

Fort Collins City Council Work Session Agenda

6:00 p.m. Tuesday, January 10, 2023

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

NOTICE:

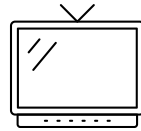
Work Sessions of the City Council are held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesdays of each month in the Colorado Room of the 222 Building. Meetings are conducted in a hybrid format, however there is no public participation permitted in a work session.

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

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 advance notice. Requests for interpretation at a meeting should be made by noon the day before.

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.



While work sessions do not include public comment, mail comments about any item on the agenda to cityleaders@fcgov.com





City Council Work Session Agenda

January 10, 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. Fort Collins Connexion Update

The purpose of this item is to provide Council and the public a general update on the Connexion broadband service and rollout.

2. North College Projects.

North College has been the subject of focus and planning for the past 30 years. After 30 years of intentional planning and investment, the North College corridor has accomplished many of the goals articulated in City plans and policy documents. This AIS provides a brief history of planning in the corridor, what current projects are underway, and what the future holds for the North College corridor. While we have accomplished much, many of the desires for the corridor exist in tension with one another. Some of these tensions include:

- Affordability vs. desire for redevelopment and infrastructure investment vs. conservation.
- Desire for more amenities in the corridor vs. retaining the existing character of the neighborhood.
- Safe, comfortable, and accessible mobility options vs. fast vehicular movement through the corridor.

3. Land Use Code Changes to Address Xeriscape for New Developments and Soil Amendment for New and Existing Developments.

The purpose of this item is to provide an overview of the current state of landscapes and irrigation in Fort Collins, and to present four code change opportunities that promote climate-appropriate landscapes and use of soil amendment.

C) ANNOUNCEMENTS

D) ADJOURNMENT

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January 10, 2023



WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council

STAFF

Chad Crager, Broadband Executive Director
Travis Storin, Chief Financial Officer
Nina Bodenhamer, Director, City Give

SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

Fort Collins Connexion Update

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to provide Council and the public a general update on the Connexion broadband service and rollout.

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. What questions does Council have for the Connexion team?

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The City of Fort Collins municipal broadband service, Connexion, has been providing service for over 3 years. In 2023, service will be available citywide which brings exciting opportunities for marketing and product maturity. In the last year Connexion has added key staff and been able to stabilize and provide a more consistent customer lifecycle model. As Connexion moves from startup phase into a growth phase there are many opportunities both locally and regionally to benefit residents and add resiliency regionally. These efforts come with challenges and will also be exciting as solutions come together.

Build and Take Rate

As mentioned above, the main build out for Connexion is almost complete. The complexities of an underground build, permitting, and navigating staffing shortages have all contributed to a slight delay. Interest in service remains high, although staff is excited to re-energize marketing efforts throughout the community targeting both residential and business customers.

To date, Connexion is seeing a consistent 32% single family residential take rate (measured in neighborhoods with service available for at least 90-days). Staff has also been able to secure right-of-entry agreements and contracts with multiple dwelling units (MDU) and commercial properties. With the addition of key staff and the capabilities of the billing system, process improvements have streamlined workflows to allow for greater efficiencies and a smoother customer experience for these types of properties.

Video Price Increase and TV Service Selection Tool

As we enter year three of our video content contracting, there is a rising cost to Connexion. This cost increase will need to be passed on to TV customers resulting in increased TV package pricing from \$5 to \$20 per month, depending on the package. This TV package pricing increase will begin February 1, 2023, and notification has already been sent to existing TV customers.

Connexion continues to provide the fastest, most reliable internet service available in the industry and we believe in helping our customers find the best TV product, whether it's Connexion or something else. For this reason, Connexion has launched a TV service selection tool called My Bundle TV. This tool allows customers to pick the best TV option based on the customer providing information such as the desire to watch live TV, watch sports, or just certain channels. Using this information, the best TV option will be reflected for each customer with comparisons in available desired channels and pricing.

Capital Project and Funding Update

The bulk of Connexion funding has been made available through a voter approved bonding process. In September 2021, Council appropriated \$8.2 million of contingency funds to assist with construction. In April 2022, Council appropriated up to \$20 million in Light and Power (L&P) reserves for Connexion understanding that monies would be used as needed (not taken in a lump sum) and returned with interest. The current balance of this reserve utilization is \$10 million as of November 30, 2022.

The table below highlights the original Business Plan assumptions, approved spending updates, project spending to date, and the current project estimate.

Description	Business Plan and Approved Updates	11/30/2022 LTD Spent	Current Project Estimate thru Dec 2024
Network (Primarily AEG)	\$84M	\$105M	\$110M
Installation (On Trac, boring)	\$13M	\$17M	\$36M
Equipment & All Other	<u>\$12M</u>	<u>\$11M</u>	<u>\$12M</u>
Subtotal Business Plan	\$109M		
Contingency & Re-deploy – Sept. 2021	\$13M		
L&P Reserves Appropriated – Apr. 2022	<u>\$20M</u>		
Total Capital Budget/Estimate	\$142M	\$133M	\$158M

Total capital spending on the project through November 30, 2022 is \$133 million. Connexion currently has approximately \$9 million remaining from its' approved funding of \$142 million. Primarily due to some industry trends and challenges, the current capital project estimate stands at approximately \$158 million through the end of 2024, representing an additional \$16 million over the current available budget.

Connexion does currently have in excess of \$20 million remaining capacity under the original bonding approved by residents in 2017. The most likely path forward will be to access this remaining bonding capacity in a joint bond offering with L&P sometime in late 2023. The timing and magnitude of this potential offering will be driven primarily by L&P's needs and operational requirements. Connexion financial modeling continues to maintain payback of bonding commitments and L&P reserve usage through projected customer revenues and resulting positive operating margins.

Digital Equity and Inclusion

Connexion is committed to providing the best internet experience for ALL residents in Fort Collins. As a municipal provider, 6% of all Connexion revenue is paid to the General Fund as a Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) and is dedicated to meeting digital equity goals of reducing the digital divide and increasing digital fluency of all residents.

In 2022, as Connexion service and PILOT revenue grew, the City of Fort Collins invested in a diverse range of Digital Inclusion programming, services, and community collaboration. This investment includes a discounted internet price of \$19.95 (including WiFi) for 1 Gig internet speeds for income qualified residents, partnerships with Poudre School District (PSD) Family Liaisons, funding for Larimer County Digital Roots program, Medical and Mental Health Care Access, and Resources for Entrepreneurs.

This programming and partnerships will continue to grow along with Connexion.

Federal Funding and Regional Partnerships

In 2021, the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act included \$65B for Broadband, of which \$42.5B is allocated for the Broadband Equity Access and Deployment (BEAD) program. BEAD funding will be available in areas with internet speeds under 100 Mbps download and 20 Mbps upload speeds. As a comparison, Connexion has symmetrical 1,000 Mbps download and 1,000 Mbps upload speeds. These speed requirements make it difficult for urbanized areas to apply for grant funding.

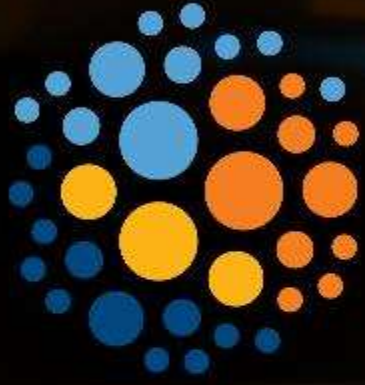
While Connexion will not qualify for BEAD funding in the city limits due to high upload and download speeds, we are working closely with Larimer County to consider opportunities available outside of city limits.

In addition, Connexion network operations supports both Loveland's Pulse and Estes Park's Trailblazer, and we continue to also include Longmont's Nextlight in conversations of network redundancy, lessons learned, and solutions to work together as a region moving forward. With four municipal internet service providers in this region as a broadband foundation, we have the potential to be one of the most innovative regions in the nation.

In addition to great relationships with Larimer County and regional municipal broadband providers, we have also established strong relationships with Poudre School District (PSD) to help us identify their needs and where we can work together to provide high speed internet and education to all PSD families.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Presentation



FORT COLLINS
CONNEXION



City Council Work Session

January 10, 2022

1. Where are we now
2. Video Price Increases
3. New Products
4. Digital Inclusion
5. Partnership Opportunities

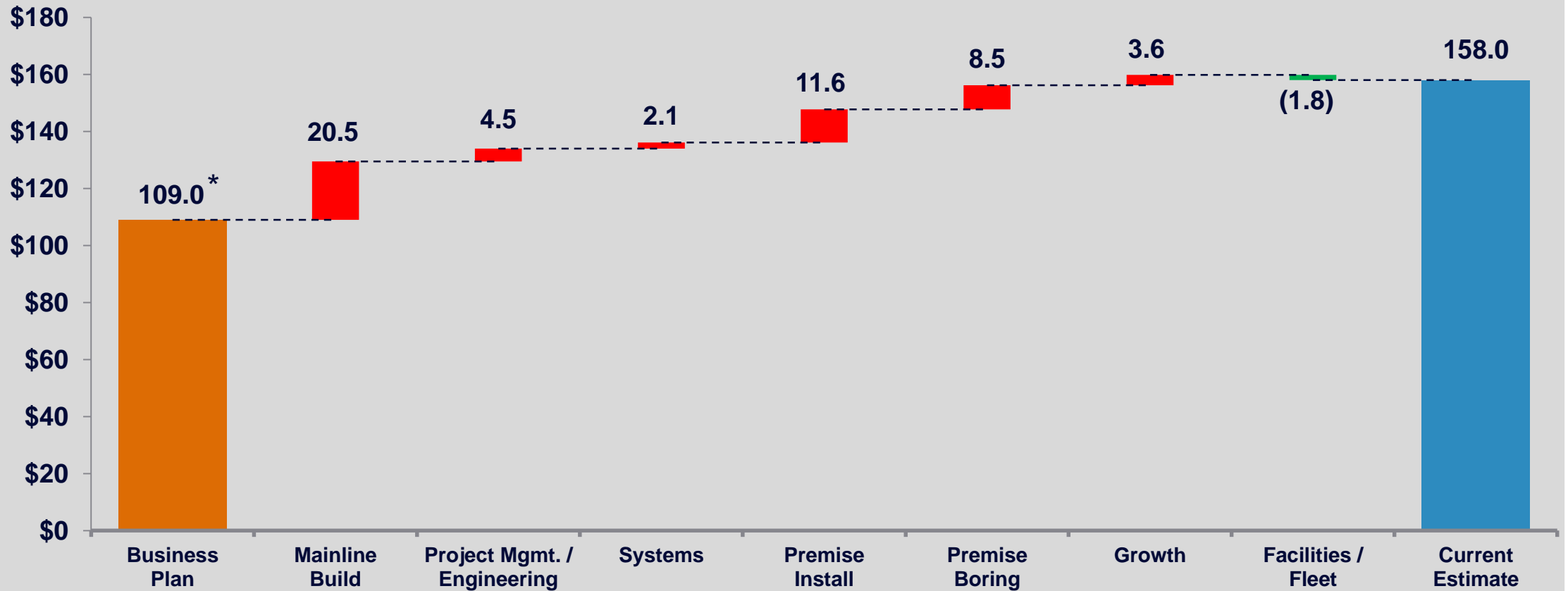
1. Build Out Completion
2. Key Hires
3. Resident Feedback Group
4. Over 13,000 customers
5. 32% Single Family Residential Take Rate
6. Industry Trends/Challenges

Connexion - as of November 30, 2022 (\$M) - Preliminary, Unaudited

Inflows:	
Bond Proceeds	\$ 142.2
L&P Reserve Draw	\$ 10.0
Operating Revenue	\$ 18.2
Interest	<u>\$ 6.9</u>
Total Revenue	<u>\$ 25.1</u>
Total Inflows	<u>\$ 177.3</u>

Outflows:	
Debt/Interest Pymts	\$ (23.2)
Cost of Sales	\$ (2.4)
Operating Expenses	<u>\$ (17.9)</u>
Total Expense	\$ (20.3)
Capital Project	<u>\$ (132.7)</u>
Total Outflows	<u>\$ (176.2)</u>

Connexion Capital Project - \$M



* Does not include an additional \$18 million of contingency

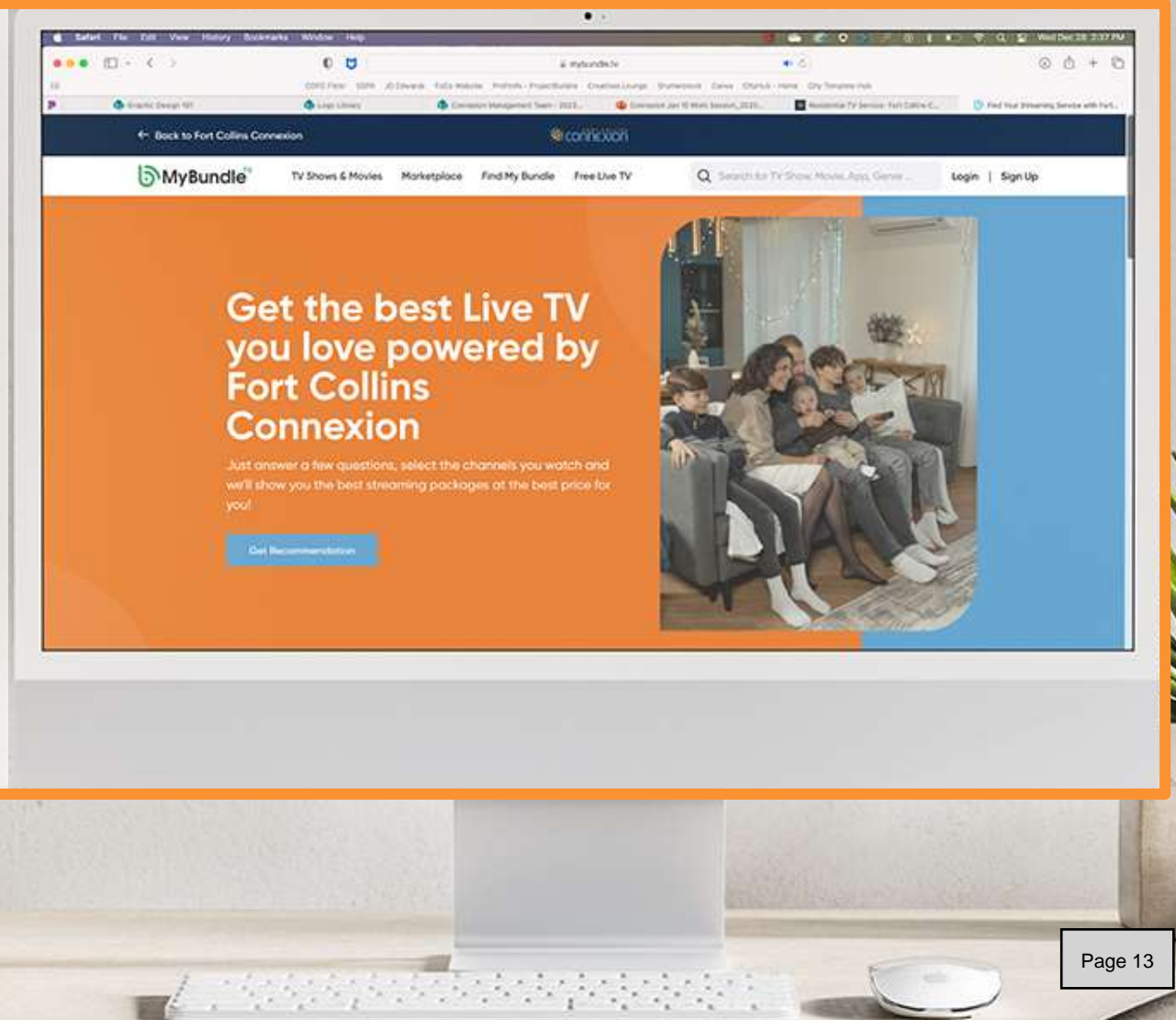
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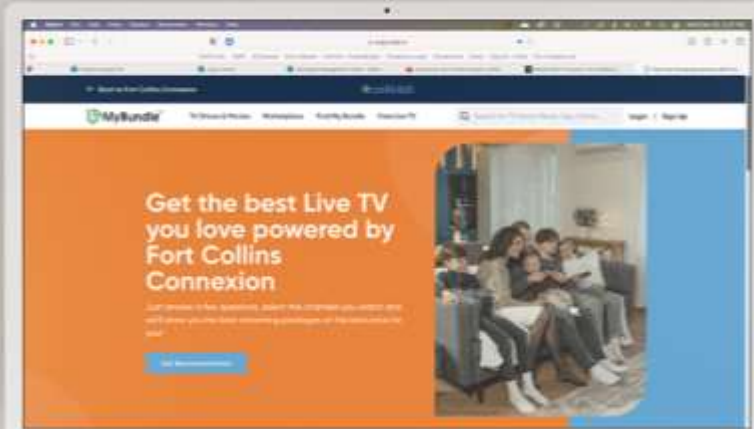
- \$16 million additional capital project needs above the currently available budget of \$142 million.
- Likely path forward will be to access needed funding through the remaining \$20 million of existing, resident approved bonding capacity.
- L&P borrowing needs and timeframe will determine Connexion bonding timing and amounts – likely Fall 2023.
- Updated Connexion financial model continues to maintain payback of L&P reserves and bond commitments through customer revenues and resulting positive operating margins.

1. Additional speed tiers

2. Video Price Increase

3. My Bundle TV





What is your ZIP Code?

Your ZIP Code allows us to offer you your local channels as well as filter results for your area.

ZIP Code

Which best describes your household?

Just Me

Multiple
Adults

Adults &
Children

Very Large
Family

Would you like to record shows (DVR)?

Some streaming services include recording of shows in the "cloud"
(no physical DVR box needed.)

Yes

No

Which of these services do you already have?

If none, hit next to continue.

NETFLIX

hulu

prime video

Disney+

How have you been streaming until now?

Pick all that apply. If you do not currently use a streaming service, click next to continue.

Roku

amazon fireTV

Android TV

Apple TV

Smart TV

I'm Not Sure / Other

Are live sports important to you?

Yes

No

← Back to Fort Collins Connexion

Questions ○○○○○○● Channels ●○

Select the channels you need.

You can choose as many channels as you'd like, but the fewer channels you select the more you'll save!

Popular Channels

NBC

CBS

abc

FOX

FOX NEWS

msnbc

ESPN

USA

HGTV

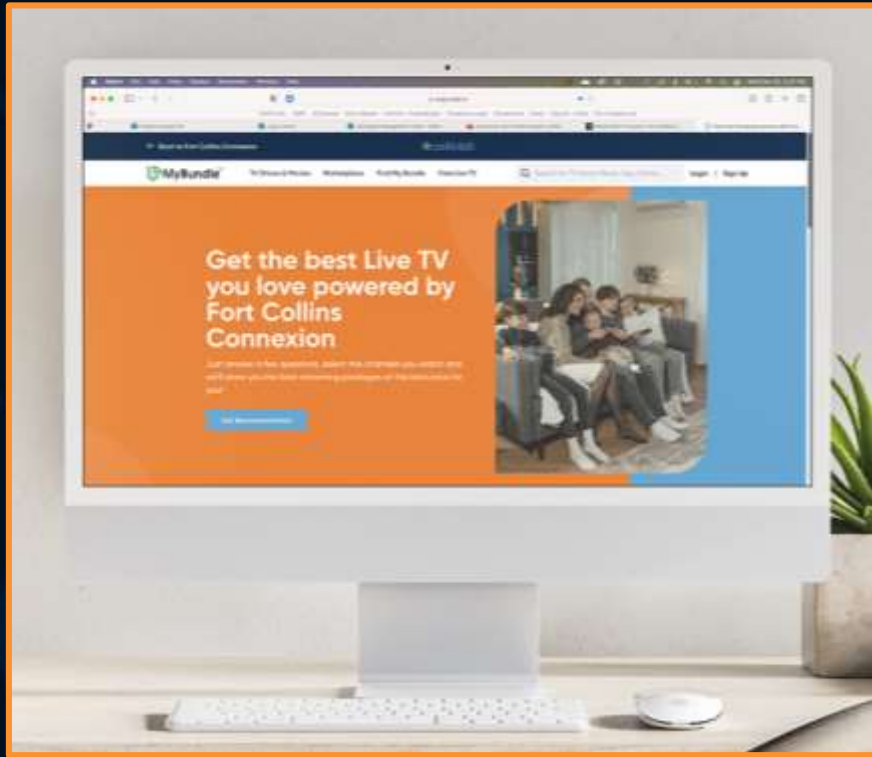
TBS

TNT

CNN

MyBundle TV - Results

Item 1.



← Back to Fort Collins Connexion CONNEXION


Get ready to stream and save! Below are your personalized bundles.

MyBundle.TV may be compensated when you purchase through our links, but always strive to recommend the right services for you.

Fort Collins Connexion
 Get the most advanced high-speed home Internet at a great price, no matter what speed you choose. Click Check Availability to see what's available at your home. [Check Availability](#)

All Your Channels

You asked and we answered, the service below has 100% of the channels you selected!



\$46


\$46/month

100%	43	✓	1
of your channels	total channels	cloud DVR	total streams


Channel List (Sling) ▾

[Learn More](#)

You may also like:




ESPN+
\$10



Discovery+
\$5

Best Value

If you want to save even more, this bundle requires just giving up a channel or two.




\$25

\$25/month


50%	60	✓	3
of your channels	total channels	cloud DVR	total streams

Channel List (Philo) ▾

Some options to replace your missing channels:



ESPN+
\$10




ESPN+
\$10

Learn More

Connexion TV

Our in-home streaming option: the feel of traditional cable TV without the wires and boxes.



