

**CITY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA
June 20, 2019**

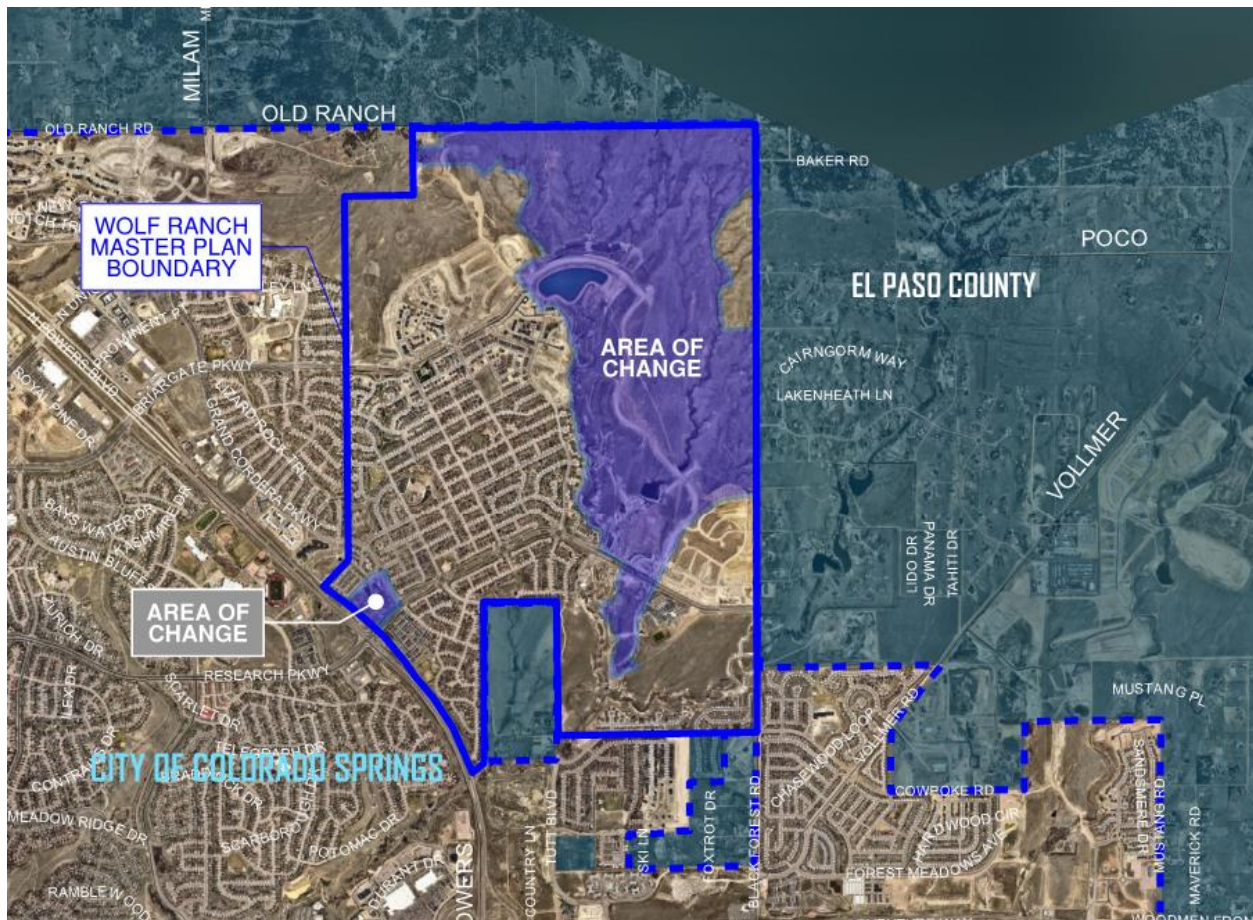
STAFF: KATIE CARLEO

**FILE NO(S):
CPC MP 05-00080-A7MJ19 – LEGISLATIVE**

PROJECT: WOLF RANCH MAJOR MASTER PLAN AMENDMENT

OWNER: NOR'WOOD DEVELOPMENT GROUP

CONSULTANT: NASS DESIGN ASSOCIATES



PROJECT SUMMARY

1. **Project Description:** This project is a major master plan amendment impacting approximately 750 acres of the Wolf Ranch Master Plan. The master plan illustrates the proposed land use configuration, access and circulation and overall intent. The existing PUD (Planned Unit Development) zoning will remain with the proposed shift in land use categories.

