

Autumn Hills Sketch Plan

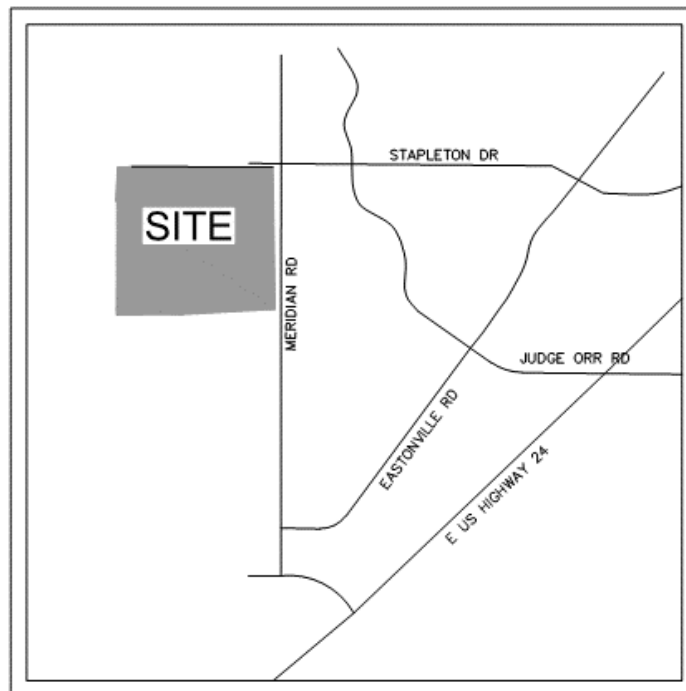
Letter of Intent

January 2023

Owner: State of Colorado
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Developer: Meridian Hills LLC
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Planner/Engineer: Terra Nova Engineering Inc.
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VICINITY MAP
NTS

INTRODUCTION: The Autumn Hills property is located at the southwest corner of Stapleton Drive and Meridian Road. Stapleton Drive borders the north boundary and Meridian Road borders the east boundary. The property currently consists primarily of prairie grassland. Adjacent land uses include commercial/residential to the north and residential to the west, south, and east. The Meridian Road and Stapleton Drive intersection is near the center of development in the Falcon community, and the other three quadrants at that intersection are already well developed with residential and commercial properties. Incongruously, the site is 160 acres of currently undeveloped and vacant land; it is currently zoned RR-5 (rural residential). The southwest quadrant, Autumn Hills, is the last to be proposed for development.

There is a very high demand for the proposed land use of these types and density. Currently, El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs are experiencing a severe housing shortage. As illustrated in the recently approved Master Plan, the County should increase density to help reduce land cost per unit for development with a primary focus on Suburban Residential place types. Autumn Hills is just such an ideal development, combining commercial, multifamily and residential properties. The proposed density increase would be aligned and compatible with the area's existing and planned residential densities. Infilling vacant properties within the metropolitan area is an important goal for El Paso County. Indeed, the proposed plan is in general conformance with the El Paso County Master Plan and helps to meet the primary goal of creating a competitive place to live, work, invest and visit. In addition, it will further the County's goal of encouraging a range of development types to support a variety of land uses by providing multiple residential and commercial options.

THE PLAN: Proposed access to the Autumn Hills will be from Stapleton Drive (collector) and Meridian Road (principal arterial). Access spacing restrictions on principal arterials (1/2 mile) and collectors (660 feet) will require deviations for three of the access points on the Sketch Plan. An internal street network is planned for the residential portions of the site, with the commercial access being largely separated from the residential streets.

The primary site influences that affect the proposed land use are the surrounding land uses and the areas of seasonal shallow groundwater identified on the site. The surrounding land uses are primarily residential and the shallow ground water is primarily on the south half of the site, but forks out following the topography and soil conditions. The commercial land use will need a buffer from the surrounding residential land use, which is proposed to be met with the proposed residential land use and stormwater treatment structures. The shallow groundwater will limit the use of basements on the site, and the foundation designs (and any deep utilities) will have to account for the groundwater

The commercial land use is proposed to be located at the intersection of Stapleton Drive and Meridian Road and along Meridian Road. As Meridian Road is a principal arterial, fronting it

with residential land is not desirable. Multifamily units are proposed adjacent to the commercial land, then 4 unit/acre residential is proposed for the majority of the site, with half acre residential proposed along the west and south property lines.