\$90


\$90/month

100%	93	✓	5
of your channels	total channels	cloud DVR	total streams


Channel List (Connexion TV) ▾

[Learn More](#)

You may also like:

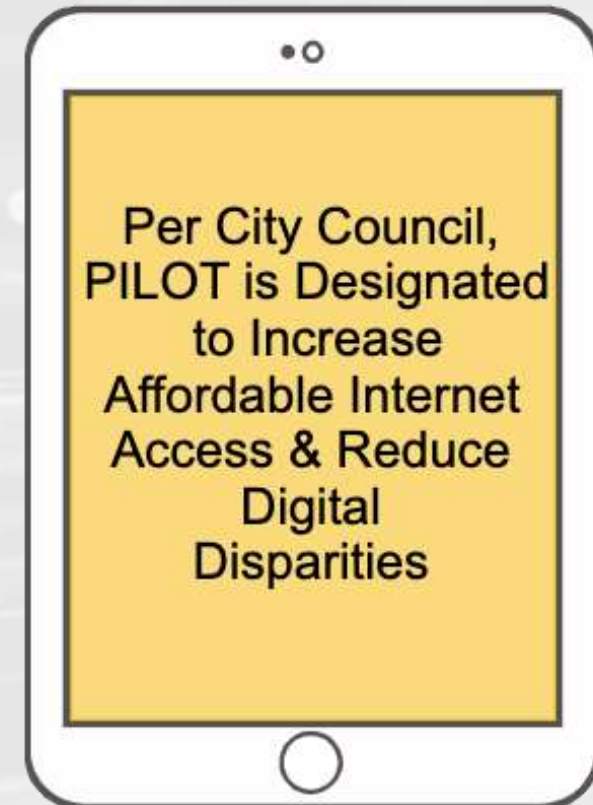
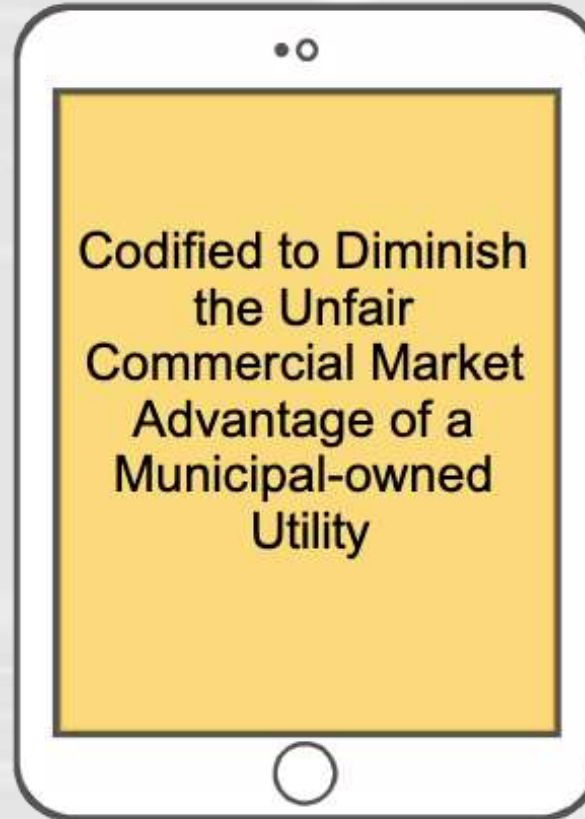
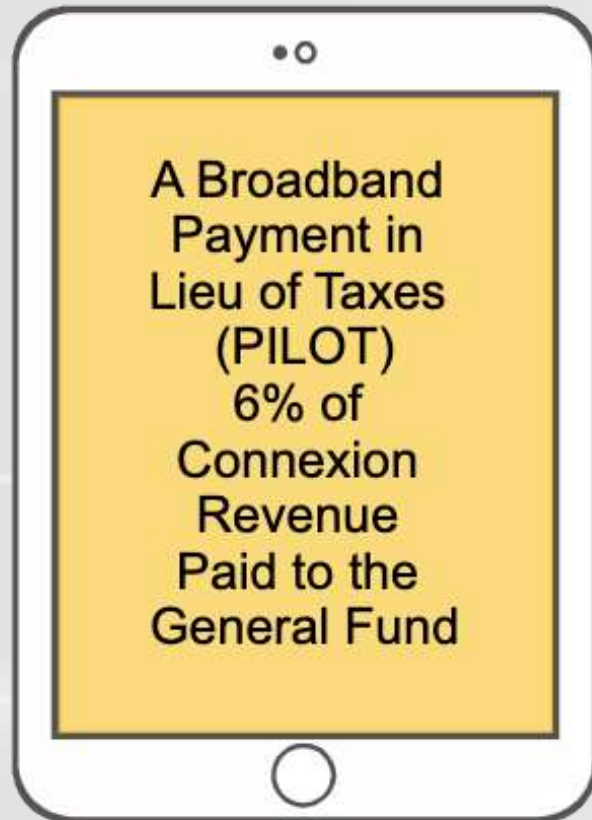


ESPN+
\$10

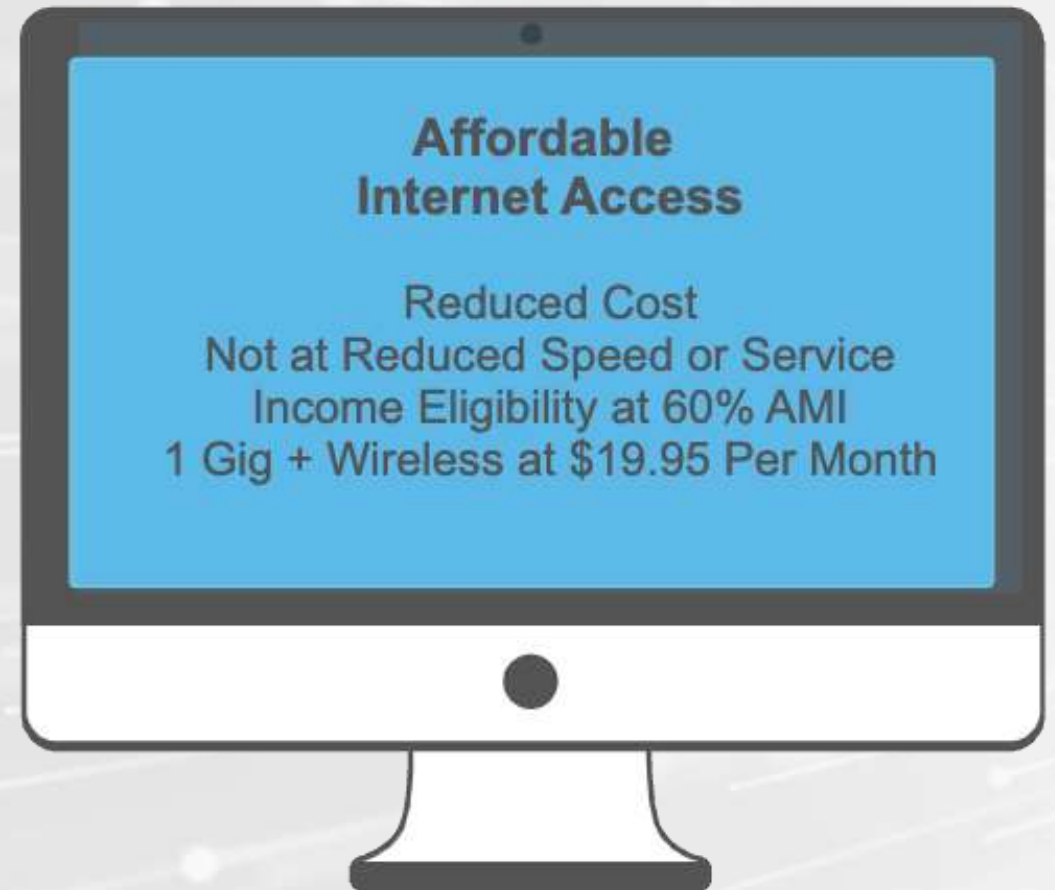


Discovery+
\$5

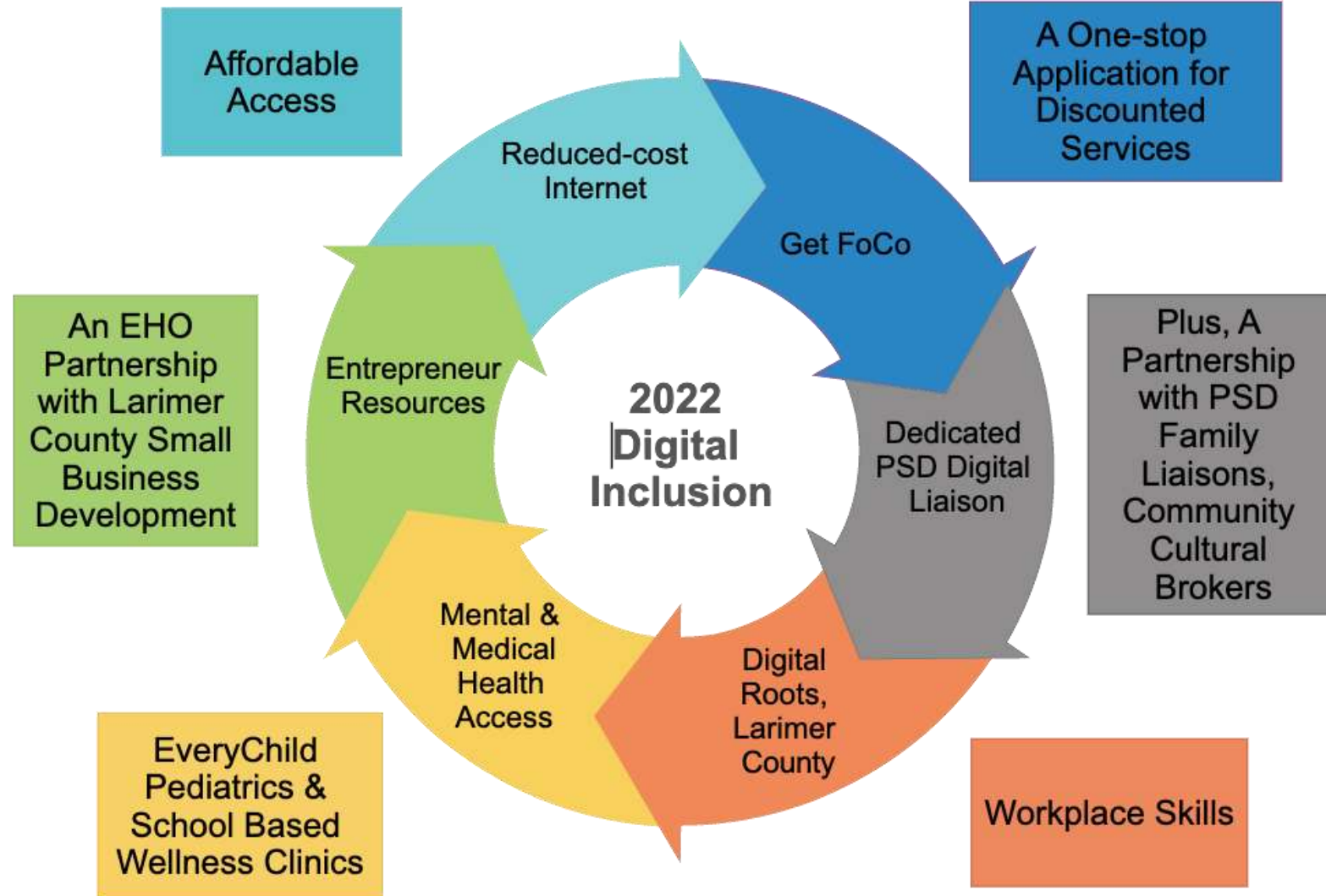
Digital Inclusion



Digital Inclusion: Dual Approach



Digital Inclusion: A Community Network



1. Grant opportunities

2. Partnerships:

- Loveland and Estes Park
- Longmont
- Larimer County
- PSD
- Others in region

1. Transparency
2. Opportunities
3. Connexion is for ALL
4. Partnerships

QUESTIONS?



January 10, 2023



WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council

STAFF

Clay Frickey, Redevelopment Program Manager

SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

North College Projects.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

North College has been the subject of focus and planning for the past 30 years. After 30 years of intentional planning and investment, the North College corridor has accomplished many of the goals articulated in City plans and policy documents. This AIS provides a brief history of planning in the corridor, what current projects are underway, and what the future holds for the North College corridor. While we have accomplished much, many of the desires for the corridor exist in tension with one another. Some of these tensions include:

- Affordability vs. desire for redevelopment and infrastructure investment vs. conservation.
- Desire for more amenities in the corridor vs. retaining the existing character of the neighborhood.
- Safe, comfortable, and accessible mobility options vs. fast vehicular movement through the corridor.

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. Are we focused on the right priorities with the next phase of North College's life?
2. How should staff navigate the tensions identified?
3. What more do you need to know as Council about North College?
4. Where else in the community would Council like to see a more focused, place-based implementation approach?

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Overview of North College Planning Efforts

North College has long presented unique opportunities for the City and community. The North College corridor has long provided affordable housing and business opportunities while being next door to two of Fort Collins's greatest amenities: Downtown and the Poudre River. Despite this, North College has felt disconnected from the larger community due to infrastructure deficiencies and the corridor operating as a

State highway. Due to this unique context, the City has developed various plans and policy documents to support North College over the past 30 years. These planning initiatives include:

- North College Corridor Plan – 1995
- Urban Renewal Plan – 2004
- North College Corridor Plan Update – 2007
- Infrastructure Investment Plan – 2010
- Poudre River Natural Areas Management Plan – 2011
- Poudre River Downtown Master Plan – 2014
- Urban Renewal Authority Strategic Investment Plan – 2017
- Urban Renewal Authority Community Engagement – 2019
- North College MAX Plan - 2023

Through the years, these planning efforts have continued to hone the vision of the North College corridor and articulate goals and objectives for the future of the corridor.

When City staff began engaging the community to support the first North College Corridor Plan in 1992, the North College corridor looked very different than it does today. North College had no curb, gutter, and sidewalk. The Dry Creek floodplain covered most of the corridor, preventing development and presenting flooding hazards for existing residents and businesses. Few essential services existed in the corridor. This meant residents needed to go to other parts of the community for most of their day-to-day needs. Despite these challenges, stakeholders throughout the years have expressed their appreciation for the unique feel of the corridor that is distinct and unique to Fort Collins. North College was also an affordable place to live and run a business. All these factors lead to a vision for North College that the community has reinforced in all subsequent planning. This vision was:

- North College evolves to become more inviting and not just a highway
- More complete network of streets that are safe and comfortable for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Connect to Downtown
- Retain affordable housing and business opportunities
- Distinct design character that is more urban
- Bring more amenities to North College corridor (i.e., grocery store, restaurants, entertainment)

Summary of City Infrastructure Projects

New development in North College was difficult if not impossible prior to the City’s investment in resolving infrastructure deficiencies in the corridor. One of the major impediments to development in the North College corridor was the Dry Creek floodplain. The City has invested millions of dollars to remove large portions of the corridor from the floodplain. In 2010, the City and Urban Renewal Authority jointly created an Infrastructure Investment Plan for the corridor. The table below shows the projects in this plan and their status.

Project	Completed?	Comments
Improvements to Existing Streets		
<i>North College Avenue</i>		
750’ from Hemlock to Conifer, street edges	Yes	
½ mile from Vine to Conifer – medians, eastside circulators and overlay	Yes	
300’ Conifer to Hickory	Yes	
½ mile Hickory to Willox, permanent sidewalk, street edges, medians, and overlay	Yes	
¼ mile Eaton Ditch to Highway 1	Yes	

Project	Completed?	Comments
Conifer/Hickory intersection realignment	No	Would have required purchase of property on NE corner of Conifer and College, which is an historic property

Other

Vine Drive – ½ mile College to Linden	Yes	
Willox Lane – ½ mile from Union Pacific Railroad to College	Yes	
Alley upgrade east ¼ mile from Conifer to Bristlecone	Yes	

New Streets

Suniga Road – College to Redwood	Yes	
Redwood Street – Cajetan to Vine	Yes	
Mason Street to Alpine	No	Part of North College Drainage Improvement Design (NCDID)

Storm Drainage Facilities

Northeast College Corridor Outfall (NECCO)	Yes	
North College Drainage Improvement Design (NCDID)	No	Covers west side of corridor from Willox to the Poudre River. 30% design complete in 2022.

Sewer Line

Westside sewer from Alpine to Poudre Valley Plaza	No	Part of NCDID
---------------------------------------------------	----	---------------

The last remaining major project from the 2010 Infrastructure Investment Plan is completing Mason Street with associated stormwater and sewer facilities in the corridor, for which engineering is currently underway.

Summary of New Development

One of the objectives of the North College Corridor Plan was for increased development activity in the corridor. After City investment resolved some of the major impediments to development, private development increased in the corridor. The tables below summarize the development activity in the corridor since 1995.

Residential Development Summary

Subdivision	Single-Family			Total Units
	Detached	Townhomes	Multi-family	
Old Town North	132	74	88	294
Crowne at Old Town North			304	304
Aspen Heights			220	220
Greenbriar Village	72		40	112
Revive		37	36	73
Village on Redwood			72	72
Total	204	111	760	1075

Commercial Development Summary

Project Name	Square Feet
Lyric	10,000
Feeders Supply	2,220
Country Club Corners	125,595
N College Marketplace	175,000
Innosphere	31,000
Kaufman and Robinson	10,000
Valley Steel	19,000
Hickory Commons	31,136
Total	403,951

The residential development in the corridor doubled the number of housing units. The new commercial development in the corridor has brought essential amenities to the corridor such as a grocery store, employment opportunities, entertainment, and incubator space for small businesses. Opportunities remain to fulfill the vision of the corridor. The corridor still has the character of a highway with many businesses oriented to the car. College Avenue is still a barrier to traveling on foot or bike to destinations within the corridor or to the rest of Fort Collins. New development will fill in infrastructure gaps and deliver more amenities to the corridor. New development, however, has led to increasing rents and a shift in the area’s identity. This has raised the tension between providing essential infrastructure to enable development and bring amenities to the corridor while retaining the area’s affordability and character.

Summary of Public Space

One of the priorities at the onset of planning for the North College corridor was to provide parks and open space within the corridor. Parks opened Soft Gold Park in 2004. In 2019, Parks opened the Poudre River Whitewater Park. The Whitewater Park provides additional recreation opportunities on the Poudre River while connecting the North College corridor to the river as well as Downtown. Natural Areas has acquired, restored, and maintains four Natural Areas within the corridor: Salyer (1985), McMurry (2003), Magpie Meander (2013), and River’s Edge (2001). Salyer has been City-owned natural area since 1985. All these amenities are connected by the Poudre Trail and Hickory trail spur.

Current Plans and Projects

Many projects are underway in the North College corridor. These projects represent the work of many departments within the City as well as the development community. Upon completion of these projects, nearly all the goals and objectives for the corridor articulated in the various planning documents will have been achieved.

Current Plans and Projects

Project Name	City, URA, or Private Development	Status
North College MAX Plan	City	Council to consider in Q1 2023.
Mobile home park re-zonings	City	Hickory Village and North College re-zoned by City in 2022.
Land Bank acquisition	City	Acquired property in 2018.
North Mason	City and URA	30% design completed. Preparing to acquire right-of-way.

Project Name	City, URA, or Private Development	Status
Poudre River Zone Update	City	Natural Areas updating plan, slated for completion in 2023.
Powerhouse II	Private development	Approved by Planning & Zoning Commission. Construction in 2023.
Jerome Street Station	Private development	Approved by hearing officer. Construction in 2023.
North College Marketplace	Private development	Construction completed on last pad sites.
24/7 Shelter	Private development	In development review process.
Sit and Stay Dog Bar	Private development	Approved by hearing officer. Construction in 2023.
Albertsons	URA	URA performing due diligence to participate in redevelopment or purchase site.

A team of City staff meets every month to coordinate on the current projects in the corridor. This allows for better collaboration and ensures that projects work together to reinforce the vision for North College.

Future of North College

City Plan identifies North College as being an Infill/Redevelopment Opportunity Area with a Community Activity Center at Wilcox and College. Current zoning supports this vision by allowing a wide range of land uses. Recent analysis supporting the Housing Strategic Plan shows the North College corridor houses two census tracts in the process of gentrification. The census tract on the east side of the North College corridor is the only census tract in Fort Collins in the middle part of gentrification (Attachment 2). Much of the new development in the corridor has occurred east of College. The new residential development has largely been market rate. That has meant that the neighborhood has more residents that are wealthier, more educated, and whiter than before. Despite this, 44% of the population is Hispanic/Latinx and the corridor has more renters, families earning less than 80% of median household income, and people with less than college education than the average for Fort Collins.

Community members' perceptions match what the data shows. During the community engagement effort for the North College MAX Plan, community members identified gentrification as one of the main issues facing the neighborhood. Due to this, community members expressed an interest in expanding MAX to the corridor and accompanied by additional investment in affordable housing and other policies to stabilize rents in the corridor.

These aspects of the corridor highlight several tensions, including:

- Affordability vs. desire for redevelopment and infrastructure investment vs. conservation
- Desire for more amenities in the corridor vs. retaining the existing character of the neighborhood
- Safe, comfortable, and accessible mobility options vs. fast vehicular movement through the corridor.

The concept of the 15-minute City could provide a framework to navigate these tensions and others. The 15-minute City helps identify what assets exist in a neighborhood and what amenities are missing in a neighborhood that would allow community members to accomplish most of their day-to-day tasks and needs within a 15-minute walk or bike ride. The 15-minute City Report as part of the Active Modes Plan identifies North College as being an equity focus area. This means there are the presence of vulnerable

populations with lack of connections to destinations. Combined with the other data at staff's disposal, the 15-minute City could help with prioritizing projects to fill infrastructure gaps, inform updates to zoning that would create a more complete neighborhood, and ensure investments targeting the communities that need these improvements most.

On February 21, 2023, Council will consider adoption of the North College MAX Plan. This plan has a vision that states:

The vision for North College Avenue is for a safe, accessible, attractive, and affordable corridor for people who live, work, and visit the North College area. North College Avenue will be a gateway and hub for local and regional transit connections that link people to essential services, recreation, and entertainment. The corridor will connect to a comfortable and convenient network for people using active modes made up of sidewalks, share-use paths, and bike lanes.

Transit stations will be focal points for new, multi-story development that de-emphasizes surface parking. Corridor development will bring upgrades to infrastructure, improve public space, and fill in existing vacant land and buildings. New development will occur in a way that protects the natural environment and preserves affordability and diversity of residents, local businesses, and service providers. North College Avenue will become a district and destination with its own distinct character that is driven by residents, workers, and local business owners. The corridor will be a safe and comfortable corridor to travel through and a destination for people of all socio-economic statuses, ages, and abilities.

Questions for Council

1. Are we focused on the right priorities with the next phase of North College's life?
2. How should staff navigate the tensions identified?
3. What more do you need to know as Council about North College?
4. Where else in the community would Council like to see a more focused, place-based implementation approach?

ATTACHMENTS

1. North College Corridor Plan Vision
2. Gentrification Analysis
3. Presentation

Chapter 3 – Vision

Over the years, it has become apparent that the overall vision needs to be clarified to guide revitalization and enhancement efforts. Various investors, decision makers, and interested parties, both public and private, want to know how their decisions and actions can contribute to positive community development, to maximize the value of those decisions and actions.

The corridor presents an unparalleled need for collaboration among neighboring owners, city departments, and other agencies, in adapting to circumstances in the corridor. The key is a vision with wide support, followed by ongoing conversations on a new generation of projects.

To meet this need, a multifaceted vision for the area's future has been developed through public discussion of the issues.



If the area is going to serve its citizens in a way that's better than before, then by definition, some things must change. Change will present special complications of existing physical conditions, businesses, and histories.

Overall Vision Statement

A series of interesting places evolve along the corridor, becoming more urban in the best sense of the word.

In general, this urban evolution leads to

- more efficient use of land,
- higher values,
- more complete public infrastructure, and
- more economic activity;
- while keeping the strong sense of civic ownership that led to this plan.

