



Staff Communication

File #: PC Reso 16-2017, Version: 1

Agenda Date: June 26, 2017

Subject:

A resolution recommending approval of the Lee Gulch Overlook Open Space and Trailhead, Phase 1 rezoning from PD-R to OS

Presented By: Andrea Mimnaugh, AICP, Principal Planner
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APPLICATION SUMMARY:

Project Name: Lee Gulch Overlook Open Space and Trailhead, Phase 1 Rezoning

Application Type: Rezoning

Size of Subject Property: Tract C, Santa Fe Heights Subdivision, 2.99 Acres

Zoning: Located in the Riverbend Plaza GPDP with PD-R zoning (existing); OS (proposed)

Applicant/owner: City of Littleton

Project Description: Request for rezoning of one property within the Lee Gulch Overlook Open Space and Trailhead

PROCESS:

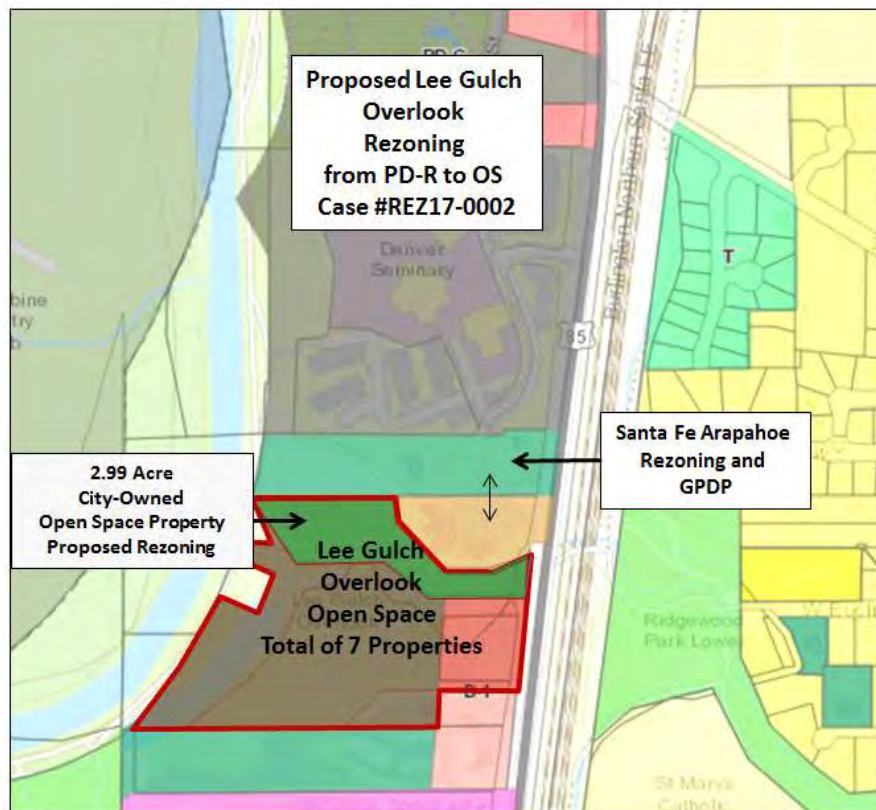
At this time, the requested rezoning is the sole objective of the project.

- Rezoning request - first step
(June 12, 2017 public hearing - for recommendation by planning commission)

Rezoning requests - second and final step
(decision by city council)

BACKGROUND:

The subject property is Tract C, a 2.99-acre parcel in the Santa Fe Heights Subdivision, Filing 1 and in the Riverbend Plaza GPDP. It is within the 13-acre Lee Gulch Overlook Open Space and Trailhead, located between South Santa Fe Drive and the Mary Carter Greenway, at 6591 South Santa Fe Drive. The Open Space and Trail area consists of a total of 7 properties; 2 are under the ownership of South Suburban Parks and Recreation, and 5 are under the ownership of the City of Littleton, as shown in Figure 1. Tract C includes a segment of Lee Gulch, the Lee Gulch Trail.



