



City of Colorado Springs

Regional Development
Center (Hearing Room)
2880 International Circle

Meeting Minutes - Final City Planning Commission

Wednesday, May 13, 2026

9:00 AM

2880 International Cir., 2nd Floor, Hearing Room

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Present: 9 - Chair Hensler, Commissioner Cecil, Vice Chair Slattery, Commissioner Robbins, Commissioner Clements, Commissioner Gigiano, Commissioner Willoughby, Commissioner Case and Commissioner Engel

2. Changes to Agenda/Postponements

3. Elections

3.A. [CPC 2733](#) Appointment of Planning Commission Vice Chair

Presenter:

Kevin Walker, Planning Director, City Planning Department

Chair Hensler explained that former Chair Ken Casey had recently been appointed to City Council, elevating Commissioner Hensler to Chair, and leaving the Vice Chair position vacant. A nomination was opened to fill the Vice Chair position until August or until newly appointed commissioners are seated.

Motion by Commissioner Case, seconded by Commissioner Willoughby, to nominate Commissioner Slattery as the Planning Commission Vice Chair.

The motion passed unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Chair Hensler, Commissioner Cecil, Vice Chair Slattery, Commissioner Robbins, Commissioner Clements, Commissioner Gigiano, Commissioner Willoughby, Commissioner Case and Commissioner Engel

4. Communications

Nadine Hensler - Planning Commission Chair

Chair Hensler said the application period for open Planning Commission positions had closed and that interviews would begin soon. The aim was to seat new voting and alternate commissioners by summer.

Kevin Walker - Planning Director

Kevin Walker, Planning Director, said a special Planning Commission

meeting was being tentatively scheduled for June 17 to hear the Data Center project. He briefed the Commission on several City Council items scheduled for May 26, including the Elevate Downtown Plan, a daycare center proposal, zoning changes, and conditional use modifications. Mr. Walker noted that City Council would not meet on June 23, which could affect commissioners' seating timelines.

5. Approval of Minutes

- 5.A.** [CPC 2732](#) Minutes for the April 8, 2026, City Planning Commission meeting.

Presenter:

Nadine Hensler, City Planning Commission Chair

Attachments: [CPC Minutes 4.8.26 Draft.Rev](#)

**Motion by Commissioner Robbins, seconded by Commissioner Slattery, to postpone the approval of the minutes for the April 8, 2026, City Planning Commission meeting to June 10, 2026.
The motion passed by a vote of 7-0-2-0.**

- Aye:** 7 - Chair Hensler, Vice Chair Slattery, Commissioner Robbins, Commissioner Clements, Commissioner Gigiano, Commissioner Willoughby and Commissioner Case

- Abstain:** 2 - Commissioner Cecil and Commissioner Engel

6. Consent Calendar

**Motion by Commissioner Slattery, seconded by Commissioner Willoughby, to approve the Consent Calendar.
The motion passed unanimously.**

- Aye:** 9 - Chair Hensler, Commissioner Cecil, Vice Chair Slattery, Commissioner Robbins, Commissioner Clements, Commissioner Gigiano, Commissioner Willoughby, Commissioner Case and Commissioner Engel

Austin Bluffs Pump Station - Zone Map Amendment

- | | | |
|--------------------|--------------------------|--|
| <p>6.A.</p> | <p>ZONE-26-00</p> | <p>Ordinance No. XXX amending the zoning map of the City of Colorado Springs pertaining to 5.24 acres located at 4535 Marconi Heights from R-E/PF/HS-O (Residential Estate and Public Facilities with Hillside Overlay) and PDZ/PF/HS-O (Planned Development Zone and Public Facilities with Hillside Overlay) to PF/HS-O (Public Facilities with Hillside Overlay). (Quasi-Judicial) (2nd Reading and Public Hearing)</p> |
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Related Files: N/A
Located in Council District 1

Presenter:

Allison Stocker, Senior Planner, Planning Department

Kevin Walker, Planning Director, Planning Department

Attachments: ZONE-26-0004_Ordinance
ZONE-26-0004_Staff_Report
Attachement_1_Zone Map
Attachment_2_Legal Description
Attachment_3_Land Use Statement
Attachment_4_Development Plan
Attachment_5_Subdivision Plat
Attachment_6_Geohazard Report
Attachment_7_Drainage Variance
Attachment_8_Project Statement
Excerpt Minutes -Austin Bluffs Pump Station - CPC 05_13_2026
ZONE-26-0004_CC_Presentation

7. Items Called Off Consent Calendar

8. Unfinished Business

9. New Business

Colorado Chronic Retail Marijuana Cultivation

- 9.A. [CUDP-25-0009](#) Conditional Use to allow the Retail Marijuana Cultivation Facility land use in the MX-M (Mixed-Use Medium Scale) zone district located at 2926 Wood Avenue.
(Quasi-Judicial)

Presenter:

William Gray, Senior Planner, City Planning Department

Kevin Walker, Planning Director, City Planning Department

Attachments: [Staff Report](#)[Attachment 1-Vicinity Map](#)[Attachment 2-Zoning Map](#)[Attachment 3-Public Comment](#)[Attachment 4-Aerial View](#)[Attachment 5-Plan View](#)[Attachment 6-Context Map](#)[Attachment 7-Conditional Use Statement](#)[Attachment 8-Land Use Statement](#)[Attachment 9-Floor Plan](#)

William Gray, Senior Planner, presented the application for Colorado Chronic, that operates a long-standing medical marijuana grow in a small commercial center south of Fillmore and Wood. The proposal sought to add a retail cultivation license without physical expansion of the building, additional employees, or increased plant count.

