



Date: June 15, 2026

To: File DEPN-26-0039 - Development Plan Modification of Corporate Ridge No. 1

From: Kevin Walker, City Planning Director
Daniel Sexton, LUR/DRE Planning Manager

Re: Administrative Decision Analysis for a Development Plan Modification of Corporate Ridge No. 1

Purpose

This memo has been prepared by the City's Planning Department to provide context and clarity for the administrative decision approving the Development Plan Modification application for Corporate Ridge No. 1 Lot 4 (also known as "Project Taurus"), including documenting key changes that the Applicant made to the original application to address comments and code requirements.

Background

In 1995, land use applications were approved by the City that allowed the development of the subject property with a mix of light industrial uses (e.g. manufacturing, warehouse, and office uses) to support a microelectronic center for United Technologies. At that time, the microelectronic center included adjacent properties and was zoned PIP-1 (old Chapter 7 zoning), which supported the current development pattern. After the land use approvals, building permits were obtained and construction occurred in the mid- to late-1990s. Over the intervening years, different owners and operators used the property for manufacturing and industrial purposes. The current BP (Business Park) zone district for the property was established in 2023 as a part of the city-wide rezoning to implement the Uniform Development Code (UDC).

On March 12, 2026, the City Planning Department received the Development Plan Modification application for Project Taurus. The proposal modifies the previous Development Plan and establishes a data center use in the existing industrial building on the 21.96 acre, BP (Business Park) zoned, site located at 1565 High Tech Way. More specifically, the application proposed the re-purposing of the building at 1615 West Garden of the Gods Road for the data center, which is an allowed use in the zone district for the property. The approved plan also illustrates a number of site modifications including: new generators, chillers, sound walls, landscaping, and other site work.

Application Process

In accordance with City Code, the Applicant for Project Taurus submitted a Development Plan Modification application on March 12, 2026. City Planning staff reviewed the submittal for completeness and then processed it for review. Copies of the submittal materials were transmitted to agency partners and were also made available for public view on the City's website through the [Permits, Licenses and Records](#) webpage.

Concurrently with the agency review, the City Planning Department initiated the required public notice including the mailing of 138 postcards to adjacent property owners within 1,000 feet of the project boundaries and posting three posters on and adjacent to the property to notify the public of the development plan submittal. The City also required the Applicant to hold a neighborhood meeting, with information about that April 7, 2026 neighborhood meeting included in the first mailing. The number of community members attending the April 7, 2026 meeting significantly exceeded the venue capacity (over 400 attendees to a room with 100-person maximum capacity), so the Applicant agreed to host a second meeting and that was held on May 14, 2026 with over 500 attendees. This meeting also was noticed by the City Planning Department.

To date, upwards of 1,000 comments from citizens and organizations regarding this matter have been received by the City Planning Department. The City process for managing public comments is to forward them to the Applicant for consideration and response. The Applicant has responded privately and publicly to the comments despite the large numbers and continues to engage in ongoing dialogue with residents and neighbors. City staff and agency partners also consider the public comments as part of the application review. Based on City staff's review of the comments, the predominant issues identified include:

- Neighborhood and land use compatibility
- Water use and regional scarcity
- Noise and quality-of-life impacts
- Energy demand and utility costs
- Air emissions
- Public transparency and independent reviews

During the administrative review of the application materials, the City Planning Department and agency partners engaged in a comprehensive review of the project to ensure compliance and conformance with all applicable City Codes through four (4) review cycles. In certain instances, such as the evaluation of potential geologic hazards and noise impacts, the City consulted with external independent consultants to evaluate the project with respect to these matters. At the conclusion of the administrative review, the City Planning Department determined that the application did not need to be referred to the City's Planning Commission for final action and, as such, a final administrative decision could be rendered by City staff.

The City acknowledges that the Applicant sought and received a Rapid Response Certificate for the project from the Economic Development Department. This designation encourages agencies to prioritize the application's review. However, it does not change any administrative procedures, City Code requirements, review criteria, or the required sequence of approvals.

