



Importance:

The development of the Lowry Bombing Range, Colorado State Land Board (SLB) property in Arapahoe County, and its effect on the region have been the subject of intense discussion at DRCOG for a number of years. In October 2007, the DRCOG Board decided to allocate 5.16 square miles of Urban Growth Boundary/Area to this property in the Metro Vision 2035 Plan.

Background//Key Issues:

The issue of the SLB property, which totals 40 square miles, was first raised as a part of the adoption of Metro Vision 2030. At that time, the DRCOG Board recommended providing more in-depth information about the development and folding it into the 2035 update of Metro Vision. The Board had concerns about the potential growth on the site, the associated infrastructure investment needed to support it, and the possibilities of long-term open space preservation.

Since 2005, various presentations have been made before the DRCOG Board in an attempt to address many questions about the development. The presentations addressed water supply, wastewater services, and transportation infrastructure.

In December 2006, the SLB selected two master developers for the Lowry Range. One developer will be in charge of urban development for the 5.16 square miles north of Quincy Avenue, while the other developer proposes open space preservation uses for 26 of the remaining 35 square miles. The SLB signed a contract with the developer of the proposed urban portion of the Lowry Range in June 2007. Twenty-six square miles is slated to be retained in perpetuity as a conservation area under the guidance of the Arapahoe Grasslands Conservation Team. This consortium includes Arapahoe County Open Space, the City of Aurora Parks and Open Space, The Trust for Public Land, The Nature Conservancy, and the Colorado Department of Military and Veterans Affairs. The group is working to secure the long-term conservation of this land through a variety of methods, including easements or outright purchase of property for open space. No decision has been made on the remaining nine square miles but it is anticipated that this land will be used for development of water resources and reservoir sites.

Did You Know?
The total area of the
Lowry Range is
approximately 40
square miles.

Issues Paper

The Lowry Range and the State Land Board Proposal

Status (as of August 2010):

In October 2007, as part of the Metro Vision 2035 plan update, the DRCOG Board voted to allocate the UGB/A for the Lowry Range development. Before this action, the Board engaged in considerable discussion and debate about the merits of allocating UGB/A to this part of the region. Some Board members believed that the Lowry Range development would negatively affect adjacent jurisdictions and/or that the development would siphon off scarce transportation dollars. Other Board members believed that DRCOG, as the regional planning agency, did not have a role to encourage or discourage urban development in specific locations.

The Board's decision to allocate the 5.16 square miles of UGB/A to the Lowry Range was contingent upon the Arapahoe Grasslands Conservation Team being successful in arranging long-term conservation for the balance of the property and executing its contract with the SLB. These negotiations are currently in progress.

In January 2009, the developer for the proposed urban portion of the Lowry Range announced official termination of its agreement with the SLB. Despite this termination, the SLB states that it "...remains completely committed to its previously adopted three-part vision for the Lowry Range parcel, including expansive conservation, sustainable development, and development of water resources..."

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