



Planning and Zoning Board

(PLN2017-00322)

Case Information

GENERAL PLAN CASE #: **GPMInor17-001**
ZONING CASE #: **Z17-038**
LOCATION/ADDRESS: The 4700 thru 4800 blocks of East Baseline Road (north side).
GENERAL VICINITY: Located east of Greenfield Road on the north side of Baseline Road.
GENERAL PLAN REQUEST: Minor General Plan amendment to change Character Type from Employment to Mixed Use Activity District.
ZONING REQUEST: Rezone from AG, LI, and PEP-PAD to RM-3-PAD, Site Plan Review and Preliminary Plat.
PURPOSE: This request will allow the development of a multi-residential complex.
COUNCIL DISTRICT: District 2
OWNERS: R.O.I. Properties, LLC; Baseline 2005, LLC; Crisko Baseline, LLC; Dale and Janice Gray Trust
APPLICANT: Earl, Curley & Lagarde – Stephen C. Earl
STAFF PLANNER: Kim Steadman

SITE DATA

PARCEL NUMBERS: 140-68-(006Q, 006R, 006S, 006T) and 140-68-(006U, 006W, 006V, 156)
PARCEL SIZE: 21.8± acres
EXISTING ZONING: AG, LI, and PEP-PAD
GENERAL PLAN Character area: Employment
CURRENT LAND USE: School, Vacant, Agriculture & Industrial

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Adoption of the Minor General Character Amendment Approval with conditions for the Rezone and Site Plan
P&Z BOARD RECOMMENDATION: ☒ Adoption. ☐ Denial
WAIVER SIGNED: ☒ Yes ☐ No

SITE CONTEXT

NORTH:	Existing agricultural use	– Zoned LI-PAD
EAST:	Existing employment use	– Zoned PEP-PAD
SOUTH:	(Across Baseline Road) Existing single-residential	– Zoned SF-7 in Gilbert
WEST:	Existing single-residential and agricultural use	– Zoned AG

GENERAL PLAN HISTORY

1971 General Plan: General Plan designation: **Agriculture/Vacant**
1982 General Plan: General Plan designation: **Lower Density Residential (5 du/ac)**
1988 General Plan: General Plan designation: **Commerce Park**
1996 General Plan: General Plan designation: **Commerce Park**
2002 General Plan: General Plan designation: **Business Park**
Mesa 2040: Character Area: **Employment**

ZONING HISTORY/RELATED CASES

June 16, 1982: Annexed into the City. (Ord. #1599)
February 22, 1983: Establish City zoning from County Rural-43 to Agricultural (AG) (Z83-010)
February 18, 1986: Rezone (easternmost parcel) to General Industrial (M-1) for a contractor's yard. (Z86-004)
December 7, 1987: Rezone most of this site, westward to the canal, to Conceptual M-1 for an industrial park. (Z87-077)
July 12, 2006: Rezone to M-1 PAD & C-2 & pre-plat approval. This included the east half of this site. (Z06-047)

PROJECT DESCRIPTION/REQUEST

This site is located on Baseline Road, east of Greenfield Road. The applicant proposes a 344-unit multi-residential development on 21.8 acres. The first request is a Minor General Plan amendment to change the Character Type from Employment to Mixed Use Activity District. In addition, the applicant requests rezoning from AG, LI, and PEP-PAD to RM-3-PAD, Site Plan Review and Preliminary Plat. The PAD overlay is requested to allow deviations from development standards.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION

The applicant has enacted a Citizen Participation Plan for this project, holding a neighborhood meeting on July 5, 2017. Invitations (dated 6-15-17) were mailed to Property owners within 500', and HOAs and Registered Neighborhoods within a mile; five neighbors attended the meeting. The applicant's report lists questions raised and answers provided. An additional mailing (dated 6-30-17) went out to property owners between 500' and 1,000' from the site. They were offered a personal opportunity to hear and discuss details of the project. No one accepted that offer. Staff has not been contacted by the Public in regard to this project.

