The Co-Chairs and Coordinating Committee of UniverCity Connections led this effort beginning in August of 2006. They identified stakeholders, refined the process and schedule, identified the study area, chose the name and logo, and planned the Kickoff party. The process followed by the stakeholders was a step by step effort beginning with the development of a vision of the desired future. The stakeholders, working together identified the elements of their vision and assigned a committee to write the vision statement. Stakeholders assessed the current reality in the area, including identifying the strengths to build on, weaknesses to overcome, opportunities to capture, and threats to avoid. This preparatory work enabled the stakeholders to identify a manageable number of specific topics to focus on, and formed task groups for each topic. The remainder of the process was carried out by these task groups, mostly working alone, but occasionally coming together to share progress and address overlapping issues. Now the planning work of the task groups is finished, and the stakeholders have brought this phase of their effort to an end. The next phase, implementation of these initiatives, is now ready to begin.

The stakeholders may not all agree with or plan to help implement every initiative, but each of them should find an idea that ignites their passion and engages them in creating a better future for Fort Collins.

“What we need . . . is something new — networks of responsibility drawn from all segments coming together to create a wholeness that incorporates diversity. The participants must come to be at home with change and exhibit a measure of shared values, a sense of mutual obligation and trust. Above all, they must develop a sense of responsibility for the future of the whole community.”

John W. Gardner, Boundary Crossers, 1997

introduction

It all started with a bicycle ride. CSU President Dr. Larry Penley and Fort Collins City Manager Darin Atteberry, enjoying a leisurely ride through downtown, talking about creating better connections between the City and the University. Within months, this conversation had sparked the creation of UniverCity Connections, a collaboration convened by the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, and driven by the City of Fort Collins, Colorado State University, the Downtown Development Authority, and over 100 Fort Collins citizens. UniverCity Connections challenged the community to come together, imagine a great future and make that future a reality. This report tells the story of how it began, who made it happen, and what it will produce for Fort Collins.
Fort Collins — 2025 AD

It is an exciting and living revolution. Fort Collins has become a home unlike any other on earth, a magnet for creative minds, learners, playful minds, entrepreneurs in commerce, industry, education and the arts. Where the sense of place, is the place, and the people who live and visit there.

The community’s embrace of a wide diversity of life is in full bloom. Where wisdom and the quest for it, where play and the renewal born of it, where tolerance and the personal experience of it, where creativity and the acceptance of it, where the urban world and the world of nature find common ground. Where the moment is lived and the future is always being designed, respectfully but without boundaries.

The trees are bigger. The landscape matured and native plants grow vigorously in the parks, planters, and yards of the historic residential neighborhoods. Once-new buildings now have a soft patina and have aged into a comfortable friendship with their historic neighbors. Multi-use, newer buildings, many with garden roofs and vine-covered trellises for walls, startle long-absent children returning to their roots.

Our Vision

gaining focus

At the beginning of the process, the stakeholders identified the elements of a vision for the future of the study area. These elements became the Vision Statement for UniverCity Connections. All of the work that followed was guided by this vision of the desired future and the products of this work are intended to bring that vision closer to reality.
All of downtown has blossomed into a cultural district with large performing arts venues, intimate theaters, galleries, a modern art museum, a history museum, a children’s museum integrated into the children’s discovery Science Center, the Beet Street amphitheater, a state-of-the art music hall on the Oxbow, and churches and spiritual centers representing beliefs from around the world. Marquees and billboards tell an astonishing tale of the variety and diversity of performances and events on any given day. Local and CSU productions frequently top the bill but there also are productions and speakers from New York, San Francisco, London, and Tokyo and hundreds of other far away places. And where once there was not a movie house to be found, there are several film festivals along with the 24 themed programs produced by Beet Street.

But there is more than art and entertainment now. The naturally reclaimed Poudre River is clean, fresh, and safe. A few narrow pedestrian trails wander down the banks of the river and back up through thriving native vegetation, and bike trails are set further away. Where these trails lead beneath a bridge, soft solar lamps light the way for nighttime joggers or nature lovers or just plain lovers. Occasional interpretative signage tells the story of the river, how it got its name, what grows naturally, and what lives naturally in the water and on its banks. On the south bank, an award-winning green residential complex, a few small commercial enterprises, and a boutique hotel/loft complex serve as a transition zone between the serene river corridor and the urban richness of the downtown neighborhood. The drop in point for the paddle park nestles unobtrusively below what was once CSU’s Engine Lab (but what has become the National Renewable Energy Center and the University’s Technology Transfer Center) and the single take out point leaves the river beneath the railroad trestle which serves commuter trains running along the entire Front Range and to Denver International Airport.

The cultural transformation and the Renewable Energy and Technology Transfer Centers are the sources of yet another revolution launched by UniverCity Connections a quarter century ago. They spun off local start-up businesses, some small, some growing into international corporations, in renewable energy, bioscience, nanotechnology and agriscience and these attract gifted students, innovators, professionals, and entrepreneurs from around the world. Their intellectual production is reflected locally in energy–efficient historic buildings, a solar powered transit system connecting the campus to downtown and the Poudre River, a consolidated trash collection and recycling system that has turned Fort Collins into a zero-waste city, a public utility that relies almost exclusively on wind, solar, and other non-polluting, sustainable energy systems. The University and the City have built life-long learning and community cycling center downtown that serves CSU athletic programs, downtown employees and residents from throughout Fort Collins. Five other specialty education institutions offer art, cultural, science, and technology classes to all ages. A year-round community market and CSU-affiliated culinary school gives locally-owned restaurants access to the best produce and the best cooking minds in the country. Most importantly, because of the expanded employment opportunities generated by the projects and programs borne out of UniverCity Connections, the local housing market has actively responded to the needs of people in the form of unique mixed-income residential developments.