Application Review Criteria

This project, in accordance with City Code, required a Development Plan Modification application, which is required to meet the application review criteria as defined in City Code Section 7.5.516.D. The City Planning Department, following a complete review of the application, determined that the application meets the review criteria as described below and administratively approved, with conditions, the application as a Major Modification. The referenced review criteria listed in the City Code Section 7.5.516.D. *Criteria for Approval* state:

D. Criteria for Approval: An application for modification of a development approval or permit may be approved if the decision-making body identified in Subsection C above determines that the applicable criteria have been met as they relate to the area of the development approval or permit proposed to be modified:

- 1. Major Modification: A Major Modification may be approved if the applicable decision-making body determines that the request:*

- a. *Complies with the provisions of this UDC and all applicable City regulations;*
- b. *Is consistent with any conditions in the approval or permit proposed to be modified, unless the decision-making body that imposed that condition modifies that condition;*
- c. *Does not create more adverse impacts on surrounding properties than the development approval or permit proposed to be modified; and*
- d. *Is consistent with the Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan, other plans adopted by City Council, and the intent of the zone district in which the property is located.*

The criteria, dimensional and use standards, and other applicable City Code requirements outlined above constitute the regulatory framework governing the administrative review process and the resulting decision. These provisions directed the evaluation conducted by City staff and partner agencies. The following section documents the considerations and analysis of the required review criteria.

a. *Complies with the provisions of this UDC and all applicable City regulations;*

The UDC includes nearly 140 unique uses which are correlated (permitted, conditional, or prohibited) to the City's Zone Districts. Many of the 140 use categories are broad and include numerous specific uses. For instance, "personal services" may include uses as varied as barber shop, fitness studio, bail bond providers, tattoo parlors, and appliance repair services. Specific to this application, the use "data center" is one of numerous other uses, including commercial bakeries, soft drink bottling, electronics manufacturing, and print shops, that all fall within the formal use category referred to as "Light Industry."

The Applicant's proposed data center use, which is classified as Light Industrial use under the UDC, proposes to re-develop the currently vacant and underutilized industrial property at 1565 High Tech Way. In the BP zone district, all Light Industrial uses are permitted and as noted above, the industrial use of the property appears to have been maintained over the years. Per the original proposal, the largest industrial building on the site, at 442,468 square feet, will remain and be repurposed to house the data center use and supportive office space. Other ancillary industrial buildings on the property are to be removed and replaced with generator and chiller yards or converted to gravel, mulch or native seed. Much of the remaining ancillary site improvements and infrastructure will remain and is expected to be repurposed to reactivate the site.

To comply with City Code requirements and to respond to comments received from the public, the Applicant significantly revised the proposed site design during subsequent submittals of the application materials. For example, the proposed generator yard was relocated to the north side of the building at 1615 High Tech Way and a 30-foot-tall screen wall is now proposed to be installed along north edge of Douglas Creek South, which runs parallel to the southern property boundary. The Applicant also reduced the initial changes to exterior lighting fixtures and limited lighting upgrades to within the proposed generator and chiller yards. All lighting fixtures within the yards will be located below the top of the acoustical barriers that surround the yards; thus, maintaining an exterior lighting scheme that prevents light spillage beyond the property lines for all new fixtures. The above referenced screen wall will further mitigate the visual impact of the site from the established residential neighborhood to the south.

Based on the final site configuration and proposed improvements, all agency comments and City Code requirements pertaining to site design were addressed through plan revisions, notes and conditions of approval. Specific to the proposed conditions of approval, Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) requested that the conditions be added to any approval which address the notation and configuration of certain utility services. During subsequent construction drawing reviews and approvals, the service items CSU raised will be addressed.

- b. Is consistent with any conditions in the approval or permit proposed to be modified, unless the decision-making body that imposed that condition modifies that condition:

The property has been industrially developed and consistently used for the past 30 years. During the administration review, City staff evaluated all prior entitlements for the property and determined that prior land use application approvals for the property did not contain any conditions of approval.