STAFF ANALYSIS

MINOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT - CONFORMANCE WITH THE MESA 2040 GENERAL PLAN

This is a request to change the General Plan Character Area from "Employment" to a character area that is suitable to multi-residential use.

Existing and Proposed General Plan Designations:

This site is currently within the Character Type of "Employment" as identified on the Character Area map in the Mesa 2040 General Plan (P.7-3). Residential uses are not appropriate in this Character Area, except in an urban setting where a mix of uses are fully integrated. The current proposal for a stand-alone, gated residential use does not fit that description.

Existing Employment Development to the East

The subject parcels front Baseline Road, just west of other employment developments. While it seems reasonable to continue this development pattern, adding to the employment district, existing conditions west of the subject site can be seen as impeding the full buildout of this Employment District.



Existing Residential & Employment Development to the West

The southwest corner of the existing Employment district (just west of the subject site) includes a quasi-agricultural neighborhood of five “ranchettes”. These are residential uses on large lots zoned AG. This long-standing agricultural/residential use predates the General Plan, and conforms to neither the Employment or the MUAD character types. West of this neighborhood the Employment district picks up again, with employment uses on both sides of Inverness Avenue, finally transitioning into the Mixed-Use Activity District at Greenfield Road. In function, these existing Employment uses along Inverness Avenue, already contribute to the mix of uses in the MUAD.

Proposed: Expanding the “MIXED USE ACTIVITY DISTRICT”

The applicant proposes adding the subject property to the adjacent Mixed-Use Activity District (MUAD). The General Plan identifies multi-residential uses as appropriate to the mix of uses in MUADs. The proposed apartment complex provides auto/pedestrian connections at the entry gates on both the north and south ends of the site, allowing circulation to surrounding uses. The north entry to the development (on the future Banner Gateway Drive) is adjacent to the remaining undeveloped land in the Employment District, and connects residents to the MUAD to the west, and the hospital to the east. This encourages access to, and integration of uses.

General Plan GUIDING PRINCIPLES, POLICIES and CHARACTER AREAS:

The General Plan establishes three guiding principles that form the heart of the Plan. (P. 3-7) The goals and related policies and strategies which are applicable to the consideration of this request are:

Guiding Principle:

- **Housing:** Create and maintain a variety of great neighborhoods
 - **Housing P-1:** Encourage a range of housing options in all areas of the city in order to allow people to stay in their neighborhood as their housing needs change. (P.4-8)
 - **This proposal adds multi-residential housing to the mix of housing options.**

Guiding Principle:

- **Jobs:** Grow and maintain diverse and stable jobs.
 - **Economic Development P1:** “Preserve designated commercial and industrial areas for future job growth.” (P.5-15)
 - **This site is located in the “Superstition Freeway – East” Major Employment Activity Area. Identified employment types for this area are “...advanced business services, healthcare services and retail industry clusters.” (P.5-11)**
 - **Providing “workforce housing” adjacent to large employers can be seen as supportive of adjacent employment centers.**
 - **The Economic Development Office has expressed no concerns with this proposal.**

Guiding Principle:

- **Public Spaces:** Provide rich public spaces to bring the community together in a variety of settings.
 - **Public Spaces P2:** Design of neighborhoods, neighborhood village centers, mixed use activity districts, downtown, and transit districts should consider and include the development of a variety of public gathering places appropriate for the scale and location of the development. (P.6-8)
 - **The public realm is not the focus of this project. It does, however, provide well designed community spaces and amenities within.**
 - **As an element of the existing Mixed Use Activity District to the west, this project is responsible for providing connectivity to the rest of the district, as well as to the employment areas to the north and east. The proposed design highlights pedestrian paths within the site, and through the perimeter security wall, and provides enhanced perimeter walls that will improve the pedestrian experience, with view windows into landscaped activity areas fronting the public street.**

Proposed Character Type:

- **Mixed Use Activity District:** Areas of activity, generally larger than 25 acres that serve the larger community; primarily retail areas and entertainment centers, but often also include offices, multi-residential, and other supporting uses.
- **Sub Type: “Community-Scale Districts” - Forms and Guidelines: (P.7-18)**
 - Building heights typically ranging from one to three stories
 - **Most buildings are proposed at three stories, with some additional two-story and single-story buildings.**
 - Usually more suburban in design and form with auto dominant characteristics, but more urban forms that balance autos with pedestrians are encouraged for new development and redevelopment.
 - **Each street frontage has two, covered pedestrian access porticos.**
 - Building and parking fields should be located on the property to establish a connection to the street and promote walkability between buildings.
 - **A network of pedestrian paths encourages walkability throughout the site.**

- Size and scale of parking fields is broken up to improve visual appearance, reduce heat islands, and improve walkability.
 - **Parking is distributed throughout the site, minimizing its impact.**
- Highest densities and intensities when in conjunction with transit district.
 - **N/A. This is outside the transit district at Greenfield Road and the US 60.**

Conclusion:

The protection of employment areas is a strong emphasis of the General Plan. The lead-in statement of Chapter 5 of the Plan states: “The future of the City of Mesa is tied to its ability to continue to secure and maintain a stable and diverse employment base.” This proposal would transfer Employment lands into a MUAD, providing higher-density housing that will serve both the MUAD and the Employment District. The presence of large-lot residential uses already compromises the southwest corner of the Employment District. An approach that changes the focus of this area to MUAD gives a path forward if the existing ranchettes redevelop in the future.

The MUAD character type focuses on commercial and office uses, but includes higher-density residential, entertainment, and employment uses to create a vibrant and active area. Expanding the MUAD area closer to the Employment area places emphasis on strengthening the existing MUAD, while providing supporting uses that serve the Employment District as well.

Staff recommends adoption of the Minor General Plan amendment, which is supportable by the policy directions approved through The Mesa 2040 General Plan. The proposed land use not only allows for a variety of uses contributing to the Mixed-Use Activity District but also creates a transitional land use between the MUA District to the west, and the Employment District to the east and north.

REZONING, SITE PLAN REVIEW AND PRELIMINARY PLAT– CONFORMANCE WITH THE ZONING ORDINANCE AND SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS

Rezoning History:

When this land was annexed it was assigned comparative zoning of Agriculture (AG). Over the years, as parcels have been rezoned or developed, they have followed the Employment District pattern, rezoning to LI and PEP-PAD zoning on most of the land. A narrow strip of AG zoning remains along the western boundary, abutting the existing residential properties to the west.

Proposed Zoning:

The applicant proposes RM-3-PAD zoning to accommodate 344 multi-residential units on 21.8± net acres. This is a density of 16 dwelling units per acre, which falls within the RM-3 density range of 16-20 du/ac. The proposed building height of 38'± is below the RM-3 cap of 40'.

PLANNED AREA DEVELOPMENT(PAD) Overlay:

The applicant's request for a PAD overlay will allow for deviation from development standards in these specific areas:

- **Parking:** The Zoning Ordinance requires multi-residential developments to provide 2.1 parking spaces per dwelling unit. This is intended to meet the needs of residents and visitors. 723 parking spaces are required for this 344-unit development. The applicant proposes 718 spaces,

or 2.087 spaces per unit, a reduction of 5 parking spaces. The applicant states that in its years of experience with the apartment market, a parking ratio of 1.8 to 1.9 spaces per unit has repeatedly proven to be ideal.