2. Applicant's Project Statement: The owner has included a detailed project statement that clarifies the intent for the proposed master plan changes. Discussed in the statement is the approach to the proposed changes in residential land use configuration along with an in-depth analysis of the Wolf Ranch parkland suitability. The complete information is included as a supplemental to this report as **FIGURE 1**.
3. Planning and Development Recommendation: Staff recommends approval of the application.

BACKGROUND

1. Site Address: None
2. Existing Zoning/Land Use: PUD (Planned Unit Development)/ the subject property is vacant
3. Surrounding Zoning/Land Use: North: RR-5 (Rural Residential) within El Paso County with some large lot residential homes.
South: R1-6000 (General Residential) Single-family Residential within the Cumbre Vista development.
East: RR-5 (Rural Residential) within El Paso County with large lot residential homes.
West: PUD (Planned Unit Development) Single-family Residential within the Cordera development.
4. Annexation: Briargate Addition No. 5 Annexation in 1982
5. Master Plan/Designated Master Plan Land Use: Existing Wolf Ranch Master Plan
6. Subdivision: The associated properties are currently not subdivided.
7. Zoning Enforcement Action: None
8. Physical Characteristics: The majority of the proposed area of change includes a mix of natural vegetation, mainly wild grasses. Cottonwood Creek runs north to south through the western portion of the proposed area of change.

STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT

As part of the submittal to the City, a robust public stakeholder process and involvement with the surrounding neighborhoods was undertaken. At the time the application was submitted the site was posted and postcards sent to all property owners within a 1000-foot buffer of the subject property. During the initial review a neighborhood meeting was held, January 28, 2019, in which 1036 postcards were sent to surrounding property owners; an estimated 145 people attended this neighborhood meeting. Several areas of concern were discussed and are further detailed below. After neighborhood comments had been received and the technical comments from the City addressed the owner held a second neighborhood meeting on April 24, 2019 to review the adjustments that had been made to the approach and configuration of the master plan changes. The second neighborhood meeting had an estimated 72 people in attendance.

Comments from the neighbors were focused on concerns for the following overall concepts:

- Density increase to area near southern school site.
- Pedestrian connection for school children to safely walk to school.
- Changes to school site location.
- Concern for the buffer provided along the northern boundary and transition to the county large lots and rural living.
- Preference for the 1-acre lots as a more appropriate use type along northern boundary
- Impact to the HOA overall the residents of Wolf Ranch.
- Antelope herd and where these will be moved.
- Access and increase to traffic along Black Forest Road.
- Overall concern for density increase and specifically with the area north of Briargate Parkway.
- Concern that the neighborhood parks proposed will be activated and support opportunity for the neighborhood to use the parks.
- Trail connections

- Changes in classification of residential density throughout the master planned area.
- Home prices and the impact of more density to the value of homes.
- Opposition to apartments within Wolf Ranch.

Throughout the review process, several letters of opposition were received and are included as **FIGURE 2**. There were also letters of support received, which are also included as **FIGURE 3**. In response to the neighborhood comments, the owner prepared a detailed letter addressing the areas of concern and outlining how adjustments to the master plan changes were approached. This in-depth letter (**FIGURE 4**) is included as a supplemental to this report and goes into further detail on the areas of concern synthesized from the letters of opposition received.

Staff input is outlined in the following section of this report. Staff sent plans to the standard internal and external review agencies for comments. All comments received from the review agencies are addressed. Commenting agencies included Colorado Springs Utilities, City Engineering, City Traffic, City Fire, School District 20, Police and E-911, and El Paso County Development Services.

Comments were received from El Paso County Development Services Division (**FIGURE 5**) which generally stated concern for development with an impact to Black Forest Road. A full traffic study was completed and reviewed by the City Traffic Division. Further details are discussed below as it relates to traffic. El Paso County was included on resubmittals of the proposed and at this time no further comments have been received from El Paso County.

