

# Apache & Plaza Multi-Family

## Narrative

### Conditional Use Permit and Site Plan

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Submittal

#### PROJECT INFORMATION

<b>Project Name</b>	Apache & Plaza Multi-Family
<b>Property Owner</b>	Wayne Ness, c/o Berth C Ness Revocable Trust
<b>Assessor Parcel Numbers</b>	101-11-005A
<b>Location</b>	Generally Northeast of the Apache Trail & Plaza Rd Intersection
<b>Property Size</b>	18.59 Acres
<b>Existing Zoning</b>	B-3 City Center in Core Downtown Overlay District
<b>Proposed Zoning</b>	B-3 City Center in Core Downtown Overlay District with a Conditional Use Permit ("CUP") for Multi-family use
<b>General Plan 2020 Land Use Designation</b>	Downtown Mixed Use
<b>Development Team</b>	<u>Applicant/Developer</u> Wolff Enterprises III, LLC Katie Reiner and Chase Courchaine 6710 E. Camelback Rd., Suite 100 Scottsdale, AZ 85251 <a href="mailto:kreiner@awolff.com">kreiner@awolff.com</a> <a href="mailto:ccourchaine@awolff.com">ccourchaine@awolff.com</a>  <u>Representative</u> Gilbert Blilie PLLC Paul E. Gilbert 701 N 44 <sup>th</sup> Street Phoenix, AZ 85008 <a href="mailto:pgilbert@gilbertblilie.com">pgilbert@gilbertblilie.com</a>

## PURPOSE OF REQUEST / PROPOSED USE

This narrative accompanies a request for formal application review of a Conditional Use Permit for Multi-Family use and a Site Plan Design Review for land generally located on the east side of Plaza Road and the north side of Apache Trail, and specifically at Assessor's Parcel Number ("APN") 101-11-005A. The property has an existing General Plan land use designation of Downtown Mixed Use and a zoning designation of B-3 City Center with a Core Downtown Overlay District. The proposed project ("Project") will require a CUP and will retain the existing B-3 Zoning. The applicant also has concurrently submitted for a Site Plan review.

The proposed Project is for a 336-unit multifamily housing development consisting of fourteen residential buildings and a centralized Fitness and Leasing Building for resident use. Residential units will include (48) 1-Bedroom/1-bath and (288) generously sized 2-Bedroom/2-bath units to accommodate the market demand.

## LOCATION/VICINITY INFORMATION

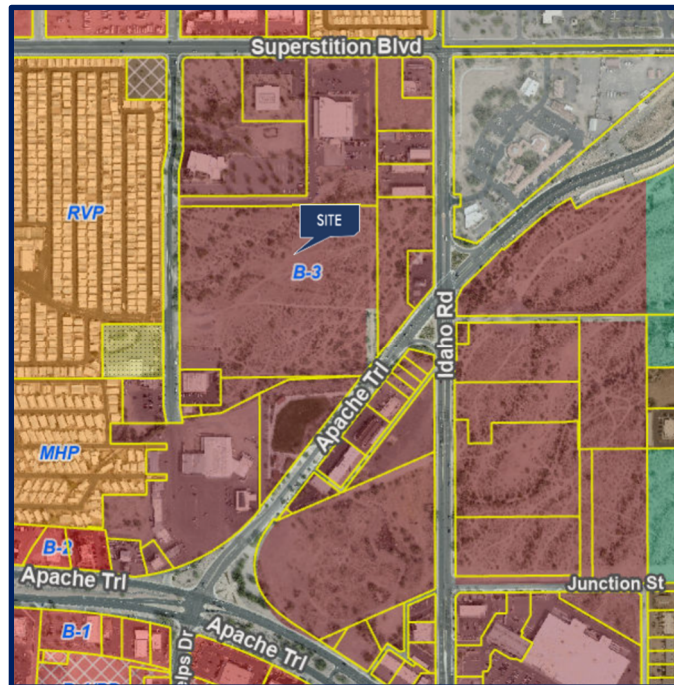
The subject property is a single, irregularly shaped parcel, with approximately 125 feet fronting Apache Trail and 796 feet fronting Plaza Drive. The property is currently undeveloped land, as shown in the aerial below:



To the north is the US Postal Service as well as Horizon Health and Wellness Center. To the south there are 3 parcels: the city-owned Flatiron Community Park; Saguaro Rehabilitation

and Aquatic Therapy; and a vacant parcel. To the east is undeveloped land. Finally, to the west is the Lost Dutchman RV Resort. A summary of adjacent uses, as well as the zoning of the adjacent parcels, is provided in the Table, below, as well:

Direction	APN	General Plan 2020 Land Use Designation	Zoning	Current Use
On-site	101-11-005A	Downtown Mixed-Use	B-3 City Center	Vacant Land
North	101-11-002M	Downtown Mixed-Use	B-3 City Center	Horizon Health & Wellness Inc.
North	101-11-002D	Downtown Mixed-Use	B-3 City Center	US Postal Service
South	101-23-0430	Downtown Mixed-Use	B-3 City Center	Saguaro Rehabilitation and Aquatic Therapy
South	101-11-016A	Downtown Mixed-Use	B-3 City Center	Vacant Land
South	101-23-042A	Downtown Mixed-Use	B-3 City Center	Flatiron Community Park
East	101-11-0220	Downtown Mixed-Use	B-3 City Center	Vacant Land
West	101-11-0200	Downtown Mixed-Use	RVP Recreational Vehicle Park	Lost Dutchman RV Resort
West	101-11-003D	Downtown Mixed-Use	RS-20M Medium Density Single-Family Detached Residential	Lost Dutchman RV Resort RV Resort Amenity Area



Notably, the property is approximately 1,000 feet northeast along N. Apache Trail from the Golden Triangle property (the former Grand Hotel site), a recent acquisition by the City in May 2024 as part of the downtown Economic Development strategy.

See further comments about compatibility with surrounding uses under “Findings of Fact” section of this narrative.

## CURRENT SITE CONDITIONS

The project is currently undeveloped land with native desert vegetation. Historical aerials show that the property may have been used as a golf course in the 1970s and 1980s but has not been used since that time. The Southeast corner of the site contains a small surface parking lot that is believed to have been used when the neighboring historic building was a Post Office. However, the parking lot has since been abandoned and has not been in use by any private or public users in some time. A series of washes through the property convey overland flow that historically enter along the eastern and northern property lines. At the Southern property line, an underground culvert conveys drainage underground across N. Apache Trail.

## DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSAL

The intent of the application is to activate an underdeveloped parcel in the Downtown Core and bring a much-needed housing type to the City of Apache Junction. The proposed garden walk-up multi-family product provides a housing diversity that is needed in the area and provide renters a choice beyond the trending Built-to-Rent/Single-family for rent communities. This will be a market-rate, non-age-restricted product.

The vision of the community is one of clean straight lines, simplistic yet elegant, with characteristics of a mid-century modern design that still hails desert Southwest architecture. The landscape design will visually articulate the modern design with thoughtful landscape planting with symmetry, pairings, and grouping to create harmonious accents to the architectural building. The product incorporates an efficient building design with Sustainability in mind including low-water use plants selected from the ADWR Phoenix AMA recommended plant list, and considerations for future EV and future solar.

The property is gifted with majestic views of the Superstition Mountains. As proposed, the project embraces those views as well as works to not overly block the views of our neighbors. This multi-family application proposes lower heights and less intense density than the current B-3 zoning allows for: the applicant is only proposing building heights up to 38' in height at 18.1 du/acre, whereas current zoning allows for building heights up to 60' tall with density up to 40 du/acre and no restrictions on density/ square footage for non-residential uses. Other commercial uses would bring much higher, denser vertical structures and disrupt views for neighbors.

### *Circulation*

The Property is bordered by N. Apache Trail on the Southeast, and Plaza Drive to the West. The site is fenced with vehicular gates at the two entries. The main marketing ingress/egress access is on N. Apache Trail with a call box to permit guests within the property. A secondary ingress/egress driveway is proposed on Plaza Drive aligning with the existing RV Resort





driveway and will be limited to a southbound left-in and westbound right-out only. This secondary entrance is intended to be used only by residents and fire for ingress/egress, with signage directing guests and prospective tenants to the main entrance.

