



Plan Fort Collins

SNAPSHOT REPORT

May 2010



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Thank you for your comments to date! The City received hundreds of comments from the community and feedback about values and future challenges and opportunities during Phase 1. This Report includes the common and recurring comments provided through multiple sources, including Boards and Commissions, focus groups, public kick-off events, and online sources. Other detailed comments will continue to be considered in Phase 2, as the City carries forward current policies and as the community explores new policy choices. Please stay involved. Your ideas will help shape the future of Fort Collins.



Snapshot Overview: Welcome!



CITY PLAN AND THE TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN—NEXT GENERATION

Plan Fort Collins is a community-wide effort to update the *City Plan* and *Transportation Master Plan (TMP)*. These plans, first developed in 1997, guide the way the City looks, functions, feels, and develops. *Plan Fort Collins* will blend what has worked well in the past with new ideas from the community and “best practices” from other places that might work in Fort Collins.

Fort Collins is a great place today in part because of past policy directions and actions by the City and partners. The City has seen many successes since 1997. Even so, the community faces new challenges and opportunities in the near-term, over the next 20-25 years, and beyond. For instance, the population is aging and becoming more diverse; current economic conditions are straining the City’s economic financial resources; technological changes will affect travel and communication; new and efficient ways to use and conserve energy and water continue to be refined; and the amount of vacant land remaining for development, conservation, or other needs becomes more limited as neighboring communities grow and as the City expands within its growth boundaries. In sum, the plan can help the community build on accomplishments and lessons learned, explore and respond to new trends that will shape the future of Fort Collins, create new opportunities, and make wise and informed choices.

WHAT MAKES THIS PLAN DIFFERENT?

Plan Fort Collins will carry the City into the future, helping to shape the City for the next generation of children and their children’s generations. The effort will fold past plans together and embrace new ideas, such as arts and culture, health and wellness, energy, and other topics. Three major overarching themes for the effort are: *innovate*, *sustain*, and *connect*.

Why Innovate?

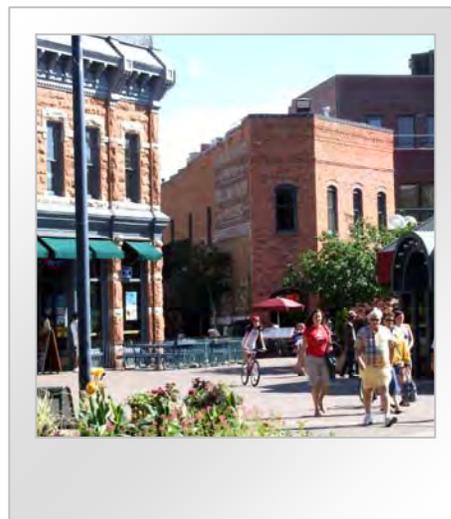
Innovation continues to set the City apart regionally and nationally. *Plan Fort Collins* will build on recent successes and explore new frontiers—ways to bridge gaps, forge alliances and partnerships within the community and region, and take advantage of new technology to shape the future.

Why Sustain?

Sustainability is about balancing human, financial, and environmental systems—and planning over the long-term by adapting human activities to the capacity of the natural systems needed to support life. The concept of sustainability will be more integral to *Plan Fort Collins* than in past plans. (See the “Sustainability” section on page 9 for more information.)

Why Connect?

Connections are a core tenet of *Plan Fort Collins*—relating people, organizations, and neighbors in the Northern Colorado region, and linking places and service areas within the City. Connections are a way to better address future needs from a systems perspective.



Fort Collins is a widely recognized “great” place to live, work, play, and visit today, due in part to past policy directions and actions by the City and other partners.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT?

This Snapshot Report is one of the first steps in a year long effort to update and broaden *City Plan* and the *Transportation Master Plan*. Its purpose is to help set a context for initial community outreach and dialogue about “our City of the future” and priorities for the long-term future. It provides a summary of the City’s current adopted goals and community values; takes stock of what has been accomplished since *City Plan* and the *Transportation Master Plan* were first adopted in 1997; and identifies an initial list of challenges and opportunities that lie ahead where accomplishments are either incomplete or new challenges await.

This report and the Phase 1 community dialogue helped set the stage for the next phase of the *Plan Fort Collins* effort—exploring choices and new policy directions to address future challenges and opportunities. Many community members provided input about “missing ideas” during Phase 1; these ideas have been folded into this Report. In addition, much of the detailed input provided by the community will be carried forward as part of the next phases of the planning effort, including new policy choices in Phase 2. See: www.fcgov.com/planfortcollins, for more detailed summaries of input from Phase 1.



Community dialogue about the future of Fort Collins has helped set the stage for the next phases of the planning effort.

SNAPSHOT ORGANIZATION AND TOPICS

This Snapshot Report includes the following sections:

Trends of the Future

This section highlights some key trends and changes likely to change the community over the next 50 years, and how they might influence Fort Collins’ future.

Sustainability Introduction

This section describes the concept of sustainability as it applies to the City and *Plan Fort Collins* – summarizing what the City has already accomplished as well as new opportunities ahead.

Topic-based Snapshots (in alphabetical order)

The Snapshot Reports describe the City’s programs and services in eight key areas:



Arts and Culture



Built Environment and Land Use



Environment and Utilities



Finance and Economy



Health, Wellness, and Safety



Housing



Open Space, Natural Areas, Parks, and Recreation



Transportation

Each of the eight topic-based Snapshot Reports includes the following sections:

1. **Current Values:** A summary of the City's current values related to this topic (from *City Plan*, the *Transportation Master Plan*, or other City policy documents);
2. **Accomplishments:** A summary of accomplishments since adoption of *City Plan* (1997 and updated in 2004) and the *Transportation Master Plan* (updated in 2004);
3. **Challenges and Opportunities:** An initial list of major challenges and opportunities that the City likely will need to address in the future;
4. **Cross-Cutting Topics:** Sustainability is an important driving philosophy for the *Plan Fort Collins* effort. Each chapter also identifies cross-cutting topics that should be addressed in a more integrated way; and
5. **Links for More Information:** Definitions for specific technical terms in the Snapshot and references for Reports related to a particular topic.

What if a Topic is not Included?

This Snapshot Report includes almost all City programs, services, and policies that are pertinent in a Comprehensive Plan or Transportation Master Plan. Some topics are not addressed if other service providers are responsible for them, such as schools, libraries, and health care. However, such topics are important factors in the community's future successes, and are often related to City services and programs.

THE PLAN FORT COLLINS PROCESS

Plan Fort Collins is organized around three major phases, which will take about a year to complete. **This Snapshot Report is part of Phase 1.**

The three phases in the process are:

Phase 1 – Understand (March/April 2010)

- Examine key trends;
- Engage the community in dialogue about challenges and opportunities; and
- Identify topics to be explored during Phase 2.

Phase 2 – Envision/Analyze (May to August, 2010)

- Review key policy choices;
- Analyze trade-offs and consequences of different policy choices; and
- Develop preferred directions for the plans.

Phase 3 – Implement/Adopt (August 2010 to March 2011)

- Identify strategies to achieve plan goals and determine priority actions; and
- Prepare and bring plans forward for adoption.

WANT TO SHAPE THE FUTURE?

Your input is very important to make sure *Plan Fort Collins* reflects community viewpoints and has strong support over time. Several ways for the community (you!) to help shape the Plan are:

- Check the project website, fcgov.com/plan. Send comments, fill in surveys, sign up for email, Facebook, and Twitter updates, and other activities.
- Sign up for focus groups on the website.
- Watch for and attend City Council, City boards and commissions events, public events and meetings.



The Fort Collins community will continue to have many ways to be involved with Plan Fort Collins.

The Process

One-Year
Process

Phase 1: Understand

Analyze

- What are current conditions and trends?
- How does Fort Collins compare?
- What do current plans/policies say?

Verify

- Which parts of the *City Plan* and *Transportation Master Plan* Vision(s) are still valid?

Phase 2: Envision/Analyze

Expand Big Ideas and Vision

- What new "big ideas" should be added to the Vision?

Plan Choices

- What are the key choices (e.g., future growth, "refill," transportation, utilities, low impact development, social programs, etc)?
- What are trade-offs?

Preferred Directions

- What is our preferred plan direction – for 25-years and beyond?

Phase 3: Implement/Adopt

Implementation Actions/Strategies

- What new actions are needed to implement the renewed Vision?
- How will the City pay for what the community wants?
- What are the monitoring tools and indicators to continually renew the Plan(s)?

Priorities

- What are the implementation priorities?

Draft Plan

- Prepare draft Plan(s) (study sessions and hearings)

Code Amendments

- Code amendments to implement the Plan(s).

Fort Collins 2060

FORT COLLINS THEN AND NOW

Nestled against the Front Range, about 60 miles north of Denver, Fort Collins is a regional center for commerce and education. It is the largest city in Larimer County and home to Colorado State University. It was not long ago that Fort Collins was a small community, centered on Old Town and its neighborhoods. In the last 50 years the City has grown from 25,000 people in 1960 to about 140,000 people in 2010. Think how much the community has changed—how we conduct business, recreate, travel, live, and interact with the broader region and beyond. Now anticipate what kinds of trends might influence our future 50 years from now. What kind of jobs will people have? How will we travel? How will our lifestyles change?

Plan Fort Collins, like *City Plan* and the *Transportation Master Plan*, is based on a 25+-year planning horizon, to the year 2035. But as part of this planning process, the City is taking a longer-term view, considering long-range trends that may influence the Fort Collins of the future. The City invites you to explore the future, and think about how these trends might influence Fort Collins even 50 years from today.

While much of the focus in this section is on demographic trends (such as population and housing), the City will need to consider many other trends during the *Plan Fort Collins* process. How will demographic changes affect City recreation, cultural services, and programs? How will buildings adapt to meet a changing population? Will the City be called on to provide new services, or reduce or eliminate others? How will Colorado State University adapt to change, and what is the University's vision?

Note that this section is based on projections, which by their nature are never precise. What matters is the magnitude of change and the overall general trends of which to be mindful.¹

¹ Sources for this section include State of Colorado Population Projections for Larimer County, Dr. Arthur C. Nelson, PhD, FAICP, Presidential Professor at the



What will Fort Collins be like in 2035 and beyond?



Fort Collins 2010.

WHAT TRENDS WILL INFLUENCE FORT COLLINS IN THE FUTURE?

Fort Collins could reach a quarter million residents or more by mid-century. This depends on a number of factors—global, national, and regional trends; resource limitations; and community values. The current financial situation certainly will have bearing on near-term population growth for the region, but its long-term affects remain unknown.

Metropolitan Research Center of the University of Utah, Dr. Thomas Frey (www.davinciinstitute.com), and Clarion Associates.

National Growth Trends

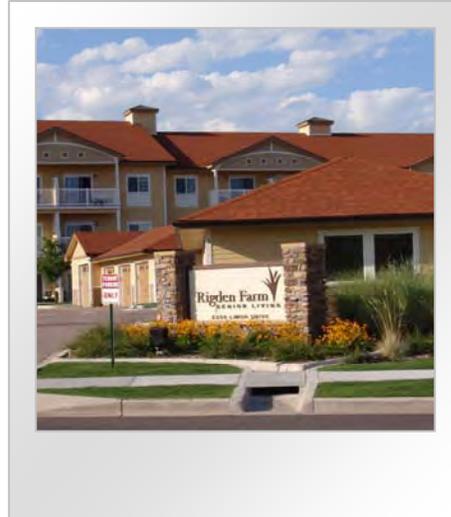
The nation as a whole is growing. This growth is fueled by increasing life spans, increasing fertility rates (particularly among first and second-generation immigrants, as well as a result of women having children at older ages), and by increases in immigration, both employment-based and by family-sponsorships. In its projections from 1999 to 2100, the U.S. Census Bureau's high estimate would have the U.S. population reaching 1.2 billion by the end of the century. Its "middle" projection, which is normally used for planning purposes, still has the U.S. growing to about 750 million by 2100. One factor included in the high projection was assuming that American's longevity would increase from about 76 years (for those born in 1996) to 96 years (for those born in 2099).

Regional Growth Trends

Larimer County today contains just over 300,000 persons. State of Colorado projections show the county growing to more than 430,000 persons by 2030; extrapolating past trends would lead to more than 600,000 persons by 2060. While it is assumed that Fort Collins's share of the county's population will fall over time, overall growth in the region is expected to continue over the next 50 years.

Demographic Shifts

The United States is an aging nation. The "baby boom" epoch from 1946 to 1964 saw the greatest number of births the nation has ever seen over a comparable period of time. Boomers turn 65 between 2011 and 2029, leading to substantial change in the nation's demographic profile. Between 2010 and 2030, for instance, the share of the nation's population that is 65-years and older could increase by nearly half—from about 13% to about 19%. In Fort Collins, the share of the population that is 65+ is estimated to increase from about 8% in 2010 to about 19% by 2030, and then drop between 2030 and 2060 to about 11%. Such change would affect housing, transportation, and other service needs. The City's ethnic diversity will also change. Overall, like much of the U.S., Fort Collins will become a more diverse community. Over the entire period 2000 to 2060, the growth rate of Anglos will be the lowest of all ethnic groups, with the largest changes occurring in the Hispanic, Black, and other ethnic groups.



As the 65+ population grows, demand for new housing types may increase.

As the demographic profile of Fort Collins changes over the coming decades so will its household composition and associated demand for housing, which is discussed next.

Changing Household Composition

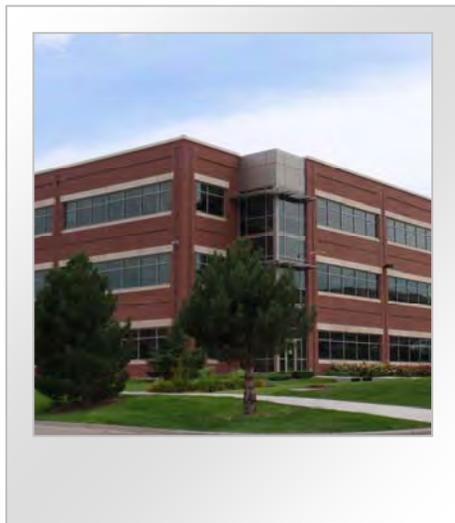
It is projected that the composition of Fort Collins households will change dramatically between 2010 and 2040. Family households (married couples with and without children) will fall to about half of all households by 2040, but family households with children will fall to less than a quarter of all households by 2040. Single-person households will increase to about 37% of all households by 2040. Also, by 2040, nonfamily households (unmarried people living together) with householders over age 65 will just about double their share of total households but then fall to their 2010 levels thereafter as the baby-boomers will no longer be around.

Changing Demand for Housing

The demographic changes described above will have a notable effect on housing demand. The majority (roughly 80%) of all new housing demand for each of the next three decades will be for non child-oriented households, settling to about 70% by 2060. The main drivers will be growth in empty-nester households, single person households, and nonfamily households with householders age 65+.

What does this mean for the housing market in Fort Collins? Based on these projections, it may mean that Fort Collins already has most of the single-family detached homes on large lots needed to accommodate future demand for this type of

housing. As a group, non-child households tend to prefer smaller homes on smaller lots, attached owned homes (such as townhouses and condominiums), and apartments. They also tend to prefer proximity to shopping and services (especially medical services for seniors), and alternative transportation modes. In Fort Collins, meeting this demand may be accomplished through directing moderately higher densities into newly developing areas and higher densities at commercial nodes, downtown, and along commercial corridors, mixed with nonresidential land uses.



Small and large (shown) office and institutional employment will likely see future growth.

Employment Growth

Job growth will increase proportionate to the City's growth in population. While the City's regional share of employment will likely drop over time—from about 57% today to closer to 52% in 2060—the City's employment base will continue to be significant and dominant in the region. The largest sector in 2010, office and institutional, will likely see the most growth overall—not surprising given the presence of Colorado State University combined with other government activities. Conversely, the industrial sector is projected to lose some employment over all periods, 2000-2030, 2030-2060, and 2000-2060. This is likely for two reasons: (a) the national economy is trending away from industrial activities and (b) industrial activities tend to be land-extensive and thus less able to compete for land in urban locations, especially central ones.

Development Patterns and Land Supply

A significant portion of Fort Collins' future land supply needs can likely be met on existing vacant and built nonresidential properties. One key reason is that, with few exceptions, nonresidential structures are not durable—on average they are replaced every 40 years. Based on that assumption, by 2040 nearly two-thirds of all of Fort Collins' nonresidential building stock would be replaced, and by 2060 nearly all would be replaced. Redevelopment usually results in higher land-intensities than that which it replaces. In Fort Collins, redevelopment resulting in just a 25% increase over current levels, combined with development of vacant nonresidential land at modestly higher intensities could easily accommodate all new nonresidential needs and much of its residential ones. These trends and choices will need to be tested and evaluated by the community during Phase 2 of *Plan Fort Collins*.

Resource Limitations

While the western U.S. as a whole and Fort Collins is projected to continue to grow significantly over the next 50 years, questions remain about the ability of natural resources to support such growth without serious consequences. Meeting growing demands for water in an arid climate in a sustainable manner; conserving valuable natural resources; improving air quality; addressing energy needs, understanding impacts on wildlife; and many other important resources will need to be considered. Resources will need to be conserved and protected if a high quality of life is to be maintained. The community will need to consider resource questions for the future during *Plan Fort Collins*.



The natural environment and resource limitations are a consideration of Plan Fort Collins.

Fort Collins and the *Creative Class*

An emerging trend among U.S. cities is the concept of attracting a demographic segment made up of “knowledge workers” as a primary economic force. This group contains a wide range of occupations (science, engineering, education, computing, and research) whose primary job function is to be creative and innovative. Also included are more traditional knowledge-based workers such as in healthcare, business and finance, and education, as well as artists and those in other creative fields.

The leading proponent of this concept, Richard Florida, has identified three main prerequisites of creative cities, known as “the three T’s”:

- Talent (they have a highly talented/educated/skilled population),
- Tolerance (they have a diverse and accepting community), and
- Technology (the technological infrastructure necessary to fuel an entrepreneurial culture is in place).

Fort Collins is already a leader in fostering employment opportunities in emerging and sustainable sectors. The City is focusing its economic health initiatives around five industry clusters that represent its future economic base:

1. Chip design,
2. Bio-science,
3. Clean energy,
4. Software, and
5. Uniquely Fort Collins.

Clean water technology is another emerging sector. The economic health initiatives address the City’s ability to attract talent and build on its already impressive technology base. (See the Finance and Economy Snapshot for more information.) As part of the *Plan Fort Collins* effort, the community will need to consider “the three T’s” to determine if this economic approach fits with its vision for the future.

Sustainability

TRIPLE BOTTOM LINE

The City of Fort Collins defines sustainability as balanced stewardship of human, financial, and environmental resources for present and future generations. This concept of sustainability approaches human, financial, and environmental planning goals as an integrated system where the three “pillars” are seen as mutually reinforcing, instead of operating in isolation. This systems-based approach, often referred to as the “triple bottom line” benefits not only the financial bottom line, but also places equal emphasis on positive social and environmental outcomes.

Historically, past planning processes often have treated functions and goals such as land use, transportation, housing, arts, and community health as distinct and separate topics rather than related and mutually-beneficial. By comparison, *Plan Fort Collins* will feature sustainability as a unifying concept—as a way to integrate and connect topics across City service areas and departments, and throughout the community to address current and future needs efficiently and effectively—to meet today’s needs and the needs of future generations. While this Snapshot Report has been organized around eight topic areas and many subtopics to document progress and next steps, this organization is not meant to separate and treat topics in isolation.