The intellectual bent of the cultural and technological worlds is balanced by a variety of recreational uses. In addition to the paddle park, locals and visitors alike can play golf, tennis, basketball in state-of-the art facilities. The University cycling team has expanded its program to include track racing in a velodrome that also serves as the home of the United States Cycling team. Joggers clip along the cool River paths breathing some of the cleanest air in any urban environment in the world. Sustained stream flows have allowed for the successful re-introduction of naturally spawned wild trout and other native fish species. Beet Street offers recreational programming to compliment its cultural programming in the form of field trips to Soapstone and other natural areas, and with package deals with regional skiing, rafting, hiking, opportunities.
Because of the compactness of this development between the University and the River, pedestrians, bicyclists and public transportation systems dominate the streets. Downtown hotels, short-stay residential complexes, the City, County, many local businesses, and the University pooled resources to buy 1500 bicycles that are used by locals, students and visitors alike to meander along the river, to shop, and to attend classes. Their use is so ubiquitous that the rest of the City is considering buying into the program. Remington Street, with its collection of grand homes has been dedicated to bikes and pedestrians while Mason Street is now a fully functional multi-modal corridor connecting Colorado State to the downtown and the River. An alley network converted to pedestrian walkways almost doubles the available storefronts without any new construction.

Secluded nightclubs, restaurants, cafes, and boutique shops hidden away in these pedestrian alleyways await discovery by locals (over and over again) and visitors alike. In the central business district and on campus automobiles move very slowly and because most are now parked in high-density garages, the old surface parking lots have morphed into an eclectic mixture of student, family, and senior housing of all income levels. It is common to find work-live space and many of the businesses in the clusters started in these places.

The revolution begun by UniverCity Connections is still alive in Fort Collins. The ribbon of the Poudre River weaves together the natural world, the cultural world, and the world of learning into a rich, rewarding home without boundaries.
introduction

To further focus the work, the stakeholders created eight task groups, each with a specific topic to work on. The topics selected were:

• Arts & Culture
• CSU/City Joint Facilities & Programs
• Economic Development
• Mixed-Use Development
• River Protection, Development & Enhancement
• Housing
• Sustainable Energy Technology
• Transit & Mobility

The summary reports of the task groups follow.

Full reports of the task groups can be found on the UniverCity Connections website.

www.UniverCityConnections.org
Arts & Culture Task Force Mission: Develop a plan to advance and strengthen the delivery of cultural arts, sciences and history as a significant differentiating feature for the Fort Collins River District, Downtown and CSU campus.

To achieve this mission, we recommend the following:

The arts, the participative sciences, the preservation/communication of Fort Collins’ history, together have the potential to make Fort Collins a world-class cultural destination.

arts and culture

The arts, the participative sciences, the preservation/communication of Fort Collins’ history, working together represent a culture of clean industry that enriches the lives of our community’s citizens, visitors and serves as an economic engine that has the potential to make Fort Collins a world-class cultural destination.
Goal #1: Grow audiences, increase participation and encourage an economically flourishing UniverCity cultural community through centralized communication and collaboration.

Timeline: In progress and ongoing
Resources: Arts Alive, CSU, CVB, CRB, etc.
Action Steps:
1) Support and promote CVB’s centralized calendar
2) Merge Arts Alive, the Lincoln Center and CSU ticketing
3) Market the arts through collaborative efforts
4) Establish a funded arts council to provide oversight to achieve the UniverCity cultural goals

Goal #2: Connect the arts and cultural community, Fort Collins student community and the Fort Collins community at-large to nurture creative energy and understanding.

Timeline: In progress, Ongoing, New
Resources: Fort Collins intellectual capital
Action Steps:
1) Form an Arts & Culture think tank made up of a broad range of stakeholders, convened by the arts council, to provide on-going conversation about arts and culture and its’ ties to educating the populace while impacting the economy.
2) Develop a directory of artists, events, calendars and academic programs that increases accessibility and opportunity, while serving as a clearing house for cultural educational opportunities.
3) Revisit education initiatives that have had success through the years to identify new best practices and education initiatives, while evaluating current viability and determining funding needs and opportunities.

Goal #3: Heighten and broaden the experience of the artist, visitor, participant and audience by presenting world-class facilities and programming. (Webb Management Services Cultural Facilities Plan for the City of Fort Collins, “The lack of local cultural facilities is stifling programming and organization growth and creativity.”)

Timeline: Ongoing (2-10 years)
Resources: 100s of millions of dollars
Action Steps:
1) Plan, fund and build a range of cultural facilities that serve different constituents including residents, youth, students and potential visitors.
2) Develop the appropriate infrastructure to support facilities and programming. Examples are:
   o Way finding stations and River interpretation incorporating historic preservation and interpretation elements, etc.
   o Integrate the historic trolley into the overall transportation plan
   o Create a cultural line with a rubber wheeled trolley
   o Hotel rooms downtown
3) To create a space or adaptive reuse of an existing space for the creative community to gather and collaborate, work, rehearse, eat, exhibit, present and compose.

Goal #4: Develop a dedicated funding stream and the support mechanisms to sustain and advance the arts and culture of Fort Collins.

Timeline: In progress, Pending, 2008 for SCFD
Resources: To be determined.
Action Steps:
1) Pursue a Scientific & Cultural Facilities District (based on the Denver model) for the 11/2008 general election that will have the potential to
generate almost $2M in annual maintenance/operations funding.

2) Actively promote the expansion of philanthropic support for the arts in Fort Collins.
   - Host sessions to teach the community about opportunities/benefits to becoming an arts donor/volunteer.
   - Create a designated cultural arts donor-advised fund managed by the Community Foundation.
   - Identify sources of administrative support/guidance for arts organizations.
   - Articulate a defined menu/roadmap of resources to engage and guide the creative community in establishing/growing their business.
   - Cultivate champions for the arts (Municipal, County, State, Chamber of Commerce, major foundations and corporations) who publicly accentuate the creative community as a vital ingredient to our continued quality of life.

3) Command the business and human resource support necessary to sustain the cultural community and to elevate both the profile and contribution of the cultural arts in the local economy.
   - Promote donor tax credit opportunities.
   - Pursue the support of national funding with collaborative proposals.
Goals
1. Identify areas of common interest
2. Bridge bureaucracies
3. Leverage and enhance existing programs
4. Create new facility offering unique programming opportunities

Objectives
Draw Colorado State University into the community and the community into Colorado State.

Initiatives

1. Life-Long Learning Center
A $15 million facility housing a life-long learning center. The center will be located downtown and close to the Mason Corridor to ensure easy transit connections with Colorado State. Programming in the center will be jointly developed and administered by qualified members of the community and University faculty/staff.

