



2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Published May 2020



LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



Dear friend,

When 2019 came to a close, the words planned for this space were much different. My letter to you was a celebration of our shared accomplishments and an optimistic reflection on how we'd meet future challenges together. The global outbreak of a new coronavirus requires a reflection nuanced for the times. However, I'm still optimistic.

Looking over what the Denver Regional Council of Governments accomplished with you, our partners, last year, it's impossible not to imagine how each of us is approaching this year differently. As we enter the second quarter of 2020, DRCOG is continuing to provide critical business functions while most of our staff teleworks from their homes. We continue to provide leadership in the areas of regional planning and development, transportation planning and operations, and ensuring our region's older adults have what they need to stay healthy, safe and as independent as possible.

Everything seems to be shifting as it relates to our work and our plans for 2020. And as we release this report, we can't help but reflect on how the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the partners we work alongside and the residents we serve.

Whether you're a resident of the region or represent one of our member governments, partner agencies or nonprofit organizations, we know your world has changed, too.

In the midst of a global pandemic, economic uncertainty and new ways of connecting with our families and neighbors, I hope this recap of last year's successes provides both a moment of pride and a sliver of hope. I invite you to consider all that we achieved together last year, which is indeed cause for celebration. When times are good, the value we provide our communities might be taken for granted. As you peruse these pages, I invite you to recognize that the good work we do together makes a difference for our communities right now, and for the long term.

Thanks for everything you do to contribute to our region's success!

In partnership,

Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director
May 2020

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Since its origins as the Inter-County Regional Planning Association in 1955, DRCOG has been defined by its partnerships. DRCOG maintains its robust existing relationships while forming new alliances with other organizations improving life in the Denver region. In 2019, DRCOG embarked on several new collaborations. Highlights include:

Advanced Mobility Partnership

In December, DRCOG hosted the first meeting of the Advanced Mobility Partnership executive committee. With meetings convened by DRCOG, the partnership champions the implementation activities of the Mobility Choice Blueprint. Emily Lindsey, DRCOG transportation technology strategist, coordinates Advanced Mobility Partnership activities, including quarterly executive committee meetings and monthly working group meetings.

Next steps: A partnership website will launch mid-2020.

► On Dec. 5, 2019, members of the Advanced Mobility Partnership executive committee signed a memo of understanding to establish the partnership. Signatories included (left to right) Sophie Shulman, chief of innovative mobility for the Colorado Department of Transportation; Kelly Brough, president and CEO of the Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce; Dave Genova, general manager and CEO of the Regional Transportation District; and Douglas W. Rex, DRCOG's executive director.

Aging Colorado

In November, DRCOG received a Rose Community Foundation grant to create a media partnership with CBS4. The Communications and Marketing division negotiated the creative media partnership with CBS4 Denver for a new program to raise awareness and increase use of services provided by the Area Agency on Aging and its contracted partners. The yearlong partnership includes television, web and digital advertising on CBS4, as well as increased access to its newsroom.

Imagine a Great Region

In February 2019, 80 business, community and civic leaders gathered at the University of Colorado Denver to kick off Imagine a Great Region, a year of regional conversations on growth and related issues. Partners included DRCOG, the University of Colorado Denver CityCenter, the Gates Family Foundation, Denver7 News and the Denver Metro Chamber Leadership Foundation. DRCOG co-coordinated the quarterly forums under the auspices of its Metro Vision Idea Exchange series. The first quarter's session covered managing urban growth deliberately, sustainably and equitably. The second-quarter session addressed gentrification, displacement and models



for understanding how people, place and policy shape neighborhood change. The third quarter's session explored the region's legacy of providing residents with access to nature while striking a balance between conservation and economic development.

2020 first-quarter update: A January 2020 Imagine a Great Region forum brought stakeholders together to learn from national experts about how the Denver region compares to other regions in providing a path to prosperity for all residents. The Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce, the Leadership Foundation and the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation are identifying gaps in opportunity and developing a range of strategies to close those gaps.



