

# WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



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## STAFF

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## SUBJECT FOR DISCUSSION

**City Council Priority: 15-Minute Strategy.**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The intended purpose of this item is as follows:

- A) 15-Minute City Context:** Offer additional context and definition to the 15-minute city concept, as expressed in the “15-Minute City Analysis” prepared for Council in Q4 2022.
- B) 15-Minute City Work Plan Progress:** Provide a summary of activities associated with the 15-Minute City Council Priorities.
- C) Specific Focus Areas:** Seek feedback on specific deliverables including: 1) Place Based Assessment; 2) Strategic Trails Plan; and 3) 10 Year Transportation Capital Improvement Plan.

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## GENERAL DIRECTION SOUGHT AND SPECIFIC QUESTIONS TO BE ANSWERED

1. Do Councilmembers support the updated Objectives and Work Plan?
2. Do Councilmembers have any questions or feedback on the scope and outcomes of the Place Based Assessment?
3. Do Councilmembers have any questions or feedback on the purpose, goals, and process of the Strategic Trails Plan?
4. Do Councilmembers have any questions or feedback on the project prioritization approach for the 10 Year Transportation Capital Improvement Plan?

## BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

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### Council Priority Background

In March 2024, Council finalized their priorities for their '24-25 term. Two of the priorities focused on advancing the 15-minute city concept with specific emphasis on neighborhood centers and safe, active modes. The Council Priority statements and objectives are as follows:

- Advancing a 15-minute City by igniting our neighborhood centers:
  - Update the Land Use Code and related business processes to achieve community outcomes and improve the customer experience;
  - Assess current conditions and emerging opportunities and re-imagine the City's role in supporting thriving, connected neighborhood center;
  - Explore and determine optimal private/public partnerships and identify effective implementation actions; and
  - Test fun and engaging methods to raise community awareness and support for advancing a 15-Minute strategy.
- Advancing a 15-minute City by accelerating our shift to active modes:
  - Highlight the connections between a 15-minute City and prioritizing Safe Routes to School and Active Mode investments and programs;
  - Leverage funding opportunities to accelerate investment in active mode infrastructure and safety improvements;
  - Assess and update policies, standards and guidelines to remove barriers for active mode and safe routes projects; and
  - Update the Strategic Trails Plan to integrate the paved trail system into a citywide active mode vision.

In May 2024, staff presented this proposed work plan for Council review and feedback. This discussion confirmed alignment between staff and Council on the work streams and actions associated with each priority. Generally, staff received positive feedback and support for the work plans associated with advancing a 15-minute city. There were specific work plan components that required more details from staff and additional time with Council for questions and direction.

### 15-Minute City Context

In 2022, the City conducted a 15-minute city analysis which defines what a "15-minute city" means for Fort Collins, establishes a vision and goals, examines existing conditions, identifies gaps in active transportation networks and land use patterns that are barriers, and outlines next steps.

The vision is that 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. This vision can be achieved with a focus on the following goals:

- Strengthen 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, improving air quality, 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.

Staff conducted a robust analysis of daily destinations focused on connecting residents by means of active transportation and micromobility options. The analysis further explored the experience/stress of those connections. Aspects that influence level of stress include number of traffic lanes, number of crossings, traffic speeds and volumes. Destinations that were considered included the following:

- Bus stops
- Childcare providers, K-12 schools, higher education
- Civic centers, community centers, commercial and employment centers
- Grocery stores
- Medical and social services
- Parks and natural areas; recreational trails

Specific takeaways from the bicycle network analysis include:

- The low-stress bicycle network is limited in connectivity and coverage and strong in pockets.
- Access to childcare providers, parks, and recreational trails is well-distributed with hubs of strong connectivity.
- Connectivity to K-12 schools is strong near Downtown and in scattered pockets due to the availability of low-stress routes.
- Connectivity to grocery stores is strong in north-central Fort Collins.
- Connectivity to civic centers, social services, and transit is limited outside of the Downtown core.
- Connectivity to community centers is weak.

