



Proposed Tree Preservation and Mitigation Policies

Municipal and Land Use Code changes

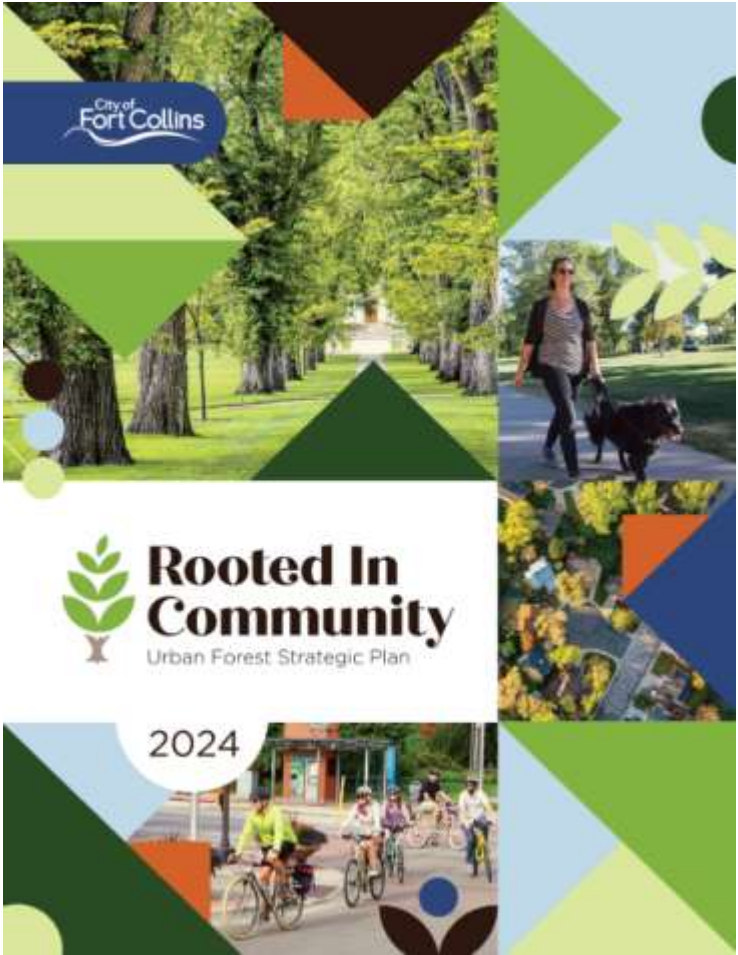
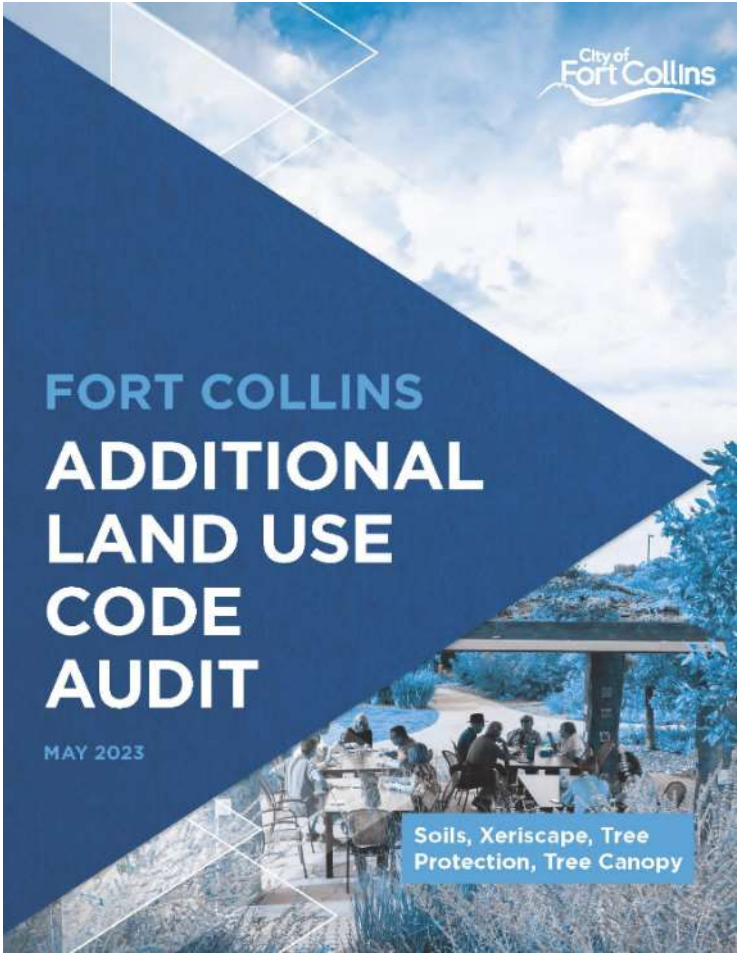
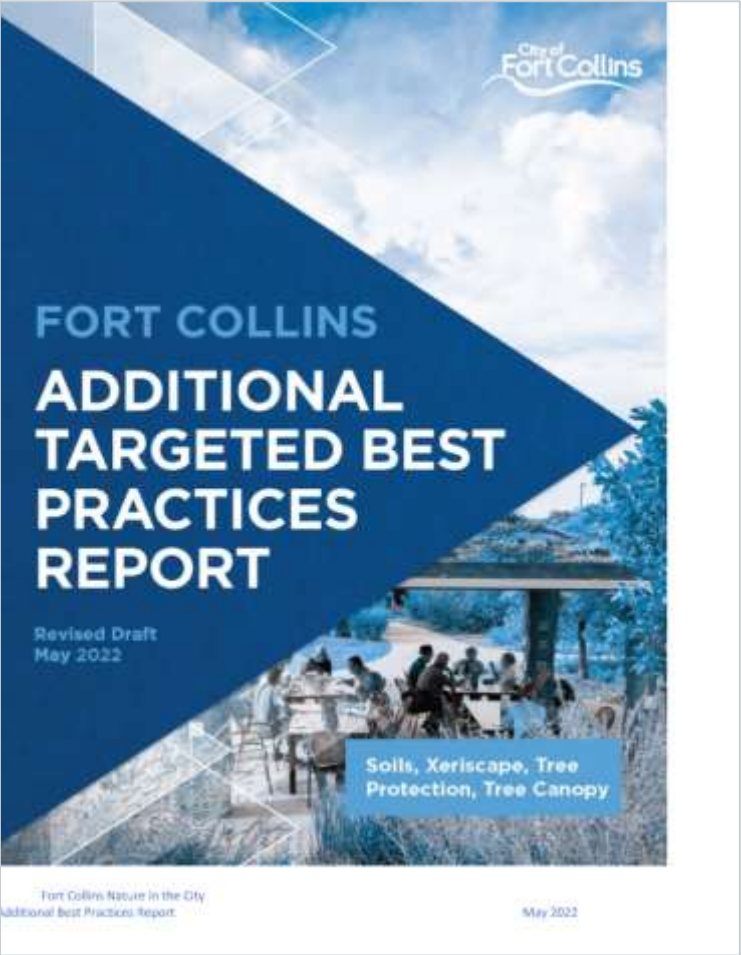
Sylvia Tatman-Burruss – Sr. Policy & Project Manager

