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The Honorable Board of County Commissioners

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Dear County Commissioners,

I am writing to share additional points that arose during the hearing on November 21, 2024, regarding the proposed Monument Ridge East development in our community. As a resident of Woodmoor North, I believe it is important to express my concerns.

For further context, I kindly ask that you also refer to my initial letter, which was sent on November 20, 2024.

The Conflict Between Corporate Growth and Community Needs

Corporations operate under a fundamentally different set of priorities than individuals. Their primary drive is relentless growth and expansion, often at any cost, with little regard for the broader impact. In contrast, humans require a nurturing environment to thrive—clean air, clean water, fertile soil, and an atmosphere free from light and noise pollution. These are not luxuries; they are the foundational elements necessary for our health, well-being, and overall quality of life.

To build a balanced and harmonious society, a shift in awareness is crucial—one that moves beyond outdated practices toward a more mindful, sustainable approach. Industrial and commercial developments should not be placed in close proximity to residential areas, and high density city style housing should also not be build in rural areas, as this creates a direct conflict between the needs of corporations and the well-being of individuals. Such developments disrupt the very conditions that people need to flourish, creating an unbalanced and unhealthy environment for those who live there.

We must take a stand to protect our communities from developments that threaten our health and quality of life. Responsible, thoughtful development is not just important—it is urgently needed. We must prioritize the health of our environment and the people who live in it, ensuring that future growth is sustainable and beneficial to all.

Concerns Over Traffic and Infrastructure

The developer has failed to present a comprehensive traffic study conducted during peak traffic seasons, a critical oversight that raises serious concerns. The most significant traffic congestion occurs during the school year, when roads are already stretched to their limits. This omission is not only deceptive but irresponsible, and I will outline the reasons why.

Palmer Ridge High School, Lewis-Palmer Middle School, and Lewis-Palmer Elementary School are all situated close and to the south of the proposed high-density housing project. Consequently, all traffic from this development would funnel directly into the bottleneck of Monument Hill Road and Woodmoor Drive. As it stands, traffic during peak school hours is already horrendous there, and this project would only exacerbate an already strained infrastructure.

To make matters worse, the traffic burden is further compounded by the nearby VR park, where vacationers year-round also use the same roads to enter and exit the area. This adds a layer of seasonal congestion that is not accounted for in the developer's traffic analysis. In fact, the developer has proposed closing down Monument Hill Road to the north, claiming that its current shape creates accident hazards and has been the site of fatalities. However, the accident they refer to occurred decades ago due to high speeds and a young unexperienced driver, and the road has since been improved with a railing on the exit/bridge area. This argument made by Vertex and the landowner is misleading. Closing down that road and funneling traffic through their proposed new development instead makes no sense, especially since many of us use that back road from the north. Reshaping Monument Hill Rd. to go through their proposed gated community instead where it's flowing right now, next alongside I-25, would eliminate another important access and exit point for both residents and visitors, making it harder to leave the community during peak traffic hours or in case of emergencies.

Additionally, none of you have talked about, but we must consider the massive industrial-style commercial development planned just south of Palmer Ridge High School, actually just next to it.

This construction will house multiple vendors, and the influx of construction traffic—along with traffic from the commercial facility once it is operational—will significantly increase the volume of vehicles on the same already congested roads – Monument Hill Road and Woodmoor Dr.

The failure to include this critical data in the traffic study south of the proposed development site is, in my opinion, both deceptive and negligent. We cannot afford to view these issues in isolation, as they are all interconnected and will place an immense strain on our community. The cumulative effects—escalating traffic congestion, increased noise levels, greater light pollution, and further stress on our water system—cannot be ignored.

Water Supply Concerns

This brings me to the subject of our water supply, which has also been misrepresented by the landowner and the development team. The addition of high-density housing and the proposed commercial development next to Paler Ridg High School will place an unsustainable demand on our already limited water resources. It is critical that we consider the broader environmental impact of these developments and ensure that our infrastructure can support such growth without compromising the health and well-being of our community.

The developer asserts that there is enough water to support their proposed development, yet we, as residents, live under mandatory water restrictions for much of the year. My own research has revealed that Woodmoor Water and Sanitation is required to provide water to these developments—not because there is an abundance of water to sustain higher-density projects, but because the infrastructure is obligated to accommodate them, regardless of whether it exceeds the capacity originally planned in the master plan.

This creates a clear disparity: while commercial developments and high-density housing projects are seemingly exempt from these water restrictions, the rest of us are expected to comply, facing hefty fines or even having a water restrictor placed on our water lines if we exceed the limits. It appears that commercial and high-density developments are being prioritized at the expense of the existing residents, who are forced to limit our water usage to accommodate this irresponsible growth.

Given that water restrictions have become increasingly common across many districts in Colorado over the past decade, it is both perplexing and troubling that this critical issue is being so willingly overlooked by those in charge, except for the residents who continue to raise awareness about this diminishing resource. It seems the

concerns of the community are being ignored in favor of short-term development goals, despite the long-term sustainability of our most essential resource—water—being at stake.

Deforestation and Environmental Impact

The developer's characterization of their deforestation plan as 'fire mitigation' is deeply concerning. Those of us living in and around Woodmoor are well-acquainted with fire mitigation practices, as we engage in them year-round. However, deforestation is neither allowed nor considered an appropriate form of fire mitigation in our community. In fact, we are prohibited from removing trees without prior approval and only for very specific reasons, such as diseased or dead trees.

Additionally, these trees provide an important noise barrier from the highway. Should they be removed, the noise from the highway will only increase, compounding the impact already felt since the highway's widening and the raising of sections to different elevations. The failure to extend the noise-protective barriers far enough north has left our properties vulnerable to the constant noise of traffic, a situation exacerbated by the poor design of the highway that did not account for how sound behaves at higher altitudes and in our mountain climate. We did NOT hear the highway before that at all.

Equally troubling is the developer's proposed plan to build high-density housing on land that includes wildlife underpasses. These underpasses are critical for preserving the natural migration of wildlife in our area. The developer's intention to enclose the proposed project with a wall, creating a gated community, would not only disrupt wildlife but further displace them from their natural habitat.

Winter Weather and Infrastructure Maintenance Concerns

Furthermore, the developer claims they will privately maintain the roads within this new development, including plowing snow and clearing ice. However, we are well aware of the severity of winter weather in this region. The snow and ice in our area can be intense and persist for long periods, with wind drifts sometimes reaching heights of five to six feet. This is a reality that only those who live here can truly understand. Just a few minutes' drive in any direction on I-25 from our property, from Monument Hill area, and the snowfall is vastly different.

Unfortunately, we have heard similar assurances from other developers before, like those from the Misty Acres project. In that case, once the development was

completed and the properties sold, the developer left the residents to contend with snow removal and icy conditions on their own, abandoning their promises and the community they had left behind. Given this history, we have reason to be wary of the developer's claims and are concerned about the long-term implications for our community, both environmentally and in terms of quality of life.

The Developer's Rhetoric and Community Impact

Since 2023, in every meeting with the developer, we have been met with dismissive, rude, and often deceptive rhetoric. Our concerns were never acknowledged, nor was there any indication of a willingness to compromise. Instead, the developer resorted to scare tactics, suggesting they could build a range of undesirable commercial structures on the land, such as strip clubs, night clubs, hospitals, rehab centers, gas stations, and is even pushing for a Buc-ee's on the West side (Monument Ridge West project, land also owned by the same person!). There are many other things that could be build there which could be in harmony with our nature rich area, but the developer/ land owner pushes for the most destructive developments in our community, literally obliterating all trees and green areas.

On a side note, the developer seems unaware that we already have two rehab centers in the Tri-Lakes area.

One of these centers, Mountain Springs Recovery, is located just down the road from Woodmoor, in the former Sundance Hotel, Restaurant, and Bar. This rehabilitation center is situated at the end of Monument Hill Road, where it intersects with Woodmoor Drive, near Woodmoor Lake and within close proximity to three schools: Monument Ridge High School, Lewis Palmer Middle School, and Lewis Palmer Elementary School. You can find more information here:

[Mountain Springs Recovery](https://mountainspringsrecovery.com/co-rehab-alt/?utm_title=Colorado%20Addiction%20Rehab&utm_source=MSR%20PPC&utm_campaign=msr_geo&utm_medium=referral&utm_term=monument)

https://mountainspringsrecovery.com/co-rehab-alt/?utm_title=Colorado%20Addiction%20Rehab&utm_source=MSR%20PPC&utm_campaign=msr_geo&utm_medium=referral&utm_term=monument

Another rehab center, The Recovery Village, is located between Palmer Lake and Monument in a former hotel, restaurant, and bar, which has now been converted into a peaceful, gated rehab facility. You can learn more about it here:

[The Recovery Village](#)

<https://www.therecoveryvillage.com/local-rehab-resources/colorado/monument/>

Both of these centers are quiet, unobtrusive, and did not require deforestation, depletion of water resources, or contribute to light, air, or noise pollution.

