

May 3, 2023

Subject: Pecan Groves Minor General Plan Amendment and Planned Area Development Request
Case #s GPA23-02 & PAD22-17

Project Narrative

On behalf of Emmerson Enterprises, CVL Consultants is pleased to submit this request for Pecan Groves, a new single family residential community planned for approximately 329 single-family homes, three typical lot sizes with opportunities for additional housing product options, a ±5.2-acre commercial site, and quality open space and amenities on an undeveloped approximately 80-acre parcel at the northwest corner of Steen Road and Murphy Road (the “Property”) in Maricopa, Arizona (the “City”). This unique community meets the desires of current and future homebuyers while reflecting the property’s historic use as a pecan grove, in both name and agricultural character. The Pecan Groves community provides an appropriate land use solution for this undeveloped property in a growing area of Maricopa.

The purpose of this request is to submit, process, and obtain approval for a Major General Plan Amendment and Rezoning for the proposed project. Both requests are being filed concurrently. The first request seeks a Major General Plan Amendment (“GPA”) to change the existing LDR (“Low Density Residential - up to 2.0 dwelling units per acre”) land use designation to a combination of the MDR (“Medium Density Residential 2.0-6.0 dwelling units per acre”) and C (“Commercial”) land use designations.

The second companion request seeks to rezone the overall approximate 80-acre property from the current CI-2 (“Industrial Zone”) zoning to PAD (“Planned Area Development”) zoning. Amended development standards are proposed to create specific standards to guide the development of the Property so that it fits seamlessly within the surrounding area.

The Property is well suited for its majority single-family residential use, due to its location adjacent to the Cortona master-planned community directly to the west and the Maricopa 40 community to the north, and the Eagle Shadows master-planned community across from Steen Road to the south. Moreover, Pecan Groves is positioned approximately one mile from Maricopa High School No. 2 located on the southwest corner of Murphy Road and Farrell Road. This location precludes large industrial uses, since heavy truck traffic would pose a safety hazard and certain industrial uses may also pose an environmental hazard for nearby students. Both federal and state school and transportation agencies and the EPA discourage heavy industrial development near schools due to these safety concerns. Larger portions of commercial and multi-family residential uses would also generate more traffic than single-family residential uses, which could also pose a safety hazard for nearby students. As described above, the proposed residential community with a portion designated for future commercial development is significantly more compatible with the surrounding area.

Through these two requests, Emmerson Enterprises seeks to bring a beautiful residential neighborhood to the City, with lot sizes that provide a variety of options to meet the desires of current and future homebuyers in the area. Emmerson Enterprises has designed the community after the pattern it used successfully in nearby communities like McDavid Estates, located on McDavid Road and Loma Drive. Pecan Groves will be another quality community based on these principles and will be developed as a high-quality single family residential and commercial neighborhood through these concurrent PAD and Major GPA applications.

Description of Development

Pecan Groves is composed of residential lots with a small commercial corner connected by an integrated network of open space and recreation facilities as further described within this narrative. The community incorporates a wide landscape tract along the property's frontage on both Murphy Road and Steen Road with additional open space at each entry to provide a beautiful external aesthetic to the community. This tract provides width for staggering and articulation of perimeter walls for visual interest and additional buffering to the project's lots that back to the adjacent roadway, as well as the proposed commercial site.

The residential lots primarily consist of a typical lot mix of 40' x 115', 45' x 120', and 60' x 125' lots with the opportunity for the end user to incorporate a more diverse and innovative variety of housing types, such as alley loaded lots or z-lots for a portion of the community, if supported by market demand. The current design of the community as shown provides internal neighborhoods dedicated to each of the proposed lot sizes buffered by a network of contiguous open space corridors providing visual appeal and pedestrian connectivity throughout, as illustrated on the Conceptual Land Use Plan. A separate phase is planned for a ±5.2-acre commercial parcel at the southeast corner of the community to offer flexibility and diversity to the land plan and fulfill the City's intent for commercial development in the area. The future commercial use will be determined by the end user with the opportunity for various uses such as a farmer's market to adapt to the nearby agrarian surroundings or other neighborhood commercial development appropriate for its location. Internal circulation to the community will be provided by a primary entrance from Steen Road to the south and Murphy Road to the east, with internal collector roads providing access to local streets within all proposed parcels. The design highlights efficient and safe traffic circulation with careful consideration of open space corridors and trail connectivity, while promoting a clear focus on separating pedestrian and vehicular circulation where possible throughout the community.

The site plan has been designed to create a centrally located main park containing active open space amenities with smaller pocket parks located throughout. All homes in the community are in close proximity to active open space areas. Residents will have ample opportunity for active and passive recreation with the centrally located main park, trail corridors and recreation areas featuring amenities such as a playground, shade ramadas, shade nodes, BBQs, and picnic tables. A network of walking paths and trails link individual parcels and smaller pocket parks with the main park and surrounding area, providing an enhanced walkable community experience for all residents within Pecan Groves.

The community provides open space for off-site drainage flows, on-site retention, landscape buffers from the adjacent right-of-way, and landscape tracts adjacent to all corner lots. The proposed community addresses the City of Maricopa's Single Family Residential Design Guidelines and Zoning Code by proposing multiple perimeter improvements, including monument signage, entry landscaping, character shade trees, and trail connectivity, and a high-quality material and finish design for the theme walls and decorative fencing provided throughout the entire community.

Design features, including the use of character trees, various complimentary building materials and architectural focal points will emphasize the project's theme. Detached sidewalks will be provided throughout to further enhance the livability of the community. All architectural elements will tie together to provide a strong identity for the site that compliments the surrounding properties as well as creating an inviting atmosphere for both residents and guests. The community addresses the City of Maricopa's Single Family Residential Design Guidelines and Zoning Code by proposing multiple perimeter improvements, including monument signage, entry landscaping, character shade trees, and trail connectivity, and a high-quality material and finish design for the theme walls and decorative fencing provided throughout the entire community. The community will implement design elements from the Heritage District Design Guidelines to reflect the rich culture and historical character of Maricopa along with several other defining standards further identified in this proposal to ensure the development of a high-quality neighborhood and overall design compatibility to the area.