



North Ada County Foothills Association

One voice. One goal. One plan.

NACFA Update—April 28, 2007--Addendum to April 22 Message

Hi all,

Here is a follow-up on my Update a few days ago...

In my last email with "alarm bells" on Eagle's draft North Foothills comp plan amendment and the pending M3 application for development of 6000 acres in the North Foothills, I mentioned that we were planning to meet with the Eagle planning staff to answer some hard questions about Eagle's process and intent.

CJ and I spent an hour Friday (4/27/07) with Eagle planning director Bill Vaughan and Nichoel Baird-Spencer, the planner charged with all Foothills-related issues. We came away feeling a bit better, in one regard, based on **Bill Vaughan's assurances that the comp plan for the entire Foothills will be decided before any specific Foothills development applications.**

What does that mean? Simply put, we were told that: Eagle will not collaborate in an "end run" around the comp plan by M3 and will not make commitments to any developer on density or any other specifics until after adoption of the comp plan for the entire area by vote of the City Council. We'll all need to stay involved in the comp plan process and the M3 hearings to make sure that commitment doesn't waver.

With that in mind, I want to remind you on **high priority meetings** on the North Foothills comp plan amendment coming up this week at which it's critical we have a large turnout:

Monday, April 30, 6 p.m: Joint Eagle Council and P & Z Commission workshop on the draft North Foothills comp plan amendment. This is a session intended exclusively for Council/Commission discussion and to get their questions answered by city staff and consultants. No public testimony will be heard at this event. Nevertheless, we can expect that many key aspects of the draft will be discussed, including key issues such as density. Even though no testimony will be taken, I believe we need a show of force to let Eagle officials know that many, many people are concerned about development in the North Foothills and are watching their decisions. It's likely that we'll be able to deduce from this session the tendency of at least some of the officials to favor either developers or the neighborhoods.

Tuesday, May 1 or Thursday, May 3, 6 p.m: Two open houses (content same at each) sponsored by the City to explain to the public the draft North Foothills comp plan and presumably to take preliminary reactions on that plan from the public. You'll be able to see details of the proposal at these meetings, ask questions, and weigh in on the impacts (e.g., traffic) the

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

plan/proposal would entail. This is your first opportunity, in an informal setting, to **let the City know how you feel about the possibility of Eagle allowing a minimum of 24,000 housing units and potentially as many as 30,000 units to be built in the North Foothills (with an attendant addition of 160,000 to 210,000 car trips per day on our roads--no, these are no exaggerated numbers, they are conservative)**. We need to take full advantage of this first opportunity to express strong opposition to this kind of density.

If your time allows attending only one meeting this week, go to one of the open houses and weigh in.

As the beginning of our focused action on their proposal, NACFA is asking anyone and everyone to participate in a **letter writing campaign on the City's Foothills Plan and the concurrent processing of the M3 proposal** (the latter for a minimum of 5740 to a maximum of 8150 housing units on their 6005 acres between Willow Creek Road and SH 16 north of Homer Road). We ask for letters as opposed to email because the physical impact of hundreds of letters pouring in to city hall will be fairly dramatic. (If you elect to go with email use eaglecity@cityofeagle.org, with subject line For J. Pierce, P & Z, re: Eagle North Foothills Plan and M3--CPA-14-06/RZ-19-06.)

If you are interested, I'm including a draft letter (below, right after this message, covering some of the major concerns which you can print, date, sign and mail to arrive not later than May 12 (May 16 at the very latest) to the Eagle P & Z commissioners.

Consider involving the entire family in this letter writing campaign. At the last P & Z hearing, the commission especially noted the letter sent by a young (8-10 year old) resident pleading that animal habitat not be destroyed and asked if she was in attendance. It's perhaps for our children that these issues are most important. It's their future as much as ours.

If you prefer to draft your own letter, I encourage that even more strongly. (A discussion of major issues is included below the example letter, to assist in that endeavor.) The first P & Z hearing on the draft Foothills plan is 5/14, and the next hearing on the M3 proposal is 5/17...more on that closer to the hearing date.

