



April 16, 2019

To: Dave Corliss, Town Manager

From: Tara Vargish, Assistant Director Development Services

Subject: Douglas County 2040 Comprehensive Master Plan Update Comments

Background

Douglas County is currently going through the process of updating their existing Comprehensive Master Plan (CMP). The County's first CMP was completed in 1974 and has been periodically updated over the years. The County's current CMP, "2035 Comprehensive Master Plan" was adopted in 2014 and states that it is "the foundation for the County's future growth and development, and as such, is intended to provide decision makers with guidance on how to maintain and improve identified community values." The 2035 CMP incorporates general policies about how and where growth and development should occur, while offering a broad, yet realistic plan for the County now and in the future. Similar to the Town of Castle Rock's recent update to our Comprehensive Master Plan, Douglas County has drafted their 2040 CMP update. Douglas County has circulated their draft document to numerous agencies and to the local jurisdictions within the County and has requested comments from the Town of Castle Rock.

Douglas County and the Town of Castle Rock work together on a variety of community interests and find ways to partner together whenever possible. In the area of land planning, the Town governs the land use development within our jurisdiction, and the County governs land use development and permitting within their jurisdiction. While it may be commonly thought that County development is generally rural in nature, County zoning can and has allowed urban level development in various areas throughout the County. Highlands Ranch is an example of an urban level community that is in unincorporated Douglas County jurisdiction. Regardless of what jurisdiction a community resides in, the developer must still work through the challenges of providing infrastructure and resources, including water supply, for any proposed development.

The Town of Castle Rock is an urban community, and the County land on our borders is typically rural residential and agriculture in nature. Some areas on our borders; however, are already planned for urban level development, such as within the City of Castle Pines, and within the Canyons South planned development in Douglas County.

