

Hillside at Castle Rock 3rd Amendment Phases 3&4

Site Plan Project Narrative

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600 Grant St.
Suite 404,
Denver, CO 80203



Design & Development Team

Developer / Home Builder

BLVD Builders
Contact: Aaron Foy
600 Grant Street, Suite 404
Denver, CO 80203
303-200-0742 (Aaron)
303-919-5192 (Jonathan)

Lighting / Photometric

Kimely-Horn
Contact: Dustin Colwell
380 Interlocken Crescent, Suite 100
Broomfield, CO 80021
720-642-8650

Land Planning / Landscape Architecture

PCS Group
Contact: Kurt Moje
200 Kalamth Street
Denver, CO 80210
303-653-9771

Survey

JR Engineering
Contact: Jeff Paulsen
7200 S. Alton Way Suite C400
Centennial, CO 80112
303 - 228-2322

Civil Engineering

JR Engineering
Contact: Jeff Paulsen
7200 S. Alton Way Suite C400
Centennial, CO 80112
303 - 228-2322

Irrigation

Hydrosystems
Contact: Hugo Ochoa
13949 W. Colfax Ave. Suite 260
Lakewood, CO 80401
303-980-5327

Architecture

Woodley Architectural Group
Contact: Graham Denton
731 Southpark Dr., Ste. B
Littleton, CO 80120
303-683-7231

INTRODUCTION

The vision for the Hillside Community remains in line with the initial concept outlined in the “Annexation Narrative.” This development is designed to offer a unique 55+ age-restricted living experience in Castle Rock, focusing on both active and more passive living environments for homeowners. The community emphasizes “Universal Design” and “Living in Place” principles to cater to residents who seek a low-maintenance lifestyle with high energy efficiency and the ability to “age in place.” Hillside Castle Rock aims to provide a neighborhood where residents “never have to move again,” fostering a strong sense of community.



This development is consistent with the 2030 Comprehensive Master Plan’s goals, including contributing to the anticipated population growth of 90,000 new residents in Castle Rock by 2030. Hillside is also designed to provide a community that encourages interaction and socialization, supporting both active and passive lifestyles. The housing concepts integrate seamlessly with the broader community, offering a mix of interconnected housing types and amenities.

SITE LOCATION

The Hillside at Castle Rock is situated west of Coachline Road and north of E. Wolfensberger Road, near the Santa Fe Quarry, approximately half a mile west of Red Hawk Drive. Phases 3 and 4 border the northern edge of Phases 1 and 2 and lie west of The Arbors, covering approximately 16.141 acres.

VISION

The Hillside Development Phases 3 & 4 will introduce 65 residential units, including single-family homes and duplexes across 16.141 acres in the Town of Castle Rock. The development seeks to establish a thriving, inclusive, and vibrant community that stands as a model for 55+ age-restricted living in Castle Rock. It aims to offer a living environment where residents can enjoy a high quality of life, ease of mobility, and access to a variety of recreational, social, and wellness amenities that cater to active and passive lifestyles alike. The development emphasizes the concepts of Universal Design and Aging in Place, ensuring that each home is accessible, functional, and adaptable to the changing needs of its residents over time. Hillside is designed to foster community engagement, with walking paths, community centers, and shared green spaces creating opportunities for social interaction and outdoor enjoyment.

By incorporating sustainable design practices, including energy-efficient homes and drought-tolerant landscaping, Hillside intends to not only improve the livability of the area but also contribute positively to the environment. The development integrates seamlessly into the natural landscape, ensuring that scenic vistas and local topography are enhanced and protected. Overall, Hillside aims to provide a secure, connected, and enriching environment for its residents, offering a modern lifestyle that embraces the values of community, sustainability, and accessibility. By focusing on the needs of the 55+ demographic, Hillside will offer residents a high quality of life with low-maintenance homes, energy-efficient designs, and a social atmosphere that appeals to both active and passive lifestyle preferences. The development aims to provide a sense of permanence, allowing homeowners to age in place comfortably, without the need to move to another community.



APPROVAL CRITERIA

Site Development Plans and amendments shall be evaluated on the following criteria (and the criteria set forth in Chapter 17.39 for a Site Development Plan) as applicable to the type of development proposed:

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 entitled use(s) and density.

The proposed development aligns with Castle Rock's overall vision of fostering a community that values its historic Downtown, small-town charm, and accessible recreational offerings. It is designed to support the growth and evolving character of Castle Rock, contributing to its vibrant Downtown by incorporating elements that echo its heritage and emphasize its distinct identity. By supporting a diverse array of housing types, this development helps maintain the character of Castle Rock while accommodating future population growth.

