



Financial plan

Appendix E

Contents

Revenues 5

Expenditures.....20

Project prioritization.....23

Conclusion 25

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This appendix documents the financial methodology and assumptions used to develop the 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan. The purpose of the financial plan is to demonstrate fiscal constraint, which ensures that the Regional Transportation Plan reflects realistic assumptions about future revenues for investment.

A long-range transportation plan must contain a financial plan that demonstrates how the adopted plan can be implemented, indicates resources from public and private sources that are reasonably expected to be available to carry out the plan, and recommends financing strategies for needed projects and programs.

The Denver Regional Council of Governments, in coordination with the Colorado Department of Transportation, Regional Transportation District, local governments, special districts and authorities, and various special funding agencies, estimated total revenues available for transportation purposes. The financial analysis covers 25 years — 2026 through 2050 — split into multiple funding tiers. The analysis includes federal, state, local and private revenues. The major steps for developing the financial plan include:

- 1) Estimating the amount of revenue available out to 2050 for all aspects of the transportation system in coordination with regional, state and federal partners.
- 2) Determining the amount available for individually listed projects versus funding allocated to program expenses.
- 3) Evaluating and prioritizing projects to determine the best use of limited regional funding.

Table 1: Financial summary by staging period

Staging period	Revenues	Expenditures	Balance
2026-2030	\$28,202,663,903	\$26,803,418,555	\$1,399,245,347
2031-2035	\$38,092,157,028	\$36,924,271,546	\$1,167,885,482
2036-2040	\$40,533,399,589	\$39,556,018,274	\$977,381,315
2041-2050	\$101,173,248,434	\$97,300,653,205	\$3,872,595,229
Total	\$208,001,468,954	\$200,584,361,580	\$7,417,107,374

Revenues

A total of \$208 billion in funding is estimated to be available through the plan's horizon year, in year-of-expenditure dollars, from federal, state, local and private sources. The estimate includes:

- DRCOG-administered funds: \$8 billion.
- CDOT-administered funds: \$22.4 billion.
- RTD-administered funds: \$39 billion.
- Other Regional Roadway System funds: \$33.1 billion.
- Non-Regional Roadway System funds: \$106.2 billion.

Table 2: Revenues by staging period

Staging period	Revenues (Current year)	Revenues (Year of expenditure)
2026-2030	\$23,419,338,356	\$28,202,663,903
2031-2035	\$26,242,655,362	\$38,092,157,028
2036-2040	\$24,264,442,920	\$40,533,399,589
2041-2050	\$48,881,510,710	\$101,173,248,434
Total	\$122,807,947,348	\$208,001,468,954

Revenue forecast methodology

Unless otherwise noted, a standard inflation rate of 2.9% was used to inflate current-year dollars into year-of-expenditure dollars. Revenues were inflated each year out to 2050. The revenue across five years was then combined to provide an available amount to program within that time period and for projects to draw from. Project costs were inflated to the midpoint of a five-year funding tier to provide better fiscal constraint analysis but provide some flexibility in project implementation. (The five-year funding tiers do not always match the associated staging periods for air quality conformity listed in the tables.)

DRCOG revenues

DRCOG is anticipated to have an estimated \$8.5 billion through the plan horizon. Funds identified as DRCOG-administered include funding types identified in CDOT's Program Distribution, a regional funding measure and transit funds identified through collaboration with RTD. An estimated \$500 million of the total available to DRCOG is assumed from the discretionary funds detailed in Table 6.

Table 3: DRCOG revenues

Funding type	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	2041-2050	Total (2026-2050)
Surface Transportation Block Grant-Metro	\$330,097,112	\$420,480,850	\$535,716,798	\$1,550,318,264	\$2,836,613,023
Transportation Alternatives	\$42,070,907	\$54,058,620	\$69,401,740	\$203,423,456	\$368,954,723
Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement	\$289,047,082	\$368,317,205	\$469,328,512	\$1,359,118,392	\$2,485,811,192
Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options Fund	\$71,544,049	\$82,879,670	\$100,902,691	\$367,296,978	\$622,623,388
Carbon Reduction Program	\$45,338,041	\$57,831,860	\$73,587,474	\$213,135,739	\$389,893,114

Table 3: DRCOG revenues (continued)

Funding type	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	2041-2050	Total (2026-2050)
Regional funding measure	Not applicable	\$237,649,028	\$274,165,571	\$681,187,102	\$1,193,001,701
Section 5310	\$16,405,128	\$18,925,898	\$21,834,003	\$54,248,391	\$111,413,418
Total	\$794,502,320	\$1,240,143,129	\$1,544,936,788	\$4,428,728,322	\$8,008,310,559

Program Distribution

DRCOG staff rely on CDOT's Program Distribution to develop revenue forecasts for funds DRCOG administers. Program Distribution is a statewide process; DRCOG staff participated to determine the proportion and amounts in each program area and funding type available to the Denver region. Funding administered by DRCOG and included in the Program Distribution includes Section 5310 funds, Surface Transportation Block Grant-Metro program funds, Transportation Alternative program funds, Carbon Reduction Program funds, and Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program funds.

Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options Fund

With the passage of Colorado Senate Bill 21-260, the Multimodal Options Fund program was extended past its original expiration date and renamed the Multimodal Transportation and Mitigation Options Fund program. DRCOG staff relied on guidance developed by CDOT to estimate revenue available through the program.

Regional funding measure

The Denver region has a recent history of passing regional transportation funding measures, which DRCOG staff took into consideration when developing revenue forecasts. Staff assumed the passage of a quarter-cent sales tax in the Denver region, with funding becoming available in 2031. Staff have been engaged in preliminary conversations with the Board of Directors to explore the passage and implementation of a regional funding measure. The regional funding measure assumes \$131 million (in 2026 dollars) brought in each year to the region, with \$32.8 million available to DRCOG and the remaining amount directed to local governments.

Federal Transit Administration formula funds (Section 5310)

DRCOG staff reviewed the full-year apportionments under Section 5310 (Enhanced Mobility of Seniors and Individuals with Disabilities) for the Denver-Aurora, Colorado, urbanized area for federal fiscal year 2025 to determine a base-year value to inflate out to 2050.

CDOT revenues

CDOT is anticipated to have an estimated \$22.4 billion through the plan horizon. CDOT-administered funds include program areas and funding types identified in the Program Distribution and two transit funds identified through collaboration with RTD.

Table 4: CDOT revenues

Funding type	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	2041-2050	Total (2026-2050)
Surface treatment	\$494,317,513	\$630,464,647	\$766,419,926	\$2,056,485,053	\$3,947,687,138
Structures	\$170,457,908	\$196,650,035	\$226,866,777	\$563,669,328	\$1,157,644,048
10-Year Plan (capital asset management)	\$293,163,488	\$262,644,113	\$308,879,004	\$1,246,839,240	\$2,111,525,845
Highway Safety Improvement Program	\$166,044,153	\$217,275,029	\$283,515,523	\$846,411,088	\$1,513,245,792
Funding Advancements for Surface Transportation and Economic Recovery (safety)	\$182,308,301	\$239,824,145	\$317,125,794	\$994,980,512	\$1,734,238,753
Regional Priority Program	\$120,767,226	\$139,324,010	\$160,732,182	\$399,352,439	\$820,175,857

Table 4: CDOT revenues (continued)

Funding type	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	2041-2050	Total (2026-2050)
10-Year Plan (capital mobility)	\$293,163,488	\$262,644,113	\$308,879,004	\$1,246,839,240	\$2,111,525,845
Maintenance program	\$661,506,579	\$847,158,596	\$1,029,944,128	\$2,763,250,605	\$5,301,859,908
Real-time traffic operations	\$31,485,749	\$39,495,695	\$47,229,500	\$122,461,497	\$240,672,441
10-Year Plan (multimodal)	\$65,028,903	\$39,495,695	\$68,789,577	\$277,058,455	\$469,059,475
Enterprises	\$1,005,764,558	\$1,160,307,772	Not applicable	Not applicable	\$2,166,072,329
Financing mechanism	\$657,560,389	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	\$657,560,389

Table 4: CDOT revenues (continued)

Funding type	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	2041-2050	Total (2026-2050)
Funding Advancements for Surface Transportation and Economic Recovery (transit)	\$15,500,000	\$17,500,000	\$18,000,000	\$40,500,000	\$91,500,000
Section 5311	\$3,556,523	\$4,375,127	\$5,361,328	\$14,518,467	\$27,811,445
Total	\$4,160,624,778	\$4,075,845,823	\$3,541,742,743	\$10,572,365,923	\$22,350,579,267

Program Distribution

Program Distribution is a part of the Statewide Transportation Plan and outlines the assignment of projected revenues to various program areas for the time period of the plan. Program Distribution provides a long-term view of what revenues are likely to look like and how they will be allocated among programs in the future. It is for planning purposes only and does not represent a budget commitment by the Colorado Transportation Commission. Final numbers for each year will be determined by updated revenue estimates and annual budget adoption.

Funding is broken into program areas and includes existing federal and state sources. Only funding that can be generated into the future under current law and average economic conditions is included.

