of life; trauma; and damage to property, equipment, and infrastructure. Having a hazard mitigation plan and disaster response plan in place can also help the region's communities be more resilient should a significant event occur in the future—minimizing community disruption and economic, environmental, and other losses.

OBJECTIVE 11.1: ENHANCE COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

Strategy 11.1(a): Limit expansion of the wildland-urban interface

Limit new development or the expansion of existing development in areas recognized as having a high probability of being impacted by natural hazards. High-risk areas include, but are not limited to, floodplains, steep slopes, and areas located within the wildland-urban interface. Establish guidelines for existing or future development in these locations to minimize loss of life and property should a natural disaster occur.

WHAT IS THE WILDLAND-URBAN INTERFACE?

The wildland-urban interface, or WUI, is any area where manmade improvements are built close to, or within, natural terrain and flammable vegetation, and where high potential for wildland fire exists. Studies of the state's wildland-urban interface areas in relation to projected growth indicate these areas are likely to increase from 715,500 acres in 2000 to more than 2 million acres in 2030.[1] Much of the increase will be focused along the Front Range and within the DRCOG region. Over the last decade, the frequency and intensity of wildfires in Colorado has increased dramatically. In recent years, drought conditions—combined with forests that have been heavily impacted by beetle infestations—have triggered numerous wildfires near major population centers along the Front Range, raising awareness of the potential dangers of living within the WUI and sparking debate at the state and local level over possible strategies to minimize future risk.

Strategy 11.1(b): Promote integrated planning and decision making

Integrate hazard mitigation considerations into plans and policies at the local and regional levels to increase awareness of the associated risks and costs, identify strategies to minimize threats for existing development in high-risk areas, and to promote informed decision making when future development within high-risk areas is proposed.

Strategy 11.1(c): Foster interagency coordination

Foster interagency coordination to promote a greater understanding of what resources are available to support hazard mitigation planning and disaster recovery efforts within the region, minimize duplication of efforts, and ensure open lines of communication are established in advance of a major event.

Strategy 11.1(d): Prioritize open space protection in high-risk areas

Prioritize open space protection efforts in areas recognized as being at risk of being impacted by natural hazards, including but not limited to floodplains, steep slopes, and areas located within the WUI. Consider the protection of properties adjacent to, but not within high-risk areas, as opportunities arise to provide additional protections in the event of unique storm events or other natural disasters in the future.

FLOOD RECOVERY EFFORTS

In September 2013, many communities in the DRCOG region and in other parts of the Front Range experienced massive flooding triggered by an unprecedented rainfall event. Damage to personal property and critical infrastructure was extensive; eight lives were lost. While the immediate urgency of the situation has passed, the physical, emotional, and economic toll on area communities has not subsided. The reconstruction of critical infrastructure, such as roadways and bridges, in some locations will take many years—forcing the redirection of resources from other priority projects and hindering the ability of local businesses and residents to move forward. In conjunction with recovery efforts, many communities are actively looking to explore ways in which they can reduce risk and develop plans that will increase their resiliency in the future.

In the aftermath of the September 2013 flooding, community members from the Town of Lyons charted a course toward recovery. The town formed Recovery Work Groups (RWGs) to identify issues, generate ideas, and identify recovery projects. Each RWG followed a nine-step process to create Project Development Guides for each long-term recovery project. The process helped community residents, business, and stakeholders identify a common understanding of the impact of the flood and a shared set of outcomes for each recovery project. The town's Comprehensive Plan served as a framework for identifying key issues, topics, and recovery projects.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- 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.

- Coordinate with the Colorado Department of Local Affairs, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, emergency responders, and others local, state, and federal stakeholders to help advance planning efforts, assemble BMPs, and increase local and regional preparedness.

- Assist local governments impacted by natural disasters with recovery planning efforts.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- 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.

- Collaborate with emergency responders in the identification of critical facilities, and the review of local plans, regulations, and development projects of significance.

- Incorporate Colorado State Forest Service guidelines into the land development and building permit approval process.

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS: A SAFE AND RESILIENT NATURAL AND BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The table below contains some preliminary measures to track our progress toward a safe and resilient natural and built environment. Key considerations in selecting measures included the overall availability of data and the extent to which measures are currently being tracked by DRCOG or others in the region to minimize overlap and promote efficiency.

Outcome 8. A region with clean water and air, and lower greenhouse gas emissions.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 8.1	Improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions	Number of air quality violation days
		Foundational Measure 6: Surface transportation related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions per capita*

		Compressed natural gas (CNG) and electric vehicles*
Objective 8.2	Restore and maintain the quality of the region's waters	Miles of impaired water bodies
Objective 8.3	Reduce growth in regional per-capita water consumption	Per capita water use[11]

Outcome 9. An interconnected network of widely accessible open space, parks, and trails.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 9.1	Protect and restore open space of local and regional significance	Amount of open space
		Amount of priority preservation areas protected
Objective 9.2	Provide a parks system that is widely accessible to the region's residents	Recreational opportunities in areas with concentrations of low income populations as compared to the region on a per capita basis
Objective 9.3	Establish multi-modal linkages to and between the region's parks, open spaces, and developed areas	Parks and open space areas in urban centers, within ½ mile of rapid transit stations, or within ¼ mile of high frequency bus stops
		Parks and open space areas within 1/2 mile of a bicycle travel way facility[12]

Outcome 10. Working agricultural lands of significance are conserved for current and future generations.		
OBJECTIVE		**MEASURES**
Objective 10.1	Maintain the region's agricultural capacity	Agricultural production employment
		Extent of cropland cover

Outcome 11. Reduced risk and effects from natural hazards.		
OBJECTIVE		**MEASURE**
Objective 11.1	Enhance community resiliency	Amount of high risk areas[13] protected as open space or park

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* Indicates measure used in multiple elements

[11] County level estimates are only available from the US Geological Survey (USGS) every five years

* Indicates measure used in multiple elements

[12] A "bicycle travel way facility," based on the categories assigned in the DRCOG Bicycle Facility Inventory, includes all categories except "Shared Lane Bicycle Route," which are signed but otherwise unmarked.

