

**THE HILLS AT LORSON RANCH  
LETTER OF INTENT  
Planned Unit Development, Preliminary Plan, Early Grading,  
& Wet Utilities**

**May 26, 2020**



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5500000278; 5500000279; 5500000280; 5500000405

**Site Location, Size, Zoning:**

Lorson LLC is respectfully submitting development applications for The Hills at Lorson Ranch to include a combined PUD Development Plan/ Preliminary Plan, request for early grading, and request for early construction of utility mains. The site is 123 acres with 514 single family detached residential lots located within the eastern portion of the Lorson Ranch. The Hills at Lorson Ranch is a continuation of the Lorson Ranch development and will open the eastern portions of Lorson Ranch to development as new roadways and utility main extensions will be designed and constructed as part of this proposed development. The site is currently zoned RLM (Residential Low/ Medium 4-6 DU/ Acre) as illustrated on the Lorson Ranch Minor Sketch Plan Amendment approved April 21, 2016.

The site is bordered by an existing 325' wide powerline easement to the west, and vacant Lorson Ranch property to the north, east, and south. The parcels that make up this submittal are vacant with no existing buildings, structures or facilities. There are existing drainage and channel improvement features that were installed in previous filings. The existing 325' wide overhead electric power line easement runs through the site in a northeasterly direction shall remain. The site layout has been designed to accommodate this easement and will cause little to no impact. The site contains no natural drainage ways or significant natural features.

**Request & Justification:**

The purpose of this application is to request approval of a combined PUD Development and Preliminary Plan (PUDSP), a Pre-Development Early Grading Request and installation of wet utility mains for the Hills at Lorson Ranch project within Lorson Ranch. The PUD Development and Preliminary Plan shows the general concept for the design of the single-family detached residential community and open spaces, as well as identify the development standards for the proposed residential product types. The plan describes the lot sizes, transportation systems,

public rights-of-way, and easements necessary for the development. Since the site is quite large and grading operations are expected to be substantial, the early grading request will permit grading operations to begin upon approval of the PUD/ Preliminary Plan and prior to Final Plat. Early installation of wet utilities is also being requested for the main trunk lines within arterial and collector roadways since these roadways are essential to the sequencing of future lot construction.

The proposed application includes 514 new single family lots on 123 acres for a density of 4.17 DU/ Acre. The site layout incorporates a mix of lot sizes to include: 50' x 110' (5,500 SF); and 60' x 110' (6,600' SF); 45' x 95' (4,275 SF); and front loaded 35' x 84' (2,940 SF). The smallest lot size of 35' wide introduces a new single car garage product to Lorson Ranch further increasing affordable housing options within the development. All streets shall be public, permitting on-street parking, with corner lots for all unit types designed with additional corner lot width to accommodate sight distance and sidewalk requirements. In addition to the on-street parking, each lot will provide a full length driveway for off-street parking. There is no proposed access to the south into Peaceful Valley Estates. There shall be no direct access to any arterial or collector streets. Fontaine Blvd. as well as Lorson Blvd. are designed to handle existing and proposed traffic expected to be developed within the Lorson Ranch community. A traffic impact analysis was completed and is included with this submittal.

The community is designed to provide for functioning automobile and pedestrian circulation, taking advantage of surrounding land uses. Within the overall Lorson Ranch development, open space and community connections are planned providing easy access to open space corridors such as Jimmy Camp Creek, pocket parks and the adjoining neighborhoods. While the PUDSP drawings illustrate a single phase due to major utility infrastructure needs, the platting of individual lots and construction of housing may occur in phases based on market trends. Roadways, utilities, drainage, and necessary improvements will be constructed in the most optimal and efficient manner in order to facilitate development construction and sequencing.

As with previous Lorson Ranch developments, Lorson Ranch East will be developed and advanced per the Sixth Amended Development Agreement Lorson Ranch. The 6th Amended Development agreement outlines updated access, road impact fees, and future road ROW's issues with previous agreements remaining in effect.

El Paso County PUD Section 4.2.6(D) Approval Criteria, 1998 El Paso County Policy Plan, and El Paso County Preliminary Plan Section 7.2.1(D)-2E Approval Criteria:

The purpose of the PUD is to provide the information necessary to rezone a property to the PUD Zoning district and to provide a graphical representation to serve as the zoning of the property after approval. The PUDSP sets forth the stated purpose of the PUD Zoning and Preliminary Plan Criteria through illustrated detailed use design, dimensional and development standards, utility connections, landscaping and other important site improvements.

The 1998 El Paso County Policy Plan establishes broad goals and policies intended to serve as a framework for land use applications and development in the County. The County Wide Policy Plan ties the specific small area plans, and other Master Plan elements such as the Water Master Plan, Master Plan for Mineral Extraction, El Paso County Department of Parks and

Leisure Services Master Plan and the Major Transportation Corridors Plan together. The Policy Plan provides general direction in terms of water use, density, buffers, transitions, and infrastructure where no small area plan exists. The Hills at Lorson Ranch PUDSP meets the requirements of these planning tools as outlined in more detail within the sections below.

