



VIRTUAL TOWN MEETING
DECEMBER 6, 2011
QUESTIONS / RESPONSES

Rhonda – Englewood

Questions:

1. Why did the Board of County Commissioners believe it was necessary to file an appeal of the recent redistricting ruling?
2. How do district maps make a difference in the county's day-to-day decision making?
3. Please share your insights on the recent denial of your redistricting appeal.
4. How does this decision impact county residents at the local level?
5. How do you expect it will change the way the county does business?

Refer to video for response.

Margo – Franktown

Question: What is the single most important issue that faces Douglas County at this time? **Refer to video for response.**

Margo – Franktown

Question: What are the three highest traits we as citizens in Douglas County should look for in a commissioner candidate? Since we have candidates running for Commissioner Board's seat, I am curious what qualifications does a Commissioner need to have, from your perspective? **Refer to video for response.**

Bob – Highlands Ranch

Question: I was on my way from Castle Rock this morning on my way to Rox Park. It took me about 45 minutes to get down Titan Rd. due to a small accident and I think the southern connector would help solve a lot of problems for a lot of people. Can I put my two cents in for the connector to be approved? **Refer to video for response.**

Micheal – Littleton

Question: What is the status of the Southern Connector and the Waterton Canyon flyover? **Refer to video for response.**

Chad – Roxborough

Question: Regarding the southern connector, where are we on the approval and time frame?
Refer to video for response.

Kim – Roxborough

Question: Quite some time ago, the residents of Roxborough were asked to review plans for making the intersection at Waterton and Wadsworth safer. Where is the county on approval and funding of this project? **Refer to video for response.**

Lori – Roxborough

Question: When is Santa Fe going to be widened? Will that happen before the Southern Connector? How about the widening of Titan Road? It is very congested and unsafe. **Refer to video for response.**

Dave – Castle Rock

Question: What do you believe has been the county's greatest success in the last Four Years? What do you believe are the most important three goals for the County to achieve in the next 4 years? **Refer to video for response.**

Dennis – Littleton

Question: Does the County have updated population and housing growth rate projections for the next 20 years? **Refer to video for response or visit www.douglas.co.us/demographics/documents/PopProjections.pdf projection of population growth to 2030.**

Mark – Highlands Ranch

Question: How does transportation play into 2012.? Douglas County is such a great place to live but congestion seems to be getting the best of the community.
Refer to video for response.

Mike – Castle Rock

Question: I know there have been numerous meetings offered to the community to discuss the Sterling Ranch development plan, and many Roxborough residents appreciated the opportunity to offer their thoughts and insights about the plan.

The density that is currently being discussed will most likely have a significant impact on the traffic, given the current narrow roads will need to be expanded to support such growth, and another impact will be to the natural beauty of the dark skies residents now enjoy star gazing, and it seems a high density build out as planned, will wipe out this cherished aspect of living in Roxborough. First, how do you envision managing the inherent traffic issues that will be inevitable, and is there any projection or date in which major road work will ensue? Second, is there any way the Sterling Ranch organization and the County have considered how to protect the dark sky we now enjoy?

Refer to video for response.

James – Parker

Question: When will the C470 / Santa Fe Flyover be opening?

Refer to video for response.

Land Owners Alliance of Douglas County

Questions:

1. Will Douglas County be able to increase their enforcement activities as drilling starts and increases in the County? **Refer to video for response.**

2) Rio Blanco County charges the oil industry an \$18,000 fee for drilling a well that is used for road repair and maintenance due to the increased road usage. We understand that fracking a well requires millions of gallons of water - resulting in thousands of water truck trips. Will Douglas County have a road use fee structure that will provide monies from the Oil Industry, for road repair/maintenance, so that the Tax Payer does not foot this bill? **Refer to video for response.**

3) Can Douglas County include an Emergency Notification Matrix on their website, so that citizens know how to navigate the system for anything from large to small emergencies related to oil drilling? **Staff Response: Yes, an Emergency Notification matrix can / will be placed on the County website.**

Dennis – Littleton

Question: The growth in the County and staff has been dramatic in the past 20 years, and so we can anticipate a significant increase in retirements in coming years. Does the 2012 budget include pensions, and do projections for pensions have a significant adverse affect on budgets in future years? **Refer to video for response.** Additional information:

Douglas County does not provide a pension plan for our employees. Employees contribute a certain percentage of their monthly income and receive a corresponding match by the County. As such, employee retirements have no impact to the Douglas County budget, as there is no future financial liability or cost to the County. Douglas County does not provide on-going Retiree Healthcare plans/options for employees. Upon retirement, an employee may choose to COBRA their benefits at the full cost for up to 18 months, which is required by law for all separating employees. Beyond that, a retired employee would either have to secure individual coverage or if eligible, apply for Medicare.

