

Transportation Advisory Committee

Meeting date: February 24, 2025

Agenda Item #: 6 (Attachment D)

2026-2027 Unified Planning Work Program Kickoff

Agenda item type: Discussion

Summary

Consider ideas for the new 2026-2027 Unified Planning Work Program.

Background

The Unified Planning Work Program, or UPWP, is a document that describes all metropolitan planning work to be carried out by the metropolitan planning organization (MPO). It outlines and serves as the tool for scheduling, budgeting and monitoring the planning tasks and activities of the MPO and other participating entities within the region with federal transportation planning funds. The document also lists other major planning activities performed by local governments and other agencies.

DRCOG staff has begun discussions around major activities to be conducted from October 1, 2025, through September 30, 2027 for the 2026-2027 UPWP. Many activities will continue from the current [2024-2025 UPWP](#).

The total budget for the new UPWP will likely be comparable to the current two-year cycle, as DRCOG is currently engaged in drawing down its reserve balances to meet new state constraints on carryover funds.

Staff seeks ideas and priorities regarding the new UPWP.

Action by others

None

Previous discussion/action

None

Recommendation

None

Attachment

Staff presentation

For more information

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2026-2027 Unified Planning Work Program

Transportation Advisory Committee – February 24, 2025



Agenda

- Metropolitan transportation planning overview.
- Unified Planning Work Program overview.
- Menti exercise.
- Next steps for 2026-2027 UPWP Development.



Metropolitan transportation planning

DRCOG as metropolitan planning organization

- **Purpose** – carry out a **continuing, cooperative, and comprehensive** performance-based **multimodal** transportation planning process, including the development of a **metropolitan transportation plan** and a **Transportation Improvement Program**.
- **Interested parties, participation, and consultation** – shall develop and use a documented participation plan that defines a process for providing interested parties with reasonable opportunities to be involved in the metropolitan transportation planning process.



Metropolitan transportation planning

- Provide for performance-based approach and support national goals.
- Be consistent with the development of regional Intelligent Transportation System architectures.
- Prepare coordinated public transit-human services transportation plan.

Metropolitan transportation planning (continued)

- **Congestion management process** – shall address congestion management that provides for safe and effective integrated management and operation of the multimodal system.
- **Metropolitan transportation plan** – shall develop a 20-year transportation plan that considers the planning factors.
 - Long-range and short-range strategies and actions.
 - Review and update at least every 4 years.
 - Coordinate with the process for developing transportation control measures in a State Implementation Plan.
- **Transportation Improvement Program.**
- **Annual listing of obligated projects.**

Federal planning factors

- Consider and implement projects, strategies, and services that address the following factors.
 - Support the **economic vitality** of the metropolitan area, especially by enabling global competitiveness, productivity and efficiency.
 - Increase the **safety** of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
 - Increase the **security** of the transportation system for motorized and non-motorized users.
 - Increase **accessibility and mobility** of people and freight.
 - Enhance **travel and tourism**.
- Protect and enhance the **environment**, promote energy conservation, improve the quality of life and promote consistency between transportation improvements and state and local planned growth and economic development patterns.
- Enhance the **integration and connectivity** of the transportation system, across and between modes, for people and freight.
- Promote efficient **system management and operation**.
- Emphasize the **preservation** of the existing transportation system.
- Improve the **resiliency and reliability** of the transportation system and reduce or mitigate stormwater impacts of surface transportation.

Unified Planning Work Program

- Includes a discussion of the planning priorities facing the metropolitan planning area.
 - Identify work proposed for the next 1- or 2-year period by major activity and task, including activities that address the federal planning factors.
 - Who will perform work.
 - Schedule for completing the work.
 - Resulting products.
 - Proposed funding by activity/task.
 - Summary of total amounts and sources of federal and matching funds.

The work we have to do

- Operate and maintain the continuing **transportation planning process** within the metropolitan planning area.
- Federal **law/regulatory compliance** – maintain eligibility for federal funding.
- Unified Planning Work Program.
- Regional Transportation Plan.
- Transportation Improvement Program.
- Transportation performance measures.
- Congestion Management Process.
- Air quality conformity.





The work that facilitates required efforts

- Regional data.
- Land use/travel model.
- Technical assistance.
- Local transportation plan support.
- Transportation operations.
- Transportation demand management.

