

4.2 Form B: MP Narrative

Master Plan Narrative

General Description of the MP

Since the original Framework Development Plan (now called Master Plan) application for High Point at DIA was approved in 2005, the area has changed significantly with several amendments occurring. Past changes include an amendment to create an 80+ acre parcel for the development of the Gaylord Rockies Resort and Convention Center, as well as a new MP comprising 130 acres, known as Rockies Village, that surrounds the Gaylord Rockies Resort and Convention Center. The area that comprises these two projects was formerly part of the High Point at DIA MP. With these described changes, they are no longer a part of the High Point at DIA MP.

With this 4th MP Amendment, changes to the land uses are proposed that reflect shifting uses for the area, including, but not limited to, the addition of new land uses such as mixed-use commercial and multi-family residential. Additionally, standard commercial/retail planning areas are proposed, and the previously designated Mixed-Use Regional (MU-R) subarea is removed and replaced with industrial land uses. Lastly, the addition of three oil and gas facilities is part of this MP Amendment. As northeast Aurora has continued to develop, this MP amendment is reactive to the adjacent land uses. The applicant has coordinated closely with the surrounding property owners/developers including Rockies Village, the Fulenwider property to the east and south and Painted Prairie and Avelon to the south to ensure a cohesive land plan across the region.

Defining Character of the MP

The goal for High Point is to create a livable residential community and viable commercial and general industrial development that attract new jobs and investment, evokes diversity in culture and community and supports a sustainable future. As housing types evolve and market demand continues to rise in the Denver metropolitan region, with the City of Aurora as one of the best expansion opportunity areas, new residential land uses at a higher density are proposed with this amendment. Introduction of mixed-use commercial areas help to provide neighborhood level services to these new residents, while the more standard commercial/retail uses can serve a more regional population. Lastly, the introduction of industrial land uses including but not limited to high-tech industrial, greenhouse and modern agriculture, internet fulfillment centers, warehouse distribution and light manufacturing offers even more opportunity and variety in this area. Class A modern industrial developments are in high demand across the U.S. given the evolving supply chain around e-commerce, ongoing population and economic growth, and the resurgence of manufacturing partly from onshoring efforts. Quality industrial business parks are increasingly amenitized employment centers that accommodate the upper echelon of domestic and international companies while strengthening a community's live/work inter-reliance.

The High Point MP will strive to develop and emphasize a strong sense of connectivity in the daily lives of its residents. Connectivity to the land and the natural environment will be fostered through an integrated trail and park system, linking residents and employees throughout the project to the beauty of open spaces, protected wildlife areas and dramatic vistas of the Front Range. Access and connectivity to downtown Denver and the entire Aurora/Denver metro area will benefit greatly by the direct proximity to E-470, Pena Blvd., I-70 and other major highways and arterials.

In addition, High Point sits at the gateway to one of the biggest transportation hubs in the country, Denver International Airport (DEN). DEN is now the 10th busiest airport in the world and is projected to soon handle more than 40 million passengers a year. Residents and employees at High Point could well be in Chicago, Dallas, Phoenix or Los Angeles in less time than a Tech Center or downtown employee/resident would need to get to Vail or Colorado Springs during rush hour. The increase in international service at DEN will further enhance opportunities to access destinations around the world from a point just minutes from home.

Whether traveling by foot or bike, car or bus, light rail or plane, residents at High Point will enjoy an unprecedented level of connectedness to their surrounding environment to the metro area, and to the world beyond.

The High Point MP provides an opportunity to create a unique industry and lifestyle destination that leads businesses and people to the highest points of possibility on their journeys. It's about elaborating on the High Point brand that currently exists in the built portion of High Point and giving people meaningful pursuits beyond "the point of arrival."

High Point brings industry, commercial, and residential opportunities together in one place. "Beauty in Balance" reflects this dual desire, connecting the dots across High Point through art, plants, and infrastructure that boast vibrant pops of color that lead people from point to point and give every destination a unique, vivid impression.

To implement this concept, three high-level design principles will guide development:

Create Colorful Connections. Connect people to each other, to the future, and to the best that life can offer. Bring people, businesses, and ideas closer together with places and programs that pop with colorful expression. This is accomplished within the MP in a variety of ways starting with the underlying mix of uses that are proposed. The idea is to skillfully merge land uses by providing meaningful areas to connect within the development. This may look like a designed outdoor space as part of an industrial/office development that ties into a larger trail network connecting employees to housing and other amenities within the MP.

