

# Metro Mayors Caucus Policy Principles

Updated - 2025

The Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC), as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, takes positions on a limited number of significant legislative bills. MMC does not automatically endorse proposals simply because they align with the policy statements outlined in this document. When a significant proposal is identified, MMC staff will brief the Executive Committee, which will then determine whether to seek a consensus position (2/3 approval) from the Caucus. The Executive Committee also provides members and proponents with information regarding the proposal's potential impact on MMC member municipalities.

The *Metro Mayors Caucus Policy Principles 2025* highlights key areas of interest and consensus positions adopted by our 38 mayoral members from across the seven-county Denver metropolitan area. These policy positions are intentionally broad and are not intended to be exhaustive.

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## Local Control and Home Rule Authority

The diverse nature of Colorado's cities, towns, counties, and regions fosters a strong foundation for innovative local solutions and collaborative regional approaches to shared challenges. The Caucus emphasizes the following principles:

### 1. Oppose Preemption of Local Authority

The Caucus generally opposes legislation that restricts the existing authority and powers of municipal governments unless it serves a clear, overarching public interest outlined in this Policy Statement.

### 2. Support Tools for Local Objectives

The Caucus supports legislative measures that enhance the authority and flexibility of municipalities, empowering them to achieve their unique local goals and objectives.

## Local Control and Home Rule Authority - Continued

### 3. Encourage Regional Cooperation

The Caucus advocates for tools and initiatives that facilitate and incentivize intergovernmental collaboration to address common challenges effectively and efficiently.

### 4. Unfunded Mandates

The Caucus generally opposes unfunded mandates that compromise local control and fiscal responsibility, ensuring municipalities retain the ability to govern effectively within their financial means.

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## Addressing the Fiscal Challenges of Colorado

The cumulative impact of several constitutional amendments has placed Colorado in a perpetual fiscal bind, simultaneously mandating increased spending while restricting revenue growth. This dynamic creates ongoing challenges in funding federally mandated programs, early childhood to higher education, and the construction and maintenance of multi-modal transportation infrastructure, among other critical state responsibilities.

Municipalities face parallel constraints and require greater flexibility to sustain and improve essential service levels. In response, the Metro Mayors Caucus generally supports policies aligned with the following principles:

### 1. Seek Voter Approval for Enhanced Fiscal Flexibility

The Caucus generally supports initiatives that provide Colorado voters with options to address the state's complex fiscal challenges, including opportunities to consider modifications to measures that help to untangle the state's financial constraints.

### 2. Preserve Taxation and Fee Authority of Home Rule Municipalities

The Caucus generally opposes any reductions to, or exemptions from, sales, property, or personal property tax bases, as well as restrictions on imposing service-related fees. These changes require a public vote to restore, limiting municipalities' ability to manage revenues effectively.

# Addressing the Fiscal Challenges of Colorado - Continued

## 3. \*Sustainability of economy – not adding more barriers to do business in Colorado.

A thriving economy requires a balance between growth and regulation. The Caucus supports local and state policies that support businesses without creating unnecessary obstacles.

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## Housing

The Metro Mayors Caucus supports efforts to create, expand and preserve state and local government options to address Colorado's housing affordability crisis. This includes housing and supportive services for those experiencing or are at-risk of homelessness, and expanded housing opportunities for Colorado's low and moderate-income workers:

### 1. Strengthen Local Government Authority

The Caucus supports proposals that empower local governments to expand affordable housing initiatives through zoning reforms, financial incentives, and community. The Caucus generally opposes state preemption of land use policies.

### 2. Promote Condominium Development for Affordable Homeownership and Housing Diversity

The Caucus supports addressing barriers to condominium development exacerbated by the **Colorado Construction Defect Action Reform Act (CDARA)** of 2001 and its 2003 amendment, **CDARA II**. These laws have significantly contributed to class action litigation, increasing insurance costs for condominium projects, making condominium development unaffordable and economically unfeasible.

To promote affordability and housing diversity, the Caucus supports measures to:

1. Reduce the cost of insuring condominium developments.
2. Mitigate risks associated with converting multi-family rentals into condominiums.
3. Expand developers' opportunities to repair defects before litigation is initiated.
4. Increase the threshold of HOA owner approval for litigation to as much as 65%, ensuring broader consensus before legal action.

