

## Description

The Denver Regional Council of Governments began investigating land use land cover layers on behalf of local and regional organizations in 2018. Land use land cover data is created by classifying imagery pixels into a predetermined set of categories that describe the landscape. High-resolution orthoimagery captured through the Denver Regional Aerial Photography Project is the foundation for developing land use land cover data.



## At a glance

DRCOG has only recently begun developing land use land cover data through a pilot project that focuses on the following classes. Future projects may expand these classifications depending on needs and available funding.

1. **Structures:** Human-constructed objects made of impervious materials that are greater than approximately two meters in height. Houses, malls and electrical towers are examples of structures. Minimum mapping unit (MMU) equal to 9 square meters.
2. **Impervious surfaces:** Human-constructed surfaces through which water cannot penetrate, and that are below approximately 2 meters in height. This includes asphalt, concrete, gravel, pavement, treated lumber (for example, docks and decks) and dirt roads. MMU equal to 9 square meters, minimum 2 meters wide for linear features.
3. **Water:** All areas of open water, generally with less than 25 percent cover of vegetation/land cover. This includes water-filled backyard pools, ponds, lakes, rivers, natural tidal pools in wetland areas and boats that are not attached to docks. MMU equal to 9 square meters.
4. **Grassland/prairie:** Large open semi-arid areas composed of perennial grasses, herbs and shrubs. Grasslands and prairies are often used for ranching and grazing but are not managed beyond these activities. MMU equal to 9 square meters.
5. **Tree canopy:** Deciduous and evergreen woody vegetation of either natural succession or human planting that is over approximately 5 meters in height. Standalone individuals, discrete clumps and interlocking individuals are included. MMU equal to 9 square meters. Includes individual large shrubs.
6. **Irrigated lands/turf:** Managed lands composed of active crop cover or turf. Examples of turf: lawns, cemeteries, golf courses, sports fields. MMU equal to 9 square meters.
7. **Barren/rock:** Areas void of vegetation consisting of natural earthen material regardless of how it has been cleared. This includes beaches, mud flats and bare ground in construction sites. MMU equal to 25 square meters.

## Data uses

- determine tree canopy cover of urban areas that relates to urban heat
- study urban growth and gentrification
- identify natural corridors and connectivity of natural areas
- understanding yard composition
- mapping microhabitats
- identifying barren/degraded landscapes
- finding opportunities for parks/open space as it relates to social justice/equity
- water quality/quantity studies
- flood control
- fire management
- recreational planning (for example, trail placement)

## Data samples



## More information

Visit our [website](#) for meeting materials and other resources.

## QUESTIONS?

Contact Ashley Summers, DRCOG information systems manager  
303-480-6746, [asummers@drcog.org](mailto:asummers@drcog.org)

