



Planning and Zoning Board

Case Information

CASE NUMBER: GPMInor 14-012 and Z14-038 (PLN2014-00193)
LOCATION/ADDRESS: The 10600 to the 10800 blocks of East Guadalupe Road (north side).
GENERAL VICINITY: Located at the northwest corner of Signal Butte Road and Guadalupe Road.
GENERAL PLAN REQUEST: Minor General Plan Amendment to adjust the boundaries of the existing Mesa 2025 General Plan Land Use designations from MDR 6-10 to CC (20± acres)
ZONING REQUEST: Rezone from RM-2 PAD to LC, Special Use Permit and site plan for Crescent Ridge Commercial Center (20± acres)
PURPOSE: This request will allow the development of a commercial center to include one big box retail user with attached shops, a gas canopy and with two drive through restaurants and one bank pad.
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 6
OWNER: Paul Dugas, Desert Land Group, LLC
APPLICANT: Ali Fakhri, Sustainability Engineering Group
STAFF PLANNER: Lisa Davis

SITE DATA

PARCEL NUMBER(S): 304-01-976A
PARCEL SIZE: 20± acres
EXISTING ZONING: RM-2 PAD
GENERAL PLAN DESIGNATION: Medium Density Residential 6-10 du/acre (MDR 6-10)
CURRENT LAND USE: Vacant

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Continuance to July 16, 2014

P&Z BOARD RECOMMENDATION: ☒ Approval with conditions ☐ Denial

PROPOSITION 207 WAIVER SIGNED: ☒ Yes ☐ No

HISTORY/RELATED CASES

December 7, 1983: Annexed into the City of Mesa (ordinance 1752)
July 16, 1984: Comparable zoning approved from Maricopa County Rural-43 to City of Mesa AG, Z84-091
August 28, 2006: City Council approved GPMInor06-03 to revise the Mesa 2025 General Plan designation from MDR 4-6 to MDR 6-10 and for Z06-45 and for rezoning of 175± acres from AG to R1-9 PAD, R1-6 PAD and R-2 PAD, ordinance 4589, for Desert Vista Development Master Plan.

GENERAL PLAN HISTORY

Mesa 1988 General Plan: Medium Density Residential 3-5 du/ac
Mesa 1996 General Plan: Medium Density Residential 2-5 du/ac
Mesa 2025 General Plan: Medium Density Residential 6-10 du/ac

SITE CONTEXT

NORTH: Vacant- zoned RM-2PAD
EAST: (across Signal Butte Road) Vacant–13.5 acres zoned LC and a church site zoned AG
SOUTH: (across Guadalupe Road) Existing single residences – zoned RS-6PAD (Santa Rita Ranch) and vacant 12.5 acres-zoned AG, Mesa 2025 land use designation is NC and MDR 4-6
WEST: Vacant- zoned RM-2PAD

GENERAL PLAN PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This proposal includes a Minor General Plan amendment to change the land use designation for the 20± acres at the northwest corner of Signal Butte Road and Guadalupe Road. The existing General Plan land use designation for the site is Medium Density Residential 6-10 du/ac. The applicant is requesting an amendment to Community Commercial to accommodate the development of a commercial center including a Big Box user. A Big Box is defined in the General Plan as a single-story building used for the display and sale of goods and merchandise to the general public, having a gross floor area (GFA) equal to or greater than one hundred thousand square feet (100,000 sq. ft.). No more than one Big Box retail user is permitted in a single location of Community Commercial designated areas.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/ZONING AND SPECIAL USE PERMIT REQUEST

The 20± acres is zoned RM-2Pad and was part of the Desert Vista Development Master Plan. The applicant is requesting a rezone to Limited Commercial (LC), a Special Use Permit for a service station and site plan approval for development of Crescent Ridge Commercial Center. The proposed commercial center includes Fry's Marketplace, 123,000 SF, 12,040 SF of attached shops indicating 5,000 SF of restaurant space. There are three pads, pads A, B and C, and the Fry's gas canopy on the site. According the zoning ordinance, the gas canopy is indicated as a service station and requires a Special Use Permit.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION

The applicant has provided a Citizen Participation Report that summarizes outreach efforts to inform neighboring property owners of the project, solicit feedback, and address any comments or concerns that may arise. The applicant held a neighborhood meeting on May 29, 2014. The neighborhood meeting notification included all property owners within 1,000 feet, registered neighborhoods and HOAs within 1 mile of the site. There were 17 citizens in attendance at the meeting. The Citizen Participation report summarizes the concerns/comments expressed at the meeting. Primarily, the discussion surrounded impact to traffic in the area. City of Mesa will require half street improvements along Guadalupe Road and Signal Butte Road adjacent to the site at the time of development. This includes curb, gutter, sidewalk, street lights, deceleration lanes and a signal relocation to accommodate the development.

