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**Minutes
City of Fort Collins
Futures Committee Meeting
Regular Meeting
CIC Room, City Hall
300 LaPorte Ave
September 8, 2014
4:00–6:00pm**

Committee Members Present:

Wade Troxell, Chair
Gerry Horak
Bruce Hendee
Darin Atteberry
Gino Campana

Committee Members Absent:

None

City Staff:

Dianne Tjalkens, Admin/Board Support
Jeff Mihelich, Deputy City Manager
Cameron Gloss, Planning Manager
Mike Beckstead, Chief Financial Officer
Mary Pat Aardrup, Volunteer Coordinator, MHE
Kelly DiMartino, Assistant City Manager
Karen Weitkunat, Mayor
Jon Haukaas, Water Engineering & Field Operations Manager
Sam Houghteling, Graduate Management Assistant
Laurie Kadrich, Community Development and Neighborhood Services Director
Kevin Gertig, Utilities Executive Director

Invited Guests:

Community Members:

Kevin Jones, Fort Collins Area Chamber of Commerce

Wade Troxell called meeting to order at 4:12pm

Member Comments: Bruce directed attention to a follow up document on the Water Security meeting. He asked members to look this over and provide comments by the end of the meeting.

Approval of August Minutes:

Gerry moved to approve the August 22 minutes. Gino seconded.
Motion passed unanimously, 4-0-0.

Think Tank Item 18: Land Use Planning & Build Out— Cameron Gloss

The question is, how big is Fort Collins going to get? This is a build out analysis that explores what is likely to happen as we grow over time. This includes the land in the GMA, not just City limits. Fort Collins defines greenfield as vacant and undeveloped land, generally around the perimeter. Infill is development on vacant parcels in already developed areas. Infill can be an adaptive reuse of an existing building, an expansion, or larger and more intensive uses of a property. The analysis is theoretical based on GIS and 2010 census data, as well as databases from South College Corridor Plan, Midtown Corridor, etc., and professional judgment. The intent is to look at what is permitted under the City Plan and zoning. The analysis nets out land that is undevelopable including parks, natural areas, and flood plains. They take into account approved projects and projects under review as well as CSU housing. There are two scenarios including status quo growth and a higher density scenario that maximizes the development potential. Today's population within the GMA is 169,009 persons. The estimated population is approximately 250,000 at build out. Staff has modelled 1%, 2% and 3% growth trends. Cameron showed a map of buildable land and areas that could be intensified, including Midtown. The southeast quadrant has been nearly built out over the last twenty years, with a lot of activity happening there now. There is growth capacity north of Prospect. Mountain Vista, North College, and Mulberry Corridor are areas of focus for development. The areas around downtown, through CSU, and into Midtown are being looked at for more residential and mixed use, though it is mostly commercial now. There will be activity in these areas. A more detailed map of Mountain Vista couples the area with Mulberry. Geographically they are close together and the transportation systems connect them. Staff has treated Mulberry as we have Midtown to see what kind of density we could have in this area and have done the same with the industrial district. The vision for the area is that it remains an industrial incubator, with intensification that does not change character. With the Midtown data, staff was able to update South College information. When you project out using current population data, we reach build out in 2028 with 3% growth. With 1% growth build out comes at 2050. This hypothetical analysis is based on a static plan. What if the plan changes? What if the growth boundary is modified? What if the City decided to invest in areas to make them developable? There are ways to look at land use differently. When you look at Mulberry Corridor, what if we revised it in a different way?

Comments/Q & A:

- Water tap fees are 20% higher in ELCO than in Fort Collins, which affects home affordability.
- It is the cost to find raw water. The developers have to get water rights and they aren't available.
- We want to have a conversation with Council on Mountain Vista area within the next few quarters. The constraints are water and transportation.
- The build out question will look at asset management for what we have. This is the start of the north east conversation.
- Our projections may not be able to be realized due to the constraints.
- Pink areas on the map are commercial?
- They are employment areas. In New Jersey Anheuser Busch had complaints about the plant from nearby residential so when they purchased here, they bought a buffer area

around the plant as well. Since the transfer of ownership, the conversation can be more open, but they are not a developer.

