

## **STERLING RANCH SKETCH PLAN AMENDMENT**

### **LETTER OF INTENT**

**SEPTEMBER 2022, REVISED NOVEMBER 2022, REVISED DECEMBER 2022**

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#### **OWNER:**

##### **CLASSIC SRJ LAND, LLC**

2138 FLYING HORSE CLUB DRIVE  
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80921

##### **SR LAND LLC**

20 BOULDER CRESCENT  
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80903

##### **CHALLENGER COMMUNITIES, LLC**

8605 EXPLORER DRIVE, SUITE 250  
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80920

#### **APPLICANT:**

CLASSIC SRJ LAND, LLC  
2138 FLYING HORSE CLUB DRIVE  
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80921

#### **CONSULTANT:**

N.E.S. INC.  
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**ACREAGE:** 1,444 ACRES

**MAX DENSITY:** 5,225 DWELLING UNITS

**CURRENT USE:** AG. GRAZING LAND & VACANT LAND

#### **REQUEST**

N.E.S. Inc. on behalf of Classic SRJ requests administrative approval of an amendment to portions of the approved Sketch Plan for Sterling Ranch, including:

Changes in Residential Density:

- 32 Acres of 8-12 DU/AC amended to 5-8 DU/AC south of intersection of Sterling Ranch Road and Briargate Parkway
- 12 Acres of School Land was change to 5-8 DU/AC
- 35 Acres of 12-20 residential amended to 3-5 DU/AC south of Briargate Parkway
- 5 Acres of 12-20 residential amended to Industrial
- 257 Acres of 5-8 DU/AC (Active Adult Community) amended to 240 Acres of 3-5 DU/AC and 23 Acres of 5-8 DU/AC North of Briargate Parkway

#### Commercial to Mixed Use:

- 11 Acres from Commercial amended to Mixed Use (Commercial and/or Multifamily up to 25 DU/AC) in southwest corner at 8-25 DU/AC
- 22 Acres from Commercial amended to Mixed Use (Commercial and/or Multifamily up to 25 DU/AC) on east side at 8-25 DU/AC
- 14 Acres from Commercial amended to Mixed Use (Commercial and/or Multifamily up to 25 DU/AC) southwest of intersection of Vollmer Road and Briargate Parkway at 8-25 DU/AC.

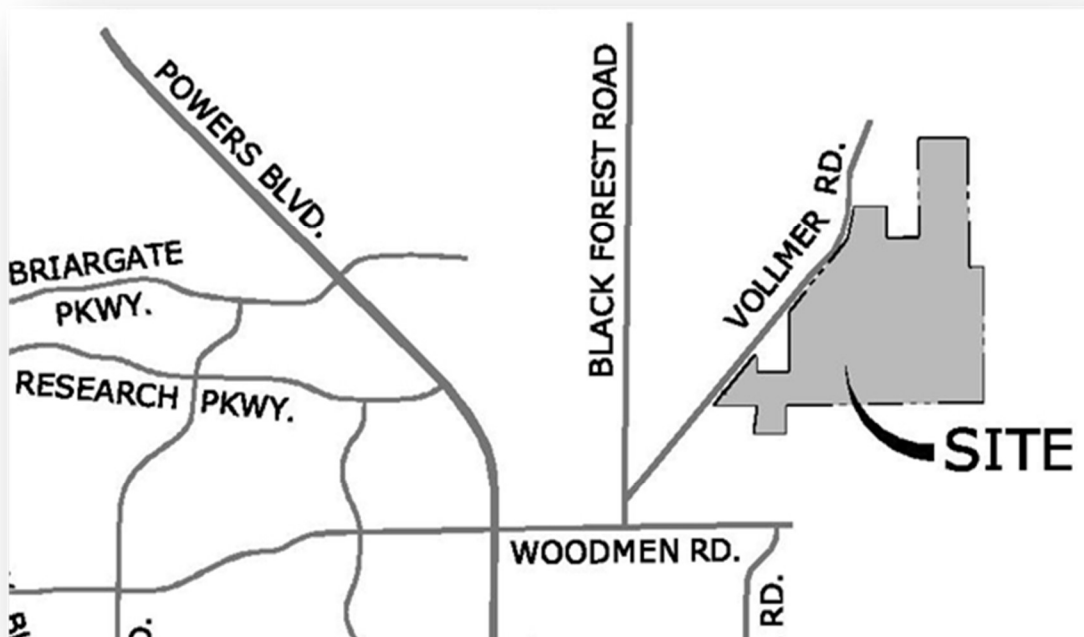
#### Other Modifications:

- 5 Acres from Residential (12-20 du/acre) amended to Industrial
- Elementary School site relocated east of Sand Creek (previous location is now residential 5-8 DU/AC)
- Residential 3-5 DU/AC in south east, park and traffic circulation amended (Buffer along the school district boundary removed)
- 5 Acre Park shifted south adjacent to Elementary School Site and southernmost 50' buffer
- Boundary revision for the 2 DU/AC to the south with the boundary running to the eastern side of Sand Creek.

The proposed changes to the Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan are requested for administrative approval because they are minor. These changes are not changing more than 25% of the Sketch Plan area, increasing the area, or decreasing park space by more than 10%.

#### LOCATION

The Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan consists of approximately 1,444 acres located northeast of Vollmer Road and Marksheffel Road, in El Paso County. To the north of the site is the Retreat at TimberRidge, zoned



PUD. Phase D of the development is adjacent to the northern boundary of this site, and includes lots with a minimum size of 12,000 sq. ft. South of the site is the Pawnee Rancheros 5-acre rural residential subdivision and some industrial uses such as Pioneer Landscape Center. Across Vollmer Road are residential lots zoned RR-5 and RR-2.5. To the east are also RR-2.5 and RR-5 lots.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION & CONTEXT

### CONTEXT

The Sketch Plan area is in the northeastern quadrant of El Paso County, a rapidly urbanizing area near Colorado Springs that has experienced significant residential development in the past decade and is projected to experience continued development over the next decade. The Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan is located north of developing urban areas under the jurisdiction of the City of Colorado Springs, and south of the Black Forest.

### SKETCH PLAN HISTORY

File #	Resolution #	Date	Description
SKP-07-007	08-476	11/13/2008	Original Sketch Plan Approval of 5,225 dwelling units and 56 acres of commercial uses. Establishment of the PUD Zoning requirement.
SKP-07-007	14-441	11/05/2014	Approval of a 2-year extension to the Sketch Plan and removal of Condition #2 of the Original Conditions of Approval.
SKP-183		12/5/2018	Amendment to modify densities, appropriately locate the water tank site, add proposed MVEA substation site, general modifications to reflect existing conditions and recent approvals.
SKP-22-004	Current Request	7/2022	Amendment to modify densities, relocate school site and parks, change commercial to mixed use

The approved Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan provides a framework for creating quality neighborhoods and shopping areas, conveniently linked through transportation corridors to schools, parks, and open spaces and is a guide to the future development of the property. Sterling Ranch is an urban character mixed residential development with a variety of densities interspersed throughout the property and approximately 47 acres of mixed-use development located on major arterials. Each phase of the plan will have a variety of residential densities and product types to ensure a diverse community.

An interconnected system of trails, open spaces and neighborhood parks will be provided within the project to allow for a recreation-oriented community. This system of open spaces, trails and parks is intended to provide a comprehensive off-street pedestrian circulation system that would supplement the standard sidewalks along streets. Parks have been located so that residents have a short walk to these facilities. Adjacent developed rural residential is buffered with open space and trail corridors.

The proposed amendments to the Sketch Plan continue the original intent of the Sketch Plan as described above. Appropriate buffers are still incorporated and parks, open space, and interconnected trails are maintained and expanded.

#### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The primary purpose of this Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan Amendment is to modify residential densities, change commercial areas to mixed use, and facilitate strategic access points to Briargate Parkway.

This amenity will modify the commercial sites to mixed use and overall lower the development density. Further amendments include modification from residential 12-20 du/acre in the southwest corner to 5 acres of Industrial. The elementary site proposed in the southwest is relocated east of Sand Creek. The former school site is now proposed residential 5-8 du/acre. The park shifted slightly south, adjacent to the other school site and traffic circulation in the southeast corner has been reconfigured.

