



VI. REDEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

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The Need

One of the most significant institutional decisions associated with the Stapleton redevelopment program is the type of management structure created to guide the site's disposition and development.

The 4,700 acre Stapleton site is owned by the City and County of Denver. Its disposition is subject to specific obligations imposed by the Charter of the City and County, commitments to airport system bondholders, federal grant conditions, provisions in airline tenant leases and other sources. Fundamentally, however, the City and County is the owner and the Mayor and City Council are the ultimate decision-makers. This fact places the City and County in the role of owner and potentially direct participant in the development and management of land, rather than its more traditional role of regulator of the use of privately owned land.



The City and County seeks to dispose of the Stapleton property in a prudent fashion and achieve a positive financial return on the asset. Given the enormous size of the asset, this disposition is likely to take place over time rather than through a single transaction or conveyance. In addition, the City and

County hopes to advance a number of community economic and social objectives through the reuse of the Stapleton property. The City and County's opportunity to do so is potentially much greater as an owner of land rather than simply a regulator. It can and must, as an owner, assure quality development.

The City and County will seek ways to attract private interest and investment in the Stapleton property. Successful redevelopment from a financial and community perspective will require ongoing public involvement (beyond normal regulatory approvals), in one form or another. The alternative would be to eliminate public involvement at the outset and convey the entire site immediately to one or more private parties (assuming willing buyers exist).

Absent adopting this approach, the public will be a participant at some level in the redevelopment process. The roles it plays and the vehicle or vehicles it uses to play them may well be critical to the long-term success of the redevelopment program. The public management role must encourage, rather than substitute for, private involvement.

The important question becomes how best to structure the public involvement. There is clearly a need to balance the desire for continuing public accountability with the desire to create a vehicle capable of operating in an efficient, professional and flexible fashion. Given that redevelopment activity could span more than 30 years, it is essential that a structure be developed that can provide continuity and be somewhat insulated from short-term pressures and the uncertainties of four-year election cycles.

Roles and Possible Structures

The structure established may need to address a number of governance, management and financing requirements of a long-term redevelopment program. For example, a public redevelopment entity may need to perform or otherwise require the ability to address the following:

- project management
- service delivery
- programming and management of events and interim uses on the site
- physical and financial master planning
- sales and leasing
- project phasing
- financing and provision of site improvements (infrastructure and amenities)
- communications and community outreach
- programmatic activities (training and economic development programs, project financing, incentives, affirmative action programs, research, etc.)
- design review and other quasi-regulatory functions

"INSTEAD OF OPERATING AS MASS SUPPLIERS OF PARTICULAR GOODS OR SERVICES, PUBLIC AGENCIES ARE FUNCTIONING MORE AS FACILITATORS AND BROKERS AND SEED CAPITALISTS IN EXISTING OR INCIPIENT MARKETPLACES. AS THE PAST DECADE HAS TAUGHT MANY OF THE LEADING PRIVATE CORPORATIONS, THIS MORE ENTREPRENEURIAL ROLE CANNOT BE PERFORMED WELL BY TRADITIONAL COMMAND STYLE BUREAUCRACIES."

THE CORPORATION FOR ENTERPRISE DEVELOPMENT FROM REINVENTING GOVERNMENT BY D. OSBORNE AND T. GAEBLER

Discussion of possible management structures for the redevelopment program began in 1990-1991 as part of the Stapleton Tomorrow process. More recently, a work group convened by the Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation and composed of representatives of the City and County administration, City Council, Citizens Advisory Board, Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation and the Denver Urban Renewal Authority reviewed the range of possible options. In addition to exploring the possible roles a management or development entity might play, the work group considered the characteristics that might be essential or desirable in such an entity.

The work group reviewed five categories of options for a Stapleton development entity. Those categories included:

- A newly formed 501(c)(3) nonprofit development corporation.
- The Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) or a sub-structure created under DURA consistent with provisions of urban renewal law.
- A newly created public development authority, requiring specific authorization by the Colorado General Assembly.
- A new entity created pursuant to the Intergovernmental Agreement provisions of Colorado law.
- A City and County department or agency operating under the City and County Charter.

Recommended Approach

The recommended approach that emerged involves the City and County and DURA entering into an agreement to create a third structure, a nonprofit development corporation. In general, the structure would have the following characteristics:

- The City and County and DURA would create a third entity to assume responsibility for management of the Stapleton site and redevelopment project.
- The entity would be a 501(c)(3) corporation governed by a board of directors appointed by the Mayor and DURA Commissioners and confirmed by the Denver City Council.

THE ATTRIBUTES OF THE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE SUGGESTED AS APPROPRIATE AT THE OUTSET OF THE INVESTIGATION INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING:

Control Must have control of Stapleton asset and authority to make and carry out decisions. Must provide continuity over time.

Authority Must have legal authorities necessary to carry out responsibilities (sell, lease, own, contract, finance, etc.). Must have community support and must provide for direct community involvement in governance structure.

Mandate Must have a defined public mission and mandate from the community (the Vision and Development Plan). Must see its primary mission as enabling private development activity to achieve that vision over time and assuring high quality development.

Capacity Must have the skills, experience and tools necessary to perform its various roles effectively (manage, plan, market, finance, regulate, service, lease and sell, involve community, etc.).

Capitalization Must have sufficient resources to cover 1) operating and administrative costs, 2) property management, 3) programming of events, 4) site improvements and 5) economic and community development initiatives. Must be able to draw resources from a variety of public, private and philanthropic sources. Must ultimately be self-sufficient.

Accountability Must insure continuing commitment to public development objectives and responsiveness to evolving needs of the community. Must be accountable but not political.



- The City and County would provide initial operating support to the entity with the expectation that it will ultimately be financially self sufficient. The City and County will have a formal operating agreement with the entity defining its role and responsibilities.



- The entity would function on behalf of the City and County and would have the necessary capacities to perform required functions (manage, lease, sell, contract, provide services, etc.). The entity would operate outside of City and County contracting, personnel and other systems.
- The entity could issue tax-exempt revenue bond debt to finance infrastructure and site improvements with prior

approval of the City and County. DURA would provide any necessary urban renewal powers such as tax-increment financing if requested by the entity and the City and County to do so.

- The entity would function consistent with open meeting and open records provisions and would adopt a code of ethics to govern members of its board and its staff.
- The entity would be exempt for purposes of Amendment 1.
- The entity could take title to Stapleton property if necessary and subject to existing requirements and obligations.

The approach described above has been recommended by the work group to the Mayor and City Council. The draft documents necessary to create such a structure have been developed by the City and County and the Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation and reviewed by the Citizens Advisory Board. Consideration and creation of a new entity is expected to take

place at approximately the same time as consideration and adoption of the Stapleton Development Plan by the City Council. Transition of responsibility to the new entity would begin following adoption of the Development Plan. Once transition to the new entity has been substantially achieved, it is the intention of the board of the Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation to sunset the foundation.

In addition to the legal steps required to create and empower a new development entity, there are additional issues that will need resolution. Funding sources for the development entity must be identified and committed. Once operational, the governing body of the development entity will need to work with the City and County, airlines, FAA and others to further define how best to fulfill the fair market value obligations associated with disposition, as well as the mechanisms and timing for addressing issues such as transfer of title, environmental remediation and long-term responsibility for stewardship of Stapleton assets prior to disposition or conveyance.

Beyond these activities, the City and County will continue to exercise a variety of responsibilities that will influence the nature and pace of redevelopment of the site. The City and County will continue to exercise its role as regulator of land use, provider of services and general purpose government of the jurisdiction in which the Stapleton property lies. In addition, the City and County will continue to have oversight of implementation of the Development Plan from a policy perspective and approval responsibilities with respect to the issuance of debt and creation of other financing and regulatory mechanisms. Creation of a development entity to manage development activity will not alter the City and County's ultimate responsibilities with respect to development of the site. It will, however, shift the day-to-day responsibility for the conduct of the business of redevelopment to the new entity. The Mayor and City Council will retain their role as the ultimate policy-makers and the ultimate point of accountability for the redevelopment program.



**VII. PHASING
STRATEGY AND
EARLY ACTION
ITEMS**

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PHASING STRATEGY

The full buildout of the Stapleton site will likely span several decades. The exact sequence of events over this period of time cannot be predicted with precision. It will be important, however, to focus development activity in a selected set of subareas and provide improvements and service extensions in a logical and efficient fashion.

Following are specific phasing principles with respect to the location, timing and type of development.

Location of Development - Given the large scale of the site, early development should occur in a limited number of locations, allowing for concentrations of investments in infrastructure and amenities and avoidance of the need to make expensive site improvements in multiple locations at the same time.

Each area of development should facilitate efficient extension of infrastructure and services, by taking advantage of opportunities to build on existing site improvements and utilities.

Timing of Development - New phases of development should not be initiated until previous phases have reached a critical mass necessary to support facilities and services such as schools, retail services, public transportation, etc. In addition, the phasing sequence should allow sites to be reserved whose maximum potential cannot be realized until value has been created by prior development and changes in the site's identity.

Property disposition or improvements made outside of an intended phasing sequence may be appropriate at times, but should not unduly limit future flexibility and should not trigger additional financial obligations that cannot be reasonably accommodated.

Within the northern portion of the site, development of an open space system should be encouraged as early as possible.

Type of Development - Early phases should contain a mix of uses and provide a balanced picture of the larger vision for full buildout of the site. Each identified phase must respond to market opportunities and set a precedent for high quality development.

PHASE 1 DEVELOPMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

Adherence to the phasing strategy described above could result in a number of different ultimate development scenarios. Regardless of the exact sequence of events, the initial stage of development should be focused on District I (the southwest corner of the site), District V (the Havana Street corridor immediately south of the King Soopers site) and the open space system. The terminal area, District II, could also be part of early development activity. Its fate and timing are dependent in part on market response to solicitations of interest in the terminal building and associated improvements.

Districts I and V respond most effectively to the phasing criteria established. Both areas can build upon existing access and utility improvements. Both areas are adjacent to developed portions of the community that support similar land uses to those identified in the Development Plan. District I can be developed as an extension of the existing residential grid. District V has already attracted market interest as a site for office, manufacturing, warehouse and distribution activities. There appear to be current market opportunities for both of these Districts. The environmental condition of each of these Districts, while not uncomplicated, does not appear to prevent their inclusion in Phase I of the development program.

The Stapleton open space system will take many years to reach maturity and will do more to change the character and identity of the site than any other improvements. Several of its components, such as Bluff Lake, Sand Creek, Westerly Creek, the Sandhills Prairie Park and drainage system may be eligible candidates for funding from outside sources. For these reasons, development of this system should commence with the development of Districts I and V as part of Phase I.

