

The Cottages on Sossaman

Submitted by:

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On behalf of:

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Request

This application includes a request to rezone property from Limited Commercial (LC) to Multiple Residence (RM-2) with a PAD overlay along with a Site Plan Review to allow for a new residential community called The Cottages on Sossaman.

Approval of this request will allow the development of a 37-unit residential community. The developer has worked diligently to create a site plan that works within the tight constraints of an infill lot to best utilize the property and create a dynamic addition to the surrounding community. The development will be an improvement to the area and will provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their home and neighborhood.

Project Location

The subject property is approximately 2.75 gross acres located on Sossaman Road, approximately 545 feet north of the NWC of Main Street and Sossaman Road (the "Property"). See Aerial Map at **Tab 1**. The property is vacant land.

To the north of the property is a storage facility zoned LC. To the south and west is a shopping center, which is mostly vacant, zoned LC. To the east is a residential subdivision zoned R1-10.

Current Zoning & Infill Opportunity

The project site is designated in the City of Mesa General Plan as Neighborhood, which, according to the General Plan, is intended to "provide safe places for people to live where they can feel secure and enjoy their surrounding community" and "can contain a wide range of housing options." This proposal is consistent with the Mesa General Plan.

The Property is also within a Mixed-Use Activity District character area. Though this district is intended for large format commercial, these areas may take on a significant residential character with the redevelopment of shopping centers, so long as the residential component is a secondary use. This proposal conforms with the intent of the character area designation as the residential use will be secondary to the established commercial center to the immediate south. See General Plan and Zoning Map at **Tab 2**.

The Property is an infill lot on older LC property that is clearly a forgotten remnant. It appears to be a neglected part of the shopping center as it is located to the rear of the retail storefronts and never developed with the rest of the shopping center. It is possible it may have once been considered a part of the shopping center to the north although that eventually developed with self-storage buildings and a fence along the common property line, effectively blocking off any opportunity for future expansion. Because the property is hidden behind a shopping center without visibility to Main Street, it is highly unlikely to ever develop with commercial uses. Thus, a change in zoning to residential is appropriate.

The platted residential subdivision to the north and east were built in 1975 and general upkeep of the area is not reflective of the high-quality design standards Mesa expects today. Recognizing the infill nature of the site and quality of the homes that surround it, Sossaman Villas proposes a new residential community that makes meaningful use of this challenging infill site. Additionally, the high-quality architecture will raise the bar for housing in this area and will strengthen nearby home values.

Infill development is always challenging because there are often factors that negatively affect vacant land and make it difficult to develop. In addition, infill development tries to consider the surrounding area while recognizing that creating an identical development or zoning pattern is often not possible. As a result, good planning principles try to find a way to make meaningful development, including a change in zoning or other modifications, that encourage infill development with minimal impacts. In order for infill development to be feasible at this location, this application requests a change in zoning to RM-2 with a PAD overlay.

The purpose of a PAD District is to permit flexibility in the application of zoning standards and requirements where it can be demonstrated that the proposed development provides equivalent or superior standards in a creative way to meet the intent of the underlying zoning district and general plan.

City staff recognizes that a change in zoning and additional flexibility is warranted in situations like this because of the unusual circumstances affecting infill development and this particular property. Thus, the City of Mesa has generally been supportive of multiple residence rezoning for unique sites like this. Through this change in zoning the Property can be put to productive use in a manner that is complementary with the mix of commercial and residential uses in the surrounding area.

Development Proposal

Site Plan

The development plan has been designed to fully utilize the unique infill Property while dedicating areas for open space and resident amenities. The proposal includes 37 cottages with common open space amenities including a pool, ramada, barbeque facilities, pickle ball court, and lawn. Architecture, design, and theming of the community will meet and exceed the standards established by the nearby townhome community to the north. The project will have two access points on Sossaman Road. Landscaped setbacks along the streetscape will improve street aesthetics.

Housing Product

Homes will include between approximately 1,008 and 1,062 livable square feet and will feature two stories, a rear yard and covered front porch, and a carport. There will be four different elevations and two different floor plans offered in the community. The elevations will include

distinctive exterior materials, roof lines, fenestration, and façade articulation. The units will be connected via the adjoining carport canopy.

