

I-25 corridor design under way

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While discussions continue on future development along Interstate 25 in Northern Colorado, Fort Collins is taking a closer look at its portion of the highway corridor.

City staff is putting the finishing touches on the I-25 Subarea Plan, which covers land uses and design standards along the corridor from Larimer County Road 52 to just south of Prospect

Subarea Plan outlines developmental guidelines, land use

Road. City Council is scheduled to vote on the plan, "sometime before the end of the year," City Planner Ken Waido said.

While the plan addresses a variety of development guidelines, from parking lot sizes to landscaping requirements, these are the key components:

■ Hotels, restaurants and convenience shopping —

so-called "secondary uses" — would be set back from the interstate at least a quarter-mile in the employment and industrial zoning districts. There also would be a quarter-mile interstate buffer for single-family housing.

■ Clustering would be required for single-family housing within a quarter-mile and half-mile of I-25.

■ There would be an 80-foot minimum setback for buildings along the interstate. In addition, the plan would require that building frontage along the road account for no more than half of the lot's total frontage.

The plan doesn't address the issue of expanding the city's growth management area, or GMA, east of I-25.

Waido said he's generally

happy with the plan, and that it would help the corridor develop in an orderly fashion and without the canyon effect of buildings lining the roadway.

As part of the subarea plan, the city is laying the groundwork for the future location of a regional shopping center at the northeast corner of the Mulberry Street/I-25 interchange. The

50-acre Larimer County site would require some rezoning from its current mostly-industrial designation, as well as about \$30 million in improvements to the interchange.

City staff pushed for the shopping center to be located farther south on the northeast corner of the Prospect Road/I-25 interchange, but the council has thus far nixed that idea.

Councilman Eric Hamrick

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said the Mulberry interchange is better suited for a large-scale development. He envisions three distinct entry-points for Fort Collins, with Harmony Road as the technology gateway, Mulberry Street as the commercial/industrial gateway and Prospect Road as the natural gateway.

"I think we want to keep (development along Prospect) as low density as possible," Hamrick said. "I don't feel like we have to develop every interchange along I-25 in Fort Collins. All that's going to do is lead to more traffic and congestion."

Councilwoman Karen Weitkumat said she's frustrated with the prevailing notion that Prospect Road is off limits to development.

In addition, she said the plan's two housing units per acre restriction is contrary to the city's goals for density and would make the creation of affordable housing impossible.

Affordable housing generally requires densities of at least 12 units per acre.