

December 23, 2020
Office of Development Assistance, City of Aurora
15151 E. Alameda Parkway
Aurora, CO 80012

RE: Pomeroy/Pronghorn FDP Amendment (Application Number: #1371385)
KA#: 218108

Dear Mr. Sakotas,

The Pomeroy Framework Development Plan (“FDP”) 1st Amendment is a detailed community vision which includes approximately 62.3 acres of land located directly north and northeast of Southlands Shopping Center (“Southlands”) in the southeast quadrant of Aurora, Colorado. The Pomeroy FDP 1st Amendment pertains to the 27.2 acres east of S. Aurora Parkway (Pomeroy east side). The property was originally zoned within the E-470 District with a Regional Activity Center Subarea (“RAC”) designation. Aurora adopted a new zoning code in May of 2019 and the property was re-designated as MU-R or Mixed-Use Regional District. The E-470 RAC standards transitioned into the new MU-R Zoning. Although Pomeroy is not required to do so, a large number of the concepts outlined in the MU-R zoning standards have been incorporated into the design.

Pomeroy’s east side has dealt with significant challenges since the time of implementation of the RAC zoning designation in 2001 as well as the approval of the FDP in 2003. The surrounding property has undergone significant development – including virtually all of Southlands to the south and Sorrel Ranch to the north – which necessitates dramatic changes in roadway connectivity from that which was approved in the 2003 FDP. Infrastructure development since 2001 includes Aurora Parkway, Orchard Road, various minor collectors within Sorrel Ranch, extraordinarily extensive retaining wall improvements and significant drainage improvements both within Southlands and the property across Aurora Parkway east of Southlands, some of which have negatively impacted the subject property and its buildability.

As a result of this surrounding development, the site has evolved into a narrow (+/- 650’) infill property with many constraints and challenges. The narrow nature of the site, with no relief along the boundaries, necessitates many changes to the 2003 FDP. Further constraints and challenges include (1) roadway connections in fixed locations and with fixed grades; (2) a site with severe topography given its relatively small size; (3) the need for a signalized full movement intersection on South Aurora Parkway and designing the geometry of that intersection; (4) existing drainageways (Chelsea Draw & Murphy Creek) and associated drainage and crossing improvements; (5) access to utilities and (6) an adjacent utility substation and large stormwater detention pond. Therefore, we believe strongly that the site requires a collaborative and thoughtful planning and zoning effort in order to maximize its utility not only for future users but also for adjacent property owners and the City.

This FDP Amendment's primary objective is to create a vibrant community with a mix of land uses that support and connect with the regional and local context, particularly Southlands and the existing open space/trail system. Our vision is to develop a community providing commercial, retail, and/or office services and high-quality residences along the S. Aurora Parkway corridor within the Southlands submarket. The site's leading assets are its proximity to one of Aurora's finest regional amenities (Southlands), frontage along a major arterial (Aurora Parkway), and frontage along Murphy Creek. Our vision includes creating a variety of useful connections to these assets. Revised street configurations, site access, and open space networks will foster enhanced interaction within the project and the larger community context. The residential and mixed-use land uses will benefit from S. Aurora Parkway access. A variety of open space and pedestrian connections span the east side landscape, connecting the commercial and residential districts. This community focal point creates a strong connection between provider and user. Experience has also shown that residents adjacent to an amenity such as Southlands are attracted to and disproportionately patronize nearby retail goods and services. Lastly, the site is located within the Cherry Creek School District, helping to draw residents from across the region into this attractive community.

To this end, we are proposing an amendment to the original FDP for the eastern parcel only. After a number of meetings with the City of Aurora staff it was decided the best direction was to amend the FDP for the east parcel only and for the applicant to re-write the design guidelines which would apply to the property in its current state rather than its condition circa 2003 in order to accommodate the constraints previously enumerated. The current FDP consists of what is now a largely out-of-date east side land use map/matrix, as well as urban design, architectural, and landscape design guidelines, which ignore existing site conditions as they have evolved during the 16 years of adjacent development. Our team amended the west side standards two years ago to allow for the development of a vibrant community with a mix of supporting land uses. The east side amendment strives to do the same. A majority of the standards presented in this amendment mimic the standards proposed in the west side amendment.

As a reminder, the adjacent Southlands property satisfies many of the E-470 RAC Subarea/MU-R requirements regarding layout and design. The Pomeroy FDP 1st Amendment will complement this development and ensure cohesion with the greater Mixed-use Regional District designation. A new land use map/matrix considering current site constraints and updated urban design, landscape, and architectural guidelines will promote a distinctive, unified character and assures high quality development.

As a result of the severe site constraints, two primary planning areas will be developed. PA 6, which is designated for commercial, office, retail, and residential uses abuts S. Aurora Parkway and is located at the western boundary of the site. It is accessed via a stop light-controlled intersection. PA 7, which is designated for single-family attached townhomes, is located in the central portion of the site and is bordered by Planning Areas 8 & 11, a series of open spaces. It is accessed via S. De Gaulle Street and an internal road connecting with PA 6.

Planning Areas 7 has been designed to accommodate the most intensive single-family attached neighborhood possible, which is outlined in the MU-R zoning. Green court dwellings were utilized to fit within the undulating landscape. The arrangement of these units yielded the highest density within this parcel because it took into account the existing topography and reduced the amount of overall grading within the site. A series of Townhome pads follow the site's natural grade along De Gaulle St. Private alleys provide access to this rear loaded product. Internal open space courtyards between townhome "pods" create a pleasant front door entry and connect users to the primary street and open space planning areas.

Planning Areas 8 and 11 have been designed to provide significant benefit both to the Pomeroy development and also the neighboring communities. Planning Area 8 serves as the primary amenity for the development as numerous spaces within the planning area have been programmed for a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities. A large gathering area with public art, benches, an open lawn and garden have been provided at the culmination of S. De Gaulle St. It also borders and overlooks Murphy Creek. This gathering area serves as a perfect destination for residents of the Planning Area 7 townhomes and is easily accessible to neighboring communities through a variety of trail options within Planning Areas 7 & 8. A multi-use trail moves north from the gathering area and passes alongside a detention pond which also serves as a bird sanctuary. Numerous seating options and a full trail loop around the detention pond/bird sanctuary allow for ample viewing options. The bird sanctuary will contain scattered bird nesting stations meant to attract multiple bird species. The multi-use trail continues north to connect with the existing Murphy Creek trail system. This trail connects users with a variety of nearby trails, Appaloosa Park, Infinity Middle School, and a new City of Aurora recreation center. The primary multi-use trail within Planning Area 8 also moves west toward the primary entry of Planning Area 7. The trail meanders west along Chelsea Draw and connects residents with a second gathering area which includes picnic tables, benches, seat walls, and a display garden. The trail continues west and greets residents at the primary entry of Planning Area 7 with native plantings and a display garden, open lawn for recreation, and a variety of seating options.

Planning Area 11 is a 1.4-acre open space that is located in between Planning Areas 6 & 7. This Planning Area has been designed to provide unique recreation and viewing opportunities of the overall community, Murphy Creek, and Aurora open space to the east. Significant grade change occurs in Planning Area 11 and provides the perfect setting for a community trail with ample seating options. The trail starts at the primary entrance of the townhome community and weaves its way southeast through a variety of seating nodes. These nodes provide users with numerous views of the entire community and inhabitant wildlife. The trail within this Planning Area also connects to other trails and walkways to create a loop around the entire community.

The Pomeroy 1st Amendment area consists of two land-use districts that share several qualities and characteristics but are distinguished by differences in emphasis on primary uses and intensity of development. The land-use districts are designed to work together to result in a lively, prosperous,

mixed-use neighborhood that along with surrounding land uses serves as an attractive place to live, work, and shop.

We are excited about the vision of bringing this community consisting of retail/commercial uses and high-quality residences and other services to Aurora and to developing this strategic and important undeveloped parcel between Southlands and Sorrel Ranch. We hope this package provides sufficient detail and visioning to create a clear picture of the purposeful programming behind this FDP Amendment. We look forward to working with the Aurora Staff throughout the FDP amendment process.

Sincerely,

Jeff Neulieb
KEPHART