



Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary GPA-AF-1-22-6

Date of VPC Meeting	June 27, 2022
Request From	Arterial
Request To	Arterial, Collector, and Local
Location	Chandler Boulevard approximately between the 19th and 27th Avenue alignments, and 27th Avenue between Chandler Boulevard and the Loop 202 Freeway
VPC Recommendation	Approval, per the staff recommendation
VPC Vote	5-3

VPC DISCUSSION:

Nayeli Sanchez Luna, staff, presented an overview of the general plan amendment GPA-AF-1-22-6. Ms. Sanchez Luna discussed the location of the site, the requested street classification for Chandler Boulevard and 27th Avenue and provided some background information on the Street Classification Map. Ms. Sanchez Luna summarized the proposed development south of Chandler Boulevard noting the different types of residential units and the improvements along Chandler Boulevard. Ms. Sanchez Luna informed the committee that eleven letters of opposition had been received from the community and that major concerns included the increase in traffic within the village, street safety, and emergency vehicle response times. Ms. Sanchez Luna concluded the presentation by providing the staff findings and the recommendation for approval for the general plan amendment GPA-AF-1-22-6.

Jennifer Meyers, representing the applicant with Norris Design, provided an overview for the proposed general plan amendment GPA-AF-1-22-6. Ms. Meyers informed the committee that the name for the proposed development had been changed to Upper Canyon and provided the history of the site including the purchase of the site, the changes to the Street Classification Map, and the filing for the General Plan Amendment for Chandler Boulevard. Ms. Meyers displayed the Loop 202 selected alternative that removed 25th Avenue from design and planned the intersection on 17th Avenue instead. Ms. Meyers summarized the existing street classifications and street conditions for Chandler Boulevard and 27th Avenue and noted that an interchange is not planned for 27th Avenue. Ms. Meyers displayed the proposed street classification and the street conditions for Chandler Boulevard and 27th Avenue which would include parallel parking for adjacent trails and bicycle lanes with detached sidewalks. Ms. Meyers summarized their neighborhood outreach and the concerns that they have

received from the public including parallel parking along Chandler Boulevard, speeding concerns, and the reduction of lanes in both directions of Chandler Boulevard. Ms. Meyers concluded the presentation by displaying the proposed timeline for GPA-AF-1-22-6 and summarizing the reasons why the general plan amendment was needed for the proposed development.

Questions from the committee:

Darin Fisher stated that he had concerns with the proposed parallel parking along Chandler Boulevard and asked the applicant to explain how vehicles would avoid opening their car doors into oncoming traffic. **Ms. Meyers** stated that the bicycle lane would act as a buffer on the north side of the road. **Mr. Fisher** stated that his concern was for the other side of the parallel parking spot, the driver would have to open their car door on incoming traffic and that it would create a hazardous condition along Chandler Boulevard. **Ms. Meyers** stated that Norris Design had been working with the Street Transportation Department and that the parallel parking was requested by the Street Transportation Department as an improvement for Chandler Boulevard. **Mr. Fisher** stated that even if the Street Transportation Department requested the parallel parking, it would still create a hazard along Chandler Boulevard. Mr. Fisher stated that when vehicles leave a parking space, the only direction that drivers would be able to go would be west, which would result in a dead-end street. Mr. Fisher asked how U-turns would be prevented along Chandler Boulevard. **Ms. Meyers** stated that she was unable to answer that question at this time. **Mr. Fisher** stated that he wasn't opposed to the additional parking for the adjacent trails, but that the proposed parking design would create numerous hazards. Mr. Fisher asked how the community west of the proposed development would be better served with the reduction of traffic lanes along Chandler Boulevard. **Tom Lemon**, with the applicant's team, stated that his team has been working with the City of Phoenix for approximately a year and stated that they were aware of the proposed street classification designation before purchasing the land and stated that they planned to reduce the number of lanes if they had the opportunity to purchase the land south of Chandler Boulevard. Mr. Lemon stated that Liberty Lane would act as a reliever from Chandler Boulevard and added that Shaughnessy Road, located west of Chandler Boulevard, was also built with one lane in each direction and one turning lane so Chandler Boulevard as a collector would be compatible with the existing road to the west. Mr. Lemon added that Liberty Lane would act as a traffic reliever for Chandler Boulevard and stated that the Streets Transportation Department requested the 28 parking spaces adjacent to the trail. Mr. Lemon noted that the bicycle lane, detached sidewalks, and parallel parking spaces would all benefit the community. **Jose Castillo**, with the applicant's team, stated that if the road was built with 5 traffic lanes rather than the proposed 3, it would cause an increase in vehicle speed and stated that the reduction of lanes would reduce the urban heat island effect in the Ahwatukee Foothills Village. **Mr. Fisher** stated that over 300 acres will be used to develop housing in the Ahwatukee Foothills Village and as a result, the urban heat island effect would still be created. Mr. Fisher stated that traffic will be forced to go through Liberty Lane and that traffic will lead into the intersection of 17th Avenue and Liberty Lane which is one of the most dangerous traffic intersections within the village. Mr. Fisher stated that the reduction of traffic lanes would add to the traffic on 17th

