

ROLLING HILLS RANCH NORTH FILINGS 1 & 2 AT MERIDIAN RANCH

PUD DEVELOPMENT / PRELIMINARY PLAN

LETTER OF INTENT

NOVEMBER 2023

PROPERTY OWNER:

Meridian Ranch Investments Inc.
PO BOX 80036,
San Diego, CA 92138

DEVELOPER:

GTL Development, Inc.
3575 Kenyon Street, Suite 200
San Diego, CA 92110

CONSULTANT:

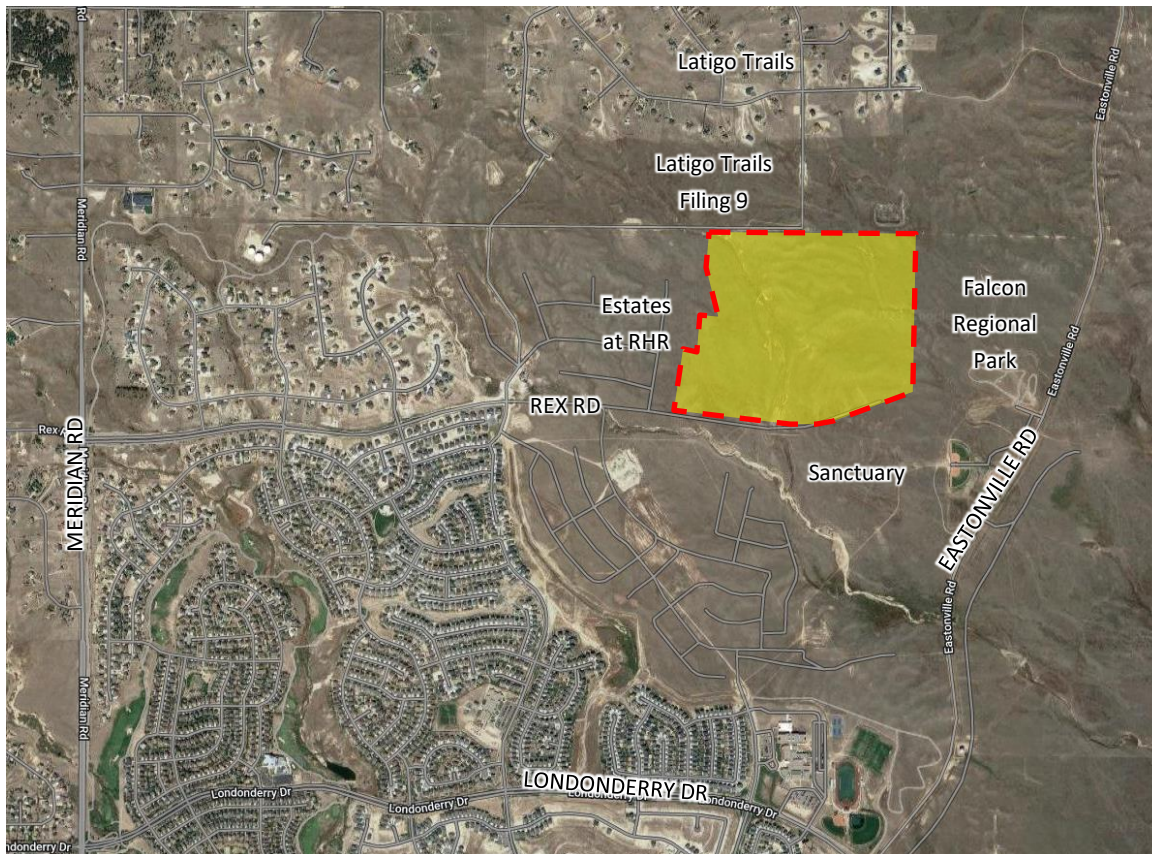
N.E.S. Inc.
619 North Cascade Avenue,
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

Include the telephone numbers and emails

LOCATION

Include the parcel ID number(s)

Rolling Hills Ranch North Filings 1 & 2 at Meridian Ranch is located north of Rex Road and west of the Falcon Regional Park. The site comprises approximately 149 acres and is zoned PUD. To the west is the Estates at Rolling Hills Ranch residential subdivision. To the south is the recently approved Sanctuary at Meridian Ranch PUD, with a density of 4.6 du/ac. To the north is the Latigo Trails 2.5-acre lot rural residential subdivision. Latigo Trails Filing 9, immediately north of Rolling Hills Ranch North, was approved by the Board of County Commissioners in June 2023.



REQUEST

GTL Inc. is requesting approval of the following applications:

1. A PUD Development/Preliminary Plan for Rolling Hills Ranch North Filings 1 & 2 at Meridian Ranch, consisting of 441 single-family dwelling lots, landscaping, open space, and trails on approximately 149 acres.
2. The following PUD Modifications for Rolling Hills Ranch North Filings 1 & 2 at Meridian Ranch.