The proposed development will be supplied with water and sanitary services from the existing Paint Brush Hills Metro District.

The stormwater treatment structures will be located along the south property line and will discharge into existing swales in their vicinity. The overall drainage direction of the site will continue to be to the south and southeast.

Approximately 18.5 acres of open space will be provided within this site. Open space and space for trails is proposed along the west and south sides of the site, away from the major streets and along the proposed stormwater treatment structure areas. Additional open space may be provided with future submittals as more detailed design is completed and includes elements such as landscape buffers.

TOPOGRAPHY: The topography of the project site is primarily moderately sloped towards the south and southeast. The elevation drops approximately 100' from the northwest corner to the southeast corner of the site. The average slope across the site is approximately 3%, with localized slopes in the 1%-20% range. The site is suitable for development and is not impacted by the moderately sloped grades because current, acceptable state and local best grading practices will be employed.

SOILS: The soils report found three general soil types: silty sand, silty sandstone bedrock, and sandy claystone bedrock. The soils report identified the following geologic hazards: artificial fill, erosion, expansive soils, potentially seasonal/seasonal shallow groundwater, and radon. Mitigation measures for these hazards are discussed in the soils report. Shallow bedrock (sandstone) was also encountered on most of the site.

HYDROLOGIC FEATURES / FLOOD HAZARDS / FLOODPLAIN: There are no major hydrologic features on the site. No portion of this site is within a designated F.E.M.A. floodplain, as determined by Flood Insurance Rate Map No. 08041CO553 G and 08041CO551 G dated December 7, 2018. Runoff will be directed to two areas for stormwater treatment, before being released into existing swales on the south and east sides of the site.

WETLANDS: There are no jurisdictional wetlands found on site. There is a low area with a berm in the southeast quarter of the site. That berm likely dams a former stock pond that doesn't appear to retain water often.

VEGETATION: The site is covered in prairie grasses with almost no trees. Development of the site will almost certainly increase the number of bushes and trees on the property with the addition of landscaping.

AIR POLLUTION: By adhering to current air quality regulations, any air pollution emanating from the development will be negligible. The proposed development will provide irrigated turf areas and native seeding to help alleviate the dust issues. Construction practices will adhere to El Paso County Health department, as well as state department codes and regulations.

WATER POLLUTION: By adhering to current wastewater and stormwater regulations, any water pollution emanating from the development will be negligible. An erosion and sedimentation plan will be in place prior to construction.

NOISE POLLUTION: Vehicular movement is the only expected source of noise pollution originating at the site. The proposed development is surrounded by similar land uses and the effects of noise generated from the site will have little or no impact on other surrounding areas.

SCENIC RESOURCES AND UNIQUE NATURAL AREAS: No significant natural landscapes or features have been identified on this site. Some of the site will have a partial view of the mountains, but most of the mountains are obstructed by a ridge line on the west side of the site.

WILDLIFE AND MIGRATORY BIRDS: Proposed landscaping will include low-water-use plant material, and where possible, the plant material will be native to the Colorado Springs region

JUSTIFICATION:

Conformance with the El Paso County Policy Plan

Autumn Hills conforms to the following goals and Policies of the El Paso County Policy Plan.

PURPOSE AND INTENT. Holistic Application.

The applicable policies in this document should be considered and applied comprehensively rather than singularly. Most development proposals will naturally be consistent with some policies while inconsistent with others. The appropriate approach is to evaluate all of the relevant policies and then make a land use decision with respect to overall consistency based on a preponderance of policies within this Policy Plan.

Policy 2.1.10 Encourage preservation of open space in subdivisions. ***18.5 acres of open space has been shown on this plan and is ~11% of the site.***

Policy 2.1.11 Encourage approaches to natural system preservation and protection which also accommodate reasonable development opportunities. ***The only significant natural feature on this site is prairie grass, which will continue to be a part of the open space on the site.***

Policy 2.3.1 Preserve significant natural landscapes and features. ***No significant natural landscapes or features have been identified on this site.***

Goal 6.3 Continue to support existing and carefully planned future urban density development in the unincorporated County, provided the requisite level of urban services is available or will be available in a timely fashion. ***Due to its location within the center of the Falcon Community, urban services will be available to serve the urban land use of this project.***

Policy 6.1.3 Encourage new development which is contiguous and compatible with previously developed areas in terms of factors such as density, land use and access. ***This proposed development is similar to the surrounding developments and serves as a transition between residential and commercial development.***

Policy 6.1.6 Direct development toward areas where the necessary urban-level supporting facilities and services are available or will be developed concurrently. ***As stated previously, urban services will be available to serve this project.***

Policy 6.1.11 Plan and implement land development so that it will be functionally and aesthetically integrated within the context of adjoining properties and uses. ***The sketch plan promotes this policy by placing larger one-half acre lots and water detention areas on the edges of the property that border existing residential lots and transitioning to denser uses as you move away from the existing lots towards Stapleton Drive and Meridian Road.***

Policy 8.3.3 Address protection of natural features beginning with the initial stages of development review process. ***No significant natural landscapes or features have been identified on this site.***

Policy 9.2.3 Strictly limit direct access onto major transportation corridors in order to preserve their functional capacity. ***The Sketch Plan proposes access that will be in conformance with County policies.***

Policy 9.4.5 Encourage processes by which development can contribute a reasonable and fair share toward off-site transportation improvements. ***This project will pay its fair share of transportation costs through the Countywide Transportation Fee Program.***

Policy 11.3.3 Fully evaluate the relative impact of proposed drainage improvements on the maintenance of water quality. ***County standards require that stormwater runoff be released***

at or below historical flows, and that water quality treatment be provided; therefore, maintaining water quality is a requirement of project approval.

Policy 12.1.3 Approve new urban and rural residential development only if structural fire protection is available. **Fire protection is available from the Falcon Fire Protection District.**

Policy 15.3.3 Encourage innovative approaches to the problem of financing solutions to the off-site fiscal impacts of development. **This project will be required to participate in the El Paso County Road Impact Fee Program. The decision to join one of the two fee program PID districts or to exercise the opt-out (of the PID) option will be provided at the Final Plat stage. The fee required up-front with each subdivision will be payable at the time of building permit.**

Sketch Plan Review Criteria

The review criteria for approving a Sketch Plan are set out in Chapter 7.2.1(D)(1)(c) of the Land Development. The proposed Sketch Plan for Autumn Hills meets these criteria as follows:

1. The proposed subdivision is in general conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan: **The Sketch Plan follows the uses the Master Plan shows for the property (Suburban Residential). The proposed uses for the site are mixed use-- residential/commercial. As stated in the introduction, the site will increase density to help reduce land cost per unit for development with a primary focus on Suburban Residential place types. It will help meet the primary goal of creating a competitive place to live, work, invest and visit. The proposed density increase would be aligned and compatible with the area's existing and planned residential densities. Infilling vacant properties within the metropolitan area is an important goal for El Paso County.**
2. The proposed subdivision is in conformance with the requirements of this Code: **The Land Development Code indicates that a Sketch Plan should address the feasibility of the division of land including review of the schematic design, ability to obtain water and sanitation, location of geologic hazards, identification of environmentally sensitive areas and wildlife habitat areas, source of required services, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, relationship to surrounding land uses, evaluation of wildfire hazards and conformance with the requirements of the Code and Master Plan. This Letter of Intent and the supporting reports demonstrates that the Autumn Hills Sketch Plan satisfies these requirements. The project will not affect the health, safety, or welfare of the general area.**
3. The proposed subdivision is compatible with existing and proposed land uses within and adjacent to the sketch plan area: **This proposed development is similar to the surrounding**

developments and serves as a transition between residential and commercial development.

