

Zoning OK'd for Oxbow site

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Parcel along river set for mixed-use

The Fort Collins City Council on Tuesday gave unanimous preliminary approval for mixed-use rezoning of the Poudre River corridor's Oxbow property, clearing the way for future development on the 21.7-acre site.

No development is allowed with the site's current T, or Transition, zoning.

With the rezoning, the

parcel — bordered by the river on the west and Buckingham Park on the south — would change to C-C-R, or Community Commercial-Poudre River, zoning. Poudre Development Ltd., a group of individuals who own parts of the site, are seeking the change.

Ted Shepard, the city's chief planner, said the zoning change reflects the development pattern called

for by the city's 1989 Downtown Plan.

"(The zoning change) seems to fit the vision of several plans for that area," Councilman Kurt Kastein said.

C-C-R zoning is designed for downtown fringe areas of the river corridor with both river and street frontage. It allows for a wide range of commercial and residential

uses as well as golf courses and other recreation.

"There's no question in my mind this parcel was an integral part of the plan when the Downtown Plan was developed," said Tom Peterson, a representative for Poudre Development Ltd.

Exactly what the Downtown Plan calls for remains in dispute, however.

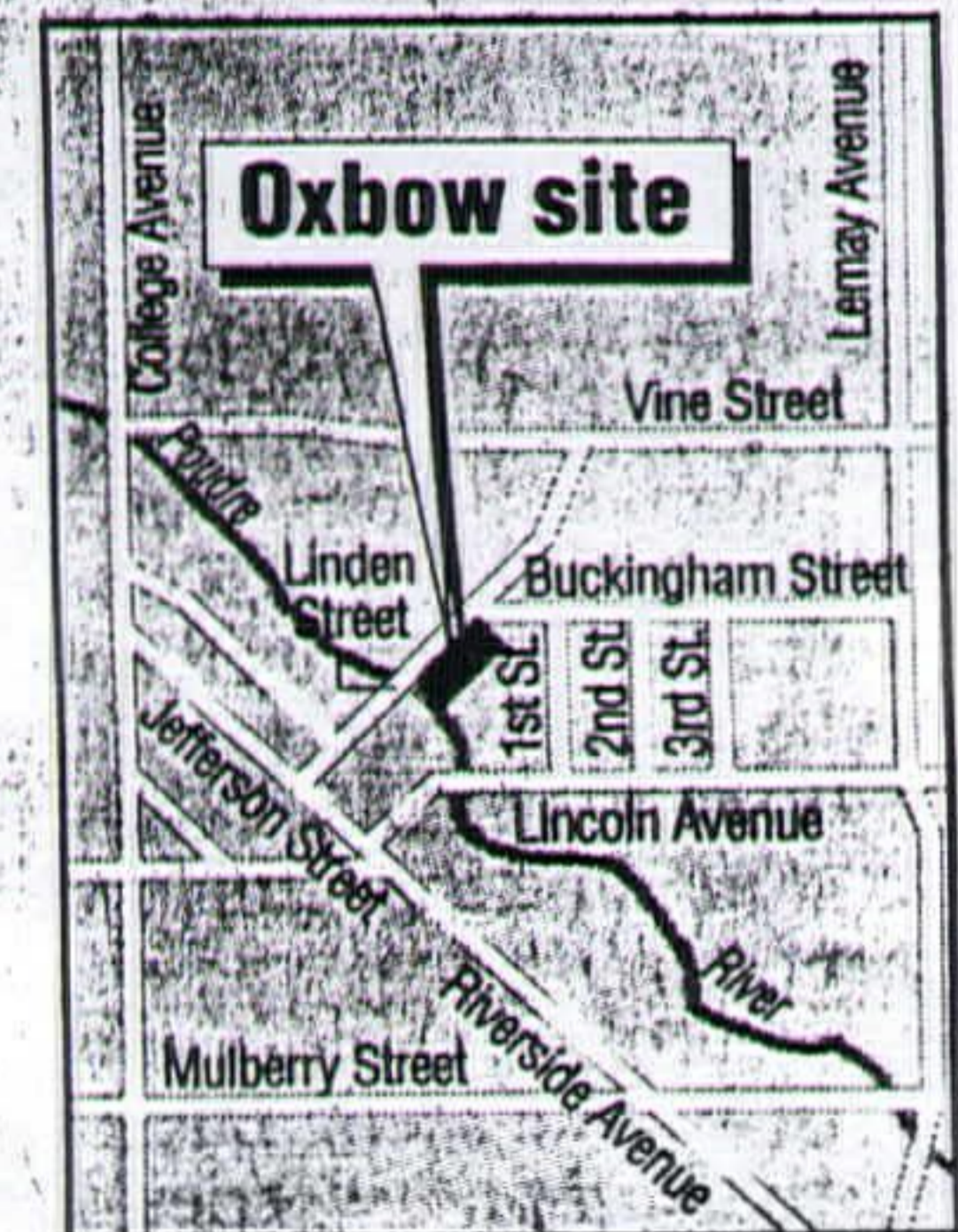
In its April 5 decision, the

city's Planning and Zoning Board recommended L-M-N residential zoning for the parcel.

"To us, (the Downtown Plan) very blatantly said they'd like to see housing in that area," said board member Sally Craig, who voted for the residential zoning along with three other members. "Residential is needed downtown."

Shepard, however, said L-M-N zoning isn't in place

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Kirk Alberts/The Coloradoan

Oxbow

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that close to downtown anywhere in the city.

The Oxbow property long has been a favorite topic of development rumors. The city even has discussed building a 2,500-seat, open-air amphitheater on the site.

While no development plans have been submitted, Peterson said, "over time, something will happen."

Julie Horton, a three-year resident of the adjacent Buckingham neighborhood, worries that any development on the Oxbow property would be placed in harm's way.

Most of the parcel — about 16 acres — lies in the Poudre River's 100-year floodplain. Poudre Development Ltd. has promised to build a dike that would bring the parcel and Buckingham neighborhood out of the floodplain.

That would simply place other areas at risk, Horton said, noting that in the event of a flood, "the water's got to go somewhere."