



**Final Report of the
Focus on Longmont:
Share Your Vision,
Create Our Legacy
Strategic Plan**

**Presented to the City
of Longmont,
Colorado**

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Introduction

Focus on Longmont is an initiative launched by the Longmont City Council at their 2004 planning retreat. The purpose is to develop community-supported strategic policies that, if implemented, will move the city towards a sustainable future as it approaches build-out within its planning boundaries. In this capacity, a “sustainable future” means two things: achieving a balance between the resources and expenditures needed to sustain the city’s capacity to provide desired levels of municipal services, and a healthy, balanced community whose economic, environmental, and social needs are met. “Resources” means more than dollars and cents; it refers to our community’s social, environmental, and economic assets.



This Focus on Longmont Strategic Planning Process illustrated the major steps for innovative public engagement to create the Strategic Plan.

Because of the importance of this initiative to Longmont’s future, the City chose an approach that would engage a broad cross section of the community in the development and eventual implementation of this citywide strategic plan.

The process combines two proven methods for community-wide planning, Appreciative Inquiry (Phase 1) and Deliberative Dialogue (Phase 2). This approach was chosen to capitalize on the following strengths in the two methods:

- Engaging people with diverse experiences in working together on defining the city's strengths and ideas for the future.
- Framing issues and providing pertinent information in a way that makes sense to the community.
- Fostering in-depth and forward-looking deliberations among community members on future trade-offs.
- Exploring common ground among choices that capture the community members' values.

This report summarizes the *Focus on Longmont* process, presents the strategic policy directions and outlines recommendations for implementation.

The Focus on Longmont Process

PHASE 1: APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY PROCESS

Phase 1 of the project focused on Mobilizing the Voices and Visions of Longmont through a variety of one-to-one interviews, community conversations, best in class interviews and a community Summit. People all across the community participated in thoughtful conversations about the city's future. These conversations revealed stories and insights on Longmont at its best, and connected individuals to the larger community and its future.

Phase 1 produced a comprehensive collective understanding of Longmont's positive core strengths. These strengths describe Longmont at its best and they are essential to the City's social and strategic vitality. Phase 1 also produced a mapping of the community's compelling ideas or vision for the future.

JANUARY – MARCH 2005

Five important goals guided the first phase of the process:

- Draw many members of the Longmont community into the process, representing as many different perspectives as possible.
- Forge new relationships across different segments of the community.
- Build connections and a sense of appreciation between city employees and citizens.
- Learn the breadth of the community's understanding of Longmont's strengths.
- Build ownership for and enthusiasm about the planning process, in order to increase involvement in subsequent activities

In keeping with these goals, the process was designed to cast an ever widening net over the Longmont community, inviting more and more people to participate, establish relationships, and share ideas and insights related to our future as a freestanding, mature community.



Focus on Longmont brought a wide cross-section of the community together to plan the future.

With assistance from the Consulting Team, the City's Leadership Team organized a 35-person Coordinating Team, which formed and planned the details of how to involve the community in this crucial planning process. The Coordinating Team worked with the Consulting Team to identify topics to explore in interviews to uncover Longmont's positive core, or what Longmont is like at its best. The topics were:

- one giant front porch
- prosperity for all
- exciting living and business personality
- enhancing our environmental legacy.



The interviews brought folks together to share stories about Longmont at its best.

The Coordinating Team helped develop an interview guide (see Attachment 1) and conducted 80 one-on-one interviews with a wide array of community members, including both community leaders and people who had not been active in city projects.

The people who first participated in these interviews became the “next generation” of supporters for the process. They helped build involvement in 15 Community Conversations, which involved over 350 people from all walks of life in Longmont. Participants in the conversations represented over 145 different organizations and citizen groups. Many of the participants rarely, if ever, take part in city-sponsored planning activities. One of the Community Conversations was conducted in Spanish and involved several monolingual Spanish speakers. Most participants had key opportunities to meet and establish relationships with people who were outside of their immediate relational circles. The interviews and Community Conversations produced stories and insights about Longmont at its best. A summary of these stories appears in Attachment 2.

With guidance from the Consulting Team, the Coordinating Team studied all the stories to track patterns and identify the key elements of Longmont's *positive core* – those things that are *uniquely good* about our community that must be *preserved and built upon* as we move into the future as a freestanding, mature community.

Finally, Coordinating Team members interviewed 11 “Best in Class” cities around the country to gain new insights and ideas about how to build on the best of what Longmont has been as we move towards a sustainable future after build out. The cities included Eugene, Oregon; Madison, Wisconsin; Missoula, Montana; Scottsdale, Tempe and Yuma, Arizona; Ft. Collins, Colorado; and Burlington, Vermont. A full summary of these interviews appears in Attachment 3. Highlights from that research included:

- Revitalization of a downtown area is one of the most effective ways to stimulate the local economy, while enhancing people's sense of community. Downtown areas in several other cities have been stimulated by the emergence of vital small businesses, residences (e.g., lofts), and entertainment. Lunchtime entertainment and street vendors bring people into downtown from other parts of the city.
- Pedestrian options (i.e., wide sidewalks, benches, free transit on a regular schedule) also stimulate downtown activity.



People learn more when they engage with others from outside their immediate circles.



At the Summit, we discovered how a large group coming together creates a certain magic.

- Cross-cultural celebrations in other cities have included a “world community fair,” summer picnics, and Friday Afternoon Celebrations for international residents.
- Neighborhood grants, a neighborhood leadership school, and neighborhood roundups all build people’s local sense of connection and enhance grassroots capacities.
- Local universities have the potential to be strong strategic partners in terms of building up the community.
- Mentoring relationships between businesses and schools, or between schools and neighborhood groups – at the elementary and post-secondary levels, as well as high schools – foster performance and increase kids’ chances of graduating high school and continuing their education.
- Regional partnerships for the purchase of large blocks of open space increase cities’ capacities to preserve easements, backdrops, and trail systems.

APRIL 2005

The Coordinating Team conducted a narrative analysis of the interview results to capture what the community is like at its best. The following six key elements describe Longmont’s positive core:

1. Small town feel

Longmont is a community with a “real” downtown and a “small town feel.” The community values small businesses and the community’s history.

2. Quality natural environment

Natural spaces are important and the city has an eco-friendly attitude.

3. Celebrating together

Longmont provides a friendly environment for folks from all walks of life.

4. Opportunity for all

The community values education and there are different job opportunities. People care about seeing others succeed.

5 An engaged community

Longmont supports a culture of “giving back” and there is room for everyone to make a difference. The community is committed to breaking new ground in reaching across cultural divides and values global relations.

6. Facilitative city leadership

City government has adopted an entrepreneurial style with employees who are personal and responsive. The City also helps support and facilitates community action.

