# Table of Contents

Message from the Chair 4
Message from the Executive Director 5
The Big Picture 7
  Partnerships 8
  Planning 10
  Funding 12
Recognition 13
Bread and Butter 15
Rejuvenation 19
Budget 22
Board of Directors 23
Principal Staff 23
Vision Statement

Enhancing and protecting the quality of life in our region

Mission Statement

DRCOG is a place where local officials work together to solve the region’s problems
As I think back on my year as chair of DRCOG, two issues and events really stand out as most important.

First is the passage of Referendum C. If C had failed, the year would have been dominated by painful cuts to essential public services. Instead, we were able to focus on how the state and the region could begin to recover from the recession that began in 2001. For the DRCOG region, one of the impacts of the passage of Referendum C was the restoration of state transportation funds from the Senate Bill 1 and House Bill 1310 funding streams. While the restoration of funds was very welcome, it also sparked a difficult set of conversations with CDOT on the equitable allocation of funds to the region. Ultimately, DRCOG and CDOT reached a resolution on this issue.

Perhaps the most important impact of the restoration of transportation funding was the triggering of a new legislative requirement that a minimum of 10 percent of SB 1 funds must be allocated to transit. This state funding of transit is a first for Colorado. While the amount of money is relatively modest (it is expected to generate a total of $60 to $70 million over the next five years) it establishes a new precedent for state involvement in transit. DRCOG played an important role in both, helping to choose the projects that would be funded in the metropolitan area and in helping the state determine a strategic approach to statewide transit funding.

At the same time, new issues are arising that are likely to have a dramatic impact on our future decisions around land use and transportation. The large increases in the costs of gasoline, and the likelihood that we are approaching the peak of oil production, to be followed by even greater price hikes; the increasing consensus that global climate change must be mitigated by reducing emissions; and the enormity of the transportation funding challenges associated with our current growth patterns will all play a role. DRCOG has a leadership role in convening key interests to examine transportation funding needs. However, to be successful at meeting these new challenges, we will have to broaden our vision and seek new solutions.
Message from the Executive Director

It was a great pleasure to serve as DRCOG’s Executive Director for the last year. Acclimating to the differences in state laws, city/county relationships, sales tax dissimilarities, visions for growth and development, relations with the DOT, and the cultural nuances between South Florida and the Denver region is demanding but immensely rewarding.

In the past year, DRCOG achieved objectives that included adopting Metro Vision 2030 and associated plans, agreeing to a Memorandum of Understanding with CDOT, developing Performance Indicators for Metro Vision, and pursuing increased communications with other MPOs. In addition, we’ve developed contacts with top-level management of other government agencies and businesses; organized joint meetings between the jurisdictions in Weld County and their neighbors; facilitated a meeting of the Front Range MPOs; and, spoken to a number of local, regional and statewide audiences about DRCOG’s policies and plans. New jurisdictions have signed the Mile High Compact and more small community members have applied for DOLA grants through DRCOG, increasing annual participation by 500 percent.
The Board’s overarching goal for DRCOG in 2005-2006 was making the region a better place to live, work and raise a family. What did DRCOG do to make that happen? Read about the partnerships, planning and progress we made in “The Big Picture.”
AMPO Conference

DRCOG partnered with the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations (AMPO) to host AMPO’s national conference in Denver in October 2005. The conference theme was “Ensuring the Future of MPOs.” More than 200 participants in the transportation field, including executive directors and technical staff of many metropolitan planning organizations from throughout the nation, attended the event. DRCOG helped with conference planning and logistics, and organized many of the related “field” trips for participants.

Front Range Transportation Forum

In September 2005, representatives from the five Front Range transportation planning agencies, the Colorado Department of Transportation, Front Range transit agencies and state elected officials met to discuss the possibility of creating a Front Range Transportation Plan that would incorporate decisions about transportation, development, open space and air quality. The high-profile event at the Convention Center featured Robert Grow of Envision Utah as the keynote speaker.

The event served as a starting point for the five Front Range transportation planning agencies, who continue to meet regularly and are hard at work on a Front Range Transportation Plan.

Coordinated Planning with Weld County and its Municipalities

With growth continuing in Weld County, DRCOG worked hard through the year on its relationships with Weld County and the southwest Weld County communities. The Board has recognized it as a work program priority. In July, the DRCOG Board entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Upper Front Range Transportation Planning Region, formalizing the first step in joint planning efforts. All of the jurisdictions have been invited to share their plans for growth and development at DRCOG Board meetings in an effort to get to know one another better.

