



501 N Wahsatch Ave

Quick Facts

Applicant

Ed Morgan, William Guman & Associates

Property Owner

Giana Valdez, Simple Wealth Solutions

Address / Location

501 N Wahsatch Avenue

TSN(s)

6407421022

Zoning and Overlays

Current: R-4 (Multi-Family Low)

Site Area

9,800 square feet

Proposed Land Use

Dwelling, Multi-family (single-family detached)

Applicable Code

Unified Development Code

Council District

3

Project Summary

The applicant is requesting a Development Standards Adjustment to permit a residential density of 13.33 dwelling units per acre in the R-4 (Multi-Family Low) zone district, where a maximum of 8 dwelling units per acre is allowed. This request reflects the reuse of the existing and former laundromat structure as a single-family residence, resulting in a total of three single-family homes on the parcel located at 501 North Wahsatch Avenue.

File Number	Application Type	Decision Type
DVSA-25-0003	Development Standards Adjustment	Quasi-Judicial

Background

Prior Land-Use History and Applicable Actions

Action	Name	Date
Annexation	Town of Colorado Springs	1872
Subdivision	Town of Colorado Springs Addition No. 1	1873
Master Plan	N/A	N/A
Prior Enforcement Action	Weeds/grass violation (ENF23-08601)	8/28/23
	Weeds/grass/trash violation (ENF24-08868)	11/18/24
	Weeds/grass violation (ENF25-06001)	8/8/25

Site History

The property is located within the original Town of Colorado Springs annexation of 1872 and the subsequent Town of Colorado Springs Addition No. 1 subdivision recorded in 1873. The site was developed with the existing commercial structure in 1904 and two single-family residences in 1917, forming the three-structure configuration present today.

Historic research conducted by the Historic Uptown Neighborhood Association indicates that the building functioned as a neighborhood grocery through 1958 (see Attachment 1 – History of 501 N Wahsatch Ave). The building transitioned to a self-serve laundromat in 1960 and continued operating for several decades under various owners. According to the applicant, the laundromat's use diminished over time as in-home laundry appliances became more common, eventually leaving the building vacant (see Attachment 2 – Project Statement). The laundromat use ceased after the property changed hands in 2017, with Google Street View suggesting the use ended sometime between 2017 and 2020.

The surrounding neighborhood was established primarily between the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and is characterized by small-lot residential development arranged within a traditional grid street pattern. The former laundromat reflects historic neighborhood-serving commercial uses that historically coexisted with residential development but are no longer permitted under current zoning.

Today, the site contains the former laundromat building and two single-family homes. Its location at 501 North Wahsatch Avenue places it within an established residential neighborhood that has experienced incremental transitions in use intensity while retaining its historic residential character.

