

City of Lafayette Comprehensive Plan

To: Phillip Patterson, Planning Manager

From: George Harrison, RNL Design

Date: June 3, 2003

Re: Developers Panel: Summary Notes

On May 30, 2003, the RNL consultant team met with members of the Lafayette development community to present and then discuss the first draft of the City of Lafayette 2003 Comprehensive Plan. The following summarizes the comments received during this meeting:

Comments:

- How many acres of Open Space does the Plan propose, has the City budgeted to purchase this Open Space, and over what time period would this Open Space be purchased?

Reply: Of the approximately 1900 acres of specific “in-play” undeveloped parcels focused upon by the planning effort, 510 acres are designated as Open Space. Overall, the draft Land Use Plan identifies approximately 891 acres of existing City owned Open Space and 846 acres of proposed Open Space that is in addition to that Open Space proposed on individual “in-play” parcels.

- Though support exists for the designations of mixed-use on the Land Use Plan, concern exists that the City does not have a mixed-use zoning district. Currently, all developments use conventional zoning districts, even for Planned Unit Developments (P.U.D.’s). Will the City’s Development and Zoning Code be amended to create a mixed-use zone district, and if so when?

Reply: The Comp plan includes implementation recommendations – one of which is to update the existing code to comply w/ the new Comprehensive Plan. It is up to the CAC/Council/PC to prioritize this.

- If the Land Use Plan does not reflect mixed-use on a parcel, can the plan still be changed to include mixed-use on that parcel?
- How does the Land Use Plan relate to zoning?

Reply: If the Land Use Plan and the Zoning Map conflict, the zoning map will prevail unless the landowner requests to rezone his/her property. Then the Land Use Plan will be used to guide the review and decision making related to the rezoning request.

- How much flexibility exists within the Land Use Plan?

Reply: The Comprehensive Plan is more than just the Land Use Map, the plan’s supporting goals and policies are equally important. A development proposal’s compliance with or support of the Plan’s goals and policies can provide guidance for considering land uses other than those prescribed by the Land Use Plan.

- As written in the draft document, is a “super-majority” needed to amend the Comp Plan?

Reply: As drafted, 5 out of 7 Council votes are required to amend the Comprehensive Plan. One argument in support of this provision is that the Comprehensive Plan represents a yearlong extensive investment of

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time, money, and effort on the part of the City and the citizens of Lafayette community, and therefore amending the Comprehensive Plan should require more than the standard simple majority vote.

- Experience in other communities have been that it is getting increasingly harder both practically and politically to amend comprehensive plans.
- Are the impacts of the shown extension of South Boulder Road to the east understood? Such an extension could provide an alternative by-pass for east west regional traffic around Old Town Lafayette. As shown on the draft Land Use Plan, the extension would pass through designated open space meaning that there would not be development to either benefit from this roadway extension nor to help pay for it. Topographic conditions in the area designated for the extension of South Boulder would hinder both roadway construction as well as possible adjacent development.

Response: The potential extension of South Boulder Road as shown of the draft Land Use Map does not represent an actual alignment, but only the possibility of extending South Boulder Road to the east.

- The large development proposed to the east in Broomfield known as Siena (formerly Preble Creek), currently has no provisions for an east/west roadway extension that would tie into a South Boulder Road extension from Lafayette. The potential residential development to the east of Lafayette could provide Lafayette a significant commercial market opportunity.

Response: The mixed-use commercial node proposed on the draft Land Use Plan at Hwy. 119 and Baseline Road is meant in part to capture the potential market opportunities resulting from planned development to the east of Lafayette. Moving this mixed-use node southward to Hwy 119 and South Boulder Road was not discussed at any of the project's previous public meetings.

- Does the draft Land Use Plan focus future commercial development too much to the periphery of Lafayette, at the detriment of the Urban Renewal Area/Downtown Lafayette? Will the designation of Gateways at every major intersection on the community edge also detract attention away from the Urban Renewal Area/Downtown Lafayette? The more efforts are made to by-pass regional traffic away from Downtown, the more critical it is that Downtown Lafayette achieves a “critical mass” and becomes a stronger regional commercial destination.
- Broomfield represents severe competition to Lafayette for regional sales-tax dollars. Lafayette should be concerned with sales-tax leakage to Broomfield.
- Many of the communities within Lafayette’s trade area are attempting to create new village centers/downtowns in their new developments. However, retailers resist being “socially –engineered”. These other communities are trying to create what Lafayette already has – a real downtown. Downtown Lafayette is a tremendous asset that needs receive more attention/investment. Lafayette should review other communities’ development plans to understand the competition for sales-tax dollars.
- Lafayette needs to be flexible when considering development proposals.
- All cities in Lafayette’s retail trade area are focusing their efforts on commercial development and not on residential development. Without significant residential development, there will not be enough rooftops to match the amount of commercial being planned for and built in the trade area. For example, in the Northwest Parkway/I-25 area, the Siena/Preble Creek project (Broomfield) is proposing 20 million square feet of commercial while the Perlmutter (Thornton) development is proposing 10 million square feet of commercial. A similar problem also exists with a surplus of hotel rooms compared to a lack of supporting office space.

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- Allow Broomfield and Erie to have the residential growth and its impacts. Try to get more jobs in Lafayette like the 2,000 jobs associated with the new hospital development.
- Regional cooperation statements within the draft Comprehensive Plan are too soft. Lafayette needs to be more aggressive with Inter-governmental Agreements (IGA's) dealing with sales tax sharing in key geographic locations.
- Lafayette needs to find different ways of fulfilling mixed-use goals with quality design – possibly a point system as used by other communities. The draft Land Use Plan's minimum ratios are too restrictive. The market demand is not equal to the amount of commercial that is being required for these mixed-use parcels. There is no need for the nearly 600,000 square feet of retail on Parcel #29 in our lifetime. Some parcels will be de facto open space due to the inability to meet these minimum ratios.
- The draft Land Use Plan does not provide enough potential residential.
- The densities proposed by the draft Land Use Plan have gotten out of sync with what the current zoning allows. The new lower densities counter aims of increasing densities within the City.
- The potential roadway extensions/realignments are just dashed lines on the draft Land Use Plan, but they carry a fair amount of weight. How can these “suggested” projects be brought to fruition?

Response: The realignment of Hwy. 7 was added to the plan to start discussion of how to relieve Baseline Road. This provision, however, is probably not high on either the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) or Boulder County's priorities list. It is not in the City's vision for Baseline Road to be expanded to a 4-lane road. The extension of South Boulder Road is being shown on the map to show it is a possible long-term goal for the City. The City then needs to bring these potential roadway improvements to CDOT's attention. Putting them on the Land Use Map is the first step.

- Discussions have been held with Boulder County regarding the extension of South Boulder Road. The Stevenson/Nelson annexation agreement has extensive language describing open space dedication costs and cost sharing of a possible South Boulder Road extension.