New Quality Development Design Guidelines

The homebuilder has studied the Quality Development Design Guidelines and incorporated many of the new elements with this community. The enhanced design will promote quality development that will improve area aesthetics. Enhanced design elements include the following:

Site Design

The development provides a sense of neighborhood and arrival with monument signs, landscaped entry areas, and decorative pavers. A centrally located open space area will include a pool, pickle ball court, and grass area. A second landscaped amenity area will include a ramada for outdoor community gathering. The development creates visual interest by offering distinct elevations to provide variation and avoid monotony.

Architectural Design

Incorporating unique design, these cottages utilize different colors and materials at each elevation and mix in different rooflines. Facades are articulated with windows, paneling, and detailing. Articulation includes window trim, overhang eaves and other building details.

High-quality authentic building materials are used - such as wood, siding, and stucco - which enhance the building's architectural character and assure a long-lasting building life. The development provides visual interest through the use of accent materials, so the application replicates the authentic means of construction. Materials are durable in extreme heat and under high amounts of sun exposure. Deep, rich accent colors are used, and bright colors are excluded.

Development Standards

Per Table 11-5-5 of the Mesa Zoning Ordinance, development standards are outlined for the RM-2 zoning district. The chart below outlines how this development meets the required standards.

Standard	RM-2 Required	RM-2 (PAD) Proposed
Minimum Lot Area	7,200	7,200
Minimum Lot Width (ft.)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Residence 	60	60

Minimum Lot Depth (ft.)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple Residence 	94	94
Maximum Density (du/ac)	15	14.8
Minimum Density (du/ac)	-	-
Minimum Lot Area per Dwelling Unit	2,904	2,904
Maximum Height (ft.)	30'	30'
Maximum Lot Coverage (% of lot)	70%	70%
Minimum Yard Size (ft.):		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Front and Street-Facing Side 	4-lane arterial (Sossaman): 20'	20'
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interior side and rear: 3 or more units per lot 	15 ft per story	Side (North): 6 ft Side (South): 30 ft Rear (West): 24 ft
Minimum Separation Between Buildings on Same Lot (two-story building)	30 ft	12 ft
Perimeter Landscaping	Side (North): 15 ft Side (South): 15 ft Rear (West): 15 ft	Side (North): 6 ft Side (South): 8 ft Rear (West): 10 ft
Maximum Building coverage (% of Lot)	45%	45%
Minimum Open Space (sq. ft./unit)	200 sq ft	200 sq ft (520 sq ft provided)
Private Open Space (sq. ft./unit)	120 sq ft	120 sq ft (227 sq ft provided)

• Minimum Dimension (ft.)	10 ft	10 ft
Covered Private Open Space (% of Open Space)	50%	50%
Minimum Horizontal Area of Entryway	50 ft	36 ft (Plan C only)
Parking Spaces	78	78 (80 provided)

The PAD deviations are a result of this unique infill parcel. Infill development is always challenging because there are often factors that negatively affect vacant land and make it difficult to develop. In addition, infill development tries to consider the surrounding area while recognizing that creating an identical development or zoning pattern is often not possible. As a result, good planning principles try to find a way to make meaningful development, including a change in zoning or other PAD modifications, that encourage infill development with minimal impacts.

This application requests the following PAD deviations:

- 1. The yard size adjacent to non-single residence uses reduced to 0 feet on north property line and 24 feet on west property line. Required: 30 feet.**

Rationale: Due to the unusual circumstances affecting infill development and this property in particular, additional flexibility is warranted to ensure the development is viable and to achieve maximum utility for the property. The cottages along the northern property line abut a self-storage facility. Given the lack of activity associated with such use and the screening provided by the storage units, additional landscape setback is not necessary. On the western property line, more than 30 feet of setback is provided with the exception of the northwest corner of the Property where a carport is located 21 feet from the property line.

