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## MERIDIAN RANCH

### SKETCH PLAN AMENDMENT

#### *LETTER OF INTENT*

**MAY 2021**

**REVISED JUNE 25, 2021**

**PROPERTY OWNER/ DEVELOPER:**

GTL Development, Inc.  
3575 Kenyon Street, Ste 200  
San Diego, CA 92110

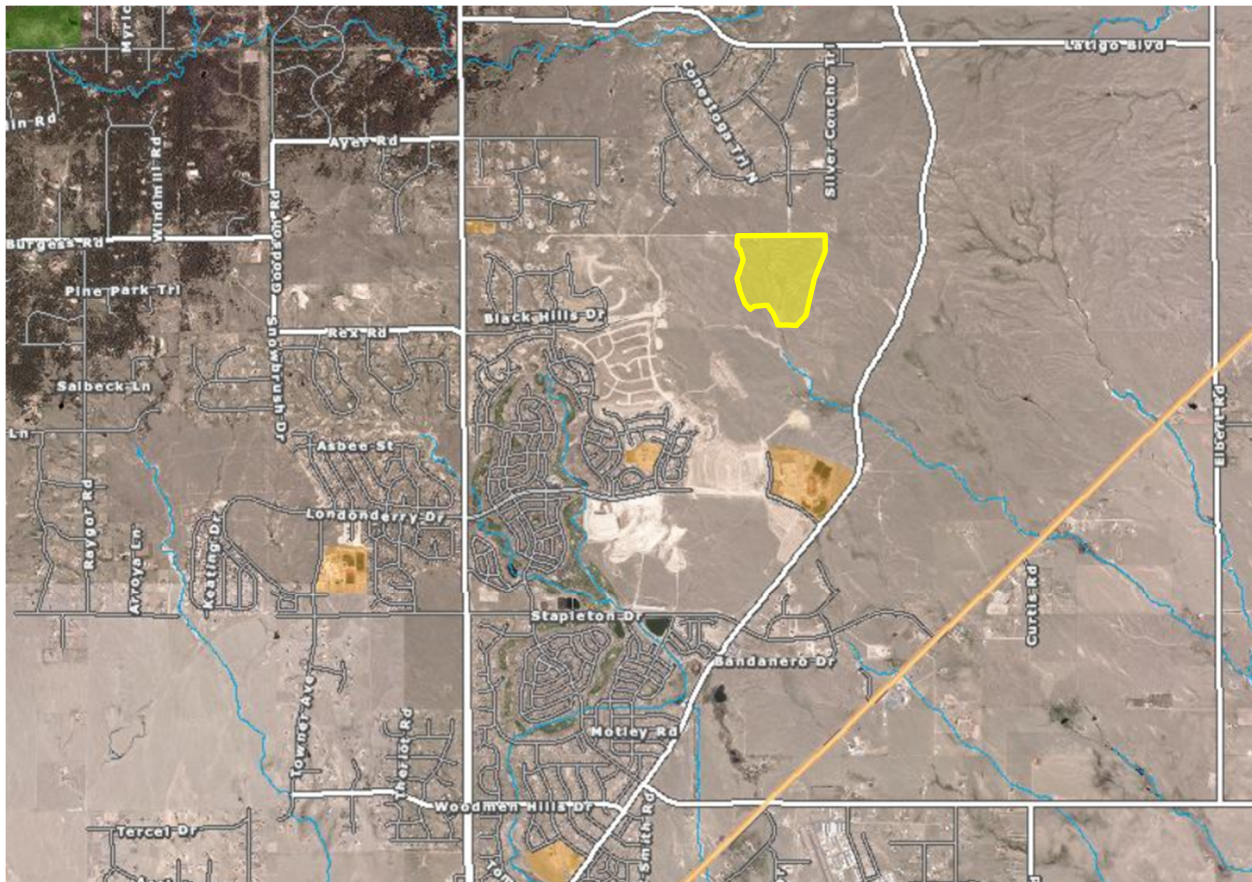
**CONSULTANT:**

N.E.S. Inc.  
619 North Cascade Avenue,  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

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#### LOCATION

Meridian Ranch is bounded by Meridian Road to the west, Stapleton Drive to the south, Eastonville Road to the East, and private property to the North. The Sketch Plan amendment relates to the remaining area that is yet to be entitled, which totals 196.44 acres.



