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URBAN PLANNING | COMMUNITY DESIGN | LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
ENTITLEMENT COORDINATION | CONTRACT

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EL PASO COUNTY

LETTER OF INTENT FOR: WELSCH AT HOWELLS FINAL PLAT

TSN # 6214000071

FILE # EA257

☐ OWNER/APPLICANT, AND PLANNING CONSULTANT:

Owner:

Randall S. Welsch
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Applicant/Planner:

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Property Address:

11525 Howells Road, Colorado Springs, CO 80908

TSN:

6214000071

Current Zoning:

RR-5 Residential Rural, 5-acre minimum lot size

Proposed Zoning: RR-2.5 Residential Rural, 2.5-acre minimum lot size
There are no known overlay zone districts on the property.

PROJECT LOCATION/DESCRIPTION AND HISTORY OF PROPERTY:

The property included within the **Welsch at Howells Final Plat** application is in El Paso County in Colorado Springs, CO, approximately 16 miles northwest of downtown Colorado Springs, situated on Howells Road 500 feet north of Mountain View Drive. The site approximates a rectangle with rough dimensions of 670 feet in length by 326 feet in width.

The **2021 Your El Paso County Master Plan** identifies the Placetype of this development as “*Large Lot Residential*.” The primary land use in this Placetype is Single-Family Detached Residential. Agriculture, Commercial Retail/Commercial Services, and Parks and Open Space are also allowed as support uses. Residential lot development, within the Large Lot Residential Placetype, allows for lots having a minimum area consisting of 2.5-acres or more. This Placetype is more connected and less remote than the *Rural* Placetype that comprises the larger eastern half of the county. The Welsch property Final Plat proposes splitting the existing 5.0077-acre parcel into two 2.5-acre parcels, thus requiring a zone change from RR-5 to RR-2.5. The rezone application for the property was submitted separately.

Based on FEMA FIRM number 08041C0507G dated December 7, 2018, the site lies within an area of minimal flood hazard (Zone X).

Large-Lot Residential Within the Large-Lot Residential Placetype, conservation design should be primarily utilized for preserving El Paso County’s rural character, defined by large swaths of open space with minimal development. Additionally, some Large-Lot Residential parts of the County include environmentally sensitive areas that need to be protected. Development should not be allowed within a certain distance of the critical natural assets to ensure they are not negatively impacted by future development. Protecting farmland and scenic views is also an important component of conservation design within Large-Lot Residential areas. The County should evaluate new developments on a case-by-case basis to determine their impact on these natural assets.

DEVELOPMENT REQUEST

Final Plat approval of this property is being sought without any waiver or deviation requests. Rezoning has been sought, changing the parcel from the current RR-5 Residential Rural zoning to RR-2.5 Residential Rural. In accordance with County standards, the minimum lot sizes proposed within the property will not be less than 2.5-acres for the proposed zone district.

Pursuant to this Final Plat application, the applicant proposes to develop the site with one additional single-family residential lot. With the planned 2 dwelling units for this project on a site of 5.0077 total acres, the density for the site in its totality is .4 du/ac. This is compatible with the large lot single-family detached residential dwelling character of the surrounding rural area.

Infrastructure to serve the new lot, including a driveway, drainage improvements, and utilities will all be constructed in compliance with applicable county standards, regulations, and criteria in effect at the time of this application. This is in keeping with the rural character of the surrounding Black Forest community.

Surrounding properties are largely rural, single-family homesites with some farm homesteads and ranching operations

JUSTIFICATION FOR REQUEST

This request is consistent with the purposes of the **2021 Your El Paso Master Plan**. The Final Plat is in conformance with subdivision design standards and establishes an adequate level of compatibility with surrounding areas of the site already constructed and other known surrounding areas currently proposed for development.

EXISTING AND PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS

The property has an existing single-family home on the western half of the property. The owner intends to divide the site into two parcels, ultimately having a second, single-family residence with associated construction of a new driveway access, drainage structures, utilities, and other infrastructure as required by the County on the eastern half of the property.

