



CENTER FOR PUBLIC DELIBERATION
COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

Hughes Civic Assembly Community Guides Summary Report

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Executive Summary

This report synthesizes the comments from members of the Fort Collins community who engaged in Community Guides conversations about the former Hughes Stadium Sites between February 12, 2025 and March 5, 2025. In total, 22 Community Guides representing diverse community interests led conversations with community members across Fort Collins to discuss local opinions about how the former Hughes Stadium site should be used. Conversations were designed to solicit a broad range of perspectives on the issue. From those conversations, 267 community members provided written feedback, either through surveys they completed on their own or with the help of their Community Guide.

Community members identified several values that they hope delegates consider during their deliberations, including:

- Accessibility
- Access to nature
- Affordability and economic impact
- Community
- Education
- Environmental sustainability
- Health
- Inclusion
- Native rights
- Preservation
- Safety

In addition, community members proposed ways to use the site, describing the benefits of their preferred proposals as well as their concerns about alternative proposals. They also offered suggestions for information delegates might consult when considering how to use the site. Seven primary uses emerged. We describe them in alphabetical order below.

- A **Bike park** that would include skills features and trails and allow community members to practice and develop bike skills.
- A focus on **Environmental and Agricultural Sustainability** through the addition of solar panels, community gardens, or sustainable urban agriculture
- **Indigenous Stewardship** of the land and a space for Native communities to conduct cultural ceremonies, public gatherings, and educational opportunities
- A **Mixed Use** space that would combine elements from other proposals, generally focusing on either low-impact uses or outdoor recreation and educational experiences
- The restoration of the site as a **Natural Space**, either by allowing the area to rewild or through restoration of native habitats and the development of low-impact trails
- A **Trails** system that would provide opportunities for walking, running, and/or cross-country skiing and allow residents to interact with nature
- A space for **Wildlife Rehabilitation**, with the potential to establish a Nature and Wildlife Campus and a partnership with the Raptor Center

Community Guides Program Overview

Since 2017, the Center for Public Deliberation (CPD) has worked with the City of Fort Collins and community partners to develop and implement Community Guides. The program was designed to create meaningful and inclusive opportunities for local residents to influence public policy.

In January 2025, community members were invited to apply to be a Community Guide, either as a representative of a local non-profit, cultural, or community organization or as an emerging leader representing historically excluded communities. Next, they took part in a two-part, two hour workshop led by the CPD where they honed their skills for hosting and facilitating community conversations. After that training, Guides conducted conversations in their trusted communities, during which they collected data about residents' goals for the former Hughes Stadium site as well as their concerns about potential uses.

The program seeks to address barriers to engagement and act as a bridge to residents who typically do not have a voice in public decision making or who may otherwise feel uncomfortable or be unable to participate through traditional engagement methods. Guides who joined the program represented a variety of communities and groups across the city:

- BIPOC communities
- Business communities
- CSU students
- Cyclists
- Environmental advocates
- Local artists
- Local non-profits
- Native communities
- Open space advocates
- Preservationists
- PRIDE groups
- Residents in the neighborhoods near the site
- Runners
- Seniors
- Wildlife rehabilitation groups
- Youth activity groups

In addition to the training workshops, Community Guides were provided with the following resources:

- A workbook to help them plan and organize their meetings
- Access to interpretation and Spanish-language materials
- Logistical assistance for hosting their meetings
- A \$50 hospitality stipend to assist with food, meeting costs, or accommodations
- An optional stipend for their time spent preparing for and hosting their Conversations

Community Guides hosted conversations throughout the City of Fort Collins. Generally, these were small group conversations with members of similar communities, though on occasion these were conducted in a one-on-one setting. When acting as facilitators, Guides were instructed to remain impartial during the conversations and allow their participants to share their own opinions about the future of the Hughes Site. Guides used five main questions designed by

the Center for Public Deliberation in collaboration with the City of Fort Collins and Healthy Democracy to encourage participants to share their perspectives with one another.

1. Given the constraints provided by the ballot measure, what values or goals should guide our decision on how to use the land?
2. What uses of the former Hughes Site would most benefit our local community?
3. What are some concerns you have about the future of the Hughes Site?
4. What community members, groups, or organizations can offer helpful information to Civic Assembly delegates as they consider the future of the Hughes Site?
5. If you could share one thing with the Civic Assembly delegates about the former Hughes Site, what would it be?