The City’s values, accomplishments, and challenges related to sustainability outlined in this Snapshot Report will inform the discussion over the course of this process and will be the basis for evaluating key choices for *Plan Fort Collins*. Using an integrated systems approach, the City will evaluate how various choices and alternatives affect the human, financial, and environmental goals. For instance, energy and resource use and financial benefit can be measured for different choices. Analysis will help to inform community dialogues and develop preferred directions for Fort Collins.

Another Definition of Sustainability

Since the 1980s, the term sustainability has been used to describe human interaction on the planet and reconciliation of the three pillars (financial,

human, and environment). A widely used definition of sustainability is that which: “meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” (Brundtland Commission, 1987).



City of Fort Collins Illustration of Sustainability. Throughout *Plan Fort Collins*, the above model will be further customized and refined to illustrate a stronger integration of future programs and services. It also can be used to practically measure and monitor goals of the plan(s) over time. During Phase 2, the community will continue to look for ways to refine the City’s approach to sustainability.



Fort Collins’ commitment to sustainability encompasses all topics, ranging from the built environment, to economy, to the natural environment.



An example of a mutually-beneficial approach: Sidewalks and bike paths enhance mobility as well as improve health.

GAPS AND FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

By nature of its broad definition and systems approach, sustainability is integrated into each of the following Report sections. Some topics within each snapshot section, however, more naturally lend themselves to discussions of specific City values and priorities with respect to sustainability. In each snapshot section, you will find these topics under a separate section entitled, “What are the Cross-Cutting Topics?”

FORT COLLINS’ PROGRESS

This Snapshot Report captures the significant progress the City of Fort Collins has made to date in its journey toward sustainability. It documents the City’s progress, for example, in addressing climate change through its *Climate Action Plan*, as well as its commitment to energy and water efficiency through its *Energy Policy*, Green Building program, *Water Conservation Plan*, and FortZED initiative. It highlights the progress the City has made in enhancing the quality of its urban spaces and in developing alternatives to single-passenger vehicle use; as well as its accomplishments on housing, arts and culture, parks, and natural areas conservation that contribute to community livability. In short, much progress has been made, and the City is already recognized as a leader in sustainability. As the following sections show, however, the City has opportunities to further its progress toward sustainability through *Plan Fort Collins*.



Arts and Culture

WHAT ARE THE CITY'S CURRENT VALUES?

While *City Plan* did not directly address the topic of arts and culture, they are essential to Fort Collins' continued success and desirability. As identified in the City's 2008 *Cultural Plan*, as well as the missions of community organizations such as Beet Street, Fort Collins aspires to become a nationally recognized arts and culture center and destination, and aims to develop cultural facilities and infrastructure that elevate the resident and visitor experience.

Incorporating public art, distinctive architecture, and aesthetically pleasing and cohesive design for buildings, parks, plazas, streetscapes, public spaces, and transportation enhances the appearance of the community, and its overall quality and livability. Creation and encouragement of innovative and diverse arts and cultural programming and experiences to serve people of all backgrounds and interests will also add to the City's quality of life, as well as its economic vibrancy.

Current City values related to arts and culture and expressed during community input include:

- A vibrant, livable community that instills pride;
- Partnerships, coordination, and integration of arts, culture, and creativity into all aspects of community life;
- A focus on wide reaching, high impact, resourceful, achievable efforts to enhance arts, culture, and creativity;
- Aesthetically pleasing and cohesive design that includes art and creativity in the built environment; and
- Empowerment of exceptional people and organizations to step forward and help themselves and the Fort Collins arts and culture community reach its potential.



The Art in Action project provides residents and visitors opportunities to witness the creation of public art in Old Town Square. (artist Lisa Cameron)



Art along Prospect Road establishes a sense of arrival. (artists Carol May and Tim Watkins)



Transformer cabinet murals add interest to Downtown and also deter graffiti. (artist Kirsten Savage)

WHAT HAS THE CITY ACCOMPLISHED?

Arts and culture efforts in Fort Collins have gained momentum in recent years, and the community has many accomplishments to celebrate, including:

Adopted the community's first *Cultural Plan*

The *Cultural Plan* is a guiding document for community-wide efforts. It ensures that arts, culture, and innovation thrive in our community, add to the excellent quality of life, help drive the local economy and tourism, and become an integral part of Fort Collins' unique identity.

Stimulated the local economy through arts and culture

The 2007 *Arts and Economic Prosperity Study* shows the arts have a \$15.9 million impact on the local Fort Collins economy, an increase from \$9.6 million in 2003. The powerful nature of the arts and culture industry is reflected in the City's Economic Health strategy, which identifies *Uniquely Fort Collins* as a target industry for economic development. The cluster is comprised of unique and independent local arts and creative businesses that contribute to Fort Collins' high quality of life.

In addition to the City's *Uniquely Fort Collins* efforts, several other community organizations and partners have helped to enhance the link between arts and culture initiatives and the vitality of the local economy, including:

- Beet Street, created in 2007, aims to add to the economic vibrancy and development of Downtown by building on arts and culture as a unique economic engine;
- The Downtown Development Authority's (DDA) *2009 Broadening Investment in Downtown Arts and Cultural Initiative* focuses on stimulating and supporting the arts Downtown during tough economic times; and
- The City's Cultural Resources Board has reframed its mission and the Fort Fund grant program to "serve as a catalyst in making Fort Collins a cultural center and destination."



Recent improvements to Oak Street Plaza have enhanced the appearance of Downtown and also capture the attention of residents and visitors. (artist Lawrence Argent)

Enhanced the appearance and visual impact of the community

The Art in Public Places program (APP) started in 1995 and is established today. In addition to placing more than 75 pieces of art throughout the City, APP has developed a host of other programs and partnerships to enhance the appearance and visual impact of the community. Recent recognized and notable accomplishments of APP include:

- Partnerships with the DDA in 2009 on the Downtown Alley Enhancement projects and the *Art in Action* program in Old Town Square;
- Recognition for the Transformer Cabinet Mural Program in 2008 as an innovative program by the National League of Cities;
- Urban Design Awards for the new Police Facility, Spring Canyon Community Park, and the Spring Creek Trail underpass in 2008; and
- Installation of the community's first piece of gateway art on Prospect Road in 2007.

Historic preservation projects, including building façade enhancements and restoration of historic signs, also have added to the visual appeal of the community. Additionally, van, bicycle, and walking tours of the community increase public awareness and recognition of historic preservation, planning, urban design, and public art accomplishments.

Improved and expanded arts and cultural facilities

The City's *Cultural Facilities Plan*, adopted in 2008, provides recommendations for improvements and additions to the City's cultural and performance facilities. The most notable arts and cultural facility enhancements will begin in 2010, with a major renovation to the Lincoln Center, and ground breaking for the joint Fort Collins Museum and Discovery Science Center facility. These improvements are supported by the 2005 voter-approved Building on Basics tax renewal and through private donations. Another key addition to the City's cultural facilities was the donation of the Romero House, a Hispanic heritage museum.



The future Museum and Discovery Science Center will be located near Old Town and the banks of the Cache La Poudre River.

Advanced arts and cultural programming

Public and private arts and cultural programs in Fort Collins continue to grow annually. One notable addition to the arts and cultural scene was the First Friday Gallery Walk, which began in 2000. The Walk includes more than 15 participating galleries, and draws activity to Downtown on the first Friday of each month. Today, the arts and culture industry is represented by more than 80 non-profit organizations, for-profit creative businesses, and hundreds of individual artists living and working in Fort Collins.

In 2005, a Public Opinion Survey confirmed that a majority of Fort Collins residents believe arts, science, and culture improve our quality of life and contribute to education and development of our children. Several years later, in 2007, UniverCity Connections brought together arts and culture constituents from throughout the community to

strategize shared goals and identify solutions to address them.



A major renovation to the Lincoln Center will help Fort Collins transform into a nationally-recognized arts and cultural destination.

CITY COLLABORATIONS IN ARTS AND CULTURE

City departments that collaborate to provide art and cultural programs and services, include:

- Public art
- Performing arts events
- Visual arts exhibitions
- Cultural and science exhibitions
- Educational programs, classes, and outreach
- Cultural planning

COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN ARTS AND CULTURE

In addition to working with artists, the City routinely partners with the following arts and culture organizations:

- Beet Street
- Bohemian Foundation
- Community Foundation
- Colorado State University
- Downtown Development Authority
- First Friday Gallery Walk
- Front Range Community College
- Poudre Landmark Foundation
- Poudre River Library District
- Poudre School District
- UniverCity Connections
- Uniquely Fort Collins Industry Cluster

WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES REMAIN?

Using arts and culture as an economic catalyst

Arts and culture could be further developed into a robust industry that contributes its own measures to the local economy and helps to attract and retain top talent and other creative class sectors. It will be important to measure positive economic and quality of life contributions of the arts, culture, and creative economy, and to communicate that information to the whole community.

Coordinating and funding of arts and culture organizations, programs, and facilities

Through UniverCity Connections and other initiatives, great strides have been made in arts and culture collaboration and coordination. The City also offers many festivals, fairs, and events that could be continued and enhanced. The challenge remains to continue to encourage an entrepreneurial approach and to find ways to sustain efforts and achieve specific objectives.

For arts and culture to remain successful, it will be important to improve operations, business, and fundraising acumen of artists and arts organizations. Finding and committing sustainable financial resources to support continued arts and culture programming, maintenance, and operations will be an ongoing challenge. The City's *Cultural Facilities Plan* states that the lack of facilities is stifling the growth of the arts in Fort Collins, therefore it is necessary to develop and resource such facilities. Funding future facilities will be an ongoing challenge. Considering funding mechanisms (e.g., Scientific and Cultural Facilities District) may be necessary.

Continuing to differentiate Fort Collins from its neighbors as an arts and culture destination

To be successful in its arts and economic endeavors, Fort Collins should continue to differentiate itself as a unique destination for entertainment, cultural, and intellectual pursuits and as the selected home for the creative class.

Designing for public spaces

Public spaces (e.g., streets, buildings, parks, plazas) and their design contribute to the

community's identity and image. They need to be designed for positive visual effect.

WHAT ARE THE CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS?

Arts and culture overlap with a number of other snapshot report topics. All great cities have strong arts and culture contributing to their livability, economic success, interest, and attractive appearance of parks and public places. Arts and culture promote learning, creativity, and pride, and are critical to attracting an educated workforce. Some of the cross-cutting arts and culture topics include:

- **Arts and Culture as a Community Value:** Supporting arts and culture as a community "way of life" and as an economic function (part of the Uniquely Fort Collins industry cluster) can also improve quality of life and education.
- **Local Arts/Public Places:** Developing further connections/integration of arts and cultural elements throughout the City, not just Downtown.
- **Arts Incorporated into Utilities/Facilities:** Increasing presence of artistic elements as part of utilities and renewable energy facilities.
- **Arts and Transportation:** Incorporating art into transportation corridors and facilities to make the journey as fun as the destination.
- **Partnerships/International** Integrating ethnic and international groups and forging stronger partnerships with Colorado State University and "sister" communities helps elevate awareness.
- **Youth in Arts:** Supporting arts activities which also give youth opportunities and outlets.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sources

- [Art in Public Places Program](#)
- [Americans for the Arts - Arts and Economic Prosperity Study \(2003 and 2007\)](#)
- [Beet Street Strategic Plan for 2010 and Beyond \(2009\)](#)
- [City of Fort Collins Cultural Plan \(2009\)](#)
- [City Plan \(1997 and 2004\)](#)
- [Colorado Council on the Arts - The State of Colorado's Creative Economy \(2008\)](#)
- [Larimer County Urban Area Street Standards \(2007\)](#)



Built Environment and Land Use

WHAT ARE THE CITY'S CURRENT VALUES?

The 1997 *City Plan* established guidance for shaping the look, feel, and function of neighborhoods, commercial centers, and employment areas. The overall aim is to continue building a distinctive city in which separate developments, streets, parks, and public works projects form a cohesive, integrated community. Fort Collins focuses development and growth within its designated urban growth area. Some of the main intentions are to protect sensitive natural resources and the regional landscape setting, encourage infill and redevelopment (inward revitalization), and make the most efficient use of public infrastructure. Supporting land uses are to be brought together in a development pattern designed to create a pleasant environment for walking and bicycling as well as vehicle travel. Within the overall development pattern, distinctive local design of buildings and streetscapes, thoughtful preservation of valuable historic resources, and incorporation of public art are key parts of the City's values related to the built environment. The City's values related to this topic are:

- Efficient, sustainable development pattern;
- Downtown as the vital center of the community;
- Other vibrant mixed-use activity centers;
- Safe and attractive neighborhoods with a mix of housing types and services;
- Connected neighborhoods and districts with convenient access to reduce travel distances;
- A balanced mix of housing and employment;
- Efficient and adequate public facilities and services;
- Preserved historic buildings and districts;
- High-quality design of streets, buildings, and places;
- Existing neighborhoods protected from incompatible change;
- Collaboration with the planning efforts of adjacent communities; and
- A complete connected transportation system and connected open lands throughout the community.



New development along Harmony Road integrates pedestrian amenities and demonstrates high quality design.



A FEW SELECT AWARDS SINCE 1997

- A Distinctive Dozen Destination—National Trust for Historic Preservation
- American Planning Association (APA) Colorado Chapter Award—*Community Engagement - The Plan Van*
- APAColorado Chapter Award—Community Service Project - *Development Review Guide*
- Colorado Governors Award for Downtown Excellence, Armstrong Hotel Rehabilitation
- Presidential Award—Preserve America, the highest National Historic Preservation Award
- APAColorado Chapter Award—Outstanding Planning Project - *East Mulberry Corridor Plan*
- State Honor Award, Colorado Preservation Inc. - *Preservation of the Historic Preston Farm*
- APAColorado Chapter Award—Outstanding Planning Project - *Northern Colorado Communities Separator Study*
- Governor's Award—Outstanding Efforts in Smart Growth and Development - *Fossil Creek Reservoir Plan and City Plan, Design Standards and Guidelines for Large Retail Establishments*
- APAColorado Chapter Award—Outstanding Planning Project - *City Plan*

WHAT HAS THE CITY ACCOMPLISHED?



This conceptual drawing of the Downtown Penny Flats development shows an attractive public realm with a mix of commercial and residential uses.

Since adoption of the 1997 *City Plan* and subsequent updates, the City has progressed towards implementing land use, urban design, and historic preservation policies. The main accomplishments are identified below.

Development Patterns and Land Use Mix/Growth Management

Developing land in Fort Collins more efficiently

Development since 1997 has become more efficient, helping to reduce reliance on growth on undeveloped or agricultural land for housing and employment. According to the *2007 City Plan Monitoring Project*, the overall average densities of new mixed-use neighborhood developments were approximately:

- 7.5 units per acre (150% of the City's requirement for a minimum of 5 units per acre in new low density mixed-use neighborhoods); and
- 18 units per acre (150% of the minimum required 12 units per acre in new medium density mixed-use neighborhoods).

- Redevelopment projects are becoming more common. Since 1997, 481 dwelling units and 240,000 square feet of non-residential infill development and redevelopment have occurred.
- Several large-scale development projects have achieved the desired mixed-use pattern, integrating retail shops, offices, and residences close together all within walking and biking distance of homes.

Distinct community destinations are emerging

Downtown continues to be a key regional destination for working, shopping and living. It attracts people—with its vibrant pedestrian environment, good transit connections, and attractive and historic buildings and streets. But other commercial areas also are becoming more distinct places along the lines described in *City Plan*. For example:

- Campus West is starting a transformation with a street that is safer and more inviting for pedestrians, with new buildings facing the street.
- The River District also is becoming more welcoming, with new, attractive buildings and investments in infrastructure upgrades.
- North College is attracting commercial and residential investment such as the North College Marketplace, Union Place, and Old Town North.

New neighborhoods providing more choices

New neighborhoods built since 1997, such as Harvest Park or Observatory Village, provide choices in housing and lifestyles.

- They contain multi-family and single-family housing, small parks, trail connections, and neighborhood services, like daycare.
- The neighborhoods have connected streets, like the downtown grid pattern, so that people can easily walk, bike, and drive.

Conserved significant natural features

By guiding new development to suitable locations, the community has conserved natural features. For example, Poudre Fire Authority Station #4 was developed away from Spring Creek and efforts are underway to restore natural features. (See the

Natural Areas, Parks, and Recreation Snapshot for information on natural areas acquisitions and restoration.)

Connected transportation and water corridors

City Plan in 1997 called for connected corridors. Transportation and water corridors are becoming important amenities within the community for multiple purposes. Two examples are:

- Mason Corridor, which will provide transportation options between destinations near College Avenue.
- McClellan Creek features restored habitat and a trail near several new neighborhoods.

Provision and Integration of Services

Providing adequate public facilities through new development

City Plan calls for adequate public facilities and infrastructure provided at the time of new development. For instance:

- The City's adequate public facilities requirements have prevented new developments from overburdening street infrastructure in the Mountain Vista Area.
- Private development helped to pay for the Timberline and Prospect Road intersection improvements.

Constructing and coordinating necessary community infrastructure improvements

The City has constructed large necessary infrastructure improvements such as the Howes Street and Oak Street Outfalls, as stormwater solutions to serious flooding problems in the Downtown. In addition, the City has been emphasizing utilities and transportation improvement project coordination to maximize efficiency.

Urban Design

Increasing attractive and functional public spaces

City Plan has fostered quality urban design and a strong sense of place. In response to the increasing number of interesting and inspiring design efforts, the City launched an urban design

awards program in 2006. The program raises awareness and spotlights some of the many creative additions in the City.

Thoughtful urban design is lending character to whole neighborhoods, building groupings, individual buildings, streetscapes, parks, plazas, public art and design touches as small as a railing around an outdoor cafe.

Improving design quality of new buildings

Buildings are being constructed with high quality materials and a more interesting, attractive design. In addition, the number of energy efficient "green" buildings is growing. Some examples include breweries, City buildings, new schools, new development along Harmony Road, In-Situ, and the Lofts at Magnolia.

Historic Preservation

Receiving national recognition for historic preservation efforts

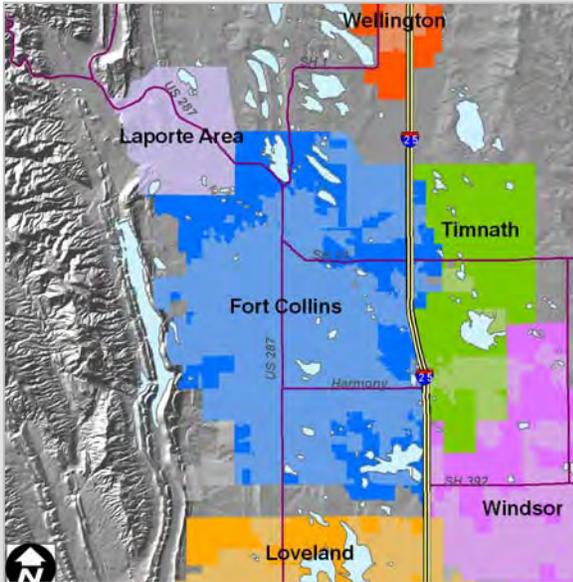
The historic preservation program has led to the protection of over 1,800 historic properties and has been key in the revitalization of Historic Old Town. Fort Collins has received state and national recognition for its outstanding efforts to preserve the historic heritage of the community.



Downtown Fort Collins is a big attraction for residents and visitors.

WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES REMAIN?

Since 1997, the City has made strides toward a more mixed-use pattern, higher quality of development, and historic preservation. However, more remains to be done to achieve these and other long-standing goals, as described below.



Communities near Fort Collins are growing, which poses new challenges to the City's growth management strategies.

