



2019-2023 Larimer County Strategic Plan Review

In preparation for adopting the 2024-2029 Strategic Plan, this update shows the progress the County made as a result of the [2019-2023 Larimer County Strategic Plan](#). This version of the Strategic Plan focuses on a small number of goals critical to the future of our community. Each goal is further defined by a set of objectives following the SMART format: specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time stamped. This format fosters the development of step-by-step plans to achieve the objectives. The 2019-23 Strategic Plan is both strategic – focused on specific goals for our community: a plan – driven by a blueprint for success.

Larimer County gathered factual data and qualitative input on the characteristics and needs of our community to inform the development of the 2019-23 Strategic Plan. Data was gathered including demographics, economic statistics and trends, community well-being measures, and broad infrastructure demand estimates. A Community Survey, numerous small group meetings with residents, and a facilitated workshop with community leaders provided broad insight. A survey and multiple input meetings with county employees provided input from workers who provide County services to the community. In collaboration with other elected officials, the Commissioners narrowed these diverse needs to three strategic goals, further defined by specific, measurable, realistic, and timestamped objectives to guide our community successfully into the future

The report on the following pages shows the progress towards completing each specific objective. As with the [2013-2018 Strategic Plan](#), many of these objectives were completed successfully and have since been “operationalized” or added into the daily operations of the County. Such successes include:

- Establishing the Northern Colorado Fiber Alliance - a collaborative partnership between Larimer County, Fort Collins Connexion, Loveland Pulse, and Estes Park Trailblazer to expand broadband into rural areas.
- Developing a Community Well-being Dashboard that focuses on community-identified priorities of the public health system in Larimer County.
- Developing a comprehensive housing strategy that defines the County's role.
- Piloting strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities working with employers to share experiences.
- Developing alternative workspace strategies to reduce the need to expand County facilities and reduce miles traveled by County employees.
- Adapting County services to address future needs of the community, including improvement to web access for services, renaming the County Administrative Services building in downtown Fort Collins to reduce resident confusion about where courts are located, and enhancing the County's ability to use data in decision making.

Some of the other objectives were one-time in nature, while some objectives were not implemented completely or successfully. In some cases, the objectives may be continued on into the 2024-2029 version of the plan.

Goal 1 - Infrastructure - Larimer County works collaboratively to ensure adequate public infrastructure is available to support the needs of our growing community.

OBJECTIVE 1 - REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION: By the end of 2023 , a regional transportation task force will establish a prioritized list of regional transportation projects with corresponding cost estimates. The task force, led by Larimer County, will evaluate alternative funding options, and based on community polling, recommend a specific strategy for generating additional locally derived funding for regional transportation projects over the next 20 years. By the end of 2023, establish the funding mechanism and begin implementation of the highest priority projects.

RESULTS: This objective is complete. The County led the regional effort to develop the prioritized list and placed a measure on the ballot to secure funding from a dedicated sales tax, which was not approved by the voters. The County has funded and pursued this effort as far as is warranted considering current local community priorities and support. The technical team for this objective supports further dialogue and development of a standard presentation that would be given to all communities to determine the level of interest from elected officials in pursuing further regional transportation efforts.

OBJECTIVE 2 - SOLID WASTE: By the end of 2024, Tier 1 improvements identified within the Solid Waste Infrastructure Master Plan will be constructed and placed into operation to establish core municipal solid waste disposal infrastructure. Over the next 5 years the diversion goal for the regional waste shed is 40% by 2025.

RESULTS: This objective has been partially operationalized. The County is negotiating with a vendor to implement a public-private partnership for design, construction and operations of a transfer station and new landfill. The anticipated date to open the new landfill is July of 2024. With regard to other components of this goal, rising costs require further evaluation of diversion and emerging technologies, which are now part of the Solid Waste Department's ongoing operations.

