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Mr. William Gray, Senior Planner
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Re: Cottage Court on Costilla - Development Standards Adjustment, and Development Plan

Thank you for the coordination and discussion of the Development Plan for the proposed Cottage Court on Costilla. We are honored to represent our client, StreamHome Construction and support their desire for providing homes on a more affordable level than is otherwise possible in our community. The MX-L zoning present at this property provides an opportunity to work within the zoning for the property to better understand how the zoning in our community can yield smaller homes for ownership and thereby bring down the initial cost for a first-time homebuyer – our target audience for this product.

This Project Statement is for the following applications related to the Cottage Court on Costilla:

- DEPN-25-0164 Development Plan
- DVSA-26-0001 Development Standards Adjustment (Parking Ratio Adjustment)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The properties included in this application are El Paso County Tax Schedule Numbers 6417312001, 6417312002, and 6417312003, with current addresses at 745 E. Costilla Street, 404 S. Prospect Street, and 410 S. Prospect Street. The site has frontage on both E. Costilla Street and S. Prospect Street, with an existing alley along the southern boundary.

The Cottage Court on Costilla is designed to provide an intimate, dignified infill housing purchase option not currently present in Colorado Springs. The images to the right of this description illustrate successful cottage court developments across the United States, where the focus is on shared community-oriented spaces rather than large, often underutilized front yards.

The site is exceptionally location efficient benefiting from proximity to Downtown Colorado Springs, Shooks Run, and Memorial Park. It is served by 15-minute transit, regional bicycle trails, and established on-street bicycle infrastructure.



The property is envisioned to be subdivided into 14 attached single-family lots. Future homeowners will enjoy both privately owned outdoor spaces and shared access to the community amenities within Tract A. Tract A will be owned and maintained by the Cottage Court on Costilla Homeowners Association.

Within Tract A, two pedestrian pathways will provide connections from S. Prospect Street and another sidewalk connection through the interior of the site from E. Costilla Street to the southern common area. This area will include off-street parking and a shared waste receptacle.

MISSING MIDDLE

The Missing Middle refers to housing that can be developed on relatively small parcels of land—often less than one acre. Missing Middle housing can include single-family homes on small lots, tiny homes, duplexes, townhomes, stacked flats, apartments, and condominiums. Missing Middle developments may include a mixed-use component integrated with residential uses, or they may stand alone. They can consist of a single housing type or a mix of types. While they are often more affordable by nature, affordability is not a defining requirement.

In the instance of the Cottage Court on Costilla, we believe the development will not only achieve that vision but also help inspire other property owners to explore similar approaches that broaden housing options within our community.

AFFORDABILITY

As outlined here, this project is inspired by our client's vision to expand economic and housing opportunities for Colorado Springs residents through thoughtful and creative infill design. The intention of this development is to provide household ownership opportunities for residents earning 80 percent of the Area Median Income (AMI) or less. 80 percent AMI in Colorado Springs presently is a household income of approximately \$68,000.00-\$90,000.00 per year. The general rule of thumb is a home that is "affordable" would spend 30% of their income on housing, which would provide a home price somewhere between \$300,000.00 and \$390,000.00.

PARKING AND LOCATION EFFICIENCY

The surrounding bicycle network includes bike lanes along E. Costilla Street, the Shooks Run Trail as a north-south connector to the west, Memorial Park located a half-mile to the east, and a PikeRide station one block east at Costilla and Institute.

Combined with a nearby Route 1 transit stop less than a block away, these facilities provide residents with meaningful independence from reliance on automobiles—a benefit not commonly available in most parts of Colorado Springs.

The proposed development is less than one-mile from what is considered to be the center of downtown (Tejon and Pikes Peak Avenue) and boasts a "walk score" of 74, or "Very Walkable".

Keeping in mind the goal and intent of the project is to provide affordable home ownership opportunities, we have not requested parking reductions for affordable housing. With the understanding that taking this reduction in parking would require a deed restriction on the homes, which will affect the viability for lending on the project.

Missing Middle housing projects are full of other constraints and we choose to not add another hurdle in the ability for this project to be developed.

As noted in the below calculations, we are proposing a Development Standards Adjustment (DVSA) with this application. The provided calculations are aligned with the plan and intention of the homes to be constructed on the property. We are planning to construct fourteen (14) homes (7 buildings), with eight (8) 2-bedroom homes and six (6) 1-bedroom homes. The bedroom count is important in respect to this DVSA because we are utilizing calculations within the UDC that would otherwise be used for multi-family residential.

The intention of this application is to provide affordable homeownership opportunities, a desire repeated frequently by the City Planning Department, Public Officials, and in the City’s Comprehensive Plan, PlanCOS. In doing this, without subsidy from CHFA or other Government funding means, right-sizing the homes is a critical step. The homes planned for the property are intentionally smaller and with less land area. This helps to keep the end prices lower for homeownership.