Avenue and Liberty Lane which would create hazardous street conditions.

Chair Spencer Elliott asked if there had been any traffic studies that indicated which time of day would Chandler Boulevard have the most traffic congestion. **Chuck Wright**, with the applicant's team, displayed the proposed street composition in relation to the proposed development and stated that a traffic signalization of 17th Avenue and Liberty Lane was part of the development and stated that the people would still take the shortest route and added that traffic through Chandler Boulevard and Liberty Lane would be the same since one is not shorter than the other. Mr. Wright also stated that people coming out of the freeway would most likely use Liberty Lane rather than Chandler Boulevard. Mr. Wright stated that there are still two different methods to go west within Ahwatukee Foothills which would be on Chandler Boulevard and Liberty Lane.

Mr. Fisher asked what the proposed time frame would be from the full development of the proposed residential development south of Chandler Boulevard. **Mr. Lemon** stated that it would depend on the housing market conditions and stated that the developer would like to break ground either at the end of 2022 or at the beginning of 2023 and stated that it would take about four years for the completion of the proposed residential development. **Mr. Fisher** stated that there would be an active construction zone and stated that this would also add to the traffic on the west portion of the village. **Mr. Lemon** stated that the construction traffic will utilize the same street as the rest of the community and added that the first phase of improvements would be on Liberty Lane and 27th Avenue. Mr. Lemon stated that a traffic control plan will be used to ensure that traffic moves smoothly along Chandler Boulevard. **Mr. Fisher** asked if there will be a safety issue with construction equipment having to drive along Chandler Boulevard in addition to the parallel parking. **Mr. Lemon** stated that there is a potential hazard but added that the trails are primarily used during the weekends rather than during typical work hours and stated that the existing parking condition is not suitable for Chandler Boulevard and that the parallel parking spots reduce unsafe parking along the road.

Public Comments:

Doug McBane stated that he would like the committee to recommend denial of the proposed GPA-AF-1-22-6 and stated that the PCD has not been updated accordingly over the passage of time. Mr. McBane stated that there are no local services that would serve the community and stated that the proposed development would result in over 11,000 additional daily trips that are not commute related and as a result, it would increase traffic from Upper Canyon to Desert Foothills. In addition, Mr. McBane added that the proposed development would increase the surrounding noise pollution, traffic, and carbon emissions. Mr. McBane stated that he would like to hear about the impact on the neighborhoods east of the proposed development and noted that the proposed housing density is not consistent with the surrounding area and requests that the proposed development have a less density. Mr. McBane concluded his public comment by stating that he is not opposed to development but would appreciate a lower density designation and for the development to be built at a reasonable rate. **Ms. Meyers** stated that they understood the lack of services and stated that the PCD originally planned

over 300 additional homes north of Chandler Boulevard and stated that this would no longer be built. Ms. Meyers added that the impact fees will assist the situation with the fire station, water, sewer, and streets as part of the developer's responsibility. **Mr. Lemon** stated that the concerns have been taken into consideration and noted that this is an infill site and that the proposed development is ensuring numerous improvements and that he understands that services would be needed. **Mr. McBane** asked for clarification on what discussions the applicant has had with the City of Phoenix. **Mr. Lemon** stated that the applicant's team has been in contact with the fire department and that the development proposal gets routed to the Police Department as well as all the departments within the City. Mr. Lemon noted that through numerous discussions with the City they have been able to modify the proposed development to have numerous benefits to the Ahwatukee Foothills Village. **Mr. McBane** stated that the nearest grocery store was Safeway and added that even with the proposed residential units, the citizens of Ahwatukee Foothills will still utilize Chandler Boulevard rather than Liberty Lane. Mr. McBane added that the proposed development is not supportive of the current community conditions and that this would negatively impact the residents east of the development.

