

**Wednesday, October 19, 2022
6:00 pm**

Note from the Clerk: The October 19, 2022, Planning Commission meeting was held in-person at City of Avondale Council Chambers

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thompson called Planning Commission meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

The following members and representatives were present.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT IN PERSON/PHONE/VIDEO

Chair, Christopher Thompson
Vice Chair Lisa Osborne
Commissioner Denise Stanfield
Commissioner Linda Warren
Commissioner Larry White
Commissioner Alan Agundez-Castillo
Alternate Julia Arnette

COMMISSIONER EXCUSED ABSENT

Commissioner Alisha Meginnis

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Jodie Novak, Acting Director, Development & Engineering
Brandon Cartwright, Attorney
Brian Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director
Barbara Cason, Administrative Assistant

3. OPENING STATEMENT AND INSTRUCTIONS

Chair Thompson read the opening statement.

4. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:

- a. THREE RIVERS RANCH - MAJOR PLAN AMENDMENT - APPLICATION PL-22-0050**
- b. THREE RIVERS RANCH - REZONING TO PLANNED AREA DEVELOPMENT (PAD) - APPLICATION PL-22-0110**

Jodie Novak, Acting Director, Development & Engineering, noted that items 4a and 4b would be presented together.

Ms. Novak provided an overview of the site plan area, located west of the intersection of Broadway and Dysart Roads. Located to the south is an existing City wastewater treatment facility. The Dysart Road alignment is to the east. The property is currently within Maricopa County jurisdiction with an annexation in process. The parcel is approximately 194 gross acres/190 net acres. The goal is to complete the annexation. The two cases

will proceed to City Council in November. The parcel will be given an initial zoning of RR-43, which is compatible with the County's RU-43 designation. The applicant is requesting to rezone for a PAD with custom uses. In the current General Plan, the parcel is designated as Estate Low Density Residential (ELDR), however it also has a Mixed Use (MU) designation, which is intended for a village rural entertainment live, work, play district with a mix of residential and commercial uses. The applicant requests to amend these uses. The goal is to have two new land uses, including Medium Density Residential (MDR) and Medium High Density Residential (MHD). The rezoning request is for a PAD, which is a custom zoning district. This focuses on the land uses that the applicant is specifically requesting for their project. Three Rivers Ranch focuses on all residential-type uses, including Single Family and Multifamily Residential. The Major General Plan request requires City Council action with required approval via two-thirds vote. The unit details for the development were reviewed.

Development request:

- 961-unit residential development with single-family, townhouses, and apartments and consisting of 194 acres
- 5.05 dwelling units per acre density

Three types of residential product:

- 530 detached single-family residential home lots
- 120 attached townhouse units
- 311 multi-family apartment units (One and two-story individual casita style units)

Staff believes the request is in conformance with the goals of the General Plan, particularly in regards to the goal to have a mix of housing options. The property is in a unique location, adjacent to the Agua Fria River, with a portion in the flood zone. There is a wastewater treatment facility with an odor boundary. There is not much development existing to the north, with some designation for residential or employment. To the east is a site plan for a future high school. Also in the area is the Alamar Master Planned Community, which includes a mix of regular single family, small lot single family, townhome capacity and a current proposal for a senior age single family subdivision. The proposed mix of residential fits within the character of the area. It improves the area, as the parcel has been vacant for quite some time. The proposed land uses would not adversely affect existing uses nearby. If the General Plan Amendment and rezoning are approved, each will be presented to the City for site plan design review and platting processes.

A brief overview of the proposed rezoning details was provided. A collector road system enters off Dysart, winding westward and then goes north or south into the community. A three to four-acre neighborhood park is proposed and would be managed by the HOA. Other open space, amenities and recreational opportunities will be available with a focus on pedestrian accessibility. No deviations from required parking spaces are requested. Access is primarily from Dysart Road, with the main entrance off of what would be the Broadway Road intersection. The applicant proposes to have the collector street named Three Rivers Ranch Parkway, but such requests must be agreed to by the City. There are secondary emergency access points. Staff feels there will be no significant traffic impacts.

In terms of analysis results, the applicant will be required to conform to the City's adopted design manuals. The project is compatible with adjacent uses and provides adequate transition between housing types and nearby properties. Open space, park and amenities are provided. Modifications are appropriate to achieve the quality of design for the community. There are some setback and lot coverage reductions. Littleton Elementary School District has indicated that they have insufficient capacity to accommodate enrollment. The applicant is working with the District on a standard impact agreement. Tolleson Union High School District indicates they have sufficient capacity to accommodate enrollment.

All required notifications have been completed. The Major General Plan Agreement requires a 60-day review period, which was provided in June, 2022. No comments were received. A neighborhood meeting was held on August 29, 2022 attended by two members of the public and two Commission members. Question topics included traffic, school capacity and water and sewer capacity.

Commissioner Osborne asked about the City's five-year estimated projection for population growth. Ms. Novak stated that at the time the South Avondale Master Plan was brought forth, the population in the City was nearing 95,000. The long-term projection was approximately 100,000.

Chair Thompson inquired as to the level of occupied low density housing in the City. Ms. Novak stated that she did not have figures as to actual occupation. Most of the data shared amongst cities in Maricopa County comes from Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG). The data provided applies to the amount of single family units, but does not track occupation data. Much of the construction is single family, however there has been a pull-back on home sales recently.

Chair Thompson asked about the percentage comparison of High Density, Medium High Density to Rural in Avondale. Ms. Novak did not have an exact figure, but stated that the amount would be very low. Some rural agrarian-style communities have been in place for many years. There is no such new development in the works at this time. The land along Baseline north of the Gila River is planned for low density, large lot residential, however, most of it is farmland at this time or owned by aggregate mining companies.

Commissioner White referred to the 2017 Road Plan for Avondale, noting that it has a connection of Dysart south across the bridge and across the river to connect to Dysart to the south. He inquired whether this development will accelerate the need for the bridge connection. Ms. Novak stated that staff have looked at different arterial streets where a bridge may be needed, however, there are no such plans in the current capital improvement project planning. This project would not precipitate moving the bridge connection forward.

Commissioner Castillo asked whether the fact that part of the land is in the floodplain means that plans to address this have been incorporated into the design. Ms. Novak said this aspect has been discussed as part of the pre-application process and submission of the Major General Plan Amendment and rezoning. All of these aspects go through one to three staff reviews. The applicants are informed that they are in the floodplain and as such, there are standard details and requirements for the creation of pads and walls.

Commissioner Osborne inquired as to studies for environmental impacts, particularly with regard to building in the flood zone. Ms. Novak stated that the City does not require an environmental impact assessment. For engineering, the applicant must submit a Conditional Letter of Map Revision (CLOMR). Staff must ensure that it meets all adopted requirements. If significant problems were anticipated by the construction in the floodplain, staff would not bring the project forward at this time.

Commissioner Warren noted the close proximity to Alamar and asked about the need to address fire and police services. Ms. Novak stated that a parcel is set aside for a combined police and fire substation. This will be in close proximity to serve this and surrounding projects. She was not immediately able to provide a timetable for construction.

Commissioner White referred to the main entrance location and asked whether the roadway exists currently. Ms. Novak stated that it is not yet fully built out. In response to a further question from Commissioner White, she added that she does not believe that completion of the street was part of the Alamar development. Commissioner White expressed concern about the traffic on the two-lane road leading to the two-lane Lower Buckeye Road. Ms. Novak clarified that Dysart Road will become four lanes, with two lanes each direction and a center turn lane.

Commissioner White asked about deceleration lanes and left turn lanes at the main entrance. Ms. Novak stated that this would be via additional review with offsite improvements. There is a stipulation that the developer shall contribute 50 percent of the design and construction costs for a future traffic signal at the intersection.

Chair Thompson asked if a traffic study has been done. He does not agree that Dysart Road can accommodate the increased traffic volumes. Ms. Novak stated that most applications must include a traffic impact analysis as part of a rezoning case review. The analysis is reviewed by the traffic engineering department. In order to have come up with the stipulation regarding the traffic signal, staff would have reviewed the traffic impact analysis to advise the applicant regarding needed lane improvements, right-of-way widths, location of water and sewer lines as well as ensuring adequate road system design. Other segments are in areas of regional commercial, which greatly increases traffic levels. There are no commercial segments in this particular development area.