Specific takeaways from the pedestrian network analysis include:

- The low-stress network is distributed throughout the City with pockets of strong connectivity.
- Connectivity to childcare providers, parks, and recreational trails is strong and well distributed.
- Connectivity to K-12 schools, transit, and commercial centers is generally strong, except for the city periphery and in some central pockets.
- Connectivity to grocery stores is not well-distributed, but strong where it exists.
- Certain types of daily destinations are well-distributed throughout the City, while other types are highly localized to specific parts of the City.
- Childcare providers, parks, recreational trails, schools, and commercial centers are well distributed across the City.
- Employment centers, universities, civic centers and community centers are not well distributed across the City, which is evident in the highly localized network results for both bicyclists and pedestrians.

The 15-Minute City Analysis concludes with the following themes and strategies that will be critical to achieving our vision. These themes align very closely to several of the 24-25 Council Priorities.

- Increase housing capacity
- Support mixed use neighborhoods
- Expand the active transportation network
- Expand access to nature and parks

- Expand transit services
- Increase awareness through education and outreach

**15-Minute City Work Plan Progress**

Since the adoption of the Council Priorities, staff have been working diligently to focus on internal alignment and coordination, identifying existing and planned work that will support Council Priorities and determining any new/different resources or tool.

- **Internal alignment on both 15-Minute City Priorities:** Staff formed a multi-departmental team to lead and coordinate the multiple work streams associated with both priorities. This effort involves leadership from six (6) departments (Community Development and Neighborhood Services, Economic Health Office, FC Moves, Engineering, Traffic Operations and Parks). Several other teams are offering support and various points of leadership. The teams meet on a regular basis to stay coordinated and identify partnership opportunities. Cross functional teams are also necessary, including forming a team of staff with expertise in geographic information systems (GIS) to share data layers and develop a consistent methodology to tracking our progress long term. This internal coordination will support accelerated outcomes and shared value.
- **Progress Updates: 15-Minute City - Neighborhood Centers:** The City Manager’s office will provide Quarterly reporting on all Council Priorities. Council will receive the first report later this summer. A few highlights related to 15-Minute City-Neighborhood Centers include:

<b>Land Use Code Update: Commercial Corridors and Centers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff team preparation; scoping</li> <li>• June 2024 Council Work Session</li> <li>• Request for Proposals under review</li> <li>• Next: Select consultant team; begin engagement and analysis</li> </ul>
<b>Review, Permit, Inspect: Digital and Business Transformation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff team preparation; scoping</li> <li>• Selection of vendor</li> <li>• Implementation of quick win improvements (e.g. website, business hours)</li> <li>• Next: Appropriation; process improvement efforts</li> </ul>
<b>Place-Based Assessment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drafted scope and confirmed desired outcomes</li> <li>• Next: Finalize scope and timeline, begin work and engagement</li> </ul>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shift Your Ride: University Park</li> <li>• Las Chicas en Bicicleteas Events</li> <li>• Biking and walking tours</li> <li>• Community Empowerment Fair</li> <li>• Adaptive Recreation Opportunities</li> </ul>

- **Progress Updates: 15-Minute City - Safe, Active Modes:** The City Manager’s office will provide Quarterly reporting on all Council Priorities. Council will receive the first report later this summer. A few highlights related to the 15-Minute City – Safe, Active Modes include:

<b>10 Year Transportation Capital Improvement Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan is being formulated this Spring/Summer, and will be ready to present at Council work session in October/November</li> </ul>
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<b>School Safety Assessments (programmed by school years)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The reports for 23/24 school year are complete (Beattie, Dunn, Irish, Tavelli, Kinard)</li> <li>• City striping crew working on minor recommended improvements; coordinating with Larimer County for Tavelli improvements</li> <li>• Schools chosen for 24/25 school year, begin September</li> <li>• Seeking Safe Routes to School grant funding for larger projects recommended in the assessments (Call for projects opened at Noon today, 8/5)</li> </ul>
<b>Audit Policies, Standards and Guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2025/2026 BFO Offer Submitted (included with Vision Zero and neighborhood traffic improvements)</li> </ul>
<b>Strategic Trails Plan</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic Trails Plan – Phase I community engagement</li> <li>• Next: Phase II community engagement / interactive proposed trails map</li> </ul>
<b>Monitor Funding Opportunities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Street Maintenance Tax Renewal</li> <li>• Community Capital Improvement Program Tax Renewal</li> <li>• 2025/2026 BFO Process</li> </ul>

