

VISION AND VALUES

Since the first City Plan in 1997, Fort Collins has steadily transformed from a quiet college town of just over 100,000 people to a bustling, small city of approximately 170,000 in 2018. Population estimates from the Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA) and the North Front Range Metropolitan Planning Organization (NFRMPO) project that Fort Collins is likely to add 70,000 new residents by 2040. This iteration of City Plan carries forward the city's long-standing commitment to sustainability and triple-bottom-line thinking. Emerging concerns about rising housing costs, increased congestion and the effects of continued growth pressures in the city and region are incorporated into City Plan through an emphasis on equity, resilience and access to opportunity. This chapter highlights the big ideas that emerged from community input over the course of 18 months and serves as a foundation for this update to City Plan.

“Overall, the best place in the world to live. We strive for excellence in all areas. Fort Collins has been a community that believes there’s no standing still—you’re either moving forward or falling behind. Fort Collins chooses to move forward.”

-Fort Collins resident

Community Vision

We take action to address the needs of all members of our community and strive to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to thrive. As a community, we commit to building a healthy, equitable and sustainable city—for our families, for our neighbors and for future generations.

CORE VALUES



LIVABILITY

FORT COLLINS IS THRIVING

The high quality of life we enjoy requires a city that is safe, with a wide range of housing and transportation options and a vibrant economy that is accessible to everyone. These basics are supported by exceptional community services, strong educational institutions, and committed business and nonprofit partners.

Livability means:

- Attainable housing options
- Convenient transportation
- Great parks and open spaces
- A vibrant economy with good jobs
- Wide range of educational opportunities
- Safety and stability
- Clean air, water and neighborhoods



COMMUNITY

FORT COLLINS IS FOR EVERYONE

We benefit from our diversity, social connections and open communication. We strive to provide equitable access to opportunities, services and resources, and to create an inclusive environment for all members of our community. We take pride in our friendly culture, celebrate our differences and know that we make better decisions when we encourage open dialogue about tough issues.

Community means:

- Fostering healthy living and social well-being
- A commitment to equity, diversity and inclusivity
- Funding and promoting arts, culture, creativity and innovation
- Strong public and private social services
- Friendly neighborhoods and enduring community pride
- Public spaces set aside for interaction and celebration
- A culture of open, honest communication



SUSTAINABILITY

FORT COLLINS IS RESILIENT AND FORWARD THINKING

Our actions equitably address the triple bottom line of sustainability: our economic, social and environmental resources. We create opportunities for all to participate in the success of our economy, to act to address the needs of our most vulnerable community members, to prepare for disruptive events and to mitigate our impacts on the environment.

Sustainability means:

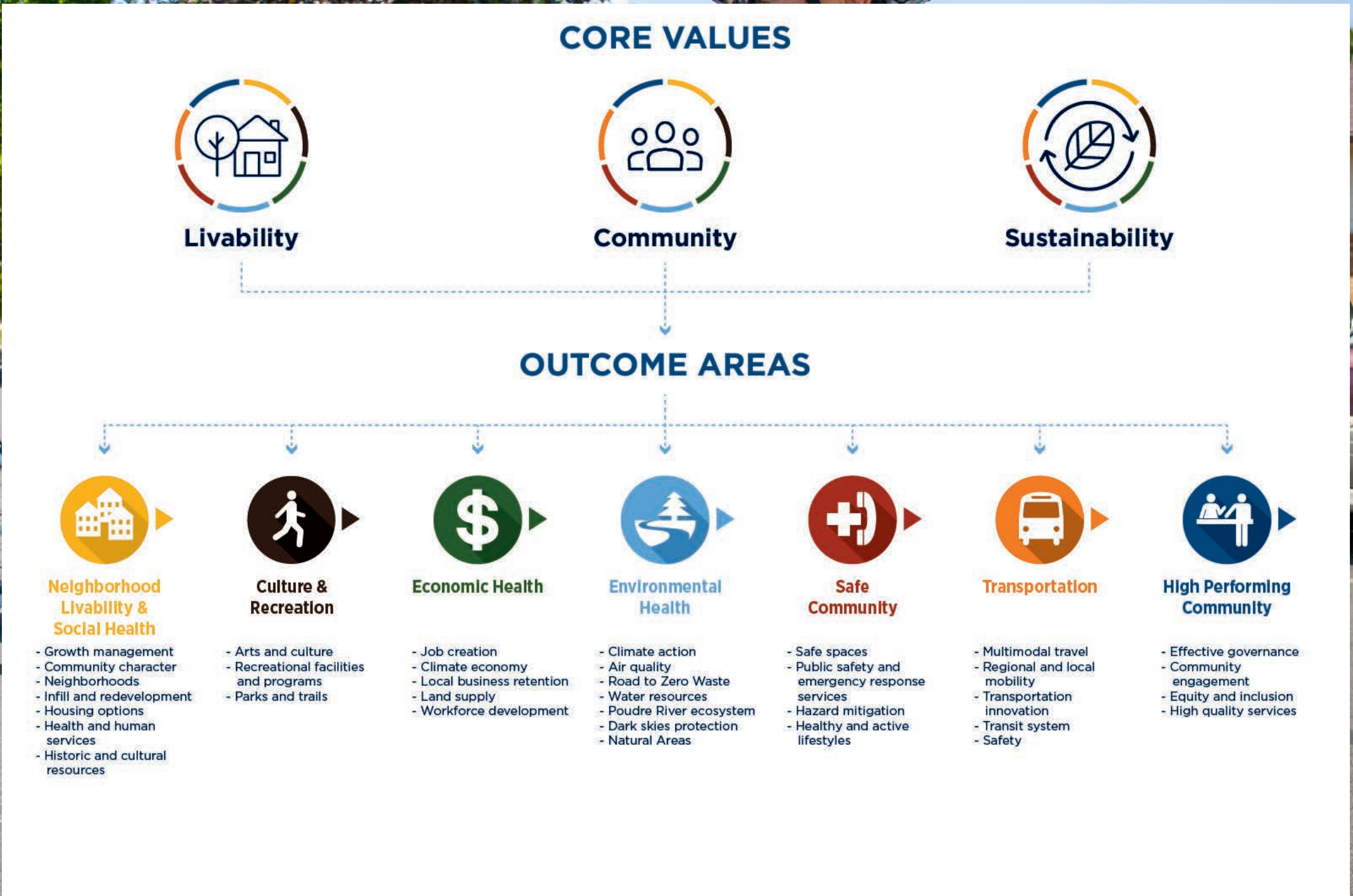
- A clear path toward clean energy, waste reduction and carbon neutrality
- A strong and diverse economy
- Protection of the natural environment
- Efficient management of our community's financial position and stability
- Close coordination with cities and partners in Northern Colorado
- Careful management of growth and resources
- Managing our water resources for a changing future climate

How does City Plan support our vision and values?