[13] Depending on data availability, may include floodplains, steep slopes, wildfire risk areas, etc.

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Healthy, Inclusive, and Livable Communities

INTRODUCTION

The Denver region is widely recognized as models of livability and health. However, increasing rates of chronic disease such as diabetes and obesity, rising care costs, an aging population, accessibility of services, insufficient workforce and affordable housing, local food access, and socio-economic disparities are just a few of the many trends and issues of concern threatening to undermine our quality of life, the health of our residents, and ultimately the region's economy. To remain economically competitive, we must work toward being more inclusive in our efforts to address these issues—considering the needs of residents of all ages, abilities, ethnicity, and incomes in our planning and decision-making.

Many efforts to address these issues and concerns underway at the local, regional, and state level 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 and there is much to be done at all levels. Achieving healthy, inclusive, and livable communities depends on the region's ability to collectively work toward-s the following outcomes.

OUTCOMES FOR HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE, AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES:

- **A built and natural environment that promotes healthy and active lifestyle choices;**
- **The region's residents have expanded connections to health services[14]; and**
- **Diverse housing options meet the needs of residents of all ages, incomes and abilities.**

The objectives and strategies in this section aim to increase awareness of the importance of community health and wellness considerations, to build on the successes of ongoing efforts across the region, and to help advance the conversation at all levels.

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[14] The term "health services" encompasses the full spectrum of health care facilities and service providers, including, but not limited to, hospitals, clinics, pharmacies, emergency rooms, urgent cares, community clinics, doctors' offices, and social service providers. (SIDEBAR)

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CONNECTING THE DOTS: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

An Efficient and Predictable Development Pattern. The location, types, and patterns of development all shape individual decisions and behaviors, and influence local and regional health outcomes, as well as the livability of individual communities. Careful planning can ensure the region's centers, corridors, and neighborhoods are designed in ways that support healthy activities and quality of life making it easier for people to make healthy choices that result in positive health outcomes.

A Connected Multimodal Region. The transportation system can have a profound influence on public health and community livability. People who can frequently walk and bike to destinations are more likely to maintain healthy weights and benefit from regular physical fitness.[1] Others who spend long periods commuting by car or cannot use other modes of travel often experience higher levels of stress, and are more susceptible to other health risk factors such as long periods of sedentary behavior and unhealthier weights. Transportation modes and commuting patterns also directly affect regional air quality, which can lead to health issues such as asthma, lung cancer, and heart disease.

A Safe and Resilient Built and Natural Environment. In addition to air quality, other environmental factors such as water quality, soil quality, and access to nature and open space affect regional and community health and wellness. The conservation and stewardship of these and other resources are critical in maintaining the health of people, as well as the other natural systems that support life.

A Vibrant Regional Economy. While health and wellness are themselves an important sector for future economic growth, health and community livability also impact the bottom line for regional business, in terms of costs of care, employee productivity, and ability to attract and retain employees. Residents and businesses alike are attracted to the Denver region's reputation as a healthy place to live, and delivering on this -brand- is essential in capturing future economic opportunities. Moreover, health, or lack thereof, presents very real economic realities to households. Individuals experiencing poor health may struggle with affordability or access to care, which can also affect employment options and available resources for housing, transportation, education, and nutrition.

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Outcome 12: A built and natural environment that supports healthy and active lifestyle choices.

The way in which we live influences our health in many ways—whether the choice of walking or biking versus driving; the mix of uses in our communities; access to civic services; the ability to engage in community activities; safe and convenient access to parks, trails, open space, and other recreational opportunities; or accessibility of healthy food options. Expanding opportunities for the region's residents to lead healthy and active lifestyles will require a deliberate focus on where we grow, how we get around, the types of places we build, access to the natural environment, and the individual needs of the diverse populations we serve.

OBJECTIVE 12.1: INCREASE CONVENIENT AND SAFE MOBILITY OPTIONS FOR ALL AGES AND ABILITIES

Strategy 12.1(a): Build active, connected places

Establish a mix of well-connected land uses and recreational amenities in communities throughout the region to create places that make active transportation and recreational physical activity safe for people of all abilities, part of an everyday routine, and foster opportunities for social interaction.

Strategy 12.1(b): Improve first- and final-mile connections

Improve first- and final-mile connections to important destinations across the region to ensure convenient and safe travel to and from transit to original and final destinations. Prioritize new or enhanced connections to and between health

services, social service providers, schools, grocery stores and other retail services, parks, employment centers, particularly in areas with transit-dependent populations.

Strategy 12.1(c): Build Complete Streets

Build new streets, and retrofit existing streets, as Complete Streets, to 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, by integrating separate facilities for bicycles and pedestrians along with motorized vehicles.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Prioritize funding for projects that meet Complete Streets objectives.
- Focus resources on building safe pedestrian and bicycle connections from transit stops to neighborhoods and activity centers within communities.
- Facilitate public/private partnerships to identify and address first- and final-mile connectivity issues associated with regional transit.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- 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.
- Prioritize funding for projects that meet Complete Streets objectives through non-MPO sources, including local capital improvement programs.
- Promote the development of the natural and built environment shade canopy and/or appropriate vegetative cover to create/maintain a safe, comfortable pedestrian environment.

OBJECTIVE 12.2: INCREASE ACCESS TO HEALTHY AND LOCAL FOODS

Strategy 12.2(a): Expand opportunities for local food production and processing

Expand opportunities for local food cultivation and sales to include—but not be limited to—personal and community gardens, edible landscaping in public spaces, traditional agricultural operations, and small specialty farms, as well as aquaculture, greenhouses, and other indoor facilities that allow the growing season to be extended.