Mr. Gray reviewed zoning context, surrounding residential and mixed-use districts, and parking lot encroachments into the Wood Avenue right-of-way that would require either restriping or a revocable permit within 90 days of approval. Public comments received in advance were opposed, citing odor, lighting, compatibility with nearby medical offices, safety, traffic, and proximity to the North Nevada overlay. Staff concluded that the proposed use met the criteria for conditional use approval.

Applicant's Presentation

Austin Edmondson, the business owner and applicant, described Colorado Chronic as a boutique 500-plant operation employing two people. The retail license would not expand operations, increase production, or alter site conditions. He detailed odor mitigation measures, ventilation controls, and a history of zero citations. He emphasized that no intensification of activity, traffic, or lighting would occur.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Commission Discussion

Commissioner Cecil asked why the parking lot encroachment conditions were applied to the applicant rather than the property owner. Mr. Gray clarified that although the condition appeared in the applicant's approval, the property owner would be involved in addressing the revocable permit or

restriping requirement. He explained that the encroachment itself predated the applicant and likely the current ownership, but because it is triggered by land-use action, it appears as a condition on the application.

Commissioner Slattery asked whether this item, absent the public comments, would ordinarily have appeared on the consent agenda, and if so, whether the same parking-related condition would still have been imposed. Mr. Gray confirmed that similar marijuana cultivation conversions commonly appear on consent when uncontroversial, and the same condition regarding the parking encroachment would have applied regardless of the item's placement on the agenda.

Commissioner Cecil asked for clarification on how the conditional use attaches to the property. Trevor Gloss, City Attorney's Office, explained that the conditional use attaches to the use as conducted by the applicant, Colorado Chronic, in the specified tenant space. He said if ownership of the business changes, the conditional use remains valid for the business so long as operations remain materially consistent. Mr. Gloss said, however, if the business were to expand into additional square footage or modify its operational footprint, a major modification and potentially a new conditional use approval would be required.

Commissioner Robins asked regarding potential odor impacts, as he was concerned that the conversion from medical to retail cultivation might alter the intensity or nature of odors produced. Mr. Edmondson responded that no physical expansion or plant increase would occur, and therefore no additional odor would be generated. He described the facility's carbon filtration and air handling systems and noted that air is never exhausted directly to the neighborhood under normal operation.

Commissioner Engel expressed support for the proposal, stating that he saw no intensification of activity and no negative impacts to the surrounding area. Commissioner Engel explained that maintaining a small, well-regulated cultivation site was preferable to forcing relocation or expansion elsewhere.

Commissioner Case stated that he found the application consistent with the conditional use approval criteria and intended to vote in favor.

Commissioner Willoughby emphasized that the applicant's statements and staff analysis showed no increase in plant count, no new traffic generation, and no operational expansion. Commissioner Willoughby highlighted that odor controls were already in place and had been effective for more than a decade of prior cultivation activity at the site.

Commissioner Slattery, echoing earlier comments, stated that she supported the application but remained uneasy about tying the parking encroachment condition to the applicant, but ultimately agreed that the requirement was not unreasonable and did not warrant denial.

Chair Hensler summarized the discussion by acknowledging that the application involved no physical expansion, no increase in intensity, and no change in site operations. Chair Hensler stated that, under the city's criteria for conditional uses, the request appeared compliant.

Motion by Commissioner Willoughby, seconded by Commissioner Robbins, to approve the Conditional Use to allow a Retail Marijuana Cultivation Facility land use in the MX-M (Mixed-Use Medium Scale) zone district located at 2926 Wood Avenue, based upon the findings that the request complies with the criteria for Conditional Use as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.601.C.2 with the following conditions:

- 1. A Revocable Permit is obtained for the parking lot encroachment in Wood Avenue right-of-way, or the parking lot is re-stripped to eliminate the encroachment within 90-days of Conditional Use approval by City Planning Commission.**
- 2. Add a note to the Land Use Statement reading "There are no changes to building utility requirements proposed as part of this application".**

The motion passed unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Chair Hensler, Commissioner Cecil, Vice Chair Slattery, Commissioner Robbins, Commissioner Clements, Commissioner Gigiano, Commissioner Willoughby, Commissioner Case and Commissioner Engel