Methodology

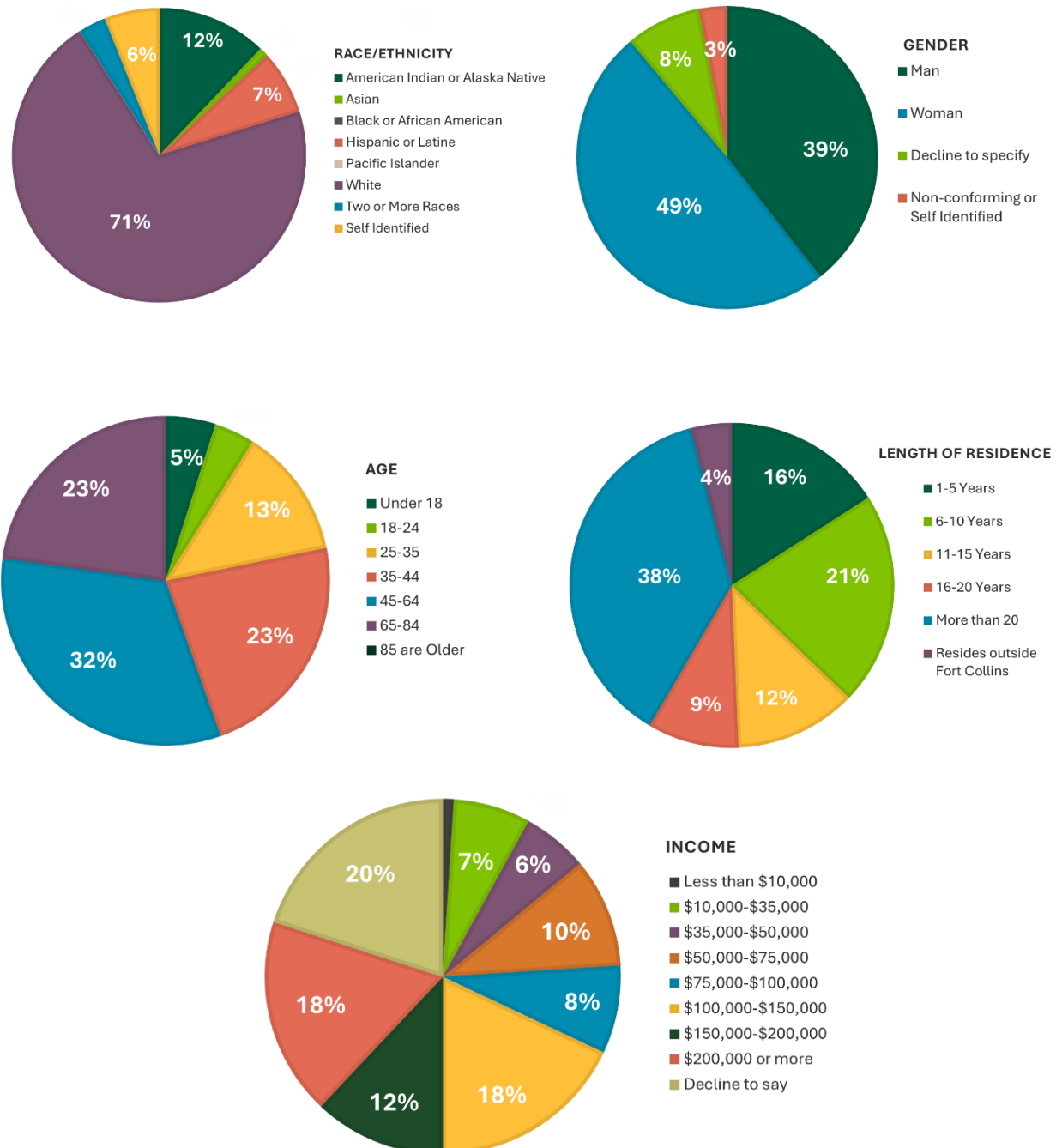
The data in this report was collected during conversations hosted by 22 Community Guides conducted between February 12, 2025 and March 5, 2025. The resulting dataset includes 242 surveys and a notes document written by a Guide during a conversation with 25 individuals from the Native Community. After data entry, each comment was thematically coded by a team of researchers at the CPD, who reviewed themes across questions and respondents. At least two coders completed an initial, grounded analysis of every response, working to identify the primary themes as they were expressed by respondents. A second round of coding was used to synthesize themes across the data, with a particular focus on the values that emerged and the discrete proposals suggested by community members. At this point, members of the research team began to create memos for each primary theme, working to define the theme and identify relevant uses, benefits, concerns, and information needs. A final round of coding was conducted based on those values and proposals identified in the previous stage. Researchers read back through the data, analyzing it in relation to the proposals and values with which it aligned and identifying information and examples that would help members of the Information Committee and Assembly Delegates understand distinct perspectives.

Rather than attempting to quantify the data, this analysis aimed to identify the diversity of perspectives that exist in the community. Though we attempt to identify common trends emerging under each distinct proposal, we do not offer measures of how many participants supported each proposal. This method acknowledges that some communities may have more robust organizing structures and less barriers to engagement and thus may be able to more easily recruit participants into their conversations. In the sections below, we list the findings alphabetically rather than by their prevalence in the data.

Participant Demographics

At the end of the survey, participants provided demographic information. The charts below offer a visualization of primary demographic characteristics. Though these are reflective of the

responses provided on the survey, participants at times chose not to provide demographic information. Of particular note, the demographic information of individuals who participated in the Native community conversation are only reflected in the graphic depicting race and ethnicity as we did not have individual level data for participants. Even so, the Guide noted that the, “youngest was born in 2019, oldest was 1949,” and the “education ranged from elementary education to Juris Doctorate.”



