

APPEAL OF DECISION OF DOWNTOWN REVIEW BOARD

Case No. FBZN-24-0016

ONE Vela Mixed Use Building

April 7, 2025

North East Corner of Sahwatch and W. Costella St., Colorado Springs, Colorado

THE BUILDING HEIGHT IRREVOCABLY AND IMPROPERLY CHANGES THE COLORADO SPRINGS SKYLINE

- Tallest Building in City – 27 Stories.
- 315 Feet Tall.
- 50-68 Feet Taller than Wells Fargo Tower.
- Attempts to Mitigate with Self-Described “Iconic” Building Designation Does Not Change the Skyline Impact.
- Building based on Subjective Guidelines to be “Attractive”.

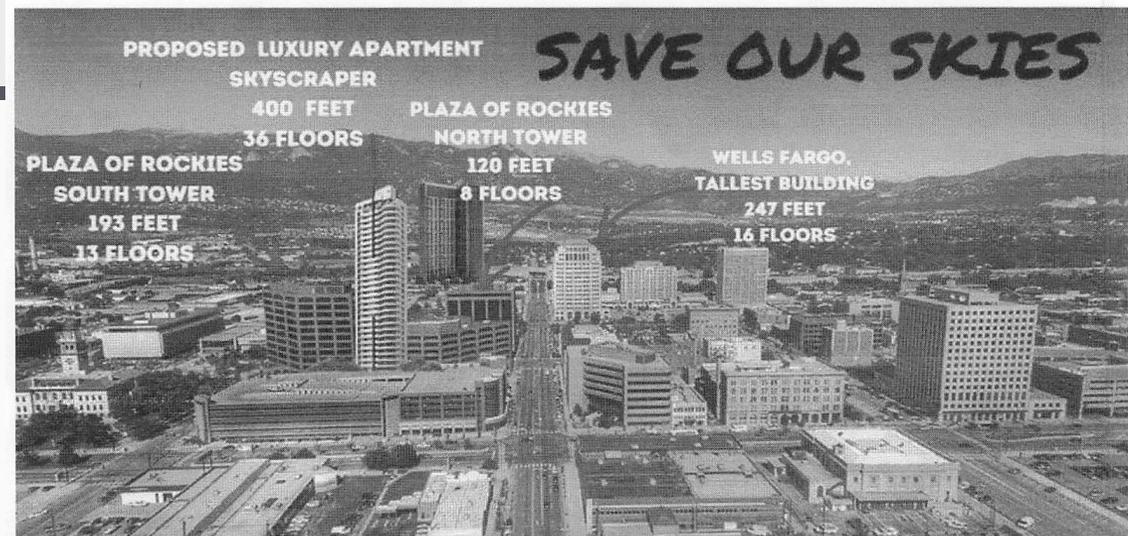
REASONS HEIGHT LIMITS MATTER:

- Maintain Scenic Views.
- Represent Community Values in Urban Design.
- Prevent view obstructions/Distractions.
- Minimize overshadowing of Property.
- Maintain Scale of Community.

Image 1:

Colorado
Springs Skyline





SAY NO TO BUILDING A CONCRETE JUNGLE. SAVE OUR BEAUTIFUL

Allow the Citizens to Vote! Save our Beautiful City! Save our Skies!

Sign petition

6,797

Verified signatures

- Angelica Lopez • 4 days ago
- Sarah Kimball • 7 days ago
- J Placeres • 1 week ago
- Suzanne Windsor • 2 weeks ago

[Decision Makers: yemi.mobolade@coloradosprings.gov](mailto:yemi.mobolade@coloradosprings.gov) +9

[17 Updates](#)

