

# MINUTES

CITY OF FORT COLLINS • BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS



## ECONOMIC ADVISORY BOARD

### TYPE OF MEETING – REGULAR

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November 16, 2022 4:00 – 6:00 pm  
[Via Zoom](#)

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#### 1. CALL TO ORDER

4:05pm

#### 2. ROLL CALL

- List of Board Members Present
  - Renee Walkup
  - Thierry Dossou
  - Denny Coleman
  - Jeff Havens
  - Braulio Rojas
  - John Parks
  - Mistene Nugent
  - Blake Naughton
- List of Board Members Absent – Excused or Unexcused, if no contact with Chair has been made.
- List of Staff Members Present
  - Jillian Fresa, Staff Liaison, Economic Sustainability
  - Trent Shaw, Economic Development Consultant, Hickey Global
  - Elijah Cleary, Engagement Manager, Hickey Global

#### 3. AGENDA REVIEW

- No changes

#### 4. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

- N/A

#### 5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Minutes approved by Board

#### 6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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#### 7. NEW BUSINESS

- **Economic Health Strategic Plan Interview**

- Trent Shaw, Economic Development Consultant, and Elijah Cleary, Engagement Manager with Hickey Global joined the Board to interview them regarding the City's Economic Health Strategic Plan. They will be taking the Boards feedback and compiling it to learn how Fort Collins sees itself and what its goals are.
- **Q (Elijah)** Please share from your perspective how you would define economic development?
  - **A (Braulio)** If you think about economics, it is the science of trying to learn how people fulfill their needs. For the City, it would be, can the City sustainably fulfill their needs in a long-term capacity without upgrading a lot of negative externalities.
  - **A (Jeff)** I think people just think economic development is just growth, but the only thing that grows on check is cancer. So, make sure growth is done intelligently and making sure it doesn't cause unexpected problems or more problems than it solves. Putting economic development into context with the larger host of issues that collectively form life and specific engagement I think is important as well.
  - **A (John)** Economics come from Greek, about maintaining the house. It involves so many different things. Making sure that everything is in balance is what economic development is to me. Making sure there is no lack of housing, or too much housing. Making sure it is all in order.
  - **A (Jeff)** I would also throw in there that economic development presupposes mobility. It requires people to have options to change careers to move as necessary and to not feel as though whatever job they are in is the only opportunity they have.
  - **A (Renee)** I think economic health is planned. It is not an accident that a city grows, or businesses come. It has to be thought through and that in our city particular that we focus on our global businesses. That is where a lot of our health has to come from. We have to preserve our local businesses and keep them strong.
  - **A (Denny)** Economic development is all about the growth and expansion, attraction, or creation of jobs and investment in your community.
  - **A (Thierry)** I agree with what everyone said on business creation and

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quality of life. Being able to attract talent to the community and focusing on the community and betterment of community. Creating jobs and businesses.

- **A (Jeff)** A diversity of opportunity. I've lived in a factory town, and I've lived in a one company town. You feel like you are somewhat hostage to the fortunes of that company. You can find examples of cities that disappeared overnight when things don't go well. So, making sure you are properly resilient and not one part of your economy is so outsized that its failures would cause a cascade in other parts.
- **Q (Trent)** In reference to what Jeff said about the right kind of growth, could you maybe put more definition of what you perceive as negative growth that could be a result of economic development?
  - **A (Jeff)** Just the boom-and-bust current cycle you see being played in the tech industry now. You grow really big, worry about it later and then when things go south you lay off a bunch of people. It can be chaotic and an unstable situation. There is a reason the federal reserve has a 2% inflation target. If you have 10% inflation for forever you end up with semi failed states, so making sure your growth is managed intelligently is a really good hedge against chaos and revolution. When Renee said growth has to be planned, I don't think it has to be planned. I think it should be planned because people grow and later figure out if that was a good decision and that causes problems. The importance of thinking before acting is paramount for something as large as a city.
  - **A (Braulio)** On the same line, if we are talking about the key element of economic development, how you can create economic growth precuring value because most of the time when you try to create economic growth it is under a body of cost; you need to destroy the environment or you need to settle with your principals. How can we be smart creating value, creating economic growth but at the same time preserving our community value
- **Q (Elijah)** What is working well in the City's economy and community. What do you guys feel are some strengths of Fort Collins?
  - **A (John)** One thing is the University. It is so central to this town and there is so much opportunity to change based on the University being here. So many people come to Fort Collins because of the University and want to stay. It becomes such a center of nation in so many different areas because of the University.

