

LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

TAB 1

August 9, 2024

Deborah Bickmire
City of Aurora, Planning Department
15151 E. Alameda Parkway, 2nd Floor
Aurora, Colorado 80012

Re: The Aurora Highlands – Framework Development Plan Amendment 3

Dear Ms. Bickmire,

Enclosed please find the submittal for The Aurora Highlands Master Plan, (formerly Framework Development Plan) Amendment 3. The application has been prepared by the following owner and consultants.

Owner / Developer:

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Planners, Landscape Architects, and Traffic:

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Survey:

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The purpose of the Amendment is multi-pronged. First and foremost are modifications to facilitate the development of a hospital and associated medical buildings, and to allow higher density residential development in an activated mixed-use urban form north of 38th Avenue/Aurora Highlands Parkway. Second, update the landscape standards to reference the current requirements of the UDO. Third, to incorporate urban design guidelines and standards for non-residential uses. And fourth, update the Land Use Plan and Park/Open Space to reflect the most current development to date. Each of the modifications will be accomplished simultaneously with a rezoning request removing the MU-A zone north of 38th Avenue/Aurora Highlands Parkway and a sliver of R-2 west of Main Street and replacing it with MU-R and R-2 to bring the underlying zoning in compliance with the Vision Plan. This will allow development of the “walkable main street” criteria in the north portion of the site. Specific modifications are summarized below.

Tab 1. Letter of Introduction. This tab has been modified to remove all of the proposed waivers since they were approved with the original MP and the plan is considered in compliance, to update the references to zoning to bring the amended MP in compliance with the rezoning request made simultaneous to this amendment, and to update the land dedication summary chart.

Tab 3. Context Map. This tab has been modified to reflect the updated zoning, current boundaries of the MP, and the current primary land uses within the development.

Tab 6. Narrative. This tab has been modified to remove the waiver requests, incorporate the summaries of the updated Traffic Analysis and updated Master Utility Studies, update the Neighborhood Map, and incorporate the Urban District.

Tab 8. Land Use Map-Matrices. This tab has been modified to identify the Urban District, revise the land use planning areas to reflect the current land use and proposed land uses (including adjustments to neighborhood park boundaries), update the land use matrix (Form D) to reflect the current plan, and incorporate recently annexed land.

Tab 9. Open Space Maps. This tab has been modified to update the Open Space Map and the accompanying Form J, incorporate new criteria allowing additional open space credit for drainage improvements, and refining the boundaries and locations for neighborhood parks, neighborhood activity centers, and small urban plazas to reflect the refined site plans.

Tab 10. Commercial Urban Design Standards. This tab has been modified to incorporate Guiding Principles to help future planning area developers and designers meet the intent of the Vision Plan, to clarify planning area maximum gross and net density allowances (also provided in Form D), update the proposed street sections to be in compliance with current City of Aurora Standards, to include a proposed standard for the frontage road along E-470 north of 38th Avenue/ Aurora Highlands Parkway, identify Land Use Districts and characteristics, illustrate the location and amenities for the “walkable main street” in the northern area of the community (not to be confused with Main Street), incorporate building typologies for the various Land Use Districts, and detail developer imposed standards for building heights and step-backs to facilitate realization of the Vision Plan.

Tab 11. Landscape Standards. This tab has been modified to reference the current landscape standards of the UDO in their entirety, add landscape screening of service areas, and to provide additional standards for the E-470 frontage and the area between the proposed frontage road and the E-470 right of way.