Kendra Boot – City Forester

August 26, 2025

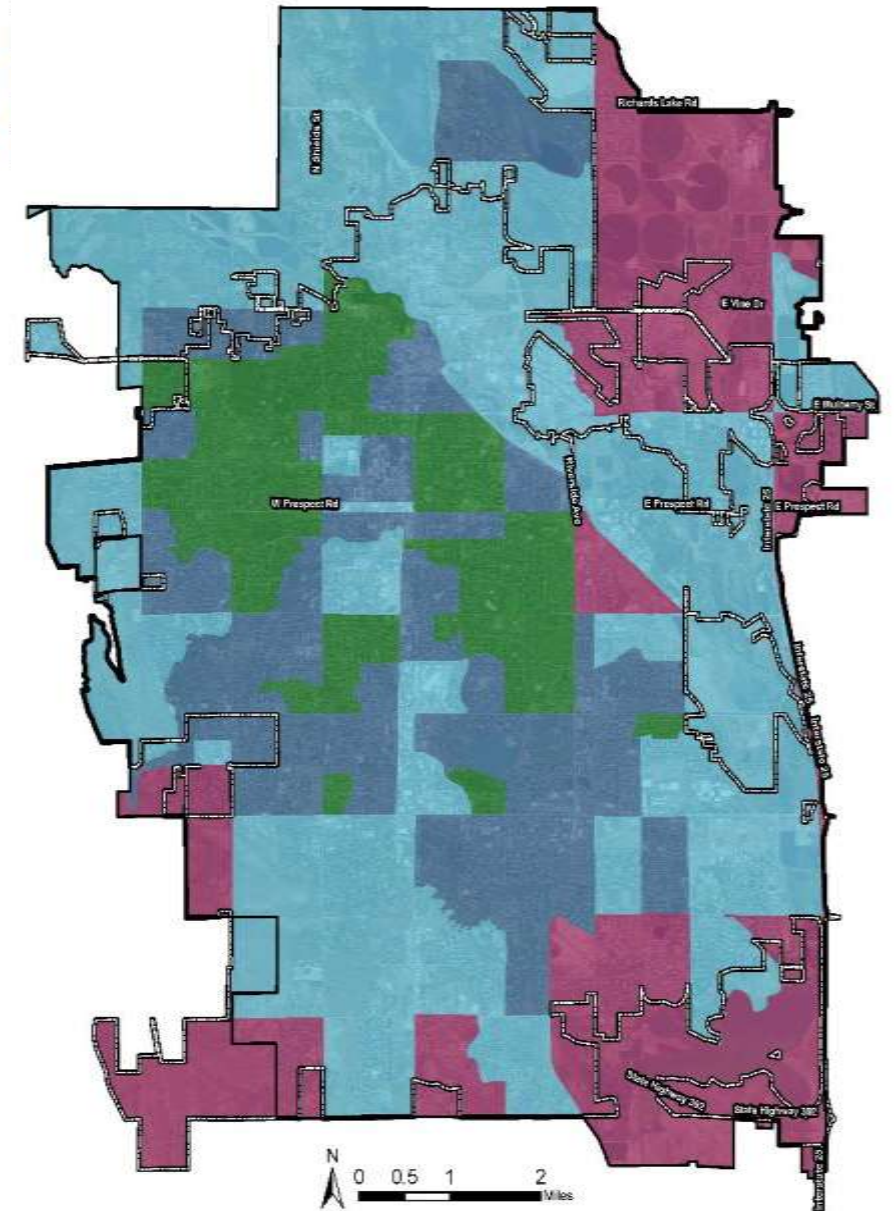
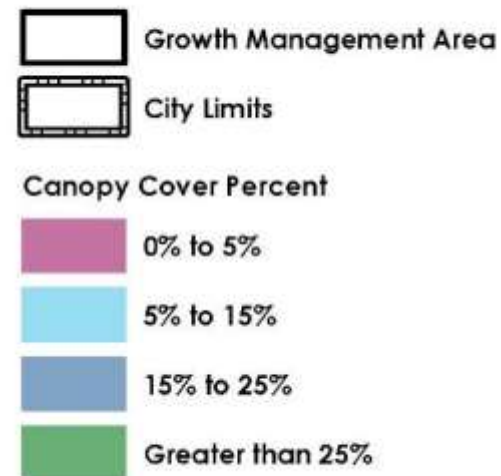
What feedback do Councilmembers have regarding the proposed tree policies?





