

Written Comment Opposing Proposed Master Plan Amendment —

Ralston Creek / Croke Canal Area

To: City Clerk, City of Arvada

From: David Soucie Arvada, CO 80007

Date: October 17, 2025

Subject: Opposition to Proposed Master Plan Change from Residential to Light Industrial

1. Introduction and Standing

My name is David Soucie, and I am a lifelong resident of Arvada. I grew up playing along Ralston Creek and have seen firsthand how this community has worked to balance development with the preservation of its natural environment. I currently live at 6868 Lupine Way, directly adjacent to the area proposed for a Master Plan change from Residential to Light Industrial use.

When I purchased my home 18 months ago, I relied on the City's Master Plan, which clearly designated this parcel for residential use. My neighbors in Forest Springs and GEOS relied on that same plan when they made their investment decisions and built their lives here.

2. The Master Plan Is the Controlling Document

The developer argues that the current Master Plan designation is inconsistent with existing industrial zoning. However, under Arvada's Land Development Code, the Master Plan—not the zoning—is the controlling policy document. Zoning should conform to the Master Plan's intent, not the reverse. The City Council already affirmed this principle when it previously rejected the same proposal, with only one dissenting vote.

3. Environmental Risks and Lack of Impact Study

This property was acquired by the current developer at a tax sale because it was not considered viable for standard development due to its prior use as an unregulated dump site. Hazardous materials were reportedly buried and covered with roughly four feet of topsoil, serving only as a temporary cap—not true remediation.

Despite this history, no environmental impact study has been conducted. That means the interaction between the existing contaminants and the new pollutants typically introduced by light industrial activity—such as fuel, oil, and antifreeze from vehicle storage—has not been scientifically evaluated.

It is highly likely that introducing additional industrial contaminants into already compromised soils would cause irreversible chemical reactions and spread toxins through groundwater and stormwater runoff. These contaminants would inevitably reach Ralston Creek and the Croke Canal, both of which are part of a sensitive riparian ecosystem supporting diverse wildlife and migratory bird species. The ecological consequences could be permanent.

4. Broader Hazards of Light Industrial Use

Even apart from this parcel's contamination history, light industrial uses pose significant risks compared to residential development: chemical and petroleum runoff contaminating stormwater and groundwater; noise and lighting pollution disrupting wildlife and nearby residences; increased heavy-vehicle traffic posing safety risks for families and cyclists along the Ralston Creek Trail; and heat island effects from reduced vegetation and compacted surfaces

5. Insurance and Economic Impacts

As a licensed property insurance adjuster with more than 30 years of experience—and as a former FAA Aviation Safety Inspector for 17 years and current Senior Safety Analyst for CNN—I want to emphasize the financial and safety implications of this amendment. Insurance underwriters evaluate neighborhood risk based on proximity to industrial activity, environmental hazards, and zoning classifications. Reclassifying this area to allow light industrial use would elevate the perceived risk for nearby homeowners, resulting in higher property insurance premiums. Given that property insurance rates in Colorado are already climbing rapidly, this would create an unnecessary financial burden for residents and reduce property values throughout the Forest Springs and GEOS neighborhoods.

6. Conclusion and Request

The Master Plan is the guiding, controlling document for responsible land use. The developer purchased a contaminated site and seeks to bypass the environmental due diligence expected for its redevelopment. No environmental impact study has been performed, despite the clear risk of irreversible contamination and permanent ecological damage to the Ralston Creek wildlife corridor. The change would negatively impact public health, property values, and insurance rates for the surrounding community.

I respectfully urge the Arvada City Council to deny the proposed Master Plan amendment and uphold the City's long-standing commitment to responsible planning, environmental stewardship, and the preservation of the Ralston Creek ecosystem for future generations.

Respectfully submitted,

David Soucie
Arvada, CO 80007

Licensed Property Insurance Adjuster – 30 Years
Former FAA Aviation Safety Inspector – 17 Years
Senior Safety Analyst, CNN
Specialist in Risk and Environmental Safety Analysis