

Housing Collaboration: A Shared Vision for Colorado

Introduction

Colorado stands at a crossroads, with the state's escalating housing crisis demanding urgent solutions. With elections approaching in 2026, a diverse group of stakeholders came together to propose a proactive strategy as we engage candidates for Colorado Governor. This coalition is built on the belief that no single community or sector can solve this challenge alone, and that by sharing resources, exchanging expertise, and working collectively, we can shape a more affordable and sustainable future for our state.

Vision and Commitment

As the election nears, we will engage candidates and elected officials in a constructive conversation about the future of housing in Colorado. With the goal of highlighting the progress already being made, elevate successful local and regional models, and ensure that these examples inform a statewide strategy, as well as potential legislation. By doing so, we will inspire leaders to see housing not as an intractable crisis, but as a solvable challenge that, if addressed with vision, collaboration, and long-term foresight, can strengthen our economy, support our workforce, and preserve the character and vitality of Colorado's communities for generations to come.

Considerations for State's Direction

The considerations that follow outline a cohesive direction for Colorado's next chapter in housing policy, one that favors alignment and steadiness. They reflect a shared view that the state can make meaningful progress by coordinating its systems, strengthening what already works, and creating conditions that allow communities to plan with confidence. The proposal is not a prescriptive blueprint, but a framework that invites the next Governor and legislature to guide statewide efforts in a way that respects local expertise, encourages flexibility, and supports a full spectrum of housing choices suited to Colorado's diverse communities.

1. Integrate housing, transportation, natural resources, and infrastructure planning. These systems are deeply interconnected, yet often managed in isolation. Coordinating them, and funding complementary efforts such as first- and last-mile connectivity, will ensure that investments reinforce one another and produce lasting economic and community benefits.
2. Leverage and strengthen existing programs and initiatives rather than creating new ones. Colorado already has successful local/regional models and partnerships underway, and the opportunity lies in scaling what works, fostering alignment, and providing sustained support for projects with proven positive community outcomes.
3. Provide flexibility and predictability for local governments, allowing long-term development planning to proceed without frequent state-mandated policy reversals. Sustainable progress depends on stability, which includes resolving persistent issues in the state's current construction liability model, where reform is urgently needed, as well as creating a framework where state guidance enables development in communities ready to embrace it.

4. Encourage a diversity of housing options that reflect Colorado's communities and lifestyles. True affordability includes choice, from denser urban neighborhoods and mixed-use developments to rural and small-town settings where families seek space and stability. Consider changes to recent land use legislation to provide flexibility and remove one-size-fits-all mandates, which risk undermining both effectiveness and identity, reshaping the distinctive character that draws people to a community in the first place.
5. Develop a consistent, non-statutory statewide framework for defining housing types, such as "affordable," "workforce," "income-aligned", and "attainable." A shared vocabulary across sectors and jurisdictions will improve policy design, funding strategies, and public understanding.

Working Group

The working group represents an alliance of business leaders and civic organizations who share a commitment to addressing Colorado's housing challenges in a coordinated way. It brings together Civic Results - Metro Mayor's Caucus, the Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG), the Colorado Municipal League (CML), Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI), and Colorado Concern to advance collaborative, practical housing solutions. In a related but separate effort, Colorado Concern, Civic Results and local representatives also participate in the Public/Private Housing Consortium, which focuses on complementary strategies within the same policy area. Together, these organizations share a commitment to bring creativity, credibility, and collaboration to the statewide dialogue, ensuring that the next Governor and future legislature inherit not only an urgent challenge but also a well-prepared set of actionable solutions that respect Colorado's history of plurality, transparency, and partnership. The lessons of recent years suggest that durable progress requires collaboration with those on the ground who are building, planning, and governing Colorado's communities every day.

Local Government Housing & Land-Use Actions in Colorado

Members of this working group are already advancing initiatives that make a measurable difference in communities across Colorado. These efforts demonstrate both creativity and commitment, and they are the kinds of work we want elected officials to recognize and build upon as we shape a broader collaborative strategy for the future.