POLICY FRAMEWORK

Principles, policies and strategies contained in City Plan— together with the Structure Plan—are used to guide future growth and development and day-to-day decision-making within the City of Fort Collins organization. The City tracks its progress on City Plan and other adopted plans and priorities based on the seven outcome areas to the right. This structure supports plan- monitoring efforts, as well as alignment with the City’s budgeting and strategic planning processes.

Topics listed under each outcome area below highlight where policy direction is provided within City Plan. However, issues related to the community’s core values overlap. Key areas of alignment between the core values and the principles and policies in each outcome area are highlighted in Part 3.



GROWTH FRAMEWORK

Many aspects of the community's vision and core values are directly or indirectly influenced by the built and natural environment. The Structure Plan map is used in conjunction with the principles and policies in City Plan to guide where and how growth occurs. While the basic premise behind the Structure Plan has not fundamentally changed over the last 20 years, some of the key concepts that underpin it have been implemented more successfully than others.

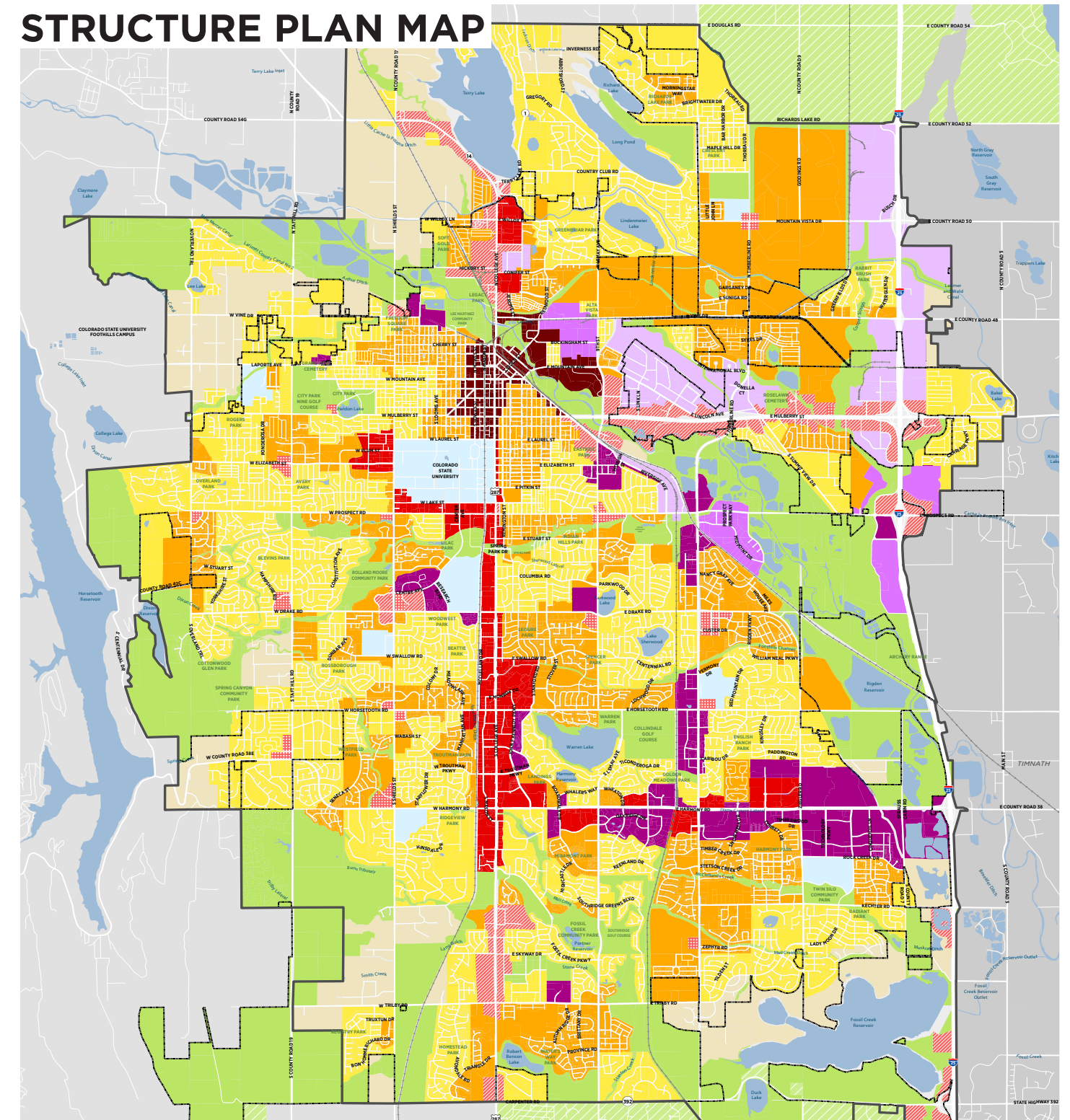
This iteration of City Plan seeks to build a broader understanding of the Structure Plan's role in implementing the community's vision, and the need to consider trade-offs when it comes to future growth and investment. An evaluation of issues and opportunities pertaining to five focus areas were used to help frame discussions with the community and ultimately to inform updates to City Plan as part of this update:

- » Making the most of the land we have left;
- » Taking steps to support a healthy and resilient economy;
- » Encouraging more housing options;
- » Expanding transportation and mobility options; and
- » Maintaining our focus on climate action.

