

2 PENROSE BLVD RENOVATION USE VARIANCE

Planning Commission July 9, 2025

Staff Report by Case Planner: Chris Sullivan



Quick Facts

Applicant

NES Colorado

Property Owner

El Pomar Foundation

Developer

El Pomar Foundation

Address / Location

2 Penrose Boulevard

TSN(s)

7435409002

Zoning and Overlays

Current: RE/WUI-O/HS-O/CU

Proposed: N/A

Site Area

3.24 acres

Proposed Land Use

Nonprofit Conference and
Education Center

Applicable Code

UDC

Council District

District 3

Project Summary

A Use Variance to allow a non-profit conference and education center in the R-E/WUI-O/HS-O (Residential Estate with Wildland Urban Interface and Hillside Overlays) zone district on a 3.24-acre site located at 2 Penrose Boulevard. This application is supported by a Land Use Statement.

File Number

UVAR-25-0004

Application Type

Use Variance w/ Land Use
Statement

Decision Type

Quasi-Judicial

Background

Prior Land-Use History and Applicable Actions

Action	Name	Date
Annexation	Southwest Annexation (Ord. 80-171)	October 27, 1980
Subdivision	El Pomar Subdivision No. 2	May 31, 1989
Master Plan	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
Prior Enforcement Action	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

Site History

The subject site is zoned R-E / HS-O / WUI-O / CU (Residential Estate with Hillside and Wildland Urban Interface Overlays; and a Conditional Use) The site area is 3.24 acres and has existing improvements. Those improvements include an existing 29,500 square foot building footprint formerly used as a residential memory-care facility operated by Penrose St. Francis Hospital up until 2023. The conditional use was issued to allow the memory care use as a Human

Services Establishment use on this site. This property has two existing points of access to Penrose Boulevard. Onsite parking is provided for the previous use with additional parking provided on the neighboring Penrose House property to the north.

Applicable Code

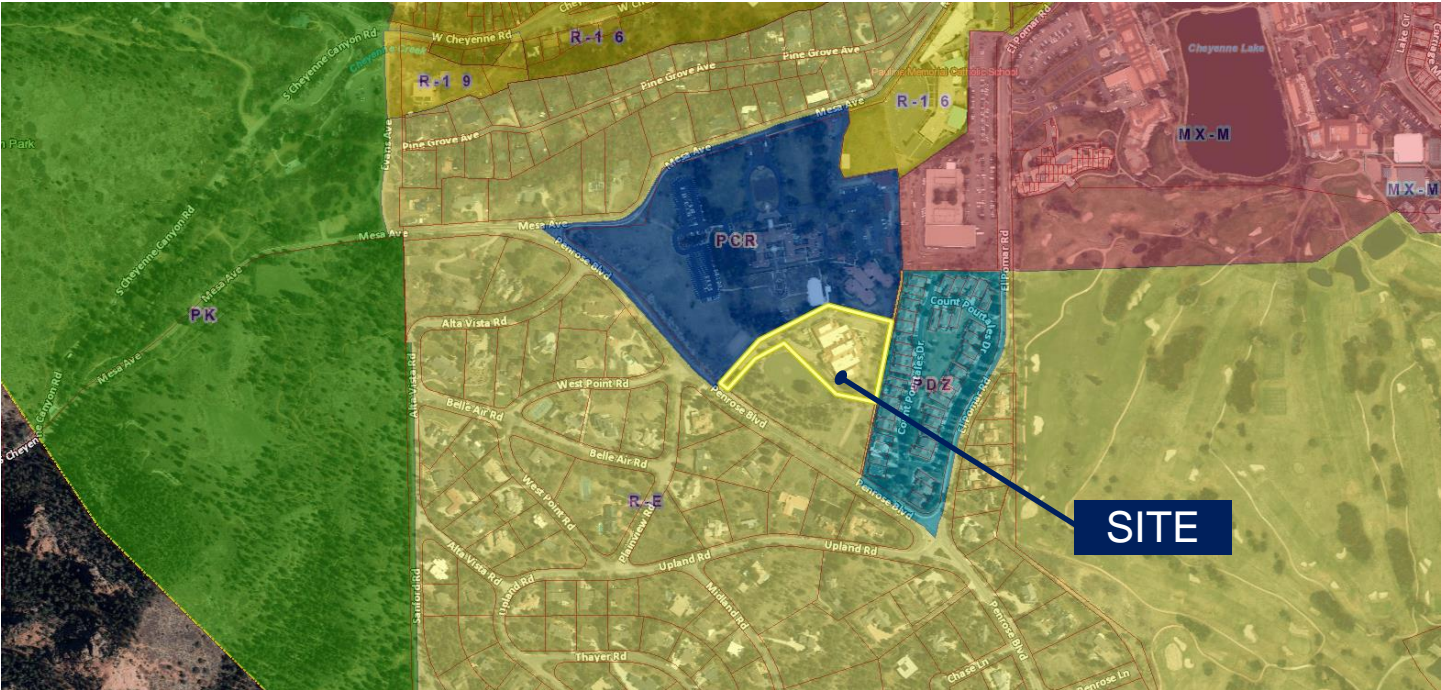
The subject application(s) were reviewed under the Unified Development Code. All subsequent references within this report that are made to “the Code” and related sections are references to the Unified Development Code.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

