



Report to the CC4CA Board of Directors:

Recommendations for CC4CA's Organizational Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

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Developed by the CC4CA Pandemic Recovery Working Group

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Part 1: Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic, which began to impact Colorado in March 2020, has introduced a series of unprecedented challenges to CC4CA communities across the state. Issues surrounding public health and economic downturn have become top of mind for many CC4CA jurisdictions. As member communities navigate this new reality, a need to address these issues, their influence on the work of CC4CA, and the state of climate action progress in Colorado became prevalent.

While the pandemic has created a slew of challenges for CC4CA communities to navigate, the recovery phase of the pandemic presents an opportunity to build back better – focusing attention on a “green recovery” that would help communities mitigate the increasingly harmful risks of climate change. The Pandemic Recovery Working Group (PRWG) was created at the request of the CC4CA Board of Directors to develop recommendations addressing both the challenges and opportunities presented by the recovery phase of the pandemic. Those recommendations are presented in this report and the Board can choose to pursue any combination of them at its discretion.

PRWG Process

The PRWG convened five times between early June 2020 and late August 2020 to evaluate the landscape and develop recommendations. Consisting of 16 representatives from 14 member communities, the PRWG includes a diverse collection of Front Range and mountain jurisdictions. Each meeting addressed a topic relevant to the connection between the pandemic response and advancing climate action. Intentionally facilitated discussions that considered each topic led to the PRWG’s recommendations to the Board. The process and resulting recommendations specifically addressed the following four categories, which were originally identified by the Board:

- The **needs of member communities** that have come about in response to, or have been amplified by, the pandemic and how CC4CA can support members in addressing these needs.
- The **organizational health** of CC4CA, including its financial position and ability to carry out its current mission.
- The best ways for CC4CA to pursue **policy advocacy** considering changes to the political and legislative landscape in Colorado as a result of the pandemic.
- The **statewide/regional leadership** roles CC4CA could take on, related to climate action, in the coming years.

Following each meeting, a memo was distributed to the members of the PRWG synthesizing the discussions and providing an opportunity for the group to amend, remove, or add additional insights.

How to Use This Document

The specific recommendations developed by the PRWG, which can be found in Part 2 and Part 3 of this report, are not implementation roadmaps. Rather, they serve as collectively developed starting points, that can be explored in further depth by the Board. The PRWG suggests that the Board review the full set of recommendations, identifying which merit further exploration, and

establishing a process to move priority recommendations towards implementation. The PRWG would be happy to further support the Board in further explorations or implementation planning processes.

Recommendations in this report are generally supported by the member community representatives involved in the PRWG. Additional links and resources related to the recommendations, which can be used to explore the categories of recommendations in further depth, can be found in the Appendix.

Part 2: Key Recommendations

The key recommendations listed in this section are those that garnered the most collective support from the PRWG. There is one key recommendation listed for each of the four overarching categories. All other recommendations that were developed in the context of the four overarching categories are listed in Part 3.

Equity

Embed Equity in all Recommendations

While equity was not one of the four themes listed above, the PRWG consistently emphasized that equity should be centered and embedded into CC4CA's practices, including, but not limited to, any action that is pursued as a result this Report. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the inequities that marginalized groups experience related to public health, economic status, and accessibility have been amplified. Similarly, climate change is an issue deeply rooted in human systems which have historically produced significant disparities for people of color, low-income households, and other historically underrepresented groups. These inequities are exacerbated by climate change, as people of color and other marginalized populations are often more vulnerable to climate change impacts. Accordingly, it is critical to prioritize equity in any CC4CA decision-making process, including those related to the recommendations in this report. In prioritizing equity in response to the pandemic and climate action, CC4CA should actively seek to create more equitable outcomes for all Colorado communities, and when this is possible, to ensure that CC4CA efforts do not negatively impact marginalized groups.¹ Notably a PRWG recommendation to '*Integrate Equity into Policy Advocacy*' is detailed in that section of the report (p.9).