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- **A (Jeff)** I would also have to say the design, the physical structure of the City is one of the things that attracted me to living here. You can get anywhere in 15 minutes and that is really hard to do, if not common for a city of this size. The fact that you never wonder if you should get in your car or physical mobility which allows you to do something on the other side of town, spend your money there, not feel like you can't get supplies if you're a business that needs something in another part of the City. I like the physical infrastructure.
- **A (Denny)** To expand on what Jeff said, I think the core of the City is the Downtown area. It is somewhat unique. It is well planned. It has kept the large, big box retailers out towards the freeway vs letting them approach on Downtown. It is human scale. I love how the City decorates it for the holidays and plants things in the spring, summer, and fall. The whole physical infrastructure is so enhanced. I think it is very nice. One other thing I find somewhat unique is the way the City hasn't let the alleys go underutilized. They pave the alleys, decorate the buildings, and actually encourage some retail to crop up in some of the alleys Downtown. I think it is unique in my experience and a nice added benefit to the walkability of the Downtown area. The core here is really special.
- **A (Mistene)** I would say particularly post covid, the Chamber and the City are working very close together and there is a real recognition how small business runs our economy and request of engagement from small businesses and understanding what their needs are.
- **A (Renee)** One of the reasons our City is unique is because of our spirited community. They are welcoming, they like each other. I am making some broad brushstrokes, but it is a friendly city. They talk to each other, they say hello. There is a spirit here of we belong, for most people and it is a pervasive around town. You walk on a trail, and they say hello, good morning; there is a conversation some of the time. I didn't see the same engagement in other cities, and I have traveled a lot. It is something that makes us unique, and it does help provide a spirit of community and that helps our businesses.
- **A (Jeff)** I would add to what Mistene said; I don't disagree at all about what she said about the small business. I also kind of go back to my comment earlier about diversification. I appreciate Fort Collins has a collection of larger but not enormously large, overshadowing businesses. There are multiple companies here that employ 500-5,000 people. The University is certainly the biggest employer and has an outside piece in the City but it is impossible for that one to pick up and

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leave. The large businesses here could theoretically decide to leave but there is a lot of them and I think that is helpful. It keeps the economy diversified. I would also like to point out the infrastructure side; a real dedication on the City to use and appreciate its outdoor spaces. You have bike trails to take you almost anywhere you want. There is a huge emphasis on using the proximity front range to the mountains, all the water, lakes, and everything else. There are lot of parks and each one is unique.

- **A (Denny)** I think that is a key point. The proximity to the mountain is pretty spectacular. Nothing we did to get it here, but I think the ability to get into the mountains fairly quickly in terms of some very spectacular spaces is somewhat unique to other parts of the country.
- **A (Braulio)** Mine is going to be along the same line with outdoor and nature spaces. Most people who live here appreciate its outdoor spaces. They can enjoy them. The other thing is the college life. Many people come here to go to school, get engaged, and stay in the City. City life is around CSU for sure. Another good is a good balance between the young lifestyle due to the College and the senior life. I think the City has created a good balance if you live in a college town but people can also consider coming here for retirement. I think those three elements are three key elements around the City of Fort Collins.
- **A (Thierry)** I was just going to add, yes, we have a university which is great, we also have a great school district in Fort Collins. It is a family friendly place to raise kids.
- **A (Jeff)** I would say one of the strengths too is there is a large college here, but I don't actually feel Fort Collins is a college town in the sense that the town couldn't survive without its college. I don't feel awkward being Downtown or near campus the way you can in some communities if you don't go to that school. I think it is nice there is a healthy balance between student life and non-student life.
- **A (Renee)** I would like to add one more thing. We have a vibrant music community here. People have referred to Fort Collins as a mini-Nashville. I think to keep that in mind as we continue to plan our growth and attract businesses. I think that is extremely important. I think there are very few resources and talent here in the music industry. I think we should consider that as we are attracting businesses.
- **A (Mistene)** We also have a strong philanthropic community as well.

