

Coeur Terre
Annexation and Zoning Application
Public Focus Group / Listening Session Notes with KCLC Response

Overview

On Wednesday, February 15th, 2023 Kootenai County Land Company hosted a public focus group and listening session to receive community feedback regarding their annexation and zoning application with the City of Coeur d'Alene for the Coeur Terre property. The meeting was held at the Coeur d'Alene Library in the Community Room from 11am-1pm. Members of the community that participated in the application process and prior public involvement efforts were invited to attend, acting as community liaisons to represent their larger neighborhoods or interest groups. Approximately 17 people in total were identified as liaisons and invited to attend. Several additional members of the community arrived day of and were welcomed to join. Approximately 30 members of the community participated in the focus group. The project team was also in attendance.

The meeting was facilitated by The Langdon Group (TLG), a subsidiary of JUB Engineers, which specializes in public involvement, facilitation, and conflict resolution. Acting as a neutral third party, the TLG facilitator provided a general overview of meeting goals, explained how the feedback would be used, and provided several prompts to guide participants in the types of feedback sought. Participants were then asked to provide responses to the prompts, and/or general feedback as the facilitator recorded the discussion.

Meeting Goals:

- To provide opportunity for public feedback in response to the proposal.
- To make sure we have heard and understand all public perspectives and interests.
- We cannot promise all of your ideas will get incorporated, but we can promise to listen to all of them and seek to understand so that we can consider possible solutions.
- Provide clarification where able.

Outcome:

- Will work to review, consider, and incorporate your focus group feedback where able and reasonable.

Feedback Prompts:

- What did you think about the proposal?
- Do you have any new thoughts or interests since attending the hearing?
- What do you like about the proposal?
- Where do you see possible solutions, considering the property's limitations and direction from the City?

Summary of Public Feedback

While perspectives varied within the group, three main themes emerged as common topics of interest: Zoning, Traffic and Circulation, and Adjacent Neighborhood Characteristics. Overall, participants were solution oriented and provided candid feedback. Ultimately, the participants agreed that the area had been planned for development for a long time and that they would like to see their perspectives and suggestions addressed in the proposed master plan where reasonable and able. The participants expressed an understanding that all parties share a mutual desire for the project to be well-done and to benefit the community.

The following summarizes the comments heard from the participants in the meeting, including those which were recorded by the note taker and the facilitator. This list is not exhaustive to every comment made, but captures to the best of the note-takers ability, the main themes.

Zoning / Density / Proximity

1. Most participants agreed that their main concern is regarding density in proximity to their homes.
2. Several participants noted the correlation between traffic/circulation and density as a related issue.
3. Some participants would prefer to see the areas of the zoning requested changed to R5 (single family use) or R8 (mix of housing units), with a participant suggesting granting exceptions for higher density where needed.
4. It was suggested that a strip of single family homes on the east side of the project would be a reasonable buffer between existing homes and the proposed higher density units;*
5. The majority of participants would like to see complementary zoning adjacent to their homes.
6. It was highlighted that phasing of the project should be flexible to take into consideration the ever-changing market, population, and environment.

Traffic / Circulation/Maintenance

1. A common topic was the need to identify a collector road that would not impact, or would minimize impact to, the residents who live in the Big Sky, Indian Meadows, or North Shire neighborhoods.
2. Several participants identified that they would like to see new traffic studies done that:
 - a. Would include the trips per day that currently go east bound.
 - b. Would address the following roads, because they believe that those streets already see high volume traffic, and would be further impacted if the development were to occur:
 - i. Seltice
 - ii. Huetter
 - iii. Hanley
 - iv. Atlas
 - c. It was suggested that the city planning department should have a third-party complete a study at the earliest convenience.