Preserving the Character of Tri-Lakes

I aim to illustrate with those examples above how our vibrant commercial areas, once spaces for the community to gather, have now been transformed into places we can no longer use. Meanwhile, developers are acquiring land around our neighborhoods, rezoning it for maximum profit, and constructing unattractive, dysfunctional projects right in front of our homes—projects that not only fail to serve the community but actively undermine its character.

We must cultivate greater foresight and move away from the shortsightedness that serves only one party at the expense of us all. There is immense value in preserving and protecting the unique character of the Tri-Lakes area. Yet, we are actively eroding our own environment for fleeting gains, while affluent nature-rich regions in Colorado prioritize habitat preservation.

It is vital that we evolve to understand the significance of living in harmony with nature, as the health of our environment is intimately tied to our well-being. The two cannot be separated. This growing awareness is spreading within communities, fueling a desire to distance commercial areas and high density city style residential areas from rural nature rich residential neighborhoods, and to ensure that essential needs are met in spaces that serve those purposes without encroaching on our natural surroundings. There are people that love to live in cities and people that love to live in rural areas. There has to be a place for us all to thrive without pushing city style construction into rural areas where it's not wanted.

The Developer's Request to Remove Critical Documents

Additionally, the developer has requested the removal of a letter from Colorado Parks and Wildlife. During the hearing on December 3rd regarding the proposed Monument Ridge East high-density housing development, the developer asked the El Paso County Planning Commission to approve a rezoning and remove this document,

which comes from the Colorado Parks and Wildlife Department of Natural Resources.

If, as the developer claims, this document holds no significance, why is it so crucial for them to have it excluded? The request to remove it only serves to highlight the document's importance, and it should not be disregarded.

The Need for Thoughtful Development

At the El Paso County Planning Commission Hearing, on 11/21/2024, one planning commission member, a lady, repeatedly expressed a desire for Monument to have resolved the issue, so that the council wouldn't have to deal with it. However, we did address the matter, and Monument ultimately rejected the project for several valid reasons. While we were open to discussing compromises with the landowner/Vertex, they chose not to engage and abruptly left the meeting. Our goal is to foster development that benefits the community—such as low-density housing or small businesses—while ensuring the natural environment is preserved, water usage is kept to a minimum, and traffic impact is limited.

Clear-cutting the land to maximize buildings and profit, at the expense of local fauna, flora, and the surrounding community, is not only visually unappealing but out of alignment with the character of our region. This development would disrupt the natural harmony that defines the area, replacing it with concrete and asphalt.

Conclusion: The Importance of Preserving Tri-Lakes

Tri-Lakes is renowned for its natural beauty, drawing people who seek to escape the stress of city life and reconnect with nature. The community here is deeply committed to maintaining that peaceful, restorative environment. It is crucial that we strike a balance between development and preservation—ensuring growth that does not sacrifice the very qualities that make Tri-Lakes so special. If we allow high-density projects like this one to proceed unchecked, we risk transforming our region into just another overcrowded urban sprawl where people no longer find the peace and respite they seek.

By preserving green spaces and prioritizing thoughtful, low-density development, we can continue to serve both the needs of our community and the broader environment.

I would also like to highlight that nearly 5,000 people have signed two petitions on Change.org, both opposing the Monument Ridge East and West project proposals. The level of opposition is significant, driven by many valid concerns. Most people

are unaware of these petitions, or the number of signatures would likely be much higher.

We are asking you to carefully consider the implications of this proposed development.

It is critical that any decisions made take into account the well-being and safety of all community members.

I respectfully ask that you deny the rezoning request and the project as currently presented, just as the Mayor and Council of Monument have done.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your thoughtful consideration and to hearing your response.

Sincerely,

Ljubica Horvat

and

Chad Credeur