Values

The opening question asked residents to describe the goals or values that they hoped delegates would consider in their decision making. Below, we provide a summary of the primary values identified by participants. Values are listed in alphabetical order.

- **Accessibility:** Residents often expressed a desire for the site to be accessible by a broad cross section of the community, with attention paid to barriers that might be faced by people with disabilities, older generations, and low-income community members. They also noted the need for accessible transportation options to the site.
- **Access to nature:** Participants often hoped that the site would provide residents with access and connection to the outdoors. Some residents valued the peace, quiet, and dark skies afforded by the site, and others valued its natural beauty and the views of the foothills. Residents often expressed an appreciation for the ability to enjoy the outdoors and connect with the land and native species.
- **Affordability and economic impact:** Those who valued affordability noted the need to attend to the costs of the project and the ways it might impact local taxes or spending priorities. They were concerned about long-term maintenance costs and additional financial burdens that might be imposed by the site. Some also hoped to ensure free public access to the site and were concerned about potential costs related to use or parking fees. Others hoped the site could be used to generate additional revenue, generally by increasing tourism and local spending.
- **Community:** Residents often hoped that the site could help foster connections among community members and that it could be a local gathering place for recreation, learning, and celebration.
- **Education:** Participants who valued education suggested that community members could use the site to learn about local histories, sustainable ecological practices, wildlife, and Indigenous culture. Residents expressed a desire for educational opportunities for children, school systems, and the wider community.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Some residents hope that any use of the site would prioritize environmental conservation, the preservation of natural and open spaces, and the long-term ecological health of the land and native plant and animal species. Others highlighted a need to use the site in ways that are responsive to climate change or that would protect the land for future generations.
- **Health:** Community members suggested that the site has the potential to improve the community's physical and mental health through access to outdoor recreation, natural spaces, and sustainable practices.
- **Inclusion:** Community members often expressed a desire that any decision would be inclusive of community members who have been historically excluded from decision making. They also hoped that diverse community members would feel welcome at and be able to access the site.

- **Native rights:** Some community members hoped that any decision would be responsive to the rights of Native community members. These residents expressed a desire to honor their original stewardship of the land and a hope that Native voices would be included in both the decision-making process and the eventual management of the site.
- **Preservation:** Some residents valued uses that would preserve the natural state of the land and expressed a desire to remove man-made infrastructure. Others hoped the space could be used to preserve the history of the community. For some, preservation related to a desire to preserve the space for use by future generations.
- **Safety:** Residents expressed concerns about the ways the site might impact local safety. Some residents were concerned about the safety of using the site for outdoor recreation, with some fearing the liability associated with it and others suggesting that previous construction might make the site unsafe. Others noted that the site could be used as a way to safely practice and learn skills for outdoor recreation.

Proposed Uses

The remainder of the questions asked participants to discuss potential uses for the site. The following section provides a summary of the primary uses proposed by participants along with the information that proponents hoped delegates consider. Proposals are listed alphabetically.

Though most respondents listed organizations they hoped delegates connect with, some offered specific pieces of information they hoped delegates consider. In these instances, we list those specific recommendations, though not all proposals have this additional information. Moreover, we limit the groups that might offer more information to those organizations that were frequently mentioned or relate more specifically to that proposal. The Additional Considerations section provides information about groups, such as historically excluded communities, first responders, and schools, who participants thought could offer valuable information across proposals.

Bike Park

Residents who support a bike park hope to create a space that will provide opportunities for bike recreation and skill development. Community members in favor of the bike park listed different features that a park might include, including skills features for riders with different levels of expertise and bike trails. Some proponents highlight the location of the site as a reason for their position, noting its potential for elevation changes and connection to existent trail systems. Others expressed a hope for more widespread accessibility, noting the need for features like paved trails and accessible parking.

Proponents of this use often noted its benefit for outdoor recreation and health. Residents discussed the ways that outdoor recreation experiences can improve mental and physical health and community connections. Residents suggested that a bike park could be used by both beginners and experts and hoped that it would be accessible to all ages. Advocates discussed that the addition of a bike park could increase bike safety, particularly for children, who would have a place to practice handling skills that is not exposed to traffic or heavy use by expert riders. Those in favor of this position highlight a large and active biking community in both Fort Collins and the wider Front Range and suggest that the city lacks specialized bike parks found in other locations. Advocates also suggest that having a bike park on this site could generate tourism revenue currently being lost to nearby towns with more specialized bike parks.

Participants who supported this position often noted its compatibility with other uses, specifically outdoor recreation, such as running trails, disc golf, and playgrounds, as well as the preservation of nature and wildlife.