The general, one-size-fits-all standard for single-family homes is to provide two vehicle parking spaces. This is an easy standard to meet in the suburban context of the City, where homes are much larger and mostly constructed today include 2-3 garage spaces for vehicles. Most single-family homes constructed today are also in areas considered to be automobile dependent. This is not the case for this property, where the property is located in close proximity to downtown Colorado Springs, transit and a vast trail network.

This request is to utilize multi-family standards for parking, which by home sizing calculations are much more aligned with the planned product. Multi-family calculations for parking are as follows:

One-Bedroom or Studio Home	1.0 Parking Space per Home	6 Homes
Two-Bedroom Home	1.5 Parking Spaces per Home	8 Homes
Three+ Bedroom Homes	2.0 Parking Spaces per Home	0 Homes

Applying these standards to the Cottage Court on Costilla would require 18 Parking Spaces, or 1.29 Parking Spaces per Home. We have applied a parking ratio in this request of 1.30 Parking Spaces per Home accordingly.

Per Chapter 7 of the Unified Development Code (UDC) (7.4.1005), Adjustments to Minimum Motor Vehicle Parking Requirements, we calculate the required parking as follows:

DVSN-2X-XXXX (Parking Development Standards Adjustment from 2.0 spaces per unit to 1.3 Spaces per unit)

14 Dwelling Units * 1.3 Spaces = **18 Off-Street Parking Spaces Required**

D. On-Street Parking Credit (25% Credit) – *Subtract 4.5 Spaces*

F. Transit Proximity Reduction (10% Reduction) – *Subtract 1.8 Spaces*

H. Bike Route or Trail Proximity Reduction (5% Reduction) *Subtract 0.9 Spaces*

Required Parking Spaces

11 Off-Street Parking Spaces are Provided in addition to 12 Adjacent On-Street Parking Spaces.

SCHEMATIC LEVEL ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE DEVELOPMENT

The following images are schematic in nature, but illustrate the intent of the development. The images are conceptual only.



Development Plan (DEPN-25-0164)

The Development Plan criteria, along with a response to how the project achieves the criteria is as follows:

- a. The decision-making criteria in Section 7.5.409 (General Criteria for Approval) apply unless modified by this Subsection 4; The application complies with all applicable Use-specific standards in Part 7.3.3 related to the proposed use(s);
 - Yes.
- b. The details of the site design, building location, orientation, and exterior building materials are compatible and harmonious with the surrounding neighborhood, buildings, and uses, including not-yet-developed uses identified in approved Development Plans;
 - Yes, the planned Cottage Court community will provide homes of a similar size, scale and mass to the remainder of the neighborhood. We believe that what is planned and requested with the Development Plan is more harmonious than would otherwise be permitted in the MX-L zone classification;
- c. Significant off-site impacts reasonably anticipated as a result of the project are mitigated or offset to the extent proportional and practicable;
 - We do not anticipate off-site impacts.
- d. The Development Plan substantially complies with any City-adopted plans that are applicable to the site, such as Land Use Plans, approved master plans for a specific development, neighborhood plans, corridor plans, facilities plans, urban renewal plans, or design manuals;
 - The Development Plan complies with Plan COS and the Shooks Run Redevelopment Plan.
- e. The project meets dimensional standards applicable to the zone district, or any applicable requirement in an FBZ or PDZ district;
 - Yes.
- f. The project grading, drainage, flood protection, stormwater quality, and stormwater mitigation comply with the City's Engineering Criteria, the drainage report prepared for the project on file with the Stormwater Enterprise Manager, and other federal, state, and City regulations;
 - Yes, the development is in compliance.
- g. The project complies with all the development standards of Article 7.4 (Development Standards and Incentives), including access and connectivity requirements in Part 7.4.4 (Access and Connectivity), the landscaping and green space requirements in Part 7.4.9 (Landscaping and Green Space), and the parking and loading requirements in Part 7.4.10 (Parking and Loading);
 - Yes.
- h. The project complies with all applicable requirements of any Overlay District in which the property is located, as listed in Part 7.2.6 (Overlay Districts);
 - Not applicable
- i. The project preserves, protects, integrates, or mitigates impacts to any identified sensitive or hazardous natural features associated with the site;

- Not applicable
- j. The project connects to or extends adequate public utilities to the site. As required by Colorado Springs Utilities, the project will extend the utilities to connect to surrounding properties; and
 - Yes.
- k. If necessary to address increased impacts on existing roadways and intersections, the project includes roadway and intersection improvements to provide for safe and efficient movement of multi-modal traffic, pedestrians, and emergency vehicles in accordance with the Engineering Criteria, public safety needs for ingress and egress, and a City accepted traffic impact study, if required, prepared for the project.
 - Understood, we do not anticipate such improvements for this infill development.

DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS ADJUSTMENT REQUEST (DVSA 26-0001)

This Development Standards Adjustment Request (DVSA) is to provide a more suitable parking standard ratio, calibrated to a smaller home product. The one-size-fits-all approach is inappropriate for the smaller home product that is being proposed. A more appropriate solution is to utilize the multi-family standards within the City, which assume a smaller home, less drivers within the home, and less dependency on automobile ownership.

