



Vertex Consulting Services

5825 Delmonico Drive
Colorado Springs, CO 80919
719-733-8605

**Pro Trans Plus
Variance of Use
Letter of Intent**

April 14, 2025

VA253

OWNER:

Pro Trans Plus
7936 Cessna Drive
Peyton, CO 80831
Phone: (719) 661-5669
Email: protransplus7936@gmail.com

Enclosures: Taxiway Safety Procedure
Surrounding Commercial Uses Map

Planner: Vertex Consulting Services, LLC, Nina Ruiz
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Tax Schedule Nos: 4304002080

Acreage: 1.68 Acres Total

Zoning: R-4 (Planned Development District Obsolete), GA-O (General Aviation Overlay District)

Utilities: Mountain View Electric Association (MVEA) provides electric service and Colorado Springs Utilities provides natural gas service to the existing structures.

Site Location:

Vertex Consulting Services, LLC, on behalf of Pro Trans Plus, is respectfully submitting a variance of use application to allow for a "Commercial Vehicle Repair Garage" in the R-4, GA-O zone district. The property is located approximately 0.7 miles southeast of the Judge Orr Road and Highway 24 Intersection, within Meadow Lake Airport. The proposed variance of use is compatible with the surrounding planned and existing development and is consistent with the Your El Paso Master Plan.

Floodplain:

Include a floodplain statement: The flood map for the selected area is number 08041C0554G, effective on 12/7/2018. This property is in Zone X, area of minimal flood hazard. No floodplain requirements will apply.

Request:

The purpose of this application is to:

1. Request approval of a variance of use to allow a "Commercial Vehicle Repair Garage" in the R-4, GA-O zone. Section 1.15 of the Land Development Code defines Commercial Vehicle Repair Garage as:
"An establishment used for the care or repair of passenger vehicles and light trucks, including major or minor work such as paint, body and fender work or engine and transmission overhaul and incidental storage or parking of repaired vehicles, but excluding the dismantling of wrecked vehicles and the storage of junk vehicles.
2. The daily trips associated with Pro Trans Plus shall not exceed 10.

No additional ground disturbance is being requested. The variance of use request only applies to Mr. Gandara's unit as depicted on the site plan and floorplan. The remainder of the building will be utilized for other uses and is not subject to the variance of use.

Use Description:

The business, Pro Trans Plus, is operated by the owner Jeff Gandara and has been in business for over 19 years at the current location. The only employee, other than Mr. Gandara, is Mr. Gandara's significant other who assists with administrative duties on a part-time as-needed basis. Pro-Trans Plus may choose to hire a full-time administrative employee in the future, bringing their total employee count to 3 employees, including Jeff Gandara.

Jeff Gandara is a licensed A & P mechanic through the FAA (Airframe and Powerplant Aircraft). Pro Trans Plus has completed aircraft annual maintenance on countless aircraft over the years. Pro Trans Plus has repaired numerous airplanes and gliders over the years. A few examples of aircraft work that has taken place in the past year includes airplane brake repairs, installation of client cowling, alternator repair, evacuate and repair air conditioning systems, engine assembly, rebuilding transmissions for airplane tow vehicles.

The business repairs both airplanes as well as passenger vehicles. Pro Trans Plus has performed annual maintenance of a Meadowlake Airport Association Plow Truck, including oil changes, blade maintenance, and hydraulic system repairs. Pro Trans Plus has also repaired the Meadow Lake fire mitigation vehicle. Pro Trans Plus has also repaired countless vehicles of Meadowlake Airport Association members over the years, sometimes while they are flying their airplane.

