



Planning Commission
Notice & Agenda
Wednesday, March 20, 2024

AVONDALE RESOURCE CENTER - AGUA FRIA ROOM | 995 E RILEY DRIVE | AVONDALE, AZ 85323

SPECIAL MEETING

6:00 PM

PHYSICAL ACCESS TO THE AGUA FRIA ROOM WILL BE AVAILABLE 30 MINUTES PRIOR TO THE MEETING.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Approval of February 7, 2024 and February 21, 2024 Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

4. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

a. HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS NORTH – MAJOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT – APPLICATION PL-23-0299

Planning Commission will hold the first of two public hearings and consider a request by Carolyn Oberholtzer of Bergin, Frakes, Smalley, and Oberholtzer, PLLC for a Major General Plan Amendment for Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus North, an approximately 239 gross acre planned Technology Campus with a Data Center and related employment uses located at the southwest corner of Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road. The proposed Major General Plan Amendment, if approved, will amend the General Plan 2030 Land Use Map designations for the property from Medium Density Residential and Estate/Low Density Residential to Business Park. The amendment will also expand the existing Local Commercial land use area. The Commission will discuss the item and hear any public comment. A second public hearing is scheduled for April 17, 2024, when the Commission will take appropriate action and forward a recommendation to the City Council.

Staff Contact: Joshua Orton, AICP, Senior Planner

5. COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS

6. PLANNING DIVISION REPORT

7. CALENDAR

April 17, 2024

8. ADJOURNMENT

Members will attend either in person or by telephone conference call. Individuals with special accessibility needs, including sight or hearing impaired, large print, or interpreter, should contact the City Clerk at 623-333-1200 or TDD 623-333-0010 at least two business days prior to the meeting.

Los miembros asistirán en persona o vía teleconferencia. Personas con necesidades especiales de accesibilidad, incluyendo personas con impedimentos de vista u oído, o con necesidad de impresión grande o intérprete, deben comunicarse con la Secretaría de la Ciudad al 623-333-1200 o TDD 623-333-0010 cuando menos dos días hábiles antes de la junta del Concejo.

**Wednesday, February 7, 2024
6:00 pm**

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair White called the 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 Larry White
Commissioner Denise Stanfield
Commissioner Julia Jewell
Commissioner Alan Agundez-Castillo (Arrived at 6:14 p.m.)
Alternate Ryan Benson

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED ABSENT

Commissioner Linda Warren

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Catherine Lorbeer, Deputy Director of Planning
Arrianna Ramirez, Administrative Assistant
Stephen Kemp, Assistant Attorney
Joshua Orton, Senior Planner

3. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

a. SUN DEPOT ENERGY STORAGE – MAJOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT – APPLICATION PL-23-0053

An overview was provided of the request by property owner Sun Depot Energy Storage LLC, to amend the General Plan 2030 Land Use Map for approximately 15.92 gross acres of land located approximately 330 feet west of the southwest corner of Palm Lane and Avondale Boulevard. The proposed major General Plan Amendment (GPA) is to amend the General Plan 2030 Land Use Map designation from Mixed Use to Public/Civic. It was noted this is the first of two public hearings. This item is only for discussion of the GPA and no action will be taken.

The acreage was annexed into the City in 2006 and is currently being used for agriculture. North of Palm Lane is Canyon Breeze Elementary School, zoned agriculture and single-family residences, as well as Palm Gardens Planned Area Development (PAD). South is McDowell Villas PAD for future townhome rentals and Avondale Commons PAD zoned mixed use which is under construction for apartments and future commercial offices. East are larger single-family residences and west are two electrical substations within Maricopa County jurisdiction owned by Arizona Public Service (APS) and Salt River Project (SRP).

An explanation of the type of uses allowed under the mixed use and public/civic use was provided. The proposed use for this site is a privately-owned battery energy storage facility that is intended to sell stored energy to APS and SRP.

Staff analysis finds the amendment does not constitute an improvement to the 2030 General Plan and the current designation of mixed use is more suitable for this site. Also noted was that the proposed change would alter current acceptable land use pattern for the area as a mixed residential and commercial use site. An alternative site near industrial areas would be more suitable. The neighborhood meeting was held on January 4, 2024, at City Hall with nine attendees along with members of the applicant's team and one Planning Commissioner attending. Discussion related to safety, monitoring, and response to any kind of fire events. Traffic impact; the potential need for improvements to Palm Lane; benefits to Avondale as a whole; and the design, layout, and specific details about batteries; and security of the site were also discussed.

The City has notified the required agencies and held a 60-day review process. Luke Air Force Base indicated this project would not affect their operations. Eleven comments were received through Avondale Connect not in favor of the project due to the proximity of homes and school and potential fire risk as well as visual impact and increased traffic. Similar comments were received from the City's social media posting. Currently, staff recommends denial of application PL-23-0053, a request for a major General Plan Amendment to the General Plan Land use 2030.

Chair White opened it up to Commissioners. There were no questions or comments at this time.

Chair White invited the applicant to speak.

Katherine Anderson with Ballard and Spahr, LLP spoke on behalf of the applicant Invenergy to explain why they are seeking approval of this application. She was joined by Kelly Zagrzebski, Manager of Local and Community Affairs at Invenergy in Arizona; Paul Burman, Director of Renewable Energy at Invenergy in Arizona; and Ryan Green, Project Engineer. Ms. Anderson provided an overview of how battery energy storage facilities work. Extra power on the grid is pulled from the system to charge the batteries, then during peak usage, the grid pulls energy back from the batteries. This cycle provides grid stability and continuous energy to consumers even when solar power is not available and also prevents rolling blackouts. APS and SRP have been partnering with private companies like Invenergy to install battery energy storage systems at their substations. The Sun Depot facility would be constructed adjacent to the White Tank 69 Global substation, which is co-owned by APS and SRP.

After discussing this project with City staff, it was suggested the appropriate land use category for this project under the General Plan would be Public/Civic, which made sense because Sun Depot is a public facility that will store power for APS and SRP and everyone benefits from a stable electrical grid. Battery energy storage systems are designed to serve substations and they must be built as close as possible to the existing substation, which in this case means there is no other suitable location based on the proximity to the substation. If this battery energy storage was built in an industrial area, transmission lines would need to be run throughout the City which would reduce efficiency and increase cost. What is being proposed is like uses adjacent to like uses, which is land use 101.

The property is currently zoned agriculture use and the General Plan use designation envisions mixed use, but the only proposed project is Sun Depot. This project is more sustainable than the current agricultural and is consistent with the City's priority of renewable energy and energy efficiency. Mixed use development will consume energy, create a burden on the City's water resources, and create traffic concerns on Palm Lane.

The proposed amendment is consistent with the General Plan's themes of sustainable development and economic vitality. The project will create tax revenue for Avondale and both short-term and some limited long-term employment opportunities, but the real economic impact is grid stability. A stable infrastructure makes Avondale a more attractive place to build a business and allows businesses to thrive with a stable power supply. The Sun Depot project will benefit Avondale and its residents by advancing Avondale's commitment to energy efficiency and attracting future development by placing importance on a stable infrastructure.

In response to questions from Commissioner Agundez-Castillo, Ms. Anderson explained this location was chosen because of the proximity to the White Tank substation that is co-owned by APS and SRP, allowing transmission lines to be tied directly into substation, increasing the efficiency of the power supply. Weaving lines throughout the City would cause power to be lost. There are other substations within the city; however, not many of them have land available next to them. Mixed use will provide more long-term jobs, but it will not provide a stable power grid. Mr. Burman discussed the number of employees Invenenergy has within their Arizona office and the number of employees needed for each project is minimal, but it is a growing industry. There are other possible substations, but each one comes with their own challenges, and the applicants think this is a good and compatible use and location.

In response to questions from Chair White, Mr. Burman noted many of the concerns presented at the public meeting on January 4th were related to traffic, which are believed to be driven by the totality of the construction projects in the area including the townhomes and apartments. The only potential traffic issues for this project would be during peak construction and a traffic management plan would be developed with city staff with proper notification to residents. The facility will generate some noise, but it will be within the city ordinance. The applicant is working with a sound engineer to keep it as minimal as possible with appropriate walling. The City has requested half-lane improvements to the south half of Palm Lane to meet city standards to which the applicant acquiesced.

Chair White opened the public hearing.

Linda Ressler discussed her concern about safety and hazards, noting if the batteries were to catch fire, they would emit gases. She noted situations in Chandler, AZ, and Los Angeles, CA, where residents within a half-mile radius had to be evacuated. She noted the same radius around the proposed battery storage facility includes schools and a hospital. Ms. Ressler also expressed concern with decreased home values due to the need for evacuation plans.

Larry Martino discussed concerns with the lithium-ion batteries being unpredictable and starting a fire at any time and if the fire department was prepared to handle it. He understands it is necessary to have, but not in his backyard, and also noted concern with safety and proximity to the hospital and schools.

Vicente Juarez, an Avondale resident and Invenenergy employee, spoke in favor of the project. He discussed how Invenenergy supports veterans and assists with transitioning them into civilian life and the workforce. He further discussed Invenenergy's commitment to safety with highly trained personnel, constantly monitored facilities, and working closely with first responders to ensure they are ready to handle any situation that may arise. The project will keep the energy rates from increasing and prevent outages.

Chair White closed the public hearing.

Mr. Burman responded to the public comments noting Invenenergy has been proactively working with the Avondale's Fire Marshall, who has reviewed the plans and believes he has the equipment to respond to this type of fire should one arise. These facilities are very important in maintaining grid stability and the applicant understands there are risks and responsibilities, which are taken seriously.

In response to Chair White's questions, Mr. Burman stated the batteries will more than likely be lithium-ion and further explained how technology has evolved. The units will look like commercial-sized refrigerators that are self-contained and have smaller cells inside them. The Invenenergy projects have not issued evacuation plans and do not anticipate the need to do that for this project. Commissioners were invited to view the Youngtown project which is adjacent to housing on both sides. The HVAC system is a standard system.

Mr. Burman discussed the steps to be taken before they reach the point of discussing a contract with APS and SRP and the review process the utilities do before they enter the contract. A building permit is not sought through the City until the contract is signed. If there is no contract with the utilities, the project ends.

Mr. Burman explained, if the project is built, there is a projected \$100,000 in sales tax at the time of building and an average of \$500,000 per year in property taxes. APS and SRP ensure the reliability of their systems, and if APS had additional power, they could sell power to SRP.

4. **COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

No announcements made.

5. **PLANNING DIVISION REPORT**

Mrs. Lorbeer noted the next meeting will be on February 21, 2024, at City Hall.

6. **CALENDAR**

- Regular meeting scheduled for February 21, 2024

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

There was no further business; Chair White called for a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Agundez-Castillo made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Jewell.

Chair Larry White	Aye
Commissioner Denise Stanfield	Aye
Commissioner Linda Warren	N/A
Commissioner Alan Agundez-Castillo	Aye
Commissioner Julia Jewell	Aye
Alternate Ryan Benson	Aye

Upon vote, the motion passed 5 to 0

Meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Chair, Larry White

Date

**Wednesday, February 21, 2024
6:00 pm**

1. WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER

Chair White called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

The following members and representatives were present.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT IN PERSON / PHONE / VIDEO

Chair Larry White
Commissioner Linda Warren
Commissioner Alan Agundez-Castillo
Commissioner Julia Jewell
Alternate Ryan Benson

COMMISSIONERS UNEXCUSED ABSENT

Commissioner Denise Stanfield

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Catherine Lorbeer, Deputy Director of Planning
Arrianna Ramirez, Administrative Assistant
Stephen Kemp, Attorney
Joshua Orton, Senior Planner
Sandra Freund, Senior Planner
Larry Rooney, Fire Chief
Jodie Novak, Development Services Director

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair White called for a motion to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Agundez Castillo moved to approve the minutes for November 15, 2023, and January 17, 2024;
Commissioner Warren seconded the motion.

