

RESOLUTION 2025-082
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS
REFERRING ORDINANCE NO. 141, 2025, EXPRESSING
SUPPORT FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CIVIC
ASSEMBLY AND ADOPTING A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK
FOR THE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE HUGHES STADIUM
SITE TO A VOTE OF THE REGISTERED ELECTORS OF THE
CITY AT THE NEXT REGULAR GENERAL ELECTION ON
NOVEMBER 4, 2025

A. On September 2, 2025, City Council adopted Ordinance No. 141, 2025, on second reading. Ordinance No. 141, 2025, sets out Council's intent to establish use and management plans for the Hughes Stadium Site based on the recommendations of the City's Civic Assembly.

B. City Council desires to refer Ordinance No. 141, 2025 (the "Council-Adopted Ordinance"), to a vote of the registered electors of the City at the next regular municipal election on November 4, 2025, pursuant to Article X, Section 9 of the City Charter.

C. In 2025, Fort Collins community members circulated an initiative petition and gathered enough signatures to initiate an ordinance about the Hughes Stadium Site. On July 15, 2025, through Resolution 2025-073, the City Council referred that ordinance (the "Citizen-Initiated Ordinance") to a vote of the registered electors at the November 4, 2025, regular municipal election. If approved by a majority of the electorate, the Citizen-Initiated Ordinance would require the designation and use of the Hughes Stadium Site as 100% City Natural Area.

D. The Council-Adopted Ordinance and the Citizen-Initiated Ordinance irreconcilably conflict about how the Hughes Stadium Site would be developed and managed. The Council-Adopted Ordinance requires the City's Natural Areas Department to "acquire, maintain and restore a portion of the Hughes Site as a Natural Area, not to exceed 60 acres" and for other areas of the Hughes Site to be developed and managed for non-Natural Area purposes, including as a City park. In contrast, the Citizen-Initiated Ordinance requires the Hughes Stadium Site to be used entirely as a City Natural Area.

In light of the foregoing recitals, which the Council hereby makes and adopts as determinations and findings, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS:

Section 1. There is hereby referred to the registered electors of the City at the next regular City election to be held on November 4, 2025, the question of whether Ordinance No. 141, 2025, of the Council of the City of Fort Collins, Expressing Support for the Recommendations of the Civic Assembly and Adopting a Conceptual Framework for the Use and Management of the Hughes Stadium Site, which Council adopted on September 2, 2025, as set forth below, should be approved:

ORDINANCE NO. 141, 2025
OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS
EXPRESSING SUPPORT FOR THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF
THE CIVIC ASSEMBLY AND ADOPTING A CONCEPTUAL
FRAMEWORK FOR THE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF THE
HUGHES STADIUM SITE

A. In 2021, a citizen-initiated ordinance was passed by the voters requiring the City to purchase the Hughes Stadium Site (the “Hughes Site”), rezone the approximately 165-acre Hughes Site to Public Open Lands District (“POL”), and use the Hughes Site for “parks, recreation and open lands, natural areas, and wildlife rescue and education.”

B. The City and the Board of Governors of the CSU System signed a contract on March 2, 2023, for the City to purchase the Hughes Site. The transaction closed and the City acquired the Hughes Site on June 30, 2023. The total cost of the purchase, including closing costs, was \$12,700,000.

C. In 2024, the City commenced a Civic Assembly process to engage the public about the development and management of the Hughes Site. After extensive preparations, in April and May of this year a group of twenty lottery-selected Fort Collins residents, representing a balanced cross-section of the community, met to create recommendations for the development and management of the Hughes Site. At a series of open meetings, the Civic Assembly heard from an array of presenters about potential uses of the Hughes Site consistent with its zoning as Public Open Lands.

D. Members of the Civic Assembly and City staff presented the Assembly’s recommendations for the development and management of the Hughes Site to City Council on May 27, 2025. These recommendations included that the City should:

- a) Develop and manage the Hughes Site for multiple uses to include a combination of bike park, open spaces, natural area, trails, and conservation/education features;
- b) Include Indigenous/Native American consultation, and provide support and opportunities for Indigenous communities;
- c) Restore natural habitats throughout the development of the Hughes Site, as possible;
- d) Include outdoor education and interpretation;
- e) Include a multi-use center for public gatherings, wildlife rehabilitation (i.e. wildlife hospital facility), learning and education, and Indigenous cultural representation;
- f) Minimize light pollution;
- g) Include trail connections to Maxwell and Pineridge Natural Areas; and
- h) Consult with land use experts, planners, architects, and designers for the optimal location of site features.

E. The City Council identified adoption of a general plan for use of the Hughes Site as one of its priorities for the 2024-2026 term.

