



2013-2018 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 [2013-2018 Larimer County Strategic Plan](#). The strategic plan was developed as a part of Larimer County's "Planning our Future" process involving citizens, community leaders, the Board of County Commissioners, Elected Officials and employees. The result was a community vision for Larimer County, a set of high-level goals that the County aspired to, and a series of objectives to drive action for a five-year period.

The strategic plan was developed by reviewing data about the county: indicators of how well our departments were achieving their current goals, any issues occurring in our community that affected our ability to deliver services, Elected Office and citizen input. A vision and high-level goals were developed by the Board of County Commissioners to describe "what" Larimer County (as a community and as an organization) could look like in five years. The vision and goals were the basis for creating a strategic plan: "how" Larimer County organization would achieve these goals. The objectives in the Strategic Plan were the foundation for creating tactical work plans to manage what needs to happen in order for the objectives to be fulfilled.

The report on the following pages shows the result of each specific objective that was created to drive progress towards the seven high-level goals. Many of these objectives were completed successfully and have since been "operationalized" or added into the daily operations of the County. Such successes include:

- Creation of an award-winning Office of Emergency Management, which was critical to the County's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Cameron Peak Fire of 2020, and other fires and floods.
- Approval by Larimer County voters in 2018 of a 0.25 % sales tax [dedicated to providing critical behavioral health services](#).
- Implementation of a new, updated [County Website](#) that vastly improved usability for the public and County staff, providing enhanced transparency and, critically, the ability to provide online services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Creation of an Economic and Workforce Development Department that serves as a convenor for regional economic development efforts.

Some of the other objectives were one-time in nature, while some objectives were not implemented completely or successfully. In some cases, the objectives continued on into the 2019-2023 version of the plan.

For more information about the 2013-2018 Strategic Plan, visit the County's website [at this link](#).

Goal 1 – Safety and Well-being - Enhance the safety and well-being of our community by promoting a continuum of support and services to proactively address causal issues like Mental Health and Substance Abuse, integrated into the Criminal Justice system.

OBJECTIVE 1 – PUBLIC SAFETY INFORMATION SHARING: By the end of 2017, to better protect public safety and streamline informed decision making, appropriate criminal justice entities can securely and remotely access shared criminal record data and status information for individuals.

RESULTS: This objective was successfully completed and is now operational. The County partnered with a software vendor to connect data from 70+ agencies. This program allows law enforcement the ability to search individuals' history and justice system involvement easily using a number of criteria.

OBJECTIVE 2 – BEHAVIORAL HEALTH FACILITY: By the end of 2018, treatment providers and criminal justice agencies in Larimer County have developed a 24/7/365 multi-services center (detox, acute treatment unit, outpatient services, residential treatment, etc.) with linkages to a full continuum of treatment options to serve the public and criminal offenders.

RESULTS: This objective was successfully completed and is now operational. The objective team worked diligently to do a “lessons learned” after a ballot initiative asking voters for a dedicated revenue source for these programs failed in November 2016. The County hired a team of strategic consultants to gather information and provided more voter education, which helped a similar initiative pass in November 2018. While the facility was being designed and constructed the County used these funds to make grants to expand behavioral health services in our community. The facility is nearing completion and will be operational later in 2023.

OBJECTIVE 3 – BEHAVIORAL HEALTH SERVICES FOR CHILDREN: By the end of 2018, the number of children and youth in Larimer County who are receiving appropriate mental health or substance abuse intervention and treatment services has increased by 15 percentage points compared to a 2014 baseline.

RESULTS: This objective was successfully completed and is now operational. The County entered into a partnership with the Early Childhood Council of Larimer County Leap Coalition, and representatives from 28+ child services organizations. These organizations developed a training series, utilized community conversations, shared best practices, and ultimately developed a referral tool to help childcare providers determine the best ways to respond to children who may be facing behavioral health issues.