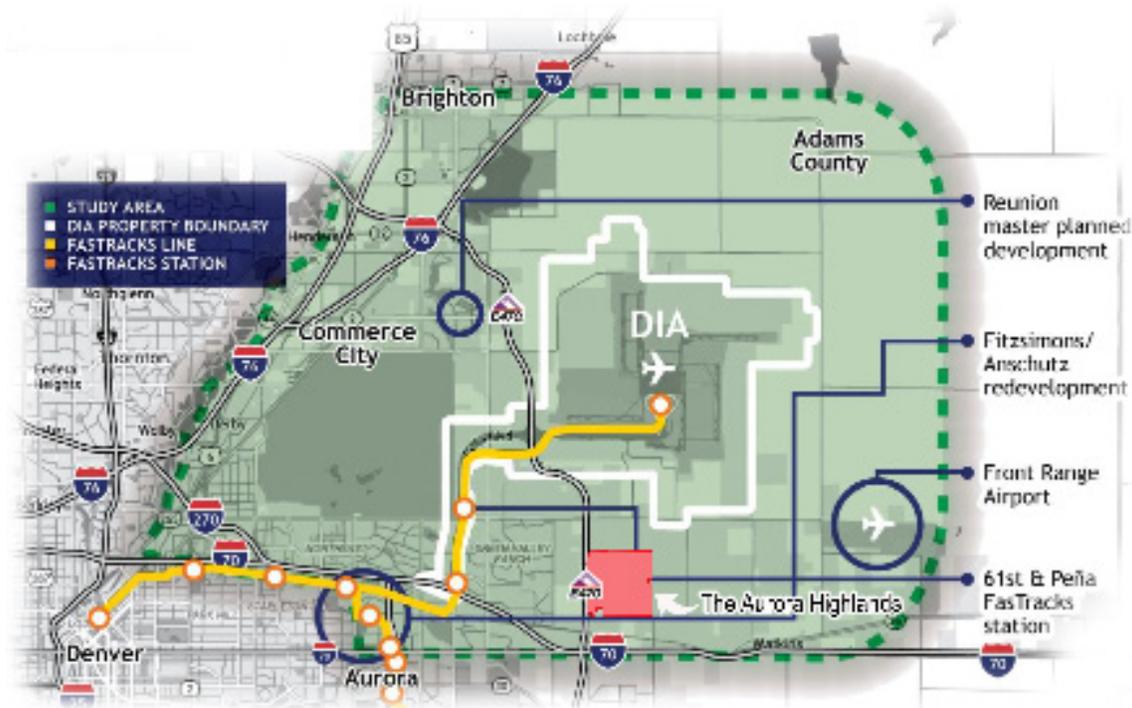
Tab 12. Architectural Guidelines. This tab has been modified to incorporate images and descriptions of appropriate architectural elements for non-residential buildings both in the Urban District and areas outside of the Urban District. These include building character descriptions for the hospital, public, institutional, religious, and civic buildings, urban mixed-use buildings with commercial and residential uses, urban mixed-use non-residential buildings (office and retail), traditional suburban retail buildings (1 story), suburban retail and housing mixed use (3-4 story), suburban walkable street oriented retail (1 story), suburban residential scale office buildings (1-2 story), and suburban residential office/ retail buildings (2-4 story).

Tab 14. Appendices and Other Supporting Documents. This tab has been modified to incorporate the updated Traffic Analysis and Master Utility Studies that verify the ability of the existing and planned public improvements to handle the revised land uses propose dint he amendment.

We look forward to your review of this submittal and remain ready to address and issues or questions you may have. As you know, development of the hospital is constrained until we can finalize this amendment.

Background and Introduction

The Aurora Highlands is a new master planned community located on the high plains prairie, approximately three miles south of Denver International Airport (DEN). Surrounding this new community is the Colorado Aerotropolis, an urban plan in which the layout, infrastructure and economy are centered around DEN and the infrastructure associated with the airport. In 2015, Denver and Adams County approved 1,500 acres for new development in the DEN Transit Corridor, creating upwards of 12,000 new jobs in the immediate vicinity and opening up a new economic front line for the Aerotropolis and the City of Aurora.



Success of the Aerotropolis area will rely on two key components: extending infrastructure and building a sustainable housing base. Aerotropolis has the potential to generate 74,000 new jobs by 2040 if corporations call this area home. (Aerotropolis Visioning Study, 2016). However, as Cal Fulenwider, President of L.C. Fulenwider Inc. states in an article addressing the Denver Aerotropolis, “Corporate America doesn’t come until they’ve got a place for their workforce to live and be happy”. (Jackson, Denver Post 2012) This is achieved by creating a solid residential foundation from which large corporations can be supported. A variety of residential housing options is a key component in supplying the labor force and commerce needed for a successful industry based region.

Homes and businesses cannot be established until the infrastructure needed to support them is available. Rapid, collaborative infrastructure development is needed for the Aerotropolis region to be successful. Key opportunity areas for infrastructure development in the region are RTD connectivity and vehicular connections point to DEN from the south, specifically Jackson Gap Street and Picadilly Road - both of which would be accessible through future developments adjacent to The Aurora Highlands.