Electric and telecommunication service points-of-connection will be extended to both lots. The electrical service provider is Mountain View Electric Association. Extension of natural gas service is provided by Black Hills Energy. Water will be provided via individual on-site wells and individual septic systems will be provided per lot in accordance with El Paso County Department of Health policy guidelines. Both are acceptable by the county for lot sizes 2.5-acres and larger.

Incorporating Water-saving Actions in Land Use & Development Planning in El Paso County
Discourage individual wells for new subdivisions with average lot sizes smaller than 2.5-acres when there is a reasonable opportunity to connect to an existing central system or construct a new central water supply system when the economies of scale to do so can be achieved, especially in the Laramie-Foxhills, Lower Arapahoe, Denver and Lower Dawson aquifers.

Grading and earthmoving activities will be limited to internal driveways, drainage, and utility construction areas. The new lot owner will assume responsibility for grading their respective lot; no 'overlot' grading is proposed to occur over the site.

As such, prior to construction of the proposed residence, a lot-specific subsurface soil investigation will be performed to determine whether shallow groundwater, hydro-compacted soils, and/or potentially expansive soils are present on the lot, and to determine an appropriate foundation design, basement, or crawl-space suitability, and/or lot-specific recommendations are necessary to mitigate these conditions. Language requiring lot-specific subsurface soil investigation will appear as a note on the future Final Plat.

No request is sought for early grading.

NO-BUILD / OPEN SPACE / RESIDENTIAL LOT OPEN SPACE EASEMENTS

Due to its small size, the Welsch at Howells Final Plat does not offer public open space area. The site does have private, wooded areas within its confines, and nearby Kettle Creek may provide its residents with connectivity to public open space areas. Careful siting of a future residence is anticipated due to existing contours. Steeper sections in the eastern property will be preserved.

ADHERENCE WITH THE 2021 YOUR EL PASO MASTER PLAN, AND WATER MASTER PLAN

Land Use & Development, Core Principle: Manage growth to ensure a variety of compatible land uses that preserve all character areas of the County.

The **2021 Your El Paso Master Plan** (the "Master Plan") addresses issues directly related to the Welsch at Howells subdivision. Policies specifically related to this Final Plat request include:

Goal 1.1 - Ensure compatibility with established character and infrastructure capacity

The Final Plat proposed for new Large Lot Single-Family Residential lots is compatible with the other larger existing adjacent residential lots in the Black Forest community. The new lot will be similar in character to existing lots and the driveway serving the new lot will be compatible with the types of driveways in nearby adjacent neighborhoods.

Per "Your El Paso County Master Plan", adopted May 26, 2021 by El Paso County Planning Commission, the property is within the "Large-Lot Residential" placetype. The Large-Lot Residential placetype is in keeping with the rural character of the County while providing for unique and desirable neighborhoods. The land use is primarily single-family detached residential (typically 2.5-acre lots or larger). Parks, open space, limited commercial retail, limited commercial service and agriculture are supporting uses.

The Large-Lot Residential placetype consists primarily of residential development and acts as a transition between placetypes. Development in this placetype typically consists of single-family homes occupying lots of 2.5 acres or greater and are generally large and dispersed throughout the area, preserving a rural aesthetic. The Large-Lot Residential placetype generally supports accessory dwelling units as well. Even with the physical separation of homes, this placetype still provides a sense of neighborhood and is more connected and less remote than rural areas. Large-Lot Residential neighborhoods typically rely on well and septic, but some developments may be served by central water and wastewater utilities. If central water and wastewater can be provided, then lots sized less than 2.5 acres could be allowed if, 1.) the overall density is at least 2.5 acres/lot, 2.) the design for development incorporates conservation of open space, and 3.) it is compatible with the character of existing developed areas. Our proposed subdivision will be well and septic, adding a single new dwelling.

According to “Your El Paso County Master Plan”, conservation design (or clustered development) should routinely be considered for new development within the Large-Lot Residential placetype to provide for a similar level of development density as existing large-lot areas while maximizing the preservation of contiguous areas of open space and the protection of environmental features. While the Large-Lot Residential placetype is defined by a clear set of characters based on geography and landscape. There will be a no build area on this site with steeper slope.

