



March 11, 2024

Development Review Enterprise
Planning & Community Development
30 South Nevada Avenue
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

**RE: *Central Bluffs Substation
NWC Austin Bluffs Pkwy & Goldenrod Drive, Colorado Springs, CO
Project and Land Use Statement for a Rezone***

LAND USE STATEMENT AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Colorado Springs Utilities (“CSU” or the “Developer”) wishes to rezone seven parcels of land to the Public Facilities Zone as outlined in Exhibit B - Zone Change Map (included separately). The parcels to be rezoned consist of:

- Parcel 6327206056 – 2910 Austin Bluffs Parkway
- Parcel 6327206051 – 2914 Austin Bluffs Parkway
- Parcel 6327206054 – 2918 Austin Bluffs Parkway
- Parcel 6327206052 – 2922 Austin Bluffs Parkway
- Parcel 6327206055 – 2930 Austin Bluffs Parkway
- Parcel 6327206046 – 4002 Goldenrod Drive
- Parcel 6327206045 – 4006 Goldenrod Drive

The existing zone districts of the parcels to be rezoned consist of MX-N, R-4, and R-1. Specific zones for each parcel as well as which parcels are affected by conditional use agreements and streamside requirements can be seen on the Exhibit B - Zone Change Map (included separately).

CSU intends to redevelop the existing commercial, residential and vacant land into a proposed substation. The substation has been proposed so three older substations can be decommissioned and consolidated into one new substation to meet the electrical needs of the surrounding neighborhoods. The exact site layout and development plans for the proposed substation are unknown at this time but will be provided in a future development plan submittal. Additionally, proposed stormwater facilities, ground cover and landscaping plant materials, screening materials, off-street parking and other site details will be shown in the future development plan.

The Property is bounded as follows:

North: 3-Single Family Residences, Templeton Gap Floodway and City Greenbelt Land
East: City of Colorado Springs Park Land and 8-Single Family Residences and Goldenrod Drive
South: Austin Bluffs Parkway
West: Templeton Gap Floodway (land owned by City)

WAIVER OF LAND USE PLAN

The Manager may waive the requirement for approval of a Land Use Plan if the Manager determines that requiring approval of a Land Use Plan would not serve the purposes of this Section or the UDC because:

- The land area under review is less than ten (10) acres and is planned to be developed in a single phase;
 - Applicable: The land area under review is approximately 352,397sf or 8.09 acres.
- The land is contained in and subject to a previously approved Master or Concept Plan;
 - Not applicable: A Master or Concept Plan does not cover the full parcels included in this proposed rezone application.
- The land is included in a Development Plan application;
 - Not applicable: A development plan application has not been submitted to the city of Colorado Springs for review, but one will be submitted at a later date as part of the future development.
- The land area is part of an established surrounding development pattern;
 - Applicable: The land area is surrounded by established neighborhoods
- The proposed zoning pattern for the land aligns with adjacent existing zoning or development; and/or
 - Not applicable.
- Major infrastructure or urban services for the land including but not limited to access points and roadway systems, have already been established and are not proposed to be changed.
 - Applicable: The proposed rezoning and subsequent development is not anticipated to have an impact on major infrastructure or urban services for the land. It is known that traffic to the site will be reduced significantly as the land use changes from commercial and residential uses to public facilities. Access points to the site may be revised as needed for the proposed public facilities, but it is not anticipated that these access point changes will have a major impact on public infrastructure or traffic patterns.

Based on the information provided above and the fact that a development plan must be submitted and approved prior to any development of the future public facilities at the site, we request that the rezone application proceed with a land use statement as provided above.

REZONE JUSTIFICATION

Applications for an amendment to a zoning map are subject to the following ten criteria for approval. Justification for the proposed rezoning has been included beneath each criteria.

Criteria 1: The proposed rezoning is consistent with the goals and policies of the Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan, with other plans and policies adopted by the City Council; and with the purpose statement of the proposed zone district(s).

The proposed rezoning will occur in the Garden Ranch Neighborhood, an established Suburban Neighborhood as established on the *Vibrant Neighborhoods Framework Map of PlanCOS*.

The proposed rezoning aligns with *Strategy VN-1.A-3: Support the location of City and County services and amenities within or near neighborhoods that need them the most and along/near bus services of PlanCOS*. Once the property is rezoned and developed, electrical facilities will be provided near the neighborhoods that need them the most.

One of the existing substations that can be decommissioned once commissioning of the proposed substation occurs, is a substation located on the north end of Palmer Park. This existing substation is within the Regional Parks and Open Space area as identified on the *Majestic Landscapes Framework Map* found within *PlanCOS*. Removal of the existing substation will allow the land to eventually be returned to open-space, park, or recreational uses (excepting the easement retained for the existing transmission line).

In addition, the proposed substation will support a more reliable and robust electrical network, which supports *Strategy ML-4.C-2: Evaluate and align investments in long-term multimodal transportation solutions such as mass transit, self-driving car technologies, electric vehicle charging stations, and bicycle and walking trails to support improvements in air and water quality*. Development of the proposed substation associated with the proposed rezoning will provide improvements to the electrical grid required for continued adoption of electrical vehicle charging as discussed in Chapter 5 of *PlanCOS* and *Strategy SC-1.E-5*.

