

ANNUAL REPORT



**NORTHERN
COLORADO
PROSPECTS**

**18
19**



**NORTHERN
COLORADO
PROSPERS**



Northern Colorado Prospers is a 5-year regional strategic initiative of the Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce. One hundred leading businesses and organizations in the region have pledged \$3.8M for 4 goals:

[1]

Fix North I-25

[3]

**Bold Voice
of Business**

[2]

**Align, Attract,
and Retain Talent**

[4]

**Expand and Retain
Existing Business**

UP NEXT:

May 3, 2019:
End of Legislative
Session

July 24, 2019:
NCP Quarterly Live
(Summer Edition)

October 9, 2019:
NCP Fall Quarterly
Update

**Proud Member of the
Fort Collins Area
Chamber of Commerce**

uchealth

GOAL [1]

Fix North I-25



ACTION

The Chamber will lead a comprehensive, multi-year lobbying and communications campaign to secure the \$1.7B by 2025 necessary to widen North I-25 between Fort Collins and Longmont (Highways 14 and 66).

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS/ ACCOMPLISHMENTS (TO-DATE)

- \$617.5M committed to North I-25.
- The Crossroads Boulevard intersection was completed in June 2018.
- The groundbreaking of the North I-25 Express Lanes project from Johnstown to Fort Collins was held in the fall of 2018. Dignitaries including former Colorado Governor John Hickenlooper, U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet and many local, state and federal officials, broke ground at the State Highway (SH) 402 exit.
- CDOT and contractor, Kraemer, agreed to a contract for work to include:
 - A temporary third lane in both directions from SH 402 south of Loveland to SH 14 in Fort Collins
 - Replacement of aging bridges and widening of others
 - Improvement of bus service performance by adding new bus slip ramps
 - Creation of pedestrian and bicycle access under I-25 at Kendall Parkway
 - Connection of the Cache la Poudre River Regional Trail under I-25
 - The project is scheduled to be completed by early 2022.

CDOT has estimated that by 2040, the I-25 Corridor will see **a 60 percent increase in daily vehicle traffic.**



SUMMARY OF PROGRESS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS (TO-DATE) CONT'D

- Colorado voters said 'no' to two ballot measures that would have provided additional transportation funding. It was thumbs down to both Colorado Proposition 109 (Fix Our Damn Roads initiative) and Colorado Proposition 110 (Let's Go, Colorado initiative) during the November 2018 election. The Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce endorsed the two measures believing they were viable means of addressing the traffic problem in the state.
- After the ballot measures failed, the Fix North I-25 Business Alliance immediately began work to identify alternative funding options.
- U.S. Senators Cory Gardner (R-CO) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) announced on December 6, 2018, that the North Front Range Transportation & Air Quality Council has been awarded a \$20 million Better Utilizing Investments to Leverage Development (BUILD) grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT).
- The City of Fort Collins and CDOT signed an Intergovernmental Agreement to rebuild the Prospect interchange. The City has also signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the property owners at the interchange.



Having a free-flowing, safe I-25 is necessary to the success of my trucking business. We rely on the interstate for daily commerce and when it's slow and congested it hurts productivity. What could be done in four days in the mid-2000s now takes us five, due to the congestion and frequent accidents.

- **Carl Maxey,**
MGS Incorporated,
Maxey Trailer Sales &
Truck Fitting and Maxey
Transportation



2019 UP NEXT

- During 2019 Legislative Session (January 4- May 3, 2019)
 - Lobby to keep and expand General Fund monies for transportation in the State budget.
 - Explore legislation for other funding options such as a gas tax increase, electric vehicle surcharges, and more.
- Work with the Transportation Commission to convert the temporary alignment of the new lanes between SH 14 in Fort Collins to SH 402 south of Loveland to permanent lanes, saving the State \$150M to more than \$200M over the long-term.
- Ramp up the research effort to study alternative transportation funding options including the viability of tools like regional transportation authorities.
- Continue work on Larimer County Roads Funding Task Force. It is estimated that Larimer County will have \$25.7M in transportation needs through 2040.



Leaders from Larimer and Weld counties were recognized for their work and contributions to Interstate 25 during the 2019 Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner on February 20, 2019. From left to right: Larimer County Commissioner Tom Donnelly, Weld County Commissioner Barbara Kirkmeyer and Fort Collins Mayor Pro Tem Gerry Horak. Photo Courtesy Craig Vollmer Photography

GOAL

[2]

Align, Attract and Retain Talent

ACTION

The Chamber will implement strategies to ensure competitive advantage for area employers through finding and attracting quality workers, and for area employees trying to discover quality jobs.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS/ ACCOMPLISHMENTS (TO-DATE)

The Chamber, with its regional Talent 2.0 partners, continues to work on strategies to ensure a competitive advantage for area employers through finding and attracting quality workers.

Recruitment Tools and Information for Employers

- A new recruitment tool is launching right now: www.WorkInNorthernColorado.com. A regional team has been working with DCI, a place-marketing firm, to build this talent attraction portal. It will replace NoCoTalent2.com.
- Talent 2.0 has contracted for EMSI, a web-based tool, which allows recruiters to identify regions with excess talent in specific job classifications to allow for better targeting of recruiting resources.
- The Chamber is partnering with the Larimer County Workforce Center to:
 - provide customized economic data reports with wage data
 - offer economic and labor data online
 - strengthen work-based learning experiences like internships and apprenticeships
 - produce a trailing spouse program
- The Talent 2.0 Partnership hosted its first Talent Summit last spring and planning is underway for the second annual summit.



Using the medium income of \$64,919 in Larimer County. **For one child, 18% of income goes toward child care, with two children it jumps to 37%.**

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS (TO-DATE) CONT'D



Minimizing Child Care as a Workforce Barrier

- In the *Talent 2.0 Regional Workforce Strategy* released in 2017, the lack of quality, affordable child care was identified as a primary challenge employers face when attracting and retaining new workers. As a result, in 2018, child care advocates joined forces and created a white paper, titled *A Workforce Strategy and Major Economic Driver: Child Care in Larimer County*. The report provides an overview of child care challenges for employers and families in Larimer County, and calls for a joint effort of businesses, governmental agencies, educational institutions, and the early childhood sector to solve this complex problem. In addition, a Talent 2.0 Child Care task force was assembled in February 2018 to study the challenges of limited child care capacity and affordability in Larimer County, identify changes to the current system and address the issue of child care gaps.

Addressing Housing Affordability as a Barrier

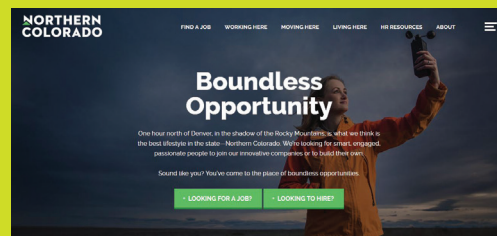
- Another barrier to attracting talent that was cited in the Talent 2.0 Regional Workforce Strategy plan is housing affordability.
- Four NOCO Housing NOW All Partnership meetings were held in 2018. The NOCO Housing Coalition seeks to assure that the critical regional issue of housing affordability is being discussed on a regional scale. The Chamber provides an important market-based perspective in these discussions.
- Topics addressed at the NOCO Housing Now meetings included: inclusionary housing and its impact on attainable housing stock, the current housing market in Northern Colorado and a gap analysis of the Land Use Code in Larimer County versus population demand for housing.

For an employee to be their most productive at work, they need to know their children are receiving quality care. When children are being shuffled between family members, friends and neighbors due to a lack of provider slots, there is no sense of stability for the children or for the parents. That means parents can't give 100% at work. It's a lose-lose for everybody.

- **Mims Harris, Early Childhood Council of Larimer County**

2019 UP NEXT

- After the April 2019 launch of the talent recruitment portal, workinnortherncolorado.com, the Chamber will initiate a social and media campaign to drive traffic to the new talent portal.



