



The Metro Mayors Caucus Primer

Welcome to the Metro Mayors Caucus. We have prepared this short overview to answer some of the most common questions about the function, administration and financing of the Caucus.

Table of Contents

1. Mission, Background & Purpose of the Metro Mayors Caucus	2
a. Mission	2
b. Background and Purpose	2
2. Caucus Positions and the Decision Process	3
a. Retaining Consensus as Process & Modifying the Decision Rule	3
b. Exceptions to the Super-Majority	4
c. Acceptance & Support Timelines	4
3. Executive Committee Role and Functions.....	6
a. Who is on the Executive Committee?.....	6
b. What does the Executive Committee do?	6
c. How does one join the Executive Committee?	6
d. How is Caucus leadership selected and what is their role?	8
4. Agenda Setting & Committees	8
a. How are agendas set for full Caucus meetings?	8
b. Are there standing committees?	8
5. Caucus Finances & Staffing	9
a. How is the Caucus Funded?	9
b. How is the fee for service developed and approved?	9
c. Operating Reserves	9
d. Civic Results and the role of staff.....	10
6. Staff Bios.....	11

1. Mission, Background & Purpose of the Metro Mayors Caucus

a. Mission

Founded in 1993, the Metro Mayors Caucus (Caucus or MMC) is a nationally recognized voluntary and collaborative membership organization for mayors in the Denver region.

The Caucus is a unique forum that fosters personal relationships and uses dialogue to identify common purposes, challenges and solutions that benefit both the region and member municipalities.

b. Background and Purpose

The Caucus was created as a forum for Denver area mayors to build relationships, discuss common problems and develop collaborative approaches to a variety of regional challenges. Today, the Caucus is comprised of 39 municipalities in the Denver metropolitan region and known throughout the United States as a key factor in promoting the region's nationally recognized culture of collaboration.

The Caucus nurtures an environment of cooperation among mayor members and other governmental agencies and levels, as a key strategy for effectively addressing complex regional issues. To this end, the Caucus provides a non-confrontational arena for the discussion of common issues and multi-jurisdictional challenges. Built on a foundation of communication, collaboration and consensus, the Caucus serves a number of functions for its members:

- Provides opportunities for developing personal relationships among the mayors and building trust.
- Develops and adopts positions and advances strategies on key issues facing the metro area and advocates for their adoption by members and other levels of government.
- Monitors local, regional, state and federal action on key policy issues to keep members abreast of issues that affect their municipalities and the region.
- Serves as a voice for collaborative approaches to regional challenges.
- Acts as a sounding board for private, non-profit and public sector representatives seeking to implement change.
- Offers a non-competitive forum for the resolution of differences among metro area jurisdictions.

2. Caucus Endorsements, Positions and the Decision Process

The Metro Mayors Caucus, is a program of Civic Results which is a 501(c)3 non-profit. In compliance with IRS guidelines, Civic Results and MMC do not engage in lobbying or endorse candidates for office. Further, MMC does not endorse the capital or charitable giving campaigns of other organizations with limited exceptions provided for events with a direct linkage to MMC identified area of focus.

A fundamental strength of MMC is the ability to speak with one voice on behalf of many mayors. With this in mind, [the Civic Results staff](#) and the [Executive Committee](#) will evaluate requests for statements, resolutions or proclamations on a case by case basis. The MMC Executive Committee will recommend a statement, resolution or proclamation for full MMC consideration if a proposal is found to be substantially in line with MMC priorities.

The Caucus has used consensus decision-making as the basis for reaching positions since our founding in 1993. Adherence to consensus decision-making gives every member an equal voice, ensures that positions reflect the ideas and solutions of the entire group, and enables the organization to remain collaborative rather than adversarial. For more than twenty years, this model worked well and only rarely prevented the Caucus from tackling difficult and controversial issues. Use of consensus has allowed MMC to stand out among similar organizations as a true leader and helped to advance the regional culture of collaboration.

What is consensus? In true consensus, participants make every effort to find solutions that all can “live with” even if some do not fully support the outcome. In some instances where middle ground was elusive, individual mayors have stepped aside to let the decision of the majority prevail. In other situations where a proposal met with strong opposition and no compromise could be broached, MMC took no position.