- 2. Minimum separation between buildings on the same lot reduced to 12 feet. Required: 30 feet.**

Rationale: The proposed development offers a unique product of single-family cottages that functions like a multifamily development community. The residences are attached via each unit's adjacent carport, which measure 12 feet in width. Accordingly, the minimum separation requirements are not practically feasible with this product type and a deviation is requested.

- 3. Minimum horizontal area of entry way reduced to 36 feet (Plan C Only). Required: 50 feet.**

Rationale: All proposed floors plans exceed the required 50 square feet of horizontal area for their entry ways, with the exception of Plan C, which features a smaller covered entry way in exchange for additional interior square footage. This minor deviation allows for variation in the provided elevations and floor plans and will improve the aesthetic quality of the community without negatively impacting the resident experience.

4. The landscape yard setbacks adjacent to non-single residence uses reduced to 6 feet (north), 8 feet (south), 10 feet (west). Required: 15 feet

Rationale: Due to the unusual circumstances affecting infill development and this property in particular, additional flexibility is warranted to ensure the development is viable and to achieve maximum utility for the property. The townhomes along the northern property line abut a self-storage facility. Given the lack of activity associated with such use and the screening provided by the storage units, additional landscape setback is not necessary. Along the north property line, the rear yards of the residences shall function as the landscape yard. Accordingly, the minimum planting requirements of 11-33-B(2)(c) shall not apply along the north property line. Additionally, a 10-foot landscape yard is provided on the western property line and an 8-foot landscape yard is provided on the south property line. The residences are further separated from the adjacent uses to the west and south by an internal drive aisle. The reduced landscape yard sizes allow for efficient use of this infill property and enable more activated public open space for the benefit of residents, such as a pickle ball court, pool, ramada, and other gathering spaces.

PAD Request and Compliance

As stated in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance, the PAD overlay can be used to modify base district regulations to implement policies in the General Plan such as the ones identified in this project narrative. The deviations help create innovative design and flexibility in projects. In this manner, the applicant can tailor the development standards and site design in a way that not only maximizes the compatibility between the development and the adjacent neighborhood, but also ensures that any future development on the Property is limited to the same requirements. The benefit of the PAD is to ensure the proposed residential community will develop in a manner compatible with the adjacent communities. This ensures the site plan, lot sizes, dimensions, layout and open space areas are tied to the rezone approval. The intent of a PAD overlay is to provide for the following:

- A. Well designed and integrated open space and/or recreational facilities held in common ownership and of a scale that is proportionate to the use;
 - *The proposal includes a residential community with common open space amenities including lawn, a covered ramada, shaded seating areas, a playground, and barbeque facilities. The size and scale of the amenities are commensurate with the small number of lots provided in the community.*
- B. Options for the design and use of private or public streets;
 - *The development uses private streets that include simulated “neck-downs” to promote safety.*
- C. Preservation of significant aspects of the natural character of the land;
 - *As a small infill site, there are no significant aspects of the natural character of the land.*
- D. Building design, site design, and amenities that create a unique and more sustainable alternative to conventional development;

- *The proposed development offers a unique new housing product that will create more diversity in inventory and bring value to the surrounding area by creatively utilizing a challenging infill property. The Cottages on Sossaman will provide a high quality, thoughtfully designed community with over twice the minimum required public open space in order to foster public gathering and community engagement.*

E. Sustainable property owners' associations;

- *The applicant has experience developing infill residential communities and understands how to provide amenities that are useful and sustainable long term for the homeowner's association. In this instance, the association's obligations are manageable given the thoughtful design, layout, and amenities.*

F. Maintenance of property held in common ownership through the use of recorded covenants, conditions, and restrictions; and

- *The Property will be under common ownership and maintained by a property management company.*

G. Single or multiple land use activities organized in a comprehensive manner and designed to work together in common and in a synergistic manner to the benefit of both the project and the neighboring area.

