



## STAFF REPORT

## CASE NUMBERS: GPA23-05 & PAD23-04

To: Planning and Zoning Commission

Through: Rick Williams, Development Services, Planning Manager

From: Derek Scheerer, Development Services, Senior Planner

Meeting Date: May 12, 2025

## REQUEST SUMMARY

**PUBLIC HEARING: Minor General Plan Amendment, GPA23-05 Maricopa Towne Center:** A request by Rose Law Group on behalf of property owner SP DUNN/Ak Chin, LLC, to amend the General Plan Future Land Use Map for approximately 184 +/- acres from existing Commercial (C), Medium Density Residential (M), and Master Planned Community (MPC) to Mixed Use (MU) for the future development of residential, and commercial uses, generally located at the southeast corner of W. Farrell Rd. and N. John Wayne Pkwy. **DISCUSSION AND ACTION.**

**PUBLIC HEARING: Planned Area Development, PAD23-04 Maricopa Towne Center:** A request by Rose Law Group on behalf of property owner SP DUNN/Ak Chin LLC, to amend the Zoning Map for approximately 184 +/- acres from the existing Avalea Planned Area Development (PAD) Local Business (CB-1) and Transitional (TR) to the Maricopa Towne Center Planned Area Development (PAD) for the future development of residential and commercial uses, generally located at the southeast corner of W. Farrell Rd. and N. John Wayne Pkwy. **DISCUSSION AND ACTION.**

## APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER

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## COUNCIL PRIORITIES CONSIDERED

- Well Planned Quality Growth and Development
- Economic Development
- Safe and Livable Community

## PROJECT DATA

Site Gross Acres	184 +/- gross acres
Site Addresses	Unassigned
Existing Site Uses	Vacant and Agricultural
Proposed Site Uses	Residential, Commercial
Existing General Plan, Land Uses	Commercial (C), Medium Density Residential (M), Master Planned Community (MPC)
Proposed General Plan, Land Uses	Mixed Use (MU)

Existing Zoning

Avalea Planned Area Development (PAD) Local Business (CB-1) and Transitional (TR)

Proposed Zoning

Maricopa Towne Center Planned Area Development (PAD)

**SURROUNDING ZONING/LAND USE**

Direction	General Plan Land Use	Existing Zoning	Existing Use
North	Medium Density Residential (M), Commercial (C)	Transitional (TR), Palo Brea Planned Area Development (PAD) Single-Family Residential CR-3	Single-Family Residences
East	Master Planned Community (MPC)	Avalea Planned Area Development (PAD) Single-Family Residential CR-3, CR-4, CR-5	Agricultural
South	Master Planned Community (MPC)	Avalea Planned Area Development (PAD) Transitional (TR), Single-Family Residential CR-3	Agricultural
West	Tribal Lands	Tribal Lands	Casino, Hotel, Entertainment Center

**ANALYSIS**

The city's General Plan is intended to provide a framework for all the interrelated functions of the City of Maricopa. The General Plan is an expression of the preferences of residents and property owners; a statement of City policy designed to achieve the citizen's vision; a framework for future decision making; and a means of enhancing the quality of life of the citizens. The General Plan is not a tool to promote special interests; not a rigid document that is inflexible; not a detailed policy or ordinance for specific properties or areas; not a Capital Improvement Plan; and is not a zoning map. Refer to [Planning Maricopa \(General Plan\)](#) for further information.

The applicant is requesting a Minor General Plan Amendment to the Future Land Use Map and a Rezone request. These requests are to convert 184 +/- acres of land designated as Commercial (C) (approx. 120 ac.), Medium Density Residential (M) (approx. 40 ac.), and Master Planned Community (MPC) (approx. 25 ac.) to Mixed Use (MU) and from Avalea PAD to Maricopa Towne Center PAD. The subject property is located at the southeast corner of W. Farrell Rd. and N. John Wayne Pkwy.

The City of Maricopa General Plan states that the purpose of the Commercial (C), Medium Density Residential (M), and Master Planned Community (MPC) designations are as follows:

- **Commercial** land use designation provides for commercial nodes on individual parcels. The intent is to provide neighborhood and community scale shopping, offices, medical facilities, and subordinate multi-family residential uses which incorporate pedestrian and neighborhood needs through site planning, architecture, access, lighting and parking design. Single-family residential uses are not supported. For larger parcels, over 40 acres, regional retail development is anticipated in this designation.
- **Medium Density Residential** designation provides for a suburban lifestyle with planned, single-family residential neighborhoods, which include significant open space, recreation and

cultural opportunities, including schools, churches and neighborhood facilities. Medium density residential developments are expected to contribute to off-site infrastructure needs for which they create a demand including roadways, bridges and grade separated crossings. Medium density residential areas comprise the majority of residential land in the city. The density of this land use category is between 2.0 to 6.0 du/ac.

