

Vibrant Denver Bond Subcommittee Questionnaire



Project Summary

The Latin America Experience:

A Vibrant New Vision at Denver Zoo Conservation Alliance (DZCA or Zoo)

The Latin America Experience is a bold, transformative reinvestment in the Denver Zoo Conservation Alliance's campus—replacing outdated infrastructure with a story-rich celebration of wildlife, vibrant cultures, and immersive discovery.

Shaped by thousands of community voices, this unforgettable journey invites guests to follow the jaguar from the peaks of the Andes to the heart of the Amazon Basin—exploring three stunning biomes: Andes Mountains, Amazon Basin, and Intertidal Waters.

Covering 4 acres and featuring 175,000 square feet of new or revitalized space, the project brings Latin America's most iconic species—including jaguars, Andean bears, capybaras, sloths, and monkeys—to life through dynamic habitats that inspire awe, foster inclusion, and ignite curiosity across generations.

[Please view our Latin America project sizzle reel and flythrough here.](#)



How does this project change or improve the lives of people in the community?

How The Latin America Experience Transforms Our Community

- **A Zoo for All:** More than 25% of our guests visit through free and reduced admission—making magical wildlife experiences accessible to all families, no matter their income or background.
- **Celebrating Wildlife and Culture:** Our Latin America Experience brings the color, rhythm, and spirit of Latin America to life—reflecting Denver’s vibrant diversity with bilingual storytelling and dynamic interactive animal habitats featuring jaguars, capybaras, sloths, monkeys, Andean bears and more.
- **Designed for Gathering and Joy:** With new public plazas, a family-friendly splash pad, an outdoor rooftop deck overlooking lush habitats and the city skyline, and a vibrant indoor event space, the project creates dynamic spaces for connection, celebration, and community—inviting guests to linger, laugh, and learn together.
- **Showcasing the Arts:** Through SCFD partnerships, the Zoo features local artists and performers year-round. The Latin America Experience will expand this with vibrant, family-friendly celebrations of Latin American culture and storytelling.
- **Fueling Jobs & Opportunity:** The project will spark over 1,900 construction jobs and create pathways for skilled trades and apprenticeships—an investment in Denver’s workforce and future.
- **Uplifting Certified Businesses:** We’re proud to uplift certified businesses by meeting—and aiming to exceed—our certified firm participation goals, strengthening local impact every step of the way.
- **Powering Economic Growth:** Already delivering \$270 million annually in economic impact, the Zoo is on track to generate \$368 million upon project completion in 2030—driving tourism, boosting local businesses, strengthening our city’s cultural engine and uplifting our communities.
 - With over 85% of this impact “net new” to Denver, the Zoo drives economic growth that wouldn’t exist without it—cementing its role as a powerhouse for tourism and economic development.
- **Shaped by Community Voices:** More than 4,700 community members helped design this bold vision—ensuring it reflects what our community wants most.
- **Inspiring the Next Generation:** With jaguars, sloths, Andean bears, monkeys and more, kids and adults alike will explore, learn, and connect through unforgettable interactive animal encounters.

This is more than a Zoo project—it's a celebration of our City— who we are and where we're going.

Has the community been involved and if so, how have they supported the project?

Shaped by 4,700+ Voices

- **Voices That Shaped the Vision:** More than 4,700 community members helped bring this project to life—sharing ideas, priorities, and dreams to shape an inclusive, immersive experience that reflects who we are as a city.
- **Guest Input That Guided Every Step:** Through our Summer 2024 Guest Engagement Survey, we heard community feedback loud and clear: the community wants lush rainforests, coastal habitats, underwater viewing, elevated walkways, and encounters with jaguars, sloths, toucans, and monkeys.
- **Built for All Ages and Abilities:** Families with kids 6–10 were the top audience—and 22% of respondents emphasized the need for mobility-friendly design. We listened. Accessibility is at the heart of this project.
- **Elevating What Matters Most:** The community asked for interactive fun, bilingual storytelling, and real talk about conservation. We’re delivering all of it—and more—in a way that advances both guest joy and the City’s goals for education, equity, and engagement.
- **Voicing Support through Philanthropy:** In advance of a formal capital campaign, a select few Zoo donors have already voiced their support with financial commitments.
- **True Community Partnership:** From planning to design, this is a project shaped *with* Denver, not just *for* Denver. Community feedback drives every detail—and the community’s support fuels the path forward.

