

# FORT COLLINS COLORADOAN

SUNDAY  
OCTOBER 14, 2007

## THE FORECAST

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snowflakes above 6,000 feet

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Low tonight: 42

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# Entrance to city changing

## Major projects at Harmony Road, I-25 will reshape regional landscape

BY PAT FERRIER  
PatFerrier@coloradoan.com

Three big projects, all with grand plans to bring jobs, housing and entertainment to the region, have the potential to dramatically change the face of Northern Colorado within the next 10 years.

Two of the projects, about a mile from each other, promise to transform Fort Collins' gateway at Interstate 25 and Harmony Road.

The third, 10 miles down the road at I-25 and U.S. Highway 34, solidifies that interchange as a regional hub.

All three — Grand Station, H25 and Presidio — promote the "new urbanist" concepts of living, working and playing in the same areas.

But can all three projects from established developers with established track records get built, survive

and thrive amid the competition? And how much will they change the region's landscape?

Former Fort Collins planning director Les Kaplan said his Presidio project — 85 acres on Harmony Road, a mile west of I-25 — is infill

development surrounded by the highest employment base in Fort Collins. He believes it is ripe for high-end office space, a hotel/conference center, housing and some retail.

Jay Stoner of Stoner Homes has visions of transforming

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Harmony's new skyline

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Project information

See HARMONY/Page A2

## COMPOSTING RESOURCES SCARCE



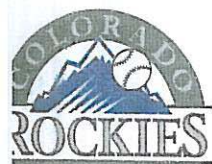
Rich Abrahamson/The Coloradoan

Game personnel exit through the south tunnel Sunday at Hughes Stadium during a rain storm that kept the Colorado State vs. Air

Indoleezza  
concerned

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ATION & WORLD /  
GE A17



Rockies return  
work tonight

Colorado, up 2-0, and  
zona resume the  
National League  
Championship Series.

SPORTS / PAGE C1



## On the Internet

- > www.presidiofc.com
- > www.grandstationatcenterra.com
- > www.stonerco.com
- > www.mavd.com

## About the projects

### Grand Station

- > **Developer:** McWhinney
- > **Where:** East of Promenade Shops at Centerra on I-25/U.S. 34
- > **Size:** 60 acres (phase I)
- > **Use:** Mixed use, including housing, retail, restaurants, hotel and entertainment
- > **Status:** Loveland City Council to discuss approval Oct. 23.

### I25

- > **Developer:** Jay Stoner
- > **Where:** Southwest corner of I-25 and Harmony Road
- > **Size:** 300 acres
- > **Use:** Mixed use, including housing, retail, restaurant, hotel and entertainment
- > **Status:** Working on permits for earth moving

### Presidio

- > **Developer:** Les Kaplan
- > **Where:** Southeast corner of Harmony Road and Lady Moon Drive, 1 mile west of I-25
- > **Size:** 85 acres
- > **Use:** Mixed use, including housing, office, some retail, hotel and restaurant
- > **Status:** Infrastructure in place; formal plans not submitted

# Harmony

Continued from Page A1

abandoned gravel pits into an \$800 million development where residents can live, work and play within one-quarter of a mile. The project has yet to be named but for planning purposes, he's calling it H25.

He sees the incorporation of water into his project as a major selling point.

And McWhinney's Grand Station in Loveland, slated for a fall 2009 opening, includes three hotels, 150 residential units, office space, conference center and entertainment so residents can live their lives within the development.

Stoner, who was unavailable for comment this week, previously said H25 is complementary to Grand Station rather than "one versus the other."

H25 "is at the gateway to the best city in the nation," Stoner said. "Secondly, we have an opportunity to do something extraordinarily interesting with water," which flows through the property.

Stoner envisions riverfront dining, gondola rides through a mile-long waterway and biking along a harbor fed by the Poudre River.

All three projects can survive and thrive over time, said McWhinney President and CEO Chad McWhinney, who expects final approval for Grand Station at the Loveland City Council's Oct. 23 meeting.

McWhinney complimented Stoner and Kaplan for their plans.



Sherri Barber/The Coloradoan

Kevin Brinkman, of Brinkman Partners, and developer Les Kaplan, stand on the property they will develop into Presidio which will include high-end office space, a hotel/conference center, housing and some retail.

mixed use," McWhinney said. "At the end of the day, we are in an economy that is based on experience; all of us developers are really trying to integrate uses. It's pretty easy to subdivide land and

put up buildings, but when you start integrating uses, you start creating experiences.