Enterprises

CDOT, through multiple enterprises now implemented in the region, developed revenue forecasts associated with the enterprises' funding streams. The projects are anticipated to be implemented in the 2026-2029 and 2030-2034 staging periods, so revenue is only included for those two periods. The enterprises that make up these assumptions include:

- Bridge and Tunnel Enterprise.
- Colorado Transportation Investment Office.
- Clean Transit Enterprise.
- Nonattainment Area Air Pollution Mitigation Enterprise.
- Fuel Impact Enterprise.

Funding Advancements for Surface Transportation and Economic Recovery

Funding Advancements for Surface Transportation and Economic Recovery funds are not indexed, so they are not inflated out to 2050 to reflect their diminishing purchasing power.

Federal Transit Administration formula funds (Section 5311)

For CDOT-controlled Federal Transit Administration formula Section 5311 funds, DRCOG staff assumed a 2026 current-year estimate of \$550,000 and an average annual growth of \$7,500 out to 2050.

RTD revenues

DRCOG staff rely on RTD's forecasts to develop revenue projections for funding administered by RTD. RTD provides year-of-expenditure forecasts to DRCOG staff. The forecasts include a specific average annual inflation rate that DRCOG staff used to deflate year-of-expenditure dollars back to current-year dollars.

RTD's transit revenues include sales and use taxes, fare revenues, and Federal Transit Administration formula grants (Sections 5307, 5337 and 5339). An estimated \$39 billion is anticipated to be available through the plan horizon across the program areas RTD identified in its financial planning process.

Table 5: RTD revenues

Funding type	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	2041-2050	Total (2026-2050)
Sales and use tax	\$4,945,355,153	\$5,731,906,538	\$6,145,599,686	\$15,100,780,205	\$31,923,641,582
Section 5307	\$463,965,000	\$537,900,138	\$623,573,685	\$1,560,923,695	\$3,186,362,518
Section 5337	\$153,572,450	\$178,070,292	\$206,432,273	\$516,739,294	\$1,054,814,309
Section 5339	\$37,931,240	\$43,978,265	\$50,982,862	\$127,619,814	\$260,512,181
Fare revenues	\$314,006,000	\$421,104,000	\$508,359,000	\$1,339,320,000	\$2,582,789,000
Total	\$5,914,829,843	\$6,912,959,233	\$7,534,947,506	\$18,645,383,008	\$39,008,119,590

Other Regional Roadway System revenues

Regional Roadway System funding includes assumptions about federal discretionary awards, toll authority funding and local funding. DRCOG staff worked with CDOT, RTD and other partners to develop reasonable forecasts using historical expenses. Improvements funded with the following sources are on the Regional Roadway System.

Table 6: Other Regional Roadway System funds

Funding type	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	2041-2050	Total (2026-2050)
Discretionary	\$161,260,415	\$400,664,877	\$214,625,599	\$533,255,103	\$1,309,805,993
Federal Transit Administration discretionary (Section 5309 Capital Improvement Grants)	\$189,067,103	\$184,091,367	\$75,574,264	\$98,679,326	\$547,412,059
Public highway authority	\$902,283,754	\$2,090,890,367	\$602,050,538	\$1,204,101,077	\$4,799,325,737
Local and private funding (capital)	\$1,001,674,973	\$1,451,804,027	\$1,386,664,356	\$2,003,774,191	\$5,843,917,547

Table 6: Other Regional Roadway System funds (continued)

Funding type	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	2041-2050	Total (2026-2050)
Local and private funding (preservation, enhancement)	\$1,465,429,820	\$2,083,901,962	\$2,404,109,017	\$5,973,208,277	\$11,926,649,075
Local and private (bridges and culverts)	\$1,111,410,559	\$1,580,471,895	\$1,823,323,171	\$4,530,197,666	\$9,045,403,290
Total	\$4,710,716,515	\$7,523,431,083	\$6,506,346,945	\$14,343,215,640	\$33,083,710,182

Federal discretionary awards

As the region has a history of receiving federal discretionary grants, DRCOG staff averaged the annual discretionary funding awards identified in the 2012-2015, 2016-2019, 2020-2023 and 2024-2027 Transportation Improvement Programs to develop award forecasts. Staff excluded Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act funds and Section 5309 New Starts awards due to the mechanism for those grants.

The average annual award was \$25.6 million in 2026 dollars. Beginning in 2026 and using year-of-expenditure dollars, staff calculated the total amount available from 2026-2050 at \$1.1 billion. Since the awards used in the calculation included grants to local, regional and state agencies, DRCOG staff proposed splitting the available revenue equally between DRCOG and CDOT for projects.

