




**City Manager's Office**  
City Hall  
300 LaPorte Ave.  
PO Box 580  
Fort Collins, CO 80522  
**970.221.6505**  
970.224.6107 - fax  
fcgov.com

## MEMORANDUM

Date: March 23, 2023

To: Mayor and City Council

From: Sylvia Tatman-Burruss, Project Manager 

Ginny Sawyer, Project and Policy Manager 

Thru: Kelly DiMartino, City Manager 

Tyler Marr, Deputy City Manager

RE: Work Session Summary – March 14, 2023 - Former Hughes Stadium Property

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Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis and Councilmembers Peel, Ohlson were present with Councilmember Canonico participating remotely.

At the March 14 Work Session, staff provided an overview of activity on the Hughes property to date and shared findings from recent outreach focused on future land use. Staff reviewed the engagement activities to date including on-line participation and focus group activity. Clarity on City definitions of Natural Areas, Public Open Lands, and Parks, Recreation and open lands was provided.

City is currently under contract with Colorado State University and anticipates closing on the property in the next few months.

### Summary of Feedback

Discussion included:

- A desire to continue to work with the community and organized interest groups going forward.
  - There was recognition of multiple community passions.
  - Some expressed a desire to pursue a bike park elsewhere in the community.
- Clarity of timelines:
  - Staff reiterated that nothing has been determined or decided.
  - This initial outreach is a first step in a much longer, iterative process.
  - Confirmed that 2025 would be the first budget opportunity to dedicate funds to planning or improvements.
- Question of consultant bias.
  - Staff assured that both consultants and staff are dedicated to the process and not the outcome.



- Excitement and encouragement to work with the community to create something of value to all.
  - Council encouraged avoiding win/lose scenarios.

### **Next Steps**

- Council confirmed a deliberative timeline is appropriate for this process and Council supports staff returning with an update later in 2023.
- Council desires more engagement before stating activities that should be considered or removed (with the exception of those that do not want a bike park on the property.)
- Staff will develop an engagement plan and share with Council through a memo in late April.



**Economic Health Office**  
222 LaPorte Avenue  
PO Box 580  
Fort Collins, CO 80522  
**970.416.2164**  
[fcgov.com/business](http://fcgov.com/business)

**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** March 23, 2023

**TO:** Mayor and City Council

**THROUGH:** Kelly DiMartino, City Manager  
Tyler Marr, Deputy City Manager

DS  
A blue ink signature of Kelly DiMartino, enclosed in a blue rectangular box.

**FROM:** Jacob Castillo, Chief Sustainability Officer  
Josh Birks, Deputy Director, Sustainability Services  
SeonAh Kendall, Economic Health Director  
Jillian Fresa, Economic Health Manager  
Shannon Hein, Economic Health Manager  
Molly Saylor, Waste Reduction and Recycling Lead Specialist

**RE:** **March 14, 2023 Work Session Summary: Economic Health Strategic Plan and Circular Economy**

This memorandum provides a summary of the discussion related to the March 14, 2023 Work Session Item – Economic Health Strategic Plan and Circular Economy.

**Councilmembers Present:** Mayor Arndt, Mayor Pro Tem Francis, Gutowsky, Peel, Ohlson  
**Presenting Staff:** SeonAh Kendall, Jillian Fresa, Shannon Hein, and Molly Saylor

**Direction Sought:**

1. What feedback does Council have on the proposed elements to include in the updated Economic Health Strategic Plan?
2. Do Councilmembers have feedback about the circular economy portion of this planning effort?

**Discussion Summary:**

Council's discussion covered the following points:

- Positive feedback on themes and direction of the Economic Health Strategic Plan
- Opportunity for further integration of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) Analysis into the plan, including specific items such as the development review process and its economic impacts to business
- Acknowledgment of a limited sample of stakeholders and the need for the expansion of engagement to better represent the community, including small businesses
- Support of the direction of the Circular Economy



**Follow-up:**

Council had several questions regarding specific statements within the SWOT Analysis. Please note that stakeholder input is generally an individual's perceptions and perspective, which is valuable to understand and include while developing the analysis. The Economic Health Office intends to expand the stakeholder engagement amongst other community and business leaders, including small businesses to build out the SWOT analysis.

**Attachments:**

1. Brookings Metro Monitor 2023: tracks the inclusive economic growth performance of the 192 largest U.S. metro areas. <https://metro-interactives.s3.amazonaws.com/monitor-2023/v0/index.html>
2. The Denver Post Article: Fort Collins rose from 126<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup> in the Brookings economic ranking.

# Pandemic walloped metro Denver and Greeley economies

## Boulder proved resilient, while Fort Collins and Colorado Springs strengthened

Metro Denver went from having one of the strongest economies prior to the pandemic to one of the weaker ones. So too did Greeley, according to Brookings Metro. Pictured here is an empty Sixth Avenue Freeway in April 2020. (Helen H. Richardson, The Denver Post)

By **ALDO SVALDI** | [asvaldi@denverpost.com](mailto:asvaldi@denverpost.com) | The Denver Post

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Metro Denver had the eighth strongest economy heading into the pandemic, but two years later, its economic ranking slipped to 121st out of 192nd metro areas, making it among the most deteriorated economies during the pandemic, according to a [study from Brookings Metro](#).

The region joined the “tested” category of top-half economic performers between 2011 to 2019 who dropped to the bottom half between 2019 to 2021. About 40% of very large metros, defined as having more than 1 million residents, moved into that tested group, including New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Seattle, Atlanta, Boston and San Diego.

“There are a lot of theories, but not a lot of firm answers as to why. Very large metros had this tremendous run of growth and they were where economic activity was increasingly concentrated. Denver was a poster child for that inclusive growth,” said Joseph Barilla, fellow and director of applied research at Brookings Metro Monitor and a co-author of the study.

Brookings looked at three indicators each in four categories, including typical measures like job growth, GDP growth, wage growth, productivity and the employment rate. It also had a category for racial inclusion to measure the gap in employment, earnings and poverty among various groups.

While very large metros slipped, many nearby large metros, defined as those with populations of between 500,000 and 1 million, rose in the rankings. One explanation is that they may have benefitted from lower housing costs, which workers, freed to go remote, found more attractive.

Almost mirroring in reverse of Denver’s decline, Colorado Springs’ ranking went from 119th to sixth, making it among the metros that came out on top economically despite the chaos of COVID-19. One explanation is that El Paso County is more reliant on federal and military spending, which were not impacted as severely as other areas like tourism, health care and retail trade.

Colorado Springs was in the emergent category, along with Fort Collins, which rose from 126th to 26th in the Brookings economic ranking. Emergent metros are defined as bottom-half performers last decade who rose into the top half.

Metro Greeley, which encompasses all of Weld County, also was in the tested category, going from 53rd to 190th, near the very bottom. Barilla said many oil and gas hubs found their economies severely tested by depressed oil prices, which caused a reduction in drilling activity. Weld County, once a top performer for job growth and wage gains, also [stands out for still not recouping its pandemic job losses](#).

Boulder was in the resilient category, meaning its economy was in the top half before the pandemic and stayed there during the tough years. Boulder's ranking didn't move much, going from 14th to 22nd. It was strong and stayed strong.

At the other extreme were stagnant metros, which weren't doing well before the pandemic or during it. Their level of misery tended not to change much. Most stagnant metros are in the Midwest and Northeast and were once dependent on manufacturing. None of the five Colorado metros studied were considered stagnant.

Barilla said the concentration of growth in very large metros, especially in the Western half of the country, made it hard to supply enough housing to their growing populations. That caused home prices and rents to spike and during the pandemic contributed to population declines, especially in core urban areas like Denver County.

"There are a lot of fundamentals in metro Denver that made it a strong economy and I don't see this derailing what had been a strong economic trajectory," Barilla said. "More time is needed to see whether this is just a blip or something more significant."