

**FORT COLLINS AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
CANDIDATE ENDORSEMENT QUESTIONNAIRE
2021 CITY OF FORT COLLINS ELECTION**

**Questionnaires are due back to ahutchison@fcchamber.org
by noon on Tuesday, February 16, 2021
Please note that all questionnaire answers
will be shared with the business community.**

Office Sought: Mayor	District: All
Name: Gerry Horak	
Home Address: 123 North Mack Street Fort Collins CO 80521	
Daytime Phone: 970-217-2993	Evening Phone: same
Email: gchorak@gmail.com	
Employment: Retired	
Length of Residence: In City: 43 years In District: Mayor lives in 6	

Please limit responses to approximately 200 words per section.

Education:	I have degrees in economics and geography (BS Towson State University), resource economics (MA Johns Hopkins University), and a Ph.D. in wildlife biology from Colorado State University.
Past and Present Community Service or Volunteer Positions Including Offices Held:	<p>I have a long history of public service. I was re-elected to the Fort Collins City Council April 2015 to represent the citizens of District 6 (northwest Fort Collins) and my term ended April 2019. In April 2013, 2015 and 2017 I was elected Mayor Pro Tem. I served as the Mayor 1984-1985, Assistant Mayor 1983-1984, and Mayor Pro Tem 1993-1994. I was elected four times to represent the citizens of northwest Fort Collins and served on the city council from 1981-1994. I provided leadership in open, responsive, accountable and fiscally responsible government.</p> <p>In 2019 I completed my service as Vice Chair on the National League of Cities Energy, Environment and Natural Resources</p>

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	<p>(EENR) Advocacy Committee and as a member of the University Communities. I am a founding steering committee member for WaterNow. I also represented the City Council on the Larimer County Open Lands Board, Platte River Power Authority, Poudre Fire Authority, North Front Range Transportation and Air Quality Planning Organization (Chair for two terms), I-25 Coalition. In 2014 Governor John Hickenlopper appointed me to the Regional Air Quality Commission and I was reappointed in 2016. I was appointed by Governor Polis to the Colorado Public Health and Environment's Small Business Advisory Committee and serves as Chair. I am a steering committee member for NOCO Housing NOW.</p>
<p>Past and Present Employment/Business Experience:</p>	<p>I have a proven track record of building businesses through business development, proposal preparation and operations. I have met payrolls, dealt with employee issues, hired thousands of employee and made profits when I managed projects. My proposal win ratio was very high and won every re-competition. For many years my focus for business development was the capture of Department of Interior contracts though I won a 350 person contract at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and managed the contract during transition. The DOI efforts resulted in awards from the U.S Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management and a technical services IDIQ contract at the USGS FORT Science Center in Fort Collins. Most of the awards were through GSA schedules. I have successfully</p>

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	<p>transitioned, managed and recruited qualified workforces of scientific, professional, IT, technical, GIS, and administrative personnel for both on-site and off-site staff. I have developed and improved businesses processes as well as ensured that operations were efficient and effective with an eye towards the bottom client (especially not exceeding budgets). I have been a consultant, Vice President, Operations Manager, Program Manager and researcher. BTW I drove Uber for three years.</p>
<p>Current Employment and Responsibilities:</p>	<p>Retired. Represent City of Fort Collins and Larimer County Commissioners representative on the Boxelder Basin Regional Stormwater Authority, serves as President.</p>
<p>Specific Qualifications for This Office:</p>	<p>See above</p>
<p>Why are you running for this office?</p>	<p>I like to help people.</p> <p>Many customers no longer tip, so the woman who cuts my hair is fearful she will not provide for her teenage sons. My friend who sits on a charitable organization's board is worried – service demands are increasing while donations are decreasing. My favorite restaurant's owner is at wit's end, having let go his co-workers except family.</p> <p>We live in challenging times. We need to help hurting families, businesses and the environment. That is why I am running.</p>
<p>What have you done to prepare for election to this office and how you</p>	<p>I have served on council for 20 years and worked in business for 45 years. I know</p>

