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DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

July 14, 2023

Kylie Bagley
Project Manager
El Paso County Development Services Department

Subject: Overlook at Homestead Rezone (P235)

Kylie,

The Parks & Community Services Department has reviewed the Overlook at Homestead Rezone application and has the following administrative comments of behalf of El Paso County Parks. The applicant requests a rezone of 350 acres from A-35 to RR-5.

This property is located along the east of Elbert Road and south of Apex Ranch Road in northern El Paso County. The property is approximately six miles northwest of Peyton, CO. The property is surrounded by rural residential subdivisions and agricultural grazing land. The County's Homestead Ranch Regional Park borders the property's east side. The applicant indicates that as many as 62 residential lots could be built on the property of no less than 5 acres each.

The El Paso County Parks Master Plans shows a master-planned trail in the vicinity of this project. The proposed Palmer Divide Regional trail bisects the Overlook at Homestead property starting on the east side of the property and makes a connection to Elbert Road on the west side of the property.

County Parks requests trail easements where development projects impact proposed County trails. As it pertains to this application, the County requests that the landowner provide a 25-foot public trail easement along the Palmer Divide Regional Trail alignment that allows for the construction and maintenance by El Paso County of a Primary Regional Trail, and this easement shall be shown and dedicated to El Paso County on the Final Plat. Due to the challenging terrain of this property, County Parks requests the applicant provide a proposed alignment that is constructable with average grades less than 10%. County Parks is welcome to an ongoing dialogue regarding trail easement location.

Homestead Ranch Regional Park is a 458-acre regional park that the county developed in the early 2000's. Prior to this time, the park was home to ranching activities dating back to the late 1800's. Today, the park offers the public opportunities for hiking, biking, equestrian use, and outdoor education. The site includes a playground, restroom, fishing pond, picnic pavilions, a multi-use field, and 5 miles of trails. In addition to active use areas, much of the park is preserved as passive use to conserve the plants and animals that are native to the region.

The most predominate vegetative feature is the belt of Ponderosa Pine defined by the bluffs which traverse the park. This stand exists mainly as a result of the same high-water table that occurs throughout the Black Forest. Typical shrubs found in the understory include mountain-mahogany, wax currant, snowberry, and juniper. Forbes and grasses are widespread in the understory as well. According to Colorado Parks and Wildlife's 'Species Activity' mapping, the property is in the overall range for numerous species of bats, black bear, mountain lions, pronghorn, mule, and white-

tailed deer. The Swift Fox is listed in Colorado as a species of Special Concern and its range overlaps Homestead Ranch.

El Paso County has experienced rapid growth over the last two decades. In the year 2000, the population of El Paso County was 519,802. Today it is over 700,000. By the year 2045, the population of the county is projected to reach 1,000,000 people. With this growth comes more need to preserve unique open spaces and provide recreation opportunities for residents of the county. The El Paso County Parks Master Plan and Homestead Ranch Regional Park Master Plan include goals to preserve unique landscapes, habitats, trails corridors, and responsibly expand the county's regional parks, trails, and open space system.

As it pertains to this rezone application, the county would welcome the opportunity to discuss expansion of Homestead Ranch Regional Park particularly along the bluffs that make the area unique and worthy of preservation. This could be done in several ways including dedication of park lands, acquiring additional park land or buffering opportunities. The County would also be open to facilitating discussions regarding potential conservation easement options that could provide a financial benefit to the applicant for preserving lands.

