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**AGENDA**  
**Metro Vision Planning Advisory Committee**  
**Wednesday May 21, 2014**  
**9:00 a.m.- 11:00 a.m.**  
1290 Broadway  
Independence Pass Board Room

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment
3. April 16, 2014 Meeting Summary  
(Attachment A)

**ACTION ITEM**

**INFORMATIONAL ITEMS**

4. Metro Vision 2040 – Urban Centers Analysis  
(Attachment B)  
Brad Calvert/Gabby Voeller
5. Metro Vision 2040 – Regional Housing Strategy Update  
(Attachment C)  
Brad Calvert
6. Metro Vision 2040 – Working Plan Outline  
(Attachment D)  
Brad Calvert

**ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

7. Updates
  - MVPAC Issues Tracking May 21, 2014
8. Member Comment/Other Matters
9. Next Meeting- June 18, 2014 9:00 a.m.
10. Adjournment



## ATTACHMENT A

### MEETING SUMMARY Metro Vision Planning Advisory Committee (MVPAC) Wednesday, April 16, 2014

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#### MEMBERS PRESENT:

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Christopher Auxier     | Adams County Housing Authority                         |
| Erin Fosdick           | City of Longmont                                       |
| Steve Glueck (Chair)   | City of Golden   |
| Steve Gordon           | City and County of Denver                              |
| Steve Hebert           | City of Lone Tree                                      |
| Leanne Jeffers         | Regional Institute for Health & Environmtl. Leadership |
| Steve Klausung         | Denver South Economic Dev. Partnership                 |
| Glenda Lainis          | City of Thornton                                       |
| Kyle Legleiter         | The Colorado Health Foundation                         |
| Anne Miller            | CO Dept. of Local Affairs                              |
| Ann Norton             | Ann Norton Law Offices                                 |
| Katherine (Kati) Rider | Douglas County   |
| Will Toor              | Southwest Energy Efficiency Project                    |
| Cate Townsley          | CO Dept. of Public Health and Environment              |
| Glen Van Nimwegen      | City of Littleton                                      |
| Robert Watkins         | City of Aurora   |
| Brad Weinig            | Enterprise Community Partners                          |

DRCOG staff: Brad Calvert, Nicole Klepadlo, Teri Whitmore, Michele Anderson, Anna Garcia, Doug Rex, Ashley Kaade, Gabby Voeller, Casey Collins

Public: Ted Heyd, Bicycle Colorado; Susan Wood, RTD

#### Call to Order

Chair Steve Glueck called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

#### Public Comment

No public comment was heard.

#### Summary of March 19, 2014 Meeting

The summary was accepted with the following clarifications.

- On page 4 – In MVPAC Comments (Edge Development) Second bullet, second sentence. Change sentence to “*There are industries that may be drawn to these areas—e.g., energy (solar, wind, oil and gas).*”
- On page 6 – In MVPAC Comments (Regional Housing Strategy Study). Fourth bullet. Change to “*Current construction defects legislation should be noted – it is perceived by some as a primary barrier to building attached housing.*”

### INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

#### Metro Vision 2040 – Regional Economic Strategy Update

Brad Calvert presented an update on the Regional Economic Strategy (RES). This report seeks to identify roles, responsibilities, policies, and actions that DRCOG can adopt to promote economic sustainability in the Denver region. Consultants developing the report, Economic & Planning Systems (EPS), conducted 12 interviews with over 40 participants (municipal economic developers, county-wide organizations, multi-county regional organizations, and state-level economic developers).

Key highlights of the RES interviews:

#### Regional assets

- Well-educated and trained workforce (although R&D and technology transfer not of the same scale as Stanford-Silicon Valley / MIT-Cambridge-Boston)
- DIA – particularly direct international flights (and other airports)
- Mid-continent location
- Transit investment and planning
- Housing and lifestyle diversity
- Highway network

#### Regional weaknesses or threats

- Broadband access and the digital divide
- Not educating everyone equally well
- Business personal property tax
- TABOR and Gallagher Amendment
- High housing cost for size of metro area
- Lack of strong financial or tax incentives compared to competing states
- Not attracting Fortune 500, but strong hub for Western and West-Central US
- Cost of electric power for large power users
- Growth in rural communities (jobs and housing)
- Oil and gas regulations
- I-70 congestion

#### Quality of life

- Regional trails, parks, open space
- Favorable weather (generally)
- Proximity to mountain recreation
- Key factors in attracting 25-34 year old talent workers
  - Knowledge of latest arts/practices/skills
  - Ability to sustain industry as older workers retire (concern for some)
  - Peak household formation years means high spending patterns (housing, consumer goods, entertainment, etc.)

#### Transit and FasTracks

- Fare rates and zone structure is higher than competitive cities – issue for service/middle skill employees
- EcoPass: great amenity in CBD, but less attractive in areas with lower transit shares
  - CBD (40% transit capture) vs. suburban office parks (<10%)
  - At the expense of equally important road infrastructure?
  - DRCOG promoting residential vs. commercial at station areas

#### Housing

- Middle to upper skill and wage jobs have pretty good choices
- Lower incomes: affordability and stability a threat to economic opportunity
  - Lack of entry level rental housing in peripheral suburban and exurban locations
    - Difficulty attracting and retaining entry level employees
  - Construction defects – impact on urban-style housing that's seen as key asset

The RES will also create benchmark indicators that can be used to track how the region compares to competitor regions. Six regions were identified as competitor regions based on an analysis of Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation records.

#### Cities identified for benchmarking are:

- Phoenix, AZ
- Dallas, TX
- Salt Lake City, UT
- Austin, TX
- Atlanta, GA
- Portland, OR

Brad discussed the following proposed benchmarking indicators and asked for committee feedback.

Employment and Business assets

- Proportion of jobs in low, mid, and upper level wages
- Percent of population with HS, Bachelor's Degree and advanced degrees
- Percent of population with reported access to download speeds greater than 25 or 50 Mbps
- Number of internet service providers

Population and Quality of Life assets

- Population by age cohort and growth rate by cohort
- Median household income and income distributions
- Median single-family home price and housing affordability index
- Cost of Living Index (Census)
- Multifamily housing units delivered as a percent of total housing units
- Vacancy rate own-vs.-rent
- Air quality - # of days exceeding healthy levels

Transportation and Transit access

- Congestion index (Travel Time Index)
- Mode of transportation: SOV, HOV, transit, bicycle, pedestrian
- Average commute times and distribution of worker commutes by time of day (peak spreads)

MVPAC member comments (Regional Economic Strategies):

- Small business representatives should be included interviews – the Small Business Development Center was recommended.
- Supporting entrepreneurship is critical for a variety of reasons – including larger businesses that can “harvest” employees and ideas
- Is there specific direction from the Board regarding the economic strategy? Traditional economic development activities may be outside the role DRCOG is best suited to play.
- Benchmarks and indicators should reflect the nuance of data and DRCOG should consider how data are reported.
- There should be broader groups and fewer indicators. Economic development comes down to “are the workers there and can you retain them”.
- Some committee members indicated that these data are already collected and there may be some duplication of efforts.
- Focus on where DRCOG has influence - i.e., air quality, mobility, and mix of housing and jobs.
- Many businesses focus on the cost of doing business, including utilities. They are also interested in the access their employees have to higher and continuing education.
- Benchmarking should reflect the role of DIA – the region's single biggest economic driver.
- Travel time index is not a good measure for congestion – when possible it's best to think of housing and transportation affordability together.
- Important to grow existing jobs, not just new jobs.
- A healthy workforce is also important – are they able consistently make it to work because they are healthy, etc.
- Another role is to look at distribution of resources geographically across the region – level of success
- It may not be appropriate for the plan to include a separate section, but rather link other policy items to their importance in creating an economically vital region.

A follow-up conference call to discuss more details of indicators will be scheduled by DRCOG staff with the following volunteers, Steve Glueck, Steve Klausung, Steve Herbert, Robert Watkins, Kati Rider, and Christopher Auxier.

Key findings of the Regional Economic Strategy Report will be brought to the DRCOG Board (June 11). A final report is expected by the end of July, 2014.

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### Metro Vision 2040 – Parks and Open Space

Brad Calvert presented the initial findings on potential modifications to the existing Parks and Open Space element identified by consultants Logan Simpson Design. Brad noted over 300 comments were received during public engagement.

### MVPAC member comments (Parks and Open Space)

- The powerpoint and summary were requested to share with appropriate staff.
- Discussing parks and open space separately may be needed, but there are also reasons to keep them together in the plan.
- Make sense to look at separately, like population based goals.
- Are we adding open space to the edge of UGB to make it better?
- Should the plan detail conservation of open space on edges – creating buffers.
- Urban areas may have different needs (parks) than areas of the region that are looking to protect large areas of open space.
- Open space is very important to Free Standing Communities.
- Access to parks should note who has access – e.g. do areas with concentration of affordable housing have good access?
- The plan should include both access (parks) and land area (open space) measures.
- There needs to be an emphasis on urban centers and what functions as useful space
  - What is important to build our environment?
  - How do people's needs get met by amenities?
  - Emphasis and public space, plazas, etc.
- Access to trails and how that impacts access to parks should be considered
- What do we know about hazard areas (e.g. fire and flood) – this should be incorporated in discussions about protected areas.

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### Metro Vision 2040 – Urban Centers Analysis

Nicole Klepadlo presented on key urban centers and corridor themes emerging from surveys and interviews conducted by consultants Logan Simpson Design with local government staff and stakeholders.

