

Election Code Committee Meeting

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Election History

Debrief from the 2025
Election

Feedback from ECC

2026 Work Plan



Election History

Fort Collins Elections - History



City Charter required elections to be held in April of each year. Regular elections on odd years. City conducted all aspects of City elections through April 2021.



The State authorized mail ballot elections starting in 1990. Council approved moving to mail ballot elections starting in 1995. The City continued to conduct all aspects of City elections. An increase in voter turnout resulted from change to mail in ballots.



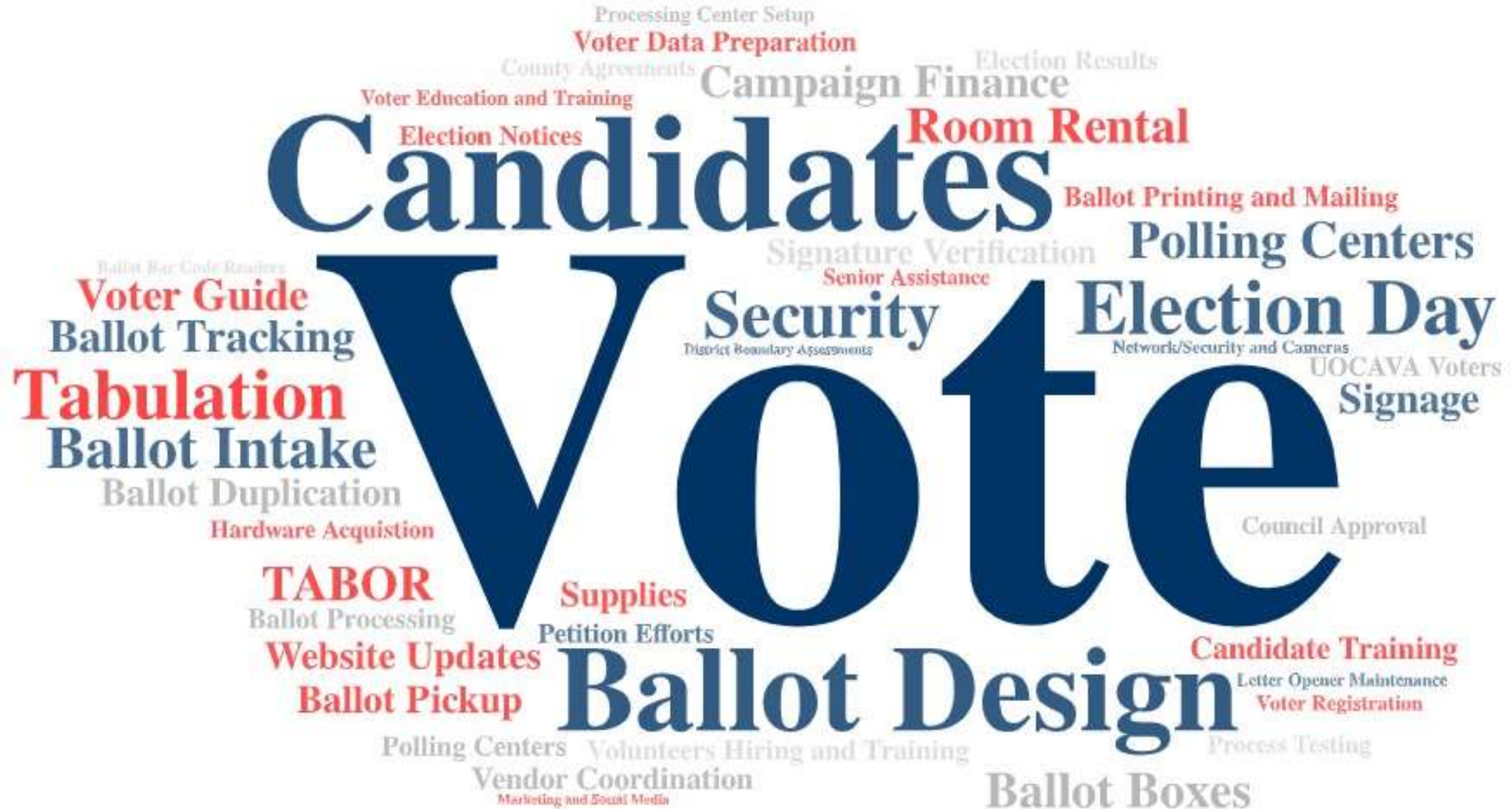
The City adopted its own provisions under Article VIII related to mail ballots processes/procedures in 2006. Various election code changes occurred over time, but timing and oversight remained the same. Signature verification went into effect in 2019.



Major changes occurred in 2022 when voters approved moving elections to November (this also increased voter turnout) and enabled coordination with the County. Voters also approved a move to Ranked Voting. Council has always had the ability to call special elections at a time other than the biennial regular municipal election.

Fort Collins Elections – Ballot Processing





City

- 2013 - \$152K
- 2015 - \$243K
- 2017 - \$232K
- 2019 - \$343K
- 2021 - \$355K

Coordinated

- 2016 - \$129K
- 2017 - \$69K
- 2022 - \$317K
- 2023 - \$167K
- 2025 - \$176K



Questions?

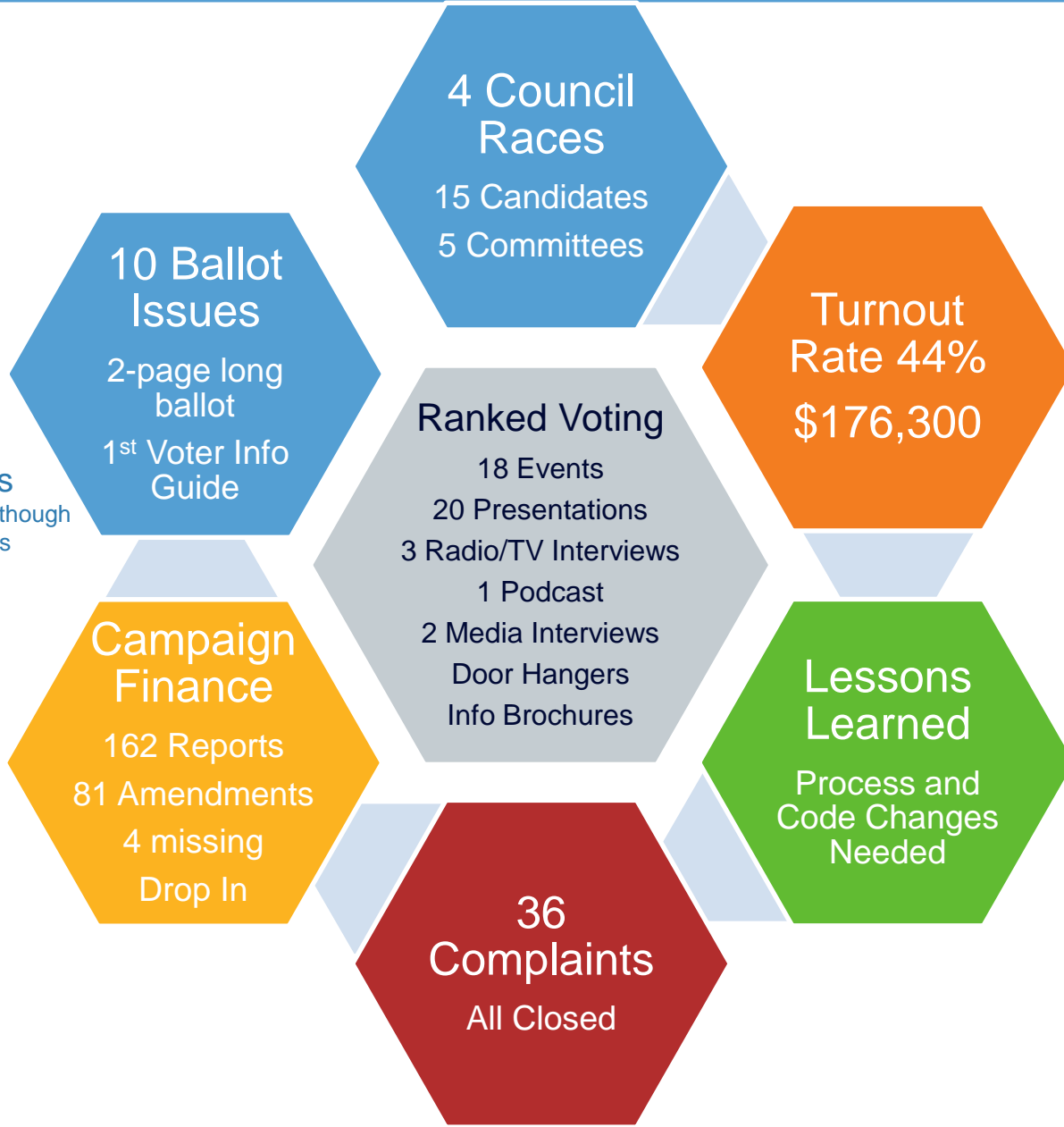


Debrief of 2025 Election

2025 Election – We Did It!!



3,447 downloads
Top across entire website although
only up for a few weeks



Amazing Partnerships



Ranked Voting Election Administration

The broad strokes of a ranked voting election are the same as any other November election. We:

1. Sign an intergovernmental agreement.
2. Program the election.
3. Test the election.
4. Verify, tabulate, and adjudicate ballots.
5. Post election results.
6. Audit the election.