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<p>will you conduct yourself if elected to this office? What experiences have you had that makes you qualified to serve in office?</p>	<p>how to collaborate with people to reach common goals. I know the role of the mayor: to set the respectful tone and collaborate councilmembers to make Fort Collins a better place for all. To also work with the city manager and mayor pro tem to ensure council's agenda and ensure a fair process for all. Over the past year I have spoken with over 50 people from all walks of life to learn their concerns and issues the city needs to address. I listen and learned. Folks said that people, business especially small businesses and the environment are hurting, They want to know when they will receive the vaccine and how will ensure that all in our community when eligible receive the vaccine.</p>
<p>What do you think are the top 3 economic priorities city government should undertake during the next four years? What role should the City of Fort Collins have in economic development? How will you make the economy a City budget priority?</p>	<p>Businesses especially small businesses are hurting and struggling to recover from the pandemic's effects. Many have closed their doors. I promise to partner with our small business community and primary employers to ensure they thrive and we revitalize the economy:</p> <p>Empower small business to get employees back to work by providing direct loans and grants as well as modify regulations and policies to facilitate commerce</p> <p>Retain primary employers and encourage their growth</p> <p>Build partnerships with CSU, school districts and business organizations to create more jobs</p> <p>The city partners with the private sector and</p>

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	<p>business organizations to achieve economic development. We must be an honest broker and provide information as requested and facilitate a business's understanding of the development process.</p> <p>Economic development must always be a priority. Economies evolve and we must always be looking to the future and assessing our interaction with business as well as large government institutions that drive our economy. The city's customer service at all levels must improve. We need to be helping businesses solve problems and provide options not just a no.</p> <p>The city manager and council did not take a hard look at the 2020 revised budget nor the 2021 budget. Levels of resources going to recreation centers, Lincoln Center and Senior Center were not adjusted to the reduced demands. These resources could have been used to revitalize the economy.</p> <p>Also it should not be overlooked that city run utilities are essential for most employers. Electricity and water delivery must be 99% reliable and price competitive. We meet both of those marks. City services must be top tier roads, transportation, parks, open space, etc. We want to be a place where employers and employees want to live.</p>
<p>How will you make the City of Fort Collins a more Jobs Friendly community? Are you willing to engage with business leaders to discuss these solutions? Please</p>	<p>I am always ready to meet anyone and discuss city issues. I have a demonstrated track record of doing that. I want to hold community discussions with business folks on a regular basis and learn how the city can</p>

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<p>explain how you will stay in touch with business leaders.</p>	<p>do a better job collaborating with business. I regularly attend Chamber and Realtor events. The programs are enjoyable and informative – I love to learn. Enjoyed hearing from attendees what are their issues and concerns. I have collaborated with business on I-25 and am a steering committee member for NOCO Housing NOW. Over the last year I met with many business leaders to learn of their concerns and issues.</p>
<p>What role should the City of Fort Collins have in the region? What do you believe are the top issues facing Northern Colorado in the next several years?</p>	<p>The City should be a leader in Northern Colorado. I have tried to fill that role on a number of issues including I-25, water and housing.</p> <p>Revitalizing the economy of Northern Colorado has to be number one. We need to work with other jurisdictions to facilitate that to occur. Additional funding for the express lane for I-25 is high on list. Housing affordability is on everyone’s mind. We must work with other jurisdictions, businesses and non-profits to tackle this issue. Also water cannot be neglected –development in northeast Fort Collins is hindered by current water polices. We must work for a resolution that keeps all whole.</p>
<p>Colorado will continue to grow, including our area. How should the City of Fort Collins plan for growth, if at all?</p>	<p>We should continue to plan for the development in the UGA. We have cooperatively worked with the county for 40 years thorough an intergovernmental agreement to ensure developments are built to city standards in the UGA and that properties are annexed to the city when they are contiguous to the city. We should follow city plan and update our codes to</p>