Potential uses:

- Bike park
- Kid friendly features
- Skills features for experts and entry level riders
- Bike trail system
- Elevation gain features
- Accessibility features
- Velodrome
- Cyclocross course

Concerns:

Some participants expressed concerns about the infrastructure required for a substantial bike park and suggested that it would require high-impact development that was inconsistent with the intent of the ballot measure. Others worried about the maintenance required for a bike park or that it would be incompatible with ecological preservation or the establishment of a wildlife habitat. Some suggested that the city already has ample opportunities for biking and that other proposals should be prioritized. Finally, some thought the use of the site exclusively for a bike park would offer limited usage for the wider community and that it would not be accessible or utilized by people who do not bike.

Groups who can offer information:

- Fort Collins Bike Park Collective
- Overland Mountain Bike Association
- Send Town Bike Club
- Wolfpack (Kids bike club)

Community Voices:

- “Biking is such a core thread to the identity of Fort Collins. It is a healthy mechanism for cultivating community, providing exercise and living sustainable with our environment. A bike park is a resource that helps the development of our youth, providing them with a constructive outlet for all ages. It would be great to see communal spaces in town for people to gather around such a positive activity.”
- “I am a kid (9 years old). I think this could be good for us and for nature. Maybe we could split it in half and use half for a bike park and half for natural land.”
- “I spend so much time driving to other towns in Colorado, eating at their local restaurants, going to their local businesses, and giving money to their local economy just because they have a bike park. If we had one in Fort Collins we would have people coming from all over to ride.”
- “Bike park for all ages. This would provide a safe and fun outdoor space for families and any individual that enjoys riding bikes. This would benefit young riders and riders of all ages. Fort Collins is well known for being a bike riding friendly community however there is no place for young riders to learn and come together.”
- “Fort Collins claims to be a bike friendly place, but is missing a Bike Park, or something where we can take our kids where they can experience the joy of biking on trails without the stress of being on one of the numerous natural area trails where more experienced bikers are. It would be great to use the community space to be family oriented and serve many purposes.”

Environmental and Agricultural Sustainability

Participants who support uses focused on environmental and agricultural sustainability highlight the pressing needs posed by climate change and a desire to use the site to boost the city's long-term sustainability. Some residents discussed urban agricultural sites that might offer an opportunity for local residents to grow food using sustainable methods or small-scale farm stands that would serve the local community. Similarly, some residents hope to have community or demonstration gardens on the site that could help residents learn about native species and sustainable gardening. Others suggest the site should be used for solar energy production, either on its own or as a shade option for agricultural or gardening use.

Residents who focused on environmental and agricultural sustainability often highlighted the need to protect the environment, both in relation to immediate needs such as fire and flood mitigation, as well as the long-term ecological health and sustainability of local energy and food systems. They also suggested that this proposal would help to address issues of food scarcity or access to healthy foods and that it could serve as an educational opportunity for the community.

Some residents suggest that a focus on natural or open spaces would be compatible with flood and fire mitigation and suggest that the area acts as a buffer zone for the city. Those who favor environmental and agricultural sustainability often suggest that it can be implemented in tandem with other uses, particularly the maintenance of natural space, low-impact trail systems, Indigenous stewardship, and wildlife rehabilitation.

Potential uses:

- Urban agriculture
- Community garden space
- Solar energy
- Flood and fire mitigation

Concerns:

Some conversation participants argued that solar panels would disturb the natural beauty of the area and that there are more appropriate locations for utilitarian uses.

Groups who can offer information:

- Colorado State University faculty
- Colorado State Forest Service
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- Local farmers

Community Voices

- "A community garden shaded by solar panels... The produce grown under solar panels in Colorado are big and beautiful! The property is already wired with electricity and plumbed with water."
- "I'm envisioning 5 to 10 acres and the northeast corner of the property. The gardening plots can be rented to community members or farmers, could be donated for school

programs or to lower income households, or whatever. We might be able to fit a few megawatts of solar that could be owned by the city, or subscriber owned, or donated within town. This would provide a recreational opportunity for gardeners, as well as healthy and affordable food for eaters, and clean electricity for the community.”

- “Community members may benefit by the production of locally sourced food crops, whereas solar would provide additional electricity at a presumably cheaper price.”
- “I prefer something that promotes sustainable practices such as agricultural activities or solar energy systems. These will address food insecurity and climate change mitigation which are some of the most pressing needs to be addressed presently. I believe a natural area would also support sustainability of land and a habitat for a diversity of animal species.”
- “Public Lands could benefit all residents through urban agriculture and solar energy systems. It would generate food and energy for the community, both of which are needed. Solar energy would not need water, though urban agriculture would use water. Water costs could be countered by the sell of food and solar energy.”

Indigenous Stewardship

Community members who supported Indigenous stewardship demonstrated a desire for Native communities to have a say in how the land is managed and used, a space for Native communities to practice ceremonies or public events, and a return of the land to its natural state. Proponents of this position indicated a need for Native voices to be included in the decision-making process and to have their interests honored in any final decision. Some proposed land back agreements, where the city would give the land back to tribal communities, whereas others offered suggestions for collective decision making and stewardship in collaboration with the city and other community members. Residents requested a place that would offer opportunities to gather with other indigenous communities, take care of the land based on historical and cultural practices, and act as an educational resource aimed at increasing awareness and knowledge of Native history and practices.