Together, we’re building a Latin America Experience that’s as bold, vibrant, and diverse as the community the Zoo serves.



What is the origin story of the project? Where did it come from? What are its roots?

Rooted in Community, Built for All

- **Decades in the Making:** The Latin America Experience was born from bold, long-term planning. In 2011, a facility condition assessment revealed that this area of campus was outdated and no longer met modern animal care standards—prompting a bold reimagining. Guided by our City-approved 2015 Master Plan and 2021 Zoo Implementation Plan, we set a new course. The Latin America Experience is the heart of that vision for this area of the Zoo—driven by purpose, pride, and community.
- **Inspired by Our City’s Heartbeat:** With over 51% of the student population at Denver Public Schools and nearly 28% of our region’s residents identifying as Hispanic or Latino, we saw an opportunity—and a responsibility—to create a space that celebrates Latin American wildlife, culture, and conservation.
- **Designed to Reflect, Engage, and Belong:** This project reimagines our exhibits to mirror the ecosystems of Latin America and creates immersive experiences that honor the people and stories behind them. The project will seek to expand the educational and cultural experiences that celebrate Latin American biodiversity and conservation.
- **Language Access as a Gateway:** Backed by our 2023 Wayfinding and Campus Signage Master Plan, the project incorporates bilingual signage and storytelling—making every experience accessible, informative, and welcoming.
- **Aligned with Citywide Goals:** From sustainability to economic resilience, the Latin America Experience delivers on Denver’s strategic priorities and the vision of the 2025 Vibrant Denver Bond—bringing community, culture, and conservation together like never before.

What started as a master plan has become a movement—to reflect our city, inspire every guest, and leave a lasting legacy.

Does this project address historic deficits in services and investment?

A Space Reimagined

- **Reclaiming Space, Reimagining Wonder:** The Latin America Experience breathes new life into one of the most underutilized areas of the Zoo—where outdated buildings and animal enclosures no longer meet modern standards and are unusable. This part of the Zoo has been closed off to the public for years. This revitalization turns this part of the Zoo into a dynamic new hub of learning, play, and discovery.
- **Hidden Burden, Bold Solution:** While this project isn't on the City's Facility Condition Assessment Program, this zone currently carries a heavy maintenance burden for the Zoo—inefficient systems, outdated utilities, and barriers to accessibility. We're replacing that with modern infrastructure built to last. The project also strengthens critical City-supported services—education, conservation, and recreation—core priorities of the 2025 Vibrant Denver Bond.
- **Smarter, Safer, More Sustainable:** We're replacing labor-intensive, high-maintenance infrastructure with modern, efficient systems. Guest amenities, life support, and animal care facilities are consolidated into flexible, modular buildings that cut costs, reduce risk, and improve performance.
- **Purposeful Capital Investment:** With over \$80M in infrastructure upgrades—including \$40M in site reconstruction, \$35M in green building systems, and millions more in water savings and life support—this project modernizes city-owned assets to meet today's needs and tomorrow's standards.
- **Elevating a Civic Treasure:** As a City owned, privately operated cultural institution, the Zoo plays a unique role in City service delivery. This investment enhances resilience, accessibility, and guest experience—ensuring a treasured cultural asset continues to serve future generations.
- **Inclusive by Design:** From bilingual signage to accessible pathways and culturally resonant storytelling, the Latin America Experience honors the vibrant communities that call Colorado home and creates a space where every guest feels welcome, seen, and inspired.
- **Equitable Access:** More than 25% of our guests can access the zoo with free or reduced admissions through programs like Free Days, Denver Great Kids Head Start, and SNAP/EBT Explorer cards.

