

Silveray at Goldfield

Major General Plan Amendment Rezoning Project Narrative

Submitted to:



City of Apache Junction, Arizona

Submitted on behalf of:

Olsen Recker/Guadalupe Properties LLC
4915 E. Baseline Rd. #105
Gilbert, AZ 85234

Prepared by:

Iplan Consulting



3317 S. Higley Road, Suite 114-622
Gilbert, AZ 85297

October 2023

Purpose of Request

This narrative accompanies a request for formal application review of a Major General Plan Amendment (GPA) and a Planned Development (PD) rezoning for approximately 18 acres of vacant land located on the east side of Goldfield Road, immediately south of US60 within the City of Apache Junction. The property has an existing General Plan land use classification of Commercial and a zoning designation of B-1/PD which is proposed to be changed respectively to a classification of High Density Residential (HDR) and zoning designation of RM-2/PD (multi-unit residential) for the purpose of replacing the current PD development plan of a hospital complex along with offices, hotels, and restaurants, with a proposal for an approximately 15 DU/acre rental home residential neighborhood of 271 units (Site Plan currently shows 269 units but site can accommodate up to 271 units subject to an easement abandonment which is currently underway).

Site Aerial



Location

The subject property is bifurcated by Resort Boulevard into two parts which both front on to Goldfield Road. The northern part is located immediately south of the on ramp for US60 and contains seven separate parcels. The southern part is located south of Resort Boulevard and is comprised of one large lot. The entire northern boundary is comprised of ADOT right-of-way for US60. To the east and south is the Dolce Vita community which is an active adult multi-family

development. Goldfield Road is our western boundary with the Golden Vista RV Resort beyond. Also to our west is the existing Chevron gas station and convenience store.

Surrounding Property Information

Direction	General Plan Designation	Zoning	Existing Use
<i>On-Site</i>	High Density Residential	RM-2/PD	Vacant
<i>North</i>	-	-	US 60 R/W
<i>South</i>	High Density Residential	MHP	Dolce Vita Community
<i>East</i>	High Density Residential	MHP	Dolce Vita Community
<i>West</i>	High Density Residential	RVP	Golden Vista RV Resort

We believe this property is ideally located for a multi-unit residential land use as it is in close proximity to US60 and the multiple services and employment nodes along it. In addition, this product type provides a great land use transition for the Dolce Vita and Golden Vista communities as it is a significantly less intense use than what the current zoning allows for, resulting in significantly less traffic and better preservation of view corridors.

Description of Proposal

The intent of this proposal is to both activate this otherwise overlooked and underdeveloped parcel and to bring a unique housing product to the City of Apache Junction that is needed. Currently, the City's housing stock is comprised of either single family homes or traditional apartments. The dearth of other housing types creates a lack of diversity in both lifestyle and income levels. The proposed Silveray product helps address that issue by introducing a new product type into the community that will fill an existing need for residents that want the lifestyle akin to that of a single-family home or townhome but not the long-term time/cost commitment or maintenance that comes with it. Residents also benefit from the resort level amenities and lock/leave ability that this product and project provides. This will be a market-rate, non-age-restricted project that can serve all members of the community.

Access:

Not only is the product unique, but so is the site as it is bifurcated into two parcels that span Resort Blvd. which will provide the main points of access to this project. Both sides of the project are

proposed to be gated and will have multiple points of ingress/egress along Resort Blvd. The north parcels currently each show two points of ingress/egress and two second points of egress only, however all four access points permit emergency ingress. The southern parcel features the primary access from Resort Blvd. to the community clubhouse and leasing office which is outside of the gated area. The entry drive then continues on through a gated access that allows for both ingress and egress into the site. A secondary point of connection provides egress to Goldfield Road and also serves as an emergency vehicle access point.

Circulation & Parking:

Once through the gates, the 26-foot, or wider, driveways circulate through the property providing access to all of the residential units and parking areas. The current unit count and mix result in a parking requirement (established by the City of Apache Junction Zoning Code) of 496 spaces which we intend to exceed via a mix of private garages, shaded car ports, and open parking spaces. The parking ratios are based upon anticipated product mix for the site, which currently includes 95 one-bedroom units, 102 two-bedroom units, and 77 three-bedroom units. The parking ratios are 1.5 spaces/unit for the one-bedroom units, and 2 spaces/unit for the two and three-bedroom units for a blended ratio of 2.2 spaces/unit and a total space count, including garages, of 496 parking spaces. It is intended that 25% of the garages will provide enhanced electrical connection for residents with electric vehicles.

