Go west, city, and prosper

Greeley should heed words of pioneer and expand to I-25

Because of the work of water pioneers like W.D. Farr, Greeley emerged in the 1950s and 60s as the dominant city in northern Colorado. Greeley controlled the water and prospered as a result.

That position of pre-eminence gradually shifted to Fort Collins with the construction of Interstate 25. The rapid growth there during the past two decades has clearly made that city the region’s retail center.

The result is many Weld County residents spend their money in Larimer County, meaning our sales tax dollars help enhance the quality of life in Fort Collins and Loveland. We help build roads and parks there.

Now we’re even in danger of losing ConAgra’s corporate headquarters because Larimer County has more amenities — shops, restaurants, hotels and other services that appeal to white-collar workers.

Enter W.D. Farr again.

After reports of ConAgra’s interest across the county line, Farr started thinking about Greeley in the coming century. He tackled this problem with the same incredible vision he and others showed when they built a tunnel through the mountains to carry water to the arid Plains.

He decided Greeley needs to act now to reclaim its position as the leading city of northern Colorado. It can do that by capturing the continued growth that surely lies ahead for the region.

He took this message recently to the Greeley/Weld Chamber of Commerce. Annex to the west almost to I-25, he said. Control as much of the land as possible between the Poudre River to the north and the Platte River to the south.

Greeley already holds water rights to most of this land. It makes sense the development of this land be determined by Greeley and not Fort Collins or Loveland or a smaller Weld town.

Farr sees a day when the newly expanded U.S. 34 will serve as a state-of-the-art office and industrial corridor into Greeley. The tax benefits of those companies will help enhance the quality of life for all.

With growth, Greeley will attract the amenities sought after by other high-paying companies. Already, some exciting retail services are coming with developments such as Elk Lakes.

But Greeley needs to aggressively go west again, as Horace Greeley suggested in the 19th century. A move west will strengthen Greeley’s tax base and power base.

Many details need to be worked out before this vision is put into place. But work on this plan should proceed swiftly. Growth won’t stop while we cogitate.

This vision is sure to stir up controversy in other cities. While Greeley should be sensitive to its neighbors’ concerns, we shouldn’t sway from the belief that one comprehensive plan for growth is the best approach.

And we should thank Greeley’s water pioneer for his Farr-sight.
Thoughts on Greeley’s Future Water Supplies

Now that Tri-Points is established and State Farm’s 130-acre campus is being positively planned; along with some slow growth ideas of some cities will push more growth to Greeley.

I believe that Greeley is in a unique position to plan a perfect city that will continue to be very attractive to new people and new industry.

Our plans must be bold and far reaching in order to attract a variety of growth. To illustrate what I mean I believe Greeley should annex everything west of our present boundaries. From the Poudre on the north to the Big Thompson on the south all the way to the Weld County line.

Most of the land on the south and north sides are irrigated by the Greeley/Loveland system. As development occurs on any of this land, the water rights are available to Greeley. As long as we use the three acre feet requirement and allow the farms to turn Greeley/Loveland various company shares as specified in the stockholder contract. The new land will support itself as far as water is concerned.

There are several thousand acres of land in the middle that has never been irrigated. This large dry-land area is very desirable for many kinds of industry that requires little water except for domestic purposes. It is also attractive for home developers. How to get water for those acres so they can be developed is our challenge.

CBT shares are becoming harder to buy. The price has risen to $4,000 to $4,500 per unit. Based on a 70% average delivery this water costs from $5,000 to $6,000 per acre-foot of wet water.

The rural domestic and the small towns must buy CBT because their delivery and filter systems are built on that plan.

Windy Gap water has not yet been used to any great extent because it has not been needed. In order to protect their absolute decrees the Windy Gap participants have agreed that they must phase into pumping this water right to capacity. At the moment, the participants say there is no Windy Gap for sale.
We are fortunate to live in Northern Colorado and have two new water projects that can be built and produce new water plus better management which means some of the old rights will produce a few more gallons.

The first project is the possibility of a large new Seaman Reservoir about half a mile below Greeley’s present Seaman Reservoir.

Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District holds a conditional right on the main stem of the Poudre at Grey Mountain, which is about two miles below the proposed new Seaman site. This conditional right can be transferred to the Seaman site.

The advantage to the new Seaman is that it is off channel therefore the rafting, fishing, and highways are not impacted.

Greeley and Northern are doing the preliminary studying of the site. The geological work has been completed it is a fine reservoir site very near the mouth of the canyon. This reservoir will allow the state water commissioner too much better manage the Poudre.

There will be 20,000 to 30,000 acre-feet of new water on a firm every year basis developed. There will also be a new amount of space where present water rights owners can pay for storage so that their systems work better.

With all the planning, permitting, and environmental studies that are necessary to build a reservoir it will be fifteen to twenty years until there is wet water to deliver. The studies are not complete enough to talk about firm prices. The new water will cost as much as $10,000 per acre-foot of wet water. Storage space would be less.

The Northern Colorado Conservation Water Project plans a small dam where the Poudre discharges into the South Platte. Pumps would lift this new non-potable water 20 miles north to a reservoir northeast of Galeton.

Hydrology shows that about 80,000-acre feet or more could be recovered.

This water is fine for agriculture but not good for cities without expensive treatment. The water would be pumped west to strategic points on the Cache La Poudre ditch and the Larimer and Weld ditch. As the ditches accept this water in several locations, they would exchange their potable water that they would have diverted for agriculture. The new Seaman Dam would help the water commissioner make the exchanges.

Again new potable water has been developed. There are pipelines and pumping costs but again this water can be produced not to exceed the $10,000 area.
This project is probably 25 years away before it will be needed if Greeley continues to grow and if the dry-land areas get water, it will have to come from these new sources.

Probably within the next five years, the new ownership in the new Seaman will have to be established.

Northern will have to establish a new enterprise and make contracts with the various participants. The project will probably be financed with bonds as Windy Gap was.

I believe that Greeley will want to be a strong participant in these projects.

Greeley will have to agree to pay these higher prices for water for the future.

If Greeley would assign this new water to the dryland, they could have two different tap fees. One for development of irrigated land (Greeley, Loveland, or #3 Ditch). The higher tap fee would be for dryland.

Give the developer the option of either water source. Still maintain the three-acre foot standard. The water would cost more on the dryland but the land would cost less. The water rates would be the same.

These ideas would make the city of Greeley very flexible for the future. The city could agree to buy more new water knowing how it would be used and how it would be paid for.

If Greeley uses the same tap sizes and allowances for limited business use I believe many industries that are slowly being attracted to the development of DIA would be attracted to this dryland area. For example, the large WalMart distribution center is located on dryland. A lot of acres and not much water.

WalMart had to build a large storage tank for fire protection. If Greeley really plans this whole area with Gold Hill as a base, those problems would not exist.

Greeley has always wanted to maintain agriculture. The city agreed to take a large block of CBT water. Then they agreed to support Windy Gap.

If the city of Greeley wants to maintain the position of being a leader and having water available for the future they must be in a position to sign up for significant quantities of these two new water projects. This is the last water that can be developed. Water will be finite after that.

