

# M-word frequents city's vocabulary

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## 'Big-box' moratorium ahead?

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The Coloradoan

Moratorium is a noun that Fort Collins City Council members are beginning to use more than ever.

Tuesday night marks the first time the governing body approved a development moratorium, according to longtime city employees.

And the council will consider yet another moratorium July 5 that temporarily would ban developments classified as "big-box retail."

Greg Byrne, the city's director of community planning and environmental services, said the July 5 proposal is designed to give staff members a chance to define where they want to place the large retail projects whose developers are beginning to explore Fort Collins as a possible site.

He said how "big-box retail" is defined is among the priori-

## Growth

ties, but it would include such projects as super-size department and grocery stores, such as Wal-Mart and Kmart.

Such developments have vastly different impacts on traffic, the neighborhoods and the environment compared to what Fort Collins city planners have dealt with in the past, Byrne said.

Exactly how long a moratorium is needed to study the issues — outlining what to expect, where they should be placed in the city and what the designs should include — is not yet clear.

Councilman Will Smith said a "big-box retail" moratorium may be needed.

"Are people ready to be the site of a regional shopping center?" Smith asked.

He said when retail shop-



## Other actions

Issues addressed Tuesday by the Fort Collins City Council:

### ACTION

Council members gave final approval to appropriate \$623,245 for streetscape improvements on Linden Street between Walnut and Jefferson streets.

Council members annexed 17.9 acres known as the Strachan Farm property and zoned it low-density planned residential.

Council members approved on initial reading the annexation of 155.6 undeveloped acres known as the Harmony Farm property.

### WHAT'S NEXT

Construction will start sometime in July and finish this fall.

The undeveloped land, east of County Road 9 and north of the Hewlett Packard plant along Harmony Road, will become part of the city July 1.

Council will consider on July 5 the final approval of the land annexation, which is on the southeast corner Harmony Road and County Road 9.

ping center developers are talking about attracting shoppers in a 50-mile radius, then the city needs to stop and think about the future.

"Are we willing to become a magnet for surrounding shoppers?" he said. "There are shopping centers in the city that total 95,000 square feet. Now, when the anchor stores in a center are getting bigger than that . . .

"We're talking about planning for the future, not planning for the moment."

Assistant planning director Joe Frank said those super stores "are the new kid on the block, and we know they are looking at Fort Collins."

However, officials were not sure if moratoriums were going to be the city's answer to difficult planning questions.

"I don't know if this is any trend," Frank said about the two proposed moratoriums. "It's too early to tell. These seem to be unique situations. I don't know if we're going to use them again."