

# THE STAPLETON Front Porch

DENVER, CO

SUMMER 2000

STAPLETON

## SHOPPING CLOSE TO HOME Friendly, Convenient Neighborhood Stores a Denver Tradition

Early 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 a two-acre green space. 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.  
Right: Councilwoman Happy Haynes at her office near 23rd and Dexter.



### 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.

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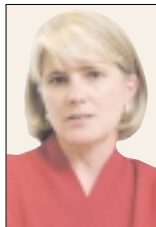
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# Q & A with Denver's Planning Director Jennifer Moulton



This interview is the second in a two-part series.

**Q:** What exactly is 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 16th Street Mall to four stories on 15th Street.

Writer Square was designed to provide a visually attractive pedestrian link between the 16th Street Mall and Larimer Square. Within the span of one block are The Market and Josephina's, two old Denver establishments, several tree covered benches, flower gardens and public art, a florist, a card shop, restaurants, an art gallery, and the Chocolate Factory.

Traditional brick arches, cornices and details highlight the project's contemporary design. Using brick as the dominant building material not only enhances the character of the development, but creates an inviting sense of place – it's intimate, it's warm, it's comfortable. The brick and the human scale were designed to create a refuge from the steel and glass sky scrapers and day-to-day pressures of the adjacent Downtown.

Another example of mixed-use development is Old South Gaylord Street – a single street with an eclectic mix of small, quaint – and usually locally-owned – shops, restaurants and offices located in the middle of the East Washington Park residential neighborhood. Old South Gaylord Street has become a defining feature of that

community. It is easily accessible by pedestrians throughout the neighborhood, and thrives in part because of that fact. Old South Gaylord represents what we would call horizontal – rather than vertical – mixed-use. Most of the structures are single story, are visually accessible, and are defined by their human scale. The 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.

Old South Gaylord (right) and Writer Square (below) are examples of existing "mixed-use" development in Denver.



that to go anywhere or do anything you have to get in your car and drive.

We made a conscious decision years ago – and went to considerable length in our public process and through the Stapleton Citizen's Advisory Board (CAB) – not to allow that to happen at Stapleton. It will be developed as a livable, pedestrian-friendly community from the outset.

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.

**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 home builders. We will push for an even greater variety of housing units than we got at Lowry. We want a development where each neighborhood and each unit has diversity. Forest City on their residential side has eighteen or more unit types. That alone will give the Stapleton neighborhood visual variety and a sense of identity.

**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 will continue to go through extensive review processes with the city – the first of which is with the Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC) and their Design Review Board. There will be a number of public processes and there's a whole crowd of citizens out there who have practically memorized the "Green Book" and they will be inspecting the development plans. There are many eyes on this project – every facet of this development will undergo meticulous consideration and scrutiny.

**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

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 will continue to go through extensive review processes with the city – the first of which is with the Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC) and their Design Review Board. There will be a number of public processes and there's a whole crowd of citizens out there who have practically memorized the "Green Book" and they will be inspecting the development plans. There are many eyes on this project – every facet of this development will undergo meticulous consideration and scrutiny.

## TO OUR READERS

The *Front Porch* is produced and funded by Forest City, Stapleton Inc. to keep Denver residents informed about the redevelopment of Stapleton.

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# birth of an urban park



By Dennis Piper  
Director, Parks & Environment

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

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."*

*(The Stapleton Plan, pp 5-13)*

Beyond that description, the content, use, appearance, landform, and circulation of this new park will be determined by you, the community, through your active involvement in the Stapleton Parks System Needs Assessment and the Central Park planning efforts. That process will be successful only if you and your neighbors take advantage of the opportunity to participate in the shaping of this 21<sup>st</sup> century park. (See box at the left for information on how to become involved.)

Planning activity for the central park at Staple-

ton 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!

Dennis Piper leans on a former runway sign at Stapleton in an area that will become a major urban park.