Bicycle and pedestrian access is provided at all of the vehicular points of access but also in multiple other locations connecting residents directly to Resort Blvd. and Goldfield Road. The north parcels are compact and do not need additional points of access, however five additional access points are spread throughout the south parcel making it convenient for residents to exist the community safely. A total of fifty bicycle parking spaces are provided in the project via garage and designated bike racks around the site.

Open Space & Amenities:

As a high-quality residential community, the site will offer an elevated level of site amenities for the residents including the primary amenity area which features a clubhouse community building with fitness center, swimming pool with a large sun deck, spa, ramada, grilling areas, and more. Additional amenity areas feature a game lawn, two dog parks, and several walking paths with shade trees and multiple benches. The location of the primary amenity will be at the north end of the south parcel which affords centralized access from all residential units. The amenity area

location also enhances the streetscape along Resort Blvd. Additional passive parks will be provided and linked by walking paths that circulate throughout the project. In all, there is almost three acres of open space which equates to over 15% of the net site area.

Product:

The residential homes themselves offer an elevated level of luxury via high end interior finishes, numerous floor plan options, and attractive architecture. Although there is quite an eclectic mix of architecture in the area, the intent of this project is to blend into the more single family feel of the community which is why our homes use materials and roof structures similar to that seen in traditional single-family neighborhoods. We are using materials that stand up to the harsh environmental conditions in the desert including stucco, stone, metal, and concrete tile, and utilize colors that are complimentary to beautiful desert environs. Sloped rooflines and articulated massing complete the robust and complimentary architectural design for the project.

Departing from traditional large monolithic multi-family buildings containing multiple units, this project features smaller cluster of one, two, and three units which have a maximum height of two-stories all under 30-feet tall. These smaller units look and live more like a traditional single-family home than traditional apartments thus are much more compatible to the adjacent HDR communities. Similar to a single-family home, every unit at Silveray includes a private rear yard space that allows for private and secure use by the residents, guests, and their pets. In addition, almost half of the units offer attached garages which is also something more akin to single family homes versus traditional multi-family apartments.

Compatibility with adjacent uses

This property is unique in several ways. First, although it is adjacent to US60, it is a difficult property to develop due to limited access and extremely low traffic volumes due to Goldfield being a dead-end street. The previous concept of a hospital complex, office buildings, hotels, and restaurants were a grand vision that is simply not viable at this location due to lack of surrounding demographics and traffic counts. A multi-family residential project is much more viable here as it can utilize the proximity to the highway but still be compatible with the existing residential communities surrounding it. Multi-family uses also do not rely on area demographics or traffic counts. Furthermore, being immediately adjacent to an important highway corridor leading to critical employment areas provides an important housing opportunity for the city. The site being

bifurcated by a private street serving another community affords some design challenges which we believe have been successfully mitigated by the more single-family nature of the product type.

Additionally, this property is blessed with a beautiful natural desert wash and some of the most spectacular views of the Superstition mountains in the valley, both of which are better protected by developing a lower intensity multi-family project with limited heights and appropriate setbacks from the wash than the current zoning would allow for. The hospital, hotel, and restaurant uses that would come with the existing zoning would bring much higher vertical structures disrupting those views for some of the neighbors, especially to the west. In addition, those uses would bring much more intense traffic and congestion to Goldfield but most of all to Resort Boulevard, the primary access for the Dolce Vita residents. The proposed land use change would limit traffic to this area to people who live there as opposed to the existing land use which would draw a constant flow of people from elsewhere. This makes the proposed use much more compatible with the quiet residential character currently being enjoyed by neighboring communities.

The site is bordered on three sides by existing residential uses, making this proposal compatible from a land use perspective. In addition, the building configuration (1–3 units per structure), building height (less than 30-feet), and design result in a single-family look and feel which is complimentary to the adjacent projects.