Adjacent Property Existing Conditions

	Zoning	Existing Use	Special Conditions
North	PCR/WUI-O/HS-O	El Pomar Foundation	Use Variance, Conditional Use
West	PCR/R-E/WUI-O/HS-O	El Pomar Foundation & Single Family Residential Detached	Use Variance, Conditional Use
South	R-E/WUI-O/HS-O	Single Family Residential Detached	N/A
East	PDZ/WUI-O/HS-O	Single-Family Residential Attached	N/A

Zoning Map



Stakeholder Involvement

Public Notice

Public Notice Occurrences (Poster / Postcards)	Initial Review / Planning Commission / City Council
Postcard Mailing Radius	1000 feet
Number of Postcards Mailed	131
Number of Comments Received	0

Public Engagement

City staff did not require a neighborhood meeting and received no comments in response to public notifications that were issued during initial review / public hearings. However, the applicant did conduct a neighborhood meeting on April 7, 2025, to inform the surrounding neighborhoods. Approximately 100 property owners were in attendance for this meeting with concerns involving how the site will be operated and impact to adjacent roadways. Per the applicant's summary, they have address this. Parking for 2 Penrose Blvd will be located at the property immediately to the northwest. It will be accessed through the existing parking lot for the Penrose House Garden Pavillion from the northwest. Only drop-offs for guests needing close access will be allowed at the west driveway. The address provided to visitors will continue to be 1661 Mesa Avenue, the main entrance for Penrose House. Car parking access for staff, caterers, and some vendors at 2 Penrose will be on the east side of the building but accessed through the main entrance. The east entrance driveway will be gated and used only sparingly for maintenance and emergency access. Fencing shall not stop access to utility lines or conflict with utility equipment and a Knox padlock will be installed on the gate to provide access for Colorado Springs Utilities.

Timeline of Review

Initial Submittal Date	04/18/2025
Number of Review Cycles	2
Item(s) Ready for Agenda	June 13, 2025

Agency Review

Traffic Impact Study

- 1- Traffic Engineering reviewed the Traffic Impact Study (TIS) and determined that the TIS was complete and provided the adequate information and analyses per the requirements of the Traffic Criteria Manual and Traffic Engineering staff.
- 2- Analysis of future traffic conditions indicates that the addition of site-generated traffic is expected to create no negative impact to traffic operations for the existing and surrounding roadway system.
- 3- Site plan shows no changes to existing access points. All existing access points meet the City Traffic Criteria Manual guidelines.

School District 12

No comments received.

Parks

Citywide Development Impact (Police & Fire) Fees will be evaluated with the conversion of use at time of development plan review.

SWENT

No comments received.

Colorado Springs Utilities

Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) comments were received and addressed during the review of this application.

Use Variance

Summary of Application

The application requests a use variance to allow El Pomar Foundation to extend uses into this property including offices, conference rooms, meeting halls, assembly spaces, administrative offices, and archive storage with supporting functions including kitchen space, a chapel, and outdoor gathering space. This space is intended for El Pomar Staff and associated nonprofit organizations (not for general public). The intent is to renovate the existing building and site for this use. The applicant's project summary (See Attachment 1 – Project Statement) and land use statement (See Attachment 2 – Land Use Statement) go into detail on the proposed function of the site.

