

Joe Letke

From: Joe Letke
Sent: Monday, December 9, 2024 10:25 AM
To: jennifercwagner@gmail.com
Subject: RE: Proposed Buc-ee's in Palmer Lake

Hello,

Buc-ee's has formally requested to be annexed into the Town of Palmer Lake. The Town of Palmer Lake has not yet held a formal hearing to consider the annexation request. If the Town of Palmer Lake approves the annexation request, then the property will become part of the Town's jurisdiction and all future development proposals for this property will be considered by the Town.

El Paso County has no authority over properties that are located within the municipal jurisdiction of the Town of Palmer Lake and has no statutory authority to approve or deny a request for annexation.

Once the Town of Palmer Lake has a determined date for final consideration of the annexation request, El Paso County Planning staff will present the request to the Board of County Commissioners as an informational item; as such, there will be no formal hearing or decision-making process involving the County on this matter.

Pursuant to State Statute, the Board of County Commissioners does not approve or deny an annexation request, nor does the Board of County Commissioners support or oppose annexation requests. Any questions or concerns regarding the annexation request should be directed to the Town of Palmer Lake.

Thank you,



Joseph Letke

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Planning & Community Development
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From: Jennifer Wagner <jennifercwagner@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, December 8, 2024 10:53 AM
To: Jackie Allred <JackieAllred@elpasoco.com>
Subject: Proposed Buc-ee's in Palmer Lake

You don't often get email from jennifercwagner@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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December 8, 2024

To the Town of Palmer Lake and the El Paso County Planning Commission:

On December 3, 2024, a meeting about a proposed Buc-ee's location at the intersection of I-25 and County Line Road was held at Palmer Lake Elementary. So many townspeople showed up, they were turned away at the door because the school reached maximum capacity.

The Buc-ee's representatives started their presentation defensively. They presented screens we have all seen before at other Tri-Lakes development meetings. They threatened that they "could" build all manner of "undesirable" things such as sexual type businesses, jails, addiction recovery buildings, etc.

The representatives clearly displayed their lack of knowledge about the Tri-Lakes area. They thought that the elevation here was lower than Johnson's Corner (4,875 feet above sea level). They thought they could "just hire snowplows". They showed complete ignorance about life on the Divide.

It was when they were asked whether the plan meets the Palmer Lake Master Plan that my ears perked up. These charlatans said "yes". Let's take a closer look at the plan and see if the proposed project fits. Text from the Master Plan appears in italics, and page numbers are indicated at the end of the sentence in parentheses.

The Palmer Lake Master Plan, dated 2022, with a Three Mile Plan, is available on the Palmer Lake website at <https://www.townofpalmerlake.com/media/9336>.

According to the plan, [w]e strive to update and enforce our land use codes to reflect the residential feel of our small mountain community - we discourage high-density housing, full-service hotels, and franchises. (9).

Vision Element # 2: Retain the rural, small-town atmosphere of Palmer Lake. Concepts include: Preserve open lands outside the current Town boundary by working with other entities to encourage development that retains the rural character through the preservation of open space and respects the scale of existing developed areas (11). The scale of 80,000 cars per day in no way respects the scale of what we have now.

Guiding Objective LU-4.3: Preserve natural environmental features, particularly flood-prone lands, forested lands, steep hillsides and ridgelines, stream corridors and drainage ways, and view corridors (67). The proposed site for Buc-ee's is on a steep slope AND it is next to a major wildlife corridor.

Carefully consider the impacts of new development, both in Town and on the outskirts of Town, on the integrity and carrying capacity of the roadway system (15). Developers continually assume that the Tri-Lakes area is a suburb of Colorado Springs. THINK AGAIN. It isn't. The Palmer Lake Fire Department is a VOLUNTEER department. County Line Road is a two-lane road. There is no way it can handle the amount of traffic a Buc-ee's would bring.

Guiding Objective ED-2.2: Discourage the development of any big-box or large franchise businesses, as these options are already available directly outside of the Town limits (62).

Page 68 provides extremely clear guidance:

Guiding Objective LU-6.5: Update the land use regulations to include building and site design with attention to how well the development meets the following criteria:

- *Minimizes visibility, noise, or other impacts on adjacent premises.*
- *Preserves views and vistas from public ways and other properties.*
- *Avoid unnecessary natural environment damage, evidenced by reducing cut-and-fill and vegetation removal (68).*

A Buc-ee's in this area would wreck the continual beauty of the drive from Greenland south to Colorado Springs. It would be a pustule on one of the most beautiful faces in the world.

Guiding Objective EQP-1.2: Enforce and update the dark skies lighting ordinance (Ordinance 20 of 2018) that protects the night sky and includes provisions for IES37 full cutoff fixtures that limit the total amount of light that can be emitted from any property (73). The developer representatives blithely stated they would “follow all rules” without even thinking about how snow becomes a reflective surface, thereby increasing the nighttime glow of such a property.

Page 90 specifically mentions the property under consideration, one of three “Retail Nodes”:

RETAIL NODES SETTING These designated new retail nodes are located along County Line Road. As development increases along the I-25 corridor, increased traffic counts are anticipated, allowing the development of new retail stand-alone centers that will not detract from the Town's small-town character.

USES AND CHARACTER These sales tax-generating retail nodes should be located within the Town limits or lands that are eligible for annexation. This type of retail development can generate a high number of vehicle trips and serve the area's residents and the traveling public. These retail nodes are within three miles of I-25 and will benefit from planned higher-density housing developments along the I-25 corridor. **Possible uses include new farm and ranch supply centers such as Murdoch's, now a home supply store, or an animal feed store to serve northern El Paso County and southern Douglas County (90).**

A Buc-ee's is not a feed store or a farm or ranch supply center. It is an abomination waiting to happen.

Land that is eligible for annexation into the Town of Palmer Lake and is of a density that requires centralized services will be discouraged from developing within the unincorporated portion of the County (104). Flagpole annexations are tricky; neighboring properties to an annexed site must be given the same opportunities and consideration as the initial annexation site. Approving a flagpole annexation opens the door to more unwanted growth and works directly against Palmer Lake's stated desire to keep a small-town feel.

It is clear that the developer does not respect the area and intends to do whatever they want. I would like to remind you that the developer of Village Center in Monument promised many road improvements to the Town of Monument. However, when the homes were sold, the developer skipped town and left Monument and the HOA to come up with a plan to deal with the fallout.

These developers have lied to your residents, taken the microphone away from speaking residents, threatened residents with “unattractive” options, and generally behaved as bullies. Just say no to this nonsense. We do not need such childish behavior, and we certainly do not need their greed.

This letter has given several instances of proof that the proposed development does NOT meet the guidelines set forth in the Master Plan. The Master Plan encourages Palmer Lake to work with the Town of Monument and El Paso County; both have said NO to this project. The community does not want this land developed like this. Why can't we have a park? Why can't the developer put a few nice homes there? It is up to Palmer Lake to say NO and keep the Tri-Lakes area one of the most beautiful places in the world.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Wagner

Monument, Colorado