Principal 1: District Town Identity

Principle ID-2: Encourage master-planned communities with diverse housing, mixed-use development, trail connections, open space buffers, and community amenities, while following Town design guidelines and coordinating public facilities.

The proposed development aligns with the Town's vision for master-planned communities by providing diverse housing options and strategic trail connections. It features a 50-foot open space buffer along the eastern border adjacent to The Arbors and offers access to community amenities within Tract B. This plan promotes a seamless integration of suburban and natural landscapes, fostering a vibrant and sustainable community.

Principle ID-4: Freestanding community that maintains non-urban development on its borders

This development upholds Castle Rock's rural character and scenic vistas by creating a clear buffer between urban areas and natural landscapes. Thoughtful landscaping preserves natural beauty, especially at the borders, with adjacent open spaces and preserved ridgelines. The project ensures a sustainable transition from development to nature, reinforcing the town's identity as a freestanding, historic community.

Principle ID-6: A community recognized for and enhanced by its natural environment and scenic vistas

The development maximizes scenic vistas by orienting community spaces and homes to highlight surrounding natural beauty. Thoughtful placement of buildings and landscaping integrates the community into the environment. Sustainable practices, including native plantings and low-impact design, preserve topographic features and ensure the community thrives while respecting the landscape.

Principle ID-7: A highly accessible and well-distributed system of parks, recreation facilities, open space and trails

The design incorporates green spaces and active recreation areas, offering residents easy access to parks and trails within walking distance. A network of pedestrian pathways links neighborhoods to these spaces, promoting active lifestyles and community engagement. The development abutts the amenity area, which provide features such as pickleball courts, shade shelter & public restroom, cornhole courts, active recreational open space, mandering pathway to the overlook area, and connections to regional trails, enhancing both local and regional recreational opportunities.

Principle ID-8: All development will comply with the Town's architectural design guidelines, meeting the highest standards of design and material quality.

The development will fully comply with Castle Rock's architectural design guidelines, ensuring that all structures meet the highest standards of quality and craftsmanship. Thoughtful use of materials and design elements will create a visually cohesive community that enhances the town's aesthetic while maintaining durability and sustainability.

Principal 2: Responsible Growth

Principle RG-1: Consider reinstating the County/Town Intergovernmental Agreement to keep the Town a separate urban community with buffers and ensure urban development occurs only in designated areas with Town services.

Reinstating the County/Town Intergovernmental Agreement would help maintain Castle Rock's distinct identity as a freestanding urban community. By creating clear boundaries and buffers between urban development and surrounding land uses, this agreement would ensure that growth occurs in designated areas with adequate Town services. This approach supports orderly, sustainable growth while preserving the Town's character and protecting natural resources. It also ensures that development aligns with Castle Rock's long-term goals for responsible, fiscally sound growth.

Principle RG-3: Efficient connections between residential areas, transportation facilities, and services, with pedestrian and bicycle trails linking neighborhood amenities for safe and convenient access.

The development emphasizes efficient connectivity between residential areas, transportation systems, and essential services by incorporating pedestrian and bicycle-friendly trails. These trails will provide safe, direct access to neighborhood amenities, promoting active transportation and enhancing the overall mobility of residents. This approach supports the Town's goal of fostering a walkable and bikeable community, ensuring convenience for all. The integration of these trails contributes to a more sustainable and accessible environment for all residents.

Principle RG-4.3: Honor existing development agreements and pursue necessary modifications to align with the Master Plan, ensuring fiscal responsibility by requiring new development to contribute fairly to infrastructure and service costs.

The development will honor existing contractual obligations and seek modifications where needed to better align with the Master Plan. In line with fiscal responsibility, the project will ensure that new development contributes its fair share to infrastructure, services, and water resources, promoting long-term sustainability and cost-effectiveness. This approach guarantees that growth is financially balanced and supports the town's strategic goals.

RG-5.2: Incorporate buffers or mitigation measures, such as landscape screening, fencing, or walls, between residential areas and other land uses to minimize noise, traffic, and other potential nuisances or dangers to residents.

The development includes a 50-foot buffer on the east end, adjacent to the Arbors development, which provides a natural separation between the two communities. While Hillside and Arbors are developed by the same owner, the buffer helps maintain distinct housing styles and minimizes potential nuisances such as noise or traffic. This mitigation measure ensures a smooth transition between the developments while maintaining a peaceful environment for residents in both areas.