Member Communities' Needs

Resource Sharing

Organized resource sharing between CC4CA member communities could both bring forward relevant information from various jurisdictions to enable more informed local decision making, and unlock collective action opportunities, on topics related to both climate action and pandemic response. Resource sharing could take the form of resource libraries, sharing of best practices,

¹ To learn more about what equity looks like in the context of advancing climate action through government, see the [Urban Sustainability Directors Network Equity Foundations Training](#). Furthermore, additional resources can be found in the "Links and Resources" section of the Appendix, specifically those listed under the category of "Anti-Racism and Climate Justice".

cohorts that work together and with technical advisors on specific challenges, and co-development of strategies, tools, toolkits, and dashboards. Topics of interest that members suggest could benefit resource sharing include, but are not limited to telecommuting, growth management, beneficial electrification, waste and plastics, transit and transportation, infrastructure development, housing, repurposing vacant commercial buildings, climate impacts, as well as data sharing and visualization. Opportunities likely exist to approach this through a partnership model. For example, several CC4CA members are participating in a Rocky Mountain Institute cohort on *Beneficial Electrification* for Colorado Communities. It is likely that organizations such as USDN, ICLEI, RMI and regional organizations, that have experience managing shared learning tools and processes, are open to discussions to explore partnerships that could help deliver specific resource sharing needs.

Organizational Health & Policy Advocacy

Maintain Advocacy Capacity

It is critical that CC4CA maintain its current capacity to influence and impact the climate policy space while simultaneously evolving with a shifting landscape. This could help advance CC4CA's core mission while allowing the coalition to continue delivering on those priorities in a context that is both more interconnected and focused on equity and racial justice. Ideas for bringing the capacity to accomplish this include leveraging foundation funding (to support additional capacity and partnerships) and more actively engaging the membership to help with capacity.

Note: the key recommendation from both the conversation on Organizational Health and Policy Advocacy were similar pertaining to the maintenance of advocacy capacity. As such, these two key recommendations were combined to cover both categories. Further, the additional recommendations in each of these sections (below) provides additional depth related to this recommendation.

Statewide/Regional Leadership

Procure Locally and Regionally Relevant Datasets to Strengthen the Case for Climate Action

These data sets could include:

- The anticipated additional costs of delivering key government services under various GHG emissions scenarios (similar to the work that Boulder County has done).
- The potential economic and jobs-creation benefits of climate action.
- Costs, benefits, and reduction potential of specific climate policies supported by CC4CA.
- The value of ecosystem services and associated economic sectors threatened by climate change.

Most CC4CA members do not have the financial resources to commission localized data. And though it would be possible to get a significant economy of scale out of collaboratively

developing or commissioning this type of data, CC4CA does not have the financial resources to do so independently.

Obtaining these data sets is something that could be possible through mutually beneficial partnerships. Universities, nonprofits, and state agencies may all have some capacity and interest in answering specific questions, particularly if there is a policy-relevant application. Further, this presents an additional opportunity for one-time foundation funding.

Experience has shown that this type of data – namely the Boulder County study – has been very helpful in making the case for climate action in a variety of policy venues. An additional benefit of producing this data would be its use within member communities. If the Board decides that CC4CA should procure any of this data, the PRWG recommends starting with those that are most transferable to all communities.

Part 3: Detailed List of Other Recommendations

Member Communities' Needs

Engagement on Stimulus Funding and the CARES Act

Including, but not limited to, advocacy around stimulus funding to ensure recovery actions also benefit climate action and resiliency initiatives. Developing additional coalition intention related to the best use and spending of CARES, or future stimulus, dollars would further benefit member communities.

Analysis and Coalition Education on the Evolving Policy Landscape

Member communities could further develop their understanding, through CC4CA, of a) how Colorado's political climate has changed; and b) how that change will impact climate action policies and politics moving forward, including the impacts to potential future state budgets.

