

10 May 2023

To: El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department
Planning Division
Attn: Kylie Bagley
2880 International Circle,
Suite 110, Colorado Springs, CO 80910

From: Residents of Homestead at Sterling Ranch
Colorado Springs, CO 80908

We, the property owners and the residents of Homestead at Sterling Ranch, strongly oppose the proposed replat and Recreation Vehicle (RV) storage site plans submitted by the owner, Scott Belknap, of Belknap Ventures, LLC. The property description is Lot A & C of McClintock Station at 8815 & 8765 Vollmer Rd, Colorado Springs. For many relevant reasons, we strongly urge the El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department to deny Mr. Belknap's plans for a replat and his plans to build an RV storage lot. Our many concerns are listed below.

1. **Safety/Increased Crime:** RV storage facilities often attract theft, vandalism, and other types of criminal activity that will threaten the safety of residents living nearby. According to the data collected by the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program, there were 6,925,677 property crime offenses in the nation in 2019 alone, resulting in losses estimated at \$15.8 billion. In fact our neighboring Arapaho County Sheriff's Office reported an 80% increase in burglaries at self-storage units, like RV storage lots, in 2020 with a recorded 115 burglaries at 35 different sites. There is already an RV storage site less than a quarter mile southwest on Vollmer Road from where this RV site is planned. Adding yet another RV Storage site that borders the residential lots invites criminals, and criminal activity, to the neighborhood, which is a serious threat to the safety and well-being of the residents.
2. **Traffic:** The increase in traffic from the RV storage site will negatively impact residents' access to and from their homes, as well as make it more difficult for emergency vehicles to reach the residents of Sterling Ranch in the event of an emergency. Another RV storage facility will attract a significant amount of traffic, particularly during peak periods when people are dropping off or picking up their vehicles. This will lead to more congestion on the already narrow, two-way Vollmer Road, which has no shoulder or traffic lights near the entrance of Homestead at Sterling Ranch neighborhood. Currently, the only entrance and exit from the Sterling Ranch neighborhood is from Dines Boulevard and Vollmer Road, which is only less than a quarter mile from the entrance of the proposed RV storage site. All that to say, the RV storage site will create an unsafe traffic bottleneck. Furthermore, Colorado Springs Utilities will be installing a large natural gas pipeline along Vollmer Road which is expected to start in May 2023 and continue for the next two (2) years. This natural gas renewal project is expected to bring larger construction vehicles and heavy industrial equipment to the Sterling Ranch neighborhood. The increased noise levels, dust, dirt, safety hazards posed by the amount of heavy machinery, and the negative impacts on traffic compounded by the proposed RV storage site, are incredibly unfair for one group of residents to withstand. The lack of traffic safety infrastructure and the addition of yet another traffic bottleneck is blatantly irresponsible and is inviting serious traffic accidents, which is absolutely counter to Colorado Springs Police Department's number one (#1) priority, "improving traffic safety."
3. **Noise Pollution:** This point cannot be emphasized enough, RV storage lots generate a significant amount of noise, especially during the loading and unloading of vehicles. RV storage lots require large vehicles to be maneuvered and parked, which will produce an abundance of noise, particularly

during late night and early morning hours, when people are trying to sleep. Again, there is already one RV storage lot nearby that is loud and littered with trash. Adding yet another RV storage site 20 feet from residents' backyards will absolutely disturb the peaceful nature of the residential area, negatively affecting the quality of life of residents and the enjoyment of their property.

4. **Environmental concerns:** The proposed RV storage facility may cause environmental concerns such as an increase in litter, dust, road debris, and pollution. Idling engines and fumes will cause air pollution that will lower the air quality for local residents, possibly to dangerous levels. Additionally, this RV storage site is likely to have fuel, motor oil, anti-freeze, solvents, or other chemical spills which will impact the local water supply to the nearby residents. The environmental concerns of this RV storage site have the potential to cause life-threatening illnesses to the nearby residents.
5. **Aesthetics:** RV storage facilities are not visually appealing and will decrease the overall attractiveness and charm of the area, which will negatively impact quality of life for residents.
6. **Decrease in Property Value:** The increase in criminal activity, traffic, and noise are all concerns created by the proposed RV storage facility. Coupled with the negative aesthetics and environmental concerns this project brings, it will undoubtedly decrease property value for residents in the Homestead at Sterling Ranch neighborhood. An analysis of the negative effects from RV storage sites on residential property values is unavailable because these sites are generally not located in residential neighborhoods. It is unfair to the residents at Sterling Ranch who worked hard for their homes and the beautification of the neighborhood to be a test case for how property values are lowered by proximity to an unsightly RV storage lot and the negative activity associated with it. The introduction of an RV storage site may also bring about zoning changes that could have long-term consequences for the area, including increased property taxes for a property that will decrease in value and a shift in the character of the neighborhood.
7. **Nuisance:** This proposed RV storage facility will absolutely be a nuisance for the residents of Homestead at Sterling Ranch, especially to those residents who's property boarder the proposed RV site with their backyards a mere 20 feet away. In Colorado, a nuisance has been defined in the courts as an "unreasonable interference with the use and enjoyment of property." The increase in noise, litter, traffic, dust, debris, and criminal activity are all unreasonable and interfere with a family trying to enjoy a nice day on their own property. Homeowners and residents have the right to use and enjoy their home and land. The proposed RV storage site absolutely infringes on that right of quiet enjoyment and will impair homeowners from the use of their property.

Overall, the presence of an RV storage facility so close to the residential area of Homestead at Sterling Ranch will negatively impact the safety and quality of life for residents and must be denied by the El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department. Furthermore, El Paso County should carefully consider the rezoning to Rural Residential (RR-2.5) or Forestry and Recreation (F-5) for these particular lots.

Sources:

- Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies, Division of Real Estate (2021). What is a Nuisance and What Can You Do About Them?
- Colorado Springs Police Department (2020). Annual Report.
- Colorado Springs Utilities (2023). Natural Gas Renewal Project.
- Sentinel Colorado (2021). Local Storage Units See Spike in Burglaries in 2020.
- US Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Investigation, Uniform Crime Reporting (2019). Property Crime.