

# CITY COUNCIL COMMUNICATION



**MEETING DATE:** June 30, 2009                      **ITEM NUMBER:** SS-1  
**TYPE OF ITEM:** Study Session  
**PRESENTED BY:** Phil Greenwald, Transportation Planner, 303-651-8335,  
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**SUBJECT/AGENDA TITLE:** Southwest Transportation Plan Amendment Options

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** On June 9, 2009 the Longmont City Council determined that a study session was needed to evaluate the alternative options for the Southwest Longmont Transportation Plan (SWTP). The Council asked that the city staff come back to the Study Session with the following items:

- Maps of the options (1-6, plus 5A from TAB) with pros and cons for each;
- A vicinity map with all roads identified;
- A traffic volume map of the future conditions;
- A map indentifying existing building locations in relationship to Plateau Road and Mount Audubon Drive;
- A map identifying the location of the participants in our process; and
- An updated historic survey of the homestead on the Markel property.

These items have been included as attachments to this communication.

**COUNCIL OPTIONS:**  
Staff is requesting direction from the City Council regarding their preferred option. The preferred option will be forwarded to 1st Reading of an Ordinance, scheduled for July 14, 2009 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading / public hearing on July 28, 2009.

**RECOMMENDED OPTIONS:**  
On May 27, 2009 the Planning and Zoning Commission (P/Z) recommended adoption of Option 4 to the City Council.  
  
On May 28, 2009 the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) recommended approval of Option 5 with design changes referred to as Option 5A (the difference between the two options is the added curve to the Plateau Road alignment to slow traffic and direct through traffic east).  
  
The major difference between Option 4 and 5A is the location of the southern-most collector. In Option 4, the southern collector is approximately ¼ mile further north than in Option 5A, where the collector follows the Plateau Road alignment.

**FISCAL IMPACT & FUND SOURCE FOR RECOMMENDED ACTION:** N/A



## **BACKGROUND AND ISSUE ANALYSIS:**

The Lower Clover Basin Neighborhood is situated in the southwest portion of the Longmont Planning Area (LPA). It is roughly 300 acres in size and contains a significant area of developable land that is close to existing infrastructure, planned schools and park sites. The area is largely undeveloped and is one of the last "greenfield" residential neighborhoods within the LPA still to be developed.

Over the last two years, the City has processed various development applications in the neighborhood. The City has processed an annexation for the Kahl property and referral for annexation for the Markel/North Star/Binder property as well as subdivisions for Maxwell Place and Somerset Meadows. During the annexation process and then with the proposed annexation referral of the Markel/North Star/Binder development, concerns were raised by area residents that the proposed transportation system created too much of an impact on area residents and that a continuation of development under the current LACP plan would not be appropriate. The City Council requested that prior to proceeding with any further development applications in the area, staff review transportation issues in this neighborhood and complete any necessary revisions to the LACP as necessary to address the various transportation problems for the area. This effort has been labeled the Southwest Longmont Transportation Plan.

The purpose of the Southwest Longmont Transportation Plan is to analyze and evaluate the existing and proposed street, bikeway and trail planning in the Lower Clover Basin neighborhood, develop alternatives to support the future growth in the area and provide an analysis of six alternative options for transportation in the Southwest area. A number of years ago (1987), the transportation planning for this area included a robust system of arterial and collector roadways to accommodate future growth in the area. Yet over the years, a variety of factors changed the transportation system to one that today is less connected, requires traffic to stay on collector and local streets for longer periods and continues to increase the amount of vehicle miles traveled in this area.

The proposal before the City Council is a proposed change to the transportation system in the Lower Clover Basin Neighborhood. The options presented to the City Council are the result of a public hearing and a public meeting held by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the Transportation Advisory Board. The recommendations of the two boards are different in only one aspect and that is the location of one east-west collector street in the southern end of the neighborhood. Otherwise the recommendations to add three new collectors to the LACP and preserve the existing designations are the same.

## **OPTION EVALUATION:**

Options 1 - 4 were developed by City staff and presented at the open house on May 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009:

**Option 1** - This option proposes to add two new collector streets to the LACP. The two new streets would run east-west across the southern portion of the plan area and would connect Renaissance Drive and Mt Audubon Drive. The two new collectors are identified on the plan as Maxwell Avenue and "Park" Avenue.