Strategy 12.2(b): Increase the efficiency of food distribution

Promote the efficient distribution of food within the region—reducing food-shipping distance by supporting both traditional and non-traditional agricultural operations throughout the region; community supported agriculture (CSA), farmers' markets, green markets, and other programs that directly connect producers with consumers; cottage food industry sales; and the addition of more healthy food outlets in urban/semi-urban settings throughout the region. Place a particular emphasis on increasing access and opportunities in low-income neighborhoods and areas with high levels for food insecurity.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Monitor the accessibility of healthy food options from transit through periodic updates to the Denver Regional Equity Atlas.
- Support the integration of farmers' markets and other green markets within urban centers and rural town centers.
- Examine the production, processing, distribution and consumption of food in the Denver region and consider creation of a regional food system council as a potential outcome.

- 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.
- 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 working with local communities and others.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- 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.
- Prioritize incentives for grocers who locate in urban centers and underserved areas of the community.

OBJECTIVE 12.3: MAXIMIZE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION AND ACCESS TO THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Strategy 12.3(a): Expand the regional trail network

Complete of "missing links" in the regional trail network, with a particular focus on completing linkages that serve as first- and final-mile connections between transit stations and trails and increase multimodal options for residents and commuters.

Strategy 12.3(b): Improve transit connections to recreational opportunities

Align transit service plans with the region's network of recreational facilities and parks and open space areas to increase recreational opportunities, particularly for populations that are currently underserved. Support the integration of smaller-scale parks and recreation facilities as part of communities throughout the region.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Organize attention around the need for green space and recreational amenities in areas where a concentration of residents and/or employees exists or is planned, such as in urban centers.
- Collaborate with local governments on the identification and implementation of projects in areas that have the greatest need for access to recreation and nature, as identified in the Regional Equity Atlas.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Focus on completing "missing links" in the regional trail network.
- 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.
- Pursue agreements to share public properties or facilities that can increase access to recreation and/or community gathering places.

Outcome 13: The region's residents have expanded connections to health services.
To enhance the overall health and wellness of the regional population, a range of factors that shape access to health services must be considered—the types of health services available, the location, convenience, and accessibility of health care facilities and service providers, and the ability of the region's residents to pay for the health services offered.

OBJECTIVE 13.1: IMPROVE CONNECTIONS TO HEALTH CARE FACILITIES AND SERVICE PROVIDERS

Strategy 13.1(a): Locate health services in areas that are readily accessible

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 get to them by walking, biking, or using transit.

Strategy 13.1(b): Improve transit accessibility to health services

Align transit service—including on-demand and other specialized services—with health care facilities, social service providers, grocery stores and other retail outlets that offer health services, to low-income and economically disadvantaged populations. Support non-emergency transportation providers to relieve the burden on hospital emergency rooms in non-emergency situations.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- 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 help inform discussions surrounding areas of the greatest need.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Collaborate with public health professionals, area hospitals, health and social service providers, and other regional stakeholders to implement projects in areas with the greatest need for accessibility improvements.
- Adopt and implement policies and regulations that support the integration of health services as part of urban centers, employment campuses, retail centers, rural town centers, and other activity hubs.

OBJECTIVE 13.2: INCREASE AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ISSUES AND SUPPORT NETWORKS

Strategy 13.2(a): Promote collaboration among stakeholders at the local, regional, and state level

Identify and implement opportunities for collaboration among stakeholders at the local, regional, and state level on projects and initiatives that highlight connections between community health and wellness and the built environment. Place a particular emphasis on projects and initiatives that reduce or eliminate duplicative efforts.

Strategy 13.2(b): Leverage existing health and wellness programs and services

Build increased capacity on community health and wellness issues at the local government level by partnering with public health organizations, health care providers, local governments, school districts, and others leading the charge on community health and wellness issues on initiatives that help leverage available resources and increase the visibility and effectiveness of existing programs, services, and other efforts within the region.

Strategy 13.2(c): Incorporate health considerations and strategies into local and regional plans

Incorporate health considerations and strategies into plans at the local and regional level and increase formal roles for or participation by health professionals in long-range planning efforts and development activities.

Strategy 13.2(d): Increase awareness of programs, services, and other assistance

Promote awareness of the range of programs, services, and other assistance available to help residents lead healthier and more active lifestyles and opportunities for them to become involved in related efforts at the local and neighborhood level.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Convene regular meetings of regional stakeholders—health care providers, local governments, public health organizations, major hospitals, business leaders, the development community, foundations, and others as appropriate—to facilitate and support health and wellness projects and initiatives of regional significance.
- Establish a central clearinghouse of information to support health and wellness initiatives throughout the region (e.g., regional health indicators, access to services, programs, best practices).

LOCAL ACTIONS

- 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.

Outcome 14: Diverse housing options meet the needs of residents of all ages, incomes and abilities.

A range of housing options across the region benefits both individuals and families, and can improve the economic vitality and diversity of local communities. Viable housing choices allow individuals and families to find desirable housing affordable and accessible to them in the communities where they want to live and stay in their community of choice as their economic or life circumstances change.

OBJECTIVE 14.1: INCREASE THE REGIONAL SUPPLY OF OWNERSHIP AND RENTAL HOUSING THAT IS AFFORDABLE TO A VARIETY OF HOUSEHOLDS AT ALL INCOME LEVELS

Strategy 14.1(a): Remove barriers and reduce cost of developing housing

Proactively pursue strategies that reduce barriers and expedite the development of housing in desired locations.

Strategy 14.1(b): Encourage creative approaches to foster the development of affordable, accessible workforce and senior housing

Coordinate with the private development community to understand and convey the need to produce units, including clarity on key challenges that must be overcome. Identify realistic and effective incentives that can stimulate the production of housing products that meet the needs of residents of all ages, incomes, and abilities.

Strategy 14.1(c): Monitor changing demands for new and different types of housing

Develop mechanisms to assess housing 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.