The difference is in the details.

Ranked Voting Election Administration – Intergovernmental Agreement

Larimer County and the City of Fort Collins entered into an intergovernmental agreement in April, 2025. This agreement, in addition to the usual details of election coordination, also:

- Outlined shared responsibilities of conducting a ranked voting election, including voter education and outreach.
- Provided an estimate of costs unique to ranked voting.

But collaboration between the County and City actually began much earlier:

- The County and City officially met to “kick off” the ranked voting election in January, 2025.
- City and County continued to meet monthly to share key updates, educational materials, and public communications.

Ranked Voting Election Administration – Election Programming

The County programmed the 2025 Coordinated Election, including ranked voting contests for the City of Fort Collins Mayor and Council Districts 1 and 3. This was only possible after:

- Exhaustive review of Rule and Law.
- Communication with the voting system provider and Secretary of State staff.
- Testing, testing, testing!
- Conducting mock elections.

Ranked Voting Election Administration – Tabulation and Adjudication

The process of verifying, extracting, prepping, and tabulating ballots does not differ between standard and ranked contests. Ranked voting does, however, result in additional adjudication.

When a voter makes a mistake on their ballot, election judges must examine that ballot for “voter intent” and make any necessary corrections. What this looks like:

- A voter crosses out a mark in Round 6.
- Election judges interpret the correction.
- Election judges tell the system which mark to count.

In general, more bubbles = more adjudication.

Ranked Voting Election Administration – Results Posting

The County's results posting schedule was the same for all measures and races in the 2025 Coordinated Election.

The process for posting ranked voting results required:

- Updates to the Larimer County results posting website.
- Integration of visualization software.
- Additional results reports (for each ranked contest).

Ranked Voting Election Administration – Risk-Limiting Audit

The County audited each ranked voting race before the canvass board certified the election.

In practice, the County conducted two audits:

1. The official 2025 Coordinated Election Risk-Limiting Audit.
Target Contests = State/County.
2. The pilot 2025 Coordinated Election Risk-Limiting Audit.
Target Contest = City of Fort Collins Mayor.

These milestone audits were the first time a ranked voting contest was tested in a risk-limiting audit using the Colorado Risk-Limiting Audit (CORLA) tool.

Ranked Voting Election Administration – Costs

Unique costs associated with ranked voting:

- Voting System License: \$10,000.00
- Instructional Insert: \$12,212.97
- Election Judge Staffing Increase – Adjudication: \$1,894.46
- **TOTAL: \$24,107.43**

Unique costs associated with 2-card ballot:

- Printing and Insertion: \$52,372.84
- Election Judge Staffing Increase – Extraction: \$14,066.66
- **TOTAL: \$66,439.50**



PROGRAM EXCELLENCE IN GOVERNANCE AWARD

IIMC 2026



Code Changes made Prior to Election

July 2024: Charter Amendments for Articles VIII (General), IX (Recall) and X (Initiative and Referendum)

- Modernized language on all
- Modified time computations on all
 - ✓ Move to business days in increments of 7
 - ✓ Clarified if process was going to remain calendar days
- Reorganization of materials for clarity
- Updated processes
 - ✓ Review periods
 - ✓ Simplification (easier review process and elimination of cure provisions)
 - ✓ Petitions – City Clerk prepares general statement, simplified review process, tightened timeframe protests, requires initiative measures to be voted on at next timely November election

February 2025: Code Changes

- Revisions to enforcement process
- Revisions to campaign contributions including adding additional reports
- Removal of write-in candidates
- Revision of requirements for petition circulators (not having to read entire petition and attachments unless asked, timing, etc.)
- Revisions to various sections to align with the City's Charter

April 2025: Proposed Charter Changes

- Resulted in 6 Charter amendments moving forward to the 2025 Ballot
 - ✓ All but one was approved

2025 Election:

- ✓ 162 Reports Received
- ✓ 8 late reports were received
- ✓ 81 amendments were requested and received
- ✓ 4 amendments requested but not received (same person)
 - Information has been turned over to attorneys for prosecution

