



## City seeks feedback on logo

Darin Atteberry

### Soapbox

**Originally published April 2, 2008**

In my tenure as city manager, there have been few issues that have garnered as much attention as the replacement of the city logo. It's evident that the community cares deeply, and I want to capitalize on that interest. As we move forward with designing an additional logo option, there are multiple opportunities for you to be involved.

To kick off this community conversation on the right foot, I want to correct the misperception that the city spent \$80,000 to develop a logo - we did not. Spending \$80,000 on any logo would be irresponsible. The logo is only a part of a communitywide branding effort, which involved more than a year of work and collaboration between the city, Convention and Visitor's Bureau, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Association, Downtown Development Authority and other partners.

The branding project was specifically designed to improve the economic health of our community. In 2005, our citizen-based Economic Vitality and Sustainability Action Group recommended community branding as a strategy to enhance efforts to attract and retain primary jobs and visitors. In the 2006 Budgeting for Outcomes process, City Council approved \$80,000 to fund this important component of the city's Economic Action Plan. The final cost of the branding project was \$76,000. The actual price for logo development was approximately \$2,500.

We spent a full year collecting data, using multiple focus groups, hundreds of surveys and dozens of personal interviews with community members. The research showed that Fort Collins is genuine, forward thinking and creative. We're a unique balance: We're green and pro-business, highly educated and down to earth, high energy and laid back. Fort Collins is inspiring. We embrace revitalization and continuous improvement. We value sustainability and nature as much as we value arts and culture. In short, in Fort Collins, renewal is a way of life.

We now have key themes and messages that will be used in future tourism marketing, business retention and recruitment and economic development efforts. We have excellent market data that can be used by many community organizations and businesses to help them be more effective. This is what the branding effort is all about. The logo is one small piece of this much bigger effort.

The city's current logo, a literal depiction of Horsetooth Rock and geese, was implemented more than 30 years ago. The old design has strong community recognition, yet the text is virtually unreadable. This poses significant problems because the goal of a strong logo is name recognition. Logos should also be simple and easy-to-read representations (literal or abstract) of a community's best qualities.

Where do we go from here? We have an opportunity to develop a new logo that captures what you, as the local residents, believe is most important. We are in the process of selecting a local design firm to create an alternate logo. During the design phase, I encourage you to attend one of two public forums to offer feedback or visit [fcgov.com/yourvoice](http://fcgov.com/yourvoice) to share feedback.

Once the alternate logo has been designed, the public will again be invited to weigh in on which of the two logo designs best captures the essence of Fort Collins. Using data from the branding study and the public input gathered over the next few weeks, I will submit one logo to City Council for approval in July.

Truly, I'm encouraged by the large number of people that has taken the time to write letters, post comments online and contact City Council and me directly. I am confident that we will sustain this level of involvement as we move forward with this process. I'm so pleased by the level of interest expressed regarding this effort, and I believe that this constructive, healthy dialogue will result in a much better outcome.

***Darin Atteberry is the city manager of the city of Fort Collins.***