



# City of Apache Junction

Development Services Department



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## PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING STAFF REPORT

**DATE:** March 24, 2026

**TO:** Planning and Zoning Commission

**THROUGH:** Rudy Esquivias, Development Services Director  
Sidney Urias, Development Services Deputy Director

**FROM:** Nicholas Leftwich, Principal Planner

**CASE NUMBER:** P-25-59-PZ "Acacia by Diamante Homes"

**OWNER:** Diamante Homes Inc.  
2812 N Norwalk Suite 110  
Mesa, AZ 85215

**APPLICANT:** Diamante Homes Inc.  
Represented by Brennan Ray of Ray Law Firm

**REQUEST:** Proposed planned development rezoning of approximately 8.29 gross acres currently zoned High Density Multiple-Family Residential by Planned Development ("RM-1/PD"), General Commercial ("B-1"), and General Rural Low Density Single-Family Detached Residential ("RS-GR") to High Density Multiple-Family Residential By Planned Development ("RM-2/PD") with a new planned development overlay to authorize the development of a 129 lot townhome subdivision to be platted.

**LOCATION:** The subject site is located near the northeast corner of S. Acacia Road & E. Southern Ave. (APN 103-21-025F, 103-21-025G, 103-21-025H, 103-21-025E, 103-21-026E, 103-21-026G, 103-21-026C, and 103-21-026F)

**GENERAL PLAN**

**DESIGNATION:** High Density Residential (40 DU/AC Max)  
(west half) and Commercial (east half)

**ZONING DESIGNATION:** High Density Multiple-Family Residential by Planned Development ("RM-1/PD"), General Commercial ("B-1"), and General Rural Low Density Single-Family Detached Residential ("RS-GR")

**SURROUNDING USES:** North: Vacant "RS-GR" Residential Lot, Old West Highway, "B-1" property developed as a wedding & event venue;

South: Pinal County Residentially zoned properties, Goldview "RS-5/PD" residential subdivision;

East: Vacant General Commercial "B-1" property;

West: "RS-GR" Residential Properties, both developed and vacant.

**PROPOSALS**

P-25-59-PZ is a proposal by Diamante Homes, Inc. to rezone approximately 7.96 net acres (8.29 gross acres), currently zoned High Density Multiple-Family Residential by Planned Development ("RM-1/PD"), General Commercial ("B-1"), and General Rural Low Density Single-Family Detached Residential ("RS-GR") to High Density Multiple-Family Residential by Planned Development ("RM-2/PD") with a new planned development overlay to authorize the development of a 129 lot townhome subdivision to be platted for individual ownership. This results in a density of 16.2 Dwelling Units per Net Acre (15.6 dwelling units per gross acre).

As a portion of the subject site (approximately 3.75 net acres) is designated "Commercial" by the General Plan, a Minor General Plan Amendment to the land use map is also requested to amend the land use designation of the east-side subject properties (103-21-026E, 103-21-026G, 103-21-026C, and 103-21-026F) to match the "High Density Residential" designation of the west-side subject properties (103-21-025F, 103-21-025G, 103-21-025H, and 103-21-025E) to facilitate the rezoning.

## **BACKGROUND**

The proposed rezoning involves eight (8) separate parcels with different zoning histories, however only Parcel 103-21-026C, zoned General Rural Low Density Single-Family Detached Residential "RS-GR", was ever developed, previously being developed with a single-family home that has since been demolished and removed from the property.

Parcels 103-21-026E, 103-21-026G, and 103-21-026F are zoned General Commercial "B-1", however they have not been developed.

Parcels 103-21-025F, 103-21-025G, 103-21-025H, and 103-21-025E are zoned High Density Multiple-Family Residential by Planned Development ("RM-1/PD"), having previously been rezoned in 2003 with planned development approval for a 25-unit detached, single family condominium subdivision by Ordinance No. 1183. Plans were further amended to modify amenity requirements for the proposed community in 2005 by Ordinance 1254, however the community was never developed.