LDC/ECM Section	Category	Standard	Modification	Justification
ECM Section 2.5.2.C.4	Mid-block crossings	Access ramps on local roadways shall be spaced no greater than 600 feet apart.	The deviation would remove the mid-block pedestrian crossing requirement on the following streets: Chalk Cliffs Dr, Lava Falls Dr, Crystal Falls Dr, and House Rock Dr.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sidewalks on both sides of these streets provide adequate pedestrian access to crossing ramps at the nearest street intersection. • There are no destinations or trails that would necessitate a mid-block crossing on these streets. • The subdivision design intentionally limits the use of mid-block pedestrian crossings as they can create safety hazard to pedestrians. • The omittance of mid-block crossings allows for a continuous and uninterrupted attached sidewalk through the neighborhood. • There are no Federal ADA maximum distances allowed between pedestrian crossings that would necessitate midblock pedestrian ramps.

Chapter 4.2.6.F.2.h of the Land Development Code (LDC) allows for a PUD modification of a general development standard in the LDC or criteria of the Engineering Criteria Manual (ECM). The justification for the PUD Modification is provided at the end of this Letter of Intent.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

Consistency with Approved Sketch Plan

An amendment to the Sketch Plan for Meridian Ranch was approved by the Board of County Commissioners on August 5th, 2021. The approved Sketch Plan includes a residential density cap of 5,000 lots. Rolling Hills Ranch North Filings 1 & 2 is the last remaining residential subdivision within Meridian Ranch. Approval of this PUD Development/Preliminary Plan for 441 lots will maximize the residential density within Meridian Ranch at 5,000 lots as approved by the Sketch Plan.

The Sketch Plan designates the area comprising the Rolling Hills Ranch North Filings 1 & 2 at Meridian Ranch as MR-R4 (max. 4 du/ac). The PUD Development/Preliminary Plan for Rolling Hills Ranch North Filings 1 & 2 comprises 441 lots on approximately 149 acres, which represents a gross density of 3 dwellings per acre, well below the maximum of 4 du/ac. The Sketch Plan identifies an open space buffer across the northern boundary of the property to provide a transition to the rural residential

development to the north. This buffer is provided as part of Tract A on the PUD/Preliminary Plan, which extends the entire length of the northern boundary and has a minimum width of 410 feet. The open space tract also includes a County regional trail as a continuation of the regional trail already provided within Meridian Ranch to the east. This remaining trail section completes the connection to Falcon Regional Park to the east.

County Master Plan Compliance

Your El Paso County Master Plan

This is not a mapping error. This was identified as large lot residential to try to preserve a density buffer between Meridian Ranch and Latigo Trails. I think a stronger argument here would be to identify that the development of Meridian Ranch has incorporated rural and suburban densities and identify how the proposal for RHRN can be compatible with both. Since this part of the property is in the large lot residential, you need to include an analysis of that placetype.

MAPPING ERROR: Meridian Ranch is primarily identified as a Suburban Residential placetype on the County Master Plan. However, the Rolling Hills Ranch North Filings 1 & 2 PUD and adjacent Estates at Rolling Ranch Filing 2 is identified as Large-Lot Residential placetype, which assumes a primary land use of single-family detached residential, typically 2.5-acre lots or larger. These parcels have been identified for 1-acre lot development since the 2011 approval of the Meridian Ranch Sketch Plan, and the Rolling Hills Ranch North area was amended to 4 du/ac density in 2021. **It makes no sense** for these parcels to be identified as Large-Lot Residential placetype when the rest of Meridian Ranch, including the existing 1+ acre lots to the west, is designated as Suburban Residential Place type.

I would recommend re-working this language

This analysis therefore assumes that Rolling Hills Ranch North was intended to be designated Suburban Residential Placetype on the master plan placetypes map, consistent with the remainder of Meridian Ranch. The primary land use in the Suburban Residential placetype is detached single-family land uses with lots sizes smaller than 2.5 acres per lot, up to 5 units per acre. Supporting land uses include Single-family Attached, Multifamily Residential, Parks/Open Space, Commercial Retail, Commercial Service, and Institution. Rolling Hills Ranch North proposes single-family detached residential development at a density of 3 du/ac, with supportive open space and trails, which is consistent with the placetype land use objectives.

Characteristics of the Suburban Placetype include connectivity to trails, hiking paths, and bike lanes to provide access to parks, open space, other neighborhoods, jobs, and services. Neighborhood scale parks and open space should be distributed throughout the residential development to support community gathering and recreation. Rolling Hills Ranch North is an integral part of Meridian Ranch and is a continuation of a long-term development with a distinct vision. The Meridian Ranch community centers on a recreational lifestyle by providing opportunities such as a golf course, recreation center, parks and open space, and trails for residents to enjoy. Overall, Meridian Ranch common landscape elements such as fencing, street tree plantings, landscaping, and signage will establish a unique sense of place for this development. The recreation center and neighborhood parks are located in areas of higher density to provide accessible focal elements for the neighborhoods.