The following urban centers were interviewed:

- Downtown Golden
- RidgeGate West (Lone Tree)
- Westminster Activity Center
- Superior City Center
- Thornton City Center
- Twin Peaks Activity Center (Longmont)
- Downtown Louisville
- Cherry Creek Center (Denver)
- East Colfax Center (Denver)
- Lakewood Center

### What We Heard – Urban Centers

- Weathered the recession well compared to other areas within communities
- Common goal towards working to enhance multimodal mobility with proposed bike facilities, better transit and exploring/implementing shuttles from urban center to rail stations
- No formal monitoring in place, no metrics in place to track performance
  - Consideration of lease rates, building permits, land value, sales tax etc.
- Strong desire for more affordable housing units including senior housing
- Difficulties in leasing mixed-use space and an oversupply of retail space
- Policies and programs within the selected urban centers include:
  - Streetscape improvements enhancing the pedestrian experience
  - Design guidelines
  - Parking management
  - Business improvement districts
  - Updated zoning policies
  - Small area plans

Nicole noted key themes emerging from the interviews on the following corridors:

- Wadsworth (Arvada, Wheat Ridge)
- Speer/Leetsdale (Denver)
- South Broadway (Denver, Englewood)
- Federal Blvd (Denver, Adams County)
- 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue (Commerce City)

### What We Heard – Corridors

- Corridors complement, rather than compete with, urban centers through linking them to each other and transit stations
  - Lack of funding/resources
- Not a shared vision for any of the corridors
  - Competing needs (auto, pedestrian, commercial)
- Overall challenges facing corridors include:
  - Constrained right-of-ways
  - Weak identities
  - Small parcels and multiple owners
  - Competing priorities of other city projects
- Primary role is to provide local and regional connectivity
- Successful policies and programs that have been effective include:
  - Innovative form-based code
  - TOD zoned districts
  - Neighborhood plans/station area plans
  - Concentration on nodes within each corridor
  - Living and complete streets policies

### Urban Centers Quantitative Analysis

- % of trips that are urban center to urban center
- % of trips that stay within an urban center
- Average VMT for households in an urban center
- Average VMT for employees in the urban center
- SOV% for urban center employees (commute trip)
- SOV% for urban center residents (commute trip)

### Urban Centers Quantitative Initial Analysis

- Two Urban Centers types emerged:
  1. Centers friendly for **residents**
    - Include large concentration of destinations and jobs for people that live here
  2. Centers friendly to **jobs**
    - Include high concentration of job options, sometimes transit to get there, and retail accommodations before, during, after work.
- Urban centers with high numbers of walking, biking and transit trips shared similar characteristics including:
  - Population density
  - Job density
  - Trips that stay within the urban center or go to other urban centers
- Walking trips are high in places with high population density
- High numbers of transit trips are correlated with low VMT/SOV rates for employees
  - These areas present alternative options to driving to employment in these urban centers

### MVPAC member comments (Urban Centers)

- Does DRCOG require monitoring metrics –there should be monitoring done – we should require governments to supply their metrics. Others spoke in opposition to this if it leads to “de-designation” of centers. Brad Calvert explained that DRCOG is committed to periodic regional measurement and that DRCOG-funded urban centers studies will include metric and monitoring efforts.
- Urban renewal is a critical tool.
- How well we are doing in achieving 50/75 goals? Brad said between 2005 and 2010 urban centers captured 21% of housing growth and 55% of employment growth (2005-2013).

### Next Steps

#### Urban Centers and Corridors

- Survey analysis to be completed and final results presented in May
- Quantitative analysis to be correlated with survey data and interview themes
- MVPAC preview – May 2014
- MVPAC policy conversation – June 2014

#### Rural Town Centers

- Interviews to be completed
- MVPAC preview – May 2014

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### Metro Vision 2040 – Regional Housing Strategy Update

The presentation was tabled until May 2014. The DRCOG Board of Directors will receive a briefing in May 2014 – final report to be completed in June.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS**

Cate Townley, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, was introduced as a new member replacing Susan Motika.

Member Leanne Jeffers of Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership distributed a flyer on the Institute's *Leadership for Healthy Community Design* program.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:04 a.m. The next meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2014 at 9:00 a.m.

## ATTACHMENT B

To: Chair and Members of the Metro Vision Planning Advisory Committee  
From: Brad Calvert, Senior Planner  
303-480-6839 or [bcalvert@drcog.org](mailto:bcalvert@drcog.org)

| Meeting Date | Agenda Category | Agenda Item # |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| May 21, 2014 | Information     | 4             |

### SUBJECT

Staff will brief committee members on key findings and analysis identified through case studies, interviews, and surveys.

### PROPOSED ACTION/RECOMMENDATIONS

No action requested. This item is for information.

### ACTION BY OTHERS

N/A

### SUMMARY

DRCOG retained Logan Simpson Design to complete a series of tasks to identify trends and key strategies that influence successful urban center planning and implementation. Urban centers have long been a key element in the region's growth framework dating back to the Metro Vision Guiding Vision adopted in 1992.

In addition to sharing survey and interview results, DRCOG staff will detail additional analyses on the travel characteristics of those that live and work in urban centers.

MVPAC will hear a summary of the qualitative and quantitative data and identify key policy items to deliberate further on at the June MVPAC meeting.

### Next Steps

- MVPAC – Key Findings (May 2014)
- MVPAC – Urban Center and Corridor Policy Recommendations (June 2014)
- MVIC – *An Efficient and Predictable Development Pattern* – key plan concepts (July 2014)
- MVPAC – *An Efficient and Predictable Development Pattern* – initial plan language (July 2014)

### PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS/ACTIONS

MVPAC

- June 3, 2013 - MVPAC Webinar on Urban Centers Analysis
- [January 19, 2014](#) – Metro Vision 2040 Key Milestones (Information)
- [April 16, 2014](#) - Urban Centers Analysis (Information)

### PROPOSED MOTION

N/A

### ATTACHMENT

N/A

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you need additional information, please contact Brad Calvert, Senior Planner, at 303-480-6839 or [bcalvert@drcog.org](mailto:bcalvert@drcog.org).



## ATTACHMENT C

To: Chair and Members of the Metro Vision Planning Advisory Committee

From: Brad Calvert, Senior Planner  
303-480-6839 or [bcalvert@drcog.org](mailto:bcalvert@drcog.org)

| Meeting Date | Agenda Category | Agenda Item # |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| May 21, 2014 | Information     | 5             |

### SUBJECT

Staff will brief the committee on the Regional Housing Strategy and Fair Housing Equity Assessment.

### PROPOSED ACTION/RECOMMENDATIONS

N/A

### ACTION BY OTHERS

N/A

### SUMMARY

DRCOG retained BBC Research and Consulting to conduct a Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA) and Regional Housing Strategy (RHS). All recipients of Sustainable Community Regional Planning Grants awarded through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are required to complete a FHEA as part of their grant work program.

Staff will share key findings and recommendations with MVPAC. Attached are the FHEA and RHS summaries.

Staff will also brief the DRCOG Board on May 21 on key findings and recommendations of the two reports. Staff is recommending that the Board of Directors form an ad hoc Board Working Group to consider the findings and recommend goals, objectives, performance measures, and initiatives for inclusion in Metro Vision 2040.

### PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS/ACTIONS

MVPAC

- [August 21, 2013](#)
- [January 15, 2014](#)
- [March 19, 2014](#)
- [April 16, 2014](#)

### PROPOSED MOTION

N/A

### ATTACHMENTS

Summary – *DRCOG Regional Housing Strategy*  
Summary – *Denver Region Fair Housing Equity Assessment*

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you need additional information, please contact Brad Calvert, Senior Planner, at 303-480-6839 or [bcalvert@drcog.org](mailto:bcalvert@drcog.org).

# SUMMARY

## DRCOG Regional Housing Strategy

This Regional Housing Strategy (RHS) is a key deliverable in the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Sustainable Communities Initiatives (SCI). DRCOG identified housing as a missing element in Metro Vision, the region’s long-range plan for growth and development. The need for a regional focus on housing was reinforced in the results of the Metro Vision 2040 Local Government Survey when two-thirds of respondents indicated that growth in low- and moderate-income households was a key challenge. Sustainable Regional Community Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG) recipients are required by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to conduct a fair housing analysis. A companion Fair Housing and Equity Analysis (FHEA) study was also developed.

The RHS tells a story of the housing market in the Denver region—where it has been, where it is and how it is likely to change. The RHS also incorporates major findings from the required Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA). The principal component of the RHS is a set of recommended strategies from which DRCOG and area partners can work to further a diverse set of housing choices in the region—an important component of sustainable growth.

In addition to quantitative analysis, the RHS was informed through interviews and focus groups with engaged stakeholders and the public.

### **Economic importance of housing choice**

The concentration of affordable housing—which occurs when only a few communities are the predominant home location of lower-wage workers—has many adverse economic effects. The most prominent are:

- **Increased traffic congestion and wear-and-tear on roads** caused by workers commuting from home to work. Affordable housing in the region has become much more concentrated within a handful of communities. This is likely to continue unless the array of housing choices can be broadened throughout the region.
- **Lower community investment by workers** who commute long distances in volunteering and contributing to civic life, as well as patronizing local businesses. These commuters also have less time to invest in their families and children.
- **The consequence of cost burden**, when a household pays more than 30 percent of its household income in housing cost. This is a problem for renters because it limits their ability to save to buy a home. And in almost every county in the region, more than half of

renters are cost-burdened.<sup>1</sup> Cost burdened owners often need to cut back on other household spending to make their mortgage payments. In the most severe situation, cost burden leads to foreclosure. One-third of the region's owners are currently cost burdened.

- **Constraints on economic development.** In interviews with local, regional, and state economic development organizations (EDOs) conducted for the Regional Economic Strategy (a companion study to the RHS), it was noted that lack of housing affordability and stability (ability to stay in the same home) are threats to economic opportunity. The mismatch between affordable housing locations and job centers creates costly commutes, stresses families, and results in significant turnover in lower-wage jobs.
- **Housing costs and outmigration.** The Center for Housing Policy recently examined lost economic development opportunities that occur when employers and qualified employees move from a community because of high housing costs.<sup>2</sup> According to the report, between 2000 and 2006—the period when housing costs rose at record levels in most U.S. cities—23 of the 35 metropolitan areas in the country with the highest housing costs lost population to out-migration; on average, a 6 percent loss per year.

***Recent research has demonstrated that an increase in the ratio of housing prices to income can slow regional employment growth by as much as 1 percent per year.***

Maintaining a diverse mix of housing choices in the region—a “housing balance”—should be an important focus of the region’s economic growth strategy. This should involve an efficient positioning of future housing for workforce, which takes advantage of existing infrastructure, occurs near job centers and transit, and maximizes areas of new opportunity. It must also involve efforts to increase opportunity for the region’s lowest-income residents, especially children, who will comprise a large part of the future workforce. Finally, it must address the supportive service needs of future older adults, many of whom will age in place, away from easy access to major service centers.

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<sup>1</sup> Cost burden exists when a household pays more than 30 percent of its gross income toward housing and utilities costs. This is an industry standard for being able to afford to buy or rent through both the private and public markets.

<sup>2</sup> *The Role of Affordable Housing in Creating Jobs and Stimulating Local Economic Development: A Review of the Literature*, The Center for Housing Policy, Keith Wardrip, Laura Williams, and Suzanne Hague, January 2011.

## The Denver region: Where we have been

The Denver region ended the last decade—a tough one, for many regions in the U.S.—in a relatively strong place. The region was fortunate that our housing bubble was modest compared to many areas: Prices went up, but not at the rate seen in many parts of the U.S., and the post-recession landing was soft.

Yet many of the region's residents ended the decade worse off than in the beginning. Many residents fell out of, then re-entered, poverty. Incomes failed to keep pace with increased housing costs, eroding housing purchasing power. And the areas in the region where affordable housing could be found declined, narrowing the opportunities for residents to live close to places of employment.

**Population growth.** The region experienced moderate population growth in the 1980s, but saw a population surge in the 1990s when the region added nearly 600,000 residents (a 31 percent increase over the decade). In the 2000s, population growth returned to more moderate increases.

Altogether, the region gained over 1.1 million new residents from 1980 to 2010. This growth required development of many residential units to house new residents. *Nearly half of all homes in the region, more than 550,000 residential units, were built during this period.*

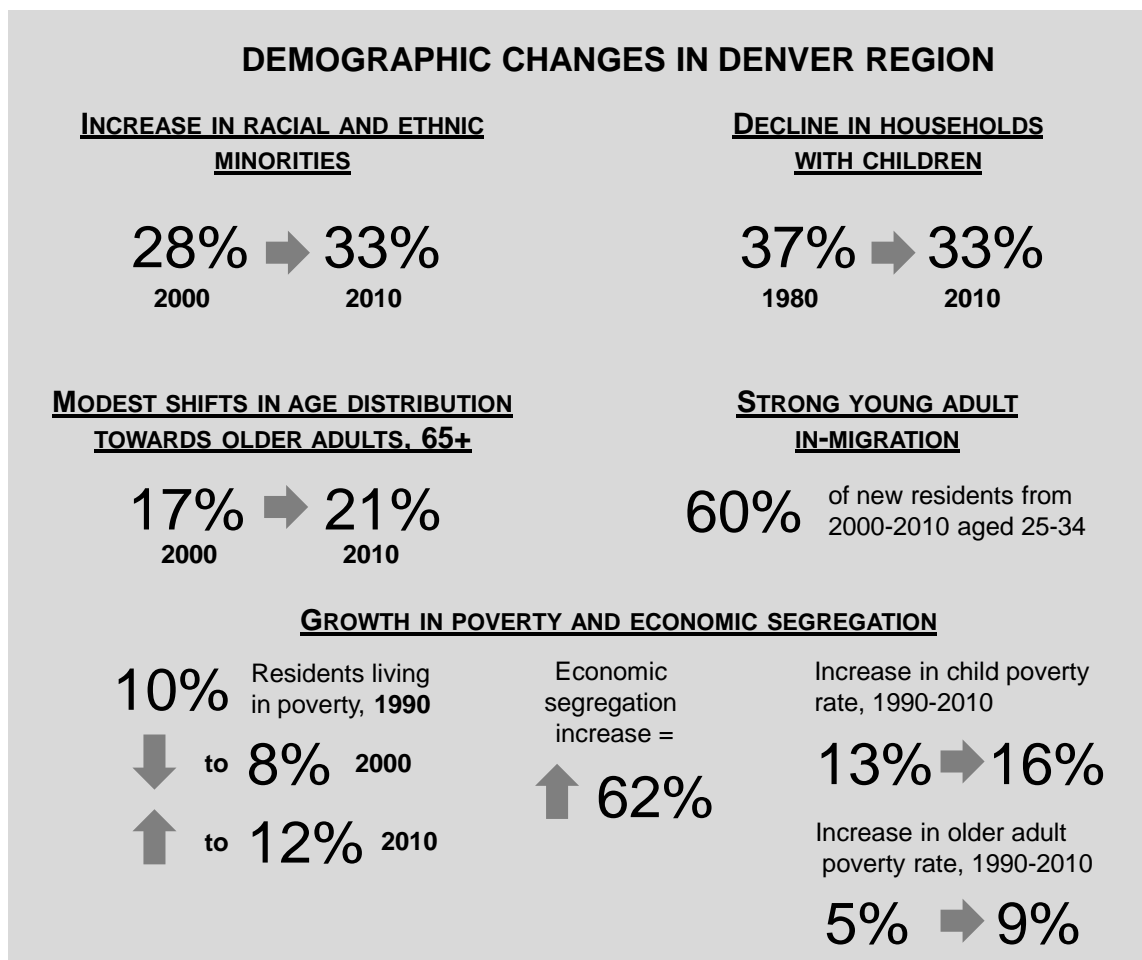
**Diversity.** The region's racial and ethnic diversity continues to increase as the region grows—33 percent of the region's residents were racial and ethnic minorities in 2010 compared to 28 percent in 2000. But this increase was not uniform across the region. The largest shifts in racial and ethnic diversity occurred in Adams and Arapahoe counties, each of which increased its shares of minority residents by about 10 percentage points. Denver's diversity remained the same and Weld County grew less diverse. At the end of the decade, Denver and Adams County remained the most diverse in the region, with minority residents making up a little less than half of all residents.

**Age and household composition.** The region experienced modest shifts in age distribution during the past decade, mostly a tilt toward residents aged 55+ (growing from 17 percent of residents to 21 percent) and away from 35 to 54 year olds (declining from 32 percent to 29 percent). However, the aging of the population will be a critical issue for the region moving forward, as discussed later in the report.

The region saw only a small shift in household composition, a slight movement away from family households and families with children toward single households. Households with children made up 37 percent of all households in 1980 compared to 33 percent in 2010.

**Income and poverty.** Poverty changed little except during the 1990s, when it fell to 8 percent in 2000. Currently, about 300,000, or 12 percent, of the region's residents live in poverty. Poverty is highest in Denver (19 percent) and Adams County (14 percent).

Between 1980 and 2010, residents living in poverty became more segregated from moderate and high-income residents. A 2013 study by the Pew Research Center, *The Rise of Residential Segregation by Income*, used a Residential Income Segregation Index (RISI) to evaluate income segregation by metropolitan area.<sup>3</sup> The RISI for the Denver metropolitan statistical area (MSA) was found to have increased significantly during the past 30 years, from 34 in 1980 to 55 in 2010—a 62 percent increase in the segregation index.



**Housing costs.** At the end of the decade, housing was more expensive, mostly driven by demand to reside in the region. Although incomes rose in tandem with housing costs, the income increase was not enough to keep up with inflation. As of 2010, households needed to dedicate more of their incomes to housing costs than in 2000, causing erosion of purchasing power overall.

In 2000, the median rent ranged between \$650 and \$800 per month in most counties; by 2013, it approached or exceeded \$1,000 in many counties. Due to strong rental demand in the latter part of the prior decade, 2010 began with rental vacancy rates at low levels—only to decline even

<sup>3</sup> The index adds the share of low-income residents who live in a majority low-income Census tract to the share of upper-income residents living in a majority upper income Census tract; higher indices indicate higher levels of segregation.

further in recent years with continued strong demand. For example, the metro area vacancy rate was 7.7 percent at the end of 2009, dropping to 4.4 percent by third quarter 2013.

The median price of homes to buy rose from \$189,000 in 2000 to \$259,000 in 2012-13—a \$70,000, or 37 percent, increase. The locations of affordable homes, priced at less than \$250,000, shifted away from the southern areas of the region, toward the northeast, farther away from the region’s core job centers.

Homeownership declined in all counties except those in the western part of the region and Weld County. An influx of younger residents who rent contributed to the decline. Indeed, 25- and 34-year-olds—58 percent of whom rent—made up more than 60 percent of all net migration in the region between 2000 and 2010.

