



July 24, 2025

Re: Senior Housing at Bergen Meadow Elementary School

Ms. Ally Hilgefort

Dear Ally,

I am writing to express the support of Seniors4Wellness ("S4W") for the proposal that the closed Bergen Meadow Elementary School be turned into Senior Housing operated by Foothills Regional Housing with the surrounding fields and recreation space owned by Evergreen Parks and Recreation District ("EPRD").

S4W was incorporated in April of 2021 as a non-profit in an effort to replace senior services lost when the Seniors Resource Center stopped operating the Yellow House in Evergreen during Covid. Since then, S4W has offered a monthly lunch in Evergreen as well as monthly game days and wellness classes. During the last year we have acquired, through a grant from Colorado Gives, a brand new van that we use to transport seniors down the hill for doctor, chemotherapy, dialysis and other medical appointments free of charge. EPRD has recently created a permanent senior space at the Buchanan Recreation Center for our seniors to use for socializing and programming that has long operating hours. Each of these accomplishments have occurred because of the beautiful collaboration and partnering in Evergreen with other groups such as the Evergreen Legacy Foundation, the Chamber of Commerce, EPRD, Colorado Gives and many others.

The population of Evergreen is graying as is Jefferson County. 18% of residents in the county are over the age of 65 and nearly 10% are over the age of 80. This is certainly true in Evergreen and the closing of the school is indicative of our aging population. We have one senior housing independently-owned complex in Evergreen at Rocky Mountain Village Estates and one commercial

assisted living facility at Elk Run. With respect to non-medical related senior housing, there are only 209 units for seniors in Evergreen, and that number has not changed in 30 years. This simply does not, and will not, house our growing graying population. When being interviewed about the new senior space at Buchanan, many of the residents of Rocky Mountain Village commented how critical it is to live around other people your own age as you get older and to be around a population of people that understand and appreciate you. They also commented on how important a social network is to each of them, many of whom are widowed and do not have extended family in the area.

S4W believes it is critical to the mountain community's ability to keep our aging population living here, and not escaping to the more urban areas due to a lack of resources, that we have communal housing that is conveniently located. Many seniors here live alone at 8000 feet and many no longer drive and certainly are unable to shovel snow or keep up a yard and house. As we all know, aging well and in place requires healthy physical, mental and social opportunities. The location right near our excellent Evergreen Fire Department, near Bergen Park, and across the street from the Buchanan Recreation Center make the Bergen Meadow school a perfect location for senior housing. As an added bonus, Foothills Regional Housing has indicated that they will have community space in their building for seniors and organizations to hold activities and gather. This would be so helpful to have right in the seniors' own living space.

The Board of S4W stands ready and willing to help however we can to make this senior living space at Bergen a reality. This is a segment of the population that we value and do not want to lose in our mountain community.

Thank you.

Mary B. Tribby, Esq., President Seniors4Wellness