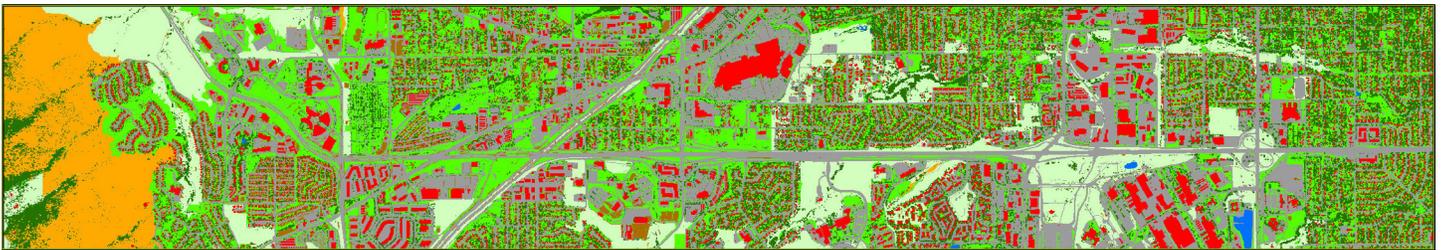


Description

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

Each project's requirements may vary slightly based on the needs of the funding partners. Although each project is unique, the following classifications are typically collected at a 3-foot resolution.

1. **Structures:** Human-constructed objects made of impervious materials that are greater than approximately 8 feet in height. Houses, malls and electrical towers are examples of structures. Minimum mapping unit (MMU) equal to 180 square feet.
2. **Impervious surfaces:** Human-constructed surfaces through which water cannot penetrate, and that are below approximately 8 feet in height. This includes asphalt, concrete, gravel, pavement, treated lumber (for example, docks and decks) and dirt roads. MMU equal to 81 square feet, minimum 6 feet 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 900 square feet.
4. **Grassland/prairie:** Large open semi-arid areas composed of perennial grasses and herbaceous vegetation. Such lands are often used for ranching and grazing but are not managed beyond those activities. This class also includes unmanaged natural ground cover that is less than 2 feet tall, such as wetland areas. MMU equal to 270 square feet.
5. **Shrubland/scrubland:** Areas dominated by shrubs; less than 8 feet tall with shrub canopy typically greater than 20% of total vegetation. This class includes true shrubs, young trees in an early successional stage or trees stunted from environmental conditions. MMU equal to 900 square feet.
6. **Tree canopy:** Deciduous and evergreen woody vegetation of either natural succession or human planting that is over approximately 8 feet in height. Standalone individuals, discrete clumps and interlocking individuals are included. MMU equal to 54 square feet. Includes individual large shrubs.
7. **Irrigated lands/turf:** Managed lands composed of active crop cover or turf. Examples of turf: lawns, cemeteries, golf courses, sports fields. MMU equal to 81 square feet.
8. **Cropland:** Large fields generally found in non-urban areas used for the production of various annual crops. These can be in active or inactive use but must show visual signs of recent usage such as tilled fields or tire tracks. MMU equal to 2 acres.
9. **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 270 square feet.

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 the DRCOG [website](#) for meeting materials and other resources. Download data from the [Regional Data Catalog](#).

Questions?

Contact Ashley Summers, DRCOG information systems manager
303-480-6746, asummers@drcog.org