## REQUEST

GTL Inc. request approval of the following in this Sketch Plan Amendment:

1. Amend 152ac of MR-R2 (2du/ac) area north of Rex Road to MR-R4 (4du/ac)
2. Amend 45ac of MR-R3 (3du/ac) south of Rex Road to MR-R9 (9du/ac)
3. Increase Density Cap to 5000 units from previously approved cap of 4500.
4. Addition of a 3ac Neighborhood Park.

## PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

### a. Sketch Plan Background

**Original 2000 Sketch Plan:** The original Meridian Ranch Sketch Plan encompassed 2,650 acres, and was approved by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in March of 2000, with the following land uses: 2,289 acres of residential uses; 55 acres of commercial uses; 64 acres for a Business Park; 15 acres for a community park; 33 acres for a wastewater treatment facility; 93 acres for open space, trail corridors and rights-of-way; and 70 acres for schools. This approved Sketch Plan established a maximum of 3,266 dwelling units, at densities ranging from 0.4 to 6 dwelling units per acre.

**2006 Sketch Plan Amendment:** In January 2006, the BOCC approved an amendment to the Sketch Plan that modified land use areas to achieve multiple objectives, including: adding 15 acres to the size of the high school site to meet the needs of the Falcon School District; creating a large community park; realigning Lambert Road; establishing a civic area; modifying the location of the business park; minor changes to the commercial and residential land uses; and amending the phasing plan. The originally approved Sketch Plan included a provision that for every 1 acre of non-residential area that is converted to residential use, an additional lot will be permitted in addition to the approved density cap. The 2006 amendment included a reduction in commercial land uses by 9 acres, which resulted in a concurrent increase in the number of permitted dwelling units by 9 units, to 3,275 dwelling units.

**2012 Sketch Plan Amendment:** In May 2012, the BOCC approved an amendment to the Sketch Plan converting the northeastern portion of the site from low density residential to a 223-acre regional park, increasing some of the remaining residential densities, reducing the size of one of the neighborhood commercial areas; reducing the size of the elementary school site at the request of the school district; and removing the previously added civic area. The reduction in the non-residential areas from the original Sketch Plan in this application allowed for the conversion of 40 acres to 40 residential units. However, despite this additional allowance and the reduction in the overall acreage for residential, the increases in densities for the remaining area resulted in an approved increase of the density cap to 3,800 dwelling units.

**2014 Sketch Plan Amendment:** In October 2014, the BOCC approved an amendment to the Sketch Plan that converted approximately half of the 30-acre commercial parcel at the northeast corner of Meridian Road and Stapleton Drive to residential use due to changes in market conditions. The conversion of 14.7 acres of commercial land allowed for an additional 14 lots, thus increasing the permitted dwelling units

to 3814. This simultaneously approved PUD/Preliminary Plan for this 14.7 acre site (Filing 4B) added a further 62 units to the dwelling total in Meridian Ranch.

**2015 Sketch Plan Amendment:** The 2015 Sketch Plan Amendment was approved by the BOCC in November 2015. Other than some minor access and road network changes to assist traffic distribution, the principal change was the removal of an 18-acre high density residential parcel, the removal of a 10-acre neighborhood commercial site, and the removal of 26 acres of the proposed business park, all in the southeast corner of the Sketch Plan area. This was replaced by single-family detached residential at a maximum density of six dwelling units per acre. The allowed conversion factor from non-residential to residential increased the permitted dwelling total from 3,814 to 3850. However, the subsequently approved PUD/Preliminary Plan for this area added a further 221 units to the dwelling total at Meridian Ranch, approximately two-thirds of which was attributable to the conversion from non-residential areas. To account for this additional residential area, an increase in the density cap to 4,000 units was also requested and was approved.

**2017 Sketch Plan Amendment:** The most recent Sketch Plan amendment was approved by the BOCC in March 2018. The amendment increased the density cap to 4,500 units. The 40 acres of business park was converted to residential use at a density of six dwelling units per acre. The conversion of this remaining non-residential area allowed an additional 40 dwelling units.

With the past amendment, a total of 139 acres of non-residential land in the original Sketch Plan has been converted to residential use. While the allowed conversion factor would permit an additional 139 units, in reality these conversions have added approximately 400 additional units to the total achievable dwelling's units in Meridian Ranch.