ANALYSIS OF REVIEW CRITERIA; COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & MASTER PLAN CONFORMANCE

1. Review Criteria / Design & Development

a. Background

The area known today as Wolf Ranch was originally annexed into the City of Colorado Springs in 1982 with the Briargate Addition No. 5 Annexation and was previously a part of the Briargate Master Plan. In 2001 this area was removed from the Briargate Master Plan and the Wolf Ranch Master Plan was established. At that time Wolf Ranch was rezoned to PUD (Planned Unit Development) with corresponding PUD Zoning Guidelines. Zoning and land use for the Wolf Ranch development is governed by this PUD zoning district that details the land use classifications as part of the Wolf Ranch PUD Zoning Guidelines. This zoning document establishes the use categories further depicted on the Wolf Ranch Master Plan. These zoning classifications remain consistent, but changes to the master planning areas are allowed through a major master plan amendment. No changes to the PUD zoning categories are being proposed and thus no zone change would be required. Past amendments have been approved since the origination of the master plan in 2001 that have adjusted the land use configuration including the most recent major amendment in 2014 that relocated the community park within Wolf Village.

b. Master Plan Major Amendment

A land use master plan establishes the envisioned land use designations and configuration within the project area. Within the Wolf Ranch Master Plan there are several major areas of change that are discussed below. The changes are primarily focused in the northeasterly portions of the master planned area including the central open space and remaining parks. As a supplement to this report (please see **FIGURE 1**) the details of the proposed changes as it focuses on the adjustments to density, removal of commercial zoning, open space allocations, configuration of parkland, location of school sites and impact to surrounding infrastructure and roadways, as well as **FIGURE 6** which goes into more detail on the parkland analysis. Staff has outlined the major themes below, but further specifics are explained in these supplemental documents. In addition, please reference the existing currently approved Wolf Ranch Master Plan as **FIGURE 7** and the proposed plan as **FIGURE 8** for comparison of changes discussed below.

i. Density

The overall density of the Wolf Ranch Master Plan has decreased since the last amendment going from 7701 total proposed dwelling units to the current total of 6825 dwelling units. Several areas already implemented (entitled or developed) were established at the low end of the category density ranges. There is also a decrease in multi-family land use categories within the plan. A detailed chart is included in **FIGURE 1** that shows the density changes over time.

Several residential land use category areas are shifting with the proposed master plan changes. The major areas of change include the 'A' Category (0.0-99 DU/AC), found along the northern portion of the master plan consisting of 87.31 acres, being replaced with the 'B' Category (2.0-3.49). Acreage from a portion of the undeveloped 'A2', 'B/C', and 'D/C' Categories are being consolidated into a 'C' Category (3.5-7.99 DU/AC), and the 'B' Category along the eastern side of the central open space will be converted to 'C' and 'C/D' Category. These changes are proposed to allow for greater flexibility in housing types and supporting a variety of densities. Further explanation of each category change is included in **FIGURE 1**.

ii. Commercial Land Use

The currently approved master plan identifies an area of commercial at the northeast corner of Powers Boulevard and Research Parkway. This is a 13.71 acres site with Neighborhood Commercial. The proposed amendment would convert the commercial to residential - 'D' Category (7.99-11.99 CU/AC). The intent of this change is to construct similar townhomes as those already located directly north of the site within Wolf Ranch. This particular townhome product within Wolf Ranch has proven to be desirable and successful in terms of offering an alternative housing product to single-family detached.

iii. Fiscal Impact Report

A Fiscal Impact Analysis (FIA) is required for all major amendments of a master plan and is completed by the City Budget Office. The FIA was completed on January 25, 2019. The fiscal review criteria of the City Code states city costs related to infrastructure and service levels shall be determined for a ten-year time horizon for the appropriate municipal funds. This is a standard FIA modeling by the City Budget Office.