Chair Larry White	Aye
Commissioner Julia Jewell	Aye
Commissioner Denise Stanfield	N/A
Commissioner Linda Warren	Aye
Commissioner Alan Agundez Castillo	Aye
Alternate Ryan Benson	N/A

Upon Vote, the motion passed 4 to 0

4. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

a. EXTRA SPACE STORAGE – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT – APPLICATION PL-23-0303

Sandra Freund, Senior Planner, provided an overview of Application PL-23-0303 for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow a Mini Storage Warehouse and Personal Storage facility in the Palm Valley Planned Area Development (PAD). A CUP for this development was previously approved on June 21, 2021, but has since expired and the applicant is requesting a new approval for the same project to allow the development to move forward. The property is 2.28 net acres, located on the southwest corner of Indian School Road and Osborn Road, which was annexed in the city in 1981 and zoned PAD. To the north is Litchfield Park with single family homes; to the east is Coldwater Station, that contains retail, restaurant, office, and service uses on approximately 3 acres; to the south is the Litchfield Park Post Office and Litchfield Park Plaza; and to the west is undeveloped land with C-2 community uses allowed. This site is zoned Palm Valley PAD with C-2 community commercial uses. The 30-foot tall, 2-story facility is designed for internal access only with operating hours from 6:00 AM to 10:00 PM. Access will only be from west Osborn Road through a controlled security gate and on-site parking will accommodate 10 vehicles with covered loading sections. The south elevation will be visible from the post office.

The staff's analysis finds the project conforms with the General Plan, zoning, and existing development; complies with the City's commercial design manual; and is a low traffic generator. The developer must meet five recommended conditions of approval for the project:

- Consistent with the General Plan 2030 and North Avondale Specific Plan
- Compatible with existing land uses
- Suitable size to accommodate use and meet all required development standards
- Adequate access to public streets and capacity to accommodate traffic generated by proposed use
- Adequate conditions in place to mitigate any potential adverse effects

Two neighborhood meetings were held, one was virtual and the other was in-person. The public comments focused on traffic safety concerns, landscape and water demand, and the proposed use at this location. On the City's digital platform, Avondale Connect, the project received two comments. One of the comments had concerns about the traffic and building height and the other comment voiced support for the project. Staff recommends approval of the application, subject to the five conditions of approval as listed in the staff report.

Applicant Paul Hedges addressed the Commission, noting although the CUP expired, their dedication has not wavered. The project is a step toward meeting Avondale's need to enhance the community and contribute to the local economy. The design will consist of warm desert tones and glass elements for the exterior. The development will have minimal impact on traffic. Monthly services and internal loading would minimize pest concerns and ensure cleanliness and safety. Effective waste management, following city codes, and diligent monitoring help preserve the environment. Hazardous materials or toxic chemicals are not allowed to be stored in the facility.

In response to the commissioners' questions, Ms. Freund clarified Osborn Road does not have a concrete median at the proposed entrance location. The post office is a single-story building to the south and this facility would be approximately 30-feet tall. Mr. Hedges explained how a feasibility study was used to determine the need for a storage facility within this area. They project the facility will fill up within 12 to 18 months and 1 to 3 cars will access the facility every hour. Nearby facilities are at capacity and have minimal vacancies, which are created by raising rents. Based on the growth study conducted, the demand is there. Office hours will be from 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. and the gate hours will be from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. every day. There are many layers of security to keep crime down, including a gate code, exterior cameras, and lighting. Although the lease states the hazardous items are not allowed, it is difficult to monitor and staff walk through the building to see what is coming in and out.

Chair White opened the public hearing.

Ms. Ramirez read a comment card from Mike Llewellyn, who is opposed to this item based on the type and size of the business, the esthetics and industrial service, excessive traffic, loud noise, and visual degradation of the area that will cause property values to decrease.

Ms. Ramirez read a comment card from Christopher Chavez, who is opposed to this item.

Eric Blocher presented 33 signatures from the Dysart Ranch residents to request this project not be approved, citing this would decrease property values and would not benefit the Dysart Ranch residents. The proposed operating hours will result in loud noises within the residential areas and is not conducive to the community. He presented a recommendation to build the warehouse along the Loop 303 Corridor.

Jennifer with the Dysart Ranch Community coalition (DRC) formed around this permit stated this should not be approved for the following reasons:

- The notices were not completed correctly
- Inaccurate information was provided to the Commission
- The title report deed was not current
- C-2 zoning requirements have not been met
- The esthetics do not conform with the area
- The applicant failed to comply with the application requirements

Greg Deeds, also with the DRC, spoke against this item. He noted the report provided by the applicant is incomplete, inaccurate, and that the applicant has misrepresented facts. Building this property will have a long-term adverse effect on the community, safety, and property value. He urged that the lot instead be used for community enrichment.

Public Hearing was closed by Chair White.

In response to Commissioner Warren's questions, Mrs. Lorbeer stated noticing requirements have been met for this item.

Commissioner Jewell moved to approve Application PL-23-0303 Extra Space Storage Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to allow for a mini-storage warehouse and personal storage development, subject to the five conditions of approval. Commissioner Agundez Castillo seconded the motion.

Chair Larry White	Aye
Commissioner Julia Jewell	Nay
Commissioner Denise Stanfield	N/A
Commissioner Linda Warren	Nay
Commissioner Alan Agundez Castillo	Aye
Alternate Ryan Benson	N/A

Upon vote, the motion to approve the project failed 2 to 2 so the project is denied.

b. SUN DEPOT ENERGY STORAGE – MAJOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT – APPLICATION PL-23-0053

Josh Orton, Senior Planner, presented the second public hearing for Sun Depot Energy Storage Major General Plan Amendment and the first and only public hearing on the Rezone before this item moves forward to the City Council. This site is located approximately 330 feet west of the southwest corner of Palm Lane and Avondale Boulevard. The approximate 15.92-gross-acre property was annexed into the City in 2006 and is currently being used for agriculture. North of Palm Lane is Canyon Breeze Elementary School, zoned agriculture, and single-family residences zoned Palm Gardens planned area development (PAD). South is McDowell Villas PAD for future townhome rentals and Avondale Commons PAD, zoned mixed use including multifamily, which is under construction for apartments and future commercial and office uses. To the East are larger single-family residences, and to the west are two electrical substations owned by APS and SRP within Maricopa County jurisdiction.

The first request is to amend the General Plan Land Use designation from mixed use to Public/Civic. An explanation of the type of uses allowed under the mixed use and public/civic use was provided. The proposed use for this site is a privately owned battery energy storage facility that is intended to sell stored energy to APS and SRP, which most closely fits the public/civic designation. There is also a request to rezone the property from Agricultural to Sun Depot

Planned Area Development (PAD) to allow for the development of the battery energy storage facility. A conceptual site plan has been provided. If the project is approved, the development must conform to the PAD narrative and conceptual designs presented to staff. The majority of the site is made up of battery storage with primary ingress and egress from West Palm Lane. The proposal includes an 8-foot screen wall and a gravel drive aisle around the perimeter. Requested deviations include to allow:

- Galvanized chain link on west side
- Decreased land use buffer plantings
- Decreased right of way plantings
- Decreased land use setback plantings.

Staff analysis finds the amendment does not constitute an improvement to the 2030 General Plan. The change would alter and adversely impact the current acceptable use land use of the area. A battery energy storage system project would be incompatible with the existing residential, educational, and hospital uses in the vicinity in terms of environmental and safety concerns from a potential fire event and in terms of esthetics. These also present potential life safety concerns in the event of a fire that could have toxic fumes and cause evacuations. Fire incident considerations from the Fire Marshall include:

- The scale of the systems is directly correlated to the effects of their failure, meaning the larger the system, the more danger it presents if it were to fail
- Fire suppression practice involves a defensive approach
- Neighborhood evacuations are probable due to the toxic fumes
- Effects could spread as far as the freeway

The neighborhood meeting was held on January 4, 2024, at City Hall with nine attendees along with members of the applicant's team and one Planning Commissioner. Discussion related to safety, monitoring, and response to any kind of fire events, along with the traffic impact; potential improvements to Palm Lane; benefits to Avondale; and the design, layout, specific details about batteries and security of the site; as well as concerns expressed by Phoenix Children's Hospital.

The City has notified the required agencies and began a 60-day review process. Luke Air Force Base indicated this project would not affect their operations and Arizona Game and Fish had preliminary comments. Thirteen comments were received through Avondale Connect in opposition to the project due to the proximity of homes and school and potential fire risk as well as visual impact and increased traffic. Two citizens spoke in opposition at the first Planning Commission hearing and one individual expressed support. North Avondale Homeowners Association, which is the community north of the project, is in opposition to the project.

Staff recommends denial of Application PL-23-0053 and PL-23-0177 because they are not consistent with the overall intent of the 2030 General Plan and other adopted plan, codes, and ordinances. General Plan states consideration will be given to relationship with surrounding land uses, visual impact of the project, potential fire risk, and public input.

In response to Commissioner Jewell's questions, Mr. Orton advised the individual who previously spoke in favor of the project is employed with Invenergy and Chair White noted he lived in the City of Avondale. Mr. Orton stated the map may not fully reflect current information including education designations. Approximately six people will be employed at the battery storage facility.

Commissioner Agundez Castillo stated he shares staff's concerns and believes this project is not compatible with the land uses surrounding this site.

In response to Commissioner Jewell's questions, Chief Rooney stated this would be very difficult for them to handle, but they do have a plan in place to mitigate. There are many factors such as the wind and weather conditions. The large number of residents and the proximity of the neighborhoods is very concerning and surrounding areas could be shut down for up to a week.

Applicant, Paul Burman discussed how the battery energy storage facilities are an investment in energy safety to create a reliable, compatible, and safe use for a growing community like Avondale. Invenergy will do this responsibly and effectively. The safety elements require analysis of the impacts on hazard mitigation, and as the technology expands, it gets safer. Due to the existing APS and SRP substation, there is no other land use available in the City of Avondale. This project is also committed to adhering to the landscape, wall, and visual aesthetics for the City of Avondale.

In response to the Commissioners' questions, Mr. Burman explained energy comes from the grid of the APS and SRP substations and there would need to be a long-term power purchasing agreement with either utility before the project is built. There will be three employees on site at this facility and the site manager lives in Avondale. The batteries are made from lithium. There is no fire suppression within the individual units. Instead, an alert will be received notifying staff if something needs to be addressed. If there is a fire within one cell, only that cell would be at risk because they are stand-alone units. The facility shows no impact on property values. Most of the residents in the area are SRP customers and Avondale would receive tax revenue from the project. Jim Kennedy, Invenergy Staff Engineer, stated there is extensive testing being done and they will work with the fire department to design a system in the safest way.

In response to Chair White's questions regarding the 2019 incident in Surprise, Mr. Kennedy explained the system's battery management system and that it is designed with a battery management system that can detect any fluctuation and will shut down and disconnect the affected battery cell rack from the rest of the system. Fire suppression is only used to prevent the spread of an electrical fire and the best suppression method will be determined with the fire department. An insulator will be used as a barrier to ensure propagation is limited between cells. Most storage systems use a prevention method called NFPA 69, which detects hydrogen gases. The emergency ventilation system evacuates gases to prevent explosions. The fire department is aware of the development. The NFPA 55 has improved since 2019 and has gone through the 2023 version. This facility would be viewed as a large system. Mr. Burman noted the three employees would park in the drive aisles and the employees' primary focus would be the operations and maintenance of the system.

Chair White asked if this type of technology has advanced to the point that the risk is now low enough to accept putting this facility in a residential location. Mr. Burman responded by referencing multiple events in the Phoenix area that have helped inform safety measures the company will take. He also noted it took a while for people in Youngtown to become educated about and comfortable with this type of facility.

It was noted there are two items under consideration: PL-23-0053, application for a Sun Depot Energy Storage Major General Plan Amendment to amend the General Plan Land Use designation from mixed use to Public/Civic, and PL-23-0177, a request to rezone the property from Agricultural to Sun Depot Planned Area Development.