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- **A (John)** As well as 32 microbreweries.
- **A (Blake)** Pick up on what people are talking about. What I thought of when I saw this question was the ability to attract particularly a high educated workforce. I think because of the expense here you need to think about, are we going to attract all levels of the workforce but certainly it is a mix that is different than other college towns. There are a lot of industries here that require a highly educated workforce. It's a great environment near the mountains, breweries, and all that that people want to live in. I think it has an ability to bring that workforce together in a way that a lot of communities don't.
- **Q (Trent)** I have heard the University mentioned a couple times as well as music scene and other quality of life measures and assets you have. Are there any other assets or resources for small businesses like small business welcome center or something you can name that is a resource you rely on for the business community in Fort Collins?
  - **A (Renee)** When Braulio mentioned our aging community, we have a tremendous amount of seniors who live in this area and they are continuing to move in in troves. Often people, older people, bring money. I think there is an opportunity for businesses that support seniors or where seniors are going. It is definitely a target that I don't think a lot of people have taken a look at. The City has done a good job thinking about transportation for seniors but when it comes to businesses coming in and providing resources for seniors and not just seniors over 55 but all the way up to 100 plus because all those people are aging. That group is going to continue to grow, and I think it needs to be addressed.
  - **A (Jeff)** I am going to give a shoutout to the Front Range Community College Small Business Development Center. It might be funded by the State but anyone that wants can go there and utilize mentors on a number of different issues. I have done that with a business I am looking to start. IT is free to you and free to anyone who wants to. They have helped hundreds of different people talk through their business and helped dozens of those hundreds actually start successful businesses. Having that free community resource is great from a business development standing.
  - **A (John)** Innosphere, which is an incubator for small businesses, as well as the Energy Institute which is Part of Colorado State University (CSU). It focuses on developing new projects in the energy space. I know there are a lot of companies being built and from that energy

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institute and planning on growing in size soon.

- **A (Denny)** Maybe a major issue for quality of life, but people who like pets, especially dogs, go to the Larimer County Farmer's Market. The Westminster dog show has nothing on that place. Lots of vets around town. For people who like animals, this is a friendly environment for them.
- **A (Braulio)** I remember about a month ago, I participated in a City sponsored event that hosted a small engagement tour in the Hispanic Community. They help small businesses. I liked that and I think that program is open. Many people come here and want to start a business, but they don't have an idea. From what I saw in the Latin Community, I think the City has done a good job trying to provide guidance and accomplishment in moving their idea forward.
  - **Q (Trent)** Do you know the name of that program?
    - **A (Braulio)** It is through the Economic Health Department.
- **Q (Elijah)** What is the opposite of what is working well? What are some weaknesses throughout Fort Collins and throughout the community?
  - **A (Jeff)** There are a couple of things. One is housing is too expensive. Everything is expensive but, housing in particular is very difficult. It is one of the most expensive places in the country. Going back to the infrastructure comments, I think Fort Collins has done a poor job in developing north of the Poudre River. North College does not have the same thoughtfulness about its infrastructure as South College. Also, the further south you get (last 20 years the City has developed) it gets into the same kind of developments you have around every other place. It is a whole lot of neighborhoods and not a lot of businesses. If Fort Collins isn't intelligent about its expansion, it is going to run into the risk of it being a city that is twice the size it is now geographically with the same core and poorly designed northern part of town. It will be a bunch of bedroom communities sprawls that you would see in the suburbs of Denver when you get to Broomfield. I think the City needs to be mindful of how it continues to grow because some of the current approaches to that growth are a little bit more mono culture then they are properly diversified.
  - **A (Denny)** I strongly agree with that. If you are going to retain a strong quality Downtown and Old Town area, I think that area to the North needs to be developed properly. Very strong development up there



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would help solidify Downtown as a sector of the region rather than be pulled to the South, which I think is happening now. Downtown and Old Town are strong don't get me wrong, but I think to solidify that, budling up that and using that halo affect of Downtown would be a great strategy.

