Fort Collins Housing Crisis and the U+2 Ordinance

THE PROBLEM
The lack of available housing and increasing rental prices, caused in great part by the U+2 ordinance, is a significant problem for Fort Collins residents. The ordinance especially hurts CSU students who are also facing college unaffordability.

THE ORDINANCE STATES THAT:
“Occupancy in a residential dwelling unit (single-family, duplex, and multifamily) is restricted to: one family as defined below (Section 5.1.2) and not more than one additional person; OR one adult and their dependents (if any), a second adult and their dependents (if any), and not more than one additional person.”

Rental costs in Fort Collins grew at a very similar rate to comparable metro areas before the U+2 ordinance. However, since the adoption of the ordinance housing costs have increased at a much faster rate. Research conducted by Corona Insights demonstrates that this increase is not likely due to an increase in housing demand unique to Fort Collins because of the decrease in the average yearly change in population.

WHO IT IMPACTS
The U+2 ordinance impacts our whole community. The increase in rental costs and decreased housing availability restricts spending in the local shops and businesses.

More people rent now than ever before in Fort Collins. The restrictions of U+2 therefore impact all types of renters. Only 47 percent of violators are estimated to be college students, with 53 percent estimated to be non-students. A majority of these violators are working (63%), and relatively few are disabled or receiving any type of public assistance.

HOW WE CAN ADDRESS THE CRISIS
By lifting the restrictions of the U+2 ordinance, we can make our community accessible for all residents. Housing availability exists, but the U+2 ordinance is standing in the way and driving up costs. We must lift the U+2 ordinance and then collectively address community concerns, like parking.

Our community has long been a mix of young and old, students and professionals, newcomers and long-term residents. We can achieve good neighborhood quality and facilitate neighborly support and community while also improving housing accessibility. The two are not mutually exclusive.