- **Master Planned Community** designation provides for large-scale (160 acres or more) master planned developments that include a true variety of residential products, including larger lots and smaller, attached housing, along with supporting commercial and employment land uses to meet the daily needs of the residents. Residential areas are to include adequate open space, schools, churches and neighborhood facilities. Overlay zoning in combination with comprehensive site planning provide for supporting infrastructure. MPC developments are expected to provide off-site infrastructure enhancements as necessary to offset development impacts including needed roadway, bridge and overpass capacity. The overall density is flexible to allow appropriate urban design for properties designated for Village Center. Overall densities for all residential dwellings in MPCs without a Village Center designation can range from 3.0 to 10.0 dwelling units per acre.

The proposed request would change 184 +/- acres from Commercial, Medium Density Residential, and Master Planned Community to 184 +/- acres of Mixed Use. See descriptions of the Master Planned Community designation below.

- **Medium Density Residential** designation is intended to foster creative design for developments that desire to combine commercial, office and residential components. Single use projects are discouraged in the MU designation. Proposed MU projects should provide a true combination of uses that inter-relate in design and function with a pedestrian oriented environment. Higher density residential products (such as apartments and condominiums), 8.0 or more dwellings per acre, are expected in Mixed Use projects.

The considerations for the General Plan Land Use Map Amendment considers the Plan Administration section of the General Plan itself. Criteria include the following:

- **Land Use Criteria**

**Staff Analysis:** Per the General Plan's Land Use Criteria, any land use change that moves from a Low Density Residential designation to more intense residential or commercial category for 80 acres or more shall result in a Major Amendment to the city's General Plan. As presented, the proposed change of approx. 40 ac. from Medium Density Residential to the more intense Mixed Use designation does not trigger the requirement for a Major Amendment and is therefore processed as a Minor Amendment as proposed.

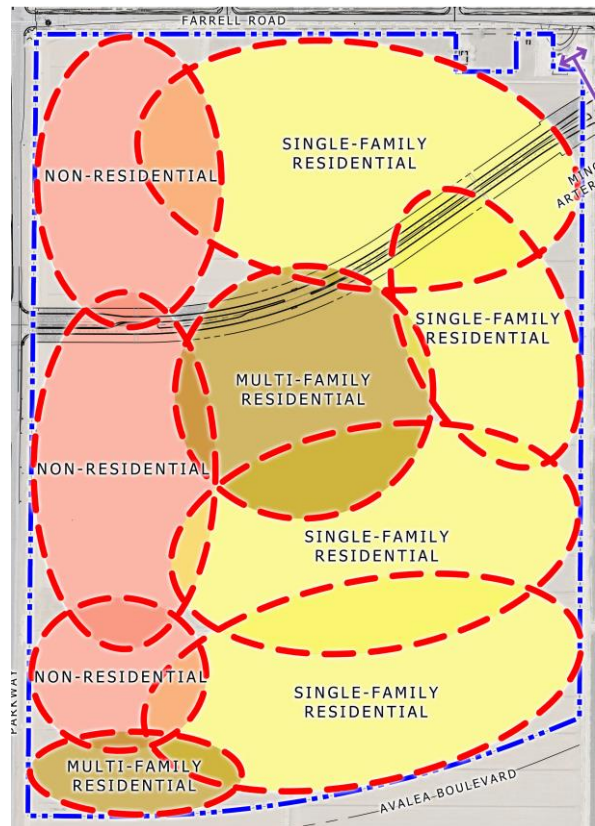
Per the applicant's Narrative (see Exhibit A – PAD Narrative) and Land Use Analysis (see Exhibit D – Site Context Study and Land Use Analysis), the proposed land use changes to Mixed Use is to allow for an environment that promotes a dynamic and flexible combination of land uses to support the city in creating medium to large scale commercial and local employment opportunities while providing the opportunity for diverse high-quality housing in a portion of Maricopa that lacks both commercial and residential diversity. Per the General Plan, commercial and residential growth is encouraged for areas within the existing Avalea PAD area, which includes the subject property. In addition to encouraging housing, the plan also encourages economic opportunities, which is a significant attribute of the applicant's overall development goals for the site. The applicant has justified the requested land-use changes as noted below:

- The Maricopa Town Center PAD is to permit a variety of uses such as residential in varying levels of density and product type (i.e. attached and detached single-family, multifamily, manufactured housing) along with office, commercial, hospitality, mixed-use, and employment.
- The proposal envisions providing multiple employment opportunities which are integrated with housing at various densities, commercial, hospitality, retail, and entertainment uses and encourages a community where people can work, live, and play.
- The 184-acre site is situated at the intersection of two high volume transit corridors, SR-347 and Sonoran Desert Parkway allowing for commercial and employment uses that will utilize these high-volume transit corridors to create thriving commercial and employment uses for the City.
- An overall matrix is provided identifying the acreages and general locations for each of the proposed land use categories under the Mixed Use designation.

Conceptual Use Data				
Gross Acreage	195.93 AC			
General Use	Minimum		Maximum	
	Acres	Percent	Acres	Percent
<b>Non-Residential Uses</b>				
Non-Residential Uses	24.00 AC	12.25%	125.00 AC	63.80%
<b>Residential Uses</b>				
Single-Family Uses	30.00 AC	15.31%	168.00 AC	85.74%
Multi-Family Uses	4.00 AC	2.04%	75.00 AC	38.28%

#### Details of the request:

Maricopa Towne Center PAD is a proposed multiphased development that will include varying degrees of residential, commercial, and employment developments. The proposal is a flexible set of land use regulations with the goal of permitting varying land uses that are adaptable to current and future market conditions. The PAD is intended to utilize zoning flexibility imbedded within its regulations to accommodate and encourage a variety of potential development opportunities while adhering to a cohesive framework and development theme that will form an attractive, interconnected, harmonious development. The Standards and Guidelines Report (see Exhibit C – Standards and Guidelines Report) demonstrates this through its list of varying permitted uses and development standards while Exhibit G – Applicant Exhibits, Sheet G-2 Non-Residential Development Standards and sheet G-3 Residential Development Standards support and provide further details of the development expectations. In furtherance of these expectations the unique Design Elements section of the Standards and Guidelines Report, specifically developed by the applicant and city staff, separates the Maricopa Towne Center PAD project from other PAD projects within the city. As an extension to the Standards and Guidelines Report and Design Elements, the applicant additionally proposes Architectural and Landscape Character expectations as noted in Exhibit G – Applicant Exhibits G-1 Architectural and Landscape Character Boards.



Within the proposed PAD, the request utilizes the Mixed Use – General (MU-G) zoning district of the city's zoning ordinance as a base zone for the entire PAD. The proposal seeks to only deviate from the

base MU-G Development Standards to accomplish the goals for diversified commercial and residential development.

The applicant is requesting:

1. A Minor General Plan Amendment to the Future Land Use Map from Commercial (C), Medium Density Residential (M), and Master Planned Community (MPC) to Mixed Use (MU).
2. A rezone from Avalea PAD to Maricopa Towne Center PAD. This zone change request will allow the applicant to pursue Preliminary/Final Plat and Development Review Permits (DRP) requiring site plan and architectural reviews to comply with the PAD.

Each request builds upon land use and development entitlements to make the proposal possible. Each approval is dependent upon the subsequent approval. The development proposal cannot move ahead without the rezoning, nor can the rezoning move ahead without the approval of the General Plan Land Use change.

Minor General Plan Amendment:

Currently, the site falls under various General Plan Future Land Use designations (as noted above) that do not support the proposed development pattern as described in the PAD Narrative (Exhibit A). As such, an amendment to the General Plan designation is required. Amending the General Plan Land Use Map requires consulting the Plan Administration section of the General Plan. Criteria for approval include the following:

- (1) number of acres for land use change and/or
  - (2) the capital cost burdens to the city when classifying an amendment as either Major or Minor.
1. Proposed land use changes that exceed the thresholds of a Minor Plan Amendment (as defined in Table 1 – Major Plan Amendment Land Use Criteria within City Limits) are defined as Major. This proposal does not exceed any of the land area or other criteria for a Major Amendment and is therefore being processed as a Minor Amendment.
  2. Infrastructure Criteria is also listed as an independent consideration to acreage. The context of the site may require expansion of infrastructure that warrants costly capital improvements. Expansion of infrastructure may include installation of various flood control devices/channels that will be coordinated between the applicant and the city at a later date. As presented, the proposed General Plan Future Land Use Map changes, along with the proposed development proposal, do not trigger infrastructure criteria that would escalate this application from a Minor to a Major Amendment.

