

**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: Fort Collins City Council	District: 4
Name: Melanie Potyondy	
Home Address: 2813 Michener Dr, Fort Collins, CO 80526	
Daytime Phone: 970-231-3576	Evening Phone: 970-231-3576
Email: melanieforfoco@gmail.com	
Employment: School psychologist, Poudre School District	
Length of Residence In City: ~11 years, In District: 5 years, 8 months	

Please limit responses to approximately 200 words per section.

Education:	-B.S. Psychology -Ph.D. School Psychology -Doctoral Minor, Statistics
Past and Present Community Service or Volunteer Positions Including Offices Held:	-Fort Collins Urban Renewal Authority: Board Member -Fort Collins Youth Advisory Board: Council Liaison -Colorado Society of School Psychologists: Regional Representative on Board -Poudre Education Association: Representative, Negotiations Team Member -Colorado Education Association: Ambassador Fellow -Colorado Department of Education: Mental Health Advisory Committee Member -Fort Collins Women's Commission: Member -Rocky Mountain High School: Club Sponsor
Past and Present Employment/Business Experience:	-Fort Collins City Council: District 4 Councilmember -Poudre School District:

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	<p>School Psychologist -Saint Vrain Valley School District: School Psychologist -Thompson School District: School Psychologist</p>
<p>Current Employment and Responsibilities:</p>	<p>-School Psychologist, Rocky Mountain High School: complete school psychologist duties for a school of 2,000+ students in 9th through 12th grade; work collaboratively with team of 12 special education teachers; complete cognitive and social-emotional assessments and creative comprehensive psychoeducational evaluations; consult with teachers re: behavioral concerns and recommend interventions; co-teach social-emotional learning class for students with emotional/behavioral disabilities; provide individual and group counseling services to students; assess students for safety risk to self and/or others; serve on school crisis team; mentor early career school psychologists; supervise graduate students in school psychology; co-facilitate school ukulele club; serve as building representative for Poudre Education Association</p> <p>-Fort Collins City Councilmember: represent residents of Fort Collins' District 4 on City Council; participate in weekly Council meeting and work sessions; interface with City staff and residents re: needs and current affairs; hold community listening sessions with constituents; serve on Urban Renewal Authority (UAR) Board; serve as liaison to Youth Advisory Board, member of Poudre River Library District Trustee Selection Committee, and member</p>

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	of Council Futures Committee
Specific Qualifications for This Office:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interim City Councilwoman for Fort Collins District 4 -Resident of Fort Collins summer 1998-summer 2003 and summer 2015-present -Parent of 4-year-old and 9-year old children, including one enrolled in Poudre School District -Knowledge of and experience responding to Fort Collins mental health concerns -Knowledge of and experience working with Poudre School District leadership, staff, families, and students -Volunteer involvement in various City government activities (e.g., City Works 101, Women’s Commission, Super Issues meetings) and campaigns -Patron of and advocate for small and local businesses
Why are you running for this office?	As a parent, public educator, mental health professional, and volunteer, I am fully invested in serving and bettering this community to ensure long-term livability for all. I value social, economic, and environmental sustainability and believe that, through thoughtful decision-making by Council and other invested stakeholders, we can enhance equity of access for our wide-ranging population now and moving into the future.
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?	To secure appointment to the District 4 seat, I completed a written application, met individually with all councilmembers and the mayor, secured 14+ letters of recommendation from community leaders (including state representatives, county commissioners, school board members, and union presidents), collected citizen support

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	<p>via email, organized 30+ public commenters to speak during Council meetings, and participated in a public interview.</p> <p>For the April 2021 municipal election, I have engaged in phone and video conferences with local elected officials, small business owners, community leaders, and residents to gauge their opinions and needs. I have raised a significant amount of funding for the campaign via events and phone calls. I will be spreading my message through yard signs, targeted literature drops, phone banking, and Zoom networking events.</p> <p>Experiences that have prepared me for success in public office include having worked with my state representative on legislation, participation and/or leadership on various local and state-level boards and committees, and participation in numerous local and state-level elections. I am also a seasoned public speaker, competent writer, compassionate collaborator, data-based decision-maker, and excellent communicator with a variety of audiences.</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>Top economic priorities:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. COVID Recovery 2. Small and locally-owned business support 3. Diversification of the job market <p>I believe the City of Fort Collins, in its planning and zoning decisions, should consider creative opportunities for employers of all sizes and budgets to</p>

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	<p>establish themselves in our City. I also believe it would behoove the City to provide or partner in the provision of programs to train aspiring business-owners, including women and people of color; to highlight basics of business and economics; and to assist as possible with start-up costs and procedures. Finally, I believe the City should consistently engage in promotional activities encouraging shopping local, to retain jobs and revenue in our community.</p> <p>The City’s triple-bottom-line process is well-suited to considering economic implications in decision-making. As policies and procedures are developed and vetted, the economic impacts should always be part of the discussion, along with social and environmental factors.</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>I am highly invested in expanding our employment options in Fort Collins, especially in the skilled trades. Increased access to high school vocational programs, support for community college certificates, and apprenticeship options might enhance growth in this often well-paying employment sector.</p> <p>I am absolutely willing to engage with business leaders and, as a Councilmember, will make myself available 1:1 or in small-group meetings as requested and appropriate. I will be transparent in my decision-making on Council and open to information from all applicable stakeholders, including individuals and agencies in the business community.</p>
<p>What role should the City of Fort</p>	<p>I believe Fort Collins is a hub in Northern</p>

