

# Fort Collins City Council Work Session Agenda

6:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 14, 2023

Colorado Room, 222 Laporte Avenue, Fort Collins, CO 80521

## NOTICE:

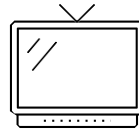
Work Sessions of the City Council are held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month in the Colorado Room of the 222 Building. Meetings are conducted in a hybrid format, however there is no public participation permitted in a work session.

City Council members may participate in this meeting via electronic means pursuant to their adopted policies and protocol.

## How to view this Meeting:



Meetings are open to the public and can be attended in person by anyone.



Meetings are televised live on Channels 14 & 881 on cable television.



Meetings are livestreamed on the City's website, [fcgov.com/fctv](https://fcgov.com/fctv).

*Upon request, the City of Fort Collins will provide language access services for individuals who have limited English proficiency, or auxiliary aids and services for individuals with disabilities, to access City services, programs and activities. Contact 970.221.6515 (V/TDD: Dial 711 for Relay Colorado) for assistance. Please provide 48 hours' advance notice when possible.*

*A solicitud, la Ciudad de Fort Collins proporcionará servicios de acceso a idiomas para personas que no dominan el idioma inglés, o ayudas y servicios auxiliares para personas con discapacidad, para que puedan acceder a los servicios, programas y actividades de la Ciudad. Para asistencia, llame al 970.221.6515 (V/TDD: Marque 711 para Relay Colorado). Por favor proporcione 48 horas de aviso previo cuando sea posible.*



While work sessions do not include public comment, mail comments about any item on the agenda to [cityleaders@fcgov.com](mailto:cityleaders@fcgov.com)





# City Council Work Session Agenda

November 14, 2023 at 6:00 PM

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

Colorado River Community Room  
222 Laporte Avenue, Fort Collins

Cablecast on FCTV  
Channel 14 on Connexion  
Channel 14 and 881 on Comcast

Carrie Daggett  
City Attorney

Kelly DiMartino  
City Manager

Anissa Hollingshead  
City Clerk

## CITY COUNCIL WORK SESSION 6:00 PM

### A) CALL MEETING TO ORDER

### B) ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

#### 1. City Recovery Plan Update.

The purpose of this item is to provide an update on the City’s American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF).

#### 2. Process for Council Appeals to Quasi-Judicial Decisions.

The purpose of this item is to review issues and considerations that have been identified in the process for Council appeals to quasi-judicial decisions, and to seek Councilmember feedback on potential solutions or improvements.

#### 3. Economic Health Strategic Plan.

The purpose of this item is to provide Councilmembers with an update on the proposed Economic Health Strategic Plan with consideration by Council on December 5, 2023.

### C) ANNOUNCEMENTS

### D) ADJOURNMENT

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*A solicitud, la Ciudad de Fort Collins proporcionará servicios de acceso a idiomas para personas que no dominan el idioma inglés, o ayudas y servicios auxiliares para personas con discapacidad, para que puedan acceder a los servicios, programas y actividades de la Ciudad. Para asistencia, llame al 970.221.6515 (V/TDD: Marque 711 para Relay Colorado). Por favor proporcione aviso previo. Las solicitudes de interpretación en una reunión deben realizarse antes del mediodía del día anterior.*

November 14, 2023



# WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council

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## STAFF

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Dean Klingner, Community Services Director  
Blaine Dunn, Accounting Director  
Jo Cech, Fiscal Recovery Manager  
Ted Hewitt, Assistant City Attorney

## SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

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**City Recovery Plan Update.**

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The purpose of this item is to provide an update on the City's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF).

## GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

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1. Does Council have any questions or concerns?

## BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

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Currently, 50 ARPA-funded programs are open and operating, eight have closed and seven are in the process of closing. Through Q3 2023, \$10.4M, or 37% of the total ARPA SLFRF funding of \$28.1M has been spent. Most programs will complete their spending by December 31, 2024, but a small number will continue to spend into 2025 before completing their programs.

Additional information on the recovery programs is attached including spending by year and spending by recovery theme. Cultural Services will provide an update on their ARPA-funded programs supporting artists and residents' access to cultural enrichment.

## NEXT STEPS

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The 2023 Annual Resilient Recovery Report will be issued in March 2024.

In Q1 2024, Council will be asked to consider a resolution obligating the use of remaining ARPA funds, to ensure ARPA funding may continue to be spent until the December 12, 2026 deadline.

## ATTACHMENTS

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1. Summary of Recovery Programs
2. ARPA Project Ties
3. Presentation

## Summary of Recovery Programs

Below is a summary of all ARPA-funded Recovery Programs. Each project summary includes program status, allocation amount, a program description and key outcomes and impacts. Programs highlighted in green also fall into the category of revenue replacement.

Additional program outcomes and impacts are shared on the Recovery Dashboard ([fcgov.com/RecoveryDashboard](https://fcgov.com/RecoveryDashboard)) and in annual Recovery Plan Implementation Reports (2023 report will be issued in March 2024).

Project Name	Status	Allocation Amount	Program Description	Key Outcomes / Impacts
<b>HEALTH</b>				
<b>Poudre Fire Authority TecGen PPE Gear</b>	Complete	\$137,946	Funds for purchase of TecGen51 PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) that protects firefighters from exposure to bodily fluids, chemicals, COVID-19 variants, and other illnesses.	All PFA firefighters have been outfitted with TecGen Gear.
<b>Social Services Recovery</b>	In Progress	\$500,364	Additional grant funding for human services nonprofits and other local organizations supporting vulnerable community members.	8,788+ people served since program launch
<b>SSD Recovery Specialist</b>	Complete	\$147,923	Position to manage Social Services Recovery grants, Learning Loss grants and Childcare grants, as well as grants related to homelessness services.	Position supports Social Services Recovery, Homelessness Services and Learning Loss programs.
<b>Parks Lawn and Garden Equipment Replacement</b>	In Progress	\$70,000	Funds to purchase electric handheld lawn and garden equipment for use in parks and cemeteries.	Program awarded additional funding through a state ARPA grant.
<b>Mental Health Response Team</b>	In Progress	\$660,412	ARPA funds accelerated the build out of the co-response team, consisting of Police officers and UC Health clinicians. Funds also being used for equipment, engagement and training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 444+ individuals diverted from jail and/or emergency department</li> <li>• Team coverage expanded 7 days / week</li> <li>• 110+ community engagement presentations</li> </ul>
<b>Municipal Court – Mental Health, Addiction &amp; Teen Diversion Services</b>	In Progress	\$75,000	Funds for traffic diversion program for teens and young adults, and competency evaluations for defendants with mental illness and/or substance use disorders in the City's Municipal Court.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 96+ teens and young adults diverted to Restorative Traffic Circle Program               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 79+ traffic complaints dismissed</li> </ul> </li> <li>• 28 competency evaluation clients               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 80+ charges dismissed</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Item 1.

<b>Cultural Services Access Fund for Low-Income Residents</b>	In Progress	\$485,000	Provides qualifying community members with access to enriching cultural experiences at City of Fort Collins cultural facilities including the Lincoln Center, Fort Collins Museum of Discovery and Gardens on Spring Creek.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2023 outcomes will be included in the 2023 annual report.</li> <li>In 2022, an estimated 3,800 of the 33,741 community members who benefited from the access program were supported by ARPA dollars.</li> </ul>
<b>Reduced Fee Scholarship Funding Increase</b>	In Progress	\$300,000	Provides low-income, vulnerable and underserved community members access to recreation facilities, recreation programs and childcare services.	2023 outcomes will be included in the 2023 annual report.
<b>EQUITY &amp; COMMUNITY RESILIENCE</b>				
<b>Cultural Services Community Programs Manager &amp; Program Support</b>	In Progress	\$468,394	Program integrates arts and cultural experiences throughout the community to foster a sense of diversity, connection and belonging.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5,800+ community members have attended programming</li> <li>More than 140 individual events held</li> <li>240+ hours of programming</li> </ul>
<b>Support for Creatives in the Community (Art to Live)</b>	In Progress	\$170,000	Grants for local creatives (artists, designers, musicians, etc.) significantly impacted by the pandemic. Funds provide assistance to artists to create art to be shared with the community.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>22 grants awarded in 2023</li> <li>Additional 24 grants will be awarded in 2024</li> </ul>
<b>Special Events Recovery Grant</b>	In Progress	\$125,000	Grants to help cover security and safety-related costs at local events working to return after the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>46 grants awarded to local events</li> <li>Total attendance at these events exceeds 59,000</li> </ul>
<b>Native American Community Relations Specialist</b>	In Progress	\$313,217	Position works directly with the Fort Collins Native American community and local Native-serving nonprofits to build relationships, conduct community engagement, and support community-led initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Native Nations Community Advisory Panel established to assist with creation of Land Acknowledgement</li> <li>Ongoing tribal consultation for City projects</li> <li>Support for local events including Indigenous Peoples' Day Celebration</li> </ul>
<b>Equity Grant Fund</b>	In Progress	\$400,000	Grant fund for individuals, nonprofits and community partners to support community-led work that assists those impacted by the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>20 grants awarded in 2023</li> <li>Impacts of these grants will be shared in the 2023 annual report</li> </ul>

Item 1.

<b>Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Professional Services</b>	Complete	\$33,266	Funding to support the establishment and expansion of Equity and Inclusion Office in the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Office partnered with dozens of community partners to host 14 local events including Northern Colorado Intertribal Powwow, Pride Proclamation, Latinx Resource Fair and Equity Indicators Community Forums</li> </ul>
<b>Language Access Services for Council Meetings and High Priority Civic Engagement Events</b>	In Progress	\$26,294	Funding for Spanish interpretation at City Council meetings and other high-priority civic engagement events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>35 events supported with Spanish interpretation, including Council Meetings, community conversations and focus groups</li> <li>Translation of high-priority documents including the City's Equity Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Expanded Community Outreach and Engagement</b>	In Progress	\$55,000	Funding to expand, systematize and enhance engagement with diverse groups, including those who have been historically underserved and most impacted by the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updated Public Engagement Guidelines being drafted for use across the organization</li> <li>Draft guidelines will be reviewed by community partners to ensure they reflect resident needs</li> </ul>
<b>Neighborhood Resilience Projects</b>	In Progress	\$40,000	Support for Adopt a Neighbor volunteer program updates and placemaking opportunities through Asphalt Art projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt a Neighbor matching system was upgraded to more efficiently pair volunteers with those in need</li> <li>Three traffic-calming asphalt art installations that brought 100+ residents together to create</li> </ul>
<b>Eviction Legal Fund</b>	In Progress	\$640,000	This program provides eviction prevention education, training, and resources for both renters and landlords.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>57 landlords directly served</li> <li>637+ renters directly served</li> <li>Training for Mediation and Restorative Justice staff and volunteers about how to better handle eviction-related cases.</li> </ul>
<b>Affordable Housing Fee Credit Fund</b>	Complete	\$350,000	Subsidies to developers building affordable housing projects within Fort Collins, increasing the amount of affordable housing available.	20 new affordable apartments established
<b>Affordable Housing Land Bank Expansion</b>	In Progress	\$1,000,000	This program provides funds to support the City's Land Bank.	With these funds, staff anticipate purchasing 5 acres to build at least 100 homes.
<b>Heartside Hill</b>	In Progress	\$1,100,000	Funding for the development of the Heartside Hill project. This development is being funded in partnership with local, regional and state partners.	Project anticipated to create 71 new units of affordable rental housing

Item 1.

<b>Homelessness Services</b>	In Progress	\$3,462,000	Funding for programming proven to reduce the likelihood of prolonged or chronic homelessness, including Outreach Fort Collins, case management and resource navigation, 24/7 shelter, seasonal overflow shelter and rapid rehousing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,780 individuals served in shelters</li> <li>• 194 clients moved into housing after accessing case management and resource navigation</li> <li>• 35 families, and 10 individuals housed through Rapid Rehousing</li> </ul> <p>[Note only 2 of the 7 programs under Homelessness Services are revenue replacement offers]</p>
<b>Utilities Pandemic Assistance</b>	Complete	\$458,233	Direct financial assistance to Fort Collins Utilities customers struggling to pay bills due to the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2,052 residential and commercial customers provided assistance</li> </ul>
<b>ECONOMIC RECOVERY</b>				
<b>Economic Strategic Plan</b>	In Progress	\$100,000	Funds to develop an updated Economic Health Office (EHO) strategic plan that reflects shifted post-pandemic priorities.	Draft will be presented to Council November 14, 2023
<b>Expanded Technical Assistance for Small Businesses</b>	In Progress	\$354,511	Enhanced and expanded technical assistance to businesses and individuals navigating the development review process with the City.	14 grants awarded to small businesses and nonprofits
<b>Advancing Accessible Permitting</b>	In Progress	\$158,000	Funds are being used to update the City's permitting systems and technology, so they are more accessible and efficient for customers and staff.	Will be included in the 2023 annual report
<b>For Fort Collins</b>	In Progress	\$190,000	For Fort Collins encourages community members to support local businesses and connects businesses to useful resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 22,500 total website visits</li> <li>• ~5,000 new website visitors in 2023</li> <li>• Seasonal "support local" campaign during holiday season</li> </ul>
<b>Multicultural Business and Entrepreneur Center (MBEC)</b>	In Progress	\$1,336,006	MBEC provides support, training and resources for local businesses and entrepreneurs of all sizes, with a specific focus on providing support for historically underserved community members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 363 appointments held with more than 206 different businesses</li> <li>• 78 new businesses established with support from MBEC</li> <li>• 15+ grants to businesses</li> </ul>
<b>Small Business Grants</b>	In Progress	\$1,060,000	Grants for businesses impacted by the pandemic to support stabilization, workforce and talent acquisition and technical assistance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 161 small businesses awarded grants</li> </ul>

Item 1.	<b>Use Code Update</b>	In Progress	\$670,000	Funding for code changes, professional services and public engagement efforts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Public engagement efforts, including deliberative forum events, Spanish translation and marketing</li> </ul>
	<b>Capital Project Business Liaison</b>	In Progress	\$275,000	This provides support to businesses affected by City construction projects, ensuring they have the information, resources and support they need.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>45+ grants awarded to businesses impacted by construction, totaling more than \$92,000</li> </ul>
	<b>Learning Loss Mitigation</b>	In Progress	\$400,000	Grants to local partners working to mitigate learning lost impacts suffered by students during the pandemic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2,300+ students served across programs</li> <li>Eight organizations granted funding</li> <li>Multiple reports that programs supported by grant funding improved student performance</li> </ul>
	<b>Childcare Space Modifications at Northside Aztlan Community Center</b>	In Progress	\$421,932	Upgrades to Northside Aztlan Community Center to allow additional children to be served through onsite youth programs.	Estimated project completion in mid-November
	<b>Childcare System Support</b>	In Progress	\$1,146,123	Grants to community partners to increase access to affordable, reliable childcare locally.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1,036 individuals served</li> <li>10 organizations granted funding</li> <li>Funds supported childcare scholarships, respite care, behavioral health support for children and training for childcare workers</li> </ul>
<b>ENVIRONMENTAL RESILIENCE</b>					
	<b>Building HVAC Electrification &amp; Efficiency Replacements</b>	In Progress	\$2,437,653	Upgrades to HVAC systems in several City facilities that will reduce the carbon footprint of buildings and increase efficiency.	Design and installation work moving forward for all retrofits
	<b>Lincoln Center Converting Stage Lighting to LED</b>	In Progress	\$227,278	Upgrades to lighting on stages at the Lincoln Center to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the events center and increase building efficiency.	Installation complete
	<b>Contractual Mobile Home Park Code Compliance &amp; Building Evaluation</b>	In Progress	\$344,000	Enhanced engagement, support and code compliance for mobile home park communities. Program includes funding for home energy upgrades within units at mobile home parks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Outreach events at mobile home parks hosted by Code Compliance and Building Inspection</li> <li>Ongoing assessment of energy efficiency needs in mobile home parks</li> <li>Collaboration with park residents on 2024 programming</li> </ul>



### GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS

<b>Recovery Administration</b>	In Progress	\$840,289	Staff and administrative costs for the implementation of the Resilient Recovery Plan, including deployment and monitoring of ARPA funds.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff support for 65 ARPA-funded programs</li> <li>\$10.4M of City's \$28.1M of ARPA SLFRF funding spent</li> </ul>
<b>Recovery Communications</b>	Complete	\$50,000	Funds were used to support ongoing pandemic communications, as well as the public outreach and engagement for the development of the Resilient Recovery Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Timely pandemic updates to community in 2021 and 2022</li> <li>Thousands of community members engaged during development of Resilient Recovery Plan</li> </ul>
<b>Senior Buyer</b>	In Progress	\$172,424	Additional Purchasing staff to handle ARPA-funded purchases and service agreements which must adhere to stringent federal purchasing rules.	Position filled
<b>Parking Structure Critical Preventative Repairs</b>	In Progress	\$1,348,617	Critical repairs to downtown parking structures to prolong their lifespans and increase structural integrity.	Repairs underway
<b>Municipal Court Technology</b>	In Progress	\$225,000	Funds to update Municipal Court case management technology.	Will be included in the 2023 annual report
<b>Crisis Communications Plan</b>	In Progress	\$130,000	Funds to support the development of a comprehensive emergency communications plan for the City that can be applied to a variety of different emergency events.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan anticipated to be complete by end of 2023</li> <li>Training and implementation of the plan will occur in 2024</li> </ul>
<b>HR Staff Support</b>	In Progress	\$839,089	Additional staff and funding to support hiring and workforce management within the City's HR Department.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Team fully staffed</li> <li>Upgraded access to hiring platforms to enhance recruitment efforts</li> </ul>
<b>COVID-Related Hybrid Meeting Spaces and Community Wi-Fi</b>	In Progress	\$1,500,000	Updates to spaces within the City to support secure hybrid work environments along with improvements to wi-fi at Cultural Services and Recreation facilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>90% of wi-fi upgrades complete</li> <li>Upgrades to City work spaces underway</li> <li>50+ pieces of equipment donated to Poudre Library for digital literacy program, including laptops, webcams, 3D printer and power banks</li> </ul>
<b>Cyber Risk / Risk Management</b>	In Progress	\$375,000	Funds for cybersecurity updates to safeguard all City devices and users in a post-pandemic hybrid work environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Multifactor authentication (MFA) rolled out throughout the City organization</li> </ul>
<b>Local Match</b>	In Progress	\$2,500,000	Matching funds to support regional community-focused projects related to recovery.	Will be included in the 2023 annual report

# PA Project Ties to Recovery Themes and Outcomes

## Adopted Resilient Recovery Plan Themes and Outcomes

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 is 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 our 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.
Government Operations	Government Operations captures administrative costs, infrastructure improvements, and workforce needs for the City to implement recovery-related programming.

