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Subject: Urban Research Duplexes; CPC MP 07-00061-A8MN20, CPC PUZ 20-00002, CPC PUD 20-00003

TO: Hannah Van Nimwegen

1. I have reviewed the subject notice and have numerous concerns as noted below. I would appreciate the city planners, who will hold the review on 21 May 2020, be able to address these issues and concerns at that time. This will ensure that the hearing and subsequent decisions have all the available questions and concerns from this list and others from the community addressed to their satisfaction as appropriate.
2. These concerns are specific to the current infrastructure in the area and the impact that this development may have on these areas. The following are the areas of interest:
 - a. The amount of dwellings being considered may raise the density of this area by at least 140 to 280 individuals if not more.
 1. Basics: 70 dwellings, average family size two to four; two adults and two children. Assumption the children are of teenage years and will be driving in less than three years. This may result in an increase of numerous concerns:
 - a. Concern 1: Is the design able to handle this increase in this new neighborhood parking without creating a bottleneck in emergency vehicles able to access this area?
 - i. Basis: This may result in between 140 to 250 or more in automobiles and related transportation methods. There are currently two existing designs in the area that have traffic issues; specifically, the neighborhood at the corner of Austin Bluffs and Meadow Ridge Dr (Antelope Trails). There is no available overflow parking and this restricts emergency vehicles access to this area. This may involve a life or death emergency that is unable to deliver the required services since vehicles are blocking the interior road on both sides in Antelope Trails.
 - b. Concern 2: Will the overflow result in parking problems on the boundary streets or in other neighborhoods and/or into the church parking lot?
 - i. Basis: The current large density housing at the corner of Brainard Dr and Briargate Pkwy has no overflow parking and resistant's are parking on Brainard Dr and this narrows the road that could cause accidents. Also, this could lead to multiple car break-ins since they are off the resistant housing area. This is also a fact that there is an increase in criminal activity in our area concerning car break-ins while the cars are actually in the owner's driveways. If the church lot is a designated overflow, then will the city pay for supporting the upkeep of the lot as a result of the heavier traffic load? At this time, that lot only offers a west bound access to Research Pkwy, this is problematic during church services, since members will exit west on Research Pkwy and immediately move to the far left lane to turn south onto Austin Bluffs or

do a U-turn to go east. This can only add to the traffic volume during rush hours and the probability of accidents.

- c. Concern 3: This increase in traffic volume will add to more density and issues since there are only two stop lights that permit access, both ways, onto Research Pkwy. How is the city going to provide more safe access and deal with this increase in volume? Is the city Police and Fire Departments agreed to this development? How does this impact their ability to respond effectively in the case of emergencies and related crimes?
 - i. Basis: There are two schools, a district stadium, two major churches, numerous business, and four major neighborhoods that surround this proposal that rely on these two lights. This adds to the traffic in both directions on Austin Bluffs which supports a major shopping area, YMCA, and Memorial Hospital North and access southbound to Woodmen Road. The middle school traffic is already backing up to drop off/pickup children, the high school has close to several hundred cars that use the high school lot during class and release times throughout the school day. The stadium is large enough to hold over 1000 people and associated cars since it serves more than Liberty HS for sporting events. Also, the intersection of Austin Bluffs and Research Pkwy has had numerous automobile accidents throughout the years and is increasing in volume and accidents. There has been an increase in the east and west bound Research Pkwy traffic since it has been completed all the way to Black Forest Road.

- d. Concern 4: This increase in density may cause issues in gangs, drugs, and related crimes since the proximity of the Liberty HS and the traffic, foot traffic specifically, from the surrounding neighborhoods. How is the city going to support more police presence in the area, to manage potential increase in crime and other emergencies, to ensure the safety of the area? Is District 20 ready to handle this increase in the student load from this proposal?
 - i. Basis: This proposal sits in the middle of a major foot traffic area from the neighborhood directly south of Liberty HS and Timberview MS and two neighborhoods directly west and north. The south neighborhood the children have a school crossing sign at the top of the Research Pkwy rise as it approaches Austin Bluffs that leads directly across this proposed site. Crime is on the rise in the northern areas of Colorado Springs. According to a retire CSPD officer I talked to this is not a surprise since crime follows the money and density of individuals that do not have other supporting activities will often fall victim to these elements.

- e. Concern 5: What is the market research showing is the value for this development at this time? Is the city allowing too much development that will result in an oversupply of homes and then decreasing market values?
 - i. Basis: This proposal may have assumed an economy growth that is basically now stagnate at best or going lower since this current pandemic has happened to the world economy. Now is not the time to overbuild.

- f. Concern 6: Who is the focus group for this development in terms of value and demographics; low income, high income, etc?
 - i. Basis: Development of this proposal would assume that families would want to live close to the local schools. If that is the case, this focuses on a working family. If it is for retirement living, then why buy across from the schools and district stadium and put up with all of the traffic, noise, and related problems?

- g. Concern 7: What is the established density of the surrounding neighborhoods that border this proposal; specifically south, north, and west side areas and the newer east areas across Powers and Research Pkwy.
 - i. Basis: This proposal should permit only the same level of density since the area is basically saturated with new housing developments already. Without density controls this may lead to the economic impact of oversupply. Also, reducing even further the density may lower the increased burden of the local schools that are already stretched to support the existing student population. Consider the school impacts with the pandemic issues, smaller classes, which mean more teachers and more classrooms and a tax base that is not able to support a new round of school tax levies, because of the economic loss of jobs. This may lead to lower scores and existing of the population for a better school district. It has happened. This is a simple question are we setting ourselves up to fail?

- h. Concern 8: What tax incentives have been provided to the developer and possibly to the buyers of these duplexes?
 - i. Basis: In the past, incentives have allowed an overbuilding and then a collapse of the economy often rolls right back onto the local tax base to pay for the bonds or other infrastructure improvements that were made to the area. This happened in 1990s in the El Paso County area.

- i. Concern 9: What infrastructure improvements will be required, in terms of road, utilities, schools, etc? What timeline is anticipated for start and completion of all units.
 - i. Basis: The surrounding neighborhoods should be informed on the impacts and adjustments to their daily activities in terms of closures, outages, etc.

- b. There are at least two tracts of land that are not associated with this proposal at this time, but are contained in the same overall plot. These areas are currently undeveloped and would further impact the infrastructure and property values if not taken into consideration now.
 - 1. Concern: What is the current disposition and city approvals of the adjoining areas around the church that is not part of this proposal at this time?
 - i. Basis: The proposal as is should take into account the other current or future plans for the undeveloped portions of this land tract. Without this additional information an informed and effective decision on this proposal would be lacking in value to the full community. This community of neighborhoods will be impacted by the current and future plans for this entire tract.
 - 2. Concern: There is a direct need within the current community to have a community park or support area. There is one that is directly north, but it is not local and caters to more sports activities.
 - i. Basis: Why is the city not looking to either have this plot and others donated or buy it to support a community park for families, not just sports? It sits strategically within walking distance for these four neighborhoods. Is not important to ensure a safe and comfortable environment for existing community members than to add to the congestion with additional infrastructure demands?
- c. Does the applicant need to post a security bond to ensure the development is completed? Also, has the developer secured a line of credit to actually start this development and what are the timelines with such a line of credit to start and complete the project? Finally, has the developer actually sold or have direct interest from prospective home buyers?
 - 1. Concern: Without a guaranteed bond for completion or other related instrument the developer can effectively walkway, declare bankruptcy, and leave an undeveloped property in the hands of the banks and investors empty handed. This property then becomes an eyesore on the surrounding community.
 - i. Basis: The economic environment at this time and for the near future will severely strain the banking, employment, and investment lines to the point that the more risk a developer takes could ultimately collapse as a result of a simple downturn in any portion of the local economy. Buyers are likely to stay away from large investments (homes) and others may actually be walking away from the current mortgages since unemployment is rising at an alarming rate at this time. As we know from the earlier recessions and housing collapse it takes years to recover and grow, roughly 10-12 years.
- 3. Unless there is sufficient information and clarification on this proposal to show low risk among the concerns mentioned above, it would be in the Colorado Springs Planning & Community Development Department's interest to not approve this development at this time.

Thank you for your time in reviewing these concerns.

Richard Butler