Applicable Code

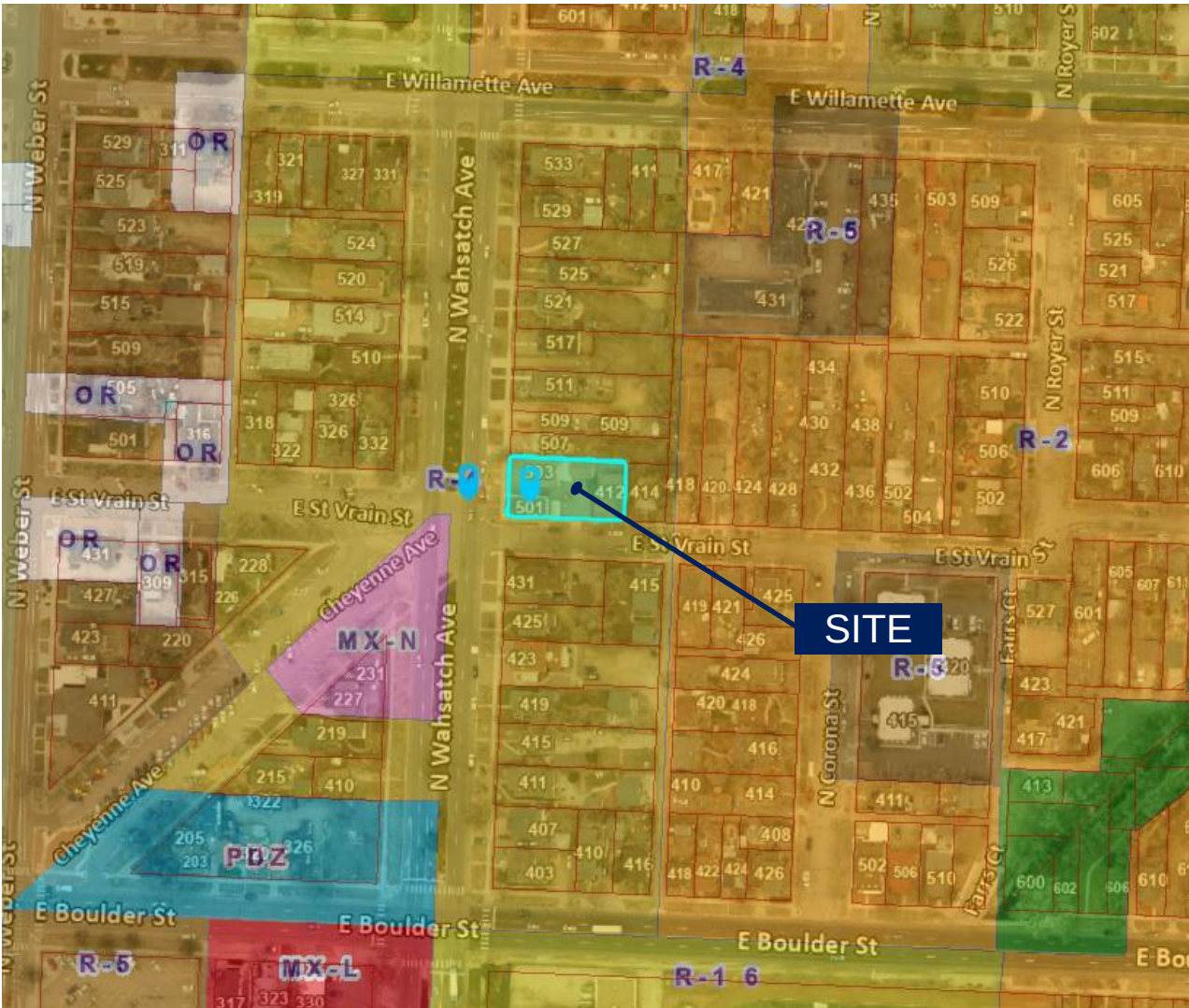
The subject application is to be reviewed under the Unified Development Code. All references to “the Code” within this report refer to the Unified Development Code.

Surrounding Zoning and Land Use

Adjacent Property Existing Conditions

	Zoning	Existing Use	Special Conditions
North	R-4 (Multi-Family Low)	Single-Family Home	N/A
West	R-4 (Multi-Family Low)	Multi-Family Residential (4-8 units)	N/A
South	R-4 (Multi-Family Low)	Two-Family (Duplex)	N/A
East	R-4 (Multi-Family Low)	Single-Family Home	N/A

Zoning Map



Stakeholder Involvement

Public Notice

Public Notice Occurrences (Poster / Postcards)	Initial application and City Planning Commission public hearing
Postcard Mailing Radius	1,000 feet for each notification
Number of Postcards Mailed	255 postcards were sent with each public notice occurrence
Number of Comments Received	Four (4) public comments were received

Public Engagement

The City received several written comments regarding the proposed Development Standards Adjustment (see Attachment 3 – Public Comment). Key themes include the following:

- Preference for the building to return to a neighborhood commercial use.
- Concerns that the proposed residence could be used as a short-term rental.
- Reports of property neglect and nuisance conditions, including boarded windows, overgrown vegetation, unresolved alarms, and prior squatting activity.
- Ongoing concerns about parking availability in the area; some opposition and some conditional support depending on provision of off-street parking.
- One household expressed support, noting a desire to see the property reoccupied.

Timeline of Review

Initial Submittal Date	8/7/2025
Number of Review Cycles	Two (2)
Item(s) Ready for Agenda	7/17/2026

Development Standards Adjustment

Summary of Application

The applicant is requesting a Development Standards Adjustment to authorize a residential density of 13.33 dwelling units per acre within the R-4 (Multi-Family Low) zone district, where a maximum of 8 dwelling units per acre is permitted. The request is associated with the proposed conversion of the former laundromat building into a single-family residence, resulting in a total of three single-family detached dwellings on the parcel located at 501 North Wahsatch Avenue (see Attachment 2 – Project Statement). No new construction is proposed; density increases solely due to the reuse of the existing structure.