## Projects Related to Council Priorities

All programs funded with ARPA dollars tie directly to the Resilient Recovery Plan, which was created at the direction of Council's #26 Priority: Create a targeted, specific plan for community recovery. Many programs also tie to other Council Priorities and are listed below.

**NOTE:** Some projects relate to multiple priorities and are listed multiple times.

Council Priority	ARPA-Funded Program
<b>#2. Juvenile Diversion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Municipal Court Services – Mental Health, Addiction and Teen Diversion Services</li> </ul>
<b>#5. Advance Regionalism</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heartside Hill</li> <li>Local Match</li> </ul>
<b>#8. Attract and Retain Competitive and Diverse Talent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>HR Staff Support</li> </ul>
<b>#17. Improved Air Quality</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Building HVAC Electrification &amp; Efficiency Replacements</li> <li>Parks Lawn &amp; Garden Equipment Replacement</li> </ul>
<b>#23. Develop a Circular Economy Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Economic Health Strategic Plan</li> </ul>
<b>#25. Affordable, Quality and Accessible Childcare Infrastructure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Childcare System Support</li> <li>Childcare Space Modifications at the Northside Aztlan Center</li> </ul>
<b>#27. Access Funding for Parks (O&amp;M, refresh, new parks)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parks Lawn &amp; Garden Equipment Replacement</li> </ul>
<b>#31. Homelessness Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>24/7 Shelter at Fort Collins Rescue Mission</li> <li>Homelessness Initiatives Recovery &amp; Stabilization</li> <li>Homelessness Initiatives and Support Services</li> <li>Homelessness Initiatives Increase</li> <li>Homelessness Initiatives and Program Increase</li> <li>Homelessness Initiatives &amp; Programs: Ongoing City Support</li> <li>Rapid Rehousing</li> </ul>

## Projects by Type

ARPA-funded programs fall into three general types:

- Programs addressing pandemic-related needs and ongoing services
- Programs that break new ground
- Government operations programs

Each of these program type support recovery work in slightly different ways. Programs addressing pandemic-related needs and ongoing services support recovery work by providing additional resources to address increased or shifting needs from the pandemic. This category includes projects like social services recovery grants and recreation reduced fee scholarships. While many of these programs were in place pre-pandemic, the need for them increased due to the impacts from COVID-19.

### Programs Addressing Pandemic-Related Needs and Ongoing Services

- PFA TecGen PPE
- Homelessness Programs & Rapid Rehousing
- Social Services Recovery Grants and Recovery Specialist
- Childcare System Support
- Childcare Space Modifications at North Aztlan Center
- Utilities Payment Assistance for Customers
- Affordable Housing Fee Credit Fund
- Recreation Reduced Fee Scholarships
- Cultural Services Access Programs
- Special Events Recovery Grants
- For Fort Collins
- Small Business Grants
- EHO Strategic Plan
- Neighborhood Resilience Projects
- Lincoln Center Lighting
- Parks Lawn & Garden Equipment Replacements
- Land Use Code
- Building HVAC and Efficiency Replacements

## Programs by Type (continued)

Other programs break new ground and demonstrate new ways the City is collaborating with the community to support recovery, inclusivity and resilience. This category includes programs like the Multicultural Business and Entrepreneur Center (MBEC), which fills a need in the business community that was not previously addressed by the City.

### Programs that Break New Ground

- Mental Health Response Team (MHRT)
- Municipal Court—Mental Health, Addiction, and Teen Diversion Services
- Cultural Services Community Programs
- Native American Community Relations Specialist
- Capital Project Business Liaison
- Multicultural Business and Entrepreneur Center (MBEC)
- Learning Loss Mitigation
- Crisis Communications Plan
- Eviction Legal Fund
- Expanded Community Outreach and Engagement
- DEI Professional Services
- Language Access Services for Council Meetings and High Priority Civic Events
- Expanded Technical Assistance for Small Business
- Heartside Hill (affordable housing)
- Equity Grant Fund
- Art to Live
- Affordable Housing Land Bank Expansion
- Mobile Home Park Code Compliance
- Advancing Accessible Permitting
- Local Match- To be used as matching funds to support regional community-focused projects and other critical needs

Government operations programs are also critical for recovery, as they cover administrative costs, infrastructure improvements and technology upgrades needed to implement recovery-related programming.

### Government Operations Programs

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parking Structure Critical Repairs and Maintenance</li> <li>• HR Staff Support</li> <li>• COVID-Related Hybrid Meeting Spaces and Community Wifi</li> <li>• Cyber Risk Management / Risk Management</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recovery Administration</li> <li>• Recovery Communications</li> <li>• Municipal Court Technology</li> <li>• Senior Buyer</li> <li>•</li> </ul> |
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# Recovery Update

**Dean Klingner**

Community Services Director

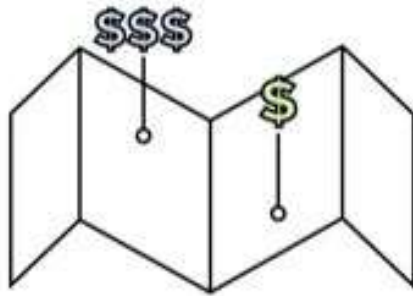
**Blaine Dunn**

Accounting Director

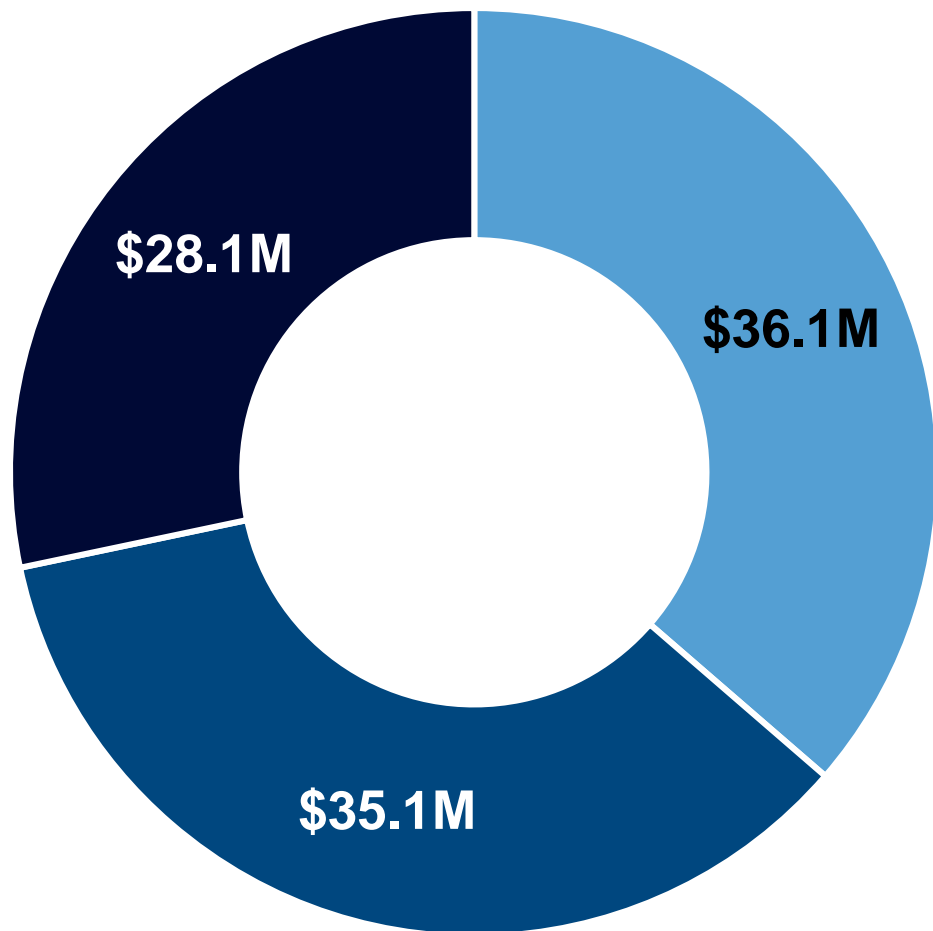
**Jo Cech**

Fiscal Recovery Manager

Any questions on the materials provided in packets?



Item 1. **Recovery-Related Grants**



**CARES FUNDING**

- **\$16.9M Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)** - Northern Colorado Regional Airport
- **\$9.0M Coronavirus Relief Fund (CVRF)**
- **\$8.7M Federal Transportation Agency (FTA)** - Used for ongoing operations and offset contributions from General Fund in 2020
- **\$1.4M Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)**
- **\$0.1M Department of Justice (DOJ)** – Used for Police Overtime and Personal Protective Equipment

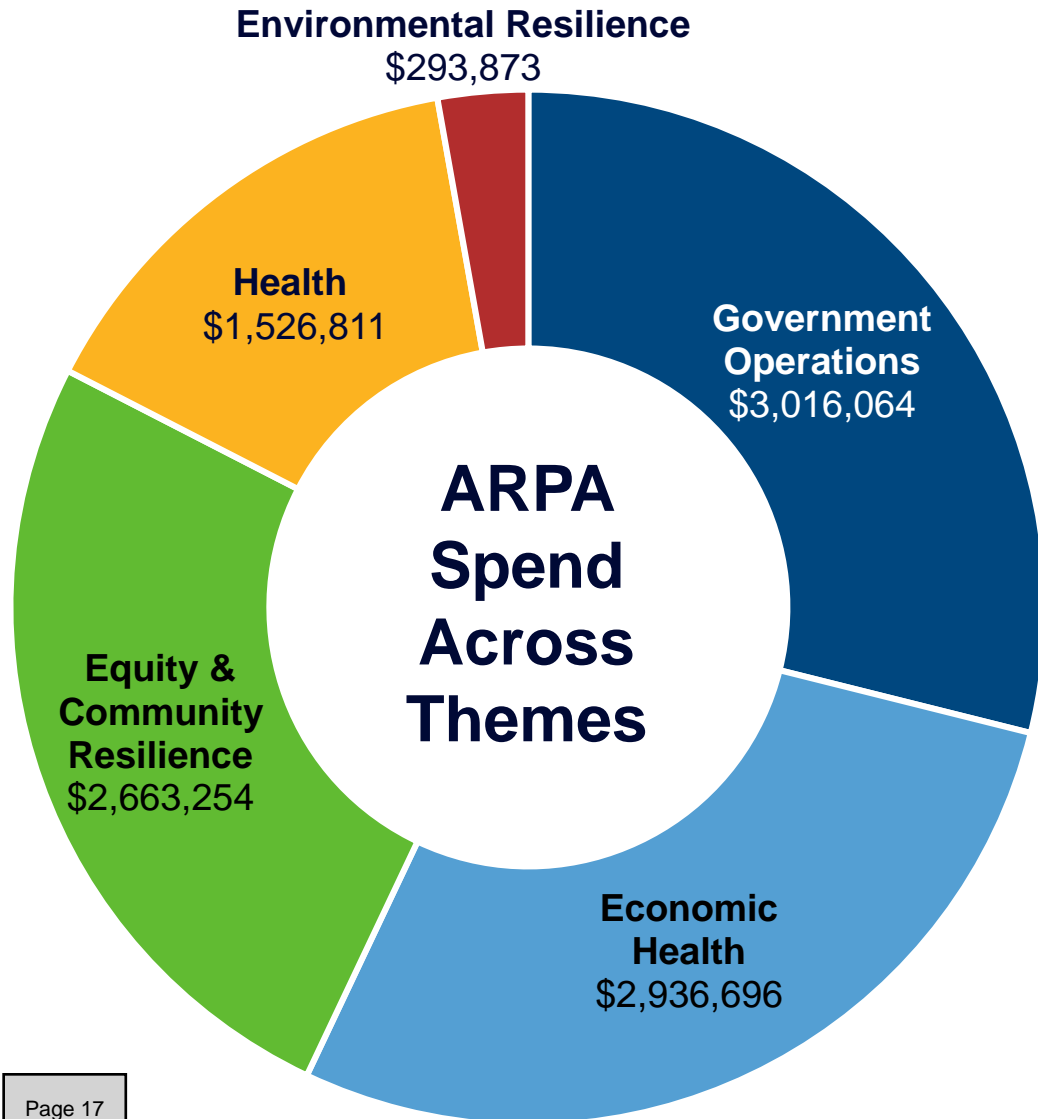
**OTHER RECOVERY-RELATED GRANTS**

Examples include Shuttered Venue Operators Grants, Colorado Arts Relief Fund, Carnegie Center Grant, RAISE Grant and Workforce Innovation Grants

**ARPA SLFRF**

\$28.1M used for implementation of programs related to the Resilient Recovery Plan.





- **\$10.4M** spent (as of Q3 2023)

- 10+2 Forecast for 2023: **\$7.5M**

- Forecast for total spend through 2023: **\$12.4M**

# Item 1. Solution for Continued Spending

- Some programs anticipated to spend into 2025
- Resolution will be brought forward obligating use of remaining ARPA funds to ensure spending can continue until December 2026 deadline

Anticipated timeline of ask –  
Q1 2024



Item 1. Program Highlights



**MUNICIPAL COURT PROGRAMS**  
**\$75,000**

- Launched in Dec. 2021
- 96+ teens/young adults diverted to Restorative Traffic Circle Program
  - 79+ traffic complaints dismissed
- 28 competency evaluation clients
- 100+ charges dismissed



**EVICTIION LEGAL FUND**  
**\$640,000**

- Launched in 2020
- Funded with CARES & ARPA
- Eviction prevention education, training and resources
- 637+ renters & 57 landlords directly served



**CHILDCARE SYSTEM SUPPORT**  
**\$1,146,123**

- Launched in 2022, additional funding for '23 & '24
- 1,036 individuals served
- Childcare scholarships, respite care, behavioral support, training for childcare workers



**MOBILE HOME PARK CODE COMPLIANCE & BUILDING EVALUATION**  
**\$344,000**

- Outreach events at mobile home communities
- Ongoing assessment of energy efficiency needs
- Collaboration with residents for 2024 programming



# ARPA & Art Programs

# PA-Funded Art Programs



## Cultural Community Programs

## Cultural Services Access Fund

## Art to Live

**\$468,394**

**Launched in 2022**

- Integrate arts & culture experiences into community
- 5,800+ community members attended programming
- 240+ hours of programming

**\$485,000**

**ARPA Funded 2022, 2023-2024**

- Subsidized visits and transportation for students
- Reduced admission programs & scholarships
- Advertise opportunities through partner organizations

**\$170,000**

**Launched in 2023**

- Grants for local creatives impacted by pandemic
- Art supported by grant shared with community
- 22 artists awarded in 2023
- Additional 24 artists will be awarded in 2024

Item 1: and Culture Access Programs



**Art to Live**



**Cultural  
Community  
Programs**



**Cultural  
Services  
Access  
Fund**



**Art in Public  
Places**



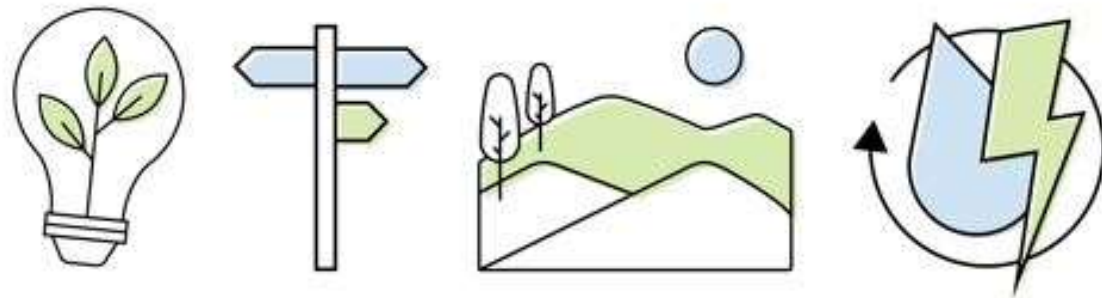
**Fort Fund**

**ARPA FUNDED**

**EXPANDED WITH  
ARPA**

**ONGOING PROGRAMS**

Any questions on the materials provided in packets?





November 14, 2023

# WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council




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## STAFF

Paul Sizemore, Community Development & Neighborhood Services Director  
Brad Yatabe, Senior Assistant City Attorney

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## SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

**Process for Council Appeals to Quasi-Judicial Decisions.**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to review issues and considerations that have been identified in the process for Council appeals to quasi-judicial decisions, and to seek Councilmember feedback on potential solutions or improvements.

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## GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. Does Council have feedback on the list of identified issues and considerations in the appeals process?
2. Are there other issues or considerations that have not yet been identified?
3. Are there solutions or improvements that Council would like to see staff further develop and bring forward for consideration?

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## BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

One of Council's current roles under the Municipal Code is to hear appeals to quasi-judicial decisions made by Commissions and Administrative Hearing Officers. Council has expressed a desire to discuss issues and considerations associated with the appeal process and to potentially explore solutions to problems or improvements that could make the process run more predictably and smoothly.