"I compliment both those guys. They're thinking through their plans as are we. It creates a

better environment for all of Northern Colorado."

But Kaplan sees Grand Station as trying to grow outside its native region.

"Our employment base is there (at the Presidio development) and there's potential for it to evolve," he said. "The seeds are in place. We're not looking to see if we can grow an exotic plant."

Presidio will allow Fort Collins "to reclaim its position as a region hub," Kaplan said.

It's a position that has slipped recently as development flowed south to McWhinney's Centerra and the I-25/U.S. 34 interchange.

"This will be an engine itself," Kaplan said. "It finally puts Fort Collins back on the map."

If the three projects continue as planned, I-25 and Harmony Road could be unrecognizable 15 years from now.

'The impact may be more from what is surrounding Fort Collins than in Fort Collins.'

Cameron Gloss,  
city planning  
director

"The impact may be more from what is surrounding Fort Collins than in Fort Collins," said Cameron Gloss, city planning director. "Think of Timnath, east of I-25. With a Wal-Mart Supercenter there and other development we're hearing about, that may have a more profound impact on the landscape than these projects."

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# Plan would change face of city gateway



Courtesy of Vaught Frye Architects

A rendering of the proposed Main Street through Presidio as it would be seen from Lady Moon Drive. Presidio, an 85-acre mixed-use development along Harmony Road, will change the Fort Collins skyline visible from Interstate 25.

## Developer: Project to put Fort Collins back on map

BY PAT FERRIER

PatFerrier@coloradoan.com

Les Kaplan is a patient man.

Eight years ago, the Fort Collins developer quietly began amassing land along Harmony Road, one piece at a time.

Today, the city's former planning director has 85 acres, a ridgeline and a plan that will radically alter the city's skyline at Interstate 25 and Harmony Road. It's a plan that he says will "finally put Fort Collins back on the map."

Coordinating his development efforts with the owner of

110 adjacent acres

— Michigan-based

MAV Development

— the two projects

can accommodate

more than 2.7 million

square feet of commercial

development on both

sides of Lady Moon

Drive, the north/south road that runs

between the two properties across from

Hewlett-Packard.

Kaplan's preliminary drawings for Presidio — Spanish for fort — show tree-lined streets, a plaza with terrazzo tile and fountain, mountain vistas, offices, retail, multifamily homes and a hotel/conference center perched on the Poudre River and visible from I-25.

"Presidio is where old world charm

meets urban energy," Kaplan said.

He hates the "live, work and play"

buzzwords so often bandied about now

with mixed-use projects such as his.

Rather, he considers Presidio a

lifestyle/business park that creates a

"sense of community and place" in

southeast Fort Collins.

MAVD's Harmony Technology Park

will be primarily office, commercial

and technology space, what the city

calls an employment zone.

"The primary purpose of the district

is to provide employment opportunities

in an office park format or light

manufacturing" and support

for those employment centers, such

as banks, convenience stores,

restaurants, etc., said Cameron

Gloss, city planning and zoning director.

"It's the foundation of the Harmony

Corridor Plan," he said.

With the projects could come

hundreds of jobs, said Rob

Aldrich, president of MAVD,

which plans to break ground

next year on an 80,000-square-

foot spec building.

