



Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary
GPA-AF-2-22-6
INFORMATION ONLY

Date of VPC Meeting	April 24, 2023
Request From	Commerce/Business Park
Request To	Mixed Use (Industrial / Commerce/Business Park)
Proposal	Minor General Plan Amendment to allow for a hybrid of uses to combine commerce park with industrial.
Location	Approximately 1,300 feet north of the northeast corner of 50th Street and Chandler Boulevard

VPC DISCUSSION:

No quorum.

STAFF COMMENTS:

None.

Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary GPA-AF-2-22-6

Date of VPC Meeting	August 28, 2023
Request From	Commerce/Business Park
Request To	Mixed Use (Industrial / Commerce/Business Park)
Proposal	Minor General Plan Amendment to allow for a hybrid of uses to combine commerce park with industrial.
Location	Approximately 1,300 feet north of the northeast corner of 50th Street and Chandler Boulevard
VPC Recommendation	Approval, per the staff recommendation
VPC Vote	5-3

VPC DISCUSSION:

Item No. 4 (GPA-AF-2-22-6) and Item No. 5 (Z-69-22-6) are companion cases and were heard together.

3 members of the public registered to speak on this item.

Staff Presentation:

Matteo Moric, staff, presented an overview of the general plan amendment and the rezoning case associated with the property along 50th Street north of Chandler Boulevard. Mr. Moric stated these proposals will be heard together but require two separate motions.

Mr. Moric showed the location of the proposal and identified the staff findings and recommendations. Mr. Moric identified the land uses and zoning of the surrounding properties, showed the proposed site plan and elevations. Mr. Moric stated the proposal was to allow commerce park uses and select industrial uses.

Applicant Presentation:

Carolyn Oberholtzer introduced herself as the attorney representing the proposal and reminded the Committee that she came before them for an information item back in April. Ms. Oberholtzer said she would mainly talk about what had changed since the previous meeting and noted the buildings have been built and certificate of occupancies were issued so it was fully operational today. Ms. Oberholtzer said the property was owned by the Kyrene Elementary School District but it's a long-term lease with Via West which is a national local major developer. Ms. Oberholtzer said

there was high demand in the market for these smaller clean manufacturers needing 50,000 to 100,000 square feet of space. Ms. Oberholtzer indicated the site was a logistics center with high interior ceilings which buildings could function for logistics, distribution, storage, as well as manufacturing. Ms. Oberholtzer noted the surrounding context of the property.

Ms. Oberholtzer clarified there was a property two parcels to the north which had been rezoned from office to multifamily. Ms. Oberholtzer said for logistics the freeway interchanges nearby were important such as the Chandler Boulevard and Ray Road interchanges and access to 50th Street with a short run to Chandler Blvd.

Ms. Oberholtzer identified the size of the three buildings onsite ranging from 141,000 to 210,000 square feet and noted they had a signed lease for a locking system company which did distribution and warehousing at this location and hoped to add manufacturing in the future. Ms. Oberholtzer stated they were working with a mixture of tenants and one group which needed a space for pharmaceutical manufacturing and had committed tenants for warehouse and storage. Ms. Oberholtzer added they had plenty of additional parking and that Via West managed these types of industrial parks very well.

Ms. Oberholtzer said the PUD enforces what the existing building setbacks are and codified large residential setbacks and building heights.

Ms. Oberholtzer noted access was from 3 driveways with 2 having expanded tapers to take trucks out of the traffic lanes. Ms. Oberholtzer added this property was originally planned for office, which had a higher projected trip count than this proposal. Ms. Oberholtzer said the ITE code which traffic engineers use for industrial park, factors in both manufacturing and logistics users' range with 13% trucks and the balance passenger vehicles. Ms. Oberholtzer said the shift towards more manufacturing tenants would bring passenger vehicles up and trucks down. Ms. Oberholtzer stated that office use was originally planned for the site when the site plan was made in the early 1990's, and the current traffic study was done in 2021. Ms. Oberholtzer said if the concern was traffic, the use would generate less traffic.

Ms. Oberholtzer added there was similar uses to the east side of the freeway within the City of Chandler. Ms. Oberholtzer reminded the Committee they were requesting limited processes typically accompanied with electronic manufacturing which is metal plating and the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals, vitamins, and dietary supplements, which she said the CP/GCP zoning was silent on. Ms. Oberholtzer emphasized that they were not talking about smokestacks and heavy manufacturing, they were tightening up on the allowance of outdoor storage by providing limitations on the height and wanted an increase to lot coverage for the shade covering of vehicles. Ms. Oberholtzer said they went beyond the standard notification requirements by 400 feet and noted no one came to the neighborhood meeting. Ms. Oberholtzer stated the intent was to bring in high quality jobs and tenants who work well together.

Questions from Committee:

Chair Andrew Gasparro asked the applicant representative to define metal plating. Ms. Oberholtzer said metal plating entails such precious metals as gold, platinum, and silver used in a lot of computer manufacturing and melting it down and cleaning the parts.

Vice Chair Darin Fisher said this was like semiconductors or chips manufacturing. Ms. Oberholtzer said yes, but nothing too intense and it's at a smaller scale.

Elena Pritchette said anytime there's plating it would release cyanides which are extremely toxic. **Ms. Oberholtzer** said the proposal would need to go through city review and requirements of all the materials which the city code would define how materials are treated and disposed.

Vice Chair Fisher shared concerns because this proposal was introducing the storage, manufacturing, utilization, and transport of hazardous toxic materials and this would open the door to other changes in the future. Mr. Fisher believed these materials were a concern since there were residential uses and hotels nearby. Mr. Fisher said it was a small change in the language but not in the permissibility it would allow.