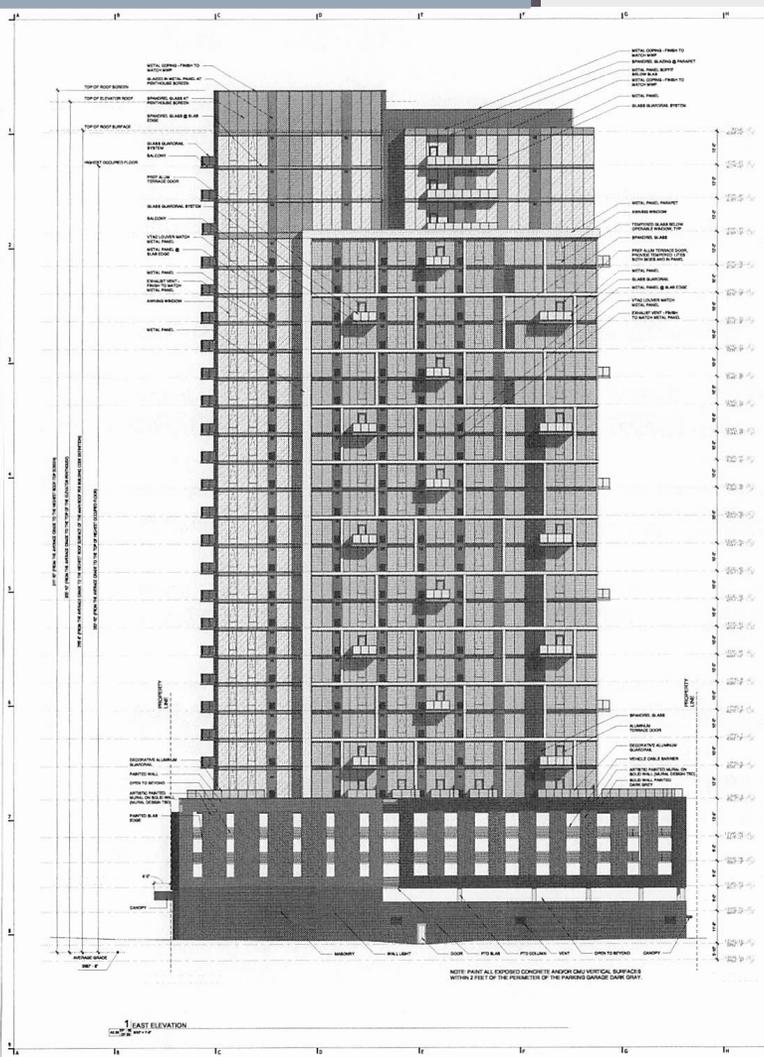
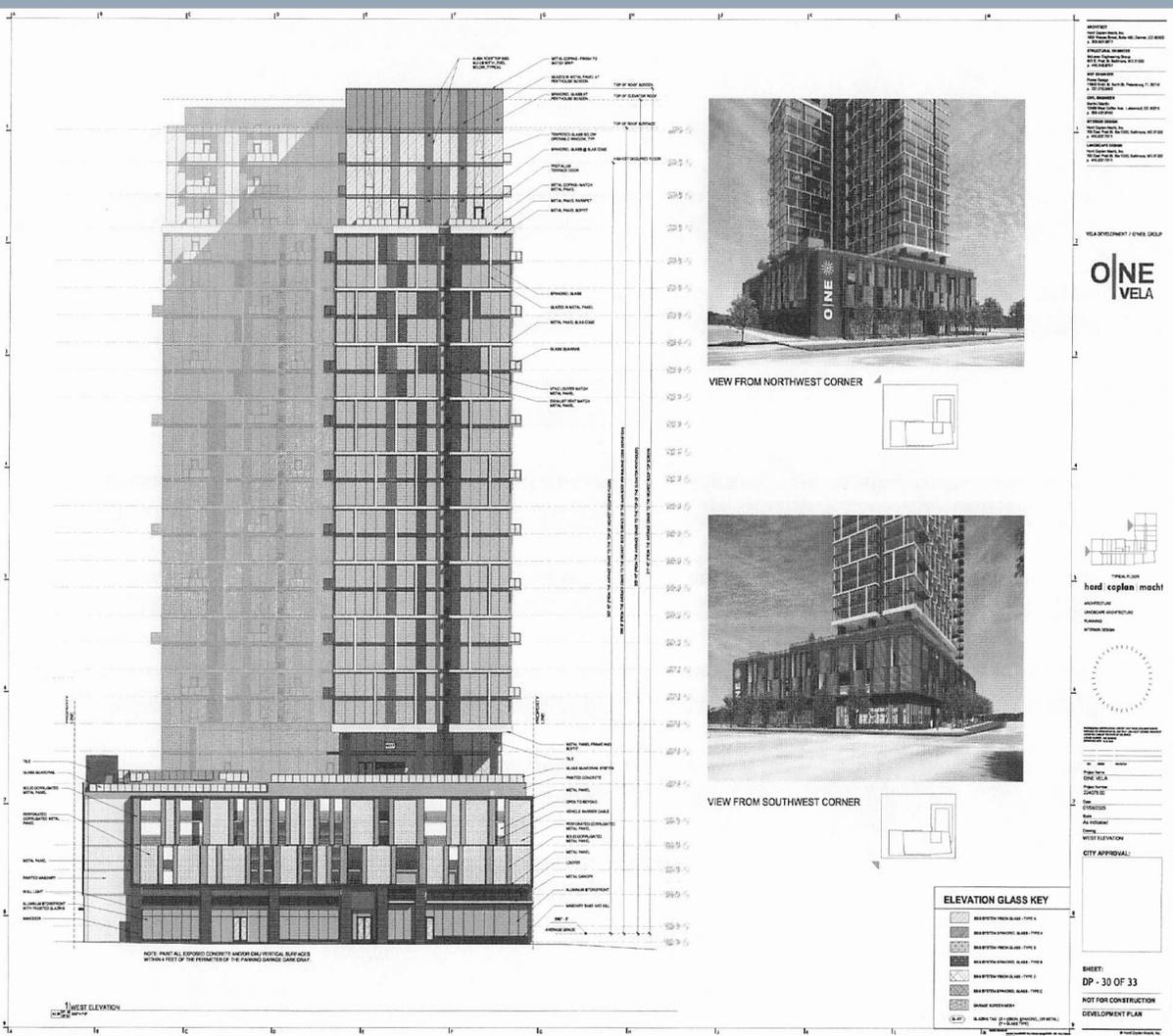
[11 Media Mentions](#)