Development Patterns and Land Use Mix/Growth Management

Addressing potential regional growth impacts

Fort Collins itself is limited in its outward expansion by neighboring communities and its Growth Management Area, yet the City is affected by growth in the region. The City can continue to be an attractive place to live and work. It will need to:

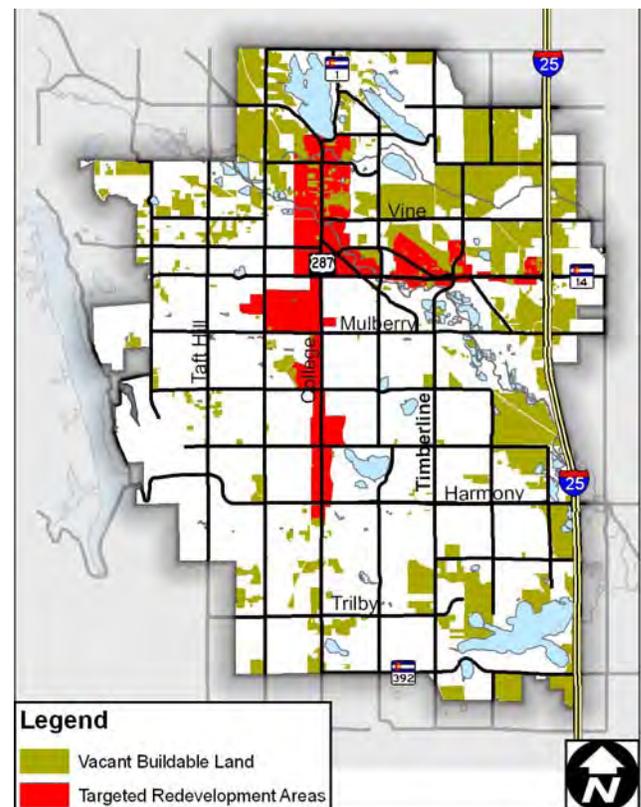
- Address demand for new housing and jobs.
- Seek ways to successfully work with neighbors to address effects of regional growth on transportation systems, utilities, community character, and quality of life, and jointly plan for transportation and land use.
- Maintain and enhance important regional natural areas or open space separators.

Positioning the City for desirable infill and redevelopment

The process of transforming places to a more desirable pattern takes time, effort, and a shifting of public opinion toward acceptance of infill, redevelopment, and slightly higher densities. Fort Collins desires infill and redevelopment in appropriate and viable locations. However, these types of projects are costly, may require significant utility and street upgrades, often face regulatory and financial barriers, and may face opposition from adjacent neighborhoods. Changes to the Code or incentives may be necessary to facilitate desirable projects.

Several infill trends are worth noting. First, many large retailers are moving from older spaces to new areas within and outside of the community, and the financial state of the retail industry is in flux, making the future uncertain. *Plan Fort Collins* should address how to occupy older spaces or redevelop them to prevent decline of older commercial areas. Sometimes appropriate transitional uses may be necessary until the ultimate vision can be achieved.

The Mid-Town redevelopment study is looking at options for the area around the Foothills Mall.



Vacant land and targeted redevelopment areas.

Defining how neighborhoods will accommodate future population and lifestyle shifts

While many of the future housing needs will be met by the existing housing stock, the types of neighborhoods in place today (largely single-family homes) may not be what an aging and diversifying population will need in the future. The City will need to define whether or how neighborhoods should be allowed to change to accommodate demographic shifts, value changes, and changing lifestyles. Keeping pace with material and technological change in design and configuration of buildings is another issue to consider.

Addressing limited transit links to and from activity centers

The options for people to move to and from activity centers are limited due to the lack of complete transit connections. *City Plan* and the *Transportation Master Plan* updates will need to be closely coordinated to address priority transit connections. (See the Transportation Snapshot.)

Maintaining a balance of jobs-and-housing and land for future jobs and employment

The City has traditionally seen strong market pressure to use vacant employment land for housing or retail uses, which may occur again when the housing market gains momentum. However, a reduction in planned or zoned employment land may mean insufficient land to accommodate future job growth. Targeted industries, which are clusters of a type of businesses most likely to be attracted to Fort Collins (like biosciences and clean energy) have particular site needs. It will be important to protect suitable vacant sites and ensure adequate public facilities to accommodate such industries.

Provision and Integration of Services

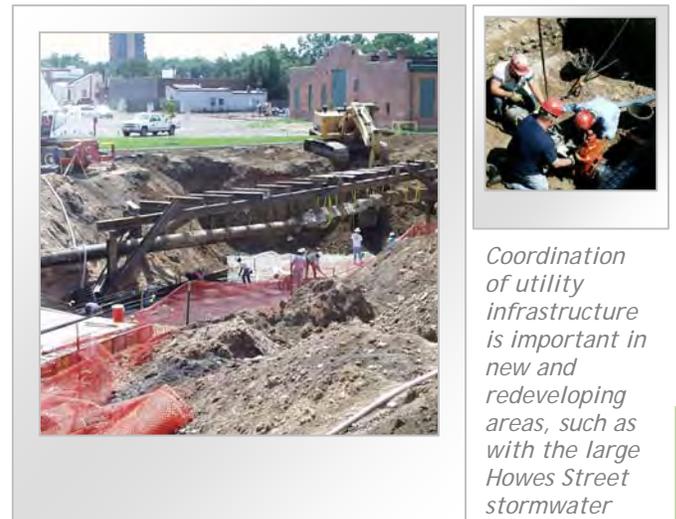
Addressing infrastructure needs for parts of the City with older or substandard infrastructure

The City will need to continue to address the demands on aging infrastructure in older areas, particularly as infill and redevelopment occurs.

Continuing coordination, integration, and expansion of utilities

As new development occurs, the City will need to address the following issues related to utilities:

- Balance the community desire for higher density urban development with the need for safe, reliable, and maintainable utility service lines in constricted rights-of-way.
- Jointly address potentially conflicting goals of reducing stormwater pollution caused by impervious (hard) surfaces and promoting higher density urban areas.
- Find opportunities for transitional or small businesses that do not trigger requirements for extensive upgrades to nearby streets, stormwater facilities, and utilities. The costs for these upgrades have been out of reach for many businesses, leading to vacant buildings.
- Consider the trend toward renewable energy and distributed generation and its affect on land use patterns and urban design.
- Address appropriate land uses for flood prone areas, especially along the Poudre River near Old Town.
- Find potential opportunities in the urban area for enhanced natural corridors that can serve multiple purposes: flood protection, recreation, and habitat protection (e.g., Soldier Creek, Boxelder Creek, and Cooper Slough).
- Address increased water demands related to new development while maintaining drought protection for the entire city.



Coordination of utility infrastructure is important in new and redeveloping areas, such as with the large Howes Street stormwater project.

Urban Design

Continuing appropriate renewal of Downtown

An important issue for Downtown is the need to balance preservation of the character, provision of utilities, and accommodation of new growth for sustained vitality.

Increasing activity along the street for people

The city encourages places with active street fronts and walkable connections. Some challenges are:

- New retailers generally prefer large and individual parking lots for each building pad, with wide separation between buildings and the street. While optimal for drive-in business, these types of places are generally not pleasant walking environments and often have a character that could be anywhere (i.e., not unique to Fort Collins).
- Despite all the attention to design (such as landscaping, detached sidewalks, and bike lanes), arterial streets are not always attractive to pedestrians.

Determining appropriate height for buildings

Sustainable, efficient infill and redevelopment poses questions and controversy about appropriate height limits for new taller buildings throughout the city and along I-25.

Defining gateways that help distinguish Fort Collins from surrounding communities

Fort Collins' gateways are being redefined by growth in adjacent communities, particularly along I-25. To maintain its uniqueness and sense of identity, gateways and corridor definition will be important.

Historic Preservation

Reconciling "change" and "preservation" within historic neighborhoods

Fort Collins, like many maturing communities, aims to reconcile the desires for development and change with preservation of historic buildings and the desired character, or "feel," of community and neighborhoods (e.g., scrape offs, pop-ups, and demolition through attrition). *Plan Fort Collins* is an opportunity to define appropriate types and places for change in neighborhoods and preservation.

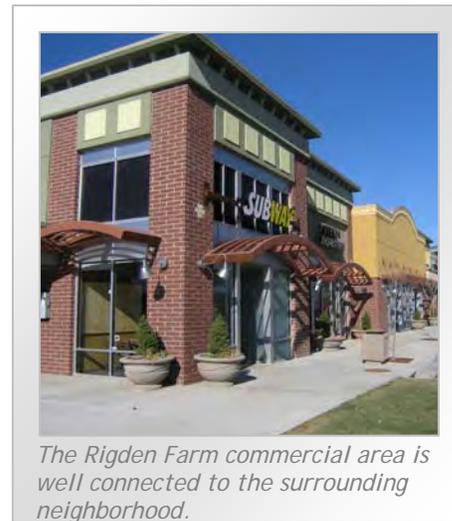
Balancing new commercial development in historic Old Town

A similar challenge exists with balancing commercial redevelopment in the Old Town commercial area, and the protection of nearby historic buildings.

WHAT ARE THE CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS?

The built environment and land use has many interconnections with the city's broader sustainability goals to balance human, financial, and environmental aspects over the long-term. The following are specific linked topics:

- **Neighborhood Functions:** Fostering programs that contribute to sustainability in neighborhoods, such as food production and urban agriculture, energy production and conservation, and water quality improvements.
- **Sustainable Infrastructure:** Providing a more fiscally and environmentally sound system of maintaining community infrastructure.
- **Efficient Mobility:** Providing choices for travel to reduce auto-dependency, greenhouse gas emissions, and to improve air quality.
- **Green Streets:** Building streets for stormwater drainage, and multiple types of transportation (car, bike, and pedestrian) and
- **Land Use and Green Technology:** Developing land use policies that support new technologies (e.g., green building, alternative energy development, smart metering, and design for electric and other vehicles of the future).



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sources

- City Plan (1997, 2004).
- Advance Planning website (subarea plans).
- City Plan Monitoring Project, Biennial Indicator Report, 1997-2007 (2009).



Environment and Utilities

WHAT ARE CITY VALUES?

The City of Fort Collins has led the way in innovative and sustainable environmental quality and utilities programs for decades, beginning with drinking water, watershed, and water conservation plans in the late 1980s; energy policies in the 1990s (updated in 2003 and 2009); and air quality and emissions policies in the early 1990s. In 1999, Fort Collins was among the first communities in the nation to develop a community-wide carbon reduction goal. It developed an *Action Plan for Sustainability* (2004, updated in 2007), and began climate action planning in the late 1990s, culminating most recently with the 2008 *Climate Action Plan*. More recently, the City is focusing on green building standards and programs.

The 1997 *City Plan* and 2004 update included only limited discussion of utilities and their relationship to land use, growth, transportation, and other environment and natural resources topics. *Plan Fort Collins* will seek ways to link topics and present policies through a more systems-based approach that will help manage resources, and address growth efficiently and economically, as well as protect environmental quality. The City's current values related to environmental quality and utilities are identified below:

Water

- High-quality drinking water
- Managing watersheds and water resources (balancing drought protection and conservation)

Wastewater

- Water reclamation that meets or exceeds regulatory requirements

Stormwater

- Life safety protection for people and reduction of damage to structures due to flooding
- Quality streams, rivers, and water resources

Electric Service/Energy and Green Building

- Safe, reliable, competitive electric service
- Energy-efficiency, renewable energy, carbon neutral energy
- Green building

Recycling and Solid Waste Management

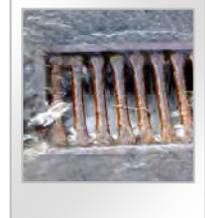
- Waste reduction and waste stream diversion (recycling and composting)
- Management of hazardous materials

Air, Emissions, and Climate Protection

- Improved air quality
- Climate protection

Sustainability and Performance

- Serving as a leader in environmental performance and sustainability in daily operations and actions
- Leveraging economic benefits of sustainability and engaging people
- Community education for all above programs



Fort Collins provides high quality utilities to businesses and residents, including water, wastewater, stormwater, and electricity.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

The City partners with organizations with similar sustainable development, utilities, energy, and environment goals, including:

- Poudre School District (award-winning green building, Sustainability Management System);
- Colorado State University (recognized internationally for pioneering clean and renewable energy technologies);
- Climate Wise partners (publicly committing to voluntarily reduce greenhouse gas emissions);
- The Northern Colorado Clean Energy cluster (a public/private sector partnership);
- Community non-profit organizations;
- UniverCity Connections;
- Businesses practicing sustainability; and
- Platte River Power Authority (PRPA).

WHAT HAS THE CITY ACCOMPLISHED?



The Cache la Poudre River, one of the two water sources for drinking water supply in Fort Collins. (Photo by Nicki Bensley)

Two City departments (Natural Resources and Utilities) carry out environmental and utilities planning and programs. They have made strides over the years related to air quality, natural areas, recycling and solid waste, environmental planning and information, climate protection, water, stormwater, wastewater, and electricity. Accomplishments are summarized below.

Water Resources

Maintained high quality drinking water

The City's *Drinking Water Quality Policy*, adopted in 1993, provides guidance for the provision of water service that meets or exceeds customer expectations for quality, quantity, and reliability.

Drinking water quality is managed through:

- Pro-active monitoring and testing,
- Protecting, developing, and preserving water resources,
- Advancing treatment technology and operations,
- Operating and maintaining the water distribution system,
- Assuring the quality of water service,
- Coordinating drinking water and wastewater treatment management,

- Cooperating with other water providers and users, and
- Annual reporting.

Provided watershed protection

Fort Collins drinking water comes from two watersheds (the Cache la Poudre River and Colorado-Big Thompson watersheds), both with active watershed monitoring programs, dating from the 1980s. The City manages the watersheds to minimize negative impacts to the quality of the waters from activities on land and water. The City has been a member of the Big Thompson Watershed Forum and participated in the Poudre River collaboration.

Established water supply and drought protection goals

The *Water Supply and Demand Management Policy*, adopted in 2003, establishes guidelines for water conservation goals. It provides general criteria for decisions regarding water supply and storage projects, acquisition of water rights and demand management measures. It addresses:

- Drought protection to meet at least a "One-in-50-year" drought event, and
- Management of the City's supplies to meet drinking water demands and other obligations.

Achieving water conservation

The updated *Water Conservation Plan* details the measures, costs, and benefits of conservation. Since the 1990s, the City has completed installation of system-wide water metering, resulting in significant reduction of water use, prior to the 2002-2003 drought period. Other conservation measures include:

- Indoor and outdoor efficiency programs;
- Xeriscape demonstration and programs;
- Irrigation standards;
- Leak detection; and
- Customer education.

Wastewater

Water reclamation facilities operate at high level

The City operates two facilities, the Drake and Mulberry Water Reclamation Facilities, to clean and treat wastewater to remove contaminants before returning water to the environment.

- Major renovations of the Mulberry facility are currently underway.

- Wastewater treatment facilities produce about 1,900 dry tons of biosolids each year, which are applied to the 26,000-acre Meadow Springs Ranch north of Fort Collins to reduce waste and improve crop production.
- The City's Pollution Control Laboratory ensures that treated wastewater meets requirements of the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permits.



Mulberry Water Reclamation facility under construction.

Stormwater

Stormwater has accomplished numerous programs, plans and policies over the years—too many to cite here. A few key accomplishments are listed below.

Restored streams

A goal for restoration of stream corridors is to restore 21 miles of streams by 2035. As of 2009, the City has restored approximately 5.9 miles. All City urban stream corridor reaches have been inventoried and rated using physical and biological parameters to monitor and improve stream health.

Using Low Impact Development and Best Management Practice techniques

Low Impact Development (L.I.D.) is an innovative/comprehensive approach to stormwater management that is modeled after nature. It uses design techniques to infiltrate, filter, store, evaporate, and detain runoff close to its source. It does not treat stormwater as “waste” to be piped away, but as another natural resource. The City has completed three L.I.D. demonstration projects and a monitoring and sampling program to test water quality. 20% of developed properties are treated with a Stormwater Best Management Practice (BMP), with a goal of 100% of all new or

redeveloped properties by 2035 (in *21st Century Goals*).

Mitigated flooding and removed structures from floodplains and protection of water quality

Floodplain mapping was updated in 2003 along with regulations. In the future, stormwater master plans will use the triple bottom line approach to analyze the best solution to mitigate flooding hazards, and maintain the high Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) Community Rating System (CRS) Class 4 rating. Since 1997, approximately 2,585 structures have been removed from the floodplain. Substantial investment has occurred in Downtown (e.g., Oak Street flood mitigation project).

Electric Service / Energy

Providing reliable, cost-effective electric service

Years before the first Electric Energy Supply Policy, Light and Power established a distribution system undergrounding program to ensure electric reliability. Completed in 2009, the underground distribution system and high standards for construction and maintenance of the system produce enviable reliability for customers, who seldom experience an outage. When outages occur, they are brief in duration. The 2009 *Energy Policy* continues to focus on cost-effective, reliable electricity service for homes, schools and businesses.

Recycling and Solid Waste Management

Continuing to reduce landfill waste

Fort Collins' efforts at waste reduction, recycling, and promoting reuse began to come into focus in the 1990's, when estimates put levels of waste diversion at 17-20%. As programs have been launched, developed, and refined, including 1995's cornerstone Pay-as-you-Throw ordinance for trash fees, data collection capability has also improved. In 2009, the community diversion rate measured 38%, as reported by Natural Resources Department staff (measured using the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) methodology for solid waste diversion). Accurate measurements are inherently difficult, in some cases due to lack of local data.

The City also offers many waste diversion programs, such as a leaf exchange, sofa round-up, waste vegetable drop-off, Christmas tree drop-off, a full service drop-off center, and a second glass only

drop off. Many more programs are noted on the City's website.

Providing management of hazardous materials

The City has ongoing programs to prevent and abate hazardous materials, including illegal or improper pollution to the City's stormwater system and to educate, monitor, and manage the use of hazardous materials in City operations.

Air, Emissions, and Climate Protection

Improved air quality

Since 1994, the City's over-arching air quality goal has been to continually improve air quality even as the City grows. Recognizing that good environmental quality positively affects public health, economic viability, and overall quality of life, Fort Collins has set the bar higher than the minimum compliance requirements, seeking continual improvement. Fort Collins has come into compliance with federal carbon monoxide standards, officially recognized in the *Carbon Monoxide Maintenance Plan* (2002), and maintains compliance with standards for particulate matter.

Increased climate protection

In 2008, City Council updated the carbon reduction goals and plan. The 2008 *Climate Action Plan* (CAP) sets forth community carbon reduction goals to reduce community-wide greenhouse gas emissions by 20% below 2005 levels by 2020 and 80% by 2050. It relies on strategies important to achieving multiple City values, including economic vitality, green building, sustainable land use planning, and transportation programs.

- The CAP program grew from 13 partners in 2000 to over 180 in 2009 and surpassed its 2010 reduction goal in 2008 by avoiding over 100,000 tons carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) emissions in 2008.
- CAP goals align with those of the Fort Collins Utilities, Platte River Power Authority, the state of Colorado, and other City policies.
- Fort Collins community greenhouse gas emissions dropped 0.7% below 2005 levels in 2008, despite a 5.5% growth in population. Per capita carbon emission dropped 6% over the same time period. This progress can be attributed in part to forward-thinking energy and waste reduction policies and *Climate Wise*.
- Ongoing support of the City's *Climate Wise* program helps community businesses develop

and report on carbon reduction strategies. The program represents the City's top employers (representing more than 20,000 employees) and the City's top energy users (representing approximately one third of Fort Collins Utilities' total annual electricity delivered).

- Annual cost savings for the *Climate Wise* partners exceeded \$7.2 million in 2008 alone. Since the program's inception, cumulative savings to partners are nearly \$24.4 million.



Climate Wise is a Free, Voluntary Outreach Program

The program is dedicated to helping organizations reduce greenhouse gas emissions and save money. In 2006, the program organized and collaborated with the *Climate Wise Advisory Committee* to develop a tiered performance structure of bronze through platinum levels—the higher the level the more recognition they receive as a leader in the community. The program provides the following support:

- Customized solutions for waste reduction, energy savings, transportation, and water conservation
- Green Team development assistance
- Employee education and engagement
- Seminars, workshops, and educational tours
- Tools and resources for project/greenhouse gas savings (Greenhouse gas baseline tool)
- Partner List Serv and myClimateWise database



City Sustainability and Environmental Policy

Following the *Action Plan for Sustainability*

In 2004, the City developed the *Action Plan for Sustainability* for internal operations, which set specific numeric reduction goals for greenhouse gases, energy, transportation, waste, water, native vegetation, purchasing, and employee wellness. The City is tracking and reporting its progress:

- Carbon emissions from the municipal organization are leveling off from 2005 to 2009.
- The City has reduced its electric use by 3% from 2005 to 2009.
- A third of the trash collection sites managed by Operation Services were downsized.

WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES REMAIN?

Water Quality Management

Managing watersheds and drinking water quality

Major water projects and operational changes could potentially affect the City's management of water quality. Proposed water supply transfers to Horsetooth Reservoir and the construction of a second Horsetooth Reservoir outlet structure are two such projects. The City still has concerns and questions about the Northern Integrated Supply Project (NISP) (or the Glade Reservoir) and its impacts on the water treatment facility and to the Poudre River and habitat.

City Utilities also continues to focus on raw water quality, because source watersheds are under various human and environmental pressures. For instance, pine beetle deforestation, wildfires, climate change, and invasive mussels potentially challenge management of the source water quality.

Addressing water quality potentially affected by water conservation is another issue. When less water gets distributed through the system, it takes more time for water to get from the treatment plant to the tap. This creates potential concerns over water quality in the distribution system related to reduced demand for water because of water conservation.

Balancing water resource planning and drought protection objectives

The City and region is facing increased competition for regional water supplies. The City recognizes public concerns and permitting challenges related to balancing drought protection and building water storage. In addition, increasing water system regionalization will require ongoing planning and coordination.

Meeting or exceeding regulatory requirements for water reclamation

Federal and state standards continue to get more challenging for water reclamation. The City will need to continue to respond to and meet standards.

Stormwater

Continuing stream restoration

The City will continue to restore the additional 15+ miles of streams identified in the *21st Century Goals*. Elements of urban runoff, and treated effluent are now believed to cause problems for aquatic life. New types and higher level of water quality treatment may be required to achieve desired levels of stream restoration.



Denver's Stapleton stormwater facility is an example of a regional stormwater/water quality management approach for infill and redevelopment in urban areas.

Addressing stormwater treatment in infill development areas

Development sites, especially infill and redevelopment projects, are often complicated by stormwater management requirements. On-site stormwater requirements may conflict with the goals of compact development. Regional stormwater strategies may be necessary to address stormwater runoff produced by compact development and infill projects.

Meeting more stringent criteria for acceptable quality and quantity of stormwater

The pollution of streams and rivers in urban areas is a growing concern. The City must comply with state and federal regulations for stormwater runoff, which are becoming more stringent. In response, it has been developing new standards, to improve the requirements for construction sites to provide sediment and erosion control. The City is evaluating

the practice of Low Impact Development (L.I.D.) to address urban runoff in pilot projects across town. (See L.I.D. description in the “accomplishments” section.)

Coordinating utilities, other City departments, other organizations, and public input

To ensure adequate stormwater treatment, fulfillment of multiple purposes, and achieving the triple bottom line philosophy, the Utilities stormwater division will need to continue coordination with other jurisdictions, homeowners and businesses to prevent water pollution and address water quality and volume of water. Community education about materials that may harm water quality may be a future component of stormwater programs.

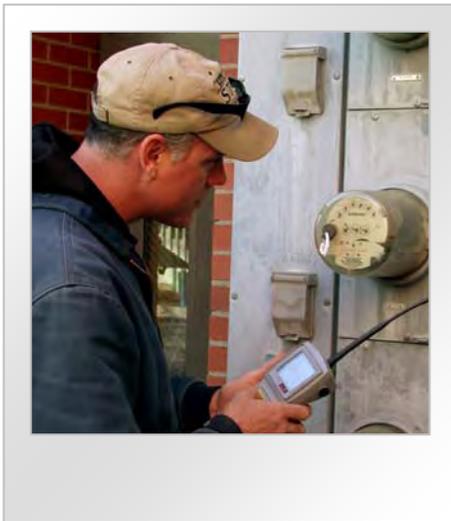
Energy and Electricity

Responding to uncertainty of carbon legislation

The likelihood and details of carbon legislation at the federal level, to reduce energy-related green house gas emissions, are still undefined. The uncertainty of the costs of such programs makes it difficult to evaluate the real value of programs and projects.

Increasing energy security

As the electrical system is modernized and information technology is integrated with the system, City Utilities will need to reduce chances of cyber-attack as well as physical system sabotage.



The workforce will need to be prepared to deal with new utility technologies.

Adapting to new electric system technology

As new technologies are introduced and as the City modernizes its infrastructure, retraining the existing workforce is going to be critical for future success.

In addition, as the existing workforce approaches retirement, new engineers and technicians will need to be trained to replace them. Building interest and momentum to attract new engineers and technicians is critical.

In addition, the integration of more renewable energy into the electrical distribution system will require new technologies, skills, and business models. As the most obvious and cost-effective energy efficiency projects are accomplished, the City will need to develop new and innovative energy efficiency programs to achieve *Energy Policy* goals. As management of the electric load becomes more decentralized with new technologies, the City may also need to address customer privacy issues.

Committing to green building

The 2007 *Roadmap for Coordinated and Enhanced Green Building Services* outlines a vision for creating a sustainable built environment using a combination of incentives, recognition and regulations. Development and implementation of an effective *Green Building Program* by 2011 will require participation and collaboration with a wide range of stakeholders, development of metrics, development of quantifiable goals and objectives, and ongoing evaluation.

Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction

Reducing solid waste and diversion from landfill

Waste diversion opportunities for commercial generators are largely untapped, and strategies to involve this sector are strategic City “next steps.” Larimer County landfill waste profiles show that organics and construction/demolition debris make up a large portion of the waste stream, and that a surprisingly large amount of paper goods (e.g., cardboard) still enters the landfill. Programs that target specific materials may be a valuable approach for the City to consider. Reaching the next levels of waste diversion (including a goal set in 1999 for 50% waste diversion by 2010) requires fundamental changes in source reduction and shifts in consumer behavior.

Managing hazardous materials

Managing household hazardous materials requires:

- Hosting household hazardous waste collection events for the community to ensure proper recycling and disposal;

- Collaborating with Larimer County to provide hazardous materials recycling opportunities in the community;
- Developing internal processes and systems to reduce and manage hazardous materials generated from City operations; and
- Staying abreast of changing hazardous waste regulations.

Air, Emissions, and Climate Protection



A sampling of City environmental programs.

Meeting higher state and federal air quality standards

The City will continually strive to meet air quality standards, but standards are getting more rigorous.

- The current 8-hour ozone standard set in 2008 is rigorous, and if the standard is tightened further to protect health, as Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has proposed, this will pose additional challenges.
- The EPA is currently reviewing federal health standards for ozone, nitrogen dioxide and sulfur dioxide to determine if they adequately protect public health. All standards may be strengthened, leading to improved air quality, increased control cost, and decreased public health costs.

Achieving climate protection goals

Climate change may have impacts on water and other resources. Over time, rising temperatures and other impacts of climate change may also contribute to elevated concentrations of ground-level ozone and particulates. Climate adaptation plans address these issues. Meeting the *Climate Action Plan* goal to reduce communitywide greenhouse gas emissions 20% below 2005 levels by 2020 looms as the population grows. The City

has a list of future actions, including implementation of the 2009 *Energy Policy*, to guide progress.

Meeting sustainability and environmental policies for City operations

For the City to function efficiently and meet its sustainability goals for internal operations, it will need to address several challenges including but not limited to:

- Departments or programs with cross-cutting purposes that currently function independently;
- Accountability and performance goals tied to sustainability and carbon budgets for service areas;
- Developing a culture of sustainability; and
- Developing partnerships with other community organizations and businesses.

WHAT ARE THE CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS?

This snapshot contains a number of topics that are linked with other service areas. For instance, a healthy environment, efficient use of resources and a sound supporting utility infrastructure are highly interrelated with a number of the City's human, financial, and environmental sustainability goals. Environmental stewardship, for example, is related to the City's built environment, such as energy, water, and resource use in new and existing buildings and homes, as well as stewardship of streams and open lands in the natural environment. Reducing the City's carbon footprint is closely linked with both the built environment and transportation. Some of the cross-cutting topics related to environment and utilities include:

- **Environmental/Economic Dual Purpose Programs:** The City's environmental programs, goals, and policies often serve the dual purpose of improving the environment and the long-term economic health and resilience of the community. For example, *Climate Wise* helps businesses reduce their environmental footprint, while at the same time, helping them to save money on their day-to-day operations.
- **Water:** Managing water use efficiency and water quality can meet the needs of a growing population as well as have positive impacts on the City's natural resources, local agriculture and food production, urban forest, recreation use, health, and aquatic habitat.

- **Energy Policies:** Increasing energy efficiency and integrating renewable energy and smart grid technologies into the energy system to help reduce carbon emissions can benefit Fort Collins residents and save money.
- **Waste Reduction and Composting:** Working toward greater solid waste diversion and hazardous waste reduction goals to conserve landfill space, protect community health, and use resources more efficiently. Promoting yard waste composting, which also benefits local crop production and reduces landfill waste.
- **Urban Forestry:** Managing and planting new trees on streets and in public spaces helps with stormwater management, clean water and air, aesthetics, shade and cooling.
- **Carbon Emission Reduction:** Reducing carbon emissions by vehicles and buildings while adapting to a changing climate in the natural and built environment. Many of the above topics address carbon emission reduction.

Water Act to regulate discharge of pollutants to water bodies.

- **NISP:** Northern Integrated Supply Project, a proposed water storage project in Northern Colorado.
- **Organics:** Organic matter in solid waste that can be composted.
- **Raw water:** Water that has not been treated for human consumption.
- **Renewable energy:** Energy produced by solar, wind, biomass, or other renewable energy sources.
- **Source reduction:** Reducing the generation of hazardous or solid waste.
- **Waste Diversion:** The amount or percentage of solid waste diverted from landfills through recycling, composting, reuse, or other means.
- **Watershed:** A large area that drains snowmelt and rainfall.
- **Xeriscape:** Landscaping and gardening in ways that reduce or eliminate the need for supplemental irrigation.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Utilities and Environment Definitions

The following definitions are provided to assist the reader with some of the technical terms in this Snapshot topic:

- **Biosolids:** Byproducts of domestic and commercial wastewater treatment.
- **Carbon Dioxide Equivalent (CO₂e):** The contribution of greenhouse gases emitted other than carbon dioxide, expressed in equivalent units of carbon dioxide.
- **Carbon/Greenhouse Gas:** Gases such as carbon dioxide that accumulate in the atmosphere and contribute to climate change.
- **Electric load:** Power demand on an electrical system.
- **Federal Emergency Management Act (FEMA) Community Rating System (CRS).** A voluntary incentive program that recognizes and encourages community floodplain management activities that exceed minimum National Flood Insurance Program requirements.
- **Green Building:** The practice of constructing buildings that are more energy, material, and resource efficient and that are healthier for building occupants.
- **National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System:** A program under the federal Clean

Sources

- Action Plan for Sustainability (2004)
- Air Quality Plan (2004)
- Carbon Monoxide Maintenance Plan (2002)
- Carbon reduction goal (1999 and 2008)
- Climate Action Plan (2008)
- Climate Wise Program (ongoing)
- Energy Policy (2003 and 2009)
- Drinking Water Quality Policy (1993)
- Water Supply and Demand Management Policy (2003)
- Water Conservation Plan (updated 2009)
- Roadmap for Coordinated and Enhanced Green Building Services (2007)



Finance and Economy

WHAT ARE THE CITY'S CURRENT VALUES?

Economy

Today's local and national economic climate is quite different than when *City Plan* was first adopted in 1997. At that time, the City's primary economic strategy emphasized overall quality of life, including a strong sense of community and quality infrastructure.

In 2000 and 2001, the telecommunications and information technology downturn triggered a contraction of electronics manufacturing and technology jobs in the city. In 2004, Fort Collins began to experience a contraction in its dominance as the primary regional commercial and retail center as neighboring communities reached a size sufficient to attract a broader range of retail and commercial activities.

In 2005, and as a result of these economic changes and a desire to articulate economic values that fit Fort Collins, City Council adopted an *Economic Vision and Values* statement. The statement describes a vision of a healthy economy for the unique Fort Collins community in a changing world. This vision led to four primary Economic Health Strategies, which remain relevant today. These four strategies are the City's economic health values:

- A balanced and targeted approach to business retention, expansion, incubation and attraction;
- A proactive role of the City in supporting the economic health of the community;
- Partnership building with local and regional organizations and the private sector to further enhance economic health; and
- Diversifying the local economy by focusing on new job creation, leveraging the unique Fort Collins brand, and evaluating opportunities for diversifying the City's revenue sources.



In 2009 Forbes magazine rated the Fort Collins metropolitan area as the second best for business and careers.

Finance

The same economic shifts leading to the adoption of the Economic Vision also impacted the City's budget. In 2005, the City determined that its budget system focused on short-term fixes to respond to economic downturns (such as spending down reserves, freezing employee wages, and not filling vacant positions), instead of longer term solutions. Thus, the Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO) approach was used to develop the 2006/07 budget. Values related to the City's budgeting process include:

- Clarity about the overall budget process for the community;
- Allocation of revenues to the highest priorities and outcomes citizens want and need;
- A clear understanding of choices for funding programs and services; and
- Emphasis on staff accountability, efficiency, innovation, and partnerships.

WHAT HAS THE CITY ACCOMPLISHED?

The City is actively investing more staff time, resources, and policy deliberation to create a community where businesses can succeed in a way that fits community values. The past five years have resulted in numerous accomplishments as a result of the City's shift towards a more holistic economic health vision and strategy. These accomplishments are noted below.

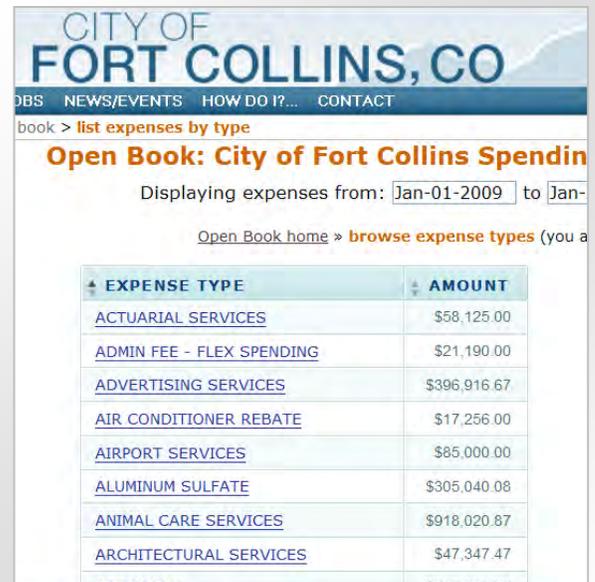
Transformed the City's budgeting process and forecasting model, and opened books to the public

The Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO) process has aligned the City budget to address community issues and has created greater transparency about the City budgeting process for decision makers, citizens, businesses, and interest groups. The intent of BFO is to focus attention on achieving results the community desires, and assess willingness of the public to pay for those services. BFO has also provided direction for organizational transformation, economic health activities, and new policies (such as the Title 32 Metropolitan District and Urban Renewal designations). The current BFO key results areas include:

- Cultural and Recreational Opportunities, Economic Health,
- Environmental Health,
- High Performing Government,
- Neighborhood Livability,
- Safe Community, and
- Transportation.

In 2007, the City updated and refined its revenue forecasting model. The previous model relied on state-wide data that did not accurately reflect the changing conditions in our local community. The new model accounts for sales activity in Loveland and Windsor and shifts in the City's sales mix. The refined model has help project City revenues more accurately.

Additionally, the City of Fort Collins is among the first in the nation to offer the Open Book tool, an easy to use, yet detailed account of the City's spending records and expenses.



The screenshot shows the City of Fort Collins Open Book website. The header includes the city name and navigation links for JOBS, NEWS/EVENTS, HOW DO I?... and CONTACT. Below the header, there is a breadcrumb trail: book > list expenses by type. The main heading is "Open Book: City of Fort Collins Spending". Below this, it says "Displaying expenses from: Jan-01-2009 to Jan-". There is a link for "Open Book home" and another for "browse expense types (you a". The main content is a table with two columns: EXPENSE TYPE and AMOUNT. The table lists various expense categories and their corresponding amounts.

EXPENSE TYPE	AMOUNT
ACTUARIAL SERVICES	\$58,125.00
ADMIN FEE - FLEX SPENDING	\$21,190.00
ADVERTISING SERVICES	\$396,916.67
AIR CONDITIONER REBATE	\$17,256.00
AIRPORT SERVICES	\$85,000.00
ALUMINUM SULFATE	\$305,040.08
ANIMAL CARE SERVICES	\$918,020.87
ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES	\$47,347.47
ART WORK	\$916,916.67

The City's new online open book tool allows residents to view the City's spending records.

Coordinated efforts to attract target industries and employers

In 2006, the City completed a detailed Target Industry Cluster Analysis of the existing employment base. The study identified six key primary industry clusters for the City to target, which have evolved into five industry clusters that represent the future economic base of the community, including:

- Chip Design;
- Bio Science;
- Clean Energy;
- Software; and
- Uniquely Fort Collins (including arts, cultural, tourism, breweries, creative firms and hospitality businesses).

Clean water technology is another emerging industry sector.

The City and Colorado State University (CSU) have partnered and coordinated efforts on the City's Targeted Industry Clusters and the related Superclusters initiatives at CSU. As a result, several companies have developed around technologies spinning out of CSU. Beginning in 2009, several companies have considered relocating to Fort Collins because of the partnership.

Rocky Mountain Innovation Initiative, or RMI2, (originally the Fort Collins Technology Incubator program launched in 1998) has evolved from its original program to a 501(c)3 non-profit organization with an expanded mission and regional focus. A brand new 30,000 square foot facility for the organization will be completed in 2010.

Since 1999, RMI2 has:

- Produced 162 high-wage jobs,
- Generated \$53 million in investment and grants, and
- Created numerous programs and services for entrepreneurs.



The Uniquely Fort Collins industry cluster includes businesses that differentiate Fort Collins from other places, such as breweries.

According to attraction and expansion data reported by the Northern Colorado Economic Development Corporation (NCEDC), companies who have recently expanded or located in Fort Collins include:

- English Language Institute of China,
- Enterprise Rent-a-Car Claim Center,
- Pelco,
- Spirae,
- Technigraphic Systems, and
- Custom Blending.



Coordination with Colorado State University has helped the City attract targeted industries, such as clean energy and bioscience.

Developed and utilized tools to spur investment and assist businesses

The Fort Collins Urban Renewal Authority and Downtown Development Authority have both leveraged tax increment financing (TIF) to assist numerous projects. The result has been significant investment in both the Downtown area the North College Urban Renewal Area.

The Economic Health team has worked with regional partners to develop a Business Innovation Model that provides assistance to businesses regardless of their size and lifecycle stage. The model encompasses all aspects of regional job creation, and links businesses with the appropriate lead agency and useful resources.

While the economic conditions of recent years have been challenging, Fort Collins has generally fared better than the national unemployment rate. The trends since 2003 related to the City's rates of employment and unemployment are presented in Figures 1 and 2.