# NEIGHBORHOOD RETAIL CENTER

## TOWN CENTER

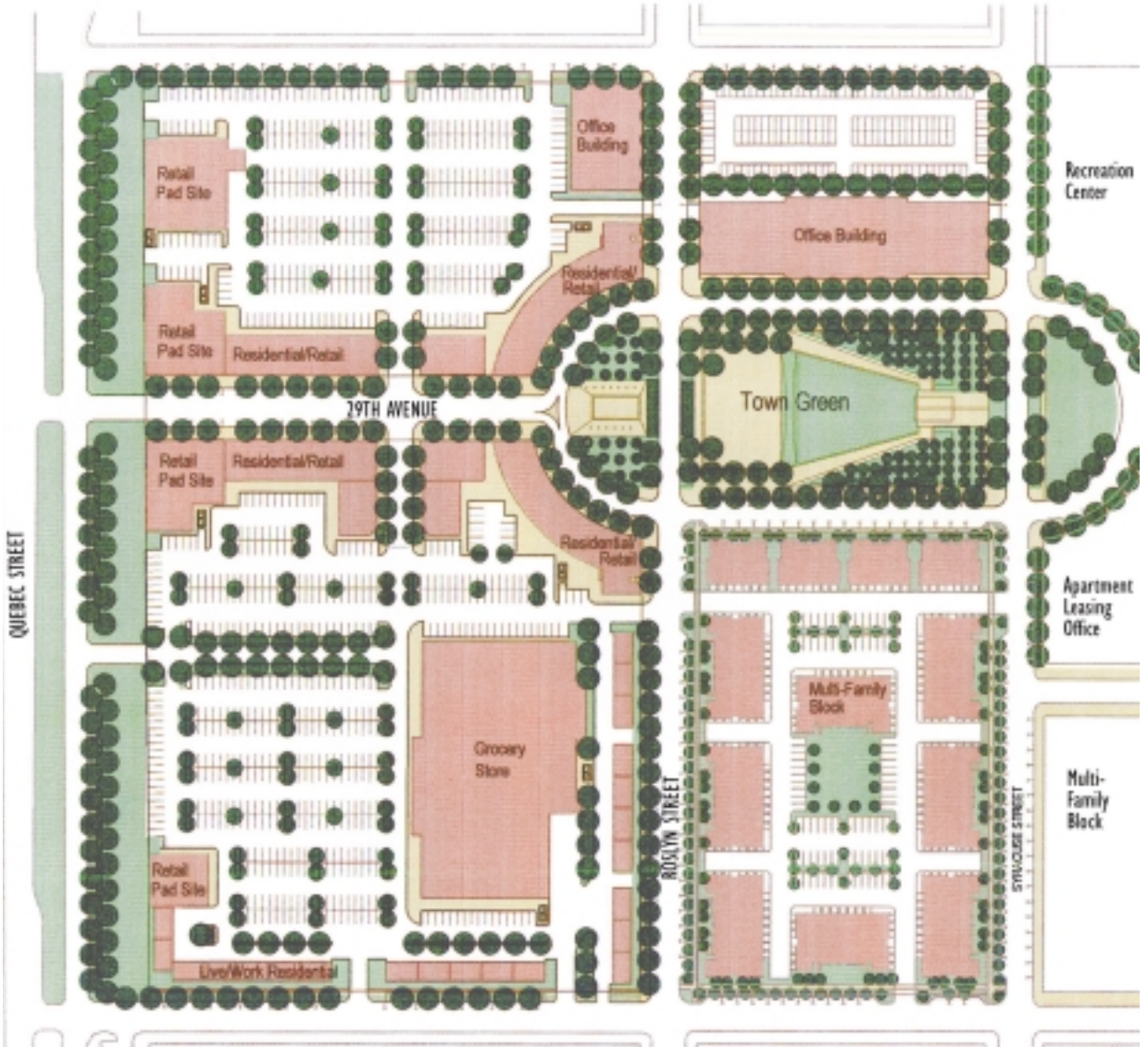
The neighborhood town center will be anchored by a grocery store serving the new and existing residents in the Stapleton area.

## "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



# REGIONAL RETAIL CENTER

## RESTAURANT/RETAIL

Restaurant uses and smaller retail have been collected along the extension of 36<sup>th</sup> 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.



## 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 a challenge that is as gigantic as the 4,700-acre property itself! When Forest City signed the agreement earlier this year to purchase all of the remaining developable land at Stapleton, it was a major milestone in a redevelopment process that began eleven years ago with the decision to build 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 as the cornerstone of that 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.

## Denver International Airport:

Until Forest City takes title to the 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.

**The City and County of Denver:** As with existing Denver neighborhoods, the new neighborhoods at Stapleton will receive basic city services from the City of Denver and be subject to city ordinances. At least initially, the new parks and open space will be managed by special districts created especially for Stapleton, but they one day will be managed in part by Denver Parks and Recreation. Mayor Wellington Webb and the senior members of his administration, along with Councilwomen Happy Haynes and Cathy Reynolds, and their colleagues on the Denver City Council, are among the people who have played vital roles in coordinating the involvement of numerous agencies throughout city government.

**The Federal Aviation Administration:** Because Stapleton was formerly an airport and the recipient of federal airport funding, the property has been under the jurisdiction of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), which had to approve an appraisal process that was the basis for obtaining the fair market value for the land sale.

**The Airline Industry:** The airlines that moved to DIA upon the closure of Stapleton have played a role in the redevelopment process as parties involved in the negotiations pertaining to the environmental remediation and demolition necessary to prepare Stapleton for sale.

**The Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC):** The Stapleton Plan called for the creation of a private sector, non-profit entity to oversee the disposition of the property. That entity is the Stapleton Development Corporation (SDC). 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.

**Homebuilders:** In preparing for the residential development at Stapleton, Forest City has talked to more than 100 homebuilders interested in building the housing that will comprise the diverse, traditional neighborhoods envisioned in The Stapleton Plan. By the end of this year, Forest City will select ten to twelve builders to participate in the first phase 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.



## 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.

# TAX INCREMENT FINANCING: 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



Tracy Huggins

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.

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



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 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



Jeannine Balsamo

one of the nation's premier mixed-used communities. In this edition, Ms. Balsamo responds to some of the most frequently asked questions from the public.

### Are there old aviation hangars available for lease at Stapleton?

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

### with Stapleton's Director of Asset Management

presently leased are scheduled for demolition.

### How did you make decisions about demolition?

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.

### Will the Stapleton Events Center be preserved?

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.

### What buildings will be re-used?

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.  
**Who is overseeing the demolition and environmental remediation at Stapleton?**

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.



# stapleton recycling



Left: Mark Wachal, President of Recycled Materials, Inc. at his Stapleton recycling plant.

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.

Below: Recycled material stockpiled for sale and re-use.