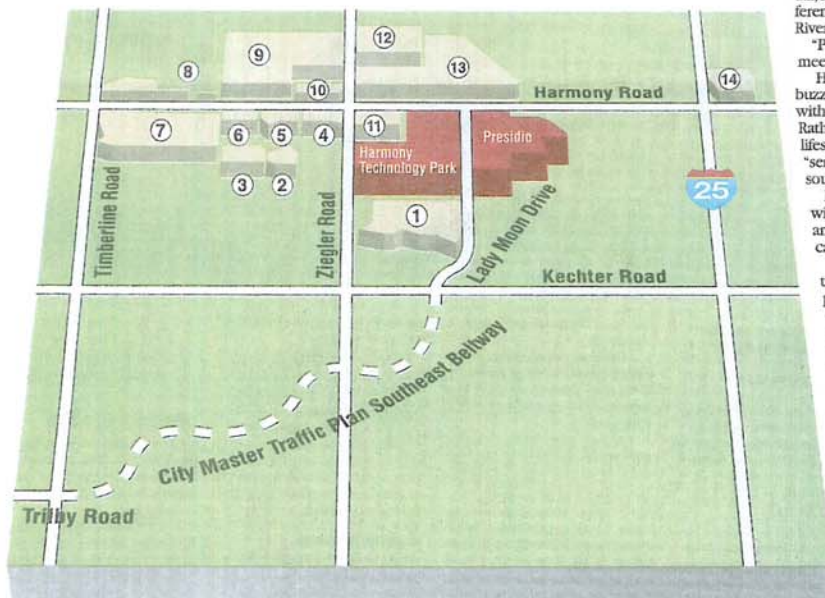
### A ways to go

About \$5 million in infrastructure costs — including roads,

### New faces of Harmony Road

200 acres of land across from Hewlett-Packard on Harmony Road are being developed in conjunction with each other. When built, Presidio and the Harmony Technology Park will be home to offices, retail, a hotel/conference center and multifamily homes. The projects on the east and west corners of Lady Moon Drive will change the face of Harmony Road and the city's skyline.

1. Fossil Ridge High School; 2. Preston Junior High School; 3. Traut Elementary School; 4. Harmony One; 5. Preston Center; 6. Retail; 7. Poudre Valley Health System; 8. Harmony School Shops; 9. Front Range Village; 10. AMD; 11. Intel; 12. Avago; 13. Hewlett-Packard; 14. Wal-Mart Super Center



Jason Melton/The Coloradoan

Source: Presidio

See GATEWAY/Page A14

### Presidio by the numbers

- > 85 acres
- > 80,000 square feet of banking, shopping and dining
- > 450 multifamily residential units in 17 different buildings
- > 750,000 square feet of Class A office space in about 25 different buildings
- > 40,000-square-foot wellness complex
- > 825 feet of frontage on Harmony Road
- > 8 years that project has been in the works
- > 1 hotel/conference center; contract pending with hotel developer Lamont Cos., which expects to build a 135-room Holiday Inn Express.

### MAVD by the numbers

- > \$14 million to buy land
- > 110 acres
- > 8 months since property was purchased

Source: Les Kaplan and MAVD

### On the internet

www.presidiofc.com

### About the area

- > 30,000 employees within 7 miles
- > 97,000: Average household income within 3 miles of project
- > Possible 4,600 total vehicles added to Harmony Road, according to earlier study for HP project.
- > 32,800: Existing traffic counts at intersection of Harmony and Ziegler roads
- > 35,650: Existing traffic between Interstate 25 and Strauss Cabin Road east of Lady Moon Drive

Source: Ward Stanford, city's traffic systems engineer

## What people are saying about Presidio

Fort Collins is reclaiming its position as a regional hub. This is an infill development in Fort Collins and will be an engine in itself and finally put Fort Collins back on the map. The emergence of Presidio is a long-awaited story." — Les Kaplan, Presidio



If you look right now at that's under construction in Timberline and Ziegler, Fort Range Plaza, Harmony School Shops, office building, hotel, and put that all together, it's approaching 2 million square feet. A quick look at H25 (Jay Stoner's project on Harmony and I-25), Presidio and MAVD collectively could far exceed the size of I-25." — Cameron Gloss, city planner



One of the special things about that area is the view of the foothills and the mountains. We lose that, we will be losing an important piece of the Harmony Corridor Plan's intent to the gateway." — Glen Colton, community sustainability activist



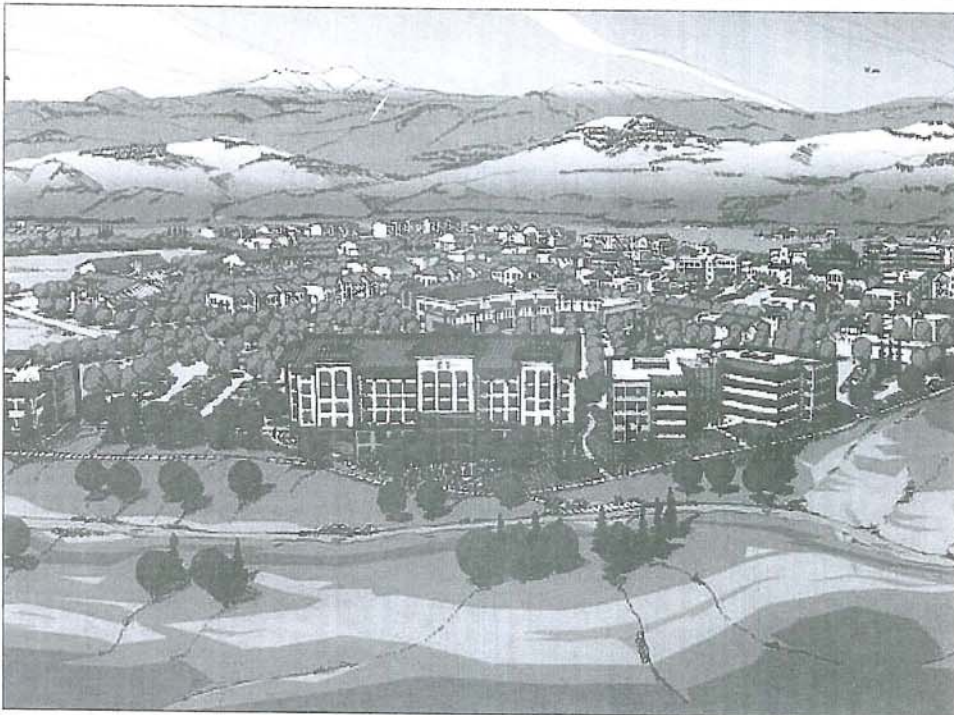
Harmony is without question the premier employment corridor in Fort Collins. One's great access to I-25 and you can't beat the neighbors. Hewlett Packard, Intel, etc." — Bob Aldrich, MAVD