Additional Policy Focus on Mission-related Topics that Have Become More Challenging or Urgent as a Result of the Pandemic

Member communities could benefit from an expanded CC4CA focus on these topics, which could include telecommuting, transportation and declines in the use of transit, as well as waste and increase in the use of plastics and single use materials. Coalition work on telecommuting, for example, could include developing specific policy positions or initiatives to create better systems across the state and in local communities.

Defensive Readiness

CC4CA should help member communities be prepared to play defense in the face of potential a) rollbacks on regulatory safeguards; and b) pauses on important legislative items.

Analysis and Guidance on Navigating and Reconciling Competing or Complementary Policy Priorities

Currently identified examples of guidance that could be provided to member communities include a) clean energy development and open space; and b) relationships between climate action and zoning policies; and c) climate action and economic recovery.

Understanding Anticipated Growth Trends and Emerging Planning and Zoning Needs

This understanding will be critical as more people move to Colorado, and particularly mountain communities, as a result of pandemic-related dynamics. Member communities could benefit from a better understanding of the impacts of displacement on existing communities, who is impacted by these trends, and the relationship between these trends and emissions. In addition, anecdotal evidence is beginning to emerge that demand for larger homes is increasing, thus reversing the trend toward smaller homes and increasing the potential for a rise in emissions in this sector.

Member Dues

CC4CA should explore securing external funding, for example through foundations, to subsidize (fully or partially based on need) member dues from communities that are unable to pay dues because of pandemic-related budget impacts. Supplemental foundation funding might also help support desired member services that are not currently provided.

Development of Narratives

Both the coalition and individual jurisdictions would benefit from the creation of shareable narratives to describe how we are pivoting on policy priorities and approaches in response to the pandemic, connecting climate to related priority issues like housing, health and racial justice, and becoming more integrated in approaches. The development of cohesive narratives that can be utilized by all member communities would allow CC4CA's positions to be accurately shared across Colorado. Further, these narratives could support member communities by decreasing the burden of drafting original narratives in instances where a CC4CA narrative would be successful.

Local Government Authority

Member communities would benefit from CC4CA supporting policy outcomes that could increase local government's authority to design and enforce rules related to pandemic response and recovery.

Organizational Health

Position Organizational Capacity to Nimble Support Member Needs

With a recognition that CC4CA's success to date stems from its focus on policy, the PRWG recommends expanding organizational focus, for a limited time, to address additional member needs. Examples of those evolving needs are detailed in the "Member Communities' Needs" section above.

Take a *Holistic, Forward Looking, and Adaptable* Approach to Advocacy

Taking a holistic, forward looking, and adaptable approach would intentionally promote the creation of new solutions rather than focusing on fixing old problems. Additionally, it would emphasize intersectional solutions to climate and resiliency that foster an inclusive economy. Examples, specific to our climate and pandemic-recovery context include:

- Reimagining economic growth models that meet organizational objectives;
- Expanding the coalition's focus to provide immediate benefits to member communities;
- Building back better; and,
- Expanding the intersectional scope of CC4CA's advocacy focus.

To this end, one resource the Board might consider for further exploring what these ideas look like in practice is the '[Catalytic Thinking](#)' Framework (background and description can be found [here](#)).

Pursue One-time or Limited-term Foundation Funding

Funding would support challenges and opportunities resulting from pandemic-related circumstances. Limited or one-time foundation funding could be used to:

- Supplement or subsidize dues for members facing budget austerity; and,
- Enable delivery of the additional services and support that members are asking for.

The capacity and mission tradeoffs related to securing and spending foundation funding are recognized and underscore the rationale for limiting this activity to helping the coalition weather current challenges. Member community representatives of the PRWG, Greg Poschman (Pitkin County) and Chris Menges (City of Aspen), suggested that they could engage a specific foundation contact.

Retain Member Communities

Member communities who are unable to pay dues as a result of pandemic-related budget austerity, should be provided with aid to retain their presence in CC4CA. A method to realize this goal could be securing one-time foundation funding.

Identify and Communicate Climate-related Stories that Speak to the Urgency and Opportunity of the Moment

Capture and share success stories on climate action at the state and local level to demonstrate the importance and connectivity of climate action work to pandemic-related challenges and opportunities. This can help demonstrate why CC4CA's mission remains critical and relevant. One example of such a story is Xcel Energy's commitment to continue providing power to low income neighborhoods.

Policy Advocacy

Integrate Equity into Policy Advocacy

Take the appropriate process and implementation steps to ensure that efforts to center equity in policy advocacy are substantive, strategic, and informed. Specific ideas to accomplish this include:

- Developing a coalition-specific definition of equity.
- Using that definition, develop a framework for substantively evaluating and elevating equity in CC4CA's policy positions and decisions.
- Pilot that framework for one year in policy engagement processes to understand what it looks like in practice. Evaluate its efficacy and consider improvements.
- Identify a partner organization(s) that is an established equity leader to collaborate with CC4CA and specific groups like the Legislative Group. The partner organization could assist CC4CA in better understanding equity implications and desirable outcomes related to specific policy proposals. This also recognizes that CC4CA and member jurisdictions' expertise in this space is nascent and would go further faster with dedicated expertise to both advance policy advocacy and overall capacity.
- Look within CC4CA member communities for individuals or groups that can assist jurisdictions in bringing more inclusive perspectives and positions back to the coalition or evaluate the equity implications of specific proposals. Consider funding/stipends.
- Sign on to the [Equitable and Just National Climate Platform](#) to enhance our commitment, create accountability and demonstrate relevance/leadership in the space.

Broaden Approach to Identifying, Evaluating, and Engaging in Policy

Given the interconnectivity of issues, such as public health, democratic process, infrastructure, economics, land-use, resilience, etc. to climate, CC4CA could consider engaging in a wider variety of legislative, regulatory and policy activities that connect with our core priorities. Strategically, this could provide CC4CA with robust opportunities to engage in policy during a state legislative session that will likely look much different than previous years. Tactically, this could relate to how CC4CA's searches for bills to engage in and positions us to embed our priorities into related legislation.

Broaden the Focus and Impact of our 'Just Transition' Work

Expanding the focus and impact of CC4CA's 'Just Transition' efforts could include expanding our focus beyond coal communities, cultivating new allies, and utilizing the Just Transition Working Group's recent report to inform ongoing policy advocacy efforts.

Consider Drafting and Finding a Sponsor(s) to Introduce a Bill to Cement Substantive Gains

Substantive gains (related to decreases in GHG emissions) made over the past several years could be supported by a legislative effort to ensure that these gains are fully realized. While following up on this recommendation would require an inclusive coalition process, ideas include climate hazards mitigation and tax incentives for employers that promote telecommuting on a large scale.

Prioritize Frontline Workers

Ensure policy approaches and positions do not leave frontline workers behind or inadvertently impact frontline workers negatively.

Add Local Policy and Federal Policy Focus Areas to CC4CA's Wheelhouse

Expanding CC4CA's policy advocacy focus areas to the local and federal levels would allow CC4CA to take advantage of relevant opportunities while the State is focused on "3-F" policies (fast, friendly, free).

Maintain the Visibility, Urgency, and Relevance of Climate Policy at the State Level

Education and continued advocacy should be utilized so that climate policy is not entirely lost to what might otherwise be a "3-F" policy approach during the 2021 legislative session. Laying the groundwork for future climate policy during the 2021 legislative session will create the opportunity for expedited adoption of such policies in future sessions.