## **PLANNED DEVELOPMENT REQUEST**

The applicant requests the use of a planned development (PD) overlay to modify the minimum street width for the interior streets of the community from 28' to 26' in order to facilitate the site design as proposed. This modification of zoning standards is identified as a possible deviation that may be granted by council approval per the Apache Junction Zoning Ordinance § 1-7-6 Private Street Standards:

(A) *Private streets shall be a minimum of 28 feet in unobstructed width of paved surface (back of curb to back of curb, if curbs are installed) with a 20-foot-by-20-foot cutoff at intersections or a minimum turning radius of 20 feet. Narrower private streets may be permitted, subject to City Council review and approval.*

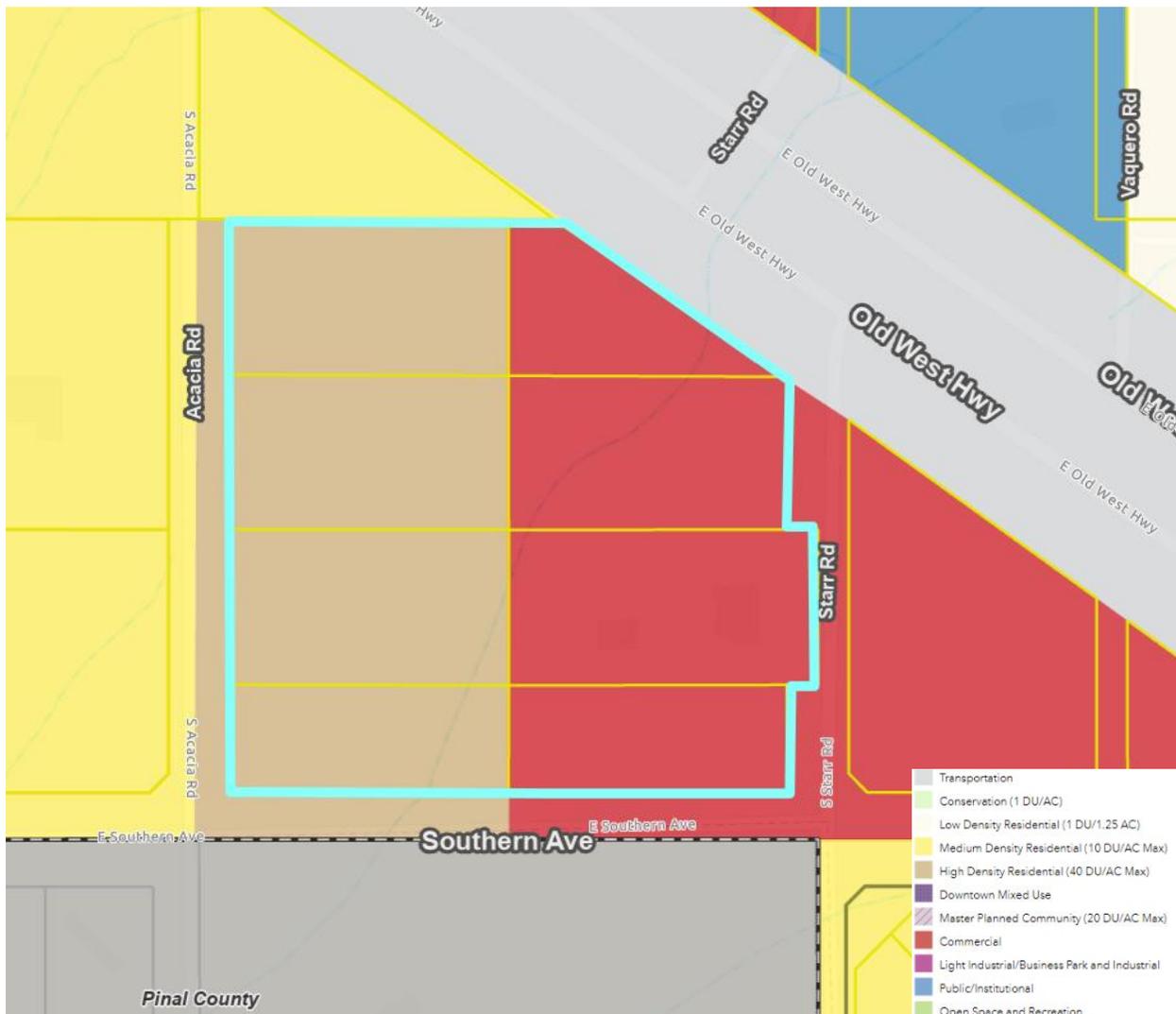
## **PLANNING STAFF ANALYSIS**

*Relationship to General Plan:*

The subject site is split by two different General Plan Land Use Designations, with the west-side properties being designated by the city's General Plan as "High Density Residential (40 DU/AC

Max)", which specifically promotes this type of denser residential development, and the east-side properties being designated "Commercial", which is used to promote commercial, office, retail, and business uses.