"BUSINESS IS THE MOST
FORCEFUL AGENT OF
CHANGE. AS BUSINESS
LEADERS, WE ARE
RESPONSIBLE FOR
CHANGE THAT IS POSI-
TIVE. THIS MEANS TO
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ERS, JOBS AND DEVELOP-
MENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR
EMPLOYEES, QUALITY
SERVICES AND PRODUCTS
TO SUPPLIERS AND CUS-
TOMERS. BUT IT ALSO
MEANS TO BRING POSITIVE
CHANGE TO SOCIETY AT
LARGE OVER THE LONG-
TERM. THIS CHANGE MUST
BE A COMMITMENT TO SUS-
TAINABLE DEVELOPMENT."

ANTONIA AXSON JOHNSON
CHAIRMAN
AXEL JOHNSON AB,
SWEDEN

EARLY ACTION ITEMS

The development corporation will have several immediate priorities to address related to project finance, marketing, communications, planning, infrastructure design, project management, asset management, pursuit of demonstration opportunities and additional studies. These priorities are summarized below. Work has already commenced in many of these areas. In addition, a phasing strategy has been developed which identifies Districts I and V as areas of initial development for residential and business and other uses.

1. Redevelopment Management Structure

- define character and role of the organization
- appoint the Board of Directors
- determine funding mechanisms
- identify and hire staff

2. Regulatory and Institutional Structure

- prepare and adopt site infrastructure and subdivision plans
- adopt master rezoning ordinance
- permanently designate open spaces through conveyance, easement, dedication or other mechanisms, as appropriate
- develop regulatory incentive and programmatic structures to support the development program's environmental, social and economic objectives
- establish a Transportation Management Organization

3. Finance

- develop initial infrastructure funding mechanisms
- identify initial carrying cost funding sources
- identify initial environmental remediation funding sources
- develop open space funding structures
- develop final impact fee structure

4. Marketing/Communications

- develop and implement land marketing program
- develop and implement existing building marketing program
- develop communications and public outreach program
- develop and implement strategies to attract environmental science and technology firms

5. Planning and Infrastructure Design

- develop plans for initial northern site storm drain improvements and diversion of Havana ditch flows from Havana Lake
- identify and design infrastructure improvements for subareas of Districts I and V
- complete design of Sand Creek corridor restoration improvements
- complete design of Westerly Creek channel restoration improvements
- commence planning and design for the learning golf course adjacent to Westerly Creek
- commence design of the District VIII Prairie Park
- continue Section 10 design coordination with the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge planning and Commerce City's planning of Section 9
- prepare tree planting program for Montview Boulevard



Redevelopment will take several decades to complete. Interim management of the site and its facilities will be critical to early success. Initial employment, housing, open space and infrastructure projects must contribute to a strong, new identity for the site.

6. Project Management

- complete terminal reuse solicitation process
- initiate first phase of airfield recycling program to support new road and site improvement construction
- construct 56th and 51st Avenue roadway improvements
- construct northern site stormwater management improvements and diversion of Havana ditch flows from Havana Lake
- construct infrastructure improvements for subareas of Districts I and V
- commence Sand Creek corridor restoration and trail development
- commence Westerly Creek channel, water quality, stormwater management and trail improvements
- continue on site environmental remediation activities
- coordinate with the Denver Smart Places Project
- complete King Soopers and Union Pacific transactions and manage development of these initial business environments
- initiate tree planting program along Montview Boulevard

7. Asset Management

- implement property management program
- implement site security program
- selectively demolish and recycle structures and airfield improvements
- implement interim management and events program

8. Demonstration Opportunities

- Pursue homebuilding demonstration opportunities for District I with partners interested in promoting resource conservation and other sustainable development objectives.
- Pursue infrastructure demonstration opportunities, including water reuse for golf course and open space irrigation and waste minimization, reuse and recycling through initial elements of a resource recovery program.

9. Additional Studies

- evaluate village scale energy system application to Phase I neighborhood development
- develop a tree planting program
- develop short and long-term water and wastewater management strategy
- identify feasibility of a solid waste resource village
- continue joint visitor facility and program planning with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- participate in the RTD rail corridor alignment
- identify and complete necessary environmental studies
- evaluate and recommend appropriate open space management strategies
- participate in the DRCOG I-70 corridor study
- identify and evaluate options to provide innovative educational opportunities

10. Social and Economic Strategies

- Create a business plan for the Center for Environmental Technology and Sustainable Development including pursuit of an environmental business incubator.
- Develop a program to expand entrepreneurial skills of surrounding and new residents.
- Create a task force to develop an education and job training delivery model for Stapleton and to identify specific K-12 educational options for future residents.
- Pursue establishment of, and funding opportunities for, school to work programs with employers recruited to the site.
- Evaluate Stapleton buildings for reuse as educational or community facilities.
- Initiate collaborative planning efforts with Aurora to rejuvenate the area between Stapleton and Lowry.

CURRENT WORK ON ACTION ITEMS

Prior to and during the creation of the Development Plan, work has commenced on a number of these action items. This work ranges from early site restoration and open space improvements to actual disposition of sites for industrial use. A brief status report on the most significant current project activities is provided below.



Bluff Lake Environmental Education Center

Center: The Bluff Lake area, in the southeast corner of the Stapleton site (between Havana Street and Sand

Creek) is being developed as an environmental education center. Initial funds (\$1 million) for restoration and development of the site (for restrooms, interpretive signage, etc.) have been committed by the City and County of Denver as part of a settlement of a lawsuit with the Sierra Club over water quality violations in Sand Creek.