In the Areas of Change chapter of the County Master Plan, Rolling Hills Ranch North is identified as a “Minimal Change: Developed.” The plan notes that these areas have undergone development and have an established character. Developed areas of minimal change are largely built out but may include isolated pockets of vacant or underutilized land. These key sites are likely to see more intense infill development with a mix of uses and scale of redevelopment that will significantly impact the character

I'm not sure the density transition argument works as well here as it did with Estates at Rolling Hills, because with those filings, the larger lots exceeding 1 acre were located to the north, with smaller lots further south. I am not seeing that transition with this proposed layout. Actually, some of the smallest lots in the subdivision are located further north. I understand that the open space on the north side may act as a buffer - this is not the same as a density transition.

of an area. Rolling Hills Ranch North is the only remaining unplatted residential development parcel within Meridian Ranch. The development of the parcel in a manner consistent with the Sketch Plan and the established character of Meridian Ranch is anticipated by this Area of Change designation.

The Rolling Hills Ranch North Filings 1 & 2 PUD aligns with Core Principle 2, Housing & Communities, which seeks to “preserve and develop neighborhoods with a mix of housing types” as well as Goal 2.3 to “locate attainable housing that provides convenient access to goods, services, and employment”. The development provides an average 0.25-acre lot size, which adds to the overall variety of housing options and price points available Meridian Ranch.

Core Principle 1, Land Use and Development, which seeks to “manage growth to ensure a variety of compatible land uses that preserve all character areas of the county.” Goal 1.1 seeks to “ensure compatibility with established character and infrastructure capacity.” The proposed 0.25-acre lot size and preservation of the large open-space buffer on the north side of the PUD ensures consistency with these goals by providing a transition from the higher density development within Meridian Ranch south of Rex Road and the rural residential development to the north.

Objective TM1-4, Transportation and Mobility, encourage sidewalks and other multimodal facilities in all new development. The PUD integrates open space and trails to provide recreation opportunities and connection to adjacent neighborhoods. It is part of the larger Meridian Ranch community which promotes extensive interconnected opens spaces and parks throughout the development.

El Paso County Water Master Plan

The project is located within Region 3, Falcon Area, containing 4 growth areas projected to be completed by 2040, three areas to be completed by 2060, and two other growth areas located on the north and south sides of Falcon Highway directly east of Falcon. Specifically, the Water Master Plan states:

“Region 3 contains four growth areas west of Falcon projected to be completed by 2040. Other areas of 2040 growth are projected for the north-central part of the region west of Highway 24 extending from Falcon to 4-Way Ranch. North of Falcon along Highway 24, growth is projected by 2060 on both sides of the highway. Just west of Falcon, another small development is projected by 2060 on the north and south sides of Woodmen Road. On the east side of Highway 24, three separate areas of growth are projected for development by 2060, with the largest of the three spanning from south of Judge Orr Road to east of Peyton Highway into Region 4c. This development will likely consist of 35-acre lots that will require individual wells to use Denver Basin groundwater. The other two growth areas will be located on the north and south sides of Falcon Highway directly east of Falcon. See Figure 5.5 for Region 3 growth map projections.”

The proposed subdivision lies within the Meridian Service Metropolitan District (MSMD) service area. The Water Resources Report indicates that MSMD has sufficient supply to meet the expected need at full build out by 2040 and 2060. Region 3 has a current water supply of 7,164-acre feet per year and a current demand of 4,494-acre feet per year. The 2040 water supply is projected to be 7,921-acre feet

per year and the project demand is 6,403-acre feet. As stated in the Water Resources Report, this development is projected to need 137-acre feet of water per year and a planning need of 1,902 -acre feet per year. Current supply is 2,062-acre feet on a 300-year basis.

MSMD currently incorporates a 15% reserve into their future planning. Based on the needs, current supply, and reserve, the District has sufficient water to meet the needs expected now and into the future with no shortages anticipated. The District's current use is based on an average of 20% renewable water sources and is actively seeking renewable sources and replacement sources with Cherokee Metro Water District to date.

The MSMD service area is located in the Upper Black Squirrel Creek Groundwater Management District and the water bearing formations in descending stratigraphic order are the Dawson, Denver, Arapahoe, and Laramie Fox Hills. These four aquifers are collectively known as the Denver Basin aquifers and are found approximately at depths of 500, 1,400, 1,900, and 2,500 feet below the ground surface. MSMD currently services over 15,500 in equivalent population in several filings within Meridian Ranch, Falcon High School and portions of Latigo Trails as an out of district user. The water system that serves Meridian Ranch is classified as a "public water system" and meets all the applicable requirements of the CDPHE.

The water system uses groundwater as its primary source of supply. Filtration and disinfection facilities have been constructed at a central location to ensure good water quality. Elevation differences that exist throughout the property require that the distribution system is divided into two pressure zones to ensure that the water is delivered at no less than 40 psi during peak hour flow and at no more than 120 psi during periods of low use. Storage facilities and distribution piping are provided to ensure that the residual pressure requirements are achieved both during peak hour demands and during maximum day demands with a superimposed fire flow of 1500 gpm for the residential areas and up to 3500 gpm for commercial areas.

The proposed residential subdivision satisfies the following policies of the County Water Master Plan:

Policy 5.2.4 – Encourage the locating of new development where it can take advantage of existing or proposed water supply projects that would allow shared infrastructure costs.

The proposed subdivision is located within MSMD and a commitment letter noting the District's ability to serve the proposed development in an efficient manner with the current infrastructure has been provided.

