

# September 15<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> Public Workshops

## Summary

### Overview

The City of Fort Collins and Larimer County hosted two workshops in September, on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, to discuss issues in specific areas of northwest Fort Collins and portions of Larimer County that are covered by the Northwest Subarea Plan. These were the first public meetings for the project, which will continue through 2006. The issues raised at these meetings will help set the stage for choices to address topics such as land use, trails, transportation, utilities and others. The next public events are targeted for November 2005, but no specific dates have been set yet.

### Notification Prior to Meetings

- Before the meeting, the project team mailed out 2,400 letters to all households and properties in the area containing information about the two meetings, the "Summer '05 – Project Bulletin," which also contained a mail-back comment form.
- The planning team met with the Coloradoan to discuss the project. The Coloradoan posted an Opinion piece on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2005 with the title, "Public must drive areas plans for northwest," which included information about the upcoming meetings.
- The Coloradoan also printed an article following the first meeting, on Friday, September 16<sup>th</sup>, entitled, "Residents speak up to preserve rural life."

### Meeting Attendance

The sign-in sheets and "dot map" show that people from all parts of the study area attended the meetings:

- 85 people signed in for the September 15<sup>th</sup> meeting at CSU.
- 125 people signed in for the September 27<sup>th</sup> meeting at Lincoln Junior High.

### Meeting Agenda and Format

Both meetings followed a similar format, as follows:

1. **Sign-in and Open House.** The first half hour of the meeting allowed time for participants to place a dot on the study area map to indicate where they live and work, review posted materials, and talk with staff.
2. **Discussion.** Staff responded to key questions raised by the community and then provided a brief overview of the planning process and continued opportunities for public involvement.
3. **Small Group Working Session.** The large group broke into smaller groups organized by area (e.g., North and South of Vine Drive) and discussed issues and choices.
4. **Ideas and Preferences.** Individual participants posted dots on ideas boards.

## Handouts and Materials Available

- Copies of the display posters (in limited quantities).
- Copies of Coloradoan newspaper articles
- Comment forms
- Listening Log through September 15<sup>th</sup> (for first meeting).

These materials are also available on the website: [www.fcgov.com/advanceplanning](http://www.fcgov.com/advanceplanning)

## Comment Forms and Listening Log

Comment forms were completed and turned in by a limited number of people. These comments are summarized in the “Listening Log,” which also contains the 60+ Bulletin comment forms received via mail, fax, or email (see Listening Log).

## Questions Raised by Participants

During the discussion period of the meeting, participants raised the following questions, that staff answered (see attached Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) sheet for answers to many of the questions):

- Who is Clarion and why are they involved in the creation of this plan?
- What clout or interest does Clarion have in the plan? Are they developer-driven?
- How will this plan impact current and future zoning in the area?
- To what degree will residents be involved, and will that involvement truly help shape the process or is this just lip service?
- What prompted the city and county to make this plan?
- Was this plan initiated because there is a developer planning a project in the area?
- Is this process merely seeking to provide a “rubber stamp” to a plan that has already been developed for the area? Is there a preconceived outcome?
- What will happen if development is proposed before the plan is complete and adopted?
- Will this plan impact or change current development proposals?
- How was the boundary for the area determined?
- Will CSU be involved in this planning process?
- How many planned unit development (PUD) proposals have been submitted to the county for this area?
- Is this plan going to lead to forced annexations like we are seeing with the southwest enclave?
- What is the timeline of this plan?
- Will the special review process override the recommendations made in the plan?
- How does this plan relate to the comprehensive plans of the city and county?
- What constraints to development has staff considered for the area?
- Is water supply a constraint to development?
- What types of trails would be proposed and where would they go?
- How would grandfathering relate to this plan (in both city and county)?
- Is this plan being driven by a desire for more sales tax?
- Is this plan attempting to develop the area in a manner similar to south Fort Collins?
- What is the overall process and timeline for the development of this plan?

- Is this going to be a document that holds “feet to the fire”- how much will it impact decision made for the area?
- Who gets the final decision on this plan and what are the opportunities for public input?
- To what degree are suggestions for the area going to be restricted by codes and regulations? Can we really make our suggestions happen?
- If the City and County approve a plan for a trail that crosses my property without my consent, what happens? Is this the same for roads?
- What is the process of informed consent in the County?

