



**PLANNING DIVISION  
STAFF REPORT**

**Planning and Zoning Board**

**November 13, 2024**

CASE No.: **ZON23-01003**

PROJECT NAME: **Carmello by Blandford Homes**

Owner's Name:	Colleen Horcher Trust
Applicant's Name:	Pew and Lake PLC
Location of Request:	30± acres at the southeast corner of North Hawes Road and East McDowell Road.
Parcel No(s):	219-31-028F
Request:	Rezone from Agricultural (AG) to Single Residence 15 with a Planned Area Development Overlay (RS-15-PAD) and preliminary plat approval for a Single Residence Subdivision.
Existing Zoning District:	Agricultural (AG)
Proposed Zoning District:	RS-15-PAD
Council District:	5
Site Size:	30± acres
Proposed Use(s):	Single-Family Residential
Existing Use(s):	Vacant
Hearing Date(s):	November 13, 2024 / 4:00 p.m.
Staff Planner:	Josh Grandlienard, Senior Planner
Staff Recommendation:	APPROVAL with Conditions

**HISTORY**

On **December 11, 2023**, the applicant applied to annex the property into the City of Mesa (Case No. ANX23-01004). Currently, the project site is zoned Single Family Residential-35 (R1-35) in Maricopa County, which is comparable to the City of Mesa Single Residence-35 (RS-35) zoning designation. The planned annexation, if approved, will assign a zoning designation of Agricultural (AG) to the property, which is a less intense zoning district designation than the existing Maricopa County zoning. The request for annexation will be considered on the same City Council agenda as the subject request.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

### **Background:**

The applicant is requesting to rezone the 30± acre subject site from AG to RS-15-PAD to allow for the development of a single residence subdivision (Proposed Project). The subdivision will be located in the Desert Uplands area. The applicant is proposing a 65-lot single residence subdivision. The primary access to the site will be from McDowell Road with only emergency access provided from Hawes Road for fire access.

The proposed preliminary plat shows that 90% of the proposed 65 lots do not back onto another lot adding additional space for natural desert open space. The proposed subdivision has a variety of lot sizes ranging from 10,476 square feet to 22,619 square feet distributed throughout the development with a mixture of possible style proposed based on the residential product provided with this application. The applicant is providing a total of 6.2± acres of revegetated open space to meet the requirements of the natural open space requirements of the Desert Uplands Development Standards, which equates to approximately 22% of the area proposed will remain as natural open space. The proposed subdivision also includes private streets to be maintained by the Neighborhood Association which all proposed lots front. The proposed subdivision's natural open space and private road system is consistent with other existing neighborhoods within the Desert Uplands sub-area.

### **General Plan Character Area Designation and Goals:**

The General Plan Character area designation on the property is Neighborhood with a Large Lot/Rural Sub-type within the Desert Uplands area. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, the primary focus of the Neighborhood Character Type is to provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their surrounding community. The Large Lot/Rural Sub-type within the Desert Uplands area a low-density residential area committed to preservation of a natural desert landscape. The character type in this area can have either large lots with preservation on each lot, or smaller lots with common open space to maintain the low-density character of the area. Low lighting levels are used in this area to preserve a dark sky at night. Per the 2040 General Plan, the Desert Uplands allows for RS-15-PAD as a secondary zoning district, which means that at least 55% of the development area surrounding the proposed use will need to be within a primary zoning district. The sites to the north, west, and east are all zoned RS-35-PAD, which is a primary zoning district, the proposed secondary district percentage requirements have been met per the 2040 General Plan.

Staff reviewed the request and determined it is consistent with the criteria for review outlined in Chapter 15 (pg. 15-1) of the Mesa 2040 General Plan. Per Chapter 7 of the General Plan, the RS-15 District is listed as a secondary zoning category within the Large Lot/Rural Sub-type. Overall, the requested rezoning is consistent with the intent of the Neighborhood Character Area.