Pro Trans Plus also repairs passenger vehicles for non-Meadowlake Airport Association members in addition to the airport related functions. Due to Mr. Gandara being the only employed mechanic, he serves an average of 4-5 vehicles/airplanes per week. Mr. Gandara is a responsible business owner and wants to ensure all patrons are safe when entering and exiting his shop. He has a well-established protocol to inform non-Meadowlake Airport Association members of the fact that his business is within the General Aviation Overlay, provide them with directions to the site that eliminate them getting lost and inadvertently driving onto the runway, and of the fact that airplanes have the right of way. Prior to confirming an appointment time, either Mr. Gandara or his admin informs the patron over the phone that they will be entering an airport, that they should always look for airplanes, that if they encounter an airplane the airplane always has the right of way. Following confirmation of the appointment time, the patron is sent an email/text reinforcing what was discussed over the phone. (see exhibit attached) The directions and route to access the business instruct patrons to drive down Cessna Drive, a non-taxiway private road, until they turn right onto a platted 40 foot ingress and egress easement (non-taxiway). The patrons will never drive on a taxi-way or runway.

Justification:

The pages that follow address each one of the Variance of Use criteria included within Section 5.3.4 of the El Paso County Land Development Code:

The strict application of any of the provisions of this Code would result in peculiar and exceptional practical difficulties or undue hardship.

The Board of County Commissioners added the OA-G (named GA-O today) to the subject parcels on May 18, 1970. This overlay added the following permitted uses to the underlying A-3 zone district [see attached 1980 OA-G zone]:

- Aero club facilities
- Aircraft maintenance facilities
- Airfields and landing strips
- Airport terminals and related supporting facilities [e.g. restaurants, hotels, retail]
- Aviation control towers
- Hangars and tie-down facilities
- Navigation instruments and aids
- Aviation related businesses

The property was platted as part of Meadow Lake Airport Filing No. 3 in 1982. The plat included the following note, restricting the land uses permitted by the underlying A-3, OA-G zone:

“All lots in this subdivision will be utilized for hangars & airport accessory uses only. No residential uses are allowed. Private wells & septic systems may be approved only upon lots which are combined into a minimum of 2.5 acres.”

The Board of County Commissioners approved a rezoning of the subject parcels from the A-3/OA-G to the R-4/OA-G on November 23, 1981. The R-4 zone district allowed commercial uses as outlined in the PBP zone pursuant to Section 17 of the 1980 Land Development Code [See attached R-4 zone.] The application submitted by the Meadow Lake Airport Development Corporation did not include a list of permitted/excluded uses, nor did it include new dimensional standards for the R-4 zone. The R-4 zone specifically permitted those allowed uses in the PBP zone district and the Meadow Lake Airport Development Corporation provided the use is aviation related.

There are other commercial businesses within the Meadow Lake Filing 3 subdivision and the other surrounding subdivisions. [See attached Commercial Uses Map identifying the numerous other commercial operations in place today]. Over the years several other lots within the Meadow Lake subdivisions have received approval of plat note waivers, subdivision exemptions, and replats to remove the use restriction included within the Meadow Lake Airport Filing 1. Additionally, special uses have been approved to allow for those uses allowed within the PID zone. The Department has identified that a plat note waiver, subdivision exemption, or replat are no longer options for allowing the proposed use. The variance of use has been identified as the process for removing the plat note restriction. These other uses will likely be required by El Paso County Planning to obtain approval of a variance of use, regardless of prior actions taken by the Board of County Commissioners.

The business has been in operation at this location for over 19 years without a variance of use, or other land use action being required. A review of the historical cases in EDARP uncovers that the complaint from 2021 was closed without further code enforcement action (CE21932). The business owner wishes to continue to operate his business in the same location and manner as he has for the past 19 years. The property owner may only do so with approval of the variance of use. This sequence of events, and prior assumptions, presents a practical difficulty for the current owner.

- ***The variance of use is generally consistent with the applicable Master Plan;***

Please see the Master Plan analysis beginning on page 8.

The proposed use is compatible with the surrounding area, harmonious with the character of the neighborhood, not detrimental to the surrounding area, not detrimental to the future development of the area, and not detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the inhabitants of the area and County;

The property has been utilized for uses other than “hangars and tie-downs” since 1985. Please see the attached map and table identifying the numerous commercial uses in the area.

