
MERIDIAN RANCH

SKETCH PLAN AMENDMENT

LETTER OF INTENT

JUNE 2017 (REVISED OCTOBER 2017)

PROPERTY OWNER/ DEVELOPER:

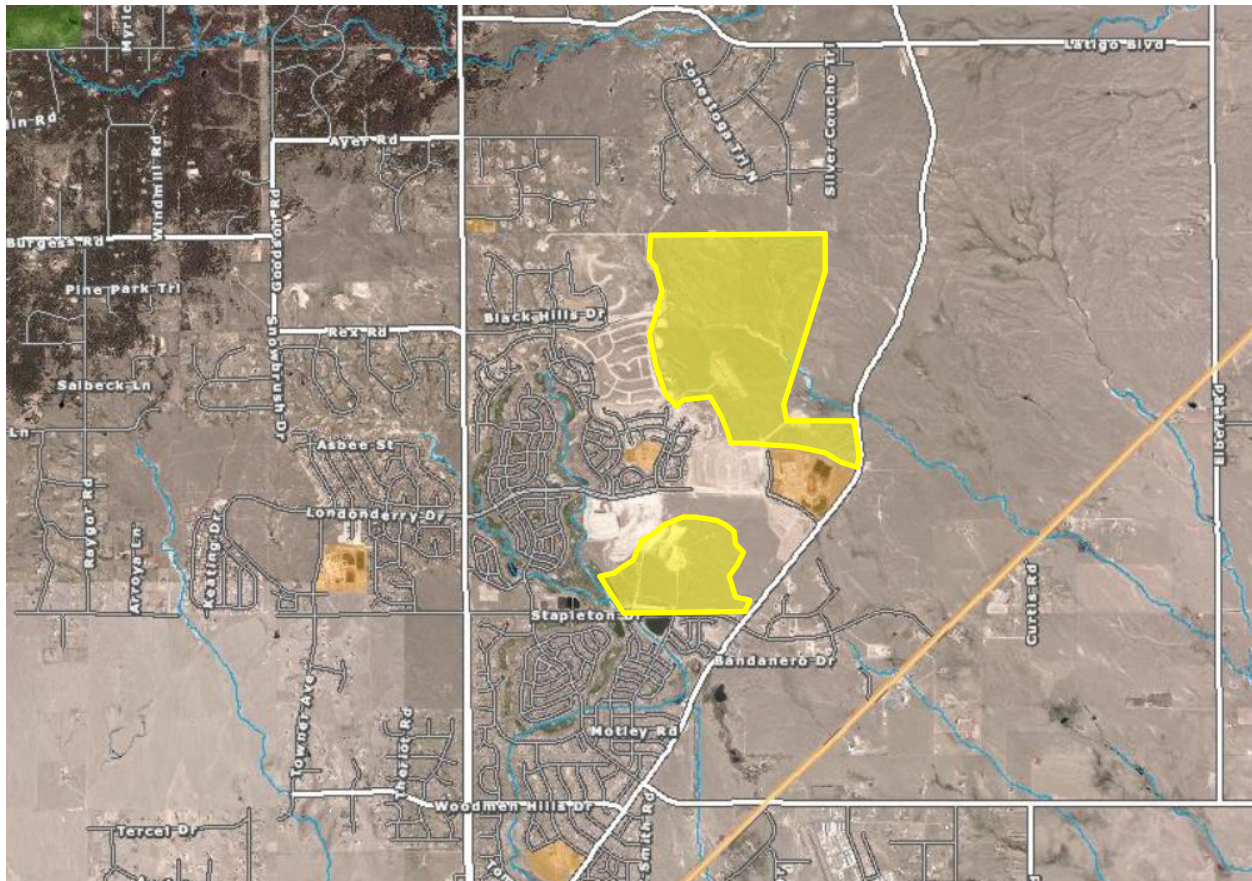
GTL Development, Inc.
3575 Kenyon Street,
San Diego, CA 92110

CONSULTANT:

N.E.S. Inc.
619 North Cascade Avenue,
Colorado Springs, CO 80903

LOCATION

Meridian Ranch is bounded by Meridian Road to the west, Stapleton Drive to the south, Eastonville Road to the East, and private property to the North. The Sketch Plan amendment relates to the remaining area that is yet to be entitled, which totals 848.79 acres.



