

Zen on Recker

Rezoning Project Narrative

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On Behalf of:



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The City of Mesa Planning Division
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Introduction

Pew & Lake, PLC, on behalf of Pacific Rim Group, is pleased to provide this project narrative and related materials to the City of Mesa in support of a rezoning application for approximately 6.7 gross acres located at the northeast corner of “Old” Recker and Baseline Roads. The property is shown below and may be identified on the Maricopa County Assessor’s Map as parcel numbers 141-54-004C, --004G, -004J and 004K. When the request discussed in this narrative is approved, it will allow for the development of Zen on Recker, a community of 76, for-sale townhomes.



Existing General Plan Designation and Zoning Classification

As shown on the next page, most of the project site is currently designated in the City of Mesa General Plan as “Neighborhood”, with just a small portion designated as “Specialty”. The site is currently classified as Agricultural (AG) on the City of Mesa Zoning map.

City of Mesa 2040 General Plan Land Use Map



City of Mesa Zoning Map



Relationship to Surrounding Properties

As shown in the graphic below, the site is bound on the west by vacant property designated for a Health & Technology Business Park. It is bound on the north by large-lot residential properties that, on the east by a business park that is zoned Light Industrial. The southern boundary of the property is Baseline Road, a residence and professional plaza, all of which lie in the Town of Gilbert’s jurisdiction.

	General Plan Designation	Zoning	Existing Use
North	Neighborhood Suburban	AG	Residential
South	General Commercial (GC) Town of Gilbert	GC (Town of Gilbert)	Residential/Professional Park
East	Neighborhood Suburban	LI	Commerce Park
West	Specialty	PEP	Vacant/ Health & Technology Park
Project Site	Neighborhood Suburban/Specialty	Agriculture (AG)	Residential

Existing Site Conditions/Topography

The site is presently in use by two large residential properties.

Utilities and Services

Utilities are provided to the site by the providers as shown below:

Utility	Provider
Electric	Salt River Project
Natural Gas	City of Mesa
Water	City of Mesa
Sewer	City of Mesa
Solid Waste	City of Mesa or Other
Telephone	Century Link or Other
Internet	Cox Communications
Law Enforcement	City of Mesa
Emergency Services	City of Mesa

Request

Our request to the City of Mesa is to rezone the property from Agriculture (AG) to Residential Multiple Dwelling (RM-2) with a Planned Area Development (PAD) Overlay, and site plan approval to allow for the development of a 76-lot townhome community.

Compliance with General Plan

As previously stated, most of the site is currently designated in the City of Mesa 2040 General Plan as a *Neighborhood* character area. This is the predominant pattern of neighborhoods in the City. The suburban sub-type features areas of duplexes and other multiple-residence properties along arterial frontages. The predominant building heights are one-and two-stories, and the typical density is between 2 and 12 dwelling units per acres. However, higher densities are allowed along arterial streets. The General Plan for this area also calls for accessible, community open space within a new subdivision.

Zen on Recker will help implement some of the following goals in the Mesa 2040 General Plan in the following ways:

- The ultimate design and configuration of the site will buffer and maintain the neighborhood to the north using adequate landscaping, building orientation and building height. (*Chapter 4- Creating and Maintaining a Variety of Great Neighborhoods*)
- As a self-contained development site, the proposed residential development is consistent with the Suburban sub-type that provides for multiple residence developments along arterial roads. The RM-2 zoning classification we are seeking is at the low end of the permitted densities within the character area, and at 13.57 DU/ac, this development is within the density range in the zoning district. Moreover, the two-story height of the proposed subdivision is less than the allowable three-and four-story heights. (*Chapter 7- Community Character*)
- The quality architecture and entrance to the development will provide the residents with a sense of arrival at Zen on Recker. The community is designed to attract a younger demographic, many of whom may be medical professionals working in the Baseline medical corridor. By providing a residential use at this location that provides a new housing option in the area, the Specialty designation of this property is supported and advanced.

The addition of Zen on Recker at this location will contribute to the General Plan goal of “Creating and Maintaining a variety of Great neighborhoods.” This new community will contribute to the diversity of housing in the area, with minimal impact to the large lot neighborhood to the north.

Moreover, the RM-2 zoning district which we are seeking is a primary zoning district within the Neighborhood Land Use designation. For the foregoing reasons, the proposed rezoning and subsequent development is consistent with the Mesa 2040 General Plan Neighborhood Land Use designation.

