

## **VENETUCCI FARMS – BUSINESS EVENT CENTER**

**5202, 5210, 5304 HIGHWAY 85-87 & TRACT A OF ST. DOMINIC’S CATHOLIC CHURCH**

**LETTER OF INTENT - AL 2115 & PPR2153**

**SEPTEMBER 2021, REVISED JUNE 2022**

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### **OWNER:**

Pikes Peak Community Foundation  
102 S. Tejon Street. # 530  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

### **APPLICANT:**

Pikes Peak Community Foundation  
102 S. Tejon Street. # 530  
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

### **CONSULTANT:**

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### **SITE DETAILS:**

**TSN:** 6511300008, 6511302001

**Address:** 5202 HWY 85-87; 5210 HWY 85-87; 5304 HWY 85-87; 5304 US HWY 85

**Acreage:** 197.5 (includes. Tract A 4.24 AC)

**CURRENT ZONING:** A-5

**Current Use:** Charitable; Special Purpose (Tract A)

**PCD FILE #:** PPR21-053, AL2115

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Pikes Peak Community Foundation requests approval of the following applications:

1. A Special Use Permit for a Business Event Center for seasonal weddings and occasional special events.
2. Approval of Site Development Plan.

## LOCATION

The approximately 10.12-acre proposed Business Event Center site is located at 5202, 5210 and 5304 US-85-87 Colorado Springs, CO 80911(TSN: 6511300008, 6511302001). This site is within the larger 187.23 acre parcel & 4.24 acre Tract A known together as Venetucci Farm. The Special Use Permit for the Business Event Center will be centered around the event barn located immediately off the internal gravel drive northwest of St. Dominic’s Catholic Church and the Can Am Highway (S US 85-87).



