

**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: 1
Name: Nick Armstrong	
Home Address: 2238 Ballard Lane, Fort Collins, CO 80524	
Daytime Phone: 970-581-3036	Evening Phone: 970-581-3036
Email: Nick@NickForFoCo.com	
Employment: Geek-in-Chief at WTF Marketing, Lead Organizer FoCo StartUp Week, Fort Collins Comic Con	
Length of Residence: In City: 18 years In District: 13 years	

Please limit responses to approximately 200 words per section.

Education:	BS in Marketing, CIS + Media Studies minor (CSU 2007)
Past and Present Community Service or Volunteer Positions Including Offices Held:	Lead Organizer, Fort Collins Comic Con Lead Organizer, Fort Collins Startup Week Executive Director, Howdy Neighbor Events Director, Boxelder Sanitation District Board President, Maple Hill HOA FBLA/DECA/SKILLSUSA/TSA/PSD Futures Lab volunteer judge
Past and Present Employment/Business Experience:	Geek-in-Chief @ WTF Marketing Production Director @ KCSU Analyst @ HP
Current Employment and Responsibilities:	Geek-in-Chief @ WTF Marketing Lead Organizer, Fort Collins Comic Con Lead Organizer, Fort Collins Startup Week Executive Director, Howdy Neighbor Events Director, Boxelder Sanitation District Board President, Maple Hill HOA
Specific Qualifications for This Office:	Most of my adult life, I've focused on connecting diverse, representative communities to accomplish big goals in Fort Collins. From raising \$120,000

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	<p>for the Poudre River Public Library District through Fort Collins Comic Con to bringing the City’s leaders of economic, non-profit, and small business engines together to provide peer-to-peer resources through Fort Collins Startup Week to over 1,000 local business owners, to a \$25,000 neighborhood grant that supported local artists and facilitated the creation of a 190’ mural on the Richards Lake underpass, connecting neighbors, businesses, governments, and organizations together to inspire change is what I do.</p>
<p>Why are you running for this office?</p>	<p>We can work together for a brighter future for Fort Collins, making sure our neighborhoods are more walkable and usable, ensuring responsible development is paired with responsible infrastructure, collaborating creatively on the complex, but solvable affordable housing crisis, steward the success of our local economy by supporting both traditional businesses and creative businesses, create a truly visionary next-generation gig-speed-powered economy through smart partnerships and skilled/vocational training programs through CSU, FRCC, PSD, and local businesses, and expanding common-sense efforts to conserve our natural resources for generations to come.</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>As a newbie entrepreneur, I borrowed \$72 to start a MeetUp group and offered \$1 digital literacy classes, donating the proceeds to the foodbank, teaching in the basement of the Cherry street Dazbog. As word spread, I took on teaching at the SBDC and LBDC. I expanded my efforts to Skillshare and stand-alone courses, empowering over 13,000 entrepreneurs with my classes to date. Paula, Communications Director from the Library, was one of those students, and gave me a chance to do marketing for the Library District. When they lost a key component of their fundraising</p>

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	<p>mechanism for the Book Sale, I pitched Fort Collins Comic Con, which has to date raised \$120K for their childrens’ literacy efforts. None of this occurred in a vaccum; the community had my back while I forged teams and learned to scale my efforts. My team had my back to succeed, and together, we had the community’s back to solve difficult problems. I have a demonstrated track record of inclusive, representative leadership and teambuilding, solving problems</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>Infrastructure + making neighborhoods walkable. This is a dire economic, environmental, and equity initiative. Most neighborhoods in District 1 and on the edges of the City have similar issues: they are not connected to the rest of Fort Collins by way of sidewalks, bike lanes, or trails. As a result the quality of life for our neighbors is significantly impaired and they spend more of their disposable income on commute-related expenses, leaving less time and money for shopping, living, and playing.</p> <p>We have book, food, park, and service deserts which must be addressed cohesively utilizing partnerships with local businesses and non-profits and neighborhood HOAs to fill in gaps. The homelessness crisis must be similarly solved with a 360* support structure including local businesses, non-profits, service providers, and neighbors.</p> <p>In terms of affordable housing: one of the key ways we can bolster the local economy and ease this crisis beyond walkable neighborhoods is to create a direct partnership between local employers, CSU, FRCC, and PSD’s Futures Lab to create a books-to-bootstraps skilled labor/vocational training and job placement program which includes energy service providers</p>

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	<p>as well – creating a truly visionary local economy built around energy transition, environmental stewardship, and gig-speed creative endeavors that support talent retention for all industries and supports the City’s infrastructure needs.</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’m the leader of Fort Collins Startup Week and Fort Collins Comic Con – local business leaders are a key part of that effort. I’m a member of the Chamber. I regularly visit with local business leaders, event organizers, artists, creatives, etc. I meet weekly with local business, educational, and service leaders as well as the City and County with regard to COVID recovery.</p> <p>Siloization is the enemy of collaborative problem solving – so yes, I will relentlessly engage with local business leaders, non-profits, creatives, educators, you name it. I want the smartest minds in the room when we solve problems.</p> <p>Ultimately: we need to bolster the local economy by making talent acquisition and retention much easier – neighborhoods must be walkable/usable, which means jobs closer to home, or at home (thanks to Connexion), and jobs that are able to be reached by bike.</p> <p>The cost of living needs to be offset with the ability to increase wages or increase efficiency, and employers need the ability to truly engage across the board with service providers (including early childhood care and education) to provide solutions for employees and reduce turnover and healthcare costs.</p>
<p>What role should the City of Fort Collins have in the region? What do you believe are the top issues</p>	<p>Fort Collins is the 4th largest city in Colorado without a commensurate voice on the State-level stage. We’re constantly lauded as “the best place to live” – but many cannot afford to live or move</p>