Allow the Citizens to Vote! Save our Beautiful City! Save our Skies!



We request that the City Council allow the citizens of Colorado Springs to vote on a building height limit on the November 2024 ballot.

1. Currently, there are NO restrictions on how tall buildings can be built in downtown Colorado Springs. Our previous height restrictions were removed without a vote of the citizens. Most citizens are unaware of this.
2. Citizens want reasonable height restrictions to protect the character, views, and human scale of Colorado Springs.
3. There has recently been [a proposal to build a 400 foot tall \(36 floors\) building downtown](#). That is more than twice as tall as every existing building - except one (Wells Fargo building - 16 floors).
4. Before it is too late, and the character of Colorado Springs is permanently changed (think Denver), we request that the City Council allow the citizens of Colorado Springs to vote on a building height limit on the November 2024 ballot.
5. Limiting future building height to the height of our current tallest building (247 feet) will maintain Colorado Springs' character and human scale which complements, rather than dominates, our beautiful surroundings. The same surroundings which inspired General Palmer to found our city at the base of America's Mountain, Pikes Peak.
6. Sign this petition to allow the citizens of Colorado Springs to have a voice in the future of our city!



ARCHITECT:
 HCD COPLAN MOCH
 10000 W. BROADWAY, SUITE 1000
 DENVER, CO 80231
 (303) 733-1100
 www.hcdcp.com

**ONE
VELA**

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SHEET:
 DP - 30 OF 33
 NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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SHEET:
 DP - 28 OF 33
 NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION
 DEVELOPMENT PLAN

O | **NE**
VELA





A project worthy of its surroundings and unlike any product seen in Colorado Springs.

Class A amenities available to ALL residents and views unlike anything in Colorado Springs.