What was once outdated is now a celebration—of community, conservation, and connection.

How will the project impact the community holistically?

A Holistic Investment in People, Place, and Wildlife

- **A Journey That Starts in Denver and Leads to the Amazon:** The Latin America Experience draws powerful parallels—from the ecological role of the Rockies to the mighty Andes and Amazon Basin—inviting guests to follow the jaguar from Mexico through Latin America via immersive design and storytelling.
- **A Space to Celebrate and Belong:** For the first time, the Latino community will have a dedicated space at the Zoo that celebrates their cultures, indigenous roots, languages, and connections to nature—created in collaboration with community and cultural partners.
- **Nature Meets Narrative:** With dynamic habitats, bold architecture, bilingual interpretation, and upgraded guest amenities, this experience brings the wildlife and cultural vibrancy of Latin America to life—all in a setting built for affordable joy, reflection, and discovery.
- **Where the Arts Come Alive:** Through our strong partnerships with SCFD organizations, the Zoo brings the arts directly to our guests—featuring local performers, musicians, and creators throughout the year. The Latin America Experience will expand these collaborations by spotlighting artists, storytellers, and cultural traditions in vibrant, family-friendly performances and events.
- **Designed to Inspire the Next Generation:** With hands-on play areas, interactive animal encounters—like wading alongside capybaras—ecological storytelling, and curriculum-aligned programming, the Latin America Experience sparks curiosity and fosters conservation literacy in children of all backgrounds.
- **Built for Impact, Inside and Out:** With sustainable building systems, water-saving infrastructure, and stormwater upgrades, this project showcases environmental leadership while modernizing a treasured City-owned institution.
- **Boosting Denver’s Cultural and Economic Future:** The project drives job creation, strengthens tourism, and elevates Denver’s identity as a forward-looking, inclusive city—aligned with the core values of the 2025 Vibrant Denver Bond.
- **A Place for All:** With universal design, inclusive amenities, bilingual signage, and vibrant public spaces, the Latin America Experience invites every guest—regardless of background or ability—to feel welcome, inspired, and at home.

This is a transformational investment—celebrating who we are, protecting what we love, and shaping the City we’re proud to call home.

How would the long-term benefits of the project outweigh the impacts from the project?

Minimal Disruption, Maximum Impact

- **Closed to Guests, Open to Possibilities:** Located in a long-shuttered area of the Zoo, the Latin America Experience will bring nearly 4 acres back to life. Due to the project location at the perimeter of the Zoo's boundary, there will be minimal disruption to daily zoo operations or guest enjoyment during construction.
- **A Transformational Return on Investment:** This project unlocks powerful, long-term benefits—creating vibrant new spaces for play, learning, and discovery while revitalizing a City-owned cultural asset.
- **More Access, More Joy:** Once completed, the community will gain a dynamic, immersive experience that celebrates the wildlife, ecosystems, and cultures of Latin America—expanding access to nature, conservation, and inclusive storytelling.
- **Representation that Matters:** For the first time, the Latino community will have a dedicated space at the Zoo, a Tier 1 cultural institution, that honors Latin American heritage—turning representation into reality and connection into celebration.
- **Built for the Future:** Sustainable design, bilingual interpretation, and universal accessibility ensure this project serves everyone—now and for generations to come.

While construction may be temporary, the impact of this project will be transformative, inclusive, and lasting.



Are there anti-displacement elements that would balance the investment?

There are no displacement elements to the project.



Does the project help to preserve any business, cultural knowledge, food, art form, or other element that is at risk of being lost in our communities in Denver?