FIGURE 1: FORT COLLINS EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Source: US Bureau of Labor and Statistics

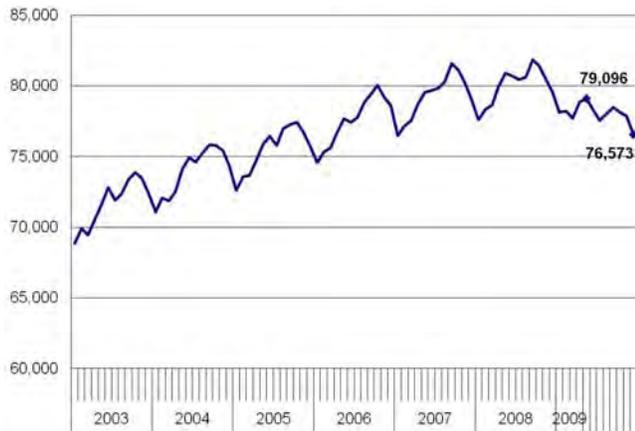


FIGURE 2: UNEMPLOYMENT TRENDS

Source: US Bureau of Labor and Statistics



COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN ECONOMIC HEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The City is assisted in its economic health and development efforts by many local and regional organizations, including:

- Colorado State University
- Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB)
- Downtown Business Association (DBA)
- Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce
- Innovation Economy Cluster
- Larimer Bioscience Cluster
- Larimer County
- Northern Colorado Be Local
- Northern Colorado Clean Energy Cluster
- Northern Colorado Economic Development Corporation (NCEDC)
- Northern Colorado Entrepreneurship Network
- Rocky Mountain Innovation Initiative (RMI2)
- Software Cluster
- State of Colorado
- Uniquely Fort Collins Cluster
- UniverCity Connections
- Urban Renewal Authority



CURRENT CITY ECONOMIC FACTS

(FROM THE MIDTOWN COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR STUDY)

- Median family income is \$72,200 (for a family of four).
- Approximately 48.2% of the population have completed four or more years of college. The Larimer County unemployment rate is 6.1% (December 2009).
- The City/State has a combined sales tax rate of 6.7%
- The City sales tax rate of 3.0% is among the lowest in Colorado.
- The residential property tax rate is 7.96%.
- The business property tax rate is 29%.
- The City's adopted biennial budget totals \$499.1 million for 2010 and \$497.9 for 2011.

WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES REMAIN?

Despite significant forward progress in the past five years, the City of Fort Collins still faces numerous challenges to achieving a well-balanced, diversified, and healthy economy, as noted below.

Responding to regional retail and employment competition

Communities adjacent to Fort Collins will continue to grow, which will lead to additional commercial and retail development and attraction in these neighboring areas. The increasing availability of Internet retail also has had an effect on local retail sales. This increasing competition will continue to affect the City's retailers and employers. In addition, the growing competition is occurring as the amount of available land within the City diminishes, further exacerbating the challenge.

Making available "shovel ready" land for employment

To address the challenges of regional competition, it is important for the City to have land available within its boundaries that is adequately prepared for potential employers and retailers. The process of preparing sites, often referred to as making a site "shovel ready," requires both private and public investment. Understanding the role and timing of public investment in this process, and how to induce private investment in these activities remains a challenge.

Understanding fiscal sustainability and balancing revenues and expenditures over the long-term

Fiscal sustainability is a set of financial practices and policies that assures that revenues and expenditures are in sync. Revenues and expenditures are constantly changing, so it is challenging to assure their balance and synchronization under various scenarios. The City will continue to try to understand the implications of fiscal sustainability and implement strategies to achieve it.

Maintaining a balanced mix of land uses to support fiscal sustainability

Fiscal sustainability requires an understanding of the mix of land uses and the impacts different land uses have on City services and revenues. Determining an appropriate mix of land uses must take into account factors such as fiscal sustainability, market demand, and community desires. It will be a challenge to achieve a land use mix that fits the current demand, yet is flexible and resilient to meet future changing demands.

Providing City services despite increasing costs

In the past decade, annual inflation has stayed below 3.0%. However, this statistic encompasses a variety of goods and services across the entire nation. In reality, the costs of most inputs (materials, labor, or services) purchased by the City in the course of providing services have risen more rapidly than inflation. During this same time period increases in City revenues have slowed to 0.51% annually. Economic conditions and projections indicate that this disparity between rising costs and slowing revenues will continue to be a challenge.

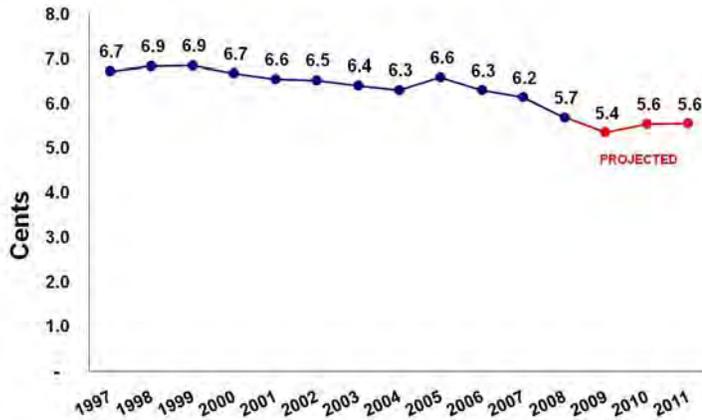
Since 1997, the City of Fort Collins has been driving the price of government down through increases in efficiency and right-sizing the organization. The price of government compares the percent of total resident income within the City of Fort Collins to the expenditures by the City to provide services. The projected increases in 2010 and 2011, as shown in Figure 3 on the following page, are due to declining resident income.

Continuing to improve the City's budgeting process

The City's Budgeting for Outcomes (BFO) process has shifted the budgeting approach from short-term fixes to addressing longer-term solutions, prioritizing revenues for outcomes desired by citizens, and focusing on efficiency, accountability, and other values. The City should continue to seek opportunities to refine the process to make it as transparent and effective as possible. In addition the Resourcing the Future community dialogue occurring in 2010 will help identify community budgeting priorities.

FIGURE 3: PRICE OF GOVERNMENT

Cents of every dollar earned going to pay for City services; including utilities and golf.



WHAT ARE THE CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS?

The overall economic health and fiscal stability of the City relates to many other topics contained within these snapshots. For instance, the future land use decisions the City makes shapes where future revenue generating activities such as employment can occur, and transportation and utility infrastructure are important considerations as employers seek new locations. Some of the cross-cutting sustainability topics related to finance and the economy include:

- **Economic Sustainability:** Increasing the capacity of a community to be competitive, resilient, and attractive to enterprise which, in turn, provides meaningful employment to its residents in a manner that does not compromise the environment.
- **Financing New Sustainable Technologies:** As the City identifies new approaches and technologies to provide services, it will also be important to address how to finance the capital, operations, and maintenance costs of innovations. In addition, community members have expressed interest in seeing the City do more to encourage sustainable development and innovation in the private sector.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Finance and Economy Definitions

The following definitions are provided to assist readers in understanding technical terms within this Snapshot.

- **Budgeting for Outcomes:** This is a method of preparing the City budget that clarifies the relationship between citizen priorities and the “price” of services. It is an analytical tool to help deliver government services that work better and cost less.
- **Fiscal Sustainability:** A set of financial practices and policies that assures that revenues and expenditures are in sync.
- **Metropolitan District:** A governmental entity that may be formed, subject to city approval, to finance public improvements and services with taxes and fees generated within the district boundaries.
- **Supercluster:** An academic and enterprise structure used by Colorado State University to address complex global challenges that demand multidisciplinary approaches, build on a foundation of scholarly excellence in core disciplines, and focus academic research.
- **Target Industry Cluster:** Geographic concentrations of interconnected companies and institutions in a particular field.
- **Tax Increment Financing (TIF):** A financing technique where the incremental property and sales tax revenues above a baseline and within a defined project area can be bundled and used to finance public improvements.
- **Uniquely Fort Collins:** This cluster includes artistic, cultural, recreation, and craft brewing businesses and services that contribute to the eclectic, innovative and high quality of life in Fort Collins.
- **Urban Renewal Authority (URA):** An entity authorized by the City of Fort Collins to revitalize, redevelop, restore, and revive targeted areas within the city limits that promote investment for public benefit.

Sources

- City of Fort Collins Finance Department (2010)
- Economic Health Strategy (2006)
- Target Industry Reports (2006)



Health, Wellness, and Safety

WHAT ARE THE CITY'S CURRENT VALUES?

Health, wellness, and safety are not simply factors attributed to individuals within our community, but they are also topics that help to shape the overall community's appeal, viability, productivity, and economic stability. *City Plan* envisioned Fort Collins as a safe, healthy, and nonthreatening community, yet these topics were woven in as pieces of the plan elements (such as Transportation, Housing, and Land Use), and not directly addressed. *Plan Fort Collins* builds on the vision of health, wellness, and safety of *City Plan*, as well as the ideas contained within the *Transportation Master Plan*, and from the City's health, wellness, and safety partners, to address these topics comprehensively. Health, safety, and wellness are increasingly recognized as important aspects of a sustainable community.

Values related to health, wellness, and safety, expressed in current plans and policies include:

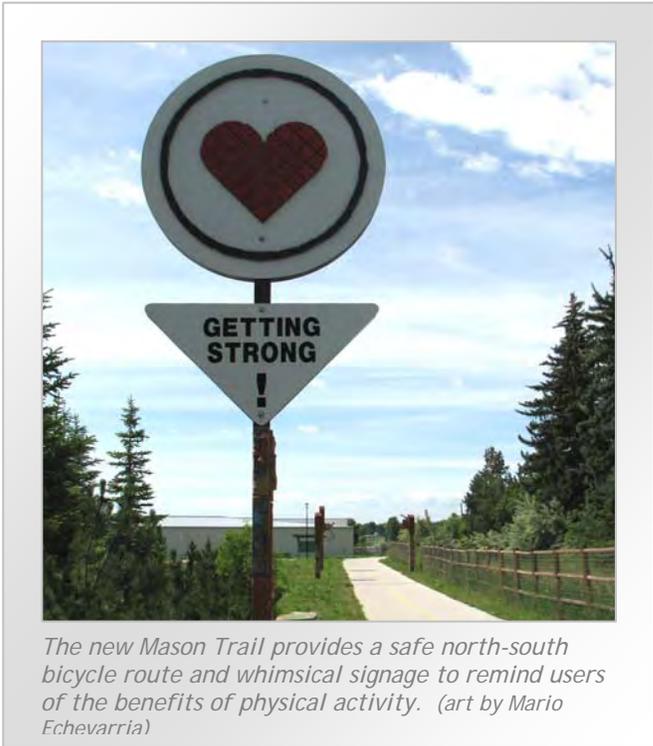
- Opportunities to lead active, healthy, and engaging lifestyles;
- A safe and non-threatening community environment;
- Access to healthy foods;
- Equity and fairness in the distribution of opportunities;
- Respect for diversity and unique heritage; and
- Opportunities for fulfillment and happiness.



CITY COLLABORATIONS IN HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLNESS

A number of City departments work to advance community health, safety and wellness through:

- Affordable Housing and Human Services programs
- City Wellness program
- Neighborhood Services programs
- Parks and Recreation programs
- Police Department programs
- Transportation programs



The new Mason Trail provides a safe north-south bicycle route and whimsical signage to remind users of the benefits of physical activity. (art by Mario Echevarria)



There are many partners involved in creating a healthy and safe community including engaged residents and numerous service providers.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN HEALTH, SAFETY, AND WELLNESS

The City also works with organizations throughout the community to foster health, wellness, and safety:

- Coalition for Activity and Nutrition to Defeat Obesity (CanDo)
- Colorado State University
- Food Bank of Larimer County
- Health District of Northern Larimer County
- Larimer County
- Poudre Fire Authority
- Poudre School District
- Poudre Valley Health System

WHAT HAS THE CITY ACCOMPLISHED?

The City and its partners have made much progress in establishing a safe and non-threatening environment that provides opportunities for recreation, active living, and overall well-being. Major health, wellness, and safety-related accomplishments include:

Recreation Programs

Increased opportunities for recreation throughout the community

The fitness and recreation programs offered through the City's Recreation Department at Edora Pool Ice Center (EPIC), Mulberry Pool, the Senior Center, and Northside Aztlan Community Center (NACC) continue to provide myriad opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities to engage in healthy activities. (See the Open Lands and Recreation Snapshot for Parks and Outdoor Recreation.) In recent years, the City has provided several new and improved recreational facilities. It has:

- Added a second sheet of ice at EPIC in 2003.
- Opened the seasonal outdoor downtown ice arena in Old Town in 2005.
- Opened the new Northside Aztlan Community Center (NACC) in 2007, which replaced the old facility that had been in existence 30 years and was experiencing structural problems. The new facility is twice as large, offers three full-size gyms, a running track, weight room, class rooms, and meeting rooms for larger community gatherings and special events.



CITY'S 2008 CITIZEN SURVEY:

In the 2008 Citizen Survey, community members weighed in on the City's recreation facilities and offerings. The results indicated:

- 85% satisfaction with the availability and diversity of recreation opportunities;
- 94% believe recreation facilities in Fort Collins are safe.



The new Northside Aztlan Center expanded recreation and fitness opportunities in the northern portion of the community.

Active Living

Promoted and provided opportunities for residents to lead active lifestyles

Bicycling in Fort Collins has become a major recreational activity as well as a key mode of transportation for many people. The City's comprehensive bicycle facilities and programs earned recognition from the League of American Bicyclists, when Fort Collins was designated as a gold-level bicycle-friendly community in 2009. Many bicycling events, sponsored by the FC Bikes Program, also bolster safety, enthusiasm, and support for bicycling, such as the:

- Resources for Bicycling in Fort Collins event;
- 'City Streets Crits' bike races;
- Bike to Work Days (winter and spring); and
- Bicycle safety and education programs through Colorado State University and Poudre School District.

Additionally, the Safe Routes to School program has coordinated and improved traffic, bicycle, and pedestrian safety to encourage active transportation to and from neighborhood schools. This program has also provided bicycle and pedestrian education for more than 4,000 students since 2007.

Increased opportunities for active lifestyles have also been supported through:

- The Complete Streets Policy (adopted in 1999) to ensure that future streets are designed to accommodate bicycles and pedestrians in addition to vehicles;
- The City’s snow plowing policies that ensure trails and most bike lanes are accessible throughout the year; and
- Funding and support from the North College Urban Renewal Authority to improve pedestrian and bicycle safety conditions along the North College Avenue corridor.

Health and Wellness

Made progress in increasing the overall health and wellness of the community

Fort Collins has made significant progress towards becoming a nationally-recognized Well City. This is a designation given by the Wellness Council of America (WELCOA) to communities that demonstrate excellence in the area of worksite wellness, and satisfy certain requirements. An application for the award is expected to be submitted in 2012. Only nine cities in the US have received this designation.

In addition to its achievements related to worksite wellness, the community is showing signs of progress related to increased health and activity levels, including:

- A 4.8% decrease from 2008 to 2009 in lifestyle and health risk factors that attribute to chronic disease among City employees (City Wellness program); and
- An increase in the number of adults reaching recommended activity levels, (*Larimer County Compass*), as demonstrated in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1 - NUMBER OF ADULTS REACHING RECOMMENDED ACTIVITY LEVELS

ACTIVITY LEVEL	2004	2007
Moderate	44.3%	49.2%
Vigorous	38.3%	40.2%

Food

Ensured the community’s food is safe to consume

The community’s food supply also contributes to the overall health and wellness of residents. The City coordinates with the Larimer County Health Department, which provides routine regulations and inspections of food establishments to ensure that the community’s food is safe to consume.

Increased the availability of healthy and local food options

The availability of and access to locally produced food has also gained momentum, with increasing numbers of food cooperatives, farmers markets, community supported agriculture programs (CSAs), neighborhood gardens, and individual gardens and animal operations.

Health and Human Services

Coordinated with and supported health and human service providers to assist those in need

The clustering of many health and human service providers in the northern part of the community (such as the County Health Department and Sister Alice Murphy Center) has provided services for resident well-being and health in an area where many of these services were needed.

Additionally, a significant portion of CDBG funds (15%, or over \$1.5 million) has been allocated to public/human service programs that support lower income residents, including job training, day care services, and housing counseling. Further support for public and human service programs is provided by the Human Services Program (funded through the City’s General Fund). Since 2000, over \$4.2 million has been allocated to the Human Services Program.

Community Engagement

Engaged residents to improve neighborhood relationships

Fort Collins has worked hard to develop a strong sense of community and to improve relationships between the student population and established neighborhoods. Successful programs and activities

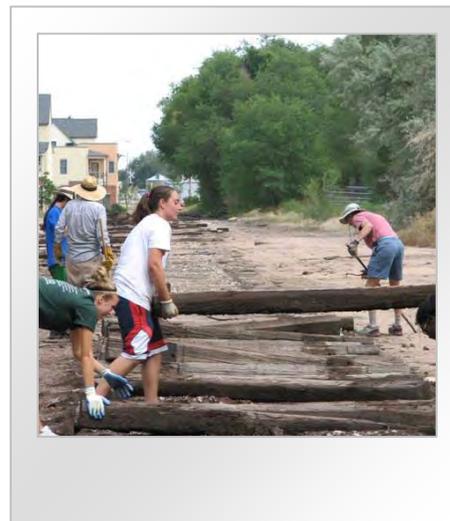
that have helped to engage residents and improve relationships include the Party-Patrol, Neighborhood Night Out, Adopt-A-Neighbor, Party Registration, CSU Community Welcome, Noise Workshop and Party Partners, Landlord and Home Owner Association (HOA) trainings, Community Mediation, and partnerships between the City's Community Liaison and CSU's Conflict Resolution and Student Conduct Services. Key milestones and outcomes related to these programs and activities are listed below:

- Party Patrol has nearly eliminated incidents of large parties with more than 300 participants and greatly reduced party and noise complaints.
- Approximately 100 neighborhoods registered for the 2009 Neighborhood Night Out event.
- More than 600 students participated in 100 neighborhood projects during the Adopt-A-Neighbor Fall Clean-Up event in 2009, making them feel like a part of the larger community.
- Neighborhood dialogues, and the Community Welcome programs have helped the behaviors of students living in neighborhoods.
- In 2009, of the 274 parties that were registered in the Party Registration Pilot Program, 32 received complaints, 28 of which shut down within 20 minutes without police intervention.
- Approximately 436 of 639 requests for community mediation services in 2009 were resolved.

Safety

Fostered a safe and non-threatening community

In 2007, the new Police Services building opened—the first new facility in Fort Collins' history built solely for police services. In recent years Fort Collins has also been considered one of the safest cities in Colorado, according to the Colorado Bureau of Investigation's (CBI) Crime Rankings. Crime levels have remained relatively stable between 2004 and 2008 (approximately 5,060 total crimes in 2004, and 5,244 total in 2008), despite a growing population. Additionally, the ratings of personal safety among Fort Collins residents have generally remained high and better than national and Front Range averages.



Community clean-up and welcome events engage residents and help to increase neighborhood safety and relations.

Listed below are some major programs and accomplishments that have helped to foster these feelings of safety:

- Police Districting has increased police presence Downtown and in the northeast part of town, and has helped enhance the economic vitality and perceptions of safety Downtown.
- The Neighborhood Traffic Safety Program and enhanced traffic enforcement have helped reduce speeding.
- The Eyes & Ears Program continues to assist residents in need by linking them with trained drivers in marked vehicles who will contact emergency services.
- The Safe Kids Coalition, a service of Poudre Fire Authority (PFA), has improved child car seat safety by providing proper car seat installation instructions.
- The City's FC Bikes and Safe Routes to School programs educate adults and children about bicycle safety, helmets, and maintenance.
- The Graffiti Abatement Program has successfully resulted in the rapid removal of graffiti, reducing the potential for vandalism and other criminal activity.
- Routine bicycle trail maintenance, and the installation of additional street lights and traffic control measures have increased safety for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) training has provided neighborhoods with the knowledge and skills to assist their residents in times of disaster or emergency.
- The Neighborhood Watch Program has continued neighborhoods/police coordination to improve safety.

WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES REMAIN?

While many challenges remain in improving the overall health, wellness, and safety of the community, *Plan Fort Collins* presents opportunities to address these challenges directly, and through their relationships to other topics, such as transportation and land use. Some of the key opportunities and challenges for the community's health, wellness, and safety include:

Active Living

Reducing barriers to and improving opportunities for physical activity and active lifestyles

Many of the community's physical barriers to active living occur in areas that are already developed. For example, the lack of sidewalks and safe pedestrian environments in many of the community's northern areas reduces the desirability of walking in those areas. It will be important to identify these barriers and challenges and seek ways to reduce them as new development and redevelopment occur.

Health and Wellness

Improving the health and wellness of the community, especially at-risk populations

In Larimer County, the obesity rate has doubled in the last decade. The rates of obesity and overweight persons are important indicators, because they also help to indicate rates of heart disease, diabetes, certain types of cancer, depression, and a host of other physical ailments. Groups that are most at-risk for obesity include children and those with lower-socio-economic status. Opportunities exist to increase the overall health and wellness of everyone in the community, and it will be important to be especially mindful of the needs of at-risk and vulnerable populations.

Health and Human Services

Addressing accessibility and provision of communitywide health and human services

The clustering of health and social services in one location makes it a challenge for people in other parts of the community to access them. As the community continues to grow, health and human services may need to expand to other areas to serve and be accessible to populations in need, and they should be coordinated with other programs and services such as affordable housing, transit, and disabled and elderly services. In addition, human services organizations are in the mode of being resourceful to cover increasing demands for services with fewer resources. The economic downturn has affected many families and individuals in the community. The lack of permanent and guaranteed local funding is a challenge.

Community Engagement

Engaging a broad range of community members

As community issues arise, such as the Occupancy Ordinance, which limits the number of people who can reside in a dwelling unit, it will be important to seek diverse input and opinions in order to address concerns and retain a sense of community. Likewise, as the community's demographics shift, it will be important to ensure that a variety of demographic groups are engaged and informed in community matters.

Retaining a sense of community and heritage as change occurs

It will be important to involve neighborhoods and a diverse mix of residents to ensure that growth or changes benefit the community and are compatible with neighborhoods.

Safety

Satisfying community safety needs and expectations with limited resources

A Police Services Staffing Study conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum and updated in 2009 shows that an additional 48 sworn and civilian positions are needed to provide the police services our community needs and expects. As the

community's population and number of crimes grow, police resources will not likely be able to keep pace. Currently, officers and dispatchers are working overtime on every shift just to fill minimum coverage. Likewise, as the City's policing territory expands with annexations of new areas currently not within the city limits, it will be increasingly difficult to provide adequate police staffing and resources.

The community hosts many successful events like the New West Fest, Taste of Fort Collins, Irish Festival, and Brewfest that attract people from all over the country. Some of these events attract well over 15,000 people. Traditionally off-duty police officers are utilized to address traffic control and provide for public safety during these events. These large events stretch the ability of the police department to meet the demand for services, and will be an increasing challenge as events continue to grow.

Like the Police Department, Poudre Fire Authority faces challenges related to limited staffing. As the community continues to grow, this issue will also increase, which will not only impact the safety of firefighting personnel during emergencies, but will also impact the quality and timeliness of service provided to the community.

Addressing safety as multiple modes of transportation share roads

As more types of vehicles are sharing the community's roadways (including bicycles, motor scooters, wheelchairs, and possibly future neighborhood electric vehicles [NEVs]), there are increasing safety issues and potential for conflicts. Certain areas in the City, such as the area around Colorado State University, tend to have more conflicts because of the high number of bicyclists and pedestrians sharing the major roadways with motorists.

WHAT ARE THE CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS?

This Snapshot contains a number of topics with relationships to other snapshots. The topic of a healthy community is becoming a focus area in many new comprehensive plans. This is in part because the Centers for Disease Control and

Prevention have documented costs associated with not getting enough physical activity and poor diets leading to obesity. Active living can be greatly improved through urban design that supports bicycling and walking and places destinations together (e.g., schools within neighborhoods with safe walkways). Interrelated topics include:

- **Active Living/Complete Streets:** Building streets and a transportation network that allows for safe, comfortable, and convenient walking and bicycling for all people (including seniors, youth, disabled, low-income population), can positively affect community health. Parks, recreation, and programs that support active living are important, too.
- **Local Food Production and Security:** Supporting greater access to farmer's markets throughout the year, organic food production, and community gardens and agriculture can contribute to community health and well-being.
- **Safety and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design:** Using a multi-disciplinary approach to deterring criminal behavior through design can increase outdoor physical activity, visibility, and social interaction.
- **Housing and Human Services Coordination:** Coordinating location of housing for seniors, disabled people, and low income households near services and transit will continue to be important, as well as equitable distribution.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sources

- [CanDo School BMI Project \(2008-2009\)](#)
- [City of Fort Collins FC Bikes Program](#)
- [City of Fort Collins Citizen Survey \(2006 and 2008\)](#)
- [City of Fort Collins Community Scorecard \(2008 and 2009\)](#)
- [City of Fort Collins Neighborhood Services Department](#)
- [City of Fort Collins Safe Routes to School program](#)
- [Colorado Bureau of Investigations Unified Crime Reports \(2004-2008\)](#)
- [Health District of Northern Larimer County Community Health Survey \(2007\)](#)
- [Healthy Hearts Club Report \(2008-2009\)](#)
- [Larimer County Compass \(2004 and 2007\)](#)



Housing

WHAT ARE THE CITY'S CURRENT VALUES?

In 1997, *City Plan* contained goals to achieve a wide variety of housing types (including single-family houses, duplexes, townhomes, and apartments). As a result, people from all income levels have choices of affordable and quality housing in diverse neighborhoods around the community. Over the years, the City has worked with the development community and neighborhoods to improve and maintain the appeal, safety, and desirability of housing and neighborhoods so that residents can live, work, shop, and play nearby and easily travel within and to destinations.

Distribution and availability of affordable housing for low-income residents throughout the community has also been a major goal of *City Plan* and housing policies. By increasing the overall average density of the city, as recommended in *City Plan*, the community's neighborhoods foster efficient land use, support a mix of housing types, increase efficiency of public utilities, streets, facilities, and services, and accommodate multiple modes of travel (including vehicle, bus, bike, and walking).

Current values from *City Plan* related to housing include:

- Affordable housing dispersed throughout the community,
- Access to and options for quality housing for all income levels,
- High quality, desirable existing housing stock,
- Neighborhoods with a mix of housing options located near public transportation, shopping, schools, and employment, and
- Efficient use of land for housing.



The community has worked hard to provide quality housing options that are affordable, such as with this Habitat for Humanity home.



COMMUNITY PARTNERS IN HOUSING

Many organizations work with the City to provide housing options and support for the community's residents, including:

- Board of Realtors
- CARE Housing
- Colorado Division of Housing
- Colorado Housing and Finance Authority (CHFA)
- Fort Collins Housing Authority
- Funding Partners
- Habitat for Humanity
- Home Builders' Association
- Homeward 2020
- Larimer County
- Neighbor to Neighbor
- Private for-profit developers
- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

WHAT HAS THE CITY ACCOMPLISHED?

Since the adoption of *City Plan* in 1997, Fort Collins has made great strides in establishing mixed-use neighborhoods that provide quality and affordable housing options in desirable and convenient locations throughout the community. Recent housing accomplishments include:

Jobs-to-Housing Balance

Maintained a consistent, positive balance of jobs to housing

City Plan established a policy to have a reasonable balance between housing and employment to create a relative balance between the wages of various types of employment and housing prices. The jobs-to-housing ratio is an indicator that a community has an adequate number of jobs to meet the demand for employment by its residents. Planning literatures cites 1.5 jobs per 1 housing unit an ideal ratio to maintain a balanced community.

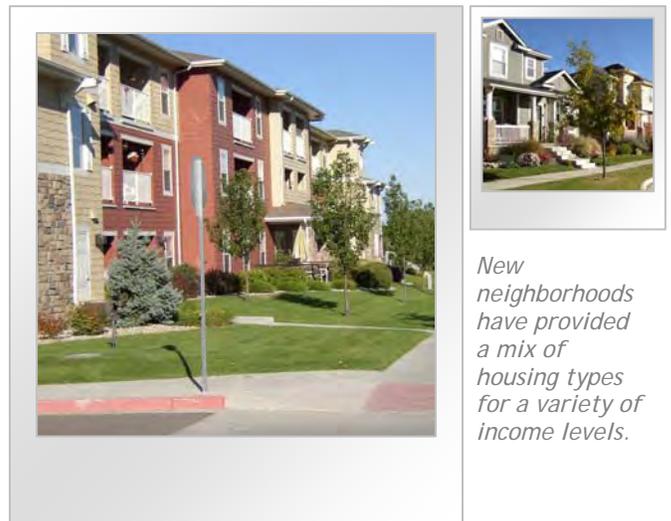
- In 1997, the ratio of jobs to housing was 1.5 jobs per 1 housing unit.
- The jobs-to-housing ratio of 1.5-to-1 has been maintained. (*City Plan Monitoring Project Biennial Indicator Report 1997 – 2007.*)

Affordable Housing

Increased options for affordable housing

The supply of affordable rental housing units in Fort Collins increased from approximately 1,219 units in 1997 to approximately 2,300 units in 2009 (*Larimer County Housing Needs Assessment, 2009*). Affordable housing units in the city are either provided by the Fort Collins Housing Authority (e.g., Section 8 rental subsidy program), or by non-profit affordable housing agencies and private for-profit developers.

In addition to affordable rental housing assistance, the City also assists homebuyers. The City's Home Buyer Assistance program has helped about 1,100 families become first-time home buyers since the program started in 1995.



New neighborhoods have provided a mix of housing types for a variety of income levels.

Funded and provided incentives for affordable housing

The City has funded and provided incentives for affordable housing, including:

- Federal CDBG and HOME funding has been allocated (over \$12 million since 2000 directly to affordable housing programs and projects).
- Affordable Housing Fund (City's General Fund) augmented federal programs (\$4.5 million since 2000). This fund is much more flexible to use for funding local projects than federal funds.
- The City has established a competitive process to allocate its financial resources to affordable housing and community development activities. This means the City can grant funding for applications that do the best job of addressing the City's affordable housing and community development needs.
- The City has established incentives for development of affordable housing. They include: a density bonus (allowing increased density in select zones in exchange for affordable housing units), reduction in development review application fees and processing times, and delayed collection of development impact fees.

Land for Housing

Reserved land for future affordable housing

The City's Land Bank Program has acquired land in various parts of the Growth Management Area for future affordable housing development.

- The program has spent over \$3 million to acquire five undeveloped properties, totaling

51.2 acres, for the future development of between 512 and 614 new affordable housing units.



The City has reserved land for future affordable housing developments, like this property on Kechter Road.

Used land efficiently for new housing development

City Plan established minimum densities for low density mixed-use neighborhoods (5 units per acre) and medium density mixed-use neighborhoods (12 units per acre) to ensure efficient use of land, increase efficiency of utilities and infrastructure, and accommodate multiple transportation options. New project densities since 1997 have exceeded minimum targets by 150%. (See the Built Environment and Land Use report.)

Housing Breakdown

Maintained mix of housing options for renters and homeowners

The community's trends related to the mixture and variety of housing types (e.g. single-family, multi-family, owner-occupied, and renter-occupied, etc.) are provided within Tables 2 and 3 at right. These trends show that:

- Fort Collins has retained a mix of housing unit types for owners and renters; and
- While the percentage of detached single-family units has increased since the year 2000

(+2.4%), the percentage of owner-occupied units has declined slightly (-0.7%).

In comparison to other university communities (as shown in Table 3 below) Fort Collins has:

- A significantly higher percentage of detached single-family housing units than other communities (58.3% versus less than 50.0%); and
- A higher percentage of owner-occupied housing units (56.4% versus 50.5% or less).

TABLE 2: FORT COLLINS HOUSING MIX 2000-2008

HOUSING TYPES	2000 CENSUS	2008 AMERICAN COMMUNITY SURVEY	PERCENT CHANGE
Detached Single-Family Housing Units	55.9%	58.3%	+2.4%
All Other Types of Housing Units	44.1%	41.7%	-2.4%
Owner Occupied Housing Units	57.1%	56.4%	-0.7%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	42.9%	43.6%	+0.7%

TABLE 3: FORT COLLINS HOUSING MIX COMPARED TO OTHER UNIVERSITY COMMUNITIES

LOCATION	DETACHED SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSING UNITS	ALL OTHER TYPES OF HOUSING UNITS	OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS	RENTER OCCUPIED HOUSING UNITS
Fort Collins, CO	58.3%	41.7%	56.4%	43.6%
Boulder, CO	42.6%	57.4%	50.5%	49.5%
Lawrence, KS	48.9%	51.1%	50.4%	49.6%
Champaign, IL	49.5%	50.5%	48.1%	51.9%
Ames, IA	41.4%	58.6%	44.3%	55.6%

WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES REMAIN?

Despite the City's accomplishments related to affordable housing and mixed-use neighborhoods, the community still faces challenges, and recognizes opportunities to further enhance housing options for all. They are noted below.

Affordable Housing

Continuing to fund, support, and develop affordable housing

The cost of land and reduced supply of vacant land for residential use means that prices are increasing. As growth and development consumes the available undeveloped land inside the City's Growth Management Area (GMA) boundary over the next 20 years, the simple economics of supply and demand would indicate that land costs will increase which will cause the cost of housing to increase. This will make it more difficult, or require increased financial subsidies, to produce new affordable housing units. Affordable rental housing units are a particular need at this time.

Also, the investor climate is becoming more challenging for affordable housing financing.

- Historically, the Low Income Housing Tax Credit program has been a primary development financing tool for affordable housing. Approximately 60% of all new affordable housing development has been financed using this program, through which investors purchase tax credits to be taken on their profit over ten years.
- Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, who previously purchased nearly half of these tax credits, dropped out of the market because they were unprofitable. Other typical credit investors have dropped out of the market because they are not able to predict future profitability.
- These factors have resulted in a dramatic decrease of 40% in equity pricing and very few investors. With a much lower equity price, a new development will require a great deal more subsidy from public sources such as HOME, CDBG, and the Affordable Housing Fund.



The need for public subsidy to provide for lowest income groups is increasing, while sources are diminishing.

- The needs of the community's lowest income families continue to increase (partially because income/wages are not increasing at the same rate as housing and other living and transportation costs).
- The sources of public subsidy that have been available in the past have been decreasing substantially (i.e., CDBG, HOME, Federal Home Loan Bank Affordable Housing Program, Colorado Division of Housing, and the City of Fort Collins Affordable Housing Fund).

Need for a continuous local funding source

A local source of financial assistance, not tied to federal rules and regulations, is an important component of a comprehensive affordable housing program.

- The City recently reduced the annual General Fund contribution, due to declining sales tax revenues and other budget funding needs. Once as high as \$894,000 (2002), the 2010 allocation is less than \$180,000.

- Due to the relative declines in funding for affordable housing projects and programs at the federal, state, and local levels, a more permanent, less volatile source of money needs to be explored, which would permit a more structured and dependable strategic plan to address affordable housing needs.

Housing Options

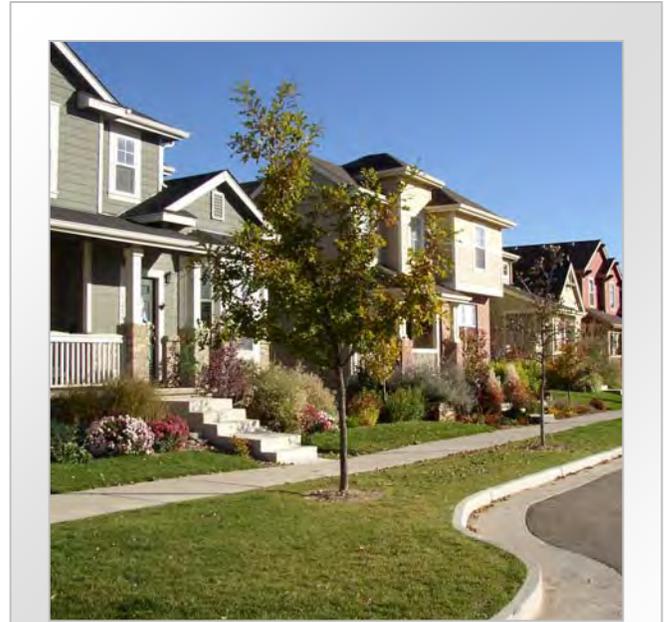
Serving the housing needs of many diverse groups and changing demographics

The community has many different housing needs, ranging from emergency shelter to homeownership. Future trends such as an aging population, demographic shifts, and community housing preferences will also affect the community’s housing needs. It will be important to understand the diverse needs of the community’s diverse groups and changing demographics to be able to provide suitable housing options.

High Performing Housing for All

Providing high-performing housing for all income levels

“Green building” practices make housing more energy efficient, and help to reduce utility costs and environmental impacts. While “green” or high-performance housing products and improvements are within the reach of some segments of the population, it will be a challenge for many that depend on affordable housing or have limited incomes to meet the front-end investments in these new technologies or housing products. It will also be important to find ways to incorporate green building practices into future affordable housing developments.



New neighborhoods will likely incorporate “green building” practices to reduce environmental impacts and utility costs.



Renewable energy features and xeriscape are becoming more common.



Housing options will need to meet the needs of changing demographics, such as senior and workforce housing products.

WHAT ARE THE CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS?

Housing is a basic need for all residents. *City Plan* recognized the need to supply a variety of quality housing options to serve future population needs in convenient locations throughout the community, the importance of efficient use of land for housing, and linking housing to transportation and destinations. Additional interrelated topics connected to housing include:

- **Housing and Health and Human Services Coordination:** Providing health and human and services in combination with housing programs to assist residents in securing housing.
- **Green Technology and Housing:** Integrating new utility technologies into existing and future housing units to achieve conservation goals and reduce the cost of utilities for residents.
- **High Density Housing and Transit:** Linking transit to locations with higher-density housing.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Housing Terms

- **Affordable housing** - housing which costs no more than 30% of a household's gross monthly income for rent and utilities.
- **Density** - ratio measurement of housing units per acre (e.g., 3.5 units per acre).

Sources

- Priority Affordable Housing Needs and Strategies, Fort Collins, Colorado (2004)
- Consolidated Housing & Community Development Plan FY 2005-2009, Fort Collins, Colorado (2005)
- City Plan Monitoring Project, Biennial Indicator Report, 1997-2007 (2009)
- Larimer County Housing Needs Assessment (September 2009)
- FC Gov web pages: Land bank, Funding available for Housing and Human Services (<http://www.fcgov.com/affordablehousing/landbank.php>) and <http://www.fcgov.com/affordablehousing/funding.php> (2010).

Open Space, Natural Areas, Parks, and Recreation

WHAT ARE THE CITY'S CURRENT VALUES?

This section addresses open spaces, natural areas, parks and recreation, and stormwater multi-use projects under separate headings below. (See the Environment and Utilities Snapshot for more information about Stormwater treatment and flooding.)

Open Space and Natural Areas

Fort Collins residents and visitors of all ages and backgrounds enjoy and are passionate about their natural areas. On any given day, people can be found taking advantage of recreation (for example, walking, horseback riding, biking, wildlife viewing, and fishing) and other opportunities. Natural areas also conserve habitat for wildlife, help provide clean water in streams and rivers, conserve working farms, protect views, and offer respite from the built environment.