Strategy 14.1(d): Promote better jobs-housing balance in employment-rich areas

Expand the supply and range of housing, including affordable and accessible units, in and near to major employment centers around the region.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Share BMPs in land use regulations, zoning and housing policies with local governments and other stakeholders.
- Convene local government officials and housing experts to identify ways to expand affordable, accessible workforce and senior housing development opportunities in local communities.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Review local plans and regulations to ensure they encourage a mix of housing types and densities.
- Consider incentives to support affordable, accessible, workforce and senior housing, particularly within centers and other areas that are or may be served by transit.
- Promote a variety of housing options to meet the needs of older adults, including independent and supportive options.

OBJECTIVE 14.2: ENCOURAGE OPPORTUNITIES FOR DIVERSE HOUSING BY LEVERAGING TRANSIT INVESTMENTS

Integrating housing development, and transit planning and implementation creates development patterns that support high transit demand, expand travel choices for households, and can reduce VMT.

Strategy 14.2(a): Promote transit-oriented communities that ensure a mix of housing affordability in transit station areas, including preservation of existing affordable housing

Implement programs and policies that support the production and preservation of housing options in location-efficient places, including urban centers, high opportunity areas, and areas well-served by transit.

Strategy 14.2(b): Encourage transit investments where housing densities support transit already, or are guided to support such densities through local community planning processes

Promote new and enhanced transit service in areas with densities that make bicycling, walking and taking transit viable options to reduce reliance on the automobile and enhance the independence of those who do not drive, by choice or by financial or physical circumstance.

Strategy 14.2(c): Elevate awareness of the catalytic role housing can play in transit-oriented community strategies

Develop small area plans for transit station areas that document future land uses, circulation needs, market conditions and implementation strategies. Prioritize catalytic developments that provide affordable, accessible workforce and senior housing and expand demand for other key amenities including commercial development and community services.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Continue to support local planning that furthers the implementation of the region's transit system and Urban Centers.
- Develop and share guidance based on existing best practices, to aid local communities in the identification of high opportunity sites, districts, or areas.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Assess current and future housing needs and programs in transit communities.
- Assess transit and mobility gaps near higher density, affordable, accessible-, workforce- and senior housing.
- Plan for increased residential density in strategic transit and transportation corridors.
- Develop a focused strategy for preservation and rehabilitation of existing housing located near current and future transit areas.
- Develop and maintain cooperative efforts with entities focused on developing accessible, affordable, workforce and senior housing.

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS: HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE, AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES

The table below contains some preliminary measures to track our progress towards healthy, inclusive, and livable communities. Key considerations in selecting measures included the overall availability of data and the extent to which measures are currently being tracked by DRCOG or others in the region to minimize overlap and promote efficiency.

Outcome 12. A built and natural environment that supports healthy and active lifestyle choices.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 12.1	Increase convenient and safe mobility options for all ages and abilities	Housing and employment within 1/2 mile of bicycle travel way facility[15]
		Housing and employment within ¼ mile of bus stop and ½ mile of rapid transit station*
		Traffic fatalities per 100,000 population*
		High-performing schools within ¼ mile of bus stop or ½ mile of rapid transit station
Objective 12.2	Increase access to healthy and local foods	Population living in areas with low food access[16]
		Full service grocery stores within ¼ mile of bus stop, ½ mile of a rapid transit station, or in an urban center
Objective 12.3	Maximize opportunities for recreation and access to the natural environment	Housing located within 1/4 mile of a park or trail
Outcome 13. The region's residents have expanded connections to health services.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 13.1	Improve connections to health care facilities and service providers	**Foundational Measure 5:** Share of health facilities in urban centers, in rural town centers, within ½ mile of rapid transit stations, or within ¼ mile of high frequency bus stops
Objective 13.2	Increase awareness and knowledge of community health and wellness issues and support networks	Local plans and policies that address community health and wellness

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[15] The definition of a "bicycle travel way facility" can be further refined using the categories assigned in the DRCOG Bicycle Facility Inventory. Suggest using all categories except "Shared Lane Bicycle Route," which are signed but otherwise unmarked.

[16] Beginning investigation of substitute for USDA analysis

Outcome 14. Diverse housing options meet the needs of residents of all ages, incomes and abilities.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 14.1	Increase the regional supply of ownership and rental housing that is affordable to a variety of households at all income levels	**Foundational Measure 4:** Share of the region's households that are housing cost burdened (spending 30% or more of income on housing)
		Housing affordability gap[17]
Objective 14.2	Encourage opportunities for diverse housing by leveraging transit investments	Share of population in low-income or minority areas with good transit-job accessibility (100,000 jobs within 45 mins.)*
		Foundational Measure 3: Combined cost of housing and transportation as a percent of income for a median-income family*
		Combined cost of housing and transportation as a percent of income for a moderate-income family and working individual*
		Subsidized, affordable housing units[18] in urban centers, within ½ mile of rapid transit stations, or within ¼ mile of high frequency bus stops
		Share of population in low-income or minority areas with good transit-job accessibility (100,000 jobs within 45 mins.)*

* Indicates measure used in multiple elements

[17] Methodology estimates the shortage of rental homes for given levels of household income

[18] Beginning to investigate regular sources for this data

A Vibrant Regional Economy

INTRODUCTION

An economically sustainable region balances economic vitality, environmental quality, and a high standard of living for the region's residents. A sustainable economy is also resilient in that economic downturns are less severe and recovery occurs 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 Denver region will 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 talent and innovators, a high quality built environment, and housing options that are accessible and affordable to all ages, incomes, and abilities. Maintaining a vibrant regional economy depends upon the region's ability to collectively work toward the following outcomes.

OUTCOMES FOR A VIBRANT REGIONAL ECONOMY:

- **Access to opportunity for all residents.**
- **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 that focus on 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 in regional and local decisions. As such, the objectives and strategies in this section seek to support the ongoing efforts of the many economic development organizations and local governments playing a role in promoting the economic vitality of the region and to reinforce essential linkages between these groups.

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CONNECTING THE DOTS: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

An Efficient and Predictable Development Pattern. The region's diverse communities—rural, suburban, and urban—play a large role in its appeal to residents and businesses. The ability of residents to choose whether to live in a compact and walkable urban center; a suburban neighborhood; or on a working ranch or mountain property outside the UGB/A plays an important role in the region's success in recruiting companies and skilled employees. In addition, carefully managing growth and development and encouraging infill and redevelopment in locations that are accessible by transit can help the region achieve a more sustainable future by capitalizing on existing infrastructure, reducing energy consumption, and reducing VMT—all of which can help support the more efficient use of municipal resources.

A Connected Multimodal Region. Ensuring people, goods, and services move through the region safely, efficiently, and predictably is essential to our economic health. Our region's economy will prosper when residents have access to employment opportunities as well as access to basic needs and quality of life amenities. Providing a range of multimodal travel options will help ensure the Denver region remains competitive with other major metropolitan areas for new employers and residents seeking a high quality of life, lower transportation costs, and diverse lifestyle choices. Improving access to and from the region's employment centers will benefit the economy and enhance mobility options for residents in the workforce.

Healthy, Inclusive and Livable Communities. While health and wellness are themselves an important sector for future economic growth, health and community livability also impact the bottom line for regional business, in terms of costs of care, employee productivity, and ability to attract and retain employees. Residents and businesses alike are attracted to the Denver region's reputation as a healthy place to live, and delivering on this -brand- is essential in capturing future economic opportunities. Moreover, health, or lack thereof, can diminish access to opportunities for residents.

A Safe and Resilient Built and Natural Environment. Businesses and residents alike choose to move to—and stay in—the region because of its scenic natural environment, wide open spaces, and access to ever-expanding recreational opportunities and numerous other quality of life amenities. These features play an important role in the region's success in recruiting companies and skilled employees and attract visitors from around the globe who travel to the region to hike, bike, ski, and pursue a host of other outdoor pursuits. The ability of our region to maintain the quality of these assets and the ability for residents and visitors to readily access them is critical to continued economic health.

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Outcome 15: Access to opportunity for all residents.

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 plays a critical role in enabling commerce and providing access to basic needs and quality of life amenities that allow the region's residents to succeed and excel.

OBJECTIVE 15.1: ENSURE THE EFFICIENT FLOW OF PEOPLE, GOODS, SERVICES, AND INFORMATION IN AND THROUGH THE REGION

Strategy 15.1(a): Invest in the region's infrastructure to ensure the region remains globally competitive

Develop and maintain connected multimodal infrastructure that businesses depend on to access local, national, and global customers and markets.

Strategy 15.1(b): Connect residents and visitors to cultural, educational, and natural amenities in the Denver region and across the state

Capitalize on regional and state amenities through efforts to promote reliable connections to key destinations. Invest in planning, design and mitigation strategies and approaches that support positive resident and visitor experiences while protecting the character and integrity of the region's natural and cultural resources.

Strategy 15.1(c): Preserve, protect, and enable employment opportunities that are accessible to transit

Concentrate a significant portion of the region's employment in centers accessible via transit. Through multisector partnerships, develop and implement strategies that safely and conveniently connect workers to final work destinations.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Identify current and future travel and 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 support manufacturing and production businesses in areas served by transit.
- Identify best practices to support mixed use development, including a range of employment and housing options in areas served by transit.
- Evaluate, promote, and encourage investment in first- and final-mile solutions.
- Provide and analyze data on the region's demographic and economic conditions.
- Identify gaps and strategies in regional transportation infrastructure.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Develop plans to address potential conflicts between conservation of natural resources and public use and enjoyment.
- Engage economic development and planning professionals in efforts to align community-wide goals.
- Develop strategies that focus a range of employment opportunities directly adjacent to transit stops and stations.

OBJECTIVE 15.2: IMPROVE ACCESS TO AND FROM THE REGION'S DEVELOPED AND EMERGING EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

Strategy 15.2(a): Track, assess and respond to the mobility needs of major employment centers

Analyze commute data for major employment centers to understand specific patterns and mobility needs. Align public and private investment to create a diverse portfolio of mobility options and strategies including new and/or enhanced infrastructure and transportation demand programs in these centers.

Strategy 15.2(b): Facilitate public/private partnerships to improve first- and final-mile connections to the region's high-capacity transit services

Develop first- and final-mile strategies that consider local conditions around stations including: street layout, bicycle and pedestrian network, property ownership, infrastructure opportunities and barriers, existing and future development, and operational needs for transit.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Establish a technical committee to identify best practices in addressing first and final mile barriers.
- Develop and track metrics that measure qualitative and quantitative urban design characteristics, and quantitative market and economic performance measures at transit stations.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Partner with transportation management organizations and/or improvement districts to determine travel needs of employees.
- Work with property owners, developers, transportation service providers, and RTD to implement first- and final-mile strategies in employment centers.
- Prioritize investments that will contribute to mobility enhancements in employment centers.

Outcome 16: Investments in infrastructure and amenities allow people and businesses to thrive and prosper.

The Denver region's economic vitality depends on providing a high quality of life in diverse communities. Quality of life is a major factor in the location decisions of businesses and individuals. Our region's weather, recreational and cultural assets, and diverse living settings have contributed to our success attracting talented labor. The region must also focus on efforts to promote economic advancement for our communities so that all residents share and contribute to sustained regional prosperity.

OBJECTIVE 16.1: INCREASE AWARENESS OF KEY REGIONAL GROWTH, TRANSPORTATION, AND ECONOMIC TRENDS BASED ON THE REGION'S SHARED VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Strategy 16.1(a): Assess whether the infrastructure our communities and residents depend on now and in the future will support the region's near- and long-term economic vitality

Encourage coordinated economic and community development activities aimed at assuring the region's infrastructure will maintain and grow the economic health and vitality of the region. Expand dialogues and partnerships that examine the role of the built environment in connecting residents to opportunities for economic stability and advancement.

Strategy 16.1(b): Develop monitoring and reporting programs to assess progress toward shared local and regional goals

Track key metrics and indicators that measure changes in economic vitality and progress toward achieving Metro Vision outcomes. Foster collaboration between planning, economic, and community development partners including efforts to develop and share data, information and analysis tools.