Over time, the consensus process devolved to something less like consensus and more like strict unanimity. MMC decided that the consensus process must be clarified and better documented so that a single member could not veto a proposal regardless of the support it had among the other members. Unanimity is very difficult to achieve; this is particularly true within a group as large and varied as the Caucus. For this reason, the Caucus has periodically reviewed Caucus its consensus practices.

a. Retaining Consensus as Process & Modifying the Decision Rule

Using consensus as a process for developing and modifying proposals or positions adheres to Caucus values of an egalitarian, inclusive, collaborative and participatory organization of peers. Consensus encourages full participation and expressions of dissent while striving for a position acceptable to the entire group. Recognizing that there are important policy

issues where unanimity might not be possible, the Caucus in 2021 adopted a new Decision Rule.

- **Unanimity of Consent:** This is the most powerful position from which to announce a position, and as such, unanimous consent remains the primary objective of the Caucus. To this end, dissenters are encouraged to suggest modifications that address their underlying concerns and allow for them to either support the proposal or stand-aside.
- **Super-majority:** If unanimous consent is not possible, a super-majority is the threshold for passage. By requiring a super-majority, only proposals with an exceptionally high degree of agreement can move forward. The super-majority alternative satisfies the need for action on the part of the majority and diminishes the pressure to conform on the minority in those circumstances where there is no acceptable middle ground.

b. Exceptions to the Super-Majority

In no instance should the Caucus take a position that would have a demonstrable negative impact on a member community. For example, the Caucus would not take a position on the siting of a major infrastructure project within a community over the objections of that community.