Celebrate the Style Between. Enliven the journey between destinations. Pockets of intrigue and small, considerate design elements encourage people to explore and discover something new along the beaten path. This is achieved utilizing well designed and located street furnishings and locating areas to stay and play within the development.

Uplift the Community. Bring people together, inspire how they work, and enrich how they live with intimate spaces that invite quiet contemplation to major gathering places that attract the entire community. Again, this is reflected in the spaces between buildings and vary in scale depending on location, use, etc.

Defining Characteristics of High Point include:

1. Mixed-Use Commercial and Residential land use areas integrating neighborhood level commercial/retail uses with higher-density residential
2. Varying single-family detached neighborhoods focused around neighborhood parks and convenient trail and sidewalk networks
3. Industrial land uses to attract high-tech industrial campuses
4. Regional trail corridor along the west branch of Second Creek
5. E. 64th Avenue that connects the various elements of this, and other MPs in the area
6. Water conserving and sustainable landscape, building, and the site development.

Landscape Design

The landscape is inspired by the high plains. The high plains urban aesthetic is defined as the juxtaposition of the clean lines as seen in the built environment and the natural forms as seen in the landscapes of the plains. This theme will be integrated into the landscape to create a feeling of being a part of the prairie landscape with opportunities to escape from the norm. This will be translated through plaza spaces for relaxing and enjoying spending time, introduction of sustainable water features and incorporating the borrowed views of the Rocky Mountains. The ecology of the Rocky Mountain Plains has been the foundation of the site and will continue to be through the continued presence of native plants.

A variety of open spaces will optimize the benefits of living in the Front Range climate. In conjunction with more naturalized landscape areas and open space, focus on small urban nodes intermixed through the community is a primary goal with this 4th Amendment. The new Mixed-Use planning areas offer excellent opportunity for urban plazas that could host community events such as small concerts or farmers' markets, outdoor patio seating for restaurants in this area and overall provide a sense of place to visitors and residents of the area alike.

Urban Design

The High Point Urban Design standards are intended to provide continuity between the single family, multi-family, mixed use, commercial/retail, and industrial uses within the High Point MP. Within this range of land uses, design that accentuates the contemporary high plains character will reinforce sense of place and connection between the different neighborhoods and districts.

Urban Design concepts could be implemented through the High Point MP as follows:

1. Local street access points, frontages, and shared drives will be used as appropriate to create an open visual character along perimeter streets. They also provide for improved connectivity between internal and perimeter walk and trail systems.
2. The Second Creek community open space will preserve views from within the community as well as of west bound traffic along E. 64th Avenue.
3. A wide range of single-family detached, attached and multi-family home designs and price points will create visual and lifestyle diversity.

Architecture

Architectural Design Standards are provided to offer design direction for future developers within the High Point community. Descriptions of architectural style, materials, color, design intent, and building form, roof form, fenestration and details that follow will guide and reinforce the forward-looking design approach desired for the entire High Point MP. Examples and more details on the guiding theme can be found within the Urban Design Standards.

The architectural styles included with this MP Amendment are intended to provide flexibility in definition, which will allow for broader design interpretation, and therefore yield greater diversity within the development. All styles while rooted in a traditional vernacular will allow for forward looking design solutions suited to the needs and desires of future residents, inherently compatible with each other. These modern interpretations further reinforce the architectural vision of the commercial and mixed-use districts of High Point.

Natural Site Features

The majority of the High Point site consists of slopes of less than six percent. Exceptions to this are for the most part along the west branch of Second Creek in the west central part of the site. To a limited extent there are some isolated steeper slopes associated with the drainage way that passes through the easternmost part of the site, east of E-470 and south of 64th Avenue. Other steep slopes are generally anomalies associated with very minor drainages and manmade disturbances throughout the site are ten to twenty feet in height or less.

Steep slopes associated with West Second Creek will generally be incorporated into open space areas. Drop structures and other channel stabilization improvements will be included in the drainage improvements anticipated for Second Creek and the easternmost drainage described above. More detailed grading plans will be developed with future contextual site plan submittals and steep slope guidelines will be applied to necessary situations.

