

# Developer pulls annexation request

## Council examines growth amid opposition to Crowsnest bid

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The developer behind a controversial 3,650-home mixed-use project that relied on an annexation by Castle Pines has withdrawn its petition to build the Crowsnest community.

The withdrawal of the request for the city to annex 800 acres in Douglas County was made official Tuesday by the Castle Pines City Council. At the meeting, elected leaders passed a resolution devoting the next four months to hammering out an annexation policy for the fast-growing city that straddles Interstate 25 between Lone Tree and Castle Rock. It will grant no new annexations during that time.

The council had been set to vote on the Crowsnest annexation request in April, but it faced stiff opposition from a group of residents who felt the project was too dense for a county that is still characterized by wide swaths of rural territory.

Developer VT Crowfoot Valley Landco LLC declined to tell The Denver Post whether it would try again this summer to annex the property, which sits at the southwest corner of Crowfoot Valley and South Chambers roads in unincorporated Douglas County. The limited liability company was formed in September and shares an Englewood mailing address with Ventana Capital.

In a letter submitted to Castle Pines on March 19, VT Crowfoot Valley said it "reserves all rights with respect to any future petition, application, amendment request, or other entitlement relating to the property."

Donna Cook, a Castle Pines resident who helped form the citizen group People Against Annexing Crowsnest and led the fight against the project, called this week's move "a huge win for the city."

She and a group of neighbors argued that the annexation of the Crowsnest site would lead to the construction of an overly dense development that is incompatible with the area's bucolic character. Aside from homes, the project would include about 120 acres devoted to commercial uses.

Further, opponents argued, VT Crowfoot Valley proposed a flagpole annexation, using Crowfoot Valley Road as a narrow connecting conduit to physically link Castle Pines to the Crowsnest site.

They called Crowsnest a "remote, disconnected island that would burden existing taxpayers with unsustainable service costs."

VT Crowfoot Valley argues that Crowsnest's plan is less dense than neighborhoods in nearby Parker and will be a multimillion-dollar boon for Castle Pines. It would also devote 132 acres to open space.

Cook said her group would closely watch how Castle Pines' council crafts the city's annexation policy over the next few months to determine whether to resume the battle against Crowsnest, should the developer submit another application.

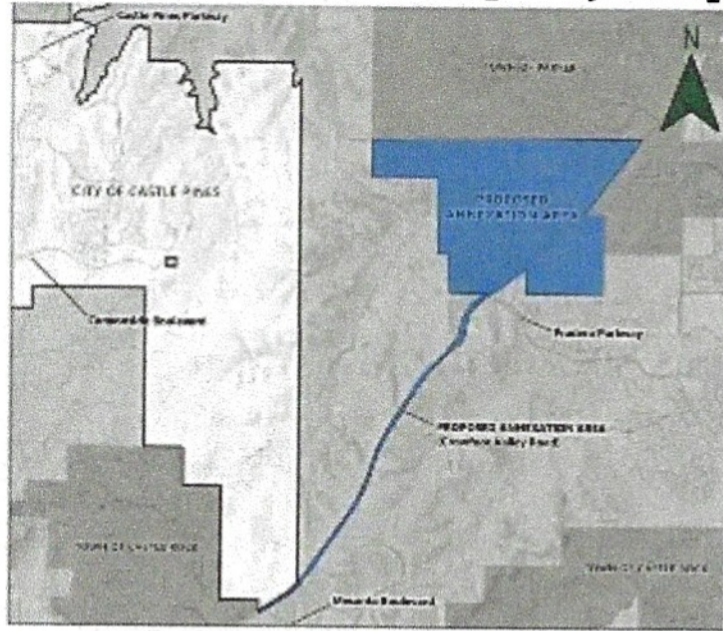
"We would indeed fight, depending on what the final annexation policy states, to ensure that any future annexation is in the best interests of the city," she said.

# Castle Pines places 120-day stay on annexation requests

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A controversial annexation request was withdrawn after the Castle Pines City Council directed staff to develop an annexation policy and placed a 120-day stay on future requests.



“We need to take time with this, we need to make sure we get this right,” Councilmember Nate Winegar said. “And make sure that all voices are heard in the community.”

The 794-acre property, known as “Crowsnest,” is located in unincorporated Douglas County, directly south of Parker and east of Castle Pines. Preliminary plans showed capacity for 3,646 dwelling units, along with commercial and open space.

City Council unanimously approved both the withdrawal of the annexation request and a resolution directing staff to begin drafting a city annexation policy on Tuesday.

According to city documents, development of the policy will include public engagement and criteria related to master planning, density, parks, open space, trails, municipal service delivery, commercial areas and uses.

Multiple speakers at the public comment portion of the meeting raised concerns about potential strain on emergency services and water supply, as well as environmental impacts and increased traffic.

Speakers called for transparency during the policy development process and urged the council to expand opportunities for public engagement through town halls and public input sessions.

“This annexation will shape the future of Castle Pines for years and decades to come, which is why it is so important to slow down enough to get it right and let all voices be heard,” Lisa Woods, a resident of Castle Pines, said.