### **The Denver region: Where we are now?**

**Age.** The region’s older adults currently make up a relatively small portion of residents (15 percent), but this will change dramatically in the very near future with the aging of the Baby Boomers. With the aging of the population, the region will also experience an increase in population with one or more disabilities; older adults have much higher rates of disability than younger residents.

**Childhood poverty.** Children make up about one-fourth of the region’s residents. They have the highest poverty rate of all residents at 16 percent for the region overall. Almost 40,000 of the children in the region live in poverty. Children have the highest rate of poverty of any age cohort in almost every county in the region. The region has significant disparities in childhood poverty rates by county. In Denver, nearly 30 percent of children live in poverty, while only the figure is only 3 percent in Douglas County.

**Racial and ethnic concentrations.** The region remains predominantly non-Hispanic White (67 percent), with two counties—Denver and Adams—almost “majority minority.” Few neighborhoods in the region mirror the region’s overall racial and ethnic composition. Instead, residents are more likely to live near neighbors who share their race and ethnicity. In 2010, Hispanic residents were nearly three times as likely as the average resident to live in a Hispanic majority Census Tract. African Americans were 10 times as likely as the average resident to live in an African American majority tract.

About 150,000 residents in the region live in neighborhoods with both racial/ethnic and poverty concentrations. Of these, over half (57 percent) are in Denver, 20 percent are in Arapahoe County, 19 percent are in Adams County and 4 percent are in Boulder County. These areas are generally areas of poor-performing schools, as well as areas with poor housing condition and little private investment.

**Economic segregation.** Income or economic segregation in the Denver region is currently the 5<sup>th</sup> worst of the 30 largest cities in the U.S. according to a recent study measuring economic segregation.<sup>4</sup> The study found that the Denver MSA—in addition to New York, San Antonio and

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/08/01/the-rise-of-residential-segregation-by-income/>

Philadelphia—led the 30 largest metro areas in the share of lower-income households residing in majority lower-income tracts. The Denver MSA is just second to New York in the share of households earning less than \$40,000 living in a majority low-income Census tract.

**Housing affordability.** A near halt in rental housing production in the middle part of the past decade following high vacancy rates, coupled with increased rental demand of new residents, has contributed to record low vacancy trends since 2011. Vacancy rates hovered around 4 percent in 2013—a significant change from the 11 percent high in 2004. Low vacancies—and corresponding increases in rental costs—disproportionately affect low-income renters, who already have a limited supply of units in their price range.

As of 2013, the average renter in the region needed to earn \$40,000 to afford the median rental unit. The following table below details median rent (all unit sizes), vacancy rate, and income needed to afford median rent in 2013. Renters looking for more affordable rentals are often only exploring options in limited submarkets within counties—these areas are currently experiencing extremely low vacancy rates, as low as 1 percent according to stakeholders familiar with these areas.

| <b>MEDIAN RENTS, VACANCIES, AND INCOME<br/>NEEDED TO AFFORD RENT, 3Q13</b> |                |                         |   |
|--|----------------|-------------------------|---|
|  | <u>RENT</u>    | <u>VACANCY<br/>RATE</u> | <u>INCOME NEEDED<br/>TO AFFORD RENT</u> |
| <b>Adams</b>   | <b>\$931</b>   | <b>5.7%</b>             | <b>\$37,000</b>                         |
| <b>Arapahoe</b>  | <b>\$947</b>   | <b>4.8%</b>             | <b>\$38,000</b>                         |
| <b>Boulder/Broomfield</b>  | <b>\$1,172</b> | <b>2.8%</b>             | <b>\$47,000</b>                         |
| <b>Denver</b>  | <b>\$933</b>   | <b>4.6%</b>             | <b>\$37,000</b>                         |
| <b>Douglas</b>   | <b>\$1,188</b> | <b>3.5%</b>             | <b>\$48,000</b>                         |
| <b>Jefferson</b>   | <b>\$996</b>   | <b>3.6%</b>             | <b>\$40,000</b>                         |

The most expensive submarkets for rentals include central and downtown Denver, which require an annual income of almost \$60,000 to afford the median rent. In these two market areas, the median rent exceeds \$1,400 per month.

Lower-income rentals are concentrated in the City and County of Denver. Nearly half the rental units in the region affordable to households earning less than \$25,000 are located in Denver. Denver also has the widest gap between overall regional rental share and share of most affordable units.

## PROPORTION OF RENTALS AFFORDABLE TO RENTERS EARNING < \$25,000/YEAR

|                             | Percent of all rental units affordable to renters earning < \$25,000/year | Distribution of Affordable Units     |                                |                                       |
|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
|                             |   | Regional distribution of all rentals | Units affordable at < \$25,000 | Difference from all unit distribution |
| Adams County                | 15%   | 13%                                  | 13%                            | 0%                                    |
| Arapahoe County             | 12%   | 20%                                  | 16%                            | -4%                                   |
| Boulder County              | 8%  | 11%                                  | 6%                             | -5%                                   |
| Broomfield County           | 13%   | 2%                                   | 1%                             | 0%                                    |
| Clear Creek County          | 16%   | 0%                                   | 0%                             | 0%                                    |
| Denver County               | 22%   | 33%                                  | 49%                            | 17%                                   |
| Douglas County              | 3%  | 5%                                   | 1%                             | -4%                                   |
| Gilpin County               | 11%   | 0%                                   | 0%                             | 0%                                    |
| Jefferson County            | 11%   | 16%                                  | 12%                            | -4%                                   |
| Weld County (DRCOG portion) | 7%  | 1%                                   | 0%                             | 0%                                    |
| <b>DENVER REGION</b>        | <b>14%</b>  | <b>100%</b>                          | <b>100%</b>                    |                                       |

An analysis of home sales below \$250,000 indicate significant concentrations in areas that tend to have low levels of elementary school quality, which can negatively affect the region’s ability to grow its own skilled workforce.

These affordable areas for homeownership are also far from job centers in the region. Excluding the relatively small affordable area near the central business district in Denver (which is primarily composed of condos), areas of high job density have no overlap with areas of for-sale affordability.

### The Denver region: Where are we headed?

**Population growth.** DRCOG’s population forecast for the year 2040 shows rates of population growth experienced in the last 30 years. The region is projected to grow by 1.2 million people between 2010 and 2040.

Population growth is anticipated to be strongest in Adams, Arapahoe, Denver and Douglas counties—representing nearly a million new residents between these four counties.

**Age shift.** The demographic composition of the region will be quite different than in the past. The percentage of the population made up of older adults will double by 2040. Many inner-ring suburban communities currently have older adult populations that are over 20 percent of the city’s total population. The region’s outer-ring suburbs will increasingly see their residents age. Douglas County will continue to lead the region in greatest change in senior growth.

Largely due to the growth of older adults, the number of residents with disabilities will increase by 237,000. The increases in persons with disabilities in most counties will be quite significant, resulting in more demand for accessible and visitable housing, transit and supportive services.



A shift away from residents in prime working ages toward residents in retirement will increase demand for new workforce. Ensuring the region's current children have optimal educational opportunities will be an important part of sustaining future economic growth. Continued immigration of well-educated, young adults has and may continue to be an important part of the region's economic growth.

**Increase in poor residents.** If the region fails to improve economic opportunity for its lowest income residents and poverty rates stay the same as they are currently, the number of individuals living in poverty in the region will increase by 141,000, with 46,000 of these individuals being older adults and 39,000 being children.

**Housing preferences.** Another 1.2 million people in the region could require development of at least 550,000 new housing units, if household sizes remain similar to the past.<sup>5</sup> This begs the question of: *will future housing demand be different?*

Housing preferences are difficult to predict, since they are so closely related to personal financial, employment and familial situations. But the behavior and housing preferences exhibited by the two large age cohorts that will drive housing demand during the next 20 years—the Millennials<sup>6</sup> and Baby Boomers—suggest housing preferences could differ from the past.

A 2013 Urban Land Institute (ULI) survey of Millennials found favorable responses to developments that have a variety of housing types, are mixed-use and pedestrian friendly, suggesting a desire for both urban and “urban light,” mixed-use settings that are growing in suburban markets.<sup>7</sup>

Some research has shown similar preferences toward denser, walkable residential environments among Baby Boomers. Yet the behavior of older adults, historically, has been to remain in their own homes as long as possible—due in some part to lack of housing options suitable for aging-in-place. If this continues, there will be a large need for expanded home health care networks to accommodate growth in older adults throughout the region, as well as home modifications to accommodate disabilities, senior-friendly transit and, for older adults who can afford and desire to move, senior-friendly residential communities.

## Primary housing gaps in the region

Considering where the region has been, where it is now and the demographic direction in which it is likely headed, continuing on the same path of housing provision will not meet residents' future needs. But it's not just future gaps in housing; there are current needs as well. The RHS and Fair Housing Equity Assessment (FHEA) identified key challenges that should be addressed.

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<sup>5</sup> 2010 Census data estimate that 566,000 new units were developed in the Denver region between 1980 and 2010.

<sup>6</sup> Millennials are residents between the ages of 25 and 34, also known as Generation Y.

<sup>7</sup> <http://uli.org/research/centers-initiatives/terwilliger-center-for-housing/research/community-survey/> contains a compilation of recent surveys, articles and opinions on Millennials' housing preferences.

The challenges below were informed by data analysis and engagement with informed and knowledgeable stakeholders.

