

**Town of Superior  
Board of Trustees Work Session  
Town Center Visioning Process  
Summary Notes  
October 30, 2006**

This work session was attended by the Board of Trustees (Mayor Muckle, Trustees Chu, D'Souza, Gourgouris, Rosenfeld and Skumatz), members of the Planning Commission, Superior Chamber of Commerce, citizens, property owner George Menkick, and Town staff and planning consultant. Presenting were students from the University of Colorado–Boulder's College of Architecture & Planning enrolled in the Planning Studio II Class (3220) this semester. Also in attendance was class instructor Terry Ware.

The students distributed and discussed two documents with the Board: a printed copy of the Town Center Image PowerPoint presentation, and a Draft Existing Conditions Report.

The Interim Town Manager introduced this item and its purpose:

- Presentation by the students and discussion with the Board regarding the elements of the two documents, which were distributed immediately prior to the meeting.
- Feedback and direction from the Board to help fine-tune the proposed alternatives and their associated financial constraints for the next class presentation on December 4, 2006.

Terry Ware introduced the members of the class and described the goals of the presentation:

1. Update the Board on the students' broad review of existing conditions on the site—including soils, marketing, traffic, transportation, etc.—and identify gaps or additional items the Board would like the students to research.
2. Review case study research on what has been done at other town center projects, their key elements and what particularly has made them successful. He asked that the Board consider this information in context with the larger goal of this process—to focus on creating a place, not a design.
3. Receive feedback from the Board on the vision of Superior's Town Center as described in the Town's Comprehensive Plan, as expressed in stakeholder interviews, other documents, and the results of the students' research on the elements of successful places.
4. If the majority of the information presented is consistent with the Board's vision, the class will begin putting these ideas on paper and talking about what could happen with this place, and then add the financial piece—determining what's doable given the land price and existing marketplace,

what will tenants pay, what are the existing encumbrances on the property, what does the retail market look like—then come back to Board with a refinement of that vision and those ideas

A student summarized the components of the Draft Existing Conditions Report, which includes the interviews conducted with the Board members, and then reviewed the opportunities and constraints of the property as outlined in the PowerPoint presentation.

Board comments:

1. I'm not sure the Spicer property as office is completely a constraint—there may be some flexibility to do something else there, especially along the northern border area with the Biella-Menkick property.
2. Technically this is true. Politically, any change there could be a hot-button issue for Rock Creek residents. Consensus to date has been to leave the entire property as a business use, but there is flexibility for the Board to look at other options.

A student reviewed the image work done to date, including existing site condition photographs, case studies, and discussed several elements of successful town center projects.

Board comments:

1. Valencia Town Center is a good example—built to appear as if built over time rather than brand-new uniformly designed construction; streets appear more pedestrian-friendly; I like having the parking structures behind.
2. Too much parking from the top-down perspective.
3. With first-floor retail in the parking structures, it may not look as parking-heavy.
4. Concern: scaling for accessibility. Superior Market Place is overparked due to Code requirements. We need to park appropriately and adjust Code to meet this level rather than park for the worst-case scenario. Places people want to go to still succeed even if it's difficult to find parking. Increase accessibility and reduce parking—don't worry about Code and focus on good ideas.
5. Valencia Town Center is a great example for Board to review—it's a similar scale and magnitude of the uses the Board has called out for the Town Center. Consider adding height to make appear less dense.
6. Does this diagram show the full 80 acres?  
Yes.
7. This is the right type of mix, but we have to meet the IGA conditions. I think the Lehi, Utah example is aesthetically more applicable to our site—especially with the example of Spanish architecture.
8. Lehi looks like everything else built around here.
9. The architectural theme needs to link Original Town to Rock Creek Ranch.

10. Lehi in large part is Superior—it would help to have the commercial details of this project.
11. Architecture is an important point for the Town Board to discuss—Board direction on this point will to a large extent determine the look and feel of the project. If we want to focus on a built over time look, something that adds value over time, and ultimately is timeless, then we need varying architecture—whether built together, or over time, or as dictated by need. Compared to monstrous developments built all at once during one time period, these are to me a lot more attractive—this is a big part of making a successful place, where people want to go. Since we're talking about creating a draw, we need to be very careful about what we want this place to look like and what we believe is successful. I think this is a critical point for the Board to discuss and flesh out.
12. I like the older style varying architecture examples because town centers are generally considered places where a town is started; therefore, it should look older than most of the rest of the town. It also makes the area more pedestrian-scale.
13. I agree that this type of older style of architecture would be great if we had 50 years to develop. But how practical is this type of architecture with every building looking different with a different facade? This isn't cost-effective for a developer. We need to talk about what are the minimum sizes.
14. I like the built over time idea, but the Valencia example is too disjointed and has no sense of commonality. I prefer a general theme, but not with all buildings looking exactly the same. I like that these examples allow for window-shopping with convenient sidewalk access.
15. How dense is loft over retail?  
*The issue becomes parking with this type of development; once the density goes over 14 units per acre structured parking is necessary.*
16. I didn't like the Santa Monica example of housing.
17. I like the mixing and matching shown on the lower example on slide 30—it looks less cookie-cutter.
18. Does the class have thoughts on or examples of higher-rise (5/6 stories)/mid-rise to bring up densities and not take away as much green, or clustering higher buildings with common ground between?  
*Class will research.*
19. The quality of the architecture and how parking is dealt with makes a big difference. A development at 10 units per acre can look schlocky while another at 36 units per acre can be done at a high level of quality. This is a critical element.
20. I'm not too concerned about building higher to keep a lot of green, since the potential is that the area isn't as accessible from end to end. More 3 story construction is okay if blended effectively to achieve an appropriate look and feel, although it may require more space. A more human scale will be achieved if buildings are more spread out rather than building higher.

21. What is a high-rise/mid-rise?  
*5 to 11 stories is generally considered mid-rise, 12 stories and above is considered high-rise. 3 stories is the most common height in projects like this since Fire Codes generally require sprinklering. Also generally required for development greater than 3 stories: different construction techniques, elevators, and structured parking.*
22. Three story projects have been discussed by developers in the past, and these looked massive. How do we get densities without the massive structure is the question, so mid-rises could help break that up.
23. I can see the appeal of higher-rise buildings due to increased accessibility, but 3 stories with built over time appearance is more attractive to me.
24. What can a municipality do without a developer there?  
*The municipality can guide the development by paying for and building the infrastructure, and creating design guidelines. Small block spaces like Pearl Street Mall or a town/village square are very expensive to build with lots of streets and alleys; developer needs to recoup this cost through density. Public finance of infrastructure can facilitate this development. This discussion will be part of our next exercise: once the vision is formed, then determine how much it will cost, then work backwards from there to see what kind of development will be necessary to make that vision happen.*
25. How do we do capital improvements without a developer?  
*This will be part of the strategies component to come.*
26. Slides 41, 42, and 43 get at the questions I've been asking—what should we be doing that we're not, what should we be doing to take control of this process? These are questions for Board with input from the class. Which of these items on slide 41 should the Town do, if any?  
*All of them—specifically the community's own market analysis and financial analysis. Many communities have in-house or consultant development teams conduct their own financial analysis to determine benefits to community. A developer's perspective can be different, but they generally want to create projects of lasting value and take pride in, as well as profit. It's important to do own analysis and double-checking to make sure all are on the same page.*
27. The Board should look at doing these items—creating a team, establishing a budget for this—I'm glad to hear it's backed up by professional advice.
28. Absolutely we have to do this—what we've seen to date is a developer comes with a number X and we don't know if it's the right number, or if the number is Y—we need to identify what are the trade-offs between the two.
29. What does “rezone at the worst point” mean?  
*Consider rezoning when the market is at it lowest point for the current use—property owners will be more interested in rezoning when the market for the current use is flat.*

A student reviewed the property's opportunities and constraints.

#### Opportunities:

1. Coal Creek—having a natural water feature is a big opportunity—it's rare to be able to develop a project with this opportunity.
2. Views from westbound US 36.
3. Views from the site—specifically from south looking north; also from the center looking west toward mountains.
4. Surrounding existing residential development provides stability for the project design.
5. Traffic volume on US 36 provides lots of eyes on the property.
6. Most essential services and goods are already available in a one- to two-mile radius—there's an opportunity here to create something different, to stand out and be unique, and expand on ideas.
7. Opportunity to create a landmark for the westbound traffic on US 36 to immediately recognize and remember Superior.
8. Opportunity to link the new part of Superior with the old—bridge the gap.

#### Constraints:

1. Limited access—mainly from US 36 and McCaslin.
2. Existing buildings north of site—Superior Plaza—will influence design for Town Center in order to match what's there—may need to redo or tear these down or make fit with new buildings.
3. Superior Market Place is a visual barrier from the site since the property slopes down to the east—may need to elevate the buildings on the eastern part of the project in order to maintain views—and ensure buildings on the western portion of the site don't block the views of the buildings on the east.
4. Wildlife near the creek.
5. Noise from US 36—look at buffering with trees, buildings—don't put parks here.
6. The changing topography on the south and southwest portions of the site—will likely need to cut and fill. Also important with sun exposure, especially in winter due to icy conditions on the hill.
7. Flood plain—look at raising buildings to bring out of flood plain; or look at cutting and filling some of this area.
8. Cemetery.
9. Coal Creek—most of the water in the creek is wastewater; may not wish to make this a recreational amenity if the water is wastewater.
10. Prairie dogs—look at removing/destroying.
11. Multiple property owners—convincing them collaborate on a single idea may be difficult.

