



# City of Colorado Springs

Regional Development  
Center (Hearing Room)  
2880 International Circle

## Meeting Minutes - Draft City Planning Commission

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Wednesday, February 11, 2026

9:00 AM

2880 International Cir., 2nd Floor, Hearing Room

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- A. [ZONE-24-0020](#) Reconsideration of a Zone Map Amendment (Rezone) consisting of 2.17 acres located at 4880 Airport Road from R1-6/AP-O (Single Family - Medium with Airport Overlay) to R-5/AP-O (Multi-Family - High with Airport Overlay).  
(Quasi-Judicial)

Council District 4

Presenter:

Chris Sullivan, Senior Planner, City Planning Department  
Kevin Walker, Planning Director, City Planning Department

**Attachments:** [Staff Report - ZONE-24-0020](#)  
[Zone Ord\\_ZONE\\_24-0020](#)  
[Signed Ordinance 25-102.pdf](#)  
[Attachment 1\\_Updated Project Statement](#)  
[Attachment 2\\_Land Use Statement](#)  
[Attachment 3\\_Rezone Exhibit A\\_B](#)  
[Attachment 4\\_Public Comment Response](#)  
[7.5.704 ZONING MAP AMENDMENT \(REZONING\)](#)  
[CPC Minutes Excerpt - 4880 Airport Rd Rezone - 11.12.2025](#)  
[4880 Airport Rd Rezone Presentation - Planning](#)

Chris Sullivan, Senior Planner, said the item was brought back for reconsideration because, during preparation for its second reading before City Council, the City Attorney's Office determined that the rezoning process did not align with the code, and City Council chose to withdraw the item. Mr. Sullivan presented the reconsideration of the zone map amendment of the 2.17 acres site from single-family medium with airport overlay to multi-family high with airport overlay. The applicant has also submitted a land use statement proposing a concept plan for three-story, 50-unit multifamily building with green space, on-site parking and access for Karr Road. He said there is a right-of-way issue involving a 20-foot strip along Airport Road, which extended the review timeline to seven review cycles, and led staff to propose a condition requiring dedication of that portion to the city. Standard notice was made; comments were received with concerns regarding the intensity of use, traffic impact and quality of life.

Agency review process was conducted and all comments received were addressed or will be submitted prior to their plan submittal. The proposal complies with PlanCOS and meets the review criteria.

### **Applicant's Presentation**

Ann Odom, NES, representing the applicant, said this is an infill development located along a major four-lane arterial with nearby connections to key corridors and employment centers. She said surrounding zoning consists in R1-6 and R-5, and the latter accommodates a range of residential types at up to 25 units per acre. Ms. Odom said when similar properties were rezoned, they would have been allowed to go up to 50 units per acre. She said the day before the meeting they received additional 36 comments with concerns regarding traffic. She said that the proposal meets the review criteria and aligns with PlanCOS goals for infill development, housing diversity, and support for nearby employers, and highlighted existing higher-intensity uses along Airport Road, ongoing infrastructure improvements, and the area's evolving development pattern. Ms. Odom said the immediate area includes a mix of multifamily developments and older single-family homes along Karr Road, many of which were built in the 1950s and 1960s and are now out of character with the more suburban, higher-intensity development occurring along Airport Road. She said there have been nearby approvals for large multifamily projects, including a 27-acre development with more than 450 units, demonstrating precedent for increased density. Ms. Odom presented the development standards required and compared them to what they are proposing to show they are in compliance. She said that an R-5 buildout could accommodate up to 50 units in a three-story structure while meeting setback, buffering, fencing, landscaping, open-space, stormwater, and parking requirements. Ms. Odom said fire and traffic staff reviewed the conceptual layout and confirmed that one access point would be sufficient with fire sprinklers, and a right-in/right-out onto Airport Road could be supported if warranted. She said preliminary trip-generation estimates showed a relatively small increase in morning and evening traffic, with a full traffic study required at the development plan stage. She said the project is similar to Silver Key project, which was recently approved in a smaller site by the Commission. She said that the larger context mapping shows how a building of this scale fits within the surrounding area and reinforced that future design and mitigation requirements in city code would provide compatibility.

Ms. Odom said fire officials confirmed the project could operate with a single access point if the building is sprinklered and a fire lane is provided, and traffic staff indicated a second right-in/right-out access onto Airport Road could be supported if warranted. She said, regarding ongoing traffic concerns raised by commissioners and neighbors, a full traffic study is not

required at this stage, but at the development review stage. She said preliminary trip-generation estimates show only a modest increase in peak-hour traffic from about one car per 52 seconds to one car per 42 seconds. She said code-required buffering, landscaping, and design standards will help mitigate potential impacts and that R-5 zoning remains appropriate.

