

The North Ranch

**Subdivision
Letter of Intent**

PCD File No. SF26XX

The North Ranch LLC
944 Cheyenne Blvd
Colorado Springs, CO 80905

OWNER: The North Ranch LLC
944 Cheyenne Blvd
Colorado Springs, CO 80905

REPRESENTATIVE: Vertex Consulting Services, LLC
5825 Delmonico Dr., Suite 320
Colorado Springs, CO 80919

PROPERTY LOCATION: East of Highway 83 and North of Needles Drive

TAX SCHEDULE NO: 6100000369

ACREAGE: 47.55 acres

PROPOSED DENSITY: 1 Dwelling Unit Per 3.17 ac

CURRENT ZONING: RR-5

PROPOSED ZONING: RR-2.5

Utility Service:

Mountain View Electric Association (MVEA) provides electric service and Black Hills Energy provides natural gas service to the area. Commitments letters for the subdivision have been provided by MVEA and Black Hills. Each new dwelling unit will be served by individual onsite well and septic systems.

Existing Development:

The site is currently developed as a rural residential lot with one primary dwelling, one accessory living quarters, and a barn. All structures are proposed to remain. Site plans have been submitted depicting each one of the homes being on separate lots meet the setback requirements of the RR-2.5 zone district.

County Road Impact Fee:

The proposed subdivision will be subject to the County's Road Impact Fee. Payment of fees will be required at time of building permit.

Request:

Vertex Consulting Services, LLC, on behalf of The North Ranch LLC, is respectfully submitting an application for approval of:

1. A final plat to allow for the creation of fifteen single-family residential lots.
2. A finding of water sufficiency in terms of water quality, quantity, and dependability.
3. A request for a waiver from Section 8.4.3.C.5 of the Land Development Code to allow the proposed lots to be accessed by a private road and not a County roadway.

Analysis and Justification:

The pages that follow address each one of the criteria included within Section 7.2.1 (subdivision) of the El Paso County Land Development Code.

COMPLIANCE WITH CRITERIA OF APPROVAL AND SUBDIVISION DESIGN STANDARDS

The proposed subdivision meets the criteria for approval included within Section 7.2.1.D.3 of the El Paso County Land Development Code as described below:

The subdivision is in general conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan;

Your El Paso County Master Plan

Chapter 1 of Your El Paso Master Plan (2021) states that the Plan is “general in nature-it cannot tackle every issue in sufficient detail to determine every type of necessary action.” In addition, Chapter 1 goes on to state that the Plan “is intended to provide clearer and more coordinated policy, resulting in a document that effectively communicates County goals and identifies specific actions to achieve both County-wide and local area objectives.” When taken together, these two statements suggest to the reader that the Plan may only address certain issues at a cursory level and that specific steps or actions for addressing such issues may not be offered within the Plan. However, that is not the case with this subdivision request, as identified below.

Chapter 3 Land Use

Key Area Analysis: “Tri-Lakes Key Area”

