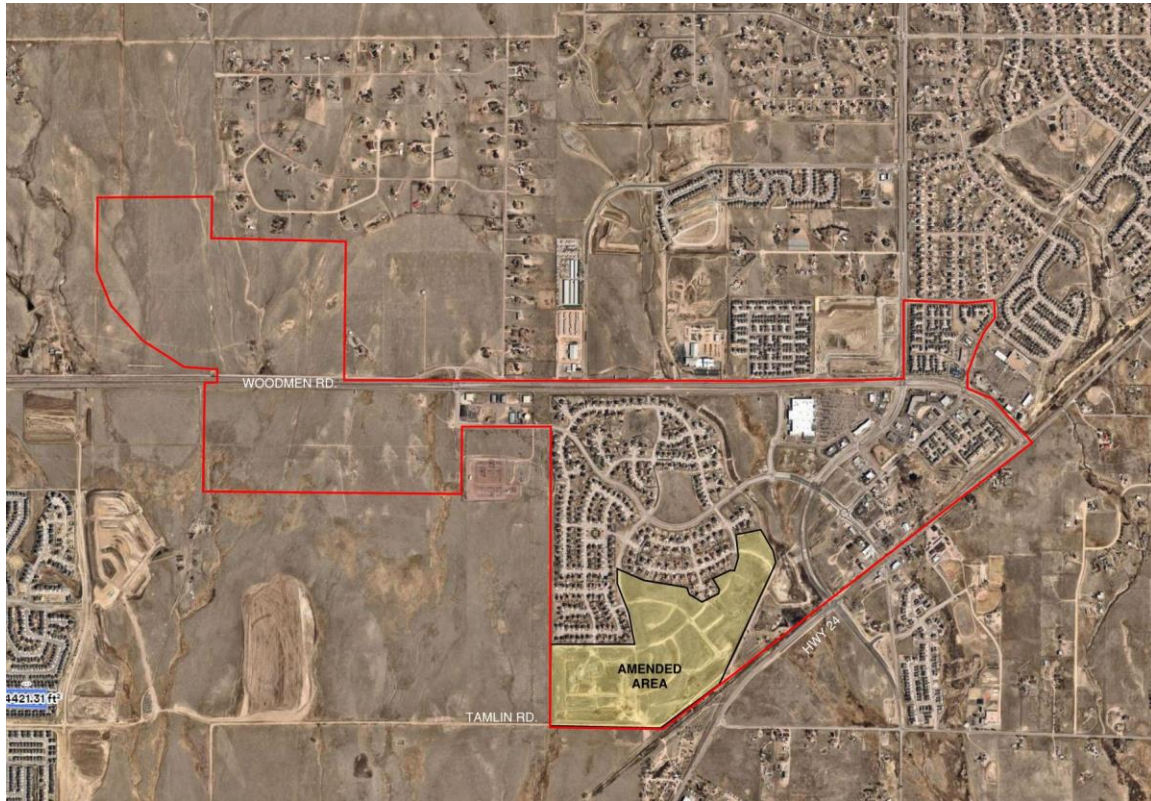


**FALCON HIGHLANDS FILING NO. 3  
LETTER OF INTENT  
SKETCH PLAN MAJOR AMENDMENT**

**November 2, 2021**



**PREPARED FOR:**

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**PREPARED BY:**

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**Site Location, Size, Zoning:**

Matrix Design Group, on behalf of Challenger Communities, is respectfully submitting a development application for a Sketch Plan Amendment to the existing Falcon Highlands community. Falcon Highlands is located south of Woodmen Rd, west of State Highway 24 and west of New Meridian Rd. in the Falcon area of El Paso County. The Falcon Highlands Sketch Plan area is currently zoned PUD with an approved use of single family residential at a density of 1.58 DU/ Acre. The Falcon Highlands Sketch Plan was most recently amended in 2007 to permit increased commercial acreage.

The proposed site amendment area is bordered by existing residential development to the north; a drainage channel to the east; and vacant land to the south and west. The existing development to the north is single family residential and is a part of the Falcon Highlands Sketch Plan. The drainage channel to the east is also within the Falcon Highlands Sketch plan and is in FEMA zone AE and will remain unaffected by this amendment. The vacant land to the south and east is a part of the City of Colorado Springs, currently zoned R to the south and R1-6 to the east. The amended area contains no natural drainage ways or significant natural features.

