E arly next year, two new retail centers will be under construction at Stapleton, both of which are scheduled for opening in early 2002.

One is the very essence of the Stapleton Plan’s vision of a mixed-use neighborhood town center. Located along 29th Avenue between Quebec and Syracuse, it will be anchored by a grocery store in the area formerly occupied by the rental car facilities. The other center, sited along Quebec Street north of the United Airlines Flight Training Center and south of Smith Road, will be unlike any regional retail center in the nation. It will provide convenient shopping at large volume home improvement and discount retailers to an area of the city that is presently underserved in that regard. Unlike its suburban counterparts, however, it will be laid out on an urban street grid that will include pedestrian-friendly access to shopping, entertainment and a future transit station that will “knit” the center into the fabric of the surrounding neighborhoods.

The Town Center
A pedestrian-friendly 29th Avenue will serve as the “Main Street” of the town center. Lined by two-story buildings of residences above ground floor retail, 29th Avenue will link the neighborhoods west of Stapleton to the center’s focal point: a town green with office buildings, apartments, a health club and retail uses framing its large retail stores. An interactive fountain and special landscape features will make that green a favorite gathering spot for residents, shoppers, office workers and other visitors.

Anchoring the town center retail will be a grocery store, lined along its eastern edge on Roslyn Street with modestly priced town houses that soften the transition into residential neighborhoods to the east. Those neighborhoods will include a campus shared by a Denver Public Schools elementary school, its charter school neighbor, The Odyssey School, and an early childhood education program. South of the grocery store will be more multi-family residential buildings, including senior housing on the north side of Fred Thomas Park.

Above: Amy Carter of Park Hill gives her two children, Matthew and Olivia, a ride through the 23rd and Dexter neighborhood retail shopping area. She loves the friendliness and convenience of having shops and restaurants within walking distance of home.

The Regional Retail Center
Taking its cue from several of the elements that make the near-by town center pedestrian-friendly and a comfortable link to the surrounding neighborhoods, the regional retail center will complement its large retailers with smaller retailers and restaurants collected along streets that follow the urban grid. Those elements are designed to establish pedestrian links with the hotels and existing neighborhoods to the west, to the United Airlines Flight Training Center to the south, and to the future Smith Road transit station and office buildings planned to the east.

The regional retail center will generate significant new tax revenues that will make it possible to repay the costs of the infrastructure required to serve all of the new development at Stapleton. The center was located in close proximity to the Interstate 70 interchange at Quebec Street to provide significant regional access without placing undue pressure on the neighborhoods to the west.

For more information about the site plans for the town center retail and the unique regional retail center, please turn to pages four and five.
This interview is the second in a two-part series.

Q: What exactly means mixed-use development?
A: There are several kinds of mixed-use. For example, Writer Square was the first mixed-use project of its kind in Denver. Twenty years after construction, Writer Square still retains its place as Downtown Denver’s best example of mixed-use — or more accurately, fully integrated mixed-use. It combines residential, office, and retail uses within the same block. Its scale changes from 11 stories on the retail uses to four stories on the residential use. It combines residential, office, and retail uses within the same block. Its use of brick and wood building materials complement the surrounding residential neighborhood. The basic idea of mixed-use is to create an environment in which people have the option to live, work, shop, eat out, and play all within a comfortable walking distance. Stapleton should be developed based on the very best examples that Denver has to offer in creating livable communities — and by definition, that means mixed-use.

Q: What have you learned from Lowry that can be applied to the redevelopment of Stapleton?
A: We will be more aggressive about the community facilities, which could not be accomplished at the Lowry redevelopment. We’ve learned a lot about the Stapleton neighborhood visual variety and a sense of identity.

Q: What kind of opportunities present themselves in the development of the community at Stapleton?
A: Stapleton offers the opportunity to build the various parts of the neighborhood at the same time — residences, offices, commercial, and community facilities. The Green Valley Ranch neighborhood residents have waited over 10 years for a recreation center and basic shopping amenities, because it was originally designed only as a residential community. That mode of development is obsolete, in part because it means that to go anywhere or do anything you have to get in your car and drive.