Participants who supported this use saw it as a chance to return the land to Native communities and restore ancestral connection to the land. Through such practice, they hope to restore the land to its natural state and foster long-term ecological and communal sustainability. Several participants saw this as an educational opportunity that would offer community members a chance to learn about indigenous practices based in caring for the natural environment and local tribal histories.

Residents often, though not always, saw collaborative potential between Native stewardship and uses focused on ecological restoration, low-impact outdoor recreation, and wildlife preservation. Similarly, participants who supported this use often mentioned a desire for collaboration with other community members, particularly those who have been historically excluded from decision making, so that the decision would be reflective of the needs of the wider community.

Potential Uses:

- Return stewardship to Native communities
- Land preservation and restoration to its natural state
- Space for ceremonial, spiritual, and religious uses for Native communities
- Indoor and outdoor space for Indigenous events and gatherings
- Educational site for Indigenous history and culture
- Space to grow and/or care for native plants and wildlife based on Indigenous practices
- Natural areas for recreation
- Public art
- Resources for children

Concerns:

Some participants expressed concerns about the space being designated for a single use rather than being accessible to the wider community. Some expressed a desire to designate a portion of the land for Native practices or Indigenous stewardship, rather than the entire site.

Groups who can offer information:

- Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche, Kiowa, Pawnee, Shoshone, Lakota, and Ute Peoples
- CSU Native American Cultural Center
- Local Indigenous community members and spiritual leaders
- Tribal representatives
- Tiyospaye Winyan Maka

Information to Consider:

- Treaty of Horse Creek (1851)
- Treaty of Fort Wise (1861)
- Treaty of Fort Laramie (1868)
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act (1978)
- Federal Land Policy and Management Act (1976)
- Native American Graves Protection & Repatriation Act (1990)
- Indian Reorganization Act (1934)
- National Historic Preservation Act (1966)
- National Environmental Protection Act (1970)
- Joint Secretarial Order No. 3403 on Fulfilling the Trust Responsibility to Indian Tribes in the Stewardship of Federal Lands and Waters (2021)
- Colorado Revised Statute 24-80-1301-1305 on State History, Archives, and Emblems (2023)
- Public Law #91-550, Executive Order 13007 on Accommodation of Access to Sacred Sites (1996)
- Executive Order 13175 on Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (2000)
- Herrera v. Wyoming (2019)
- United States v. the Great Sioux Nation (1980)
- United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP, 2007).

Community Voices

- “I think that this land should be a non-city ran natural area that is primarily (or in part) stewarded by indigenous communities. Having the indigenous community as stewards of the land would benefit everyone, especially a community that has been historically marginalized and that our city owes reparations to. Their involvement in this project would give an in depth and historical perspective to the conservation of this piece of land which the entire community would be able to enjoy”
- “The most pressing goal should be returning the land to the native people, to provide a space for them to conduct ceremonies, practice their arts, gather in community, and nurture the land to protect unfettered access to wildlife.”
- “We should rematriate the land to the care of Indigenous Peoples, and specifically Tiyospaye Winyan Maka if possible, to be nurtured and protected for use by the public. It is compatible with all of the requirements of the 2021 ballot measure, and it offers to the

public an experience that cannot be found anywhere else: the opportunity to connect with our Indigenous roots, heal past wrongs, and have access to land being nurtured and cared for by its original caretakers. That is something that Fort Collins can be proud of, and that could draw people needing to feel that connection to our history and culture that we cannot find in most places.”

- “We were here in the past and we are here in the present- we’ve been here. We will be there in the future. Letting the public know we aren’t in the past. We are right here. Creating natural habitat and a space for learning. This is our home, our elders say this is where we are from. (Arapaho tribe)”
- “There are so many tribes who called this place home. To honor that would mean more than words can comprehend not only for the Indigenous community but the preservation of the history of Fort Collins.”

Mixed Use

Conversation participants often discussed ways that individual proposals might be combined with their preferred usage, but some specifically proposed the site should be a mixed-use space, suggesting that it could be used simultaneously for outdoor recreation, ecological preservation, and community education. Proponents at times described it as an outdoor park that would provide community members access to nature and opportunities for outdoor recreation. Some advocates for mixed use leaned towards uses that would be low-impact and focus on natural preservation, whereas others hoped for more robust development of trails or community structures like bike, running, and skiing trails, event spaces, sports fields, and bathrooms.

Those who support mixed use hoped to create a natural space that was widely accessible and used by a diverse cross-section of the community. Advocates argued that it was large enough to use for multiple proposals. Conversation participants suggested that a mixed-use space would support community health and wellbeing and that it could offer a site for education about local histories and sustainability practices. They discussed its benefit as a space for community building and public art and highlighted its potential to provide children access to the outdoors and recreational opportunities. They also suggested that multiple uses would be more inclusive, allowing more community members access to the site and an opportunity for collaboration across interest groups.