“Tri-Lakes” Key Area

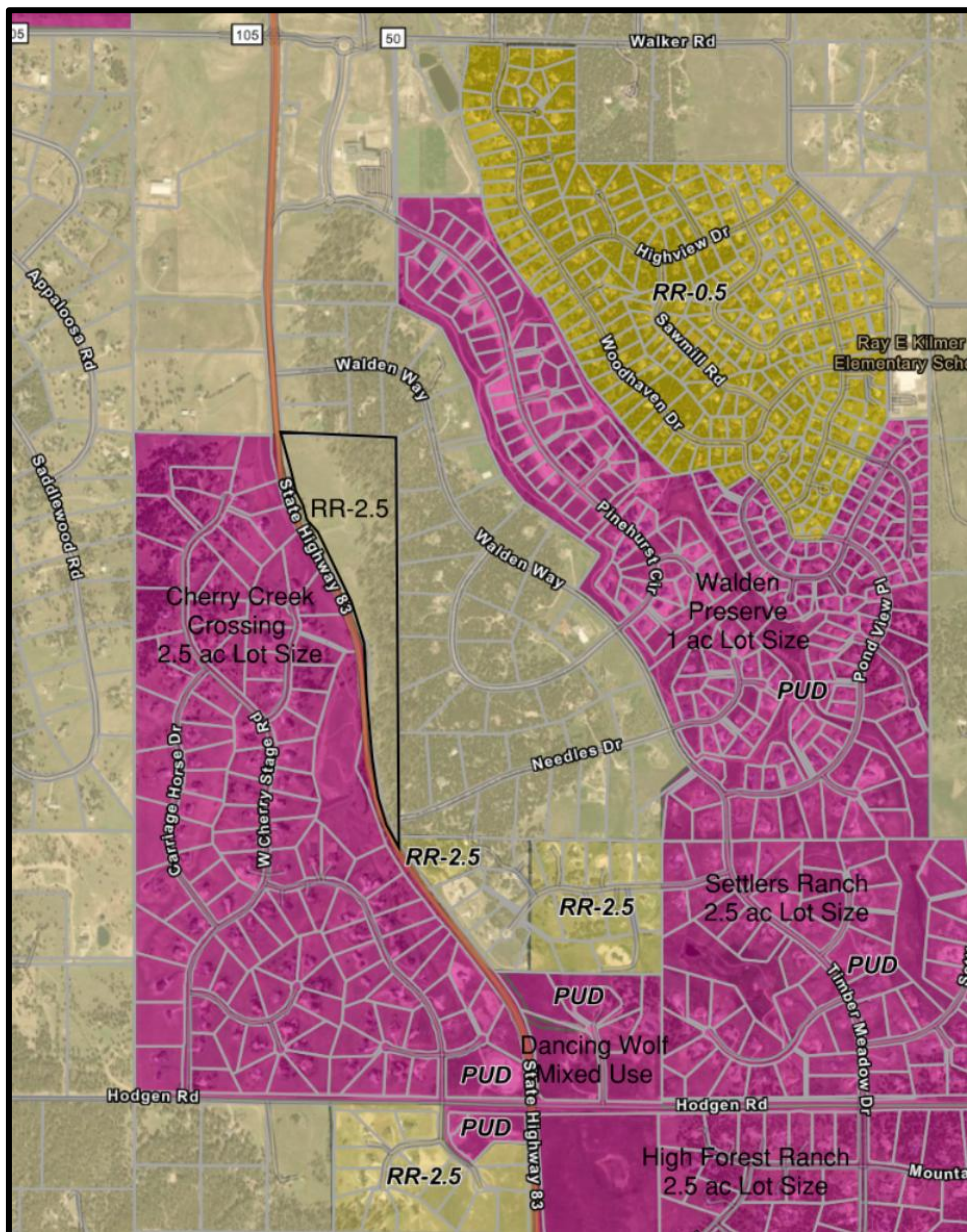
The property is located within the Tri-Lakes Key Area. The Plan describes the key area as follows:

“Tri-Lakes is the northern gateway into the County along Interstate 25 and Highway 83. It is situated between Pike National Forest, the United States Air Force Academy, and Black Forest. With significant suburban development and some mixed-use development, this Key Area supports the commercial needs of many of the residents in northern El Paso County. ***Tri-Lakes also serves as a place of residence for many who commute to work in the Denver Metropolitan Area.*** It is also an activity and entertainment center with the three lakes (Monument Lake, Woodmoor Lake, and Palmer Lake) that comprise its namesake and direct access to the national forest. Tri-Lakes is the most well-established community in the northern part of the County with ***a mixture of housing options***, easy access to necessary commercial goods and services, and a variety of entertainment opportunities. ***Future development in this area should align with the existing character and strengthen the residential, commercial, employment, and entertainment opportunities in the adjacent communities of Monument, Palmer Lake, and Woodmoor.*** (emphasis added)

The proposed subdivision is in general conformance with the El Paso County Master Plan, specifically the goals and policies applicable to the Tri-Lakes Key Area. The Master Plan identifies Tri-Lakes as a well-established residential community that accommodates a significant population of residents who commute to employment centers in the Denver Metropolitan Area. The proposed subdivision supports this role by providing additional residential opportunities that expand housing availability and reinforce the area's function as a commuter-oriented community. The property's proximity to Highway 83 further supports its suitability, offering convenient regional access and strengthening the connection between housing supply and employment centers to the north and south.

Furthermore, the Master Plan emphasizes that future development within the Tri-Lakes Key Area should "align with the existing character" while strengthening residential, commercial, and community opportunities in Monument, Palmer Lake, and Woodmoor. The proposed subdivision is consistent with this directive and reflects the established pattern of mixed residential densities in the surrounding area. Adjacent properties to the north and west are zoned RR-5, while properties immediately to the south are zoned RR-2.5, creating a compatible and gradual transition in lot sizes. The nearby Cherry Creek Crossing PUD (approximately 2.5-acre lots) and the Walden Preserve PUD (approximately one-acre lots located roughly 800 feet to the east) further demonstrate the existing mixture of residential densities that characterize the area (see map below).

