

Memorandum

Date: October 30, 2025

To: Douglas County Planning Commission

From: Brett Thomas, AICP, Chief Planner *BT*
Curtis J. Weitkunat, AICP, Long Range Planning Manager *CW*
Steven E. Koster, AICP, Assistant Director of Planning Services *SK*

Subject: Sterling Ranch Planned Development, 13th Amendment – Supplemental Information

Project File: ZR2025-009

Planning Commission Hearing: **November 3, 2025 @ 6:00 p.m.**

The attached correspondence was received after the staff report to the Planning Commission was finalized on October 22, 2025. The referral comments were provided to the applicant on October 20, 2025.

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620 Wilcox Street
Castle Rock, Colorado 80104

October 23, 2025

Brett Thomas
Douglas County Community Development, Planning Services
bthomas@douglas.co.us
(303)814-4369

RE: Sterling Ranch Planned Development, 13th Amendment (ZR2025-009)

Dear Mr. Thomas,

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to the above referenced application requesting approval of a major amendment to the Sterling Ranch Planned Development (PD) revising commitments for school dedications and cash in lieu of land dedications.

First, the District has been inundated with letters and calls from Sterling Ranch residents who are just now hearing about the proposed changes to their community. This energy is worth considering. We wish to press our rights in this forum not only for these residents' sake but also for the sake of residents in other parts of the County's jurisdiction.

The School District shares the applicant's interest in facilitating the efficient development of school sites within the Sterling Ranch community and would be glad to discuss updates to proposed school site dedications to reflect current planning efforts and the shared vision for the community. However, in its current form, the 13th Amendment dramatically alters the School District's rights with regard to the development of future school sites and/or the receipt of cash in lieu of land dedication and will undermine the ability to provide the present and future residents of Sterling Ranch with the world-class education available to other District students.

Douglas County School District **ardently opposes** the proposed amendments to Section 1.2(A) and Section 1.2(B) and urges the Board to deny this application. In its current form, Section 1.2(A) stipulates that 1) school land be dedicated to Douglas County in alignment with student generation from the development; and 2) that the number, locations, and configuration of school sites be determined collectively by the Owner, Douglas County, and the Douglas County School District. The proposed Amendment eliminates the site dedications for elementary, middle and high school and proposes instead to dedicate 110 acres of school land. The proposed Amendment states that the specific school sites will be determined during the preliminary planning phase and dedicated to Douglas County or a public school upon final plat **only** if the County or said public school provides an approved Capital Plan or Bond Plan demonstrating the ability to fund and construct a school on the given site. If the public school is unable to demonstrate funding at the time of final plat, the school site will be retained and developed by the Owner and an alternative site or cash-in-lieu will be offered by the Owner.

The proposed stipulation that DCSD lose access to needed school sites should funding for school construction not be secured by final plat is not feasible and not acceptable to DCSD. This requirement is completely unrealistic and does not consider the complexities of securing funding to construct and operate a new school. To start, this timing requirement does not appear to consider the timeline that actual population growth in a development follows. Historically, occupation of homes hasn't occurred until at least three (3) to four (4) years *after* final plat approval. Under the proposed Amendments, sites would become unavailable to the District before homes in the neighborhood are even close to being occupied. Furthermore, despite best efforts, bond measures sometimes fail and voter fatigue can be a very real obstacle that in some years cannot be overcome. We would ask you to consider the new elementary school currently being constructed in Filing 1 of the Sterling Ranch development. Douglas County voters voted no on previous bond initiatives for over a decade prior to the successful 2018 bond and also said no to the District's previous request to fund a new school in the growing Solstice and Sterling Ranch communities. In 2024 voter perspective changed and County residents overwhelmingly voted yes to funding a new school in this community. The District is thrilled to offer Sterling Ranch residents a first-rate neighborhood school option starting in 2027 but would point out that if the proposed restrictions to school land dedication had been in place DCSD would be unable to provide this option to residents.

The District's concerns with the proposed language in Sections 1.2(A) and (B) cannot be overstated. The current PD language ensures the three partners (Douglas County, Owner/Developer, and DCSD) work together to determine and adjust, as necessary, the methodology used to determine accurate student generation numbers and the appropriate size, location, and configuration of sites offered to the School District for dedication. There is no reason or justification for converting required school entitlements that directly align with the County's subdivision regulations and dedication standards. The proposed amendment includes the land dedicated to the John Adams Academy ("JAA") as part of the dedicated school site acreage and positions the County to reallocate future school sites or cash in lieu of dedications to public schools not affiliated with DCSD.

To be clear, we have no issue with the dedication of land to a charter school not affiliated with the District. However, we cannot support a decision to deduct any such lands from the acreage due to the District. We believe that this is contrary to the purpose and intent of the County's subdivision requirements and the State's subdivision statute, C.R.S. 30-28-133.

Moreover, as evidenced by the School Board's Resolution to Allow John Adams Academy to Submit a Charter Application to CSI, approved on December 10, 2024, the District was very clear in its intention to allow JAA to move forward with its application through CSI so long as it did not impact land dedication or cash in lieu of dedications to DCSD. A copy of the Board's resolution is attached.

