



WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council

STAFF

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SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

15-Minute City Analysis.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this work session is to get feedback from Councilmembers on the 15-Minute City Analysis as one of the adopted 2021 – 2023 Council Priorities. The 2022 City Budget funded an offer to expand the scope of the Active Modes Plan to examine how to achieve a 15-Minute City. The general concept of a “15-Minute City” is a community where every resident can access daily needs within 15 minutes via active modes of transportation such as walking and bicycling. The analysis defines what a “15-Minute City” means for Fort Collins, examines existing conditions, identifies gaps in active transportation networks and land use patterns that are barriers to creating a 15-Minute City, and recommends strategies to remove these barriers. The analysis identifies existing initiatives that are helping to achieve 15-minute access as well as identifying opportunities for improvement.

GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. Do Councilmembers support the vision and goals?
2. Do Councilmembers support the strategies?

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The 15-Minute City concept is rooted in the idea that cities should be designed to accommodate the needs of people and enhance opportunities for human-powered transportation rather than being designed primarily to serve vehicular traffic. This framework for developing communities posits that everyone should have access to the goods and services needed to thrive, and they can reach these destinations within 15 minutes by active modes of transportation such as walking and biking. The geography of a 15-Minute City has diverse land uses and a well-connected transportation network of context-sensitive streets and trails. Commercial and other destinations are designed with the comfort and enjoyment of pedestrians in mind in a 15-Minute City. These communities must also offer an appealing, aesthetic, high-quality, and safe walking, biking, and rolling experience that encourages people to travel using active transportation. One of Council’s adopted 2021–2023 priorities is implementation of the 15-minute concept. The City is conducting an analysis to define what a “15-Minute City” means for Fort Collins, examine existing

conditions, identify gaps in the active transportation networks and land use patterns that are barriers to creating a 15-Minute City, and recommend strategies to remove these barriers.

VISION AND GOALS

To define what a 15-Minute City means for Fort Collins, the project team established a vision and goals based on feedback received from the community as part of the Active Modes Plan as well as engagement with City staff and boards and commissions.

- **Vision:** Fort Collins is a “15-Minute City” where every resident can walk, bike, or roll within 15 minutes of their home to their daily needs and services.
- **Goals:**
 - *Strengthen Historically Underserved Communities:* Fort Collins will be a socioeconomically equitable community in which every resident in every neighborhood can access basic needs and services without an automobile.
 - *Shift to Active Modes Trips:* The need for motorized transportation is minimized, advancing City climate goals and reducing greenhouse gas emissions, congestion, and parking demand.
 - *Enhance Resiliency in Fort Collins:* The convenient location of services accessible by multiple modes of human-powered transportation results in a reduced need to travel long distances for daily needs, saves time, and improves health, well-being, and quality of life.

STRATEGIC ALIGNMENT

Multiple City plans and policies support the 15-Minute City vision and goals:

- **Strategic Plan**
 - *Neighborhood Livability and Social Health 1.1:* Increase housing supply and choice and address inequities in housing to ensure that everyone has healthy, stable housing they can afford.
 - *Transportation and Mobility 6.3:* Invest in equitable access to, and expansion of, all sustainable modes of travel with emphasis on growing transit ridership.
- **City Plan**
 - *Livability and Social Health Principles:* Maintain a compact pattern of growth, directing developments to locations where they can be adequately served by critical public facilities such as transportation and water/sewer; promote infill and redevelopment, especially in areas served by high-frequency transit.
 - *Livability and Social Health Policies:* Design neighborhoods with an interconnected network of streets, sidewalks, and walkway spines; encourage the development of new services and gathering places in neighborhoods lacking those spaces.
 - *Safe Community Principle:* Provide opportunities for residents to lead healthy and active lifestyles and improve access to local food.
 - *Transportation Principles:* Support bicycling and walking as a safe, easy, and convenient travel option for all ages and abilities by building a connected network of facilities; continue the Safe Routes to School program and ensure that it supports those with disabilities.

- **Our Climate Future**

- *Big Move 4 Convenient Transportation Choices*: It is safe, easy, fast, and affordable to get around without a car.
- *Big Move 5 Live Work and Play Nearby*: No matter where we live, we all can meet our basic daily needs without driving across town.

- **Land Development Code Updates** (under development) to support Priority Place Types recommended in City Plan, increase housing capacity, and prioritize housing capacity, diversity, and affordability along transit corridors.
- **Active Modes Plan** (under development) identifies opportunities to update, improve, and expand the City’s active modes networks, policies, and programs.
- **Housing Strategic Plan** includes strategies to prevent displacement, incentivize the creation of affordable housing, and promote infill development (such as accessory dwelling units, “ADUs”). Affordable housing tends to be denser and displacement prevention helps keep people centrally located, rather than forcing them into areas not well-served by transit.
- **Nature in the City** sets a goal that every resident is within a 10-minute walk to nature from their home or workplace.
- **ReCreate: Parks & Recreation Master Plan** provides equitable access to parks and recreation experiences, ensures all existing and future community parks and community centers are connected to a major paved trail, and includes multiple actions to support trails as commuting routes.