Q: How does the city plan to hold Forest City accountable for maintaining the community vision in the development plan?
A: Forest City came to the Denver with the kind of value system we had expressed in the Stapleton “Green Book.” They were selected as the City’s development partner after successfully competing against several other developers. Forest City on their residential side has eighteen or more unit types. Of housing units than we got at Lowry that can be applied to the redevelopment of Stapleton.

Q: What do you think about home builders? We will be more aggressive about the community facilities that could not be accomplished at the Lowry redevelopment. We’ve learned a lot about the Stapleton neighborhood visual variety and a sense of identity.

Q: How can you achieve a livable, pedestrian-friendly community from the outset?
A: The agreement between the City of Denver and Forest City allows us to bring all aspects of the community together in a public-private partnership. Forest City has experience integrating multiple kinds of development and they are committed to organizing the Stapleton development based on the best traditions of Denver.

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It won’t be long before you’ll be able to find a new park at Stapleton to complement the Bluff Lake Natural Area and the two miles of the Sand Creek Regional Greenway trail that are already open to the public. Planning for one of Denver’s first major urban parks of the new millennium has begun this summer with two important steps that will determine the form and content of the 175-acre park temporarily called “Central Park” until a permanent name is chosen.

This first of those two steps is the preparation of a “Stapleton Parks System Needs Assessment.” The needs assessment will include extensive public involvement to determine what activities should be accommodated throughout the entire 1116-acre Stapleton parks and open space system, and where those uses would best be located. In a sense, it is an “update” of the Stapleton Development Plan (known as “The Green Book”) that was created in 1995.

The second step was the recent selection by the Stapleton Public Facilities Authority of a consultant team for the planning and design of the Central Park and the greenways that will connect it to adjacent neighborhoods. The local office of EDAW, Inc., one of the nation’s premier landscape architectural firms, was selected to lead that project. Other key members of the consultant team include: Andropogon Associates, Ltd., HNTB Inc., Matrix Design Group, Christopher Smith Architecture, Harding Lawson, and the Lund Partnership. Public involvement will be managed through the combined efforts of EDAW, Marketing Support, Inc., Neighborhood America.Com, and the Stapleton Metropolitan District.

The Green Book describes the major urban park in the following words:

“This park, planned for the southern end of the site, to the east of the terminal area, will be similar to traditional Denver parks…The park will accommodate a variety of uses – from playing fields to social gathering areas – serving as an amenity both for new residential and commercial development on the site, and for existing neighborhoods.”

By Dennis Piper
Director, Parks & Environment

**LET US KNOW WHAT YOU THINK…**

To participate in the needs assessment information gathering process for the planning of the parks, open space and recreation at Stapleton, contact Emilie Ailts at 303-777-2325 as soon as possible. We are looking for opportunities to survey neighborhood groups, recreation associations and other interested parties about use of and interest in parks and recreation at Stapleton.

Planning activity for the central park at Stapleton should begin in a little over a month, and it is expected to take about 18 months to complete, followed by two years devoted to construction. On that timeline, grand opening festivities should take place in 2004.

Make your plans to be there!

Above: Stapleton Director of Parks and Environment, Dennis Piper, standing at Westerly Creek, shows future plans for open space at Stapleton.
**NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL CENTER**

**TOWN CENTER**
The neighborhood town center will be anchored by a grocery store serving the new and existing residents in the Stapleton area.

**“MAIN STREET”**
The Town Center includes 29th Avenue, a pedestrian-friendly “Main Street” lined by residential uses above retail shops on the way to a town green.

**TOWN GREEN**
The 2.5 acre town green will be ringed by office uses, multi-family residential buildings and a health club serving the residents of those buildings and the general public.