#### A student reviewed the property's marketing conditions.

1. The market/trade area is approximately 2 to 5 miles around the site—includes Boulder, Louisville, Broomfield.
2. Demand figures for the market area:

- a. Residential: 7,000 new units over the next 10 years; 1,600 of these could be multi-family (from previous market study).
  - i. Single-family housing demand is currently down, but multi-family and senior housing markets are up.
- b. Retail: 750,000 SF of new retail could be supported over the next 10 years within the entire trade area.
- c. Office: 1.8 million SF of new office space could be supported over the next 10 years within the entire trade area—due to new job growth and turnover.
- 3. Retail competitors in trade area:
  - a. Superior Market Place
  - b. Flatirons Crossing – Broomfield
  - c. Colony Square – Louisville
  - d. 29<sup>th</sup> Street Mall – Boulder
  - e. 16<sup>th</sup> Street Mall – Denver
- 4. Residential competitors:
  - a. Rock Creek
  - b. Calmante
  - c. SouthPointe
  - d. Village Homes
- 5. Comprehensive Plan policies that could impact the market:
  - a. 3.2 – mixed-use
  - b. 3.5 – pedestrian-oriented
  - c. 3.7 – shared public/private parking structures
  - d. 3.14 – unique commercial/entertainment/regional draw

A student reviewed comments and questions from the class regarding the Town's policies related to the Town Center property.

- 1. Comprehensive Plan Policy 3.2 states that medium-sized retail is okay, but large parking fields are not. The cost to build parking structures can double or triple the cost of a project with ground level parking.
- 2. Comprehensive Plan Policy 3.4 calls for no retail or medium-box retailers along the property adjacent to McCaslin. Without retail there, will there be demand for residential there due to increasing traffic congestion and noise?
- 3. Height of buildings—if limited to two to three stories some views won't be impacted as much if these buildings are placed in lower areas along creek or at the higher points, and then the views could be maintained.
- 4. Comprehensive Plan Policy 3.1 calls for this to be a destination site. In order to support the type of development and density you're looking for, you'll probably need 2 to 3 medium boxes. Getting variety/something specific to this area not currently in Louisville or Flatirons Crossing is a challenge. One unique big box could get to that goal without trying find 3 or 4 smaller stores.

5. How do you feel about sustainable/greenbuilding development—such as a wind farm on the site, solar panels, greenroofs? This would be unique in the area.

Board comments:

1. Regarding medium-sized retail and parking, structured parking could be supported using public financing—but the medium-sized retailers don't want this. We need to find a balance and look at mixing and matching. An example is Broomfield's experience with the parking structure near Best Buy in Flatirons Crossing. This facility seems pretty empty. Financially, there's interest in structured parking for us, but the question is finding a willing user.
2. Regarding retail along McCaslin, it depends on the type of retail. Downtown street retail is fine. Big box is better along highway for exposure and will serve as a draw to the rest of the site.
3. Finding a unique store mix is the issue. The key is how to separate the mass of a 200,000 SF big box—multiple entrances, two-story.
4. Greenbuilt buildings are not more expensive, they have a long-term payback that's a plus—greenbuilding itself isn't a draw. It doesn't have to look dramatically different either.
5. As far as limitations in the Comp Plan, I don't want to be limited by them. I'm interested in hearing new ideas, innovative ideas, suggestions or recommendations on things that could be changed. I don't want to be saddled by decisions made five or six years ago. I'm most interested in good ideas in how to change the Comp Plan. I understand the reasoning but it's good to take a fresh look.
6. Conditions always change, so decisions from a few years back may not fit/suit the market anymore.
7. I would like to incorporate sustainable and non-toxic building or preferences for the new buildings that would be part of this development.
8. Regarding a windfarm, this may require too much space and may be prohibited due to eagles present on the site. Looking at greenbuilding and design options to lower the energy costs for residents there is a great idea, but not a draw. Regarding the retail next to McCaslin, this would be okay, but not huge boxes with extensive walling effect—it needs to have more of a community feel. I'm concerned about how to prevent any boxes from going dark.

Terry Ware asked the Town Board if there are additional items or information the Board would like the class to provide.

1. Examples of a smaller-scale convention center and high-end hotel that could be part of a destination.
2. More detail about the items on slides 42 and 43—how do we get to concrete details to pursue these?
3. For diversification and scale, local medium-sized retail along the highway is preferable to a single big-box store.

4. Slide 18—are we looking at having 1 main street or are there peripheral streets? We're interested in more depth than a single street, i.e., three blocks by three blocks.
5. I'm looking forward to hearing what are the next steps—this is critical. In terms of the steps, what is the process by which we move forward—a roadmap? We haven't gotten this in the past and this is probably why we haven't done anything. What are the steps that will guide us through this process?
6. I would like to see steps and then who's responsible for each of those steps—staff, Board, consultant—who does what to get this in place?
7. How far can we go without a developer?