

April 3, 2015

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**RE: Village at Aeroplaza PUD Rezone and Concept PUD Plan Submittal:**

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:**

The proposed Concept PUD Plan for the Village at Aeroplaza is a single family project located on the northeast corner of Fountain Blvd. and Aeroplaza Drive in southeastern Colorado Springs. The project is approximately one-third mile west of Powers Blvd. The property is presently zoned Planned Business Center with an attached Condition of Record (PBC/CR). The site is not within the APZ (Accident Potential Subzone 1 or 2) overlays but lies within the AO CAD (Airport Overlay) zone area. The site is 14.02 Acres and currently vacant. Thomas & Thomas, on behalf of Aeroplaza Fountain LLC, is proposing to rezone the parcel to Planned Unit Development (PUD) to allow for a small lot, detached single family residential use. The design incorporates the elements of the Small Lot PUD Review Criteria and Guidelines. The project proposes 83 single family lots with a minimum size of 3,825 square feet for a density of 5.9 DU/ AC and 41,200 square feet of open space. There are no proposed commercial, office, or industrial uses being proposed.

The existing surrounding zoning and land uses are as follows:

- **Northwest:** Zoned PUD. Detached single family residential.
- **Northeast:** Zoned PIP2. DPIX, LLC.. Industrial/ Manufacturing.
- **West:** Zoned PBC. Vacant, Hotel Use.
- **South:** Zoned PBC, Hotel Use. Zoned C6/ CR, vacant use.

The site has been vacant for many years and contains no significant natural features, stands of vegetation, or wildlife habitat. There is currently no sidewalk present along Fountain Blvd. yet sidewalk currently exists along the western side of Aeroplaza Dr. Pedestrian sidewalks will be included as required along the site's frontage of Aeroplaza Dr. Discussions with CDOT and City Engineering will take place regarding required sidewalk improvements along Fountain Blvd. There is an existing 46' no-build Condition of Record easement along Fountain Blvd. that will remain.

Access into the site will be via two access points off of Aeroplaza Dr. Each access point will align with existing curb cuts along this street. Of the existing curb cuts, one allows access into the existing hotel and one will be a logical continuation of Leyburn Dr. All of the internal streets will be public and meet current city engineering design standards. The proposed street configuration was purposeful with the intent of providing on-street parking, maximize efficiency and provide internal pedestrian sidewalk connectivity. The streetways are designed with a 50' Right-of-way and 30' pavement mat to accommodate on street parking. This on street parking is in addition to the individual resident driveways and garages. There are no designated parking lots being provided.

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION:**

The proposed development submittal takes into account the Development Plan Review Criteria. The project at this early stage of the development submittal process conceptually follows the guidelines as illustrated in both the Small Lot PUD Review Criteria & Concept Plan Review Criteria. More detailed information will be provided at the time of Development Plan and Final Plat submittal. While the current zoning for the site is PBC/ CR, the proposed PUD zoning and residential use is a compatible mix of use within this area of the city as there are very few similar, small lot residential projects within the general vicinity. The land demand patterns in this area have not warranted the large amount of PBC zoned parcels, particularly west of Powers Blvd. A review of current city zoning and land use patterns indicates a majority of the PBC, PIP, C6 and OC zoning west of Powers Blvd remains as vacant ground stretching from Platte Ave. down to Astrozon Blvd., where residential communities begin as the primary land use. These vacancies include many pockets of land westward to Academy Blvd. Further land use review in this area also illustrates that the planned industrial and commercial parks east of Powers Blvd. contain large pockets of unused, vacant land zoned for uses other than residential. These vacant pockets occur all the way from Airport Rd. south to Zeppelin Rd.