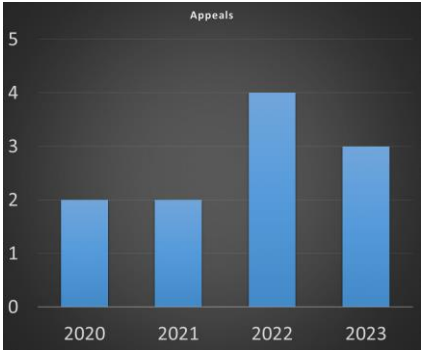
In the City appeals process, decisions made by a Quasi-judicial Commission or Hearing Officer are subject to appeal, and these appeals are brought before the Council. Similarly, administrative decisions can be appealed to a specific Commission, such as the Planning and Zoning (P&Z) or the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). It is important to note that the definition of a "party in interest" is broadly defined, and this designation determines who has the right to appeal a decision. Appeals can be made on two primary grounds: first, if there is a belief that the decision did not result from a fair hearing, and second, if there is a claim that the Code was not properly interpreted and applied. To initiate an appeal, it must be submitted within a strict timeframe of 14 days.

The Council has the option to conduct a pre-hearing site visit to better understand the circumstances involved. During the actual hearing, the allocated time for presenting arguments is divided among those

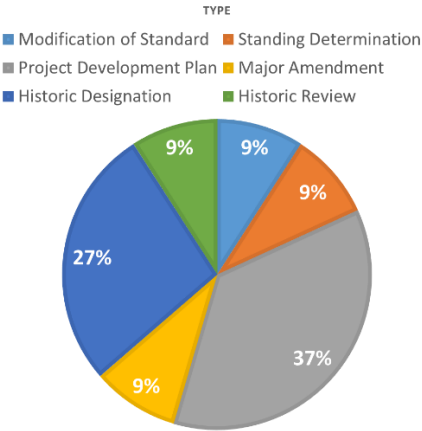
both in favor and opposed to the appeal, ensuring a fair and balanced discussion. The Council carefully reviews the record of the case and listens to testimony from involved parties. Following this deliberation, the Council reaches a decision, and in the subsequent meeting, a resolution is adopted, clearly stating the findings of fact that support their determination. This process aims to ensure that decisions at the local level are made fairly, and the appeal process provides a crucial mechanism for citizens to have their concerns heard and addressed.

**Appeals Data**

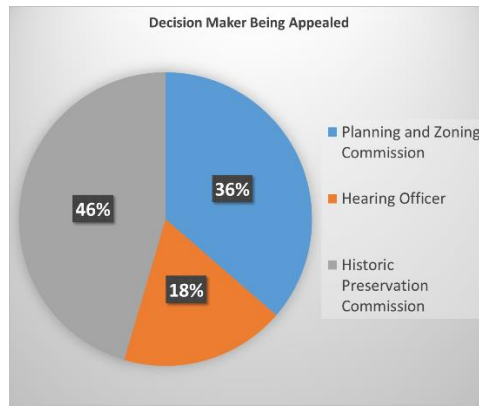
Over the four-year period from 2020 to 2023, the data on appeals heard by the Council provides several insights. The average number of appeals considered by the Council during this time was just under 3 per year.



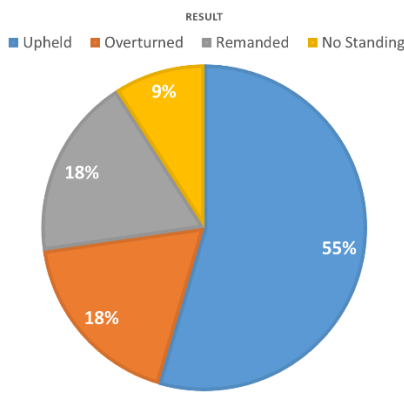
It is worth noting that some appeals were filed towards the end of a calendar year and were subsequently heard in the following year. In total, the Council heard 11 appeals during this period, with each appeal accounting for approximately 9% of the total.



Most of these appeals were related to Project Development Plans, comprising 37% of the cases, followed closely by appeals of Historic Designation Determinations at 27%. These appeals came from various sources, but the largest number were decisions made by the Historic Preservation Commission, with the Planning and Zoning Commission following closely behind.



In terms of outcomes, the Council upheld the original decision in most of the appeals, with a 55% rate of affirming the initial rulings.



Interestingly, an equal number of decisions were either overturned or remanded back to the decision maker, each accounting for 18% of the total cases. One exceptional case involved an appeal where it was determined that the appellant did not have standing. Additionally, one Council decision, specifically the decision to uphold, was further appealed to court and subsequently remanded to the original decision maker. This data underscores the complexity of the appeal process and the various outcomes that can arise during Council review of such cases.

### Due Process Requirements

State and federal law entitle an applicant in a quasi-judicial hearing to procedural and substantive due process. Because any hearing process implemented by the City must adhere to these principles of due process, there are certain clear boundaries around potential changes or solutions. Due process rules require:

- The adopted procedures for hearings must be followed.
- Affected persons must be afforded a “fair hearing” with reasonable opportunity to speak and for rebuttal.
- The decision maker must be “impartial” and “unbiased.”
- The decision must be based “on the record” (only on information that is a part of the hearing).
- The decision maker must apply the proper standards and criteria in making its decision.

### Issues and Considerations

In preparation for this item, staff compiled several issues and considerations from previous Council appeals and conversations as well as staff observations. For this work session, staff is seeking feedback from

Council on whether we have accurately captured the key issues and whether there are any additional issues that we have not included in this inventory. The list of issues and considerations includes:

- Does the Councilmember appeal process work?
- It is difficult to avoid and discourage ex parte communication from members of the public.
- Limitations on discussion make it difficult for Councilmembers to prepare for an appeal hearing.
- Participants in appeal hearings have difficulty understanding the process.
- Unpredictable set of participants leads to unpredictable hearing dynamics (time allocation, etc.).
- Evidentiary issues raised during the hearing can be complicated, inefficient, and difficult to resolve fairly during the hearing.
- Are the right decisions being appealed at the right stage of the process and the right level of detail for review by Council?

**Data from Other Jurisdictions**

In preparation for this work session, staff evaluated the process for appeals to land use decisions in other front range communities. The table below summarizes how these jurisdictions handle appeals. Some important takeaways include:

- All jurisdictions except for Denver provide for appeals of land use decisions to Council.
- Jurisdictions are about evenly split between those who conduct appeals only on the record (without admission of new evidence) and those who allow new evidence.
- A significant majority do not allow appeals to be brought forward by Council, although a few do allow this.
- There are many unique features and nuances present in the approaches that reflect community preferences.

	<u>Quasi-Judicial Land Use Appeals to Council</u>	<u>Appeal Only On the Record, No New Evidence</u>	<u>Council Can Initiate Appeal</u>	<u>Notable Features</u>
Arvada	Yes	Yes	No	No appeals to Council of items appealed to Planning Commission
Boulder	Yes	No, may consider new evidence + record	Yes	
Centennial	Yes	Yes	No	Basis for appeal must be specific; Council must affirm unless decision was abuse of discretion or unsupported by record
Colorado Springs	Yes	No, may consider new evidence + record	No	Council may preliminarily determine if notice of appeal meets application requirements and dismiss if not; Council may hear appeal de novo or limit to issues raised on appeal
Denver	No	n/a	No	Appeals principally heard by Board of Adjustment
Golden	Yes	Yes	No	Council appeal decisions subject to appeal to municipal court
Greeley	Yes	Yes	No	Council gives deference to decision on appeal; appeals may be filed by any department director or referral agency that provided comments
Longmont	Yes	No, may consider new evidence + record	No	For major development applications, any resident, the Planning Director, and City Manager have standing to appeal; for minor and administrative applications, City Manager has standing
Loveland	Yes	Yes	No	Staff may dismiss appeal if lacks standing or sufficient detail to put City on notice of the appeal's legal basis; no appeals to Council of items appealed to Planning Commission
Thornton	Yes	No, de novo hearings	Yes	
Westminster	Yes	No, de novo hearings	Yes	Four Councilmembers must appeal matter, City Manager may also appeal

### Potential Solutions and Improvements-Structure Based

To help inform Council’s discussion about potential solutions and improvements, staff has developed options that fall into two main categories: structural and process. Structural improvements include substantial changes to the way appeals are heard, i.e., changing what can be appealed and/or what body hears appeals. Process-based solutions capture options that are procedural in nature and do not involve major role changes or the creation of new review bodies.

The potential structure-based solutions and improvements identified by staff include:

1. **Provide for no appeal from the decision-making Commissions or Hearing Officers.** Under this approach, an interested party would need to file a lawsuit to challenge the decision.
2. **Give Council the role of reviewing underlying decisions based on the record** without the addition of new evidence .
3. **Give Council the role of making a new decision on appeals** by conducting an entirely new hearing. This is called “de novo” review. Council becomes the decision maker under this model and must reach its own independent decision based on the information presented to Council.
4. **Give Council the role of initial decision maker on certain applications.**
5. **Create a separate body, like a “Board of Appeals”** or a hearing officer, to consider appeals rather than Council.
6. **Create an option for no presentation of oral arguments**, just submittal of written argument.

### Potential Solutions and Improvements- Process Based

Process-based solutions can be implemented on their own, or in combination with any of the larger structural changes identified above. Possible process solutions identified by staff include:

1. **Change eligibility to file an appeal** to those who participated and/or have a possessory interest in the property in the process for the appealed decision (not providing standing for everyone who receives notice).
2. **Narrow the grounds for appeal** to eliminate appeal based on bias by decision maker or consideration of false or misleading evidence.
3. **Narrow or clarify new evidence rules and procedures.**
4. **Change participation in the appeal hearing to the applicant and appellant.** If the applicant is the appellant, require opposers to file an entry of appearance by a deadline to participate in the appeal.
5. **Eliminate the organized site visit.**
6. **Allow Councilmembers to make written requests for information** from staff in advance of the hearing so long as the requests and responsive information are available to participants in the appeal.
7. **Adopt standard times for presentation by hearing participants** (to avoid case-by-case uncertainty) allowing for Mayor/Council to make exceptions determined appropriate.
8. **Consider whether written exchanges by Council with staff may be allowed** in advance of the hearing if they are documented and included in the record.

9. **Make a distinction between the appealability of different application types** (for example, a PDP vs an ODP).
10. **Create a mandatory pre-hearing conference** that overviews the process and rules with all participants.
11. **Allow submittal of written pre-hearing arguments to Council.**
12. **Allow staff to review notices of appeal for obvious defects** (example: standing).

## **NEXT STEPS**

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Depending on Council conversation at work session, staff is prepared to research any additional issues or considerations identified by Councilmembers, and/or further develop solutions or improvements that Councilmembers would like to explore more thoroughly. Possible next steps could include another work session with more detailed research and solutions, or the development of code amendments for Council consideration in 2024.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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1. Presentation

# Process for Council Appeals to Quasi-Judicial Decisions

**Paul Sizemore, CDNS  
Director**

**Brad Yatabe, Senior  
Assistant City Attorney**



1. Current Appeals Process
2. Historical Data
3. Due Process Requirements
4. Issues and Considerations
5. Potential Solutions and Improvements





- Do Councilmembers have feedback on the list of identified issues and considerations in the appeals process?
- Are there other issues or considerations that have not yet been identified?
- Are there solutions or improvements that Councilmembers would like to see staff further develop and bring forward for consideration?

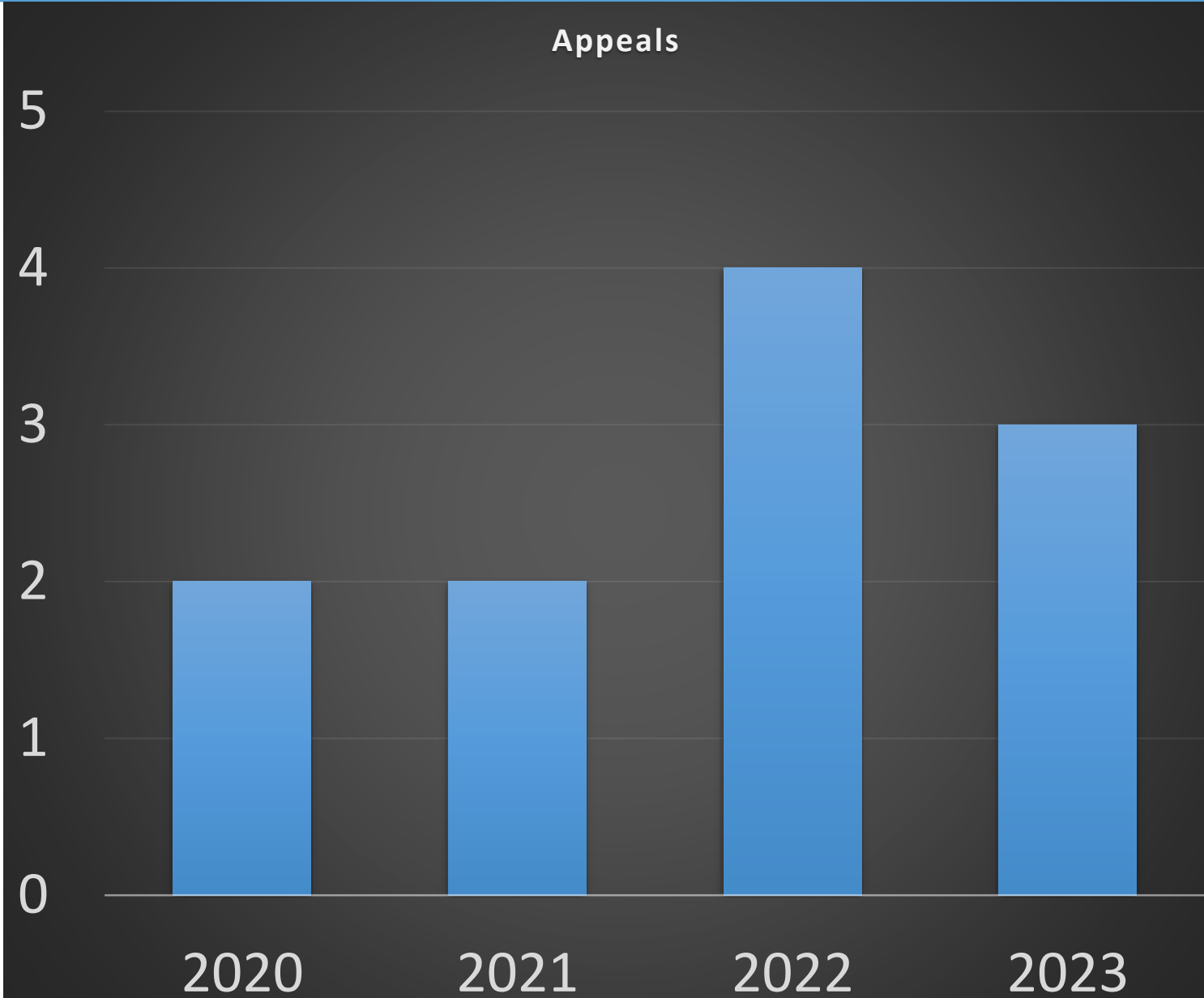
## Item 2. Current Appeal Process- A Broad Overview

- Quasi-judicial Commission or Hearing Officer decisions may be appealed to Council
  - Appeals of administrative decisions go to a Commission (e.g., P&Z or HPC)
- “Party in interest” is broadly defined- this determines who can appeal a decision
- Appeal can be on the basis of a failure to provide a fair hearing, or failure to properly interpret and apply the Code
- Appeal must be submitted within 14 days
- Council has the option of a pre-hearing site visit
- Time to present during a hearing is divided among those in favor and opposed to the appeal
- Council reviews record and hears testimony
- Following Council’s decision, a resolution stating findings of fact is adopted at next meeting



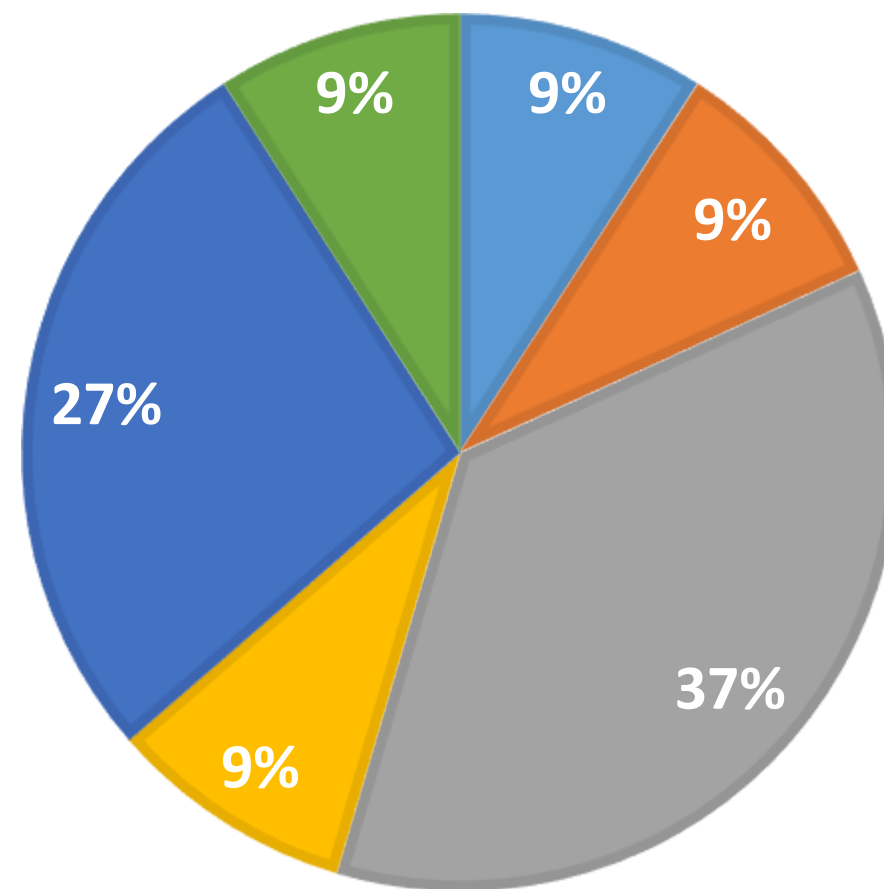
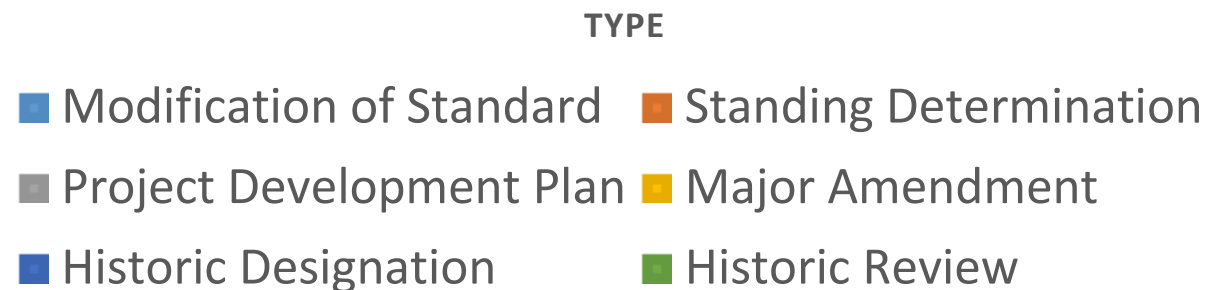
# Item 2. Historical Data: Fours Years of Appeals Heard by Council