In accordance with these criteria, staff classifies the proposed General Plan Land Use Map Amendment as Minor. The application was made with a Public Participation Plan that has met the regulations and standards prescribed within the Zoning Code, as outlined later in this report. The remaining public process includes holding a public hearing before the Planning & Zoning Commission, a recommendation by the Commission to the City Council, holding a Public Hearing before the City Council, and a decision by City Council. A recommendation should be made as to whether the amendment achieves, on balance, the goals and objectives as defined within the text of the General Plan Elements. A review of the goals and objectives are listed under the GPA23-05 *Minor General Plan Amendment Findings* section of this staff report.

Planned Area Development:

With a favorable recommendation for the General Plan Land Use Map Amendment, the Commission can consider the concurrent Zoning Map Amendment (rezone). Under Section B. Land Use Elements, subsection D. Land Use Plan – Land Use Designations of the City’s General Plan, future land use designations are listed (as previously noted). The Planned Area Development (PAD) zone is defined within the Zoning Code under Chapter 18.60.010 and states that “the specific purpose of the Planned Area Development (PAD) District is to provide opportunities for creative and flexible development approaches that accommodate, encourage, and promote innovatively designed developments involving a mixture of residential and/or nonresidential land uses not prescribed within the zoning districts of the city.” As presented, the proposed Minor General Plan Amendment and rezone fall within the criteria of these code sections.

The proposed PAD seeks to use the Mixed Use General (MU-G) zoning category as a base zone for the commercial and residential areas of the project. The proposal seeks to apply numerous variations to MU-G zone’s development standards to accomplish the goals of the development. Within the PAD Narrative and Standards and Guidelines Report, with support from Exhibit G - Sheets G-1 thru G-6, rationale for the proposed land use variations are provided. These requested variations are offset by the Design Elements section of the PAD that have been specifically tailored for this proposal.

As noted, the PAD standards proposed by the applicant thoughtfully follow the standards of the MU-G district with targeted variations that provide a unique PAD zoning custom-made for the proposed development of the site. Per Section 18.60.060 PAD Design Elements of the Zoning Ordinance, PAD applications requesting variations to the standards of the Zoning Ordinance must provide a certain number of required design elements, as listed under Section 18.60.060(C) PAD Design Elements Table, to offset the requested variations. In accordance with the spirit of the Zoning Code Design Elements Table the proposed PAD, as presented, provides individualized and development specific Design Element requirements that closely mirror the City Zoning Code Design Elements while providing an increased number of and alteration to the to the Zoning Code Design Elements. These tailored Elements have been specifically developed by the applicant and city staff to best meet the needs of the city, its residents, and the ultimate development proposal.

Density

Under Section 18.60.040.A Residential Unit Densities of the Zoning Code, land use and development regulations for the PAD zone “shall not exceed the maximum number permitted by the general plan density for the total area of the planned area development designated for residential use.” The General Plan does not specify density limitations specifically for PAD zones but restricts density under the Mixed Use (MU) land use designation to 8 du/ac. or more. The proposed maximum overall density for the PAD is 11.68 du/ac. or a maximum of 2,113 residential units, which falls within this allowable range. However, the PAD seeks the ability to cluster residential units with a specific area(s) of the PAD with a maximum site specific density of 65 du/ac. while maintaining the overall gross density and unit count limitations.

Building Height

The proposed PAD seeks to amend the maximum height restrictions from the MU-G base limitation of 60’ to 110’ feet for hotel development while incorporating step-back requirements. The step-back requirements are illustrated in Exhibit G – Sheet G-5 Building Height Stepback Requirements and demonstrate that as the building height increases, so will the building setback from property lines.