Sharing will lead to increased partnering on other issues such as economic development, improved communications and partnering to solve community concerns.

csu/city joint facilities & programs

Bringing together Colorado State University and the Fort Collins community through shared programming, projects, and facilities.
The center is intended to offer demand-driven classes and activities similar to the University’s Continuing Education program but much broader in scope so that it includes the whole spectrum of structured educational experiences for all ages and abilities. The facility will include at least ten classrooms, conference and meeting space, a teaching kitchen, administrative offices, and privately operated coffee and retail shop. It is to be built around a 350 x 200 foot velodrome (a 250 meter world-class track) that will serve as the focus of health and programming. The velodrome itself will be multi-purpose, allowing for a variety of other physical activities (football training field, tennis, volleyball, etc.), music events, conferences, trade shows, arts and crafts shows, etc.

### Funding
- **Land:** gifted
- **Parking:** Existing or future city-developed facilities
- **Operations and Maintenance:** self-sustaining after three years

#### Hypothetical Design and Construction:
- Philanthropic: $2,000,000
- Public funds: $7,000,000
- New Markets Tax Credits: $1,000,000
- EDA grant: $1,000,000
- CDBG grant: $500,000
- Other grants: $500,000
- Naming rights: $2,000,000
- Sponsorships: $1,000,000

**Total:** $15,000,000

#### Timeline: 30 months to completion

#### Ongoing responsibility: Rick Simpson/CSU, Tim Anderson, Bob Komives, Chip Steiner/DDA

### 2. Shared Facilities.

**Mini-Vision:** The University and the City would develop plans to share Facilities/Space in and near the target area. This sharing would lead to increased partnering on other issues such as economic development, improved communications and partnering to solve other community concerns. In order to be successful, both parties would need to think strategically about barriers that have prohibited this from occurring to date: politics and territorial attitudes; cost center management budgeting, liability and insurance issues and assessment of current demand and access.

#### Goals and Objectives:
1. Develop an inventory of existing and potential space that could be shared.
2. Do an assessment of the demand drivers that support the notion of shared facilities and space.
3. Once facilities have been identified, there needs to be a coordinated effort to manage and reserve space.

#### Action Initiatives:
1. Develop the inventory of space. This will take a commitment of resources from both the City and University.
2. The demand drivers are emerging from discussions in other UniverCity groups, particularly those focused on housing, economic development, mixed-use and the arts.
3. There appears to be little interest in formalizing this effort because goals 1 and 2 must be realized before this can be seriously considered.

Successful facilities have been developed as a partnership usually with the participation of a third party private developer. A good resource: “Building for Campus and Community” (2/2007) by Melissa Ezarik. She illustrates how higher education institutions open facilities to the community and are partnering with local public entities to fund, design and operate buildings jointly.

#### Timeline: Now.

#### Ongoing Responsibility: Grant Sherwood
3. Joint Internship/Mentorship Program.
Specific vision is to encourage internship and mentorship programs with mutual benefit for CSU, its students and the local community.

The objective is to collaboratively enhance existing internship/mentorship programs by
- Increasing awareness about existing programs
- Educating business owners/employers on ways to market their internships
- Providing students opportunities to enhance their resume through hands on experience
- Offering students venue to obtain practical work experience relevant to their major
- Potentially providing non-student residents with access to a community mentoring program

Actions needed are:
- Encourage CSU’s Career Center (CC) to implement an assessment/feedback system;
- Improve employer & community awareness of the Career Center and its structure through the implementation of a marketing program;
- Provide information and instruction to employers on how to attract student-interns to available positions;
- Encourage the Career Center to Enhance their Mentorship Program Website to allow for participants beyond alumni or “friends of the university.”

Timeline: Now.
Ongoing Responsibility: Melissa Emerson
economic development

We need a development-ready plan for this study area that would address such things as incentives, a streamlined approval process, etc. to spur availability of all types of facilities that are needed by target companies.

Initiative One: Incubate Clean Energy Businesses
The community can take specific steps to accelerate the development of the clean energy sector of the Fort Collins economy. Those steps fall into two broad categories: physical facilities and business climate. Regarding physical facilities, close physical proximity of energy researchers, private energy companies and support services can foster the process of discovery and translation to market. Regarding business climate, the City of Fort Collins has identified clean energy as a business cluster it wants to encourage. As such, it must devote resources and align its policies and procedures to facilitate development of the clean energy cluster.
Recommendations

• **Recommendation One**: Create the physical facilities to incubate clean energy companies.

  First, over the short-term, the City could make excess building space available to the CSU Engines and Energy Conversion Lab (the Lab) for their administrative functions as a way for freeing up space in the Lab for research and incubation. Second, a delegation should visit existing clean energy incubators around the country to learn how communities are incubating clean energy companies. Third, construct a second building of ~25,000 sq. ft. on the site near the existing Lab to serve as an incubator. The building would need to be architecturally compatible with the existing historic structure, and construction would need to meet city and FEMA requirements. A creative financing package could include private donations raised by CSU, federal grants and loans and city participation as the land owner. Fourth, assemble other available land in the immediate area of the Lab for future expansion. Consider retaining the land that will become available when the current Vine Drive is abandoned during realignment, and consider working with the new land owner of the Waste Management site that will change ownership in June.

• **Recommendation Two**: Create a climate conducive to incubating clean energy research, technologies and businesses.

  First, City planning staff should review the suitability of zoning in the study area for clean energy development. As appropriate and needed, the Council should modify the land use map to allow this type of use. Next, the City should adopt a policy of expedited development review for clean energy projects, as defined by the Northern Colorado Clean Energy Cluster, and establish supporting internal procedures. Additionally, city government should develop an incentive package for clean energy business development. Elements could include use tax rebates, waiver of the business personal property tax, renewable energy tax credits, favorable utility rates and expedited development review. Finally, the Northern Colorado Clean Energy Cluster should work with the City to identify financing tools available for public infrastructure and private sector investments including federal loans (tools such as the Section 108 Loan Program), federal grants, DDA tax increment financing, North College Urban Renewal Authority, etc.

**Initiative Two:**

**Retain the Downtown Development Authority as a viable economic development tool for the study area**

The greater Downtown area has seen a resurgence over the past two decades in large part because of the public sector investments made possible by the Downtown Development Authority. With tax increment financing due to sunset in the next few years, the downtown area will be left without a critical tool at the same time that other business districts in the region are emerging.

