



DRCOG Annual Report 2013

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Highlights of 2013

1 Advocacy Efforts Put \$4 Million Back into Senior Programs

Funding for older adult services keeps seniors independent, in their own homes and out of dramatically more expensive Medicare/Medicaid-subsidized care facilities. With the dire effects of federal sequestration evident, DRCOG stepped out front in a big way in 2013 to take that message to legislators at the state Capitol and on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. **And DRCOG's efforts got results.**

Colorado once again showed its commitment to its older residents in May, when **Governor Hickenlooper signed Senate Bill 13-127** to increase the Older Coloradans Cash Fund from \$8 million to \$10 million. DRCOG played a major role with that bill, bringing together a coalition of senior advocates and working with sponsors Sen. Lucia Guzman and Rep. Dianne Primavera to show the bang-for-the-buck value of AAA services, such as home-delivered meals, transportation, homemaking and chores, and dental, vision and hearing treatments. Coupled with a 2012 allocation of \$2 million from the General Fund for senior services, **Colorado has an extra \$4 million available in 2014 for older adults.** This helps the state's AAAs counter the effects of sequestration, but certainly comes nowhere close to fixing the problem.



DRCOG representatives also visited Capitol Hill twice in 2013, with another visit scheduled in early 2014, to tell our Congressional representatives about **Colorado's unfair treatment in the current Older Americans Act reauthorization bill.** Colorado seniors get less than they should and stand to lose out on \$5.5 million in meal, transportation and support services over the next six years because of the Act's outdated and unfair funding formula. Colorado and other states with fast-growing senior populations are penalized under the Act's outdated funding formula, which relies on 13-year-old population data. While Colorado's senior population is growing at a 32.10 percent rate, our seniors are being hit with the steepest sequester cuts (-15.46 percent for support services and -6.87 percent for nutrition services). In contrast, states with relatively slow growth rates continue to receive funding based on old population numbers and remain virtually untouched by cuts. **DRCOG continues to mobilize Colorado's AAAs and AAAs from similarly affected states to call for dollars to flow where seniors are today by changing the funding formula and reauthorizing the Older Americans Act. Our efforts are paying off. We are winning support.**



2

Community-based Care Transitions Program Expected to Significantly Reduce Readmissions

In early 2013, **DRCOG was selected to participate in the pilot Community-based Care Transitions Program (CCTP)** of the Centers for Medicaid & Medicare Services. The program is testing models to improve care for Medicare beneficiaries transitioning from the hospital to other care settings. DRCOG's demonstration project, the only one in Colorado, runs for two years, with the potential for three additional one-year extensions.

The program's **goal is to improve care while reducing readmissions for high-risk Medicare beneficiaries.**

Through the program, DRCOG has been building relationships and working with Exempla Saint Joseph Hospital, Medical Center of Aurora, North Suburban Medical Center, Presbyterian/St. Luke's Medical Center, Rose Medical Center, Sky Ridge Medical Center, Swedish Medical Center and more than 50 other community service organizations and providers. This partnership engages and empowers Medicare beneficiaries to actively manage their own care and better navigate the health care system on their own.



Patients accepted into the 30-day program receive assistance from transition coaches who meet with them to go over their care instructions and prescriptions, and guide them in taking charge of their own health care.

At year's end, **CCTP's statistics show significant progress.** Of our enrolled patients to date, we estimate the 30-day all-cause readmission rate to be approximately 4.88 percent. Considering our partner hospitals' baseline 30-day readmission rate is 16.2 percent, CCTP has already had an impact on reducing readmission patients at highest risk of returning to the hospital. CCTP staff have also found a combined total of 87 medication discrepancies among coached patients. That's key because research shows a patient who leaves the hospital with even one medication error is 2 ½ times more likely to be readmitted. By identifying medication errors and increasing patients' self-management skills, we are **saving Medicare money and helping patients maintain healthier lifestyles.**

3

The People Select Centennial Center Park as Live Work Play Winner

DRCOG's popular Live Work Play awards program and event, brand-new in 2011, returned in 2013, with new awards presented to celebrate even more reasons the Denver region is consistently highlighted as one of the nation's best places to live for people of all ages, incomes and abilities. More than 150 people attended the event at the newly remodeled McNichols Building.



Live Work Play's popular People's Choice award returned, with **metro voters selecting Centennial Center Park** as their favorite project from 10 finalists in online voting.

- ◆ 40 West Arts District
- ◆ OldeTown Arvada
- ◆ TAXI Community
- ◆ Washington Village Cohousing
- ◆ The Town of Bennett Comprehensive Plan
- ◆ Denver Botanic Gardens
- ◆ Centennial Center Park
- ◆ Continuum of Colorado, Seniors' Choice
- ◆ Lone Tree's Ridgeway Community and
- ◆ The Colorado Wedding District.