Briargate / Voyager

ZONE-25-00 Ordinance No. amending the zoning map of the City of Colorado Springs pertaining to 7.93 acres located at 1625 Springcrest Road from BP/cr/HR-O/AF-O (Business Park with Conditions of Record, High-Rise Overlay, and the United States Air Force Academy Overlay) to MX-M/AF-O (Mixed-Use Medium Scale with the United States Air Force Academy Overlay). (Quasi-Judicial)
23 (Second Reading and Public Hearing)

Related Files: LUPL-25-0010
Located in Council District 2

Presenter:

Allison Stocker, Senior Planner, Planning Department
Kevin Walker, Planning Director, Planning Department

Attachments: ZONE-25-0023_Ordinance
Staff Report_v2
Attachment_A_Briargate_Master_Plan
Attachment_B_Ordinance_99-139
Attachment_C_CPC DP 99-125
Attachment_D_Public_Comments
Attachment_E_Public_Comment_Response_Letters
Attachment_E1_Public_Comments_from_CPC
Attachment_F_Traffic_Impact_Study
Attachment_G_Land_Use_Plan
Attachment_H_USAFA_Avigation_Easement
Attachment_I_CDOT_Final_Review_Comments
Attachment_J_Project_Statement
Attachment_K_Public_Notice_Affidavits
Attachment_L_Owner_Authorization_Form
Attachment_M_Mineral_Estate_Form
Attachment_N_BBCOA_Letter_of_Support
Attachment_O_Neighborhood_Meeting_Sign_In_Sheet
Attachment_P_Briargate_MP_Signed_Resolution_No._43-22
Exhibit_A_Legal_Description
Exhibit_B_Zone_Map
7.5.704 ZONING MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING)
Excerpt Minutes -Briargate_Voyager - CPC 05_13_2026
Briargate_Voyager_2nd_CC_Presentation

Allison Stocker, Senior Planner, presented the application for a Zone Map Amendment for 7.93 acres at 1625 Springcrest Road, proposing a change from Business Park with Conditions of Record, High-Rise Overlay, Air Force Academy Overlay to Mixed-Use Medium Scale with Air Force Academy Overlay. She explained the site's context, existing entitlements, and the impact of the previously adopted Briargate Master Plan. Ms. Stocker noted that the current high-rise overlay allows up to 68 feet, compared to 50 feet allowed in MX-M. She reviewed the anticipated future process, which would require both a development plan and subdivision replat if the rezoning were approved.

Ms. Stocker detailed the surrounding conditions, noting that the site sits amid a transitional area: county enclaves and estate-sized lots to the north, the Classical Academy to the east, commercial and mixed-use development to the south, and principal arterial streets (Voyager Parkway and Briargate Boulevard). She summarized

required transportation improvements, including striping turn lanes, right-in/right-out access management, and right-of-way/easement dedication. The Skyline Regional Trail extension and parkland/school fees-in-lieu would also be required.

Ms. Stocker reported extensive community outreach, including mailed notices, a neighborhood meeting attended by about 70 people, and numerous public comments and a Change.org petition, with about 1000 signatures. Common concerns included traffic congestion, school safety, emergency evacuation, compatibility, visual impacts, and the presence of multifamily housing adjacent to an elementary school. Ms. Stocker stated that staff found the request generally compliant with PlanCOS and the rezoning criteria in City Code.

Comments and clarifications

Trevor Gloss, City Attorney's Office, clarified that the motion for the rezoning would be a recommendation to approve to City Council, however, if the City Planning Commission denied the request, it becomes an appeal to City Council.

Commissioner Cecil questioned whether specific zoning alternatives, such as Mixed-Use Transition (MX-T), might be more appropriate given the site's adjacency to a school and low-density neighborhoods. Ms. Stocker explained that MX-T is intended primarily for institutional or campus-transition areas such as Colorado College or UCCS and tends to allow greater heights than MX-M. MX-N allows only low-intensity neighborhood uses and would constitute spot zoning at this location. She added that MX-M provides continuity with the mixed-use zoning immediately to the south and was consistent with the area's zoning pattern.

Commissioner Willoughby asked when parkland dedication or fees in lieu are required and where does that fee go. Ms. Stocker said those funds might be used in the future by the Parks Department to purchase Parkland and typically sites smaller than 20 acres do fees in lieu as it becomes difficult to accommodate the applicant's project and parkland on the same site.

Commissioner Robbins disclosed familiarity with one of the members of the public from the Korean Baptist Church that submitted their comments in opposition. Commissioner Robbins said has no financial benefit from this project.

Applicant's Presentation

Jennifer Shagin, Kimley-Horn, presented on behalf of the applicant. Ms. Shagin reviewed the site's history, including prior office entitlements and the market transition since the Briargate Master Plan. She explained the proposed MX-M zone as a continuation of zoning to the south and described the intent to develop attached multifamily residential housing consistent with PlanCOS goals for varied housing types.

Ms. Shagin outlined stormwater plans, the Skyline Trail connection, and traffic improvements, including required turn lanes and striping. The project's traffic study reported that office development under existing zoning would generate significantly more trips than the proposed residential use. Additional school-hour counts showed pickup queues spilling into public streets, and the report recommended the school and City work together to keep queues on-site.

