



Item # \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Date: June 5, 2007

## **AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

**To:** Honorable Mayor and Members of Town Council and Planning Commission

**Through:** Art Corsie, Director of Development Services  
Jeff Brasel, AICP, Long Range Planning Manager

**From:** Dan Staley, Senior Planner, Development Services

**Title:** Southwest Quadrant Plan Update and Background Memo

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### **Executive Summary**

The purpose of this memo is to provide an update on the progress of the Southwest Quadrant planning efforts and to provide Town Council and Planning Commission a preliminary physical layout of the Dawson Ridge area. This memo also furnishes the Mayor and Town Council with background information on the basis of the physical layout for the Southwest Quadrant.

The preliminary physical plan incorporates the 11 planning goals detailed in Resolution 2006-53. It is based on the transect concept and Form-based code. These physical plan concepts are explained in this memo and are explained in the Plum Creek Interchange District memo in this Agenda packet.

Lastly, staff seeks input regarding the suitability of this plan with respect to Town decision-making, and confirmation that the current planning direction should continue.

### **Discussion**

#### **Key Information**

##### *Southwest Quadrant Planning Background*

Significant work thus far has been performed toward attaining the goal of developing a plan for the Southwest Quadrant (SWQ). Including numerous public meetings held between 2004-2006, a charrette performed in 2005, and the integration of two economic analyses – one by DHK Associates and one by P.U.M.A (The P.U.M.A. analysis was performed for downtown but provides useful information for the Southwest Quadrant).

Last year Town Council and Planning Commission determined that the Southwest Quadrant should develop sustainably and detailed 11 planning goals to effect this outcome in Resolution 2006-53 (Attachment 3). Additional planning goals were

determined by planning staff and detailed in a formal project charter (Attachment 4). These goals and information from the public process was incorporated into a preliminary physical layout that was then vetted by various Town departments and modified based on comments, feedback, and discussion. The physical layout described in this memo is derived from the aforementioned work. As the Dawson Ridge area is the most complex component of the Southwest Quadrant area, the concepts behind the analysis and physical layout are being tested here first before extending out to the remainder of the area.

### *Southwest Quadrant Planning Public Outreach*

Public outreach for the Southwest Quadrant plan has incorporated numerous planning sessions with the public; these sessions have included property owners, community members, CREDCO, the Castle Rock Planning Commission, and most recently an Open House held on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Castle Rock Recreation Center.

The purposes of the Open House were to obtain public feedback on the details and principles of the physical layout of the Dawson Ridge area, as well as to publicly restart the planning outreach. Staff estimates between 50-70 people attended, with the attendees being a mix of Southwest Quadrant property owners and neighbors in unincorporated Douglas County areas such as Keene Ranch and Yucca Hills. Public reception was overwhelmingly positive, and almost all attendees appeared to walk away satisfied. Preliminary staff conclusions reinforce previous findings that small town values and design, as well as quality design with emphasis on the natural environment matters to the community.

### *Dawson Ridge Preliminary Physical Plan Analysis Background*

A physical plan is not a land-use plan; rather, a physical plan describes the form and layout of an area.

Long Range Planning staff is developing a draft physical plan (Attachment 1 is the map of the conceptual layout) for use in the Dawson Ridge area. The proposed Douglas Lane Interchange Overlay District is not detailed in this analysis. This physical plan is based on extensive analysis of topography, existing entitlements and stakeholder intent, existing and planned infrastructure, projected capacities for commercial and residential uses, and Town planning goals. This analysis will be expanded into the remainder of the Southwest Quadrant for inclusion into the draft plan to be presented to Town Council in mid-August. Planning staff continues to work with other departments to successfully create a sustainable plan that coincides with the Town's and the community's collective vision.

The Dawson Ridge proposed physical plan is based upon the *urban transect* concept, where development is least intense on the fringes of the area and most intense in the center. The transect concept comes from environmental science, which noted the fact that natural systems change over a continuum in cross-section through a sequence of environments – for example: from river to upland, or from ocean to foothill. Each zone in the section has different flora and fauna. The urban transect describes the range of natural and built environments from the edge of the wilderness to the center of the city. Attachment 1 identifies the location of transects in the Dawson Ridge area.

Form-based codes are proposed to implement the Southwest Quadrant Plan. Form-based codes are used to achieve a specific type of built environment by controlling physical form, with the end goal of producing a specific type of “place”. That is: form has more importance than function (“form first”), with uses adapting to the form, because buildings persist but uses may not. This concept is the norm in Europe and was the norm in the U.S. prior to World War II. In addition, Form-based codes state what *is* wanted, rather than what *is not* wanted, thus a more predictable built environment is achieved. Form-based codes allow much greater flexibility in development than traditional zoning. Lastly, form-based codes create *less* regulation and more flexibility resulting in shorter application processing times.