- Parking plan: The parking area design does not meet Code requirement of 24'-wide landscape islands between parking canopies. The site design provides an alternative solution. Rather than long parking canopies (Code allows 15 covered spaces in a row) separated by 24'-wide landscape islands, the applicant has provided shorter runs of covered parking separated by standard-width landscape islands. The resulting design will meet the intent of the code by providing landscaping relief from long runs of parking canopies.
- Entrances facing the Street: Ch.11-5-5(D)3b of the Zoning Ordinance requires that "All units located along public rights-of-way must have the primary building entrance or individual unit entrances facing this right-of-way." The intent is to provide neighborhoods that engage the street, encouraging pedestrian activity. The design of the applicant's product does not lend itself easily to this standard. In exchange, two pedestrian gates within the covered portico entries have been added at the north and south of the development providing pedestrian access.
- Fence Height: The applicant proposes 8' tall perimeter fencing. Code limits residential fences to 6'. This setting, however, transitions between employment uses to the east and single-residential uses to the west. The taller fences help transition between these various uses.
- Setback from street: The required setback from the Banner Gateway Drive property line is 20'. The applicant proposes 8' tall perimeter walls (with portions of view fencing) that encroach into that setback at various points. Staff supports this encroachment, in an effort to engage the development with the street, creating a more pedestrian-friendly experience along that portion of the street. Similar fence encroachments are proposed into the 30' required setback from the Baseline Road property line.

Per Ch. 22 of the Zoning Ordinance, a PAD should allow the applicant flexibility in exchange for creative, high-quality development. Each of the above deviations from code is justified by a design or functional need, and balanced by alternative methods of meeting the intent of Code. The proposal incorporates "well-designed and integrated open space and recreation facilities" (Ch. 11-22-1.A), and the design documents reflect a high level of quality. The project will also need Design Review approval. This will also assure the quality of the project. Staff also recommends that multi-residential developments participate in the Tri-Star Program, through Mesa Police. It is a "cooperative effort to foster a safer community in rental properties."

Site Plan:

Auto and pedestrian access to the multi-residential development is through covered entry porticos located at the north and south of the property. The site is organized around a multi-element amenity core including a club house, pool, dog park, tot lot and multiple BBQ ramadas. Three-story and two-story residential buildings surround this area. This central core is surrounded by parking and drive aisles. Additional three-story buildings line each street front, north and south. Additional BBQ ramadas in the landscaped yards closer to the street fronts allow active uses away from the central core and provide active uses near the street front.

The east and west sides of the property observe the required 20' landscape buffer, and 20' building setback for single-story buildings. The required transition from the proposed three-story buildings to the existing adjacent uses (single-residential properties to the west, employment uses to the east) is exceeded by doubling the required 45' setback (for three-story buildings) to approximately 90'.

The proposed project meets all review criteria for Site Plan Review from Chapter 69 of the Zoning Ordinance (Section 11-69-5).

Preliminary Plat:

This application includes a Preliminary Plat that will join the existing parcels into a single-lot subdivision. All approved preliminary plats are subject to potential modification through the Subdivision Technical Review process to meet City codes and requirements, including but not limited to, all ADA requirements.

Conclusion:

The General Plan amendment will add this multi-residential use to the mix of uses within the MUAD, while providing higher-density housing near the existing Employment District. Rather than providing a single entry from Baseline Road, the site plan adds an entry from Banner Gateway Drive, integrating this residential use with the adjacent Employment District, and the MUAD to the west. The campus-like design of this development will integrate well with the campus design of the existing hospital, and possible future business-park development to the north, across Banner Gateway Drive.

Well-designed buildings and extensive usable open space within the development make this a desirable living option. Staff recommends adoption of the Minor General Plan Amendment and approval of the rezoning, site plan, and preliminary plat with the following conditions.

Conditions of Approval:

1. Compliance with the basic development as described in the project narrative and as shown on the site plan, landscape plan, building elevations, and preliminary plat (without guarantee of lot yield, building count, or lot coverage).
2. Compliance with all requirements of the Subdivision Regulations.
3. Dedication of right-of-way required under the Mesa City Code at the time of application for a building permit, at the time of recordation of the subdivision plat, or at the time of the City's request for dedication, whichever comes first.
4. All street improvements to be installed with the first phase of development.
5. Design Review approval.
6. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations.