

MEMO

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Subject: City Master Plans - Weekly Update

Executive Summary:

This weekly update is intended to provide background information on the City's Master Plans in preparation for the study session reviewing the contract for the proposed plan updates on August 10. Staff will provide detailed information on the purpose and use of each of the Master Plans as well as information on how the city has changed since these plans were last updated. The last plan presented is the City's Parks, Recreation and Golf Master Plan.

Parks Recreation and Golf (PRG) Master Plan

What will Commerce City look like in 20 years? Will it be a thriving innovative economy that provides job opportunities for all? A vibrant residential community that offers healthy neighborhoods? A recreational haven that offers multi-faceted programs for an improved quality of life? A combination of all three? Or maybe something else entirely? What will determine how the city grows and changes?

The City's PRG master plan provides renewed strategic direction for the delivery of parks, trails, open space, recreation and golf amenities, programs and services city-wide (including the growth boundary). The master plan articulates the values, vision and voice of present day Commerce City residents and stakeholders. In 2000, the city's population was approximately, 21,000 and in the most recent census information; it is now over 60,000 as of July 1, 2019. Existing PRG documents include: Parks & Recreation Master Plan (1994); Prairieways Action Plan (1999); Strategic Plan for Recreation Programs, Services & Facilities (2007); and Buffalo Run Golf Course Strategic Master Plan (2014).



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As development and the number of people continues to increase, great demands will be placed on PRG resources including parks, trails, open space, recreation and golf amenities, programs and services. Commerce City must continue to balance community growth with the protection of important natural areas and provision of adequate outdoor and indoor recreational facilities. The PRG master plan update is one consolidated plan and becomes the guiding document for present and future planning for staff and advisory committee recommendations and ultimately, City Council action.

The PRG master plan provides guidance for future: programs, services and operational budget proposals; capital improvement projects and new construction; land acquisitions, easements, etc.; evaluation of cooperative agreements, partnerships, etc.; and identification of potential funding sources.

Existing plans such as the Prairieways Action Plan (1999); Strategic Plan for Recreation Programs, Services & Facilities (2007); and Buffalo Run Golf Course Strategic Master Plan (2014) have been used by staff over the years and continues today for land acquisitions through dedication or purchase (all park property and trail easements north of 96th); development of complexes such as Pioneer Park and the Bison Ridge Recreation Center; all golf course improvements of the past five years; capital repair, replacement and improvements for all parks and recreation amenities; and finally as support for seeking additional funding sources such as Adams County Open Space and Great Outdoor Colorado grants.

A PRG master plan based on the values, vision and voice of today's residents and stakeholders is critical regarding the need for and prioritization of park, recreation and golf new development, resources, programs and services in the future.

Economic Development Strategic Plan Update

For the Economic Development Strategic Plan to remain a viable and workable plan, it is important that a comprehensive update occur at least every ten years. The Economic Development Strategic Plan update will include a re-evaluation of the goals, policies, and



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strategies based on any changing economic or community conditions and help inform new business start-up, location and expansion strategies.

Business/Employment Growth and Diversification

According to the latest figures from the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (DOLA), there are 1,538 companies in Commerce City employing 33,665 people. A large number of these jobs are in the transportation, warehouse/distribution, and construction industries. DOLA also reports that the number of people that live in the City that are in the labor force working or looking for work as of the first quarter 2020 is 30,600 people. All of these numbers are from data collected pre-COVID-19. A further analysis as part of the Plan update will help determine the current and predicted economic state of the City and/or region; an industry analysis for future growth or decline; and help identify employer needs.

New Real Estate Development and Opportunities

In addition to business/employment growth and undetermined pandemic consequences within the business community, other changes in the City since the 2010 Economic Development Strategic Plan update include the following:

- Large properties in the E-470 corridor are moving forward with mixed-use development plans and bringing more shovel-ready sites to the City.
- The communities surrounding Denver International Airport (DEN) are working together on a regional aerotropolis marketing effort. A Plan update should be in concert with this effort.
- The RTD FasTracks light-rail station is moving closer to completion. There are several projects planned around the new station stop in Commerce City, including affordable housing projects and redevelopment opportunities of former school sites.
- An area west of Vasquez Blvd and south of 72nd Avenue was designated as an opportunity zone, offering federal tax credits for investments in the zone.
- Several million square feet of new, speculative industrial buildings are either planned or under construction throughout the City. These projects provide increased location



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“choices” throughout Commerce City for companies looking for available industrial space.

- The City is working with Delwest to bring new residential and some commercial development to the former Mile High Greyhound Park property.
- Residential growth is fueling a community desire to see additional commercial development throughout the City.

Most of these current conditions are not reflected in the last Plan update.

Commerce City has experienced many changes over the last ten years making it necessary to reexamine the Economic Development Strategic Plan and update it accordingly to ensure that the City is in the best position to grow the economy and compete for new or expanding companies, jobs and investment.

Transportation Master Plan Update

For this Transportation Plan to remain usable over time, it is important that a comprehensive update be conducted every ten years. The Transportation Plan update will include a re-evaluation of the goals, policies, and strategies. This will ensure that the Transportation Plan reflects changes in population, land use, economic, physical, social, and travel patterns of the City and region.