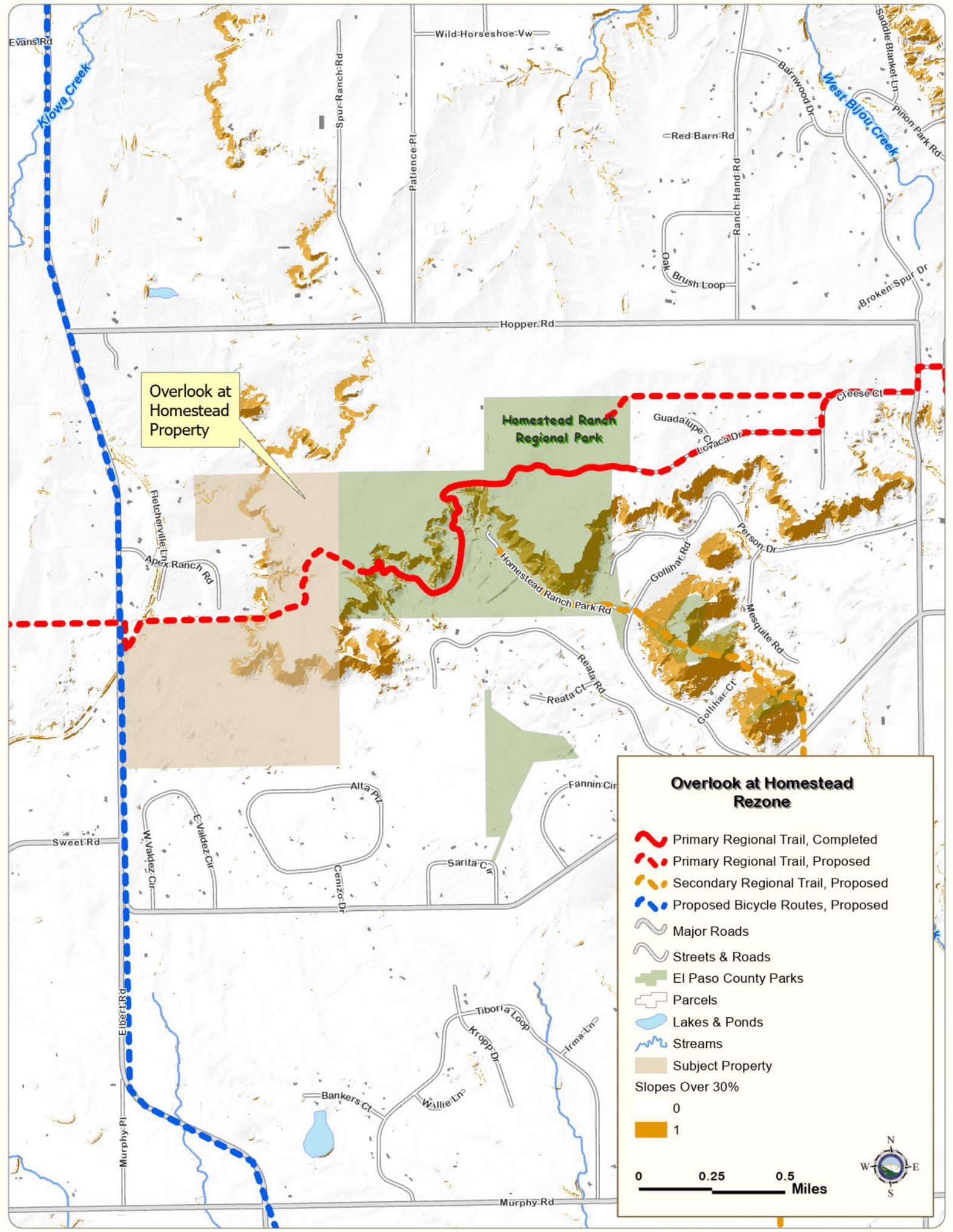
Regional and urban park fees will be calculated upon reviews of forthcoming preliminary plans and final plats. A park land agreement is an acceptable alternative in lieu of park fees provided the agreement is approved by the County and executed prior to recording the final plat. These comments are being provided administratively, as rezoning applications do not require Park Advisory Board consideration.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Greg Stachon
Landscape Architect
Community Services Department
GregStachon@elpasoco.com





Overlook at Homestead Property

Overlook at Homestead Rezone

- Primary Regional Trail, Completed
- Primary Regional Trail, Proposed
- Secondary Regional Trail, Proposed
- Proposed Bicycle Routes, Proposed
- Major Roads
- Streets & Roads
- El Paso County Parks
- Parcels
- Lakes & Ponds
- Streams
- Subject Property

Slopes Over 30%

- 0
- 1

0 0.25 0.5 Miles