Andrew Ritter, Blackburn Communities, summarized the developer's operational practices, tenant screening, and intentions to create a well-managed residential community. He confirmed that the maximum density permitted under MX-M, 236 units, would define the project's limit.

Commissioner Questions

Commissioner Engel asked how residents would reach I-25. Ms. Shagin replied that drivers would travel from Springcrest to Voyager Parkway, then to either the InterQuest Parkway or Briargate Parkway I-25 interchanges. Commissioner Engel next asked about the differing unit numbers shown in earlier materials, noting references to both 250 and 236 units. Mr. Ritter explained that early conceptual plans included 250 units, but under MX-M zoning the maximum allowed was 236 units, which is now the limit. Commissioner Engel also asked whether the applicant could meet parking requirements for 236 units; Mr. Ritter confirmed that they could.

Commissioner Engel questioned the assumption that 80% of residents would travel south in the morning. Mr. Plank responded that the 80% figure applied specifically to morning peak commuting patterns. He explained that returning residents would primarily enter via the Voyager right-in/right-out rather than Springcrest, resulting in no net increase in

afternoon traffic at that intersection.

Public Comment

Amanda DeMarco, Apartment Association of Southern Colorado, stated her support for the multifamily proposal. She emphasized the region's documented housing shortage and argued that it is inconsistent for the community to acknowledge the need for homes while opposing most residential projects that reach the public hearing stage. She described the project as infill on a vacant parcel already served by major arterials and utilities, and she noted that City staff found the rezoning and land-use plan consistent with the review criteria and PlanCOS goals. Ms. DeMarco addressed concerns raised by residents about student safety and crime, asserting that professionally managed apartment communities use screening and background checks that are often more rigorous than in the for-sale housing market. She concluded that the development would expand housing choice, support the workforce, reduce sprawl, and make productive use of an underutilized site.

Jill Gaebler, Executive Director of the Pikes Peak Housing Network, voiced support for the rezoning and land use plan. She stated that the area is dominated by single-family homes and lacks sufficient rental housing for lower- and moderate-income households, including teachers, health-care workers, military families, and service-sector employees. Ms. Gaebler explained that rising home prices have outpaced incomes, pushing the average age of first-time homebuyers upward and increasing the need for rental options. She argued that the proposed apartments would generate less traffic than office uses allowed under current zoning and would allow families to walk to the nearby school, reducing car trips. She added that the project aligns with PlanCOS by promoting infill, supporting economic development, and bringing a vacant parcel into productive use.

Barbara Voget ceded time to Allison Flannery, who spoke in opposition of this item and described past experiences with natural disasters and evacuations and expressed deep concern that adding approximately 236 apartments and their vehicles to Springcrest Road would endanger residents during an emergency. She emphasized that her neighborhood has only one viable exit and recounted the mobility limitations of elderly and disabled neighbors who would be among the last to evacuate. Ms. Flannery argued that an apartment complex would add hundreds of cars to an already strained evacuation route and

stated that approving the rezoning would put lives at risk.

Patricia Peveto ceded time to Jacqueline Peveto, who spoke in opposition and focused on traffic impacts and roadway limitations. She stated that the surrounding neighborhoods have only two access routes and that Springcrest already experiences congestion from school traffic. She argued that residents of the proposed development would likely use Otero Avenue to avoid delays, although it is a county road not designed for higher volumes. Ms. Peveto identified safety issues posed by the proposed right-in/right-out access on Voyager and stated that the short distance between intersections would create weaving and merging conflicts, worsening existing congestion. She also argued that the traffic study failed to account for actual gridlock during school pickup times. She further expressed concern that the developer's suggested fire-evacuation plan, which relied on shelter-in-place for existing residents, was unacceptable and showed disregard for current neighbors.

Richard Davidson and Gigi Greer ceded time to Ariane Peveto, who argued that the MX-M zoning district is too intense for the area and does not meet the Unified Development Code's intent for emerging activity centers. She stated that the surrounding context includes rural residential, churches, and the school, not mixed-use commercial areas. She emphasized that the project would not provide meaningful pedestrian connections for the existing neighborhood and that bus service is not realistically accessible. Ms. Peveto also asserted that alternative zoning categories, such as mixed-use transition (MX-T) or mixed-use neighborhood (MX-N), would have been more appropriate and compatible. She expressed concern that approving MX-M could open the door to future commercial or more intense uses incompatible with the school and the surrounding residential areas.

Becky Francione ceded time to Nancy Carsten stated that traffic through the Pine Woods neighborhood is already unsafe, with nonresidents using local roads as cut-throughs. She described dangerous turning movements from Voyager and expressed concern that the development would bring more vehicles onto Springcrest and Otero, worsening existing congestion and safety problems. Ms. Carsten also raised safety concerns about having a four- or five-story apartment complex next to an elementary school, citing risks related to visibility from balconies, inadequate vetting of visitors, and opportunities for harmful behavior. She asked the Commission to prioritize community and child safety over developer interests.

