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El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department  
2880 International Circle, Suite 110  
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

Re: Overlook at Homestead Preliminary Plan

El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department:

This firm represents the Upper Black Squirrel Creek Ground Water Management District (the "UBSC District"), a formed and operating ground water management district with the powers enumerated in the Colorado Ground Water Management Act, C.R.S. § 37-90-101 *et seq.* The UBSC District has reviewed the Overlook at Homestead Preliminary Plan (the "Project") submitted by PT Overlook LLC ("Applicant") for approval of a preliminary plan consisting of 62 single family lots and 3 tracts on 350.83 acres and provides the following comments for your review and consideration:

**1. Management and Use of Designated Groundwater.**

The Colorado Ground Water Management Act of 1965, C.R.S. § 37-90-101 *et seq.*, created the Colorado Ground Water Commission ("Commission") and provided for the formation of groundwater management districts within designated basins. Together, the Commission and the local groundwater management district administer designated groundwater in a coordinated manner.

Under the 1965 Act, the Commission, not the water court, has jurisdiction to determine the right to withdraw designated groundwater. The Commission has promulgated rules and regulations, the "Designated Basin Rules," 2 CCR 410-1, for the management and control of designated groundwater and are binding on all users of designated groundwater. Groundwater management districts may also establish rules for the management and control of designated groundwater that are applicable to the withdrawal and use of designated groundwater. For example, within the boundaries of a groundwater management district, the district has the authority to administer designated groundwater priorities, issue curtailment orders, further limit withdrawals, and resolve disputes between well owners.

The UBSC District is a groundwater management district formed and operating under the Colorado Ground Water Management Act. Pursuant to its statutory authority, the UBSC

District has established rules, regulations, and policies, available to view on the UBSC District's website.<sup>1</sup> Applicant should review all UBSC District rules, regulations, and policies.

## **2. Compliance with UBSC District Rules.**

The Project is located within the UBSC District's boundaries and therefore Applicant must comply with all UBSC District rules and regulations. Specifically, Applicant must comply with:

UBSC District Rule 17. Rule 17(B) imposes the following limit on withdrawals from large capacity wells in subdivisions:

Withdrawals shall not exceed 0.5 acre-feet per year per single family residence, single condominium unit, apartment unit, single unit with a multiple-dwelling unit, or equivalent within the Subdivision or cluster development supplied by the well. In the event a Subdivision or cluster development is supplied by multiple wells, production from all wells supplying the subdivision or cluster development shall not exceed the product of (the number of single family residences, single condominium units, apartment units, single units within a multiple-dwelling unit or equivalent within the Subdivision)X(.5) acre feet per year. In no event shall production from the well exceed the rate or amount set forth in any determination of water rights issued for the well by the Colorado Ground Water Commission.

***Applicant is responsible for complying with all UBSC District rules and regulations, not just Rule 17.***

## **3. Water and Wastewater Service.**

The UBSC District has enacted a policy that “encourages the uses of central (municipal) water and wastewater systems, as opposed to the use of individual wells and septic systems in any proposed subdivision consisting of three or more lots.” Similarly, the El Paso County Land Development Code states that “[e]very reasonable effort shall be made to provide a central wastewater system.” El Paso Land Dev. Code § 8.4.8(B)(1)(a).

The proliferation of individual septic systems, called Individual Sewage Disposal Systems (ISDS) or Onsite Wastewater Treatment Systems (OWTS), within the UBSC Basin degrades the Basin's alluvial water quality and threatens the already over-appropriated groundwater resources of the Basin. Septic systems are generally ineffective at removing organic nitrogen compounds, volatile organic compounds (solvents, paints, antifreeze, etc.), pharmaceuticals, and personal care products from effluent. The cumulative use of septic systems in a specific region of the aquifer can result in the discharge of hundreds of acre-feet per year of effluent to a localized part of the alluvial aquifer, which may cause attenuation of certain contaminants from the effluent that can then become a source of residual contamination.

For projects intending to utilize individual septic systems, consideration must be given to the cumulative use of septic systems in that area and the location of the septic systems within the alluvial groundwater flow system. This should include an analysis of the depth to groundwater and depth to bedrock, and the degree of subsurface saturation, which influences groundwater

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<sup>1</sup>UBSC District, *Rules, Regulations and Statement of Policy*, [https://upperblacksquirrelcreekwater.com/reg\\_rules.php](https://upperblacksquirrelcreekwater.com/reg_rules.php).

flow direction and velocity. In areas with shallow depth to water, the use of septic systems can create near-surface saturated conditions. Similarly, shallow bedrock can prevent septic systems from properly discharging, which can result in near-surface impacts, particularly during rain events. *Accordingly, individual septic systems should not be used in areas with shallow depth to water or shallow bedrock.*

**4. Shallow Groundwater and Underdrains.**

Shallow groundwater exists throughout much of the UBSC Basin, including the area underlying this proposed development. Applicant should investigate the existence of shallow groundwater under each proposed lot. Structures developed in areas with high groundwater require underdrains to capture and drain water that would otherwise flood those structures. Under the Ground Water Commission's Designated Basin Rules, underdrains are considered large capacity wells and require a large capacity well permit. Any such large capacity well permit will require a replacement plan that meets the requirements of Designated Basin Rule 5.6, including by replacing evaporation and evapotranspiration associated with the exposure of groundwater caused by the underdrain.

**5. Use of Dawson Aquifer.**

The Dawson aquifer has been determined to be partially tributary to the alluvium of the Upper Black Squirrel Creek and its tributaries and therefore a replacement plan is required prior to the issuance of a large capacity well permit to withdraw groundwater from the Dawson aquifer. UBSC District Rule 3(B) additionally prohibits the withdrawal of water from the Dawson aquifer from small capacity wells permitted under section 37-90-105.

Applicant provides that the Project's water demands will be met with domestic wells drilled into the not-tributary Upper Dawson aquifer. Pursuant to UBSC Rule 3(B), *Applicant may not withdraw water from the Dawson aquifer from small capacity wells* to supply the homes in the subdivision. Therefore, to use water from the Dawson aquifer as Applicant has proposed, Applicant must first obtain a replacement plan that complies with UBSC District Rule 6 and with the Ground Water Commission's Designated Basin Rule 5.6. Any large capacity well permitted subject to that replacement plan would then be subject to the limits of the UBSC District's Rule 17(B), outlined above.

**6. Denver Basin Groundwater.**

Denver Basin groundwater is a non-renewable source, and it is well known that the Denver Basin water supplies are diminishing and may not be available in the future. Accordingly, Applicant should seek renewable sources of water and minimize reliance on Denver Basin groundwater to supply the Project.

The UBSC District reserves the right to provide additional comments at a later date founded upon information not readily ascertainable from the above-referenced application.

Sincerely,

for  
TROUT RALEY