

**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

PARK OPERATIONS ~ ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES ~ RECREATION/CULTURAL SERVICES

December 16, 2022

Kari Parsons  
Project Manager  
El Paso County Development Services Department  
2880 International Circle  
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

**Subject: FourSquare at Sterling Ranch East Filing No. 1 Final Plat – Preliminary Comments (SF-22-036)**

Hello Kari,

The Park Operations Division of the Community Services Department has reviewed the FourSquare at Sterling Ranch East Filing No. 1 Final Plat application and has the following preliminary comments of behalf of El Paso County Parks. This application and the following comments and recommendations will be presented to the Park Advisory Board for endorsement on January 11, 2023:

This is a request by Classic Consulting, LLC, on behalf of Classic SRJ Land, LLC, for endorsement of FourSquare at Sterling Ranch East Filing No. 1 Final Plat, which includes 158 small single-family residential lots on 36.65 acres, laid out in a dense “four square” urban arrangement. The property is currently zoned as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) and is located east of Vollmer Road and east of Sand Creek, near the intersection of Sterling Ranch Road and the future extension of Briargate Parkway.

The 2013 and 2022 update of the El Paso County Parks Master Plan shows no parks, trails, or open space impacted by this project. The Sand Creek Regional Trail is located approximately 0.25 mile west of the property on the western banks of Sand Creek, while the proposed Briargate Parkway Bicycle Route is located immediate south and adjacent the project site along an east-west alignment. A dedicated public right-of-way already exists along the aforementioned bicycle route, so no easement requests are necessary at that location; however, the applicant is advised that multi-modal transportation options will be developed within the rights-of-way in the future.

The 2022 El Paso County Parks Master Plan includes an update to the Candidate Open Space Areas, utilizing a weighted overlay of numerous natural and man-made attributes which contribute to strong candidate open space areas. The FourSquare at Sterling Ranch East Filing No. 1 falls completely within the bounds of the updated Black Forest South Candidate Open Space Area. Open space attribute values here include the Sand Creek corridor, surface water and wetland areas, floodplains, moderate wildlife impacts, and open high prairie grasslands along the southern boundary of Black Forest. The project site is located to the east of Sand Creek, its floodplains, and wetlands and will have very limited impacts on the creek corridor or surrounding open space attributes.

The project plan includes an interconnected trail and sidewalk system that affords the residents easy access to the sidewalk system along Briargate Parkway and in turn, the surrounding neighborhood, proposed school sites, neighborhood and community parks, as well as the nearby Sand Creek Regional Trail.



The current application shows 16.36 acres, or 44.6% of open space, dedicated to public and private open space, passive use parks, internal trail corridors, landscaping tracts, and drainage infrastructure. Tracts A through H comprise of 5.17 acres, or 31.5% of the available open space and are primarily designed for recreational purposes, pedestrian movement, and extensive landscape tracts. Tract I, at 11.2 acres or 68.5% of available open space, is comprised primarily of a large stormwater detention basin. The applicant's Letter of Intent states the following in regard to parks, trails, and open spaces:

- *“Tract I is approximately 11.2 acres and provides regional detention and is also designed to accommodate functional park space, perimeter walking trails, and amenities.”*
- *“The detention pond will also be designed to incorporate a perimeter trail and associated amenities so that it can serve a dual purpose as a recreational amenity for the Sterling Ranch East community.”*
- *“Foursquare PUD provides 10.74 acres of usable open space, including a 2.57-acre park (Tract G) centralized within the development and connected by pedestrian sidewalks that weave throughout the development. A 5' concrete trail loops through the park providing connections from Catalina Foothills roads, Estes Park Road, Idaho Fall Drive and open space tracts leading out of the development. A series of smaller tracts are located at the end of the block to provide small open spaces between the residential roadways and the proposed lots. All roadways include pedestrian sidewalks and connections to the Sterling Ranch parks and trails system, including Sand Creek Regional Trail. Parks and trails will be owned and maintained by the Sterling Ranch Metro District.”*

The El Paso County Land Development Code (LDC) states the following guidelines:

- Section 4.2.6 of the LDC states that *“Constructed storm water facilities may be included in the open space calculation if **comprising less than 10%** of the required open space, recreational areas, trails and greenways.”*
- Section 4.2.6 of the LDC states that *“Open space shall be concentrated in large usable areas. No less than 25% of the gross land area of open space shall be contiguous and usable.”*
- Section 8.5.2 of the LDC states that *“The dedicated park land shall be conveniently located and have public access. The land shall be **free of hazards** that would threaten the safety of those using the land.”*

Staff is pleased the FourSquare at Sterling Ranch East Filing No. 1 Final Plat contains a large percentage of passive-use park and open space areas, however, the inclusion of the large regional stormwater detention facility in the open space calculations as a dual-purpose drainage and recreational facility is concerning. As noted above, stormwater facilities may only comprise 10% or less of the open space calculations, whereas Tract I comprises 30.5% of the total project area and as noted above, 68.5% of the available open space.

Furthermore, Parks staff highly discourages the construction of recreational facilities in an active stormwater detention facility, especially one of this size and magnitude. In order to maintain a hazard-free recreational environment, a multi-use turf field located at the bottom of the detention facility would need to be adequately fenced from the concrete trickle channels, forebays, and outlet works, thus disrupting the overall efficiency of the detention facility itself.

Because Tracts A through H, at 5.17 acres, comprise over 14% of the total project area and therefore meet and exceed the PUD 10% open space requirement, staff recommends the applicant remove the regional stormwater detention facility from the open space calculations in order to conform to the recommended guidelines of the Land Development Code.

Staff does, however, encourage the applicant to construct the trail and trail-related amenities around the upper perimeter of the stormwater detention facility, keeping user safety in the forefront of plan design. Staff also encourages the applicant to plan and develop active-use amenities within the 2.57-acre neighborhood park, which could include playgrounds, picnic tables and pavilions, and perhaps exercise areas. These types of amenities would allow for a wide variety of recreational choices to users of all age groups and abilities. Lastly, staff recommends fees in lieu of land dedication for regional and urban park purposes, to be paid upon the recording of the forthcoming final plats.

**Recommended Motion (Filing No.1 Final Plat):**

*“The Park Advisory Board recommends that the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners include the following conditions when considering and/or approving FourSquare at Sterling Ranch East Filing No. 1 Final Plat: (1) per the open space area computation guidelines of the El Paso County Land Development Code, remove the Tract I stormwater detention facility from the open space acreage calculations; (2) remove the planned future park from the regional stormwater detention facility and design safe pedestrian trails around its perimeter; (3) recommend the applicant explore a wide variety of active-use park and open space amenities to strengthen recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities; (4) fees in lieu of land dedication for regional park purposes in the amount of \$72,680 and urban park purposes in the amount of \$45,820 will be required at time of the recording of this Final Plat. A Park Lands Agreement may be an acceptable alternative to urban park fees, provided the agreement is approved by the County and executed prior to recording the Final Plat.”*

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,



Ross A. Williams  
Park Planner  
Park Operations Division  
Community Services Department  
[rosswilliams@elpasoco.com](mailto:rosswilliams@elpasoco.com)