**SITE DATA**
- Grocery Store: Approx. 61,000 sq. feet
- Residential units: Approx. 400
- Office: Approx. 100,000 sq. feet
- Retail: Approx. 98,000 sq. feet
**RESTAURANT/RETAIL**

Restaurant uses and smaller retail have been collected along the extension of 36th Avenue to create a pedestrian-friendly area for shoppers, office workers, neighborhoods on the west, and the office complex to be built on the east.

**ACCESS**

Detached sidewalks (separated from streets by landscape) will be provided throughout the site, connecting to all existing and future neighborhoods. Bus service and bike paths will also be provided.

**USES**

Anticipated uses are expected to include, but are not limited to, home improvement, general merchandise, wholesale club, electronics, books, linens, apparel, restaurants, a service station and a bank.

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**SITE DATA**

- Major Retail: 451,226 sq. feet
- Retail: 222,382 sq. feet
- Restaurant Pads: 73,000 sq. feet
- Total Development: 746,608 sq. feet
AROUND THE TABLE
Who's Redeveloping Stapleton?

Redeveloping Stapleton, once the fifth busiest airport in the world, is one of the most significant development projects in the history of Denver. The community: “Average” citizens throughout Denver and the metropolitan area have been involved in this process from the beginning. The Stapleton Redevelopment Corporation (SDC) has played a multi-year role in greater detail. Tracy Huggins elsewhere in this edition of The Front Porch explains that for the land sale. Forest City has agreed to pay $79.4 million for the remaining developable land at Stapleton.

The Stapleton Plan. By the end of this year, Forest City will have taken title to 2,935 acres of land remaining to be purchased at Stapleton, that land is owned by The Department of Aviation of the City and County of Denver. Through an agreement with the airlines, Denver International Airport (DIA) is funding the demolition and environmental remediation at Stapleton that must be completed before the land can be sold to Forest City. Net proceeds of those land sales are pledged to Denver International Airport. That process has included all segments of our community: neighbors, business and civic leaders, elected officials, professional planners and just about anyone who shared a common interest in the future of our city.

The Stapleton process continues to be an inclusive one. Around the table are multiple parties that have played significant roles in that process:

- **The community:** "Average" citizens throughout Denver and the metropolitan area have been anything but “average” in their dedication and generosity with their time and contributions. The community continues to play a vital role in every phase of the development process, today, primarily in the form of the Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) of the Stapleton Development Corporation. Call 303-393-7700 for information about the time and place of the CAB meetings.

**The Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC):** The Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC) is governed by a board of citizens who serve without compensation following their appointment by Mayor Webb and DURA and their confirmation by the Denver City Council. SDC is also guided by an active Citizens Advisory Board. Since 1997, the primary roles of SDC have been to manage the assets of the former airport, and select a development partner, which later turned out to be Forest City. Among the current duties of the SDC are the preservation of open space and the creation of the special districts at Stapleton that will finance the infrastructure and ensure growth pays its own way.

**The Stapleton Foundation for Sustainable Urban Communities:** The non-profit Stapleton Foundation for Sustainable Urban Communities is the reincarnation of the Stapleton Redevelopment Foundation that began the Stapleton redevelopment process. Its goals are to pursue the principles of The Stapleton Plan related to affordable housing, quality education and jobs training, and sustainable development. The Foundation is governed by a board of 16 business and civic leaders who serve without compensation.

**The Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA):** Created by state law to assist the City and County of Denver with the prevention and elimination of blighted areas, DURA has played a multi-year role as the entity that has the power to fund revitalization efforts through tax increment financing (TIF). A column by DURA Director Tracy Huggins elsewhere in this edition of The Front Porch explains that role in greater detail.

**Denver Public Schools (DPS):** Officials from DPS and others are currently involved in the design of a ten-acre campus that will be shared by one of its traditional elementary schools and one of its charter schools, The Odyssey School. The site may also include early childhood education programming. DPS projects that ultimately it will need four elementary schools, one middle school and one senior high school to serve the new neighborhoods at Stapleton.

