

CITY PLANNING COMMISSION AGENDA  
November 18, 2021

STAFF: DANIEL SEXTON

FILE NO:  
CPC UV 21-00102 – QUASI-JUDICIAL

**PROJECT:** BLOOM HOUSE  
**OWNER:** EL PASO COUNTY  
**DEVELOPER:** HOMEWARD PIKES PEAK  
**CONSULTANT:** CIVIC DESIGN PARTNERSHIP



## **PROJECT SUMMARY:**

1. Project Description: The project includes an application for a use variance development plan for the properties located at 701 East Boulder Street and 325 North El Paso Street. The proposal, if approved, will allow the change of use from an adult counseling center, operated by El Paso County, to a human service establishment consisting of a drug and alcohol treatment facility and ancillary site upgrades. **(see “Use Variance Development Plan” attachment)** The project is herein referred to as the “Bloom House”.

A subsequent administratively reviewed application will be submitted by the Applicant for a waiver of replat to consolidate the currently platted parcels.

2. Applicant’s Project Statement: **(see “Project Statement” attachment)**
3. Planning and Development Team’s Recommendation: City Planning staff recommends approval of the application.

## **BACKGROUND:**

1. Site Address: The properties associated with this project are addressed as 701 East Boulder Street and 325 North El Paso Street.
2. Existing Zoning/Land Use: The properties are zoned PF (Public Facilities) and are developed with two buildings used for an adult counseling center.
3. Surrounding Zoning/Land Use:  
North: OR/cr (Office Residential with Conditions of Record) and is being used for an adult counseling center.  
East: R4 (Multi-Family Residential) and is residentially developer.  
South: R4 (Multi-Family Residential) and is residentially developer.  
West: PK (Public Parks) and is development with a segment of the Legacy Loop trail.
4. PlanCOS Vision: According to the PlanCOS Vision Map **(see “PlanCOS Vision Map” attachment)**, the project site is identified as being in an Established Traditional Neighborhood and is adjacent to Shooks Run trail a segment of the Legacy Loop trail.
5. Annexation: The project site was annexed into the City under the Town of Colorado Springs annexation plat (September 1 1872; ordinance unknown).
6. Master Plan/Designated Master Plan Land Use: The project site is part of the Shooks Run Redevelopment Plan, which has a determined status of Operative.
7. Subdivision: The project site is platted as Lots 1, 2, and 3 of Block 3 of Boulder Heights Addition.
8. Zoning Enforcement Action: None
9. Physical Characteristics: The project site is fully developed and slope north and east towards the adjacent public roadways.

## **STAKEHOLDER PROCESS AND INVOLVEMENT:**

The public notification process consisted of providing notice to surrounding homeowners’ associations and adjacent property owners within 1,000 feet of the site, which included the mailing of postcards to 315 property owners on three occasions: during the internal review, prior to a neighborhood meeting held on June 29, 2021, and prior to the Planning Commission hearing. The site was also posted during the three occasions noted above. City Planning staff received numerous written correspondences from interested residents inquiring about the development and others objecting to the proposal. **(see “Public Comment” attachment)**

Staff input is outlined in the following sections of this report. Staff sent copies of the plan set and supporting documentation to the standard internal and external review agencies for comments. Commenting agencies included Colorado Springs Utilities, City Engineering, City Traffic, City Fire, City SWENT, City Parks, Council of Neighborhood Organizations (CONO), Police, and E-911. All comments received from the review agencies have been addressed. As a redevelopment project within an established neighborhood, City Planning staff notes that the following review agency provided project specific comments:

- City Police – The surrounding area has current crime trends that revealed both property and persons crimes, and persons experiencing homelessness. As such, it is recommended that safety and security measures be installed on premises deter criminal activity and trespass. The applicant agreed to upgrade on-site security systems as part of facility programming.
- City Fire – Had no concerns or objections to the proposed land use and site upgrades as they are consistent with City Code.

### **ANALYSIS OF REVIEW CRITERIA/MAJOR ISSUES/COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & MASTER PLAN CONFORMANCE:**

#### 1. Review Criteria / Design & Development Issues:

##### a. Application Summary:

##### i. Use Variance Development Plan

The Applicant's requested use variance development plan for the Bloom House project (**see "Use Variance Development Plan" attachment**) proposes a human service establishment consisting of a residential drug and alcohol treatment facility that focuses on comprehensive residential substance abuse treatment, prevention and recovery support services. The facility will provide lodging and services for a maximum of eight (8) women over the age of 18 who are pregnant or postpartum. As programmed, all babies will also be allowed to stay within the facility and will receive supervised care from their mothers. Supervision by Homeward Pikes Peak staff will be provided 24-hours a day within Bloom House. At this time, the Applicant has not proposed any modifications to the historic character of the existing buildings, but modest enhancement to the grounds will, however, be made to bring the property into ADA compliance and in alignment with the City's site development standards. As the operator of Bloom House, Homeward Pikes Peak is committed to operating the facility in good standing and intend to be a good neighbor to the surrounding neighborhood.

