

## **From Lead to Location:**

*Managing the Economic  
Development Pipeline and  
Business Retention and  
Expansion Framework*

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**SeonAh Kendall, CPA**

Director, Economic Sustainability

**Shannon Hein**

Economic Health Manager



**01**

**Questions**

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**02**

**Lead Generation and Site Selection for Primary Employers**

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**03**

**Business Retention and Expansion and Approach**

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**04**

**Questions and Discussion**



1. What kind of issues/challenges raised by local businesses should be elevated to Council? What signals or trends help guide your policy considerations?
2. Council often meets with businesses. How does Council and staff share insights gathered from business engagement?
3. What other information would help Council explain the economic development approach?

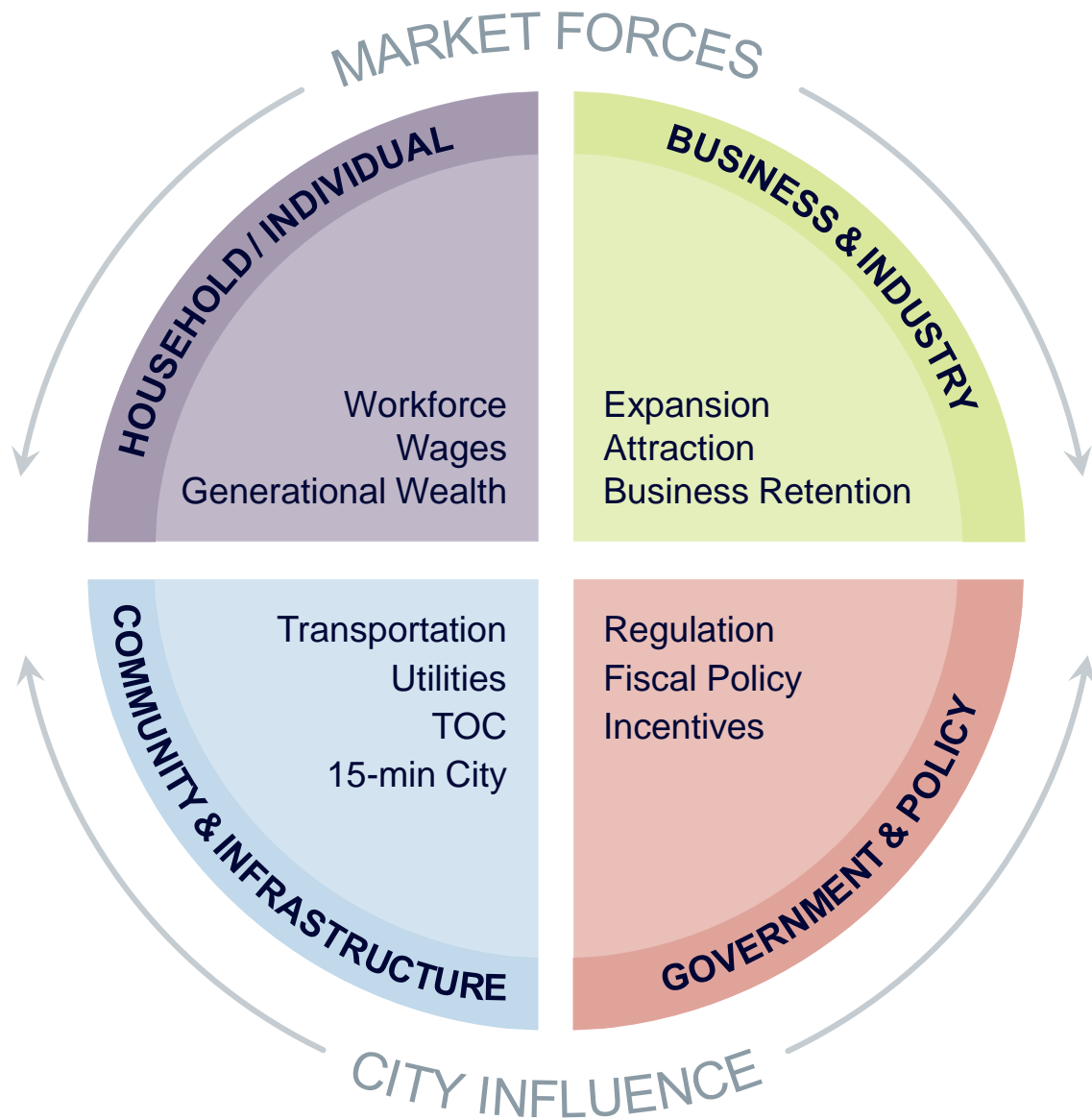


## Economic Health Strategic Plan Vision Statement

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

**Council Priority:** Bolster Economic Vitality with a Focus on Small Business, Neighborhood Centers, and Quality Job Creation