The Meadow Lake area is characterized by light industrial uses. The R-4 and GA-O zone districts allow for commercial uses, which include airplane repair and maintenance. A portion of the business that occurs onsite is airplane repair and maintenance. The business has also provided repair and maintenance to critical Meadowlake Airport Association equipment in the past. A Commercial Vehicle Repair Garage is compatible with the numerous pre-existing commercial vehicle repair garages, light industrial uses, and other commercial service uses in the area.

- ***The proposed use will be able to meet air, water, odor or noise standards established by County, State or federal regulations during construction and upon completion of the project;***

The proposed use meets all air, water, odor, and noise standards. All repair occurs inside of the building.

- ***The proposed use will comply with all applicable requirements of this Code and all applicable County, State and federal regulations except those portions varied by this action;***

All structures are pre-existing and have previously been permitted. No alterations or additions are proposed.

- ***The proposed use will not adversely affect wildlife or wetlands;***

The structures have been constructed. No additional impacts to wildlife are anticipated as a result of the approval of the variance of use. There are no wetlands onsite.

- ***The applicant has addressed all off-site impacts;***

The impacts are anticipated to be the same as all other permitted uses within the surrounding R-4, GA-O properties, such as airplane repair and manufacturing.

- ***The site plan for the proposed variance of use will provide for adequate parking, traffic circulation, open space, fencing, screening, and landscaping; and/or***

Pro Trans Plus repairs passenger vehicles for non-Meadowlake Airport Association members in addition to the airport related functions. Due to Mr. Gandara being the only employed mechanic, he serves an average of 4-5 vehicles/airplanes per week. The shop can store a total of six vehicles. There is a parking area located on the southern end of the building that Mr. Gandara has used in the past. Other unit owners of the building have started utilizing these parking spaces. For this reason, Mr.

Gandara proposes to construct two parking spaces onsite to accommodate employees if the variance of use is approved.

The Land Development Code requires one parking space per employee plus 3 spaces per bay or stall. There will be a maximum of 2 employees total on shift (one mechanic, one administrative employee) and there are 2 bays. Each bay can store 3 vehicles (two on the ground, one lifted). The Land Development Code requires 9 parking spaces. An additional proposed condition of approval limits the maximum daily trips to no more than 10 trips per day, although it is only anticipated that there would be 6 trips per day (4 for employees, one customer). The property owner is requesting an alternative parking ratio with the variance of use to allow for two parking spaces to be provided. These two parking spaces will be utilized for the employees. Any vehicles/airplanes being worked on will be inside of the shop in one of the two bays. Customers will drop off and pick up from the shop. Please see photos attached.

The variance of use is anticipated to result in an average of 6 additional trips per day. A traffic impact study is not required pursuant to ECM Appendix B, ECM Chapters 1.6 and 1.16 as:

1. The proposed variance of use will not result in traffic in excess of 100 ADT or 10 trips at the peak hour.
2. There are no additional minor or major roadways or intersections being proposed
3. The increase in the number of vehicular trips does not exceed the existing trip generation by more than 10 peak hour trips or 100 daily trip.
4. There will be no change in the type of traffic to be generated.
5. The variance of use will not result in a change to the LOS for Judge Orr Road or any other nearby County roadways.
6. No roadway or intersection in the immediate vicinity has a history of safety or accident problems.
7. There is no proposed access onto a State Highway.

No screening, open space, fencing, or landscaping are required for properties within the Meadow Lake Airport pursuant to the 1981 R-4 zoning [See page 14 of 1981 staff packet]. Additionally, no outside storage is proposed which would necessitate screening.