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	facilitate developments according to the plan.
<p>What are the top two issues facing city government over the next 4 years and why do you believe they are the most important?</p>	<p>The new Council will hold a retreat in May. At the retreat the council will develop a list of initiatives to be addressed over the next two year. The 2021 budget was passed in November 2020. Ann Hutchison pointed out to me that these two actions have never been blended together. So I propose that the council initiatives should become BFO offers and blended into the budget and other funded items will need to be reduced. That is called prioritization.</p> <p>We need to take a hard look at the changing economy and the effect that has on revenues. Along with that review we need to be realistic and not continue to act as we can do everything that citizens desire. We need to focus on basic services and perhaps eliminate or reduce service levels to meet priority needs. Revenues may not ever get back to pre-pandemic levels in real dollars. We need to adjust expectations as well.</p>
<p>What economic tools should the City add to their "tool box" of resources to attract key employers?</p>	<p>I can't think of any to offer. Though I can offer that we need to use the tools we have effectively and especially leverage our reliable utilities and their competitive prices. We harvest our water and our wholesaler produces our power. Thus we have direct control over our water and electricity prices and reliability.</p>
<p>What are the top three transportation improvements the City of Fort Collins should accomplish? What is your position on the Fix North I-25 effort? Why?</p>	<p>North I-25 improvements to three lanes with one a managed lane are most important. Polling I believe has shown most citizens support it. I was one of the original participants representing the city on the I-25 coalition. I worked closely with David May</p>


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	<p>to achieve our goal. I led the effort for a local match and committed the city to \$2M the first local contribution. The Vine/Lemay overpass and realignment of Vine will be built this year to alleviate the current tie-ups on Lemay and Vine. The transportation system in NE Fort Collins must be evaluated to ensure the required collectors and arterials are planned for and constructed. As part of the transportation system we need to figure out how transit is connected to NE. A Timberline overpass over the RR tracks and Vine is also needed.</p>
<p>Tell us about your understanding of water issues in Northern Colorado.</p>	<p>I am well versed in Northern Colorado water issues. In my 20 years' service I learned a tremendous amount about water and the city role in the area. Back in the 1980s I took Water Law course at CSU. A few years ago I participated in the Water Leaders course. Read a number of books on Colorado water issues and continue to learn through articles and newspapers. In the late 80s I worked with the Fort Collins Loveland Water District General Manager and board to resolve a dispute as to who should service the rapid development in southern Fort Collins. I offered a simple concept that was the basis of the resolution – folks get high quality water from each provider so whoever can serve them at lower cost should do it. For the three or so years before my council term ended in 2019 I worked with Gino Campana and staff to form a committee of the three primary water providers in Fort Collins to work on joint concerns and issues. I want to reinstitute that committee if elected.</p>
<p>What is your position on water</p>	<p>I support water storage as a component in</p>

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<p>storage in northern Colorado? Do you support the NISP project? Do you support the Halligan project? Why do you hold these positions?</p>	<p>the water system to ensure water for the city especially during droughts. I have strongly supported the Halligan Project since its inception 30 years ago. Halligan purpose is primarily drought storage and is sorely needed by Fort Collins Water Utility customers. During the many years I served on city council my greatest fear was a long term drought. Halligan is a must.</p> <p>I do not support NISP in its present form. The project will adversely alter the Cache La Poudre River above and through Fort Collins. I supported the resolution that council passed to that effect. Representing the city I testified before the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Commission that the project's mitigation plan was inadequate therefore Fort Collins cannot support NISP. Also the project has limited benefit to the city. Some of the water is allocated to the Fort Collins Loveland Water district that serves southern Fort Collins. Though my understanding is that most of the new water is for developments in Timnath.</p>
<p>Why should the members of your district support your election to office? Why should someone who is interested in a vibrant city economy vote for you?</p>	<p>Though times are tough, this year is already brighter. I promise to work with you and help vulnerable families, businesses and the environment. That's what I'm about—Getting It Done—through principled, collaborative and pragmatic leadership. The previous answers provide the context that I am ready to do the job of mayor on day one. I am shovel ready!</p>
<p>Do you have existing relationships with anyone on City Council or Staff? And how will those relationships help you serve the</p>	<p>I know the current councilmembers who will carry over to the new council. I have offered to meet with all the council candidates and have met with all who were</p>

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<p>citizens of Fort Collins.</p>	<p>interested. My creed is 'you can't make friends when you need them. To be an effective mayor, you need to meet regularly with the mayor pro tem and councilmembers to learn about their issues and concerns as well as get to know them and their interests. That is an element of an effective council which works together for the people. I also know the city manager and most of his senior staff. I know my role and how to express the council desires and more importantly make sure the process on policy is open and thoughtful</p>
<p>If business groups endorse you, is there any significant information that could come out about you during a campaign that could potentially embarrass you (and them) publicly? (ex: bankruptcy, discrimination, harassment, arrest, conviction, etc.)</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>Signature </p>	
<p>Date 2/7/2021</p>	