## ECONOMIC HEALTH OFFICE WORK MODEL OVERVIEW

Develop policy framework for an updated business assistance packages

### Areas of Focus

- **Primary Employment** – quality jobs & upward mobility opportunities
- **Revitalization of Neighborhood Centers** – 15 min cities
- **Sales Tax** – stabilizing & increasing
- **Organization Policy Alignment** – business friendly – protector to partner



Primary employers bring in outside dollars and help anchor our tax base

Fort Collins is competing nationally and globally, not just locally

Our existing businesses are other cities' best prospects

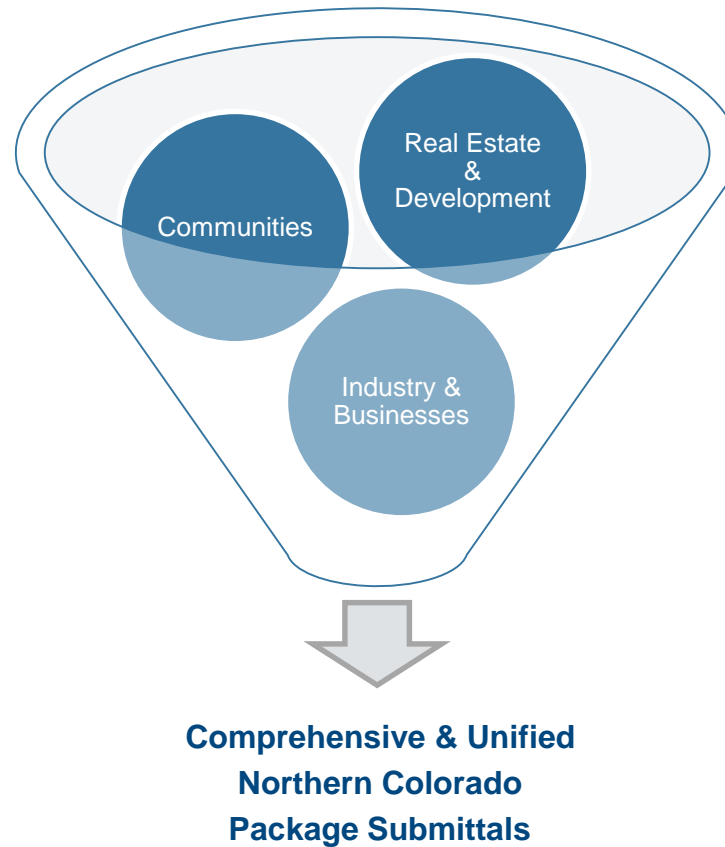
We pursue the right opportunities, not every opportunity