Chair White opened the public hearing for both Application PL-23-0053 and PL-23-0177.

Vicente Juarez, a resident of Avondale and employee of Invenergy, spoke in favor of the project.

Wilma Brown, a resident of Palm Garden, stated her opposition to the project, noting the risk with high temperatures, overcharging, toxic fumes, and traffic impacts. She also referenced the Gilbert, AZ, 2023 fire.

Layla Villasenor gave a community map to the Commissioners that shows over 100 neighbors that have signed a letter of opposition to this project. She stated of her opposition to the project, noting it would be better suited for an industrial area, will not bring jobs to the City, and is not worth the risk to families in the neighborhoods.

Linda Ressler stated her opposition to the project and asked the commission to take into consideration the Fire Marshall's evacuation report and the letter from Phoenix Children's Hospital.

Chair White closed the public hearing.

Mr. Burman stated Invenergy makes providing safety a high priority and have designs ready for the Fire Marshall to review that do not present any evacuation risks. They want to work with everyone to ensure they are comfortable with this type of technology.

Commissioner Warren moved to recommend denial of Application PL-23-0053, a request to amend the General Plan 2030 Land Use Map designation from Mixed Use to Public/Civic. Commissioner Agundez Castillo seconded the motion.

Chair Larry White	Aye
Commissioner Julia Jewell	Aye
Commissioner Denise Stanfield	N/A
Commissioner Linda Warren	Aye
Commissioner Alan Agundez Castillo	Aye
Alternate Ryan Benson	N/A

Upon vote, the motion to recommend denial of the project passed 4 to 0.

c. SUN DEPOT – REZONE – APPLICATION PL-23-0177

Commissioner Agundez Castillo moved to recommend denial of Application PL-23-0177, a request to rezone approximately 15.92 gross acres from Agricultural to Planned Area Development. Commissioner Jewell seconded the motion.

Chair Larry White	Aye
Commissioner Julia Jewell	Aye
Commissioner Denise Stanfield	N/A
Commissioner Linda Warren	Aye
Commissioner Alan Agundez Castillo	Aye
Alternate Ryan Benson	N/A

Upon vote, the motion to recommend denial of the project passed 4 to 0.

5. COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS

No announcements made.

6. PLANNING DIVISION REPORT

Mrs. Lorbeer thanked the Commissioners for their time and noted the next meeting will be held at an alternative location.

7. CALENDAR

- Special meeting March 20, 2024

8. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business; Chair White called for a motion to adjourn.

Commissioner Agundez Castillo made a motion to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Warren.

Chair Larry White	Aye
Commissioner Julia Jewell	Aye
Commissioner Denise Stanfield	N/A
Commissioner Linda Warren	Aye
Commissioner Alan Agundez Castillo	Aye
Alternate Ryan Benson	N/A

Upon vote, the motion passed 4 to 0

Meeting Adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Chair, Larry White

Date

ITEM NUMBER: 4.a.

SUBJECT: Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus North – Major General Plan Amendment – Application PL-23-0299**MEETING DATE:** 3/20/2024

TO: Planning Commission**FROM:** Joshua Orton, AICP, Senior Planner**THROUGH:** Jodie Novak, Director of Development Services**PURPOSE:**

Planning Commission will hold the first of two public hearings and consider a request by Carolyn Oberholtzer of Bergin, Frakes, Smalley, and Oberholtzer, PLLC for a Major General Plan Amendment for Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus North, an approximately 239 gross acre planned Technology Campus with a Data Center and related employment uses located at the southwest corner of Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road. The proposed Major General Plan Amendment, if approved, will amend the General Plan 2030 Land Use Map designations for the property from Medium Density Residential and Estate/Low Density Residential to Business Park. The amendment will also expand the existing Local Commercial land use area. The Commission will discuss the item and hear any public comment. A second public hearing is scheduled for April 17, 2024, when the Commission will take appropriate action and forward a recommendation to the City Council.

BACKGROUND:

The approximately 239-acre subject property (Exhibits A and B) is located at the southwest corner of Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road and is made up of two parcels, 500-66-001D (53.45 acres) and 500-66-281 (24.07 acres), as well as the former “Fleming Farms” subdivision (approximately 53 acres). This site is currently vacant.

A portion of the property was annexed to the City on May 16, 2006, and the remainder was annexed on March 16, 2008. The site is currently zoned Diamond P Ranch Planned Area Development (PAD), Fleming Farms PAD, and Agricultural, which permits typical single-family residential and agricultural related uses.

The site consists of three land use categories designated by the General Plan 2030 Land Use Map (Exhibit C). The Medium Density Residential (MDR) designation is a land use category that primarily accommodates the development of suburban detached single-family residential within a density range of 2.5 to 4.0 dwelling units per acre, with a target density of 2.5. The Estate/Low Density Residential (ELDR) land use category is residential land that will contain densities that range between 1.0 to 2.5 single-family detached dwelling units per acre north of the Estrellas. These residences are typically large, detached estates or executive-type homes of one or two stories with significant privacy and open space.

The Local Commercial (LC) land use category is one that is used primarily for providing for the daily needs of goods and services to the residents residing within the surrounding area. The types of uses allowed in this category specifically for local residents may include: grocery stores, gas stations, neighborhood/retail services, and office and medical uses serving consumers residing in adjacent residential areas, which promotes a walkable community.

The property is within the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor emphasis area which is

designated in the General Plan as a major corridor for employment and commercial land uses.

The existing uses and zoning of surrounding properties include:

North: Small to medium lot single-family residential detached subdivision zoned Del Rio Ranch Planned Area Development (PAD)

South: An electrical substation and vacant property to be developed into a data center and battery energy storage facility; Rural Residential (RR-43) and Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus South Planned Area Development (PAD) zoning

East: Vacant land zoned for single-family residential, zoned Shadow Ridge Planned Area Development (PAD), and County property zoned single-family residential

West: A single-family residential subdivision, Cantada Ranch; zoned Planned Area Development (PAD)

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

The applicant is requesting approval of a Major General Plan Amendment (GPA) to the General Plan 2030 Land Use Map to facilitate development of Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus North, a planned technology campus with a data center and related employment uses (Exhibit D).

The requested Major GPA will create two major changes to the designation of the site. The first will change the majority of the property from Medium Density Residential (MDR) and Estate/Low Density Residential (ELDR) to Business Park (BP). The second change will add to the existing Local Commercial (LC) district to include properties which were previously given the Estate/Low Density Residential and Medium Density Residential designations.

The Business Park designation allows for large scale campus development that provides abundant employment opportunities and offers amenities such as attractive streetscapes with excess landscaped setbacks, pedestrian connections, efficient circulation, and refuge areas for active and passive activities to keep a healthy lifestyle for all employees. The category accommodates enclosed light manufacturing, corporate commerce, offices, data centers, research and development industries, solar and renewable energy manufacturers, motor sports related manufacturing, and limited warehouse and support services that support these primary employment uses.

There is a separate request to rezone the site to Planned Area Development (PAD). Approval of this Major GPA request is required for the rezoning to be approved, which is scheduled for the same upcoming Planning Commission and City Council meetings.

DISCUSSION:

1. The development pattern contained on the Land Use Plan inadequately provides the appropriate optional sites for the use or change proposed in the amendment.

This amendment will facilitate employment uses at an appropriate location where alternatives are not available. The site's current land use designations of LC, ELDR, and MDR do not allow for a major employment center, and as a result, do not advance the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor. This site is ideally located within a planned Development Corridor Emphasis Area for Avondale Boulevard and adjacent to supportive power and transportation infrastructure. The current General Plan does not have other BP sites with these advantages. Within the southern portion of the City, there are no BP sites over 300 acres.

2. The amendment constitutes an overall improvement in the 2030 Plan and is not solely for the good or benefit of a particular landowner or owners.

This Major GPA improves the General Plan by introducing supportive land uses to planning areas designed to attract employment investment. The project will provide new business opportunities within Avondale, particularly within the technological market that continues to rapidly grow and is attracted to areas with access to reliable power. This amendment reinforces Avondale's economic stability and sustainability.

This Major GPA will also serve to make the Local Commercial site located at the southwest corner of Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road more attractive to potential commercial development. It is expected that

the increased acreage will allow for a potential grocery anchor to develop the site as a local shopping center to serve the southern portions of Avondale. The city's Economic Development Department is consistently working with developers and business decision-makers to recruit new retail, restaurants, and future grocers into the community. South Avondale, specifically, is a high priority and new residential areas are creating heightened demand for retail, including grocers, and restaurants. This project will help progress those efforts. The southwest corner of Lower Buckeye Road and Avondale Boulevard will be planned for retail and restaurants. The project itself will help increase daytime population density with higher-wage jobs, which is very appealing to restaurants and retail dependent upon workweek lunch crowds and shoppers.

3. The amendment will not adversely impact the community as a whole and/or a portion of the community by: (1) significantly altering acceptable land use patterns; (2) requiring large and more expensive public infrastructure improvements including, but not limited to roads, water, wastewater, and public safety facilities than would otherwise be needed without the proposed change, or (3) adversely impacting the existing land use.

The amendment does not significantly alter acceptable land use patterns, but rather, advances the General Plan's land use goals and brings new jobs close to where residents live. The proposed project advances the goals of the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor, recognized in the General Plan as a major corridor for employment.

This Major GPA will not require larger and more expensive public infrastructure improvements. Replacing residential with employment uses will likely generate less demand for public safety services, and less traffic impact while providing a significant revenue enhancement to the City. As stated previously, this site is ideally located to take advantage of the existing arterials and transportation network. Off-site improvements may include water line upsizing on Lower Buckeye road, widening of Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road adjacent to the site, and installation of new driveways and traffic signals, subject to Site Plan and Design Review approval. These improvements are not beyond the type of off-site improvements that would be required if the currently planned uses are developed. The companion rezoning to Planned Area Development will establish future water and wastewater infrastructure to the site and the associated Meter Plans will establish sufficient water and sewer capacity. Proximity to the Rudd Substation is ideal for the proposed change.

The proposed data center will use turbo air-cooled chillers and a closed water loop cooling system. This technology greatly reduces water demand compared to other data center cooling technology that uses water-cooled chillers which consume and discharge a tremendous amount of water. In the case of the proposed Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus North, this project will use considerably less water than the residential development anticipated for the site as currently designated by the City's General Plan.

The Major GPA will not adversely impact existing land uses. Avondale has expectations for high-quality site design and landscaping in the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor. The proposed Project, through the companion PAD, will establish sufficient building and landscape setbacks to appropriately transition to surrounding existing and planned uses.

4. The amendment is consistent with the overall intent of the General Plan 2030 and other adopted plans, codes, and ordinances.

This Major GPA is consistent with the overall intent of the General Plan 2030, and the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor. This amendment encourages new investment, job creation, and a change to land use that advances economic sustainability and employment diversity.

The proposed amendment furthers several goals of the General Plan 2030, including but not limited to:

1. Land Use Element Goal #3, Policy D: "Ensure adequate transitions and/or buffers are provided when adjacent land uses vary in character and intensity."
2. Land Use Element Goal #4, Policy C: "Ensure Avondale is at the forefront of any emerging markets by continuously updating codes and policies to include standards for new business types"

and technologies”.