Section 5309 Capital Improvement Grant discretionary awards

DRCOG staff also coordinated with CDOT and RTD, leveraging recent work through the Regional Bus Rapid Transit Partnership, to determine a reasonable number of Federal Transit Administration awards to the region through the plan horizon. There are five bus rapid transit projects identified in the Regional BRT Partnership that assume a Capital Improvement Grant award. The awards were calculated to cover half of a project's cost and were applied to eligible bus rapid transit projects likely to receive federal grants.

Public highway authorities

After reviewing the 2025 E-470 Master Plan adopted in October 2025, DRCOG staff set up a coordination call with staff and officials from the E-470 Public Highway Authority. DRCOG staff confirmed the implementation timelines for air quality regionally significant projects. Costs in the E-470 Master Plan were inflated using an average annual inflation rate of 4.55% based on a current-year value from 2024. DRCOG staff incorporated the existing list of projects and investments from the master plan into the Regional Transportation Plan with minor adjustments. The investments include air quality regionally significant projects, pavement overlays, interchange signalizations, multi-use trails, and the renewal and replacement program.

DRCOG staff also coordinated with the Jefferson Parkway Public Highway Authority to determine revenues and project costs to include in the Regional Transportation Plan. Projects include four new interchanges and the construction of a new four-lane road.

After coordination with the Northwest Parkway, DRCOG staff identified no additional regionally significant projects during the plan's horizon to include in the plan.

Local and private funding

To develop revenue forecasts for local government and private developer funding, DRCOG staff used the Federal Highway Administration's Form 536 reports from 2019 to 2023. Form 536 reports document receipts and expenses on transportation from all municipalities in every state. Staff averaged the expenses for maintenance, enhancement and operations, resurfacing, snow removal, and traffic enforcement to develop annual revenue assumptions.

DRCOG staff developed revenue assumptions for bridges and culverts on the regional roadway system using CDOT-provided bridge data. Staff estimated the total cost to replace or rehabilitate bridges and culverts.

Non-Regional Roadway System revenues

Non-Regional Roadway System revenues include any funding by local governments and private developers anticipated to be spent on non-regionally significant improvements on new minor, collector and local roads. The roads are not eligible for regional funding, so improvements are funded 100% by local governments or private developers. DRCOG staff used historical expenses to calculate future revenues available.

DRCOG staff again used the Federal Highway Administration's Form 536 reports to develop forecasts for non-Regional Roadway System revenues. Staff averaged the expenses for maintenance, enhancement and operations, resurfacing, snow removal, and traffic enforcement to develop annual revenue assumptions. Staff then carried the calculated average forward through the life of the plan.

DRCOG staff developed the revenue assumptions for bridges and culverts not on the Regional Roadway System using the same CDOT-provided bridge data as for the on-system bridges. Staff estimated the total cost to replace or rehabilitate bridges and culverts.

Table 7: Non-Regional Roadway System funds

Funding type	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	2041-2050	Total (2026-2050)
Local and private funding (bridges and culverts)	\$584,342,679	\$830,959,517	\$958,642,635	\$2,381,827,148	\$4,755,771,979
Local and private funding (new minor, collector roads)	\$12,463,380,521	\$17,723,443,842	\$20,446,782,973	\$50,801,728,393	\$101,435,335,729
Total	\$13,047,723,200	\$18,554,403,359	\$21,405,425,608	\$53,183,555,541	\$106,191,107,708

Expenditures

The Regional Transportation Plan's estimated expenditures through the plan's horizon year from federal, state, local and private sources is \$200.6 billion. Any balance of revenues remaining after the interagency process is reallocated to additional program investments to zero out the balance.

Table 8: Expenditures by staging period

Staging period	Expenditures (Current year)	Expenditures (Year of expenditure)
2026-2030	\$22,257,412,647	\$26,803,418,555
2031-2035	\$25,438,069,364	\$36,924,271,546
2036-2040	\$23,679,354,736	\$39,556,018,274
2041-2050	\$47,010,479,503	\$97,300,653,205
Total	\$118,385,316,250	\$200,584,361,580

Expenditure forecast methodology

Projects versus programs

In the development of the Regional Transportation Plan, DRCOG staff, in consultation with staff from CDOT and RTD, developed revenue allocations for each program area and funding type. Revenue allocations determine how much of each program area and funding type are available to capital projects. The effort was complex, as many funding sources are restricted to specific uses, and others can be flexed between uses and modes. The results of the allocation process are multimodal in nature and reflect all program distribution revenue sources: roadways, transit, bicycle and pedestrian, and other multimodal transportation system components.

