



Red Rock Ranch

Homeowners' Association

PO Box 1463
Monument, CO 80132

Planning and Development Department
Board of County Commissioners
2880 International Circle
Suite 110
Colorado Springs, CO 80910

January 18, 2021

Re: Red Rock Acres Re Zone
File#P2010

John Green, Project Manager

This letter is a request to not change existing zoning for the Red Rock Acres in the Tri Lakes area of El Paso County. Original zoning was RR1, with 1 acre lots. Infrastructure does not support this dense ½ acre development proposal in this area. This is a lynchpin property that will set a precedent as to how the area will be developed with more open land that will be up for sale and development in the future.

The original zoning of the east parcel along Rockbrook Rd was originally zoned RR1, as demonstrated by the majority of developed lots in the adjacent Clovenhoof subdivision. The new Land Development Code (revised Jan 9, 2018) altered the RR1 to RR.5.

According to the current Land Development Code definition of Rural Residential, "Newly developed Rural Residential lots should be between 2.5 and 10 acres. ... Designation in the rural residential category does not automatically imply the acceptability of lots as small as 2.5 acres." Lot sizes in the Red Rock Ranch area vary from very close to 1 acre to 38.87 acres. There are 125 lots that are 1 acre to 2 acres, about 245 lots that are 2½ acres to 38.87 acres with 20 of those larger parcels 5 acres or larger. This is a rural setting with narrow paved roads, some dirt roads, a community well for some lots and single wells for other lots and septic systems.

If part of this parcel were to be developed as ½ acre parcels, it would appear to be Residential Suburban as demonstrated by the Pioneer Lookout Suburb 1.3 miles from the Red Rock Ranch Drive and 105 intersection.

Infrastructure does not support dense housing.

The Red Rock Ranch HOA has concerns about traffic congestion on a daily basis. As the traffic study provided by the developer demonstrates, the intersection of Red Rock Ranch Dr. and HWY 105 is already at the threshold of needing a left turn lane, deceleration and acceleration lanes. There are no indications of improvements in the Master Plan through 2040 for this intersection. There is not enough ROW on either side of HWY 105 to create the required lanes for an increase in traffic. The highway speeds are 50 mph in this area and west bound traffic already backs up making a left turn.

Fire evacuation is another concern. This area has been compared to the Paradise area in California, with National Forest providing fuel and few exits for existing homes. Evacuation will be slow and difficult. I have been told by Wildland/ Urban fire experts that it is not a matter of if, but when an event will occur. The Red Rock Ranch HOA is very active in Firewise, with national recognition by the National Fire Protection

Association. The Red Rock Ranch HOA is reducing fuels and alerting authorities to the evacuation situation we already have. Dense housing of 38 homes will add 76 to 114 cars to that mass emergency evacuation. Those vehicles will enter at a crucial bottle neck exit road for the existing community. Most roads are rural in nature, about 1½ lanes wide. This area will not “drain” as fast as Rockrimmon area during the Waldo Canyon Fire with major roads of 2 lanes each way (converting to 4 lanes) in different directions. We are actively preparing our neighbors for an evacuation, which would become more problematic with an additional dense subdivision and additional vehicles.

With the main intersection currently at capacity and with the inability to expand prior to development, this will produce a hazardous situation to the safety of the residents in the Red Rock Ranch area.

Schools in the Lewis Palmer Lake area are at maximum capacity. Population has had a 43% increase from 2017 to 2020 with what has been approved by January 2020. With more developments approved in 2020 for the Tri Lakes Area, Lewis Palmer schools, and basic services sheriff and fire departments are stretched beyond the ability to provide those services quickly. Some schools do not have the ability to expand due to an already developed area around the schools. There is no place for additional school room, temporary or permanent.

Water, a very contentious commodity, is not plentiful in our area. There are 15 undeveloped lots in the area that Forest View Acres Water District is already obligated to supply water. We have had water restrictions in the summer, broken infrastructure with no water to the community. A dense sub division may become problematic.

Monument Creek flows year round and is prone to flash flooding, erosion and deposition. Many small ponds are manmade, but over the years these bodies of water, and Monument Creek, have evolved into important wildlife habitat.

Wildlife and wetlands are located in this area of the Red Rock Ranch area. Animals include deer, occasional moose, beaver, bear, mountain lion, bobcat, fox, skunks, porcupines, wild turkeys, owls, hawks and migrant species of ducks, geese and egrets have all been seen in this area. I am sure there are more nocturnal and smaller animals not seen that inhabit this area. Residential ½ acre lots and culverts are not amenable to maintaining a habitat for these animals. “Identify and protect wildlife and sensitive natural areas and unique landscape features.” (Tri Lakes Master Plan 2000, Chapter 4 page 12).

“We need to accommodate growth that **preserves the natural environment**, character, history and natural beauty of the Tri Lakes area.” (Tri Lakes Master Plan 2000, Chapter 3 page 8). The most recent development ½ mile east of Red Rock Ranch Dr., Pioneer Preserve, is developed as 5 acre lots. The west parcel the developer wants to change, located along Red Rock Ranch Rd., is zoned 5 acre lots, consistent with what is in the area.

5 acre parcels will preserve the habitat that has formed along Monument Creek. 5 acre lots will decrease the impact on the already stressed infrastructure. 5 acre lots will be more compatible to the existing area. 5 acre lots will keep Red Rock Ranch ...rural.

Elizabeth Lonnquist
Red Rock Ranch HOA
President

cc. Nina Ruiz, BOCC: Stan VanderWerf, Holly Williams, Carrie Geitner, Longinos Gonzales Jr. , Cami Bremer