• **Recommendation One**: Extend the life of the DDA. This will require action by the State Legislature. Opposition by Larimer County and other public entities must be overcome by finding a win-win compromise that extends the life of the DDA while allowing these entities to capture some new revenues from the higher property values made possible in part by the DDA investments. A ‘rolling’ sunset might be the answer whereby use of tax increment financing is extended for a specific period of time but would start from a new tax base. For example, add ten years to the life of the DDA but use the property valuation base ten years after the DDA was founded.

• **Recommendation Two**: Expand the boundaries of the DDA to match those of the UniverCity Connections study area. This will aid the redevelopment of the Mason and Howes Street corridors in the area of the university.

**Initiative Three:**

**Create Development-Ready Sites**

It is recommended that the City identify development/redevelopment sites in the downtown/CSU/River District areas to be proactive about further developing the downtown area and further improving the community’s competitive position for mixed-use projects, transit oriented development, unique retail, restaurants, employment, and arts/entertainment/cultural business or venues.

• **Recommendation One**: There are steps underway to evaluate differing aspects of the downtown/CSU/River District areas for potential development; however, there is not a consistent goal of identifying “development-ready” sites. Coordinate the work among
these varying efforts to identify high priority sites for development/redevelopment.

- **Recommendation Two**: Following the inventory of potential development ready sites, evaluate each to ensure that proper zoning, utilities, infrastructure, and other development issues have been evaluated and addressed prior to receiving development proposals.

- **Recommendation Three**: Market the availability of the development ready sites through a City website, marketing materials, and other channels. It is recommended that this initiative be completed by the Fall of 2007.

Other Initiatives Supported by the Task Group:
Designate all or part of study area as net-zero energy zone as long as it is incentive-oriented rather than mandate-oriented and doesn’t violate private property rights; implement Beet Street concept; create a development plan for the river corridor.

About the Economic Development Task Group
Economic Development Task Group participants changed throughout the process. Bob McCluskey served as the Task Group’s convener. At various times participants in the Economic Development Task Group included Adam Bowen, Martin Carcasson, Jacob Castillo, Christine Chin, Janey Kramer, Dave Derbes, Maury Dobbie, Mary Fischer, Mike Freeman, Sarah Hach, David Herrera, Tomas Herrera, Blue Houatter, Doug Johnson, Kevin Jones, Ron Lautzenheiser, Ray Martinez, David May, Deanna McCrery, Rick Price, Matt Robenalt, Donna Smith, Ralph Waldo, Mickey Willis, Katherine Woods, and Katie Zwetzig.

Initiative Four: Identify and Provide a Site for the Expanding Fort Collins Technology Incubator within the UniverCity Study Area and Develop an Entrepreneurship Council

- **Recommendation One**: The City of Fort Collins provide a physical location within the UniverCity study area for the Fort Collins Technology Incubator and explore the benefits of co-locating CSU’s Center for Entrepreneurship within the new building.

- **Recommendation Two**: Partner with the City of Fort Collins, Colorado State University, the Fort Collins Technology Incubator, the SBDC, Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce, the Fort Collins Microloan Program, the Downtown Development Authority, the Downtown Business Association and the Northern Colorado Economic Development Corporation to develop an “Entrepreneurship Council” that will focus on, but is not limited to, the following initiatives:
  - Identify gaps and overlap in services and opportunities for collaboration and develop a multi-year strategy to address identified gaps.
  - Create a common web portal that would link resources for entrepreneurs and small business owners in a “one stop shop.”
  - Hold a Northern Colorado Summit for Entrepreneurs in partnership with the Fort Collins Technology Incubator and CSU’s Office of Economic Development in the fall of 2007.
  - Through the “Entrepreneurship Council” work in cooperation to contribute to the fostering of a business-friendly and entrepreneurial environment that supports emerging industry clusters (including: Bioscience, Clean Energy, Computer and Electronics Manufacturing, Information Technology / Software and Uniquely Fort Collins), existing businesses and the attraction of new primary employers to the region.
The Housing Task Force contends that the location of residential uses in proximity to all other initiatives of this UniverCity Connections will be integral to our overall success. Moreover, the initiative must consider the entirety of the housing continuum; beginning with homelessness and transitional housing, through publicly subsidized and market-rate rental, student rental, modified ownership and traditional single family neighborhoods, and culminating with lifestyle housing options. Each stage of the continuum requires different levels of planning, programmatic and financial support. Furthermore, each stage is often in competition with commercial development and, indeed, each other, for a finite supply of land inventory. The free market rewards initial economic strength, whereas a deliberate and thoughtful process will seek to reward a more sustainable economic strategy, as presented within this report.

Communities prosper when all segments of society are afforded the right to live, work, shop, and recreate within their boundaries.

Housing options that are affordable and appropriate according to one’s means are the lynchpin to healthy, vital communities. Children develop greater social skills, perform better scholastically and maintain better health when they are able to grow in a safe, comfortable environment. Adults are more productive at work, more engaged in their neighborhood and enjoy greater financial stability with adequate housing options within their community. Business and industry succeeds where the housing needs of the local workforce are met and adaptive to evolving conditions. Communities prosper when all segments of society are afforded the right to live, work, shop and recreate within their boundaries. As a primary element of human survival, shelter represents a cornerstone of the UniverCity Connections initiative.
Housing Task Group Goals
Elements of the study area housing will:
• Encourage development of mixed-use, mixed-income projects to gain economic scale.
• Identify steps to address current housing needs, while anticipating future demand.
• Establish guidelines for delivering units at all stages along the housing continuum.
• Incorporate both student and non-student housing projects where appropriate.
• Develop a model program for promoting economic and environmental sustainability within a comprehensive housing strategy.

