

Board Work Session Summary

Wednesday, August 3, 2025

Meeting held via Zoom

Members/Alternates Present

Colleen Whitlow, Chair

Jeff Baker

Claire Levy

Austin Ward

Rebecca Lloyd

Kevin Flynn

Adam Paul

Andy Kerr

Susan Beruman

Sharon Davis

Nicole Speer

Deborah Mulvey

Tim Dietz

Tammy Maurer

Steve Douglas

Emily Baer

Georgia Koefed

George Lantz

Chuck Harmon

Brian Wong

Jeslin Shahrezaei

Stephen Barr

Larry Strock

Marissa Harmon

Alecia Brown

Joan Peck

Judi Kern

Laura Dennis

Richard Kondo

John Diak

Sarah Nurmela

Claire Carmelia

Bud Starker

Rachel Hultin

Town of Mead

Arapahoe County

Boulder County

City and County of Broomfield

Clear Creek County

City and County of Denver

City and County of Denver

Jefferson County

Gilpin County

City of Arvada

City of Boulder

City of Castle Pines

Town of Castle Rock

City of Centennial

City of Commerce City

Town of Erie

Town of Georgetown

City of Greenwood Village

Town of Idaho Springs

City of Lafayette

City of Lakewood

City of Littleton

Town of Lochbuie

City of Lone Tree

City of Lone Tree

City of Longmont

City of Louisville

Town of Mountain View

City of Northglenn

Town of Parker

City of Westminster

City of Westminster

City of Wheat Ridge

City of Wheat Ridge

Others Present: Douglas W. Rex, Executive Director, Melinda Stevens, Executive Assistant, DRCOG; Michele Riccio, Adams County; Danny Herrmann, Boulder County; Kent Moorman, Thornton; Tyler Bump, ECONorthwest; Hollie Velasquez Horvath, XCEL Energy; George Lux, Citizen; and DRCOG staff.

Chair Whitlow called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Status of Electrical Grid and Projected Energy Demands

Flo Raitano introduced Hollie Velasquez-Horvath, XCEL Energy, to provide an overview of the grid status and demands to the Directors. XCEL Energy serves approximately 1.6 million electric and 1.5 million natural gas customers across Colorado, with a reliability rate of nearly 99.98%. The company operates generation and transmission assets beyond its core service territory, including hydro facilities in the southwest. Guided by four priorities, safety, clean energy leadership, reliability, and affordability, XCEL has steadily reduced carbon emissions since 2005, achieving a 57% reduction and a 52% carbon-free energy mix as of 2024. In 2018, Xcel became the first U.S. utility to commit to 100% carbon-free electricity by 2050, setting an interim target of 80% by 2030, with current resource plans suggesting the potential to exceed that goal.

Historically, XCEL's system experienced rapid growth from the 1930s through the 1970s, particularly due to air conditioning adoption. From the 1970s to the 2000s, however, conservation and efficient appliances flattened load growth despite population increases. Since 2010, the company has focused on decarbonization, and more recently, it has faced new pressures from electrification (e.g., EVs and heat pumps) and major emerging demands from large-scale data centers. These trends could potentially double or triple Colorado's peak load, requiring massive infrastructure investments in generation, transmission, and distribution systems.

To meet this demand, XCEL has filed a "Just Transition" electric resource plan with the Colorado Public Utilities Commission, projecting the need for thousands of megawatts of new capacity by the 2030s. The company has also begun building over 500 miles of new transmission through the Colorado's Power Pathway project and is advancing new policies and distribution system planning approaches to proactively expand grid capacity. With \$22.5 billion earmarked for Colorado investments out of a broader \$45 billion enterprise-wide plan, XCEL is positioning itself to balance near-term growth pressures with its long-term commitments to carbon reduction, wildfire mitigation, affordability, and reliability in a rapidly changing energy landscape.

2050 Regional Housing Strategy Update

Sheila Lynch introduced Tyler Bump, ECONorthwest, to present and update on the strategy to the Directors. ECONorthwest, with DRCOG, is developing a Regional Housing Strategy that builds on the Housing Needs Assessment through a three-phase process: discovery, strategy development, and implementation. The work combines technical analysis, such as identifying activity centers, assessing displacement risks, and tracking local innovations, with broad engagement of stakeholders, advisory groups, and a steering committee. Early insights highlight both progress (zoning updates, affordability incentives, preservation programs, modular housing pilots, cross-jurisdiction collaborations, and philanthropic support) and challenges, particularly balancing regional coordination with local flexibility. Stakeholders emphasize the need for clear messaging, efficient funding pipelines, anti-displacement tools, and predictable processes, while calling for durable governance structures, shared data, and consistent frameworks. Ultimately, DRCOG's role is seen as convening and aligning systems to support diverse local implementation without overriding local control.

Directors raised questions about gaps in the housing strategy, emphasizing the need to address not just rentals but also homeownership opportunities, particularly for younger adults, first-time buyers, and those seeking starter homes. They highlighted barriers such as high costs, student debt, and childcare, and asked about potential funding mechanisms like low-interest state-backed loans. Other comments focused on the scarcity of affordable, accessible housing for people with disabilities and older adults, urging its inclusion in long-term planning. Concerns were also voiced about fragmented and complex funding systems for affordable housing developers, with calls for more coordination across jurisdictions. Participants touched on the impacts of construction defect legislation on housing supply, the importance of defining “regional” at a workable scale (such as county-level partnerships), and the challenge of ensuring housing types and affordability levels are fairly distributed. Overall, the discussion underscored the need for clear coordination, accessible funding, diverse housing options, and equitable regional approaches that respect local contexts.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 5:27 p.m.