



Meeting Date: Sept. 23, 2021

AGENDA MEMORANDUM

To: Planning Commission

From: Donna Ferguson, AICP, Senior Planner, Development Services

Title: **The Ridge at Crystal Valley Site Development Plan; and**
The Ridge at Crystal Valley Skyline Variance

Executive Summary

The applicant, WSB & Associates, on behalf of the property owner, Crystal Valley Ranch Development Company, is requesting approval of a Site Development Plan (SDP) known as the Ridge at Crystal Valley. The Ridge at Crystal Valley is comprised of property within the Crystal Valley Ranch Planned Development, 4th Amendment (Crystal Valley Ranch PD) and the Ridge Estates Planned Development (PD) and proposes a residential neighborhood



Vicinity Map

consisting of 142 single-family homes, a new street network and over 28% of open space on a 116-acre property. In addition, for 25 lots which lie in a designated Moderate Skyline Area, the applicant is requesting a Skyline Variance from the height provisions of the Moderate Skyline Area to increase the maximum permitted height to 35-feet from 25-feet. The property is generally located in the southwest section of Crystal Valley Ranch. SDPs for residential use require a public hearing before the Planning Commission who shall review the proposal and provide a recommendation to Town Council. In addition, requests for Skyline Variances are under the purview of the Planning Commission who shall review and make a decision on the Skyline Variance request.

Background

Existing Conditions and Surrounding Uses

The Ridge at Crystal Valley is a 116-acre property comprised of 46 acres within the Crystal Valley Ranch PD (norther section) and 70 acres within the Ridge Estates PD (southern section). Across the northern tip, southern tip, and a small area on the western edge of the property is designated Moderate Skyline Area. The property is undeveloped and generally located in the southwest section of Crystal Valley Ranch, east of Lanterns and Bell Mountain and north and west of Sellers Creek Ranch.

To the northwest of the property, within the Lanterns, is a large parcel of future Town open space, which contains the highest peak within the corporate limits of the Town. To the northeast, within Crystal Valley Ranch, are single-family homes on lots which are typical in size and shape to other homes within Crystal Valley Ranch. To the southeast and south, within the jurisdiction of Douglas County, is private open space and single-family homes on 4-acre lots which are part of Sellers Creek Ranch. And, to the southwest, also within the jurisdiction of Douglas County, are single-family homes on large 10-acre lots which are part of Bell Mountain Ranch.

Zoning

The development of the Ridge at Crystal Valley is governed by two different planned developments; the northern section by the Crystal Valley Ranch PD and the southern section by the Ridge Estates PD.

The Crystal Valley Ranch PD was originally approved in March 2001 as a resort residential community. It was created from a portion of property from the Plum Creek South Planned Development, which was annexed and zoned in September of 1985. The zoning for the area was further amended in February of 2007 and then again in February of 2012 to its current zoning, the Crystal Valley Ranch Planned Development, 4th Amendment.

The Ridge Estates PD was recently annexed and zoned in July of 2019 as a single-family residential neighborhood.

Discussion

Use

Within the Crystal Valley Ranch PD, portions of two residential planning areas and one open space dedication area are being site planned with this SDP proposal. The permitted uses for the residential planning areas are attached or detached dwelling units.

The Ridge Estates PD is comprised of five residential planning areas, three open space private areas, and one public land dedication area. All planning areas are being site planned with this SDP proposal. The permitted use for all of the residential planning areas is detached single-family dwelling units.

The proposed residential neighborhood consisting of 142 single-family homes is in conformance with the permitted uses described for both the Crystal Valley Ranch PD and the Ridge Estates PD.

Development Standards

A comparison of the SDP proposal to the zoning requirements (Page 3 of SDP) illustrates the SDP proposal meets the permitted maximum density, minimum setback, minimum lot area, minimum lot width, minimum parking, and minimum open space requirements. The maximum height requirement is proposed to be met for all but 25 lots.

The proposed density of each residential planning area is equal to the maximum permitted density for each respective planning area. Permitted densities range from 0.4 dwelling units per acre (Ridge Estates PD) to 2.3 dwelling units per acre (Crystal Valley Ranch PD). This equates to 90 dwelling units for the Crystal Valley Ranch PD and 52 dwelling units for the Ridge Estates PD.

All proposed setbacks meet the minimum setback requirements and where applicable, all required lot dimensions are met. At minimum, a two-car garage is being provided for each lot, and the proposed open space of 28.81% (private + public) is more than the minimum standard of 20%.