F. Through this Ordinance, City Council expresses its support for the Civic Assembly's recommendations to be included in the plan for development of the Hughes Site. The City Council further, through this Ordinance, elaborates upon those recommendations by setting acreage limitations for certain uses, discussing best practices for design, use and management, and acknowledges that flexibility in the development and management of City-owned land is necessary to meet the changing needs of Fort Collins over time. City Council also notes that it will be the work of future City Councils to implement the vision for the Hughes Site established in this Ordinance.

In light of the foregoing recitals, which the Council hereby makes and adopts as determinations and findings, BE IT ORDAINED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FORT COLLINS that the City Council directs City staff to create development and management plans for the Hughes Site in accordance with the following principles:

- 1) Development and management of the Hughes Site will align with its zoning as Public Open Lands;
- 2) The City will endeavor to engage in on-going consultations with Native American tribes and the Indigenous community throughout the development of the Hughes Site;
- 3) The City will cultivate predominantly native and xeric vegetation and the Hughes Site will feature a naturalistic architectural palette;
- 4) The City's Natural Areas Department will acquire, maintain and restore a portion of the Hughes Site as a Natural Area, not to exceed 60 acres;
- 5) On a portion of the Hughes Site not to exceed 30 acres, the City will provide environmental education and wildlife conservation partnership opportunities, to include but not be limited to, wildlife rescue and rehabilitation and zoning-appropriate structures;
- 6) The City will develop and manage the remaining acreage as a park, to include but not be limited to the following amenities:
 - a. Connective trail system throughout the Hughes Site;
 - b. Bike park features, not to exceed 35 acres;
 - c. A community gathering space, available for reservation by permit; and
 - d. Any necessary supporting facilities, including restrooms, shade structures, trash collection, and parking;
- 7) Existing uses such as the disc golf course and sledding hill may continue in appropriate locations according to the plans for the site;
- 8) The City will manage features of the developed Hughes Site appropriately in light of their respective lifecycles;
- 9) Development and redevelopment of the Hughes Site will proceed over time as planning, design and funding allow;
- 10) City projects to develop the Hughes Site will proceed through the applicable components of the City's development review process to

- 11) ensure compliance with all current standards (e.g. stormwater, lighting, etc.); and
- 12) The City will manage the Natural Area in accordance with City laws and policies regarding Natural Areas. The City will manage the park in accordance with City laws and policies governing parks.

Section 2. Ordinance No. 141, 2025, is hereby submitted to the registered electors of the City of Fort Collins at the next regular election to be held on November 4, 2025, with the following title and submission clause:

COUNCIL-REFERRED ORDINANCE

Ordinance No. 141, 2025, Expressing Support for the Recommendations of the Civic Assembly and Adopting a Conceptual Framework for the Use and Management of the Hughes Stadium Site (the “Council-Adopted Ordinance”), was adopted by the City Council on September 2, 2025, and differs from the Citizen-Initiated Ordinance on the November 2025 ballot (which would require 100% of the Hughes Site to be designated as a City Natural Area) by:

- requiring multi-use development and management for the approximately 165-acre Hughes Site;
- requiring the City to consult with Native American tribes and the Indigenous community throughout the process;
- requiring site plans to feature native and xeric vegetation and a naturalistic architectural palette, and include the following new amenities for the Hughes Site:
 - a City natural area, up to 60 acres;
 - dedicated space and facilities for environmental education and wildlife conservation, to include wildlife rescue and rehabilitation, up to 30 acres;
 - a trail system throughout the site connected to nearby City natural areas and parks;
 - a City park with a community bike park up to 35 acres, a community gathering area and appropriate related facilities;
- including continuing existing uses, such as disc golf and winter sledding; and
- requiring the City to manage these uses over time as planning, design and funding allow, in accordance with regular City planning and review processes, and consistent with the Public Open Lands zoning.

Shall the Council-Adopted Ordinance for multi-use of the Hughes Site be approved?

YES/FOR _____
NO/AGAINST _____

Section 3. The Council finds that the Council-Adopted Ordinance (Ordinance No. 141, 2025), and the Citizen-Initiated Ordinance (referred in Resolution 2025-073) irreconcilably conflict. Pursuant to Article X, Section 10(d) of the City Charter, if the ballot questions regarding each of these Ordinances are adopted or approved by the registered electors of the City at the November 4, 2025, regular municipal election, the Ordinance receiving the highest affirmative vote will be effective and the other Ordinance will not be effective.

Passed and adopted on September 2, 2025.

Mayor

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Effective Date: September 2, 2025
Approving Attorney: Ted Hewitt

Exhibit: None