

VOLUME II, SECTION VI. D.
DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (DRCOG)
OVERVIEW AND STRUCTURE¹

The Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) is a voluntary association of city and county governments serving eight counties - Denver, Arapahoe, Adams, Boulder, Douglas, Jefferson, Clear Creek and Gilpin - and over forty municipalities. The region, which has approximately 2.287 million people, is comprised of three urbanized areas - Denver, Boulder, and Longmont. The organization provides planning and technical support to its members, and acts as a forum for transportation, air quality, growth and development, water quality, and aging issues.

The Governor of Colorado designated DRCOG as the Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for the Denver/Boulder urbanized area in 1977. A Memorandum of Agreement was entered into by DRCOG, Colorado Department of Highways (CDH)(predecessor to Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)), and Regional Transportation District (RTD) to cooperatively conduct the transportation planning process in the Denver area. DRCOG, as the MPO, is responsible for operation and maintenance of the urban transportation planning process. Although DRCOG serves eight counties, the MPO's Transportation Management Area [TMA] area or boundaries encompass approximately six of the eight counties (Denver, Arapahoe, Adams, Boulder, Douglas and Jefferson). DRCOG, CDOT, and RTD are responsible for carrying out selective portions of the process in a fashion that complements the region-wide planning process.

DRCOG has a comprehensive committee structure for incorporating regional and local transportation planning interests into the plan and program development process.² The committee structure permits the involvement of locally elected officials in the development of the region's transportation policy. Also, opportunity exists for technical staff from different transportation related agencies, and public and private representatives to participate.

Board of Directors

A Board of Directors governs policy and management direction for DRCOG. The Board has forty-nine members representing the different local governments participating in the organization.³ The Board is also the policy body for the MPO. It is supported by a number of committees that provide advice on technical and policy issues.

¹ *Review of the Transportation Planning Process in the Denver Metropolitan Area*, November 1994, p. 12-14. [Report available at: <http://www.fta.dot.gov/fta/library/planning/TPP/denver.html>]

² For a complete description of DRCOG committees, membership and responsibilities refer to the *DRCOG Committee Policy, Guidelines, and Descriptions*, Revised June 1998.

³ CDOT and RTD are not represented on the Board despite ISTEA regulations that encourage the inclusion of representation from agencies that operate or administer major modes or systems of transportation as voting members of MPO's policy bodies.

Transportation Committee

The key committee advising the Board is the Transportation Committee, where formal interaction occurs between DRCOG, CDOT and RTD. Its ten member representatives of DRCOG, the State of Colorado, and RTD are charged with the management of the urban transportation planning process for the region in accordance with applicable federal regulations. The Board can either accept or reject a recommendation of the Transportation Committee; however, it can take no action as the MPO without the concurrence of the Transportation Committee.

The Transportation Committee has ten voting members. Four of the members represent DRCOG and the remaining six positions are evenly split between CDOT and RTD. Three of DRCOG's positions are assigned to its Board Chairman and two Board Designees, all of whom are elected officials. The fourth DRCOG member is its Executive Director. The state's positions are assigned to the Chairman of Colorado's Transportation Commission, a member of the Commission designated by the Governor, and CDOT's Executive Director. RTD's representatives include its Chairman of the Board, another Board member, and its General Manager. RTD's Board members are publicly elected.

In addition, the Transportation Committee has two non-voting members representing the Colorado Air Quality Control Commission (AQCC) and the Regional Air Quality Council (RAQC). The AQCC is the state's statutory organization responsible for implementing the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990 (CAAA) and approving State Implementation Plans (SIPs). The RAQC is the lead agency for preparing SIPs and identifying different Transportation Control Measures (TCMs) for the Denver region.

The Transportation Committee is supported by the Regional Review Team (RRT) which is comprised of technical managers from DRCOG, CDOT, RTD, the state divisions of Planning and Air Pollution Control, and other agencies responsible for activities funded through the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP). The RRT's responsibilities include (1) coordinating the UPWP work activities and schedules; (2) providing information on the status and progress of UPWP activities; (3) providing a forum for inter-agency input to UPWP activities; and (4) conducting technical reviews.