Criteria 2: The rezoning will not be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or general welfare.

The proposed rezoning is not anticipated to be detrimental to the public interest, health, safety, convenience, or general welfare. Allowing the rezoning to occur will allow Colorado Springs Utilities to provide newer and more reliable electrical infrastructure to the community. Additionally, development of the land in the future into a new substation will allow CSU to decommission three existing substations and consolidate operations from all three substations into one location. When the development plan is prepared for the site, appropriate screening and fencing measures will be designed to provide for public interest, health, safety and welfare.

The majority of the existing developed land within the rezone boundaries consists of commercial uses. When the land is rezoned to the PF District, the amount of traffic entering the site will decrease significantly compared to the traffic currently seen traveling to/from the commercial businesses along Austin Bluffs Parkway. This will allow pedestrians on the north side of Austin Bluffs Parkway safer access to the trail system next to Templeton Gap Floodway due to a reduction in traffic in this area entering the site and crossing public sidewalk crosswalks.

Criteria 3: The location of the lands in the zoning map area being amended are appropriate for the purposes of the proposed zone district(s).

As stated in *Section 7.2.501 PF: Public Facilities* of the *Colorado Springs Unified Development Code*, “The PF zone district is provided for land that is, for example, used or being reserved for a governmental, utility, or telecommunication purpose by the City of Colorado Springs, El Paso County, the State of Colorado, the Federal government, a public utility, a telecommunications provider, or a private provider of a traditional government function. Generally, the existing or proposed use is a unique governmental or utility service or a governmental function.”

Colorado Springs Utilities, a municipal utility, has identified that the land associated with the rezone is appropriate for the public facilities zoning and that it will adequately support the proposed use of a substation facility. The future substation use will be reviewed by the City in a future development plan submittal.

Criteria 4: If the application proposes to rezone a small area of land, the application demonstrates that the size, scale, height density, and multimodal traffic impacts of the proposed rezoning are compatible with surrounding development or can be made compatible with surrounding development through approval conditions.

The proposed application includes rezoning 8.09 acres of land. Although the size, scale and height density of the future facility are unknown at this time, it has been determined by CSU that the proposed land is adequately sized for a future substation and there is enough land to provide landscape buffers and screening anticipated to be required as part of the development plan process.

The proposed rezoning will require less multimodal traffic options as trips generated by the rezoned site will decrease significantly due to the removal of commercial businesses. Once the facility is constructed, trips to the site are only anticipated to be made by employees of CSU performing inspections and maintenance at the facility.

Criteria 5: If the application proposes to rezone a relatively small area of land, the application demonstrates that the change in zoning will not create significant dislocations of tenants or occupants of the property, or that any impacts are outweighed by other public benefits or progress toward other Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan goals that would be achieved by approval of the application.

The proposed application includes rezoning 8.09 acres of land. CSU has already purchased the land associated with the proposed rezoning and has provided tenants and occupants of the properties assistance with required relocations. The proposed rezoning will support at least three *PlanCOS* strategies as outlined above within Criteria 1.

Criteria 6: If a Land Use Plan or amendment to a Land Use Plan accompanies the application, the Land Use Plan or amendment complies with the applicable criteria in in Subsection 7.5.514C.3 (Land Use Plan Criteria).

As allowed by code, a land use statement can accompany a rezone application for rezoning to the Public Facilities Zone District. Before development of the land discussed in the rezone application, a development plan will be submitted for approval of the proposed public facilities.

Criteria 7: The application is consistent with any approved Concept Plans in the area for which the map is being amended or includes or is accompanied by a provision that approved Concept Plans that have been classified as implemented do not have to be amended in order to be considered consistent with an amended zoning map.

The applicant is not aware of any existing/approved concept plans in the area for which the map is being amended.

Criteria 8: If the application is for creation of an ADS-O district, the approval criteria applicable to the creation of the text of the ADS-O district in Section 7.2.607D.47.5.702 (Decision) shall also apply to consideration of the zoning map amendment required to create or amend the boundaries of the ADS-O district.

The proposed map amendment does not include creation of an ADS-O District.

Criteria 9: If rezoning to a PDZ district, the proposed PDZ district provides significant community amenities or other benefits, as determined by the Manager, that promote the achievement of Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan goals and would not otherwise be required of the applicant under this UDC or other City or governmental regulations.

The proposed map amendment does not include rezoning to a PDZ District.

Criteria 10: Complies with the additional standards of the base zone district where the property is located (see Article 7.2 (Zone Districts)) or in an overlay district that applies to the property (see Part 7.2.6 (Overlay Districts)).

When the development plan is prepared for the site additional standards relating to the uses of the land as well as overlay district standards will be met as required by City Code.

Please contact Kimley-Horn and Associates if you have any questions or need additional information in regards to this application.

Sincerely,

KIMLEY-HORN AND ASSOCIATES, INC.



Mitchell Hess
Project Manager