## General Comments

The Small Group Workshop comments and the Ideas Preference Summary sheets (attached) highlight the following directions for and concerns about the plan:

### Common Ideas:

- **Trails.** Many residents would like improved trail connections, but property owners and residents do not necessarily want new trails adjacent to or through their properties. Many residents want improved (safe) equestrian, bicycle, and pedestrian access on Taft Hill, Shields, Vine, LaPorte, and Overland Trail.
- **Open Space/Agricultural Lands.** Most residents would like to keep as much land for agriculture and open space as possible. Small groups discussed using creative approaches such as neighborhoods collectively purchasing lands, clustering development, supporting small “community-supported agriculture” CSAs, or allowing greater flexibility for “rural economic uses” on agricultural properties, such as roadside stands.
- **Streets.** Residents have mixed opinions about street improvements:
  - Some residents think streets should be widened or intersection improvements made to help with traffic *versus*
  - Most people like the “rural” feel of streets with narrow cross-sections, no sidewalks, no street lights, and no curb and gutter.
  - Most existing residents agree: No through streets.
- **Street Lighting.** Residents generally agree – no more street lighting.
- **Limited or No Commercial Development.** Residents are generally very opposed to any large commercial shopping in the area, but some residents could support some small neighborhood-scale retail (but generally not gas stations or “mini marts”).
- **Low Density.** Residents would like to make sure that new developments are built at low densities and are compatible with current subdivisions. Patio homes and townhomes may be acceptable if accompanied by lots of open space, trails, and greenspace.
- **No “Cookie Cutter Development.”** Many agree this area is unique and should not become like other parts of Fort Collins with larger subdivisions with uniform styles of housing.
- **Protecting Environmental Quality.** The Poudre River is an important resource.
- **Other Amenities.** Public horseback riding area, trails and other recreation amenities are important to many residents.
- **Fewer Utilities above Ground.** Electric wires should be underground.

### Common Concerns:

- **Annexation.** Existing residents generally are very opposed and concerned that the city will annex properties. However, the issue is complex as it relates to developed subdivisions versus vacant properties and needs better explanation about when the city could annex properties (i.e., when a developer voluntarily chooses to annex property that is adjacent to city limits). (Note: The FAQ sheet and the annexation issues board provide more information about this subject).
- **Eminent Domain.** Some residents are concerned that the city or county have aims to condemn property. (Note: The FAQ sheet provides more information about this topic).
- **Government Regulation and Involvement.** Some participants would prefer less government involvement in the area and are concerned that the plan may result in greater restrictions on ability to have animals, freedom to use land and property, and other individual rights.

## **September 15 – Small Group Comments**

### **Group # 1: (facilitators - Amy and David)**

#### **Comments about Issues:**

- Keep the rural character of the neighborhood, including animals.
- Keep the area low-density.
- Retain areas of agriculture/conservate agricultural lands.
- Keep out light pollution so that we can still see the stars at night.
- Become a “sustainable” neighborhood.
- Help residents strategize innovative ways for neighbors to pursue their goals as individuals (e.g., innovative ways to keep open space and agricultural lands without relying on government).
- Get utility improvements made, such as burying power lines.
- Have less uncertainty about future uses and development of land in our neighborhood (i.e., including possible future use of Poudre School District property).

#### **Other Ideas and suggestions:**

- Maintain continued strong community involvement throughout the process.
- Look into conservation easements or organizing neighbors to purchase agricultural lands for a neighborhood-based community supported agriculture.
- Involve the Sunset Water District more.
- Consider developing new street standards for the area with more rural street components.

### **Group # 2: (facilitator - Porter)**

#### **Comments about Issues:**

- Maintain the existing character of the area.
- Retain the pattern of small acreages and modest homes.
- Create better trail connections for pedestrians, including Irish Elementary kids, between neighborhoods, and to Horsetooth trail.
- Help reduce conflicts between residential areas and business, commercial, and industrial uses.
- Address code violations.
- Retain the rural atmosphere, including our ability to keep animals.
- Plan for additional parks and open space—perhaps between Havel Ave and N. Hillcrest Dr, and Havel and Teal Drive.
- Keep out major/minor shopping areas.
- Keep street and other lighting low so that we still have our views of the night sky.

