

MEGGAN HERINGTON, AICP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

EL PASO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING RESULTS (UNOFFICIAL RESULTS)

Planning Commission (PC) Meeting

Thursday, June 19th, 2025, El Paso County Planning and Community Development Department
2880 International Circle, Colorado Springs, Colorado – Second Floor Hearing Room

REGULAR HEARING at 9:00 A.M.

PC MEMBERS PRESENT AND VOTING: SARAH BRITTAIN JACK, JIM BYERS, JAY CARLSON, JEFFREY MARKEWICH, ERIC MORAES, WAYNE SMITH, TIM TROWBRIDGE, AND CHRISTOPHER WHITNEY.

PC MEMBERS PRESENT AND NOT VOTING: NONE.

PC MEMBERS ABSENT: BRYCE SCHUETTPELZ.

STAFF PRESENT: MEGGAN HERINGTON, JUSTIN KILGORE, RYAN HOWSER, GILBERT LAFORCE, BRET DILTS, DANIEL TORRES, ERIKA KEECH, AND JESSICA MERRIAM.

OTHERS PRESENT AND SPEAKING: COLONEL DAVID BERRIOS, BLAINE PERKINS, DREW BALSICK, BRANDON WILSON, AND EDWARD DAVIS.

1. REPORT ITEMS

Ms. Herington informed the Board that the next Planning Commission Hearing is scheduled for Thursday, July 17, 2025, at 9:00 A.M. and will include a presentation by Clarion and Associates on the Land Development Code update process. **Mr. Kilgore** shared information about an opportunity for Board members to participate in an Energy and Water tour hosted by Colorado Springs Utilities.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE HEARING AGENDA

(NONE)

3. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Adoption of Minutes for meeting held on June 5th, 2025

PC ACTION: THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS PRESENTED (8 - 0)

IN FAVOR: (8) Brittain Jack, Byers, Carlson, Moraes, Trowbridge, Whitney, Markewich, and Smith.

IN OPPOSITION: (0) None.

B. VR235

MATHY

VACATION AND REPLAT PEYTON RANCHES FILING NO. 1A

A request by Fridah Joanitah Wood for approval of an 8.59-acre Vacation and Replat creating one single-family lot. The lot was illegally created when it was split without going through the subdivision process per El Paso County and State Statute. The property is zoned RR-5 (Residential Rural) and is located at 15330 East Chaparral Loop. (Parcel No. 3133002011) (Commissioner District No. 2)

DISCUSSION: Mr. Kilgore requested that this item be continued to a date certain of July 17th, 2025.

PC ACTION: TROWBRIDGE MOVED / MORAES SECONDED TO CONTINUE THIS ITEM AT THE JULY 17TH, 2025 PLANNING COMMISSION HEARING. THE MOTION PASSED (8 - 0).

IN FAVOR: (8) Brittain Jack, Byers, Carlson, Moraes, Trowbridge, Whitney, Markewich, and Smith.

IN OPPOSITION: (0) None.

4. CALLED-UP CONSENT ITEMS:

(NONE)

5. REGULAR ITEMS

A. SKP242

HOWSER

SKETCH PLAN FLYING HORSE EAST PHASE 1

A request by Flying Horse Land Company, LLC for approval of a 1821.3-acre Sketch Plan consisting of approximately 818 acres of residential uses, 31.2 acres of commercial uses, 89.9 acres of institutional uses, 521.1 acres of land designated as mixed-use, 47.7 acres of right-of-way, 30.6 acres of open space/parks, 96.6 acres of land dedicated to stormwater detention, and 186.1 acres of land set aside for preservation of the natural floodway that flows through the property. At full build-out, the maximum development potential contemplated within the Sketch Plan area consists of 4,973 dwelling units, a maximum potential gross density of 6 dwelling units per acre. The property is zoned RR-5 (Residential Rural), CR (Commercial Regional), CC (Commercial Community), RS-5000 (Residential Suburban), and I-2 (Limited Industrial), and is located at 16661 Highway 94, Colorado Springs, CO, 80930. (Parcel Nos. 4400000438, 4400000360, and 4400000374) (Commissioner District No. 4)

STAFF PRESENTATION

REMARKS FROM DEPUTY COMMANDER – Schriever Space Force Base

APPLICANT PRESENTATION

DISCUSSION: **Mr. Carlson** asked whether the six units per acre figure was calculated using the full 1,800 acres or just the residential portion. **Mr. Howser** clarified that the calculation was based on the proposed 800 acres of residential use and the total potential number of units, noting the final density is typically lower due to development requirements.