243 Reports Processed

- 6 reports were required prior to changes. We now require 7 reports (more if committees register early)
 - ✓ **2 weeks** after filing committee registration (then on 1st day of quarter until September) - NEW
 - ✓ **July 1, 2025** - (1st day of quarter until Sept. 2, 2025 report) - NEW
 - ✓ **Sept. 2, 2025** (63 days before election) - NEW
 - ✓ **Sept. 30, 2025** (35 days before election)
 - ✓ **Oct. 14, 2025** (21 days before election)
 - ✓ **Oct. 21, 2025** (14 days before election)
 - ✓ **Oct. 31, 2025** (by noon - Friday before election)
 - ✓ **Dec. 2, 2025** (28 days after election) - AMENDED
 - ✓ **Jan. 13, 2026** (70 days after election)

1 Candidate Unresponsive
to Filing Deadlines

Common Issues Found:

- ✓ People neglected to sign or date the report
- ✓ Not showing the correct report period
- ✓ Report signed by the wrong person
- ✓ Not submitting the report to all parties (City and 3rd Party)
- ✓ Not understanding that the ending balance of the prior report needed to match the beginning balance of current report
- ✓ Not completing or making errors with cumulative totals
- ✓ Changing or eliminating the formula in the spreadsheet resulting in calculation errors
- ✓ Incomplete names/addresses for contributors and expenditures
- ✓ Not completing the column designating whether something was a loan

Changes made:

- ✓ Spreadsheet was slightly modified to help make it clear what field entries were required
- ✓ Criteria checklists developed to assist with review reports
- ✓ Providing third party with filed spreadsheets to assist in cross-checking and calculations

Very helpful related to Campaign Finance!

- ✓ Especially with the extra efforts required for Ranked Voting

Budgeted for \$40K; actual - \$17,380K to date

Improvements needed:

- ✓ More training on Code provisions related to campaign finance and enforcement
- ✓ Shared file locations that can be accessed by third party
- ✓ More timely uploads and sharing of initial committee information
- ✓ Better tracking of amendments
- ✓ Training on complaint process so they can assist

36 Complaints Received:

- ✓ 21 complaints filed by one complainant
- ✓ 11 complaints filed by another complainant
- ✓ 4 complaints filed by separate individuals

Complaint Types:

- 1 – No reported contributions/expenditures yet activity was occurring (i.e., website)
- 1 – Funds on hand with no identification of where they were from
- 1 – LLC reporting
- 1 – LLC revised report did not include dates
- 1 – Paypal processing fees not itemized
- 2 – Date listed at the top of form was incorrect, registered agent did not date the form, registered agent did not include title.
- 2 – No separate bank account
- 2 – Question about where donations were actually going (committee or another)
- 2 – Committee making expenditures with no contributions
- 2 – Cumulative totals section not completed or incorrect totals in form
- 3 – Contributions in excess of limits
- 4 – No paid for by listed
- 6 – No committee registered but participating in election
- 8 – Committee coordinating with another committee

- Further Code refinements and/or administrative procedures need to be developed around enforcement process
 - ✓ When does City file complaints
 - ✓ Should there be some standard steps that if a report is late, after XX days there is an automatic fine (may be other items where this should apply) – would be good to have this set out in Code
 - ✓ Guidelines around complaints (when to file, etc.)
 - ✓ Simplify process
- Further refinements to Campaign Finance Spreadsheet or different way to file
 - ✓ Could research systems that do this; however, we know they are costly
 - ✓ Would be helpful in filing, tracking, etc.
 - ✓ Found a possible solution!
- Changes to allow someone to get started with some things such as creating a bank account prior to filing a registration since funds are required to do this, but we require proof of a bank account at time of registration
- Changes around 3rd Party Assistance:
 - ✓ More training on Code provisions related to campaign finance and enforcement
 - ✓ Shared file locations that can be accessed by third party
 - ✓ More timely uploads and sharing of initial committee information
 - ✓ Better tracking of amendments
 - ✓ Training on complaint process so they can assist





Campaign Finance Report

Any questions or concerns related to this report can be sent to elections@fortcollins.gov

Type of Report *

- New Report
- Amending a Previous Report

Reporting Period *

Election Date *

Date of election most relevant to this committee

Contact Information

Full Name of Committee: *

Name of committee as shown on the Committee Registration Form

Candidate First Name

If not on behalf of a candidate, leave this blank

Candidate Last Name

If not on behalf of a candidate, leave this blank

E-mail Address *



2026/2027 Work Plan

Enforcement Process and Related Violation Refinement

Committees/Independent Expenditures

Nomination Petitions (more signatures?)

Redistricting/precinct boundaries

Other?



OTHER BUSINESS?