

MEGGAN HERINGTON, AICP, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
PLANNING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

EL PASO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING RESULTS (UNOFFICIAL RESULTS)

Planning Commission (PC) Meeting

Thursday, June 18th, 2026, 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: Thomas Bailey, Michael Brewer, Jim Byers, Mae Emrick, Suzanne Casagrande, Eric Moraes, and Christopher Whitney.

PC MEMBERS PRESENT AND NOT VOTING: None.

PC MEMBERS ABSENT: Blaine Brew, Sarah Brittain Jack, Bryce Schuettpelz, Tim Trowbridge, and Jason Wulf.

STAFF PRESENT: Meggan Herington, Justin Kilgore, Kari Parsons, Joe Letke, Daniel Torres, Gilbert Laforce, Bret Dilts, Erika Keech, and Jessica Merriam.

OTHERS PRESENT AND SPEAKING: Nina Dossey, Amy Philips, Matthew Grubersch, Laurel Schow, Craig Dossey, Jeffrey Hodsdon, Mary Louise Fiddler, Betsy Matthies, Dave Mott, Alicia Whitcomb, Heather Tiffany, Craig Enoea, Paul Pusateri, Harold Haver, Tom Tijerive, Elisa Rusonis, Marti Breedlove, Harold Larson, Steve Strang, David Parks, Jess Neal, Laurel Ann, Luis Lolli, and Matt Dunston.

1. REPORT ITEMS

Mr. Kilgore advised the board that the next PC Hearing is Thursday, July 2nd, 2026, at 9:00 A.M.

2. PUBLIC COMMENT FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE HEARING AGENDA

NONE

3. CONSENT ITEMS

A. Adoption of Minutes for meeting held on June 4th, 2026.

PC ACTION: THE MINUTES WERE APPROVED AS PRESENTED (7 - 0)

IN FAVOR: (7) Bailey, Brewer, Byers, Casagrande, Emrick, Moraes, and Whitney.

IN OPPOSITION: (0) None.

4. CALLED-UP CONSENT ITEMS:

NONE

5. REGULAR ITEMS

A. P2511

LETKE

MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING)

IRON RIDGE REZONE

A request by Atticus Land LLC for approval of a Rezoning (Map Amendment) of two properties totaling 85.99-acre from RR-5 to RR-2.5. The properties are located south of Walker Road and approximately .03 miles from the intersection of Walker Road and Thompson Road. (Parcel Nos. 6100000439 6100000457) (Commissioner District No. 1)

STAFF & APPLICANT PRESENTATIONS

DISCUSSION: Ms. Emrick asked whether future property owners would be informed of the proposed no-build area at the time of purchase. **Mr. Letke** confirmed that the restriction would be included in the property documentation and noted that County staff would also identify the no-build area during site plan review. He explained, however, that because the restriction is a private no-build easement related to views, enforcement would occur through private covenants or an HOA rather than through El Paso County. **Mr. Whitney** confirmed that any disputes regarding the easement would therefore be civil matters between property owners. **Mr. Bailey** asked whether County staff would identify conflicts if a future building proposal encroached into the no-build area. **Mr. Letke** stated that staff would flag the issue during review and advise the applicant of the potential conflict with the subdivision's private

easement, though enforcement would remain a private matter. **Mr. Whitney** further questioned how inconsistencies between an approved preliminary plan and a future administrative review would be handled. **Mr. Kilgore** explained that minor modifications could be addressed administratively, while significant changes affecting density, access, or overall site design would require returning through the public hearing process. **Ms. Herington** added that if the no-build area is carried forward onto the final plat, County staff would generally not approve construction within that area. She noted that any exception would depend on the specific language and notes included on the final plat.

Mr. Moraes requested clarification regarding discrepancies in lot numbering between the applicant's presentation materials and the documents included in the staff packet. **Ms. Nina Dossey** of Vertex Consulting explained that the discrepancy resulted from an earlier conceptual exhibit used during a previous resubmittal and confirmed that the final preliminary plan identifies the subject property as Lot 15. **Mr. Moraes** also asked about the location and purpose of the proposed no-build area on Lot 15 and whether development could occur outside of the designated no-build area. **Ms. Dossey** confirmed that construction would be permitted outside the no-build area and required setbacks, explaining that the no-build area was voluntarily established by the developer to help preserve views for neighboring properties. She further noted that the topography, including a depression in the terrain, influenced the location of the no-build area. Finally, **Mr. Moraes** questioned the purpose of a proposed 60-foot right-of-way and the absence of a roadway connection between the northern and southern portions of the property. **Ms. Dossey** explained that the right-of-way was included at the County's request to preserve future access to an adjacent parcel if needed. She further stated that a direct roadway connection between the northern and southern portions of the development was not feasible due to the presence of a large drainageway and floodplain that would require bridge construction.