REQUEST

GTL Inc. request approval of the following in this Sketch Plan Amendment:

1. Change 40 acres from Business Park to Residential MR-R6 at NW corner of Stapleton & Eastonville.
2. Amend density MR-R1 (1du/ac) area north of Rex Road to MR-R2 (2 du/ac).
3. Increase Density Cap to 4500 units form previously approved cap of 4000.

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

a. Sketch Plan Background

The revised MDDP design is not maintaining the BoCC condition to release at 80% historic. Include a narrative requesting a reconsideration of the BoCC condition and provide justification. **Unresolved. Add as a 4th request.**

Original 2000 Sketch Plan: The original Meridian Ranch Sketch Plan encompassed 2,650 acres, and was approved by the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) in March of 2000, with the following land uses: 2,289 acres of residential uses; 55 acres of commercial uses; 64 acres for a Business Park; 15 acres for a community park; 33 acres for a wastewater treatment facility; 93 acres for open space, trail corridors and rights-of-way; and 70 acres for schools. This approved Sketch Plan established a maximum of 3,266 dwelling units, at densities ranging from 0.4 to 6 dwelling units per acre.

2006 Sketch Plan Amendment: In January 2006, the BOCC approved an amendment to the Sketch Plan that modified land use areas to achieve multiple objectives, including: adding 15 acres to the size of the high school site to meet the needs of the Falcon School District; creating a large community park; realigning Lambert Road; establishing a civic area; modifying the location of the business park; minor changes to the commercial and residential land uses; and amending the phasing plan. The originally approved Sketch Plan included a provision that for every 1 acre of non-residential area that is converted to residential use, an additional lot will be permitted in addition to the approved density cap. The 2006 amendment included a reduction in commercial land uses by 9 acres, which resulted in a concurrent increase in the number of permitted dwelling units by 9 units, to 3,275 dwelling units.

2012 Sketch Plan Amendment: In May 2012, a further amendment to the Sketch Plan was approved which proposed converting the northeastern portion of the site from low density residential to a 248-acre regional park, increasing some of the remaining residential densities, reducing the size of one of the neighborhood commercial areas; reducing the size of the elementary school site at the request of the school district; and removing the previously added civic area. The reduction in the non-residential areas from the original Sketch Plan in this application allowed for the conversion of 40 acres to 40 residential units. However, despite this additional allowance and the reduction in the overall acreage for residential, the increases in densities for the remaining area resulted in an approved increase of the density cap to 3,800 dwelling units.

2014 Sketch Plan Amendment: In October 2014, the BOCC approved an amendment to the Sketch Plan that proposed to convert approximately half of the original 30-acre commercial parcel at the northeast corner of Meridian Road and Stapleton Drive to residential use due to changes in market conditions. The conversion of 14 acres of commercial land allowed for an additional 14 lots, thus increasing the permitted dwelling units to 3814. This simultaneously approved PUD/Preliminary Plan for this 14-acre site (Filing 4B) added a further 62 units to the dwelling total in Meridian Ranch.

2015 Sketch Plan Amendment: The most recent amendment to the Sketch Plan was approved by the BOCC in November 2015. Other than some minor access and road network changes to assist traffic distribution, the principal change was the removal of an 18-acre high density residential parcel, the removal of a 10-acre neighborhood commercial site, and the removal of 26 acres of the proposed business park, all in the southeast corner of the Sketch Plan area. This was replaced by single-family detached residential at a maximum density of six dwelling units per acre. The allowed conversion factor from non-residential to residential increased the permitted dwelling total from 3,814 to 3850. However, the subsequently approved PUD/Preliminary Plan for this area added a further 221 units to the dwelling total at Meridian Ranch, approximately two-thirds of which was attributable to the conversion from non-residential areas. To account for this additional residential area, an increase in the density cap to 4,000 units was also requested and was approved.

