

# Anadarko's plans will dramatically change Dacono's future



Photo by Helen H. Richardson/The Denver Post

DACONO, CO – JUNE 7: A roundabout on Flying Circle Blvd was constructed to go around an oil derrick that sits inside a housing development on June 7, 2017 in Dacono, Colorado. Gas and oil development, exploration and fracking operations are colliding more and more with subdivision and housing developments as the front range continues to grow.

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By **A.J. EUCKERT** | Guest Commentary

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Given the choice, most Colorado cities wouldn't choose to eliminate future housing stock by 16 percent. You'd be hard-pressed to find a growing community willing to cast aside a viable economic development plan and instead, make way for a massive oil and gas operation that will generate millions of dollars for a private company. We in Dacono certainly wouldn't choose such a path, but its nonetheless where we find ourselves.

Several months ago, a routine review of new land purchases by city staff discovered Anadarko Petroleum Company's new plan for oil and gas development. It involves 500 acres of centrally located residential and commercial land in our city of just over 5,000 residents. The tracts were purchased by several limited liability companies under ambiguous trade names. After a closer look, we determined these entities were owned by Anadarko, which has its sights set on the underground petroleum riches of the Denver-Julesburg Basin.

Our city finds itself in an interesting situation in terms of growth. By most accounts, the northern Interstate 25 corridor has come of age. For sprawling metro Denver, Dacono is an attractive community with easy access and room to grow. At the same time, pump jacks, tank complexes, and gas wellheads have long been a fixture in the Dacono landscape. Having these oil and gas operations as long-time neighbors is one thing. Having new operations supplant future neighborhoods is another. Anadarko's plans dramatically change Dacono's economic development vision, one that welcomed families, neighborhoods and the small businesses that support them.

Last fall, we asked to sit down with Anadarko to get an accurate picture of its plans and discuss a path forward. State law doesn't give us a lot of clout, or options, in trying to lessen the impacts of oil and gas production. We're not in favor of an approach taken by some Colorado communities that involves costly, and to varying degrees unsuccessful, litigation. Rather, our goal is establishing an operating agreement. This practical approach helps us control heavy truck traffic on our roads primarily used for residential access, limit noise and odor impacts, and prompt better aesthetics around well sites — all while allowing the company to run its business.

Dacono will receive tax income from the Anadarko production, although positive revenue won't really begin to come in until 2021 and falls steadily after about eight years of production. To ensure fairness for our residents, we're also discussing impact fees that will enable us to continue to improve parks, build trail systems and add community features.

The way we see it, an operator agreement is a "new model" for co-existing with oil and gas development in Colorado. We're told Anadarko shares this view, and it's our sincere hope that it follows through. While we have little choice but to adapt to a different vision for community growth, Dacono's commitment to developing an inviting, safe and accessible community remains unchanged.

*A.J. Euckert is the City Manager of the City of Dacono, Colorado. The community is located in Weld County, 10 miles north of Denver.*

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