Black Forest South  
Candidate Open  
Space Area

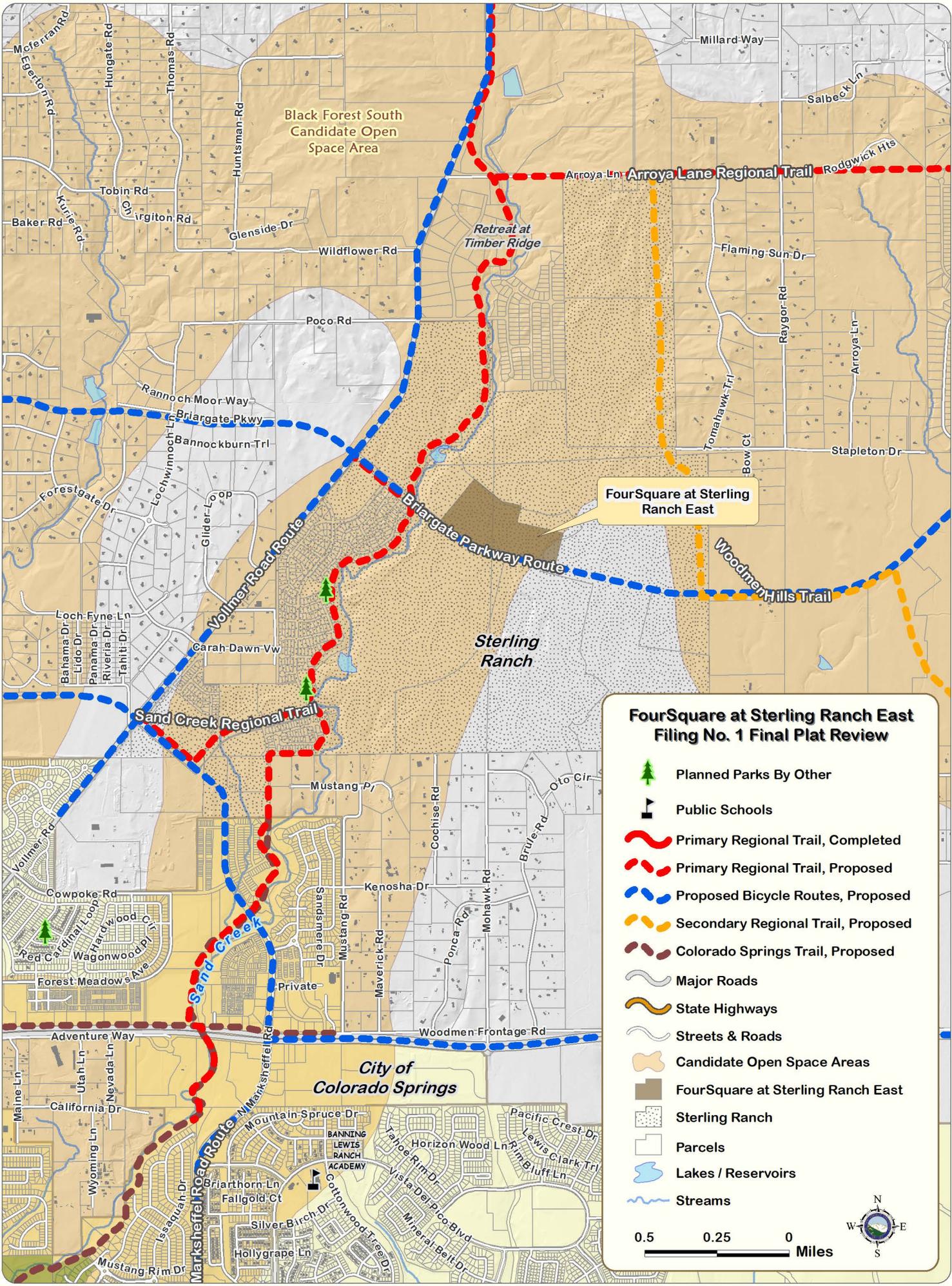
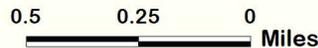
FourSquare at Sterling  
Ranch East

Sterling  
Ranch

City of  
Colorado Springs

**FourSquare at Sterling Ranch East  
Filing No. 1 Final Plat Review**

-  Planned Parks By Other
-  Public Schools
-  Primary Regional Trail, Completed
-  Primary Regional Trail, Proposed
-  Proposed Bicycle Routes, Proposed
-  Secondary Regional Trail, Proposed
-  Colorado Springs Trail, Proposed
-  Major Roads
-  State Highways
-  Streets & Roads
-  Candidate Open Space Areas
-  FourSquare at Sterling Ranch East
-  Sterling Ranch
-  Parcels
-  Lakes / Reservoirs
-  Streams



