

Site Plan Letter of Intent

Location:

2290 Old Ranch Rd., Colorado Springs, CO 80908

Project Overview:

The property is located nearby large manufacturing and industrial centers, as well as residential, office, and commercial sites. We are looking to create a unique and rural general office space, leasing to a company who either currently houses their business in Denver, or who seek to operate a business outside of Colorado Springs. By creating a workspace nearby both residential and commercial locations, we hope to attract business that would otherwise take their tax revenues outside of El Paso County.

Chapter 1.15 of the EPC LDC describes General Office as: Use of a site for business, professional, or administrative offices excluding medical offices. General offices are characterized by a low proportion of vehicle trips attributable to visitors or clients in relation to employees. Typical uses include real estate, insurance, management, travel, or other similar business offices; organization and association offices; law, architectural, engineering, accounting, telemarketing or other professional offices.

Many new homes are being built in this area and a majority of those new residents are driving north to the Denver area, to work outside of Colorado Springs. El Paso County has recognized this increased migration and so has plans to expand Powers north to I25, expedite the I25 expansion by several years, and continues to expand I25 throughout the city.

By creating a space where an employee or company owner could drive a very short distance, or even bike or jog to work, we feel it would at least in some way reduce the tax revenues and traffic flowing north out of our county.

Project Detail:

Building #1:

We are proposing to build a two-story, steel-framed, 5,700 sf building (2,850 sf footprint) that will be used for General Office space. Currently four offices are planned with central common space. Three baths, one elevator, and five egress points are included in the design. ADA access will be available for both floors. Also included in the design is a wrap-around upper deck that will serve as an alternate work space for tenants, give the building a look and feel of a neighbor home (which is in keeping with the original Variance design concept, and provide additional egress access for the second floor. Exterior finishes with also lend to the "neighborhood" feel with stucco and natural stone finishes. This building will be addressed through Enumeration to 2294 Old Ranch Rd.

Building #2:

We are converting a 720 sf garage into General Office space. The building structure was inspected by Affinity Engineering and approved for desired use with slight modifications. Some framing additions will be made for window relocation and a new front access door, and an addition of a restroom in the NE corner of the building. The foundation will be upgraded with frost protection per engineering plans. New natural stone exterior finishes and steel roofing will be installed as well. ADA access will be available. Address to remain 2290 Old Ranch Rd.

General Lot Improvements:

1. Existing structure (detached 1974 Mobile Home) has been removed (donated).
2. OWTS completed / submitted.
 - a. This design ties both building septic tanks together into one leech field, located in the rear of the property.
3. Soils Report.
4. Site Plan completed / submitted.
5. Grading and Erosion ESQCP will be submitted by contractor in accordance with EPC LDC 6.3.5.
6. Landscaping Plan completed / submitted.
 - a. The landscaping design incorporates natural grass coverage for most of the lot, with several roadway and interior screening trees. Many established trees exist on the property and serve as required screening. The commercial well permit negates the use of well water for outside irrigation, so self-sustaining type plants must be utilized for coverage. EPC LDC 6.2.2
7. Lighting Plan completed / submitted.
 - a. The exterior lighting will consist of lighted balusters for the parking and entry areas, with lighting provided for building entrances. It is our intent to keep the exterior lighting to an acceptable low-light level to reduce the effects of light pollution in the area. EPC LDC 6.2.3
8. Drainage Plan completed / submitted.
 - a. There are no detention ponds included in the drainage plan as there is sufficient natural drainage provided through low lot coverage. EPC LDC 6.3.2
9. Parking Plan completed / submitted.
 - a. Parking design is in keeping with EPC LDC 6.2.5, with appropriate sized parking spots, sidewalks, turn radii, entrance and egress, and ADA access. Lot access to remain the same.
10. Commercial Well Permit approved.
 - a. Awaiting MEP controls / meter for final approval.
11. USF&W Clearance Letter.
 - a. Building of permanent structures in the Kettle Creek river basin (flood zone) is discouraged.
12. Existing account with Colorado Springs Utilities for natural gas.
13. Existing account with Mountain View Electric.
14. Existing account with CenturyLink for fiber optic service.
 - a. CenturyLink will install service lines once that phase of the project commences.