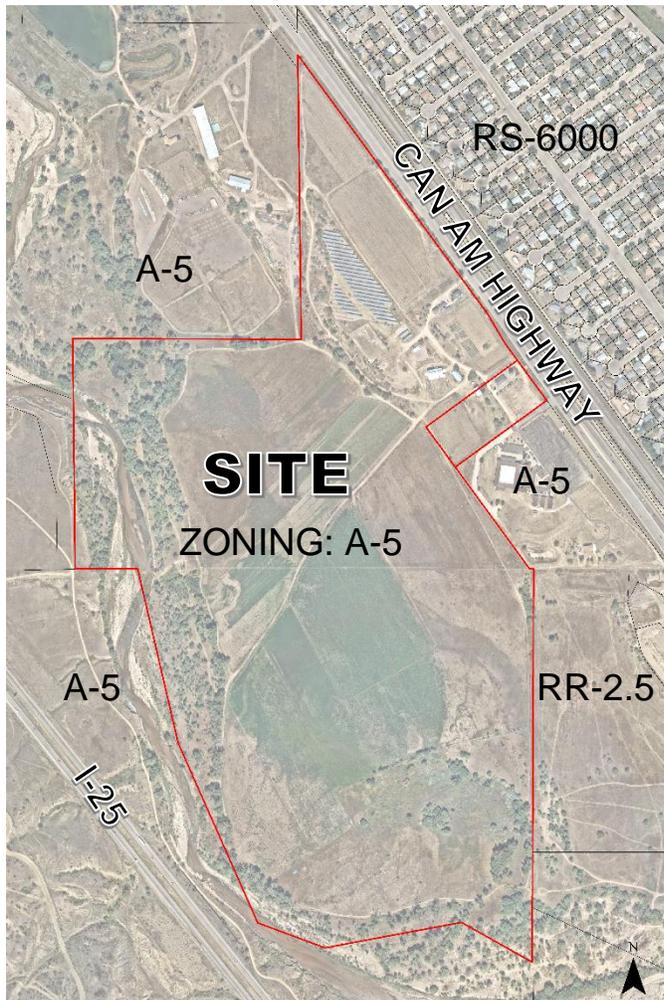
## PROJECT DESCRIPTION/CONTEXT

Venetucci Farm is best known and recognized in the community of Colorado Springs for its decades of community outreach, annual pumpkin giveaway and fall festival in the community for local school children. The farm was purchased in the 1930s by Nick and Bambi Venetucci and operated as an active farm until 2006 when it was sold to The Pikes Peak Community Foundation. The foundation continued to operate the farm and annual pumpkin give-away until 2016 when PFAs and PFCs were discovered in the farm’s well water. Subsequently, the renowned annual pumpkin give away has continued with imported pumpkins and farming operations have nearly halted altogether. A small portion of the farm is currently leased to Gather Mountain Blooms, a local business, for wholesale flower growing operations. Gather Mountain Blooms intends to support the Business Event Center through its flower growing operations.

The farm is currently zoned A-5 and includes a building conservation easement, deeded by Nick and Bambi Venetucci and recorded under reception number 205196779, 206003416 and a correction

restated under reception number 206179122. The Conservation Easement is located towards the center of the parcel, runs adjacent to the Can Am Highway and encompasses all existing buildings on site. A total of four historic farm structures remain on site, comprising of a two-story single-family residence with a detached garage (built in 1905), two hog barns, asparagus shed, historic tuberculosis hut and a newer construction barn (event barn) built in 2013. The residence is currently utilized by an onsite caretaker with water and sewer serviced by Security Widefield Water and Sanitation District.

**Venetucci Farm Zoning Exhibit:**



Surrounding zoning to the site includes, two parcels zoned A-5 owned by the City of Colorado Springs. To the Northwest, Fountain Creek and Highway 85 run along the westernmost boundary of Venetucci Farm. Bandley development owns an un-zoned and un-platted parcel to the southwest, and Southpark Technological Center owns an undeveloped parcel to the southwest adjacent to Bandley development. Avatar Riverbend LP owns two undeveloped parcels to the south of Venetucci Farm adjacent to the eastern boundary of Southpark Technological Center both of these parcels are zoned PUD. To the east is St. Dominic's Catholic Church zoned A5. Access to the site is provided by one full-movement access onto US 85 shared with an adjacent church land use and located approximately 1,500 feet north of Main Street (referred to as Church Access), and one additional full-movement access located approximately 2,500 feet north of Main Street (referred to as Farm Access). The Business Event Center intends to utilize

the Farm Access as the primary access. The Church Access is currently gated and is proposed to serve as an emergency access only.

The Pikes Peak Community Foundation is requesting a Business Event Center special use in the current A-5 zoned parcel to allow for smaller seasonal weddings and events. This request will allow for the barn, built in 2013, and adjacent areas to be used for small seasonal weddings (restricted to 150 people by the year 2023 including both guests and a limited number of on-site staff) and events. Wedding events will be held both inside the barn for receptions with ceremonies and a small cocktail area outside of the barn near the chicken coup. Weddings will be predominantly seasonal, held from the Spring through the Fall, primarily on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The foundation may allow for small weddings or events on a case by case basis. Existing buildings utilized for events will include, the barn, hog barns, and chicken coup with all event activities contained within the event barn and area immediately surrounding it, as shown on the Site Development Plan.

The existing single-family residence and garages located onsite are intended to house a property caretaker for all site operations including seasonal wedding and/or event operations.

Water, drinks and food for all events will be provided by an outside caterer. All alcohol will be served in compliance with El Paso County alcohol storage and serving regulations. A porta-potty will be brought on site for all wedding events from Spring through the Fall.

Gravel parking is provided for a total of 91 parking spaces for guests, and wedding service workers (81 spaces required at 1 sp per 100 Sq. Ft. of event space). The gravel parking lot is located on Tract A, adjacent to an existing barn and south of the flower growing operations. Landscape improvements include tree plantings along Hwy 85-87, parking lot screening and internal landscape improvements for the Business Event Center.

ADA and Vendor parking is located in front of the Business Event Space. All accessible paths and parking will include appropriate signage and will be compacted to create a firm, stable and slip resistance surface. Staff will be briefed on 'service dogs' and the proper and safe assistance for anyone with a disability. Patrons needing assistance will be strongly encouraged to contact staff. The Pikes Peak Community Foundation is committed to making this facility as accessible as possible – beyond basic ADA responsibilities and within their financial and the site's physical limitations.

Traffic may enter the site the Farm Access, located 1,500 feet north of the Church Access. With this application the first 50' of the existing Farm Access from US 85 will be paved and widened to 30'. This entrance connects to an internal two way 24' gravel looped drive connecting to a gravel parking lot located on Tract A. An emergency access gate is located at the end of the two way access drive to provide emergency access to the Church and its associated full movement access onto HWY 85.

All events will be limited to one per day, with no weddings or events scheduled during the annual fall festival. The traffic study completed by SM Rocha in May of 2022, concluded that the proposed site-generated traffic resulting from the change in use for the Business Event Center is anticipated to increase peak hour traffic volume. Analysis of site-generated traffic concluded that proposed

development traffic volumes are minor and not likely to negatively impact operations of US 85 or other adjacent roadways or intersections.

**Traffic:**

The Traffic Memo provided by SM Rocha LLC dated May 25, 2022, indicates that the proposed site generated traffic resulting from the proposed Business Event Center is not expected to create negative impacts to traffic operations for the surrounding roadway network or intersections. Analysis of site-generated traffic concludes that proposed development traffic volumes are minor.

Projected peak hour traffic volumes indicate that both right-turn and left-turn deceleration lanes are required at the Farm Access based on the assumed trip distribution. It is anticipated that the existing TWLTL on US 85-87 be restriped to accommodate a dedicated on-way left-turn at the Farm Access. Projected peak hour egress volumes are shown to be less than CDOT's threshold for requiring a right-turn acceleration lane. However, due to the high traffic volumes and a high posted speed limit along the Canam Highway; it is understood through conversation with CDOT Staff that a right-turn acceleration lane is to be required.

Pursuant to CDOT design criteria as defined in Section 4.8 of the CDOT SHAC, the anticipated right-turn and left-turn deceleration lanes are to provide 500 feet of deceleration length including a 180-foot taper assuming a lane width of 12 feet. An additional minimum 50 feet of storage at the end of the left-turn deceleration length is also recommended. The right-turn acceleration lane is to provide 760 feet of acceleration length including a 180-foot taper; however, it is noted that this will overlap the existing right-turn deceleration lane at Church Access. Therefore, it is anticipated that a continuous acceleration/deceleration lane is to be provided between the Farm Access and the Church Access.

**Drainage:** There are no new structures proposed or changes to the impervious surfaces or existing drainage pattern associated with this application.

**Utilities:** Water and Sewer are provided to the main residence by Security and Widefield Water and Sanitation District. The event barn is not currently serviced by water or sewer. Events will have water and drinks supplied by outside vendors for individual events. Restrooms will be seasonally provided with an onsite port a potty.

**Geologic Hazards:**

The proposed business event center is outside of the existing floodplain in tile 08041C0763G and 08041C0744G effective 12/7/2018. No new structures are proposed, a geotechnical and soils study is not required.

**Wildlife:** There is no development or construction associated with this site that would negatively affect wildlife on the site.

**Wildfire:** There is no development or construction associate with this site that would negatively affect or contribute to an increased risk of wildfire. This parcel is marked as low-moderate to low fire risk by the Colorado State Forest. Vegetation on the site includes riparian, oak shrubland, shrubland and grassland.