GENERAL PLAN

The purpose of the Land Use Element of the Mesa 2025 General Plan is to guide future growth and development in the City. The basic vision of the Mesa 2025 General Plan is “to provide for a prosperous and economically balanced community, to address the need for future housing and employment opportunities, and to support Mesa as a sustainable community in the 21st century.”

Chapter 2 of the General Plan speaks directly to Land Use goals, objectives and policies. This plan envisions a future development pattern that balances residential and employment oriented land uses with economic enhancement opportunities. The proposal to rezone this property to Limited Commercial (LC) expands the available uses permitted for the property in an effort to drive development.

Within the General Plan there are several goals, objectives and policies established to provide this basic vision. The goals and related objectives and policies applicable to this request are as follows:

Goal LU-1: Develop a land use pattern throughout the City that creates orderly municipal growth, achieves compatibility with surrounding communities and is consistent with the General Plan.

Objective LU-1.1: Create the most advantageous economic and environmental balance of build-out land uses based on community and regional characteristics.

Policy LU-1.1a: Continue to evaluate the appropriate mix of land uses to achieve the desired mix of residential, employment, and public uses. **Objective**

LU-1.2: Encourage urban growth in a planned, orderly manner with high quality development and sustainable urban development patterns.

Policy LU-1.2b Update the planning-related ordinances and programs to implement the General Plan and to encourage creative and innovative design in constructing subdivisions that promote both sustainability and a sense of community.

Goal LU-4: Provide for an adequate supply of commercial acreage and space that provides increasing levels of annual sales tax to the City.

Objective LU-4.2: Encourage the development of commercial type uses that support a fiscally sound community.

Policy LU-4.2b: Attract land uses that generate revenue to the City, while maintaining a balance of other community needs such as housing, open space, and public facilities.

Existing General Plan Designation:

Medium Density Residential 6-10, MDR 6-10 (6.0-10.0 du/ac)

Identifies locations where urban density detached or attached single family residential including townhouse and patio home developments is desirable. The target density for these areas is 6.5 du/ac for detached products and 8.0 du/ac for attached products. Appropriate locations offer direct collector or arterial road access, connections to potable water and sanitary sewer, and proximity to public safety services. The provision of park and open space (15 percent of net area excluding street system) is encouraged to provide opportunities for recreation and non-vehicular pedestrian connections like pathways, trails, etc. Other uses permitted in this category may include Office and limited Neighborhood Commercial of less than 10 acres, where deemed appropriate by the City.

Proposed General Plan Designation:

Community Commercial, CC

Identifies retail and service-oriented businesses that serve the larger surrounding residential trade area within a one to two mile radius. Typical users include, but are not limited to, grocery store and additional large anchored tenant shopping centers with additional drug stores, fast food chains, smaller hardware/building materials stores, convenience/gas stations, and larger restaurants/cafes. Other compatible uses include larger administrative/professional offices including medical services, finance, insurance and real estate. No more than one Big Box retail user is permitted in a single location of Community Commercial designated areas. Community Commercial areas are located on, and with direct access to an arterial.

STAFF ANALYSIS – GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

The applicant is proposing a Minor General Plan Amendment, GPMinor 14-012, to change the General Plan land use designation from Medium Density Residential 6-10, (MDR 6-10) to Community Commercial (CC). The intent is to provide a compatible land use designation for the requested zoning district.

This intersection currently has a total of 30 acres designated for commercial uses, of which only five acres is currently developed. One of the issues that has been identified in the update to the General Plan has been the over development of commercial property which has left many centers underutilized and struggling. There is sufficient commercial space at this intersection today to allow for a grocery store, which we understand is needed in this area. Currently, the closest grocery stores for this large residential area are at Baseline and Crismon and at US 60 and Signal Butte.

