

## **STERLING RANCH EAST RS-5000 MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING)**

### **LETTER OF INTENT**

***REVISED MARCH 13, 2023***

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#### **OWNER:**

CLASSIC SRJ LAND, LLC  
2138 FLYING HORSE CLUB DR.  
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80921

#### **APPLICANT:**

CLASSIC SRJ LAND, LLC  
2138 FLYING HORSE CLUB DR.  
COLORADO SPRINGS, CO 80921

#### **CONSULTANT:**

N.E.S. INC.  
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#### **SITE DETAILS:**

**TSN:** 5227000008, 5200000552, 5200000553, 5200000554, 5228000037, 5228000038, 5233000015, 5233000016, 5233000017, 5233000018

**ACREAGE:** 301.033 ACRES

**CURRENT ZONING:** RR-5

**CURRENT USE:** VACANT LAND

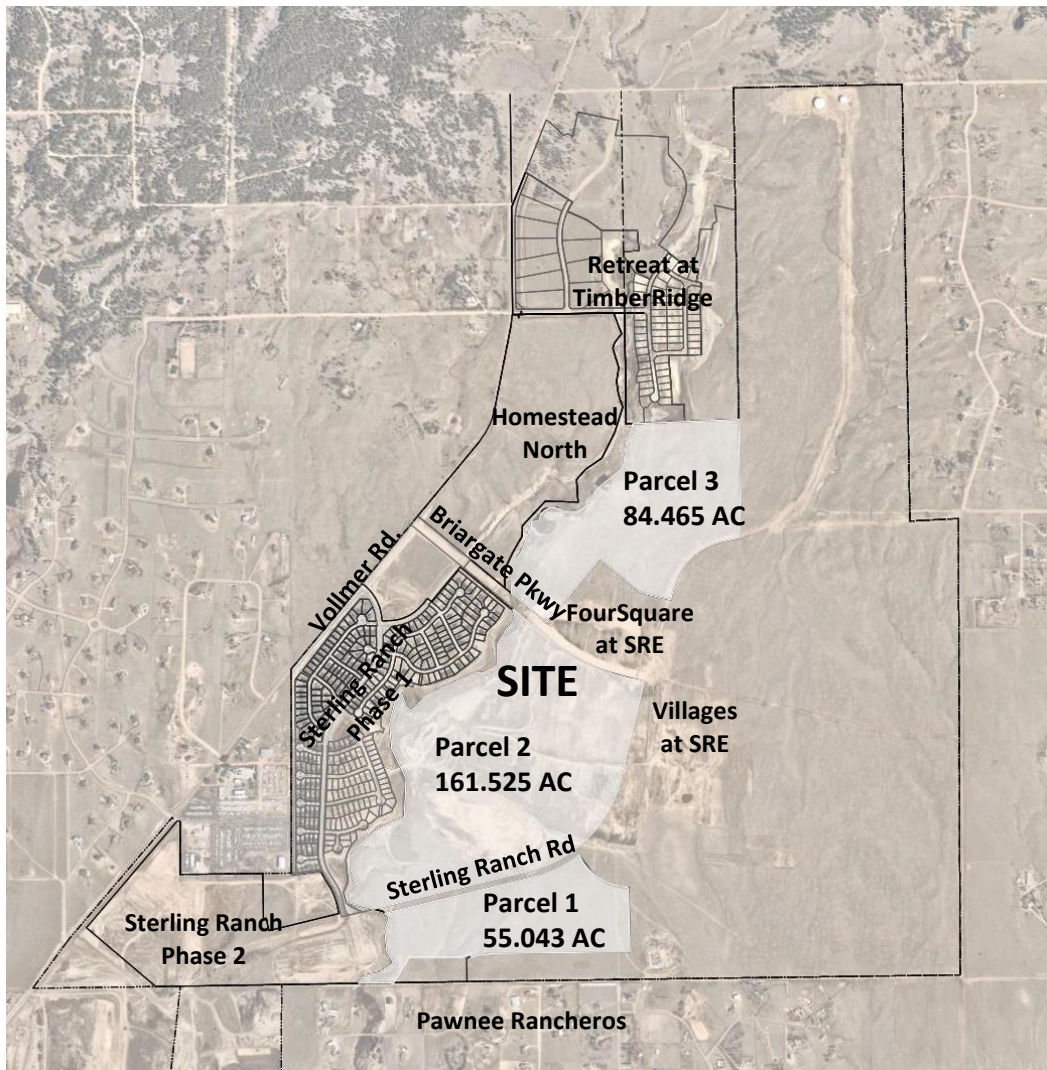
**PCD FILE #:** P-22-012

#### **REQUEST**

N.E.S. Inc. on behalf of Classic Consulting requests approval of a Map Amendment (Rezoning) from RR-5 to RS-5000.