Each proposed transect (or District) in the area has different building types, open spaces, uses, and design. Form-based code goes along with these transects to help regulate the form of the built environment. An increasing number of locations in the United States are using transects and Form-based code to create or change the built environment. The State of California has codified this concept as state law (CA Government Code Section 65302.4), and the city of Denver is currently attempting to implement Form-based code as its land-use code.

### *Dawson Ridge Preliminary Physical Plan Analysis Results*

The Dawson Ridge area is approximately 1877 acres (Attachment 2 is the detailed capacities). The proposed conceptual plan protects approximately 531 acres of ridgeline and drainages, or about 28% of the area. Residential areas of differing densities comprise approximately 844 acres and allow for approximately 3916 dwelling units without full parks or civic space set-asides; this number of dwelling units translates to approximately 10,575 residents using current Town demographics. An area designated as a ‘Town Center’ comprises about 27.2 acres housing the commercial area with approximately 388,000 sf of ground-floor commercial. It will be a focal point for the community while avoiding competition with downtown. The ‘Town Center’ area can provision approximately 260 dwelling units. Civic Districts, located as placeholders, currently comprise about 52.5 acres. They are intended to serve as civic, school, and Town facility areas. It is expected that the amount of acreage in these Civic Districts will increase upon additional analysis and input from other departments.

There are three proposed main arterials or collectors located in the Dawson Ridge area. All are sited to minimize grade changes and follow topography, aligning to existing road infrastructure where possible, and to efficiently serve as many households as possible.

The preliminary local access roads proposed are optimally sited using a series of 500 ft x 500 ft grids aligned 23.5° to the Northeast of the equator, allowing winter sun to strike all Right-Of-Way pavement (see Figure 1. below) reducing the use of melting agents such as MgCl. Reducing the use of melting agents improves water quality, reduces capital expenditures and lessens plant damage from contact with these agents. Examples of other cold-climate cities employing such tilted grid alignments are: Cheyenne, WY; Albuquerque, NM; Edmonton, AB; Winnipeg, MB; and Toronto and Ottawa, ON. This alignment is aided by a generally Easterly or Northeasterly slope for much of the Dawson Ridge area.

Small street blocks also serve to increase non-motorized connectivity, often reducing speeds, and are an amenity for walking trips. The generalized east-west alignment allows building siting to maximize winter solar access and thus reduce winter heating expenditure.

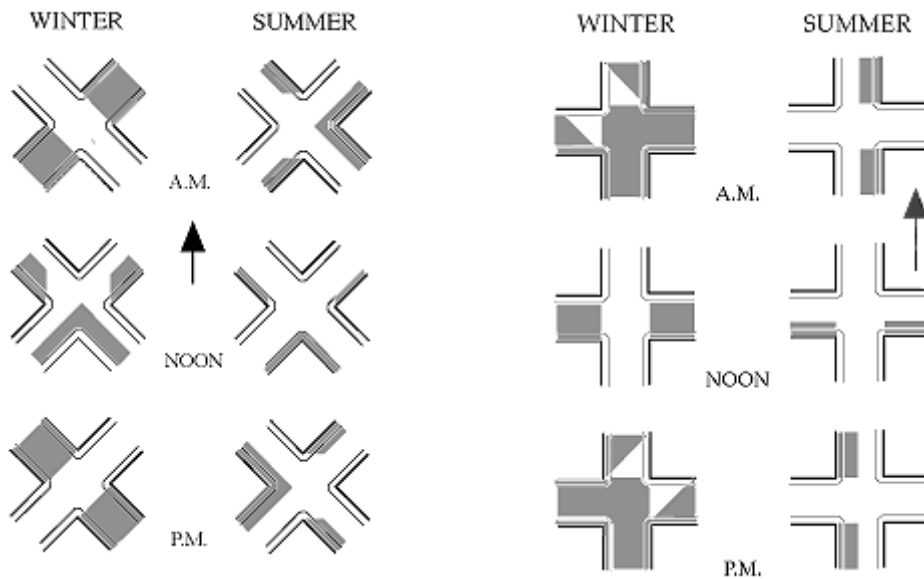


Figure 1. Example of shadow patterns on streets laid out diagonally (left) and on the traditional grid established in the US Land Ordinance of 1785 (right).

### *Dawson Ridge Preliminary Physical Plan Detail and Capacities*

In the proposed plan – transects are hereafter called *Districts* - District T1 is open space and is delimited on two major environmental constraints: protection of ridgelines (topographic) and major drainages (hydrologic). This protection serves to function as habitat corridor. There is ample potential for soft-surface pedestrian trail amenities in these areas as well. There are 6 separate T1 zones totaling approximately 23.13 million square feet or 531 acres (28% of all land area in Dawson Ridge subarea).

District T2 proposes the lowest residential density and contains solely residential uses, approximately .5-1 Dwelling Units per acre (DU/ac) with allowable lot sizes of likely 20,000 sf to 60,000 sf, resulting in approximately 175 dwelling units. The T2 zone is only located on the far side of the ridgeline on steeper slopes and commands views of the Rampart Range to the west. Similar densities can be found in the Diamond Ridge subdivision. The T2 zone is one contiguous area totaling approximately 9.53 million square feet or 219 acres (~12.4% of all land area in Dawson Ridge subarea). The T2 District maintains the current relatively rural character and captures the large lot portion of the housing market share. There would be walkable street connectivity to the denser Districts.

District T3 proposes to allow residential densities of approximately 4 DU/ac, with allowable lot sizes of 4,500 sf to 10,000 sf, which are typically lots with 45-85 foot frontages, resulting in approximately 1,163 dwelling units. The T3 zones are

typically located on steeper slopes than the T4 zones and are sited downhill from ridgelines. Similar densities can be found in the Castlewood Ranch subdivision. This zone will allow Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs – also known as mother-in-law apartments or granny flats), occasional Single Family Attached where practicable, and a few duplexes numbering not more than (2) per acre; topography constraints make multifamily provisioning problematic in these areas. There are 4 separate T3 zones totaling approximately 15.8 million square feet or 354 acres (~19.4% of all land area in Dawson Ridge subarea).

District T4 is the denser proposed Urban General Zones, at residential densities of approximately 6.5 DU/ac, with allowable lot sizes of roughly 3,000 sf to 7,500 sf, which are typically lots with 35- to 70-foot frontages; this results in approximately 2316 dwelling units. Similar densities can be found in the Castlewood Ranch subdivision. This zone will allow ADUs, Single Family Attached, multifamily, and occasional mixed-use with limited uses at major intersections if market conditions allow. In addition, the flexibility of this District allows for a locational component to the character. That is, areas closer to the Interstate are likely to have more of a commercial feel and intensity than interior locations. There are 4 separate T4 zones totaling approximately 19.4 million square feet or 446 acres (~26.6% of all land area in Dawson Ridge subarea).

The proposed District T5 serves to function as a commercial area for central Dawson Ridge and the Town, and adjacent to the future Douglas Lane interchange. As the Interchange Overlay Zone at the Douglas Lane Interchange has not been developed, specific capacities with respect to increased Floor Area Ratios are not available. However, the T5 zone adjacent to the interchange has approximate net capacity for 107 acres of commercial space (parking and open space assumed at 35% reduction for this figure), or approximately 4.67 million square feet of commercial space.

The proposed Dawson Ridge 'Town Center' is intended to contain approximately 27.2 acres of pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use neighborhood commercial/office (grocery, food, taverns, cleaners, dentist, office uses). This area is intended to complement rather than compete with the existing downtown. The 'Main Street' is sited through this area, as well as the main focus of the Dawson Ridge area, a ~30 acre civic park that protects the existing pond and downstream drainage. This area contains additional pedestrian safety features and is sited to support increased discretionary non-motorized trips. The main commercial area is sited just off of the major N-S arterial<sup>1</sup>. Opportunities exist for commercial activity off the arterial. Approximately 388,000 sf of ground-floor commercial capacity is proposed in this area; additional capacity is possible on the second floor of buildings.

The proposed Civic Districts continue to undergo refinement as capacities become more precise. Civic Districts are intended to house uses such schools, libraries, recreation facilities, etc. Currently, two Civic Districts are sited. The first site is located between Arterials A and C, extending 25.9 acres. The second (#2) is in the south adjacent to Arterial A, extending 22.4 acres. This district is also alongside an active park siting extending 10.3 acres, which in turn is adjacent to the extensive proposed open

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<sup>1</sup> This is the arterial depicted in the Transportation Master Plan (Project #17: Exec. Summ. Figure V-1 Page V-2).

space that protects the major drainage way in the southern portion of the Dawson Ridge area. It is expected that these districts will undergo further modification.

### Next Steps

Planning staff will integrate Joint Session comments as well as public and stakeholder input into the preliminary plans to further refine the planning concepts. These refinements will undergo internal vetting with planning staff and Town departments. The public will be invited to a public meeting in July to comment on the revised plans and these comments will be incorporated into a draft plan to be submitted to Planning Commission in July and to the Mayor and Town Council for first reading in August.

### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends approval of the suitability of this plan and seeks confirmation that the current planning direction should continue, as modified by input during the Joint Session.

### Attachments

Attachment 1: Map of Dawson Ridge subarea within the Southwest Quadrant

Attachment 2: Table of capacities resulting from preliminary physical layout

Attachment 3: Resolution 2006-53: *A Resolution Supporting the Eleven Policy Goals for the Southwest Quadrant*

Attachment 4: Southwest Quadrant Plan Charter