

**Wednesday, December 14, 2022
6:00 pm**

Note from the Clerk: The December 14, 2022, Planning Commission meeting was held in-person at City of Avondale Council Chambers.

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair Thompson called the 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
Commissioner Alisha Meginnis
Commissioner Denise Stanfield
Commissioner Linda Warren
Commissioner Larry White
Commissioner Alan Agundez-Castillo

COMMISSIONER EXCUSED ABSENCE

Vice Chair Lisa Osborne
Alternate Julia Arnette

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Jodie Novak, Director, Development Services Department
Barbara Cason, Administrative Assistant
Ron Corbin, City Manager
Stephen Kemp, Attorney
Jani Wertin, Planner

3. OPENING STATEMENT AND INSTRUCTIONS

Chair Thompson read the opening statement

4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair Thompson called for a motion on the November 16, 2022, meeting minutes. Commissioner White moved to approve the minutes as written; commissioner Stanfield seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair, Christopher Thompson	Aye
Vice Chair Lisa Osborne	N/A
Commissioner Alisha Meginnis	Aye
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.

5. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS:

a. HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS- SOUTH - MINOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT - APPLICATION PL-22-0163

b. HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS - SOUTH -REZONING-APPLICATION PL-22-0166

Jani Wertin, Planner, presented application PL-22-0163 and PL-22-0166 a Minor General Plan Amendment and Rezone for Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus-South together.

Ms. Wertin provided an overview of the Minor General Plan Amendment and Rezone PL-22-0163 and PL-22-0166 for the Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus-South. This site is located about one half-mile south of the southwest corner of Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road. It currently consists of approximately 78 gross acres. The current zoning for this property is Diamond P Ranch, that is a part of a larger PAD, and the current General Plan designation is Medium Density Residential (MDR). The actions at this meeting will amend the General Plan 2030 Land Use Map designations for the property from MDR to Business Park and change the zoning from Diamond P Ranch Planned Area Development (PAD) to Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus - South PAD to allow a data center and related employment uses with underlying Commerce Park (CP) zoning. The General Plan Amendment would change the land use designation from MDR to Business Park and accommodate the proposed uses, a data center that would use 66.5 acres, a private battery storage (Sierra Estrella Battery Storage) that will use 11.5 acres, and a private substation located in the northwest corner. For continuity purposes, the Sierra Estrella Battery Storage was previously entitled by approval of Council on November 1, 2021. This amendment will facilitate employment uses at an appropriate location where alternatives are not available, advancing the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor, as well as the General Plan's land use goals. It does not significantly alter acceptable land use patterns or adversely affect land use in the area. The developer is required to construct infrastructure and make necessary improvements. This proposed amendment is consistent with the goals in the General Plan 2030, and the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor. The closed loop cooling system recycles water and has no impact on the City's water system. Proposed development standards deviations include building setbacks, landscape setbacks, land use buffer and height to more of a buffer, and more space between the data center and future and existing residential.

The rezone request proposes employment use to include the data center, the private substation, private battery storage, professional offices, public utility facilities, accessory structure and laboratory uses. Minimal traffic impact is expected with access provided by two driveways off Avondale Boulevard, to include two left-turn lanes and one right-turn deceleration lane. The Developer will construct Avondale Boulevard along the project street frontage. A 10-foot multi-use trail will be provided within the landscape setback along Avondale Boulevard. Parking will follow zoning ordinance requirements for warehousing. The PAD conforms with the requested Business Park designation and furthers several goals of the General Plan. It meets the PAD requirements of the zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, design manuals and other applicable regulations and requirements. There is adequate public infrastructure and services in the immediate area to serve the proposed development. The developer will construct all required utility extensions and perimeter roadway improvements. The project is compatible with land use relationships within the proposed development and with adjacent properties. The proposed PAD development standards are consistent with or exceed the desired character of development for the area.

All required notifications for the neighborhood meeting and this hearing have been completed. There was a neighborhood meeting on July 25, 2022, with two attendees, including staff. No opposition has been voiced and no public comments have been received. Questions centered around the cooling system, job creation, proposed height, and tentative building schedule.

Commissioner Castillo inquired if the developers partnered with any regional partners to mitigate the project's water footprint in terms of water conservation. Carolyn Oberholtzer, Applicant, explained that the PAD is written to require the data center to use a closed loop system, which uses 95% less water than residential use.

Commissioner Castillo inquired about the relationship with the substation. Ms. Oberholtzer stated data centers use a lot of electricity and being adjacent to a power network and substation were significant components to this project. The battery storage has a contract with SRP to supply power to take off the grid, store it, and put it back into the grid.

Commissioner Castillo asked if there are tenants ready to move in and use the data center. Ms. Oberholtzer stated data centers are typically built for and managed for specific tenants; this project is tenant-driven. Where this project encompasses five buildings there may be more than one tenant per building.

Commissioner Castillo inquired if there is potential for future expansion within the region besides this parcel. Ms. Oberholtzer stated there was an application for a larger project north of this project, but no end-user or specific use was dictated. This project took priority as there was an end-user for this specific and isolated location. When that does occur, the developer will come before the Commission seeking to replace the various zoned entitlements.

Commissioner Warren asked how many employees are projected for the data center. Ms. Oberholtzer stated they anticipate between 40-60 employees for high quality jobs at the data center, which will generate low traffic.

Commissioner Warren inquired if there is a proposal for a bus service to bring in employees. Ms. Oberholtzer stated a bus stop is not on this property, but she believes a Zoom stop is planned for Lower Buckeye and Avondale Boulevard. Ms. Novak advised the transit program does not have any planned bus stops along that corridor, other than the one being looked at on Lower Buckeye near McDonald's.

Commissioner Stanfield asked about the laboratory uses. Ms. Oberholtzer stated there is no laboratory component at this time. The laboratory use was included in the PAD to allow for additional uses should there be a need in the future.

Chair Thompson inquired how tall the building will be and how it will affect nearby residences. Ms. Oberholtzer stated the roof height cannot exceed 50 feet plus a setback to house the chillers and mechanical equipment, including a screen and acoustical component. They mitigated the height using distance with 100 foot setbacks in every direction. Throughout the application process the residential communities have not indicated an issue with the proposal.

Chair Thompson inquired if there is anticipation of any hazardous materials being used at this facility. Ms. Oberholtzer stated outside of cleaning agents there are not.

Chair Thompson opened the public hearing on application PL-22-0163. There being no requests to speak, Chair Thompson closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Warren moved to accept Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus-South, with the Minor General Plan Amendment, Application PL-22-0163. Commissioner Agundez-Castillo seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair, Christopher Thompson	Aye
Vice Chair Lisa Osborne	N/A
Commissioner Alisha Meginnis	Aye
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.

Chair Thompson opened the public hearing on application PL-22-0166. There being no requests to speak, Chair Thompson closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Warren moved to accept Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus-South rezoning Application PL-22-0166, subject to the eight conditions of approval as listed in the staff report. Commissioner Stanfield seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair, Christopher Thompson	Aye
Vice Chair Lisa Osborne	N/A
Commissioner Alisha Meginnis	Aye
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.

6. PLANNING DIVISION REPORT

Ms. Novak stated there are two potential items that may be scheduled for the next meeting.

7. CALENDAR

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2023.

8. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner White made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Warren seconded the motion.

Roll Call Vote:

Chair, Christopher Thompson	Aye
Vice Chair Lisa Osborne	N/A
Commissioner Alisha Meginnis	Aye
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 6:32 p.m.


Chair Christopher Thompson
Date