The Lorson Ranch Minor Sketch Plan Amendment approved April 21, 2016 illustrates the proposed PUDSP area as RLM (Residential Low/ Medium 4-6 DU/ Acre). The PUDSP submitted with this application remains consistent with the approved Sketch Plan Amendment by maintaining the approved residential zoning designation and approved densities.

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 southeast 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.

The proposed PUDSP will not have a negative impact upon the existing and future development of the area, but rather continue with the planned sequencing of phasing and development. This design approach supports *Policy 6.1.1: Allow for a balance of mutually supporting interdependent land uses, including employment, housing and services in the more urban and urbanizing areas of the County* and *Policy 6.1.3: Encourage new development which is contiguous and compatible with previously developed areas in terms of factors such as density, land use and access.*

The proposed single family residential use will not overburden the capacities of existing or planned roads, utilities or other public features, drainage, police protection, emergency services, and water/ wastewater services as these services have been planned for in advance and are adequately sized to meet the demands of this phase and other future phases. A sufficient water supply has been acquired and can provide the water necessary for the proposed 514 units. In addition, a wastewater system has been established and can adequately serve the proposed units. Please refer to the water and wastewater reports for more information.

By providing open space areas and extending existing utility services already approved and in place, the Hills at Lorson Ranch supports *Policy 6.1.5: Support the development of well-planned mixed-use projects* and *Policy 6.1.11: Plan and implement land development so that it will be functionally and aesthetically integrated within the context of adjoining properties and uses.*

A Geology and Soils Report was prepared by RMG-Rocky Mountain Group and is included with the submittal package. As part of this report, 110 exploratory test borings were completed. There are no significant geological hazards found to be present on the site.

There was no ground water encountered and the site was found to possess low to moderate potential for either expansive or hydrocompactive soils. Bedrock was also encountered in the majority of test borings performed and is anticipated to be encountered in the building excavations or utility trenches for this development. It may be necessary to design and implement mitigation alternatives on a lot by lot basis although the conditions found at this site are relatively common to the immediate area and mitigation can be accomplished by implementing common engineering and construction practices. Refer to the soils report for more detailed information.

#### 2003 Highway 94 Comprehensive Plan

Per the Highway 94 Comprehensive Plan Map 8.1, it appears the northern most portion of the Hills at Lorson Ranch is within Sub-Area 4 of the 2003 Highway 94 Comprehensive Plan. This area of the project is located north of Fontaine Blvd. The portions of the PUDSP south of Fontaine Blvd. are not included within the Highway 94 Comp Plan.

Sub-Area 4 is characterized as the Colorado Centre and calls for higher intensity land uses that will blend with the existing Colorado Springs character. This proposal meets several of the Highway 94 plan's goals, including:

*-Goal 1. Guide growth in a manner that respects the emerging needs of the community....:*

Lorson Ranch provides valuable and affordable housing to the Fountain Valley area. Lorson Ranch also provides housing along existing major transportation corridors such as Marksheffel Rd.

*-Goal 2. Achieve a desirable and efficient use of the land while enhancing the physical environment through functional and compatible land use configurations:*

This site was previously approved for residential uses and this PUDSP continues the existing pattern of residential development.

*-Objective 2.2: Ensure that the nature and intensity of proposed development are consistent with the Land Use Map and Sub-Area scenarios:*

*-Goal 3. Ensure that residential development is appropriate for the Planning Area:*

The Hills at Lorson Ranch continues the existing development pattern already approved, built, and thriving elsewhere in Lorson Ranch.

#### **EL PASO COUNTY WATER MASTER PLAN:**

The Hills at Lorson Ranch is located within the Widefield Water and Sanitation District's (WWSD) boundaries and will rely upon municipal services for water supply. These municipal services have been provided in previous Lorson Ranch filings and will be extended to this proposed development. There are no proposed wells or individual septic systems within the Hills at Lorson Ranch. The WWSD has provided letters of intent to serve commitment letters for the Hills at Lorson Ranch. The district has also provided the water quality report as required by El Paso County. The Hills at Lorson Ranch will seek the Colorado State Engineer's sufficiency of water finding for both quantity and quality as part of this PUDSP. In addition, the Hills at Lorson Ranch meets the stated 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. Water conservation is achieved through higher densities with smaller individual yards and more common open space. The common open space emphasizes water conservation using native turf seeds and limited high water sod.

**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 ‘Valley Fill’ containing sand and gravel with silt and clay deposited by water in one or a series of stream valleys. The proposed project does not contain any mineral deposits of commercial value.

