

CALENDAR

May is National Historic Preservation Month

You've seen the beautifully-restored buildings in Old Town. But did you know there is financial help available for other commercial and residential properties? The City offers an array of financial incentives to make the upkeep of your historic building easy on the pocketbook. Visit fcgov.com/historicpreservation or call 221-6376 for details.

Water-Smart Sprinkler Systems

Wednesday, May 2, 7-9 p.m.

Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

Learn how to operate and maintain a sprinkler system to conserve water and save money. Plus, learn about the latest sprinkler system technology. fcgov.com/utilities/eps.php

Car Show

Saturday, May 19, 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.

Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Drive

FREE

The Parade of Years car tour from Loveland to Estes Park will make a stop at the Fort Collins Senior Center again this year featuring more than 40 classic and antique cars. 221-6645.

Bike & Lunch-NEW!

Saturday, May 5, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Depart from Senior Center, 1200 Raintree Dr.

Fee: \$15

A leisurely exploration of the Spring Creek Trail followed by a deli-style lunch at a local restaurant (included in fee). 221-6645.

Character Quality of the Month "Cautiousness"

Knowing how important right timing is in accomplishing right actions.

For more information about Character Fort Collins, visit characterfortcollins.org or call 266-2671.

MAY 2007



news



SPOTLIGHT:

URA, TIF, AND URP
— The Alphabet Soup of Redevelopment

OTHER FEATURES:

- Summertime: Not a Moment too Soon
- Summer Reading Programs Begin May 16th
- Floodplain Services Management Available
- Water Supply and Conservation
- Culture Corner
- Calendar



CITY COUNCIL/CITY MANAGER


Doug Hutchinson, Mayor

Ben Manvel, District 1	Wade Troxell, District 4
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Diggs Brown, District 3	David Roy, District 6

Darin Atteberry, City Manager

CITY HALL

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221-6505 • TDD: 224-6001 • www.fcgov.com

This publication is available in large print, audio and on the web. 

URBAN RENEWAL NEWS

URA, TIF, AND URP — THE ALPHABET SOUP OF REDEVELOPMENT

URAS, URPS, TIF, NORTH COLLEGE CORRIDOR, Foothills Mall, Downtown — with so many new terms and projects, it's hard to keep up with what's going on and what it means for this community.

URA — URBAN RENEWAL AUTHORITY

An Urban Renewal Authority (URA) is a state regulated tool used to promote redevelopment in specific areas. They are created by local governments, but are officially a separate corporate entity.

HOW DO URAS WORK?

URAs are used to increase economic activity within a certain area. They stimulate redevelopment by providing funding assistance for projects using Tax Increment Financing (TIF).

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF)

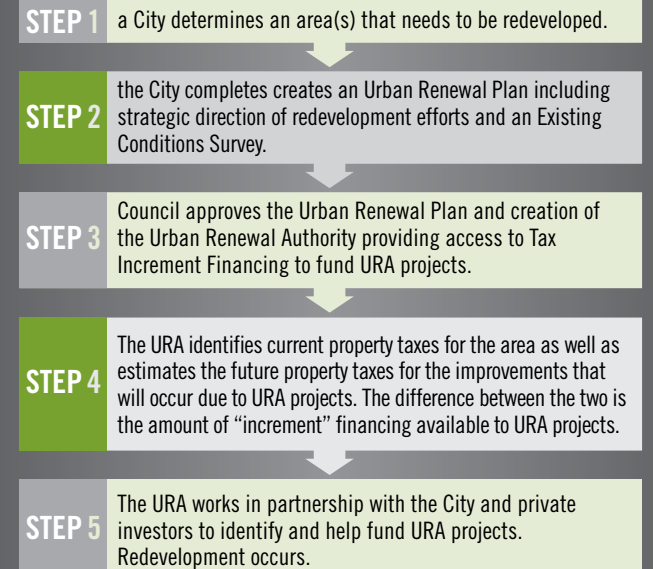
Essentially, TIF allows the URA to capture a portion of the increase in property taxes that will be generated by redevelopment projects. The tax "increment" is the difference between the current property taxes (before redevelopment) and the anticipated property taxes after redevelopment. These increment funds are reinvested into URA projects for a 25 year period.

URBAN RENEWAL PLANS

The plan identifies how to best use TIF and determine the direction of redevelopment within the URA. Before a URA can be activated, an Urban Renewal Plan (URP) must be created.

According to state law, the URP must also contain an Existing Conditions Survey that demonstrates that the area is in need of redevelopment. This is where the word "blight" comes into play. The word "blight" conjures strong images: run down buildings, unsafe structures, "slums." The finding of blight is necessary to creating a URA. But the public's definition and images of blight and the State of Colorado's definition are often quite different. The State views blight simply as an area that:

URA PROCESS AT A GLANCE



- substantially impairs the sound growth of a municipality, inhibits housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability,
- and is a menace to public health, safety, morals or welfare.

The State lists eleven possible "blight" descriptions including, among other factors, deterioration of buildings, faulty lot layout, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, unusual topography or inadequate public improvements or utilities, and defective or inadequate street layout. At least four out of eleven "blight" factors must be present before a URA can be created.

Once the URP is approved by Council, the URA can begin redevelopment work.

The intricacies of a URA can be confusing, yet the overall goal is simple: to strengthen the local economy and sense of community. To learn more about URAs visit fcgov.com/ura.