Transportation Policy Committee

Another key committee reporting directly to the Board is the Transportation Policy Committee. It is intended to provide other viewpoints regarding technical and policy-oriented transportation issues. The Committee reviews regional transportation issues and DRCOG transportation issues and provides recommendations to the Transportation Committee and the Board. Its membership includes DRCOG Board members and individuals representing the public and private sectors. An RTD Board Member and a State Transportation Commissioner have recently been added as voting members.

Membership Advisory Committees

Membership advisory committees encompass local government views in addressing regional and cooperative issues. They include a group of local government staff or other persons as members. These standing or permanent committees work with DRCOG staff on project and program activities and develop advice and recommendations for policy committees and the Board.

The **Transportation Advisory Committee** (TAC) which supports the Transportation Policy Committee and the Transportation Committee, includes traffic engineers and transportation planners from municipalities, counties, and implementing organizations in the region. It also includes ex-officio participants from state and federal agencies. All members are appointed by DRCOG, upon recommendation from their respective jurisdiction or agency, and are charged with the following: (1) review the transportation planning process and advise on the methods of planning, programming, and implementation; (2) review and provide advice to the Transportation Committee on plans and programs and amendments as they affect local governments; (3) advise the Transportation Committee on local government concerns dealing with transportation issues; and (4) develop regionwide standards for construction, operation, and maintenance of the transportation network.

The **Regional Planning Advisory Committee** assists the integration of the functional plans and programs developed by the DRCOG staff and advisory committees into the Comprehensive Regional Plan. This committee also reviews and makes recommendations to the Metro Vision Policy Committee regarding proposed regional plans and amendments. The planning director, city/county engineer, or planning commission member who provide a continuing liaison with local agencies usually represents municipalities and counties.

Program Advisory Committees and Project Task Forces

To make use of citizen expertise and encourage public input, ad hoc advisory committees are established to address issues such as providing aviation related transportation services or improving bicycle transportation programs. The committees are disbanded once their objectives are met. During the life of the committees, members may work with DRCOG staff in preparing and reviewing elements of the region's transportation plan and programs. One such committee is the Transportation Demand Management Coordinating Committee.

Advisory task forces are also established to assist staff in relation to projects of a fixed duration. For example, a task force could be formed for corridor and location studies to assure participation in the planning process by affected units of government and public agencies. These task forces are characterized by the specificity of responsibilities, their technical expertise, and by the fixed term of their existence.

DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (DRCOG) HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT⁴

The Denver region was a popular destination for the post-World War II westward migration, growing from 454,000 to nearly 620,000 in the 1950s. It was during this migratory period that the predecessor to DRCOG was organized as the Inter-County Regional Planning Association (ICRPA) with Adams, Arapahoe, Jefferson counties and the City and County of Denver as charter members. The first ICRPA resolution supported a major east-west highway route through the metro area later known as Interstate 70.⁵ Early principles adopted by ICRPC gave emphasis to industrial plant locations and planning thoroughfares to connect residential and industrial areas

During the **1960s** the region's population grew to 937,677 (over 51%), suburban housing spread, and ICRPC produced the first comprehensive regional plan, *The Metro Growth Guide*. (Agreements with Adams, Arapahoe and Jefferson counties designated the Commission to prepare a coordinated transportation plan.)

The ICRPC was reorganized in **1966** and the name officially changed to Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG) in **1968**. The DRCOG became involved in creation of the Regional Transportation District (RTD) and Urban Drainage and Flood Control District, both proposed and enacted in **1969**. Under the enabling Act, the RTD was empowered to develop, operate, and maintain a mass transportation system for the area which now consists of the City and County of Denver, Boulder county, parts of Douglas, Jefferson, and the western portions of Adams and Arapahoe counties. Originally RTD was given ad valorem tax-levying authority on assessed property valuation within the district.⁶ Early activities of the RTD focused on involving citizens and related planning agencies and commissions in devising immediate improvements in transportation services and in developing a system concept for the future.⁷

During the **1970's** the metro area topped the one million mark in population, with two-thirds of the growth the result of net migration into the metropolitan area. The DRCOG region expanded to cover an eight-county area and adopted the first housing plan for the region. The Urban Systems Committee was formed to provide local governments a direct voice in distribution of annual federal street funds.

