



AMARA

Welcome to the New West

Frequently Asked Questions

- 1. What is the history of the site?** The Norris family, a long-time prominent family in the Pikes Peak region, has owned this land for over 70 years. It is part of the Tee Cross Ranch, which is the oldest registered cattle brand in Colorado. Bob Norris, the patriarch of the Norris family, was a genuine cowboy, prominent cattle rancher, the original televised Marlboro Man, and a local philanthropist. The family also raises renowned American Quarter Horses. The Norris family is a partner in the Amara development.
- 2. Why does La Plata need to annex into Colorado Springs?** Amara fits perfectly into the strategic annexation policy of Colorado Springs and its annexation is in accordance with the City's and El Paso County's intergovernmental agreement (IGA) regarding urban development and annexations. It will also be beneficial to the southeastern region of Colorado Springs to have additional housing options for the City to meet current growth projections.
- 3. What is the current zoning?** The site is currently zoned agricultural. Other zoning will be considered as development occurs and will have to be approved by the City.
- 4. What is planned in Amara?** Amara will consist of approximately 9,500 residential units of single-family attached and detached products, multi-family products, as well as approximately 2 million square feet of commercial space. There will be a broad product mix to provide attainable housing and serve a broad range of home buyers. In addition, La Plata Communities, Inc., the developer of Amara, has committed to provide a minimum of 7%, or approximately 650 of its housing units, as affordable housing.
- 5. What is the big picture fiscal impact?** Amara will have a positive fiscal impact by expanding the tax base of Colorado Springs and increasing revenues to the city by amounts that will exceed the associated costs to the City. The Amara development will also contribute substantially to regional facilities that will add to capacities and reduce per unit costs to other contributing projects.
- 6. What does this mean for Colorado Springs in terms of economic benefits, utilities and road improvements?** Amara will benefit the overall transportation network as La Plata will be responsible for constructing or funding all roads within the project. La Plata will also be responsible for other infrastructure including on-site utilities and the extension of required utilities to the project, neighborhood parks, school land, and trails and open space, so this is a real asset to residents and the broader community. Amara will also be vital for supporting business development in the area such as the Colorado Springs Airport Business Innovation Park, Amazon and local military bases providing essential housing opportunities for those workers. An independent Economic and Fiscal Study done for Amara estimated the overall fiscal impact to the City would be \$29.9 million for the life of the project (20+ years) and ongoing fiscal impact is projected to be \$1.8 million annually at full buildout. In addition, the Amara project is anticipated to add 3,334 jobs to the region.
- 7. Can and how will the City accommodate this annexation/community?** Yes, the City can accommodate the annexation through well-established processes. The annexation is currently

being vetted by City staff using defined criteria. A public hearing by the Planning Commission will take place in the future, followed by two public hearings before City Council.

8. **Who will live in Amara? How does this project help meet the City's affordable housing goals?**

Amara will offer a broad mix and range of housing prices to address various homebuyer segments, including active adult, traditional single family and homes for the "missing middle," in order to provide numerous attainable options. Rental housing products will also be offered, including apartments, and single-family built-to-rent units. Additionally, La Plata is working with various partners to develop viable programs for workforce housing or other affordable housing options. Amara will also be very important for supporting our military families who currently have a lack of housing options that are both attainable and close to their military installations. Amara will offer desirable communities to all at a reasonable cost. All of this is essential for fostering a balanced community.

9. **Who is developing Amara and is the team local? What commitments will be made to ensure quality control?**

Amara will be developed by La Plata, one of Colorado Springs' local premiere master planned community developers. Since 1995, La Plata has developed the extremely successful Briargate master planned community in northern Colorado Springs, including the Briargate Business Campus, and the Briargate Crossing Commercial Centers and the residential communities of Pine Creek, Cordera and North Fork. La Plata is also the creator and developer of The Farm and The Foothills Farm Business Campus in northern Colorado Springs. La Plata's vision is to enhance southeast Colorado Springs by bringing the same exceptional level of thoughtful planning to Amara as it did to northern parts of the city. La Plata's longevity and commitment to Colorado Springs is essential to ensure a development worthy of residents of southern Colorado Springs.