The “positive core” became the launch-point for a one-day community Summit involving 175 people in mid-April. The Summit was designed to validate Longmont’s positive core, continue to foster relationships and connections within and across the city, and inspire people’s creativity, bringing forth compelling shared visions for the future of Longmont as a mature, sustainable community after build out. (See Attachment 3 for the Summit Participant Workbook.) Summit attendees determined the *root causes of our success* – those people, systems, structures, places, funding, etc. that have contributed to our positive core. These are the factors that have enabled Longmont to be the great place that it is. They are the conditions that Longmont must replicate in the future, to consistently reproduce our successes. Finally, Summit participants then envisioned the future of Longmont (both individually and in small groups) by conducting interviews on the following questions:

Imagine Longmont *fifteen years from today* – in the year 2020. It is a vibrant, freestanding community whose growth has slowed – but whose prosperity has continued... even blossomed. The community is everything you’d hoped and wished for, *and* there is enough money in the City to pay for what we have. What do you see????

- What is the *same* from the Longmont of 2005?
- What is *different*? Be specific. List at least *three ways* in which the City has changed.
- How have the changes you’ve just described helped everyone to prosper together in Longmont?
- How are these positive changes funded? Who pays for what? How?

Graphic recorders captured core ideas in the discussions of peoples’ hopes and dreams for the future and developed the following collective future vision map:



In the vision of Longmont's future, certain images were repeated over and over again:

❑ ***A vibrant downtown with great curb-appeal***

Downtown serves as the center of the community. It is both the place where the community comes together and a symbol of the community's "small town feel."

❑ ***Vital retail centers***

Retail centers provide different shopping opportunities to the community but also serve to reinforce and strengthen neighborhood relationships.

❑ ***Diverse entertainment***

As a vibrant city, Longmont provides diverse entertainment, especially for young people. Music, culture, recreation and the arts draw people together.

❑ ***Healthy environment***

Longmont is a city with a view. Environmental values are visible throughout the community. The community is committed to reuse and recycling, high quality water, public transportation and preservation of natural areas. Trails connect the community, providing healthy opportunities for recreation as well as links between neighborhoods, parks and open space and community gathering places.

❑ ***Prosperity and quality education***

There are many different job and business opportunities. The city supports lifelong learning, enabling people of all ages to reach their potential.

❑ ***Housing for all***

The city is known for creative approaches to affordable housing and more people can live and work in the community.

❑ ***Connecting people as citizens***

The strength of the Longmont community is built on the belief that everyone has something to contribute. Diversity is at the heart of the community, which is warm, caring and friendly.

These images, which are depicted on the collective "vision map" of the future, represent the spirit of the whole population of Summit participants.



Participants celebrate a fun and productive day.

PHASE 2: THE DELIBERATIVE DIALOGUES AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Phase 2 involved Community Choice Making on Policy Directions. Phase 2 drew upon the data from Phase 1 to create choices or Directions for Action for the future which were described in a Deliberation Guide. The community participated in two deliberative forums where participants engaged in what the National Issues Forum model for Deliberative Dialogues calls “Choicework” where people work through future directions for the community. The Deliberative forums revealed the community’s shared view about priorities for future action in the best interest of the community. Findings from deliberative forums were used to craft policy directions, which were then further refined in a Community Workshop. As a final step, the consistency of the recommended policies with existing city plans and policies was assessed to identify where the new strategic priorities suggest a change in direction for the city. A set of performance measures was also developed for tracking how well the city is implementing the strategic plan.

MAY – JUNE 2005



In the deliberative forums, people moved from their personal views to discussing priorities for the City as a whole.

Phase 2 focused on developing recommended policy directions based upon community priorities. For the priority-setting deliberative process, more than 500 ideas and preferences for the future from Phase 1 were clustered to provide the foundation for developing four directions for the future. In the National Issues Forum model, this step in the process is called “issue framing.” The four directions, listed below, were documented in the *Focus on Longmont* Deliberation Guide (see Attachment 4). The Guide describes these four directions in detail, lists some possible strategies or actions the city might pursue in furtherance of the Direction under consideration, and gives a number of reasons why each should or should not be made a city priority.

DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE 1: ENRICH THE EXPERIENCE OF LIVING IN LONGMONT.

This Direction for the Future proposed that Longmont can best ensure it continues to be a distinct community with adequate resources to sustain a high quality of life for all its residents by *preserving the city’s “small town feel” while giving it more “big city appeal.”* Residents who favor this Direction stress the desirability of promoting the arts and of celebrating our cultural richness and variety.

DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE 2: ENHANCE THE ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL AND BUILT.

This Direction for the Future argued that Longmont can best ensure it continues to be a distinct community with adequate resources to sustain a high quality of life for all its residents by *ensuring that the city continues to be a place where the landscape is open and pleasing to look at, and where everything that is built on it—houses, stores, office buildings, schools—preserves and even accentuates its beauty.*

***DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE 3: EXPAND PROSPERITY
THROUGH INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY, AND
EDUCATION.***

This Direction for the Future suggested that Longmont can best ensure it continues to be a distinct community with adequate resources to sustain a high quality of life for all its residents by *emphasizing efficiency and innovation in both business and government, and by ensuring that all our young people graduate from high school with the knowledge and skills they will need to become productive adults.*

***DIRECTION FOR THE FUTURE 4: EXTEND THE PRINCIPLES
OF COOPERATION AND SHARED RESPONSIBILITY
THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY.***

This Direction for the Future maintained that Longmont can best ensure it continues to be a distinct community with adequate resources to sustain a high quality of life for all its residents by *improving the ability and willingness of citizens and city government to work together in partnership, and of citizens to work constructively and productively with each other.*

JULY 2005

Community members participated in two deliberative forums on the four directions outlined in the Deliberation Guide. The deliberative forums had three explicit goals:

- To help Longmont residents, as a community, express their sense of what Longmont's priorities should be as the city plans for the future.
- To help Longmont residents develop a better understanding and appreciation of each other's concerns, interests, and values as these relate to Longmont's future.
- To help Longmont residents move closer to a shared sense of what the city can and should do in order to ensure that Longmont continues to be a distinct community with adequate resources to sustain a high quality of life for all its residents.

On each of two Saturdays in July, community members gathered for four-and-a-half hours to discuss the four Directions for Action noted above. The July 16th forum was open to everyone in the community, including residents who had participated in Phase 1 activities such as the Community Summit. In order to bring new perspectives and voices into the process by reaching people who seldom, if ever, participate in city or community discussions of public matters, a random sampling method was used to recruit participants for the July 30th forum. More than 70 persons identified in this manner participated in that forum. Altogether, more than 150 residents joined in the deliberations.

The two forums began with a presentation on current trends to help participants deliberate against a background awareness that the city's revenue from growth-related activity will decline as the amount of land



Ideas for how to make Longmont sustainable in the future were posted and prioritized at the deliberative forums.

available for developments shrinks, even as the Latino and senior subpopulations continue to grow faster than the community as a whole. Participants were then asked to join small groups of 8 to 12 people. Volunteer facilitators moderated the small group discussions and city staff members donated their time to serve as recorders. The process for each small group was as follows:

- Deliberate all four Directions – Participants assessed and weighed the pros and cons of making each Direction a priority for the future.
- Identify priorities for action – In the small groups, each participant identified and posted on the wall his or her top 5 potential actions from the Deliberation Guide or the discussion. Participants then used weighted voting (in the form of 5 dots that could be distributed in any manner) to rank their top three.
- Discuss results of prioritizing exercise – Each group discussed the allocation of dots, where the group members shared or did not share priorities, and why.
- Prepare small group report – Each group prepared a report to the plenary assembly that identified the recommendations it would make to the city with respect to planning for a sustainable future in alignment with the community’s vision.

AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 2005

Results from the forums were evaluated to learn what Longmont residents value about life in their community and the kind of community they want it to be in the future. Rather than choosing one Direction to the exclusion of the others, forum participants embraced aspects of different directions as the strategic priorities for the city. Five central themes, along with one overarching recommendation, emerged as the common ground in the two forums. The five themes are as follows:

- Promote a healthy business climate, especially by supporting small, local businesses.
- Support education, recognizing its importance both in attracting good jobs and in helping community members obtain good jobs.
- Enhance the attractiveness of the natural environment and the strength of the community’s commitment to a healthy environment.
- Focus on downtown as a symbol of our “small town” identity and as a functional center of the community.
- Promote a sense of community identity and cultural integration through community-wide celebrations, partnerships, public dialogue, and open, inclusive decision making.

The overarching recommendation that emerged was *linking policies to priorities and balance*. Participants expressed a clear desire that Council be strategic and balanced in their policy-making and be wise stewards of public resources.

Highlights from the deliberations related to each theme are described below.

1. BUSINESS CLIMATE

Forum participants identified a strong economy as the foundation of any successful community. Business activity generates the wealth we require to raise our standard of living and to support those things that do not pay for themselves. If the city “gets business right,” everything else will fall into place. The question is not whether Longmont needs to achieve and sustain a robust economy, but rather the form that economy should take and the means by which the city should go about achieving it. In this connection, participants offered a number of important considerations:

- Economic development should be “strategic” in the sense that there should be a clear strategy for attaining both the level and the type of prosperity that serves the community’s desire to sustain its quality of life.
- A vital, prosperous local economy requires jobs—jobs for *everyone*. All residents should have work that others respect and appreciate.
- Both new development and re-development should be consistent with the values and community visions held by Longmont residents. That means recruiting, supporting, and assisting those businesses whose purposes and activities are in keeping with Longmont’s character and quality of life.
- Longmont needs a balance between local small and large non-local businesses. The challenge is to take advantage of what the “big boxes” offer without adversely affecting the things small businesses offer the community.
- Support for small local businesses should be reflected in our economic development policies. We need a business climate in which a wide range of businesses can take root, grow, and thrive.
- The community should be made aware of the importance of supporting small businesses through purchasing locally whenever possible.

2. EDUCATION

More forum participants expressed concern about education than about any other topic they discussed. Participants believed that any future improvement in Longmont’s present depends upon the quality of education that young people receive today.

There appears to be broad agreement that the public school system that serves Longmont, the St. Vrain Valley School District, needs to be strengthened. The schools, however, do not by themselves determine whether the young people of a community receive the sort of education they require. The community must value education, support it, complement it, and reinforce it through a variety of principles, practices, and activities. Forum participants said, in effect, that as a city and community, Longmont is not contributing as much to the education of its young people and it could, or should. The community should make full use of its considerable capacity for responding to the wide range of educational needs that all residents have.

The city—along with business, not-for-profit-organizations, and individual citizens—needs to find an appropriate way to be involved in the education of Longmont’s young people. Many participants urged a “partnership between the city and the school district” as the beginning of an answer. They also offered a number of concrete suggestions:

- The community must support education through a variety of practices and activities: early childhood education, vocational education or occupational training, etc.
- The community must find ways to help parents meet their responsibilities. Addressing the pressing need of working parents for after-school programs would be a good start.
- The schools need business support—not just financial support or in-kind donations, but also mentoring, apprenticeships, teaching how the skills and knowledge businesses need are used in the work they do.
- Enable and encourage residents to donate their time and talents to the schools. Mentoring programs are both do-able and helpful.
- Care needs to be taken not to make matters worse or to waste resources in ill-advised attempts to do what education professionals are already doing.

3. NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

The opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the natural environment is a key component of Longmont’s quality of life. The city’s trees, parks, mountain views, open space, and trails constitute a major community asset. Participants recommended in particular that Longmont’s trail system be strengthened by extending trails so that they facilitate intra-city movement, not just offer recreational opportunities.

But participants also raised questions. While generally applauding the city’s acquisitions of open space, they wondered whether open space—especially land to be acquired in the future—should be more “usable.” They asked whether the community could come up with a mixed-use approach. They proposed that the city be more “strategic” in its purchasing of open space to serve specific widely-supported purposes.

One way forum participants echoed the Phase 1 vision of a city with an “eco-friendly attitude” was by urging that Longmont move more quickly toward “built-green” construction requirements for both new construction and renovations. Yet others cautioned that a blanket built-green policy could narrow the range of housing options available to people and raise prices to the point where neither current residents nor newcomers could afford to live in Longmont.

Participants also praised the city’s recycling program. They urged that it be expanded and that the city “make it too convenient [for residents] *not* to recycle.”

On the topic of traffic congestion, not everyone who participated agreed that Longmont has a “traffic problem” (or a “parking problem”), but most recognized that the community faces a challenge in preventing traffic from *becoming* a problem detrimental to Longmont’s environmental quality (and to its “small-town feel”). Participants saw improved public transportation as a precautionary measure to hold at bay the congestion that is mounting in the north suburban area as a whole. As Longmont builds out and begins to “build in,” the city should be planned so that public transportation becomes more practical, more attractive, and more economical.

4. DOWNTOWN

In its current state, participants said, downtown is not the sort of place the community wants nor needs it to be. Many said downtown is the symbol (as well as a source) of Longmont’s small-town appeal. They described downtown as the business, cultural, and civic center of the community. Some argued that Main Street is the key to Longmont’s identity as a distinct city, and so must have its own identity that is aligned with and reflective of the community’s self-conception.

Participants offered a number of specific criteria for a vibrant downtown:

- It should be more of a “destination” than it is today. It should offer residents and visitors alike more than a single reason or purpose for spending time and money there. To achieve this, downtown should feature mixed uses: residential, retail, entertainment, and civic. Downtown should afford people a pleasant experience no matter what one is doing.
- It must be economically viable—a functioning center of commercial activity, not a “movie set” or “theme park.” It should open up opportunities for new or relocated business activity. The city should do more to help and support businesses on Main Street.
- It should be a place *all* residents can identify with, feel a part of, and make use of. Some participants cited the need for “public” or “civic” space where people can come together, where community events can be held, where people can find a variety of things to do, or where they can “just be.” They argued that a genuine community requires a central public space—it needs a focal point, such as a pedestrian-only public square where people can gather.

- It should be aesthetically pleasing—nothing should detract from the physical attractiveness of the area. Some supporters of maintaining downtown's character suggested that an architectural theme consistent with the city's 19th century architecture should be encouraged in both new construction and in redevelopment projects throughout the city. (Other participants, however, expressed skepticism about, and occasionally outright opposition to, the idea that private property should be subjected to regulation by the city to any degree greater than it is at present.)
- Downtown should be accessible by bus, by bicycle, and on foot.
- It should be more pedestrian-friendly without necessarily banning vehicles from Main Street (though some participants did call for a pedestrian-only zone with adequate parking within easy walking or shuttle bus distance.)

