

TAB 4

Site Analysis Narrative
Existing Conditions &
Natural Features Map

Site Analysis Narrative

Site Analysis & Character:

1. GENERAL SITE CHARACTER

Briefly describe the existing location and physical character of your site. What are its most important and distinguishing features?

The Cottonwood Creek property is generally located between Monaghan Rd on the West, Hudson Rd on the East, Jewell Ave on the Northwest side, Mississippi Ave. on the Northeast side, and Yale Ave on the South, and is comprised of approximately 1,232 acres. The site appears to have been primarily used for agricultural purposes, and is included in the growth area for Aurora. In general the site slopes to the Southwest, and provides distant views to the Front Range. The overall site is flat and well suited for development with a general average slope of less than 4 percent.

The site has several distinguishing features. There are tremendous views of the Front Range from the western portion of the site, and due to the relatively flat nature of the site there will be several drainage corridors on the southern portion of the property that we plan to utilize as an organizational tool to create identifiable neighborhoods. We anticipate the drainage corridors will include Community Trail corridors, and our development pattern will have Neighborhood Trail corridors that feed to the drainage corridors. In addition the southern portion of the site features Yamaha Creek traversing the property on a diagonal alignment. The most important and distinguishing feature of Yamaha Creek is not its natural characteristics, but the connections via Yamaha Creek to the larger regional trail connections in this part of the City.

2. SITE ASSETS

Based on your site analysis, what are your site's most important physical assets and potential amenities?

Consider location, relationship to existing and proposed transportation networks, scenic beauty, recreation potential, special natural resources, etc.

Yamaha Creek provides the most important physical asset, and our proposed plan for the property respects this asset to the greatest extent practical. We have strategically located permanent park features adjacent to Yamaha Creek to take advantage of the connections to the Regional trail facilities. We have purposefully used Yamaha Creek as a logical defining element to our land uses.

3. SITE RESTRICTIONS

Based on your site analysis, what are the physical restrictions and site characteristics that may pose a challenge to development? Consider location, nature of surrounding conditions, environmental pollution, airport noise contours, lack of existing infrastructure, steep slopes, etc.

The arterial and collector road crossings over Yamaha Creek will undoubtedly present the most challenging physical site condition, although ultimately connecting to a Regional Trail corridor to the west, this challenging area will be a major asset to the community. The project team has worked carefully to convert the physical restriction of Yamaha Creek, and the challenges that it presents, into a project amenity. The development of the Cottonwood Creek community will be key in helping the City connect to a regional trail corridor and related connections along the Triple Creek corridor.

The timing and size of surrounding infrastructure presents this project with challenges; however, our team has been meeting with the surrounding property owners throughout the design process, and negotiating solutions to the timing and sizing of off-site infrastructure is how we are thoughtfully dealing with these challenges. The surrounding proposed land uses are very complimentary to the development that we are proposing. The Cottonwood Creek area contains two areas for oil and gas drilling in the future. It remains uncertain whether oil and gas operations will actually move forward in these areas. We are mitigating any negative impacts from the oil and gas operations by locating open space buffers around the potential well sites and locating schools farther from the well locations.

4. DESIGN RESPONSE TO SITE ASSETS

How does your proposed development plan take advantage of all the site assets identified by your analysis?

Our analysis of the property identifies a few high points on the property in the southeastern portion of the community. We have proposed a modification to the alignment of a future unnamed east-to-west collector road to miss this high point, thereby providing vistas from neighborhoods toward the Front Range. The areas along Yamaha Creek & First Creek will be characterized by drainage channels that will incorporate natural features such as rocks, landscaping and other aesthetic elements that encourage natural growth and provide for stabilization. We have strategically located parks and open spaces along these corridors, and envision the drainage areas functioning as a linear park system connecting and defining the various sub neighborhoods in this portion of the property.

This philosophical stance takes the greatest advantage of this asset by leaving it in as natural state as is practical, and provides uninterrupted pedestrian flow through the property. We also envision direct access to the regional trail along Triple Creek at several locations through the property, and have located a community trail corridor that will connect internal park and open space areas to the regional trail corridor. In addition we have located a park directly adjacent to the Yamaha Creek trail to take advantage of the connectivity that the trail will provide for the residents.

Design Impact:

5. DESIGN RESPONSE TO SITE CHALLENGES

How does your development plan deal with the site's development constraints as identified above? Have you considered alternate strategies to deal with these problems?

- If so, why did you select the particular approach shown on your development plan?

In general the property is relatively flat, and with the exception of Yamaha Creek, has no physical constraints or development challenges - no power lines running through the property, no steep topography, no known rock problems to complicate the construction of underground utilities, no negative impacts from nearby facilities (landfills, highway noise), and all the utilities are either to the side or very close. In addition this area is blessed with some of the best soils (low swell potential) in the metropolitan area.

6. DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS ON EXISTING SITE CONDITIONS

What are the impacts of your project on the existing character of the site and its immediate surroundings? What improvements will your development make? How have any impacts been mitigated?

- Consider impacts on environmental quality, aesthetic appearance, existing open space and natural features, physical infrastructure, etc.

The impact of development on the existing site conditions will be considerable. The project will be

making significant roadway, water, sewer, detention, and regional trail improvements. This project will ultimately help bring significant infrastructure closer to adjacent properties for development of this larger area. Our Community Plan incorporates significant trail corridors, both Regional and Community in nature, and our Community Concept anticipates significant Neighborhood trail connections as well. The existing character of the site is heavily influenced by historic, agricultural uses. The site has been, and is currently being used as cropland and / or grazing, eliminating any natural rangeland habitat and species diversity. Little, if any, of the native site character remains. Nonetheless, development will impact the physical nature and visual character of the site. Increased run off, loss of agricultural use and reduction of rangeland habitat will occur with site development. Many improvements associated with the development will provide significant mitigation, including:

- Storm water detention/water quality basins will retain meaningful quantities of water on site and enhance and diversify wildlife habitat along the drainage way,
- Parks providing both passive and active uses, including social interaction,
- Shade tree plantings throughout the property will establish a tree canopy that does not exist today,

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