Underscoring each of these focus areas is a commitment to equity and inclusion. While housing units, jobs, vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and carbon emissions are all important factors that influence where and how we grow, we must also remember that the people who live in Fort Collins are what makes it a great community. As Fort Collins continues to change over time, we need to evaluate the impacts of land use, economic, housing and transportation decisions on those in our community who are most vulnerable or in greatest need. One group should not be disproportionately impacted over others by changes to our city. At the same time, we must ensure that the benefits of future growth are also distributed equitably across our community. Using decision-making tools such as the Health Equity Index in this section and the City's Triple Bottom Line (TBL) Scan will help ensure that we are making smart, thoughtful decisions about our future growth.

The pages that follow highlight key policy directions and Structure Plan elements that will be used to help focus our efforts over the next 10-20 years.

STRUCTURE PLAN MAP



Mixed-Use Districts

- Downtown District
- Urban Mixed-Use District
- Suburban Mixed-Use District
- Neighborhood Mixed-Use District

Employment Districts

- Mixed Employment District
- Research & Development/Flex District
- Industrial District
- Campus District

Neighborhoods

- Rural Neighborhood
- Suburban Neighborhood
- Mixed Neighborhood

Corridors and Edges

- Parks and Natural/Protected Lands
- Community Separator

Boundaries

- City Limits
- Growth Management Area (GMA)
- Adjacent Planning Areas



HEALTH AND EQUITY

Who you are and where you live in Fort Collins can put you on a different path than a resident from a different background or part of the city. This can result in different outcomes for your health, ability to access healthy food, recreational opportunities and many other areas that are critical to maintaining the high quality of life City Plan envisions for all members of our community. In this update, City Plan utilized a health and equity lens to develop new policies and implementation actions that can help ensure that our actions and decisions do not disproportionately burden one group over another. As our city becomes more diverse, it will be important to understand the barriers facing certain groups or neighborhoods (whether they be related to race, income, health, employment, educational attainment, age, ability, etc.) so that all residents have access to the services, resources, infrastructure and opportunities they need.

What are Social Determinants of Health?

Social determinants of health are the social and physical conditions of a person's life that influence their personal health and well-being: education, income level, access to health care, social and community context, and neighborhood/built environment. Research shows that residents who live in poverty and have lower levels of educational attainment are more likely to have poor health outcomes and will be more vulnerable to impacts from climate change. Understanding this linkage is an important factor in planning for health equity.

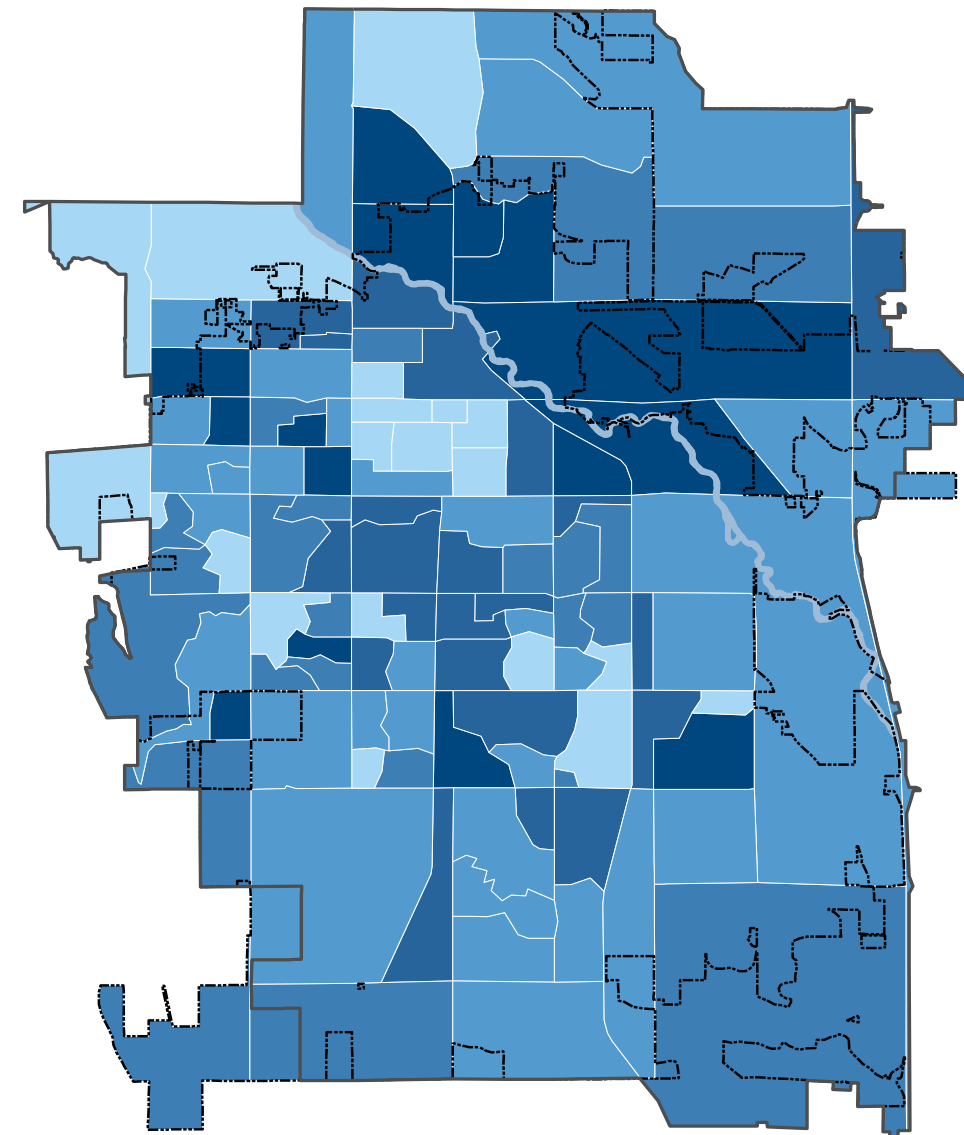
How does it all connect?

The Health Equity Index analysis shows that social factors related to health outcomes are not equal in all parts of Fort Collins. Median household income tends to be lower for non-white racial and ethnic groups (\$42,333 or less) than it is for white households (\$62,804). Educational attainment also varies by race and ethnicity—for example, 42% of Hispanic/Latinx residents had a bachelor's degree in 2016, compared with 59% of white residents. Generally, the Health Equity Index shows that more vulnerable or disadvantaged populations (census block groups with high index values) are clustered north of the Poudre River, while less vulnerable populations (census block groups with low index values) are clustered near Downtown. These disparities in health equity have wide-ranging implications for all outcome areas in City Plan.

What is the Health Equity Index?

The Health Equity Index, developed by the Larimer County Department of Health and Environment (LCDHE), is a tool to identify potentially vulnerable areas of the community. It is a weighted index made up of two calculated scores to determine the geographic areas of highest need. The first component includes an Equity Score, composed of socioeconomic factors using the most recent American Community Survey (ACS) estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. The second component, the Health Score, is composed of health indicators from 500 Cities Data (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention). See the City Plan Trends and Forces Report in the Appendix for more information.

HEALTH EQUITY INDEX FORT COLLINS, 2016



0 - 20 21 - 40 41 - 60 61 - 80 81 - 100

Scores range from 0 to 100, with 100 indicating the highest priority.

The Health Equity Index is a composite measure of overall health equity in Fort Collins and includes the following equity and health indicators:

Equity Indicators

- » Population under age 18
- » Population age 65 and older
- » Households at or below the Federal Poverty Level
- » Hispanic/Latinx population
- » Non-white (minority) population
- » Households without a vehicle
- » Disability status

Health Indicators

- » Adult obesity
- » Adults with no leisure-time physical activity
- » Adults who experienced poor mental health for 14 or more days

Making the most of the land we have left...

As we look ahead, it is important to consider how we can best use the limited supply of remaining vacant land to meet our future needs. Principles and policies in City Plan address the overall mix, distribution and intensity of land uses in different parts of Fort Collins; promote the efficient and cost-effective provision of public infrastructure and services; and support the development of the types of places we would like to see—or retain—in our community in the future.

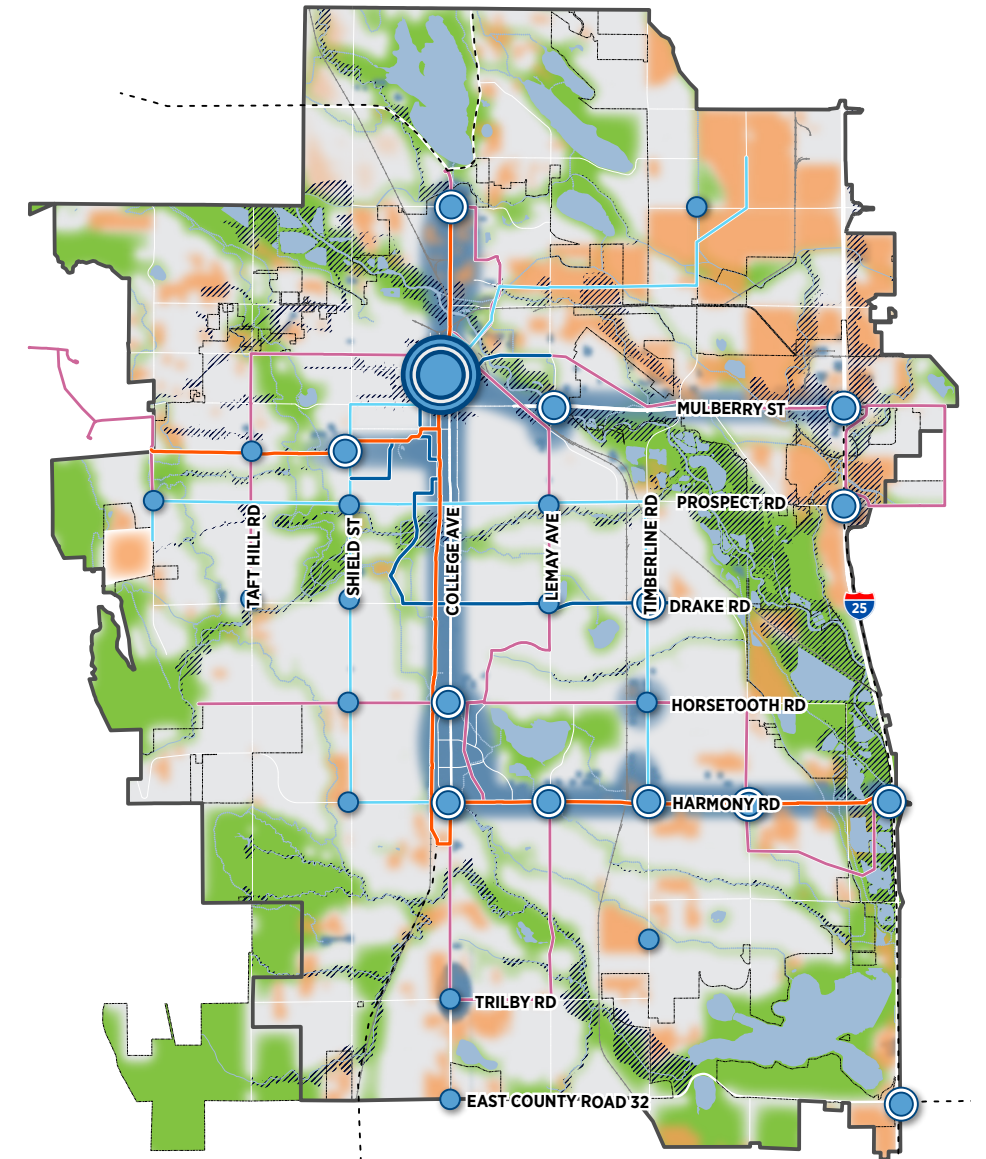
Where are we today?

