



North Ada County Foothills Association

One voice. One goal. One plan.

NACFA Update—In Case Anyone Doubted...; Next Steps/Meetings.

October 21, 2006

In Case Anyone Doubted...

A huge thanks is due to all who attended the October 16th Eagle P&Z hearing on the M3 project!!! An even bigger thanks goes to those who testified. We have gotten compliments, expressions of support, and encouragement from many sources based in the quality of our message and our presentation. It truly was a great team effort.

So, what good did it do? Well, we will have to wait and see. However, there is no doubt that we:

- Sent a message to M3 that they are not going easily ram their project through Eagle by force of dollars and deluge of detail. There IS a community watching...willing to show up and demand good faith response to its values and concerns;
- Let the decision-makers in Eagle know that we expect (respectfully, but well beyond a request) a comprehensive approach for the whole North Foothills area, not piecemeal decisions on individual projects or landholdings; and
- Now have good media attention to what it happening in and surrounding the North Foothills.

We are being asked to be patient for the moment, to let the process work. Ok, fine, but I will say this: if the M3 project gets through the P&Z Commission and is passed on to the City Council with any form of approval, we will need to rally an even stronger response than we did on the 16th. To be honest, I don't see it going that way; I believe that both the P&Z Commission and the City Council see what is happening and know the right way to proceed. However, we are not dealing with developers who give up easily and I expect that they are pressing whatever buttons they can to avoid both [1] being subsumed into a full foothills-wide planning effort, and [2] going back to the drawing board to come up with a project that doesn't completely ignore the community of which it ultimately would be a part.

Stay tuned...here is what is happening and the next steps...

Next Steps/Meetings:

- Eagle City Council--Pre-Council workshop on foothills planning (held on Tuesday, 10/17): At this workshop, we had a chance to present our messages to both the City

...citizens helping to create a sustainable vision for the future of Ada County's Northern Foothills...

Council and P&Z Commission together (text of Conclusions & Recommendations attached). M3 and Suncor also presented their perspectives on foothills planning. The primary results of this workshop were:

1. The City Council will take the next step in looking at the foothills comprehensively by working on a set of goals and objectives addressing planning for and land use in the foothills (starting with a review of the goals, objectives, and policies in the current Comp. Plan). It remains to be seen what, if anything, the City will accept from the County effort thusfar, but we are stressing forcefully that the public input we have all contributed, over long hours of meetings in the last year not be ignored.
 2. The Council seemed to acknowledge that a full, public comprehensive plan process is needed, but (for whatever reasons) did not comment on the status of or approach to the individual landowner applications currently being processed (M3 and Suncor). This latter “result” is where the “have faith” idea comes in...so, for now, hearings on both M3 and Suncor are still happening, as summarized below.
- **Eagle Planning & Zoning Commission Hearing-Suncor**, first hearing: **6:30 PM, Monday, 10/23 at City Hall**. As I noted in the last Update, the thrust of our testimony at this Suncor hearing will be reiterating the message that no individual project or land area plan should be approved before the full, foothills-wide plan is completed. Beyond this, what Suncor is proposing stands in stark contrast to what we see from M3. Suncor is simply presenting a broad concept (not burying us in data and details), and their concept is generally responsive to Community values and concerns. In fact, the NACFA Concept (the “Frog”) was drawn with their knowledge, cooperation, and input. So, aside from our insistence on a “big picture” plan before approval of pieces, it will be good to be able to stand up and comment favorably...that has been and remains our goal as an organization. It would be good if interested folks attended this hearing, but I do not consider it an “all-hands” event.
 - **Eagle City Council - Pre-Council workshop on foothills planning**—**5:30 PM, Monday, 10/24 at City Hall**. This is the continuation of the Council’s workshops (see first meeting note above). This workshop will focus on foothills goals and objectives. Again, it would be good if interested folks attended this meeting, but it is only an interim step. CJ and I will be there, and, as necessary, I will press the points about [1] a full-blown comp. plan process with formal public involvement events, and [2] the status of the M3 and Suncor applications in that context.
 - **Eagle Planning & Zoning Commission Hearing-M3 & Suncor**—the continuing saga?—**6:30 PM, Monday, 10/30 at City Hall**. We hope this hearing doesn’t happen, that by this time both the M3 and Suncor applications are tabled and/or are subsumed into the North Foothills Comprehensive Plan process. Even if it does occur, I am not sure whether it will do us any good to make a big effort to show up. We will have clearly stated our position and our concerns. As I said above, if either or both of these applications get through to the City Council with any form of P&Z approval, that will be a major alarm bell...and we will need to plan our response accordingly. I will follow-up on this later.

- **County Planning & Zoning Commission—Work Session (County Comp. Plan Update, including Draft North Foothills Sub-Area Plan) – 5:00 PM, Thursday, 11/2, first floor Ada County Courthouse.** As I have said before, we cannot take our eye off the ball with the County process. There is no guarantee that these North Foothills will become part of Eagle (in fact, the County could object to and fight expansion of Eagle’s Area of Impact). We therefore need to remain vigilant to what is happening with the County plan. I have previously sent our the NACFA comment letter to the County (see the website if you need to find it again). We do know that the Draft North Foothills Plan has been under major assault by landowners and developers. As I have said, some have legitimate complaints (e.g. Suncor & Connolly), but the M3’s of the world are simply angry that the Draft Plan placed such (we believe) reasonable limits on their development intensity. Rumor has it that County leadership intends to get the plan revised to be far more “developer-friendly”...we will see. Try to attend this one if you can, but the major push (if needed—but likely) will need to happen at the formal hearing two weeks hence.
- **County Planning & Zoning Commission—Public Hearing (County Comp. Plan Update, including Draft North Foothills Sub-Area Plan) – 6:00 PM, Thursday, 11/16, first floor Ada County Courthouse.** *This one could be an “All Hands, Everyone and Their Dog” event.* I will follow-up after seeing what transpires at the 11/2 workshop.

If I missed something, I will pass it along.

Thanks again for all the support in our common cause, and order-of-magnitude bigger thanks to all who worked on our presentation and made it happen.

Best regards,

JP

Conclusions & Recommendations

- **Re-orient priorities to a full, open Eagle Foothills Plan**
 - It is the City's role to lead
 - The Community expects it – it is Eagle's strength & tradition
 - We want to participate and help
- **Take counsel from public involvement to date**
- **Build on the work that has been done**
- **Establish citizen work groups/committees on critical subjects/issues**
 - Water
 - Wildlife habitat & open space
 - Traffic/roadway requirements
- **Look at a range of possible futures**
- **Create a Community Vision before any decision on parts of pieces**