No other city has that large dryland area available. It fits the transportation corridors and will make Greeley the most desirable of all Front Range cities.
We have the water available to put this plan into operation now. We do not have to wait for the new water to be developed.

It is a big plan that city council, the planning commission, the zoning board, and the water and sewer department all need to get behind and move forward.

There are no flood plain problems and really, no serious storm water problems. If this plan could be accepted now, just think of how well all city utilities could be planned for the future. The water distribution mains, the major collector sewer lines, the size of the terminal storage at Gold Hill, the storm sewer layout the new waste water plant or plants could be strategically located.

If these things can be planned ahead and millions of dollars can be saved. For example: As Greeley develops on the south side of Highway 34 By-pass from 47th Avenue west sewer and storm water drain to Ashcroft Draw and the Big Thompson River. Everything on the north side drains north to the Poudre.

These are ideas that need study and refinement. I have seen Greeley grow from a population of 5,000 to the present 75,000. If we had ever dreamed that we would grow this much and this fast we could have prevented many costly problems.

Today with the Front Range popularity and DIA, our growth is assured. The only question is how fast it will develop.

We can plan a fine city and I sincerely hope we do.

W. D. Farr
I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak to the city council about my thoughts on annexation for the city of Greeley to the west.

These are not new thoughts on my part. When Carl Moasberg, President of the Greeley Loveland Ditch Co., and I negotiated the original deed between the city and the ditch company. We felt that someday Greeley would grow over the entire ditch system.

That is why Greeley Loveland farms have had city water for forty years. That is why those farms consented to annex when Greeley asked.

Greeley’s water grid system west of the city is why there are no rural domestic systems. If there had been those systems, there would be urban sprawl all over the area today.

This city council and city administrative staff has the great opportunity to plan and build a fine city in the next thirty years if this large area of land can be annexed and planned now.

Think of the millions of dollars that can be saved in the planning and location of parks, storm sewers, arterial roads, fire station locations, and proper sizing of sewer and water mains.
I am now very positive of what the city should do. I intend to be very
candid and to the point. I firmly believe that this year 2000 is the opportunity to
plan and build Greeley back into the prominence we formerly had.

Promitory is under construction; everyone is finally beginning to realize
what a dominant factor it will be in West Greeley. US highway 34 is completed.
We have direct access to I-25 (Main Street Colorado). There are thousands of
acres of developable land. Last, but a very important factor, Greeley has the water
and the infrastructure to plan and build a great city.

There is no place in Northern Colorado that has all these attributes. As soon
as Greeley annexes the area and has control the developers will be here.

I know Greeley must work out intergovernmental agreements with Evans,
Windsor, Milliken, Johnston, and Weld County. There was a meeting last week
where progress was made.

The council must realize that this must be accomplished by November 1st if
the proposed growth initiative amendment should pass, this great opportunity will
be lost.

Many months ago I suggested Greeley should annex everything from river to
river as far west as the county line, Road 17.

Today, I want to be more specific. Last week I talked to EDAP. They told
me that the southeast corner of the intersection of Highway 34 and Highway 25
was the best corner on Main Street north of Denver. They said that two hundred
acres or so would produce ten to fifteen million dollars of sales tax. I have been in 
business all my life. This fact is too important to let it slip away.

I then went to Jon Monson to be sure my thoughts were sound. The Greeley 
transmission water lines from Boyd Lake are adjacent to the property. The new 
zone 4 water pressure system being constructed for Promitory serves all the area 
west to highway 25. So the water is already there.

With detailed aid of this map prepared by Tom Donkle and Sean Cronin who 
operate the detailed mapping section for the Water and Sewer department, I believe 
I can show you why Greeley must go to I-25 (Main Street Colorado).

Loveland has annexed the north side of highway 34. We are talking about 
the south side. The Big Thompson River is about one mile south of the 
intersection. There is only between 800 and 1,000 acres of irrigated land between 
the county line and I-25. A highly desirable area from a sales tax viewpoint.

I will elaborate more in a few minutes but now I want you to 
understand that Greeley must have a waste water plant on the Big Thompson in 
order to receive all the benefits of our Greeley Loveland water when we go to 
water court.

Milliken and Evans are both on the Big Thompson drainage. A 
regional waste water plant with these two cities should be accomplished.

Now assuming the prime 34-25 corner is in Greeley, Mr. Monson told me 
we could go down the Big Thompson a mile or so and put in what he calls a
package sewer plant that meets all Greeley, Colorado, and EPA standards and will last for many years. This will only cost about two million dollars.

This package plant would serve for many years. As the area develops Greeley will build a collection system on the Big Thompson the same as we now have for the Poudre.

Greeley will have to build some roads, a fire and police station and staff them perhaps for three or four years before they are fully needed. But with ten million income, that is a good business decision.

On the north side of Highway 34 from 83rd Avenue to 95th Avenue there is some developable land. West of State Highway 257 is mostly steep rough land that is irrigated. Then there is the car junkyard with more rough land. This area would make a tremendous large park with trails, bike paths, etc., with the potential for non-potable water.

Next is the Oklahoma district about 3,000 acres of Greeley Loveland farm land all sloping to the north facing the Poudre River Valley and the high mountains of the Poudre drainage. Windsor is under the bluffs along the Poudre River.

Here again, this land drains to the Poudre. A regional sewer plant with Windsor and Kodak has been considered for several years.

Greeley must be flexible and willing to develop substantial subdivisions either on the north side or the south side of Highway 34. If you only annex the corridor the city will produce the jobs but people will live elsewhere.
The developers need housing sites. Greeley must be flexible and willing to build sewer and water to large development.

On the south side of Highway 34 Greeley must annex everything west of 71st Avenue all the way south to the Big Thompson River.

There is about 15,000 acres of irrigated land west of 71st Avenue on the south side. Here again there are bluffs above the Big Thompson, which means there are many opportunities for parks, golf courses, trails, and green space. Very beautiful home sites facing south overlooking the Big Thompson River with Longs Peak on the skyline.

There is about 2,500 acres of dry land that should all be held for business use absolutely no houses. Greeley has surplus water. We have planned for years that we could use it on the dry land. Business use requires much less water than homes.

Please remember that when we build homes anywhere on Greeley Loveland land the water is there to support people. We maintain our surplus as long as we build houses on irrigated land.

This is enough basic detail. Let's talk a little about how Greeley should handle this potential thirty-year growth.

As the water drains to the Poudre and Big Thompson, there are many wonderful park sites and storm water drainage's that can be planned in advance. The same is true for the main water and sewer lines, the proper sizing to fit the area
to be served. If properly planned there can be non-potable water available for parks, golf courses, etc. There will be plenty of green space.

The water and sewer department will have to plan the mains estimate the costs and charge the developers accordingly. Maybe the departments may need to carry some investment for three to five years before fill in pays their share.

There will be an army of developers come to the city with ideas. The council must set high standards and stick with them. Don’t forget you must be flexible.

Suppose a developer comes and wants to develop two or three sections with homes, golf course, clubhouse, etc. You must take sewer water, fire, and police protection to that area.

Now, I hope I have stretched your imagination of what a great city you are going to start to build. I have good news for you. The financing will be easier than you think.