ANALYSIS

Methodology

A Daily Destinations Network Analysis was conducted to determine how connected residents are to daily destinations via bicycling/rolling or walking. A 15-minute network was defined as 3 miles for those biking or rolling, and ¾-mile for those walking. The analysis incorporates Level of Traffic Stress data, which quantifies the bicycling and walking stress level of street networks based on roadway characteristics such as the number of traffic lanes, number of crossings, traffic speed, and traffic volume. The analysis compared the number of destinations that can be reached on the low-stress network with the number of destinations that can be reached on the total network. Areas with no nearby destinations at all receive a score of zero. Each Census block was assigned a score from 0 to 100 for each destination category, and then scores were aggregated into an overall score for each Census block. Higher scores indicate that most or all daily destinations are accessible while lower scores indicate that little to no daily destinations are accessible. The following destinations were included in the analysis, and those with an asterisk were weighted higher:

High-frequency bus stops*	Community centers
Grocery stores*	Employment centers
K-12 schools*	Higher education
Parks and natural areas*	Bus stops
Recreational trails*	Medical
Childcare providers	Social services
Civic centers	

Results

The analysis revealed the following key takeaways:

- Neighborhoods in north and central Fort Collins have better access to daily destinations.
- Areas on the periphery of the City with natural and agricultural areas have lower levels of access.
- K-12 schools, childcare providers, parks, and trails are generally well-distributed across the city.
- Employment centers, universities, civic and community centers are not well-distributed across the city.
- Grocery stores are primarily located in the north-central parts of the city.

STRATEGIES

The analysis informed the development of core and supporting strategies under seven themes. Many of the strategies have been recommended in currently adopted plan or are underway as part of existing initiatives. Examples of strategies under each theme are below:

Core Themes

- **Increase Housing Capacity in Areas with Strong Connectivity**

- Remove barriers to the development of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)
- Remove barriers to allowed capacities through code revisions
- Create additional development incentives for affordable housing and promote the development of affordable housing in strategic locations

The strategies above have been incorporated into the recommended phase one land development code updates.

- Adopt minimum capacity/intensity requirements in transit-oriented development overlay areas

The strategy above could be incorporated into the phase two land development code updates.

- **Support Mixed-Use Neighborhoods**

- Update the Land Use Code to encourage “complete neighborhoods” that include a variety of housing options, and access to services and jobs
- Review and update residential zoning districts to allow more neighborhood-serving destinations and services as permitted land uses
- Encourage city/government facilities and social services to locate along transit and active transportation facilities
- Strengthen requirements for mixed-use development in transit-oriented development overlay areas to encourage a mix of uses near transit

The strategies above could be incorporated into the phase two land development code updates.

- **Expand the Active Transportation Network**

- Ensure that the percent of transportation funding allocated to active modes aligns with the City’s strategic goals as recommended by the Active Modes Plan
- Implement expansion of the active modes network and crossings, as identified in the Active Modes Plan
- Continue filling sidewalk gaps on an annual basis and upgrading to detached and widened sidewalks as prioritized by the Pedestrian Needs Assessment

- Continue the design and construction of new paved trails throughout the city in accordance with the Paved Recreational Trail Plan

Supporting Themes

- **Expand Access to Nature and Parks**

- Implement parks and public spaces envisioned in adopted plans such as the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Natural Areas Plan
- Continue to expand access to nature in neighborhoods where gaps in access have been identified through the Nature in the City grant program

- **Expand Transit Services**

- Connect public transit to other modes through strategically located mobility hubs as recommended in the Transit Master Plan.

- **Increase Awareness through Education and Outreach**

- Expand public awareness of the ability to connect to destinations in less than 15-minutes with active modes through targeted marketing and trip planning support

The Shift Your Ride travel options program could help implement the strategy above.

- **Improve Safety Conditions for Vulnerable Road Users**

- Take action to move Fort Collins towards being a Vision Zero city

The Vision Zero Action Plan (in progress) will identify priority improvements to achieve the strategy above.

EQUITY

Several of the strategies listed above can be implemented citywide, but in many cases the City will have to prioritize where efforts are directed. To ensure that improving access for historically underrepresented groups is prioritized, the project team conducted an equity analysis. The Larimer County Health Equity Index was updated with 2020 data to identify concentrations of the following groups:

Youth	Households without a vehicle
Older adults	Poverty
Racial and ethnic minorities	Poor mental health
People with disabilities	Low physical activity and high rates of obesity

On a scale of 0 – 100, the higher the health equity score, the greater concentration of the population groups listed above. Areas that met the following criteria were identified as equity focus areas:

- Health Equity Index greater than 60
- Affordable housing, senior housing, or mobile home park present
- Walking and bicycling scores less than 40

Six equity focus areas were identified based on the analysis. Additional analysis will be needed to further understand how strategies should be implemented at a street and neighborhood level. Any improvements involve equitable engagement that meaningfully involves and values participation by historically underserved groups.

NEXT STEPS

The project team will incorporate feedback received from Councilmembers into the summary report for the 15-Minute City analysis. The report will inform corresponding efforts to achieve the 15-Minute City vision and goals.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Presentation