Every community is trying to increase their tax base, including ours

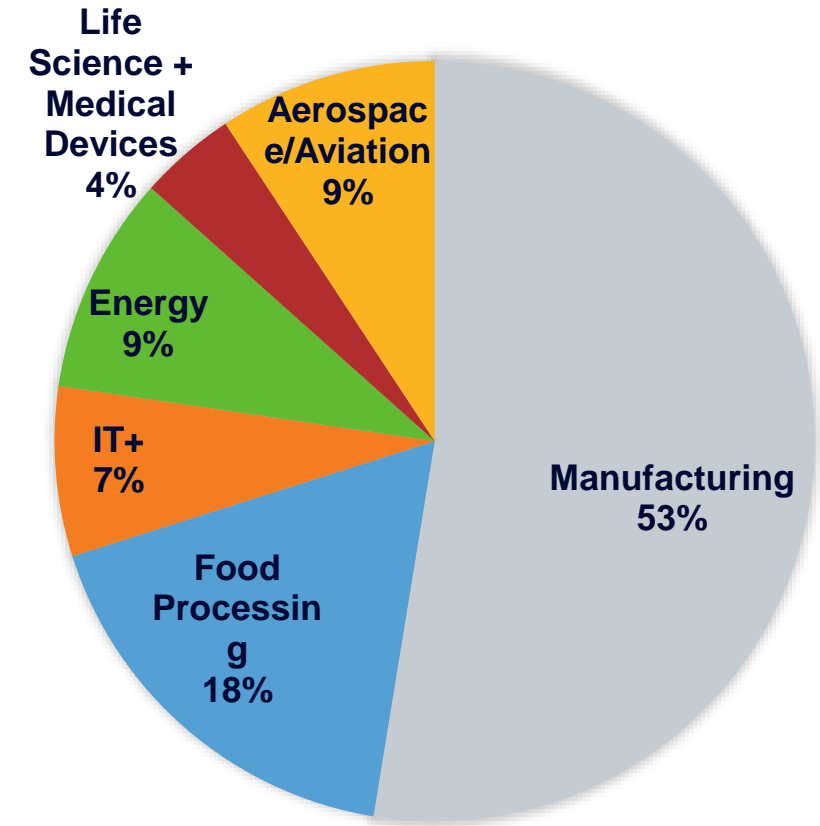
## PIPELINE OVERVIEW

<b>52</b> Total Lead Inquiries	<b>\$7.6B</b> Investment
<b>11</b> Active Recruitment Projects	<b>15,379</b> New Jobs
<b>7</b> Expansion Projects	<b>195</b> Sites Submitted

## HOW IT WORKS



## INDUSTRY CLUSTERS



## ACTIVE

- Prospects - 9
- Known Investment Pipeline - \$1.7B
- Potential New Jobs Pipeline – Over 1,000

*\*As of 4/1/26*

## RECENT WINS

- USDA announces centralized Forest Service (FS) Research and Development Enterprise, and Operational Service Center
- Project Lithium, inquiry in 2023 – 2025, \$49.5M Investment
- Anheuser-Busch, inquiry in 2022 – 2024, \$52M Investment, align with City Our Climate Future Goals

## RECENT LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

- Coca-Cola (Project Telluride), inquiry in 2024, requested Fort Collins submittal, \$400M Investment
- Lessons Learned: Site Readiness, Water, Incentives



## Business Retention and Expansion

A core principle (not a program) focused on nurturing existing local companies to remain competitive, avoid closures, and expand.

### WHY BRE?

80%

of net new jobs come from existing businesses\*

*\*International Economic Development Council*

- More cost-effective to retain businesses than to recruit
- Proactive and reactive roles
- Informs policy considerations
- Builds trust
- Gathers market and business insights
- Non-response is not a failure, but a data point

## Three Modes of Engagement

### STRATEGIC • PROACTIVE

Before Problems Arise

- Scheduled visits
- Monitoring
- Community Impact

### SIGNAL-BASED • REACTIVE

When Businesses  
Need Us

- Removing barriers
- Navigation questions
- Rapid Response Team

### OPEN-DOOR • PASSIVE

Responsive Service

- Accessible
- Dedicated email address
- One-off questions
- Welcome kit, pop-ins

## STRATEGIC • PROACTIVE

### Small Retailer – Cherry on Top

Card delivery led to 11 great questions for follow-up and relationship building

### Local Manufacturer

Scheduled engagement led to expansion and annexation opportunities

## SIGNAL-BASED • REACTIVE

### Service-Based - Co-here and OTM

Upcoming lease expiration and connected to another small business to purchase a portion of the building

## OPEN-DOOR • PASSIVE

### Newsletter and Resources

Increased access to tax credits through Enterprise Zone from 97 to over 500 registered FC businesses from end of 2024

### Business Email

Uptick in inquiries through [business@fortcollins.gov](mailto:business@fortcollins.gov)

#### Legacy business

### Old Firehouse Books passes to employee ownership

Longtime staffers Revati Kilaparti and Teresa Steele bought the 45-year-old Old Town anchor from retiring founder Susie Wilmer — keeping an independent bookstore rooted in the community.