**Current Sketch Plan Amendment:** The current Sketch Plan amendment proposes an increase in the density cap to 5,000 dwelling units. The proposal aims to amend portions of the northeastern portion of the development near Rex Road. The amendment request is to convert 152 acres of MR-R2 (2du/ac) to MR-R4 (4du/ac) and 45 acres of MR-R3 (3du/ac) to MR-R9 (9du/ac). The total amendment proposes to increase density on an approximate 196ac of remaining development. Appropriate density transitions, open space and neighborhood park implementation will be provided to support the proposed application.

The following is the total number of units that have been constructed or approved at Meridian Ranch:

MERIDIAN RANCH: CONSTRUCTED OR APPROVED UNITS	
Filing No.1	800
Filing No.2	350
Filing No.3	122
Filing No.4	96
Filing No.4B	62
Filing No. 6	54
Filing No.7	131
Filing No.8	145
Filing No.9	181
Filing No.11A	118

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Filing No.11B	82
Stonebridge Filing No.1	102
Stonebridge Filing No.2	73
Stonebridge Filing No.3	164
Stonebridge Filing No.4	209
The Estates Filing No.2	33
The Estates Filing No.3	29
The Vistas Filing No.1	221
Winding Walk Filing No.1	345
Winding Walk Filing No.2	60
Estates at Rolling Hills Ranch Filing No.1	16
Estates at Rolling Hills Ranch Filing No.2	98
Rolling Hills Ranch Filing No.1	272
Rolling Hills Ranch Filing No.2	244
Rolling Hills Ranch Filing No.3	209
<b>Total Constructed and Approved Units</b>	<b>4,216</b>

Based on best estimates for the remaining developable area, there is capacity for approximately an additional 784 units. Accordingly, an increase in the density cap to 5,000 is requested.

Meridian Ranch has successfully developed and maintained a high-quality Master Planned golf course, parks and recreation community as was originally envisioned in 2000. With over an approximate 590 acres of open space, trails, parks, right of ways and golf course, Meridian Ranch residents have tremendous amounts of open space and recreational areas to enjoy. Meridian Ranch dedicated an additional 223 acres to El Paso County for the Falcon Regional Park which the County has consistently been improving since its dedication. The amount of parks and open space that has been dedicated far exceed El Paso County requirements.

The requested change of additional and higher density provides a diversity in housing types and range that is not only consistent with the objectives of the County Master Plan, but also supports the extensive recreational and commercial facilities that make Meridian Ranch the vital and viable community that is evident today. The request for the density increase of 4du/ac on the 152 acre area by Meridian Ranch will be designed similar to the existing Rolling Hills Ranch Filings 1-3. The 9du/ac density increase on the 45 acre parcel south of Rex Road is placed strategically to be its own neighborhood bordered by Rex Road to the north, the Regional Park to the east, new 3 acre park to the west and open space to the south. This neighborhood will provide a much-needed affordable housing option within the established golf, parks and recreation master planned community that is not currently available. This request for the density does reflect a similar path to past development goals as where Approved in the 2014 Sketch Plan at the time envisioned a 12du/ac development in the now Vistas Filing No.1.

The proposed parcels have great access to major roads, parks and trails and are located to enjoy views of rolling open spaces making them very desirable properties. The conversion coupled with the continuing demand for housing and growing market in the Falcon/Peyton area over the Sketch Plans life further supports the request. Meridian Ranch even after the current density request will have a gross density of 2.06 du/ac, well below the density requests of neighboring communities. The added homes will only further support the Meridian Ranch Metropolitan Districts amenities and services as well as

upscale the retail center, Shops at Meridian Ranch, located at the corner of Stapleton Drive and Meridian Road.

Meridian Ranch's neighborhood center at the corner of Meridian Road and Stapleton Drive have proven successful in maintaining the viability of this center in the face of competition from commercial development in Falcon town center and in support of the Meridian Ranch community at large.

The introduction of additional and higher density residential into Meridian Ranch provides a diversity in housing type and range that is not only consistent with the objectives of the County Master Plan, but also helps to support the extensive recreational and neighborhood commercial facilities that make Meridian Ranch the vital and viable community that is evident today.

b. County Policy Plan and Small Area Plan Compliance

Meridian Ranch is identified as part of the Approved Development Pattern within the Falcon/Peyton Small Area Plan. The Sketch Plan amendment continues to comply with the goals of the plan to meet the housing needs of existing and new residents with a diversity and variety of housing type, size, and location. The Sketch Plan Amendment will also address the following policies of the County Policy Plan:

*Policy 6.1.3: Encourage new development which is contiguous and compatible with previously developed areas in terms of factors such as density, land use and access.*

*Policy 6.1.11: Plan and implement land development so that it will be functionally and aesthetically integrated within the context of adjoining properties and uses.*

c. Parks and Open Space

The Sketch Plan Amendment does not alter the overall parks provision within the Sketch Plan. The area proposed for Falcon Regional Park was previously excluded from the Sketch Plan boundary as this property has now been deeded to El Paso County for park purposes. Additional open space and notation for a small neighborhood park has been added to the south of Rex Road in the proposed MR-R9 density area which is also adjacent to the Regional Park dedication.

d. Drainage

On November 16, 2000, the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners approved the rezoning of the Meridian Ranch project (PUD-00-010) from A-35 to PUD with several conditions. Condition number seven stated in part that "drainage plans shall release and/or retain at approximately eighty percent (80%) of historic rates." At the time of the initial approvals, there were no drainage improvements downstream of the Meridian Ranch project and the existing natural channels were shallow and undefined.

Since the time of the original approvals, development has occurred downstream of Meridian Ranch with drainage facilities designed and constructed of sufficient size to safely convey the historic flow rates off of Meridian Ranch further downstream. The requirement to reduce the release of developed storm drainage to approximately eighty percent of historic peak flow rates from Meridian Ranch was removed with the 2017 Sketch Plan Amendment by Resolution 18-104. Future drainage plans shall evaluate the

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stormwater runoff based on current stormwater requirements as adopted by the El Paso County Land Development Code, Engineering Criteria Manual, Drainage Criteria Manual and/or other adopted drainage referenced manuals, plans and/or documents applicable to El Paso County

The final storm drainage design at each Final Plat submittal will determine the anticipated flow rates for the full spectrum of design storms discharged from Meridian Ranch. The final discharge rate of flow from the existing Pond G will be at or below the historic flow rates per El Paso County requirements.

e. Traffic

A Traffic Impact Analysis prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants Inc. is submitted to address the changes proposed by the Sketch Plan Amendment.

f. Water

The water system that serves Meridian Ranch is classified as a “community water system”, and meets all the applicable requirements of the Colorado Department of Health (CDH). The water system uses groundwater as its primary source of supply. An existing treatment facility has been providing the required treatment since 2003. In addition, disinfection is provided to ensure good bacteriological characteristics. The Meridian Ranch development has water rights and appropriation for the Denver Basin groundwater, renewable alluvial ground water, and additional Denver Basin water rights from adjacent metropolitan districts as part of either a financial or annexation agreement. Based on the existing active wells and the future water supply, Meridian Ranch has more than sufficient water supply for the full build out of Meridian Ranch based on the El Paso County 300-year rule.

g. Sewer

The remaining phases of Meridian Ranch discharge the wastewater through the Woodmen Hills development to a lift station located in Falcon, where it is transported to Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD) for treatment. Meridian Service Metropolitan District (MSMD) and Woodmen Hills Metropolitan District (WHMD) entered into an agreement on March 17, 2004 outlining the cooperation and limitations of operations between the two district. The agreement outlined the agreement set the responsibilities of the systems within each district’s boundaries as to maintenance, repairs and capacity upgrades. Sections 5 and 7 of this agreement address the responsibility of upsizing any mainline utility should the need arise. The last paragraph of Section 7 specifically states *“Wastewater lines located within Woodmen Hills that are to be oversized to handle the capacities produced by Meridian Service shall be the responsibility of Meridian Service.”* One such segment of sewer mainline within WHMD has been upsized at MSMD cost. Two other segments have been identified as needing similar improvements, these segments will receive capacity increase improvements at MSMD costs. Should additional segments be identified as a result of the Sketch Plan amendment, those segments shall be treated in similar manner and with MSMD being responsible for the cost of those improvements.

The Meridian Service Metropolitan District (MSMD), in conjunction with Cherokee Metropolitan District (CMD), has constructed treatment of 4.8 MGD of wastewater at the Black Squirrel Wastewater Treatment Facility (BSWTF). MSMD retains a 45.8% ownership in the treatment facility through an inter-governmental agreement with CMD for a total capacity of 2.2 MGD. The total capacity available to MSMD through the wastewater treatment facilities is approximately 2.3 MGD, or over 12,000 single

family residential equivalents based on 185 gallons per day per residential unit, thus providing more than enough capacity for the full build out of Meridian Ranch.

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