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STAFF REPORT

CASE NUMBERS: GPA24-04

To: Planning and Zoning Commission
From: Rick Williams, Development Services, Planning and Zoning Manager
Meeting Date: December 23, 2024

REQUEST SUMMARY

PUBLIC HEARING: Major General Plan Amendment, GPA24-04 Industrial Triangle: A request by the City of Maricopa, to amend the General Plan Future Land Use Map for approximately 716.5 +/- acres from Master Planned Community (MPC), Medium Density Residential (MDR), and Open Space (OS) to the Employment (E) designation. The proposed amendment is generally located south of the Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, east of N. Porter Road, east of N. White and Parker Road, and north of W. Peters and Nall Road. **DISCUSSION AND ACTION.**

APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER

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COUNCIL PRIORITIES CONSIDERED

- Quality of Life
- Economic Sustainability
- Managing the Future

PROJECT DATA

Site Gross Acres	716 +/- gross acres
Site Addresses	Unassigned
Existing Site Uses	Agricultural and Light Industrial
Proposed Site Uses	Employment / Light Industrial
Existing General Plan, Land Use	Employment (E), Open Space (OS), Medium Density Residential (MDR), and Master Planned Community (MDR).
Proposed General Plan, Land Use	Employment (E)
Existing Zoning	Industrial (CI-1 and CI-2), General Industrial (GI) Commercial (CB-2), Residential (CR-3), and Transitiona Zone (TR).

SURROUNDING ZONING/LAND USE

Location	Zoning	Maricopa General Plan	Current Use
Project Site	Industrial CI-1 and CI-2 General Industrial GI Commercial CB-2 Residential CR-3 Transitional Zone TR	Employment (E) Master Planned Community (MPC) Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Vacant/Agricultural Uses
North	PAD – Kelly Ranch Commercial CB-2 Industrial CI-2 Transitional TR PAD – Eagle Shadows Residential CR-3	Open Space (OS) Commercial (C) Employment (E) Mixed-Use (MU) Medium Density Residential (MDR)	Vacant
East	Transitional Zone TR Commercial CB-2 CI-1 and GI	Open Space (OS) Master Planned Community (MPC)	Vacant
South	Ak-Chin Indian Reservation	Ak-Chin Indian Community (AC)	Vacant/Agricultural
West	PAD – Avalea Residential CR-2, CR-3, CR-4, CR-5, Commercial CB-2 Transitional Zone TR	Commercial (C) Medium Density Residential (MDR) Master Planned Community (MPC)	Vacant

DETAILS OF THE REQUEST

The City of Maricopa is initiating a request for a Major General Plan Amendment (GPA) to amend the land use designation for approximately 716.5 gross acres of land from Master Planned Community (MPC), Medium Density Residential (MDR), and Open Space (OS) to the Employment (E) designation. The proposed amendment is generally located south of the Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, east of N. Porter Road, east of N. White and Parker Road, and north of W. Peters and Nall Road. **See Exhibit B, Vicinity Map.** The Employment (E) land use category is a broad designation that accommodates numerous types of development. Preferred uses include lighter industrial use such as light manufacturing and business park development, professional offices, medical facilities, etc.

The site is generally located south of the Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway, east of N. Porter Road, east of N. White and Parker Road, and north of W. Peters and Nall Road and is bifurcated by the Santa Rosa Wash. The subject area is primarily undeveloped land with some properties currently being utilized for agricultural purposes. The Santa Rosa Wash, which runs north/west through the area, acts a natural barrier for the properties adjacent to the UPRR and W. Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway. The remainder of the properties, which are vacant undeveloped land, are located north of W. Steen Road between N. White and Parker Road and N. Porter Road.

The majority of the adjacent/surrounding properties are currently designated as Employment (E) on the Maricopa General Plan and are within close proximity to the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR). The proposed land use amendment of the subject area to the Employment land use designation will result in the expansion of the existing Employment land uses creating a vibrant industrial core thus providing further growth in employment opportunities.