Aerotropolis, being a regional vision plan, would be implemented over many decades and through the collaborative efforts of many neighboring jurisdictions and overseeing entities. These groups would all serve a part in creating the required housing and infrastructure needed for the regional vision. The following guiding principles are encouraged in the planned growth of the region:

- Infrastructure development contiguous to active developments
- Planned developments that reflect current local jurisdictional goals
- Incremental growth of infrastructure based on previous investments such as FasTracks Light Rail and the widening of Tower Road

- Guiding early development toward projects that are attainable and feasible, given current conditions
- Encouraging cross-jurisdictional developments that require regional collaboration
- Continued support of the long-term Aerotropolis vision

These principles, in combination with a strong residential foundation, will foster the continued growth of the region and the Aerotropolis vision.

The design for the Aurora Highlands community fully embraces the Aerotropolis Study and the City of Aurora’s recently adopted South of DEN Transportation Priority Study. Implementation of the infrastructure requirements in and around the airport as proposed in this development will create a new frontier in the City of Aurora. The Aurora Highlands will be the catalyst enabling a new opportunity for growth, commerce, and connectivity. This community will be planned, designed, and built with a uniquely focused vision that prioritizes the potential of connectivity and continuity—linking the past and future, the urban and the frontier, and embracing the Aerotropolis visions of easy access to transportation, commerce, and new community enthusiasm. The design intent is one where urban and suburban become one.

Central to the character and feel of the community will be an emphasis on consistent continuity and style. As a new community in the high plains prairie of North East Aurora, The Aurora Highlands will embrace its geographical roots with stylized versions of its agricultural and prairie lineage. This “Prairie Influence” combined with modern versions of the classic and successful architectural styles found along the Front Range of Colorado will unify square miles of development into a cohesive community.

The intent of The Aurora Highlands is to provide villages with a clear community focus that fulfill the Aerotropolis vision of connectivity, commerce, and community. It will feature a large variety of housing categories from attainable attached, multi-family groupings, and single-family residences to larger single-family and estate based offerings. Homes will range in size and price ranges. Large, statement homes are integrated throughout the community in key areas and act as a beacon to all home owners aspiring to ascend the real estate ladder. These distinct and diverse villages will attract baby boomers and millennials alike, with homes that bring classic styles into a modern age and that offer residential amenities ranging from recreation centers to open space and parks. For local workers, retirees, and families, The Aurora Highlands will be home, a place to build the lifestyle that suits them best in a place like no other. The Aurora Highlands makes it easy to travel the world, while providing everything you need right outside your door.

Community activity centers and neighborhood level commercial centers will anchor the villages, providing places to work, shop, play and relax. These clusters of commercial, corporate campus, medial, civic and mixed-use centers will emphasize important focal points between neighborhoods, and encourage the development of businesses that provide a variety of desired products and services for the region and local community. These activity centers are located at key transit intersections to allow ease of access for the Aurora Highlands residents, neighboring communities as well as passerby to ensure their success.

The community provides key land uses that create a diverse master-planned community such as areas for higher density residential, schools, civic amenities, retail, restaurants and office space, providing the urban village lifestyle that multiple generations of home-buyers want and often demand in the suburban setting they so desire. It is this “city within a city” feel that provides crucial support services to the rapidly growing community. With City and County service facilities and easy connections to DEN, commuter rail, E-470 and I-70, The Aurora Highlands will deliver residents the convenient connectivity to work, shop and play that supports the Aerotropolis vision and determines a successful community.

Site Location

The Aurora Highlands is located in northeastern Aurora, Colorado. The site is generally located east of E-470, between 48th Avenue and 26th Avenue. Today, barriers to successful development are the result of poor access to this portion of Aurora. The Aurora Highlands will develop significant infrastructure improvements, opening of regional connectivity for additional future developments.

The proposed development consists of approximately +/- 2,497.4 total acres. The site is bound by E-470 on the west. To the north, land uses are identified for the Windler Development, Sun Empire, E-470 Airport

Corporate, and NEP Medium Density Residential. Light industrial uses are permitted to the east, and I-70 Corridor uses are permitted to the south.

The site has minimal topography with the exception of a draw that cuts diagonally across the site. The design for the Aurora Highlands utilizes this draw as an asset, turning into a community focus. Locating a community arterial on either side, the community makes this draw area the front door for all to access and admire. The design team has engaged with Urban Drainage and many City Staff Departments to vet the drainage and park design for this significant feature and turn it into a true community amenity. The Highlands Park and Highlands Park Open Space are located within the 300' wide corridor that spans approximately 2 miles long. A 10' concrete trail with 5' jogging trail will be located in the linear park that will flow through the space adjacent to and over the creek. Nature play areas, shelters, gardens, public art and more will activate this community gem.