The FIA methodology reviewed City units projected increase in marginal cost of providing services to the development for 2019-2028. The FIA states most departments indicated there were no identifiable costs of providing services to this development; however, the change from a commercial tax base property to residential does show a loss in tax base for the City. The result of the FIA is a negative cumulative cash flow for the City during the 10-year timeframe. Per the FIA, the negative factor within this fiscal impact analysis stems from the loss of potential revenue in the removal of the commercial development. The Summary of Expenditures and Revenues is attached along with the Expenditure and Revenue Notes to provide the methodology for calculating the expenditures and revenues. (**FIGURE 9**)

Although staff recognizes that there is some loss of potential tax revenue converting the commercial to residential, staff believes that gaining a townhome-type housing stock in this part of the City, especially consistent and compatible with the adjacent townhomes, is beneficial.

iv. Traffic Analysis and Access

At the request of the City Traffic Division, a Traffic Impact Study was completed as an update to the previous study for the Wolf Ranch master plan. According to

the findings of the report, the projected operation of the surrounding roadways will be at a satisfactory level of service assuming traffic control measures and roadway designs are developed as analyzed. The primary major street corridors and established points of intersection have not changed with this amendment. Briargate Parkway and Research Parkway will remain the existing major roadway connections to Black Forest Road.

The City is currently working with PPRTA (Pike Peak Regional Transportation Authority) for the timing and improvements of Black Forest Road. It is intended that the connection of Briargate Parkway to Black Forest Road will be several years in the future. Research Parkway has recently been extended Black Forest Road and includes a new signal at the intersection. Further site specific investigations will take place at the time of each development plan entitlement.

v. Land Suitability/Geological Hazards / Wetlands

A Land Suitability Analysis (LSA) was completed with the original Wolf Ranch Master Plan to identify suitability of the proposed development and potential constraints. These findings are still valid; however, since this time some adjustments have occurred to the wetland areas. Iris Mitigation and Design environmental consultants have completed the updated wetland delineation for this area of Wolf Ranch. Per Iris this 'wetland delineation included flagging all wetlands and other "Waters of the U.S." in the field which were then surveyed and mapped.... [the] report includes all updated wetland mapping.' The findings showed an overall reduction in wetland areas; these updated areas are depicted on this master plan amendment.

This property is also subject to a required Geological Hazard Study per City Code 7.5.403. The study was completed by Entech Engineering and reviewed by City Engineering and the Colorado Geological Survey (CGS). The summary letter provided by Entech is included as **FIGURE 10**.

Slope stability areas of concern were mapped along the east bank of Tributary Four and the north bank of Cottonwood Creek. As a result of this analysis, structure setback lines are depicted on the master plan and will inform developable areas along these drainage corridors. CGS agrees with the findings from Entech and support that individual geologic evaluations should be done when a detailed development plan is submitted. (**See Figure 11**) The areas that would be subject to an evaluation are identified by the City CGS Landslide Susceptibility area and would follow City Code for a site specific report.

vi. Water Resource/Floodplain

A Master Development Drainage Plan has been reviewed by City Engineering Water Resource Division. Future development will follow standard process and comply with all drainage criteria and will require a Final Drainage Report prior to any approval of a development plan.

vii. Parks/Trails

As part of this amendment the owner has proposed a major change to the open space configuration throughout the center of the master plan running along Cottonwood Creek. The community and neighborhood parks and linking trail systems have been redesigned. As part of this redesign a full parkland analysis was done by NES Inc., which informed the proposed envisioned open space and park system.

The previously approved open space and park configuration within the master plan included a spine of open space running north to south through the site along

the Cottonwood Creek with fingers of open space reaching from this spine northeast into the developed area. A community park was located south of Research Parkway just west of the school site with three additional neighborhood parks; one located along the northern boundary of the master planned area and Old Ranch Road and the other two within the eastern half of the master planned area.

The current proposal keeps the intent for open space concentrated along Cottonwood Creek and consolidates additional park features along this spine. The community park located south of Research, west of the school site, has been reduced in size moving approximately 17 acres of community park to a new site north of research along Cottonwood Creek. A larger area of community park has been established south of the lake as a more centralized location with a variety of recreational opportunities to be provided. Neighborhood parks have been altered slightly to establish several pocket parks along an improved trail system running throughout the eastern portion of the master planned area. For reference of the changed park locations please see **FIGURE 7** as the 2014 approved master plan and **FIGURE 8** as the currently proposed plan. With all the proposed changes to the open space and parks the overall area of land has been evaluated and a detailed chart comparing the data is part of the updated project statement (**FIGURE 1**). The data shows that with the proposed changes the master planned green space will increase from 346.73 acres to 398.52 acres.

