



## Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary

### GPA-MV-1-24-7

<b>Date of VPC Meeting</b>	November 13, 2024
<b>Request From</b>	Residential 3.5 to 5 dwelling units per acre
<b>Request To</b>	Residential 15+ dwelling units per acre
<b>Proposal</b>	Minor General Plan Amendment to allow multifamily residential
<b>Location</b>	Southwest corner of 69th Avenue and Thomas Road
<b>VPC Recommendation</b>	Approval, per the staff recommendation
<b>VPC Vote</b>	11-0

*Item No. 4 (GPA-MV-1-24-7) and Item No. 5 (Z-53-24-7) are companion cases and were heard together.*

*5 members of the public registered to speak on this item.*

*3 members of the public registered to speak on this item, in support.*

*2 members of the public registered to speak on this item, in opposition.*

#### **Staff Presentation:**

**Matteo Moric**, staff, presented an overview of the general plan amendment and companion rezoning case. Mr. Moric identified the size and location of the site, the requested General Plan Land Use Map and zoning designations, the surrounding uses and zoning, and the proposal. Mr. Moric explained the site was the property with the densely populated trees at the southwest corner of 69th Avenue and Thomas Road. Mr. Moric then noted there was one correspondence in opposition received on this item. Mr. Moric summarized the staff findings of each case and provided the staff recommendations and identified the staff recommended stipulations.

#### **Applicant Presentation:**

**Benjamin Tate**, with the law firm of Withey Morris Baugh, PLC, represented the applicant, The NRP Group. Mr. Tate indicated the site is a little over 10 acres requiring the general plan amendment. Mr. Tate noted the S-1 zoning is the portion of the site where the farmstead is located, and the undisturbed areas of the property were zoned R1-6. Mr. Tate stated the farmstead residence was built around 1915, and the Historic Preservation Office felt it did not have historical value that needed to be preserved. Mr. Tate displayed aerial photos of property and highlighted how residential subdivisions

surrounding the property were mainly built in the 1970's and 80's. Mr. Tate explained the history of the mesquite trees and said there were over 2,000 of them. Mr. Tate explained that many of the mesquite trees would need to be salvaged, and noted typically with trees they would reuse them onsite, but with so many they are working with the City of Phoenix to get direction on what to do with them.

Mr. Tate emphasized that the current condition of 69th Avenue is one lane and dangerous, because it is narrow. Mr. Tate added that with this project they would build another lane to include improvements such as a 25-foot-wide half street, curb, gutter, sidewalk, and landscaping. Mr. Tate said the site is challenged because an odd shape and everything other than multifamily development would be difficult to land plan around. Mr. Tate said they are proposing a 288-unit garden style multifamily project. Mr. Tate said they were limiting the development to 3-stories and indicated there would be a landscape tract with private yards on the south side. Mr. Tate added they limited the building sizes and would be stipulated to plant mature evergreen trees to add a green screen and buffer properties to the south and west.

Mr. Tate noted that there was a proposed secondary access but that could only be used by the fire and police for emergency services. Mr. Tate said they would install a detached sidewalk and shade trees and provided a rendering of more modern style architecture. Mr. Tate stated the development company does quality work and described the many amenities within and outside of the proposed units.

Mr. Tate added the City is working on creating a redevelopment zone in the area which would allow the City to approve a Government Lease Excise Tax (GPLET). Mr. Tate stated this would allow the City to purchase the property and lease back the property as a ground lease to The NRP Group and give them a break on property taxes. Mr. Tate added there could be a development agreement to allow a significant rent reduction which would allow half the units to be offered as affordable of 80% or less of the Area Median Income (AMI).

Mr. Tate stated there were many violations on the property over the years since it did not develop. Mr. Tate said this is quality multifamily housing project in an area that has not seen development for a long time. Mr. Tate emphasized they oriented the buildings to not be intrusive and considered the neighbors privacy.

### **Questions from Committee/Applicant Response:**

**Patricia Jimenez** asked about the house on the property. **Mr. Tate** explained the owner lives in the house and he is the one wanting to sell it.

**Ken DuBose** questioned the amount of public outreach that had taken place in the community. **Mr. Tate** identified as part of process a neighborhood meeting and mailing notices were sent out to property owners within 600 feet and neighborhood associations within one mile.