Joint meetings continue on such topics as planning process, Metro Vision tenets and membership.
Baghdad-Denver Region Partnership

The Baghdad-Denver Region Partnership was no less busy in the past year and continues to carry on with a host of different activities. The partnership promotes the exchange of ideas and understanding between government officials, citizens, college faculty and students, businesses and nonprofit organizations of the two regions. The primary benefit to Baghdad of participation in the program is humanitarian aid and exposure to the systems of government, education, business and nonprofits in a democratic civil society. The partnership welcomed a women’s delegation of government and nonprofit officials from Iraq in May and supported a student internship. The delegation focused on employment and family issues while visiting with various governmental and educational organizations and attending the annual conference of United Way of America.

Senior Source

Senior Source, a project of 9NEWS, the Colorado Department of Human Services, Rose Community Foundation and the Colorado Health Foundation, went live in the fall of 2005. The Web site is targeted to the aging population and their caregivers, supplying information for senior living. Working with DRCOG’s Area Agency on Aging and the Colorado Department of Human Services, a team from 9NEWS-KUSA-TV developed the Web site and approached Rose Community Foundation and the Colorado Health Foundation for funding. Both foundations committed funding for the Web site’s first year of operation and for a follow-up evaluation. The Centers For Medicare And Medicaid Services also provided funding.

Partnerships for the Passage of Referendum C

Concern about the condition of Colorado’s transportation infrastructure prompted many Colorado organizations and businesses, DRCOG among them, to support the passage of Referendum C. Approved by voters in November 2005, Referendum C is a “de-Brucing” measure. It allows the state to keep all “excess” revenues collected for the next five years for general fund operations, but specifically to reduce health care costs, and to fund public education and strategic transportation projects.
**Tolling/the Establishment of the 1148 Process**

In the last year, the DRCOG Board approved a process and evaluation measures to review proposed toll highway facilities, familiarly known as the 1148 process. In 2005, the Colorado General Assembly passed House Bill 05-1148 that stated: “The Board (Colorado Tolling Enterprise – CTE) shall take no action relating to the construction of a toll highway until after the toll highway system that includes the toll highway has been reviewed by every metropolitan planning organization or regional planning commission that is located in whole or in part within the toll highway system.” DRCOG is the designated metropolitan planning organization for the Denver region.

To orient local governments and other planning organizations about the process, DRCOG held a workshop on the 1148 process in June. The process is very similar to the responsibility given to DRCOG to review and assess rail transit proposals from RTD before they are taken to the voters.

**State Land Board**

Proposed development on the State Land Board property in Arapahoe County has implications not only for the affected jurisdictions, but for the entire region. While planning for this massive piece of property is still in the early stages, the State Land Board is proposing development on the 40-square-mile former Lowry Range. There are many unanswered questions about the proposed development of the property, but DRCOG is working with the State Land Board staff to provide a “check list” of information that will be useful to provide to the DRCOG Board to successfully amend the development into the 2035 Metro Vision Plan. Also, Arapahoe County has requested assistance from DRCOG staff with scenario planning, as it updates its comprehensive plan to address the State Land Board property.

**Weld County Joint Planning**

Significant inroads have been made with Weld County and the Southwest Weld communities. In July, the DRCOG Board entered into an MOU with the Upper Front Range Transportation Planning Region, formalizing the first step in joint planning efforts.

All of the jurisdictions have been invited to speak at the DRCOG Board meetings to share their plans for growth and development. Weld County presented in July and Frederick made a similar presentation in August.
Joint meetings continue to be held as all parties learn about the transportation planning process and talk about urbanization into Weld County and the need for joint planning. In addition, membership in DRCOG is being discussed. Looking ahead, the DRCOG staff will prepare a dues schedule, a list of products and services, an overview of how the Urban Growth Boundary was established, and a summary of Metro Vision’s tenets. The Weld County communities want to better understand DRCOG’s processes as discussions about membership proceed.

**Aging EPA Grant**

In Metro Vision 2030, DRCOG takes a proactive approach to accommodating the needs of a growing senior population, adopting policies concerning housing types/locations, development patterns, pedestrian connections and transportation. With a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, DRCOG is researching how local zoning and development could better meet the needs of older adults. Aging Baby Boomers are bringing about changes in all facets of community life and local communities need to be prepared. A Senior-Friendly Regulatory Guidelines workshop conducted by DRCOG for local government staff covered the preliminary findings of the work effort.