Participants urged that the city ascertain what residents think downtown should be in order for it to become the authentic heart of Longmont for everyone, including the merchants who operate businesses there and people who at present don't spend much time there.

5. COMMUNITY

In “community,” people are more than residents. They are *neighbors*; they show concern for each other and take responsibility for helping each other when help is needed. For people who embrace its importance, “community” is built on empathy, understanding of differences (or, better, appreciation of them), and a sense of reciprocal obligation.

This is the vision, the ideal. And to some extent—certainly more than in many communities—it is the reality in Longmont. Yet already Longmont is large enough a city that most people will remain strangers to each other, even when they live in close proximity. This poses a problem for a community beginning to wonder how to integrate a growing ethnic minority into the general population.

As it did in the Phase 1 conversations, “cultural inclusion” resonated quite strongly with some participants in the deliberative forums. These folks argued that it's important for residents of a community like Longmont to celebrate together. Community-wide events that put people together in the same space sharing the same experience go a long way toward helping people see not only that they differ from each other, but that they have things in common as well. Accordingly, a substantial portion of forum participants recommended that the city play an important part, if only as a catalyst, in creating and sustaining regular city-wide celebrations that span and connect Longmont's various communities.

Forum participants were optimistic about Longmont's capacity for effective action, provided that residents' experience, knowledge, ingenuity, persistence, and energy can be marshaled and brought to bear on the tasks that have to be performed. This is why Longmont needs processes for discussion and decision-making that are widely regarded as fair, accessible, and responsive by all members of the

community. Participants thought the city could create more one-time involvement opportunities like the July forums.

At the same time participants acknowledged that achieving broader participation by residents and sustaining their engagement over time present a formidable challenge. It may be unrealistic to expect that more than a very small percentage of Longmont residents will ever participate frequently and substantially in activities of a public nature. In response, some participants suggest that we need to make involvement more attractive, to present it as a potentially gratifying undertaking and to avoid making it look like a job or a chore.

People talked about cultivating a civic norm of *volunteerism*; strengthening and connecting *neighborhoods*; and building *partnerships*. In the discussion of inclusion, one point that surfaced was that there are not enough amenities and events for young people. Not enough attention is paid to their needs and interests. What Longmont really requires is the opportunity for young people to feel valued in the community.

STRATEGIC AND BALANCED POLICIES

In discussing the four Directions, many of the comments related to being *strategic* (e.g., establishing incentives for businesses according to pre-determined community priorities) and *balanced* (e.g., recognizing a need for both large and small retailers.) Some participants were concerned that the city “does no harm.” They cautioned that the status quo is good and that taxes should not increase in an effort to change. Some of the comments related to striking a strategic balance in policy-making included:

- We understand that, in the end, a balance must be struck between a commitment, at one extreme, of going after new businesses irrespective of the consequences and, at the other extreme, imposing excessively severe restrictions on what kinds of businesses may locate in Longmont.
- We need a balance between small local and large non-local businesses that offer products and services that aren't provided locally or that residents wish to patronize because it makes economic sense for them to do so.
- If we recruit businesses, we need to strike a balance between the desirability of supporting locally-owned small businesses and the benefits of having large companies come to Longmont from elsewhere.
- Similarly, revenue from retail sales tax is important, but it must be weighed against other values, such as its impact on downtown, which contributes so much to Longmont's small-town feeling and to the small local businesses that are concentrated there.

OCTOBER 2005

A draft list of policy directions based on the themes that surfaced in the deliberative forums were discussed and refined at a Community Workshop on October 15th. Participants included representatives from the small groups at the deliberative forums, members of the Coordinating Team and City Council members. Using the City's OptionPower polling system, participants were asked to what degree they supported the policy directions and priority actions. Results are shown in the summary report included in Attachment 5.

NOVEMBER 2005 – JANUARY 2006

The draft policy directions were disseminated to the community for comment via a newsletter and the project website. The Consulting Team reviewed comments received and drafted policies and recommended actions. The Consulting Team also developed recommendations for implementation. This included reviewing City policy documents and assessing consistency with the strategic policies from the *Focus on Longmont* project and developing recommended performance measures. These findings are described in the section of this report on implementation.

Strategic Policy Directions

INTRODUCTION

A *policy* is a defined course of action adopted as a means of achieving the broader goals of the community; it is used to guide and determine decisions. The City of Longmont, in its Comprehensive Plan and other adopted plans and documents, already has a number of established policies on a wide array of topics, such as land use, growth management, transportation, and many others. These policies are used routinely by the city to guide day-to-day decisions, and will continue to be used in that manner.

Strategic Policy Directions differ from the city's adopted policies in that they are intended to serve as overarching directions that guide the city's development as it approaches build-out within its planning boundaries. Simply stated, these are viewed as the directions the city should take if it is to remain a healthy, balanced community.

This section of the report describes the five recommended strategic policy directions, which include:

-
- 1. Promote a Healthy Business Climate**
 - 2. Support Education as a Community-Wide Value**
 - 3. Enhance the Natural Environment**
 - 4. Focus on Downtown**
 - 5. Promote Community Identity and Cultural Inclusion**
-

For each of the strategic policy directions, we have included the following:

- A rationale for the strategic policy direction;
- Policies that define the actions to be taken by the city towards the strategic direction; and
- Recommended actions that would help implement each of the policies.



Strategic Policy Directions serve as overarching directions that guide the city's development.

POLICY DIRECTION 1: PROMOTE A HEALTHY BUSINESS CLIMATE

RATIONALE



A thriving business climate in Longmont is essential for a strong economy and bright future.

A healthy business climate produces a strong economy across multiple sectors; is flexible and adaptable for the future; and encourages expansion and retention of existing business but also promotes the creation of new, local business and the relocation of business into the area. A well-balanced, diversified, and strong economy is critical to providing high quality jobs to residents, generating wealth within the community, and establishing a dependable tax base to support needed services and infrastructure improvements. A strong economy implies that wages are high enough to keep a stable, skilled workforce intact and that the costs associated with maintaining a household, relative to wages, are affordable to the majority of those working in the community. A diverse economy is also one that has balance between primary and service sector businesses and employment. Locally-owned businesses help to provide economic stability and a positive business environment by reducing the flow of capital from the area. Local industries tend to have a stake in the community, leading to more involved corporate citizenship.

City residents who participated in the *Focus on Longmont* process identified that a healthy business climate and a strong and diverse economy can serve as the foundation for a successful community. Their sense was that if we “get business right,” everything else will fall into place.

POLICIES

Policy 1.1 Increased Job Opportunities

The City shall work proactively with the private sector to create opportunities for a continuum of appropriate jobs for all residents.

Policy 1.2 Development Aligned with the Community’s Vision

Ensure that both private and public development and redevelopment activities are in alignment with the community’s vision.

Policy 1.3 Business-Friendly Environment

Create a “business-friendly” and receptive environment for Longmont in the community, both locally and beyond.

