



Planning and Zoning Board

Case Information

CASE NUMBER: Z14-014
LOCATION/ADDRESS: The 3600 to 5200 blocks of South Ellsworth Road (east side), the 9200 to 10800 blocks of East Elliot Road (south side), and the 3600 to 6000 blocks of the South Signal Butte Road alignment (west side).
GENERAL VICINITY: Located south of Elliot Road between Ellsworth Road and Signal Butte Road
REQUEST: Major Amendment to the Eastmark (Mesa Proving Grounds) Community Plan
PURPOSE: This request will modify the character theme and the addition of the Regional Center/Campus Land Use Group to Development Unit 5.
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 6
MASTER DEVELOPER: Jill Hegardt, DMB Mesa Proving Grounds, LLC
STAFF PLANNER: Tom Ellsworth

SITE DATA

PARCEL SIZE: 3200± acres, (DU5 - 472± acres)
EXISTING ZONING: PCD (Eastmark Community Plan)
GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Mixed Use Community

SITE CONTEXT

NORTH: (across Elliot Rd) Multiple undeveloped properties – zoned C-2 DMP, M-1 DMP, and PEP DMP, and AG
EAST: (across Signal Butte Rd alignment) Single Residential – zoned R1-6 PAD and R1-7 PAD
SOUTH: Pacific Proving Grounds Community Plan – zoned PC
WEST: (across Ellsworth Rd) Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport and multiple undeveloped properties, – zoned C-2, M-1, and AG, also Maricopa County Rural 43;

HISTORY/RELATED CASES

September 22, 2008: Approval of a Major General Plan Amendment changing the land use designation to Mixed Use Community (GPMajor08-01).
November 3, 2008: a) Annexed to City (Ord. #4891).
b) Establish City of Mesa Zoning R1-43 (Z08-55)
c) Rezone to PCD to establish the Mesa Proving Grounds Community Plan (Z08-56)

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Approval with Conditions

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/REQUEST

This request is for a Major Amendment to the Eastmark Community Plan. The Eastmark Community Plan was approved by the City Council as part of zoning case Z08-56 on November 3, 2008. The community plan identifies the vision for the development of the old Mesa Proving Grounds property and establishes development standards and permitting processes.

The applicant is proposing the following amendments that specifically impact Development Unit 5 (DU 5) within the Community Plan:

1. The addition of the Regional Center/Campus Land Use Group ("LUG C") to the Land Use Budget for DU 5 and establishes the maximum allowable area for LUG C in DU5 at 80%.
2. Modification of Section 8.4C to refine the character theme for DU 5 to address the development of employment and campus type uses within DU 5.

These changes represent a change to the permitted uses within a DU and therefore are considered as a Major Amendment. The proposed changes will only impact DU 5 as approved in the Community Plan. In accordance with Section 4.2 of the CP, Major Amendments are considered and approved by the Planning Board and the City Council.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION

The applicant has completed a Citizen Participation Plan in order to inform neighboring property owners of the project, solicit feedback, and address any comments or concerns that may arise. The Citizen Participation Plan included a contact list consisting of all registered neighborhoods within ½ mile, all property owners within 1000 feet of Development Unit 5, the Gilbert and Queen Creek School Districts, Phoenix-Mesa Gateway Airport, and Boeing Corporation. Each person or entity on the contact list was sent a letter providing general information on the request with contact information and notice of the community meeting and Planning and Zoning Board Hearing date.

CONFORMANCE WITH THE GENERAL PLAN

This request is within an area designated as Mixed-Use Community on the land use map from the Mesa 2025 General Plan. The Mixed-Use Community designation identifies larger land areas where it is possible to develop a mixture of uses that will create a complete and identifiable community. Areas designated Mixed-Use Community are expected to develop with one or more village(s) and/or urban core(s) and contain an appropriate variety and mix of employment, industrial, office, retail, medical, educational, community service, tourism, entertainment, open space, recreational, and residential uses to provide a complete community atmosphere. As appropriate, uses should be integrated vertically and horizontally and provide for a variety of transportation options. The mixture of uses should create a synergy that provides for stability of the village(s) and/or urban core(s) and community and neighborhood uses defined within this designation. The uses available within this designation will be limited to prevent incompatible land uses with constraints such as close proximity to airports, aircraft operations, and freeways. Mixed Use/Community areas shall be at least 160 acres in size, shall have direct access to principal arterial streets, and be within close proximity to a freeway.