**Metro Districts:** Authorized under Title 32 of the Colorado Revised Statutes, these are political subdivisions with the power to tax property within the district’s boundaries as a means of enabling growth to pay its own way. The Denver City Council approved two metropolitan districts for Stapleton. Together, the districts implement the financing and construction of infrastructure at Stapleton.

**Forest City Stapleton, Inc.:** In November 1998, at the conclusion of its process to choose a development partner, The Stapleton Development Corporation selected Forest City to purchase all of the remaining developable land at Stapleton. Forest City has agreed to pay $79.4 million for 2,935 acres, the appraised market value of the land, as well as an additional $44 million in impact fees earmarked for the preservation of open space, for a total of $123.4 million. Forest City will also advance funds to the City of Denver for the construction of regional infrastructure and be repaid those funds through revenues generated by site development at Stapleton in a financing mechanism that eliminates the risk for the City of Denver.

**Who's Redeveloping Stapleton?**

- **A Community Working Together**

- Stapleton Development Corporation
- FAA
- Stapleton Foundation
- DIA
- Citizens Advisory Board
- Metro Districts
- City & County of Denver
- DPS
- Home Builders
- Forest City
- Airlines
- DURA

**Open House at Bluff Lake**

Saturday, August 19, 9 am to noon
Come meet the staff, Board of Directors and volunteers.
Coffee and doughnuts.
Free tours of a “little jewel,” Bluff Lake, led by nature guides.
Learn about membership in the Bluff Lake Nature Center.
Children’s activities and lots more!
Location: east of Havana Street between Smith Road and 26th Ave.

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INVESTING IN OUR FUTURE

By Tracy Huggins, Executive Director, Denver Urban Renewal Authority

Last February, the Denver Urban Renewal Authority (DURA) was part of a proud and enthusiastic team that unveiled plans to transform the former Stapleton International Airport into a mixed-use urban community. The announcement of a financing plan for Denver’s newest neighborhood capped a multi-year collaborative effort and paved the way for the redevelopment to go forward.

DURA, charged under state law with assisting the City and County of Denver in eliminating and preventing slums and blighted area, has a significant role in Stapleton’s redevelopment. We are the only entity in Denver with the power to fund urban revitalization efforts through the use of a financing tool called tax increment financing, or TIF.

First, let me explain how this unique but complex tool works. State law enables DURA and other urban renewal authorities to use the ”new” tax revenues generated by a redevelopment project to provide front-end financing. These new revenues, or “tax increment,” must pay for infrastructure and related public improvements associated with the redevelopment, usually through the issuance of bonds or developer reimbursement.

In the case of Stapleton, the cost of regional, or “trunk,” infrastructure to support the redevelopment will be $346 million. DURA will invest up to $294 million in TIF in roads, drainage, water and sewer systems, as well as in schools and community facilities. The investment will take the form of a reimbursement, with the developer, Forest City Enterprises, advancing the money and DURA repaying Forest City’s costs as TIF is generated. A portion of the new revenues generated on the site also will be retained by the city to help provide services, such as police and fire protection and trash removal, to the residents who make Stapleton their home.

At the end of 25 years, all the additional taxes created by the redevelopment of Stapleton will revert to the normal taxing entities. So the use of TIF as a financing tool is a ”win/win” proposition. It benefits both the neighborhood, which gets roads, parks and schools, and the taxing entities, which get new, permanent sources of tax revenue that wouldn’t have existed without the redevelopment.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING:

Investing in Our Future

Barbecue by Emil-Lene’s Sirloin House
Silent auction • Greenway tours
Activities for children

Live Entertainment by Liz Masterson & Sean Blackburn
Bike, hike, ride your horse or drive your car to Star K Ranch in Aurora for an afternoon of family fun. Proceeds benefit Sand Creek Regional Greenway, a 13-mile public greenway linking the High Line Canal with Platte River Greenway.