## Housing - Continued

These initiatives aim to revive the viability of condominiums as a pathway to affordable homeownership while diversifying housing options across Colorado.

### 3. Support the Creation and Expansion of Housing Tax Credits

The Caucus advocates for initiatives to establish new and enhance existing state tax credits that promote affordable housing. This includes programs targeting homeownership, employer-assisted housing, and other strategies to increase the availability of housing for individuals and families earning at or below the median income.

### 4. Support Innovation to increase Middle Housing

To address housing affordability and availability, this policy promotes innovative solutions to increase **middle housing**—which includes duplexes, triplexes, townhomes, and other diverse housing types that bridge the gap between single-family homes and large apartment complexes.

A key component of this initiative is studying the role of **utilities**—including water, waste, gas, and electricity—and how their associated fees impact new housing development, particularly in **transit-oriented communities**. Understanding these costs will help identify ways to streamline development, reduce barriers, and support sustainable, well-connected housing options that meet the needs of Colorado's growing population.

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## Transportation & Mobility

Since 1993, the Metro Mayors Caucus has collaborated to identify and advocate for new funding sources to address Colorado's transportation and mobility challenges. Current funding is insufficient, and the lack of substantial investment in mobility infrastructure significantly impacts quality of life, transportation efficiency, the environment, and the economy. The Caucus supports modernizing and expanding the revenue structure, reassessing spending priorities, and adopting a more equitable approach to allocating resources to meet the diverse and evolving mobility needs of Coloradans.

# Transportation & Mobility - Continued

## 1. Transportation Funding

The Caucus opposes distributing new revenue streams using the outdated HUTF formulas, which fail to adequately fund metropolitan areas that house the majority of the state's population and generate the highest vehicle miles traveled. Equitable allocation should consider factors such as population, vehicle miles traveled, diverse mobility needs, and safety priorities.

The Caucus opposes transportation project bonding that lacks dedicated revenue streams for repayment. Past measures have relied on unpredictable general fund dollars, forcing CDOT to cut maintenance during economic downturns or due to TABOR constraints.

The Caucus opposes new revenue sources that exclude direct allocations to local governments, recognizing their responsibility for maintaining the majority of transportation infrastructure and serving densely populated areas.

## 2. Promote Flexible Funding for All Transportation Modes

The Caucus supports funding mechanisms that provide flexibility to address the mobility, congestion reduction, and air quality needs of urbanized and metropolitan regions.

## 3. Completion of FasTracks and Rail Expansion

The Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC) supports the completion of the FasTracks transit system as a critical component of regional mobility and economic growth. MMC will actively monitor opportunities for additional rail expansion but will remain neutral on new rail projects unless they are funded through sources outside the state general fund and do not place an undue financial burden on local governments.

## 4. \*Coordination of Transit Services

The Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC) supports enhanced coordination among transportation and transit providers to improve mobility, safety, and efficiency within the Denver Metro area. MMC prioritizes transit connectivity and multimodal accessibility, particularly around Transit-Oriented Developments (TODs) that require upzoning under HB24-1313.

# Transportation & Mobility - Continued

## 4. \*Coordination of Transit Services - Continued

To ensure a seamless and safe transit network, MMC advocates for:

- Collaboration among RTD, CDOT, local governments, and transportation agencies to optimize transit routes, schedules, and first-last mile connections.
- Safety Initiatives that address public security, lighting, and infrastructure improvements around transit hubs.
- Integrated Planning to align transit investments with land use policies that support higher-density, mixed-use development.

MMC will continue to support policies that enhance transit accessibility while ensuring local governments have the necessary resources to implement these initiatives effectively.

## Prioritizing Safety Across All Modes of Transportation

The Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC) advocates for policies and legislation that fund innovative, data-driven, and multi-disciplinary strategies to enhance safety and accessibility for all transportation users. MMC supports a comprehensive, equity-focused approach that prioritizes safety improvements across roadways, transit systems, and active transportation networks.