Mr. Trowbridge inquired about the existing zoning across the property, specifically regarding the I-2 zoning and how it originated. **Mr. Howser** responded that the commercial and industrial area was rezoned in 1984 to support a proposed business/industrial park that was never developed. This is the first development proposal for the property since that rezoning.

Mr. Markewich asked whether the compatibility study mentioned was specific to Schriever Space Force Base or part of a broader assessment. **Colonel David Berrios**, Deputy Commander, clarified that the

study will be unique to Schriever and its surrounding areas, marking the first of its kind for the Space Force and potentially serving as a model for future base studies.

Mr. Markewich inquired about the study's timeline and expressed a preference to have its findings prior to making related land use decisions. **Colonel Berrios** stated that funding is being pursued this year through Space Operations Command, with the goal of initiating the study next year. If funded, the study could be completed by late fiscal year 2026.

Mr. Markewich also questioned the appropriateness of mixed-use development adjacent to the base, given access limitations and proximity concerns. **Colonel Berrios** responded that the study aims to define acceptable uses within a 2-mile buffer, with graduated recommendations based on distance. He acknowledged the current lack of technical data but emphasized the goal of informed collaboration with developers once the study is underway.

Mr. Markewich asked whether any mitigation, such as riprap, was planned for the wetland area near the proposed overpass and retention ponds, or if the area would remain natural. **Mr. Blaine Perkins**, with HR Green Development, LLC, responded that the intent is to preserve the natural landform, with retention ponds managing flow. An application for a jurisdictional determination has been submitted to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and the results may influence future mitigation measures, though the team does not currently anticipate the area will be jurisdictional.

Mr. Markewich then questioned the types of uses planned for the mixed-use area adjacent to Schriever Space Force Base, including concerns about potential traffic flow and the feasibility of high intensity uses like big box retail. **Mr. Perkins** explained that potential uses could include office space, commercial services, and retail, similar to other areas in the plan. While high traffic uses such as Walmart or King Soopers are unlikely to locate there, **Mr. Perkins** confirmed that such uses have not been explicitly ruled out.

Mr. Moraes asked for clarification on the electronic device limitations referenced in the 1990 agreement. **Mr. Perkins** stated the agreement includes six parameters related to electronic interference, though he did not have the technical details. **Mr. Moraes** also inquired about the size of the mixed-use area displayed; **Mr. Perkins** confirmed the total mixed-use designation is 521 acres, with the displayed area comprising approximately 480–500 acres.

Mr. Markewich questioned whether the 1990 agreement had been updated to reflect modern technology. **Mr. Perkins** explained that only the base (Space Force) has the authority to amend the provisions of the agreement. He clarified that the agreement covers a specifically described area—not the full property—and any future restrictions, such as prohibiting electronics in certain areas, could be unilaterally implemented by the base within that defined area.

Mr. Trowbridge expressed concern that more consideration was not given to placing low-density residential development near the base, especially given the known limitations, and questioned why mixed-use was prioritized in that area instead of being located more centrally. He noted that the letter of intent acknowledges mixed-use is not a recommended land use in the master plan for this area and emphasized the importance of addressing these concerns early in the planning process. **Mr. Perkins** responded that the letter of intent reflects current limitations in the Land Development Code as it pertains to mixed use. He explained that, following discussions with Schriever Base personnel and County staff, the decision to propose mixed-use rather than residential adjacent to the base was intentional. The goal was to limit 24/7 occupancy near the base and instead provide uses such as office or retail, which operate primarily during business hours and reduce potential security concerns.

Mr. Whitney asked for clarification on the development timeline, referencing the earlier comment that it would be "several years" before construction begins. **Mr. Perkins** estimated the timeframe to be approximately 5 to 10 years. **Mr. Whitney** noted this allows time for the completion of the Space Force compatibility study and potential refinement of the conceptual plan. **Mr. Perkins** agreed and added that initial development would likely focus on the northern portion of the property, rather than areas adjacent to Schriever Space Force Base. He emphasized that the overall timeline depends heavily on reaching agreements with Cherokee Water, which will determine when development can proceed.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: **Mr. Edward Davis**, a resident of Rolling Hills Ranch Estates at 18245 State Highway 94, expressed serious concerns regarding traffic along Highway 94. He noted that despite longstanding promises dating back to the 1970s to expand Highway 94 to four lanes, no significant improvements have been made aside from two limited passing zones. **Mr. Davis** described heavy commuter traffic beginning as early as 3:30 A.M., particularly from individuals traveling to Schriever Space Force Base, often driving solo and at high speeds. He emphasized the increased accident rates and high auto insurance premiums in the area due to unsafe driving conditions. **Mr. Davis** urged that

road improvements, particularly to Highway 94 and Curtis Road, be prioritized before allowing new development in the area. He referenced past studies and proposed collaborations between El Paso County and the Air Force but noted no visible progress. He concluded by stressing the need for infrastructure improvements to ensure resident safety before advancing the proposed development.

