



The data consortium consists of Denver Regional Council of Governments members and regional partners with an interest in geospatial data and collaboration. The data consortium newsletter improves communication among local geographic information systems professionals and features updates from all levels of government as they relate to data and geospatial initiatives in our region. This newsletter is published quarterly.

DRCOG launches Equity Index dataset

Article submitted by Byron Schuldt, geographic information systems specialist at DRCOG. Byron can be reached at bschuldt@drcog.org

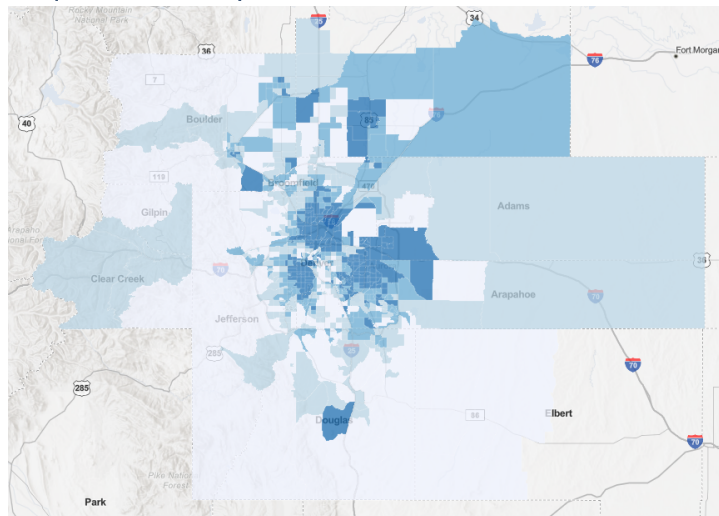
DRCOG staff are pleased to announce the completion of a new Equity Index dataset for the Denver region. For the past year, staff have been working to enhance equity and environmental justice analyses for DRCOG's various programs, such as the Transportation Improvement Program. As part of the equity project, staff explored ways to create meaningful data to help identify marginalized communities in the region and better assess how transportation projects provide potential benefits to or burden those communities. The process included research, peer interviews and external engagement, and resulted in the design of DRCOG's first [Equity Index dataset](#).

The dataset is based on 10 demographic indicators selected from American Community Survey five-year estimates to represent populations who have been historically marginalized from planning processes or experience barriers to mobility. Based on a combination of the 10 indicators, each census tract is assigned an index value — the greater the

value, the more concentrated marginalized communities are estimated to be in each tract. For more details on the indicators and methods, see the [Equity Index Data Guide](#).

At the outset of the dataset's creation, staff had many options in terms of demographic information available and index calculation methods. DRCOG staff chose the set of 10 indicators after reviewing state and federal regulations regarding DRCOG's programs. Staff also analyzed data reliability, feedback from DRCOG's Civic Advisory Group, and the demographic data categories that peer organizations use in their equity datasets. Staff then analyzed various ways of calculating an index by researching well-regarded peer examples and best statistical practices.

Now that the Equity Index dataset is complete, DRCOG staff plan to incorporate it as a key piece of the equity analyses of its programs alongside qualitative assessments to identify potential benefits to and burdens on surrounding communities as a project is implemented. While the topic of equity goes beyond any single measure or approach, the index dataset will be a useful tool for bringing a better equity lens to programs and plans. DRCOG staff hopes this publicly accessible dataset is useful for others in the region and plans to update it annually.



A screen-capture from the Equity Index dataset shows a choropleth representation of the index score. Lighter colors represent a lower index score and darker colors represent a higher index score.

Way to Go offers employer commute web maps

Article submitted by Brittney Compton, Way to Go outreach specialist, and Greg Conant, geographic information systems analyst, both at DRCOG. Brittney can be reached at bcompton@drcog.org and Greg can be reached at gconant@drcog.org.

Way to Go is a federally funded program offered by the Denver Regional Council of Governments that works with employers and commuters to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. In partnership with eight regional transportation management associations, Way to Go provides free and personalized commute consultations to businesses in the nine-county Denver region.

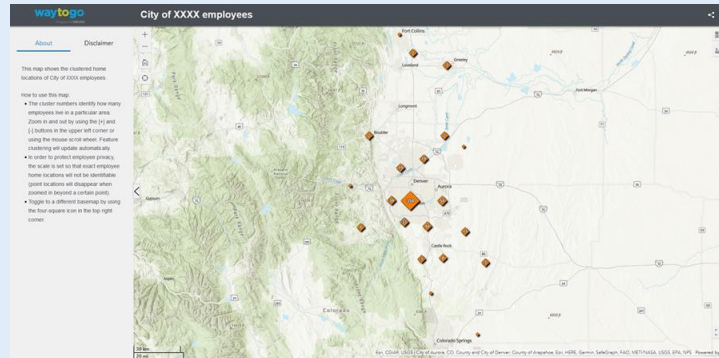
Way to Go partners with companies in a variety of ways, typically following an email inquiry from the company or after targeted outreach by Way to Go staff. In an initial discovery meeting, a Way to Go outreach specialist walks the employer through a short assessment to learn more about the company's current commute benefits and company structure. Way to Go then helps the company survey its employees about their commute habits.

Way to Go can also provide employers with a commute visualization web map. The employer sends Way to Go its employees' addresses, intersections or zip codes, which the GIS team uses to create a map. Based on the organization's location, Way to Go staff will match the requestor with the appropriate outreach specialist to analyze the map and make recommendations for commute by bike, foot, carpool or transit.

The web maps, created in-house by DRCOG's geographic information systems team, provide a dynamic method of viewing geographic data provided by the participating organization. Some examples of information that can be shown are employee home locations (displayed as generalized clusters to protect privacy), employee residence zip codes, or other aggregations of information, all in an effort to visually display the organization's commuting network. The power of web maps comes from scalability and ability to overlay additional relevant information on-the-fly. Users can zoom in and out on the web maps, and pan around the region. If requested, the geographic information systems team can also provide additional data overlays that may inform the user of commute options. For past web maps, additional data have included bus stops, bus routes, Regional Transportation District commuter rail lines, bike paths and other commuter-relevant information that may be found on DRCOG's public [Regional Data Catalog](#).

There are several reasons employers may want to analyze employee commute behavior and request a mapping analysis. Employers may be looking for an edge in recruiting and retaining employees and studies show providing commuting support is viewed favorably. Other businesses may have sustainability goals or parking constraints. Whatever the final use case, DRCOG's Way to Go program and geographic information system staff provides high-quality information products for employers.

To inquire about partnering with Way to Go to map commute options for your business, contact Brittney Compton at bcompton@drcog.org.



An example of a web map showing employees' anonymized and approximate commute starting points and work location. The Way to Go team and geographic information systems team prepares similar maps to help employers encourage their employees to choose eco-friendly commutes.

Engage with us

- This quarterly newsletter reaches more than 300 people, has a higher-than-average open rate, and is written by professionals like you. It is the perfect place to show off your projects, highlight your great work and contribute ideas to the geographic information systems community in the Denver region. Newsletter release dates are the 15th of January, April, July, and October (or the next business day afterward). Please contact Jenny Wallace at 303-480-6754 or jwallace@drcog.org to contribute.
- Did you miss a newsletter or a meeting? [Visit DRCOG's website](#) for past newsletter issues and Denver Regional Data Consortium meeting materials.



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