Policy 5.5.1 – Discourage individual wells for new subdivisions with 2.5 acre or smaller average lot sizes, especially in the near-surface aquifers, when there is a reasonable opportunity to connect to an existing central system, alternatively, or construct a new central water supply system when the economies of scale to do so can be achieved.

The proposed development is located within the MSMD service area and is proposed to connect to the existing central water and wastewater. A service commitment letter is provided for the proposed development.

Policy 6.0.1 – Continue to require documentation of the adequacy or sufficiency of water, as appropriate, for proposed development.

The accompanying Water Resources Report demonstrates an adequate supply of water in terms of quantity, quality and dependability to meet El Paso County's the 300-year requirement.

El Paso County Parks Master Plan (Updated 2022)

Falcon Regional Park is identified as a new regional park in the Master Plan. This park was dedicated to the County by the owners and developers of Meridian Ranch. All regional park fees are offset by the dedication of this land to the County per the overall Parks Land Agreement for Meridian Ranch.

The Arroya Lane Regional Trail is identified as a 5.38 mile proposed primary regional trail that is 29% complete. Part of that trail runs through the northern section of Meridian Ranch. The western portion has either been constructed or platted with previous subdivisions. The remaining trail section in Rolling Hills Ranch North will complete the regional trail through Meridian Ranch and provides a continuous connection to the adjacent Falcon Regional Park.

El Paso County Major Transportation Corridor Plan (MTCP)

Rex Road to the south of the proposed Rolling Hills Ranch North subdivision, and Eastonville Road to the on the east boundary of Meridian Ranch, are identified as minor arterials on the 2040 Functional classification map of the MTCP. Planned improvements to these roads by 2040 are identified in Table 4:

- A new extension of Rex Road through Meridian Ranch as a 2-lane urban collector.
- Eastonville Road upgrade from unimproved county road to a 2-lane minor arterial.

The construction of Rex Road as an Urban 2-Lane Minor Arterial from the Rolling Ranch Drive to Shelter Creek Drive was included as part of the Sanctuary at Meridian Ranch approved PUD/Preliminary Plan and Final Plat. As agreed with the El Paso County Engineer, the approved design is for a half-section of the Urban Minor Arterial street-section, as the projected long-term (2040) traffic volumes are less than originally anticipated by the MTCP. The half section roadway will be constructed within an 80-foot right of way with a 20-foot right-of-way reservation is identified in Tract A on the Sanctuary at Meridian Ranch PUD and Plat in order to accommodate the future full width section when the County determines it is necessary. The portion of Rex Road within Falcon Regional Park is under construction, which will complete the connection between Meridian Road and Eastonville Rd.

Parks and Open Space

Rolling Hills Ranch North includes 46 acres of open space tracts with trail connections to the extensive trail, parks and open space system within Meridian Ranch. The northern open space tract includes a County regional trail as a continuation of the regional trail already provided within Meridian Ranch to the east. This remaining trail section completes the connection to Falcon Regional Park to the east.

The proposed 46 acres of open space for the project substantially exceeds the 10% requirement for open space within PUDs as noted in LDC Chapter 4.2.6.F.8b (10% of 149 acres is a requirement of 14.9 acres). The subdivision also exceeds the LDC requirement that 25% of the 10% total open space be contiguous and usable: 25% of 14.9 acres is a requirement of 3.7 acres; Filing 2 Tract A of the subdivision provides a contiguous and usable area with trails totaling 39 acres.

As required by Section 8.5.3 of the Land Development Code, the fees in lieu of park land dedication are currently \$295 per subdivision lot for Urban Parks and \$467 per subdivision lot for Regional Parks. The required fees in lieu of for this project are:

	Sanctuary
Urban	\$130,095
Regional	\$205,947
Total	\$336,042

This appears to be for the Sanctuary project - these numbers appear to be correct for the 441 proposed lots. Don't forget, these fees do not apply and are not final until final plat stage.

The regional park fees are offset by the dedication of land to the County for the Falcon Regional Park per the overall Parks Land Agreement for Meridian Ranch. Credit for the urban park fees will be requested through a Parks Land Agreement at the time of platting to offset the costs of construction the proposed trail and landscape improvements within the open space tracts.

Drainage

A Preliminary Drainage Report for Rolling Hills Ranch North is submitted with this application package. The site is located within the Gieck Ranch Drainage Basin. The storm drain runoff will be collected by a series of inlets and storm drainpipe then conveyed through the project and discharge into an existing natural drainage course continuing into existing Pond G that is properly sized to safely convey the storm water flows away from the project without damaging adjacent property. A water quality facility is located on the south boundary of the project at Rex Rd. Runoff will be collected by the proposed storm drainage system and diverted through the water quality facility to allow for suspended solids to settle from the stormwater prior to being discharge downstream of Rex Rd.

