

El Paso County Parks

Agenda Item Summary Form

Agenda Item Title: Ben Lomand Mountain Village Preliminary Plan

Agenda Date: August 12, 2026

Agenda Item Number:

Presenter: Ross Williams, Senior Parks Planner

Information: **Endorsement:** X

Background Information:

This is a request by Fairfield and Woods, P.C, on behalf of the United Congregational Church for consideration and endorsement of the Ben Lomand Mountain Village Preliminary Plan, which consists of 72 single-family rural residential lots on approximately 341.1 acres. The Ben Lomand Mountain Village subdivision is located east of the Town of Palmer Lake on County Line Road, situated primarily on the northern flanks of Ben Lomand Mountain with open space tracts that extend to the southern slopes north of the mountain itself. Zoned RR-2.5 for rural residential uses, the project site was successfully deannexed from the Town of Palmer Lake in 2025.

The 2022 El Paso County Parks Master Plan shows this project directly impacting the proposed Ben Lomand Mountain Secondary Regional Trail (see attached map), which winds its way around Ben Lomand Mountain from El Paso County Parks' Santa Fe Open Space in the south to the northernmost extension of the New Santa Fe Regional Trail near the Douglas County / El Paso County line. Within the project bounds, the proposed Ben Lomand Regional Trail traverses around and over the western flanks of Ben Lomand Mountain before exiting at the site's northwest corner. Santa Fe Open Space, which is protected under a Conservation Easement through Palmer Land Conservancy, is located approximately 480 feet south of the proposed development, with the New Santa Fe Regional Trail located to the south of Santa Fe Open Space.

The 2022 El Paso County Parks Master Plan identifies several Candidate Open Space Areas, formulated from utilizing a weighted overlay of numerous natural and man-made attributes (see attached maps). Ben Lomand Mountain Village falls completely within the bounds of the Ben Lomand Mountain Candidate Open Space Area. The Ben Lomand Mountain Candidate Open Space area is characterized as:

- *“These regionally significant landmarks are located near Palmer Lake along State Highway 105. Elephant Rock is an isolated cluster of cap rock that extends off Ben Lomond Mountain, standing above the surrounding pines like a castle ruin. The overall landscape is very scenic. The higher portions of Ben Lomond Mountain are a series of cliff faces that have shed huge blocks of rock lying along the lower slopes. Ponderosa pine and scrub oak blend into an extensive and gently sloping meadow that meets the base of the mountain and emphasizes its abrupt rise. Protection of this area would preserve two notable landmarks and a critical backdrop to the popular Palmer Lake Recreation Area. The area is also traversed by the New Santa Fe Trail and it represents one of the more scenic settings along the trail. However, the meadows and flanks of the mountain face imminent development that may preclude the exploration of protection options unless discussions begin immediately. As a natural area, development of facilities would be minimal and access controlled to protect sensitive areas and steep slopes. Future trail connections could also be made that would link the area to existing Forest Service trails up nearby canyons to the west. The result could be a trail through land managed by the Forest Service, El Paso County and other jurisdictions.”*

Although not held to the open space requirements of the El Paso County Land Development Code for Planned Unit Developments (PUD), the RR-2.5 zoned Ben Lomond Mountain Village Preliminary Plan contains approximately 100 acres of open space, or 29.6% of the total project Area. Tract A, which contains all 100 acres of open space, envelops the summit, northwestern, and southwestern slopes of Ben Lomond Mountain, which with slopes exceeding 30 percent grade, are not suitable for construction. The applicant’s Letter of Intent states the following in regard to this open space area:

- *“The anticipated wildlife sanctuary implements Master Plan Goal 7.3, which calls for the provision of a variety of open spaces within the region, Objective E1-1, which calls for the establishment of “wildlife sanctuaries,” and Master Plan Objective HC2-7, which calls for a “conservation design” approach to new development.”*
- *“The proposed subdivision sets aside approximately 100 acres that will serve as an open space sanctuary for wildlife. This area roughly corresponds with the area that the County has designated for “protection” or “conservation” in the Master Plan. The area set aside for wildlife sanctuary represents a substantial portion of total Church Property and comprises the most striking and sensitive natural environment of the site. The wildlife sanctuary represents an expansive open space visual and buffering amenity for the anticipated large-lot residential subdivision.”*