By reinforcing the existing development pattern, supporting commuter housing demand, and maintaining compatibility with surrounding zoning and land uses, the proposed subdivision aligns with and advances the intent of the Master Plan. As such, the application meets the review criterion that it is in general conformance with the El Paso County Master Plan.



Area of Change Analysis: “Minimal Change: Developed”

The subject property is identified in the Areas of Change map within the Plan as being within the “Minimal Change: Developed” area of change.

“Minimal Change: Developed” Area of Change

Page 21 of the Plan characterizes areas of “Minimal Change: Developed” by stating:

“These areas have undergone development and have an established character. Developed areas of minimal change are largely built out ***but may include isolated pockets of vacant or underutilized land. These key sites are likely to see more intense infill development with a***

mix of uses and scale of redevelopment that will significantly impact the character of an area. For example, a large amount of vacant land in a suburban division adjacent to a more urban neighborhood may be developed and change to match the urban character and intensity so as to accommodate a greater population. The inverse is also possible where an undeveloped portion of a denser neighborhood could redevelop to a less intense suburban scale. ***Regardless of the development that may occur, if these areas evolve to a new development pattern of differing intensity, their overall character can be maintained.***
(Emphasis added)

This parcel is an underutilized vacant property in an enclave of developed land on all sides. To the north and east is the Walden subdivision, to the west and south the Cherry Creek Crossing subdivision. As discussed above, the proposed 15 lot subdivision is consistent with the established pattern of mixed residential densities in the surrounding area. The proposed subdivision is consistent with the surrounding established development character.

Placetype Analysis: “Large-Lot Residential”

The subject property is shown on the Placetypes map of Your El Paso Master Plan as being within the Large-Lot Residential Placetype.

Page 26 of the Plan identifies the following land uses as being Primary Land Uses within the Large-Lot Residential Placetype:

- **Single-Family Detached Residential (typically 2.5 acre lots or larger)**

In addition, the Placetype includes the following Supporting Land Uses:

- Parks/Open Space
- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Service
- Agriculture

The Large-Lot Residential Placetype is described further on page 26 as follows:

“The Large-Lot Residential placetype consists almost entirely of residential development and acts as the transition between placetypes. ***Development in this placetype typically consists of single-family homes occupying lots of 2.5 acres or more, and are generally large and dispersed throughout the area so as to preserve a rural aesthetic.*** The Large-Lot Residential placetype generally supports accessory dwelling units as well. Even with the physical separation of homes, this placetype still fosters a sense of community and is more connected and less remote than Rural areas. Large-Lot Residential neighborhoods typically rely on well and septic, but some developments may be served by central water and wastewater utilities. If central water and wastewater can be provided, then lots sized less than 2.5 acres could be allowed if; 1.) the overall density is at least 2.5 acres/lot, 2.) the design for development incorporates conservation of open space, and 3.) it is compatible with the character of existing developed areas.

Conservation design (or clustered development) should routinely be considered for new development within the Large-Lot Residential placetype to provide for a similar level of development density as existing large-lot areas while maximizing the preservation of contiguous areas of open space and the protection of environmental features. While the Large-Lot Residential placetype is defined by a clear set of characteristics, the different large-lot areas that exist throughout the County can exhibit their own unique characters based on geography and landscape.” (emphasis added)

The proposed subdivision includes a total of 15 lots, resulting in an average of 3.17 acres per lot.

Chapter 4 Housing & Communities

In addition to supporting and being in compliance with the applicable Areas of Change, Key Area, and Placetype designations and policies in Chapter 3 of the Master Plan, the proposed subdivision is also in total alignment with the Residential Priority Development Area designation found in Chapter 4 of the Plan.

The subject property is located within a Priority Development Area, specifically the Black Forest/North Central Area. Priority Development areas were specifically identified in an effort to guide growth towards certain areas of the County first, before developing others.

The Plan states “El Paso County is expecting significant growth over the next 20 years. While large expanses of undeveloped land exist throughout the County, particularly in the Rural Placetype, development should be prioritized elsewhere to efficiently utilize and extend existing infrastructure, conserve water resources, and strengthen established neighborhoods. This framework identifies specific locations throughout the County that should be prioritized first for new residential development to help accommodate growth.”

The Black Forest/North Central Area is described further on page 57 as follows:

Black Forest is a community with one of the strongest and most well-established characters in El Paso County. This area is built around protecting the forest and preserving its rural quality. Due to this natural amenity, many new residents seek to live in this area when moving to the County.