CANOPY PERCENT BY BLOCK GROUP

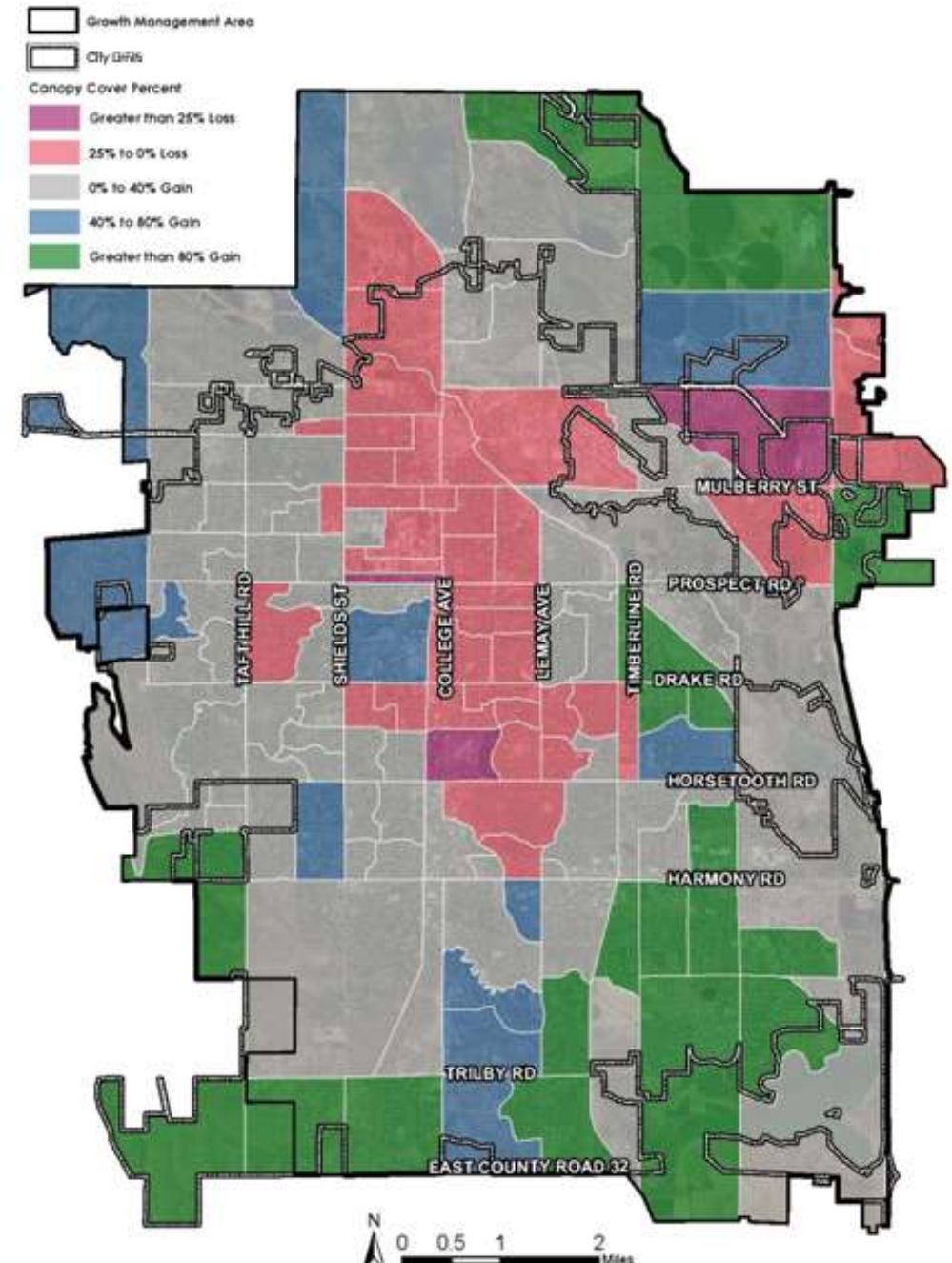
- Citywide: 13.7%
- City + GMA: 12.6%



Tree Mitigation Policy

- **Balance mitigation requirements (new tree plantings) with supporting new mixed-use and affordable housing development**
- **Prioritize protection of larger trees**
- Canopy coverage is generally high within these areas (15% to greater than 25%)
- Often, these are established trees that were a result of past development standards
- Take many years to get same canopy coverage as large trees
- Commercial and Institutional land use types have lost canopy

MAP 3. TREE CANOPY CHANGE BY U.S. CENSUS BLOCK GROUP, 2011-2021. TREE CANOPY LOSSES WERE HIGHEST IN THE DENSELY DEVELOPED URBAN CORE.