- *“The approximately 100-acre preserved wildlife sanctuary will serve as an open space amenity, and an appropriate level of recreation is readily available, both on-site (on large lots) and nearby for the anticipated intensity of use. Regional recreation areas located in Palmer Lake, Monument, El Paso County, and Douglas County are also available to serve the proposed subdivision.”*
- *“The proposed subdivision is consistent with the goals and policies set forth in El Paso County Community Services Department Parks Master Plan Update (2022) (“PARKS MASTER PLAN”). The conservation of approximately 100 acres of wildlife sanctuary open space is not a public park but is nonetheless a benefit for the residents of the proposed subdivision and El Paso County in terms of scenic value, habitat preservation, and natural resource stewardship. Because the proposal adds no new public parks to the County’s park assets, no new expenses are placed on County budgets. That aligns with Goal 5, to prioritize taking care of and maximizing current assets over acquiring new assets to better serve El Paso County Residents.”*
- *“At the same time, the approximately 100-acre wildlife sanctuary aligns with Goal 2, to “balance passive/active use of county parks and open space and determine what is most appropriate for individual sites based on community need and master planning processes.” With regard to the natural features and geography conserved by the proposed wildlife sanctuary, its conservation aligns with Goal 10, to “protect and enhance El Paso County’s legacy of unique natural features and areas and cultural resources, working in collaboration with others to conserve high priority open space areas in the county.” Approval of this subdivision would align broadly with the goals that are set out in the Parks Master Plan, which encourage collaboration with private partners to enhance open space, provide high-quality outdoor amenities, and maintain the county’s legacy of conservation.”*

