

**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: City Council	District: 5
Name: Kelly Ohlson	
Home Address: 2040 Bennington Circle	
Daytime Phone: 970 493-7225	Evening Phone: 970 493-7225
Email: kellyohlson@gmail.com	
Employment: Retired	
Length of Residence: In City: 45 years	In District: 41 years

Please limit responses to approximately 200 words per section.

Education:	M.Ed. Colorado State University B.S. Iowa State University
Past and Present Community Service or Volunteer Positions Including Offices Held:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor • Mayor Pro Tem (4x) • City Councilmember (3x) • Larimer County Public Trustee (3x) • Downtown Development Authority Board of Directors • Metropolitan Planning Organization • City Council Finance Committee • City Council Legislative Committee • City Council Leadership Team • City of Fort Collins Citizens Budget Com. • Poudre Fire Authority Board of Directors • Natural Resources Advisory Board • Land Conservation and Stewardship Board • Poudre Landmarks Foundation Board of Directors • Larimer County Office on Aging

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	<p>Advisory Board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDC Animal Care Committee • City Neighborhood Planning Committee • City Plan Citizens Committee (original) • Parks and Recreation Master Plan Committee • City Council liaison to Senior Advisory Board, Commission on Disabilities, Land Conservation and Stewardship Board, Parks and Recreation Board, Building Review Board, Zoning Board of Appeals • A leader of 8 natural areas and open spaces campaigns helping protect approximately 75,000 acres for future generations of wildlife and people
<p>Past and Present Employment/Business Experience:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public School Teacher (tenured) • Historic Building Renovation (14 projects) • Retail (The Cupboard, B. Dalton Bookseller) • Larimer County Public Trustee • Balancing 12 years of city budgets • Working on numerous business projects while on city council.
<p>Current Employment and Responsibilities:</p>	<p>None</p>
<p>Specific Qualifications for This Office:</p>	<p>With decades of intense community involvement and public service as delineated above (#'s 2 & 3), I will bring hard work, experience, collaboration and empathy. I will listen to, meet with, and seriously consider all</p>

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	<p>proposals, and ideas presented to me by individuals and organizations, including the Chamber of Commerce. I take the responsibility of governing seriously, while finding joy in the privilege of serving the people of Fort Collins.</p>
<p>Why are you running for this office?</p>	<p>I am running to serve the people, neighborhoods, businesses and organizations of the Fort Collins community. Depending on the outcome of the various races in April, we will have one of the least experienced city councils ever (as far as city governance is concerned). I will bring a great deal of experience to assist the council and community in achieving their goals for the benefit of Fort Collins. I am pragmatic and empathetic. I govern with my head and my heart—and I make decisions not only based on today, but for our shared future, as well.</p>
<p>What have you done to prepare for election to this office and how you will you conduct yourself if elected to this office? What experiences have you had that makes you qualified to serve in office?</p>	<p>Again, please refer to #'s 2 and 3 above. Having served as the city council member for District 5 for eight years, I am very familiar with its people, businesses, and neighborhoods. I also understand how the city organization works—and how it doesn't work (sometimes). My conduct in office will primarily be as a listener, and as a resource with an historical perspective. Process will also be very important to me. Proper vetting and timelines, with no mysteries of content or motive are also important. Not too fast—not too slow. (We need to get the porridge just right). As we move through COVID recovery, it will take several years to find a new normal. I'm hopeful that the new normal will be an even stronger community than before. But, it will</p>

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	<p>be different. We need all cooks in the stew. No individual, elected body or organization has all the answers. We need to talk, meet, seriously listen, collaborate and act. That is how I will operate.</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>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Business and employee recovery from COVID 2. Business incubation, retention, and expansion 3. Improved outcomes on workforce skill sets and talent retention <p>The City’s role should be to continue to implement and improve upon, its economic plan and be a good partner with business, locally and regionally. The economy is a priority in the City budget, but I will seriously consider recommendations for specific improvements.</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 explain how you will stay in touch with business leaders.</p>	<p>Governmental entities and private sector interests need to put more emphasis on the education, training and skill set necessary for businesses to be successful. I was also part of city councils that created the <i>Innosphere</i> (now, <i>Innosphere Venture</i>), and facilitated the relationship with <i>EnergyLab</i> (now <i>CSU Energy Institute</i>). We also refined and improved industry clusters, increased city budgets related to economic health and job creation, adopted the most comprehensive economic action plan in the City’s history, increased services to businesses, streamlined the development review process and assisted numerous economic develop and jobs projects such as <i>Intel</i>, <i>AMD</i>, <i>Valley Steel</i>, <i>Custom Blending</i>, <i>Front Range Village</i>, and <i>Kaufman & Robinson</i>. Yes, I will engage with business interests to discuss solutions whenever and</p>

