

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

Jill Oropeza, Utilities Senior Director, Sciences & Planning

SUBJECT

Resolution No. 2025-105, Regarding the Northern Colorado Water Alliance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to adopt the guiding principles of the Northern Colorado Water Alliance (Alliance), of which the City of Fort Collins is a participating member, along with approximately sixteen other Northern Colorado entities and municipalities. The Alliance works to identify water-related challenges that could benefit from broad collaboration and action. This includes identifying ways to keep water in Northern Colorado to support the vitality, resilience, and well-being of Northern Colorado communities, rather than allowing the unimpeded purchase and transfer of these limited water resources to the Denver metro area or other communities outside of the region. The Alliance principles serve as a guide for member organizations as opportunities emerge to engage on this issue.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Resolution.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

The Alliance is an outgrowth of the former Regional Leadership Initiative “StratOp” group, which was established in 2019 as a forum to discuss regional water issues. Today, the NoCo WA has grown beyond the original four communities to include over 17 different entities including regional municipalities, Larimer County, water districts, special districts, and is facilitated by the NoCo Foundation. A full list of Alliance members is included here (**Attachment 1**).

In recent years, the work of the Alliance has focused on identifying and collaboratively addressing water-related challenges. The members of the alliance have identified a shared goal of keeping water in Northern Colorado for the benefit of Northern Colorado communities, rather than allowing the unimpeded purchase and transfer of this limited resource to Denver metro or other communities outside of the region.

Due to the unique needs and missions of the involved organizations and the complexities and challenges of water ownership and management in Colorado, a set of guiding principles for the Alliance was developed as a first step, ahead of identifying any actions (**Attachment 2**).

These principles do not bind members to any specific actions, but rather, aim to:

- Articulate the shared interest of the member organizations of retaining water in the region for local beneficial use by Northern Colorado communities.
- Express the intent that when out-of-region transfers do occur, the group will work to secure appropriate mitigation for the loss of those resources.
- Acknowledge each entity's right to engage in water markets in ways that support their interests, while acting in good faith, to achieve the stated goals.
- Encourage members to work together in good faith, through collaboration and transparency.

If the City chooses to engage in future collaborative projects or initiatives that are identified by the Alliance, these principles will be used to guide the work.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

None.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

None.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

None.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Northern Colorado Water Alliance Fact Sheet
2. Northern Colorado Water Alliance Principles (May 2025)
3. Resolution 2025-105