



# The Metro Mayors Caucus Primer

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

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## Mission, Background & Purpose of the Metro Mayors Caucus

### Mission

The Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC) is a voluntary collaboration of 38 mayors in the Denver metropolitan region. Mayors formed MMC in 1993 to provide a non-partisan vehicle for regional dialogue and cooperation on issues that transcend individual municipal boundaries.

MMC serves as a distinctive platform that cultivates personal connections and leverages dialogue to achieve shared goals, address challenges, and develop solutions that benefit both the region and its member municipalities.

### Background and Purpose

MMC was established as a platform for Denver area mayors to build strong relationships, address shared challenges, and collaborate on innovative solutions to regional issues. Today, it comprises 38 municipalities in the Denver metropolitan region, which is nationally recognized for fostering the region's culture of collaboration.

Focused on cultivating cooperation among mayor members and across various government agencies and levels, MMC plays a vital role in tackling complex regional issues. It provides a neutral and collaborative space for discussing common concerns and addressing multi-jurisdictional challenges. Grounded in communication, collaboration and consensus, MMC provides several key benefits to its members:

- **Strengthens Relationships:** Facilitates trust-building and personal connections among mayors.
- **Shapes Regional Strategies:** Develops, adopts, and advocates for positions on critical metro area issues at all levels of government.
- **Informs Members:** Monitors local, regional, state and federal policies to keep members updated on developments affecting their municipalities and the region.
- **Promotes Collaboration:** Serves as a unified voice for collaborative approaches to regional challenges.
- **Provides Insight:** Acts as a resource for private, nonprofit and public sector stakeholders feedback on proposed changes.
- **Encourages Resolution:** Offers a constructive, non-competitive forum for resolving differences among metro area jurisdictions.

Through its collaborative spirit, MMC remains a cornerstone for advancing shared regional priorities.

### Caucus Endorsements, Positions and the Decision Process

The Metro Mayors Caucus is a program of Civic Results which is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. In adherence to IRS regulations, Civic Results and MMC refrain from lobbying or endorsing political candidates. Additionally, MMC does not support the capital or charitable giving campaigns of other organizations, except in rare cases where the event directly aligns with MMC's identified areas of focus.

One of MMC's core strengths is its ability to represent the collective voice of many mayors. With this in mind, the Civic Results staff and the Executive Committee carefully evaluate requests for statements, resolutions or proclamations on a case-by-case basis. If a proposal aligns closely with MMC's priorities, the MMC Executive Committee may recommend a statement, resolution, or proclamation for full MMC consideration.

Since its founding in 1993, MMC has used consensus decision-making as the basis for establishing positions. This approach ensures that every member has an equal voice, that decisions reflect the collective input and solutions of MMC and enables the MMC to remain collaborative rather than adversarial. By embracing consensus, MMC has distinguished itself among similar organizations and has fostered a culture of regional collaboration.

#### What is consensus?

In true consensus, participants strive to reach solutions that everyone can "live with", even if some do not fully agree. In cases where middle ground could not be found, some mayors have chosen to step aside, allowing the majority's decision to move forward. When strong opposition prevented compromise, MMC opted to take no position.

However, over time, the consensus process shifted from its intended form toward requiring strict unanimity. To address this, MMC recognized the need to clarify and document the process so that a single member could not veto a proposal supported by the majority. Achieving unanimity within a diverse and sizable group like MMC is highly challenging. As a result, MMC has periodically reviewed and refined its consensus practices to maintain their effectiveness and inclusivity.

#### Retaining Consensus as Process While Modifying the Decision Rule

MMC remains committed to consensus as a process, reflecting its values of inclusivity, collaboration, and peer-based participation. Consensus fosters full

engagement, encourages expressions of dissent, and seeks positions acceptable to the entire group. Recognizing that unanimity may not always be achievable, MMC adopted a new Decision Rule in 2021 to guide decision-making more effectively.

### Unanimity of Consent:

- Achieving unanimous consent remains MMC's primary objective, as it represents the strongest possible consensus and unifies the group behind a position.
- Dissenters are encouraged to propose modifications that address their concerns, enabling them to either support the proposal or "stand aside," allowing the majority to proceed.

### Super Majority:

- When unanimity cannot be reached, a super-majority serves as the threshold for adopting a proposal.
- This approach ensures only positions with a high level of agreement move forward while balancing the need for action with respect for dissenting voices.