Preserving Stories, Species, and Cultural Memory

- **A Bridge to What's at Risk of Being Lost:** The Latin America Experience offers an essential space for community members to connect with the wildlife, landscapes, and traditions of Latin America—many of which are endangered in the wild and increasingly distant from daily life.
- **Passing Down Knowledge, Inspiring Multigenerational Love for Wildlife:** For generations who may never travel to Latin America, this project ensures that the stories, species, and cultural knowledge tied to these ecosystems aren't lost. Instead, they're honored, interpreted, and shared in ways that spark pride, learning, and connection.
- **A Response to Community Desire:** Thousands of survey participants expressed strong interest in learning about Latin American wildlife and conservation. This project delivers on that call—with immersive animal exhibits, engaging narratives, and educational tools that reflect and uplift the region's biodiversity and heritage.
- **Language Access That Opens Doors:** With bilingual signage, interpretation, and materials, the project ensures Spanish-speaking guests can fully engage with every aspect of the experience—making cultural connection and conservation education accessible to all.

This is a living archive—preserving stories, traditions, and species for a new generation to experience, celebrate, and protect.

Does the project serve or represent a community that has been marginalized or is at risk of or has been displaced or exploited? If so, how?

Built for Belonging

- **A Celebration of Culture and Community:** The Latin America Experience honors the Latino community—creating a vibrant, dedicated space that reflects heritage, voices, and deep-rooted ties to biodiversity and conservation. It’s a space that says: *you belong here*.
- **Equity in Action:** Aligned with Denver’s Neighborhood Equity & Stabilization (NEST) priorities, this project ensures that historically underrepresented communities have access to rich educational and recreational experiences that are welcoming, meaningful, and built for families.
- **Driven by Community Voices:** With over 27% of survey respondents sharing personal connections to Latin America—and 84% planning to visit with family—the design responds directly to community desire for inclusive, intergenerational learning in a joyful setting.
- **Inclusive by Design, In Every Way:** From ADA-compliant walkways to sensory-friendly zones, this space is thoughtfully built for all. As an IBCCES Autism Certified Organization, the Zoo incorporates quiet areas, tactile materials, natural lighting, and calm soundscapes to ensure comfort for guests with sensory sensitivities.
- **A Greener Space for Everyone:** The project elevates the Zoo’s sustainability leadership—with stormwater upgrades, water-efficient systems, and energy-smart infrastructure that contribute to cleaner air and water for the surrounding neighborhoods.
- **Affordable Access, Enduring Joy:** With over 25% of Zoo guests entering through free or reduced admission, the Latin America Experience expands access to wonder, learning, and play—regardless of income, background, or ability.
- **Strengthening a Civic Treasure:** This project enhances the Zoo’s role as one of Denver’s most inclusive, uplifting, and beloved spaces—where every guest can connect with nature, culture, and community.

This is more than a project—it’s a promise: to reflect, include, and uplift every part of Denver.

How does this project promote economic activity both through implementation and long-term operation?

A Powerful Economic Engine for Denver

- **Fueling Jobs and Building Futures:** The Latin America Experience will generate over 1,900 construction jobs—opening doors for skilled trades, apprenticeships, and career pathways that strengthen Denver’s workforce for years to come.
- **Driving Lasting Economic Growth:** The Zoo already delivers \$270 million in annual economic impact. With this project, we’re on track to reach \$368 million by 2030—boosting local businesses, energizing tourism, and contributing nearly \$17 million annually in tax revenue.
- **A Net-New Return for Denver:** Over 85% of this economic impact wouldn’t exist without the Zoo. That makes this project a true economic multiplier—delivering growth that’s unique, sustainable, and civic-centered.
- **Fueling Downtown Denver’s Revitalization:** As one of Colorado’s top cultural destinations, the Zoo draws guests from across the region—many of whom spend time and money in Downtown Denver before or after their Zoo experience. This project strengthens the City’s broader downtown and tourism strategy by driving economic activity to surrounding hotels, restaurants, and retail while reinforcing Denver’s identity as a vibrant, family-friendly city.
- **Reinvesting in Public Assets:** As a capital improvement to a beloved City-owned institution, this project breathes new life into aging infrastructure—ensuring Denver continues to reap cultural and financial returns for decades.
- **Growing Denver’s Philanthropic Capacity:** The Zoo has engaged CCS Fundraising as a thought partner on the project’s Capital Campaign. The firm was selected because of the breadth of their work in Denver as well as with zoos. Their outlook is strongly optimistic based on their deep familiarity with Denver’s philanthropic landscape and the Zoo’s recent Comprehensive Campaign success.
- **Growing Our Identity as a Destination:** The Zoo is one of Colorado’s top attractions. With this expansion, we project over 2.1 million visitors annually by 2030—drawing families, tourists, and regional guests who invest in surrounding restaurants, hotels, and shops.
- **Strengthening Denver’s Competitive Edge:** This experience supports our city’s brand as a global, family-friendly cultural capital—helping us compete nationally for tourism dollars, convention activity, corporate head quarter relocation, skilled workers, and corporate partnerships tied to education and sustainability.