**Joe Barba** asked about the letter of opposition. **Mr. Tate** noted it was in the back of the staff report and no specific concerns were raised about the project other than the person was in opposition and wanted to know what they would need to do so it does not pass. Mr. Barba asked about the neighbors' concerns at the neighborhood meeting. Mr. Tate stated the neighbors' concerns were traffic and the desire to limit access with cars into neighborhood and building height. Mr. Tate also stated they designed the site so the orientation of the buildings would be less intrusive to the surrounding neighborhood, and they limited access on 69th Avenue which would reduce the amount of cut-through traffic.

**Chris Demarest** asked about the number of parking spots. **Mr. Tate** said there were 432 proposed parking spaces.

**Jennifer Fostino** had concerns with the material changes of the buildings and felt it was needed to be high-end. **Mr. Tate** said there would be material and architectural changes to create visual interests. Jennifer Fostino asked about the width of landscape required by the City between multifamily and single-family residential. **Mr. Moric** responded there is a required 5-foot landscape setback in those situations, but the building setback is required to be greater. Jennifer Fostino clarified where she wanted to see more landscape buffers.

**Meli Acevedo** wanted to get clarity on the sale of the property to the City of Phoenix. **Mr. Tate** and **Austin Kates**, with The NRP Group, clarified the process to take advantage of a GPLET. Ms. Acevedo also had concerns about the trees which provided shade and she wanted to see if there was an ability for residents to re-purpose shade trees since she felt they were badly needed in the area. Mr. Tate explained they wanted to keep as many for their own project and salvage the remaining trees.

**Joe Barba** wanted to make the trees available to Maryvale residents.

**Cindy Alonzo** wanted to know what the rates of rent would be for the project.

**Chair Derie** wanted to see if he understood the proposal correctly and described it as a private property owner who wished to sell the land so 288 units could be built on it. **Mr. Tate** explained if the GPLET would not be involved the applicant would still move forward with the project, but qualified people would not be able to benefit because of the reduced rent rate. Chair Derie expressed he thought the applicant was trying to be a good neighbor to allow the units to be at a more affordable rate. Mr. Tate emphasized the importance of establishing a redevelopment area in this part of the city and to be able to utilize the GPLET.

**Warren Norgaard** asked about the project's timeline. **Mr. Tate** and **Mr. Kates** described the timeline.

**Meli Acevedo** mentioned she saw on The NRP website that they develop and manage properties. **Mr. Tate** said the plan is to manage the property too. Ms. Acevedo asked if

The NRP Group had developed other projects in Phoenix. Mr. Tate said they developed properties in Phoenix in the past and would be doing more.

**Chris Demarest** asked of the likelihood of the development backing out. **Mr. Tate** indicated that they were working so closely with the Economic Development Department and with the GPLET a development agreement would be needed, identifying a timeline.

**Mr. Demarest** also had a question about the access to 69th Avenue. **Mr. Tate** said the only people who would have access to open the gate would be the property management, fire and police departments.

**Mr. Barba** loved the fact they were keeping some of the landscaping and would love to see an approach to see if can offer trees to residents. **Mr. Tate** said they were working with upper management for guidance on this.

**Lupita Galaviz** felt this project would be good for Phoenix and the community.

**Chair Derie** asked about the bus pad. **Mr. Tate** described the location of the bus pad and how it would have direct access for people living at the project.

#### **Public Comments:**

**Teresa Vazquez** noted she was a neighbor of the property and indicated she was happy they would widen the road. Ms. Vazquez expressed concerns with problems of scorpions and snakes and was concerned what will happen with them when the development commences. Mr. Tate said they could do some level of pest control before the landscape and salvage takes place. Ms. Vazquez recommended approval of the project.

**Angel Colin**, neighbor, said all his questions were answered.

**Valeria**, neighbor, shared concerns with the proposed building height and privacy. Mr. Tate said the front doors of the units would face inward on the property and there would be no balconies. Valeria also asked about access from 69th Avenue. Mr. Tate said it would only be used for emergency purposes.

#### **Floor/Public Discussion Closed: Committee Discussion and Vote:**

##### **Motion:**

**Joe Barba** motioned to recommend approval of GPA-MV-1-24-7, per the staff recommendation. **Al DePascal** seconded the motion.

**Ken Dubose** asked about stipulations for the case. **Chair Derie** explained the stipulations would be for the zoning case.

##### **Vote:**

**11-0**, Motion to recommend approval of GPA-MV-1-24-7, per the staff recommendation passed with Committee Members Acevedo, Alonzo, Barba, Demarest, DePascal, DuBose, Fostino, Galaviz, Norgaard, Jimenez and Derie in favor.

**STAFF COMMENTS REGARDING VPC RECOMMENDATION:**

No comment.