Traffic:

The site fronts onto Goldfield Road which is a fully improved arterial level road within the city and can easily accommodate the existing traffic volumes in addition to the traffic generated by this proposal. The proposed change in land use will actually reduce the potential traffic generated from the existing proposed uses as identified in the Traffic Impact Analysis for the site:

- The proposed development is anticipated to generate 2,038 daily trips, 124 (30 in/ 94 out) trips during the AM peak hour, and 139 (89 in/ 51 out) trips during the PM peak hour.
- The existing zoning of the site would be anticipated to generate 7,596 weekday daily trips, 564 (388 in/ 176 out) trips during the AM peak hour, and 747 (294 in/ 453 out) trips during the PM peak hour.
- **The proposed land uses generate approximately 5,558 fewer daily trips, 439 (359 in/ 80 out) fewer AM peak hour volumes, and 602 (203 in/ 399 out) fewer PM peak hour trips than the existing zoning allows.**

The reduced intensity of the proposal from the approved commercial land uses will also benefit the City in terms of a lessened demand on public infrastructure, facilities, and services, all of which are in place and have capacity to serve this project. Lastly, the Development Plan for the proposal currently exceeds the City parking requirements which ensures there is adequate off-street parking.

Views:

This property and area is blessed with wonderful views of the majestic Superstition Mountains and one of the many benefits of this project is the lowering of the allowable height for the property. The current zoning allows building heights to be up to 45-feet and while the proposed RM-2 zoning district reduces that maximum height to 40-feet, the proposed product is less than 30-feet which we will be voluntarily committing to via the PD overlay.

The project will take advantage of the existing 8-foot wall of Dolce Vita by adding landscaping to effectively screen our project from the adjacent Dolce Vita project to the east. A new wall will be built along the perimeter where needed which will further screen the project. Goldfield Road acts as a buffer to the west and a 50'+ wide wash provides a buffer to the east. Additional landscaping is proposed along the south boundary to act as a buffer beyond the existing 8-foot wall.

Noise and Light:

The proposed residential use does not contain any sources that will create atypical levels of odors, dust, gas, noise, lighting, vibration, smoke, heat, or glare. Lighting and noise obviously will emit from this project, but the levels of emission will be significantly less than would occur under the currently approved land uses, especially the noise and light attributed to a hospital use. Even so, we have prepared a photometric plan to demonstrate light level compliance with City regulations and all community amenities will close at 10pm minimizing impacts to adjacent properties.

General Plan Amendment

The current General Plan designation of Commercial has proven to be non-viable at this location for multiple reasons. The most damaging reason is the lack of ambient traffic in the area but specifically along Goldfield Road. Currently Goldfield Road dead ends one-half mile to the south, limiting the necessity of traffic to turn south of US 60. US 60 itself is a major transportation corridor but this specific interchange has nothing immediately nearby to attract motorists to exit which is of critical importance for the viability of the commercial uses the current zoning allows for. Large commercial centers exist to the east (Gold Canyon) and the west (at Signal Butte) which serve the regional needs for commercial services along US60, limiting the viability of any

commercial services at this interchange. It is possible some commercial/employment uses that do not require high traffic volumes (e.g. mini-storage, warehousing, contractor yards, etc.) could work here, but those uses would still prefer to be in more active areas and we believe types of uses are not as compatible with the adjacent land uses as the residential use proposed.

Another justification for the amendment is that the Commercial classification is not as compatible with surrounding land uses which use the same High Density Residential (HDR) land use classification of our proposal. This area has proven to be viable for residential uses such as the rental community of Dolce Vita to our east and south, and the Golden Vista RV park to our west. As such, we believe changing the land use classification to HDR is more appropriate and will allow the property to finally develop as a viable and long-term sustainable use.

Findings of Fact:

As required by the City of Apache Junction 2020 General Plan, below are the applicant's responses to the Findings of Fact which are the criteria the City evaluates the justification of the proposed Major General Plan Amendment from a land use classification of Commercial (C) to High Density Residential (HDR).

1. Whether the amendment proposes a land use designation that the land use plan map does not adequately provide optional sites to accommodate.