### **Public Comment**

Tao Thai, owner of the Temple across the street, although his property is zoned R-5, that does not mean large buildings must be constructed. He said Karr Road is the community's only access point, and during a past emergency it became completely blocked, preventing residents from entering or leaving. He compared this road to an airplane exit, stressing the need for clear, unobstructed escape routes. Mr. Thai said, from his volunteer experience with the police department, cramped living conditions can contribute to domestic crises, mental-health strain and family stress. He said constructing a large multifamily building would reduce open space, diminish residents' ability to decompress, and negatively affect the well-being of those already living in the neighborhood. He said the long-term psychological and safety impacts on current residents should be considered.

Helen Mackey, a 20-year resident and HOA board president of Sand Creek Commons, said Karr Road is frequently obstructed by abandoned vehicles and debris, which she documents and reports to the Police Department as a volunteer. She said, with families living in 187 units already relying on a limited access system, she said the community often becomes backed up, especially when cars park along Karr Road or when emergency vehicles respond to incidents. Ms. Mackey said there is frequent police and fire activity, high speeds on Airport Road, and worsening congestion since nearby roadway changes. She said residents already struggle to exit the neighborhood safely and that adding more density would increase danger and delay commuters.

Barbara Overgaard, a 21-year resident of Sand Creek Commons, said she agrees with previous concerns, particularly regarding traffic. She said the neighborhood's quality-of-life character, is a small, tucked-away community valued for its open space, surrounding undeveloped R-5 parcels, and limited multifamily presence. She noted that nearby multifamily developments each have their own direct access to Airport Road, unlike the proposed project, which would rely on the already congested single egress shared by her neighborhood. She said residents chose the area for its quieter, more single-family-oriented environment and fear being

increasingly surrounded by multifamily projects, which they believe would erode integrity of the community.

Joyce Salazar, Executive Director, RISE Southeast, said her organization supports responsible growth and additional housing but emphasized that community safety must be considered early in the process. She said nearby residents rely on single egress on Karr Road, creating safety risks during congestion or emergencies. She said, while traffic and safety are typically reviewed at the development-plan stage, rezoning decisions determine the scale of future development, shifting the discussion from whether a use is appropriate to how its impacts will be managed. Ms. Salazar said this sequence can leave residents feeling reactive rather than involved and asked the commission to consider how rezoning affects communities with single-access roads and to ensure that safety, livability, and preventative planning are addressed at the front end, not only later in the review process.

### **Applicant's Rebuttal**

Ms. Odom said, regarding emergency access, Sand Creek Commons already has an emergency route onto Airport Road, which could assist residents in blockage situations. She said a second access for the proposed development, such as a right-in/right-out onto Airport Road, remains a viable option at the development-plan stage. She said future development will still provide significant setbacks, open space, and landscaping, even at maximum density. Ms. Odom said development typically reduces activities such as vehicle camping and debris on Karr Road, opposed to vacant parcels. She said infill should be expected in this area, which is experiencing major infrastructure upgrades, growing employment centers, and rising housing demand. She said the maximum density shown is only a possibility; the actual project could be lower intensity and will still be subject to further traffic, safety, and design studies. Ms. Odom said zoning approval does not eliminate future public input or detailed review of off-site impacts.

### **Commissioners' Comments and Questions**

Vice Chair Hensler asked who determined the closure of the exit adjacent to the housing development to the east. Zaker Alazzeah, City Traffic Engineering, said he is not aware of this closure being requested by them. Vice Chair Hensler asked if it was a violation to have it closed off. Mr. Alazzeah said it is a private driveway so they might not be violating code. Steven Smith, Fire Protection Engineer, said he is not familiar with the site; however, it looks like an emergency exit.

Vice Chair Hensler said she understands the concerns about Karr Road's limited access and the adjacent development appears to have an emergency route that could improve circulation. Vice Chair Hensler said she would support requiring a secondary access point, if allowed by safety and legal standards, and asked staff to clarify whether such access should be expected. Mr. Smith said emergency access routes are typically intended for fire department use only; however, the fire department would not object to it being opened for regular use. Chair Casey said there is a white solid line which might indicate is not access.

Chair Casey asked if an entrance like that would be something this new development could have. Mr. Sexton said final decisions about ingress and egress will be made during the development-plan stage, not at rezoning. He said he understands residents' concerns about the adjacent multifamily project's access conditions and said staff can review that site with traffic and fire officials to ensure it complies with current standards.

Commissioner Case asked if, based on current traffic conditions, there have been any existing issues in the area as it stands today. Mr. Smith said he does not currently have operations details. Mr. Alazzeah said they checked for the past five years and did not see any problem in that intersection.

Commissioner Robbins said the interchange to the east has already increased traffic in the area, and congestion on Airport Road remains a significant problem. Commissioner Robbins said adding another residential complex near multiple existing developments could create dangerous conditions, especially given the nearby elementary school and heavy parent traffic. Commissioner Robbins said the area could become unsafe in the near future and said the city should reevaluate plans for Airport Road before allowing additional density. Commissioner Robbins said he is not in favor of this project.

Commissioner Case said after hearing public comments and knowing that Fire and Traffic might not have enough information, having a 25-unit per acre density does not seem to fit. Commissioner Case asked what the thought process is behind deciding to propose the maximum density. Ms. Odom said determining an appropriate density would involve market analysis, evaluation of intersection performance, and assessing whether needed improvements are feasible and who would bear their cost. She said emergency access, evacuation needs, and preventative measures, such as sprinklers, are all reviewed early in the development-plan process. Ms. Odom said reducing the unit count per acre would generate a pretty marginal decrease in potential traffic.

Chair Casey said while the R-5 zone allows up to 25 units per acre, nearby multifamily projects are built at much lower densities, and the current R-1-6 zoning permits only about eight units per acre with much lower building heights. Chair Casey said approving R-5 would represent a significant jump to the city's highest density residential district, even though no specific development plan is tied to the request. Chair Casey said he has concerns about compatibility criteria, and he was not yet convinced the scale, height, and potential traffic impacts of R-5 would be compatible with the surrounding neighborhood and asked whether anything presented should change that assessment. Ms. Odom said the R-5 district is intended for areas near higher-intensity uses and that the request represents an expansion of an existing R-5 zone, not a spot-zoning action. She said medium-density transitional zone could be considered, but the difference in potential trip generation between that and R-5 would be minimal. She said single-family development is unlikely on such a small arterial-frontage parcel, making the current zoning impractical. Ms. Odom said compatibility does not require identical density and that buffering, transition, and site-design standards can address impacts.

Chair Casey said Silver Key project was mentioned, however, it is not comparable to the current request because its zoning was already in place and the review focused only on a conditional-use modification to allow more units within a single building. Chair Casey asked how they think the two situations are similar. Ms. Odom said the Silver Key comparison was to illustrate building scale, as the project achieved a similar building size on a much smaller site and at a higher density, adjacent to single-story homes.

Vice Chair Hensler said a different zoning than R-5 would be more of a spot zone, given the adjacent properties, making this zoning appropriate, not necessarily the density compared to neighboring developments. Vice Chair Hensler said the commission's role is to evaluate zoning consistency rather than predict the exact number of units that may ultimately be built. Vice Chair Hensler said she understands the neighborhood concerns, but growth along Airport Road is expected given nearby commercial expansion and that the site sits in an area that is transitioning. Vice Chair Hensler said the R-5 request appears consistent and said she might be in support.

Commissioner Cecil said it is frustrating that the development plan is not coming back to the Commission for approval. Mr. Walker said the applicant as well as the public have the opportunity to appeal should they feel the decision was not appropriately made. He said even if the approval was administratively, the neighbors will be noticed.

Commissioner Cecil said she could not conclude the proposal would be

detrimental to the public interest, since a ride-in/ride-out turn lane could address potential concerns and that the early stage of development leaves uncertainties. Commissioner Cecil said the request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and potential build-out would contribute to housing diversity. Commissioner Cecil said it is unreasonable to expect an undeveloped parcel in an unincorporated area to remain undeveloped indefinitely. Commissioner Cecil asked whether any elements of the concept plan raised concerns under Criteria 7. Mr. Sullivan said no. Commissioner Cecil said she does not find reasons to oppose.

Commissioner Slattery said she recognizes the community's need for additional housing and the appropriateness of Airport Road for higher-intensity uses due to its arterial designation, however, she has concerns regarding compatibility. Commissioner Slattery said maximum build-out does not appear harmonious with the surrounding area, particularly the adjacent R-5 zoning. Commissioner Slattery said she is significantly concerned about the use of Karr Road as the primary access point, and the possible height of this development. Commissioner Slattery said she does not think it meets the criteria.

Commissioner Robbins said he is not in support, as he has concerns regarding the increasing traffic volumes on Airport Road. Commissioner Robbins said the rising number of accidents presents a public-safety issue and emphasized that protecting lives must take priority over other considerations. Commissioner Robbins said Airport Road now functions more like a highway than originally intended and that the conditions are dangerous until the City identifies appropriate safety improvements.

Commissioner Gigano said she concurs with Commissioner Robbins regarding traffic and compatibility with the surrounding areas.

Commissioner Case said last time he voted in favor of this item, but after hearing public comments and Fire and Traffic, there are a lot of unknowns so he will be voting against it.

**Motion by Commissioner Robbins, seconded by Commissioner Gigano, to deny the zone change of 2.17 acres from R1-6/AP-O (Single Family - Medium with Airport Overlay) to R-5/AP-O (Multi-Family - High with Airport Overlay) based upon the findings that the request does not comply with the criteria for a Zoning Map Amendment as set forth in City Unified Development Code Section 7.5.704.**

**The motion passed by a vote of 6-3-0-0.**

**Aye:** 6 - Commissioner Slattery, Commissioner Robbins, Chair Casey, Commissioner Clements, Commissioner Gigano and Case

**No:** 3 - Vice Chair Hensler, Commissioner Cecil and Commissioner Willoughby