▶ Attendees at the inaugural Imagine a Great Region event at University of Colorado Denver discussed gentrification and managing urban growth. The yearlong series was presented in coordination with DRCOG's Metro Vision Idea Exchange series.

2020 census outreach

Building on several years of partnerships with the U.S. Census Bureau and supporting member governments in census activities, in December 2019, DRCOG staff began implementing a Department of Local Affairs grant to ensure the region's older adults are accurately represented in the decennial count. DRCOG's Communications and Marketing division created a suite of print and digital materials to help older adults prevent fraud and address the importance of an accurate count for securing state

and federal funding for the region. Some materials were customized to address the needs and concerns of rural residents, veterans, and Native American and Latinx individuals. Materials are available in Spanish and digital files optimized for the visually impaired.



▶ Among the turnkey toolkit materials DRCOG distributed to Area Agency on Aging contractors were five posters encouraging older adults to take the census.

2020 first-quarter update: In January, DRCOG hosted a kick-off event for other grant recipients within the region to coordinate efforts and avoid duplication. In February, DRCOG distributed a toolkit of materials to Area Agency on Aging contractors including posters, flyers, advertisements, digital assets and social media campaigns for adaptation or distribution.

Rose Community Foundation funding for age-friendly communities

In August 2019, a DRCOG announced a partnership with Rose Community Foundation to fund the advancement of age-friendly strategies by local governments. Through the program, Broomfield, Castle Pines, Centennial and Edgewater received funding to support healthy and successful aging.

TRANSPORTATION

DRCOG has served as the federally designated metropolitan planning organization for the Denver region since 1977, acting as a forum for a collaborative transportation planning process. The organization's legacy of involvement is even longer – the first official action after its 1955 founding endorsed the construction of Interstate

70 through the metro area. DRCOG, the Regional Transportation District and the Colorado Department of Transportation are the primary partners in transportation planning in the Denver region.

DRCOG takes the lead on transportation planning and funding in the region, working in partnership with CDOT, RTD and the Regional Air Quality Council. DRCOG develops the long-term vision for the region presented in the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan and addresses short-term needs through the Transportation Improvement Program.



► Public engagement specialist Lisa Houde invites feedback on the Transportation Improvement Program at Civic Center Park during Bike to Work Day.

Transportation Improvement Program

The Transportation Improvement Program identifies all federally funded transportation projects to be completed in the Denver region during a four-year period. The Board of Directors adopted the 2020-2023 Transportation Improvement Program in August. Through the subregional forum recommendations the Board allocated more than \$208 million to 82 projects, as well as \$32 million to regional projects, along with a previous allocation of \$25 million to the Colorado Department of Transportation's Central 70 project. Consistent with DRCOG's commitment to collaboration, local governments decide on a process and criteria for including projects in the TIP and awarding

DRCOG-controlled federal funds, which allows the region to set and agree upon its transportation priorities. The 2020-2023 TIP allocates funds via a dual model process. Under this process, 20 percent of funds are for larger, regional projects or programs. A subregional share of 80 percent is proportionally allocated to projects recommended to the Board by eight county-based forums. During the public comment period for the 2020-2023 TIP, DRCOG solicited comments on proposed project locations using an interactive, online map. It received 102 comments on 75 projects.

Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan

In 2019, DRCOG kicked off the two-year development process for the 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan, which guides development of the region's future multimodal transportation system in order to achieve the region's transportation goals. Over the summer, DRCOG conducted joint outreach meetings in every county in the region with the Colorado Department of Transportation, Regional Transportation District and the Southwest Chief and Front Range Passenger Rail Commission. DRCOG staff also held outreach events at several public events including the Colorado Black Arts Festival, Gilpin County Fair, Westminster Latino Festival, Boulder County Fair, Aurora Global Fest and Colorado Classic Open Streets. To supplement in-person outreach, DRCOG staff developed an online survey to learn about residents' visions and



► In 2019, DRCOG formed a Civic Advisory Group to inform development of the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan by people representing populations traditionally under involved in transportation planning.