- Finish the EMSI pilot project and open it up to all interested businesses using an online application form.
- Provide customized economic data reports with wage data through a new partnership with the Larimer County Workforce Center.
- Continue to work with Larimer County Workforce Center to:
 - strengthen work-based learning experiences
 - develop and launch trailing spouse program
- Hold a Housing Summit in Summer 2019.
- Plan and execute the second annual Talent Summit in Summer 2019.

GOAL

[3]

Bold Voice of Business



ACTION

The Chamber will serve as the voice of business to aggressively advocate the perspective of business and ensure public officials and residents understand the strong connection between business vitality, jobs and having the means to afford public services that greatly enhance the quality of community life, such as good schools, parks and bike paths.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS/ ACCOMPLISHMENTS (TO-DATE)

Reliable, Affordable, Clean Electricity

- To advocate for maintaining a supply of clean, affordable, and reliable electricity for the region, the Northern Front Range Zero Net Carbon Task Force was formed as a collaboration between the Fort Collins, Loveland, and Longmont chambers and includes some of the area's major power user members.
- A research study was completed by Energy Ventures Analysis regarding proposed zero net carbon policies.
- In 2018, the Task Force analyzed various proposals that could impact how the region produces electricity. The Task Force conducted interviews with 24 major electrical power users from Longmont, Loveland and Fort Collins. Reliability was the number one issue identified for these companies.
- Insights and recommendations from the above were conveyed to the Board of Platte River Power Authority and area city councils.

Adequately Funded City Government

- Completed and produced a study on City finances and use of revenues from the Keep Fort Collins Great (KFCG) tax. This ultimately led to the Chamber endorsing renewal of the tax on the April 2019 ballot.

Telling the Story about the Importance of Business

- In the fall of 2018, the Chamber launched a community campaign – Bringing Business Home – to emphasize the importance of business to a strong quality of life.

Bringing Business Home campaign has generated **more than 4 million impressions.**



SUMMARY OF PROGRESS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS (TO-DATE) CONT'D



- By featuring Chamber member businesses, we are helping residents make the connection between business success, community economic vitality and the happy consequence being our ability to afford great public quality of life amenities. Six business features have been completed and audiences can find the stories in the newspaper, online, on the television and radio and pictured on one of the most visible billboards in Fort Collins.
- Over 4 million impressions to date.
- People are interested in these personal stories – videos are being watched start-to-finish, blog posts are being read and Facebook spikes with each new story.

Keeping Abreast of Public Opinion

- Conducted public opinion polling of Fort Collins registered voters in

mid-December 2018 to understand public sentiment on a variety of issues.

Business Perspective in City Plan Update

- Chamber officials and businesspeople focused on making sure the business perspective was heard in the update of the City Plan. This group worked on the various committees, participated online, and attended relevant meetings. The City Plan will be adopted in April 2019.

Capital Expansion Fees Study

- The Chamber, the Fort Collins Board of Realtors and the Northern Colorado Homebuilders Association hired DPGF to complete an audit of the City of Fort Collins' use of capital expansion fees. The review of five years of collections identified general alignment with



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SUMMARY OF PROGRESS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS (TO-DATE) CONT'D

[3]

community expectations, though approximately \$200,000 needs to be reimbursed to the fund.

Forward-focused Government Affairs Program

- Held a government affairs retreat in October 2018 to focus on current and emerging local and regional issues.
- Updated the Chamber's policy framework, *Where We Stand*.

City Elections

- The Chamber made it a priority to support the election of City Council members who support business and job creation. For the April 2, 2019 City of Fort Collins election, the Chamber endorsed Mayor, Wade Troxell; District 2, Noah Hutchison; and District 4, Kristin Stephens.

- The Chamber took positions on two of the ballot issues presented to voters on the April 2 City election ballot:

Opposed CITIZEN-INITIATED
CHARTER AMENDMENT NO. 1:
Councilmember Compensation

Supported CITY-INITIATED BALLOT ISSUE
QUESTION NO. 1: Keep Fort Collins Great Tax
Renewal

2019 UP NEXT

- Post-April City election, develop strategy and plan of action in light of new Council and its agenda.
- Continue Phase 2 of Bringing Business Home campaign.