- Another factor in that area is oil and gas development.
- The assumptions for growth include a 13,000 person increase for residents and 16,000 new jobs in that subarea.
- The next version of Mountain Vista may have lower numbers.
- The cost of water dramatically affects housing affordability and we are counting on this land for developable inventory.
- The Howes/Meldrum area has campuses like OtterBox?
- The developers see value in being near downtown and the Mason Corridor is making it more attractive.
- The realignment of Vine will drive a different mix of uses.
- When we talk about the relationship between providing the full range of services such as transportation and police, it becomes a question of timing.
- When you look at the growth potential of the city, do you look at the population potential as well?
- We are going through that process now. We are hoping that the next City Plan will focus on Job/Housing balance. We don't want to export our housing.
- Oftentimes these plans are put together through looking at revenue sources. We can re-look at that balance.
- There is a lot of redevelopable land in South College.
- We had a conceptual review for two contiguous properties recently. There is more activity coming into South College.
- At build out what does the community start to look like in advance planning?
- There are many cities that have reached their growth areas all over the world and they plan redevelopment.
- Vail 30 years ago was a small ski town and now it is a significant resort town. You can see the changes that are happening there.
- What was the growth rate we used when we created the GMA?
- It was 1.5 %. However, there is more redevelopment potential than was recognized the last time we did the analysis.
- Is it accurate to say within 23 to 36 years, we expect build out to be around 250,000 people?
- Yes.
- You talked about altering development densities. There are people who would like to see us alter it down. We have the ability to down-zone and lower density. Have you looked at various scenarios such as this? We ought to be thinking about policy direction to make it 200,000 instead if necessary. How would we accomplish that instead?
- We had EPS complete a Housing Affordability Policy Study. We have added 5000 new jobs that people are in-commuting for. They are choosing to live outside of Fort Collins; it could be preference either in affordability or lot size.
- We have people leaving Fort Collins during the day for jobs, but more people are coming in than leaving for work.
- Boulder has 50,000 people in-commuting per day.
- It isn't just a matter of what the density is, but what is the mix? We need a balance of housing and jobs across the community. The biggest increase is 1200 new trips coming in

from Windsor. There is a carbon impact for commuting, but what does the City look like with more rental units? We need to have this conversation.

- Cities that have tried to limit density have created an issue with affordability. Without intervention basic market forces put us at build out. Is that acceptable, or do we need to make changes?
- Don't look at a number, but look at quality. Can we have a livable city at a population of 250,000? There are so many factors outside of our control.
- We've been messaging World Class for 8 years and now it is being accepted. One thing I want is for the City to still be friendly at 250,000 people. What will the new brand be? Right now the City is clean, we have a great downtown, and we have friendly people. If we are going to think of 25 years out and branding and telling the story, there is a chance we can get that vision. Let's also talk about the number. There are people who moved here 10, 20, 50 years ago who did not sign up for 250,000 people. It is a tough conversation to have.
- How often do you see other cities looking at livability metrics? Can we keep getting across town in a certain amount of time? Can we have a mix of local and chain restaurants?
- Measuring how to get across town is a relatively new measure. There have always been train issues, but traffic has increased. With population increase there are many things we can do here now that we used to have to travel to Denver for.
- Medical care and access has also improved with population growth.
- People are concerned about this kind of growth.
- If you have your existing neighborhood and a sense of place in it, you maintain that feel.
- The Park Land Fee and other programs are trying to do just that. If we hadn't chosen in the '60s to expand water service, the areas still would have grown, it just wouldn't have been called Fort Collins. Timnath is growing. How does that affect Fort Collins? Is it a bad thing that people are driving in from Wellington? Whose perspective are we looking at? What is the problem we are trying to solve or address?
- Or are we just identifying the impacts? In Boulder jobs stayed inside and housing went outside. They ended up with traffic and pollution. What are the costs?
- Traffic has impacts on air quality.
- We have poor air quality already. We had a quality of life metrics 30 years ago. Policy affects quality of life. No matter how big Fort Collins gets my neighborhood is already built out and won't change much.
- Once you get off the arterial, you are in your own world.
- The policies drive whether my neighborhood stays a livable place. The questions are: how do we interact with things outside the boundaries? Is another city going to develop at our northern boundary?
- To the east Timnath is going to have a lot of rooftops.
- Their assumption is 20,000 at build out. Their geographic area is spread out; it is low density.
- It may be a little higher than that. Maybe low 30,000s.
- You can start getting an Orange County look, with endless suburbs.
- Our growth management area will be adjacent to someone else's GMA.
- We cannot look at this in isolation.
- In 1997 the objective was to buy separators along the I-25 corridor.
- There is a letter being drafted now to discuss separators with Timnath.

- There are different approaches to GMA. You could argue that having a larger GMA gives you greater control over what happens, or you can work regionally with IGAs.
- The argument on the other side was to get more land in our GMA to build our own separator.
- In the '90s Windsor and Johnstown were annexing a lot of land.
- There was a recommendation that our GMA go far beyond I-25. At the time Timnath wanted to stay 400 to 500 people. However, we did not do that. There were some people advising we annex the airport property. But the Council at that time did not support that concept.
- What about west? People want to live in Rist Canyon and south Horsetooth. Does that happen with the County? The County doesn't want density. Would those become separate communities?
- What you can control is always making sure the City is a great place in the way we build out. Urban design and making sure we continue to have the highest quality water matter. No matter what happens the community will always be a shining light.
- We have to tell the story in advance. We need to be intentional in that.
- In projecting forward, we think of just more of what we have. As Fort Collins has grown it has gotten better. South of Harmony could have the biggest and best things in the world happening here. We can have signature buildings that become iconic.
- In the northeast water costs more, and the available land has issues. We could cannibalize zones to get what we want, but instead we should to create a vision and stick to it to get the desired character. The Mason Corridor only works with nearby housing and transit. If you have jobs and homes out northeast, people will buy homes near their jobs.
- The developers are getting close to the maximum densities now.
- What this says is that Max isn't going to encourage that much density.
- We are talking about really increasing density along the Midtown Corridor.
- The growth boundary can only change in the north.
- There could be areas where the boundary could shrink. In the north we have County subdivisions that are low density with unpaved roads. They don't have services to the level we would provide. Potentially they come out of the GMA.
- If they come out of ours, then they go into someone else's GMA, which defeats the purpose.
- An example is east of Terry Lake a developer came in and had to develop a road for a ¼ mile and do a flagpole annexation. Does it really make sense there when it has a rural character?
- Wellington is interested in getting much bigger.
- The assumptions about growth and what the community wants to be are fundamental. People are pushing back on redevelopment along the corridor. Once you know what the community wants, you can build on that. In the last few months we are seeing people changing how they think about getting around town. Deciding what you want to the community to be is fundamental to deciding what tools you use to get there.
- Community leaders need to acknowledge that without strong action to down-zone growth is going to happen. There needs to be a conversation with the community there.
- A lot of the work has been done by City Plan. Some tweaking can be done. The challenge is having that conversation community-wide. Is there a way to share the vision so citizens aren't surprised when this happens?

- It's hard to talk about distinctive architecture when you are in the mode we are in. Communities of 250,000 reach a level of needing that element. Unless we have community buy-in you cannot have the conversation of these bigger picture items.
- When we talk about affordable housing, we aren't talking about mobile home parks, we are looking at quality.
- There is a conversation about tiny houses happening now. In that large of a community, there can be a place for tiny houses.
- We've always had an eclecticism of our neighborhoods. Old Town has a variety.
- That conversation about population needs to be community-wide.
- Original population projections were for 220,000. These projections include redevelopment and density. The people who have accepted 220,000 may not like 250,000.
- If this area has a long term drought, it will change what people do. Detroit's population projections always showed more, and now they have fewer.
- The next meeting will be on aging infrastructure and discussing whether we have the asset management and resources to fund projects that will keep Fort Collins from decaying.
- It is predominantly a financial issue.
- There is a systems issue, but once that is determined, it becomes financial.
- The population is different from our rate payers. Some of our utilities won't have much growth.
- How are we planning to ensure we have adequate major resources such as water and electricity? We know storage problems are very hard.
- 230,000 has always been the number in our projections. Our portfolio is set for this growth, but storage is always an issue. Other cities have more storage than us.
- Working with tri-states on water is a great issue. What are we going to do for water and if we have a drought? We are part of the electricity conversation as well.
- Then there is thermal energy. Highest and best use is a good principle of evaluation. One disappointment I've had is the purposeful downsizing of Prospect. That evaluation could be as much environmental as it is economic and social. We want to better utilize the resources we have.
- The build out analysis maximizes the utilization of land.
- Our zoning and land use plans are predicated on those values.
- University Connections will be having a forum on these issues.
- There are conversations around the complexity of the issues, etc. similar to what was done with the river planning. The university is interested as they talk about student projections. The connections between the downtown community, university, and City need to be discussed.
- The Poudre is a specific issue that people can rally around. The GMA will be impossible to get consensus on.
- We are not trying to get consensus.
- The bigger question is how we work with other entities like Timnath, Wellington, etc.
- Do you think they are being sophisticated as they approach our GMA? They don't have the resources to do a proper plan.
- Look at metro Denver. There is a lot more collaboration on transportation and other topics.

- What is Larimer County going to do with areas outside of GMAs?
- There will be more regional planning. Other areas that have failed to do that have water and transit issues, among others.
- This needs to be a regional conversation to start.

DO 18: Next Steps

- December 8 we can bring this topic back.
- A map with regional GMAs would be helpful. Timnath is interested in more discussions about working together. Maybe we can help them.
- Can we invite Wellington and other areas?
- What are the discussions to have with them about the areas between Wellington and Fort Collins?
- Cameron's slides and handouts should be provided to all of Council.
- One Councilmember suggested having estate zoning in the northeast could be an answer there. There are many views.
- UCC's next scoping meeting is the end of September. They could share the dialogue to make this work.
- UCC wanted to talk about water in the past, and many people got very informed. Can this be leveraged the same way?
- There was a comment in the paper about the Summit garage that said City planners don't know what they are doing. If we had a way to share our City Plan as a campaign in the paper weekly, or somewhere else, that could help tell the story.
- We have not done well as a city organization of highlighting the good work being done.
- Telling stories instead of giving facts is better.
- We will be doing a video model of the whole downtown area. We can give various scenarios in it. We are moving in that direction.
- People are missing the context of the design that we have chosen this way to grow.
- Technology is evolving and the next City Plan will have a very different public engagement process. We have heard that we don't touch a high enough percentage of the population in our outreach.
- There are ways to aggregate data input. Utilizing technology and media will help get better information.

Future Meeting Topics Discussion

- October—Aging Infrastructure long term management
- November—Climate Action Plan
- November—Long Term Financing
- December—Land Use Planning & Build Out Revisited

Meeting adjourned by Wade Troxell at 5:45pm.