Traffic

A Traffic Report prepared by LSC is submitted in support of this application. This study is in keeping with past approved traffic studies and shows that no significant changes were projected for the improvements noted in the recent 2021 Sketch Plan study which had identified the proposed development densities. The future extension of Rex Road abuts the southern boundary of Rolling Hills Ranch North. The construction of Rex Road as a half-section Urban 2-Lane Minor Arterial from Rolling Ranch Drive to Shelter Creek Drive was included as part of the Sanctuary at Meridian Ranch approved PUD/Preliminary Plan and Final Plat immediately to the south of Rex Road. This section of Rex Road is

revise to urban local
to match county
nomenclature

under construction and is expected to be open to the public in Spring 2024. All subdivision streets will be classified as local residential roads and two points of access onto Rex Road are provided at Shelter Creek Drive to the east and via a connection to Estate Ridge Drive in Estates at Rolling Hills Ranch Filing 2.

Geotechnical Report

A Geotechnical and Soils Report prepared by Entech Engineering Inc. is submitted in support of this application. The report notes that consideration should be given to several conditions on this site in planning and excavating the development including groundwater, expansive soils and sandstone/claystone materials. While groundwater should not impact the development of this site, procedures and equipment to mitigate groundwater impact during and after construction may be necessary. An underdrain system can be considered for long term groundwater mitigation. Expansive soils [clayey sand, claystone, and sandy clay] are present on the site exhibiting low to moderate potential for expansion and consolidation. These soils, where encountered, will require mitigation for residential construction such as moisture treatments and overexcavation. Sandstone and claystone were encountered at shallow depths across the site and is expected to be exposed upon completion of site grading. Track type equipment likely will be needed to accomplish excavations particularly where harder materials or lenses are present.

Utilities

Meridian Service Metropolitan District will provide central water and sanitary sewer service to the project. Mountain View Electric Association, Inc. will supply electricity service and Black Hills Energy will supply natural gas.

Wildlife

Rolling Hills Ranch North is in a developing area and there is no significant impact to wildlife. As noted in the Impact Identification Report for the 2009 Meridian Ranch Sketch Plan, the property was assessed for Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse and Ute Ladies'-tresses Orchid habitat but was found to be unsuitable for these threatened species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviewed the studies and agreed with these findings.

At the time of the 2009 Sketch Plan approval, the Colorado Division of Wildlife Impact Maps indicated that Pronghorn Antelope may range within the Sketch Plan area. Pronghorn Antelope are rated as being subject to potentially moderate impacts from the effects of development. The two drainage corridors within the Meridian Ranch Sketch Plan may allow for the migration of the Pronghorn Antelope. The fencing used within Meridian Ranch is compatible with the wildlife needs.

Has there been any additional analysis since 2009?

CRITERIA FOR APPROVAL

Chapter 4.2.6.D of the LDC allows the combination of a preliminary plan with a PUD development plan, provided all review and approval standards for both the PUD development plan and preliminary plan are met. The PUD/Preliminary Plan for Rolling Hills Ranch North is consistent with the PUD zoning and preliminary plan approval criteria set forth in Chapter 4.2.6.D & 4.2.6.E of the LDC as follows:

PUD Zoning:

- **The application is in general conformity with the Master Plan;**

The proposed application conforms to the most recent 2021 Approved Sketch Plan and County Master Plan as noted above.

- **The proposed development is in compliance with the requirements of this Code and all applicable statutory provisions and will not otherwise be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the present or future inhabitants of El Paso County;**

The proposed development is in compliance with all County Code requirements and applicable statutory provisions, other than the following: a PUD modification and deviation to ECM Section 2.5.2.C.4 is submitted to remove the requirement for a mid-block pedestrian crossing requirement on the certain streets within the subdivision; and an alternative landscape plan is also requested to reduce the tree planting requirement on Rex Road to accommodate future widening plans. The justification for these code section waivers is provided at the end of the Letter of Intent.

The proposed development provides needed housing, adequate access to services, infrastructure and beneficial active community open space opportunities which will promote the health, safety and welfare of the existing and future residents of El Paso County.

- **The subject property is suitable for the intended uses and the use is compatible with both the existing and allowed land uses on the neighboring properties, will be in harmony and responsive with the character of the surrounding area and natural environment; and will not have a negative impact upon the existing and future development of the surrounding area;**

The proposed development is suitable for the intended land use and conforms to the approved 2021 Sketch Plan amendment. The residential land use is compatible with the residential land use of the neighboring properties. The proposed 0.25-acre lot size and large open space tract on the north side of the PUD creates a transition from the higher density development within Meridian Ranch south of Rex Road and the rural residential development to the north.

- **The proposed development provides adequate consideration for any potentially detrimental use to use relationships (e.g. commercial use adjacent to single family use) and provides an appropriate transition or buffering between uses of differing intensities both on-site and off-site which may include innovative treatments of use to use relationships;**

The Sketch Plan identifies a 21-acre, 335-foot wide open space buffer across the northern boundary of the property to provide a transition to the rural residential development to the north. This buffer

See comments above regarding using the density transition argument as justification.

This is a buffer - not a transition

Elsewhere it states minimum width of 410 feet.

is provided as part of Tract A on the PUD/Preliminary Plan, which extends the entire length of the northern boundary and is 33 acres and has a minimum width of approximately 410 feet.

- **The allowed uses, bulk requirements and required landscaping and buffering are appropriate to and compatible with the type of development, the surrounding neighborhood or area and the community;**

As noted above, Tract A on the PUD/Preliminary Plan provides a buffer to the rural residential development to the north, which extends the entire length of the northern boundary and has a minimum width of 410 feet. An alternative landscape plan is requested to reduce the tree planting requirement on Rex Road to accommodate future widening plans. Additional planting is provided interior to the site to compensate for this reduction. The justification for this code section waiver is provided at the end of the Letter of Intent.

- **Areas with unique or significant historical, cultural, recreational, aesthetic or natural features are preserved and incorporated into the design of the project;**

No areas with unique or significant historical, cultural, recreational, aesthetic or natural features exist on site. Minor drainageways are located on the northern portion of the property and these are primarily contained within proposed open space tracts. The drainageway running through the property north to south has been regraded to capture and carry stormwater flows to the water quality pond adjacent to Rex Road.

Recreational open space opportunities are consistently incorporated into the Meridian Ranch development for a consistent and growing community need. Tract A provides open space and local trails and continue the regional trail connection to Falcon Regional Park.

- **Open spaces and trails are integrated into the development plan to serve as amenities to residents and provide a reasonable walking and biking opportunities;**

The proposed Open Space for the project is 46 which equates to 31% of the total PUD area, exceeding the 10% requirement as noted in the Land Development Code Chapter 4.2.6.F.8b. The usable and contiguous open space also exceeds the 25% requirement in the LDC.

- **The proposed development will not overburden the capacities of existing or planned roads, utilities and other public facilities (e.g., fire protection, police protection, emergency services, and water and sanitation), and the required public services and facilities will be provided to support the development when needed;**

Infrastructure from the Meridian Service Metropolitan District provides central water and sanitary sewer service to the project. Mountain View Electric Association, Inc. will supply electricity service and Black Hills Energy will supply natural gas.

- **The proposed development would be a benefit through the provision of interconnected open space, conservation of environmental features, aesthetic features and harmonious design, and energy efficient site design;**

The proposed development includes a 33-acre open space tract that provides regional and local trail connections. Recreational open space opportunities are consistently incorporated into the Meridian Ranch development to meet the needs of this growing community.

- **The proposed land use does not permit the use of any area containing a commercial mineral deposit in a manner which would unreasonably interfere with the present or future extraction of such deposit unless acknowledged by the mineral rights owner;**

The proposed development does not propose or permit the use of land for mineral extraction.

- **Any proposed exception or deviation from the requirements of the zoning resolution or the subdivision regulations is warranted by virtue of the design and amenities incorporated in the development plan and development guide;**

A PUD modification/deviation is requested from ECM Section 2.5.2.C.4 relating to mid-block crossings and the requirement for access ramps on local roadways to be spaced no greater than 600 feet apart. The deviation request is to waive the need for mid-block pedestrian crossings on the following streets: Chalk Cliffs Dr, Lava Falls Dr, Crystal Falls Dr, and House Rock Dr. The omission of mid-block crossings creates a more pleasing design aesthetic as it creates a continuous and uninterrupted attached sidewalk through the neighborhood. There are no destinations or trails that would necessitate a mid-block crossing on these streets. Sidewalks on both sides of these streets provide adequate pedestrian access to crossing ramps at the nearest street intersection.

- **The owner has authorized the application.**

Application is being submitted by the current landowner and developer.

Preliminary Plan:

The Preliminary Plan is consistent with the approval criteria in Section 7.2.1.D.2.e of the LDC as follows:

- **The proposed subdivision is in general conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan;**

The proposed application conforms to the most recent 2021 Approved Sketch Plan and County Master Plans as noted above.

- **The subdivision is consistent with the purposes of this Code;**

The proposed development is in compliance with all County Code requirements and applicable statutory provisions and not detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of El Paso County.

- **The subdivision is in conformance with the subdivision design standards and any approved sketch plan;**

An amendment to the Sketch Plan for Meridian Ranch was approved by the Board of County Commissioners on August 5th, 2021. The approved Sketch Plan includes a residential density cap of 5,000 lots. Rolling Hills Ranch North Filings 1 & 2 is the last remaining residential subdivision within Meridian Ranch. Approval of this PUD Development/Preliminary Plan for 441 lots will maximize the residential density within Meridian Ranch at 5,000 lots as approved by the Sketch Plan.

The Sketch Plan designates the area comprising the Rolling Hills Ranch North Filings 1 & 2 at Meridian Ranch as MR-R4 (max. 4 du/ac). The PUD Development/Preliminary Plan for Rolling Hills Ranch North comprises 441 lots on approximately 149 acres, which represents a gross density of 3 dwellings per acre. The Sketch Plan identifies an open space buffer across the northern boundary of the property to provide a transition to the rural residential development to the north. This buffer is provided as part of Tract A on the PUD/Preliminary Plan, which extends the entire length of the northern boundary and has a minimum width of 410 feet. The open space tract also includes a County regional trail as a continuation of the regional trail already provided within Meridian Ranch to the east. This remaining trail section completes the connection to Falcon Regional Park to the east.

The PUD Development/Preliminary Plan for Rolling Hills Ranch North conforms with all subdivision design standards, subject to approval of a requested PUD modification/deviation from ECM Section 2.5.2.C.4 relating to mid-block crossings and the requirement for access ramps on local roadways to be spaced no greater than 600 feet apart. An alternative landscape plan is also requested to reduce the tree planting requirement on Rex Road to accommodate future widening plans. The justification for these code section waivers is provided at the end of the Letter of Intent.

- **A sufficient water supply has been acquired in terms of quantity, quality, and dependability for the type of subdivision proposed, as determined in accordance with the standards set forth in the water supply standards [C.R.S. §30-28-133(6)(a)] and the requirements of Chapter 8 of this Code;**

Meridian Service Metropolitan District will provide central water to the project. The District has a sufficient water supply as identified in the accompanying Water Resources Report.

- **A public sewage disposal system has been established and, if other methods of sewage disposal are proposed, the system complies with state and local laws and regulations, [C.R.S. §30-28-133(6)(b)] and the requirements of Chapter 8 of this Code.**

Meridian Service Metropolitan District will provide sanitary sewer service to the project. The District has an established sewage disposal facility. The current capacity allocated to MSMD at the PBHWTP

is 0.086 MGD and the total capacity available at the BSWTF is 2.2 MGD for a total of just under 2.3 MGD. The available capacity of the wastewater treatment facilities is sufficient to accept the anticipated flows from Meridian Ranch at full build-out.

- **All areas of the proposed subdivision, which may involve soil or topographical conditions presenting hazards or requiring special precautions, have been identified and the proposed subdivision is compatible with such conditions. [C.R.S. §30-28-133(6)(c)];**

A Geotechnical and Soils Report prepared by Entech Engineering Inc. is submitted in support of this application. The report notes that consideration should be given to several conditions on this site in planning and excavating the development including groundwater, expansive soils and sandstone/claystone materials. These conditions can be mitigated by established engineering methods.

- **Adequate drainage improvements complying with State law [C.R.S. §30-28- 133(3)(c)(VIII)] and the requirements of this Code and the ECM are provided by the design;**

A Preliminary Drainage Report for Rolling Hills Ranch North is submitted with this application package. The site is located within the Gieck Ranch Drainage Basin. The storm drain runoff will be collected by a series of inlets and storm drain pipe then conveyed through the project and discharge into an existing natural drainage course continuing into existing Pond G that is properly sized to safely convey the storm water flows away from the project without damaging adjacent property. A water quality facility is located on the south boundary of the project at Rex Rd. Runoff will be collected by the proposed storm drainage system and diverted through the water quality facility to allow for suspended solids to settle from the stormwater prior to being discharge downstream of Rex Rd.

- **The location and design of the public improvements proposed in connection with the subdivision are adequate to serve the needs and mitigate the effects of the development;**

A Traffic Report prepared by LSC is submitted in support of this application. This study is in keeping with past approved traffic studies and shows that no significant changes were projected for the improvements noted in the recent 2021 Sketch Plan study which had identified the proposed development densities. The future extension of Rex Road abuts the southern boundary of Rolling Hills Ranch North. The construction of Rex Road as a half-section Urban 2-Lane Minor Arterial from Rolling Ranch Drive to Shelter Creek Drive was included as part of the Sanctuary at Meridian Ranch approved PUD/Preliminary Plan and Final Plat immediately to the south of Rex Road. All subdivision streets will be classified as **local residential** roads and two points of access onto Rex Road are provided at Shelter Creek Drive to the east and via a connection to Estate Ridge Drive in Estates at Rolling Hills Ranch Filing 2.

- **Legal and physical access is or will be provided to all parcels by public rights-of-way or recorded easement, acceptable to the County in compliance with this Code and the ECM;**

All lots will be accessible by new public streets that comply with the LDC and ECM.

- **The proposed subdivision has established an adequate level of compatibility by**
 - a. **incorporating natural physical features into the design and providing sufficient open spaces considering the type and intensity of the subdivision;**

There are no natural physical features on the site. The Rolling Hills Ranch North PUD includes substantially more than required by Code.

- b. **incorporating site planning techniques to foster the implementation of the County's plans, and encourage a land use pattern to support a balanced transportation system, including auto, bike and pedestrian traffic, public or mass transit if appropriate, and the cost-effective delivery of other services consistent with adopted plans, policies and regulations of the County;**

Appropriate provision is made in this regard given the context of the site and surrounding area. Sidewalks and trails are included throughout the subdivision and connect to the surrounding trails, open space, recreational facilities and neighborhoods within Meridian Ranch and to Falcon Regional Park.

- c. **incorporating physical design features in the subdivision to provide a transition between the subdivision and adjacent land uses;**

The Sketch Plan identifies a 21-acre open space buffer across the northern boundary of the property to provide a transition to the rural residential development to the north. This buffer is provided as part of Tract A on the PUD/Preliminary Plan, which extends the entire length of the northern boundary and has a minimum width of 410 feet. The

- d. **incorporating identified environmentally sensitive areas, including but not limited to, wetlands and wildlife corridors, into the design; and**

There are no environmentally sensitive areas on the property.

- e. **incorporating public facilities or infrastructure, or provisions therefore, reasonably related to the proposed subdivision so the proposed subdivision will not negatively impact the levels of service of County services and facilities;**

The road, utility, stormwater and parks infrastructure for Meridian Ranch is already established or approved with previous subdivision.

- **Necessary services, including police and fire protection, recreation, utilities, open space and transportation systems, are or will be available to serve the proposed subdivision;**

The road, utility, stormwater and parks infrastructure for Meridian Ranch is already established or approved with previous subdivision. Meridian Service Metropolitan District will provide central water and sanitary sewer service to the project. Mountain View Electric Association, Inc. will supply electricity service and Black Hills Energy will supply natural gas. Falcon Fire Protection Department will provide fire protection services to the proposed development

- **The subdivision provides evidence to show that the proposed methods for fire protection comply with Chapter 6 of this Code; and**

A Fire Protection Report is included with this submittal identifying compliance with the International Fire Code and Chapter 6.3.3 of the LDC.

- **The proposed subdivision meets other applicable sections of Chapter 6 and 8 of this Code.**

The proposed subdivision meets the applicable sections of these parts of the Code, subject to the PUD modification and deviation request referenced below.

PUD Modification:

Chapter 4.2.6.F.2.h of the Land Development Code (LDC) allows for a PUD modification of a general development standard in the LDC or criteria of the Engineering Criteria Manual (ECM). The proposed modification should provide for the general health, safety, and welfare of the citizens and at least 1 of the following benefits:

- Preservation of natural features;
- Provision of a more livable environment, such as the installment of street furniture, decorative street lighting or decorative paving materials;
- Provision of a more efficient pedestrian system;
- Provision of additional open space;
- Provision of other public amenities not otherwise required by the Code; or
- The proposed modification is granted in exchange for the open space and/or amenity designs provided in the PUD development plan and/or development guide.

A PUD Modification and associated deviation is requested to ECM Section 2.5.2.C.4 relating to mid-block crossings and the requirement for access ramps on local roadways to be spaced no greater than 600 feet apart. The deviation request is to waive the need for mid-block pedestrian crossings on the following streets: Chalk Cliffs Dr, Lava Falls Dr, Crystal Falls Dr, and House Rock Dr.

The proposed PUD modification addresses the general health, safety, and welfare of the citizens, provides a more livable environment and provides a more efficient pedestrian system as follows:

General health, safety, and welfare of the citizens:

- The subdivision design intentionally limits the use of mid-block pedestrian crossings as they can create a safety hazard. Parked on-street cars can hinder sight lines for both pedestrians and drivers. Pedestrians will typically cross the street in any location on a local residential street due to the low traffic volumes. Formalizing this crossing point with a mid-block crossing can create an assumption that traffic will stop for the pedestrian which, together with blocked visibility, can potentially place pedestrians in danger.
- There are no Federal ADA maximum distances allowed between accessible pedestrian crossings that would necessitate midblock pedestrian ramps, and accessible ramps are provided at nearby intersections.

A more livable environment:

- The omittance of mid-block crossings creates a more pleasing design aesthetic as it provides a continuous and uninterrupted attached sidewalk through the neighborhood, creating a more walkable and livable residential environment.
- The proposed subdivision, and Meridian Ranch generally, relies heavily upon trails through and between neighborhoods to provide an interconnected community. These trails are segregated from traffic and provide a safer and more enjoyable pedestrian experience than the use of mid-block crossings.

A more efficient pedestrian system as follows:

- There are no destinations or trails that would necessitate a mid-block crossing on these streets.
- Sidewalks on both sides of these streets provide efficient pedestrian access to crossing ramps at the nearest street intersection, and mid-block crossings do not make it more efficient and can create safety issues, as referenced above.

Request for Alternative Landscape Design:

The Applicant requests approval of an Alternative Landscape Plan for the required landscaping along Rex Road. As noted above, the construction of Rex Road as a half-section of the Urban Minor Arterial street-section will be constructed within an 80-foot right of way with right-of-way reservation to accommodate the future full width section when the County determines it is necessary. The request for an Alternative Landscape Plan is to allow a reduction in the number of the required trees along Rex Road, so that trees are planted only outside the future widened right-of-way and do not have to be removed if the road is widened. The request is to reduce tree planting along Rex Road from the required 121 trees to 80 trees.

The residual 41 trees will be located interior to the site so they are not disturbed by the future road widening.

LDC Chapter 6.2.2(A)(4) indicates that the PCD Director may approve landscaping that does not meet the specific requirements of the Section, provided the purpose of the landscape requirements is met. The purposes of the landscape requirements relevant to this request are to create a positive image and visual appeal along highly visible roads; to separate circulation systems; and to create an overall pleasant and attractive surrounding. The provided landscaping along Rex Road includes 80 trees, shrubs and other landscape features that will provide an attractive and positive image through Meridian Ranch, consistent with the overall high quality of landscape design demonstrated throughout this master planned community. The relocation of 41 of the required trees to the interior of the site will create a more attractive residential environment and will enhance the regional trail corridor.