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civic academy

*Welcome 2026 participants!*

Civic Academy: Week one  
September 29, 2026

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DENVER REGIONAL COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

We make life better!



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# Agenda

|           |                                            |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------|
| 6:00 p.m. | Greetings, directory photos, dinner served |
| 6:15 p.m. | Let's kick off the 2026 Civic Academy!     |
| 6:25 p.m. | Guide to web portal and social media       |
| 6:35 p.m. | Shake your assets bingo                    |
| 6:50 p.m. | Introducing Metro Vision                   |
| 7:00 p.m. | The power of regionalism: panel discussion |
| 8:15 p.m. | Moving forward and next steps              |
| 8:30 p.m. | Adjourn                                    |



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**Welcome to the 2026 Civic Academy!**

# *Welcome to Civic Academy!*

- Civic Academy is a nationally recognized leadership development program with nearly 20 years of developing community advocates for a strong Denver region.
- Network - you will be a part of a network of 1,000-plus graduates.
- The curriculum closely reflects the themes in Denver's regional plan, Metro Vision. Seven weeks of content, discussions and skill building ahead. We will go over this in more detail at the end of the evening.



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# *Housekeeping*

- Wi-Fi
- Restrooms
- Food and beverages
- Photos

## *DRCOG Civic Academy contacts*

- Angie Shelbourn, Planner of Public Engagement
- Sheila Lynch, Director of Regional Planning and Development
- Steve Erickson, Director of Communications and Marketing



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# Course Overview

- **September 29:** Welcome and introductions - The power of regionalism
- **October 6:** How to optimize demography
- **October 13:** Field trip - Creating safe and active community spaces (5:30 start)
- **October 20:** Changing the narrative surrounding income-aligned housing
- **October 27:** Changing multimodal transportation behavior
- **November 3:** Regional vision for nature
- **November 10:** Individual action plan presentations and celebration



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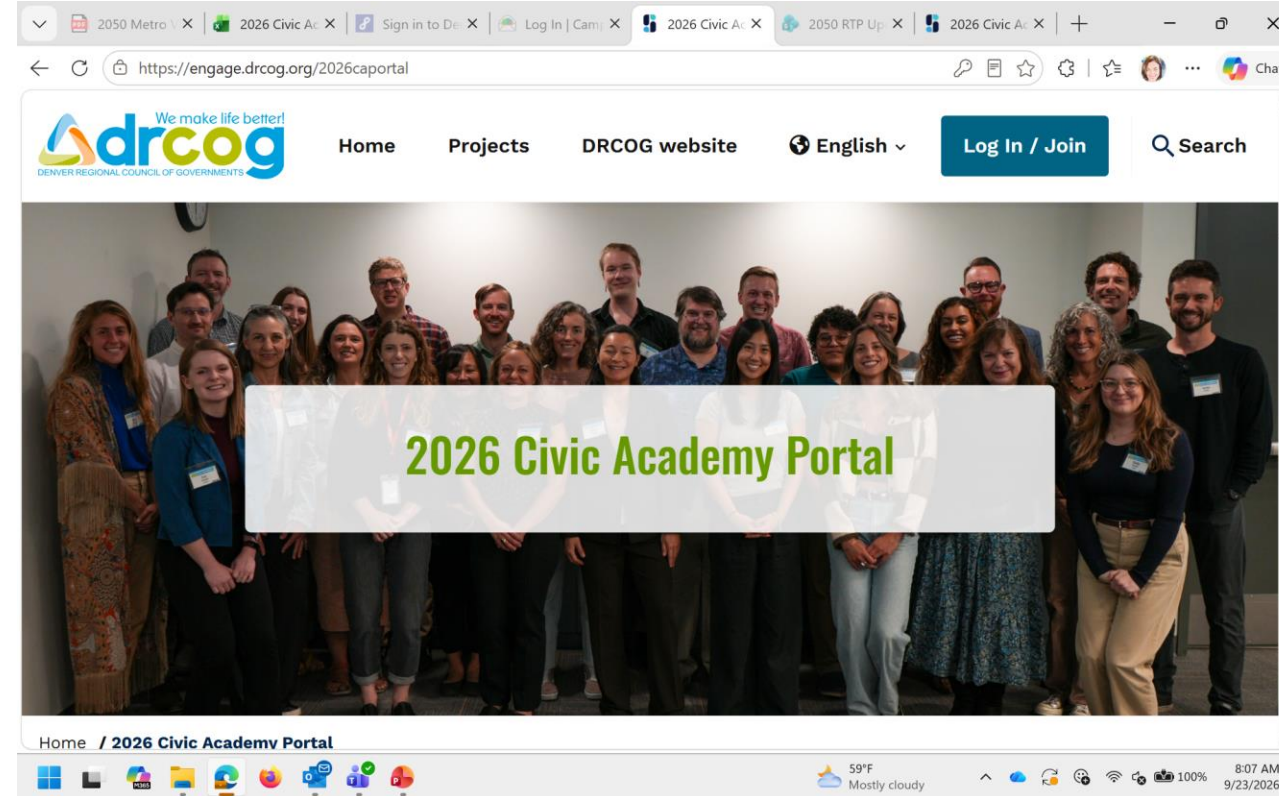
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**Web portal and social media**

