



Memorandum

TO: Katie Carleo, City of Colorado Springs
FROM: Cody Humphrey, Director of Planning
DATE: September 16, 2016
SUBJECT: Cordera Filing 4 and 5 - Response to Letters of Opposition

The following summary is provided in response to the letters received by the City of Colorado Springs from citizens in opposition to the Cordera Filing 4 and 5 application submittal. La Plata Communities on behalf of High Valley Land Company, Inc. is requesting in its application an amendment to the Briargate Master Plan for a land use change, a concept plan and zone change for Filings 4 and 5, and a Development Plan and Final Plat for Filing 4. The total acreage for Filing 4 and 5 is 116.82 acres with 307 single-family lots being proposed, equating to 2.63 dwelling units (du) per acre (ac).

The proposed development in Filing 4 and 5 is consistent with the character, planning, lot size mix and product mix found throughout the rest of the Cordera community. A total of seven cul-de-sacs are being provided between Filings 4 & 5 which is 70% of the roads being proposed in this application. Nearly two miles of trails in 33.48 acres of open space will be provided as amenities throughout Filing 4 & 5. The total length of trail does not include the mile of the Tier 2 Regional Trail that will be constructed as part of these filings. A 16-acre park is also being planned in Cordera Filing 3 directly to the south of Filing 4 and within easy walking and driving distance of the proposed development.

Cordera Filing 4 and 5 were designed to be offset from the County boundary along Old Ranch Road to provide a visual buffer for the County residents to the north. Instead of planning lots directly adjacent to Old Ranch Road, a wide landscaped area with a variety of shrubs, native grasses and Ponderosa Pine trees, rolling berms, low-slung remnant walls, and preservation of existing on-site scrub oak will provide a soft and harmonious transition to the County. By implementing a large buffer width and landscape screening, one of the goals of this buffer is to soften the impact of a home along Old Ranch Road. The Ponderosa Pines were chosen specifically to mimic the same type of evergreen trees predominantly found in the Black Forest area within the County as well as add screening that will filter views from Old Ranch to the back of homes. Where a 20' landscape buffer is required by the City Review Criteria, the landscape buffer area varies in width from 75' to 410', averaging about 100' wide along the entire length of Old Ranch Road. Each lot in Cordera that abuts this landscape buffer will have a 25' rear yard setback which further increases the distance of a home away from Old Ranch Road. Another goal of this buffer was to provide a new public amenity through the installation of a trail. A nine-foot wide multi-use public trail (six-foot wide asphalt and three-foot wide soft surface) will meander throughout the landscape, berms and remnant walls along the entire stretch of Old Ranch Road. The trail will connect to the Tier 2 10' wide regional trail along the gas easement through Cordera to form a loop trail system of nearly two miles of trails with links to additional neighborhood trails found throughout Filing 4 and 5's designated open spaces.

The homes that will be built in Filing 4 and 5 will be very similar in total square footage and quality to the homes found in Cordera Filings 1, 2 and 3. The same builders that were selected to build homes in the previous filings of Cordera will be used again in Filing 4 and 5 and will be upheld to the same architectural standards established by the Cordera Design Guidelines as in the previous three filings. The open space and trail amenities, aesthetics and landscaping combined with high quality architectural guidelines will continue to uphold the value of the homes throughout the Cordera community. The proposed homes for Filing 4 and 5 is not a multi-family product. The proposed Filing 4 and 5 plan contains 307 single family homes with a mix of 50', 60' and 70' wide lots.

We are requesting an amendment to the Briargate Master Plan for a land use change request from Very Low (0.00-1.99 gross du/ac) to Low (2.00-3.49 gross du/ac). The proposed overall density is of Filing 4 and 5 is 2.63 gross du/ac which is an increase of 0.64 du/ac. Based on the 2020 Land Use Map that designates "Low Density Residential" in the areas of Filing 4 and 5, the application is consistent with the goals and policies of the City's Comprehensive Plan.

The following is a breakdown of lot sizes per Filings 1, 2 and 3 compared to the lots sizes of Filing 4 & 5:

Cordera Filing 1

55% of the lots are 50' wide
44% of the lots are 60' wide
1% of the lots are 70' wide

Cordera Filing 2

37% of the lots are 50' wide
32% of the lots are 60' wide
21% of the lots are 70' wide
10% of the lots are 80' wide

Cordera Filing 3

47% of the lots are 50' wide
28% of the lots are 60' wide
25% of the lots are 70' wide