- » Undeveloped land within the GMA is becoming increasingly scarce.
- » Much of the remaining undeveloped land in the GMA is not served by City sewer and water utilities, which could impact the availability, timing and pricing of future development in these areas.
- » Underutilized properties have significant potential for infill and redevelopment, particularly along current and future transit corridors.
- » Without a significant increase in density in key locations, a transportation system desired by the community, including improvements to transit and infrastructure for bicycles pedestrians, will not be viable.

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



This map illustrates—at a conceptual level—where the most significant changes in density, intensity and overall mix of uses are likely to occur over the next 10-20 years. It also identifies areas that we will need to protect as future development occurs. Because our land supply is finite, we must focus our efforts on:

» Requiring transit-oriented development (TOD) in key locations

High-frequency transit is only viable with supportive land use patterns such as mixed-use with higher-density residential, employment and services. The plan supports a stronger stance on maximizing infill/redevelopment potential where service exists or is planned.

» Encouraging compact growth

The GMA will continue to define the outer limits of future growth.

» Encouraging infill and redevelopment

Policies support the conversion of vacant and underutilized properties to meet current and future needs and promote the efficient use of infrastructure.

» Encouraging more housing options in neighborhoods

Housing options such as accessory dwelling units (ADUs) will be encouraged through new development and the adaptation of existing neighborhoods over time. These additional options help support the plan's broader housing affordability policies.

» Expanding access to services and amenities

City Plan supports a broader mix of uses in activity centers and along corridors to reduce the need for crosstown trips.

» Addressing infrastructure priorities

City Plan supports collaboration with local and regional partners as development occurs to address infrastructure and service needs in areas not currently served by City utilities.

Taking steps to support a healthy and resilient economy...

Fort Collins' economic health is influenced by a variety of factors—jobs/housing balance; land cost and supply; access to infrastructure and services; and the overall livability of the community. Principles and policies in City Plan promote a continued focus on innovation and creativity, which have long been drivers of Fort Collins' local economy. They also promote a stronger focus on equity—to help ensure that the benefits of employment, wage growth, prosperity and increased standards of living are shared by all—and resilience—to allow our economy to evolve and adapt to technological advancements and climate change, as well as rebound from economic shocks.

Where are we today?

- » We've experienced strong employment growth over the past 10 years.
- » Our economy is becoming greener and more adaptable in the face of climate change.
- » Employment growth is outpacing housing growth, which creates a commuting problem.
- » It is difficult for residents to find high-paying jobs that allow them to live in Fort Collins.
- » Businesses are struggling to attract qualified workers and/or find appropriate space to grow into.
- » Land available for future non-residential development may not be development-ready or located in appropriate parts of the city.
- » It is increasingly difficult for small businesses, service-commercial and industrial users to remain in Fort Collins because of rising commercial rents.

WHERE WILL WE FOCUS OUR EFFORTS?

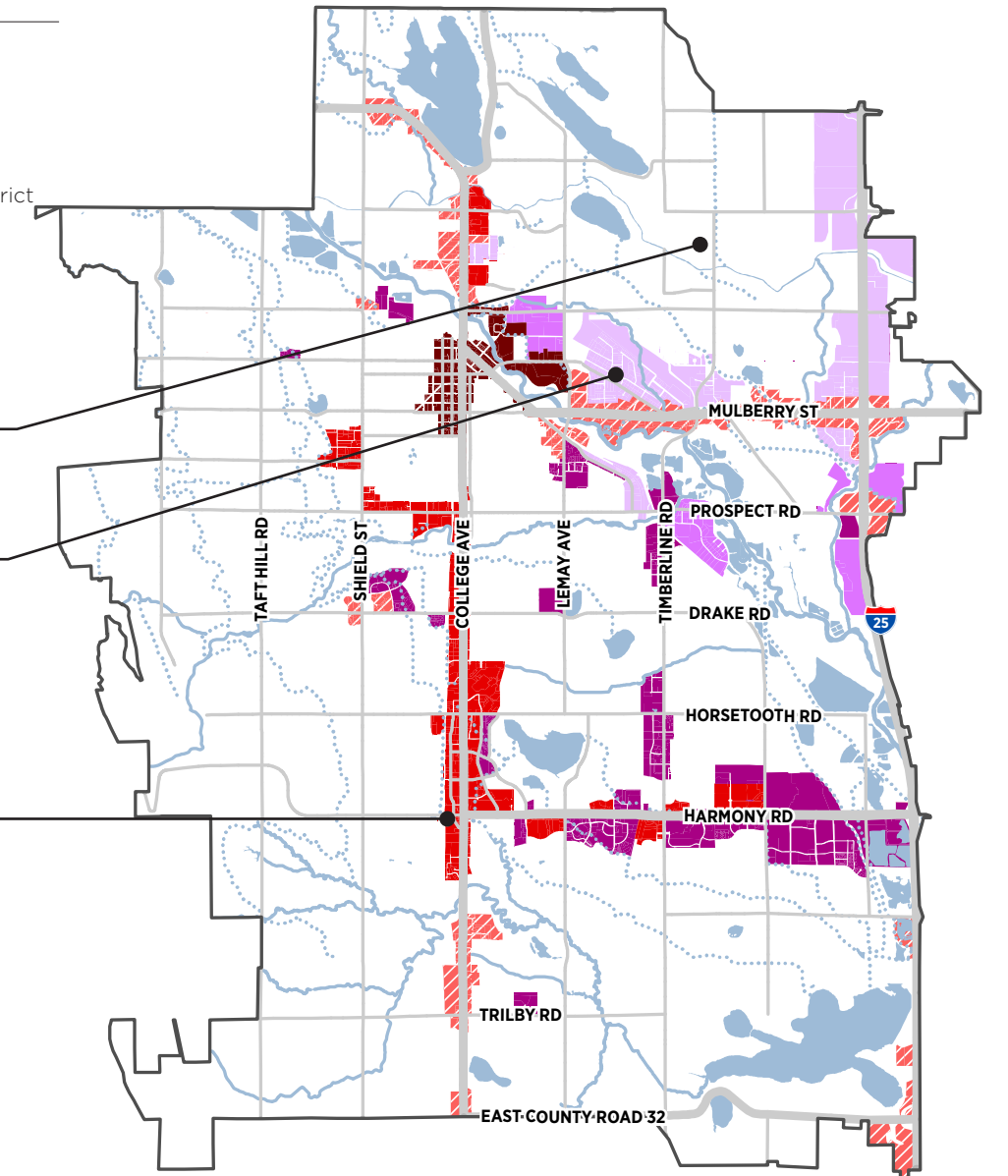
LEGEND

- Downtown District
- Urban Mixed-Use District
- Suburban Mixed-Use District
- Mixed Employment District
- Research & Development/Flex District
- Industrial District