- **A (Jeff)** A heavier percentage of the stuff north of Downtown is Hispanic or Mexican businesses. I think you could lead into that really nicely. I am not saying call it little Mexico or anything like that, but you could certainly create a second downtown feeling that didn't drive anyone away but tried to keep the character of the businesses that exist there.
- **A (John)** I think that touches on an important point that maybe a lack of diversity among the inhabitants of Fort Collins. We have 1-2% of Black folks, maybe 10-15% of Hispanic folks, and there is historically a big division there on the north end of town. That has been the lower socioeconomic portion of town which has been a big driving factor of the lack of integration. We have some good public transportation like the Max Bus which goes up and down college but stops in Downtown. It doesn't serve the Northern part of town. That was a missed opportunity.
- **A (Braulio)** I agree with absolutely everything. I will emphasize on the affordability, especially on homes. Fort Collins is not as affordable as viewed to be. If we get that under control, we are going to place our rates in which, yes, I like and love Fort Collins, but I have to move. I think we need to be proactive and smart. How can we keep things under control? That requires long discussion. In relation to public services, if you have good strong public services that will solve problems for the community. It can make it more affordable. We cannot be overconfident thinking about everyone wants to be here and forget about the cost of living. At some point people are going to make rational decisions.
- **A (Renee)** We moved here about 15 years ago and it was extremely affordable back then, however last 10 years of so, cost of living has gotten out of control. The main reason is the worst/best places to live lists. All these places said move to Fort Collins. It is a great place to live so it is attracting a lot of people and the price has gone up. I don't know what else has really changed in the last 10 years other than media frenzy to move to Fort Collins. There hasn't been a lot of new, large businesses here to attract thousands of people. It has become popular. I would like the media to stop talking about it because it has



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created a frenzy.

- **A (Braulio)** For example our teachers who teach our kids, they cannot afford to live here. My wife is a teacher and I know another teacher that work with her that work here but live in Johnstown at her parents' house. She takes naps in her car at school because she couldn't afford a place here. This young teacher with a lot of talent is providing a great service to our Kids. There is a bilingual program we rave about, but those teachers cannot afford to live here. That is alarming because we have to think about it and everyone is going to distance from the problem. We all live here so we need to try to think outside the box and see how we can make life easier and affordable to people who provide value to this community. Who can provide more value than a teacher. We have to be mindful about that.
- **A (Jeff)** One other thing for Fort Collins or Larimer County at large has a reputation for being more expensive to do anything. I understand a house in Larimer County from the permitting process and getting shovels in the dirt, costs \$100,000 more to build a house here than Weld County. That is a complaint about Fort Collins. I want to temper this complaint by saying in general Fort Collins is more intentional about what goes where than Weld County. So, you do, on the plus side end up with more intentionality designed place to live Where in Weld County, they go where they go in a lot more sprawled way and a lot more disconnect. That is a positive for that slower, more expensive process. The negative is it is slower and more expensive. It can push businesses out as Mistene has mentioned in other meetings and has potential to make housing expensive.
- **A (Mistene)** Not sure there is a real appreciation or understanding for the cost that comes with the decisions we make as a City. Everyone wants affordable housing, but our development fees are high. We want businesses to thrive, but property taxes are existential, which is not specific to Larimer County but big issues for businesses. Development, licensing, and getting approval to do projects can be burdensome. I am not sure we always think about the correlation and that cost. The other issue again, not specific to Larimer County is water. Colorado overall in affordability, water is expensive. It is a challenge that not everyone has as well.
- **A (Denny)** In Old Town, a lot of the little side streets and alleys are not paved which in a dry windy climate, picks up a lot of dust and contributes to the air quality at times. In the wintertime the City does a nice job of plowing the main streets and clearing them. They do not

