

Planning board seeks input on N.C. 16, 150 growth

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DENVER – The Lincoln County Planning Board is seeking community input for the future development of N.C. 16 and N.C. 150 interchange as it is spearheading a planning initiative for county commissioners.

County officials are kicking off a future development plan with a public meeting at 6 p.m. July 23 at Lebanon United Methodist Church, 5033 Lebanon Road.

It's an opportunity for residents to express their thoughts, ideas and concerns and to let officials share their ideas, County Planning Director Andrew Bryant said, adding that people may have information the county is not aware of and vice versa.

"It's very introductory, so we have no assumptions going into this," he said.

Catawba County is installing sewer lines into the area to prepare it for development, and Crosland Southeast has already received approval from Catawba County for its development plans. Lincoln County commissioners want feedback from property owners and interested citizens to help guide the development on the Lincoln County side of the interchange, according to a planning board press release.

"We want to make sure we do what the community wants," Chairman Alex Patton told the Denver Weekly. "We want their input. We want them to be comfortable with what we're doing and it be their vision for the future, not ours."

Patton said development of the interchange is important for the area because it could be a "hub for retail and business."

"They could pull from a pretty big area," he said, commenting on lack of nearby large retail operations. "It could draw more business. It could draw housing developments."

Bryant said the plan will help the county be prepared for growth when development opportunities arise.

"We want to take this chance as a county to help guide and determine what kind of growth is appropriate so that when somebody does come with a proposal, we can know we've taken the time to study its impacts and what's best suited for that area," he said.

After the initial meeting, the planning board will present a consolidated report to the commissioners at its August meeting, pinpoint issues on a map then bring the suggestions back to the community for more feedback, Bryant said.

"Pending on how well that goes will determine whether we go back for another round of edits and revisions or whether we took it to the board of commissioners," he said.

A webpage dedicated to the development plan will be created to keep citizens informed throughout the nine-month process.

To see the county's press release regarding the community meeting, visit <http://bit.ly/11WPEVQ>.

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