The RTD, Colorado Department of Highways (CDH)(predecessor to CDOT), and DRCOG entered into an agreement in **1971** to establish the Joint Regional Planning Program (JRPP), through which public transportation planning was coordinated with land use and highway planning. The JRPP was organized into three parts: (1) a policy board, the DRCOG Board of Directors, fulfilled a ratification role by acting on the joint recommendations of the Executive Directors of CDH, DRCOG, and the RTD; (2) the

⁴ Much of the information in this historical summary was taken from the *DRCOG 40th Anniversary Annual Report 1955-1995* (1995).

⁵ The organization changed its name to the Inter-County Regional Planning Commission (ICRPC).

⁶ Ad valorem tax authority was later repealed.

⁷ *Long Range Transit Development Analysis, Environmental Overview (DRAFT)*, April 1975.

formulation arm was comprised of the Executive Directors of the three organizations; and (3) implementation was based in state, county, and local planning offices.

In **1972** the State of Colorado, through an Executive Order, established thirteen regions to develop planning and management programs as guides for future development in the State. DRCOG, CDH, and RTD entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in **1977** to cooperatively conduct the planning process in the Denver area.⁸ DRCOG, as the MPO, is responsible for operation and maintenance of the urban transportation planning process. The Governor of Colorado designated DRCOG as the metropolitan planning organization (MPO) for the region based on this MOA. As MPO, DRCOG's principal function was coordination and integration of the Regional Land Use Plan, the Street and Highway Plan, and the Public Transportation Plan into a unified and comprehensive set of guidelines for the future development of the region. The "3-Cs" continued, coordinated, comprehensive planning were conducted by DRCOG and its three member agencies in association with state, county and local planners and local elected officials.

In **1978** DRCOG adopted the Regional Growth and Development Plan which included the most comprehensive environmental resources database ever compiled for the region. In addition, plans to improve transportation options for the elderly and disabled were completed. The council identified the need for a new regional airport facility; and a study began to find a new location for a commercial airport and to determine an institutional arrangement to build and operate it. During this period the proposed interstate highway, I-470, was removed from the federal interstate system and DRCOG established priorities for the expenditure of a portion of the funds allocated for I-470 to other needed transportation projects throughout the region, including the 16th Street Mall in downtown Denver.

A sluggish economy slowed growth only slightly in the **1980s**, with a 31% change from the 1970s, producing a regional population of 1.6 million. A report on travel in the Denver region revealed a significant shift in travel patterns from suburb-to-downtown commuting to suburb-to-suburb commuting.

The Council's work during the 1980's was expansive, ranging from contracting with Volunteers of America for the operation of 35 meal sites for seniors to analyzing the region's vulnerability to an energy emergency. Work also included the creation of a task force addressing the problem of jail overcrowding and starting an elevator/escalator safety inspection program to serve member governments. The first shared-services survey was conducted to identify existing intergovernmental shared services or cooperative arrangements; to determine the extent and type of contracts local governments have with private sector or nonprofit corporations; and to assess interest for new cooperative or shared service agreements among local governments.

⁸ *Memorandum of Agreement between the Denver Regional Council of Governments and the State Department of Highways and the Regional Transportation District Regarding the Urban Transportation Planning Process, January 28, 1977.*

The preparation of the DRCOG Transportation Planning Prospectus occurred in **1981**. The Prospectus defined the regional transportation process and spelled out transportation issues facing the area at the time. It effectively demystified the planning process and provided information to facilitate citizen involvement and influence in decision-making.⁹

In **1985** DRCOG adopted the Regional Development Framework (RDF), an integrated approach to regional planning, which identified how, where, and to what extent growth should occur in the metropolitan area up to the year 2000. The RDF influenced the development of the 2010 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) which identified roadway and public transit needs for the metropolitan area.

Also in the **1980's**, an annual integrated plan assessment process was initiated, which combined the annual plan updates of the RDF, the Clean Water Plan and the RTP. The Board selected the North I-25 corridor as the first priority corridor for transit improvements. DRCOG recommended to the State General Assembly a method to finance a new convention center using a statewide approach and the bill passed into law in 1987, closely followed the DRCOG recommendation.

The start of the **1990's** saw regional population growth spurred by migration as the metropolitan area's strong economy and quality of life in the eight county area brought new residents from across the nation. The regional population had grown in excess of two million people.

Colorado Senate Bill 208 (**1990** Session) strengthened regional transportation planning by requiring approval of the MPO (DRCOG) before the Board of RTD could take any action relating to construction of a regional fixed guideway mass transit system. The Board of DRCOG approved the RTD's light rail line, known as the Metro Area Connection (MAC), in downtown Denver and an extension from the Auraria campus to I-25 and Broadway.