Plaza Drive has 40 feet of public of Right-of-Way ("ROW") previously dedicated and requires no further dedication. Plaza Drive is an existing roadway with posted 15 mph speed limit signs. No deceleration lanes are warranted due to low traffic volumes and posted speed limit of 15 mph, as demonstrated by the attached Traffic Impact Analysis by EPS Group. The applicant will be required to install half street improvements of the Main Street Cross Section, including on-street parking, per the figure below:

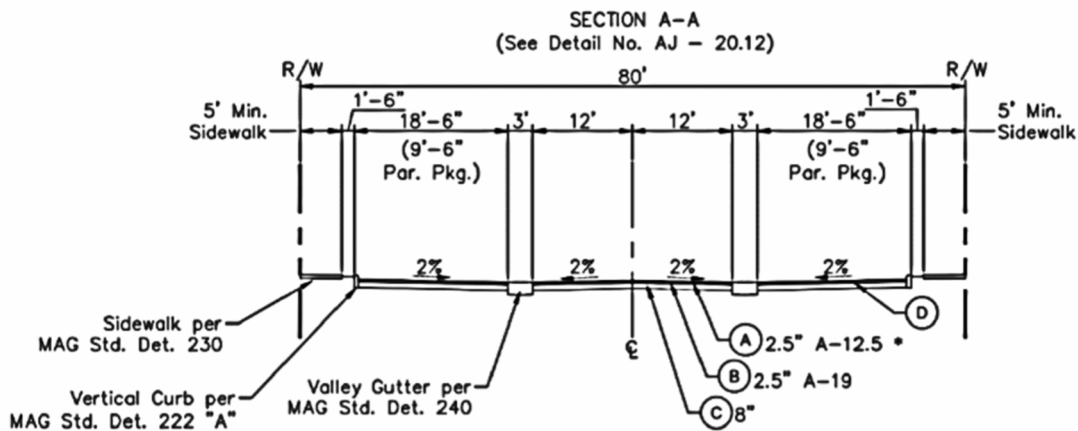


Figure 5 – Apache Junction: Main Street Cross Section

N. Apache Trail is an existing roadway with posted speed limits of 15 mph at this subject property's frontage. 50 feet of public ROW has previously been dedicated to Apache Junction with no further ROW dedication required. Applicant will install half-street improvements including replacing the existing lane merge condition with a right-turn lane into the proposed development.

The proposed multi-family use under a CUP will reduce potential traffic generated from a more intensive by-right commercial use that is permitted under the B-3 zoning without a CUP:

- The proposed multi-family development is anticipated to generate 2,265 weekday daily trips (entering/exiting) with 134 trips (entering/exiting) during the AM peak hour and 171 trips (entering/exiting) during the PM Peak Hour.

The existing by-right uses of the site under B-3 zoning do not have restrictions on square footage/density with non-residential uses. As outlined in the Traffic Impact Analysis, if a shopping center was developed with a conservative assumption of 25% FAR or 202,000 SF

on the subject site, **the proposed multi-family development generates 5,211 fewer daily trips, 36 fewer AM peak hour trips, and 516 fewer PM peak hour trips.**

Inherent to the multi-family community are lifestyle elements oriented towards Trip Reduction goals:

- At the main project entry, 10 parking stalls are provided which can function as rideshare parking stalls.
- Bicycle Racks will be located in strategic locations such as project entries and major amenities
- Onsite amenities such as fitness center and dog park reduce the need for residents to travel outside the property, which reduces cars on the road
- On the upcoming property website, website links will be provided to commuter resource information
- In addition, resources such as transit maps and schedules will be available at our clubhouse for employees and residents

## *Parking*

The applicant is providing 684 on-site surface parking stalls for 336 units or a 2.04/DU ratio. For context, of the +3,000 units entitled in the last 5 years in The Wolff Company portfolio, the average parking ratio is 1.67:1/DU (all similar surface parked, walk-up garden product). Applicant is also installing an additional 45 angled public parking stalls on the Plaza Drive frontage, for a total of 729 parking stalls. 168 of the on-site surface stalls will be covered with carports, which residents can choose to rent at their option.

