

June 28, 2023

Tamara Baxter, Senior Planner
Planning and Community Development
Land Use Review
30 S. Nevada, Suite 701
Colorado Springs, CO 80901

RE: Mesa Highlands Land Use Plan and Zone Change– 1st Review Response

**City File #: ZONE-23-0011
MAPN-23-0004**

Dear Ms. Baxter:

Thank you for forwarding the public comments received during the initial review of the Mesa Highlands Zone Change and Master Plan Amendment. We have given consideration to these comments and would like to supply more details to address some of the concerns and misconceptions about the proposed project. We would be grateful if you could send this letter to the individuals who commented on the application.

Of the three comments received, two are concerned with traffic and drainage, one is concerned with subsurface water, one is opposed to high rise development, and one is concerned about unique health impacts of construction and ongoing development noise.

Drainage and Subsurface Water

A drainage letter has been prepared for the development and submitted for review by the City's Storm Water Enterprise (SWENT). All new development will be required to install new Full Spectrum Detention facilities in compliance with current City criteria to limit their flows to historic rate to the east. The same existing outfall pipe/corridor downstream of the existing pond will be used as the outfall. The existing pond will be for emergency storage use only.

In response to the surface water traveling east across the site and down the slope into the adjacent commercial and residential areas, upon development of the upper portion of the site, curb and gutter and drainage inlets and storm systems will be installed that will collect the water and convey it to the south, essentially cutting off surface easterly flows. The properties to the east will see a reduction in overall flows based upon this uphill diversion, detention, and release to the south.

A Geologic Hazard Report prepared for the property by CTL Thompson (CTL/T) finds the prevalent geologic hazards identified at this site consist of undocumented fill as well as expansive soils. Both hazards can be mitigated with common and careful engineering design and construction methods, and do not preclude development of the site. Groundwater was not encountered at the time of drilling. When checked 8 days

following the completion of drilling operations, groundwater was measured in five of the exploratory borings at depth between 15.5 and 63 feet. The comparatively shallow groundwater depth of 15.5 was measured in exploratory boring TH-2B located at the toe of the slope. The Report concludes that conventional methods of site grading, utility installation, and building construction are applicable for future development of the property; that remediation of existing fill materials will be needed and will help reduce risk of poor foundation and slab-on-grade performance as well as improve reliability of pavements and utilities; that grading located adjacent to and along the existing and new slopes should be designed and graded with permanent slopes not exceeding a ratio of 3:1' and that slope grading and repair of erosion rills should be completed following the recommendations presented in the Report.

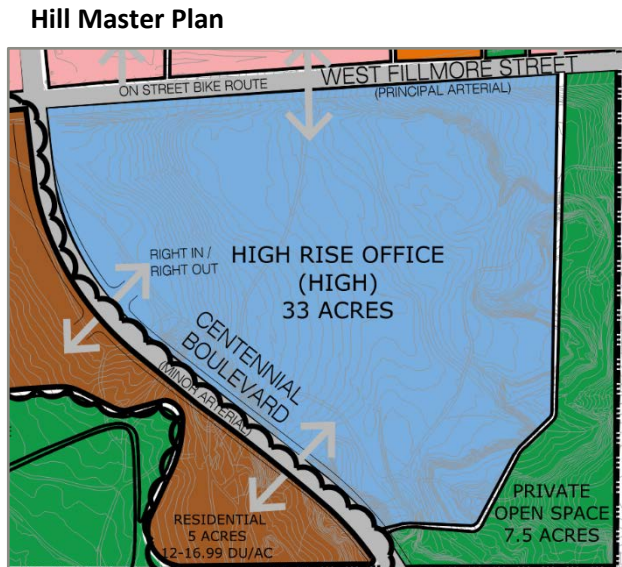
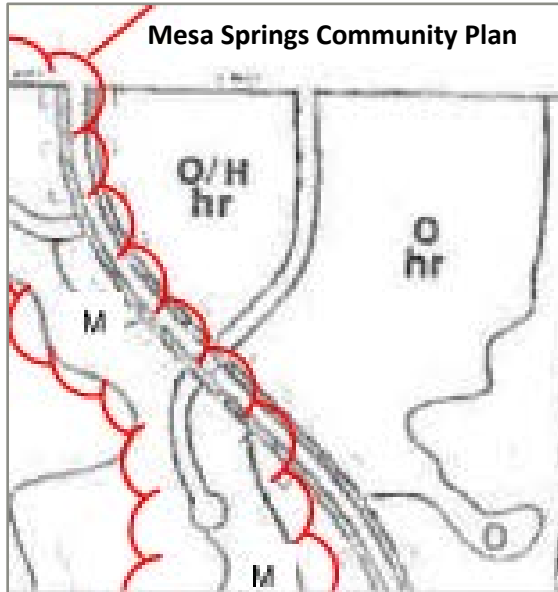
In response to neighborhood concerns TCL/T indicates that a design level Geotechnical Investigation will be prepared for the design and construction of each proposed building in the development. Recent and past Geological Hazard Evaluations prepared by CTL|T have identified existing groundwater at depths of between 45 and 62 feet, measured from the crest of the slope. Some variability may exist year over year depending on abnormally dry or wet seasons and previous earthwork. Based on their recent study, as well as previous investigations, subsurface materials across the site generally consist of deep, relatively permeable fill and granular materials. Less impermeable bedrock was generally encountered at depths greater than about 25 feet.

