

Jefferson County League of Women Voters Position in Brief: **Support for a way of life, which seeks to balance environmental, economic, and human needs, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet the same goal.**

In 2008, the sustainability committee presented a broad picture of what constitutes sustainable communities. Our action last year prompted other leagues in the state to follow our lead and study their communities. Members of The Jefferson County League concurred that Jefferson County's elected and appointed leaders are obligated to make our county as economically, socially and environmentally sustainable as possible. To that end the League will closely monitor the County Commissioners and other commissions and Boards in the County who are the final decision-makers about the future of our county and its inhabitants. We will support projects that meet our goals and challenge decisions that do not support sustainability as defined by our membership. In this unit we will be presenting information about a number of environmental issues that the county currently is facing. It is our plan that the issues of economic and social sustainability will also be a part of the information and consideration and that those issues will also be addressed in other units during the year. Sustainability cannot be considered without economic, social and environmental aspects being addressed. Growth for the sake of growth is not the goal of sustainable communities. A better quality of life is the main goal. Quality includes, among other things, sufficient and clean drinking water, pure air, livable neighborhoods, public transportation and recreation.

As we looked around Jefferson County, Golden stood out as an example of progressive sustainable practices. The city has established a Community Sustainability Advisory Board, hired a Sustainability Coordinator, and obtained a grant for \$500,000 to further its seven sustainability goals. Those goals are to promote green building practices, improve the economic health of businesses through the creation of jobs and products focused on renewable energy, promote sustainability awareness through education and communication, increase energy efficiency, reduce solid waste, increase access to alternative transportation, and ensure a clean stable water supply. They have contracted services to reduce energy consumption, and partnered with two large Golden companies to facilitate single-stream recycling. The city is incorporating recycling for all city operations, consolidating Information Technology servers to reduce power consumption and reducing the city vehicle mileage.

The issues we have chosen to consider at this time are:

1. County Commissioners and the County Planning Commission: Stance on Sustainability
2. Lakewood Zoning Ordinance Review
3. Green Jobs and Education: What training is available to our citizens and are there any currently green jobs available in the county?
4. Rooney Valley Development
5. The Beltway: Completion of a toll road in Northwest Jefferson County
6. St. Anthony's Hospital: Relocation to the Federal Center

There will definitely be other issues that will come up in our unit meetings that we hope will stimulate discussion and possible studies and/or action by the league. We would like to know which issues you feel are most important. Your input will help us develop our action plan for the April units.

Also, at the end of this presentation we will be asking you to give your opinion on this Principles Statement posed by the Colorado League of Women Voters:

Principles Statement: *Sustainability is a way of life which seeks a balance in meeting current environment, economic and human needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet the same goal. The concept of Sustainability is implicit in the Principles of the League of Women Voters. League positions are in compliance with the fundamental principle of sustainability, recognizing the interdependency among issues of public policy and the impact of current decisions on the global welfare of future generations.*

It is similar to what we you approved last year during our sustainability unit. We elected to use an encompassing statement at the county level to include all the positions we have that are associated with the concept of sustainability. Now the state is following our lead and would like to make a principles statement about sustainability.

Economic, social and environmental issues facing Jefferson County in 2010:

1. The County Commissioners and the Planning Commission

The Jefferson County Planning Commission is in the process of revising the County Comprehensive Master Plan. They have included an entire section titled "Sustainability".

At the end of each chapter of the plan, there are specific "Sustainability Goals, Objectives, Policies and Implementation Strategies."

The Plan defines sustainability as "an approach to balancing economic, environmental and social considerations, in order to achieve an improved quality of life for ourselves and future generations." It is "the capability to equitably meet the essential human needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs."

In Jeffco, planning for sustainability includes a vision and three guiding principles. The vision strives for a balance between the principles of economic vitality, environmental stewardship, and social concerns. Under each principle, there are stated goals. An example of a goal under Environmental Stewardship is "Promote land use patterns, transportation systems and building designs to conserve energy and allow for renewable, reliable and alternative energy strategies." A goal under Social Concerns is "Promote safety and health in the community..." The full revised Comprehensive Master Plan can be found at the Jefferson County Colorado, website.

2. Lakewood Zoning Ordinance Review

The City adopted its ordinance in 1980. The Lakewood zoning improvement process will hold quarterly events on topics related to land-use and zoning regulations to broaden the perspective on how zoning impacts other aspects of our community during this 18-month process. For more information visit the website www.playyourpart.org or for additional information on the zoning improvements and future community events call 303-987-7505.

3. Green Jobs and Education

Colorado and Jefferson County seems to be on the cutting edge in providing educational opportunities and green jobs by attracting companies to locate here. Colorado School of Mines' mission is achieved by the creation, integration, and exchange of knowledge in engineering, the natural sciences, the social sciences, the humanities, business and their union, to create processes and products to enhance the quality of life of the world's inhabitants. Mines is, consequently, committed to serving the people of Colorado, the nation, and the global community by promoting stewardship of the Earth, advancements in energy, and sustaining the environment.

In 2010 The Colorado School of Mines will sponsor a conference on the Sustainable Management of Mining Operations. Discussion will focus on sustainability with regard to the creation of a corporate culture, which leads to the development of sustainable business practices.

There are numerous opportunities at Red Rocks and Warren Tech to get training for green jobs. On the Red Rocks website: 222.rccc.edu/EET there are helpful videos and links describing degrees and certificates offered in Solar Photovoltaic, Solar Thermal, Wind Energy Technology, and Energy Efficiency (energy audits). Warren Tech prepares students for careers in biofuels, wind power, fuel cells, hybrid drive, and wind-smithing. Many of these jobs will pay \$18-\$22 per hour with an associate's degree.