OBJECTIVE 4 – ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION: By the end of 2018, at least 100 “high need” individuals, as identified by assessment, are participating in an appropriate treatment program with an emphasis on programs with judicial oversight. Of those individuals, at least 60% will complete their assigned program. “High need” individuals include either 1) citizens who access the emergency response system three or more times per month or 2) citizens who are convicted of a crime and have been diagnosed with a substantial mental health condition.

RESULTS: This objective has been successfully operationalized by the County. This objective led to the implementation of [the Wellness Court in the 8th judicial district](#). This program collaborates with community providers to provide eligible participants with behavioral health and substance abuse treatment and criminal justice supervision to support long-term recovery. After the program was implemented in July 2014, there was a 93% reduction in jail bed usage by this population from prior year, followed by a 74% reduction in 2016.

Goal 2 – Economic Development - Larimer County is a recognized center for supporting business by turning innovation into reality. We plan for improvement by encouraging smart business growth, more and better jobs.

OBJECTIVE 1 – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BUILT ENVIRONMENT: By the end of 2015, working with economic development partners, Larimer County will identify and prioritize infrastructure and amenity components within the County’s control that inhibit or enhance economic development success. By 2016 plans will be in place to address the highest priority needs.

RESULTS: This objective was successfully completed. In 2016 the County procured a study to analyze infrastructure and amenity components, which has ultimately informed ongoing economic development programs and collaboration among organizations.

OBJECTIVE 2 – COUNTY’S ROLE IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: By the end of 2015 Larimer County will develop a comprehensive economic development framework that defines the County’s role, strategic partners, and targeted activities to 1) support innovation and entrepreneurship in Larimer County and 2) influence the retention and creation of opportunities that increase the wealth and / or well being of the community and its residents.

RESULTS: This objective has been successfully operationalized. The County held conversations with stakeholders and other outreach efforts, which culminated in the creation of a new economic development department, which has since been combined with job training programs and the Veterans’ Services Office into the Department of [Economic and Workforce Development](#). The Department collects and distributes economic data and convenes regional partners to assist in business location, retention and expansion programs.

OBJECTIVE 3 – COMPREHENSIVE MASTER PLAN: By January of 2017 Larimer County will align the necessary resources to update the Comprehensive Master Plan. Preparations will include involving citizens to identify needs and current conditions, evaluating current land use regulations and development processes, and establishing a cash reserve fund.

RESULTS: This objective was successfully completed and is now operationalized. The first half of the updated comprehensive master plan was completed in 2018 and encompassed the western half (mostly mountainous areas) of the County. The second half was completed in 2019. The [full plan is available](#) on the County’s website.

Goal 3 – All Hazards Emergency Management - We proactively deal with threats from natural and human-caused hazards within and around Larimer County.

OBJECTIVE 1 – COUNTY COORDINATION OF DISASTER RECOVERY: By June 2014, designate a county staff member to coordinate the initial recovery activities and work with the Long-Term Recovery Group on long-term recovery goals. Assist in the establishment of a VOAD (Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster), and act as the County's representative to the Long-Term Recovery Group and VOAD.

RESULTS: This objective was successfully completed and is now part of the County's ongoing operations. The County hired an Emergency Management Director in 2015 and subsequently created the [Office of Emergency Management](#) which now has six full-time positions and a dedicated Emergency Operations Center. Upon the filling of the Emergency Management Director, the remaining tasks were completed and directly led to successful implementation of the following objectives.

OBJECTIVE 2 – CITIZEN DISASTER TRAINING. By the end of 2015, develop and implement a training and education program for citizens at risk of all hazards to protect their lives and property.

RESULTS: This objective was successfully completed and operationalized. The County created the [Larimer Connects program](#), which helps neighborhoods build their own plans and get prepared for future disasters.

OBJECTIVE 3 – UPDATE EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN: By the end of 2014, ensure that the Emergency Operations Plan is updated to optimize coordinated emergency response efforts.

RESULTS: The Office of Emergency Management successfully achieved this objective, establishing an Emergency Operations Plan which was [subsequently updated in 2022](#).

OBJECTIVE 4 – LAND USE CODE AND DISASTER MITIGATION: By end of 2015, review and revise as appropriate the County's Building, Fire, and Land Use Codes to require and enforce suitable mitigation for new construction in hazardous areas.

RESULTS: This objective was successfully completed. The objective team assembled a committee including members from Larimer County Emergency Management, the Building Department, wildfire specialists, and consultants. The team researched the County's existing codes, and using guidance from the Structural Engineers Association of Colorado helped with code enhancements to ensure new construction is better suited to mitigate against disasters.

OBJECTIVE 5 – COMMUNITY PREPAREDNESS STUDIES: By June 2016, perform an Unmet Needs and Community Fragility Study for Larimer County and outline how the information can be used to reduce unmet needs and decrease community fragility from emergencies and disasters long-term.

RESULTS: This objective was added after the Strategic Plan was adopted. The [Unmet Needs Study was completed](#) 2016. The outcomes of this Study are now part of the Larimer Connects program.

Goal 4 – Transportation - We have an efficient transportation system and road network with safe and well-maintained roads and alternative modes of transportation.

OBJECTIVE 1- INFRASTRUCTURE QUALITY: By the end of 2020, 100% of the publicly owned and maintained bridges, on mainline collector or arterial roads, in unincorporated in Larimer County will be structurally sufficient.

RESULTS: This objective has become operational. All four of the structurally deficient bridges identified when the plan was adopted were repaired through 2019, including two in 2017, one in 2018, and one in 2019. Three of the repair projects were funded by federal grants, and one was funded by the County. Unfortunately [other bridges have since been identified](#) as structurally deficient and will be repaired as part of the County's capital improvement plan.

OBJECTIVE 2 – TRANSPORTATION FOR SENIORS: By the end of 2016, an evaluation of the transportation needs and challenges for seniors living in unincorporated Larimer County will be completed. Existing and new options for addressing those needs and challenges will be identified, prioritized, and implemented.

RESULTS: This project was partially completed. The County hired consultants to review gaps in transportation services for seniors, including convening focus groups, conducting surveys, and reviewing best practices. The objective team made five service and programmatic recommendations as a result of this work but these have not yet been implemented due to funding constraints.

OBJECTIVE 3 – TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE CAPITAL PLAN: By mid-2016, a prioritized list of transportation needs in unincorporated Larimer County will be completed, and the gap between existing funding and the cost of those prioritized needs will be identified. By the end of 2016, options to close the gap in transportation funding will be identified.

RESULTS: This objective was partially completed and with the assistance of a regional task force the County has developed a [Transportation Master Plan in 2017](#). The task force identified possible funding sources which led to 2019 ballot initiative 1A, which asked the voters to implement a ½ cent sales tax. This initiative did not pass and so the County included this item in [Objective 1 of Goal 1 of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan](#).

OBJECTIVE 4 – ALTERNATIVE FUELS. By the end of 2016 a Coalition in Larimer County will be established to promote the use of compressed natural gas (CNG). The Coalition, led by Larimer County, will create a countywide plan that will identify the CNG fueling sites and fleet conversions. By the end of 2018, two (2) publicly accessible fueling sites will be operational in Larimer County and 100 public agency fleet vehicles will be converted to CNG.

RESULTS: This objective was partially completed and operationalized. The coalition was created and met, which has resulted in several organizations sharing CNG fueling sites. By the end of the plan in 2019, the County had 82 CNG vehicles in its fleet. The envisioned publicly available sites were not successfully implemented because grant funding was not obtained. The County has since shifted focus to electric vehicles and is seeking funding opportunities from the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022

Goal 5 – Collaborate - We have a culture of collaboration among towns, cities, businesses, non-profit organizations, and citizens as the first-choice strategy to accomplish the Vision and Goals

OBJECTIVE 1 – ORGANIZATIONAL COLLABORATION TEAM: By April 2014, a team will be in place. Their role is to develop strategies to reduce costs, magnify positive outcomes, streamline government operations, and emphasize collaboration between Larimer County and other organizations as a foundation of our culture.

OBJECTIVE 2 – BEST PRACTICES. By the end of 2014, identify, assess, and recognize existing collaboration successes and develop a strategy to replicate them.

RESULTS: This goal and its associated objectives were designed more as “how to operate” ideas that helped lead to fulfillment of other objectives in the plan. As part of this goal, objective teams held a community workshop, researched best practices, and sought out feedback from employees. Some results of this goal include the Larimer Connects program and better internal communications.

Goal 6 – Operations - Larimer County government operates with a collaborative culture, a well-managed budget and continuously improving processes. We have evaluated our practices and services for the way we fund and operate and have a plan for improvement.

OBJECTIVE 1 – PROJECTS TO IMPROVE EFFICIENCY: By April 2014, identify common objectives that benefit the County and, by the end of 2018, implemented at least three collaborative projects across departments and elected offices to maximize the efficient, effective, and shared use of resources.

RESULTS: This objective has been successfully implemented and operationalized. Projects in this objective were focused across internal departments. Four projects were successfully completed: a financial data warehouse was created that brought multiple financial databases together to create one “book of truth”; the County revamped its website to be easier for staff to update, improving usability for the public; a new enterprise content management program was developed to reduce paper processes and storage; and the County implemented a shared copy/print service that was less expensive and more efficient.

OBJECTIVE 2 – IMPROVE BUDGET PROCESS: By the end of 2016, structure department or service budgets using a common set of components to ensure core services are funded at a basic level and discretionary funds are allocated based on priority and value back to the County.

RESULTS: This objective has been successfully implemented and operationalized. The annual budget process has been improved to make it easier for departments to navigate and more transparent for staff, policymakers and public. As a result, the budget document [wins awards for distinguished presentation](#) of complex information. A capital planning and budget process was added to enable forecasting of significant projects in future. The process now focuses on providing more information about what would be achieved with budget dollars. The budget process will be further enhanced as a result of [Objective 4 of Goal 3 of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan](#) related to data-driven decision-making.

OBJECTIVE 3 – IMPACTS OF COUNTY OPERATIONS ON NATURAL RESOURCES: By the end of 2016, analyze processes and infrastructure to determine appropriate balance of cost, natural resource impacts and community benefit, and identify strategies for improvement.

RESULTS: This objective has been successfully operationalized. One major component is the Facilities Management Department created a checklist for future capital projects, updated facility usage standards to reduce environmental impacts, and implemented a Facilities Master Plan. The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent move to remote work had a significant impact on this objective and related work is being continued in [Objective 1 of Goal 3 of the 2019-2023 Strategic Plan](#). Additionally, the County updated its purchasing policy to make natural resource impacts awareness a part of purchase decisions.

Goal 7 – Customer Service - Government services are customer-centric, accessible, and transparent. We leverage technology for better/faster customer service, allowing many services to be done online.

OBJECTIVE 1 – CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY: By July 2015, create a comprehensive citizen communication strategy that reports outcomes from County services, enhances recognition of the linkages among County services, and seeks feedback to spark improvement in County services.

RESULTS: This objective has become operational. The Public Information Manager convened county staff and consultants to identify ways to enhance and improve internal and external communications. In August 2015 the plan was finalized, and a functional team was created to share information across County organizations. In subsequent years the County has increased capacity with additional positions.

OBJECTIVE 2 – CUSTOMER SERVICE MONITORING: By July 2015, implement a uniform, countywide system for monitoring and improving the customer service experience of citizens.

RESULTS: This objective was partially completed. The objective team researched best practices and operated a successful pilot during 2015, soliciting feedback from citizens. The objective team developed recommendations for operations which have been implemented in some cases; however most elected offices and departments have customized their feedback efforts based on the specifics of the services they provide.

OBJECTIVE 3 – GOVERNMENT SERVICES HUB: By the end of 2017, take a regional leadership role by establishing an information and access hub to connect citizens to the government services they need.

RESULTS: This objective has been successfully implemented and operationalized. The objective team utilized focus groups and researched best practices. Partially as a result of this and other objectives (such as Objective 1 of Goal 6), the County developed a new public-facing website and internal-facing intranet that have vastly improved the availability of information and online service completion. The new website went live in September 2017.