Per City Code Section 7.3.203 *Permitted, Conditional and Accessory Uses*, the proposed human service establishment consisting of a drug and alcohol treatment facility use is prohibited in the PF (Public Facilities) zone district. However, according to City Code 7.3.402 *Purpose and Specific Requirements of the Special Purpose Zone Districts*, lands assigned with a PF zone district are intended to be "...used or being reserved for a governmental purpose by the City of Colorado Springs, El Paso County, the State of Colorado, the Federal government or a public utility." City Planning staff recognizes that Homeward Pikes Peak is a nonprofit human services organization and is not an agency of government, but staff acknowledges that most of Homeward Pikes Peak's facility's utilize government funds for operations/programming and are often seen as fulfilling certain governmental functions. Based on the information above, City Planning staff determined that a use variance must be approved to permit the proposed human service establishment consisting of a drug and alcohol treatment facility on the property.

To determine whether the proposed use is appropriate for the property, City Planning staff considered the criteria for granting a use variance, as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.803(B) *Criteria for granting a Use Variance*, and the use approval parameters set forth in City Code Section 7.3.402(A) *PF – Public Facilities*. Specifically, staff provides the

following rationale for why the request meets the applicable criteria and use approval parameters:

- *Exceptional or Extraordinary Circumstances or Conditions Applicable to the Property* - The property, which is currently owned by El Paso County and was previously used for an adult counseling center, is well situated to accommodate the Applicant's proposed residential treatment facility. The proposed facility, which will provide 24-hour treatment and lodging for eight (8) individuals with children, will be less-intense than the previous operation, which generated more vehicle trips and had a higher occupancy. As such, a human service establishment, which provides functionality/services often provided by governmental agencies, is exceptionally positioned to operate on the property. Additionally, City Planning staff notes that this type of facility is not available elsewhere in the City of Colorado Springs or El Paso County; thus, the proposed use represents an extraordinary need within the community.
- *Preservation and Enjoyment of the Property* – The repurposing of the properties with the proposed residential treatment facility will not be detrimental to the historic character of the existing buildings as no exterior changes are proposed. In fact, the new facility will make use of the currently vacant buildings and provide a means for their ongoing maintenance through their continued use. As a less-intensive use, the proposed use will also outwardly present as a small multi-family residence as opposed to rezoning the property and developing it commercially.
- *Public Welfare or Convenience nor Injurious to the Property or Improvements of Other Owners* – The proposed residential treatment facility will benefit clients and the neighborhood alike, in that the proposed facility supports members of the larger community that need services that this facility can provide. As the Applicant has proposed, all operations will occur on-site and within the current buildings so the change of use should not be injurious to the property or surrounding property owners. Off-site impacts due to noise or traffic are not anticipated to occur, as the Applicant has programmed the facility to operate under all applicable City Code requirements.
- *Does a Public Need Exist and the Use and Location are Compatible with Adjacent Land Uses* – As mentioned above, this type of facility, with its focused programming for a facility servicing clients with children, does not exist within the City of Colorado Springs or El Paso County. While facilities providing treatment, prevention and recovery support services are often associated with more intensive centers, the Applicant is not proposing any outwardly facing changes to the existing building and the facility will outwardly function as a small multi-family residence, which is less-intensive than the previous adult counselling center.

The reasonings outlined above reinforce why this proposal will be good for the larger community and surrounding neighborhood. City Planning staff finds that the proposed plan, as stipulated, is in conformance with the authorizations for granting a use variance for a human service establishment for a drug and alcohol treatment facility that is otherwise not permitted on a Public Facilities zoned property, as set forth in City Code 7.5.803(A).

City Planning staff finds that the project addresses all the applicable review criteria set forth in City Code.

## 2. Conformance with the City Comprehensive Plan:

The project applications have been evaluated for conformance with the City's current comprehensive plan (herein referred to as "PlanCOS"), adopted in January 2019. According to PlanCOS, the project site is identified as a Established Traditional Neighborhood and is adjacent

to a segment of the Legacy Loop. **(see “PlanCOS Vision Map” attachment)** The Bloom House project is consistent with one of the core values of PlanCOS, which reinforces the importance of encouraging infill and redevelopment. One of the “Big Ideas” in the Vibrant Neighborhood Chapter 2 of PlanCOS is entitled “Reclaim Neighborhood Space”, which has goal VN-3 that states:

*“Through neighborhood plans, associations, and partnerships, empower neighborhoods to reinvest in order to create community, vibrancy, and to address their specific vision and needs.”*

A “Big Idea” from Chapter 4, entitled “Embrace Sustainability”, has Goal TE-4 that states:

*“Focus on productively developing and redeveloping areas already in, nearby, or surrounded by the city in order to preserve open spaces, maximize investments in existing infrastructure, limit future maintenance costs, and reduce the impacts of disinvestment in blighted areas.”*

Adaptive and responsive land use change is also one of the core values of PlanCOS. On balance with this perspective, City Planning staff has determined that the project’s proposed land use meets the overall intent of this idea. For the reasons provided in this overall staff report, City Planning staff finds that this redevelopment proposal to be in substantially conformance with PlanCOS and its guidance.

3. Conformance with the Area’s Master Plan:

The project site is part of the Shooks Run Redevelopment master planned area and is identified for residential land uses. The Shooks Run Redevelopment plan was a publicly initiated plan that has been deemed “Operative”. City Planning staff finds that the Bloom House project to be complimentary and supportive of the long-range vision for the Shooks Run Redevelopment planned area. **(see “Context Map” attachment)** Through staff’s review of the use variance development plan applications and the review criteria considered for these applications, the overall area impacts of the project were analyzed.

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:**

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Approve the Use Variance Development Plan for the Bloom House project, based upon the findings that the request meets the review criteria for establishing a development plan, as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.502(E), and the criteria for authorizing a use variance, as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.803(B).