City Code for on-site parking calculates 1.5 stalls for each of the 48 1-Bedroom units, 2 stalls for each of the 288 2-Bedroom units, and 0.3 guest stalls for every dwelling unit, with a total parking requirement of 749 parking stalls. However, Section 1-7-4 of City code allows up to a 10% reduction in required parking stalls (calculated to 674 stalls) if public parking is located within 100' of the property and if a Parking Study is provided with Technical Data on parking associated with the proposed land use. Please see associated Parking Study prepared by EPS, which calculates a maximum parking demand of 411 parking stalls based on the Institute of Transportation Engineers ("ITE") calculations for this land use, or a total of 512 stalls for conservative assumptions for guest parking. There is public parking along Plaza Drive and as part of this development, as noted above, approximately 45 additional public parking stalls will be provided by the Applicant. With adjacent public parking and a Parking Study illustrating that the actual parking demand will be lower than City Code requirements, the project meets both conditions for the permissible reduction in parking up to 10%. Applicant is requesting a reduction of 65 stalls, or an 8.7% reduction. It is worth noting that



when considering the 45 additional parking stalls preliminarily designed along this parcel's Plaza Drive frontage, there is only a reduction of 20 parking stalls from City Code.

## *Drainage*

There are multiple washes crossing the existing vacant land. Applicant will intercept and convey these flows through the Project to continue offsite at historical entry and exit locations. Please see Figure, below, for existing flows. The offsite storm conveyance will remain separate from on-site stormwater retention. On-site retention facilities will consist of surface retention basins with drywells and underground storage.



## *Open Space, Landscaping and Amenities*

The proposed landscaping is a desert contemporary plant palette highlighting symmetry and clean lines. A property management company will professionally maintain the landscape and grounds. Pedestrian paths connect residents within the site and to the public ROWs. Breezeway connections at and through each building connect to the circulatory path throughout the site. Applicant will endeavor to salvage existing native trees in compliance with code.

Open space is calculated at 187,725 SF of which equates to 23% of the net site area. The community will be activated with the following amenities:

- Centralized Leasing/Fitness Center with:
  - Fitness room with State-of-the-art cardio and strength-training equipment
  - Leasing center with on-site staff
  - Resident lounge space including TV, furniture and Coffee Station
  - Indoor mailroom and Amazon delivery parcel room

- Outdoor Pool with chaise lounging, barbeque area, and shaded outdoor patio with ceiling fans and speakers for Owner-controlled music
- Dog park with dog fountain
- Dispersed stand-alone BBQs for convenience
- Walking paths with shade trees
- Further pedestrian activation thru adjacency to Flatiron Park

Applicant will also install and maintain planting in the public ROW at public street frontages.

## *Architectural Product*

Residential building elevations are anticipated to have a contemporary southwestern architectural style with clean lines, simple textures, and a mixed color palette of desert hues. Material differentiation includes a mixture of stucco, metal, siding, and scored and painted masonry block at the ground plane enclosing 1<sup>st</sup> floor patios and 1<sup>st</sup> floor mechanical units. The 3-story residential buildings' height is approximately 35' to the top of the Parapet and 38' in height at a secondary parapet located at stairway breezeways to screen roof mounted mechanical equipment. This is much lower than the 60' max allowance in the B-3 zoning district per Table 5-4 of City code. For reference, the Horizon Health and Wellness Center to the north has building heights of 45'-6" from Finish Floor. The applicant's proposed project is 11'-2" shorter than Horizon Health (24% less height), but including the Stair Towers are 8'-1" shorter than Horizon Health (17% less height).

Building design utilizes flat roofs on all residential buildings to accommodate roof-mounted HVAC equipment. Roof-mounted HVAC Equipment will be centralized over the breezeway.

Unit finishes will include stainless steel appliances, granite countertops, and luxury vinyl tile (LVT) hard plank flooring throughout. Ground floor units will have walk-out patios, and upper floors will have a combination of inset balconies or sliding doors with Juliet railing.