- **Completed Projects:** The following is a summary of quantitative outcomes from our 2024 Work Plan of Active Mode and Safe Routes to School investments. We will provide additional, qualitative outcomes as part of the Quarterly report.
  - Approximately 23 lane miles of buffered and/or improved bike lanes
  - Approximately four (4) lane miles of protected bike lanes added or coming this year
  - Six (6) improved intersections for people walking and biking
  - Schools served: Compass High School, Bennett, Polaris, Poudre High School, Putnam, Lopez, O-Dea, Boltz

### Specific Focus Areas

- **Place Based Assessment:** Our current evaluation of the 15-Minute City is provided at a citywide scale and viewpoint. Staff believe there is more to learn and understand in advancing this priority if we take a closer look at specific centers and nearby neighborhoods. This requires a different perspective and potentially different tools and roles for the City. Primarily, our neighborhood centers are built, re-developed, and managed by the private sector and influenced by the market. This exploration will help us understand how the City can be a good partner in “igniting” our neighborhood centers.

A “place-based” assessment focuses on the context, opportunities and challenges of specific neighborhood centers in our City. The Place-Based Assessment will consist of three sections. The goal of the Place-Based Assessment is to establish a baseline of performance related to the 15-Minute City, identify opportunities, and show what it’s like navigating Fort Collins without a car. The three components of the Place-Based Assessment will be:

1. Existing Conditions – this portion of the assessment will build on the 2022 15-Minute City Analysis and examine how well existing commercial centers meet the objectives of the 15-Minute City. This will establish a baseline by which we can measure progress.

2. Future Potential – this portion of the assessment will focus on a selection of commercial centers of different kinds to see how well they might be able to adapt to meet the objectives of the 15-Minute City. Components of this analysis will include improvement to land value ratio, potential for housing, demand for commercial, and any publicly owned land close to the commercial center. These indicators will help Council see which commercial centers would benefit from City support, additional attention, or changes in policy to better meet the goals of the 15-Minute City.
  3. Qualitative Assessment – this portion of the assessment will show what it’s like to try and access our commercial centers without using a car. Staff will collect photos and/or videos of the journey from neighborhoods to commercial centers to show the barriers and opportunities for creating a community that better meets the objectives of the 15-Minute City.
- **Strategic Trails Plan:** An interdepartmental staff team, in conjunction with consultants, Logan Simpson and Fehr and Peers, is updating the [2013 Paved Recreational Trails Master Plan](#), renamed, the Strategic Trails Plan (STP). STP will provide a new framework for the future planning, design, construction, maintenance, and preservation of the paved trail system.

The paved trail system is vital component of the 15-minute city concept. It is the foundation of the low stress network and provides safe, convenient, and car-free routes for people walking and bicycling. The existing major trail system consists of approximately 45 miles and is used for all types of trips and provides access to schools, neighborhoods, parks, natural areas, and activity centers.

The major trail system is maintained by the Parks Department, except for the Mason Trail, which is maintained by the Streets Department. An additional 57 miles comprises the minor trail system and consists of trails constructed by other City departments, Colorado State University, and Home Owner’s Associations. Combined, these two systems provide numerous off-street connections within the Fort Collins community.

The STP consists of three project phases:

- **Phase I – Assessing Community Needs (March – May)** Included a variety of online interactive and in-person community engagement opportunities. Feedback was centered around the community's experiences, challenges, opportunities, and values related to the existing paved trail system. The following are key themes that emerged:
  - Trails for all. Everyone should have access to the trail system and the planning and design of trails should account for a wide variation in abilities, cultural backgrounds, modes, and diversity of the community.
  - Community Connections. Priority connections for the community include neighborhoods, schools, parks, natural areas, and activity centers, such as, shopping centers and major employers.
  - Interconnected Network. Trails are a key component of the City’s system of facilities for active transportation and recreation; and should be considered congruently with those facilities to provide a seamless and safe user experience.
- **Phase II – Proposed Trails and Policies (June – October)** Using feedback gathered in first phase of community engagement and informed by numerous inputs consisting of both opportunities and constraints, a map of approximately 75 miles of new, proposed trails has been developed. This [interactive map is currently online](#) and available for community review and input through August 31. Concurrent to this on-line engagement tool, staff is conducting focused meetings with key stakeholders, including community organizations, neighborhoods, and boards and commissions. Interdepartmental staff teams have also formed to explore and develop several policies related to development of the paved trail system.