Through the parkland analysis the owner now proposes a consolidated park system while keeping the design of the open space spine along Cottonwood Creek. The owner has stated this approach will provide a better overall park system and experience for residents while providing a more efficient system for pedestrian access. A comprehensive description and justification for the proposed park, trails and open space changes is included as **FIGURE 6**.

As part of the review process the master plan parkland allocations are reviewed by the City Parks Board. The associated master plan has been presented at the first hearing with the Parks Board. A final decision will be rendered on June 13, 2019. The applications can't continue with the public hearing process moving to City Council if the Parks Board does not approve the applications as proposed. It is staff's understanding that the Board is generally supportive of the master plan.

viii. Academy School District 20

The proposed master plan includes changes to the dedicated school site located in the northeastern portion of the master planned area. The site for the school was previously located near the northern boundary with access from a collector road. (**FIGURE 7**) The proposed site has been shifted south and located along Briargate Parkway. (**FIGURE 8**) The intent for this site is to accommodate better access to the school site with location along a principal arterial as well as being more centrally located in the northeastern portion of the master planned area.

Academy School District 20 has been in communication with the owner and reviewed the proposed master plan changes. The District has met with Nor'wood Development and is in the process of developing a memorandum of understanding. Comment letters from the District area attached as **FIGURE 12**. Staff has communicated to the owner that a final letter from the District stating their agreement to the school site location will be needed prior to any further public hearing.

2. Conformance with the City Comprehensive Plan

PlanCOS is a high level and visionary document. Although PlanCOS purposefully does not include site-specific map-based recommendations regarding land use there are multiple areas of alignment between the Plan and the proposed changes to the Wolf Ranch Master Plan. There is a stated assumption in PlanCOS that land use change and adaptation should be recognized and reasonably supported both in existing development and with approved but not yet fully developed plans. Therefore, in the context of PlanCOS, the conversations and decisions are focused on how the proposed changes align with and advance the vision of PlanCOS.

Foundationally, PlanCOS is theme based. Three of its six themes are particularly pertinent to and aligned with the request for a major master plan amendment; Unique Places, Strong Connections and Majestic Landscapes. **(Map – PlanCOS Conformance)** PlanCOS places a special importance on the creation, maintenance and adaptation of Unique Places, which is an important consideration in plans of this scope. Wolf Ranch seeks to provide unique place through parks and open space that create a sense of community along with an active programming to engage residents. Briargate Parkway as identified in PlanCOS is a Strong Connection for the City. This will be a major corridor in the region and among other considerations its connection will be critical to providing for the future development of properties to the east including Banning Lewis Ranch.

As part of the analysis of the master plan the City supports the alignment of the proposed changes and the intent of Majestic Landscapes within PlanCOS. This development, with respect to both the existing and proposed master plan, has a number of attributes that are well aligned with this theme. Principal among these is the existing and planned network of “green infrastructure” which will be available to residents and the community. The proposed changes, to incorporate more connected parks, trails and open space, will strengthen this alignment. PlanCOS emphasizes the importance of the “Ring the Springs” Trail which is an important visionary element of the current Parks Plan. As illustrated on the master plan a loop trail is planned that could be integrated into this trail vision as it grows in northern portions of the City.

PlanCOS generally supports reasonable and logical increases in residential density. Although the overall potential density of the master planned area is expected to be reduced by few hundred units on paper, it is customary to plan master developments at maximum densities and then scale back as projects are implemented. At over 7,000 expected dwelling units, arguably, this project is maintaining reasonable density given its location within the City and unincorporated County, and considering the market it is responding to. The proposed changes support a reasonable accommodation to include a mix of residential products and density ranges at logical locations.

It is the finding of the Planning and Community Development Department that the major amendment to the Wolf Ranch Master Plan substantially conforms to the PlanCOS goals and objectives.

3. Conformance with the Area’s Master Plan: The Wolf Ranch Master Plan is the subject of the current application. Conformance with City Code criteria for a major master plan amendment as well as conformance with PlanCOS are discussed in this report and support the findings for approval of the proposed master plan.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION
CPC MP 05-00080-A7MJ19 – MASTER PLAN

Recommend approval to the City Council the Wolf Ranch Master Plan, based upon the findings that the proposal meets the review criteria for master plans as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.408.