Northeast Fort Collins shifts away from employment

Stronger focus on industrial along Mulberry Corridor

More intensification along South College Avenue.



This diagram illustrates the overall distribution and types of areas designated for employment uses on the Structure Plan. Changes recommended in this City Plan update reflect a focus on:

» Preserving land for industrial and service-oriented uses

The Structure Plan identifies areas limited to industrial and service-commercial uses to support their retention over the long-term.

» Providing suitable employment lands

Policies aim to provide adequate opportunities for employment, commercial and industrial uses with the locations, amenities and services that employers are seeking.

» Maximizing return on investment

City Plan promotes investments in infrastructure and other services in areas where benefits to the community will be greatest.

» Aligning employment designations with business needs

The Structure Plan includes expanded employment place types to increase clarity around the types of employment that are desired in different parts of the city.

» Providing more opportunities for people to live close to where they work

Policies support expanded housing options in areas that are close to jobs and transit to allow more opportunities for employees at all wage levels to live and work in Fort Collins.



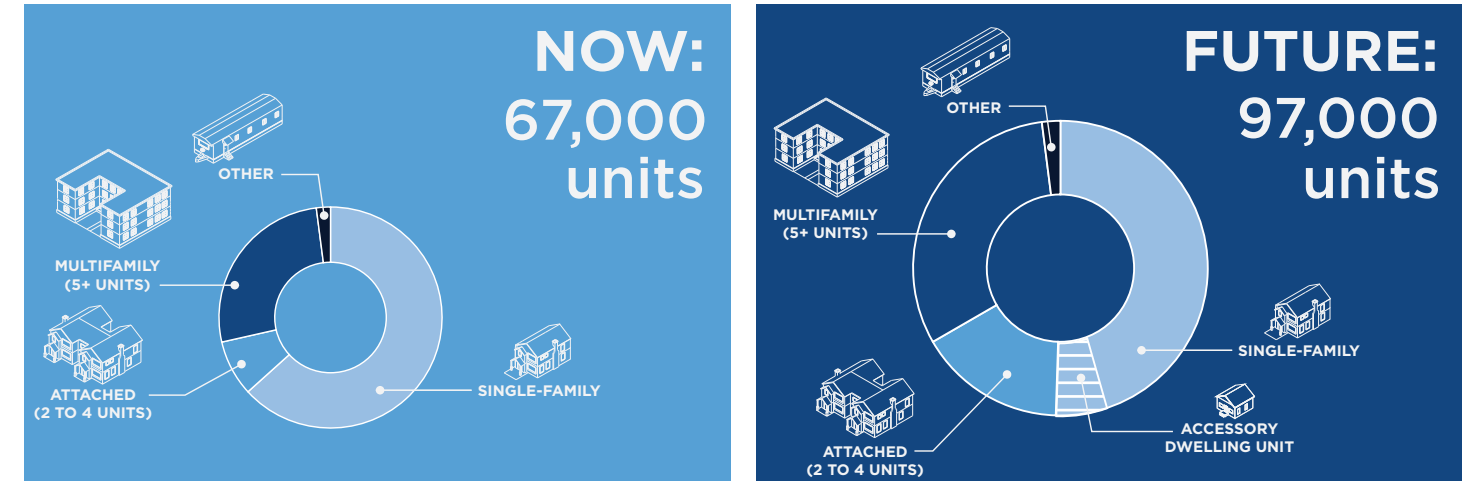
Encouraging more housing options...

The degree to which housing is attainable in Fort Collins is influenced by multiple factors: the range of housing options that are available (type, size and price point); the supply of land devoted to different types of housing; the overall demand for housing; the proximity and connectivity of housing and jobs; housing and transportation costs; and housing programs that seek to expand and maintain the city's supply of affordable and workforce housing. City Plan principles and policies recognize that improving housing access in Fort Collins will require action on all of these fronts.

Where are we today?

- » Fort Collins' demographics are changing, creating demand for different housing types.
- » Since 2000, Fort Collins and Larimer County have produced more jobs than housing units, and this imbalance has recently accelerated.
- » Despite an increase in multifamily development in recent years, the overall mix of housing in Fort Collins is similar to that of 2000.
- » Rents and home prices in Fort Collins are increasing faster than wages, and homeownership is becoming less attainable; as a result, more people are living outside the city and commuting to their jobs in Fort Collins.
- » Only 4.8% of housing units in Fort Collins are deed or income restricted (i.e., affordable to households earning less than 80% of the area median income).
- » Smaller housing options, such as ADUs, are allowed only in limited locations.

WHERE WILL WE FOCUS OUR EFFORTS?



Changes recommended in this City Plan update reflect a focus on:

- » **Expanding housing choices**
The Structure Plan promotes a broader mix of housing types and densities to support a changing population and housing market.
- » **Recalibrating land use patterns to increase capacity**
The Structure Plan reflects the reallocation of some land that was previously designated for employment uses to residential uses.
- » **Expanding workforce and affordable housing efforts**
City Plan promotes strategies, new programs and incentives to encourage the construction of workforce and affordable housing throughout the community.
- » **Updating development regulations**
City Plan identifies numerous changes to zoning and development standards needed to support desired housing types and to better meet community objectives and goals.
- » **Adopting protective measures where needed**
Area plans and/or design standards will continue to be used to ensure that residential infill and redevelopment are compatible with existing neighborhoods.

WHERE WILL WE FOCUS OUR EFFORTS?

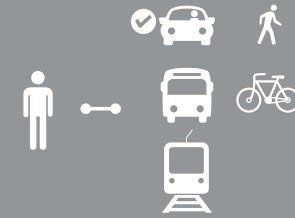
Expanding transportation and mobility options...

Transportation and mobility options impact how and when people travel and, therefore, the ability of residents to access jobs, obtain services or accomplish daily needs. City Plan principles and policies seek to reduce VMT per person and the number of trips made by vehicles with only one occupant. This will be accomplished through strategies that encourage walking, carpooling, cycling and transit use, and through the implementation of solutions that minimize travel times between key destinations within Fort Collins and to/from other parts of the region.

Where are we today?

- » Our VMT per capita is decreasing, but this trend could change depending on how transportation innovations (such as autonomous vehicles) affect travel behavior.
- » Average travel time has been consistent, with some corridors increasing and others decreasing.
- » While transit services have expanded near Downtown and CSU, it is difficult to provide convenient, high-frequency transit service in less-dense areas of the community.
- » Employee commuting patterns will be impacted by emerging mobility and technology, land use, and regional transit.
- » Fort Collins is a nationally recognized city for biking and walking; however, gaps and deficiencies in the low-stress, multimodal network remain.

THEN



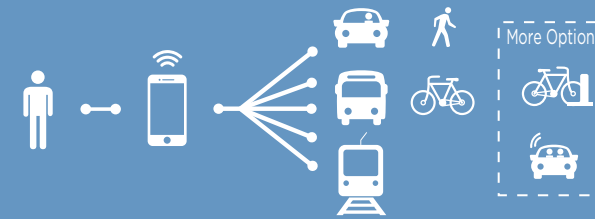
Loyal to Mode

Tend to use just one option and rarely switch

Perception of Limited Options

Personally owned car often the default option

NOW



Mobile Phone

Helps make choices, but each tool has separate app

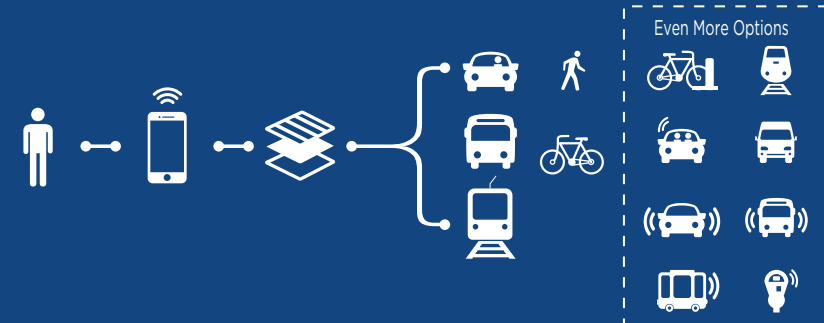
New Options

Many people use just one or two new options (ride-hailing, bike-sharing) in addition to their primary mode

Ride-Hailing

Car ownership separated from car use

FUTURE



Mobility as a Service

Use mobile device to select among many options and seamlessly book and pay for them

More New Options

Including innovative, new, private-sector mobility tools

Choose the Right Tool for the Right Trip

Based on better information about cost, time and comfort

Changes recommended in this City Plan update reflect a focus on:

» Prioritizing safety

City Plan supports expanded transportation options to make travel safe and comfortable for all ages and abilities.

» Expanding high-frequency transit in targeted locations

To leverage the significant investment required, high-frequency transit is planned in areas where higher densities or intensities exist or are likely to be achieved in the planning horizon.

» Using a Layered Network approach

Policies support the prioritization of certain modes in corridors where all modes of transportation may not be viable.

» Enhancing pedestrian and bicycle connectivity

Policies support connected bicycle/pedestrian networks between neighborhoods and districts citywide.

» Making equitable investments

As City investments and improvements in transportation infrastructure are made, equity must be a key consideration.

» Leading with innovation

Fort Collins will be proactive in welcoming new travel options and technologies that offer the opportunity to travel more efficiently while reducing negative environmental, infrastructure and social impacts of travel.

» Optimizing traffic flow through mobility management and system improvements.

Policies seek to keep the transportation system moving efficiently for all modes by reducing traffic demand, eliminating bottlenecks and deploying state-of-the-art traffic control.

Maintaining our focus on climate action...

City Plan principles and policies play a significant role in supporting the community's ongoing efforts to protect the climate and our environment with ambitious climate action goals. Additional transportation options and increased density along key transit corridors will result in a smaller land use footprint, reduced vehicle miles traveled, increased walkability and bikeability, and smaller housing unit sizes. This translates to reduced energy use, lower GHG emissions and water demand, and improved health outcomes. In addition, City Plan helps advance the community's Nature in the City goals—providing opportunities for habitat, recreation and connection to the outdoors.

How does it all connect?

Acting on climate can sometimes seem like a daunting challenge at the local level. What it means in Fort Collins is reducing our emissions from the electricity, natural gas, transportation, waste and water sectors. For example:

Policies in the Environmental Health section address the needs for a carbon-neutral electricity system and reducing waste sent to the landfill. In other sections, policies advance electric vehicles and multimodal transportation opportunities to offer new ways for residents and businesses to access Fort Collins' amenities while making trips with a lower carbon impact.

Where are we today?

- » We have set ambitious climate action goals and aim to be carbon neutral by 2050; overall emissions have decreased since 2005.
- » Like many Front Range communities, we do not meet national air quality standards for ozone; the Air Quality Plan continues to prioritize improvements in this area.
- » Although other policies and documents guide long-term actions, climate adaptation and resilience are not systematically integrated into our policies, plans and processes.
- » We have the potential to reach our 2030 goal to reduce GHGs by 80% with shifts in development patterns, travel behaviors and with other steps.
- » Many residents have access to a park or natural area within a 10-minute walk of their home, though gaps still remain.

What impact will City Plan have on the community's climate action goals?

City Plan will reduce emissions by encouraging denser land use in some locations and enhancing opportunities for alternative means of transportation (walking, biking and transit). Even with these efforts, the potential for overall emissions may grow as our population increases.

Despite these challenges, analyses show Fort Collins' emissions are forecast to decrease somewhere between 25% and 30% below 2005 levels in 2030 and hold fast at 20% below 2005 levels in 2040.

WHERE WILL WE FOCUS OUR EFFORTS?

What are GHGs?

GHGs are gases in the atmosphere that can absorb and emit heat. Scientists attribute a warming of Earth's atmosphere to an increase in GHGs.

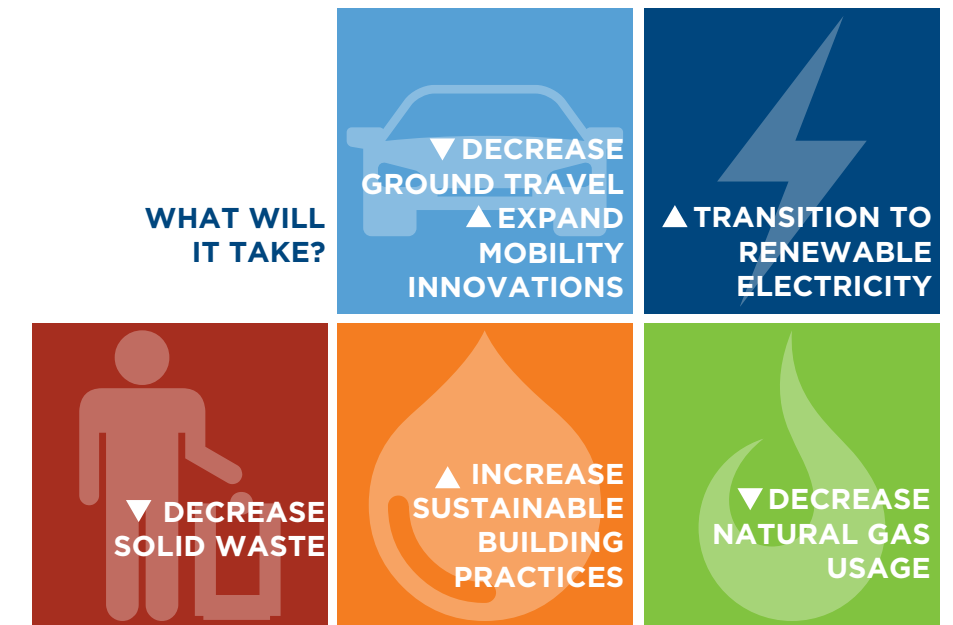
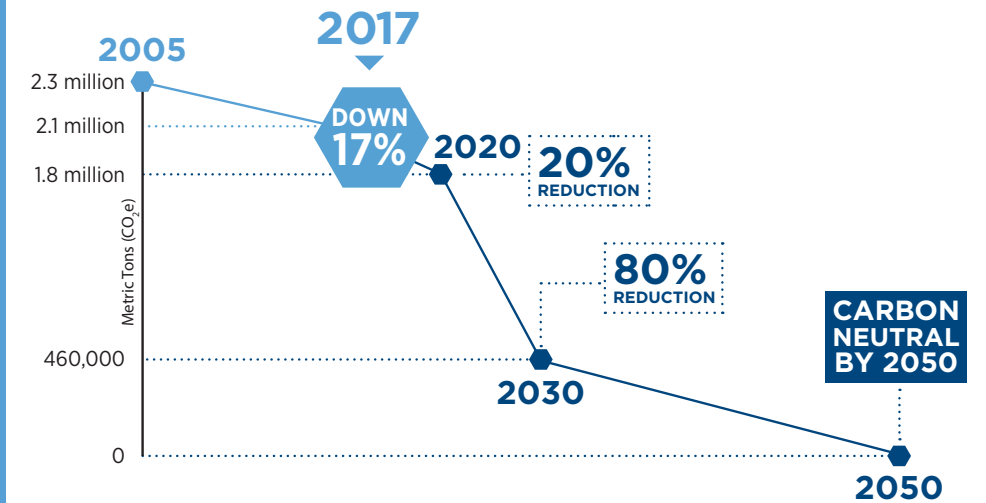
What is CO₂e?

Carbon dioxide (CO₂) is a GHG emitted naturally and from fossil-fuel combustion for energy and heat (e.g., coal, natural gas, gasoline and diesel). Global warming contributions from other greenhouse gases (such as methane) are referred to in terms of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e), which represents the amount of CO₂ that would have the same global warming potential as other GHGs. Community carbon inventory goals are tracked in terms of tons of CO₂e.

Fort Collins' current emissions come from...

- 51% - Electricity
- 24% - Ground travel
- 21% - Natural gas
- 4% - Solid waste
- 0.3% - Water-related factors

GHG Emission Reduction Progress & Targets



Changes recommended in this City Plan update reflect a focus on:

- » **Prioritizing pragmatic, positive and cost-effective solutions**
Policies seek to ensure affordability, reliability and sustainability in their implementation.
- » **Promoting sustainable development practices**
Policies seek to reduce net energy and water use in new and existing development.
- » **Water resources**
Policies seek to ensure that water is used wisely and our community is prepared for a changing climate.
- » **Transition from fossil fuel to renewable-energy systems**
Focus on policies and infrastructure to transition electricity sources, natural gas use in buildings and petroleum for transportation to renewably supplied electricity.
- » **Aligning land use and transportation decisions**
The Structure Plan and Transportation Plan work in tandem to promote development patterns and transportation behaviors that reduce VMT.
- » **Coordinating climate adaptation and resilience planning efforts**
City Plan provides a coordinated and cohesive set of policies to support ongoing climate adaptation and resilience planning throughout the community.
- » **Increasing access to Nature in the City**
Policies seek to increase the number of residents who have access to natural areas, parks and/or open space within a 10-minute walk of their home, emphasizing existing gaps and areas planned for intensification.