FortZED

FortZED (Zero Energy District) is a community-driven initiative to create one of the world's largest net zero energy districts in an existing community. The FortZED district encompasses approximately two square miles that includes downtown Fort Collins extending from the Poudre River on the north and extending south and west to the campus of Colorado State University (see area map).

FortZED Vision and Mission

Fort Collins will be the model community for a leading and replicable net Zero Energy District. The mission of FortZED is to transform the downtown area and the main campus of Colorado State University into a net Zero Energy District through conservation, efficiency, renewable sources and smart technologies. This bold and visionary project, first conceived in 2007, will help prove out the concepts, pathways and technologies to achieve net zero energy use in an existing community.

FortZED will be realized through a systems approach with a broad portfolio of smart grid technologies, renewable energy sources and supporting public policies. Energy generation will come from renewable sources within a 50-mile radius of FortZED; renewable and conventional distributed sources within the district; and demand reduction and response within the district.

Finally, FortZED will provide a strong competitive advantage to expand existing capabilities and attract clean energy technology companies to Colorado that can replicate the technical solutions embodied in FortZED in other urban environments, on campuses, and in existing and new communities nationwide and around the world.

Collaboration and Partnerships

The FortZED initiative is a three-way collaboration of the Colorado Clean Energy Cluster (CCEC), Fort Collins Utilities, and UniverCity Connections. The CCEC is an economic development organization that works to attract, incubate and grow Colorado's clean energy companies through collaborative initiatives, one of which is FortZED.

The success of FortZED will rely on continuing its existing partnerships and extending partnership opportunities to other organizations as additional projects are developed and implemented. Current partners include local government, nonprofit organizations, leading edge companies, technology providers, and institutions.

FortZED Strategies

Representing approximately 10 to 15 percent of Fort Collins Utility's electric distribution system, the FortZED district currently serves approximately 7,200 residential and commercial electric utility customers. In order to achieve net zero energy—generating as much as energy as we use on an annual basis, a targeted list of strategies will be employed.

• Conservation and Efficiency: Reducing energy use in buildings
• Renewable Energy: Local generation from renewable energy sources
• Energy Storage/Load Management: Balancing and optimizing energy sources
• Smart Grid: The technology and infrastructure needed to enable a net Zero Energy District
FortZED Benefits

- It is the catalyst for the deployment of a more responsive and flexible energy infrastructure
- It is an innovative energy project that supports a progressive municipal utility
- It complements the City’s Climate Action Plan, Energy Policy, and other related Utilities programs and projects
- It will empower the consumer with new choices to manage electric use
- It fosters local innovation and entrepreneurship
- It provides economic support for local private sector clean energy technology companies
- It will develop a clean energy technologies workforce
- It will create high-paying primary jobs as well as hundreds of spinoff jobs in the renewable energy industry
- It legitimizes our region as a leader in clean energy technology innovation
- It has philanthropic-minded, grassroots support in the community
- It is collaborative—with a wide variety of partners and opportunities for new affiliates as programs are developed
- It is drawing national and international attention and funding for its vision and progress to date.

FortZED Progress to Date

The FortZED Steering Committee oversees a range of existing projects in various stages of completion and is also charged with creating the long-term strategic plan and associated new projects for realizing the FortZED vision.

Existing projects include:

- Jump Start Project: Renewable and Distributed Systems Integration Project—a project funded in partnership with the U.S. Department of Energy
- Community Energy Challenge: A grassroots campaign to increase energy efficiency and conservation practices among residents and occupants in the district
- Smart Grid Investment Grant Project: A city-wide project that provides a key enabling technology to FortZED—smart metering on all homes and businesses and targeted distribution system upgrades
- Public Buildings Project: Energy retrofits and solar installations on public buildings in FortZED through a Department of Local Affairs NEC Grant

Follow the progress of FortZED at FortZED.com