



Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary Z-41-21-7

Date of VPC Meeting	September 13, 2021
Request From	S-1 (Approved C-2/CP-GCP) (14.56 acres)
Request To	C-2 HGT/WVR DNS/WVR (14.56 acres)
Proposed Use	Multifamily Residential Development
Location	Approximately 615 north of the northwest corner of 59th Avenue and Dobbins Road
VPC Recommendation	Denial as filed
VPC Vote	8-0

VPC DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDED STIPULATIONS:

Sofia Mastikhina, staff, provided an overview of the request, including the location, surrounding and on-site zoning, surrounding land uses, and an explanation of proposed entitlement. She explained that the current zoning of C-1 (Intermediate Commercial District) permits multifamily residential development per R-3 (Multifamily Residence District) standards. The request is to add a height and density waiver to allow for a more intense development than would otherwise be permitted by right. She then outlined the General Plan Land Use Map designation, noting that the site is located within the Laveen Village Core, which is intended to be the central focus of the village where more height and density are appropriate. She presented the proposed site plan, pointing out the two entry driveways, three open space areas, and a height limitation for buildings along 59th Avenue of a maximum of two stories. She then presented the landscape plan, which includes robust landscaping within a 30-foot setback along 59th Avenue, per staff's request, and the proposed building elevations, which exhibit rural architectural elements such as pitched roofs and vertical siding. She concluded her presentation with staff's findings and recommendation, as well as the recommended stipulations of approval.

Manjula Vaz, representative with Gammage & Burnham, presented examples of other projects by PB Bell, noting the high quality of the developments. She provided an overview of the locational context of the site, outlining the relationship of the site to the village core, and noting that the site to the south is planned for commercial development, as well as several other commercial developments slated for construction along the Loop 202 freeway. She presented information regarding the rezoning case that established the commercial zoning on the site and pointed out that the approval letter called out the intent of the village core as a high-intensity area with a mix of

commercial and high density multifamily residential development. She then presented the proposed site plan, landscape plan, building renderings and elevations, noting the main development features, circulation, pedestrian areas, improvements to 59th Avenue, enhanced open space, and enhanced architecture. She also outlined the General Plan Land Use and Design policies that are met by this proposal, and the development impact fees, contributions of the school district, and property taxes that will be generated by this development.

QUESTIONS FROM COMMITTEE

Vice Chair Linda Abegg thanked the applicant for working with the committee and the applicant in incorporating many of the standards and design features that they requested, and thanked staff for the recommended stipulations to ensure that the Laveen Core is held to high standards. She stated that although the plan underwent many changes, her main concern is that this site is designated for mixed use and the request at hand is to increase the height and density yet does not provide a mix of uses. She expressed concern over the trend of commercially zoned properties being developed with only residential uses and stated that there is no guarantee that the property to the south will develop with commercial.

Rebecca Perrera thanked the applicant for their listing of the impact fees that will be applicable to this project and paid to the city but stated that ultimately those won't do much for the local community. She explained that the biggest fiscal impact at a local level comes from sales taxes and, if Laveen continues to add rooftops without any commercial uses, the sales taxes from Laveen residents will go to the communities that they have to commute to for their shopping and entertainment needs. She also expressed concern with the erosion of commercial properties in Laveen. She then asked if the development is designed to discourage mid-block pedestrian crossings, as there is a school on 59th Avenue with many students walking to and from every day. **Vaz** replied that the developer is working with the Street Transportation Department to ensure sufficient pedestrian safety along 59th Avenue.

Carlos Ortega expressed concern with the applicant's usage of the word "multi-use," as this is not a mixed-use project. He also expressed concern with the proposed height of 3-story units and the noise mitigation from the freeway. Although the developer incorporated some architectural features, the proposal does not meet the intent of a mixed-use core. There is no guarantee that the property to the south will develop as commercial, and he is opposed to the proposal at hand.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Scott Ward introduced himself as the property owner of the parcel to the south and stated that he and his development team have been trying to attract businesses to their site for several months. He expressed his excitement for this project as it will bring sufficient residential units to support the future commercial uses on his property, which will come to fruition more easily once the multifamily is developed.

Dan Penton expressed appreciation for the applicant having incorporated the community's desired features into the plan but stated that this proposal does not meet the intent of the Village Core, which is to provide a mix of land uses. He explained that the proposal means to add high density residential along the freeway corridor, which should be an area for new employment opportunities. He then asked if the development has considered incorporating affordable units, as affordable housing is something that

the community desperately needs. He requested that the committee deny this case or require that the applicant file a PUD to ensure commercial development on the property to the south.

Sandy Hamilton asked for clarification on the committee's position regarding multifamily housing, as they had previously made an assertion that they would no longer approve such projects yet, just at the previous meeting, they had approved two multifamily residential cases. He stated that the land of this subject request could be put to better use than for multifamily housing.

Erika Lopez expressed concern over the high density of the proposal, the traffic generation, the lack of school capacity for the new units, and the overall impact on the neighborhood to the east. She asked that the committee recommend a continuance so that the applicant can explore a PUD designation to solidify requirements for a commercial portion to support the residential.

Vice Chair Abegg expressed appreciation to the applicant for working extensively with staff, committee members, and members of the community to incorporate their suggestions into the project. She stated that, nevertheless, the proposal does not meet the intent of the Village Core due to a lack of a mixed-use component, and that the promise that there will be commercial on the parcel to the south is not enough to justify approval of this project.

MOTION

Vice Chair Abegg made motion to deny the request as filed. **Carlos Ortega** seconded the motion.

VOTE

8-0: Motion passes with committee members Glass, Abegg, Barraza, Buggs, Ortega, Perrera, Rouse, and Rowe in favor. Committee member Hurd experiences technical difficulties during the vote and was thus absent.

STAFF COMMENTS REGARDING VPC RECOMMENDATION & STIPULATIONS:

None.