



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

The Ranch at Watkins Farm Filing No. 1 Preliminary Plat PP23-002

Board of County Commissioners Public Hearing

January 13, 2026





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Applicant: Strategic Land Solutions, Inc.

Project Proposal: Subdivide 36.73 acres
into 11 lots and one tract

Project Location: East of N. Watkins Road,
and south and adjacent to E. Colfax Service
Road

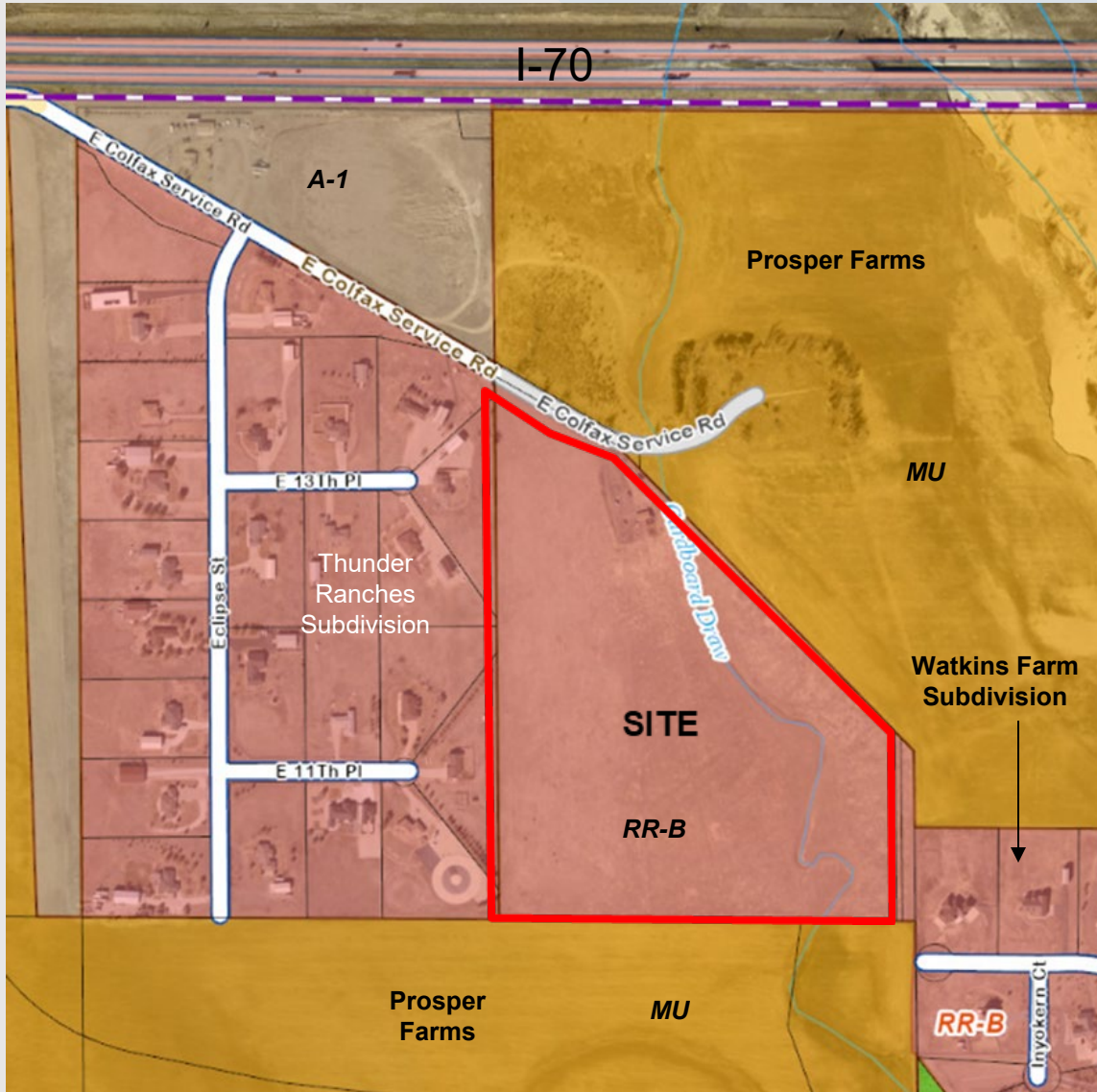
Staff: Sue Liu – Engineering Services



Vicinity & Zoning Map



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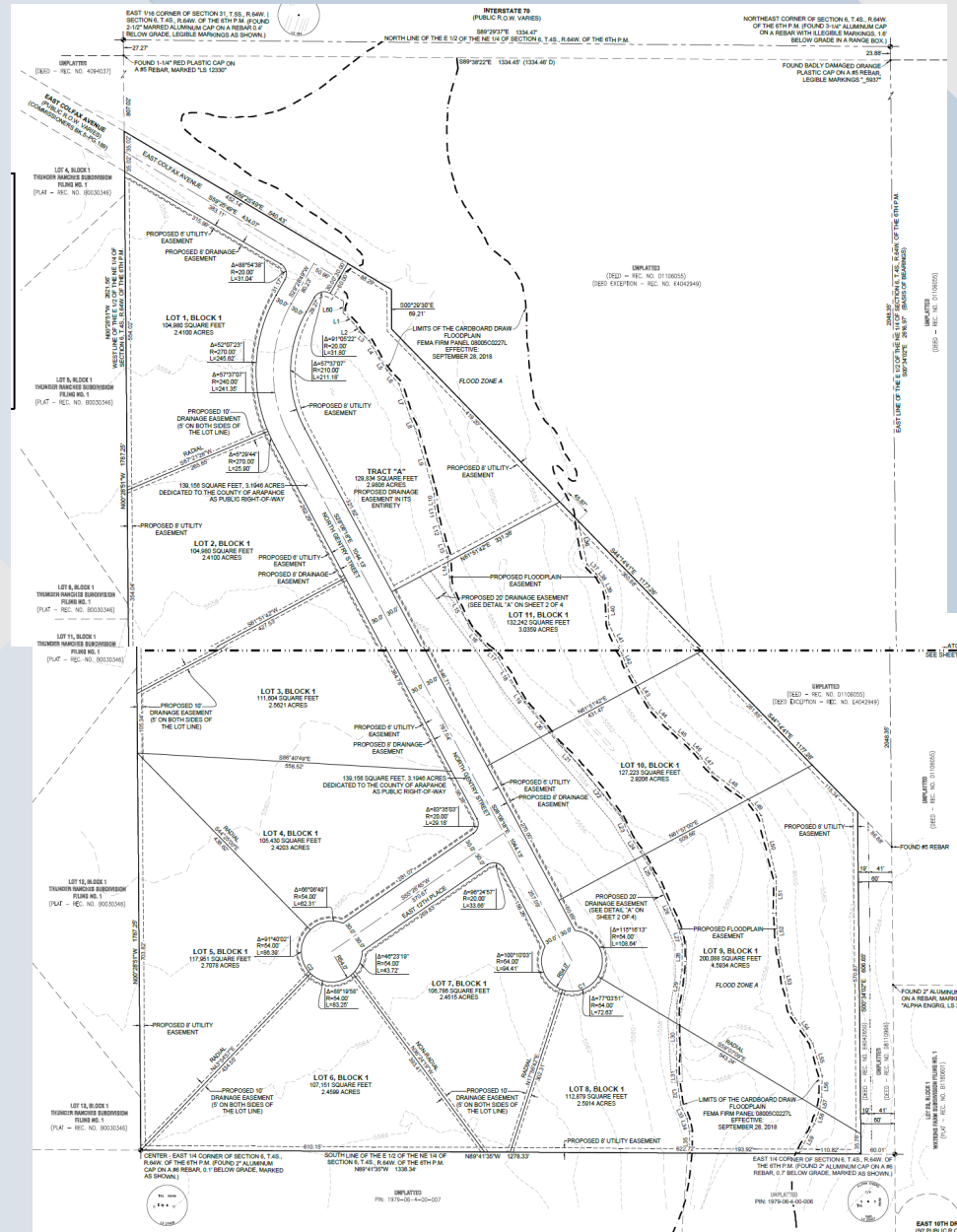


- Zoned: Rural Residential-B (RR-B)
- Surrounding properties:
 - North: Prosper Farms, MU, A-1
 - East: Prosper Farms, MU, & Watkins Farm Subdivision, RR-B
 - South: Prosper Farms, MU
 - West: Thunder Ranches, RR-B



Preliminary Plat

- 11 SFR lots, 1 tract for detention pond
- Lot size ranges from 2.41 to 4.5 acres
- Access from E. Colfax Avenue Service Road
- Lots 8-11 have constraints from the floodplain



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Comprehensive Plan & Land Development Code



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- The subject site is located in the Comp Plan's land use category of Urban Residential/Single-Family Detached and Attached.
- The land use category density is from 1 to 8 dwelling units per gross acre. The project's proposed density is 3.34 du/ac, which aligns with the SF detached designation.
- Consistent with LDC:
 - Meets minimum lot size, minimum lot widths
 - Adequate access to the parcel.
 - Development can be served (well water, on-site septic, utilities)
 - Development can be served by sheriff, fire, schools)
 - Compatible with the surrounding area.



Referral Comment



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- Referral comments received.

State Water Engineer

- Determined that the water supply is adequate and can be provided without causing injury.
- The groundwater in the aquifers underlying the subject property was adjudicated in Division 1 Water Court Case No. 97CW398.
- As per the court decree, a Property Owners Association must be created for the property, and all the lot purchasers must join. The water rights and the augmentation plan will be assigned to the Property Owners Association.
- A condition of approval has been set for the Property Owners Association to be created before the signing of the plat.

Arapahoe County Health Department – Concerns about Lots 8-11 meeting setbacks between wells and septic on these lots and with the adjacent lots. Staff worked with this division crafting the condition of approval addressing setbacks and the applicant has provided an exhibit demonstrating how the required setbacks can be met.