**Traffic:** This Sketch Plan amendment does not significantly change anticipated traffic patterns. There is less residential density as a result of this amendment. A Traffic Impact Analysis, prepared by SM Rocha, is included in this submittal.

**Drainage:** A Master Development Drainage Plan Amendment, prepared by Classic Consulting and Engineering, is included in this submittal.

#### **PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

The Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan amendment request addresses the Sketch Plan Amendment Review Criteria in Chapter 7.2.1.D.1.c if the LDC as follows:

**1. THE PROPOSED SUBDIVISION IS IN GENERAL CONFORMANCE WITH THE GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND POLICIES OF THE MASTER PLAN;**

The relevant County master plan documents for the Sketch Plan Amendment are Your El Paso County Master Plan, the El Paso County Water Master Plan, the El Paso County Major Transportation Corridor Plan, and the El Paso County Parks Master Plan. The Sketch Plan Amendment is in general conformity with these plans as described below.

#### **YOUR EPC MASTER PLAN**

The project site is denoted as a Suburban Residential placetype within a priority development area in the County Master Plan. This placetype consists of predominantly single family detached residential areas, with supporting single-family attached, multifamily residential, commercial retail, parks, and open space. The range of residential densities and supporting commercial, retail, parks and open space proposed in the Sketch Plan amendment is consistent with the Suburban Residential placetype characteristics.

In the Key Area Influences chapter, this site is also designated as a Potential Area for Annexation. While the Developer does not propose to annex Sterling Ranch into the City, the sites status as a Potential Area for Annexation is indicative of its urban character and the need for urban level of services, which will be provided by Sterling Ranch Metropolitan District.

In the Areas of Change chapter of the County Master Plan, the area is identified as a “New Development Area,” which will experience significant transformation as new development takes place. These areas are often on undeveloped or agricultural areas, and are expected to be complimentary to adjacent development. The proposed new development within Sterling Ranch will bring about the transformation of this area as anticipated by the Master Plan.

The El Paso County Master Plan also designates a new Roadway connection of Briargate Parkway between Black Forest Rd and Meridian Road. This road will come through the Sterling Ranch development as shown on the Sketch Plan amendment.

The mix of residential and supporting commercial, retail, parks and open space proposed in this Sketch Plan amendment is consistent with 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 Sketch Plan Amendment continues to buffer the adjacent developed rural residential areas with open space tracts and trail corridors. The infrastructure improvements and extensions proposed by the Sketch Plan will provide the required capacity to support the planned level of development.

The Sketch Plan amendment is also consistent 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 Sketch Plan provides a variety of housing types, with necessary neighborhood commercial, schools, and park space. This combination of uses will provide a vibrant community. This Sketch Plan sets land aside for new schools, encourages a variety of housing types, designs neighborhood focal points, expands the off-street trail system, all of which are recommendations for emerging and future neighborhoods.

#### **WATER MASTER PLAN**

*Goal 1.1 – Ensure an adequate water supply in terms of quantity, dependability and quality for existing and future development.*

*Goal 6.0 – Require adequate water availability for proposed development.*

*Policy 6.0.8 – Encourage development patterns and higher density, mixed use developments in appropriate locations that propose to incorporate meaningful water conservation measures.*

*Policy 6.0.11– Continue to limit urban level development to those areas served by centralized utilities.*

Sterling Ranch Metro District (SMRD) has sufficient supply and infrastructure in the area to serve this development. The total of all supplies currently available to Sterling/FAWWA is 1901.83 AF300 year which would allow for over 5,388 Single Family Equivalent (SFE) which is greater than the 5,225 residential units anticipated. All Sterling Ranch Metro District Assets will be allocated to FAWWA.

The Sterling Ranch System includes both decrees and determinations. Local groundwater rights are associated with three service area portions; Sterling Ranch, The Retreat, and The Ranch. The system includes a central system and some well and septic systems. The Water Resources report primarily focuses on the central supply and does not include the 41 rural style lots in the Retreat served by wells in the calculations.

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.”

