



Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary

Z-TA-5-18-2 INFORMATION ONLY

Date of VPC Meeting	December 9, 2021
Request	Amend Section 653 of the Phoenix Zoning Ordinance to modify the Desert Character Overlay District (DCOD) boundaries between the 16th Street and 32nd Street alignments
Location	South of Sonoran Desert Drive between the 16th and 32nd Street alignments

VPC DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDED STIPULATIONS:

This item was heard concurrently with Item #3 – Information Only – GPA-DSTV-1-18-2, Item #4 – Information Only – Z-62-18-2, and Item #6 – Information Only – Z-75-18-2.

Committee member Julie Read arrived to the meeting during this item, bringing the quorum to 5 members.

3 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 Shannon Simon asked about the timeline for constructing Sonoran Desert Drive. **Susan Demmitt** stated that the buildout for Sonoran Desert Drive will cost approximately \$120 million and there is no defined timeline. She stated that the development will complete a Traffic Impact Study to determine the level of service and the necessary improvements.

Committee member Michelle Ricart asked whether the applicant reached out to the school district. **Susan Demmitt** stated that they are working with the school district on a donation agreement. She added that there will be no modifications to the boundaries of the school district and students living in the development will be within the boundary of Desert Mountain schools.

Gary Kirkilas, a member of Save Our Sonoran Preserve, expressed concerns with removal of the Desert Character Overlay. He stated that areas adjacent to preserve areas should be low density. He also expressed concerns regarding increased traffic.

Paul Grayczyk, president of the Sonoran Gate Home Owner's Association, encouraged larger setbacks from Sonoran Desert Drive.

Bob Thompson, a member of the public, stated that the beauty of the area should be maintained. He added that the developer should honor the Desert Character Overlay and keep the preserve areas as is.

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



Village Planning Committee Meeting Summary

Z-TA-5-18-2 INFORMATION ONLY

Date of VPC Meeting	November 8, 2018
Request	Modify the Desert Character Overlay District for approximately 638 acres to modify a portion from Sub-District A to Sub-District B and remove a portion of property from Sub-District A
Location	South of Sonoran Desert Drive between the 16th and 32nd Street alignments

VPC DISCUSSION:

Susan Demmitt, applicant, presented the information to the Village regarding MacEwen 480 PUD. She addressed the history of the site and the current requests to ultimately build 1,420 homes. She addressed that a portion of the 480 acres is within the Desert Character Overlay District and the North Land Use Plan. She stated they are working with the Deer Valley School District to come up with a solution to the school capacity issue. She stated they are looking into the option of Cave Creek Schools.

Tim Mitten, VPC member, expressed several concerns:

- Traffic safety and cyclist safety on Sonoran Desert Drive.
- Public safety response time.
- Elimination of the night sky.
- Density is too high.

He then asked if the applicant has been in communication with the State Land Department to see when the surrounding land will be opened for auction. Susan Demmitt stated it won't be within the next 5 years.

Jason Stokes, VPC member, asked where the closest fire station is located. Ms. Demmitt stated Cave Creek and Dynamite.

Steve Tucker, VPC member, asked what would happen in the notch. Ms. Demmitt states most likely residential. Mr. Tucker stated that the road improvements to Sonoran Desert Drive need to happen before development.

Julie Read, VPC member, asked how many homes are approved for Sonoran Gate. Ms. Demmitt responded 255 homes.

Shannon Simon, VPC member, inquired about the City's timeline for the complete build out of Sonoran Desert Drive. She stated the light pollution from Sonoran Gate isn't as bad as she thought. Ms. Simon then asked if all the neighborhoods will be gated. Ms. Demmitt responded that some neighborhoods will be gated.

Julie Read, VPC member, stated she has concerns about the school capacity issue and the fact that some of the students could be going to Cave Creek Schools. She stated that a neighborhood elementary school builds a sense of community. Ms. Read asked what the target market will be for this development. Ms. Demmitt states they are still trying to identify the target. Julie Read asked how many children there are in Sonoran Gate. A resident in the audience who lives in Sonoran Gate stated about 1 in 8 homes have kids.

Michelle Ricart, VPC member, stated that Sonoran Gate has a lot of amenities for kids so there might not be a lot of kids right now but they can come. She stated she is concerned with the school capacity. She said that it is at least a 20 to 25-minute drive to the closest Cave Creek elementary school by car, so it would be even longer by bus.

Susan Demmitt stated that Taylor Morrison is committed to working with the school districts to find a solution.

Michelle Ricart, VPC member, stated she is concerned about school buses going in and out of the neighborhood with the traffic and the speeds vehicles travel along Sonoran Desert Drive. She also stated open enrollment can be deceiving because students can get kicked out of the school.

The floor was open to public comment.

Michelle Kelly, resident, stated she was opposed to the request. She stated she is concerned about the density. She stated she lives in Sonoran Foothills, which is lower in density than the proposed project. She stated that Sonoran Foothills Elementary land was gifted by the developer. She is concerned about police and fire response times. She stated the project is too dense without the proper infrastructure in place.

Burt Bragin, resident, voiced his concerns about Sonoran Desert Drive and the current traffic. He stated the connection to the 303 needs to be made before the project is approved. He stated Sonoran Foothills has 1,300 homes and a school was gifted by the developer. He stated this development has 6 to 7 times more homes than Sonoran Gate.

Susan Demmitt, applicant, stated that Deer Valley Schools doesn't want a school site at this location.

Cynthia Wise, resident, stated she is in favor of the request. She said Taylor Morrison did a great job with the current infrastructure improvements within Sonoran Gate.

Gary Kirkilas, resident, stated he is a park steward for the Apache Wash trailhead. He stated this development would change the entire character of the area. He then asked the developer how they will make it look like the preserve.

J.R. Oliver, resident, stated she lives in Sonoran Foothills and has to wait a long time to get out of her subdivision. She stated the connection to the 303 would help a lot.

Susan Demmitt, applicant, stated that is more of a regional issue and to talk to the City's Street Transportation Department.

Sue Pierce, resident, stated she opposes the project and is a resident of Desert Enclave. She said on the way to the meeting they had to wait until 56 cars went by to turn out. She stated this development will have an adverse reaction on the desert wildlife and preserve area. She stated this development is in contradiction of the Sonoran Preserve Master Plan.

L. Chicchillo, resident, stated the current Taylor Morrison project looks like row houses. He stated he lives in Desert Enclave and is worried about the traffic.

Spero Papos, resident, asked if the land had been purchased. The applicant confirmed it had not been purchased yet. He inquired about traffic lights.

Julie Read, VPC member asked if the applicant has met with ADOT because they would like to see more information about the project.

There was then a committee discussion about how Dove Valley Road, Cave Creek Road and 27th Avenue all get flooded out in the monsoon storms.

Tim Mitten, VPC member, stated that the North Gateway minutes will be forwarded onto the Desert View VPC with their packet so they are aware of the discussion that took place.