- Data reflects year the appeal was heard by Council
- Average number of appeals is just under 3 per year
- Some appeals were filed near the end of the calendar year and were heard in the following year



## Item 2. Historical Data: Types of Appeals

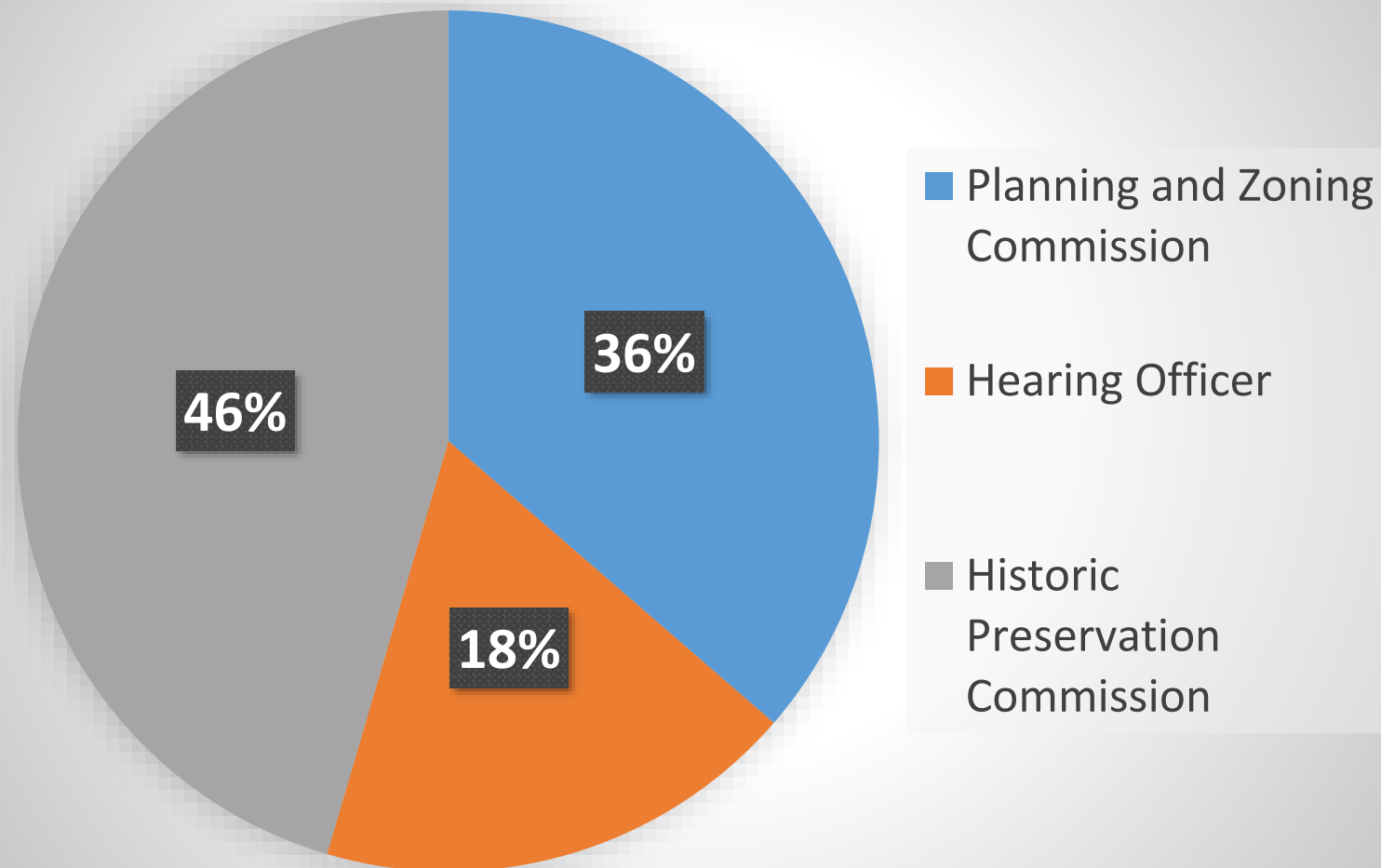
- During the past 4 years, a total of 11 appeals have been heard by Council (1 appeal= 9%)
- The greatest number of appeals were of Project Development Plans (37%)
- The second greatest was appeal of a Historic Designation Determination (27%)



## Item 2. Decision Maker Being Appealed

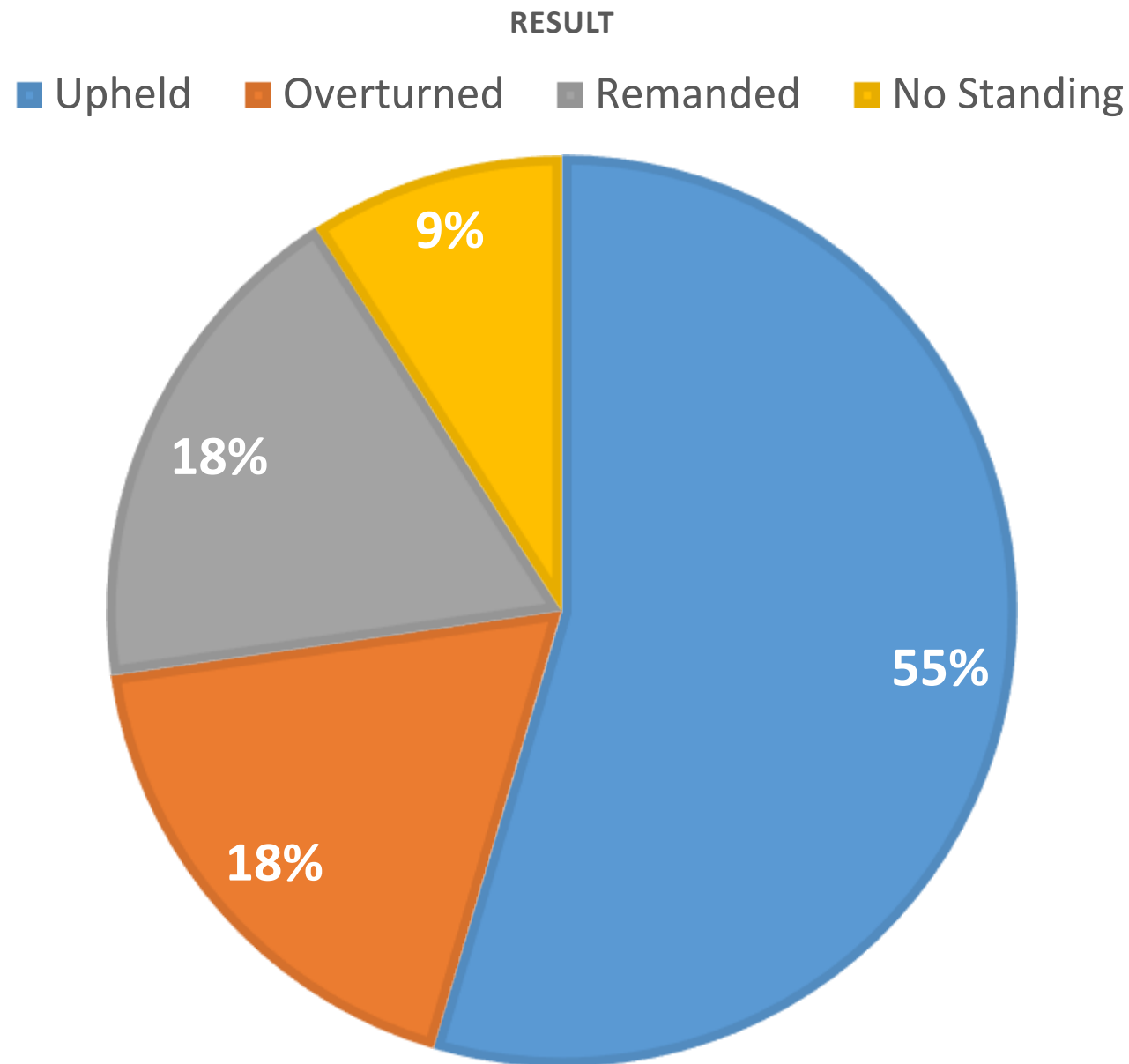
- The largest number of appeals heard by Council were decisions by the Historic Preservation Commission
- This was followed closely by the Planning and Zoning Commission
- Only 18% of appeals were to a Hearing Officer decision

Decision Maker Being Appealed



## Item 2. Outcome of Appeals

- Council upheld the decision in a majority of the appeals (55%)
- An equal number of decisions were either overturned or remanded to the decision maker (18% each)
- One appeal was resolved by determining the appellant did not have standing
- One Council decision (to uphold) was appealed to court and then remanded to the original decision maker



## Item 2. e Process Requirements

- State and federal law entitle an applicant in a quasi-judicial hearing to procedural and substantive due process. This means:
  - The adopted procedures for hearings must be followed
  - Affected persons must be afforded a “fair hearing” with reasonable opportunity to speak and for rebuttal
  - The decision maker must be “impartial” and “unbiased”
  - The decision must be based “on the record” (only on information that is a part of the hearing)
  - The decision maker must apply the proper standards and criteria in making its decision

Item 2. **Issues and Considerations**



- Does the Councilmember appeal process work?
- It is difficult to avoid and discourage ex parte communication from members of the public
- Limitations on discussion make it difficult for Councilmembers to prepare for an appeal hearing
- Participants in appeals hearings have difficulty understanding the process
- Unpredictable set of participants leads to unpredictable hearing dynamics (time allocation, etc.)
- Evidentiary issues raised during the hearing can be complicated, inefficient, and difficult to resolve fairly during the hearing
- Are the right decisions being appealed at the right stage of the process and the right level of detail for review by Council?



# Practices in Other Jurisdictions

	<u>Quasi-Judicial Land Use Appeals to Council</u>	<u>Appeal Only On the Record, No New Evidence</u>	<u>Council Can Initiate Appeal</u>	<u>Notable Features</u>
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- 1. Provide for no appeal from the decision-making Commissions or Hearing Officers.**
- 2. Give Council the role of reviewing underlying decisions based on the record**
- 3. Give Council the role of making a new decision on appeals**
- 4. Give Council the role of initial decision maker on certain applications.**
- 5. Create a separate body, like a “Board of Appeals”**
- 6. Create an option for no presentation of oral arguments**

## **Item 2. Potential Solutions and Improvements - Process Based**

- 1. Change eligibility to file an appeal**
- 2. Narrow the grounds for appeal**
- 3. Narrow or clarify new evidence rules and procedures.**
- 4. Change participation in the appeal hearing to the applicant and appellant.**
- 5. Eliminate the organized site visit.**
- 6. Allow Councilmembers to make written requests for information**

- 7. Adopt standard times for presentation by hearing participants**
- 8. Consider whether written exchanges by Council with City staff may be allowed**
- 9. Make a distinction between the appealability of different application types**
- 10. Create a mandatory pre-hearing conference**
- 11. Allow submittal of written pre-hearing arguments to Council.**
- 12. Allow City staff to review notices of appeal for obvious defects**

- Do Councilmembers have feedback on the list of identified issues and considerations in the appeals process?
- Are there other issues or considerations that have not yet been identified?
- Are there solutions or improvements that Councilmembers would like to see staff further develop and bring forward for consideration?



November 14, 2023

# WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



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## STAFF

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SeonAh Kendall, Economic Health Director  
Shannon Hein, Economic Health Manager  
Jillian Fresa, Economic Health Manager

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## SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

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**Economic Health Strategic Plan.**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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The purpose of this item is to provide Councilmembers with an update on the proposed Economic Health Strategic Plan with consideration by Council on December 5, 2023.

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## GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

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1. What feedback does Council have on the proposed elements of the Economic Health Strategic Plan?
2. Does Council agree with moving forward with the adoption of the Economic Health Strategic Plan on December 5?

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## BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

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### Background

On March 14, 2023, staff presented the general overview and direction of the Economic Health Strategic Plan, along with insights into the Circular Economy. Council members offered valuable feedback and expressed a strong interest in broadening and diversifying the engagement process. Subsequently, staff conducted further community engagement and integrated Council's feedback and concepts into the current plan.

Council provided positive and comprehensive feedback and guidance on the Circular Economy portion. Therefore, during the November 14, 2023 work session, staff will focus on the updated Economic Health Strategic Plan instead of discussing details of the Circular Economy Work Plan. The presentation will demonstrate how the Circular Economy is embedded into the overall Strategic Plan. Again, it is worth noting that the Circular Economy Work Plan has been incorporated throughout the overarching Economic Health Strategic Plan.

## Discussion

Fort Collins is undergoing a crucial transformation, necessitating a proactive economic strategy to address population growth, income disparities, and other challenges like climate change, COVID-19, political divisions, and racial injustice. A pragmatic, people-centered approach focusing on economic competitiveness, racial equity, and climate action is essential for sustained growth and resilience. This strategy must consider the impacts of affordable housing, childcare, air quality, and climate emergency. Prioritizing strategic, smart growth is vital to prevent population and infrastructure decline.

Although this plan cannot address every economic challenge facing Fort Collins, by leading with a people-centered approach, it can position Fort Collins residents, businesses, and community for a more resilient and prosperous future. The triple bottom line (TBL) model creates innovative opportunities, forging comprehensive solutions to boost community resilience where people, planet, and prosperity converge. Its focus remains on fostering positive impact and empowering the community.

### The updated Economic Health Strategic Plan aims to:

- Redesign economic health to positively address environmental, social, and economic resilience within Fort Collins.
- Evaluate and develop a “both/and” approach to supporting Main Street businesses (locally owned that provide goods and services in Fort Collins) and Primary Employers (businesses that generate over half their revenue from outside the City and bring new dollars into the community).
- Assist in the development, access, and resilience of specific programs to support historically underserved businesses in the community (minority, women, low - income, and veteran - owned).
- Redefine the City’s role in supporting workforce development that supports diverse job opportunities for the community.
- Reaffirm the City’s commitment to equity and inclusion leading with race and applying it to economic resilience.
- Champion the role of innovation in designing and scaling solutions to address local and global challenges and opportunities in climate and life sciences.

## Vision Statement

Fort Collins is a healthy, equitable, and resilient community where people and businesses can thrive.

## Guiding Principles

The guiding principles play a vital role throughout the plan, ensuring alignment with values and vision, aiding decision making, and maintaining consistency and accountability. Each of the outcome areas in the plan is directly linked to one of the guiding principles, establishing them as the plan’s foundation. This approach ensures that all actions and direction taken are purposeful, consistent, and in line with long-term success.

- **Sustainability** - Enhance the social, economic, and environmental resiliency of our community, and the City organization, for present and future generations, where everyone can afford to live and work in Fort Collins, ensuring good quality jobs, education for the future, and housing affordability.
- **Community Belonging** - Create a sense of belonging and inclusion, integrating principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) to support the retention of diverse talent, as well as small businesses that make our community uniquely Fort Collins.
- **Adaptation** - Ability to learn, prepare for uncertainties, act responsively and move forward with resilience toward recovery and renewal.



## Five-Year SMART Goals

People success and business success is **community success**, there is not either/or in this scenario. We envision a place where our community has economic choice for upward mobility and wealth generation to create a resilient, sustainable future. With these factors in mind, we have identified four goals.

These goals serve as the plan's fundamental, overarching outcomes the Economic Health Strategic Plan hopes to achieve. All focus areas in the plan are designed to contribute to the achievement of these central goals. In essence, the focus areas are like the building blocks that collectively work towards realizing these **four** fundamental goals:

**Goal 1:** Increase business owner representation to match Fort Collins MSA demographics.

**Goal 2:** Increase overall business survivability longer than five years from 45% to 50%.

**Goal 3:** Add 1,800 new jobs in targeted sectors (life science and climate technology).

**Goal 4:** Increase representation in employment within targeted sectors.

## Focus Areas

Each outcome tied to these objectives has significance in ensuring a healthy, equitable, and resilient Fort Collins economy:

- **Approach Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction Thoughtfully**, helping targeted Primary Employers stay and grow in Fort Collins while ensuring community-wide economic stability and employment opportunities;
- **Ensure Small Businesses Thrive**, supporting our vital “Main Street” businesses that contribute to both the character and economic resilience of Fort Collins;
- **Support Talent and Workforce**, ensuring all businesses have access to good talent and people, while community members have access to good jobs and employers; and
- **Re-position Innovation**, fostering the life science and climate tech cluster ecosystems while championing sustainable businesses and a local circular economy.

