
STERLING RANCH SKETCH PLAN AMENDMENT

NATURAL LANDFORMS, VEGETATION, & RIPARIAN ANALYSIS

OCTOBER 2018

PROPERTY OWNERS AND DEVELOPER:

Challenger Communities LLC.
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Colorado Springs, CO. 80920

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REQUEST

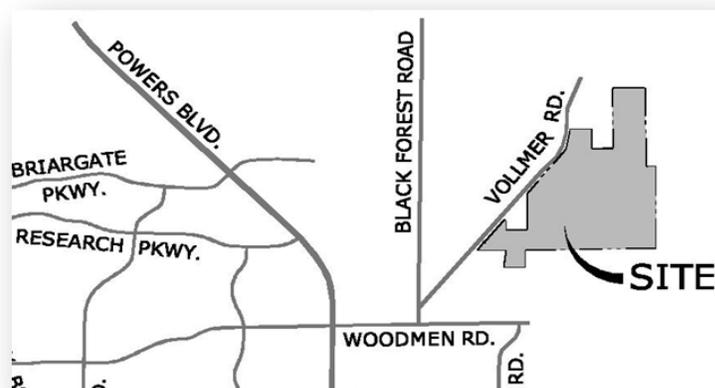
Challenger Communities LLC requests approval of an amendment to portions of the approved Sketch Plan for Sterling Ranch, including:

- a reduction in density of 101 acres from 5-8 du/ac. to 3-5 du/ac.,
- an increase in density of 19 acres from 3-5 du/ac. to 5-8 du/ac.,
- a 2.5 ac. water tank parcel is added to reflect built conditions,
- a 5-ac. parcel for the future MVEA substation is shown in the southeast corner, and
- a 1.5 ac. parcel is shown for the approved lift station in the south portion of the Plan.

Other minor changes have been included to reflect changes since the approval of the original Sketch Plan in 2008.

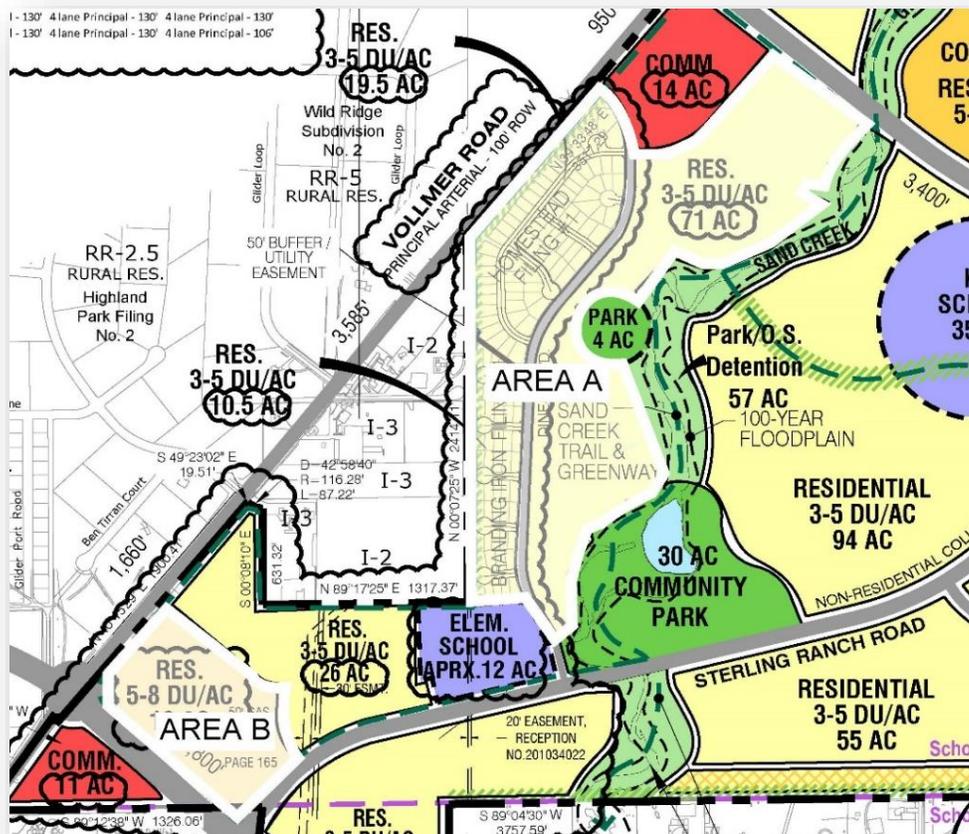
LOCATION

The Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan consists of approximately 1,444 acres located northeast of Vollmer Road and Marksheffel Road, in El Paso County.