15. Variance of Use Approved through VA-18-001 and BOCC Resolution Number: 18-141 to include General Office use.
16. Fencing Variance Approved through VA-18-001 and BOCC Resolution Number: 18-141.
 - a. A split rail fence will be installed around the logical borders of the usable property, allowing for utility access easements. (EPC LDC 6.2.1)
17. Traffic Study relief was granted by Project File VA-18-001 due to the following reasons:
 - a. Size of gross square footage of construction will not generate more than 100 daily vehicle trips. The ITM Manual states average daily trips for General Office per 1000 sq. ft of gross floor area is 9.74. Gross square footage of this project is 6338 sq ft. Therefore 61 trips per day is calculated (9.74x6.3).
 - b. Additional requirements for TIS relief were met per EPC ECM Appendix B.1.2.D guidelines.

Requests:

1. Alternate Landscaping per LDC 6.2.2(A)(4) to allow for reduced screening requirements due to the following reasons:
 - A. Unavailability of irrigation water. The Colorado Division of Water Recourses included the following condition of approval for this commercial well: **“The use of ground water from this well is limited to drinking and sanitary facilities as described in CRS 37 92 602 1 c for a commercial business. Water from this well shall not be used for lawn landscape, greenhouse irrigation, domestic animal livestock watering, or for any other purpose outside the business building structure.”**

Hand watering of plants and trees will be required, and only that type vegetation that can endure low levels of topical irrigation will have to be planted. Hand watering of new trees and shrubs until they can be sustained on their own is not only costly, but can be very wasteful of water. Reducing the number of screening trees is requested to reduce overall maintenance costs. (EPC LWCM 1.1.4, 1.1.6, and 1.2.1 (E))

Source of water for hand watering will come from landscape contract and off-site sources.

The types of trees and shrubs selected for maximum screening, yet low water needs are as follows:

1. Cockspur Trees: The Cockspur hawthorn is native to eastern North America. It is characterized by very long and very sharp thorns on the branches. The hawthorn is a popular garden tree. Height: tree / shrub growing slowly up to 8 m (26 ft) in a broad manner.

2. Burr Oak: Tolerant of a variety of moisture and soil conditions, adapts well to urban settings. Its fringed acorns are food for wildlife. A very long-lived tree. Prefers full sun. Grows 70' to 80', 80' spread. Offers dense shade. Tolerates pollution and heat stress. Features alternating leaves that are 6–12" long with 5–9 lobes separated about halfway down by a pair of particularly deep sinuses.
 3. Armstrong Junipers: Upright Juniper such as this are planted at corners of the house or in spaces between windows and beside doorways. Use as a single specimen either left to grow naturally or clipped into a formal shape. Great barrier hedges for driveway separation or to discourage pedestrian traffic. Makes a good hot or cold windbreak hedge for seating areas. Average landscape size: Moderate growing; reaches 4 to 5 ft. tall and as wide, or wider. Watering Needs: Once established, needs only occasional watering.
 4. Ponderosa Pine: Ponderosa pine has a lush green color and pleasant odor that makes it popular for ornamental plantings. It has been planted, sometimes out of its natural range, because of its aesthetic qualities. Ponderosa pine is used as borders of forested highways. The large stature of the tree limits its use to open spaces as the canopy spread can be up to 25'. Growth Habit - Pyramidal when young and good for screening
- B. Utility Conflicts. The shape of the lot is non-standard. Planting trees along the northern border, against the embankment and inside the OWTS is not feasible or advisable per our septic design contractor. Tree roots will destroy the sewer system quickly if trees are planted inside this area. (LDC 6.2.2 (G) 2 (f) ii)

Additionally, a CSU water main lines and gas lines exist along the frontage of the property on the south side, which could be damaged by tree roots if screening trees are planted in that area. Access to the main line and electrical utility pole is also a consideration and concern (LDC 6.2.2 (B) 2 (D))

- C. FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) panel number 08041C0506F shows that the eastern corner of the property is located within the 100-year floodplain (Zone AE). Any type development is not being proposed within the floodplain.