► Graphic designer Sara Bogovich and public relations specialist Mariah Wollweber interview a pedestrian in downtown Castle Rock about her perspectives on traffic safety for a video that accompanied Regional Vision Zero public engagement efforts.

priorities for regional transportation. In November, staff and stakeholder efforts shifted from visioning and education activities to exploring scenario and investment options. Communications and Marketing staff developed a video introduction to the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan and DRCOG's role in regional transportation planning. DRCOG staff convened two advisory groups to provide guidance throughout the plan's development. The Youth Advisory Panel, with 20 members from nine youth commissions, began meeting in November. The Civic Advisory Group, composed of 27 members from populations that have not typically been involved in the transportation planning process, began meeting in December.

Next steps: The focus of the planning effort in 2020 will be on scenario options and investment priorities, followed by plan development. DRCOG staff anticipates the Board will consider the plan for adoption in early 2021.

Regional Multimodal Freight Plan

DRCOG began updating the freight element of the regional transportation plan in 2019. In May, DRCOG staff held two stakeholder forums to obtain input and direction on areas

of focus early in the planning process. Forum attendees included staff from the City and County of Denver; Adams, Arapahoe and Jefferson counties; the cities of Aurora, Commerce City and Louisville; Denver International Airport; Colorado Motor Carriers Association; and BNSF Railway Company. Next steps: DRCOG staff anticipate the draft plan will be ready for Board review spring of 2020.

First-quarter 2020 update: Public comment on the plan was open through mid-April.

Regional Vision Zero

In concert with global, state and community efforts to end traffic fatalities, DRCOG launched a Regional Vision Zero initiative in 2019. The action plan identifies strategies to eliminate traffic deaths and serious injuries in the Denver region. In May, DRCOG convened an extensive stakeholder group to shape the process. With a consultant, DRCOG developed an online survey to solicit public input and identify

primary traffic safety concerns in the region. The survey was open from Aug. 13 to Oct. 31. The Communications and Marketing division interviewed residents around the region and produced a video to raise awareness about traffic deaths and serious injuries. Media coverage prompted by the video included an article in Denver Streetsblog that reached 346,000 people and a segment on Next with Kyle Clark on 9News that reached nearly 1.5 million people. **Next steps:** DRCOG staff anticipate the draft plan will be ready for Board review in spring of 2020.

First-quarter 2020 update: As of January, the Regional Vision Zero video had more than 650 views. The video was also included in a Twitter post on DRCOG's page, receiving nearly 1,000 views so far.

Active Transportation Plan

At its January meeting, the DRCOG Board of Directors unanimously adopted a regionwide active transportation plan, which encourages self-propelled, human-powered ways of getting around, such as biking and walking. DRCOG worked with partners throughout the region to develop an active transportation vision, tools and products to support the development of a robust active transportation network throughout the Denver region. The plan supports access to shared-use paths, bike lanes and sidewalks for people of all ages, incomes and abilities, and who live in all types of communities: rural, suburban and urban. It also considers the health, congestion and air-quality benefits of active transportation, as well as safety considerations. Local communities can use the plan as a guide for implementing a safe, comfortable and connected active transportation network. A micromobility work group met monthly in 2019 to examine active transportation themes identified during development of the plan and discuss collaboration opportunities.

COMMUTER BEHAVIOR CHANGE AND CONGESTION REDUCTION

DRCOG reduces traffic congestion through its Way to Go program and various initiatives within its Transportation Planning and Operations division. Way to Go encourages

commuters to drive alone less frequently by walking or biking or taking transit, carpools and vanpools. The Transportation Planning and Operations division helps the region's communities plan and build infrastructure that makes it easy for residents and visitors to use transit, bicycling, walking or sharing the ride to work.

