

Behind The City Scene



**Charles "Charlie"
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I want to make it very clear that this column is neither an overt or subliminal comment on the proposed Proposition 112 which deals with setbacks for oil and gas operations from various land uses. In Ward 4 we deal daily with a panoply of challenges including crime, traffic, infill dense development, and roads. Fortunately we will not be impacted by oil and gas extraction. On the other hand the north and eastern portions of the City are a battleground between land developers and Oil and Gas companies. The fight is over access to the underground Niobrara shale formation which is situated in the Denver-Julesburg Basin. I am going to assume none of us were residents of Ward 4 when it was formed between 82 and 87 million years ago.

Nevertheless, now new fracturing methods are allowing the economical access to the mineral resources in this area of Aurora. It is estimated that in the near future the Niobrara field will be as productive as the Bakker formation in North Dakota. The City Council is at ground zero on the eve of a big expansion of drilling activity. On the surface the impacted area is generally south of DIA and north of I-470 along E-470. But for the oil and gas activity this would be prime real estate in the DIA environs.

The new Gaylord hotel and conference center is situated in this area. It has always been anticipated that ancillary high quality development would soon surround the Gaylord complex. Obviously many people do not want to live in close proximity to Oil and Gas extraction activity. This industry is well funded and powerful. The land development community also has considerable economic and political clout.

How we assimilate these two interests will have long term consequences for our City. This issue is the most difficult and fierce for us on City Council and will test the Council's ability to reconcile these conflicting interests.

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2018 Ward IV Town Meetings — held on the third Thursday of each month from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at EcoTech Institute, 1400 S. Abilene St., unless otherwise noted.