

City of Colorado Springs

City Planning Commission

Draft Meeting Minutes – Excerpt

Wednesday, November 12, 2025

8.A. ZONE-24-0020 – 4880 Airport Road Rezone

A Zone Change consisting of 2.17 acres located at 4880 Airport Road from R1-6/AP-O (Single Family - Medium with Airport Overlay) to R-5/AP-O (Multi-Family High with Airport Overlay).
(Quasi-Judicial)

Chris Sullivan, Senior Planner, presented the application for the currently vacant site to rezone the property from single-family residential detached with a 6,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size with an Airport Overlay to multi-family high, that allows a maximum density up to 25 dwelling units per acre. Dimensional standards include a 20-foot front setback, 5-foot side setback, 15-foot rear setback, and a maximum building height of 50 feet. The surrounding zoning includes R-1-6 to the south, west, and north, and R-5 to the east. Nearby uses include detached single-family homes, potential ancillary commercial uses, and a religious institution. He said as a condition for approval they have to dedicate approximately 20 feet of right-of-way along Airport Road to the City. Standard notice was made; approximately 10 comments were received through all the reviews about quality of life, potential intensity, traffic and losing the open space. Agency review was made and comments were provided that CDI fees will be applicable. The application is compliant with PlanCOS and meets the review criteria for the zone change.

Applicant's presentation

Ann Odom, NES, representing the applicant, presented the application for this rezoning. She said the zone change criteria require alignment with PlanCOS, assurance that the change will not negatively impact public health, safety, or welfare, and that the location is appropriate for the proposed zoning. She said a land use statement is permitted for smaller rezoning requests, typically under 10 acres, where there is an established development pattern and no major infrastructure needs. Ms. Odom said during the boundary survey, it

was discovered that a 20-foot strip on the southern portion of the parcel had not been formally dedicated to the city for Airport Road widening, and the property owner has agreed to that condition of approval. Ms. Odom said the rezoning aligns with surrounding development patterns, highlighting nearby multifamily and commercial uses, particularly along Airport Road, where single-family detached homes are less compatible with the high-traffic, four-lane arterial.

Ms. Odom said their request is for a maximum density of 25 units per acre resulting in 50 units, given the size of the lot. She said specific development plans are not yet under review, but any proposal will be subject to the Unified Development Code (UDC), which includes standards for land-use transitions, buffers, parking, height, and water quality, and if future development raises concerns about traffic impacts, additional traffic analysis will be required. She said the project aligns with the “Vibrant Neighborhoods” and “Thriving Economy” frameworks of PlanCOS.

Public Comments

Tao Thai, resident of a Buddhist Temple in the area, spoke in opposition. He said the road is very narrow and it is very difficult for traffic to go in or out of that street. He said he would prefer to see a park. Mr. Thai said people do not pick up after their dogs and this would worsen with that many people coming in the area. He said in the temple they practice meditation, and more people mean more noise that would affect their meditation.

Barbara Overgaard, Sand Creek Commons resident of 20 years, said she agrees with the previous speaker. She said there are also significant traffic and safety concerns, Karr Road being the only exit for the nearby 487-unit condo complex and surrounding homes, which already experiences congestion during peak hours. She said the presence of other R-5 zones nearby does not justify introducing another high-density development in an area originally intended for lower-density living. Ms. Overgaard said there is an opposing contrast between the proposed multifamily housing and the existing character of the neighborhood, which includes open space, a nearby ranch with horses, and proximity to Sand Creek.

Applicant's Rebuttal

Ms. Odom said they hear and understand the concerns raised by neighboring residents. She said, given the surrounding development and the classification of Airport Road as a principal arterial, the current R-1-6 zoning may no longer be appropriate for the area. She said the rezoning process requires a broader perspective, as specific development details, such as access points and site impacts, are not yet available, but will be thoroughly evaluated during a future development application phase, where more detailed analysis and scrutiny will occur.

Commissioners' Questions

Vice Chair Hensler asked what some of the future impacts of the development are and if they are aware of any surrounding parcels that would be interested in increasing density. Ms. Odom said the Unified Development Code (UDC) includes protections to address compatibility between differing land uses, such as buffering and screening requirements. She said future development will also involve a public notice process, giving neighbors another opportunity to provide input and potentially influence the design. She said no development application is currently under review, allowing time to consider community concerns and incorporate them into future planning. Ms. Odom said regarding nearby properties, she is not aware of any current redevelopment plans for the larger, rural-style lots surrounding the site; however, a nearby business and commercial park to the east is expanding north and west, and high-intensity multifamily development is occurring just north of Karr Road, indicating broader redevelopment activity in the area.

