



# OUR COMMUNITY OUR ORGANIZATION



## **The Community**

The City of Fort Collins sits nestled against the foothills of the Rocky Mountains alongside the Cache La Poudre River banks. At 5,000 feet in elevation, residents enjoy a moderate, four-season climate, with an average of 300 days of sunshine per year. With 174,800 residents, Fort Collins is Colorado's fourth-largest city and spans 57 square miles. With the 20-year growth projection, the City of Fort Collins is expected to reach 255,000 residents.

The first people who hunted in this region arrived approximately 11,000 years ago, and Northern Colorado remains an integral part of the traditional and ancestral homelands of the Arapaho, Cheyenne, and Ute Nations. European American trappers and traders arrived by the early 1800s but rarely established permanent settlements. Gold and silver discoveries in the Colorado mountains in the mid-1800s and the prospect of land for farming and ranching attracted people from eastern cities and across the globe to the Colorado Territory, including what would become the town of Fort Collins: an agricultural colony that emerged from its founding days as a military camp. The expansion brought new residents whose descendants still live here today, including Mexican American families from southern Colorado, New Mexico, and northern Mexico, Germans from Russia, and other immigrant families who settled here in the 1800s.

Since 1879, Fort Collins has been the home of the state's land grant institution, Colorado State University, which currently enrolls 34,000 students. Along with the University, the City's major high-tech and manufacturing companies and breweries attract new residents from all over the country and the world. The City is known for its unique innovative, entrepreneurial, and collaborative spirit that brings together the public and private sectors and the Colorado State University community. Fort Collins is the home of the Colorado State University Energy Institute, whose mission is to deliver real-world energy and climate solutions that address society's most pressing global challenges, and Innosphere Ventures, a science and technology incubator that accelerates the business success of startups and emerging growth companies.

Our adaptability, openness to failure, risk-taking, the overarching character of collaboration and strong ties between leaders from the university, city government, and local businesses, and a sense of community led to Fort Collins being chosen by Smithsonian Institute curators as one of the country's most innovative places for the exhibit, "Places of Invention." People can make a difference here and have contributed to the City's reputation for breakthrough inventions in clean energy and socially responsible innovation.

We have exceptional medical systems, strong public and private K-12 schools, and many recreational offerings for families. We like to think every age can live, work, and play in our community, and with 300 days of annual sunshine, mild temperatures, and record snowfalls, it is always a good time to come to Colorado.

The community's overall social diversity continues to grow, and there are abundant outdoor recreation opportunities available to the many residents who enjoy healthy lifestyles. The nearby Horsetooth Reservoir is a key attraction, as is the Cache La Poudre-North Park Scenic Byway. Thanks to voter support of sales tax ballot measures, the City conserves valued lands and provides recreation and educational access to our community treasures.

There are 50 natural areas and over 100 miles of trail encompassing more than 36,000 acres. Fort Collins has a strong appreciation for arts, culture, and entertainment and is known as the cultural hub of northern Colorado. There are many great performance theaters, museums, and art galleries to visit. The Downtown district provides many venues for live music, shopping, dining, and nightlife. Fort Collins is widely considered the Craft Beer Capital of Colorado. Various national organizations and magazines recognize Fort Collins as one of the best places to live in the nation. People come and want to build their lives here.

Fort Collins is a community with a strong sense of place. It has gained accolades as one of the best places for job seekers in Colorado, one of the best towns in America, and among the healthiest, most livable, and bicycle-friendly.

### **Among the awards Fort Collins has won over the past two years are:**

- No. 1 Best Place to Live in Colorado: [Forbes 2022](#)
- 100 Score on Municipal Equality Index (MEI) Score - 2022
- 2021 What Works Certified City: Bloomberg Philanthropies
- No. 6, Safest Cities for Cyclists: Your Local Security - May 2021
- No. 8, Colorado City Ranked Among 'Most Relaxed' in Country: Out There Colorado - April 2021
- No. 4, 25 Best Cities in the US to Own an Electric Car: 24/7 Wall St - April 2021
- No. 5, 2021 Top 10 Remote-Ready Cities in the US: Livability - January 2021
- Clean Air Champion: RAQC - December 2020
- No. 8, Most Fitness Friendly Places for 2021: Smart Asset - December 2020
- No. 1, The Best Places to Live in America in 2020: Market Watch - October 2020
- No. 21, Top 30 Creative Small Cities: CVSuite - May 2020
- No. 18, 20 Safest Cities in Colorado: SafeWise - April 2020



### **The Organization**

The City of Fort Collins aspires to provide exceptional services to the community while cultivating an outstanding organizational culture for its employees. To achieve its vision, both internal and external services are data-informed and implemented according to organizational values.

The City develops resiliency and sustainability through organization-wide systems and processes that ensure consistent employee work practices and alignment across service areas. The City places a high value on public input and strives to include community members as fellow problem-solvers whenever possible. Residents can expect to receive high-quality service, engage with decision-makers, provide input regarding the allocation of City resources, and access to government information in a timely and transparent manner.

The City of Fort Collins recognizes and honors the legacy inherited from the decisions, relationships, and thoughtful planning of those who cared deeply about our community. We also realize we are a more robust and better community when we welcome everyone to participate in shaping our future. The 2019 City Plan, which serves as our long-range vision and development framework, shapes decision-making and funding priorities to implement the future the community desires. Whether building a more inclusive and equitable community, supporting entrepreneurship and innovation, addressing and mitigating the impacts of climate change, or creating additional transportation and housing options, we are committed to partnering to make Fort Collins an even better place for future generations. We know this means keeping our current infrastructure updated and maintained while thinking ahead.



The City is a dynamic and continually evolving organization. However, the vision, mission, and core values of the City remain a constant that helps all employees focus on the primary goal: service to our community members. This commitment is one that the nearly 2,500 City employees take seriously. From exceptional snowplow drivers and emergency dispatchers, utility crews and recreation officials, IT specialists, vehicle mechanics, and police services, the City's workforce provides high-quality municipal services around the clock employing their wide variety of talents.

We believe these awards are possible due to our employees, volunteers, community members, partnerships in the city and region, and the strong leadership from City Council.

The City of Fort Collins is involved in Bloomberg Philanthropies and has received funding and consulting for several key projects. This philanthropic organization focuses its resources on five areas: the environment, public health, the arts, government innovation, and education. Councilmembers and City leaders are engaged nationally and internationally on issues facing our community.

Fort Collins was also selected as one of 30 U.S. cities participating in the What Works Cities City Budgeting for Equity and Recovery program. This new effort will help cities confront budget crises while strengthening their commitment to equity in the wake of the pandemic. The program will help cities develop and implement plans to drive financial recovery and ensure their budget crises do not disproportionately harm low-income residents and communities of color. We acknowledged, "The City of Fort Collins has a strong desire to invest in long-term, meaningful equity advancement, and yet in the absence of the requisite models, knowledge, and abilities, this is uncharted territory for our organization."

The German Marshall Fund of the United States is a nonpartisan American public policy think tank and grant-making institution dedicated to promoting cooperation and understanding between North America and Europe. Fort Collins was chosen as one of twelve cities to participate in "Cities Fortifying Democracy," a first-of-its-kind cohort of American and European cities that will come together in teams to collaborate on what cities are and can be doing to strengthen their resilience and the foundation of democracy from the ground up. The cohort — comprised of twelve five-person city teams — will zero in on the democratic vulnerabilities and innovations in four key areas where local stakeholders can make a difference: governing, voting and elections, public safety and justice, and local journalism.