Please forward this to spread the word far and wide to neighbors and all others you know who care about preserving our quality of life, both here in the community and throughout the Valley.

Let's gear up and go get 'em!

As always, my sincere thanks for your help in the struggle and your commitment to reasonable foothills development.

Best regards,

JP

_____(date)_____
_____(name)_____
_____(address)_____

Eagle Planning and Zoning Commission
Attn: Jason Pierce, Chair
P.O. Box 1520
Eagle, Idaho 83616

Re: Draft Eagle Foothills Comprehensive Plan Amendment and application by the M3 Companies (CPA-14-06 and RZ-19-06) for rezoning with development agreement for 6005 acres in these Eagle Foothills.

Dear Mr. Pierce and Planning and Zoning Commissioners:

I am extremely concerned about the impacts of development intensity proposed in Eagle's draft Foothills plan (24,000 to 30,000 units), and, within this Foothills plan area, the development proposed by the M3 Companies (i.e. 5740 to 8150 units of the 24,000-30,000 total). This development in the Eagle Foothills will likely have severe impacts on the City of Eagle and the entire Treasure Valley. These proposals will have a profound effect on our future quality of life.

For example, I urge in the strongest possible terms that:

- You insist on a full, detailed understanding of all impacts of the south- and west-bound traffic this foothills development will generate (170,000 to 210,000 daily car trips). I am greatly concerned not only about the congestion which will result from this traffic locally and regionally but about the cost and timing of the road and state highway improvements which will be required to handle this traffic volume.
- You carefully consider the tax burden you will be imposing on residents of the Meridian school district. The M3 proposal, for example, will generate the requirement for nine additional schools, and the developer will only donate land. The cost of constructing, staffing and operating those schools will fall on us, and the overcrowding of existing Eagle schools until new schools can be built causes me great concern.
- No entitlements be implied for or granted to M3 or any developer before the City Council has adopted the full North Foothills amendment to the City Comp Plan.

There are many difficult issues, of which these are only a few, that need to be carefully analyzed and fully understood before you come to a recommendation on first, the Foothills Plan and, subsequently, M3 Eagle or other developer proposal. Please ensure that the concerns of the community are fully represented in your deliberations and that the development process is not rushed before the ramifications of Foothills development, at whatever level are fully understood and addressed.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours truly,

IF YOU COMPOSE YOUR OWN LETTER

Remember: Let the Eagle officials hear you clearly but politely. Your letter can be as long or short as you like; you can copy The Statesman and The Valley Times. Do and say what feels comfortable to you.

What your letter should include

1. Your name and address, with your letter addressed to: Eagle Planning and Zoning Commission, Attn: Jason Pierce, Chair, P.O. Box 1520 Eagle, Idaho 83616 (Or, if you elect to go with email eaglecity@cityofeagle.org, with subj line “For J. Pierce, P & Z, re: CPA-14-06 and RZ-19-06.)
2. Reference to the Draft North Foothills Comprehensive Plan Amendment and/or the application by the M3 Companies for rezoning with development agreement for 6005 acres in the Eagle Foothills (Eagle file number CPA-14-06 and RZ-19-06),
3. The request that a copy of your letter be included with the hearing materials and distributed to the other four P & Z commissioners. (Eagle requires that, to be included in the official hearing materials, comments must be received at least five days before the hearing is scheduled. It’s for this reason we ask you get the letter in by the 12th; the next hearing is scheduled for the 17th. Receipt after that does not guarantee inclusion in the hearing materials.)

Some of the topics you may want to address

1. Why you chose to live in Eagle. What you think is special about Eagle. How long you’ve lived here.
2. Why you appreciate the North Foothills (e.g., because you recreate there, because you love the look and feel of the area, because the foothills are home to abundant wildlife)
3. What you’d like the Foothills to be twenty years from now (e.g., scenic vistas intact, ridgelines and wildlife habitat preserved, open space for public recreation, continued access for equestrians, large expanses of native plants so the look of high desert foothills can still be found)
4. ...and what you hope they don’t become (e.g., another typical suburban development a la Phoenix or Denver, a quick and easy, fast route for commuters from the west and north to use on their way to Boise or Meridian).
5. What concerns you *most* about the draft Plan and/or M3 proposal from the following broad topics (one, a few or many—your choice):
 - a. **Water:** Applicant (M3) has submitted a request for new water rights to IDWR for 42.5 cubic feet/second peak flow (that’s more than 19,000 gallons per minute). They propose to pump groundwater from existing aquifers for that entire water

quantity. Although they propose irrigation with “gray water”, aquifer recharge will be affected by loss of open ground to houses, paving, etc.