- c. Does not create more adverse impacts on surrounding properties than the development approval or permit proposed to be modified; and

City Code contains numerous dimensional and use-specific development standards which govern how all properties within the city may be developed. As a data center, Project Taurus is subject to additional requirements specific to the use. Throughout the administrative review process, the Applicant submitted extensive documentation and detailed plans to demonstrate compliance with the applicable standards. City staff note that all applicable dimensional and use-specific development standards set forth in the UDC have been met. Additionally, as is customary within the City's regulatory framework, public comments received on the project addressed a wide range of issues, and generally fell within the categories of environmental impacts, public health considerations, and quality-of-life concerns as noted above. Discussion and analysis of these issues is provided below.

Environmental Impacts

From an environmental perspective, City staff considered the presence of significant or sensitive flora and fauna. Across the City, areas or landscapes containing sensitive species have been designated with certain overlay zone districts, such as the HS-O (Hillside Overlay) and SS-O (Streamside Overlay) zones. After reviewing current and historical zoning records, it was determined that the Project Taurus site is not included within either of these overlay zones nor did prior land use decisions mention such habitats or species. Additionally, through the administrative review, the Applicant has provided documentation and information to reinforce that the project will comply with the City's geologic hazard and drainage requirements. On the matter of geologic hazards specifically, the City consulted with the Colorado Geologic Survey (CGS) to ensure the proposed changes to the site effectively mitigated any potential impacts to the known hazards, which included landslide susceptibility and dipping bedrock.

Public Health Impacts

In terms of public health considerations, most concerns or questions raised during the administrative review revolved around impacts relating to noise, specifically infrasound, air quality, and heat island effect. The anticipated noise sources associated with Project Taurus are expected primarily from the backup generators during emergent and maintenance operation, as well as the chillers which support the electrical equipment. Other site improvements and equipment are not anticipated to generate appreciable levels of noise during regular operations. Overall, the types and levels of noise expected from the project are consistent with those typically found in industrial or commercial developments that utilize backup power generation or mechanical cooling systems. The placement and design for the generator yard (30 generators) and chiller yard (36 chillers) are illustrated on the approved Development Plan Modification for the project. The backup power generators are anticipated to be operated during electric service outages and monthly during regular maintenance cycles. The chiller systems will be operated 24/7/365 during operations of the facility, as heat is produced as a byproduct of the data center's operation.

The Project Taurus Comprehensive Exterior Noise and Acoustical Design Analysis and Impact report (herein "Report"), produced by D.L. Adams Associates and last dated May 12, 2026, was created specifically for this project, and includes site specific layout of equipment, topography, vegetation, and proximity to property lines and residential receptors. The modeling presented in the Report shows that if unmitigated, the project would result in a sound level exceeding the acceptable limits of City Code Section 9.8.104 Permissible Noise Levels.

City-Wide Permissible Noise Levels

<u>Zone</u>	<u>7:00 A.M. To Next 7:00 P.M.</u>	<u>7:00 P.M. To Next 7:00 A.M.</u>
Residential	55 dB(A)	50 dB(A)
Commercial	60 dB(A)	55 dB(A)
Light industrial	70 dB(A)	65 dB(A)
Industrial	80 dB(A)	75 dB(A)

However, the acoustic mitigation proposed with Project Taurus, which consists of the placement of equipment yards and other noise attenuation improvements (e.g. acoustical barriers and a 30-foot-tall screen wall) on site, results in the expected maximum noise levels on site during normal operations being 42 dB(A) or less, 46 dB(A) during generator testing, and 51 dB(A) or less during emergency conditions. The Report also notes that an ambient noise level of 40 dB(A) is generally representative of day and night noise level for the location and surrounding area. While the expected maximum noise level scenarios are higher than the baseline noise level, the proposed noise mitigation in the form of acoustical barriers and the screen wall are appropriate to ensure compliance with the local and State permissible noise levels.