By November 1, 2000, the annexation will be complete. Not very much money will be spent.

Developers start looking for potential sites including the prize corner at 34 and 25. Big developments have to be carefully planned, then financed all of this takes two or three years before construction begins. The State Farm project proves this point.

So, we have advanced to the year 2003. Time is on Greeley’s side. These figures are from your City Finance Director so I know they are right.
Starting in 2002 the Greeley Sewer Enterprise debt payments are reduced 1.2 million dollars a year. The sewer fund can invest this money in West Greeley without increasing sewer rates.

Starting in 2008 the Greeley Water Enterprise debt payments will be reduced 2.7 million dollars yearly. So water will have substantial funds available. The water enterprise might have to borrow some money before 2008.

The City of Greeley Recreational Center pays out in 2006. This means three million dollars a year available in 2007 for new needs.

The following year, 2007, the Union Colony Civic Center pays out. So in 2008 there will be another million dollars a year for new needs.

The only remaining debt the city has is the two bond issues to pay for parks, streets, storm sewer drainage, etc. Those are paid by sales tax proceeds.

The City of Greeley is in wonderful shape to take on this new challenge. Lets assume that the city would have to borrow money to finance this growth for a few years until taxes would carry it. Twenty million dollars from a twenty year bond would cost approximately one million eight hundred thousand per year. Because of the Tabor amendment the citizens would have to approve that debt. If you are developing jobs and receiving sales tax income that should be an easy sell.

Any funds that are needed by water and sewer are entirely up to the water and sewer board with council approval without any vote.
You have a great challenge. I hope I have described a vision for the future that you will move forward on. I know the large majority of the city wants to move forward to the West.
November 27, 2000

Mayor Jerry Wones
1000 10th Street
Greeley, CO 80631

Dear Jerry:

I very much enjoyed our visit last week. You spoke of a Supreme Court decision in the morning paper. I checked the paper and it was a close to a long-standing possible project.

I served on the Colorado Water Resources and Power Development Authority as a director for eight years. We studied every feasible project in Colorado. Union Park was one of them.

This was a large project on the upper Gunnison River. They planned to pump water from Taylor Reservoir up to a very large closed basin several miles and a few hundred feet in elevation.

Arapahoe County got involved for Aurora residents and they were the proponents.

The plan was to pump water from Union Park through a tunnel several miles long to the Arkansas River near Buena Vista. Then divert it from the Arkansas by pumping it through another tunnel to the headwater of the South Platte in South Park and then through the city of Denver’s reservoirs to Arapahoe County users.

It was a very expensive plan with tremendous pumping costs.

The denial by the Supreme Court, which was unanimous, was based on the fact that this water was removed high up on the Gunnison. So every water user downstream was effected. The other main reason was Blue Mesa Reservoir on the lower end of the Gunnison. The United States Bureau of
Reclamation project releases the water downstream to Lake Powell to protect the four upper basin states in the Colorado River Compact.

A long story that I thought might be of interest. It helps prove my statement that no one can ever drill any more tunnels. We must utilize what we have developed.

Sincerely,

W. D. Farr

WDF/ss
MEMORANDUM

to: Members – Westward Expansion Study Taskforce
from: William R. Farr
subject: Status of taskforce.
date: October 17, 2000

As is normally the situation, there is a lot going on at the Greeley Chamber of Commerce. A replacement for Lyle Butler has not been accomplished. The top two candidates did not “pan out”. The annual planning retreat is set for Friday, October 27. This is to set the goals for a year or more in advance.

With three weeks to go until the election, the Chamber is focusing on defeating Amendments 21 and 24. Other issues may be important, but will not generate Chamber activity.

Greeley has had a lot of annexation activity with the “Gold Hill” annexation already approved. They hold applications for considerably more acreage that is in the midst of being processed. The annexation of the southeast corner of the I-25 and U.S. 34 interchange by Johnstown has caused some frustration. Development there is a few years off so much can happen. Greeley’s passage of the Comprehensive Plan sets the framework for the future. It will be interesting to follow the actions of the Council and the Planning staff.

With all of the above information considered, the Board of Directors has officially disbanded both the Annexation Taskforce and Comprehensive Plan Taskforce. The beauty of a taskforce is it generally has a short life span.

For 2001, Kris Pickett will be the new President along with a new board. They will have the determination to decide what, if anything, they can do to keep Greeley headed in the right direction.

Thanks to each of you for your help and participation. We accomplished quite a bit and had a positive influence on the annexation and growth areas of the Comprehensive Plan.

Hope you are enjoying our pleasant fall weather.
August 23, 2000

Harry Felderman
2538 54th Ave.
Greeley, CO 80634

Dear Harry,

You showed concern about future water supplies at the joint meeting a few weeks ago.

You did not get a full answer. I will point out some facts. If you need more discussion please call me (353-9971).

Your question was what about water supplies for all of the northern Front Range?

Starting at the south end Boulder Creek has no water to develop. Left Hand Creek and the St. Vrain River have no other water to develop. The Big and Little Thompson have no water to develop. The Poudre has about 20,000 acre-feet of non-used water on a ten-year average.

The Poudre is a wild and scenic river. No development is possible except the one reservoir, Grey Mountain, which was identified by Congress to capture this surplus water. The Northern Colorado Water Conservancy District holds a conditional decree on this water.

The enlarged Seaman Reservoir that is often mentioned is a possible alternative reservoir site for Grey Mountain. Northern is pursuing this and other alternatives.

As northern Colorado moves into a drier period, the opportunity will allow one of those developments. It is a question of being able to move quickly at that time.
The City of Greeley staff is well aware of these opportunities. They attend and participate in all planning meetings.

A larger Seaman would improve Greeley’s water supply in our present Seaman Reservoir. In addition Greeley would get part of the new water to be developed.

Greeley needs to be patient but ready to assume a positive share when the project becomes more feasible probably by 2010.

You need to realize that from the time the decision is made to move forward; it will be about fifteen years later before there is ever water in the reservoir to deliver.

The present reservoir that Greeley owns would stay in service and available for Greeley to use until the new dam was constructed. Then our reservoir will have to be breached before filling starts.

By that time I am sure that Greeley will need this new water. In addition I am sure that Greeley will have paid for a few thousand feet of space in the new reservoir.

This space will allow Greeley to manage all Poudre water rights to better advantage.

There is still some CBT water that will transfer from agriculture to municipal in the next five years. Then there will be no more available.

All of the small towns north of Greeley (Windsor and Evans) and all of the new towns south (Erie, Fredrick, Dacona, etc.) can only use CBT water. Their filter plants take water from Carter and Horsetooth Reservoirs. Those filter plants are located right under the reservoirs. So that is their only source.

Johnstown has Home Supply ditch water. Milliken is planning on developing Hillsboro ditch water. Those are both Big Thompson ditch systems like Greeley/Loveland.

These water supplies can be developed. They will have to go to water court. They will have to build expensive transmission lines and very expensive filter plants. They will have to build some rather large storage facilities.

Broomfield is the leading city on the north side of Denver. Their new growth is all in Boulder and Weld Counties. Broomfield is in the Northern District. They are active buyers for CBT. They also own Windy Gap water.