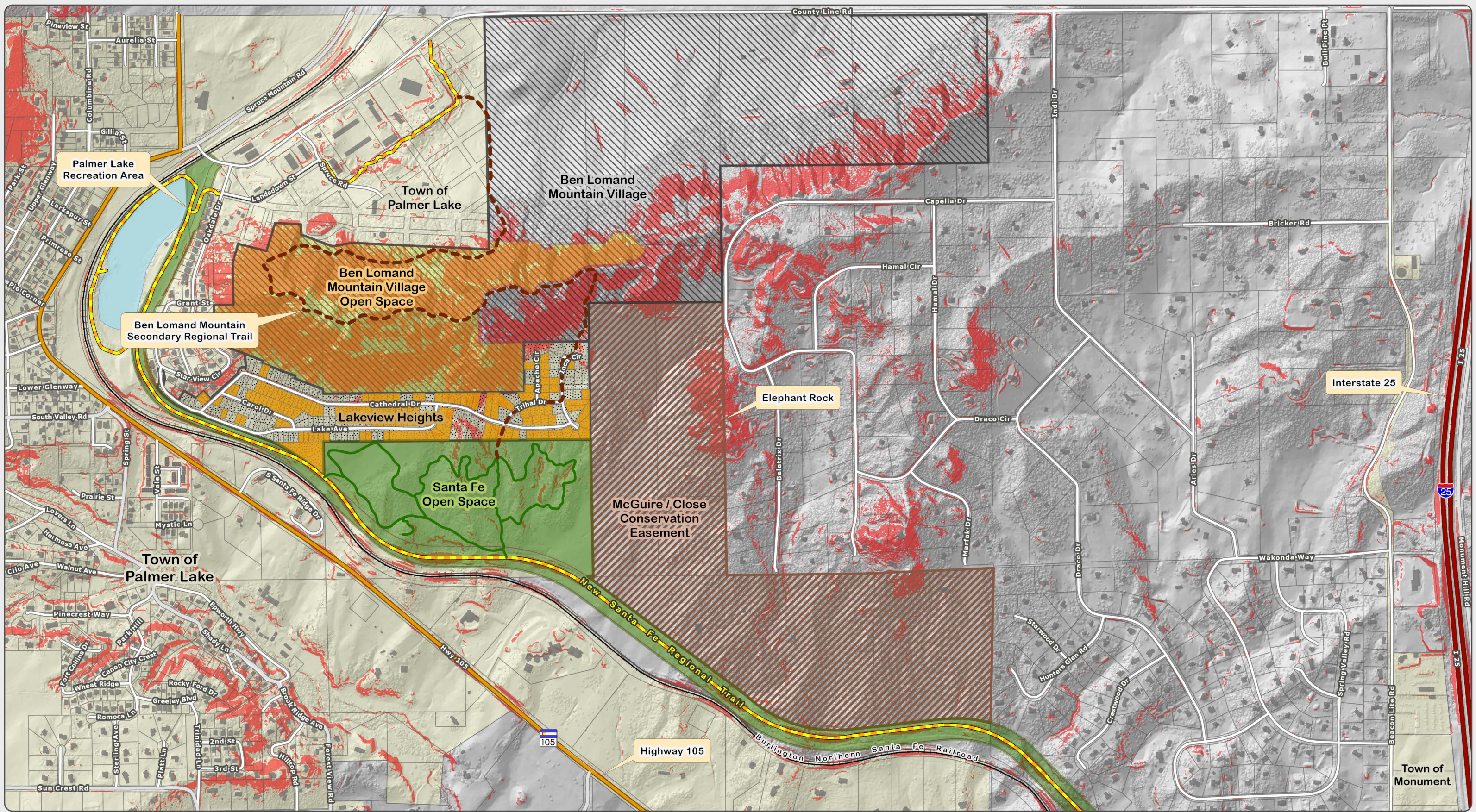
County Parks genuinely appreciates the applicant’s thorough attention to the conservation and preservation of Ben Lomand Mountain and its high open space values, through their proposed utilization of 100-acre Tract A as a wildlife sanctuary and open space amenity. Due to the proximity of the open space tract to Santa Fe Open Space, the New Santa Fe Regional Trail, and the Palmer Lake Recreation Area, as well as existing conservation easement properties to the south and southeast of Ben Lomand Mountain, El Paso County Parks has reached out to the applicant’s representative, Fairfield & Woods, to begin a conversation about the potential acquisition of the open space tract by the County, either through the land development process, conservation easement, outright purchase, or a combination of the three processes. At this time, Fairfield & Woods has not responded to EPC Park’s request for an introductory meeting.

The submitted Preliminary Plan shows Lots 1-7 located on the southern edge of Ben Lomand Mountain, situated above Santa Fe Open Space, Lakeview Heights, and privately-held conserved lands. Topographically speaking, these lots are generally steep in nature, with slopes measuring greater than 30 percent grade that offer few viable locations for the construction of residential units. Furthermore, these lots fall within the viewshed of Ben Lomand Mountain, and therefore, homes constructed here will be visible from points to the south. Although not a requirement of the endorsement of this Preliminary Plan by the El Paso County Park Advisory Board, El Paso County Parks suggests that the applicant reconsider the placement of these lots in the Preliminary Plan in order to preserve the high open space values – particularly viewshed and wildlife habitat – of the southern slopes of Ben Lomand Mountain.

Due to the impacts on the Ben Lomand Mountain Secondary Regional Trail, El Paso County Parks is recommending a 25-foot public trail easement for the construction, maintenance, and public access of the Regional Trail. Staff recommends that the applicant work closely with El Paso County Parks to establish the final location of the easement and dedicate the easement on the forthcoming Final Plat(s). Furthermore, staff recommends regional park fees in lieu of land dedication for regional park or open space purposes to be due at the recording of the forthcoming Final Plat(s). A Regional Park Lands Agreement may be an acceptable alternative to Regional Park Fees, provided the Agreement is reviewed and approved by the El Paso County and executed by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners prior to the recording of the Final Plat(s).