REGIONAL ACTIONS

- Create annual progress report on regional land use and transportation measures and targets that influence the region's economic vitality.
- Consolidate regional data, analysis, and information to a "one-stop shop" accessible to a wide variety of audiences.
- Develop informational products that highlight key trends that may impact the region's ability to achieve desired outcomes.

LOCAL ACTIONS

- Collect and share local development data and trends that can inform regional analysis and modeling.
- Develop measures and indicators to assess progress toward local goals.
- Regularly assess the regional impact of local policies, programs and investments.

TRACKING OUR PROGRESS: A VIBRANT REGIONAL ECONOMY

The table below contains some preliminary measures to track our progress toward a vibrant regional economy. Key considerations in selecting measures included the overall availability of data and the extent to which measures are currently being tracked by DRCOG or others in the region to minimize overlap and promote efficiency.

Outcome 15. Access to opportunity for all residents.		
OBJECTIVES		**MEASURES**
Objective 15.1	Ensure the efficient flow of people, goods, services, and information in and through the region	**Foundational Measure 9:** Lane-miles of congested roadways on the Regional Roadway System (RRS)*
		Average travel time variation (peak vs. off peak)*
Objective 15.2	Improve access to and from the region's developed and emerging employment centers	Average urban center mode split*
		Travel time to employment centers
		Share of region's employees with access to EcoPass
Outcome 16. Investments in infrastructure and amenities allow people and businesses to thrive and prosper.		
OBJECTIVE		**MEASURE**
Objective 16.1	Increase awareness of key regional growth, transportation, and economic trends based on the region's shared vision for the future	Regional Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

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Appendix A: Supporting Plans and Documents

The following plans and documents are available on DRCOG's website at www.drcog.org.

2011-2015 AREA PLAN ON AGING

The focus of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is to help people live independently as long as possible in their own homes and communities and provide support and assistance to those living in care facilities. To accomplish this, the AAA regularly identifies the needs of older adults living in the Denver region. The Area Plan on Aging captures public and service provider input to assess current programs and goals and sets a modified course to respond to the needs of the region's older adults.

METRO VISION LISTENING TOUR

The Listening Tour was conducted in 2012 in advance of the launch of the Metro Vision update process. The Listening Tour was a qualitative research process designed to hear 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 there were nearly 1,200 online survey responses.

METRO VISION LOCAL GOVERNMENT SURVEY

The Local Government Survey was conducted in fall 2013. The survey was an online voluntary survey for DRCOG's 56 member governments. The purpose of the survey was to gain a better understanding of local growth and development challenges throughout the Denver region. A diverse cross-section of 27 communities from across the region participated in the survey.

REGIONAL GOALS – METRO VISION 2035 SNAPSHOT

The DRCOG Board adopted a major update to Metro Vision 2035 in February 2011. The update included a focus on sustainability. The Board defined sustainability in the region through a series of measurable goals the region should achieve by the year 2035. The Regional Snapshot summarizes progress toward these goals using the most recent data available. Metro Vision will continue to periodically measure performance on key plan outcomes.

INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT ISSUES PAPER

The Infill and Redevelopment Issues Paper identified major issues facing infill and redevelopment in the region and discussed potential solutions for the region and local governments to consider during planning and implementation activities. DRCOG also hosted a Metro Vision Idea Exchange on infill development in December 2013.

COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS ISSUES PAPER

This issues paper introduced key challenges related to community health and wellness in the Denver region, and identified some potential solutions for DRCOG and local governments to consider during the Metro Vision update process and beyond. DRCOG also hosted a Metro Vision Idea Exchange on community health and wellness in February 2014.

METRO VISION REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2035 AND 2040)

The Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) addresses the challenges and guides the development of a multimodal transportation system over the next 25 years. It reflects a transportation system that closely interacts with the four other overarching themes of Metro Vision. The fiscally-constrained RTP will be adopted prior to Metro Vision. Remaining elements of the RTP will be adopted in conjunction with the adoption of Metro Vision, or shortly thereafter.

DENVER METRO AREA HOUSING DIVERSITY STUDY

DRCOG commissioned a study to research a number of factors identified as potentially contributing to recent housing and development trends and conditions. DRCOG was particularly interested in understanding the characteristics and dynamics of higher density housing, including attached for-sale multifamily and the potential for designated urban centers to achieve a diverse housing stock, allowing people of all ages, incomes and abilities to live and thrive in urban centers.

REGIONAL HOUSING STRATEGY

Housing emerged as a critical issue for regional stakeholders and the public throughout the process to develop Metro Vision. The Regional Housing Strategy included recommendations for addressing regional housing needs in the Denver metro area. Housing needs were identified through data analysis, interviews with knowledgeable stakeholders and residents who participated in the citizen input process.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC STRATEGY

The Regional Economic Strategy identified specific roles, responsibilities, policies, and actions that DRCOG can adopt to promote economic sustainability in the Denver region. The strategy focuses on improving and sustaining the economic health of the region, rather than business recruitment, expansion, and retention efforts handled by the existing economic development organizations.

URBAN CENTERS SURVEY AND REPORT

The Urban Centers Survey and Report summarizes the varying degrees of success local governments have experienced as they work to enhance the region's economy, protect our quality of life, and promote transportation choices through urban center planning and implementation. Over 80 designated centers completed on-line surveys and additional interviews were conducted to supplement the survey results. DRCOG hosted a Metro Vision Idea Exchange on urban centers in May 2014.

RURAL TOWN CENTERS INTERVIEWS AND REPORT

DRCOG first designated rural town centers in 2004 to encourage new growth beyond the Denver region's urbanized core to concentrated development in established rural areas. The Rural Town Centers report explored issues and opportunities in rural communities and their town centers, and best practices around the country. The report aimed to inform DRCOG's evolving role in supporting these vibrant places that occur beyond the Denver region's urban edge.