Response: Although the General Plan does provide alternative HDR sites, many are developed and /or in areas of the City already being served by higher density residential uses.

2. Whether the amendment constitutes an overall improvement to the general plan, will not solely benefit a particular landowner or owners at a particular point in time, and is consistent with the overall intent of the 2020-2050 general plan.

Response: The Commercial land use classification of the subject property was specific to a previous plan which proved to be non-viable and other than one parcel developing as a fuel station, the rest of the site has remained vacant. The proposed amendment to a residential use will activate this property, bringing in a housing product that will benefit the community and residents that will spur additional economic growth in the area. The proposed amendment is more consistent with the quieter character of the neighboring communities, thus more compatible from a general Plan perspective. Since Commercial land is significantly more valuable, the amendment does not solely benefit the land owner and instead benefits the community which is consistent with the intent of the General Plan.

3. Whether the proposed amendment is justified by an error in the 2020-2050 general plan as originally adopted.

Response: The proposed amendment is justified by a change in how commercial development occurs and is not tied to an error of the General Plan. The commercial market has adapted to the post-COVID world of fewer commercial centers and the clustering of uses in regional nodes versus on “every street corner”. That change in market has made sites like this better suited for other land uses such as the HDR proposed.

4. Whether the proposed change is generally consistent with goals, objectives, and other elements of the 2020-2050 general plan.

Response: As demonstrated later in this narrative, we strongly believe the proposed change is consistent with the goals and objectives of the General Plan. The proposal is also consistent with the adjacent properties which share the same HDR classification.

5. Whether the proposed change is justified by a change in community conditions or neighborhood characteristics since adoption of the plan.

Response: Yes, as aforementioned, this property has proven to be non-viable for the current Commercial classification and in analyzing other land uses available, the HDR designation is the most appropriate given the surrounding land uses.

6. Whether the amendment will adversely impact a portion of the community by:

a. Significantly altering acceptable existing land use patterns, especially in established neighborhoods.

Response: The proposed HDR classification is more compatible with the established neighborhoods, many which also utilize the HDR land use designation. Furthermore, the Commercial designation and specifically the approved hospital use would certainly adversely impact this quiet residential area via the regular high levels of noise and light caused by ambulances & helicopters coming and going.

b. Significantly reducing the housing to jobs balance in the planning area.

Response: Although a Commercial classification is more associated with jobs, that only matters if the property can be developed under that land use designation. The commercial classification (and commercial zoning) has been in place for almost 25 years and only produced one small fuel station. It is clear the property would continue to sit vacant producing no jobs for the foreseeable future. The HDR classification will allow the property to be developed immediately, create a handful of jobs, but more importantly, will provide a housing product for employees that not only will help the City attract employers, but also will spur economic growth in this otherwise under-developed part of town.

c. Substantially decreasing existing and future water supplies.

Response: The proposed HDR classification and resulting residential community will use significantly less water than the current Commercial classification and approved uses would.

d. Replacing employment with residential uses.

Response: As previously mentioned, this site, although currently designated for commercial use, is not viable and will remain vacant. Developing an HDR land use will help bring people here and will likely spur economic and job growth in the area by activating an otherwise vacant property.

- e. Requiring additional and more expensive improvements to infrastructure systems and/or proximity to municipal facilities and/ or services than are needed to support the prevailing land uses and which, therefore, may impact the level of service for existing and proposed developments in other areas.**

Response: As an infill parcel, this site is already served by adequate infrastructure which means the City will bring in more revenue on systems already in place, increasing their efficiency. Furthermore, the proposed HDR land use will actually use LESS utilities than the Commercial approved land uses would producing lower stress levels on the City's infrastructure systems.

- f. Increasing traffic (without mitigation measures) on existing roadways beyond the planned level of service that negatively impact existing and planned land uses.**

Response: Although Goldfield Road sees very little traffic today, it is an arterial street that is designed to accommodate significantly more traffic. The traffic study prepared for the proposed HDR land projects an acceptable LOS (Level of Service), meeting the City's guidelines. Furthermore, the proposed amendment actually reduces the traffic load on the area streets by over 70% from the projected traffic of the currently approved Commercial land uses.