Boulder has plenty of water. Longmont has enough. Loveland can develop some more water but they lack storage. Fort Collins is okay.
Jon Monson demonstrated that Greeley was in good shape. Greeley is firming Windy Gap at the moment. Greeley is developing more non-potable water. It is fortunate that we are downstream far enough that this is more feasible than our neighbors to the west.

If Greeley is active and annexes all the land to I-25 and all the land on both sides of the corridor from the bluffs on the north to the Big Thompson River on the south. That will add a very large amount of water from those Greeley/Loveland farms. All of this water can be used through the present Boyd Late filter plant. Then delivered back to the area for city purposes. Then Greeley will have enough water to grow to I-25 and eventually be a good-sized city in thirty to fifty years.

Water in Colorado is a complex problem. I have tried to quickly outline the answer to your excellent question.

Sincerely,

W. D. Farr
April 10, 2000

Mr. W. D. Farr  
PO Box 878  
Greeley, Colorado 80632

Dear W. D.,

Thanks so much for your letter. I made a copy and distributed it to the Councilmembers. Your son told me that your knee is much better and we are very glad to have you back.

You are way ahead of us, since the Council has not yet received a copy of the Comprehensive Plan. I’m sure it’s like everything else, they expect that we will rubber stamp it. The Council has already had three discussions about growth to the west and I know we will look very closely at that section of the Plan.

The council and I would like you to address us on the Comp Plan. Leonard will be in touch to make the arrangements. It looks like either April 25 or May 9 at our worksession.

On April 20th, we are going to meet with the County Commissioners and the small towns. We’ll see how far they are willing to go. I believe it is the Council’s position that we try to annex to WCR 17 or WCR 15 right away. Windsor is the only town that may want to fight about that stretch, but we have the infrastructure ready to serve that section right now.

Based on the information provided by Jon Monson, serving the remaining parts of the Hwy 34 corridor will probably require a new sewer plant. I hope the small towns recognize that it would be to everybody’s benefit to have a beautiful corridor and not urban sprawl and gas stations. This will be the most difficult political part.
I appreciate your comments about open space and buffer zones. At least the Council has agreed to not use our prime industrial land for buffer zones. That is an important first step. I personally like the small open spaces like the Plumb Farm, they can be well maintained. They also provide traffic relief, visual interest and help with noise.

There is much land speculation on the areas west of Greeley. Leonard and I are talking to those owners to get the annexations started, before any inappropriate development can begin.

Thanks again for your letter. Leonard will be calling to arrange your talk before the Council. Please let him know is one of those dates is better for you. I look forward to seeing you soon and am glad your recovery is going well.

Best Personal Regards,

Jerry
Wones
Mayor
April 3, 2000

Mr. Jerry Wones, Mayor
City of Greeley
1000 10th Street
Greeley, CO 80631

Dear Jerry,

As you may know I have been out of circulation for the past six weeks with a complete right knee replacement.

I have carefully read the Tribune so I know how much progress you have made with the several city problems facing you. Jon Monson has also talked to me on the telephone to help keep me up to speed.

I have a copy of the final complete Comprehensive Plan. It is a very thoughtful report. However, I have a few thoughts that I want to pass on to you. If any of them have merit, I can now meet with any group or individual to discuss the future of Greeley.

The growth is going to be faster than the plan estimates. The eastern half of the United States is just discovering Colorado particularly Northern Colorado. DIA is having and will continue for many years to cause at least 5% growth per year in Greeley.

Our city has been very conservative for the past many years. You and your council must convince the people that Greeley must be aggressive. That is the style of the world we live in. No person, corporation, or city can get very far without taking some chances. I don't mean to be reckless but you have to believe that some investment now will pay big dividends in a very few years.

If Greeley annexes land to the west, we control it. You only develop it, as the demand will pay for it.

Greeley must be able and willing to build water and sewer when a developer signs on the line.
There is a lot of land west of Greeley. If Greeley controls it we will have a beautiful city. If we don’t, there will be urban sprawl that can’t be controlled.

The cost of homes will continue to be lower in Greeley than anywhere else because of land and water costs.

If Bill Sterling and Jon Monson can plan ahead for thirty years they can save millions of dollars in construction of storm water, parks, recreation, streets, water and sewer.

If Greeley has the land annexed, then the good developers who have developed Fort Collins, Loveland, Longmont, and Windsor will be coming to Greeley. Plus some new ones from Denver. But it must be annexed first so they know Greeley will follow through.

The most glaring error in the Comprehensive Plan is the often-repeated buffer zones between communities. I understand why it is there and why it sounds good but it is highly impractical.

This is a dry country. Without water those areas will be weeds in a few years. Distribution ditches don’t run on section lines. They follow the contour of the land.

Irrigated farming in this area has been successful for over 125 years. Now with big expensive equipment land has to be farmed in large acreage with little labor. How do you think the city people would like the noise and dust of farm trucks hauling crops through their neighborhoods?

The City of Greeley was given the Plumb farm. It is an illustration of what buffer strips would be. You are a master politician this problem will take some education.

I have no property or investment of any kind west of my home on 14th Avenue. I will not see too much of the new city to the west. But I know it will be a city everyone will be proud of.

Let me know if I can attend any meetings or talk to individuals about anything to be helpful.

Sincerely,

W. D. Farr

WDF/ss

CC: Leonard Weist, Jon Monson, Greeley City Water & Sewer Board
June 22, 1999

W.D. Farr
Box 878
Greeley, CO 80632

Dear Mr. Farr:

Thank you for providing me with your great insight, both past and future, on the future Greeley and its water systems. I am going to be out of town this week at the Colorado Municipal League conference and miss the upcoming Water and Sewer Board meeting. I am responding to your thoughts in writing as I was afraid I might miss any verbal discussion on each topic due to my absence at the Water and Sewer Board meeting on Thursday.

I agree with you that it would be wise to offer incentives, or in the alternative, penalties, for those that don't develop on irrigated land in the future such a system is basically in place now due to the extremely high water costs to develop dry land acreage. I am in agreement that the price and availability of CBT are both becoming problematic. Competition for those limited CBT resources will only increase in the future. I agree as you have discussed in the past though, there may be an opportunity when the CBT contracts are renewed with the federal government, that the new assessments might create some opportunity for purchasing additional CBT shares. I think the City should be in a position, when that opportunity presents itself, to be able to act quickly and acquire as many CBT shares as possible, up to what we think our future needs may be.

I also agree that Windy Gap participants need to start pumping and using those waters or run the risk of a legal challenge to their water rights in the future. Windy Gap may prove to be the wild card that will enable us to purchase additional CBT water when availability presents itself. It might be possible to market Windy Gap water on a temporary basis, if done carefully, to provide as a stop-gap measure for municipalities developing alternative water supplies. That would help us get out of the expensive annual assessments, provide the pumping necessary to protect our water rights, free up some cash for further CBT purchases, and finally, if we get the water back in the long run, be our safety valve for drought conditions or future growth needs.
W.D. Farr  
June 22, 1999  
Page Two

Your analysis of the enlarged Seaman is correct in my opinion. I think that site holds the most potential of all the options that exist for the City of Greeley and Northern at this time. While the Galeton site may provide agricultural and some augmentation options, I believe you are correct in your analysis that it will not be of great help to municipalities. As you are well aware from your long history of water development in Colorado, these reservoirs never come cheaply or quickly. The groundwork must be laid quickly for these projects for the next generation to be able to take advantage of our foresight.