Continuing and upcoming efforts

- Regional Transportation Plan update.
- 2029-2032 Transportation Improvement Program policy update and calls for projects.
- Vision Zero/Safety initiatives.
- Ongoing federal discretionary awards.
- Local transportation/land use best practices and transportation-land use coordination.
- Transit-oriented development.
- Transit design standards.





Continuing, emerging, and future issues

- Future population and employment changes.
- Aging population.
- Leveraging transportation and land use for better outcomes.
- Transportation technology.
- Transit system optimization/future of mobility.
- Mobility as a service.
- Greenhouse gas emissions/air quality.
- Complete Streets and multimodal safety.
- Micromobility.
- Future of transportation demand management and telework.
- Funding limitations.



Overview of the current Unified Planning Work Program

Nine Objectives

1. Program administration and coordination
2. Planning coordination and outreach
3. Land use and development planning
4. Multimodal planning
5. Air quality
6. Project programming
7. Transportation systems operations and safety
8. Public transportation planning
9. Planning data and modeling



Objective 1.0 – Program administration and coordination

Administer the core metropolitan planning organization transportation planning program.

- Facilitate staff development and training.
- Maintain and update the Unified Planning Work Program.
- Ensure compliance with state and federal laws and regulations.

Objective 2.0 – Planning coordination and outreach

Involve the public, local governments, and stakeholders, and our regional partners in the planning process to address the transportation and development issues of the region and ensure outcomes that are consistent with Metro Vision goals and policies.

- Implement the Public Engagement Plan to engage the public.
- Coordinate with federal, state, and local partners.
- Develop visualizations to make data more digestible for the public.
- Assist local governments in implementing the Greenhouse Gas Mitigation Action Plan.

Objective 3.0 – Land use and development planning

Develop, refine, and implement Metro Vision, the region's long-range plan, as well as work to plan for land use, growth, and development, to enhance and improve the quality of life in the Denver region.

- Maintain, update, and implement Metro Vision.
- Conduct small-area planning.
- Conduct housing coordination planning.

Objective 4.0 – Multimodal planning

Develop, refine, and implement the Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan, as well as the various modal plans which help to implement its principles.

- Maintain and update the Regional Transportation Plan.
- Report on federal performance measures.
- Conduct corridor and community-based transportation planning.
- Conduct active transportation and transportation demand management planning.
- Conduct Complete Streets planning.
- Conduct freight planning.

Objective 5.0 – Air quality

Plan for improved air quality in the Denver region and conduct analyses to ensure the region meets federal air quality conformity standards.

- Perform air quality conformity analyses.
- Perform climate pollution reduction planning.

Objective 6.0 – Project programming

Identify and implement priorities within the metropolitan area by effectively developing and managing the Transportation Improvement Program.

- Implement the Regional Transportation Plan with projects that align with the project and program investment priorities.
- Maintain and update the TIP, including holding calls for projects.
- Manage the TIP set-asides.

Objective 7.0 – Transportation systems operations and safety

Implement regional priorities through strategies to improve the safety and effectiveness of the existing transportation system, explore innovative solutions, and protect air quality.

- Administer the Congestion Management Process.
- Conduct Intelligent Transportation Systems, operations, and technology planning and deployment.
- Conduct security planning.
- Conduct safety planning.
- Conduct innovative mobility planning.

Objective 8.0 – Public transportation planning

Plan and operate rapid transit corridors, the regional bus network and transit facilities.

- Conduct DRCOG-led transit-related planning.
 - Coordinated Transit Plan.
 - FTA Section 5310 Program.
 - Bus rapid transit planning.
- Conduct RTD-led transit-related planning.
 - Financial planning.
 - Facility planning.
 - Service planning.
 - FasTracks (Northwest Rail) planning.

Objective 9.0 – Planning data and modeling

Acquire and maintain data and tools to support the region's transportation and land use planning activities.

- Deploy geographic information systems tools.
- Conduct land use and transportation modeling.
- Maintain and update the Regional Data Catalog.



Menti exercise



Next steps

Anticipated upcoming schedule

- Ongoing – coordination with federal, state, and local partners and internal cross-divisional staff.
- June 13-July 3: Public comment period on draft 2026-2027 UPWP
- July 28: TAC recommendation
- August 18: RTC recommendation
- August 20: Board action



Thank you! Any questions?

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