**Districts Serving the Property:**

- Widefield School District No. 3
- Security Fire Protection District
- Security Widefield Water & Sanitation District(SWWSD)
- Southeastern Colorado Water Conservancy District

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

The relevant County Plans for Venetucci Farm are the County Master Plan, County Water Master Plan and the 2040 Major Transportation Corridor.

Compliance with Conservation Easement Deed:

Inclusion of a Business Event Center at Venetucci Farm aligns with the conservation values of Relatively Natural Habitat, Open Space and Scenic Value(s) as outlined in the Conservation Easement Deed. The proposed Business Event Center does not propose any new or significant exterior improvements to any of the existing structures; thereby preserving the Relatively Natural Habitat and associated bird and/or sensitive species habitats along Fountain Creek. Open Space and Scenic Values are supported by seasonal weddings with ceremonies and cocktail hours held outside, framing the existing scenic character of the Farm, and all receptions held interior to the event barn. Revenue from the seasonal weddings will further support the Pikes Peak Community Foundations' ability to preserve and protect the conservation values of the Farm and the ongoing annual Fall Festival/Pumpkin giveaway.

The commercial nature of the proposed business event center does not conflict with the conversation values outlined in the Conservation Easement Deed, rather it supports the intent to permit all other uses on the Property that not inconsistent with the preservation and protection of the Conservation Values. Nothing in the Deed is intended to compel a specific use of the Property, such as agriculture, other than the preservation and protection of the Conservation Values.

**County Special Use Review Criteria (5.3.2):**

**1. The special use is generally consistent with the applicable Master Plan:**

The proposed development supports the County Master Plan by preserving the historic character of existing farm, supporting economic development opportunities and regional tourism opportunities within El Paso County. Seasonal weddings at Venetucci will provide an economic revenue stream for the Pikes Peak Community Foundation to continue its preservation efforts of the existing farm and philanthropic endeavors in the community. The County Master plan designates Security Widefield as an enterprise zone and commercial development opportunity area. Being less than 1/4mile away, weddings at Venetucci Farm have the ability to spur commercial development and business support in the downtown area. Currently a portion of the Farm is leased to a local wholesale flower growing operation. Weddings' need for flowers will serve to support this local business along with employee retainment and attraction of a skilled workforce. A business event center at Venetucci is highly probable to attract

couples, guests and patrons interior and exterior to El Paso County. As such, individuals and groups attending events at Venetucci will be in need of nearby hospitality, restaurants and likely to visit nearby attractions in El Paso County.

### **COUNTY POLICY PLANS**

The Special Use Permit for a Business Event Center at Venetucci Farm will support the following goals of the County Master Plan.

### **Housing and Communities**

*Goal HC.2 Preserve the character of rural and environmentally sensitive areas.*

*Objective: HC2-6: Continue to carefully analyze each development proposal for their location, compatibility with the natural environment, and cohesion with the existing character.*

Business event center use at this site will enable the Pikes Peak Community foundation to continue the legacy of the annual fall festival and pumpkin giveaway while preserving the historic character of the farm. Weddings are located within developed areas and existing buildings of the farm; as such, undeveloped areas of the farm will remain as such. No new structures are proposed with this development and all environment impacts are anticipated as minimal.

### **Economic Development**

*Goal ED.1 - Recruit new businesses and spur the development of growing sectors.*

*Objective ED1-3: To help activate spaces, provide more options for fun an recreation to residents.*

*Objective ED1-4: Attract more visitors to the County by emphasizing development of entertainment uses in Regional Centers.*

*Objective ED1-5: Allow residents to manage compatible, low intensity personal businesses from their home to create greater opportunities for new companies to be established.*

*Objective ED1-7: Transit routes and stops at or near all Employment Centers should be strategically located as these areas continue to develop and redevelop.*

*Goal ED.2 - Support efforts to recruit, train, and retain a skilled workforce.*

*Objective: ED2-2: Foster and further develop all partnerships that are essential to workforce development in the community to ensure residents have access to the tools and training they need to live and work in El Paso County.*