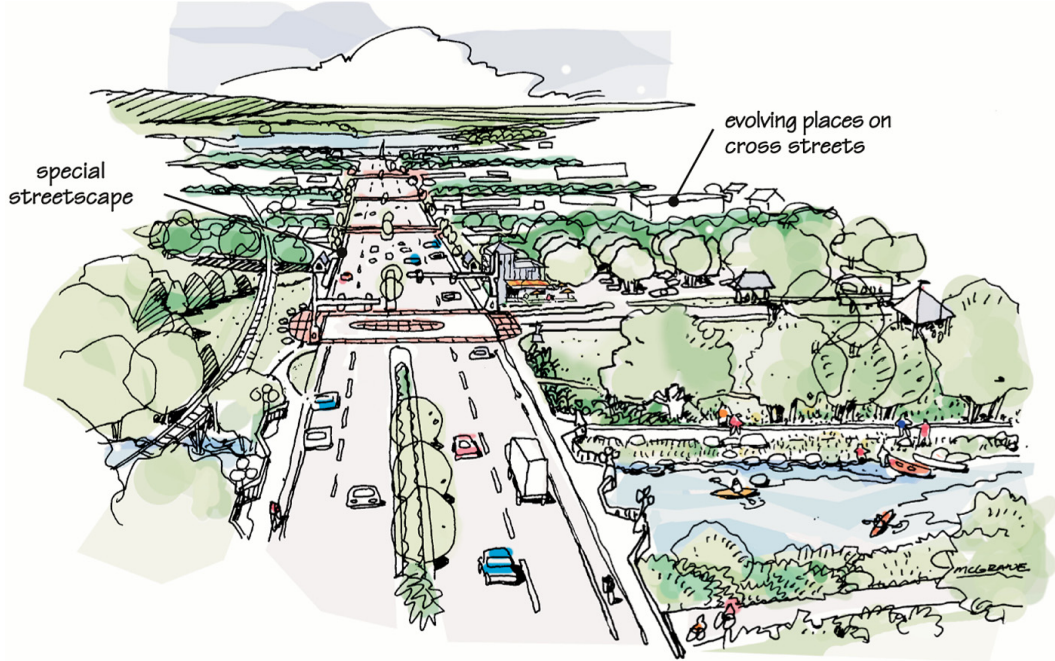
Active civic discussion continues to stimulate City projects, private sector redevelopment, upgrades to existing properties, and new development. Each project helps set the stage for further investment in real estate development and improvement projects in an evolutionary process. Where collaboration among multiple owners and City departments is necessary for changes to occur and be positive, it will be an increasing attribute.

The vision has different facets. It is not possible to make one simple statement about it. One attempt at a simple statement, heard during the process, is “fix the junky, but keep it funky”

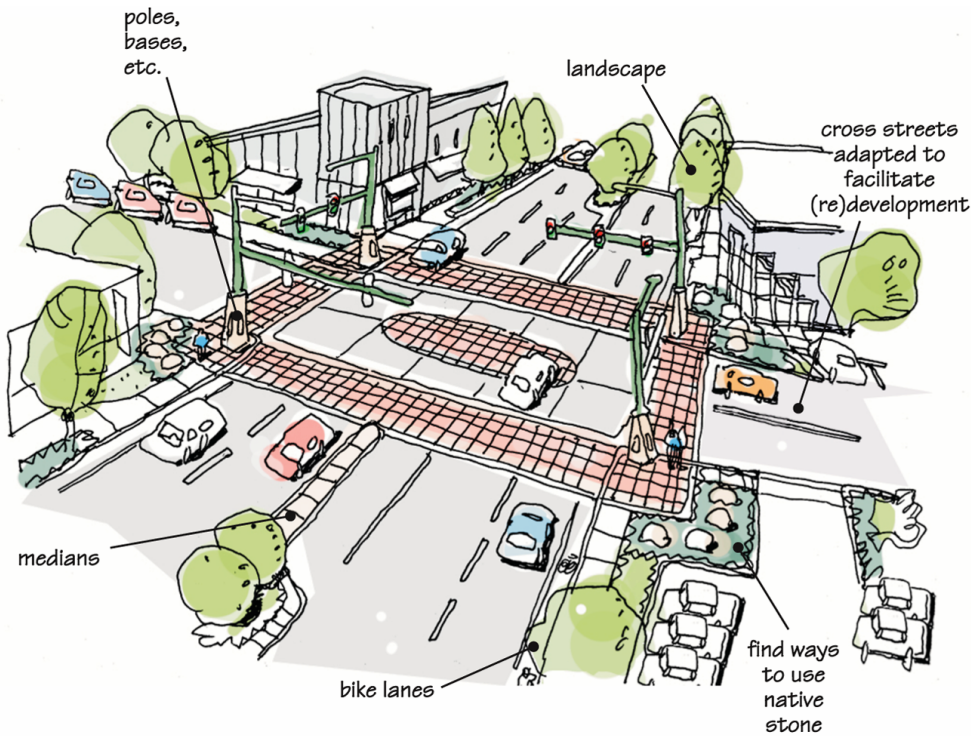
Facets of the Vision:

The Highway Itself -- North College Avenue/SH 14/US 287

The corridor stays naturally focused on the highway as its backbone. North College Avenue evolves into a more inviting and comfortable commercial street with an increasingly positive connotation to its name. This stretch of our main thoroughfare grows safer and more enjoyable for people of all ages and abilities who walk, ride bikes, and riding transit, as well as for car and truck drivers. North College Avenue is becoming a welcoming local and regional gateway. It fosters attention for travelers, and pride for the local community, as an interesting and attractive stretch of the *Colorado Scenic Byways* system. The highway emphasizes mobility for people and goods moving *through* the corridor and coming *to* pedestrian-oriented places, “more like Downtown”, evolving along inviting cross streets. Vehicle access to properties shifts away from the highway frontage itself a more complete network of cross streets and side streets, which invite parking.



This sketch captures the vision of North College Avenue as a primary transportation mobility corridor along the lines of standard arterial streets, but with special streetscape. Interesting places and street-fronts evolve along cross streets that feed into the highway.



This sketch captures some ideas regarding a whole strategy for the highway and its streetscape. Elements could include light and signal poles, special pole bases with identity elements such as native stone, North College logos, *Colorado Scenic Byways* signs, color themes, banners for seasons and events, and a unique landscape image. This sketch also leads into the next facet of the vision regarding cross streets adapted to fit circumstances and facilitate redevelopment.

Facets of the Vision:

More Complete Street Network

This facet of the vision is very closely related to the highway itself. Redevelopment and retrofitted public infrastructure projects add a more complete network of streets, drives, and alleyways. The network is forward-looking; supporting intensified land use as the area evolves, bringing access, utilities and urban services into formerly vacant and underused areas. The linear strip of North College Avenue is punctuated by new street corners, with cross streets leading to a diverse series of interesting places off of the main frontage.

New street corners do a lot of things:

- add value to development, helping pay for expensive new infrastructure,
- bring character of new places along side streets within visibility of College Avenue,
- calm traffic,
- create a more “town-like feel”, and
- generally make the linear strip more interesting with multiple new dimensions.

The layout and design of access and parking is finer-grained than in standardized new growth areas, with closer spacings as needed to adapt to compact development parcels, to existing development, and to desired scale and character of evolving new places.

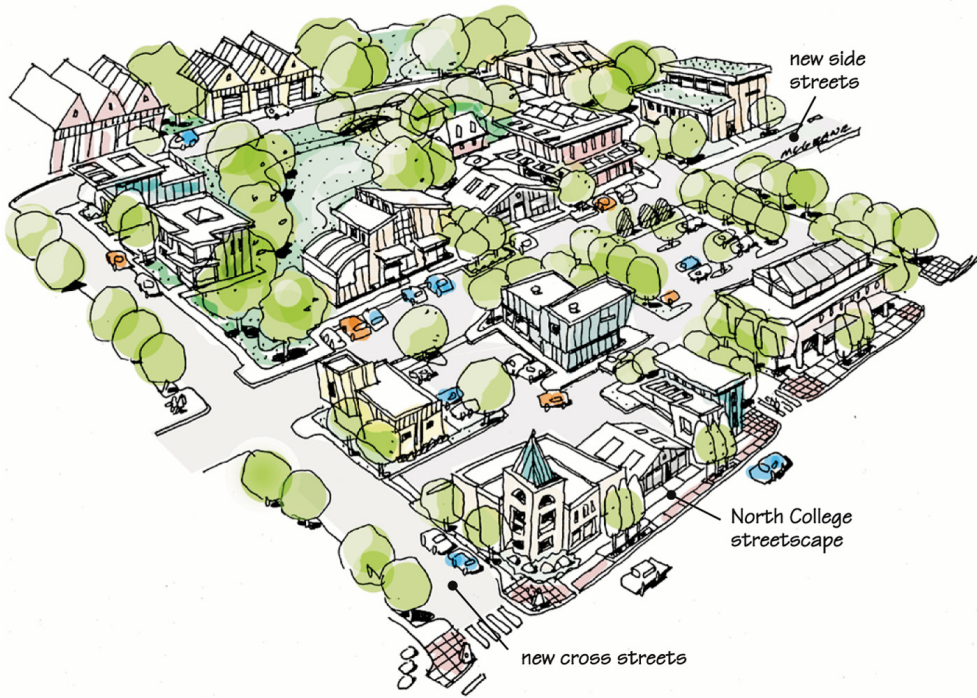
If a large footprint user can find an adequate site, they are welcomed and fitted into the overall pattern of new streets through careful, customized design adaptation.



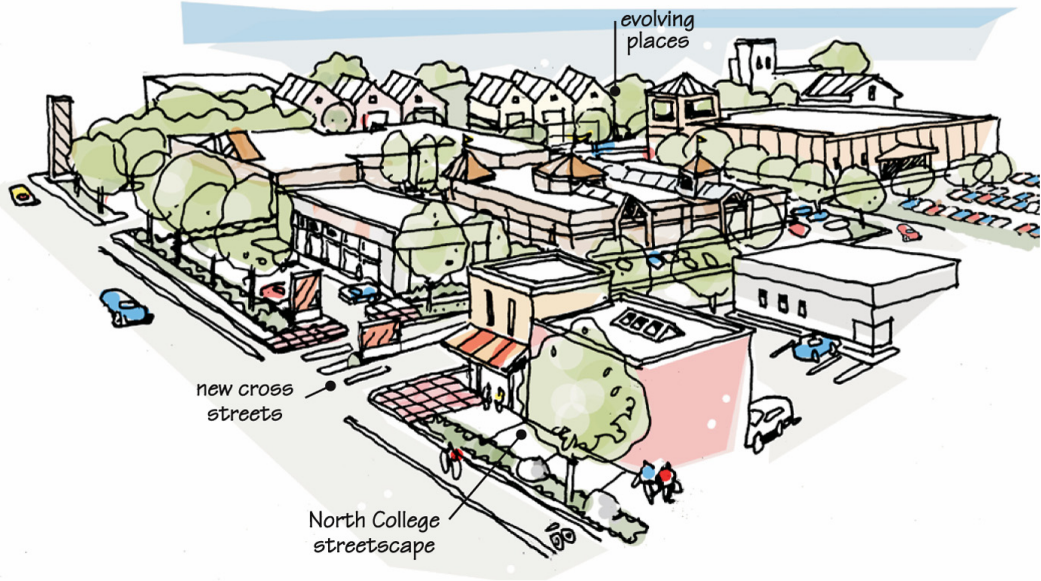
Left: Example of new development in an older commercial corridor. In adding new streets, land must be carved out of existing properties; the value of new corners can help make up for lost square footage. North College Avenue is expected to evolve with 8 or 9 new street corners, with more new corners in the network off the highway.

Right: Example of a new pedestrian-friendly cross street along a highway in a redeveloped semi-industrial area on the outskirts of a small city. Maximized on-street parking and a pedestrian-friendly place reflect aspects of the vision for places in the North College corridor.

Paths, trails, and landscaped drainage and utility corridors add to the network. The pattern and details of new infrastructure systems will be uniquely adapted to fit circumstances. New streets are sensitively fitted into evolving, funky places that are different than standardized new growth.



This sketch captures ideas for an example redevelopment area on the west side of North College, north of Hickory street. New cross streets and side streets are specially adapted to facilitate development, with on-street parking shown in response to the issue that as new streets use land, remaining land for development will be tight, and a street network can provide useful overflow parking. Also, street parking brings activity to new street-fronts and encourages pedestrian oriented building faces. The sketch indicates how a closely-spaced network of access can create modest building sites offering opportunities for small business, including current owners who wish to remain in the new format. It also captures the idea of storm drainage and detention as part of the framework, providing landscaped focal points for development.



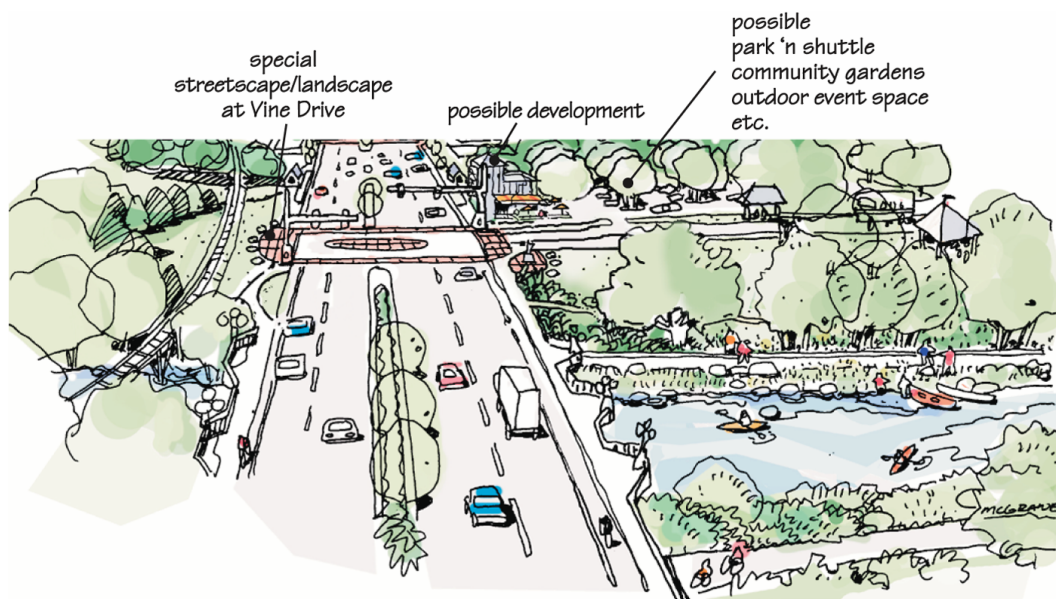
This sketch shows similar ideas, but includes the idea that large-footprint uses are a welcome part of the vision, if they can find a site. A new drive leads to rear areas on the east side of the highway. A sign providing visibility, which may be a necessary aspect of developing rear areas in some cases.

Facets of the Vision:

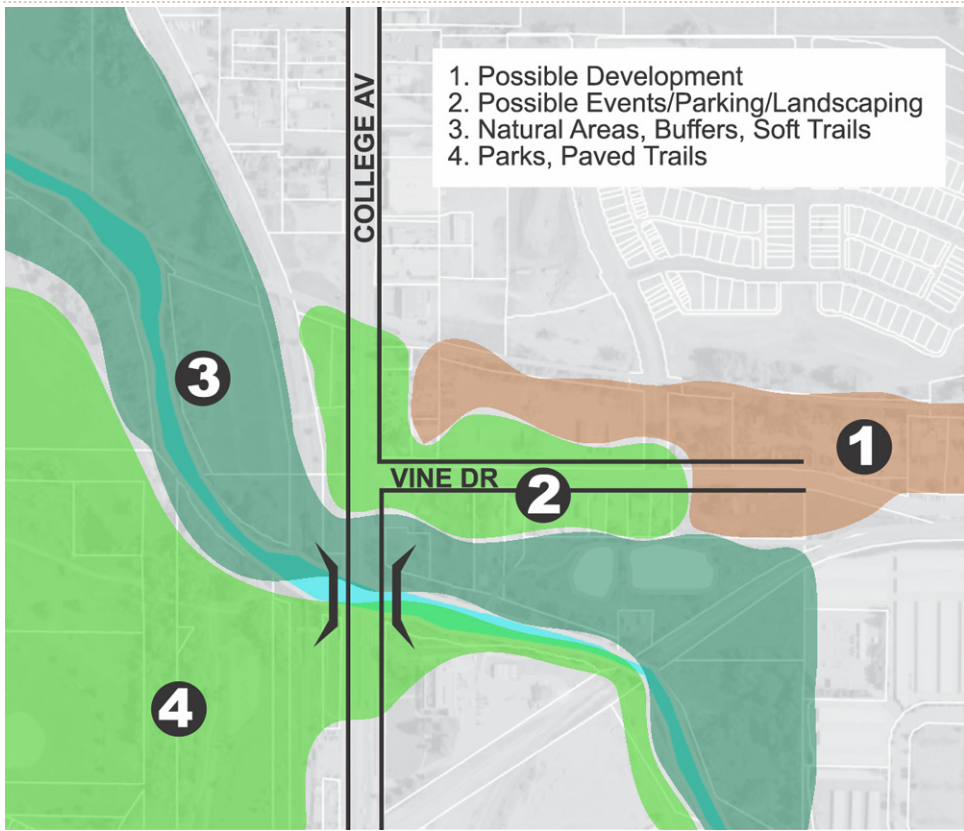
Connections to Downtown Across the Poudre River Corridor

The river corridor links and binds the North College corridor with Downtown and the rest of the community. People convene, collaborate, compromise, and find solutions to the complex problems of creating more attractive and active connections across the river corridor and its floodway.

Crucial public perceptions are transformed by an inviting and seamless transition, so that the river corridor is seen as an attraction shared with Downtown, rather than an edge and barrier as in the past.



Streetscape and landscape projects can create more attractive visual connections across the river corridor. A very careful balancing act is needed regarding facilities or events that invite the presence of significant numbers of people – this is a place where activity must be carefully considered in light of river flood flows, and the habitat corridor of the river.



Vine/North College area, with a diagram of general levels of activity as envisioned. This general vision emerged during plan discussion of possibilities for the river corridor. Generally, the lowest levels of human activity are most appropriate along the north bank. Intermediate levels of activity are most appropriate on the south bank and east of North College Avenue, with the paved trail, parking access, and park-like settings. Higher levels of activity, e.g., outdoor spaces for events, festivals, and markets, trailheads or other parking, and possibly a limited amount of actual development with buildings, would be appropriate higher up above street grade along Vine and North College.



Left: modest example of “re-branding” of an aging building – that is, creating a new image and identity (the “brand” in terms of public perception) to emphasize river influences in a positive light.

Right: parking lot with informal cottonwood grove and native stone is one modest example of detailing that could highlight the river. (A typical parking lot island would have a standardized spacing of individual non-native trees and shrubs.)

Facets of the Vision:

Community Appearance and Design

The corridor evolves in such a way that it keeps a unique and interesting feel, avoiding tendencies for standardization in new development. Design of development and public improvements responds to circumstances, history, and citizen preferences for a distinctive complement to Downtown.

Along North College Avenue, streetscape design elements highlight the outdoor recreation aspect of the region, the Scenic Byways designation, and the river.

Positive downtown-like design qualities such as interesting street-fronts with on-street parking and facing buildings, are carried northward and adapted to contemporary circumstances of the corridor in places focused on cross streets.

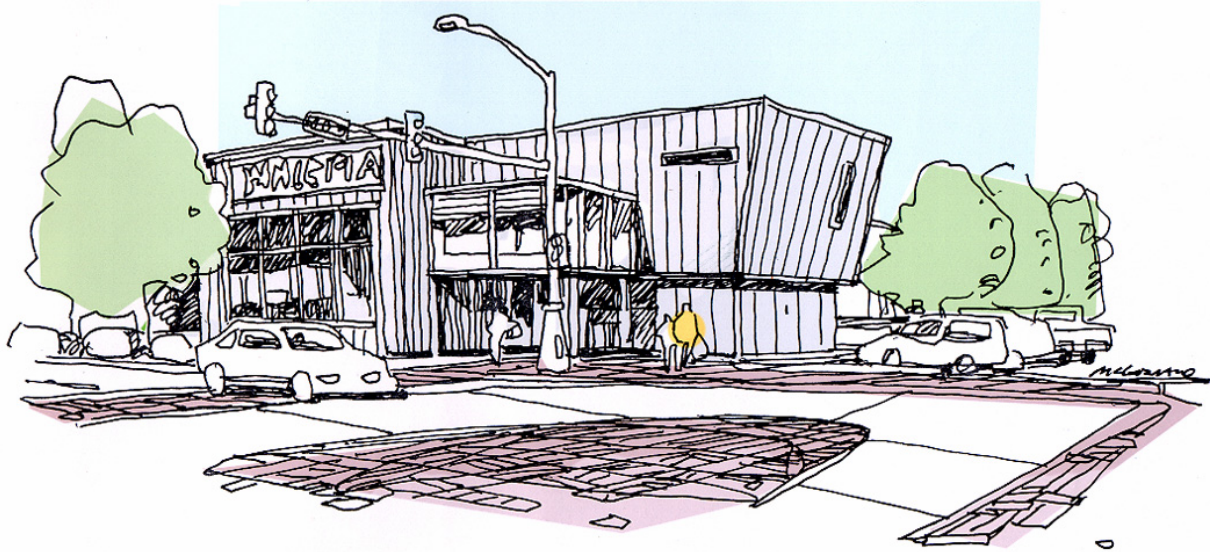
The nature of the corridor creates a special opportunity for design character in new buildings to offer an interesting counterpoint to newer suburban areas. Contemporary, semi-industrial building styles and materials offer particular opportunities to build up a fitting character which relates to the north-downtown setting.



Photos show examples of image and identity features – pedestrian bridges over canals and other streetscape structures offer a chance to use materials, colors, and special touches like flower baskets.



Examples of semi-industrial simplicity and informality. Simple materials and styles can have an authentic urban charm by emphasizing pedestrian-oriented building faces with glass, extensions, awnings, colors, signage, and well-kept planters. This kind of design is envisioned as having potential to create a fitting identity for key parts of the corridor.



City Plan and the Land Use Code already call for responsive design to fit local circumstances, vs. corporate prototype design. This sketch is intended to convey a general idea of what that could mean in the corridor, showing a new building and corner with contemporary semi-industrial styles and materials.



Examples of semi-industrial character made interesting with glass, projections, recesses, light, shadow, and internal use that flows out and contributes to a place.

Facets of the Vision:

Land Uses and Activity

The eclectic mix of uses evolves stronger underpinnings of higher-activity uses that create synergy, and contribute to a whole greater than the sum of the parts – in this case, a more active and healthy economy. The area still accommodates a broad mix of land uses, including service, repair, and supply-type businesses, but the general direction of change is toward housing, jobs, and commercial uses that bring more people into the area.

Commercial uses naturally fall in a range that complements Downtown, rather than competing – the corridor accommodates types, sizes, and styles of uses that don't fit Downtown, as in the past. Commerce continues to include vehicle- and tourism-oriented uses, and the corridor remains a secondary Fort Collins shopping and dining area, catering primarily to the comparatively small population north of the river.

A few exceptional retail attractions find a place in the corridor, and are able to draw from a larger market area -- most notably, businesses related to outdoor recreation, fitting the niche created by the Scenic Byways aspect of the Avenue. These uses bring the 'Great Outdoors' aspect of Northern Colorado and Wyoming close to Downtown as an added dimension.

Various studio, craftsman, workshop, repair, printing, food prep, and other modest light industry with pedestrian-friendly fronts mix with compatible urban dwellings in places along cross streets and back streets.

Some older small businesses remain even as redevelopment projects and larger corporate businesses bring higher-density, higher-value development. Some new re/development projects accommodate or relocate existing owners who wish to remain in the area in updated formats.

Hispanic culture is evident, with cultural characteristics featured in buildings and businesses in the corridor.

Different uses are integrated by the street network and by responsive architectural design. Even workshop, service, and repair uses contribute to the sense of place as building fronts are brought together along streets with generous glass and deep façade enhancements.



The vision for mixed uses has a strong tie to community design facets of the vision. In transitional areas behind highway frontage, businesses with pedestrian-friendly fronts can mix with compatible styles of dwellings.

Facets of the Vision:

Public Support/Dealing with Change

Broad public support and active civic participation stimulate evolution toward the vision and goals. Collaboration will maintain the continued interest and active citizenship of those who have spent time and effort to focus civic attention on the area.

Discussion and education improve mutual understanding about tradeoffs between the need to hold to an overall vision, and the needs of individual property owners working with existing conditions and current market realities.