**Request & Justification:**

The purpose of this application is to request approval of a major sketch plan amendment to the Falcon Highlands Sketch Plan originally approved in 2004. The area as part of this amendment request within the existing Falcon Highlands development is currently known as Filing 3 and encompasses 114.1 total acres. These 114 acres was originally part of a larger 240 acre parcel permitting single family residential at 1.58 Du/ Acre. Much of these 240 acres has



been developed and constructed as part of Falcon Highlands Filing No. 1 and No. 2 existing lots as small as 10,000 SF up to an acre or larger in size. The amended area is proposing to include 19.8 acres of residential single family residential at a density of 1.0-2.99 DU/AC to align with the existing neighborhood and 95.1 acres at a density of 3.0-5.99 DU/AC. The proposed higher density land use area will be buffered by Antelope Meadow Circle. The zoning will remain PUD with a future submittal to include a comprehensive PUDSP outlined the development in detail.

The proposed sketch plan amendment would permit up to 400 single family detached units and 23 acres of open space and drainage areas. The amended area will include a mix of lot sizes ranging from 3,500 SF to 6,600 SF within the 95.1 acre higher density area and 20,000 SF lots within the 19.8 acre lower density area. Adequate buffers, landscaping and transitions will be illustrated with future, more detailed submittals. The proposed plan includes continuing Antelope Meadows Circle, a residential collector, from existing Birch Hollow Way to southwest terminating at the western property boundary. This continuation will create a looped roadway system with multiple access points as well as providing for a future connection to the adjacent property to the west. All streets will be designed as public roadways and constructed to El Paso County requirements.

The community is designed to provide for functioning automobile and pedestrian circulation, taking advantage of surrounding land uses. Within the overall Falcon Highlands development, open space and community connections are planned providing access to open space corridors, the existing pocket parks, a proposed school site, and future adjoining commercial. This is achieved via planned trails through open space tracts, and internal sidewalks.

#### **El Paso County Master Plan Consistency Evaluation**

The purpose of the Sketch Plan process reviews, at a conceptual level, the feasibility and design characteristics of the proposal based on El Paso County standards. The sketch plan review examines the feasibility of the division of land including review of the schematic design, ability to obtain water and sanitation, identification of environmentally sensitive areas, source of required services, vehicular and pedestrian circulation, relationship to surrounding land uses, and conformance with the Master Plan.

#### **Baseline Considerations:**

1. *Is there a desirability or demand within the community for this use?*  
The proposed Falcon Highlands Sketch Plan Amendment would help to fulfill desirability and demand for additional housing and housing types within El Paso County. As illustrated in the recently approved Master Plan, the county should increase density to help reduce land cost per unit for development with a primary focus on Suburban Residential placetypes. In addition, Falcon Highlands is located near a commercial activity center of which the increased residential density can help support.
2. *Does the market support the need for the use? Would the use be viable if built right now?*  
There is a very high demand for the proposed land use and density as El Paso County and the City of Colorado Springs is experiencing a severe housing shortage.

3. *Would the use be providing necessary housing or essential goods and/ or services?*  
The proposed Falcon Highlands Sketch Plan Amendment to increase the density to permit more single family homes than was previously approved will help provide necessary and needed housing in the Falcon area. The proposed density increase supports Goal HC1: Promote development of a mix of housing types in identified areas and Goal HC3: Locate attainable housing that provides convenient access to good, services and employment. The Falcon Highlands development is near existing highways; will utilize existing infrastructure to help keep lot cost down; and would be located near an existing commercial activity center which provides numerous job opportunities.

Geographic Considerations:

1. *Is the proposed use located within a Key Area? If so, does it fit with the development recommendations for that particular Key Area?*  
Falcon Highlands is located within the Potential for Annexation Key Area due to its proximity to the City of Colorado Springs city limits to the west as part of Banning Lewis Ranch. However, the proposed development is not identified as a Priority Annexation Area per the priority annexation map. The proposed density increase would be inline and compatible with existing and planned residential densities as part of Banning Lewis Ranch.
2. *Does the use promote the level of change identified in the Areas of Change?*  
The Falcon Highlands area is identified as an area of *Minimal Change: Developed* per the recently approved Master Plan. While this area is mostly building out with Filings No. 1 and No. 2 with an established character, this isolated pocket of undeveloped land of Placetype: Suburban Residential can be successfully developed with an increased density through the application of appropriate transitions and design techniques. For example, this proposed Sketch Plan provides for larger lots and decreased densities where immediately adjacent to existing homes while the more dense land use areas are separated by a collector roadway. This design approach meets Goal LU1: Ensure compatibility with established character and infrastructure capacity.
3. *Does the use fall within the primary or supporting land uses within the appropriate placetype?*  
The Falcon Highlands development area is identified as a Suburban Residential Placetype characterized by primarily single family detached housing with a density range of up to 5 units per acre. As illustrated in Section 4 Housing and Communities, “to sustain Falcon’s growth momentum, the county should continue to prioritize Suburban Residential in this area.” The proposed sketch plan amendment meets this objective and Goal LU3: Encourage a range of development types to support a variety of land uses and Objective LU3-3 by utilizing single family detached housing within an existing neighborhood.
4. *Is the use located in a Priority Annexation Area? If so, does it align with the growth and development plans for the nearby municipality?*  
While the Falcon Highlands development is located within the Potential for Annexation Key Area due to its proximity to the City of Colorado Springs city limits to the west as part of Banning Lewis Ranch; the proposed development is not identified as a Priority Annexation Area per the priority annexation map.

5. *Is the use located within a Housing Priority Area? If so, is it one of the allowed housing types?* The proposed Falcon Highlands development is not located within a Housing Priority Area.
6. *Is the use located within a Commercial Priority Development Area? If so, is it one of the allowed commercial uses for that area?* The proposed Falcon Highlands development is not located within a Commercial Priority Development Area.
7. *Is the use located within an Employment Priority Development Area? If so, is it one of the allowed employment-focused uses for that area?* The proposed Falcon Highlands development is not located within an Employment Priority Development Area.

County Systems Considerations:

1. *Is there existing infrastructure to which the development can connect? If so, what infrastructure exists? If not, are there existing or proposed plans to extend infrastructure to this area?*

The proposed Falcon Highlands development will be served by existing infrastructure to include water and wastewater services, electricity and roadways. The proposed Falcon Highlands development will be required to complete the construction of Antelope Meadows Circle providing multiple access points in to and out of the subdivision meeting *Goal LU4: Continue to encourage policies that ensure “development pays for itself”*.

2. *Does the development trigger the need for such infrastructure?*

The proposed development does not trigger the need for infrastructure as previous approvals contemplated the necessary infrastructure improvements. However, the proposed development may trigger upgrades and/ or expansion of existing facilities to accommodate the increased densities meeting *Goal LU4: Continue to encourage policies that ensure “development pays for itself”*.

3. *Does the proposal trigger the need for pedestrian or multimodal connections and are those connections being provided?*

The proposed Falcon Highlands amendment will require public street roadways to be designed and built to El Paso County Standards. Region trail connections along Highway 24 will be provided as necessary per the El Paso County Parks Master Plan. This supports *Goal TM2 Promote walkability and bike-ability* by continuing the construction of trail corridors connecting this development with adjacent neighborhoods and the commercial activity center to the northeast.

Best Practices Considerations:

1. *Does the development appropriately include conservation design best practices to protect/preserve existing natural resources?*

Future, more detailed design submittals will illustrate implementation of any conservation best practices such as clustered development, inclusion of parks/ open space, and preservation of natural areas.



2. *Does the development include best practices to protect existing natural resources and prevent unnecessary property damage? If not, does it include methods for impact mitigation?*

Future, more detailed design submittals will illustrate implementation of any conservation best practices such as clustered development, inclusion of parks/ open space, and preservation of natural areas.

The proposed property is suitable for the intended use and the use is compatible with both the existing and allowed land uses on the neighboring properties to the west and north consisting of single family residential or open space. The new development will be in harmony with the existing surrounding character of the area and natural environment using varying residential densities, perimeter buffering and provisions for both natural and built open space. There are no areas of significant historical, cultural or recreational features found on site.