As you point out in your letter, flexibility is the key to the future. While water is certainly one of the most important components in determining where new growth will develop, it is unfortunately not the only one. Land prices, as well as access to major transportation corridors, will also help determine where industrial development will want to occur. Incentives away from dry land or encouraging development on dry land that requires little water will be in the best interests of all.

Thanks to the futuristic thinking of people like you and your family, Greeley is in a position of leadership in the area of water. The legacy and knowledge that you have imparted to your successors will serve citizens of Greeley for generations to come. You should be very proud of the many accomplishments your family, and you in particular, have contributed to the City of Greeley.

Thanks for the opportunity to provide comments on your thoughts. If it is not too late to discuss these topics in person when I return from the Municipal League conference, I would love to buy you lunch sometime and discuss these ideas in more detail.

Cordially,

OFFICE OF THE CITY ATTORNEY

Richard P. Brady  
City Attorney

RPB: lmc

s://ea/rick/corresp/farr.ltr
CITY OF GREELEY
GROWTH AND SERVICE AREAS
2001 - 2005 Capital Improvements Plan
April 10, 2000

Mr. W. D. Farr
PO Box 878
Greeley, Colorado 80632

Dear W. D.,

Thanks so much for your letter. I made a copy and distributed it to the Councilmembers. Your son told me that your knee is much better and we are very glad to have you back.

You are way ahead of us, since the Council has not yet received a copy of the Comprehensive Plan. I’m sure it’s like everything else, they expect that we will rubber stamp it. The Council has already had three discussions about growth to the west and I know we will look very closely at that section of the Plan.

The council and I would like you to address us on the Comp Plan. Leonard will be in touch to make the arrangements. It looks like either April 25 or May 9 at our worksession.

On April 20th, we are going to meet with the County Commissioners and the small towns. We’ll see how far they are willing to go. I believe it is the Council’s position that we try to annex to WCR 17 or WCR 15 right away. Windsor is the only town that may want to fight about that stretch, but we have the infrastructure ready to serve that section right now.

Based on the information provided by Jon Monson, serving the remaining parts of the Hwy 34 corridor will probably require a new sewer plant. I hope the small towns recognize that it would be to everybody’s benefit to have a beautiful corridor and not urban sprawl and gas stations. This will be the most difficult political part.
I appreciate your comments about open space and buffer zones. At least the Council has agreed to not use our prime industrial land for buffer zones. That is an important first step. I personally like the small open spaces like the Plumb Farm, they can be well maintained. They also provide traffic relief, visual interest and help with noise.

There is much land speculation on the areas west of Greeley. Leonard and I are talking to those owners to get the annexations started, before any inappropriate development can begin.

Thanks again for your letter. Leonard will be calling to arrange your talk before the Council. Please let him know is one of those dates is better for you. I look forward to seeing you soon and am glad your recovery is going well.

Best Personal Regards,

Jerry
Wones
Mayor
I very much appreciate the opportunity to speak to the city council about my thoughts on annexation for the city of Greeley to the west.

These are not new thoughts on my part. When Carl Moasberg, President of the Greeley Loveland Ditch Co., and I negotiated the original deed between the city and the ditch company. We felt that someday Greeley would grow over the entire ditch system.

That is why Greeley Loveland farms have had city water for forty years. That is why those farms consented to annex when Greeley asked.

Greeley’s water grid system west of the city is why there are no rural domestic systems. If there had been those systems, there would be urban sprawl all over the area today.

This city council and city administrative staff has the great opportunity to plan and build a fine city in the next thirty years if this large area of land can be annexed and planned now.

Think of the millions of dollars that can be saved in the planning and location of parks, storm sewers, arterial roads, fire station locations, and proper sizing of sewer and water mains.
I am now very positive of what the city should do. I intend to be very candid and to the point. I firmly believe that this year 2000 is the opportunity to plan and build Greeley back into the prominence we formerly had.

Promitory is under construction; everyone is finally beginning to realize what a dominant factor it will be in West Greeley. US highway 34 is completed. We have direct access to I-25 (Main Street Colorado). There are thousands of acres of developable land. Last, but a very important factor, Greeley has the water and the infrastructure to plan and build a great city.

There is no place in Northern Colorado that has all these attributes. As soon as Greeley annexes the area and has control the developers will be here.

I know Greeley must work out intergovernmental agreements with Evans, Windsor, Milliken, Johnston, and Weld County. There was a meeting last week where progress was made.

The council must realize that this must be accomplished by November 1st if the proposed growth initiative amendment should pass, this great opportunity will be lost.

Many months ago I suggested Greeley should annex everything from river to river as far west as the county line, Road 17.

Today, I want to be more specific. Last week I talked to EDAP. They told me that the southeast corner of the intersection of Highway 34 and Highway 25 was the best corner on Main Street north of Denver. They said that two hundred
acres or so would produce ten to fifteen million dollars of sales tax. I have been in business all my life. This fact is too important to let it slip away.

I then went to Jon Monson to be sure my thoughts were sound. The Greeley transmission water lines from Boyd Lake are adjacent to the property. The new zone 4 water pressure system being constructed for Promitory serves all the area west to highway 25. So the water is already there.

With detailed aid of this map prepared by Tom Donkle and Sean Cronin who operate the detailed mapping section for the Water and Sewer department, I believe I can show you why Greeley must go to I-25 (Main Street Colorado).

Loveland has annexed the north side of highway 34. We are talking about the south side. The Big Thompson River is about one mile south of the intersection. There is only between 800 and 1,000 acres of irrigated land between the county line and I-25. A highly desirable area from a sales tax viewpoint.

I will elaborate more in a few minutes but now I want you to understand that Greeley must have a waste water plant on the Big Thompson in order to receive all the benefits of our Greeley Loveland water when we go to water court.

Milliken and Evans are both on the Big Thompson drainage. A regional waste water plant with these two cities should be accomplished.

Now assuming the prime 34-25 corner is in Greeley, Mr. Monson told me we could go down the Big Thompson a mile or so and put in what he calls a
package sewer plant that meets all Greeley, Colorado, and EPA standards and will last for many years. This will only cost about two million dollars.

This package plant would serve for many years. As the area develops Greeley will build a collection system on the Big Thompson the same as we now have for the Poudre.

Greeley will have to build some roads, a fire and police station and staff them perhaps for three or four years before they are fully needed. But with ten million income, that is a good business decision.

On the north side of Highway 34 from 83rd Avenue to 95th Avenue there is some developable land. West of State Highway 257 is mostly steep rough land that is irrigated. Then there is the car junkyard with more rough land. This area would make a tremendous large park with trails, bike paths, etc., with the potential for non-potable water.

Next is the Oklahoma district about 3,000 acres of Greeley Loveland farm land all sloping to the north facing the Poudre River Valley and the high mountains of the Poudre drainage. Windsor is under the bluffs along the Poudre River.