#### **Other Ideas and Suggestions:**

- No additional lane/widening of Vine Drive but improve bike lanes.
- Need to address reduced bus service as a transportation issue.
- Infrastructure planning should address the capacity issue of Sunset Water District given their smaller pipes.
- The small pipes should be seen as an advantage because they can help limit growth.

## **Group # 3 (facilitator - Russ)**

### **Comments about Issues:**

- Plan transportation to have fewer problems with traffic on major streets like Vine Drive.

### **Other Ideas and Suggestions:**

- Meet with the Board of Directors of the Sunset Water District to discuss water issues.
- Do not want to be annexed into the city.

## **Group # 4: North of Vine (facilitator - Lesli)**

### **Comments about Issues:**

- Plan road improvement projects.
- Retain open space and views.
- Accommodate patterns of animals.
- Keep our character and not become the south end of town.
- Develop the quality of life in our area.
- Address transportation safety issues e.g. north of Stonecrest.
- Have an opportunity to give our input for how our area should look 20 years from now.

### **Other Ideas and Suggestions:**

- Use clustering to retain open space.
- Small scale commercial development is OK.
- Let's think global.
- Look into ways that HOAs could buy up some land.

## **Group # 5: (facilitator - Timothy)**

### **Comments about Issues:**

- Keep the feel of freedom and individuality we enjoy now.
- Keep the scale of developments down.
- Keep important open lands.
- Plan for more trail connections to connect the area- including to the Poudre River trail and gravel mine path.
- Create a thoughtful pattern of development that allows for equestrian trails and wildlife corridors.
- Help guide new development.
- Influence development decision-making for our area.

### **Other Ideas and Suggestions:**

- Process needs to help create a bridge so that there is not animosity between newcomers and long term residents.
- No cookie-cutter development!
- Do not want new development to affect how we use our land.

## **September 27– Small Group Comments**

### **Group # 1: North of Vine (facilitators - Russ and Amy)**

#### **Comments about Issues:**

- Work on preserving open space corridors between neighborhoods for residents and wildlife.
- Create more/better bike path connections, including to the Poudre Trail.
- Plan for parks and trails.
- Keep the current rural feel of streets, including minimal street lighting.
- Encourage power lines to be buried as projects are pursued.
- Keep traffic down within neighborhoods by not planning through streets.
- Plan for how to keep the density of development low.
- Address traffic and safety concerns on major arterials in the area such as Overland Trail, Vine and Taft.
- Plan for ways to incorporate the gravel mines into an open space and recreation area in the long-term.
- Maintain the rural character of the area by shaping the kind of development that comes in.
- Encourage a developer fee system that would place the costs of infrastructure and parks on developers.
- Improve access to the Poudre River and Trail.
- Keep the rural residential character of the area—plan to limit commercial and business activity.
- Plan to retain existing agriculture and large animal business activities (e.g. stables) to remain as part of the land use mix. Safeguard agricultural-based business.

#### **Ideas and suggestions:**

- No annexation—do not want additional city regulations.

### **Group # 2: (facilitator - Porter)**

#### **Comments about Issues:**

- Retain open space and agricultural areas.
- Address problems of increased traffic on streets that are now turning into arterials such as Sunset and Hollywood.
- Keep the number of streets that are widened to a minimum—widening impacts tree-lined streets, increases traffic.
- Keep the rural feel of the streets—no curb and gutter.
- Preserve the rural farm character. If development occurs—should either be low density on large lots or higher density clustered and surrounded by open space.
- Retain views of the mountains through development patterns and height restrictions.
- Provide parks for children in new developments.
- Encourage that subdivisions be allowed to have horses.
- Limit the amount of commercial activity in the area- are close enough to needed goods and services.
- Revise zoning to eliminate inconsistencies or places where incompatible uses exist.
- Retain existing businesses.

#### **Other Ideas and Suggestions:**

- Incorporate multiple uses in stormwater plans.
- Expand the requirement for notifying landowners when a zoning variance has been requested.
- Dense housing raises a crime concern.
- Provide info on re-zoning process, grandfather rules, stormwater improvement plans and timelines, and right to farm law.

## **Group # 3: Vine Drive south to LaPorte Ave. (facilitators - Naomi and David)**

### **Comments about Issues:**

- Retain the low density rural character.
- Increase and improve trails, wildlife corridors, and paths for bikes, pedestrians and horses.
- Help deal with unwanted wildlife, including bears.
- Address security concerns from CDC (terrorism concern).
- Be more involved with street planning.
- Encourage utility lines to be buried.

## **Group # 4: South of Vine Drive (facilitator - Lesli)**

### **Comments about Issues:**

- Plan for better bike access and walking trails.
- Keep rural character.
- Plan street improvements including shoulders and sidewalks.
- Plan for development patterns that “fit” our area and are not city-type developments with higher densities and street lights.
- Find a balance between safety and traffic for bikes and cars on main arteries (Taft, Vine, LaPorte, Overland)
- Retain open space (south of Adrien, north of LaPorte, south of Vine, west of Taft.)
- Retain a primarily residential land use mix—do not encourage new commercial development (on this group, 12 people agreed on NO commercial development; 3 agreed that small commercial at neighborhood scale might be okay).
- Reduce traffic patterns and do not add opportunities for cut-through traffic where there are currently none.
- Keep the agricultural feel of having horses and animals allowed on properties.
- Plan for a horse trail connection from Poudre Trail to Foothills or the community arena.

### **Other Ideas and Suggestions:**

- Involve CSU and their plans in this process.
- Provide more information on “informed consent.”
- Make CSU plan and stormwater improvement plans available on the web.

## **Group # 5: City (facilitator - Timothy)**

### **Comments about Issues:**

- Keep the uniqueness—avoid having a visually monotonous area.

### **Other Ideas and Suggestions:**

- A divided community is detrimental—don’t want to be forced to do something.
- Take a historical approach.
- The area currently lacks the developer mentality.
- The level of services is fine.



## Ideas Preference Summary “RED DOT/GREEN DOT” (September 15 Meeting)

<b>Annexation</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
Annexation into the city: I have mixed feelings about this. The County has done a poor job of enforcement, improvement, planning or controlling development in the area, and I would welcome help. However, I'd hate to lose the “rural-urban” nature of the area or to see the area become “mini-California” like Forth Collins around Horsetooth.	1	8
Limited future development. I am NOT interested in annexation.	44	1
I see no advantage to we property owners in being annexed. Only added complications for all of us can ensue.	19	
<b>Transportation and Trails</b>		
Slowing traffic in neighborhood from PHS students. Traffic control on Laporte and Mulberry before and after school.	10	
Improved (SAFE!) equestrian, bicycle, and pedestrian access on Taft Hill, Shields, and Overland Trail from the south to the Poudre River Trail system.	25	
Better public transit.	11	3
No access through collector streets. Improved bike access on Vine Drive.	8	
More enforcement of speeds and speed limits on Taft Hill Road-very unsafe!		
<b>Land Use and Growth</b>		
Balance between growth and maintaining open space should be of paramount importance.	21	
I moved here because I liked the way it was...5 years later, I still like it as is.	18	2
More patio homes or town homes. Single family homes with areas of open space included with bike trails and old fashioned streets.	5	19
Patio Homes/townhomes are OK if there are accompanied by lots of open space, trails, and green space.	3	
<b>Public Services and Utilities</b>		
Hooking houses on septic to sewer system.	7	1
Fewer above-ground electric/cable TV/telephone wires would make this a better place to live.	18	

Sewer not a priority, but would be nice.		
Bike/walk lanes on Taft Hill, Vine and Laporte – kids walk and bike to school we like access to the river trail system.	9	
Try to coordinate with Sterling Ln and canal and school district to put a walking bridge over the canal at the end of the street to access Lincoln JHS- kids cut through and across the canal.	1	
<b>Parks, Open Space, and Natural Habitats</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
I would like the plan to keep s much open space as possible. I would like the NW part of town and the Poudre River to remain a recreational area for runners, bikers and horseback riders.	28	
Continued open space acquisition with access, trail development	21	1
A NW side pool. More natural areas. A kayak course on Poudre.	2/5/5	12/0/1
Parks are not a priority. Open space and connections to open space and parks are priorities. Equestrian activities should always be kept in mind.	6	
No more high density developments a la Poudre Overlook. Cows not condos!	12	
Allows access to CSU property along foothills (LaPorte Avenue to Centennial Drive).	5	1
Cluster any development, developments/developers should be as mindful as possible of the open and quiet. Smaller individual lots.		
<b>History and Character</b>		
I don't want to see cookie cutter house type development.	24	1
Keeping a rural feel rather than suburban.	31	
How can we prevent the NW part of Fort Collins from becoming like the south part of town? We like the rural atmosphere. Keep Wal-Mart out of here!	26	1
Vacant lots within the city limits should be encouraged to be developed as commercial property to promote economic growth in turn cause roads to be maintained.	2	9

## Ideas Preference Summary “RED DOT/GREEN DOT” (September 27 Meeting)

Annexation	Agree	Disagree
Annexation into the city: I have mixed feelings about this. The County has done a poor job of enforcement, improvement, planning or controlling development in the area, and I would welcome help. However, I’d hate to lose the “rural-urban” nature of the area or to see the area become “mini-California” like Forth Collins around Horsetooth.		25
Limited future development. I am NOT interested in annexation.	23	2
I see no advantage to we property owners in being annexed. Only added complications for all of us can ensue.	7	
I want annexation.		49
Fort Collins has nothing to offer through annexation, only increased expense.	7	8
Why pay higher taxes for services we don’t want? We have a good relationship with the county.	6	3
Transportation and Trails		
Slowing traffic in neighborhood from PHS students. Traffic control on Laporte and Mulberry before and after school.	4	
Improved (SAFE!) equestrian, bicycle, and pedestrian access on Taft Hill, Shields, and Overland Trail from the south to the Poudre River Trail system.	19	1
Better public transit.	6	
Eliminate semi-truck traffic on Taft Hill Road and prohibit “jake” brakes in residential areas.	9	3
Make streets have wider shoulders and bike lanes throughout.	1	3
I like the rural feel of the streets in this area, I don’t want to have big urban streets.	26	
Need better enforcement of speed limits.	4	
Address traffic and safety on LaPorte and Vine – including sidewalks.	5	
Sidewalks on Taft Hill and Vine St.		12
Improve entrance to High School from LaPorte Ave.	2	1
Leave us alone!	4	

<b>Land Use and Growth</b>		
Balance between growth and maintaining open space should be of paramount importance.	15	1
I moved here because I liked the way it was...5 years later, I still like it as is.	15	1
More patio homes or town homes. Single family homes with areas of open space included with bike trails and old fashioned streets.	3	9
I would like to see a major shopping area with a national chain store, especially supermarkets.		57
Leave it alone – no stores or new houses – stop growth!	25	2
There should be protection and encouragement for community supported agriculture.	11	
Address the patchwork pattern of development.	2	1
Why not do something different in this area than the rest of Fort Collins. The area is a fantastic agricultural resource.	20	
<b>Public Services and Utilities</b>		
Hooking houses on septic to sewer system.	3	3
Fewer above-ground electric/cable TV/telephone wires would make this a better place to live.	18	
We need more street lighting.	1	47
There should be incentives or grants to retrofit structures to make them more energy efficient.		
I like having Larimer County Sheriff service.	5	5
Comcast cable access...US cable stinks. DSL?	10	1
<b>Parks, Open Space, and Natural Habitats</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>
I would like the plan to keep as much open space as possible. I would like the NW part of town and the Poudre River to remain a recreational area for runners, bikers and horseback riders.	37	
Continued open space acquisition with access, trail development	15	1
A NW side pool.	4	24
A kayak course on Poudre.	2	15
Open space, trails, and more community space.	16	

I would like to see more hiking trails in our area.	8	1
Public horseback riding area where access would not require a horse trailer.	24	
We have a lot of wildlife – deer, hawks, foxes, a black bear, and, on rare occasions, the sounds from a “big cat” at night.	14	
Protecting the Poudre River and waterways from environmental degradation (pesticides, fertilizer, etc.)	20	
I don’t want the west side of Overland North of Vine to look like “the Ponds”.	5	
Have natural areas around housing clusters so there is pedestrian access on natural trails (unpaved) to walk around the area.	1	
<b>History and Character</b>		
I don’t want to see cookie cutter house type development.	19	
Keeping a rural feel rather than suburban.	17	
How can we prevent the NW part of Fort Collins from becoming like the south part of town? We like the rural atmosphere. Keep Wal-Mart out of here!	23	
I like this area for its diverse population, open space, and rural feel.	19	
I enjoy the agricultural feel. Lack of busy 4-lane streets. Lots of green fields and houses with big yards.	21	
I want to still be able to see the night sky.	20	