

## Chapter 8 - Implementation

In order for the Comprehensive Plan to be a useful and relevant document, it must be implemented. The most fundamental way in which the Plan can be implemented is through a systematic process of aligning regulations, standards, and processes with the objectives of the Comprehensive Plan. In this manner, the day-to-day decisions regarding development will effectively produce a physical environment that furthers planning objectives.

Equally important is the need for a process of monitoring how the plan is being implemented. This effort will provide information on how well the policy objectives are working, where there are opportunities for additional modification, and whether certain elements are not working at all. A monitoring process also can provide meaningful information for decision-makers that helps to ensure that the plan is an effective and useful tool.

This chapter summarizes major implementation tasks that should be undertaken to implement the Comprehensive Plan. These tasks represent high priority efforts that can significantly improve the linkage between policy objectives and implementing tools.

There are seven major areas in this element of implementation, as follows:

- 1) 1)Revising the Zoning Code to Encourage Integration of Uses, Pedestrian-Friendly, Transit-Friendly Development, and Establish Standards and Guidelines for Mixed-Use Development;
- 2) Modifying Zoning and Subdivision Codes to Provide Public Street Standards and Guidelines that Reinforce Mixed-Use and Multi-Modal Transportation Objectives;
- 3) Developing a Spatial Framework for Growth Planning to Complement Strategic Planning Activities;
- 4) Updating the City's Annexation Plan;
- 5) Evaluating Opportunities for Cooperative Planning with Other Governmental Entities;
- 6) Developing a Community Housing Plan to Address Housing Affordability;
- 7) Strengthening Natural Resource Preservation Through Revisions to Zoning and Subdivision Codes.

Following is a brief description of these major areas of implementation.

### Major Implementation Tasks

#### 1. Zoning Code Revisions

Description: The Zoning Code is one of the fundamental tools used to implement planning objectives. Historically, zoning has been used to segregate different uses, and this practice has been used in Colorado Springs. In order to more closely align the Zoning Code with the mixed-use objectives of the Comprehensive Plan, there are numerous opportunities to add mixed-use considerations as a development option. However, these options will not replace existing code provisions, due to concerns regarding property rights vesting.

Code revisions could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Adopt mixed-use zoning, consisting of new zones with varying size parameters and range of uses, depending on potential service area. A potential hierarchy of zones might include:
  - i. Create a neighborhood commercial zoning district that: limits the total site size to one acre or some other small number; limits the size of individual establishments to 2,000 square feet or some other small number; allows a limited range of convenience goods and services, not including gasoline and auto services or on-premises dry-cleaning.
  - ii. Consider creation of one or more community commercial zones that are planned, mixed-use zones, generally subject to the existing PUD procedures but containing these variations: requiring creation of a commercial core in which first floor uses must be retail or service and which must include second floor residential; require shared parking, generally behind the establishments; establish maximum setbacks from the streets on which these front; allow a broad range of retail goods, personal and professional services and food and beverage establishments; exclude drive-in and drive-through uses; exclude auto-oriented uses such as large grocery stores, furniture stores, lumberyards and any sort of auto service.
  - iii. Consider creation of a regional center zone that would allow intense commercial development of the scale of a regional mall but that would require incorporation of residential and public uses and open space and that would require pedestrian-oriented design. The purpose of the regional center zone is to allow the creation of a small number of large-scale mixed-use projects with intensive commercial uses. The district would ideally apply to an area of 50 or more acres, with reasonably direct access to a major arterial street. Although both the neighborhood and community commercial zones should have small buildings with mixtures of residential and commercial uses, a developer in the regional center zone is less likely to mix uses in individual buildings but should still achieve mixed-use objectives in the project. This zone could also be created as a sub-category of the PUD zone.
- b) Evaluate existing zones to accommodate mixed use, with consideration of effect on property rights vesting.
- c) Identify enhanced development plan review criteria intended to improve attention to public street interface, internal site layout, and transition to adjacent uses.
- d) Create a PUD classification for nonresidential uses in order to encourage innovation and provide flexibility in the development of nonresidential land use.
- e) In the Zoning Code, add a definition of "Dwelling Unit, above first-floor," and add to the use tables as a new land-use type. Allow as a permitted use, with appropriate additional conditions, in all Office and Commercial zones. This will encourage mixing of uses in designated zones.
- f) In the Zoning Code, add a definition of "Live-work space" or something comparable. Such spaces are typically used by artists, craftspeople and professionals. Add it to the use tables as a new land-use type. Allow it as a permitted use, with appropriate additional conditions, in appropriate residential zones, probably excluding A and R. Such a use will be more intensive than many home occupations in that it will involve maintaining inventory and may involve customer visits and even retail sales. On the other hand, it typically should not involve a significant number of employees. It may be desirable to include a condition limiting these to locations along collector and arterial roads in the specified zoning districts.

- g) Create a "Traditional Neighborhood Development" zoning classification as an alternative to standard development practices. This option would establish parameters for development that fully implements new urbanism concepts without the need for variances to code requirements.

Lead Responsibility: City Planning

When: 2001-2002

How: Work Program, with supplemental consultant assistance (also Strategic Plan implementation)

## **2. Public Street Standards**

Description: Improving the visual character of the City's public streets can dramatically affect the quality of the community. Street standards can be fully integrated into new development, but will require selective and incremental application in redeveloping areas. This task will entail examination of Street Standards and development of revisions to enhance pedestrian use, multi-modal opportunities; integration of pedestrian circulation considerations; assessment of public corridor functional issues relating to infrastructure and utility placement, landscaping and maintenance; evaluation of appearance issues; preparation of revisions to the Zoning Code, Subdivision Manual, and Public Works Design Manual.

Modifications could include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a. Consider the imposition of maximum building setbacks in the following: the new neighborhood commercial district; office and commercial districts located along collector and minor arterial roads; alternatively, in selected areas, designated by overlay zones. The purpose of the maximum setbacks is to force buildings up close to the sidewalk, creating a traditional downtown or neighborhood-center kind of pedestrian environment.
- b. Consider adoption of connectivity policy or expansion of Major Traffic Thoroughfare Plan to include collectors. The subdivision regulations currently require that new subdivisions conform to the Major Traffic Thoroughfare Plan, a policy that should ensure continuity of the arterial street system through the city. The policies for pedestrian-oriented development, for neighborhood-oriented shopping and a number of other policies in the plan, however, suggest a need for a higher degree of connectivity, extending at least to the collector street level. If such a policy is adopted, it should be an amendment to the subdivision regulations and should require connectivity of both minor arterials and collector streets between and through subdivisions; where appropriate, that may involve temporary stub streets providing routes for future connectivity to land that may be subdivided later. The New Urbanists and others advocate a complete grid system, but there is little evidence that such a system fully addresses traffic problems in a city as large as Colorado Springs. The principle of easy connectivity among neighborhoods, for pedestrians, autos and emergency vehicles, however, is an important one.
- c. Add pedestrian-friendly development design standards for all commercial zones and require appropriate pedestrian connections from new commercial areas to nearby residential areas.

Along major arterials or for auto-intensive commercial uses, the design criteria may suggest separating the pedestrian access areas from the major arterials and dominant parking areas.

- d. Require improved pedestrian circulation in nonresidential developments, including protected pedestrian ways to reach parking areas; such design requirements should be coordinated with landscaping of parking areas.
- e. Add maximum driveway widths.
- f. Consider amending the subdivision regulations to allow more off-site and shared parking. Pedestrian-friendly developments should encourage walking from business to business, which would mean that on-site parking is less important than in current "strip" developments. Further, a rhythm of business-parking lot with driveway-business-parking lot is pedestrian-hostile; pedestrian friendly environments typically have a rhythm of business-business-business-business, with parking grouped behind or separate from the bulk of the pedestrian-oriented area.
- g. Examine the potential for reducing pavement widths on residential streets. Reducing pavement widths is the simplest form of "traffic calming," reducing speed and increasing livability on truly residential streets. This recommendation should not be applied to arterial streets and probably should not be applied to major residential collector streets, because all such streets are likely to carry significant traffic loads that require pavement widths similar to those now set out in the table.
- h. Develop public street standards and guidelines that provide:
  - i. Design guidelines for major corridors, including streetscape standards for public improvements and related guidelines for landscaping, signage and, possibly, building elevations along the corridors;
  - ii. Streetscape standards for major collectors and arterial roads that are not major corridors;
  - iii. Corridor design (cross-sections) for all street types, incorporating aspects of the plan related to pedestrian accessibility, connectivity and land-use compatibility, including traffic calming.