The provided calculations are aligned with the plan and intention of the homes to be constructed on the property. We are planning to construct fourteen (14) homes in seven (7) buildings. Eight (8) of the homes will include two (2) bedrooms and six (6) of the homes will have only one (1) bedroom. The bedroom count is important in respect to this DVSA because the UDC breaks parking requirements by number of rooms for multi-family residential.

The intention of this application is to provide affordable homeownership opportunities, a desire repeated frequently by the City Planning Department, Public Officials, and in the City’s Comprehensive Plan, PlanCOS. In doing this, without subsidy from CHFA or other Government funding means, right-sizing the homes is a critical step. The homes planned for the property are intentionally smaller and with less land area. This helps to keep the end prices lower for homeownership.

The general, one-size-fits-all standard for single-family homes is to provide two vehicle parking spaces. This is an easy standard to meet in the suburban context of the City, where homes are much larger, they include 2-3 garage spaces for vehicles, include three to five bedrooms, and generally have a minimum of two drivers per household. Most single-family homes constructed today are also in areas considered to be automobile dependent. This is not the case for this property, where the property is located in close proximity to downtown Colorado Springs, transit and a vast trail network.

As mentioned, this request is to utilize multi-family standards for parking, which by home sizing calculations are much more aligned with the planned product. Multi-family calculations for parking are as follows:

One-Bedroom or Studio Home	1.0 Parking Space per Home	6 Homes
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Applying these standards to the Cottage Court on Costilla would require 18 Parking Spaces, or 1.29 Parking Spaces per Home. We have applied a parking ratio in this request of 1.30 Parking Spaces per Home accordingly.

Criteria for Approval: The Planning Commission may approve or approve with conditions a Development Standards Adjustment if the Planning Commission determines that the proposed alternative design meets the following criteria:

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 standard proposed is calibrated to the product type than the conventional suburban standard for single-family residential.

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 development standards adjustment meets the goals and policies of this UDC, but even more importantly, it meets the goals and policies of the Comprehensive Plan to provide affordable homeownership. Affordable homeownership has been a struggle to meet in the City of Colorado Springs due to antiquated standards created and calibrated to conventional suburban development.
3. The alternative design imposes no greater impacts on adjacent properties that would occur through compliance with the specific requirements of this UDC; The proposed standard creates more attainable homeownership opportunities near Downtown Colorado Springs. Without the requested adjustment, this development would likely not be feasible, and the property would more likely be redeveloped as rental multifamily housing—a permitted use within the MX-L zone.

Applying suburban parking ratios designed for larger, suburban single-family homes does not reflect the lower rates of vehicle ownership and automobile dependence typically found in urban neighborhoods near Downtown. Requiring that level of parking would reduce the number of homes that could be provided, increase housing costs, and result in inefficient use of valuable land. In some cases, excess parking can also create unintended consequences, such as storage of inoperable vehicles.

Our goal is to strike an appropriate balance that advances the objectives of PlanCOS and the City by supporting housing affordability while promoting efficient use of existing municipal services and infrastructure.

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:
 - a. Benefits to the general public:
 - i. Parks, trails, or other similar public or cultural facilities;
 - ii. Public landscape buffers or beautification areas;
 - iii. Public art;
 - iv. Permanent conservation of natural areas or lands;
 - v. Increased building setbacks;
 - vi. Decreased building height; or
 - vii. Other benefits as agreed upon by the Planning Commission.

When considering benefits to the property, considerations should be made to what previously existed on the property and what is otherwise permitted in the MX-L zoning classification. The property previously included dilapidated structures that were an eye-sore for the Hillside Neighborhood. In anticipation of the future development, the property owners have cleared the structures today and cleaned up the site.

The proposed improvements for the property include a development with lower building heights than are allowed in the MX-L zone (65-feet allowed today). We are proposing residential homes which are generally four-stories or less in Colorado Springs. Per the current plan for the property, we are showing these as a mix of single and two-story homes – a significant decrease from 65-feet. Also proposed are walkways and landscaped areas to be maintained by a new HOA for the property. In contrast to the

conventional market-driven alternatives for the property, which is multi-family residential, we believe that the proposed development will be a major benefit to the Hillside Neighborhood as a whole.

- b. Benefits the users, customers, or residents of the proposed development:
 - i. Green space or public open space, trails, or other similar recreational amenities;
 - ii. Upgrades in architectural design;
 - iii. Increased landscaping;
 - iv. Increased buffering;
 - v. Permanent conservation of natural areas or lands;
 - vi. Secure bicycle facilities, where appropriate; or
 - vii. Other benefits as agreed upon by the Planning Commission or City Council.

The major benefit of the property for both the City of Colorado Springs and the future homeowners is the opportunity for homeownership near downtown Colorado Springs. Our community has struggled to provide affordable homeownership opportunities for several years. We believe that this could be a model for development in the City to provide homeownership opportunities however parking requirements need to be calibrated to appropriate amounts to ensure that this can happen.