The Latin America Experience isn't just shovel-ready—it's future-ready, built to grow Denver's economy while enriching the lives of everyone it touches.



Are there stabilization factors this project would provide to the local economy?

Strengthening Community Without Displacement

The Latin America Experience project delivers deep community benefit without contributing to gentrification or displacement. Located entirely within the existing boundaries of the Zoo—and in a part of the Zoo already closed to the public—this project creates a transformational new experience without altering surrounding housing or land uses.

Rather than creating pressure on local housing, the project serves as an anchor for neighborhood vitality, offering:

- **Affordable Access to Cultural Joy:** With over 25% of guests participating through free and reduced admission, the Zoo remains one of Denver’s most inclusive cultural destinations—supporting equitable access for families of all income levels.
- **Job Creation and Workforce Stability:** The project supports over 1,900 construction jobs and expands long-term career pathways in education, animal care, facilities, guest services, and hospitality—promoting economic stability for Denver residents and neighborhoods.
- **Public Investment in a City-Owned Asset:** By revitalizing aging infrastructure within city-owned land, this investment improves the quality of civic space without changing neighborhood character—preserving affordability while uplifting community value.
- **A Stabilizing Community Anchor:** As a top cultural destination, the Zoo brings consistent foot traffic to local restaurants, transit systems, and small businesses—generating tax revenue that supports essential city services without displacing existing residents.

The result: a catalytic investment that celebrates culture, sparks economic activity, and strengthens neighborhood vibrancy—without shifting the foundations that make Denver home.

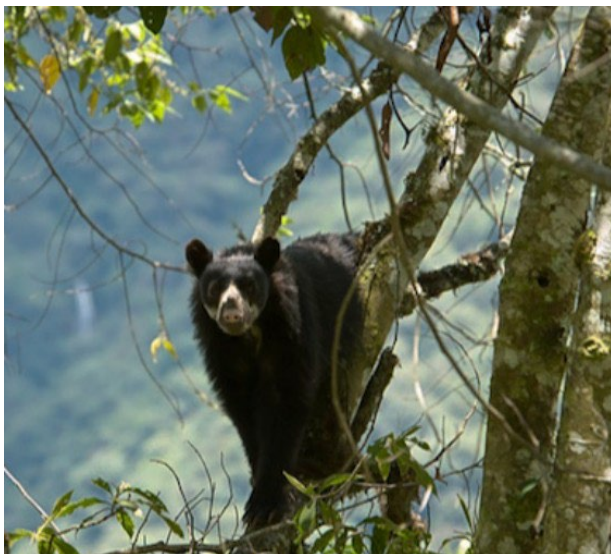
How would this project contribute to Health, Safety, or Environmental Goals such as Energize Denver?