## LOCATION

The Sterling Ranch East RS-5000 rezone area includes 301.033 acres and is part of the overall Sterling Ranch master planned community, located east of Vollmer Road and east of the Sand Creek channel. The property lies north and south of the proposed extension of Briargate Parkway and north, west and south of the proposed extension of Sterling Ranch Road. Between Vollmer Road and Sand Creek to the west is the existing and recently approved residential development within Sterling Ranch Phases 1 and 2. The Retreat at TimberRidge development lies immediately to the north. The remainder of the Sterling Ranch property is situated to the east and south. The Pawnee Rancheros 5-acre rural residential subdivision is also located to the south.



## PROJECT DESCRIPTION & CONTEXT

### SKETCH PLAN COMPLIANCE:

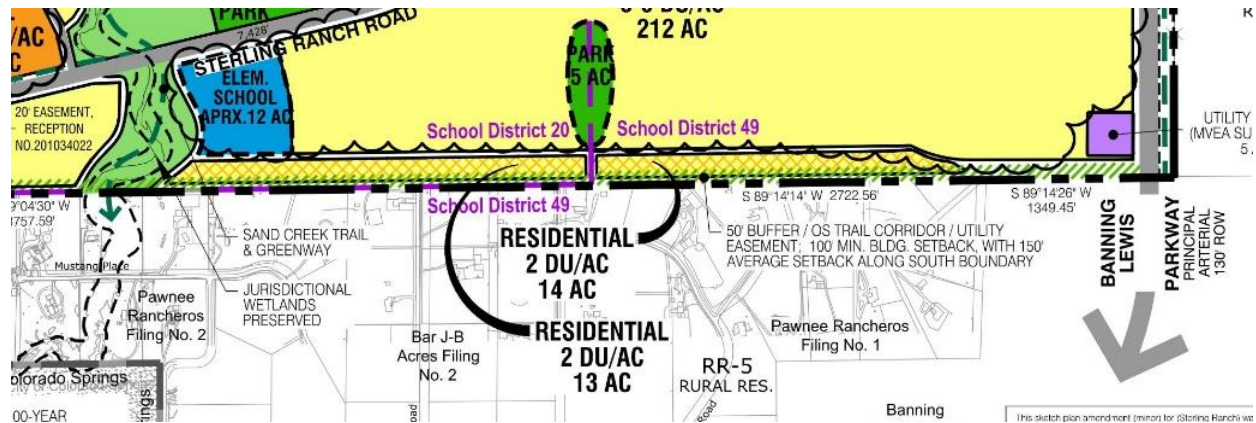


This map amendment request is for a zone change from RR-5 to RS-5000 for 301.033 acres of Sterling Ranch East. The Sterling Ranch Sketch plan amendment was approved in December 2022, which reduces the density cap to 4,800 dwelling units on 1,444 acres. The Sketch Plan amendment identifies the area included within this proposed rezone as primarily residential at a density of 3-5 du/ac per acre. A 35-acre K-8 school site, a 12-acre elementary school site and a community park are also included in the rezone area on the approved Sketch Plan.

The intent of the proposed RS-5000 zoning is to meet the 3-5 dwelling units per acre density shown on the Sketch Plan. Per the approved Sketch Plan amendments, approximately 47 acres for the two school sites, 30 acres for a Community Park and approximately 68 acres for open space/neighborhood parks/drainage. The remaining 157 acres will accommodate residential lots of a 5,000 sq.ft. minimum size and associated public streets, which is equivalent to approximately 4.5 du/ac. This is consistent with Sketch Plan density of 3-5 du/ac. Inclusion of the supporting school and community park sites within the rezone area is also consistent with the

approved Sketch Plan.

The Sketch Plan shows a 50-foot buffer/trail corridor and a 2 du/ac residential density along the southern boundary of the property, the intent of which is to provide a transition between the suburban density of the Sterling Ranch development and the lower density 5-acre Pawnee Rancheros subdivision to the south. A separate request to rezone that area to RR-0.5 has been submitted for review to the County to ensure that this area is retained as a transition and buffer as originally intended.



**COMPATIBILITY/TRANSITIONS:** This rezone continues the suburban density approved in Sterling Ranch to date and anticipated in the remainder of the Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan area. Directly north is the Retreat at TimberRidge, zoned PUD. Phase D of this development is adjacent to the north boundary of the rezone area and includes lots with a minimum size of 12,000 sq. ft. The western boundary of the RS-5000 rezone area is framed by the Sand Creek Channel, to the west of which is existing and proposed single-family residential development in Sterling Ranch Phases 1 and 2 and Homestead North. These areas are zoned RS-5000 and RS-6000 for suburban density development respectively.