Strategies related to this land use category include:

- Encourage a broad ranges of uses;
- Provide nodes or cores as active public gathering spaces that create a sense of identity;

- Allow sufficient opportunity for flexibility in design while still meeting the overall goal;
- Provide protection against incompatible uses, for areas that might utilize this land use category but that may be within a sensitive area such as a flight path.

This request is in conformance with the proposed Mesa 2025 General Plan land use designation of Mixed-Use Community.

STAFF ANALYSIS

SUMMARY:

This request for a Major Amendment to the Eastmark Community Plan involves making modifications to the the plan as it relates to the development character of Development Unit 5 (DU 5). These modifications will allow the development of campus-style employment uses within DU 5. The approved Community Plan allows residential uses, hotel/resort uses, and urban style commercial, retail, and employment uses.

This request is responding to the evolution of the Elliot Road corridor into a manufacturing, industrial, and employment center that will attract “critical and necessary high wage employment opportunities.” In recent years the City has invested in infrastructure along Elliot Road to increase interest in the area by larger scale employers. This investment along with the recent development of the First Solar site and it’s repurposing to accommodate Apple for the manufacturing of high tech products has made the area more desirable for other employers that are looking for sites to develop larger scale campus-type facilities.

The increased interest in this area by these types of users has modified the potential development character along Elliot Road. The applicant’s request to allow the Campus Land Use Group within DU 5 will allow the facilitation of the development along the Elliot Road corridor to conform to the Gateway Strategic Development Plan, the Economic Development Strategy for the Elliot Road Corridor, and the land use plan from the General Plan.

This request does not change the development amount of non-residential square footage allowed in DU 5, but enhances the potential development options of DU 5 by allowing the possibility of these types of users in the future. The applicant has proposed the following amendments to the Community Plan within the narrative of this request:

1. Amendment to Exhibit 4.5 -Land Use Budget to allow LUG C within DU 5. The allowable percentage of LUG C is proposed to be 80%.
2. Amendment to Section 7.3 (Exhibit 7.4) to graphically reflect that LUG C is allowed within DU 5.
3. Amendment to Section 7, Exhibit 7.21 to graphically reflect that LUG C is allowed within DU 5.
4. Amendment to Section 8, 8.4 C. This change will modify the character theme for DU 5 to reflect the potential for employment uses within DU 5 in addition to the Resort Core Character.

Staff also concurs with the applicant’s justification for the amendments as stated in the narrative. The applicant states, “Development Unit 5 Characteristics DU 5 is located in a key portion of Eastmark at the northern portion of the community. This area of Eastmark was envisioned to contain urban uses, resort, golf and employment uses. Given the existence of the Phoenix Mesa Gateway Airport and the flight corridors for planes flying out of the Airport, single

family residential use was not allowed within the area 1/2 mile south of Elliot Road. In its place, employment, golf and urban uses with less sensitivity to noise were envisioned. Additionally, the CP placed a significant emphasis on the creation of an economic center in order to meet the City's goal of creating 100,000 high way jobs within the Gateway area. In fulfillment of this goal, the area is beginning to develop with employment uses (Apple) and several other important users are considering this area for development of additional employment generating uses. The existence of available infrastructure has also made this attractive to users who need electric services as well as water, sewer and transportation corridors. Eastmark has been a particularly attractive option for users given the inherent flexibility of the entitlement framework and the ability to quickly obtain permits in pursuit of the project. This flexibility and ability to quickly react to potential uses has given Mesa a distinct edge in attracting users and is precisely the manner in which the CP for Eastmark was intended to perform."

CONCLUSIONS:

The proposed Major Amendment to the Eastmark Community Plan is consistent with the goals, policies, and objectives of the General Plan, the Gateway Strategic Development Plan, and the overall vision of the existing Eastmark Community Plan. Therefore, staff is recommending approval of the Major Amendment. The original approval of the Community Plan included five conditions. Those conditions are still applicable. In order to maintain those conditions they are being attached to this Community Plan Amendment.

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

1. Compliance with the basic development as described in the project narrative and redlined Community Plan as prepared and submitted by staff and finally approved by the City Council.
2. The Planning Director is authorized and directed to correct the Community Plan for grammatical, formatting, and other errors that do not affect or change the meaning of the CP's substantive requirements or standards.
3. Compliance with the Infrastructure Master Plans as approved by the City Engineer and City Traffic Engineer.
4. Any amendment to a site plan will be determined to be major when the aggregate of minor amendments to that site plan have exceeded the criteria for a major amendment.
5. The appeal of decisions made in the approval of, or amendment to, a Community Plan, Development Unit Plan, or a Site Plan will be per the requirements set forth in the City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance.