

FORT COLLINS



RESILIENT RECOVERY PLAN

REVISED 3/1/2022



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On March 9, 2020, the first COVID-19 case in Larimer County was announced. Within a week, as cases rose throughout the country, schools, businesses and other public and private spaces closed, and Colorado issued a statewide stay-at-home order on April 27, 2020. What initially looked like a temporary shift in everyday life grew into a pandemic that continues to disrupt daily decision-making. These have been unprecedented times, with deep impacts on the community, country and world.

The health and safety of the community has been, and will continue to be, a top priority throughout the pandemic. Early on, the community acknowledged the interconnectivity between people, the economy and the environment during the crisis. The community's commitment to sustainability (or the triple bottom line) when thinking about recovering and rebuilding, especially long-term resilience, are at the core of the Recovery Plan.

Many communities have developed COVID recovery plans focused on the distribution of federal funding; however, **the City envisioned a plan** built with community members, internal City departments, businesses and partners to not only ensure transparency and fiscal responsibility, but also recognize and acknowledge the past to build an inclusive, resilient future for Fort Collins. This unique approach is designed to acknowledge that Fort Collins cannot return to the pre-pandemic status quo. Recovery will be a multi-faceted, multi-year, non-linear process that includes not only regaining stability but also acknowledging the trauma and healing that must happen to build resilience.

Many of the City's existing plans have visions and strategies that move the community toward the vision of a vibrant city. However, this plan recognizes the work that remains ahead around **healing, inclusion, and resilience** to move Fort Collins toward a **vibrant** future.

A pragmatic, people-centered approach to engagement was utilized to inform the plan. Engagement was designed to meet the needs of different audiences in the community, and to center hard-hit and historically underserved community members (residents, businesses, and organizations). A variety of methods and tools were used to reach various groups, including all ages, races, ethnicities, and income levels. The input from the extensive engagement resulted in four themes identified for the plan: health, equity and community resilience, economic recovery, and environmental resilience. The plan addresses each of these themes, which are integral to recovery, along with specific outcomes and objectives.

The plan seeks to leverage this historic opportunity to make bold, long-term investments to achieve recovery. Federal funding, such as the American Rescue Plan Act funds, is one tool to help the community achieve the plan's vision; however, additional sources of funds, resources and partnerships must be utilized for recovery to be fully realized.

Throughout the pandemic, the community has worked to respond to and recover from direct and indirect COVID-19 impacts. Adoption of the plan is one milestone, but one that will require intentional action and review due to the uncertain nature of the pandemic. Plan implementation will include not only rolling out new programs to help recovery, but also enhancing and/or accelerating programs the City organization and community partners are already providing that align with plan outcomes. Additionally, policy will play a key role, including advancing and adjusting policies that reduce barriers and systemic inequities. Ongoing evaluation and process improvement will continue to be valuable measures to gauge how recovery is progressing. The future is still uncertain; however, this plan lays out priorities for a more resilient, vibrant and inclusive post-pandemic community, while still being nimble and not overly prescriptive.

INTRODUCTION

LETTER FROM LEADERSHIP

Since March 2020, when the initial local emergency was declared, our community has endured the extraordinary and continually evolving impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Later that year, those impacts were compounded by some of the worst fires in Colorado history and the large-scale social justice movements spurred by the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and others.

As we continue to navigate the pandemic and respond to its far-reaching impacts, it is important to acknowledge the trauma of the last two years in order to begin to heal and recover. While we may not fully understand the impacts of the pandemic for some time, we do know that members of our community have been lost and many more have lost friends and loved ones. Burnout and pandemic fatigue are experienced by our healthcare providers, first responders, education professionals and essential workers - and to an extent we have all felt the exhaustion of the pandemic and its challenges.

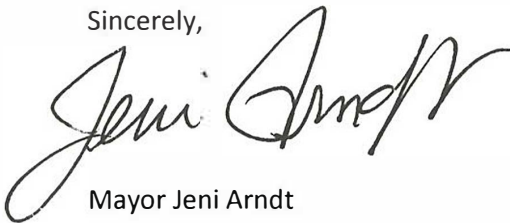
Despite these difficult times, Fort Collins and the entire Northern Colorado community have pulled together in incredible ways. We have heard countless inspiring stories of the innovative ways neighbors have supported each other, of restaurants opening their doors to feed front-line workers, of local organizations providing lifesaving and life-changing aid to those in need. Our community is strong, even in the midst of struggle.

As we move forward, we have the opportunity to come together to heal, rebuild and create a more resilient, equitable and vibrant community. Over the past year, the City worked with regional partners, community organizations, local businesses and thousands of community members to understand how the pandemic has affected them and what they most desire from a community recovery effort. This plan lays out priorities for both immediate and long-term recovery, while maintaining flexibility for what remains an evolving environment. The City is committed to not only supporting our community members, but also partnering with them to co-create solutions that address challenges and shape the future of Fort Collins. By doing this, we can create stronger, more equitable and innovative solutions for recovery.

We know we cannot return to the pre-pandemic status quo. As much as the past two years have shown our strength, they have also revealed and elevated systemic inequities and injustice. Building back and recovering from the pandemic is about more than just returning to what was normal; we can create a new normal, one that is more equitable and inclusive and doesn't leave anyone behind.

Fort Collins is an evolving, resilient community, full of caring people. Our future is bright, and we will continue to move forward together.

Sincerely,



Mayor Jeni Arndt



Kelly DiMartino, Interim City Manager

RECOVERY VISION

The pandemic has brought perilous challenges, seemingly overnight, to the community, impacting virtually every aspect of residents' lives and often exacerbating previously existing issues. Fort Collins continues to face these and emerging challenges with the rise of COVID variants. 2020 and 2021 were also marked by historical wildfires, air quality impacts and the social justice movement intensified by the murders of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor.

Although the community is still in the midst of pandemic response, the City of Fort Collins has begun to plan the road to a resilient recovery. The health and safety of the community is top priority. To guide long-term efforts, the City is committed to developing a community Recovery Plan. Recovery is a multi-faceted, multi-year process, and the plan is a crucial step in laying out what the community wants and needs most to build back better.

The plan will focus on more than economic recovery or the distribution of federal recovery funds. As the initial wave of the pandemic swept through the region and stay-at-home orders were put into place, disparities in the community related to health, equity, inclusion, economic stability and more that had existed pre-COVID were exacerbated.

To move toward a resilient future, these disparities and systemic barriers must be acknowledged and removed. This approach of investing in the community's triple bottom line (economic, environmental and social health) will lead to a more balanced, purposeful recovery – one that doesn't focus just on economic rebuilding or health, but rather balances them along with community and environmental resilience. As the Fort Collins community moves toward recovery, perspectives and impacts from many different stakeholders and community members' lived experiences must be understood. Disparities in health and economic security were not created by COVID-19, but were worsened by the pandemic. Recovery will involve not only helping those most impacted, but also reducing barriers and building resilience so that those who have faced inequities in the past are better situated to weather the next crisis and thrive in the community. This shared purpose will allow Fort Collins to move toward recovery.

Taking all of this into account, **the vision for recovery is that Fort Collins residents and businesses can participate in a resilient, vibrant and inclusive future.**



KEY ELEMENTS ADDRESSED IN VISION AND PLAN

A crucial purpose of the Recovery Plan is to lay out what the community has shared is needed most now and into the future, as well as defining the City’s role and available resources.

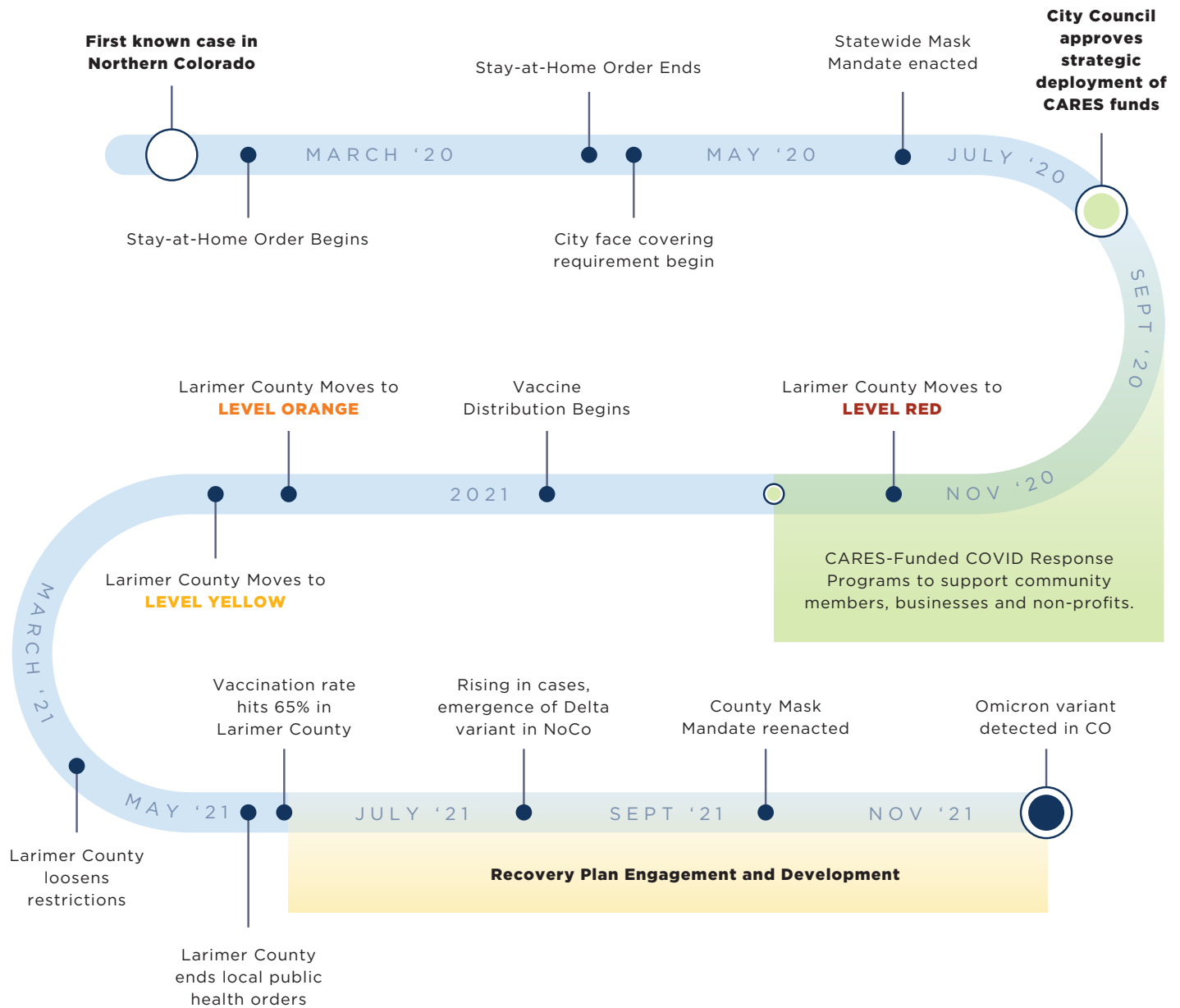
Inclusion and healing are the first steps in moving toward becoming a more resilient city that can prepare for and endure future shocks and disruptions. By becoming a city that prioritizes a future where everyone, including those who have been historically underserved, feel a sense of belonging, the whole community will be stronger and more inclusive. As the City moves toward recovery, Fort Collins must be intentional and acknowledge that the community needs to heal from the damage the pandemic has caused, including the human losses that have occurred. Healing – like grief – is not linear and looks different for everyone. Keeping this at the forefront of processes and decision-making are crucial in the path toward recovery.

The City has many plans, such as City Plan, FoCo Creates, and others, that move the community toward the vision of a vibrant city. The Recovery Plan acknowledges the existing work that remains around **healing, inclusion, and resilience** to move Fort Collins toward a **vibrant** future. The purpose of these four foundational words is to anchor the community and City organization to a “new normal” – a vision of work that integrates healing and inclusion as a foundation to becoming a community that is resilient in the face of difficult change and where everyone who calls this place home can experience a sense of belonging.

	HEALING	INCLUSION	RESILIENCE	VIBRANCY
DEFINITION	The process of making or becoming sound or healthy again.	An intention or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or underserved. Inclusion requires removing barriers so all can thrive.	The ability to better avoid, withstand or recover from difficult conditions of various scales.	A sense of place and belonging for all. Full of energy and enthusiasm.



TIMELINE



On March 9, 2020, the first COVID-19 case in Larimer County was announced. Within a week, as cases rose throughout the country, Fort Collins experienced closures of schools, businesses and other public spaces, followed by a statewide stay-at-home order on April 27, 2020.

The City of Fort Collins, along with other municipalities, received federal Coronavirus Relief Funds (CVRF) to meet the immediate health crisis and ongoing response in summer 2020. To provide strategic oversight and guidance for the overall pandemic response, as well as CVRF deployment, an internal Recovery Executive Team (Recovery Exec) was formed. A City Recovery Manager position was created to focus on the response and long-term recovery within the City organization, while also ensuring regional coordination and collaboration. As the pandemic continued, Recovery Exec and City Council determined the need for a long-term recovery plan that aligns with and supports the community.

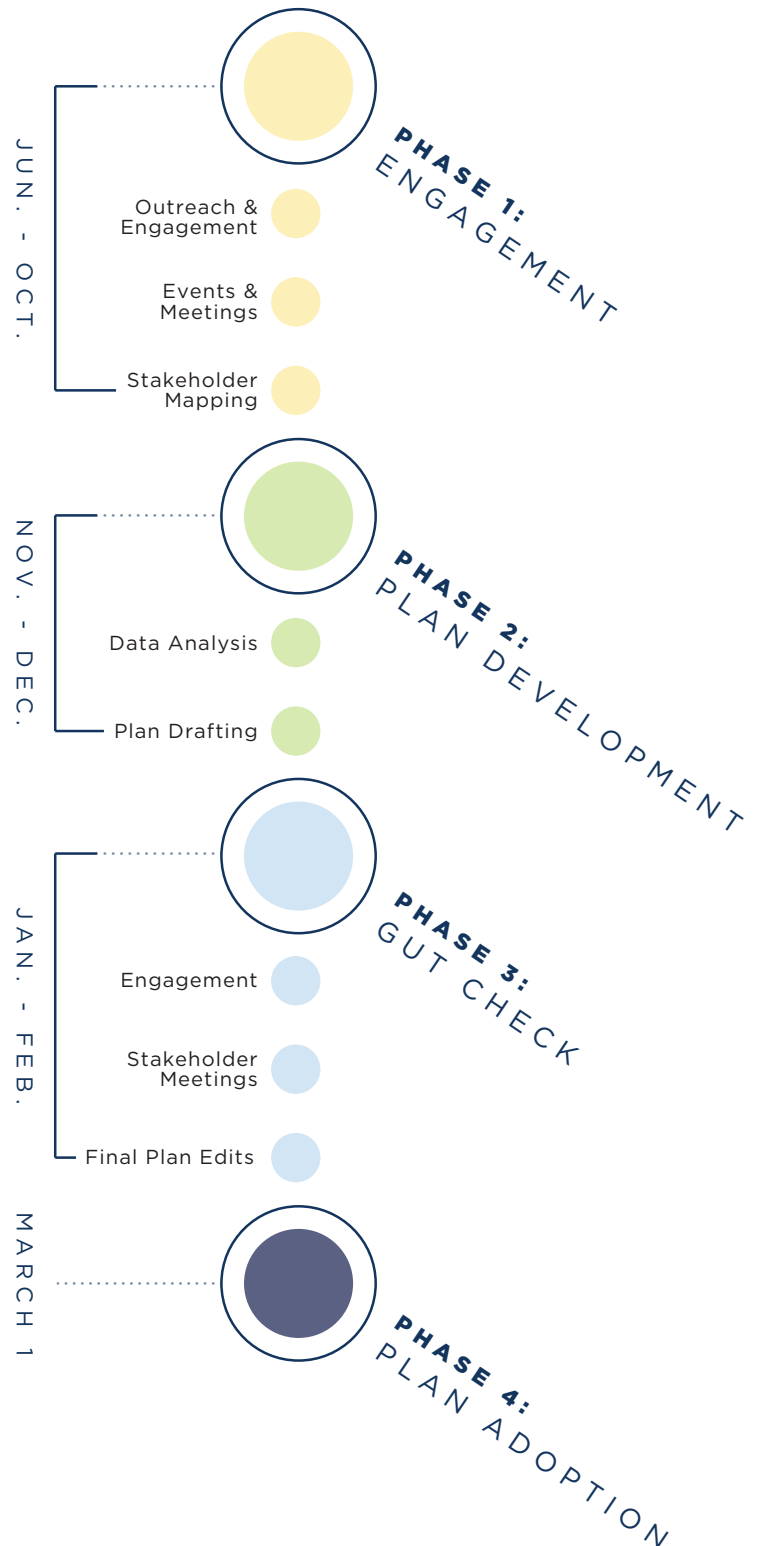
RECOVERY PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Other communities have developed or are developing recovery plans primarily focused on distributing federal funding. However, the City of Fort Collins is taking a different approach, one that envisions a plan built with community members, internal City departments, businesses and partners. This approach helps ensure transparency and fiscal responsibility, and acknowledges past inequities and seeks to build an inclusive, resilient future for Fort Collins. This unique approach allows the City to remain mindful that the community cannot return to the pre-pandemic status quo.

In March 2021, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) was passed by Congress, shortly after which the City was notified of a \$28.1 million ARPA award. By mid-May, the City received the first \$14 million tranche of state and local fiscal recovery funds, with the remainder to be received in 2022.

Public engagement and plan development began in earnest in June 2021. That same month, staff sought direction for the development of a recovery plan with City Council and discussed the need to set aside a portion of ARPA funds to be used for immediate pandemic response. On July 7, 2021, Council adopted Ordinance No. 079.2021 appropriating \$4.2 million for response efforts.

- **Phase 1: Engagement:** Focused on robust community engagement
- **Phase 2: Plan Development:** Centered on drafting and writing the plan, along with analyzing community engagement priorities and feedback
- **Phase 3: Gut Check:** During this phase, additional community engagement on the draft plan occurred, and the plan was finalized for Council adoption



A full timeline of Recovery Plan development can be found in Appendix B.

RECOVERY PLANNING STRUCTURE

To help guide the City's recovery planning efforts, several teams were assembled from staff across the organization, with final authority and guidance coming from City Council and the community.



PURPOSE OF RECOVERY EXECUTIVE TEAM

The Recovery Executive Team (Recovery Exec) is a cross-functional group of service area directors within the City. The team met monthly to provide strategic focus, a collective organization- and community-wide approach, transparency and leadership to the overall response and recovery efforts, including the deployment of federal emergency funds. Recovery Exec identified challenges and roadblocks and advised the City Recovery Manager and Recovery Core Team on solutions, opportunities and efficiencies.

PURPOSE OF RECOVERY CORE TEAM

The Recovery Core Team is an interdepartmental, cross-functional group that met monthly to tackle key challenges facing recovery, such as identifying and addressing opportunities and threats to the Recovery Plan development and ensuring the effectiveness of long-term resilience planning.

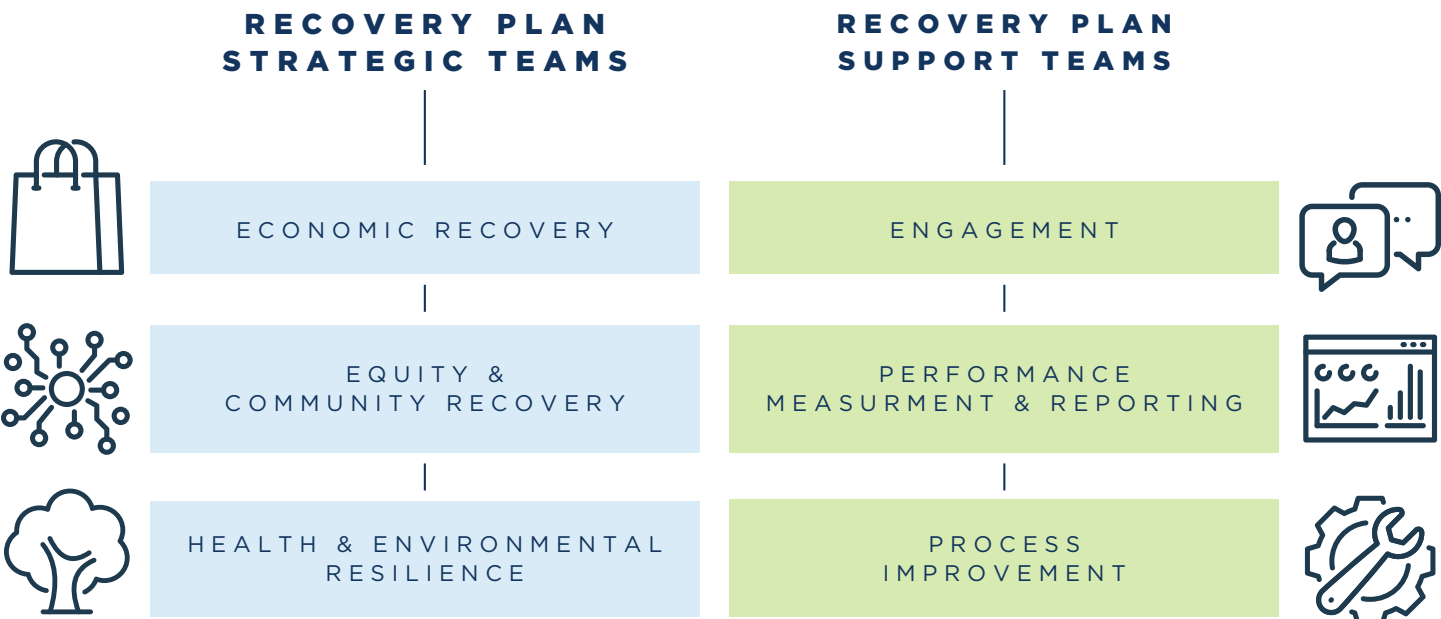
This group includes the Chief Financial Officer, City Recovery Manager, Recovery Policy & Engagement Specialist, Utilities Interim Deputy Director, and the Strategic Working Group leads. Recovery cannot happen in isolation and affects more than one project, one department, one sector, or one municipality. It encompasses everyone and requires working together to serve the needs of the community. The Recovery Core Team worked to deliver on the plan's vision, while also addressing the everyday challenges of the pandemic.



STRATEGIC WORKING GROUPS

The three strategic teams were focused on three broad areas related to recovery: Equity & Community Recovery, Economic Recovery, and Health & Environmental Resilience. Taking into consideration the feedback received from the community throughout the engagement process, as well as their knowledge and experience gleaned from service to the community, these teams helped craft a unique and comprehensive set of outcomes to aid in a holistic approach to the plan. Ultimately, within the plan, Health and Environmental Resilience were split into two separate themes based on community and stakeholder feedback.

The three support teams focused on community engagement, data & metrics, and process improvement. The Community Engagement Team spearheaded the creation and implementation of public engagement to guide the planning process. The Performance Measurement and Reporting supported the identification and analysis of relevant metrics to help measure recovery progress, and the Process Improvement Team continuously worked to evaluate and improve the short-term ARPA funding process and plan for allocation of future ARPA funds.



IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC ON FORT COLLINS

“It’s almost hard to remember life as we knew it, pre-COVID. For many, this time has brought increased stress and pressure. Others, it has been a time of refreshing and a positive resetting of priorities. We’re being forced to rethink how we do things, and this presents both challenges and opportunities that come with change. As an organization, we are navigating this same dynamic, and at times I am almost overwhelmed with gratitude for those of you who are on this journey and doing the tremendous work of serving our community.”

- Kelly DiMartino, Interim City Manager

As the world continues to battle COVID-19, the pandemic’s impact on society continues to grow. While the global population has experienced extreme changes in day-to-day life, researchers have worked tirelessly to develop vaccines and treatments to halt the disease and bring the world out of lockdown. From shifting to remote work and home-schooling children, to restricting travel and leisure activities, to disrupting supply chains, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on virtually every facet of life.

The pandemic has amplified existing systemic inequities in income and poverty; socioeconomic inequities in education, skills and wages; as well as intergenerational inequities; with particular impacts on children, seniors, families with children, young adults, and small businesses. Within these segments of the population, inequities related to gender, race and ethnicity and social deprivation have been both exposed and exacerbated. At the same time, impacts related to development, relationships and mental health have been compounded, which are all variably affected and interlinked.

Like systemic inequities, health outcomes for COVID-19 have followed patterns of existing health disparities. There are ongoing health impacts from ‘long-COVID’ as well as from delays in care-seeking and reprioritizing medical resources. Deficiencies in infection prevention and control measures, and inequities in the structure and funding of social care provisions have also been laid bare. Many of these impacts have a compounding effect at both the individual and community levels. Childcare issues have led to negative economic impacts, with certain community members feeling like they are choosing between the health of themselves and their family and their ability to work.

COMMUNITY MEMBER STORY:

"I was launching a new business prior to the pandemic and bootstrapping it with my own savings (which has now run out). I am a single mother with two school-age children, so I could not work on my business until the past few months. Pre-revenue small businesses did not qualify for ANY COVID financial help from the government or from other groups. I feel invisible. As of three months ago, I am receiving SNAP and Colorado Works, however it is not enough. I am still exhausted/burnt out from being a single parent of school-age children during the pandemic. Taking another job while trying to get my own business back online is way too much for me to handle right now. My business is purpose driven, and it is not something I can walk away from."

Mental health has also been profoundly impacted. Isolation, disruption to feelings of safety and security, and the daily pressures of managing work- or school-load and well-being have all taken their toll on the community, especially on first responders, healthcare- and front-line workers, educators and youth. Public engagement efforts during plan development brought forward hundreds of examples of how mental well-being has been negatively impacted due to the pandemic. The community is still struggling with both the impacts of the past two years as well as future unknowns:

"I just need to see that we're starting to make progress toward returning back to normal. Even when things do loosen up there's always this looming threat that the rug is going to be ripped out from under me again."



IMPACTS TO BUSINESSES

"My business received help from the PPP and other loans/grants. Some other small businesses that did not apply now wish they had. At the time they had lost staff and had no one to help them navigate the processes. I am concerned that some will not survive. They need grants and real help to understand them and to apply for them."

Virtually all businesses in the City have been impacted by the pandemic in some way. The type and degree of impact has varied by business size, industry, and other characteristics. Businesses in the hospitality industry, personal services, arts and entertainment, recreation, retail, manufacturing, and healthcare industries have been significantly impacted since the initial stay-at-home orders in March 2020. This is especially true for businesses owned by women, Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) and/or LGBTQIA+ community members.

Surveys of local businesses indicated that a majority of them made changes to operations during the pandemic. Changes included:

- introducing new health and safety measures
- closing facilities to the public
- discontinuing onsite sales or services
- increasing the number of employees working from home
- canceling or postponing large meetings or events
- postponing plans to upgrade facilities or equipment
- canceling contracts with vendors or service providers

After nearly two years of operating in a pandemic, businesses continue navigating a complex minefield of supply chain delays/shortages, inflation, public health orders, new variants of COVID-19, and worker/talent changes and shortages.



IMPACTS TO RESIDENTS

"There needs to be expanded access to mental health services...Providers are overwhelmed and spaces are limited, especially for those who offer services outside of traditional work hours. There has to be some relief... None of us are doing okay."

The COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting economic recession have negatively affected many residents' mental health and created new barriers for people already suffering from mental illness and substance use disorders.

Throughout the pandemic, many adults locally and nationally have reported symptoms of anxiety or depression. Specific negative impacts to well-being mentioned include difficulty sleeping, difficulty eating, increases in substance use, and worsening chronic conditions due to worry and stress over the coronavirus.

As the pandemic wears on, so too do negative mental health consequences. Young adults, people experiencing job loss, parents, children, BIPOC community members, and essential workers have been particularly at risk for negative mental health consequences during the pandemic, and these impacts may not go away when the pandemic ends.¹

Although mental health impacts from the pandemic have helped destigmatize conversations about mental well-being and the value of getting support when needed, it also means that the need for quality mental health services is greater than ever before. This increased need has in turn highlighted new and existing barriers to accessing services.



¹ It is important to acknowledge that many of these identities do not occur in isolation and that there is often intersectionality between them.

IMPACTS TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

"[Fort Collins] is a great place to live for individuals who are middle class to upper class, but things are getting more and more expensive and a lot of minority groups are getting left behind/cannot afford to be here."

Even before the pandemic, systemic and societal disparities existed for many historically underserved, underrepresented community members in Fort Collins. COVID-19 is a "crisis on top of a crisis" that compounds the experience of racism, discrimination, stigma, and implicit bias.

Many who were at or above the poverty level pre-pandemic are now finding themselves unable to afford food, healthcare, housing, transportation and other essential needs because of new circumstances driven by the pandemic. For example, many workers in lower-income positions do not have the flexibility of working from home, but instead work on the front lines, increasing the risk of COVID-19 exposure and infection for themselves and their families. Already vulnerable residents have been pushed into even more vulnerable states.

Public engagement conducted during plan development yielded dozens of stories from vulnerable community members about how the pandemic exacerbated their already difficult experiences. When looking specifically at top priorities for recovery, Latinx/Hispanic community members ranked essential needs, such as food access and housing, higher than the community as a whole. This data reflects local and national research that clearly shows the disparate impacts the pandemic has had on certain groups. Not only have historically underserved community members been more likely to experience negative socio-economic impacts, but data have shown higher rates of COVID-19 infection and severe illness. This trend is reflected in rates of hospitalizations and deaths.²



² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/investigations-discovery/hospitalization-death-by-race-ethnicity.html>

IMPACTS TO FAMILIES AND CHILDREN

“[We need] more security around childcare and in-person schooling - it feels like the bottom will drop out at any moment and that makes it impossible to grow in our careers, business decisions, etc.”

Families with children have experienced various challenges throughout the pandemic and continue to struggle to regain stability as exposures and illness from variants occur. In addition to worries and anxieties related to the pandemic and the safety of their children, many families have seen childcare and social support disrupted or fade away altogether. Many parents, while trying to juggle work, have not only had to take care of their children with restricted caregiver resources (e.g., grandparents, daycare settings, schools) but also play the role of educator. Even though schools have reopened, frequent exposures and staff shortages continue to impact the ability of children to attend school, and parents and caregivers must then figure out how to find care for children. During public engagement, dozens of parents and caregivers indicated that affordable and available childcare has been impacted, and that they often felt forced to choose between staying home to care for their children and working. Many times, front-line workers were unable to be home to support children and remote learning, nor did all community members have the funds or network to set up learning pods when schools were remote.

These disruptions do not only impact parents and caregivers; they impact children themselves. Youth behavioral, developmental and mental health have all been widely reported as negatively impacted, and children with preexisting educational disparities have been especially impacted. Learning loss and loss of social interaction have also had significant impacts, and long-term effects of this on children are yet to be fully understood. However, it will be important to support children during recovery to mitigate learning loss and spur social development.

It is also important to note that when schools transitioned to remote learning, not all students had the same ability to learn from home. Many lower-income households in the community have experienced a “digital gap” due to the lack of reliable access to the internet and other digital resources at home, which has affected learning.

IMPACTS TO HEALTHCARE WORKERS

“As a nurse it is exhausting to work through this, especially because people do not believe it is real and will not take simple measures. Despite taking all precautions, being vaccinated, I still got a breakthrough case. I wasn’t able to get my booster due to working extra shifts and then needing to take daughter to look at colleges. So I caught COVID despite always wearing a mask. Now it’s been three weeks and I am still not better. I have struggled to find a therapist because they are all so overwhelmed.”

Healthcare workers have been at the heart of the unparalleled crisis of the pandemic, burdened with reducing the spread of infection, developing short-term strategies for treatment, and formulating long-term plans for patient recovery. Throughout the pandemic, they have also had to continue treating non-COVID patients – an already challenging role prone to stress and burnout.

Like other front-line and essential workers, many health-care workers have experienced higher levels of psychological stress and burnout throughout the pandemic, causing some to leave the profession. This exacerbates staffing shortages and places further strain on those who remain.

IMPACTS TO CITY EMPLOYEES

“As a police officer, it is my duty to leave the safety of my home and interact with high-risk members of the public knowing I may bring exposure to COVID home to my young children who are not yet approved for the vaccines.”

Similarly to those working in other essential services, City employees have been significantly impacted by the pandemic over the past two years. While some staff were able to transition to working remotely, many others have worked in person throughout the pandemic, including during the statewide stay-at-home order, providing critical services for public safety and public works.

Although City buildings have reopened to the public, many staff are following a hybrid work model, and rising cases counts due to COVID-19 variants have strained the ability to provide service. Like other employees in the Fort Collins community, City staff are also experiencing burnout.

Burnout has been reported across almost all parts of the City organization, with many staff departures taking place since March 2020. Coupled with this has been a wave of positions vacated by staff who opted to retire (sometimes early). For some, retiring or leaving was related to personal health circumstances, or changes in family situations and lifestyle due to the pandemic. Many City employees have reported that they have considered leaving their jobs at some point during the pandemic.



PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Conversations with community members are a key part of planning for recovery. A central element of the vision for recovery involves recognizing that the negative impacts of the pandemic were not and are not evenly distributed. Numerous studies and reports have shown that COVID-19 has had disparate impacts on different socioeconomic and demographic groups, including workers in low-wage positions, caregivers, seniors and people of color.

Grounded in this knowledge and guided by the desire to center equity in creating a vision for recovery, the City of Fort Collins engaged with thousands of community members through events, paid partnerships with community organizations, surveys and other methods.

The primary objectives of Recovery Plan Engagement include:

- Gather community input and needs to inform creation of recovery plan.
- Connect with and gather feedback from underrepresented groups, focus on inclusive engagement and language access.
- Incorporate feedback from other recent and ongoing engagement processes to help inform recovery (data from City Plan, Our Climate Future, etc., and include recovery as a topic in Community Survey, East Mulberry and Budget engagement).
- Gather ideas for recovery programs, identify community needs for recovery and a future that is resilient, vibrant and inclusive.
- Develop clear recovery plan and recommendations to achieve vision based on community feedback.



PROCESS AND METHODS

Engagement began in the spring of 2021, ramping up through the summer and fall. Phase 1 of engagement focused on understanding ongoing challenges and impacts of the pandemic, while also asking what long-term recovery looks like to the community.

Engagement was designed to meet the needs of different audiences in the community, and to center hard-hit and historically underserved residents. A variety of methods and tools were used to reach various groups, including all ages, races, ethnicities, and income levels. This included online and mailed surveys in English and Spanish; digital, print and radio ads; stakeholder meetings; and paid partnerships with community connectors and organizations, among other methods. Final participation numbers include:

- 2,200+ online survey responses
- 220+ responses from OurCity Platform
- Approx. 25 paper survey responses
- 50+ stakeholder meetings

After the creation of the draft Recovery Plan, additional public engagement (Phase 3 of Plan Development) occurred to gauge if community priorities for recovery were accurately reflected in the plan. Multiple tools were used for this engagement, including online surveying and additional stakeholder conversations.

Public engagement does not stop with plan adoption. Future conversations with the community will be required to help uncover the specific programs and mechanisms needed to support residents' unique paths toward recovery. Throughout plan implementation additional engagement and outreach will be conducted to ensure continued alignment between community needs and offered programs and services. Ongoing engagement will also allow nimbleness to respond to emerging challenges and impacts of the pandemic.



RESULTS

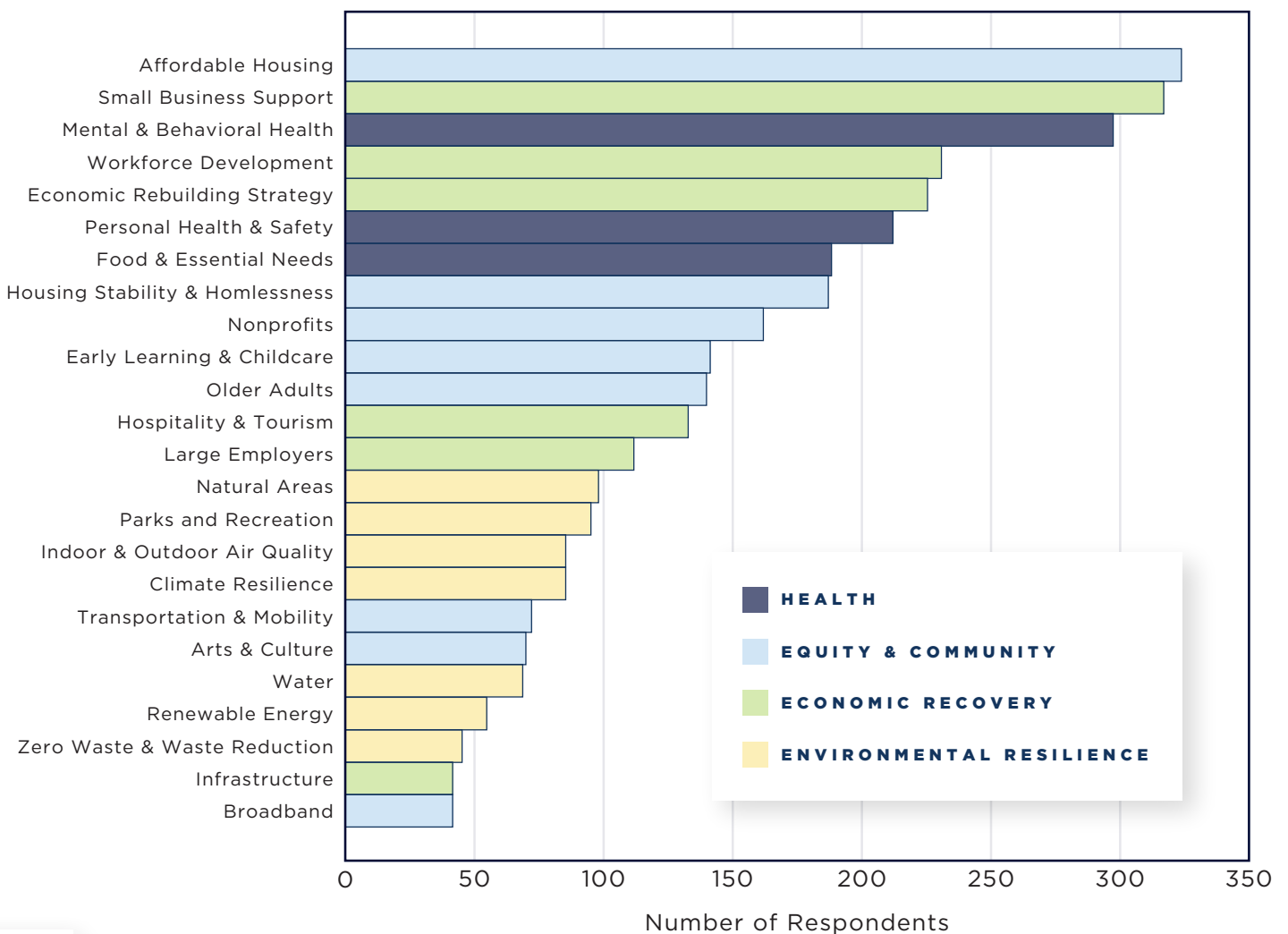
Analysis of open-ended responses yielded four key themes for recovery:

- Support individuals and businesses through strong pandemic response programs
- bolster community organizations, networks, and spaces that provide direct assistance, and center those most impacted
- remove barriers to resilience
- invest in infrastructure and amenities to support a vibrant future

The following graph displays Priority Areas for recovery as identified by survey respondents. Respondents chose their top five priorities for recovery based on the list below.

Affordable housing, small business support, mental & behavioral health, workforce development and economic rebuilding strategy ranked highest; however, it is important to note that not all parts of the Fort Collins community have the same top priorities. For example, mixed-methods analysis highlighted that for many, essential needs and health and safety ranked highest. For others, recovery didn't even resonate – it felt too soon to talk about recovery when the crisis is ongoing.

Top Priority Areas for Recovery



In many ways, the community's responses align with existing priorities and plans. Specifically, many responses highlighted the need for community mental health services, affordable housing, higher wages, and access to childcare.

Participants recognized that recovery will not be a straightforward or linear journey. Rather than understanding the four themes listed above as "steps" in the process of recovery, the City should focus on pairing centralized policy and investment with decentralized programs and access points for the community. This will remove barriers to success and allow residents to access the programs and resources they need for healing and resilience.

While the above chart and qualitative analysis included a number of businesses, additional engagement with businesses occurred during the plan development process through the Economic Health Office. This included regular surveying and follow up for those businesses that received pandemic relief assistance through the City and/or County. The most recent survey of Small Business Assistance Report Recipients can be found in Appendix C, along with full engagement results.



FUNDING

Although the State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) is an impactful tool to aid recovery work, is not the only tool. The community must be intentional about its funding deployment to leverage ARPA and any future funds that become available. In order for Fort Collins to recover, the community must look at all tools, including but not limited to grant or general funds, policy review, acceleration of programs/projects, public-private partnerships and other resources.

ARPA FUNDING

The federal American Rescue Plan Act established \$1.9 trillion in COVID-19 relief funding, including \$350 billion State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) to aid state and local fiscal recovery. \$28.1M of SLFRF has been allocated to the City of Fort Collins. These funds are designed to provide flexibility so that each recipient can meet unique local needs, including support for the communities and businesses hardest hit by the pandemic. Funding Objectives Include:³

- Support urgent COVID-19 response efforts to continue to decrease spread of the virus and bring the pandemic under control
- Replace lost revenue for eligible state, local, territorial, and Tribal governments to strengthen support for vital public services and help retain jobs
- Support immediate economic stabilization for households and businesses
- Address systemic public health and economic challenges that have contributed to the unequal impact of the pandemic

As part of the SLFRF, the U.S. Treasury Department (Treasury) had released interim compliance and reporting guidance for all agencies receiving these funds in 2021, with anticipation of final rules later. City staff had been closely reviewing and monitoring changes and updates to interim guidance throughout 2021. In early January 2022, the final compliance and reporting guidance was released by Treasury.⁴ Staff will continue to closely monitor all uses of the SLFRF within the Recovery Plan to ensure compliance and transparency.

In May of 2021, City Council allocated approximately \$4.2M of the \$28.1M to be spent over the following 12-18 months for short-term response efforts. In addition, City Council approved an additional \$4.1M of ARPA fund allocations in the 2022 Budget.

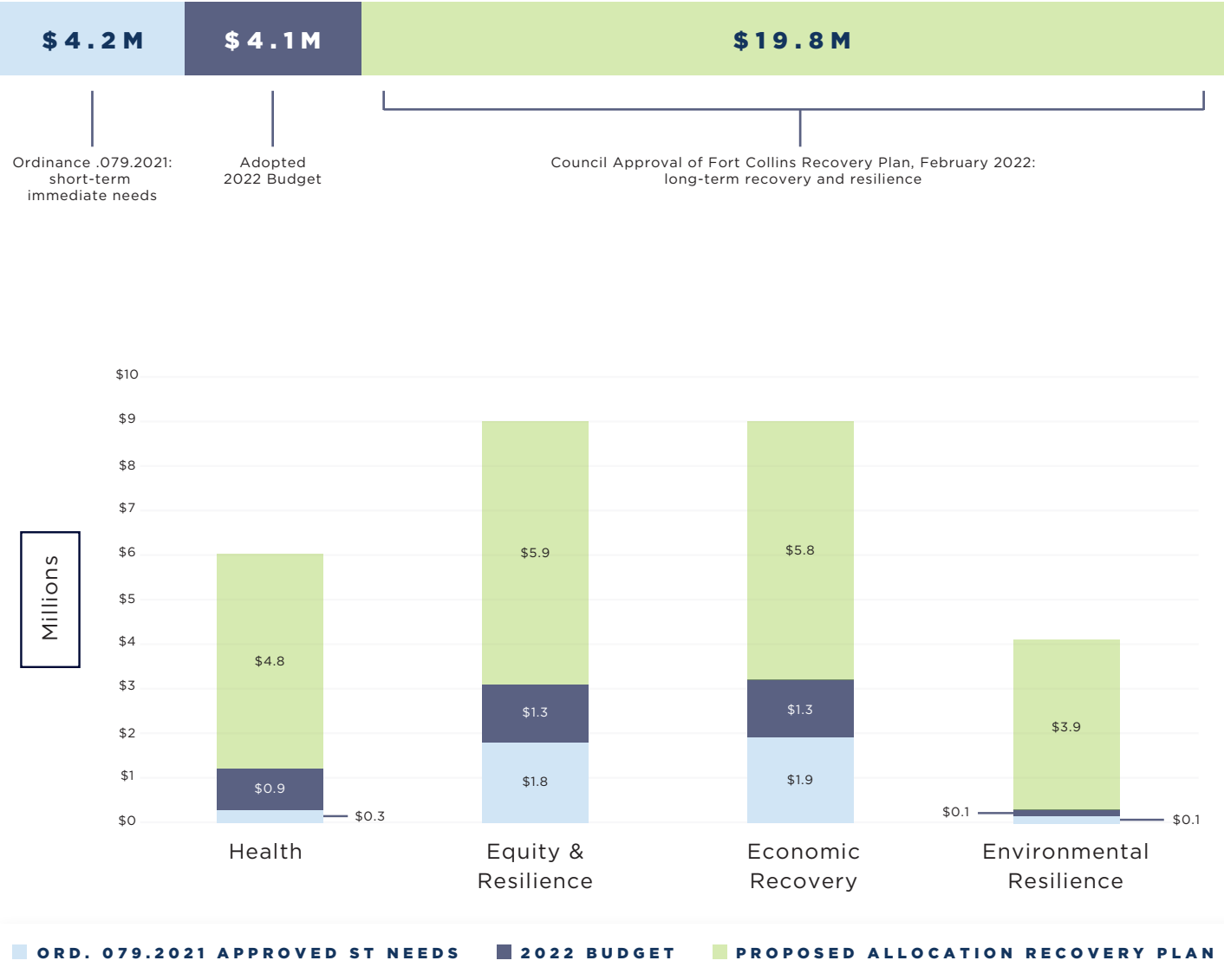
The pandemic continues to have many unknowns and immediate needs and impacts have changed over time. City Council has therefore offered clear direction to staff to be nimble in the use of funds. They support the additional allocation of ARPA funds to meet immediate challenges caused by the pandemic, if needed. The remaining SLFRF funds are expected to be allocated in the City's 2023-2024 budget cycle. SLFRF-funded items in the 2023-2024 budget will tie to both the Recovery Plan and the City's 2022 Strategic Plan.

³ Interim Final Rule Quick Reference Guide,

<https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRP-Quick-Reference-Guide-FINAL-508a.pdf>

⁴ <https://home.treasury.gov/system/files/136/SLFRF-Final-Rule.pdf>

ALLOCATION OF SLFRF FUNDS



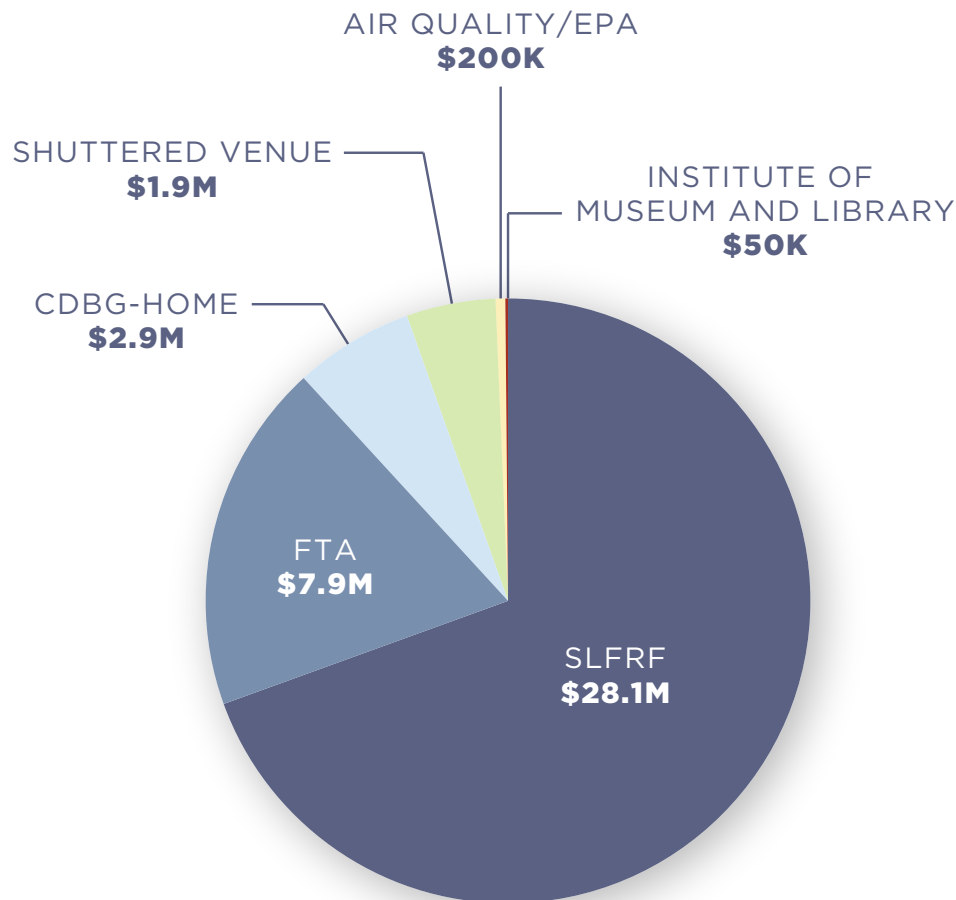
NOTE: Administrative costs spread throughout each category

A full list of SLRFR Funded projects can be found in Appendix D.

ADDITIONAL FUNDING

In addition to the SLFRF funds, the City has received additional ARPA funds to support recovery.

SUMMARY OF ARPA FUNDING RECEIVED BY THE CITY:



- **State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF)** – Received directly from US Treasury
- **Federal Transportation Agency (FTA)** – Public transportation to prevent layoffs and severe cuts to transit services
- **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG – HOME)** – Provide supportive services and safe, socially distant housing solutions
- **Shuttered Venue Operators Grants** – Small Business Administration Office of Disaster Assistance program to aid hard-hit venues
- **Environmental Protection Act (EPA)** – Air quality monitoring and pollution cleanup
- **Institute of Museum and Libraries** – Expanded education and wellness programs
- **TOTAL ARPA FUNDING TO DATE: \$40.45M**

City staff will continue to pursue and leverage other available funds for recovery and will work closely with public and private regional partners to explore innovative solutions.

RECOVERY THEMES & OUTCOMES

LOOKING AHEAD: AN EYES-WIDE-OPEN VIEW OF A DIFFERENT FUTURE

As the community looks toward the future, an important question looms: How does Fort Collins heal from the pandemic and move forward to rebuild better?

The cascading impacts of the pandemic have shown that while the City of Fort Collins has made progress to achieve the objective of being world-class, there are areas and people in the community who experience Fort Collins very differently. They are struggling, lacking stability and sometimes do not feel they belong or are even welcome. In order to move forward toward a more resilient and inclusive future, the City must acknowledge past shortcomings and recognize that not everyone in the community feels like they belong or has the resources they need to thrive. By embracing a growth mindset, the City and community as a whole can begin to reconcile with the changes that need to occur to move forward.

The road toward recovery will be difficult; however, Fort Collins has the opportunity not just to bounce back to where it was pre-pandemic, but to bounce forward and create a better, more resilient, inclusive, vibrant community. A coordinated, collaborative recovery plan can provide the framework for community cooperation. Understanding and removing barriers that hinder efforts toward inclusion, healing, resilience and vibrancy will be essential.

As the community continues to heal from the effects of COVID-19, it is important residents feel included and welcomed. The pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated the various inequities already present in the community. In recognition of this, the Recovery Plan is aligned with the 2020 City Strategic Plan's objective to "advance equity for all, leading with race, so that a person's identity or identities is not a predictor of outcomes." Leading with equity impacts both the planning process and the plan's intended outcomes. An emphasis on racial disparities is a starting place for inclusion as the City expands to bring in underrepresented and disproportionately impacted community members. This approach is intentional about addressing barriers and designing solutions in collaboration with those most impacted, ensuring all community members can benefit, participate, and influence outcomes.

Centering recovery work in equity is a process of continual growth. It comes with a great deal of change and myriad tensions to balance as work occurs to achieve the plan vision.



Below are Guiding Principles generated as a result of feedback received from the community through public engagement. Following these principles is key to achieve the vision for recovery. They also informed the creation of the Recovery Themes and Outcomes provided in the plan. These Guiding Principles will also be used to guide plan implementation.

- 1. Equity and inclusion are embedded throughout the recovery process.** As the City moves forward with the recovery effort, it is vital that the prioritization of the themes, outcomes and objectives outlined below are informed by the voices of the diverse Fort Collins community. Many of the people most impacted during the pandemic were struggling to meet their basic needs before March 2020. It is crucial that this plan recognizes and addresses how to increase stability for individuals and families that struggled pre-pandemic.
- 2. Accelerate the City's community vision by leveraging existing plans, programs and partners.** There are several strategic plans and programs in existence that are still relevant and impactful through the lens of recovery today and in the future. They should not be reinvented. Instead, resources should be leveraged to accelerate their outcomes. The key for many of these strategies is listening to, supporting, and co-creating solutions with both the communities most impacted and community partners already leading such efforts.
- 3. A City that supports just as much as it leads.** The City can and should play a supportive role for other organizations, stakeholders, businesses and individuals to lead on some of the Recovery Themes, Outcomes, and Objectives explored in the plan. Power-sharing with community organizations and stakeholders can help create a more robust and equitable community. Community organizations and other stakeholders may be better placed to lead on recovery efforts – like those who provide mental health support services. Many of the plan strategies will require resourcing with recovery and longer-term funding. The Recovery Plan could pilot, enhance or accelerate ongoing work to address inequities, build capacity, and sustain momentum over time.
- 4. Be data- and experience-driven.** The pursuit of perfect information and data should not become the enemy of forward motion. The structure for engaging in recovery planning should develop from the goals of the recovery process, not vice versa. Do not lead with 'solutions.' Seek to gather and understand lived experiences in the local community so that the data-driven strategies and tactics are truly reflective of Fort Collins. In addition, the pursuit of perfect information and data should not slow down the progress of recovery efforts. Understanding best practices (regionally, nationally, internationally) and lessons learned from implementation will help identify and mitigate pitfalls.
- 5. Focus on resilience by avoiding being short-sighted.** Resilience is the capacity to prepare human and natural systems to respond and adapt to changes and disruptions of various scales that affect the ability to thrive. While addressing short-term needs, keep long-term goals in mind. Focus on balancing the interests of both the present and the future. Existing inequities exacerbated by the pandemic and other potential disruptions may only be further widened if a balance is not struck. Approaches should be understood and translated so that the community can withstand future events more effectively.
- 6. Make recovery decisions with sustainability in mind.** The community benefits from the balance of social, environmental and economic contributions (triple bottom line) to the overall quality of life in Fort Collins. Ensure that sustainability is factored into all decisions for recovery. Keeping sustainability front of mind is of paramount importance to ensure the community's vibrant future. This is a symbiotic relationship that recovery reinforces.

RECOVERY THEMES	RECOVERY OUTCOMES
1. HEALTH	1a. Support clear and effective communication of public health orders.
	1b. Enhance efforts to ensure basic needs are met in the community.
	1c. Mental and physical health are valued as necessary and prevention-based.
2. EQUITY AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE	2a. Foster a sense of belonging and community trust.
	2b. Accelerate the City's Housing Strategic Plan's vision that "everyone has healthy, stable housing they can afford."
	2c. Expand and leverage existing partnerships to quickly connect people experiencing homelessness (PEH) to resources and services.
3. ECONOMIC RECOVERY	3a. Small businesses, creatives and nonprofits have the resources they need to thrive.
	3b. Safe and stable employment, current and future.
	3c. Equitable and affordable childcare is accessible.
4. ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE	4a. Commit to environmental justice and resilience in pursuit of climate, zero waste, energy, water and other sustainability goals.
	4b. Resilient infrastructure is reliable and affordable.
	4c. Open space, natural amenities and healthy ecosystems are resilient, protected and accessible.

IN-DEPTH THEMES & OUTCOMES

Following is a detailed breakdown of the Recovery Themes and Outcomes listed in the table above. Additional information and nuance is provided under each Outcome with specific Objectives and Action Needed. Further detail is provided with Action Needed that describes in a broad sense what next steps are needed to achieve the Objectives and Outcome. Specific Example Actions that align with the Themes, Outcomes, and Objectives can be found in Appendix E. **It should be noted that the included actions are only examples of actions that could be taken, not necessarily the actions that will be taken as a result of this plan.** This approach was chosen due to the ever-changing nature and uncertainty of the pandemic. Not creating an overly prescriptive, exhaustive list also allows opportunities to be nimble and innovative in recovery and support those most impacted by the pandemic. Throughout the Themes and Outcomes section, quotes from residents and businesses have been included to elevate the community voice and highlight how public engagement influenced the plan.

THEME 1: HEALTH

Community recovery will not, and cannot, begin until personal recovery has taken place. The community's basic physiological and safety needs must be met first before addressing other aspects of recovery and resilience. Discussions around getting "back to normal" at the beginning of the pandemic have transitioned to the idea of a "new normal" instead.

Alongside the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was a year of unprecedented wildfires and air quality extremes. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of protecting those with respiratory or cardiac issues, as these individuals are the most susceptible to both COVID-19 and air quality impacts. Early in 2020, stay-at-home orders led to some of the cleanest air quality days on record in 20 years, likely due to decreases in vehicle use. In contrast, during the fall and winter, local and regional wildfires led to some of the poorest air quality on record.

Public health guidance to address the pandemic often encourages being outdoors due to potential indoor ventilation challenges that could lead to increased COVID-19 exposure. However, due to wildfires throughout the U.S. in 2020, and in particular the Cameron Peak Fire in Larimer County, poor outdoor air quality, heavy smoke and ash created "action day alerts," meaning the particulate matter and ozone in the air was unhealthy to breathe and the community was asked to limit their time outside. The overlap of the pandemic and bad air quality had negative impacts on both mental and physical health. As Fort Collins faces challenges related to population growth and climate change, continued efforts to mitigate these impacts are necessary. When asked about COVID-19 recovery, community members have consistently indicated that physical and mental well-being is a high priority.

"[I'm experiencing] social isolation (about to give birth without the physical support from community because of the pandemic), grief from losing several family members to COVID in the last year, inability to commemorate important milestones with family..."

The pandemic has heightened the risk factors associated with poor mental health – physical, social and financial uncertainty – but has also shifted the conversation around mental health, reducing its stigma. Mental health impacts all aspects of life, including the ability to provide care and work. This theme area recognizes that specific populations have been disproportionately impacted by the pandemic and need additional support to survive and thrive right now and into the future. Additionally, there is a high need for mental health support for jobs that expose employees to trauma, such as law enforcement, EMS, fire, and healthcare, but few resources are available to help them.

"[The pandemic] reinforced the importance of providing services like healthcare to everyone regardless of employment."



RECOVERY OUTCOME 1A.

Support clear and effective communication of public health orders.

Why a Priority for Recovery? Community engagement consistently underscored ongoing concerns about potential health risks and impacts from typical daily activities including shopping, visiting restaurants, participating in community activities, attending cultural events, and being out and about in the community. Developing and delivering consistent public health messaging provides clarity to the community about the current risk level from the virus, along with other disruptions such as air quality impacts from wildfire smoke. Clear, consistent messaging is one of the most effective measures for mitigating risk for residents and businesses. Enabling all community members to have the information they need to take appropriate action increases the overall effectiveness of any given public health measure.

Reliable and regular data about the status of the virus enables the best response, whether by the local public health system, government, or private employers. Clear data builds confidence, which is a central input to economic outcomes. The pandemic shook the confidence of both consumers and businesses in the stability of the local economy, disrupting spending on goods and services. Commerce will regain its footing as the public regains its confidence. Re-instilling confidence for both the customer and workforce comes when functional barriers to re-engage in the community and local economy are removed. Everyone shares responsibility in rebuilding confidence – individuals, businesses, government, institutions, and associations.

“We have experienced a lot of loss financially due to taking safety precautions that the health department recommended...We spend about \$50 a week on masks. Spent thousands on sanitizers and extra staff. Plus, we have lost a lot of customers [due to enforcing] masks....We are essential workers who have gotten the brunt of rude customers and have feared for our safety at times...”

Objectives for 1a include:

- Share clear, consistent public health guidance.
- Ensure access and availability to personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 tests.

“Everything is more difficult because of a lack of kindness and consideration. Every interaction is made more frustrating, folks don’t have time to ‘do the reading,’ coordination and communication are more difficult.”



RECOVERY OUTCOME 1B.

Enhance efforts to ensure basic needs are met in the community.

Why a Priority for Recovery? At the beginning of the pandemic, the community leaned heavily on family, neighbors, community organizations and local government to provide safety nets, and they continue to do so as the pandemic lingers. The spread of COVID-19 acted as a magnifying glass, shining a light on pre-existing inequities in the community – and further exacerbating them. Basic needs for this plan are defined as housing, utilities, food, medical care and mobility.

Housing and safe shelter are vital for community members to have stability and thrive, as is food security and adequate medical care, including mental and behavioral health services. Mobility is defined as the ability to move or be moved freely and easily. Access to dependable, affordable transportation (trails, bikes and buses) is vital for the community's ability to get to essential services, products and places. It is not just funding for public transit, but a broader understanding of how transportation access can promote health, safety and economic opportunity while reducing congestion and emissions that affect air quality.

Organizations play a vital role in ensuring basic needs are met while supporting community connection. During the pandemic, community organizations/nonprofits have supported families, the workforce and businesses to provide unmet needs and expand their criteria for assistance. In essence, these organizations stepped up to the front line in unprecedented ways.

Additionally, COVID-19 has had a crushing impact on the nonprofit sector, which employs about 14% of the U.S. workforce. Community organizations are dealing with skyrocketing requests for assistance for basic needs such as food, housing and counseling while also experiencing a drop in donations and cash reserves. Multiple nonprofits engaged during plan development specifically mentioned increased operational costs as a challenge. Community members served by nonprofits are still in dire need, and the resources – including staff capacity – are not always enough to provide needed support. In order for these organizations to continue to help those in need, they must have access to adequate resources.

"The need for affordable housing, food, and taking care of our community members that need help because they may not have family or friends to help them has become a much more obvious issue [to me]. The economy and health risks have hurt these people that were already hurting before the pandemic. This is an emergency now."

Objectives for 1b include:

- Strengthen nonprofits and other existing networks that provide essential needs such as food to those most vulnerable in Fort Collins.
- Improve air quality for all community members, especially historically underserved groups and adapt to air quality impacts we cannot control (e.g., emissions from wildfires).
- Increase access to multiple modes of transportation.

"Families are getting hit financially from all directions - soaring healthcare costs, food prices, gas, housing prices, childcare, etc. Where to even begin?"

RECOVERY OUTCOME 1C.

Mental and physical health are valued as necessary and prevention-based.

Why a Priority for Recovery? The cost of the pandemic can be measured in case counts, jobs lost and revenue drops; however, the human costs of the pandemic are equally important – and more difficult to assess. The community’s mental well-being has been deeply impacted, and it will take time and resources to heal. Well before the pandemic, mental and behavioral health issues were increasing. Now, more people than ever before have flagged the ongoing need for mental health services and support. This de-stigmatization of mental health has highlighted the diversity of needs and identified barriers to care and gaps in service availability. In the Colorado Health Foundation Poll’s 2021 Results⁵, 63% of Larimer/Weld County respondents have said that mental health is a serious problem, but only 29% have talked to a health professional.

Additionally, the pandemic has highlighted the gaps in available providers and pathways to access those with proper training to support specific populations such as youth, BIPOC, LGBTQIA+, first responders and other community members. These groups have seen disproportionate impacts to mental well-being throughout the pandemic. The need for additional resources, more providers, and providers with a greater diversity of training and backgrounds to serve those in need is clear and will continue to worsen in the future if not addressed.

“There needs to be expanded access to mental health services...Providers are overwhelmed and spaces are limited, especially those services outside of traditional work hours. There has to be some relief...None of us are doing okay.”

Objectives for 1c include:

- Ensure access and affordability to local mental and behavioral health services, including those in need of bilingual, multicultural providers.
- Expand opportunities and lower barriers for public access to cultural experiences and venues.

“[Fund] peer-run services such as Alliance for Suicide Prevention’s veterans group, NOCO Splash, Alternatives to Suicide, the Yarrow Collective, PSD mental health trainings and intervention, the Willow Collective maternal + early childhood mental health, etc. Research indicates that these investments are high reward, low cost and most likely to reach the groups most at risk of suicide/mental health distress but who are least likely to utilize traditional services.”

5 <https://www.copulsepoll.org/results>

THEME 2: EQUITY AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

In the beginning of the pandemic, neighbors and communities across Fort Collins pulled together, offering support and solidarity to each other. However, the pandemic has gone on and people get tired and overwhelmed. People are grieving, hurt, stressed and in need of support. The goal is not to rebuild or build back better (as is often said) but to *build community*, in all senses of the word. This entails a community-led recovery where lives, connection, social capital and vibrancy of place are strengthened. Absent this, others can feel further disconnected and disenfranchised.



RECOVERY OUTCOME 2A.

Foster a sense of belonging and community trust.

Why a Priority for Recovery? Community in Fort Collins has consistently been defined by what the dominant culture describes as best fit for them. The City defines “dominant culture” as one that is able, through economic or political power, to impose its values, language, and ways of behaving within a political or social entity (a city for example) in which multiple cultures are present. This often comes at the expense of BIPOC, people with disabilities, seniors, LGBTQIA+ community members, communities developing their English language skills, and communities of diverse religious commitment, who are most impacted by social, economic and environmental crises.

Among those most impacted, there is particular need for emphasis on people of color who are refugees/immigrants and/or identify as being a part of LGBTQIA+ communities. To recover, it is important to acknowledge and act to address the need to politically and financially support physical and psychological safe spaces built by and for communities of color and other historically underserved communities where they can connect and identify, authentically express identities, thrive and lead in creating a healing place and sense of belonging.

“While the City of Fort Collins saying, ‘Estoy aqui; I am here’ to the Latinx community may appear like a small, perhaps insignificant first step, this gesture of inclusion is identified by the interviewees as significant...the community feels assured that their City leaders have their backs...”

Objectives for 2a include:

- Foster a culture of belonging.
- Support neighborhood-driven resilience while also improving social capital and capacity.
- Promote and increase the visibility and support of the diverse cultural artists and "organizations in Fort Collins.⁶
- Codesign multicultural activities and generative spaces for improved access and opportunities.

“[We need] funding for grassroots community organizations run by and for the groups most affected by the pandemic (Black, Latinx, low-income, disabled, psychiatric survivors, LGBTQIA+)...These groups best know what their communities need, and can multiply the impact of even small amounts of money more than large-scale spending.”

6 FoCo Creates Arts and Culture Master Plan 2019, Goal 1, Strategies 1.2 and 1.3

RECOVERY OUTCOME 2B.

Accelerate the City's Housing Strategic Plan's vision that "everyone has healthy, stable housing they can afford."

Why a Priority for Recovery? Housing affordability is a key element of community livability. Having a healthy, stable, affordable place to live impacts people's physical and mental health, resilience to life's challenges, and economic mobility. As the community continues to grow, many people are struggling to afford stable, healthy housing in Fort Collins. Nearly 60% of renters and 20% of homeowners are cost-burdened, spending the majority of their income on their housing. Furthermore, local BIPOC community members and low-income households are disproportionately impacted—these community members are experiencing lower homeownership rates, lower income levels, and higher rates of poverty. The Housing Strategic Plan was developed in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the resulting health and economic crisis and public health restrictions have further exposed and increased pre-existing inequities in housing, employment and health. Now, more than ever, the housing needs in Fort Collins are critical and urgent. The development of this Housing Strategic Plan was a priority before the pandemic and has become even more important to implement as the public health emergency that is disproportionately impacting BIPOC and low-income households persists.

"To have a diverse and resilient community we need more people to have access to housing.... I don't know if it's subsidized housing, new developments aimed at mixed income, or utilizing now-defunct office space but we need to make this city affordable."

Stable and safe housing include the full spectrum of those experiencing homelessness, near-homeless, renters and homeowners.

Objectives for 2b include:

- Preserve existing affordable housing.⁷
- Increase housing supply, affordability, diversity, and choice by 10% of overall housing stock by 2040.⁸
- Increase housing stability and renter protections.⁹

7 City of Fort Collins Housing Strategic Plan 2021, Prioritized Strategy 7, 9, 22, 24, 26

8 City of Fort Collins Housing Strategic Plan 2021, Prioritized Strategy 10

9 City of Fort Collins Housing Strategic Plan 2021, Prioritized Strategy 25

RECOVERY OUTCOME 2C.

Expand and leverage existing partnerships to quickly connect people experiencing homelessness (PEH) to resources and services.

Why a Priority for Recovery? Increased homelessness initiatives and services are crucial for long-term support of people experiencing homelessness (PEH) and housing insecurity in Fort Collins. According to the Health District of Northern Larimer County, “Metro Denver is reporting a 40% increase in utilization of emergency shelters comparing 2020 to 2021, and a 99% increase in people newly becoming unhoused” and similar trends are being seen throughout the country. Homelessness should be rare, brief and non-recurring. This requires innovation and case management capacity to deploy wrap-around services to aid people experiencing homelessness.

Currently, partner organizations are seeing an increase in demand for services and resource navigation needs but are not able to fully meet those needs due to staffing constraints (staffing cost and shortages). People experiencing homelessness and the emergency shelter providers have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19. Due to shelter capacity constraints and limited availability of non-congregate rooms for isolation, some PEH have been turned away from overnight shelters. Additionally, community partners are reporting long wait times for PEH to access appointments with a provider. Most importantly, homelessness and housing instability disproportionately impact BIPOC community members, those from lower income households, people with substance use disorders and mental illness, and other historically underserved groups. During the pandemic, these disparities have widened.

“Larimer County has many very low income persons who are unable to access housing and transportation. There are not sufficient community supports to keep them from worsening health, preventing them from homelessness, or both.”

Objectives for 2c include:

- Expand funding to community organizations that operate programs and services that support PEH.
- Accelerate plans for a 24/7 shelter for those experiencing homelessness.
- Support regional solutions such as the Northern Colorado Continuum of Care and Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System through funding and leadership.

“More compassion and understanding would help [pandemic relief and recovery]. With winter coming we need more shelter for people that are less fortunate. We need access to more medical equipment and precautionary measures like hand sanitizer for lower income, homeless, addict population. We need more access to food in the community. We need more funding put into the Murphy Center. People suffer when there is shortage in supplies and lower income people have less access. Free therapy would be helpful to help build a stronger community and address the mental health issues that have come from COVID-19.”

THEME 3: ECONOMIC RECOVERY

The COVID-19 pandemic has not only impacted public health, but also the community's economic health. Lost jobs, wider gaps between wages, increased cost of goods and services, supply chain shortages, reduced revenues/incomes and overall economic disruption are all prevalent, impacting both employers and employees.

The pandemic has also intensified inequities faced by women and BIPOC, along with small businesses and nonprofits that serve underrepresented community members and/or are led by them. Prior to the pandemic, many inequities existed within Fort Collins – disproportionate shares of business ownership, a racial wealth gap and persistent unemployment within the low-income quintile. Community efforts for recovery should focus on being inclusive, enabling all community members to participate in our community and thrive.

Small businesses, nonprofits and the creative sector uniquely engage communities to contribute to well-being and connectivity, including reflections of local history, amplifying unique character of places, and renewing civic and social lives of community members through their work. This will not only help those still struggling for financial stability but will strengthen long-term economic resilience.

A K-shaped recovery occurs when some segments of the economy, such as large corporations, experience a V-shaped recovery while other sectors and groups, such as the service industry or women, experience an L-shaped recovery.

Long-term implications of a K-shaped recovery include:

- long-term unemployment among people of the lowest incomes
- wealth inequality
- a continuing or worsening racial wealth gap
- growing corporate monopolies

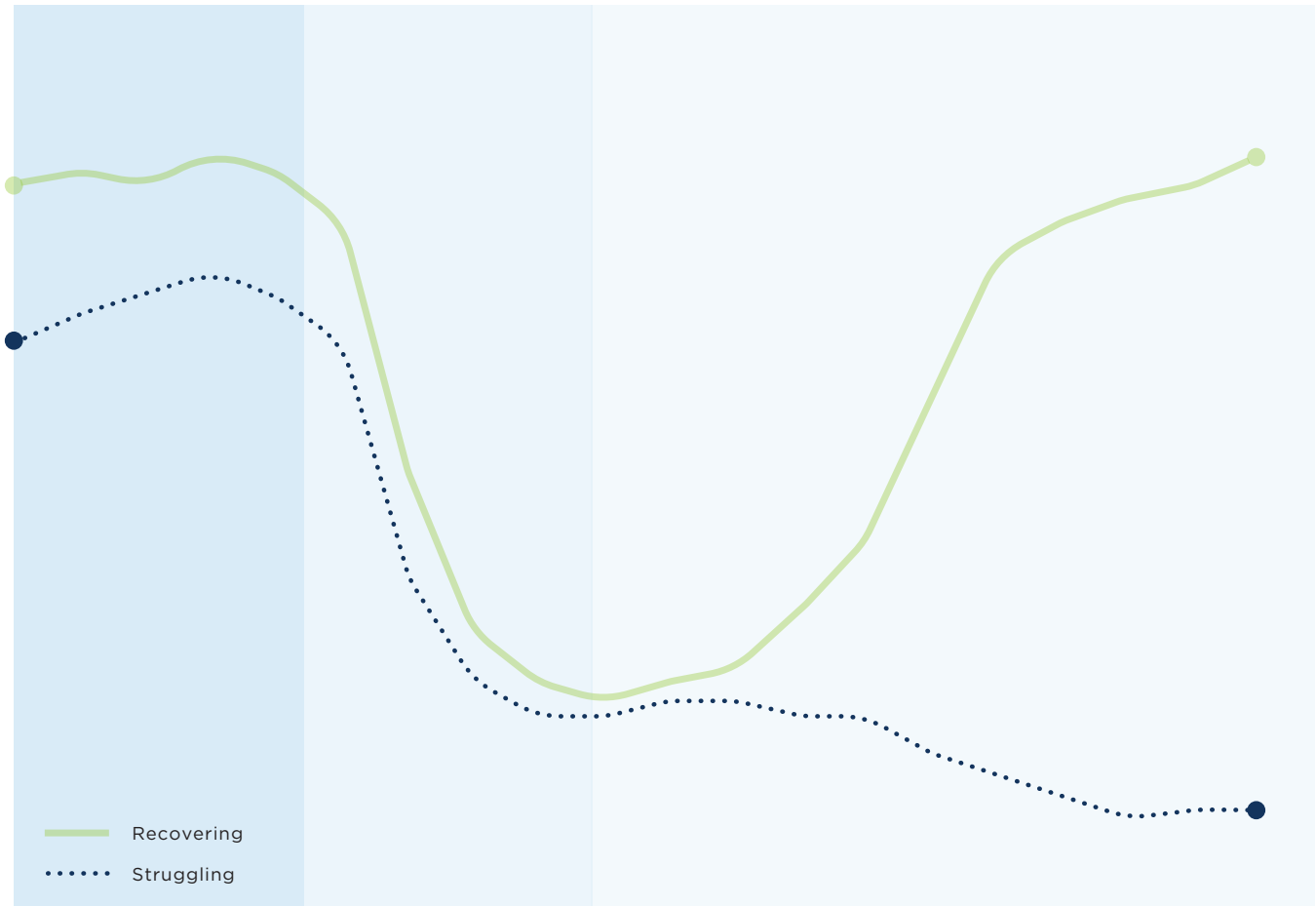
Previous recessions have seen K-shaped recoveries, and the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic has the probability of a similar long-term trend unless those segments that are not recovering as quickly or at all are supported.

"We don't need financial assistance personally, but please help small businesses in a fair, equitable manner. Support getting people back to work so these places don't keep closing down due to lack of workers."

PRIOR TO
COVID-19

RECESSION

RECOVERY



K-SHAPED RECOVERY

EXAMPLES OF SECTORS THAT ARE RECOVERING:

- Technology
- Online Retail
- Home Improvements

EXAMPLES OF SECTORS THAT ARE STILL STRUGGLING:

- Tourism & Hospitality
- Arts & Entertainment
- Food Services

EXAMPLES OF POPULATIONS THAT ARE RECOVERING:

- Work from Anywhere
- College-educated
- Wealthy

EXAMPLES OF POPULATIONS THAT ARE STILL STRUGGLING:

- Frontline Workers
- Women
- BIPOC

RECOVERY OUTCOME 3A.

Small businesses, creatives and nonprofits have the resources they need to thrive.

Why a Priority for Recovery? Stable small businesses, solo-entrepreneurs, creatives and nonprofits in the community provide a wide range of benefits, including:

- more options for residents to shop and entertain locally
- more employment opportunities
- enhanced ability to offer strong benefits and wages
- creating a unique culture of unity, innovation, and healing through their distinctive characteristics of place
- and much more

The pandemic has exposed the vulnerability and importance of small businesses, creatives and nonprofits to local and regional economies. In Fort Collins, as the initial shock of the pandemic shook the community, small businesses and nonprofits jumped into action to address immediate needs in the community, providing vital assistance to those in need.

For example, during the early days of the stay-at-home order, one local small business, with the help of local nonprofits, prepared meals for furloughed staff, frontline staff and in-need community members. This innovative program reduced food insecurity for many who found themselves suddenly without jobs and resources.¹⁰ And although many entertainment venues were shuttered, local musicians, artists and entertainers found innovative ways to continue to share their art – providing a way for community members to pull together and enjoy a shared experience even during the stay-at-home order.

“In times of social crisis in the history of our country and civilization, we’ve routinely turned to the arts to maintain balance in our mental health, happiness, and perseverance. It’s on us as this community’s creative arts leaders to work together and invest in new opportunities and infrastructure that benefit the creative community as a whole.”

Small businesses, creatives and nonprofits continue to deliver vital projects and services, while facing the challenges of operating in a disrupted environment.

Ninety-eight percent of businesses in Fort Collins are considered small businesses - those with 100 or fewer employees. They employ more than 50 percent of the local workforce. Most businesses start because of the passion of the owner to provide a unique good or service to the community, not because they are excited about accounting or changes to employment law. Enabling business owners to focus on delivering their product or service to their customers, and nonprofits to deliver their mission to those they serve should be their primary focus. Providing support services that enable businesses, the creative sector and nonprofits to build the capacity to deliver their primary purpose and do so with stable business operations helps the entire community. The more stable and thriving the business, creative and nonprofit sectors are, the more resilient and thriving the community will be.

¹⁰ Full story available at <https://forfortcollins.com/the-moot-house/>

“While we have been fortunate to get support through emergency relief dollars, these dollars have not covered both the loss of revenue through fundraising efforts and the increased costs of operating due to COVID-19 restrictions and being open all day to support youth during remote learning.”

Objectives for 3a include:

- Enhance support services and tools to enable operations to be soundly positioned for successful recovery, including but not limited to capital access, translation of information in multiple languages, etc.
- Support smooth and timely ability for facility modification to deliver goods and services with increased public safety protocols.
- Focus on programs and services that support historically underserved community members.



RECOVERY OUTCOME 3B.

Safe and stable employment, current and future.

Why a Priority for Recovery? Through public engagement, a consistent theme heard from both community members and businesses was the need for safe and stable employment. The business community employs community members; therefore, job security and stability depend in part upon business success. When a business struggles to find and employ the necessary workers it can have ramifications on the local supply chain or services available. Access to labor is key across all businesses, regardless of industry, type or size.

Additionally, the learning, development, and negative academic effects on children and youth caused by the pandemic are well-documented. The remote and hybrid learning modes employed during the pandemic have in many cases set back learning achievements and milestones for students, particularly those already with high risk factors. Poudre School District, the City and community organizations have mobilized throughout the pandemic to address the learning loss and developmental delays of students, and the needs will remain in the years ahead. Numerous studies show a strong association between learned skills and the income earned in the future labor market.

When an individual has consistent employment (total hours and compensation) they are able to invest in other aspects of their lives – social engagement, supporting their family and friends, and engaging in their community – leading to increased well-being and mental health. Consistent employment creates not just financial stability, but stability overall – for housing, nutrition, mobility, childcare, access to services, and more.

Finally, safe and stable employment ensures greater productivity in the community, resulting in more stable community and individual wealth creation. This translates into additional revenue for businesses, additional tax revenue to provide services, and less turnover in employment. Ultimately, safe and stable employment makes for a more resilient community and economy.

“[I need] better pay and more hours. Workforce development would be HUGE! I want to better myself but cannot afford to get more education.”

Acknowledging that Outcome 3b addresses a spectrum of interconnected employment issues, the Objectives and corresponding Actions have been divided into two groups – the individual/employee level and the business/employer level. These groups are very interconnected; however, looking at them separately allows for better understanding of unique needs and strengths while also addressing structural and systemic barriers preventing the community from achieving economic security.



Objectives for 3b include:

Individual/Employee:

- Support partnerships that develop the workforce businesses need.
- Bring in training that is available regionally but not directly to Fort Collins.
- Prioritize learning loss mitigation programs and services that support students with high risk factors and/or are part of historically underserved populations.
- Reduce barriers that inhibit students/families from full participation in educational, workforce and employment opportunities.

Business/Employer:

- Support business and nonprofit ability to find and recruit labor that meets their needs.
- Enhance the ability of businesses to implement flexible labor practices (i.e., remote, hybrid, gig/contractual, variable shifts, job share, etc.).

“We are still experiencing a workforce crisis and funding shortage that are impacting our ability to serve youth. We have less applicants for open positions than ever before and we are paying more for starting wages than ever before...”



RECOVERY OUTCOME 3C.

Equitable and affordable childcare is accessible.

Why a Priority for Recovery? The community recognizes how critical quality, affordable and accessible childcare is for families and businesses in the community. Making reliable and affordable early childhood care and education available and accessible for all is among the most important policies that can create equity and economic stability—especially for women, who often bear the responsibility of caregiving. This is especially true for BIPOC and low-income families, who face significant childcare affordability challenges. This is about more than merely providing space for children to be while parents are working. Healthy early childhood experiences are critical to long-term success; research has found that the accumulation of trauma throughout childhood can cause toxic stress in children, which can lead to long-term negative effects on both the body and the brain.

The pandemic—and associated housing insecurity, food insecurity, decreased reporting of child abuse, and social isolation—have exacerbated children’s negative experiences. Research shows children who arrive at kindergarten prepared to learn and grow perform better throughout their K-12 school years and increase their chances of post-secondary success. It is important for policymakers, grassroots activists, nonprofits, businesses, and community leaders to identify and respond to childcare needs by helping reduce barriers to access, increasing capacity and leveraging assets. Affordable and accessible childcare has rippling impacts throughout the community now and into the future.

“More quality childcare programs and options for kids 0-12. I would love to see the City invest in programs with quality providers who had the City’s backing (education, background check, etc.). I understand why people don’t want to be paid less than a fast food job to care for children, and I think my kids are better off being cared for by someone who is making a stable living. Not investing in these resources (and people!) is hurting everyone.”

Objectives for 3c include:

- Advance regional, systemic and sustainable childcare solutions. Original and collaborative strategies are needed to address the compounding challenges facing the childcare industry.
- Recruit, develop and retain dedicated employees in the early childhood education profession.



THEME 4: ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

Prior to the pandemic, climate change was a primary topic of concern across the community, state, nation and globe. Fort Collins has long prioritized climate action and mitigation of greenhouse gases, adopting aggressive climate action targets.

With the arrival of the pandemic, simultaneous public health and economic crises arose, but the devastating impacts of climate change remained present. 2020 was the hottest year on record. In 2020, wildfires burned a record-breaking amount of forest in Colorado and created extremely poor air quality across the Front Range, including in Fort Collins. Atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases have continued to climb despite the dip in emissions caused by stay-at-home orders early in the pandemic. Climate risks are more elevated than ever.

The dramatic and rapid changes in the behaviors of individuals, organizations and systems at all scales induced by the COVID-19 pandemic affect the environment, climate and ecosystems locally. What does Fort Collins' reaction to the pandemic say about the City's ability to tackle climate change? What lessons learned about urgent mobilization for the greater good can be applied to the climate crisis? How can climate resilience and greenhouse gas mitigation be incorporated into pandemic recovery?

In the face of widespread changes brought about by COVID-19, the importance of environmental resiliency cannot be overstated. Resilience recognizes that disruptions inevitably will come and that building flexibility into operations allows one to better recover on-course, minimizing detours or derailments as much as possible.

Since the onset of the pandemic, evidence of the importance of sustainability has only increased. The world faces growing vulnerability to natural disasters, flooding, drought and other environmental problems with dire consequences for rural and urban communities around food security, economic growth and political stability. Ultimately, solutions require collective political will: stakeholders from across the community working toward a shared vision for a socially, economically and environmentally sustainable future for us all.

"I am blessed with a job and lifestyle that wasn't impacted too much from the pandemic. That said, I think there are many lessons learned that I hope we don't lose. For example, I LOVE all the extra outdoor seating at restaurants and I also appreciate not having to drive to work everyday (which I think is critical towards meeting our Climate Action goals). I hope the City and organizations don't feel that we have to revert back to pre-COVID times."



RECOVERY OUTCOME 4A.

Commit to environmental justice and resilience in pursuit of climate, zero waste, energy, water and other sustainability goals.

Why a Priority for Recovery? The City's Our Climate Future Plan notes that it is crucial to plan for disruption and to foster and strengthen regional, community and personal networks by supporting each other so the community is better prepared to handle those disruptions. To effectively support one another during and after recovery, it must be acknowledged that community members were at different starting points before the pandemic. Some community members were impacted more than others, particularly BIPOC and low-income community members.

"A more focused, dramatic shift needs to take place to prioritize equity, health, and climate change mitigation and adaptation in all decisions and at all levels in order to address the systemic issues our communities will perpetually face if action continues at the present rate."

The City's Housing Strategic Plan states, "the legacy of neighborhood segregation and social and economic discrimination against BIPOC community members is evident in generational wealth gaps that affect access to healthy and stable housing today. Segregation ensured that BIPOC residents in Fort Collins were likely to live near the city's industrial sites and more likely to be exposed to toxins such as coal smoke and soot from the sugar beet factory; constant pollution and hazards from trains; and the odor and environmental impacts from the original Fort Collins City landfill and the nearby oil depots."¹ Many historically underserved groups are disproportionately exposed to various types of environmental pollution, causing health issues, such as asthma, which are often compounded by lack of access to quality, affordable health care.

As solutions are designed for recovery, they must also help to achieve health and environmental resilience and equity. Solutions co-designed with community members most impacted must be prioritized. There is a strong correlation between health and environment, where BIPOC and low-income residents bear a larger burden and impact. While environmental justice and equity are woven throughout this plan, this Outcome is designed to explicitly call out the need to advance environmental resilience and justice.



Objectives for 4a include:

- Identify criteria, process and funding options to revitalize neighborhood and community parks.
- Accelerate support to address vulnerabilities to natural hazards, including proactive mitigation actions and preparing the community to minimize impacts to people, property, and critical facilities.
- Support community- and neighborhood-led workshops for community members to identify sustainable solutions to support resilience.¹¹
- Decrease barriers and increase access to local sustainable food production and agriculture.¹²

“[The pandemic] has put all in new context; especially environmental health, with a serious pulmonary virus spreading amidst high AQI readings. Neighborhood developments that are disconnected from the rest of the city make the inequality and isolation of the pandemic even harder to cope with.”



11 Our Climate Future: Big Move 7: Healthy, Affordable Housing HAH5

12 City of Fort Collins Our Climate Future: Big Move 8: Local, Affordable, and Healthy Food LAHF2 and City of Fort Collins Our Climate Future: Big Move 8: Local, Affordable, and Healthy Food LAHF4

RECOVERY OUTCOME 4B.

Resilient infrastructure is reliable and affordable.

Why a Priority for Recovery? The pandemic highlighted the need for local infrastructure and buildings to thrive both today and into the future. Community members shared that as Fort Collins works to build back better, the way the community builds back is critical to success.

“Fort Collins needs to use any recovery funds designated for infrastructure and development to support a green recovery - focused on promoting renewable electricity, subsidies for electric vehicles, reducing food waste, etc...”

Indoor spaces, including homes, schools and work environments, are critical spaces individuals spend time in—up to 90% of their lives. Buildings and homes also serve as the physical fabric of the local community, the places where community members connect with others and where they often feel safest. Buildings and spaces that are healthy, comfortable, energy efficient and water efficient increase the health and well-being of those in them. Changing the buildings, and individuals’ habits in them, has the potential to positively impact community well-being.

In addition, safe and comfortable indoor spaces have taken on new meaning after 2020, when Fort Collins residents navigated both a pandemic and some of the worst wildfires in Colorado history. Indoor air quality is on average up to five times worse than outdoor air quality, and is especially of concern in homes, schools, businesses and other public spaces that lack the ability to properly filter and ventilate the air. In addition to clean air, the delivery of safe and reliable water, and stable electric power are basic rights that all individuals in Fort Collins must have in order to achieve stability.

Development and climate change are putting new stresses on all of Fort Collins’ infrastructure, especially those systems related to water and electricity. Impacts of the pandemic have also resulted in continued reductions in public transit ridership and service levels. Mobility service reductions have extreme impacts on the most vulnerable populations in the community, particularly as it relates to the accessibility of health care and food. The management of local and regional infrastructure is of paramount importance for continued community recovery.

“Stronger regional transportation systems will help with climate change and accessibility to all Fort Collins and surrounding areas have to offer.”



Objectives for 4b include:

- Access to healthy, energy- and water-efficient indoor spaces, including homes and work environments.
- Transportation and mobility systems are resilient to a variety of expected and unexpected disruptions.
- Reliable water and electric infrastructure are more resilient to a variety of expected and unexpected disruptions.



RECOVERY OUTCOME 4C.

Open space, natural amenities and healthy ecosystems are resilient, protected and accessible.

Why a Priority for Recovery? Open space and access to nature are defining characteristics of Fort Collins, supporting the physical and mental health of residents while strengthening long-term resilience of the region and its population. The pandemic has highlighted the importance of these services, with up to 200% increases in use at some local natural areas.

Continued restoration and preservation ensure open spaces provide a high-quality resource to the community, supporting native plant and wildlife habitat both now and into the future. Enhanced amenities across parks and natural areas provide additional recreational opportunities for all community members. Accessibility to these sites will help meet the needs of a growing population, and those who in the past have not had easy access to nature.

Additionally, a robust urban tree canopy can help cool urban areas and mitigate the urban heat island impact, while helping to address air pollution through carbon and pollution sequestration. Shade provided by urban trees also reduces energy demand, contributing to reduced carbon emissions. More broadly, minimizing air and light pollution in the local ecosystem and open spaces is also important to preserving environmental and human health.

“The pandemic showed us how valuable having open space is to our mental as well as physical health. I would like to see Fort Collins focus on maintaining clean and safe open space areas. While obtaining new open space would be great, a lot of the existing spaces are getting loved to death and could use some help.”

Objectives for 4c include:

- Acquire, expand, conserve improve, update and revitalize natural areas and open space, including associated asset management to support the physical and mental health of residents.
- Increase access to parks, as well as expand, add and improve them.
- Identify vulnerabilities to natural hazards, identify proactive mitigation actions, and prepare adequately to minimize impacts to people, property, and critical facilities.¹³
- Support a healthy and diverse urban tree canopy to reduce air and light pollution and lower energy costs.

“Besides affordability of living in the area, please keep our environment and open spaces, as this is the core beauty of this part of the country.”

¹³ City of Fort Collins Our Climate Future: Big Move 11: Healthy Natural Spaces HNS5

PLAN MILESTONES

- **ARPA Funding**

- Additional immediate needs and contingency request to Council by May 2022
- Remaining fund requests through 2023-2024 BFO process; funds release January 2023 and 2024

- **Treasury Reporting for ARPA Funds**

- Project and Expenditures Reports by January 31, 2022 and then 30 days after the end of each quarter thereafter.

- **Reporting**

- Twice a year staff report to City Council
- Annual report by March

- **Community Outreach and Engagement**

- Quarterly updates at least (to align with updates to ELT), will be published onto a dashboard
- Ongoing engagement for many various recovery projects, annual wider community engagement to gauge recovery as a whole (i.e., in community report etc.)

- **Final Recovery report for City: March 2027**



DATA, REPORTING & PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT

Data and metrics are valuable measures for how recovery is progressing, and ongoing performance measurement will be an important aspect of Recovery Plan implementation.

The Recovery Data, Performance Measurement and Reporting Strategic Initiative Team is currently focused on gathering data sources and best practices, and conducting benchmarking of other cities' approaches to data for supporting recovery work. In conjunction with data owners and managers across the City, this work is part of a broader initiative to create an internal data inventory within the City organization. As the City transitions into implementing the Recovery Plan, the team will focus on two key areas:

- **Reporting**

- Federal reporting requirements for ARPA-funded programs
- ELT quarterly reporting on the Recovery Plan and the associated programs/projects
- City Council and public reporting on the overall Recovery Plan

- **Data to assess outcomes**

- Baseline data of where a program starts its recovery work
- Evidence-based data capture to demonstrate program outcomes

The team will continue to identify appropriate metrics and reporting cadence as well as conduct data analysis to provide a comprehensive picture of recovery throughout implementation. The data analysis will include work to improve the City's ability to disaggregate data to determine impacts and outcomes at more granular levels in the community. This, along with weaving together qualitative and quantitative data, will lead to deeper understanding of how recovery is progressing for hardest hit community members and businesses.

In addition, the team will work with service areas and program managers across the City to ensure all recovery-related programs measure their outcomes and performance over an appropriate period of time. Developing these measures at project initiation will assist and support data collection effectiveness and efficiency.

Many recovery outcomes relate to other initiatives and plans already in progress at the City. For example, some recovery activities will be measured and tracked in the City's ClearPoint system for tracking budget metrics. Additionally, the City's evolving Equity Dashboard overlaps with many of the issues addressed in the Recovery Plan and will be utilized to help determine whether the plan is positively impacting groups most affected by the pandemic. Finally, the Larimer County and [NoCo Recovers](#) dashboards will continue to be data sources to help measure the Recovery Plan's local effectiveness.

Together this work will result in new capabilities at the City for data capture, analysis, management and evidence-based reporting. Staff will utilize process improvement practices to ensure learning from the Recovery Plan's data work is captured and embedded in City practices.

SUMMARY / CONCLUSION

When Council first directed staff to begin public engagement and development of the Recovery Plan, many expected the pandemic to be over by the time of adoption and implementation. However, the community is still in the midst of the pandemic, seeing record positivity rates, battling new variants and still struggling. The lifespan of the pandemic and its impacts remain unpredictable, demonstrating the importance of being flexible and nimble in recovery.

Fort Collins' Recovery Plan is different from many other community recovery plans. Rather than just focusing on economic recovery or spending ARPA funds, the Fort Collins Recovery Plan acknowledges that recovery must also take into account health, equity, community, economy and the environment to be balanced and address long-term resilience.

Each recovery theme – Health, Equity & Community Resilience, Economic Recovery, and Environmental Resilience – directly echoes what was heard during community engagement as essential for recovery to occur in Fort Collins. The Recovery Plan is intended to guide and support the community's healing process during and long after the pandemic has ended. The intent of the plan is not to be prescriptive of which specific actions must be implemented for the vision of recovery to be realized. Instead, the themes and outcomes, along with their objectives, are designed to provide a guide toward achieving the recovery vision, while allowing for flexibility in which specific programs are created to achieve goals.

Understanding the impacts of programs on the community is vital for plan implementation. Fort Collins is committed to ongoing metrics measurement and evaluation of recovery-related programs, which will allow for nimbleness and ongoing improvement. Measuring progress through strictly quantitative data is not enough. Looking simply at sales tax data, "recovery" has been achieved – Fort Collins is not only back to pre-pandemic revenue levels but has exceeded them. However, it is not as clear cut as revenue alone. The other side of the equation in terms of increased costs, supply chain shortages and strains on normal business operations must be evaluated or only half the picture is being seen. The true recovery has not yet occurred. The community is still struggling and experiencing profound social, economic and health impacts. Measuring recovery must also include more intangible impacts—qualitative metrics that cannot be easily measured, but are key to understanding how communities are recovering, particularly historically underserved groups.

This is uncharted territory for everyone. In Fort Collins, the community has a strong history of banding together to support one another, being intentional and innovative while also learning from past successes and failures. 2020 and 2021 have highlighted the preparedness and unpreparedness of the community, while also shining a light on the inequities within Fort Collins. As the community ventures into the unique opportunities and challenges of recovery, lessons learned from the pandemic and its aftermath must not be forgotten. This will allow healing so that all Fort Collins residents and businesses are able to participate in a resilient, vibrant and inclusive future.

FORT COLLINS



APPENDIX

FORT COLLINS RECOVERY PLAN



A. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT STATEMENT

The City of Fort Collins would like to thank the following community members, City leadership and City staff for providing the input that informed the Recovery Plan.

LIST OF ALL PARTNERS

Paid Community Engagement Partners

- 301 Faith Partners: St Paul's Episcopal; Mary of Magdala, Ecumenical Catholic; Trinity Lutheran
- Boys and Girls Club of Larimer County
- CARE Housing
- Community Connectors LLC
- Homeward Alliance
- Housing Catalyst
- ISAAC of Northern Colorado
- La Cocina
- The Matthew's House
- Northern Colorado Health Network
- Peggy Lyle
- SPLASH Youth of Northern Colorado
- Teaching Tree Fort Collins

Additional Stakeholders

- Adaptive Recreation Opportunities
- Alianza Norco
- Alliance for Suicide Prevention of Larimer
- Art Lab
- Bohemian Foundation
- City of Fort Collins Boards & Commissions
- Coalition for the Poudre River Watershed
- Colorado Creative Industries
- Columbine Health
- Commission on Disabilities
- Community Dreamer Fund
- Crossroads Safehouse
- CSU College of Health & Human Services
- CSU Health Professions
- Disabled Resource Services
- Downtown Development Authority
- Family Housing Network
- FC Creative District
- FoCo Café
- Food Bank for Larimer County

- Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce
- Fort Collins Sustainability Group
- Fort Collins Symphony
- Fuerza Latina
- Habitat for Humanity
- Innosphere
- La Salud
- Larimer County
- Larimer County Economic & Workforce
- Larimer County Health Department
- Level Up Business Advisory Council
- Lincoln Center
- Mental Health and Substance Use Alliance
- Midtown BID
- Murphy Center
- Museum of Art Fort Collins
- Museum of Discovery
- Neighbor 2 Neighbor
- NOCO REDI
- Poudre Fire Authority
- Poudre River Public Library District
- Poudre School District
- Realities for Children
- SAINT
- Sustain Music & Nature
- The Salvation Army
- United Way of Larimer County
- Utilities Key Accounts
- Visit Fort Collins
- Volunteers of America

In addition to the stakeholders listed above, 49 additional respondents to Recovery Surveys indicated they were with community organizations and/or nonprofits, and 132 respondents indicated they were with a business. The City would also like to thank the thousands of community members who engaged in the recovery planning process.

CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS

- Jeni Arndt, Mayor
- Emily Francis, Mayor Pro Tem, Councilmember, District 6
- Susan Gutowsky, Councilmember, District 1
- Julie Pignataro, Councilmember, District 2
- Tricia Canonico, Councilmember, District 3
- Shirley Peel, Councilmember, District 4
- Kelly Ohlson, Councilmember, District 5

EXECUTIVE LEAD TEAM MEMBERS

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- Theresa Connor
- Chad Crager
- Carrie Daggett
- Kelly DiMartino
- Seve Ghose
- Dean Klingner
- Jacqueline Kozak-Thiel
- Tyler Marr
- Claudia Menendez
- Teresa Roche
- Kyle Stannert
- Travis Storin
- Jeff Swoboda
- Greg Yeager

RECOVERY TEAM MEMBERS

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- Blaine Dunn
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- Cate Eckenrode
- Sarah Meline
- Trevor Nash
- Gerry Paul
- Lawrence Pollack
- Travis Storin
- Claire Turney

B. SUMMARY TIMELINE

□ CITY

■ PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

■ REGIONAL

■ FEDERAL

DATE	EVENT / MILESTONE
JUNE 2020	SeonAh Kendall appointed City Recovery Plan Manager
JUNE 2020	Northern Colorado Regional Economic Development Initiative (NoCo REDI) regional group convened
FEBRUARY 2021	City Recovery Plan Executive Team named
MARCH 31, 2021	Larimer County COVID-19 Recovery Implementation Plan issued
MARCH 2021	City Recovery Plan Core Team named
APRIL 2021	City Recovery Plan Vision and Charter drafted
MAY 10, 2021	Initial Interim U.S. Treasury guidance received for spending ARPA Funds
MAY 25, 2021	Work session with City Council: ARPA Funds & Recovery Plan Work Session Materials
MAY 19, 2021	Received first half of ARPA Fiscal Recovery Funds
JUNE 15, 2021	First Reading of Appropriation of Portion of City's ARPA Funds for Short-Term Response & Recovery Work Session Materials
JUNE 16, 2021	Larimer County Root Cause Analysis released
JUNE 2021	City Recovery Plan Strategic Initiative Teams named: Equity and Community Recovery; Economic Health; Health and Environmental Recovery; Community Engagement; Data, Reporting and Performance
JUNE 2021	For FoCo website adopted as City recovery website

JULY 6, 2021	Second Reading of Appropriation of Portion of City's ARPA Funds for Short-Term Response and Recovery Work Session Materials
JULY - OCTOBER 2021	Public Engagement: Events, Stakeholder Meetings and Surveys
AUGUST 4, 2021	NoCo Recovery Strategy issued
AUGUST 9, 2021	Recovery Strategic Initiative Teams (SIT) Charter Document drafted
OCTOBER 2021	Paid Partnerships with Community Connectors implemented
OCTOBER 26, 2021	City Council Work Session on Recovery Plan Work Session Materials
NOVEMBER 2021	ARPA Regional Funding Meeting re: State funds
NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2021	Drafting Recovery Plan
NOVEMBER 17, 2021	Boards and Commissions Review of Recovery Plan
NOVEMBER 23, 2021	City Council Work Session: State ARPA Funds Work Session Summary
JANUARY 2022	Public Engagement: "Gut Check" Reaction to Recovery Plan
JANUARY 11, 2022	City Council Work Session: Recovery Plan Draft Work Session Materials
JANUARY 25, 2022	City Council Work Session: Recovery Plan Draft Work Session Materials
MARCH 1, 2022	City Council Meeting: City Recovery Plan Adoption

C. PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

Qualitative Engagement Report

The following is the report of the qualitative mixed methods analysis completed for Phase One public engagement for the recovery plan.

Community Guidance for Recovery Planning

Prepared by Cactus Consulting, LLC in partnership with the City of Fort Collins Recovery Plan Team

Executive Summary

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way people work, attend school, receive healthcare, and socialize. Nearly two years after the first public health orders, the City of Fort Collins (“the City”) and its residents continue to grapple with high transmission rates and significant uncertainty related to the virus and its variants. In the midst of this uncertainty, the City is set to receive \$28.1 million in American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding to address the pandemic and its negative impacts on the community.

Conversations with community members are a key part of planning for recovery. As the community continues to heal, the City’s vision for recovery is that all Fort Collins residents and businesses can participate in a resilient, vibrant and inclusive future. A central element of this vision involves recognizing that the negative impacts of the pandemic were and are not evenly distributed. Numerous studies and reports have shown that COVID-19 has had disparate impacts on different socioeconomic and demographic groups, including workers in low-wage positions, caregivers, and people of color.

Grounded in this knowledge and guided by the desire to center equity in creating a vision for recovery, the City of Fort Collins engaged with thousands of community members through events, paid partnerships with community organizations, and surveys. This report reviews the open-ended responses gathered from these engagement methods.

Analysis of open-ended responses yielded four key themes for recovery:

- empower individuals and businesses through strong pandemic response programs;
- bolster community organizations, networks, and spaces that provide direct assistance, and center those most impacted;
- remove barriers to resilience; and
- invest in infrastructure and amenities to support a vibrant future

In many ways, the community’s responses align with existing priorities and plans. Specifically, many responses highlighted the need for community mental health services, affordable housing, higher wages, and access to childcare.

Participants recognized that recovery will not be a straightforward or linear journey. Rather than understanding the four themes as “steps” in the process of recovery, the City should focus on pairing centralized policy and investment with decentralized programs and access points for the community. This will remove barriers to success and allow residents to access the programs and resources they need for healing and resilience. Future conversations with the community will be needed to help uncover the specific programs and mechanisms needed to support residents’ unique paths towards recovery.

The Process

The City of Fort Collins began engagement in spring of 2021 in preparation for developing a Recovery Plan. This engagement has focused on understanding ongoing challenges and impacts of the pandemic, while also asking what long-term recovery looks like to our community.

Engagement was designed to meet the needs of different audiences in the community, and to center hard-hit and historically underserved residents. This included online and mailed surveys in English and Spanish, digital, print and radio ads, stakeholder meetings, and paid partnerships with community connectors and organizations, among other methods. Final participation numbers include:

- 2,200+ online survey responses
- 220+ responses from OurCity
- Approx. 25 paper survey responses
- 50+ stakeholder meetings

Though this includes some individual responses from small business owners, there was also separate engagement of small businesses. Information on that engagement will be available in Economic Recovery reports.

Engagement questions included:

- What impacts of the pandemic are you still seeing or experiencing?
- What would help?
- What would make our community stronger?

Though some demographic and rating questions were included in surveys, this report focuses on analyzing the responses to open-ended questions for key themes. Quantitative analysis can be incredibly powerful for answering specific questions. However, qualitative analysis that focuses on stories rather than numbers is often more effective for exploratory questions like the ones above. It emphasizes leaving space for community inspiration and direction, and finding commonalities across responses rather than ranking ideas against each other.

More information about the analysis is available as an appendix to this report. Some community partners developed their own reports with additional qualitative analysis of the responses they gathered. These reports are also included as an appendix.

Community Guidance for Recovery Planning

The following sections attempt to tell a story about the values, priorities, and ideas the Fort Collins community envisions as part of recovery efforts. The first section provides a response to the City's Recovery Vision to test its alignment with community sentiment. The next section highlights key themes for recovery that move from more specific and immediate needs to longer-term, more structural changes needed to improve community resilience, along with potential actions suggested by participants to help the community recovery.

Community Vision for Recovery

The City's Recovery Executive Team outlined a Recovery Vision—that **all Fort Collins residents and businesses can participate in a resilient, vibrant and inclusive future**—along with four “vision words”—**healing, inclusion, resilience, and vibrancy**. While participants were not asked specifically to respond to these ideas, responses indicate alignment between community values and the vision laid out by the City. The following section outlines the ways that the community understands and discusses each vision area.

HEALING

the process of making or becoming sound or healthy again

Participants shared many types of losses experienced during the pandemic, including lost loved ones, lost income, and lost trust in other members of the community. In addition, some mourned the loss of learning and social opportunities for youth. Participants identified the importance of recognizing losses and restoring a sense of safety and stability as key steps in the healing process. The concept of reestablishing community trust through forums or events was also proposed.

INCLUSION

an intention or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. Inclusion requires removing barriers so all can thrive

Participants recognized that not all residents experienced the same level of impact or needed the same level of support to recover from the effects of the pandemic. Many highlighted that underlying issues like housing affordability were made worse for many over the course of the pandemic. Some participants requested additional focus on recovery for immigrant communities, low-income residents, and people experiencing homelessness. In addition, participants strongly identified with the goal of removing barriers to success. Specifically, they noted the importance of removing barriers for small businesses, workers in the creative sector, parents, Spanish-speaking residents, people experiencing homelessness, and LGBTQIA+ residents. For many historically underserved populations, including Latinx residents and LGBTQIA+ residents, there was a strong desire for more representation in future decision-making to demonstrate “follow-through” from the City on their stated goal of inclusion.

RESILIENCE

the ability to better avoid, withstand, or recover from difficult conditions of various scales

Participants recognized the important work of nonprofit organizations and City-sponsored programs in connecting community members with resources to help them weather tough times. Latinx community members also cited their families as sources of resilience and hope during times of adversity. The idea of resilience was frequently intertwined with discussion of removing barriers. Specifically, many participants recognized low wages and high cost-of-living as a significant barrier to financial resilience.

VIBRANCY

sense of place and belonging for all, full of energy and enthusiasm

Respondents envisioned a future, with strong, sustainable transportation networks, well-maintained community amenities like parks, pools, and natural areas, affordable housing, and a strong arts and culture sector. For many, a vibrant future was closely intertwined with meeting the goals of existing City plans, including the Our Climate Future Plan and the Housing Strategic Plan. While many responses suggested leveraging the Recovery Plan efforts to make progress on existing goals and initiatives, it is important to note that some respondents were in favor of utilizing a strict interpretation of recovery that focused on direct and immediate impacts and excluded any support for housing or sustainability.

Community Priorities for Recovery

The following key themes begin with more immediate and specific needs for healing, and ripple out towards broader initiatives that support resilience and vibrancy in our community. Each key theme includes information on the role that the City can play, and some potential actions suggested by respondents. It is important to note that the potential actions suggested are not an exhaustive list, and should not be considered a mandate from the community. Responses varied widely in their specificity. For example, some responses just noted “affordable housing” was needed, while others detailed specific policies related to changing zoning laws or creating supportive housing for those experiencing homelessness. An important part of future recovery efforts will be ongoing opportunities for community idea generation, feedback, and leadership.

Empower individuals and businesses through strong pandemic response programs.

Responses indicate that it is vital to provide ongoing pandemic response in addition to planning for and investing in community recovery. This includes sharing clear public health guidance and providing supplies to support safe and stable workplaces, public transportation, childcare facilities, schools, and community events.

Participants reported experiencing significant fear, frustration, and uncertainty related to how to safely navigate work and everyday activities as the effects of the pandemic linger. As one person shared,

I am still very worried about my health and the health of those I love, even with some people getting vaccinated.

For many, this manifested as fear and uncertainty related to being in public places. Others worried that employers were not taking the necessary precautions to keep them safe, and felt that they were being forced to choose between financial stability and their health.

While some businesses reported seeing rebounds to pre-pandemic levels, others, including members of the creative sector and employees of nonprofits and childcare centers shared a very different story. According to one participant,

We are experiencing greatly reduced audience support related to closed/reduced venues, mixed messages about safety, reduced employment for musicians. This pandemic is far from over- so we are looking for new ways to move forward.

La Cocina’s ethnographic report noted that their participants said it was “too soon to talk recovery.” Their participants expressed a desire for the community to find solidarity in this moment, noting that a huge first step would be for the City to affirm that the organization is here for its residents, particularly those who have been historically underserved, during these difficult times.

Mental health was also a large part of this conversation. For many, the uncertainty around public health remains a source of significant anxiety, adding to the feelings of social isolation and loss that have accumulated since the beginning of the pandemic. As one person shared,

There needs to be expanded access to mental health services...Providers are overwhelmed and spaces are limited, especially for those who offer services outside of traditional work hours. There has to be some relief...None of us are doing okay.

Responses gathered from Spanish-speaking residents, particularly parents with school-aged children, also highlighted the need for more mental health services in Spanish.

Participants also shared their struggles with consistent childcare, noting that COVID guidelines and frequent exposures were causing their children to miss school or daycare and impacting their ability to work. As one person stated,

[We need] more security around childcare and in-person schooling - it feels like the bottom will drop out at any moment and that makes it impossible to grow in our careers, business decisions, etc.

Finally, some noted that the continued reduction in Transfort service was a source of stress and instability, and requested that the City restore service, particularly for later evening hours, to assist with reliable transportation to appointments and workplaces.

While most community members who mentioned public health in their responses were in favor of additional measures related to combatting the COVID-19 pandemic, it is important to note that some community members were opposed and expressed a desire for a more “hands-off” approach to public health. Vaccination mandates were particularly controversial, with some participants requesting additional mandates for workplaces and large events, and others opposing any mandates. Participants were more supportive of the City amplifying public health messages than creating policies.

Recommended City Role: Communication, leadership, connection, service provision

Potential Actions: Coordinate with Larimer County Health Department to amplify public health messages ♦ Provide masks, rapid tests, and other public health supplies to individuals and businesses, especially parents and childcare providers ♦ Communicate to community members, especially Latinx residents, that the City stands with them in solidarity ♦ Support opportunities for increased mental health services, including virtual and in-person services, and Spanish-language services ♦ Reinstate Transfort service to provide reliable transportation services to the community, and provide masks onboard for those who need them.

Bolster community organizations, networks, and spaces that provide direct assistance, and center those most impacted

Participants recognized that not everyone was affected equally by the pandemic, and prioritized support for hard-hit groups, including youth, immigrants, people experiencing homelessness, low-wage workers, small business owners, freelancers, and people working in the arts industry. As one person shared,

The need for affordable housing, food, and taking care of our community members that need help because they may not have family or friends to help them has become a much

more obvious issue to me. The economy and health risks have hurt these people that were already hurting before the pandemic. This is an emergency now.

Because each person's experience of the pandemic was unique, respondents recognized that each person's path to recovery would be unique. Rather than requesting specific programs or types of assistance from the City, many requested additional support for nonprofits that provide direct aid to those hardest hit by the pandemic. Suggested recipients of support included organizations that:

- serve people experiencing homelessness,
- provide low-cost childcare and educational and social programs for youth,
- provide emergency assistance for rent, food, and other basic needs, and
- support freelancers, small businesses, and workers in the "arts economy."

For many residents, those in historically underserved groups in particular, the City has not been a central resource or access point in the past. Community organizations and family members have filled those gaps, and are seen as best positioned to bolster recovery efforts.

Community members also expressed a need for healing spaces and events to restore community trust and cohesion. For many in the community, including some Latinx respondents, it was important for the City to acknowledge community contributions during the pandemic, and recognize the physical, emotional, and financial losses experienced. The ethnographic report from La Cocina also highlighted the need for "generative spaces" that provide safety, honor identity, and promote connection with family and friends. Others also identified community events as an important opportunity for connection, and requested the revival or addition of new events. As one participant shared:

Fort Collins could definitely be more of a community. There is not a lot of pull together. I would like to see the community have community days and neighbor events

Some highlighted the opportunity for arts events and creative spaces or "hubs" to be an important element of this healing. As one participant suggested,

Some unifying experiences will help alleviate the divides and fears. Art can be that experience. Art can unite us.

Overall, respondents envisioned the City strengthening the networks and spaces in the community that provide support, healing, and resilience. While relationships between the City and the community are an important part of trust and future resilience, participants did not see them as a precursor to recovery efforts. Rather, through recognition and support of community organizations and spaces, the City can expedite recovery, build community capacity, and enhance its relationships with community members.

Recommended City Role: Support, capacity-building, connection

Potential Actions: Assist local organizations providing support for immigrants, people experiencing homelessness, and low-wage workers ♦ Provide support for organizations and spaces serving youth,

such as Boys & Girls Clubs ♦ Support local organizations serving small businesses and freelancers, including coworking spaces, creative hubs, makers spaces and shared digital marketplaces ♦ Identify key leverage points where skills and resources could spread throughout the community and reach historically underserved populations ♦ Consider opportunities to support generative spaces that provide opportunities for healing and connection. ♦ Consider opportunities to support additional communitywide events ♦ Utilize local artists and arts organization as cornerstone of healing

Remove barriers to resilience

As participants considered the move from immediate recovery to longer-term resilience, many focused on the ways the City could remove barriers, especially barriers to economic resilience. For many, childcare presents a significant barrier to employment and financial stability. Even more frequently, low wages were identified as a barrier to resilience and stability. Participants mentioned the high cost of living and noted that wages, even for many full-time jobs, were not keeping pace. As one person stated,

[Fort Collins] is a great place to live for individuals who are middle class to upper class, but things are getting more and more expensive and a lot of minority groups are getting left behind/cannot afford to be here.

Responses in Spanish, which were received later in 2021, also mentioned the impact of inflation on the cost of living, and the need for increased wages to keep up with increasing costs.

Responses also suggested a mismatch between the jobs available, and the skills and needs of those looking for work. Some individuals and business owners lamented the difficulties of staffing and the feeling that individuals are choosing not to work in available jobs. Alternately, many individuals stated that they wanted additional work and/or hours, but could not find work to meet their skills and needs. As one person shared,

[I need] better pay and more hours. Workforce development would be HUGE! I want to better myself but cannot afford to get more education.

This disconnect between employers and residents suggests a need for a community-wide understanding of the economy to understand what skills businesses need, what skills individuals have, and how best to match these together. This information could drive targeted workforce development programs, as well as identify opportunities to incentivize new industries that draw on community skills.

Recommended City Role: Policy, connection, program development

Potential Actions: Explore policies to increase wages ♦ Expand community childcare capacity ♦ Understand and address the mismatch between worker skills and open positions ♦ Emphasize skill development and capacity-building for individuals, businesses, and nonprofits

Invest in infrastructure and amenities to support a vibrant future

Participants expressed a desire for improved roads and intersections, enhanced bike trails, high-quality community recreation (including parks, pools, and natural areas), and expanded public transportation. As one participant shared,

The pandemic showed us how valuable open space is to our mental as well as physical health. I would like to see Fort Collins focus on maintaining clean and safe open space areas. While obtaining new open space would be great, a lot of the existing spaces are getting loved to death and could use some help.

While the above comment highlights the need for maintenance of community amenities, some responses also requested new open spaces, parks, pools, or venues (both indoors and outdoors) for community events and performances.

Schools and affordable housing were also mentioned as areas for additional investment. One participant described the importance of investment in affordable housing by saying,

Our city will face many more challenges in the future if we don't use ARPA funding to build infrastructure to address the needs [of people experiencing homelessness].

Finally, while sustainability was cited less frequently than affordable housing as an important priority, some participants also saw this as an opportunity to advance towards Our Climate Future goals, and called for using sustainability as a “lens” or reference point as decisions are being made for recovery.

Recommended City Role: Strategic investment, leadership

Potential Actions: Explore opportunities for targeted investment in housing, transportation, community recreation with affordability, equity, and sustainability in mind.

Conclusion

As the City continues to balance the need for immediate response with a plan for healing and recovery, conversations that recognize and honor diverse lived experience and provide opportunities for community leadership will be vital. **Just as the pandemic has affected residents differently, recovery has been and will continue to be a different journey for everyone.** A focus on pairing centralized policy and investment with decentralized programs and access points for the community will allow each resident to receive what they need for healing, inclusion, resilience, and vibrancy.

Positionality Statement

Though we hope that the community priorities identified accurately represent the collective engagement of thousands of community members, we recognize that data collection and analysis is inherently influenced by our personal experiences and biases. In this case, the coding for this report was grounded in the researcher's experience as an able-bodied white woman.

BRIEF ETHNOGRAPHIC EXPEDITION

“RECUPERACION IS RECOVERING OUR IDENTITY”

A small n’ mighty data set collected in partnership with The City of Fort Collins

Authors: Janina E. Fariñas, Alejandra Magaña, Claudia Perez & Karen Sandoval

Fort Collins, Colorado

November 8, 2021

I. INTRODUCTION

The COVID-19 pandemic brought an onset of new and challenging hardships to communities throughout the globe and to our very own hometown of Fort Collins, Colorado. To date, COVID-19 related hardships remain stacked in excess of preexisting upstream factors heightened by the stresses of the pandemic. Recognizing that many Fort Collins residents report feeling as though they are still amidst a crisis, the City of Fort Collins began paving the road to recovery by engaging community-based organizations (CBO’s) to listen to community members’ experiences during the pandemic. To this end, La Cocina conducted one-on-one interviews with Latinx persons who live, work, and/or play in Fort Collins. Referred to as a Brief Ethnographic Expedition, this report presents findings from a short-term series of engagements that highlight Latinxs lived experiences of recovery, and which honor Latinxs’ community members’ stories illustrative of both large and small pathways leading to healing, and critical to codesigning recovery with those most impacted by the devastating impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. SCOPE & PURPOSE

The City of Fort Collins is set to receive \$28.1 million of the nearly \$6 billion American Rescue Plan Act funds received by the State of Colorado and other communities. These funds will be spent over the course of the next three and a half years to aid in recovery efforts. The City recognizes recovery as a multi-faceted, multi-year process, and seeks to build a comprehensive plan that will center under-resourced communities’ needs. As well, as the City considers long-term recovery plans, the Economic Health Department has identified a need for public-private partnerships that better represent the interests and cultural values of historically under-resourced communities. Intentional and culturally responsive community outreach and engagement is a crucial step in the City’s efforts to build back stronger with an equity-first mindset. The City of Fort Collins partnered with La Cocina to learn about the agency’s unique codesign and participatory methodologies employed in better n’ deeper listening, and in order to glean from these activities core codesign elements mostly available in “small and smaller data sets” (Krause, H., 2021) which center the experiences of those most impacted by the wicked-problems seeking to be solved.

Goals established as part of this partnership:

1. To employ La Cocina’s community participatory action methodologies as a way to listen “better and more deeply,” (WeAllCount, 2021) in the interest of centering under-represented community voices expert at guiding equitable decision-making.

2. To bridge relationships between the City of Fort Collins and residents self-identified as Latinxs who live, play and/or work in Fort Collins.
3. To increase the City's understanding of what is needed to begin the recovery codesign process.
4. To introduce the City of Fort Collins to L'Ancla's and La Cocina's empathic interviewing and inquiry process focused on highlighting stories that introduce hopefulness as the community's North Star, and that orient the City to critical and foundational frameworks for how to intentionally codesign equitable recovery activities.
5. To make preliminary recommendations accordingly.

III. METHODS

La Cocina employed semi-structured ethnographic interviews to learn about Latinx community members' lived experiences of recovery. Interviewers' protocols were aimed at deepening empathic learning of experiences which community members describe as generative of hopefulness. Please note that participants direct quotes/words have been placed in quotations.

a. What is Ethnography?

Utilized broadly by social scientists, ethnography is a qualitative research method that involves deep immersion into a particular community, organization, and/or culture. While limited in scope due to deadlines related to the City's efforts, La Cocina was able to conduct a total of seven individual interviews, and one group ethnographic interview.

b. Participants and Sample

- Individual interviews with seven Latinx Fort Collins community members conducted in both English and Spanish
- Group interview with five City of Fort Collins community members conducted in Spanish
- **Total number of individual contacts = 7, including:**
 - 1 Latinx male-identified individual
 - 6 Latinx female-identified individuals
 - Zip codes represented: 80521 and 80524
- **Total number of group contacts = 1 x 5 residents per group, including:**
 - 5 Latinx female-identified individuals
 - 5 Spanish-speaking
 - Zip code represented: 80524
- **Interest and Participation**
 - Total number of participants interviewed = 12
 - Total number of no-shows and/or cancellations = 1
 - Total number of additional interested participants requesting interview(s)/on waiting list = 7

IV. FINDINGS

Community based participatory action methods (CBPAR) include a collaborative approach that involves generating empathy throughout the inquiry process. In

addition to CBPAR innovations, La Cocina strongly recommends a Human Centered Design Framework as a way to build generative outcomes throughout the recovery plan development process. Together these key methodologies help uncover important leverage points that may be cultivated in the interest of gathering a more robust data set in the future, and for building a strong community codesign infrastructure for the City of Fort Collins' now and into the future.

Utilizing a Grounded Theory approach which seeks to distinguish emerging patterns of experience in data sets, La Cocina identified a series of areas of opportunity for the City of Fort Collins. As such, La Cocina introduces the following as priority focus areas worthy of additional exploration and follow-up:

1. TOO SOON TO TALK RECOVERY

Both individual and group participants shared stories that suggest the impacts of the pandemic are actively moving through our Latinx communities, and which support a step-wise approach to recovery efforts. Jointly participants presented a picture of recovery beyond the pandemic and included examples of ways they have partially recovered in spite significant barriers and at times, unsurmountable suffering and loss, both now and long before the pandemic. While some might interpret this as resilience, interviews more closely resemble laments—passionate expressions of sorrow and grief which when “heard” in unison bind participants in a single story of dignified courage, and a succinct set of instructions for how to use dignity and courageous action as a way to aspire to respite and healing.

What follows are ways for the City of Fort Collins to first hear and join in their lament, and to build on the light each shines on our shared paths to recovery.

2. BEGIN BY SAYING, “ESTOY AQUI, I AM HERE”

Group participants expressed a strong sense of resonance and identification with one participant's story about how hearing the words, “Estoy aqui, *I am here*,” from a friend helped her get through the pandemic. Group participants made meaning of their peer's story, adding that hearing these words “means everything! It makes the load lighter;” “It means we're here with you”, and “It makes us feel cared for.”

When interviewers asked, “what would change if the City of Fort Collins said to you, “*estoy aqui, I am here*?” Respondents said they would feel:

- Included
- Important
- Valued
- Safe
- Free
- And, one participant said, “the identity of the City would be recovered.”

While the City of Fort Collins saying, “Estoy aqui; *I am here*” to the Latinx community may appear like a small, perhaps insignificant first step, this gesture of inclusion is identified by interviewees as significant. When genuine narratives identified by

community members as meaningful are centered above dominant narratives, the community feels assured that their City leaders have their backs--a basic need not fully met throughout the pandemic, and consequently identified herein as a salient community need, and an integral codesign choice point oriented to recovery efforts.

An individual interviewee also centered the idea of “estoy aqui, *I am here*,” expressing her desire to be fully seen and recognized, she said, “I’ve heard people say ‘there’s no Latinos in Fort Collins’ and that’s not true. We are here. *I am here* (¡estoy aqui!).” A variation on the group’s use of the phrase, this participant’s use of, “estoy aqui, *I am here*” also expresses the basic human need to be seen. Again, we wondered what meaningful recognition would look like for this participant, who responded saying, “leadership would understand what is happening on the front lines and there would be recognition of the contributions (of Latinxs on the frontlines).” In both of these instances, the sentiment of “estoy aqui, *I am here*” comes down to feeling valued, seen, and recognized by the City.

A word of warning and a recommendation: saying “Estoy aqui, *I am here*” to community members who have long felt undervalued, and unseen should be coupled with substantive listening action(s) by city leadership, and particularly those interested in codesigning recovery efforts. These actions can build empathy between city leadership and under-represented communities, and per community members’ requests, are best supported by meaningful dialogues that allow community members to create ways and spaces to be seen, valued and recognized.

3. WATCH OUR FEAR TRANSFORM TO POWER!” ¡MIRA! NUESTRO MIEDO SE VOLVIÓ PODER”

Despite the overwhelming and disproportionate hardships described by our Latinx interviewees, stories of courage and empowerment shine through. All participants used the word “*empoderadx*” or “*empowered*” after sharing a story of transformation amidst hardships brought on by the pandemic. Several stories were about having the courage to learn a new skillset such as learning to use online technologies that would facilitate navigating the pandemic; others were about accessing YouTube videos to learn how to do online activities with their children. Central to these stories was the feeling of “*empoderadx*” which resulted when in turn they taught these skills to other Latinx friends, families, and neighbors. These stories of how Latinxs are giving-back to their communities by sharing knowledge and information previously inaccessible to them is considered a significant codesign strength that communicates to the City of Fort Collins the critical Latinx value of “*Juntos: collective community stewardship*” (Bordas, J., 2019). Building codesign efforts in collaboration with proximate leaders is essential to activating a city-wide network of “*empoderadorxs*” that can use the city’s community-led codesign to mentor and to “*alentar*” (build up) fellow Latinx friends, family and *vecinos*/neighbors.

4. “LA FUERZA QUE ES CUANDO UNO ESTÁ UNIDO A LA FAMILIA”

“THE STRENGTH ONE HAS WHEN UNITED WITH FAMILY”

Time and time again, interviewees stressed the importance and strength they acquired from being with family and community. Stories of hopefulness were centered on feeling supported by either a family member or a caring friend. Often recognized as Latinxs’ most salient cultural value, *Familismo* is perhaps the single source of hopefulness expressed by interviewees who reported feeling traumatized by the pandemic. For these individuals, if fear and terror marked their stories and lives in ways that still haunt them, then *familismo* is the antidote they name as what will surely see them through. One interviewee spoke of her family’s strength by saying, “when we’re together, everything is possible.” Another interviewee reported that feeling part of his family or community “*aligera la carga*,” or “*lightens the load*” when living through experiences of worry and pain.

To be sure, *Familismo* is a Latinx value that supports a strong “sense of connection.” Often cited as a protective factor in Latinx mental health, *familismo* (German et al., 2009), or prominent and well-aligned family values, was reported by all participants as central to their experiences of recovery, and feelings of hopefulness and strength. As such, it would benefit the City to explore ways to practice intentional codesign that invites Latinxs into spaces and places where cultivating these connections is possible. When asked how the City can plant seeds of recovery in the Latinx community, and after group participants expressed that recovery has not begun in their homes and communities, most participants requested “a space to build and/or rebuild our families.” This is a critical quote that expresses the need Latinxs feel to further cultivate, and/or to heal family connections and with one another.

5. GENERATIVE SPACES

Interviewees responded to the following prompt, “We need a space where...”, in single written statements, saying they need:

- “A space to mourn, recover and reclaim our identity.”
- “A space to heal ourselves and our families”
- “A space to flourish as a person, student, and parent.”
- “A space where we can feel peace.”
- “A space to destress.”
- “A space to recover safety.”
- “A space to be with family.”
- “A space to feel heard and without criticism.”

V. CONCLUSION, RECS & HOW TO USE THIS REPORT

Human centered design (HCD) is both a framework and a process for solving wicked and complex human problems. L’Ancla’s and La Cocina’s approach to human centered community-led codesign involves returning to human-centered experiences like those listed above as the center from which to invite community members to participatory action codesign, equitable data collection, and democratizing data in an iterative process that

centers community voice and power. As a whole, this process takes time and a solid commitment to social systems change, and because this model of engagement seeks to be generative in cultivating what community members identify as “already working,” La Cocina suggests the City follows this brief engagement with the following activities:

1. **Ensure that other participants who want to share their stories, and who want to collaborate with the city are invited to do so.** La Cocina turned away many Latinx community members who wanted to share their stories, and who wish to participate in both individual and community dialogues. Additionally, interviewees reported that interviews in and of themselves were healing. When asked what healing spaces should look like, one interviewee responded, *“like this! Just like this!”* Interviewers understood this as validation for the power of deep listening, respectful dialogue and feeling witnessed.
2. La Cocina recommends that the City **follow these first interviews with a facilitated codesign session** where interviewees will have the opportunity to learn about the outcomes shared in this report and will consequently have the opportunity to participate in a series of codesign activities with key City of Fort Collins representatives. L’Ancla and La Cocina are committed to this process and will thus provide the needed facilitation for this follow-up codesign session at no cost to the City.
3. Community dialogues that support storytelling facilitated by elders and proximate leaders has long been known to support recovery from multigenerational and community-wide traumas (Onwuachi-Saunders, 2007). Interviewees referred to the impacts of the pandemic as terrifying, traumatic, ongoing, and as what needs healing before any recovery is possible. They also identified **caring dialogues, Charlas, and listening sessions with each other and with the City as foundational to the recovery process.** Latinxs interviewed throughout this process stressed this over and over again: (paraphrased) *“in order to begin our recovery, we first need to hear and say to each other, “¡Aquí estoy!, I am here...”* From a human centered design perspective, this type of community-assertion is a ripe codesign fruition that allows the City to transform engagement into an iterative process that democratizes community participatory listening → to community-codesign → to community-inclusive action and buy in → to shared learning → to shared power.
4. This model of engagement seeks to be generative in cultivating what is already working, and by centering and illuminating pathways already endorsed by community members as having cultural resonance and heartfelt value. Viewed as the fulcrums of innovation and creativity, **these pathways offer City leaders our communities reclaimed “seeds of recovery” as identified by those most impacted by systemic inequities**, and amidst the disproportionate impacts felt by Latinx residents both now and prior to the pandemic. To this end, let our team walk you through these reflections, but first...let’s go codesign!

5. Please contact Claudia Perez at Claudia@lacocinahome.org, or Karen Sandoval at Karen@lacocinahome.org with your questions and comments.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve our community. We loved hearing our fellow Latinxs' stories of courage and hopefulness.

[Claudia Perez & Karen Sandoval](#)

For La Cocina

[November 8, 2021](#)

Date

[Alejandra Magaña](#)

For L'Ancla

[November 8, 2021](#)

Date



Approval by Janina E. Fariñas, Ph.D., Psy., LPC
Founder & CEO

[November 8, 2021](#)

Date

###

Overall Summary Report and Takeaways

Fort Collins Recovery Plan Discussions

Artists, Venues and Creative Business

By: Peggy Lyle Due: 11-5-2021

- Primary focuses include:
 - Acknowledgment of, commitment to and investment in the Creative sector as a viable economic driver and legitimate business group in Fort Collins
 - Access to, investment in, maximizing and creation of affordable spaces for living and working, i.e. for lessons, rehearsals, creation (studios) and performances
 - Equity as it pertains to not only race, sexual orientation, culture, but also occupation. City needs to acknowledge and invest in arts, music and creative industry and not allow this industry to be an afterthought or a luxury, but view it as essential to our community's successful recovery, community wellbeing and economic health.
 - Invest in it for the things it can create, impact it can make, healing it can bring and not an afterthought or first thing to be cut in budgets.
 - Need a representative body/group like an arts council, leadership group, ...
 - Feel under served, under appreciated, under invested in and not listened to at the city level
 - Need to recognize that creative work is "work" and a valuable contributor to our city
 - Art has created our high quality of life here and sense of culture and are at risk of being pushed out
 - Artists and creative leaders need to be part of the process more often, in leadership and staff positions at the city and county, have them on contract with the city helping on projects both arts related and no arts related.
 - Huge impact with lots of loss of jobs, income, businesses, staff, careers, sense of community, mental health and happiness.
 - Not currently an equitable environment and artists are an underserved and marginalized population with limited access, and artists of color are more so impacted
- **Short Term:**
 - Clearer policies about COVID safety and rules, mandates...
 - Mental health support
 - Short term debt relief as many have been closed or nearly closed for 1-2 years
 - Affordable Spaces to host makers markets, rent studios, rehearse and put on performances in safe ways
 - Fewer barriers to working with city and for grants
 - Access to de-escalation training/support group and customer education
 - Staffing help, attraction and retention of workers and help building safe environments for them to work within
 - Incentives to build up our technical personnel for venues and industry support (lighting, sound, crew,...)

- Access for underserved populations including BIPOC, differently abled, LGBTQ and other artists to performance and creation spaces, grants, and professional development
 - Easier access to COVID tests and quick results
 - Affordable or free mental health and health support for artists, arts administrators and creative business owners - including group support environments
 - Access to programs that employ artists -- like Art in Public Places, being a vendor, hosting a market, host an event, ... the city processes put too many barriers for many newer artists are discouraged
 - Arts need to come back to schools and afterschool programs, a way of coping and processing the effects of the pandemic
 - Marketing campaign for Fort Collins that it is a arts destination and establish that brand as an arts leader
 - Let the Arts help us heal as a broader community - that's what we are good at, - art therapy, PTSD/trauma healing through the arts, murals, music, writing,....
 - Help with supply and demand of products - can we source things locally and team up with manufacturers here.
- **Long Term:**
 - Living wages for creatives/artists
 - Affordable housing and work spaces
 - Creative Industry leadership group/Arts Council/Sector collective
 - Representation of the arts within the City and staff through positions and leaders
 - Creative Centers that support all types of artists and art forms, where there are chances to have collaboration between disciplines and feeling on community - need multiple of these and can be activating non city owned private spaces to create this.
 - Mental health support
 - Safety nets for gig workers, artists and self employed business owners
 - Use large vacant commercial spaces or underwrite established cultural organizations to establish creative spaces for creative entrepreneurs to set up shops, studios, make sales, host events, create goods and perform.
 - Have representation for the Creative Industry that can communicate to, serve as a authority and Industry representative
 - Have centralized information/communications about arts events, classes & businesses
 - Make tangible investments to back up commitment to and not tokenism of the arts
 - City funding a Micro Grant Program, granted to Community partner organizations or businesses to be given to their specific populations of artists/business entrepreneurs to cultivate and foster unique and innovative projects/startups, can be geared around solving problems that face community or simply to create products or works. Can serve the arts but also underserved populations.
 - Supportive of Fort Fund and Art in Public Places - need more support and fewer barriers for entry and engagement
 - Revamp the mental health services offered or streamline them - group therapy, better crisis hotlines and more education about resources for the community at large

- Random Takeaways/Comments:

- Multiple offers were made to have individuals come speak before your planning group and leadership to express the importance of the arts as a business sector, impact of the pandemic on the creative industry, the importance in investment, return on investment, and issues pertaining to access and inclusion in the arts
- One of our participants shared a video from a film industry and music industry professional about living in Fort Collins -- Musician Russick Smith talks on the importance of repairing and investing on the developing film scene in our county. https://www.dropbox.com/s/p7pxo0jyela6elw/james_russick_smith_on_the_film_com_mission.mov?dl=0
- "...Also, how many times do we give the city our ideas and they completely ignore them? It's frustrating."
- "I completed the survey, but found it to be bureaucratic, the typical City jargon with useless questions that lack enough background information..... I've chosen to put my time and talents into creative organizations that are making a difference and delivering on their promises. Or at least trying. The City is not that for me or my organizations — for profit or nonprofit."
- In discussion this was offered: "Check out this video that discusses what happens when a community is without the arts." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xe81-eHGc0w>.
- "Hmm...well, there are already studios for rent in town for musicians. Perhaps there could be studios for rent in order for dancers and choreographers to record away from babies and parents! Also...I've been imagining what it would be like to have more bandshells like the one in Old Town in all the parks!"
- From Elizabeth Martin at the Museum of Art Fort Collins - "I wanted to include some articles and food for thought on the systems-level change that I mentioned. Our own strategic planning moved us back to our growth phase and a "radical alignment" and a bold new vision looking past scarcity and towards a future where the arts are recognized as the economic driver they are. Indeed someone on the call mentioned that--without the music scene that is supported--where would Fort Collins be?"

Besides the comment I made about a **shared creative space** (which could be the post office building), a shared back office is a great system change. We are all struggling to pay IT, HR, Payroll, bookkeeping, etc. Here are a couple of articles about that:

- <https://www.intellichief.com/5-ways-to-make-your-back-office-shared-services-center-more-productive/>
- <https://www.nonprofitcenters.org/events/back-office-alternatives-need-know-shared-services/>
- <https://www.tcg.com/blog/who-says-shared-services-are-only-for-back-office-functions/>

- *Along with the idea of investing in public space that fosters creativity, here is a resource I like about investment in civic commons to drive equity that the city can think about--maybe they already are. There is a great action guide here.*
- *Here is an article about saving a historic building using pandemic relief funds from Cleveland*
- Comments on the Facebook post did mention the Americans for the Arts - Fort Collins Arts Economic Study and how the planners should look at that to see how much impact the arts have on our local economy (It was most recently done by DDA & City?)
- Also the Arts Space Feasibility Study was mentioned several times as an important document to look at for housing and space needs. (It was conducted by Bohemian Foundation DDA and City of Fort Collins)
- And there are also statistics that can be found from the Creative Vitality Index reports (Downtown Fort Collins Creative District has access to this database and reports)
- Other comments shared in virtual chat:
 - *In support at the LC, that includes the tech people who run streaming services. There have been many snafus during our broadcasts and this is likely a lack of experience on the part of those creating the stream product.*
 - *The upgrade of the streaming support would be huge. This may bring more work for that industry as well.*
 - *We also need investment in growth for our organizations on every level as well as salaries and honorariums for artists and subsidized studio space*
 - *We'd like to add that in times of social crisis in the history of our country and civilization, we've routinely turned to the arts to maintain balance in our mental health, happiness, and perseverance. It's on us as this community's creative arts leaders to work together and invest in new opportunities and infrastructure that benefit the creative community as a whole.*
 - *When Steve Jobs built Apple headquarters, he put one set of restrooms near the front of the building. Specifically so people would run into each other to begin conversations . . .*
 - *yes- investment is the underlying systemic need and solution to lift us all*
 - *Let's make one of the outcomes of COVID being to put aside our silos and work together for the greater good of the entire creative arts community in FC*

Coding Memo

The coding process began with open coding, which is designed to allow themes to emerge rather than beginning with a predetermined set of ideas or topics. This first stage of coding encourages variety and creativity in assigning codes to small units of text (Glaser 1978). Multiple codes for a single unit of text were used when appropriate to avoid early bias towards specific concepts or themes (Charmaz 2006). These themes were then cross-checked with key stakeholders to ensure that written comments were reflective of discussions. The next stage of coding, focused coding, zeroed in on specific codes that appear to be the most useful or relevant (Glaser 1978). After focused coding, the theoretical coding stage related codes that have remained relevant to each other (Charmaz 2006; Glaser 1978). According to Charmaz, theoretical codes are “integrative” and “lend form” to relevant codes (Charmaz 2006: 63).

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS

Survey Results

The following represent the quantitative results from surveys conducted during engagement. It is important to note that although valuable, these survey results do not provide the full picture of public engagement. Much of the engagement conducted happened during events, interviews and other one-on-one conversations, which focused more on qualitative storytelling and open-ended questions. Qualitative, mixed-method analysis results are detailed in the full Community Engagement Report above.

Surveys included in the results below:

- OurCity Online Priority Survey (English and Spanish)
- Larimer County Recovery Survey – Responses marked as living in Fort Collins (English and Spanish)*
- Priority Surveys – Completed by Community Connectors LLC (paid partnership), vast majority of respondents were Spanish-speaking, living in manufactured housing

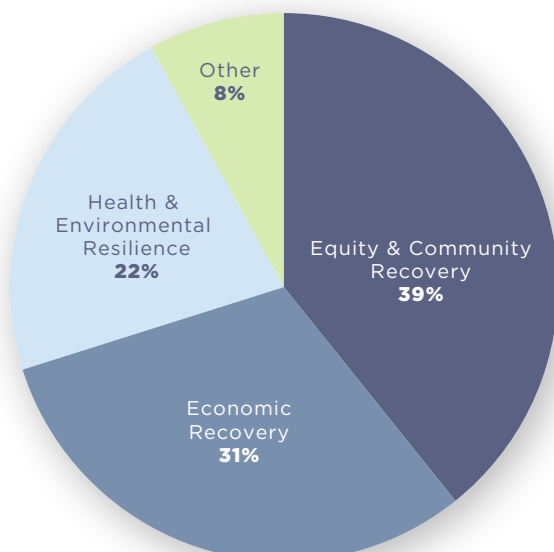
**The Larimer County Survey did not include all questions asked in the Fort Collins OurCity Online Priority Survey. When not included, a note has been added to the graph.*

Priority Snapshot

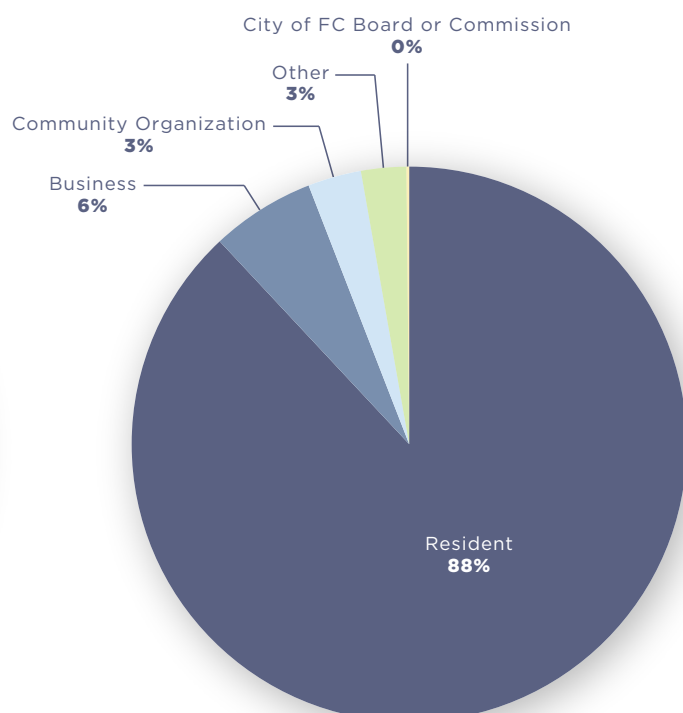
The majority of survey respondents were residents of Fort Collins, however many local businesses and community organizations also responded. Additional community organizations and businesses, including many nonprofits, were engaged through other methods – virtual open houses, paid partnerships and stakeholder meetings. Additional business engagement occurred separately, including surveying small business grant recipients.

Respondents were asked which area of pandemic recovery matters most to them as a quick way to gauge priorities. Each area was split fairly evenly, and the majority of those who responded “Other” mentioned that each area was equally important for recovery.

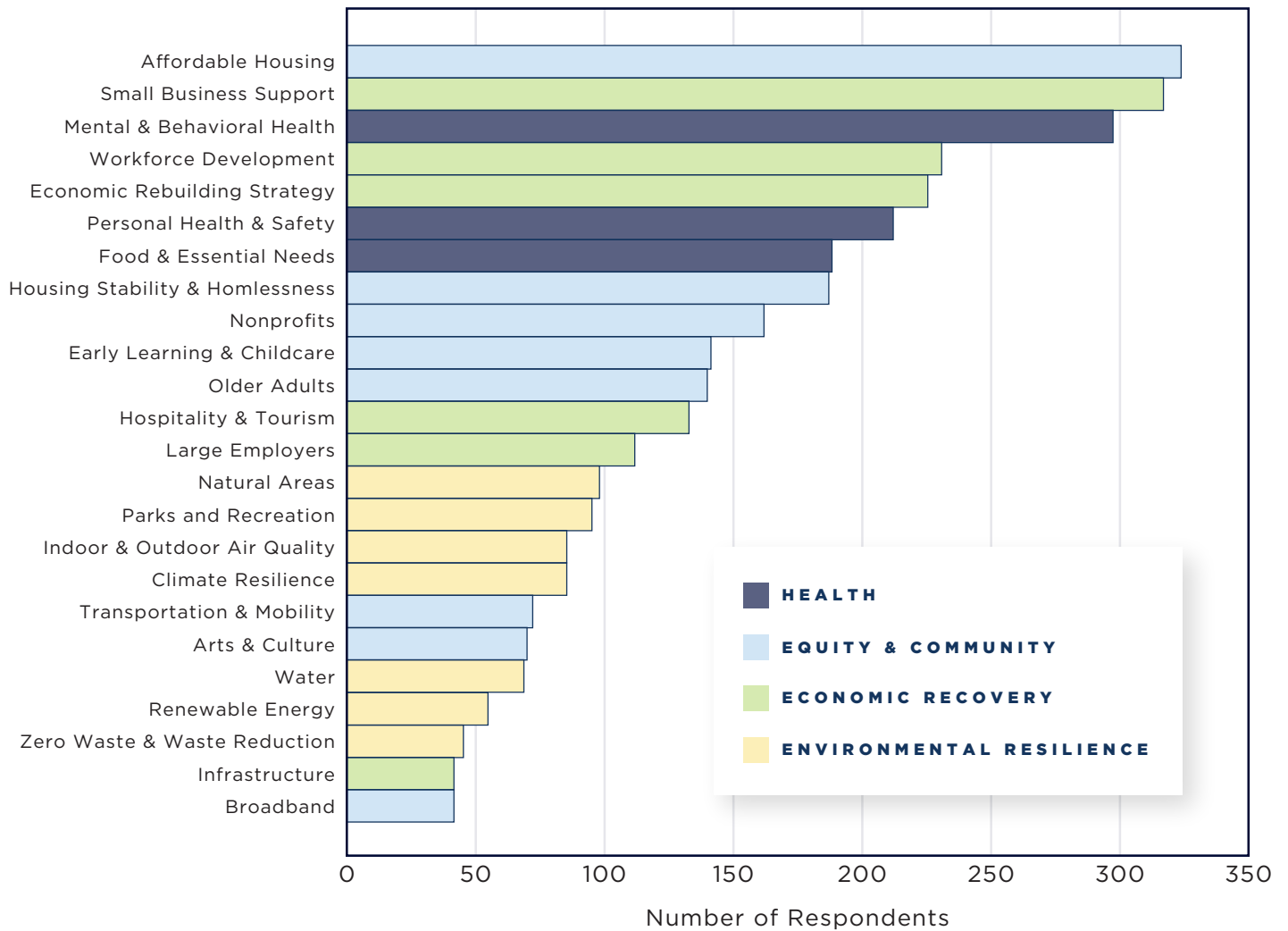
Which area of Pandemic Recovery Matters Most to you?



Respondent Profiles

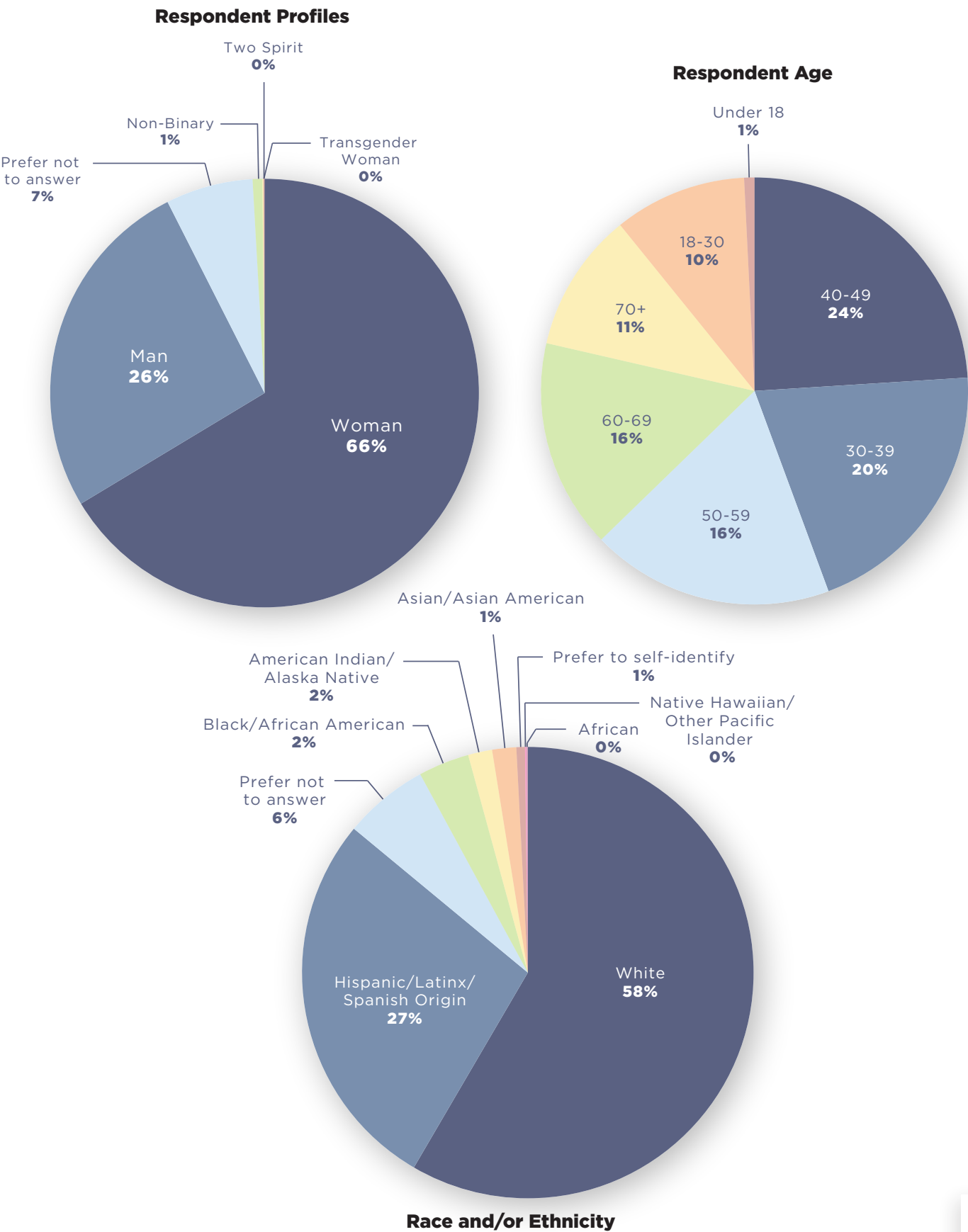


The following chart displays Priority Areas for recovery. Respondents choose their top five priorities for recovery based on the list below. Affordable housing, small business support, mental & behavioral health, workforce development and economic rebuilding strategy ranked highest; however it is important to note that not all parts of the community have the same top priorities. For example, mixed-methods analysis (above) highlighted that for many, essential needs and health and safety ranked highest. For others, recovery didn't even resonate – it felt too soon to talk about recovery.

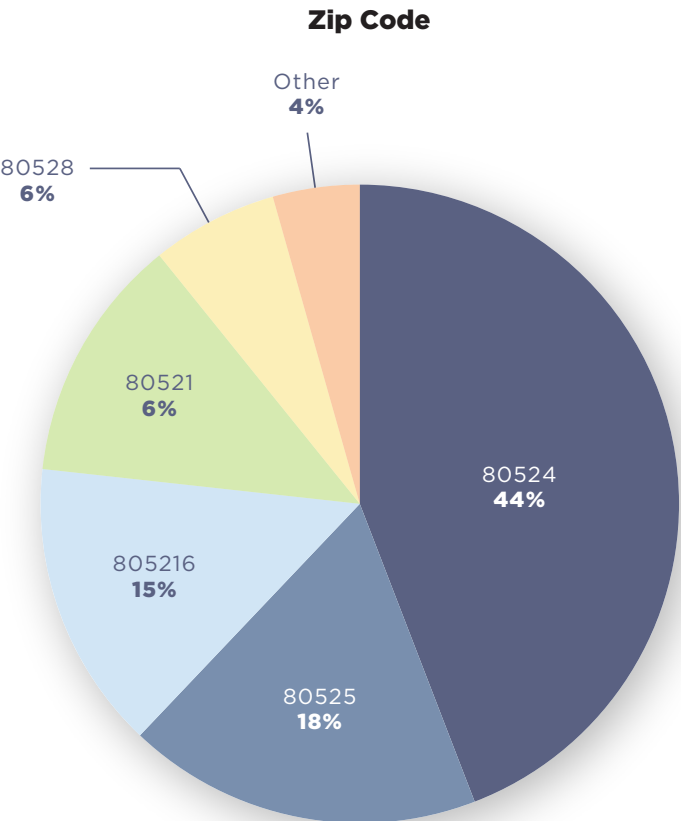
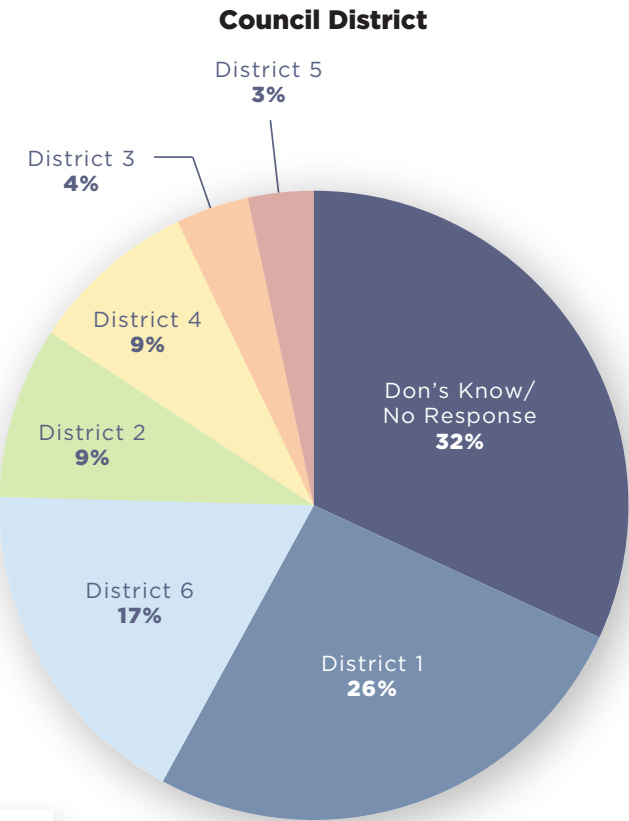
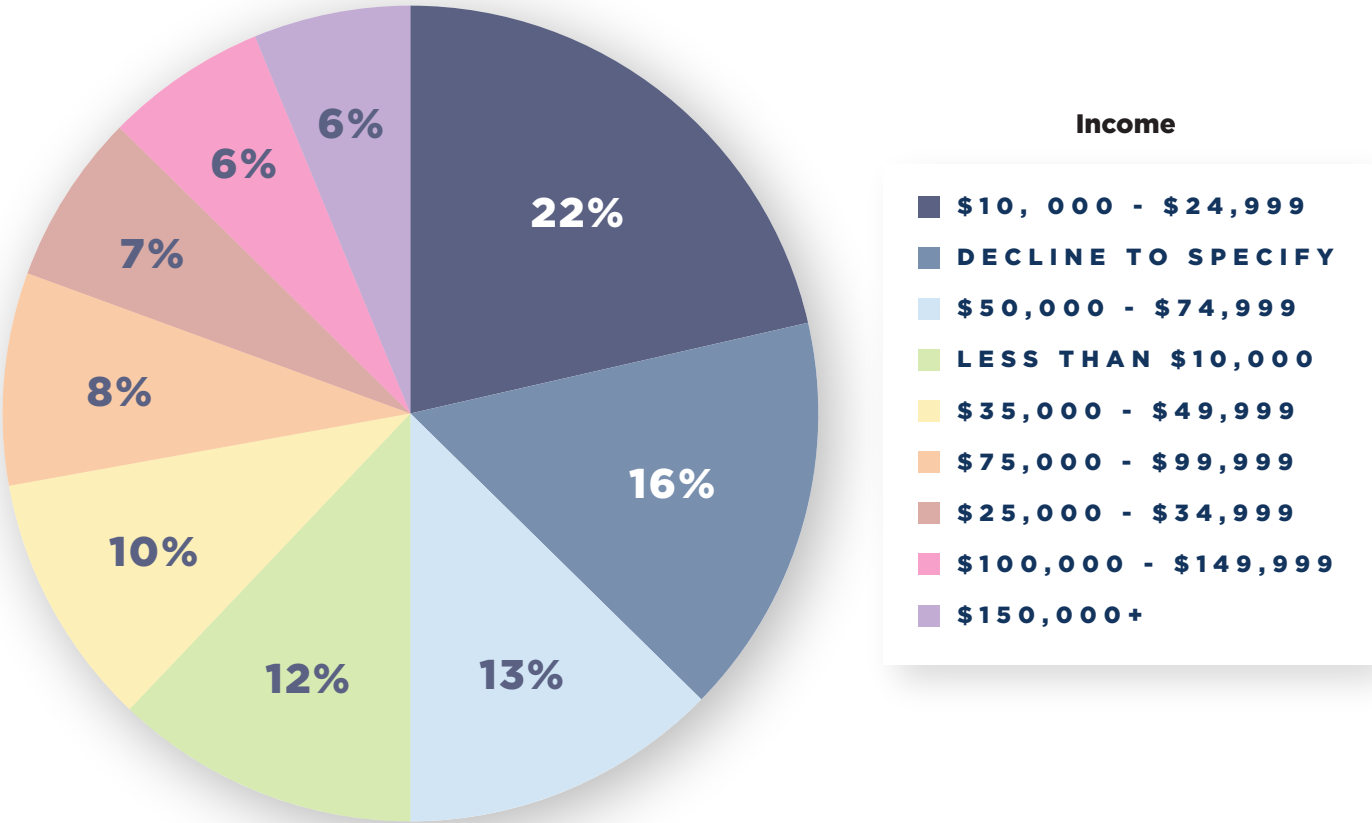


DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

Demographic questions asked within the survey were opt-in. Not all respondents answered the demographic questions and some choose to partially answer the questions.



The following graphs for Income, Zip Code and Council District include only respondents to the City’s priority survey, not the survey put out by Larimer County.



SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CURRENT STATUS SURVEY RESULTS *November 30, 2021*

CONTACT

Josh Birks, Economic Health & Redevelopment Director, jbirks@fcgov.com

Rachel Rogers, Senior Specialist, Economic Sustainability, rrogers@fcgov.com

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The City of Fort Collins Small Business Assistance Program (SBAP), funded by Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act dollars and administered by the Economic Health Office, provided monetary relief to small businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The program provided funding to individual businesses to help offset the significant, temporary loss of revenue during this pandemic and to assist businesses in sustaining through impacts to their business from public health orders.

The City also participated in the Larimer County Small Business Relief Program, which was very similar to the SBAP program, but where the eligibility criteria were set by the State. Eligible industries included restaurants, bars, wineries, breweries, distilleries. Caterers, movie theaters and fitness/recreational sports centers.

The total number of distinct businesses that received one or both of the grants is 297.

	# OF BUSINESSES	TOTAL GRANT \$	AVERAGE \$/ BUSINESS
SBAP	205	\$1,899,177	\$9,264
SBR	164	\$842,238	\$5,136
TOTAL (DISTINCT BUSINESSES)	297	\$2,741,415	\$9,230



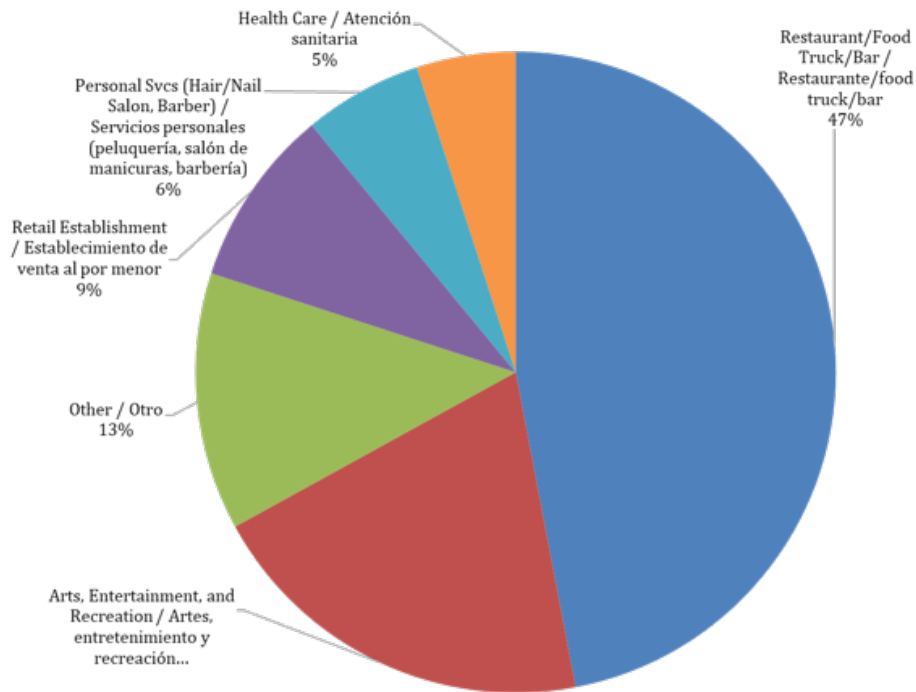
[FCGOV.COM/BUSINESS](https://fcgov.com/business)

FALL 2021 SURVEY OF GRANT RECIPIENTS

In October 2021, the Economic Health Office sent out a follow-up survey to the businesses that received SBAP and/or SBR funding to try to get a sense of the current conditions and concerns of those businesses.

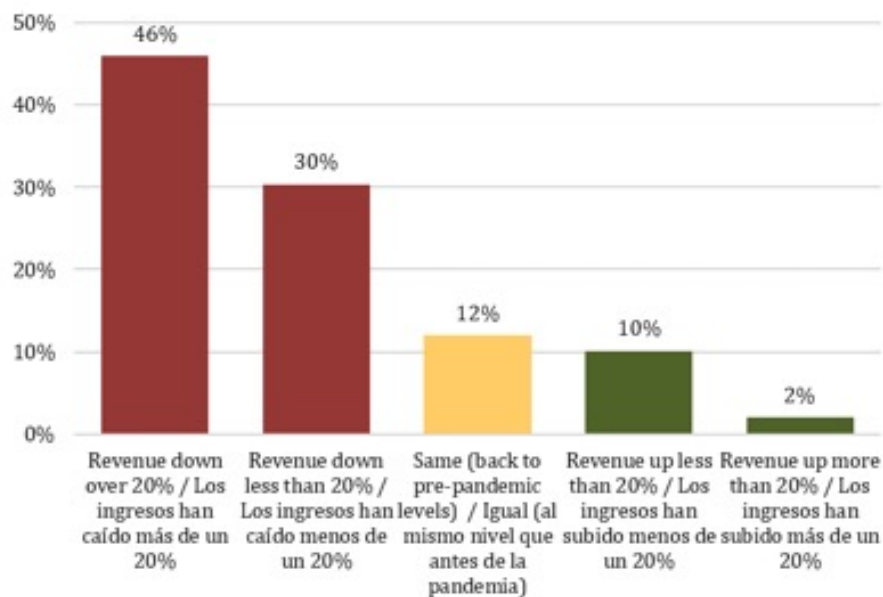
INDUSTRY CATEGORY

We received a total of 81 responses to the survey (27% response rate).

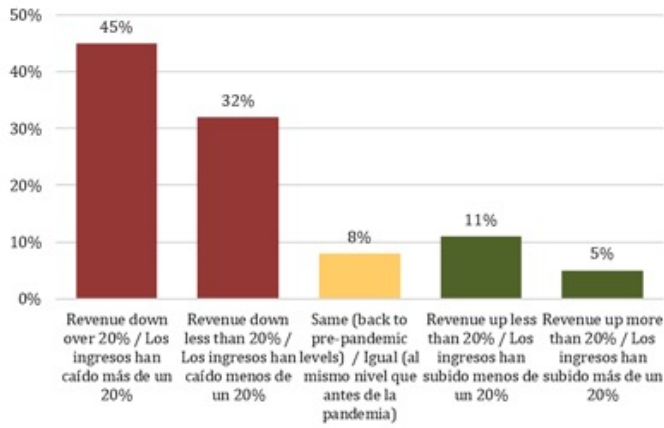


BUSINESS REVENUE LOSS

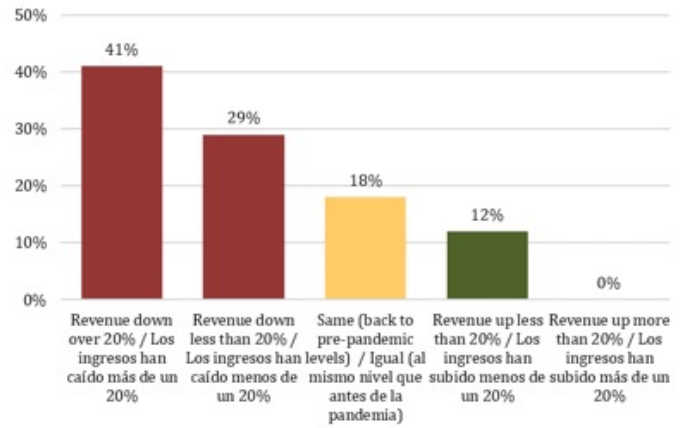
Businesses were asked “How is your current business revenue compared to pre-pandemic revenue (approximately)?” – 76% of businesses stated revenues are still down compared to pre-pandemic levels.



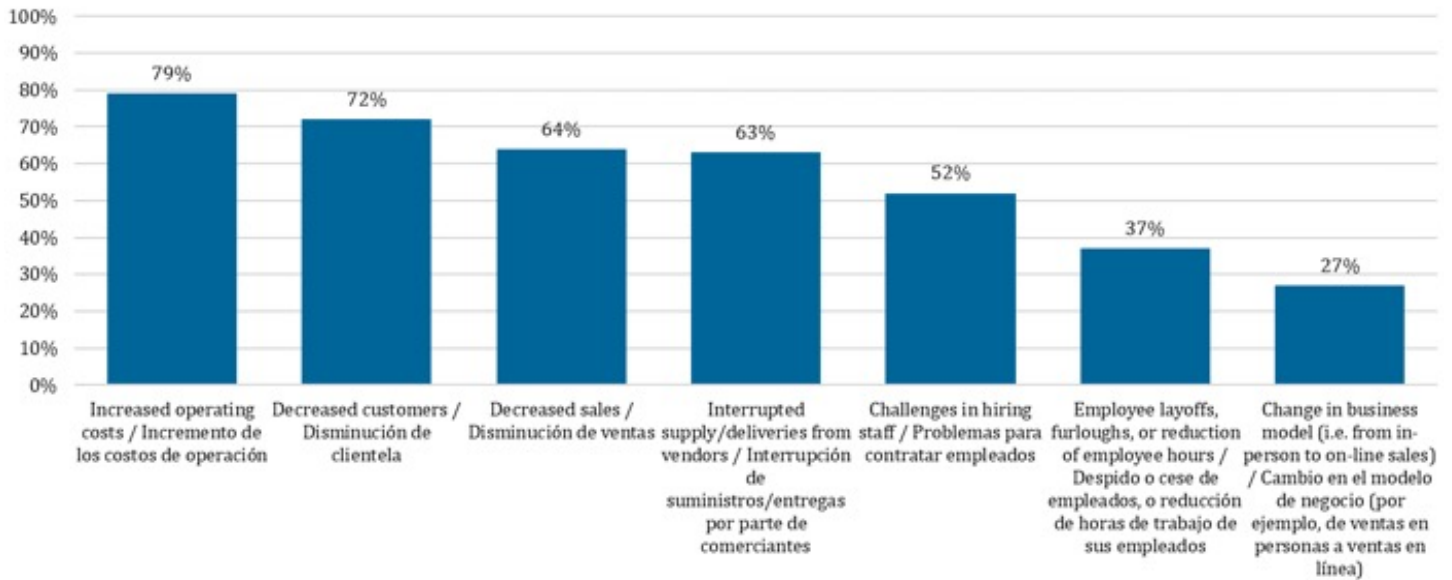
RESTAURANT/FOOD TRUCK/BAR



ARTS, ENTERTAINMENT, AND RECREATION



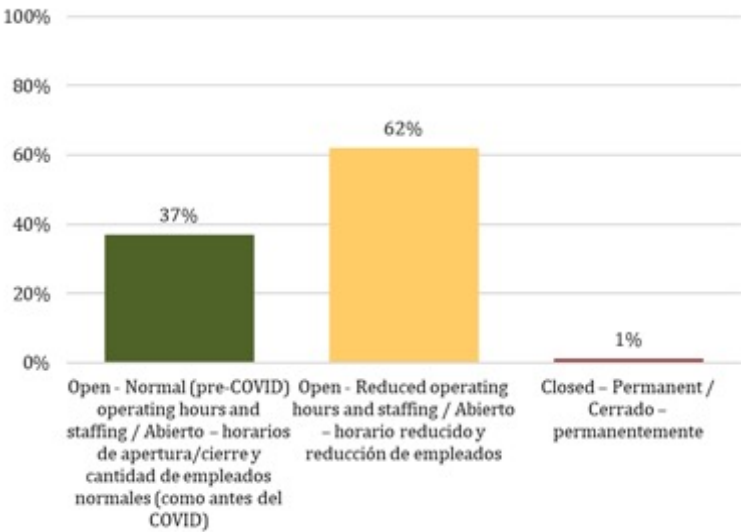
CURRENT IMPACTS TO BUSINESSES COMPARED TO PRE-COVID OPERATIONS



[FCGOV.COM/BUSINESS](https://fcgov.com/business)

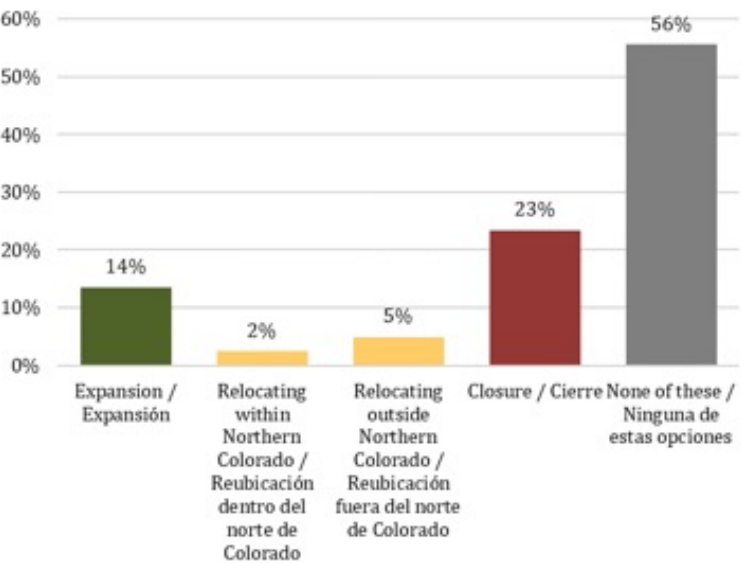
CURRENT STATUS OF BUSINESS

A significant percentage of businesses are still not operating at pre-COVID hours or staffing. One business closed for reasons not related to COVID.



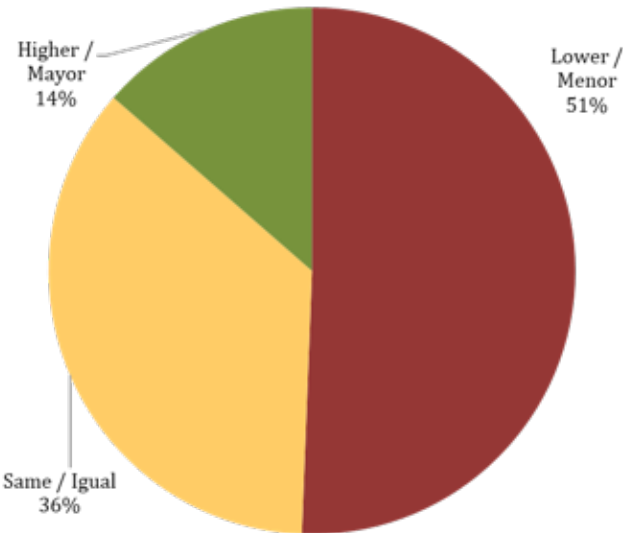
ANTICIPATED CHANGES TO BUSINESS

Businesses are still very concerned about the ability to continue after COVID.



EMPLOYEE COUNT COMPARED TO PRE-COVID

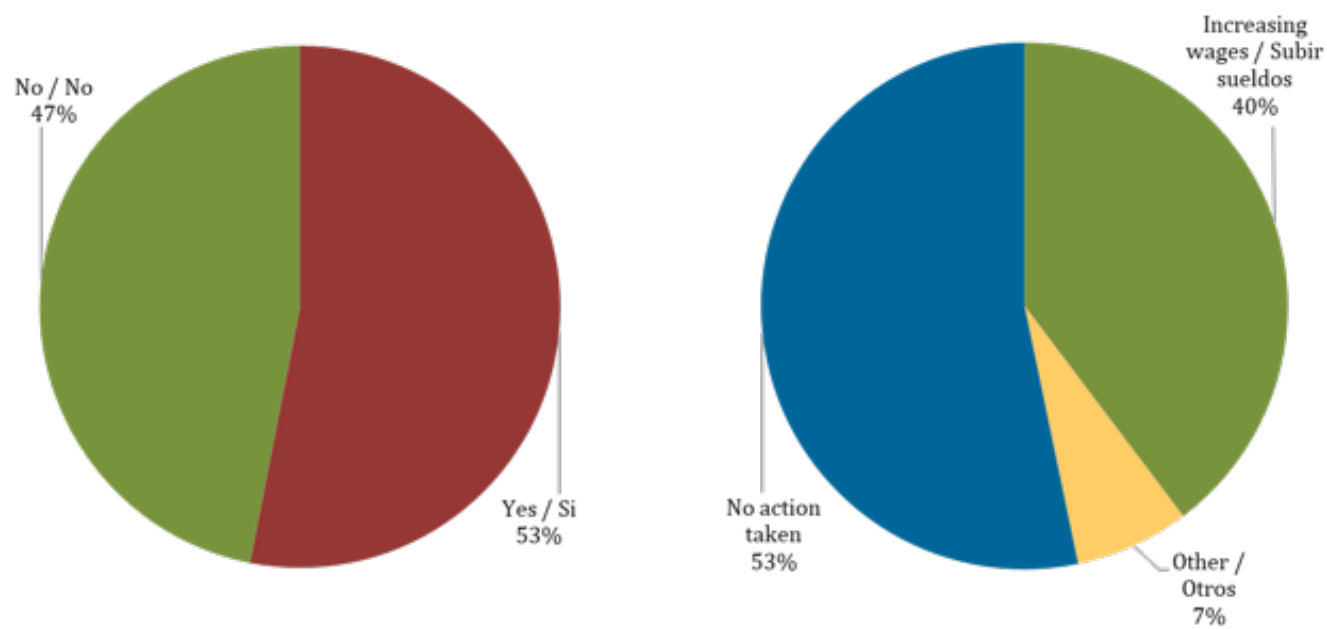
Over 50% of businesses are not at pre-pandemic staffing levels.



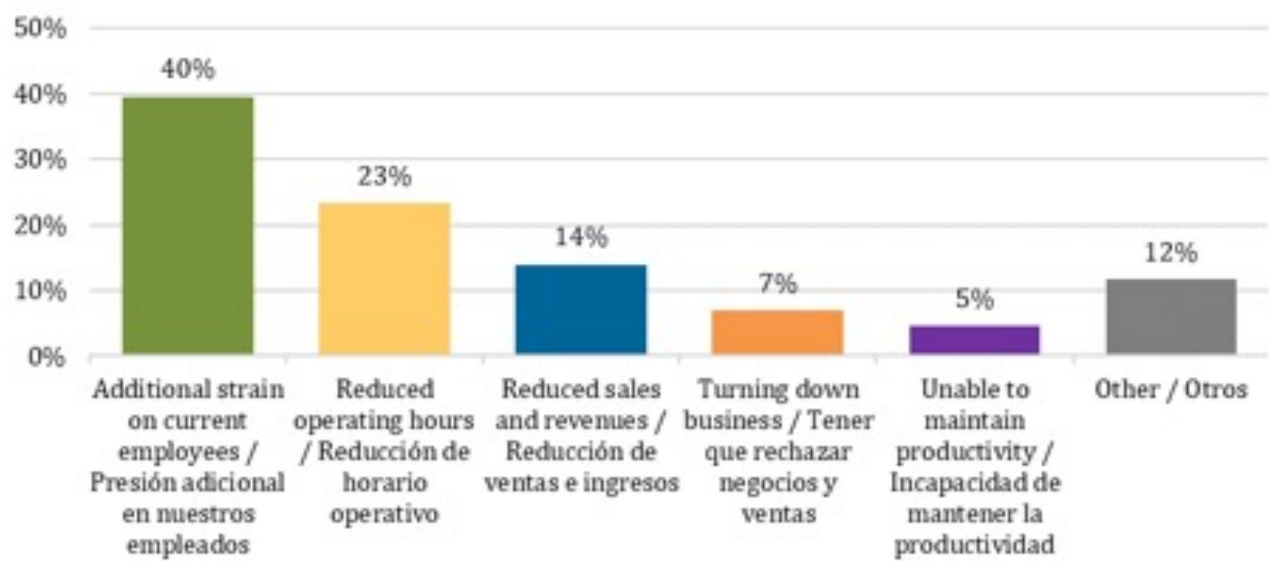
CHALLENGES RECRUITING OR RETAINING EMPLOYEES

Challenges with staffing continue. Reasons are a complex, overlapping web of factors including concerns of health safety at work, ongoing childcare concerns and a readjustment their preferences.

In response to the challenges in recruiting and retaining employees, 47% of survey respondents have taken action to address the issue.



Shortage of employees' impact on business (for respondents for whom it is an issue).



WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN HELPFUL OVER THE LAST 18 MONTHS?

Below are the most common responses from businesses.

- Clearer and more timely information on local vs. county vs. state regulations.
- More direction on how to implement new mandates and more lead time to do so.
- Continued sales tax and property tax forgiveness and/or reductions.
- Expanded use of outdoor space for a variety of entertainment.
- Funding for additional outdoor dining equipment, like heaters.
- More money.
- Work with landlords regarding rent for when businesses were closed.
- “The biggest help was the grant I received from the city to keep my business afloat financially.”

WHAT RESOURCES OR TOOLS DO YOU NEED TODAY?

Below are the most common responses from businesses.

- Additional funds to help until costs of supplies and workforce return to normal.
- Assistance negotiating a lower rent to allow us to stay in current facility.
- At home COVID-19 tests for the artists currently performing and rehearsing.
- Community job board would be helpful to find people in the area looking to fill jobs.
- Continued support of the temporary patio expansions throughout the next year.
- Funds to develop outdoor area
- Employees and training.
- Marketing and education of the public to shop early and to shop local.
- No more mandates/fewer restrictions.
- “We made a big pivot and can’t really return to pre-pandemic ways so just continued support for these new ways is greatly appreciated.”

WHAT WOULD MAKE FORT COLLINS MORE RESILIENT/STRONGER?

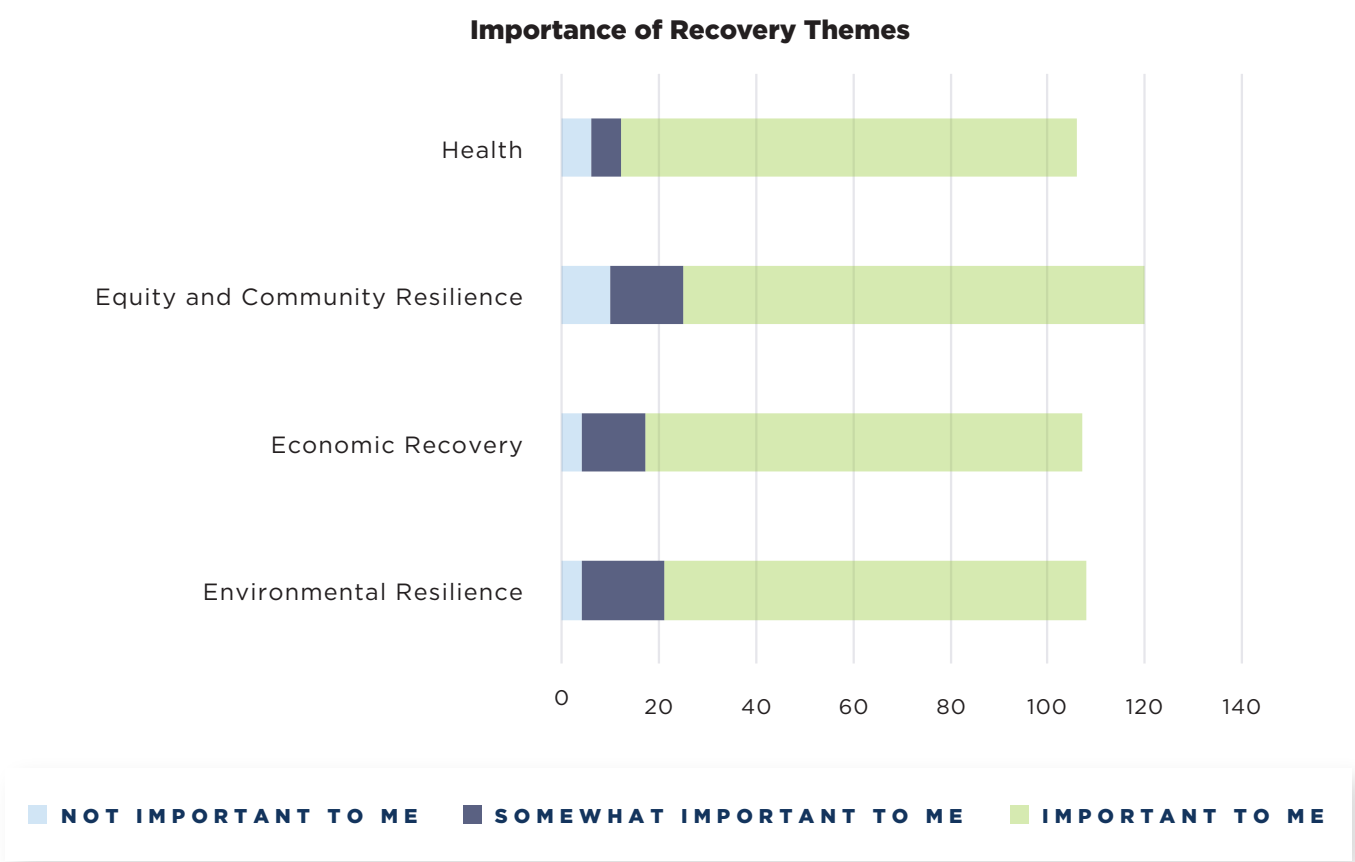
Below are the most common responses from businesses.

