

Building Momentum, Continuing Success: The 2017 Fort Collins Downtown Plan



What happens after the mission of a revitalization plan has been accomplished? The Fort Collins Downtown Plan, adopted in March 2017, built on over thirty years of sustained, intentional effort and set Fort Collins, CO on a clear path toward an even more vibrant, innovative, and inclusive Downtown.



When the planning process began in 2015, it was clear that

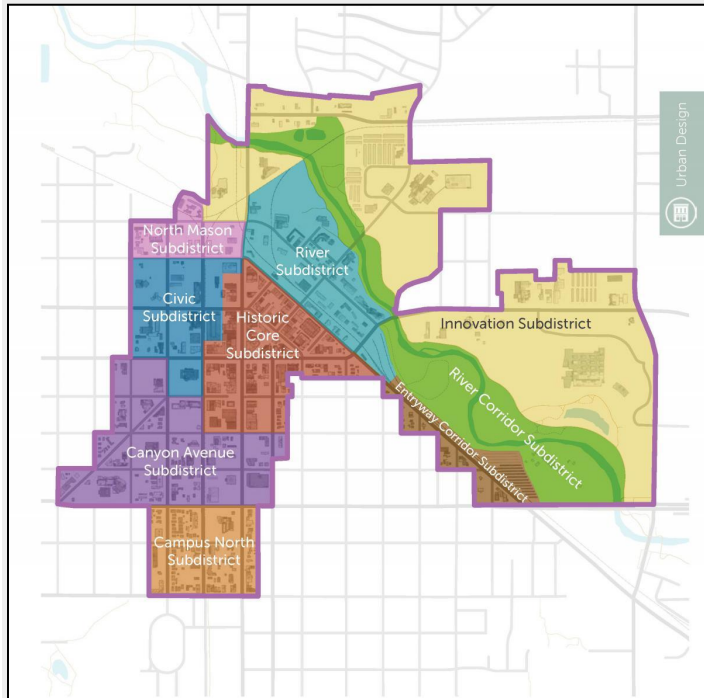
the context for decisions about Downtown had changed significantly since the adoption of the original 1989 Downtown Plan. In contrast to the vacant buildings and deteriorating infrastructure of the 1970s and 1980s, Downtown Fort Collins today is flourishing as a local and regional hub for arts, entertainment, shopping and an authentic experience. Though the Downtown area comprises only 1.9% of the city's land area, it contains 17% of the city's jobs, generates 15% of the city's sales tax revenue, serves as a neighborhood commercial center for over 24,000 residents, and welcomes over a million visitors a year.

These changes – though positive – warranted a thorough public discussion about how to manage Downtown's success in a time of prosperity and growth. Affordability, compatible design, homelessness, parking, and environmental protection were all major topics addressed through a thoughtful 18-month community conversation. The results of that conversation guided the policies and actions recommended in the Downtown Plan. Rather than creating a plan that could work for any Downtown, an extensive outreach process resulted in a Plan that is uniquely tailored to the needs and dreams of Fort Collins.

In the Plan document, six topic areas and nine geographic subdistricts help organize the themes that emerged from the community engagement process. The ongoing involvement of working groups, each focused on a topic area, also guided the development of the Plan. Members of the working groups represented a cross-section of over 60 Downtown stakeholders from both the public and private sectors, including staff from the City, Downtown Development Authority (DDA) and Downtown Business Association (DBA). This structure created an integrated dialogue that transcended organizational boundaries.

The Downtown Plan's ultimate success will rely on the coordinated implementation of more than 250 distinct action items. Some actions and recommendations are already underway. Work has begun on land use code changes to better define terms like "adjacency" to historic resources or "compatibility" of new construction. Design standards and guidelines to ensure successful transitions between character subdistricts and from Downtown to the adjacent residential neighborhoods are also in progress. Other actions are identified for the short- and intermediate term, many

of which require additional funding or effort by the City, DDA, DBA and other partners.



Over the next 20 years, the Downtown Plan aims to both maintain the success of Fort Collins' flourishing Downtown and address the challenges that have come from that success. Recognizing that a vibrant city culture depends on the input of many people with differing values, the Plan hinges on cooperation and calls for an atmosphere that includes all Downtown users. Downtown Fort Collins is already the heart of the community – this Plan will ensure that Downtown becomes even more vibrant, welcoming, and accessible.

For more information on the planning process and the final plan document, please visit <http://fcgov.com/downtown>.