The Friends of Sand Creek — a coalition of representatives from the Denver Parks and Recreation Department, Denver Public Schools, Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation and the University of Denver Environmental Policy Program — has pursued the development of programming for the site. Grants from the U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Bureau of Reclamation will allow the group to hire a program administrator in the winter of 1995, who will work with educators/advisors, funders, volunteers and local schools to begin on-site programming in the fall of 1995. The group is also exploring the possibility of serving as a satellite location for the Colorado Division of Wildlife's Urban Wildlife Education Center at the Denver Zoo.



Shurt and Pizzarello

Rocky Mountain Wildlife

Refuge: The Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Area (a 27-square-mile site to the north of Stapleton and east of Commerce City) is undergoing a transition from its former use as a U.S. Army chemical weapons plant and Shell Chemical Co. pesticide production facility to its

development and protection as a Congressionally designated National Wildlife Refuge under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The Army and Shell Oil are undertaking cleanup to address groundwater and soil contamination problems. Once cleanup is complete, the National Wildlife Area will officially become part of the National Wildlife Refuge system. The National Wildlife Area contains important wildlife habitats, including winter communal roosts for bald eagles and several other species of raptors. A master planning process for the Wildlife Refuge is currently underway, and should be complete by the fall of 1995.

The Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, formalizing an ongoing process of cooperative planning between the two entities for the adjacent sites. The northernmost portion of the Stapleton site (Section 10) is surrounded on three sides by the National Wildlife Area. Possible areas for cooperation include the siting of visitor facilities on Stapleton land leading into the Wildlife Area; cooperative wildlife and land use management strategies between the Wildlife Area and the Stapleton Sandhills Prairie Park and drainage corridors; joint educational program and interpretive area development; and cooperative planning among the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation, and Commerce City for the future development of Section 9 of the Wildlife Area, which is to be sold for private development.



**Sand Creek
Corridor:**

The Stapleton
Redevelopment
Foundation is coordinating a cooperative master
planning effort —
involving the cities

of Aurora, Commerce City and Denver — for the inventory, restoration and development of trails along Sand Creek, which runs through the center of Stapleton. Consultants are already under contract to begin trail planning and design work in the Denver and Commerce City segments. Once complete, the Sand Creek Corridor trail will join the High Line Canal and South Platte river trail systems to form a complete circuit trail around the city. The Corridor will form the southern edge of the proposed Emerald Strands trail system in the northeast metro area.

To fund this effort, the cities have requested a grant from Great Outdoors Colorado. The cities hope to create an independent, non-profit support and advocacy group for the greenway: a “Sand Creek Conservancy.” Their effort is being coordinated with the EPA Sand Creek Corridor Watershed Brownfields Project, aimed primarily at improving environmental health and economic development in Commerce City along Sand Creek.



**Westerly Creek
Multiple Use Greenway
and Water Quality
Area:**

Westerly Creek is a tributary to Sand Creek that runs from Fairmount Cemetery in the south-

east, through the former Lowry Air Force Base, and enters Stapleton at Montview Boulevard, nine blocks to the north of Lowry. On Stapleton, the creek runs approximately one and a half miles from Montview to the confluence with Sand Creek. Most of Westerly Creek now runs through pipes and lined channels, and is managed as a storm drain.

In coordination with the city of Aurora, the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District and Denver Wastewater, the Stapleton plan will uncover buried creek segments and restore Westerly Creek as an ecologically healthy, multiple-use river corridor. Enhanced wetland and ponding areas will improve water quality — a cost-effective alternative to repairing and replacing existing broken pipes. The Stapleton restoration activity will serve as a model for replication along the length of the creek. The creek improvements have also been proposed as a national demonstration for management of non-point source pollution.



**Residential
Development
Pilot Project:**

This project would create a model energy-efficient residential development. Among those involved in

the initial discussions have been Public Service of Colorado, the Electric Power Research Institute, the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the Governor’s Office of Energy Conservation, the Public Utilities Commission and the Denver Smart Places Project, through Denver Department of Health and Hospitals. Such a development could showcase available technologies for energy-efficient and environmentally beneficial construction and the use of renewable energy sources. The project could serve to demonstrate and monitor the short- and long-term costs and benefits of such technologies. The development would be privately built and financed.

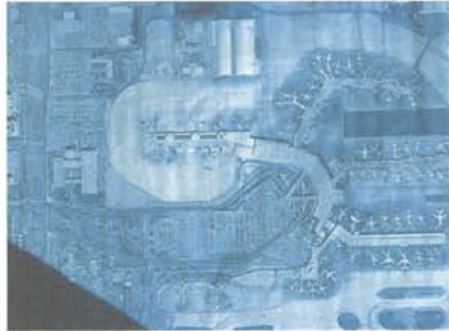


**“Groundswell”
Community Farm and
“Just Say Whoa!” at the
Urban Agriculture Center:**

The Denver Urban Gardens and a non-profit equestrian program for at-

risk youth have proposed a community farm, to be developed and located on land near the existing city nursery facility in

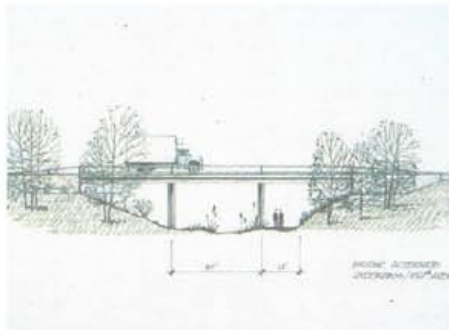
District V. This area has been designated in the development plan as an "Urban Agriculture Center." The proposal offers an early opportunity to meet long-term goals for the site. The farm would provide job-training and experiential education programming for disadvantaged populations, as well as food for the needy. The development and maintenance of the facility would be funded through program fees and private "shares" in the farm program (using the community-supported agriculture model).