The site consists of two existing single-family homes and the former commercial building situated on 0.22 acres, producing an existing residential density of 8.89 du/ac. The proposed conversion increases this density to 13.33 du/ac. As stated in the applicant’s project narrative, the R-4 district is intended to accommodate detached and attached single-family residences, two-family dwellings, and small multi-family structures in walkable, transitional urban areas. The R-4 district allows up to 8 du/ac for multi-family land uses; however, the UDC Internal Policies Q1 – April 2024 Memo clarifies that three or more single-family dwelling units on one lot constitute a multi-family land use, regardless of whether the units are

attached or detached. Therefore, density relief is required to allow three detached dwellings on the parcel (see Attachment 5 – UDC Internal Policies Q1 – April 2024).

Because the former laundromat use was discontinued for more than 12 months, it lost its legal nonconforming status under UDC Section 7.5.804.E. As a result, any future use of the building must comply with the R-4 zone district, which does not permit commercial uses. Although several commenters expressed interest in restoring a neighborhood-serving business, reactivation of a commercial use would require a separate Zoning Map Amendment, which the property owner is not pursuing.

Public comment also expressed concerns about possible short-term rental activity. Staff review confirms that the property does not qualify for a non-owner-occupied short-term rental license due to the presence of other approved non-owner-occupied STRs within 500 feet. An owner-occupied STR could be considered through a separate review process. The applicant's representative stated that the intended use is long-term rental rather than short-term occupancy (see Attachment 4 – Applicant Response to Public Comment).

Parking concerns were raised by several residents. The R-4 zone district requires two off-street parking spaces per single-family dwelling. The site plan demonstrates that the required six spaces are provided on-site, along with an accessible space and additional capacity in the existing garage (see Attachment 6 – Site Plan). The associated site plan is currently under administrative review by City staff consistent with the City's development review procedures.

Landscaping improvements are also proposed around the site's perimeter, including new street trees along East St. Vrain Street and Wahsatch Avenue, consistent with current city landscaping standards. These improvements exceed minimum requirements and serve as compensating benefits in support of the DVSA.

Overall, the application requests the density relief necessary to facilitate the reuse of an existing building and formalize a fully residential land use pattern that conforms to the R-4 zone district. Conversion of the long-vacant building to a single-family residence would eliminate an expired nonconforming use, address nuisance conditions identified in public comment, provide adequate off-street parking, and align the site with surrounding residential development.

Application Review Criteria

UDC Code Section 7.5.525

City Code requires that a development standards adjustment may only be approved if the following criteria are met:

1. The alternative design achieves the intent of the subject standard to the same or better degree than the standard for which a waiver is requested;

The intent of the R-4 density standard is to ensure neighborhood-compatible residential development that reflects appropriate scale, form, and intensity for established, walkable urban neighborhoods. The proposed alternative design achieves this intent by reusing an existing early-twentieth-century building and maintaining the historic development pattern of compact lots and detached residential structures. No new building mass, height, or expansion is proposed, and the project reinforces surrounding residential character while resolving the site's expired nonconforming commercial use. Although three detached dwellings on one lot technically trigger multi-family classification under UDC interpretation, the physical form and operational characteristics remain consistent with the intent of the R-4 district.

2. When considered together with compensating benefits, the alternative design advances the goals and policies of this UDC to the same or better degree than the standard for which a waiver is requested;

The project advances UDC goals by facilitating reinvestment in an established neighborhood, returning a vacant structure to productive use, and eliminating an obsolete commercial use that cannot be reactivated under current zoning. The

alternative design supports neighborhood stability, walkability, and compatible land-use patterns while providing compensating benefits, including increased landscaping, improved site aesthetics, and long-term residential occupancy. Additionally, the project adds one new dwelling unit, contributing to increased housing availability which is a documented community need. When viewed collectively, these benefits advance the purpose and policies of the UDC equal to or better than strict application of the density standard.

3. The alternative design imposes no greater impacts on adjacent properties that would occur through compliance with the specific requirements of this UDC; and

The project does not introduce new structural massing, height, or additional building footprint, and therefore does not intensify physical impacts beyond what currently exists on the site. The conversion of the former laundromat to residential use results in a substantial reduction in commercial noise, traffic, lighting, and activity levels compared to the former nonconforming use. Required parking is fully met onsite and mitigates concerns about spillover parking expressed by neighbors. Landscaping improvements provide additional buffering along both street frontages, and the reuse of the existing structure maintains established setback and form relationships. The alternative design therefore imposes no greater impacts on adjacent properties than strict compliance with zoning requirements.