*Goal ED.4 - Utilize economic opportunity zones to support new business development*

Security Widefield, immediately adjacent to Venetucci, is identified as commercial development opportunity areas and an enterprise zones. Weddings at Venetucci Farm will support localized economic development through its partnership with Gather Mountain Blooms and its proximity to Security Widefield downtown. Seasonal weddings at this location will support County goals to train and retain a skilled workforce and local employment opportunities (such as flower growers, wedding photographers and/or food vendors). Furthermore, this use will serve to attract local commuters, residents and tourists

to Venetucci Farm and Security Widefield. Guests and/or patrons attending weddings and events may serve to further support economic development opportunities and employment within Security Widefield as out of town guests may be in need of hospitality and restaurant resources.

### **Community Facilities**

*Goal CFI.1: Continue to coordinate with local and regional agencies to provide well-managed, high-quality community facilities and services.*

*Goal CFI.3 - Ensure adequate provision of utilities to manage growth and development.*

*Objective CFI3-6: In general, all forms of energy generation should be considered and appropriately sited in the County as opportunities arise.*

*Goal CFI.4 - Use best management practices to protect water quality, conserve water, minimize impacts of flooding, and beautify El Paso County*

*Objective CFI4-3: Plan for water resources in a thoughtful way that recognizes the nonrenewable nature of water resources in the area, accommodates existing and historical uses, and allows for sustainable planned growth.*

The Pikes Peak Community Foundation currently leases land to Colorado Springs Utilities for solar panels. This partnership supports the County Master Plan by focusing on clean alternative energy sources and providing continued support for resources and technology to ensure clean energy is both reliable and sustainable. There are no new structures or associated impacts to water or the watershed associated with this use. All water for events will be brought onsite by an outside caterer and restrooms will be provided by a seasonal porta-potty.

### **Tourism**

*Goal RT.3 - Explore projects, programs, and initiatives for enhancing tourism in unincorporated areas.*

The special use permit for a business event center at Venetucci farm will enhance tourism opportunities and create a tourist destination within the Security Widefield enterprise zone. Weddings at Venetucci have the ability to attract patrons, couples and families from outside of El Paso County to Venetucci farm. Tourists drawn to Venetucci can then serve to support other economic sectors and existing tourism opportunities including, recreational attractions, restaurants, hospitality services, ride share and car rental services.

## **Environment**

*Goal E.1 - Consider the environmental impacts related to natural resource conservation, air quality, water quality, wildlife habitat, and waste management during any planning process.*

The Business event center at Venetucci will be located within the developed area of the existing farm and utilize existing buildings, such as the event barn and chicken coup. Undeveloped areas of the farm are to remain undeveloped and in alignment with their agricultural usage prior to the business event center; this will support the preservation of wildlife habitat and leave existing habitat undisturbed. Landscape areas around the business event center are planned as predominantly native with a Foothills Seed mix, Native Seed mix and minimal shrub beds to lower water demand.

## **COUNTY WATER MASTER PLAN**

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

*Policy 1.1.1 – Adequate water is a critical factor in facilitating future growth and it is incumbent upon the County to coordinate land use planning with water demand, efficiency and conservation.*

*Goal 1.2 – Integrate water and land use planning*

PFA and PFCs well water contamination has halted nearly all farming operations and sources of revenue for the Pikes Peak Community Foundation. The adaptive reuse of the event barn for seasonal weddings and occasional small events will allow for additional revenue to support the annual Fall Festival while preserving the farm's historic character and philanthropic endeavors. There are no increases to water or waste water demand at this site because all water/drinks will be brought in from an outside caterer. The caterer will also be responsible of removing the dishes offsite for cleaning. Restroom facilities for all events will be provided by portable toilets located on site seasonally. Landscape improvements at this site are designed to be low water usage, low maintenance and predominantly native. The existing residence is serviced by Security Widefield Water and Sanitation District. The residence is occupied by a single caretaker for the property.