- *The PAD application facilitates an enhanced community "organized in a comprehensive manner" with a layout that works within the constraints of a challenging infill site. The design of the community brings a unique product to the area's housing market, increasing diversity and providing more options for prospective residents. The community will also improve the walkability/connectivity of the area and increase demand and economic activity in the adjacent shopping center. Lastly, the community improves the public street, sidewalk, lighting, landscaping and walls to create an improved street appearance that benefits the overall area.*

General Plan Conformance

This proposal is consistent with the underlying land use designation of Neighborhood. 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.

There are many goals, policies, and objectives of the General Plan that support an RM-2 residential use at this location as identified in Chapter 4 of the Mesa 2040 General Plan. The following are some excerpted provisions from the General Plan:

1. Safe, Clean and Healthy Living Environment.

People want to have their homes in neighborhoods where their families will be safe, and they can live healthy, productive lives. This community will be professionally managed and will ensure safety, cleanliness and responsible maintenance of the common areas and streetscape.

The development will also have its own active outdoor space for all ages. The open space will include lawn, a covered armada, a pickleball court, barbeque facilities, and gathering spaces to promote community engagement.

The streetscape will also be improved with new landscaping and wall treatments that beautify the areas as opposed to its empty lot condition today and will create a favorable impression to area residents.

2. Build Community and Foster Social Interaction

The homebuilder recognizes that great neighborhoods build a sense of community and foster social interactions. This is achieved on-site through public open space amenities like barbeque facilities, a playground and a covered ramada. This offering allows residents to congregate and get to know their neighbors as the center of neighborhood activity.

3. Connectivity and Walkability.

In Mesa, walkability and connectivity can be improved by encouraging a mix of uses that are within walking distance and working proactively with underutilized commercial sites to redevelop in a manner that improves the mix of uses and connections with the surrounding neighborhood. This proposal will increase the mix of uses and promote economic activity in the adjacent shopping center. Additionally, the developer will implement a complete streets program along their site frontage to include trees and shade along Sossaman Road.

4. Provide for Diversity

The General Plan encourages a variety of housing types and a variety of people. Having a variety of housing types, like the requested RM-2 zoning here, provides interest to the built environment and provides the opportunity for differing people to live near one another. Diverse neighborhoods can be achieved through encouraging a variety of dwelling types within each area of the community consistent with the character area standards.

Great neighborhoods should have a variety of people and that can be achieved with RM-2 zoning such as this. Diverse and inclusive neighborhoods allow people of different incomes, ages, races, and ethnicities to gather and get to know each other which make the community stronger. That is the vision for this development site and that is the stated goal of the Mesa General Plan.

Until now, there has been no diverse housing types in this area. The surrounding residences were built primarily in 1975 and there is no housing diversity within the existing neighborhood. One home looks like the next with no variety of housing options. This development provides for a residential product that is needed in this area, is highly attractive, fulfills a need for young families, and is attainable for the workforce.

5. Neighborhood Character and Personality

Neighborhood investment and maintenance is more likely to happen when a neighborhood is a recognizable place, when it has its own character and personality. This community will provide a sense of place, will improve an eyesore vacant lot, and will create an enhanced streetscape and landscape appearance.

6. Quality Design and Development

The opportunity for long-term health and sustainability is increased when the initial development is of a high quality. The high-quality architecture designed with this community will greatly improve the area aesthetics and create an identifiable and unique neighborhood. Further, the developer will install landscaping throughout the development and utilize a property manager to ensure proper maintenance and enforcement.

The high-quality nature of this development is represented in the images and renderings presented with this proposal. It is evident in the use of architectural detailing that provide visual interest, use of materials that add texture and are easily maintained over time, integration of architecture and landscape design, and use of a plant palate that is appropriate for our climate and can be easily maintained.

Summary

The Cottages on Sossaman will add to the diversity of housing types available in the area. This proposal is also a benefit to the residential homes and retail uses that surround this site because it makes meaningful use of an otherwise unattractive, empty infill property. This project will also create an opportunity for additional housing choices in this area.

New residences on this infill parcel provide many benefits to the area and City. The development will fill a need in this area and makes meaningful use of an otherwise vacant property. It will provide a new housing product that is low maintenance which is not available in the immediate area. Finally, it provides a use and zoning that strengthens the neighborhood with no negative impacts.

