

El Paso County Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners,

We are residents of the Red Rock Ranch area and would like to express our concerns with the proposed Red Rock Acres development, particularly to object to the proposed rezoning of the development for the high-density construction of houses. Allowing such a high-density development in this area will impose numerous negative impacts. Our concern is that those negative impacts would not only be reflected in our community and immediate vicinity, but also our neighbors and the surrounding areas. The items below are a summary of the major areas that would be impacted by the approval of the high-density development request, all of which are negative and vary in severity.

- Aesthetics and Community Feel: severe negative impact
- Stormwater and Drainage: negative impact, possibly severe
- Traffic: severe negative impact
- Wildfire Danger: negative impact, possibly severe
- Wildlife and Environment: negative impact
- Schools: negative impact
- Public Safety: negative impact
- Setting Precedent For Conversion To High Density Development: severe negative impact

**Aesthetics and Community Feel:** First and foremost, the natural setting and open space of the immediate and surrounding areas of this project would be greatly compromised should this higher density approach be approved. The area has been planned, and has historically followed approved planning instruments, to maintain the natural open environment. The ideal of preserving the natural setting and limiting its disturbance is a conscious and deliberate goal which has been accepted by all the nearby communities. Defying that goal and historical consensus would be disrespectful to the past planning efforts and the individuals who call these communities home, now and in the future.

**Stormwater and Drainage:** Original development planning and historic growth in the area did not anticipate such a high density of housing. Higher density development equates to increased runoff concentration times and resulting volumes. These factors lend themselves to an increased level of untreated pollutants being generated and potential discharged to natural waterways. As a result, the natural drainage ways will most certainly be impacted by the high-density development. Although certain control measures should be designed and constructed for the development to handle these conditions, such facilities are built to assumed minimum design conditions and cannot fully protect the existing natural streams and waterways from excessive discharges and pollutants generated.

**Traffic:** The high-density development would impose an unsafe, high density of traffic to the area. The high traffic density would be forced through the area and concentrated to the intersection of Red Rock Ranch Drive and Highway 105. The existing conditions of this particular intersection would make it a very dangerous area. The unprotected turning movements between Highway 105 and Red Rock Ranch Drive are not well supported by the current traffic loads and conditions. Larger traffic density forced through this intersection creates unacceptable and unsafe conditions. Even if improved roadway designs were funded and constructed by the project, the high traffic density would still impact the area negatively in terms of traffic volume, noise, congestion and safety.

**Wildfire Danger:** We have all been forced to accept the reality of wildfires occurring in this area. It is not a matter of if, but when, the next wildfire will happen. In a wildfire event, it is critical that evacuation routes be maintained and provide the capacity necessary to safely and effectively carry the traffic volumes. The addition of a high-density development will push the emergency evacuation routes beyond their limit. In particular, the location of the proposed high-density development is near the outlet of the primary evacuation route, Red Rock Ranch Drive to Highway 105. That location will create an extremely dangerous bottleneck. Another consideration is the close proximity of the houses that would be constructed in a high density setting. That concentrates fuel in the form of structures for a wildfire. It would not only promote the rapid spread of a wildfire through the area, it would make attempts at controlling a fire exponentially more difficult.

**Wildlife and Environment:** This category is a more tangible extension of the aesthetics and natural setting of the area. A high-density development obviously creates more developed hardscapes and impervious materials, while leaving less natural and vegetated land. Alternating the landscape through the reduction in natural land and environmental features then negatively impacts the wildlife and ecosystems in the area. Less land would remain available for the natural habitat of many species of wildlife. Less natural land would not only decrease the habitat for wildlife, it will also degrade the ecosystems in the area. Fewer natural elements would remain and a potentially dangerous increase in human to wildlife interactions could result as the high density developed area consumes larger portions of the natural environment.

**Schools:** Simply put, the local schools in the area are already near or at capacity. Adding a high-density development in the area would exacerbate the situation. The educational staff and facilities are struggling to deal with the stresses of overcrowding. Adding such a density development in the area would increase those stresses even more. Increasing the pressure on the facilities and worsening the overcrowding would be irresponsible at this time.

**Public Safety:** The general idea of public safety from a police, fire and emergency services standpoint follows the other categories. The existing systems are not equipped for a high-density development imposing a large concentrated demand for the services. This is especially true for the fire protection services. As stated in the wildfire danger section above, high density development poses its own unique challenges during a wildfire event. It also imposes another set of challenges in day-to-day operations and protection services increasing the burden on the existing staff, facilities and systems.

**Precedent for High Density Development:** Perhaps the most important point to make in the consideration of the proposed rezoning for a high-density development is that of setting precedent. As all the points above note, a high-density development in this area poses a multitude of negative impacts to the immediate and surrounding communities. Should this high density philosophy be approved, it will set precedent for countless future developments to do the same. Decades of planning and responsible development following established planning instruments and practices have maintained the area in its current state. Opening the door for future developers to create high density projects would be a definitive contradiction to the current planning philosophy and accepted documents. It would also defy the philosophy and will of all the communities in the area to maintain larger lot sizes and the natural open space environment. The surrounding communities have made a strong commitment over many decades to preserve the area's natural setting. Such a dedicated commitment is admirable, as is the strong support to stand behind that commitment and defend its integrity. We hope the El Paso County

Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners support the communities and their dedication to preserving the area.

For various reasons, we would like to remain anonymous at this time. However, we feel strongly that our concerns must be voiced on this matter. We sincerely hope the El Paso County Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners take to heart not only our concerns, but also those of multiple other persons, communities and entities, in a strong and definitive manner to uphold current planning instruments and community consensus and deny the rezoning request to change the proposed area to a higher density development.

Sincerely,  
Anonymous resident of Red Rock Ranch.