Council Priority

Council Priority No. 1: Operationalize City resources to build and preserve affordable housing

Council Priority No. 4: Pursue an integrated, intentional approach to economic health

Council Priority No. 8: Advance a 15-minute city by accelerating our shift to active modes

Goals

Balance mitigation requirements (new tree plantings) with supporting new mixed-use and affordable housing development

Prioritize and incentivize protection of larger trees

Maintain current levels of tree canopy coverage and support tree-health infrastructure improvements



UFSP: Seven Growth Strategies

1. Strategically invest in growing tree canopy where it will promote resilience and quality of life in Fort Collins.

2. Complete the shift to proactive management of Fort Collins' public trees.

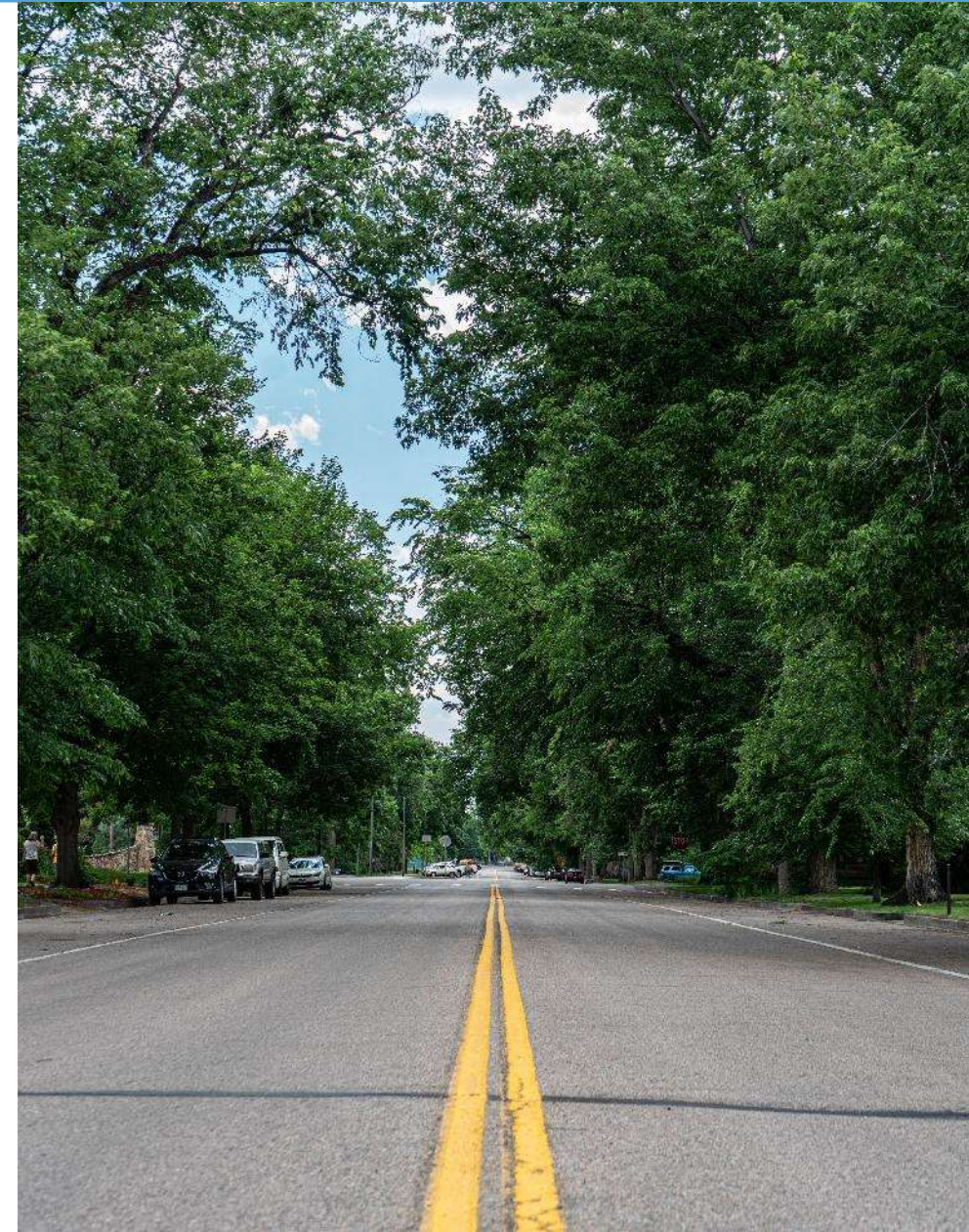
3. Strengthen city policies to protect trees.

4. Collect data to track changes to tree canopy over time and to inform forestry activities.

5. Sustainably resource the Forestry Division to keep pace with growth of the urban forest.

6. Deepen engagement with the community about tree stewardship.

7. Expand the network of Forestry Division partners.



Existing LUC Policies include these tree health benefits:

Tree and Habitat
Protection in
environmentally
critical areas
(Natural Habitat
Buffer Zones)

Robust
landscape
requirements =
increased canopy
in new greenfield
development
areas

Quality standards
for soil
amendments,
plantings and
irrigation

| | Recommendation |
|---|---|
| 1 | <p>Establish no-fee Commercial Tree Removal Permit – to help address removal of large trees outside the development review/construction process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Municipal and land use codes• For trees 15-inches and greater• Intervention or conversation prior to tree removal• Slow down or omit preemptive tree removal• No expected increase to staffing or resources needed |

| | Recommendation |
|---|--|
| 2 | Enhanced measures for tree protection during construction <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alignment with enforceable protection provisions, updated signage and fencing, etc.• Better support for large tree preservation through construction |
| 3 | 3-year establishment period for Street Trees <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Currently there is no set period, depends on tree health and staff's discretion as the SMEs• Current timeline is long and unpredictable |
| 4 | Expand exemptions for tree mitigation for undesirable species (Russian-olive, ash, and Siberian elm) under 11" <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Effort to decrease unwanted species in the community and simplify exemption criteria• Could reduce costs for developments |

| | Recommendation |
|---|---|
| 5 | <p>Update tree mitigation policies to better support goals</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Aligns with current mitigation code process, yet more predictable• Encourage larger tree preservation• Additional mitigation reduction for affordable housing projects defined in LUC 5.2.1 |