In addition to supporting collaboration more broadly, proponents of a mixed-use space often expressed an interest in collaborating with Native communities and other communities who had been historically excluded from decision making.

Potential uses:

- Outdoor recreation park
- Walking, Running, and Ski Trails
- Bike Park
- Disc Golf
- Play area
- Wildlife habitat and rehabilitation
- Space for community events and meetings
- Space for Indigenous ceremonies and events
- Native, pollinator, or community gardens
- Public Art
- Amphitheater
- Skate
- Park

Concerns:

Some residents are concerned that breaking the land up into smaller pieces will be disruptive to other purposes, such as the establishment of natural areas or wildlife habitats. Others are concerned about high-impact development that would similarly be disruptive to nature and cause increased congestion in the area. Residents also worry about water use, particularly for amenities that would require irrigation.

Groups who can offer information:

- Gardens at Spring Creek
- Environmental Learning Center
- Fort Collins Discovery Museum
- Fort Collins Recreation Department
- Local Artists

Community Voices

- “The primary goal must be to create a multi-purpose, outdoor activities area, with malleability to be adjusted over time as community priorities change.”
- “This is a special parcel of land between the city and natural spaces in an area of town that is generally less congested and more economically and culturally diverse than other areas of Fort Collins. This is an opportunity to create a unique, environmentally friendly, sustainable, open public space that might be lost forever if poorly planned now.”
- “The Hughes site offers a unique opportunity to create a space that serves both environmental and recreational purposes.”
- “The former Hughes site promoted community and spending time outside. It would be great if this land could still be used to bring the community together in a positive manner.”
- “I'd love to see this area have variety: natural spaces, trails, community facilities, resource recovery... Things that improve ecological health and allow people to appreciate that ecology.”
- “The space is so large it could be multi use. There is no reason to limit the space; the more uses the larger range of community it will engage.”

Natural Space

Participants who supported natural space centered options that would help to preserve nature and wildlife and allow low-impact use, though they differed on their preferred levels of development for the site. On one end of the spectrum, some community members want to keep the site as is, allowing the area to re-wild on its own and limiting the costs or labor associated with transforming the space into new uses or spending funds to improve access to or existent infrastructure on the site. In contrast, some wanted the city to be more active in returning the site to a natural site, through the introduction of native plants or species and the elimination of existent concrete, roads, or other man-made structures. Still others took a different approach, advocating for amenities such as low-impact trails, accessibility features, parking, and bathrooms that would allow residents to interact with the site while still maintaining a focus on nature preservation and open space. Regardless of their preferred level of development, proponents of natural space tended to support the already existent recreational uses associated with the site, including the nearby disc golf course, the sledding hill, and a space to walk dogs.

Across these perspectives, proponents hope that the city preserves the beauty, natural look, and quiet of the space and advocated for limited development at the site. They often noted that this option would be less disruptive to the neighboring communities and offer an educational opportunity for residents, children, and schools. They pointed to the uniqueness of the site and its situation between the Maxwell and Pine Ridge Natural Areas as reasons to keep the spot as natural as possible and the need for natural spaces for wildlife and ecological preservation. Some advocates for this position argue that keeping the area natural is the only use that aligns with the initial intent of the original ballot measure, though others are open to additional uses in the space.

Those who were open to mixed use often demonstrated an interest in and a willingness to collaborate with proposals that focused on low-impact trails, Indigenous stewardship, environmental protection, and educational opportunities

Potential uses:

- Leave the site as is
- Remove existent infrastructure
- Maintain disc golf course and sledding hill
- Reintroduce native plants and animals
- Low-impact walking, running, and/or skiing trails
- Native species garden
- Educational signage about local species, environmental preservation, or history
- Low-impact play area
- Accessibility features
- Bathrooms

Concerns:

Some residents worry that the site is not suitable for the public as is and that returning it to natural space that can be accessed and used by the community would require significant cost to rid the area of invasive species and construction debris. Others suggest that the site is not appropriate for re-wilding because of the previous infrastructure and compact soil caused by the

stadium. Others suggest that the site is large enough for multiple uses and that restricting its use to only natural space would limit its utility for the wider community. Some argue that the city already has a number of natural spaces and that other proposals should take priority.