3. Several participants identified that pedestrian safety needs to be addressed. Many of the streets in the Indian Meadows neighborhood do not have sidewalks and the residents are utilizing city streets for pedestrian and animal activity. This concerns the residents when they consider their neighborhood being connected to the new development and anticipated high traffic volume.
4. Some participants requested that the impact of construction traffic should also be taken into consideration.
5. Some participants expressed an understanding that a solution that individually suited them might not be conducive to other neighbors who live along different roads.
6. The following are ideas that were introduced by individual participants:
 - a. The Huetter Road expansion could be done on the east side of the road rather than on the west side.
 - b. I-90 and the rest stop area could be used a point of entry for a collector road.
 - c. Working with a third-party organization such as SSMTI (State Smart Transit Initiative) to identify transportation solutions.
 - d. Purchasing a section of the industrial loop and developing the area as an alternative traffic route.
7. Some participants noted frustrations with the current lack of road maintenance in their neighborhoods. They worried that winter plowing and pothole filling resources would be stretched even thinner if more streets were added.
8. Some participants desired that the location of the collector roads should be done in coordination with determining the location of the school sites to help avoid high traffic volumes during peak times. The school sites would potentially cause more traffic and create more difficulties when navigating the area during high peak times.

Environment

1. A few participants expressed concern for water usage and aquifer protection. There was discussion about environmental assessments, water usage, and water impact studies.
2. A participant expressed concern about the lack of fencing surrounding their own property stating that the majority of properties along the proposed trail were already fenced, and worried how those who would use the trails would interact with their property. One solution offered by the participants was to include more vegetation along the trail as a buffer; another solution was to fence the property.
3. One participant noted that another of the applicant's developments (The Trails) values scenery and natural environment in its marketing plan, and this new development should do the same.

Miscellaneous Topics

1. Participants would like to see the City Planners involved in conversations.
 - a. Participants would like to understand the City's decision-making progress.
 - b. Participants would like to see the City Planning group have more conversations with the public and seek to understand public needs better.
 - c. Participants want to know how the City plans to have long term funding to provide maintenance for the roads of high concern.

2. One participant noted that wildlife currently passes through the North Shire neighborhood, and would like to make sure they are not impacted by fencing.
3. The participants would like to see more updates on the process, perhaps on the project's website.
4. The participants would like to see a Master Plan that is up to date with the finalized annexation and development agreement.
5. Some participants identified the following solutions to miscellaneous topics:
 - a. Converting the parks or green spaces into ponding basins during the winter months to help mitigate water and aquifer usage.
 - b. Allocating homes to be rented or owned to locals of the area (perhaps as part of the 5% allocated for affordable units, or as an additional 5%).
 - c. Participants were able to understand that there is a middle ground to be found where all parties involved can feel as if they were protected, considered, and respected. They are hopeful that they can find a solution that all can accept.
 - d. Participants would like to see written/official note of the modifications that are agreed upon by the developers, suggesting they should be noted in the development agreement.
 - e. Participants noted they would like to see more opportunities for public involvement. They appreciated and liked the format of this listening session.

What Participants liked about the Proposal

- Participants agreed that they liked that land is being dedicated to the school district.
- Promotion of the greenspaces was a great concept to many participants of the focus group.
- The trail surrounding the property is a good idea and would allow for residents of all neighborhoods to take walks, ride bikes, walk animals, etc.
- The participants expressed that they had no objections to the land being annexed or developed but would like to have more discussion on the zoning.

Questions that the Focus Group Had: (With KCLC response)

- What is the City's traffic mitigation plan?
- Could the development agreement have more clear language on the zoning request?
- Where will the first phase of the project build out start?
- What is the plan for the Atlas to Nez Perce intersections and transition?
- What is the plan for potential emergencies on Huetter Road?
- Will the water line be moved, as it is now it is in the middle of the planned site
- At what point will impact studies like Environmental Assessment be triggered or required?
- What will happen to the properties west of Huetter Road?
- When will improvements be done to Atlas Road, and who will be responsible? Will it fall on the developer?
- What will the estimated total population of the development be?
- What is the total width of the area (trail and grass, etc.) between Coeur Terre and the abutting properties?

- How are these comments and concerns going to be used? Will they be submitted to the City or released to the public?