**Passage of SAFETEA-LU**

Late summer 2005 saw the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) become law. With guaranteed funding for highways, highway safety, and public transportation totaling $244.1 billion, SAFETEA-LU represents the largest surface transportation investment in U.S. history. The two landmark bills that brought surface transportation into the 21st century—the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) and the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21)—shaped the highway program to meet the nation’s changing transportation needs. SAFETEA-LU builds on this firm foundation, supplying the funds and refining the programmatic framework for investments needed to maintain and expand the nation’s vital transportation infrastructure. SAFETEA-LU addresses the many challenges facing today’s transportation system – challenges such as improving safety, reducing traffic congestion, improving efficiency in freight movement, increasing intermodal connectivity, and protecting the environment – as well as laying the groundwork for addressing future challenges. SAFETEA-LU promotes more efficient and effective federal surface transportation programs by focusing on transportation issues of national significance, while giving state and local transportation decision makers more flexibility for solving transportation problems in their communities.
senior advocacy groups collaborated to restore “State Funding for Senior Services” to levels that existed before recent cuts. These state funds are allocated to the Area Agencies on Aging (DRCOG is the AAA for Adams, Arapahoe, Broomfield, Clear Creek, Denver, Douglas, Gilpin, Jefferson counties) for programs such as home-delivered meals, in-home services, and transportation. As a first step, HB 06-1018, by Rep. Riesberg and Sen. Hagedorn, passed and was signed by the governor and restored the Older Coloradans Fund (a key component of the state funding) to the $3 million funding level it was given when created in 2000. The Joint Budget Committee also provided $250,000 for senior services in the fiscal year 2005-06 budget with additional Referendum C monies. This was annualized to $1 million for the fiscal year 2006-07 budget. As a result, the State Funding for Senior Services line item is expected to be $5 million for the next five years.

10 Percent for Transit

The passage of Referendum C also restored state funds for transportation through a mechanism known as SB97-00. Ten percent of this revenue must be used for transit projects in strategic corridors. It is roughly estimated that about $65 million will be available statewide from fiscal years 2006 to 2010. To represent the region’s transit interests, the DRCOG Board created an ad hoc committee that prepared policies and criteria for investing state transit funds and developed evaluation criteria. In addition, the Board adopted a resolution recommending to the Transportation Commission task force a list of eligible Denver region projects for state transit revenue funding from fiscal year 2006 to 2010. The list includes 19 projects totaling $58 million, of which six projects were recommended for funding by the Transportation Commission.
DRCOG again received honors during the past year for its programs and activities.

**National Award**

In October, at the national Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations meeting in Denver, DRCOG received an honorable mention for its review of the region’s light rail transit plan, FasTracks. The honorable mention for outstanding overall achievement was presented to Executive Director Jennifer Schaufele at an awards ceremony during the conference. The award recognized DRCOG’s thorough review of RTD’s FasTracks Plan’s financing and technology in advance of the November 2004 election on the issue. The responsibility for the review was given to DRCOG by the Colorado General Assembly.

**Regional Award**

In July, DRCOG received a Transportation Planning Excellence Award for Metro Vision 2030. The award was one of 12 presented by the Federal Highway Administration in conjunction with the Federal Transit Administration and the American Planning Association. Awards were presented to projects, processes or groups that have made outstanding contributions to the field of transportation planning in 12 award categories. DRCOG received the award in the Transportation and Land Use Integration category.

**Mile High Compact Signatories**

Two more jurisdictions signed the Mile High Compact in 2006, bringing to 41 the number of communities in the metro area agreeing to cooperate on growth issues. Arapahoe County and the Town of Morrison are the newest communities to sign the landmark document. The Compact commits members to working together to manage and direct growth throughout the Denver metro area by adhering to the principles outlined in Metro Vision, the region’s long-range growth plan. More than 87 percent of the region’s total population is represented by communities signing the Mile High Compact.
While it’s headline events that often capture the most attention, in every organization there are ongoing activities that carry out the mission and vision. In this section, we present our “bread and butter” activities.
Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)

A new Transportation Improvement Program, or TIP, was adopted by the DRCOG Board in June. The 2007-2012 TIP gives the green light to 57 new projects around the region totaling $94,410,000, and meets all requirements of the State Implementation Plan for air quality. The TIP presents projects proposed by local governments, the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Regional Transportation District and DRCOG for federal funding for fiscal years 2007-2012. It is through the TIP that projects included in the 2030 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan are funded and built, further carrying out the goals included in the region’s long-range plan.

New to the TIP are a number of station area planning studies to be conducted as the region implements FasTracks. When the TIP was adopted in June, DRCOG selected 13 station area planning studies for funding and set aside $585,000 in reserves for studies to be selected later in the fall.

Small Communities Grants

DRCOG, as the regional planning association, annually receives funding from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs to allocate to small communities. The funds are designed to help small communities with planning projects, ranging from conducting research on economic or demographic issues to reviewing zoning codes to providing mapping assistance. Through the program, DRCOG provides additional staff and expert resources for planning projects. Bennett, Edgewater, Idaho Springs and Lyons received Small Communities Grants in 2006.