Ms. Oberholtzer said this was an opportunity to allow a diversification of jobs in Ahwatukee with the latest buildings with the latest reviews and meet latest codes with these new uses. Ms. Oberholtzer said the new technology, robotics and machines were able to have these facilities in buildings which they could not have before.

Clifford Mager asked if this was like a use permit to expand the uses from two years ago and expressed concern of sending trailer traffic in the area which would not be an easy fit. Mr. Mager said this would create a bigger problem in a couple years. **Ms. Oberholtzer** said the streets have acceptable levels of service and they were wanting to add users which would have less truck traffic.

Chair Gasparro asked about the building permit or developer impact fees which were paid to the city for DOT or transportation. **Ms. Oberholtzer** said it the fees paid to the City of Phoenix for impact, permit fees, and off-site improvements were significant. **Mr. Gasparro** said this was a significant investment paid to the City of Phoenix and would help the school district.

Vice Chair Fisher wanted clarification on the traffic study. **Ms. Oberholtzer** said this would add about 1700 daily trips in addition to what is already there.

Chair Gasparro said Amazon could go in there with storage and distribution of nothing but trucks and go back and forth and this proposal would allow smaller users which get more passenger vehicles.

Vice Chair Fisher felt it was important for Ahwatukee residents to speak about an Ahwatukee issue. **Ms. Oberholtzer** explained that they had notified property owners with 1000 feet and homeowner associations within a mile.

Kimberly Barua asked if the proposal was for one or more tenants. **Ms. Oberholtzer** said they started working on this PUD over 1 ½ years ago, and the locking system company is a tenant now who would like to expand in the future to allow electronics manufacturing. Ms. Oberholtzer said they had interest from other tenants along the way including the manufacturing of pharmaceuticals.

Mike Maloney asked why it was hard to find locations for this use. **Mr. Alex Boles** from Via West stated some of these infill sites drive the highest values in the city. Mr. Boles said down I-17 and I-10 lots of companies that want to expand. Most employees live in Ahwatukee going to other locations and in many you need to tear down buildings which can be very expensive, and the zoning may be difficult to obtain.

Ms. Barua asked if there were employment counts. **Ms. Oberholtzer** said there were no employment projections yet since they only have storage and distribution now, but it would be higher.

Mr. Mager shared concerns that there will need to be traffic improvements in the near future. **Ms. Oberholtzer** said if there's a change of use it triggers a new traffic assessment update.

Vice Chair Fisher identified a concern with neighboring properties wanting to do something similar.

Public Comments:

Patty Porter said she was opposed to the item. She wanted to know how this project benefited the residents of Ahwatukee and she did not want an infiltration from a commuter type of business. She said this brings semitruck traffic and the proposal would not promote the small town feel of Ahwatukee. Ms. Porter also expressed concerns of toxicity and pollution.

Lei Finke opposed the item and read into the record her concerns of Via West built buildings now they want a General Plan Amendment. She expressed concerns with traffic and its increase and stated it was insulting to compare traffic counts to the proposal from the 1990's.

Joe Shultz said the existing zoning is done and they'd allow trucks in and out today. He was concerned with the metal plating and said his knowledge is metal plating is one of the largest ecological disasters. He added he was all about bringing jobs to Ahwatukee but did not feel this kind of facility should be in Ahwatukee.

Ms. Oberholtzer said the traffic concern is it's a vacant property and when you add a use it will add trips and it is on a freeway in Ahwatukee. Ms. Oberholtzer said the majority of the concerns was the electric manufacturing and said the tenant is not fundamental and more fundamental is the pharmaceutical and the basic compounding for the vitamins and supplements. Ms. Oberholtzer said it was in the Committee's purview to make the recommendation to approve the PUD without that component of it. Ms. Oberholtzer wanted to remind the Committee of this option when they deliberate.

Ms. Oberholtzer said this use would provide the potential of someone living in Ahwatukee to be close to these high paying jobs.

Ms. Pritchette said she was a chemical nuclear engineer and did not want to open the pandora's box for the toxic industry and she worked with plating and said there's no perfect lab which can filtrate toxicity which will be dumped in the ground or sewer. Ms. Pritchette said every place that has this use has a high rate of cancer and noted she had worked 20 years in the industry.

Vice Chair Fisher asked if they were willing to edit out the use and said if Via West would be willing to. **Mr. Boles** from Via West said if the Committee was uncomfortable with the use they would agree to it.

Chair Gasparro wanted to put on record he hopes friends at Planning Commission and City Council listen to the recommendation of the Village Planning Committee.

Ms. Oberholtzer said after City Council approval have to complete a PUD narrative which will serve as regulatory document, and they would not advocate for the Planning Commission to add it back in.

Chair Gasparro wanted to ensure the owners comment of agreeing to the removal of the electronic manufacturing, if the Village Planning Committee approves the GPA and Zoning. **Ms. Oberholtzer** said the owner would agree to it.

Chair Gasparro said his suggestion would be if the VPC wants it this way.

Motion:

Vice Chair Fisher motioned to recommend approval of GPA-AF-2-22-6 per the staff recommendation. **Clifford Mager** seconded the motion.

Vote:

5-3, Motion to recommend approval of GPA-AF-2-22-6 per the staff recommendation passed, with Committee Members Barua, Mager, Meier, Vice Chair Fisher, and Chair Gasparro in favor; and Maloney, Pritchette, and Sharer opposed.