The four focus areas exist because a healthy economy is interconnected and cannot be achieved in a silo. Uniquely Fort Collins Main Street (including small and local) businesses need Primary Employer companies to bring new dollars into a community, to employ locally and spend disposable income with them. Primary employers need main street businesses, not only for their local consumer goods and services, but also for the culture of community it creates. A community is built on sales and property tax dollars that fund local amenities in the natural and built environment, which becomes part of the Fort Collins brag book to help recruit and retain a strong community and workforce. The cycle cannot be robust if the focus is one over the other; Main Street and Primary Employer businesses working together enhances the local community.

The full ecosystem of a healthy economy includes a healthy mix of Primary Employer and Main Street businesses, no matter the size. It is not just about the dollars and cents that business contribute to the local economy (through property and sales tax, payroll, and contributions to nonprofits) but the character and sense of belonging to a community. Oftentimes, local businesses are the “front door” to our community that not only build connections and relationships, but also share pieces of their culture, talent, and themselves.

The Economic Health Strategic Plan's emphasis on prioritizing people in the work underscores its commitment to fostering a healthy, equitable, and resilient community where all can thrive. However, the recognition of inherent tensions and tradeoffs for our community is crucial for ensuring its effectiveness. For instance, addressing issues such as job growth outpacing housing development or the disparity

between housing costs and wages will be integral in achieving long-term economic stability. By acknowledging such challenges, the plan can be adapted to better balance the needs of the individual, businesses, and the community.

### **NEXT STEPS**

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Based on Council feedback, Economic Health Office propose the Economic Health Strategic Plan be brought forth for consideration by Council at the December 5, 2023 Council meeting.

### **ATTACHMENTS**

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1. Economic Health Strategic Plan
2. Circular Economy Work Plan
3. Engagement Report
4. Presentation

## Introduction

**Fort Collins is at a time of transformation and can no longer rest on our laurels and take for granted the unique reasons people choose to live and/or work here.** In recent decades, Fort Collins has experienced steady population growth, while business and household income growth lagged. Strategic plans are meant to be forward looking, while also underpinning resiliency. Fort Collins has not been immune to impacts from climate change, COVID-19, political divide, and racial injustice.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach, and as we look to the future, Fort Collins' economic health strategy must be a pragmatic, people-centered approach grounded in economic competitiveness, racial equity, and climate action. **We will NOT achieve racial and social equity or climate action goals without economic inclusion and growth. AND that growth will be neither as robust nor as durable without understanding the impacts of affordable housing, childcare, air quality, and climate emergency on our community.** Strategic, smart growth that is **economically prosperous, socially equitable, and environmentally sustainable** must happen to avoid population and infrastructure decline.

Although this plan cannot address every economic challenge facing Fort Collins, by leading with a people-centered approach, it can position Fort Collins residents and businesses for a more resilient and prosperous future.

**Language matters.** The importance of language is critical when discussing race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity. In this context, the usage of the terms like "BIPOC" (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) is more descriptive than people of color while also acknowledging that people of color face varying types of discrimination and prejudice. Although terms like "marginalized" and "minority" might be factually correct, it lacks the people-first approach, while also carrying a suggestion of being "less than." A "people-first" approach acknowledges that every individual and community is unique, diverse, and with different lived experiences that contribute to our community. Our intention is not to be exclusionary or label but to acknowledge the disparities, systemic racism, and prejudices that BIPOC and women have historically endured.

### **The updated Economic Health Strategic Plan aims to:**

1. Redesign economic health to positively address environmental, social, and economic resilience within Fort Collins.
2. Evaluate and develop a "both/and" approach to supporting Main Street businesses (locally owned that provides goods and services in Fort Collins) and Primary Employers (businesses that generate over half their revenue from outside the City and bring new dollars into the community).
3. Assist in the development, access, and resilience of specific programs to support, historically underserved businesses in the community (minority, women, low - income, and veteran - owned).
4. Redefine the City's role in supporting workforce development that supports diverse job opportunities for the community.
5. Reaffirm the City's commitment to equity and inclusion leading with race and applying it to economic resilience.
6. Champion the role of innovation in designing and scaling solutions to address local and global challenges and opportunities in climate and life sciences.

**Vision Statement:**

Fort Collins is a healthy, equitable, and resilient community where people and businesses can thrive.

**Guiding Principles:**

The guiding principles play a vital role throughout the plan, ensuring alignment with values and vision, aiding decision making, and maintaining consistency and accountability. Each of the outcome areas in the plan is directly linked to one of the guiding principles, establishing them as the plan's foundation. This approach ensures that all actions and direction taken are purposeful, consistent, and in line with long-term success.

- **Sustainability** - Enhance the social, economic and environmental resiliency of our community, and the City organization, for present and future generations. Where everyone can afford to live and work in Fort Collins, ensuring good quality jobs, education for the future, and housing affordability.
- **Community Belonging** - Create a sense of belonging and inclusion, integrating principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) to support the retention of diverse talent, as well as small businesses that make our community uniquely Fort Collins.
- **Adaptation** - Ability to learn, prepare for uncertainties, act responsively and move forward with resilience toward recovery and renewal.

## FIVE-YEAR SMART GOALS

People success and business success is **community success**, there is not either/or in this scenario. We envision a place where our community has economic choice for upward mobility and wealth generation to create a resilient, sustainable future. With these factors in mind, we have identified fundamental goals.

These goals serve as the plan's fundamental, overarching outcomes the Economic Health Strategic Plan hopes to achieve. All focus areas in the plan are designed to contribute to the achievement of these central goals. In essence, the focus areas are like the building blocks that collectively work towards realizing these **four** fundamental goals:

**Goal 1: Increase business owner representation to match Fort Collins MSA demographics.**

**Goal 2: Increase overall business survivability longer than five years from 45% to 50%.**

**Goal 3: Add 1,800 new jobs in targeted, traded sectors (e.g. life science and climate technology).**

**Goal 4: Increase representation in employment within targeted, traded sectors.**

## BACKGROUND

The Economic Health Strategic Plan intersects with and takes inspiration from existing City of Fort Collins community plans:

- [Resilient Recovery Plan](#) – a community plan to guide long-term response and rebuilding from the COVID-19 pandemic.
- [Fort Collins City Plan](#) – comprehensive plan that guides how the community will grow and travel in the next 10-20 years.
- [Our Climate Future](#) – a plan to simultaneously address climate, energy, and waste goals while improving our community’s equity and resilience.
- [Housing Strategic Plan](#) – a vision that everyone in Fort Collins has healthy, stable, housing they can afford.
- [Equity and Inclusion Plan](#) - a plan to address and further embed equity and inclusion into City processes and projects.

*[DEFINITION BOX]: Resiliency – The Our Climate Future Plan defines resiliency as the capacity to prepare our human and natural systems to respond and adapt to changes and disruptions of various scales that affect our ability to thrive. Taking that one step further for this body of work, the Economic Development Administration defines economic resilience as the ability to bounce back from shock, disruption, or stress.*

#### **FOCUS AREAS:**

Each outcome tied to these objectives has significance in ensuring a healthy, equitable, and resilient Fort Collins economy:

- **Approach Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction Thoughtfully**, helping targeted Primary Employers stay and grow in Fort Collins while ensuring community-wide economic stability and employment opportunities;
- **Ensure Small Businesses Thrive**, supporting our vital “Main Street” businesses contribute to both the character and economic resilience of Fort Collins;
- **Support Talent and Workforce**, ensuring all businesses have access to good talent and people, while community members have access to good jobs and employers; and
- **Re-position Innovation**, fostering the life science and climate tech cluster ecosystems while championing sustainable businesses and a local circular economy.

These four objectives exist because a healthy economy is interconnected and cannot be achieved in a silo. Uniquely Fort Collins Main Street businesses need Primary Employer companies to bring new dollars into a community, to employ locally and spend disposable income with them. Primary employers need main street businesses, not only for their local consumer goods and services, but also for the culture of community it creates. A community is built on sales and property tax dollars that fund local amenities in the natural and built environment, which becomes part of the Fort Collins brag book to help recruit and retain a strong community and workforce. The cycle cannot be robust if the focus is one over the other; Main Street and Primary Employer businesses working together enhances the local community.

The full ecosystem of a healthy economy includes a healthy mix of Primary Employer and Main Street businesses, no matter the size.



Entrepreneurship, business ownership, and home ownership have a direct link to wealth creation and generational wealth distribution. With recent growth causing more apparent housing insecurity, homeownership slips further out of reach, causing the opportunity for wealth building through homeownership to also slip further away. This leads us to look to entrepreneurship and business ownership as a viable opportunity for community members to build generational wealth.

[DEFINITION BOX] *Generational wealth – any kind of asset that is passed down from one generation to the next. This includes cash, investments such as stocks, bonds, real estate, and businesses.*

With that said, many business owners, especially BIPOC and women business owners, personally finance their endeavors. With little to start with in the first place, launching a business can be harder than for white entrepreneurs in our community. The typical white family has eight times the wealth of the typical Black family and five times the wealth of the typical Hispanic family. <sup>i</sup>The aggregate low levels of wealth among Black and Hispanic populations not only diminished their ability to self-invest but limited their appeal to funders. <sup>ii</sup> Additionally, even with the passing of the Women’s Business Ownership Act of 1988, obtaining funding can be challenging for women entrepreneurs. They are lower credit risks than man, yet typically are approved for smaller amounts and charged more.

These acknowledgements help guide economic development in Fort Collins to the holistic approach including identifying systematic barriers such as access to resources (information, funding, human and social capital, etc.).

## Engagement Summary

*\*See the full engagement report and SWOT analysis here*

## Methodology

Over seven months, the Economic Health Office and its consultant, Hickey Global conducted Interviews, small group discussions, launched an online questionnaire, and engaged community members at two large public events.

- **Interviews:** Conducted by both Hickey Global and the Economic Health Office. These consisted of 1-on-1 interviews with business proprietors and leaders in Fort Collins, involving individuals who spoke both, English and Spanish.
- **Small Group Discussions:** Three virtual events featuring small businesses, employers, solopreneurs, and business partner organizations.
- **Questionnaire:** 54 responses
- **Community Events:** The Economic Health Office hosted an outreach table at the Lagoon Concert Series and Bike-to-Work Day. In total, Economic Health spoke with 265 event attendees.

It is also important to note that two other plans were taken into consideration that also saw heavy outreach and engagement in the last two years. **The Economic Recovery Strategy from Reignite Northern Colorado in 2021 and the City of Fort Collins Resilient Recovery Plan 2022** both garnered a large amount of engagement from both businesses and community members that are referenced to understand the needs of the community to improve the economic health of Fort Collins.

The Fort Collins Economic Health Office is appreciative of the time and consideration provided by all the stakeholders who participated in the engagement process. Through these engagement efforts city staff gathered input from:

- Community members and leaders
- Business leaders representing a broad range of economic sectors
- Employees and managers working at Fort Collins businesses
- Public sector officials from local, county, and state governments
- Educational leaders from K-12 through postsecondary institutions
- Small business owners and employers
- Artists and art advocates
- Nonprofit organizational leaders
- C-Suite executives and national experts in economic development
- Hospitality and tourism experts

## SWOT THEMES

The following SWOT results have been updated to consider both the engagement conducted by Hickey Global as well as the second phase of engagement.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educated workforce and strong educational institutions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of housing</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beautiful community assets and amenities</li> <li>• Quality of place</li> <li>• Diversity of economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of affordable commercial space and site-ready land</li> <li>• Insufficient workforce size</li> <li>• Lack of diversity</li> </ul>
<b>Opportunities</b>	<b>Threats</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upskill and reskill programs</li> <li>• Retaining talent</li> <li>• Branding and messaging consistency – City-wide and regionally</li> <li>• Industry support of quality jobs within Chips Zone, life and bio science, and climate tech/circular economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception that Fort Collins is not business friendly</li> <li>• Fees and policies to build, expand, or open a business (cost of doing business)</li> <li>• Not embracing or supporting diversity in our community and workforce</li> </ul>

## FOCUS 1: APPROACH BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION & ATTRACTION OF PRIMARY EMPLOYER BUSINESSES THOUGHTFULLY

Fort Collins is strengthened by diversity of industries. **Industry diversity** is a measure of how evenly employment is distributed between 11 industry clusters found in the typical metropolitan statistical area (MSA). Markets with high diversity are considered to be more resilient in the face of adversity such as recessions and layoffs. Fort Collins has above-average Industry Diversity (ranked 150 out of the 384 Metro MSAs). The top identified clusters include Food & Beverage Manufacturing, Machinery Manufacturing & Production Technology, Information Technology, Life Sciences, Metals, Plastics, Mineral Product & Chemicals, Professional Services & Distribution, and E-Commerce. - Lightcast

Focusing business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts on these targeted industries supports the growth of Fort Collins’ economic base. This growth creates jobs and imports new money more and income into the community. In turn, these new dollars support small businesses and provide people more opportunities to thrive. *Figure 1: Primary Employers and Small Business Contribution*

### Outcome 1.1: Policy and structural shifts create a good business environment.

#### Example Initiatives:

- Engage in intentional and sustained **coordination and alignment between City departments and partners at the city, county, and state level to bolster business** resilience and growth through programs and policies that are interconnected impacts of housing, land use, and transportation on Fort Collins business environment.
  - Deploying economic impact analysis for City policy changes and new programs that impact businesses and employment opportunities.
- **Support and align City of Fort Collins assistance for businesses** – including financing, and technical programs (from development to accessibility) to assist Fort Collins entrepreneurs; navigation of city processes, including permitting, accessing financial resources and grants; and engaging in policy.



- **Engage and support process improvements** such as development and conceptual reviews.

**Outcome 1.2:** Strategic business retention, expansion, and attraction (BREA) efforts strengthen and diversify opportunities and economic resilience.

Example Initiatives:

- Establish a sustainable, **data-driven program to respond to the needs of existing employers** and industries to create a feedback loop for the City and private industry. Work with business and institutional partners to maintain and grow a database of existing businesses in Fort Collins with ongoing data collection and analysis mechanisms to keep a pulse on the vitality of local businesses.
  - Structure business visits to develop a strong understanding of the overall needs of local businesses, their challenges to operate successfully, and their potential to remain and/or expand in Fort Collins.
- **Target recruitment** of companies that can help the City further its economic, social, and environmental goals. Examples of companies would include those that can help advance a circular economy, provide high-quality employment opportunities, and many others.
- **Build the region's target supply chain** through specialized industry research aimed at focused recruitment efforts on Fort Collins' target industries such as circular economy manufacturing, life sciences, and climate tech.
- Leverage and market **Fort Collins and the region as a leader in the life science and clean tech sectors**. Strengthen through data, research, and convening those that lead the industry already.

**Outcome 1.3:** Attract circular economy business sectors for a more resilient community.

Example Initiatives:

- Develop internal infrastructure and establish standardized practices to effectively transition Fort Collins towards a circular economy through:
  - **Creating an asset map** of existing circular ecosystems, their gaps, and potential new ecosystems.
  - **Defining measurable goals** and metrics that will enable tracking Fort Collins' progress in transitioning to a more circular economy.
- Focus business development efforts to business supply chain companies within the value chain to support existing Fort Collins businesses, current and future, recirculate and rethink products and processes to eliminate and reduce waste (alignment with Outcome 1.2)
- Leverage the City's leadership role to grow the Fort Collins' circular economy and encourage others to drive the circular economy forward.
  - Review purchasing policies to support circular activities through its sustainability practice.

## FOCUS 2: ENSURE SMALL BUSINESSES THRIVE

Small businesses, defined as 50 employees or less, comprise 98% of Fort Collins businesses. These businesses face significant challenges, with a 20% failure rate within the first two years, 45% within five years, and 65% within ten years. To ensure their survival and growth, it is crucial to provide early

support and ongoing assistance.<sup>xiii</sup> Small businesses were impacted the most by the pandemic, and at the time of this plan, may still be in recovery mode and made a priority in the Recovery Plan.

Local, unique, and creative businesses (also known as Main Street Businesses) nurture the vibrant and artistic atmosphere that makes Fort Collins so appealing to residents and visitors alike. Supporting and retaining these imaginative originators, innovative problem solvers, and resourceful local entrepreneurs is vital to community resiliency and critical for talent recruitment and retention.

Entrepreneurs thrive when they have access to resources such as new business incubators, existing business accelerators, and networks that expand their knowledge and skills. These drivers, alongside capital or finance programs, are critical for developing and retaining innovative problem solvers. Nurturing environments like these are instrumental in helping entrepreneurs refine their ideation, develop robust business models, and gain the skills necessary to thrive in competitive markets. Meeting the needs of a broad spectrum of businesses increases the potential for significant positive outcomes in community growth and development. This could include programming for an aspiring solopreneur whose primary language is not English or working with existing industries to re-shore manufacturing production through national programs, and everything in between. The enormity of impact is directly proportional to the range of representation.