- b. **Density/Type of Development:** The level of development proposed in the City’s draft plan has already been mentioned. However, it is informative to study how M3 proposes to build their 5740 to 8150 housing units and about 300 acres of mixed use, including commercial, office and a 500-room hotel. (Current zoning for this land is one unit to forty acres, or 150 units.) Although M3 does include some “large lot” (5, 2, 1 acre) housing areas, the great majority of units proposed range from 4 to 20 units an acre.
- c. **Traffic:** 160,000 to 210,000 car trips added every day, spread around and through downtown Eagle to South Eagle Road, State St., Hwy 44, Hwy 16 and Hwy 55. Major expansions to Highways 16 and 55 would be required to handle this traffic (just to get it to Highway 44/State Street and the Boise River), and major new connections of Hwys 16 and 55 southward to the freeway would also be required. The State highway department has no funding for the design or construction of any such expansions; at present, funds are available only for the environmental work associated with a Hwy 16 expansion. The following are examples of what also will be necessary to handle this traffic, based on available traffic studies (which in some cases do not agree with one another):
- Widening Eagle Road (in Eagle) from Beacon Light or Floating Feather through downtown Eagle to at least 5 lanes (with a four lane Eagle/Willow Creek coming out of the foothills);
 - Widening Eagle Road to 7 lanes south of Highway 44;
 - Widening Floating Feather to 5 lanes between Eagle Road and Hwy 55;
 - Widening Beacon Light to 3 lanes between Hwys 16 and 55, ultimately going to 5 lanes;
 - Widening Linder to 5 lanes south of Beacon Light (with a four lane Linder Road coming out of the foothills)
 - Widening Hwy 44 to 7 lanes between Linder and Eagle Road;
 - Constructing an overpass at Hwy 16 and Floating Feather;
 - Constructing interchanges (like Eagle Rd and I-84) at Hwy 16 and Hwy 44 and Beacon Light;
 - Upgrading Hwy 55 to 5 lanes north of Beacon Light to Dry Creek
- d. **Air quality:** The effect of all this additional traffic on the Treasure Valley air shed. In the extreme case, violating federal air quality standards too many times could jeopardize access to federal highway funding/GARVEE bonds.
- e. **Schools:** The M3 development alone is expected to generate the need for 9 additional schools, and M3 proposes to provide only the land. Eagle middle and high schools are already over capacity and the school district will be floating bonds well into the future just to catch up with existing need. New schools for this development are not currently in the school district’s plans and would have to displace other requirements or go to the end of the line for funding. Where will all these additional children go to school until money can be found to build new schools for them...in our already overcrowded facilities?
- f. **Your tax bill:** You’ll pay for those nine new schools in the M3 development and, even if developers pay for county roads (ACHD’s position), you will likely bear at

least some of the cost to acquire right of way and upgrade the state highways involved through a combination of GARVEE bonds, higher car registration fees and additional gas taxes.

- g. **The wildlife toll:** What will happen to the mule deer, hawks, quail, burrowing owls, curlew, chukar, pheasant, song birds, foxes, badgers and coyotes which currently call the foothills home? What will they eat when the ground squirrels and other small mammals now living in the grass and ranch lands are developed?
- h. **Continued Foothills open space and recreation:** Is it important to you to continue using the foothills for recreation? Do you value the sense of place the foothills provide for Eagle?
- i. **Impact on the city:** How does this “new city” to the north affect the downtown businesses and Eagle’s ability to continue to attract to new businesses to our downtown? How do you feel about all the traffic headed “downstream”?

Close with any other comments you wish to offer and thank them for considering your opinions.