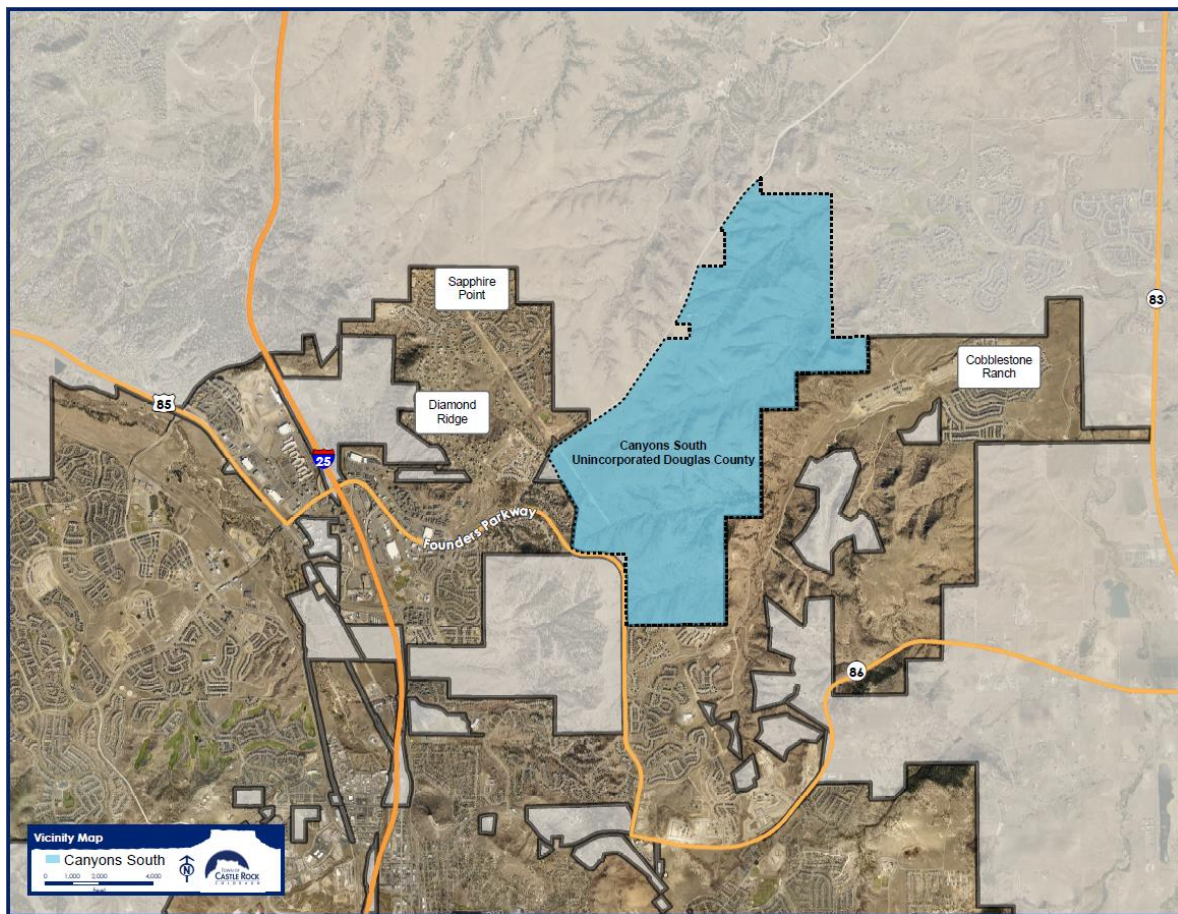
Discussion

In the County's 2035 CMP, the land abutting Town borders is generally in an area that was previously governed by an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between Douglas County and the Town of Castle Rock, which expired in 2016 when the County chose not to renew it. The now expired IGA described various regions in the buffer area between Town and County borders; however, the general theme for the buffer was that if the land owner wanted to pursue urban level development, he or she would need to request annexation from the Town of Castle Rock in order to receive the Town services needed for urban density. Access to a centralized water distribution system is one example of a service that Castle Rock provides to the land that is within its boundaries. Typically, urban level development cannot occur unless a land owner builds their own water supply system, such as the Highlands Ranch Metro District did, or they join a local

jurisdiction that will provide a water supply. Regardless of whether the IGA was in place or not, any developer is still faced with the challenge of providing services to their urban development if they do not annex into a jurisdiction that has those services.

Castle Rock staff looked closely at the sections of the County's 2040 CMP Update related to this boundary area to see if any of the proposed changes promoted an increase in density over what is currently constructed or approved today. One element of the County's 2040 CMP Update is to remove labeling and text that currently refer to the outdated IGA buffer area along the Castle Rock boundary.

There are three County Subareas that border the Town of Castle Rock and all three are categorized as "Nonurban Subareas" by the County. Canyons South is located in the southeast portion of the High Plateau Subarea, along the Town's northeast border. Specifically, Canyons South development is located just east of Sapphire Point and Diamond Ridge on the east side of Crowfoot Valley Road, and extends to the western edge of the Liberty Village/Cobblestone Ranch neighborhood. It extends south to the Terrain/Castle Oaks neighborhood boundary.



Canyons South is currently zoned in the County for 968 single-family dwelling units and they have indicated, in past discussions, that they would like to seek an increase in their zoning. The Town of Castle Rock agreed to provide water service for the 968 dwellings in a 2005 Water Service Agreement.

The 2040 CMP Update is proposing a new policy, 3-3C.3, that reads:

POLICY 3-3C.3

Low level urban density development may be supported in the southeast portion of the High Plateau Subarea on land which is not visible from Interstate 25, when consistent with the cluster development approach set forth in Policy 3-3C.2, above.

Canyons South is located in this “southeast portion of the High Plateau Subarea”. This proposed policy does not automatically rezone Canyons South; however, it does provide support for any future rezone requests in this area. Any increase in development in this area is further complicated by the Town owning a portion of the water rights under Canyons South, as required in the 2005 Water Service Agreement, and our contractual obligation to only provide for the 968 units.

Status

Staff plans to provide Douglas County with the following comments on the 2040 CMP Update by April 24, 2019:

The Town of Castle Rock does not have the infrastructure or water supply to support more than 968 units in the Canyon South area of the High Plateau Subarea. The Town is currently obligated to provide Canyons South with water for 968 units; however, we are not planning to provide them with any additional water supply. The Town also owns almost all of the Denver Basin groundwater underneath the area. Any additional development in this area would require significant additional Denver Basin groundwater in accordance with the County's rules. The Town will not provide this additional water supply.

The Town would not support a Comprehensive Master Plan update that would allow an increase in units in this area of the County. The proposed Comprehensive Master Plan identifies this area as being "not visible from Interstate 25," implying that criteria is a reason to allow higher density clustered development in this location. However, this area is visible to Town of Castle Rock residents and will have a direct impact on our community in multiple ways.

Any increase in density, whether clustered or not, will impact the Town's roadway system, and will add congestion to our community. Additionally, more demands on Denver Basin groundwater in this area may impact the Town's groundwater wells and supplies. Castle Rock does not find that increasing density in the Canyon South area, or to low level urban densities anywhere on our boundaries, will provide a "community benefit" to the Town of Castle Rock. Please remove Policy 3-3C.3 regarding the support for higher density development in the High Plateau Subarea.

CC: Bob Slentz, Town Attorney
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Bob Goebel, Public Works Director
Bill Detweiler, Development Services Director
Kevin Wrede, Planning Manager