### **Zoning District Designations:**

The applicant is requesting to rezone the project site from AG to RS-15-PAD. Per Section 11-5-1 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance (MZO), the purpose of the Single Residence zoning district is to

provide areas for single residence housing, and RS-15 provides housing at densities of up to 2.9 dwelling units per acre with a PAD. Single Residence is permitted within the RS-15 district.

**Surrounding Zoning Designations and Existing Use Activity:**

<b>Northwest</b> (Across McDowell Road) Maricopa County R1-35 Single Residence	<b>North</b> (Across McDowell Road) Maricopa County R1-35 Single Residence	<b>Northeast</b> (Across McDowell Road) Maricopa County R1-35 Single Residence
<b>West</b> (Across Hawes Road) Maricopa County R1-35 Single Residence	<b>Project Site</b> NC Vacant	<b>East</b> (Across Waterbury Road) Maricopa R1-35/ RS-35-PAD Single Residence
<b>Southwest</b> (Across Hawes Road) Maricopa County R1-18 Single Residence	<b>South</b> (Across Culver Street) Maricopa County R1-18 Single Residence	<b>Southeast</b> (Across Culver Street) Maricopa County R1-18 Single Residence

**Compatibility with Surrounding Land Uses:**

The project site is adjacent to properties zoned and developed as single residences to the east, north, west, and south. The proposed rezoning of the property will not be out of character with the surrounding development.

**PAD Overlay Modification – MZO Article 3, Chapter 22:**

Per Section 11-22 of the MZO, the purpose of the PAD overlay is to allow innovative design and flexibility that creates high-quality development for the site where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development provides equivalent or superior standards. Table 1 below shows the MZO required standards, the modified standards approved under the existing PAD, and the applicant’s proposed PAD standards.

Table 1: Development Standards

<b>Development Standards</b>	<b>MZO Required</b>	<b>PAD Proposed</b>	<b>Staff Recommendation</b>
<u>Lot Frontage on a Public Street</u> – <i>MZO Section 11-30-6(H)</i>	Each lot shall have frontage on a dedicated public street	<b>Each lot shall have frontage on a private street</b>	As proposed
<u>Maximum Lot Coverage (% of Lot)</u> <i>MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1</i>	50%	<b>55%</b>	As proposed
<u>Maximum Building Coverage (% of Lot)</u> <i>MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1</i>	40%	<b>55%</b>	As Proposed

<u>Minimum Lot Area –</u> <i>MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1</i>	15,000 square feet	<b>10,400 square feet</b>	As proposed
<u>Minimum Lot Width –</u> <i>MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1</i>	110 feet	<b>75 feet</b>	As proposed
<u>Building setbacks</u> <u>(Minimum Yards) –</u> <i>MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1</i>	<p>Front (enclosed livable, porches and Porte Cocheres) – 22 feet</p> <p>Garages and Carports – front and side yards – 30 feet</p> <p>Street side – 10 feet</p> <p>Interior side: Minimum aggregate - 20 feet</p> <p>Rear – 30 feet</p> <p>Rear (porches and patios) – 30 feet</p>	<p><b>Front (enclosed livable, porches and Porte Cocheres) – 12 feet</b></p> <p><b>Garages and Carports Front Yard – 20 feet</b></p> <p><b>Garages and Carports Side Yard– 12 feet</b></p> <p><b>Street side – 7 feet only when adjacent to minimum 8-foot-wide landscape tract</b></p> <p><b>Interior side: Minimum aggregate – 15 feet</b></p> <p><b>Rear – 20 feet</b></p> <p><b>Rear (porches and patios) – 15 feet</b></p>	As proposed
<u>Minimum Enclosed Garage Dimensions –</u> <i>MZO Section 11-32-4(F)(2)</i>	A double-car garage shall be at least 20 feet wide and 22 feet long	<b>For plots 2342, 2568 and 3177, a double-car garage shall be at least 20 feet wide and 19 feet long</b>	As proposed
<u>Maximum Wall Height –</u> <i>MZO Section 11-30-4(A)(1)(b)</i>	6 feet	<b>8 feet at grade, 10 feet if a 6 foot wall is on top of a retaining wall.</b>	As proposed