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. The 2060 water supply is projected to be 8,284-acre feet per year and the projected demand is 8,307-acre feet.

This is a rather large sketch plan, so a buildout period of 20 years is reasonable. The current available water supply for FAWWA or SRMD is now 697.39-acre-foot, 300-year supply. FAWWA/Sterling has additional contractual arrangements to purchase water from three major well fields; being McCune, Bar-X and Shamrock West Ranch. The additional amount of supply is under contract to FAWWA/Sterling is roughly 1204 AF, 300-year supply. The total of all supplies currently available to Sterling/FAWWA is 1901.83 AF, 300 year supply which would allow for over 5388 SFE which is greater than the 4800 residential units anticipated. Without any additional water acquisitions, FAWWA/Sterling are in a very feasible position to be able to easily provide for the water needs of the Sterling Ranch sketch plan.

The Sterling System has opportunity to connect with both the Cherokee Metro District and Woodmen Hills Metro District storage and delivery facilities. Sterling wastewater is discharged into the Meridian System which in turn has potential to convert some reusable flows to available physical supplies.

#### **2040 MAJOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR PLAN (MTCP)**

The MTCP identifies the extension of Briargate Parkway as a 4-Lane Principal Arterial between Black Forest Rd and Meridian Road by 2040. No additional change of classification or widening is identified

on the 2060 Corridor Preservation Map. This road will be constructed through the Sterling Ranch development. The County has commissioned a consultant to initiate the design of this road extension and the Sterling Ranch developer has met with the consultant to coordinate intersection locations along Briargate Parkway.

The 2040 Functional Classification map also shows adjacent Vollmer Road as a minor arterial. Vollmer Road is expected to be improved from a 2-lane minor arterial to a 4-lane minor arterial between 2040 and 2060.

#### **EL PASO COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN**

The Parks Master Plan shows a proposed bike route on Vollmer Road, and a proposed Sand Creek trail connection from north-south through the site. There is also a secondary regional trail on the east side of the site, which will connect south-north from Briargate Parkway to Arroya Lane. A trail going east-west will continue on Arroya Lane, as shown on the sketch plan amendment.

Sterling Ranch is on the edge of a zone identified for a potential regional park on the Parks Master Plan. This need has been met by the new Falcon Regional Park in Meridian Ranch to the east. Various community parks and other smaller neighborhood parks will serve the residents in this area. These parks will be owned and maintained by the Sterling Ranch Metropolitan District. The site is 2 miles from Black Forest Section 16, 8 miles from Black Forest Regional Park, and 3.7 miles from the Pinerias Open Space.

#### **2. THE PROPOSED SUBDIVISION IS IN CONFORMANCE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THIS CODE;**

The amended Sketch Plan meets all applicable submittal requirements for El Paso County.

#### **3. THE PROPOSED SUBDIVISION IS COMPATIBLE WITH EXISTING AND PROPOSED LAND USES WITHIN AND ADJACENT TO THE SKETCH PLAN AREA;**

The amendment maintains the compatibility with existing and proposed land uses. This amendment maintains the density transitions and buffers to the adjacent rural residential lots to the north, east, south, and west as approved in the 2018 Sketch Plan Amendment. The industrial use proposed in the southwest is an appropriate location for the use as it is separated from the rest of the Sterling Ranch development by the Marksheffel Road extension and is located adjacent to the industrial zoned Pioneer Sand and Gravel property. The school site relocation was requested by School District 20 due to utility easement constraints on the originally proposed school site. The new location is more centrally located and will better serve the future Sterling Ranch community. Modifying the commercial areas to mixed use does not change the compatibility with surrounding uses.

#### **4. THE WATER SUPPLY REPORT PROVIDES SUFFICIENT INFORMATION TO IDENTIFY PROBABLE COMPLIANCE WITH THE WATER SUPPLY STANDARDS AND IDENTIFIES ANY NEED FOR ADDITIONAL WATER SUPPLIES;**

The FAWWA will be the water service providers to Sterling Ranch with all Sterling Ranch assets dedicated to FAWWA. Please see the District Boundary Descriptions and the Water Resources Report submitted with this application, along with the Letter of Commitment. Water, wastewater, storm water and park/recreational services will be provided by FAWWA. Finding of water sufficiency

is not required at the Sketch Plan level but will be requested with subsequent entitlement submittals.