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	<p>in any appropriate way you so desire. I welcome and need your help to be as effective as possible. I will stay in touch by giving you the best number to reach me (970) 493-7225 and my private email: kellyohlson@gmail.com. Please stay in touch.</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 of Fort Collis should have a strong leadership role in the region, not because we are the largest, but because we have more financial and human resources to assist the region in addressing what shared interests and vision we may have. The top issues facing Northern Colorado in the next several years are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • COVID recovery in all forms; especially economic • Transportation; figuring out the complex issues of prioritization and funding • Water—this will always be a significant issue
<p>Colorado will continue to grow, including our area. How should the City of Fort Collins plan for growth, if at all?</p>	<p>You sure ask all the easy questions. It has been a major topic of discussion and debate since I arrived in 1973. Yes, the City should plan for growth, as flawed as those plans may be. There are practical infrastructure questions that must be planned for such as electrical power, digital infrastructure, water, storm water, wastewater, transportation, and more. These are complicated issues, even before individual values, philosophies and interests come into play.</p>
<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>What is this? A semester take-home, final exam?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. COVID Recovery—in all its forms:

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	<p>to get to the new normal that, hopefully, will be better than pre-COVID.</p> <p>2. The City’s finances and budget (citizens’ money). We will be better off than most communities for a variety of reasons, but we should take these challenging times and reassess our budget projections, priorities, and spending—something that should not take a crisis to do.</p>
<p>What economic tools should the City add to their "tool box" of resources to attract key employers?</p>	<p>Unless the City eliminated them, when I was on council (not that long ago), we added an entire workbench of economic tools—some of which I mentioned in questions #9. One that I think is often overlooked is the human element. Don’t just go to the planning process (which we also dramatically improved) and the financial aspects, but also to the human elements. Let them know they are wanted and welcome and that we are a great community for them to prosper. I am also open to learning from you about what other tools we have yet to acquire.</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>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue to engage in the completion of the I-25 Project 2. Lemay/Vine Intersection 3. Finally- please Fort Collins, decide on your approach to bus transit (whatever it is) and implement it in a financially responsible and timely manner. <p>My position on the Fix North 1-25 effort is to complete it in a timely, environmental, and fiscally responsible manner.</p>

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<p>Tell us about your understanding of water issues in Northern Colorado.</p>	<p>My understanding of water issues is quite strong based on following water issues for many years and being in 12 years of legal executive sessions, as a city council member, dealing with almost every conceivable issue that concerns water in this area. Unfortunately, Mark Twain appears to be correct, “Whiskey’s for drinkin’, water’s for fighten’.”</p>
<p>What is your position on water storage in northern Colorado? Do you support the NISP project? Do you support the Halligan project? Why do you hold these positions?</p>	<p>My position on water storage in Northern Colorado is that we should provide appropriate storage in an environmentally and financially responsible manner, while keeping an eye on who benefits and who pays.</p> <p>No to NISP: NISP is an absurdly expensive, overbuilt, and environmentally devastating project. We cannot continue draining more of the water from our rivers during June Rise--this severely damages and changes our riparian ecosystems. It also destroys an ecologically significant and beautiful valley.</p> <p>Yes to Halligan: Halligan, on the other hand, is a correctly-sized expansion to provide for final build-out of the utility delivery area. It is also for emergencies such as fires, infrastructure failures and repairs and drought.</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>The voters of my district should support me because they know me and I represented them well between 2005-2013. I work very hard, I meet with anyone and listen carefully to all viewpoints. I take the job seriously, but my joy in having the privilege of serving them shines through. They can</p>

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	<p>have my home phone number and they like that.</p> <p>People that are interested in a vibrant economy should vote for me because (see questions #8,9, 10, 11, 13, 14) I had a 20 point economic plan when I ran before. I believe all of it was implemented. I also served on the <i>Downtown Development Authority</i> for 6 years, received the 25th Anniversary Founder’s Award for brokering the creation of the <i>Convention and Visitor’s Bureau</i>, (now <i>Visit Fort Collins</i>). I was also part of the city council in the 1980’s that annexed the land for Anheuser Busch, and also passed the now-famous, original <i>Old Town Project</i>.</p>
<p>Do you have existing relationships with anyone on City Council or Staff? And how will those relationships help you serve the citizens of Fort Collins.</p>	<p>I have cordial, casual relationships with most of the current council members. I have the longest, strongest relationships with Wade and Ross (both term-limited). I know many members of city management and staff because of my years of involvement. Those relationships will benefit the citizens of Fort Collins as I work with management and staff because I have established a reputation for hard work, fairness, integrity, clarity, humor, and yes, critical questioning of proposals and specifics when necessary.</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 <i>Kelly Ohlson</i></p>	
<p>Date 2-15-2021</p>	

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