Alternate Commissioner Engel asked if there were any anticipation of increased traffic on Airport Road that would challenge the development. Ms. Odom said that traffic impacts from a potential 50-unit development on the site would need to be closely analyzed if a formal proposal is submitted. She said that while no current traffic issues are known, any future development would be subject to traffic impact analysis. She said the ongoing construction of a nearby interchange is expected to improve overall mobility in the area.

Chair Casey asked why they chose R-5 versus a less dense option. Ms. Odom said the R-5 zoning directly east of the site, along with nearby nonconforming R-1-6 single-family properties, supports the proposed rezoning as a logical transition. She said there are no plans to redevelop or alter existing single-family residences in the area and given the site's

limited size of approximately 2 acres, the potential development intensity is relatively modest. Ms. Odom said the R-5 zoning aligns with existing development patterns with another R-5 district within 500 feet to the west.

Chair Casey asked the applicant to elaborate on that around criteria number four, since this would be proposing 25 units instead of the current 9 and the height would be 50 feet instead of 35. Ms. Odom said the when the R-5 zones to the east and west were established, they had similar 50-foot height limits but no density caps, so developers at the time assessed what was appropriate for the area, which guided the resulting development. Ms. Odom said even on larger, less constrained sites, developers rarely reach the maximum density due to factors like construction costs, parking requirements, and the need for on-site water quality infrastructure, as well as its own stormwater management. She said the current proposal includes a 25-dwelling unit per acre cap, providing a clear upper limit of approximately 50 units on the site, which gives certainty to the neighborhood about the scale of future development.

Chair Casey said he thinks choosing zoning with the most density area has a significant impact, even with the constraints of the construction requirements. Ms. Odom said the current zoning is not very practical, as there are not many R1-6 developments happening throughout the city and the property owner saw no future in developing the property as such, and instead considered surrounding areas. Mr. Sullivan said the surrounding R-5 areas were not originally zoned like, but rezoned into R-5, and the current proposal for a multifamily could have been proposed by any of those other R-5 parcels. He said there is a multifamily proposed northeast of the site and commercial development nearby and traffic studies were made already considering those developments.

Chair Casey said, according to the UDC, this is intended to be used in areas adjacent to specific zones, with similar or higher densities or intensities, and he understands surrounding properties might be R-5, but the adjacent ones do not have that high density. Mr. Sullivan said they could have gone denser based on the code at that time. He said that building and landscape parameters and codes should be taken into consideration for the final design of the development. Chair Casey asked if that would be approved administratively. Mr. Sullivan said that is correct.

Chai Casey asked why the applicant considers R1-5 and R1-6 is inappropriate for the area. Ms. Odom said much of the surrounding development likely occurred before Airport Road

was widened into a principal arterial and before South Powers Boulevard experienced significant traffic growth. She said this part of Colorado Springs is evolving, with increasing industrial presence and ongoing change. She said the proposed rezoning represents a relatively small infill project, which she believes will have limited impact on the surrounding neighborhood.

Vice Chair Hensler said she is concerned about approving a zoning change without a corresponding development plan, and while she is not opposed to the R-5 designation she is uneasy about deciding without clarity on the site's future use and potential impacts, and just assuming that appropriate decisions will be made later in the process. Ms. Odom said the land use statement was introduced in the UDC to support smaller projects where development intensity can be reasonably anticipated. She said the concerns that 25 dwelling units per acre may seem high for the site, but the process is being approached step by step, with community feedback helping to shape future development. She said it is unlikely the subject site would reach the maximum 25 units per acre, given its smaller size and construction limitations.

Chair Casey said he will not be in support of the application as he considers it does not meet criteria number four.

Alternate Commissioner Engel said there are too many unknowns of traffic impact and to other properties.

Alternate Commissioner Case said he will be in support of the application as it meets adjacent properties zoning and it is also subject to the criteria in the future development plans.

Motion by Alternate Commissioner Engel, seconded by Commissioner Clements, to recommend denial to City Council of the zone change of 2.17 acres from R1-6/AP-O (Single Family – Medium with Airport Overlay) to R-5/AP-O (Multi-Family – High with Airport Overlay) based upon the findings that the request does not comply with the criteria for a Zoning Map Amendment as set forth in City Unified Development Code Section 7.5.704.

The motion passed by a vote of 3-2-0-6.

Aye: 3 - Chair Casey, Commissioner Clements and Alternate Commissioner Engel

No: 2 - Vice Chair Hensler and Alternate Commissioner Case

Absent: 6 - Commissioner Cecil, Commissioner Slattery, Commissioner Robbins,
Commissioner Sipilovic, Commissioner Gigiano and Commissioner Willoughby

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