Way to Go Commuter Champion Awards debuted at the Live Work Play event to honor businesses and individuals who promote commute options, helping reduce traffic and improve air quality. Employer Champions included the Boulder Valley School District, the Denver Zoological Foundation and Boulder County. Individual Commuter Champions included Ean Tafoya, Sen. Andy Kerr and Pia Sabina Valeriana, all of whom are committed to options besides the single-occupant vehicle.

4 Sustainable Communities Initiative Delivered Great Results in 2013

In full swing during 2013, the Sustainable Communities Initiative (SCI) notched exciting accomplishments. DRCOG staff was invited to share our work during peer exchanges with the Twin Cities and the Federal Highways Administration working with Atlanta.

DRCOG hosted semi-annual Consortium meetings with grant partners and stakeholders. In March, Puget Sound Regional Council staff joined us to share lessons learned by grantees working on similar projects. The October meeting featured a Brookings Institution fellow and the Colorado state demographer addressing planning for changing demographics.

Corridor planning and implementation activities flourished with **DRCOG successfully convening a working group and stakeholder committee for the East, Gold and Northwest corridors**. Collaborative efforts produced a vision and goals for each corridor as well as transit-oriented development implementation strategies addressing housing, economic development, and funding and partnerships. Each corridor working group also collaborated to identify one station area along the corridor for additional planning funds, called Catalytic Projects. Catalytic site work for the West Corridor at the Sheridan Station began in earnest for the City of Lakewood's 20-Minute Neighborhood Study, designed to create and enhance neighborhoods where residents have easy, convenient access by walking or bicycling to many of the places and services they use daily. Lakewood and consultant MIG hosted a community



workshop in September and held focus groups related to mobility, housing, health and business improvement throughout the fall. Lakewood also worked with ArtSpace USA from Minneapolis, Minnesota, an SCI resource partner, to develop artist live/work developments along the West Line.

Stakeholder engagement has been integrally woven throughout grant activities. Grant partner FRESA: Good Jobs Strong Communities complemented corridor stakeholder committees with outreach to specifically targeted under-represented communities, including low-income individuals and families, and communities of color with one-on-one resident meetings, presentations and leadership trainings. Transit Alliance hosted a customized Citizens Academy for the East and Gold Corridors in the fall of 2013, providing grassroots leaders with a fundamental working knowledge of how to be involved in the regional transit process and better communicate its benefits to their communities. In November, **DRCOG launched its new public engagement tool, OUR Shared Vision**, to broaden our ability to interact with citizens beyond the scope of the traditional public meeting, and gather feedback on programs and projects that affect our region.



As part of the SCI, DRCOG also partnered with Mile High Connects to transform the Denver Regional Equity Atlas into an interactive online tool to help community members better understand the opportunities related to a robust regional transit system. Staff hosted focus groups to help identify audience and key functions of the resource in early spring and spent subsequent months developing the program before a December 2013 soft launch.

5 Boomer Bond and Housing Diversity Top Accomplishments of Metro Vision Implementation



Work moved forward to implement projects in our current plan, Metro Vision 2035, following through on recommendations of the Metro Vision Implementation Task Force, and further **set the stage for adoption of a 2040 plan in 2014.**

The Board amended Metro Vision in May to include language on wildfire hazard areas. The addition to the plan recommends that development in areas designated as high wildfire hazard zones in community wildfire protection plans and/or county comprehensive land use plans follow the most recent Colorado State Forest Service Firewise construction guidelines or local wildfire mitigation regulations. It also recommends local governments, where practical, guide new development away from high wildfire hazard zones.

The Boomer Bond, a key component of the 2035 plan, is a project to help local governments understand the impacts of an aging population and arm them with strategies, tools and policies to meet the needs of that population. DRCOG and Tri-County Health Department hosted workshops in 2013 to help refine the draft Boomer Bond



assessment tool and to get input on the development of a toolkit. The toolkit contains **information and resources to help create healthy communities where people can age in place**, with the services and facilities they need for successful, independent aging.

In the fall, DRCOG released its "Regional Housing Diversity Study," prepared by consultant Economic and Planning Systems Inc., to examine the construction of for-sale, multifamily residential units in the Denver region. The report concluded that without a robust condominium market, Metro Vision urban center goals will be difficult to achieve.