Lead Responsibility: City Planning, Transportation Planning

Support: Public Works, Parks, Fire, Colorado Springs Utilities

When: 2001-2002

How: Work Program with supplemental consultant assistance

### **3. Spatial Framework for Growth Planning**

Description: While decisions regarding infrastructure and service investments are ultimately budget and financial considerations, the planning function can provide important information regarding the spatial distribution of development. This information can aid decision-makers, as well as ongoing strategic planning efforts, in understanding the cumulative effect of incremental development decisions on the demand for infrastructure and services.

This task could include, but would not be limited to, the following:

- a. Developing a mapped supplement consisting of annual cataloging of development activity;
- b. Correlating infrastructure and service needs identified in the Strategic Network of Long-range Plans to Planning Evaluation Zones;
- c. Monitoring updates to facility and distribution system plans prepared by Colorado Springs Utilities.

Lead Responsibility: City Planning

When: Ongoing

How: Work program through GIS applications

### **4. Annexation Plan Update**

Description: Update to the City Annexation Plan, a compendium of policies and procedures for the annexation of land into the City, and identification of general land uses within the 3-mile extraterritorial planning area.

Lead Responsibility: City Planning

Support: Colorado Springs Utilities, Public Works, and Office of Budget and Financial Analysis

When: 2001-2002

How: Work Program (also Strategic Plan implementation)

### **5. Cooperative Planning with Other Governmental Entities**

Description: Evaluate Cooperative Planning Agreement for possible modifications; jointly discuss opportunities for collaboration with other parties to the agreement; provide annual updating of land use and district mapping.

Lead Responsibility: City Planning, in collaboration with El Paso County Planning, and the City of Fountain

When: Ongoing

How: Work Program, supplemental budget requests depending on level of action desired by elected officials

## **6. Community Housing Plan Efforts**

Description: Continuation of efforts to facilitate housing options for all income groups throughout the city, and examination of opportunities to vary utility fees to facilitate provision of affordable housing.

Lead Responsibility: Neighborhood Services, Colorado Springs Utilities

When: Ongoing

How: Implementation of the Affordable Housing Plan 2000, which includes mitigation of barriers to the provision of affordable housing, preservation of existing affordable housing, and incentives to generate additional affordable housing. Additional definition of task through the City Strategic Plan.

## **7. Strengthening of Natural Resource Preservation through Development Codes**

Description: The Comprehensive Plan builds on the concepts for open space identification and preservation that are called out in the Open Space Plan. A fundamental component of this effort is the strengthening of the process of identifying and securing open space as part of the development review process, and better integrating open space and natural features preservation into the site planning process.

This task could include, but would not be limited, to the following:

- a. Synthesize the policies from the Colorado Springs Parks, Recreation and Trails Plan, the Colorado Springs Open Space Plan, and land-conservation policies from the Comprehensive Plan.
- b. Create a classification system for all future open space.
  - i. Open space and recreational lands which must be under public ownership and maintenance and available for public use.
  - ii. Open space lands which may be under either public or collective private ownership (such as a land trust or a homes association) but which must be preserved as open space or natural areas over a very long period of time.
  - iii. Open space lands which should be preserved where practicable but which are not worth significant expenditures of public funds and which may be transferred to individual ownership and simply
  - iv. preserved as yard areas on individual lots.
- c. Replace the existing combination of park dedication and impact fee program with a comprehensive park and open space impact fee ordinance, allowing the acceptance of land in lieu of fees only when that land matches-by location or character-specific elements of the Open Space Plan or Parks, Recreation and Trails plan.

- d. Amend the Zoning Code to require that planned open space in planned developments meet criteria consistent with the Open Space Plan as well as with needs of the particular development and to allow reduction in dedication requirements only where open space reserves in project meet specific criteria and needs identified in Open Space Plan.
- e. Create a cluster zoning option that allows specified variation in lot size (perhaps + or - 15 percent) subject to requirements to preserve specified open space lands.
- f. On land containing significant natural features not requiring public management, land needed for view protection or wildlife corridors, require cluster zoning and preservation of the designated lands and/or features up to 15 percent of the total site.

Lead Responsibility: Parks and Recreation for establishment of dedication criteria, City Planning for cluster zoning options.

Support: Colorado Springs Utilities

When: 2001-2002

How: Work program with supplemental consultant assistance.

## **Comprehensive Plan Monitoring And Evaluation**

### Introduction

Plan monitoring and evaluation involves (1) tracking progress and setbacks in accomplishing plan objectives, and (2) determining an appropriate response and effective course of action toward achieving progress.

Two principal plan monitoring techniques are proposed for the City of Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan:

1. Focus on identifying several key "indicators" that monitor plan objectives. Indicators are specific measures that bear a direct or indirect relationship to accomplishing an objective or implementing one of its policies. By tracking the selected indicators consistently over a number of years, benchmarks can be identified, trends evaluated, targets set, strategies reviewed, and policies adjusted as necessary to ensure that plan objectives are accomplished as intended;
2. Create a "progress matrix" that identifies key responsibilities and timeframes for accomplishment of plan objectives. The progress matrix also serves as a checklist for monitoring progress toward accomplishing intangible or non-measurable objectives for which indicators could not be established.

A freestanding document describing implementation of the Comprehensive Plan will be prepared. In addition, an annual report on implementation will be prepared. This report will discuss how the plan has been implemented or amended through the development review process, as well as providing assessments of progress on the tasks previously identified.

It is important to note that the Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan is an overall policy document that is linked to numerous other planning tools, including intergovernmental agreements, land use regulations, facility plans, and capital improvement programs. The success of the Comprehensive Plan is therefore dependent upon the implementation of a variety of other legislative, regulatory, technical, and financing mechanisms, requiring coordination and cooperation between the public, private, and non-profit sectors within Colorado Springs.

## **The Comprehensive Plan Monitoring And Evaluation System**

The following process for monitoring and evaluating the Comprehensive Plan is recommended.

1. **Collect Data.** In the first few months of every year, data for the proceeding year should be collected by the Comprehensive Planning Unit and added to the database for each established indicator. Geographic referenced data should be forwarded to Planning Data Systems for the creation of GIS coverage. Parcel data (APDS) and planimetric (FIMS) data will be updated twice annually through an existing agreement with the Assessors Office and Colorado Springs Utilities.
2. **Identify Benchmarks.** The collected data provides a baseline from which to measure change. A benchmark is the baseline from which to evaluate either positive or negative change. Benchmarks should be established for each indicator by the Comprehensive Planning Unit and reviewed with the Planning Commission and City Council.
3. **Set Targets.** In addition to benchmarks, targets for each indicator should be established and updated. A target can be a short-term, mid-term, or long-term goal toward the achievement of a plan objective. Targets should be initially researched by the Comprehensive Planning Unit, reviewed by the Planning Commission, and established by the City Council.
4. **Evaluate Trends.** Once tables and graphs are updated, benchmarks are identified, and targets are set, the trend for each indicator should be reviewed by the Comprehensive Planning Unit to determine either a positive or a negative movement relative to the achievement of a plan objective.
5. **Review the Progress Matrix.** The progress matrix serves as a checklist for monitoring progress toward accomplishing intangible or non-measurable objectives for which indicators could not be established.
6. **Produce an Annual Report.** An annual Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan Monitoring and Evaluation Report should be prepared by the Comprehensive Planning Unit to provide sufficient information to allow the Planning Commission and City Council to determine whether or not objectives have been achieved. The annual report also serves to inform the general public of the effectiveness of the Comprehensive Plan as a policy tool.
7. **Update the Comprehensive Plan.** Comprehensive planning, to be successful, must be an ongoing activity. If targets are met and/or trends toward achieving targets are positive, minor modifications or refinements to strategies should be considered that could further support the trend. If targets are not met and/or trends toward achieving targets are negative, the



Comprehensive Planning Unit, Planning Commission, and City Council should re-evaluate existing strategies and consider modifications to policies that are necessary to reverse the trend.

8. Update the Monitoring and Evaluation Program. Like the Comprehensive Plan, the monitoring and evaluation program should be considered a dynamic, ongoing process. New indicators should be added and existing indicators revised or even deleted as targets for each objective are monitored and evaluated. Likewise, the progress matrix should be updated as the monitoring and evaluation program evolves and objectives are achieved.