

Date: June 28, 2022

Project: Costilla 10-Plex

Location: 703 E. Costilla St.
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

To: Pikes Peak Regional Building Department
2880 International Circle
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Public Comment Responses:

- Alec Brunk *"Thank you for notifying us about the new potential development complex on Costilla and El Paso. We are excited to see the city expand and have an addition to our neighborhood. It has been a while since new developments have happened east of the train tracks so we look forward to it!"*

Response: Thank you! We are excited as well.

- Bethany Jorenby *"I realize this is a day late, but life with a newborn meant only recently hearing of the proposal referenced in the subject line. As a young family and citizen in the neighborhood of El Paso and Cimarron, I believe the proposed development to be absolutely inappropriate. The lot is ridiculously small to be fitting 10 units and that corner cannot handle an additional 10-20 cars (potentially more with the current price of real estate and rentals if you take into account many people needing roommates to afford how expensive the Springs has become). Building substantially "up" more than other homes in the neighborhood is rude and disrespectful to the families who have lived there for decades. That corner already experiences a high volume of unsafe traffic due to the way the light operates, the fast speeds, and the school traffic. It's become a fairly regular occurrence to hear shots fired in this neighborhood, something that was not the case a few years ago, and something that shoving too many people in too small a space won't help. The neighborhood is becoming a stark division of the wealthy moving in, lower and middle class being forced out by rent hikes and starter homes being turned into AirBnB's, and very poor with no where else to go. Our neighborhood and city is not equipped to be developed in the rapid way it has been over the last few years. We do not have the infrastructure our streets, highways, or interstates need. We are rapidly losing air quality and quality of life. We are no longer a town where young working families like ours can afford housing. We do not possess the quality schools systems needed throughout every area of town. While many people are happy with the increased tourism and business opportunities, it seems as though COS is becoming a better town to vacation in than live. It's extremely frustrating to see a city I loved change so drastically and quickly and, even worse, to become a place working class families can no longer afford or enjoy."*

Response: We hear your concerns about density and affordability in Colorado Springs. We believe smart infill development with relatively small units is a great option to provide more affordable living in our City. By building small and dense on an infill site we are utilizing existing infrastructure, using our City as an amenity and reducing dependency on automobiles. By doing this we can keep costs and rents reasonable, and believe this is a great addition to our City. Our City Traffic Engineer has indicated that the surrounding streets can adequately handle the minor increase in automobile traffic this project will generate. As far as your height concerns go, we are keeping the building well below the allowable 45' height limit on the site in order to better fit in with the massing of the neighborhood.

- Heather Koss *"I would like to strongly express my opposition to the development proposal, file number CPC CU 22-00030 & CPC NV 22-00031, for a 10 unit apartment complex. This project will be detrimental to the neighborhood. Thank you for your consideration."*

- Jerry Thompson *"I am writing to tell you I am against the Costilla 10-Plex on 703 E Costilla Street. I live on the 700 block of Vermijo and I am against big apartment complexes going in my neighborhood. There are plenty or more than plenty mega apartment complexes being built downtown."*

- Samantha Mauro *"I am the property owner at 705 E. Costilla Street. I returned home from a six week trip last night to find that a development has been proposed for the neighboring property. Based on the notice, I am past the date that comments were requested (March 11, 2022). I am very much opposed to this project. Has a decision already been made? Is it too late? Please advise."*

Response to Heather, Jerry, and Samatha: We believe that investment in a neighborhood is good for everyone. Having a new development on this corner will not only improve property values, it will clean up a derelict, vacant lot.

- Jim Tolbert *"I am writing to express concerns on behalf of my daughter, Jennifer Callie Murphy, who owns the property at 728 E. Costilla Street. While we think that a residential use on the property at 703 E. Costilla is better than a commercial use we are concerned about the number of units and parking spaces on this site. It seems as though they are cramming as many units as they can and figuring that the overflow parking will go to the streets on either side. Since this is a relatively small lot there is very little frontage so residents will be forced to park in front of other homes and I am afraid park too close to the intersection and block site distance. I know that there is a push to reduce required parking in urban areas but in reality this location is on the edge of walkability and my guess is most residents will have at least one car. I have no issue with the variance requested but that it will allow this too dense use on this site. I would appreciate if you could consider a condition to limit the number of units to the number of parking spaces on the site. You may also receive comments from my daughter."*

Response: Between street parking immediately adjacent to the property at 703 East Costilla and the on-site parking there are 13 stalls provided, with the additional ample street parking on El Paso it is highly unlikely that parking for this 10-plex will spill beyond the immediate adjacent parking available.

