



# THE COLORADO PROJECT

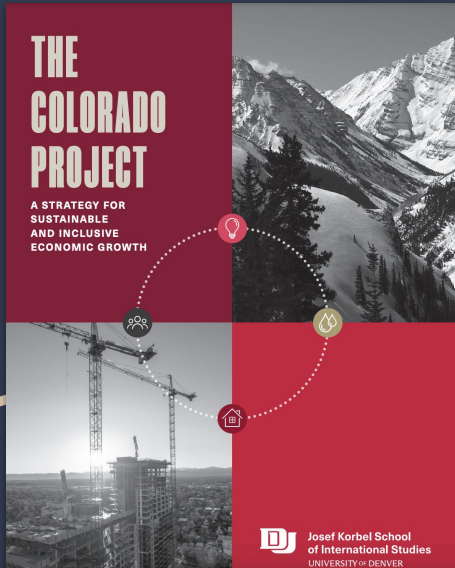
External Partners  
Winter/Spring 2025



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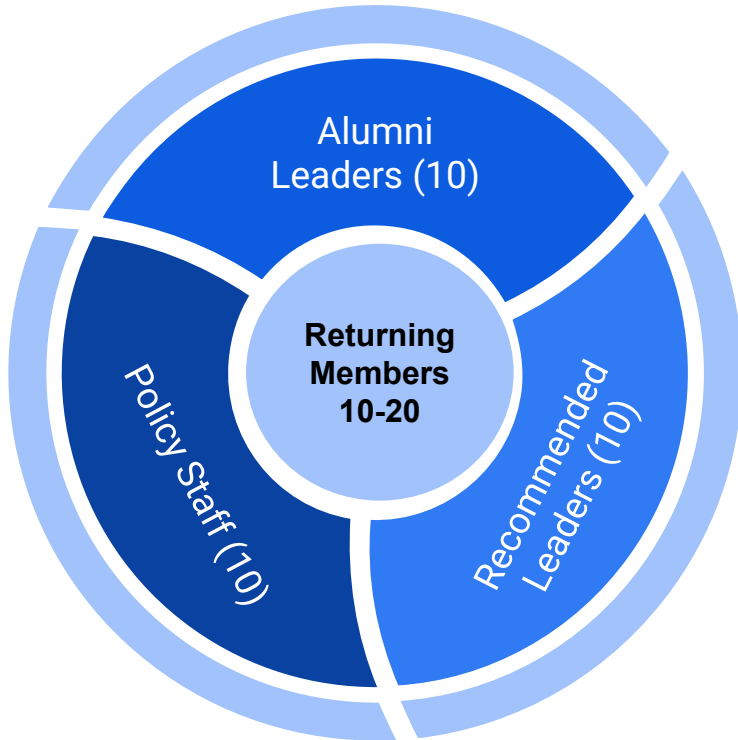
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# Agenda



- ❖ Opening Question
- ❖ Building Together
- ❖ Next Steps

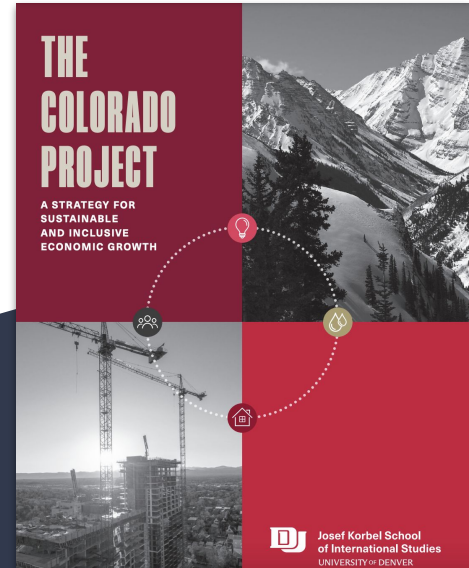
# 2.0 Recruitment



- ❖ Framing Alumni and Policy Leaders in a “Colorado Project Fellowship”
- ❖ 1 Year Participation
- ❖ Inclusive of new member in leadership discussions

# The Colorado Project

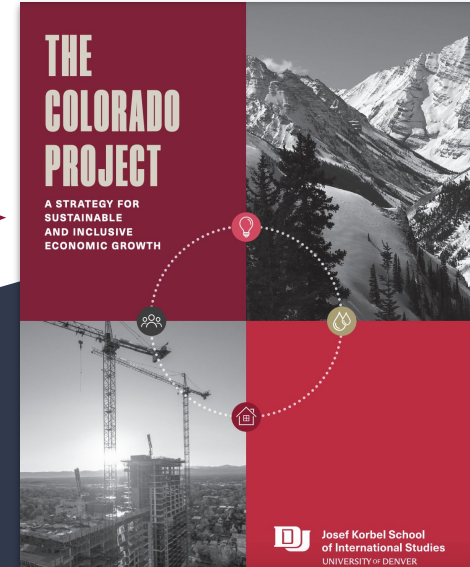
- ❖ Leaders from all over Colorado, all with different areas of expertise and different perspectives.
- ❖ Goal was to come up with a strategy to support sustainable and inclusive economic growth in Colorado
- ❖ Civil discourse and shared vision guided the process
- ❖ The process was just as important as the end result



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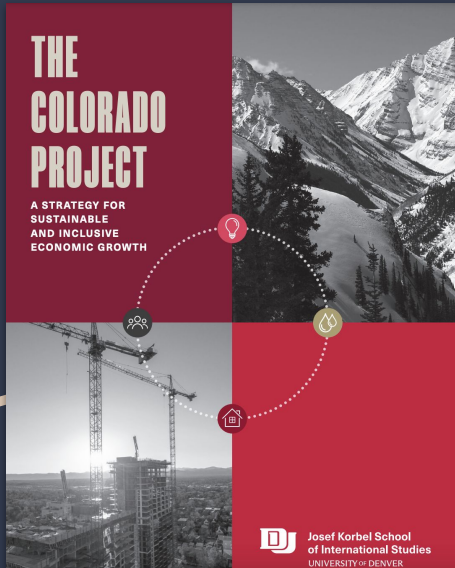
# Reminder: Project Timeline



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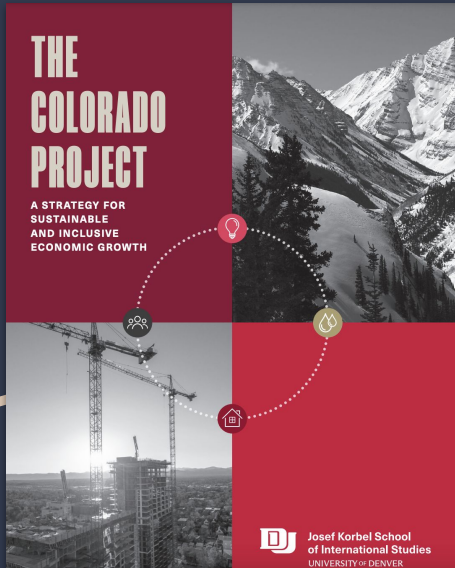
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# Four Sections



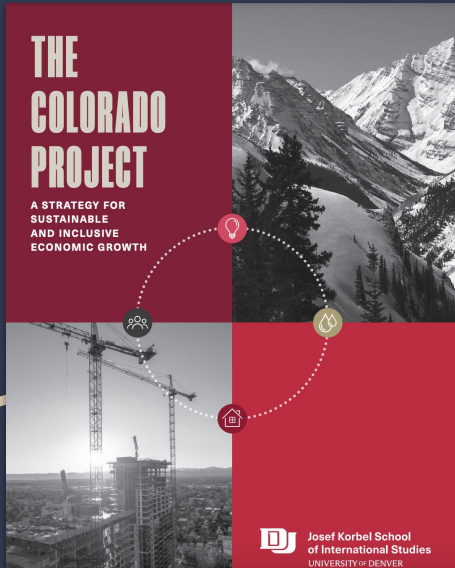
- ❖ **Colorado's Promise**
- ❖ **Sustainability and Resilience**
- ❖ **Economic Mobility and Workforce**
- ❖ **Cost of Living**

# Framing the Work



- The issues are interdependent: We can't make progress on one without progress on all
- We were working for the whole state, with room for community difference
- This is a beginning, progress over perfection

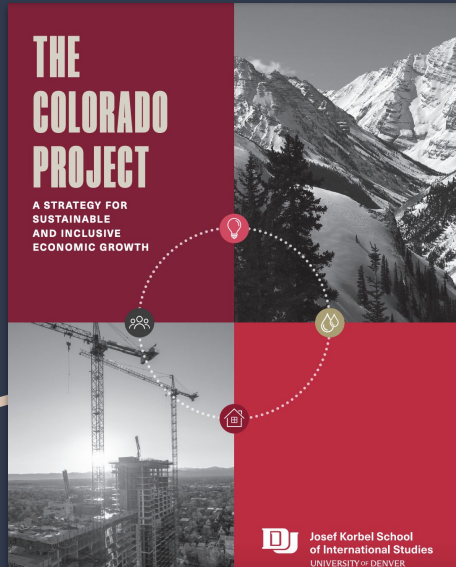
# Guiding Principles



- ❖ **A Comprehensive Approach is Needed Because Our Challenges are Connected**
- ❖ **We Aren't All Starting from the Same Place; Partnership on Solutions is Critical**
- ❖ **The Health of Our Environment is Our Foundation**
- ❖ **Rural Colorado is a Competitive Asset and Colorado Cities Attract Investment. Both are Critical to Our Shared Success**
- ❖ **We will be more successful with a regional approach in the state**
- ❖ **The future will require capital investment from the public sector, private sector, and philanthropy**
- ❖ **Infrastructure and connectivity are required for success**



# Colorado's Promise

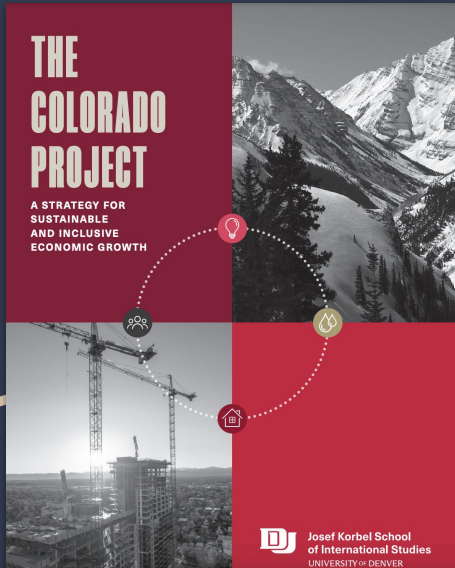


**Goal:** To grow businesses and jobs in Colorado that increase median income for ALL Coloradans and drive more access to prosperity in ALL Colorado communities.

## **Key Points from the Recommendations:**

- ❖ Make sure everyone who wants to start or grow a business has access to the tools they need to make it happen (eg: map gaps in access, mentorship, broadband access)
- ❖ Make Colorado the best place to live, work, and play (eg: childcare, broadband access)
- ❖ Build on the industries where Colorado is a leader and that are aligned with goals
- ❖ Focus on the areas that need additional strategic thinking (eg: Downtown Denver, rural economies)

# Sustainability and Resilience

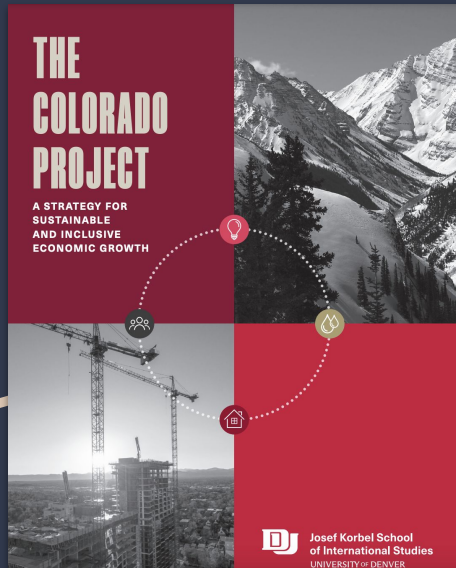


**Goal:** Achieve quantifiable progress towards healthier and more resilient watersheds, forests, grasslands, rangelands, and working lands, even as our population grows.

## **Key Points from Recommendations:**

- ❖ Water resources are at the center of our economic growth, population growth and climate change complicate our approach.
- ❖ As state need to be strategic about how we grow– think holistically (infrastructure, water, housing, energy efficiency) think regionally, and incorporate climate resilience.
- ❖ Agriculture, outdoor recreation are key to our state economic strength.
- ❖ Continue progress towards a carbon neutral economy, while balancing affordability and reliability.