OBJECTIVE 3 - RURAL INFRASTRUCTURE: By the end of 2020, Larimer County will develop a comprehensive rural infrastructure strategy that defines the County's role, funding level, and targeted activities to 1) address the growing demand for street reconstruction and maintenance within every County subdivision; 2) expand broadband services within unincorporated areas; and 3) improve long-term planning for water supply and wastewater treatment infrastructure in unincorporated areas.

RESULTS:

Street reconstruction: The team for this objective has researched solutions for this portion of the goal, including a "Master Public Improvement District (PID)" covering most of unincorporated Larimer County, but this option has been determined to be unfeasible. The County is considering an alternative option to creating advisory boards for each PID, evaluate whether special elections can be held, and explore whether the application fee should be waived for some subdivisions. PID staff met with Road & Bridge to discuss the priority list for County Maintained Subdivisions and discuss a communication strategy to the public.

Broadband: This objective has become operationalized, as the County is implementing a number of projects to expand high-speed broadband access in rural areas of the County and has applied for several grant opportunities. The projects currently in development include:

- Loveland Pulse Projects in progress (Ptarmigan, N or 57th, and Devils Backbone area) Ptarmigan HOA voted to approve a 25% match for the fiber project.
- Fort Collins Connexion in initial planning (Southwest of Fort Collins)

- Poudre Valley Rural Electric Authority (PVREA) line from Livermore to Red Feather Lakes ~ 50% complete. Also working on a lease agreement for fiber to connect the new landfill.
- Colorado Department of Local Affairs grant for a middle mile connector from Fort Collins to Wellington and Masonville has been submitted. Looking into connecting Wellington water treatment and reclamation sites as part of the grant.
- Assisting Timnath and Berthoud with Fiber to the Premise plans. Timnath is working with Loveland Pulse on an Intergovernmental Agreement to serve the city. Berthoud still working on a final decision.
- Assisting a number of Homeowners Associations on strategic plans and possible projects to improve internet services.
- Working on Federal Communications Commission map challenges with the state broadband office and preparing for future grant opportunities.
- Developing tools to gauge resident interest, prepare capital project fund applications for underserved residents, and finalize the fiber lease agreement with PVREA for the new landfill site.

Water & Wastewater: A consultant completed the Larimer County Regional Water Existing Conditions Report. The Department of Natural Resources has been working with in-stream flow recommendations with the state, and outcomes will take about a year. The County will continue to evaluate the county's role on the topic of water sharing. The County has also allocated \$500,000 in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to fund a community restroom, including design and construction, in Red Feather Lakes.

OBJECTIVE 4 - WATERSHED MANAGEMENT: By the end of 2024, Larimer County will complete a regional watershed management collaboration effort to 1) improve mitigation efforts for flood-related hazards; 2) promote water sharing strategies to preserve agriculture and sustain water supplies; and 3) establish management and funding solutions to improve NRCS Dams B2, B3, and B4 based on the high-risk dam classification established by the State of Colorado.

RESULTS:

Flood-related hazards: The Cameron Peak Fire expansion of the Early Flood Warning System is complete. The County is awaiting a decision on Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) funds for the expansion into the Boxelder Drainage. Staff are sponsoring a Colorado State University Civil Engineering Senior Design Project this year to develop an Emergency Action Plan related to the Rain/Stream gauges. A HMGP grant was received for (\$90,000 federal, \$10,000 local) to help fund the installation of the rain/stream gages required by the State Engineer's Office to come into compliance with the regulations for dams B-2, B-3, and B-4. A summer intern will help finalize the final products for these objectives.

Water sharing strategies: The State has recently made a change to the conservation tax credits program, allowing property owner can get a 90% reimbursement rather than 50%, which will help promote conservation easements. The County is working with several municipalities and water providers to evaluate their interest in transfer of water supply with lease-back provisions to agricultural properties. Staff will be scheduling a future executive session with the Commissioners to discuss a potential project that may be available.