### Pros/Cons:

- Provides additional east/west access within Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- No additional arterial street connections
- Creates additional traffic at Boulder County's 75th Street/Plateau Road intersection

- Not supported by Boulder County and County residents adjacent to Plateau Road and Mt. Audubon Drive
- Marginally supported by City residents in Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- "Park Avenue" collector not supported by adjacent landowners (Markel & Somerset)

**Option 2** – This option also proposes to add two new collector streets (Maxwell Avenue and “Park” Avenue) to the LACP, but it also proposes to remove two collector street designations from the plan - the southern half of Mt Audubon Drive and Plateau Road. The two new streets would run east-west across the southern portion of the plan area and would connect Renaissance Drive and the northern half of Mt Audubon Drive. But the collector designation south of “Park” Avenue on Mt Audubon would be removed.

Pros/Cons:

- Provides additional east/west access within Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- No additional arterial street connections
- Supported by Boulder County and County residents adjacent to Plateau Road and Mt. Audubon Drive
- Not supported by City residents in Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- "Park Avenue" as a collector not supported by adjacent landowners
- Loss of Mt. Audubon right-of-way and currently held securities (\$112,531) to build 1/2 of the collector

**Option 3** – This option proposes to add three collector streets (Maxwell Avenue, “Park” Avenue and Renaissance Drive extension) to the LACP and also proposes to remove the collector designation from Plateau Road and the southern half of Mt. Audubon Drive.

Pros/Cons:

- Provides additional east/west access within Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- Adds arterial street connection at Airport Road
- Preferred by Boulder County staff and County residents adjacent to Plateau Road and Mt. Audubon Drive
- Not supported by City residents in Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- "Park Avenue" as a collector not supported by adjacent landowners
- Loss of Mt. Audubon right-of-way and currently held securities to build 1/2 of the collector

**Option 4** – This option proposes to keep all existing collector street designations in place and add three new designations to the plan. The three new collector streets would be Maxwell Avenue, “Park” Avenue and the Renaissance Drive extension.

Pros/Cons:

- Provides additional east/west access within Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- Adds arterial street connection at Airport Road
- Creates additional traffic at Boulder County's 75th Street/Plateau Road intersection
- Not supported by Boulder County and County residents adjacent to Plateau Road and Mt. Audubon Drive
- Preferred by City residents in Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- "Park Avenue" as a collector not supported by adjacent landowners

Options 5 and 6 were developed using input from the open house and other individual meetings with other interest groups. Option 5A was developed by the TAB on May 28, 2009:

**Option 5** – This option proposes to keep all existing collector street designations in place and add three new designations to the plan. The three new collector streets would be Maxwell Avenue, “Plateau Road Extension” and the Renaissance Drive extension.

Pros/Cons:

- Provides additional east/west access within Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- Adds arterial street connection at Airport Road
- Creates additional traffic at Boulder County's 75th Street/Plateau Road intersection
- Not supported by Boulder County and County residents adjacent to Plateau Road and Mt. Audubon Drive
- Supported by City residents in Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- Preferred by City emergency services
- Unclear whether supported by adjacent landowners (Markel & Somerset) for southern connection--option was developed based on meeting discussion.

**Option 5A** – This option was developed by the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) as a modification to staff recommended Option 5. The modifications by the TAB changed the intersection points at Plateau Road and Mount Audubon to direct the traffic away from the County subdivisions and the Plateau Road and 75<sup>th</sup> Street intersection. The pros/cons are generally the same as Option 5.

**Option 6**– This option proposes to add three collector streets (Maxwell Avenue, “Mount Audubon Extension” and Renaissance Drive extension) to the LACP and also proposes to remove the collector designation from Plateau Road and the southern portion of Mt. Audubon Drive that would connect to Plateau Road.

Pros/Cons:

- Provides additional east/west access within Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- Adds arterial street connection at Airport Road
- Not supported by County residents adjacent to Plateau Road and Mt. Audubon Drive
- Supported by Boulder County
- Marginally supported by City residents in Lower Clover Basin neighborhood
- Supported by City emergency services
- Unclear whether supported by adjacent landowners for southern connection--option was developed based on meeting discussion.

## **PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATION**

At the May 27, 2009 Planning & Zoning Commission meeting, the Commission recommended approval of Option 4 to the City Council. This recommendation would add three collector streets to the LACP and keep all existing road designations in place. The Commission's decision was based on their finding that Option 4 best met the Review Criteria for a Comprehensive Plan Land Use Amendment and the finding that it would have the least impacts on the existing Boulder County residents while mitigating future impacts on the residents of the City.