Policy 1.4 Balance of Businesses

Emphasize a balance between locally-owned and non-local businesses at a range of sizes and scales.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Continue to Participate in Economic Development Activities

Through the Longmont Area Economic Development Council (LAEC), the Longmont Small Business Association, the Boulder County Latino Chamber of Commerce, the Longmont Chamber of Commerce, and other organizations involved in economic development activities, the city should continue to expand its business recruitment efforts, with particular emphasis on local and regional coordination.

Expanded Retail Assistance Program

Consider whether the city ought to expand its assistance, such as incentives and/or use of special districts, for retail projects that have the potential to generate new sales tax revenue and are consistent with the community's vision.

Enhance Support for Small Businesses

Consider expanded efforts to support both existing and new small businesses, such as an annual Small Business Forum, a small business advocate program, and technical assistance/mentoring programs to assist small businesses with city processes and procedures and business planning.

POLICY DIRECTION 2: SUPPORT EDUCATION AS A COMMUNITY-WIDE VALUE

RATIONALE

While recognizing that education is not a service provided by the city, nevertheless we should make full use of its considerable capacity for responding to the wide range of educational needs that all residents have. Education serves a number of important roles in achieving the city's goals for a sustainable future. First, educational opportunities will help residents achieve their employment and economic goals. In today's marketplace, this also includes retraining opportunities for workers whose career needs are changing. An educated workforce will help the city attract employers with quality job opportunities. Finally, a range of educational opportunities will continue to make Longmont an attractive and desirable place to live, attracting new residents over time as the city's population matures.

Residents participating in the Forums expressed a higher level of concern about education than about any other topic. They believed that the community must value education, support it, complement it, and reinforce it through a variety of activities. The city—along with business, not-for-profit organizations, and individual citizens—needs to find an appropriate way to be involved in the education of Longmont's young people. Forum participants said, in effect, that as a city and community, Longmont is not contributing as much to the education of its young people as it could, or should. For this reason, the policy directions for education emphasize a stronger partnership between the city and educational providers as the beginning of an answer. Equally important is the emphasis on learning opportunities as a life-long pursuit – the policies place emphasis on education for adults of all ages.



Educational opportunities should be available for adults of all ages.

POLICIES

Policy 2.1 Community Support for Education

Promote and support community activities to support education.

Policy 2.2 Public and Private Partnerships

Promote partnerships between public and private sectors that enhance educational opportunities, from pre-school through college and life-long learning.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Enhanced Opportunities for Community Support for Education

Promote community support through volunteerism and mentoring programs, and further explore opportunities to promote parental involvement in educational activities. Continue to review how the city considers growth opportunities in terms of projected school capacities.

Education Summit

Consider organizing an annual Education Summit, to bring together organizations involved in education within the city (at all levels). The purpose of the Summit would be three-fold: 1) ensure that all educational providers/resources are in alignment with community needs and goals; 2) serve as a catalyst for ideas and actions to benefit community education, and 3) identify resources and opportunities for city and community involvement and initiatives.

Continue to Provide City Support for Early Childhood Education, Career Technical Education, College, and Continuing Education

The city should continue to provide facilities and other resources to support early childhood, career technical education and continuing and higher education in the community.

Establish a Permanent Location for Front Range Community College and/or Other Post-Secondary Education Providers

Work with policy-makers, administrators and the community to identify and secure a permanent location for FRCC and/or other post-secondary education providers in the city.



Early childhood education should be supported by the city of Longmont.

POLICY DIRECTION 3: ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

RATIONALE

Improving and sustaining our natural environment is one of the key elements of a sustainable community. The opportunity to appreciate and enjoy the natural environment is an already key contributor to Longmont's

quality of life. The city's trees, parks, mountain views, open space, and its trail system constitute a major community asset that residents value in their daily lives. The underlying theme of this policy direction is to consider ways that the city could do more to enhance the usability and accessibility of the natural environment in day-to-day city life. In particular, this might include enhancing the trail system to make it potentially more functional as a transportation option as well as for recreation, seeking opportunities to increase the "usability" of open space to residents, and more strategic purchases of open space to serve specific purposes. Also important is the continuing need to conserve our scarce resources, including water and energy. Also important is the continuing need to conserve our scarce resources, including water and energy by pursuing a variety of strategies such as utility rate structures, education and incentive programs.

POLICIES

Policy 3.1 City-Wide Trail System

Improve the City's trail system to achieve a city-wide grid system that strengthens community connections for non-recreational as well as recreational purposes.

Policy 3.2 Expanded Open Space Opportunities

Promote expanded open space opportunities through additional targeted acquisitions, including agricultural preservation areas, and enhanced use opportunities for existing open space.

Policy 3.3 Emphasis on the Built Environment

Continue to focus on standards for the built environment, with an emphasis on quality, energy-efficient materials, quality architecture, and appropriate landscaping that reinforces community and the environment.

Policy 3.4 Enhanced Public Transit Opportunities

Encourage/enhance public transportation opportunities by working proactively to promote an increased level of transit service in Longmont that meets the needs of all members of our community.



Trails such as this provide recreational opportunities and a healthy means of transportation.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Continue to Enhance the City's Trails System

Focus on enhancing the city trails system with particular emphasis on "missing links; north/south connections; and its usability for transportation as well as recreation.

Green Building Standards

Consider requiring and providing incentives for "green" building standards for all public as well as private development. This may include resources and standards such as LEED (Leadership in Energy Efficiency and Design), BuiltGreen Colorado, US Department of Energy's Building America program, and Energy Star and other standards for energy efficiency.

Continue to Work with RTD to Increase Transit Opportunities

Continue to work with RTD to enhance bus transit service within and to the city, and aggressively promote FasTracks rail service.

POLICY DIRECTION 4: FOCUS ON DOWNTOWN

RATIONALE



An attractive and vibrant downtown Longmont builds community.

A downtown that is attractive, vibrant, and economically healthy will play an important role in the city's future as a stable, sustainable community. Downtown will serve as an "anchor" for many of the activities that help to build community – educational, civic, and celebratory.

Downtown can be the active heart of the community – the basis of its identity and historic roots, a community destination, and its government and cultural center. Forum participants envision downtown as a diverse, multicultural environment that is a welcome place for residents and visitors, particularly pedestrians. More attention is needed to the total environment that is created. Downtown must be, and more importantly, must be perceived to be, safe, clean and active. Beyond these physical considerations, downtown must be marketed and public and private spaces programmed with activities that give people more reasons to come downtown and stay downtown. The downtown "experience" is as important as the bricks and mortar: a successful downtown is more than a collection of structures.

Also important is the need to seek a balance between the interests of established neighborhoods and businesses, and new businesses and mixed-use development as it relates to historic preservation and the character of the downtown area. As the downtown continues to evolve, care must be given to retaining those elements that help define its character, while recognizing that the sustainability of downtown will bring about change.

POLICIES

Policy 4.1 Downtown as a Destination and Gathering Place

Promote the downtown area as a community-wide destination and gathering place for civic, retail, arts and culture, and entertainment uses in a manner that enhances Longmont's unique identity. Continue to strengthen downtown's role as the civic center of the community so that everyone in Longmont feels welcomed and included in civic activities.

Policy 4.2 Balanced Economic Development

Foster balanced economic development opportunities that encourage economically viable businesses to locate and prosper in the downtown area and the greater Central Business District (including the north and south Main Street corridors), and encourage a diverse mix of uses to strengthen its economic base.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS

Continue to Invest in Physical Improvements to the Downtown Area

Focus downtown physical improvements on facilities and features that are designed to achieve a greater degree of accessibility from adjoining neighborhoods and throughout the city and region, with particular focus on pedestrian orientation, parking, public gathering places and plazas, and historic awareness.

Encourage a Mixed-Use Development Pattern

Encourage a mixed-use development pattern with emphasis on incorporating residential uses in commercial buildings, so that downtown can prosper in a safe environment.

Continued Support for Public Events

Continue to provide public support for events and activities in the downtown area, with increased emphasis on events that can serve to bring the community together.

POLICY DIRECTION 5: PROMOTE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND CULTURAL INCLUSION

RATIONALE

Policy Direction 5 builds upon Longmont's history of volunteerism and community involvement. In community, people are more than residents. They are neighbors; they show concern for each other and take responsibility for helping each other when help is needed. An actively engaged community helps stretch limited city resources by allowing the city government to serve as a facilitator for community action. When an engaged community communicates effectively, city decisions and resources reflect the priorities of the community; the city is accountable to its people.

In the *Focus on Longmont* process, people talked about cultivating a civic norm of *volunteerism*; strengthening and connecting *neighborhoods*; and building *partnerships*. Community members identified an important role for the city as a catalyst for community events that bring the community together. Building a strong community will play an important role in achieving many of the other strategic directions, through building support for education, community appearance, environmental stewardship, and public/private partnerships.



Cultural activities provide opportunities for the community to mingle in new ways.

POLICIES

Policy 5.1 Engaged Neighborhoods

Place a continued and enhanced emphasis on neighborhoods as the primary building block of the city.

Policy 5.2 Renewed Emphasis on Youth Activities

Involve youth in planning and conducting new and revitalized programs and activities, and create an environment where youth feel valued in the community.

Policy 5.3 Meaningful Citizen Involvement

Continue to promote meaningful, purposeful citizen involvement and engagement opportunities to hear many voices in City programs and initiatives.

Policy 5.4 Culturally Inclusive Gatherings and Events

Support and encourage culturally inclusive community gatherings and events.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS



Active neighborhoods contribute to Longmont's community identity.

Strengthen Neighborhood Groups

Strengthen and connect existing neighborhood groups, and encourage the formation of new groups in additional neighborhoods (existing and new). Consider opportunities to involve neighborhoods through Homeowner's Associations, where they are active in neighborhoods.

Seek the Assistance of the Longmont Youth Council

Involve the Longmont Youth Council as the lead organization in identifying and planning needed programs and activities.

Implement the Multicultural Strategic Plan

Involve the Multicultural Plan Steering Committee and community members in continued implementation of the City's adopted Multicultural Strategic Plan and explore additional opportunities to create and sustain community inclusion.

Implement the City's 5-Year Community Involvement Plan

Implement and periodically update the City's adopted 5-year Community Involvement Plan to strengthen the level and extent of community engagement in city decisions and initiatives.

Monitor the City's Progress Annually

Convene an annual forum to report on the city's progress towards achieving these strategic policy directions.

Strategic Plan Implementation

This section of the report describes recommendations for implementation of the policies and actions resulting from the *Focus on Longmont* strategic plan.

The first step, which is currently underway, will be for the city to conduct a fiscal impact analysis to gain an increased understanding of the projected fiscal conditions for the city at build-out. With this data and the results of the *Focus on Longmont* process, City Council will then establish priorities for implementation. The second step will be for the city to update existing policies and policy documents to be consistent with the policy directions contained in this report. As is discussed in greater detail below, the existing policy documents are in large part consistent with the strategic policies. In the future, alignment with the *Focus on Longmont* policy directions should be addressed when new policy documents are drafted and presented to Council. The third step is for the city to adopt performance measures to track how well the strategic policies are achieving the desired results. Recommended performance measures are described at the end of this section. In some cases, we have identified available data for tracking performance while in others, our recommendations call for a specific organization or entity to define appropriate measures. Finally, we recommend building upon the lessons learned about how to effectively involve the community.

ALIGNMENT WITH EXISTING PLANS

Review of plans was conducted at two levels: identification of policies that are generally in alignment with the Strategic Policy Directions but would benefit from an enhanced focus over time, and policies that may require adjustment or refinement to achieve alignment with the Strategic Policy Directions.

LONGMONT AREA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2003)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

The City's Comprehensive Plan was updated in 2003, and generally reflects the identified directions for the Strategic Policy Directions.

Policy Direction 1: Promote a Healthy Business Climate

Add a strategy to Policy ED-1.1 to emphasize the desired balance between local and non-local businesses.

Add a strategy to Policy ED-1.4 to address opportunities for an expanded incentives program.

Policy Direction 2: Support Education as a Community-Wide Value

Add a strategy to Policy HS-1.3 that provides more specific direction on the actions that the city will take to increase coordination with education providers in the community (e.g., Education Summit).

Policy Direction 3: Enhance the Natural Environment

Consider whether to add a specific policy and strategies to more directly address incentives and/or requirements for green building standards – Policy E-1.1, strategy (c) addresses this in an indirect manner.

Policy Direction 4: Focus on Downtown

No changes required.

Policy Direction 5: Promote a Sense of Community Identity and Cultural Inclusion

No changes required.

LONGMONT MULTICULTURAL PLAN (2005 ACTION PLAN)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

The City's Multicultural Plan contains a very specific set of recommended action steps that reflects an ongoing effort on the part of the city and its Multicultural Task Force. The Strategic Policy Directions are very much in alignment with the actions proposed by this Plan; no changes to the Plan are required.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT SKILLS-BUILDING PLAN (2003) AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT RESOURCE MANUAL (2002)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

The Plan provides a 5-year roadmap for improving community involvement practices within the City and the Manual is a resource to city staff conducting community involvement activities. The Plan is consistent with the Strategic Policy Directions and in fact, many of the recommended actions related to training and mentoring were implemented in the course of the *Focus on Longmont* project. The finding in the deliberative forums that community members have different expectations regarding the role of the City in community involvement suggests that the development of a Community Involvement Policy continues to be a priority. The Community Involvement Resource Manual should be updated with the techniques used in *Focus on Longmont*.

OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS MASTER PLAN (2002)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

In general, this Plan appears to be in alignment with the Strategic Policy Directions, with one exception noted below.

Policy Direction 3: Enhance the Natural Environment

Evaluate City's Trail Criteria

The Plan's trail system recommendations state that the general philosophy of the trail system should be to provide for recreational, multi-use corridors, and Strategic Policy Direction 3.1 recommends that the trail system should emphasize non-recreational as well as recreational purposes.

WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT PLAN (2005)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

There do not appear to be any conflicts between this Plan and the Strategic Policy Directions; no changes to the Plan are required.

MULTI-MODAL TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2005)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

This Plan is strongly in alignment with the Strategic Policy Directions. Specifically, the Plan encourages a transportation system that is balanced, provides mobility, protects the environment, and supports the economic growth of the city and vitality of the downtown. The Plan contains a *Transit Vision Plan* that is strongly aligned with Strategic Policy Direction 3.4, and encourages an enhanced trail system to serve pedestrians and bicyclists, in alignment with Strategic Policy Direction 3.1. There do not appear to be any conflicts between this Plan and the Strategic Policy Directions; no changes to the Plan are required.

MAIN STREET (MIDTOWN) REDEVELOPMENT PLAN (2005)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

This recently adopted Plan establishes a vision, development concept and strategy for the portion of the Main Street corridor known as "Midtown", from Longs Peak Avenue on the south to 17th Avenue on the north. The Plan is strongly in alignment with Strategic Policy Direction 4: Focus on Downtown, and embraces a vision for Main Street as... "one of the community's premier shopping, business, and entertainment centers". There do not appear to be any conflicts between this Plan and the Strategic Policy Directions; no changes to the Plan are required.

DOWNTOWN MIXED-USE PARKING STRUCTURE STUDY (ONGOING)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

The city and LDDA are evaluating the feasibility of building a mixed-use parking structure in the downtown area. While the location and design of the facility are still pending, this initiative is strongly in alignment with Strategic Policy Direction 4: Focus on Downtown. It directly supports the recommended actions to continue to invest in physical improvements to the downtown area, and will serve to further encourage a mixed-use development pattern.

BRIGHT EYES (ONGOING)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

In 2003, an ad hoc group of representatives from the city, school district, and area children services providers formed Bright EYES (Early Years Education Stewards), to focus on ways that the community could work together to expand and improve early education opportunities. To date, the city has received several grants to assist with community awareness and parent engagement efforts, as well as funded several capital projects for facilities to house programs. This initiative is strongly in alignment with Policy Direction 2: Support Education as a Community-Wide Value, particularly for promoting actions that enhance opportunities for community support for education.

FLOUR MILL REDEVELOPMENT PLAN (2003)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

This Plan recommends a mixed use development that retains the historic nature of the existing buildings and pursuing Federal Historic Designation of the Flour Mill and Silo. The plan also calls for the project to be designed to take advantage of future FasTracks rail transportation opportunities by incorporating Transit Oriented Development principles. This plan is in alignment with Policy 4.2

URBAN RENEWAL PLAN--CONDITIONS SURVEY (2004)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

The conditions survey was a prerequisite for preparing an Urban Renewal Plan that identifies the area including both the Flour Mill and Sugar Factory, and land in between, as an opportunity to work with property owners and provide incentives to stimulate redevelopment of those properties. This plan is also in alignment with policy 3.4 and 4.2 especially as they relate to South Main.

BUILDING GREEN PROGRAM (2005)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

The City Council reviewed recommendations from the Board of Environmental Affairs (BOA) regarding implementing a variety of techniques that would promote the use of materials that would conserve energy resulting in more efficient and sustainable living conditions for future Longmont residents. The City Council supported the use of these techniques and asked the BOA to return with incentives that would encourage a voluntary use of these techniques. This program supports Policy 3.3.

QUALITY OF LIFE BENCHMARKS (2000)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

These benchmarks are being used by our City Council as a way to monitor the impact that new development has on the City's ability to sustain its quality of life. These benchmarks and the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan's sustainable indicators are directly supportive of overall purpose of *Focus on Longmont's* fundamental purpose of arriving at performance measures that will assist in determining if the City is achieving a level of sustainability.

5 YEAR CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (ONGOING)

GENERAL COMMENTARY

The Capital Improvement Program (CIP) is an important planning and management tool used by the City to identify the needed capital infrastructure needs for the ensuing five years. The CIP provides guidance in the area of prioritization of City's capital funds necessary to implement the community's *Focus on Longmont* goals and objectives.

PERFORMANCE MEASURES

The purpose of the *Focus on Longmont* process is to develop community-supported strategic policies that, if implemented, will move the city towards a sustainable future as it approaches build-out within its planning boundaries. Since this process of strategic alignment will occur over time, it is important to establish a mechanism for tracking the city's progress towards achieving these policies. Performance measures are one of many tools to help answer the question: How do you know what you are achieving? Performance measures are usually seen as numerical measures of achievement that are easy to collect and use, and a numerical measure of the degree to which the objective is being achieved.

This approach is similar to, but at the same time quite different, from the city's existing Quality of Life Benchmark Program. The Benchmark Program monitors benchmarks in key city service areas to ensure that the impact of new growth and development does not negatively affect Longmont residents' quality of life.

Performance measures are long-term considerations. The definition of what they are and how they are measured should not change often, and they need to be measured over a long enough period of time to determine if progress is being made towards the city's strategic objectives. It is also critical that they are based on data that is easily measured; are updated on a regular basis, for comparison purposes; and are a valid measure of achievement with regard to the stated policy objective(s).

The following are a set of recommended performance measures for the city's strategic policy objectives. It is not our intent that the city would necessarily implement all of these measures, but rather would "pick and choose" and perhaps determine other measures over time that might be more appropriate. We also note that the city has recently initiated a program of Comprehensive Plan Indicators, based on recommendations contained in the city's 2004 Comprehensive Plan update. Many of the Comprehensive Plan Indicators (CPI) will be useful in tracking *Focus on Longmont* progress. In our recommendations below, we have noted where a particular CPI might be used to track the *Focus on Longmont* policy directions.

POLICY DIRECTION 1: PROMOTE A HEALTHY BUSINESS CLIMATE

1. Jobs to Resident Ratio

Maintaining an appropriate number of jobs in the community sufficient to guarantee a strong local economy in balance with the resident labor force is critical to the community's economic health. The total number of jobs for Longmont is calculated annually by DRCOG. Their estimates are tailored for the municipal boundaries and include wage and salary positions (ES202) as well as other positions such as those that are compensated on commissions, sole proprietors, non-profit employees, etc. The city has recently begun tracking this indicator as part of its CPI program.

2. Total Sales Tax Revenues

The city should continue to track total annual retail sales tax data, to determine if revenues are keeping pace with budget requirements. The city utilizes this indicator as part of its CPI program. Revenue is tracked by major sector categories.

3. Annual Net Change in the Number and Type of Jobs in the Longmont Area for Primary Employers

The Longmont Area Economic Council (LAEC) conducts surveys annually to track employment growth. The *Primary Employer Activity Report* measures the change in number of employees for every primary employer in the Longmont area. If data is available, it would also be useful to track information on business ownership (e.g., local vs. non-local). It would also be helpful to track type of jobs and wage levels (e.g., service vs. primary, higher-paying jobs). This would entail collecting additional data from that which is currently tracked by LAEC. The city utilizes this indicator as part of its CPI program.

4. Retail Leakage

In its annual survey of residents in 2005, the city addressed the issue of retail leakage (i.e., the percentage of expenditures for major purchases that residents are expending outside of the city). It would be useful to continue to poll residents on this topic on a periodic basis (perhaps every two years) to determine if the city is making progress on its goal of reducing retail leakage.

Other Potential Measures

Other potential performance measures that may be considered by the city include the following:

- *Annual Net Change in Total Square Feet of Office and Industrial Space* - as part of the city's CPI program, the annual net change in net square feet that is absorbed for primary employment is tracked annually, using data collected by LAEC.
- *Change in Non-Residential Building Space* - as part of the city's CPI program, the amount of non-residential square feet for which building permits are issued annually is tracked, based on city building permit data.
- *City Fiscal Health* – once the fiscal impact analysis modeling is complete in early 2006, it may be appropriate to establish an ongoing performance measure(s) for the city's fiscal balance.

POLICY DIRECTION 2: SUPPORT EDUCATION AS A COMMUNITY-WIDE VALUE

None recommended at this time; it would be advisable to use the first community-wide Education Summit as the starting point for identifying performance measures that might be needed.

POLICY DIRECTION 3: ENHANCE THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

1. Open Space Accessibility

The city's Quality of Life Benchmarks Program currently tracks total open space acquisitions (in acres) over time. It might be appropriate to fine-tune this aspect of the program to reflect other desired aspects of the city's strategic policy directions, such as open space accessibility (as measured by its geographic distribution throughout the city, or by measuring its accessibility to neighborhoods), and type of open space (e.g., community separator, wildlife habitat, or open space accessible to the public).

2. Annual Increase in Citywide Trail System

One of the strategic policy objectives is to achieve a citywide trail grid system. The city's recently adopted Multi-Modal Transportation Plan includes a recommended pedestrian and bicycle network. As part of the city's CPI program, the number of linear feet of primary and secondary greenways that are

constructed annually is tracked. However, in and of itself this does not address the primary issue of achieving a connected system; therefore, it might be useful to track the total miles of constructed, connected trails. One possible measure would be to calculate the total miles or trails and/or crossings that are required to be constructed to complete the system, and track the reduction in unconnected trails on an annual basis.

3. Transit Ridership

As part of the city's CPI program, annual trips on local RTD transit facilities are tracked.

POLICY DIRECTION 4: FOCUS ON DOWNTOWN

1. Percent Annual Change in Central Business District (CBD) Retail Sales

One important measure of the economic viability of the downtown area is the health of its retail businesses. The change in the total amount of retail sales (as measured in percent annual change) is tracked as part of the city's CPI program.

2. Building Permits for New Residential Dwellings

Tracking the number of new residential dwellings that are constructed in the downtown area (particularly if they are part of a mixed-use development project) would be an appropriate indicator of progress towards a mixed-use development pattern. The data should be readily available from city building permit information. As part of the CPI program, the city already tracks the number of building permits for new dwellings issued annually in established neighborhood planning areas. It may be possible to further segment this data to track new dwellings specifically within the downtown area.

Other Potential Measures

Other potential performance measures that may be considered by the city include the following:

- *Growth in Non-Retail Businesses* – one important indicator of the economic health of downtown is the number of non-retail jobs (i.e., service sector and primary jobs). As previously noted, the city does not currently track jobs by sector (see recommended performance measure 3, Policy Direction 1). If LAEC were able to collect this data for the city, it would be helpful to track it by geographic area as well as job type.

POLICY DIRECTION 5: PROMOTE A SENSE OF COMMUNITY IDENTITY AND CULTURAL INCLUSION

1. *Neighborhood Representation*

One of the strategic policy actions is to strengthen and connect neighborhood groups in the city, including outreach to Homeowner's Associations as a means of increased participation by neighborhoods in city programs and planning efforts. This presents some challenges in formulating an appropriate performance measure, since a simple tally of the total number of neighborhood groups or HOA's does not necessarily reflect degree of coverage of the city's population, or their participation. One possible measure would be to utilize the city's GIS system to delineate the areas of the city that are encompassed by an active association or group, and track the total percentage of the city's residential neighborhoods that are part of an organized group or association, that are determined by the city to be active organizations.

2. *Cultural Inclusion*

The Multicultural Plan Steering Committee and Task Forces have an ambitious annual action program; we are recommending that the city work with the task force to determine an appropriate measure of progress towards this objective.

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS

The community involvement for the *Focus on Longmont* project was intensive, innovative, ambitious and instructive. It involved two innovative methods for citizen engagement: Appreciative Inquiry and Deliberative Forums. Both of these approaches received favorable comments from the community. The Appreciative Inquiry process excelled in obtaining a high level of engagement that strengthened citizen relationships within the city. Participants in the deliberative forums were quite positive about the potential for deliberative forums to improve the ability of citizens and the city and the community to work together to address complex issues. There was near-universal agreement that these types of forums should be a continuing feature of Longmont's civic life.

The process provided several valuable lessons about how to further strengthen community involvement in the city:

- Create city/community partnerships - The relationships created by having city staff and community members work together as champions for the process and facilitators for events will continue to strengthen community involvement in the city.
- Reach out to new people – Randomly selecting people to participate in the deliberative forums brought new voices into the process.
- Personal contact yields a higher return than random invitations.



Creative community involvement will continue to strengthen how the City and community work together to solve complex issues.

- Positive one-on-one interviews create stronger relationships and help build commitment to community inclusion.
- People learn more when they engage with people from outside of their immediate circles. Phase 1 especially worked because a variety of people were involved – from City government, businesses, and neighborhoods, with a diversity of age, ethnicity, and experience.
- Adapt the approach for special populations – personally invite people to participate, provide transportation for elders, and organize Spanish-speaking tables and community conversations. Involve youth in designing activities to encourage more youth to participate. Continue intergenerational conversations.
- LARGE groups of people create a certain magic.
- Encourage people to move from the personal to the collective.

Conclusion

As previously noted in this document, the purpose of this effort is to develop community-supported strategic policies that, if implemented, will move the city towards a sustainable future as it approaches build-out within its planning boundaries. In this context, a “sustainable future” means a healthy, balanced community whose economic, environmental, and social needs are met. In order to successfully achieve this balance, all three must be addressed.

The policy directions included in this report have been formulated with these objectives in mind, as the five policy directions together address a balanced approach towards the city’s future economic, environmental, and social needs. Policy Directions 1 and 5 (Healthy Business Climate and Focus on Downtown) focus on the city’s economic needs; Policy Direction 3 focuses on the natural environment; and Policy Directions 2, 4, and 5 (Education, Downtown and *Community Identity and Cultural Inclusion*) focus on the city’s social and community needs.

The final consideration is the desire to achieve a balance between the resources and expenditures needed to sustain the city’s capacity to provide desired levels of municipal services. Early in 2006, a fiscal analysis will be completed of the city’s projected buildout to determine if revenue projections will be able to sustain the desired levels of service. Depending on the results of this analysis, the city will be in a position to “stay the course”, or adjustments may be needed to planned service levels and/or revenue sources to maintain its position. In any event, the city will need to monitor its position continually, since any such analysis is a “snapshot” of a particular point in time and will change as market and community circumstances adjust over time.



To implement this plan, the City will continue to call upon the community’s creativity and commitment to working together.