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plow out the side streets at all. You shouldn't have to use your dog sled to get to the main street to drive well. It needs to be addressed. It could be a cost issue but could help immensely. A bigger issue the City is addressing is the entrance way into the City off I-25. I know there is an annexation proposal on Mulberry; that needs to be done. To me comparing it to real estate, you have a beautiful house on the inside but an ugly exterior. You get a vision of what the City looks like by the routes you take to get there. If we could take that over as a city and improve the look of that through infrastructure, landscaping, and some zoning controls it would be a big benefit long term for the City. It is a big cost but needs to be addressed.

- **A (Jeff)** I am going to tac on that as well. There are four main entrances to the City and North College doesn't look any better coming into the City than Mulberry does. You could do exactly what Denny said but on the North College side as well. South College and Harmony you just come into the town, nothing bad, nothing interesting, just more stuff so you know you are in town. You could make it a welcome sign or arch but more particular, North College and Mulberry do not impress.
- **Q (Trent)** When talking about people potentially being priced out of the community, is that something you would see being pushed into surrounding slightly different counties or uprooting their communities and moving someplace else?
  - **A (Renee)** Like Braulio said, people can't afford to live here; they live outside the City and then commute into the City for work. I spoke with a top police officer one day and he said he lives in Windsor. He was telling me how he had a bigger yard and bigger house. Most of his colleges were also living in that area because it was more affordable. They are City of Fort Collins police officers. It would be nice if they lived next door, but I don't have any control over that. It is another example of people living outside of our City. It's really complicated with housing too because of the way the suburbs outside Fort Collins have been developing. They bottom line is that a lot of people are driving in and working here. They are using our services too, so that is good and bad. They are buying gas here, but they are using our roads. It's the Ying and Yang of people working in our City. They might come shopping and spend their money, but there is a drag on some of the resources. I wanted to comment on one other thing, Denny, when you are talking about infrastructure one of the biggest problems we have in the City is people are resistant to change. You have people are going

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to City Council meetings all the time. We have people who have lived here for a long time, and it's never been done that way before, so they don't want it to change.

- **Q (Denny)** To specific types of infrastructure?
- **A (Renee)** Different kinds. A good example is probably with the trash, you know single hauler and that kind of thing. Don't mess with my freedom, we hear it all the time.
- **Comment (Jeff)** Yeah, and it doesn't stop at the City
- **Comment (Renee)** Exactly, but it slows us down.
- **A (Braulio)** Adding to that, and I don't have data to support it, but I think people are rushing on decision if they have a job in this town. I work there but I live in a different one that is more affordable. The thing is, thinking about the City, a city can decide whatever they want. Do they prefer to have the jobs here or do they want to have the people here and work wherever they want? My personal concept is it is strong to have people living in the place. You mentioned earlier that you have city units around businesses, that business goes bankrupt, the city disappears. So going back to the first question of economic growth, I think city's prefers people living in the city. It can go worse, but people are going to stay. People are doing what is rational in living where it is cheap, but we need to have people living here. Let them work outside and live here.
- **A (John)** One of the strengths we didn't talk about is some of the policies that are pretty progressive like the Climate Action Plan, but one of the weaknesses that goes along with that is transportation is our biggest producer of greenhouse gas emissions. There is not a good plan to reduce emissions. There are opportunities for a regional train system that had been raised over the last 30 years that always gets shot down. That would be a really great opportunity.
- **A (Jeff)** Not sure if it is a weakness but there are 300 days of sun here so using solar as an energy generator seems like a no brainer. I know we have some solar plans, but I don't know how much of the City's energy generation is through solar. If they could be increased, that would be a weakness. I might be wrong, and they might be doing everything they can. I just know we have the resource and can use it to do potentially more.
- **A (Blake)** To add in a different direction that is not working well. I do not believe the City plans well with the University in relation to

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economic development. Its south campus was originally supposed to be an economic R&D park and was built about 25 years ago. It was turned into an office park with a lot of public buildings, and they are not doing R&D now. Now the Powerhouse Campus and Foothills campus, which are both in town, will have more of a roll in that. But even the plan meetings don't demonstrate a strong coordination and that development with the City about what kinds of assets to attract what kind of ways. The University does good incubation of agriculturally based businesses but completely absent coordination with the City in the ways they are doing that. Lot of missed opportunities, could be much more.

- **A (Jeff)** John mentioned Innosphere as a strength. There is not a lot of that in Fort Collins. What tends to be organized is what you expect would be near a university. A lot of science and a lot of agriculture products or business ideas. I don't know if the City has the ability to do this but I think a weakness is a lack of opportunity for that kind of venture or funding in general for a business that are not science or tech oriented.
- **A (Denny)** In my experience technology transfer doesn't just happen. It needs to be actively pursued by a university but also by an investment community. It goes all the way to precede funding, to seed funding, to venture capital and so on. I think if you want a robust entrepreneurial environment, you need to have all of that. It comes down to money especially tech companies will flow where the money is.
- **Q (Elijah)** Identify three specific ways in which you envision the City of Fort Collins can capitalize on its many assets to strengthen, expand, and diversify its economy (don't feel like you must stick to three).
  - **A (Jeff)** I think a real intentional redesign or enhanced design of the North College part of town would be a really big deal. It would be helpful for those businesses. I think you could attract a lot more foot traffic. I mean it is certainly walkable from Old Town. I think it would make the City look more attractive. It would be an enhancement in every way as long as you didn't price people out of being able to live there.
  - **A (Denny)** I think an asset the City has is the Gardens on Spring Creek. It is a real asset, a beautiful place. It is kind of constrained size wise but has vacant land around it. The City should pursue acquiring some of that land and expanding the Gardens. I think we are also in a

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unique situation because of the dry environment getting dryer. There is an opportunity perhaps with the University to look more into plant science as to plants that can exist not just agriculturally but other plants in this environment. Expand on an asset we already have.

- **A (Braulio)** One I have thought about is how to help in the community residence and business is to take advantage of the digital era we are living in right now. I think we have made an effort to try to create a sense of shopping local and build internal relationships, but the reality is that people like being online. We should be proactive in helping the business community take full advantage of what they can do. Not only focus on local markets but go to online options would be a good opportunity.
- **A (Jeff)** I live in a neighborhood that was developed in the 80s and at that time they had some kind of plan or requirement where in the square mile I live in every type of house had to be built. There is single family detached, duplexes, retirement community, apartments, and condos. They are not all right next to each other. I think as the City got older, and more recently as they developed south, they let that idea slide. As the City continues to develop and create neighborhoods or any infrastructure, they should diversify the types of things that are there or requiring them to diversify types of homes. There could be a certain percentage of homes to business or residential to commercial would prevent the possibility of an expanded bedroom community feel. Just more mixed use which is what everyone loves about Old Town. Make sure you continue the character in new development as well, so it doesn't lose character.
- **A (Blake)** My response to that question is more about the definition of the City's value on the region. In my time here, it doesn't seem like it is well defined. Other cities will define itself as a life science corridor and I think about the overall regional workforce needs, infrastructure needs, education needs or whatever in a broader sense. Not long ago this was a city that then, was surrounded by dry land but now we are all mushed together along the Front Range. It doesn't seem apparent to me that we are planning in that way thinking about housing and development. Look at the City's contribution overall to that economic portfolio would be in the ways we would define that, name, and claim that space in certain ways and take advantage of our assets. I am sure there have been some past iconic plans that did that but certainly not heard the drum beat of this is what we are about, this is what we contribute, or this is what we are doing with our neighbors. Instead, it

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is people go over to Weld County to build cheaper houses and drive in and there is not good transportation. Yes, there is some big tech on the south side of town and agricultural tech by the University, but it doesn't seem like an intergraded approach or strategy is apparent.

