

AGENDA ITEM SUMMARY

City Council



STAFF

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SUBJECT

First Reading of 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.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this item is to consider an Ordinance to support the Civic Assembly's recommendations presented to Council on May 27, 2025, and to add additional specification to those recommendations.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends adoption of the Ordinance on First Reading.

BACKGROUND / DISCUSSION

One of the identified 2024-2026 Council priorities is to develop a Hughes Site Master Plan for the approximately 165-acre site by engaging in an inclusive process to determine desired future uses on the site. Implementation of this priority resulted in a Civic Assembly process. Twenty delegates were randomly selected from across Fort Collins to reflect the city's demographic diversity in terms of age, Council district, housing status, household income, and educational attainment.

The Assembly convened for two full weekends: April 12-13 and May 3-4 to answer the following question:

"Informed by the diverse needs of our community, what use of the Hughes site will contribute most effectively to Fort Collins' long-term vitality and meet the requirements outlined in the 2021 ballot measure?"

On May 27, 2025, staff and delegates from the Assembly presented the final report and recommendations to Council, which included:

- Property should be utilized for multiple uses to include a combination of bike park, open spaces, natural areas, trails and conservation/education features;
- Indigenous consultation, support, and opportunities should be included throughout the development of the site;
- Natural habitats should be restored throughout the development, as possible;
- Outdoor education and interpretation should be included;

- Multi-use center for public gathering, wildlife rehabilitation (i.e. wildlife hospital facility), learning and education, and Indigenous cultural representation ;
- Minimize light pollution;
- Include trail connections to Maxwell and Pineridge; and
- City will consult with land use experts, planners, architects, and designers for the optimal location of site features.

At an additional Work Session on July 8, 2025, staff presented a draft document of support for Council discussion. Based on feedback, the following updates have been incorporated:

- Ordinance language should stick as close as possible to the Civic Assembly recommendations;
- Uses recommended by the Civic Assembly should all use the same language, i.e. “the City will” vs “the City may include;”
- Specifically include wildlife rehabilitation as part of the environmental education partnership opportunities and increase acreage from 20 acres to 30 acres; and
- Clarification around “open space” (changed to City-owned land).

Also based on feedback from the work session, Council will consider referring the Ordinance as a ballot measure at the September 2 Council meeting.

The Ordinance will direct City staff to create development and management plans for the site in accordance with the following principles:

- Development and management of the Hughes Site will align with its zoning as Public Open Lands;
- 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;
- The City will cultivate predominantly native and xeric vegetation and the Hughes Site will feature a naturalistic architectural palette;
- 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;
- On a portion of the Hughes Site not to exceed 30 acres, the City will provide environmental education partnership opportunities, to include but not be limited to wildlife rehabilitation, and zoning-appropriate structures;
- The City will develop and manage the remaining acreage as a park, to include but not be limited to the following amenities:
 - Connective trail system throughout the Hughes Site;
 - Bike park features, not to exceed 35 acres;
 - A community gathering space, available for reservation by permit; and
 - Any necessary supporting facilities, including restrooms, shade structures, trash collection, and parking.
- Existing uses such as the disc golf course and sledding hill may continue in appropriate locations according to the plans for the site;
- The City will manage features of the developed Hughes Site appropriately considering their respective lifecycles;
- Development and redevelopment of the Hughes Site will proceed over time as planning, design, and funding allow;

- City projects to develop the Hughes Site will proceed through the applicable components of the City's development review process to ensure compliance with all current standards (e.g. stormwater, lighting, etc.); and
- 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.

CITY FINANCIAL IMPACTS

Development and redevelopment of the Hughes Site will proceed over time once a site plan has been approved and as planning, design, and funding allow. Funding will be identified over time.

BOARD / COMMISSION / COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

A representative each from the Land Conservation and Stewardship (LCSB), Natural Resources, Parks and Recreation, and Youth Advisory Boards all participated in the Information Committee which was a critical element of the Civic Assembly process to curate information and initial presenters for their first weekend.

A Super Issues meeting was held on June 23, 2025, which was open to the public. Substantive questions centered around the site's planning details, civic assembly process, and community representation.

During their regular meeting on July 23, 2025, LCSB recommended that Council not adopt the Civic Assembly Resolution and Council not refer the Civic Assembly's recommendations to the ballot. Board minutes will be considered for approval during their August 13, 2025, meeting and a copy will be shared with Council in their read before packet.

PUBLIC OUTREACH

The project webpage (ourcity.fcgov.com/future-of-hughes) remains the central hub for updates, news and engagement. The site also serves as an information portal regarding the associated Civic Assembly process and recommendations and subsequent Council deliberations.

If Council refers this topic to the ballot, public engagement and communications efforts will conform with election-related policies, particularly regarding neutrality in public information and restrictions on advocacy during active ballot periods.

As this project marks the City's first use of a Civic Assembly as a community decision-making tool, we will also be conducting follow-up public engagement to gauge the community's feelings about (and knowledge of) the process and its effectiveness. This work is anticipated to start in fall 2025 following the election and after the final result of any ballot measures is known.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Proposed Resolution on Hughes Stadium Development (redlined)
2. Presentation
3. Ordinance No. 141, 2025