Ombudsman

The Ombudsman Program is a vital part of the Area Agency on Aging’s daily functions. Ombudsmen serve as advocates for residents of the region’s long-term care facilities, covering residents of 246 assisted living facilities and 89 nursing homes in six counties. At capacity, that’s nearly 17,000 people.

Over the past year, the team of staff and volunteer ombudsmen made 4,434 visits to facilities and resolved 4,924 complaints. Staff also responded to 4,851 requests for information and referrals, attended family and resident councils, and educated the community about their work. The importance of the ombudsman’s role will only increase as the region’s population ages.
**Water Quality**

A variety of water quality planning efforts captured DRCOG’s attention. At Board direction, DRCOG staff testified at several Colorado Water Commission rulemaking hearings in support of the guidelines and tenets of the Clean Water Plan. In addition, the DRCOG Board dealt with two water quality treatment plant changes. The Board added a treatment plant to the Clean Water Plan that will be operated by the Parker Water and Sanitation District to serve Lone Tree. In addition, a water treatment plant consolidation was approved in the Conifer area. DRCOG’s Water and Environmental Planning Committee began updating the region’s Utility Plan Guidance document on how local facilities prepare utility plans in concert with the Clean Water Plan. In addition, DRCOG is involved in a state effort on stormwater quality regulations to prevent E. Coli contamination in the South Platte River.

**Traffic Signals**

DRCOG works with CDOT and with local governments to readjust signal timing to accommodate changing traffic patterns. Signal projects help every tightly stretched transportation dollar go farther by providing congestion relief when funding for additional lanes or other facilities may be unavailable.

Over the past year, traffic signal system improvements projects have resulted in travel time savings of up to 22 percent per project, reduced fuel consumption by nearly 650,000 gallons, decreased harmful CO emissions by nearly 2.2 million pounds, and saved $31 million in time and fuel costs. Ensuring peak efficiency from existing facilities, the Traffic Signal Program makes a significant, if subtle impact on the region’s commuters.

**RideArrangers**

Gas prices were in the news during the past year, rising to unprecedented highs. As a result, the region’s rideshare program gained some new visibility among commuters looking for ways to save money at the pump. A new look in advertising came at just the right moment—RideArrangers launched its Superheroes campaign at the turn of the year.

Bike to Work Day continued its historic trend of gaining new participants each year—on June 26, 2006, around 20,500 cyclists pedaled to work instead of driving. RideArrangers continues to experience high demand for rides through its vanpool service as well, and fills vans as quickly as they can be ordered.

### VMT Reduced

<table>
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<th>VMT Reduced</th>
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<tr>
<td>Vanpool</td>
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<tr>
<td>Schoolpool</td>
<td>11,918,906</td>
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<tr>
<td>Telework</td>
<td>4,970,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bike to Work Day</td>
<td>5,476,604</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
One of the best ways to do things well is to constantly seek out new ways of doing and viewing things.
Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)

Following the Board’s direction to provide resources for member governments in planning and implementing Transit-Oriented Development (TOD), the regional council has begun working to promote dialogue on this important topic. A new section of DRCOG’s Web site now houses links to articles, case studies, reports and other materials. The site also provides details about corridors and stations, and information about TOD events in the region. DRCOG is working with other regional agencies such as RTD, ULI Colorado, the Transit Alliance, the Metro Denver EDC, Colorado Municipal League, and the Metro Mayors Caucus to coordinate TOD efforts at the regional level, develop a regional definition of TOD success, support public education and outreach, and facilitate the sharing of lessons learned regionally.

Infill and Redevelopment

Related to its transit-oriented development activities, DRCOG completed three “white papers” for local government staff interested in learning more about infill and redevelopment strategies for their communities. The reports, available on the Web site, examine financing strategies, regulatory strategies and transportation strategies.

The vision for Union Station continues to evolve. In October 2005 the partners hired a master developer executive director, Liz Orr, on a one-year contract. A call for RFQs
brought forth interest from a number of developers, and two were selected to prepare formal proposals. A draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Phase I was prepared in the spring of 2006, and put forth for public comment; a final version of the EIS and selection of the developer are both anticipated for fall 2006. DRCOG is part of the selection team.

**New Modeling Work**

Several years ago DRCOG initiated the Integrated Regional Model project, whose purpose is to generate a next-generation regional modeling system that integrates land-use and transportation modeling. The new model will permit better evaluation of the effects of important regional transportation and planning initiatives such as FasTracks, transit-oriented development, and toll roads. Detailed model design is now complete, and model development is underway, including development of new software to permit flexible, easy use of the model and the data it will produce.

