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STAFF REPORT

CASE # GPA23-04

To: Planning and Zoning Commission
 Through: Rick Williams, Development Services, Planning Manager
 From: Derek Scheerer, Development Services, Planner II
 Meeting Date: September 25, 2023

REQUEST SUMMARY

PUBLIC HEARING: Major General Plan Amendment, GPA23-04 Murphy Park: A request by CVL Consultants on behalf of Maricopa 480 Partners, to amend the General Plan Future Land Use Map for approximately 481 +/- acres from existing Low Density Residential (L), Medium Density Residential (M), Master Planned Community (MPC), and Open Space (OS) to Master Planned Community (MPC) for the future development of residential, business park, and employment uses, generally located at the southeast and southwest corners of W. Steen Rd. and N. Murphy Rd. **DISCUSSION ONLY.**

As required by Arizona Statute for Major General Plan Amendments, the Commission will conduct two separate public hearings at different locations within the municipality to promote citizen participation. The first public hearing, at the Maricopa Library and Cultural Center, is an opportunity for the public to comment; no action will be taken by the Commission as that will occur at the second public hearing scheduled for October 23, 2023, at City Hall. The second public hearing will be an additional opportunity for the public to comment along with action by the Commission.

APPLICANT/PROPERTY OWNER

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COUNCIL PRIORITIES CONSIDERED

- Quality of Life
- Economic Sustainability
- Managing the Future

PROJECT DATA

Site Gross Acres	481 +/-1 gross acres
Site Addresses	Unassigned
Existing Site Uses	Vacant and Agricultural
Proposed Site Uses	Residential, Business Park, Employment
Existing General Plan, Land Uses	Low Density Residential (L), Medium Density Residential (M), Master Planned Community (MPC), Open Space (OS)
Proposed General Plan, Land Uses	Master Planned Community (MPC)
Existing Zoning	Eagle Shadows Planned Area Development (PAD)

SURROUNDING ZONING/LAND USE

Direction	General Plan Land Use	Existing Zoning	Existing Use
North	Low Density Residential (L), Master Planned Community (MPC)	Industrial (CI-2), Murphy and Farrell Planned Area Development (PAD)	Agricultural
East	Master Planned Community (MPC), Low Density Residential (L)	Arden Trails Planned Area Development (PAD)	Agricultural
South	N/A (Tribal Lands)	N/A (Tribal Lands)	Industrial
West	Medium Density Residential (M), Open Space (OS)	The Sanctuary Planned Area Development (PAD), Industrial (CI-2)	Vacant

ANALYSIS

The city's General Plan is intended to provide a framework for all of 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 Major General Plan Amendment to the Future Land Use Map to convert 481 +/- acres of land designated as Low Density Residential (L) (approx. 122 ac.), Medium Density Residential (M) (approx. 158 ac.), Master Planned Community (MPC) (approx. 190 ac.), and Open Space (OS) (approx. 10 ac.) to Master Planned Community (MPC). A separate Planned Area Development (rezone) application will be presented to the Commission in the near future for review and possible approval. The subject property is located at the southeast and southwest corners of W. Steen Rd. and N. Murphy Rd.

The City of Maricopa General Plan states that the purpose of the Low Density Residential (L), Medium Density Residential (M), Master Planned Community (MPC), and Open Space (OS) designations are as follows:

- **Low Density Residential** land use designation accommodates semi-rural large lot development with generous distances to streets and between residential dwelling units and a viable semi-rural character setting. Limited livestock privileges may be a part of this character for areas where lot sizes are a minimum of one acre. Areas in this category are generally larger lots with accessory structures that may be used for animals. The maximum density for this land use category is 2.0 dwelling units per acre (du/ac).
- **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.
- **Open Space** land use category designation identifies open-space sites and corridors intended for public recreation and resource conservation. The General Plan Future Land Use map does not locate individual neighborhood park sites. The General Plan recognizes the need for parks, recreational areas and open areas, which add to the attractiveness of the community and to the quality of life of the residents. The need for future parks is addressed in the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Element of the General Plan. Larger open space tracts are identified as future preserves and potentially regional parks, including substantial federal land reserves along the western and southern edges of the planning area. The OS designation is consistent with the State's Open Space Planning law when applied to private and State Trust Lands and includes a maximum development intensity of 1 residence per acre.

The proposed request would change 481 +/- acres from **Low Density Residential, Medium Density Residential, Master Planned Community, and Open Space**, to 481 +/- acres of **Master Planned Community**. See descriptions of the **Master Planned Community** designation above.

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. 122 ac. from Low Density Residential to the more intense Master Planned Community designation triggers the requirement for a Major Amendment.

Per the applicant's Narrative (see Exhibit A – Project Narrative) and Land Use Analysis (see Exhibit B), the proposed land use change to Master Planned Community is to allow for an environment that promotes a flexible and dynamic combination of land uses to support the City by creating large scale local employment opportunities and providing diverse and high-quality housing in a portion of Maricopa that lacks housing type diversity. Per the General Plan, residential growth is encouraged for areas of Maricopa east of White and Parker Rd., which includes the subject property. In addition to encouraging housing, the plan also encourages employment 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:

- This development is to allow flexibility in the different land uses (residential, business park, and employment) throughout the 481-acre site.
- This request improves the balance between housing and employment within the City limits by providing the opportunity for employment areas and permitting multiple types of diverse and attainable housing to those looking to live, work and play in the City of Maricopa.

- This proposal identifies a minimum of 80 acres of employment land use.
- Locations and alignments of streets, points of access, trails, walls, amenities and open space areas remain flexible to accommodate multiple land use scenarios within Murphy Park.
- An overall matrix is provided identifying the acreages and general locations for each of the proposed land use categories under the Master Planned Community designation.

Land Use Matrix				
Land Use Category	Min.		Max.	
Employment (South end of property & east of Murphy)	80 acres	17%	401 acres	84%
Business Park (North of Employment or west of Murphy)	0 acres	0%	240 acres	50%
Residential (North of Employment)	80 acres	17%	401 acres	84%
Total	481 acres			

MAJOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT FINDINGS:

As required by the General Plan, its goals and objectives are of consideration for the proposed request. Refer to Exhibit A – Project Narrative and Exhibit B – 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 applicants. Infrastructure improvements to support access will be determined in the PAD. Drainage solutions must be coordinated with City’s proposed regional CLOMR and other independent CLOMR’s submitted by developments east and west of Murphy Rd. and Steen Rd. With the future analysis in mind, 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 Master Planned Community (MPC) 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 Major Amendment it is staff’s opinion that the City of Maricopa General Plan Future Land Use Map be amended to reflect a Master Planned Community (MPC) land use on the proposed site.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION:

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

- June 28, 2023 - 1st Notification letters sent

- July 13, 2023 - Neighborhood meeting
- September 8, 2023 - 2nd Notification letters sent
- September 9, 2023 - Newspaper notice published
- September 11, 2023 - Site sign posted
- September 25, 2023 - 1st Planning and Zoning Commission meeting

Furthermore, 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 July 12, 2023, and the City's website has provided up-to-date information, attachments, and public meetings regarding the proposal.

PUBLIC COMMENT

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

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

No action at this time. Staff will present a formal recommendation at the next scheduled Planning and Commission meeting.

Exhibit A – Project Narrative

Exhibit B – Land Use Analysis

Exhibit C – Site Context Study

Exhibit D – Citizen Participation Report

-- End of staff report --