It is also our understanding that the applicant proposes to replace Section 1.2(B) Cash-in-Lieu in its entirety. Section 1.2(B) currently requires that, when appropriate, cash-in-lieu be offered to the School District for use by the School District for schools and school support facilities located within the development. The proposed amendments to Section 1.2(B) do not acknowledge the School

District as an affected party and instead propose that the Owner offer cash-in-lieu to Douglas County **or** other acceptable land to a public school. Since its inception and through 12 separate amendments the Sterling Ranch PD has continuously and clearly identified the School District as an impacted party and as the primary responsible entity for the provision of public schools in Sterling Ranch. The reasoning behind the proposed dramatic shift away from this understanding is unclear to us and not justified. In summary, the District strongly opposes any changes to its ability to collect cash in lieu of land dedication as/if appropriate under the circumstances.

The 13th Amendment stands to significantly change the future choice and variety of schools and programming offered to Sterling Ranch residents by severely impairing the School District's ability to fund new school construction and support school facilities serving the Sterling Ranch community.

For these reasons, we urge you to vote no on Amendment 13 or, alternatively, to postpone consideration until there has been sufficient time to engage the School District, the community and other partners in this important discussion.

Sincerely,

Shavon Caldwell
Planning Manager, DCSD Planning & Construction
scaldwell2@dcsdk12.org
shavon.caldwell@dcsdk12.org
office: 303.387.0417
mobile: 720.428.1170

RESOLUTION TO ALLOW JOHN ADAMS ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL TO SUBMIT A
CHARTER APPLICATION TO CSI

RECITALS

WHEREAS, Colorado Statute 22.30.5-102(3), also known as the Charter Schools Act, states that “it is the intent of the general assembly to create a legitimate avenue for parents, teachers, and community members to implement new and innovative methods of educating children that are proven to be effective and to take responsible risks and create new and innovate, research-based ways of education children within the public education system.”; and

WHEREAS, the Douglas County School District (the “District”) Board of Education (the “District Board”) is a public school district of the State of Colorado with exclusive chartering authority to authorize charter schools within its geographic boundaries pursuant to C.R.S. 22-30.5-504; and

WHEREAS, the John Adams Classical Academy Charter School is a non-profit that intends to operate a charter public school in Colorado and will be organized under C.R.S. 22-30.5-104.7; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to C.R.S. 22-30.5-504(8), the District Board may permit the establishment of one or more Charter School Institute (“CSI”) charter schools within the geographic boundaries of the District by adopting a favorable resolution and submitting the resolution to the State Board of Education; and

WHEREAS, the District Board and the Charter Board acknowledge and agree that if CSI approves the School’s charter application, then the School shall be a charter school authorized by CSI.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, in consideration of the foregoing recitals, incorporated herein by this reference, the Douglas County School District Board of Education resolves as follows:

1. The Governing Board of the Charter School (the “Charter Board”) desires to apply to the Colorado Charter School Institute (“CSI”) to establish a charter school (the “School”) within the geographic boundaries of the Douglas County School District in a location other than land that is currently dedicated to Douglas County School District or on land that Douglas County for future transfer to Douglas County School District or on land that the Board of County Commissioners requires be dedicated through the subdivision process at a later date by determining the need exists for a school site, and that said site should be owned or operated by the District; and
2. John Adams Classical Academy Charter School’s desired location is Sterling Ranch or north and/or west of Sterling Ranch; and
3. CSI will ensure through their application review process that John Adams Classical Charter School has all the necessary components of starting a Charter School, including but not limited to: vision and mission; evidence of need, support, and involvement; school culture; education program; student services; goals, objectives, and pupil evaluation;

budget and financial viability and sustainability; governance and leadership; and operations; and

4. Charter Application; Limitations.

- a. The District Board hereby authorizes the Charter Board to apply to establish the School as a CSI school and authorizes the School to apply to and negotiate with CSI for matters ancillary to the operation of such school.
- b. This Resolution shall not be construed in any manner as a relinquishment of the District Board's exclusive chartering authority, which exclusivity is hereby expressly reserved and retained.

Dated this 10th day of December 2024.

Passed and approved by the Board of Education by a vote of 4-3.

AYES: Moore, Myers, Williams, Winegar

NAYS: Geiger, Meek, Thompson



DOUGLAS COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT RE-1

By: *Christy Williams*
Christy Williams, President

By: *Becky Myers*
Becky Myers, Secretary

Brett Thomas

From: Gabby Swanson <gabbyswans80@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 21, 2025 9:26 PM
To: Brett Thomas <bthomas@douglas.co.us>
Subject: Public Comment for the Record – Opposition to Sterling Ranch PD Amendment on School Land Dedication

Dear Mr. Thomas,

I am writing to submit my public comment regarding the proposed amendment to the Sterling Ranch Planned Development (PD). This amendment raises serious and urgent concerns about the future of public education infrastructure in our community, and I strongly urge the County to reject it in its current form.

The proposed changes would significantly alter the established and lawful framework for how school land is dedicated and preserved. Under Douglas County Regulations and the original Sterling Ranch PD, developers are required to dedicate land for public schools based on population and student generation rates. These dedications are intended to serve Douglas County School District and ensure that land remains public, held in trust by the County, until a school is ready to be built.

The amendment, however, proposes the following major and troubling changes:

1. **Contingency on Bond Passage:** The developer, Sterling Ranch DevCo, would no longer be required to dedicate school land unless the County or DCSD can prove “reasonable certainty” of school construction through a 5-year Capital Plan or Bond Program at the time of platting. This undermines long-term school planning. Bond measures are uncertain and dependent on voter approval; this provision could allow the developer to retain and develop land originally intended for schools.
2. **Use of Private School (JAA) to Satisfy Public Obligation:** The amendment proposes to count John Adam’s Academy — a private nonprofit — toward fulfilling DevCo’s school land dedication obligation. Even more concerning, the PD language is being altered to replace “Douglas County School District” with “public school.” While JAA may describe itself as a “public charter,” the land is not being deeded to the County or DCSD but rather to a private foundation. Should the school close or fail, that land remains with the private entity, not the public. This is a direct violation of the spirit and letter of **Article 10 of the Douglas County Subdivision Resolution** and **C.R.S. § 30-28-133**.

This amendment sets a dangerous precedent that could allow future developers to bypass public school dedications altogether. It creates a loophole where public needs are sacrificed in favor of rapid private development. It also disenfranchises the community by converting what should be public educational infrastructure into private assets.

I chose to live in Sterling Ranch because it was presented as a well-planned, future-ready community with integrated public infrastructure, including schools. I would not have chosen this community otherwise. Public schools are vital to the long-term sustainability, equity, and economic health of any neighborhood.

Please take this comment as part of the public record. I urge you and the Commission to **oppose this amendment** in its current form. The long-term health of our community, the integrity of our planning process, and the future of public education in Douglas County depend on it.

Sincerely,

Gabriela Mueller

Sterling Ranch Resident

Brett Thomas

From: Adam Scurto <adam.scurto@gmail.com>

Sent: Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:49 PM

To: Brett Thomas <bthomas@douglas.co.us>; Planning <Planning@douglas.co.us>; Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@douglas.co.us>

Subject: Sterling Ranch Land Transfer - DO NOT BAIT AND SWITCH

Hello,

I will not be able to attend the November 3 or November 18 meetings, but want to make sure you hear all voices.

Please DO NOT allow the Sterling Ranch developers to change their land dedication, and consider the land given to John Adams Academy to count towards their original public school land allocation.

While I am not against charter schools, healthy public schools are a crucial part of our educational ecosystem. Many families have moved (and will continue to move) to Sterling Ranch because of the excellence of Douglas County's public schools, and last fall voted 60-40 for a bond initiative that would build schools in Sterling Ranch and elsewhere. Allowing the developers to renege on their promise of 115 acres of land to DCSD would be a huge breach of public trust, and undermine not only the voters' will for expansion of public schools, but also trust in transparent government processes at the county level (already under strain after the county commissioners tried to rush through a Home Rule election that I would remind you was shot down 70-30, indicating how badly people want a transparent process that allows for public involvement).

While public charters are a great thing, so is a public school system that doesn't get the rug pulled out from under it by profit-motivated developers, politically captured committees, and self-interested commissioners in the dark of night. You have a chance to demonstrate you are something different - especially to the people who would be affected most by this decision: busy parents and families (LIKE ME!) who do not have time to attend a meeting or learn the arcane practices of planning commissions and land use.

Please fulfill your duty to the public by rejecting this proposed change and letting changes like this take place in a more transparent, voter-involved fashion.

Thank you.

--
Adam Scurto

adam.scurto@gmail.com

Brett Thomas

From: Jaclyn Charles <jaclyn.charles@gmail.com>

Sent: Monday, October 27, 2025 10:10 AM

To: Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@douglas.co.us>

Subject: Please Oppose the Sterling Ranch 13th Amendment — Protect Public School Land Commitments

Dear Members of the Douglas County Planning Commission,

My name is Jaclyn Charles, and I am a Sterling Ranch resident and parent of a kindergartner in the Douglas County School District. I am writing to respectfully urge you to deny or delay the proposed 13th Amendment to the Sterling Ranch master plan until the District and community can be fully consulted.

The original Sterling Ranch approval guaranteed 110 acres of dedicated land for district-run public schools, with specific sites for elementary, middle, and high schools. The proposed amendment changes that promise by:

- Reducing the guaranteed land to 110 acres total across all future schools,
- Removing grade-level distinctions for school sites, and
- Allowing the developer to keep control of land until the District can prove both need and funding.

These changes may appear procedural, but they effectively transfer control of public-school land from the community to the developer. “Set-aside” land is not the same as dedicated land. Without true dedication, DCSD cannot responsibly plan, bond, or build future schools—and that undermines every family who relied on the original commitment when choosing to live here.

When my daughter was entering kindergarten, I strongly considered a local charter option. But after visiting Roxborough Elementary, I was so grateful to find the kind of support and community that public, district-run schools uniquely provide. The mental-health and learning support team there has been instrumental in helping us navigate possible ADHD and sensory needs. That experience reaffirmed my belief that public schools must remain central and protected within our community.

I ask that the Commission require firm guarantees of dedicated land for district-led schools—not conditional or deferred set-asides—and that privately held charter land not be counted toward public-school requirements.

This amendment sets a dangerous precedent by weakening public accountability and allowing future school land decisions to depend on developer discretion. Please stand with Sterling Ranch families and with the Douglas County School District in preserving our right to strong, accessible, truly public schools.

Thank you for your time and for your service to our community.

Warm regards,
Jaclyn Charles
Sterling Ranch Resident & DCSD Parent

Brett Thomas

From: Tina Ruggiero <truggiero0@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 5:08 AM

To: Planning <Planning@douglas.co.us>

Subject: *** URGENT - Sterling Ranch DCSD Escrow Req's

Hello - I am a resident and taxpayer in Douglas County. I am writing to you to request that Planning Commission members and County Commissioners *demand* that Sterling Ranch work *with* the Douglas County School District to provide the required school sites to be held in escrow by the County Commissioners, as has always been done by developers in Douglas County, until DCSD is ready to build on the sites.

