



Landscape Architecture • Planning • Entitlements

June 25, 2021

Revised September 1, 2021

Ms. Ariana Muca, Planner I
City of Aurora Planning and Development Services
15151 E. Alameda Parkway
Aurora, CO 80012

RE: *Murphy Creek GDP Planning Areas 9C - 13- 14 - Letter of Introduction*

Dear Ms. Muca,

Henry Design Group, Inc., on behalf of Meritage Homes, the potential builder of Murphy Creek Planning Areas 9C-13 and 14 is pleased to submit this Site Plan, Plat and General Development Plan Amendment Letter of Introduction for the development of 132 Single Family Detached lots on 38.641 Acres.

The site is located west of Harvest Mile Road and the 210-foot wide Public Service Company right-of-way, north of East Jewell Avenue and east of S. Flatrock Trail. The parcel is indicated on the Murphy Creek General Development Plan (GDP) Amendment No. 2 as follows:

- Planning Area 13: SFA (Twn) or SFD Small (136 DUs Permitted)
- Planning Area 14: MF Large (112 DUs Permitted)
- Planning Area 9C: PD Comm.

SITE PLAN AND PLAT

The proposal is for a total of 132 single family lots, trail corridors, small pocket park nodes throughout the neighborhood, and drainage facilities. The lots are typically 47 and 52-foot wide by 110-foot deep in accordance with the S.F.D. Small Standards within the Murphy Creek GDP.

A portion of PA-14 includes a drainage easement as indicated on the Murphy Creek East Offsite Infrastructure Plans; and a 50-foot-wide Colorado Interstate Gas Easement. Drainage facilities are proposed in three ponds to manage storm water flows.

Access to the neighborhood is limited to S. Flatrock Trail at common intersection with S. DeGualle Way to the west and S. Gunnison Drive to the north. No access is proposed to E. Jewel Avenue or Harvest Road. An internal loop street provides access to each home site. The primary loop street will be constructed to City of Aurora (COA) Local Street Type 1 section. Two east west streets connecting to the loop streets will be constructed to COA Local Street Type 2 standard. Planning Area 14 is proposed for 10-lots served by a cul-de-sac built to COA Local Street Type 2 Alternative which allows for a reduced right-of-way given the limited number of lots. Although the cu-de-sac is typically limited to a maximum of 250-foot in length, preliminary discussions with the City Engineer indicated the longer cul-de-sac would be acceptable. As requested, a detached walk has been provided at the entry. Unlike the majority of the Murphy Creek Community, this proposed neighborhood will not utilize the reduced street sections as stated in the Murphy Creek GDP.

Pocket park nodes are proposed throughout the neighborhood. These nodes are connected by trails and sidewalks which ultimately connect to the regional trail/sidewalk along E. Jewell Avenue and the regional trail in the PSCO right-of-way adjacent to Harvest Road as indicated on the GDP. A trail is also proposed along the Colorado Interstate Gas Easement to connect to the existing trails throughout Murphy Creek north of this parcel. Parks and open space have been previously dedicated within Murphy Creek based on the ultimate buildout of Community. This proposed neighborhood includes a significant reduction in the permitted number of dwelling units. As such, a series of pocket park nodes are provided but a central community park is not required. The nodes provide a variety of amenities and are easily accessible to the residents through a connection to the trails and sidewalk system.

A 25-foot wide buffer is provided along E. Jewell Avenue and S. Flatrock Trail as required by the Murphy Creek GDP. If the GDP Amendment is approved, the plan is in compliance with all other requirements of the GDP.

Proposed Adjustments

The following proposed Adjustments to the Murphy Creek GDP and the Aurora Unified Development Ordinance are being requested based on-site constraints; to provide diversity of homes; and to enable the efficient development of this uniquely shaped site.

MURPHY CREEK PA 9C, 13 AND 14 SITE PLAN WITH ADJUSTMENTS		
MURPHY CREEK GENERAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN Standard	PROPOSED STANDARD	JUSTIFICATION
Sec. 2.2 Architecture Chart - Garage Doors	45.7% up for to a maximum of 60% of the homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An adjustment is needed to allow for 35-foot-wide homes on the lots. A 35-foot-wide homes provide for additional side yard setbacks on the typical 47-foot-wide lot thereby creating more outdoor living space for the residents. The proposed standard, although .7% greater than permitted, is in compliance with the Aurora Unified Development Ordinance Section 146-4.6-C.9 which states the garage door shall not occupy more than 47% of the total width of the front elevation. The 35-foot-wide home provides for another home alternative while maintaining quality of design and compliance with the Murphy Creek GDP Architectural Design Standards
Max. % of garage door width to full width of elevation for two car garages: 45%		

Site Plan and Approval Criteria

The Site Plan and Plat comply with the following Approval Criteria as stated in Section 146-5.4.3. B.2(c) of the City of Aurora Unified Development Ordinance.

- 1) . The application complies with the applicable standards in this UDO, other adopted City regulations, any approved Master Plan that includes the property.**
 - a. Consistency with the City of Aurora Comprehensive Plan

- The proposal provides housing in the Murphy Creek Emerging neighborhood as defined in the “Place Type” of Aurora Places
 - Proper consideration has been given to the surrounding area.
 - Provides housing in proximity to existing facilities and jobs allowing residents to reduce travel time between work and home.
- b. *The application complies with the applicable standards in this UDO*
- The Site Plan and Plat was designed in accordance with the Dimensional Standards of the Murphy Creek GDP and design standards as required by the UDO.
 - Access and Connectivity is provided in accordance with City Standards, the Murphy Creek GDP and street networks as provided by adjacent planning areas.
- c. *The application complies with other adopted City regulations, any approved Master Plan that includes the property,*
- The Site Plan and Plat is in compliance with the Murphy Creek GDP including Planning Areas 9C (as proposed for amendment).
- 2) *The City's existing infrastructure and public improvements, including but not limited to its water, wastewater, street, trail, and sidewalk systems, have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development, and any burdens on those systems have been mitigated to the degree practicable***
- The infrastructure systems will have adequate capacity to serve the proposed development given these systems are being developed as this emerging neighborhood continues to develop and infrastructure improvements are provided by the builder/developer to ensure adequate services for the residents.
 - Sidewalks and trails are provided throughout the neighborhood to connect to sidewalks along E. Jewell Avenue, S. Flatrock Trail and Harvest Road.
- 3) *Major Site Plans shall be designed to preserve and protect natural areas, ridgelines, swales, natural landforms, water quality and wildlife habitat of riparian corridors, wetlands, and floodplains affected by the proposed development and to integrate those areas into site design where practicable.***
- a. ***The application will improve or expand multi-modal connections with adjacent sites, neighborhoods, and urban centers.***
- b. ***The application is compatible with surrounding uses in terms of size, scale and building façade materials.***
- c. ***The application mitigates any adverse impacts on the surrounding area to the degree practicable***
- Planning Areas 9C-13 and 14 are the most eastern parcels in the Murphy Creek neighborhood and are surrounded by existing or developing parcels within the GDP area and the Master Plans to the south and east of the site.
 - The Site Plan accommodates a significant drainage corridor through PA-14.
 - There are no other significant natural features on the site.

- The proposed neighborhood is consistent with the surrounding single family detached and attached residential development.
- The proposed architecture complies with the GDP Architectural Design Standards and will be complementary to surrounding neighborhoods with regard to scale, quality and architectural design and materials.
- There are no adverse impacts to the surrounding area given the reduction in density and the proposed elimination of the commercial area. Overall traffic generated from this neighborhood will be reduced.

MURPHY CREEK GDP AMENDMENT

A GDP Amendment is proposed to change the permitted land use in PA-9C from PD-Comm to SF Small thereby creating a cohesive neighborhood of single family detached lots with a typical lot size of 47 and 52 feet wide by 110 feet deep.