4. The alternative design provides compensating benefits that are reasonably related to the proposed waiver and would not otherwise be required by this UDC or State law. Compensating benefits may include one or a combination of the following:

The project provides several compensating benefits that offset the requested density relief and meaningfully improve both the site and surrounding neighborhood:

a. Benefits to the general public:

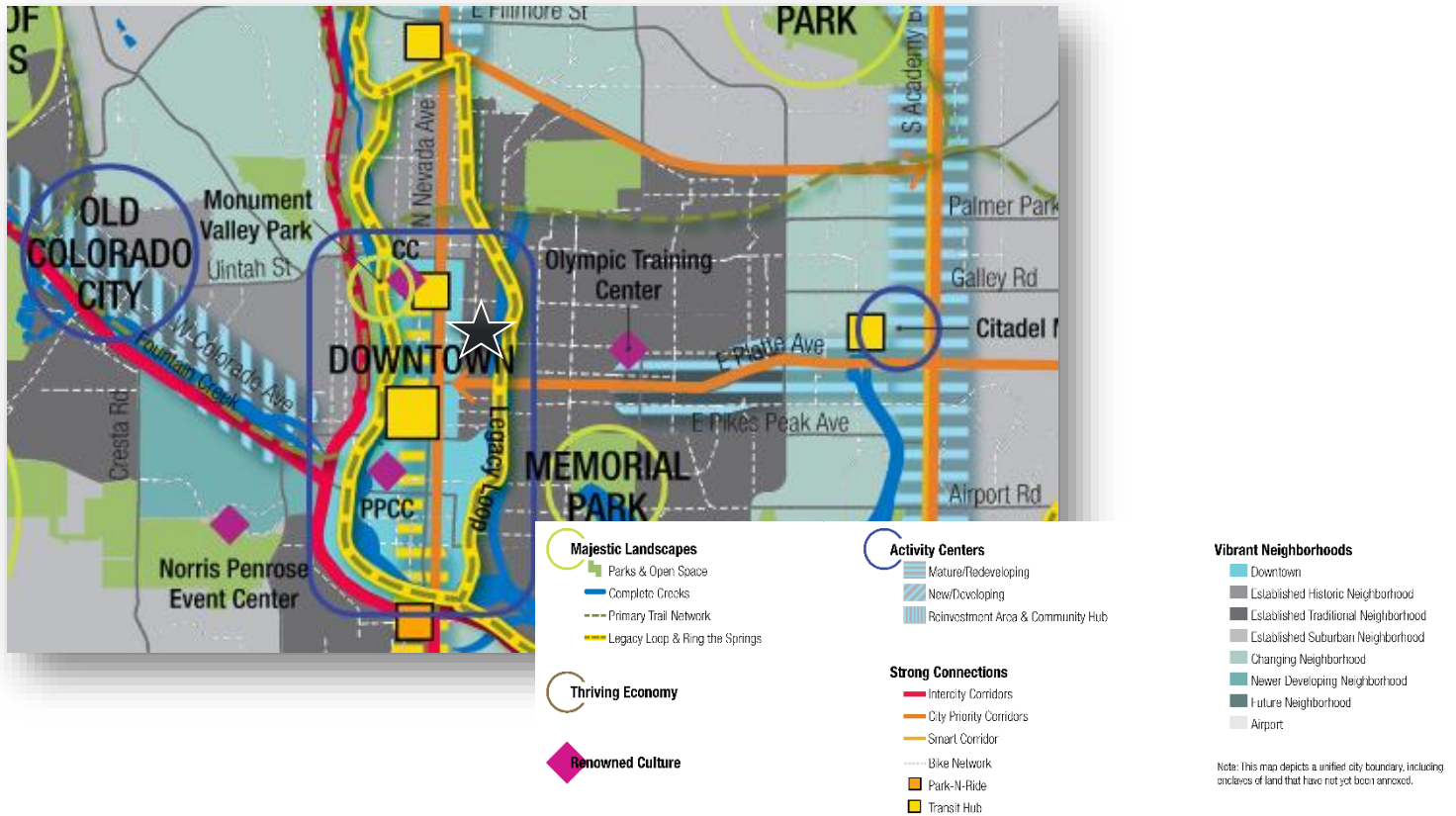
- Beautification and landscape enhancements: New street trees and upgraded perimeter landscaping along Wahsatch Avenue and East St. Vrain Street exceed minimum requirements and enhance the public streetscape.
- Historic neighborhood character preservation: Reuse of the 1904 structure maintains the building form and supports the historic development pattern of the neighborhood.
- Reduction of nuisance conditions: Activating the long-vacant structure addresses concerns regarding trespassing, safety, and property neglect.