**How to best balance mitigation requirements
(new tree plantings) with supporting new mixed-
use and affordable housing development**

Protection of all trees
and increasing cost to
development



Protection of larger trees
and balancing
development costs

What other communities are doing:

Greater
restrictions for
larger trees

Portland OR, Madison WI

Canopy
coverage by lot
size

Lake Forest Park WA

Canopy
coverage by use
type or district

Portland OR, San Antonio TX

Replacement
based on equal
tree canopy

Lake Forest Park WA

Assessing fees
and fines

Lake Forest Park WA

Appraised
valuation

Boulder, Longmont, Denver CO

Prohibit tree
removals in
Environmentally
Sensitive Areas

Lake Forest Park WA, San Antonio TX

Incentives/reduced
mitigation for trees
saved

San Antonio TX

Tree Mitigation – Proposed Changes

Current LUC Tree Mitigation Requirements

Tree mitigation required for each tree removed:
Each tree assigned a value of **1 to 6** replacement trees

Off-site plantings or payment-in-lieu allowed if mitigation cannot be completed on site

Proposed Tree Mitigation Requirements

Tree mitigation required for each tree removed:

Poor Condition = no mitigation required

6"-14" = 1 tree

15"-19" = 2 trees

20"-29" = 5 trees

30"-39" = 10 trees

40" and larger = 20 trees

Payment-in-lieu allowed if mitigation cannot be completed on site

Tree Mitigation Reductions

For each tree saved with development, allow reduction in overall tree mitigation requirements based on **50% of the mitigation value of tree saved, 75% reduction for Affordable Housing**

For **Payment-in-Lieu** for mitigation trees that cannot be planted on site, allow up to **25% reduction** in PIL fees for equal value of enhanced tree planting measures

Benefits

Prioritizes protection of larger trees

Incentivizes tree preservation with development:

- Reduction in mitigation requirements for trees saved
- Development projects that protect larger trees may have no mitigation for removal of smaller trees on site

Allows for enhanced tree planting measures instead of PIL

Attempts to balance mitigation requirements (new tree plantings) with supporting new mixed-use and affordable housing development

Spectrum of Options – Tree Mitigation

Guiding Principle: Enable more housing and mixed-use buildings, especially along roads with frequent bus service

Protection of all trees
and increasing cost to
development



Protection of larger trees
and balancing
development costs

Retain Existing Standards

Mitigation - where not feasible to protect or transplant on-site, trees must be replaced:

- **1-6 replacement trees** for each tree removed

OR

Payment in Lieu – when not feasible to plant required mitigation trees on site (currently \$500 per tree)



Tensions: Payment for mitigation easier than protecting large trees with development

Proposed Code Changes

Tree Mitigation –

- Increased mitigation for very large trees
- Decreased for small trees
- 50% reduction in mitigation for trees protected, 75% for Affordable Housing
- Up to 25% reduction in PIL costs for enhanced tree planting measures

Species and Poor Health Exceptions

Options to Dial Further

Mitigation –

- Based on appraised value, inch for inch
 - increases tree mitigation
 - difficult to plant back increased # of trees on development sites
- No mitigation reductions for trees protected



Tensions: Impedes higher density mixed-use development, increases costs

Tree Preservation and Mitigation Recommendations

| Recommendation Number | Recommendation |
|-----------------------|--|
| 1 | Establish Commercial Tree Removal Permit – to help address removal of large trees outside the development review process |
| 2 | Enhanced measures for tree protection during construction |
| 3 | 3-year establishment period for Street Trees |
| 4 | Expand the exemptions for tree mitigation to include Russian-olive, ash, and Siberian elm species under 11” |
| 5 | Update tree mitigation policies for commercial development: Tree Mitigation by size, with reductions for trees saved |

What feedback do Councilmembers have regarding the proposed tree policies?