<u>Elevation Material Calculations –</u> <i>MZO Section 11-5-3(B)(7)</i>	Buildings must contain at least 2 kinds of primary exterior materials.	<b>For Spanish Elevations only, buildings may contain less than two primary exterior materials.</b>	As proposed
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Lot Frontage on a Public Street:

Per Section 11-30-6(H) of the MZO, every lot shall have frontage on a dedicated public street unless the lot is part of an approved Planned Area Development (PAD). Through the PAD, the applicant is requesting private streets that will comply with City of Mesa Fire, Solid Waste, and Transportation Department standards and requirements.

Lot and Building Coverage:

Per Table 11-5-3.A.1 of the MZO, the maximum lot coverage in the RS-15 zoning district is 50% and the maximum building coverage is 40%. The applicant is requesting to increase both the lot and building coverage to 55% percent in order to allow for the proposed single residences to be built on the reduced lot size.

The applicant is providing for a higher quality product that where the proposed lot and building coverage would allow for larger homes to be built within the proposed neighborhood.

Building Setbacks:

Per Table 11-5-3.A.1 of the MZO, the minimum building setbacks in the RS-15 zoning district are 22 feet for the front setback to livable areas, porches and porte cocheres, 30 feet for garages in the front and side yards, 10 feet for the street side setback, 7 feet for the minimum interior side yard setback, 20 feet for the aggregate side interior setback, and 30 feet for the rear setback. Per the proposed subdivision, the applicant is providing for 12 front setback to livable areas porches and porte cocheres, 20 feet for garages that are front facing and 12 feet for side facing garages, 7 feet for the street side setback, 7 feet for the minimum interior side yard setback, 20 feet for the aggregate side interior setback, with perimeter lots requiring a minimum of 15 foot side yard and an aggregate of 30 feet, and 20 feet for the rear setback.

According to the applicant, the proposed setback reduction is to allow the development to meet the intent of the Desert Uplands area by providing for smaller lots that provide for more natural desert open space, as well as being able to provide for quality open space and home design features.

Lot Size Requirements (lot area and width):

Per Table 11-5-3.A.1 of the MZO, the minimum lot area for an RS-15 zoned property is 15,000 square feet, with a minimum lot width of 110 feet and a minimum depth of 120 feet. The applicant is proposing a reduction of the minimum lot area to 10,400 square feet, a reduction of the minimum lot width to 75 feet and a minimum lot depth of 140 feet.

According to the applicant, the proposed lot size reduction is to allow the development to meet the intent of the Desert Uplands area by providing for smaller lots that provide for more natural desert open space, as well as being able to provide for quality open space and home design features. The applicant also proposes landscape areas behind 90% of the proposed lots, thus creating the feeling of increased setbacks that utilize the natural open space areas.

Minimum Garage Dimensions:

Per Section 11-32-4(F)(2) of the MZO, the minimum garage size is 22 feet wide by 20 feet deep for a two car garage. The applicant is requesting to reduce the minimum garage dimensions to 22 feet in width and 19 feet in depth. The garage depth reduction would only apply to plot plans 2342, 2568 and 3177.

This deviation would allow for the applicant to provide for higher quality materials and designs for each individual home, while also giving homeowners the flexibility to fit their needs. This will allow the applicant to be consistent with their proposed floor plans and provide anyone interested in buying a lot an option of 45 different floor plans.