TAB 1

Aerial Map

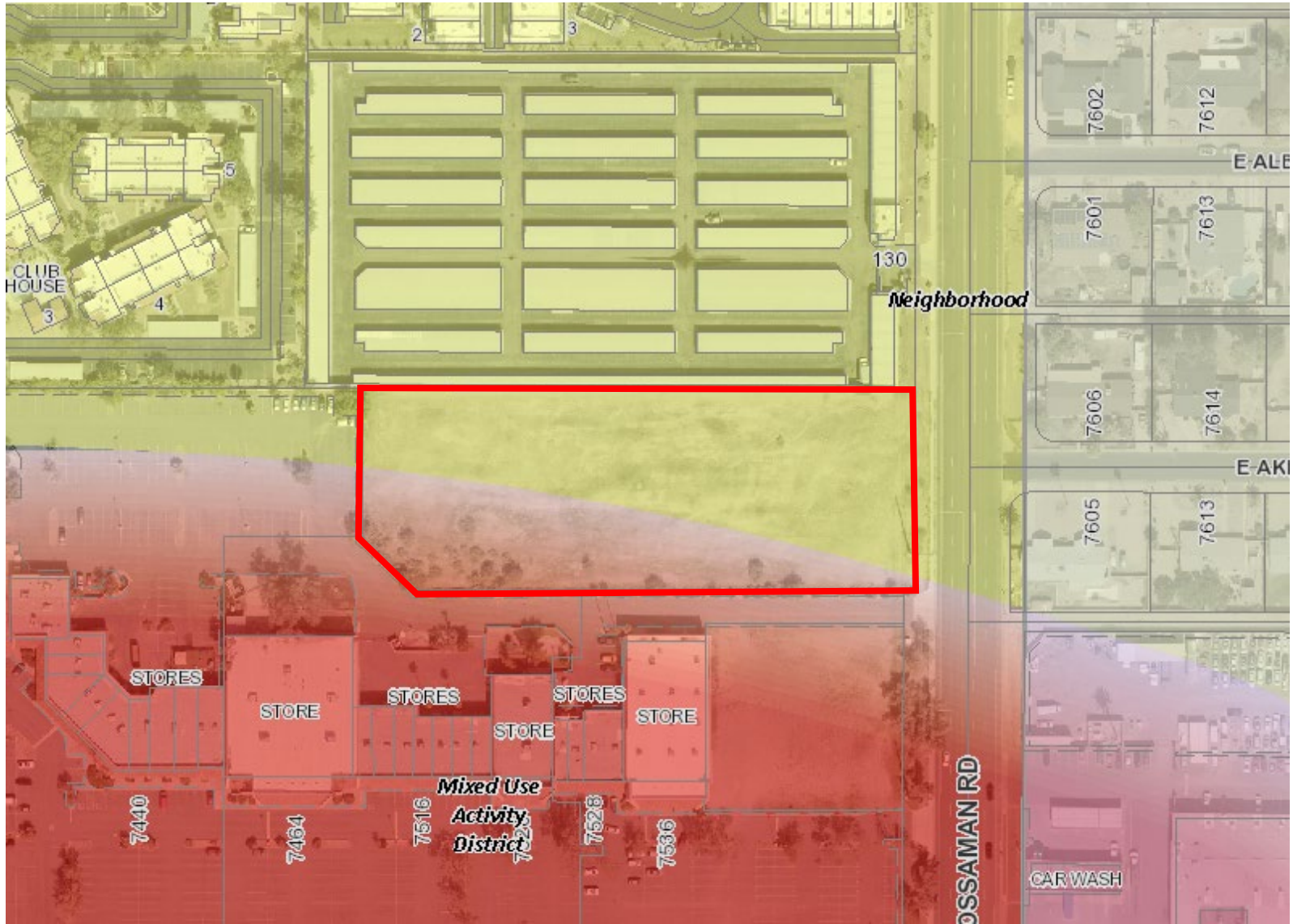


545 Feet North of NWC Main Street and Sossaman Road – Mesa, AZ



TAB 2

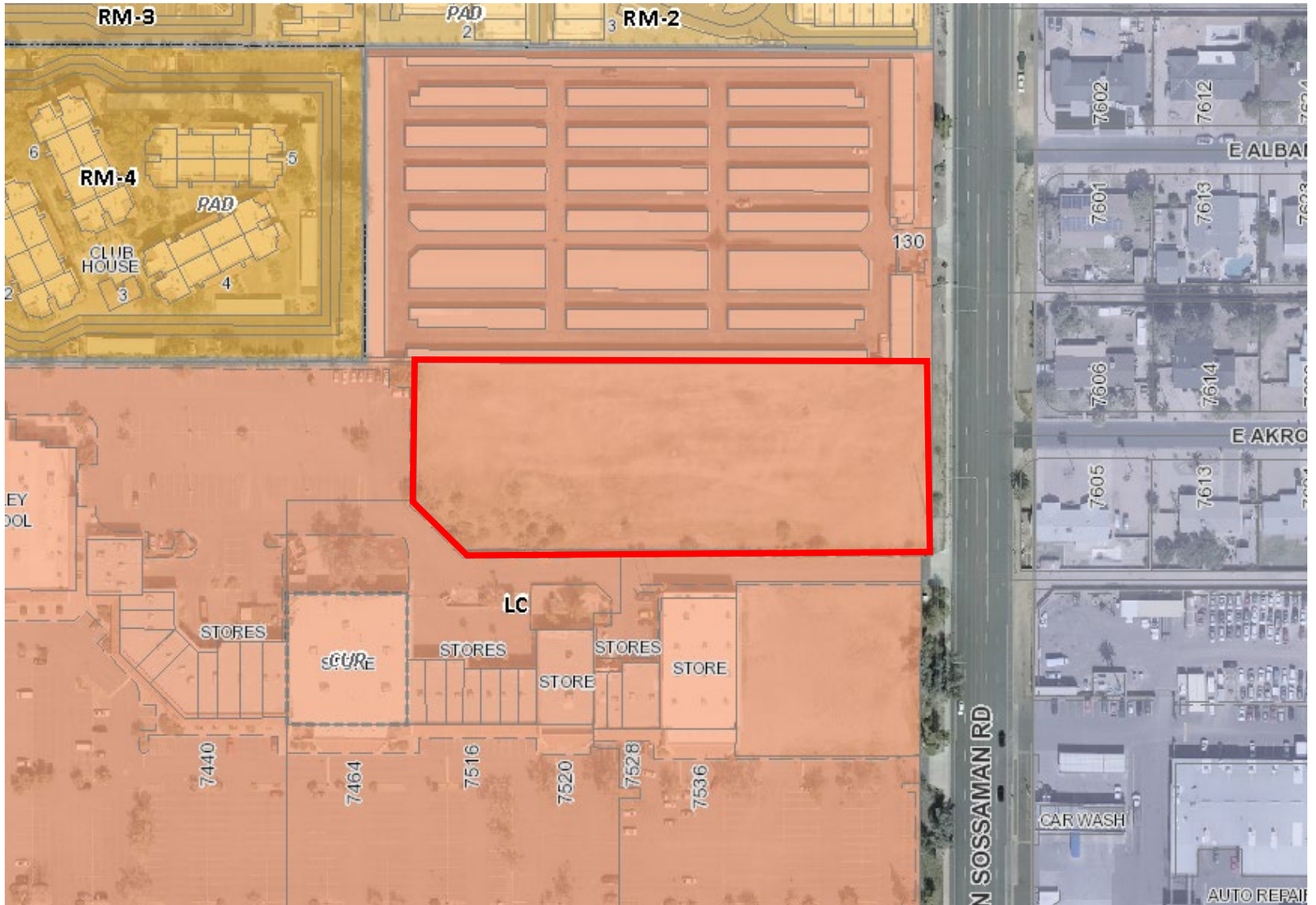
General Plan Map



545 Feet North of NWC Main Street and Sossaman Road – Mesa, AZ



Zoning Map



545 Feet North of NWC Main Street and Sossaman Road – Mesa, AZ