- Declining housing affordability region-wide and geographically limited options for affordable housing, particularly near job centers.
- A growing disconnect between locations of public transit and where lower- and moderate-wage workers, as well as seniors, reside.
- Gaps in opportunity for low-income and minority residents. The primary opportunity gaps are in education, job access, income segregation and neighborhood investment.
- Lack of a flexible funding source, such as a housing trust fund, to address housing needs.
- Lack of rental subsidies and permanent housing for the region's residents living in poverty, in addition to supportive services.
- Urban areas, as the primary provider of housing and services to the region's households with the most severe needs, are sheltering much of the burden. But needs are growing in suburban areas, which initially had relatively low demand, but are now struggling to serve increasing numbers of residents living in poverty.
- More permanent, supportive housing region-wide is needed to address homelessness.
- Information is needed, such as housing condition and best practices in zoning and land use, for jurisdictions to effectively and efficiently address housing issues.

### **How can DRCOG make a difference?**

DRCOG has the potential to improve regional housing diversity and, as such, help to further economic opportunity by playing a variety of roles. The recommended strategies are organized around these various roles.

- **Convener.** Provide information and bring together cities, counties, industry experts and other partners to discuss solutions to improve housing options across the region.
- **Incubator.** Set in motion, through provision of information, administrative and/or financial support, new regional programs and initiatives to support increased housing options.
- **Do-er.** 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.

## **DRCOG as a convener**

### **Recommendation C-1. Sponsor discussions and workshops to provide information about best practices in land use regulations, zoning and housing policies.**

#### **Potential Focus Areas:**

- Education on proactive, flexible, zoning and expedited development reviews that can reduce regulatory barriers in housing production.
- Strategies to build and recognize successful mixed-income developments in urban centers.
- Documenting programs and practices with successful housing outcomes, including well-integrated, racially/ethnically and economically diverse communities.
- Efforts to revitalize aging inner-ring suburban neighborhoods and improving housing condition in aging neighborhoods.

### **Recommendation C-2. Continue and amplify dialogue about visitable and accessible housing demand.**

#### **Potential Focus Areas:**

- Education on successful regulatory tools (e.g., Arvada visitability ordinance) to help communities meet demand.
- Coordinate with private development community to understand and convey key incentives needed to produce units, including clarity on key challenges that must be overcome.
- Continue to promote dialogue at the local level, including documentation of innovative practices, through DRCOG's Boomer Bond initiative.
- Facilitate a discussion of the growing needs (housing, transportation, services, etc.) of seniors in inner- and outer-ring suburban communities.

## **DRCOG as an incubator**

### **Recommendation I-1. Become a catalyst for additional, flexible sources of funding.**

Housing experts consulted in this effort strongly agree that a source of new funding for affordable and workforce housing production is needed to address gaps in current and future affordable housing stock. Ideally, this would be a regional dedicated source of flexible funding.

#### **Potential Focus Areas:**

- Sponsor discussions about sources of funding for housing development.
- Bring together housing advocates, real estate professionals, local leaders and housing finance interests together to develop a funding recommendation.
- Examine if models exist in other regions that could be replicated in the Denver region.

- Explore innovative revenue-generating and -sharing models such as inter-jurisdictional agreements to share in the cost of housing that will benefit multiple communities.

**Recommendation I-2. *Explore a new method of coordinated and collaborative housing planning for homelessness.***

**Potential Focus Areas:**

- Explore partnership opportunities with regional homeless coordinating entities such as the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative (MDHI) to initiate regional planning for homeless initiatives.
- Consider implementation of a single point of entry system and creation of permanent supportive housing region-wide.

**Recommendation I-3. *Gather and make available research on successful ways to improve access to economic opportunity.***

**Potential Focus Areas:**

- Build-on initial analysis of geographic analysis of opportunity in the Denver region initiated in the Fair Housing Equity Assessment
- Work with partner organizations to identify the long-term, multi-faceted, and interrelated challenges that combine to create areas of low economic opportunity
- Determine strategies, resources, and investments that can improve life outcomes for all residents.
- Coordinate with housing providers to determine the most effective interventions and programs that will produce positive outcomes in the areas they serve.

**DRCOG as a do-er**

**Recommendation D-1. *Create and share information about housing condition.***

Information on housing condition is lacking in the Denver region, as it is in many regions. Numerous jurisdictions interviewed for this study identified the need for a condition database that would help them better target home rehabilitation programs and plans for aging housing stock.

**Potential Focus Areas:**

- Create a database and mapping tool that helps local governments assess existing housing condition.
- Variables that are indicative of condition could be used to predict home rehabilitation needs and identify program needs where improvements are not being made.

**Recommendation D-2. *Conduct research, education and outreach to member communities about the economic benefits of addressing housing needs.***

This RHS has barely scratched the surface in identifying the economic benefits associated with diverse housing choices that can meet the needs of all the region's residents. Many interviewed for this study emphasized a need for a continuous stream of information to help decision makers understand the economic benefits of having a diverse array of housing for residents.

**Potential Focus Areas:**

- Conduct research to quantify the economic benefits of reducing income and race/ethnic segregation (a similar study was completed by MetCouncil in Minneapolis/St. Paul).
- Quantify the costs to the region of future, resource-intensive growth patterns on transportation systems, water and resident health.
- Detail the economic impact of development of affordable housing to reduce existing cost burden and meet future housing needs.
- Outline key housing needs identified by the economic development community as part of the Regional Economic Strategy.

**Recommendation D-3. *Reward communities that work to improve their affordable housing choices.*** Stakeholders suggested the most successful way to produce geographically-based affordable and workforce housing is through mandates or incentives. They pointed to DRCOG's role in the allocation of federal transportation funds as an opportunity to ensure affordable housing production and preservation.

**Potential Focus Areas:**

- Reward or incentivize communities to provide (or plan to provide) a certain proportion of affordable and workforce housing near employment/job training centers as identified in local housing needs assessments.
- Provide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) points to communities that demonstrate a commitment to the efforts listed above.
- Prioritize transportation projects that are catalysts to revitalization of disadvantaged areas, including projects that connect low-income residents and older adults to services, job training, and employment.

**Recommendation D-4. *Support expansions of existing programs to create mixed income housing in desired locations.***

**Potential Focus Areas:**

- Support the efforts of the region's innovative, successful organizations and programs that are already catalysts to affordable housing creation.
- Support land banking efforts of non-profits to assist with affordable housing production.
- Expand eligibility of existing Urban Center/Station Area Master Plan funds to include housing authorities.

# Summary

## Denver Region Fair Housing Equity Assessment

This Fair Housing Equity Assessment is a key deliverable in the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) Sustainable Communities Initiatives (SCI). The summary presents the primary findings from an assessment of fair housing equity in the Denver region. A Fair Housing Equity Assessment, or FHEA, is a required component of DRCOG’s Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. All Sustainable Communities Regional Planning Grant (SCRPG) recipients must complete an FHEA as part of their work program.

The Denver region’s FHEA has two primary areas of focus:

- 1) **An assessment of “access to opportunity” for residents in the region.** For this report, under HUD’s guidance, access to opportunity is defined as access to: transit; affordable, quality housing; quality schools, job training facilities and employment; and needed supportive services.<sup>1</sup> The FHEA is also required to examine fair housing challenges, including an analysis of legal complaints and violations related to fair housing.
- 2) **Development of a plan to improve areas where opportunity is lacking and improve the fair housing environment.** This is contained in the document’s Recommendations section.

It is important to note the FHEA differs from Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice (AI) reports, which are completed by jurisdictions in the region receiving HUD community development and housing funds directly. The FHEA has a deeper emphasis on access to opportunity; in contrast, AIs focus more directly on discrimination and other barriers to housing choice.

Conversations with representatives of the region’s many jurisdictions during the development of the FHEA revealed challenges in understanding and embracing the concept of “access to opportunity.” Viewing fair housing needs through this lens is new to many and will require education and outreach—an effort that begins with this FHEA.

### Key Findings of the FHEA:

- Racial and ethnic concentrations are limited, but do exist in the region
- The region is economically segregated, restricting opportunity for residents

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<sup>1</sup> A HUD-requirement of FHEAs is an examination of the existence of segregation of residents by race and ethnicity, as well as poverty. As such, this FHEA incorporates a number of HUD-prescribed indicators and maps to examine racial, ethnic and economic segregation in the Denver region.

- Gaps in opportunity exist throughout the region

Addressing these critical challenges requires a coordinated, concerted effort involving numerous partners. Initial recommendations are described in this summary, and the full report.

## The Story of Fair Housing in the Region

The Denver region developed later than many areas of the country and, as such, grew at a time when racial and ethnic discrimination was beginning to be addressed nationally through activism and legislation. Prior this period, Colorado and the City and County of Denver were pioneers on many civil rights fronts. In 1959, Colorado passed one of the earliest state civil rights laws in the nation. In 1947, Denver's mayor established one of the nation's first civil rights commissions. The City and County of Denver's current goal to be a "world-class city where everyone matters" demonstrates continued commitment to equity.

The region and state are certainly not immune to racial and ethnic discrimination—the Poundstone Amendment, for example, prevented Denver from expanding in reaction to school busing and integration. Public- and private-sector actions and cultural biases contributed to segregated neighborhoods. At one point in history, both Denver and state had an active KKK. But, overall, the region is fortunate not to have a history of severe racial and ethnic tensions when compared to other established regions around the country.

Despite this relatively positive history, racial and ethnic separations persist in the region—and it is unclear exactly why. These concentrations are mostly likely not a result of any one factor, but instead a mix of historical settlement patterns (some related to institutional segregation), economic need, housing preferences and community perceptions.