A super-majority avoids forcing conformity, empowering the minority to maintain their stance without stalling the group's progress. 3. Exceptions to the Super-Majority

MMC will not adopt any position that could have a demonstrable negative impact on a member community. For instance, MMC will abstain from taking a position on the siting of major infrastructure projects within a community if that community raises objections.

## Acceptance & Support Timelines

Given that the Full Caucus convenes just six times per year it is not always feasible to hold in-person discussions before formulating a position. To ensure flexibility and responsiveness, the Executive Committee (occasionally in collaboration with a standing issue committee) serves as a preliminary deliberative body between Full Caucus meetings.

### Steps for Position Development

- **Presentation and Discussion:** When possible, the MMC will have an informational presentation and discussion at a Full Caucus meeting.
- **Draft Position Memo:** A background memo or suggested position prepared by the Executive Committee.

## Proposal Circulation and Feedback Process

All proposals for consensus are distributed to members via email with the subject line: "Consensus Question." This process applies only to letters issued on behalf of the Metro Mayors Caucus Chair. Letters requesting signatures from individual mayors will not be circulated without the explicit approval of each mayor.

(See Appendix A, Figure 1 for Proposal Development Process).

## Executive Committee Role and Functions

### Executive Committee Membership

The Executive Committee is comprised of a Chair, two Vice Chairs (first vice-chair and second vice-chair), past chairs who remain in office and the committee is further complemented by several at-large mayor members, ensuring a total of nine members. Additionally, the mayors of Denver and Aurora, representing the region's largest municipalities, each have a high-level policy staff member who participate on their behalf.

### Executive Committee Roles and Responsibilities

The Executive Committee convenes at least six times annually to plan the Full Caucus meetings and holds additional sessions as needed. Beyond setting the Full Caucus agendas in alignment with Caucus priorities established during the Annual Retreat, the Executive Committee and its members are responsible for the following:

- Proposing policy positions for Caucus consideration and adoption.
- Representing MMC at external meetings and hosting visitors interested in its regional model and acting as spokespersons on behalf of approved Caucus policies.
- Engaging with mayor members on a peer-to-peer basis.
- Appointing mayors to fill Executive Committee vacancies as required.
- Chairing task forces and ad-hoc committees
- Functioning as a Legislative Committee when necessary.
- Identify and recommend potential sponsors to the President & CEO of Civic Results for annual MMC events.
- The Chair and first Co-Vice Chair sit on the Civic Results Board as ex-officio non-voting members

### Path to Executive Committee Membership

In the event of a mid-term vacancy, the Executive Committee appoints a replacement, adhering to the eligibility requirements outlined below. To maintain balanced representation, the appointee is selected from the same regional subarea

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(Northeast, Northwest, Southeast, Southwest or Central) whenever possible. If any subarea lacks representation, the Executive Committee may prioritize eligible mayors from that area.

### Annual Recruitment for Vacancies:

After the November municipal elections, staff invite mayors to self-nominate for any vacancies created by elections or term limits. Interested mayors must:

- Commitment to attending most Executive Committee (EC) Meetings
- Submit written responses to the EC questionnaire.
- Meet minimum eligibility requirements:
  - Attend at least 50% of the Full Caucus meetings in the prior year.
- Have at least one year remaining in their mayoral term. (Current EC members with less than a year remaining may complete their term on the EC)
- Be in financial good standing with the current year's dues paid in full.

Mayors elected in an election held outside of November may self-nominate in November and if selected, their seat will be held until meeting eligibility requirements.

### Self-Nomination Process

Mayors must answer the following questions:

1. What is the largest barrier to metropolitan cooperation and how can it be addressed?
2. What are the top 2-3 regional issues or challenges?
3. What role should MMC play in the region?
4. What activities should MMC prioritize or reduce?
5. How would you measure success for MMC next year?
6. Are you able to attend two-hour Executive Committee meetings throughout the year? (Most are held virtually, except for the annual in-person meeting and luncheon in November. The full meeting calendar is shared in advance.
7. Are you willing to serve as a standing committee chair if asked? (i.e., Housing, Homelessness, & Hunger Committee, Sustainability & Resiliency Committee, and Transportation & Mobility Committee).

### Selection Process

- A Selection Committee of up to seven members, which includes the past chair, current chair, first vice-chair and 2-4 Executive Committee appointees, reviews applications.