### Key Priorities Include:

- **Driver safety initiatives** to reduce collisions and improve roadway design.
- **Protections for vulnerable road users**, including:
  - Pedestrians
  - Cyclists
  - Motorcyclists
  - Micro-mobility users (e.g., scooters, e-bikes)
  - Wheelchair users
- **Enhanced safety for transit riders and rail passengers**, including improved station design, lighting, and security measures.

MMC will continue working with regional and state partners to ensure transportation infrastructure and policies promote safe, accessible, and efficient mobility for all.

# Sustainability & Resilience

The Caucus supports initiatives that advance the environmental sustainability of the region both now and in the future. It advocates for scientifically grounded programs focused on protecting the natural environment and addressing climate challenges while balancing the need for a strong, inclusive economy. These efforts aim to restore, preserve, and safeguard natural resources for the well-being and enjoyment of current and future generations.

## 1. Enhance the Electrical Grid

The Caucus recognizes the need for investments to strengthen the electrical grid and supports efforts to expand vehicle charging infrastructure and building electrification to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

## 2. Promoting Water Conservation, Efficiency, and Sustainable Community Planning

The Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC) supports innovative, data-driven approaches to enhance indoor and outdoor water conservation and efficiency while ensuring that compliance does not place an undue burden on local governments.

Recognizing Colorado's semi-arid climate and the increasing challenges of drought and water scarcity, MMC advocates for sustainable community development that aligns with actual water availability. This includes:

- Integrating water-efficient design into new developments and infrastructure.
- Encouraging conservation strategies that support long-term water resiliency.
- Aligning land use planning with sustainable water resources to ensure future growth remains viable.

By prioritizing water-conscious planning and conservation, MMC aims to strengthen the region's resiliency while balancing economic growth and environmental stewardship.

## 3. Planning & Coordination for Fire and Flood Resiliency

The Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC) advocates for proactive planning, regional coordination, and strategic investments to enhance community resilience against wildfires and flooding. Recognizing the increasing frequency and severity of these natural disasters, MMC supports policies that:

- Improve interagency collaboration among local, state, and federal partners to ensure coordinated emergency response and preparedness.

# Sustainability & Resilience - Continued

## 3. Planning & Coordination for Fire and Flood Resiliency - Continued

- Strengthen land use and infrastructure planning to mitigate fire and flood risks, including smart zoning, defensible space strategies, and resilient building codes.
- Expand data-driven risk assessments to identify vulnerable areas and prioritize investments in protective infrastructure.
- Support funding for mitigation efforts, such as wildfire fuel reduction, watershed protection, and stormwater management systems.

By prioritizing **regional cooperation and proactive risk reduction**, MMC aims to protect communities, infrastructure, and natural resources from the growing threats of wildfires and flooding.

## 4. Opposing Preemption of Local Utility Control

The Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC) firmly opposes any state or federal efforts to **preempt local control over utilities**, including broadband, energy, and water services. Local governments are best positioned to make **informed, community-driven decisions** that address the unique needs of their residents and businesses. MMC supports policies that:

- **Protect municipal authority** over broadband deployment, energy regulations, and water management.
- **Encourage local innovation and competition** to improve utility services and expand access.
- **Prevent one-size-fits-all mandates** that undermine local decision-making and hinder economic development.

**Preserving local control over utilities** ensures that communities can develop **tailored, forward-thinking solutions** to meet their infrastructure and connectivity needs.

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## Public Safety

Public safety remains a top priority for the Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC), from addressing youth violence to responding to crises like 9/11, the opioid epidemic, and post-pandemic crime. Law enforcement is primarily a municipal responsibility, and local officials must have the flexibility to enforce laws fairly and equitably in alignment with community values.



# Public Safety - Continued

## **1. Community-Centered Intervention & Rehabilitation**

Advocating for state and local programs that focus on prevention, intervention, and rehabilitation while recognizing the essential role of local governments.

## **2. Local Flexibility in Criminal Justice**

Preserving municipal authority in implementing federal and state criminal justice initiatives, including local control over PR bonds and sentencing policies.

## **3. Co-Responder & Behavioral Health Programs**

Supporting state funding for programs that pair law enforcement with mental and behavioral health professionals and expanding access to mental health, detox, and youth crisis beds.

By prioritizing local control and community-driven solutions, MMC aims to enhance public safety, justice, and rehabilitation efforts across the region.