

# AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



---

## STAFF

SeonAh Kendall, Economic Health Director  
Jillian Fresa, Economic Health Manager  
Shannon Hein, Economic Health Manager  
Ryan Malarky, Assistant City Attorney

---

## SUBJECT

**Resolution 2023-111 Adopting an Update to the Economic Health Strategic Plan for the City of Fort Collins.**

---

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to consider adoption of the 2023 Economic Health Strategic Plan (EHSP) which includes the Circular Economy Work Plan. The EHSP does not take a one-size-fits-all approach to economic health but a people-centered, integrated economic, social, and environmental approach so Fort Collins is a healthy, equitable, and resilient community where people and businesses can thrive.

---

## STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Resolution.

---

## BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

Staff have been working towards an update to the 2015 Fort Collins Economic Health Strategic Plan. Fort Collins has not been immune to impacts from climate change, COVID-19, political divide, racial injustice, increased housing costs, and stagnant wages. Fort Collins has experienced steady population growth and is projected to grow to 237,000 residents by 2040 and a total of 250,000 residents at full growth management area land use “buildout” as stated by the City Plan Trends and Forces Report, 2018.

There is no one-size-fits-all approach to economic health, and as we look to the future, Fort Collins’ economic health strategy must be a pragmatic, people-centered approach grounded in economic competitiveness, racial equity, and climate action. **We will NOT achieve racial and social equity or climate action goals without economic inclusion and growth. AND that growth will be neither as robust nor as durable without understanding the impacts of affordable housing, childcare, air quality, and climate emergency on our community.** Strategic, intentional management of projected growth that is **economically prosperous, socially equitable, and environmentally sustainable** can be achieved. Why the words “strategic, intentional management of projected growth”? As mentioned above, Fort Collins has experienced steady population and job growth, while businesses and household income growth have lagged. A vibrant economy is the result of deliberate choices and actions that aims to stabilize and strengthen the economic well-being (through quality jobs, safe and stable housing, support of startups to legacy-owned businesses, etc.) and quality of life for our community.

## The updated Economic Health Strategic Plan (the Plan) aims to:

1. Redesign economic health to positively address environmental, social, and economic resilience within Fort Collins.
2. Evaluate and develop a “both/and” approach to supporting Main Street businesses (locally owned that provides goods and services in Fort Collins) and Primary Employers (businesses that generate over half their revenue from outside the City and bring new dollars into the community).
3. Assist in the development, access, and resilience of specific programs to support, historically underserved businesses in the community (minority, women, low - income, and veteran - owned).
4. Redefine the City’s role in supporting workforce development that supports diverse, quality job opportunities for the community.
5. Reaffirm the City’s commitment to equity and inclusion leading with race and applying it to economic resilience to meet our community members where they are at and ensure a strong post pandemic recovery.
6. Champion the role of innovation in designing and scaling solutions to address local and global challenges and opportunities in climate and life sciences.

### Vision Statement:

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

### Guiding Principles:

The guiding principles play a vital role throughout the plan, ensuring alignment with values and vision, aiding decision making, and maintaining consistency and accountability. Each of the outcome areas in the plan is directly linked to one of the guiding principles, establishing them as the plan’s foundation. This approach ensures that all actions and direction taken are purposeful, consistent, and in line with long-term success.

- **Sustainability** - Enhance the social, economic and environmental resiliency of our community, and the City organization, for present and future generations. Where opportunities for all to participate in the success of our economy, to act to address the needs of our most vulnerable community members, to prepare for disruptive events and to mitigate our impacts on the environment.<sup>1</sup> Where everyone can afford to live and work in Fort Collins, ensuring good quality jobs, education for the future, and housing affordability.
- **Community Belonging** - Create a sense of belonging and inclusion, integrating principles of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) to support the retention of diverse talent, as well as small businesses that make our community uniquely Fort Collins. We strive to provide equitable access to opportunities, services and resources, and to create an inclusive environment for all members of our community.<sup>1</sup>
- **Adaptation** - Ability to learn, prepare for uncertainties, act responsively and move forward with resilience toward recovery and renewal.

## ENGAGEMENT

In 2023, the Economic Health Office and its consultant, Hickey Global, conducted one-on-one interviews, small group discussions, launched an online questionnaire on ourcity.fcgov.com, and engaged community members at large public events to engage over 375. In addition, heavy outreach and engagement in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Fort Collins City Plan, 2019

2021 Reignite Northern Colorado Economic Strategic Plan and the 2022 City of Fort Collins Resilient Recovery Plan were leveraged to inform the Plan.

## **FOCUS AREAS:**

The EHSP focus areas are prioritized to ensure a healthy, equitable, and resilient Fort Collins economy:

- **Approach Business Retention, Expansion and Attraction Thoughtfully**, helping targeted Primary Employers stay and grow in Fort Collins while ensuring community-wide economic stability and employment opportunities;
- **Ensure Small Businesses Thrive**, supporting our vital “Main Street” businesses contribute to both the character and economic resilience of Fort Collins;
- **Support Talent and Workforce**, ensuring all businesses have access to good talent and people, while community members have access to good jobs and employers; and
- **Re-position Innovation**, fostering the life science and climate tech cluster ecosystems while championing sustainable businesses and a local circular economy.

The Economic Health Strategic Plan is broad and cross-cutting in its approach purposefully, as there will continue to be tensions and tradeoffs as our local economy is impacted by outside influences. The 2023 Plan focuses on the long-term strategy development to give community agency over our economic future. The four focus areas within the plan were selected because a healthy, resilient local economy cannot be achieved in a silo – the intersection of people, planet and prosperity are at the center to enhance community resilience and allow flexibility to address changing conditions.

## **CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS**

---

None at this time. Any future decisions would be considered individually by Council.

## **BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION**

---

Presentation to Natural Resource Advisory Board on October 18, 2023 and Economic Advisory Board on September 20, 2023.

## **PUBLIC OUTREACH**

---

Over 375 community members were engaged in the 2023 Economic Health Strategic Plan through:

- Multiple one-on-one interviews and conversations
- Small group discussions (in person and online)
- Online questionnaire on OurCity engagement
- Community events such as the CSU Lagoon Concert Series and Bike-to-Work Day
- Presentations to the Economic Advisory Board, Natural Resource Advisory Board, Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce Local Legislative Affairs Committee
- Multiple internal departments in the City of Fort Collins organization

## **ATTACHMENTS**

---

1. Resolution for Consideration
2. Exhibit A to Resolution
3. Economic Health Strategic Plan – Redlined
4. Circular Economy Work Plan
5. Engagement Report
6. Economic Health Presentation