Circulation

Access to the site will be from various points along the northern (W. Farrell Rd.), western (N. John Wayne Pkwy.) and southern (future Avalea Blvd.) portions of the development area. The site is also bisected by the Sonoran Desert Pkwy., which will provide additional points for exterior access. The ultimate location(s) and appropriateness of future access points will be determined as individual areas



of the site seek development proposals under Development Review Permit (DRP) submittals. Additional internal access points and connections will also be determined at individual DRP submissions. As noted in the project Narrative, in addition to vehicular access points, pedestrian access points both internal and external will be required and located at individual DRP submission stages. Also noted in the PAD is requirements for landscape setbacks and screening along roadways. These treatments will help ensure a sense of arrival into the overall Maricopa Towne Center development.

### Open Space and Amenities

As part of the previously noted Non-Residential and Residential Development Standards (Exhibit G - Sheets G-2 and G-3) and within the Design Criteria offsets, the applicant proposes a robust amenity and design package for the open space areas of the PAD. The proposed open space areas will account for 10% of the non-residential and 20% of the residential development areas. Proposed amenities will vary by land use type and can be found in the Design Elements section of the Standards and Guidelines Report.

### Architecture

Although currently in the conceptual design phase, the applicant has included architectural design expectations for the various land use types within Exhibit G – Sheet G-1 – Architectural and Landscape Character Boards. This exhibit provides a minimum design expectation for commercial, single-family residential, multi-family residential, and the various attached and detached residential types proposed in the PAD. The concept imagery provided in the Exhibit will assist potential developers and city staff when formulating and assessing various development proposals. These concepts provide context and guidance for the overall development theme of the site. The aesthetic sought by the development's design team emphasizes a modern motif that will meet the city code and the PAD.

## **CITIZEN PARTICIPATION**

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Prior to recommending approval of the General Plan Minor Amendment and rezone requests, the applicant provided a public participation plan to demonstrate the materials used to inform surrounding property owners of the proposed General Plan Minor Amendment and rezone required per the city's Zoning Code. The Public Participation Plan included one (1) neighborhood meeting that was held at the request of anyone who wished to participate, two (2) rounds of notification letters sent to all property owners within 600 feet of the subject area, public notice signs within the subject area, and one (1) legal notice published in the Pinal Central Dispatch. The two (2) sets of notices that were distributed advertised the neighborhood meeting, Planning and Zoning Public Hearing and City Council Public Hearing dates. A timeline of the participation event is shown below (refer to Exhibit E – Citizen Participation Report).

- |                  |   |  |
|------------------|---|--|
| • March 26, 2025 | - | 1 <sup>st</sup> Notification letters sent  |
| • March 26, 2025 | - | 1 <sup>st</sup> Site posting               |
| • April 10, 2025 | - | Neighborhood meeting                       |
| • April 24, 2025 | - | 1 <sup>st</sup> Newspaper notice published |
| • April 24, 2025 | - | 2 <sup>nd</sup> Notification letters sent  |
| • May 12, 2025   | - | Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting     |

## **PUBLIC COMMENT**

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At the time of writing this report staff has not received any comment for the request. Comments were provided to the applicant at the Neighborhood Meeting and have been included in Exhibit E – Citizen Participation Report.

## **GPA23-05 MAJOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT FINDINGS**

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As required by the General Plan, its goals and objectives are of consideration for the proposed request. Refer to Exhibit A – PAD Narrative and Exhibit D – Site Context Study and Land Use Analysis, for responses from the applicant regarding the listed elements applicable to this request. Through staff review of the project many aspects of this amendment were analyzed. These aspects included surrounding land uses, circulation, as well as impacts on the surrounding areas and region. Staff notes that further analysis of access to the proposed land uses, and future development must be evaluated by City staff and future applicants. Infrastructure improvements to support access will be determined at individual development submittals. Drainage solutions must be coordinated with the City Engineer and city's Stormwater Systems Manager. With the future analysis in mind, staff found that the proposed Minor Amendment would have no adverse impact and will meet and fulfill the various goals and objectives stated in the city's adopted General Plan.

Further, the Mixed Use (MU) designation, as demonstrated in this report, would enhance the surrounding areas, complement the surrounding residential land uses and carry forth Maricopa's Vision stated within the General Plan. After reviewing the application and the request for a Minor Amendment it is staff's opinion that the City of Maricopa General Plan Future Land Use Map be amended to reflect a Mixed Use (MU) land use on the proposed site.