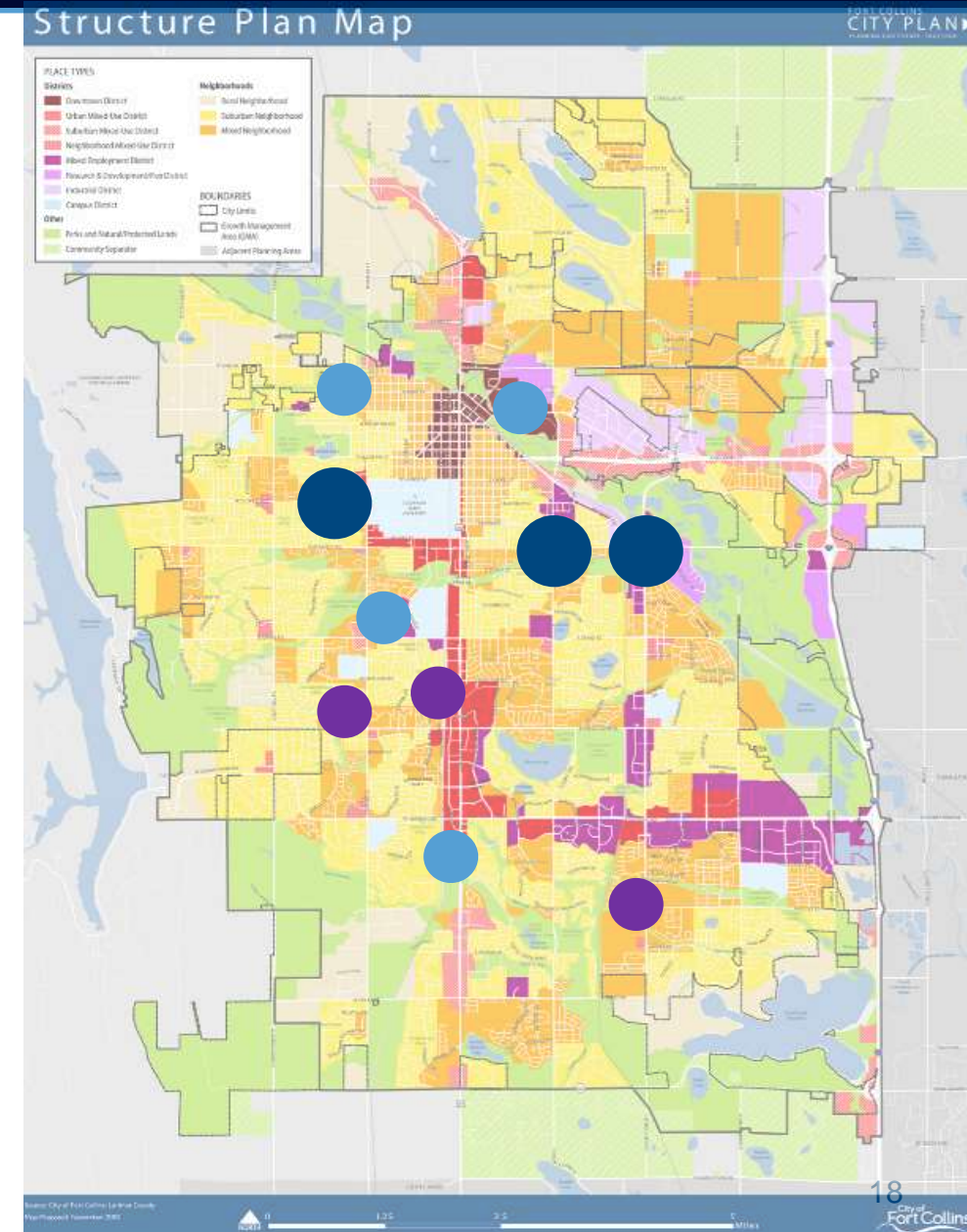
Recent Infill and Greenfield Projects

Illustrated Examples:

- **Union on Elizabeth**
- **Kum & Go at Prospect/Lemay**
- **Prospect Sports**
- Worthington Storage
- Village at Horsetooth
- Timberline Road Expansion

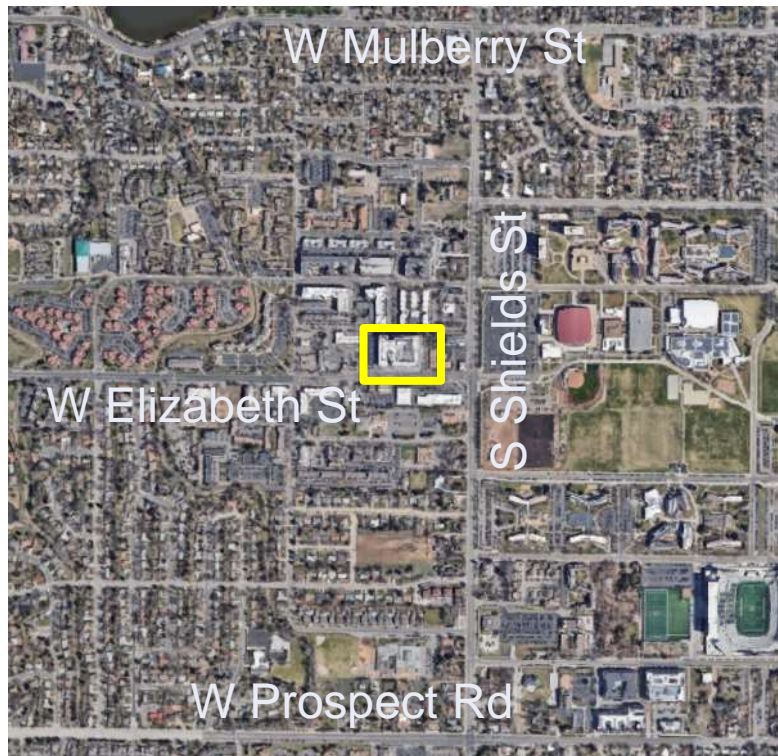
Others Analyzed:

- Stodgy Brewing
- The Grainary (Fairway)
- Copperleaf Subdivision
- Tapestry



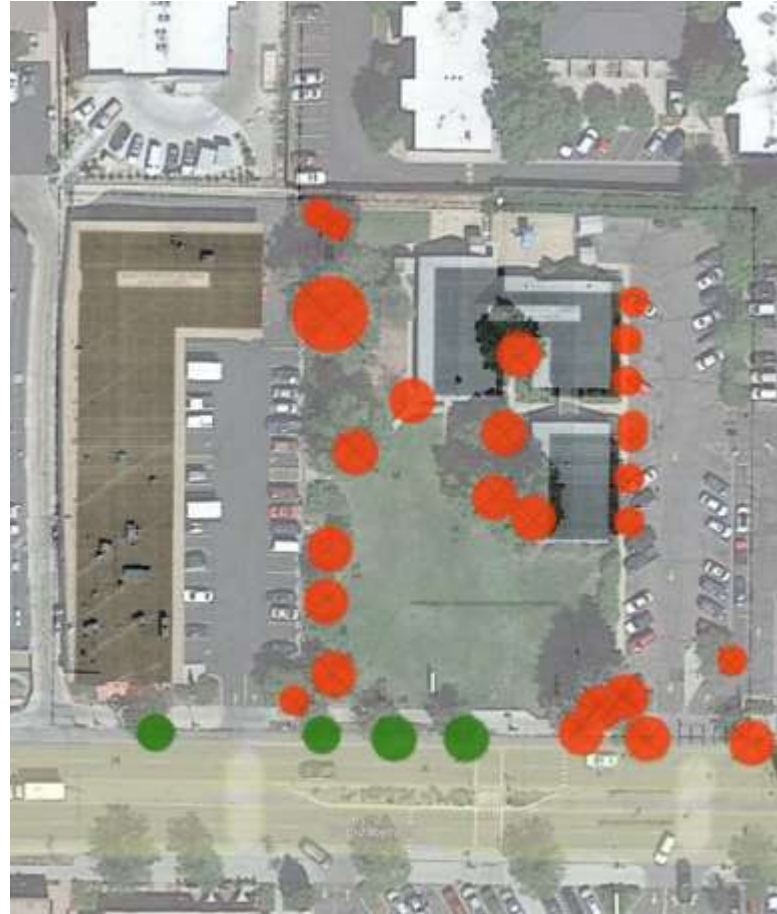
Union on Elizabeth

- Multi-family, 102 Units
- Infill Site, 2.3 acres

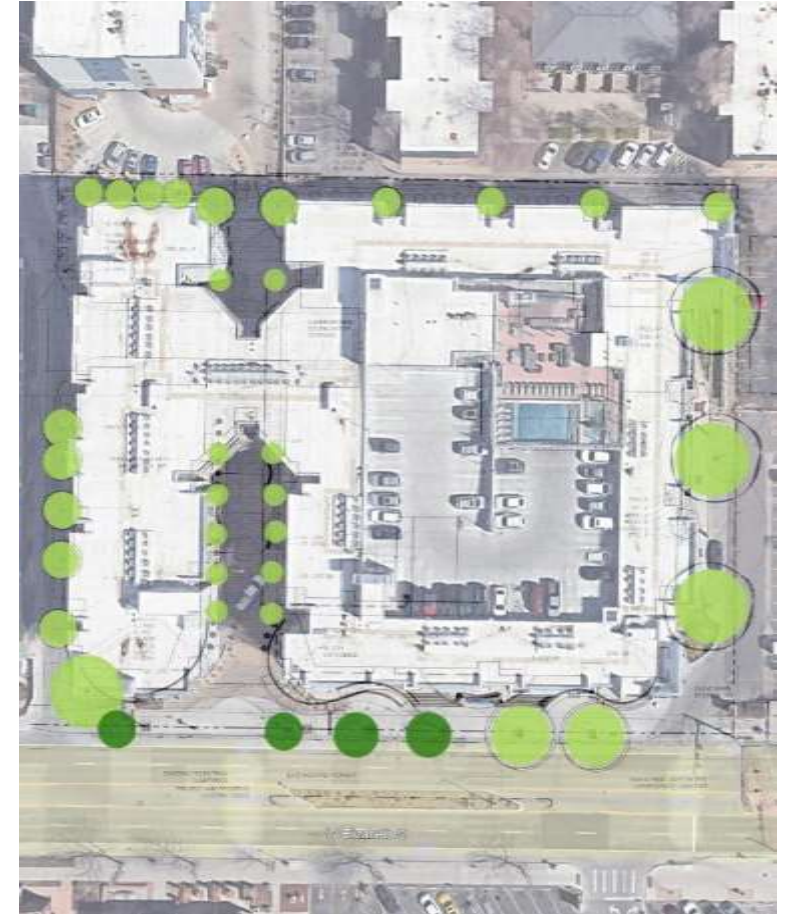




Site before development



26 trees removed, 4 protected



*Developed site - 55 new trees added
+ \$1,350 for off-site mitigation*

| Mitigation Type | Value |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Current Land Use Code | \$21,000 or 42 mitigation trees |
| Proposed Mitigation with 50% Reduction for Trees Saved | \$20,000 or 40 mitigation trees |

Compared to current Land Use Code:

- 2 fewer mitigation trees required or
- \$1,000 decrease in payment-in-lieu fees/value
- **5% decrease** in mitigation trees/fees required