Recently, FEMA has mapped a 100-year floodplain through this draw, causing it to be a significant topic of discussion throughout the City review process. Currently approximately 128 acres, it is anticipated to be only 30 acres after completing the CLOMR process with FEMA.

All residential areas of the Aurora Highlands are within the 55 to 60 LDN noise designation of Denver International Airport.

Statement of Intent

The Aurora Highlands is a mixed-use planned development consisting of a variety of proposed land uses that include: residential housing options, neighborhood commercial, mixed-use, corporate campus, medical campus, civic uses, schools, and parks and open space.

The Aurora Highlands is within the Aerotropolis visioning study area. An Aerotropolis is an urban plan in which the overall layout, infrastructure, and economy are centered around an airport. Potential economic growth within the Aerotropolis is vast; forecasted to bring 74,000 jobs to the area by 2040. These new jobs will be filled by a local labor force, and will create upwards of \$600 million dollars of additional tax revenue. The Aurora Highlands will aid in providing areas for economic growth through the medical, corporate, and civic campuses, as well as commercial areas. The community will also provide housing options for the Aerotropolis workforce as well as commuters.

Site Zoning

Existing Zoning- The Aurora Highlands is a planned development with existing and proposed zoning under the E-470 and North East Plains Sub-Areas. There are currently three zoning sub-categories within the development, including MU-R, MU-A, and R-2.

Proposed Zoning (Rezoning)- One (1) re-zoning application has been submitted and approved. This rezoning application is a request to change approximately +/- 212.3 total acres from a mix of MU-A and R-2 to a mix of MU-R and R-2. The site is bound by E-470 on the west. To the north, land uses are identified for the Windler Development, E-470 Airport Corporate, and NEP Medium Density Residential. Light industrial uses are permitted to the east, and I-70 Corridor uses are permitted to the south.

Benefits to the City of Aurora

The planned development will create multiple, thoughtful villages for residents and industry alike. The villages will each have their own unique character and appeal to a variety of residents. Multiple home types offer options for a spectrum of home-buyers and increase diversity within the overall community. Proposed corporate and medical campuses along with a main street retail village and community activity centers offer multiple job and economic opportunities within the development, decreasing the need for commuting and promoting community involvement. Parks, community centers, schools, civic amenities, and open space trails offer a variety of activities for residents and create a network of connectivity across the development and into the larger regional system.

The Aurora Highlands will be a valuable addition to the City of Aurora and a catalyst for new development for the City and the region. The Aurora Highlands will accelerate transportation and utility infrastructure development in the area and serve as a stimulus to advance the economic goals pursued by Aurora City

Council. The Aurora Highlands commercial centers, in combination with the residences that make them possible, will be an economic attraction to the neighboring Denver and Commerce City residents traveling through the area and DEN, generating additional sales tax revenue for the City of Aurora. A successful Aerotropolis places emphasis on access to jobs and industry near the airport to gain a greater share of the global economic activity that is driven by air travel.

Land Dedication

The following land dedication is required for the Aurora Highlands per City of Aurora standards and assuming five dwelling units per acre is achieved:

| | Acreage Required | Acreage Provided | Difference |
|-------------------|------------------|------------------|------------|
| Neighborhood Park | 96.88 | 96.88 | 0 |
| Community Park | 35.52 | 35.52 | 0 |
| Open Space | 251.88 | 469.36 | +217.48 |
| Schools | 167.9 | 73.3 | -94.6 |

At the time of Site Plans and in the event a maximum of 5 dwelling units per acre is achieved, additional land will be provided for any deficiency in neighborhood parks. This is stated in Form J to ensure there will be no park deficiency within the community. Please refer to Tab 8 Standard MP Notes 18 and 19 for specific requirements associated with parks/schools shared use sites.

A high school shall be located within the Aurora Highlands property boundary, preferred location is in the northeast 1/4 section of Section 20. A proposed location is identified on the Land Use Map within PA-37. The final size and location shall be coordinated with Aurora Public Schools at the time of CSP, or when demand for a high school is warranted.

Additional applications

Additional applications being filed concurrently with this MP include:

- Rezoning of +/- 212.3 total acres from a mix of MU-A and R-2 to a mix of MU-R and R-2.

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this MP please contact myself or any member of the team listed above.

Respectfully submitted,
Matrix Design Group, Inc.



Thomas W. Kopf, PLA
Director of Community Design