



November 9, 2011

Mr. Tom Boni
Town of Eagle County
P.O. Box 609
Eagle, Colorado, 81631

RE: Eagle River Station Referral Response

Dear Tom:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the proposed Eagle River Station (ERS) Subdivision Sketch Plan; PUD Zoning Plan, and; PUD Development Plan application dated July 2011.

Please note that our office did not receive a copy of the combined application until early October, 2011. As such, we did not have adequate time to perform a thorough staff review. The following comments were assembled by staff with some input from the Board of County Commissioners. We hope that you will find these observations useful as the project moves through the Town's land use approval process.

The ERS is a mixed-use development proposal on an 85.52-acre parcel located at the eastern end of Chambers Avenue between Interstate-70 on the north and U.S. Highway 6 on the south. The proposal entails 732,500 square feet of commercial retail space in a traditional big box configuration and 550 rental residential units. The application further states that 'institutional and entertainment' uses are also included; however no specificity as to the nature of these types of uses was provided. The core elements (design, scale, layout and use of land) of the development proposal appear to have not changed significantly from prior proposals.

We note that the current proposal departs from previous proposals as follows:

- The amount of commercial square footage proposed has increased from prior proposals. The previous proposal considered by the Town Board in 2009 contained 550,000 square feet of retail space, a 150-room hotel, 20,000 square feet of office space and 581 residential units. The current proposal contains

approximately 183,000 additional square feet of retail commercial uses and the number of housing units remains similar to the previous proposal.

- Residential units are now proposed to be 100% rental, with the stated goal of targeting 80% AMI.

Over the past seven years, Eagle County has responded to three similar iterations of this land use proposal. Our former comments were based upon the goals and policy statements contained in the jointly adopted Eagle Area Community Plan. While Eagle County fully acknowledges the Town's capacity to make appropriate land use determinations based upon what is best for the Town, this is a large scale proposal with the potential for significant regional impacts. Eagle County is concerned about impacts to regional traffic, preserving regional character, storm water management and aesthetics associated with the proposed development. It is our intention that the comments provided herein will be received in the spirit of furthering the intergovernmental cooperation that has been enjoyed by the Town and the County for many decades.

The following comments, based upon the present proposal, are submitted for the Town's consideration:

Transportation Impacts:

- 1) Regarding the proposed new Interstate-70 interchange, and more specifically, the associated roundabout/spur road improvements, the design encourages future access to adjacent, presently undeveloped Resource zoned properties located east of the ERS property. This eastern property line is not only the extent of the Town's recently adopted growth boundary; in the Eagle County Comprehensive Plan it is also the delineation line for the Community Buffer zone that was established in 2006.

The intent of the Community Buffer delineation is to maintain undeveloped visual breaks along the county's main development corridors to avoid the perception of strip development and to promote the unique and separate character of the community centers located along I-70. The Comprehensive Plan recommends that development within the Community Buffer areas be limited to one primary residence and one accessory dwelling unit per 35-acres, as well as agricultural uses. Our concern is that providing a vehicular connection to the land located east of the ERS site may encourage development proposals which are inconsistent with the intent of the Community Buffer. Further, access to the property abutting the ERS site on the east could potentially be extended across the immediately adjacent property to provide access to the land acquired by the RE-50J school district located further to the east. Our belief is that this location for a future high

school is not ideal and should be dissuaded. We believe this is consistent with the position of the Town as well.

- 2) The county is concerned about future capacity impacts on U.S. Highway 6 from the proposed East Eagle Interchange to the existing Eby Creek roundabout. The Traffic Study provided with the application (original dated 2008; update letter, dated May, 2011) does not include any proposed capacity related (segment) improvements (ie. widening of U.S. Highway 6) commensurate with anticipated 2030 volumes. It is our understanding that this highway segment will not be annexed by the Town, and that the town will not undertake maintenance responsibilities on this road. In anticipation for the required State highway access permit, the county requests that additional analysis of capacity issues on this roadway segment be provided.

Additionally, we hope the Town would recognize the significant efforts made by the county and CDOT to improve bicycle safety on U.S. Highway 6 East of Eagle, and that the inclusion of similar safety measures on U.S. Highway 6 between the East Eagle Interchange roundabout and the Eby Creek roundabout will be required as a part of this proposal.

Stormwater Drainage and Off-site Impacts:

- 1) The drainage study provided with the application indicates that offsite flows will be treated by new wetlands and existing wetlands prior to reaching the Eagle River. It is not clear where these facilities will be located, or how these constructed and/or natural wetlands will be protected and/or managed in perpetuity via easement or fee title ownership. The proposed conveyance of stormwater from the site to the Eagle River is a related concern. There are six pre-development outfalls, and 3 post-development outfalls. Since these outfall locations are changing and are being consolidated, consideration should be given to what happens offsite from these proposed outfalls after it exits the structures crossing U.S. Highway 6 and the railroad. The possibility of channel degradation and damage to down gradient properties may occur, as well as potential water quality degradation to the Eagle River on these offsite drainage ways. The Applicant should provide drainage analyses that follow these increased flows along the outfalls all the way to the Eagle River in an effort to determine the full impact and offer the appropriate mitigation as necessary.

