



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE  
10TH CIVIL ENGINEER SQUADRON  
USAF ACADEMY COLORADO

Ms. Erin Manning  
Deputy Director  
10th Civil Engineer Squadron  
8120 Edgerton Drive, Suite 40  
USAF Academy CO 80840-2400

Ms. Kari Parsons  
El Paso County  
E.P.C. Planning and Community Development  
2880 International Circle  
Colorado Springs, CO. 80910

Dear Ms. Parsons

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed Hay Creek Valley development: PCD File# SP-23-01 located adjacent to the United States Air Force Academy's (USAFA) northern boundary. After review, we offer the following comments.

USAFA's 3,300-acre Jacks Valley training area is on the northern side of USAFA, directly adjacent to the proposed development. Jacks Valley has been part of USAFA since the 1950s and used for field training since 1966. USAFA's 2019 Air Installations Compatible Use Zones (AICUZ) study, which was formally submitted to the County Planning Department, identified our concern for master-planned residential development close to Jacks Valley.

Jacks Valley has the only fully functional weapons training range along the Southern Front Range and serves over 30,000 Cadets, Airmen, Soldiers, Marines, Special Forces, as well as federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies annually. The proposed development will be immediately northeast of this Combat Arms Training and Maintenance (CATM) firing range. Tactical and weapons training in Jacks Valley produces noise due to small arms firing, the use of pyrotechnics, and helicopter operations. In addition, cadets conduct intensive basic training and land navigation during the summer, including at night. Furthermore, residents may see remotely piloted aircraft and experience overflight from Davis Airfield, which is active from dawn to dusk, six days a week, and has historically been the third busiest airfield in the Air Force.

Training activities will create noise levels audible at the proposed development, with intense periods of noise during summer training when residents may be outside in backyards enjoying the warmer weather. In formal input to the 2021 El Paso County Master Plan, USAFA conveyed this information as well as concerns that increased residential development along the northern boundary of the Academy could generate sufficient noise complaints to restrict the full use of Jacks Valley. The Master Plan discusses the need for coordination on land development in this area to ensure compatibility with the training complex and firing range.

As the 2019 Colorado Spring Regional Joint Land Use Study (JLUS) points out with respect to any future residential development adjacent to Jacks Valley, it is important to provide information about training operations to help current and future residents understand what they may experience in their

neighborhood. The JLUS suggests including this information into planning entitlement documents and real estate transactions.

Therefore, USAFA asks the County to consider having the developer dedicate and record an avigation easement on the existing development site to help protect USAFA's flying mission from incompatible developments. This easement would acknowledge the right for the USAFA to conduct flight training in the area; we can provide a template to the assigned planner or applicant. When and if the avigation easement is recorded, please request the developer send a copy to the USAFA Community Planner's email addresses listed below.

USAFA also asks the County to request the developer include this note on the final property plat maps and covenants to provide full disclosure of nearby training operations at any future time of sale or lease:

*Notice: This property may be impacted by noise and other similar sensory effects of United States Air Force (USAFA) land-based cadet training, small arms, and light weapons firing, and of flight caused by aircraft both in (USAFA's) Airmanship Program and during special events. This notice shall remain in effect until the Air Force Academy shall cease to be used for land-based and, flight training purposes, or until all training areas and airports on the Air Force Academy shall cease to be actively used. This notice shall run in perpetuity with the land.*

In our engagement and outreach with the development community, USAFA endeavors to partner and work toward development that is compatible - development that neither creates public safety issues nor precludes military operations. In the County Master Plan's discussion of USAFA, it specifically notes the JLUS recommendation to "pursue conservation partnering opportunities for compatible land use buffering under flight training areas and other critical areas as needed."

To this end, the Department of Defense has a longstanding program called Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program. A key component is the use of buffer partnerships among the military, private conservation groups, and state and local governments, authorized by Congress at 10 U.S.C. Section 2684a. These win-win REPI partnerships share the cost of acquisition of easements or other interests in land from willing sellers to preserve compatible land uses and natural habitats near installations and ranges that helps sustain critical, at-risk military mission capabilities. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with the county and the developer about possible options for achieving an outcome satisfactory to all parties.

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment. If you have any questions, please contact our Community Planner, Ms. Rachel Martell, 10 CES/CENPP, at (719) 333-8367, [rachel.martell.ctr@us.af.mil](mailto:rachel.martell.ctr@us.af.mil) and [10ces.cenp.usafadevreviewgrp@us.af.mil](mailto:10ces.cenp.usafadevreviewgrp@us.af.mil).

Sincerely

ERIN M. MANNING, GS-14, USAF