Planning for Climate Migration:
Exploring a Leadership Role for Colorado Communities

September 8, 2021 – Keystone, Colorado
Let’s explore...

- What is climate migration? Why should Colorado communities care?
- What can planners do? What is the role of communities?
- How are others approaching this issue? How do we reframe it from a problem to an opportunity?
- How can Colorado and your community be a leader on climate migration?
Today’s Panelists

Brendle Group, Senior Planner
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Brendle Group, President
Judy Dorsey, PE

Welcoming America, Western Regional Manager
George Zavala
Climate Migration Framing

- People move
- Climate change increases movement
- Planning plays a significant role
People Move

Independent of climate change, roughly 10% of the U.S. population moves every year (40 million) (Census, 2019);

10,000 people per month are moving to CO on top of the 82 million visitors per year (Colorado Energy Research Laboratory, 2019).
Climate Change Increases Movement

• Nearly 1 in 3 Americans experienced a weather disaster this summer (Washington Post, 9/3/21)
• 64% experienced a multiday heat wave (Washington Post, 9/3/21)
• More Americans die from heat exposure than any other weather-related event. (Jones et al., 2015)
• Four to six times more people in the US could be exposed to extreme heat by the latter half of the century (Jones et al., 2015)
Planning Plays a Significant Role

Government policy plays a significant role in influencing push and pull migration factors through regulations and restrictions that determine how, when, and where people can move (Warner et al, 2010)

It is critical for cities to establish partnerships, with aid organizations, the private sector, and community-based organizations to fund and provide a coordinated response for incoming residents to stay and thrive in their new communities (Marandi and Main, 2021)
Putting Migration into Historic Perspective

- **Dust Bowl**: 1930-1940 (10 yrs), 2.5 Million
- **Great Migration of African Americans out of the South**: 1916-1970 (54 yrs/2 generations), 6 Million
- **Domestic Climate Migration**: 2020-2050 (30 yrs), 12-14 Million
- **International Climate Migration**: 2020-2050 (30 yrs), 200 Million
Sabbatical Methods & Sources

• Technically Credible
• Passionately Neutral
• Solutions Oriented
International Climate Migration, What Can U.S. Cities Do?

- Why should U.S. cities, towns, and counties care about climate migration?
- What is climate migration?
- How will climate change interact with other factors driving migration?
- Where will climate migrants move from and where will they go?
- Who are the international climate migrants coming to the United States?
- What’s the legal status of international climate migrants?
- What can we do in the United States?
- What can we do locally?
Climate Migration Quiz: True or False

Four Important Take-Aways
True or False

Many researchers and policy makers are voicing climate migration as the most serious outcome of climate change.
True or False

With climate migration we don’t need to worry about climate mitigation anymore.
True or False

Each country’s/community’s economic burden from climate change is proportional to their contribution to climate change.
True or False

Climate migration leads to increased urbanization.
Climate Migration is Transdisciplinary

- Sustainable development
- Peacekeeping
- Environmental Justice
- Refugee resettlement
- Decolonial sustainability
- Race and equity
- Poverty alleviation
Relationship to Mitigation and Adaptation

- **Climate mitigation** is aimed at preventing climate change. Still a top priority and an important lens in designing adaptation and migration strategies. Millions of lives are at stake in how well we do with mitigation.

- **Climate adaptation** is aimed at preparing for or responding to climate change. The goals are to reduce exposure and increase resilience. Voluntary migration is one of many examples of how people are adapting to climate change.