A Strategic, Healthy, and Sustainable Investment for Denver

- **Built for a Greener Tomorrow:** The Latin America Experience is a climate-smart, energy-efficient project that supports *Energize Denver* and advances the City's broader environmental and resiliency goals. Every element—from materials to mechanical systems—has been selected to reduce emissions, conserve resources, and model sustainability.
- **Targeting LEED® Gold Certification:** The indoor Amazon Basin biome is designed to meet the highest standards in green building. Key strategies include:
 - Optimized energy performance through advanced building controls
 - High-efficiency HVAC and humidity systems
 - ETFE roofing for thermal insulation and daylighting
 - Low-emitting materials and finishes
 - Stormwater capture and urban heat island reduction
- **Exceeding Energy Code Expectations:** All systems will meet or exceed Denver's IECC energy code—ensuring operational excellence and minimizing the project's carbon footprint over the long term.
- **Water Wise and Resilient:** From bioswales and rain gardens to low-flow fixtures and closed-loop filtration, this project elevates the Zoo's commitment to water conservation and quality—reducing reliance on potable water while enhancing habitat health and stormwater performance.
- **Demonstrating Climate Leadership:** The project will benchmark and report building performance in alignment with *Energize Denver* requirements—publicly demonstrating accountability and innovation in sustainable civic development.
- **Rooted in Community Climate Resilience:** Building on long-standing partnerships in neighborhoods like Elyria–Swansea, the Zoo continues to connect environmental stewardship with public health. These community-driven programs ensure that the benefits of sustainability extend beyond the Zoo's campus—fostering ecological belonging and healthier lives across Denver. Past efforts have included:
 - Tree planting and urban greening with Groundwork Denver
 - Health and wellness partnerships with Clínica Tepeyac
 - Community art and conservation engagement with BirdSeed Collective
 - Activations at the Swansea Block Party and Día del Niño reaching thousands of residents

- **Inspiring Environmental Action:** This isn't just about buildings—it's about behavior. Through immersive design and storytelling, guests will engage with climate-resilient ecosystems and learn how local actions connect to global conservation—encouraging empathy, stewardship, and a call to action.

The Latin America Experience isn't just a capital investment—it's a model for how cultural institutions can lead on climate, spark public awareness, and build a healthier, more resilient city.



Would this project help to advance Health outcomes in the City, including Mental Health?

A Healthier City, One Visit at a Time

- **Nature That Nurtures:** The Latin America Experience strengthens Denver’s public health goals by creating a vibrant, nature-rich space that promotes mental, physical, and emotional well-being—right in the heart of the city.
- **A Natural Extension of Denver’s Health Priorities:** As part of the City’s public recreation system, the Zoo advances the *Game Plan for a Healthy City* by offering safe, inclusive, and high-quality outdoor experiences for residents of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities.
- **Where Wellness Begins with Wonder:** Guests walk an average of 6,000 steps per visit—boosting physical activity while experiencing decreased blood pressure and improved emotional well-being. One hallmark feature of the project—a stingray touch tank—has been shown to reduce psychological stress and increase feelings of calm.
- **A Joyful Boost for Mental Health:** Zoo visits have been shown to enhance quality of life for people with disabilities and their caregivers, improve mood, and foster meaningful connection—especially in inclusive environments like the one we’re building.
- **Proven Health Benefits of Time Outdoors:** Studies show that spending time in parks and natural spaces lowers stress, improves mood, and reduces the risk of chronic disease. This project brings those benefits to life through immersive landscapes, water features, and multisensory environments designed for all.
- **Building Social Well-Being Alongside Wildlife Connections:** By providing bilingual interpretation, inclusive play spaces, and a gathering place for community connection, this project strengthens the social fabric—advancing key social determinants of health like belonging, access, and opportunity.

The Latin America Experience is more than an exhibit—it’s a public health asset, delivering joy, movement, mindfulness, and connection in a setting designed to help our community thrive.

Does this project serve emergency purposes? Does it have emergency power capabilities, housing capacity, food/water storages, food preparation capacities, alternative energy or other abilities to serve the community in the event of emergency need?

