

JEFFERSON COUNTY PLANNING AND ZONING

MEMO

DATE: JULY 28, 2011

TO: PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: ALAN TIEFENBACH, PLANNING & ZONING

RE: REVISIONS TO THE SOUTHWEST PLAZA ACTIVITY CENTER
RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE SOUTH PLAINS AREA PLAN.
CASE NO. 10-104936CH

The introduction of mixed use developments, specifically commercial projects that allow a multifamily residential component above commercial uses, and in some instances, at ground level, is an integral component of the new *South Plains Area Plan*. The idea is to introduce people into a development to support the commercial uses, and allow them to work, shop, play, and live in the same location. Mixed use developments are becoming increasingly more important as people live longer and become unable to drive, as cheap land becomes scarce, and as fuel prices continue to increase.

In the most recent version of the draft *South Plains Area Plan* (provided in the staff report), the proposed Southwest Plaza Activity Center map and policies recommend Large Scale Commercial at the portions of the activity center directly adjacent to Wadsworth Boulevard and north of Bowles Avenue, with mixed uses being recommended toward the peripheries (shown as “Area A” on the “present recommendations” map included with this memorandum). This was because there were early concerns from staff to preserve prime commercial locations for retail commercial uses only.

However, evolving staff discussions have led staff to believe that allowing high density residential development within the entire core of the Southwest Plaza Activity Center (bringing more people in) would provide additional attraction, developer flexibility, support and synergy for a more intensive commercial center. Staff believes the Southwest Plaza Activity Center recommendations, with the slight revisions as indicated with this memorandum, would provide enough clarification that the center is to remain a commercial center with residential supporting the commercial, and not visa-versa.

Therefore, if the Planning Commission moves to approve the draft South Plains Area Plan, staff recommends the Southwest Plaza Activity Center Map and policies be revised as provided with this memorandum. These revisions could be addressed as a red-mark change to the Plan.