

Deborah Doty
4185 Spaatz Road
Monument, CO 80132

19 April 2019

Commissioner Holly Williams
El Paso County Board of County Commissioners

RE: Planned Unit Development/Preliminary Plan, Forest Lakes Phase II

Dear Commissioner Williams,

Thank you to you and the other County Commissioners for taking the time to hear arguments and give thoughtful consideration to the above proposed development.

I own a property adjacent to this proposed development, and I am strongly against the plan, which is not consistent with the County's zoning and density guidelines for this area. The rezoning from RR-5 (5-acre rural lots) to much smaller lots (most will be ½-acre or less) has already adversely affected this area, increasing noise, light pollution, traffic, and crime; further burdening our already overcrowded schools; and destroying wildlife habitat and the area's natural beauty. Moving ahead with this development will take too large a toll on our quality of life and natural resources. I am attaching some photos of the current Forest Lakes development, which depict a much more crowded and unappealing view of the current phase than what is on their marketing materials.

The Tri-Lakes area has been growing at an alarming rate, and the infrastructure has been unable to keep up with the rapid growth in northern El Paso County. In the past three years, we have seen a dramatic increase in traffic congestion to and from the retail and service locations along Jackson Creek Parkway, Baptist Road, Woodmoor Drive, Lake Woodmoor Drive, and Highway 105. Those thoroughfares are already busy during peak morning and afternoon hours, as well as on weekends, and adding another 180 homes, with 500 to 1,000 additional residents (and their vehicles), is only going to make that situation worse. Semi-tractor trailer trucks entering and exiting the truck stops at Baptist Road and I-25 already impede traffic to and from Forest Lakes. And the new Pilot truck stop is just the beginning of the planned growth for that area.

Much of the data in the traffic report submitted by LSC (dated February 21, 2019) appears to be from 2017 or earlier. Many geographic and demographic changes have taken place in northern El Paso County since then, and more developments have been approved or are in process (including the Willow Springs annexation to the Town of Monument). In addition to being outdated and understated, the traffic figures in the LSC report focus only on the Forest Lakes area and do not consider the impact of 180 additional houses on nearby neighborhoods. New traffic research for northern El Paso County in general, and the Tri-Lakes area in particular, should be conducted to provide more current and relevant data.

The Forest Lakes Phase II plan provides for access to National Forest land through the Forest Lakes area. It should be expected that residents from all of the Tri-Lakes area, as well as other parts of Colorado, will be driving or cycling through the Forest Lakes neighborhood to access the National Forest. I understand that only a small parking area has been designated for these people, which means residents near the National Forest will likely have cars parked in front of their houses (not to mention what dogs and horses will do to the lawns). There is limited information from the Forest Service regarding plans for monitoring and maintaining this new access point. The Forest Service is understaffed and struggling to enforce regulations now, so it is unfair to increase that burden on the department.

The proposal claims that the guidelines protecting the Preble's Mouse (a federally endangered species) will be adhered to. The activity and noise from construction – not to mention the increased human population -- will certainly disrupt the natural cycles, mating, and populations of these animals, along with those of numerous other wildlife and birds in the area.

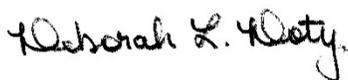
Regardless of what is on paper, it is clear that a wildfire in the valley would be devastating. Emergency vehicles trying to get into the area while evacuees are trying to get out of Forest Lakes would be disastrous. I witnessed this first-hand during the Waldo Canyon fire. A fire would not only destroy most or all of the new homes, but it would likely spread to the homes that have been in this area for decades. The wind in this area is notorious and would definitely contribute to the rapid spread of a wildfire.

Several governmental and environmental organizations, including the Tri-Lakes Land Use Committee and NEPCO, as well as private citizens and legal entities, have expressed their concerns about the negative impact this development will have on the environment and on the quality of life for El Paso County residents. Of the dozens of residents in the area who responded to the survey, NOT ONE person was in agreement with this proposal. I was dismayed that the Planning Commission chose to ignore the residents' arguments in favor of corporate profit goals.

The detrimental effects of this development on the current residents, the County, and the future residents of this region, far outweigh any financial benefits El Paso County might see. Please understand how congested and busy the Tri-Lakes area has become in recent years and consider what Forest Lakes Phase II will do to further destroy our rapidly disappearing natural beauty. I strongly oppose this crowded and noisy residential area being built adjacent to my 5-acre, rural property and our National Forest. Please vote against this proposal to help ensure that this area -- one of the few remaining natural and peaceful regions in El Paso County -- is not sacrificed.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Deborah L. Doty". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Deborah L. Doty

What Forest Lakes advertises:



What Forest Lakes currently looks like:



The land designated for Phase II:

