

[Search Again!](#)[Send Article to Printer](#)

Boulder County & U.S. 36 Corridor
03/05/2008 - 03/18/2008

Superior OKs new town center

By Tim Van Meter
Founding partner, architect and urban designer
Van Meter Williams Pollack LLP

The town of Superior is poised to develop what may be the largest parcel of vacant land in Boulder County on the U.S. 36 Denver-Boulder Turnpike by approving a concept plan for Superior New Town Center. The 162-acre site, composed of three privately owned parcels whose owners have agreed to consider appropriate development options, is located on vacant land stretching between U.S. 36 and McCaslin Boulevard to the west.

Superior New Town Center is envisioned as a regional draw for shopping, dining and gathering that will provide more diverse housing and boost the tax revenues of the town and the real estate value of Boulder County. The proposed program calls for a minimum of 1 million square feet of commercial space, including 250,000 sf of retail shops and restaurants, 450,000 sf of office space, and possibly a hotel and conference center. A maximum of 2,000 residential units could expand to 2,300 units if the additional 300 were for seniors. Community gathering places such as a town plaza would be featured prominently, and 40 percent of the land would be reserved for parks and open space, including a riverfront park along Coal Creek and pedestrian and bike connections to Coal Creek Regional Trail, which runs through the site.

In May 2007, the town of Superior hired our firm to create a master plan concept for the New Town Center, drawing from a visioning process we conducted through a series of open meetings with the community that were held from June through December. Early in the process, we established a set of "defining principles" to serve as a guide for discussions. These principles include a new town center that emphasizes connectivity, a mixture of complementary and synergistic land uses, a "sense of place" unique to Superior, economic sustainability, and environmentally responsible design and construction.

On the basis of this community visioning process, the town board this month expects to endorse a set of development parameters that will serve as a guide for prospective developers and investors on what the town wants to see incorporated in any future town center development plan, said Superior Town Manager Scott Randall. These include the development of four subzones: a 10-block pedestrian-friendly town center with a community plaza and a Main Street, with ground-floor retail and up to four floors of offices or residences above; a mixed-use commercial core located next to Main Street would extend to U.S. 36; development with higher

density and height would occur along U.S. 36, where office buildings could reach a 12-story maximum; and a southern transitional zone would have low-rise and lower density housing.

The majority of Superior's 12,000 residents live in the Rock Creek Ranch subdivisions, located south of the site, where development began in the early 1990s, and about 250 residents live in Original Town, located to west of McCaslin Boulevard. Superior now has approximately 3,500 single-family homes, says Randall, and a major goal of the New Town Center would be to provide more diverse owner-occupied housing opportunities, such as live-work lofts, flats, townhouses, and rowhouses.

Sustainable "green" initiatives would include meeting LEED Silver standards (or equivalent) for all buildings, innovative storm-water management techniques such as pervious paving, and multimodal transit opportunities linked to an existing bus rapid transit stop on U.S. 36.

"There have been a number of proposed developments on some or all of these parcels, and nothing has come of them," said Randall. "That's why the town took a proactive stance: What would we be willing to receive?" Randall said the town is not looking to draw single-family detached homes or big-box development. He adds that the town's extensive public engagement process since last May has indicated great community support for the concept plan.

Colorado Real Estate Journal ©2005