**Superheroes Campaign**

In January 2006, DRCOG’s RideArrangers program debuted what may be its most ambitious marketing campaign ever: the Mighty Motorin’ Ride Arrangers. The campaign turns each of the program’s key services into a superhero, battling demons of driving such as the Evil Brown Cloud and Cone Zoneheads, among others. The fun and colorful characters have made an impression in the minds of commuters throughout the region, and continue to appear in new advertisements and marketing materials.
Federal grants $ 10,006,205
Service income $ 713,573
Participating member dues $ 1,142,900
Local/other $ 1,305,662
In-kind services $ 673,098
State grants $ 332,928
Interest/miscellaneous $ 78,000

2006 Revenues $14,252,366
COUNTIES

ADAMS COUNTY -- W. R. “Skip” Fischer, Commissioner
ARAPAHOE COUNTY -- Susan Beckman, Commissioner
BOULDER COUNTY -- Will Toor, Commissioner
CITY AND COUNTY OF BROOMFIELD -- Karen Stuart, Mayor
CLEAR CREEK COUNTY -- Harry Dale, Commissioner
CITY AND COUNTY OF DENVER -- John Hickenlooper, Mayor
-- Rick Garcia, Council Member
DOUGLAS COUNTY -- Melanie A. Worley, Commissioner
GILPIN COUNTY -- Jeanne Nicholson, Commissioner
JEFFERSON COUNTY -- Dave Auburn, Commissioner

CITIES AND TOWNS

ARVADA -- Lorraine M. Anderson, Council Member
AURORA -- Bob Broom, Council Member
BENNETT -- Sue Horn, Mayor
BLACK HAWK -- David Spellman, Mayor
BOULDER -- Jack Stokes, Council Member
BOW MAR -- Garrett Baum, Trustee
BRIGHTON -- Dick Hodge, Mayor Pro Tem
CASTLE ROCK -- Doug Tisdale, Mayor Pro Tem
CENTENNIAL -- Todd Miller, Council Member
CENTRAL CITY -- Ron Slinger, Alderman
CHERRY HILLS VILLAGE -- Doug Tisdale, Mayor Pro Tem
COLUMBINE VALLEY -- Mason Howard, Trustee
COMMERCE CITY -- René Bullock, Council Member
DEER TRAIL -- Vacant
EDGwatER -- David Cooke, Council President
EMPIRE -- Mike Spies, Trustee
ENGLEWOOD -- Olga Wolosyn, Mayor
ERIE -- Andrew Moore, Mayor
FEDERAL HEIGHTS -- Mike Vallerio, Mayor Pro Tem
FOXFIELD -- Aimee Svenneby, Trustee
GEORGETOWN -- Ernest Dunn, Selectman
GLENDALE -- Larry Harte, Mayor
GOLDEN -- Jacob Smith, Mayor Pro Tem
GREENWOOD VILLAGE -- Nancy N. Sharpe, Mayor
IDAHO SPRINGS -- Dennis Lunbery, Mayor
LAFAYETTE -- Chris Berry, Mayor

LAKewood -- Ed Peterson, Council President
LARKSPUR -- Sherilyn West, Mayor
LITTLETON -- Pat Cronenberger, Council Member
LONE TREE -- John O’Boyle, Mayor
LONGMONT -- Julia Pirkack, Mayor
LOUISVILLE -- Don Brown, Council Member
LYONS -- Vacant
MORRISON -- Kathleen Dichter, Trustee
NEDERLAND -- Laura Farris, Mayor
NORTHGLENN -- Kathleen M. Novak, Mayor
PARKER -- David Casiano, Mayor
SHERIDAN -- Cliff Mueller, Council Member
SILVER PLUME -- Fred Lyssy, Mayor
SUPERIOR -- Karen Imbierowicz, Trustee
THORNTON -- Noel I. Busck, Mayor
WESTMINSTER -- Nancy McNally, Mayor
WHEAT RIDGE -- Larry Schulz, Councilor

GOVERNOR’S NON-VOTING APPOINTEES

Jennifer Finch -- Colorado Department of Transportation
Angie Binder -- Colorado Department of Local Affairs

PRINCIPAL STAFF

Jennifer Schaufele
Executive Director

Susanna D. Bozinovski
Area Agency on Aging Director

Betty McCarty
Administrative Officer

Karin McGowan
Policy Development & Communications Director

Jeffrey H. May
Customer Resource and Support Director

George J. Scheuernstuhl
Transportation Planning & Operations Director