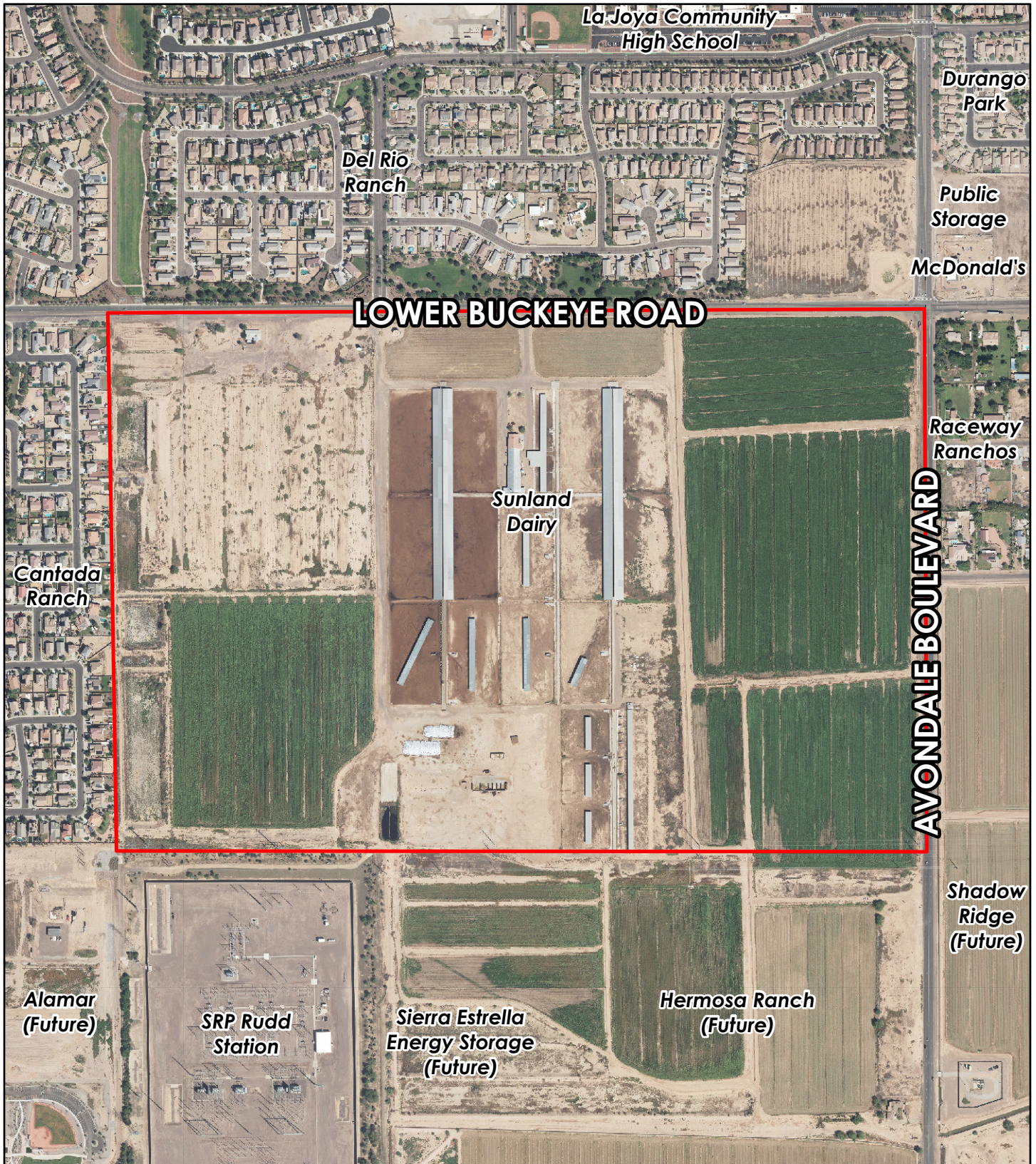
3. Economic Element Goal #3, Policy E: “Increase the supply of developable Business Park land and promote a flexibility of uses within.”
4. Economic Element Goal #10, Policy A: “Support efforts to locate and develop additional business park and industrial land along Avondale’s business corridor.”

BUDGET IMPACT:

No budget impacts at this time.

RECOMMENDATION:

This item is for discussion only. No action will be taken.

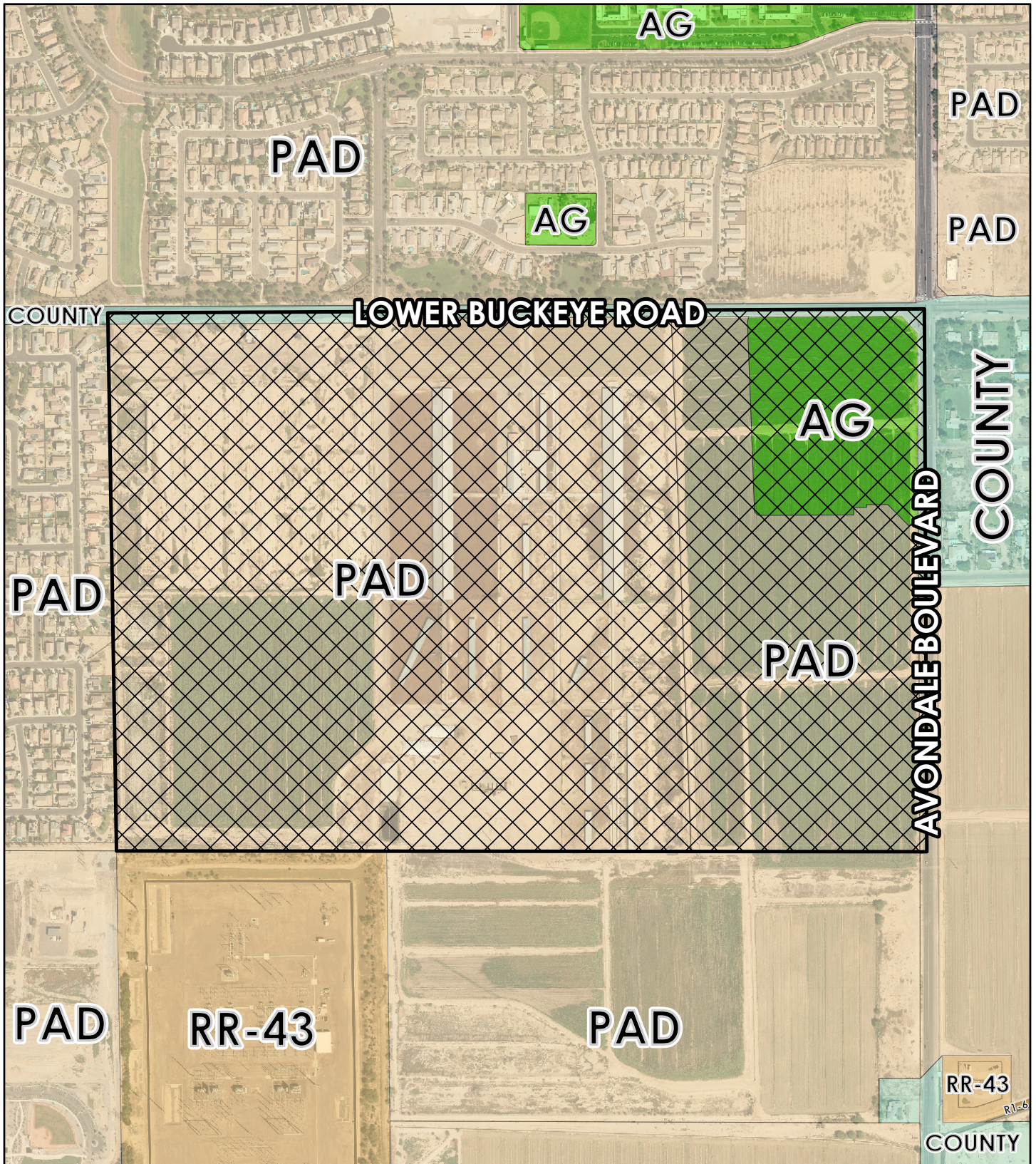


Aerial Map



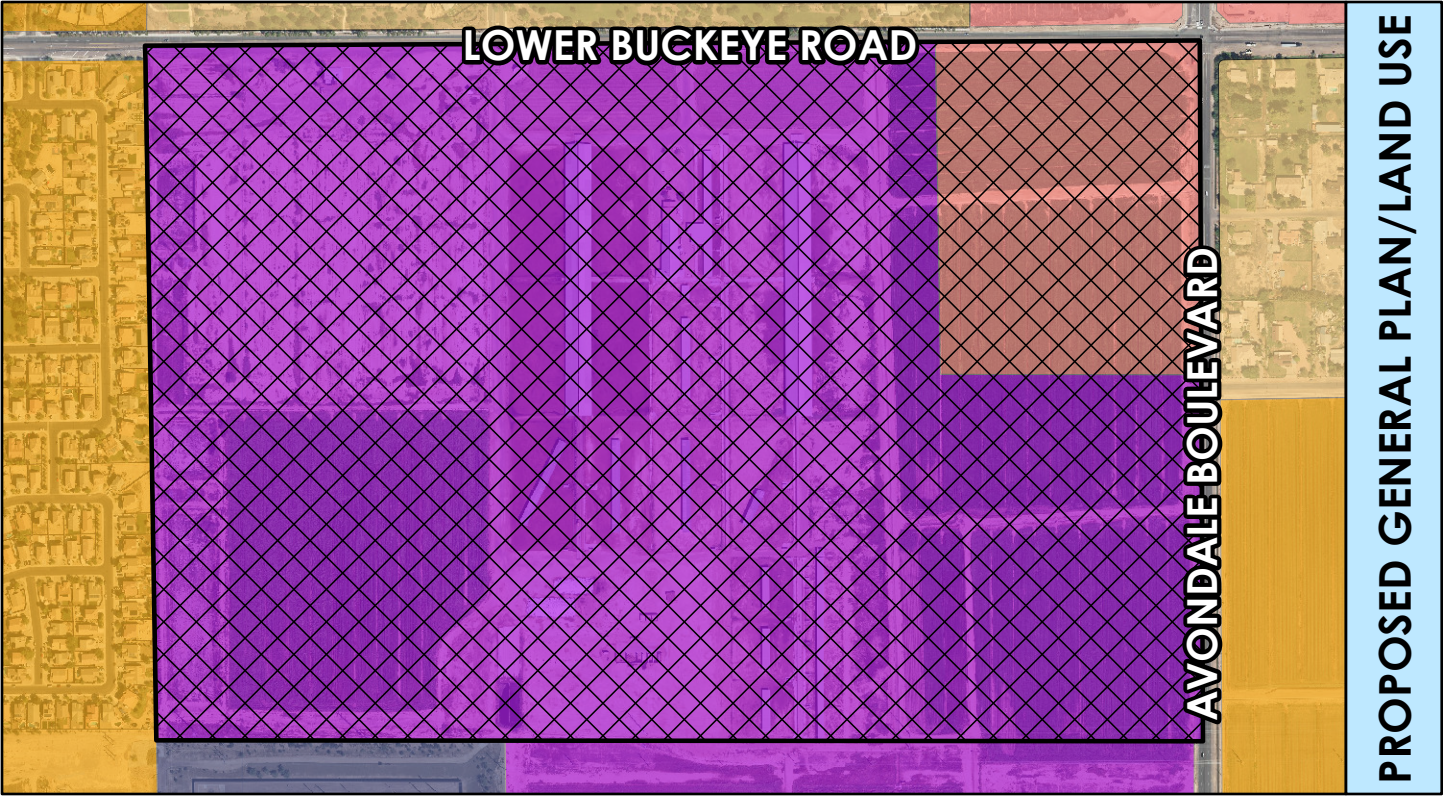
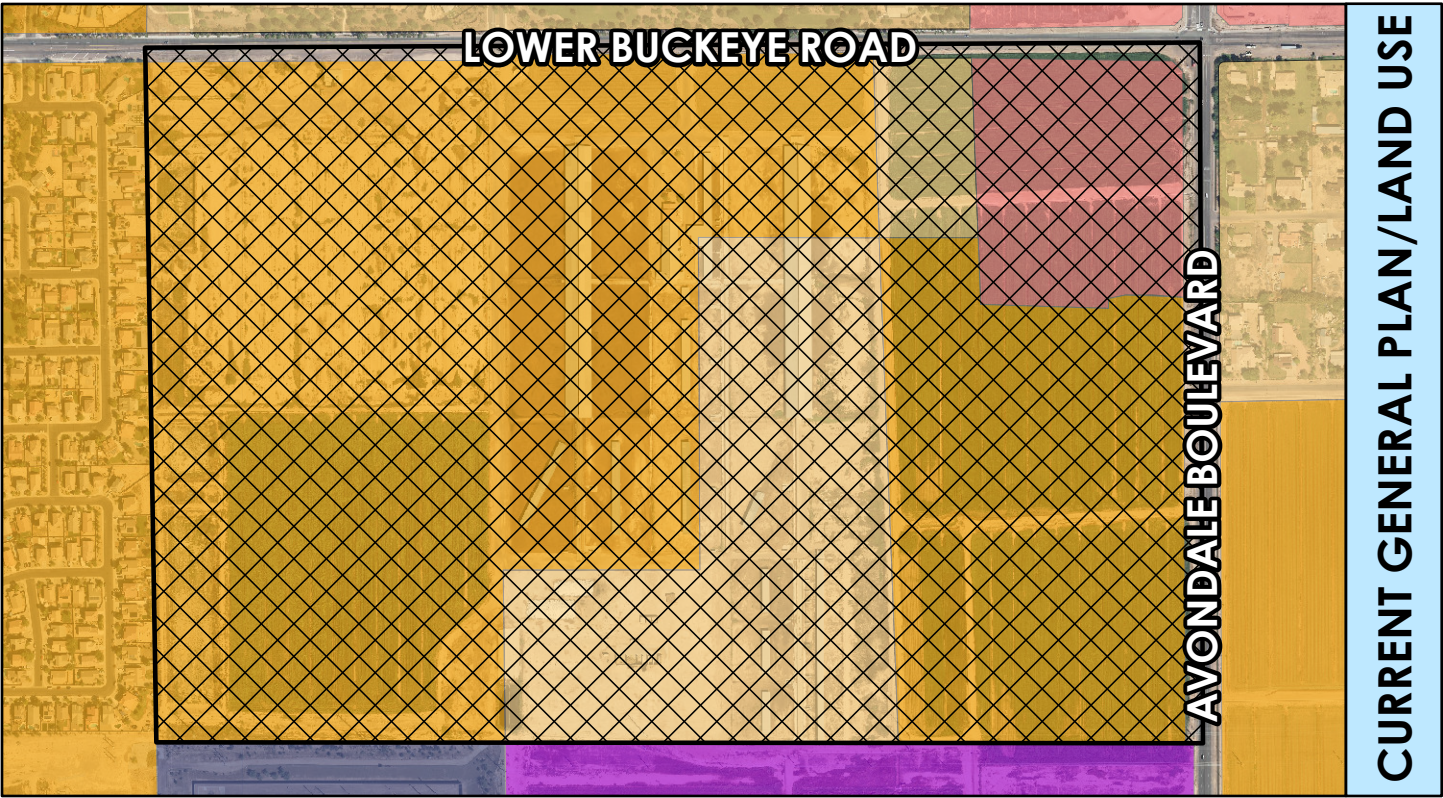
 Subject Parcel