APPLICANT REBUTTAL: Mr. Brandon Wilson, with SM Rocha, LLC, stated that during preparation of the master study, the development team consulted with the Pikes Peak Regional Transportation Authority (PPRTA) and reviewed CDOT capital assessments. He confirmed that neither CDOT nor PPRTA currently have plans to improve State Highway 94, meaning any future upgrades will likely be development-driven.

Mr. Smith raised concerns about the impact of construction traffic on an already overburdened Highway 94 and asked how improvements could be expedited. **Mr. Wilson** acknowledged the concern but noted that influencing CDOT's project timelines is difficult, as projects are placed in a regional queue with no clear path to acceleration.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION: Mr. Markewich expressed strong opposition to the proposed development, citing national security concerns and the incomplete Space Force compatibility study. He emphasized that while he is generally hesitant to restrict private property rights, the proximity to Schriever Space Force Base and its strategic importance should take precedence. He noted that the proposed development, particularly Phase 2, would surround the base on two sides. **Mr. Markewich** referenced a recent development proposal that was overwhelmingly rejected by voters (80% opposed), largely due to concerns over base security. He questioned the compatibility of the current proposal with Schriever's operations and stated that, based on his experience serving on both the Colorado Springs Planning Commission and this board, he believes this is a "horrible idea" and declared his intent to vote against the project.

Mr. Moraes expressed concerns about balancing the need for housing and commercial development near Schriever Space Force Base with the risk of urban encroachment. He cited examples of other military installations—such as Williams AFB (AZ), Lowry AFB (CO), Georgia AFB (CA), and Myrtle Beach AFB (SC)—that were closed due to encroachment and evolving mission viability. He warned that approving development near Schriever could unintentionally undermine the base's long-term sustainability, potentially resulting in the loss of federal investment and military presence.

Mr. Moraes noted that while private landowners have rights, purchasing property near a military installation comes with known limitations. He pointed to the 1990 agreement, particularly its electronic device restrictions, as an example—highlighting that certain infrastructure (e.g., lift stations using SCADA systems) could conflict with those limitations. He also voiced concern that sketch plan approval may later be used by developers to justify rezoning requests, even if conditions or public sentiment change over time. While acknowledging the potential traffic benefits of housing closer to the base, he ultimately cautioned against moving forward with the project at this stage due to the number of unknowns and compatibility concerns.

Mr. Byers stated that buffering through land use—such as mixed-use rather than residential—may be the most practical approach given the existing conditions near Schriever Space Force Base. He noted that the 1990 agreement includes provisions that limit density, estimating it to be roughly equivalent to RR-2 zoning. He expressed concern that a full 2-mile buffer would be overly restrictive and emphasized the new property owner's right to pursue development concepts. He expressed support for the project.

Mr. Trowbridge reiterated his earlier concerns about the mixed-use designation but acknowledged the applicant's rationale for avoiding residential development adjacent to the base due to national security risks. He recognized the difficulty of developing that area and expressed hope that the forthcoming Space Force study will help guide future phases. He supported the project, noting the potential benefit of reduced commute times for base personnel.

Mr. Carlson expressed that the proposal feels premature due to the many unknowns, particularly the lack of completed compatibility data from the Space Force. He emphasized the importance of protecting military operations and referenced past threats to space-related missions. He raised concerns about allowing mixed-use development immediately adjacent to the base boundary, including the potential for misuse of large structures. Additionally, he noted the proposed densities exceed what is outlined in the master plan. Due to these concerns, he stated his intent to vote against the project.

PC ACTION: TROWBRIDGE MOVED / BRITTAIN JACK SECONDED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF REGULAR ITEM 5A, FILE NUMBER SKP242 FOR A SKETCH PLAN, FLYING HORSE EAST PHASE 1, UTILIZING THE RESOLUTION ATTACHED TO THE STAFF REPORT WITH THREE (3) CONDITIONS AND

TWO (2) NOTATIONS, THAT THIS ITEM BE FORWARDED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION. THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL FAILED (5 - 3).

IN FAVOR: (3) Brittain Jack, Byers, and Trowbridge.

IN OPPOSITION: (5) Carlson, Markewich, Moraes, Smith, and Whitney.

6. NON-ACTION ITEMS

(NONE)

MEETING ADJOURNED at 11:02 a.m.

Minutes Prepared By: Jessica Merriam