Questions? Call 303-393-7700.
Directions: I-70 to Chambers Road. South to Smith Road. East to Emil-Lene’s sign at Jasper.
To order tickets clip and return form to: Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership
3333 Quebec St. #8100 Denver, CO 80207

Sand Creek Jamboree
at Star K Ranch
Sunday, Aug 27
11am - 3pm

Sand Creek Jamboree Tickets
Name__________________________
Address________________________
Phone__________________________
# adult tickets _______@ $12 = $___________
# children’s tickets _______@ $6 = $___________
Total amount enclosed $___________
✓ Check enclosed (payable to Sand Creek Regional Greenway Partnership)
✓ Visa ❑ Master Card
#____________________ Exp. date____________
Signature________________________

Q & A

Jeannine Balsamo, director of asset management for The Stapleton Development Corp. (SDC), has one of the most challenging jobs in real estate: managing the assets of formerly the fifth busiest airport in the world as it undergoes a transformation into one of the nation’s premier mixed-use communities. In this edition, Ms. Balsamo responds to some of the most frequently asked questions from the public.

Q: Are there old aviation hangars available for lease at Stapleton?
A: No. Shortly after SDC took over asset management in January 1997, we conducted an inventory of the former airport’s 4 million square feet of space spread over 150 buildings to identify and lease usable space. All buildings not presently leased are scheduled for demolition.

Q: How did you make decisions about demolition?
A: Some buildings such as the former terminal and concourses were impractical to save and reuse, either because of their deteriorated condition, a design that was limited to airport uses, or the high cost of bringing them up to current building codes.

Q: Will the Stapleton Events Center be preserved?
A: No. Like the other concourse buildings, the former A-Plus concourse that has housed the Stapleton Events Center would be prohibitively expensive to maintain and remodel. Removal of the runways has also required an elimination of the special events program at Stapleton.

Q: What buildings will be re-used?
A: The former Combs-Gates terminal and hangar began housing the Colorado Studios Complex shortly after Stapleton’s closure in 1995, and it is expected to continue in the future. Nearby, another former hangar houses the popular Bladium Sports Club of Denver, and RK Mechanical has purchased and is planning to expand one of the air cargo buildings along Smith Road. The Denver Police Department is purchasing another hanger for its training academy, and the former FAA Tower will also be preserved, perhaps for use as an observation tower.

Q: Who is overseeing the demolition and environmental remediation at Stapleton?
A: The work is being funded by Denver’s Department of Aviation (which owns the land until it is sold to Forest City Stapleton). The work is being done by contractors selected under the City’s bid process and supervised by the Denver Department of Public Works.
Mark Wachal, president of Recycled Materials Company of Arvada, stands near the operator’s cab on top of his company’s recycling plant at the former Stapleton International Airport and explains to a visitor how the massive equipment can reduce a 36-inch square chunk of runway into recycled materials of almost any specification. Nearby, huge haul trucks arrive in a steady stream from the area south of the terminal complex to dump pavement material into the hopper of the gigantic plant.

In business for more than thirty years, Recycled Materials Company is taking on one of its greatest challenges: breaking up and recycling an estimated six million tons of materials from more than 1,000 acres of pavement at Stapleton. Project Manager Rick Givan notes that the layers of material in that pavement can run three to four feet in depth. The company is removing the pavement under a marketing agreement with the City of Denver and has the exclusive right to sell the recycled aggregate it produces.

Recycled aggregate has now become a standard specification in many municipal and private sector paving contracts in the metropolitan area. The aggregate from the former runways and taxiways at Stapleton has been judged high quality in tests conducted by the Colorado School of Mines. The material is a cost-effective substitute for virgin aggregate that would otherwise need to be mined in quarries along Denver’s Front Range.

Mark Wachal’s work at Stapleton has attracted the attention of officials from the former Soviet Union, who are consulting with the company in their plans to demolish and recycle aging apartment buildings in Moscow. A delegation of Russians recently visited Stapleton to view firsthand the recycling operation, which is running ahead of schedule.