# Economic Mobility and Workforce

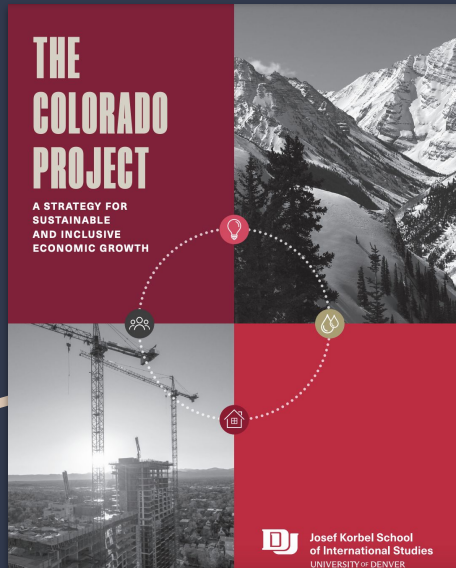


**Goal:** Build an education and training system of lifelong learning pathways that provide family-sustaining careers at a positive Return on Investment (ROI) to all Coloradans, no matter their background, zip code, or age.

## Key points from Recommendations:

- ❖ From early childhood to post-secondary education—ensure access to quality education and learning opportunities.  
(Ensure quality ROI, remove barriers)
- ❖ Public funding should support proven post-secondary approaches, including credentialing and apprenticeship
- ❖ Need flexibility for educational opportunities to vary to meet the needs of different communities and different learners.
- ❖ Engage private sector, work-based learning
- ❖ Need to work with industry and prioritize pathways that meet the needs of in-demand industries.

# Cost of Living



**Goal: Ensure a cost of living that is affordable to every Coloradan.**

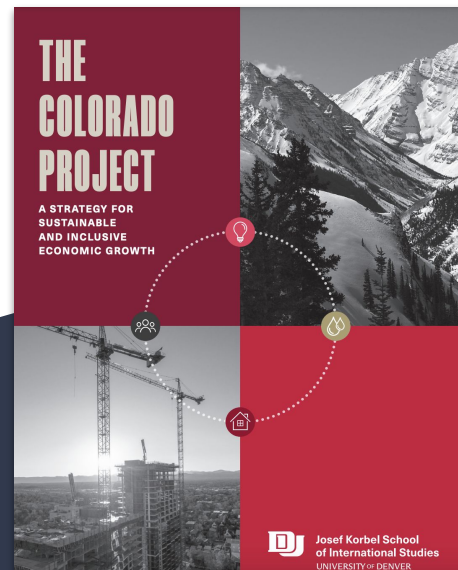
## **Key Points from Recommendations:**

- ❖ Housing access and cost affects everything, need to document statewide need, identify gaps, and increase housing inventory
- ❖ Early childhood education and care for aging adults—make room for innovative approaches, flexibility, pre-school
- ❖ Prioritize health care affordability, address primary cost drivers
- ❖ Expand access to behavioral health services, especially in schools
- ❖ Transportation costs can affect economic mobility and access to opportunity, cut transportation cost and vehicle miles traveled where it makes sense

# Building Together

Three Major Priorities for the Work Moving Forward:

- ❖ Colorado Project 2.0 - Rural Thriving
- ❖ Leadership Network Partners
- ❖ Accelerating Our Impact



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# Colorado Project 2.0: Rural Thriving



## Emerging Structure:

- **2 year process:** Learning and Leading
- **Catalyzed Support:** Grateful for the LOR Foundation & Gates Family Foundation to set us on a path forward
- **Focus on 3 Rural Regions/Archetypes:** Eastern Plains, Southern Colorado, Mountain Ski Towns
- **Partner with Field Innovators:** Organizations and institutions like The Colorado Forum already working in this space, NE Educonomy Coalition, etc.

# Leadership Partners

The CIVICO logo features the word "CIVICO" in a light blue, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a dark blue circle containing a white stylized human figure with arms raised.

METRO

**Mayors**  
CAUCUS

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 Civic Results

## Emerging Structures:

- **Making the Report Come Alive:**  
Getting it into the hands of leaders
- **Leverage CO Project Experts in Partnership:** Organizations can leverage reciprocal expertise
- **Shared Exploration of Civic Engagement/Civil Discourse:** A priority among many organizations right now as we deal with toxic politics



# Closing



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