**Figure 1.
Vicinity Map**

The Lee Gulch Overlook Open Space and Trailhead developed over time with the assemblage of properties and the development of park improvements. The timeline for the development of the open space is as follows:

- | | |
|------|--|
| 2003 | Dedication of Tracts A, B and C within the Santa Fe Heights Subdivision, Filing 1, a total of 7.09 acres, by Santa Fe Heights, Inc., for drainage purposes and other public uses. |
| 2009 | Purchase of Lot 1, Block 1, Santa Fe Heights Subdivision, Filing 1, consisting of 6.29 acres, by City of Littleton, South Suburban Parks and Recreation, Arapahoe County Open Space, GOCO and the Trust for Public Lands. |
| 2012 | City council approval of the Master Plan for Lee Gulch Overlook Open Space |
| 2016 | Park improvements including a crusher fine trail, a nature play area and a new parking lot are completed. The improvements project was funded by grants from Great Outdoors Colorado, the South Metro Land Conservancy, the city, the county and South Suburban. |

Project Description:

While the acquisition and development of the Lee Gulch Overlook Open Space and Trailhead is now complete per the Lee Gulch Overlook Master Plan, the zoning of the 7 parcels has never been formally addressed. Currently, the parcels lie within three zone districts: PD-R, R-E and B-2. In coordination with South Suburban Parks and Recreation, the city's Community Development Department has it on the workplan to rezone the seven parcels to the OS (Open Space) zone district. The subject application, prepared by the city, proposes the rezoning of Tract C in the Riverbend Plaza GPDP from PD-R (Planned Development-Residential) to OS (Open Space). The proposed rezoning is the first phase of a proposed overall rezoning of the 7 parcels within the Lee Gulch Overlook.

The purpose of bringing this first phase of the Lee Gulch Overlook rezoning forward at this time is to coincide with the Santa Fe Arapahoe Rezoning and GPDP (SFA Rezoning and GPDP), a proposal on planning commission's agenda for this evening. As explained in the SFA Rezoning and GPDP, Tract C would fall below the 180,000 sq.ft. threshold for a free-standing zone district if left under PD-R zoning (refer to Staff Analysis section, below). The OS zone district is not subject to the threshold under the city's zoning code and a property of any size may be zoned OS. Thus, if this application is recommended for approval and ultimately approved by city council, the rezoning of Tract C in the Riverbend Plaza GPDP to the OS zone would establish rezoning eligibility for the SFA Rezoning and GPDP.

STAFF ANALYSIS:

Zoning Map Amendments

Section 10-12-2 of the city's zoning ordinance provides limitations on amendments to the official zoning map. The pertinent criterion of this section regarding minimum requirements for freestanding zone districts is the following:

10-12-2 (A) Except as may be exempted in subsection (C) of this section, no amendment to the official zoning map shall be approved which creates a freestanding zone district of less than one hundred eight thousand (180,000) square feet. For the purpose of determining the size of an area to establish compliance with this limitation, there shall be included with the subject parcel the following:

- 1. The area of public rights of way lying within the boundaries of the parcel proposed for rezoning; and**
- 2. The area of land within the city which is contiguous to the subject parcel and which bears the same or lower zone district classification than is proposed, provided the lower zone district has the same letter district designation.**
- 3. Contiguity, as applied in this subsection (A) shall not be affected by the existence of a street, alley or other public right of way.**

10-12-1(C) This provision shall not apply to the initial zoning of newly annexed territory, or to any parcel proposed to be placed in the OS zone district.

The subject property consists of 2.99 acres. Since the minimum 180,000 square feet, or 4.1 acre requirement for a zone district does not apply to the OS zone district, the application meets the criterion.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

Section 10-12-1 of the city's zoning ordinance requires that a rezoning be consistent with the goals and policies

of the comprehensive plan and promoted the general welfare of the community. The applicable components of the comprehensive plan for the proposed Lee Gulch Overlook Rezoning, Phase 1 are the Citywide Plan, the Santa Fe Corridor Plan and Guidelines. The staff analysis follows below:

CONSISTENCY WITH THE CITYWIDE PLAN:

Vision for the Future of Littleton

- **Littleton Will:**
- **Value livability, diversity, and progress**
- **Value the importance of its citizens and its natural resources**
- **Strive for sustainability in economic, environmental, and social decision**
- **Raise the bar to increase the quality of community and economic development.**