Action Plan
The task force has identified several action items to facilitate the goals, while providing greater clarity of measurable objectives in order to actualize the vision. Action items include:

Market Survey – In cooperation with various departments at CSU, focus groups and an electronic survey were conducted to assess the type, location and cost of housing options students prefer. This information provided valuable insight into the apparent disconnect between published inventory and vacancy reports that show readily available housing stock and the oft-voiced concern among students that few affordable options exist. To further understand the market at the community level, a much broader survey will be performed. Results will indicate current market demands while providing insight to future trends of housing needs within the study area. With information in hand, developers will be better able to design and deliver matching inventory within a shorter pre-development window. Land use policies would also benefit from more scientific public input that is weighted against market dynamics. [Survey findings released by December 2007]

Inclusionary Requirement – Based upon the outcome of the Market Survey and interviews with other task groups under the UniverCity Connections initiative, a zoning ordinance would be enacted to compel affordable residential development within the Mason Street Corridor. Within the projected build-out of the Corridor, an ordinance would establish a minimum percentage of residential units priced as affordable to households at, or below the Area Median Income. Market Survey data will provide a better understanding of the requisite mix of unit size, amenities and configurations, while non-residential development will indicate the type and size of the supporting workforce in need of proximate housing. [Adoption of zoning requirement by January 2009]

Student-Oriented Development – In recognition that CSU has a limited direct-role in the provision of housing for students, supporting staff and faculty, private-sector development will be encouraged to fill the void. Engaging the expertise of faculty and students under a service-learning model can leverage the use of appropriate and developable land under university control to significantly lower the associated costs of housing production. Survey information will greatly enhance the appeal of units created under this model program. Projects will be undertaken in such a way as to promote sustainable design, low operating overhead and connectivity through alternate transportation options. [Program adopted by CSU Administration by July 2009]

Preservation of Neighborhoods and Affordability – Design and implement a financial program that lowers the monthly debt service necessary to purchase owner-occupied housing within target neighborhoods. This same program will also provide a practical method for achieving affordability targets without limiting the financial benefits of ownership. The program will utilize ‘patient’ capital to bridge the gap between an optimum level of mortgage debt carried by the home owner and the market value of the subject
property. This program would supplement modified ownership structures such as deed restrictions and community land trust models. [Program launch by January 2008]

**Homeless & Transitional Housing** – Through a partnership that includes the Community Foundation of Northern Colorado, the City of Fort Collins, Larimer County, United Way of Larimer County, and select not-for-profit agencies, a comprehensive program will deliver adequate shelter and housing inventory for homeless and transitioning populations. Coupled with existing facilities and supportive service providers, the UniverCity Study Area represents a central and convenient location to re-establish the social and economic value of displaced citizens. Existing programs will help identify and refer individuals with severe and chronic conditions to appropriate agencies that may reside outside the Study Area. [Identification of initial project site July 2008]

**Residential Liaison** – A clearinghouse will be established outside the public structure to serve as liaison between all potential stakeholders and service providers to facilitate implementation of the housing plan. Responsibilities of this position will include dissemination of the plan and supporting materials, recruitment of qualified developers, connecting requisite expertise to individual projects, and marketing financial programs available through public, private and non-profit channels. [Introduction of service by July 2008]

**Task Group Overlap**

The Housing Task Group believes its charge has significant overlap with all other groups under the UniverCity Connections initiative, citing the following examples:

- **Economic Development** – As new jobs are created, existing companies expanded and evolving industries incubated within study area, proximate and appropriate housing options are critical to long-term success.

- **Sustainable Energy Technology** – In addition to housing the resulting workforce, the technologies envisioned under this group will greatly enhance the comfort, cost, liveability and adaptation of residential units that serve all segments of the community.

- **Arts, Culture & History** – Adaptive reuse of historic structures as residential and mixed-use properties has a long and successful track record. Witness the Northern Hotel. Moreover, arts and cultural districts across the nation are most successful where live-work studios and below-market rental housing is readily available.

- **River Protection, Development & Enhancement** – Unfortunately, too many members of our community have taken up residence within the Poudre River corridor and will be displaced as projects are undertaken. The homeless and transitional housing program will seek to address this issue.

- **Mixed-Use Development** – A central component of a successful housing plan incorporates commercial and residential uses that provide vitality and economic scale. More importantly, projects envisioned under this group should consider a mix of housing options that appeal to all levels of the economic hierarchy.

- **Transit & Mobility** – Housing and transportation are intertwined to the point one cannot be addressed without addressing the other. A successful housing plan must understand the costs, constraints and efficient design elements, and then plan accordingly. Both task groups must commit to sharing information and developing plans that compliment desired outcomes.
mixed-use development

Mixed-Use Development and the concepts of New Urbanism have been all the rage in urban design for more than a decade. This is truly a “back to the future” movement seeking to reestablish the bustling vitality of American cities from a century ago, prior to the advent of automobile-centric development. Modern thinking has come full-circle to the realization that a compact urban form embracing a balanced variety of land uses within close proximity is the most resource efficient, most economically productive, healthiest, and culturally enriching way to live.

Modern thinking has come full-circle to the realization that a compact urban form embracing a balanced variety of land uses within close proximity is the most resource efficient, most economically productive, healthiest, and culturally enriching way to live.

The UniverCity area of Fort Collins is extremely well positioned to take advantage of these trends, mainly because we’ve already been a mixed-use trendsetter for years! Still, there are serious hurdles to cross and important opportunities to be seized as the future of UniverCity comes to life.

Key elements of the built environment envisioned for UniverCity include:

- New and renovated buildings in the core of Old Town with mass and scale that respect the established historic fabric.
- New districts with taller buildings creating the density needed to support mass transit on the Mason Corridor.
- Multiple focal points which may include a festival marketplace, sports venues, entertainment complexes, and civic plazas dispersed throughout the area.
Key elements (continued)
- Lively, upscale streetscapes to connect these focal points and also provide informal spaces for conversation and contemplation.
- A diversity of housing opportunities for all ages and incomes.
- A balanced and vibrant mix of land uses providing all of the goods, services, employment opportunities, and amenities needed to make the area self-sustaining for residents as well as a pleasant and exciting attraction for visitors.
- Minimal amounts of land consumed by low value uses such as surface parking.

Full attainment of this vision will require something more than private developers pursuing individual projects guided solely by market forces. Infill development is inherently complex and has uncertainties that lead to increased financial risk and costs. Relief will come through greater community engagement in the development process and by forging new partnerships designed to synchronize public and private goals. These are some of the actions needed to stimulate high quality mixed-use infill development:

- Make development standards that respond specifically to infill projects.
- Analyze infrastructure deficiencies and fund improvements.
- Build and maintain a comprehensive spatial database used for planning, promotion, and communication.
- Promote better communications between project stakeholders and neighbors, which will smooth out the planning process and improve the prospects for approval.
- Require enhanced streetscapes and other public amenities and establish mechanisms to share installation and maintenance costs.
- Provide shared services such as market analysis, promotion, entrepreneurial advice, and intern placement resources available to all in the business community.
- Establish a mechanism for resolving land use and regulatory conflicts.

