



Sustainable Communities Regional Principles

Economic Vitality and Resiliency

The strength of the Denver region's economy is its workforce. Continued economic vitality and resilience require a targeted approach to ensure access to opportunity for all residents. This includes access to well-paying jobs, affordable housing, health care and transportation that supports people in maintaining employment. Open communication and collaboration must cut across all sectors of the economy and focus on improving opportunity for all incomes, races and education levels. That is the basis for long-term economic growth.

Each community, agency and organization operates within different realities: fiscal, political, economic, legal, etc. As such, the application and implementation of these principles, as well as the strategies provided herein, must be voluntary and sensitive to those contexts.

Strategies

Develop regional employment targets or thresholds (by wage level, sector, etc.).

A thriving region requires a balanced approach to employment where opportunities exist for all skill sets and a targeted approach to grow jobs in sectors that meet the region's growing cost of living. In addition, as the region changes over time, employment must meet job demand through diversification across sectors.

Determine appropriate targeted areas (geographic) for employment growth based on regional and local priorities. Considerations include transit accessibility (routes, fares, etc.), potential employment/sector clusters, accessibility to employment/training, housing proximity, etc.

As the Denver region continues to grow, opportunities to affordably access employment centers are critical for success. Planners and employers should be forward thinking in their location choices to provide the opportunity for employees to live and work in close proximity. This includes a focus on an inclusive choice of housing to meet the needs of all employees across wage levels.

Adopt plans, policies, and incentives to achieve employment goals.

A resilient region requires a diverse labor force capable of meeting the needs of employers. Establishing goals based on the needs of employers within the region is a necessary step to ensure the availability of the region's labor force today and into the future.

Enhance connections between jobs and education/training opportunities.

The Denver region supports a vast set of employment sectors. Within those sectors is a wide range of needed skill sets. Providing opportunities to match training to the skill sets that employers demand and to advance along career paths will be crucial for long-term growth.

Establish and facilitate greater coordination among entities to support achievement of regional employment targets and thresholds.

The Denver region consists of diverse residents, employers, education/training providers and policy makers. Reaching employment targets requires working toward defining shared outcomes so that employment gains can be made by people of every income and educational level throughout the region.

Ensure that economic growth is inclusive of all income levels, races/ethnicities and education levels.

The Federal Reserve (2006, Eberts, Erickeck and Kleinhenz) documented that a skilled workforce, racial inclusion and improving income equality correlate strongly with economic growth. The continued success of the region depends on recognizing and supporting the inclusive growth across incomes, races and education levels. Increasing income is a necessary step in laying the foundation for long-term, stable economic growth.