To verify the Report's analysis and conclusions, City Planning retained an independent noise consultant, Hankard Environmental, Inc. The consultant confirmed that the report accurately identified the project's noise sources and applied appropriate mitigation measures. During this review, the consultant also advised City staff that scientific research on infrasound and low-frequency sound remains limited, and that no consistent regulatory framework exists nationwide to address these issues. Although concerns about these sound types have been raised for decades, research has not established a measurable level linked to health impacts, and therefore no objective standard currently exists for setting compliance criteria.

Air Quality

In the State of Colorado, the Department of Public Health and Environment's (CDPHE) Air Pollution Control Division is responsible for developing and implementing air pollution control measures in accordance with State and Federal law. The Division issues and enforces air quality permits and conducts statewide monitoring of outdoor air pollution. For Project Taurus, the Applicant has proposed installing and maintaining best-in-class generator and chiller units to ensure that air quality impacts remain within permitted limits. The City is not party to the States air quality permitting process. City staff concluded that the backup generators, which operate solely during electrical service outages and monthly maintenance cycles and are classified as 'standby-only' by both the State of Colorado Air Quality program and the Colorado Springs Fire Department, would not produce any negative impacts.

Heat Island Effect

The Project Taurus site is already a predominantly developed industrial property, and the proposed backup generators and chillers represent the primary new sources of potential heat-island effects. City staff acknowledge that virtually all man-made surfaces absorb solar energy and therefore contribute to heat-island conditions; however, they were unable to identify any regulatory framework establishing enforceable standards for heat-island mitigation. Although research in this field is advancing, current data do not provide a consistent or measurable basis for regulatory criteria.

Considering the foregoing analysis, the Applicant has shown responsiveness to agency and staff reviews and comments, as well as to concerns articulated by neighborhood stakeholders. This

collaborative process culminated in a Development Plan Modification deemed both compliant with, and in conformance to City Code.

- d. Is consistent with the Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan, other plans adopted by City Council, and the intent of the zone district in which the property is located.

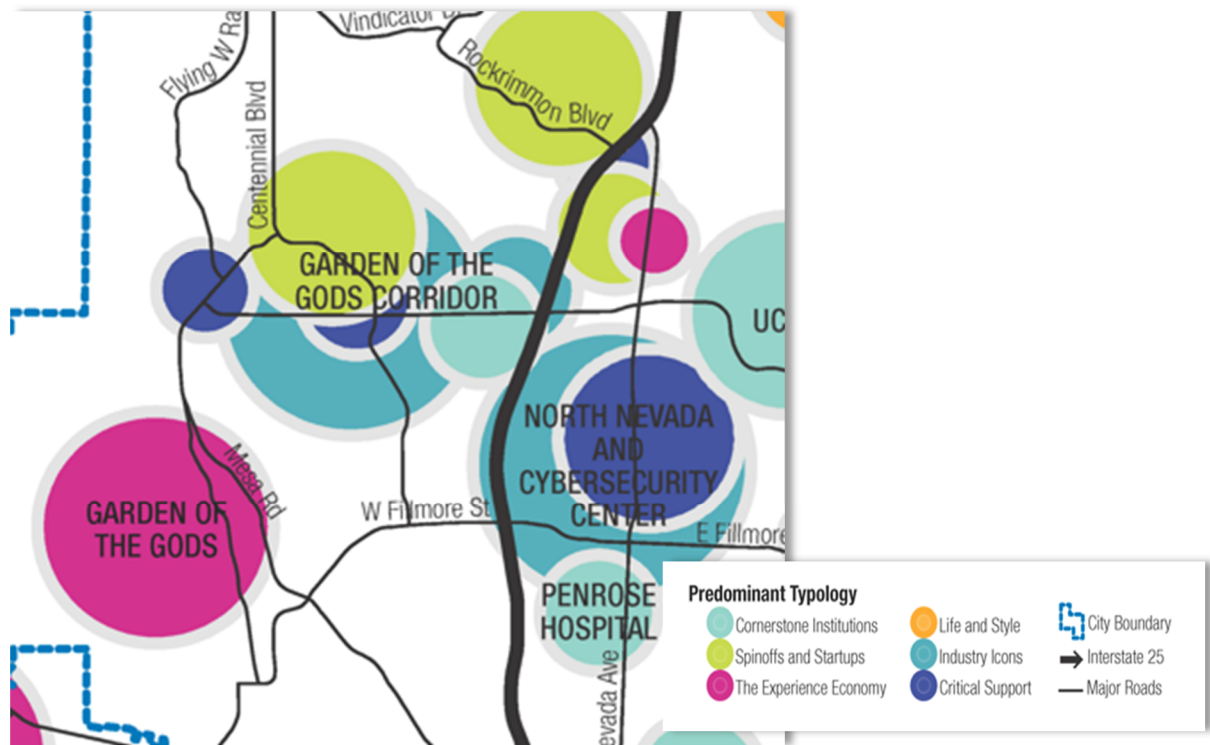
As previously noted, the Project Taurus site is zoned BP (Business Park). City Code Section 7.2.401.A Purpose states:

A. Purpose: The BP zone district accommodates a limited group of, for example, professional, administrative, research, manufacturing, and light industrial uses. Land uses are as indicated in Table 7.3.2-A: Base and NNA-O District Use Table. Uses suitable for BP zone districts have operations that are quiet and clean to ensure the creation and maintenance of an environment that will protect the occupants of the business park from unintended adverse traffic, noise, or performance impacts. BP zone districts shall be located on lands that are suitable for industrial development, have adequate traffic capacity for the anticipated mix of uses as shown on the Major Thoroughfare Plan and applicable Land Use Plans. Before proceeding with any development, an applicant rezoning land to the BP zone district must obtain approval of a Land Use Plan pursuant to Section 7.5.514 (Land Use Plan).

As indicated under Table 7.3.2-A: Base and NNA-O District Use Table, the Light Industrial use, which includes Data Centers, is a permitted use in the BP zone and certain use-specific standards are noted in City Code Section 7.3.303.D.6 *Light Industrial*.

Table 7.3.2-A		P = Permitted					A = Accessory to primary use													
Base and NNA-O		C = Conditional Use					T = Temporary use													
District Use Table		R = Allowed pursuant to regulating plan																		
							Mixed-Use					Indus.		Spec P.			NNA-O			Use-Specific Standards
Zone District ➡		A	R-E	R-19	R-16	R-2	MX-M	MX-L	MX-I	FBZ	BP	LI	GI	APD	PF	PK	South	Central	North	
Land Use ↓																				
Light Industry										R	P	P	P	P			C	P	P	7.3.303D.6

According to PlanCOS, the City's comprehensive plan that was adopted in 2019, and it's Thriving Economy Framework map (below), the Garden of the God Road is a vibrant corridor containing many cornerstone institutions and industry. The Project Taurus property sits within the center of this thriving economic and industry focused hub in the City. While additional residential and supportive commercial development has occurred along the periphery of the corridor, the City maintains that the proximity of work and live spaces has consistently been a draw for industry partners. The Applicant has also indicated that the site represents many of the classic challenges and opportunities for infill redevelopment.



Conclusion

In conclusion, the administrative review of the Project Taurus Development Plan Modification was conducted in a manner consistent with all applicable provisions of the Uniform Development Code, the Colorado Springs Comprehensive Plan, and relevant technical and regulatory standards. The evaluation incorporated extensive interagency coordination, independent technical analyses, and consideration of substantial public input. The Applicant's iterative revisions and demonstrated responsiveness to regulatory requirements and stakeholder concerns materially improved the proposal and ensured compliance with the governing criteria for a Major Modification. Based on the comprehensive administrative record and the findings detailed on the approved plans and supplemental materials, City Planning determined that the application satisfies the requisite standards for approval with conditions and advances the intended land use objectives for the BP zone district. Accordingly, the Development Plan Modification was approved with conditions to ensure continued adherence to City Code and the responsible implementation of the project.