- The Selection Committee recommends a slate of candidates at the January Annual Retreat for consensus approval.
- Recommendations aim to balance geographic representation, population size, and tenure.

If the Committee cannot fill all nine seats or achieve diversity goals, additional mayors are identified and evaluated for willingness to serve. While desirable, it is not mandatory for each county to have at least one representative on the EC.

## Caucus Leadership Selection and Responsibilities

### Leadership Selection

- The Chair and Vice-Chairs are chosen by the Selection Committee from current EC members and approved by consensus at the Annual Retreat.
- Chair serves a one-year term, unless otherwise agreed upon by the Executive Committee.
- First Vice-Chair is next in line to assume the role of Chair. They also take on the Chair's duties when the Chair is unavailable.
- Second Vice-Chair is in the line of succession after the First Vice-Chair and may step into the Chair role if the First Vice Chair is unable or chooses not to serve – whether due to term limits, election outcomes, or other timing-related considerations.

### Chair Responsibilities

- Convene and run Full Caucus meetings, including the retreat.
- Represent and act as the primary spokesperson for MMC
- Sign all formal Caucus communications and resolutions

## Agenda Setting and Committees

### 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 can be proposed by the Executive Committee, regular members, or external parties seeking an audience with MMC. Each topic is assessed based on its alignment with the priorities established at the Annual Retreat, its timeliness and the ability of MMC to influence the issue.



Civic Results staff are responsible for organizing speakers, coordinating presentations, and preparing related materials. The final hour of each Full Caucus meeting is reserved exclusively for mayors, providing a dedicated space for focused discussions and collaborative problem-solving. This time is used for workshopping ideas, addressing shared challenges, and fostering deeper dialogue among the mayor members.

## Standing Committees

MMC has convened several committees and task forces over the years on issues ranging from water conservation to workforce housing. Currently, the three standing committees, in addition to the Executive Committee are:

### Transportation & Transit:

Transportation remains a consistent focus, with the Transportation & Mobility Committee convening as needed. In the past, MMC has organized task forces such as:

- MPACT64 (statewide transportation task force)
- FasTracks Task Force
- Metropolitan Transportation District Governance Committee (MTD)

### Sustainability & Resiliency:

Water conservation and energy efficiency are an ongoing focus for MMC. In the past, MMC committees have addressed topics like:

- Energy Efficiency & Conservation
- Water Conservation & Drought Mitigation

### Housing, Hunger & Homelessness:

Affordability, and the ability to have housing and stability is a constant concern of our mayor members. We address ongoing issues such as:

- Workforce and Affordable Housing
- Hunger & Homelessness

The Executive Committee and Full Caucus have the discretion to establish ad-hoc or permanent committees as needed, while considering the available resources and staff capacity required to effectively support these meetings.

## Civic Results and the Role of Staff

Civic Results assists 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 region.

### Collaborative Problem Solving

- **Process Design & Facilitation:** Crafting and leading structured discussions for problem-solving.
- **Strategic Planning:** Guiding entities through planning processes to achieve shared goals.
- **Multi-Jurisdictional Initiatives:** Coordinating efforts across municipal boundaries.
- **Intergovernmental Agreements:** Helping jurisdictions formalize collaborations.
- **Best Practices Research:** Providing insights to inform effective policies and programs.
- **Community Visioning/Scenario Planning:** Shaping long-term goals and envisioning future possibilities.
- **Stakeholder Consensus Building:** Ensuring diverse perspectives align on key issues.

### Current Programs:

Civic Results manages or has managed several impactful programs:

- **Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC):** Provides full administrative and strategic support.
- **Municipal Leadership Academy:** Provides training to local leaders who are currently serving in municipal office.
- **Future Housing Coalition:** Creates toolkits as a resource for local governments related to implementation of certain needed housing types.

### Prior Programs and Projects:

In the past, Civic Results has spearheaded or supported significant initiatives:

- **Metro Vision 2020:** Negotiating urban growth boundaries.
- **Blueprint Denver:** Advancing smart urban planning.
- **ULI Series: Meet the Mayors:** Facilitating engagement with urban leaders.
- **UniverCity Connections:** Strengthening ties between Fort Collins and Colorado State University.
- **Oregon Big Look Task Force:** Evaluating state land-use policies.
- **Children and Nature Network:** Developing a community action guide.
- **Colorado Transportation Finance and Implementation Panel:** Exploring sustainable funding options.

