

Email Transparency FAQ

What is the Email Transparency Project?

With limited exceptions, all emails addressed to, or sent by, City Council will be available for public review via an online archive that is viewable through any web browser. Confidential messages will not be included in the online archive.

Why does the City of Fort Collins make Councilmember emails public?

Under the Colorado Open Records Act (CORA), City Council emails, with limited exceptions, are subject to public disclosure. City Council wants to be as transparent as possible to the community they serve about how City business is transacted and City decisions are reached, so are voluntarily making these emails available for online viewing.

Why host the archive with a third party provider (Global Relay) instead of on FCGov.com?

For more than 15 years Global Relay has been in the business of cloud-based data archiving, and they are a trusted partner for more than 18,000 customers needing data archives and compliance solutions.

The annual cost of hosting City Council email with the cloud-based service from Global Relay is \$2195 (\$395 for set-up fees and \$150 per month). This is less than the City would pay a senior programmer or developer for just a week of work, and building a product of similar quality in-house would take months of work from server administrators, database administrators, application programmers, as well as the cost of the hardware to house it.

Will all City Council emails show in the archive?

For the most part, yes! Emails sent From Councilmembers, To Councilmembers, CC Councilmembers or BCC Councilmembers will be copied to the archive unless they are “restricted”. Emails that are “restricted” will generally be limited to those that, by law, must be kept confidential. Examples include attorney-client communications (unless the privileged has been waived by the Council), personnel matters, and proprietary information. In addition, citizens may sometimes wish to communicate with their Councilmembers about matters that they want to keep confidential because they are personal in nature and do not deal with public business. Such communications may or may not be subject to inspection under the Colorado Open Records Act upon request of another party. However, the City will, to the extent permitted by law, keep such correspondence confidential.

How do citizens request an email to a City Council member be kept confidential and not available to the general public in the archive?

Just put “#private” in the subject line of the email and the archive will automatically mark the message as “restricted.” But please make sure you use the hash-tag and that you spell private correctly and fully, or the rule won’t work!

If I CC or BCC people on an email to Council members, will those recipients show in the archive?

Yes, all recipients on an email to or from Council will show in the archive, regardless of whether they are in the To, CC, or BCC field. Any confidentiality implied by using BCC is lost in the archive.

Is data ever deleted from the archive?

Emails cannot be deleted manually from the archive by anyone on City Council, nor by City employees. However, the same data retention policy that governs email retention on the City’s email system applies on the archive. Data older than 90 days will be permanently deleted from the archive.

How can I access the archive?

Go to:

<https://compliance.login.globalrelay.com/cc/archiver/getToken?svcUrl=https%3A%2F%2Farchiver.globalrelay.com%2Farchivewebmail%2Farchivewebmail.fpl>

And use these credentials:

User - councilemail@fcgov.com

Password – City-80521

Using the right search parameters and key words, you can leave all fields blank and click “Search” to see all emails in the archive, or you can enter search parameters like dates and key words to find all emails relating to the topics that you’re interested in.