The Current Sketch Plan Amendment: The current Sketch Plan amendment proposes a further increase in the density cap to 4,500 units. The remaining 40 acres of business park will be converted to residential use at a density of six dwelling units per acre. The conversion of this remaining non-residential area allows an additional 40 dwelling units.

With this amendment, a total of 139 acres of non-residential land in the original Sketch Plan has been converted to residential use. While the allowed conversion factor would permit an additional 139 units, in reality these conversions have added approximately 400 additional units to the total achievable dwellings units in Meridian Ranch.

The following is the total number of units that have been constructed or approved at Meridian Ranch:

MERIDIAN RANCH: CONSTRUCTED OR APPROVED UNITS	
Filing No.1	800
Filing No.2	350
Filing No.3	122
Filing No.4	96
Filing No.4B	62
Filing No. 6	54
Filing No.7	131
Filing No.8	145
Filing No.9	181
Filing No.11A	118
Filing No.11B	82
Stonebridge Filing No.1	102
Stonebridge Filing No.2	73
Stonebridge Filing No.3	164
The Estates Filing No.2	33
The Estates Filing No.3	29
The Vistas Filing No.1	221
Total Constructed and Approved Units	2,763

Based on best estimates for the remaining developable area, there is capacity for approximately an additional 1,650 units. Accordingly, an increase in the density cap to 4,500 is requested.

It is considered that the current request, and previous increases in the density cap, are justified as Meridian Ranch has successfully demonstrated the original development intent for a high-quality, master-planned, golf and recreational centered community, with 215 acres dedicated to the County as a regional park. The increases in the number of residential units since the approval of the original Sketch Plan in 2000 have been a result of converting non-residential areas to residential use and increases in the density of the remaining residential areas. Both measures have been in response to continually changing market conditions over the course of the Sketch Plan's life.

Meridian Ranch has a new and expanding neighborhood center at the corner of Meridian Road and Stapleton Drive, and the focus of the developer and the Metro District is on maintaining the viability of this center in the face of competition from commercial development in Falcon town center. This is achieved by consolidating the commercial component of the neighborhood into one focused location. The increases in residential densities have been a response to the market's demand for smaller lots for both first time-buyers and move-down (empty-nester) buyers. For example, the Stonebridge area of the Meridian Ranch is now an age-targeted, recreation-based, community, which is a more recent trend in the housing market.

The introduction of additional and higher density residential into Meridian Ranch provides a diversity in housing type and range that is not only consistent with the objectives of the County Master Plan, but also helps to support the extensive recreational and neighborhood commercial facilities that make Meridian Ranch the vital and viable community that is evident today.

b. County Policy Plan and Small Area Plan Compliance

Meridian Ranch is identified as part of the Approved Development Pattern within the Falcon/Peyton Small Area Plan. The Sketch Plan amendment continues to comply with with the goals of the plan to meet the housing needs of existing and new residents with a diversity and variety of housing type, size, and location. The Sketch Plan Amendment will also address the following policies of the County Policy Plan:

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.

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.

c. Parks and Open Space

The Sketch Plan Amendment does not alter the overall parks provision within the Sketch Plan. The area proposed for Falcon Regional Park was previously excluded from the Sketch Plan boundary as this property has now been deeded to El Paso County for park purposes. A notation for a small neighborhood park has been added to the remaining MR-R3 area.

d. Drainage

On November 16, 2000, the El Paso County Board of County Commissioners approved the rezoning of the Meridian Ranch project (PUD-00-010) from A-35 to PUD with several conditions. Condition number seven stated in part that “drainage plans shall release and/or retain at approximately eight percent (80%) of historic rates.” At the time of the initial approvals there were no drainage improvements downstream of the Meridian Ranch project and the existing natural channels were shallow and undefined.

Since the time of the original approvals development has occurred downstream of Meridian Ranch with drainage facilities designed and constructed of sufficient size to safely convey the historic flow rates off of Meridian Ranch further downstream. The 4-Way Ranch development located adjacent and downstream of Meridian Ranch has processed a Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) and constructed storm drainage improvements downstream of the existing Pond E outlets. The LOMR was processed and the improvements constructed assuming historic flow rates from Meridian Ranch. Storm drain improvements near the intersection of Stapleton Drive and Eastonville have also been designed and constructed to convey the historic flow rates from Meridian Ranch. The design of these improvements and the downstream system anticipated 87 CFS to be collected near outlet of the future Pond H from Meridian Ranch. The preliminary design of Pond H has yielded a 100-year flow rate of 61 CFS, well below the anticipated 87 CFS figure.