Appendix B: Shaping Metro Vision-Key Stakeholder Engagement Activities

METRO VISION LISTENING TOUR

The Listening Tour was conducted in 2012 to launch the Metro Vision update process. The Listening Tour was a qualitative research process designed to hear 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 there were nearly 1,200 online survey responses.

METRO VISION LOCAL GOVERNMENT SURVEY

The Local Government Survey was conducted in the fall of 2013 as an online voluntary survey for DRCOG's 56 member governments. The purpose was to gain a better understanding of local growth and development challenges throughout the Denver region. A diverse cross-section of 27 communities participated.

METRO VISION PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE (MVPAC)

The DRCOG Board of Directors created the Metro Vision Planning Advisory Committee in October 2012. Over a two year period, MVPAC met regularly and worked closely with DRCOG staff to develop policy options and make recommendations to the DRCOG Board of Directors and Metro Vision Issues Committee (MVIC).

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE (CAC)

The DRCOG Board of Directors created a Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) in December 2012. The CAC advised DRCOG on effective ways to involve residents and businesses, raised awareness of Metro Vision and assisted in making connections with the broader community. CAC members also conducted outreach activities to engage their existing networks on topics explored as part of the update process.

METRO VISION TRANSIT ALLIANCE CITIZENS ACADEMY

In partnership with Transit Alliance, DRCOG organized a seven- week leadership program for citizens from around the region. Sessions were conducted on key Metro Vision topics including: economic vitality, multimodal transportation, community health and wellness, access to opportunity, and housing. Each academy participant then created an individual action plan to advance mobility-related issues in his/her community.

OUR SHARED VISION

In fall 2013, DRCOG launched an online platform promoting idea generation through stakeholder-to-stakeholder interaction. Idea generation is achieved through online idea submissions, surveys, and polls. Participants provide feedback on numerous Metro Vision update topics, including: community support for older adults, key regional strengths and opportunities, economic vitality, housing, community health and wellness, and infill development.

METRO VISION IDEA EXCHANGES

Idea Exchanges bring together staff and elected officials from local governments and stakeholders from the private, public, and civic sectors to share information and learn about best practices to support of Metro Vision. In 2013 and 2014 three exchanges were tailored to gather feedback on key issues being explored during the update process – infill

development, community health and wellness and urban center planning in areas outside the traditional urban core of the region. DRCOG will also host Idea Exchanges to further implementation of key strategies outlined in Metro Vision.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES INITIATIVE

In 2011, the Denver region received a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to support regional planning and implementation activities. The Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) brought together numerous stakeholders to align investments, programs and policies to get the most out of the region's transit investment. SCI also played a critical role in providing resources to explore two key issues not directly addressed in previous versions of Metro Vision – housing and economic vitality.

SCI engaged a broad consortium of municipalities, counties, state agencies, housing authorities, federal partners, and non-profit, academic and philanthropic organizations in shaping and implementing Metro Vision. The grant brought many new voices to the table and cemented partnerships required for successful implementation efforts. The DRCOG Board of Directors makes the final determination of Metro Vision's contents, approves the plan, and guides organizational activities to ensure progress toward desired regional outcomes.

Appendix C: Urban Growth Boundary/Area (UGB/A)

In previous Metro Vision plans, the DRCOG Board of Directors established a policy that urban development will occur within a locally defined UGB/A. Metro Vision continues this voluntary, collaborative approach to growth management among communities in the Denver metro region. The current boundary encompasses 980 square miles of urban development, which was intended to achieve at least a 10 percent increase in the region's overall density between 2000 and 2035.

In March 2013 the DRCOG Board delayed member requests for additional UGB/A until after Metro Vision is adopted by the DRCOG Board of Directors. Early in 2015, DRCOG staff will initiate preliminary efforts to support the regional allocation process. Preliminary activities will include identifying the current extent of urban development according the development classification system as outlined in the Metro Vision 2035 Growth and Development Supplement. DRCOG staff will also coordinate with member jurisdictions to determine changes to the existing UGB/A due to annexations.

Following the adoption of Metro Vision, the Board will invite each member government requesting additional UGB/A to submit an application detailing how its request meets Board criteria for allocation UGB/A. These criteria are described in the Growth and Development Supplement. The Supplement also details the emergency request provision, which enables any member government at any time to request additional UGB/A outside the designated regional allocation process. Additionally, the self-certification provision allows communities to make small changes to their UGB/A allocation, that do not have regional impact, without seeking Board approval.

Upon the conclusion of the UGB/A allocation process Metro Vision will be amended to include a current and accurate accounting of UGB/A for each member community.

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Appendix D: 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 Metro Vision. The process to designate urban centers stresses the key Metro Vision characteristics, but also strongly considers local circumstances and commitment. DRCOG does not unilaterally identify and designate urban centers – all potential centers are submitted by local governments.

Any jurisdiction interested in designating an urban center should schedule an informal consultation with DRCOG staff. Ideally this consultation will be scheduled during Cycle 1 of the annual Metro Vision Plan Assessment process. During Cycle 2, jurisdictions formally submit urban center proposals for evaluation by DRCOG staff and a panel of volunteers. The evaluation panel provides recommendations to DRCOG staff for urban center designations. Finally, recommended urban centers are presented to the Metro Vision Issues Committee (MVIC) and then to the DRCOG Board of Directors for their final consideration.

Please see the Metro Vision Growth and Development Supplement for details on the designation process.

The following table lists urban centers currently recognized in Metro Vision. The table lists centers by jurisdiction and provides information on size of the urban center, whether the center is served by high-capacity transit, and magnitude of expected development – see below for details.

