



Legislation Text

File #: CPC CP 08-00142-A8MJ19, **Version:** 2

A concept plan amendment changing the land use designation of the 15.67 acres from commercial and medical office to single-family residential, located at the southwest corner of Woodmen Road and Austin Bluffs Parkway.

(Quasi-judicial)

Related Files: CPC PUZ 19-00155, CPC CP 08-00142-A8MJ19, CPC PUD 19-00156

Presenter:

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Summary:

Owner: 4305 East Woodmen Storage LLC
Applicant: Springs Land Ventures Investments LLC
Consultant: N.E.S. Inc.
Location: Southwest corner of Woodmen Road and Austin Bluffs Parkway

The applications under consideration are a zone change from OC/PBC/AO/SS (Office Complex and Planned Business Center with Airport Overlay and Streamside Overlay) to PUD/AO/SS (Planned Unit Development with Airport Overlay and Streamside Overlay: small-lot single-family residential development with a maximum gross density of 3.6 dwelling units per acre and 35-foot maximum building height); a concept plan amendment changing the land use designation of 15.67 acres from commercial and medical office to single-family residential; and a development plan for 56 small-lot single-family detached homes.

Lot sizes are proposed to range between approximately 2,680 and 3,900 square feet. The homes will be surrounded by a 4.8-acre open space tract encircling the development. Additionally, approximately 3.5 acres of open space south of the development and adjacent to the creek is proposed to be dedicated to the City for drainage, utilities, trails, and open space. The development will obtain vehicular access exclusively from Woodmen Road, with a $\frac{3}{4}$ -turn intersection. A new sidewalk will be built along Woodmen Road, and new trails will provide access to the public Cottonwood Creek Trail that exists south and east of the property

Background:

The subject area was annexed in 1980 as part of the Pring Ranch Addition, Number Five. The Norwood Master Plan designated the area containing the subject parcel as Research and Development; this Master Plan is considered implemented, meaning at least 85% of the master plan area has constructed structures on platted lots.

Staff has evaluated the proposed applications for conformance with the City's current comprehensive plan (herein referred to as "PlanCOS"). According to PlanCOS, the project site is identified on the plan's Vision map as an Established Traditional Neighborhood. PlanCOS contains goals to enhance the existing character of these neighborhoods, while supporting their ongoing investment and improved adaptation. PlanCOS notes that most Established Neighborhoods should expect some degree of infill. This statement underscores the fact that infill development is one of the key indicators of PlanCOS, and extends across many of the plan's themes. The proposed development will further the PlanCOS policies regarding infill and investment in mature and developed areas by providing an additional housing choice in proximity to open space, major thoroughfares, and activity centers.

A primary goal of the Vibrant Neighborhoods chapter of PlanCOS is the provision of "Housing for All" (Goal VN-2). Strategy VN-2.A-3 suggests support for land use decisions and projects that provide a variety of housing types and sizes that serve a range of demographic sectors and meet the needs of residents through various life stages and income levels. The property is located in an area of the city that is experiencing infill development and where a demand for residential uses currently exists. The properties surrounding the site involve a mix of both residential and non-residential land uses. Single-family residential uses exist to the north and south, but are not directly abutting this property. Existing commercial development is located immediately to the east (gas station) and the west (mini-storage) of this site. A public housing development is located to the southeast. Approximately 600 feet to the west, a small-lot residential PUD development is under construction (known as the Midtown Collection at Cottonwood Creek) on one of the lots within the concept plan that was previously zoned OC and subsequently rezoned to PUD. The Midtown project has a higher density than the proposed Trailside development (Midtown is 5.3 gross units per acre, 19.3 net units per acre, with a 35-foot height limit; Trailside is 3.6 gross units per acre, 8.8 net units per acre, with a 35-foot height limit.)

The Unique Places chapter of PlanCOS also contains policies supporting the enrichment of the city and its livability with vibrant and walkable places. Strategy UP-1.B-3 recommends the creation of connections between urban places and natural settings. The proposed development provides access to the Cottonwood Creek Trail and open space corridor from three separate points on the property.

Another way the proposed development exemplifies the objectives of PlanCOS is by furthering Policy SC-1.D of the Strong Connections chapter, which recommends maintenance of convenient multimodal connections between neighborhoods and employment centers. The proximity of this project to the Cottonwood Creek Trail provides a unique opportunity for residents to use alternate modes of travel such as cycling on the existing trail to reach a variety of destinations within an easily-traveled distance from their home (i.e.: one mile).

The Thriving Economy Chapter of PlanCOS includes a goal to "Embrace Sustainability", along with Policy TE-4.A, which reads: "Prioritize development within the existing City boundaries and built environment (not in the periphery)." The proposed project is an example of infill development, hence advancing this objective.

Finally, the Majestic Landscapes Chapter identifies the Cottonwood Creek corridor as a Major Trail Corridor within the City as well as a Complete Greenway. Goal ML-3 suggests optimizing shared use of waterways for multiple uses, including recreation, wildlife corridors, environmental assets, utilities,

stormwater conveyance, non-motorized transportation, and natural areas. The proposed project will help achieve this goal with the dedication of open space land for use as part of the Cottonwood Trail corridor.