- g. Affecting the existing character (i.e., visual, physical and functional) of the immediate area.**

Response: The surrounding area is largely residential with a hybrid rental/ownership home community to our east and south (Dolce Vita) and an RV community to our west (Golden Vistas), both of which have the same HDR land use classification that is proposed for the subject property. As such, our low intensity rental home community is consistent with the character of the area and may even enhance the built aesthetics. The current Commercial designation would significantly change the character of the area as hospitals, office buildings, and hotels are large blocky structures that would look foreign to the area and block view corridors.

- h. Increasing the exposure of residents to aviation generated noise, safety and/or flight operations.**

Response: This proposal does not have an aviation component, but also does not generate the noise, light, and potential safety issues that a commercial development might. The current Commercial classification included a hospital complex that likely would have a helicopter service which would expose residents to aviation noise, safety, and/or flight operations.

- i. **Materially diminishing the environmental quality of the air, water, land, or cultural resources.**

Response: The proposed HDR classification will result in a development that is much more sensitive to the environmental quality of the area than the current Commercial classification would allow for as we are building a neighborhood for families to live in which requires a longer-term vision in terms of the environment for our residents.

- j. **Significantly altering recreational amenities such as open space, parks, and trails.**

Response: The current Commercial classification and approved plans make no mention of recreational amenities whereas the proposed HDR land use heavily focuses on recreational amenities for the residents which is detailed in the concurrent PD Rezoning application package.

As evidenced above, we believe the proposed HDR land use classification not only meets the Findings of Fact but also will be more compatible with the existing neighborhoods, will spur economic growth in this area, and is a more appropriate land use for the property.

Zoning

Complimentary to the General Plan Amendment, we are proposing to rezone the property from PD B-1 to PD RM-2, replacing the previous plans for a hospital complex, hotels, restaurants, and offices with a residential project. We believe the RM-2 base zoning district is most applicable as it aligns with the density intent of the project at approximately 15 DU/acre. The PD overlay is proposed to highlight overall compliance with the development regulations of the RM-2 zoning district and request one deviation which is discussed in detail in the next paragraph. Below is the PD development standards proposed for Silveray on Goldfield.

Development Standards

Standard	RM-2 Code	PD RM-2 proposed
Minimum Development Area	7,000 square feet	700,000 square feet
Minimum Lot/Parcel Width	60-feet	60-feet
Maximum Residential Density	22 DU/acre	15.1 DU/acre
Minimum Area Per Unit	1,980 square feet	2,800 square feet
Maximum Lot Coverage	50%	27%
Minimum Front Setback (West)	20-feet	20-feet
Minimum Side Setback (North)	10-feet	10-feet
Minimum Side Setback (South)	10-feet	10-feet
Minimum Street Side Setback (Resort Blvd.)	10-feet	20-feet

Minimum Rear Setback (East)	20-feet	8-feet¹
Maximum Height (feet)	40-feet	30-feet
Minimum Building Separation	10-feet	10-feet ²

1 – Not including adjacent wash corridor.

2 – 0-feet when attached.

We are currently identifying one deviation to the City’s Zoning Code. The deviation is a 12-foot reduction in the rear setback that only affects the northeastern corner of the project. The northeastern parcel is severely constrained by wash corridors on both the east and west sides which significantly restricts the buildable area of that parcel. However, since there is over 90 feet of wash corridor buffering our property from the closet homes in the adjacent Dolce Vita community, we believe the intent of the setback is met and exceeded in this instance. Additional justification for the minor deviation includes our commitment to exceed compliance with many of the other development standards, including a lowered density and lowered building height which are more important standards to the adjacent residents. The project also exceeds the open space and amenity requirements which enhance the livability of the project and sufficiently compensates for any negative impact to the greater community this one deviation would have.

General Plan Compliance

As the guiding policy document for development with the City of Apache Junction, we have reviewed the 2020 General Plan and affirm the proposed amendment is consistent with the overall Goals identified therein. Following is an analysis of the project’s compliance with the Goals of the General Plan.

Goal 3.2 - Diversify housing stock and neighborhoods by incorporating a variety of housing types and associated values to allow for a diverse demographic of residents.

Being one of the more outlying communities of the Phoenix Metropolitan area, Apache Junction has historically attracted only single-family home development and as noted within the General Plan, the existing housing stock percentages are heavily skewed that way. The proposed development of this site as a for-rent housing community will add to the City’s multi-family inventory and help the overall diversity of both the City’s housing stock and residents.

Goal 3.3 - Maintain and attract a quality housing stock in condition, design and construction standards.

The ownership history has a history of developing and maintaining quality commercial, industrial and residential communities within the Phoenix metro area. The design, open space amenities, housing diversity and quality of life built into this community achieves the stated goal.

Goal 5.1 - Attract all quality private investment that will add value and bring diversification to current and future residents of Apache Junction as a great place to live, work and play.

Within the Economic Development Element of the General Plan, this goal is appropriately broad to recognize that economic development contains many different components. In this case, the private investment is expanding the housing diversity, thus employee pool, which is critical for not only existing employers to be able to maintain their workforce, but also important for prospective employers considering Apache Junction as their new home. This project meets this goal on a number of different levels.

Goal 9.1 - Increase the city's financial sustainability.

Financial sustainability is helped tremendously by increased residential density and diversity. Assuring sufficient disposable income through attainable housing choices, as well as increasing the number of people in the immediate trade area, the City is well served financially by the development of this project.

Goal 9.3 - Encourage infill development.

As a strategic piece of land located between an existing community and the US60, this property is an infill property. It can be difficult to identify the proper balance of uses in an infill location, but this site creates a density transition between existing commercial and residential, and takes advantage of the proximity to a major transportation corridor which might negatively impact other land uses.

Goal 9.4 - Support and foster sustainable growth.

Sustainable growth is a term that relates to housing diversity, financial sustainability, economic development contribution, and the overall goals of creating a city favorable to a live, work and play environment. This goal is met on all accounts.

Goal 11.2 - Provide a balance of uses throughout the community.

From the General Plan:

“Currently, the city has less multi-family and single-family residential homes per capita than Queen Creek, Chandler, Gilbert or Mesa. A highly disproportionate percentage of current housing stock resides in manufactured/recreational vehicle homes which currently totals approximately 63 percent (63%) of the city’s residences. As a result, only 27 percent (27%) of the city’s housing stock is considered single family development. As young people grow out of their parent’s home it is important to have a diversity of housing types in order to keep new generations within the city. Moreover, the lack of diversity in housing stock also has a direct effect on people being able to move into the city. The general plan addresses this concern through appropriate land use designations and housing policies.”

As noted above, this product is critical to help achieve the overall balance of uses the community needs.

Goal 11.4 - Encourage and promote sustainable land use development.

As identified under the Sustainable Growth Goal, there are many components to sustainable land use development. Providing an appropriately dense housing project along a major transportation corridor reduces traffic in the community and creates a density transition away from the traffic and other commercial uses. This project, and multi-family projects in general, also result in higher efficiencies of utility infrastructure due to the focused intensity/density and bring a higher ratio of customers per capita resulting in a higher level of sustainability for the public utility providers.

Conclusion:

This property is unique as it is close to a major transportation corridor, but is somewhat isolated by the lack of transportation network to the south or east. For those reasons, the current entitlement failed to become viable. The property ownership has analyzed this site and larger context and believe this infill property’s highest and best use is as a multi-family development. Even so, it is important to take the adjacent mobile home park and RV park communities into account and develop a project that is compatible both in land use and design. We are proposing a lower intensity product type that we believe it is compatible to the adjacent communities due to its lower height buildings and single family livability. Furthermore, this product is designed to attract working professionals that need to be a short drive into the regional employment areas, but desire a more single family like lifestyle combined with no maintenance responsibilities and resort like amenities which make this a complimentary development for both the adjacent neighbors and the City as a whole.

Within the Phoenix metropolitan area, the shortage of housing quantity and variety is having a significant detrimental impact on communities' ability to grow in an economically viable fashion due to a variety of reasons, not the least of which is the inability of employers to find quality housing for new employees relocating to the Valley. If a community wants to develop in a smart and sustainable way, they need to have a range of housing to address affordability and lifestyle choices. This project will help achieve that goal for Apache Junction.