

MEGGAN HERINGTON, AICP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

EL PASO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING RESULTS (UNOFFICIAL RESULTS)

Planning Commission (PC) Meeting

Thursday, September 17th, 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: Tom Bailey, Sarah Brittain Jack, Jim Byers, Suzanne Casagrande, Mae Emrick, Eric Moraes, Tim Trowbridge, and Christopher Whitney.

PC MEMBERS PRESENT AND NOT VOTING: None.

PC MEMBERS ABSENT: Blaine Brew, Michael Brewer, Bryce Schuettelpelz, and Jason Wulf.

STAFF PRESENT: Justin Kilgore, Lori Seago, Gilbert Laforce, Daniel Torres, Victoria Chavez, Jen Uhler, Jalal Saleh, and Jessica Merriam.

OTHERS PRESENT AND SPEAKING: Scott Asher, Maureen Paz de Araujo, Robert Digby, Sam Frost, Susie Ecklund, Mike Drabing, and David Kinisihke.

1. REPORT ITEMS

Mr. Kilgore advised the board that the next PC Hearing is Thursday, October 1st, 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 September 3rd, 2026.

PC ACTION: THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS PRESENTED (8 - 0)

IN FAVOR: (8) Bailey, Brittain Jack, Byers, Casagrande, Emrick, Moraes, Trowbridge, and Whitney.

IN OPPOSITION: (0) None.

B. SF265

UHLER

FINAL PLAT

HARDY ROAD PROPERTIES SUBDIVISION

A request by Hardy Road Properties, LLC, for approval of a 19.40-acre Final Plat creating two single-family lots and one tract. The property is zoned RR-5 (Residential Rural) and is located approximately 1.75 miles east of North Meridian Road at 10545 Hardy Road. The requested lots have a minimum lot size of 5 acres. (Parcel No. 5114000046) (Commissioner District No. 1)

NO STAFF OR APPLICANT PRESENTATION OR DISCUSSION

PC ACTION: BAILEY MOVED / BRITTAIN JACK SECONDED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEM 3B, FILE NUMBER SF265 FOR A FINAL PLAT, HARDY ROAD PROPERTIES SUBDIVISION, UTILIZING THE RESOLUTION ATTACHED TO THE STAFF REPORT WITH FIVE (5) CONDITIONS, FIVE (5) NOTATIONS, ONE (1) WAIVER, AND A RECOMMENDED FINDING OF SUFFICIENCY WITH REGARD TO WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY, AND DEPENDABILITY, THAT THIS ITEM BE FORWARDED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION. THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL PASSED (8 - 0).

IN FAVOR: (8) Bailey, Brittain Jack, Byers, Casagrande, Emrick, Moraes, Trowbridge, and Whitney.

IN OPPOSITION: (0) None.

4. CALLED-UP CONSENT ITEMS:

NONE.

5. REGULAR ITEMS

A. MP245

WERRE

MASTER PLAN

SOUTH POWERS EXTENSION PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES STUDY

AND ACCESS CONTROL PLAN

The El Paso County Department of Public Works requests adoption of the South Powers Extension Planning and Environmental Linkages Study (PEL) and Access Control Plan (ACP) into the Your El Paso Master Plan. With adoption, these Plans will become the principal plan for further planning and development of South Powers Boulevard in El Paso County. The South Powers PEL and ACP are a critical step in creating an effective and efficient transportation infrastructure that meets future needs. The Plan will provide an updated vision for future transportation, a list of transportation improvements, and a long-term right-of-way preservation plan for South Powers Boulevard. (All Commissioner Districts).

STAFF & APPLICANT PRESENTATIONS

DISCUSSION: **Mr. Bailey** asked for clarification regarding the anticipated project timeline, noting that the timeline presented appeared optimistic and emphasizing that construction would not occur in the immediate future. **Mr. Scott Asher** with Wilson & Company, Inc, confirmed that the project is still in the early stages and that the timeline shown is optimistic. He explained that establishing and preserving the planned corridor would assist with future funding and project development, and that additional opportunities for public input, environmental review, and project modifications would occur as the project progresses.