- **Climate migration** is an outcome of climate change. How we respond to climate migration could cover a wide spectrum from "climate apartheid" to a just transition that protects all people, not just those who can afford it.
Adaptation improves either outcome – staying or migrating

Migration Considerations
- Sudden vs slow onset
- Large scale vs limited reach
- Chronic vs episodic
- In country vs transboundary
- Voluntary vs involuntary

Colorado Resiliency Planning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risks from Natural &amp; Other Hazards</th>
<th>Social Equity &amp; Unique Community Needs</th>
<th>Economic Diversity &amp; Vibrancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drought</td>
<td>Systemic racism</td>
<td>Growth pressure</td>
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<td>Flood</td>
<td>Income inequality</td>
<td>Housing affordability and availability</td>
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<td>Wildfire</td>
<td>Aging population and disability</td>
<td>Recession and other economic crises</td>
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<td>Winter storm</td>
<td>Different rural and urban needs</td>
<td>Strained fiscal resources</td>
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<td>Hail</td>
<td>Disparate access to health care</td>
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<td>Cybersecurity</td>
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Source: Colorado Resiliency Framework, 2020
4. Climate change will likely displace millions, triggering large-scale migration to more resilient "receiver cities."

- Receiver cities need to be able to accommodate rapid and periodic influxes of people, particularly after natural disasters.

- Equitably accommodating climate migrants should not come at the expense of existing residents whose histories and connections are rooted to the place.

- Communities that invest in a sustainable future today will be attractive to those displaced, nationally and globally, by climate change.

- Places at risk of climate change events need to start being realistic about which areas are unsafe to continue living in or developing.

Source: 7 Trends Knocking at the Planning Office Door
Community Typologies

Vulnerable Communities
• Under threat or projected to experience climate-related risks & hazards
• Much of community is exposed

Recipient Communities
• Marginally to significantly less vulnerable to climate risks than neighboring communities
• Has its own stressors which limit adaptive capacity

Climate Destinations
• Climate shocks or stressors may be less severe, acute or more manageable
• High vacancy & infrastructure capacity and a desire to grow

Source: Vulnerable City, recipient city, or climate destination? Towards a typology of domestic climate migration impacts in US cities (springer.com)
Vulnerable Communities

Challenges & Opportunities

• Population loss → tax base impacts → fewer resources

• Lower income, BIPOC and vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted

• Uncertainty about whether people who have left will return

Some Examples

• New Orleans, LA (sudden-onset)

• Tyrell County, NC (slow-onset)

• Poudre Canyon, CO (sudden & slow?)
Recipient Communities

Challenges & Opportunities

• Existing stressors can become a crisis with sudden influx of new residents

• Lower income, BIPOC and vulnerable populations are disproportionately impacted when city resources are strained

• Improving resilience for existing residents can help prepare for future shocks and population influx

Some Examples

• Orlando, FL
• Chico, CA
• Fort Collins & Loveland, CO

Source: Vulnerable City, recipient city, or climate destination? Towards a typology of domestic climate migration impacts in US cities (springer.com)
Climate Destinations

Challenges & Opportunities

• Legacy cities have good foundations to become climate destinations
• Protecting and creating affordable housing stock can limit climate gentrification
• Build on and improve relationships with immigrant and refugee community-based organizations

Some Examples

• Duluth, MN
• Buffalo, NY
• Craig & Pueblo, CO?

Source: Vulnerable City, recipient city, or climate destination? Towards a typology of domestic climate migration impacts in US cities (springer.com)
How would you characterize your community?

Vulnerable Community

Recipient Community

Climate Destination
What Can Planners & Communities Do?

**Plans & Policies**
- Expand and accelerate emissions mitigation efforts
- Include climate migration in long-range and climate action planning
- Include equity principles in greenhouse gas accounting
- Consider climate migration typologies in scenario planning

**Resources**
- Comprehensive Plans
- Development Codes & Zoning
- Climate Action Plans
- Economic Development Strategies
- Housing Plans & Policies
- Capital Improvement Plans & Projects
- Sustainability Plans
What Can Planners & Communities Do?

Community Engagement

• Survey your community’s recent immigrants or newcomers
• Explore how immigrants—including climate migrants—can support community values and goals
• Form a climate migration study group in your community

Resources

• Community based organizations working on immigration and refugee services
• Places of worship
What Can Planners & Communities Do?