Thank You for your attention to this matter.

Concetta Ruggiero

6 Red Tail Dr

Highlands Ranch, CO 80126

From: Will Trail <willtrail@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 7:05 AM
To: Planning <Planning@douglas.co.us>
Subject: Subject: STRONG OPPOSITION to Sterling Ranch Planned Development, 13th Amendment (ZR2025-009)

To the Douglas County Planning Commission,

I am writing to express my **strong disapproval and ardent opposition** to the **Sterling Ranch Planned Development, 13th Amendment (ZR2025-009)**, which is scheduled to be heard on **November 3rd**.

This amendment, which seeks to drastically reduce the amount of land and the locations set aside for future schools, and proposes to introduce conditions for dedication or the alternative of a cash-in-lieu payment, is unacceptable and a clear attempt by Sterling Ranch to renege on their prior commitments made in 2013.

Concerns with the Proposal and Methods

The proposed changes are a significant detriment to the future educational needs of the Sterling Ranch community and the broader Douglas County School District (DCSD). I fully align with the position of the DCSD, which **ardently opposes** this application.

- **Undermining School Planning:** Sterling Ranch's proposal would tie land dedication to an "approved 5-year Capital Plan or Bond Plan," and allow the developer to reclaim the site if such a plan is not in place before the final plat. This condition significantly impairs the DCSD's ability to plan and fund new schools, which must be a collaborative effort between the developer, the County, and the School District.
- **Inadequate Land Dedication:** The proposal offers 110 acres, which includes sites that appear insufficient in location and size for the expected growth. The math suggests this may only cover a paired middle/high school and two elementary schools, which is far below the likely need for a development of 12,050 units (roughly 30% the size of Highlands Ranch, which has considerably more school acreage). Furthermore, the developer appears to be including the 26-acre John Adams Academy charter school site in this 110-acre total, despite the DCSD Board of Education's clear directive that this land should not count against the required DCSD school acreage.
- **Infrastructure Costs:** As the Douglas County Engineering Staff has highlighted, dedicating school sites without adequate existing infrastructure could easily add **millions of dollars** to the cost of building a school, forcing Douglas County taxpayers to cover the added expense.
- **Inappropriate Cash-in-Lieu Use:** The cash-in-lieu option is meant for smaller projects that don't warrant a full school site. Allowing a development of this scale to substitute required land for cash undermines the principle of setting aside properly located, adequate acreage for schools within a Planned Development.

Demand for Developer Accountability

It is time for Sterling Ranch to honor its obligations to the residents and the County. The continuous attempts to evade commitments create uncertainty and threaten the quality of education in newly developed neighborhoods, which, in turn, impacts property values and the community's overall well-being.

I demand that the Planning Commission vote **NO** on the 13th Amendment and require Sterling Ranch to:

1. **Rescind this 13th Amendment proposal immediately.**
2. **Work directly with the Douglas County School District (DCSD) to provide the required, properly located, and adequately sized school sites.**
3. Ensure that these required school sites are held in **escrow** by the County Commissioners until the DCSD is ready to proceed with construction, following the established procedure used by other developers in Douglas County.

Please stand with the School District and the community in opposing this latest attempt to dodge critical obligations.

Sincerely,

Will Trail

Brett Thomas

From: KATHERINE MICHELSEN <paddington999@aol.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 8:22 AM
To: Planning <Planning@douglas.co.us>
Subject: Sterling Ranch School Sites

To: Planning Commission and County Commissioners:

Please note as a public citizen we demand that Sterling Ranch work with the Douglas County School District to provide the required school sites to be held in escrow by the County Commissioners as has always been done by developers in Douglas County, until DCSD is ready to build on the sites.

Katherine Michelsen
Highlands Ranch

Brett Thomas

From: Renee Anderson <mistreranch@yahoo.com>

Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 8:49 AM

To: Planning <Planning@douglas.co.us>

Subject: Sterling Ranch School Sites

It is vitally important that Sterling Ranch developers work with Douglas County School District on site proposals as is required!

DO THE RIGHT THING!

Renee Anderson

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone

Get [Outlook for Android](#)

From: Jesse Reigle (Alumni) <jreigle@mines.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 8:41 PM
To: Brett Thomas <bthomas@douglas.co.us>; Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@douglas.co.us>; BOCC <BOCC@douglas.co.us>; Clerk <Clerk@douglas.co.us>
Subject: Public Comment – Sterling Ranch 13th Amendment (School Land Dedication)

Dear Commissioners and Planning Commission Members,

I am a resident of Sterling Ranch, writing regarding the proposed 13th Amendment to the Sterling Ranch Planned Development. When this community was approved, the developer committed to dedicate school land to Douglas County or the Douglas County School District (DCSD) for public ownership and operation. The proposed amendment would change that commitment by allowing privately held land to count toward that dedication requirement.

This change would reduce the amount of publicly owned land available for district-led schools and create a precedent that undermines Douglas County's ability to plan for future public school sites. Many families purchased homes here with the expectation that land dedicated for public schools would remain under public ownership.

Our family moved to Sterling Ranch because it offered an affordable community that strikes a balance between accessibility and long-term planning. A significant factor in that decision was the developer's original commitment—required at the time by both the County and the CAB—to dedicate public land for public schools. Altering that agreement now moves away from what residents were promised and relied upon when choosing to live here.

This proposal affects more than school planning. It impacts the County's long-term growth, housing market stability, and overall economic development. Families make home-buying decisions based on access to neighborhood public schools. If that access becomes uncertain, it could influence where new families choose to settle and affect property values across the County.

I respectfully ask the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners to:

- Deny or defer approval of the Sterling Ranch 13th Amendment until Douglas County, DCSD, and Sterling Ranch Development Company finalize an enforceable agreement guaranteeing that all school sites are publicly owned and controlled.
- Require that all future school land dedications be made directly to Douglas County or the Douglas County School District, not to private entities or charter operators.

Thank you for your time and commitment to protecting the long-term integrity of community planning in Douglas County.

Sincerely,
Jesse Reigle
Sterling Ranch Resident

Sent from my Galaxy

Brett Thomas

From: Robyn DePan <robyndepan@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 9:29 PM
To: Brett Thomas <bthomas@douglas.co.us>; Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@douglas.co.us>
Subject: Public Comment – Sterling Ranch 13th Amendment (School Land Dedication)

Dear Planning Commission Members,

My name is Robyn DePan, and I live in Sterling Ranch. I am writing to share my concern about the proposed 13th Amendment to the Sterling Ranch Planned Development, specifically the changes related to school land dedication.

When Sterling Ranch was approved, the developer committed to dedicate land to Douglas County or the Douglas County School District (DCSD) for public schools. That commitment ensured that school sites would remain publicly owned and available to meet the long-term needs of our growing community.

My husband and I signed on our lot in 2021 and moved into our home in 2022. At that time, we were sold the promise of living in a neighborhood within one of the best school districts in the state. We weren't yet parents, but we were excited about the prospect of growing our family here. Now that we have our son, everything we do is for him. He deserves to grow up in a community that puts his education and district-led public schools first.

The proposed amendment would allow privately owned school land to count toward the 110 acres now promised for public schools. This change would reduce the land available for DCSD-led neighborhood schools and limit public control over land that was always intended for the public good.

This issue is not just about Sterling Ranch. It affects planning standards across Douglas County. If this amendment is approved, it could set a precedent that allows other developments to meet public school land obligations with private conveyances, weakening the integrity of the County's planning process.

I respectfully urge the Planning Commission to deny or defer the 13th Amendment until the County and DCSD have finalized an enforceable agreement ensuring that all school sites are publicly owned and cannot be counted through private ownership.

Thank you for your time, for your service, and for considering the long-term planning implications for our community.

Sincerely,
Robyn DePan
Sterling Ranch Resident

Brett Thomas

From: Beilin Kelly <bzkelly22@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 9:30 PM
To: Brett Thomas <bthomas@douglas.co.us>; Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@douglas.co.us>; BOCC <BOCC@douglas.co.us>; Clerk <Clerk@douglas.co.us>
Subject: Public Comment – Sterling Ranch 13th Amendment (School Land Dedication)

Dear Commissioners and Planning Commission Members,

I'm writing as a Sterling Ranch resident and a mom of two young children. My family moved to Sterling Ranch to build our life here. We chose this community because we believed it was a place where our kids could grow up, attend a neighborhood public school, and stay rooted for years to come.

When Sterling Ranch was approved, the developer committed to dedicating land to Douglas County or the Douglas County School District for public schools. The proposed 13th Amendment changes that agreement by allowing privately owned land to count toward the required school acreage.

That may sound like a small change, but it isn't. It reduces public control of school land, weakens long-term planning, and sets a precedent that could leave our community without space for district-run neighborhood schools. Families here bought homes with the understanding that school sites would be public, not private assets.

As a parent of a toddler and an infant, this matters deeply to me. We hope to live here long-term. If public school sites become uncertain, or controlled privately, it affects every family's future, every child's opportunity, and ultimately the growth and stability of the entire county. When new families question whether public schools will exist or be accessible, they will choose to live elsewhere, and Douglas County will feel that impact economically and socially.

I respectfully ask the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners to:

- Deny or defer approval of the Sterling Ranch 13th Amendment until Douglas County, the School District, and the developer have a legally enforceable agreement ensuring that school sites are publicly owned and controlled, and
- Require clear language confirming that all school land must be dedicated to Douglas County or the Douglas County School District—never to private entities.

Thank you for your time and for protecting the commitments made to families who chose to build their lives here.

Sincerely,
Beilin Kelly
9772 Banner Peak St
Sterling Ranch, CO 80125

Brett Thomas

From: Katrina Riggs <kriggs91@gmail.com>

Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 10:04 PM

To: Brett Thomas <bthomas@douglas.co.us>; Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@douglas.co.us>; BOCC <BOCC@douglas.co.us>; Harold Smethills <harolds@sterlingranchcolorado.com>; richard.shaw@sterlingranchcab.com; dianes@sterlingranchcolorado.com; sbeckman@sterlingranchcolorado.com; Ron@ronvooss.com; alexander.taylor@sterlingranchcab.com; sam.johnson@sterlingranchcab.com; chris.binkley@sterlingranchmd2.com; jack.hamlin@sterlingranchmd2.com; steven.roseman@sterlingranchmd3.com; gregory.king@sterlingranchmd3.com; joey.halligan@sterlingranchmd3.com; lynn.moffett@sterlingranchcab.com; corey.sturm@sterlingranchmd3.com

Subject: Feedback: 13th Amendment

Dear Sterling Ranch Development Company, CAB Board, and Metro District Representatives,

As a resident of Sterling Ranch, I want to share my feedback regarding the request before the Douglas County Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners to approve the proposed 13th Amendment to the Sterling Ranch Planned Development. This amendment would alter the existing school land dedication agreement.