In other Metro Vision 2035 efforts, member jurisdictions were hard at work last year using TIP funding to help implement Metro Vision with Urban Center and station area master planning, exploring innovative planning, zoning and urban design strategies. The City of Louisville explored next steps for its downtown station area on the Northwest rail line with a focus on creating multimodal connections to the station and completed preliminary design plans for the Louisville Gateway Underpass. Commerce City developed a revitalization plan with a focus on the planned commuter rail station at East 72nd Avenue and Colorado Boulevard. Thornton developed physical design recommendations and an implementation strategy to spur reinvestment and create a viable Urban Center in south Thornton. The study builds on the South Thornton Revitalization Plan, and includes mobility recommendations for the area, as well as high-level framework plans for five development nodes. The City of Lakewood completed outreach and work on the Downtown Lakewood Connectivity and Urban Design Plan to improve walkability, wayfinding and visual identity in downtown Lakewood.



6

New Approaches Evident in Metro Vision 2040

Work continued on the Metro Vision 2040, which will extend the planning horizon for the region's long-range plan and incorporate new policies and programs to make life better in the Denver metro area. Much of the work in 2013 set the stage for Metro Vision 2040 policy discussions occurring early in 2014.

With support from the SCI, the **Board created two new temporary committees** to help achieve milestones connected with the development and adoption of Metro Vision 2040. The Metro Vision Planning Advisory Committee (MVPAC) and the Citizens Advisory Committee (CAC) are both committees of the Board of Directors and are tasked with engaging stakeholders in the Metro Vision planning process. In the fall, DRCOG also partnered with Transit Alliance to conduct a Metro Vision 2040 regional Citizens' Academy, providing an opportunity for valuable feedback on new topic areas housing and economic development, as well as other regional issues like community health and wellness, transportation and access to opportunity.

Working with the MVPAC, DRCOG developed an online survey to help the region **gain a better understanding of local growth and development challenges and**



opportunities. DRCOG launched the Local Government Survey to help identify key local issues and priorities that should be explored as part of the Metro Vision 2040 effort. The survey focused on identifying innovative planning practices from around the region that can be shared among member governments by looking at four different topic areas: population demographics and housing trends, multimodal transportation, growth and development, and emerging issues and other topics. A diverse cross-section of 27 communities participated in the survey, and survey results were released at year's end.



Metro Vision 2040
A program of DRCOG

DRCOG continued its very popular Metro Vision Idea Exchange meetings to examine in detail topics being discussed as Metro Vision 2040 moves forward. The events are opportunities for member government land use and transportation planners, local elected officials, other local government staff and stakeholders from the private sector to share information and ideas, and learn about best practices that support Metro Vision goals. 2013 concluded with a session on Transforming the Community Fabric, with Community Health and Wellness slated for early 2014.

In late 2013, Board members received information on scenario analysis results. Scenarios are modeled to produce transportation, air quality, population and other outcome measures, with results serving as one of several factors for the Board to consider in policy decision-making for the Metro Vision 2040 process. **Regional scenarios contain “what if” factors** for the FOCUS travel model, based on year 2040 assumptions, and represent distinct concepts to explore broad regional trends. The scenarios were developed, based on direction from the Metro Vision Issues Committee, and with help from the Metro Vision Planning Advisory Committee and the Transportation Advisory Committee. The scenarios include:

- ◆ additional express managed lanes and arterials
- ◆ additional express managed lanes; new transit facilities and service; increased bicycle/pedestrian attractiveness
- ◆ 50 percent of new housing and 75 percent of new jobs in designated urban centers
- ◆ uses current local government assumptions for new housing and jobs in designated urban centers
- ◆ doubles auto operating costs beyond inflation; 50 percent of new housing and 75 percent of new jobs in urban centers and major transit corridors

7 Organizational Development Work Begins with Fresh Look at Mission and Vision

DRCOG began examining its future direction and how best to continue its long, proud track record as forward-leaning and successful. Executive Director Jennifer Schaufele started the discussion with a presentation to the Board at its September meeting, asking Board members and key DRCOG staff to join in **looking at DRCOG's structure, governance, dues structure, activities and more.** At year's end, a

Is everyone clear on DRCOG's mission?
What is it DRCOG does?
What is DRCOG's long-term vision?
What is the role of a Board member?
What are the programs of the organization?
What will DRCOG do no matter what?

newly hired organizational development director convened a group of Board members and staff to take a long, hard look at DRCOG's mission statement to make sure it's clear and defines what DRCOG is and does. A new mission statement is expected in early 2014, setting the stage for continuing discussions on more key topics. The effort is particularly timely as DRCOG concludes its sixth decade of service in the Denver region in 2014, leading up to its 60th anniversary in February 2015.