The beauty of land-use development is that you set the vision early to allow for flexibility over time... the underlying vision will act as the glue and keep everything together." — David McWhinney, Centerra



We got a lot of confidence that if it progresses, it will progress in a way that Fort Collins. We are very sensitive to that area along Harmony Road as we transition out toward I-25... There will be change, but I think we manage that well in Fort Collins." — Doug Hutchinson, Fort Collins mayor



A rendering of the Fort Collins skyline when Presidio, a mixed-use project developed by Les Kaplan, is built.

Courtesy of Vaughn Frye Architects

## Gateway

Continued from Page A13

systems — are already making quick development possible. But countless reviews and approvals are still needed before buildings start popping from the ground on either side of Lady Moon, Gloss said.

The Harmony Corridor Plan needs tweaking to clarify uses — including the ability to combine uses in the same building — and discussions need to be had about the city's skyline and southern gateway that will be forever altered, he said.

"We will be evaluating what are the key elements that need to be preserved for an appropriate entry to the community," Gloss said.

The City Council will get involved in that discussion Dec. 11 when it talks about its vision for the city's gateway, Gloss said. Former planning board member Glen Colton said protecting the view shed is his primary concern about the project.

"We all understand this area is going to change and will have quite a bit of employment... but the change should be consistent with the Harmony Corridor Plan and should fit into the surrounding landscape and make sure the scenic view shed is protected."

The hotel, now planned at five stories, will be the highest building visible from I-25. "That seems kind of high to me," Colton said. "I hope (the city) looks closely at that. One of the special things about that (area) is the view of the foothills and the mountains. If we lose that, we will be losing an important piece of the Harmony Corridor Plan's intent and the gateway."

Colton said the plan may be good for the developer, but "it's bad for the community... and goes against the intent of the Harmony Corridor Plan." Kaplan could correct that by decreasing the height of the hotel and changing the layout of the plan

to make buildings less visible from I-25.

"I'm sure people would rather have a view of Longs Peak than a five-story hotel and four-story office buildings," Colton said.

Lifelong Fort Collins resident Charla Farmer grew up on Harmony Road, on farms owned by her father and grandfather — land now home to Fossil Ridge High School — and what will soon become Presidio and Harmony Technology Park.

Farmer, nostalgic for the old farms, said development on the land "makes me sad that things have to change and develop, but that's the way it is."

She remembers sheep coming in on the railroad near Harmony School and herding them down to the farm. It's one of her fondest memories of her grandfather Samuel "Old Sam" Webster, who owned upward of 30 farms in Larimer County.

"I don't like it; I wish it was back to farmland; it was the best in Larimer County. But I can't do anything about growth," she said.

She likes the look of Harmony Road as an access to Fort Collins more than Prospect Road or Mulberry Street.

Berms built around HP lessen its visual impact from the road, she said, "and that looks nice." If growth is coming, she said she hopes it looks nice. "I guess you can make houses or businesses look nice."

Insurance agent Dave Lawser, who will move into new offices at the corner of Ziegler and Harmony roads, said Harmony Road is eventually going to grow out to and across Interstate 25. His concern is not about when it will come, but how it will come.

"I want to make sure it's quality development rather than quantity... I'm for reasonable, common-sense growth."