Per City Staff review, the R-E (Residential Estate) does not allow for this type of use so the options given to the developer included request for a zoning map amendment (rezone) or a request for a use variance. The use variance was chosen as the better route to limit the types of allowable uses to those related to the El Pomar Foundation's request. Staff identified the following use categories that could potentially fit their proposal: Office, Stadium/Auditorium, Entertainment and Recreation, Indoor (See attachment 4 – Potential Use Categories). The existing development plan to the north, used for the same purposes, identifies Office as the principal use. After reviewing the above listed categories and existing adjacent development, staff found that there are elements of the proposed uses that fit, but not perfectly. Per UDC Section 7.3.105 (Unlisted Uses), the Manager has some flexibility in case of a use not fitting into a specific category to make a determination on land use designation. The applicant was then asked to provide a name and definitions that incorporated all their operations. Their request is to allow a "Non-profit Conference and Education Center" to be defined as a facility including meeting halls, assembly space, conference room, administrative offices, and archive storage with supporting kitchen space, a chapel, and outdoor gathering areas.

Application Review Criteria

UDC Code Section 7.5.527.E

Criteria for Approval: The City Council may approve the application or approve it with conditions if Council finds that the following criteria have been met;

1. That there are exceptional or extraordinary circumstances or conditions applicable to the property involved or to the intended use of the property that do not apply generally to the property or class of uses in the same zone so that a denial of the Use Variance would result in undue property loss and not solely a mere inconvenience or financial disadvantage;

Per the applicant's project statement, this site contains an existing structure that doesn't fit any of the allowable uses within the R-E (Residential Estate) zone district. With the allowance of this adaptive re-use, the existing building will be preserved and utilized for similar functions as the property to the north. As the applicant identifies, there is historic value in preserving the existing building and reuniting this site with the property to the north.

2. That the Use Variance is necessary for the preservation and enjoyment of a property right of the and if not approved, the property or structure cannot yield any beneficial use;
The existing structure was built for commercial use and implementation of the limited number of allowable uses identified in the R-E zone could require significant alteration or demolition of the existing structure.
3. That the Use Variance will not be detrimental to the public welfare or convenience nor injurious to the property or improvements of other owners of property;
This proposal would be an extension of the El Pomar Foundation's Office uses on the property to the north. The proposed enhancements to this property and structures would be a benefit to the surrounding neighborhoods.
4. That the hardship is not the result of the applicant's own actions;
The conditions on this site are existing based on the use as a Human Services Establishment. Establishing the Non-Profit Conference and Education Center will allow the property to be continued to be used with existing conditions.
5. That because of these conditions, the application of the UDC prohibition on the requested use on the subject property would effectively prohibit or unreasonably restrict the use of the property; and
As the site is currently developed, the site is limited in its usability within the Residential Estate zoning district. The proposed use will allow the property to be reincorporated into the El Pomar Campus.
6. That the Use Variance is not being requested primarily to avoid the time or expense of complying with UDC standards generally applicable to similar properties and development.
The purpose of the Residential Estate Zone District is to accommodate large lots primarily for low-density, detached single family residential uses. The site has historically not been used in that manner and the existing development creates a difficulty for using the property for uses identified in the Residential Estate Zone District.