b. Benefits the users, customers, or residents of the proposed development:

- Increased landscaping and buffering: Enhanced landscaping improves shade, visual quality, and buffering along both street frontages.
- Long-term residential occupancy: The commitment to long-term residential use supports neighborhood stability and predictability.
- Increased housing availability: The project adds one additional dwelling unit within an existing urban neighborhood, through the reuse of an existing building, thereby contributing to ongoing community housing needs without new construction.
- Improved site maintenance: Reinvestment in landscaping, irrigation, and building condition enhances property upkeep.

Together, these compensating benefits are directly related to the requested waiver, exceed minimum code requirements, and support approval of the Development Standards Adjustment.

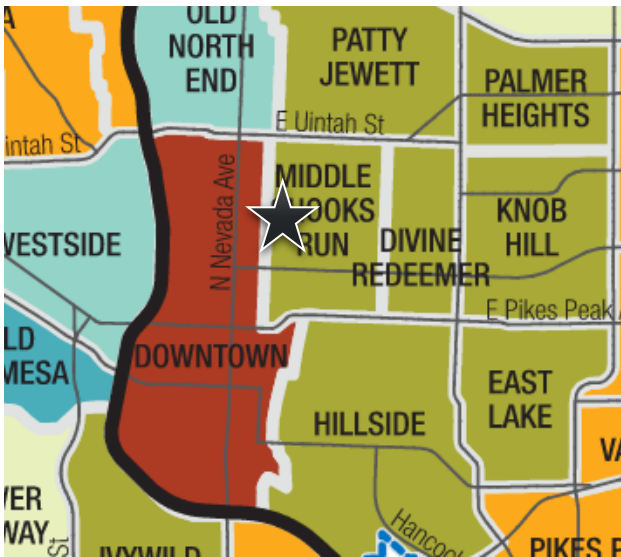
PlanCOS Vision



The PlanCOS Vision Map identifies the 501 North Wahsatch Avenue property within an Established Traditional Neighborhood. These neighborhoods are characterized by compact, walkable blocks, a historic grid street pattern, alley access, and traditional early-to-mid-century residential development. The site lies within one of the city's oldest neighborhood fabrics, consistent with the typology shown in the Vibrant Neighborhood Framework Map.

PlanCOS states that Established Traditional Neighborhoods are largely built-out but should still expect incremental infill and reinvestment. Development in these areas should preserve existing character, reflect traditional lot patterns, and maintain walkability. The proposed conversion of the existing structure to a single-family residence aligns with these expectations by retaining the building's established form, reinforcing residential use, and supporting ongoing neighborhood stability.

PlanCOS also emphasizes reinvestment in mature neighborhoods to sustain livability and maintain neighborhood identity. Returning the building to active residential use, along with the landscape improvements shown on the associated site plan, is consistent with this direction. The proposal supports compatible infill housing while maintaining the established residential character envisioned for Traditional Neighborhoods.



Predominant Typology

 Downtown	 Established Traditional Neighborhood
 Newer Developing Neighborhood	 Established Suburban Neighborhood
 Changing Neighborhood	 Airport
 Established Historic Neighborhood	 Future Neighborhood

Vibrant Neighborhoods

In addition to supporting the Vibrant Neighborhoods goals, the application aligns with specific PlanCOS policies and strategies for Established Traditional Neighborhoods:

Policy VN-2.A – Promote neighborhoods that incorporate common desired neighborhood elements.

• Strategy VN-2.A-3: “Support land use decisions and projects that provide a variety of housing types and sizes...”

- This project contributes to neighborhood housing diversity through compatible infill.

Policy VN-3.F – Enhance mobility and connectivity between neighborhoods.

• Strategy VN-3.F-1: “Increase transportation...choices by improving or adding bike lanes, sidewalks, [and] off-street neighborhood trails.”

- The landscaping and frontage improvements strengthen walkability within the traditional neighborhood grid.

Statement of Compliance

DVSA-25-0003 – 501 N Wahsatch Ave - Development Standards Adjustment

After evaluation of the Development Standards Adjustment for 501 N Wahsatch Avenue, the application meets the review criteria.