The project has been designed to not be detrimental to the health, safety, or welfare of the present or future inhabitants by meeting the submittal guidelines as illustrated in the zoning code and application packet.

#### El Paso County Sketch Plan Section 7.2.1C -Approval Criteria

1. *The proposed subdivision is in general conformance with the goals, objectives, and policies of the Master Plan.* The proposed subdivision is in general conformance with the master plan and helps to meet to primary goal of creating a competitive place to live, work, invest and visit.  
  
*The proposed subdivision is in conformance with the requirements of this Code. The subdivision is consistent with the purposes of this Code and does not affect the health, safety, or welfare of the general area.*
2. *The proposed subdivision is compatible with existing and proposed land uses within and adjacent to the sketch plan area.* The proposed residential area is compatible with the surrounding residential and commercial land uses.
3. *The water supply report provides sufficient information to identify probable compliance with the water supply standards and identifies any need for additional water supplies.*
4. *Services are or will be available to meet the needs of the subdivision including, roads, police and fire protection, schools, recreation facilities, and utility service facilities.* All necessary services are available to meet the need for the proposed development and were included in the previous Sketch Plan approval.
5. *The soil is suitable for the subdivision.* The soils are suitable for construction with any necessary soil hazards to be mitigated using common and accepted engineering design techniques. More detailed soil investigations may be provided with future submittals.
6. *The geologic hazards do not prohibit the subdivision, or can be mitigated.* An Engineering Geology Study was completed in 2000 for the Falcon Highlands development. This study indicated the site is relatively free from geologic hazards with

the more significant hazard potential to be erosion, potential for flooding and shallow groundwater. The potential hazards identified are relatively common to the region and are mitigated by accepted engineering design techniques and construction practices. More detailed soil investigations may be provided with future submittals.

7. *The subdivision will not interfere with the extraction of any known commercial mining deposit [C.R.S. §§ 34-1-302(1), et seq.].* The proposed project does not contain any mineral deposits of commercial value.
8. *The design of the subdivision protects the natural resources or unique landforms.* There are no natural resources or unique landforms within the proposed project area.
9. *The proposed methods for fire protection are adequate to serve the subdivision.* The proposed subdivision will have adequate circulation and meet all design criteria of the Falcon Fire District. A Fire Protection Report and Fire Commitment will be provided with future, more detailed submittals.
10. *The subdivision is appropriate, and the design is based on mitigating the constraints of topography, soil types, geologic hazards, aggregate resources, environmental resources, floodplain, airplane flight overlays, or other constraints.* There are no major development constraints on this site. Existing drainage facilities will be retained or modified as necessary for the development.

**Total Number of Residential Units, Density, and Lot Sizes:** Approximately 400 Single-Family Detached Residential Units for a density of 1.0-5.99 DU/AC.

**Approximate Acres and Percent of Land Set Aside for Open Space:**

The overall Falcon Highlands Development meets the open space requirement within the PUD Zoning District. Approximately 23 acres of the 114.1 acres being amended will be used as open space and drainage. The future open space tracts will include elements such as landscaping, trails, and detention facilities. The future open space provided within the amended area will be a part of the cumulative open space of the overall Falcon Highlands development and is in accordance with previous approved sketch plan.

**Types of Proposed Recreational Facilities:**

While there are no major recreational facilities such as large playfields, neighborhood parks proposed within amended area, trails and pedestrian connections to existing parks will be provided with future more detailed submittals.

**Master Plan for Mineral Extraction:**

The *1996 Master Plan for Mineral Extraction* updates and supersedes the *1975 El Paso County Master Plan for Mineral Extraction of Commercial Mineral Deposits* as amended in 1978 and 1982. This updated plan has two primary purposes, the first is to facilitate continued compliance with the mineral resource protection mandates outlined in the "Preservation of Commercial Mineral Deposits Act" of 1973 and the second is to provide guidance to the El Paso County Planning Commission and Board of County



Commissioners in evaluating land use proposals involving new or expanded mining and mineral resource processing operations. Per the El Paso County Master Plan for Mineral Extraction Aggregate Resource Maps, this site is identified as 'Upland Deposits' containing sand and gravel with silt and clay; remnants of older streams deposited on topographic highs or bench like features. Therefore, the proposed project does not contain any mineral deposits of commercial value and does not permit the use of any area containing a commercial mineral deposit which would unreasonably interfere with the present or future extraction of such deposits.