- **A (John)** One of the opportunities I mentioned earlier is the interregional transportation. There are some good things that are happening like the Busstang that goes down to Denver, but it seems like there is more that can be done in terms of electric vehicle charging areas, more equestrian areas, and more development of some sort of rail or light rail system would be phenomenal.
- **A (Denny)** If ever there is an area in the state that could be advantaged by a light rail line, the entire Front Range, Fort Collins through Denver, maybe a side trip to Boulder, through Denver to the Air Force Academy, is it. I mean they are improving I-25 but I don't know if the State is looking long term or not.
- **A (John)** I think there is a tax district that was recently developed a couple years ago to get the revenue to create some sort of train system up and down the Front Range.
  - **Comment (Blake)** Pueblo to Larimer it was a high-speed rail all along there but it has never been prioritized.
  - **Comment (John)** It's expensive but the price is never going to come down.
- **Q (Trent)** Let me put that in another way. We have heard a lot of opportunities to capitalize on, assets and some other areas we perceive Fort Collins as being the pack or future challenges emerging. If you were to attack one of these issues, as one of your main priorities or first priority, what would that be? So basically, how would you prioritize, we have heard cost of living, infrastructure, the suburban sprawl, etc. If you were to address one of the issues what would the priority be for you personally?
  - **A (Braulio)** For me, public services
  - **A (Jeff)** Cost of housing. So affordable housing is number one and number two is revitalizing North College.
  - **A (Blake)** My personal opinion would be to prioritize transportation which I think will have an affect on housing prices in second or third order affects. Then if we had a better throughout transportation system and if someone finished the highway then we would solve some other things.



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- **A (Thierry)** Affordable housing would be number one and another one would be attracting talent.
- **A (Denny)** An aggressive plan to redo North College area and a strong second would be affordable housing.
- **A (Braulio)** Let me add a little bit of context to public services. Where you live might be expensive but when many things are public, low cost, or free, it helps you compensate. For example, recreational activities, programs, transportation rails. When I mention public services, the intention is to make cost of living more affordable in general.
- **A (John)** My priority would be transportation. I think it would have quite the positive impact on air quality as well as cost of living because it would make it easier for people who need to commute a more cost-effective matter. I don't know what affect it would have on housing. My second priority would be housing. That is an issue that so many people face.
- **Comment (Trent)** Thank you so much for your time. One thing we ask is that you send the SWAT matrix we sent over in the package. If you can finish filling that out and get it sent to Jillian, that would be awesome. She will send it to us for our data. We look forward to helping with this plan.
- **Q (John)** Where are you located? Have you been to Fort Collins?
  - **A (Elijah)** I am in Phoenix. I have been to Boulder and Denver but never Fort Collins. My girlfriend and I have been discussing moving to Fort Collins in 2024 so this is enlightening.
  - **A (Trent)** I am currently living in New York and before that in Florida. I have bee to Denver but not Fort Collins. Since I spent most of my time in Florida, getting west is harder but now it is on my list.
- **Q (Renee)** How many people are you interviewing in this process?
  - **A (Elijah)** Lots of folks. Anyone Fort Collins deemed had an important role in the economic process.
  - **Q (Renee)** More or less than 100?
- **A (Trent)** Less than 100 groups. Jillian should be able to give a more exact number. We have another partner we are working with, and she is doing a lot of the stakeholder interviews. Jillian has a master list and could tell you. Not sure if we will get to 100 people with all the groups. I think it is likely we will. I think that is list growing but we are putting a cap on that list here soon. We



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certainly are pleased to get feed back from this group.