**Total Number of Residential Units, Density, and Lot Sizes:** 514 Single-Family Detached Residential Units for a density of 4.17 DU/ Acre. The site layout includes a mix of residential lot sizes: 50’ x 110’ (5,500 SF); and 60’ x 110’ (6,600’ SF); 45’ x 95’ (4,275 SF); and front loaded 35’ x 84’ (2,940 SF).

**Total Number of Industrial or Commercial Sites:**

There are no industrial or commercial sites proposed with this project.

**Phasing Plan and Schedule of Development:**

The Hills at Lorson Ranch will be developed as a single phase due to necessary utility commitments and infrastructure connections. The plat filings may be submitted in phases pending market demand; however major roadway and utilities will be installed with the first phase.

**Areas of Required Landscaping:**

The proposed PUDSP includes landscape design and streetscape planting requirements for the streetscapes along Fontaine Blvd, Lorson Blvd. and Walleye Dr. as well as for the proposed park areas. The landscape design includes a mix of deciduous and evergreen trees with varying ground plane treatments. There are no landscape waivers being requested at this time.

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

The PUDSP proposes 38.05 acres of open space which is 31% of the total site acreage. Per the EPCLDC, 12.3 acres or 10% of the total site area of open space is required within the PUD zoning district. Of the 38.05 acres being provided with the Hills at Lorson Ranch, 23.89 acres consist of the powerline easement. This easement forms a natural buffer within the community providing opportunities for pedestrian trail connectivity. In addition, trail corridors

have been illustrated on the plans along the powerline easement providing numerous connections to adjoining neighborhoods. The total open space provided with this application is part of the cumulative open space of the overall Lorson Ranch development in accordance with the Lorson Ranch Sketch Plan Minor Amendment.

**Types of Proposed Recreational Facilities:**

While there are no major recreational facilities such as large playfields proposed within the Hills at Lorson Ranch, the PUDSP identifies multiple locations ideal for pocket park type amenities. The exact nature of these pocket park sites are unknown at this time as the final park site amenities will be coordinated with El Paso County Parks based on construction sequencing. The installation timing will also be coordinated with County Park staff depending on final plat sequencing and construction phasing. Where possible the park sites are located near or adjacent to the existing and proposed trail corridors providing pedestrian connectivity.

**Traffic Engineering:**

Vehicular access and street layout shall be as illustrated on the PUDSP with all roadways to be public, built to El Paso County standards. The applicant requests that platted lots within the Hills at Lorson Ranch be included in the county wide Public Improvements District (PID 2) implemented as part of the Traffic Impact Fee resolution.

The Hills at Lorson Ranch includes the continuation of two major roadways, the eastward extension of both Fontaine Blvd. and Lorson Blvd. The extension of these roadways will provide the necessary points of ingress/ egress for this development and create numerous circulation routes through internal neighborhoods. A new collector shown as Walleye Dr. is being installed running north/ south connecting Fontaine Blvd. to Lorson Blvd. This proposed collector will run northward connecting with yet another proposed collector roadway, Grayling Dr. Grayling Dr. is being shown as extending to northern property line of Lorson Ranch for a future connection with adjacent parcels.

Fontaine Blvd. is being designed as a two-lane minor arterial with a 100' public right-of- way. The traffic report discusses the merits and justification for this roadway designation and configuration. However, as part of future consideration for possible expansion, the tracts on either side of Fontaine Blvd. are being reserved as landscape setbacks and public improvement corridors should the additional right of way be needed for expanding Fontaine Blvd. There will be no direct lot access to Fontaine Blvd.

Lorson Blvd. is a planned continuous roadway that will extend from Marksheffel Rd in the far southwestern corner of Lorson Ranch. Lorson Blvd. is being shown as an Urban Non Residential Collector roadway with a proposed 64' right-of-way. This is a continuation of Lorson Blvd. as approved with the Lorson Ranch East project.

**Proposed Services:**

1. Water/ Wastewater:      Widefield Water and Sanitation District
2. Gas:                              Black Hills Energy

3. Electric: Mountain View Electric
4. Fire: Security Fire Protection District
5. School: Widefield District #3
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: This site is not located within a designated FEMA floodplain as determined by the flood insurance map, community map number '08041C0976G' effective date December 7, 2018.

Site Geology: RMG has provided a Geology Soils Report with this submittal. This report has identified any potential Geologic Hazards on site related to development of the property along with proposed mitigation of the hazards. The development will incorporate the recommended mitigation during final design and construction on site.

Wetlands: There are no drainage areas, drainage ways or water courses found on site, 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.

Visual Assessment: The natural mountain backdrop of the Rampart Range is perhaps the best natural feature of the Hills at Lorson Ranch community with sweeping views in nearly all directions. The scenic view shed is impaired somewhat by intervening development; however, the panoramic views remain quite spectacular.

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 Colorado Springs region.

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

- Prairie Dog

- Mule and White Tailed 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.