The subject site is bordered by the "Medium Density Residential (10 DU/AC Max)" Land Use designation on the west and southeast sides of the property, the "Commercial" designation to the north and to the east of the property, and "Low Density Residential (1 DU/1.25 AC)" in the Pinal County island to the south of the property, across Southern Avenue.



With the varied land use designations all promoting a wide variety of land use patterns in this specific area, planning staff have evaluated this project based on its specific location

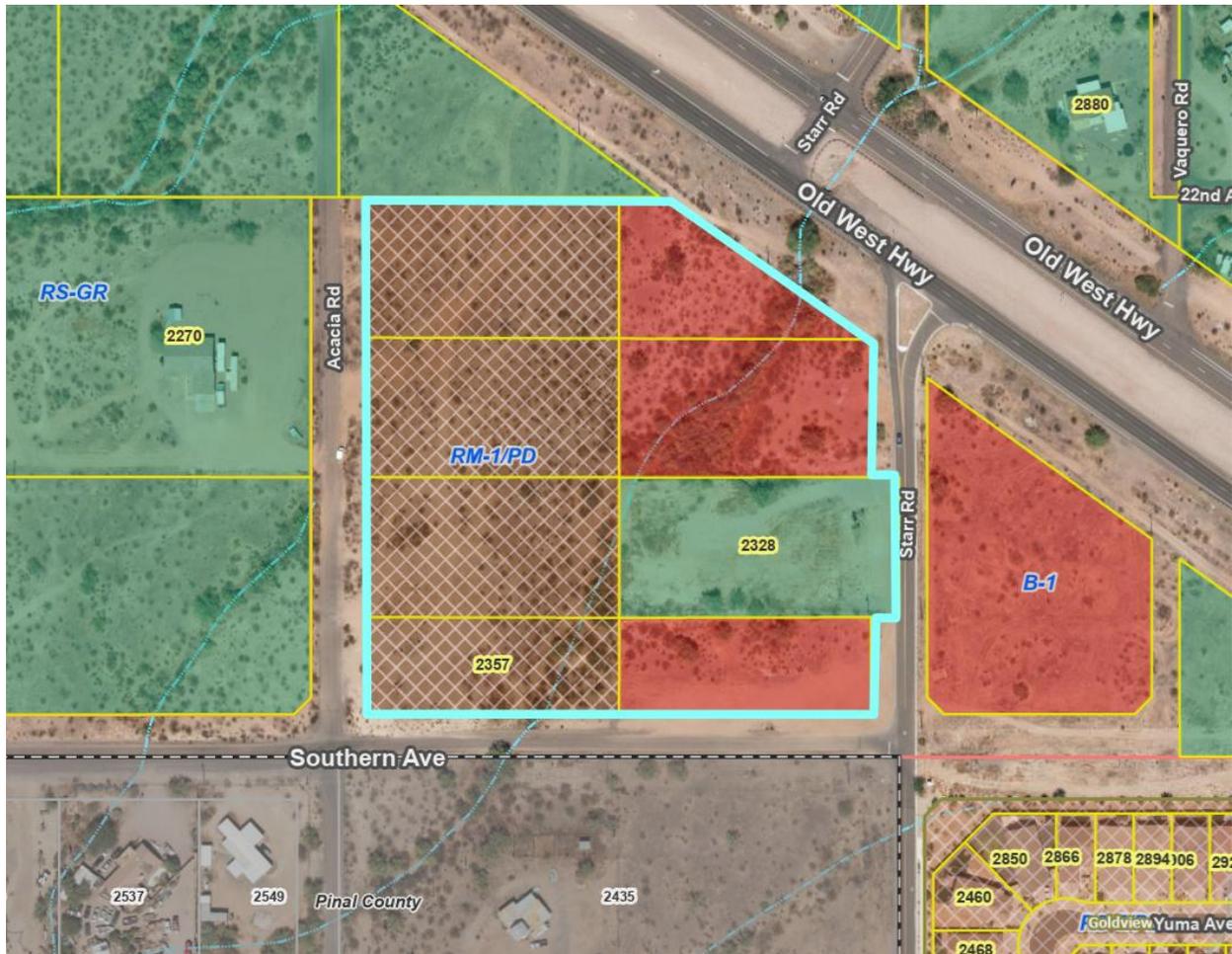
along the Old West Highway corridor, approaching the US 60, the property's position along an arterial (but not at an intersection), and the context of development in the surrounding area. In Staff's analysis of this location and the proposal, Staff believes this proposed development plan utilizes a historically vacant property in a manner that complies with the General Plan by meeting the following General Plan Goals & Policies:

- Policy 5.1.1 - Strategically identify infill opportunity sites that can accommodate office, industrial, entertainment, retail, and housing and mitigate barriers to development.
- Goal 3.2: Diversify housing stock and neighborhoods by incorporating a variety of housing
- Goal 9.3: Promote the downtown, U.S. 60 Corridor and Old West Highway Corridor for infill projects.

*Zoning/Site Context:*

The subject property is surrounded by residential land uses, as well as undeveloped commercially-zone properties, as noted:

- North of the property is a vacant "RS-GR" residential lot, and, across Old West Highway, a "B-1" property developed as a wedding & event venue.
- South of the property is a Pinal County island with 'large-lot' residentially-zoned properties, and to the southeast, within city limits, is the "Goldview" Medium/High Density Single-Family Detached Residential "RS-5/PD" residential subdivision;
- East of the property is a vacant "B-1" General Commercial property across Starr Road.
- West of the property are a couple developed "RS-GR" residential lot, as well as larger, undeveloped "RS-GR" lots along Acacia Road.



*Infrastructure & Site Improvements:*

The applicant will be required to connect to all necessary services, including electricity through SRP, water through the Apache Junction Water District, and sewer connections. Some of these utilities will require extensions to connect to the existing infrastructure network, which the developer has been made aware of through the planning process and coordination with these agencies.

All other necessary and required on-site and off-site improvements, including retention basins, dust-proof surfacing, perimeter walls, and landscape buffers will be built at the time of development.

*Public Input:*

The applicant sent out neighborhood meeting notification letters to the property owners within a three-hundred (300') radius, per

the standard requirements of a rezoning, notifying neighbors of the proposed development and providing them contact information to learn more about the project. The advertised neighborhood meeting was held at the Apache Junction High School, 2525 S Ironwood Drive, advertised for Tuesday, September 2, 2025, at 6:00 PM. Five members of the community attended and questions regarding the site planning and access, water sourcing, utility easements, traffic, building timelines, landscaping, construction dust, and the proposed price point were discussed.

Staff have not received any comments via phone or e-mail regarding the proposed development at the time of this staff report.

### **FINDINGS OF FACT FOR PLANNED DEVELOPMENT REZONING**

As noted previously, the planned development deviation requested is regarding the approval of a narrower interior street, from the 28' standard to the requested 26'. As required by the Apache Junction Zoning Ordinance, a Planned Development request may be approved by the City Council after consideration has been given to three different criteria. The criteria are outlined in the text below:

1. That a better design cannot be achieved by applying the strict provisions of the underlying zoning district.

#### Applicant Response:

*Yes. The proposed 26-foot street width (reduced from 28-foot standard) achieves superior design through:*

- *Enhanced Site Utilization: Maximized area for landscaping and resident amenities*
- *Environmental Integration: Reduced site disturbance and improved stormwater management*
- *Community Focus: Additional space allocated to recreational opportunities and landscape buffers*

2. That strict adherence to the provisions of the zoning ordinance is not required in order to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the inhabitants of the proposed development.

Applicant Response:

*Strict adherence to 28-foot width is unnecessary for health, safety, and welfare. The 26-foot width maintains:*

- Emergency Access: Full compliance with fire department and emergency vehicle requirements*
- Traffic Safety: Adequate circulation with enhanced pedestrian safety through traffic calming*
- Infrastructure Functionality: Complete utility access and service delivery capabilities*
- Enhanced Safety: Improved sight lines and natural traffic control through additional landscaping*

3. That strict adherence to the ordinance is not required to ensure that property values of adjacent properties will not be reduced.