- ***Careful planning is required to promote health of natural areas, especially the forest, while accommodating new development for future residents.***
- The County should ***maintain existing and expand the Large-Lot Residential place type*** in this area in a development pattern that matches the existing character of the developed Black Forest community.
- Commercial nodes should be considered where appropriately served

by the transportation network in the northern area to provide commercial goods and services within closer proximity to the population in this area. This would reduce unnecessary travel to other parts of the County and establish key commercial areas within the communities that need them.

The proposed subdivision aligns with the Master Plan recommendations, including prioritizing development in this area of the County while maintaining and expand the Large Lot Residential Placetype. The property owners have already completed a tree survey which resulted in the removal of beetle-infested trees. Additionally, the property owners have also drafted a detailed forestry management and wildfire mitigation plan and begun the necessary mitigation to ensure not only the health of the forest but also the safety of those in the area. Details and instructions regarding ongoing maintenance and mitigation will be included in the subdivision covenants.

El Paso County Water Master Plan

The subject property is located within Planning Region 2 of the Water Master Plan, pursuant to Figure 3-1 on page 25, which includes Walden Water and Sanitation District along with several other central water providers. Table 5-3 of the Plan identifies that Region 2 has a current demand of 7,532 acre-feet per year and a current supply of 13,607 acre-feet per year, which results in current excess water supplies in the amount of 6,075 acre-feet per year. Tables 5-4 and 5-5 project Region 2 as continuing to have excess water supplies at year 2040 and at full buildout (2060) in the amount of 1,894 acre-feet and 353 acre-feet, respectively. A Water Resources Report was submitted in support of the application. The report identified there is adequate water in terms of water quality, quantity, and dependability. A finding of water sufficiency by the Board of County Commissioners is being requested.

El Paso County Parks Master Plan

The El Paso County Parks Master Plan (2022) does not depict any planned open space on, or adjacent to the subject property. The Plan depict a planned bicycle route along Highway 83 and Walker Road. Land dedication, or fees in lieu of land dedication will be paid at the time of final plat recording.

2024 Major Transportation Corridors Plan (MTCP)

The 2045 Roadway Plan (Classification and Lanes) exhibit of the 2024 El Paso County Major Transportation Corridors Plan (MTCP) identifies Highway 83 to the west of the project as a "Principal Arterial". A traffic impact study was prepared by SM Rocha and has been submitted in support of the requested application. The final plat depicts the extension of Needles Drive along with the extension of a private road to serve the property. An emergency-only access onto Highway

83 has also been depicted on the final plat. CDOT has indicated no objection to the emergency-only access, provided an access permit is obtained following the subdivision approval. The fire district reviewed the proposed subdivision, water supply, and access prior to submission to El Paso County and has no objection.

Other Topical Elements of the County Master Plan

The proposed rezone is in compliance with the other topical elements of the County Master Plan, including the Master Plan for Mineral Extraction, and the El Paso County Wildlife Habitat Maps and Descriptors.

The subdivision is in substantial conformance with the approved preliminary plan;

A preliminary plan was not required, therefore, this criteria does not apply.

The subdivision is consistent with the subdivision design standards and regulations and meets all planning, engineering, and surveying requirements of the County for maps, data, surveys, analyses, studies, reports, plans, designs, documents, and other supporting materials;

The subdivision meets all of the design standards included within Chapter 8 of the Code as well as the dimensional standards of the RR-2.5 zoning district, with the exception of the roadway waiver request. The reports and maps submitted in support of the application are in full compliance with the County, State, and Federal rules and regulations as well as the County adopted checklists.

Either a sufficient water supply has been acquired in terms of quantity, quality, and dependability for the type of subdivision proposed, as determined in accordance with the standards set forth in the water supply standards [C.R.S. § 30-28-133(6)(a)] and the requirements of Chapter 8 of this Code, or, with respect to applications for administrative final plat approval, such finding was previously made by the BoCC at the time of preliminary plan approval;

A water resources report has been submitted in support of the final plat application. The report identifies there is adequate water for a 300-year water supply.

A public sewage disposal system has been established and, if other methods of sewage disposal are proposed, the system complies with state and local laws and regulations, [C.R.S. § 30-28-133(6) (b)] and the requirements of Chapter 8 of this Code;

All lots will be served by individual onsite wastewater treatment systems (OWTS). Entech prepared a wastewater report identifying that all lots have at least two potential locations for OWTS systems. Future systems will be reviewed and approved by El Paso County Public Health.

All areas of the proposed subdivision, which may involve soil or topographical conditions presenting hazards or requiring special precautions, have been identified and the proposed subdivision is compatible with such conditions. [C.R.S. § 30-28-133(6)(c)];

A Soils and Geology Study was prepared by Entech and was submitted as a supporting document to this application. Areas of potentially seasonal water were found on the site. The conclusion of the Study was that “It is our opinion that the existing geologic engineering and geologic conditions will impose some minor constraints on the proposed development and construction. The site conditions can be mitigated through proper engineering design and construction practices. The proposed development and use are consistent with anticipated geologic and engineering geologic conditions.”