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<p>facing Northern Colorado in the next several years?</p>	<p>here, enter the cusp of homelessness, and/or find their creative endeavors or business struggling for lack of systemic support. We could be the BEST place to start a business, the best place to raise a family, the best place to create the next best piece of art, the best place to see an off-broadway show...you name it. We can do it – but it requires teamwork and visionary effort.</p> <p>Infrastructure. Infrastructure is the #1 issue that will drive everything else: economy, environment, equity, and livability. Sidewalks, bike lanes, paths, connectivity between neighborhoods that are fully utilized (no book, park, service, or food deserts!)</p> <p>FoCo can truly have a next-generation economy empowered by our municipal gig-speed network for creatives and traditional businesses alike – services and manufacturing tracks can be created to provide end-to-end job training and placement with local employers.</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>Truly cohesive partnerships with large regional employers, community-builders (developers), businesses both creative and traditional, Business Improvement Districts, neighborhoods/HOAs, Metro Districts, the City, and the County are the only way to ensure that we will have both the infrastructure and service-area coverage necessary to support that growth.</p> <p>Low-hanging fruit improvements that scale will foster an immediate improvement in quality of life and reduction in the cost of living in Fort Collins.</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>Infrastructure development. Wide areas with no alternative to car travel have a deleterious effect on the quality of life in all of our neighborhoods, but most importantly: a huge impact on the economic viability of small businesses without</p>

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	<p>access to storefront parking or a delivery service, environmental health, and equity. Mulberry Annexation has the opportunity to be a major economic hub (think: regional convention center).</p> <p>Economic development – survival of creative/craft-based businesses, talent retention + acquisition for local businesses and organizations as it relates to livability and affordable housing. Education opportunities and economic resiliency for everyone from the front-line workers to the CEOs is going to be a foremost concern as the energy economy shifts.</p>
<p>What economic tools should the City add to their "tool box" of resources to attract key employers?</p>	<p>First: let’s bolster the key employers we have. Those employers need to be supported to expand and incentivized to spin off. Look at OtterBox -> NerdyMind. They also need to be recognized – the City, PSD, UnitedWay, Kroger, ARC, A-B, CSU, Woodward, Madwire, and HP are all huge players in this space. But also: Allen, Poudre Valley Heating + Air, etc...</p> <p>Second: we need (I’m gonna say it again) INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS that make our neighborhoods truly walkable, affordable, and livable. Sidewalks, bike lanes, and paths were a major initiative of HP’s employees-turned-civic-council. Let’s ping those folks above to try to start solving these problems and connecting our communities. You cannot recruit talent to a non-walkable/non-usable neighborhood.</p> <p>Third: art, culture, and sales tax-generating tourism are all closely related. We need an adaptable multi-purpose convention center to pull event revenue back away from The Ranch/Embassy Suites and back to Fort Collins proper.</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>Roads. Sidewalks. Bike Lanes. Without these, small mainstreet businesses are toast. Connectivity between neighborhoods increases the ability of workers to bike safely to their jobs most of the year AND to allow their kiddos to get safely to school without having to use the car to do it (very important for households at or below AMI with only one car).</p>
<p>Tell us about your understanding of water issues in Northern Colorado.</p>	<p>I'm a quick learner, but from my experience working with the City to build out Crescent Park, water was the key issue and delay for the whole project. The City had to work with ELCO to establish a brand new lateral to irrigate the park, and our HOA also partnered to provide shoulder-season water for the pond. Our neighborhood has access to well water, and for non-potable water, this is an interesting but rare resource.</p> <p>Proactive action is required to ensure we have sufficient water to meet the needs of all current and future residents – and that we're not shooting ourselves in the foot to artificially limit growth.</p> <p>There is significant low-hanging fruit in terms of partnerships between water utilities to enable conservation and xeriscape rebates for customers inside city limits but not on city utilities.</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>This is an area I would like some training on from people who are smarter than I am. In general I understand the need for water warehousing and agree that adding resiliency is a smart long-term play.</p> <p>My foremost concern with both projects: what are the long-term consequences of both of these projects, both good and bad?</p>

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	<p>The backing of the Army Corps + CO Parks + Wildlife, etc. give me some faith that this can be done well.</p> <p>Diverting rivers does tend to have short-term ecological effects, especially in dry years if partners aren't meeting their commitments or if things don't go as planned – I want to understand the externalities as well.</p> <p>I don't know enough about either project's long-term consequences or externalities yet, but as I said I'm a quick learner and would love to hear more.</p>
<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>I know how to solve tricky, long-lasting problems through creative, community-based collaboration. I will work to bring more creative, community-driven, teamwork-based solutions to the table than any City Councilperson before me, allowing us to truly find pragmatic, workable solutions to the tricky, long-lasting issues in our city. Fort Collins deserves a visionary future, and as an expert in forming cohesive, diverse, and representative communities, I will help bring fresh, vibrant resources to the table that had not previously been accessible from neighbors, HOAs, community partners, businesses, non-profits, service providers, the City, and the County. We can create a brighter future for our City, together.</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>Yes, from Wendy S. at City Utilities and Shannon Hein in the EHO and Marcy Yoder at Neighborhood Services, to a good working relationship with Darin Atteberry and Wade Troxell, across the board I have earned the respect of many of the folks I've had the opportunity to speak to about issues in Fort Collins.</p>
<p>If business groups endorse</p>	<p>I occasionally dress up in a blow-up dinosaur suit</p>

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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.)	and scare my own children: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E_opU_EiqK4
Signature Nick Armstrong	
Date 2/16/2021	