- **Phase III – Draft Strategic Trails Plan (October – March 2025)** – Following Phase II, staff will develop a draft, recommended proposed trail map and firm up recommendations pertaining to each of the focus areas of the plan. Staff will consult with key community stakeholder on the draft plan before presenting to Council for direction and anticipated adoption in spring 2025.

The focus areas of the STP address existing and new challenges and opportunities associated with maintaining and expanding the paved trail system:

- **Plan Congruence:** Ensure the STP aligns with recommendations from several supporting adopted plans, including:
  - [ReCreate: Parks and Recreation Master Plan](#) (P. 228) – which identifies the following key action items:
    - Expand the network of paved, multi-use trails.
    - Increase safe routes to parks and recreation facilities (including schools and neighborhoods).
    - Ensure trails function for a range of recreational and transportation users.
  - [Active Modes Plan](#) and its goals and objectives pertaining to Safe Routes to School and the 15-Minute City.
  - [Natural Areas Strategic Framework Plan](#) (In Progress).
  - [Our Climate Future](#).
- **Equity of Existing and Future Trails:** Review proposed trails and provide recommendations on new trails to meet the needs of Fort Collins’ expanding population, including a focus on connecting to underrepresented neighborhoods and schools.
- **Community Engagement:** Utilize a diverse array of community engagement and communication tactics to engage community members, with special focus on connecting with underrepresented community members.
- **Safety, Mobility, and Accessibility:** Review current safety outreach practices and ordinances; and provide recommendations to create a culture of safety among users of the trail system.
- **Maintenance:** Analyze trail conditions, consolidate current and new maintenance issues, and prioritize improvements.
- **Design and Construction Standards:** Review existing design standards and provide recommendations to ensure standards are contemporary and meet the needs of Fort Collins’ growing population.
- **Development Review:** Review and provide recommendations on developer requirements for trail easements, cost shares, construction, maintenance, and connections.
- **Irrigation Ditch Compatibility:** Evaluate the feasibility of pairing trails on, along, or across irrigation ditches. Create public transparency to known challenges and explore opportunities for future collaboration with irrigation ditch companies.
- **Funding:** Review and summarize trail funding strategies and identify new funding opportunities to potentially accelerate the growth of trail construction.
- **10 Year Transportation Capital Improvement Plan:** Staff engaged a consultant in Spring 2024 to develop a 10-year Transportation Capital Improvement Program (TCIP). This plan incorporates projects and priorities from multiple sources and aligns them with City Plan, City strategic objectives, and Council priorities. Staff see this as a critical opportunity to bolster the project prioritization criteria and confirm its alignment with Council Priorities. We can accelerate our goals by prioritizing active mode investment that specifically supports safe routes to school and safe routes to our neighborhood centers. The key sources for the 10-year TCIP include:

- Capital projects: Top 15 projects from the Transportation Capital Projects Prioritization Study (TCPPS).
- FC Moves: medium and high priority projects from the Active Modes Plan (AMP).
- Parks: key projects from the Strategic Trails Plan (STP), focusing on grade separated crossings, and high-priority trails.
- Bridge replacement: high priority projects from the Bridge Program.
- Ongoing projects: current capital projects requiring continued funding and management.
- Coordination and synergy with the Pedestrian Program and the Streets Maintenance Program.
- Projects are prioritized based on a set of criteria previously developed with the TCPPS and AMP programs, and address key issues such as safety, equity, community, multi-modal benefit, access and safe routes to schools, demand, growth, etc.

## **NEXT STEPS**

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Staff will continue to advance this updated work plan for both Council Priorities associated with a 15-Minute City. Specific items that will require further direction or action of Council in the next few quarters include the following:

- **On-going:** Continue to coordinate community events and project announcements with Councilmembers; communicate funding opportunities and status; and provide Councilmembers project tours as requested.
- **Land Use Code Phase 2 – Commercial Centers and Corridors:** In Q4 2024, staff will lead a work session with Council to receive feedback and answer questions on guiding principles and priorities for the scope.
- **10 Year CIP:** Staff will lead this work over the summer and fall and will return to Council in Q4 2024 with a draft of the 10-year plan.
- **Place Based Assessment:** Update through memo Q4 2024 with additional next steps and opportunities to engage Council.
- **Strategic Trails Plan:** Staff will return to Council to seek feedback and direction on the Strategic Trails Plan's draft, proposed trail map and recommended policies in Q1/2 2025.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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1. Presentation