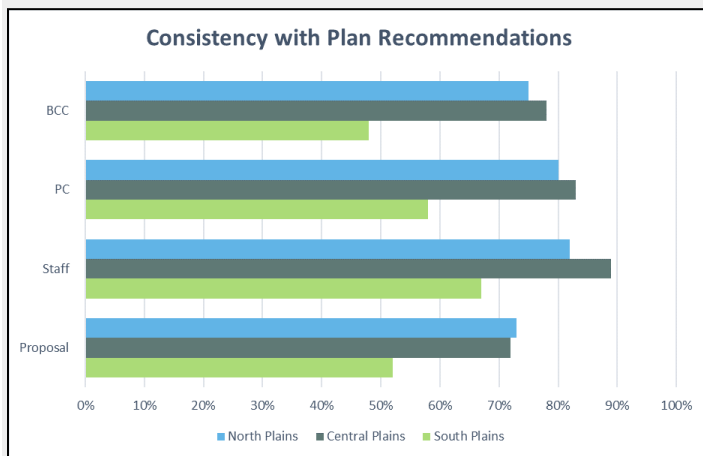


Jefferson County's Plan to Plan



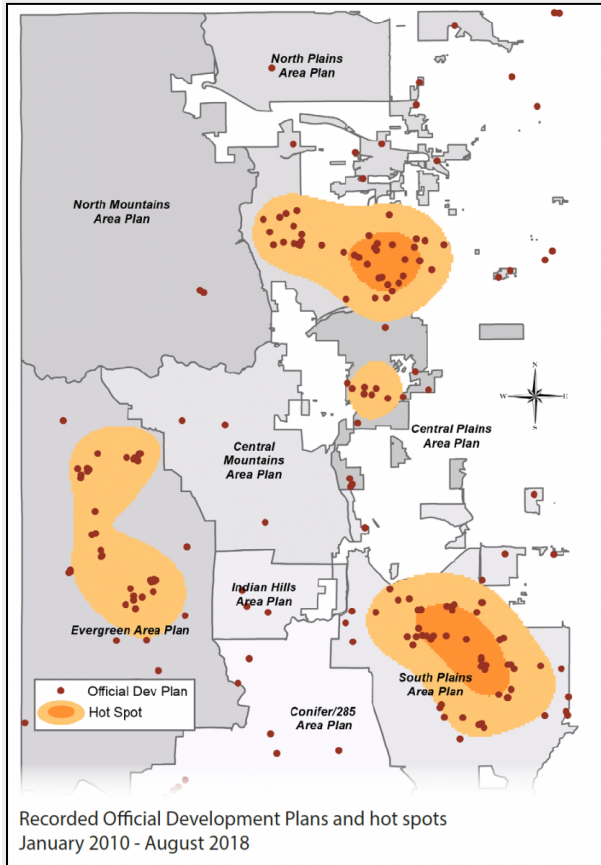
by Heather Gutherless, AICP



The Master Plan update project included analysis of five factors: areas of development pressure, community responses, age of area plan, upcoming projects by other agencies, and consistency of development proposals with the plan's recommendations. This project also involved collaboration of several county divisions.

Results of this analysis supported the update of two general elements of the plan, water and mixed use, based on community responses and opportunities for collaboration with other upcoming projects. After those updates, the South Plains area plan will be updated because it is the oldest, facing the most development pressure and has development proposals least consistent with the plan recommendations.

This project was unique to the County because of the variety of factors used to determine what portion of the plan needed to be updated. In the recent past, the county mainly determined plan updates simply by the age of the plan, highest number of development cases, or most vocal community members. This project also included input from various agencies, consistency of development proposals with plan recommendations, and broader public outreach. Over 1400 people gave feedback either through the meetings or survey. Four public meetings were designed to appeal to citizens by involving a variety of County divisions. Citizens could get answers to questions related to planning, engineering, zoning enforcement, open space, drainage, and roads because subject experts from the Planning & Zoning, Open Space and Transportation & Engineering Divisions were available at each meeting.



The county also used technology to guide the outcomes by using ArcGIS and ArcGIS Story Map. ArcGIS was used to determine “hot spots” for development in the county. ArcGIS Story Map interactively showed current projects juxtaposed with the current plan’s land use recommendations to show how they did or did not comply.

In order to promote both the process and the outcome, the Jefferson County Planning & Zoning Division worked closely with the county’s Public Affairs team. Public Affairs was able to publicize the project, community meetings and survey through various social media outlets and this will be one of the pilot projects for a new on-line platform to promote community education and engagement.

Many decision-makers look for data to make decisions about how to allocate their resources. This project gave decision-makers needed data by having information such as development hot spots and age of plans, along with human perception that was quantified through meeting and survey results. This project was both economical and provided solid information to determine what portion of the Comprehensive Master Plan to update.

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