Goal 1.4 – *Continue to encourage policies that ensure “development pays for itself.”*

The Welsch at Howells Final Plat is proposed as a development of an additional Large Lot Single-Family residence within a non-urban density area (Large Lot Residential Placetype) of the Black Forest community. Utilities and infrastructure needed to serve the new lot, such as new driveway, drainage, erosion control, etc. will be constructed as part of this development.

Housing & Communities, Core Principle: Preserve and develop neighborhoods with a mix of housing types.

Goal 2.2 – *Preserve the character of rural and environmentally sensitive areas.*

The subdivision proposed with RR-2.5 zoning for the site is harmonious and compatible with the lower density character of adjacent and nearby neighborhoods that are also zoned RR-2.5 and RR-5. The Owner/Developer proposes to avoid overlot grading across the entire 5.0077-acre site and instead will limit grading to driveways and drainage infrastructure in keeping with the established land use character of surrounding sub-areas of the county. A lower density will help to sustain the appearance and unique environmental conditions of adjacent properties.

There are wooded areas within the property which will likely remain untouched by excavation or building on the site. A Wildland Fire & Hazard Mitigation Plan is provided with the final plat submittal.

Transportation & Mobility, Core Principle: *Connect all areas of the County with a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system.*

Goal 4.1- *Establish a transportation network that connects all areas to one another, emphasizing east-west routes, reducing traffic congestion, promoting safe and efficient travel.*

The Welsch at Howells Final Plat will locate an additional new home with direct driveway access to Howells Road, a rural minor collector. The driveway will be shared with the existing home. This single, new residence will have minimal impact on traffic volume onto Howells Road.

Community Facilities & Infrastructure, Core Principle: *Continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies to provide well-managed, high-quality community facilities and services.*

Goal 5.3 – *Ensure adequate provision of utilities to manage growth and development.*

Regarding utilities, the Final Plat submittal of the Welsch at Howells Subdivision has provided commitment letters for delivery of electrical service and natural gas from Mountain View Electric Association and Black Hills Energy. On-site wells will provide water for the new lot and wastewater will be accommodated by an individual on-site wastewater treatment system. Based upon the existing residence, it is likely that the site is suitable for an individual on-site wastewater treatment system without contamination of surface and subsurface water systems. An OWTS report is provided with the Final Plat.

Goal 5.4- *Use best management practices to protect water quality, conserve water, minimize impacts of flooding, and beautify El Paso County.*

The Drainage Report submitted with the Final Plat specifically details a four-step process to minimize adverse impacts of development. The process includes reducing runoff volume, stabilizing drainageways, and treating the water quality capture volume (WQCV).

Environment & Natural Resources, Core Principle: *Prioritize and protect the County's natural environment.*

Goal 9.2- *Promote sustainable best practices with regard to development and infrastructure.*

The area surrounding the property has sufficient carrying capacity to support the proposed development's driveway impact, water supply, septic suitability, educational facilities, and

organized structural fire protection. As stated, commitment letters from entities that will supply this development with essential services have been provided.

The Welsch at Howells Final Plat, amounts to 2 homes on 5.0077-acres ensuring that development of this site will remain compatible and contiguous with existing larger lot low-density residential areas within the community. With a density of .4 DU/AC, the Welsch at Howells Final Plat is compatible with numerous other adjacent and nearby properties.

GAS SERVICE

Natural gas service, in keeping with the existing residence, will be provided by Black Hills Energy.

WATER SERVICE

The following information is provided by request of El Paso County per the *El Paso County Water Master Plan, Chapter 7, Implementation*:

Water Quality, Quantity and Dependability:

A Water Resources Report and Water Supply Information Summary is provided to the County as part of the Final Plat application.

TRANSPORTATION

The Welsch at Howells Final Plat provides a single point-of-access from Howells Road into the community.