Cassie Carrigan ceded time to Dr. Sarah Pramanik, security engineering expert, opposed the rezoning on the grounds of student safety, traffic, and the shifting of burdens onto residents and the school. She stated that the development would introduce elevated vantage points overlooking the school playground and increase risks of voyeurism, unauthorized photography, and misuse of images through modern technology. She objected to the developer's suggestion that the school should modify its traffic operations to compensate for project impacts and argued that it was inappropriate for existing institutions to bear the burden of accommodating a private development. Dr. Pramanik also raised concerns about proximity to I-25 as a trafficking corridor and stated that higher-density housing brings increased transiency and additional safety concerns.

Patricia Krueger ceded time to Elizabeth Gilbert, a parent with children at TCA, opposed the project due to incompatibility with PlanCOS, school security risks, and market oversupply of apartments. She stated that school-safety best practices emphasize perimeter protection and that a tall building overlooking school grounds conflicts with established guidelines on surveillance risks. Ms. Gilbert cited a fatal incident involving a tenant at another property operated by the developer to argue that screening cannot eliminate safety issues. She also pointed to rising vacancy rates in nearby multifamily communities as evidence that the development is not needed and expressed concern about the long-term risk of future redevelopment under MX-M zoning.

Diane Myers ceded time to Elissa Tipps, who spoke on behalf of parents and teachers, expressed concern about health risks from wind-blown construction dust affecting students who spend significant time outdoors. She stated that the area experiences frequent high-wind events, which could carry debris and contaminants onto school grounds during years-long construction. Ms. Tipps also addressed the danger of additional traffic at the already congested Voyager/Briargate/Springcrest area and asserted that the proposed right-in/right-out access would worsen safety issues. She argued that the zoning was originally set appropriately to avoid these hazards and asked the Commission not to rezone the land.

Hillary Jeanjacquet ceded time to David Wahl, a Springcrest resident of 27 years, who argued that the neighborhood's only viable access road is already strained and that adding hundreds of residents would "bottle-cap" the community by overwhelming Springcrest Road. He

noted that Otero is also becoming limited due to another apartment project and that the rezoning would double traffic volumes. Mr. Wahl expressed concern about emergency vehicle access and for traffic during school pickup times. He also objected to five-story buildings overshadowing the school and said the project would eliminate the “margin of safety” his neighborhood currently has.

KC Voget ceded time to Lance Miller, who presented an opposition argument based on the UDC criteria for rezoning and land-use plans. He stated that the area is an established neighborhood and that the proposal does not meet compatibility or public-interest standards. He argued that cumulative developments, including another large project at the end of Otero, would overwhelm local infrastructure. Mr. Miller presented renderings to illustrate how the building massing would dominate the school’s field and stated that MX-M would allow too intense a use for a small parcel next to a low-density neighborhood and elementary school.

Annie Han ceded time to Patricia Gould, who opposed the proposal as a grandparent who regularly drives through the area and experiences congestion at Voyager and Springcrest. She stated that adding hundreds of residents would cause unsafe traffic conditions at times when students are present. Ms. Gould warned about security risks posed by balconies overlooking the playground, including possible active-shooter scenarios. She argued that the density and height were inconsistent with the neighborhood and suggested that open space or low-intensity use would be more appropriate.

Madeline Han, school student, expressed fear of additional traffic and discomfort being watched while playing.

Ellie Han, school student, said she worries they would not enjoy the sun because it will all be shaded by the apartments.

Hannah Adams, school student, said she would not like strangers looking out from their windows into the school.

Millie Gearhart, school student, said she and her classmates spend significant time outside and would not feel safe with people looking at them. She is also concerned about what could happen when they are walking to and from school.

Lydia Gearhart, school student, expressed concerns about

inappropriate behavior, smoking, and loss of mountain views.

Steve Luna, area resident, TCA students' father, said the proposal is not compatible with the neighborhood, since all the surrounding properties do not exceed two stories. He said zoning categories such as OC MX Neighborhood or R-Flex Low would provide a more reasonable transition. He said height should be limited to two-story homes or similarly low-scale housing. Mr. Luna also raised traffic and safety concerns, stating that the proposed right-in/right-out access would worsen school-hour merging conflicts and that allowing four- or five-story apartments overlooking the elementary school playground would pose unacceptable security risks.

Brandi Henderson opposed the rezoning and raised concerns about marijuana smoke from legal personal use drifting toward the school due to prevailing winds. She also argued that the developer's description of the units as "luxury housing" contradicts the stated goal of providing affordable options and stated that such units are not accessible to the average household.

Rebecca Hernandez, a Pine Woods resident, opposed the project due to increased congestion on the community's single access road, emergency evacuation concerns, and the proximity of a tall apartment building to an elementary school. She stated that the project is incompatible with the character of the surrounding single-family neighborhoods and argued that the Voyager corridor already has added too many apartments.

Idgie Watkins stated that she frequently walks in the neighborhood and is concerned about safety on Otero and Springcrest. She argued that residents deserve the same privacy buffer that city facilities have around them. She expressed doubt that the apartments would remain luxury units and stated that the zoning could allow undesirable uses if the current project failed. Ms. Watkins encouraged the commission to prioritize people over revenue.

John Percell, a parent of two TCA students, argued that higher population density correlates with increased crime risk and that the development would create opportunities for exploitation or harm to children due to direct visual access from balconies. He stated that screening and background checks cannot eliminate risks posed by visitors or future occupants. Mr. Percell said the project is inappropriate land use adjacent to an elementary school.

Christina Winger mentioned statistics on mental-health trends and violent incidents nationwide and argued that placing a five-story building 15 feet from the playground would create unacceptable safety risks. She described the number of students and staff regularly outdoors and stated that the project would give too many potential vantage points overlooking children. Winger asked the Commission not to prioritize developer interests over student safety.

Jack Stewart, a nearby resident, stated that he would not introduce new arguments but questioned whether the concerns raised by the community would have any real effect on the outcome. He expressed skepticism about the process, asking whether the Planning Commission or those who appointed its members were influenced by developers and suggesting that approval of the rezoning might already be predetermined. He concluded by asking whether the extensive opposition presented by residents would genuinely be considered.

Jeff Willsey, a resident of Bramblwood Lane, opposed the rezoning due to traffic congestion, safety concerns, and the developer's reliance on the school and residents to mitigate impacts. He stated that multifamily housing should be in walkable, high-density, mixed-use areas, not in an isolated pocket beside single-family homes and a school.

Applicant's Rebuttal

Mr. Ritter thanked the public for their comments.

Jeff Plank, Traffic Engineer, addressed congestion concerns by explaining that the proposed multifamily project would generate far fewer trips than the office development already permitted under existing Business Park zoning. He noted that, in response to community concerns, additional school-hour counts were conducted and showed that congestion was primarily caused by pickup queues spilling into the roadway from the school's site. Mr. Plank stated that this issue could be resolved through operational changes by the school to keep queues on campus, rather than through major roadway modifications. He added that the project's required improvements, such as striping adjustments, turn-lane enhancements, and a right-in/right-out access on Voyager, would help manage traffic flow and reduce conflict points. Overall, he maintained that the apartments would have a lower peak traffic impact than office use and would not exceed the capacity assumptions of the City's traffic standards. The applicant reiterated its willingness to work with the City and neighborhood.

Mr. Ritter emphasized that safety, particularly school safety, was also a serious concern for the development team. He stated that their company hires professional property-management firms and requires criminal background checks, credit checks, and income verification for all prospective residents. Mr. Ritter noted that while no system is perfect, these procedures are more rigorous than those applied to single-family homeownership or informal rental arrangements and help maintain a safe residential environment.

Mr. Ritter added that single-family neighborhoods are not inherently safer, as individuals who pass background checks can still engage in harmful behavior, and visitors to any home or rental are not subject to screening. He argued that the multifamily product, given its management structure, allows for more consistent oversight than other allowable land-use categories under BP zoning, which could include office, retail, or other commercial uses with uncontrolled public access.

Mr. Ritter then addressed comments raised about the prior rezoning request on the church property to the north. He stated that the earlier case differed materially because that site lacked access to Voyager Parkway and relied solely on Springcrest Road and Otero Avenue. In contrast, he explained, the current proposal includes a right-in/right-out access directly to Voyager, which significantly reduces traffic impacts on Springcrest, a key concern noted by both staff and residents.

Mr. Ritter reiterated that the existing BP zoning already allows a 68-foot-tall structure by right, whereas the MX-M rezoning would reduce the maximum height to 50 feet. He emphasized that the development proposes substantially less square footage and far fewer peak-hour trips than an office building built under existing entitlements. He also addressed market-demand concerns, stating that vacancy has dropped sharply in Colorado Springs in the last two years and that the region continues to experience housing shortages projected to worsen. Mr. Ritter said apartment construction decreased significantly from 2024 to 2026, and demand is projected to outpace supply again.

Ms. Shagin added a brief statement addressing PlanCOS. She noted that the property lies within an “area of change,” meaning the City’s long-range planning framework anticipates redevelopment and infill. She stated that the proposed land-use plan aligns with PlanCOS goals regarding infill development, housing diversity, and reinvestment in existing transportation corridors. Ms. Shagin reiterated that the project transitions appropriately from high-intensity uses along Voyager to lower-intensity residential areas to the north and east.

Staff Comments and Commission Discussion

Todd Frisbie, City Traffic Engineering, explained that the City followed its standard review process and required a traffic impact study, which met all applicable requirements. He noted that analyzing traffic near a school is inherently difficult due to the brief but intense 15-20-minute surges during drop-off and pick-up. He stated that the City has worked closely with TCA for years on improving its operations and that the school has been receptive to suggested changes.

He highlighted that the campus has a long internal driveway wide enough for double-stacked queues. Earlier observations showed 21 vehicles queuing onto Springcrest when the school was not using double-stacking; recent follow-up observations, after the school implemented that procedure, showed only two cars queued. He noted that the earlier 21-car queue lasted only seven minutes, which is typical for school traffic patterns.