Erin – Parker

Question:

When is the new Hess Road Extension from Parker to I-25 going to open? Was going to be today? **Refer to video for response.** Visit

http://www.douglas.co.us/engineering/Hess_Road_Extension.html for more information.

Jennifer – Littleton

Question:

Is this meeting recording to be made available on the DC website, and when?

Refer to video for response.

Zavon – Castle Rock

Question: I am a student at Douglas County high school, and I see lots of teachers leaving do to budget cuts. Where do you see our education in the next couple of years?

Douglas County School District response: Every District across the state is facing tough decisions due to the current economic conditions.

However, Douglas County School District is not resting during this downturn. We have developed a Strategic Plan that encourages the creation of more World-Class choices for our students, moves us toward new outcomes and more sustainable learning (learning that sticks) and measures what matters most. The assessment and pay for performance systems that are part of this plan will be a model for the state and our country. The work being done now is bettering education over the next couple years and positioning the District well for the future.

Becky – Castle Rock

Question: When will the road construction on Founders be complete? With the lane alignment changing frequently it is getting dangerous. Especially with the traffic coming into Castle Oaks for the school.

Bob Goebel – Castle Rock Public Works responded: Founders Parkway (Colorado Highway 86) is a State facility and is being reconstructed under their jurisdiction. I spoke with the CDOT representative on the phone today, and she indicated that the project is planned to be open to all lanes by the end of next week and throughout the winter. Remaining project work, such as seeding and permanent pavement striping, is weather sensitive and will continue next spring. Here is a direct link to the project through the Town's web site where you can access news releases to monitor the progress of the project, and obtain contact information:
<http://www.crgov.com/index.aspx?nid=1113>

Tyler – Castle Rock

Question: Why is the section of Monarch Blvd just south of Rocky heights middle school all the way to Castle Pines Parkway so poorly maintained in the winter. It is in my opinion one of the most dangerous roads to drive after a snow storm

This comment was sent to the City of Castle Pines.

Mr. Greenfield – Castle Rock

Question: What are the future plans for the Town Center in the Meadows? **Jim Riley – Castle Rock Development responded:**

The recent commencement of construction for the Castle Rock Adventist Health Campus has provided increased interest in the Meadows Town Center. Over the past several months we have spoken with combinations of the following potential uses within the Town Center; however, credit is still difficult to obtain and remains a challenge for new facilities. Grocery-(including discussions with the Whole Foods Broker), Medical offices, Retail uses, Restaurant uses,Hotels, Apartments, Office uses, and Residential builders. For background information, the town center area has mixed-use zoning, which means there is planned residential, commercial, & office uses. Two commercial pads were sold in the town center area to a local Castle Rock developer and the commercial buildings are approved by the Town. The owner is working on leasing the buildings up before construction can start. You can see the approved buildings here <http://www.mercantilecastlerock.com/renderings.html>. The leasing and construction timeframes are driven by the market, which has been rough the last couple of years.If you would like additional information please contact Jim Riley, Castle Rock, Development company at 303-394-5103.

Chris – Lone Tree

Question: In light of the recent Fourmile fire near Boulder, I would like to bring a matter to the attention of the County Commissioners which I feel is a tragedy waiting to happen. It has to do with the use of backyard fire pits in certain areas of Douglas County where homes are in close proximity to each other. I believe that in less populated areas such as Elizabeth or Franktown, where homes are built on acreage and sit farther apart from one another, the hazards of fire pits may not be that great. However in more populated areas such as Lone Tree, Highlands Ranch and Acres Green where I happen to live, and where homes are usually not more that 30 feet apart I feel that these pits should not be permitted.

A recent (channel) 9-News.com report stated that “fire investigators suspect that the Fourmile Canyon Fire, which charred 6,400 acres and destroyed 166 homes, likely was sparked by embers from a fire pit that a volunteer firefighter had not fully extinguished”. The front page article in the Sunday (9/12/10) Denver Post which says the Boulder fire may have been started by one of these pits brings this problem to the forefront. Sparks from these pits, especially during this very dry season we have had, can reach a neighbors wooden fence, their roof, or other nearby structures resulting in a fire. Since most of these pits are used at night, if they are not extinguished properly sparks may ignite a fire after the people using them have left and gone to bed.