Conversely, those areas of residential zoning or rezoned to allow for residential uses from as far north as Airport Rd. all the way south down to the Milton Proby Expressway have been built out, currently under construction, or planned to be built. This clearly indicates the demand for residential housing is far greater than the demand for industrial or commercial center zoning areas, particularly west of Powers Blvd. As an example, the site being submitted for review and approval of small lot, single family residential was originally platted in 1980 for commercial/ industrial uses yet has remained vacant for nearly 35 years. The site is adjacent to a well established sub community



**FIGURE 2**

with schools, parks, churches, commercial and employment centers offering an opportunity for residents to work and live within close proximity.

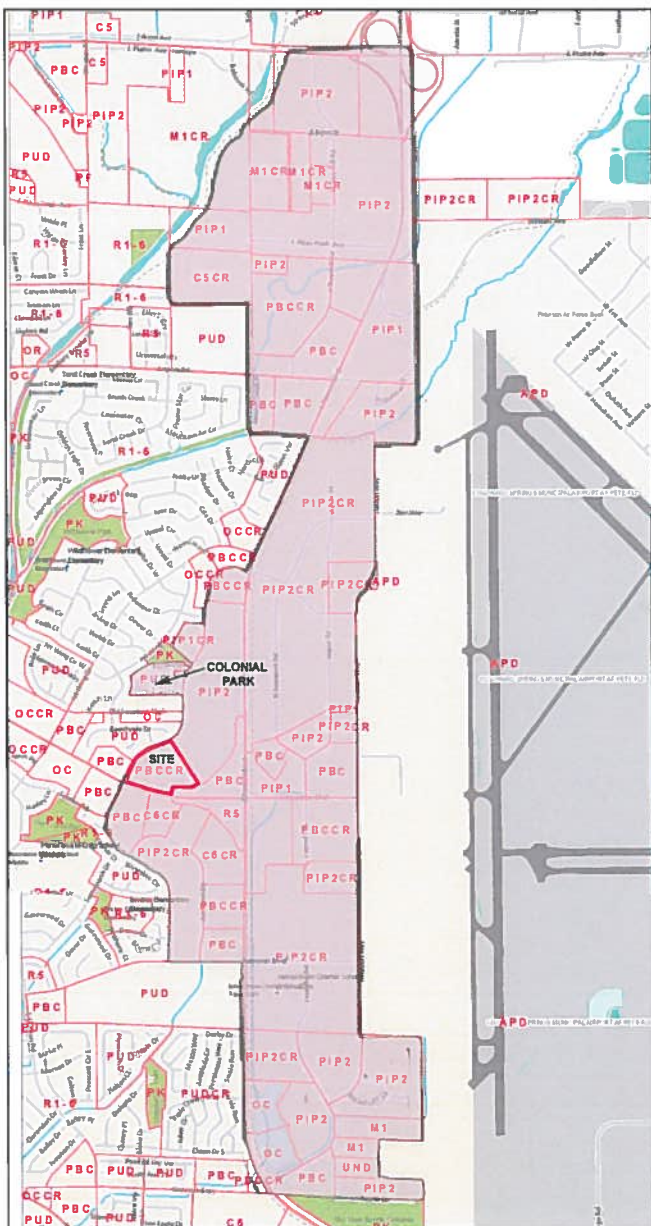
The current zoning of PBC/ CR does permit one family and higher density residential as a conditional use. While the residential conditional use requires additional approval by the Planning Commission and City Council, the residential use is not strictly forbidden. The residential use within the PBC zone would allow lot sizes as small as 4,000 square feet while the Village at Aeroplaza is proposing a lot size of 3,825 square feet. In addition, the Small Lot PUD Guidelines require more restrictive design principles than the PBC Conditional Use further enhancing the design. Since the PBC zone does permit residential use, this proposed Concept PUD Plan remains consistent with all the possible uses as permitted by the PBC zone. In this case, the PUD further defines the intended use thereby restricting the land use to what is approved on the Concept PUD. Any change in use would require an amendment to the plan and subject the proposal to further review.

Finally, the site has been identified as an employment center for Colorado Springs on the 2020 Land Use Plan.