Zoning Vicinity

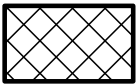




Proposed General Plan/Land Use



- Business Park
- Local Commercial
- Medium Density Residential
- Public/Civic
- Estate/Low Density Residential



Subject Parcel



Exhibit D
Electronically Submitted 3/7/24

HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS – NORTH

MAJOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

Application PL-23-0299

March 4, 2024

Property Owner

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HRNN, LLC
HRNL, LLC
HRNJ, LLC
HRNM, LLC

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DOCUMENT CONTENTS

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*NOTE: ALL IMAGES/USERS/TENANTS SHOWN WITHIN THIS GPA NARRATIVE ARE INTENDED TO CONVEY DESIGN INTENT AND ARE CONCEPTUAL IN NATURE.

I. INTRODUCTION

This Major General Plan Amendment (GPA) request is necessary to facilitate the future development of Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus - North, a technology campus and commercial development located on approximately 239 acres west and south of the intersection of Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road (the "Property"). This will be the continuation of the 2023 approved Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus - South PAD. The Property is located within the Tres Rios Opportunity Zone, along the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor, and one-quarter mile north of the South Core Growth Area which calls for "medium density commercial and employment uses". This GPA request will bring employment and commercial uses to the Property and provide a transition of intensity in alignment with the City's long range planning efforts. (See Exhibit 1 | Context Map and Exhibit 2 | Tres Rios Opportunity Zone)

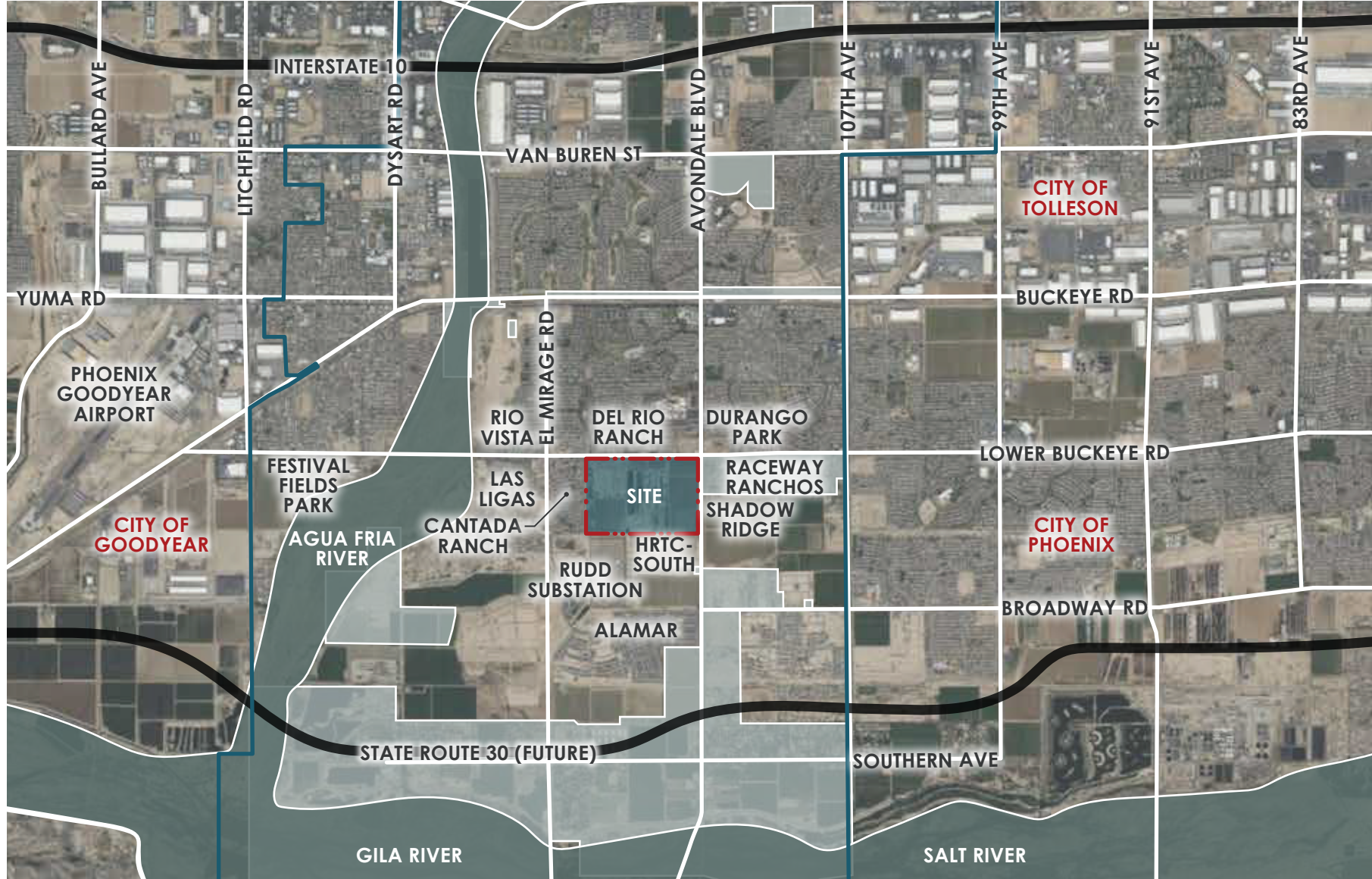
Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus – North is designed to include a variety of neighborhood-serving commercial uses and a technology campus with supporting ancillary uses in an arrangement that will complement the surrounding built and planned environment (the "Project"). The northeastern, approximately 28 acres (Parcel A on the Conceptual Development Plan), will be a variety of neighborhood-serving commercial such as a potential grocery, restaurants, fitness, and smaller-scale retail. The remaining approximately 212-acres (Parcel B on the Conceptual Development Plan) will serve as a technology campus designed to include gated and secured entrances with large landscape setbacks. Specific land use, development standards, site and architectural design guidelines are provided as a part of the companion Planned Area Development (PAD) Rezoning request, with the intent to complement surrounding existing and planned uses. The Project will provide a substantial revenue source for the City of Avondale and school districts and a significant investment in the community, infrastructure, street improvements, and employment opportunities, which will ultimately benefit the surrounding residential areas. (See Exhibit 3 | Conceptual Development Plan)

II. SUMMARY OF REQUEST

The purpose of this GPA request is to introduce employment uses into a planned employment corridor and to right-size the commercial corner by modifying the current General Plan land use designation from Estate/Low Density Residential (ELDR) and Medium Density Residential (MDR) to Business Park (BP) and increase the acreage of Local Commercial (LC). The requested land use modifications on the Property will continue the recent growth and investment in the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor, as envisioned in the General Plan. It will provide employment opportunities in this rapidly expanding growth area near existing infrastructure and the future SR30 Freeway and allow for a substantial mix of neighborhood goods and services. (See Exhibit 4 | General Plan)

This request includes the modification of approximately 48 acres of ELDR and approximately 164 acres ± of MDR to BP and approximately 1 acre of ELDR and approximately 7 acres ± of MDR to LC. Upon approval of this GPA request the Property will replace approximately 49 acres of ELDR, 171 acres of MDR, and 20 acres of LC with a total of approximately between 210 and 220 acres of BP and approximately between 20 and 30 acres of LC.

EXHIBIT 1 | CONTEXT MAP

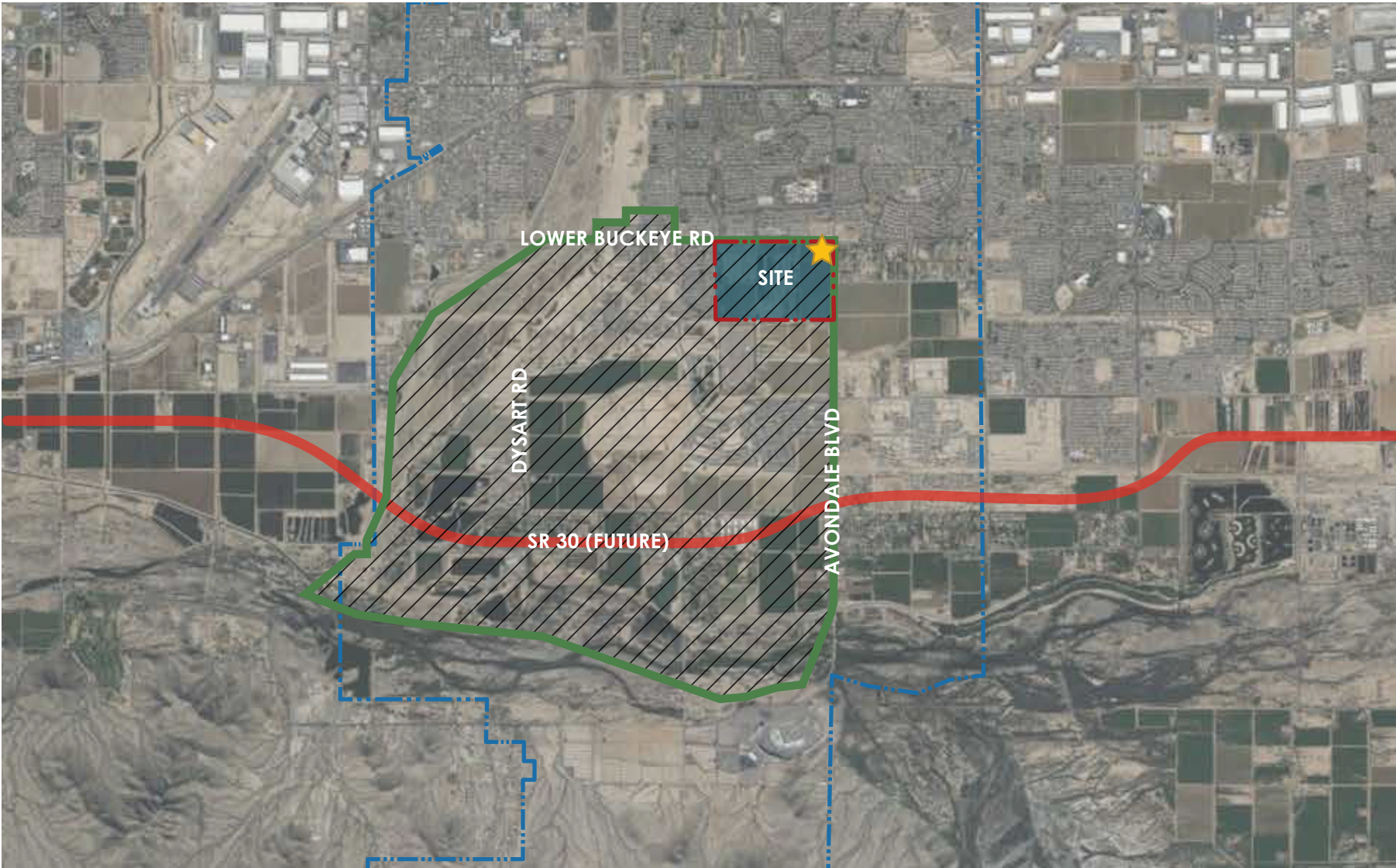


LEGEND

 HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS - NORTH
 AVONDALE CITY LIMITS

 RIVER/WATERSHED AREA
 MARICOPA COUNTY JURISDICTION





LEGEND

- HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS - NORTH
- TRES RIOS OPPORTUNITY ZONE
- AVONDALE CITY LIMITS

- SR 30 (FUTURE)
- PROPOSED COMMERCIAL



DEL RIO RANCH

LOWER BUCKEYE RD

RACEWAY RANCHOS

WINSLOW RD

MIAMI AVE

PARCEL A
GROSS: ± 28 AC

PARCEL B
GROSS: ± 212 AC

CANTADA RANCH

RUDD SUBSTATION

HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS - SOUTH

SHADOW RIDGE

PARCEL A
75'x125'
31 LOTS

PARCEL B
53'x115'
112 LOTS

AVONDALE BLVD

50' LANDSCAPE SETBACK

100' BUILDING SETBACK

20' BUILDING & LANDSCAPE SETBACK

15' BUILDING SETBACK

10' LANDSCAPE BUFFER

35' LANDSCAPE BUFFER

35' ADDITIONAL LANDSCAPE BUFFER

+/- 180' POWER LINE CORRIDOR

230' BUILDING SETBACK

ILLUSTRATIVE SECTION VIEW (TYP.)

AREA OF SHRUB LANDSCAPING PER PAD STANDARDS, BUT WITHOUT TREES IN POWER CORRIDOR (TYP.)

15' BUILDING SETBACK

10' LANDSCAPE BUFFER

10' LANDSCAPE BUFFER

15' BUILDING SETBACK

15' LANDSCAPE BUFFER AND BUILDING SETBACK

180' POWER LINE CORRIDOR

TREE MASSING PER PAD STANDARDS, FOR REFERENCE

50' ELEC ESTMT PLAN DOC #0008-349541

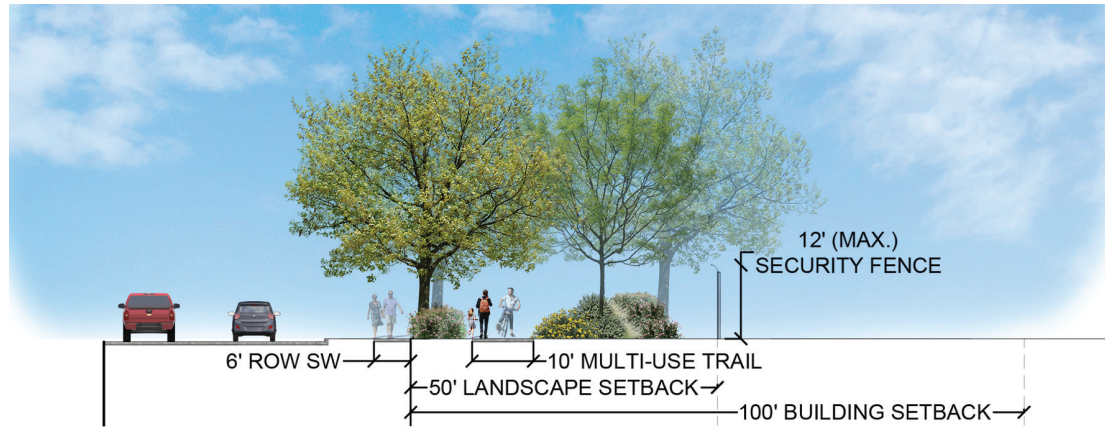
50' ELEC ESTMT PLAN DOC #0008-349541

PARC NORTH
58'x120'

HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS - NORTH
 PARCEL A - LOCAL COMMERCIAL
 PARCEL B - BUSINESS PARK
 ACCESS
 SETBACKS

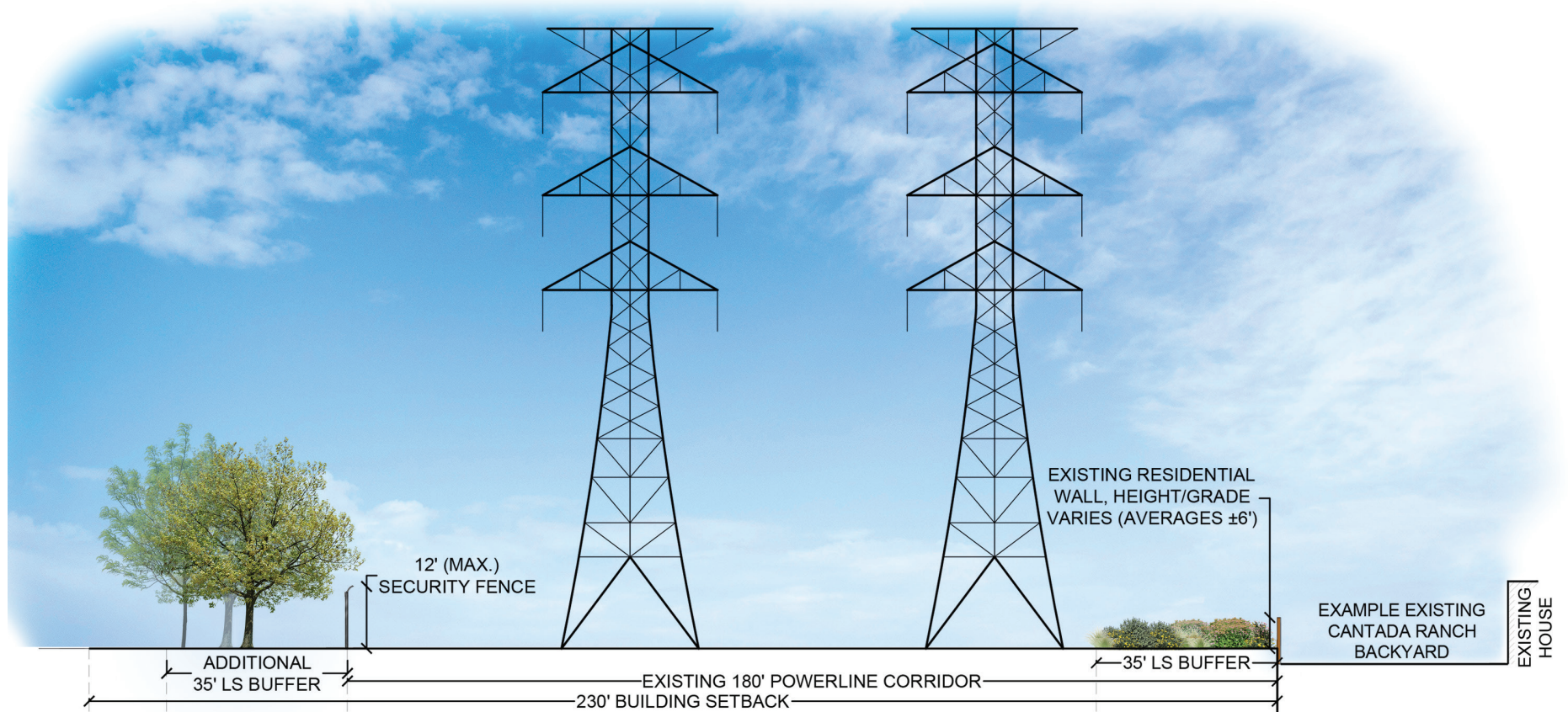
4

EXHIBIT 4 | ILLUSTRATIVE SECTIONS



Note: Landscaping shown is intended to demonstrate general scale, character and placement. Final design shall be per the plant list and standards provided in this narrative, and will vary by its individual context. For reference, A-A's setback will include one tree and ten shrubs planted every twenty feet of street frontage, and B-B's buffers will include three shrubs in the western 35-foot buffer (no trees allowed in power line corridor) and one tree in the additional 35-foot buffer planted every fifteen feet.

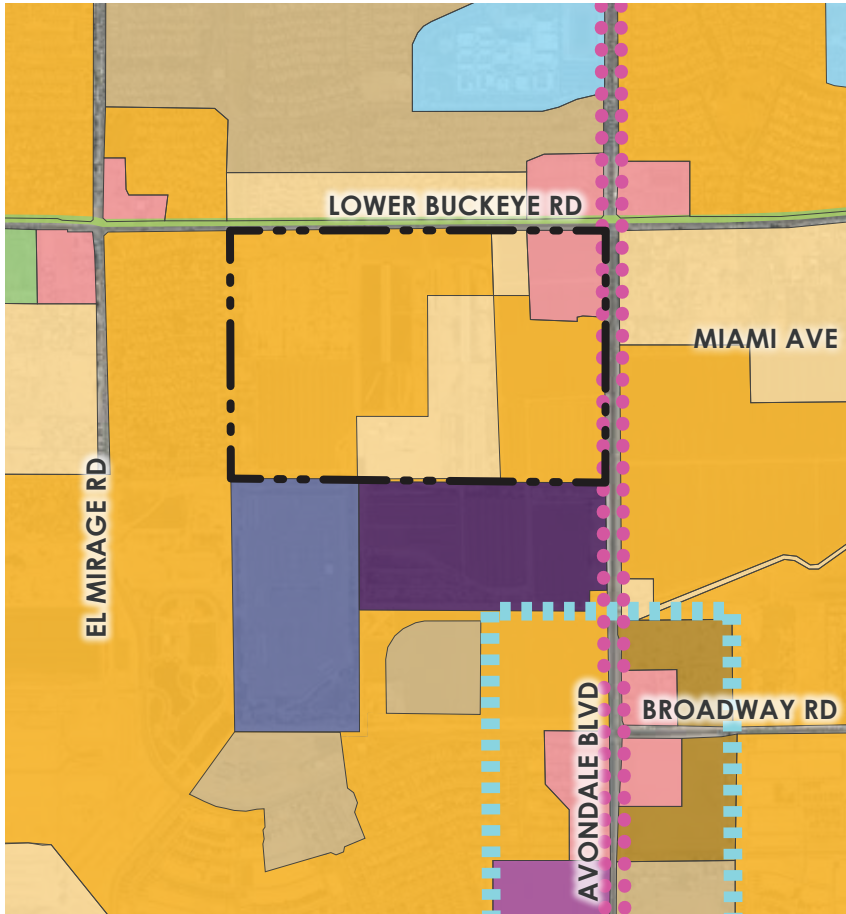
CROSS SECTION A-A: FACING E. ON LOWER BUCKEYE RD OR S. ON AVONDALE BLVD, ADJACENT TO EMPLOYMENT PARK