The Metro Forum panel, created by DRCOG to examine regional issues and trends and determine the types of functions a regional agency should perform, concluded work and recommended the establishment of an umbrella regional planning and service agency. The agency it concluded, should have the ability to set regional policies, formulate regional plans, resolve interjurisdictional conflicts, provide services, identify financial resources and ensure implementation of regional plans and policies. Services identified for further consideration included water supply, surface transportation, tax equity and regional revenue sharing, health care, environment, solid waste and open space. The new agency could eliminate duplication and fragmentation in regional policy-setting and service provision plus enhance abilities of existing agencies.

⁹ As noted in the *Review of the Transportation Planning Process in the Denver Metro Area, November 1994*, DRCOG's 1981 Transportation Planning Prospectus is out-of-date and needs to be updated to accurately describe the organization, and roles and responsibilities of the agencies participating in the urban transportation planning process.

Principles and policies to guide the preparation of a new integrated transportation and land use plan to the year 2020 were developed through a series of public workshops throughout the region and by various DRCOG task forces.

The federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA) became law, strengthening local governments' role in planning and allocating federal transportation funds. ISTEA's successor legislation, the Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), retained the role of public involvement in transportation decision-making. The Interim Regional Transportation Plan for the year 2015 received federal approval and the region had its first approved long-range transportation plan under ISTEA guidelines. The 1993-1995 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) became the region's first program to meet air quality conformity standards of ISTEA and the Clean Air Act Amendments.

Self-certification was completed by the MPO on July 28, 1993, following the independent planning review. The Governor also found the planning process to be in compliance with ISTEA on October 15, 1993.

During the **1990's**, DRCOG has routinely undertaken regional system plans and studies to support long range planning activities. DRCOG includes RTD and CDOT as major participants on the Transportation Committee, consistent with ISTEA regulations that encourage the inclusion of representatives from agencies that operate or administer major modes/systems of transportation as voting members of the MPO's policy bodies. The Vision 2020 Task Force, reflecting a diversity of public-and private- sector interests, began to develop alternatives for regional transportation and development for the year 2020.

DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (DRCOG) WORK PRODUCT¹⁰

Regional Transportation Plan¹¹

The DRCOG, as the designated MPO for the Denver area, is charged with developing a regional transportation plan that defines the integrated, multimodal metropolitan transportation system. The development of a system-wide transportation plan is an important product of the MPO's coordinated, cooperative, and continuing (3C) transportation planning process and is a major focus of the ISTEA final rule.

DRCOG adopted a transportation plan, known as the **Regional Transportation Plan** (RTP) in July 1987, with a 2010 planning horizon. The document identified goals

¹⁰ The publications listed here are available from the DRCOG Public Affairs Office or from libraries throughout the region.

¹¹ Federal regulations require the preparation of a transportation plan, regularly updated.

and policies for guiding facility development as well as surface transportation facility needs.¹²

Metro Vision 2020 Vision Statement, Principles and Policies (May 1992)(Reprinted November 1997) documented the first phase in the development of Metro Vision 2020, as well as developmental principles and policies used to guide regional growth over the next 20 to 30 years.

DRCOG prepared an interim RTP, the **2015 Interim Regional Transportation Plan** in October 1993. The plan includes highway and transit facilities that can reasonably be provided using expected financial resources.

Metro Vision 2020 Framework (November 1995) is a framework for the comprehensive long-range land development and transportation plan crafted through the council of governments' Metro Vision process. The report defines characteristics of the Denver region of the future and was used to prepare more detailed development, transportation and water quality plans for the region for 2020.

Metro Vision 2020 Plan (Adopted by the DRCOG Board of Directors in March, 1997) represents the preferred regional transportation and development plan, unconstrained by the region's ability to fund improvements.

Metro Vision 2020 Mountains and Plains Regional Transportation Plan (April 1997) defines the transportation policies, services and facilities to be provided through the year 2020. It includes all modes of transportation and defines the needed and fiscally constrained multimodal facilities for the 1997-2020 period.

Metro Vision 2020 Regional Transportation Plan, the Fiscally Constrained Element (Adopted September 1998)(164 pages) is the region's fiscally constrained transportation plan. It includes those regional transportation facilities identified in Metro Vision that can be provided through the year 2020, based on reasonably expected revenues. This plan document summarizes the transportation and transportation-related portion of Metro Vision 2020 and represents the "next step" for implementing Metro Vision's transportation element.

