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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

April 2, 2024

Kari Parsons
Project Manager
El Paso County Development Services Department
2880 International Circle
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Subject: Overlook at Homestead Metropolitan District Review (ID-24-002)

Hello Kari,

The Park Planning Division of the Parks and Community Services Department has reviewed the Overlook at Homestead Metropolitan District application and wishes to submit the following comments on behalf of El Paso County Parks.

This is a request by Icenogle Seaver Pogue, PC., on behalf of PT Overlook, LLC., for consideration of the Overlook at Homestead Metropolitan District. The district includes 62 single-family rural residential lots on approximately 350.83 acres and is currently zoned RR-5 (Rural Residential 5-acre lots). The site is located east of Elbert Road, south of Hopper Road and north of Sweet Road.

Previous reviews of Rezoning and Preliminary Plan applications for the Overlook at Homestead development highlighted impacts to an El Paso County Parks master planned regional trail, as well as its immediate proximity to a major regional park. The 2022 El Paso County Parks Master Plan shows the proposed Palmer Divide Primary Regional Trail running generally east-west through the central portion of the proposed development, commencing in the west at its intersection with Elbert Road and winding northwestward to its connection to Homestead Ranch Regional Park, which is located immediately adjacent Overlook at Homestead. Previous development application reviews have made note of the impacts to this regional trail alignment, and the applicant has indicated the desire to dedicate trail easements to El Paso County. The development of forthcoming Preliminary Plans, as well as the applicant's efforts to work with El Paso County Public Works, will solidify the final trail and subsequent trail easement alignment.

The Parks Master Plan also shows the proposed Elbert Road Bicycle Route running north-south along Elbert Road on the western side of the property, to be located in public right-of-way. Dedicated public right-of-way already exists or will be dedicated along this aforementioned bicycle route, so no additional regional trail easement dedications are necessary or are anticipated for the bicycle route.

EPC staff is encouraged by the applicant's willingness to provide the aforementioned Palmer Divide Regional Trail easement through the Overlook at Homestead, including a viable connection to Homestead Ranch Regional Park. Recent meetings and discussions between the applicant and El Paso County Parks have focused on the trail alignment, particularly in the vicinity of a steep portion of Apex Ranch Road as it ascends steep terrain. Furthermore, the Overlook at Homestead Metropolitan District Service Plan and Letter of Intent include the following statements in regard to parks, trails, and open space:

- **Letter of Intent, Page 1: Purpose of the Districts.** *The District will be organized to provide, finance, construct, own, manage, and operate public improvements, infrastructure and services related to the development of the residential subdivision to be known as "Overlook at Homestead". The District will have the power and authority to provide the*

public improvements and related operation and maintenance services as such power and authority is described in the Special District Act, and other applicable statutes, common law and the Constitution, including, but not limited to, the following: water, sanitation, storm drainage, street and roadway improvements, transportation improvements, traffic and safety controls, **parks and recreation improvements**, mosquito control, fire protection for a fire cisterns only if needed, television relay and translation facilities, covenant enforcement, security services, and solid waste disposal, subject to the limitations of the District's Service Plan as described therein. County.

- **Letter of Intent, Page 2:** Additional major purposes of the District will include ongoing operation and maintenance of six full spectrum detention/water quality ponds and associated drainage ways, and **open space**, which is planned to include **trailhead parking**, mailboxes and kiosk, and a fire water cistern.
- **Letter of Intent, Page 5:** The proposed District and Overlook at Homestead subdivision within the District is also consistent with Core Principle 4, Transportation & Mobility, seeking to "Connect all areas of the County with a safe and efficient multimodal transportation system", as well as Goals 4.1 and 4.2 which respectively seek to, "Establish a transportation network that connects all areas to one another, emphasizing east-west routes, reducing traffic congestion, promoting safe and efficient travel" and, "Promote walkability and bike-ability where multimodal transportation systems are feasible." The proposed trail easement within the District's boundaries would accomplish these goals by connecting more homes to an east-west trail that directly links with a nearby regional open space. When built, the trail moving through the proposed District and Apex Ranch would be only two parcels away from connecting to the EPC Woodlake Trailhead.
- **Letter of Intent, Page 6: El Paso County Parks Master Plan.** The County's Parks Master Plan identifies a future primary regional trail connection through the center of the Overlook at Homestead property to connect the surrounding area with the Homestead Ranch Park to the east. It is anticipated that the County will construct a regional trail connection within the boundaries of the proposed District. In order to blend with the Regional Open Space to the east (Homestead Ranch Park), the proposed development would have a trail easement spanning from east to west and connecting with similar tracts existing in the Apex Ranch development. This trail accommodation aligns with the Trails Master Plan put forth by the County. Homestead Ranch Park is currently only accessible from the east via Golihar Road. This trail connection would not only improve overall access to the park, but when combined with other future trails it would provide residents with a safer and quicker route to the nearby town of Peyton. Conversely, the addition of this public trail also provides neighboring residents with exposure to the views and natural features present on the Overlook at Homestead property.
- **Service Plan, Executive Summary: Proposed Improvements.** Total estimated improvement costs of \$7,965,287 (in 2024 dollars), of which it is estimated that \$6,194,233 (in 2024 dollars) are district-eligible public improvement costs, which include, but are not limited to, street improvements, traffic control and safety protection, drainage facilities, **and park and recreation facilities**. Specifically, the anticipated public improvements consist of drainage channels, detention/water quality ponds, streets and associated drainage, and **open space**, which is planned to include such improvements as **trailhead parking**, landscaping and a fire water cistern.
- **Service Plan, Pages 8-9: Parks and Recreation.** The District shall have the power and authority to provide for the design, acquisition, installation, construction, financing, operation, and maintenance of public park and recreation facilities or programs including, but not limited to, grading, soil preparation, sprinkler systems, hiking trails, pedestrian trails, pedestrian bridges, picnic areas, open space/common area landscaping and weed control, outdoor



lighting of all types, and other facilities, together with all necessary, incidental and appurtenant facilities, land and easements, and all necessary extensions of and improvements to said facilities or systems. It is anticipated that the County will construct a regional trail connection within the boundaries of the District, and the Developer has granted an easement to the County to construct the regional trail connection. In the event that any other park and/or recreation facilities are constructed within the Project, it is anticipated that such park and recreation facilities will be owned, operated, and maintained by the District.

The District shall not have the authority to apply for or utilize any Conservation Trust ("Lottery") funds without the express prior consent of the Board of County Commissioners. The District shall have the authority to apply for and receive any other grant funds, including, but not limited to, Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) discretionary grants. Such approval, although required, is not considered to be a major modification which would require the need to revise this Service Plan.

- **Exhibit A.3: Overlook Open Space and Trail Easement.** *The applicant included a map exhibit showing the Palmer Divide Regional Trail easement and trailhead parking area through Filings No. 1 and 2.*

In conclusion, Parks staff is encouraged by the applicant's desire to plan and provide regional trail connections for local residents and visitors of the Overlook at Homestead which provide residential and public access to nearby Homestead Ranch Regional Park and its vast assortment of recreational opportunities. EPC Parks and Community Services does not object to the formation of the Metropolitan District. These comments are being provided administratively and do not require endorsement by the Park Advisory Board.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Ross A. Williams
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