Summer Reading Programs Begin May 16

Keep reading all summer long with the Fort Collins Public Library's free summer reading programs. Sponsored by the Friends of the Library, registration begins Wed., May 16 at all locations. Visit fcgov.com/srp for details. Programs include:

- "Get a Clue @ Your Library" – for children through 6th grade. Programs abound with puppets, music, magic and cool prizes for reading.
- "YNK-You Never Know @ Your Library" - for teens finishing grades 6-12. Participants can earn prizes including a mall gift certificate.
- Adult Summer Reading Program - featuring outdoor programs including a film night and the return of the "Harmony on the Green" concert.

Floodplain Management Services Available

As flood season begins, now's the time to learn about Fort Collins Utilities' Floodplain Management Program, designed to minimize the potential for flooding damages and personal injury.

Heavy rainfall is the primary cause of flooding between May and September, but rapid snowmelt and blocked waterways can also cause flooding.

The City offers a variety of services to help keep you informed and prepared including:

- site-specific flood information;
- interactive floodplain maps at fcgov.com/stormwater/floodplain-maps.php;
- flood insurance information;
- development permit requirements;
- local flood history, flood safety and property protection information;
- retrofitting and construction techniques;
- and site visits to advise property owners of protection measures.

For details, call 221-6700 or visit fcgov.com/stormwater.

PARKS & REC NEWS

summertime: NOT A MOMENT TOO SOON

THE TRUTH IS, IT'S BEEN A LONG, COLD WINTER.

For many of us, the warmer weather means it is time for recreation and relaxation at your local City park, but for the City's Parks crews, it's time to get busy.

The City of Fort Collins Parks Department maintains 46 parks. This includes more than 800 acres of land, public buildings, 22 miles of trails, Old Town Square, and much more.

Preparing for the increase in visitation that comes with the summer months is no easy task, especially considering that visitation to the various City parks this summer will exceed that of Rocky Mountain National Park! To accommodate that kind of traffic, City Parks staff increases from roughly 30 full time employees to 120.

In addition to the obvious mowing of grass and picking up trash, Parks crews tackle projects that you might not be aware of. For example, did you know...

- Before the summer season, Parks crews must convert all snow equipment into mowing equipment;
- Parks crews will request that more than 200 water valves are turned on;
- Parks crews will distribute roughly 2,000 pounds of seed to repair the grass of City-owned ball fields;
- The City will use seven tons of chalk to line all the soccer, baseball, and other fields in preparation for summer use;
- Every drinking fountain, restroom, and public building needs to be clean and in working order before the summer season begins;
- Equipment replacement includes more than just replacing light bulbs. Crews also replace tennis nets, clean and repair picnic tables, restore playground equipment, and much more.

That's just a peek at what it takes to get the park system ready for summer, but that's not all. The City's parks and trails are heavily used in the warmer months for special events. They host a wide variety of events ranging from smaller trail walks to large-scale productions like the Fourth



of July. Plus, the City also provides services to support those events such as the "showmobile," a portable performance stage used by local event producers.

It's a community investment to maintain these parks, and the Parks Department continually looks for ways to operate efficiently. "We live by the ideas of stewardship and sustainability," said Bill Whirly, Parks Maintenance Supervisor. He explains that sustainability considers environmental stewardship, as well as the community and financial implications of the parks system.

For example, every single park irrigation system is armed with rain gauges and when a certain amount of rain is recorded, they automatically shut off sprinklers at that park. The system conserves water and simultaneously saves money.

Plus, Parks crews use electric-powered utility vehicles in the majority of locations which decreases fuel costs and minimizes environmental impacts.

Finally, the City is expanding the "no-mow zones" along riparian areas due to their participation in the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary Program. The intent is to improve bird and wildlife habitat, but there is also benefit in cost savings; mowing less requires less staff time and less fuel.

This summer, enjoy the safety and beauty of your local parks and know that the City is hard at work trying to make your experience the best it can be.

Fort Collins URAs – What's Going On?

In 1982, Fort Collins City Council approved a resolution stating that any URAs within City limits will be governed by City Council, and since then, the City identified areas targeted for redevelopment:

- North College Corridor – In 2004, Council approved its first URA based on the North College Urban Renewal Plan. Using TIF, North College recently completed their first large-scale project paving the way for local business expansion.
- Foothills Mall – City staff gathered public input on the URP for Foothills Mall in April. This month, Council will consider approving the plan and creating a URA for the area.
- Downtown Fort Collins – Currently, there is not a URA or URP for Downtown. Council discussed the possibility of a URA along with several other options as a method to ensure vitality downtown. No decisions have been made, and several options are under consideration.

BLIGHT AND DOWNTOWN FORT COLLINS

Connecting what most envision as blight with Fort Collins' "crown jewel" is, at first, difficult. However, consider that the State of Colorado's definition of blight includes eleven factors, several of which speak to what we traditionally think of as blight (slums and run-down buildings), and others that simply define a need for redevelopment (faulty lot layout or certain types of title conditions). Whether blighted areas exist in Downtown is yet to be determined. To learn more visit fcgov.com/ura.

Culture Corner

Taste of Fort Collins

Saturday, June 9, 11 a.m. – 9 p.m.,
Sunday, June 10, 11 a.m. – 7 p.m.
Civic Center Park

Enjoy food from restaurants throughout the region, plus art booths, live music, cooking demonstrations, and chef competitions. For ticket info and other details, visit www.tasteoffortcollins.com