During the summer months when windows are usually kept open, if the prevailing winds are right, the close proximity to other homes can also cause smoke to enter a neighbors’ home causing eye and respiratory irritation and possible smoke damage to furniture and rugs. Such was the case when my neighbor used his fire pit one evening while we were out for the day. Upon returning, we found that smoke had entered our home including the basement and garage area from several open windows. It took almost the entire following day, with all our windows open to clear the smell from our home.

As a resident of Acres Green, I am asking the commissioners to seriously review the County ordinance on the use of these fire pits, and not allow their use in the more heavily populated areas of our county. I look forward to your reply on this matter. **County staff responded:** As the Emergency Manager, I completely appreciate concerned citizens with an eye for fire safety because it is citizens such as you that are often the "first alert" for us that a situation is occurring.

I do need to clarify that the 4 Mile Fire was caused by embers from a poorly extinguished trash fire that was in a fire pit that was constructed by the homeowner. In essence, this is an open fire which would require a fire department permit here in Douglas County. These permits will dictate exactly when the burning is allowed and is governed by atmospheric conditions (weather). This is different from the patio fire pits that citizens can install at their homes here in the County. The type of fire pit that caused the fire in Boulder would need to have 25 feet of clearance from the nearest structure and the pile of combustible material cannot be higher than 2 feet and cannot be wider than 3 feet in diameter.

Fire pits here in the County are allowed when we are not in Stage II fire restrictions (fire ban). Fire pits are required to have not less than 15 feet of clearance from the nearest structure. Also, they must be constantly attended by a responsible party at least 21 years of age. Further, many HOAs have added additional restrictions requiring that the fire pit be on a concrete patio. Some have restricted fire pits to only those that use pellets, gas, or camping type fuel.

I would suggest that you check to see if your neighbor's fire pit actually meets the County's and your HOA's requirements. Generally, permissible devices don't put off enough smoke to cause the kind of smoke infiltration that you described. If your neighbor's fire pit does not meet these standards, please try to discuss the issue with the neighbor first. Sometimes citizens are just not aware that they are out of compliance or are causing discomfort to their neighbors. Of course, if this fails and they are out of compliance, please report them. Oftentimes a visit from the Fire Department/Prevention Bureau is helpful in getting compliance. Also, if the situation appears to be causing an imminent hazard, please call 9-1-1.

David – Highlands Ranch

Questions: There is a re-zoning request for the land that used to be Arapahoe Acres Nursery and the adjacent commercial rock and landscaping supply yard. This request would allow more than one Big-Box retailer to build on these combined sites. The current land ownership group has acknowledged that Wal-Mart, Lowes and Costco have all expressed interest in these sites. This area is split by the Highline canal, directly backs-up to the Highlands Ranch Golf Course and dozens of neighboring homes. What is the master plan for further development along Santa Fe from C-470 to Highlands Ranch Parkway? **County Staff Responded:** The land on either side of that stretch of Santa Fe is within the Principal Urban Area of the County, as defined by the 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan. Commercial, office, industrial, retail, manufacturing, and residential development are all anticipated within the Principal Urban Area in general, and the northern Santa Fe corridor in particular. The land in this particular stretch of Santa Fe is already dominated by general and light industrial, commercial, and business zoning in support of the master plan's vision.

What are the results of the traffic study being conducted regarding existing/future congestion and safety issues? **County staff responded:** A traffic study provided by the landowners requesting the rezoning indicates that the existing access to the site is not sufficient to serve large scale retail. The landowners have engaged County staff and the Colorado Department of Transportation in discussions as to what improvements could be made to the existing road network to accommodate the proposal. Those discussions are on-going, and could potentially result in new studies being conducted.

Is it true the new Sterling Ranch development allows no Big-Box retailers in their master plan, and if so does that make Santa Fe the next South Wadsworth, Arapahoe Road and/or Colorado Blvd of massive retail and Big-Box Development? **County staff responded:** The zoning for the Sterling Ranch Planned Development does not prohibit "big-box" retailers. Regardless of the Sterling Ranch zoning, this area's access to a state highway; the availability of utilities such as water, sewer, electric, broadband data, and natural gas; and the more than 130,000 people already living in the vicinity all create the potential for this stretch of Santa Fe to attract a wide variety of uses, including retailers such as Wal-Mart, Lowe's, or Costco.

Roger – Littleton

Question: Any update on quiet zones for the trains? **County staff responded:** Staff worked with the consultant to explore creating a partial quiet zone from the sewer treatment plant access, just south of Happy Canyon Road and SH 85, to the Cherokee Ranch access, just north of Daniels Park Road and SH 85. An estimate was prepared for this partial quiet zone that directly benefits the Castle Pine Village area (\$300,000 for Construction and \$100,000 for design, permitting and construction management).

The Castle Pines Village Homes Association and the Metro District entered into an IGA with the County to fund the construction cost of the partial quiet zone. In the same IGA, Douglas County agreed to fund \$100,000, and staff time, for the design, permitting and construction management of the partial quiet zone.

During the initial phase of the design and permitting of the partial quiet zone (10 pm to 7 am), it was discovered that the PUC likely would not approve turning the field access at Cherokee Ranch into a public crossing. This fact would not allow the County to move forward with the partial quiet zone. The County's consultant explored other options to keep the efforts of creating a quiet zone alive by moving the north end of the quiet zone to the CDOT improved crossing at Hwy 67 in Sedalia.

Staff, the Castle Pines Village representatives and the consultant decided to investigate what construction, and estimated costs would be necessary to create a 24 hour quiet zone for the northbound tracks between the sewer treatment plant near Castle Pines Village and the Hwy 67 crossing in Sedalia. The increase in construction cost was approximately \$378,000. The benefits of a 24 hour quiet zone compared to a partial quiet zone are as follows:

- Partial quiet zones only silence the train horns between 10 pm and 7 am. The 24 hour quiet zone would silence the train horns all the time.
- Partial quiet zones can be ordered to be removed by the PUC. 24 hour quiet zones once established cannot be ordered to be removed.
- Businesses in Castle Pines Village and Sedalia do not benefit from a partial quiet zone as much as a 24 hour quiet zone.
- If this area can be established as a 24 hour quiet zone, the Town of Castle Rock could easily extend the quiet zone to the south from the sewer treatment plant to Fifth Street.

The Commissioners agreed to fund the additional construction cost using tipping fees promised to be used for improvements to benefit Sedalia. Staff has moved forward with the design and permitting of the full quiet zone described above.

Jim – Highlands Ranch

Question: After snowstorms stop (24 hours after), why doesn't the county send out code inspectors to cite or warn homeowners and business owners that they are responsible to keep their sidewalks clear. Most of those that don't, are repeat offenders. Highlands Ranch HOA cites the county ordinance for problem issues, so the county needs to step up. Leave notices on the front doors and keep a computer record so that repeat offenders can be fined. School children that wait for school buses must negotiate these walks as well and there is the safety issue.

County staff responded: Douglas County agrees with this resident that sidewalk snow removal is an important safety concern that often requires extensive follow-through. The Douglas County Sidewalk Snow Removal Ordinance was last updated in December of 2007 and states that snow must be removed from the sidewalk within 24 hours of the end of a snow event in order to provide safe walkways for pedestrians. Douglas County will dispatch staff to deliver informational flyers to owners who do not shovel the sidewalk along their frontage after the 24-hour timeframe has elapsed. The flyer explains the ordinance provisions and the need to provide safe walkways for pedestrian use.

If the sidewalk is not shoveled within 24 hours from the time the informational flyer was delivered to the residence or business, a Notice of Violation is left in a conspicuous location on the building. If the owner does not comply with the Notice of Violation, the Douglas County Sheriff's Office is made aware of the situation and a deputy is dispatched, when available, to the residence to issue a citation. Current procedure requires the resident to be present to receive the citation. The fine for not removing snow is \$50.00 per occurrence and Douglas County maintains a database containing a record of violations per address.

Douglas County has taken proactive steps to identify major pedestrian school routes and to make contact with those adjacent owners a priority. Metro Districts are contacted annually to remind owners of their responsibility and of their obligation to clear sidewalks. County staff will be coordinating with the Douglas County Sheriff's Office in an attempt to streamline the process that often takes several days to complete.

Jan – Littleton:

Question: This process is awesome, how can citizens get reminders for future virtual meetings? Please visit www.douglas.co.us and sign up for email alerts.

Becky – Castle Rock

Question: When will the road construction on Founders be complete? With the lane alignment changing frequently it is getting dangerous. Especially with the traffic coming into Castle Oaks for the school. **Bob Goebel – Castle Rock Public Works responded:** Founders Parkway (Colorado Highway 86) is a State facility and is being reconstructed under their jurisdiction. I spoke with the CDOT representative on the phone today, and she indicated that the project is planned to be open to all lanes by the end of next week and throughout the winter. Remaining project work, such as seeding and permanent pavement striping, is weather sensitive and will continue next spring. For more information visit <http://www.crgov.com/index.aspx?nid=1113>

Mike – Parker

Question: February 2nd there will be a forum at the Wild Life Center focused on transit solutions. What do you see as transit needs in Douglas County and what role will this forum play in addressing and meeting those needs? **County staff responded:** We know that there are significant gaps in transportation services for the transit dependent populations in Douglas County (e.g. persons with disabilities, persons with low-moderate income, and seniors). We are currently working with a consultant on a transit needs assessment for Douglas County that has a special focus on those populations. The results of this assessment will enable us to plan for future transit needs in Douglas County. We expect to present the results of this study at the "Partners in Motion" transit event in February.

Another key objective to be accomplished at the event is the establishment of a Local Coordinating Council or LCC. A local coordinating council is a formal, multi-purpose, long-term alliance of community organizations, individuals, and interest groups that work together to achieve common goals regarding public transportation. A LCC implements and oversees the provision of coordinated transportation in their community or region. Through the LCC we can achieve greater efficiency through the coordination of existing transit services. This will enable us to provide an increased level of service utilizing existing resources. The event will conclude with key stakeholders, including municipal jurisdictions, service providers, and community based organizations, participating in a signature ceremony of the Memorandum of Understanding to establish the LCC.

Jennifer – Littleton

Question: Current zoning does not require developers to actually improve roads prior to the impact -- rather only after roads reach failing levels of service and then the only consequence is that that developer can't build more until improved to just passing again. Why hasn't zoning addressed this major problem? **County staff responded:** All development is required to be evaluated for its impact to existing transportation infrastructure and road improvements are required when needed. Level of Service for roads are rated as LOS A (free flowing traffic), B, C, D, E (at capacity) or F (beyond capacity). The Douglas County Board of County Commissioners ("BCC") has adopted, through its Zoning Resolution, certain level of service thresholds for County roads. Those thresholds are LOS D for urban areas and LOS C for rural areas.

Staff analyzes a residential rezoning application, and the associated traffic impact study, to verify that the projected traffic from the proposed rezoning application does not degrade the roads beyond the above-mentioned thresholds. If the traffic impact study indicates that construction of the residential development proposed by a rezoning application would degrade the level of service on a County road below the standard adopted by the BCC, the Zoning Resolution requires the applicant to commit to specific roadway improvements (i.e. turn lanes, road widening, traffic signal construction, etc.). The improvements must be constructed prior to, or concurrent with, the development so that the road functions at, or better than, the adopted level of service. If construction of the residential development is phased, construction of the road improvements may be similarly phased. The intent of this process is to prevent the level of service on a County road from falling below the adopted standard by ensuring that capacity is available prior to, or concurrent with, the traffic generated by a proposed development.

Michael – Highlands Ranch

Question: I would like to know , why the D.C. commissioner allowed the sheriffs department to spend what ever ridiculous amount of money on a substation I rarely see being used, as well as a community patrol that drives brand new cars and threatens the community with power I don't believe they have. What is there annual budget? and what powers do they posses? How much did the new substation-cost to build and it's annual budget? Would this money be better spent in our schools where the parents are now paying for the basics of there children's education. Things that there parents never would have thought of having to pay, like bus transportation to and from after school events?

County staff responded: Total expenditures to date for the substation are \$9.5 million. The annual maintenance budget (utilities, maintenance/custodial support) for the substation is \$207,951.

Tyler – Castle Rock

Question: Why is the section of Monarch Blvd just south of Rocky heights middle school all the way to Castle Pines Parkway so poorly maintained in the winter. It is in my opinion one of the most dangerous roads to drive after a snow storm **This comment was sent to Jim McGrady at City of Castle Pines since it not in the jurisdiction of unincorporated Douglas County**

Alex -Castle Rock

Question: What cuts can the next few years of students expect to see from their education, from the failed bond voted on a month ago? **Douglas County School District response:** Currently Douglas County School District is expecting approximately \$25 million in budget reductions

over the next year, based on the current projections from the State of Colorado. The District's goal is to limit the impact to students as much as possible, by finding every efficiency we can.

While we hoped for a successful bond and mill election, District staff and principals prepared for the current scenario, creating budgets that envisioned the cuts that will be needed. The result will be different at each school, because of site based budgeting, but again every effort is being made to avoid cuts that impact students. In fact, we are hearing from principals who are finding ways to maintain electives and student programs while reducing class sizes.