



An open letter to Starbucks



From the Fort Collins Citizens
for Local Business
Accountability

Until Starbucks demonstrates its commitment to the Old Town Community, please consider these nearby, locally-owned alternatives.

Dear Starbucks,

Old Town is Special

We are Fort Collins Citizens for Local Business Accountability, and we would like to welcome to your beautiful new location in the Northern Hotel. As you know, because the renovation of the Northern is part of an affordable housing project, your store benefited from our tax dollars.

Old Town is unlike anyplace else in Fort Collins. Indeed, Old Town is unlike anyplace else in the country, and we are very proud of it. It helps define Fort Collins for us, with its friendly atmosphere, pedestrian areas, and most important, its local flavor. We cherish our local businesses here. A dollar spent with them stays in our community and works for us again and again.

We hope that — as a powerful outsider coming into Old Town — you will use your tremendous resources to raise the bar on your own business practices. It is in that spirit of hopefulness that we welcome you and invite you to be a true member of the community.

Our Concerns

Your stores were targeted and your windows broken during the Seattle WTO protests in 1999. Since then you've occasionally used heavy police fortification to protect some of your stores. We are opposed to that sort of conflict following you to Old Town. To ensure community peace, we would like to voice some of our concerns in the hope of beginning a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

- *Community Responsibility.* You are now operating within mere blocks of over half a dozen Fort Collins-based coffee shops. These businesses are essential to our local economy: their profits stay in Fort Collins. Cannibalizing their business would tear the fabric of this community.

- *Fair Trade for Coffee Beans.* Starbucks has come under intense international scrutiny for business practices involving your coffee growers. Global Exchange and several other noted human rights organizations have repeatedly requested that Starbucks ensure its growers receive a fair price for their labor and product. Thus far, Starbucks has taken only hesitant steps toward solving this problem.
- *Genetically Modified Foods.* Starbucks continues to use milk containing recombinant Bovine Growth Hormone (rBGH), which is often associated with higher risks for cancer. rBGH is banned in every industrialized country in the world, except the U.S.
- *Labor Practices.* Starbucks has been profiled extensively for questionable labor practices, including allegations of intimidating, threatening and engaging in “psychological warfare” against workers who want to join unions. Health and safety charges and charges of labor standards violations have been brought in front of the U.S. and Canadian governments. Starbucks’ use of prison labor to package coffee has also been documented.

Commitment to Community

Starbucks is a respected and successful multinational corporation, with revenues of over \$2.6 billion last year. You clearly have the resources to be a leader in your industry and in all the communities you touch. We’re asking that you use those resources to honor our requests, making your Old Town store a showcase of community responsibility, honoring our tax money, local businesses, and our special Old Town space.

- Support Colorado agriculture by purchasing all milk from local dairy farmers by May 1.

- Pledge to refrain from selling anything made with sweatshop labor or prison labor.
- Respect your role as part of an affordable housing project for seniors by hiring seniors in the store.
- Eliminate all your use of genetically modified products, including milk that contains rBGH, by this time next year.
- Honor our Spanish-speaking community members by providing all written materials in Spanish and English.
- Ensure coffee farmers earn a living wage by brewing all coffee drinks in the store using beans that have been certified as “fair trade” by TransFair, the internationally recognized certifying body, starting May 1.
- Respect your workers by pledging to pay them a living wage, and to support their rights to unionize if they desire.
- Present a plan for using local and regional services and suppliers as much as possible, including your printed goods, paper and ceramic cups, and bakery supplies.
- Disclose annually how much of every dollar collected in your store stays in Fort Collins and Colorado, where it benefits our community. Outline a plan to keep more of every dollar here.
- Outline a plan to assist the nearby small coffee shops in case they encounter financial hardship within the next three years, whether provably your fault or not.

Please send your responses to the above items by electronic mail to mail@fairbucks.org no later than Monday, March 25. We look forward to your timely and positive responses, demonstrating your ongoing commitment to our community.