1997-1999 Denver Regional Transit Development Program (June 1997) defines the short-term transit service resources needed to serve the needs of residents and visitors to the Denver region.

Mobility Management in the Denver Region (February 1992) is a short-range plan that identifies strategies or actions for achieving greater efficiency from the existing transportation network. DRCOG was commended¹³ for monitoring land development

¹² See *Review of the Transportation Planning Process in the Denver Metropolitan Area*, November 1994, at page 17-19, for a detailed review of the 1987 RTP adopted by DRCOG.

¹³ *Review of the Transportation Planning Process in the Denver Metropolitan Area*, November 1994, at page 6.

trends, traffic patterns, and levels of traffic and transit service in the region as documented in this report.

Mobility; a Report on the Status of Transportation in the Denver Region (January 1997) provides an analysis of travel movement and transportation services within the region, as well as trends in mobility patterns.

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP)¹⁴

The Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) identifies federally funded transportation projects anticipated in the Denver Transportation Management area (all or parts of Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Douglas and Jefferson counties, and the City and County of Denver) for the time period of the report. DRCOG was commended for its efforts to include all significant projects that are funded by local units of government in the TIP.¹⁵ The TIP reports include sections on MPO roles and responsibilities. Adopted reports include:

1988-1992 Transportation Improvement Program (December 1987)(Amended)(40 pages) identifies all federally funded highway, transit, bicycle and ridesharing projects anticipated for implementation in the Denver and Boulder urbanized areas. First year projects are described in detail. Also included is information on regionally significant projects using entirely local funding.

1993-1995 Transportation Improvement Program (January 1993)(87 pages) is the three-year program of highway and transit programs which includes an introduction regarding “ISTEA and its Requirements” and “MPO Role and Responsibilities.” The TIP describes MPO’s policy on TIP preparation, includes a financial plan, and outlines how projects included in the TIP are consistent with regional strategies and ISTEA. (The TIP does not describe the project selection process).

1995-2000 Transportation Improvement Program (Adopted September 1995; Amended October 1995; Amended November 1995) (75 pages) identifies all federally-funded transportation projects anticipated for funding in the metropolitan area including highway, high-occupancy vehicle, transit, and non-motorized facilities and services.

1997-2002 Transportation Improvement Program (February 1997)

Policy on TIP Preparation (November 19, 1997) (Update due Spring 1999) details eligibility requirements and scoring criteria for transportation projects.

1999-2004 Transportation Improvement Program (September 1998)

¹⁴ The Transportation Improvement Program is required under federal regulations. See *Review of the Transportation Planning Process in the Denver Metropolitan Area*, November 1994, at page 20-23 for a discussion of the DRCOG process for preparation and approval of the TIP.

¹⁵ *Review of the Transportation Planning Process in the Denver Metropolitan Area*, November 1994, at page 6.

Unified Planning Work Program¹⁶

The Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) is prepared annually by DRCOG in cooperation with CDOT and RTD in accordance with the joint FHWA/FTA metropolitan planning regulations, as defined under ISTEA. The DRCOG Board, upon the recommendation of the Transportation Committee, adopts UPWP which describes all urban transportation-related planning activities, including air quality planning, that are anticipated in the region each year.¹⁷ Work items that are included in the UPWP are then developed by the participating agencies.

In its introduction, the UPWP describes how the tasks ensure the continuation of the urban transportation planning process and the development of the RTP and its elements. It also identifies which of the projects included in the UPWP are regional priorities. Additionally, the status of the RTP and its elements are reviewed, including a list of tasks related to the continued development of the transportation plan, which were identified and completed under the preceding work program.

The **1999 DRCOG Budget and Work Program** (August 19, 1998) contains the fiscal guide for operation of the Council and summarizes priorities for aging programs, agency support, development services, environmental services, intergovernmental activities, services to local governments, transportation demand management, and transportation services.