Compliance with Chapter 22: Planned Area Development Overlay District

Section 11-22-1 of The City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance specifies that a Planned Area Development (PAD) Overlay District is to allow for innovative design and flexibility in projects of sufficient size that are planned for development as a cohesive unit. The intent of the district is to provide for creative, high-quality development incorporating:

- 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;
- B. Options for the design and use of private or public streets;
- C. Preservation of 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;
- E. Sustainable property owners’ associations;
- F. Maintenance of property held in common ownership through the use of recorded covenants, conditions, and restrictions; and
- 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.

As discussed below, the proposed development is appropriate for a Planned Area Development (PAD) Overlay District.

The Development Plan

Zen on Recker is proposed as a gated, 76-unit, owner-occupied townhome development. As shown on the Site Plan provided in this application, the units are placed within 15 different buildings, featuring from four to eight units apiece. The exact breakdown of the townhome units is shown below:

Building Configuration	Number Provided	Units per Building	Total Units
4-Plex	8	4	32

6-Plex	6	6	36
8-Plex	1	8	8
Total			76 Units

Each of the units feature a 2-car garage as well as a garage-top deck.

The overall site design considers the access to multi-modal transportation options in the area, and on-site vehicular circulation has been designed to provide easy pedestrian access to the community amenities.

Finally, the site has been designed with the neighbors to the north in mind—the required building setbacks are met, and the 27’ roadway loop on the northern boundary, placed behind a landscaping buffer has been designed to allow for greater distance between the future residents of Zen on Recker and the properties to the north than is required by the code. The two homes closest to the northern boundary have side elevations that face north. As shown below, the side elevations have minimal window openings and a solid wall on the garage deck for added privacy.



Amenities

Amenities at Zen on Recker will include a large pool and spa, amenity building, Community BBQ stations, Fire pit lounge area, Fireplace lounge area, Dog Park, and a Zen Garden. Details of each amenity area have been provided in a Common Area Plans included in the formal submittal.

Design Intent

As shown in the photographs on the next page, each of the units in Zen on Recker features articulation in building facades and overall massing that create a sense of both horizontal and

vertical movement. The modern architectural detail, coupled with soft landscaping creates visual interest in the community and a dynamic streetscape. The outdoor deck on top of each garage contributes to a private, yet spacious feel within each unit.



Landscape/Open Space

The gated front entrance to the site is set back from Recker Road with a welcoming entry that provides not only a safe turnaround space, but also a sense of arrival. Landscape accents within the site provide delineation from parking, buildings, driveways and pathways. Foundation base

landscaping is provided adjacent to exterior walls with a base of materials such as trees, shrubs, ground cover, and/or accent plants.

Traffic and Circulation

Zen on Recker is proposed to have a single, gated primary entrance for residents and visitors alike. The entrance will be on Recker Road, with a call box about 40 feet east of the curb. The gate itself will be approximately 30 feet east of the call box. A street bulb in front of the gate is provided to accommodate U-turn needs. There will also be a secondary, access point for emergency and solid waste vehicles approximately 220 feet south of the main entrance. The City of Mesa will always be provided with the code to this access point to ensure availability for first responders.

The Town of Gilbert has jurisdiction over Baseline Road in this area. Accordingly, the Town requested a Trip Generation Statement for review. The statement is provided within the application materials and estimates that traffic resulting from Zen on Recker will create 37 trips in the morning peak hour, and 46 trips in the evening peak hour. As indicated in correspondence provided by the Town of Gilbert, the Traffic Engineer reviewed the Trip Generation Statement and proposed Site Plan and opined that the access point on Recker Road is preferred by the Town of Gilbert.

Parking

Each of the 76 units in Zen on Recker features a 2-car garage. Additionally, 14 units have two driveway spaces apiece and there are proposed to be 13 unreserved guest parking spaces within the community. Total proposed parking, at 193 spaces, provides a ratio of 2.5 spaces per unit, exceeding the 2.1 spaces per unit required in the Mesa Zoning Ordinance.

Proposed Drainage Solutions

Drainage for this subdivision is provided by means of eight (8) retention basins placed throughout the community. The drainage for the site has been designed to provide the retention required to capture rainfall from a 100-year, 2-hour storm event as required by the Mesa City Code. Retention calculations are shown on the Preliminary Grading and Drainage Plan provided in the application materials.