- Capital projects are major projects that are individually listed in the plan. Examples range from road widenings, new roads and bus rapid transit projects to major active transportation, safety and freight projects.
- Programs include lump sums of funding to be spent on small-scale projects that are not listed individually. Examples include system preservation, local bus service, roadway operations, sidewalks and safety.

Based on consultation with CDOT, DRCOG staff determined that roughly 65% of available CDOT-administered funding is allocated to program expenses. The amount reflects continued and expected investments toward maintaining, preserving and operating the existing multimodal transportation system.

As DRCOG-administered funding had the most flexibility, staff allocated 77% of available DRCOG-administered funds toward major capital projects. This allowed staff to include capital projects reflective of the region's priorities across regional transit, active transportation and safety.

DRCOG staff based transit allocations on RTD estimates and staff guidance. Most transit-related revenue sources are prescribed for specific uses, such as the FasTracks sales and use tax. The bulk of RTD's revenue, 98%, is dedicated to program expenses to maintain and operate the existing transit system.

Finally, staff allocated local funds to preservation and maintenance, Regional Roadway System roadways, non-Regional Roadway System roadways, and other activities based on information obtained from local governments, special districts and authorities.

Estimated project costs

DRCOG staff rely on planning-level cost estimates from project sponsors. Estimated costs include, as appropriate, preliminary engineering, right-of-way and construction costs. Current-year (2026) project costs were forecast to the future year the project is expected to be complete or open to service to reflect the trend of increasing project costs.

DRCOG staff inflated costs for individually identified projects using a tiered inflation rate — 7.49% for 2026-2030, 3.36% for 2031-2040 and 3.00% for 2041-2050 — based on the Colorado Construction Cost Index and to take into account rapid inflation experienced over the last few years. Staff made an exception for projects identified by the E-470 Public Highway Authority, as the 2025 E-470 Master Plan used an average annual inflation rate of 4.55%.

Based off the five-year funding tiers established for revenues, DRCOG staff inflated project costs to the midpoint of each funding tier to provide fiscal constraint analysis and provide some flexibility in project implementation. Projects programmed then draw down the available revenue in a five-year funding tier until revenue is exhausted. (The five-year funding tiers do not always match the associated staging periods for air quality conformity listed in the tables.)

Project prioritization

DRCOG staff coordinated with staff from CDOT, RTD and local governments to affirm the project solicitation framework to request and evaluate candidate projects for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan. The process reflected both regional and subregional needs, and supports the themes outlined in Metro Vision and the six Regional Transportation Plan priorities.

DRCOG staff considered 133 candidate projects for inclusion in the Regional Transportation Plan. The projects ranged from managed lanes and road widenings to active transportation and safety projects. Key considerations in evaluating projects to determine the best available use of limited regional funding included:

- The candidate project solicitation and evaluation process affirmed by DRCOG's transportation committees and Board. The process reflected the unique roles of regional agencies and local governments.
- The priorities expressed during public and stakeholder engagement, including multiple meetings with the Civic Advisory Group and Youth Advisory Panel.
- The candidate project qualitative scoring results. Each project was evaluated against the Regional Transportation Plan priorities, Metro Vision themes and federal performance measures. The scores were provided to DRCOG's committees and Board to help guide discussions.
- The input from the Regional Review Panel, which was composed of local government representatives. Panel members reviewed the candidate projects' scores and additional information and provided guidance on project selection considerations.

- The equity analysis scores developed using DRCOG's Equity Index.
- The travel demand estimates that DRCOG staff generated to determine future average daily traffic.
- The draft financial plan and investment strategy, which outlined regional priorities.

The prioritized list of projects was then matched to potential revenue, based on project eligibility, availability of local match and availability of funding within each funding tier of the Regional Transportation Plan. The process was iterative, requiring repeated balancing across funding sources and funding tiers.

Locally funded projects

In addition to the regional evaluation process, which determines the candidate projects that are included in the plan and programmed with regional funding, DRCOG staff worked with local governments and public highway authorities to identify locally funded regionally significant capacity projects that will be completed by 2050.

Fiscally constrained regionally significant capacity projects are those funded entirely with locally derived funding sources. The projects are typically, but not exclusively, funded by local governments through funding sources they control, such as general fund revenues, developer contributions, bonds or other revenue sources.

Conclusion

The 2050 Metro Vision Regional Transportation Plan is fiscally constrained in current-year (2026) and year-of-expenditure dollars. Further, with the additional breakdown and analysis by funding tiers, the Regional Transportation Plan demonstrates fiscal constraint across the plan's horizon.