Council members won't comment on either project in case they come before council, said Mayor Doug Hutchinson and Councilman Kelly Ollson.

Aldrich said MAVD expects to

submit plans to the city within the next 60 days.

Kaplan has tentative agreements from Lamont Cos. for a 135-room hotel — most likely a Holiday Inn Express — with a 10,000- to 15,000-square-foot conference center and Miramonte Sports Center for a wellness center that will tie into other health and medical facilities on Harmony Road.

### A perfect storm

In a sense, development at Lady Moon and Harmony Road comes amid a perfect storm of circumstance: Kaplan patiently biding his time, piecing together parcels; MAVD scouring the country for the right development site; and HP cutting its losses.

In its heyday, Hewlett-Packard jealously guarded its 110 acres across from its Harmony plant for future expansion, sitting on it for more than a decade and essentially keeping the land off the city's inventory of available development land.

HP planned to start construction on the site in 1999 to consolidate its Loveland, Fort Collins and Greeley facilities but pulled the plug after its merger with Compaq.

Since then, a downturn in the high-tech market has left HP with little need for expansion land.

Enter Ann Arbor, Mich.-based MAVD, which bought the property in February for \$14 million.

MAVD, looking for development opportunities across the country, wanted a college town of a certain size and with certain employment characteristics. It came up with three locations along the Fort Range: Fort Collins, Colorado Springs and Boulder.

"We were impressed with Fort Collins and the cooperation that we've seen from the city in terms of helping us make this project a success," Aldrich said.

Southeast of HP individual property owners started selling out to Kaplan — 10 property owners in all, including two farms. That's 200 acres on Har-

mony Road that up until six months ago were not considered" on the city's inventory of developable property, Kaplan said.

### Harmony as a hub

The combination of Kaplan and MAVD's land provides newfound opportunities for businesses interested in Fort Collins, Kaplan said.

"If a major company wanted to come here five years ago, where would they go?" he said. "There was nothing on Harmony that was 50 acres."

HP had its land locked up. East of that, parcels were in fragmented ownership, until Kaplan bought the 10 properties.

"There was no opportunity in terms of geography in Fort Collins" for companies wanting easy access to I-25, Presidio and Harmony Technology Park are just less than a mile from I-25.

Even companies such as Intel, "which were wined and dined" by other developers outside Fort Collins, saw the value in Harmony Road, choosing to move into the former Celestica building at Harmony and Ziegler roads, because there was no other land available, Kaplan said.

Intel's first choice in Northern Colorado was Fort Collins and its first choice in Fort Collins was Harmony Road, Kaplan said. "It is the bulls-eye on the Northern Colorado dart board," Kaplan said.

The projects, which just started advertising last week, are seeing strong interest, said Kevin Brinkman of Brinkman Partners, Kaplan's marketing partner for Presidio.

While there will be some retail, Presidio "is not intended to compete with regional or community shopping centers," said David Miller, also of Brinkman Partners.

Harmony Technology Park has contracts signed for five acres and is "close to completing" contracts for a 10- and 20-acre parcel in addition to the 80,000-square-foot spec building MAVD plans to build, Aldrich

said. "We're excited about it. Harmony is without question the premier employment corridor in Fort Collins, with great access to I-25, and you can't beat our neighbors: HP, Intel and AMD," he said.

Both developers expect build-out will take several years and depend on market demand.

"If we build out 1 million square feet of office space, probably a 10-year absorption rate is too short... but the number of developable sites in Fort Collins for this type of use is very limited," Aldrich said, meaning absorption rates could be faster.

Office vacancy rates in the city have dropped 3 percent in the past year, but a plethora of Class A space is in the building pipeline, including a five-story building just west of Lady Moon Drive being developed by Everitt Cos. and Brinkman Construction, a subsidiary of Brinkman Partners.

More Class A space on I-25 at Crossroads Boulevard and U.S. Highway 34 threatens to glut the market with high-end office space.

But Aldrich has confidence in his site. "Since we've intensively been looking in Fort Collins, there is no land on Harmony. That gives us confidence" the demand is there, he said.

### Cooperative effort

While Presidio and Harmony Technology Park are separate projects, they are being developed cooperatively so each knows what the other is doing. It's an arrangement that Kaplan calls "unprecedented" in Fort Collins.

"We're going to be neighbors for a long time," Aldrich said. "It just makes sense for us to be aware of what each other is doing. We will be calling each other for various things when we're at different points in development. There has to be continued dialogue, as much as we can plan today about what we think is going to happen there, but we don't know."