

Self-Storage Project at 6910 Mark Dabling

As long-time residents in the adjacent community of Golden Hills Rockrimmon, our knowledge and experience living in the Wildland Urban Interface has prompted a number of concerns about the fire risks of the self-storage project located on Mark Dabling. We hope you will consider the information below in the issue of rezoning the subject property. Existing property owners should not be put at excess risk such as the wildfire dangers our city has come to know all too well. There is also the incompatibility of the project with the adjacent community. The land is immediately east of the railroad right-of-way, and immediately to the west of the railroad is the east side of Golden Hills, an established community. We note Mr. Gray's review commentary: "Specific to mini warehouse, PC felt that there was little that could be done to make the mini warehouse look attractive to the point of neighborhood compatibility." To this we add the fire risk of such a establishment, as described in further detail below.

The Risks of Use as Storage

The proposed project raises a significant concern with regard to the risk of fires in buildings and vehicles in proximity with wildland. The contents of storage units and stored vehicles are not controlled (despite the statement in the documentation that hazardous materials cannot be stored), which has led to fires from many sources: lithium batteries, propane, unstable chemicals (particularly in illegal drug production), etc. There have been two fires in a nearby RV storage facility that caused significant damage, and could easily have spread into a major fire. We note that details such as number of storage units, their sizes and features are not obvious, at least to us, in the documents on file. There also seem to be errors in the land description: "To the west, the property is zoned Mixed Use-Medium...". The site plan clearly shows the narrow area of the mini warehouse project is immediately adjacent to the railroad right of way. On the other side of the railroad is a very large area of heavily populated wildland that runs all the way to the foothills. This huge area has tens of thousands of dwellings, as well as commercial buildings, assisted living/nursing facilities, churches, and schools.

Other Possible Uses

We understand that property owners want to monetize their holdings – that's fair and understandable – but this is a difficult parcel, and the intended uses must be examined for the risks and problems those uses pose to the neighboring properties and residents. Mark Dabling Blvd has parcels of land currently being used to store construction materials; there is also a vehicle storage apparently being used for truck-trailer storage. The land area for the proposed storage facility would be a good place for similar open-air uses that do not add appreciably to fire risk. These uses would still not meet goals of neighborhood compatibility, but would at least represent less fire danger.

The Real Risk? People and Fire

It has been pointed out to both the Planning Commission and City Council a number of times that wildfire risk is very high for proposed projects in this NW area. The NW area is bordered by the foothills to the west, I-25 to the east, and the Air Force Academy to the north. It is a box containing at least 40-50 thousand people that has only three points of egress: (1) Woodmen Valley Road at I-25; (2) Vindicator Drive connecting to Centennial Blvd; and (3) South Rockrimmon Blvd at the intersection of Delmonico Drive, Pro Rodeo Drive, Mark Dabling, and I-25. In the 2012 Waldo Canyon Fire, 18,000+ acres burned, including most of Mountain Shadows and the Flying W. Everything from Centennial Blvd to I-25 was evacuated. This area narrowly escaped as the fire was turned back in a last-ditch attempt at Centennial by CSPD and firefighting resources.

Our Request

We ask that the zoning change for the subject project not be approved. We would be happy to participate in discussions of alternative uses that pose lower fire risk and do not detract from the adjacent neighborhoods. As 50-year residents of the area immediately to the west of 6910 Mark Dabbling, we are very familiar with those neighborhoods and their history, and we would work constructively to find ways to develop the remaining properties that fit with the existing uses. The fire risk in this area makes any unmonitorable use such as the proposed mini storage too dangerous.

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