## Outcome 2.1: Small Businesses Have Access to Tools and Resources Needed to Succeed.

### Example Initiatives:

- **Support access to capital** - Access to capital continues to show up as one of the largest barriers to entrepreneurship.
  - Re-launch of a revolving loan fund product, providing access to capital for businesses, giving Main Street Businesses (including childcare) the ability to grow while also preparing for conventional loans in the future.
  - Leverage the City's **Urban Renewal Authority (URA) tools to support not only the business being redeveloped, but all businesses within the district** for greater alignment and success opportunities.
- One-stop shop hubs located throughout the City with liaisons trained in multiple departments needs that can walk businesses through the process of Sales Tax/Business License, development and building review, Utilities, resources, and more.
  - **Streamline the development and redevelopment process** to provide greater transparency.
  - Having locations outside traditional City buildings provides accessibility and transparency, making the processes more human-focused and easier to navigate.
- Ongoing **Support and Partner Local campaign** to include communication and opportunities to pivot customer behavior to support local retailers, artisans, creatives, and service providers.

## Outcome 2.2: Fort Collins Businesses Are Resilient Ready.

### Example Initiatives:

- Identify resiliency resources and gaps, to assist businesses prepare for man-made or natural economic downturn or disaster.
  - Example resources include the Multicultural Business and Entrepreneur Center, Sustainable Business Program, and the Green Business Tracker.

- Develop programs with partners such as a Legacy Business Program, a Business Emergency Plan, and a Business Climate Adaptation Plan to support businesses proactively identify threats and solutions to ensure resiliency.
- Improve access and education to certifications and programs for underrepresented businesses to increase procurement and funding opportunities for local business owners.

### Outcome 2.3: The Creative Sector is Celebrated and Supported for Their Contribution to the Fort Collins Community.

#### Example Initiatives:

- Collaborate and support Cultural Services programming to **strengthen the creative sector through capacity building, business acumen, and education (storytelling the value proposition)**.
  - **Connect entrepreneurs in the creative sector with the Multicultural Business and Entrepreneur Center** for additional support and access to resources.
  - In partnership with Cultural Services, Sales Tax, and Colorado State University, **analyze and share the economic impact of the creative industries** in Fort Collins, as a premiere cultural destination.
  - **With community partners, create space to incubate or strengthen existing** retail, food, or creative business, allowing them to test concepts, conduct market research, and get feedback on their products or ideas.

## FOCUS 3: SUPPORT TALENT AND WORKFORCE

Fort Collins is home to a highly educated and skilled workforce. Sixty-eight percent of the Fort Collins population aged 25 and older have a post-secondary education, compared to 54.2% in Colorado and 45.9% nationally.

The Colorado Workforce Development Council developed the [Colorado Job Quality Framework](#), in which they encourage communities to attract and grow a variety of businesses committed to job quality to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for their community.”

We recognize the multitude of barriers preventing people from obtaining education and accessing employment opportunities. These include opportunity awareness, transportation, housing affordability, and childcare affordability and availability. Fort Collins must maintain a competitive inventory of quality jobs for community members to live, work and play in their own community. A shorter commute time means enhanced workforce efficiency, better attraction and retention of talent, economic inclusivity and mobility, infrastructure efficiency, and the reduction of environmental externalities.

### Why are Quality Jobs important to have in Fort Collins?

It’s clear that job quality impacts employees’ financial health. Additionally, quality jobs give workers economic choice: allowing for other community contributions such as social support, a sense of community, economic mobility, physical and mental health, and climate resiliency.

[POP-OUT BOX]: Colorado ranks as one of states with the largest cost burden for childcare for married couples with children after factoring both the price of care and median income in each state, and this is exacerbated for single parent households.

[POP-OUT BOX]: **The mean travel time to work is 20.6 minutes.** Travel commute times are indicative of certain aspects of local economic health including availability of job opportunities, **housing affordability and accessibility**, transportation challenges, economic disparities, and **environmental impact**.

**Outcome 3.1:** Accessible career pathways meet needs of employers and employees, today and in the future.

Example Initiatives:

- Leverage opportunities and partnerships to advance strategic workforce programs aimed at enhancing and future-proofing the workforce’s resilience in an evolving economy.
  - Support the dynamic landscape which includes the progress of AI technology and the shifting nature of occupations due to the emergence of new technologies.
  - Continue to support and advance NoCo Works, a regional collaboration for workforce and talent development in northern Colorado, spanning Larimer and Weld Counties.

**Outcome 3.2:** Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) is Good Business.

Example Initiatives:

- Leverage existing and emerging work by industry and community to foster an inclusive community (within the business and/or organization, as well as throughout the community).
- Develop a platform that matches underrepresented and underserved students to internship or apprenticeship opportunities throughout the city and region’s leading innovative companies.
  - Provide valuable experiential learning opportunities and connections to both the student and local businesses creates talent retention possibilities, as well as breeds innovation.
- Encourage and support continuous learning for civil conversations and dialogue around DEIA and lived experiences.

## FOCUS 4: REPOSITION INNOVATION

To stay competitive in a post-pandemic economy, certain industries must be elevated and supported to continue the resiliency and strength of the community. The life sciences and climate technology (climate tech) industries, including manufacturing activities are vital components of any thriving economy.

[DEFINITION BOX] Life sciences includes the research and development, tech transfer, and commercialization of biological sciences, such as pharmaceuticals, biotechnology, medical devices, and others. Climate tech is recognized as new business models and technologies that mitigate the impacts and key drivers of global greenhouse gas emissions that attribute to climate change. While cleantech is described as new business models or technologies that increases the performance, productivity or efficiency of production while minimizing impacts on the environment.

Fort Collins is equipped with the right talent coming from our local educational institutions, including a major land-grant university, Colorado State University. This brain trust in the northern Colorado region can help solve large global issues in the fields of health and climate. Fort Collins produces the highest

percentage of awarded degrees in Biological and Biomedical Sciences and overall, most awarded degrees in Agricultural, Animal, Plant, and Veterinary Science compared to its peer communities.

#### Outcome 4.1: Targeted Clusters Spurs Innovative Solutions to Meet Community Goals.

##### Example Initiatives:

- Promote the development and tech transfer of clean technology happening locally with institutional partners such as Colorado State University's Powerhouse and Innosphere Ventures to meet Our Climate Future (OCF) goals.
- Leverage opportunities to innovate and support **local semiconductor manufacturers**, including efforts towards the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions operations that align with City OCF and the company's sustainability goals.

#### Outcome 4.2: Leverage and Engage the Regional Assets that Drive Innovation.

##### Example Initiatives:

- Map regional assets such as **wet laboratory (wet lab) space** that drives innovation for bio- and life sciences, as many companies seek to locate near Tier 1 Research universities and institutions (such as Federal laboratories).

[DEFINITION BOX] Wet lab space are laboratories where chemicals, drugs, or other material or biological matter are tested and analyzed requiring water, direct ventilation, and specialized piped utilities. The inventory of physical wet lab space is significant because these specially designed and controlled laboratories must meet certain criteria for life science activities to properly occur.]

# Fort Collins Circular Economy Workplan

## Introduction: What is Circular Economy?

In the traditional linear economy, materials follow the chain of “take, make, waste” where raw materials are taken from an environment, made into a product, and once that product has reached the end of its life, it is sent to the waste stream. In a circular economy, products come with only what is needed, last longer, are repairable, and, when they can’t be used anymore, are easily and safely recycled. A circular economy aims to eliminate waste by focusing on the reduction, recycling and reuse of materials, lowering the number of raw materials taken from our natural environment, designing products for longevity, and creating new business models that promote a sharing economy. **For Fort Collins, the circular economy is about rethinking current processes to effectively utilize natural resources to increase supply chain stability, create sustainable employment opportunities and ensure the resilience of our natural and built environment.**

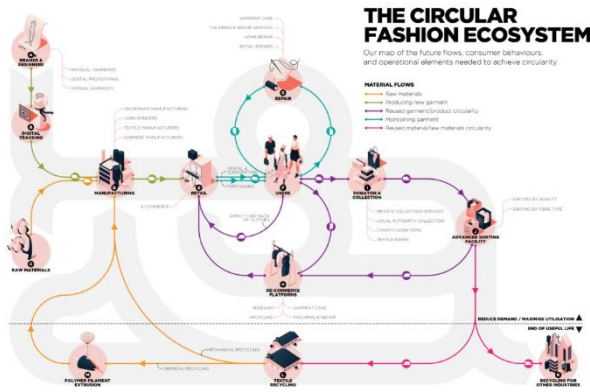


## Circular Economy Concept - A Circular Ecosystem.

A circular ecosystem functions similarly to a natural ecosystem in that a given material can be handled by a variety of different players throughout its lifecycle. Recyclers, producers, consumers, repair services, thrift, and remanufacturers – all impact whether a material is kept in circulation or heads to a landfill. When systems keep materials moving in a loop, the results are circular products that are created with little to no raw materials, and its end of life in mind.

An example of a circular ecosystem in Fort Collins is around food. In Fort Collins, many grocers have ambitious goals to reduce food waste and hunger by the end of this decade. These goals work in synergy with a City regulation that grocers must donate or compost their food waste. Donated food goes to local non-profits like the Food Bank for Larimer County and Vindeket Foods. At these non-profits, food is “rescued” and distributed to community members who support the ecosystem by being okay with the occasional bruised piece of fruit or day-old baguette. Food that can’t be rescued is composted and used

to grow new food or build soil in local landscapes, closing the loop.



## Connecting to other City plans.

Several existing City plans have incorporated circular economy strategies, including Our Climate Future, Municipal Sustainability and Adaptation Plan, and the updated Economic Health Strategic Plan. This Circular Economy Workplan aims to work alongside and propel existing strategies while also filling gaps left by these plans.

## Our Climate Future - achieving zero waste.

Moving toward an economy that keeps materials circulating is significant to reaching the community’s goal to landfill zero waste by 2030 and the transformational outcomes outlined in the Our Climate Future plan (Zero Waste Neighborhoods and Zero Waste Economy). While achieving zero waste will involve familiar strategies like recycling more types of materials and improving recycling behavior, around 15%-20% of the community’s waste is made up of consumer products that aren’t designed to be recyclable or are hazardous wastes that require specialized disposal. The circular economy can fill that gap by innovating new ways to keep these materials in use and recycle them.

Read the Climate Action Plan here.

**Connecting to climate action.** Fort Collins’ Our Climate Future Plan identifies “Healthy Local Economy and Jobs” and “Zero Waste Economy” as two [Big Moves](#) for an equitable, carbon neutral, and resilient Fort Collins.

### BIG MOVE 9

## HEALTHY LOCAL ECONOMY AND JOBS

The community supports a healthy innovative local economy with new opportunities for all people and businesses to thrive.



## The Economic Health Strategic Plan – supporting a healthy economy.

The circular economy elements of the Economic Health Strategic Plan seek to support manufacturers, life science, and climate tech sectors, as well as entrepreneurs, while taking the broader view of the ecosystem and considering how all parts of our local circular economy work together. While the City has already integrated circular strategies into some of its environmental plans, the Economic Health Strategic Plan offers a significant opportunity to advance Fort Collins' climate and equity goals, as well as close planning gaps such as:

- Economic health dimensions of the circular economy (cluster support, wealth generation, skills and training, business attraction, etc.).
- Cluster sector strategic gaps.
  - Other plans have focused primarily on individuals, small businesses, institutions, and the construction and demolition sector.
  - The manufacturing, life science, and climate tech sectors have the greatest opportunity for innovation.
- Non-regulatory strategies that support businesses transitioning to circular business models.

Read the Economic Health Strategic plan [here](#).

## Why is circular economy important to Fort Collins and its businesses?

Climate change is present in all facets of our lives with significant impact on people, places, businesses, and entire economies and these impacts are only expected to grow. The changing climate also brings new opportunities for innovation to our local economy. Opportunities include developing new products, more efficient processes and services, and creating new jobs all while building a more resilient and equitable community.

## How a changing climate may impact Fort Collins businesses.

**Climate risks.** Each sector is faced with their own climate challenges and at varying impacts; in response, businesses must adapt and have their own sustainable goals and practices. Most sectors will see some disruption within their business models and value chains such as:

- Increased scarcity and increased costs of natural resources
- Supply chain shortages



- Regulatory changes and unpredictability
- Increased inflation and cost of doing business
- Rising costs for resiliency and redundancy measures, capital, and insurance
- Suppliers, partners, and governments requiring the use of sustainable or reusable materials and processes
- Changing consumer preferences and behaviors that move towards sustainability

**Climate opportunities.** Becoming more circular can benefit businesses by:

- Lowering costs, improving efficiencies and competitiveness
- Strengthening supply chain systems
- Creating more opportunities for innovation and progress towards sustainability
- Strengthening workforce, while taking advantage of workforce opportunities for job training
- Attracting top talent with company's sustainability character and commitment to sustainability
- Strengthening resiliency and adaption in times of uncertainty
- Creating new partnerships with other businesses and industries
- Leverage local assets (institutional and technological assets) to strengthen industry ecosystems
- Influence of shareholder and employee values and expectations

### How a shift to a circular economy may impact the workforce.

The shift towards a more adept circular economy presents **new opportunities for workforce training and workforce mobility**. The circular economy offers innovative approaches to develop an inclusive economy through the creation of new jobs, as well as the reskilling, upskilling, and new skilling (RUN) of workers.

The interconnected nature of a circular economy means it involves many different types of high-skilled jobs – requiring technical work as well as jobs in engineering, science, design, and other areas of innovation. The circular economy model allows the opportunity to improve the quality of employment for our community by promoting inclusive and diverse jobs that continually provide new skills and training opportunities. This is necessary in an evolving, dynamic economy that promotes innovation.

## How do we get to a circular economy?

Transitioning to a circular economy requires ambitious and deliberate efforts to create new processes and expand knowledge and infrastructure. It requires many different players working together to create a successful circular ecosystem. Institutions, like government and universities, have a role to play in this system, as do community members and business leaders.

### The City's role.

Government can play a crucial role in advancing the circular economy through legislation, creating and developing programs and services, and as a large employer and organization through its own informed decisions around internal operations. The City is in the unique position that can propel the demand for circular products and influence the way organizations operate while leading by example through internal processes and policies.

### Industry as a key partner.

Industrial activities, including private and public firms, (see call-out box for more details) are responsible for around 68,000 tons of landfilled waste each year. Because of this, industry is recognized as a partner

to driving a strong, effective circular economy. Industry partners can transform the traditional linear model into a more sustainable and regenerative system. Increasing circularity in local and regional industries not only support Fort Collins’ goal to become zero waste, it also reduces pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, and waste globally.

While 66% of industrial waste is already recycled, the circular economy is a way to get the rest of the way to 100% *and* reduce residential waste too.

**What’s in our industrial waste?**

Fort Collins *industrial* waste comes from a variety of industrial activities. Some of the biggest sources include:

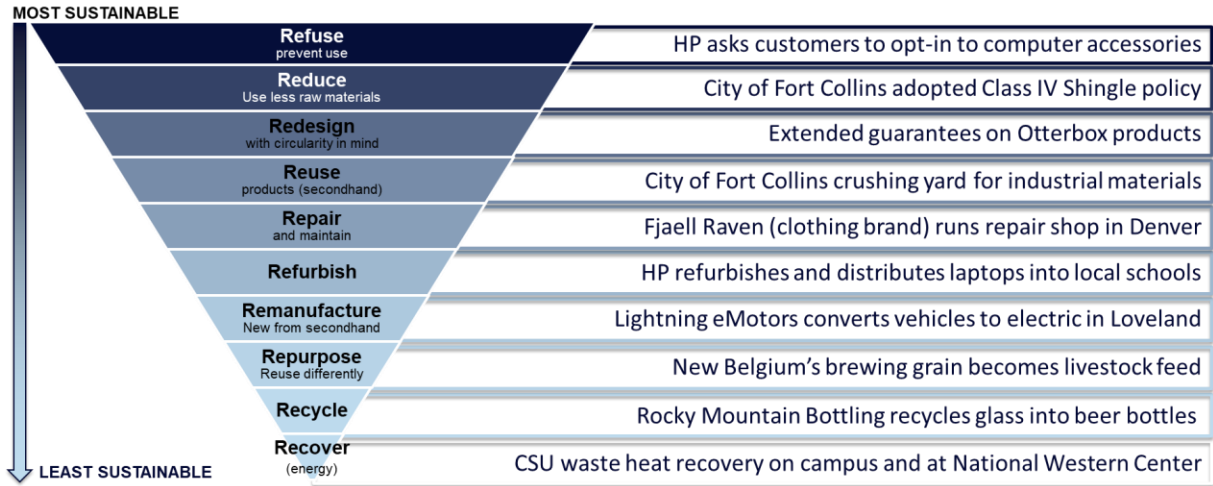
- Construction of roads and infrastructure
- Construction of buildings
- Manufacturing

**What’s made in Fort Collins?**

- Food and beverages
- Computers and electronic products
- Machinery
- Plastics and rubber products

Circular Strategies.

Most people know the adage “reduce, reuse, recycle” but there are many more “R-strategies” that can have a big impact on creating a more circular community. Many Fort Collins manufacturers, retail businesses, institutions and community groups are already leading the way by applying other “r-strategies” like refusing, reducing, redesigning and more. See the figure for examples and a few highlighted local leaders. The higher up the “R” hierarchy, the better the environmental impact.



In order to cultivate an environment where “r-strategies” are not only more accessible but a common practice, a shift in culture and way of life must occur. This workplan identifies four key objectives to get us started.

## Objectives for a Circular Fort Collins

The strategies and actions detailed in this plan combine with existing efforts (Our Climate Future, the Municipal Sustainability and Adaptation Plan, and many community efforts) to jumpstart the circular economy in Fort Collins. These strategies are to:

### 1. Lay the groundwork

Develop internal infrastructure and common practices that will prepare Fort Collins for the shift to support a circular economy.

### 2. Lead by example

Leverage the City's leadership role to grow the Fort Collins' circular economy and encourage others to participate.

### 3. Develop circular businesses

Focus business development efforts to support businesses interested in implementing circular strategy.

### 4. Innovate

Partner with local stakeholders to test innovative circular practices and concepts in Fort Collins and collaborate with other communities to help scale the circular economy globally.