The Second Creek community open space will preserve views from within the community as well as of west bound traffic along E. 64th Ave.

Response to the major landforms of the site, in particular the ridge that runs from the west central part of the site up to the High Point park, is a key part of the High Point MP.

The west branch of Second Creek will be modified to accommodate erosion and flood control improvements required by the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District. Open spaces adjacent to the corridor will be improved for detention and water quality basins, trails and recreation facilities.

Open Space and Recreation

High Point's parks and open space system has resulted from this planning concept to emphasize a strong sense of connectivity in the daily lives of its residents. Connectivity to the land and the natural environment will be fostered through an integrated trail and park system, linking residents and employees throughout the project to the beauty of open spaces, wildlife areas and dramatic vistas of the Front Range.

These natural amenities offer opportunities for hiking, biking, nature walks, and other pre-programmed community activities. In addition, there will be a diversity of residential buyers including a strong market for first-time and move-up homeowners. Therefore, recreation centers, pools and clubhouses will be provided throughout the community in strategic locations. A number of other recreational and cultural opportunities will be incorporated. In addition, High Point's convenient connection to regional, national and worldwide transportation offers unlimited travel and leisure opportunities for community residents.

The west branch of Second Creek will be modified to accommodate erosion and flood control improvements required by the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District. Open spaces adjacent to the corridor will be improved for detention and water quality basins, trails and recreation facilities, and wildlife habitat. Some riparian habitat exists along lower stretches of West Second Creek. It is anticipated that these areas will be preserved or mitigated as a part of the drainage improvements anticipated along the drainage.

There are no known historic or archeological sites on or immediately adjacent to the High Point site.

As previously described, views to the Front Range exist from much of the High Point site and opportunities to preserve the views have been incorporated into the Master Plan

Varying degrees of expansive soils are found throughout the property. Appropriate standard industry practices for site development will be taken to mitigate their impacts as necessary.

Vehicular Circulation

Alignment and cross-section of all collector streets planned within High Point will be coordinated with and the City of Aurora with this MP and all subsequent development plan reviews. Dunkirk Street, Picadilly Road, Himalaya Street, Gun Club Road and other future collectors will be extended into the community from the south.

Zoning Conformance

In addition to the requested MP Amendment No. 4, the applicant has requested and received approval by City Council on January 6th, 2020 for a Rezoning as well as a Comprehensive Plan Amendment of a portion of the property. The approved zoning and Comprehensive Plan Amendment designations are consistent with the new land uses proposed with this MP amendment. The area previously zoned Mixed-Use Regional (MU-R) was rezoned AD (Airport District) to align with the adjacent AD zoning to the west and to allow flexibility in the industrial land uses proposed within this subarea in this MP Amendment. The approved Comprehensive Plan Amendment changed the site's area east of E-470 to the Industry Hub Placetype designation as well as introduced the Emerging Neighborhoods Placetype designation to an area north of E. 65th Avenue in order to align with the proposed single-family land use that is shown on the MP Amendment. The remainder of the site continues to be designated Urban District Placetype. No other areas within the property received Comprehensive Plan Amendments or are planned to be amended in conjunction with this MP Amendment.

Potential Regulatory Conflicts

There are no known conflicts between the MP design ordinance requirements and the terms of any existing annexation agreements with other jurisdictions or interest groups.

Adjustments

No adjustments are requested.

Black Forest Ordinance

Not Applicable.

Steep Slope Standards

The majority of the High Point site consists of slopes less than six percent. Exceptions to this area for the most part along the west branch of Second Creek in the west central part of the site. To a limited extent there are some isolated steeper slopes associated with the drainage way that passes through the easternmost part of the site, east of E-470 and south of 64th Avenue. Other steep slopes are generally anomalies associated with very minor drainages or manmade disturbances throughout the site and are ten to twenty feet in height or less. Steep slopes associated with West Second Creek will generally be incorporated into open space and golf course areas. Drop structures and other channel stabilization improvements will be included in the drainage improvements anticipated for Second Creek and the easternmost drainage described above. More detailed grading plans will be developed with future contextual site plan submittals and steep slope guidelines will be applied to necessary situations.