The runoff is planned to be detained in individual ponds on each lot, with the outlets conveying the discharge to an existing pond at the southeast corner of the overall development. Water from the pond is conveyed through an existing stormwater system. These features will limit the potential of the development to alter the moisture contents of the soils and the referenced property. Covering surfaces with generally impermeable surfaces such as asphalt, concrete, and buildings will reduce and/or limit infiltration of precipitation runoff.

According to the design team and civil engineer, the proposed stormwater quality pond designs will be reviewed by the City Stormwater Enterprise. The ponds will be a full spectrum detention facility designed to reduce and limit the easterly flows to historic rates. CTL/T believes, with proper design and construction of the commercial developments, including stormwater drainage, the proposed development will not significantly impact the existing conditions. Seasonal and long-term changes in precipitation are likely to influence structures on expansive materials.

Highrise Development

The subject property is within the Mesa Springs Community Plan (implemented) and the Hill Properties Master Plan. Both plans have been in place for a number of years, and identify this property as Office/High Rise, so the rezoning request is consistent with both master plans. While current PUD zoning would allow for high rise development, it does not allow for institutional or residential development, therefore the primary purpose of the rezone is to modify the allowable uses to include such land uses.



The proposed MX-L zone provides for a mix of residential, commercial and office uses. This zoning district also allow heights up to 65', with increased height up to 85' on lots with arterial frontage (W Fillmore Street and Centennial Boulevard). The maximum height proposed for development on the site is not yet known, and while it is not currently anticipated to reach the maximum allowable height of 65' or 85' on arterials roadways, the owner desires to maintain the current high-rise allowances for the property. Final proposed maximum height will be determined with Development Plans for the property. Development Plans, while administratively approved, do require notification of adjacent property owners.

Traffic

The site is in a growing mixed-use area and has excellent access to local and regional transportation, various multi-use trails, and two transit stops which are present on W Fillmore St, which provide alternate transportation options in the area. The extension of Centennial Boulevard south to Fontenero St will improve the overall accessibility of this property, as well as provide additional options for traffic in the area.

The Land Use Plan, which must show proposed access points and traffic circulation, shows no connections between the development property and adjacent property to the east and south, to minimize impacts to existing uses and the surrounding neighborhood. Primary access to the site is via W Filmore St and Centennial Blvd, both arterials designed to handle high volumes of local traffic.

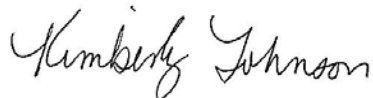
A Traffic Impact Analysis (TIS) has been prepared for the proposed development, assuming a religious institution and multi-family housing, however, final land uses have not yet been determined. The TIS indicates that the proposed development at full build-out is expected to generate approximately 2,182 daily trips, with 175 of these trips occurring during the morning peak hour and 205 of these trips occurring during the afternoon peak hour. Based on the analysis presented in the TIS, the Mesa Highlands development is expected to create no negative impact to traffic operations for the existing and surrounding roadway system upon roadway and intersection control improvements assumed in the analysis (see full report for details). The study intersections are projected to operate at future levels of service comparable to Year 2043 background traffic conditions. Proposed site accesses have long-term operations at LOS B or better during peak traffic periods and upon build-out.

Construction Noise

Noise is an inevitable and unavoidable effect of any type of construction. Construction noise is regulated under Section 9.8.107 of the Colorado Springs City Code.

Please let me know if there is any additional information we can provide to alleviate the neighbors' concerns about this project. We are confident this development will be a compatible neighbor and have a positive impact on the community.

Regards,



Kimberly Johnson, AICP
Senior Planner