10. **Will there be traffic impacts? How will this be handled?**

Traffic considerations will be handled in accordance with ongoing master transportation planning within Colorado Springs and Fountain, along with El Paso County and the Colorado

Department of Transportation (CDOT), which is contained in a report that was prepared by an independent consulting firm in 2022. The added transportation network will enhance traffic connectivity and improve future traffic flow.

11. **Where will residents go to school?** There will be three school districts in Amara - Fountain Fort Carson District 8, Widefield District 3, and Ellicott District 22, each of which will be provided school sites by La Plata where new schools will be built. Amara currently has nine school sites planned.

12. **Parks and open space improvements? Access to trails and parks?** The Amara master plan has been reviewed by the Colorado Springs Parks Department Staff and the Parks and Open Space Board. The Amara parks and open space plan received unanimous approval at the Parks Board hearing in June 2022. Over 128 acres of parks, with interconnecting trails tied to the regional trail system, will be incorporated into the Amara community.

13. **Will this community be safe? Emergency response times, police substations and fire station locations?** In response to Amara's project proposals submitted to the City in connection with the Amara annexation petition, the Colorado Springs Police and Fire Departments provided the following positive input:

- The Colorado Springs Police Department stated that it will be able to provide police services as the area begins to be developed, and stated that a new police substation will not be necessary in Amara due to being able to adequately serve Amara out of existing and future-planned substations. In fact, current response times to the outer boundaries of Amara will be less than response times in other areas of the City.

- The Colorado Springs Fire Department stated that the submittals for Amara reflect that the developer will work with the CSFD to provide necessary facilities that CSFD has requested to serve the property. There are currently two fire stations planned within Amara and La Plata has committed to contribute the land needed for the stations to the City, in addition to paying the required impact fees for public safety.

14. **Will Amara's design be friendly to the environment?** Yes, La Plata will:

- Consult with Colorado Springs Utilities (CSU) on the best ways to utilize solar as a future source of power for Amara;
- Install low water use landscaping in all community common areas;
- Implement water-wise and xeric landscaping requirements as part of the Amara residential landscape guidelines; and
- Educate residents on how to apply best management practices such as rainwater barrels and drip-line irrigation designed to save water and improve water management.

15. **When will groundbreaking begin and what is the expectation for the first house to be completed?**

Under current schedules, approval of the Amara annexation into Colorado Springs, the Amara master plan and zoning for Amara will be obtained in June, 2024. Groundbreaking for on-site and off-site development work is anticipated to commence in the spring of 2025, finished residential lots are scheduled to be delivered to builders in the spring of 2026 and the first homes are expected to be available to home buyers in late 2026.

16. **Will there be special districts in Amara?**

It is anticipated that Amara will have multiple metropolitan districts within its boundaries to finance, install and maintain public improvements required by or associated with Amara's development. All metropolitan districts must be approved by the City of Colorado Springs. The metropolitan districts will all comply with the City's model service plan requirements and guidelines. The districts will allow for the Amara project to pay for the costs of growth within the districts, without burdening existing City residents for Amara's public improvement costs.

17. **Will this community create a burden on our water system?**

- The Amara annexation is in compliance with the recently passed ordinance pertaining to the extension of water service.
- Utilities continually plans and implements projects to respond to growth.
- Utilities considers growth in water resource planning and in estimating future water needs.
- Resource plans are updated annually to revisit assumptions and update planning to reflect changed conditions.
- As outlined in the annexation agreement, Utilities does not reserve water resources for any particular customer, developer, or land area and water is provided to customers on a "first come, first served basis."

18. **What is the benefit of a master planned community?**

Master planned communities offer a mix of distinctive neighborhoods, home designs, amenities and lifestyles creating a true sense of community, none of which you find in the limited clusters of generic housing developments currently available in southeast Colorado Springs. In a John Burns study published in November 2019, 61% of homeowners and single-family renters believe master planned communities (MPC's) are safer than homes outside of a master planned community. The study also found that nearly two-thirds of homeowners and single-family renters agree that MPCs offer a superior lifestyle. Through a broad spectrum of residential and multi-family housing products, retail and commercial uses, recreation, civic and cultural uses, Amara will be a community where residents will be proud to live, work and play.

19. **How will Amara help reduce the cost of new homes?**

The best way to reduce the cost of housing is to increase the supply of available lots. Amara will do just that. The City is in desperate need of additional lots and housing options to meet existing and upcoming demand and to help improve housing affordability.