I-25 MyWay

Through I-25 MyWay, Way to Go concluded its first full year of providing options for commuters affected by CDOT's construction work on the I-25 South Gap project from south of Castle Rock to Monument. Throughout 2019, Way to Go helped hundreds of businesses and commuters explore carpool, vanpool and Bustang as alternatives to driving alone. In 2019, Way to Go staff conducted or participated in 37 outreach events including open houses, presentations and public meetings. Through the program, commuters received a one-way ticket to encourage them to try commuting by Bustang and commuters formed seven new vanpool routes.



► I-25 MyWay outreach specialist Cathy Bird greets commuters during a Bustang open house at the Denver Tech Center.

Go-Tober

Way to Go's fifth annual Go-Tober competition garnered participation by an all-time high of 75 companies. Participating organizations included the Regional Transportation District, Colorado Department of Transportation and 10 member governments: Arvada,



► An employee at Kong in Golden prepares to bike home with her dog on Bike to Work Day, June 26, 2019.

Aurora, Broomfield, Castle Rock, Denver, Lakewood, Littleton, Longmont, Northglenn and Westminster. Overall, 2,538 participants logged 64,366 one-way trips. They traveled 742,814 miles and saved 215.4 tons of carbon dioxide. Participants burned 3,979,980 calories and saved \$205,299 in commuting costs. Category winners included Otak, The Foundation for Urban Sustainable Communities, Navigant and Gusto. **Next steps:** Go-Tober returns in October 2020. Contact Way to Go at waytogo@drcog.org to learn how your company can get involved.

Winter Bike to Work Day

Even though the morning started with temperatures in the single digits, more than 3,000 metro area commuters participated in the international Winter Bike to Work Day on Feb. 8, 2019. Riders braved bitter cold and snow-packed streets to demonstrate their commitment to winter cycling. Fueled by the hot beverages and breakfasts offered by bike-friendly organizations and companies

throughout the region, they catapulted Denver and Boulder to first and second place, respectively. Several other Colorado municipalities outdid participation by their global counterparts. DRCOG's Way to Go program estimates that many commuters fulfilled their pledges by riding other days due to the weather. In recognition of its work to coordinate participation in the region and support statewide efforts, DRCOG won an international Winnie Award for Winter Cycling Excellence in the best organization category. Way to Go worked with the Colorado Department of Transportation to coordinate the statewide effort.

Bike to Work Day

On June 26, 29,000 participants traded their regular commutes for bicycles on Bike to Work Day. With regional participation coordinated by DRCOG's Way to Go program, the event is the second-largest Bike to Work Day nationwide. Riders had their choice of 281 breakfast, water and evening stations. Nearly 800 companies competed in the Business Challenge, winners included Dig Studio among small companies and DaVita among large businesses. Overall winners included Plexus, Davis Partnership

Architects and Navigant. **Next steps:** June is Colorado Bike Month. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, Bike to Work Day has been postponed until September 22, 2020.

OLDER ADULTS AND INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

Through its federal designation as the Area Agency on Aging for the region, DRCOG helps communities become more age-friendly and enables older adults and people with disabilities to remain safely in their homes for as long as they desire. DRCOG's case managers and options counselors help the region's most vulnerable older adults and individuals with disabilities obtain the care and resources they need to stay independent, healthy and safe. Federal and state dollars flow through the Area Agency

on Aging to protect the rights of the aging population and to improve quality of life for older residents through assistance with transportation, meals, housing, care and other necessities, provided through partnerships with local nonprofit organizations. In 2019, DRCOG successfully advocated for \$4 million in additional funding statewide to address this growing need.

Denver Regional Accountable Health Community

Last year, DRCOG entered its third year of a five-year, \$4.5 million funding opportunity from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services. Through application of the national Accountable Health Communities model, DRCOG works with staff at medical and behavioral clinics to refer patients with social needs to community-based resources. DRCOG compensates clinical and behavioral health partners for data, and analyzes the data to determine whether clinical referrals to community providers reduce health care costs and improve patients' well-being.