Groups who can offer information:

- PATHS (Planning Action to Transform Hughes Sustainably)
- Poudre Canyon Sierra Club
- Residents living near the site
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Colorado Natural Heritage Program
- Local Park Rangers

Information to Consider

- Ballot measure language
- History of decision making related to the site

Community Voices

- “I believe the land should remain a natural area to highlight the beauty and environment of Fort Collins. It is right near the foothill so that natural architecture should be the priority. It should remain open and accessible to the entire community.”
- “I would like to see the land left as is. Let the land breathe. Keep it simple, it's lovely as is”.
- “When my family arrived in Fort Collins, we enjoyed the open spaces for riding and hiking the trails, sliding in the winter, and watching the birds and other wildlife in the area. Those suitable low impact activities, along with the frisbee golf, are quite appropriate as recreation for the area. The higher impact of other recreation - noise, traffic, volumes of people and their needs (toilets, sidewalks, other accoutrements of populations) will ultimately destroy the animals and plants in the area - presence of more people will drive away migrating or breeding animals and birds, and destruction of flora. Protecting natural activities in the area, along with careful management of low impact recreation should guide our choices.”
- “Having an open space area across from where I reside is a breath of fresh air! I enjoy walking around that area in the late fall and winter every year. I love watching the flocks of bluebirds and meadowlarks migrate there. Fort Collins needs wildlife sanctuaries next to the city.”
- “The voters wanted the city to buy this land for a reason (at great expense), because it is a special piece of property -- large, continuous, connected to two of the city's natural areas, open, and has a storied history with CSU and the city. There is no other undeveloped land in the city that I know of that has these unique qualities. Less is more when it comes to preserving this land's unique feel and atmosphere.”
- “Voters voted to keep it natural!”

Trails

Across the data, many conversation participants advocate for the addition of trails to the site. While some residents advocate specifically for cross-country running or skiing trails, others see trails as an important part of other uses, including natural spaces, mixed use designs, wildlife rehabilitation, environmental sustainability, and a bike park. Some propose trails that are unpaved or low-impact and that would restrict uses beyond walking or running. Others hope for unpaved trails that are designed for specific outdoor recreation purposes, such as cross-country running, Nordic skiing, and/or biking or that would act as a connector between adjacent natural areas. Others request paved trails that are ADA accessible.

Advocates for more structured trails, particularly cross-country and skiing trails, suggest that the space could be used by local schools for practices and races and that their implementation may draw in tourism revenue. Proponents of trails suggest that the site already has trails that serve as unofficial connectors between natural areas and argue that it would benefit community health and well being to provide more access and connection to the existent trail system. They suggest that trails provide widespread access to nature and can be used by a broad cross section of the population. Others highlighted the potential for trails to serve an educational purpose, introducing visitors to local histories or providing information about sustainability practices or native species.

Proponents of trails often discussed the ways that trails were compatible with other proposals, including a bike park, Indigenous stewardship, natural space, and wildlife rehabilitation.

Potential uses:

- Walking Trails
- Running and cross-country running trails
- Cross country and Nordic skiing trails
- Educational and interpretive trails
- Unpaved trails
- ADA accessible trails

Concerns:

Some residents expressed concerns about high-impact trails that might interfere with ecological restoration or wildlife habitat.

Groups who can offer information:

- Fort Collins Running Club
- Fort Collins Nordic
- Fort Collins Hiking Club
- Colorado Mountain Club
- CSU and high school cross-country running and Nordic ski teams

Information to Consider

- Designs for cross-country trail systems used in other locations

Community Voices

- “Make trails. Let people use them. Let them bring their monies and collect it for other uses. Let them get fresh air.”
- “The property should be developed in a way that encourages public access, particularly for recreational activities that align with the land's natural character. This would include the creation of designated hiking and running trails that allow visitors to experience the beauty of the landscape while maintaining its ecological balance. The trails should be designed to minimize any disruption to the environment while providing a safe and enjoyable space for the community to engage in outdoor physical activities, which support both physical health and mental well-being.”
- “We think a great use of the space would be a park. Specifically, one that includes a wide multi-use soft-surface trail (like a cross country course). This trail could serve as both a training circuit for the running community and a walking trail through a park for others in the community. A cross country course is nothing more fancy than an extra wide soft-surface path (like grass or woodchips) with no road crossings that forms a loop for runners and walkers. It could be tastefully landscaped into the property leaving open space for other activities.”
- “I think a dedicated cross country course with the option to utilize as a mountain bike course as well would offer maximum utilization for our very active west side community. The foothills, especially by the A trail, are heavily used by runners and mountain bikers. There's long been a desire to tie in existing trails to a lower trail. In addition to local runners and bikers, this could benefit CSU, high school and middle school cross country teams. The ability to host a cross country meet on a dedicated course could provide a boost to our local economy as teams come to compete, go to restaurants and use local hotels for lodging.”

Wildlife Rehabilitation

Some conversation participants advocated that the site, or a portion of it, be used for wildlife habitat, rescue, and rehabilitation. While some residents spoke more broadly about the need to protect the area as a wildlife corridor or a habitat for existent species, others specifically requested that the Rocky Mountain Raptor Program, potentially in collaboration with other non-profit programs such as the Northern Colorado Wildlife Center, relocate to the site and that they build a nature center and/or wildlife campus that would provide learning opportunities for the public. Advocates suggested that these spaces could help to rescue and rehabilitate local wildlife and help educate the public about wildlife, local ecology, and sustainability efforts.