8 New Technology and Partnership Help Region

As we do every two years, in 2013 DRCOG began work on its popular aerial photography project, which acquires and delivers high-resolution aerial photography of the Denver region at a **major cost-savings to participating local governments and other organizational partners**. Since 2002, DRAPP has been providing a common base map of imagery for the region to use for collaboration and decision-making. Imagery is scheduled to be available to participants at the end of 2014.

The region's devastating September floods prompted another **win-win, cost-sharing cooperative venture** between DRCOG, 11 member governments, the U.S. Geological Survey and the Federal Emergency Management Agency to acquire elevation data, known as LiDAR or Light Detection and Ranging. To assess damage and assist with flood recovery efforts in Colorado, FEMA and USGS used LiDAR data. DRCOG

and its partners contributed \$385,000 to the \$2.1-million project, and in return will receive the entire dataset this spring to help with our own urban planning efforts. A number of our member governments expressed their appreciation and thanks to DRCOG for our work on this project. The partnership is a great example of collaboration in our region that enabled the purchase of previously unaffordable information, helped our region in a time of need, and will provide useful information for regional planning for many years to come.



Credit: Lex Ivey, TerraCognitoGIS

9 TIP Awards Additional \$7 Million to 37 Projects

Through several funding pools created for targeted transportation purposes, **DRCOG awarded a total of \$7 million for fiscal years 2014 and 2015 to 37 projects**. The three funding pools include:

- ◆ specialized transit funding to address the mobility needs of seniors and individuals with disabilities,
- ◆ regional travel demand management for programs that focus on transportation options, and
- ◆ station area master plan/urban center studies to support local planning to create visions and action strategies that contribute to the achievement of local and regional goals.

Way to Go Continues Racking up Accomplishments

Energized by a new name and a formal partnership with the region's transportation management associations/organizations to direct its efforts, DRCOG's Way to Go program racked up the accomplishments in 2013.

Two new clever and effective **campaigns made commuters think about their commutes**. The first, "Stop Being an SOV," raised awareness of the new Way to Go brand and single-occupant vehicles, or SOVs, in the region. It generated a 43 percent increase in traffic to our site, with people not only visiting, but actually looking into and finding ridematches. The second campaign, "The Future isn't Here," used billboards, bus signs and radio advertising to talk about all sorts of wonderful commuting options envisioned for the future, while reminding everyone Way to Go has solutions for today's commuting challenges since the future isn't here yet. That campaign is carrying into 2014.

Way to Go launched two new websites in 2013 – the first for Bike to Work Day on June 26 and the second for the Way to Go brand. Both sites are inviting and easy to use, and the response has been extremely positive. In fact, when Way to Go launched the

Bike to Work Day website and sent the first email blast to previous participants, we experienced record-setting web traffic, with thousands signing up immediately. Development continued on a **first-of-its-kind multimodal trip planning platform** scheduled to launch in January 2014. This truly innovative program will allow commuters to fully explore all options on a single site, making it easier than ever to find non-SOV options.

Bike to Work Day itself was a great success, with more than 27,000 participants. And it's working. Two University of Colorado graduate students conducted research on the event for the Association for Commuter Transportation and concluded: "Bike to Work Day impacts diverse cycling populations differently, and this may be its greatest strength. It provides a supportive and fun climate for those who do not regularly cycle to try it, and sustains the behavior of those who currently bicycle to work."

At year's end, Way to Go hosted the **first-ever regional TDM summit** of local government and non-profit staff working in the area of transportation demand management. All agreed it was productive and expressed the desire to continue meeting twice a year.



11

A Nimbler Process for Future FasTracks Reviews

To reflect FasTracks' evolving status, in 2013 **DRCOG moved with the times and changed the way it fulfills its mandated FasTracks review responsibilities.** Now, instead of an annual review, RTD submits Change Reports whenever significant FasTracks modifications are proposed, such as those related to funding, alignment or technology. The modified process adjusts the timing, not the scale, of DRCOG's FasTracks review process and **lets DRCOG respond nimbly in real time as changes occur.**

The **Board approved its first change report** in December, in which RTD proposed financial and project scope changes that included relocating the Montview Station along the I-225 line and extending the North Metro Rail Line from the 72nd Avenue Station to the 124th Avenue Station as a funded project in the Fiscally Constrained 2035 Regional Transportation Plan.

Since 1990 legislation directed it, the DRCOG Board has approved the method of financing and the technology for RTD light rail transit projects before construction. The Board took on an added task in 2004, requiring an annual FasTracks review. But, with approximately 70 percent of the FasTracks program currently under construction or completed, the change report is more responsive.