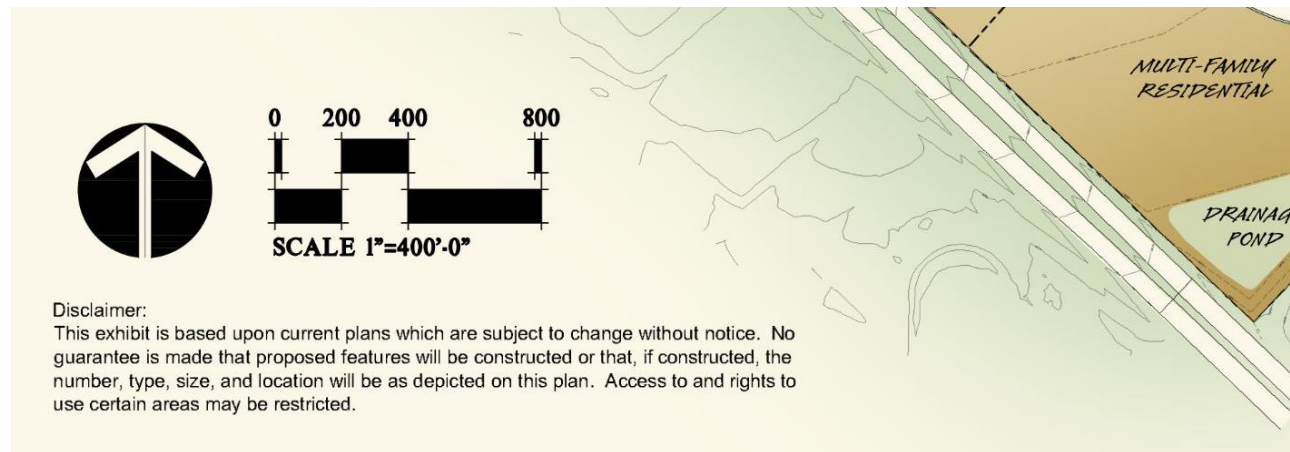
Cordera Filing 4 and 5

44% of the lots are 50' wide
42% of the lots are 60' wide
14% of the lots are 70' wide

Based on current market trends, the demand for Executive (80' lots), Semi-Custom and Custom lots is very low in the Colorado Springs area. Evidence of this can be seen in other Cordera Filings where inventory for Executive lots are still available after nine years of being on the market. This is in opposition to where the 1st Time Move-Up (50' lots), 2nd Time Move-Up (60' lots), and even Upgrade (70' lots) have been selling at a consistent rate since coming onto the market. Market trends have shown that the demand for 1st and 2nd Move-Up lots is higher because they are more attainable than Executive homes. La Plata Communities is reacting to this current market and not wanting to develop a housing product that is not in demand. The desire is to avoid having builder-ready Executive lots possibly sit vacant for many years into the future that would, in turn, have a detrimental look to the Cordera community. Because of this, La Plata is requesting the land use change for Filing 4 and 5 from Very Low to Low to capture a housing market that is currently in demand but, also, remain consistent with the planning, lot size mix and landscape treatment found throughout the rest of the Cordera community.

La Plata Communities recognizes the value in the preservation of existing vegetation for its communities. It is the goal with this Filing 4 and 5 to preserve as much of the existing vegetation as possible in areas that allow it. Much of the existing scrub oak vegetation along the landscape buffer next to Old Ranch Road will be preserved. Internal to Filing 4 and 5, existing vegetation will be tagged for preservation in open space areas and between lots when deemed savable. La Plata recognizes that not all vegetation on this site will be saved but is conscious of making the effort to do so to the utmost extent possible.

The “Treasure Map” Cordera site plan graphic that is reference to in a couple of the letters of opposition was created for marketing purposes only. A disclaimer at the bottom of the graphic states “This exhibit is based upon current plans with are subject to change without notice. No guarantee is made that proposed features will be constructed or that, if constructed, the number, type, size, and location will be as depicted on this plan. Access to and rights to use certain areas may be restricted.” The CSU gas line easement has always been 50 feet wide. No guarantee has ever been made by La Plata Communities that Cordera Filing 5 lots would be 50 to 80 yards from existing Filing 2 lots.



The Academy School District 20 has confirmed that “the increase in density requested in these filings will not adversely affect the total land dedication that is due to Academy School District 20 at full build out of the Briargate Master Plan. Based upon current calculations, past and identified future dedications of land to the District will fulfill the obligations of La Plata Communities under existing City Code.” The proposed density is consistent with the existing density found throughout the rest of the Cordera community.

Concerns that may relate to the size and capacity of the Cordera Community Center due to the continued build-out of Cordera will be addressed by the Cordera Community Association (CCA) and are not a part of this application.

Concerns were raised regarding the date and time of the neighborhood meeting. The neighborhood meeting held on the evening of August 17th, 2016, was not intentionally scheduled to conflict with the Back-to-School night for Chinook and Challenger schools. The meeting was set a month in advance and our team had no knowledge of this event when the date was selected. We were not made aware of the conflict until several days before the meeting and well after the date was posted and the City had sent out postcards of the meeting time.

Concerns about off-site and on-site runoff and drainage throughout Filing 4 and 5 have been addressed by our engineering team and will be reviewed by city staff as part of the submittal to the City of Colorado Springs.

La Plata Communities will be required to cover a portion of the cost to install a traffic signal at the intersection of Old Ranch Road/Union Blvd/Milam Road with the completion of Union Blvd heading north. A proposed pedestrian underpass will be built during the construction of Filing 5 with the completion of Union Blvd allowing for safe pedestrian access along the Tier 2 regional trail system connecting Filings 3, 4 and 5 with Filing 2 and future Cordera development north of Filing 2. This underpass will complement the already existing Briargate Parkway pedestrian underpass connecting Cordera Filings 1 and 2 allowing pedestrians to use the internal trail system without having to cross either of the two major arterial streets through Cordera.

La Plata Communities has made every effort to address all major concerns of opposition to Cordera Filing 4 and 5 with the neighborhood meeting presentation held on August 17th, 2016, and with this memo.