## *Mechanical Equipment Screening*

As noted above, 1<sup>st</sup> floor mechanical units are ground-mounted, while 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> story HVAC units are located on the rooftops and screened with a parapet. Applicant is responding to new EPA regulations effective January 2025 which narrows the list of permissible refrigerants to one that can only traverse up to 2-stories. The ground-mounted HVAC enclosures are designed with scored masonry that match the 1<sup>st</sup> floor patios and add additional material interest to the building elevations.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Submittal Updates**

The following have been revised per City comments: Site Plan, Building Elevations and Floor Plans, Landscape Plan, Civil Plans, Preliminary Drainage Report, and Parking Study.

In addition, the consultant has updated the following documents:





- Preliminary Water Report has been updated to reflect fire flows for 4-hour based on 2021 IFC code requirements
- Traffic Impact Analysis has been revised to limit movement to a southbound left-in and westbound right-out only. The reason for the change is Plaza Drive ROW does not continue through south of our site and terminates at a private commercial parking lot at APN 10111010F.

The following documents remain unchanged from 1<sup>st</sup> submittal:

- Legal Descriptions
- ALTA
- Title Report
- Deed
- Mailing Labels
- Preliminary Public Participation Plan
- Proposition 207 waiver

## Findings of Fact

In order for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) to be approved, the Planning and Zoning Commission shall consider seven factors as outlined in §1-16-12.D.3 of the City Code. We provide the following as justification that the requested CUP will not be detrimental to persons residing or working in the area, to adjacent property, to the neighborhood, or to the public welfare in general.

### **Adequacy of roadways, off-street parking, public facilities and services to accommodate the proposed use:**

Recent public improvements and applicant's plans to build upon that progress include:

**North Apache Trail** Road and Median Improvements by the City, the Flatiron Community Park, Main Street cross-section with public parking have been completed to date. Applicant will provide a right-turn into the entry off of Apache Trail and provide ROW landscaping and pedestrian sidewalk connections.

**Plaza Drive Road Improvements** - As part of Applicant's Plaza Drive half-street improvements, the City's Main Street cross-section will be constructed including public on-street parking, old-style streetlights, public sidewalks, and ROW landscape planting.

**Drainage:** the City has invested in the Superstition Basin to retain significant volumes of stormwater to reduce flood run-off into the Downtown area. For the subject property, the applicant will capture and convey flows thru the subject site at



approximately 170 CFS at the eastern property line and 27 CFS at the northern property line.

**Utilities:** Gas, Power, Water, Sewer and Telecom are all conveniently located in either Apache Trail and/or Plaza Drive. Applicant will need only to connect to these within the public ROW at our property frontage. Apache Junction Sewer and Arizona Water Company have both confirmed capacity to serve this project.

**Negative impacts arising from the emission of odor, dust, gas, noise, lighting, vibration, smoke, heat or glare:**

The applicant is committed to being a good neighbor. During the construction and development phase, dust control mitigation will be in place, such as watering down the site, and providing track out material for tires to mitigate any dust leaving the site. Signage will be posted with a construction site contact name and phone number to call with any dust or noise concerns.

Once complete, the site will have a net reduction of dust, as the undeveloped land will be stabilized by replacing vacant dirt lot with hardscape, structures or stabilized landscape material such as granite and grass. Noise will be of a residential neighborhood in nature.

All site lighting will be shielded from neighboring properties and in compliance with Dark Sky ordinances. See also accompanying lighting cutsheets and photometrics.

**Contribution to the deterioration of the neighborhood or the negative impact on neighborhood property values:**

The project will be a professionally maintained, single-owner project. New residents will provide economic development opportunities for commercial development within the Apache Junction downtown including in the upcoming Golden Triangle site. The new development will raise surrounding property values with a new modern product and consumers to downtown retail.

**Compatibility with surrounding uses and structures:**

The applicant's proposed development of a multi-unit residential development will greatly compliment the City's economic development strategy to target commercial and retail uses in the Golden Triangle site, providing retail customers and potential housing for employees in a revitalized Downtown.