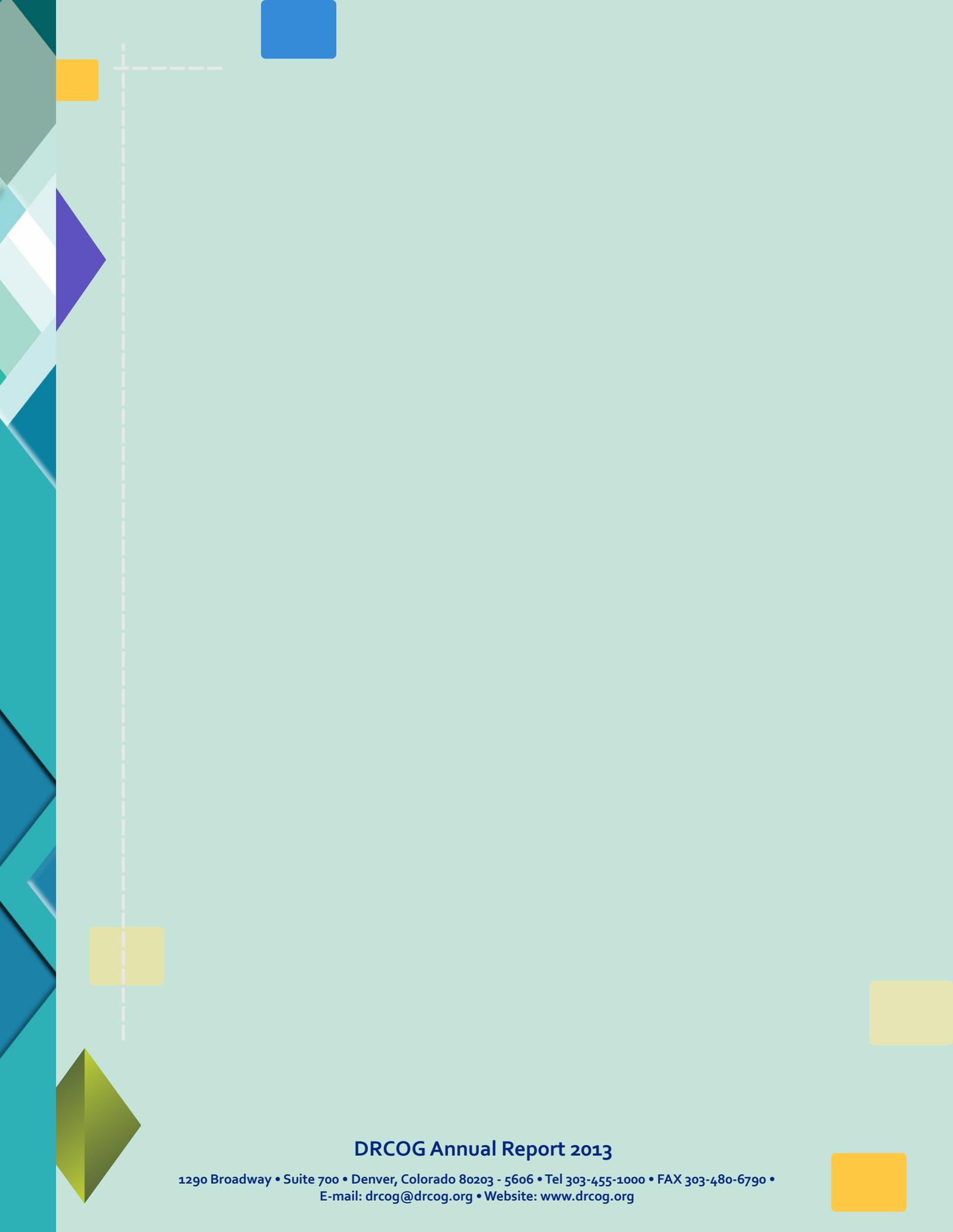


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DRCOG Recognized for Excellence for Peoria Project

At year's end, DRCOG was honored to learn we were selected, along with RTD, the City of Aurora, and the City and County of Denver, to receive the **Carla Madison Award from Transit Alliance for the Peoria Crossing project.** That project involved building an overpass bridge just west of the current Peoria Street alignment that spans the Union Pacific Railroad and East Rail Line tracks to separate vehicle traffic from passing trains. During the award presentation, the **partnership and cooperation on the project to improve regional mobility and connectivity were hailed.** Board Chair Sue Horn represented DRCOG at the award presentation. The award honors the memory of Denver City Councilwoman Carla Madison who served on Transit Alliance's board of directors, and championed livability and improved mobility for citizens throughout the region.





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