Proposed Development Standards and Justification

RM-2 Development Standards		
Standard	Required	Proposed with PAD
Minimum Lot Size	7,200 sq. ft.	243,987
Maximum Density	15 du/ac	13.57 du/ac
Minimum Lot Area per dwelling Unit	2,904 sq. ft.	3,115 sq. ft.
Maximum Height	30 feet	25 feet
Vehicle Parking (2.1 spaces per unit)	160 spaces	195 spaces
Minimum Building Setbacks:		
Front- (Recker Road; collector)	25 feet	20 feet
Side- (Baseline Road; arterial)	30 feet	20 feet
North Side	30 feet	30 feet
Rear (adjacent to LI)	30 feet	20 feet
Minimum Separation between buildings (two-story)	30 feet	Varies- 14'-11" minimum (in one location only)
Maximum Building Coverage	45%	37.8%
Minimum Common Open Space per unit	200 sq. ft.	387 sq. ft.
Private Open Space per unit (2 nd Floor Patio)	2 bedroom- 100 s.f 3 bedroom- 120 s.f	387 s.f. per unit.
Garage Recess from Livable Facade	3 feet	None
Height of fence allowed within Front setback	3'-6"	3'-6"

Justification

As previously noted, a PAD is appropriate for a community that features well-designed and integrated open space, recreational amenities that are held in common ownership and that are of a scale that is proportionate to the use. A PAD is also appropriate when there are private streets, and property that is maintained by an HOA. Finally, PAD's are most appropriate when a development is designed in an organized and comprehensive manner that is designed to work in a manner that benefits the project and the neighboring area.

Zen on Recker meets these benchmarks and expands on them further by providing common open space that is nearly double the open space required by the zoning ordinance. Additionally, the amount of private open space per unit is more than triple that required by ordinance. This abundant combination of private and common open space will create a livable environment for the future residents of this community.

As previously noted, this community has been designed with the neighbors to the north in mind—the required building setbacks are met, and the 25' roadway loop on the northern boundary, placed behind a 50-foot landscaping buffer, has been designed to allow for greater distance between the future residents of Zen on Recker and the properties to the north than is required by the code. Building setbacks on the northern boundary range from 30-feet, to over 57-feet. The reduced setbacks requested on the other three sides of the development allow for this configuration on the northern boundary, while still providing an enhanced amenity experience in the interior of the project.

The building separation reductions are to provide for the angling of the buildings within the community which has been done to meet staff's request to create visual interest and reduce garage dominance. The smallest separation distance is between buildings 10 and 17. It is important to note that Building 17 is not an enclosed building, but an open-air trellis in the pool area.

Finally, the deviation from the requirement that the garage be recessed 3-feet under the livable façade is to provide for a more generous garage-top deck or patio. It is worth noting that the decks on top of the garage are not "livable" in the technical sense since they are not counted as livable space in the overall square footage of the unit. Nevertheless, it is recognized that this space could be perceived as livable when driving through Zen on Baseline. For this reason, enhanced garage doors featuring wood grain with glass side panels have been specified to elevate the overall look of the building and provide a modern aesthetic within the community.

Phasing

Zen on Recker is proposed to be developed in a single phase.

Citizen Participation

Per City of Mesa Zoning Ordinance Section 11-67-3, the applicant has prepared a Citizen Participation Plan and will conducted a neighborhood meeting on March 9, 2020. Notice was sent to property owners within 1000' of the development site and HOA's and registered neighbors within ½ mile of the proposed development site. A summary of the neighborhood meeting, comment cards, sign-in sheets and copies of the notification materials are included with tis application. It is anticipated that there will be additional neighborhood outreach efforts in the coming weeks. A second neighborhood meeting was held on June 17th 2020. Please see the Citizen Participation Report for two neighborhood meetings included in the 2nd submittal documents.

Additionally, the property owner has met with Gary Cloud, Vice-President for University Partnerships at A.T. Still University, the property owner to the west. Mr. Cloud has provided an email to the Property Owner indicating his support for Zen on Recker and his belief that the proposed development complements the University's effort to "build community."

Conclusion

Zen on Recker is thoughtfully designed and will be an asset to this part of Mesa. It will complement the business park to the west and the light industrial development to the east. Much attention has been paid to the design of the subdivision to provide a high-caliber entry on Recker Road. The applicant and property owner look forward to working with city staff to implement the vision for this unique parcel in the City of Mesa.