We have identified the need for two empanelled groups and two process initiatives to accomplish these tasks:

Ambassadors Group
This is a diverse volunteer panel consisting of retailers, land owners, developers, public servants, and other downtown stakeholders serving as leader/advocates to shepherd the mixed-use vision for UniverCity. Their range of activities will include promotion, business recruitment, fostering ideas for new development projects, subject matter expertise, helping to develop and coordinate public/private partnerships, and assisting with conflict resolution.

Developer Coordination Committee
Developers, land owners, and allied businesses require a forum in which to exchange ideas, discuss strategies, and explore project coordination opportunities. This group would be modeled after the recently established North Fort Collins Business Association, whose executive membership includes representatives from businesses as well as public officials.
UniverCity Round Table
This is a physical space for the exchange of knowledge and ideas related to new business startups and business development assistance. It will allow students, interns, and established or prospective business owners to interact with mentors and other experts who can help them successfully negotiate a path toward prosperity.

Comprehensive Urban/Economic/Environmental Database
This is a detailed, multi-purpose database used to catalog and analyze existing conditions as well as future plans and projects affecting either the built or natural environment. It will be built and maintained using existing data sources supplemented with finer grained information collected for specific purposes. The database will be used as a tool to promote better planning and communication of UniverCity objectives, and to produce various promotional materials including online maps and virtual video tours.
The Cache La Poudre River is perhaps the greatest natural resource in the City of Fort Collins. Over the years, it has been dredged, diverted, “controlled,” disturbed, and even polluted to some extent by various users and neighbors. Beginning many years ago, however, our city leaders and citizens began to protect and enhance the river corridor with collections of natural areas along its channel, while improving trail access and adding public parks.

The River Task Group, by providing a concise set of objectives and solutions, aims to create a unique downtown river setting that enhances the natural river environment, increases pedestrian access and recreation, protects historic resources, improves the CSU/Downtown connection, and capitalizes on opportunities for development that is sensitive to the river environment.

Beginning many years ago, our city leaders and citizens began to protect and enhance the river corridor with collections of natural areas along its channel, while improving trail access and adding public parks.
1. **Environmental Improvement and Stewardship**

   Create unique projects that will maintain and enhance the character of the river for the long term.

   - Maintain or enhance in-stream flows
   - Explore channel improvements to create continuous habitat for sustainable fish populations, including a self-sustaining trout population, while providing recreational opportunities for people of all ages
   - Encourage regular river cleanup events to remove unwanted debris and to improve habitat
   - Encourage and support stream bank restoration projects that improve native vegetation in cooperation with landowners, stakeholders, and city parks and natural areas
   - Continue noxious weed control efforts through dialogue with the weed control district
   - Encourage the city to continue acquiring select parcels of land along the Poudre river corridor to further build the system of conserved lands.

   **Potential partners include:** Downtown Development Authority, United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado Division of Wildlife, City of Fort Collins (Utilities, Natural Resources, and Parks Department), Colorado State University, Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District, Army Corps of Engineers, National Park Service, National Association of Interpretation (NAI).

2. **Coordinated Plan for Interpretation and Education**

   - Identify activities and opportunities that will facilitate experiences to connect people to the cultural, historical and ecological character of the River.
   - Inventory existing interpretation and education resources (e.g., signs, displays) along the river corridor
   - Develop interpretive themes and educational messages based on an inventory of current resources and input of stakeholders
   - Assess feasibility of wayfinding/directional signage on trails to facilitate pedestrian visitation of the River corridor (including mileage signs, e.g., "½ mile to Old Town Square" along trail)
   - In addition to stakeholders already involved in wayfinding, enlist CSU students, the National Association for Interpretation, and other local interpretive groups to donate expertise to the signage effort

   - Identify points of interest (with historical significance and as places for sculpture) to serve as gathering spots or pullouts for Poudre River Trail and Downtown River District users
   - Coordinate with the Downtown wayfinding project to better identify river areas for residents and visitors. Work with transportation on wayfinding system coordination.

3. **Transportation and Access Infrastructure**

   - Identify new activities and projects that will make the river more accessible and usable.
   - Endorse the construction of a pedestrian bridge across the river to connect the Mason Corridor with North College.
   - Improve trail access for people with disabilities.
   - Improve trail access for a variety of users through better connections, parking in key locations, and other improvements. Specifically provide a connector trail from CSU via Washington - Wood streets directly north to the Poudre Trail and provide better parking along Shields Street for trail users.
   - Enhance the Linden (the axis for renewal) and Lincoln Bridges with architectural features such as artistic guardrails, pedestrian lighting, and other amenities to provide for a more comfortable and attractive walking environment.
   - Improve gateway vistas at key locations along the river corridor (e.g., College, Linden, Lincoln).
   - Identify appropriate locations for the creation of “people” places along the river.
• Support the funding, design and construction of the river enhancement project between College Avenue and Lincoln Avenue (including paddle park and Linden to Lincoln improvements)
• Encourage redevelopment of the “River District” area (Willow, Linden, and Jefferson) to better connect Old Town with the river
• Locate the Discovery Center within the River Corridor to enhance the community's contact with the river
• Offer improved access to and public interaction with the CSU Engines and Energy Conservation Lab (e.g., descriptive signs of operations)

For the long-term continuance ...
• Enlist a high ranking official in the city and at CSU to champion our group.
• Apply for grants and assistance from the Poudre River Trust, the Poudre Heritage Alliance, Friends of the Poudre, the City of Fort Collins, the County Parks Program, CSU, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), the DDA, and other entities to fund projects
• Continue to work with the UniverCity Connections Transportation Group on the pedestrian and street bridge projects, Legacy Parkway, and transit connections to the river areas.

• Enlist a high ranking official in the city and at CSU to champion our group.
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• Continue to work with the UniverCity Connections Transportation Group on the pedestrian and street bridge projects, Legacy Parkway, and transit connections to the river areas.

Submitted by the entire River Task Group…
Matt Evans, Peggy Reeves, John Stokes, Timothy Wilder, John Murray, Don Beard, Donna Beard, Karen Weitkunat, Mark Easter, Ben Manvel, Rheba Massey, George Betz, Linda Knowlton, Nick Rancis, Trudy Haines, Kathleen Benedict, Ben Loeffler, Elisa Guzman
The UniverCity District is the ideal location for a project of this scope and scale because we have come so far already.

Fort Collins' UniverCity District is uniquely positioned to demonstrate visionary leadership and to be at the forefront of social change through a bold commitment to "Net Zero Energy." FortZED looks to transform this area into the largest Net Zero Energy District in the world.

LEADERS WANTED
Our city and state have identified clean energy as top economic development and quality of life initiatives. The significant expertise that resides at CSU, including the Energy Conversion Lab and the CSU Clean Energy Supercluster, coupled with local practice knowledge and enthusiasm among residents and businesses, creates the right critical mass to be at the forefront of our nation's new energy economy. We will be known as leaders – with many of the nation's experts on renewable energy theory and practice living and working in the UniverCity District. We're calling this FortZED for Zero Energy District.
WHAT IS “NET ZERO ENERGY”?
Transforming the UniverCity District into a net zero energy user would mean that the district creates as much thermal and electrical energy “locally” as it uses within its built environment. We have defined “locally” to be within a 50-mile radius of the District. We have also further clarified our definition to stipulate that energy generated is non-polluting, and that energy generation will be balanced with reduced energy consumption through efficiency and conservation.

WHY CREATE A NET ZERO ENERGY DISTRICT?
There is no doubt that there is significant momentum building to develop new sources of clean energy, both to secure our nation’s energy future through reduced use of imported fossil fuels such as oil and to reduce the amount of CO2 released into our atmosphere to minimize global climate change. While these are extremely important and compelling reasons in and of themselves to look to creative ideas such as creating and demonstrating a local Net Zero Energy District, there are several additional reasons that apply specifically to Fort Collins:

Clean energy will contribute to our economic development: There will be significant economic benefit to creating the largest Net Zero Energy District in the world. FortZED would be an example that will gain regional, national and international recognition, creating a reputation for sustainability and cutting edge energy practice known worldwide and attracting visitors who want to explore our community’s extraordinary demonstration district. Leading scholars and teachers will want to relocate to our community and businesses will be attracted to open operations in our region. It would become a testing ground for new technologies and a fertile garden for the development of new businesses in the clean energy sector. Compatible and collaborative enterprises will see the benefit of close proximity to one another and to being in a community that is committed and supportive. High paying primary jobs will be created, including biochemists, biophysicists, electrical engineers, environmental engineers and others to develop technologies that will be sold worldwide.

Fort Collins is already positioned to lead: The UniverCity District is the ideal location for a project of this scope and scale because we have come so far already. Fort Collins has the Northern Colorado Clean Energy Cluster (a business-led, project-oriented group of regional partners including CSU, the City of Fort Collins, the Fort Collins Chamber of Commerce and the Northern Colorado Economic Development Corporation), an abundance of wind, solar and geothermal resources, existing wind farms in close proximity to our community, CSU’s planned proprietary wind farm at Maxwell Ranch, CSU’s extensive research and development in this area, and many local businesses already operating in the clean energy field in Fort Collins. Our community is perfectly positioned to be both an incubator and a testing ground for new technologies and become the “go-to” region for clean energy.

The environment is vital to our quality of life: Fort Collins is such an amazing place because of our quality of life – and we intend to keep it that way. Imagine buildings that will produce more energy than they use. The built environment will have a distinct feel that says something different is going on here. New buildings will be built with innovative, pioneering energy-harvesting technology including solar PV, geo-thermal and micro-wind turbines. Existing buildings will be retrofitted to increase their energy efficiency. Visually intriguing displays that celebrate and educate will be abundant throughout the district. The practice of energy conservation will be as natural as breathing to residents of FortZED, and their involvement in and understanding of the complexities of renewable energy will be a part of their daily living. Pride of place will be palpable. By remaining on the leading edge in sustainable energy and design, we can keep Fort Collins vital economically, environmentally and in the way people live in the emerging new energy economy.

HOW WILL WE CREATE A NET ZERO ENERGY DISTRICT?
Creating a Net Zero Energy District requires concerted effort in four key areas, in order of greatest to least impact: improving energy efficiency in generation, conservation, and flexibility; developing and implementing small-scale on-site renewables such as cost-effective solar PV panels and micro-wind turbines; creating more utility-scale green power such as wind and solar farms; and, to close the gap as needed, purchasing
market-based renewable energy credits to offset the usage of non-renewable energy sources.

**Implementation in 5 overarching strategies:**
1. Create a 5 Megawatt “jump start” demonstration.
2. Encourage and incent high performance in the built environment.
3. Remove barriers to develop needed infrastructure and create unique financial incentives in this district.
4. Local power generation and demand management.
5. Education and promotion.

**Strategy One: Jump start a 5Mw demonstration project by 2010.**
A pilot program which will produce 5 Megawatts of energy, or approximately 10% of the district’s energy demand, will help to raise awareness of FortZED and begin to build momentum for our larger goal of district-wide implementation. A mix of conservation, local power generation, peak load management, and clean energy from utilities will help us to achieve this initial goal. A representative cross section of the district will be solicited to volunteer to participate in conservation strategies and on-site energy production.

**Strategy Two: Encourage and incent high performance in the built environment.**
As new projects are built in the UniverCity District, we can leverage our net zero opportunity and showcase projects as world-class examples of energy production, energy management and resource conservation.

The City, the DDA, CSU and other stakeholders need to be aligned to encourage and guide new and retro-fit programs toward sustainability. FortZED should identify technical resources and financial opportunities and incentives to encourage new development and existing businesses and residences to significantly increase their conservation capabilities.

**Strategy Three: Remove barriers to develop needed infrastructure.**
FortZED leaders will need to work within the political framework to influence legislation and regulation. FortZED is aligned with our governor’s goal of developing the “new energy economy” as a significant economic engine for our state. In addition, the growing momentum for clean energy in the local and national media and shifting public opinion in favor of a more sustainable lifestyle create an opportunity for a public petition, citizen referendum or other show of support to further influence lawmakers. The timing is terrific for legislative and regulatory change.

**Strategy Four: Local power generation and demand management.**
Net zero energy development depends on a mix of larger scale, local, renewable energy projects like CSU’s Maxwell Ranch, on-site energy production including Photo Voltaic solar panel installations and micro-turbines and demand management which includes conservation and peak energy management by the city’s utilities. The Maxwell Ranch wind farm is expected to create more energy than CSU uses and FortZED will work to position ourselves so that the district is able to purchase this local renewable energy.

**Strategy Five: Education and Promotion.**
A PR push will help to jump-start the 5 Megawatt demonstration project and inform the community of its progress while simultaneously educating the public about the need for renewable energy and about existing and new incentives to implement renewable energy. Centralized information and communications materials will need to be developed to educate and excite FortZED stakeholders.

Schools in the UniverCity district could sell CFL bulbs as fund-raisers; they’d be working on service learning in alignment with their community!

**Sustainable energy represents a unique characteristic synergy between Fort Collins, CSU and the environment.**
FortZED will accelerate economic development, drive sustainable design in our built environment and lead our community, our nation and our world into the new energy future.
Fort Collins is fortunate. Downtown and Colorado State University are within a short distance of one another and the Cache la Poudre River is within a 5 minute walk of Old Town. Together these three destinations offer an opportunity for an exciting mobility system that can add significantly to the unfolding cultural milieu of the city. As part of an integrated plan for connecting downtown, the school, and the river, multi-modal people movement represents the silver thread which weaves culture, housing, economy, and urban design into a functional, entertaining, and educational whole.

The mission of the UniverCity Transit Group has been to develop a plan for an integrated transportation system offering inviting and accessible choices for moving people among CSU, Downtown, and the River District.

transit & mobility

Getting there is as much fun as being there. Consider the great places of the world: you will usually find there are great modes of transportation adding to the charm and spirit of the place. Whether it is the rickshaws of Shanghai, the ferry boats of Seattle, or the streetcars of San Francisco, getting around can and should be half the fun.

We have an opportunity for an exciting mobility system that can add significantly to the unfolding cultural milieu of the city.
The system should:

• include multi-modal opportunities (transit, automobile, pedestrian, and bicycle);
• offer cultural and historical attractions and transportation opportunities that attract both tourists and residents;
• be highly accessible to all ages and abilities
• include an inviting educational outreach component.
• be safe at all times of day;
• encourage CSU to be more welcoming and accessible for the community;
• be an environmentally sensitive transportation system

The transportation goals are highly focused on reducing our community’s environmental impact. The main thrust of the transit mission is to promote active living, healthy lifestyle choices, use of alternative fuel vehicles, and rapid transit for mobility. Thus encouraging people to walk, bike, and take transit so they can more fully enjoy the Downtown, CSU, and the Poudre River areas, and at the same time make positive choices that benefit the environment. To accomplish the mission, a variety of projects should be undertaken. Many of these are currently underway and funded. After reviewing numerous proposals and activities the committee has identified a number of priority projects.

Recommended Priority Projects

• Mason Corridor — The centerpiece of transportation should be the Mason Corridor (MAX). The Downtown to CSU segment of the Mason Corridor project is already funded and will be implemented beginning in 2008 with the completion scheduled for 2010. The Mason Corridor will be continued southward to the new South Transit Center, and an extension to the Mason Corridor is suggested at the north end to provide a pedestrian bridge across the Poudre River connecting the north area of town with the corridor. Through these MAX extensions, local and regional access to and from Downtown, CSU, and the River District will be greatly enhanced.

• Downtown Transit Loop — An attractive downtown circulator such as a small bus or jitney and ultimately a streetcar should be added to facilitate east/west mobility throughout downtown. The circulator should eventually extend south to the University Center for the Arts. The circulator should operate frequently and for free to encourage high usage.

• Downtown Bike Plan — The downtown bike plan should be completed and implemented. A key component of the plan is the development of a “Bike Lending Library” to provide “yellow bikes” that would be available for use for free and encourage people to move throughout downtown and the university area on bicycles.

• Downtown Alleyways — The Downtown Development Authority has initiated and significantly funded a plan to create interesting and vibrant alleys downtown. These alley efforts should be expanded, specifically with the intent of connecting the Downtown River District to Old Town; connecting the university with downtown; and connecting all to the Mason Corridor.

• Wayfinding and Interpretation — The downtown area should have an interpretive and wayfinding system integrated throughout the area. The plan should inform visitors and residents on both the physical and cultural history of Fort Collins and include easily understood information on transit vehicles and bike and pedestrian ways. The system would include electronic kiosks with information on transit vehicles and on pedestrian ways. Included as part of the electronic kiosks would be historical information, current events, and GIS location information. A National Association of Interpretation charette is recommended as a kickoff to this project. Other activities such as Volksmarches and a Wiki site would add to the interpretive fun of being downtown.

• River District Projects — The River District is a planned redevelopment area. Planning is underway to develop streetscape images and parking solutions
for this area to facilitate future redevelopment. The planning for this area should incorporate pedestrian, bicycle routes, and urban design strategies to further integrate this area into the Old Town area and into Mason Corridor. The east/west circulator should come through this area.

- **Ram Town** — The University is pursuing a plan to attract game day visitors and residents to the Old Town area. The concept is to have visitors attend athletic events at the University and then have easy access to entertainment, hotel, and dining options available downtown. This plan benefits downtown and the university and should be pursued, possibly utilizing the West Elizabeth Street corridor.

- **Connectivity Plan** — A comprehensive plan should be developed depicting all the various transportation corridors and modalities downtown and to the university. The plan should be produced in an attractive format and be available to visitors and residents. In addition to the priority projects listed above, longer term projects also are suggested including a fixed rail streetcar, relocation of the tracks on Mason Street, regional transportation linkages, and other transit related improvements. The report also recommends associated projects not directly related to transit, but affecting the overall success of downtown. Examples include the Downtown River District, a Portal of Peace Museum, and others.
What you have read are summaries of the dreams for Fort Collins' future spelled out by the citizens of the City listed below. They may be dreams but they can all be achieved. Once the people of Fort Collins hear these ideas, many of them will embrace some or all of these visions and that will ensure that these dreams will become reality.

stakeholders

Co-Chairs
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Mark Driscoll
David Edwards
Peggy Reeves

Coordinating Committee
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Ray Caraway
Mike Dellenbach
Joe Frank
Bruce Hendee
Victor Holtorf
Blanche Hughes
Mike Jensen
Larry Kendall
Janey Kramer
Lucia Liley
Wynne Odell
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Stakeholders
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Rod Adams
Anne Alexander
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John Alvarez
Tim Anderson
Keith Anderson
Paul Anderson
Betty Aragon-Mitotes
Stacey Baumgarn
Don Beard
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Beryl "Brownie" McGraw
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