Proponents argue that this proposal would benefit local wildlife, offering both habitat and rescue and rehabilitation efforts for injured animals. They also suggest that this use would increase environmental sustainability. Advocates described the educational benefit that such a space would provide, particularly by introducing students to hands-on science experiences. Proponents also suggested that the project could receive funding through non-profit partnerships.

Advocates suggest that wildlife rehabilitation aligns with land restoration and ecological sustainability efforts and a desire to keep the area natural and open. Proponents frequently suggested that their proposal would be appropriate for a mixed-use site and that it aligned with the creation of trails and natural space as well as interests in educational opportunities related to Indigenous conservation practices.

Potential Uses:

- Wildlife Education Center
- Nature and Wildlife Campus
- Wildlife Rehabilitation Center
- Walking trails
- Wildlife corridors
- Wildlife habitat
- Wildlife viewing space
- Native plant gardens

Concerns:

Residents at times expressed concerns about placing permanent buildings and extensive infrastructure at the site through the addition of a Wildlife Campus or permanent buildings. For some, this would disturb the natural beauty of the space and be damaging to the local ecosystem. Others worry that it would require large parking lots and create congestion issues for the area.

Groups who can offer information:

- The Rocky Mountain Raptor Program
- Bird Conservancy of the Rockies
- Audubon Society
- Northern Colorado Wildlife Center
- The Colorado Natural Heritage Program

Community Voices

- “Fort Collins long-term vitality is dependent on keeping enough open lands and natural areas that provide for wildlife as well as people.”
- “I would like to see a coalition of the Wildlife Rescue Organizations, including Raptor Program and Audubon and Bird Conservancy. I heard they are interested in finding space, and I believe that together then will be able to fund a really nice facility without FoCo residents being taxed on the use.”
- “The idea of a nature, conservation, and wildlife rescue facility would be an excellent showcase for the dedication that Fort Collins has to sustainability, natural resource protection, and community education.”
- “The current site has social trails, invasive species, compact soils and debris. Benefits would be restoring land health, creating more accessible ways for people to connect and engage with the land and help with restoration while experiencing and learning about raptors, songbirds and other wildlife and plant communities.”
- “I think the City needs to make the most of the site's unique positions as undeveloped land that abuts other undeveloped areas (Maxwell, Reservoir ridge, Pineridge) and allow space for wildlife corridors and habitat. You won't find many sites with this unique position abutting so many other natural areas, and once it's developed, it's gone.”
- “I think the nature and wildlife campus would be the most broadly beneficial use of the site for the community as a whole. It would provide a very unique opportunity, unlike anything else offered in the state or even within several hundred miles. Fort Collins has a proud history of protecting natural spaces and systems and this would further expand that to include the wildlife that lives within those systems.”

Additional Considerations

In addition to the proposals described above, participants identified considerations they hoped the delegates would take into account during their deliberations. Considerations that appeared frequently across proposals are described in alphabetical order below.

Affordable Housing

Although the ballot measure prevents the site from being used for affordable housing, conversation participants still raised the issue in their survey responses. While some wished that the site could be used for affordable housing, others were opposed to developing housing on the site.

Community Voice

Residents across proposals expressed a desire to listen to the public's voice in the decision, whether or not those voices are the loudest or most popular. Several community members hoped that residents who are traditionally excluded from decision making be included, such as Native communities, people of color, people with disabilities, low-income residents, Spanish speakers, young people, and seniors. Others expressed a desire to hear from people who live close to the site.

Dogs

At times, respondents expressed an interest in or concern for the use of the space by dog owners. While some hoped that the site could be used as on- or off-leash areas for dogs, others suggested that they would prefer no dogs be allowed and worried about the impact of dogs on the local environment and wildlife.

Existent Infrastructure

Across the data, participants often discussed both the cost and feasibility of improving the site because of its previous use as a stadium. They worried about how the presence of old structures or concrete, environmental contaminants, and underground infrastructure would impact community safety and health. Similarly, they expressed concerns about the cost that might be incurred by removing such hazards or restoring the ecological health of the site.

Opposition to Development

Participants in the conversations frequently expressed opposition to extensive development on the site. Many respondents were specifically opposed to a golf course, although no participant suggested that one be placed there, as well as permanent buildings, large parking lots, non-native grasses, and other types of infrastructure that would be disruptive to the natural landscape and ecological environment.

Schools, First Responders, and Utilities

Across several proposals, residents suggest that decision makers should consult first

responders, particularly the Poudre Fire Authority, as well as local police and health care and utility providers to better understand the impact that proposals might have on the community. Similarly, they frequently suggested consultation with Poudre School District to understand the impacts on and needs of children and the school system.

Transportation

Residents often raised concerns about traffic, parking, and accessibility. Some participants were wary that a significant increase in use would require parking lots that take up too much space or would cause traffic congestion. Others hoped that the site could be accessible to people who do not have access to cars, suggesting that the city ensure the space is accessible through the bus system and or bike or walking trails.