To the east is vacant land designated on the approved Sketch Plan as similar and higher residential densities, including commercial areas, an additional elementary school site, and neighborhood parks. The proposed FourSquare at Sterling Ranch East is situated northwest of the intersection of Sterling Ranch Road and Briargate Parkway. The proposed Villages at Sterling Ranch East is situated southeast of the intersection of Sterling Ranch Road and Briargate Parkway. These are both higher density detached and attached single family residential developments that are currently under review with the County. Both are consistent with the higher density anticipated at this intersection in the Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan.

The zone change to RS-5000 is compatible with the existing RS-5000 zoning within Sterling Ranch to the west of Sand Creek. It also provides a transition between the lower density Retreat at TimberRidge and Homestead North developments to the north and the higher density areas of Sterling Ranch at the intersection of Sterling Ranch Road and Briargate Parkway.

The Pawnee Rancheros 5-acre rural residential subdivision is located to the south of the RS-5000 rezone. As noted above, a concurrent application is under review to rezone the 29.863-acre area immediately adjacent to Pawnee Rancheros to RR-0.5 to provide a transition and buffer between the suburban density of the Sterling Ranch development and the adjacent 5-acre lots, consistent with the approved Sketch Plan.

**TRAFFIC:** A Traffic Impact Analysis for Sterling Ranch East Phase 1, prepared by LSC in November 2022, is included in this submittal. The traffic report analyses the entirety of the concurrent Sterling Ranch East Phase 1 Preliminary Plan, which includes the proposed RS-5000 rezone area and the part of the

concurrent RR-0.5 rezone area within Phase 1. The Traffic Report details projected traffic counts and required intersection improvements for Sterling Ranch East Phase 1, which included:

- All of the site access points to Sterling Ranch Road except the intersection of Sterling Ranch/Oak Park Place are projected to operate at a satisfactory level of service D or better during peak hours as stop sign controlled intersections, based on the projected short term and 2042 total traffic volumes.
- Some of the movements at Marksheffel/Vollmer and Marsheffel/Sterling Ranch Road are projected to operate at LOS E or LOS F during the peak hours; once signalized all movements at these intersections are projected to operate at LOS D or better based on the projected short term and 2042 total traffic volumes.
- It is recommended the intersection of Burgess/Vollmer is reconstructed as a modern one-lane roundabout and is projected to operate at a LOS C or better for all approaches during the peak hours.

**UTILITIES:** Water and wastewater will be provided by the FAWWA with all Sterling Ranch Metro District assets assigned to FAWWA. The site is within the service area of Mountain View Electric Association, Inc. for electricity supply, and within the service area of both Black Hills Energy and Colorado Springs Utilities for natural gas supply.

**FLOODPLAIN:** Areas along Sand Creek on the western boundary of the site are located in a Zone A flood hazard zone (FEMA Floodplain Map No. 08041C0533G, dated December 7, 2018), indicating an approximate one percent (1%) annual risk of flooding. The floodplain areas will be contained wholly within the open space/park areas proposed along Sand Creek. The remainder of the site where development is planned is not located in a flood hazard zone, indicating that flood risk for the majority of the site is deemed by FEMA to be 'minimal'.

**WETLANDS:** The adjacent Sand Creek drainageway includes jurisdictional wetlands and Section 404 permit is already in process for impacts to this area with the US Army Corps of Engineers. This proposed rezone area does not impact the main Sand Creek Channel or existing wetlands. As part of the concurrent Preliminary Plan application, the east side of the channel is incorporated as part of the open space and trail system for Sterling Ranch.

**WILDLIFE:** In general, the site provides moderate to poor quality habitat for wildlife. No State-listed or State sensitive species were observed on the site. The site is not suitable habitat for any Federally-listed threatened and endangered species. The site provides moderate quality habitat for some grassland and woodland wildlife, including birds, mammals, reptiles, and possibly amphibians. The expected impact from site development to grassland species is classified as relatively low and to woodland species as moderately low.

**WILDFIRE:** The primary wildland fuel type is grassland with scattered trees. The Colorado State Forest Service has determined a moderate-high wildfire hazard potential and listed as a moderate risk with one small pocket of high risk along the east side of the site, as this area is currently undisturbed grassland. Development of the site will reduce available wildfire fuels in this area.