Mr. Moraes asked about the process for modifying the Access Control Plan (ACP) and associated Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA). **Mr. Asher** explained that any amendments would require agreement from all participating entities, regardless of the jurisdiction in which the proposed change is located. **Mr. Moraes** identified discrepancies in the plan regarding the E3 alignment and right-of-way widths. **Mr. Asher** confirmed that these items would be reviewed and corrected in the final document. **Mr. Moraes** asked whether portions of the plan would become binding despite the resolution identifying the Master Plan as an advisory document. **Ms. Victoria Chavez**, the Transportation Planning Manager, explained that the Master Plan uses the County's standard advisory language; however,

provisions incorporated into the IGA would be contractually binding upon the participating entities. **Mr. Moraes** requested clarification regarding the different access and structure designations and whether intersections could initially be constructed at grade and later converted to grade-separated crossings. **Mr. Asher** explained that certain designations identify structures rather than access points. **Ms. Chavez** stated that discussions with CDOT regarding interim at-grade intersections were ongoing and would ultimately be addressed through the Access Control IGA. **Mr. Moraes** asked how future development proposals along the corridor would be addressed while the project remains several years from construction. **Mr. Gilbert LaForce**, Deputy County Engineer, explained that applicable plans and studies would be identified during the County's early assistance process. Depending on the size and circumstances of a proposed development, corridor preservation or right-of-way dedication may be addressed as part of the development review process.

Ms. Emrick asked for clarification regarding the anticipated timing and sequencing of the E3 and H3 alignments. **Ms. Chavez** explained that the timeline is conceptual and may change based on future development, funding and grant opportunities, partnerships, and changing transportation needs. She stated that the E alignment is anticipated to occur first, while the H alignment is a much longer-term possibility dependent on future growth and conditions. She also noted that the County updates its Major Transportation Corridors Plan every five years, providing opportunities to reevaluate these needs and priorities.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: **Mr. Rob Digby** expressed concerns regarding the conceptual nature of the proposed alignment and requested additional information regarding its potential impacts to nearby properties. He raised concerns regarding potential impacts to groundwater and private wells, future right-of-way acquisition and property boundaries, and the widening of Squirrel Creek Road. Mr. Digby also requested information regarding the status of the nearby OMAR development project.

Ms. Susie Ecklund, speaking on behalf of her husband and neighboring property owners along Old Pueblo Road, expressed opposition to the E alignment due to its potential impact on their property and supported the H alignment as an alternative. She raised concerns regarding the cost and infrastructure associated with constructing multiple alignments and the potential for increased traffic. Ms. Ecklund also expressed concern regarding the long-term impacts of the proposed E alignment on her family's

continued use of their property and requested additional information regarding potential modifications to the alignment and the anticipated project timeline.

Mr. Sam Frost, representing Frost Livestock Company and a property owner whose land they lease near the H3 alignment, expressed opposition to the proposed alignments and concerns regarding potential impacts to their agricultural operations. He stated that the H3 alignment could affect farmland, existing water rights, agricultural and recreational uses, and access for farming equipment. Mr. Frost also expressed concern regarding potential impacts to customers and neighboring agricultural properties along the E3 alignment.

Mr. Mike Drabing, representing Sundance Investments, expressed opposition to the H3 alignment due to its potential impacts to their property. He stated that the alignment would bisect a portion of the property and raised concerns regarding the proposed crossing of Fountain Creek, wetlands, and nearby railroads. Mr. Drabing also expressed concern that associated infrastructure could impact existing structures and separate portions of the property used for their agricultural operations.

Mr. Dave Kinisihke, President of the Upper District 10 Water Users Association, expressed concerns regarding potential long-term impacts to Fountain Creek and area water users resulting from future development associated with the proposed transportation improvements. He raised concerns regarding increased drainage into Fountain Creek, the creek's capacity to accommodate additional runoff, and potential impacts to groundwater and existing water users. Mr. Kinisihke requested that drainage and water impacts be carefully considered as future development occurs within the area.

APPLICANT REBUTTAL: Mr. Trowbridge requested that the applicant provide additional information regarding drainage in response to concerns raised during public comment. **Mr. Asher** explained that detailed drainage analysis would occur during a future design phase and would evaluate roadway drainage, water quality, detention and retention requirements, and other applicable regulatory requirements. He noted that broader cumulative impacts would also be considered through future environmental review. **Mr. Moraes** asked when the drainage analysis would occur in relation to construction. **Mr. Asher** clarified that the analysis and necessary approvals would occur during the design process and prior to construction of the applicable project improvements. He confirmed that a detailed drainage analysis is not being conducted as part of the current Master Plan process.

Ms. Brittain Jack asked whether the Fountain Creek Watershed District had been involved in the stakeholder engagement process. **Mr. Asher** confirmed that the District participated as a stakeholder and explained that coordination with the District would continue for future improvements affecting Fountain Creek.

Mr. Bailey noted that adoption of the Master Plan allows the project to move into future environmental review, permitting, and more detailed technical analysis. He stated that concerns raised regarding environmental and property impacts would continue to be evaluated as the project progresses and that future review processes are intended to identify and mitigate impacts where possible.