Education and understanding leads to collaboration on the infrastructure systems that have been missing: a drainage system and streets that need to cross subdivided land. Collaboration leads to successful land pooling among property owners in certain parts of the corridor where past subdivision has been an insurmountable obstacle to proper urban utilization of property. Public support also leads to new public/private partnerships in financing area-wide public improvements.



Discussion, collaboration, partnerships, etc. will be crucial to transformation of the corridor.

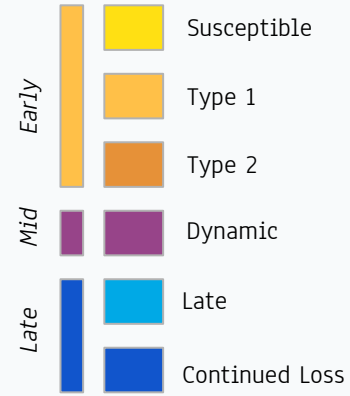
Facets of the Vision:

Financing and Administration

City investment in the Dry Creek floodway, which removed the #1 constraint to economic growth, leads to public/private collaboration on further financing and administration.

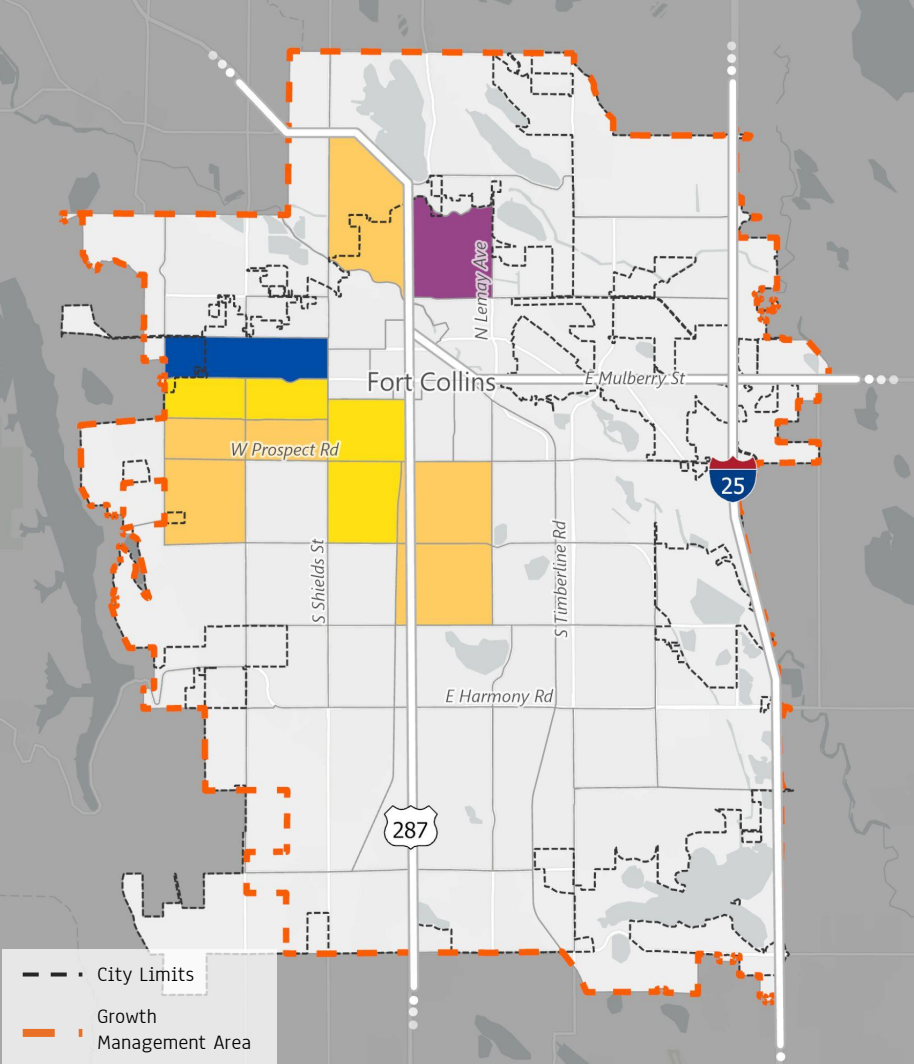
Active civic discussion continues to stimulate City projects, private sector redevelopment, upgrades to existing properties, and new development. Each project helps set the stage for further investment in real estate development and improvement projects in an evolutionary process. Where collaboration among multiple owners and City departments is necessary for changes to occur and be positive, it will be an increasing attribute.

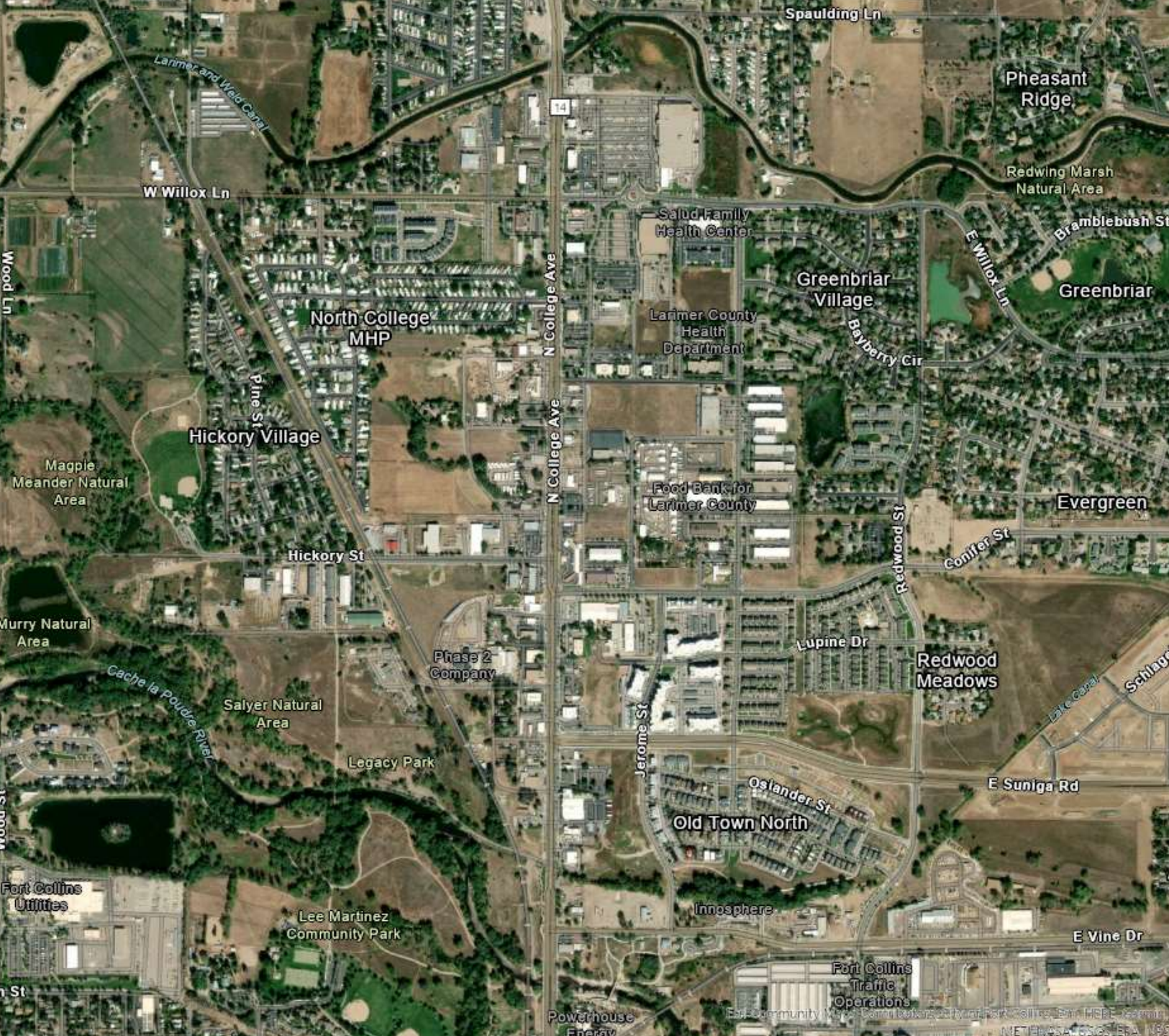
GENTRIFICATION TYPOLOGY:



OBSERVATION:

Tract 13.05 to the north Downtown, along Highway 287, is in a "Dynamic" Mid-stage of gentrification, experiencing current and ongoing significant gentrification pressures.





01/10/2023

Item 2.

North College Projects

Clay Frickey

Redevelopment Program Manager



1. History of North College
2. Current Projects
3. Future of North College
4. Feedback from Council

1. Are we focused on the right priorities with the next phase of North College's life?
2. How should staff navigate the tensions identified?
3. What more do you need to know as Council about North College?
4. Where else in the community would Council like to see a more focused, place-based implementation approach?

Strategic Plan

1.5 - Enhance the quality of life and sense of belonging in neighborhoods by connecting neighbors to City services, building community and fostering harmonious relationships.

3.4 - Utilize tools and partnerships to leverage infill and redevelopment opportunities to achieve development consistent with City Plan and supporting the City's broader strategic objectives.

6.2 - Support an efficient, reliable transportation system for all modes of travel, enhance high priority intersection operations, and reduce Vehicle Miles Traveled (VMT).

Council Priorities

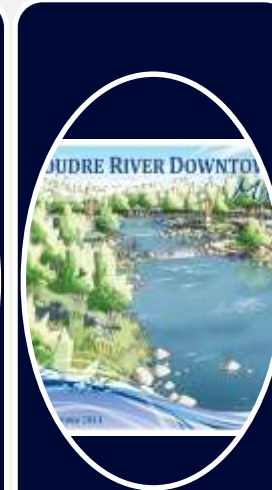
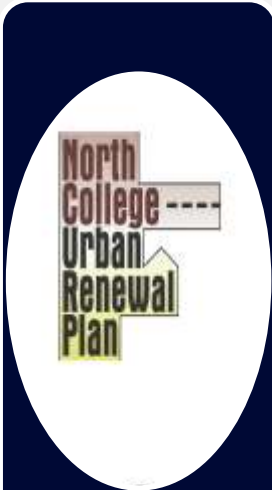
30 – Implementation of 15-minute community concept



History of North College



- Lack of infrastructure
- Covered by Dry Creek floodplain
- Disconnected from Fort Collins
- Residential = manufactured homes
- River seen as a barrier
- Affordable



North College Corridor Plan
1995

Urban Renewal Plan
2004

North College Corridor Plan
2007

Infrastructure Investment Plan
2010

Poudre River Natural Areas Management Plan
2011

Poudre River Downtown Plan
2014

URA Strategic Investment Plan
2017

URA Community Engagement
2019

North College MAX Plan
2023



- Safe connections throughout the corridor and to Downtown
- Distinct identity
- Resolve infrastructure deficiencies
- Integrate natural systems
- Recreation along Poudre River
- Retain local businesses
- Additional residential development and redevelopment
- Affordability





- 1,075 new residential units
- 400,000 + sq. ft. commercial development
- New grocery store (King Soopers)
- New park (Soft Gold)
- New natural areas
- Whitewater Park
- Trail connections to Poudre River and Downtown
- Floodplain mitigated
- Curb, gutter, sidewalk along North College
- Regional detention
- Railroad consolidation

2006

Item 2.



2018

Item 2.



Source: google.com

Page 53

2016

Item 2.



Source: google.com

Page 54

2018

Item 2.





Current Plans and Projects

Recent Projects

Item 2.

- 1. North College MAX Plan *
- 2. Mobile home park re-zoning
- 3. Land Bank
- 4. North Mason Street
- 5. Poudre River Zone Plan Update
- 6. Powerhouse II *
- 7. Jerome Street Station *
- 8. North College Marketplace
- 9. 24/7 Shelter
- 10. Sit and Stay Dog Bar
- 11. Albertsons *



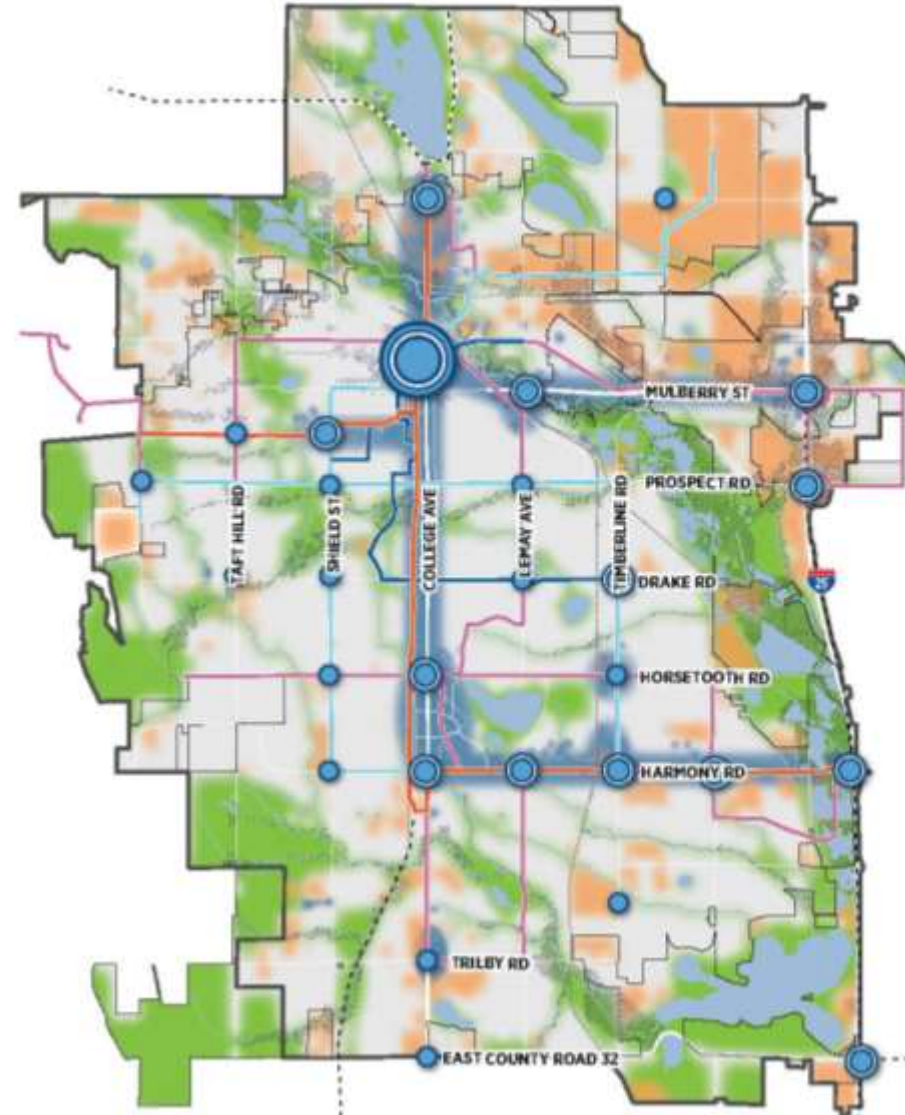


The Future of North College

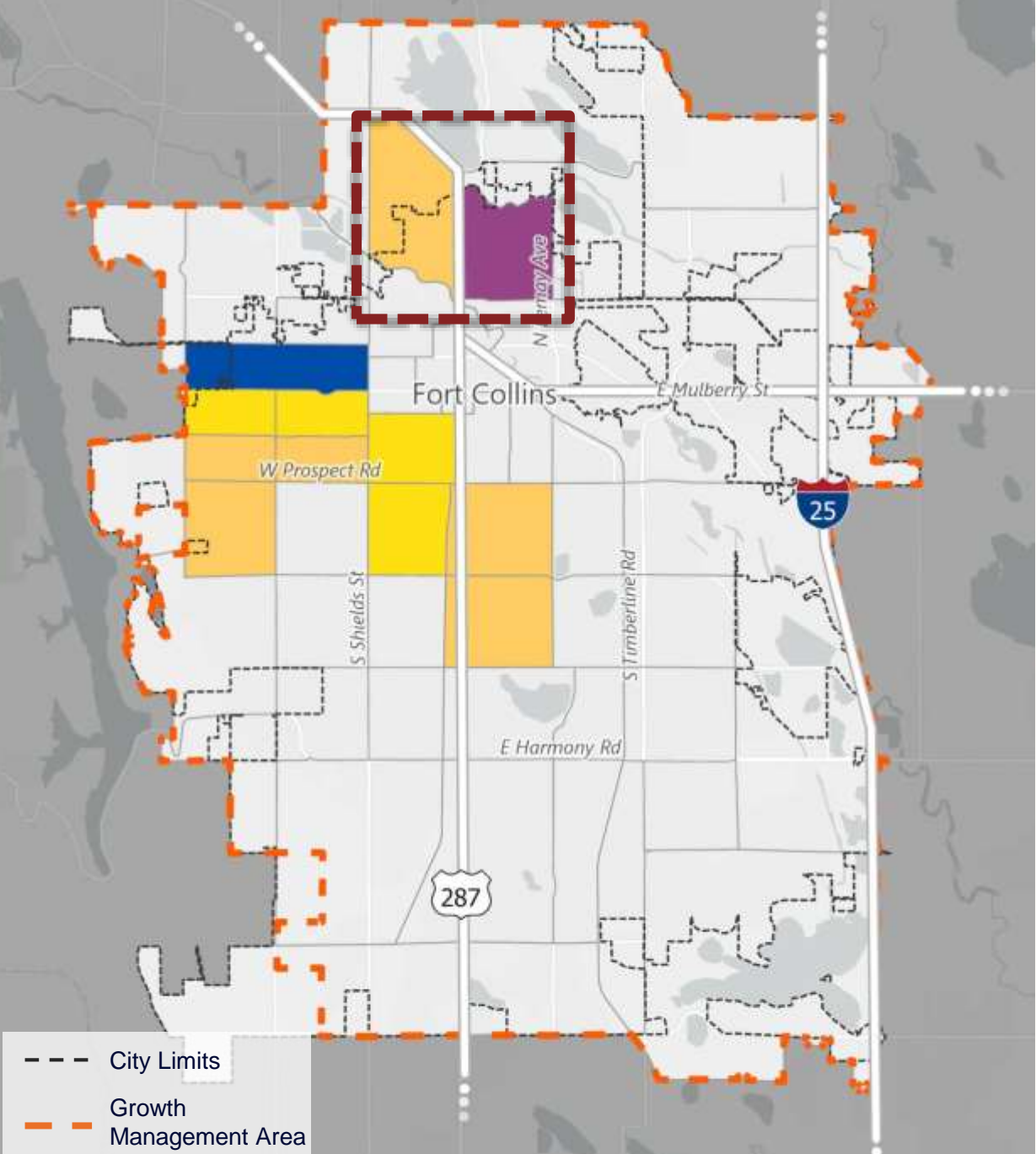
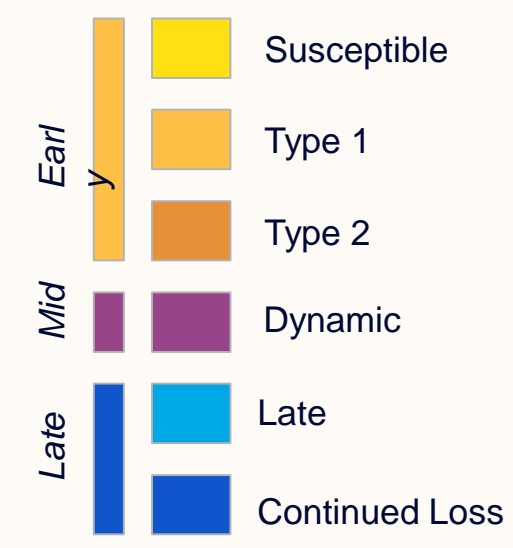
WHERE WILL WE FOCUS OUR EFFORTS?

LEGEND

-  Downtown Activity Center
-  Community Activity Center
-  Neighborhood Activity Center
-  Bus Rapid Transit (BRT)
-  High Frequency Service (15-min. or better all day)
-  Frequent Peak Service (15-min. or better peak/30-min. off-peak)
-  Local service (30-min. service all day)
-  Remaining Greenfield Opportunity Areas
-  Infill/Redevelopment Opportunity Areas
-  Parks and Natural/Protected Lands
-  Flood-Hazard Areas



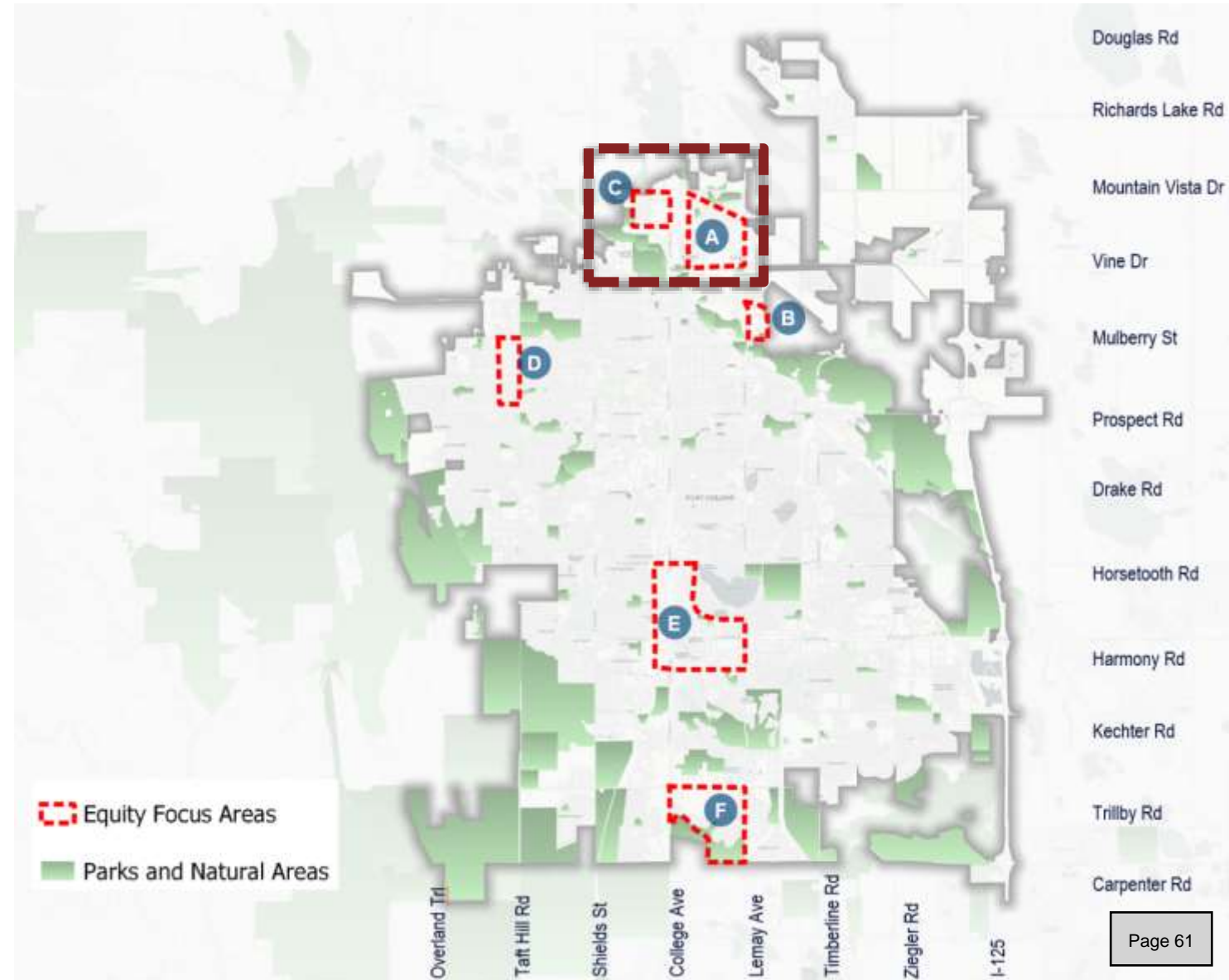
Gentrification typology:

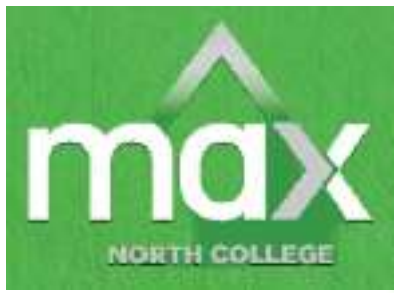


Observation:

Tract 13.05 along North College, is in a “Dynamic” Mid-stage of gentrification, experiencing current and ongoing significant gentrification pressures.

