

**ARAPAHOE COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING-CONTINUANCE
SEPTEMBER 16, 2025
6:30 P.M.**

**SUBJECT: PP23-002 – RANCH AT WATKINS FARM FILING NO. 1
PRELIMINARY PLAT**

MOLLY ORKILD-LARSON, PRINCIPAL PLANNER

CONTINUANCE FROM AUGUST 19, 2025

On August 19, 2025, the Planning Commission (PC) conducted a public hearing to consider Case No. PP23-002 for a proposed preliminary plat for 11 single-family residential lots and one tract south and adjacent to the 6th Avenue Service Road and east of Thunder Ranch subdivision. After hearing staff and the applicant's presentations and taking public testimony, the PC closed the public hearing and voted to continue the case to September 16, 2025, to consider supplemental material regarding water rights and how the floodplain affects this and nearby properties.

Floodplain Exhibits

The attached exhibit shows the 100-year floodplain of Cardboard Draw. Cardboard Draw crosses the subject property, specifically Lots 8-11. The attached cross sections of Lots 8-11 compare the location of the proposed lots to the floodplain base flood elevation. These cross sections demonstrate that the building area for Lots 8 to 11 are located outside the 100-year floodplain of Cardboard Draw. In addition, the lowest finished floor elevations for buildings on these lots will be required to be a minimum of two feet above the base floodplain elevation.

Water Rights

The attached referral letter from the Colorado Division of Water Resources analyzes the water supply and demand for the proposed development. As noted in the letter, permits issued under C.R.S. 37-90-137(4)(b)(I) shall allow withdrawals on the basis of an aquifer life of one hundred years. The State Engineer's Office reviewed the water rights decreed to the applicant and determined that the water supply is adequate and that the water can be provided without causing injury to others' decreed water rights.

The Arapahoe County Comprehensive Plan includes policies and strategies that require adequate water availability for proposed developments, including the following strategy:

Strategy PFS 2.1(b) – Adopt a 300-year Water Supply Requirement

The County will require new development to provide a 300-year water supply. This requirement should be included in the Land Development Code and apply to all development applications.

Although that 300-year standard is not incorporated into and mandated by the Arapahoe County code, the State Water Engineer's Office performs a courtesy review of supply and demand based on the 300-year recommendation. Using that measure, the Denver aquifer water is not sufficient to supply the lots for a period of 300 years; however, as noted by the State Water Engineer, the county's current legal requirement is a 100-year supply.

Since the inclusion of the 300-year requirement in the Comprehensive Plan, Arapahoe County hired a water consultant, LRE Water, to develop a Water Supply Study. The purpose of this study is to update the goals, policies, and strategies related to water resources from the County's 2018 Comprehensive Plan, and its primary objectives are to close gaps between future supply and demand, improve water efficiency, and extend the life of the Denver Basin aquifers to sustain a long-term supply. This study also provides Denver Basin Annual Production Factors rather than using the 300-year. This factor provides a formula for calculating the amount of water available in an aquifer for a project. This study has not been adopted but is to be added to the Arapahoe County Land Development Code in the future. As stated above, County staff relies on the 100-year analysis from the State Water Engineer to determine if there is sufficient water for applications.