



## Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary Z-19-20-5

<b>Date of VPC Meeting</b>	July 15, 2020
<b>Request From</b>	C-2
<b>Request To</b>	C-2 DNS / DWR
<b>Proposed Use</b>	Multifamily Residence
<b>Location</b>	Northwest corner of Black Canyon Highway and the Griswold Road alignment
<b>VPC Recommendation</b>	Approve per staff recommendation
<b>VPC Vote</b>	<b>15-2</b> , motion passes with Alauria, Argiro, Barraza, Church, Ford, Jaramillo, Larson, Magallanez, O'Connor, Perez, Sommacampagna, Viedmark, Whitney, Krentz, and Carrell in favor, Herrera and Wiedoff in dissent, and none in abstention.

### **VPC DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDED STIPULATIONS:**

**Z-19-20-5:** Presentation, discussion, and possible recommendation regarding a request to rezone approximately 5.59-acre site located at the northwest corner of Black Canyon Highway and the Griswold Road alignment **from** C-2 (Intermediate Commercial) **to** C-2 DNS / WVR (Intermediate Commercial, Density Waiver) to allow multifamily residential.

*One virtual speaker card was received by Jeff Spellman*

**Nick Klimek**, staff, provided an overview of the site context, the request, and the staff recommendation. The applicant's proposal is to convert a hotel to multifamily residential and to allow for the conversion of the 168 hotel suites, the applicant is seeking a density waiver. The site plan proposes minimal changes to the configuration of the existing site.

The site is located with one quarter mile from an elementary school and a shopping center and has direct access to Interstate 17. The site is surrounded by compatible zoning entitlements to that proposed and the Commercial General Plan Designation is consistent with the proposal. The proposal

There is a variety of relevant policy guidance that generally supports the request including the MAG I-17 Employment Corridor and the Black Canyon / Maricopa Freeway Specific Plan. Through recommended stipulations, the proposal advances the intent of the Tree and Shade Master Plan, the Complete Streets Guidelines, and the community-driven 27th Avenue To Do List.

The request is consistent with the Phoenix General Plan Land Use Designation, advances the previously mentioned policy documents, and is compatible with the surrounding land uses. As such, staff is recommending approval subject to nine stipulations with the following of special note.

- The application of R-5 (Multifamily Residence District) development standards with a maximum density of 33 dwelling units per acre.
- The construction of a 6 foot wide shared use path between the 27th Avenue Frontage Road and 27th Avenue which shrubs and illumination along the extent of the subject property. The purpose of this stipulation is to allow new residents direct access to commercial and educational facilities without needing to drive or navigate a freeway frontage road on-foot.
- The construction of an onside pedestrian thoroughfare system.
- Enhanced tree plantings in all required setback areas.
- The provision of 10% open spaces shaded to 50% by trees.
- Enhanced bicycle parking and a bicycle fix-it station as a resident amenity.

**Wendy Riddell**, of Berry Riddell LLC and representing the applicant, thanked staff for their detailed presentation and then provided an overview of the proposal. The Residence Inn was chosen for the conversion because it has an “all-suite layout” with a rich supply of onsite amenities which translate to an easy conversion into the creation of a new, market-rate, multifamily neighborhood.

The site currently has a swimming pool, sport courts, a fitness center, fire pits and grilling stations, courtyards, playground, lobby, and conference rooms. From conversations with the community and a market analysis, it is clear that new market rate housing is much needed in this community.

The proposal also includes a pedestrian connection along the south property line and extending from the frontage road to 27th Avenue. This idea arose from members of the community who see value in pedestrian connectivity and the applicant team collaborated closely with staff from the Planning and Development Department and the Street Transportation Department to find a way to make the connection possible. The connection, while challenging, will provide value to the development and support a goal of the community. In addition to a pedestrian connection, the project will also provide bicycle parking and a bicycle fix-it station for its residents.

**Larry Herrera** stated that he is on the Washington Elementary School Board and expressed concerns regarding the pedestrian connection and how it may exacerbate crime, loitering, and undesirable activity. The school had previously struggled with hypodermic needles being littered and stated that he would have preferred that the Griswald Avenue alignment be abandoned and closed. **Wendy Riddell** responded that the applicant team are trying to be good stakeholders and are responding to the priorities heard from the community which including connectivity and safety.

**Gabriel Jaramillo** asked if the project would be affordable workforce housing. **Wendy Riddell** responded that the unit rents would not be restricted to an affordability threshold however that they anticipate, based on the context that rents will be affordable to the neighborhood.

**Elizabeth Perez** noted that rents of \$1,000 to \$1,250 are not affordable to much of the population. She asked for clarification regarding the density proposed on the site.

**Wendy Riddell** responded that while the unit rents will not be restricted they will be set at whatever rate the market will bear which will likely be relatively affordable. Regarding density, there are currently 168 units that will be converted and that the staff stipulation includes some flexibility should a few additional units be desired in the future.

Seeing no additional committee comments, **Chairman Tyler Carrell** invited any members of the public to address the committee.

**Jeff Spellman** introduced himself and his organization the Violence Impact Project Coalition and expressed their support for the project. Started as an initiative to curb crime and blight in the area, the organization had focused their attention on addressing negative issues that would arise in a “whack a mole” approach. The organization has now shifted to be pro-active with advocacy for projects that support their mission for “an active, safe and welcoming community with vibrant retail and sustainable housing.”

The project will bring quality multifamily housing into the community and will convert a weekly stay hotel; while this hotel receives few complaints, it is part of a cluster of weekly hotels along the frontage road that are problematic. By bringing a sense of ownership to this area with a pedestrian connection to 27th Avenue, this project strongly supports their priorities. The Griswald Road alignment is currently used as an informal walkway and the project and walkway would formalize it and allow the community to make this space an asset.

**Gabriel Jaramillo** asked about the status of planned Food Innovation Center being proposed on the site of the former K-Mart south of the subject and whether there are plans for the pedestrian enhancements along the frontage road to connect future residents with employment or educational opportunities that may come to the former K-Mart site.

- **Nick Klimek** responded that the former K-Mart project is still in conceptual phases and that he is not aware of any site plans. The Residence Inn site does include a sidewalk along the full length of the frontage road and this will provide a good connection toward the K-Mart project and further, that the pedestrian connection on the Griswald Road alignment can be positioned to serve nearby uses.
- **Jeff Spellman** explained that he has been working closely with the District 5 Council Office, landowner, and the Community and Economic Development Department on redevelopment opportunities for the site. He added that the proposal has evolved for the K-Mart from a food innovation center to a career

training facility on a portion of the site, potentially in partnership with West-Mec. A food innovation center may be a later phase on the site.

**MOTION:**

**Mike Krentz** motioned to approve per the staff recommendation. **Patricia Ford** seconded the motion.

**VOTE: 15-2**, motion passes with Alauria, Argiro, Barraza, Church, Ford, Jaramillo, Larson, Magallanez, O'Connor, Perez, Sommacampagna, Viedmark, Whitney, Krentz, and Carrell in favor, Herrera and Wiedoff in dissent, and none in abstention.