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

SR Land, LLC requests approval of an amendment to a portion of the Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan, originally approved in 2008. The primary purpose of the Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan Amendment is to modify the density of two residential areas, Areas A & B totaling 120 acres. Area A is 101-acres; this portion of the plan is reduced in density from Residential 5-8 du/ac to Residential 3-5 du/ac, which is consistent with the approved Preliminary Plan for Phase 1 of Sterling Ranch. Area B is 19-acres; this portion of the plan is increased in density from Residential 3-5 du/ac to Residential 5-8 du/ac. This provides a concentration of higher density near the Marksheffel/Vollmer intersection and across from proposed commercial.



Further amendments include the relocation of the water tank site in the northeast corner to reflect the approved location per the 1041 permit. The previously approved Sketch Plan showed an approximate size and location for the water tank and was not to scale. The Sketch Plan has been amended to reflect the exact location and size of the site. A MVEA substation is proposed and has been added to the southeast corner.

NATURAL LANDFORMS, VEGETATION, & RIPARIAN ANALYSIS

The original Sketch Plan submittal included a detailed analysis. This amendment to the Sketch Plan does not alter the original analysis.

Identification and location of sites of natural or scenic importance. The Sand Creek drainageway and jurisdictional wetlands were identified on the original 2008 Sketch Plan and preserved as a natural feature. The corridor is incorporated as part of the open space system and an extension of the Sand Creek Trail. A 404 Permit was issued in 2016 authorizing work and channel improvements within the main stem of the Sand Creek and the development impact on the jurisdictional wetlands. Exposed bedrock was identified initially and is preserved within the Sand Creek Greenway.

Wildfire. The primary wildland fuel type is grassland with scattered trees. The Colorado State Forest Service has determined a low wildfire hazard potential and no specific fire mitigation plans or other actions are necessary.

Vegetation. The Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan area is predominantly a grassland prairie with some rangeland areas. Native vegetation covering most of the Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan area consists of Grassland Vegetation Type 1. Native vegetation on the upland areas is made up of Grassland Vegetation Type 2. Native vegetation scattered in patches around the site consists of Grassland Vegetation Type 3. Riparian vegetation along the Sand Creek corridor will be preserved and enhanced as part of the open space system in the Sketch Plan. Most of the vegetation is of no significance and will be removed with grading. Development of the site and maintenance of the open space areas will also control noxious weeds.

Wildlife. Wildlife that has been viewed on the site and surrounding areas include prairie dogs, coyotes, pronghorn antelope, western meadowlarks, sparrow and several species of hawks including red tail. Prairie voles, mice and prairie dogs are the typical rodent population in the area. As development occurs within the Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan project, care will be taken to minimize human and wildlife conflicts within reasonable limits. Quality site planning and design will be utilized in order to avoid potential impacts to wildlife habitat. The original Sketch Plan was approved in this context and this amendment does not change the impacts. Colorado Parks and Wildlife has reviewed the plan and type of action and anticipates the impacts to be negligible.

Geologic and Soils Hazards. With the original Sketch Plan Entech Engineering prepared a Preliminary Geologic Hazard Evaluation report. According to the Report, existing geologic and geotechnical conditions on the site may impose some constraints on development and construction. However, these constraints are considered typical of a high plains environment. The Report states that, avoidance, regrading, or by proper engineering design can mitigate many hazards such as unstable slopes; low lying floodplain areas, areas of seasonal shallow groundwater, and areas where ponded water can occur. The Colorado Geological Survey has no objection to the Sketch Plan Amendment. Any constraints will be evaluated with future preliminary plans or plats and can be avoided or mitigated.

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