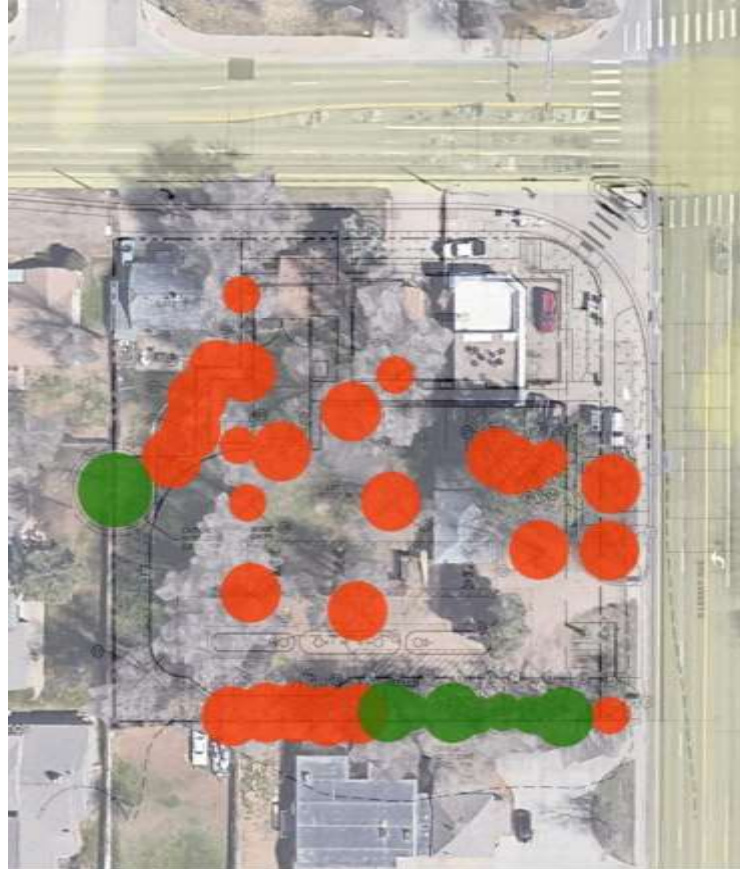
Kum & Go - Prospect

- Commercial/Mixed Use
- Infill Site, 1 acre





Site before development



29 trees removed, 8 protected



Developed site - 37 new trees approved

| Mitigation Type | Value |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Current Land Use Code | \$20,000 or 40 mitigation trees |
| Proposed Mitigation with 50% Reduction for Trees Saved | \$27,000 or 54 mitigation trees |

Compared to current Land Use Code:

- 14 additional mitigation trees required or
- \$7,000 increase in payment-in-lieu fees/value or
- **35% increase** in mitigation trees/fees required

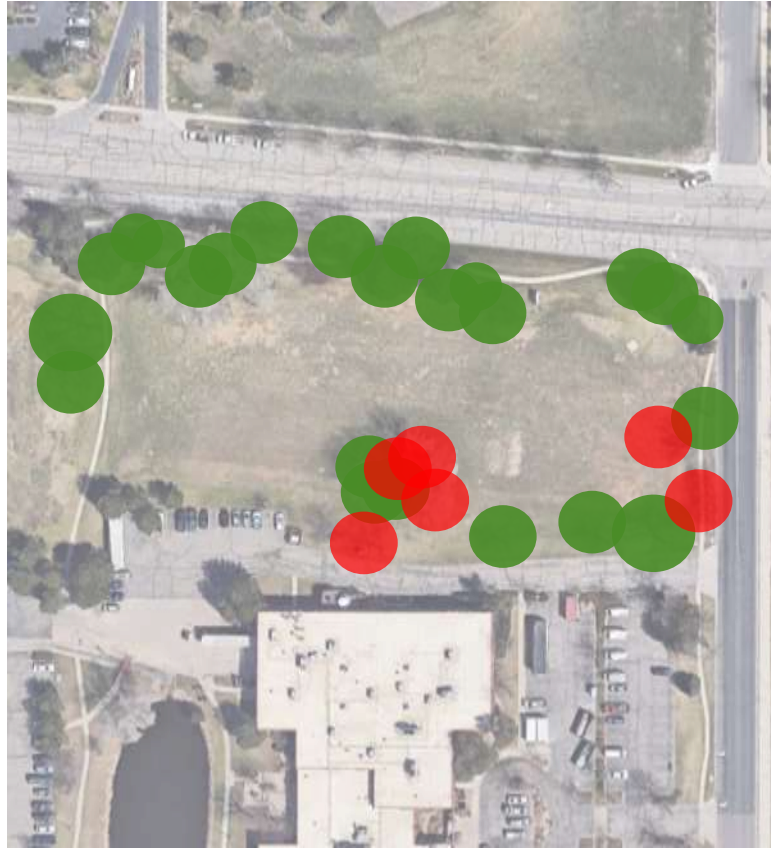
Prospect Sports Club

- Commercial/Recreation
- Infill Site, 2.5 acres





Site before development



9 trees removed, 40 protected



Developed site - 23 new trees added

| Mitigation Type | Value |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Current Land Use Code | \$10,500 or 21 mitigation trees |
| Proposed Mitigation with 50% Reduction for Trees Saved | \$0 or 0 mitigation trees |

Compared to current Land Use Code:

- 67 fewer mitigation trees required or
- \$33,500 decrease in payment-in-lieu value or
- **319% decrease** in mitigation requirements

Due to significant number of trees protected

Scenarios – Comparison with Current LUC

| | Current Land Use Code | Change with Proposed Mitigation Changes | |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|----------------|
| Union on Elizabeth | \$21,000 or 42 mitigation trees | \$20,000 or 40 mitigation trees | 5% reduction |
| Kum&Go | \$20,000 or 40 mitigation trees | \$27,000 or 54 mitigation trees | 35% increase |
| Prospect Sports Club | \$10,500 or 21 mitigation trees | \$0 or 0 mitigation trees | 319% reduction |
| Worthington Storage | \$24,500 or 49 mitigation trees | \$3,500 or 7 mitigation trees | 85% reduction |
| Village on Horsetooth | \$7,000 or 14 mitigation trees | \$8,750 or 18 mitigation trees | 25% increase |
| Timberline Road | \$25,500 or 51 mitigation trees | \$29,500 or 59 mitigation trees | 16% increase |
| Stodgy Brewing | \$28,250 or 57 mitigation trees | \$0 or 0 mitigation trees | 168% reduction |
| The Grainary (Fairway) | \$140,750 or 282 mitigation trees | \$189,000 or 378 mitigation trees | 34% increase |
| Copperleaf | \$10,750 or 22 mitigation trees | \$19,750 or 40 mitigation trees | 84% increase |
| Tapestry | \$4,500 or 9 mitigation trees | \$500 or 1 mitigation tree | 89% reduction |