The applicant believes the GDP Amendment is justified based on the following:

- The commercial uses should be focused to the commercial and office planning areas located along Gun Club Road which have yet to be developed.
- The site is surrounded by existing and proposed residential development.
- Direct access to the site is limited. The site is located north of E. Jewell Avenue and adjacent to the Public Service Company 210-foot-wide right-of-way. Access would be restricted to E. Jewell Avenue given the proximity of the intersection at Harvest Road to the east and S. Flatrock Trail to the west. Additionally, the topographical conditions limit access. As such Commercial uses are not viable without good access or visibility.
- Full movement access to the commercial site would need to come for S. Flatrock Trail which would put commercial traffic on a residential collector and local streets through a residential area.
- Commercial development is planned in the new Master Plans proposed east of Murphy Creek. The commercial parcels are proposed on both the north and south of E. Jewell Avenue east of Harvest Road. Adequate access has been accommodated in the planning process creating more viable commercial on these parcels.
- The parcel is proposed to be combined with PA-13 which allows for 136 Townhome or Single-Family Small units. With the proposed Amendment, 14.8 acres will be added to PA-13, however no additional dwelling units are proposed,
- The proposed neighborhood combines PA-9C, 13 and 14 creating a more cohesive neighborhood including both pedestrian and vehicular circulation. Access is proposed to S. Flatrock Trail which provides access to only residential areas.
- A total of 132 single family detached homes are proposed on the combined three Planning Areas which permits a total of 248 dwelling units. This creates a reduction in the in the number of dwellings by 116. The change in land use will also eliminate 129,000 square feet of possible commercial space. This reduction will lessen traffic generated by approximately 5,700 trips per day and reduce stress on existing systems and facilities.

Murphy Creek GDP Amendment Approval Criteria.

The GDP Amendment complies with the following Approval Criteria as stated in Section 146-5.4.1. C.3. (a) of the City of Aurora Unified Development Ordinance.

- 1) ***The change to the Zoning Map is needed to correct an error (change in the character of surrounding areas does not constitute an error in the map);*** or
 - Not applicable
- 2) ***The change to the Zoning Map is required because of changed conditions or circumstances on the property or in the surrounding area and:***
 - a. ***The applicant has demonstrated that the proposed initial zoning or rezoning is consistent with the spirit and intent of the Comprehensive Plan, with other policies and plans adopted by the City Council, and with the purpose statement of the proposed new zone district(s);***
 - b. ***The applicant has demonstrated that the size, scale, height, density, and multi-modal traffic impacts of the proposed initial zoning or rezoning are compatible with surrounding development or can be made compatible with surrounding development through approval conditions; and***
 - c. ***The application demonstrates that the change in zoning will not create significant dislocations of tenants or occupants of the property, or that any impacts are outweighed by other public benefits or progress toward other Comprehensive Plan goals that would be achieved by approval of the application.***
 - The proposed change in land use is Consistent with the City of Aurora Comprehensive Plan.
 - The proposal provides housing in the Murphy Creek Emerging neighborhood as defined in the "Place Type" of Aurora Places which provides for a variety of housing types and amenities.
 - Murphy Creek has been developing since it was initially zoned in 2000, however, commercial development has been slow to occur. Several commercial sites will continue to be available along the Gun Club Road corridor. These commercial and office planning areas are more accessible and visible within the Murphy Creek master plan.
 - Proper consideration has been given to the surrounding area in terms of land use and density.
 - The proposed zoning to residential is more compatible with the immediate surrounding neighborhood than commercial.
 - The proposed density, housing type is similar and complementary to the surrounding neighborhood.

In summary, the intent is to maintain the quality of the existing Murphy Creek neighborhood and fit into the fabric of the community by providing a compatible use, enhanced landscaping, and architectural details. If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to the project team:



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Applicant:

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Thank you for your time and efforts in reviewing this proposal and we look forward to continuing to work with you and the City of Aurora to see this emerging neighborhood to completion.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen Z. Henry". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Karen Z. Henry, Principal