Recommended Motion (Preliminary Plan):

The Park Advisory Board endorses the following El Paso County Parks Department comments, recommendations, and requirements as they relate to the Ben Lomand Mountain Village Preliminary Plan: (1) reconsider the placement of Lots 1-7 along the southern slopes of Ben Lomand Mountain; (2) recommend the applicant designate and provide to El Paso County 25-foot public trail easement through the subject property at a location to be determined by the applicant and El Paso County Parks that allows for public access, as well as construction and maintenance by El Paso County for the Ben Lomand Mountain Secondary Regional Trail, and the easements be shown, noted, and dedicated to the county via the forthcoming Final Plat(s). (3) fees in lieu of land dedication for regional park purposes in the amount of \$36,360 shall be due at time of the recording of the forthcoming Final Plat(s). A Regional Park Lands Agreement may be an acceptable alternative to Regional Park Fees, provided the Agreement is reviewed and approved by the El Paso County and executed by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners prior to the recording of the Final Plat(s).



~ Santa Fe Open Space / Ben Lomand Mountain ~
And Surrounding Properties



Development Application Review Form



EL PASO COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT

Park Planning - Park Operations

Recreation and Cultural Services - CSU Extension Office

August 12, 2026

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.

Name:	Ben Lomand Mountain Village Preliminary Plan	Application Type:	PUD / Prelim Plan
PCD Reference #:	PUDSP-26-005	Total Acreage:	341.10
		Total # of Dwelling Units:	72
Applicant / Owner:	Owner's Representative:	Dwelling Units Per 2.5 Acres:	0.53
United Congregational Church	Fairfield & Woods, P.C.	Regional Park Area:	1
Roger Sung, Pastor	Todd Messenger, Esq.	Urban Park Area:	1
3195 County Line Road	1801 California Street, Suite 2600	Existing Zoning Code:	RR-2.5
Monument, CO 80132	Denver, CO 80202	Proposed Zoning Code:	RR-2.5

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.
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LAND REQUIREMENTS	Urban Density (≥ 1 Dwelling Unit Per 2.5 Acres):	NO
Regional Park Area: 1	Urban Park Area: 1	
0.0194 Acres x 72 Dwelling Units = 1.397	Neighborhood: 0.00375 Acres x 72 Dwelling Units =	0.00
Total Regional Park Acres: 1.397	Community: 0.00625 Acres x 72 Dwelling Units =	0.00
	Total Urban Park Acres:	0.00

FEE REQUIREMENTS	Urban Park Area: 1
Regional Park Area: 1	
\$505 / Dwelling Unit x 72 Dwelling Units = \$36,360	Neighborhood: \$119 / Dwelling Unit x 72 Dwelling Units = \$0
Total Regional Park Fees: \$36,360	Community: \$184 / Dwelling Unit x 72 Dwelling Units = \$0
	Total Urban Park Fees: \$0

EL PASO COUNTY PARKS DEPARTMENT COMMENTS

The Park Advisory Board endorses the following El Paso County Parks Department comments, recommendations, and requirements as they relate to the Ben Lomand Mountain Village Preliminary Plan: (1) reconsider the placement of Lots 1-7 along the southern slopes of Ben Lomand Mountain; (2) recommend the applicant designate and provide to El Paso County 25-foot public trail easement through the subject property at a location to be determined by the applicant and El Paso County Parks that allows for public access, as well as construction and maintenance by El Paso County for the Ben Lomand Mountain Secondary Regional Trail, and the easements be shown, noted, and dedicated to the county via the forthcoming Final Plat(s). (3) fees in lieu of land dedication for regional park purposes in the amount of \$36,360 shall be due at time of the recording of the forthcoming Final Plat(s). A Regional Park Lands Agreement may be an acceptable alternative to Regional Park Fees, provided the Agreement is reviewed and approved by the El Paso County and executed by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners prior to the recording of the Final Plat(s).

Park Advisory Board Action:

Endorsed by PAB on 08/12/26