Subdivision Access A single point-of-access is proposed for the subdivision. Although input has been received as part of Your El Paso County outreach process cited a need for subdivision communities to have two points of access, or two ways in and out, the addition of a single home will not create undue demand for vehicle ingress and egress

TRANSPORTATION IMPACT STUDY GUIDELINES

A Transportation Impact Study (TIS) is not required for this project based upon the El Paso County Engineering Criteria Manual, Appendix B, Transportation Impact Study Guidelines B.1.2.D, with the satisfaction of these points:

(1) *Daily vehicle trip-end generation is less than 100 or the peak hour trip generation is less than 10.*

The additional single-family homesite will generate trip-end generation well short of these thresholds.

(2) *There are no additional proposed minor or major roadway intersections on major collectors, arterials, or State Highways.*

The single, existing driveway access is entered from Howells Road, a local, residential road.

(3) the increase in the number of vehicular trips does not exceed the existing trip generation by more than 10 peak hour trips or 100 daily trip ends.

The addition of a single house will not approach this threshold of trip generation.

(4) the change in the type of traffic to be generated (i.e., the addition of truck traffic) does not adversely affect the traffic currently planned for and accommodated within, and adjacent to, the property.

The additional residence will almost certainly have only passenger vehicles of the type currently accessing the driveway.

(5) acceptable LOS on the adjacent public roadways, accesses, and intersections will be maintained.

The level of service will be acceptable with the addition of a single home.

(6) no roadway or intersection in the immediate vicinity has a history of safety or accident problems.

The low traffic in the area has not provided a history of safety or accident problems. *and*

(7) there is no change of land use with access to a State Highway.

The site has no access or proximity to a State Highway. The land use itself is maintained as single-family residential.

However, an access and maintenance agreement will be required with the final plat submittal.

CHAPTER 7 AND CHAPTER 8 OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL

In approving this Final Plat, the county will find that:

The proposed subdivision is in general conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies of the **2021 YOUR EL PASO MASTER PLAN, AND WATER MASTER PLAN**, as described in Pages 4-6 of this Letter of Intent.

The proposed subdivision is in conformance with the requirements of this Code; no waivers or deviations from the Code are requested or proposed.

The proposed subdivision is compatible with existing and proposed land uses within and adjacent to the area; as previously described, the Final Plat is in conformance with subdivision design standards and establishes an adequate level of compatibility with surrounding areas of the site already constructed and other known surrounding areas currently proposed for development.

Furthermore, the subdivision design with RR-2.5 zoning for the site is harmonious and compatible with the lower density character of adjacent and nearby neighborhoods that are also zoned RR-2.5 and RR-5.0.

The Water Resources Report shall provide sufficient information to identify compliance with the water supply standards and identify any need for additional water supplies; A Water Resources Report and Water Supply Information Summary has been provided to the County with this Final Plat application.

The Water Resources Report to be prepared for the Welsch at Howells Subdivision shall confirm the proposed water supply for the additional residence is sufficient in terms of quality, quantity and dependability.

Services are or will be available to meet the needs of the subdivision including, drive access, police and fire protection, schools, recreational facilities, and utility service facilities.

Should loose soils be encountered during open excavation observation, additional compaction may be needed to achieve the allowable bearing pressure. As fluctuations in material density may arise, removal and recompaction of loose soil may be warranted. The use of track-mounted excavation equipment, or other low ground pressure equipment, is recommended on loose soils to reduce loss of stability during earthwork.

The final determination of mitigation alternatives and foundation design criteria are to be made in site-specific subsurface soil investigations for each lot, should it be necessary. Provided that appropriate mitigations and/or foundation design adjustments are made, the presence of expansive soils or bedrock is not considered to pose a risk to the proposed structures.

Flood Prone Areas-According to FEMA, the site lies in an Area of Minimal Flood Hazard (Zone X). This is per FEMA map 08041C0507G

The parcel does not pose a flood risk to the proposed residence or the On-site Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS). Provided that the recommendations in the Soils and Geology Report, as well as any requirements stipulated by the governing agencies, are followed.

Note, further disturbance and/or long term exposure without vegetative cover will increase the potential for erosion across the site.

Any landscaping in the immediate vicinity of the proposed structures should utilize xeriscape techniques in order to minimize needed irrigation to maintain landscaping. Further, stormwater and snowmelt runoff from parking (driveway) areas should be directed towards drainageways both during construction activities and upon completion of site development.