**Racial and ethnic concentrations are limited, but do exist.** A neighborhood-level analysis revealed residents are much more likely to live near neighbors who share their race and ethnicity. Nearly half of the region's minority residents live in racially/ethnically concentrated neighborhoods with high levels of poverty (defined by HUD as three times the region's rate of poverty).<sup>2</sup> According to HUD, these areas of poverty "merit special attention because the costs they impose extend far beyond their residents"—e.g., crime, low education and skill development of residents, costs supportive services, etc.<sup>3</sup>

About 150,750 residents in the region live in neighborhoods with both racial/ethnic and poverty concentrations. Of these, over half (57 percent) are in Denver, 20 percent are in Arapahoe County, 19 percent are in Adams County and 4 percent are in Boulder County.

**Why racial/ethnic concentrations exist.** A recent report by the Manhattan Institute shows segregation in most American cities has been declining since a peak in the mid-twentieth century, when both government policies and market forces contributed to neighborhood segregation. Policy reform, shifts in racial attitude, gentrification of urban areas and integration of suburbs have all contributed to the overall decline in segregation.<sup>4</sup> Even so, racial

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<sup>2</sup> RCAPs and ECAPs are HUD-defined terms and required of the FHEA.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2013-07-19/pdf/2013-16751.pdf>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr\\_66.htm](https://www.manhattan-institute.org/html/cr_66.htm)

concentrations persist in many neighborhoods due to a multitude of reasons including neighborhood history, immigration patterns, economic mobility and actual/perceived racism.

In a series of focus groups, residents suggested that lack of diversity in some areas of the region is due to perceptions of exclusion, in addition to economic factors. Some neighborhoods are viewed as inclusive by residents, while some are not. The perception of inclusiveness may be related to initial settlement reasons. An example is Green Valley Ranch, developed as an affordable home-buying option for city employees, when city workers were required to reside in Denver. Because city workers were racially and ethnically diverse, the neighborhood was diverse from its beginning. This has remained the case.

**The region is economically segregated, restricting opportunity for residents.** A statistical examination of segregation in the nation's largest metropolitan areas conducted by the Pew Research Center, *The Rise of Residential Segregation by Income*, found the Denver metropolitan statistical area (MSA) to be the 5<sup>th</sup> most segregated of the 30 largest cities in the U.S.<sup>5</sup> The Denver MSA is second only to New York in the share of households earning less than \$40,000 who live in a majority low-income Census tract.

As described previously, more than 150,000 residents in the region live in areas of both racial/ethnic and poverty concentrations. At the neighborhood level, research has shown that a 40 percent poverty threshold is the point at which an area becomes socially and economically dysfunctional. Conversely, research has shown that areas with up to 14 percent poverty have no noticeable effect on community opportunity.<sup>6</sup>

In the Denver region, there are 14 Census tracts (2 percent of all Census tracts) with severe poverty rates exceeding 40 percent. About 49,000 residents live in these extreme poverty neighborhoods; two-thirds (64 percent) of those residents are racial/ethnic minorities. These areas are generally areas of poor-performing schools, as well as areas with poor housing condition and little private investment.

**Gaps in opportunity exist throughout the region.** Gaps in access to opportunity were identified through an analysis of opportunity indicators including school quality, job access, income equality, access to health care and neighborhood investment.<sup>7</sup> Opportunity gaps in the region were found for school quality; job access, especially relative to affordable housing; income equality; neighborhood investment; and in fair housing information. Specifically:

- **School quality.** Minorities and children living in poverty, as well as renters, are much less likely to live near high quality schools than the rest of the region's population. Access to

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.pewsocialtrends.org/2012/08/01/the-rise-of-residential-segregation-by-income/>

<sup>6</sup> The Costs of Concentrated Poverty: Neighborhood Property Markets and the Dynamics of Decline." In Nicolas P. Retsinas and Eric S. Belsky, eds., *Revisiting Rental Housing: Policies, Programs, and Priorities*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 116-9. Poverty is defined at the federal level and is roughly less than \$23,000 for a family of four.

<sup>7</sup> The opportunity measures chosen are not exhaustive of the many indicators of economic opportunity. These were chosen because they were readily available, recommended by stakeholders and/or provided by HUD.



quality schools is limited by affordable housing options and transit options in high-performing areas.

- **Jobs and housing/training access.** There is a large mismatch between affordable homes (priced below \$250,000) and job centers in the region. Excluding the relatively small affordable housing near the central business district, areas of high job density have no overlap with areas of affordability.

There is also a mismatch between job training resources and areas that are most likely to need those resources—high proportions of unemployed residents and adults with less than a high school degree.

- **Income inequality.** As mentioned earlier, 49,000 residents are living in extremely high poverty neighborhoods (greater than 40%). These areas of high poverty, many of which are occupied by racial and ethnic minorities, are characterized by poor housing condition, below-average school quality, high crime and low levels of capital investment.
- **Neighborhood investment.** In the Denver region, racially and ethnically concentrated areas, as well as areas with poor housing stock, tend to have high rejection rates for home purchase and home improvement loans. As affordability has declined in the region, these areas are some of the only places left with affordable homes to buy—yet they offer considerably less access to good schools and well-paying jobs.
- **Gaps in information.** Due to budget and staffing constraints, the region lacks a robust and coordinated outreach system to educate residents and landlords about their fair housing rights, obligations and responsibilities. Historically, most fair housing organizations in the region have focused on enforcement.

## How to improve access to opportunity

Strengthening the economic capacity of residents in the Denver region is a complex effort, requiring a diverse set of strategies and collaboration among cities, counties and other public and private entities.

Because of the many factors involved in increasing opportunity—improving school quality, growing jobs that pay a living wage, ensuring residents can live near where they work, providing a range of housing choices to accommodate lifestyle and economic changes—improving access to opportunity must be a coordinated, concerted effort.

**DRCOG’s role.** DRCOG can play an important role in increasing access to opportunity by strengthening the linkages between affordable housing, educational opportunities, job centers and transit. As the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC), DRCOG is also in a unique position to be a catalyst for improving opportunities for older adults and persons with disabilities.

To this end, it is recommended that DRCOG:

**Recommendation 1. *Begin by establishing an initiative to understand and address gaps in opportunity.***

**Potential Focus Areas:**

- Convene public and private partners interested in working with DRCOG to define and improve access to opportunity.
- Define roles for each partner, as well as how to measure near- and long-term progress (e.g., improving transit access for housing units priced less than \$350,000)
- Determine the current and future role of the Denver Regional Equity Atlas in illustrating key challenges to accessing opportunity.

**Recommendation 2. *Reward communities that work to improve their affordable housing choices.*** DRCOG could take on a more direct role in addressing access to opportunity by incentivizing geographically-based affordable and workforce housing through DRCOG's role as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO)—including allocation of federal transportation dollars.

**Potential Focus Areas:**

- Reward or incentivize communities to provide (or plan to provide) a certain proportion of affordable and workforce housing near employment/job training centers as identified in local housing needs assessments.
- Provide Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) points to communities demonstrating a commitment to the efforts listed above.
- Prioritize transportation projects that are catalysts to revitalization of disadvantaged areas, including projects that connect low-income residents and older adults to services, job training, and employment.

**Recommendation 3. *Support efforts to improve school quality in the region's core neighborhoods.*** A spatial analysis of good-quality schools showed few affordable housing choices are available and that these areas also have high transportation costs. Strengthening schools in the region's core neighborhoods not only has long-term economic payoffs, but also has the potential to reduce transportation challenges.

**Potential Focus Area:**

- While other entities have the most direct influence on improving school quality, DRCOG could be a model for other organizations by dedicating resources, as available, to support educational improvement in disadvantaged areas.

**Recommendation 4. *Take a leadership role on improving housing opportunities and transit for persons with disabilities and seniors.*** To improve access to opportunity for persons with disabilities and seniors—a fast-growing population cohort in the region—DRCOG's efforts should focus on increasing visitable and accessible housing options and access to transit.

**Potential Focus Areas:**

- Through ADRC surveys and discussions with residents, explore the demand for expanded and formal rideshare and transit options for seniors and persons with disabilities—particularly in areas not currently served by transit.
- With the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT), the Regional Transportation District (RTD), Denver Regional Mobility and Access Council (DRMAC) and local governments, study the accessibility of major transportation and pedestrian corridors (e.g., Colfax Avenue, Parker Road) and how well they accommodate persons with disabilities who work/live nearby.
- Continue and expand DRCOG’s Boomer Bond to include a focus on people with disabilities.
- Develop a comprehensive housing resource guide to accessible housing opportunities, in conjunction with DRCOG’s aging resource publications and products.

**Recommendation 5. Launch a fair housing public information campaign and support testing.** The region lacks a public information campaign to inform residents about their fair housing rights and responsibilities. Currently, fair housing outreach is done at the jurisdictional level, but the extent and content varies depending on resources.

**Potential Focus Areas:**

- Develop a regional awareness campaign on fair housing laws to avoid duplication of jurisdictional efforts, create a consistent regional message, and conserve local resources.<sup>8</sup>
- Provide direct financial support and/or data to assist with fair housing testing efforts done by the Metro Denver Fair Housing Center.
- Coordinate with jurisdictions on methods to identify and address fair housing violations.

**Recommendation 6. Provide data and information to help entitlement communities meet their fair housing obligations.** Jurisdictions across the region are conducting similar efforts to obtain and analyze data to support development of HUD-required plans.