**5. SERVICES ARE OR WILL BE AVAILABLE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE SUBDIVISION INCLUDING, ROADS, POLICE AND FIRE PROTECTION, SCHOOLS, RECREATION FACILITIES, AND UTILITY SERVICE FACILITIES;**

As the proposed amendment does not increase the maximum dwelling unit cap, there is no change to the impact on services already assessed with the approved Sketch Plan. The proposed Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan lies within service area boundaries for the Black Forest Fire Protection District, School Districts 20 and 49, Colorado Springs Utilities and Black Hills Energy for gas service, and Mountain View Electric Association.

**6. THE SOIL IS SUITABLE FOR THE SUBDIVISION;**

The site contains four types of soils; Blake Loamy Sand, Blakeland Complex, Columbine Gravelly Sandy Loam and Pring Course Sandy Loam. The report prepared by Entech Engineering for the approved Sketch Plan concluded that, these soils present typical constraints on development and construction, which may be overcome by proper engineering design and construction. The amendment to the Sketch Plan does not impact previous assessment of soils.

**7. THE GEOLOGIC HAZARDS DO NOT PROHIBIT THE SUBDIVISION, OR CAN BE MITIGATED;**

The report prepared by Entech Engineering for the approved Sketch Plan concluded that the geotechnical conditions present typical constraints on development and construction, which may be mitigated by avoidance, regrading, or by proper engineering design and construction. An addendum to this report was prepared for this sketch plan amendment. This addendum concludes that the Soil, Geology, Geologic Hazard and Preliminary Subsurface Soil Investigation remains valid, and should be used for the proposed development.

**8. THE SUBDIVISION WILL NOT INTERFERE WITH THE EXTRACTION OF ANY KNOWN COMMERCIAL MINING DEPOSIT [C.R.S. §§ 34-1-302(1), ET SEQ.];**

On the "Master Plan for Extraction of Mineral Resources" known commercial mining deposits are shown in the Sketch Plan Area. This amendment does not affect the commercial mining deposits. A portion of the property containing mining deposits is within the Sketch Plan Boundary. Notice to the mineral holders will be completed by the applicant prior to Planning Commission. However, the remainder of the property is exterior to the Sketch Plan Boundary and currently a mining operation.

**9. THE DESIGN OF THE SUBDIVISION PROTECTS THE NATURAL RESOURCES OR UNIQUE LANDFORMS;**

The approved 2008 Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan preserves the Sand Creek Greenway. This amendment continues to preserve the greenway. A 404 Permit was issued in 2016 authorizing work and channel improvements within the main stem of the Sand Creek and the wetlands. This amendment does not propose any changes to the identified and preserved areas.

**10. THE PROPOSED METHODS FOR FIRE PROTECTION ARE ADEQUATE TO SERVE THE SUBDIVISION; AND**



The proposed Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan area lies within the Black Forest Fire Protection District. An updated will serve letter from the Fire Department is provided.

**11. THE SUBDIVISION IS APPROPRIATE AND THE DESIGN IS BASED ON MITIGATING THE CONSTRAINTS OF TOPOGRAPHY, SOIL TYPES, GEOLOGIC HAZARDS, AGGREGATE RESOURCES, ENVIRONMENTAL RESOURCES, FLOODPLAIN, AIRPLANE FLIGHT OVERLAYS, OR OTHER CONSTRAINTS.**

The report prepared by Entech Engineering for the approved Sketch Plan concluded that the geo-technical conditions present typical constraints on development and construction, which may be mitigated by avoidance, regrading, or by proper engineering design and construction. Specific Geohazard and Engineering reports will be required with future Preliminary Plan and/or Final Plats and will identify specific constraints and either mitigate or avoid them. The Sketch Plan continues to mitigate impact on Sand Creek and associated floodplain by including it within the designated open space areas. A 404 permit has been obtained for impact on the wetlands. There are no other identified constraints to developing the property.

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