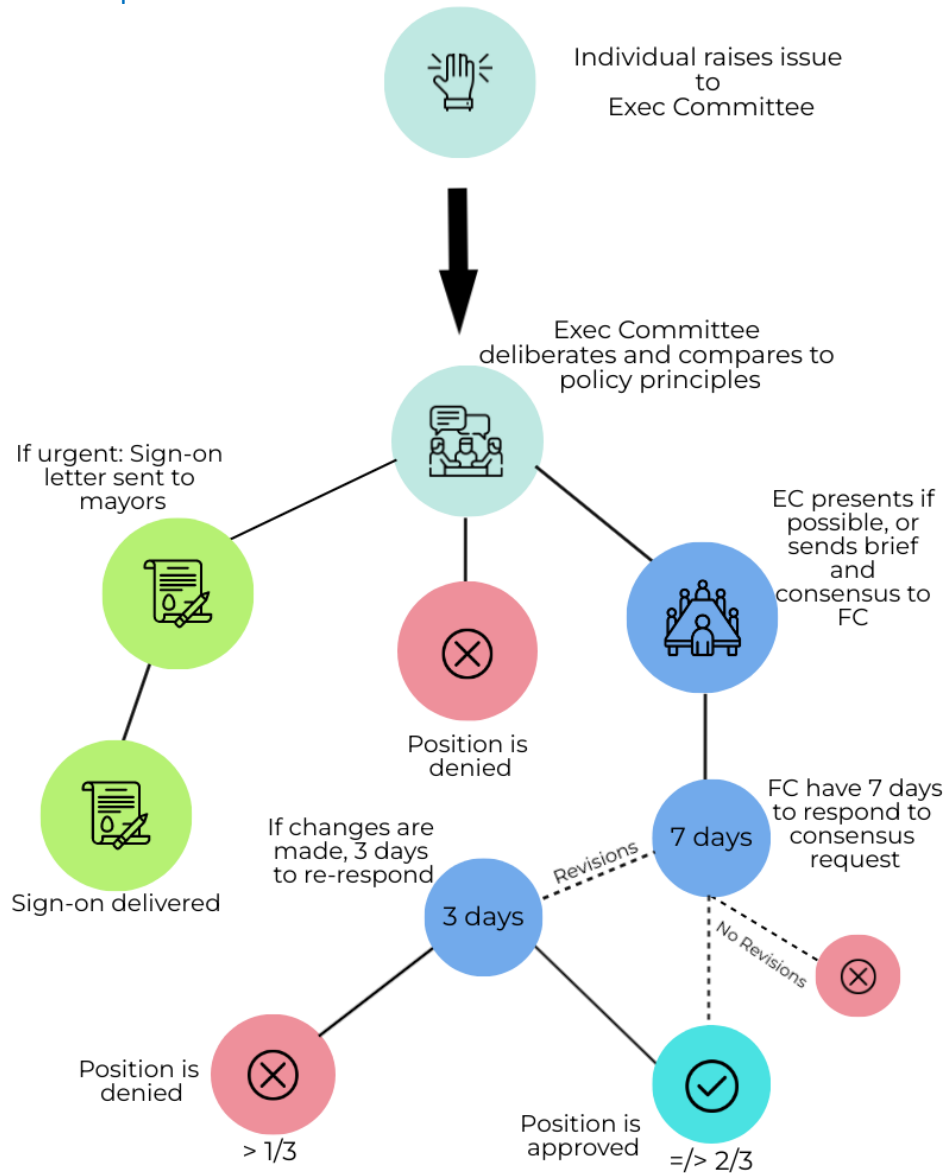
c. Acceptance & Support Timelines

Because the Full Caucus convenes just six times per year it is not always possible to have a presentation or face-to-face discussion before formulating a position. The Executive Committee, sometimes supplemented by a standing issue committee, acts as a preliminary sounding board in the periods between meetings. Any member can recommend an issue to the Caucus or solicit a position. When a position is introduced for consideration, one or more of the following steps are taken.

- An informational presentation & discussion at a Full Caucus meeting, or
- A background memo and/or suggested position from the Executive Committee is drafted

Regardless of the path taken, all proposals are distributed to members via email with the subject line "Consensus Question." A seven-day timeline for response follows and mayors with proposed changes to the position must provide those changes for consideration of the body by day 3. Please see the decision tree and table below for additional details.

Consensus Process Map



Revisions to Consensus Process Affirmed 2-1-2021

Objective: to refine the consensus process to allow for more rapid positions on priority issues

	Timeline	Options	Object/Amend	Amendments	Threshold for Failure
Sign-On Letter	Urgent	Yes/No			
Prior Process	7-10 Days	Yes/No/Abstain	No Deadline	Significant = +7-10 Days	Abstain counted as support but fails if 5 mayors oppose*
Revised Process	7 Days	Yes/No/Abstain*/Change	Changes by Day 3	Significant = +3 Days	More than 1/3 of mayors voting oppose*

*Mayors opposing are asked to provide revisions, if any, that would allow them to join the consensus.
 *Abstentions are not counted for or against consensus and are not tallied in the total votes.

3. Executive Committee Role and Functions

a. Who is on the Executive Committee?

The Executive Committee is comprised of a Chair, up to two Co-Vice Chairs, past chairs still in office, and rounded out by several at-large mayor members sufficient to bring the number to nine. The mayors of Denver and Aurora, as the region's largest municipalities, each have a high-level policy staff member that participates on their behalf.

b. What does the Executive Committee do?

The Executive Committee meets a minimum of six times a year to plan the Full Caucus meetings and on an as-needed basis between regularly scheduled meetings. In addition to developing the Full Caucus agendas in accordance with Caucus priorities established at the Annual Retreat, the Executive Committee and its members also:

- Recommend policy positions for Caucus consideration and adoption by consensus
- Represent the Caucus at outside meetings and to visitors interested in the Caucus' model of regionalism
- Serve as spokespersons on approved Caucus policy
- Conduct peer-to-peer engagement of mayor members
- Appoint mayors to fill Executive Committee vacancies as needed
- Consult with Civic Results Staff on the Caucus fee for service
- Chair task forces and ad-hoc committees
- Sit as a Legislative Committee as needed
- Help identify and secure sponsors for annual Caucus events
- The Chair and first Co-Vice Chair sit on the Civic Results Board as ex-officio non-voting members

c. How does one join the Executive Committee?