**Objective 1. Lay the groundwork:** Develop internal infrastructure and establish standardized practices to effectively transition Fort Collins towards a circular economy.

#### Key Initiatives:

- **Create an asset map of existing circular ecosystems, their gaps, and potential new ecosystems.**

Create an asset map of Fort Collins' existing circular ecosystems, identify any gaps, and explore opportunities for new ecosystems. This comprehensive map should encompass the existing initiatives and work undertaken by local institutions, organizations, industry partners, and other community groups. By understanding and leveraging the work of others will lead to better collaboration and the acceleration of a circular community.

Work with a consultant to help identify and categorize the existing circular ecosystems, which could include sectors like waste management, recycling facilities, sustainable product design, and remanufacturing. For each ecosystem, identify the key players, their roles, and the resources they contribute. Link each ecosystem, gap, and potential opportunity to specific goals and strategies.

A comprehensive asset map serves as a dynamic tool for stakeholders to understand the current circular economy landscape, strategically plan interventions, and catalyze the formation of new ecosystems that drive sustainable and circular practices.

- **Define measurable goals and metrics that will enable tracking Fort Collins' progress in transitioning to a more circular economy.**

Establish concrete and measurable benchmarks and performance indicators to effectively monitor and evaluate the strides made by Fort Collins, in its transition towards a more circular economy. This involves crafting specific goals that can be easily tracked and quantified through key metrics that will provide a comprehensive view of the city's progress. This will also provide better transparency in circular strategy and ensure stakeholder participation.

Metrics could encompass various aspects of the circular economy such as those that track waste diversion, the percentage of businesses adopting and implementing circular principles and strategies are indicators that can provide insights into the city's circular economy transition. Other economic indicators such as the growth of circular economy-related industries, job creation in sustainable sectors, and investments in circular initiatives, can shed light on the economic benefits derived from this transition.

The inclusion of quantifiable objectives and well-defined metrics will enable stakeholders to comprehensively track and analyze Fort Collins' journey towards a more circular economy, allowing for informed decision-making and effective resource allocation.

**Objective 2. Lead by example:** Leverage the City's leadership role to grow the Fort Collins' circular economy and encourage others to participate.

#### **Key Initiatives:**

- **Update City purchasing policy to support more City purchases of locally manufactured (circular) products.**

The City can enhance its purchasing policies to increase the procurement of both local and circular products. The City as a large organization holds influence in establishing stronger local procurement opportunities for all industry to utilize. The City's purchasing power is significant and could create demand for certain types of products and even positively impact market conditions for recycled products. Supporting local procurement practices additionally supports circular start-ups and entrepreneurs to meet local demands. Local procurement also plays an important role in supporting a circular economy by reducing waste streams and transportation impacts, supporting resource conservation, and strengthening supply chains, as well as promotes local economic resilience.

- **Identify and make City spaces and land available for circular initiatives and meeting spaces for circular-focused manufacturers, start-ups, and community groups.**

The City is a significant land holder in Fort Collins, a community with increasing costs to rent or purchase land or commercial space, especially for start-ups and entrepreneurs. By making its real estate assets available for circular economy projects, the City could reduce a significant barrier to innovative initiatives and start-ups.

This would entail working with the City's Real Estate Services Department to integrate circularity as a priority criterion for requests that end up in their review process. Additionally, it would look to proactively advertise un- or under-utilized spaces for life sciences and climate tech start-ups and entrepreneurs and other companies or organizations with circular initiatives.

- **Increase advocacy at different levels of government to ensure circular business goals and needs are met, including green investment funds, business-supportive policies, and recycled material availability.**

This strategy is one of the greatest levers the City can pull to advance the circular economy both within and beyond Fort Collins' borders. Where alignment exists with Fort Collins Council's Legislative Policy Agenda, the City can increase its advocacy for policies that support circularity and the circularity goals of Fort Collins businesses through member organizations like Colorado Communities for Climate Action (CC4CA), Recycle Colorado, and Colorado Municipal League. These same avenues are opportunities to ensure other barriers to circularity are reduced for all Colorado businesses, for example consistent regulatory frameworks across the State, stronger regional recycling markets, and more consistent access to capital for circular projects.

**Objective 3. Develop circular businesses:** Focus business and workforce development efforts to support businesses and community members interested in implementing circular strategy.

#### Key Initiatives:

- **Attract circular-focused businesses and those motivated to implement circular strategies, especially those that can close an eco-system gap.**

Circular-driven businesses, particularly tech start-ups, are critical to support and enhance local circular economy eco-systems and other areas of innovation. Additionally, the City seeks to engage other essential support industries such as plastics, composting, etc., or suppliers that can help bridge specific gaps within clusters. Furthermore, the City aims to attract businesses that share the community's values of the triple bottom line, working towards their sustainability goals as an organization.

- **Leverage existing relationships with industry leaders, networks, and other business development efforts to foster the growth of more circular strategy among industry leaders.**

Utilize existing convenings and networks of manufacturers to discuss circularity opportunities together, which would encourage collaborative problem-solving, knowledge sharing, and networking. By engaging industry leaders, this can help create meaningful dialogue and shared insights. This collective effort empowers manufacturers, who already hold the collective expertise and knowledge within the industry, to collectively examine the vast array of opportunities and advantages offered by adopting circular practices.

Another important component in supporting industry in the circular space is to compile, elevate, and regularly share local circular manufacturing case studies. Providing real-world examples helps demonstrate how adopting circular practices can benefit businesses, including improved efficiencies and competitiveness, strengthened supply chains, workforce opportunities, and many more. Furthermore, there is an opportunity to explore how leading circular businesses can be compensated for their teaching role around circular economy.

- **Provide tailored support to help businesses and entrepreneurs navigate government systems and connect to start-up funding.**

Provide support to community organizations, businesses, and entrepreneurs to understand how to navigate government systems and connect to startup funding for circular innovation. This support will

involve understanding their specific needs and barriers. Then guiding them through government systems and facilitating connections to various startup funding opportunities, including green financing, start-up and research grants, and other essential resources.

- **Promote the development of accessible career pathways that create a strong talent pipeline reflective of a local circular economy.**

By forging strategic partnerships and developing specialized programs, Fort Collins seeks to meet the evolving needs of the local workforce as well as needs of industry while supporting sustainable economic growth. The City will continue to elevate and explore new programs including training and development programs, certifications, and other post-secondary education that promote circular employment, including those that are directly involved or indirectly supports circular economy:

- Core circular jobs that ensure the closure of raw material cycles (e.g., jobs in repair, renewable energy, waste management).
- Enabling circular jobs that intend to remove barriers for core circular activities to occur (e.g., jobs in education, design, digital technology).
- Indirect circular jobs that work within other sectors and adopt circular strategies (e.g., jobs that provide services to circular strategies such as logistics, financial institutions, farmers, manufacturers).

**Objective 4. Innovate:** Partner with local stakeholders to test innovative circular practices and concepts in Fort Collins and collaborate with other communities to help scale the circular economy globally.

#### Key Initiatives:

- **Research and prioritize opportunities for co-location of material producers and users, underutilized spaces, ideas, recycling, sharing, and reuse services.**

This strategy involves collaborating with a consulting firm to conduct spatial and qualitative analyses, aimed at identifying potential opportunities for co-location in Fort Collins. This will help us to understand how the physical locations of materials within the community impact their circulation, and whether they end up in landfills. By conducting a spatial analysis of materials and circular opportunities in Fort Collins, the City can prioritize their implementation, capitalize on early opportunities, and plan for potential transitions in City policies in the long term.

- **Identify and collaborate on demonstration projects that have visibility in both the business community and the larger community.**

In the early-adoption phase of new concepts, it's important to have tangible examples that can be experienced first-hand in the community. Demonstration projects, such as the Colorado State University Fashion and Circular Economy Symposium, help tell the story of circularity and lets businesses test new and innovative concepts in a way that lets others benefit from lessons learned. Examples from other communities include co-locating coffee shops with mushroom growers, creating circular office parks that house public meeting spaces and circular start-ups, or having local shops sell products made from rescued food waste (e.g., beer brewed from old bread).

- **Support the development of circular ecosystems using an innovation lab approach with meaningful implementation funding.**

Materials circulate within a system of users and stakeholders, ranging from recyclers, to producers, consumers, repair services, thrift, and remanufacturers. Institutions like government and academia have a role in the system too. When these systems close the materials loop to become circular, they function almost like an eco-system.

What each eco-system needs is unique and related to the specific products it produces, for example what the local beer industry needs to function as a circular ecosystem is likely very different than what the tech industry needs. By convening these industry ecosystems individually, the group can work together to set relevant goals, identify barriers and needs, and advance strategies collectively. One method to convene eco-systems towards a bigger goal is the innovation lab approach.

**Through this Circular Economy Workplan, the City of Fort Collins aims to help the business community foster sustainable progress, while also helping businesses take advantage of new opportunities.** The actions in this workplan can guide Fort Collins forward in the pursuit of a more equitable and sustainable economy and create a more inclusive environment. This requires a collaborative effort of all partners, including government, local industries, community organizations and residents. As a main hub in Northern Colorado, Fort Collins has the potential to propel the circular economy and build a more sustainable environment and economy locally, regionally, and globally.

## Local Examples

### **HP recycles devices responsibly:**

Here's what local tech leader HP says about their contribution to the circular economy:

*"We're committed to reducing the e-waste, carbon emissions, and energy consumption – and we know you are, too. You can reduce your organization's environmental impact when you return your devices to HP for restoration, reuse, or responsible recycling.*

*When our products reach end-of-use status, our regulation-compliant programs support responsible collection and processing to cover as much material as possible – reducing negative effects on the ecosystems and human health.*

*HP contributes to a circular economy by actively growing the supply chain and market for recycled materials, as well as by empowering communities with a better quality of life and economic opportunity."*

### **Hoffman Mills supports circular construction**

The construction and demolition industries deal with a lot of materials, which means they have a lot of circular economy potential. The City of Fort Collins crushing facility and its construction company customers do a lot to make Fort Collins circular! The facility reprocesses and stores construction materials like asphalt and concrete until they are needed for a new building project.

### **New Belgium cycles**

New Belgium Brewing is known for supporting a culture of bicycling but that's not the only type of cycle they invest in. New Belgium is a local leader in circular economy and regularly partners on advocacy

efforts that bring more circular opportunities to keep materials cycling in all of Colorado's industries. Here's how the City of Fort Collins can support their efforts!

*"It's great when cities are tuned into state and federal programs which benefit decarbonization and circularity goals."*

## Next Steps

Progressing forward with the Circular Economy Plan involves several crucial next steps:

1. **Council adoption and implementation:** Having received approval from the Fort Collins City Council solidifies the City's commitment and provides the necessary mandate to proceed with the outlined strategies.
2. **Stakeholder alignment:** Securing the support and engagement of local stakeholders is critical. Collaborating with businesses, community organizations, and community members will ensure a unified effort in achieving our circular economy objectives. **Industry must be involved so the system supports them as they move towards circular practices.**
3. **Resource allocation:** To effectively drive this initiative forward, the City must commit to allocating appropriate resources, including staff and budget. These resources are vital to facilitate the implementation, monitoring, and continual refinement of a local circular economy. Resources necessary to move the circular economy plan will be proposed in the next the City Budget For Outcomes (BFO) cycle.
4. **Progress enablers:** To move this plan forward, we need a combination of factors, including effective communication strategies, engagement programs, industry and community buy-in, regular performance assessments, and built-in flexibility to adapt to evolving circumstances.

With these strategic steps, we are well-prepared to advance a circular economy plan, fostering a resilient and thriving economy and community.



## Fort Collins Economic Health Strategic Plan Engagement Report

Stakeholder engagement is a critical building block for Fort Collins' economic health strategy—the success of any community and economic strategy is directly dependent on active engagement from a broad range of Fort Collins stakeholders, including public and private sectors; community members; regional and civic institutions.

Understanding where the community stands currently in terms of the economic health of Fort Collins provides the basis for identifying assets that need to be treasured and strengthened; weaknesses that need to be minimized; opportunities that will enhance the community's livability and economic health, and internal and external threats that need to be factored into all facets of the City's strategic planning.

### Background

The consulting team of Hickey Global and IO.INC was selected to conduct community engagement for the Economic Health Strategic Plan. Beginning in winter 2022, IO.INC began community engagement for the economic health strategic framework. They conducted one-on-one interviews, engaging various representatives of the Fort Collins public, private, and civic communities, regional leaders, and external industry experts. Each of the stakeholders represented a broad, far-reaching collection of community members, groups, and communities that hold diverse perspectives and backgrounds.

The results of the one-on-one interviews conducted by Hickey Global formed the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis and engagement report that was presented at a Council Work Session on March 14, 2023. Council asked the Economic Health Office for additional engagement to create a broader picture from the community.

In partnership with the Communications and Public Involvement Office, the Economic Health Office conducted further community engagement.

### Methodology

The second phase of engagement included:

- An online questionnaire on the OurCity engagement page
- Outreach at community events such as the CSU Lagoon Concert Series and Bike to Work Day
- Three virtual small group discussions
- Multiple one-on-one conversations through ongoing business visits
- Consideration of the ongoing regional business survey

This effort added over 350 additional inputs to the Economic Health Strategic Plan from community members.

The EHO staff also reviewed and considered feedback that was provided for two recent plans:

- The 2021 Reignite Northern Colorado
- The 2022 City of Fort Collins Recovery Plan

Through these engagement efforts city staff gathered input from:

- Community members and leaders
- Business leaders representing a broad range of economic sectors
- Employees and managers working at Fort Collins businesses
- Public sector officials from local, county, and state governments
- Educational leaders from K-12 through postsecondary institutions
- Small business owners and employers
- Artists and art advocates
- Nonprofit organizational leaders
- C-Suite executives and national experts in economic development
- Hospitality and tourism experts

**Results**

- Interviews conducted by both Hickey Global and EHO: 22 individual interviews
- Small Group Discussion: Three virtual group discussions
- Online questionnaire: 54 responses
- Community Events: 265 community members engaged at the Colorado State University Lagoon Concert and Bike to Work Day

The following SWOT results have been updated to consider both the engagement conducted by Hickey Global as well as the second phase of engagement.

**SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, & Threats) Themes**

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educated workforce and strong educational institutions</li> <li>• Beautiful community assets and amenities</li> <li>• Quality of place</li> <li>• Diversity of economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost of housing</li> <li>• Lack of affordable commercial space and site-ready land</li> <li>• Insufficient workforce size</li> <li>• Lack of diversity</li> </ul>
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Upskill and reskill programs</li> <li>• Retaining talent</li> <li>• Branding and messaging consistency – City-wide and regionally</li> <li>• Industry support of quality jobs within CHIPS Zone, life and bio science, and climate tech/circular economy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perception that Fort Collins is not business friendly</li> <li>• Fees and policies to build, expand, or open a business (cost of doing business)</li> <li>• Not embracing or supporting diversity in our community and workforce</li> </ul>

**Additional SWOT Results:**

**Strengths:**

- Highly educated workforce

- Community assets and amenities that contribute to a good quality of life to live, work, and raise a family in Fort Collins
- Beautiful, safe, and friendly quality of place
- Proximity and access to large metropolitan areas
- Strong educational institutions, including public school district and higher education such as Colorado State University
- People know how to start a business in Fort Collins
- Post-Covid programs and resources and the American Rescue Plan Act dollars that have gone into the community.
- Economic Health Office is very open and accessible to businesses, community members, and people interested in doing business in Fort Collins
- New roles and work in the Economic Health Office:
  - Multicultural Business and Entrepreneur Center support and the Business Connectors
  - Capital Projects Business Liaison and the additional business support there
  - The Economic Health Office is skilled up for what is needed – staff can support both small businesses and primary employers
- Arts initiatives like Art in Public Places and the Fort Collins Mural Project
- Connexion, broadband access
- Bilingual business support
- Vibrant Downtown with many amenities, including historic “Old Town” areas
- Zoning for home childcare is in a helpful place
- City’s willingness to engage on multiple topics and including community and organizations in the process
- City’s support of staff to understand their own childcare needs as one of our largest employers
- City feels more inclusive in how they advertise jobs, who they are hiring, and intentions in expanding diversity
- Diversity of economy with many major employers across multiple sectors

**Weaknesses:**

- Insufficient workforce size to keep up with the demand for qualified workers
- Insufficient housing affordability which impacts housing for employees (especially recent college graduates, young professionals, essential workers). This also contributes to the lack of workers for industry to hire in the region
- Limited site-ready land and space for business growth, including affordability of commercial space and land especially for start-ups and entrepreneurs
- Lack of identifiable site-ready sites that could accommodate a larger employer that would bring immense value-add to the community, including quality job opportunities (one that is desirable and compatible to the community)
- Escalating cost of doing business in Fort Collins which is believed to be brought on by City’s attitudes, policies, and regulations
- Perceived community resistance to change (e.g. population, business growth, infrastructure)
- Predominantly white community with lack of diversity in the population
- City not favorable toward growth, economic development or business
- Lack of available funding for female founders and women in tech startups
- Old published economic data, unsure where new data lives

- Lack of collaborative space for entrepreneurship collisions. Galvanize on Linden was a great space but the business model needs subsidies from the City of Fort Collins to be successful.
- We have no messaging to encourage supporting local business and cannot compete with online retailers
- Development review process is tough for businesses to go through
- Too many regulations to support a business-friendly environment
- Sustainable waste management solutions
- Information sharing for businesses is not consistent and hard to find. The City website is hard to navigate.
- Fort Collins Loveland Airport is not providing the services our region needs
- Other City plans do not incorporate economic health factors, while other City priorities factor into the economic health plan.
- 1041 regulations and water adequacy
- Integration between City departments
- DEI work doesn't feel as encouraged or celebrated within businesses right now. For example, businesses are afraid to showcase Pride Month based on the news and political climate.
- Lack of consistent business survey tells the community the City doesn't care as much about the business perspective
- Cell phone service, especially in SE Fort Collins is a challenge.
- Lack of good and affordable transportation to Denver International Airport
- Council's indecision to approve any taxes or to move forward around childcare support
- Not seeing investments in the improvements of childcare support in our community
- Business owners that have an ITIN vs a social security number are treated differently and can't retain the same business to business contracts.