- Emerging centers are expecting significant growth relative to existing conditions (more than 50 percent growth in combined jobs and housing units)
- Existing centers have substantial development. 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)	High Frequency Transit Stop
Olde Town/New Town	Arvada	Existing	158	X
Candelas	Arvada	Emerging	631	
Ralston Fields	Arvada	Existing	257	X
Iliff Avenue Center	Aurora	Emerging	315	X
Aurora City Center	Aurora	Emerging	868	X
Florida	Aurora	Existing	248	X
Iliff	Aurora	Existing	186	X
13th Avenue	Aurora	Emerging	179	X
Peoria - Smith	Aurora	Emerging	266	X
Smoky Hill	Aurora	Emerging	375	X
I-225/Parker Road	Aurora	Emerging	209	X
Hampden Town Center	Aurora	Emerging	105	
E-470 / I-70	Aurora	Emerging	1043	
Fitzsimons	Aurora	Emerging	821	X
Jewell Avenue	Aurora	Emerging	294	
Buckingham Center	Aurora	Existing	414	X
1st Avenue Center	Aurora	Existing	339	X
Colfax Avenue	Aurora	Existing	336	X
Airport Gateway	Aurora	Planned	40	X
56th Avenue	Aurora	Planned	203	
28th/30th Streets (BVRC)	Boulder	Existing	634	X
Gunbarrel Activity Center	Boulder	Existing	138	X
University Hill	Boulder	Existing	542	X
Downtown Boulder	Boulder	Existing	382	X
Adams Crossing Activity Center	Brighton	Emerging	779	
Bromley Park Activity Center	Brighton	Emerging	393	
Downtown Brighton Activity Center	Brighton	Existing	178	
Prairie Center Activity Center	Brighton	Planned	436	
Interlocken Loop Activity Center	Broomfield	Emerging	586	X
I-25 & SH 7 Activity Center	Broomfield	Emerging	2086	
Urban Transit Village	Broomfield	Emerging	250	X
Original Broomfield TOD	Broomfield	Planned	469	X
Downtown Castle Rock	Castle Rock	Existing	214	
Southglenn	Centennial	Existing	146	X
Alameda Station	Denver	Emerging	201	X
62nd and Pena TOD	Denver	Emerging	161	

Urban Center Name	Jurisdiction	Classification	Area (Acres)	High Frequency Transit Stop
29th Ave. Town Center	Denver	Emerging	90	X
Broadway Station TOD	Denver	Emerging	145	X
Denver Technology Center	Denver	Emerging	287	X
Southmoor Park TOD	Denver	Emerging	50	X
Central Park TOD	Denver	Emerging	63	X
St. Anthony's Urban Center	Denver	Emerging	30	X
38th and Blake TOD	Denver	Emerging	238	X
Colorado Station	Denver	Existing	171	X
Decatur - Federal TOD	Denver	Existing	282	X
Colorado Blvd and Smith Road	Denver	Emerging	78	X
Central Business District	Denver	Emerging	1705	X
Denargo Market	Denver	Emerging	112	X
Stapleton North Regional Cen	Denver	Emerging	331	X
Belleview Station	Denver	Emerging	75	X
Sheridan Station	Denver	Emerging	168	X
Bear Valley	Denver	Existing	83	X
Colorado Blvd. Health Care District	Denver	Emerging	137	X
Federal and Evans	Denver	Existing	155	X
Tamarac & Hampden	Denver	Existing	79	X
DU Campus Urban Center	Denver	Existing	204	X
Broadway	Denver	Existing	142	X
Evans Station TOD	Denver	Existing	113	X
41st and Fox TOD	Denver	Existing	311	X
Lowry Town Center	Denver	Existing	122	X
10th & Osage Station	Denver	Existing	171	X
East Colfax Main Street	Denver	Existing	559	X
Cherry Creek	Denver	Existing	603	X
Pena & 40th	Denver	Planned	50	X
MLK Town Center	Denver	Planned	27	
Highlands Ranch Town Center	Douglas County	Emerging	165	X
Englewood City Center	Englewood	Emerging	62	X
Glendale City Center	Glendale	Existing	353	X
Golden Downtown	Golden	Existing	132	X
Fehringer Ranch	Jefferson County	Emerging	334	X
C-470 Corridor	Jefferson County	Existing	826	X
Bowles	Jefferson County	Existing	264	

Urban Center Name	Jurisdiction	Classification	Area (Acres)	High Frequency Transit Stop
Bergen Park	Jefferson County	Existing	149	
Southwest Plaza	Jefferson County	Existing	293	X
Denver West/Colorado Mills Center	Lakewood	Existing	546	X
Lakewood Center	Lakewood	Emerging	288	X
Union Center	Lakewood	Emerging	639	X
Wadsworth Boulevard	Lakewood	Existing	294	X
Oak Street	Lakewood	Existing	287	X
Littleton Downtown	Littleton	Emerging	220	X
Ridge Gate West Village	Lone Tree	Emerging	375	
Lincoln Station TOD	Lone Tree	Emerging	61	X
RidgeGate City Center	Lone Tree	Emerging	195	
SH66 Mixed Use Corridor	Longmont	Emerging	159	X
Ken Pratt Extension	Longmont	Existing	158	X
Twin Peaks Activity Center	Longmont	Existing	240	
North Main Street AC	Longmont	Existing	122	X
CBD of Longmont	Longmont	Existing	591	X
Downtown Louisville	Louisville	Existing	357	X
I-25 Corridor	Multiple	Emerging	5932	X
Northglenn City Center	Northglenn	Existing	252	X
Greater Downtown District (Parker)	Parker	Existing	280	
Superior Town Center	Superior	Emerging	81	
Eastlake	Thornton	Emerging	99	
I-25 / Hwy 7 Activity Center	Thornton	Emerging	502	
North End Station	Thornton	Emerging	127	
Thornton City Center	Thornton	Existing	491	X
S. Westminster Activity Center	Westminster	Emerging	232	X
Westminster Center Activity Center	Westminster	Emerging	622	X
Westminster Promenade Act Center	Westminster	Emerging	538	X
North I-25 Activity Center	Westminster	Emerging	561	
West 120th Ave Activity Center	Westminster	Existing	591	X
Wadsworth Wheat Ridge	Wheat Ridge	Existing	112	X
Northwest TOD Wheat Ridge	Wheat Ridge	Existing	119	