In the event of a mid-term vacancy on the Executive Committee, an appointment will be made by the Executive Committee to fill the vacant seat. The eligibility requirements of participation and length of term stated below shall still apply. To the extent possible, the appointment shall be made from the same regional subarea (i.e., Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest or Central) to ensure consistent representation, or if any subarea lacks representation on the Executive Committee, the Committee may appoint an eligible mayor from that subarea.

Each year, after the November municipal elections, staff sends out an email soliciting self-nominations of mayors interested in filling any Executive Committee vacancies created by the election cycle or term limits. A mayor interested in serving must commit to attending most if not all of the EC meetings, submit short answers to the EC questionnaire and meet minimum qualifications that include:

- Attendance at 50% of the Full Caucus meetings in the prior year, and
- At least one year remaining in his or her term. Mayors currently serving on the Executive Committee who have less than a year remaining in their term can continue to serve on the Executive Committee as they finish their term.
- Being in financial good standing with current year dues paid in full.

If a mayor is elected in a May election, they may submit a self-nomination in November. Once they have fulfilled eligibility, they may be chosen to serve on the Executive Committee, with the seat being held for that mayor until the eligibility has been met.

Mayors wishing to serve on the Executive Committee are asked to submit short answers to the below questions.

1. What is the largest barrier to metropolitan cooperation and how might we overcome it?
2. What are the top 2-3 regional issues or challenges?
3. What role should the Caucus play in the region?
4. On what activities would you like to see the Caucus focus more or less time and effort?
5. How would you measure success for the Caucus in the coming year?

When the one-month open application period closes, Civic Results staff will provide the submissions to a Selection Committee comprised of the recent past chair, the current chair and one co-vice chair, along with two to four appointees from within the Executive Committee. The committee shall not exceed seven members of the executive committee and shall maintain an odd number on the selection committee. From the applicants, the Selection Committee recommends a slate for consensus approval at the Annual Retreat. The Selection Committee is charged with striking a balanced representation of the (1) geographic, (2) population size, and (3) tenure of the broader membership in making its recommendation. If there are not enough applicants to bring the Executive Committee up to nine members or satisfy the need for geographic, political or size diversity, then Executive Committee members are asked to suggest mayors to serve on the Executive Committee and their willingness to serve is evaluated. It is desirable, but not required, that each county have at least one member represented among the EC membership.

d. How is Caucus leadership selected and what is their role?

The Chair and Co-Vice Chairs are recommended by the Selection Committee from the Executive Committee membership. These selections are affirmed by consensus of the membership at the annual January Retreat. A Chair can serve no more than two consecutive one-year terms. The Vice-Chair(s) are in line for Chair and assume the duties of Chair when the Chair is absent. The Chair is responsible for:

- Convening and running Full Caucus meetings
- Serving as the primary representative of, and spokesperson for, the Caucus
- Being the signatory to all formal Caucus communications and resolutions
- Reviewing and approving expenses on behalf of the Caucus

4. Agenda Setting & Committees

a. How are agendas set for full Caucus meetings?

The Executive Committee meets several weeks before each regular Full Caucus meeting to plan the agenda. Topics are suggested by the Executive Committee, regular members, or are brought up by outside parties seeking an audience with the Caucus. Topics are weighed against the priorities of the Full Caucus established at the Annual Retreat and evaluated for timeliness and the ability of the Caucus to influence the issue. Staff is charged with arranging for speakers, coordinating presentations and developing materials related to the topics selected. An effort is made to include time for open dialogue and networking among members on each Full Caucus agenda.

b. Are there standing committees?

The Caucus has convened several committees and task forces over the years on issues ranging from water conservation to workforce housing. Due to the limited resources and staffing of the Caucus, beyond the Executive Committee, there are no permanent committees of the Caucus. Transportation is an ongoing concern of the Caucus and to this end, the Caucus has a Transportation & Mobility Committee that meets as needed. MMC has in the past convened a statewide transportation task force “MPACT64,” a FasTracks Task Force and the Metropolitan Transportation District Governance Committee or “MTD.” Each of these ad-hoc groups were convened and managed by Civic Results staff but were comprised of multiple agencies, organizations, and levels of government. In previous years, the Caucus has also convened committees on Energy Efficiency & Conservation, Water Conservation & Drought Mitigation, Housing, Hunger & Homelessness, and a Public Safety Committee — among others. The work of and ongoing need for these committees are reevaluated annually at the January full Metro Mayors Caucus Retreat.