*Goal 4.2 – Support the efficient use of water supplies.*

*Goal 4.5 – Plan for water resources in a thoughtful way that recognizes the non-renewable nature of water resources in the area, accommodates existing and historical uses, and allows for sustainable, planned growth*

*Goal 6.1.2 – Promote water conservation*

Existing well water at Venetucci Farm is currently utilized to support non-edible vegetation, such as whole sale flower operations and existing vegetation. Landscape improvements for the Business Event Center will likewise be supported by existing well water. This usage is in alignment with the historic usage, rights and health risk factors associated with the well water and farm.

## COUNTY TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN

The 2040 Major Transportation Corridor plan identifies I-25 west of Venetucci as a Freeway and the Can Am Highway as a Principal Arterial. There are no planned roadway improvement projects for either I-25 or the Can Am highway in 2040. I-25 is similarly identified as a Freeway in the 2060 Corridor Preservation. The Can Am highway is likewise identified as a Principal Arterial.

A traffic memo by SM Rocha LLC in May of 2022 concluded allowance of a Business Event Center at Venetucci is projected to have a minor effect on existing traffic volumes.

Based on the projected usage of the Business Event Center at full build-out, an evaluation of the auxiliary lane requirements reveals that both right-turn and left-turn deceleration lanes are required at the Farm Access based on assumed trip distribution. It is noted that a two-way-left-turn-lanes (TWLTL) exists along US 85 which may be restriped to accommodate a dedicated one-way left-turn lane at the Farm Access. Through conversation with CDOT it is understood that a right-turn acceleration lane is to be required. The anticipated right-turn and left-turn deceleration lanes are to provide 500 feet of deceleration length including a 180-foot taper assuming a lane width of 12 feet. An additional minimum of 50 feet of storage at the end of the left-turn deceleration length is also recommended. The right-turn acceleration lane is to provide 760 feet of acceleration length including a 180-foot taper; however, it is noted that this will overlap the existing right-turn deceleration lane at the Church Access. Therefore, it is anticipated that a continuous acceleration/deceleration lane is to be provided between the Farm Access and the Church Access.

### **2. The special Use will be in harmony with the character of the neighborhood, and will generally be compatible with the existing and allowable land uses in the surrounding area**

The use of the barn at Venetucci for seasonal weddings will maintain the existing harmony of Venetucci Farm with the character of the neighborhood. Small seasonal weddings at this location will be located interior to the site and across the CanAm highway from residential properties. All receptions will be interior to the event barn and all services (caterers, music, etc...) will be brought in by outside vendors. In the Traffic Memo completed by SM Rocha LLC, traffic impacts from the Business Event Center to the area were determined to be minimal. Traffic will access the site from the CanAm highway and may enter/exit the site at the Farm access; no traffic is anticipated to travel through the residential neighborhood. The Church access is gated and will be available for emergency purposes.

### **3. The impact of the special use does not overburden or exceed the capacity of the public facilities and services, or, in the alternative, the special use application demonstrates that it will provide adequate public facilities in a timely and efficient manner**

Drinking water for the business event center will be provided by a caterer and restroom facilities will be provided by a port a potty that will be brought in seasonally for special events. The existing residence is currently serviced by SDDSD for water and sewer. There is no anticipated increase in usage or impact to

either water or sewer for the residence. Internal traffic circulation is provided by a gravel drive and parking lot. Traffic impacts to the Can Am Highway are projected to be minor.

**4. The special use will not create unmitigated traffic congestion or traffic hazards in the surrounding area, and has adequate legal access**

The Traffic Memo provided by SM Rocha LLC indicates that the proposed site generated traffic resulting from the proposed Business Event Center is not expected to create negative impacts to traffic operations for the surrounding roadway network and existing site accesses. Analysis of site-generated traffic by SM Rocha in May of 2022, concludes that proposed development traffic volumes are minor.