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<p>Collins have in the region? What do you believe are the top issues facing Northern Colorado in the next several years?</p>	<p>Colorado. People regularly travel to our City to shop, recreate, and dine out, and we need to embrace and foster that trend. I believe we must continue to enhance and support our small business community while making efforts to attract larger-scale businesses that fit our City’s values and specific consumer needs.</p> <p>Top issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Affordable/achievable housing 2. Long-term livability 3. Environmental sustainability
<p>Colorado will continue to grow, including our area. How should the City of Fort Collins plan for growth, if at all?</p>	<p>I am keenly interested in the prospect of redevelopment for affordable/achievable housing, especially in areas of the City that have easy access to business/jobs, schools, and public transportation. With reference to new development, I believe the City should be forthright in pursuing and incentivizing construction of the types and price points of homes we are lacking, vs. more housing in general. Finally, for new development, I believe a closer look at the benefits of mixed-use developments is warranted, as close proximity of residential and commercial spaces aligns with our climate action goals and our desire to increase equity and access.</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>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Growth: Fort Collins is projected to grow to capacity within the boundaries of the GMA in the coming decades. It is important for the City to be actively involved in guiding this process over time, to ensure that the housing, transportation, employment, and recreational decisions made meet

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	<p>the needs of all community members and the long-term goals of the City with regard to equity, environmental stewardship, and economic sustainability.</p> <p>2. Retaining community character: As Fort Collins grows and changes, leaders must be strategic in maintaining the facets of our community that are unique and valued by citizens. Specifically, I am invested in supporting and expanding small and locally-owned businesses, retaining the charm of Old Town through measures to ensure affordability, striking a balance between the needs of renters and homeowners to enhance neighborhood satisfaction, and being sure our ratio of development to open space/natural areas is one that preserves both recreational opportunities and environmental assets.</p>
<p>What economic tools should the City add to their "tool box" of resources to attract key employers?</p>	<p>I believe the City needs to take steps to ensure that employers and employees of a variety of income levels can afford housing in our community. I also believe the City should partner with other government and community agencies to expand and/or enhance job training, placement, and coaching programs for job sectors that are currently deficient (e.g., skilled trades). Finally, I believe Fort Collins should focus on equity and representation across City programs and functions, including measures to promote and support woman and minority-owned businesses.</p>

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<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>I am invested in Fort Collins expanding our dedicated bus routes (e.g., MAX) to key east/west corridors, such as West Elizabeth Street and East Harmony, as well as continued emphasis upon alternative travel means (e.g., biking, e-bikes, ride-sharing) that help us progress toward carbon neutrality. With reference to I-25 improvements, I recognize serious issues with congestion and safety and realize the need for remediation. Ideally, however, I would like to shift the focus away from widening the Interstate and toward municipal transit options.</p>
<p>Tell us about your understanding of water issues in Northern Colorado.</p>	<p>Smart planning around water use, retention, infrastructure, and rights acquisition and maintenance are key to both sustaining our community and further developing it. Our City water rights currently provide high quality and affordable water to most homes in the GMA, whereas outlying areas are served by other water districts whose development fees are generally more expensive. I support the City’s prudence in planning for worst case scenarios concerning water availability (e.g., drought years), as well as their desire to expand the Halligan Reservoir.</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>As mentioned, I support the Halligan Project. By expanding an existing reservoir, we will be able to minimize environmental impacts while enhancing our water storage options for the City of Fort Collins. I am not in support NISP, however. The bulk of water stored in the proposed NISP site will not be used by residents within the Fort Collins GMA and transport of water from the storage site to recipient municipalities</p>

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	stands to negatively impact Fort Collins natural areas, as well as decrease the flow rate of the Poudre River during peak runoff months.
<p>Why should the members of your district support your election to office?</p> <p>Why should someone who is interested in a vibrant city economy vote for you?</p>	<p>As a public educator, local volunteer, and mother to two young children, I have a keen understanding of current strengths and needs within our community. I also have a long-term interest in making smart decisions to leave an enduring positive legacy for upcoming generations. I am a strong listener and communicator, a data-based and collaborative problem-solver, and a hard-working and responsible individual.</p> <p>Fort Collins residents who are interested in a vibrant economy should vote for me because I know the health of our economy—being sure all residents of Fort Collins can gain well-paying jobs and access the goods and services they need—is critical to quality of life. Especially with reference to small and locally-owned businesses, I am invested in supporting smart strategies for economic enhancement.</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 currently work with Mayor Troxell and City Councilmembers as the interim Councilmember in District 4. I am an excellent listener and strong communicator who is able to compromise. On Council, I will hear and validate the experiences and opinions of my colleagues, while staying true to my perspectives and values as appropriate, in order to make just, balanced, and forward-thinking decisions that help our community thrive.</p>
<p>If business groups endorse you, is there any significant information</p>	<p>N/A</p>

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that could come out about you during a campaign that could potentially embarrass you (and them) publicly? (ex: bankruptcy, discrimination, harassment, arrest, conviction, etc.)	
Signature: <i>Melanie Petyondy</i>	
Date: 2/13/2021	