

MEGGAN HERINGTON, AICP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

EL PASO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING RESULTS (UNOFFICIAL RESULTS)

Planning Commission (PC) Meeting

Thursday, September 3rd, 2026, El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department
2880 International Circle, Colorado Springs, Colorado – Second Floor Hearing Room

REGULAR HEARING at 9:00 A.M.

PC MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING: Thomas Bailey, Blaine Brew, Sarah Brittain Jack, Suzanne Casagrande, Eric Moraes, Bryce Schuettpelez, Tim Trowbridge, Christopher Whitney, and Jason Wulf.

PC MEMBERS PRESENT AND NOT VOTING: None.

PC MEMBERS ABSENT: Jim Byers, Michael Brewer, and Mae Emrick.

STAFF PRESENT: Meggan Herington, Kylie Bagley, Joe Letke, Erika Keech, Gilbert Laforce, Jalal Saleh, Jen Uhler, Charlene Durham, and Jessica Merriam.

OTHERS PRESENT AND SPEAKING: Nina Dossey, Dean Couture, Kim Westfall, and Rene Trudel.

1. REPORT ITEMS

Ms. Herington advised the board that the next PC Hearing is Thursday, September 17th, 2026, at 9:00 A.M.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE HEARING AGENDA

None.

3. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Adoption of Minutes for meeting held on August 20th, 2026.

PC ACTION: THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS PRESENTED (9 - 0)

IN FAVOR: (9) Bailey, Brew, Brittain Jack, Casagrande, Moraes, Schuettepelz, Trowbridge, Whitney, and Wulf.

IN OPPOSITION: (0) None.

B. P265

UHLER

MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING)

HILLPOINTE APARTMENTS REZONE

A request by Hillpointe, LLC for approval of a Map Amendment (Rezoning) of 14.09 acres from CR (Commercial Regional) and CAD-O (Commercial Airport Overlay District) to RM-30 (Residential Multi-Dwelling) and CAD-O (Commercial Airport Overlay District). The property is located at 485 Meadowbrook Parkway and is approximately 250 feet northeast of the intersection of Highway 24 and Peterson Road. (Parcel Nos. 5408007001 5408007004 5408007008) (Commissioner District No. 4)

NO STAFF OR APPLICANT PRESENTATIONS OR DISCUSSION

PC ACTION: BAILEY MOVED / MORAES SECONDED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEM 3B, FILE NUMBER P265 FOR A MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING), HILLPOINTE APARTMENTS REZONE, UTILIZING THE RESOLUTION ATTACHED TO THE STAFF REPORT WITH THREE (3) CONDITIONS AND TWO (2) NOTATIONS, THAT THIS ITEM BE FORWARDED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION. THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL PASSED (9 - 0).

IN FAVOR: (9) Bailey, Brew, Brittain Jack, Casagrande, Moraes, Schuettepelz, Trowbridge, Whitney, and Wulf.

IN OPPOSITION: (0) None.

4. CALLED-UP CONSENT ITEMS:

None.

5. REGULAR ITEMS

A. P268

LETKE

MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING)

NEEDLES HIGHWAY 83 REZONING RR-5 TO RR-2.5

A request by North Ranch LLC for approval of a Map Amendment (Rezoning) totaling 47.55-acres in size from RR-5 to RR-2.5. The property is located along Colorado State Highway 83 and is 0.7 miles south of

the intersection of Colorado State Highway 83 and Colorado State Highway 105. (Parcel No. 6100000369) (Commissioner District No. 1)

STAFF & APPLICANT PRESENTATIONS

DISCUSSION: **Mr. Moraes** asked for clarification regarding the discrepancy between the average daily trips listed as 200 and the 127 trips shown in the presentation. **Mr. Saleh**, Senior Engineer, explained that a corrected traffic study has been requested and clarified that 200 is the correct total number of average daily trips. He stated that 127 trips are anticipated to be generated by the proposed development, which, when added to the existing trips, results in a total of 200.

Mr. Whitney asked for confirmation that access to Highway 83 would be for emergency use only. **Mr. Saleh** confirmed that the access would be for emergency use only, would remain closed at all times, and would be equipped with a Knox Box.

Mr. Whitney asked whether the Fire District's lack of comments was typical at the rezoning stage and whether fire-related comments would be expected later during the subdivision and planning process.

Mr. Letke confirmed that the lack of comments is typical at the rezoning stage because fewer technical elements are required. He explained that items such as cistern drawings and fire protection reports are not required at this stage and anticipated that the Fire District would provide fire code-related comments during the subdivision and planning stages.

Mr. Whitney asked how cumulative impacts are considered when reviewing an application, particularly when the proposed development may generate a relatively small number of trips on its own but could contribute to greater impacts when combined with existing and future development in the surrounding area. **Mr. Letke** explained that cumulative growth is considered through the Master Plan, which provides guidance regarding anticipated growth and development within the area. He noted that the property is located within a priority development area where large-lot residential development at approximately 2.5 acres is anticipated. He also noted that coordination occurs with other agencies, including the Colorado Department of Transportation, regarding potential future improvements to the highway. For the broader area, staff relies on whether the application is in general conformance with the recommendations of the Master Plan. **Ms. Nina Dossey**, with Vertex Consulting, added that County traffic study requirements account for potential future development within the surrounding area rather than evaluating only

existing traffic conditions and the trips generated by an individual application. She explained that Engineering staff considers surrounding parcels that may develop in the future when evaluating cumulative traffic impacts. She also noted that the County's road impact fee provides funding for roadway improvements that may become necessary as a result of cumulative development impacts.