The proposed height of 35-feet meets the maximum permitted height of 35-feet for all but 25 lots; These 25 lots are located across the northern tip of the property and have a maximum permitted height of 25-feet due to the height restriction associated with the designated Moderate Skyline Area. For the 25 lots subject to the height restrictions of the Moderate Skyline Area, a Skyline Variance is being requested to increase the maximum permitted height to 35-feet from 25-feet.

Skyline Variance

Across the northern tip, southern tip, and a small area on the western edge of the Ridge at Crystal Valley property are designated Skyline Areas, which are subject to the Town's Skyline/Ridgeline Protection Regulations. These regulations place restrictions on the siting of structures in visually significant areas, called Skyline Areas, and provide mitigation of the visual impact of such development. Visual impact mitigation is required for any structure within a designated Skyline Area and requires the use of earth tone and non-reflective paint colors for all structures and the planting of coniferous trees around all structures. The Skyline/Ridgeline Protection Regulations outline three types of Skyline areas: Major, Moderate, and Minor.

Per 17.48.090C of the Skyline/Ridgeline Protection Regulations, a variance from the provisions of the Skyline/Ridgeline Protection Regulations may be requested under certain grounds.

The SDP proposal for the Ridge at Crystal Valley has 25 lots which lie wholly or partially within a designated Moderate Skyline Area. For these 25 lots the applicant is requesting a Skyline Variance in order to increase the maximum permitted height to 35-feet from 25-feet.

To support the variance request, a Skyline study was performed and submitted by the applicant. The study analyzed all 25 lots and whether or not a 25-foot high structure, if built upon the lots, would be visible in the skyline from each of the 232 viewing Platforms. The study used proposed finished grades for all 25 lots. The study found that homes 25-feet in height built upon the lots would not be visible in the skyline from a large majority of viewing platforms. This is because the proposed finish grades of the lots are well under the current natural grades of the lots, due to the required grading for the road connection to Lanterns.

For the 25 lots, a 25-foot high structure on lot 2 will have the most visibility in the skyline, being visible in the skyline from 16 viewing platforms but not visible from 216 viewing platforms. Lot 13 will have the least visibility in the skyline, being visible in the skyline from 5 viewing platforms but not visible from 227 viewing platforms.

While not detailed here, the Skyline study also includes an analysis of whether or not a 35-foot high structure, if built upon the lots, would be visible in the skyline from each of the 232 viewing platforms as well as a review of the original 1999 Skyline Report methodology for mapping Skyline Areas. Both support a conclusion that the 25 lots should not be designated as Moderate Skyline Area.

Based on this analysis, the applicant concludes that the grounds for a Skyline Variance per 17.48.090C have been proven in that a proposed 25-foot high structure will not be visible in the skyline from several points along the viewing platforms, in which event the restrictions of the Minor Skyline Area shall apply.

Therefore, the applicant is requesting that the restriction of the Minor Skyline Area, which has a 35-feet maximum height restriction apply to all 25 lots, rather than the restrictions of the Moderate Skyline Area, which has a 25-feet maximum height restriction. In addition, the applicant will meet all visual impact mitigation requirements. Staff has reviewed the complete study and concurs with the conclusion.

Approval of the Skyline Variance by Planning Commission will take effect only upon the approval of the Site Development Plan by Town Council.

Traffic Impact Analysis and Mitigation

The major roadways in the site's vicinity include Crystal Valley Parkway, and West and East Loop Road. It is also located adjacent to County properties with Bell Mountain Ranch on its west and Sellers Creek Ranch on its south and east boundary. Loop Road is a collector road and Crystal Valley Parkway is a major arterial.

Nearby development projects include the Lanterns (Montaine) development to the northwest of the proposed site and Crystal Valley Ranch subdivisions to the immediate north and east of

the site. The neighborhood streets will access the wider transportation network through two local streets on the northerly and east boundary in Crystal Valley Ranch and also a collector class street (Quarry Mesa Trail) in the Lanterns connecting to Montaine Circle.

LSC Transportation Consultants (LSC) prepared a project-specific traffic impact study (TIS) in 2016 in order to estimate project traffic and provide recommendations to mitigate traffic impacts. LSC evaluated traffic impacts by comparing existing traffic to year 2020 and year 2035 projections, both with and without project traffic. The TIS compares different scenarios by estimating the operational level of service (LOS) for each scenario. LOS is a measure of average intersection delay and is reported on a scale of A through F, with A indicating free flow conditions and F representing congestion conditions. LOS A, B, C are good and mean the network is running smoothly. LOS D means the network is starting to slow down, but for peak hours, LOS D is acceptable. LOS E can be acceptable in certain cases, and LOS F is typically unacceptable.

The TIS studied existing intersection and proposed site accesses. The future signalized intersections of Crystal Valley Parkway with East Loop and West Loop Road are expected to operate at an overall LOS C or better during both morning and afternoon peak-hours through 2035 with or without the addition of site traffic, causing less than a 0.5-second increase in delay at either signalized intersection. All movements at the unsignalized intersections analyzed are expected to operate at LOS D or better through 2035 with or without the addition of site traffic, causing less than a 0.5-second increase in delay at any unsignalized intersection. None of these increases in delay will change the LOS-level for any of the studied intersections.

The planned connections between Crystal Valley Ranch and Crystal Valley Parkway through the Lanterns development is necessary for the project to achieve full buildout so as not to overload a few local streets between the site and Loop Road. Because of this, Town staff commissioned a study by FHU Engineering Consultants to determine maximum vehicle trip thresholds on the various street connections. Based on the engineering analysis, lots within the portion of the site under the Ridge Estates PD are limited to 26 lots while the sole access to the site is provided through War Knot Lane in Crystal Valley Ranch. Once the collector class street in the Lanterns (Quarry Mesa Drive) is constructed and the project has access to Montaine Circle, the platted lot limitations are removed. Emergency Vehicle Access (EVA) only is allowed between Ridge Estates and the County via Ranch Gate Trail (south of the site).

The project will impact and benefit from the construction of the new I-25 interchange at Crystal Valley Parkway and financial obligations have been paid per the Ridge Estates and Crystal Valley Ranch Development Agreements.

Utilities

Adequate water, stormwater, wastewater, and road infrastructure are proposed with this project to serve the property.

Notification and Outreach

Public Notice

The applicant mailed public notice of the Planning Commission hearing to all property owners within 500 feet of the property at least 15 days prior to the Planning Commission hearing date.

In addition, Town staff posted public notice signs on the property, published notice of the Planning Commission hearing on the Town's website and made the application available for review on the Town's Development Activity Map.

Neighborhood Meetings

The applicant conducted the first neighborhood meeting virtually on September 9, 2020, a second neighborhood meeting virtually on November 19, 2020, a third neighborhood virtually on July 19, 2021, and a fourth neighborhood meeting using a hybrid format on August 16, 2021. Neighborhood discussion topics included the water tank site, setbacks, fencing, and development in the Skyline area. A fifth and final neighborhood meeting to share the final proposed SDP is scheduled for September 14, 2021. Summaries of the first through fourth neighborhood meetings are attached.

External Referrals

Requests for comments were sent to various local agencies and utility service providers, including Douglas County Government, Douglas County Schools, Colorado Department of Transportation, Colorado Division of Wildlife, Colorado Geological Survey, Cherry Creek Basin Water Quality Authority, surrounding HOAs, surrounding Metro Districts, CORE (formerly known as IREA), Black Hills Energy, Xcel Energy, Century Link and Comcast. Comments received from local agencies and utility service providers were technical in nature and reconciled through the SDP review process.

Analysis

This independent staff analysis takes into account the representations made in the application and attachments submitted to date.

SDP Review and Approval Criteria and Analysis 17.38.040

A. Community Vision/Land Use Entitlements

1. Generally, conforms to the Town's guiding documents that include, but are not limited to, Town Vision, Comprehensive Master Plans, Sub Area Plans, Design Guidelines, Corridor Plans and any other guiding document so long as the application of such document does not restrict the project's entitle use(s) and density.
2. Complies with existing Intergovernmental Agreements applicable to the development proposed.
3. Complies with any applicable Zoning Overlay Regulations and, if applicable, Skyline/Ridgeline Regulations.
4. Complies with the approved Planned Development Plan and Zoning Regulations.
5. Conforms to the Town's architectural goals by proposing architectural details that incorporate the use of high quality materials in a unique and varied design, while eliminating monolithic expanses of walls and rooflines through the use of varying planes and architectural projections to ensure a complete 360-degree architectural design.
6. Complies with all other relevant requirements of the CRMC.

Analysis: The SDP proposal meets these criteria. It generally conforms to the Town's Vision and Comprehensive Master Plan and complies with the property's governing

zoning, the Crystal Valley Ranch PD, 4th Amendment and the Ridge Estates PD. It also conforms to all other relevant regulation and development standards of the Town's Municipal Code.

B. Site Layout

1. Conforms to Chapter 17.50 Residential/Non-Residential Interface of the CRMC.
2. Site design shall be designed to maintain pedestrian and vehicle safety, provide for adequate fire safety, and mitigate impacts upon adjacent properties by ensuring all vehicular, fire and mitigation regulations contained within the CRMC, including technical criteria, have been met.
3. Provides adequate parking, on-site circulation and loading in accordance with Town regulations.
4. Provides appropriate screening and/or enclosure of outdoor storage of merchandise/materials, loading areas, trash receptacles, mechanical units, site utility equipment and building mounted utility hardware.
5. Provides adequate site design to protect major environmental characteristics that would include unique topographic features and significant vegetation where possible.

Analysis: The SDP proposal meets these criteria. The SDP proposal protects unique topography and vegetation as much as possible and provides for larger lots and deeper setbacks where adjacent to large lot properties in Douglas County. It also meets all relevant site layout requirements outlined in the governing zoning and the regulations in the Town's Municipal Code.

C. Circulation and Connectivity

1. Complies with all CRMC and technical criteria associated with circulation and connectivity.
2. Complies with all Fire regulations associated with land development.
3. Provides for pedestrian and bicycle traffic in a safe and convenient manner.
4. Provides for a high level of pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods, schools, trails/open space and commercial areas.

Analysis: The SDP proposal meets these criteria. The plan provides three vehicular entrances into the property from Crystal Valley Ranch and one Emergency Vehicle Access adjacent to Sellers Creek Ranch. The EVA is specifically to provide a northern route for Sellers Creek Ranch in the event of an emergency.; it is not an access for the Ridge at Crystal Valley. The plan also provides sidewalks along all streets, a local trail which travels through the neighborhood with a connection to the greater Crystal Valley Ranch neighborhood as well as a connection to a future Town open space, which contains the highest peak within the corporate limits of the Town.

D. Services Phasing and Off-site Impact

1. Complies with any phasing requirements associated with the approved zoning for the property. Provides phased improvements in a logical and efficient manner.
2. Adequate water resources have been conveyed or purchased. Existing or proposed water and wastewater systems can support the proposed development pattern, uses and density.
3. Existing or proposed stormwater systems can support the development and comply with applicable regulations.
4. Provides adequate consideration for the future extension of streets and utilities to adjacent properties.

5. Identifies and appropriately provides on-site and off-site public improvements to mitigate traffic impacts as required by the CRMC and technical criteria.

Analysis: The SDP proposal meets these criteria. The SDP proposal provides adequate and efficient utility plans for water, stormwater and wastewater, which considers the existing conditions of the property and also provides necessary ingress and egress improvements.

E. Open Space, Public Lands and Recreation Amenities

1. Provides adequate trail systems in terms of internal circulation and appropriate external connections deemed necessary by the Town to achieve connectivity goals.
2. Ensures functional and accessible open space, consistent with the overall open space plan for development and preserves significant natural features.
3. Ensures appropriate buffering, utilizing open space and/or setbacks to lessen any identified negative impacts.

Analysis: The SDP proposal meets these criteria. The SDP provides 28.81% of open space (private +public), trails, and a pocket park for residents.

Budget Impact

Development of the property will generate review and impact fees, along with use taxes similar to other single-family development.

Findings

All staff review comments and external referral comments have been addressed. As such, Town staff finds the Ridge at Crystal Valley Site Development Plan:

- Generally, conforms with the objectives of the Town Vision and the Comprehensive Master Plan; and
- Meets the zoning requirements of the Crystal Valley Ranch PD, 4th Amendment and the Ridge Estates PD; and
- Meets the review and approval criteria of the Municipal Code, Chapter 17.38 and 17.50.

Recommendation

Staff recommends that Planning Commission approve the Ridge at Crystal Valley Skyline Variance; and

Staff recommends that Planning Commission recommend approval of the Ridge at Crystal Valley Site Development Plan to Town Council.

Proposed Motion

“I move to approve the Ridge at Crystal Valley Skyline Variance”

"I move to recommend approval of the Ridge at Crystal Valley Site Development Plan to Town Council."

Attachments

Attachment A: Skyline Variance Resolution
Exhibit 1: Skyline Variance Request
Attachment B: Site Development Plan
Attachment C: Traffic Impact Analysis
Attachment D: Neighborhood Meeting Summary 9-9-2020
Attachment E: Neighborhood Meeting Summary 11-19-2020
Attachment F: Neighborhood Meeting Summary 7-19-2021
Attachment G: Neighborhood Meeting Summary 8-16-2021
Attachment H: Public Comments