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- **Numerous Visioning and Consensus Projects:** Supporting initiatives both locally and nationally.
- **Livable Communities Support Center:** Advocates for sustainable and equitable communities.
- **Metro Denver Health and Wellness Commission:** Promotes regional health initiatives.
- **Alliance for Regional Stewardship:** Encourages leadership in regional governance.

### **Impact:**

By aligning policy development, collaborative facilitation, and strategic support, Civic Results empowers local leaders, communities and governments to address complex challenges and implement forward-thinking solutions.

## Current Staff Bios



**Heidi Williams took on the role of President & CEO of Civic Results and Executive Director of the Metro Mayors Caucus on July 17, 2023.** Prior to this position, Heidi had a notable career in public service and community leadership. She owned a business in Thornton before being elected as the city's mayor in 2011, where she served until December 2019 due to term limits. During her tenure, Heidi held key leadership roles, chairing the Metro Mayors Caucus, the E470 Board of

Directors, and the Mile High Flood District, while also serving as President of the Ralston House Child Advocacy Center and on the Board of Directors for the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG).

Heidi's commitment to community and regional collaboration continued after her mayoral term. She currently serves on the boards of Ralston House, Almost Home, the Front Range Community College Foundation and the E470 Transportation Foundation. In 2016, she graduated summa cum laude from the University of Colorado Denver with a Bachelor's in Political Science and later earned a Master's in Public Administration in 2018. Between January 2020 and June 2023, Heidi worked as the Director of Opioid Response for Colorado's Attorney General, Phil Weiser. In this role, she united all counties and nearly every municipality in a Memorandum of Understanding, directing opioid settlement funds to local initiatives. For her efforts, the AG's Opioid Response team received the Johns Hopkins Inaugural Award for Excellence in the Application of Opioid Litigation Practices.

Heidi's leadership philosophy centers on the belief that effective local governance requires a regional perspective. She advocates for a cooperative approach to addressing major issues like housing, homelessness, transportation, water, growth, and energy, recognizing that these challenges extend beyond municipal borders. Heidi remains dedicated to advancing the work that supports the collective success of metro area municipalities.

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*Maggie started her journey as Program Assistant with Civic Results in August 2024. She is excited to be a part of the team and help continue to build Civic Result's various programs. Originally from Lafayette, California outside of San Francisco, Maggie made her way to Western Washington University for her undergraduate degree where she studied Political Science and discovered her love for the game of Ultimate Frisbee by joining her university club team.*

*Maggie then lived in Seattle, WA and Paris, France, working in various levels of the education sector before pursuing her Master's Degree in Public Administration at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. During graduate school, she worked with several nonprofits, including the American Society for Quality and the Arthur Flemming Awards and concentrated her studies in Program Evaluation and Policy Analysis. After finishing her Master's degree, Maggie worked as the Special Assistant to the Managing Director at The Washington Ballet where she honed her organizational and event planning skills.*

*Maggie moved to Denver in July of 2024 to be closer to the mountains and to family in the area. Outside of work hours, she is excited to explore all the running, biking, hiking trails and natural beauty that Colorado has to offer. Maggie is thrilled to bring her varied experience with nonprofits, interest in regional politics and policy to her role with Civic Results as the organization continues to grow and evolve.*

## Appendix A

Figure 1 – Position Development Process



### Steps for Developing a Position

#### Presentation & Discussion

When possible, an informational presentation and group discussion takes place during a Full Caucus Meeting.

#### Position Memo

Because meetings are infrequent, the Executive Committee will have a background memo prepared with a suggested position for consideration.

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### Proposal Circulation & Feedback Process

Proposals are shared with members via email, marked with the subject line "Consensus Question". Members will have **three days** to review and respond.

#### Days 1-3: Initial Feedback Window

- Mayors may submit suggested changes or edits for consideration.
- A supermajority of member responses is required in order for the Caucus to take an official position.
- A response poll will be included in the email to facilitate feedback. To ensure all voices are heard, please respond within the three-day window.

#### Days 4-7: Final Review & Finalization

- Proposed edits will be reviewed, and a final version will be circulated if consensus is reached.
- Additional discussion and refinement may occur during this time as needed.

Figure 2 – Program Organizational Chart

