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Ramona Retail: Stratmoor Townhomes Administrative Relief

El Paso County Land Development Code Section: 6.2.2 Landscape Requirements

This request for administrative relief is to reduce the landscape requirements illustrated within Section 6.2.2. of the EPCLDC by 20% across all requirements to include a reduction for the landscape setback along I-25 (Section 6.2.2.B); the parking lot tree requirements (Section 6.2.2.C); the buffer requirements for the east buffer and the north buffer (Section 6.2.2.D); and the internal landscape requirement (Section 6.2.2.E). The proposed reduction of the landscape requirements would reduce the total tree count from 263 trees down to 213 trees and for shrub substitutes this would reduce the overall shrub count from 940 down to 750 total shrubs. The implementation of the reductions would be strategically executed with the intent that these reductions would not be appreciably noticeable. For example, along the eastern boundary the required number of trees is 1 tree per 25' linear feet for a total of 31 trees (770' / 25'). With the requested reduction, 25 trees would be provided which results in a total loss of 6 trees along the entire 770' frontage. As illustrated on the drawings, the proposed 25 trees provide more than adequate buffering and coverage along the eastern property line. Attached is a conceptual landscape plan illustrating the tree and shrub bed layout incorporating the strategic reduction that minimizes large voids of landscape vegetation.

The request for the reduction in the landscaping requirements is twofold, to help keep the resident dues and maintenance cost at a minimum and to help reduce the amount of water required for this development. This area is a lower to middle income neighborhood with a need for more affordable housing of which this project is helping to provide. As with many developments, the cost of landscape and irrigation installation and maintenance gets spread evenly across the residential units in the form of dues or increased rent. To help keep these costs at a minimum, a reduction in landscape requirements by 20% would be greatly beneficial. This site is within the Stratmoor Hills Water District of which watering rates for the first 10,000 gallons are \$3.90/ 1,000 gals and \$4.07/ 1,000 gals for 10,000 gallons or more of water usage. An irrigation system this size will require thousands of gallons of water per week in order to effectively water the proposed native turf until establishment, the trees and the shrubs which adds up to substantial cost and water usage. The average 2" caliper tree requires 15-20 gallons per week and the average shrub requires 4-6 gallons per week (<http://extension.colostate.edu/topic-areas/yard-garden/drip-irrigation-home-gardens-4-702/>). Based on this information a reduction of the tree requirements by the proposed 50 trees would result in an estimated water savings of 750- 1,000 gallons of water per week. In addition, the reduction in shrub requirements by the proposed 190 shrubs would result in an estimated

water savings of 760- 1,140 gallons per week. Combined, this is an estimated savings of 1,510- 2,140 gallons of water saved per week and over the course of a 6-7 month water window adds up to significant water and cost savings. The reduced watering, particularly within shrub beds, will also help mitigate concerns with regards to the soils found on-site of water seeping along the foundations.