Given that there are other available properties at this intersection to provide the needed development, and given that we do not want to continue the practice of overbuilding commercial properties that cannot be sustained into the future, there needs to be a compelling reason to amend the General Plan to add additional commercial property at this corner.

Considering the general plan change for this property at the same time the site plan for this property and the surrounding residential property gives us the opportunity to work with the developers to create a new commercial site that is planned in way to meet today's design objectives and integrate with the newly developing residential neighborhood. If this can be done successfully, it creates a reason to consider and approve this request.

Approval of this 20 acre request for additional commercial land use will bring the total area at this intersection designated for commercial uses to 50. This is probably more commercial space than can be accommodated. Therefore, if this request is approved and built, we should expect that some of the other area designated for commercial activities will be changed to other uses.

STAFF ANALYSIS-REZONING

This request is for rezoning, site plan and Special Use Permit for a large commercial center with a big box user. Access to the site is provided primarily from the adjacent arterial streets, Signal Butte and Guadalupe Roads. At the north side of the site there is a proposed connection with the future 172± acre residential project. There is an application proposing a Minor General Plan Amendment and rezoning for the 172± acre site, Z14-037, surrounding this commercial center. The residential project, Z14-037, is scheduled to be heard by the

Planning and Zoning Board on July 16, 2014. (A copy of the latest site plan for the residential development is attached for reference. Staff is still working with the applicant on this project so the site plan may change.) Currently the vacant area surrounding the 20± site is zoned RM-2PAD as part of the Desert Vista residential project approved in 2006.

Currently at the northeast corner of Signal Butte and Guadalupe Road, across Signal Butte, is a primarily vacant LC zoned site, 20± acres, with an approved site plan for a commercial center. Five acres has developed at the most eastern portion of the site as a self-storage facility. At the southwest corner of Signal Butte Road and Guadalupe Road is a vacant 12.5 acre site currently zoned AG but indicated as Neighborhood Commercial (NC) and MDR 4-6 on the Mesa 2025 General Plan land use designation. With the added commercial designation at this corner, the southwest corner could potentially become multi-family in the future. One mile to the north at Baseline and Signal Butte, there is a large commercial development. To the south there are no commercial centers currently existing for over 5 miles.

Overall considerations

The first point of review and consideration is the big picture – is this site being uniquely designed to integrate with the residential development to provide a connection and focus for development of the neighborhood. In reviewing the opportunities on this property, staff believes the development of this property could accomplish a much better integration if the big box were located along the north property line to face Guadalupe. This would then allow for shops on the east side of the big box and street connections both to the north and west. The applicant has explained that the Fry's development requirements do not allow orientation of the store in this manner.

Given the required orientation of the store, it becomes much more challenging to develop the site to meet the desired goal of having a commercial development that integrates with the neighborhood. To try and accomplish this goal, staff has focused on the nature of the connection between the parking lot and the neighborhood and on the pedestrian connection to the front of the Fry's store. The goal with the design of the street connection with the residential neighborhood has been to have the drive aisle continue to feel and look like part of the street system to carry the residents to an activity location. The current site plan attempts to do this by limiting the connections to the parking field to the west of the drive aisle, providing a larger landscape node incorporating the pedestrian walkway, and introducing a small outdoor seating with the proposed restaurant at Pad C. In staff's opinion, this still does not successfully accomplish the overall design objective.

The pedestrian connection in front of the Fry's store provides the other opportunity to connect the commercial space with the residential neighborhood. While the connection has been shown, no significant detail is provided on either this plan or the plan for the residential development to show how this will really function. Greater detail is needed to evaluate this condition.

Specific considerations

The site is proposed to have a 123,000 SF Fry's Marketplace with 12,040 SF of shops attached to the south. Within the shops the applicant is proposing to lease approximately 5,000 SF of restaurant. An outdoor seating patio has been indicated on the most southern end of the shops. This could also serve the adjacent proposed 1,056 homes on the 172± acre project. There are three pads proposed as well as a gas canopy with 9 fuel dispensers. The gas canopy requires the Special Use Permit. Two of the pads, B and C, are indicated as

drive through and have indicated area to provide covered drive-throughs with landscape adjacent. Pad C has also incorporated an outdoor seating area.