The City is nearly complete on a new Downtown Master Plan with Swaback Partners. During the Public Open House, Apache Junction residents voiced that they wanted "*Affordable housing for those under 55.*" The draft October 2024 Downtown Master Plan



shows the subject site as Future Residential in all scenarios, confirming this is the best use of the subject property:



**Conformance with the General Plan and city policies:** The Apache Junction General Plan 2020-2050 establishes policy for development within the City. The below city goals are furthered with the approval and development of this application:

**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 General Plan also notes: *"Currently, the city has less multi-family and single-family residential homes per capita than Queen Creek, Chandler, Gilbert or Mesa...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."*

Table 1.7 of the General Plan also notes that Multi-Family Housing (5+ units/building) accounts for just 5% of the available Housing Type in Apache Junction.

**Table 1.7**

Apache Junction Housing Type	Units	% of Total
Mobile Home	11,398	50%
Single-Family Detached	6047	27%
Other (e.g. RV's)	2987	13%
Multi-Family (5+ units/bldg)	1203	5%
Plex (2-4 units/bldg)	1146	5%
Total	22,781	100%

This development application will further the goal of housing diversity by increasing supply of the housing product in the shortest supply in the City.

**Goal 3.3** – *“Maintain and attract a quality housing stock in condition, design and construction standards.”*

Community structures will be built with modern architecture and to latest codes and contemporary standards.

**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.”*

The Wolff Company (Applicant) is a private investment and development firm headquartered in Arizona with a history of developing and maintaining quality residential communities. The Wolff Company actively manages 10,000 units with another 4,000 in the pipeline and all projects focus on high-quality design and experience for residents, guests, and neighbors.

In this case, private investment by a local developer is expanding the housing diversity, thus workforce pool, which is critical for not only existing employers to be able to maintain their workforce, but also important for prospective employers and commercial developers considering Apache Junction and the Downtown Core.

**Goal 9.1** – *“Increase the city's financial sustainability.”*

The City has made a substantial investment in the redevelopment of the downtown, with investment in public infrastructure, consultant master planning, and land acquisition of the Golden Triangle/former Grand Hotel site. The 336 residential units will bring both consumers and workforce, attracting future commercial developers, increasing future tax revenues and land sale prices.

**Goal 9.3** – *“Encourage infill development.”*



As a vacant property within the City Center Downtown Core, this property is an infill property. Development of this site will further economic development goals associated with the Downtown Master Plan.

## Screening and buffering of uses:

**Western:** The western property line at Plaza Drive will be screened with a combination of a 6' masonry wall and a 3' wrought iron over 3' masonry wall. There will also be a 10' landscape buffer from the Right of Way ("ROW"). Where a 10' building setback is required, applicant has located buildings to be setback approximately 30' from the property line. The RV resort to the east is additionally buffered by Plaza Drive ROW. The nearest proposed building to the nearest existing RV structure is approximately 145 feet.

**North:** The subject site is buffered to the Horizon Wellness Center and US Post Office by a gated private access drive, Virginia Drive. In addition, a drainage channel along the northern property line provides additional buffer. Where a 10' building setback is required, the project as designed has an approximately 32' setback to the northern Property line. A 6' wrought iron fence will provide security between users and keep residents away from the drainage channel.

**East:** The property to the east is currently undeveloped. Applicant will have an approximately 35-foot drainage channel that will double as a buffer from the future commercial uses. The neighboring property to the east will likewise need to develop a similar channel, creating additional future buffer. A 6' wrought iron fence will provide security between users and keep residents away from the drainage channel. The applicant's designed building location of approximately 36' setback from the property line exceeds the required 20-foot building setback provided by Planning Staff.

**South:** The property is bounded by 3 parcels to the south: the Flatiron Community Park, a vacant land parcel, and the Saguaro Rehabilitation and Aquatic Therapy center. A 6' wrought iron fence will provide security between neighboring properties and on-site residents. The nearest building to the shared property line is setback approximately 112 feet from the property line. Perimeter landscape will be installed as required.

## Unique nature of the property, use and/or development's physical characteristics:

The site has multiple drainage ways conveying storm flows from the north, east, and south, and passing through the site to a drainage outfall. The impact of the drainage



conveyance reduces the buildable land area that might be utilized for surface parking. See more context above under the **Drainage** and **Circulation** and **Parking** sections of this narrative.