A taxiway easement has been established along the south western property boundaries [See site plan]. This taxiway easement is not obstructed with any structures, fencing, or vegetation that would preclude airplane wings from traversing the length of easement. Mr. Gandara is a responsible business owner and wants to ensure all patrons are safe when entering and exiting his shop. He has a well-established protocol to inform non- Meadowlake Airport Association members of the fact that his business is within the General Aviation Overlay, provide them with directions to the site that eliminate them getting lost and inadvertently driving onto the runway, and of the fact that airplanes have the right of way. Prior to confirming an appointment time, either Mr. Gandara or his admin informs the patron over the phone that they will be entering an airport, that they should always look for airplanes, that if they encounter an airplane the airplane always has the right of way. Following confirmation of the appointment time, the patron is send an email/text reinforcing what was discussed over the phone. (see exhibit attached) The directions and route to access the business instruct patrons to drive down Cessna Drive, a non-taxiway private road, until they turn right onto a platted 40 foot ingress and egress easement (non-taxiway). The patrons will never drive on a taxi-way or runway.

- ***Sewer, water, storm water drainage, fire protection, police protection, and roads will be available and adequate to serve the needs of the proposed variance of use as designed and proposed.***

The property is within the Falcon Fire Protection District. El Paso Sheriff's Department will respond to any emergency.

Master Plan Elements

Below is an analysis of the various El Paso County Master Plan elements.

Your El Paso County Master Plan Analysis

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. That conclusion is certainly the case in numerous instances and with regard to a variety of topical areas. However, where that is not the case is with respect to the variance of use request, as identified below.

Key Area Analysis

The subject property is not identified in the Plan as being within a Key Area.

Area of Change Analysis

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

Page 21 of the Plan characterizes areas of "Minimal Change: Undeveloped" by stating:

"The character of these areas is defined by a lack of development and presence of significant natural areas. These areas will experience some redevelopment of select underutilized or vacant sites adjacent to other built-out sites, but such redevelopment will be limited in scale so as to not alter the essential character. New development may also occur in these areas on previously undeveloped land, but overall there will be no change to the prioritized rural and natural environments." (Emphasis added)

The subject property is currently developed and is surrounded by other commercial and industrial properties. The Master Plan anticipates some redevelopment provided the character can be maintained. The business has been in operation at this location for over 19 years and is a part of the essential character.

Placetype Analysis

The subject property is shown on the Placetypes map of Your El Paso Master Plan as being within the Employment Center Placetype. Page 36 of the Plan identifies the following land uses as being Primary Land Uses within the Employment Center Placetype:

- Light Industrial/Business Park
- Heavy Industrial
- Office

The following land uses have been identified as being supporting land uses in the Employment Center Placetype:

- Commercial Retail
- Commercial Services
- Restaurants

The Employment Center Placetype is described further on page 36 as follows:

“Employment Centers comprise land for industrial, office, business park, manufacturing, distribution, warehousing, and other similar business uses. The priority function of this placetype is to provide space for large-scale employers to establish and expand in El Paso County. They are typically located on or directly adjacent to Interstate 25 and/or other regional corridors to ensure business and employee access.

Proximity to other transportation hubs, such as Meadowlake Airport, and rail lines is also appropriate for an Employment Center. Uses in this placetype often require large swaths of land and opportunity to expand and grow to meet future needs and demands. Transitional uses, buffering, and screening should be used to mitigate any potential negative impacts to nearby residential and rural areas. Some Employment Centers are located in Foreign Trade, Commercial Aeronautical, and Opportunity Zones to help incentivize development.” (emphasis added)

Commercial and industrial land uses are recommended within the Employment Center. The aircraft repair and vehicle repair garage use fits within the commercial and industrial land use category, therefore, the proposed variance of use is in general conformance with the Placetype recommendations.

El Paso County Parks Master Plan

The El Paso County Parks Master Plan (2022) does not depict any planned or existing trails or open space on the subject property. Land dedication, or fees in lieu of land dedication are not required with a variance of use request.

Other Topical Elements of the County Master Plan

The proposed variance of use 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.

DIRECTIONS TO PRO TRANS PLUS

General Guidelines

- Airplanes have the right of way on all taxiways
- Always yield to airplanes
- Under no circumstances should you drive onto a runway
- Do not vary from the route outlined below. This route has been established to ensure safety.

Parking Instructions

- Park your vehicle in the Pro Trans Plus shop located at the south end of the building



SHOP PHOTOS DEMONSTRATING VEHICLE STORAGE