#### **Opportunities:**

- Define Fort Collins' brand, as a community decide what we're striving to be?
- Encourage start-ups and recruit new business for innovation, products, and services while utilizing Fort Collins' young talent
- Build up mentorship program for aspiring entrepreneurs
- Increase engagement with large employers in order to encourage greater presence in the community
- Commit to a philosophy and practice of business recruitment, focusing on high value-added sectors and companies
- Champion more diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across the community and make Fort Collins more welcoming to diverse individuals and families
- Plan for and actualize the development of sites and spaces for business growth
- The arrival of new businesses to Fort Collins, means increasing the job opportunities for community members and increases retention of talent, including graduates from Colorado State University
- Collaborative messaging and communication strategies among partners in the region to help brag about big economic wins, entrepreneurial support, regional assets, etc. This applies to all partners but specifically CSU and City can work together better in this space.
- Clearer pathways between City of Fort Collins Economic Health Office, Larimer Small Business Development Center, and Colorado State University Institute for Entrepreneurship and how each one best supports our community and eco-system.
- Talent readiness, upskilling, micro-credentialing, and partnerships with higher education.

- Change City codes to allow more access to business data in order to help
- Share with the business community and partners what data is available to us
- City staff, leadership, and elected officials can be more sensitive to business constraints and understand how they operate
- Life sciences and climate tech are our best economic opportunity right now. Those businesses should be in Fort Collins.
- Business to business sharing, making connections among business owners to increase social capital
- Business loan programs, access to capital
- Economic incentive/development zone for North and South College to create better access to infrastructure, food.
- Improve public transportation and MAX access from lower cost of living to higher density employment areas
- Incentives and programs for commercial space like good landlord incentives, help small businesses purchase buildings, and commercial rent control.
- Analysis of economic impact of any new policy or ordinance
- Analysis of DEI of any new policy or ordinance. For example, the plastic bag ban on disabled community members.
- Support the relationship with Poudre River Power Authority and Utilities
- Business support for businesses who fall in the middle of Innosphere and Larimer SBDC needs.
- Expand business information into additional languages, not just Spanish.
- Skilled trade schools in Fort Collins
- Chips Act and Chips Zone to help create quality jobs
- City needs to define what it means by equity. Is it equal opportunity or equal outcomes?
- Work in partnership with Economic Health office to share data around childcare and its economic impacts and opportunities
- Employers that offer flexible benefits including four-day work weeks, parental leave, childcare support.
- Funding for homeless/affordable living strategies through a program similar to Art in Public Places
- More support for immigration and entrepreneurship
- Financial literacy education for business owners
- Specific trainings, support, and business paths for owners with an ITIN

**Threats:**

- Increasing water scarcity in Colorado and the costs associated with securing this resource
- Escalating cost of living and doing business in Fort Collins believed to be in large measure due to City government policies
- The City perceived as not willing to adopt policies, make plans and encourage investment in more attainable housing across the spectrum of income-earners
- Outflow of young, college educated talent in search of more accessible housing and employment opportunities
- Potential anti-growth sentiment growing in community
- Getting in our own way as an entrepreneurial eco-system. Many of the same folks have been around for a long time. This is a strength, but the eco-system partners could be more open-minded to new partners, ideas.

- Rent and housing costs
- Talent shortages
- CSU is trying to increase student enrollment but not working to house these students
- Overall increased regulations on businesses from all levels of government.
- Downtown employment base is not supporting downtown businesses like it used to when folks work from home.
- Our regional airport is underutilized and not working as the asset it could be.
- U+2 regulations
- Commercial lease rates
- Access to childcare
- Members of City Council create friction between businesses and the organization.
- City Council not understanding their role impacts the ability of EHO to do their job.
- Businesses choosing not to open in Fort Collins because of the arduous development review process and cost of fees
- Council comments in meetings such as “evil landlords” can have negative impacts
- Large corporations are driving out small business
- Short-term rentals eat up housing inventory
- Rental registration program
- Cost of doing business and upcoming requirements around sustainable food packaging



# Economic Health Strategic Plan

SeonAh Kendall, Economic Health Director

Shannon Hein, Economic Health Manager

Jillian Fresa, Economic Health Manager

## Questions for Council

- What feedback does Council have on the proposed elements of the Economic Health Strategic Plan?
- Does Council agree with moving forward with the adoption of the Economic Health Strategic Plan on December 5?





## Vision

Fort Collins is a healthy, equitable, and resilient community where people and businesses can thrive.



## Why is the Economic Health of a community so important?

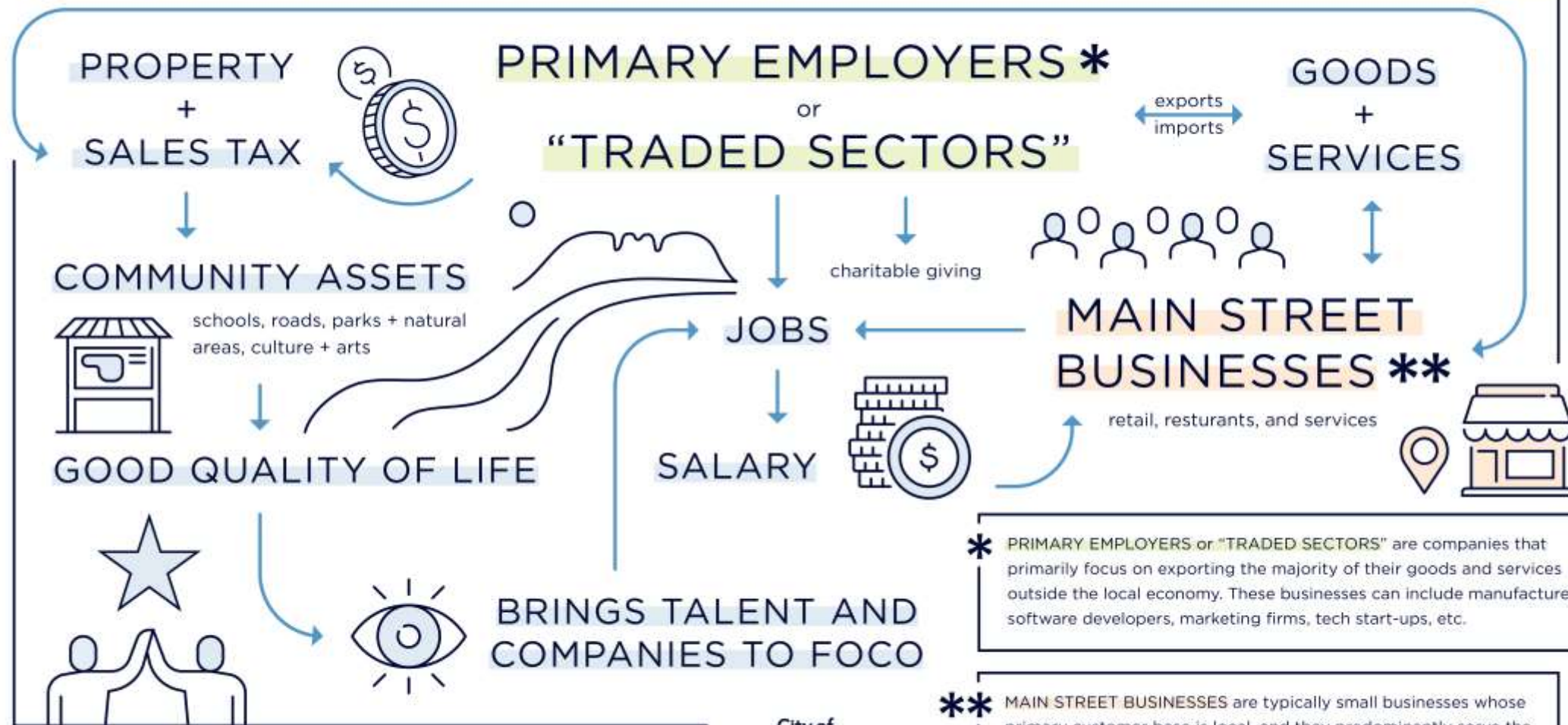
A strong economic foundation is critical for a **people-centered approach**. In order to meet social and environmental goals, we must have a healthy, inclusive economy and vice versa.

A strong economic health includes:

- Housing Affordability
- Climate Action Goals
- Small Business and Primary Employers
- Diverse workforce and job opportunities



## THE CONNECTIONS BETWEEN BUSINESS & COMMUNITY



\* PRIMARY EMPLOYERS or "TRADED SECTORS" are companies that primarily focus on exporting the majority of their goods and services outside the local economy. These businesses can include manufacturers, software developers, marketing firms, tech start-ups, etc.

\*\* MAIN STREET BUSINESSES are typically small businesses whose primary customer base is local, and they predominantly serve the needs of the local community. These businesses can include retail stores, restaurants, dryer cleaners, salons, auto-shops, etc.

IN FORT COLLINS, CO



## People Success + Business Success = Community Success

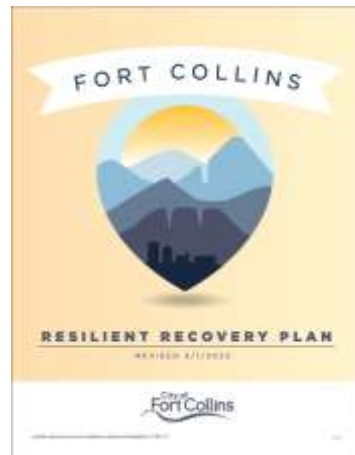
- **Goal 1:** Increase business owner representation to match the Fort Collins MSA demographics.
- **Goal 2:** Increase overall business survivability longer than five years from 45% to 50%.
- **Goal 3:** Add 1,800 new jobs in targeted traded sectors.
- **Goal 4:** Increase representation in employment within targeted traded sectors.



## Engagement Methods

- Interviews conducted by both Hickey Global and EHO
- Small Group Discussions
- Online questionnaire
- Community events: CSU Lagoon Concert and Bike-to-Work Day
- Plus, ongoing business visits and surveys

Other engagement plans referenced:



## Identify three areas or ways in which you think Fort Collins can strengthen, expand, or diversify its economy.

- **Support** industry in achieving their **sustainability goals**
- Recruitment of **new employers** to Fort Collins
- **Access to capital**/financial resources to start or grow a business

## What do you see as the biggest challenges facing Fort Collins businesses?

- Cost of doing business
- Workforce and talent
- Competing against national companies/brands (online shopping)



### Approach Business Retention, Expansion & Attraction Thoughtfully

- Policy & structural shifts create a good business environment.
- Strategic BREA efforts strengthen and diversify economic opportunities and vibrancy.
- Attract circular economy business sectors for a more resilient community.



### Ensure Small Businesses Thrive

- Small businesses have access to tools and resources they need to succeed.
- Mitigate negative impacts to small business operations through proactive collaboration.
- Fort Collins businesses are resilient ready.
- The creative sector is celebrated and supported for their contributions to the Fort Collins community



### Support Talent & Workforce Today and Tomorrow

- Accessible career pathways meet needs of employers and employees, today and in the future.
- Diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) is good business (for the individual business and community as a whole).



### Reposition Fort Collins as an Innovation Leader

- Targeted clusters spur innovative solutions to meet community goals.
- Leverage and engage the regional assets that drive innovation.

VISION: Fort Collins is a healthy, equitable, and resilient community where people and businesses can thrive



HP Inc

**Outcome 1.1:** Policy and structural shifts create a good business environment.

**Outcome 1.2:** Strategic business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts strengthen and diversify economic opportunities and resilience.

**Outcome 1.3:** Attract circular economy business sectors for a more resilient community.





**Outcome 2.1:** Small businesses have access to tools and resources to succeed.

**Outcome 2.2:** Mitigate negative impacts to small business operations through proactive collaboration.

**Outcome 2.3:** Fort Collins businesses are resilient ready.

**Outcome 2.4:** The creative sector is celebrated and supported for their contribution to the Fort Collins community.



**Outcome 3.1:** Accessible career pathways meet needs of employers and employees, today and in the future.

**Outcome 3.2:** Diversity, equity, inclusion, and access is good business (for the individual, business, and community as a whole).



Motherlove Herbal Company

**Outcome 4.1:** Targeted clusters spur innovative solutions to meet community goals.

**Outcome 4.2:** Leverage and engage the regional assets that drive innovation.

	Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction	Small Business	Talent and Workforce	Innovation
<b>City Plan</b> - Foster a vibrant, resilient, and inclusive economy.	X	X	X	X
<b>City Plan</b> - Support entrepreneurship and innovation.	X	X	X	X
<b>City Plan</b> - Support local, unique, and creative businesses.		X		X
<b>City Plan</b> - Ensure that an adequate and competitive supply of space and/or land is available to support the needs of businesses and employers of all sizes.	X	X		X
<b>City Plan</b> - Engage and help shape regional economic development efforts.	X	X	X	X
<b>City Plan</b> - Support the development of a skilled and qualified workforce that is connected to employment opportunities in the city and region.	X	X	X	X
<b>Resilient Recovery Plan</b> - Small businesses, creatives, and nonprofits have the resources they need to thrive.		X		
<b>Resilient Recovery Plan</b> - Safe and stable employment, current and future.	X		X	X
<b>Resilient Recovery Plan</b> - Equitable and affordable childcare is accessible.		X	X	
<b>Our Climate Future</b> - Healthy Local Economy and Jobs.	X	X	X	X
<b>Our Climate Future</b> - Zero Waste Economy.	X		X	X

## Questions for Council

- What feedback does Council have on the proposed elements of the Economic Health Strategic Plan?
- Does Council agree with moving forward with the adoption of the Economic Health Strategic Plan on December 5?



Frida Azul

Item 3.



City of  
**Fort Collins**

**Thank you!**

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**Urban Monk Studios**

ForFortCollins.com



El Pueblito



BT Green & Gold



TiIT



The Fox Den



Burst Diagnostics



RedDrop

## Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats Analysis

### Strengths:

- Educated workforce and strong educational institutions
- Beautiful community assets and amenities
- Quality of place
- Diversity of economy

### Weaknesses:

- Cost of housing
- Lack of affordable commercial space and site-ready land
- Insufficient workforce size
- Lack of diversity

### Opportunities:

- Upskill and reskill programs
- Retaining talent
- Branding and messaging consistency – City-wide and regionally
- Industry support of quality jobs within CHIPS Zone, life and bio science, and climate tech/circular economy

### Threats:

- Perception that Fort Collins is not business friendly
- Fees and policies to build, expand, or open a business (cost of doing business)
- Not embracing or supporting diversity in our community and workforce





## Outcome 1.1: Policy and structural shifts create a good business environment.

- Coordination and alignment between City departments and partners at the city, county, and state level to bolster businesses.
- Support and align assistance for business.

## Outcome 1.2: Strategic business retention, expansion, and attraction efforts strengthen and diversify economic opportunities and resilience.

- Data-driven programs to respond and understand the needs of existing businesses.
- Target recruitment of businesses that further community goals.
- Market Fort Collins and the region as a leader in life science, clean tech, and climate solutions sectors.

## Outcome 1.3: Attract circular economy business sectors for a more resilient community.

- Map and define goals to understand existing businesses within the circular economy ecosystem.
- Target recruitment of businesses within the circular economy supply chain.
- Leverage City's leadership role to encourage others to drive circular economy forward.



**Outcome 2.1: Small businesses have access to tools and resources to succeed.**

- Access to capital.
- Streamline support such as one-stop shop hubs throughout the City.
- Ongoing support and partner local campaign.

**Outcome 2.2: Mitigate negative impacts to small business operations through proactive collaboration.**

- Capital Projects Business Liaison position

**Outcome 2.3: Fort Collins businesses are resilient ready.**

- Identify and develop resilience resources and gaps to assist businesses prepare for man-made or natural economic downturns and disasters.
- Improve access and education to certifications and programs for underrepresented businesses to increase procurement and funding opportunities.

**Outcome 2.4: The creative sector is celebrated and supported for their contribution to the Fort Collins community.**

- Collaborate and strengthen the creative sector through capacity building, business acumen, and education of the sector's value proposition to the overall community.



**Outcome 3.1: Accessible career pathways meet needs of employers and employees, today and in the future.**

- Support opportunities and partnerships (such as NoCo Works) to advance, enhance, and future-proof workforce resilience in an evolving economy.

**Outcome 3.2: Diversity, equity, inclusion, and access is good business (for the individual, business, and community as a whole).**

- Leverage existing and emerging work to foster an inclusive community.
- Encourage the development of a platform to match underrepresented and underserved students to internships and apprenticeships with local companies.
- Continue to encourage and support continuous learning through civil conversations and dialogue around DEIA and lived experiences.



Motherlove Herbal Company

## Outcome 4.1: Targeted clusters spur innovative solutions to meet community goals.

- Partner and/or promote the development of technology transfer of clean tech and life science discoveries to meet Our Climate Future (OCF) and health goals.
- Partner with innovative local manufacturers to identify efforts towards reduction of greenhouse gas emissions that aligns with City and the local businesses' sustainability goals.

## Outcome 4.2: Leverage and engage the regional assets that drive innovation.

- Map regional assets such as wet laboratory space that drives innovation in bio- and life sciences, as many companies seek to locate near Tier 1 research universities and institutions.
- Market and support agriculture tech, clean tech, and life science pilots and innovation that happens regionally.