Here again, this land drains to the Poudre. A regional sewer plant with Windsor and Kodak has been considered for several years.

Greeley must be flexible and willing to develop substantial subdivisions either on the north side or the south side of Highway 34. If you only annex the corridor the city will produce the jobs but people will live elsewhere.
The developers need housing sites. Greeley must be flexible and willing to build sewer and water to large development.

On the south side of Highway 34 Greeley must annex everything west of 71st Avenue all the way south to the Big Thompson River.

There is about 15,000 acres of irrigated land west of 71st Avenue on the south side. Here again there are bluffs above the Big Thompson, which means there are many opportunities for parks, golf courses, trails, and green space. Very beautiful home sites facing south overlooking the Big Thompson River with Longs Peak on the skyline.

There is about 2,500 acres of dry land that should all be held for business use absolutely no houses. Greeley has surplus water. We have planned for years that we could use it on the dry land. Business use requires much less water than homes.

Please remember that when we build homes anywhere on Greeley Loveland land the water is there to support people. We maintain our surplus as long as we build houses on irrigated land.

This is enough basic detail. Let’s talk a little about how Greeley should handle this potential thirty-year growth.

As the water drains to the Poudre and Big Thompson, there are many wonderful park sites and storm water drainage’s that can be planned in advance. The same is true for the main water and sewer lines, the proper sizing to fit the area
to be served. If properly planned there can be non-potable water available for parks, golf courses, etc. There will be plenty of green space.

The water and sewer department will have to plan the mains estimate the costs and charge the developers accordingly. Maybe the departments may need to carry some investment for three to five years before fill in pays their share.

There will be an army of developers come to the city with ideas. The council must set high standards and stick with them. Don’t forget you must be flexible.

Suppose a developer comes and wants to develop two or three sections with homes, golf course, clubhouse, etc. You must take sewer water, fire, and police protection to that area.

Now, I hope I have stretched your imagination of what a great city you are going to start to build. I have good news for you. The financing will be easier than you think.

By November 1, 2000, the annexation will be complete. Not very much money will be spent.

Developers start looking for potential sites including the prize corner at 34 and 25. Big developments have to be carefully planned, then financed all of this takes two or three years before construction begins. The State Farm project proves this point.

So, we have advanced to the year 2003. Time is on Greeley’s side. These figures are from your City Finance Director so I know they are right.
Starting in 2002 the Greeley Sewer Enterprise debt payments are reduced 1.2 million dollars a year. The sewer fund can invest this money in West Greeley without increasing sewer rates.

Starting in 2008 the Greeley Water Enterprise debt payments will be reduced 2.7 million dollars yearly. So water will have substantial funds available. The water enterprise might have to borrow some money before 2008.

The City of Greeley Recreational Center pays out in 2006. This means three million dollars a year available in 2007 for new needs.

The following year, 2007, the Union Colony Civic Center pays out. So in 2008 there will be another million dollars a year for new needs.

The only remaining debt the city has is the two bond issues to pay for parks, streets, storm sewer drainage, etc. Those are paid by sales tax proceeds.

The City of Greeley is in wonderful shape to take on this new challenge. Lets assume that the city would have to borrow money to finance this growth for a few years until taxes would carry it. Twenty million dollars from a twenty year bond would cost approximately one million eight hundred thousand per year.

Because of the Tabor amendment the citizens would have to approve that debt. If you are developing jobs and receiving sales tax income that should be an easy sell.

Any funds that are needed by water and sewer are entirely up to the water and sewer board with council approval without any vote.
You have a great challenge. I hope I have described a vision for the future that you will move forward on. I know the large majority of the city wants to move forward to the West.
WATER DEBT

$40.9 MILLION OUTSTANDING

$5 MILLION D/S 2001 - 2007

DROPS $2.7 MILLION IN 2008

DROPS $800K IN 2012

SEWER DEBT:

$13.7 MILLION OUTSTANDING

$2.5 MILLION D/S 2001

DROPS $1.2 MILLION IN 2002
GENERAL DEBT:

$23.5 MILLION OUTSTANDING

$3.0 MILLION D/S 2001-2006

DROPS $1.0 MILLION IN 2007
West growth will help downtown

No one wants to see downtown or the rest of Greeley turn into a ghost town. But much of Greeley's new life force is out west. Old part of Greeley can gain from new development.

A8 GREELEY (Colo.) TRIBUNE
tribune opinion

West growth will help downtown

No one wants to see downtown or the rest of Greeley turn into a ghost town. But much of Greeley's new life force is out west. Old part of Greeley can gain from new development.

No one wants to see downtown or the rest of Greeley turn into a ghost town. But much of Greeley's new life force is out west. Old part of Greeley can gain from new development.
Developers will reshape Mad Russian, Milliken

By Dan Feiveson
Business Report Staff Writer

MILLIKEN — Greeley-based Hall-Irwin Corp. and landowner-developers Bob and Ron Ehrlich may be setting down starting blocks for a fast-track scheme that could more than double the size of Milliken over the next 15 years.

Two golf courses — a revamped Mad Russian Golf Course and a second course to be constructed south of town — represent the latest Hall-Irwin-Ehrlich collaboration and the first stages of what could become a major Milliken expansion. Ron Ehrlich described the project as "a totally planned community with an emphasis on quality of life and recreation."

"They're basically building another town," said Milliken town administrator J.R. Schnelzer of potential development plans for the 2,200-acre plot.

The land, located between Colorado Highway 60 and the St. Vrain river, south and southeast of Milliken's current center of town, has been owned by the Ehrlichs for more than 30 years.

Initial proposals for its development have provided for as many as 8,000 to 10,000 new residential homes being built over the next decade, reported Hall-Irwin marketing director Melissa Jensen.

Schnelzer said: "They would have commercial zones, industrial zones, residential and recreational facilities and school facilities, and to do that it could take 15 years — it could take 30 years. What's unique about this situation is that so much land is controlled by one entity. Usually you have five to 10 developers with five to 10 different plans."

Milliken's current population is "right..."
around 3,000," he estimated, adding that "this could push us to 10,000." But Schnelzer stressed that the Ehrlichs' land has long been annexed and zoned to the town and included in projections for growth; Hall-Irwin's plans have not altered long-term expectations for the size of Milliken's population. "We've always felt that [the land] would be developed," he said. "We just didn't know how soon or when it would happen."

The town's overhaul will be kicked off in August 2000, with the construction of the new south-Milliken golf course, tentatively named Milliken Valley. Jensen reported that the new course will have at least 18-holes, if not 27, and will be "higher-end than the Mad Russian," while still attracting middle-income golfers.

In contrast, middle-income golfers have been the core clientele of the Mad Russian golf course since its founding by Ted Blehm over 25 years ago. In 1987, the Ehrlichs bought the course from Blehm and in May 1999, Hall-Irwin signed a 25-year lease agreement with the Ehrlichs to oversee its management and reconstruction — making the Mad Russian a sort of microcosm for the whole south-Milliken overhaul, which will involve Hall-Irwin's long-term commitment to Milliken and partnership with the Ehrlichs.

"We are very excited with the long-term arrangement, and everything at this point is working along very well," said Bob Ehrlich.