Chair Thompson asked for clarification on the current status of school capacity. Ms. Novak clarified that cities do not get involved in contract agreements private developers have with school districts. It is a form of courtesy for the applicant to inform the City that they are in communication with the school district. The school districts, in turn, communicate with the City regarding capacity issues.

Commissioner White commented that if the traffic study warrants a traffic signal at the development's main entrance, he would expect that the intersection of Vermeersch and Lower Buckeye would also have to be examined for needed modifications. Currently, there is a dead-end T. Travelers will have to go left or right and currently, there is nothing but a stop sign at the intersection. Ms. Novak agreed that this is a good point. Most of the time, developer-required improvements are within the boundaries of the development and do not typically involve property outside such boundaries. The City will have to look at this when and if the development is completed.

Chair Thompson welcomed comments from the Applicant.

Applicant representative, Alex Hayes, Withey Morris, thanked City staff for their extensive work over the past year. Three Rivers Ranch will bring a variety of high-quality housing products in different market segments. These will appeal to and provide housing solutions for Avondale residents. In terms of adequate school facilities and the development agreement, Tolleson Union High School district indicated they have adequate school facilities. Littleton said they did not have adequate capacity and discussions began. This resulted in a signed donation agreement.

Chair Thompson opened the public hearing on Application PL-22-0050. There were no requests to speak and Chair Thompson closed the public hearing.

Chair Thompson opened the public hearing on Application PL-22-0110. There were no requests to speak and Chair Thompson closed the public hearing.

Chair Thompson invited a motion on PL-22-0050. Commissioner White motioned to recommend approval of application PL-22-0050. Commissioner Agundez Castillo seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair, Christopher Thompson	Nay
Vice Chair Lisa Osborne	Nay
Commissioner Alisha Meginnis	N/A
Commissioner Denise Stanfield	Aye
Commissioner Linda Warren	Aye
Commissioner Larry White	Aye
Commissioner Alan Agundez-Castillo	Aye

Upon vote, the motion passed 4 to 2.

Chair Thompson invited a motion on PL-22-0110. Commissioner Warren motioned to recommend approval of application PL-22-0110. Commissioner Stanfield seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair, Christopher Thompson	Nay
Vice Chair Lisa Osborne	Nay
Commissioner Alisha Meginnis	N/A
Commissioner Denise Stanfield	Aye
Commissioner Linda Warren	Aye
Commissioner Larry White	Aye
Commissioner Alan Agundez-Castillo	Nay

Upon vote, the motion was denied 3 to 3.

5. DISCUSSION ITEMS:

a. PRESENTATION OF ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

Brian Hughes, Parks and Recreation Director, introduced consultants Kevin Kugler and Brian Snider of Michael Baker International, who provided a presentation on the draft Active Transportation Plan. Mr. Snider provided an overview of the study boundaries.

The purpose of the study included three objectives:

- Create inventory and gap analysis of existing bike and pedestrian facilities
- Recommend Citywide on and off-street facilities for connectivity
- Develop policies and procedures for an integrated safe and efficient multimodal transportation system

The main purpose of the Active Transportation Plan is to set the foundation to assist the City in receiving funding for implementation of the plan recommendations. Active transportation applies to human-powered movements, such as: Walking, biking, scooter riding and wheelchair travel. The benefits of human-powered transportation were reviewed, including physical, health, economic and environmental.

The "Six Es" are used in the planning and development of active transportation:

- Engineering
- Education
- Encouragement
- Enforcement
- Equity
- Evaluation

The 240-page document includes five sections:

- Introduction
- Existing and Future Conditions Framework
- Public and Stakeholder Involvement
- Recommendations
- Implementation Plan

A brief overview on the sections was provided. A total of 240 projects have been identified. This includes 146 sidewalk projects, 71 bike lane projects, 11 multiuse path projects, 11 wayfinding projects and one crossing project. This supports four key considerations, including: Building a functional pedestrian and bicycle transportation network, coordinating previous planning efforts, connecting pedestrians, bicycles and public

transit and improving signage. The projects were categorized as: Onsite bike facilities, off-street multiuse facilities and pedestrian facilities.