Principle RG-8: Protection and conservation of natural resources, sensitive areas, ridgelines and areas of open space throughout the Town

The development plan prioritizes conserving critical natural resources and sensitive environmental areas by avoiding high-ecological-sensitivity zones like riparian areas and wildlife corridors. Sustainable practices, such as rain gardens and permeable surfaces, will manage stormwater and enhance water filtration. The open space will be preserved and integrated into the design to connect wildlife habitats and promote biodiversity.

Principle RG-9: Continue to secure a renewable water supply to serve the long-term needs of the community

The development integrates water-efficient landscaping with drought-tolerant plants and strategic irrigation systems to reduce water consumption. Rainwater harvesting systems and smart irrigation technology will minimize reliance on potable water for landscape irrigation. These sustainable practices align with Castle Rock's goals for water conservation and ensure the community's long-term water needs are met.

2. Complies with existing Intergovernmental Agreements applicable to the development proposed.

The development adheres to all existing Intergovernmental Agreements that govern the land, ensuring that all necessary approvals and guidelines are followed. These agreements facilitate collaboration between the developer, the Town, and neighboring jurisdictions, ensuring the project contributes to regional development goals and respects the needs and priorities of the surrounding areas.

3. Complies with any applicable Zoning Overlay Regulations and, if applicable, Skyline/Ridgeline Regulations

Hillside adheres to all applicable zoning regulations, including any zoning overlay and Skyline/Ridgeline regulations that may apply. The project has been designed to respect the aesthetic and functional guidelines of Castle Rock, particularly in relation to the site's topography and visual corridors.

4. Complies with the approved Planned Development Plan and Zoning Regulations

The proposed development complies with the approved Planned Development Plan, which outlines the allowable uses, densities, and layout of the project. The site plan also adheres to zoning regulations, ensuring that the development fits within the broader context of the community's built environment.

5. Complies with all other relevant requirements of the CRMC.

The Hillside development complies with all relevant sections of the Castle Rock Municipal Code, ensuring that all technical, design, and safety requirements are met in full. This includes meeting regulations related to land use, infrastructure, environmental impact, and community welfare.

B. Site Layout.

1. Conforms to Chapter 17.50 Residential/Non-Residential Interface of the CRMC.

The development adheres to Chapter 17.50 of the CRMC by thoughtfully integrating residential spaces with appropriate setbacks, buffering, and open space to ensure privacy, maintain aesthetic integrity, and support a cohesive neighborhood design.

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.

The design prioritizes both pedestrian and vehicular safety by providing clear, accessible pathways, proper signage, and well-placed crosswalks. The roadway system ensures safe vehicular access while minimizing the impact on pedestrian and cyclist pathways. Adequate fire safety regulations have also been implemented, with fire lanes and emergency access points integrated into the site's design.

3. Provides adequate parking, on-site circulation and loading in accordance with Town regulations.

The site layout includes sufficient parking spaces for residents and visitors, ensuring that vehicles can

move easily throughout the community. Circulation paths are well-designed to allow for smooth traffic flow while minimizing congestion. The layout also accommodates loading and service areas, as required by the Town's 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.

To maintain the visual appeal and cleanliness of the community, outdoor storage areas, including trash receptacles, mechanical units, and utility equipment, are appropriately screened or enclosed. This ensures that these functional elements do not detract from the overall aesthetic of the community and remain discreet from view.

5. Provides adequate site design to protect major environmental characteristics that would include unique topographic features and significant vegetation where possible.

Hillside has been thoughtfully designed to preserve and protect unique natural features such as ridgelines, significant vegetation, and topographic elements. Where possible, the site layout incorporates these natural features into the design, using them to enhance the character and charm of the community.

C. Circulation and Connectivity.

1. Complies with all Castle Rock Municipal Code and technical criteria associated with circulation and connectivity.

The Hillside development complies with all Castle Rock Municipal Code requirements related to circulation, ensuring that all roads, pathways, and access points are designed in accordance with the Town's technical and safety standards. This includes ensuring safe access for both vehicles and pedestrians and integrating the development into the Town's broader transportation network.

2. Complies with all Fire regulations associated with land development.

The development has been designed to meet all fire safety regulations, including ensuring adequate access for emergency vehicles, providing fire lanes, and designing hydrant locations to meet the needs of the project. Fire safety has been integrated into the layout to ensure the community is well-prepared for emergencies.

3. Provides for pedestrian and bicycle traffic in a safe and convenient manner.

The Hillside design includes extensive pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure, with well-marked paths, bike lanes, and safe crossings to encourage walking and cycling. These connections link the various residential areas, recreational facilities, and amenities within the community, ensuring ease of movement for residents and visitors alike.

4. Provides for a high level of pedestrian connectivity between neighborhoods, schools, trails/open space, and commercial areas.