Environmental Remediation: Remediation of identified surface, subsurface and groundwater contamination has been ongoing for several years and

will continue for several more. The Development Plan Resource Document describes the location and types of contamination as well as the ongoing remediation efforts.

The environmental remediation and restoration of natural features — such as those at Bluff Lake, Westerly Creek and Sand Creek — will create a solid foundation for future development.



56th Avenue:

Within three months after airport closure, construction will commence on 56th Avenue across the northern portion of the

Stapleton site. Initially this facility will be two lanes, but right-of-way has been reserved for up to six lanes. A bridge structure has been included in the roadway design to provide a grade-separated connection for trail connections, drainage and the safe transit of people and wildlife.



Runway

Recycling:

Efforts are underway to identify a contractor or contractors interested in a long-term recycling program for the site.

Recycled airfield material will be used in the construction of 56th and 51st Avenues, as well as site improvements to the King Soopers site.



Terminal:

The City and County of Denver has begun a process to solicit qualifications in order to identify a firm or firms to acquire (by lease

or purchase) and redevelop the Terminal complex portion of Stapleton. The complex consists of the two-million-square-foot Terminal building, an attached 4,300-car parking garage, a number of adjacent hangars and other buildings — totaling up to one million square feet, and up to 600 acres of land.

Industrial Land Sales:

Currently two land sales are in various stages of completion. Both involve land designated for industrial and commercial development, in an area bordering Havana Street on the east, 56th Avenue on the north and Interstate 70 on the south.

One of the parcels, covering approximately 140 acres north of 51st Avenue, will be sold to the Dillon Real Estate Company, known locally as King Soopers. The land is zoned for wholesale grocery storage processing and distribution. Construction will begin in the spring of 1995, with gradual development over the next 10 to 15 years. The acquisition schedule calls for

take-downs over a five-year period, including options that may affect the ultimate parcel size. The first takedown, approximately 19 acres, occurred in May, 1995.



The other parcel, covering approximately 280 acres south of 51st Avenue, will be sold to Union Pacific Realty, a national developer. Plans call for a “high-end” business park development, in harmony with the master plan. Closing is anticipated in the summer of

1995, contingent upon zoning acceptable to both parties.

To facilitate these land sales, the City will purchase environmental insurance, which will cover potential costs of litigation and remediation. Coverage will be assigned to the buyer at closing.

In both cases, the buyers are required to incorporate design guidelines, extensive landscaping and Urban Drainage Best Management Practices. The buyers are also encouraged to implement environmentally sustainable practices — as identified and refined over time — in building and infrastructure design.

Asset Management: Stapleton’s Asset Management program seeks to preserve, enhance and capture the value of the site’s 4,700 acres, including its more than 4 million square feet of developed space, its diverse infrastructure and its unique topographical and natural drainage features. In the near term, plans are in place for the orderly closure, maintenance and demolition of existing buildings; grounds and building security; landscape maintenance; signage; and snow removal.



Economical buildings will be leased for the interim uses reflected in transitional zoning legislation. The buildings have already attracted considerable interest for light industrial use. The

site’s unique facilities will be marketed as venues for special events — “human-scale” activities designed to transform Stapleton’s image from that of an abandoned single-use site to that of an interesting mixed-use site.

The Denver Smart Places Project:

A public-private partnership of local, state and national interests has been created to develop The Denver Smart Places Project for use in Stapleton redevelopment. The project involves the adaptation and application of a GIS-based energy modelling program (PLACE3S - Planning for Community Energy, Environmental and Economic Sustainability) to the Stapleton site. The development and use of this tool for sub-area planning will greatly aid efforts to meet the goal of sustainable resource use (for energy, air, water and land resources) on the site. The project also demonstrates the benefits of innovative planning and technology for community development. The program has proven to be a valuable planning tool in locations as diverse as San Jose and San Diego, CA; Tucson, AZ, Portland, OR and British Columbia.

Project partners include the Denver Department of Health and Hospitals, Environmental Protection Division; Public Service Company of Colorado; Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI); Colorado Public Utilities Commission; Governor’s Office of Energy Conservation; USEPA; Environmental Defense Fund (EDF) and the Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation.

STAPLETON’S ASSET
MANAGEMENT PROGRAM
SEEKS TO PRESERVE,
ENHANCE AND CAPTURE
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SITE’S 4,700 ACRES.