Applicant Response:

*Strict adherence is not required to protect adjacent property values. The development enhances surrounding properties through:*

- Quality Standards: Superior construction and comprehensive site planning elevating neighborhood appeal*
- Compatible Design: Harmonious integration with existing residential character*
- Infrastructure Enhancement: Efficient utility utilization and area improvements through development contributions*
- Market Enhancement: Quality multi-family development serving as positive market catalyst for surrounding properties*

**FINDINGS OF FACT FOR MINOR GENERAL PLAN AMENDMENT**

As required by the Apache Junction General Plan, a Minor General Plan request may be approved by the City Council after consideration has been given to specific criteria. The criteria are outlined in the text below:

1. Whether the amendment proposes a land use designation that the Land Use Plan Map does not adequately provide optional sites to accommodate.

Applicant Response:

*The amendment does not propose a land use designation that is inadequately provided elsewhere. The City's General Plan designates substantial areas throughout the city for High Density Residential development, particularly in the downtown core and along major transportation corridors. This specific location at Southern Avenue and Acacia Road provides a strategic*

*infill opportunity that complements the existing residential character of the immediate neighborhood while providing housing diversity near commercial services.*

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 2010 General Plan.

*Applicant Response:*

*Yes, the amendment constitutes an overall improvement to the General Plan. The proposal supports multiple General Plan goals: Housing Element (Chapter 3):*

*-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" - The townhome development directly fulfills this goal by providing an alternative housing type*

*-Goal 3.3: "Maintain and attract a quality housing stock in condition, design and construction standards" - Diamante Homes will deliver quality construction meeting modern standards*

*-Goal 3.4: "Incorporate sustainable practices in all housing development" - The project can integrate green building practices and sustainable design*

*Growth Areas Element (Chapter 9):*

*-Goal 9.3: "Encourage infill development" - The proposal transforms an underutilized site with existing infrastructure access*

*-Policy under Goal 9.3: "Promote the downtown, U.S. 60 Corridor and Old West Highway Corridor for infill projects" - While not directly in these corridors, the project supports the city's overall infill strategy*

*Land Use Element (Chapter 11):*

*-Goal 11.3: "Revitalize older neighborhoods and the downtown" with the policy to "Encourage infill development with a variety of housing types" - This proposal provides exactly this type of housing variety in an established area*

*Downtown Element (Chapter 4):*

*-Goal 4.8: "Provide a variety of housing options" - Townhomes expand the housing spectrum available to residents*

The amendment benefits the broader community by providing needed housing diversity and does not solely benefit the landowner, as it creates housing opportunities for future residents and supports the City's housing diversification objectives. The General Plan's Community Profile (page xiii-xiv) specifically identifies housing diversification as a critical need, noting that "63 percent of the city's residences" are manufactured/recreational vehicle homes, and "only 27 percent of the city's housing stock is considered single family development." The Plan explicitly states: "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." The proposal aligns with the General Plan's by providing quality housing that maintains the community character while offering modern living options. This amendment represents a strategic improvement that serves the community's long-term housing needs as identified in the comprehensive planning process.

3. Whether the proposed amendment is justified by an error in the 2010 General Plan as originally adopted.

Applicant Response:

The amendment is not justified by an error in the 2020-2050 General Plan. Rather, it represents a refinement that better serves the community's housing needs while maintaining compatibility with surrounding uses.

4. Whether the proposed change is generally consistent with goals, objectives, and other elements of the 2010 General Plan.

Applicant Response: See the responses to No. 2 above.

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

Applicant Response: Yes, the change is justified by evolving community conditions:

- Increased demand for diverse housing options, particularly townhomes
- Recognition that the corner location is more suitable for residential use than commercial, given the residential character of the immediate surroundings
- Need for housing that serves different demographic groups and income levels

- *Market demand for medium-density housing products in established neighborhoods*

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

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

Applicant Response: *No adverse impact. The proposal maintains the residential character of the area while providing appropriate density near the Southern Avenue corridor.*

- b. Significantly reducing the housing to jobs balance in the Planning Area.

Applicant Response: *No adverse impact. The proposal increases housing supply, which improves the housing-to-jobs balance.*

- c. Substantially decreasing existing and future water supplies.

Applicant Response: *No adverse impact. The development will connect to existing utility infrastructure and comply with water conservation requirements.*

- d. Replacing employment with residential uses.

Applicant Response: *Minimal impact. While a small commercial area is converted to residential, the corner location was not optimal for significant employment generation.*

- 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.

