

Project will cost taxpayers too much

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What is the true cost to the taxpayers with Mulberry/Lemay Crossings?

What has really changed with the Mulberry/Lemay Crossings development since the preliminary hearing on the plan? An expensive election has taken place, which was a waste of time, energy and money because the vote had no legal authority to decide what is in the best interest for the city. Only the City Council has that final say, while following the City Charter, all applicable codes, proper procedures and due process under the law.

This is a land-use decision that will greatly shape the future of Fort Collins. Floodplain development, pollution, access and transportation standards all need to be scrutinized carefully. The money for a few more sidewalks and traffic signals has been conveniently found, but pedestrian and bicycle access is still in question at Mulberry and Lemay and will place people at risk. A revision of the traffic study was performed, with even more unrealistic results!



Connie Ohlson
Soapbox

community transportation network without causing safety problems. It is council's duty to look very hard at the long-term impacts and burdens to the community ... the cost to the taxpayers for the necessary improvements to support such a huge development that threatens their health and safety.

I challenge the staff opinion that the PUD is feasible from a traffic operations standpoint. This "Regional Shopping District" will attract twice the amount of traffic currently at the site, which is already gridlocked many times through out the day. The level-of-service traffic studies are based on a for-

What has really changed other than more "window dressing?" The project still cannot be incorporated into the neighborhood and

mula of questionable predictions and assumptions that are unsupported and biased. It is also highly presumptuous to think we residents on the north side of town will not have to travel to the south any more and that southern residents will not drive north, once the massive Super Wal-Mart (twice the size of any current retail building in the city) is built.

The largest questions remain: Why would we want to make the intersection of Mulberry and Lemay the busiest intersection in town, creating a whole new plethora of problems in an already dangerous and congested area? How can a decision even be made until the complete and final traffic and infrastructure plans have been worked out? Are we going to trust the developer's designs or are we going to gamble with construction of the largest roundabout in the state? The need to even suggest such a radical, unproven alternative shows the difficulty the traffic engineers are having in accommodating not only the increased thousands of vehi-

cles this development will attract, but also providing safe access for bikes and pedestrians. What will be the cost and where will the money come from?

I will continue to contest the inappropriate magnitude of development for this site. Problems with traffic bottlenecks, pollution, floodplain issues, as well as safety and proper access for emergency vehicles, pedestrians and bicycles, all affecting the surrounding established neighborhoods, the hospital and businesses have still not been adequately addressed. What is the price for safety and convenience and the *true* cost to the taxpayers? Common sense, seeing the Big Picture and deciding what is best for the community, is the purpose and responsibility of the Planning & Zoning Board and City Council, and not city staff.

I ask City Council to see through the "window dressing" and visualize a better future for our Choice City and vote *no* on this project.

Connie Ohlson lives in Fort Collins.