Five evaluation criteria measured a diverse cross-section of needs within the community and categories related to active transportation:

- Proximity and connectivity
- Safety
- Comfort
- Social equity
- Deliverability and constructability

The 240 projects were divided into three planning horizon time frames, including short term (zero to 5 years), mid-term (5 to 20 years) and long-term (20 plus years). A map depicting projects from each time frame was reviewed and samples of projects were briefly outlined. Policies were developed to support the Six Es of active transportation. Over 30 policy considerations are designed for the City to use in implementation and monitoring of active transportation within the City. There are 18 engineering policy considerations to assist in creating safe and convenient modes and locations for safe walking and riding. Five education policies provide residents of all ages with the skills and confidence to walk and bike. Three evaluation and planning policies are designed to evaluate the use of active transportation. A handful of policies have been developed under the encouragement category to help create a strong culture within the City. Three policies are listed under enforcement, which are designed to ensure that roads are safe for all users. There are two policies under equity to help support safe, active and healthy opportunities for underrepresented and vulnerable communities within the City.

Funding opportunities have been identified at the local, regional and federal level. A road map and description has been created to assist the City with securing funds to implement identified projects.

Chair Thompson asked about the intent to expand the sidewalk widths. Mr. Snider stated that the plan first identifies sidewalk gaps that need filling. Those widths would simply coincide with the design requirements listed in the City's design manuals. Typical widths are four to five feet.

A Commissioner asked for clarification on the definition of banner wayfinding signage. Mr. Snider stated that the City has gone through an elaborate wayfinding planning process, developed in 2019. This included recommendation of wayfinding applications across the City. Those recommendations have been included in the plan and some have already been completed. Banner wayfinding signs are displayed on a street pole or street light and provide directional arrows.

A Commissioner asked for clarification on how much of the budget would apply to the first zero to five years. Mr. Snider stated that \$16.2 million is the total amount of the short-term period, \$50 million for the mid-term and \$86 million for long-term.

Commissioner White inquired whether multiuse paths will allow use of motorized Segways and scooters. Mr. Snider stated that few municipalities have thus far been able to create the most ideal solution to the question. These are not addressed in the plan, however policies can be put in place to allow or prohibit use of such devices. For example, the City of Phoenix utilizes a speed limit threshold to determine which devices may use paths or sidewalks.

Commissioner Warren commented that she would like to see more sidewalks constructed in Historic Avondale, which would increase safety in reaching transportation sites. Mr. Snider agreed that Historic Avondale is home to many underserved community members and the area does have many sidewalk gaps. Sidewalks in this area are included in the mid- and long-term time frames because of cost considerations. New sidewalk installation

is very expensive and these projects did not score as well when using the evaluation criteria. The City retains the option to bump up any projects it wishes to prioritize.

Commissioner Castillo commended the inclusion of the project on Buckeye Road. He asked about the plans for accommodate space for cyclists, especially on roads such as Lower Buckeye Road, where some traffic travels at speeds from 50 to 60 miles per hour. Mr. Snider acknowledged the difficult in creating safe environments on busy roadways. One approach is to provide a more connected network overall.

Commissioner Castillo referred to the goal of connecting pedestrians and cyclists to transit and asked whether this takes into account future transportation possibilities. For example, Valley Metro periodically changes their routes and services. Mr. Brian Hughes agreed that there are changes coming to microtransit and Zoom routes. There will be a review process to make any plan changes once these modifications go into effect.

6. COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Novak stated that there are items coming to the Commission over the next couple of months which will necessitate November and December meetings. Recruitment for the vacant planning manager position is ongoing.

7. PLANNING DIVISION REPORT

There was no report.

8. CALENDAR

The next meeting will be November 16th.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, Chair Thompson called for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Warren motioned to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Osborne.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair, Christopher Thompson	Aye
Vice Chair Lisa Osborne	Aye
Commissioner Alisha Meginnis	N/A
Commissioner Denise Stanfield	Aye
Commissioner Linda Warren	Aye
Commissioner Larry White	Aye
Commissioner Alan Agundez-Castillo	Aye

Upon vote, the motion passed 6 to 0.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 p.m.



Chair, Chris Thompson



Date