Michael Buzinski stated that there were contradictions with what was proposed by the City in 2016. Mr. Buzinski stated that in 2016, the City of Phoenix stated that 27th Avenue was no longer an option for an intersection to Loop 202 and stated that whoever purchased the land south of Chandler Boulevard would be required to build the road as an arterial. Mr. Buzinski stated that the residential development west of 19th Avenue had a single entry point along Chandler Boulevard and added that this has become a concern due to the lack of emergency vehicle response within that neighborhood. Mr. Buzinski concluded his public comment by stating that the proposed residential development would add to the traffic congestion and would significantly reduce street safety at the proposed intersections and that any high-density development would increase traffic congestion even more than single-family residential homes. **Mr. Wright** stated that there are significant improvements on Liberty Lane and Chandler Boulevard and that both would act as different channels for traffic. **Mr. Buzinski** stated the proposed improvements would not benefit the residents that have lived in the area since Pecos Road was removed as an alternative access point. **Mr. Wright** stated that the current street capacity was at 50 percent and that having Chandler Boulevard built as an arterial would not benefit the community since the street capacity and the demand should match one another. **Mr. Buzinski** asked if the applicant had any comment on the reduction of the speed limit on Chandler Boulevard. **Mr. Wright** stated that he would let City staff answer the question. **Ms. Sanchez Luna** stated that the applicant has been working with the Street Transportation Department and stated that she would reach out to their department to get clarification on the proposed speed limit for Chandler Boulevard and contact Mr. Buzinski at a later date.

Committee Discussion:

Max Masel stated that the Committee has been discussing this proposal for over two hours and that he appreciated that the applicant has been working with the City of Phoenix regarding the proposed development and that this has been a vision of

Ahwatukee Foothills since approximately 1982. Mr. Masel stated that he would like to make a motion to approve the general plan amendment request.

Motion:

Max Masel motioned to recommend approval of GPA-AF-1-22-6 per the staff recommendation. **Jerry Youhanaie** seconded the motion.

Chair Elliott stated that he would like additional parking to be provided at the trails in addition to the ones that will be provided along Chandler Boulevard.

Mr. Fisher stated that he understood that there had been a lot of discussion between the applicant and the City of Phoenix and stated that this at first glance should be a simple request but with the addition of neighborhood meetings, letters of opposition, and today's public comments it had been clear that this was not a simple request. Mr. Fisher stated that he would like Committee Member Masel to amend his motion.

Mike Maloney asked for clarification on the motion language. **Mr. Masel** stated that the motion language could be found in the request within the agenda that was presented to the committee prior to the meeting. **Mr. Maloney** stated that the language would be in Agenda Item No. 4.

Chair Elliott stated that the motion could be amended to include other information

Mr. Fisher stated that Committee Member Masel has not amended his motion.

Chair Elliot stated that he appreciated the transparency between the applicant and the Committee and that he would like the Planning Commission to consider additional parking for the trail heads other than what is proposed with the general plan amendment. **Mr. Fisher** stated that a motion was already presented, and that the Committee had to vote on it. **Mr. Masel** stated that stipulations could not be added to general plan amendments. **Chair Elliot** added that the committee could add comments or recommendations. **Ms. Sanchez Luna** stated that general plan amendments do not have any stipulations but stated that the Village Planning Committee Recommendation Forms had a section for staff comments where certain comments could be given to the Planning Commission. **Chair Elliot** asked the committee if there were any comments that they would like to add in addition to the parking comment that he had proposed. Chair Elliott stated that he would like additional parking to be provided at the trails in addition to the ones that will be provided along Chandler Boulevard.

Martha Neese requested that the motion be read again. **Mr. Maloney** stated that the motion was to recommend approval to amend the General Plan Street Classification Map on Chandler Boulevard approximately between the 19th Avenue and 27th Avenue alignments, and 27th Avenue between Chandler Boulevard and the Loop 202 Freeway from an Arterial to Local, Collector, and Arterial.

Vote:

5-3, Motion to approve passed, with Committee Members, Masel, Meier, Youhanaie Gasparro, and Elliott, in favor and Committee Members Fisher, Neese, and Maloney in

opposition.

Vice Chair Andrew Gasparro asked staff if they had received any additional speaker cards or any more registrations to speak besides the two citizens that provided their public comments. **Ms. Sanchez Luna** stated that staff had received numerous letters of opposition, but that those were provided in the staff report and that there were only two people who had registered to speak which were the two individuals that provided their public comment.