# DRCOG web portal

- [www.engage.drcog.org/2026caportal](https://www.engage.drcog.org/2026caportal)
- Reference materials
- Weekly survey
- Session materials
- Conversations per session
- Chat with fellow members



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# *DRCOG social media*

- DRCOG social media accounts
  - Facebook: @Denver.Regional.Council.Of.Governments
  - X: @DRCOGorg
  - Instagram: @DRCOGorg
  - LinkedIn: Denver-Regional-Council-Of-Governments
- Hashtags to use with your social posts
  - #CivicAcademy
  - #DRCOG
  - #CivicChat



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# *DRCOG social media inspiration*

## Ideas for weekly content

1. When you hear an interesting quote by a speaker or get an “aha!” moment during class, feel free to share about that on your personal social media account, tag us and use the hashtag **#CivicChat**
2. Take photos during interactive class exercises or during off-site field trips and tag us so we can reshare on DRCOG’s social media channels!
3. Has a session opened your eyes to something about your community? Post about it, tag us and use the hashtag **#CivicChat**



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*Icebreaker*

# Shake Your Assets

A black and white photograph of a group of people sitting at a table in a meeting. In the foreground, a woman with long blonde hair and glasses is looking towards the right. Behind her, a man is also looking in the same direction. To the left, another woman is partially visible. On the table, there is a laptop and a can of water.

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*Sheila Lynch, DRCOG*

# Metro Vision Overview

# Mission and Vision

- **Mission:** The Denver Regional Council of Governments is a planning organization where local governments collaborate to establish guidelines, set policy, and allocate funding in the areas of:
  - Growth and development
  - Aging and disability resources
  - Transportation and personal mobility
- **Vision:** Our region is a diverse network of vibrant, connected, lifelong communities with a broad spectrum of housing, transportation and employment, complemented by world-class natural and built environments.



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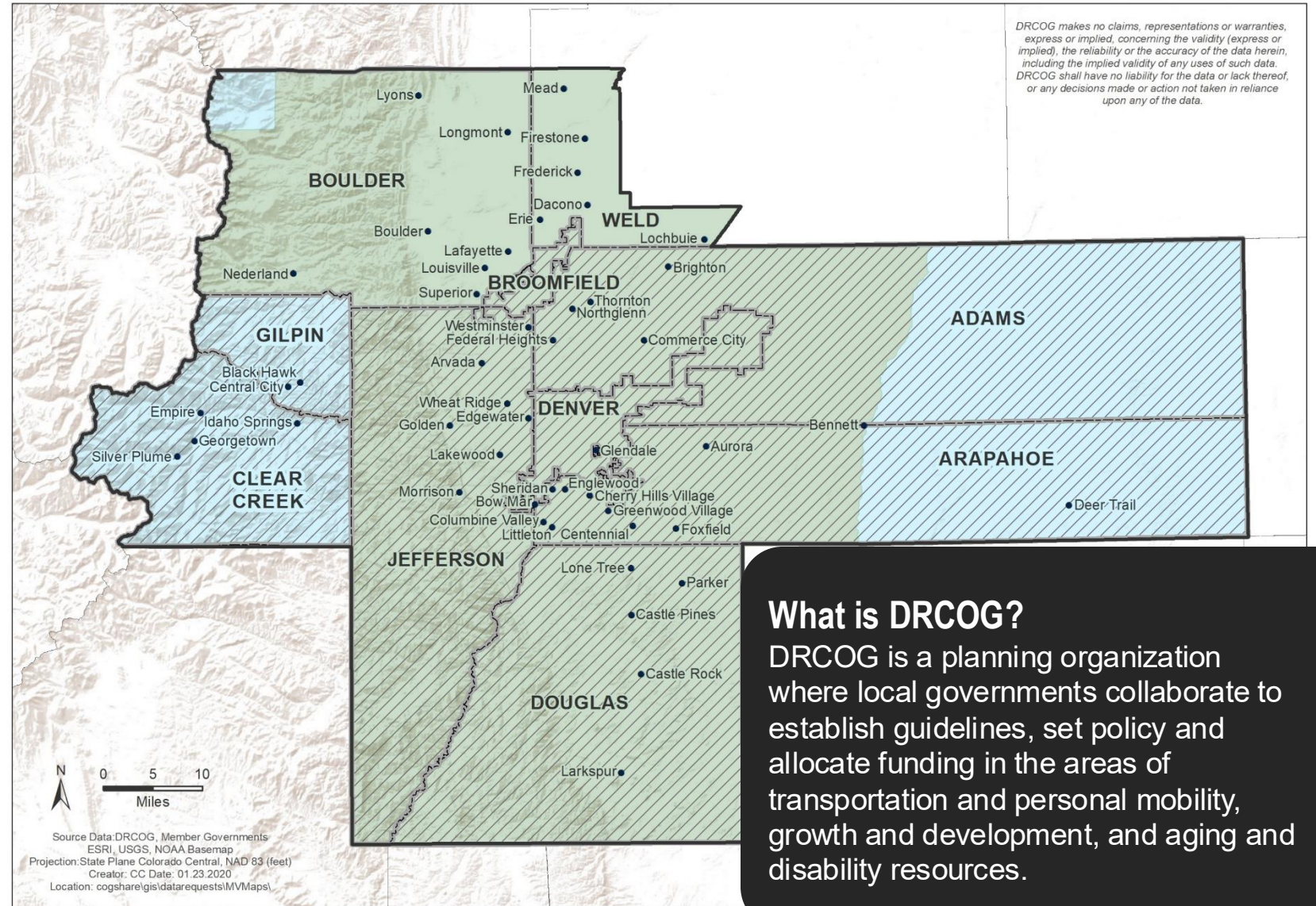
# Regional Representation