Some aspects of PlanCOS objectives that could be said are not supported by this proposal include:

Policy VN-3.C: Promote neighborhood-level shopping and service options to include a variety of healthy food markets, coffee houses, restaurants, and other supportive businesses that increase local access and walkability. The Companion Strategy to this Policy is VN-3.C-1: Assign land use designations and implement zoning to support and facilitate neighborhood activity centers within walking or biking distance of residential areas. The neighborhood of 56 homes would not be considered a neighborhood activity center.

The proposed residential development would not support Policy VN-3.E: Encourage and support the integration of mixed-use development in neighborhoods and Companion Strategy VN-3.E-2: Encourage vertical mixed-use design in neighborhood focal points along with neighborhood design meant to encourage a sense of community and provide a walkable environment. Vertical developments, where the various uses are “stacked” on top of each other, are typically used in areas with limited space, while larger sites allow those different components to be built next to each other, such as an apartment building adjacent to a grocery store.

In contrast, the project does support Strategy VN-3.E-3: Though a combination of Zoning Code changes and development review decisions, encourage and support flexible site and building designs and residential densities that are adaptable to the specific site. The project does incorporate flexible designs and residential densities adapted to the specific site.

Additionally, the project supports a primary goal of the Unique Places chapter related to infill development. Goal UP-2 reads: Embrace thoughtful, targeted, and forward-thinking changes in land use, infill, reinvestment, and redevelopment to respond to shifts in demographics, technology, and the market. Policy UP-2.A reads: Support infill and land use investment throughout the mature and developed areas of the city. Specifically, the project is an example of applying Strategy UP-2.A-5: Revise zoning and building regulations to be more streamlined and flexible regarding infill, redevelopment, and mixed-use development, especially in older, underutilized commercial areas.

Other individual objectives that are not directly supported by the proposed residential project include:

Policy TE-2.B: Create a positive atmosphere for spinoffs, startups, and entrepreneurship, as well as Companion Strategy TE-2.B-3: Retain or modify plans and regulations to allow for a complementary mix of industrial and commercial uses, workforce training, and business services in locations identified for commercial and business development. The project would not create a mix of these uses, as it would be a residential land use. Further, Strategy TE-2.C-4: Create street activation in the design of employment and business centers through the use of supportive zoning, design guidelines, and street standards would not be achieved.

As a supplement to this memo, please see the details of the proposed development, staff’s analysis of the review criteria, and breakdown of the comprehensive plan in the City Planning Commission Staff Report.

Previous Council Action:

The City Council considered a previous zoning application for the development of this parcel in September 2019, at which time the project failed to gain approval, with a tie vote of 4-4.

This proposal was originally scheduled for a public hearing before City Council on February 25, 2020, and was postponed to the March 10, 2020 meeting date due to a public noticing error.

On March 10, 2020, the applicant requested a postponement in order to have enough time to respond to the financial impact analysis (FIA). City Council approved the postponement by a vote of 4:2:3:0 (Councilors Knight and Murray voted against the postponement while Councilors Gaebler, Skorman, and Geislinger were absent).

On March 18, 2020, City Council postponed all quasi-judicial items due to the state of emergency for the City of Colorado Springs.

Financial Implications:

N/A.

City Council Appointed Board/Commission/Committee Recommendation:

A zoning application for this property was filed with the City planning department in April of 2019. The request was denied by the City Council at their September 2019 meeting. A copy of the meeting minutes from that hearing are included in the Planning Commission staff report.

Following the City Council decision, the applicant requested to resubmit the project immediately, rather than enduring the standard waiting period of twelve months before submitting an application for the same property, typically required under city code section 7.5.907: Limitation on Further Application. A copy of the applicant's resubmittal request, and the City Planning Director's acceptance of the submittal, are included in the Planning Commission staff report. The applicant submitted the following additional documentation with the new application:

- A Topographic Site Analysis
- Examples of 30-foot high retaining walls
- An Economic Feasibility Study
- A support letter from David C Cook
- A Woodmen Road Corridor Land Use Analysis.

The City Planning Commission reviewed the information and considered the new zoning application at its January 16, 2020 meeting, at which the Commission voted unanimously to recommend approval of the application. A copy of the meeting minutes is attached.

Stakeholder Process:

The public notification process consisted of providing notice to adjacent property owners within 1,000 feet of the site, which included placing a poster on the project site, and mailing postcards to 291 property owners on two occasions: during the internal review stage, and prior to the Planning Commission hearing. During the internal review notification, City Planning staff received comments from three residents expressing concerns with the project. Copies of the emails are included with the Planning Commission staff report. Generally, the emails included concerns regarding increased development in the area; density of the proposed homes; geography of site and landslide potential; impacts on the creek corridor and wildlife; loss of open space; visual impacts; and traffic safety.

Alternatives:

1. Uphold the action of the City Planning Commission;
2. Modify the decision of the City Planning Commission;
3. Reverse the action of the City Planning Commission; or
4. Refer the matter back to the City Planning Commission for further consideration.

Proposed Motion:

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Approve the minor concept plan amendment, based upon the findings that the amended concept plan meets the review criteria for granting approval of a concept plan as set forth in City Code Section 7.5.501.E.

N/A