The Work Program reflects the Council priorities as it prepares and implements annual programs to achieve cooperative action on a variety of issues, including: priorities for intergovernmental activities, implementation of MetroVision 2020, and the challenges facing the Council in its leadership role in planning for the region's transportation needs. Priorities for intergovernmental activities include effective policy and legislative analyses to support the Council's decision-making on issues such as the impact of state and federal legislation, as well as strategic planning for the 21st century. Services to local governments will provide training and technical assistance to member governments, and will work with local governments to implement Metro Vision 2020. The Council plans to continue its leadership role in planning for regional transportation needs.

1999 Budget and Work Program (August 19, 1998) The document lists officers, board of directors and executive committee and summarizes the budget by program.

¹⁶ Federal regulations require a Unified Work Program to organize planning activities for the land use and transportation planning process.

¹⁷ The UPWP primarily contains federally funded activities, although ISTEA requires the UPWP to include all significant planning activities, regardless of funding source and implementation responsibility.

Annual Reports¹⁸

The Annual Reports for DRCOG chronicle the Council of Governments' activities over the past year and look ahead to what is in store for the coming year.

Annual Reports (Years prior to 1996)

DRCOGs 40th Anniversary Annual Report, 1955-1995, Serving the Region for 40 Years, reviews the historical development of DRCOG by decade since its inception.

Annual Report: Setting the Pace for the 21st Century (March 1996).

Annual Report (March 1997) chronicles DRCOG's 1996 actions in three major issue areas of mobility, growth and development, and public and local government services. The report also looks ahead to the next century.

Annual Report (March 1998) takes a look at the Regional Council's people and programs. It examines 1997 activities and looks ahead to 1998 projects.

Additional Documents Addressing Elements of Transportation Planning

Mobility – The Southeast Area (July 1991) provides an analysis of travel movement and transportation services to and within the southeast quadrant of the Denver urbanized area.

Boulder County Origin and Destination Travel Survey (January 1994)

Traffic Signal System Improvement Program (March 1994)

Southwest Corridor Light Rail Transit Project Assessment (July 1994)

Pedestrian and Bicycle Element of the Regional Transportation Plan (July 1994)

Public Involvement in Regional Transportation Planning (November 1994)

A Market Analysis of Transportation Demand Management Programs in the Denver Region (November 1995)

Changing Commute Behavior in the Denver Region (April 1996)

Surface Transportation Data File (May 1996)

Traffic Signal System Improvement Program 1996 Update Summary Report (August 1996)

¹⁸ The MPO is responsible under federal regulations to develop an annual transportation status report.

Program Evaluation: A Manual for Transportation Management Organizations and Associations in the Denver Region (July 1997) to aid transportation planning management organizations in producing annual reports and self evaluations.

Conformity of the 1999-2004 Transportation Improvement Program; and MetroVision 2020, Regional Transportation Plan, the Fiscally Constrained Element; with the State Implementation Plan for Air Quality (Adopted September 1998)(70 pages) is a demonstration of the Denver region's timely implementation of adopted Transportation Control Measures and meeting of federally prescribed air pollution emissions tests.

Also available from DRCOG are regional census maps, traffic volume maps, regional statistical area (RSA) maps, and other documents addressing cooperative efforts in the metropolitan Denver region.

DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS (DRCOG) CERTIFICATION REVIEW

Self-Certification¹⁹

Under federal regulations in place prior to passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA), and consistent with ISTEA, the State of Colorado and the MPO must self-certify that the urban transportation planning process (UTPP) conforms to the law. Self-certification was completed by the MPO on July 28, 1993, following the independent planning review. The governor also found the planning process to be in compliance with ISTEA on October 15, 1993.

Federal Certification - May, 1995²⁰

ISTEA includes a requirement for formal Federal certification of the planning process in metropolitan areas with a population over 200,000. The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) completed a joint certification review of the transportation planning process in the Denver Transportation Management Area (TMA) in May 1995. The review determined that the Denver area transportation planning process substantially met the relevant federal requirements and was certified.

That certification review included the following findings, recommendations and corrective actions concerning the transportation planning process:²¹

¹⁹ *Review of the Transportation Planning Process in the Denver Metropolitan Area*, November 1994, p.16. This report evaluates transportation planning in the metro area and summarizes the results of the review in a series of findings and suggestions on planning practices.

²⁰ See letter to Robert D. Farley dated May 5, 1995 and the attached *Certification Review of the Planning Process in the Denver Transportation Management Area*, May 1995.

²¹ The commentary relates the status as of May 1995.

- The designation of the MPO and the general establishment of the transportation planning process are in compliance with federal requirements, although the Prospectus could be updated to reflect changes since the last revision.
- Agreements between DRCOG, RTD, and CDOT are current.
- The development of the Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) complies with metropolitan planning regulations.²²
- The reviewers commended the MetroVision 2020 process to provide a framework for transportation planning.
- The MPO received a commendation for collaboration between DRCOG and Pikes Peak Area Council of Governments on meeting the requirements for the congestion management system.
- Planning for highways and planning for traditional bus service and specialized transit service appear to occur in isolation from each other. DRCOG and its partners should ensure that all modes of surface travel are considered in the planning process.
- More emphasis is needed on social, economic, energy, and environmental (SEEE) issues throughout the transportation planning process, especially on early identification and integration of SEEE impacts and documentation of analyses undertaken.
- The MPO should incorporate the Complementary Paratransit Plan into the transportation plan under development.
- Reviewers recommended that the MPO take specific action to upgrade data collection activities, including consideration of an expanded origin and destination (O&D) study to cover more of the Front Range region.
- It was recommended that DRCOG document the decision-making process used to evaluate and select corridors/subareas for major investment studies (MIS).
- The regional transportation plan (RTP) should include bus routes of regional significance.
- The MPO partners should finalize the 2020 transportation plan and fully address agreements reached in response to the ISTEA planning requirements.

²² A recommendation was made to establish formal procedures to identify and include all significant regional transportation planning activities in the UPWP, including local, private or quasi-public agency activities.

- Since ISTEA, the MPO has put greater emphasis on forecasting future revenues for transportation projects and have produced constrained transportation plans and programs.²³

²³ Additional findings addressed air quality, the TIP and public involvement.

ATTACHMENT

Colorado Statutory Requirements For Transportation Planning Organizations

Section 18(2) of Article XIV, Constitution of the State of Colorado Counties, intergovernmental relationships.

The State and its political subdivisions may cooperate or contract with other governmental entities to provide any function, service, or facility lawfully authorized to each such unit. **To such end political subdivisions may share costs, impose taxes and incur debt.** Specific statutory authority may authorize a separate governmental entity as an instrument for use through voluntary participation by cooperating or contracting political subdivisions.

Articles 20 – 29 of Title 7, C.R.S. Colorado Nonprofit Corporations Act

define the membership, purposes, powers, organization and operation of domestic nonprofit corporations. Note: DRCOG accepted the applicability of the provisions of this Act in the Articles of Association of the Denver Regional Council of Governments, As Amended July 17, 1991.

C.R.S. §§29-1-201 to 29-1-203. Intergovernmental relationships

permit and encourage governments to make the most efficient and effective use of their powers and responsibilities by cooperating and contracting with other governments. “Government” is defined as any political subdivision (county, city, special district, etc.) of the state, any agency or department of the state government or of the United States, and any political subdivision of an adjoining state. (C.R.S. §29-1-202.)

C.R.S. §29-1-203(1), (4). This section specifically **permits sharing of costs, imposition of taxes, joint exercise of functions, or the incurring of debt as authorized to the separate legal entity by the cooperating or contracting government bodies.** Contracts fully set forth the purposes, powers, rights, obligations, and responsibilities of the contracting parties. (C.R.S. §29-1-203 (2).) Articles 10.5 and 47 of title 11, C.R.S. relating to moneys of separate legal entities formed pursuant to this part 2. (C.R.S. §29-1-203(6).)

C.R.S. §§29-1-401 to 29-1-403. Associations of political subdivisions

permit political subdivisions to form and maintain cooperative associations as an instrumentality of the political subdivisions of which they are members. Associations may promote through investigation, discussion, lobbying, and cooperative effort, interests and welfare of the several political subdivisions.