Colorado Sun · Feb 2026

#### STATEWIDE RECOGNITION

### Fort Collins companies earn spots in Colorado's top 50 second-stage businesses

Multiple Fort Collins companies were named among the 2025 Colorado Companies to Watch — a statewide program recognizing high-growth, second-stage businesses that are creating jobs and driving economic impact. This year's 50 winners are projected to generate nearly 2,000 jobs and \$447M in revenue.

Sandbox Solar

Ginger and Baker

Old Town Design Build

All Star Cleaning Services

Merit Electric

The Creative Agency

Colorado Companies to Watch / BizWest · June 2025

## WITHIN OUR CONTROL

### Relationship Building

Coordinate efforts with partners and departments to share insights, ask questions, share with leadership for the business perspective

### Ability to Support Small Businesses

Businesses asking what tools and resources the City can offer

### Proactive Construction Outreach

Connecting businesses to project information, impacts, and resources early and often.

## HOW WE CAN HELP

### Starting a Business Questions

“What permits and licenses do I need?” and “I want to be in compliance” Businesses seeking clarity and trying to follow rules

### Permit & Compliance

Business Licensing Team internal process improvement

### Rapid Response Team

City convened team of internal and external partners that mobilizes quickly when a business is at risk of closure due to compliance issues

## OUT OF OUR CONTROL

### Capital Expenditure Hesitancy

Businesses not confident making large investments right now – want to buy buildings and holding back

### Property Tax, Triple Net Lease, and Insurance

Lease structure concerns, rising property tax burdens, and insurance premiums

### Utilities & Annexation

Questions about switching to City of Fort Collins Utilities and what voluntary annexation looks like

## Measures We Are Monitoring

- Market dynamics (net business openings, closures, and expansions)
- Job growth (+ job growth in key industry sectors)
- Sales & use tax revenue

## EHO by the Numbers – 2025:

Approximately 740 businesses/entrepreneurs visited through:

- BRE, Multicultural Business & Entrepreneur Center (MBEC), and Capital Projects Business Liaison
- Over 1,000 referrals to city state and general partners
- Over 200 appointments through MBEC

## IN REAL LIFE - MULTIPLIER EFFECT

### ARBORETUM BUSINESS COHORT

One BRE visit with Arboretum led to building a cohort for seven students in their program to help them start and launch their own businesses.

The cohort will work with EHO Business Connectors while completing their apprenticeship with Arboretum.



1. What information would help Council explain economic development decisions to community members?
2. What kind of issues/challenges raised by local businesses should be elevated to council? What signals or trends help guide your policy decisions?
3. Council often meets with businesses. How do we collect Council's business engagement intelligence?



## COORDINATED VISITS

**Fort Collins Utilities** – infrastructure planning aligned with business growth

**Capital Projects** – coordinates construction timing and outreach with corridor businesses to reduce disruption

**City Manager's Office** – monthly business leadership lunches

## REGIONAL COORDINATION

**Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce** – coordinated small and primary visits and handoffs to avoid duplication and work complementary

**Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development** – coordinated visits and convene regional partners with resources and support

## INNOVATION AND GROWTH

**CSU Ventures / Innovation** – connects growing businesses to City resources as they scale

**REDI (Regional Economic Development Initiative)** – business attraction, lead generation

## HEALTH AND RESILIENCE

**Rapid Response Team (Building, Planning, Liquor License, PFA, Sales Tax)** – activated for regulatory compliance, coordination, and operational continuity support

**Larimer County Health Department & CSU Extension** – referrals, coordination, and navigation for food-based businesses

ECON 3.1: Foster diverse and attractive employment opportunities that support and enhance economic mobility

ECON 3.2: Create conditions that support small business, foster economic activity and drive additional sales tax revenue.

- *3.2.2 Support efforts to boost economic activity around arts and culture, the “night-time economy,” CSU events and general tourism.*
- *3.2.3 Modernize marijuana regulations to alleviate restrictive location requirements for marijuana businesses and create opportunities for new businesses by adding new license types.*

ECON 3.3: Address local barriers to business formation, operations and growth.

*\*BLUE denotes Council priorities & workplan*