5. Caucus Finances & Staffing

a. How is the Caucus Funded?

The Caucus is funded primarily by member dues. In July of 2022, the MMC Executive Committee proposed a change to the dues structure that includes a 1¢ increase in the per capita rate and the institution of an annual membership fee of \$500 for 2023. The fee is an effort to spread the base cost of membership more equitably among our members. The Executive Committee further recommended that dues be increased by 1¢ in 2023 and each year thereafter until dues reach .12¢ per capita in 2027 to ensure the long-term viability of the Metro Mayors Caucus. These recommendations were discussed and agreed upon without objection at the October 5 Full Caucus.

Fundraising will continue to be important to the stability of the organization to keep dues low and ensure operating reserves. Supplementary Caucus funding is provided through a variety of sources, including outside sponsorships of special events such as the annual retreat and regional leadership reception. Limited funding is provided through contributions from partner organizations and to a much lesser extent, competitive, project specific grants, such as the funding for the 2005 start-up of the Metro Denver Health & Wellness Commission. For the last several years, fundraising has accounted for approximately 15% of the total revenues and has resulted in the creation of a 3-month Operating Reserve (see 5c below) and provided supplemental funding for costs related to special events.

b. How is the fee for service developed and approved?

Civic Results, the non-profit organization that provides programming and administrative support to the MMC, develops the annual Caucus fee for service in consultation with the Executive Committee. The Caucus Chair reviews the monthly invoice for the fee for service and any additional MMC related expenditures and approves payments to Civic Results. Monthly billing is prepared by the Civic Results' bookkeeper and is in accordance with the annual fee and direct expenses. Staff reports on financials to the MMC Executive Committee. Costs are minimized by utilization of free or reduced pricing of office and meeting space at partner organizations.

Operating Reserves

The Caucus maintains Operating Reserves in an amount determined by the Executive Committee annually as a part of the fee for service approval process. The Executive Committee has determined that the Operating Reserve shall be sufficient to maintain ongoing operations and programs for a period of no less than three months, nor more than six months. The purpose of Operating Reserves is to ensure ongoing operations of the Metro Mayors Caucus, and to provide a source of internal funds for Caucus priorities, such as program opportunities, capacity building, unanticipated expenses, one-time expenses, unanticipated loss of funding, or uninsured losses.

If the Civic Results staff identifies a need that requires accessing Operating Reserves, then they must submit a request to the Executive Committee. If the Executive Committee confirms that the use is consistent with the purposes described above, then it may authorize the use of the funds. It is anticipated that any Operating Reserves funds authorized for use in this way will be replenished within 12 months of their use.

c. Civic Results and the role of staff?

The Caucus is staffed by Civic Results, a Denver-based 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. The Metro Mayors Caucus was founded by the late John Parr, Peter Kenney, and Katherine Archuleta and was formally organized in 1993. Civic Results' current mission is to assist governments, businesses, and non-profits to collaboratively plan and implement initiatives that create measurable change in the physical, social, civic, and human infrastructure of communities and regions.

To fulfill its' mission, Civic Results has provided collaborative problem-solving services in Colorado and across the United States using a variety of services, including:

- Process design & facilitation
- Guided strategic planning efforts
- Multi-jurisdictional initiatives
- Intergovernmental agreements
- Best practices research
- Community visioning/scenario planning
- Stakeholder consensus building

Among the projects and programs that Civic Results managed or engaged in as a part of a broader team over the years were these:

CR Projects:

- Metro Vision 2020 negotiations over UGB
- Blueprint Denver
- ULI Series: Meet the Mayors
- UniverCity Connections— Fort Collins and Colorado State University
- Oregon Big Look Task Force
- Children and Nature Network Community Action Guide
- Colorado Transportation Finance and Implementation Panel
- Many other community visioning, strategic planning, and guided consensus building projects in and outside of Colorado