Based upon the latest US Census estimates, Commerce City has a population of 61,313 people. In 2010, the census recorded a population of 45,913 residents in Commerce City. That is an increase of 33.54%. Currently, Commerce City is growing at a rate of 2.39% annually. If the City continues to grow at a rate of 2.39% for the next 20 years, the population will increase to approximately 98,888 people by 2040. If we use a more conservative, grow rate of 1% per year, the predicted 2040 population would be 74,887 residents. Based upon these calculations, we could see an increase in population between 13,574 and 37,575 by 2040.

Since the last Transportation Plan update, the City’s population has increased rapidly and has experienced rapid residential growth. With this growth, rapid changes and challenges have



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followed within the City's transportation system, which includes the movement of passenger vehicles, freight, transit, bicycles, and pedestrians. For example, the 2010 Transportation Plan includes identification of congested corridors and intersections. The 2010 Transportation Plan does not include several corridors that currently experience regular congestion including portions of 96th, 104th and 120th Avenues, and the intersection of Chambers Road and 120th Avenue. The Transportation Plan update will include all corridors and intersections where growth related congestion has become an issue in terms of traffic efficiency and safety.

The 2010 Transportation Plan includes projections of number of lanes needed based on 2035 traffic projections. It is staff's observation that the future traffic projections are occurring in advance of their projected years. In review of recent Traffic Impact Studies for development, the existing traffic counts are approximately 5 years ahead of the DRCOG predictions on future traffic. The 2010 Transportation Plan identifies transportation project priorities and includes projects that have been completed. As part of the update, completed projects will be removed and replaced with projects that are needed to accommodate the future transportation system.

Since the 2010 update, the RTD FasTracks light-rail station has moved closer to completion. With the new station in operation, improvements to bicycle and pedestrian access around the station will be needed. The updated Transportation Plan will incorporate and build upon pedestrian and bicycle improvement components from the 2013 Commerce City Station Area Master Plan.

It is critical that the Transportation Plan includes an updated list of projects when seeking federal, state or regional funding/grant opportunities. Many sources of outside funding/grants require that a project be included in an adopted planning document.

In continuing to build a transportation system in a rapidly growing community, there are several challenges that the updated plan will assist the City in navigating. As the City grows, maintaining a transportation system that moves toward a sustainable community will be an ongoing challenge. The Transportation Plan will guide the City in implementing transportation projects that further sustainability through reduced vehicle emissions. The implementation of multi-



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modal projects will be vital for providing livable neighborhoods that are accessible for all modes of travel. The updated Transportation Plan will help guide the City in ensuring that the transportation system provides a balance among moving vehicular traffic, pedestrians, bicyclists, and mass transit systems. Finally, the City will ensure that the transportation system stays up-to-date with rapidly evolving technologies such as connected vehicles and other advances that can enhance both the efficiency and safety of the system.

As the City's population continues to grow over the next 20 years, it is important to update the Transportation Plan to ensure that the City's transportation system is best positioned to accommodate the growth.

Comprehensive Plan Update

What will Commerce City look like in 20 years? Will it be a thriving innovative economy that provides job opportunities for all? A vibrant residential community that offers healthy neighborhoods? A recreational haven that offers multi-faceted programs for an improved quality of life? A combination of all three? Or maybe something else entirely? What will determine how the city grows and changes?

The City's Master Plans articulates the values that Commerce City residents want the city to embody and provides high-level vision and direction that guides the future development and delivery municipal services of the City. The Comprehensive Plan acts as the City's compass charting the direction for the city to move forward. The policies established in the Comprehensive Plan are then further focused and explored in the City's other Master Plans including the Transportation Master Plan, the Economic Development Strategic Plan and the Parks, Recreation and Golf Master Plan. Through the implementation of the policies in these plans, the City's Work Plan identifies specific project and programs that staff can pursue that will result in tangible developments and improvements within the community.

Over the next several weeks, staff will use the City Manager's Update as an opportunity to provide background information on the City's Master Plans in preparation for the study



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session reviewing the contract for the proposed plan updates on August 10. Staff will provide detailed information on the purpose and use of each of the Master Plans as well as information on how the city has changed since these plans were last updated. For example, the 2010 Comprehensive Plan identified the city's population as 42,473 and in the most recent census information; it is now over 60,000 as of July 1, 2019.

Pop Quiz! The Comprehensive Plan identifies the amount of land in the city's growth area to be almost 62-square miles. Do you know how much of that land is currently undeveloped?

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|--------|--------|--------|
| A) 10% | C) 40% | E) 75% |
| B) 25% | D) 60% | |

The correct answer is C, over 40%, or 26 square miles, is currently unincorporated and undeveloped (or under-developed). For comparison of size, the remaining growth area is slightly smaller than the currently incorporated boundaries of Northglenn and Brighton combined. Take away; the city is at the influential forefront of growth and development and is a major player in the Front Range. Moreover, this all adds up to that the city is at a critical juncture of to determine growth and development. The vision set out in the Comprehensive Plan will allow for an evolution to focus social, environmental, economic, land use, and fiscal dimensions to accomplish key City goals.