Planting new screening trees inside a flood zone and established waterway (Kettle Creek) was cautioned against by our landscape engineer. In a floodplain / waterway, trees must withstand running and standing water, soil erosion and sediment deposits. Most trees cannot survive in such an environment, because running water damages a tree's roots and standing water may cause them to rot. There exist naturally-growing trees in that area already, and so meet the screening requirements to some extent. (LDC 6.2.2 (G) 2 (e))

- D. Prebble Mouse Habitat exists throughout the eastern border of the property, which prohibits disturbing of environment for conservation purposes. (EPC LWCM 1.5.5 (B))
- E. EPC LDC 6.2.2(A)(1) purpose and intent met using the following methods:
1. “to create a positive image and visual appeal both along the road which is highly visible and internal properties which provide a working, shopping and living environment”:
 - a. The architectural design of the building to reflect the “look and feel” of a home dwelling, the split-rail fencing chosen to match the surrounding neighborhood, and the landscape vegetation chosen to match both the surrounding neighborhood and natural green space that surrounds the building project all come together to create a visually appealing environment from the perspective of the road. (EPC Landscape Design Manual Chapter 7, Article 4, Section 321, (A) (7))
 - b. Apart from the parking lot painted lines, there will be very little distinguishable difference from a local residence to this project from the viewpoint of the road.
 - c. Several trees will be placed in key sightlines along the roadway, along with native vegetation planted internally within the property, to obscure the parking lot and entryways so that a passerby will simply think this is a large home. LDC 6.2.2 (G)(2)(a) (c)
 2. “to decrease the scale of parking lots, provide shade, and reduce heat, glare and noise”:
 - a. The scale of parking lot is the absolute minimum required for this sized project. It is our intent to only meet the minimum requirements of parking per the LDC, and to fill the remaining landscape of the property with natural vegetation to blend in with the surrounding green space. (LDC 6.2.2 (C)(1-5))
 - b. Other surrounding properties with large homes have an equal, if not greater amount of asphalt parking and drive areas than our project. Apart from painted parking spot lines, it will indistinguishable from the other surrounding property parking areas.
 - c. Trees and shrubbery will be planted in key locations along the frontage of the property that will shade and shield the vehicles in the parking areas. Most of the parking spots (23 out of 32) face away from the road, and towards the northern border of the property, and some are already positioned under naturally occurring vegetation. (per LDC 6.2.2 (C)(1)) (EPC Landscape Design Manual Chapter 7, Article 4, Section 321, (A) (2)).
 - d. The secondary natural rock-covered building in the front of the property adds an additional visual shield to six of the parking spaces. This building itself has two parking spaces in front facing way from the road and will be shielded by a large tree planted between preexisting utilities, the road, and the building. Natural vegetation will be added between parking areas and the green space to further soften the view from the roadway. (EPC Landscape Design Manual Chapter 7, Article 4, Section 302, (C) (3)).

3. “to separate circulation systems; to soften and reduce the mass of buildings; to screen and buffer lower intensity uses from higher intensity uses and protect residential privacy”:
 - a. This property only borders two existing residences, which contain buildings that are more than two acres away. Additionally, the line of sight from both residences is 30’-60’ above this property due to it lying in a terrain depression. Even with zero vegetation in the surrounding area, these residences could not see this building if viewed horizontally from their point of view. (LDC 6.2.2 (C) (5) and (G) (1) (a))
 - b. Currently both residences have a large number of trees between our proposed build area and their buildings. Both residence buildings are obscured by these trees and are not visible from our proposed building area. (LDC 6.2.2 (C) (5))
 - c. Moving out to surrounding neighborhoods, additional naturally growing trees further obscure our proposed building area from their viewpoint. The proposed trees in the front of the property have been strategically placed to obscure the proposed building from the neighborhood far to the southwest. They already have a view of the industrial area to the north, so our project will have little-to-no impact on their view.

4. “to create an overall pleasant and attractive surrounding”:
 - a. The proposed building area of project covers very little area compared to the size of the lot. The entire eastern portion of the property has been preserved for green space, far above the minimums required by the LDC. Naturally occurring vegetation has been undisturbed and will remain in place to keep the historic look of this area. (LDC 6.2.2 (E)(3) (c))
 - b. The frontage will include naturally occurring vegetation and trees, as well as several planted trees at a density that exceeds most larger properties in this area. Some surrounding residences have zero trees planted as it is a grassland valley, making our property a more appealing viewpoint already, even without additional screening.
 - c. The fence line in the front of the property will be non-opaque, which will create the intended landscaped appearance. (per LDC 6.2.2 (B)(3))
 - d. Internal landscaping provides for a pleasant entry to the buildings, as well as separation between the two structures to soften the view. (LDC 6.2.2 (E)(3) (b))