ECHO

- Sam Friesema: "I am writing about the proposed development at 703 E Costilla. I live less than one block from this property and I pass by this property on foot, bike, and car, multiple times every day. I'm a bit confused by the fact that there is no commercial or retail on ground level. As a C6 property, they could easily put a small retail/office/etc. on that corner. That is a very busy corner and a public/commercial use would benefit the neighborhood much more than a single apartment at street level. We need more storefront street level business activity in the neighborhood. This is a gateway intersection from Downtown into the Hillside Neighborhood. This is a prominent intersection and development should transform this into a neighborhood node with active street life. The proposal has a single residence on level one and the rest of the footprint is parking. This project does not contribute to the walkable small scale urban fabric along El Paso. Given the current zoning restrictions, I do like the building facade that faces Costilla. But the Facade along South El Paso is unfortunate. C6 zoning is being proposed to change to a new Mixed Use zone district with the RetoolCOS revisions. I am 100% for density and adding people to the neighborhood but why do we need to settle for the restrictive zoning currently in place when in just a few short months the zoning will change this parcel and we could get a vibrant mixed use building on this gateway intersection. In order to meet PlanCOS goals of vibrant walkable neighborhoods, we don't just need more housing, but we need places for people to walk to. I would rather this property utilize the full height allowed and the full footprint allowed for commercial uses, and give this property a parking variance as nearly everyone in the neighborhood utilize on-street parking. This property is on a bus line and a bike route (shooks run). It is within very short walking distance to downtown. There is no reason for most of the pedestrian experience with this building to be looking at parking. I can't say I oppose this project, I do support more dense housing and exciting new architecture, but rather I am opposing the use of current zoning when we are so close to a big zoning change that would allow a much more dynamic building here. If anything I am writing to encourage MORE activity, mixed use, more units, more lot coverage, less parking, and less setbacks on this property. This would also allow the owner to realize a much higher return on their investment. Especially being in an opportunity zone, I think it could benefit them to wait for the zoning change and redesign the project with the neighborhood's long term vision in mind."

Response: Thank you for sharing Sam, I am in 100% agreement with your assessment. The suburban oriented large setbacks, landscape buffers, and parking requirements that have been overlaid on our historic neighborhoods in and around downtown all but make traditional mixed-use development impossible. On this particular site our client was not willing to push the City for multiple variances. I have high hopes that our City will update our Zoning Code to allow for more vibrant development in and around the core of our City.

- Stu Scruggs: "Hi, we live near and have the following questions/comments on this development: What's the lighting on the property going to be, is it just the listed bollard lights? Is there any way to preserve the large tree on the north side, even if it has to be trimmed? It's one of the largest trees near Costilla and contributes significantly to the historic character of the area. We have concerns around the parking, just because it seems insufficient, even though it technically meets the city requirement. Wheelchair access to the bus would not seem possible with cars parked along Costilla. Will there be residency/capacity limits, e.g. a maximum number of adults per unit? This would likely impact parking as well. Will there be any noise restrictions in place for apartment dwellers?"

Response: The site will be lit with pedestrian scale bollards, low level downlight for safety. Unfortunately with the extremely narrow developable width of our lot the existing tree makes development of this lot nearly impossible. We believe the parking provided will meet the needs of the proposed apartment building. There will be no parking allowed along Costilla (due to the bus stop). The lease agreement will limit the number of occupants. 8 of the 10 units are studio apartments, one 1- bedroom, and one 2-bedroom unit. Due to the nature of the layout and size of the units it is unlikely that any of them will house more than one or two occupants. The lease agreement will include noise restrictions for the tenants.

Respectfully,
Echo Architecture, LLC



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