Mr. Frisbie stated that Traffic Engineering has no significant traffic concerns related to the proposed development, and crash history on Voyager showed no meaningful pattern of sideswipe or turning-related crashes, with only one sideswipe recorded in five years. He added that about 20 percent of project traffic is expected to travel north on Voyager and 80 percent south toward I-25, and therefore the project is not expected to meaningfully increase cut-through traffic on Otero, as Voyager remains the faster route. Mr. Frisbie concluded that both the school's operational adjustments and the project's traffic distribution indicate no anticipated safety or operational issues.

Commissioner Cecil asked for clarification from City Traffic Engineering about whether the two proposed access points, the right-in/right-out on Voyager Parkway and the full-movement intersection on Springcrest Road, were sufficient to manage traffic generated by the development. Commissioner Cecil also asked whether any mitigation measures had been recommended to manage peak-hour school congestion. Commissioner Cecil inquired specifically about potential pedestrian-conflict points, whether bus service or walking routes were relevant, and whether the roadway design supported safe circulation for both residents and school operations.

Commissioner Cecil asked whether certain MX-M uses, like bars, adult retail, or marijuana-related businesses, would already be prohibited because of separation requirements from schools. Ms. Stocker confirmed that marijuana businesses are prohibited within 1,000 feet of a school and

that various adult-oriented uses carry similar separation requirements. She added that several other code layers, such as traffic, fire, and building code, further restrict uses, even if technically listed within MX-M.

Commissioner Cecil asked the applicant whether balconies could be eliminated on the school-facing side of the building or whether building orientation could be shifted to reduce visual exposure. Mr. Ritter responded that the site suffers from multiple constraints, including major drainage and sewer easements, which prevent reorienting buildings or pushing them further west. He stated that balconies are currently planned on the school-facing sides but noted that the team had already stepped down the closest building from five stories to four based on public feedback.

Commissioner Cecil stated that she could not support approval without conditions restricting incompatible uses. Commissioner Cecil emphasized concerns about building height transitions, safety considerations, and long-term effects of opening the door to more intense uses if the development were not built as proposed.

Commissioner Slattery shared a detailed comparison between the proposed MX-M zoning and the existing Business Park (BP) zoning, noting that BP currently allows several uses that could be more disruptive or hazardous near a school, including gas stations, truck terminals, hazardous-material uses, and various high-traffic commercial activities. Commissioner Slattery noted that the Master Plan historically envisioned high-intensity employment uses at this location and argued that mid-scale residential could be less impactful than a built-out office park.

Commissioner Slattery expressed concerns about compatibility and advocated for restricting specific MX-M uses such as heavy commercial/industrial operations, adult-oriented businesses, marijuana-related uses, and liquor sales. Commissioner Slattery also stated that although MX-M was not perfect, a rezoning with clearly defined use restrictions would better protect the school and neighborhood than leaving BP intact. Commissioner Slattery further recommended that the future development plan come back to the Planning Commission for full public review.

Commissioner Slattery asked how the right-in/right-out driveway would be striped to reduce weaving conflicts in the existing acceleration/deceleration lane. Mr. Frisbie explained that the future striped design would “force the lane drop” at the development driveway-meaning drivers exiting Briargate Parkway northbound would have to merge into the through-lane before the apartment driveway, eliminating conflict with vehicles entering from the right-in/right-out. Conversely, vehicles exiting the development would be

forced to merge into Voyager traffic before reaching Springcrest. Frisby emphasized that detailed striping review would occur at the development plan.

Commissioner Slattery asked City Traffic Engineering whether the development would trigger any requirement to bring Springcrest Road up to city standards or add sidewalks. Mr. Frisbie explained that the development would be required to construct curb, gutter, and sidewalk only along the segment directly adjacent to the project. He noted that Springcrest east of Otero is a county road, and although the City has sidewalk-gap programs, there are no current plans to reconstruct the remainder.

Chair Hensler also asked whether U-turn restrictions at Springcrest should be considered. Mr. Frisbie answered that current traffic data does not show a collision pattern requiring U-turn prohibitions, but such measures could be evaluated during the development-plan stage if concerns persisted.

Chair Hensler asked whether other zoning categories have been explored and why they determined this was the best option. Ms. Shagin clarified that the MX-T zone, suggested during public comment, allows taller buildings, up to 60 feet, and is geared toward higher-intensity, institutional housing such as student housing, making it unsuitable for the site. She added that the MX-N district, with a 45-foot height limit, is not used elsewhere in the area and would create an isolated zoning designation. She stated that MX-M best matches the adjacent zoning to the south and avoids spot zoning. Ms. Shagin also noted that although MX-M permits a range of uses, some are less intense than what is already allowed under current Business Park zoning, which permits buildings up to 68 feet. She concluded by stating that MX-M supports the UDC's intent to redevelop vacant or underutilized commercial areas.

Commissioner Robbins stated that he was uncomfortable with the proposal overall, describing the surrounding area as constrained by narrow roadways originally configured under county standards. Commissioner Robbins expressed concern that approving multifamily development could exacerbate traffic issues, school congestion, and emergency-access limitations. Commissioner Robbins stated that he believed the project imposed unreasonable burdens on existing residents and schools and felt that the site was not appropriate for higher-density development.