Statewide/Regional Leadership

Engage in Policy-related Processes with a Significant Link to, or Impact on, Climate Change

Currently, CC4CA is strategically and purposefully engaged in specific policy venues, with a focus on state policy and regulation. Engagement has been focused in these areas based on CC4CA's ability to create an impact. There may be additional venues that provide significant impact opportunities. The PRWG recommends deeper consideration of whether the following activities meet those criteria:

- Participating in Forest Plan revisions and processes, and other significant land management efforts, which impact how public lands adjacent to or within member communities are managed. Particularly when it comes to federal public lands management, there are large opportunities to impact GHG emissions in the state of Colorado (e.g. fossil fuel extraction, forest protection, sequestration, methane capture).
- Bring a climate perspective to Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission (COGCC) rulemakings.
- Ensure a climate lens and a voice in significant state management plans and long-term resource plans, such as the Colorado Water Plan. Water management has traditionally focused on adaptation, but rarely on the mitigation nexus, which could be a significant opportunity.
- Evaluate whether CC4CA should have more of a voice in wildfire mitigation and management processes and planning at the state level.

As with several of the proposed activities, engaging in these types of processes may be enabled through partnerships with organizations that have expertise in them and align with CC4CA's mission. Additionally, or alternatively, individual members with expertise/access/influence in the various areas might be able to represent CC4CA's interests in these venues. An important

consideration related to engagement is evaluating whether CC4CA would substantively contribute to outcomes that advance the coalition's priorities.

Part 4: Conclusion and Next Steps

The PRWG actively engaged in a facilitated, deliberative process to develop focused recommendations in four key areas. The PRWG recommends that the Board use this document to inform the development of organizational strategies that address emergent member needs and a more dynamic policy landscape while simultaneously continuing to advance CC4CA's core climate mission.

The recommendations contained in this report are a high-level starting point for figuring out how to do that, reflecting member needs, insights, experiences, and expertise. One approach the board might consider for proactively addressing the recommendations is as follows:

1. Convene to identify items in each of the four areas that should be pursued for implementation.
2. Determine an appropriate way to further develop an implementation plan for selected items. This could include re-engaging the PRWG, and/or bringing staff, other committees, or partners into the conversation.
3. Review and refine implementation strategies for new key initiatives and identify the appropriate process for coalition membership to approve adoption.

The PRWG appreciates the Board's vision and leadership in creating this Working Group, as well as the opportunity to submit our findings for consideration. We believe that this report provides an opportunity to move forward on focused strategy conversations that could help deliver needed and practical coalition responses in the four key areas that it addresses.

Thank you,

Your CC4CA **Pandemic Recovery Working Group (PRWG)**

Appendix

Links and Resources

A series of links and resources relevant to the connection between the COVID-19 pandemic recovery and climate action are listed in the table on the following page. This table was built out with the suggestions of PRWG members and resources are grouped together based on their common themes. If a resource is applicable to one of the four categories addressed by the PRWG, the appropriate category is listed next to the resource in the table. Additionally, while not an explicit category addressed by the PRWG, “Equity” is listed as category in this table as it applies to all further work that will be undertaken on the topic of pandemic recovery. The aim of including these resources is to provide a useful starting point for the Board to explore the PRWG recommendations further.

General Climate Action and Resiliency			
Author/Source	Title (with link)	PRWG Category (if applicable)	Keywords
Sabin Center for Climate Change Law	Cities, Climate & COVID-19	Member Communities’ Needs	Policy, Transportation, Natural Spaces, Economic Recovery
C40 Cities	Global Mayors COVID-19 Recovery Task Force Commitment Letter	Member Communities’ Needs	Climate Change, Public Health, Equity, Economic Recovery
UN Environment Programme	Building Resilient Societies After the COVID-19 Pandemic	Member Communities’ Needs, Statewide/Regional Leadership	Recovery, Socioeconomic Value, Environmental Protection
Rocky Mountain Institute	Building Urbanism into Climate Policy	Policy Advocacy	Policy, Climate Change, Housing Equity, Transportation, Carbon Emissions

