

# CREDCO gives preview of charrette results

By Ross Dolan

While data is still being tabulated for the design charrette earlier this month, members of the Castle Rock Economic Development Council (CREDCO) got a brief preview of the issues tackled by the charrette at Tuesday's autumn shareholders meeting at the Plum Creek Country Club.

The Oct. 10-11 charrette was a brainstorming session between local volunteers and members of the Urban Design Committee of the Denver chapter of the American Institute of Architects (AIA). While ideas, such as an artists' colony along Plum Creek may not always be practical or financially feasible, that was not the mission of the exercise. "It was designed to get as many ideas on the table as possible," said architect David Daniel.

The project helped to create visions for the downtown, the Craig and Gould neighborhood, the town's gateways and the Wolfensberger section of town west of Interstate 25.

A fifth transportation group was created on the day of the charrette to deal with issues surrounding roads, mass transit, and access to trails for pedestrians and cyclists. That group recommended intersections with distinctive paving, "calming" rather than accommodating downtown traffic, using bulb-out intersections at corners to create parking without widening the town's old streets and completing the ring road that would connect areas like Founders Village to the downtown core.

Retaining the historic character of the downtown and the Craig and Gould neighborhood was seen as essential by charrette participants. Landscaped buffers to protect downtown businesses from railroad tracks also were among the possibilities.

The old Cantril School, a historic asset, also should be kept as a neighborhood cultural and heritage center and the neighborhood's northern portion should be connected to the southern part via some sort of pedestrian access across Fifth Street. A commuter depot also was envisioned if commuter rail traffic is ever established.

Rather than establishing mixed-use concepts in the old town section the group said the neighborhood should be rezoned to keep its single-family character.

The Wolfensberger side of town was ripe for reinvention, said Daniel. One suggestion was to reestablish Wolfensberger Road as a broad business and pedestrian friendly boulevard or parkway. Other amenities suggested for the area's northern part were a performing and cultural arts center and a mixed-use areas with attractive class A office space. Extending affordable housing options was also seen as important.

Improving town gateways was seen as essential, especially those at Interstate 25 which create, "a continuing identity crisis for Castle Rock," said Daniel.

Existing bridges should be "celebrated," or improved visually, said

Daniel, who said the design group also suggested liberal use of the town's trademark rhyolite stone and use of a branded identity.

Gateways should be welcoming, said Daniel and should welcome new businesses to town and overcome the idea of "a small town in the middle of nowhere."

Town Long-Range Planner Loretta Daniel said the next steps would be to seek a balance between the charrette's vision and reality.

Some financial assistance for changes might be accomplished by establishing an Urban Renewal Authority or Business Improvement Districts to fund envisioned projects.

She said a draft report on the findings of the various groups would be submitted to the charrette steering committee around Nov. 15. That would be followed by public open houses to seek additional input for a final plan.

Looking toward a 2020 population of more than 60,000 residents the charrette saw change as both necessary and good, provided the historical and vital character of the town could be retained said Loretta Daniel.

Former mayor Tim White, a member of CREDCO's board of directors, said, "A lot of people think this is just pie in the sky, but if you look at downtown Denver as an example, a place that was once a rail yard, you begin to realize that good things can happen."

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