Commissioner Willoughby asked whether new hydrants would be required. Steve Smith, Colorado Springs Fire Department, said hydrant requirements would be determined during development-plan review but at

least one hydrant would likely be necessary. Commissioner Willoughby then asked whether emergency evacuations posed a concern. Mr. Smith explained that the fire code regulates emergency access, not evacuation, and confirmed that with two access points the development meets fire code.

Commissioner Willoughby further asked the Police Department whether rising crime or apartment-related safety concerns applied. Deputy Chief Doug Traynor responded that the area currently reports low crime rates and that CSPD could not conclude that multifamily housing inherently increases crime relative to other uses.

Commissioner Willoughby acknowledged the community's strong concerns but noted that BP zoning today already permits several uses that would generate higher traffic or present greater safety risks than multifamily residential. Commissioner Willoughby cited examples such as fuel stations, parking structures, and certain industrial or commercial activities that could be developed by right without public hearings. Commissioner Willoughby also pointed out that apartments do not inherently pose higher risks than other residential forms, and that passive surveillance from nearby residences can sometimes increase safety rather than reduce it. Commissioner Willoughby stated that the key concerns could be addressed through use restrictions and additional scrutiny at the development-plan stage. Commissioner Willoughby supported a requirement to have the development plan return to the Planning Commission and favored prohibiting incompatible MX-M uses.

Commissioner Case spoke in favor of relying on City traffic engineers, fire, and police, emphasizing that multiple reviewing agencies did not find technical deficiencies in the application. Commissioner Case stated that the remaining concerns, particularly detailed traffic design and circulation, would be more appropriately addressed during the development-plan stage. Commissioner Case supported requiring the development plan to return to the Commission and agreed that some MX-M uses should be excluded to ensure compatibility with the school and surrounding neighborhoods.

Commissioner Case asked whether the limited roadway network into the county enclave created hydrant or supply challenges. Mr. Smith replied that he was not familiar enough with water-supply specifics in that area to provide a definitive answer but confirmed the city-side infrastructure serving the development would follow fire-code requirements.

Commissioner Willoughby later asked the applicant whether they had considered offering housing incentives for teachers or school staff. Mr.

Ritter replied that the company had provided such programs in other cities and would consider that opportunity here. He reiterated that the development would undergo full screening and professional management.

Commissioner Cecil asked Mr. Walker whether requiring the development plan to return to the Planning Commission for approval would create administrative issues. Mr. Walker stated that while the development plan could be referred or appealed regardless, requiring it to return was permissible, though it may extend scheduling. Walker emphasized that the development-plan stage contains compatibility criteria and is the appropriate point to resolve detailed design issues such as building massing, screening, access configuration, and adjacency to the school.

Motion by Commissioner Slattery, seconded by Commissioner Willoughby, that this Ordinance be accepted Recommend approval to City Council of the zone change of 7.93 acres from BP/cr/HR/AF-O (Business Park with Conditions of Record, High-Rise Overlay, and the United States Air Force Academy Overlay) to MX-M/AF-O (Mixed-Use Medium Scale with the United States Air Force Academy Overlay) based upon the findings that the request complies with the criteria for a Zoning Map Amendment set forth in City Code Section 7.5.704. with conditions of record prohibiting the uses listed under the subcategories of Marijuana-Related Services, Heavy Commercial, Storage, and Industry; Industrial Hemp; Natural Medicine; and the following specific uses adult retail and liquor sales.

The motion passed unanimously.

Aye: 9 - Chair Hensler, Commissioner Cecil, Vice Chair Slattery, Commissioner Robbins, Commissioner Clements, Commissioner Gigiano, Commissioner Willoughby, Commissioner Case and Commissioner Engel

- 9.C. LUPL-25-00** Establishing of the Briargate/Voyager Multi-Family Land Use Plan for
10 proposed multi-family residential consisting of 7.93 acres located at 1625 Springcrest Road.
(Quasi-Judicial)

Related Files: ZONE-25-0023
Located in Council District 2

Presenter:

Allison Stocker, Senior Planner, Planning Department
Kevin Walker, Planning Director, Planning Department

Attachments: 7.5.514 LAND USE PLAN

Motion by Commissioner Slattery, seconded by Commissioner Willoughby, to recommend approval to City Council of the

Briargate/Voyager Multi-Family Land Use Plan based upon the finding that the proposal complies with the review criteria for the Land Use Plans set forth in City Code Section 7.5.514. with a condition of approval requiring the future development plan application to be reviewed and approved by Planning Commission.

The motion passed by a vote of 8-1.

Aye: 8 - Chair Hensler, Commissioner Cecil, Vice Chair Slattery, Commissioner Clements, Commissioner Gigiano, Commissioner Willoughby, Commissioner Case and Commissioner Engel

No: 1 - Commissioner Robbins

10. Presentations

11. Executive Session

12. Adjourn