

November 14, 2022

**Attention: Commissioner Holly Williams, Commissioner Carrie Geitner, Commissioner Stan VanderWerf,
Commissioner Longinos Gonzalez Jr., Commissioner Cami Bremer**

Centennial Hall
200 South Cascade Avenue, Suite 100
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Dear El Paso County Board of Commissioners,

Reference: SKP-22-003 – Flying Horse North

Thank you for upholding a community engagement process which includes Planning Commission meeting schedules, agendas, and staff reports for items presented. I find this practice to demonstrate the third Core Principle of “Trust Through Transparency” from the El Paso County’s recently adopted 2022-2023 Strategic Plan.

The problem

This proposal, SKP-22-003 – Flying Horse North, leverages a prior approval in attempts to gain an exceptional variance approval for substantive changes with long term adverse effect. This is a slippery slope for development approval, in the form of the sketch plan revisions of this nature. If the County master plan is implemented with foot-in-the-door riders, the integrity of the county policy is undermined. If variance approvals are granted for such out-of-compliance proposals, the vision and good intent of zoning codes and master plans is rendered toothless—and the county *and* the constituents suffer the consequences of more haphazard growth and under-managed risk.

The Risk

Within your own master plan, you call out the beauty of Black Forest as part of the desirable mosaic of El Paso County. However, developments like this revision reduce and degrade the rural landscapes and would make El Paso County more homogeneous---flattening its diverse environments.

The proposed development is **not** a model of good stewardship of county resources because the developer has **not** proposed the highest and best use of the land for the county. The county has developed a master plan which protects value to residents, yet the developer has submitted a revision which maximizes their near-term profit. The county should protect these unique places and uphold the goals of the master plan.

“However, the prevalence of natural amenities throughout El Paso County does not negate the need to preserve and protect them. In fact, protecting the environment and maintaining its integration as the County grows and develops is essential to keeping El Paso County a beautiful and unique place.”— El Paso County Master Plan, page 9

Requested action

At the core of the 2022/2023 strategic plan, is accountability: *“We are responsive to community needs. We are good stewards of County resources.”*

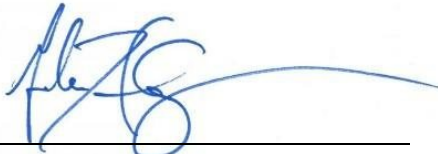
- There is value to the master plan you created: however, there is inherent risk in accepting extremely non-confirming land use proposals, setting unmanaged precedent for future developments
- There is value to El Paso County in supporting the diverse mosaic of land use groups: I ask that you make decisions to protect it.

- Developers made decisions based on short-term return on investments: I ask that you, as the local government, makes decisions with a long-range vision on behalf of visitors and residents, existing and new.
- There is value in diverse community: voices from the Black Forest community have expressed strong opposition to this development revision. I ask that you hear these voices and reject the proposal.

Quality places, quality spaces, and quality values attract the best and brightest, and honors the existing community, history, and ecology while positioning the county on good footing to flourish in years ahead.

Having lived in Black Forest for fifteen years and as a Registered Architect in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, **I implore you to take a more courageous step into the being “good stewards of county resources” and reject this proposal.**

Regards,



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