**DISTRICTS/ENTITIES SERVING THE PROPERTY:**

The following districts will serve the property:

- Academy School District 20
- Falcon School District 49
- Sterling Ranch Metro District – water and wastewater
- Black Forest Fire Protection District
- Mountain View Electric Association
- City of Colorado Springs Utilities Department – Gas
- Black Hills Energy - Gas

**PROJECT JUSTIFICATION**

The request is consistent with the criteria in Section 5.2.5.B for a Map Amendment (Rezoning) as follows:

- 1. THE APPLICATION IS IN GENERAL CONFORMANCE WITH THE EL PASO COUNTY MASTER PLAN INCLUDING APPLICABLE SMALL AREA PLANS OR THERE HAS BEEN A SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE IN THE CHARACTER OF THE NEIGHBORHOOD SINCE THE LAND WAS LAST ZONED;**

The relevant County master plan documents for the Map Amendment (Rezone) are Your El Paso County Master Plan, the El Paso County Water Master Plan, the El Paso County Major Transportation Corridor Plan, and the El Paso County Parks Master Plan.

**YOUR EPC MASTER PLAN**

The project site is denoted as a Suburban Residential placetype within a priority development area in the County Master Plan. The primary land use in this placetype is single family detached residential with lot sizes smaller than 2.5 acres and up to a 5 du/ac density. Supporting land uses include single-family attached, multifamily residential, commercial retail, commercial service, institutional, parks, and open space. The proposed RS-5000 zoning will support single-family detached residential with a net residential density of approximately 4.5 du/ac, which is consistent with the Suburban Residential placetype land uses and characteristics.

In the Key Area Influences chapter, this site is also designated as a potential area for annexation. This is indicative of the sites' suburban character and need for centralized services. The Owner/developer has chosen not to annex into the City as the Sterling Ranch Metropolitan District is already created and bonded and will supply water and wastewater services.

In the Areas of Change chapter of the County Master Plan, the area is identified as a "New Development" area, which will be significantly transformed as new development takes place. These areas are often on undeveloped or agricultural areas, and are expected to be complimentary to adjacent development. The proposed RS-5000 zoning will implement this transformation through

new development that is consistent with the densities for the Suburban Residential placetype and in the already approved Sketch Plan.

Core Principle 1, Land Use and Development, seeks to “manage growth to ensure a variety of compatible land uses that preserve all character areas of the county,” and Goal 1.1 seeks to, “ensure compatibility with established character and infrastructure capacity.” The proposed RS-5000 zoning is compatible with adjacent residentially zoned areas and continues the suburban density approved with the Sterling Ranch Phases 1 and 2, Homestead North, the Retreat at Timber Ridge, and the remainder of the Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan area.

#### **WATER MASTER PLAN**

*Goal 1.1 – Ensure an adequate water supply in terms of quantity, dependability and quality for existing and future development.*

*Goal 6.0 – Require adequate water availability for proposed development.*

*Policy 6.0.8 – Encourage development patterns and higher density, mixed use developments in appropriate locations that propose to incorporate meaningful water conservation measures.*

*Policy 6.0.11 – Continue to limit urban level development to those areas served by centralized utilities.*

FAWWA has sufficient supply and infrastructure in the area to serve this development. The total commitment of the Sterling Ranch System includes 1975 SFE in the Sterling Ranch Service Area. The total Sterling commitments stand at 858.87 acre-feet and available supply is now 697.39 acre-feet. This net deficit of available water is 161.48 AF, however, FAWWA has additionally contracted supply of 576.95 AF at Bar-X and 391.33 AF at McCune which is more than enough to meet the demands.

The project is located within Region 3, Falcon Area, containing 4 growth areas projected to be completed by 2040, three areas to be completed by 2060, and two other growth areas located on the north and south sides of Falcon Highway directly east of Falcon. Specifically, the Water Master Plan states:

“Region 3 contains four growth areas west of Falcon projected to be completed by 2040. Other areas of 2040 growth are projected for the north-central part of the region west of Highway 24 extending from Falcon to 4-Way Ranch. North of Falcon along Highway 24, growth is projected by 2060 on both sides of the highway. Just west of Falcon, another small development is projected by 2060 on the north and south sides of Woodmen Road. On the east side of Highway 24, three separate areas of growth are projected for development by 2060, with the largest of the three spanning from south of Judge Orr Road to east of Peyton Highway into Region 4c. This development will likely consist of 35-acre lots that will require individual wells to use Denver Basin groundwater. The other two growth areas will be located on the north and south sides of Falcon Highway directly east of Falcon. See Figure 5.5 for Region 3 growth map projections.”