Mr. Whitney asked whether there remained opportunities to adjust the proposed alignments to reduce impacts to specific properties. **Mr. Asher** explained that some additional alignment optimization may occur; however, certain locations, including the H3 connection to I-25, are unlikely to change significantly. He acknowledged that property impacts cannot be entirely avoided regardless of the selected alignment and stated that efforts have been made to minimize those impacts. **Mr. Asher** further clarified that adjustments made since the initial recommendations are reflected in the detailed alignment maps available on the project website.

Mr. Trowbridge asked whether the E3 and H3 alignments were intended as alternatives or whether the long-term plan contemplated construction of both. **Mr. Asher** clarified that the plan identifies both alignments, with E3 anticipated to occur first based on current development patterns. He explained that the ultimate need and timing for H3 would depend on future growth and development within the area. **Ms. Chavez** further clarified that the proposed transportation improvements are intended to respond to future development rather than encourage or initiate development. She stated that the purpose of identifying the alignments now is to allow the County to plan for future transportation needs should development occur.

Mr. Byers asked how much flexibility may remain to adjust the proposed alignments during future design and development review. **Mr. Asher** explained that some adjustments may be possible to reduce impacts to individual properties, provided the alignment continues to meet applicable design criteria. He cautioned that this flexibility would be evaluated on a case-by-case basis and should not be interpreted to mean that significant adjustments could be made throughout the corridor.

Mr. Whitney asked whether adoption of the Master Plan would create an encumbrance or otherwise restrict the current use of properties located within the proposed alignments. **Ms. Lori Seago**, County Attorney, clarified that adoption of the plan does not create a current encumbrance or independently prohibit the use of a property. She explained that the identified alignments provide notice of potential future improvements and may be considered during future development review, at which time the County may work with a property owner to minimize potential conflicts with the planned corridor.

Ms. Casagrande asked whether future environmental review could result in the elimination of an entire alignment or whether environmental concerns would primarily be addressed through design modifications. **Mr. Asher** explained that the analysis completed to date was intended to identify significant environmental constraints and that no fatal flaws have been identified for the proposed alignments. He stated that future environmental reviews would be more detailed and could result in modifications or, if significant issues were identified, potentially affect the feasibility of an alignment.

Ms. Emrick asked why the H3 alignment was included in the current Master Plan when it may not be needed for several decades. **Ms. Chavez** explained that the County's long-range transportation planning considers both 20- and 40-year planning horizons and preserves options for future transportation needs as growth and development patterns change. **Mr. Asher** added that identifying future corridors in advance allows property owners and developers to consider planned infrastructure when making development decisions and helps the County avoid future conflicts and additional costs.

Ms. Brittain Jack asked whether approval of the plan and associated IGA would place the project in a position to pursue future state or federal funding. **Ms. Chavez** explained that there is not a specific funding list; however, having an adopted corridor plan, Master Plan element, Access Control Plan, and IGA strengthens future grant applications and demonstrates that the County has completed necessary planning toward project readiness.

Mr. Byers asked what factors would trigger the design or construction of individual project phases, noting that future development may not occur as currently anticipated. **Ms. Chavez** explained that implementation would be driven by actual development and transportation needs, and that larger developments may be responsible for constructing portions of the roadway when warranted by their impacts. She stated that the Major Transportation Corridors Plan is updated every five years using

updated development information and transportation demand modeling to reevaluate future roadway needs and implementation priorities.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION: Ms. Emrick stated that she voted nay due to concerns regarding how the H3 alignment fit within the Master Plan. She acknowledged the need for long-range planning but stated that she would have preferred the alignments to be considered separately and believed that additional consideration should have been given to the H3 alignment.

PC ACTION: BAILEY MOVED / MORAES SECONDED FOR APPROVAL AND ADOPTION OF REGULAR ITEM 5A, FILE NUMBER MP245 FOR A MASTER PLAN, SOUTH POWERS EXTENSION PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL LINKAGES STUDY AND ACCESS CONTROL PLAN, UTILIZING THE RESOLUTION ATTACHED TO THE STAFF REPORT WITH TWO (2) CONDITIONS AND TWO (2) NOTATIONS. THE MOTION FOR APPROVAL AND ADOPTION PASSED (7 - 1).

IN FAVOR: (7) Bailey, Brittain Jack, Byers, Casagrande, Moraes, Trowbridge, and Whitney.

IN OPPOSITION: (1) Emrick.

6. NON-ACTION ITEMS

NONE.

MEETING ADJOURNED at 10:31 A.M.

Minutes Prepared By: Jessica Merriam