Based on the projected usage of the Business Event Center at full build-out, an evaluation of the auxiliary lane requirements reveals that both right-turn and left-turn deceleration lanes are required at the Farm Access based on assumed trip distribution. It is noted that a two-way-left-turn-lanes (TWLTL) exists along US 85 which may be restriped to accommodate a dedicated one-way left-turn lane at the Farm Access. Through conversation with CDOT it is understood that a right-turn acceleration lane is to be required. The anticipated right-turn and left-turn deceleration lanes are to provide 500 feet of deceleration length including a 180-foot taper assuming a lane width of 12 feet. An additional minimum of 50 feet of storage at the end of the left-turn deceleration length is also recommended. The right-turn acceleration lane is to provide 760 feet of acceleration length including a 180-foot taper; however, it is noted that this will overlap the existing right-turn deceleration lane at the Church Access. Therefore, it is anticipated that a continuous acceleration/deceleration lane is to be provided between the Farm Access and the Church Access. With this proposal the first 50ft of the Farm Access will be paved and widened to 30ft. The connecting internal road will remain gravel and be widened to 24ft.

**5. The special use will comply with all applicable local, state and federal laws and regulations regarding air, water, light, or noise pollution**

All proposed uses on the site will comply with local, state, and federal laws and regulations regarding air, water, light and noise. All business center activities on site are located away from wetlands and the associated migratory bird paths. There are no anticipated or foreseen impacts to wildlife with a seasonal business center usage at this location. All reception noise from weddings and/or occasional large gatherings such as reunions will be inside the barn to mitigate noise impacts. Weddings will be limited to 150 people with a small number of supporting staff and receptions will be located inside the event barn, noise impacts are anticipated to be minimal. Dark sky compliance safety lighting will be provided onsite and will remain respective of the agricultural nature of the site. No new structures are proposed with the this application.

**6. The special use will not otherwise be detrimental to the public health, safety and welfare of the present or future residents of El Paso County**

A seasonal business event center at Venetucci farm will support the philanthropic Fall Festival at Venetucci and serve as a nearby community amenity for the residents of El Paso County, Colorado Springs and Fountain. A seasonal business event center at Venetucci farm will provide a nearby wedding venue for the surrounding community and aid to support ongoing larger community events such as the

Fall Festival and Flower growing operations by Gather Mountain Blooms. Additionally, the business event center will provide local employment opportunities adjacent to the Security Widefield commercial priority development area.

**7. The special use conforms or will conform to all other applicable County rules, regulations or ordinances**

A business event center at this location will comply will all applicable County rules, regulation and ordinances.

The Traffic Memo provided by SM Rocha LLC indicates that the proposed site generated traffic resulting from the proposed Business Event Center is not expected to create negative impacts to traffic operations for the surrounding roadway network and existing site accesses. Analysis of site-generated traffic concludes that proposed development traffic volumes are minor.

Based on the projected usage of the Business Event Center at full build-out, an evaluation of the auxiliary lane requirements reveals that both right-turn and left-turn deceleration lanes are required at the Farm Access based on assumed trip distribution. It is noted that a two-way-left-turn-lanes (TWLTL) exists along US 85 which may be restriped to accommodate a dedicated one-way left-turn lane at the Farm Access. Through conversation with CDOT it is understood that a right-turn acceleration lane is to be required. The anticipated right-turn and left-turn deceleration lanes are to provide 500 feet of deceleration length including a 180-foot taper assuming a lane width of 12 feet. An additional minimum of 50 feet of storage at the end of the left-turn deceleration length is also recommended. The right-turn acceleration lane is to provide 760 feet of acceleration length including a 180-foot taper; however, it is noted that this will overlap the existing right-turn deceleration lane at the Church Access. Therefore, it is anticipated that a continuous acceleration/deceleration lane is to be provided between he Farm Access and the Church Access.