

**Wednesday, May 21, 2025
6:00 pm**

A **Regular Meeting** of the Planning Commission of the City of Avondale, Arizona was convened at 11465 West Civic Center Drive, Avondale, AZ 85323 in open and public session at 6:00 p.m.

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 Ryan Benson
Commissioner Shaun Grimm
Commissioner Mary Guzman
Commissioner Julia Jewell
Commissioner Olivia Pineda

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED ABSENT

Vice Chair Alex McBurney

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Catherine Lorbeer, Deputy Director of Planning
Arrianna Ramirez, Administrative Assistant
Mary Grace McNear, Attorney II
Torin Sadow, Business Operations and Strategic Manager
Jodie Novak, Development Services Director
Michelle Simerdla, Senior Planner
Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager
Marcella Carrillo, City Clerk

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chair White called for a motion to approve the minutes.

Commissioner Benson made a motion to approve the Planning Commission Meeting Minutes for March 19, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Jewell.

Chair Larry White	Aye
Vice Chair McBurney	N/A
Commissioner Julia Jewell	Aye
Commissioner Shaun Grimm	Aye
Commissioner Ryan Benson	Aye
Commissioner Mary Guzman	Aye
Commissioner Olivia Pineda	Aye

Upon vote, the motion passed 6 to 0

4. BOND ELECTION INFORMATION

Katie Gregory, Assistant City Manager, provided an overview of the Bond Election information. City Council has approved two questions to be put on the ballot and presented to the voters for a special election in November. Proposition 404 seeks \$68 million in General Obligation Bonds (GOB) to invest in parks, trails, and libraries and Proposition 405 seeks \$55 million in GOB to invest in public safety. GOB is a very financially responsible way to fund proposed projects. It is also called intergenerational equity,

In November 2024, a Citizen Bond Committee was formed, consisting of seven community members and two alternates. This committee learned about the past and present financial condition of the City, discussed capital projects, bond elections, among other important aspects necessary to make a recommendation. Ultimately, the committee forwarded two recommended questions and amounts to the City Council that did not increase the City's secondary tax rates. The recommendation was unanimously accepted by the City Council.

Mrs. Gregory provided a detailed overview of Proposition 404, stating the committee indicated voters are interested in the following, which are good for the community.

1. New Park Shade and Shade Expansion
2. Park and Parking Improvements
3. Trail System Improvements
4. Civic Center Library Improvements.

Similarly, a detailed overview of Proposition 405 was provided, again stating the committee indicated the voters are interested in improving overall service delivery and public safety, which are good for the community.

1. Southern Avondale Fire / Police Station
2. New Public Safety Headquarters
3. Police Firearms Training Facility
4. Main Police Station Expansion
5. City Court Office Expansion

Mrs. Gregory reviewed the process for maintaining stable tax rates by paying down prior debt issued to generate the capacity to issue new debt. In comparison to other cities within the West Valley area, Avondale has very low debt per capita. This is the first time the City of Avondale has an AAA bond rating, the best any City can get, which is determined using many factors and guarantees the best interest rates for any debt issued and speaks to the community's financial discipline.

This special election is being conducted as a vote by mail election. Ballots will be mailed to all residents on October 8, 2025, and are encouraged to be mailed back no later than October 28, 2025, or dropped off at City Hall on November 4, 2025, in person.

5. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

a. AVONDALE 10 REZONING - APPLICATION PL-24-0221

Michelle Simerdla, Senior Planner, provided an overview of the rezone request for Avondale 10, Application PL-24-0221. The property was annexed into the City in 1990, and is in the Las Ligas neighborhood, south of the southwest corner of Lower Buckeye Road and El Mirage Road. The 9.1 net acre property is developed with two (2) single family homes and a storage building. The property is presently zoned R1-6 Urban Residential with a General Plan designation of Medium Density Residential.

To the north, west and south, the properties are developed with single family homes and zoned R1-6 Urban Residential. East of El Mirage Road, the property is zoned Cantada Ranch Planned Area

Development (PAD). The site is surrounded by Medium Density Residential General Plan designations.