- Two equity focus areas
 - Lack bike and pedestrian facilities
 - Destinations inaccessible
- Framing could help with implementation
 - Prioritization
 - Inform zoning
 - Target community members in need



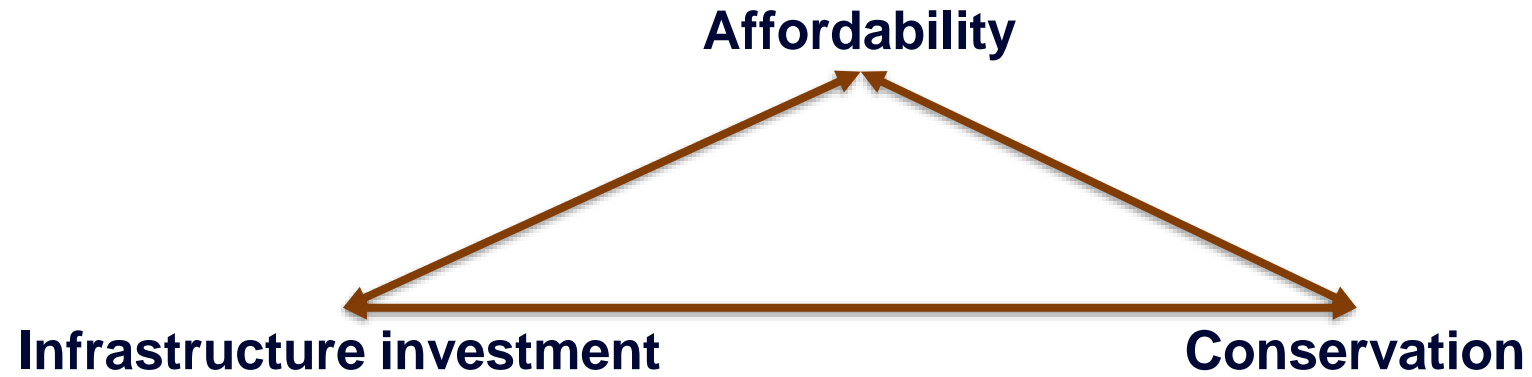


Item 2.

New Transit Routes:

- MAX on North College Ave
- Route 8 to remain
- Microtransit

New Bicycle and Pedestrian Infrastructure



Additional amenities ←————→ **Retain existing character**

Safe, comfortable, accessible mobility options ←————→ **Fast vehicular movement**

1. Are we focused on the right priorities with the next phase of North College's life?
2. How should staff navigate the tensions identified?
3. What more do you need to know as Council about North College?
4. Where else in the community would Council like to see a more focused, place-based implementation approach?

THANK YOU!





- Rezone North College Mobile Home Park (MHP) to the Manufactured Housing (MH) zone district
 - Last remaining large MHP not designated under MH district
 - Limits redevelopment potential to encourage ongoing use as a MHP
 - Rezoning delayed by conflicting policy guidance
 - North College MAX BRT Study, if adopted, resolves conflicts and encourages rezoning

Next Steps

- Neighborhood Meeting (Jan 2023)
- Planning & Zoning Recommendation (Feb 2023)
- Council Consideration (Mar 2023)

January 10, 2023

WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

Katie Collins, Water Conservation Specialist
 Danielle Reimanis, Water Conservation Specialist
 Mariel Miller, Water Conservation Manager
 Gretchen Stanford, Deputy Director, Utilities Customer Connections

SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

Land Use Code Changes to Address Xeriscape for New Developments and Soil Amendment for New and Existing Developments.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to provide an overview of the current state of landscapes and irrigation in Fort Collins, and to present four code change opportunities that promote climate-appropriate landscapes and use of soil amendment.

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. What general questions or feedback does Council have on the proposed direction? What additional information is needed?
2. Which of these Xeriscape and Soil Amendment opportunities does Council support moving forward? Which turf maximum option do you support, if any?

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Current Fort Collins landscapes and water use

- Outdoor use accounts for 40% of all water use in Fort Collins. 60-70% of all water use during summer months is applied to Fort Collins landscapes. Annually, about 40,000 gallons of water are applied to the average residential landscape. Irrigation is required for landscapes in Fort Collins because the average annual precipitation of 9 gallons per square foot – most of which falls outside of the growing season – does not support the typical, high-water-demand landscape.
- Most maintained landscapes in Fort Collins contain Kentucky bluegrass, a plant that has historically been used, and sometimes required, for its aesthetic benefits and for high-use

settings, where it fares better than some alternative landscapes. However, most areas of bluegrass serve little to no function, other than aesthetics, especially on commercial properties and in residential front yards.

- There is a tradeoff between the benefits and the high water demands of bluegrass; it requires 18 gallons of water per square foot in a growing season to remain healthy, which means at least 9 more gallons per square foot than the average precipitation in Fort Collins. Projected climate change would increase bluegrass water demands even further.

What is Xeriscape?

The word xeriscape refers to principles for sustainable landscape design. The Seven Principles of Xeriscape are:

1. **Plan** with users and water in mind. Group plants with similar water requirements to avoid overwatering some and underwatering others.
2. **Improve the soil** to absorb water more quickly and support plant health.
3. **Irrigate efficiently** by using high-efficiency equipment and managing water appropriately to avoid overwatering.
4. **Use turf wisely** by locating it in areas where it will be used and considering low- or no-water alternatives that add function and aesthetic in the rest of the landscape.
5. **Select appropriate plants** that are well-adapted to our region and climate.
6. **Mulch** to reduce evaporation and control weeds.
7. **Maintain** the landscape by mitigating weed growth, checking the irrigation system regularly for needed repairs and pruning plants for health.

The word xeriscape has developed a bad reputation over the years. The word xeriscapes often evokes images of “zeroscapes,” landscaped areas devoid of life. It is important to note that xeriscape is not a specific look or plant palette, and it is not replacing living landscapes with rock. It is for these reasons that the terms water-wise, low-water, and Coloradoscape are often used interchangeably with xeriscape to describe resilient, climate-appropriate landscapes.

Why soil amendment?

As mentioned in the Seven Principles of Xeriscape, improving soil contributes to better outcomes in landscapes. Much of the soil in Fort Collins is clay, which is made up of small particles that easily compact, making it difficult for plant roots to absorb water. One way to increase the volume of water available to plants, mitigate compaction, and improve soil structure is to incorporate soil amendment. Improving soil structure also increases the rate at which water is absorbed, resulting in less runoff during irrigation events.

Current xeriscape and soil amendment support in Fort Collins

The City of Fort Collins supports sustainable landscapes through a variety of ways (more information about current offerings can be found in the Council memo dated March 28, 2022, titled “Xeriscape and Soil Amendment Council Priorities Update.”):

- Utilities’ Water Conservation Department programs, services and educational opportunities, including the Xeriscape Incentive Program (XIP)
- Soil amendment inspection program (Table 1)
- Gardens on Spring Creek

Table 1. Soil Amendment Certificates Issued Since 2017	
Type	Count
Soil Certificates	2,699
Temporary Soil Certificate	885

Why consider xeriscape and soil amendment code updates?

Since 2016, Utilities has incentivized 390 residential and 25 commercial landscape retrofits that converted from bluegrass to xeriscape. (Table 2) While the volume of retrofits grows year over year, it is significantly easier and less wasteful to build water-wise landscapes from the start. New development standards must be addressed, especially scenarios where bluegrass is required. Addressing new developments and associated landscape standards with appropriate codes, while incentivizing existing developments to convert to water-wise is a best practice.

Table 2. Year to Date Xeriscape Incentive Program Results			
Property type	Number of turf replacement project rebates issued	Total area converted from grass to xeriscape (square feet)	Estimated ongoing annual water savings (gallons)
Residential (since 2016)	390 (94 in 2022)	462,899	2,777,394
Commercial (since 2020)	25	694,229	5,424,985

Challenges in the Colorado River Basin point to an increasingly water-scarce future. Without significant changes in landscaping code, outdoor water use is likely to increase over the coming decades as water users strive to maintain high-water landscapes in an increasingly hotter climate and longer growing season. Landscapes planned and installed with the changing climate in mind, such as those designed around the Seven Principles of Xeriscape, can be far more water efficient without compromising function and appearance. Landscapes built with resilience will not require resource-intensive landscape conversions to survive hotter, drier summers. Codes that reduce water use by promoting landscape best practices and limiting turfgrass will serve our community well into the future.

Not only do the proposed codes updates promote best practices, they also align with the following plans and objectives:

- Current City Council priorities 14 and 19
- City Plan – Neighborhood Livability and Environmental Health Principles
- City Strategic Objective Environmental Health 4.4 – Provide a resilient, reliable and high-quality water supply
- Water Efficiency Plan and development of that plan’s forthcoming update (anticipated in 2024)
- Our Climate Future Big Move 3 with the goal of increasing resilience for climate change impacts

Four Code Opportunities

Four code opportunities to advance xeriscape and soil amendment are outlined below. Research that informed these choices included a best practice report developed by a consultant, conversations with other communities, a water savings analysis, and engagement with stakeholders and the public.

A public survey that was sent out in August 2022 to gauge perception of xeriscape and soil amendment topics in Fort Collins gathered 929 unique responses and over 5,800 comments. 21 local stakeholder

groups, including City departments, attended focused conversations with staff. More public engagement results are shared in the attachment.

In addition to having conversations with external stakeholders, the project team engaged several City departments in consideration of their goals. For example, trees, animals and humans rely on irrigated landscapes for health, habitat and recreation, so the team engaged in discussions with Forestry, Nature in the City, Parks and Park Planning to develop balanced proposals.

Each opportunity described below lists benefits, challenges and resource needs identified to date. Additional cost and water savings analyses are ongoing, including evaluation of the cost impact to housing, and will be presented to Council prior to first reading.

Opportunity 1. Less turf in new development and redevelopment	
Description	A proposal to limit turf on all new development and redevelopment projects on residential and commercial properties. Staff have put together three options for each property type for consideration. Regardless of options selected, staff proposes a 50% plant coverage requirement for the total landscape on a property. Options are detailed in Table 3.
Current state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Commercial properties must meet an average of 15 gallons per square foot per year (gpsf) which limits the wall-to-wall installation of 18 gpsf turfgrass. - Residential properties do not have turf limitations or landscape standards.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restricting the area of high-water turf types allowed on a property reduces landscape water requirement and increases resilience. - Reducing turf area while maintaining a plant coverage minimum requirement supports habitat, species diversity, nature connectivity and landscape cooling benefits. - Water savings potential varies from option to option. Refer to Table 3.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The maintenance requirements of non-turf landscapes are different and can be more expensive, time-intensive and skilled. - Initial installation of landscapes with less turf may be more costly. - Concerns about cost impact to affordable housing. - As more landscapes move to less turf, tree health and irrigation must be considered (See Opportunity 3. C. below) - Understanding if a 10,000 square foot limit provides enough space for large HOA common spaces.
Resource needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Landscape inspector staff to review landscape plans and installations. - More education opportunities and avenues to teach appropriate watering and care of landscapes with less turf.

Table 3. Turf limit options for residential, commercial properties						
	Description – maximum percentage, area limit	Estimated annual water need, front yard only	Gallons per square foot (gpsf)	Estimated total outdoor water use / % total household water use	Annual outdoor water cost savings to the customer	Estimated annual water savings in million gallons (MG) at GMA buildout*
Residential new development – front yard turf limitations including parkway area	Existing	18,000 gal	18	42,200 / 51%	-	0
	Option A 50% max. turf	12,500 gal	12.5	36,700 / 47%	\$17	49 MG
	Option B 30% max. turf	10,600 gal	11	34,800 / 46%	\$23	67 MG
	Option C no turf	7,750 gal	8	31,950 / 44%	\$32	92 MG
Residential assumptions and considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Front yard area approximately 1,000 sq ft. Average annual household use 83,000 gal. - Developers to provide typical design options for front yard landscaping (“typicals”), requiring that one option has zero turf. - Front yards would require 50% plant coverage at maturity. - *9,000 infill and greenfield homes estimated at full GMA buildout, assumes similar front yard size continues. 						
	Description – maximum percentage, area limit	Estimated range annual water need	Gallons per square foot, range depending on property size (gpsf)	% savings compared to existing	Annual outdoor water cost savings to the customer	Estimated annual water savings in million gallons (MG) at GMA buildout*
Commercial new development and major redevelopment	Existing 60% max. turf	21,000 – 950,000 gal/year	15	0%	\$0	0
	Option A 60% max turf 10,000 sf limit	21,000 – 720,000 gal/year	11 - 15	22%	\$0 - \$643	29 MG
	Option B 30% max turf 10,000 sf limit	14,500 – 560,000 gal/year	9 - 10	40%	\$20 - \$1,100	53 MG
	Option C 15% max turf 10,000 sf limit	12,000 – 555,000 gal/year	9	42%	\$30 - \$1,300	55 MG

Commercial assumptions and considerations:

- Landscape area per dwelling unit based on average existing small, medium and large property sizes.
- 20% of property is landscaped/irrigated
- *21,000 infill and greenfield multi-family dwelling units estimated at full GMA buildout; assumes similar landscape size continues.
- Average cost savings to the customer assumes tap sizes suitable for small, medium and large properties. Based on Utilities 2022 water rates.

Opportunity 2. Allow synthetic turf in some scenarios (Staff had not originally intended to look at synthetic turf as an option. In response to the question “Do you think artificial turf should be allowed in Fort Collins?”, 615 out of 862 responses answered “yes, to some degree,” which prompted staff exploration of the topic.)

Description	A proposal to allow synthetic turf in certain scenarios on residential and commercial projects by applying for an exception or permit subject to review and design specifications. Installations of synthetic turf would require dedicated irrigation to trees.
Current state	According to Land Use Code Section 3.2.1, artificial plants, including synthetic turf, are not allowed in landscapes within City limits. A few commercial exceptions have been approved for areas with year-round heavy foot traffic.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides owners an opportunity for synthetic turf to be considered - Encourages smart installation of synthetic turf and gives the city an opportunity to review for high quality installations - Considers the health of trees - Potential for water savings
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Loss of habitat compared to live plant material - Loss of species diversity - Turf sports fields have an average lifespan of eight years and have limited options for recyclability. Installations that receive less traffic than sports fields likely have a longer lifespan. - Some research to suggest microplastic pollution - Contributes to heat island; surface temperatures can reach 20-50 degrees Fahrenheit higher than natural grass. - Enforcement of the process and of properties out of compliance - Need for sanitation and cooling of synthetic turf requires some water use.
Resource needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff time for design review, code enforcement - Development of design specifications to ensure recyclable, high-quality products are installed
Water savings potential	Unknown how much water is needed for synthetic turf. The Synthetic Turf Council suggests maintaining an irrigation system for sanitation and cooling purposes.

Opportunity 3. Additional irrigation standards and residential equipment efficiency	
Description	Four irrigation standards are packaged within this opportunity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Restricted daytime overhead watering between the hours of 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. Temporary daytime watering may be allowed in some scenarios, such as sod and seed establishment, with a permit. B. Drip irrigation only in areas less than six feet wide. This guideline would require an update to City of Fort Collins Streetscape Standards. C. Require dedicated automatic irrigation to trees. D. Extend high-efficiency equipment and design standards to all property types, including residential.
Current state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Restricted daytime watering is a tool in the Water Shortage Action Plan (A.). - Streetscape Standards call out turf grass as an option for parkway plantings (B.). - Code requires high-efficiency irrigation equipment on commercial new and redevelopment, but not on residential development (D.).
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Due to lower temperatures, less evapotranspiration happens overnight, so more water is absorbed and stored in soil and plants (A.) - Requiring drip irrigation in place of overhead irrigation on narrow strips reduces the overspray that ends up on sidewalks and streets due to overhead irrigation. Water savings are likely given the efficiency of drip irrigation and the likelihood that plant material other than high-water turf will be planted in those areas (B.). - Irrigation to trees is a safety net for trees in times of water shortage (C.). - Local projects that upgraded irrigation from basic to efficient equipment have shown significant water reduction, some close to 30% (D.)
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Large properties may not have enough time overnight to water all irrigation zones. Exceptions may need to be considered (A.). - Finding low-maintenance parkway options that aren't grass (B.). - Cost difference for equipment (C., D.)
Resource needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staffing for design review, code enforcement, delivering educational resources for efficient watering practices

Opportunity 4. Increase flexibility in soil amendment policy	
Description	A proposal to update code related to soil amendment to allow for: exceptions based on locations not suited for soil amendment or disturbance (i.e. riparian areas); temporary waivers for reasons related to planting times, schedules and availability of labor; flexibility to adjust amendment amounts based on soil test results; and alternatives to tilling. Staff also proposes to establish a minimum area threshold for notarized soil amendment certificates.
Current state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Requires tilling or mixing three cubic yards of amendment per 1,000 square feet. - Regardless of property type or project size, a notarized soil certificate is required.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In general, proper soil preparation prior to planting promotes deeper root growth, reduces the need for frequent irrigation events, and increases the rate water is absorbed into the soil. - Added flexibility in the code reduces burden for customers and Utilities staff and allows for better planting and soil health practices.

	- Adopting a minimum area threshold removes a barrier by which few owners abide and releases staff from enforcement on small-scale projects.
Challenges	- Perception that increases in flexibility will result in poor landscape installations.
Resource needs	- Soil amendment education campaign for homeowners and landscape contractors. - Soil test and test result resources.
Additional note	900 responses to questions about soil amendment show City and community values align around soil health and soil amendment. 71% stated that they sometimes or always use soil amendment regardless of whether they knew about the city’s soil amendment ordinance.

Additional considerations

A shift in culture around landscapes and outdoor water use is critical to reduce water use in Fort Collins. This work will not be successful without cooperation from the community. Adoption and enforcement of code is unlikely to have an impact if the behavior of water users remains the same. Codes may serve to define efficient design and equipment but even the most efficient irrigation system can be scheduled to apply too much water. Staff is committed to the continuous development, implementation and evaluation of water efficiency programs and campaigns that educate residents and businesses on efficient practices and behavior change and message the importance of a conservation ethic.

NEXT STEPS

- **Identify and develop resources needed for success.** For these changes to be successful, staff and the community need to be prepared. Educational resources and campaigns, cross-departmental collaboration and exploring additional incentive opportunities for customers are just a few of the many resource needs.
- **Align with Land Use Code, Water Efficiency Plan, and Urban Forest Strategic Plan updates.** Major updates of these guiding documents calls for close collaboration with staff to guarantee alignment.
- **Code development and adoption.** With feedback from Council, Boards and Commissions, stakeholders, and the public, the project team will continue to hone these opportunities and the associated costs and water savings. First reading of an ordinance to updated codes for new development can be anticipated in Q3 2023.
- **Continue to support and promote the conversion of existing landscapes to xeriscape.**
 - o Minimize barriers to participation in XIP where feasible, which could include reviewing the minor amendment process, streetscape standards, program applications, agreements and other program requirements.
 - o Work with City staff to identify funding sources and other opportunities on City-owned facilities and lands to expand xeriscape.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Council Memo, March 2022
2. Public Engagement
3. Soil Amendment Map
4. Presentation



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Item 3.

MEMORANDUM

DATE: March 28, 2022

TO: Mayor Arndt and City Councilmembers

FROM: Katie Collins, Water Conservation Coordinator ^{DS} KC 3/29/2022
 Jesse Schlam, Senior Environmental Regulatory Specialist ^{DS} JS 3/29/2022
 Abbye Neel, Interim Water Conservation Manager ^{DS} AN 3/29/2022
 Gretchen Stanford, Customer Connection Deputy Director ^{DS} GS 3/29/2022

THROUGH: Kelly DiMartino, Interim City Manager ^{DS} KD 3/30/2022
 Kendall Minor, Utilities Executive Director ^{DS} KM 3/30/2022

RE: Xeriscape and Soil Amendment Council Priorities Update

Bottom Line

Utilities staff take pride in delivering exceptional services and continue to look for opportunities to further promote water-wise principles. The purpose of this memo is to:

- 1) Provide an update on work that supports the three topic areas included in the 2021-23 Xeriscape Council priority: increase rebates, increase education, and less green lawns with new development.
- 2) Provide an update on work that supports the 2021-23 Soil Amendment Council priority that calls for effective soil amendment policies and compliance.

Xeriscape Rebates

Since 2016, the Xeriscape Incentive Program (XIP) has reduced outdoor water use by providing rebates to Utilities water customers who convert from high-water (i.e., Kentucky bluegrass) to low-water landscapes, such as shrub beds, water-wise turfgrasses, permeable hardscaping and more. Nearly 300 projects have been completed and 350,000+ square feet of high-water landscape have turned water-wise through the program.

In 2020, the commercial XIP incentive was added with the help of outside grant funding to serve Utilities commercial water customers. Since inception, 19 commercial projects have been installed across 650,000 square feet. Another 12 projects are scheduled to be completed by the end of the year.

Participants of XIP are required to certify loosening of soil and incorporation of a soil amendment with a notarized soil amendment certificate, pursuant to Ordinance No. 084, 2003.



An example of a 2021 Xeriscape Incentive Program project in midtown.

XIP continues to be funded by the Water Conservation budget, state, and federal grant funding, and a 2021 awarded BFO enhancement offer.

In partnership with Nature in the City, successful Xeriscape projects can be found by using the self-guided Fort Collins [Garden Tour](#) via an interactive story map. Garden ‘tourists’ are also encouraged to check out the gardens onsite.

[Garden In A Box](#) helps take the guesswork out of landscape design for XIP and non-XIP residents alike. Utilities, Nature in the City and Fort Collins-Loveland Water District partner with Resource Central to offer discounts on do-it-yourself perennial garden kits allowing residents to easily save water and beautify their landscape. New in 2022, Utilities has offered a limited number of \$100 discounts to income-qualified water customers.

Xeriscape Education

Utilities provides and supports numerous xeriscape education opportunities each year:

- **XIP Basics** – XIP participants are required to attend this class to learn how to efficiently water landscapes. Class content has changed over the years, but customer feedback remains overwhelmingly positive. Since 2016, over 500 people have joined us for XIP classes.
- [Xeriscape Garden Party](#) – This June marks the 20th annual event, and we will be celebrating all month long - both in-person on June 18 at the Xeriscape Demonstration Garden and online via webinars and virtual resources. This event typically welcomes approximately 400+ people in-person. In 2021, during the first ever virtual Garden Party, over 7,000 people engaged with content throughout the monthlong event.
- [Xeriscape Demonstration Garden](#) – In recent years, nearly 50 new species were planted, and educational signage was updated. The garden has a history – at the time of installation, it was only the second Xeriscape Garden in the world! Today, it continues to be an important resource showcasing the methods, plants, and materials for low-water gardening.
- [City of Fort Collins Plant List](#) – Published in May 2021, this educational tool was developed through a collaboration of several City departments. The plant list resource is now the most



comprehensive and information-rich list of Fort Collins native plants to date and is intended for a wide audience - from the small plot gardener to the large-scale developer.

- **Gardens on Spring Creek Adult Education** – Utilities continues to partner with the Gardens on Spring Creek to subsidize courses focused on water-wise landscapes and irrigation.

Less green lawns with new development

Effective January 1, 2022, **Water Supply Requirements** are helping to move new development toward low-water landscapes. The new fee structure is more closely tied to landscape water requirements such that development fees are less for landscapes that use less water.

Soil Amendments

In addition to over 250 soil amendment certificates received through the Xeriscape Incentive Program, Utilities has inspected and collected over 2,300 soil amendment certificates on development projects over the past five years. The soil amendment program has been providing online resources and guidance to developers, builders, landscapers, and residential customers online since June 2012 welcoming 3,542 unique visitors. To spread awareness and compliance of the soil amendment ordinance, the program provides brochures in the field and at the building department.

Next Steps

Staff continues to be focused on identifying program efficiencies that reduce barriers to participation. A new pilot of the Xeriscape Incentive Program aimed at getting more rebates to businesses and households will be offered this fall. A continuing enhancement offer for the Xeriscape Incentive Program will be submitted for the 2023-2024 budget cycle.

Staff is working towards providing an **update to xeriscape and soil amendment regulations**. Land-use consultant Clarion Associates has been hired to research and benchmark the City's current xeriscape and soil amendment codes against peer communities to help understand gaps and opportunities. Public outreach on proposed changes, including discussions with the other major water districts, is scheduled for summer 2022. Staff will present proposed regulations to Council for comment at the Oct. 11 work session.

Coming Up

- **XIP Basics** - April 5 and May 7 - Register at fcgov.com/xip
- **Xeriscape Garden Party** – June 18, from 9 a.m.-noon at 300 Laporte Ave. - fcgov.com/garden-party
- **Oct. 11 work session** - Council will be asked to weigh in on proposed xeriscape and soil amendment regulations.

Summarized Survey Results

Survey Stats

- Start Date: 8/20/22
- End Date: 9/11/22
- # Of responses: 929
- # Of comments: 5,878

Question 1. What's your position toward increasing xeriscape policies, such as those listed above, in Fort Collins?

Results:

Value	Percent	Responses
Very opposed	4.3%	40
Opposed	3.1%	29
Neutral	3.8%	35
Supportive	17.7%	164
Very supportive	71.2%	661

Totals: 929

Comments Summary:

Most respondents understand water is a limited resource and most of the people also want to see change in landscapes to reflect the local climate. A common reoccurrence in the comments was that the process to have xeriscaped landscapes should be easy to understand and affordable. Some people mentioned how unmaintained xeriscape landscapes are very unattractive, though a few people mentioned that bluegrass lawns can also be unattractive if not well-maintained. People noted their love for the trees and stressed importance of prioritizing their health. For the most part, people disliked the amount of bluegrass seen around town and would prefer to see xeriscape measures that benefits pollinators, increases biodiversity, decreases water demand, and better reflects our local climate

Key Comments:

1. Landscape planning should support our water use and climate future goals.
2. I support water conservation methods through adequate soil amendments and xeric landscaping. The city will need a system that is user-friendly for contractors. Currently, the approval process is too cumbersome and leads homeowners to keep installing turf grass.

3. As a landscaper, I see disproportionate resource use in the wealthiest neighborhoods. Getting their HOAs to adopt climate friendly landscape guidelines should be a priority. Daily watering of bluegrass has got to stop.
4. Some of the xeriscape residential properties in the city look like overgrown weed gardens. People who are required to xeriscape are not likely to do it and maintain it well.
5. If done incorrectly people will neglect watering trees. We are losing lots of trees to drought. So sad to see loss of even newly planted trees.
6. I am a tenant who has to pay for lawn landscaping and has no control over my landlord's landscaping choices. Xeriscape policies would save water, help with beautification, and reduce my costs as a tenant.
7. Supportive if training comes along for landscaping crews too. Planting more and more xeriscape is only helpful and beautiful like the pic above when the landscape is maintained.

Question 2. Do you think xeriscape policy should expand to include new home (residential) construction?

Results:

Value	Percent	Responses
Yes, xeriscape policy should affect new residential and commercial construction the same	62.6%	582
Yes, xeriscape policy should affect new residential construction, but not to the same extent as commercial construction	26.0%	242
No, xeriscape policy should not affect new residential construction, only commercial construction	3.6%	33
No, I don't support xeriscape policies for any new construction	5.1%	47
Unsure	2.7%	25

Totals: 929

Comments Summary:

People are concerned about our water future and are mixed in how far they think govt. should get involved in homeowner choice and independence. Many sighted incentivization as the right approach, while some sighted the need for heavy regulation now due to drought and climate emergency. Many note the difference in use as a reason why res/biz should be subject to different policy, however, others disregard use difference in preference of policy equality. HOA tracts of turf often sighted more as biz than as res. Also, HOA rules not allowing Xeriscape often sighted (so policy change would be needed to enable people living in these areas to go X). Less

empathy for biz apparent, and many perceived less need for turf at biz. Many note that just because grass was the approach historically, doesn't mean it is the right approach now. It is a different time, climate change is a thing, and water has grown scarce. Many recognized the difficulty and long-term nature of managing change for this work, and a common and fairly neutral stance was that if we begin now by gently implementing policy with education and incentives, we can avoid retrofitting later and be moving in the right direction, while starting us down a path that is needed for our semiarid environment with its expected climate trends

Key Comments:

1. Sustainable landscaping should be encouraged but homeowners should still be allowed a fair amount of choice in the matter. I plan to xeriscape much of my property but if I still had children at home, I would want more lawn space for them to play in.
2. Xeriscaping can be a burden on families without the means to implement it. The city should be leading by example, building out new xeriscaped spaces and developing the competencies to better inform private citizens about the benefits. With more experience, will come a city that is more trusted and followed by private citizens without the need for heavy handed regulations.
3. Allow more creative freedom for homeowners, rather than requiring a very specific landscape plan. Provide clear boundaries and limits for homeowners to work within and that are easy to understand (and therefore enforce)
4. Xeriscape in spaces not intended for use by people (essentially non-yards/parks) should be an expectation given the water consumption required for traditional lawn.
5. Would hate to buy a new house and have someone tell me how to landscape my yard, it probably would already be pretty expensive to buy a house and then probably really expensive to hire a landscaper to properly xeriscape my yard.
6. This would be a big shift for residents, so allowing a bit less stringent guidelines for residences might be a good compromise

Question 3. If future xeriscape policies are put in place, should existing homes be subject to those policies in the event of a landscape renovation?

Results:

Value	Percent	Responses
Yes, existing homes should be held to xeriscape policies when renovating landscapes	43.0%	399
Yes, existing homes should be held to xeriscape policies when renovating landscapes, but not to the same extent as new homes	33.2%	308
No, xeriscape policy should not affect existing homes	16.8%	156
Unsure	7.0%	65

Totals: 928

Comments Summary:

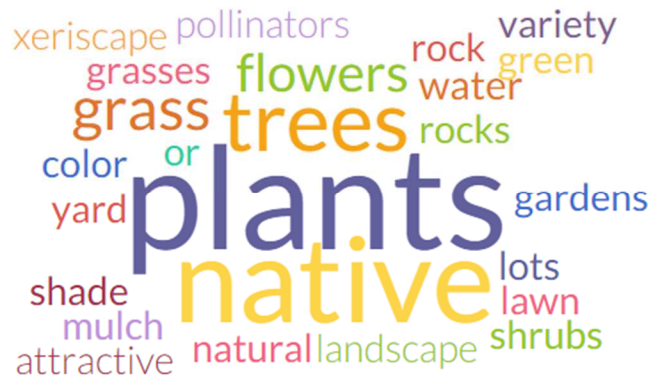
Everyone should have a role/play a part in water conservation. However, renovations are expensive and should not be required/regulated, for equity reasons. Do not have policy that increases cost. Education is key to successful renovation, especially to protect trees that are used to getting the water. People should have a choice, and not forced to go xeriscape, and equity should be considered. Additional red tape would be bad, and enforcement will be a huge challenge as well. However, if they CHOOSE to renovate, have standards that lean towards Xeriscape, such as: rules not allowing lawn expansion; incentivizing xeriscape; not allowing xeriscape conversion to lawn; total renovations subject to "new" home rules. Misconception- will this impact backyards. How to encourage HOAs to be more flexible or remove large tracts?

Key Comments:

1. I would fully agree with this except I'm concerned that this would make more red tape/permitting requirements and would actually result in preventing people from xeriscaping
2. As long as the guidelines are flexible and forgiving, sure. No one wants to see a sea of bluegrass with a weeping willow in our climate. But we want to be partners, not the enemy. Renovating landscaping is expensive. We shouldn't make it more expensive.
3. Let's not make it punitive, but rather participatory and community oriented. Let's help people change.
4. I would need help and support on converting a portion of my home landscaping to Xeriscape and I wouldn't want it to cost an exorbitant amount of money... Maybe if additional incentives for reducing water usage would off set the cost of converting I would be more inclined to do so
5. If there are no community funds available to homeowners to make the transition, more steps to ensure an equitable transition need to be taken.
6. Landscape renovations are expensive. Further, most of those landscapes will also have mature trees to deal with - making these conversions problematic (at least if you don't want to harm the trees).

Question 4. When you think of an attractive landscape at a home in Fort Collins, what does it look like?

Results:



Comments Summary:

Most people who responded want to see diversity and variety. Native plants, pollinator friendly plants, perennials, shrubs, flowers, trees, mulch, rock, grasses were ALL mentioned frequently. Only a handful (<10) only wanted to see green grass, and a few respondents mentioned they prefer green grass but are trying to change their view. A common response was well-maintained, but there were also a lot of responses that preferred "wild" and "messy" landscapes. Native and drought-tolerant showed up frequently. Same with trees and shade. Also - a frequent response was that of an edible landscape! People want to see more fruit trees and edible plants around in front yards. A slightly less common response, but still notable, was that beauty is in the eye of the beholder and what's important is that the homeowner is happy. Backyard turf was much more encouraged than front lawns, and people wanted these areas to be functional. Functional, well-maintained, diverse, drought-tolerant, native, habitat for pollinators were the largest groupings.

Key Comments:

1. Diverse native gardens with turf areas that will be frequently used. These turf areas could include native or drought resistant turf types. Trees!
2. It is a landscape that is diverse and thriving within its limitations. It is a landscape of rocks, shrubs, wood, different plants, moss, flowers, etc. It is unique, and does not match the landscape next to it.
3. Neat, organized, and well maintained.
4. Whatever the owner wants it to be within reasonable expectations of resource usage.
5. Mix of plants, often including a small turf grass area where the eye "rests" from the busyness of the other plants.
6. Lots of flowers, drought tolerant plants, color, bees, a tree for birds/squirrels, etc. Basically, it would be its own ecosystem.

Question 5. When you think of an attractive landscape while entering a business in Fort Collins, what does it look like?

Results:



Comments Summary:

Most respondents want to see well-maintained, diverse, clean, and safe landscapes for businesses. There were quite a few comments about supporting businesses that had a more water conscious/xeric landscape as it showed the business cared about the community. People want to see various colors, textures, and a landscape that can be aesthetic all four seasons. Well-maintained, but easy maintenance, were prevalent responses - something that looks neat and clean but is not too much work. Functionality was big too, hardscape walkways up to the entrance, seating, and visibly clear with no obstructions in the parking lot for safety reasons. A few people commented, like residential, it is up to the property owner to decide. Some folks also mentioned how they don't care/don't notice the landscape of businesses.

Key Comments:

1. A bit more structured with tall grasses and colorful flowers. Large boulders for benches and bordering shrubs and perennials.
2. Functional space - possible seating and pathways, repetition in plantings creating movement in the space, minimal irrigated turf, interest from focal points like sculptures, boulders, etc.
3. Native xeriscaping makes me more appreciative of that business in that it looks that they are taking an active role in minimizing water usage.
4. Native plants in clusters or patterns, including grasses, flowers, shrubs, and trees, with the use of pea gravel or mulch. For the most part, there is no need for a business to have turf anywhere.
5. Neat and no large plants blocking the way. Easy navigate when walking or driving through.
6. Not much grass. Neat and clean. Well maintained is important - if there are a lot of weeds, I think poorly of them (fairly or not!). Again, large expenses of gravel or loose rock are sloppy, unattractive, and hot.

Question 6. Which of the following best represents your view on the use of bluegrass in your neighborhood?

Results:

Value	Percent	Responses
It's important for me to have lots of bluegrass where I live	6.7%	62
I would be okay with some limits on bluegrass where I live	36.6%	338
I would be okay with no bluegrass where I live	38.2%	353
I would be okay with no bluegrass where I live, only if a park was within walking distance	14.1%	130
Unsure	4.4%	41

Totals: 924

Comments Summary:

Most respondents believe that bluegrass can be appropriate when it is functional (i.e., children, dogs, recreation) but many stated the current amount of grass is excessive. There were a notable number of comments saying that the government should not tell residents what to do with their own property. Of these comments, some stated people can do what they like on their property, whereas some added reducing grass and saving water is important but should still be the homeowner's choice. On the flip side, most comments stated there needs to be change to the current amount of grass around town, some suggested starting with City and commercial properties. Once again, a common theme from these comments is that education is going to be key for success. Education on the importance of saving water through landscapes, alternatives to Kentucky Bluegrass (natives or DogTuff), and education to new homeowners of the Colorado climate and what might grow best. Whatever solution we land on, trees in bluegrass areas currently use to a lot of water, so it needs to be a priority to keep them healthy.



Key Comments:

1. People don't need lawns when they are near a park that can be used for recreational lawn activities. We are in a drought and don't need to waste water on something as non-functional and harmful as non-native turf grass. Every drop counts
2. Although bluegrass is water thirsty, it's resilient to browning up in the hot summer, and coming back in the fall. I'm worried people will turn to turf which is toxic for humans and is bad for our watershed. At least bluegrass pulls carbon from the air. Yes, limit some bluegrass, especially for front yards, green belts, etc.
3. For landscaping in non-yard areas there is an opportunity for more xeriscape. Especially certain HOA areas, but HOA members understandably can be reluctant to put effort in or HOA money into changing grassy areas that aren't being used
4. There should be an effort to get rid of Kentucky blue grass and change to a more sustainable grass. Again, the city will have to help as the costs will be prohibitive to most.

- 5. I'm ok with less blue grass if the decision is left to the property owners, rather than government.
- 6. I think bluegrass is essential for some activities, especially for children and pets. However the amount used currently is excessive.

Question 7. Which of the following best represents your view on the use of native grass in place of bluegrass in the urban landscapes around Fort Collins?

Results:

Value		Percent	Responses
I prefer to see more native grass than bluegrass in urban landscapes		77.1%	712
I prefer to see more bluegrass than native grass in urban landscapes		4.3%	40
It depends		18.6%	172

Totals: 924

Comments Summary:

Most folks want to see native grasses more than bluegrass. However, a good majority of those folks knew that native grasses are difficult to grow and maintain, which could potentially turn them weedy and unattractive. Some folks mentioned the same thing with bluegrass, it is more about the planning and upkeep associated is what matters. Well-maintained is a very common expectation. Many respondents expected the city to provide resources, such as education and incentives to help lead the way. Quite a few comments understand the function of the area to landscape is highly important to what is planted, and water conservation should be greatly considered into this

Key Comments:

- 1. Native grasses are beneficial to wildlife and don't require as much water so I would prefer to see them in most spaces over bluegrass. Providing educational resources about native grasses in green spaces and neighborhoods might convince more folks to make the switch from bluegrass
- 2. I have fallen in love with the prairie grasses - with the look, with how they wave in the wind and look in winter. On the other hand, I look at some of my neighbors' lawns that used to be grass and are now mostly weeds, and I don't think they'd take care of a prairie grass landscape.
- 3. I would prefer the use of more resource-taxing bluegrass to be limited to recreation spaces like ball fields and playgrounds. Native grasses are better for space meant only to be seen. (You should never see a "keep off grass" sign on mown lawn.

4. From your description it sounds like native grass isn't appropriate for parks, fields, or other gathering places. I guess because of that I'd like to see a balance between the 2, however that works out to make each place functional. Ratios don't matter much.
5. It would be nice to allow a variety of water-wise options. With micro-climates there is no one size fits all. Provide options to navigate specific site conditions and educate around how and why these changes are valuable to the homeowner and larger environment.

Question 8. Do you think artificial turf should be allowed in Fort Collins?

Results:

Value	Percent	Responses
Yes, in all situations	15.1%	130
Yes, in some situations	33.6%	290
Yes, in very limited situations	22.6%	195
No, never	14.6%	126
Unsure	14.0%	121

Totals: 862

Comments Summary:

Most respondents recognize that artificial turf has a large affect on environmental health, but many commented on how it could be a better option than a high-water use landscape. There were strongly in support of artificial turf and those that think it should be 100% banned, but most people were somewhere in the middle that it is okay to use in small amounts. People's comments on the environmental affects were that of leaching plastic in the water, increasing flooding during storms due to runoff, its affect on soil health, wildlife habitat, and pollinator species. It also gets extremely hot and roasts the surrounding area to make it harder for trees and other species to survive, plus the lack of water limits any runoff to trees. Respondents that have worked with artificial turf mention it needs proper installation and maintenance, which includes watering it for hygienic reason if dogs were to use it as a bathroom. Areas that people would be okay seeing artificial turf in would be small areas that have function, most often recreation, but also for property owners that are not able to maintain a live yard. There were a lot of comments on just how ugly artificial turf is, and they don't think it reflects Fort Collins. A very common response was "I don't know enough to make a decision" so education is critical with any artificial turf policies.

Key Comments:

1. Artificial turf isn't very attractive overall, so maybe only in back yards. Also, I'm not sure about the environmental implications of whether they help retain soil moisture or if they shed microplastics into the watershed - if this is the case, then no artificial turf.

2. I don't know enough about artificial turf, but I think there may be specific settings where it would make sense. I would defer to local experts on what they recommend, particularly paying attention to the impact on our environment
3. Artificial turf increases residential heat, decreases animal habitat, and increases plastic pollution. I do not think replacing bluegrass with artificial turf is a net positive. It should be allowed but in carefully managed circumstances.
4. I do not have a lot of experience with artificial turf, but it sounds like a good solution.
5. Artificial does not require water to maintain. I don't object to people choosing this as a cost saving alternative to xeric landscaping even though I personally find it unsightly.

Question 9. When you work on landscape projects, do you incorporate soil amendment?

Results:

Value	Percent	Responses
Yes	54.1%	500
Sometimes	17.7%	164
No	3.4%	31
No, but I plan to start	6.2%	57
N/A - I don't have landscape projects	18.6%	172

Totals: 924

Comments Summary:

Simply, most people add amendment to their soil. Most people add amendment knowing the benefits to our clay soils, a few did it because it was required, but most people didn't even know it was required. A common response was it is hard to grow anything here without amending the soils, that its needed, and many people also stressed the importance of plant's needs. For example, natives don't like highly amended or rich soils. Only a few people provided amounts in this survey, but most people just "add" compost, or some sort of amendment based on the tag of the plant, the nursery/landscaper's recommendation, but rarely in very defined amounts. A common response was that they just didn't know it was required or they didn't know it was beneficial; this would have been the first time they heard of soil amendment. There was a strong push to not allow peat as the mining of peat is environmentally degrading. Some people were focused on the water savings associated, but most spoke to the benefits of plant health. Finally, there were enough comments to mention that increased education and incentivizing the adding of amendment would be good to see from the city.

Key Comments:

- 1. I always include soil amendments to help in water retention, however, I try to avoid peat when possible since it is not sustainable. I prefer to use compost instead.
- 2. The minimal requirement should be 3cy per 1000sf. Personally, We typically amend residential at this rate. At my personal home I amend with 6-10cy per 1000sf. increasing the minimum amendment rate will result in better establishment of plants and quicker establishment of turf grass. This will also result in lower water consumption throughout the life cycle.
- 3. We have worked to amend our soil in the front yard when we converted from landscaping rock to mulch with garden in a boxes. However we haven't worked on the backyard yet. It can be a lot of physical labor and I am disabled, so it can be costly for us since we have to hire help
- 4. We did a xeriscape project through City (class with utilities refund) and did significant amendment to the area xeriscaped. Major improvement in water efficiency for that portion of the yard.
- 5. I am a professional gardener and I deal with all kinds of soils. We do amend the immediate area when we plant and I encourage people to plant specimens that can thrive in clay soils. Amending large areas of heavy clay is impractical for most - Expensive and labor intensive. People rarely choose amending.

Question 10. Do you have any additional thoughts to share regarding soil amendments?

Results:



Comments Summary:

There were two most common answers to this question. One, most people did not know about the regulation and believe the City is responsible for providing education and encouragement to see this through. Secondly, there were many comments about pushing the city to start a composting program, that can be used for the amendment. Even though most people amend

the soil, very few knew it was a regulation and even fewer were in support of a notarized certification. Many people believe the certification process should be simpler and that at its current state may even discourage projects. A few people mentioned how this should be encouraged but not regulated and this idea of a certification, especially for residential properties, is government overreach. A few respondents think it's best to increase the soil amendment requirement, while most people wanted an easier way to understand process of the whole thing. Most people were in support of this policy but 1) didn't know and 2) had some qualms with minor parts of the ordinance - enough so that a re-evaluation should take place (i.e., what does "all landscape projects" mean and is that appropriate?)

Key Comments:

1. This seems more like a public awareness issue than a follow-the-rules issue. The City and the public's incentives are aligned.
2. If we had a city composting program, this could be coordinated with the push for xeriscaping in commercial and residential areas.
3. I think many people don't know what soil amendments are or the purpose of them, and probably don't even know that they are a requirement. Maybe there needs to be some more education about this?
4. As an industry professional, I can say as a fact that this does not happen consistently and needs to be policed especially with regards to builder's landscapers. I have witnessed, on several occasions, a truck pulling a dump trailer down the road, with several new homes being landscaped at the same time, where a worker is in the trailer scooping out compost and throwing it into the yards. subsequently, new sod is already on site and workers rake the compost evenly and lay the sod right down on top. Never is there any tilling to six inches into existing backfill and never does the quota of 3cy/1000sf get met.
5. Sounds like it can get expensive. If I was doing a project on a budget I would likely ignore the requirement or just nix the project entirely.
6. This is a totally un-enforceable code, but new construction should always be inspected. Just let people know. I've lived here over 40 years and didn't know this.

A public survey and invitations to one-on-one conversations with staff were extended to the following stakeholder groups:

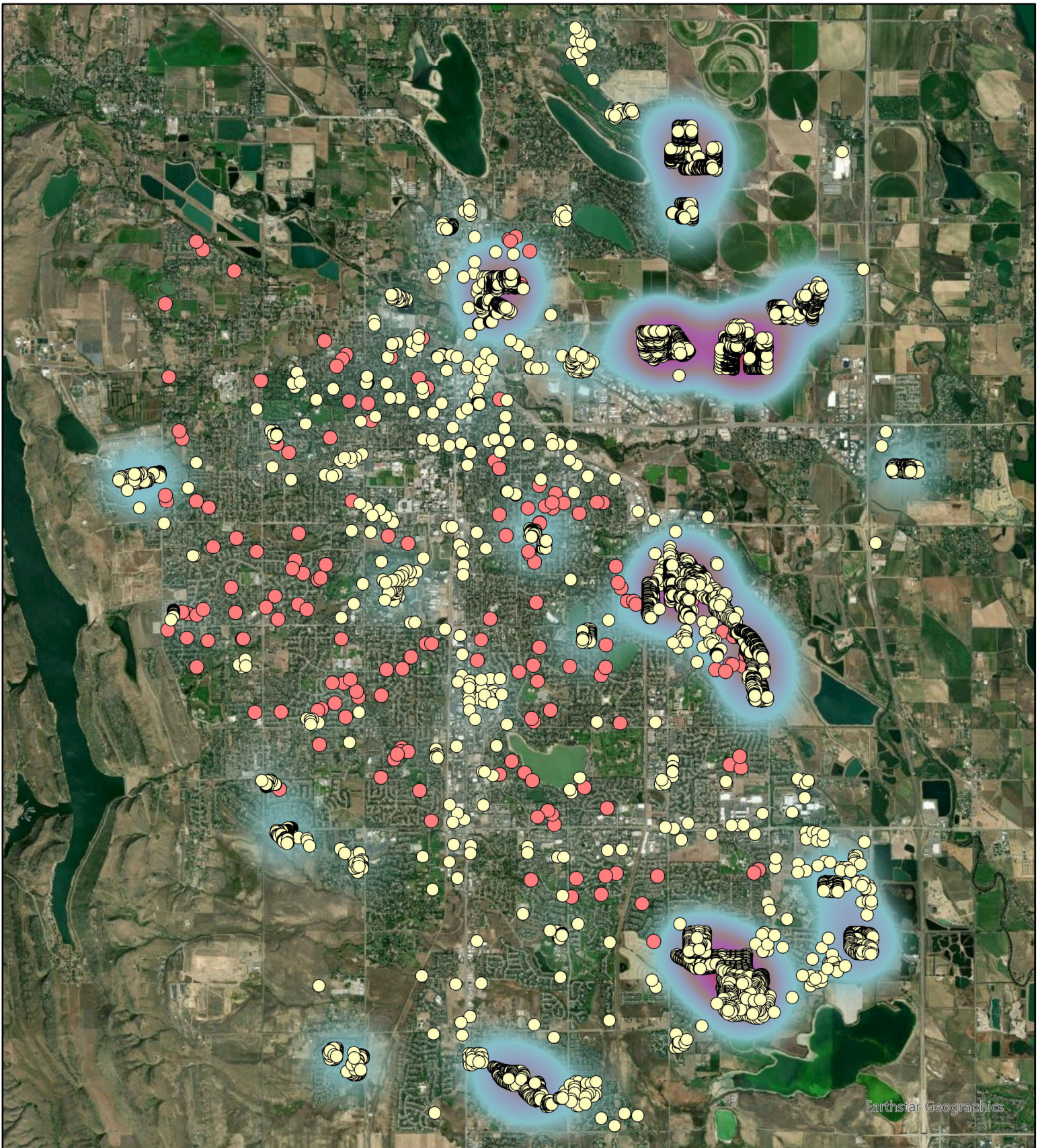
Reached out to 162 unique emails, 25 sub-audiences

1. Affordable housing provider
2. Authorities (PFA)
3. Big Developers
4. Builders
5. Building/Engineering
6. Chamber of Commerce
7. Conservancy
8. County
9. Environmental Advocacy
10. Environmental Consultants
11. HOAs
12. Individuals
13. Land Grant Universities
14. Landscape Architects
15. Landscape material supplies (wholesale)
16. Landscape Professionals
17. Landscape supply stores (retail)
18. Mom & Pop Developers
19. Nurseries & Wholesalers
20. Previous FCU program participants
21. Property managers
22. Restoration Contractors
23. Societies
24. Visitors to Fort Collins
25. City Departments


Engagement with 21 individual groups, 13 sub-audiences

1. Authorities (PFA)
2. Big Developers
3. Builders
4. Land Grant Universities
5. Landscape Architects
6. Landscape Professionals
7. Landscape supply stores (retail)
8. HOAs
9. NoCo Homebuilders Association
10. Board of Realtors
11. Water Commission
12. Natural Resource Advisory Board
13. City Departments

Soil Amendment (SA) Certificates Issued (2012 - 2022) Item 3.



Earthstar Geographics

- Xeriscape Incentive Program SA Certificates
 - Environmental Regulatory Affairs SA Certificates
-  Sparse
Dense



N



Exploring Xeriscape & Soil Amendment Code Changes

To Promote Efficient Water Use and Healthy Landscapes

Presented by Katie Collins, Water Conservation Specialist

Project Team: Gretchen Stanford, Mariel Miller, Danielle Reimanis

Project: Explore xeriscape and soil amendment code updates that support long-term water use reduction

Item 3.



- Greatest water-saving opportunities: outdoor uses (~40% of total annual water use)
- Resilient landscapes: less impacted by rising temperatures and water shortages (e.g., Colorado River Basin)
- Similar measures along the Front Range:
 - Town of Castle Rock
 - City of Aurora
- City Council identified priorities (2021-2023)

Council Priorities

Priority 14. Effective soil amendment policies and compliance (water usage)

Priority 19. Xeriscape – Increase rebates and education, less green lawns with new development

A. What feedback does Council have regarding the four proposed opportunities?

1. Less turf in new development and redevelopment (three options)
2. Allow synthetic turf in some scenarios
3. Expand irrigation standards and residential equipment efficiency
4. Increase flexibility in soil amendment policy

B. What additional information is needed?

Definitions

1. **Residential** – single-family detached homes, duplexes
2. **Commercial** – multi-family properties (e.g., apartments), businesses, HOA common spaces, etc.
3. **Turf** – area of grass with a water requirement greater than 15 gallons/square foot/year
4. **Soil Amendment** – any material added to soil to improve its physical properties and conditions for plant growth; can also reduce water use



What's Xeriscape?

Sustainable, thoughtful landscape design; water-wise landscaping; based on sound horticultural principles.

1. Plan
- 2. Improve soil**
- 3. Irrigate efficiently**
- 4. Use turf wisely**
5. Select appropriate plants
6. Mulch
7. Maintain



Xeriscape, NOT Zeroscape



Codes



- Landscape standards for commercial; none for residential
- Synthetic turf restricted
- Soil amendment
 - 3 cubic yards / 1,000 square feet, tilled in
 - Certified

Incentives



- Xeriscape Incentive Program (XIP)
 - Fort Collins Utilities only
- Financial incentives to use less water

Education



- Annual Xeriscape Garden Party
- Sprinkler Checkup program
- Garden in a Box
- Xeriscape Incentive Program

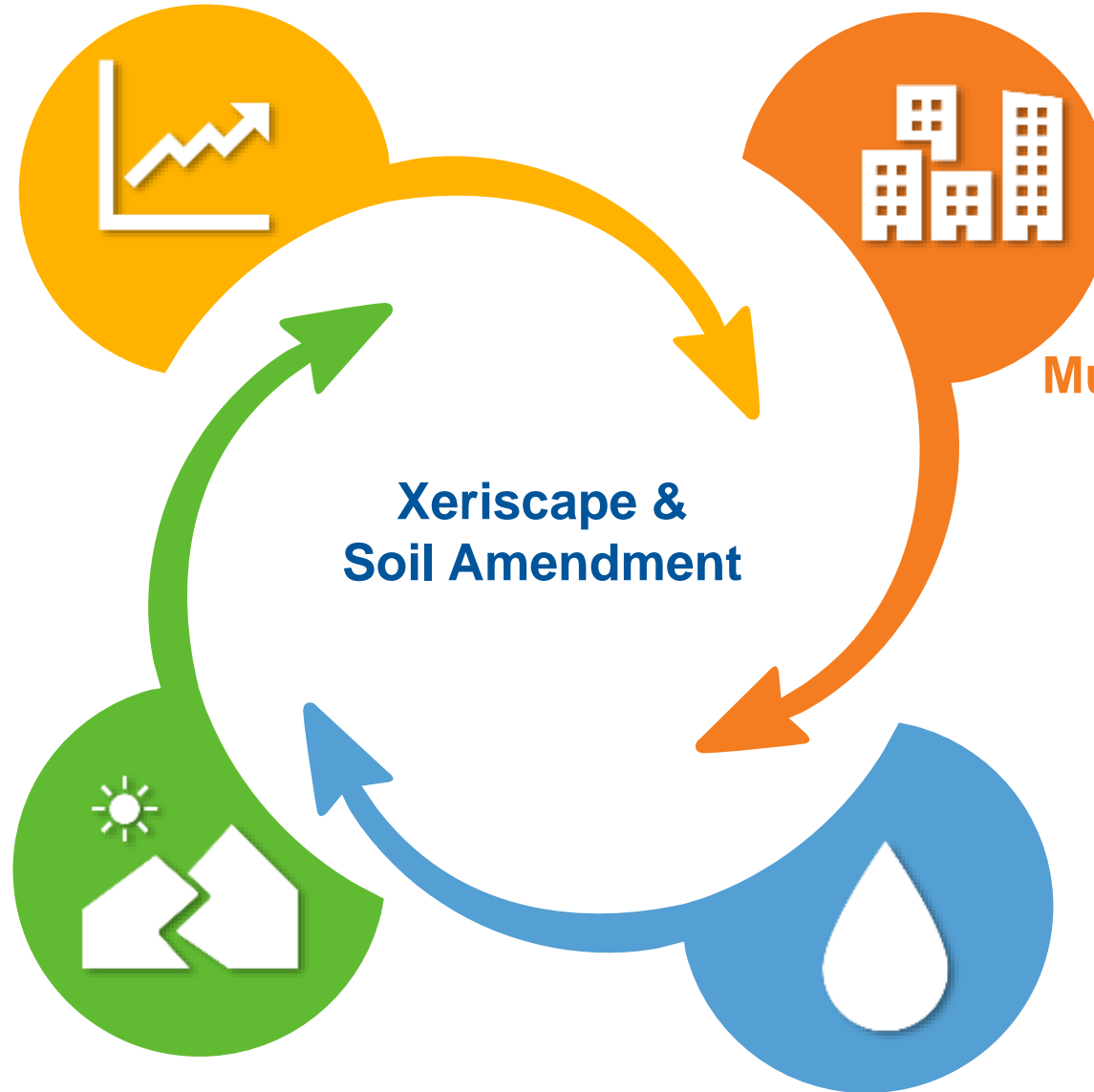
Council Priority

City Strategic Plan

Fort Collins Utilities Strategic Plan

Colorado Water Plan

Urban Forest Strategic Plan (Future)



City Plan

Our Climate Future

Housing Strategic Plan

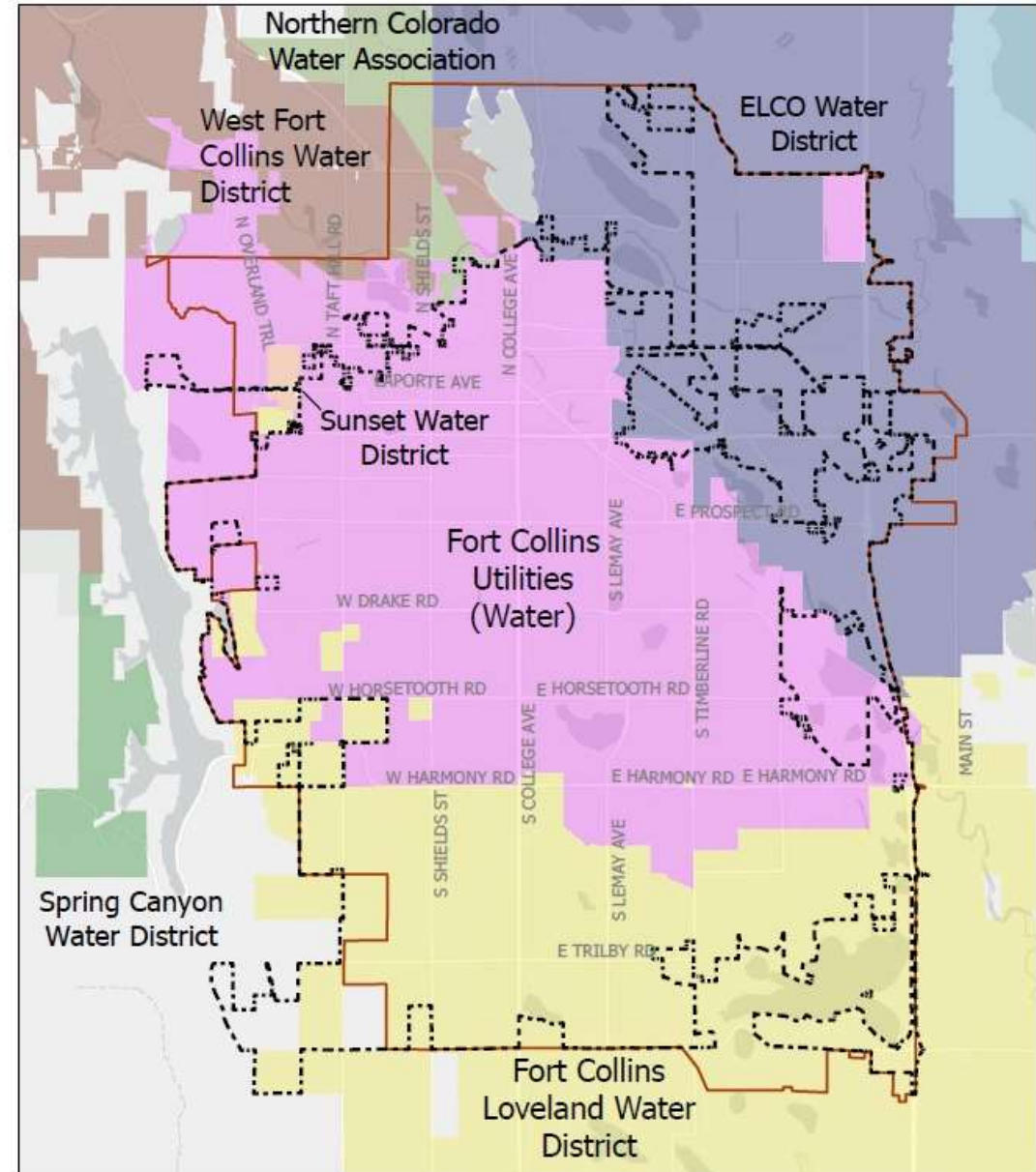
Municipal Sustainability and Adaptation Plan

Land Use Code

Water Supply & Demand Management Policy

Water Efficiency Plan

- Proposed standards are likely Land Use Code updates
- Applied within City limits, regardless of water provider



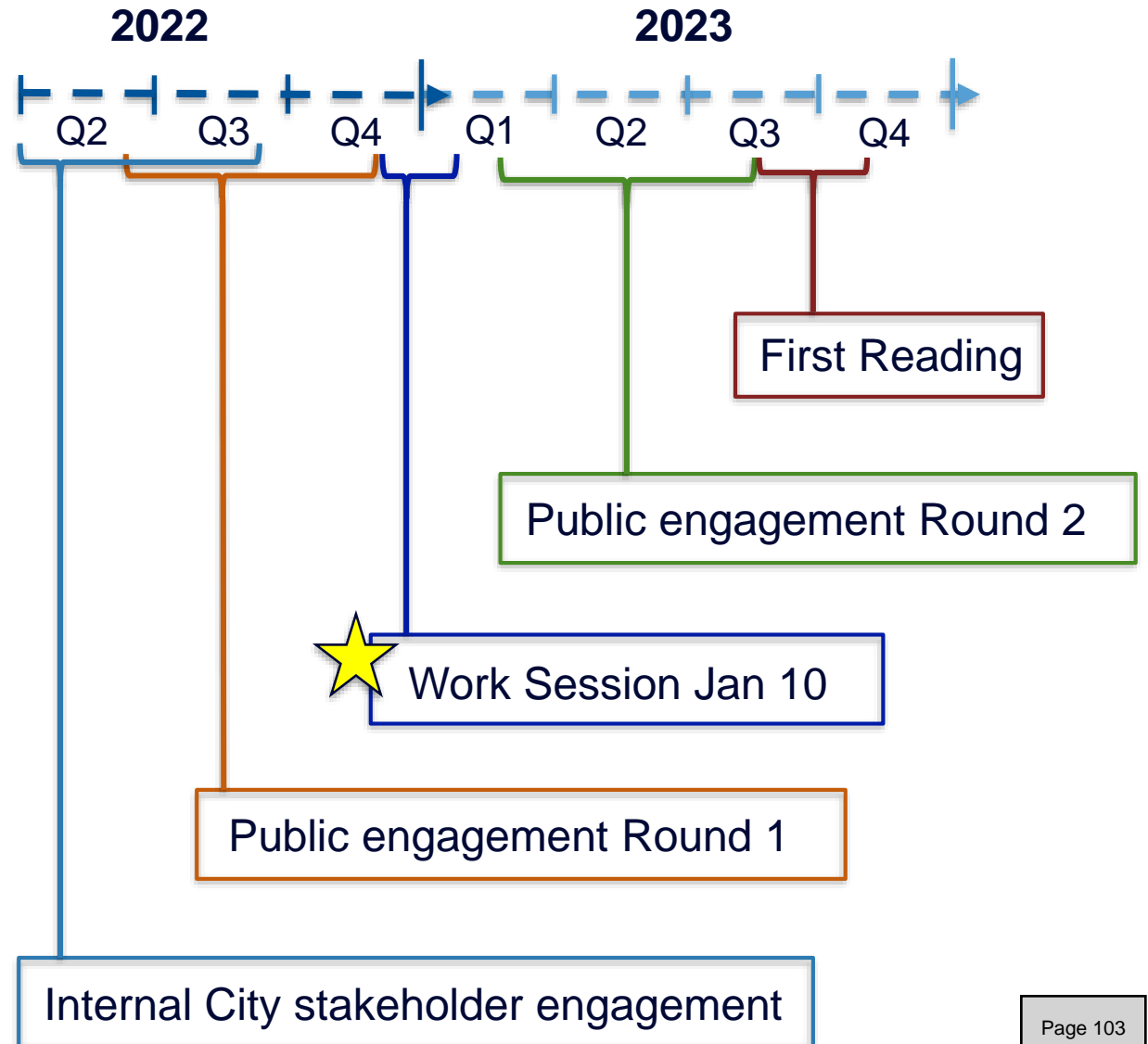


Opportunities

Xeriscape & Soil Amendment

Opportunities were developed based upon:

- Public engagement
- Alignment with other departments
- Best practice report by consultant
- Estimated water savings analysis
- Peer communities



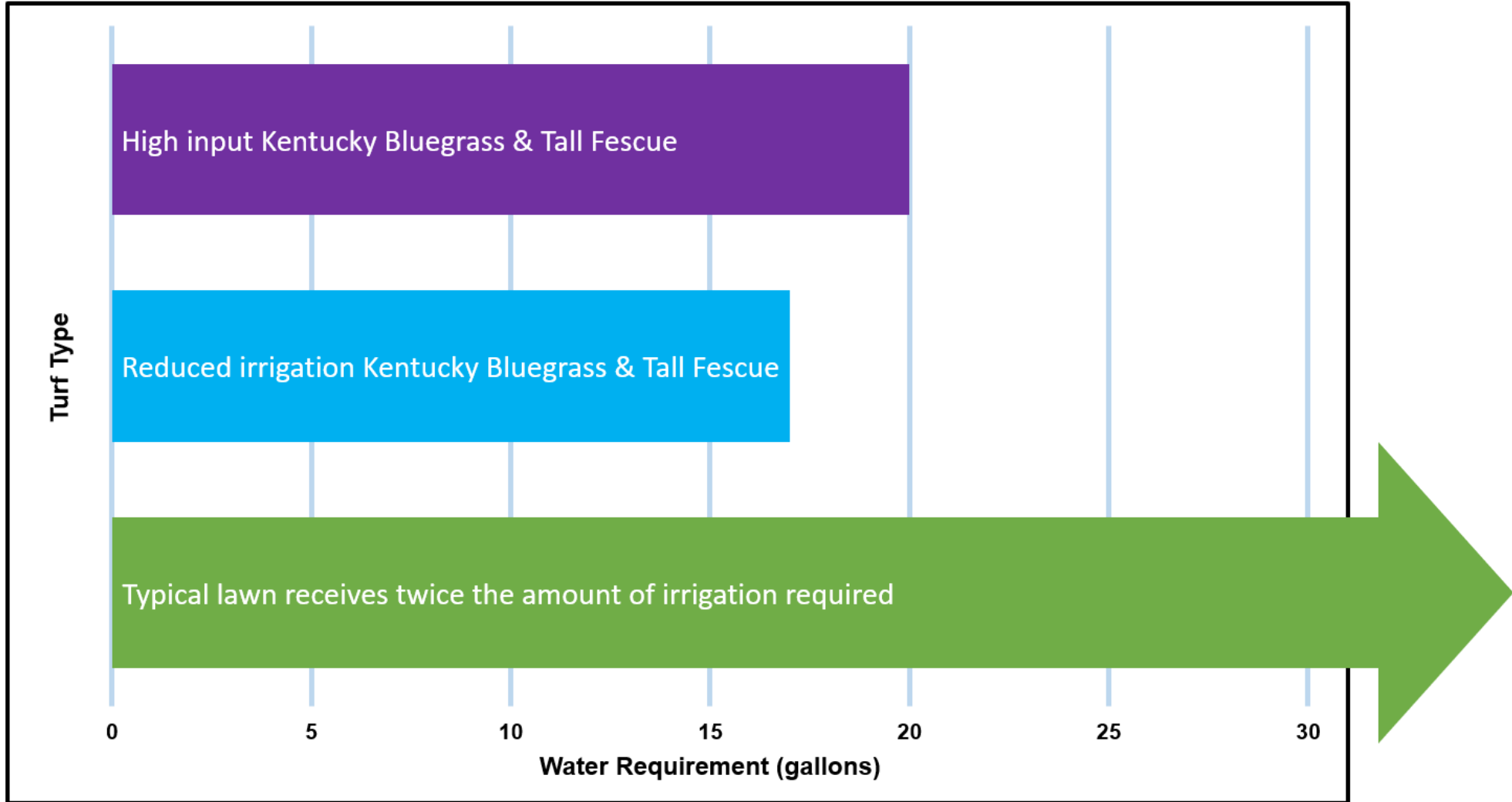
Four Opportunities to Consider:

1. Less turf in new development and redevelopment (three options)
2. Allow synthetic turf in some scenarios
3. Expand irrigation standards and residential equipment efficiency
4. Increase flexibility in soil amendment policy





1: Less turf in new development and redevelopment

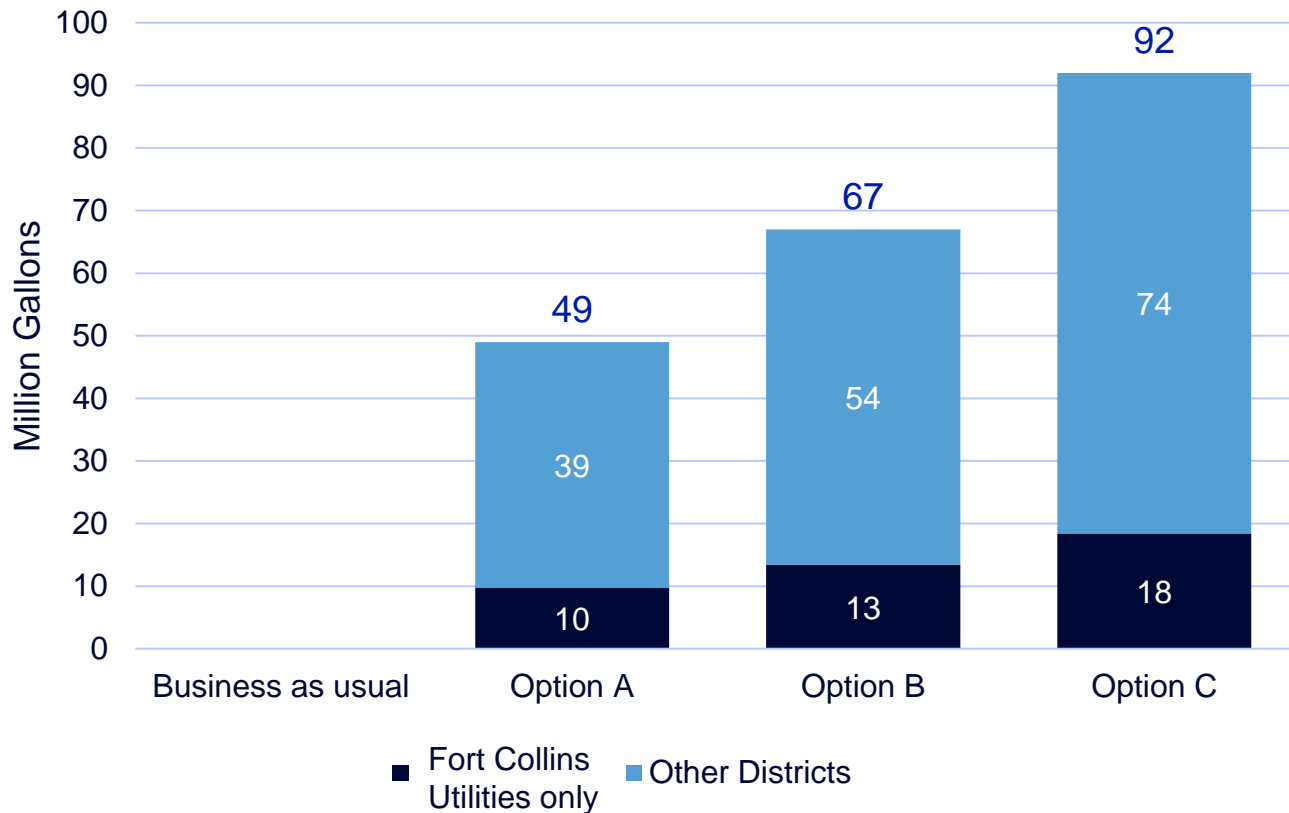


Adapted from CSU Extension



	Existing	Option A	Option B	Option C
Turf limit – front yard including parkway	No limit	50% maximum	30% maximum	0% maximum
Average annual front yard water need	18,000 gallons	12,500 gallons	10,600 gallons	7,750 gallons
Percentage of total household water use	22%	16%	14%	11%

Estimated Water Savings at GMA Build-Out Compared to Existing Residential Average



	Single Family + Duplex Dwelling Units (#)	Estimated Landscape Area (acres)
Fort Collins Utilities Service Area (20% of New Development)	1,800	41
Other Water Districts (80% of New Development)	7,200	165
TOTAL	9,000	206

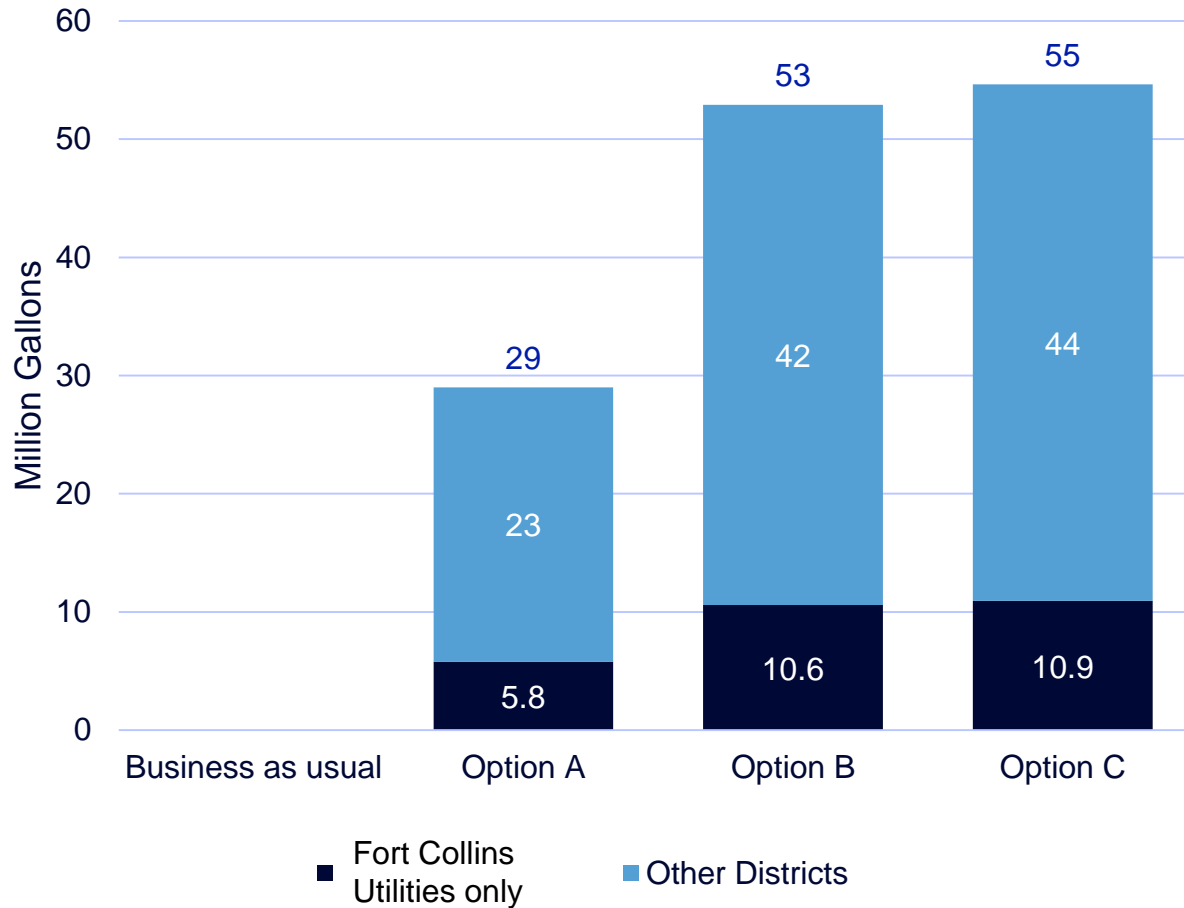
Assumptions

1. Front yard including parkway = 1,000 sq ft
2. Areas of non-turf are an average of very low to moderate water use
3. 50% plant coverage needed



	Existing	Option A	Option B	Option C
Turf limit – total property	60% maximum	60% maximum, up to 10,000 sq ft	30% maximum, up to 10,000 sq ft	15% maximum, up to 10,000 sq ft
% water savings over existing	-	22%	40%	42%
Estimated annual customer savings	-	\$0 – \$643	\$20 – \$1,100	\$30 – \$1,300

Estimated Water Savings at GMA Build-Out Compared to Current Average, Multi-Family



	Multi-Family Dwelling Units (#)	Estimated Landscape Area (acres)
Fort Collins Utilities Service Area (20% of New Development)	4,200	41
Other Water Districts (80% of New Development)	16,800	163
TOTAL	21,000	204

Assumptions

1. 20% of property is landscaped
2. Estimated landscape area based on average size of existing multi-family properties



2: Allow synthetic turf in some scenarios

Advantages

- Low water requirement
- Reduced chemical inputs (i.e. pesticide, fertilizer)

72% of survey respondents think synthetic turf should be allowed to some degree



Disadvantages

- Average lifespan of 7-10 years
- Negative soil and tree impacts
- High heat index
- Increases stormwater runoff
- Contains PFAS
- Microplastic pollution and significant plastic waste

Residential

- Allowed in front yards with a permit
- Trees must have dedicated irrigation
- Plan must meet high-quality installation specifications



Commercial

- Allowed on case-by-case. Examples include year-round, high-traffic areas.
- Trees must have dedicated irrigation
- Plan must meet high-quality installation specifications





3: Expand irrigation standards and residential equipment efficiency



Irrigation Design



- Drip irrigation only in areas less than six feet wide

Healthy Trees



- Dedicated automatic irrigation to trees

Equipment Standards



- High-efficiency equipment and design required for all property types

No overhead watering between 10 a.m. and 6 p.m.

- A permit process for new sod and seed would be developed to allow for temporary daytime watering





4: Increase flexibility in soil amendment policy



In favor of healthy landscapes, this proposal supports:

- Additional Exceptions
 - Location (i.e. waterways)
 - Project size
 - Plant type
- More Flexibility
 - Expand eligibility for temporary waivers
 - Alternatives to tilling
- Best Practices
 - Photos as proof of amending
 - Soil tests





Wrap-up

Xeriscape & Soil Amendment

Ongoing

- Continue to develop opportunities
- Analyze cost and water savings
- Align with City efforts
 - Land Use Code update
 - Water Efficiency Plan update
 - Urban Forest Strategic Plan

Before first reading

- Complete public engagement round two
- Identify and develop resources for success
 - **Education**
 - Incentives
 - Cross-departmental training/collaboration
 - Staffing needs
 - Funding sources

Future

- Plan for first reading (Q3 2023)





Discussion

A. What feedback does Council have regarding the four proposed opportunities?

1. Less turf in new development and redevelopment (three options)
2. Allow synthetic turf in some scenarios
3. Expand irrigation standards and residential equipment efficiency
4. Increase flexibility in soil amendment policy

B. What additional information is needed?

THANK YOU!

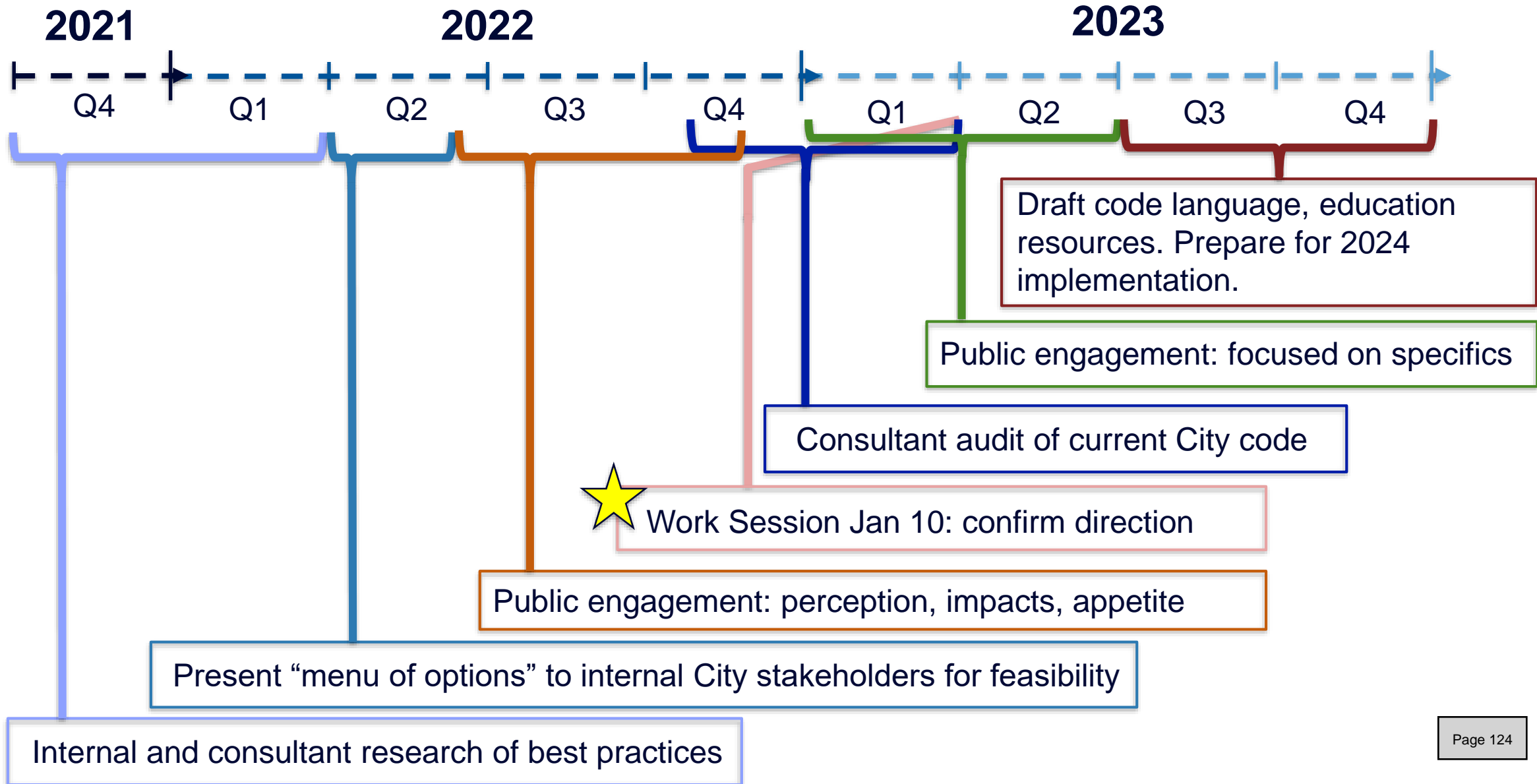
For Questions or Comments, Please Contact:

Katie Collins & Danielle Reimanis

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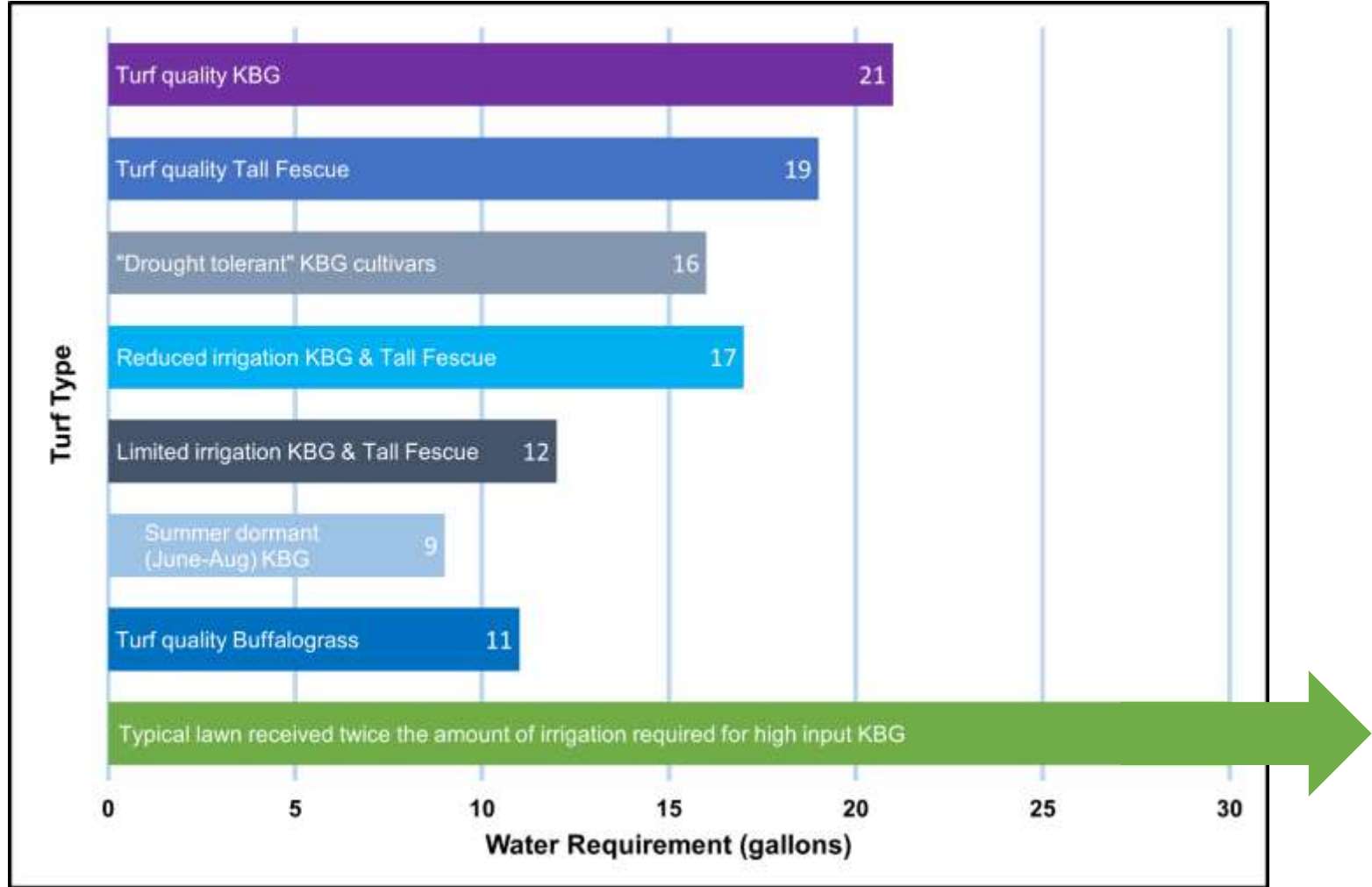
929 respondents

- 89% of respondents supportive of increased xeriscape policies
- 89% of respondents think xeriscape policy should also include residential
- 72% of respondents think synthetic turf should be allowed to some degree
- 54% of respondents always incorporate soil amendment when doing a landscape project



Project	Expenses	\$/sf	Estimated Savings (gal)	Area of conversion (sf)	Savings (gal/sf)	ROI without incentives
1	\$20,000	\$7	152,050	2,850	53	31
2	\$14,000	\$3	182,800	4,600	40	23
3	\$24,650	\$1.1	1,114,400	22,423	50	2
4	\$201,000	\$14	1,818,330	14,841	123	5
5	\$90,000	\$21	85,146	4,382	19	10
6	\$12,092	\$0.12	989,472	98,396	10	1
7	\$20,000	\$0.26	182,148	78,190	2.3	5
Average	\$54,535	\$7	646,335	32,240	42	11

	Average Pervious Area (sf)	Total Pervious Area (sf)	Total Units (#)	Pervious Area per Unit (#/sf)	Estimated Pervious Area at Build-Out (sf)
Small	1,407	116,092	1,271	137	173,568
Medium	4,542	363,087	2,431	223	542,847
Large	64,026	5,462,722	17,298	472	8,167,248



How are we enforcing and how do we ensure small rebuilds are complying?:

Enforcement options:

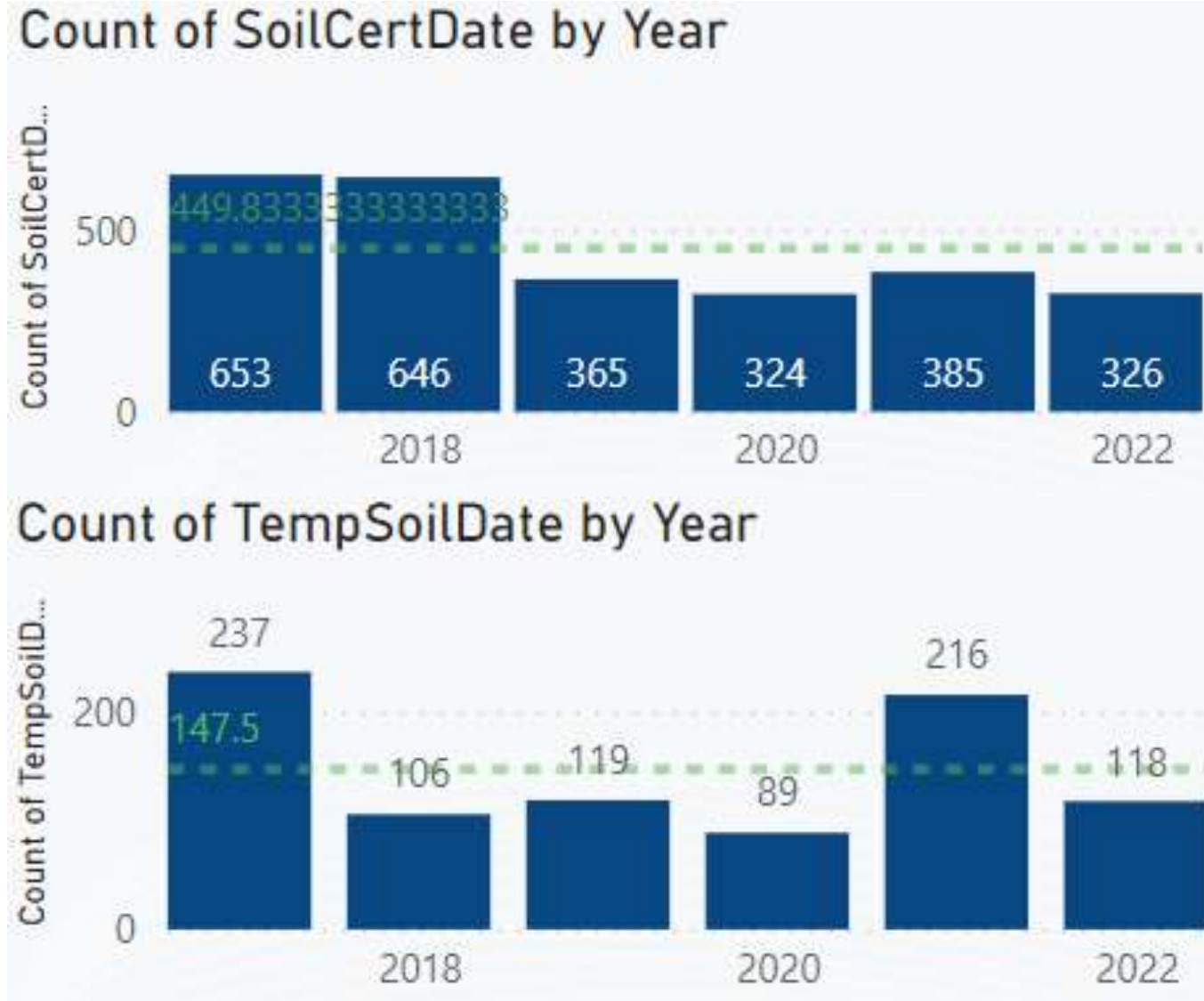


- Self-certification by owner or applicant
- Fines/escrows/abatement
- Random inspections
- Full verification

Considerations:



- Currently at resource capacity
- Increased FTE's
- Increased resources (i.e., vehicles, tools)



Commercial



Commercial (Multifamily)



Residential



Existing

Option C

	Option A	Option B	Option C
Annual Estimated Residential Savings	49 MG	67 MG	92 MG
Annual Estimated Multi-Family Savings	29 MG	53 MG	55 MG
TOTAL	78 MG	120 MG	147 MG
Equivalent to the water use of about ___ homes for one year²	940	1,450	1,770

¹It is difficult to estimate development scenarios for commercial business at GMA build-out. Commercial businesses were intentionally left out of these slides.

²The average annual residential water use for Fort Collins Utilities water service customers in 2018-2020 was 83,000 gallons.