The City's world class Natural Areas Program has become a core part of Fort Collins' identity and culture. Having conserved 40,000 acres since its start in 1992, the program continues its mission to conserve land. It also stewards these lands, which includes restoration of habitat, and maintenance of visitor amenities, such as trails and restrooms. Ongoing land conservation efforts are focused on the Local and Community Separator Focus Areas, as defined in the *Land Conservation and Stewardship Master Plan*. Other aspirations for the Natural Areas Program, include:

- Conserve additional natural areas located throughout the community and along the Cache La Poudre River which offer opportunities to experience nearby nature,
- Increase the diversity of the spectrum of the community served,
- Provide stewardship including restoring and enhancing stream corridors and wildlife habitat,
- Conserve community separations between Northern Larimer County communities,
- Conserve farms, especially ones producing local food, and

- Quality public improvements providing world class visitor experiences and interpretive programs



Red Fox Meadows stormwater detention and natural area.



OPEN SPACE INITIATIVES AND RECOGNITION

Natural areas and trails have become part of the culture and identity in Fort Collins. Fort Collins citizens have voted on multiple occasions to support a tax to support the Program. In the 2008 Citizen Survey, the City's natural areas were rated as very good or good by 93% of the respondents, one of the highest ratings of any city endeavor.

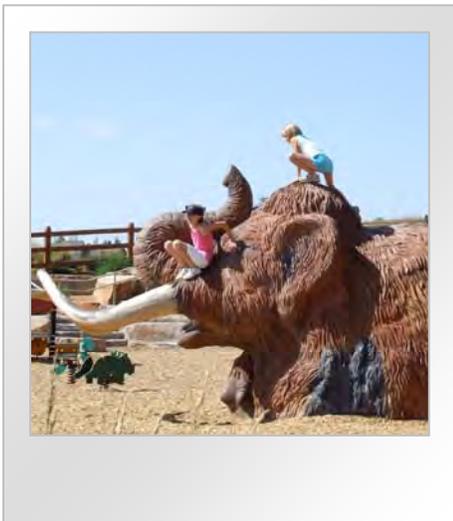
In addition, Natural Areas and associated recreation are mentioned as one of the key factors for the City, having received numerous recognitions, such as: Ranked 1st Best Place to Live and Work for Young Professionals (pop. 100,000-200,000): Next Generation Consulting - March 2009; and One of Top 20 Places to Thrive: Best Boomer Towns - February 2009.

Parks and Recreation

Parks, trails and outdoor recreation facilities provide spaces for important community social and wellness activities. Residents' quality of life is greatly improved by having facilities that invite physical

activities at all levels, gathering places for social activities, opportunities to connect with nature, and places to recharge ourselves. *City Plan* goals have sought to: ensure Fort Collins’ parks, trails, and outdoor recreation facilities legacy for future generations; provide a wide variety of high-quality recreation services and opportunities; create an interconnected regional and local trail system; promote community; and focus on enhanced ecologically sound and green practices. The City’s values related to parks, trails, and recreation facilities include:

- Providing community benefits and essential services;
- Inclusivity and accessibility;
- Stewardship of public spaces and resources;
- Excellence/ high-quality facilities providing wellness and fulfillment for residents; and
- Beauty and innovation, providing a wide range of experiences.



Redwing Marsh stormwater and natural area.

Fossil Creek Park in south Fort Collins.

Stormwater/Open Lands

Flooding and water quality problems result from not planning for the impacts of urbanization on watersheds and natural stream/river corridors. Preventing flooding requires protection and enhancement of natural corridors and treatment of urban runoff. The City’s stormwater division values are to protect people and structures from flooding, which is a serious threat to Fort Collins. (See the Environment and Utilities snapshot for more information about runoff treatment and flooding issues.) Drainage Basin Master Plans also express values related to open lands and recreation including developing stormwater projects that protect water quality, provide habitat, and foster

recreation and learning opportunities (in addition to flood protection).



PARTNERSHIPS

Conserving natural resources, building facilities, and managing the City’s natural areas, parks, trails, and stormwater facilities requires interdepartmental and external partnerships.

CITY COLLABORATIONS - NATURAL AREAS, PARKS, AND STORMWATER

The City has frequently combined efforts to achieve multiple objectives for natural areas, parks, and stormwater. Utilities and Natural Areas have partnered in the purchase of the following properties, which Natural Areas manages: Redwing Marsh, Udall, Prospect Ponds, Red Fox Meadows, River’s Edge, and Gateway. Parks and Natural Areas have partnered on the purchase of the following sites: Butterfly Woods, Spring Creek Gardens, and Magpie Meander/Soft Gold Park. City partnerships to provide multi-purpose projects with a stormwater function as well as providing recreation and wildlife habitat have occurred, too. Some examples are: Sheldon Lake/City Park Nine Detention Basins, Rolland Moore, Spring Canyon, Udall, Riverbend Ponds, and Red Fox Meadows.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

In addition, the city has worked with other community organizations to purchase and manage properties, build improvements, build trails, apply for grants, address stormwater and restoration, including:

- Larimer County,
- The Nature Conservancy and Legacy Land Trust,
- Cities of Loveland, Timnath, and Windsor,
- Poudre School District,
- Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO),
- The Discovery Museum (for a future visitor information area in the lobby and interpretation of the natural resources found in the City’s natural areas), and
- Numerous private landowners.



WHAT HAS THE CITY ACCOMPLISHED?



Bobcat Ridge Natural Area is open to the public. The natural area offers recreation, learning, viewing wildlife in its natural habitat, and other activities.

The City's Natural Resources, Parks Planning, and Utilities Departments have worked individually and jointly to advance natural area, parks, trails, and stormwater projects and programs as described below.

Natural Areas

Provided widespread conservation and restoration of natural areas

The City has conserved 40,000 acres since program inception in 1992. Since 1997 and the time of *City Plan*, the City has:

- Conserved 35,477 acres (2,089 acres local, 3,224 acres community separator, and 30,164 acres regional);
- Increased the number of acres of land restored to natural conditions each year;
- Conducted restoration at many very heavily disturbed sites, such as gravel mines, fields, and abandoned commercial and residential sites; and
- Helped conserve 14 working farms and ranches to help maintain local agricultural production

and enable farm and ranching families to continue their work.

Expanded public access to natural areas

Since 1997, the City has:

- Opened two new regional natural areas to the public (Bobcat Ridge and Soapstone Prairie) and assumed management of Gateway in the Poudre canyon;
- Opened local natural areas including: Cathy Fromme Prairie, Coyote Ridge, Kingfisher Point, Cottonwood Hollow, Running Deer, Arapaho Bend, and Fossil Creek Reservoir; and
- Purchased natural areas that remain to be opened including: Eagle View, Hazaleus, Udall and Pelican Marsh (which will be opened in 2010).

Increased recreational, educational, and volunteer opportunities within natural areas

Since 1997, the City has increased access to natural areas as follows:

- Opened 21 natural areas for public recreation use; and expanded trails in natural areas by 75 miles;
- Improved recreation opportunities and handicapped access to natural areas by providing accessible paved parking spaces, paved and crusher fines trails, picnic shelters, vault toilets, fishing piers, and wildlife viewing areas; and
- Greatly expanded natural and cultural resource interpretive features; programs led by volunteer Master Naturalists and staff, the Volunteer Ranger Program, and many other volunteer opportunities.

Parks

Expanded parks and parks facilities

The citizens of Fort Collins have continued to enjoy parks, trails, and outdoor recreation facilities since the time of the 1997 *City Plan*. Parks, trails, and outdoor recreation facilities have grown to keep pace with increased population and demands for recreational services. Many parks now contain new elements, such as dog parks and skate parks. The 2008 *Parks and Recreation Policy Plan Update* included extensive public outreach and community feedback and the community expressed support for parks, trails, and facilities.

Since 1997, the City has:

- Developed two community parks (Fossil Creek and Spring Canyon), five neighborhood parks (Soft Gold, Harmony, Homestead, Waters Way, and Registry) and two mini-parks (Rabbit Brush and Oak Street);
- Expanded the paved trail system by 12 miles and replaced over four miles of old asphalt with new wider concrete; and
- Opened the Gardens on Spring Creek Horticulture Center for the public's use and enjoyment.



Since 1997, the City has expanded the paved trail system by 12 miles and replaced asphalt.

- Completed a stream health assessment, as part of the *Master Plan*, to better understand habitat stream quality;
- Completed erosion studies on streams, such as Fossil Creek and Mail Creek, to support buffer limits for new development; and
- Revised floodplain regulations to address public safety along the river and stream corridors.



Udall wetland restoration project (after).



Udall wetland (before).



Rolland Moore Spring Creek bridge

Stormwater/Open Lands

Stormwater projects completed

The *Drainage Basin Master Plan* (2004) identifies numerous projects to address flooding and stormwater quality problems in the City and meet recreation and wildlife habitat objectives. Since 1997, the City has accomplished the following:

- Completed nine projects with a multi-purpose focus, including improved protection of natural stream corridors and enhancements to parks (e.g., improvements to Sheldon Lake and the restoration of Red Fox Meadows Natural Area);
- Expanded education for school children about flooding, stormwater pollution, and wetland ecology with the construction of nine outdoor classrooms within stormwater detention areas;

WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES REMAIN?



Maintaining and restoring natural areas and stormwater to perform multiple functions (Harvest Park).

Challenges and opportunities for natural areas, parks, and stormwater multi-use areas are addressed in the following sections.

Open Space and Natural Areas

Assuring long-term financial viability and maintaining a long-term balance between land conservation and stewardship

Natural Areas currently manages 34,500 acres (54 square miles) and 95 miles of trails. (Some of the 40,000 acres are held in easement and managed by other partners.) Natural Areas needs to plan for future land conservation and recreation improvements while, at the same time, balancing those needs against adequate stewardship resources for the existing portfolio of natural areas and improvements. Achieving this balance will be an ongoing challenge.

Striving to reduce the carbon footprint from operations and restore habitat

The City continues to find ways to reduce the carbon footprint caused by the Natural Area Program's operations and maintenance activities. It

is also working to restore habitat to enhance native biodiversity and habitat connectivity and efficient and effective ways to perform restoration.

Managing for outstanding visitor experience while there are increasing demands for uses on natural areas

The City will continue to work with the community to manage and balance an outstanding visitor experience with the increasing demands for uses of natural area lands.



Continuing parks and programs for growing community.



Restoring the natural environment (Cathy Fromme prairie).

Parks

Providing parks and trails to a growing community and maximizing program resources

To address growth of the community, Fort Collins will need to: (a) consider additional costs associated with building and operating planned future parks and trails, and (b) make the best use of limited resources to maintain parks. Long-term economic stability will depend on prioritized decision-making, identification of core services, and maximized, efficient use of resources. The parks system also should apply green practices to all aspects of the program.

Stormwater/Open Lands

Planning for most suitable uses given competing needs for remaining open land

As the City approaches build out, the potential for adverse impacts to urban watersheds, streams, and the Cache La Poudre River increases, while the City's ability to solve existing stormwater problems decreases. This is because many of the solutions

to address stormwater problems require vacant land, which is becoming less available and more costly.

Balancing protection and restoration with urbanization

The opportunity to protect and restore the health of urban streams and the Cache La Poudre River creates challenges for funding and working with private landowners. Addressing stormwater pollution, created by impervious surfaces, while promoting higher density urbanization might be conflicting goals if not addressed jointly.

Addressing multiple and sometimes conflicting regulations and values

Watersheds, stream corridors, and the Cache La Poudre River traverse other jurisdictions with potentially conflicting values and regulations. These challenges will demand innovative solutions with multipurpose functions and cooperation amongst various City departments and other jurisdictional agencies.

WHAT ARE THE CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS?

This snapshot contains topics that cross-cut with others. Parks, open lands, and trails have significant economic benefit in a community—many surveys show these features are a key factor in business development and selection of a community and the reason Fort Collins wins awards for livability. Healthy natural systems contribute to clean air and water, which in turn contribute to community health. Some of the interrelated topics are listed below.

- **Arts Outdoors** : Continued integration of education, arts, and culture as part of open spaces, natural areas, parks, and stormwater projects.
- **Open Lands Achieving Multiple Functions:** Stormwater, Parks and Recreation, and Natural Areas will continue to explore opportunities to partner on acquiring lands for multiple uses: to enhance and restore streams; to improve water quality and flood water detention; to provide and enhance trail corridors to connect open lands; to enhance wildlife habitat and corridors; to provide neighborhood natural areas; and to

improve bicycle and pedestrian access to schools, parks, natural areas, shopping areas, and neighborhoods.

- **Protecting Lands for Food Production:** Protection of small parcels and larger agricultural land where local food production can take place contributes to local health and economy and helps maintain some agricultural identity.
- **Ecological system approach to planning:** Defining suitable land uses based on land characteristics (e.g., best sites for agriculture, wildlife habitat, and urban development).

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Sources

- Cache La Poudre River Natural Areas Management Plan (2002)
- Commercial Use Policy (2009)
- Drainage Basin Master Plan (2004)
- Easement Policy (2001)
- Flood Mitigation Plan Annual Review (2008)
- Foothills Natural Areas Management Plan (2007)
- Fossil Creek Natural Areas Management Plan (2005)
- General Management Guidelines (2001)
- Land Conservation and Stewardship Master Plan (2004) replaced the original Natural Areas Policy Plan (1992)
- Parks and Recreation Policy Plan (2009)
- Bobcat Ridge Natural Area Management Plan (2005)
- Soapstone Prairie Natural Area Management Plan (2007)
- Vegetation Management Guidelines (2004)
- Wildlife Management Guidelines (2007)

Transportation

WHAT ARE THE CITY'S CURRENT VALUES?

The City of Fort Collins and the community have worked diligently over the last 10+ years to create a transportation system that allows people to travel through the city efficiently by walking, bicycling, riding transit, or driving. The system has been shaped by focusing on providing transportation choices that connect people safely and conveniently to a wide variety of local and regional destinations.

Based on the 2008 Citizen Survey and previously adopted plans and policies, the City's values related to transportation include:

- Walking, bicycling, public transit, and driving as safe, practical, reliable, and enjoyable means of travel for all residents and visitors;
- Streets that are livable and have adequate capacity to manage congestion on the street system and provide opportunity for all types of travel;
- Sustainable, safe, dependable, and affordable travel options that are used to connect neighborhoods with local and regional activity centers and employment districts;
- Using technology to improve transportation to encourage the best use of financial and energy resources;
- Minimizing harmful emissions related to transportation;
- Sustainable funding to support current and future transportation improvements that can be enjoyed by all users;
- Economic, environmental, and social elements balanced in transportation projects and decisions; and
- Movement of goods, services, and freight to support economic health.



*The community's extensive trail network provides fun and efficient ways to travel around town.
(art by Mario Echevarria)*



The City aims for safe and convenient transportation options for all types of users, including motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and transit riders.

WHAT HAS THE CITY ACCOMPLISHED?

The City has developed a safe, more convenient, and efficient transportation system that accommodates many forms of travel including autos, transit, bicycles, pedestrians, and freight. Some of the images of projects are shown below. Major transportation-related accomplishments are also noted.



Transit service and facility improvements.



Downtown River District.



Bicycle and pedestrian improvements throughout the community, and near schools.

Regional transportation projects, partnerships, and programs connecting Fort Collins regionally

Current regional transportation efforts include:

- **North I-25 EIS:** The CDOT North I-25 Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is identifying the type of facility improvements that will meet long-term transportation needs between the Denver Metro area and growing population centers along the I-25 corridor north to the Fort Collins - Wellington area. The process for identifying Phase 1 improvements is happening this year.
- **I-25 & Highway 392 (Carpenter Road) Interchange Project:** The City is working in cooperation with the Town of Windsor, Larimer County, and the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) to design and fund improvements to this key interchange.
- **Foxtrot Connection to Longmont:** Loveland was awarded a federal grant to extend the Foxtrot to Longmont, allowing Fort Collins to connect to Denver Metro and City and County of Boulder via Regional Transportation District (RTD) service in Longmont.

Leveraging local transportation investments

The City secured over \$12.2 million dollars in grant funds for transportation related projects in 2009. Since 2000, Transportation Planning staff has secured over \$33 million in federal, state and local grant funding for a wide variety of multimodal transportation projects, plus funding for the Mason Corridor project. The City actively participates in financial and community partnerships with many local, regional, state and national organizations and agencies to improve transportation within Fort Collins and beyond.



Roadway improvements.



Bikeline projects.

Growing convenient multi-modal options

The options for transportation in Fort Collins continue to grow. Recent milestones include:

- Transfort had over 1.9 million riders in 2009, and provides over 6,000 transit rides per service day. Transfort ridership has been steadily increasing, and had 1.88 million riders in 2008. (See Figure 3.)
- The regional Van Go tripled the number of vanpools in five years, (from about 30 in December, 2003 to about 90 in December, 2008).
- The Mason Trail created a new north-south bicycle and pedestrian trail connections, linking the Fossil Creek and Spring Creek Trails.
- The FC Bikes Program provides comprehensive bicycle information, including bicycle safety and education opportunities, and year-round encouragement events, such as Bike to Work Day. 13.3% of Fort Collins residents use bikes for transportation compared with regional data (MPO, Household Survey).
- The new FC Bike Library is a free service for residents, students, and visitors to Fort Collins. In addition to bicycles, the Bike Library provides a variety of self guided tours throughout the community.

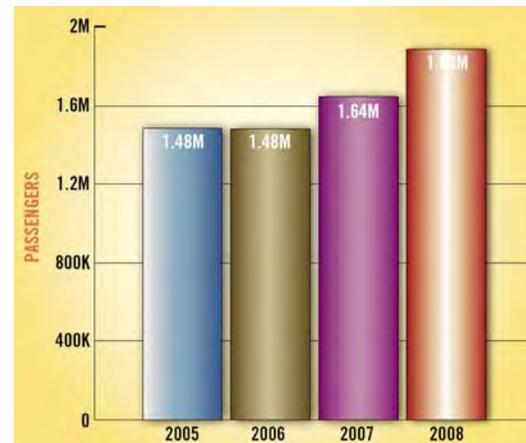


Many people attended the dedication of the Mason Trail.



New bicycle racks located Downtown.

FIGURE 3: TRANSIT RIDERSHIP



Increasing safety and efficiency of the transportation network

Roadway improvements throughout the community have made streets safer for pedestrians, bicyclists, and drivers. Improvements include:

- Roadway improvements on Timberline, Prospect and Harmony Roads.
- Bike lane projects on East and West Elizabeth Street, Remington Street, Whedbee Street, and Harmony Road.

The safety and efficiency of the City's transportation network is also enhanced by:

- The Traffic Management Center, which connects over 177 traffic signals and 36 pedestrian signals throughout Fort Collins – a system which allows traffic engineers to effectively manage and analyze real-time traffic conditions.
- Improved design standards, such as the Pedestrian Plan and multimodal Level of Service and maximum intersection geometries that have made the City a more comfortable and safe place to walk.

Planned future transportation improvements will continue improving connectivity and access

Future improvements will improve connectivity and access for residents and visitors. The five-mile Mason Corridor Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) will link major destinations and activity centers along the Mason Corridor including the Downtown commercial, cultural, and business centers, Colorado State University, Foothills Mall, and South

College retail areas. Additionally, future regional transit connections will link to the Mason Corridor.

The BRT system service (anticipated to begin in 2012) will operate nearly twice as fast as auto travel along College Avenue, as well as provide high frequency service every 10 minutes. Stations will incorporate new high-quality amenities that are similar to light rail, with low floor boarding platforms, sleek new busses, next bus arrival information, and pre-pay fare machines.