Designed for Resilience, Ready to Support

- **Emergency-Ready Infrastructure:** While not designed as a formal emergency shelter, the Latin America Experience strengthens citywide resilience through modern infrastructure built to support safe operations, reliable utilities, and uninterrupted guest and staff safety—even during adverse conditions.
- **Reliable Energy and Life Support Systems:** The project includes robust HVAC, electrical, and life support systems (LSS) essential for animal care and public safety. These high-efficiency systems are climate-controlled and backed by redundant power and water filtration—supporting critical operations in times of disruption.
- **Future-Ready Utilities and Site Design:** With waterproofed underground holding areas, sustainable stormwater infrastructure, and upgraded electrical systems, the project ensures safe circulation, emergency egress, and energy efficiency during severe weather or utility outages.
- **Climate-Smart Construction:** Designed for adaptability and aligned with LEED® Gold targets, the facility includes ETFE roofing, daylighting systems, and climate-resilient building materials that reduce reliance on external utilities and support stable operations during extreme conditions.
- **Food, Water, and Waste Systems:** The project integrates sustainable water systems, restrooms, and food and beverage spaces capable of supporting thousands of guests daily. These assets could provide community benefit in the event of short-term emergency needs.
- **Emergency Response Enhancements:** New ADA-compliant paths, open plazas, and improved visibility enhance safe evacuation and emergency access—while removing legacy barriers in a once-obsolete part of the Zoo.

While not a designated emergency shelter, this project makes the Zoo safer, stronger, and more adaptable—ready to serve as a trusted community anchor in times of need.

What is the context or relationship of this project to other known projects around it both public and private? Would it be able to leverage other assets such as housing, health facilities, childcare, schools, labor centers, or emergency services?

A Project That Connects, Catalyzes, and Builds Community

- **At the Heart of a Civic Ecosystem:** The Latin America Experience is strategically located within City Park—just steps from the Denver Museum of Nature & Science, City Park Golf Course, East High School, and major public transit routes. This project reinforces the area as a cultural, educational, and community cornerstone for families across the region.
- **Amplifying Educational Partnerships:** The Zoo is already a key destination for school field trips, pre-K Nature Play, education programs, and STEM learning. With new bilingual, sensory-friendly, and culturally rich programming, the Latin America Experience deepens alignment with nearby education partners—whose mission to empower children and families reflects the values embedded in this project.
- **Supporting Health and Wellbeing Across Generations:** While not a formal health facility, the Zoo promotes physical activity, outdoor engagement, and sensory regulation—advancing mental and emotional wellness in a safe, inclusive, and ADA-accessible environment. It’s a trusted space for all ages and abilities.
- **Opportunities to Collaborate with Health, Housing, and Workforce Partners:** While not directly integrated with housing or health facilities, the Zoo actively partners with community organizations to support workforce development, health-focused programming, and family access to cultural experiences. The project creates an ideal venue for future cross-sector partnerships—whether through bilingual early learning, sensory-friendly programs, or job training tied to green careers and animal care.
- **Fueling Workforce Development and Economic Mobility:** This project aligns with the *Denver Economic Development & Opportunity (DEDO) Strategic Plan* by driving job creation, offering workforce training in green careers and animal care, and supporting Denver’s tourism economy. A stronger, more inclusive guest experience elevates Denver’s reputation on the national and international stage.
- **Advancing Citywide Equity and Environmental Goals:** The project brings to life the vision of the *Denver Comprehensive Plan 2040*:
 - *Strong and Authentic Neighborhoods:* It enhances cultural representation, bilingual storytelling, and inclusive education—making the Zoo a welcoming space that reflects Denver’s vibrant diversity.

- *Environmentally Resilient City:* With sustainable infrastructure, habitat restoration, and stormwater improvements, the project promotes biodiversity and climate adaptation in the urban core.
- **Positioned for Future Collaboration:** The Zoo's history of partnership with organizations focused on education and community nonprofits sets the stage for deeper cross-sector work—whether through nature-based learning, cultural events, or family services tied to wellness, childcare, and early education.

More than a Zoo project, this is a community-powered catalyst—connecting people, place, and purpose through joyful experiences and bold investment in Denver's cultural, educational, and environmental future.