CROSS SECTION B-B: FACING SOUTH FROM POWER CORRIDOR

EXHIBIT 5 | GENERAL PLAN

EXISTING GENERAL PLAN

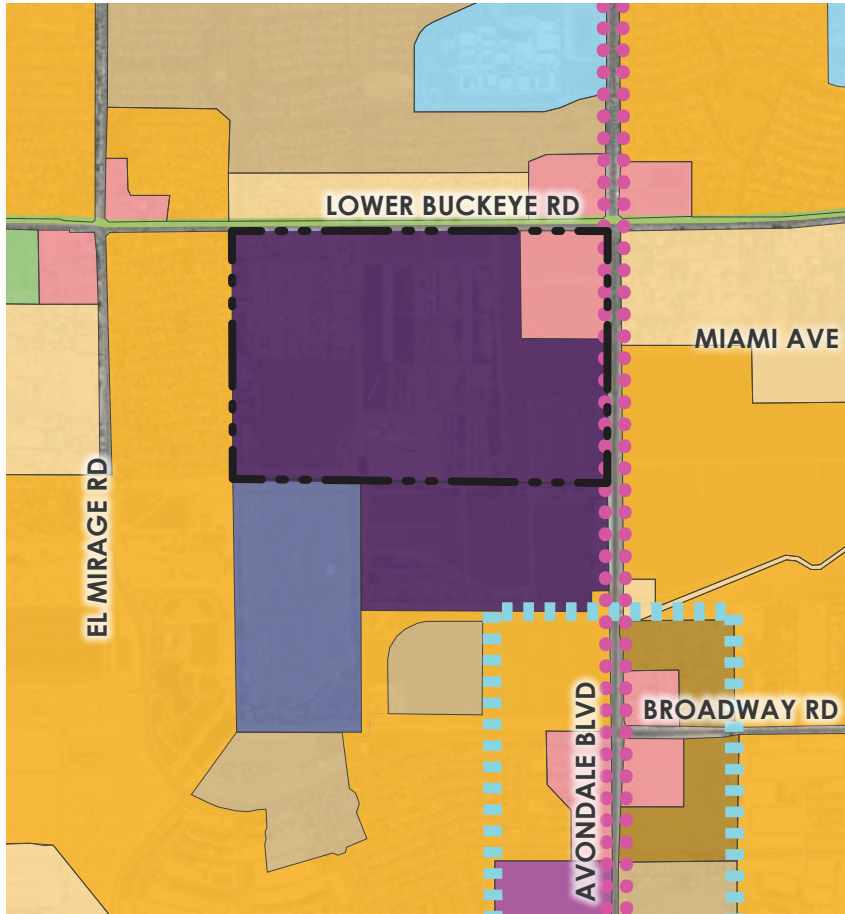


LEGEND

- MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- ESTATE/LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- LOCAL COMMERCIAL
- BUSINESS PARK
- MEDIUM/HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- PUBLIC/CIVIC
- OPEN SPACE AND PARKS



PROPOSED GENERAL PLAN



- EDUCATION
- MIXED USE
- HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL
- GROWTH AREA
- AVONDALE BLVD EMPLOYMENT AND COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR
- HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS - NORTH



III. SITE CONTEXT

Existing Conditions

The Property is currently zoned Planned Area Development (PAD) and Agricultural (AG). Approximately 167 acres of the western part of the Property is within the existing Diamond P Ranch PAD. Diamond P Ranch (Case No. Z-07-4) was annexed into the City of Avondale and rezoned to PAD in 2008 to allow 589 single family detached dwelling units, and a potential school site for the Littleton Elementary School District. Preliminary plats were prepared but were never approved by the City. East of Diamond P Ranch, the remaining approximately 67 acres of the Property is Flemming Farms PAD (Case No. Z-05-18). Subdivision Plats were approved and recorded in 2008. The northeast 17 acres was originally part of the overall PAD and called Fleming Farms Commercial, but it was removed from the Fleming Farms PAD in 2011 and reverted to the Agricultural zoning district (Ordinance 1493-412). (See Exhibit 5 | Zoning)

The approximately 239 acres associated with this GPA request is located west of Avondale Boulevard and south of Lower Buckeye Road, two highly traveled arterial roadways. Presently, the project area contains a commercial dairy, associated agriculture uses and some vacant land. Adjacent to the western third of the southern property boundary is the Rudd Substation. The existing substation serves the electrical supply networks for both the Salt River Project (SRP) and the Arizona Public Service Company (APS). The SRP, APS and WAPA power line corridors (230 kV) are present on the site, running the length of the western and southern boundaries. Immediately south of the east/west power line corridor is Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus – South which is currently being developed with a battery energy storage facility and data centers with supporting uses. The site has a flood delineation of Zone “X” and slopes towards the south and southwest. (See Exhibit 6 | Vicinity Map)



Compatibility With Surrounding Area

The current Avondale General Plan land use designations for the property are Estate/Low Density Residential (ELDR), Medium Density Residential (MDR), and Local Commercial (LC), with a zoning designation of PAD or AG. The Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor runs along the eastern portion of the Property. The entire Project is located within the Tres Rio Opportunity Zone, further emphasizing the desire to activate this site with an employment-based use. The major General Plan Amendment request to BP will complement adjacent land uses and meets the intent of the BP land use category to attract and support "large scale campus development that provides abundant employment opportunities." The proposed increase in LC acreage is to allow for the development of a neighborhood commercial center that would have the ability to offer a variety of goods and services. The proposed Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus – North will integrate into the surrounding area in a manner which promotes compatibility with existing and planned uses and facilitate the extension of the technology campus immediately to the south.

The proposed technology campus is compatible with the immediately surrounding area which includes arterial roadways to the east and north, power line corridors to the west and south, and electrical substation to the south. Special design considerations, including increased building setbacks and enhanced landscape buffers, which are provided for in the companion PAD, will be utilized along sensitive edges of the Project. The existing uses and zoning of surrounding properties include:

TABLE 1 | EXISTING CONDITIONS

LOCATION	GENERAL PLAN LAND USE	EXISTING ZONING	EXISTING USE
SITE	MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, ESTATE/LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, LOCAL COMMERCIAL	PAD (Z-07-4 AND Z-05-18), AG PL-11-0199	POWERLINE CORRIDOR, DAIRY, AGRICULTURE
NORTH	ESTATE/LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, LOCAL COMMERCIAL	PAD (Z-04-05)	RESIDENTIAL (DEL RIO RANCH), VACANT TOWARD EASTERN EDGE
SOUTH	PUBLIC/CIVIC, BUSINESS PARK	RR-43 (MARICOPA COUNTY), PAD (PL-22-0166)	POWERLINE CORRIDOR, SRP/APS RUDD SUBSTATION, HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS - SOUTH
EAST	MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL, ESTATE/LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	PAD (PL-21-0087), RU-43 (MARICOPA COUNTY)	CURRENTLY VACANT (FUTURE SHADOW RIDGE COMMUNITY), RESIDENTIAL (RACEWAY RANCHOS)
WEST	MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL	PAD (Z-99-389 AND PL-17-0303)	POWERLINE CORRIDOR, RESIDENTIAL (CANTADA RANCH)

EXHIBIT 6 | ZONING

EXISTING ZONING PLAN



LEGEND

— — — — — HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS - NORTH

PROPOSED ZONING PLAN



EXHIBIT 7 | VICINITY MAP



LEGEND

 HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS - NORTH
 AVONDALE CITY LIMITS

 RIVER/WATERSHED AREA
 MARICOPA COUNTY JURISDICTION



IV. MAJOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT REVIEW + ANALYSIS

1 Availability of current and future water supplies.

The Property is served by the City of Avondale with an existing 16-inch waterline located within Avondale Boulevard which borders the eastern property line and a 12-inch waterline within Lower Buckeye Road which borders the northern property line. It is understood that the City of Avondale's Integrated Utility Master Plan recommends upgrading Lower Buckeye Road's 12-inch waterline to a 16-inch waterline. If not previously upgraded, this Project will install this upgrade along its frontage during development. The Project will connect to these existing/proposed waterlines and provide a looped system. When compared to the water supply necessary to serve the Property under the existing Estate/Low Density Residential (ELDR) and Medium Density Residential (MDR) designations, the demand associated with the proposed data centers with closed-loop water systems, are over 90% less than single-family residential uses. Additional information regarding the impact on water services can be found in the supporting Water Report prepared by Coe and Van Loo LLC.

2 Impact on and potential support of the City's transportation systems.

Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road are both designated as Arterial Roads on the General Plan Circulation and Streets Classification Map. While Lower Buckeye Road is a major east/west roadway, Avondale Boulevard is a prominent north/south route through the City of Avondale and has been planned as a major

employment and commercial corridor from McDowell Road south to Southern Avenue. The location of Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus – North is further highlighted by its proximity to future State Route 30, planned approximately one and one-quarter mile to the south, providing for efficiency in trip generation and access routes. The existing and planned transportation network fully supports the employment and commercial uses on the Property, and the modifications in land use designation from ELDR and MDR to Business Park (BP) and a slight increase in Local Commercial (LC) will have minimal impacts on the City's transportation system. Additional information regarding the impact on City transportation systems can be found in the supporting Traffic Generation Letter prepared by Y2K Engineering.

Offsite improvements will include widening of Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road adjacent to the Property, meeting the City's half-street requirements for the planned minor arterial roadways, installation of new driveways, and the project's proportional share of adjacent traffic signals if warranted. Driveway locations and circulation will be designed to create an efficient, functional, and safe network that is easily accessible and will have minimal impact on traffic in the surrounding area. The City of Avondale initiated Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road intersection improvements, completing them in October 2023.

3 Impact on the natural environment, including, but not limited to, hillsides, riparian areas, and floodways.

This GPA will not adversely impact the natural environment, including, but not limited to, hillsides, riparian areas, and floodways, as none of these exist on the Property.

4 Extent to which the proposal contributes to achieving the (i) job to population ratio, (ii) square foot per capita ratio, and (iii) multi-family housing ratio identified within this General Plan 2030.

With the development of Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus - North, a significant concentration of capital investment in new employment space will advance the City's efforts to meet the targeted jobs-to-population ratio of 0.50 jobs for every resident. The Property is located in an area within the City that is dominated by single family residential uses and the addition of employment and commercial uses provided by the development of the Project will aid in providing a balance of uses and jobs for nearby residents. Additionally, the requested land use modification will not negatively impact the multi-family housing ratio.

5 Impact on City services and facilities including, but not limited to, police, fire, water, and wastewater.

This GPA will not negatively impact City services and is anticipated to create less demand on these systems than if the Property was to develop as single family residential. Replacing residential with employment uses will generate less demand for public safety services, as calls will likely be fewer in scope and frequency. Additionally, the future technology campus portion of the Project will provide on-site and remote private security, which further reduces reliance on public safety services.

The proposed amendment will not burden the City with regard to needing additional extensions of utility infrastructure since there are existing water and sewer lines available in Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road. All of these utility lines have adequate capacity for the proposed technology campus and future commercial. Tables 2 and 3 below compare the water and wastewater demands of the proposed Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus - North to the mostly residential uses of the existing general plan in the 2018 IUMP. These tables are provided for reference, verification and additional information can be found in the supporting Wastewater Report and Water Report prepared by Coe and Van Loo LLC.