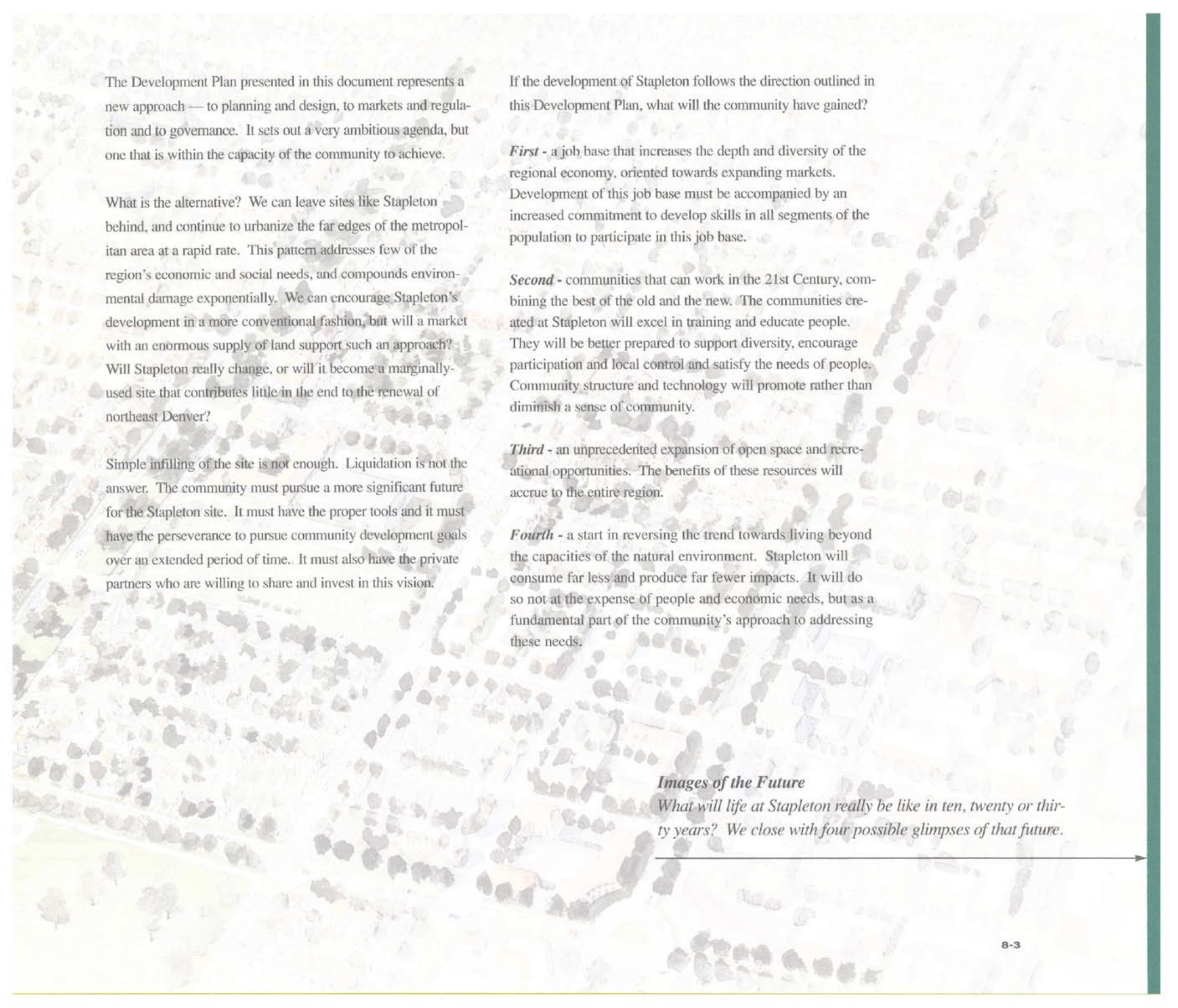


VIII. CONCLUSION-
IMAGES OF THE FUTURE

VIII. CONCLUSION - IMAGES OF THE FUTURE

A New Approach

Through its history, the Stapleton site has changed dramatically. It is about to change again. Stapleton's closure and reuse is not an isolated event. The entire region continues to change and mature. The challenges we face today are more pressing and more complex than those of the past. Stapleton's next life needs to be part of a meaningful response to the economic, social and environmental demands of the 21st Century. Stapleton presents many opportunities to the Denver community. The choices are ours to make.



The Development Plan presented in this document represents a new approach — to planning and design, to markets and regulation and to governance. It sets out a very ambitious agenda, but one that is within the capacity of the community to achieve.

What is the alternative? We can leave sites like Stapleton behind, and continue to urbanize the far edges of the metropolitan area at a rapid rate. This pattern addresses few of the region's economic and social needs, and compounds environmental damage exponentially. We can encourage Stapleton's development in a more conventional fashion, but will a market with an enormous supply of land support such an approach? Will Stapleton really change, or will it become a marginally-used site that contributes little in the end to the renewal of northeast Denver?

Simple infilling of the site is not enough. Liquidation is not the answer. The community must pursue a more significant future for the Stapleton site. It must have the proper tools and it must have the perseverance to pursue community development goals over an extended period of time. It must also have the private partners who are willing to share and invest in this vision.

If the development of Stapleton follows the direction outlined in this Development Plan, what will the community have gained?

First - a job base that increases the depth and diversity of the regional economy, oriented towards expanding markets. Development of this job base must be accompanied by an increased commitment to develop skills in all segments of the population to participate in this job base.


Second - communities that can work in the 21st Century, combining the best of the old and the new. The communities created at Stapleton will excel in training and educate people. They will be better prepared to support diversity, encourage participation and local control and satisfy the needs of people. Community structure and technology will promote rather than diminish a sense of community.

Third - an unprecedented expansion of open space and recreational opportunities. The benefits of these resources will accrue to the entire region.

Fourth - a start in reversing the trend towards living beyond the capacities of the natural environment. Stapleton will consume far less and produce far fewer impacts. It will do so not at the expense of people and economic needs, but as a fundamental part of the community's approach to addressing these needs.

Images of the Future

What will life at Stapleton really be like in ten, twenty or thirty years? We close with four possible glimpses of that future.