Mr. Trowbridge asked why an extension of Needles Drive directly to Highway 83 had not been considered. **Ms. Dossey** explained that the applicant had requested a direct connection; however, CDOT would not allow it due to its existing access management plan, which limits permanent access points to those already identified. She stated that CDOT is requiring the existing driveway on Needles Drive to be closed and replaced with emergency-only access. She acknowledged that a direct connection would be preferable but is not permitted by CDOT.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Mr. Dean Couture, property owner southeast of the subject property and a 35-year resident of Needles Drive, expressed concern regarding the proposed 2.5-acre lots, noting that the existing properties along Needles Drive and east of the subject property are generally 5-acre lots. He raised concerns regarding fire protection and referenced fire protection improvements he was required to provide when developing the Majestic Pines subdivision. Mr. Couture also expressed concern regarding the additional traffic that would be generated on Needles Drive, which is currently a dead-end road serving approximately 13 homes, and questioned whether roadway improvements, including paving, would be required as development occurs. He questioned why the property could not be developed with 5-acre lots consistent with the surrounding area and suggested exploring an additional access connection to create a loop rather than continuing to rely on a dead-end roadway. Mr. Couture acknowledged that development and growth will occur but reiterated his concerns regarding the impacts of increased density and traffic on the existing neighborhood.

Ms. Kim Westfall, a neighboring property owner whose family purchased their property approximately 30 years ago, expressed concern regarding the proposed reduction in lot size from 5 acres to 2.5 acres. She stated that the surrounding properties within the Walden area are 5-acre lots and questioned how the proposed density would affect existing property values and the character of the area. Ms. Westfall also raised concerns regarding existing and future traffic conditions on Highway 83, potential impacts from planned roadway improvements, and the cumulative effects of additional development. She expressed particular concern regarding water availability and the potential impact of additional wells on existing

property owners, as well as impacts to wildlife and emergency evacuation in the event of a wildfire. Ms. Westfall stated that she understands development will occur but questioned why the property should be rezoned to allow 2.5-acre lots when it was purchased with 5-acre zoning and reiterated her concern that the proposed density would significantly change the existing character of the Walden area.

Mr. Rene Trudel, a resident of the Woodmoor/Trail Lakes area, spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning from RR-5 to RR-2.5. He stated that he initially did not have concerns with 2.5-acre lots but, after reviewing comments from surrounding residents, became concerned regarding water, traffic, and fire impacts. Mr. Trudeau discussed existing traffic and safety concerns along Highway 83, noting that the roadway also serves as an alternate route when traffic is congested on I-25 and that turning movements along Highway 83 can result in traffic backups and unsafe conditions. He expressed concern regarding the cumulative impact of continued development in northern El Paso County, particularly during peak commuting hours. Mr. Trudeau requested that the property remain zoned for 5-acre lots and stated that existing zoning and planning decisions should be respected. He also raised concerns regarding proposed residential setbacks, noting that residents choose larger-acreage properties in part to provide greater separation from neighboring homes and roadways. He concluded by asking the Commission to consider the impacts of continued development on the existing character of northern El Paso County.

APPLICANT REBUTTAL: Ms. Nina Dossey stated that several of the concerns raised during public comment would be addressed at a later stage of the development process. Regarding traffic concerns, she noted that the traffic study has been approved by El Paso County and presented a comparison of existing and proposed traffic conditions showing that the level of service during the PM peak hour would remain the same following development, with most intersections operating at Levels of Service A and B. She explained that roadway improvements, including whether Needles Drive would be required to remain gravel or be paved, would be evaluated during the subdivision process. In response to comments regarding the existing zoning and Master Plan, Ms. Dossey stated that the proposed RR-2.5 zoning is consistent with the Master Plan, including the Priority Development Area, place type, and area of change designations, which support 2.5-acre lots. She also addressed concerns regarding setbacks, explaining that the setbacks for the RR-5 and RR-2.5 zoning districts are generally the same, with the primary difference being the side setback, which is reduced from 25 feet in RR-5 to 15 feet in

RR-2.5. She noted that, depending on the configuration of the lots, most adjacent properties would likely be subject to the 25-foot rear setback.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION: Mr. Moraes raised a broader concern regarding how the County evaluates maintaining existing character within Large-Lot Residential Priority Development Areas. He noted that while individual rezoning requests may appear consistent when reviewed independently, the cumulative effect of repeatedly rezoning properties from RR-5 to RR-2.5 could gradually change the established character of an area. He questioned at what point continued increases in density would move beyond maintaining the existing character contemplated by the Master Plan and instead create a new character over time. Mr. Moraes encouraged the Commission, County staff, applicants, and surrounding property owners to consider the cumulative effect of these zoning changes when evaluating future applications.

PC ACTION: BRITTAIN JACK MOVED / BAILEY SECONDED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF REGULAR ITEM 5A, FILE NUMBER P268 FOR A MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING), NEEDLES HIGHWAY 83 REZONING RR-5 TO RR-2.5, UTILIZING THE RESOLUTION ATTACHED TO THE STAFF REPORT WITH TWO (2) CONDITIONS AND TWO (2) NOTATIONS, THAT THIS ITEM BE FORWARDED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION. THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL PASSED (6 - 3).

IN FAVOR: (6) Bailey, Brittain Jack, Moraes, Schuettepelz, Trowbridge, and Whitney.

IN OPPOSITION: (3) Brew, Casagrande, and Wulf.

6. NON-ACTION ITEMS

None.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 9:57 A.M.

Minutes Prepared By: Jessica Merriam