- **58 member governments** spanning the region, plus **four non-voting representatives**.
- Culture is **collaborative** – the Board cooperatively solves regional problems.
- The Board works toward regional goals while **respecting the visions** of each community.

# DRCOG's Planning Area

|           |                                                                  |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
|           |                                                                  |
| Area      | <b>~10 counties</b><br>(58 member governments)                   |
|           | <b>5,288 square miles</b><br>(comparable to Connecticut)         |
|           | <b>3.4 million people</b><br>(comparable to Utah)                |
|           | <b>Ute, Cheyenne and Arapaho peoples</b> (traditional territory) |
| Elevation | <b>From Grays Peak</b><br>(14,278 feet)                          |
|           | <b>To Badger Creek</b><br>(4,505 feet)                           |
| Roles     | <b>Regional planning commission</b> (state statute)              |
|           | <b>Area Agency on Aging</b> (federal)                            |



## What is DRCOG?

DRCOG is a planning organization where local governments collaborate to establish guidelines, set policy and allocate funding in the areas of transportation and personal mobility, growth and development, and aging and disability resources.

# *Regional Planning and Development*

- Metro Vision furthers a **shared vision** of the future of the metro area, covering:
  - Growth and development
  - Transportation
  - Environment
- Updated regularly to account for a **20-year** planning horizon, the **current update** toward 2040.



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# *Civic Academy and Metro Vision*



“to make and adopt a **regional plan** for the physical development of the territory within the boundaries of the region”

Colorado Revised Statutes 30-28-106

# *Metro Vision – Our Place, Our Plan*



# *Metro Vision themes – A Connected Multimodal Region*



## **A connected multimodal region**

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# *Metro Vision – Healthy, Inclusive, Livable Communities*



**Healthy,  
inclusive  
and livable  
communities**

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# *Metro Vision – A Vibrant Regional Economy*



**A vibrant  
regional  
economy**

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# *Metro Vision – An Efficient Predictable Development Pattern*



*An efficient and  
predictable  
development  
pattern*

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# *Metro Vision – A Safe and Resilient Natural & Built Environment*



*A safe and  
resilient natural  
and built  
environment*

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A black and white photograph of three men in conversation. The man on the left has a beard and is wearing a dark button-down shirt with a name tag that says 'Justin'. The man in the middle is wearing a patterned shirt and a tie. The man on the right is wearing a light-colored striped polo shirt. They are all looking towards the right. In the background, other people are visible, including a woman with long dark hair and a man with dreadlocks.

## Regionalism panel and discussion

## *The power of regionalism: Panelists*

### DRCOG Executive Committee members

- Colleen Whitlow, Mayor - Mead
- Jeslin Shahrezaei, Council Member - Lakewood
- Steve Conklin, Mayor - Edgewater



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A grayscale background image showing a group of people in a meeting or workshop. A woman with glasses is in the foreground, looking to the right. Other people are blurred in the background.

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**Individual action plans and next steps**

## *Developing your action plan*

Think about and decide on an individual action plan.

- Beyond work, think about your passion - what brings you here today?
- You'll have opportunities to discuss your plan at each session.
- Your idea will likely evolve throughout the academy.
- Use the discussion area of the web portal to brainstorm with fellow participants.
- Civic Academy staff is happy to help!



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# *What is an action plan?*

## All action plans include:

- Main goal
- Objectives
- Tasks
- Realistic and actionable implementation details

## Benefits:

- Raise awareness
- Increase involvement
- Learn

# *Presenting your action plan*

## Final session: Nov. 10

- Three minutes maximum each.
- May use presentation slides (five or less), but not required.
- You select your presentation style - formal or casual, reserved or creative - you choose.
- Email your individual action plan worksheet and up to five presentation slides (if used) to [ashelbourn@drcog.org](mailto:ashelbourn@drcog.org) by Nov. 8.

## Questions?



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