The Mad Russian Golf Course is a minefield of blind shots, under-sized greens and steep slopes, making the course economical, but appealing only to families and players more interested in fun than competition. "We're not attracting serious golfers because we're not considered a real course," Jensen said.

The course can be unfair, Mad Russian general manager Andres Arrietta agreed, but it can also be dan-
Donovan Henderson, Opinion Editor
Greeley Tribune

Dear Mr. Henderson:

Great decisions are sometimes not obvious and may even appear crazy. In his landmark book, The Effective Executive, Peter Drucker gives several case histories to make this point. Theodore Vail built Bell Telephone into the largest private business in the world by making unusual, even counter-intuitive, decisions. As two examples, Vail saw more effective government regulation would prevent government ownership of Bell Telephone and let the company compete on a level playing field throughout the U.S. And Vail created Bell Laboratories with the expressed purpose of making obsolete the very products that were making most money for Bell Telephone at the time. The results are impressive: a company that grew so big that the federal government had to bust it up into baby bells and tiny phones you carry and use everywhere.

W.D. Parr is a similar decision maker who thinks through what the decision is about and develops a principal for dealing with it. His development of cattle feeding with Mr. Monfort brought the corn to the cattle, reversing the great cattle drives of the past, and creating great wealth for this region. In the area of water, as one example of many, Mr. Parr saw clearly that as Greeley grew west, a close and intimate relationship with the Greeley and Loveland ditch company would benefit both irrigators and the city, which has proved true.

My point is, that when W.D. Farr says Greeley should grow west to the county line, and the city may have to take financial risks to achieve greatness, we ought to listen to him. The man has proven his ability to make decisions which Peter Drucker would say “tackled the problem at the highest conceptual level”, in other words, strategic decisions, rather than adaptations to the apparent needs of the moment. Such decisions may go directly counter to what “everybody knew” at the time but they address the fundamental issue at stake.

So when W.D. says, go west Greeley, go west, we ought to go west.

Sincerely,

Jon Monson
THE BUSINESS PARK at Fox Hill

- Located at future interchange of SH 119/Ken Pratt Blvd extension
- On Highway 119 immediately east of Fox Hill Country Club
- Great visibility and high traffic counts (16,000 per day)
- Mature trees and wonderful views of Longs Peak

GIBBONS-WHITE Incorporated
I. 15 acres
    $3.25 / sq ft

II. 12 acres
    $3.25 / sq ft

III. Up to 43 acres
    From $1.50 / sq ft

Fox Hill Country Club
and Golf Course
Solid Location
A 130-acre, full-service Business Park designed to meet the needs of today's pacesetting companies, Fox Hill is highly visible with two points of access, one along the new Ken Pratt Parkway extension connecting Longmont to the major corridor - Highway I-25.

Uses
Fox Hill is zoned commercial industrial and allows for a myriad of uses, including corporate campus, hotel, athletic club and restaurant sites. At full build-out The Business Park at Fox Hill will be home to more than 1,400 employees.

Infrastructure
Fox Hill will accommodate state-of-the-art infrastructure and utilities including fiber optic telecommunications, electrical, natural gas and water/sewer systems.

Superior Site Amenities
Located immediately adjacent to the beautifully landscaped Fox Hill Country Club and Golf Course, which boasts 18 holes and a brand new clubhouse facility, swimming pool, tennis courts and a spectacular view of Longs Peak. Also in the vicinity is Longmont's newest recreational feature, Sandstone Ranch Community Park, boasting six ball fields as well as soccer fields, roller hockey rinks and an extensive trail system. The park can be accessed by a pedestrian path along the historic Oligarchy waterway.

Strategic Positioning
The Business Park at Fox Hill is located in the geographical center of the United States, less than four hours by air to either coast. Only 5 minutes from I-25, Fox Hill anchors the Northern area's vibrant business corridor on 119 on the east edge of Longmont and is easily accessible to Denver, Boulder, Greeley, Fort Collins and Denver International Airport.

Educated and skilled workforce
4 major Universities surround Fox Hill Business Park - University of Colorado at Boulder, Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado School of Mines in Golden and the University of Denver are all within a 1 hour drive.

Local Community Flavor
Longmont is in favor of clean business growth and offers an optimistic business culture along with local natural and recreational amenities that inspire productivity. Additionally, the area provides an extremely wide variety of available housing options in all price ranges, from entry level around the low $100's to high-end executive estates. Ranked 7th in the nation, Longmont was one of the fastest growing cities in 1998.

Flexible Development
The Business Park at Fox Hill works with companies to facilitate their development wishes and to accommodate long-term plans with options for expansion, build-to-suit facilities or specialized infrastructure requirements.

Available Parcels
Tracts from 3 to 43 contiguous acres are available with total gross building areas of up to 1,200,000 sq. ft. with prices that allow companies to put more money into architecture and site features to attract the right employees – and keep them.

Major Employers
Major Employers in the area include Centrex, Seagate Technologies, Adaptec, Inc., Amgen, Hewlett Packard, Agilent Technologies, Kodak.
**Location**
Highway 119 and Weld County Road 1
Longmont, CO

**Site Features**
83-acre business park

**Distance**
Downtown Longmont - 3 miles
Boulder - 12 miles
Denver - 25 miles
Fort Collins - 30 miles
Greeley - 30 miles
Denver International Airport - 25 miles

**For more information:**
(303) 442-1040

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Boulder, CO 80301
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303-449-4009 (fax)
lsgibbons@bnw.net
ECONOMIC SUMMIT AGENDA

February 8, 2000
Union Colony Civic Center

Sponsored by
The Community Foundation Serving Greeley and Weld County
The City of Greeley

9:00 a.m. PROGRAM CONVENES IN HENSEL PHELPS THEATRE

9:05 a.m. WELCOME
Julie Johnson Haffner, Executive Director
The Community Foundation Serving Greeley and Weld County

9:15 a.m. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Tom Clark, President and CEO
Jefferson Economic Council

10:15 a.m. BREAK

10:30 a.m. CURRENT ECONOMIC INCENTIVES
Leonard Wiest, City Manager
City of Greeley

10:45 a.m. RETAIL DEVELOPMENT
Andy Goodman, ORIX
Maria Bunstine, Woodmont Corporation

11:00 a.m. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS
Bill Neil, Owner
Wheeler Commercial, Fort Collins

11:15 a.m. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMENTS
Ron Klaphake, President and CEO
Greeley/Weld EDAP

11:30 a.m. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS
Glen Droegemueller
Attorney at Law

11:45 a.m. CLOSING REMARKS
Jerry Wones, Mayor
City of Greeley

12:00 Noon LUNCHEON
Two Rivers Lounge--Union Colony Civic Center
Hosted by The Community Foundation
Serving Greeley and Weld County and
The City of Greeley
Duplicate pages not scanned
See originals in folder

Water Resources Archive
Colorado State University Libraries
I-25 reigns as a ‘Force’ in region

Long ago in a galaxy far, far away there were three cities that existed separately, independently and at times, suspecting their neighbors were ... deviously striving towards supremacy! At times, tension and wild rhetoric boiled beneath the surface concerning spheres of influence, territorial "grabs", unjust taxes, and trade routes. Now the Force is, for a lack of a better word, forcing alliances between these city-states, plus nearby colonies (i.e. towns).

However over-used, this allegory describes the North Front Range — the cities of Fort Collins, Greeley and Loveland plus Interstate 25 — since 1990. The Force is, of course, economics. And to add some drama, the Dark Side of the Force is ... development and developers. Sorry, but that image was too easy.

The bust of the 1980s turned, in retrospect, quickly to the current boom. So far, it has been a one-two punch — population and jobs. The latest Census Bureau estimates numerous high-double-digit and several low-triple-digit growth rates from 1990 to 1998, or communities within Northern Colorado. Where the highest growth took place is a surprise to some — a topic we will come back to.

So what does the future hold? Perhaps 1.5 million new Colorado residents by 2020, with most coming to the Front Range. Employment growth has been the most part been proportionate to population — the challenge will be rowing the size of the employment -base, especially skilled workers.

And where will much of this growth fall? A quick check of a regional planning map confirms intuition — population and employment has locked in on the I-25 Corridor.

The "trade routes" somewhat laboriously referred to above include I-25 and highways 34, 287 and 14. Traditionally, these have been people movers but increasingly become pipelines for commercial use. And all are at or near capacity, with capital — either financially or politically — being in very short supply to address the problems.

Trade routes bring us to taxes and grabs. And it is the good news/bad news scenario. Colorado has one of the lowest real estate tax rates for houses. But this advantage is losing appeal because we have very high tax rates for commercial properties.

Communities are realizing their ability to pay for services must come from commercial development. And because businesses need exposure and traffic counts, the I-25 interchanges are key. Hence, the Johnstown vs. Berthoud annexation battles at the Highway 56 interchange will become an important generator of tax revenue.

Looking back in 2020, we will likely recall:

- The extensive residential and commercial development along I-25 and the creation of "identity retention" open spaces to separate adjoining communities.
- The congestion caused by expanding I-25 to six lanes from North Fort Collins south to Denver, but also the realization that it was needed.
- The competition between the two employment centers: The build-out of Harmony Corridor in Fort Collins and the rise of the I-25/U.S. 34 Corridor in Loveland.
- The completion of 4,000 or 5,000 homes (or more) on or near I-25 between Loveland and Windsor.
- And perhaps a significant softening of the economy in the latter part of the first decade. The stress of a downturn is so great, local governments encourage job creation and economic development. And planning staffs are instructed to facilitate approvals.

The power base is shifting. Population grew the fastest in some surprising places: Erie, Frederick, Johnstown, Mead, Severance and Windsor. While the absolute numbers of people in these areas remain modest, a trend away from the traditional population centers of Fort Collins, Greeley and Loveland has begun.

For the "futureist," such a trend suggests wonderful (and alarming) scenarios such as cities that plan only for themselves or mass transportation proposals that do not appeal to commuters in Severance or Johnstown or Milliken. Or Fort Collins possibly following the example of Greeley in the 1960s — losing its leadership position by not recognizing, or ignoring, its future.

Our center of activity and vitality is moving to I-25, probably to be anchored at Highway 34.

Michael Ehler is a transaction broker with The Group Inc. Real Estate.
Metropolis or Del Camino?

By Vickie Martin
The Daily Times-Call

DEL CAMINO — Del Camino may be just a few short years away from being bigger than Platteville, Mead and Jostows combined.

The Weld County Planning Department is reviewing 19 proposed residential and commercial projects in the Del Camino area.

That means about 4,000 new home sites and nearly 700 commercial sites could swallow about 3,000 acres in the booming area, according to an estimate of the proposals.

The homes, when averaging 2.7 people per single-family residence, could add 11,000 people in the next five years if developments go as planned.

When the Weld County planning staff updated the Mixed Use Development Plan or comprehensive plan, Del Camino was expected to grow to 30,000 over the next 20 years.

Weld County Planner Ben Patton said small towns throughout Weld County are busy tackling growth issues.

However, Del Camino is by far the busiest.

"We receive inquiries every week. This is the place that is developing in the county," Patton said.

"It's developing rapidly, and the interest is very high." With the number of development plans submitted in the area, planners are trying to keep up the pace, Patton said.

Some amenities proposed in the area include the Eagle Claw fishing education center to be built in the Rademacher development, north of Highway 119 near the Barbour Ponds fishing and wildlife area.

A site for a new branch of the Weld County Library District will be dedicated in the Meadow Vale II 14-lot residential development just east of Weld County Road 5.5.

In the Horizon development along Colorado Highway 119, off Weld County Road 7.5, an elementary school site is proposed.

Weld County Commission Chairman Dale Hall said, "I do believe that we all knew there was going to be some growth pressures in that area."

Hall said that was one of the reasons commissioners pushed to get design standards updated for the area.

"The newer applications have been under the new design standards. I have seen a benefit of having that in place," Hall said.

Despite the mixed development of old and new designs, Hall said, "I think it will eventually look a lot better than it may have in the past."

As for the location, Hall said Del Camino's position on a major interstate, far enough away from the Denver congestion, is what makes it appealing.

"We had some indication of the potential out there. It's a prime area for people to want to build commercial and industrial types of businesses."

Hall cautioned that simply because applications exist, does not mean developments will materialize.

"An application is merely only that. It has no approval. Everything has to be taken on its own individual merit." Patton said at this time, four of the development proposals have "gone away."

Sketch plans for the Rademacher, Country View, Hanover and Grant Brothers developments have been submitted, but nothing else has occurred.

Patton said planners suspect that the Rademacher and Country View development proposals are being revised.

Hanover, however, is at the mercy of Boulder County for water, and is expected to receive verification that it can move forward any time now.

As for the Grant Brothers development on the southeast corner of I-25 and Colo. 119 — one of the hottest parcels in the Del Camino area — initial plans were submitted a few years back.

Now, the land is tied up in litigation, and it is unknown when development may move forward, Patton said.

Development proposals in the Del Camino area

1. Rademacher: Up to 300 lots of commercial and residential development on 257 acres.
2. The Elms: 200 single-family homes on 140 acres.
3. Meadow Vale: 78 single family homes on 155 acres.
5. Longview: McShane Development of 401 manufactured homes on 80 acres.
6. Horizon: Vista Commercial Development of 40 lots on 69 acres.
7. Boulker Creek Estates: 21 homes on 80 acres.
8. Hanover: 840 homes on 423 acres.
9. Lighthouse Cove: 19 lots spaced around a lake on 73 acres.
10. RiverDance: About 780 new homes and 20 commercial lots on 85 acres.

12. Grant Brothers: A commercial/industrial development on about 275 acres.
13. Idaho Creek: 353 new homes on 100 acres.
14. Western Dairyman: The Milky Way Coop of 19 lots for businesses
15. Del Camino East: 270 new homes and 500 commercial/industrial lots on 235 acres.
16. The Benjamin Industrial Park: 20 commercial/industrial lots on 33.7 acres.
17. The St. Acconis subdivision: 110 new homes and 10 commercial lots.
18. Meadow Vale II: 14 new homes, including a site for a new branch of the Weld County Library.