

City Comp Plan

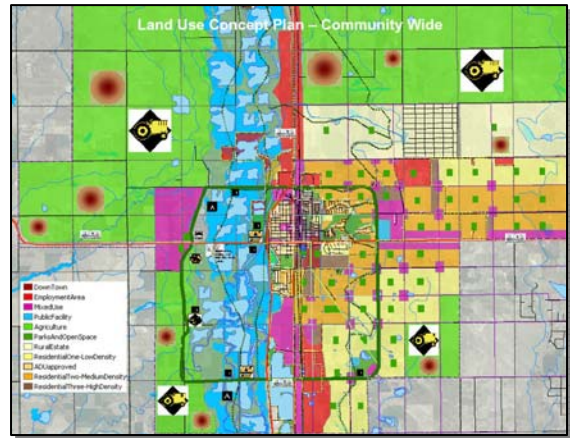
Award-winning Plan extends “outside the box”

Location: Fort Lupton, Colorado

Partners: City of Fort Lupton; Civil Resources, LLC; Foresee Consulting, Inc.

Context: Fort Lupton (pop. 7500) is a small town positioned just 25 miles from Denver and the cities of Boulder and Greeley. It has ready access via major transportation routes and finds itself within the rapidly growing urban corridor of Colorado’s Front Range. In 2006, the City set out to update its 1997 Comprehensive Plan to make it “a statement of public policy and an expression of the community’s vision for the future [that would] also represent the community’s values for positive economic growth and development, as well as preserving the quality of life the residents enjoy.”¹

The result, Fort Lupton’s 2007 Comprehensive Plan, is notable for many reasons. It looks beyond the City boundaries to address lands in unincorporated areas. Substantial efforts were taken in drafting the plan to include county residents, the Hispanic population, the elderly, and students. And Plan policies are being implemented in numerous ways, including through intergovernmental agreements (IGAs) with the surrounding communities and with Weld County. In 2008, the Fort Lupton Plan was given an award by the Colorado Chapter of the American Planning Association. “The Comp Plan was chosen for a Community Engagement Award because the [Awards] Committee was impressed with the innovative ways of capturing public participation and the use of IGA’s and other creative avenues. The Plan had great goals and is very realistic.”²



“CommunityViz was very helpful. [It] assisted the City with growth challenge games, land use planning, statistical data, etc. It also provided great visuals of proposed plans and outcomes, which most people prefer.”

—Tom Parko,
Fort Lupton Planning Director

Project Description: The City engaged Civil Resources to lead a community-based, citizen-driven process. The consulting team worked closely with area youth and adults, with elected and appointed officials, and with staff. Early in the project, the City distributed surveys in both English and Spanish at City Hall, at a Chamber of Commerce meeting, at a workshop with area seniors, via mail inserts to water bills, and at the first of two community-wide meetings. The City made a concerted effort to reach Spanish-speaking residents by also distributing the survey through the School District’s ESL program and through local businesses. As one way of reaching youth, the consultants met with the Middle School Student Council to learn students’ long range hopes for their community.

¹ Fort Lupton 2007 Comprehensive Plan

² Correspondence from Anne Lane, AICP, APA Colorado Awards Committee Chair to Tom Parko, City of Fort Lupton, July 10, 2008

The project team led a series of three very well-attended, interactive community workshops which formed the backbone of the project. At the first workshop, participants used keypad polling to indicate how they wanted the City to grow, and to define criteria that would be used later to evaluate alternative land use plans. At the second workshop, participants were divided into six groups to play a “growth challenge game” (sometimes referred to as a “chip game”) in which each group placed homes, jobs, parks, trails and public facilities on a detailed aerial photo of the planning area. Most participants indicated support for the historic pattern of compact growth in and around existing neighborhoods. The citizen-developed plans were incorporated by the consultants into CommunityViz for comparison and analysis. At the third workshop, the project team presented the results of the Growth Challenge Game. They also used the criteria developed by residents in the first workshop to evaluate the alternatives with CommunityViz and to develop a “synthesis plan.” Keypad polling was used as a check to see whether citizens approved the resulting plan. The results of the surveys and the workshops formed the basis of the final Comp Plan.



KEY LINKS

CommunityViz
<http://www.communityviz.com>
 City of Fort Lupton
<http://www.fortlupton.org>
 Civil Resources, LLC
<http://www.civilresources.com>
 Foresee Consulting, Inc.
<http://www.foreseeconsulting.biz>

Technology and Tools: Foresee Consulting used CommunityViz Scenario 360 to input, evaluate and illustrate the alternative plans and the “synthesis plan.” The community was engaged through a variety of means including widely-distributed surveys in English and Spanish, and focused workshops with seniors, students, and the Chamber of Commerce. An interactive Comp Plan web site enabled online survey responses and shared project information and updates. The workshops used CommunityViz, keypad polling and the “Growth Challenge Game” to define resident priorities, to develop, analyze, and evaluate alternative land use plans, and to confirm the synthesis plan that is the basis of the Comp Plan.

“CommunityViz is an invaluable planning tool. It enabled community members representing a host of perspectives and backgrounds to visualize the impacts of several land use scenarios and to reach consensus on how to capitalize on the benefits that growth may bring, while minimizing the environmental, social and economic impacts.”

– Danna Ortiz, Principal Planner,
 Civil Resources LLC

Outcomes: The Plan was adopted in early 2008. Since then, it has been used to develop a growing set of intergovernmental agreements. The agreements include provisions regarding boundaries and buffers, revenue sharing, cooperation on regional trails, and efficient provision of public facilities. Since the Plan was adopted, two annexations with related re-zonings have taken place, both in conformity with the Plan. City Planning Director Tom Parko indicated the annexations were facilitated by the fact that the citizen-developed Plan had already decided upon land use categories for the affected areas. The City is also using the design principles articulated in the Plan in its review and evaluation of both private and public development proposals.