CR Programs Past and Present:

- The Metro Mayors Caucus
- The Livable Communities Support Center
- The Metro Denver Health and Wellness Commission

- The Alliance for Regional Stewardship

Civic Results provides full-time administrative support, facilitation, policy development, and strategic advice to the Caucus on a variety of issues. Staff is responsible for:

- Providing policy research, development and strategic advice to the Caucus
- Design and implementation of Caucus processes
- Conducting outreach and convening stakeholders to advance MMC priorities
- Monitoring federal and state legislation on key issues
- Fostering and maintaining relationships with outside partners
- Development and distribution of MMC communications
- Developing the annual fee for service proposal
- Responding to and directing media inquiries to key leadership
- Responding to member inquiries about internal process or key priorities
- Planning the Annual Retreat, 5 regular Full Caucus meetings, 6 Executive Committee meetings, numerous special issue committee meetings, the annual Regional Leadership Reception and the occasional social event
- Outside fundraising Maintaining a database of member information

6. Under the new leadership of Heidi Williams, Civic Results aims to provide additional programming to include education to citizens as well as leadership, governance, and government training to mayors and local elected officials. Civic Results will continue to provide robust support to the Metro Mayors Caucus to address the challenging issues of our time. Civic Results programs are designed to be complimentary to the work of the MMC.

Current Staff Bios



Heidi Williams is the President & CEO of Civic Results, a Colorado based 501(c)(3) non-profit, and the Metro Mayors Caucus. The Metro Mayors Caucus is a voluntary, regional association of 39 mayors from throughout the 7-county Denver Metropolitan area. Collectively, Caucus member cities comprise a region that is home to fifty-six percent of Colorado's population.

Heidi Williams is a Colorado Native and grew up in Brighton, Colorado. Heidi and her husband Toby married in 2001 and have three children, Michael, Chloe and Noah. Heidi has lived in the North Metropolitan Denver area most of her life and has been a resident of Thornton since 2006.

After owning her own business in Thornton, Heidi was first appointed to the Adams 12 Board of Education in 2009, and subsequently elected to Mayor of Thornton in 2011 where she served on multiple regional boards until she was term limited in December 2019. Heidi chaired the Metro Mayors Caucus, served on the Executive Committee for seven years, and recently serves as recent past President of Ralston House, and currently serves as the Vice President for Almost Home and as a Director on the Front Range Community College Foundation.

In 2016 Heidi graduated Summe cum Laude with a bachelor's Degree in political science at the University of Colorado Denver and received her master's Degree in public administration in 2018.

From January 2020 through June 2023 Heidi served as the Director of Opioid Response for the Colorado Attorney General, Phil Weiser. Heidi brought the state together with every county and almost every municipality signing onto an MOU that directed opioid settlement funds primarily to the local level. On behalf of Colorado, and as the Director of Opioid Response for the AG's office, Colorado received the Johns Hopkins Inaugural Award for Excellence in the Application of the Opioid Litigation Practices.

Heidi believes that the key to local government success is to recognize that the key issues of the Metro Mayors Caucus don't have borders. Regional work on housing, homelessness, transportation, water, growth and energy takes a regional effort and Heidi remains committed to the work that has been a top priority for the metro area municipalities.



Emma Bangs is the Program Manager to Civic Results and the Metro Mayors Caucus. Emma joined the Metro Mayors Caucus Staff as a Program Assistant in July 2022. She fills a key role for the Caucus in policy and program development. Originally from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Emma moved to Colorado to complete her education and never left. She takes advantage of Colorado's great outdoors with hiking and running, she coaches rugby, and plays guitar in a swing band. Emma holds a Master's Degree in Urban and Regional

Planning from the University of Colorado Denver and a B.A. in Media Studies and Theater Production from Beloit College, Wisconsin. Emma became passionate about community planning during a year with AmeriCorps serving 7 jurisdictions throughout the Midwest on disaster response and unique community improvement projects. Her experience engaging with the people of these communities prepares her well for the work of the Metro Mayors Caucus — as does the internship she completed with the City of Centennial Planning Department working on their housing study.