Adequate drainage improvements complying with State law [C.R.S. § 30-28-133(3)(c)(VIII)] and the requirements of this Code and the ECM are provided by the design;

A drainage report has been submitted addressing the requirements of the Land Development Code and the Engineering Criteria Manual at the final plat stage of development and all applicable design criteria requirements have been implemented in the associated final drainage plan. The drainage report, construction drawings, and grading plan depicts the planned water quality/detention pond location. The detention pond will be owned and maintained by the Home Owners Association.

Legal and physical access is or will be provided to all parcels by public rights-of-way or recorded easement, acceptable to the County in compliance with this Code and the ECM;

Access will be provided by a paved cul-de-sac meeting El Paso County and Fire Department criteria. A secondary emergency access is proposed on Highway 83. CDOT has indicated no objection to the emergency access point and will require permitting after the final plat has been approved.

Necessary services, including police and fire protection, recreation, utilities, open space and transportation system, are or will be available to serve the proposed subdivision;

The property is served by the Monument Fire Protection District, which has an obligation to provide fire protection service to the development, and is within the patrol area of the El Paso County Sheriff’s Office. Mountain View Electric Association will provide electric service and Black Hill Energy will provide natural gas service to the development. The proposed roadways will be adequate and allow for emergency response access to the site. Monument Fire has no objection to the proposed development and roadway configuration.

The final plans provide evidence to show that the proposed methods for fire protection comply with Chapter 6 of this Code;

All roadways are designed to meet the fire apparatus turning radius requirements and minimum width requirements for two-way travel. There is an existing fire hydrant located off of Needles Drive. The fire department has identified this is adequate to serve the site and is not requiring additional fire water onsite. A fire protection report, wildfire mitigation plan, and forestry management plan have all been submitted in support of the subdivision application and demonstrate compliance with Chapter 6 requirements.

The proposed subdivision meets other applicable sections of Chapters 6 and 8 of the Code;

The proposed subdivision meets all applicable regulations included within Chapters 6 and 8. Please review the associated soils and geology report, onsite wastewater treatment system report, traffic study, drainage report, wildfire mitigation plan, forestry management plan, and grading and erosion control plan which document compliance with both chapters, as applicable.

Adequate public facilities or infrastructure, or cash-in-lieu, for impacts reasonably related to the proposed subdivision have been constructed or are financially guaranteed through the SIA so the impacts of the subdivision will be adequately mitigated;

All public improvements have been included in the financial assurance estimate as well as in the SIA. Drainage, bridge, park, and school fees will be paid at the time of plat recordation.

The subdivision meets other applicable sections of Chapter 6 and 8; and

The subdivision meets all applicable sections of Chapter 6 and 8.

The extraction of any known commercial mining deposit shall not be impeded by this subdivision [C.R.S. §§ 34-1-302(1), et seq.]

There are no severed mineral rights.

WAIVER

The pages that follow address each one of the criteria included within Section 7.3.3 (waiver) of the El Paso County Land Development Code.

Waiver

The waiver does not have the effect of nullifying the intent and purpose of this Code.

The purpose and intent of the portions of the Code to be waived are to ensure safe, legal access. Legal access is being provided via an easement to a County roadway. The Monument Fire Protection District has provided a commitment letter, and has indicating no concern with the requested waiver. All other aspects of the Code remain in force.

The waiver will not result in the need for additional subsequent waivers.

The waivers will not result in the need for additional waivers.

The granting of the waiver will not be detrimental to the public safety, health, or welfare or injurious to other property.

Safe, legal access will be gained from the private road to a County roadway.

The conditions upon which the request for a waiver is based are unique to the property for which the waiver is sought and are not applicable to other property.

The developer would like to create a high-end gated community. The proposed gate will meet emergency response requirements and will include a Knox box. The cul-de-sac will be for the sole benefit of the proposed 15 lots and will not connect to through to a County roadway. A gated community is unique for this area of El Paso County and necessitates private roads.

A particular non-economical hardship to the owner would result from a strict application of this Code.

As stated above, the waiver is requested because the owner would like to create a gated community.

The waiver will not in any manner vary the zoning provisions of this Code.

All standards of the RR-2.5 zoning district will be met.

The proposed waiver is not contrary to any provision of the Master Plan.

See Master Plan section below for further information regarding how the proposed subdivision is in compliance with the Master Plan.