Compliance for the site with the foundation base landscape requirements of Section 11-33-5 will be further addressed at the Design Review Application. At Pad C of the site plan, staff is concerned with the conflicts between vehicular traffic and pedestrian traffic. The driveway access from Signal Butte into the site at the south side of Pad C along with the adjacent pedestrian walkway appears to be irregular. This could cause unnecessary conflict. The dumpster is also indicated adjacent to Signal Butte Road and should be relocated to a less visible location. At the exit of the drive-through of the bank site, Pad A, should incorporate mitigation to keep vehicles from entering. Staff would suggest simply widening the planter to narrow the most western drive aisle. This would keep vehicles from trying to enter the exit drive aisles. Staff would like to work with the applicant prior to Design Review application to resolve these concerns. There will be some minor modifications to the site plan to address these issues.

The landscape plan and grading and drainage plans have not been updated to be consistent with the most recent site plan layout. These plans do indicate the intent of the design. These elements will be further reviewed through the Design Review Application.

Elevations provided are preliminary in nature and will require Design Review and approval for the overall development. The preliminary elevations do indicate the craftsman style architecture that is consistent with the proposed entry elevations for the future surrounding residential project. A portion of the proposed residential entry feature and theme wall are shown at the bottom of the elevation page. There are two identifiable entries at the building for the Fry's Marketplace. However, staff would like to see more variation in the roof line behind so that there is not such a sense of the "big box" behind. The colors depicted are monochromatic although there are a variety of materials proposed for the project. A shaded pedestrian walkway at the north side of the front elevation will also need to be investigated. These will be further reviewed as the project goes to the Design Review application.

The Fry's Marketplace is the Big Box user that will establish the overall character for the center. As part of the Design Review application, a Crescent Ridge Commercial Center design guidelines should be established. This will further reinforce the quality project and tie to the surrounding residential project that is intended with this corner. It should address architectural style, colors, materials and landscape material and layout to be utilized for the overall center.

The final part of this request is a **Special Use Permit** for the service station in the Limited Commercial zoning district.

FINDINGS

- A Special Use Permit (SUP) is required for the operation of all fueling stations manned or unmanned within the City of Mesa. This SUP would allow the operation of 9 fuel dispensers (18 pumps). The proposed fueling station is compatible with the surrounding area, which is comprised of primarily residential projects and will provide a service to those individuals living in the area.
- Approval of this project will advance the goals and objectives of and is consistent with the policies of the General Plan.
- The proposed project will not be injurious or detrimental to the adjacent or surrounding properties in the area.

CONCLUSIONS:

This intersection already has sufficient area designated for commercial activities to meet the needs of the surround neighborhoods. The request for the General Plan amendment should only be approved if the accompanying site plan demonstrates a unique, high-quality development that will help to establish a strong neighborhood identity. The site plan submitted with this request has not yet demonstrated the needed strong connections to the neighborhood or the design standards that will be used throughout the project. Therefore, staff is recommending a continuance of this case to allow the applicant to further refine this proposal to meet these objectives.

Should the Board find that the applicant has provided a site plan that sufficiently addresses the needs for this development and recommends approval of the general plan amendment, staff would recommend including the following conditions of approval to accompany the rezoning, Special Use Permit, and site plan:

CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL:

1. Compliance with the basic development as described in the project narrative and as shown on the site plan, landscape plan, and building elevations except as otherwise conditioned.
2. Compliance with all requirements of Design Review approval.
3. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.
4. All street improvements, street frontage landscaping, and perimeter theme walls to be installed with the first phase of development.
5. Revisions to site plan at Pad C and Pad A for better vehicular and pedestrian circulation as discussed in staff report. Final approval shall be required by the Planning Director prior to Design Review approval.
6. Pedestrian and vehicular connections with the residential project to the north and west shall be coordinated to ensure appropriate connections.
7. Design Guidelines for the Crescent Ridge Commercial Center architectural style, colors, materials and landscape materials and layout shall be reviewed and approved by the Planning Director prior to the approval of the Design Review approval for any portion of the site.