**Development  
Application  
Permit  
Review**



**COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT**

**Park Operations - Community Outreach - Environmental Services  
Veterans Services - Recreation / Cultural Services**

**January 11, 2023**

Subdivision requirements referenced in Section 8.5.2 of the El Paso County Land Development Code. Fees are based on average land values within designated areas. See El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) Resolution for fees established on an annual basis. The Park Advisory Board meets the second Wednesday of each month, 1:30 p.m., BoCC Auditorium, second floor of Centennial Hall, 200 South Cascade Avenue, Colorado Springs.

|                              |   |                                      |            |
|------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>Name:</b>                 | FourSquare at Sterling Ranch East Filing No. 1 Final Plat | <b>Application Type:</b>             | Final Plat |
| <b>PCD Reference #:</b>      | SF-22-036   | <b>Total Acreage:</b>                | 36.65      |
|                              |   | <b>Total # of Dwelling Units:</b>    | 158        |
| <b>Applicant / Owner:</b>    | <b>Owner's Representative:</b>                            | <b>Dwelling Units Per 2.5 Acres:</b> | 10.78      |
| Classic SRJ Land, LLC        | Classic Consulting, LLC                                   | <b>Regional Park Area:</b>           | 2          |
| 2138 Flying Horse Club Drive | 619 North Cascade Avenue, Suite 200                       | <b>Urban Park Area:</b>              | 2, 3       |
| Colorado Springs, CO 80921   | Colorado Springs, CO 80903                                | <b>Existing Zoning Code:</b>         | PUD        |
|                              |   | <b>Proposed Zoning Code:</b>         | PUD        |

**REGIONAL AND URBAN PARK DEDICATION AND FEE REQUIREMENTS**

Regional Park land dedication shall be 7.76 acres of park land per 1,000 projected residents, while Urban Park land dedication shall be 4 acres of park land per 1,000 projected residents. The number of projected residents shall be based on 2.5 residents per dwelling unit.

The EPC Land Development Code defines urban density as land development of higher density and intensity which is characteristically provided with services of an urban nature. This category of development includes residential uses with densities of more than one dwelling unit per 2.5 acres.

**LAND REQUIREMENTS**

Urban Density (>= 1 Dwelling Unit Per 2.5 Acres): **YES**

**Regional Park Area: 2**

**Urban Park Area: 2, 3**

0.0194 Acres x 158 Dwelling Units = 3.065  
**Total Regional Park Acres: 3.065**

|               |                                      |             |
|---------------|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Neighborhood: | 0.00375 Acres x 158 Dwelling Units = | 0.59        |
| Community:    | 0.00625 Acres x 158 Dwelling Units = | 0.99        |
|               | <b>Total Urban Park Acres:</b>       | <b>1.58</b> |

**FEE REQUIREMENTS**

**Regional Park Area: 2**

**Urban Park Area: 2, 3**

\$460 / Dwelling Unit x 158 Dwelling Units = \$72,680  
**Total Regional Park Fees: \$72,680**

|               |  |                 |
|---------------|--|-----------------|
| Neighborhood: | \$114 / Dwelling Unit x 158 Dwelling Units = | \$18,012        |
| Community:    | \$176 / Dwelling Unit x 158 Dwelling Units = | \$27,808        |
|               | <b>Total Urban Park Fees:</b>                | <b>\$45,820</b> |

**ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Staff Recommendation:**

The Park Advisory Board recommends that the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners include the following conditions when considering and/or approving FourSquare at Sterling Ranch East Filing No. 1 Final Plat: (1) per the open space area computation guidelines of the El Paso County Land Development Code, remove the Tract I stormwater detention facility from the open space acreage calculations; (2) remove the planned future park from the regional stormwater detention facility and design safe pedestrian trails around its perimeter; (3) recommend the applicant explore a wide variety of active-use park and open space amenities to strengthen recreational opportunities for residents of all ages and abilities; (4) fees in lieu of land dedication for regional park purposes in the amount of \$72,680 and urban park purposes in the amount of \$45,820 will be required at time of the recording of this Final Plat. A Park Lands Agreement may be an acceptable alternative to urban park fees, provided the agreement is approved by the County and executed prior to recording the Final Plat.

**Park Advisory Board Recommendation:**