Applicant Response: *No impact. The development will utilize existing infrastructure systems and provide improvements that benefit the broader area. Any proposed improvements will be sized appropriately for the area's planned development.*

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

Applicant Response: *No significant adverse impact. Residential use typically generates less traffic than commercial development.*

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

Applicant Response: *No adverse impact. The development maintains the residential character while providing appropriate density transition.*

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

Applicant Response: *Not applicable to this location.*

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

Applicant Response: *No adverse impact. The development is a relatively low-intensity residential use that will not diminish the environmental quality of the air, water, land, or cultural resources.*

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

Applicant Response: *No adverse impact. The amendment will not significantly alter recreational amenities. The Site does not contain existing parks, trails, or open space features, and the development will provide appropriate landscaping and open space as required by the City.*

#### **PLANNING DIVISION RECOMMENDATION**

In review of the project proposal, the conditions and context of the subject site, Staff is supportive of the proposed Rezoning by Planned Development Case P-25-59-PZ and the associated Minor General Plan Amendment and respectfully recommends to the Commission a favorable recommendation to the City Council, subject to the conditions of approval noted below. As always,

Cases P-25-59-PZ

March 24, 2026 Planning and Zoning Commission Staff Report

Commissioners may recommend changes or additional conditions which they feel will improve the development plan.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION FOR PLANNED DEVELOPMENT REZONING**

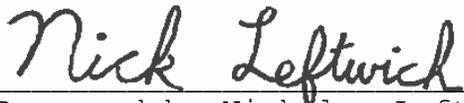
I move that the Planning and Zoning Commission recommend to the Apache Junction City Council the approval of the proposed Rezoning by Planned Development Case P-25-59-PZ, a request by Diamante Homes, Inc. to rezone Parcels 103-21-025F, 103-21-025G, 103-21-025H, 103-21-025E, 103-21-026E, 103-21-026G, 103-21-026C, and 103-21-026F, currently zoned High Density Multiple-Family Residential by Planned Development ("RM-1/PD"), General Commercial ("B-1"), and General Rural Low Density Single-Family Detached Residential ("RS-GR") to High Density Multiple-Family Residential by Planned Development ("RM-2/PD"), and the minor General Plan Amendment to modify the "Commercial" land use designation of parcels 103-21-026E, 103-21-026G, 103-21-026C, and 103-21-026F to match the "High Density Residential" designation of the remainder of the project properties, subject to the following conditions of approval:

- 1) The development shall reflect substantial compliance and consistency with the city's zoning ordinance and the planned development plans presented in case P-25-59-PZ, incorporated by reference herein, and as otherwise specified through these conditions of approval.
- 2) The minimum street width shall be narrowed to 26'.
- 3) The community shall not be age-restricted.
- 4) The properties shall be subdivided through the platting process as proposed.
- 5) Appropriate dedications of public right-of-way shall be made as required by the City Engineer, as noted:
  - a) Dedicate 20-ft by 20-ft as public right-of-way corner cutoffs at the intersections of Southern Ave & Acacia Rd and Southern Avenue & Starr Road.
  - b) Dedicate the east 33' of Parcel 103-21-026C, along Starr Road as public right-of-way.
- 6) The developer's engineer shall meet the civil engineering improvement plans and document requirements, as outlined in the previously provided pre-application and review comments

and in accordance with the city's approved engineering standards that are in effect at the time of plan submittal.

- 7) All common and amenity areas within the proposed development, including perimeter walls and fences, and interior and exterior common area landscaping, shall be owned and maintained in good condition at all times by the home owners association.
- 8) Major deviations or proposed changes from the original plans associated with this case will require a major planned development amendment. The Director or their designee shall interpret the proposed modification to be significant/major if, in the Director or Designee's opinion, the quality of project design is diminished, the types of proposed land uses are significantly altered and/or the overall character of the project is contrary to the intent and spirit of the original City Council PD ordinance approval.

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Prepared by Nicholas Leftwich  
Principal Planner

Attachments:

- Exhibit #1 - Project Narrative
- Exhibit #2 - Proposed Site Plan
- Exhibit #3 - Aerial Map
- Exhibit #4 - Proposed Landscape Plan
- Exhibit #5 - Proposed Elevations & Floor Plans
- Exhibit #6 - Public Participation Plan & Report