The property, Tract C, is one of 7 parcels of land within the Lee Gulch Overlook. The proposed rezoning of Tract C from PD-R zone to OS zone places the property in an appropriate zone district in that the intent of the open space district is to “promote the public health, safety and general welfare by providing for active recreation facilities where appropriate; and to conserve land for passive open space, to preserve environmentally sensitive areas, or to protect other resources” (Section 10-2-24 of the city zoning code). The rezoning of Tract C to the OS zone district will provide a significant protection for the Lee Gulch Overlook Open Space and Trailhead in that the zone district is intended for open space and park uses, rather than urban development. The rezoning will ensure that the natural environment will be preserved for years to come. The rezoning is an act by the city that values the importance of its natural resources.

Goal 2: An Outdoor Littleton

Capitalize and expand upon Littleton’s most valuable outdoor resources, including the South Platte River and its tributaries; the High Line Canal; and the city’s parks, open space, trails, panoramic views, landscape, wildlife, recreation facilities, and public gathering places. Make these resources as available to the public as possible while protecting and enhancing them.

Lee Gulch Overlook is a significant natural resource within the city that provides habitat for wildlife. Further, the Lee Gulch Trail, which runs through the property, provides an east-west trail across the city that links to the Mary Carter Greenway. The rezoning of Tract C to the OS zone district will place the property in a zone district that is intended for open space and park uses rather than urban development and as such, will help to protect the park for years to come.

CONSISTENCY WITH THE SANTA FE CORRIDOR PLAN:

Open Space & Natural Features

GOAL A: PRESERVE AND ENHANCE THE MAJOR NATURAL FEATURES IN THE SANTA FE CORRIDOR:

- **Big Dry Creek,**
- **Littleton’s Creek,**

- **Lee Gulch,**
- **South Platte River, and**
- **South Platte Park**

The proposed rezoning of Tract C to OS zone is consistent with the Santa Fe Corridor Plan in that the OS zone district is intended for open space and park uses rather than urban development. As such, the OS district will help to preserve a segment of Lee Gulch for years to come.

General welfare of the community

The proposed rezoning of Tract C provides natural habitat for wildlife and recreation opportunities for Littleton's residents and visitors. As stated in the Comprehensive Plan analysis above, the proposed rezoning meets several of the city's goals.

NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

The city knocked on doors and made phone calls to provide information to residents and business owners within a 700-foot radius of the subject property regarding the proposed rezoning.

Public notification of this application hearing was mailed to property owners within 700 foot radius a minimum of two weeks prior to the hearing.

REFERRALS:

No referral responses were received for this application.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION:

Staff finds that the proposed rezoning of Tract C to the OS meets the size requirements for the OS zone district, and complies with the pertinent goals and policies of the city's comprehensive plan and promotes the general welfare of the community.

PROPOSED MOTION:

The planning commission may take the following actions on the application: approve; approve with conditions; continue to a date certain; and deny. A sample motion is provided for each option.

MOTION TO APPROVE AND/IF NECESSARY, WITH CONDITIONS

I move to approve PC Resolution 16-2017, concerning Tract C, Lee Gulch Overlook Open Space and Trailhead, Phase 1 Rezoning, located at 6591 South Santa Fe Drive, which forwards a favorable recommendation to city council, with the following condition(s):

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

MOTION TO CONTINUE TO A DATE CERTAIN

I move to continue the public hearing on PC Resolution 16-2017, concerning Tract C, Lee Gulch Overlook Open Space and Trailhead, Phase 1 Rezoning, located at 6591 South Santa Fe Drive, to _____ (insert date) in order to _____.

MOTION TO DENY

I move to deny PC Resolution 16-2017, concerning Tract C, Lee Gulch Overlook Open Space and Trailhead,

Phase 1 Rezoning, located at 6591 South Santa Fe Drive. The foregoing denial is based on the findings that the proposed work:

Note: Identify criterion or criteria not met and adjust motion accordingly:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Attachments:

1. PC Draft Resolution
2. Application and supplementary materials