## **TRANSPORTATION ADVISORY BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

At the May 28, 2009 Transportation Advisory Board, the members recommended to City Council a variation of Option 5 (a.k.a. Option 5A). The variation includes curving the collector connections to move traffic away from the intersection at Plateau Road and North 75<sup>th</sup> Street, directing traffic to Airport Road from this area. Curving the collectors and constructing T-intersections also creates traffic calming to a straight-a-way street. A similar treatment was constructed at 15<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Grant Drive, though Grant Drive is designated as a local street.

## BOULDER COUNTY REFERRAL

At the beginning of May a referral was sent to Boulder County Transportation and Land Use staff for review. On June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2009, the review comments were received back to the City of Longmont. The comments made the following points:

- Maximize the use of existing infrastructure.  
***Response:*** *The number of existing and proposed homes combined with the currently planned transportation system will maximize the current situation beyond the planned capacity. This is the reason for proposing the improvements/amendments to the transportation system.*
- Focus access to the Pike Road/Airport Road intersection.  
***Response:*** *Unfortunately the current and approved system of local streets allows other access points to Airport Road which shift the “focus” of the Pike Road/Airport Road through neighborhoods and will cause issues of traffic mitigation in the future.*
- Boulder County is opposed to any connection to Plateau Road/North 73<sup>rd</sup> Street/North 75<sup>th</sup> Street for the following reasons:
  - Concentrates and increases traffic at an intersection identified by the County as high hazard, and;  
***Response:*** *Boulder County provided the accident data for Plateau Road/North 73<sup>rd</sup> Street/North 75<sup>th</sup> Street showing six accidents (with 5 injured persons) from 2004 to 2008. Of the six total accidents over the 5 years, five involved a single vehicle.*
  - Impacts at Niwot Road/North 73<sup>rd</sup> Street and Niwot Road/SH-119 intersections inconsistent with Boulder County policy to maintain rural character of the area.  
***Response:*** *Creating additional access from the neighborhood to arterial-level roadways (Airport Road as well as 75<sup>th</sup> Street) provides alternative routes, possibly easing congestion at the listed intersections.*
- The visual impacts to the rural character of the area for Diagonal Highway users by the extension of Renaissance Drive to Airport Road.  
***Response:*** *The proposed Renaissance Drive Extension is shown within the current Longmont Planning Area at the same elevation “bench” as the nearby County (Sommerlin) subdivision served with City sewer. The proposed roadway would be no more visible to Diagonal Highway users than the homes currently being built in this area.*
- Preservation of a historic house on the northeast corner of Plateau Road and proposed Mt. Audubon Drive.  
***Response:*** *The City and Boulder County have partnered in the past to move historic structures to new sites, usually within the same subdivision. This alternative would be studied if a historic structure was impacted by new development including roads.*

## REVIEW CRITERIA

The following review criteria apply to the Longmont Area Comprehensive Plan Map Amendment and are written based on the original staff recommendation of Option 5:

b. General Review Criteria for All LACP Amendments (Except Comprehensive Plan (Text) Amendments). Review Bodies and the Decision-Making Body shall evaluate the proposed amendment's compliance with the following criteria and may approve the amendment if the proposed land use designation satisfies the following criteria better than the current land use designation under the Plan:

i. The proposed land use designation implements one or more of the goals, policies, and strategies stated in the LACP. The Decision-Making Body shall weigh competing LACP goals, policies, and strategies and may approve an amendment that provides a public benefit even if the amendment is contrary to some of the goals, policies or strategies in the LACP.