**Water and Wastewater Services:**

Water and Wastewater municipal services will be supplied by the Falcon Highlands Metropolitan District. Letters of intent to provide these services have been provided as part of the submittal.

**EL PASO COUNTY WATER MASTER PLAN:**

The Falcon Highlands development is located within planning area 3 of the El Paso County Water Master Plan which encompasses the Falcon area and served by a variety of water suppliers including the Falcon Highlands Metropolitan District and Woodmen Heights Metro district for sanitary.

Falcon Highlands Metro District (FHMD) current SFE of 451 with a maximum SFE of 711. It is recommended that Falcon Highlands Phase 1 Preliminary Plan be limited to 206 SFE in order to remain with the expected system capacity at the end of 2022/2023. This allows for 50 +/- SFE to be developed with the existing area as infill.

The Falcon Highlands Sketch Plan Amendment meets the stated master plan Goals and Policies:

- Goal 1.2 – Integrate water and land use planning
- Goal 4.2 – Support the efficient use of water supplies
- Goal 6.1.2 – Promote water conservation

through integrated master planning of site planning, landscape and water resource best management practices. The open space areas emphasize water conservation using native vegetation, turf seeds and limited high water sod.

Wastewater flows for WHMD are based on the established benchmark of average daily flow of 163 gallons per day per SFE and 172 gallons per day per SFE for average daily maximum flow. It is likely that the change to the Sketch Plan will result in exceeding the contracted 750 SFE.

Existing SFE connected to the WHMD system is 423 and the upper limit for SFE under the IGA is 750. Roughly 278 SFE are available.



**Traffic Engineering:**

Vehicular access and street layout shall be as illustrated on the sketch plan with all roadways to be public, built to El Paso County standards. The amended area includes the continuation of Antelope Meadows Circle southeast. The extension will provide the necessary points of ingress/egress for this development and create numerous circulation routes through internal neighborhoods. It will also provide a future connection to the adjacent property to the west.

**Proposed Services/Utility Feasibility:**

1. Water/ Wastewater: Woodmen Hills Metropolitan District
2. Gas: Black Hills Energy
3. Electric: Mountain View Electric Association
4. Fire: Falcon Fire Protection District
5. School: District #49
6. Roads: El Paso County Road and Bridge
7. Police Protection: El Paso County Sheriff's Department

**Impacts associated with the PUD Development Plan & Preliminary Plan:**

Floodplain: The amended area is not located within a designated FEMA floodplain as determined by the flood insurance map, community map numbers '08041C0545G, 08041C0561G' effective date December 7, 2018. Just east of the amended area is a regulatory floodway in the FEMA Zone AE. This area will not be impacted with this amendment.

Wetlands: There are no drainage areas, drainage ways or water courses found within the amended area, as a result there are not wetlands present. All drainage and erosion criteria have been met following El Paso County Development Standards.

Air Pollution: By adhering to current air quality regulations, any air pollution emanating from the development will be negligible. The site has very little vegetation and contains mostly native turfgrass which may result in higher than normal amounts of dust during windy days. However, the proposed development will provide irrigated turf areas and native seeding to help alleviate the dust issues. Construction practices will adhere to El Paso County health department, as well as state department codes and regulations.

Water Pollution: By adhering to current wastewater and stormwater regulations, any water pollution emanating from the development will be negligible. An erosion and sedimentation plan will be in place prior to construction.

Noise Pollution: Vehicular movement is expected to be the only major source of noise pollution emanating from the site after construction is complete. The proposed development is surrounded by similar land uses and the effects of noise generated from the site will have little or no impact on other surrounding areas.

**Vegetation, Wildlife Habitats and Migration Routes:**

Proposed landscaping will include low-water use plant material, and where possible, the plant material will be native to the Falcon region.



The Colorado Division of Wildlife note the following as also present in the area.

- Prairie Dog
- Mule Deer
- Pronghorn Antelope
- Fox species
- Coyote
- Rabbits
- Raptors
- Songbirds
- Numerous Small Mammals

Due to the construction activity and adjoining residential developments, it is not anticipated that the application will have significant impacts on wildlife in the area.