C.R.S. §§30-28-105 to 30-28-132. Regional planning commission

Allows the creation of a regional planning commission (RPC) for a region defined as agreed upon by the cooperating governing bodies or officials or boards limited to a region within the jurisdiction of said bodies. C.R.S. §30-28-105. **imposes specific requirements** relating to the membership, officers, use of staff, funding, ability to sue,

and the power to self-regulate of the RPC. C.R.S. §30-28-106. **creates a duty for the RPC to make and adopt a regional plan**, which becomes an official advisory plan of a municipality or county only upon its adoption by the municipality or county planning commissions. **This section further specifies master plan inclusions and required coordination to ensure compatibility of such plans with implementation requirements. A regional master plan is advisory only.** C.R.S. §30-28-107. **mandates comprehensive surveys and studies of existing conditions and probable future growth in the preparation of a master plan to guide harmonious development of a region..** C.R.S. §30-28-108, -109. **requires that any complete or partial adoption of a master plan, its amendments, extensions, or additions, by resolution and certification.** The method by which the county be made through its planning commission, can inform and advise other governmental entities of the effects of proposed land use or other planned action upon the county and its residents is set forth in C.R.S. §30-28-110. The RPC may report that a referred matter, or a matter reviewed upon its own initiative, is inconsistent with the regional plan. Certain land use changes must evidence review by the RPC and approval of the board of county commissioners prior to recording a plan or plat in any public office. (C.R.S. §30-28-110.) The RPC must submit a plan, prior to final adoption and certification, to the division of planning of the Department of Local Affairs for advice and criticism (advisory only). (C.R.S. §30-28-122.) The term of membership of any governing body in an RPC shall be no less than three years. (C.R.S. §30-28-128.) Any county or municipality adjacent to an area under the RPC’s jurisdiction may be included in such RPC by agreement. (C.R.S. §30-28-129.) Written notice of intent to withdraw shall be given to the RPC at least 90 days prior to withdrawal and no refund shall be made of any moneys paid to the RPC. (C.R.S. §30-28-130.) The RPC has primary responsibility for broad master plans and surveys or studies, which clearly affect the physical development of two or more governmental units. (C.R.S. §30-28-131.)

C.R.S. §30-28-132.provides for an instance where an RPC is unable to perform on time and in sufficient detail a plan or study or survey that is its primary responsibility; and where the plan is urgent for development in an area. In this case, upon formal notice to the RPC, the local planning commission may proceed and the RPC may adopt such plan/study/survey as part of its regional plan. The RPC may agree or contract with regional government or quasi-government bodies for a plan or study or survey.

C.R.S. §39-9-107 to §39-9-107.7. *Mass transportation system*

authorizes the metropolitan Denver transit authority (RTD) to develop, maintain, and operate a mass transportation system for the district. (C.R.S. §32-9-107.) General assembly support for identification of fixed guideway corridors. (C.R.S. §32-9-107.5.) **The RTD may take no action relating to the construction of a fixed guideway mass transit system until such system has been approved by the designated MPO, which must approve each component part or corridor of the system, as well as its financing and technology.** (C.R.S. §39-9-107.)

C.R.S. §§43-1-901, -902. *Transit Planning in Areas with Population under 200,000*

authorize the DOT to enter contracts for state application and administration of the §8 and §26(a)(2) of the federal “Urban Mass Transportation Act of 1964” and successor

legislation for planning of transit projects. **CDOT must cooperate with public bodies and the MPOs to develop a procedure for a fair and equitable distribution of \$8 funds within the state.**

C.R.S. §§43-1-1101 to 43-1-1105. *Transportation planning*

Designate regional planning commissions and transportation planning regions as the proper forum for transportation planning, and cite the county hearing process as the proper forum for local government input into the five-year program of projects. The statute also recognizes the importance of the Colorado Department of Transportation's involvement in overall statewide planning. (C.R.S. §43-1-1101.) **Requires a twenty-year transportation plan for each transportation planning region, which is comprised of an MPO is required pursuant to C.R.S. §43-1-1103(1) which also defines specific elements that an MPO must include in a regional transportation plan (RTP).** C.R.S. §43-1-1103(1)(a) – (e). **The regional plan shall state the fiscal need and what can be reasonably implemented with estimated available revenues.** (C.R.S. §43-1-1103(2.) **The RPC is responsible, in cooperation with the state and other governmental entities, for carrying out necessary continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive transportation planning for the RPC's region.** (C.R.S. §43-1-1103(3).) **The RTP may recommend priorities for transportation improvements planned for the region and the RPC shall consider such priorities in making decisions concerning transportation improvements.** (C.R.S. §43-1-1103(4).) The chairman of the RPC, or the chairman's designee, shall serve on a transportation advisory committee to provide advice to the department of transportation. (C.R.S. §43-1-1104.)

C.R.S. §§43-1-1201 to 43-1-1209. *Public-private initiatives program*

outline the parameters for public-private initiatives for transportation system projects or services.