In 2019, the Denver Regional Accountable Health Community screened nearly 21,000 patients, and

► On Aug. 26, the Denver Regional Accountable Health Community held a food fair at Stride's North Aurora Family Health Services center. Participants selected fresh and canned goods to take home, in addition to information covering nutrition, health, and applying for Meals on Wheels and federal nutrition programs. Partners included Stride, Food Bank of the Rockies, Volunteers of America, Jewish Family Service of Colorado, Hunger Free Colorado, Tri County Health Department, Denver Botanic Gardens and Seniors Resource Center.



provided navigation services to 1,742 at-risk people, for a total value of \$325,000. Its advisory board formed four work groups to address food security, housing security, utility assistance and interpersonal safety. Each work group comprises clinical and community partners and topical experts. In August, the food security work group hosted a food resource fair, enabling attendees to receive food during a clinical visit (see photo and caption). Throughout 2019, the Denver Regional Accountable Health Community added clinical partners including Dominican Home Health Agency, Doctors Care and the Denver Health Emergency Department, and community service provider Hunger Free Colorado. In late September, Accountable Health Communities manager A.J. Diamontopoulos was invited to speak about DRCOG's role as an Accountable Health Communities bridge organization at the National Academies of Science, Engineering and Medicine.

Transportation voucher program

In 2019, the Area Agency on Aging piloted a groundbreaking program to demonstrate the need for on-demand transportation services that fill the gaps in traditional options for older adults. Through a partnership with HopSkipDrive, the Area Agency on Aging provided 5,000 rides to older adults in the region.

State Health Insurance Assistance Program and Senior Medicare Patrol

2019 marked the second full year of DRCOG providing Medicare counseling services through the State Health Insurance Assistance Program (SHIP) and Senior Medicare Patrol. DRCOG's counselors provide Medicare beneficiaries and their caregivers with objective information, insurance counseling and enrollment assistance. They provide presentations to groups about Medicare benefits, coverage rules, written notices, forms, appeal rights and procedures. In 2019, SHIP served 4,715 clients within the Denver metro area. It certified seven volunteers and hired a full-time bilingual Medicare counselor provide counseling and outreach to Spanish speakers. During the annual Medicare open enrollment

period (Oct. 15-Dec. 7), SHIP helped 1,021 clients with prescription coverage questions, plan comparisons and enrollments. Senior Medicare Patrol helped 1,403 Medicare beneficiaries protect their health care benefits, detect irregular Medicare charges and report suspected fraud. In 2019, SHIP staff conducted 73 outreach events and 26 media efforts including Medicare basics classes, health fairs and television interviews. In addition, staff provided outreach, Medicare fraud prevention and cost-saving counseling in partnership with several senior resident complexes. Staff formed partnerships with the Social Security Administration offices in Denver and Jefferson County to provide on-site counseling to new Medicare-eligible individuals. **Next steps:** Staff is working to establish on-site counseling at Social Security Administration offices in Arapahoe and Douglas counties.

Seniors Blue Book educational series

During the fall of 2019, the Area Agency on Aging and Seniors Blue Book offered an educational series for older people and caregivers in the Denver metro area. DRCOG staff and community providers led the 1½-hour sessions in Littleton and Thornton, which covered aging in place, older adult housing options and transportation.

REGIONAL PLANNING

Metro Vision is the Denver region's plan for continued success. The Metro Vision plan does not replace the vision of any individual community, rather, it is a tool to promote regional cooperation on issues that extend beyond jurisdictional boundaries. To support the region in achieving the shared vision it has established, DRCOG provides opportunities for individuals, member governments and partners to collaborate on efforts that contribute to realizing shared aspirational outcomes.

Boomer Bond

In 2019, DRCOG staff evaluated its Boomer Bond program through interviews with 17 communities that had previously completed the Boomer Bond assessment. DRCOG staff also researched potential adjustments to the award-winning program. DRCOG also continued



► Participants in the spring 2019 Citizens' Academy participate in a transportation planning activity.

its Boomer Bond work by facilitating age-friendly assessments by the City of Thornton and the Town of Bennett.

Regional Data Briefs

In May 2019, launched a new quarterly Denver Region Data Brief series. DRCOG staff maintains and analyzes various datasets. The series highlights data insights and provides actionable research about growth and development to inform decision-making at the local and regional levels.

Citizens' Academy

2019 marked DRCOG's second year of leading the seven-week Citizens' Academy, previously a program of the Transit Alliance. Since 2007, more than 800 residents from around the region have completed the academy, dozens of whom have pursued public service as elected officials and hundreds of whom have been appointed to public or nonprofit positions. DRCOG staff in the Regional Planning

and Development and Communications and Marketing divisions conducted two Citizens' Academy sessions in 2019. Each academy had 30-40 participants from a variety of backgrounds and communities within the region. During each seven-week academy, participants learned from local experts about regional issues like transportation, affordable housing, public health, civic engagement and demographics. Each participant worked on an individual action plan to further their involvement in civic life after the academy. **Next steps:** Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the spring 2020 Citizens' Academy has been postponed until fall.

Improvements to modeling tools

In 2019, DRCOG pursued significant population and employment forecasting model improvements. DRCOG also created new datasets to improve model functionality and operations, including data to reflect local zoning and development approvals. Model improvements were designed to open opportunities for continued process improvement and collaboration with local governments into 2020 and beyond.



► Former Centennial mayor Cathy Noon won the 2019 John V. Christensen Memorial Award, bestowed annually by the DRCOG Board of Directors on a champion of regionalism.

Metro Vision Idea Exchange webinars

In spring 2019, Regional Planning and Development staff began hosting monthly webinars (which had formerly been conducted on an ad hoc basis) to augment its in-person Metro Vision Idea Exchange series. Metro Vision Idea Exchange webinars regularly attracted 80 or more participants. Topics included the 2020 census, engagement strategies, multifamily households, planning for multimodal mobility, Olde Town Arvada's recognition among "Great Places in Colorado" and congestion in the Denver region.

Denver Regional Aerial Photography Project

The 2018 Denver Regional Aerial Photography Project concluded in early 2019. DRCOG has been facilitating the project, which acquires high-resolution imagery for the entire region, on two-year cycles since 2002. Staff from 47 participating member governments and partner organizations determined project requirements and shaped final deliverables. For the most recent project cycle, the consortium pooled its resources to purchase 6,000 square miles of imagery. Through new

specifications and processes, it increased the high-resolution capture area while simultaneously reducing costs. **Next steps:** Planning is underway for the next round of data projects, which will include elevation, infrastructure and land cover data.

Regional Land Use Land Cover Project

In 2019, DRCOG conducted a pilot land use land cover endeavor with the Babbitt Center for Land and Water Policy, and the Conservation Innovation Center. During the pilot, 1,000 square miles of the Denver region were classified (as structures, impervious surface, water, grassland/prairie, tree canopy, irrigated lands/turf, cropland or barren/rock) using high-resolution imagery acquired as part of the 2018 Denver Regional Aerial Photography Project.

BOARD ADOPTS PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT PLAN

In May, the DRCOG Board of Directors adopted a public engagement plan, *People-centered planning, projects and*

services. The plan was the culmination of nearly two years' effort to update the previous public involvement plan which had covered only transportation planning. The new plan demonstrates DRCOG's commitment to public engagement and standardizes the process for engagement.

CELEBRATING THE REGION

Despite a postponement to early May due to inclement weather, 400 people gathered at the Hyatt Regency Denver at Colorado Convention Center to celebrate the people, programs and plans that contribute to quality of life in the Denver region. Lt. Gov. Dianne Primavera provided the keynote address. With its John V. Christensen Memorial Award, DRCOG conferred its highest honor upon Cathy Noon for her role in the formation of the City of Centennial (of which she served two terms as mayor), for championing public-private transportation and public works partnerships, and her advocacy on behalf of older adults. Also honored were:

Way to Go Award

- Workplace Champion: Julia Richards, DaVita
- Community Champion: Eleanor Needy
- Employer Champion: Soledad Villarruel Larre, Western Union

- Commuter of the Year Champion: David Kimmett, Juwi Inc.

Distinguished Service Award

- Stuart Anderson
- Mac Callison
- John P. Cotten
- Susan Daggett
- Karie Erickson
- Don Hunt
- Michael P. Lewis
- Sheila Lynch
- Carrie Makarewicz
- Kent Moorman
- Dr. Margaret Tomcho

Metro Vision Award

- Adelante Home Improvements Program for the Central 70 Project
- Alzheimer's Association Promotores Project
- Buckley Air Force Base Compatible Use Buffer Project (Arapahoe County and City of Aurora)
- Denver Dockless Mobility Pilot Permit Program

► Participants in the 2019 Small Communities, Hot Topics forum discussed how smaller communities can benefit from Smart Cities innovations.





- Festival Park Reimagined (Castle Rock)
- Lyons Neighborhood Licensure Program and Handbook
- Metro Denver Impact Facility (Urban Land Conservancy and FirstBank)
- Reconstruction of Colorado Boulevard: The Construction of a Main Street in Idaho Springs

Next steps: Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the April 22, 2020 annual awards celebration at Empower Field at Mile High has been postponed until the fall.

YOUTH DELEGATION FROM BAGHDAD VISITS REGION

On Aug. 19, 2019, the Denver-Baghdad Regional Partnership facilitated a cultural exchange among high school students from Iraq and Westminster. Flo Raitano, DRCOG director of partnership and innovation; Jessica Sandgren, Board director from Thornton; Ashley Stolzmann, Board secretary; and Herb Atchison, Board immediate past chair, participated.

SMALL COMMUNITIES, HOT TOPICS

In September, DRCOG convened its fourth annual workshop for its member governments with smaller

▶ In 2019, DRCOG launched a quarterly forum for the region's city, county and town managers, bringing them together to discuss regional approaches to shared challenges and opportunities.

populations, sales tax revenue or median incomes. Attending were 23 participants from Arvada, Castle Pines, Central City, Federal Heights, Golden, Idaho Springs, Lone Tree, Bennett, Bow Mar, Georgetown, Larkspur, Lyons, Mead and the National Renewable Energy Laboratory. Participants discussed how small communities can adopt Smart City approaches and benefit from the efforts of their bigger neighbors. Presenters represented Lit Communities, Xcel Energy and the Town of Bennett. Board director Nicholas Williams of the City and County of Denver gave a presentation on Denver's Smart City request for proposal; Ray Hutchins discussed safety and Matthew "Quint" Redmond presented on agrihoods.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ANNUAL WORKSHOP

Representing 30 member governments, along with the Colorado Department of Transportation and the Regional Transportation District, Board directors gathered for the Board Workshop at Keystone Lodge and Spa Friday, Aug. 23, and Saturday, Aug. 24. The annual event

provides directors and alternates the opportunity to socialize and network in a retreat-like setting. Presenters included Michael Silverstein, executive director of the Regional Air Quality Council, state lobbyists Ed Bowditch and Jennifer Cassell, federal lobbyist Mickey Ferrell and DRCOG staff. During the Saturday plenary sessions directors discussed positioning the Area Agency on Aging for new opportunities in light of national demographic shifts and changes at the state and federal levels; and opportunities to align local and regional initiatives with the Metro Vision plan for greater collective impact. Chair Bob Fifer provided remarks highlighting the collaborative spirit of the Board, and executive director Doug Rex shared the past year's accomplishments. During breaks, directors and alternates had the opportunity to review 18 posters featuring member governments' community highlights.

QUARTERLY MANAGERS FORUM

In 2019, DRCOG began hosting quarterly forums for its member governments' city, county and town managers to build stronger working relationships with DRCOG staff, explore upcoming Board discussions and actions, learn about the products and services DRCOG offers member governments, and interact and learn from each other. The first-quarter forum included a presentation by DRCOG staff on evolving partnerships within the region; a briefing and discussion on the 2050 Regional Transportation Plan; the Mobility Choice Blueprint; and regional transportation funding options. The second-quarter forum involved a presentation by staff on DRCOG's regional data acquisition initiative; and regional funding solutions to address the region's growing infrastructure investment needs. The third-quarter forum included a staff update on transportation funding discussions; micromobility; an overview of Adams County's Path to Prosperity program; and a discussion about regional approach to homelessness. The fourth-quarter forum included a report from the University of Colorado Denver College of Architecture and Planning on homelessness and a presentation from Tri-County Health on the opioid crisis.

URBANSIM USERS CONFERENCE

In November 2019, DRCOG co-hosted a two-day workshop for regional planning organizations around the country. DRCOG is a leader among peer organizations building similar suites of tools to support planning and analysis of urban development, incorporating the interactions between land use, transportation, the economy and the environment.

COG CARES

To encourage a spirit of volunteerism among its employees, DRCOG launched COG Cares in 2019. The program provides quarterly service opportunities for staff outside of working hours. For the inaugural event in April, employees and family members gathered at Cheesman Park in Denver to plant trees as part of the City and County of Denver's annual Arbor Day commemoration. In June, staff sorted, cleaned and boxed 5,600 pounds of food at Food Bank of the Rockies, enough to feed 4,200 families or 16,800 individuals. In September, staff and their guests celebrated National Public Lands Day by restoring sections of Panorama Point Trail at Corwina Park in Morrison with Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado. In December, COG Cares made holiday cards for distribution by Senior Support Services to older adults experiencing homelessness.

► In 2019, DRCOG initiated COG Cares, a quarterly volunteer opportunity for employees. For the first event, staff and their guests planted trees in Denver.



MISSION STATEMENT

The Denver Regional Council of Governments is a planning organization where local governments collaborate to establish guidelines, set policy and allocate funding in the areas of:

- transportation and personal mobility
- growth and development
- aging and disability resources

VISION STATEMENT

Our region is a diverse network of vibrant, connected, lifelong communities with a broad spectrum of housing, transportation and employment, complemented by world class natural and built environments.

MEMBER GOVERNMENTS

Adams County
Arapahoe County
Boulder County
City and County of
Broomfield
Clear Creek County
City and County of Denver
Douglas County
Gilpin County
Jefferson County
City of Arvada
City of Aurora
Town of Bennett
City of Black Hawk
City of Boulder
Town of Bow Mar

City of Brighton
City of Castle Pines
Town of Castle Rock
City of Centennial
City of Central City
City of Cherry Hills Village
Town of Columbine Valley
City of Commerce City
City of Dacono
Town of Deer Trail
City of Edgewater
Town of Empire
City of Englewood
Town of Erie
City of Federal Heights
Town of Firestone
Town of Foxfield

Town of Frederick
Town of Georgetown
City of Glendale
City of Golden
City of Greenwood Village
City of Idaho Springs
City of Lafayette
City of Lakewood
Town of Larkspur
City of Littleton
Town of Lochbuie
City of Lone Tree
City of Longmont
City of Louisville
Town of Lyons
Town of Mead
Town of Morrison

Town of Nederland
City of Northglenn
Town of Parker
City of Sheridan
Town of Silver Plume
Town of Superior
City of Thornton
City of Westminster
City of Wheat Ridge

Non-Voting

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