



Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary

GPA-EST-2-24-7

Date of VPC Meeting	February 20, 2024
Request From	Residential 3.5 to 5 dwelling units per acre, Mixed Use (Commercial / Commerce/Business Park), and Industrial
Request To	Commerce/Business Park
Proposal	Minor General Plan Amendment to allow for a commerce park development
Location	Approximately 1,170 feet north of the northwest corner of 67th Avenue and Lower Buckeye Road
VPC Recommendation	Denial
VPC Vote	7-1

VPC DISCUSSION:

Cases GPA-EST-2-24-7 and Z-8-24-7 are companion cases and were heard together. Eight members of the public registered to speak.

Staff Presentation:

Nayeli Sanchez Luna, staff, presented an overview of the general plan amendment and rezoning requests. Mrs. Sanchez Luna discussed the location of the site, the requested zoning designation, the surrounding land uses, and the proposed General Plan Land Use Map designation. Mrs. Sanchez Luna displayed the site plan and elevation and noted the proposed height, square footage, and architectural façade. Mrs. Sanchez Luna concluded the presentation by providing the staff findings, the recommendation, and summarizing the proposed stipulations.

Applicant Presentation:

Adam Baugh, representing the applicant with Withey Morris Baugh, PLC, provided an overview of the proposed general plan amendment and rezone request. Mr. Baugh displayed the conceptual site plan and noted the proximity to transportation corridors. Mr. Baugh summarized the numerous changes to the site plan and noted the landscape buffers when adjacent to single-family residential. Mr. Baugh noted other cities that had commerce park buildings when adjacent to single-family residential and added that the commerce park buildings increased property values. Mr. Baugh concluded the applicant presentation by going over the outreach process and trip generation for the proposed use.

Questions from the Committee:

Chair Lisa Perez asked if the applicant provided 50 letters of support on the same day of the hearing. **Mr. Baugh** confirmed affirmatively. **Chair Perez** noted that the letters were not in the committee packet and that she would have preferred to receive them with more time to review them.

Public Comments:

Laura Martinez noted that she has seen the vacant property used as an illegal dumping site. Ms. Martinez voiced her support for the proposal because it bring jobs to the area.

Francisca Montoya stated that she was involved with the Fowler School District and was a former member of the Village Planning Committee. Ms. Montoya noted that industrial uses were located primarily along Buckeye Road but that the subject property was closer to Lower Buckeye Road. Ms. Montoya added that Lower Buckeye Road was primarily surrounded by single-family residential development. Ms. Montoya stated that the proposed use should be located along the Loop 202 and that the proposed SR-30 has not received funding for construction. Ms. Montoya concluded her comment by stating that school buses would use the same route as the commercial traffic, thus causing a safety hazard.

Lorena Cardenas voiced her support for the proposed development. Ms. Cardenas noted that it would bring jobs to the community.

Nathan Wright, with the Community and Economic Development Department (CED), noted that there was only one other possible 1,000,000 square foot building in the City. Mr. Wright added that south of the I-10 there weren't any large commerce park buildings that could support large businesses. Mr. Wright also supported the smaller warehouses because they could bring amenities to the area such as dance studios or offices. Mr. Wright concluded his comment by stating that they could market the 1,000,000 square foot building. **Chair Perez** asked for more clarification on why CED was speaking at a committee meeting in favor of a rezoning case. **Mr. Wright** noted that this is an important project and that the CED takes close interest in any projects that bring high quality jobs. **Chair Perez** noted that CED spoke with her once and asked why the Department hadn't done more outreach. **Mr. Wright** noted that they were also present at the Laveen Village Planning Committee and that they advocate for job generating projects.

Chair Perez stated that in the past, the committee had asked the City how they were promoting the area; however, they never received an answer. **Mr. Wright** suggested returning to the committee to listen to the community's needs and reviewing proposed projects in the area. Mr. Wright reiterated that they support job generating projects. **Angelica Terrazas** voiced her agreement and asked CED to return to the committee. **Chair Perez** noted that the technological corridor along the Loop 202 is an example of a marketable area promoted by the City. **Mr. Wright** agreed.

Abby Dunton stated that she worked with numerous HOAs along Lower Buckeye Road. Ms. Dunton stated that she supported keeping the area zoned for residential development. Ms. Dunton noted that there were existing commercial uses that rely on residential uses and concluded her comment by stating that she was in opposition of the development.

Selina Lemley stated that she lived in the area for many years. Ms. Lemley stated that she supported a use that would ensure jobs. Ms. Lemley added that a Walmart is located down the street to serve the community and stated that she would like the area to be developed.

Olga Pritchett asked for more information regarding public outreach and asked if they went house to house or if they just sent out notification letters. **Mr. Baugh** noted that they went door-to-door.

Ms. Terrazas noted that everyone in the committee has experienced traffic congestion with limited exits on Lower Buckeye Road. Ms. Terrazas noted her traffic congestion concerns and encouraged a through street to alleviate traffic from major roads.

Peter Mastro asked what type of business requires a million square foot building. **Mr. Wright** noted that there is a need for warehousing and advance manufacturing in the solar industry or semi-conductors.

Applicant Response:

Mr. Baugh noted that any development would generate traffic. Mr. Baugh stated that a single-family subdivision would create more traffic than the proposed commerce park development. Mr. Baugh added that single-family residential will add to traffic during peak hours in the morning and in the afternoon. Mr. Baugh reiterated the need for this type of development in the area.

Committee Discussion:

Dafra Joel Sanou asked how the developer would dictate who leases the buildings. **Mr. Baugh** stated that numerous uses could be used within the buildings including car restoration or indoor entertainment for children and adults. Mr. Baugh reiterated that there were many uses that could come into the building to add amenities to the area. Mr. Baugh stated that they would ensure someone that would be there for a long time.

Co-Vice Chair Cenicerros asked how much additional pollution this would add to the community. **Mr. Baugh** noted that he could not quantify pollution. Mr. Baugh stated that the proposal included numerous stipulations to try to alleviate pollution and water conservation.

Renee Dominguez stated that traffic on 67th Avenue is horrible and noted that semitrailer and commercial traffic will further add to the existing traffic congestion

problem in the area. Ms. Dominguez stated that areas with a mixture of commerce park and residential development have a lot of traffic congestion and safety issues. **Mr. Baugh** noted that residential uses would create more congestion and that an accident would create traffic congestion anywhere in the City.

Andre Serrette stated that he agreed that the village was very diverse when it came to uses but wondered if this was the only place in the village that could accommodate the proposed development. **Mr. Baugh** noted that they are developing to what the market demands. Mr. Baugh added that there wasn't a 1,000,000 square foot building in the City and the smaller buildings could easily be leased out.

Melanie Burd asked about the traffic light at 67th Avenue and Durango. **Mr. Baugh** displayed the location of the purposed traffic lights. **Ms. Burd** asked if the site will have access via 71st Avenue or 67th Avenue. **Mr. Baugh** stated that access will be via 67th Avenue. **Ms. Burd** stated that there should be an additional lane on 71st Avenue and Lower Buckeye Road. **Mr. Baugh** noted that a traffic study would be required to analyze the number of lanes. **Ms. Burd** asked if the proposed buildings could be used for a bar. **Mr. Baugh** noted that that would not be allowed.

Ms. Burd asked if there was parking on the east side of the building. **Mr. Baugh** stated that that would be employee parking. **Ms. Burd** voiced her concern for traffic along 71st Avenue.

Chair Perez stated that she has met with numerous developers for this site and that they always proposed commerce park or industrial uses. Chair Perez noted that the south portion of the site was recently zoned to allow multifamily residential, and that the representative did extensive outreach to the community. Chair Perez stated that this representative only held one community meeting and that they did not present a narrative of the project but rather just asked if the community had questions. Chair Perez added that the committee has a right to comment on proposed warehouses and commerce park buildings in the area. Chair Perez stated that there is a housing shortage in the City but the proposal does not support additional housing. Chair Perez stated that all these buildings are conceptual because there are no purposed tenants for the buildings. Chair Perez voiced her concerns regarding the square footage, employment parking and commercial parking. Chair Perez stated that she would like to see more public outreach and more meetings with CED. **Mr. Baugh** noted that during the public meeting, there were a few members that lived in close proximity to the proposal and that the rest were part of the school district. **Chair Perez** added that school employees would be directly affected by the development. **Mr. Baugh** stated that they consider additional meetings based on the first public meeting. Mr. Baugh added that they had contacted the district for a meeting. **Chair Perez** noted that this development would impact a whole area of people other than those adjacent to the development. **Mr. Baugh** noted that the number of people at the first meeting will indicate if more meetings were needed. Mr. Baugh added that only two members of the immediate area attended the meeting.

Ms. Dominguez stated that many property owners do not receive notification letters. Ms. Dominguez added that there is a future school location and there is a nearby school so extensive outreach would have been beneficial. Ms. Dominguez asked how many houses were knocked on when the applicant went door-to-door. **Mr. Baugh** noted that the door-to-door method exceeded what was required by the rezoning process. **Ms. Dominguez** asked why they waited the weekend before the meeting to go door-to-door and not allow the committee to review all the letters of support. **Mr. Baugh** noted that they had a neighborhood meeting at the end of January.

Co-Vice Chair Cenicerros asked if the applicant was willing to continue to work with the committee before a recommendation. **Mr. Baugh** voiced his agreement but stated that they would like the case to move forward. Mr. Baugh added that he could hold a meeting before Planning Commission.

Motion:

Co-Vice Chair Markus Cenicerros motioned to recommend the denial of GPA-EST-2-23-7. **Renee Dominguez** seconded the motion.

Vote:

7-1, Motion passed with Committee Members Ayala, Burd, Dominguez, Sanou, Serrette, Cenicerros, and Perez in favor and Committee Member Terrazas in opposition.

Staff comments regarding VPC Recommendation:

None.