C40 Cities	How to build back better with a 15-minute city	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Transportation, Equity, Economic Resiliency, Climate Action, Urban Planning
Anti-Racism and Climate Justice			
Author/Source	Title (with link)	PRWG Category (if applicable)	Keywords
New York Times	Read Up on the Links Between Racism and the Environment	Equity	Climate Justice, Environmental Racism, Equity
Urban Sustainability Directors Network	Anti-Racist Resources	Equity	Climate Justice, Environmental Racism, Equity
World Resources Institute	Ensuring a "Just Transition": 5 Priorities to Make Climate Action Benefit Low-Income and Disadvantaged Groups	Equity, Policy Advocacy	Climate Justice, Equity, Just Transition
Rhodium Group	A Just Green Recovery	Equity, Policy Advocacy	Equity, Environmental Racism, Just Transition, Economic Recovery, Public Health, COVID-19
Stanford Social Innovation Review	Creating a Better World Means Asking Better Questions	Equity	Equity, Social Justice, Public Health
Creating the Future	Catalytic Thinking Framework/Questionnaire	Equity	Equity, Social Justice
Equitable & Just National Climate Platform	Equitable & Just National Climate Platform Homepage	Equity, Policy Advocacy	Equity, Climate Justice, Environmental Racism, Public Health

The Current	Podcast: Mariana Mazzucato: Economics in a Post-COVID Age	Equity	Equity, Economic Recovery, COVID-19
Green Stimulus and Economic Recovery			
Author/Source	Title (with link)	PRWG Category (if applicable)	Keywords
Rocky Mountain Institute	Global Stimulus Principles	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Economic Recovery, Climate Change, Public Health
Rocky Mountain Institute	US Stimulus Strategy: Recommendations for a Zero-Carbon Economic Recovery	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Economic Recovery, Climate Change, Transportation
Rocky Mountain Institute	Decarbonization and Debt Forgiveness: A Path Forward	Policy Advocacy	Smart Recovery, Investment, Fossil Fuels
World Resources Institute	Designing the COVID-19 Recovery for a Safer and More Resilient World	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Economic Recovery, Climate Change
World Resources Institute	Responding to Coronavirus: Low-carbon Investments Can Help Economies Recover	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Climate Action, Recession, Resiliency, Sustainable Growth
Green Biz	3 lessons COVID-19 is teaching us about emissions reductions	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Carbon Emissions, Economic Resiliency
Green Biz	4 reasons clean energy jobs are key to economic recovery	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Unemployment, COVID-19, Climate Change, Equity

The Economist	The pressure to make the post-COVID rebound green	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Economic Recovery, Carbon Emissions
Climate Interactive	Recovery Policies and Actions	Policy Advocacy, Equity	Climate Action, Economic Recovery, Equity, Resiliency, Sustainable Growth
McKinsey & Company	From surviving to thriving: Reimagining the post-COVID-19 return	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Economic Recovery, Economic Resiliency, Organizational Health
Rocky Mountain Institute	US City Stimulus: Advancing Localized Green Recovery and Resilience	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Economic Recovery, Economic Resiliency, Climate Action
Climate Policy Initiative	Green Recovery	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Climate Action, Economic Recovery, Resiliency, Sustainable Growth
Green Tech Media	Podcast: Relief, Rescue, Rebuild: The Case for a Sustainable Recovery	Member Communities' Needs, Policy Advocacy	Climate Action, Economic Recovery, Resiliency, Sustainable Growth
Western Organization of Resource Councils	Coal Mine Cleanup Works	Policy Advocacy, Equity	Just Transition, Economic Recovery, Resiliency, Sustainable Growth
Public Health			
Author/Source	Title (with link)	PRWG Category (if applicable)	Keywords
Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health	Coronavirus, Climate Change, and the Environment	Member Communities' Needs	COVID-19, Resiliency, Public Health

Transit			
Author/Source	Title (with link)	PRWG Category (if applicable)	Keywords
Shared-Use Mobility Center	Moving Forward from COVID-19		Transportation, Equity, Sustainability, Carbon Emissions
Housing			
Author/Source	Title (with link)	PRWG Category (if applicable)	Keywords
Rocky Mountain Institute	New Resources for Cities to Unlock Housing Improvements		Housing, Energy Efficiency