Faults and Seismicity-Based on review of the Earthquake and Late Cenozoic Fault and Fold Map Server provided by CGS located at <http://dnrwebmapgdev.state.co.us/CGSOnline/> and the recorded information dating back to November of 1900, Colorado Springs has not experienced a recorded earthquake with a magnitude greater than 1.6 during that period. The nearest recorded earthquakes over 1.6 occurred in Manitou Springs, which experienced magnitudes ranging between 2.8 to 3.5. Additional earthquakes over 1.6 occurred between 1926 and 2001 in Woodland Park, which experienced magnitudes ranging from 2.7 to 3.3. Both of these locations are located near the Ute Pass Fault, which is more than 10 miles from the subject site. Earthquakes felt at this site will most likely result from minor shifting of the granite mass within the Pikes Peak Batholith, which includes pull from minor movements along faults found in the Denver basin.

Radon-***Radon Act 51** passed by Congress set the natural outdoor level of radon gas (0.4 pCi/L) as the target radon level for indoor radon levels*".

Northern El Paso County and the 80908 zip code, in which the site is located, has an EPA assigned Radon Zone of 1. A Radon Zone of 1 predicts an average indoor radon screening level greater than 0.4 pCi/L (picocuries per liter), which is above the recommended levels assigned by the EPA. *The EPA recommends corrective measures to reduce exposure to radon gas.*

All of the State of Colorado is considered EPA Zone 1 based on the information provided at https://county-radon.info/CO?El_Paso.html. Elevated hazardous levels of radon from naturally occurring sources are not anticipated at this site.

Mitigation for radon hazards are best mitigated in the building design and construction phases. Helpful acts in radon mitigation include providing increased ventilation of basements and crawlspaces, creating slightly positive pressures within structures and sealing of joints and cracks in the foundations and below-grade walls. Passive radon mitigation systems are also available.

Passive and active mitigation procedures are commonly employed in this region to effectively reduce the buildup of radon gas. Measures that can be taken after the residence is enclosed during construction include installing a blower connected to the foundation drain and sealing the joints and cracks in concrete floors and foundation walls. If the occurrence of radon is a concern, it is recommended that the residence be tested after they are enclosed and commonly utilized techniques are in place to minimize the risk.

A Soils & Geology Report will be provided and submitted with the Welsch at Howells Final Plat submittal. *It will state whether the soil is suitable for the subdivision and reveal any potential geologic hazards to be mitigated.* No known geological hazards are present which may

preclude the site from development as proposed. Existing drainageways will be preserved and designated as no-build areas.

The subdivision will not interfere with the extraction of any known commercial mining deposit [C.R.S. §§ 34-1-302(1), et seq.]. No known commercial mining operations exist on the site. A Mineral Rights Certification is provided with the Final Plat submittal.

The design of the subdivision protects the natural resources or unique landforms; existing natural resources and unique landforms will be protected and designed to be within no-build areas.

The proposed methods for fire protection are adequate to serve the subdivision; the Black Forest Fire Protection District will extend service within the Welsch at Howells Final Plat area. The Black Forest Fire Protection District has stated in their agency rezone review comments that the proposed rezone and lot split to create one additional single-family residence on the parcel is generally compatible with surrounding rural development and is not anticipated to create a disproportionate impact on fire or EMS services. At Final Plat and permitting, provision will be made to demonstrate compliant fire apparatus access, including driveway width, grade, surface, turnaround and addressing. Additionally, a Wildland Fire Mitigation Plan shall be approved with the Final Plat, and water supply for fire protection shall be demonstrated in accordance with the adopted Fire Code and Fire District standards.

The subdivision is appropriate, and the design is based on mitigating the constraints of topography, soil types, geologic hazards, aggregate resources, environmental resources, floodplain, airplane flight overlays, or other constraints; there are no known environmental or other constraints that would preclude development of this site as proposed in the Final Plat. Topography, soil types and geologic hazards and other environmental resources are likely not compromised by development of this site.

The entire property is outside of any airport overlay zone, including Meadow Lake Airport and the Colorado Springs Municipal Airport.

END