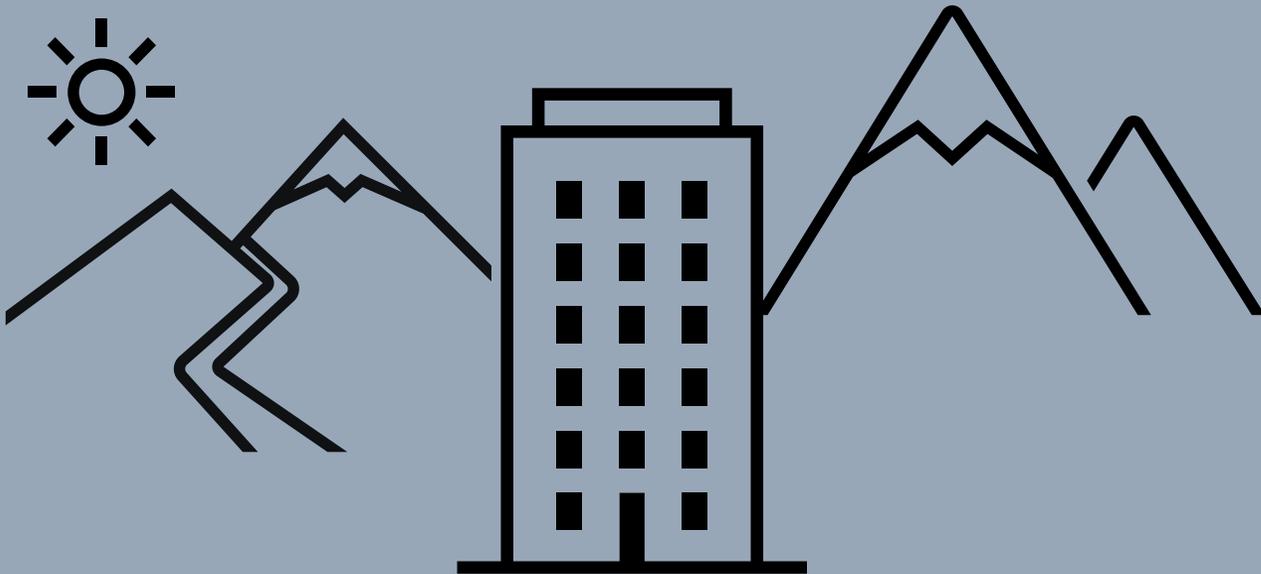
**ONE Vela Depictions/Statements.*



“Creating Dynamic Neighborhoods”

*ONE Vela Statements

- “Nick Benjamin, Principal with VeLa Development Partners spoke on the Project. ... Mr. Benjamin said the combination of growth in the Colorado Springs market and the natural beauty of location views from apartments in the building and amenity space has the potential to attract new residents to market. [...]” (from 02/04/2025 DRB Meeting Minutes).
- “Majestic views”



**AMERICA'S MOUNTAIN
PIKES PEAK**

V.

**"ICONIC" SKYSCRAPER
ONE VELA**



Image 2:
View of Pikes Peak

THE DEVELOPMENT APPROVAL IS PREMATURE

- Specific Items to be Addressed: Including Fees, Utilities, Public Spaces, Building Details, Stormwater.
- The Conditions of Downtown Review Board Transfers Final Decisions to Planning Staff.
- Robust Stakeholder Involvement not Considered.
- Environmental Concerns of the Public Unresolved.
- Discretionary Conditions are an Insufficient Substitute for Approval at Later Date.
- Void as Unduly Vague.

TIME TO TAKE NOTE OF PRECEDENT IS NOW

- Currently the Only Deviation from Skyline since 1990.
- ONE Vela Cannot be Deemed a One-Off or Single Exception Without being Illegal Spot-Zoning.
- Future Skyscrapers will Follow and Approval Would No Longer be Discretionary Without a Height Limit in the Code.

Colorado Springs, CO

Planning and Development
30 S. Nevada Ave., Suite 701
Colorado Springs, CO 80903



Application Comment Report

Application No. FBZN-24-0016

Report Date: 01/28/2025

Description : The development is proposed to consist of a 27-story high-rise mixed-use structure located at 30 W. Costilla St. The proposed structure contains 400 residential apartments, approximately 8,329 SF of retail space and more than 30,000 sf of interior and exterior resident amenity space.

Address : 30 COSTILLA ST COLORADO SPRINGS CO 80903

Record Type : FBZ - All Applications

Reviewer Contact Information:

Reviewer Name	Reviewer Email	Reviewer Phone No.:
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Hao Vo	Hao.Vo@coloradosprings.gov	-
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Gregory Stachon	gregory.stachon@coloradosprings.gov	719-385-5613
Jeff Cooper	Jeff.Cooper@coloradosprings.gov	-