As required by the General Plan, the following goals and objectives are of consideration:

### **Goal B1.4: Minimize conflicts between land uses.**

*Staff Analysis: The proposal will continue to address land use compatibilities and incompatibilities in its ultimate design, character, and construction. As indicated in the narrative, all proposed land uses are compatible with and will not negatively impact the existing adjacent and neighboring uses.*

### **Goal B2.2.: Assure the development of a diverse housing stock in both dwelling type and density.**

*Staff Analysis: The proposed PAD establishes different housing options that incorporate affordability elements along with time and market sensitive diversity with the full range of housing opportunities including higher-density residential uses under the integrated flexibility of the companion PAD application.*

### **Objective B1.4.6: Transition all property zoning designations from pre-existing districts to existing zoning districts in a manner that best achieves the goals of this General Plan.**

*Staff Analysis: The companion PAD rezone request evaluates the goals of the General Plan and provides scope and objectives and includes an analysis of how the proposed zoning helps to achieve the goals of the City's General Plan while transitioning the zoning of the site from the Former Zoning Ordinance to a modified district in the Current Zoning Ordinance.*



**Goal E3.1: Create safe and functional pedestrian ways and bicycle routes as an alternative mode of travel throughout Maricopa.**

*Staff Analysis: The proposal provides enhanced and safe pedestrian interconnections between the future residential and the commercial developments within and around the PAD site. As such, the proposal demonstrates compliance with this goal.*

**PAD23-04 ZONING MAP AMENDMENT REQUIRED FINDINGS**

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As required by Sec. 18.175.040 of the City's Zoning Code, the Planning & Zoning Commission shall make the following findings in their recommendation to the City Council:

1. The amendment is consistent with the General Plan.

*Staff Analysis: The proposed zone change to PAD adheres to the General Plan's future land use designation, pending approval of the Mixed Use (MU) designation.*

2. Any change in District boundaries is necessary to achieve the balance of land uses desired by the city, consistent with the General Plan, and to increase the inventory of land within a given Zoning District; and

*Staff Analysis: The zone change amendment will allow for additional residential and employment opportunities in the area.*

3. The amendment will promote the growth of the city in an orderly manner and protect the public health, safety, peace, comfort, and general welfare.

*Staff Analysis: The zone change will not impact the health, safety and general welfare of the area and will promote growth in an orderly manner.*

**CONCLUSION**

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Staff recommends **approval** of **case GPA23-05 Maricopa Towne Center**, subject to the conditions of approval stated in this staff report, and as amended by the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Staff recommends **approval** of **case PAD23-04 Maricopa Towne Center**, subject to the conditions of approval stated in this staff report, and as amended by the Planning and Zoning Commission. Each case will require an independent motion by the Commission:

1. The applicant shall continue with the development process of submitting Preliminary Plats, Final Plats, and Development Review Permit(s) as prescribed within the City's Zoning Code.
2. Prior to the City Council approval of the PAD23-04, the applicant shall submit to the city a signed waiver pursuant to Proposition 207, as applicable.
3. Prior to issuance of any final Certificate of Occupancy, the developer must provide all offsite improvements recommended by City's staff and a Traffic Impact Analysis prepared to the City's approved guidelines. Offsite improvements include infrastructure such as construction or improvements of roads, sidewalks, curb/gutter, stripping, signs, streetlights, landscaping and new installation or reconfiguration of existing traffic signals impacted by the development, at the determination of the City Engineer.

4. If the development is to be built and occupied by residents in phases, a phasing plan must be submitted to the City for review and approval. Construction of offsite improvements shall be included with the first phase of construction unless approved by the City Engineer to be built with future phases.
5. Any amendments to the PAD District shall be processed in accordance with Section 18.180.060 of the City's Zoning Code.
6. All proposed vehicular and pedestrian connections to existing and future public rights-of-way, internal and external to the PAD site, will be reviewed at individual development submittals.
7. All public roadways shall adhere to the City's Design Standards Manual, and any additional requirements as deemed necessary by the City Traffic Engineer unless otherwise approved by the City Engineer.
8. All zoning and development standards not expressly enumerated within this PAD shall comply with the applicable standards delineated in the City's Zoning Code.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

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**Exhibit A:** PAD23-04 Narrative

**Exhibit B:** GPA23-05 Narrative

**Exhibit C:** Standards and Guidelines Report

**Exhibit D:** Site Context Study and Land Use Analysis

**Exhibit E:** Citizen Participation Report

**Exhibit F:** Zoning and General Plan Land Use Maps

**Exhibit G:** Applicant Exhibits G-1 thru G-6

-- End of staff report --