

Improving Colorado's Business Environment

Michael Pierson | Candidate for Colorado House District 22

Policy Position Paper | October 16, 2026

Colorado needs an economy where local businesses can grow, workers can build secure futures, and families can afford to live in the communities they serve. My campaign priorities -- fully funding K-12 public schools, fixing Powers Boulevard, and putting working families first -- are essential parts of that economic foundation.

The Governor's Competitiveness Council's October 2026 roadmap identifies regulatory reform, tax and fiscal policy, capital, workforce development, affordability and housing, and infrastructure as priorities for improving Colorado's business environment. Its published recommendations offer common ground with policies I have already proposed. I support working across party lines to turn that common ground into practical results. [see notes 1-3]

Make government easier to navigate

Small business owners are working families, too. Time spent deciphering conflicting requirements or waiting for an answer is time they cannot spend serving customers, training employees, or growing their businesses. My economic policy calls for simpler compliance, predictable taxes and fees, and removing red tape that does not improve safety or fairness.

I support clear permit requirements, reasonable review timelines, coordination among agencies, and simpler sales and use tax administration. Those goals align with the council's recommendations. [2] We should measure reform by whether it reduces unnecessary costs and delays while preserving the protections Coloradans rely on.

Build the workforce through education and apprenticeships

Our workforce begins in public schools. Fully funding K-12 education supports students' futures and helps employers find prepared, capable workers. That is the connection I draw between my education pledge and the council's workforce priorities; it should not be read as the council endorsing my school funding proposals.

I support stronger partnerships among District 11 and District 20 schools, Pikes Peak State College, UCCS, employers, and union apprenticeship programs. Paid apprenticeships and accessible retraining can open doors in the skilled trades, healthcare, cybersecurity, aerospace, and defense. The council's emphasis on training and employer partnerships reinforces this direction. [2-3]

Make housing and transportation work for families

Employers struggle to retain workers when teachers, nurses, tradespeople, and young families cannot afford nearby housing. My housing policy supports traditional construction alongside modular, manufactured, and emerging construction methods. It also calls for modernized permitting, strong safety standards, and infrastructure that keeps pace with growth.

The council's focus on housing supply and more predictable approvals overlaps with that approach. [2] I will evaluate proposed changes to housing laws on their evidence and practical effects. Additional homes must be safe and attainable, and residents must retain meaningful protections when something goes wrong.

Transportation is another part of the same affordability equation. Congestion costs families time and makes it harder for businesses to move workers, goods, and services. My commitment to advancing engineering and funding for the Powers Boulevard interchanges gives a specific local purpose to the broader goal of infrastructure investment.

The council's infrastructure priority supports that general reasoning. It does not amount to a recommendation for these particular interchanges along Powers, however. I will make the case for them based on local transportation needs, safety, and their public benefit.

Protect workers as businesses grow

Successful businesses depend on the people who work in them. Fair pay, safe workplaces, and the freedom to organize belong in a serious economic development strategy. My commitment to the Worker Protection Act remains central to my agenda.

I will support practical regulatory improvements while examining each proposal for its effect on workers, consumers, and communities. A rule should have a clear purpose and work efficiently. Any proposal to weaken a protection should have to demonstrate that Coloradans will be better served.

Support innovation with public accountability

Colorado's strengths in aerospace, defense, technology, and advanced manufacturing offer opportunities for good jobs and local business growth. My experience in the Air Force and federal civilian service informs my interest in sustaining those industries and connecting residents to their opportunities.

Public support for investment must come with public accountability. Incentives should be evaluated through transparent cost and benefit analysis, measurable commitments, and clawback provisions when recipients fail to deliver promised benefits. Small businesses and companies already investing here deserve consideration alongside firms the state hopes to attract.

Keep infrastructure costs fair

The council's infrastructure recommendations include preparing electrical capacity for major investments. [3] My position on AI data centers establishes the conditions I would bring to those discussions: large users should pay for the substations, transmission upgrades, and connections their projects require, with appropriate contracts and financial guarantees.

Residential and small business customers should be protected from subsidizing those costs. Water use must be accountable, siting must be responsible, and any public incentive must produce enforceable benefits. These principles allow Colorado to pursue innovation while protecting the people who already live and do business here.

Maintain the public foundations of prosperity

Predictable, understandable taxes help businesses plan. Responsible budgeting and effective oversight help taxpayers see what they receive for their money. I support both, and I will evaluate tax proposals alongside the services and investments they must sustain.

My support for a fairer tax system and reliable school funding remains part of that approach. Businesses need an educated workforce, functioning roads, and healthy communities. Decisions about revenue should account for the long-term economic costs of underfunding those foundations.

My standard for economic policy

I will ask whether a proposal helps working families and local businesses, whether the evidence supports it, what it costs, and who pays. I will also ask how the public can verify that it delivered the promised results.

The council's roadmap offers useful starting points for cooperation. My responsibility is to bring the priorities of eastern Colorado Springs to that work: strong public schools, progress on Powers Boulevard, and an economy where working families can get ahead. I will support practical improvements and insist that the benefits of growth reach the people who make it possible.

Sources and scope

This paper responds to the council's published overview and publicly reported recommendations. It states Michael Pierson's policy positions and does not endorse every recommendation in the complete roadmap.

Notes:

[1] Governor's Competitiveness Council. Colorado Competitiveness Roadmap 2026 overview. <https://competitivenesscolorado.com/>

[2] Marissa Ventrelli. Governor's Competitiveness Council releases road map recommendations. Colorado Politics, October 14, 2026. <https://www.coloradopolitics.com/2026/10/14/governors-competitiveness-council-releases-road-map-recommendations/>

[3] Ed Sealover. Polis' Competitiveness Council urges slew of actions to restore Colorado's economic competitiveness. The Sum & Substance, October 14, 2026. <https://tssc.colorado.com/polis-competitiveness-council-urges-slew-of-actions-to-restore-colorados-economic-competitiveness/>

Campaign positions: Economic Progress; Housing for Colorado; AI Data Centers Growth With Guardrails. <https://pierson4co.com/position-papers>