Mr. Moraes requested clarification regarding improvements to Colt Court and asked whether the existing roadway would need to be upgraded before the proposed extension could be constructed. **Ms. Dossey** explained that portions of Colt Court do not currently meet County standards and would require improvements, including roadway widening in certain locations, before the County could approve the final construction drawings and accept the roadway improvements. **Mr. Moraes** also questioned how potential damage to the existing roadway from construction traffic would be addressed. **Ms. Dossey** responded that the required roadway improvements are part of the

construction plans and stated that, to her understanding, the County would not accept the completed improvements if the existing portions of Colt Court were left in deteriorated condition.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Ms. Amy Phillips, speaking on behalf of the Black Forest Land Use Committee, expressed opposition to the requested rezoning. She stated that the primary concern was not the proposed 2.5-acre lot sizes themselves, but the increase in overall residential density that would result from changing the zoning from RR-5 to RR-2.5. Ms. Phillips explained that previous developments in the Black Forest area had utilized Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) to allow smaller lots while maintaining an overall density of one dwelling unit per five acres through the preservation of open space. She stated that the proposed rezoning would establish a precedent for increased density that could place additional demands on roads, wells, septic systems, and other resources, and requested that the application be denied.

Mr. Matthew Grubersch spoke in opposition to the request, expressing concerns regarding groundwater availability and the cumulative impacts of increasing residential density. He encouraged the Planning Commission to consider current groundwater conditions and stated that approving additional RR-2.5 zoning could increase demands on limited water resources. Mr. Gruich also questioned prior amendments to the Land Development Code and Master Plan that permit higher-density development.

Ms. Laurel Schow spoke in opposition to the request, stating that the proposed RR-2.5 zoning was incompatible with the surrounding RR-5 and larger-lot properties. She argued that the proposed no-build area addressed view preservation but did not mitigate the increased density at the subdivision boundary. Ms. Schow further expressed concern that approval of the request could establish a precedent for additional rezoning requests in the Black Forest area and urged the Planning Commission to recommend denial of the application.

APPLICANT REBUTTAL: Ms. Dossey responded to concerns raised during public testimony regarding residential density, water availability, septic capacity, and traffic impacts. Ms. Dossey stated that the proposed RR-2.5 zoning would continue to support a rural residential lifestyle while providing additional housing opportunities to accommodate the County's growth. She further noted that the required water supply and wastewater reports demonstrated adequate water availability and confirmed that each lot could accommodate at least two potential septic system locations. Ms. Dossey

also stated that the submitted traffic study concluded the surrounding roadway network, with planned improvements, would adequately accommodate the projected traffic generated by the development.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION: Mr. Moraes stated that he initially had concerns regarding the proposal, particularly with respect to the required approval criteria related to the design and location of public improvements, including the extension of Colt Court. He noted that the applicant's presentation and responses to the Commission's questions addressed those concerns and provided sufficient clarification regarding roadway access and future development potential. Mr. Moraes stated that learning there were no current plans to develop the northern parcel and understanding the physical constraints preventing a roadway connection between the parcels made him more comfortable with the proposal.

PC ACTION: BAILEY MOVED / EMRICK SECONDED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF REGULAR ITEM 5A, FILE NUMBER P2511 FOR A MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING), IRON RIDGE REZONE, UTILIZING THE RESOLUTION ATTACHED TO THE STAFF REPORT WITH TWO (2) CONDITIONS AND TWO (2) NOTATIONS, THAT THIS ITEM BE FORWARDED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION. THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL PASSED (7 - 0).

IN FAVOR: (7) Bailey, Brewer, Byers, Casagrande, Emrick, Moraes, and Whitney.

IN OPPOSITION: (0) None.

B. SP253

LETKE

**PRELIMINARY PLAN
IRON RIDGE PRELIMINARY PLAN**

A request by Atticus Land LLC for approval of a 85.99-acre Preliminary Plan creating 28 single-family lots and 2.5-acres of right-of-way dedication. The two properties are located south of Walker Road and approximately .03 miles from the intersection of Walker Road and Thompson Road. A request for water sufficiency for water quality, quantity, and dependability is also requested with the Preliminary Plan. (Parcel Nos. 6100000439 6100000457) (Commissioner District No. 1)

STAFF & APPLICANT PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION WAS IN COMBINATION WITH AGENDA ITEM 5A P2511 - IRON RIDGE REZONE

PC ACTION: EMRICK MOVED / BYERS SECONDED TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF REGULAR ITEM 5B, FILE NUMBER SP253 FOR A PRELIMINARY PLAN, IRON RIDGE PRELIMINARY PLAN, UTILIZING THE RESOLUTION ATTACHED TO THE STAFF REPORT WITH THREE (3) CONDITIONS, THREE (3) NOTATIONS, ONE (1) WAIVER, AND A RECOMMENDED FINDING OF SUFFICIENCY WITH REGARD TO WATER QUALITY, QUANTITY, AND DEPENDABILITY, THAT THIS ITEM BE FORWARDED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION. THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND APPROVAL PASSED (7 - 0).

IN FAVOR: (7) Bailey, Brewer, Byers, Casagrande, Emrick, Moraes, and Whitney.

IN OPPOSITION: (0) None.

C. P261

PARSONS

MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING)

MA SUBDIVISION TRACT A REZONE TO RM-12

A request by MA Infrastructure, LLC for approval of a Map Amendment (Rezoning) of 7.56 acres from RR-5 (Residential Rural) to RM-12 (Residential Multi-Dwelling). The property is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Walker Road and Highway 83. (Parcel No. 6115011001) (Commissioner District No. 1)

STAFF & APPLICANT PRESENTATIONS

DISCUSSION: Mr. Whitney requested clarification regarding the site's Master Plan designations after noting the application materials stated that only a portion of the property was located within the Tri-Lakes area. **Mr. Craig Dossey** with Vertex Consulting acknowledged the statement was incorrect and clarified that the entire property is located within the Tri-Lakes area and is also designated within the Black Forest North Central Residential Priority Development Area.

Mr. Moraes questioned how the proposed RM-12 and RM-30 zoning districts satisfied the approval criterion requiring compatibility with the character of surrounding development. Mr. Moraes expressed

concern that the site is surrounded primarily by large-lot residential properties and asked how the proposed multi-family and higher-density residential uses would maintain the existing character of the vicinity. **Mr. Dossey** responded that compatibility should be evaluated in the context of the adjacent school, existing centralized water and wastewater infrastructure, and the evolving character of the area. He stated that the Master Plan specifically identifies the area as appropriate for multi-family and attached residential uses and argued that these housing types are intended to be located where urban services are available. Mr. Dossey further noted that much of the surrounding property consists of undeveloped acreage that is likely to transition as the area develops. **Mr. Moraes** maintained that the Commission's decision should be based on the existing surrounding land uses and zoning rather than potential future development and reiterated his concerns that the proposal was not compatible with the current character of the adjacent large-lot residential properties. **Mr. Dossey** responded that requiring higher-density residential uses to be located only adjacent to existing multi-family development would make implementation of the Master Plan's housing objectives impractical, as new development must begin somewhere within areas served by existing infrastructure.

Mr. Bailey questioned the applicant's reliance on proximity to Monument Academy as a basis for compatibility, noting that the school is nearing enrollment capacity and asking whether the applicant had considered both limited school capacity and the potential traffic impacts of approximately 1,900 additional daily trips adjacent to the school. **Mr. Dossey** responded that, while the applicant has no control over school enrollment, proximity to the school could reduce vehicle trips by allowing students to walk rather than be driven. He also noted that schools have historically been integrated into neighborhoods and stated that traffic impacts were addressed through the submitted traffic study.

Ms. Emrick questioned the applicant's use of the term "walkability," noting that the area lacks many of the amenities typically associated with walkable multi-family development, such as grocery stores, commercial services, public transit, and other daily destinations. **Mr. Dossey** acknowledged that public transportation and commercial services are limited in unincorporated El Paso County but stated that the site provides pedestrian access to Monument Academy, regional trails, parks, and open space within the Walden development. He further acknowledged that the site's overall walkability would be relatively low. **Ms. Casagrande** noted that other multi-family developments, such as those near Lewis-Palmer, are located within walking distance of commercial services and questioned the comparison to

the proposed development, which she described as more isolated. **Mr. Dossey** responded that commercial development generally follows residential growth and stated that additional commercial uses could develop in the future as the surrounding area continues to grow.

Mr. Byers requested additional information regarding the traffic impacts associated with the proposed development. In response, **Mr. Jeff Hodsdon** of LSC Transportation Consultants, Inc., presented a more detailed overview of the traffic study, including its methodology, findings, and conclusions regarding projected traffic volumes and roadway operations.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: **Ms. Mary Louise Fiddler** expressed concerns regarding the interpretation and application of the Master Plan, questioning whether the applicant's previous involvement in developing County planning documents created a conflict of interest. She encouraged the Planning Commission to preserve public confidence in the planning process and avoid establishing a precedent inconsistent with the Master Plan.

Ms. Betsy Matthies, Mr. Dave Mott, Ms. Alicia Whitcomb, Ms. Heather Tiffany, Mr. Craig Enoea, Mr. Paul Pusateri, Mr. Harold Haver, Mr. Tom Tijerive, Dr. Elisa Rusonis, Ms. Marti Breedlove, Mr. Harold Larson, Mr. Steve Strang, Mr. David Parks, Mr. Randal (last name not provided), Mr. Jess Neal, Ms. Laurel Ann, and Mr. Luis Lolli spoke in opposition to the proposed rezoning requests, stating that the requested RM-12 and RM-30 zoning districts were incompatible with the surrounding large-lot residential character and inconsistent with the intent of the El Paso County Master Plan. Several speakers expressed concern that approval would establish a precedent for additional high-density development along the Highway 83 corridor and fundamentally alter the rural character of the area.

Speakers also raised concerns regarding increased traffic volumes, roadway capacity, pedestrian safety, emergency response, and the proximity of the proposed development to Monument Academy. Several commenters questioned the applicant's reliance on school proximity and walkability as support for the proposal, noting the school's enrollment limitations and the lack of pedestrian infrastructure. Additional concerns included water availability, wastewater infrastructure, wildlife, property values, quality of life, and the long-term sustainability of higher-density development. The speakers requested that the Planning Commission recommend denial of the rezoning requests.

APPLICANT REBUTTAL: Mr. Dossey thanked members of the public for their participation and acknowledged the concerns raised during public testimony. He stated that accommodating future growth requires identifying appropriate locations for higher-density housing and maintained that the subject property is one of the few locations within unincorporated El Paso County that can support multi-family development due to the availability of centralized water and wastewater infrastructure. Mr. Dossey also noted that the proposed development would not achieve the maximum densities permitted under the requested RM-12 and RM-30 zoning districts. Mr. Dossey addressed concerns regarding consistency with the Master Plan, explaining that the property contains overlapping policy designations and asserting that the Suburban Residential Place Type is the most applicable because it specifically identifies multi-family and attached residential uses as appropriate. He further stated that the surrounding area has already developed in a suburban residential pattern and argued that the proposal is consistent with the area's evolving character.

In response to concerns regarding water supply, traffic, and infrastructure, Mr. Dossey stated that the Walden water system possesses sufficient groundwater rights to serve the development and that current surface drought conditions are not directly indicative of available groundwater resources. He further explained that roadway improvements required to mitigate project impacts would be identified and constructed during subsequent development review processes and would be the responsibility of the developer. Mr. Dossey also noted that future improvements to Highway 83 remain under the jurisdiction of the Colorado Department of Transportation.

Finally, Mr. Dossey responded to concerns regarding precedent and property values, stating that the availability of centralized utilities limits where similar developments could occur and arguing that approval of the request would not create widespread opportunities for comparable development elsewhere in the area. He also noted that similar concerns had been raised during previous development applications and stated that those developments had not resulted in diminished property values.

Mr. Matt Dunston, applicant and land developer, provided background on the history and development of the Walden community, noting that the area has been planned around centralized water and wastewater infrastructure since the 1960s and that he and his family have been involved in its development for approximately 40 years. Mr. Dunston stated that Walden has evolved as a unique

suburban residential community, including the establishment of Monument Academy, and emphasized that his family has a long-term investment in the area and is committed to preserving its character.

Mr. Dunston acknowledged the concerns expressed by neighboring residents and stated that he values their input and maintains positive relationships within the community. He explained that the requested zoning provides flexibility during the planning process but does not represent the ultimate development density, noting that site constraints would prevent the maximum densities allowed under the requested RM-12 and RM-30 zoning districts from being achieved.