Colorado Concern

- Serves as a business voice within the Public-Private Housing Consortium, ensuring that employer perspectives on housing affordability, workforce retention, and economic competitiveness are reflected in statewide discussions.
- Guided by its Board of Directors, identified housing as a top priority for Colorado's business community, recognizing the direct connection between attainable housing, workforce stability, and long-term economic growth.

- Highlights the impact of housing costs on employee recruitment and retention across all sectors, particularly among younger generations seeking to build careers and families in Colorado, and in strategic industries where the state needs to attract new talent.
- Works to align business, civic, and government leaders around practical, market-informed solutions that expand attainable housing options without compromising local character or economic vitality.

Civic Results

- The premier program of Civic Results is the Metro Mayors Caucus (MMC). MMC represents 38 mayor members from the seven county metro region including Denver, Boulder, Broomfield, Adams, Arapahoe, Jefferson and Douglas Counties. MMC represents over 2.6 million residents, which equates to more than half of the state's population. MMC priorities include housing, homelessness, hunger, transportation and mobility, sustainability and mobility, and economic success of the region and State.
- Hosts the Future Housing Coalition, a multi-phase series of workshops with local elected officials, planners, and developers to explore complex housing challenges and generate a policy toolkit for communities.
 - The toolkit aligns with four components: Community Engagement, Municipal & Developer Best Practices, and a Financial Toolkit (emphasizing tools like inclusionary zoning, ADUs, parking reforms, transit-oriented development).

Denver Regional Council of Governments (DRCOG)

- Serving 59 member governments, DRCOG is recognized as a trusted partner in ways that are leveraged for regional housing work including convening and facilitation, data collection and analysis, and technical assistance.
- Conducted a [Regional Housing Needs Assessment](#) in 2024 to establish an objective, data-driven understanding of the baseline housing need for both the current and future population. Through deep data analysis and extensive stakeholder engagement, DRCOG illustrated that the region needs 500,000 additional housing units over the next 25 years.
- Housing markets are regional and multi-jurisdictional coordination is needed in order to address housing barriers. DRCOG is developing a **Regional Housing Strategy** to foster shared understanding, collaboration, and actions to make progress toward addressing the region's housing needs. When complete, the Regional Housing Strategy will articulate a series of shared goals and vetted pathways for policy, funding and programmatic strategies that local governments and stakeholders will work toward to impact housing affordability in our region.

Colorado Municipal League (CML)

- Represents and serves 271 municipalities across Colorado through advocacy, information, and training supporting exceptional municipal governance.

- Advocates for partnership, not preemption through state policies that support municipalities' ongoing work to address housing shortages and plan for future growth.
- Led effort to pass Senate Bill 24-174, Sustainable Affordable Housing Assistance, that aligns municipal and state interests towards common goals by empowering communities to address housing challenges through inclusive and sustainable solutions. CML achieved bipartisan support for this law which preserves local decision-making and community character while fostering meaningful partnerships between the state, local governments, citizens, and community partners.
- Supports state incentives that aid communities' efforts to build affordable housing without a one-size-fits-all approach.
- Collaborates with housing advocates, state agencies, lawmakers, and various organizations to improve funding for housing and technical assistance for land use planning in communities.

Colorado Counties, Inc. (CCI)

- Spear-headed changes to Lodging Taxes (HB25-1247) to expand authorized uses to include affordable/workforce housing.
- Supported legislation to extend Revitalization Authority to counties (HB24-1172) which has been leveraged by counties for housing projects.
- Advocated for policies that reflect unique housing markets and differing environmental conditions that exist across the state.
- Highlight and create opportunities to share best practices and lessons learned amongst county leaders on affordable housing development, water and infrastructure requirements, and comprehensive planning [Conference Sessions, Webinars, Working Group].
- Encouraged and facilitated counties to utilize Prop 123 programming/funding. Considering policy modifications that make the program more accessible across the state.
- Host housing and land use working group comprised of commissioners, building officials, attorneys, and planners, community developers.

Logos