Maximum Wall Height:

Per Section 11-30-4(A)(1)(b) of the MZO, the maximum wall height in residential districts is 6 feet. The applicant states that the proposed wall will allow for additional buffer and privacy for the lot adjacent to the existing roadways to provide additional screening to the adjacent neighbors. Based on comments received during the neighborhood participation process, the applicant received a number of comments with concerns about the proposed impacts of the neighborhood and the increase wall height was a request from the neighborhood at multiple neighborhood meetings throughout the development process.

Elevation Material Calculations:

Per Section 11-5-3(B)(7) of the MZO, for single residence structures, buildings must contain at least two kinds of primary exterior materials and any one material must be used on at least 15% of the front façade. The applicant is requesting the Spanish elevation to provide one material.

The applicant is proposing additional architectural elements be included with the Spanish elevation, which will provide additional depth and articulation, meeting the intent of this code section.

Justification:

The applicant's justification for the requested deviations is providing a well-designed and integrated open space located within the center of the development as well as increased natural desert open space areas throughout the site. The development is also providing enhanced amenities for the development to serve multiple age groups that could live in the community. Additionally, the applicant is proposing 45 different floor plans and elevation choices for the 65 lot subdivision. The proposed project, Carmello, provides a high-quality design that is consistent with the surrounding community and the General Plan designation of Neighborhood within the Desert Uplands.

Overall, staff believe that the Project meets the standards of Section 11-22.

**Preliminary Plat:**

Section 9-6-2 of the Mesa Subdivision Standards requires approval of all subdivision plats located in the City to be processed through four progressive stages. Review and approval of a Preliminary Plat is the second stage in the series of progressive stages. This review includes the evaluation of the overall site, including utilities layout, and retention requirements. The Preliminary Plat is reviewed and approved by the Planning and Zoning Board. Per Section 9-6-2 of the City's subdivision regulations, all plats are subject to Final Plat approval through the City Council.

The proposed development is located within the Desert Uplands, an area within the City with unique subdivision regulations which preserve the natural desert landscape. Preservation can be achieved by keeping a certain percentage of each lot in its natural desert condition, or by creating smaller clusters of lots that maintain a significant area in its natural state. The required percentage of preservation, also known as the maximum building envelope, is determined by the total Natural Area Open Space (NAOS) provided for the entire subdivision. Per the submitted preliminary plat, 22% of the subdivision's total area will be maintained as NAOS.

The preliminary plat shows a minimum lot size of 10,400 square feet with an overall density of 2.27 units per acre. The applicant is proposing to create a landscape tract that will be planted to the Desert Uplands standards using the preferred Desert Uplands plant list, as verified per their proposed landscape plan, identified in Section 9-6-5 of Subdivision Regulations. This landscaping will help to buffer and reduce the impact of Hawes Road with landscape areas along McDowell the north, and western boundaries of the site, while maintaining a landscape area to the south and east along Waterbury Road and Culver Street. This landscape area includes an increased landscape buffer larger than the city requirements with a significant amount of trees located on the western boundary against Hawes Road as well as additional tree plantings along McDowell Road to provide for additional screening for the neighborhood from the neighboring property owners. The applicant has also provided for an enhanced entry with enhanced paving to create a sense of arrival when you enter the community.

The proposed RS-15-PAD zoning and preliminary plat comply with the Desert Uplands requirements in Section 9-6-5 by providing a large natural desert area on the west side of the proposed development while also providing for tracts throughout the development for additional preservation of natural desert space.

**Neighborhood Participation Plan and Public Comments:**

As part of the completed Citizen Participation Process, the applicant mailed notification letters to property owners within 1,000 feet of the site, Homeowner Associations (HOAs) within ½ mile of the site, registered neighborhoods within one mile of the site and conducted two neighborhood meetings on January 30, 2024 and April 4, 2024.