Mr. Dunston stated that the subject property is uniquely situated between Highway 83 and Monument Academy and that higher-density residential development represents the most appropriate long-term use of the site. He emphasized that neither he nor his family would pursue a development that would diminish the quality or value of the surrounding Walden community and expressed his willingness to continue meeting with residents to discuss the proposal.

PLANNING COMMISSION DISCUSSION: Mr. Moraes stated that he could not make the required findings under Approval Criteria 1 and 3. He expressed concerns that, although the property is designated within the Suburban Residential Place Type, it functions as an isolated area surrounded by large-lot residential development and lacks an appropriate transition in density. Mr. Moraes stated that the proposed RM-12 and RM-30 zoning districts were not consistent with the Master Plan's guidance regarding compatibility, minimal change, and development that complements the existing character of the surrounding area. He further stated that, while the Priority Development Area identifies where growth should occur, it does not prescribe the level of density, and he did not believe it justified the requested zoning. Finally, Mr. Moraes concluded that the proposal did not satisfy the compatibility requirements of Approval Criterion 3, noting that comparable residential densities do not exist in the neighboring area and that the proposed development would not maintain the character of the surrounding neighborhood.

Mr. Bailey stated that Approval Criteria 1 and 3 require the Commission to exercise judgment regarding consistency with the Master Plan and compatibility with surrounding development. He noted that the subject property occupies a unique location at the intersection of Highway 83 and Walker Road, where transportation infrastructure and existing development patterns distinguish it from the surrounding large-lot residential areas. Mr. Bailey stated that the area has long been identified as an

appropriate location for more intensive development and that the presence of Monument Academy and other nearby land uses contribute to a changing character. He further noted that the requested zoning establishes a framework for future development but does not dictate the final project design or density. Based on his interpretation of the Master Plan and compatibility criteria, Mr. Bailey concluded that the proposal satisfies the applicable approval criteria and represents an appropriate first step in the development review process.

Ms. Emrick stated that she shared many of the concerns already expressed by other Commissioners. She noted that, while the Master Plan identifies multi-family housing as a potential use within the Suburban Residential Place Type, it specifies that such development should be supportive of and compatible with the area's overall single-family character. Ms. Emrick also referenced the Black Forest North Central Residential Priority Development Area guidance, stating that future development should match the existing character of the Black Forest community while protecting the area's rural quality. Based on those considerations, she expressed concerns regarding the proposal's consistency with the Master Plan.

PC ACTION: MORAES MOVED / EMRICK SECONDED TO RECOMMEND DISAPPROVAL OF REGULAR ITEM 5C, FILE NUMBER P262 FOR A MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING), MA SUBDIVISION TRACT A REZONE TO RM-12, THAT THIS ITEM BE FORWARDED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION. THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND DISAPPROVAL PASSED (6 - 1).

IN FAVOR: (6) Brewer, Byers, Casagrande, Emrick, Moraes, and Whitney.

IN OPPOSITION: (1) Bailey.

D. P262

PARSONS

MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING)

MA SUBDIVISION TRACT A REZONE TO RM-30

A request by MA Infrastructure, LLC for approval of a Map Amendment (Rezoning) of 7.79 acres from RR-5 (Residential Rural) to RM-30 (Residential Multi-Dwelling). The property is located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Walker Road and Highway 83. (Parcel No. 6115011001) (Commissioner District No. 1)

**STAFF & APPLICANT PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION WAS IN COMBINATION WITH AGENDA ITEM
5C P261 - MA SUBDIVISION TRACT A REZONE TO RM-12**

**PC ACTION: MORAES MOVED / BREWER SECONDED TO RECOMMEND DISAPPROVAL OF REGULAR ITEM
5D, FILE NUMBER P262 FOR A MAP AMENDMENT (REZONING), MA SUBDIVISION TRACT A REZONE TO
RM-30, THAT THIS ITEM BE FORWARDED TO THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS FOR THEIR
CONSIDERATION. THE MOTION TO RECOMMEND DISAPPROVAL PASSED (6 - 1).**

IN FAVOR: (6) Brewer, Byers, Casagrande, Emrick, Moraes, and Whitney.

IN OPPOSITION: (1) Bailey.

6. NON-ACTION ITEMS

NONE

MEETING ADJOURNED at 2:43 P.M.

Minutes Prepared By: Jessica Merriam