STAPLETON TECHNOLOGY INCUBATOR

In Dave and Dorothy Mitchell's imagination, their new filtration system will revolutionize drinking water supply around the world. The Mitchells designed the device several months ago, but finding the right place to develop it was proving difficult. Without the resources of Stapleton's Technology Incubator, their invention might never have left the drawing board.

After touring the Incubator — on the grounds of the former Stapleton International Airport — the Mitchells knew it would suit their needs perfectly. They were looking for a site that reflected their concern for the environment; Stapleton exceeded their expectations. Each of the Incubator's buildings incorporates recycled runway concrete, passive solar design, high-efficiency lighting, and low water-use plumbing. Overall energy costs have been reduced by more than 75 percent. Recycling also cuts waste and landfill costs.

The Mitchells are equally appreciative of Stapleton's landscape. The building they occupy stands on a greenway, offering a spectacular view of the mountains. A nearby trail leads from the Incubator to Sand Creek, passing through a major park along the way. Stapleton's recreational amenities will provide a welcome respite from long days at the office.

Better yet, getting to the office will not take the Mitchells all day. While they live on the opposite side of town, a shuttle — funded by Stapleton employers and the local Transportation Management Organization — will bring them directly to the Incubator. And thanks to Stapleton's investments in information technology, some of the Mitchells' employees will be able to remain at home and telecommute. Many of the Incubator's other tenants hike or bike to work; a wide range of housing also lies within walking distance.

While the Mitchells were attracted by Stapleton's infrastructure, they were sold by its workforce. The Incubator and the services that surround it have helped make Denver a major center of environmental technology. Stapleton has emerged as a major employment center within the region. A number of leading businesses and laboratories have moved to the area in recent years. Large corporations, as well as start-up ventures such as the Mitchells', benefit from an ample supply of high-skilled labor.

Stapleton's job training programs ensure that this supply will continue. The program in environmental technology, conducted at the Incubator and co-sponsored by the Lowry Campus, is tailored to companies like the Mitchells'. Each year, more than 200 youth also take part in special demonstration projects, ranging from wildlife conservation to training in the manufacture of thin-film photovoltaic systems.

Stapleton also offers incentives to firms that provide apprenticeships for community residents. All of the entrepreneurs who participate are delighted with the program, and the Mitchells are looking forward to joining their ranks.

Once the Mitchells' device is ready for market, Stapleton's Export Assistance Program will help them get it there. The program has developed extensive networks in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia — where the Mitchells have already found considerable interest in their invention. With Stapleton's support, the Mitchells may be able to turn their home-grown business into a world-class success.

WESTERLY PARK NEIGHBORHOOD

After finishing his exam, Bill Romero places it on his instructor's desk and accepts her congratulations with pride. In another two weeks, Bill will complete the requirements for an environmental accounting certificate, and join 20 other adults in the Whole Life Education Center's first-ever commencement exercises.

The Center's opening last year marked the newest addition to the Westerly Park Community School — a cluster of buildings in a quiet residential neighborhood on the grounds of what was once Stapleton International Airport. Bill's Education Center shares space with his daughter's elementary school and several other uses. A large building that once served as an aviation hangar is a neighborhood recreation facility. Alongside sit a block of administrative offices, a day care center, and a small public library. And across the street lies a village green — the very heart of Westerly Park.

Bill and his wife moved here four years ago, seeking a more tightly knit community in which to raise their family. Westerly Park proved perfect. The wide lawns and stately trees remind Bill of his childhood in Park Hill. A mix of young families and older homeowners lends the neighborhood a sense of stability. And Bill managed to find not only a house for his own family but an apartment for his mother-in-law as well — in a quiet brick building overlooking the village green.

Bill's wife Linda finishes work at about the same time his classes begin. The export company she runs is headquartered in a modern building, just blocks from her mother's apartment house. When she has time, Linda joins her mother for lunch at the local cafe, or picks up supplies at the business service center next door. (Part convenience mart, part post office, part telecommunications facility, the service center is Westerly Park's equivalent of a "general store.")

After work, Linda retrieves her son from day care, her daughter from dance class, and her electric car from the nearby Recharging Facility (one of the local innovations that has kept Westerly Park's pollution levels among the lowest in the state). Nearly all of the Romeros' errands lie within walking distance; their car spends most days in the alley behind their house.

Bill bikes home after dusk and shares a late dinner with Linda. Their son is already asleep, resting up for a big day of community gardening with his grandmother. But Bill and Linda's daughter stays up to tell her parents about next week's field trip to the Westerly Creek Nature Center. Her class has been collecting prairie grassland seeds to be planted on the hike. Bill's only question: Why he can't go, too?

STAPLETON PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

Amy crouches by the riverbank, her eyes fixed on the opposite shore. The other fifth-graders have already headed down the trail, but Amy is mesmerized by the scene before her. Moments earlier, a hawk plunged into the water, snatched a fish and lifted it into the air. Now the bird has returned to its roost in an old snag tree along the river, and Amy watches with a mixture of fear and fascination as its prey struggles in vain.

The site of Amy's adventure, Sand Creek was once hidden behind the fences of Stapleton International Airport and the industrial development of nearby Commerce City. But thanks to the airport's closure, the commitment of state and local officials, and the hard work of countless volunteers, the waterway has been restored to ecological health. The 12-mile trail that now runs along it connects the High Line Canal and the South Platte River — completing a riverfront loop around Denver.

