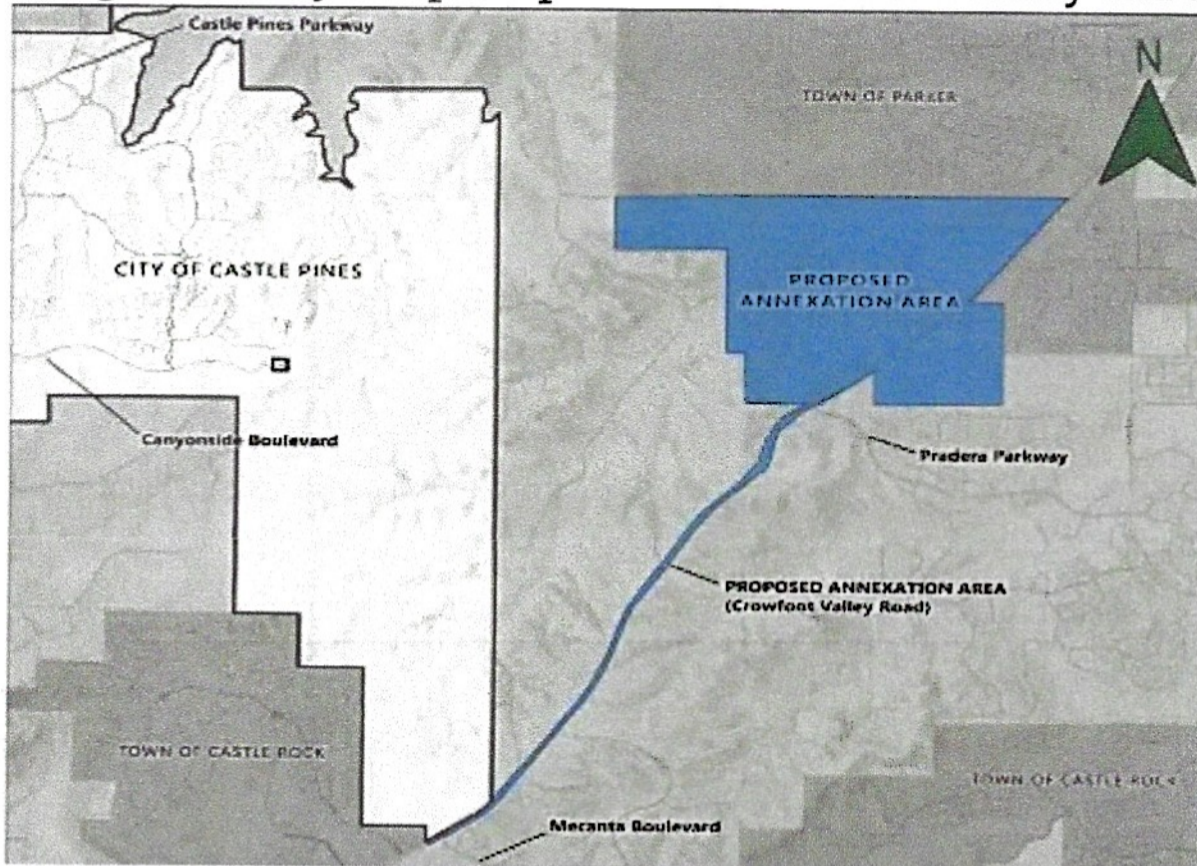


Concerns over 'dense' development

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Directly south of Parker and east of Castle Pines, a potential housing development in unincorporated Douglas County has prompted concerns over density and the possible annexation of the land it sits on.



In Parker, Mayor Joshua Rivero said he intends to preserve the identity his city has long worked for. In Castle Pines, officials said the smaller city seeks to grow with the rest of the affluent county south of Denver.

The proposed development, on a 795-acre plot of land south of Parker, might be annexed by either city. Rivero said the proposed development does not meet town infrastructure standards despite being adjacent to Parker.

Called "Crowsnest," the land is directly south of Parker along portions of Crowfoot Valley Road east of the Canyons.

In October, VT Crowfoot Valley Landco, LLC submitted a petition to annex the property into Castle Pines, which isn't directly adjacent to the land like Parker.

Parker's mayor balked at the petition for annexation and its initial plans.

"We are landlocked," Rivero told The Denver Gazette. "High density, the infrastructure concerns, and then the parks and recreation amenities ... those big things are what we're initially concerned with," Rivero said.

The potential development could include at least 4,500 housing units with the potential of over 5,000. That, Rivero said, doesn't adhere to the town's comprehensive master plan when it comes to housing density.

"This being adjacent to Parker goes against everything that our comprehensive plan currently says," Rivero said. "We're looking at over 5,000 units on over 700 acres."

On Dec. 5, Crowfoot Valley Landco forfeited its annexation petition because of an error in a legal description regarding right-of-way on Crowfoot Valley Road, according to Castle Pines officials.

"It touches Parker. It doesn't touch Castle Pines," Rivero said, adding the scariest part of the proposal is "the capacity of the infrastructure," like roadways and traffic patterns.

An online petition against Crowsnest raised other concerns. Some complaints regarding a development there included bird habitat risks, a need to expand Crowfoot Valley Road and loss of open space.

Crowfoot Valley Landco officials did not return a request for comment by The Denver Gazette.

In Castle Pines, officials seek to expand housing options, a discussion that goes well beyond annexation discussions of Crowsnest.

"The City of Castle Pines has some of the best land available for development in Douglas County," Castle Pines City Manager Michael Penny said.

"We don't see ourselves competing but complementing what makes Douglas County a great place to live," he added.

Castle Pines officials said city councilmembers haven't discussed the Crowsnest annexation beyond the petition.

"The Castle Pines City Council wants to be a good neighbor and, should an application be received, would work in good faith with residents, the town of Parker, Douglas County, and other stakeholders to address concerns as appropriate," Penny said.

Douglas County commissioners on Dec. 16 approved an ordinance to combat construction defects and address what keeps developers from building new homes.

County municipalities have pushed for more developments. Lone Tree, for example, is still looking for interested developers for its City Center development proposal.

Comparable to Crowsnest, Castle Rock previously approved annexation of the Pine Canyon develop-ment poised to feature a maximum of 1,800 housing units across 533 acres.

Littleton residents also combated density this election season.

In November, voters there decided not to allow the development of multiplexes in single-family home neighborhoods.

As for next steps for Crowsnest, Douglas County community planning officials said landowners must file land use applications. The county hasn't seen anything come through after Crowfoot Valley Landco dropped the most recent annexation petition.

"The county has had informal inquiries about developing this property," a Douglas County spokesperson said.

Rivero said the town of more than 65,000 residents could be built out to around 85,000 people.

To do so, Rivero said it's all about communicating with fellow stakeholders.

"What we do understand, what we've heard, our understanding is that it would be back," Rivero said of Crowsnest annexation consideration.

"What we don't know is if it will come back in the same form, or if it will come back to address more of our concerns," he said. "The most important thing for Parker right now is that everything in Parker is zoned. We have a plan."