When Sterling Ranch was originally approved, the Development Company committed to dedicating land to Douglas County or the Douglas County School District (DCSD) for public school use. That commitment helped ensure our growing community would have access to publicly owned neighborhood schools — a cornerstone of strong, sustainable development. Changing that agreement now appears inconsistent with both state law and Douglas County's long-standing school site dedication requirements, which other developments across Colorado have consistently met.

This proposed change would have lasting impacts not only on residents but also on the overall success and reputation of Sterling Ranch. A strong public school presence is central to community stability, property values, and long-term appeal. Families make home-buying decisions based on access to high-quality, nearby public schools. Uncertainty about the future of those sites risks discouraging new buyers and affecting resale values for current residents.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge you not to move forward with Amendment 13. I want to see our world-class public school system grow right here in Sterling Ranch. Public schools are not perfect. No system is, but they provide students with real teachers, tried and true practices, and opportunities to learn alongside peers from diverse backgrounds. That diversity helps shape well-rounded, open-minded individuals who are prepared for the real world.

I'm also concerned about the proposed direction of a specific charter school model being promoted. It resembles a low cost, online homeschool approach led by uncertified educators with limited oversight. Many of its promoters (including yourselves) are products of public education, which makes it ironic that they now question the very system that helped them learn, grow, and form their own beliefs. The notion that public schools "indoctrinate" students is a politically driven narrative that doesn't reflect the experiences of most families, teachers, or students. At least in Douglas County, there's only one group indoctrinating (at the school board level), and they are the same ones trying to dismantle public school systems.

Public schools are where children learn to collaborate, think critically, and engage meaningfully with their community. That's the kind of environment I want to help grow and strengthen in Sterling Ranch.

Furthermore, if we are investing in inclusive community spaces, like the new inclusive park, it only makes sense to also invest in an inclusive, publicly accountable school system that serves all children. And we as the community foster the quality of that service.

Instead of redirecting efforts toward politically motivated school projects, we could build community through initiatives that bring families together such as youth organizations (4-H, Girl Scouts, etc.) or shared civic programs...even Sunday School. These have long been around and have produced engaged, responsible citizens at a fraction of the cost and controversy. No need to reinvent for political gain.

Ultimately, approving Amendment 13 risks dividing our community and weakening the educational foundation that Sterling Ranch and the county has promoted. Let's stay committed to keeping our neighborhood schools public, local, and accessible to everyone.

Yes, the Charter is public, but unlike our future DCSD school, it wasn't voted on by the people and was done so in a way that contradicts choice.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Katrina Riggs

Resident, Sterling Ranch

Brett Thomas

From: George Beilby <gbeilby@comcast.net>
Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2025 4:47 AM
To: Planning <Planning@douglas.co.us>
Subject: Sterling Ranch

Please follow existing DCSD policy/formula for locations of school sites in the Sterling Ranch PD. We should not abandon the sense of community that neighborhood schools foster.

George Beilby
3183 Rockbridge Drive
Highlands Ranch
Sent from my I Phone

Brett Thomas

From: Sarah Sparks <slockett13@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2025 9:03 AM
To: Brett Thomas <bthomas@douglas.co.us>; Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@douglas.co.us>; BOCC <BOCC@douglas.co.us>; Clerk <Clerk@douglas.co.us>
Subject: Public Comment – Sterling Ranch 13th Amendment (School Land Dedication)

Dear Commissioners and Planning Commission Members,

I'm writing as a Sterling Ranch resident concerned about the proposed 13th Amendment to the Sterling Ranch Planned Development. When the community was approved, the developer agreed to dedicate land to Douglas County or the Douglas County School District for public schools. The amendment changes that promise by allowing privately owned land to count toward that total.

This means less land for district-led schools, less public ownership, and a precedent that could weaken Douglas County's ability to plan for future public school sites. Families who bought homes here expected that public school land would remain public.

We moved from Austin, TX around a great school district for a better quality of life and one of the main reasons we picked Sterling Ranch was the dedication to public schools. I had an incredible public school education when I was younger and I want that same experience for my kids. Had Sterling Ranch not explicitly laid out their plan for elementary, middle and high schools we would not have considered this neighborhood.

This change doesn't just affect schools, it affects the County's growth and long-term planning. When new families see uncertainty around public school availability, they may choose to move elsewhere, impacting Douglas County's housing demand, tax base, and economic strength.

I respectfully ask the Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners to:

- Deny or defer approval of the Sterling Ranch 13th Amendment until Douglas County, Sterling Ranch Development Company, and the School District finalize an enforceable agreement ensuring school sites are publicly owned and controlled, and
- Require revised language confirming that all school land must be dedicated to Douglas County or the Douglas County School District, not to private entities or operators.

Thank you for your time, service, and commitment to protecting the integrity of our community's commitments.

Sincerely,
Sarah Sparks

8554 Cheraw Street-Sterling Ranch

Brett Thomas

From: Lindsay Dumas <lindsay.a.dumas@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, October 30, 2025 12:36 PM
To: Brett Thomas <bthomas@douglas.co.us>; Planning Commission <PlanningCommission@douglas.co.us>; BOCC <BOCC@douglas.co.us>; Clerk <Clerk@douglas.co.us>
Subject: Public Comment on Sterling Ranch 13th Amendment (School Land Dedication)

Dear Commissioners and Planning Commission Members,

I write to you as a resident of Sterling Ranch, a parent of an elementary-school-aged child, and a firm supporter of school choice—believing strongly that families should have the freedom to select the educational environment that suits their children best. At the same time, I believe deeply in the role of neighborhood public schools as anchors of community life and to provide the best education for all students, especially in fast-growing neighborhoods.

When the community of Sterling Ranch was originally approved, the developer committed to dedicating land to either Douglas County School District (DCSD) or Douglas County for public school sites. The proposed 13th Amendment would change that promise by allowing privately-owned land to count toward that dedication. This change significantly diminishes public ownership of school sites, limits the District's ability to plan future neighborhood schools, and risks setting a precedent that undermines public-school infrastructure and community trust.

Here are the key data points that underline why this matters for Sterling Ranch:

- Douglas County's population is estimated at nearly **393,995** as of July 2024—a growth of about **10%** since April 2020. [Census.gov](#)
- DCSD has not built a new school since 2010, yet the population has ballooned by tens of thousands in that interval. [CBS News+1](#)
- In the Sterling Ranch area (Sterling Ranch + Solstice), student enrollment in DCSD-served PK-12 skyrocketed from 642 in 2022 to 891 in 2023 — a **39% increase in just one year (and has continued to grow with the continued neighborhood developments)**. [douglas.ic-board.com](#)
- DCSD has identified Sterling Ranch as part of a “school-desert” area: communities growing rapidly but lacking accessible neighborhood public schools. [douglas.ic-board.com+1](#)
- Voters in Douglas County approved a \$490 million bond in November 2024—focusing in part on building new schools in Sterling Ranch and similar neighborhoods. [Colorado Politics+1](#)

As a parent who chose to reside here because of the promise of a **neighborhood public school**, this amendment raises real concerns. My child and many other young families deserve a viable option for a public school that is **publicly owned, neighborhood-oriented, and available to all school-aged children in the vicinity**. Not one managed indirectly through privately-owned property. If the land dedication is shifted toward privately owned parcels, the public school footprint shrinks—and so does the community's future.

From a broader growth-and-economics standpoint, the ramifications are material:

- A strong network of publicly owned neighborhood schools enhances property values, supports stable communities, and attracts families—thereby strengthening the tax base and long-term economic vitality of Douglas County.
- Conversely, uncertainty around school site availability—especially when commitments are altered—can discourage new families from locating here, slow growth, and shift the burden to less-well-served neighborhoods.
- The amendment, if approved without public-school-ownership protections, would erode the District's ability to plan its facility pipeline—particularly in a county covering over 800 square miles and experiencing uneven growth.

In light of this, I respectfully urge the Planning Commission and the Board of County Commissioners to: **Deny approval** of the Sterling Ranch 13th Amendment until such time as DCSD, Douglas County, and the Sterling Ranch developer finalize an enforceable agreement which ensures that all designated future school sites are **publicly owned and controlled** by DCSD.

We are a community of young families, many of whom came here anticipating the build-out of public neighborhood schools. The planned population of Sterling Ranch is substantial, and for public-school choice (in the sense of a robust public-school option) to matter, we need sufficient public school capacity. Altering the land-dedication promise risks undermining that capacity.

Thank you for your time, your service to this community, and your commitment to ensuring that Sterling Ranch remains a well-planned, thriving, family-friendly neighborhood. I look forward to your support for protecting our public school infrastructure and community expectations.

Sincerely,

Lindsay Dumas

Parent & Sterling Ranch Resident

Brett Thomas

From: Susan Beckman <SusanB@sterlingranchcolorado.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 29, 2025 5:26 PM
To: Brett Thomas <bthomas@douglas.co.us>; Bradley Jackson <bjackson@douglas.co.us>
Cc: Kevin Johnk <kevin.johnk@sterlingranchcolorado.com>
Subject: Sterling Ranch's Response to Community Concerns and Engineering Referral Comments

Hi Brett,
Please accept Sterling Ranch's Response to Douglas County Engineering Referral Comments for the 13th Amendment and also Sterling Ranch's response to Community Concerns. Because of the late School District submittal of their referral comments, Sterling Ranch will respond to them during the Planning Commission Meeting.
Susan Beckman



www.SterlingRanchColorado.com

Susan Beckman
Director of Zoning and Rezoning
Sterling Ranch Development Company
D: (303) 881-7119
Susanb@sterlingranchcolorado.com
8155 Piney River Avenue, Suite 200
Littleton, CO 80125



October 29, 2025

Brad Jackson
Department of Public Works Engineering
100 Third Street
Castle Rock, CO 80104

Subject: Response to Engineering Comments on Sterling Ranch 13th PD Amendment

Dear Mr. Jackson:

We have received your comments for Sterling Ranch 13th PD Amendment, and we offer the following response shown in **blue** throughout this letter:

General Comments; S1.2 – Schools (A) Dedication

If a school site is not dedicated on a final plat, in a location where a school site was contemplated with a preliminary plan how will the required dedication be tracked moving forward within the overall PD development? Douglas County Engineering is concerned that a potential school site might end up being dedicated in a location that does not have adequate infrastructure in place to serve a proposed school. This could cause the school district to construct additional offsite infrastructure to open a proposed future school.

