

Wednesday, June 18, 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

Vice Chair Alex McBurney

Commissioner Ryan Benson

Commissioner Mary Guzman

Commissioner Julia Jewell

Commissioner Olivia Pineda

COMMISSIONERS EXCUSED ABSENT

Commissioner Shaun Grimm

Commissioner Julia Jewell

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Catherine Lorbeer, Deputy Director of Planning

Arrianna Ramirez, Administrative Assistant

Mary Grace McNear, Attorney II

Jodie Novak, Development Services Director

Josh Orton, Lead Senior Planner, AICP

Monika Smriti, Senior Planner

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 May 21, 2025, seconded by Commissioner Jewell.

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

Upon vote, the motion passed 5 to 0

#### 4. PUBLIC HEARING ITEMS

##### a. **CIRCLE K – CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT – APPLICATION PL-24-0058**

Monika Smriti, Senior Planner, provided an overview of the Circle K – Conditional Use Permit, Application PL-24-0058 for a gas station and convenience store. The approximate 1.7 net-acre property was annexed into the City in 2007 in the Verde Trails Planned Area Development (PAD) zoning district and is located at the southwest corner of Broadway Road and 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

The property is vacant with a base C-2, Community Commercial zoning which allows a gas station and convenience store with a Conditional Use Permit. To the north is vacant farmland zoned Entrada PAD with a commercial base zone, to the east is vacant farmland in the vicinity of Phoenix zoned commercial, and to the south and west are vacant parcels zoned commercial. The General Plan designation is local commercial.

The proposed use includes a 5,641 square foot convenience store building and a 4,608 square foot canopy with six double stacked fuel pumps. The proposed hours of operation are 24 hours per day, 7 days per week. Right-in and right-out access driveways will be on both Broadway Road and 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue with a dedicated right-of-way along Broadway Road. The developer is required to construct a deceleration lane on both roads. Maricopa County has proposed a traffic signal at the intersection of Broadway Road and 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue which is currently in the scoping stage and expected to be installed within two to three years.

The elevations of the convenience store and canopy meet city commercial and industrial standard design guidelines and feature architectural elements as required by Verde Trail PAD including stone and pitched roof elements.

Staff analysis finds the subject site suitable to accommodate the use because the project is consistent with the General Plan 2030 and Local Commercial Land Use Designation. It is compatible with existing land uses, surrounded by commercial zoning districts, and the proposed use is suitable for the hard corner of two arterial roads. The Preliminary Site Plan and Landscape Plan meet all required development standards. Adequate access is provided to both public streets and has sufficient capacity to accommodate generated traffic. Staff recommend seven conditions of approval as listed in the staff report to mitigate any potential adverse effects the project may cause.

A neighborhood meeting was held on February 11, 2025, with 13 attendees who discussed concerns with traffic, construction at the intersection, safety concerns regarding lighting, and general concerns about timing and the site. On Avondale Connect five comments were received in support of the project, with three people indicating the need for a traffic light as soon as possible. Staff received two voicemails with concerns related to traffic and road work at the intersection.

Brennan Ray, Esq., of Ray Law Firm, on behalf of Circle K stated he agreed with the staff presentation and requested approval.

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

Commissioner Guzman moved to approve Application PL-24-0058 Circle K, a request for a Conditional Use Permit to allow a gas station and convenience store on an approximately 1.7 net-acre subject property generally located at the southwest corner of 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Broadway Road in Verde Trails Planned Area Development zoning district subject to seven (7) conditions of approval Second, by Commissioner Pineda.

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

Upon vote, the motion passed 5 to 0

**b. HERMOSA RANCH TECHNOLOGY CAMPUS NORTH – MAJOR PLANNED AREA DEVELOPMENT AMENDMENT PL-25-0054**

Joshua Orton, Lead Senior Planner, AICP (American Institute of Certified Planners), provided an overview of the planned area development amendment for Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus – North PAD, Application PL-25-0054. The 239-acre property was annexed in 2006 and 2008 with a rezone to PAD in 2024. The former dairy farm is located at the southwest corner of Lower Buckey Road and Avondale Blvd.

To the north is Del Rio PAD, a single-family subdivision and commercial parcel, to the east along Lower Buckey Road is County Island containing the Raceway and Ranchero subdivision and to the south of that is the planned Shadow Ridge subdivision zoned Shadow Ridge PAD. To the south is Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus – South with the Prime Data Center and Sierra Estrella Battery Storage Site as well as the existing SRP Substation. To the west is Cantada Ranch subdivision zoned Cantada Ranch PAD. The General Plan Designations are local commercial for providing daily goods and services to residents and business park land use is for large scale campus development for employment purposes.

The applicant is requesting two substantive changes, to adjust the development standards for the data center parcel and modify the PAD stipulations to address development phases and to clarify on and off-site improvements for the overall development. The proposed changes are as follows:

- Increase maximum building height from 50 feet to 52 feet
- Increase parapet wall height from 5 feet to 9 feet above the maximum building height
- Increase mechanical equipment screening height from 75 feet to 77 feet
  - To be set back 10 feet from the edge of the building to reduce the perceived scale of the equipment.
- Increase elevator equipment height from 75 feet to 86 feet.
  - To be set back 10 feet from the edge of the building to reduce visibility from the street

Mr. Orton reviewed the renderings provided by the applicant, highlighting view #2 and view #4 that depict the approved data center building height, landscaping, and location of the buildings. Additionally, the requested modifications were reviewed, noting for Parcel A improvements are required immediately adjacent to the property frontage, installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Miami Avenue and Avondale Blvd. Parcel B is zoned as a Data Center and required to install improvements adjacent to the site, improve the remainder of Lower Buckey Road and Avondale Blvd, installation of a traffic signal along 119<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Lower Buckey Road, and installation of a multi-use trail on the regional power corridor.

Staff analysis found the proposed PAD amendment conforms with the General Plan Land Use Designation of Business Park and Local Commercial, the PAD requirements of the Zoning Ordinance, the Subdivision Regulations, Design Manual, and other applicable regulations and requirements unless modified by the PAD narrative. Adequate public infrastructure is or will be

installed to support the development, required conditions of approval ensure conformance with the Zoning Ordinance and other applicable City codes, ordinances, and policies. Development standards are consistent with the City's Commerce Park and Community Commercial Zoning District requirements, noted deviations and this request for deviation serve to foster compatibility with the existing residential and continuity with approved employment projects in the area.

A neighborhood meeting was held at City Hall on May 6, 2025, with six attendees who discussed the scale of the Data Center, commercial development, potential commercial tenants, and project timelines. Staff received a total of 20 responses through email and Avondale Connect providing feedback on the development.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions of Staff.

- Vice Chair McBurney asked if there are limits on the number of major modifications a developer can apply for. Mr. Orton explained there are no limits, though major amendments require Public Hearings, such as this application.
- Commissioner Pineda inquired about the approved heights from the original application. Mr. Orton indicated the original project had a 50-foot building height, approved with PAD zoning, including the 75-foot screening in the request.

Carolyn Oberholtzer, Esq., from Bergin, Frakes, Smalley & Oberholtzer, spoke to the Commission on behalf of the applicant. The initial project, presented in April 2024, lacked known developers at that time. Zoning was finalized, and as design progressed, necessary changes led to the current Development Amendment. The height increase was due to required clear space around the roof cooling system and elevator access to those platforms. Additionally, the grocery store is moving faster than the Data Center, and the stipulation allows each project to proceed independently.

Commissioners were given an opportunity to ask questions of the Applicant.

- Vice Chair McBurney asked if this was the final design for the data center or if additional amendments were anticipated. Ms. Oberholtzer explained although the site plan has been submitted to staff, it is under review and regulatory changes are anticipated. With a 300-acre parcel it is not unusual for additional amendments to PADs over time. Generally, the City and applicants work together to get something better for everybody.
- Vice Chair McBurney while recognizing this is a major project, stated there were concerns in the community. Ms. Oberholtzer stated she has not been contacted directly nor did anyone with concerns attend the neighborhood meeting. After reviewing all the efforts made to speak with residents in the area, she stated anyone with concerns can contact her directly and they will be happy to speak with them.
- Commissioner Pineda asked when the construction will start and how long it will take for full build out. Ms. Oberholtzer explained upon approval of this amendment by the City Council that the grocery store will submit construction drawings and continue to move forward. Jack Hays, Engineer with QTS explained the data center construction will begin in 2028 and each building takes approximately 14 months to complete.
- Commissioner Pineda inquired if the data center will be active after each phase or at total completion. Mr. Hays noted each phase will come online separately and construction on the first six buildings will overlap.
- Chair White asked if the other commercial businesses are known. Ms. Oberholtzer stated they are actively working on those, and it should be announced soon.
- Vice Chair McBurney asked if the Fry's Food Store that is less than a mile away, would be closing and relocating to this new location. Ms. Oberholtzer stated no plans have been announced and it is possible the two stores will coexist.

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

Vice Chair McBurney moved to approve Application PL-25-0054 a request to amend Hermosa Ranch Technology Campus – North Planned Area Development, subject to the twelve (12) conditions of approval listed in the Planning Division memorandum dated June 18, 2025. Second, by Commissioner Pineda.

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

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

Upon vote, the motion passed 5 to 0

**5. COMMISSION ANNOUNCEMENTS**

None presented.

**6. PLANNING DIVISION REPORT**

Ms. Lorbeer advised there are currently no items planned for the July meeting and an official cancellation notice will be sent out if determined necessary. During the month of May 2025, 16 new development applications were received.

**7. CALENDAR**

The next Planning Commission meeting is scheduled for July 16, 2025 (if not canceled).

**8. ADJOURNMENT**

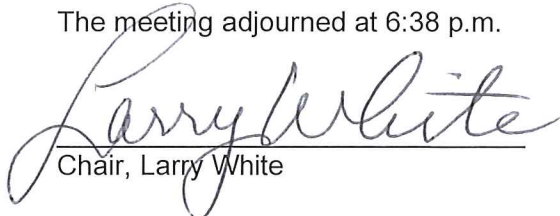
With no further business before the Commission, Chair White called for a motion to adjourn.

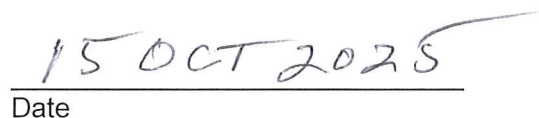
Commissioner Guzman made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Pineda.

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

Upon vote, the motion passed 5 to 0

The meeting adjourned at 6:38 p.m.

  
Chair, Larry White

  
Date