We would ask for additional detail regarding these features and assurance that stormwater treatment facilities will function as proposed in the future. We would

further request that the Town work closely with the Eagle County Engineering Department to mitigate or minimize impacts upon unincorporated land and the Eagle River which may be realized as part of the ERS development. To avoid county involvement, perhaps the land where stormwater management is to occur should become part of the ERS PUD proposal.

- 2) Based upon the historical and post development model results, we would note that approximately 56 CFS (Cubic Feet per Second) of peak flows on the 100year/24 hour analysis will be developed without any on site detention. This may suggest that the 25 year storms are not proposed to be detained on site. Eagle County requests that the Town require 25 year storms to be detained on-site and released at a rate no greater than historic peak flows. These 25 year flows have not been calculated in the study and demonstrated. Since the outfall locations are to unincorporated county lands, the Applicant should honor these standards. To avoid county involvement, perhaps the land where stormwater management is to occur should become part of the ERS PUD proposal.

Community Health:

- 1) Eagle County has taken measured steps in the recent past to bolster our Health and Human Services Department staffing and services to match the emerging needs of the community. Site design within the built environment is a crucial part of promoting healthy lifestyles and prosperity in our communities. There is a renewed focus at Eagle County on assessing development design to ensure access to healthy eating and active living.

The Public Health Department provides the following general comments and recommendations regarding the proposal:

- a. The Applicant is encouraged to provide convenient sidewalk access for personal mobile devices (scooters) and bicycles that seniors and other residents may use to move about the development.
- b. There is a general deficiency of park or open space within the proposed development for the benefit of residents, their pets and patrons of the Eagle River Station. Playgrounds, seating areas, exercise areas and community gathering places for the anticipated residential population should be considered.
- c. The "mixed-use", pedestrian friendly aspects of the development are generally isolated among large areas of parking lots.

- d. The layout of stores, parking and pedestrian circulation does not lend itself to “one stop shopping” as implied in the application. The distance between stores on opposite sides of the development may discourage pedestrians seeking convenience.
- e. Bus stop locations in close proximity to proposed senior residential units in the MUL district should be considered; service commercial, convenience/grocery stores and access to drug stores should likewise be easily accessible by seniors.

Design and Visual Impacts:

- 1) It is our observation that prior iterations of the ERS development better integrated multiple land uses including usable open space and park land for the residents and patrons. Individual building designs were encouraged for large format stores and for mixed-use structures. These building designs respected ‘traditional’ mountain architectural detailing that enhanced facades and that prevented long spans of uninterrupted wall planes.

The current proposal includes the same or similar design standards in the proposed PUD Guide document as were previously proposed. The site plan provided with this application, however, depicts building footprints which do not match the façade renderings and standards prescribed within the PUD Guide and do not break-up long building wall and roof spans in a manner consistent with the minimum percentage façade breaks prescribed in the PUD Guide.

The predominant building type proposed with this application is large and medium format (big box) structures. The Applicant should be held to the intent of the architectural guidelines which they prepared.

The current proposed layout orients the back sides of the large-format buildings within the PUD either toward Interstate-70, or the U.S. Highway 6 corridor. Although proposed landscape planting and buffer strips may lessen the visual impact from off-site perspectives, the building façades should be designed to provide 360 degree enhancements as delineated in the PUD to protect and enhance the visual character which will be created by this development. This is an important consideration due to the fact that this development will become the new entrance to the Town’s eastern gateway.

- 2) The current proposal, similar to the previous proposals, states intent by the Applicant to commit to using LEED Core and Shell (LEED CS) to gain certification for all buildings constructed by the Developer. The application also states the Applicant will “encourage and assist” retailers and individual tenants to use sustainable design and construction “features” in their buildings and tenant

finishes. Eagle County supports all such efforts and suggests the Town, as practicable, also consider additional sustainable design elements such as community connectivity and walkability; clustering and compact development patterns; energy and resource usage, and water conservation measures.

The Town has for many years identified lands immediately east of the Eagle Valley Commercial Park as appropriate for commercial and/or mixed use development as a logical extension of interstate-oriented commercial uses and Town infrastructure. Both the 1996 and 2010 Eagle Area Community Plans contain language regarding future development in this vicinity and advisory statements regarding traffic and other development-related impacts associated with large scale developments. The 2010 Eagle Area Plan contains more specific planning principals to be considered in any new development proposal.

While this proposal addresses several of these principals, the Town may want to consider additional principals set forth in the Eagle Area Community Plan regarding 'Vision', 'Livability Factors', and 'Land Use' while evaluating the merits of this application.

Eagle County appreciates the opportunity to review this land use proposal and provide comments for the Town's consideration, and reserves the right to provide additional comments as the land use approval process continues.

Sincerely,



Robert Narracci, AICP
Planning Director

xc: Board of County Commissioners
Keith Montag, County Manager
Ray Merry, Director of Sustainable Communities