RESPONSE:

Sterling Ranch is committed to providing adequate infrastructure to serve proposed school sites. This application proposes identification and evaluation of potential school sites at the Preliminary Plan stage of entitlement. The Douglas County Subdivision Resolution mandates engineering exhibits, reports, and analysis at the Preliminary Plan stage.

This provides an opportunity to establish and evaluate a satisfactory school site even earlier than the final plat stage.

Given the extended timeline that it takes to build out an entire Preliminary Plan, we believe this represents an improved process for proposing ideal school sites.

On behalf of Sterling Ranch, I would like to thank you for your partnership and your consideration. If you have any additional questions, please contact me at kevin.johnk@sterlingranchcolorado.com or at (720)224-2423.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Johnk".

Kevin Johnk, Entitlement Director,
Sterling Ranch Development Company



Community Concerns and Applicant Response for 13th Sterling Ranch PD Amendment

1. **Community Concerns:** "Privately run charter schools should not be credited toward the community's school land requirements. This undermines the intent of the original master plan and shortchanges families who moved here expecting access to district-led options."

Applicant Responses: Sterling Ranch's vision has always embraced school choice and a variety of school options for students in our community. We are fortunate to be aligned with that goal through partnerships with the Douglas County School District and the Colorado Charter School Institute, which support school choice for our residents.

2. **Community Concerns:** "Please do not approve the 14th Amendment until DCSD has been fully consulted and agrees that its ability to plan for district-run schools will not be compromised".

Applicant Response: The Douglas County School District has been consulted and was a referral agent for the 13th Amendment. The DCSD School Board voted to allow the release of John Adams Academy to get approval from the Colorado State Charter Institute. DCSD will open a district run school in Sterling Ranch in 2027.

- 3) **Community Concerns:** "When we moved into our house, we understood that the land management plan promised a specific amount of land to go to district-led public schools - not charter schools that fall outside of district-led and public management".

Applicant Response: Sterling Ranch is fortunate to have two public schools currently being built within its footprint. We understand there has been some tension in the community regarding the John Adams Academy (JAA) charter school, but there was no funding for an additional district school in Sterling Ranch in the district's long-range budget.

Additionally, the school district is not prioritizing all current students in Sterling Ranch for enrollment in the district neighborhood schools. Only a small portion of Sterling Ranch students will be able to attend because the district is giving priority to children from the Solstice Shea Home development to the north. Sterling Ranch needed an additional school, and JAA provided the funding and opportunity to make that happen.

- 4) **Community Concerns:** "The proposed "set-aside" land is not the same as dedicated land since DCSD will not be able to plan or build schools without knowing if those sites are still slated for district-led public schools."

Applicant Response: We hear your valid point about the need for certainty in school planning, and we're committed to providing that stability for Public Schools and our families. Under the Board of County Commissioners' policy, school land is dedicated for a Public School precisely when a demonstrated need arises, backed by a solid capital improvement funding plan or bond funding plan. This efficient approach avoids underutilized land and ensures that land is dedicated at the right location when it is needed.

- 5) **Community Concerns:** "School land dedication should not depend on whether DCSD has immediate bond money and having to adjust to the JAA charter school being built before the district-led public school is. This Amendment will give developers too much leverage and will very likely delay or prevent needed public schools."

Applicant Response: The Board of County Commissioners is currently addressing concerns from communities across Douglas County regarding vacant school sites that sit idle and will most likely not be utilized. The current policy of the Board is that school land will be dedicated (based on actual students) when the need for the property is validated and when capital improvement plan funding or a bond funding plan are provided.

6) **Community Concerns:** "Charter schools may contribute to educational diversity, but they do not serve the same role as public schools in providing **equitable, accessible education** for every child in the community".

Applicant Response: We do not agree.

7) **Community Concerns:** "Reclassifying this land reduces the capacity of Douglas County School District to meet the needs of a growing population and erodes public trust".

Applicant Response: The reclassifying of the school sites from elementary, middle school and high school was a technical fix to reflect the actual schools currently being built in Sterling Ranch and to allow for flexibility in the future.

Community Concerns: "Reducing the guaranteed school land to just 110 acres across Sterling Ranch is concerning".

Applicant Response: DCSD has supported the 110 acres of land dedication since 2021. This amount complies with the Douglas County Zoning Resolution Article 10 Dedication Standards, which require a minimum of 10 acres per elementary school, 25 acres per junior high school, and 40 acres per senior high school. The 110 acres are more than sufficient land for Sterling Ranch to dedicate to schools. This land will cover three elementary schools, two junior high schools, and two high schools.

Sterling Ranch's commitment to schools is strong and can be seen in our financial support for students, which includes:

- Land dedication is valued at \$7 million for two school sites.
- Capital mitigation fees and \$5 million in improvements, with the developer providing \$1,500 per single-family home and \$750 per multi-family home for the entire build-out to Douglas County.
- Infrastructure improvements on the two school sites valued at \$4 million for John Adams Academy and the district school.

A current total of \$16 million for 1,000 students, equating to a donation of \$16,000 per current student in Sterling Ranch.