Collaboration
- Nurture “sister city” relationships
- Build and leverage inter-city networks and regional coordination
- Partner with community-based and philanthropic organizations
- Make a case for welcoming immigrants and refugees into your community

Resources
- Welcoming America
- American Society of Adaptation Professionals Climate Migration & Managed Retreat Member Group
- Mayors Migration Council
How Can Welcoming Climate Migrants Benefit Communities?

- Community cohesion/inclusivity
- Neighborhood revitalization (Duluth, MN and Buffalo, NY)
- Economic development (Salt Lake City, UT)
  - New businesses
  - New labor force
  - Innovation
Welcoming America - Who We Are
The Welcoming Network
Welcoming Standard

- Leadership
- Education
- Economic Development
- Civic Engagement
- Connected Communities
- Safe Communities
- Equitable Access
Reflect on Your Community

On a scale from 0-10, how welcoming would you consider your community to be?
Reflect on Your Community

About how long did you live in your community before you felt like you belonged and were welcomed?

- I felt like I belonged right away
- Less than 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 2 to 3 years
- 4 to 5 years
The Approach

“Welcoming” is a whole-of community approach to demographic change and migration that engages newcomers and receiving communities along with all sectors of the community, to systematically reduce barriers for civic, social, and economic participation and foster a culture in which each member thrives, belongs, and prospers.

Welcoming infrastructure is as important as physical infrastructure when it comes to climate adaption.
Multi-Sector Welcoming Plans
City of Aurora, CO

COMPREHENSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN
2015-2018

Office of International and Immigrant Affairs
CITY OF AURORA • 15151 E. Alameda Parkway, Aurora, Colorado

Immigrant Integration Plan
2020-2030
Aurora is open to the world

WELCOMING AMERICA
welcomingamerica.org
@WelcomingUSA
/WelcomeAmerica
/compan/welcoming-america
Resource: Establishing and Maintaining Inclusive Emergency Management
Using Our Checklist
Resource:
Seeds of Growth: Building Your Local Economy by Supporting Immigrant Entrepreneurs
Resource: Taste of Belonging Cookbook
Resource: Neighbors Together: Promising Practices to Strengthen Relations with Refugees and Muslims
Resource: Harnessing Volunteer Energy to Support and Welcome Refugees in Your Community
Additional Resources
Get Involved

Join the Welcoming Network
Learn about membership →

Participate in Welcoming Week
Learn ways to join →

Support Our Mission
Donate today →
Keep in Touch

WelcomingAmerica.org
Like us on Facebook facebook.com/WelcomingAmerica
Follow us on Twitter @WelcomingUSA

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel youtube.com/WelcomingAmerica
Connect with us on LinkedIn linkedin.com/company/welcoming-america
WELCOMING AMERICA
BUILDING A NATION OF NEIGHBORS
welcomingamerica.org
@WelcomingUSA
Questions? Reflections?
Small Group Chats

Instructions
• Identify a facilitator/note-taker
• Identify a spokesperson
• Work through the discussion questions
• Jot notes on the worksheet provided

Discussion Prompts
• Introductions
• How would you classify your community using the typology (i.e., vulnerable community, recipient community, or climate destination)? Why?
• How would you characterize your community on a welcoming scale (0= not welcoming, 10= very)? Why?
• What examples do you have of climate displacement or migration showing up in your community?
• What is your community doing and/or what can your community do?
• What resources do you/your community need to proactively address this topic?
Report Out

1. How did you classify your communities per the typologies and why?
2. How did you characterize your communities on a welcoming scale and why?
3. What examples do you have of climate migration showing up in your community?
4. What is your community doing and/or what can your community do?
5. What resources are needed to more proactively address this topic?
Personal Steps We Can All Take

- Read and follow along – this is a burgeoning topic
- Get to know refugees and immigrants in your community
- Embrace a global mindset
- Know your contribution to climate change
- Help communities hardest hit – volunteer, fund, offset
Thank You

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