While the Bond has a requirement to be complete within 6 years, please speak to the project's ability to handle uncertain market conditions. In particular how will the project be able to accommodate material availability and sourcing, rising costs and escalations, or a reduction in funding.

Prepared, Proactive, and Built for Success

The Latin America Experience is not only transformational—it's strategically planned to weather uncertainty. From the start, the Zoo has engaged top-tier Program & Risk Management experts to guide a smart, phased, and resilient delivery strategy.

- **Proactive Risk Planning:** The project team has already identified over \$20 million in potential cost escalations and a four-month schedule buffer—well in advance. These early insights informed a robust Project Cost Worksheet and shaped our funding request with realistic, risk-adjusted projections.
- **Live Risk Register in Action:** The Zoo maintains an active Risk Register that tracks material availability, labor market volatility, and economic fluctuations. This living document allows the project team to anticipate issues and pivot quickly with mitigation strategies—ensuring project continuity even in the face of shifting market conditions.
- **Adaptive Design and Delivery:** The project includes modular construction components and scalable infrastructure systems that allow for flexibility without compromising core visitor experience, safety, or sustainability. This means design adjustments can be made without derailing timelines or public benefit.
- **Phased Capital Strategy:** With a \$240 million project cost and a 50/50 public-private match, the Zoo has already secured early philanthropic support and is prepared to launch a national Capital Campaign upon project approval. Additional fundraising, grant applications, and bridge financing provide further insulation against economic uncertainty.
- **Construction-Ready and On Schedule:** With planning complete and design set to begin in 2025, the project is on track to break ground in December 2025 and open by late 2029—comfortably within the 6-year bond window.
- **Early Investments, Strong Foundations:** The Zoo has already invested over \$26 million in adjacent and enabling projects—including Stingray Cove, Flamingos, and Sea Lions—which have improved guest flow, addressed critical utilities, and modernized underground infrastructure. These strategic early moves reduce risk, limit cost escalation, and lay the groundwork for smooth and timely construction of the Latin America Experience.

- **Primed for Philanthropic Investment:** The \$120 million capital campaign to match the City’s investment will build upon the strong foundation of philanthropy created by the Zoo’s recent \$75 million Comprehensive Campaign. CCS Fundraising has been engaged as a thought partner to ensure a well-structured campaign launch.

In short, the Latin America Experience is bond-ready and market-smart—designed with discipline, built with foresight, and backed by a team with a clear plan to deliver long-term public value, no matter the economic climate.



If there are any renderings or images that you feel would be helpful for the Subcommittee while evaluating the proposals, please feel free to include them with the information requested above.

[Please view our Latin America project sizzle reel and flythrough here.](#)

Delivering a Robust and Ready Submission

To support a strong and fully informed review, the Zoo submitted the following materials to the City in April 2025 as part of its Vibrant Denver Bond proposal:

- **Commitment to Match City Investment:** The Zoo’s CEO submitted a formal letter committing to a \$120 million private donor match—representing 50% of the project’s total cost. This mirrors the successful public-private partnership model that made the Toyota Elephant Passage a success. Our capital campaign is ready to launch immediately.
- **Economic & Fiscal Impact Analysis** (April 2025) detailing:
 - \$270 million in current annual economic impact
 - Nearly 1,900 jobs supported annually
 - Over \$12 million in Colorado tax revenue generated each year
 - More than 85% of that impact considered “net new” to Denver
 - Projected growth to \$368 million in annual economic impact, 2,100+ jobs, and nearly \$17 million in tax revenue by 2030 (project complete in late 2029)
- **Project Renderings** showcasing the bold, immersive design of the Latin America Experience
- **Two Dynamic Project Videos:**
 - *Highlight Reel* sharing the project’s purpose, impact, and community vision
 - *Fly-Through* animation offering an immersive preview of the guest experience

These materials were submitted alongside the bond intake form to ensure a compelling and comprehensive application—demonstrating that the Latin America Experience is not only shovel-ready, but poised to be a lasting economic, cultural, and community asset for Denver.