General Comments

Comment ID	Reviewer : Department	Status	Review Comments	Applicant Response Comments
12	Isidro Santos : Planning	Open	<p>Current crime trends in the proposed building location revealed incidents of both property & persons crimes, to include burglary, trespassing, motor vehicle theft, burglary of motor vehicles, minor vandalism, theft of property, criminal mischief, & assaults. In addition, this area has a known high-density population of persons experiencing homelessness. Options for consideration at this time:</p> <p>Construction Signage -Installation of temporary signage indicating No Trespassing or Video Surveillance in Progress (during demolition & construction phases) to deter unwanted persons on the property.</p>	<p>Cara Sease - 01-07-2025 15:05:37</p> <p>Landscape: Noted and plan has been revised to indicate. Bicycle: Signage note has been added to plans. Skateboard: Skateboard deterrent strips have been noted in details of planter walls along streetscape. Benches: Bench slats leave expanded opening at rear, combined with overall length these provide deterrent to</p>

Comment ID	Page Reference	Annotation Type	Reviewer : Department	Status	Review Comments	Applicant Response Comments
90	1	Note	Ryan Tefertiller : Planning	Open	If it is determined that a Warrant is necessary (e.g. insufficient glazing on the Sahwatch side of the building) then you must add a Warrant section to Sheet 1 that documents the details of the requested Warrant.	<p>Cara Sease - 01-07-2025 15:49:20</p> <p>Frosted glazing has been removed and replaced with transparent glass that exceeds 60% glazing requirement. The proposed parking along the Sahwatch façade has been removed and replace with a yet to be determined resident amenity space to comply with the active use requirement of the Form Based Code.</p> <p>Ryan Tefertiller - 01-14-2025 14:54:08</p> <p>Sheet 30 of the plan still labels the Sahwatch street level windows as "frosted." Please correct or clarify. Secondly, please provide additional information on the use of the "amenity space" as this could affect the level of street-level activity, the aesthetics of what pedestrians are seeing as they walk along Sahwatch, and your CDI fee obligations.</p>
95	1	Note	Ryan Tefertiller : Planning	Open	Overall, Planning Staff finds that the proposed building is well designed and meets many of the goals of the Experience Downtown Master Plan and the Form-Based Code. While numerous clarifications are needed, and some modifications to the proposed building may be necessary to fully comply with the FBC, Staff is optimistic that the plans can come into full code compliance. I've received limited stakeholder input to date, but expect additional participation going forward. Please confirm in writing whether you'd like Staff to refer your project to the Downtown Review Board or not.	<p>Cara Sease - 01-07-2025 15:52:45</p> <p>Acknowledged. Please proceed with referring the project to the DRB.</p> <p>Ryan Tefertiller - 01-14-2025 15:03:21</p> <p>This item is being scheduled for the February 4th DRB meeting</p>
1	2	Note	Zaker Alazzeh : City Eng - Traffic Engineering	Open	<p>1- Please show and callout "on the Plan" any proposed gates for site access points.</p> <p>2- The details of the signing and striping of the future public roadway improvements will be addressed during the construction plans review.</p>	<p>Cara Sease - 01-07-2025 13:44:54</p> <p>Labels for the proposed gates have been added to the site plan.</p>

PUBLIC SKEPTICISM OVER STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

- Citizen Experience
 - Many Efforts to Hear Citizens' Voices and Seek Input on Establishing Downtown building heights.
 - Promised Robust Community/Stakeholder Input.
 - Citizens' Voice and Input has Not Yet Occurred.
- Approval by DRB Despite Public Concern on Building Height.

ONE Vela Appeal

Appellant Comments

- Skyline is a **community shared value**
- All COS **citizens have the right for a voice** in establishment of building heights
- June 2024 Council committed a **robust stakeholder engagement** in determining height limits
- **That has not yet occurred**
- As such, **do NOT approve** the new proposed high-rise that exceeds the current height (by 68 feet... 315 ft less 247 ft)
- **Premature for council to approve** this prior to citizens voice on establishment of building heights

CONCLUSION

- Building Height Does Not Meet Community Standards.
- Precedent or Unlawful Spot-Zoning.
- Premature and Void for Vagueness.

**REVERSE THE DECISION OF THE DOWNTOWN
REVIEW BOARD'S DECISION IN FBZN-24-0016 AND
DENY ONE VELA'S DEVELOPMENT APPLICATION IN
ITS PRESENT FORM**

THANK YOU

Appellant:

Dianne Bridges

Attorney:

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