An organization called "iCast," which stands for International Center for Appropriate & Sustainable Technology was started by CU Boulder and is located near 14th and Estes in Lakewood. This non-profit's mission is to promote sustainable development in underserved communities. Students participate in service projects which pair up with local organizations to promote sustainable living especially for disadvantaged citizens.

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) located in Jefferson County is the nation's primary laboratory for renewable energy and energy efficiency research and development (R&D). NREL's mission and strategy are focused on advancing the U.S. Department of Energy's and our nation's energy goals. The laboratory's scientists and researchers support critical market objectives to accelerate research from scientific innovations to market-viable alternative energy solutions. NREL has also partnered with CU, CSM, CSU and XCEL in bringing research to fruition for the business community.

4. Rooney Valley Development

An Intergovernmental Agreement between Lakewood and the City of Morrison guides development of the valley and control of the area along C470 from West Alameda Avenue to Morrison Road. The Rooney Valley Association was created in the spring of 2009 as a public-private partnership formed and managed by the West Chamber to promote the development of the area. The membership includes Bandimere Raceways, the Solterra residential area, Colorado Mills, etc. See www.rooneyvalleycolorado.org for the complete list of members and for more information.

Moving the National Western Stock Show complex, as well as the Jefferson County Fairgrounds, to the valley were discussed by Lakewood's Director of Planning and stock show officials, according to an article by Charley Able in www.lakewoodedge.com on May 14, 2009. Adam Paul on the Lakewood City Council stated in October that there are no further developments, and he thinks it is not too likely to happen.

5. The Beltway

The history of metro Denver's beltway dates back to the 1960's when an urban beltway was initiated by the Colorado Department of Transportation (CDOT) to serve the southwest quadrant of the metro area. The highway ultimately became C-470.

1968 I-470 linking I-70 to I-25 through the developing southwest metro area is approved by the Federal Highway Administration.

1975 Governor Richard Lamm orders a halt to all work on I-470 delivering on his 1974 campaign promise to "drive a silver stake" through the project.

1980 Construction of Colorado State Highway C-470 is begun.

1985 E-470 Authority is formed by intergovernmental agreement between Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties; the City of Aurora joins shortly thereafter.

1987 The Colorado Legislature passes, and Governor Roy Romer signs a law allowing local governments to form public highway authorities, pseudo-public entities that could condemn land, issue bonds and build roads – either by toll or by creating special taxing districts.

1988 W-470 Authority, seeking to complete the northwest quadrant of the metro beltway, is created by intergovernmental agreement between Adams and Jefferson counties and the cities of Arvada, Broomfield, Golden, Lafayette, Louisville, Superior and Westminster. E-470 Authority becomes the E-470 Public Highway Authority; construction of phase one of tollway commences, from I-25 to Parker Rd. The southern suburbs voters passed a \$10 per year vehicle registration fee to fund the 12-year expansion of the E-470 tollway.

1989 Voters in Jefferson, Boulder and Adams County defeat a vehicle registration tax.

1990 C-470 construction is completed.

1991 First five miles of phase one of E-470 opens connecting I-25 to Parker Rd.

1992 The W-470 Authority suspends operations after being unable to obtain working capital or long term financing.

1999 Plans for new northwest metro public highway authority are announced. The Northwest Parkway Authority includes Broomfield, Lafayette and Weld County; the Authority succeeds the Northwest Parkway Non-Profit Corp., largely supported by the City of Broomfield. They sell \$416 million in bonds to investors hoping for a quick return.

2000 The Northwest Parkway Public Highway Authority (PHA) constructs the first nine miles of the northwest section of the beltway. C-470 also is extended north from I-70 to 6th Ave. The NW Quadrant Feasibility Study recommends NO Beltway, and instead recommends improving existing roads.

5. The Beltway (continued)

2002 Arvada and Jefferson County create the Jefferson Parkway Authority to revive the initiative to complete the metro beltway.

2003 Northwest Parkway opens; construction of E-470 completed joining SH85 to I-25 and linking with the Northwest Parkway. Traffic projections were 30,000 per day, but only 7,500 vehicles a day used the tollway. The shortfall is blamed on 9/11 and a slowdown in residential development on one hand and as a misconceived project from the start on the other hand. Arvada, Broomfield and Jefferson County initiated a local effort to complete the beltway's remaining 20 miles but postponed that effort at CDOT's request. CDOT then initiates the Northwest corridor Study.

2006 When Northwest Parkway bonds fall to "junk" status, the completed tollway is leased to a Portuguese/Brazilian consortium for 99 years.

2007 Brisa Auto-Estradas, which operates tollways across Europe and Brazil, and the Northwest Parkway Public Highway Authority, form the Northwest Parkway, LLC, which assumes operation of the Northwest Parkway.

2008 Flyover at the I-70 interchange opens and forms direct connection for northbound E-470 to westbound I-70 traffic.

2009 Colorado Department of Transportation determines that the Northwest Parkway is not feasible or necessary. Jefferson County Commissioners, Arvada and Broomfield form a new Public Highway Authority to find a private company to build and run the tollway. Golden and Boulder present a plan to improve existing highways instead of building the tollway.

6. St. Anthony Hospital

The new St. Anthony's in Lakewood is addressing sustainable development in four areas: Water Efficiency, Energy & Atmosphere, Indoor Environmental Quality, and Sustainable Sites. The goal is to reduce water usage by 20% by using new technologies and water-saving outdoor landscaping. The use of energy-saving lighting and management will reduce the carbon output, but also enhance the overall environment with natural lighting. Attention to indoor air quality has brought about the use of low-emitting paints/coating, adhesives/sealants, and low-emitting materials and carpet systems. The idea of sustainable sites is incorporated into the Brownfield Redevelopment, public transportation, and reducing light pollution.

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