Region 3 has a current water supply of 7,164-acre feet per year and a current demand of 4,494-acre feet per year. The 2040 water supply is projected to be 7,921-acre feet per year and the project

demand is 6,403-acre feet. The 2060 water supply is projected to be 8,284-acre feet per year and the projected demand is 8,307-acre feet.

The FAWWA is expected to serve 3,710 single-family equivalent (SFE) homes in the year 2040 requiring 1,310 annual acre-feet. In the year 2060 the system is expected to serve 7,310 single-family equivalent homes requiring 2,580-acre feet per year.

In order to meet future demands, contractual arrangements have been made to obtain additional legal and physical supply including contracts with McCune Water SR Water LLC and the Bar X Water. In addition to adding off-site sources, additional priority is to acquire and invest in additional renewable water supplies. Future supply has been contracted for and implementation is under way.

FAWWA's main supply source is centralized at a point that both Cherokee Metropolitan District and Woodmen Hills Metropolitan District have adjacent major storage and delivery facilities. It is possible that future agreements could be made.

#### **EL PASO COUNTY MAJOR TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR PLAN (MTCP)**

The MTCP identifies the extension of Briargate Parkway as a 4-Lane Principal Arterial between Black Forest Rd and Meridian Road by 2040. No additional change of classification or widening is identified on the 2060 Corridor Preservation Map. This road will be constructed through the Sterling Ranch development and will be facilitated by this rezone. The County has commissioned a consultant to initiate the design of this road extension and the Sterling Ranch developer has met with the consultant to coordinate intersection locations along Briargate Parkway.

#### **EL PASO COUNTY PARKS MASTER PLAN**

The Trails Master Plan map identifies a proposed Regional Trail adjacent to Sand Creek through Sterling Ranch. This has been accommodated in the Sterling Ranch filings already approved or in progress on the west side of the creek. There are no proposed regional trails in this portion of Sterling Ranch, although multiple local trails will be included for circulation and recreational use through the rezone area. These trails will be owned and maintained by the Sterling Ranch Metropolitan District.

The rezone area will also include the Sterling Ranch community park, a trail along the creek and other smaller neighborhood parks to serve residents. Parks and open space within the Sterling Ranch Preliminary Plan (currently under review) total 97.29 acres. These parks will be owned and maintained by the Sterling Ranch Metropolitan District.

## **2. THE REZONING IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH ALL APPLICABLE STATUTORY PROVISIONS, INCLUDING BUT NOT LIMITED TO C.R.S. §30-28-111 §30-28-113, AND §30-28-116;**

As the proposed rezoning fulfils the goals of the County Master Plan as described under criterion (1) above and is a compatible transition between the adjacent uses, as described in criterion (3) below,



it therefore complies with the statutory provisions that allow County's to establish, limit, regulate, or amend zoning within the unincorporated parts of El Paso County in the interests of public health, safety and welfare.

**3. THE PROPOSED LAND USE OR ZONE DISTRICT IS COMPATIBLE WITH THE EXISTING AND PERMITTED LAND USES AND ZONE DISTRICTS IN ALL DIRECTIONS;**

This rezone continues the suburban density approved with the Sterling Ranch Phases 1 and 2, Homestead North the Retreat at Timber Ridge, and the remainder of the Sterling Ranch Sketch Plan area. The zone change to RS-5000 is compatible with the existing RS-5000 zoning within Sterling Ranch to the west of Sand Creek. The proposed RS-5000 zoning provides a transition between the Retreat at Timberidge PUD zoning to the north, with 12,000 SF minimum lot size, the RS-6000 zoning to the northwest in Homestead North, and the proposed higher density areas of Sterling Ranch (FourSquare and The Villages) that are concentrated at the Briargate Parkway and Sterling Ranch Road intersection.

A separate submittal is under review to rezone the area along the south boundary to RR-0.5 for a minimum of half-acre lots to facilitate the 2 du/ac per acre residential density, 50-foot buffer identified on the approved Sketch Plan. This lower density and buffer were intended as a transition between the suburban density proposed with this RS-5000 zoning and the lower density 5-acre lots in the Pawnee Rancheros subdivision to the south.

**4. THE SITE IS SUITABLE FOR THE INTENDED USE, INCLUDING THE ABILITY TO MEET THE STANDARDS AS DESCRIBED IN CHAPTER 5 OF THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE, FOR THE INTENDED ZONE DISTRICT.**

Future development of this portion of the property will meet the use and dimensional standards for the RS-5000 zone as set out in Chapter 5 of the Land Development Code (LDC). The site is suitable for proposed residential density and it provides a transition between residential use types. The project has adequate access to Vollmer Road and Briargate Parkway via Sterling Ranch Road and has access to adequate utilities.