The purpose of the Mason Corridor is to support active lifestyles, economic development opportunities, and environmental stewardship.

Other future improvements to Transfort service are based on the 2009 *Transfort Strategic Plan*.

Pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular improvements are planned for North College to improve safety and circulation. These improvements will also help bolster and support local businesses in this area.

Additional transportation improvements are planned for the Mountain Vista, South College, and River District areas, and relate to future land use plans in those areas.



PARTNERS IN TRANSPORTATION

The City's partnerships with community, state, and national organizations continue to grow. Current transportation partners include:

- Associated Students of Colorado State University
- Bohemian Foundation
- City of Loveland Transit (COLT)
- Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)
- Colorado State University (CSU) and CSU Research Foundation
- Community Foundation & UniverCity Connections
- Downtown Development Authority (DDA)
- Federal Transit Administration (FTA)
- North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO)
- Poudre School District (PSD)
- Poudre Valley Health Systems (PVH)

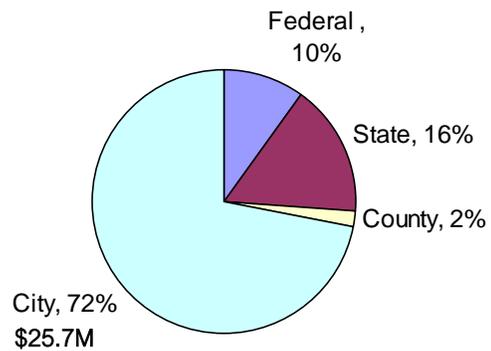
RECENT AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Fort Collins has received recognition and several recent awards for its transportation system, including:

- Gold level Bicycle Friendly Community Award from the League of American Bicyclists.
- Recognition from the North Fort Collins Business Association for the North College Improvement Project.
- Acknowledgment from Colorado State University for assistance from the City's FC Bikes program.
- Recognition from Poudre School District for the Safe Routes to School partnership efforts.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRANSIT FUNDING SOURCES, 2009

The City provided \$25.7 million in funding (72% of the total \$35.4 million) for transportation and transit in 2009.



WHAT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES REMAIN?

According to the 2008 Citizen Survey, Fort Collins' bicycling facilities and street maintenance rate above average compared to other Front Range communities and nationally. However, walkability and ease of driving rated below average, as compared to other communities along the Front Range and nationally.

Initial ideas to achieve our community goals include:

- **Improving mobility.** Developing a safe, convenient, and efficient transportation system that includes many forms of travel, including autos, transit, paratransit, bicycles, pedestrians, and freight.
- **Connecting areas.** Supporting a compact land development pattern that encourages pedestrian, bicycle, and transit travel helps to connect different areas.
- **Developing sustainable solutions.** Improving air quality, managing traffic congestion, promoting transportation demand management to reduce vehicle trips, support efficient energy, and embrace innovative ideas and future vehicles.
- **Look beyond the boundaries.** Striving for a complete transportation system by providing connections with county roads, and state and national highways.

The following is a summary of challenges and opportunities to address in the Transportation Master Plan.

Incorporating new transportation technologies and trends

The transportation system may need to adapt to and incorporate new and emerging technologies such as intelligent transportation systems, alternative fuels, new transportation energy sources and uses, and improved maintenance techniques. Adoption of these new technologies will also help the City to achieve its sustainability, mobility, and connectivity goals, and reduce vulnerability to fuel price increases or shortages.



The City's Advanced Traffic Management Center.

Improving transportation to help achieve climate objectives

Transportation improvements can help reduce citywide greenhouse gas emissions 20% by 2020. This can be achieved through reducing vehicle miles traveled, increasing walking, biking and transit trips, and reducing idling and congestion through signal or intersection improvements and modern roundabouts.

Enhancing connections between City activity centers and regional destinations

The City can do a lot to encourage connections between and to existing activity areas. New development can be located to promote accessibility for all modes of travel. Investments in enhanced travel corridors can help make areas more accessible and convenient for people walking, bicycling, and using transit while still providing access for people driving. Walking, bicycling, and transit facilities can be improved to provide alternatives to automobile travel through the City. Paratransit may also be part of the future equation.

Enhancing the transportation system to improve health and safety

The City is committed to improving the health and safety of the community, as well as providing a transportation system that serves all ages and abilities. Planning and designing the transportation system for multiple modes and users will lead to safer streets for all types of users. By providing safe and convenient alternatives to private automobile trips, such as bicycling and walking, residents are able to live more active, healthy

lifestyles. Multi-modal planning and design help to create a transportation system that meets the needs of all ages and abilities, including children, and disabled and elderly residents.

Enhancing the transportation system to improve air quality and reduce emissions

The transport sector needs to contribute to help reduce citywide greenhouse gas emissions. To achieve goals set in the Climate Action Plan, a 2% reduction in transportation emissions can be achieved through reducing vehicle miles traveled and constructing modern roundabouts to reduce vehicles idling at intersections.

Using effective tools to measure transportation system performance

Fort Collins has been using progressive policies for evaluating the roadway network for years and will continue to “push the envelope” when considering new tools for measuring the performance of the transportation system. The City is committed to applying the most effective tools to understand the mobility and sustainability impacts of the system, including using customer satisfaction surveys, and measuring congestion effects, network performance, vehicle miles traveled and clean fuel use monitoring, and energy use. Built environment factors are also used to measure comfort and safety for walking, biking, and transit travel time, and the accessibility, reliability, and service quality for all modes.

Identifying new funding opportunities for transportation, including public transit

Currently, capital projects are funded through a variety of sources. Improvements to the transportation system are costly, requiring money for studies, plans engineering, construction, and operations and maintenance. (See typical transportation costs to the right) Mobility management also incurs expenses, which need funding. The greatest threat to successfully implementing mobility management programs is the lack of reliable, long-term funding for transportation infrastructure, services, and maintenance. New reliable sources of funding need to reflect not only the new and continuing needs for capital improvements but also ongoing operations and maintenance expenses. Local funding will need to adapt to reduced federal and state funding,

particularly for operations and pavement management.

☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆☆ TYPICAL TRANSPORTATION COSTS

The following are average costs for transportation improvements:

Intersections

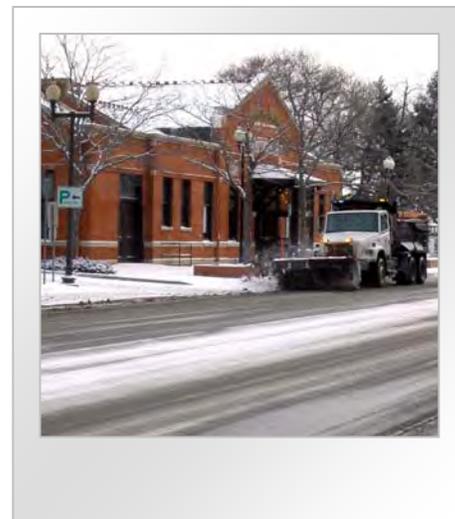
- Installation of stop signs costs between \$225 and \$475 per intersection.
- Installation of a traffic signal costs \$200,000 per intersection.
- Operation/Maintenance of the City’s traffic signal system costs about \$700,000/year per year (180+ signals, pedestrian signals, school flashers etc.).
- A signalized pedestrian crossing costs \$75,000-\$100,000.
- A typical roundabout costs \$850,000.
- A pedestrian underpass costs \$1,500,000, and pedestrian overpass costs \$2,800,000.

Roadways

- Streetscape improvements cost between \$300,000 and \$325,000 per mile.
- Crosswalk striping costs \$675 per crosswalk.
- A right turn lane costs between \$200,000 and \$225,000.
- Per mile, annual roadway maintenance costs are approximately \$58,000 for 6 lane arterial roadways, \$52,000 for 4-lane arterial roadways, and \$45,000 for 3 -lane arterial and collector streets.

Bike Lanes

- Bike lane striping and signage costs about \$1,450 per mile.



The City may need to identify new funding for transportation (e.g., pavement and operations) because of reduced federal and state funds.

WHAT ARE THE CROSS-CUTTING TOPICS?

The transportation network is intended to move people safely and efficiently throughout the community. Yet, as the system evolves to meet the needs of its users, it also has opportunities to further enhance the community's sustainability objectives. Transportation elements that cross cut multiple topics include:

- **Transforming Streets for Multi-Purpose:** Transforming streets to serve many purposes, including travel by all mode types and new future mode types, functions such as stormwater management, and linear greenways with street trees.
- **Housing and Human Services Access/Transit:** Ensuring that affordable housing and other special needs housing (such as senior or student housing) and human services are accessible via the transportation network, transit, and simple shuttle systems.
- **Access and Mobility for All:** Improving citywide day and night mobility for seniors, youth, disabled, and other segments of the population who are either unable to drive or lack a personal vehicle. Connecting the "last mile" for people who get off a bus and still need to connect to a final destination.
- **Arts and Urban Design:** Further integrating arts and urban design within the transportation network to make "getting there as enjoyable as being there."
- **Mobile Emissions Reduction:** Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air quality pollutants (such as ozone) through less automobile dependent development, reduced vehicle miles traveled, and increased use of alternative, cleaner fuels. These shifts can also contribute to better human health.
- **Health and Safety:** Planning living and travel environments that encourage outdoor physical activity that contributes to health and fosters safety.
- **Fiscal Sustainability and Transportation:** Addressing long-term stable source of funding for transportation systems and programs.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Transportation Terms

- **Accessibility** - A measure of the ability of all people to travel among various beginning and endpoints, especially focusing on the extent to which facilities are barrier-free and useable by all, especially persons with disabilities, including wheelchair users.
- **Alternative Modes** - Modes of transportation other than automobile. Includes bus and rail transit, carpool, motorcycle or scooter, bicycle, and pedestrian.
- **Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)** - Buses using and occupying a separate right-of-way for the exclusive use of public transportation services. BRT vehicles are designed to allow rapid passenger loading and unloading, with more doors than typical buses.
- **Capacity** - A measure that assesses the ability to hold and accommodate a certain volume of traffic.
- **Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT)** - The state agency responsible for planning, building, and maintaining Colorado's highway and bridge transportation system (formerly the Colorado Department of Highways).
- **Congestion** - Congestion occurs any time traffic demand is great enough so that the interaction between vehicles slows the speed of the traffic stream.
- **Delay** - The extra amount of time it takes to traverse a given roadway segment minus the amount of time it would take to travel that roadway segment at the posted speed limit if there were not interference.
- **Intelligent Transportation Systems** - The use of automated systems and information technologies on our transportation network, including communications and safety systems to assist in traveler decisions and traffic flow.
- **Mobility** - The degree to which the demand for the movement of people and goods can be satisfied.
- **Multimodal** - Using more than one mode to serve transportation needs in a given area.

Sources

- City of Fort Collins Bicycle Plan (2008)
- City of Fort Collins Citizen Survey (2008)
- City of Fort Collins Pedestrian Plan (1996)
- Fort Collins Climate Action Plan (2008)
- Fort Collins Transportation Master Plan (2004)
- North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization Household Survey data
- Transfort Strategic Plan (2009)

Conclusion and Summary

CHALLENGES/OPPORTUNITIES

Fort Collins faces both challenges and opportunities in the near-term and over the next 25 years and beyond. The previous chapters have identified an initial list of accomplishments, some of which, in their various stages of completion, also present future challenges and opportunities. They are summarized below.

Summary by Snapshot



Arts and Culture

Challenges and opportunities are:

1. Using arts and culture as an economic catalyst
2. Coordinating and funding of arts and culture organizations, programs, and facilities
3. Continuing to differentiate Fort Collins from its neighbors as an arts and culture destination
4. Designing for public spaces



Built Environment and Land Use

Challenges and opportunities are:

Development Patterns, Land Use, and Growth Management

1. Addressing potential regional impacts
2. Positioning the City for desirable infill and redevelopment
3. Defining how neighborhoods will accommodate future population and lifestyle shifts
4. Addressing limited transit links to and from activity centers
5. Maintaining a balance of jobs-and-housing and land for future jobs and employment

Provision and Integration of Services

6. Addressing infrastructure needs for parts of the City with older or substandard infrastructure
7. Continuing coordination, integration, and expansion of utilities

Urban Design

8. Continuing appropriate renewal of Downtown
9. Increasing activity along the street for people
10. Determining appropriate height for buildings
11. Defining gateways that help distinguish Fort Collins from surrounding communities

Historic Preservation

12. Reconciling “change” and “preservation” within historic neighborhoods
13. Balancing new commercial development in historic Old Town



Environment and Utilities

Challenges and opportunities are:

Water Quality Management

1. Managing watersheds and drinking water quality
2. Balancing water resource planning and drought protection objectives
3. Meeting or exceeding regulatory requirements for water reclamation

Stormwater

4. Continuing stream restoration
5. Addressing stormwater treatment in infill development areas
6. Meeting more stringent criteria for acceptable quality and quantity of stormwater
7. Coordinating Utilities, other City departments, other organizations, and public input

Energy and Electricity

8. Responding to uncertainty of carbon legislation
9. Increasing energy security
10. Adapting to new electric system technology
11. Committing to green building

Recycling and Solid Waste Reduction

12. Reducing solid waste and diversion from landfill
13. Managing hazardous materials

Air, Emissions, and Climate Protection

14. Meeting higher state and federal air quality standards
15. Achieving climate protection goals
16. Meeting sustainability and environmental policies for City operations



Finance and Economy

Challenges and opportunities are:

1. Responding to regional retail and employment competition
2. Making available “shovel ready” land for employment
3. Understanding fiscal sustainability and balancing revenues and expenditures over the long-term
4. Maintaining a balanced mix of land uses to support fiscal sustainability
5. Providing City services despite increasing costs
6. Continuing to improve the City’s budgeting process



Health, Wellness, and Safety

Challenges and opportunities are:

Active Living

1. Reducing barriers to and improving opportunities for physical activity and active lifestyles

Health and Wellness

2. Improving the health and wellness of the community, especially at-risk populations

Health and Human Services

3. Addressing accessibility and provision of communitywide health and human services

Community Engagement

4. Engaging a broad range of community members
5. Retaining a sense of community and heritage as change occurs

Safety

6. Satisfying community safety needs and expectations with limited resources
7. Addressing safety as multiple modes of transportation share roads



Housing

Challenges and opportunities are:

Affordable Housing

1. Continuing to fund, support, and develop affordable housing
2. Need for a continuous local funding source

Housing Options

3. Serving the housing needs of many diverse groups and changing demographics

High Performing Housing for All

4. Providing high-performing housing for all income levels



Open Space, Natural Areas, Parks, and Recreation

Challenges and opportunities are:

Natural Areas

1. Assuring long-term financial viability and maintaining long-term balance between land conservation and stewardship
2. Striving to reduce the carbon footprint from operations and restoring habitat
3. Managing for outstanding visitor experience while there are increasing demands for uses on natural areas

Parks

4. Providing parks and trails to a growing community and maximizing program resources

Stormwater / Open Lands

5. Planning for most suitable uses given competing needs for remaining open land
6. Balancing protection and restoration with urbanization
7. Addressing multiple and sometimes conflicting regulations and values



Transportation

Challenges and opportunities are:

1. Incorporating new transportation technologies and trends
2. Improving transportation to help achieve climate objectives
3. Enhancing connections between City activity centers and regional destinations
4. Enhancing the transportation system to improve health and safety
5. Enhancing the transportation system to improve air quality and reduce emissions
6. Using effective tools to measure transportation system performance
7. Identifying new funding opportunities for transportation, including public transit

SUSTAINABILITY TOPICS



Plan Fort Collins will carry the City into the future, helping to shape the City for our children and grandchildren’s generations. A preliminary list of cross-cutting topics identified throughout this report and during community dialogue, are listed below. Plan Fort Collins should address the integrated topics on this list.

Topic

Active Living/Complete Streets:

Building streets and a transportation network that allows for safe, comfortable, and convenient travel for all transportation modes (driving, transit, walking, and bicycling). Greater opportunities for bicycling and walking also improve community health. Providing parks, recreation, and programs to support active living.

Art in Public Places and Transportation:

Further integrating arts, urban design, and streetscape within the transportation network to make the journey as enjoyable as getting there. Developing further connections/integration of arts and cultural elements into the built environment, parks, stormwater projects, and the local economy. Increasing presence of artistic elements as part of utilities and renewable energy facilities to support local arts and cultural industries.

Cache La Poudre River Planning.:

Defining future land uses and conservation along the river, given scattered pockets of vacant or redevelopable lands and floodplain coverage. Defining the City’s policy on levels of instream flows (or amount of water needed to support downstream river functions) to support a healthy river. The river has historically had and currently plays important functions: providing water, performing as a wildlife and habitat corridor, and giving people recreational opportunities and relief from the surrounding urban areas.

Ecological Systems Planning:

Defining suitable land uses based on land characteristics (e.g., What is best for agriculture? What is best habitat? Where should urban development occur?)

Economic Sustainability:

Increasing the capacity of the community to be competitive, resilient, and attractive to enterprise. This, in turn, provides meaningful employment to its residents in a manner that also protects the environment. Providing an economically sound system of maintaining our community infrastructure.

Efficient Mobility and Transit:

Providing greater choices for travel to reduce auto-dependency, costs of fuel, and greenhouse gas emissions and other air pollutants. Transit is an important component of the system, especially for populations that either can not drive or do not have personal vehicles.

Energy Policies (efficiency, renewable):

Increasing energy efficiency and integrating renewable energy and smart grid technologies into the energy system to help reduce carbon emissions, benefit Fort Collins residents, plan for future energy uncertainties, and save money.

Financing New Sustainable Technologies:

Finding ways to finance the capital and on-going operations and maintenance costs of innovative public sector services. Encouraging sustainable development (e.g., fees, incentives, rebates, policies and practices that facilitate innovative design).

Food Production and Security:

Supporting farmer’s markets, community gardens, and agriculture that contribute to community health and well-being and the local economy.

Green Building:

Improving the built environment (structures and facilities) to increase efficiency and comfort while decreasing resources needed for construction, operation, and maintenance.

Green Streets:

Building streets that incorporate stormwater drainage Best Management Practices, street trees, and landscaping, and comfortably and safely accommodate multiple types of transportation (vehicles, bikes, transits, and pedestrians).

Topic

Housing and Health/ Human Services Coordination:

Providing health and human services in combination with housing programs to assist residents in securing housing. Coordinating location of housing for seniors, disabled people, and low incomes near services and transit, as well as equitable distribution.

New Technology:

Developing land use and transportation policies that support new technologies (e.g., green building, alternative energy development, smart metering, electric vehicles, etc.).

Reduced Vehicle Miles/Carbon Emission Reduction:

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions through less automobile dependent development, reduced vehicle miles traveled, and increased use of alternative, cleaner fuels for heating and cooling.

Safety and Crime Prevention through Environmental Design:

Deterring criminal behavior through design and a multi-disciplinary approach to increase outdoor physical activity, visibility, and social interaction.

Stormwater Multiple Uses:

Continuing a mutually-beneficial planning of parks, natural areas, and stormwater management. Adapting water quality, and stormwater functions more fully into the urban environment helps achieve opportunities for interaction with nature in the City;

Urban Forestry:

Managing and planting new trees on streets and in public spaces to help with stormwater management, clean water and air, aesthetics, shade and cooling, and wind protection.

Waste Reduction:

Working toward increased recycling, reuse, and reduction of waste to achieve greater solid waste diversion and hazardous waste reduction goals. These goals if achieved, conserve landfill space, protect community health, and use resources more efficiently.

Water Quality/Resource Protection:

Managing water use efficiency and water quality to meet the needs of a growing population and the City's natural resources, recreation use, health, and aquatic habitat.



Plan  **Fort Collins**
innovate · sustain · connect

HELP SHAPE THE FUTURE!

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