B-dams: This objective will become operational during 2023. A final draft of the Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) was sent to all the stakeholders. A new draft of the IGA was prepared by the City of Fort Collins and is being reviewed legal staff.

Goal 2 - Everyone in Larimer County has access to economic opportunities and a vibrant quality of life. We work together to remove barriers.

OBJECTIVE 1 – COUNTY WELL-BEING DASHBOARD: By 2022, Larimer County will host a dashboard of publicly accessible community health and well-being data which focuses on community-identified priorities of the public health system in Larimer County. By 2023, Larimer County will have developed and described strategies to enhance collaborative metrics and data for the priorities of our public health system and related partners to enhance community well-being over time.

RESULTS: This objective has been completed and the [dashboard is operational on the County website](#). The objective team engaged in community outreach, including surveys and focus groups to facilitate primary data gathering, particularly from disadvantaged populations. This dashboard will be integrated with other data-driven decision-making tools that result from Objective 4 of Goal 3 as described below.

OBJECTIVE 2 – EMPLOYMENT OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES: By 2021, Larimer County government will pilot strategies to increase the recruitment and retention of persons with disabilities as County employees. By the end of 2023, Larimer County will have committed partnerships with organizations in the community and internal programs that increase employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities at Larimer County. Larimer County will also collaborate with the larger community through sharing best practices.

RESULTS: This objective has been successfully completed and operational. The Inclusion Administrator in Human Resources has researched and has several options to explore employee training around disability awareness. Work continues in Human Resources to evaluate internal processes and work culture.

The Objective Team has implemented other tools to improve and expand County employment opportunities for people with disabilities, such as creating an assessment tool to determine County department “readiness” to have these kinds of employment placements within their teams, documenting the County’s employment strategies that can be shared with other organizations via networks such as Larimer County Economic & Workforce Development, and hosting [public-facing webpage](#) with resources for County staff as well as other employers:

The County Inclusion Advisory Committee continues to assess culture and policies. They are also holding roundtable discussions for any interested County staff to assess the most recent Human Resources survey results through an inclusion lens.

OBJECTIVE 3 – QUALITY CHILDCARE: By 2023, Larimer County will collaborate with public and private partners to increase quality childcare capacity by identifying and implementing investment strategies in the areas of workforce, infrastructure and funding that result in long-term systems change.

RESULTS: Ownership of this objective has essentially transferred to the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County (ECCLC) for coordination of multiple improvement efforts. The ECCLC (via their Thrive by Five initiative) has launched an information campaign in anticipation of a possible 2023 ballot initiative for a Larimer County 0.25% Sales Tax. County management and Human Services are working with the community group on their plan and may bring a ballot proposal for consideration by the Board of County Commissioners.

The Visit Estes Park Marketing District passed a ballot initiative in 2022 that increases their lodging tax. Those additional funds will be managed by the Town of Estes Park and will fund affordable housing projects and support for childcare services. The County’s Human Services department is in contact with the Town leadership to offer any support regarding childcare services and supports.

OBJECTIVE 4 – HOUSING AFFORDABILITY: By early 2023, Larimer County will develop a comprehensive housing strategy with measurable outcomes that defines the County's role, funding sources, and targeted activities to: 1) address the growing demand for affordable housing 2) expand housing assistance services within unincorporated areas; and 3) adopt best practices and create policy changes to incentivize and encourage increased housing options across the income continuum.

RESULTS: This objective has been partially completed and is becoming operationalized, though progress has been limited by funding availability. The County added a position to coordinate to develop the County's role in housing and to coordinate services and programs in future years. The County in 2021 completed a Root Cause study to determine possible County action that could address the growing demand for affordable housing and January 2023 staff was given direction to pursue nine interventions suggested by that study, however funding constraints have limited progress on these items. The County has committed \$14 million in State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to transformational housing and homeless mitigation projects.

Goal 3: Larimer County government is ready to support the future service needs of our residents and visitors.

OBJECTIVE 1 – ALTERNATIVES FOR WORKSPACE: By June 2019, explore options for alternative methods of providing staff workspaces to reduce the square footage needs of future County facilities and to optimize the current facility space. By December 2019, approve funding sources and partnerships for high priority facilities slated for the first 5-year increment of the Facilities Master Plan. By 2023, adopt a funding plan for any remaining high priority facilities in the Facilities Master Plan.

RESULTS: This objective is complete and has transitioned to ongoing operational work for Facilities. The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the County's space needs and standards due to a transition by many staff to remote work, which led the County to implement a policy around remote and which provides a stipend program for mandatory remote workers. The Facilities Department has taken this new reality in account in its facility management and capital improvement planning process.

OBJECTIVE 2 – CHARACTERISTICS OF COUNTY EMPLOYEES: By June 2019, identify the three most critical differences needed in the County's workforce to best deliver services in the coming decades. Strategies to expand the prevalence of these characteristics among employees may include 1) skill identification and development; 2) succession and replacement planning; 3) leadership development; and 4) strategies for employee retention and attraction. By the end of 2023, increase the percentage of County employees who demonstrate the three critical characteristics by at least 10%.

RESULTS: This objective is largely complete and has been operationalized. The County identified the three characteristics (what are they?) and subsequently aligned annual employee survey questions to these three employee characteristics. The objective team provided required training through Linked in, and will recommend mandatory training for each characteristic. The three characteristics have been built into the Perform evaluation tool, and they are live. The County's Affirmative Action Plan has been updated, including goals.

OBJECTIVE 3 - EVOLUTION OF PROVIDING SERVICES: By the end of 2022, adapt the service delivery method of at least one service in each of the service categories to respond to demographic trends and measure the effectiveness of the adaptations through direct polling of customers. By the end of 2023, improve the convenience of service delivery scores reported in the polling by at least 2% for each of the services.

RESULTS: Teams have completed implementation phase of their service category projects as follows:

Public Safety - Victim/Witness information exchange – The [Victim Rights web page](#) is active and will be adjusted as necessary depending on page metrics.

Support Services - Strategic Internal Communication Plan - Policies are complete. The Strategic Plan is updated and being worked on by the Internal Communications staff.

Public Records & Information - Courthouse Office First Floor Directory/Guidance - Directory/Guidance is complete. The final name change to "Larimer County Administrative Services" is complete.

Community Planning, Infrastructure, and Resources - 4H Online Registration – [The page is operational.](#)

Human and Economic Health Services - Behavioral Health Transportation - The team has completed the list of potential providers to only those who provide transportation in Larimer County.

OBJECTIVE 4 - DATA STRATEGY & POLICY: By the end of 2020, create a County Data Policy and County Data Strategy (including an implementation & sustainability plan) to: 1) drive decisions and enhance business outcomes; 2) improve data efficiency, consistency, quality, and security; and 3) promote departments data sharing. By the end of 2023, complete at least two projects utilizing and refinishing this structure to provide a model for all future data projects.

RESULTS: This objective is complete and has been operationalized. The 2023 County Budget added a Data Program Manager tasked with helping departments utilize more and better data-driven decision-making tools and with developing a data governance structure. The Business Intelligence and Process Improvement teams have been combined with the Budget Office to enhance the County's ability to utilize data in allocating resources. The County has also implemented a unified credit card processing system that will bring credit card payments to the County under one contract so that rules, fees, and processes are standardized across all elected offices and departments.

OBJECTIVE 5 - ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY: By the end of 2020, update the County's policy on environmental responsibility to ensure that 1) reflects current scientific findings and methods and 2) balances the protection of natural resources, with long-term economic considerations and community needs. By the end of 2023 develop an implementation plan to raise staff awareness of the policy and assist departments with implementation.

RESULTS: This objective has been completed and operationalized. The County has created a Climate Smart and Sustainability Manager positions responsible for implementing environmental projects across the organization.