Employment Centers in the Comprehensive Plan are defined as: *Activity centers that are major concentrations of employment supported by a mix of uses that meet the needs of employees and visitors, such as restaurants, lodging, child care, **higher density residential**, and educational facilities. Employment Areas are major concentrated locations where people work. Major employers are typically located in these areas, whether in mixed-use activity centers or campus-like settings or diverse industrial areas.*

Despite the east and west corridors intersecting Powers Blvd. being designated as Employment Centers where mixed uses are encouraged, including residential housing, there is currently only one residential land use within the boundaries of the Employment Center area from Platte Ave. south all the way to Zeppelin Rd. This residential use occurs less than a quarter mile north of this proposal along Aeroplaza Dr. and is known as Colonial Park. Colonial Park offers a mix of small lot single family residential and attached townhome like units.

The Village at Aeroplaza is seeking to provide additional affordable housing within this area of Colorado Springs where residential land use projects have been



**FIGURE 2**



successful. The existing infrastructure, roads, sewer, water and other utilities are well established. The additional units proposed within this development will not overburden or strain the existing infrastructure facilities. The Village at Aeroplaza has a density of 9.8 dwelling units per buildable acre and is surrounded in the area by a variety of land uses such as hotels, an industrial facility, office buildings, a church, schools and parks, single family residential housing and a small multi-family complex.

The project is within walking distance of approximately 0.25 miles to both Panorama Park south of Fountain Rd. and Penstemon Park just north of the site directly off of Aeroplaza Dr. Both of these parks provide outdoor recreation opportunities within a few minutes walk to the future residents. In addition, the site is in close proximity to both Panorama Middle School and Bricker Elementary School, both of which are just over 0.5 miles away. A third park is also within walking distance and is just under 0.5 miles away from the site, sitting adjacent to the elementary school. The Sand Creek Trail is accessible in several locations anywhere from 0.66 miles to 1 mile away directly west of this site. Currently there is no direct access to the Sand Creek via Fountain Blvd. due to a lack of sidewalks.

Due to the close proximity to the existing Penstemon and Panorama Parks, the proposed Conceptual PUD Plan proposes 41,200 square of open space, of which 17,935 SF is being provided in a centralized location. The provided open space was determined using the reduced open space of 400 SF per 1 Lot as allowed and outlined in the Small Lot PUD Review Criteria and Guidelines: *Common Open Space General Guidelines #10*. The design incorporates sidewalks throughout the community providing pedestrian connectivity into and out of the site.

The proposed concept is anticipating a 10' landscape setback along Aeroplaza Dr. and a 25' landscape setback along Fountain Blvd. which will be included within the 46' no build easement along Fountain Blvd. There is no landscape buffer being provided along the northeast boundary with the industrial site; however, the lots along this boundary are 15' longer in length for a minimum depth of 100'. This additional length was added in-lieu of a separate landscape buffer. The existing industrial facility has trees planted along the property line and a chain link fence which shall remain. All landscape and common open space will be maintained by a home owner's association.

As part of a Colorado Department of Transportation Powers Blvd. Corridor Study, it was determined that an interchange would be provided at Powers Blvd. and Fountain Blvd. This would occur in the vacant land directly east of the site and precludes any potential land use projects from happening. Per the study, this was to occur as part of the 2035 planning. However, it has since been determined that funding would not be available for this interchange thus making the timing unknown. While this interchange could be viewed as a detriment to the proposed single family use, the lack of funding and no new timeframe for this interchange should not place limits on proposed land uses that may or may not be impacted twenty years into the future. There are numerous examples within the city of interchanges occurring adjacent to or near existing, established residential communities should the proposed interchange be realized.

**ISSUE LIST:**

- Proposed small lot residential use: City Planning staff reluctant to support the proposed use.
- Open Space: Concerns regarding provided open space being insufficient.
- Fountain Blvd: Requirements for improvements to Fountain Blvd. are unknown at this time.
- Proposed Powers/ Fountain Blvd Interchange: Potential impact on future resale value.