- **Q (Denny)** Jillian when do you expect them to come back with their staff report or final report?
  - **A (Jillian)** Some things have shifted so I think we are going to be shifting Council adoption to summer or early fall.
  - **Q (Denny)** Will we get a chance to review that draft or whatever that next step would be?
  - **A (Jillian)** I can ask if they can come back and share the draft.
- **Comment (Renee)** John brought up a good point. It is significant we fill this form out and submit it because the person that interviewed me felt like we should be an integral part of this process. I think that certainly we have given our opinions, but they're going to look at what we are saying.
- **Q (Renee)** Do you know about how many people they are interviewing in this process?
  - **A (Jillian)** I don't know the exact number but 30-50. They frequently update us on who they actually interviewed. It's a good number of people.
  - **Q (Renee)** Not by name, but were there any surprises on that list?
  - **A (Jillian)** We developed the list so no. We gave them the contacts.
  - **Q (Renee)** If they interview anyone off the list will they report that to you?
  - **A (Jillian)** Yes, they tell us who they interviewed but don't tell us details of the interview.
  - **Comment (Braulio)** That is why you stepped out. They don't want it biased.
  - **Comment (Jillian)** Exactly, they want honest feedback.

- **2023 Work Plan**

- Every year the Board goes through their work plan to refine their goals and what they would like to accomplish for the year. It is due November 30th and will be sent to the City. They had a discussion to finalize the work plan.
- The Board word smithed the document. They discussed the charter and how their goals reflect that charter. John mentioned their job is to advise City

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Council on economic matters, which is broad. John thought buying local support should have more emphasis. They asked about what Josh had shared about buying local online that the City was working on. Jillian shared it was not funded. She shared support small businesses was a ongoing Council priority. Renee thought it applied more to education about supporting local businesses. Jillian shared the Economic Health Department also encouraged people to support small businesses throughout all of Fort Collins. Jillian mentioned having the small business team present to the Board so they can update them on everything they are doing.

- Denny discussed introducing themselves to Council like they had talked about in a past meeting. Other Board members agreed. Renee thinks they have been to passive in the past. Thierry agreed with providing more recommendations and memos to Council.
- Braulio recommended keeping the document general so it can include lots of different topics and they can get more detailed throughout the year. The Board also discussed regionalism. They also discussed what programs and projects will be ongoing and removed some goals and items based on that. They also removed wording regarding Covid 19.
- Denny mentioned how they will need to remain flexible because of the Economic Strategic plan and how it should dictate what they look at as well.
- Braulio motioned and John seconded to approve the work plan. Vote passed unanimously.

## 8. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

## 9. BOARD MEMBER AND STAFF REPORTS

- Aric resigned from the Board as he moved out of Fort Collins.
- Jeff shared he is starting a business to increase the availability of affordable housing. He plans on taking existing properties and turning them into condos. He will then sell into units at cost plus a small business profit. Instead of him owning a fourplex and renting them out he will buy a four plex and then chop into to four apartments to sell as standalone apartments. It is reverse of what people are currently doing in taking a property and turning them into rentals. It is designed to be a business and be profitable and designed to hit people in the 80-120% of median income. He asked the Board for any contacts for people who would be interested in helping or investing. Braulio mentioned working with the group that had the affordable housing strategic plan as they had a lot of good data. Renee mentioned speaking with Sue Beck-Ferkiss. John mentioned a statewide vote that approved an affordable housing fund. Jeff is not sure he would qualify as he is a business and

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not government or nonprofit. Jeff believes if he can show this can build a profit, he could get more people interested on a salvage level and then you would have a bigger pool of people to participate. You could also go to other communities and say this is how we are doing this, if we can do it in one of the most expensive places, anyone can do it. He believes there are certain advantages to having it be a business. Denny mentioned banks and other institutions might be engaged in an effort to speed up responsible indictment properties. Jeff found some but doesn't have any connections. Jeff also mentioned he is going to go to a Northern Colorado Community Foundation after Thanksgiving.

### 10. OTHER BUSINESS

### 11. ADJOURN - 6:00 pm