4. The water supply report provides sufficient information to identify probable compliance with the water supply standards and identifies any need for additional water supplies: ***The proposed development will be supplied with water and sanitary services from the existing Paint Brush Hills Metro District.***
5. Services are or will be available to meet the needs of the subdivision including, roads, police and fire protection, schools, recreation facilities, and utility service facilities: ***All services required to support the proposed development are already available. The various utility/service providers are listed on the Sketch Plan.***
6. The soil is suitable for the subdivision: ***The Soils Report prepared by Entech indicates that the soils are generally suitable for development. While there are some expansive soils and shallow groundwater areas, these are sporadic and can be mitigated by proper engineering design and construction techniques. Shallow bedrock (sandstone) was also found on much of the site.***
7. The geologic hazards do not prohibit the subdivision, or can be mitigated: ***The Soils Report prepared by Entech identifies geologic conditions that occur on the property that could impose some constraints to proposed development and construction. The identified constraints are intermittent, with the most significant being the seasonal and potentially seasonal shallow groundwater. Much of this condition is mitigated by avoidance as it is located within the proposed open space areas. The remainder can be mitigated by regrading, appropriate foundation design, and the use of perimeter drains. Other identified geologic constraints include areas of expansive soils. This condition is sporadic and can be mitigated by proper engineering design and construction techniques. Shallow bedrock (sandstone) was also encountered over most of the site and will affect the cost of construction.***
8. The subdivision will not interfere with the extraction of any known commercial mining deposit [C.R.S. §§ 34-1-302(1), et seq.]: ***The El Paso County Master Plan for Mineral Extraction shows Upland Deposits of sand and gravel, with silt and clay. The Soils and Geology Report prepared by Entech identifies the soils are generally consistent with this. Research of the County Assessor's records indicated that there are no mineral estate owners on the property. Accordingly, this project will not interfere with the extraction of mineral deposits.***

9. The design of the subdivision protects the natural resources or unique landforms: ***No significant natural resources or features have been identified on this site.***

10. The proposed methods for fire protection are adequate to serve the subdivision: ***The site lies within the jurisdiction of Falcon Fire Protection District, which will provide fire and emergency services to the property. Autumn Hills will provide adequate circulation and meet all design criteria of the District.***

11. 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: ***As noted above, there are few physical or environmental constraints to the development of the property and those that have been identified will be mitigated during construction. The analysis demonstrates that the site is suitable for the proposed development.***

SOILS REPORT: A Preliminary Soils Investigation / Soil, Geology, and Geologic Hazard Study was prepared by Entech Engineering for the site. Some minor geologic hazards were identified on the site that can be mitigated during design and construction of the proposed development.

MINERAL DEPOSITS: Entech Engineering has evaluated the site for the presence of commercially viable mineral deposits and has found that such deposits are either absent or are not commercially viable.

TRAFFIC: A Traffic Impact Analysis has been prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants and is included in this submittal as a separate document.

IMPROVEMENTS: This mixed use development will include road, stormwater, utility, and trail improvements; Both public and private.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH: Notification letters have been sent to all adjacent property owners asking them to direct any questions on the proposed sketch plan to Terra Nova Engineering. They were also notified that prior to any public hearing on this proposal, a notification of the time and place of the public hearing will be sent to them by the El Paso County Planning Department. At this time, Terra Nova has received and answered a few simple questions about the project from the adjacent shareholders.

IMPACT PLANS:

- A Noxious Weed Management Plan will be provided with the Preliminary Plan

JURISDICTIONAL IMPACTS

Districts Serving the Property

- Natural Gas – Colorado Springs Utilities. A Service Letter is included in the application.
- Electricity – Mountain View Electric. A Will Serve Letter is included in application.
- Water – Paint Brush Hills Metropolitan District. A Will Serve Letter is included in application.
- Wastewater – Paint Brush Hills Metropolitan District. A Will Serve Letter is included in application.
- Fire Protection – Falcon Protection District
- Schools – Falcon District #49
- El Paso County Conservation District
- Upper Black Squirrel Ground Water District

The Colorado Division of Wildlife note the following as present in the area:

- Prairie Dog
- Mule Deer
- Pronghorn Antelope
- Fox Species
- Coyote
- Rabbits
- Raptors
- Songbirds
- Numerous Small Mammals

Due to the construction activity and adjoining residential developments, it is not anticipated that this application will have significant impacts on wildlife in the area.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's IPaC mapper and website database (<https://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>) was used to determine the potential of migratory birds within the area. The IPaC mapper listed four migratory birds that may be affected by this project; however, this list may also include birds occurring outside this area's FWS office jurisdiction. Breeding migratory birds do receive statutory protection; however, the site contains very few if any trees. There is potential for vegetation to be reestablished in the stormwater detention

areas and open spaces. In addition, there are no critical habitats or rare/threatened species found to be present on the site.