Amy and her classmates have no intention of circumnavigating the city today; their immediate destination is Baird Bluff, another area restored after Stapleton's closure. Amy leaves Sand Creek and follows her classmates toward the top.

The bluff provides a spectacular view. To the west, Amy can see the skyscrapers of downtown Denver and the mountains beyond. A bit to the north, she can make out the city nursery, the new equestrian center, and the Stapleton Community Farm. And to the south lie the neighborhood of Bluff Lake and the elementary school Amy attends.

Winding their way back down the trail, Amy and her classmates reach the confluence of Sand Creek and Westerly Creek. Before them stretch 175 acres of meadows and streams, spacious playing fields and even a nine-hole learning golf course! This lush parkland is designed with the same respect for nature that characterizes the entire Stapleton development. Many of the plants, for example, require little irrigation; treated reuse water from the surrounding neighborhoods supplies almost all of the park's irrigation needs.

Amy's older brother spent last summer in the park's "stewardship training" program, learning how to protect and manage natural and recreational resources like this one. (Amy herself attended a workshop in Bluff Lake's Environmental Education Center.)

Amy and her classmates leave the park and rejoin the Sand Creek trail. They pass through a series of drainage corridors that once served as runway tunnels — a remnant of Stapleton's past. The stream banks here have been restored to shelter wildlife migration, and as Amy walks along, she spots a set of animal tracks. Bending down, she recognizes the hoofprints of a deer.

From the other side of the creek, Amy can hear loud whistles and cheers — the sounds of a Little League game in progress. (Stapleton's new athletic complex hosts teams from throughout the city, day and night.) Amy follows her classmates across the creek.

The trail forks near Quebec Street, Stapleton's western boundary. Amy's group takes the branch leading north, toward the Sandhills Prairie Park and the Rocky Mountain Urban Wildlife Refuge. The landscape slowly opens up; just ahead lies the site of a new championship golf course and bird sanctuary. Beyond lies the Prairie Park: 365 acres of rolling sandhills, seeded native grasses, indigenous wildflowers and willow groves. Amy's exploration ends here — to be resumed, she hopes, another day.

GREEN BUILDER

Brenda Williams enters the final pieces of data into her computer and, with the press of a key, submits the final building plans for her next project. Next spring, Brenda's small homebuilding company will build its eighth project on the former site of Stapleton International Airport.

Brenda has been involved with the property since the mid-1990s, when she and several other small homebuilders constructed the first residential units on the site. Today those units are nearing their 15th anniversary. Whole neighborhoods have evolved from these very modest beginnings, and much has changed at Stapleton and in the process of homebuilding.

Brenda's electronic submittal of plans is typical of current practice. In fact, on-line regulatory review was pioneered at Stapleton. In addition to the basic information, Brenda's submittal shows that her project meets or surpasses Stapleton standards for energy efficiency, water conservation, and inclusion of recycled materials. While Stapleton's standards are still among the highest in the state, many projects and jurisdictions have implemented similar approaches to resource conservation.

Brenda's project will also receive an excellent rating from the Metro Homebuilders Association's "Green Builder" program. The program assigns point values to individual units based on a variety of criteria, including energy efficiency, water conservation, indoor air quality, materials reuse, toxicity, and contribution to air and water quality protection. Since its inception as a pilot project, the rating system has become an essential piece of information for prospective homebuyers. Much as consumers once demanded information on the fuel efficiency of automobiles, today's con-

sumers require a complete Green Builder rating before reaching a decision about a new home. New units on the Stapleton site have consistently averaged between 85 and 90 on the system's 100-point scale. A project constructed by Brenda's company three years earlier still holds the record for the highest rating ever awarded to a new unit.

The homebuilding process has changed significantly over the last 15 years. Building codes, zoning and design controls have been greatly simplified and reoriented. The current regulatory structure continues to ensure public safety, convenience and community character, but it also facilitates projects that are highly efficient, take less time to produce, use many more recycled materials, and are far more adaptable to changes in lifestyle and use over time.

Zoning requirements at Stapleton, for instance, identify general requirements for height, density, scale and the relationship of buildings to public spaces and one another. Use restrictions tend to be flexible and to reflect performance characteristics. The design review process Stapleton has used for the last 15 years is demanding but predictable — and actually less time-consuming than previous forms of regulation and required rezonings, variances, conditions and appeals. Many of the mechanisms first tested at Stapleton have now been applied city-wide.

Stapleton's evolution has paralleled that of Brenda's own company. Over the last 15 years, her company has produced at least five different types of housing products at Stapleton, ranging from single-family and townhouse units to a senior care facility, a 45-unit co-housing village and a 100-unit mutual housing project. Brenda describes her work as having evolved from homebuilding to "community building."

Brenda's company has also experimented with new approaches to highly efficient community lawn irrigation

systems; telecommunications links among homes, schools and workplaces; and incorporation of electric vehicle recharging facilities in residential projects.

Stapleton's focus on recycling has helped Brenda become a local expert on reducing and recycling construction debris. Her company is currently exploring plans to manufacture building products from recycled materials — for the company's own use and for sale to other builders. The Stapleton Development Corporation will assist Brenda in identifying financing sources and training area residents to staff the operation.

Twelve years ago, when Brenda received her first community builder award for producing an environmentally and socially superior housing project, she was truly worried. She feared that consumers would perceive the award as a sign that her housing products were too expensive or impractical. Instead, the awards have come to represent durability, a healthy environment and attention to detail — values that any serious homebuilder would be happy to have associated with his or her name.



IX. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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