**Potential Focus Area:**

- Work with entitlement communities and HUD to determine data needs for future fair housing reports and create a “one-stop shop” where communities can access data and analysis needed to complete the required reports—this is particularly timely given the pending release of a new HUD template for fair housing.

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<sup>8</sup> All jurisdictions receiving HUD block grant funding, either directly or through the state allocation, are required to affirmatively further fair housing (AFFH). The obligation to AFFH includes fair housing outreach and education efforts.

## ATTACHMENT D

To: Chair and Members of the Metro Vision Planning Advisory Committee

From: Brad Calvert, Senior Planner  
303-480-6839 or [bcalvert@drcog.org](mailto:bcalvert@drcog.org)

| Meeting Date | Agenda Category | Agenda Item # |
|--------------|-----------------|---------------|
| May 21, 2014 | Information     | 6             |

### SUBJECT

Staff will brief the committee on the working outline for the Metro Vision 2040 plan.

### PROPOSED ACTION/RECOMMENDATIONS

No action requested. This item is for information.

### ACTION BY OTHERS

N/A

### SUMMARY

As requested by MVPAC, staff will describe the working outline for the Metro Vision 2040 plan (see attached).

The outline is a working document and will continue to be revised as key elements of the plan are brought together in the final document.

### PREVIOUS DISCUSSIONS/ACTIONS

N/A

### PROPOSED MOTION

N/A

### ATTACHMENT

Metro Vision 2040 WORKING Plan Framework and Outline

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

If you need additional information, please contact Brad Calvert, Senior Planner, at 303-480-6839 or [bcalvert@drcog.org](mailto:bcalvert@drcog.org).

# Metro Vision 2040 Plan Update

## WORKING Plan Framework and Outline

Revised—May 12, 2014

### Overview

This draft Plan Framework for Metro Vision 2040 reflects feedback received by DRCOG staff and consultants as part of the plan update process. Feedback was provided by stakeholders in the region as part of numerous focus groups, idea exchanges, listening sessions, MVPAC and MVIC meetings, as well as through a series of online polls and the Metro Vision 2040 Local Government Survey.

The proposed structure of the updated plan is intended to help transform the current Metro Vision Plan into a shared vision that belongs to everyone involved in shaping the future of the Denver Metro Area. As such, some existing plan elements have been expanded and updated and new plan elements are proposed to be added to address emerging issues of importance to the broader region. The following abbreviations are used throughout the outline to help distinguish between content that exists in Metro Vision 2035 today and changes in content and structure that are proposed as part of Metro Vision 2040.

- **CF:** Carry forward with only minor edits
- **CFU:** Carry forward with significant updates/edits
- **EXP:** Topic was addressed previously, but is proposed to be expanded in terms of the level of detail with which it is addressed
- **NEW:** Not previously addressed

Endnotes are also used in a number of instances to provide additional context for the reader as to the rationale behind specific suggestions or to provide insights into how a particular section is intended to be fleshed out as part of the plan. ***This draft will continue to evolve, based on input from DRCOG staff, the MVPAC, MVIC, and other project stakeholders.*** Additional refinements may also be made as drafting of individual plan components get underway over the course of the summer.

## **I. Background and Context (NEW)**

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### **A. ABOUT DRCOG**

1. AUTHORITY TO PLAN
2. VISION/MISSION
3. PARTNERS IN THE REGION

## **II. Metro Vision: 20 Years of Progress**

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### **A. WHAT IS METRO VISION? (CF)**

1. ORIGIN/HISTORY
2. GUIDING VISION<sup>i</sup>

### **B. VISION 2040: A CALL TO ACTION (NEW)**

#### **1. A COLLABORATIVE PROCESS<sup>ii</sup> (NEW)**

- a) Purpose<sup>iii</sup>
- b) Key Metro Vision Principles<sup>iv</sup>
- c) Sidebar: Mile High Compact

#### **2. CHANGES FROM METRO VISION 2035 (NEW)**

- a) New structure: 5 overarching themes
  - (1) An Efficient and Predictable Development Pattern
  - (2) A Connected Region
  - (3) A Safe, Healthy Built and Natural Environment
  - (4) Healthy, Inclusive, and Livable Communities
  - (5) A Vibrant Economy
- b) New/expanded topics
- c) Role of the Sustainable Communities Initiative
- d) Integration of topics-“connecting the dots” between plan elements
- e) Short/long-term strategies for implementation
- f) Focus on resources for communities –“Toolkit for Local Action”

#### **3. A FOCUS ON OUTCOMES<sup>v</sup> (CFU)**

### **III. Building on Success and Facing New Challenges (CFU/NEW)**

Note: This section will be updated to reflect major trends and key issues identified by local governments and other regional stakeholders as part of the Metro Vision 2040 process. Infographics will be used in lieu of text where possible to illustrate the most compelling trends.

#### **A. INTRODUCTION (OVERARCHING THEMES)**

- 1. REGION HAS MADE GREAT STRIDES (DIA, FASTTRACKS/NEXTRACKS, ECONOMIC VITALITY, CENTRALIZED LOCATION-US/INTERNATIONALLY)**
- 2. ACCESS TO AND CONTINUED EXPANSION OF RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES (NATURAL AND MAN-MADE)**
- 3. DIVERSITY OF REGION (DISTINCT COMMUNITIES)**
- 4. REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS**

#### **B. CHANGING DEMOGRAPHICS AND LIFESTYLES**

- 1. INCREASINGLY DIVERSE POPULATION (ETHNICALLY AND ECONOMICALLY)**
- 2. GROWTH IN OLDER ADULT POPULATION**
- 3. DEMAND FOR NEW/EXPANDED HOUSING OPTIONS (YOUNG ADULTS LIVING ALONE/SENIORS/LOW- AND MODERATE-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS)**

#### **C. ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITY**

- 1. NEED FOR MORE WORKFORCE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN KEY LOCATIONS (ACCESSIBLE TO TRANSIT AND EMPLOYMENT CENTERS)**
- 2. TRAINING/EDUCATION**

#### **D. COMMUNITY HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

- 1. INCREASE IN CHRONIC ILLNESS AND DISEASE**
- 2. ACCESS TO CARE, HEALTHY FOODS**
- 3. ABILITY TO LEAD ACTIVE LIFESTYLES (BUILT ENVIRONMENT, PARKS AND RECREATION)**

#### **E. NATURAL RESOURCES/RESILIENCY**

- 1. WATER AND AIR QUALITY**
- 2. HAZARD MITIGATION (FLOODING/WILDFIRE)**

#### **F. REGIONAL CONNECTIONS**

- 1. FIRST AND LAST MILE CONNECTIONS TO TRANSIT**

**2. REGIONAL PARKS AND OPEN SPACE LINKAGES**

**G. RESOURCE LIMITATIONS**

- 1. NATURAL (WATER)**
- 2. FISCAL (ROADWAYS AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS OUTPACING DEMAND)**

## **IV. A Plan for a Sustainable Future**

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**A. AN EFFICIENT AND PREDICTABLE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN (CFU)**

- 1. INTRODUCTION (CFU)**
- 2. SIDEBAR: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? (LINKAGES TO OTHER SECTIONS) (NEW)**
- 3. LIMIT THE EXPANSION OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (CFU)**
  - a) Introduction
  - b) Goal(s)
  - c) Regional Policies
  - d) Strategies to Limit the Expansion of Urban Development<sup>vi</sup>
- 4. ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF DIVERSE AND VIBRANT URBAN CENTERS AND CORRIDORS (CFU/NEW)**
  - a) Introduction
  - b) Goal(s)
  - c) Regional Policies
  - d) Strategies to Support the Development of Diverse and Vibrant Urban Centers and Corridors
- 5. SUPPORT LIVABLE COMMUNITIES AND NEIGHBORHOODS<sup>vii</sup> (CFU)**
  - a) Introduction
  - b) Goal(s)
  - c) Regional Policies
  - d) Strategies to Support Livable Communities and Neighborhoods
- 6. MONITOR GROWTH AT THE REGION’S EDGES<sup>viii</sup> (CFU)**
  - a) Introduction
  - b) Goal(s)
  - c) Regional Policies
  - d) Strategies to Monitor Growth at the Region’s Edges
- 7. TRACKING OUR PROGRESS/MEASURES OF SUCCESS**
  - a) Establish baseline and mid-term vs. long-term targets for 4-5 key indicators



**8. TOOLKIT FOR LOCAL ACTION: AN EFFICIENT AND PREDICTABLE DEVELOPMENT PATTERN<sup>ix</sup>**

**B. A CONNECTED REGION (CFU)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**2. SIDEBAR: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? (LINKAGES TO OTHER SECTIONS/ISSUES)**

**3. CONTINUE TO ENHANCE REGIONAL MOBILITY**

- a) Introduction
- b) Goal(s)
- c) Regional Policies
- d) Strategies to Support Regional Mobility

**4. METRO VISION MULTIMODAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

**5. FISCALLY CONSTRAINED TRANSPORTATION ELEMENT**

**6. TRACKING OUR PROGRESS/MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

- a) Establish baseline and mid-term vs. long-term targets for 4-5 key indicators

**7. TOOLKIT FOR LOCAL ACTION: A CONNECTED REGION**

**C. A SAFE, HEALTHY BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT**

**1. INTRODUCTION (CFU)**

**2. SIDEBAR: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? (LINKAGES TO OTHER SECTIONS/ISSUES)**

**3. PRESERVE AND ENHANCE NATURAL RESOURCES<sup>x</sup>(CF)**

- a) Introduction
- b) Goal(s)
- c) Regional Policies
- d) Strategies to Preserve and Enhance Natural Resources

**4. SUPPORT AN INTERCONNECTED NETWORK OF PARKS, OPEN SPACE, AND TRAILS (CFU)**

- a) Introduction
- b) Goal(s)
- c) Regional Policies
- d) Strategies to an Support Interconnected Network of Parks, Open Space, and Trails

**5. CONSERVE AGRICULTURAL LAND (CFU/EXP)**

- a) Introduction
- b) Goal(s)
- c) Regional Policies
- d) Strategies to Conserve Agricultural Land

**6. REDUCE RISK AND EFFECTS OF NATURAL AND MANMADE HAZARDS (CFU/EXP)**

- a) Introduction
- b) Goal(s)
- c) Regional Policies
- d) Strategies to Reduce Risk and Effects of Natural and Manmade Hazards

**7. TRACKING OUR PROGRESS/MEASURES OF SUCCESS (NEW)**

- a) Establish baseline and mid-term vs. long-term targets for 4-5 key indicators

**8. TOOLKIT FOR LOCAL ACTION: A SAFE, HEALTHY BUILT AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT (NEW)**

**D. HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE, AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES (NEW/EXP)<sup>xi</sup>**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**2. SIDEBAR: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? (LINKAGES TO OTHER SECTIONS/ISSUES)**

**3. ENHANCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HEALTHY AND ACTIVE LIFESTYLES**

- a) Introduction
- b) Goal(s)
- c) Regional Policies
- d) Strategies to Enhance Opportunities for Healthy and Active Lifestyles

**4. REDUCE THE GROWING HEALTH DIVIDE**

- a) Introduction
- b) Goal(s)
- c) Regional Policies
- d) Strategies to Reduce the Growing Health Divide

**5. ENCOURAGE DIVERSE HOUSING OPTIONS**

- a) Introduction
- b) Goal(s)
- c) Regional Policies
- d) Strategies to Encourage Diverse Housing Options

**6. TRACKING OUR PROGRESS/MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

- a) Establish baseline and mid-term vs. long-term targets for 4-5 key indicators

**7. TOOLKIT FOR LOCAL ACTION: HEALTHY, INCLUSIVE, AND LIVABLE COMMUNITIES**

**E. A VIBRANT ECONOMY (NEW)**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

**2. SIDEBAR: WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT? (LINKAGES TO OTHER SECTIONS)**

- a) Transportation
- b) Housing
- c) Health

**3. SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A STRONG LABOR FORCE**

- a) Introduction
- b) Goal(s)
- c) Regional Policies
- d) Strategies to Support Labor Force

**4. SUPPORT CONTINUED ENHANCEMENT OF REGIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE (LAST MILE CONNECTIONS, WORKFORCE ACCESS, TRANSIT AND FASTTRACKS) TO BENEFIT PEOPLE OF ALL INCOME LEVELS**

- a) Introduction
- b) Goal(s)
- c) Regional Policies
- d) Strategies to Support Continued Enhancement of Regional Infrastructure

**5. TRACKING OUR PROGRESS/MEASURES OF SUCCESS**

- a) Establish baseline and mid-term vs. long-term targets for 4-5 key indicators

**6. TOOLKIT FOR LOCAL ACTION: A VIBRANT ECONOMY**

## **V. Appendices**

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**A. DESIGNATED URBAN CENTERS AND CORRIDORS (CFU)**

**B. SUPPORTING PLANS AND DOCUMENTATION (CFU)**

**1. EXTENT OF URBAN DEVELOPMENT (SQUARE MILES)**

## ENDNOTES:

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<sup>i</sup> Minor adjustments to: (1) Address new or emerging issues; and (2) Reflect recent updates to DRCOG vision and mission.

<sup>ii</sup> Reframe existing text as a “call to action” for regional collaboration; text remains largely the same.

<sup>iii</sup> Draw from Vision 2040 project framework developed in 2011 to guide plan update.

<sup>iv</sup> Key Principles will remain intact, since they primarily focus on the role the plan plays on a local and regional level.

<sup>v</sup> Introduce concept of monitoring here, relocate charts in existing plan and update as part of “Tracking our Progress/Measures of Success” sections under each of the five key elements.

<sup>vi</sup> Strategies will be focused at the regional level. Regional strategies will be supported by the Toolkit for Local Action for each element which will identify opportunities to support plan implementation at a local level.

<sup>vii</sup> Proposed new sub-section to more directly address the role of suburban communities and neighborhoods generally in the region. Several existing sections are proposed to be merged into this section—Freestanding Communities, Rural Town Centers.

<sup>viii</sup> Proposed name change to more clearly reflect broader context...alternative possibilities include: Community Edges, Growth at Community Edges, or similar.

<sup>ix</sup> Likely to be a web-based format to keep information fresh and allow for ease of maintenance and accessibility. Concurrent with plan adoption, anticipated to include: links to existing programs and local/regional best practices that have been identified as part of the process to date; and placeholders for future tools to be developed (where firm support already exists). Following plan adoption, potential tools will be evaluated and developed, as appropriate to support implementation.

<sup>x</sup> This sub-section will address both water and air quality and water conservation and will be updated to reflect DRCOG’s reduced role in Clean Water Plan.

<sup>xi</sup> While some of the concepts proposed for inclusion in this section are addressed peripherally in Metro Vision 2035, this would essentially be a completely new element of the plan.

| MVPAC Introduction Date | MVPAC Further Discussions   | Project  | MVPAC Action to Date   | Status/Next Steps   |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|---|
| 1/23/2013               | 2/20/2013;<br>4/24/2013;<br>5/15/2013;<br>8/21/2013;<br>10/13/2013;<br>11/20/2013 | Metro Vision 2040 Scenario Analysis  | Informational, preliminary input, guidance to Board on initial scenarios (A & B) | <b>Status:</b> DRCOG Board briefed on scenarios in December 2013.<br><br><b>Next Steps:</b> TBD   |
| 1/23/2013               |   | Metro Vision 2040 Listening Tour   | Informational  | <b>Status:</b> The Listening Tour is complete and available as a final report on the DRCOG website. Process recommendations from the report will be integrated as applicable into the efforts of Metro Vision 2040.<br><b>Next Steps:</b> n/a   |
| 2/20/2013               | 3/20/2013;<br>4/24/2013;<br>8/21/2013;<br>11/20/2013                              | Metro Vision 2040 Local Government Survey  | Provided recommendations on crafting questions (3/20)                            | <b>Status:</b> Summary report is complete and will be posted to the DRCOG website.<br><b>Next Steps:</b> n/a  |
| 2/20/2013               | 8/21/2013;<br>1/15/2014;<br>3/19/2014;<br>4/16/2014;<br>5/21/2014                 | SCI/Metro Vision Housing   | Informational  | <b>Status:</b> Project summary documents are complete and will be shared with technical committees and policymakers. Full reports will be finalized over the coming months.<br><b>Next Steps:</b> Final report summaries to MVPAC and the DRCOG Board in May 2014.  |
| 3/20/2013               | 8/21/2013;<br>1/15/2014;<br>3/19/2014;<br>4/16/2014                               | SCI/Metro Vision Economic Development  | Informational  | <b>Status:</b> Interviews with economic development organizations are complete. Initial exploration of peer agency roles has begun as has collecting information on regional indicators.<br><b>Next Steps:</b> DRCOG Board will hear key findings and recommendations on June 11, 2014.   |
| 4/24/2013               |   | Recommendations regarding call for projects for FY14/FY15 Station Area Master Plan/Urban Centers studies | Provided recommendations (4/24)  | <b>Status:</b> Recommendations went to MVIC on 5/1 with further discussion. Items for discussion included “pooling” funds, project eligibility and project evaluation. The Board directed staff to move forward with the call for studies. Applications were due July 19 <sup>th</sup> . The DRCOG Board approved funding for 12 studies on September 18, 2013.<br><b>Next Steps:</b> n/a |

| MVPAC Introduction Date | MVPAC Further Discussions | Project   | MVPAC Action to Date | Status/Next Steps   |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|---|----------------------|---|
| 5/15/2013               | 1/15/2014;<br>5/21/2014   | Urban Centers Analysis  | Informational        | <p><b>Status:</b> Staff is currently reviewing assessment summarizing urban center survey and interview results.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> MVPAC will receive an update on May 21, 2014. An additional committee update is expected on June 18, 2014.</p> |
| 10/16/13                | 1/15/2014;<br>2/19/2014   | Metro Vision 2040 Project Update                              | Informational        | <p><b>Status:</b> DRCOG updated MVPAC on recent and upcoming activities.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> Numerous upcoming activities, including: Metro Vision Idea Exchanges, focus groups, Boomer Bond training and workshop, etc.</p>                        |
| 1/15/2014               |                           | Regional Equity Atlas   | Informational        | <p><b>Status:</b> The regional equity atlas 2.0 has been launched. DRCOG provided MVPAC with an overview of the web based tool on 1/15/2014.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> n/a</p>  |
| 2/19/2014               |                           | Infill Redevelopment Issues Paper                             | Informational        | <p><b>Status:</b> MVPAC provided comments on the report during the February meeting. The DRCOG Board of Directors received the final report in March 2014.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> n/a</p>  |
| 3/19/2014               | 3/19/2014                 | Community Health and Wellness – Metro Vision 2040 Exploration |                      | <p><b>Status:</b> MVPAC provided comments on the report during the March meeting. The DRCOG Board of Directors received the final report in April 2014.</p> <p><b>Next Steps:</b> n/a</p>   |
|                         |                           |   |                      |   |