Current estimates show the design discharge to 4-Way are near or below 90% of historic flow rates, with the 5-year discharge at or slightly above historic. It is anticipated the future design of Ponds G & I will yield similar results with discharge rates near 90% of historic for most storms.

e. Traffic

A Traffic Impact Analysis prepared by LSC Transportation Consultants Inc. is submitted to address the changes proposed by the Sketch Plan Amendment.

f. Water

The water system that serves Meridian Ranch is classified as a “community water system”, and meets all the applicable requirements of the Colorado Department of Health (CDH). The water system uses groundwater as its primary source of supply. An existing treatment facility has been providing the required treatment since 2003. In addition, disinfection is provided to ensure good bacteriological characteristics. The Meridian Ranch development has water rights and appropriation for the Denver Basin groundwater, renewable alluvial ground water and additional Denver Basin water rights from adjacent metropolitan districts as part of either a financial or annexation agreement. Based on the existing active wells and the future water supply Meridian Ranch has more than sufficient water supply for the full build out of Meridian Ranch.

g. Sewer

The Meridian Service Metropolitan District (MSMD), in conjunction with CMD, has constructed treatment of 4.8 MGD of wastewater at the Black Squirrel Wastewater Treatment Facility (BSWTF). MSMD retains a 45.8% ownership in the treatment facility through an inter-governmental agreement with CMD for a total capacity of 2.2 MGD. The total capacity available to MSMD through both

wastewater treatment facilities is approximately 2.3 MGD or over 12,000 single family residential equivalents based on 185 gallons per day per residential unit, thus providing more than enough capacity for the full build out of Meridian Ranch.

IMPACT IDENTIFICATION

The impact of the Meridian Ranch Sketch Plan was assessed with the original 2009 approval. This amendment does not involve any change to the Sketch Plan that would result in additional impacts.

a. Potential Sources of Air, Water, Noise Pollution

There are no potential sources of air, water, or noise pollution associated with the development of the Meridian Ranch Sketch Plan.

b. Relationship of Sketch Plan to Preexisting Wildlife Habitats

In 2009 the property was assessed for Preble's Meadow Jumping Mouse and Ute Ladies'-tresses Orchid habitat but was found to be unsuitable for these threatened species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reviewed the studies and agreed with these findings.

At the time of the 2009 Sketch Plan approval, the Colorado Division of Wildlife Impact Maps indicated that Pronghorn Antelope may range within the Sketch Plan area. Pronghorn Antelope are rated as being subject to potentially moderate impacts from the effects of development. The two drainage corridors within the Meridian Ranch Sketch Plan may allow for the migration of the Pronghorn Antelope. The fencing used within Meridian Ranch is compatible with the wildlife needs.

c. Vegetation/Wildfire

The remaining undeveloped part of Meridian Ranch is characterized by prairie grassland with no trees and is typical of the character of eastern Colorado. The continued development of Meridian Ranch will not have a negative impact on existing vegetation.

No significant wildfire hazard is shown for the Meridian Ranch Sketch Plan area in the El Paso County Source Book.

d. Drainage/Floodplains

A Letter of Map Revision (LOMR) was processed in 2014 to adjust the floodplain in the southern portion of the project. A drainage course in the northeast portion of Meridian Ranch includes a one-hundred year floodplain that was not a part of the earlier LOMR. All areas where floodplain exist will be preserved as open space, as shown on the Sketch Plan, and no LOMR will be necessary as a part of the continuing development of Meridian Ranch.

e. Significant Historical and Archeological Sites

There are no significant historical or archeological sites identified by the El Paso County Master Plan.

f. Sites of Natural or Scenic Importance

There are no sites of natural or scenic importance in the Meridian Ranch Sketch Plan area.

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