The site is located within the Avondale Elementary School and Tolleson Union High School District and both indicated they have sufficient capacity.

The request is to rezone the site from R1-6 to PAD with underlying R1-6 zoning with deviations to allow for up to 37 single family homes with a density of approximately 4 dwellings per acre. The proposed deviations are to reduce the minimum lot width from 65 feet to 50 feet, reduce the minimum side yard setbacks and total side yard setbacks from a minimum of 18 feet to a minimum of 13 feet, and to increase the minimum lot length from 100 feet to 115 feet.

There will be two (2) access points, one from El Mirage Road and the second on Pioneer Street, both with full turning movements with dedicated right-of-ways. Walking paths with benches and a trail on the north end of the property will connect to the sidewalk on El Mirage Road. Six- and eight-foot theme block walls will be installed, 16.7 percent open space available, and many amenities are also incorporated in the site plan.

Staff analysis finds the rezone request is compatible with existing development uses in the area, and meets the R1-6 standards with the requested deviations from the side setbacks and amended lot width and depth. The project is consistent with the goals in the General Plan, specifically assessing and implementing methods for new residential developments to incorporate specific amenities and designate open space for common use. The goals are also consistent with the Specific Area Plan for Old Town, Cashion, Las Ligas, and Rio Vista by increasing residential density.

A minimum of three elevations will be provided with a mix of one- and two-story homes to be reviewed administratively by staff and must meet all requirements in the single-family residential design manual.

A pre-neighborhood meeting was held on October 22, 2024, with five attendees and a neighborhood meeting was held on February 13, 2025, with two attendees. Discussion topics included drainage, current use, view corridors, and improvement of Pioneer Street. One comment in support of the project was received through Avondale Connect. Staff recommends approval.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions. In response, Ms. Simerdla stated the engineering staff reviewed the preliminary grading and drainage plan and found the site not to be in a flood plain. A further review will be conducted upon review of the pre-plat for the project. As part of the project the developer plans to build theme block walls that are eight (8) feet tall on El Mirage Road and six (6) feet tall elsewhere.

Jessica Sarkissian, Upfront Planning and Entitlements, LLC, on behalf of the applicant spoke about the extra study conducted on the northern side of the property along El Mirage Road and the results. She continued discussing the first neighborhood meeting and the excitement of those in attendance for a chance to afford a home. This project meets a need and will be a great addition to the City of Avondale.

Chair White opened the public hearing. There being no public comments, Chair White closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Jewell moved to approve Application PL-24-0221 Avondale 10, a request for a Rezone from R1-6 (Urban Residential) to Planned Area Development (PAD) with six (6) recommended conditions of approval as listed in the staff report. Second, by Commissioner Pineda.

Chair Larry White	Aye
Vice Chair McBurney	N/A
Commissioner Julia Jewell	Aye
Commissioner Shaun Grimm	Aye

Commissioner Ryan Benson	Aye
Commissioner Mary Guzman	Aye
Commissioner Olivia Pineda	Aye

Upon vote, the motion passed 6 to 0

6. COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS

None presented.

7. PLANNING DIVISION REPORT

Mrs. Lorbeer thanked the applicant for bringing in the Avondale 10 Rezone project. There are two public hearings anticipated for the June agenda. Fifteen (15) new development applications were received during the month of April.

8. CALENDAR

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for June 18, 2025.

9. ADJOURNMENT

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

Commissioner Jewell made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Grimm.

Chair Larry White	Aye
Vice Chair McBurney	N/A
Commissioner Julia Jewell	Aye
Commissioner Shaun Grimm	Aye
Commissioner Ryan Benson	Aye
Commissioner Mary Guzman	Aye
Commissioner Olivia Pineda	Aye

Upon vote, the motion passed 6 to 0

The meeting adjourned at 6:37 p.m.


Chair, Larry White

JUNE 18 2025
Date