Bennett School District: Cash-in-lieu of land dedication for public school sites value is \$22,869.99. This will be addressed at the time of the final plat.

Colorado Parks and Wildlife: Requested surveys to occur before construction/grading for nesting raptors and burrowing owls.



Public Comment/Neighborhood Meeting



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- Neighborhood Meeting – held on September 25, 2023, 14 attended.
- Neighborhood Meeting and Public Comments
 - Water Supply: Concerns about the impact on existing private wells in the area from the new development.
Response: The Colorado Division of Water Resources has determined that the proposed water supply is expected to be adequate and can be provided without causing material injury to existing water rights.
 - Traffic: Concerns about increased traffic.
Response: Waiver to the Traffic Impact Study was done and it was determined that site generated traffic is too low to have a measurable impact on the improved portion of E. Colfax Avenue Service Road
 - HOA for the Development: Will there be HOA for the development?
Response: HOA will be formed.
 - Floodplain: Is the property in the floodplain?
Response: Portions of the parcel are within the floodplain. The floodplain will be identified on the plat, and structures will need to be located outside this area.



Planning Commission Hearing



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

- 20 people attended the hearing, 12 of whom spoke.

- Concerns:

Water Supply: Concerns that the proposed water wells would affect the water supply of their wells. about the impact on existing private wells in the area from the new development.

Response: The Colorado Division of Water Resources has determined that the proposed water supply is expected to be adequate and can be provided without causing material injury to existing water rights.

For this office's purposes, so long as the withdrawal of the groundwater subject to the letter is consistent with statute, the decree, and well permits issued by this office, we do not anticipate material injury occurring to existing water rights.

They cannot consider potential concerns of injury without supporting information in our review of these subdivision water supply plans. Additionally, the lowering of groundwater levels alone does not necessarily constitute injury (see CRS 37-90-137(4)(c)). I mention this example because it is often a concern cited by the public as a reason for our office to deny the water supply plan, but that is not consistent with our standards of review, and it is not consistent with statute. To reiterate, the Applicant is entitled to withdraw the water that they have a right to pursuant to statute, their decree, and well permits.



Planning Commission Hearing



ARAPAHOE COUNTY
PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

- Concerns:
Floodplain/Flooding: Concerns
Response:

Impacts to Roads:
Response:

Planning Commission approved the application with a 4-0 vote.



Conditions of Approval



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PUBLIC WORKS & DEVELOPMENT

1. Prior to the signature of the final copy of these plans, the applicant shall address all Public Works and Development Staff comments.
2. A note shall be placed on the plat stating that "All lots within the development shall meet the minimum Arapahoe County Health Department setbacks. These setbacks are as follows:
 - Water well from OWTS: 100 feet.
 - OWTS from property line: 10 feet.
 - OWTS from floodplain boundary: 50 feet.Setbacks between wells and OWTS on individual lots and to adjacent lots' wells and OWTS shall be considered."
3. The applicant shall pave E. Colfax Service Road from the development site to the existing pavement at the intersection of Eclipse Street and E. Colfax Service Road at the time of the final plat.
4. The applicant shall create a Property Owners Association prior to the signing of the final plat.
5. The applicant shall comply with the Bennett-Watkins Fire Rescue requirements, including:
 - a. The road shall be designed and constructed as per the Arapahoe County Public Roadway Standards. The roadway shall be within the dedicated right-of-way for County-Maintained Roadways.
 - b. Any structure built on the 11 single-family lots will need to comply with all current Arapahoe County adopted codes and standards, as well as the 2018 International Fire Code as adopted by Bennett-Watkins Fire Rescue (subject to change before future development phases if a newer edition is adopted).
 - c. Access serving individual lots (driveways) within the development area shall meet the minimum requirements outlined in Arapahoe County Rural Roadway Standards, Appendix R.
 - d. When development occurs on each lot, applicants will need to submit for plan review directly to the fire department as part of the building permit process. Applicable fees will apply at the time of submission.
6. The applicant shall add a note to the plat that reads: "A geotechnical investigation is recommended to be done on the lots in the development to determine the depth of bedrock and seasonal groundwater to minimize on-site structural damage."
7. Prairie dogs are present within the subject property. A Burrowing Owl Survey shall be conducted if any earthmoving is to occur between March 15 and August 31. This survey shall be submitted to the County Planning Division and Colorado Parks and Wildlife for review and approval, and no construction/grading shall be permitted during those dates without prior CPW's authorization.
8. If the start of construction occurs during the raptor nesting season (between February 15 and August 31), a nesting raptor survey shall be conducted before the start of construction to identify active nests within 0.25 miles of the project workspace. This survey shall be submitted to the County Planning Division and the Colorado Parks and Wildlife for review and approval. If nesting raptors are present, no construction/grading is permitted during those dates without prior CPW authorization.



Conclusion



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- Based on the findings in the staff report, staff is recommending approval for the Preliminary Plat.