The purpose of this request is to amend the current General Plan Land Use designation for approximately 716.5 gross acres of land from Medium Density Residential (MDR), Master Planned Community (MPC), and Open Space (OS), to the Employment (E) land use designation. See **Exhibit**

C, Existing General Plan Land Uses and **Exhibit D, Proposed General Plan Land Uses**. The proposal will further support existing and planned employment and industrial developments in the area, which are key to the City’s employment goals and establishing the area as the City’s industrial and commercial hub.

ANALYSIS

The Employment land use category is a broad designation intended to accommodate numerous types of development including office, industrial and commercial, allowing for varying scale and intensity of land uses. While industrial, warehousing, manufacturing, processing and non-retail commercial activity are expected, retail and wholesale activity are in no way prohibited from locating in the Employment designation. Preferred uses include lighter industrial use such as light manufacturing and business park development, also professional offices, including medical facilities, clinics and associated office support services. Residential uses are not intended in this designation.

Employment sites are to be integrated, through design, buffering, and siting, with adjacent residential or other activities. Typical developments have their own driveways, parking areas, identification signs and landscaping. Developments with more than one building share a common architectural theme, as well a landscape theme, identification signs, parking and driveways.

The project area is well situated for industrial use as it lies within the southeast portion of the City’s development boundaries and has direct access to Maricopa-Casa Grande Highway and the UPRR on the north/northeast boundary of the site. Additionally, the subject area is also accessible to major transportation routes including Interstate 10, Interstate 8, State Route 347, State Route 238, and the future Interstate 11.

Conformance with the General Plan:

Maricopa’s General Plan, “Planning Maricopa,” is an expression of the preferences of residents and property owners and provides guidance to citizens regarding the physical development of the community. Its purpose is to provide a framework for all the interrelated functions of the City of Maricopa. It is a citizen-driven plan, which conforms both to the letter and spirit of “Growing Smarter Plus” legislation established by the State of Arizona to guide municipal planning and growth management.

This proposed amendment will better meet the Goals and Objectives set forth in the City’s General Plan. This proposal complies with numerous provisions of the City’s General Plan, including those items highlighted below.

Growth Area Element

Maricopa’s growth-oriented goals and objectives provide the community vision to achieve a sustainable balance of uses within Maricopa and the greater planning area, as well as the direction for strategic implementation to ensure that the quality-of-life standards are met in a timely and acceptable manner.

Goal A2: Achieve a balance in the community between jobs and housing.

Objective A2.1: Support land use requests that improve the balance between housing and employment within the Maricopa Planning Area

Staff Response: This request improves the balance between housing and employment within the City limits by providing the opportunity for a new industrial park developments promoting multiple types of diverse employment opportunities for those looking to live, work, and play in the City of Maricopa.

Objective A2.2: Assure that sufficient infrastructure is in place or necessary improvements are adequately planned and funded (i.e. remove from Vekol Wash, floodplain, adequate sanitary sewer and water supply).

Staff Response: The future development of the industrial park area will extend critical infrastructure needs to the southeast portion of the City, which will not only serve the subject area but also provide connections for many different types of future development.

Objective A2.4: Evaluate and update the General Plan Land Use Map with a defined scope and objectives. Include an analysis of existing zoning and the various PAD planned land uses within the City and Planning Area, and outline recommendations for Land Use Map updates in support of this General Plan and the 2040 Vision.

Staff Response: This request for a Major GPA evaluates the General Plan, provides scope and objectives, and includes an analysis of existing zoning and various planned land uses within the City.

Circulation & Connectivity Element

The goals and objectives of the Circulation Element parallel priorities addressed by citizens participating in the General Plan workshops and public meetings. The vision for the City's transportation system includes cooperating with other agencies, residents and businesses, developing a hierarchy of freeways, arterials, collectors and local streets, creating a circulation system for bikes, pedestrians, equestrians, and improving local and intra-city connections and transit services.

Goal E2.1: Develop an efficient and safe transportation system providing multi-modal connectivity to other cities and regions.

Objective E2.1.1: Implement the recommendations of the Transportation Master Plan and the supporting Capital Improvement Program.

Staff Response: As future development occurs, the City will continue to address and implement all City adopted transportation studies and infrastructure standards, including the Transportation Master Plan and supporting Capital Improvement Programs.

Objective E2.1.2: Foster strategic regional transportation partnerships with other jurisdictions and agencies (AMTRAK, ADOT, Pinal County, Gila River Indian Community, Ak-Chin Community, CAG, and MAG) to plan, design, and construct local and regional transportation improvements

Staff Response: The City will work in conjunction with future developers to ensure that coordination and cooperation with all jurisdictions, agencies, communities, and utility providers is a priority.

Objective E2.1.4: Plan for roadway corridors to improve local circulation and regional connections, such as north/south travel routes in addition to SR-347, and high capacity east/ west regional travel routes. Implement policies, such as the Transportation Corridor Overlay Zoning District and incentives to encourage compatible land uses along these corridors at appropriate locations.

Staff Response: Future development in the area will be required to address and implement all City adopted infrastructure standards and policies. Any proposed transportation facilities within this project area will be designed and maintained with the adopted codes, design details, and safety standards of the community, which include landscaping and aesthetic standards.

Goal E2.2: Develop an efficient and safe intra-city road network, including a hierarchy of roadways, which meets the long-term vision of the citizens.

Objective E2.2.7: Design, improve, and maintain existing and new transportation facilities within the Growth Areas in accordance with adopted codes, safety standards, and design details including landscaping and aesthetic standards.

Staff Response: Any proposed transportation facilities within the project area will be designed and maintained with the adopted codes, design details, and safety standards of the community, which include landscaping and aesthetic standards.

Goal E4.2: Maintain and expand local passenger and freight rail service in Maricopa to create opportunities for economic development, tourism, and regional transit.

Objective E4.2.2: Plan, design, and improve heavy rail track spurs to promote industrial development and warehousing within Maricopa.

Staff Response: As previously noted, the project area is situated in close proximity to both local and regional transportation routes. None more instrumental to the overall success of the area than the Union Pacific Railroad. It is anticipated that future development of this area will require multiple railroad spurs to adequately service the area.

Economic Development Element

The goals and objectives of the Economic Development Element include guidance and direction for a fully integrated municipal economy providing opportunity for residents to live, work, and play based on an economically prosperous, dynamic, and sustainable community. One that offers a government structure that is supportive of business and employment growth and is based on the principles that jobs, revenue, and financial stability contribute to a municipality's economic health.

Goal F4.4: Establish Maricopa as a regional leader in economic development with properly aligned resources and tools.

Objective F4.4.4: Continue to build resources and organizational capacity for economic development to achieve and implement the Goals and Objectives of the Economic Development Element.

Staff Response: With about 84% of Maricopa citizens commuting to the Phoenix Metropolitan Area for work, the City is proposing to assemble sufficient land to create an area for potential Industrial/Light Industrial users. This is an effort to create local job opportunities within Maricopa by reducing the need for residents to commute long distances for employment. More importantly, the Employment (E) land use designation will support the creation of higher-wage jobs, increased tax revenue, and higher disposable income, thereby enhancing the local economy and contributing to infrastructure development, community and economic development, and public safety.

Goal F4.5: Effectively market and position the City as a top of mind destination for new investment opportunities among key target sectors and Audiences.

Objective F4.4.4: Market externally by leveraging regional and national partners for targeted marketing and recruitment.

Staff Response: The purpose of the change in land use is to attract regional and national companies who are looking to relocate or expand their current operations. The proximity to local and regional transportation corridors makes this area an ideal location for future business development.

Parks, Recreation & Open Space Element

Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element goals and objectives support the establishment of standards and levels of service criteria that lead to the creation of a full-service parks, recreation and open space system in Maricopa.

Goal G1.c.1: Trails and open space design requires emphasis on walkability and connectivity across the property complete with connections to adjacent properties.

Objective G1.c.1.4: Future developments should incorporate open space, trails, and recreation as an integral design element, providing direct access and visibility to open space corridors from public ways.

Staff Response: As previously noted, the Santa Rosa Wash corridor runs through the middle of the subject site. The wash corridor has been identified as part of a regional trail system. Open space, trails, recreation, and pedestrian linkages will be thoroughly addressed throughout the rezoning, preliminary plat, and site plan review processes.

Goal G3.a.1: Plan and construct multi-use trails along the Santa Rosa Wash to serve existing neighborhoods.

Objective G3.a.1.1: Acquire necessary easements and rights of way to construct a continuous multi-use trail system along the Santa Rosa Wash from the Gila River Indian Community to the Ak-Chin Indian Community.

Staff Response: As previously noted, the Santa Rosa Wash corridor runs through the middle of the subject site. The wash corridor has been identified as part of a regional trail system. Future developments on both sides of the wash will be required to construct and maintain the trail system adjacent to their developments. The details of the trail system will be thoroughly addressed throughout the rezoning, preliminary plat, and site plan review processes.

Summary:

The proposed amendment furthers the goals and objectives of the Maricopa General Plan by adding to the City's stock of developable manufacturing/industrial land in a location that will encourage future growth and employment opportunities. Its proximity to existing infrastructure, regional transportation routes, and accessible rail service make it an ideal location within the City.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

Prior to recommending approval of the Major General Plan Amendment, the applicant provided a public participation plan to demonstrate the materials used to inform surrounding property owners of the proposed Major General Plan Amendment required per the city's Zoning Code. The Public Participation Plan included a neighborhood meeting that was held at the request of anyone who wished to participate, notification letters sent to all property owners within 600 feet of the subject area, public notice signs within the subject area, and a legal notice in the Casa Grande Dispatch. Public Meeting/Hearing notices went out advertising the scheduled Planning and Zoning Public Hearings and City Council date. A timeline of the participation event is shown below (refer to Exhibit E – Citizen Participation Report).

The Major General Plan Amendment has state statutes that further enhance the outreach to include neighboring jurisdictions and state agencies. This notification was completed by staff on November 25, 2024, and the City’s website has provided up-to-date information, attachments, and public meeting dates regarding the proposal.

- September 25, 2024 - 60-day Agency Review Initiated
- October 16, 2024 - Neighborhood Notification Sent
- November 6, 2024 - Neighborhood Meeting
- November 19, 2024 - Newspaper Notice Published
- November 20, 2024 - Site Sign Posted (Five Different Sites)
- November 19, 2024 - Public Meeting/Hearing Postcards Mailed
- November 25, 2024 - 60-day Agency Review Closed
- December 9, 2024 - 1st Planning and Zoning Commission meeting
- December 23, 2024 - 2nd Planning and Zoning Commission meeting

PUBLIC COMMENT

At the time of writing this report staff has not received any comment for the request.

GPA24-04 MAJOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT FINDINGS:

As required by the General Plan, its goals and objectives are of consideration for the proposed 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 found that the proposed major 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 Employment (E) land use designation, as demonstrated in this report, would enhance the surrounding areas, complement the surrounding Employment (E) land uses and carry forth Maricopa’s Vision stated within the General Plan. After reviewing the application and the request for a Major Amendment it is staff’s opinion that the City of Maricopa General Plan Future Land Use Map be amended to reflect Employment (E) land uses on the proposed site(s).

RECOMMENDATION

Planning Staff recommends the Planning and Zoning Commission approve Case #GPA24-04, a Major Amendment to the Maricopa General Plan Future Land Use Map, as presented in the staff report.

ATTACHMENTS

Exhibit A: GPA24-04 Industrial Triangle Narrative

Exhibit B: Industrial Triangle Vicinity Map

Exhibit C: Industrial Triangle Current Land Use Map

Exhibit D: Industrial Triangle Proposed Land Use Map

Exhibit E: Citizen Participation Report

-- End of staff report --