During the neighborhood meeting process as well as throughout the public comment period, surrounding property owners expressed concerns with number of lots and overall density of the

project. The applicant addressed the concerns of the neighbors by reducing the number of lots from 81 to 65 with an associated reduction in density from 2.83 to 2.27 dwelling units per acre. The applicant also increased the lot sizes of the lots which back onto McDowell and Waterbury Roads to have larger lots on the respective street frontages. The applicant has also restricted the homes located along Waterbury Road to a single-story. The neighbors also expressed concerns with a secondary location located on Hawes Road, which has been removed from the proposed design.

Staff will provide the Board with any new information during the scheduled Study Session on November 13, 2024.

**School Impact Analysis:**

City of Mesa staff provided project information to Mesa Public Schools and requested information on the anticipated impacts of the project and capacity of local schools. As of writing this report, staff has not received any comments Mesa Public Schools.

**Staff Recommendation:**

Staff finds the subject request is consistent with the Mesa 2040 General Plan, the review criteria for Site Plan Review outlined in Section 11-69-5 of the MZO, the review criteria for a Planned Area Development Overlay outlined in Section 11-22-3(B) of the MZO, and preliminary plat approval as outlined in Section 9-6-2.

Staff recommends approval with the following **Conditions of Approval:**

1. Compliance with the Preliminary Plat submitted.
2. Compliance with the Subdivision Regulations.
3. Dedicate the right-of-way and easements required under the Mesa City Code at the time of application for any building permit, at the time of recordation of a subdivision plat, or at the time of the City's request for dedication, whichever comes first.
4. Prior to the issuance of a building permit, obtain approval of and record a final subdivision plat for the subject parcels.
5. Prior to issuance of a building permit, obtain approval of an Administrative Review for product approval of the proposed homes.
6. Compliance with all City development codes and regulations, including the Desert Uplands Development Standards, except the modifications to the development standards as approved with this PAD and shown in the following table:

<b>Development Standards</b>	<b>Approved</b>
<u>Lot Frontage on a Public Street –</u> <i>MZO Section 11-30-6(H)</i>	Each lot shall have frontage on a private street
<u>Maximum Lot Coverage (% of Lot)</u> <i>MZO Section 11-5-3(A)(1)</i>	55%



<u>Maximum Building Coverage (% of Lot)</u> <i>MZO Section 11-5-3(A)(1)</i>	55%
<u>Minimum Lot Area –</u> <i>MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1</i>	10,400 square feet
<u>Minimum Lot Width –</u> <i>MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1</i>	75 feet
<u>Building setbacks (Minimum Yards) –</u> <i>MZO Table 11-5-3.A.1</i>	<p>Front (enclosed livable, porches and Porte Cocheres) – 12 feet</p> <p>Garages and Carports Front Yard – 20 feet</p> <p>Garages and Carports Side Yard – 12 feet</p> <p>Street side – 7 feet only when adjacent to minimum 8-foot-wide landscape tract</p> <p>Interior side: Minimum aggregate – 15 feet</p> <p>Rear – 20 feet</p> <p>Rear (porches and patios) – 15 feet</p>
<u>Minimum Garage Dimensions –</u> <i>MZO Section 11-32-4(F)(2)</i>	For plots 2342, 2568 and 3177, a double-car garage shall be at least 20 feet wide and 19 feet long
<u>Maximum Wall Height –</u> <i>MZO Section 11-30-4(A)(1)(b)</i>	8 feet at grade, 10 feet if a 6 foot wall is on top of a retaining wall.
<u>Elevation Material Calculations –</u> <i>MZO Section 11-5-5(B)(5)(b)</i>	For Spanish Elevations only, buildings may contain less than two primary exterior materials.

**Exhibits:**

- Exhibit 1 – Staff Report
- Exhibit 2 – Vicinity Map
- Exhibit 3 – Project Narrative
- Exhibit 4 – Preliminary Plat
- Exhibit 5 – Landscape Plan

Exhibit 6 – Grading and Drainage Report  
Exhibit 7 – Citizen Participation Plan  
Exhibit 8 – Citizen Participation Report  
Exhibit 9 – Power Point Presentation