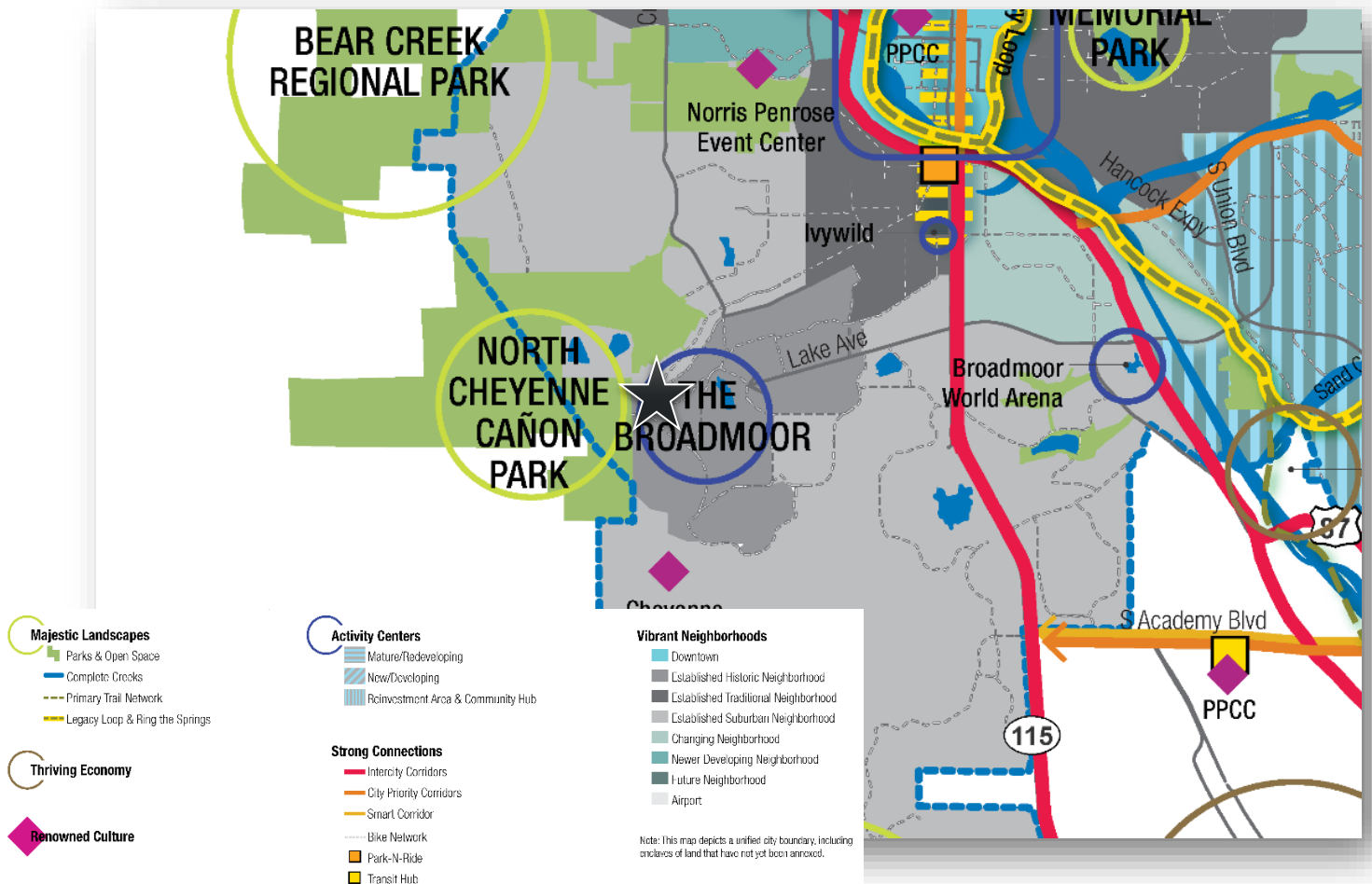
After evaluation of the 2 Penrose Blvd Renovation Use Variance, the application meets the review criteria.

Compliance with Relevant Guiding Plans and Overlays

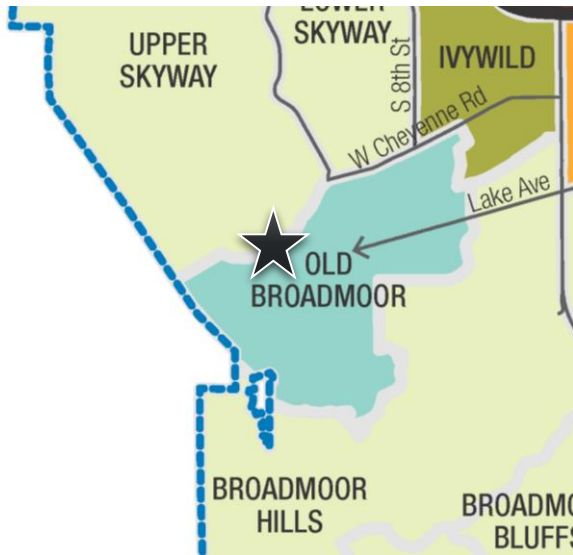
Any site improvements will be subject to Hillside and Wildland Urban Interface Overlay ordinances to be reviewed at time of development plan. No additional comments were received during this application review.

Compliance with PlanCOS

PlanCOS Vision



PlanCOS identifies this area as being predominantly in an Established Historical Neighborhood typology. These are areas mostly built out and in older parts of the City with a high value in preservation of existing design and architecture. Generally, there is more infill / redevelopment as opposed to new development in these areas. The primary goal of established neighborhoods is to recognize, support, and enhance the existing character of these neighborhoods, while supporting their ongoing investment and improved adaptation. New development and/or redevelopment should incorporate elements of the existing neighborhood. The subject property is as located within the Broadmoor Activity Center typology which are generally areas that have a concentration of employment and commercial activity supported by a mix of commercial, and residential uses. The goal of this typology is to encourage adaptation and development of these regional centers with more like and / or supporting uses to have a complete destination.



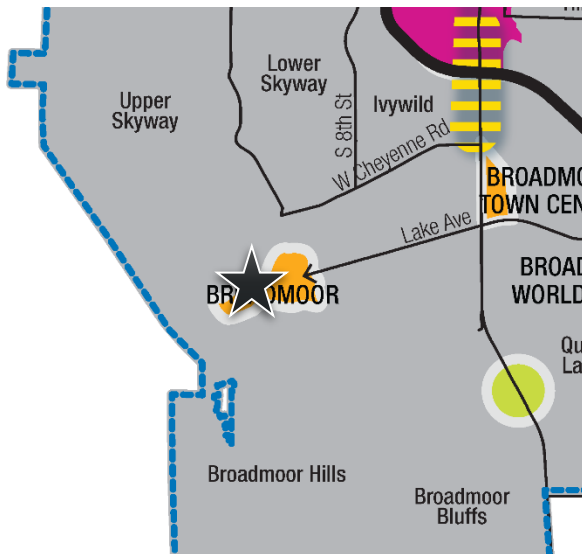
Predominant Typology

Downtown	Established Traditional Neighborhood
Newer Developing Neighborhood	Established Suburban Neighborhood
Changing Neighborhood	Airport
Established Historic Neighborhood	Future Neighborhood

Vibrant Neighborhoods

Policy VN-2.A: Promote neighborhoods that incorporate common desired neighborhood elements.

Policy VN-3.A: Preserve and enhance the physical elements that define a neighborhoods character.



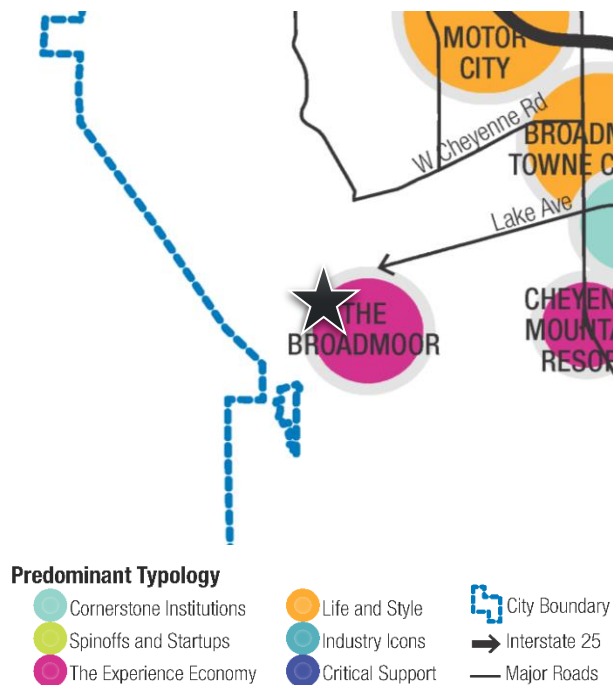
Predominant Typology

Neighborhood Centers	Mature/Redeveloping Corridors
Community Activity Centers	New/Developing Corridors
Entertainment and Commercial Centers	Reinvestment Area and Community Hub
Regional Employment and Activity Centers	
Downtown	

Unique Places

Goal UP-2: Embrace thoughtful, targeted, and forward-thinking changes in land use, infill, reinvestment, and redevelopment to respond to shifts in demographics, technology, and the market.

Policy UP-2.A: Support infill and land use investment throughout the mature and developed areas of the city.



Thriving Economy

TE-2.C: Enhance the physical environment by creating new amenities that help attract and retain new businesses and residents.

TE-2.C-2: Support the redevelopment and adaptive re-use of functionally obsolete buildings, commercial centers, and office parks, as new mixed use employment centers.

TE-4.A; Encourage revitalization and infill in underutilized urban places

Statement of Compliance

UVAR-25-0004 – 2 Penrose Blvd Renovation Use Variance

After evaluating the Use-Variance application for 2 Penrose Blvd Renovation project, the application meets the review criteria as set forth in section 7.5.527.E.