



Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary

GPA-DSTV-1-18-2

INFORMATION ONLY

Date of VPC Meeting	December 7, 2021
Request From	Preserves / Residential 0 to 1 or 1 to 2 dwelling units per acre, Preserves / Residential 2 to 3.5 or 3.5 to 5 dwelling units per acre, and Preserves / Floodplain
Request To	Residential 2 to 3.5 or 3.5 to 5 dwelling units per acre, Preserves / Floodplain, and removal of the Infrastructure Phasing Overlay
Proposed Use	Single-family Residential
Location	Southwest corner of the 24th Street alignment and Sonoran Desert Drive

VPC DISCUSSION:

This item was heard concurrently with Item #4 – Information Only – Z-62-18-2, Item #5 – Information Only – Z-TA-5-18-2, and Item #6 – Information Only – Z-75-18-2.

Committee member Reginal Younger arrived to the meeting and Committee member Jason Israel left the meeting during this item, bringing the quorum to 11 members.

10 persons indicated that they wished to speak.

Susan Demmitt, representative with Gammage & Burnham, provided information about the proposed development, noting the site is a privately owned parcel adjacent to the Sonoran Preserve, will have only single-family homes with a maximum of 3 homes per acre, and will have 7 miles of trails and community paths. She discussed the application requests to rezone to PUD, amend the General Plan, and amend the Desert Character Overlay District. She also discussed the extension and build out of Sonoran Desert Drive.

Susan Demmitt also discussed the developer's partnership with the National Wildlife Federation (NWF). She discussed the certified wildlife habitat open space, monarch pledge, early childhood health outdoors nature playscape, habitat management plans, and homeowner habitat gardens. She noted the NWF landscape palette, pedestrian circulation, and open edge plan.

Vice Chair Louis Lagrave asked about the cost of the extension of Sonoran Desert Drive. **Susan Demmitt** stated that Verdin's contribution will only be for a portion of the

extension. She stated that as other developers build along Sonoran Desert Drive they will have their own contribution requirements.

Vice Chair Louis Lagrave stated that the North Land Use Plan should be considered in addition to the General Plan. He stated that the developer should consider building less than 1000 units. He added that the development will generate traffic and overload schools. **Susan Demmitt** stated that the development will have a maximum of 3 units per acre, which is consistent with developments adjacent to the preserve. She stated that they are in discussion with the Deer Valley School District and the development is within the boundary for Desert Mountain schools, which have capacity. She stated that Cave Creek schools also have capacity.

Committee member Rick Nowell asked about traffic lights on Sonoran Desert Drive. **Susan Demmitt** stated that a traffic study is being completed and that there will most likely be a traffic signal at the main entrance of the development in the future.

Committee member Rick Nowell stated that he had concerns that the project has returned after a couple years, but not decreased the density.

Committee member Rick Powell asked about the cost of the extension of Sonoran Desert Drive. **Susan Demmitt** stated that the cost estimate for the full extension of Sonoran Desert Drive is approximately \$120 million. She stated that the build out will take place when the traffic demand exists and the funding is available. **Committee member Rick Powell** stated that the development is not in line with the character of the area.

Committee member Reginald Younger asked how close homes will be to Sonoran Desert Drive. **Susan Demmitt** stated the development's property line is adjacent to Sonoran Desert Drive, but the site will have landscape buffers. **Committee member Reginald Younger** stated that he is hoping for less density on site.

Vice Chair Louis Lagrave stated that the Desert View Character Plan should also be taken into account and to meet the character of the area, density should be decreased or the development proposal be moved closer to the core. He added that Desert Mountain and Cave Creek schools are too far from the development.

Committee member Jill Hankins asked if a flood analysis had been completed for the site. **Susan Demmitt** stated that the site is not proposing development in the established flood corridor or flood zone. **Nguyen Lam**, representative with Hilgart Wilson, stated that the drainage corridors have mapped floodplains and are subject to Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). He added that the developer will work with the City to appropriately address the flood zones. **Committee member Jill Hankins** stated that she had concerns with additional hardscape in the area.

Committee member Michelle Santoro stated that she appreciates the design, open space, and connectivity proposed by the development.

Daniel Centilli, a member of Save Our Sonoran Preserve and various trail running groups, stated that developers see the area as a transportation corridor, but residents see it as a recreation corridor. He added that the development will reduce quality of life. He stated that other residential projects in the area have increased trash and traffic.

Gary Kirkilas, a member of Save Our Sonoran Preserve, stated that he appreciated the partnership with the NWF and proposed trails and access. He added that the Desert Character Overlay is tied to the preserve and should be retained.

Sue Pierce, a resident of Desert Enclave, stated that the area is exploding with development, especially with the Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), but residential development will lead to increased traffic. She stated that traffic issues are already complicated in the area and there is no plan from the development about how to alleviate the issue. She added that major transportation will lead to additional noise pollution. She stated that there is an opportunity to preserve the area as a tranquil space in the Sonoran Preserve.

Susanne Rothwell, a member of the Phoenix Mountain Preservation Council, expressed concerns regarding amending the Desert Character Overlay. She added that the developer should keep 50% of the land as native and homes should be low scale. She also expressed concerns with the lack of parking if a trailhead is provided on site.

James Gaston, a resident of Tuscana at Tatum Ranch, questioned how the development will deal with increases in water and sewer usage.

Bob Thompson, a member of the public, stated that he was opposed to the development and instead wanted to preserve the area as natural preserve. He also expressed concerns with traffic and density.

Scott Coll, a member of the public, expressed concerns with traffic. He added that there is a need to preserve the preserve area.

Crystal Lehman, a member of the public, stated that Sonoran Desert Drive is a pleasant driving experience as is and expanding the roadway and increasing homes takes away from the beauty of the desert.

Rebecca Rodriguez, a local hiker, trail runner, and mountain biker, stated that she enjoys the beautiful views and wildlife in the area. She expressed concerns with increased noise from the roadway.

Paul Grayczyk, president of the Sonoran Gate Home Owner's Association, stated the he understands the area will develop eventually, but expressed concerns with density and traffic. He added that the development should be set back further from Sonoran Desert Drive.

Susan Demmitt stated that she had no additional comments or responses at this time, but will continue dialogue with the community going forward.

Vice Chair Louis Lagrave stated that Sonoran Desert Drive will increase to 6 lanes, but that does not mean that the preserve area cannot be preserved. **Committee member Jill Hankins** also expressed the need to retain open spaces in the City.

Committee member Rick Powell stated that he believes development should be slower and the area kept more natural.

Committee member Reginald Younger stated that he likes the look of Sonoran Desert Drive as is and hopes that development will allow that to be retained. He also expressed concerns with increased density.