The development emphasizes connectivity by providing direct links between homes, the amenity area, trails, and open spaces. Its integrated trail system ensures convenient access to nearby parks and natural areas, enhancing the pedestrian experience and fostering a walkable, community-oriented environment.

D. Services, Phasing, and Off-site Impacts

1. Complies with any phasing requirements associated with the approved zoning for the property. Provides phased improvements in a logical and efficient manner.

The Hillside development follows a logical and efficient phasing plan that ensures infrastructure and services are available in each phase of the project. The phased approach ensures that each stage of the development is completed on time, with essential services in place before new homes are occupied.

2. Provides adequate consideration for the future extension of streets and utilities to adjacent properties.

The development design takes into account the future extension of streets and utilities to the east of the site – The Arbors. This foresight ensures that the Hillside development can expand seamlessly as the community grows, without disrupting existing infrastructure.

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.

Hillside provides a robust internal trail system that connects various areas within the community and provides links to surrounding trails and open spaces. These trails are designed for both recreational and practical use, encouraging residents to engage with nature and enjoy an active lifestyle.

2. Ensures functional and accessible open space, consistent with the overall open space plan for development and preserves significant natural features.

Open spaces within Hillside have been designed to be accessible and functional, offering residents a variety of outdoor activities. These spaces are strategically located throughout the community to ensure that natural features are preserved and residents have easy access to parks, gardens, and gathering areas.

F. Technical Criteria Variance

DEVELOPMENT:

Hillside / Arbors Site Development Plan, 3rd Amendment

VARIANCE REQUESTED:

The request is for the rear yard landscape requirements for 14 single family lots to be placed on the side of the lot and not require the ornamental tree requirement due to conflicts with utilities.

CODE SECTION:

Landscape and Irrigation Criteria Manual, Section 6 Single-Family and Two-Family Residential
6.2.1.f.iii Back yard Coloradoscape: no turf. 1. A minimum of one (1) tree. 2. A minimum of fourteen (14) shrubs. 3. A minimum of sixteen (16) ornamental grasses or perennials.

1. Describe the exceptional situation or condition that exists.

The 14 single-family lots abutting the duplex product will feature a shared-use easement, which increases the rear yard depth from ten feet to fifteen feet. This additional space provides homeowners with the opportunity to create functional outdoor areas, such as spaces for a table and chairs, a grill station for social gatherings, or a hot tub/spa. However, the strict landscape requirements outlined in the code would limit the available usable space, making it difficult to accommodate these desired outdoor improvements. To address this, we propose relocating the required landscaping to the side yard, which will be visible to more residents. This alternative location offers better aesthetic appeal while preserving the functionality of the rear yards. However, the side yard area includes several utility lines that serve the duplex units, and these utilities have specific clearance requirements—no trees are allowed to be planted within ten feet of these utility lines. As such, we are requesting a variance to waive the rear yard tree requirement for these 14 lots, which would provide homeowners with more flexibility to maximize the usability of their outdoor space.

2. Describe the difficulty or hardship that would be created by a strict enforcement of the code.

Strict enforcement of the code would create a significant hardship for homeowners by limiting the practical use of their rear yard spaces. Without the proposed variance, homeowners would be forced to place trees in areas that may interfere with the desired outdoor living functions, such as seating areas, cooking stations, or relaxation spaces like hot tubs. Additionally, placing trees in the rear yard, especially near utility lines, could result in root systems encroaching on essential utilities, leading to potential damage or disruption. The lack of flexibility in the code would not only reduce the overall livability of these properties but could also present a long-term risk of damage to critical infrastructure. By allowing the tree requirement to be waived in the rear yard, we are balancing environmental considerations with the practical needs of the residents while avoiding the complications that could arise from trees being placed in close proximity to utility lines.

3. Describe why there would not be any adverse impact on public health, safety and welfare.

Granting this variance would not negatively impact public health, safety, or welfare. The requested reduction in tree planting in the rear yards of these 14 lots does not pose any environmental or public safety risks. The landscape requirements will still be fulfilled by placing trees in the side yard, an area that is visible to more residents and will contribute to the overall aesthetic quality of the community. Furthermore, the trees will not interfere with utilities in this location, as utility lines are positioned away from areas designated for tree planting. By relocating the required landscaping to the side yard and maintaining appropriate distances from utilities, the proposed variance ensures that the homes will still be surrounded by appropriate greenery without compromising the functionality of critical infrastructure. Additionally, this solution allows homeowners to enjoy safe, usable outdoor spaces while preventing potential hazards associated with tree roots near utility lines. Therefore, the public health, safety, and welfare would remain unaffected by the granting of this variance.