- A sales tax holiday in times of crises.
- An investment in non-profit arts organizations.
- Encourage development and businesses outside of downtown.
- Greater community and connection across intersectionality of minority businesses, especially single-employee businesses.
- Have plans and preparations in place in the event that what happened to our communities last year happens again/rainy day fund.
- More support in dealing with customers in challenging times.
- More B2B collaborations.
- More effective social safety net.

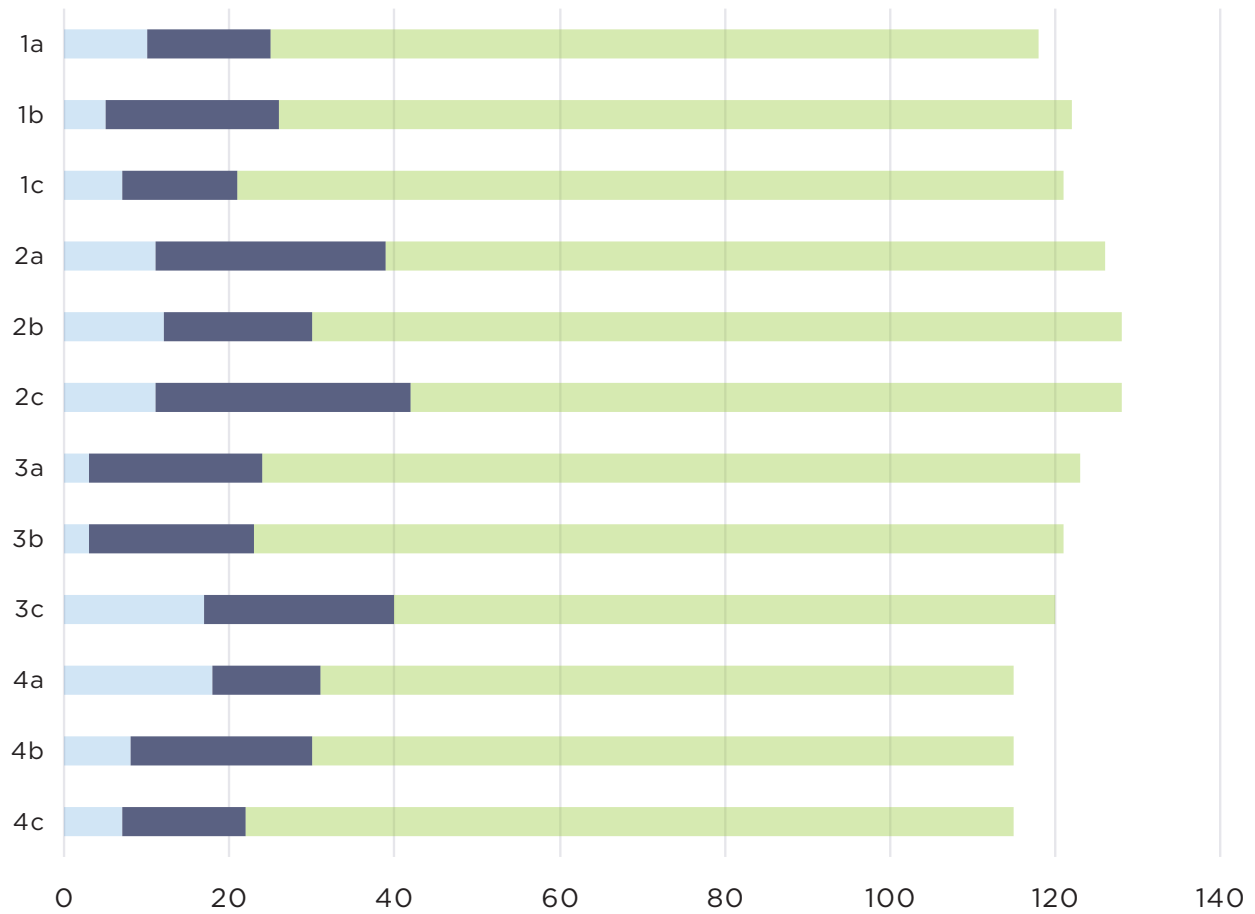
PHASE 3 ENGAGEMENT RESULTS

After the draft plan was created, additional public engagement occurred to ensure that the themes, outcomes and objectives accurately reflect community priorities for recovery.

Of more than 200 community members surveyed and spoken to, the majority expressed support for the drafted themes and outcomes, and shared additional context about why those outcomes are vital for community recovery. This additional feedback also helped expand and define specific objectives and potential actions for recovery.



Importance of Recovery Outcomes



■ NOT IMPORTANT TO ME
 ■ SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT TO ME
 ■ IMPORTANT TO ME

The rich public engagement from throughout the plan development process will continue to be used to support future decision-making for recovery, along with additional engagement as necessary.

D. FUNDING DETAILS

FUNDING SOURCES

ARPA funds will be one valuable source of funding for recovery-related projects; however, additional resources will need to be used in order to help the community accomplish recovery goals. Throughout the pandemic, the City has used funds to respond to emergent needs and impacts, including using federal funds. Below is a summary of past pandemic relief funding utilized by the City, along with details of how ARPA funds have been used thus far to respond to pandemic impacts and help recovery efforts.

Past Pandemic Relief Funding

The City continued to make use of the \$9 million federal CARES funds received in 2020 to support pandemic response and relief for businesses and community members. Many of the programs supported by CARES allowed the City to continuously build on to using ARPA and general funding.

The \$9M of CVRF funding was allocated in the following ways:



- 30% - Organization funding supported safe service delivery by the City.
- 30% - Business / Economic Recovery funding supported economic recovery and business reopening.
- 40% - Residential Support / Social Recovery funded human service projects to support community response.

Examples of the organization costs ranged from supporting hybrid telework capabilities (hardware and software) for staff and public areas, office area reconfigurations, enhanced cleaning, the emergency operations center (EOC), emergency family medical leave (EFML) and sick leave, increased unemployment costs, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) match requirement for Poudre Fire Authority, and personnel reimbursements for work diverted to the pandemic response.

The 30% used for Business and Economic recovery included restaurant dine-in expansions, small business assistance and marketing strategies like Keep NoCo open. This funding also contributed to inclusive communication and engagement, which created deeper relationships with the business community. The funding for residential support and social recovery allowed for innovation and adaptability to meet the most critical community needs like shelters, legal defense funding, utility payment assistance and childcare. It also provided grant support to 17 nonprofit organizations and supported congregate and non-congregate shelters.

Additional details about the uses of CARES funding can be found in [this](#) report.

ARPA FUNDING USES FOR 2021 AND 2022

Allocation of ARPA Funds as of 12/13/2021

Ordinance No. 079, 2021: Short-Term Response: \$4.2M allocated

PROJECT NAME	DOLLAR AMOUNT
Eviction Legal Fund	\$20,000
Direct Assistance for Utilities Customers*	\$460,000
24/7 Shelter at Fort Collins Rescue Mission	\$30,000
For Fort Collins Campaign & Website	\$190,000
Business and Entrepreneur Center*	\$400,000
City of Fort Collins Special Events Recovery Grant*	\$125,000
Small Business Grants*	\$1,060,000
Recovery Communication and Administration*	\$600,000
Learning Loss Mitigation & Developmental*	\$400,000
Homelessness Initiatives and Support Services	\$760,000
Poudre Fire Authority Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)	\$150,000
Remaining Short-Term ARPA Funds (saved for overage/shortage/additional PPE)	\$22,846
TOTAL	\$4,217,846 *

ARPA-FUNDED PROJECTS IN ADOPTED 2022 BUDGET: \$4.05M ALLOCATED

PROJECT NAME	DOLLAR AMOUNT
Eviction Legal Fund	\$220,000
Parking Structure Critical Preventative Repairs-Enhanced	\$745,400
Parking Structure Security Upgrades	\$446,000
Expanded Technical Assistance for Small Business	\$30,000
Childcare System Support	\$170,000
Innovative Fort Collins Challenge	\$100,000
Economic Health Strategic Plan	\$100,000
5.0 FTE - Mental Health Response Team build out; 1 Sergeant and 4 Officers	\$560,212
Police Special Operations Division	\$257,417
1.0 FTE Contractual - City Planner	\$81,258
Expanded Community Outreach and Engagement	\$55,000
Increased Funding for the Reduced Fee Scholarship Program	\$100,000
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Office - Professional Services Increase	\$25,000
Language Access Services for City Council Meetings and High Priority Civic Engagement Events	\$34,560
Affordable Housing Fee Credit Fund	\$350,000
Homelessness Initiatives Increase	\$201,000
Human Service Program Increase	\$150,000

1.0 FTE Contractual - Cultural Services Community Programs Manager with Program Support	\$169,575
Cultural Services Access Fund for Low-Income Residents	\$185,000
Municipal Court Services-Mental Health, Addiction, and Teen Diversion Services	\$75,000
TOTAL \$4,055,422*	

ARPA SPENDING RULES

As part of the SLFRF, the U.S. Treasury Department (Treasury) has released interim compliance and reporting guidance for all agencies receiving these funds. City staff has been reviewing and closely monitoring changes and updates to interim guidance throughout 2021. In early January 2022, the final compliance and reporting guidance was released by Treasury. Staff are reviewing these rules now to better understand any changes from the interim rules and impacts on the spending of SLFRF by the City. Staff will continue to closely monitor all uses of the SLFRF within the Recovery Plan to ensure compliance with all current and future guidance from Treasury.

E. SUMMARY OF THEMES, OUTCOMES, AND OBJECTIVES WITH EXAMPLE ACTIONS

It should be noted that the included actions are only examples of actions that could be taken, not necessarily the actions that will be taken as a result of this plan. This approach was chosen due to the ever-changing nature and uncertainty of the pandemic. Not creating an overly prescriptive, exhaustive list also allows opportunities to be nimble and innovative in recovery and support those most impacted by the pandemic.

HEALTH	
OUTCOME 1A. Support clear and effective communication of public health orders.	
Objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share clear, consistent public health guidance. • Ensure access and availability to personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 tests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination among various community organizations to ensure consistent public health messaging, including ample time to translate, communicate and implement. • Provide funding and grants to organizations and others to ensure free or reduced cost access to COVID-19 tests and PPE. • Scale up services and capacity of community organizations to ensure new methods of outreach to increase awareness and accessibility.
OUTCOME 1B. Enhance efforts to ensure basic needs are met in the community.	
Objective	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen nonprofits and other existing networks that provide essential needs such as food to those most vulnerable in Fort Collins. • Improve air quality for all community members, especially historically underserved groups and adapt to air quality impacts we cannot control (e.g., emissions from wildfires). • Increase access to multiple modes of transportation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding and grants to organizations and others to support free or reduced cost access to services. • Scale up services and capacity of community organizations to ensure new methods of outreach for increased awareness and accessibility. • Restore existing services and continue expansion of services to ensure access to necessary services and underserved areas. • Expand programs that improve indoor and outdoor air quality for community members, including increasing local monitoring and messaging regarding poor air quality alerts.

OUTCOME 1C. Mental and physical health are valued as necessary and prevention-based.

Objective	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ensure access and affordability to local mental and behavioral health services, including those in need of bilingual, multicultural providers.• Expand opportunities and lower barriers for public access to cultural experiences and venues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coordination among various community organizations to scale up or create new types of services (both what is provided and who is providing).• Provide funding and grants to organizations and others to ensure free or reduced cost access to services.• Scale up services and capacity of community organizations to ensure new methods of outreach to increase awareness and accessibility.• Collaborate with educational partners to offer low-cost pathways for those seeking careers in mental and behavioral health, specifically those historically underrepresented and underserved.

EQUITY AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

OUTCOME 2A. Foster a sense of belonging and community trust.

Objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster a culture of belonging. • Support neighborhood-driven resilience while also improving social capital and capacity. • Promote and increase the visibility and support of the diverse cultural artists and organizations in Fort Collins.¹⁴ • Codesign multicultural activities and generative spaces for improved access and opportunities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding and grant process to organizations and neighborhoods that support community-led projects. • Review and remove City policies and procedures that create barriers to full participation. • Coordination among various community organizations and Equity & Inclusion Office to utilize and improve the community's equity resources, including building capacity and providing training needed to better center solutions in equity.

OUTCOME 2B. Accelerate the City's Housing Strategic Plan's vision that "everyone has healthy, stable housing they can afford."

Objective	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preserve existing affordable housing.¹⁵ • Increase housing supply, affordability, diversity, and choice by 10% of overall housing stock by 2040.¹⁶ • Increase housing stability and renter protections.¹⁷ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide funding and grant process to organizations that support the spectrum of housing (those experiencing homelessness to renters to homeowners). • Support programs such as utility late payment assistance, rental or mortgage assistance and eviction legal assistance for those impacted directly or indirectly by COVID-19.

¹⁴ FoCo Creates Arts and Culture Master Plan 2019, Goal 1, Strategies 1.2 and 1.3

¹⁵ City of Fort Collins Housing Strategic Plan 2021, Prioritized Strategy 7, 9, 22, 24, 26

¹⁶ City of Fort Collins Housing Strategic Plan 2021, Prioritized Strategy 10

¹⁷ City of Fort Collins Housing Strategic Plan 2021, Prioritized Strategy 25

OUTCOME 2C. Expand and leverage existing partnerships to quickly connect people experiencing homelessness (PEH) to resources and services.

Objective	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Expand funding to community organizations that operate programs and services that support PEH.• Accelerate plans for a 24/7 shelter for those experiencing homelessness.• Support regional solutions such as the Northern Colorado Continuum of Care and Coordinated Assessment and Housing Placement System through funding and leadership.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide funding and grant process to organizations that support community members experiencing homelessness.• Grow the pipeline of case management staffing.• Support programs such as utility late payment assistance, rental or mortgage assistance and eviction protection services to support the most vulnerable community members staying in their homes.

ECONOMIC RECOVERY

OUTCOME 3A. Small businesses, creatives and nonprofits have the resources they need to thrive.

Objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enhance support services and tools to enable operations to be soundly positioned for successful recovery, including but not limited to capital access, translation of information in multiple languages, etc. Support smooth and timely ability for facility modification to deliver goods and services with increased public safety protocols. Focus on programs and services that support historically underserved community members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordination among various community organizations to inventory existing support programs and services and identify gaps. Provide funding and grant opportunities to businesses, creative industry, nonprofits, and other organizations to address challenges and barriers. Provide funding and grant opportunities to businesses, creative industry, nonprofits, and other organizations to increase capacity and/or capital access. Continue to evaluate, reduce, and remove structural barriers within existing and new business and nonprofit support services that deter community participation. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example – deliver resource information by the City and its partners in multiple languages whenever possible.

OUTCOME 3B. Safe and stable employment, current and future.

Objective	Actions
<p><i>Individual/Employee:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support partnerships that develop the workforce businesses need. Bring in training that is available regionally but not directly to Fort Collins. Prioritize learning loss mitigation programs and services that support students with high risk factors and/or are part of historically underserved populations. Reduce barriers that inhibit students/families from full participation in educational, workforce and employment opportunities. <p><i>Business/Employer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support business and nonprofit ability to find and recruit labor that meets their needs. Enhance the ability of businesses to implement flexible labor practices (i.e., remote, hybrid, gig/contractual, variable shifts, job share, etc.). 	<p><i>Individual/Employee:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and identify adequate infrastructure needs and services such as broadband connectivity and/or transportation options. Fund and support coordination and partnerships with Poudre School District, Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development and nonprofits that work to address learning loss and new learning. <p><i>Business/Employer:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with employers and partners to evaluate the barriers businesses are facing as they attempt to find and recruit labor. Understand the cost and other impacts that are changing how employers engage with labor. Change the way work is talked about. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Example - avoid “low skill” and other negatively biased terms.

OUTCOME 3C. Equitable and affordable childcare is accessible.

Objective	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advance regional, systemic and sustainable childcare solutions. Original and collaborative strategies are needed to address the compounding challenges facing the childcare industry.• Recruit, develop and retain dedicated employees in the early childhood education profession.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lower the household budget burden for families needing childcare services.• Improve the shortage of licensed childcare providers.• Increase caregiving options for families with school-age children to ensure they can still work when unanticipated events occur (e.g., school cancelled, quarantines, etc.).

ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE

OUTCOME 4A. Commit to environmental justice and resilience in pursuit of our climate, zero waste, energy, water and other sustainability goals.

Objectives	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify criteria, process and funding options to revitalize neighborhood and community parks. • Accelerate support to address vulnerabilities to natural hazards, including proactive mitigation actions and preparing the community to minimize impacts to people, property, and critical facilities. • Support community- and neighborhood-led workshops for community members to identify sustainable solutions to support resilience.¹⁸ • Decrease barriers and increase access to local sustainable food production and agriculture.¹⁹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce pollution at the source, targeting disparities in exposure for vulnerable community members. • Fund community- and neighborhood-led workshops where community members identify sustainable solutions to local environmental justice issues and opportunities. • Fund and support development of resilience hubs throughout the community that can be used to coordinate resource distribution and support residents. • Restore existing services and continue expansion of services to ensure access to necessary services and underserved areas. • Support neighborhood leadership of their priorities by funding capacity building efforts and projects they prioritize and ensuring City staff support is available, as appropriate.

¹⁸ Our Climate Future: Big Move 7: Healthy, Affordable Housing HAH5

¹⁹ City of Fort Collins Our Climate Future: Big Move 8: Local, Affordable, and Healthy Food LAHF2 and City of Fort Collins Our Climate Future: Big Move 8: Local, Affordable, and Healthy Food LAHF4

OUTCOME 4B. Resilient infrastructure is reliable and affordable.

Objective	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to healthy, energy- and water-efficient indoor spaces, including homes and work environments.• Transportation and mobility systems are resilient to a variety of expected and unexpected disruptions.• Reliable water and electric infrastructure are more resilient to a variety of expected and unexpected disruptions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restore existing services (including transportation) and continue expansion of services through Citywide planning efforts such as the Transit Master Plan.• Facilitate partnerships to provide access to low-cost services, utility affordability programs and other resources and provide incentives for efficient building practices.• Enhance capacity for regional collaboration to strengthen the resilience of water and electrical systems.• Support accelerated implementation of Our Climate Future's Next Moves to develop an energy performance path for new construction to zero carbon building by 2030.• Establish shared energy systems program for multifamily properties; explore new community solar options; discuss sustainable and scalable solar business model.• Take actions to "futureproof" homes and businesses to lower energy use and increase resilience, including focusing on retrofitting vacant commercial buildings.

OUTCOME 4C. Open space, natural amenities and healthy ecosystems are resilient, protected and accessible.

Objective	Actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquire, expand, conserve improve, update and revitalize natural areas and open space, including associated asset management to support the physical and mental health of residents.• Increase access to parks, as well as expand, add and improve them.• Identify vulnerabilities to natural hazards, identify proactive mitigation actions, and prepare adequately to minimize impacts to people, property, and critical facilities.²⁰• Support a healthy and diverse urban tree canopy to reduce air and light pollution and lower energy costs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implement strategies to improve ecosystem health while addressing the demand for increased access.• Scale up and create new types of resources across community service providers to effectively react to critical disruptions when they occur in the future.• Expand or add new open space and natural areas to preserve the natural environment and increase access to nature.• Increase the number of community-driven projects through support for Nature in the City projects to create pockets of nature in every neighborhood.• Increase accessibility to parks and natural areas, utilizing the new ADA assessment that provides a prioritized list and costs for natural areas and parks infrastructure.

F. PLAN SCAN

PLAN SCAN - ALIGNMENT OF RECOVERY OUTCOMES WITH OTHER CITY PLANS

 High Alignment
  Some Alignment

	1a	1b	1c	2a	2b	2c	3a	3b	3c	4a	4b	4c
2021-2023 City Council Priorities	•	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙		•	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙	⊙
City Plan	•	•		⊙	⊙		•	⊙	•	•	⊙	⊙
Housing Strategic Plan		⊙	•	•	⊙	⊙		•		•		
Our Climate Future		⊙	•	•	⊙	•	⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙
Economic Health Strategic Plan	⊙			⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙	⊙		⊙	⊙
Business Engagement Action Plan	⊙			⊙			⊙	⊙				
Northern Colorado Business Report	⊙	•		⊙			⊙	⊙	⊙			
Talent 2.0				•	⊙			⊙	⊙			
FoCo Creates Arts and Culture Master Plan	•		•	⊙			⊙	⊙				
Air Quality Plan	•	•	•		⊙					⊙	•	•
EV Readiness Roadmap		•								•	⊙	⊙
Municipal Sustainability Adaptation Plan				•				•		•	⊙	⊙
Downtown Plan		•			•		•			⊙	⊙	⊙
East Mulberry Corridor Plan					•		⊙		•	•	⊙	⊙
Wireless Master Plan		•									•	•
Midtown Plan					•		•			•	⊙	⊙
Old Town Neighborhoods Plan					•					⊙	⊙	⊙
South College Corridor Plan							⊙		•	•	⊙	⊙
West Central Area Plan/Prospect Corridor Design				•	⊙					•		
Lincoln Corridor Plan										•	⊙	⊙
North College Corridor Plan							•	•		•	•	•
North College Urban Renewal Plan and Infrastructure Funding Plan											•	•
Mountain Vista Subarea Plan					⊙				•	•	⊙	⊙
Northside Neighborhoods Plan				•	•					⊙	⊙	⊙
Harmony Corridor Plan					•			•	•		•	•
Fossil Creek Reservoir Area Plan					•					•	⊙	⊙
I-25 Subarea Plan					•					•	•	•

Northwest Subarea Plan							•			⊙	⊙	⊙
Nature in the City Strategic Plan			•							⊙	⊙	⊙
Fort Collins Consolidated Plan (HUD)		•	•	•	⊙	⊙		•	•			
Social Sustainability Strategic Plan		•	•	⊙	⊙	⊙		•	⊙	•		
Fort Collins Social Sustainability Gaps Analysis		•	•	•	•	•		•	•			
Pedestrian Plan		•							•	•	⊙	⊙
Bicycle Plan		•							•	•	⊙	⊙
Utilities Strategic Plan		•			•		•			•	⊙	
Midtown in Motion							⊙			⊙	⊙	⊙
West Elizabeth Enhanced Travel Corridor Plan		•					⊙			⊙	⊙	⊙
Transportation/Transit Master Plan		•	•				•				⊙	⊙
ReCreate: Parks & Recreation Master Plan		•	⊙	⊙		•	⊙			⊙	⊙	⊙
Natural Areas Master Plan		•	•	•		•				⊙	⊙	⊙
The Paved Recreational Trails Master Plan		⊙							•	•	⊙	⊙
The Poudre River Downtown Master Plan		•	•	•						⊙	⊙	⊙

G. DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

DEFINITIONS

- **ARPA Funds:** ARPA Funds or American Rescue Plan Act Funds refers to the funds the City of Fort Collins has received from the federal American Rescue Plan Act. In the majority of cases, ARPA Funds is used as shorthand to refer to the \$28.1 million SLFRF received by the City
- **Belonging:** an affinity for a place or situation; feeling welcome
- **Booster:** An extra dose or shot of vaccine given after initial vaccination is completed, intended to boost waning immunity
- **Breakthrough Case/Infection:** infection that occurs in a fully vaccinated person
- **Coronavirus:** A family of viruses, some of which cause disease in people and animals, named for the crownlike spikes on their surfaces
- **COVID-19:** COVID-19 is the disease caused by SARS-CoV-2
- **Environmental Justice:** the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin, or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies
- **Equity/Equitable:** designing programs, policies and systems to ensure identity is not a predictor of outcomes
- **Exposure:** contact with or close proximity to a harmful substance, such as coronavirus, that can lead to infection or illness
- **Frontline Workers:** employees within essential industries/services who must physically show up to do their jobs
- **Healing:** the process of making or becoming sound or healthy again.
- **Health/Healthy:** physical and mental well-being, free from illness or injury
- **Inclusion:** an intention or policy of including people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized. Inclusion requires removing barriers so all can thrive.
- **Infrastructure:** refers to the basic, underlying physical and organization structures and facilities in the City (e.g., buildings, roads, power and other public and private works)
- **Isolation:** separating sick people from healthy people to prevent spread of disease. The terms isolation and quarantine generally are being used interchangeably.
- **K-Shaped Recovery:** occurs when some segments of the economy, such as large corporations, experience a V-shaped recovery, while others, such as the service sector, experience an L-shaped recovery
- **Long-COVID/Long-Haul COVID:** term used for long-term effects of COVID-19. Most people recover in a few weeks after infection. Others have symptoms that linger or return for weeks or months, including fatigue, shortness of breath, "brain fog" and trouble sleeping.
- **Recover/Recovery:** a return to a normal state of health, mind or strength; to regain possession of something lost (or stolen)

- **Remote work:** a type of flexible working arrangement that allows an employee to work from a remote location outside of corporate or employer offices. Also known as work from home (WFH) or telecommuting.
- **Resilient/Resiliency/Resilience:** the ability to better avoid, withstand or recover from difficult conditions of various scales
- **Social Distance:** social distancing involves measures to restrict when and where people can gather
- **Strategic Plan:** a document which sets forth a vision for the future and identifies the goals and objectives to achieve that vision, and the sequence in which those goals should fall so that the organization is enabled to reach its stated vision
- **Vaccine:** a product that stimulates the body's immune system to make antibodies and provide immunity against a specific virus or other germ
- **Vibrant/Vibrancy:** a sense of place and belonging for all; full of energy and enthusiasm

ACRONYMS

- **ARPA:** American Rescue Plan Act, federal act passed in March 2021, established \$1.9 trillion in COVID-19 relief funding. The City received \$28.1M of ARPA funds in 2021.
- **BIPOC:** Black, Ingenious, People of Color
- **CARES Act:** Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. Signed into law on March 27, 2020. The CARES Act established a \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund (CVRF) that was distributed to communities throughout the United States to support pandemic response. CARES funds were distributed through the State of Colorado to the City of Fort Collins, which received \$9 million in CARES CVRF funds in 2020.
- **CVRF:** Coronavirus Relief Fund. Established by the 2020 CARES Act. Established a \$150 billion fund to support pandemic response and relief. Through the State of Colorado, the City of Fort Collins received \$9 million in CARES CVRF funds in 2020.
- **FoCo:** Fort Collins
- **LGBTQIA+:** Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Questioning, Intersex and Asexual. The + in LGBTQIA+ acknowledges that the LGBTQIA+ community contains many identities, all of which may not fit into a short acronym.
- **NoCo:** Northern Colorado
- **PEH:** people experiencing homelessness
- **PPE:** personal protective equipment; equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards, including masks, face shields and gloves
- **REDI:** Regional Economic Development Initiative
- **SLFRF:** State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). \$360B was allocated via SLFRF to state and local governments to assist with recovery.
- **WFH:** work from home