BUSINESS CREATES THE OPPORTUNITY TO CALL THIS PLACE HOME.

It's no secret that Northern Colorado is a special place. Natural beauty, great climate, excellent education, vibrant recreation—we're privileged to have it all. Local employers and employees make it possible for us to live and raise families here. You'll find them nurturing community both within and outside their workplaces.

Meet a group of proud Northern Coloradans committed to Bringing Business Home.



BringingBusinessHome.org



GOAL

[4]

Expand and Retain Existing Business



ACTION

The Chamber and key partners will deliberately and consistently meet with Fort Collins and Loveland area primary and key employers to express community support and to determine what can be done to help them. As a result, hundreds of jobs can be created over the next five years.

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS/ ACCOMPLISHMENTS (TO-DATE)

- In March 2019, the Business Retention and Expansion Partnership of Larimer County released the ***Northern Colorado Business Retention and Expansion Annual Report*** for 2018. Members of this effort include: City of Fort Collins, City of Loveland, Town of Windsor, Town of Berthoud, Town of Wellington, Larimer County, Larimer County Small Business Development Center, Larimer County Economic and Workforce Development, Loveland Chamber of Commerce, Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, Estes Park EDC and One NoCo.
- The group has gained greater engagement with the business community and effectively identified regional issues they can address as a partnership.

The annual report includes data points covering the Larimer and Weld County region. These two counties have an interconnected economy and a shared laborshed. The report shows year-over-year growth in gross regional product, low unemployment rates and strong job growth which indicates a healthy regional economy.



Over the next 5 years, Larimer County employers will have at least **28,000 openings to fill**. The labor force adds only about **2,000 to 3,000 workers each year**. A continuation of this trend would leave an estimated **shortfall of about 5,000 workers**.

Talent 2.0 Regional Workforce Strategy Report, TIP Strategies

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS/ACCOMPLISHMENTS (TO-DATE) CONT'D

- To produce this report, the partners gathered 315 responses from regional businesses, including in-person interviews with 30 primary employers, to help provide insight into expansion opportunities for businesses in Northern Colorado and retention challenges.

Some emerging themes:

- Finding talent is a challenge. Scarce resources and area cost of living are barriers.
- I-25 is frequently cited as an issue.
- Most interviewees have added workers over the last three years and are planning to add more in the next three.
- Employers are bullish on the Northern Colorado economy.

70% of respondents from the Northern Colorado Business Retention and Expansion Annual Report **feel positive about the Northern Colorado economy.** However, businesses consistently reported workforce as a major challenge.



2019 UP NEXT

- Continue conducting primary employer interviews.
- Complete CRM training and populate with contact data.
- Update numbers and publish second annual *Northern Colorado Business Retention and Expansion Annual Report*
- Act on identified retention risks and expansion opportunities.



Integrity

A tradition of integrity in our community since 1955, and a proud partner in our community's future.

WOODWARD
Always Innovating for a Better Future

2019 NORTHERN COLORADO PROSPERS BUDGET

FIX NORTH I-25

\$329,599

Lobbying, PR & Communications, Public Opinion Polling, Public Awareness & Staffing

ALIGN, ATTRACT TALENT (TALENT 2.0)

\$261,737

PR & Communications, Website Portal, Recruitment Tool for Employers & Staffing, Update Talent 2.0 Plan

BOLD VOICE OF BUSINESS

\$208,754

Bringing Business Home, Key Issues Research, Electing Business Friendly Candidates and Staffing

BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

\$63,242

Annual Report, CRM Software and Staffing

INVESTOR RELATIONS

\$79,707

TOTAL 2019 BUDGET

\$943,039

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Elevations Credit Union



Carrie Baumgart
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Clay Benson
Mortenson Construction



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Stephanie Teubner
Blue Federal Credit Union



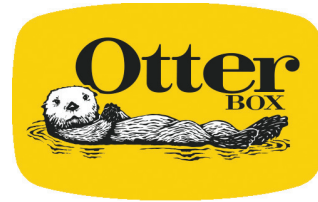
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