*Response: The proposed amendment (Option 5) will implement the following goals, policies and strategies stated in the LACP:*

*GOAL T-1: Create a transportation system that promotes and supports planned land uses.*

*POLICY T-1.1: Balance land uses and the transportation system to maintain and improve current levels of mobility.*

*Strategy T-1.1(a): Coordinate transportation and land use improvements on both a long-term and short-term basis.*

*GOAL T-2: Provide an adequate, safe, and efficient multi-modal transportation system that is compatible with the natural, community, and economic environment.*

*POLICY T-2.1: Design the Citywide transportation system to encourage the use of multiple means of transportation.*

*Strategy T-2.1(a): Develop a multi-modal implementation plan that addresses the unique needs of each mode of travel, that identifies methods of integrating all modes of travel into a comprehensive transportation system, and that has efficient links between each mode.*

*POLICY T-2.2: Maintain a traffic system that encourages the use of arterial streets for cross-town and regional traffic, that encourages the use of primary and neighborhood collector streets to channel traffic from the neighborhoods to arterial streets that discourages the use of local streets for through traffic, and that provides efficient regional travel connections to other jurisdictions and activity centers in the region.*

*Strategy T-2.2(b): Mitigate transportation facilities' impacts on noise and air pollution, safety hazards, and aesthetics through appropriate traffic control, facility design, and site design on both public and private property adjacent to the transportation facility.*

*Strategy T-2.2(c): Cooperate with neighborhood groups to reduce traffic problems on local streets.*

*Strategy T-2.20: Provide an adequate transportation system to serve cross-town and regional trips, discourage diversion of through-traffic to neighborhood collector and local streets, and*

*keep traffic volumes on neighborhood collector and local streets to the standards City Council adopted.*

*Strategy T-2.2(j): Plan the land use and internal road system adjacent to Airport Road, County Line Road, and State Highway 66 to space signalized intersections no closer than one-half mile in order to provide efficient routes for through-traffic to bypass central Longmont.*

*GOAL T-3: Promote the design and use of a transportation system that protects environmental quality by improving air quality and reducing noise pollution and energy consumption from mobile sources.*

- ii. The amendment shall not adversely affect existing or planned City facilities or services, or the Applicant will substantially mitigate any such impacts.

*Response: The proposed amendment (Option 5) will not adversely affect existing or planned City facilities or services. The proposed amendment will allow for better access to existing and planned neighborhoods, schools and parks as well as reduce traffic impacts on existing and future residents in the area by providing a well connected network of streets, reduce vehicle miles traveled and improve other multi-modal transportation options.*

- iii. The amendment shall not adversely affect existing or planned City transportation facilities, or the Applicant will substantially mitigate any such impacts.

*Response: The proposed amendment (Option 5) will improve the City's existing and planned transportation facilities by providing additional connections within the neighborhood, reduce the amount of traffic using local streets to cut-through neighborhoods and provide efficient systems for emergency vehicles to access areas within the City of Longmont and Boulder County.*

- iv. The amendment shall not adversely affect the existing or planned use of adjacent properties, or the Applicant will substantially mitigate any such impacts.

*Response: The addition of 3 new collectors to the area will affect the existing or planned uses of adjacent properties. The existing and proposed uses will require some developers to alter their proposals to include the changes to the LACP. The proposal will ultimately mitigate and distribute traffic impacts that will occur if the current transportation system is constructed. The amendment and the addition of 3 collectors to the comprehensive plan will reduce the impact of existing and future traffic on the area by providing additional options to all modes of transportation when moving through the neighborhood. The better distribution of traffic and additional access to the arterial street system will reduce the impact on existing and future residents of the area as well as allow for a more integrated traffic system.*

## **COUNCIL OPTIONS**

Staff is requesting direction from the City Council regarding their preferred option. The preferred option will be forwarded to 1st Reading of an Ordinance, scheduled for July 14, 2009 and 2<sup>nd</sup> Reading / public hearing on July 28, 2009.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

- 1) Maps of the options (1-6, plus 5A from TAB) with pros and cons;
- 2) A vicinity map with all roads identified;
- 3) Traffic Volume Map of the future conditions;
- 4) Map indentifying existing building locations in relationship to Plateau Road and Mount Audubon Drive;
- 5) A map identifying the location of the participants in the public process; and
- 6) An updated historic survey of the homestead on the Markel property.
- 7) Planning and Zoning Commission Communication May 27, 2009
- 8) TAB Communication May 28, 2009
- 9) City Council Information Item May 5, 2009
- 10) City Council Information Item May 19, 2009
- 11) City Council packet from June 9, 2009
- 12) Written Comments From June 4, 2009 through June 24, 2009 (not included in the last City Council packet)
- 13) Historic Planning Commission minutes from April 9, 2009
- 14) Boulder County Commissioner Communication and Action on Lane Farms (Markel Homes) Option to Terminate Conservation Easement
- 15) Southwest Longmont LACP Amendment Schedule

File #: 1042-39