

El Paso County Planning Commission
El Paso County Board of County Commissioners
2880 International Circle, Suite 110
Colorado Springs, CO 80910-3127

May 9, 2020

RE: North Bay at Lake Woodmoor

File: SF16021
Parcel ID Nos.:7111404111, 7111400007

Dear Commissioners:

We are writing this letter to outline our opposition to the proposed North Bay at Lake Woodmoor development on Deer Creek Road in northern El Paso County. We want to be on record as strongly against this development. We urge the El Paso County Planning Commissioners and El Paso County Board of County Commissioners to consider the following comments in your consideration of the development.

1. As stewards of the county's diminishing undeveloped spaces, commissioners have a responsibility to ensure that the developer and builder meet all land use requirements. There are several environmental obligations that must be met before the project can move forward. These include:
 - A wetland mitigation plan to address the riparian habitat in this area, with approval of this plan by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There is no evidence of approval by USFWS for a wetland mitigation plan in the Review Documents. It is illegal under the Clean Water Act to develop near wetlands without the proper permitting. Wetlands within Colorado comprise less than two percent of the landscape yet are utilized by over three-quarters of the state's species. Moreover, they are an integral part of flood and erosion control and groundwater recharge. Source: [Biological Resources of El Paso County](#)
 - A study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to ensure protection of federally threatened species such as the Preble's meadow jumping mouse and the Mexican Spotted Owl as identified in the [Biological Resources of El Paso County](#) document. Anyone planning ground-disturbing activities within 300 feet of the edge of the 100-year floodplain must address the Preble's mouse. There is no evidence of a study to ensure protection of federally threatened species in the Review Documents or approval by USFWS.
 - Measures to mitigate disturbance and human interaction with other resident wildlife such as red tail hawks, herons, cougars, coyotes, foxes, and bobcats. In our many years of living adjacent to the proposed development property, we have seen all of these species. [Ebird.org](#) lists 101 species sighted at Woodmoor Lake, including bald eagle in January 2020 and great horned owl November 2019. Potential impacts to overall wildlife are high.
 - Goals, objectives, and proposed actions regarding natural systems as specified in the [Tri-Lakes Comprehensive Plan](#) and adopted by the Board of Commissioners in 1999.
 - Development directives identified by [El Paso County Planning and Community Development](#).

2. The developer has experienced significant challenges due to this floodplain area. They must obtain the necessary permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to ensure any floodplain impacts are mitigated. There is no evidence in the Review Documents that the developer has contacted or received direction from USACE (floodplain administrators based in Pueblo) to ensure any floodplain impacts are mitigated. We also have concerns that erosion during and after construction of the roads and townhouses will contribute large amounts of sediment and silt to runoff waters, which will deteriorate water quality and lead to ecological problems in the wetlands area. Furthermore, polluted residue from lawn fertilizers, weed killers, and other human activity will have negative consequences on this riparian habitat.
3. Commissioners must be vigilant concerning issues of road safety along Deer Creek Road and at the intersection of Deer Creek Road and Woodmoor Drive. Traffic in the area has increased over the past decade. Deer Creek Road can be especially problematic for pedestrians. Likewise, the intersection of Deer Creek Road and Woodmoor Drive is unsafe when Lewis-Palmer Middle School begins and ends its instructional schedule. Moreover, students from both the middle school and Palmer Ridge High School frequently run on the local roads for sports training. While the developer contends the increased residency will not affect traffic, our observations over the years of additional cars and trucks say otherwise.
4. As the board considers this development and a request for road deviation, it must address the lack of evacuation routes in the event of wildland fires such as the Hayman Fire of 2002, Waldo Canyon in 2012, and Black Forest in 2013. In all three instances, we were put on standby evacuation. El Paso County must learn from the lessons of these fires as well as of the Camp Fire in Paradise, CA to plan for evacuation routes in the midst of growing development and increased population.
5. The development will further strain water use and increased demand on wells within the Denver Basin aquifer system and surface water intakes. In light of the water supply gap referenced in the El Paso County [Water Master Plan](#), the county and developer must address water supply sufficiency as specified in the plan.
6. The development will create an additional burden on our first responders to include public safety and fire protection. What will be the impact on the El Paso County Sheriff, Woodmoor's Department of Public Safety, the Tri-Lakes Fire Department, and other emergency response teams?
7. The proposal shows that some of the trees and Gamble Oak will be removed on the east side of the existing dirt service road to create parking spaces. We request that this vegetation not be removed because it is natural to the environment and a buffer between the homes on Lake Forest Lane and Autumn Way and the proposed development. Removing the vegetation will create a clear line of sight to the parking areas and townhouses should plans be allowed to move forward.
8. We advocate for minimized lighting to adhere to the low-light policies of the existing neighborhoods surrounding the development.

9. We are expecting dust, heavy-equipment traffic, and noise over the lengthy construction period in our quiet community if this project is approved. How will the developer and builder mitigate and address our concerns during the significant impact of construction on existing residents?

We appreciate your diligent oversight and consideration of El Paso County resident concerns. As you review this proposed development, we urge you to keep in mind Woodmoor's unique quality of life and protection of this community's irreplaceable environmental resources.

Respectfully,

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