TABLE 2 | WATER DEMAND COMPARISON

SCENARIO	Demands Based on 2018 IUMP (gpd)	Technology Campus Demand (gpd)	Demand Decrease (gpd)	% Decrease
AVERAGE DAY DEMAND	189,687	108,297	81,390	43 %
MAXIMUM DAY DEMAND	312,984	178,630	134,354	43 %
PEAK HOUR DEMAND	491,290	288,341	202,950	41 %

TABLE 3 | WASTEWATER FLOW COMPARISON

SCENARIO	Flows Based on 2018 IUMP (gpd)	Technology Campus Flows (gpd)	Flow Decrease (gpd)	% Decrease
AVERAGE FLOW	80,547	50,914	29,633	37 %
PEAK FLOW	181,668	156,009	25,659	14 %

The developer of the technology campus recognizes concerns around data center water usage and the impact imposed on local communities and the environment and therefore applies design and construction standards to significantly minimize the water consumption required to serve the buildings. An air-cooled, chilled water closed-loop system minimizes water usage to cool the data center buildings, greatly improving a measurable Water Utility Efficiency. Once charged, the closed loop system requires zero water use, with the exception of occasional maintenance. A closed loop system, as described, or alternative equivalent system as determined by the City, will be used for the technology campus.

6 Extent to which the goals of this General Plan 2030 are accomplished.

The following summary highlights a few of the Avondale General Plan 2030 goals and policies which this Major General Plan Amendment supports:

Land Use Element

Goal 3: Promote a strong balance of high quality residential, employment, recreation, and educational land uses.

Policy D: Ensure adequate transitions and/or buffers are provided when adjacent land uses vary in character and intensity.

This GPA request to increase the LC acreage and modify the land use from ELDR and MDR to BP for the Property will introduce BP uses into the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor. Diversity and balance of land uses within this Corridor, specifically between Buckeye Road and Broadway Road, is currently lacking and medium density residential is the predominant use. This GPA increases the mix of land uses for the Corridor and places new jobs, goods and services in proximity to residents.

The BP land use category supports employment uses that can incorporate modern campus planning, design, and architecture that will take into account the City's

expectations for design quality and consideration of surrounding existing and planned uses. The companion PAD application will establish generous building setbacks for the BP uses to provide for adequate transitions and landscaped buffers adjacent to existing residential uses to the west and north, aiding both with noise abatement and visual buffering. The development of the Property will enhance the visual attractiveness of the currently underdeveloped agricultural land use.

Goal 4: Ensure all land use decisions meet the long-term social and economic goals of the community.

Policy C: Ensure Avondale is at the forefront of any emerging markets by continuously updating codes and policies to include standards for new business types and technologies.

Avondale has significantly grown its employment base with major medical, warehousing and office uses, however, it has limited land available with access to the required power infrastructure necessary to attract technology companies / data centers looking to locate in the area. This GPA will add to the City's land use mix and provide an opportunity to attract an increasingly growing technology market to Avondale. The development of this northern portion of the Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus would continue the recent significant capital investment in the City of Avondale and reinforce the General Plan's goal to provide a mix of employment areas with a wide range of salary levels that increase the stability and diversity of Avondale's economy. Local jobs will be created during construction and once the data centers are operational, while the future commercial development will provide additional jobs as well.

Economic Element

Goal 1: Grow and diversify Avondale's economy and employment base through business retention, expansion, and development.

Policy E: Leverage the City's proximity to the west coast and port districts to attract international industries and high-tech companies.

This GPA leverages access to the west coast via Interstate 10 and the future State Route 30 through direct access to Avondale Boulevard, a major north/south arterial roadway through Avondale. Additionally, the adjacency of the Property to the Rudd Substation is a significant attractor for high-tech companies, as proximity to power infrastructure drives the location for many large scale employment uses. The location of the Property is further incentivized by being within an Opportunity Zone. Few west valley properties can compare to this site in recruiting targeted growth sectors with an emphasis on professional and technical employment.

Goal 3: Enhance and market Avondale's business climate.

Policy E: Increase the supply of developable Business Park land and promote a flexibility of uses within.

This GPA supports the enhancement of Avondale's business climate and will allow for new development and business attraction opportunities by increasing the availability of developable land for Business Park uses. The Project will create additional opportunities in the area for national and international industries, bringing additional business and visitors to Avondale and increasing the potential for new investment. The proposed uses also incorporate enough flexibility to provide many diverse employment opportunities, as well as ensure full utilization of the Property over time. The proposed uses associated with Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus – North will further the City's priority and focus on economic vitality and competitiveness.

Goal 10: Reserve adequate lands to accommodate business parks, light industrial uses, and higher education facilities.

Policy A: Support efforts to locate and develop additional business park and industrial land along Avondale's business corridor.

The Property fronts on the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor, which is recognized as a major corridor for employment and commercial uses. The BP land use category assists in the growth and development of this employment corridor, fulfills the purpose for this Corridor, and would adequately accommodate additional business park land within an underutilized area, as the General Plan intended.

Policy B: Promote Business Park employment uses adjacent to high-capacity roadway corridors, such as the I-10 Freeway and Van Buren Street.

The Property is located on Avondale Boulevard, which is the major north/south arterial roadway that runs between Interstate 10 and the future State Route 30. This GPA promotes business park employment uses within the designated Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor and adjacent to current and future high-capacity corridors, providing for efficiency in trip generation and access to employment for residents.

Energy Element

Goal 5: Integrate electric power line corridors, electric substations, and other energy infrastructure into future development.

Policy A: Work with developers and local utility provides to mitigate the off-site visual impacts on surrounding properties of electrical substations and well sites through decorative walls, opaque fencing, earthen berm, and dense landscaping.

Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus – North is planned to develop as a technology campus with supporting ancillary uses and neighborhood commercial goods and services. The location adjacent to the Rudd Substation is ideal and allows direct connectivity and transfer of power. The landscape buffers provided around the future technology campus will not only aid in screening the proposed BP uses but provide visual enhancements to draw the eye away from the existing power line corridors on the western and southern edges of the Property.

Conformance With The 2021 Avondale Strategic Plan

The City of Avondale Strategic Plan sets Avondale "on a course for the future, with a five-year road map of aspiring but achievable goals". The intent is to maintain what is currently unique and wonderful about Avondale while attracting new growth and development in the community through a collaborative process. The Strategic

Plan represents a cohesive and intelligent approach which will enable Avondale to create a community that is family friendly and economically robust.

Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus – North will assist in achieving the goals associated with the Strategic Plan, in particular, encouraging economic development in furtherance of the Creative and Sustainable Community Development goal. The future technology campus and commercial center will provide employment opportunities in close proximity to existing and planned residential, allowing residents an easy walk, ride, or short commute to future jobs, goods and services. Located within the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor, immediately adjacent to a designated Growth Area, and bounded by power line corridors, substation and arterial roadways, the Property is an ideal location for BP land uses and promotes a sustainable development pattern.

V. FINDINGS

This Major General Plan Amendment (GPA) request meets the following findings, as required by the General Plan 2030:

1 The development pattern contained on the Land Use Plan inadequately provides the appropriate optional sites for the use and/or change proposed in the amendment.

The development pattern contained on the Avondale Land Use Plan inadequately provides optional sites for the proposed Business Park (BP) land use as nearly all of the remaining BP land within the City's Planning Area is either developed or in the process of being developed, and much of it is not developed with BP uses but instead, auto dealerships. This GPA will facilitate employment uses at an appropriate location where alternative sites are not available. The Property's current land use designations do not allow for a major employment center, and as a result,

does not advance the vision and/or goals of the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor. This Property is ideally located near the South Core Growth Corridor, within the Tres Rios Opportunity Zone, and adjacent to supportive power and transportation infrastructure, making this a prime location for BP uses. The current General Plan does not have other BP sites with these advantages.

The small increase in acreage for the Local Commercial (LC) uses will allow for a significant and viable commercial center with potential anchors, rather than strip mall development. Due to its integration within the overall Project, the increased acreage does not negatively impact the remainder of the Property but creates a more beneficial opportunity for successful commercial uses.

2 The amendment constitutes an overall improvement to the General Plan 2030 and is not solely for the good or benefit of a particular landowner or owners.

This GPA improves the General Plan by introducing supportive land uses to planning areas designed to attract employment investment, and expands the planning areas that provide goods and services to the community. This GPA provides new business opportunities within Avondale, particularly within the technological market that continues to rapidly grow and is attracted to areas with access to reliable power.

This GPA improves the General Plan by introducing BP uses to the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor, which is designed to attract employment investment and offer employment opportunities. A technology campus designed to include data centers and ancillary uses is a significant investment in Avondale and will provide jobs in close proximity to residential. This amendment reinforces Avondale's economic stability and sustainability.

3 The amendment will not adversely impact the community as a whole and/ or a portion of the community by:

- 1. Significantly altering the acceptable land use patterns;*
- 2. Requiring larger and more expensive public infrastructure improvements including, but not limited to, roads, water, wastewater, and public safety facilities than would otherwise be needed without the proposed change; or*
- 3. Adversely impacting the existing land uses.*

This GPA does not significantly alter acceptable land use patterns, but rather, advances the General Plan's land use goals and brings new jobs close to where residents live. Additionally, this GPA advances the goals of the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor, recognized in the General Plan as a major corridor for employment.

The land use modifications from ELDR and MDR to BP and increase in LC acreage will not require larger and more expensive public infrastructure improvements, conversely, replacing residential with employment uses will likely generate less demand for public safety services and less traffic, while providing a significant revenue enhancement to the City and school districts. As stated previously, the Property is ideally located to take advantage of the adjacent arterial roadways and regional transportation network, with offsite improvements limited to widening of Avondale Boulevard and Lower Buckeye Road adjacent to the Property and installation new driveways. These improvements are not beyond the type of offsite improvements that would be required if the currently planned residential uses were developed. The companion PAD will establish future water and wastewater infrastructure to the Property and the associated Master Plans will establish sufficient water and sewer capacity.

This GPA will not adversely impact existing land uses in the surrounding area and will further advance the goals of the adjacent Growth Area and Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor by providing employment uses on the Property. The companion PAD for Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus – North will establish minimums for building setbacks and landscaped buffers and provide requirements to guarantee high-quality site design, ensuring compatibility with surrounding existing and planned uses.

4 That the amendment is consistent with the overall intent of the General Plan 2030 and other adopted plans, codes, and ordinances.

This GPA is consistent with the overall intent of the General Plan 2030 and helps further the growth of the Avondale Boulevard Employment and Commercial Corridor. This amendment encourages new investment, job creation, and a change to land use that advances economic sustainability and employment diversity.

There is also support for this request in the 2021 City of Avondale Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan provides in its Creative and Sustainable Community Development Strategic Outcome Area that "economic development is also a key focus area for the city". Identified strategies include "housing that is affordable to workers and close to their jobs." With the recent development of the Alamar and Verde Trails communities in close proximity to the Property, and established communities of Cantada Ranch, Del Rio Ranch, Durango Park and Sanctuary, there are thousands of residents within five miles of the future technology center. The BP land use designation and increased opportunity for LC uses will provide employment opportunities in the area and help balance the job-to-population ratio.

VI. CONCLUSION

A Major General Plan Amendment (GPA) is being requested to facilitate the future development of Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus - North which is a continuation of the 2023 approved Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus - South Planned Area Development (PAD). The future development is planned to include a technology campus with additional ancillary uses and a vibrant commercial center that will provide goods and services to the community. The proposed Project will generate jobs and significant revenue for the City of Avondale and school districts, while providing a convenient location for commercial goods and services for the neighboring residential communities.

This GPA request provides an opportunity to introduce a land use designation for the Property that will support the employment corridor planning and business park goals established in Avondale's General Plan. The Property's location is ideally located for employment and commercial uses along two highly traveled and prominent transportation corridors, with great access to existing infrastructure. This amendment reinforces Avondale's economic stability and supports a higher quality of life for residents.



HERMOSA RANCH
TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS - NORTH

MAJOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT

**NORRIS
DESIGN**
PEOPLE + PLACEMAKING